



The 461st

Liberaider



Vol. 33, No. 1

JUNE 2016

SOMEWHERE IN THE USA

Reunion Information

In 2016 the reunion will include the 376th, 451st, 455th, 465th, 484th and 485th bomb groups in addition to the 461st. It will be held in Dallas, TX. This will be our first visit to this city and promises to be one of the best reunions we've ever had. Check out the details on page 18 and sign-up information on page 20.

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Toward Sanctuary

William J. Barnes, Jr. was the pilot of crew #53 in the 766th Squadron. His aircraft, Dwatted Rabbit #53, was ditched off the southern coast of France on Mission #60 to the Marshalling Yard at Nines, France. All members of the Barnes crew were lost. The following is part of the book compiled by his family:

A V-mail letter to Richie.

c/o Postmaster, New York City

Monday, March 6, 1944

Dear Richie,

I don't know whether you've gotten that long book I wrote to you some time ago or not. If so you are probably completely bewildered. Perhaps you will get something out of it to help your troubled feelings, maybe not. I hope you did. And perhaps the

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Interview with William J. Muller

William J. Muller
Bombardier
Bigelow Crew #54
766th Squadron, 461st Bomb Group

William J. Muller: I was working in Washington, D.C., in 1940, when the first draft was pulled. I got a low number and I was drafted in June 1941. I left and had my records changed from Washington, D.C. to Louisville, which was my home. I thought I would be with other people I knew. As it turned out most of the young fellows in Louisville were either

married or working in war related jobs. I was 23 years old. So I got drafted real quick, and it was for a year, and you would probably get back at that time. That was before Pearl Harbor. So anyway, I was drafted into the infantry, and I was at Fort Leonard Wood where I went through basic training when December 7th came. Pearl Harbor extended my draft to four years. In the infantry, I had an opportunity to work in the first infantry division, and they were just starting it up, and the first sergeant needed

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Taps

May they rest in peace forever

Please forward all death notices to:

Hughes Glantzberg
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764th Squadron

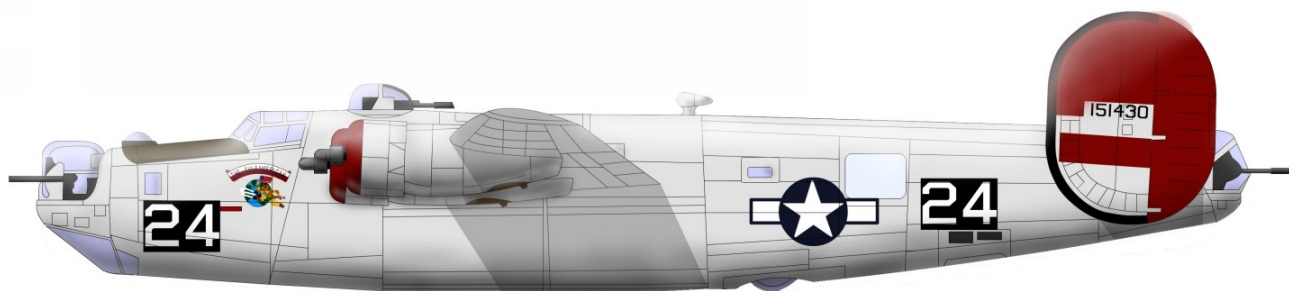
<u>Name</u>	<u>Hometown</u>	<u>MOS</u>	<u>Date of Death</u>
Harris, James P. Jr.	Adelphi, MD	750	01/18/15

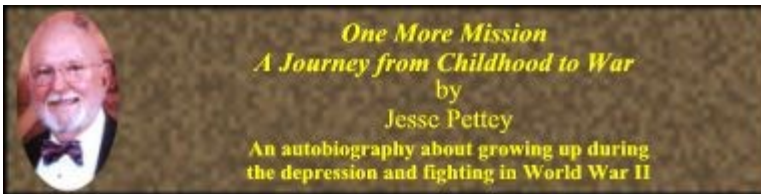
765th Squadron

<u>Name</u>	<u>Hometown</u>	<u>MOS</u>	<u>Date of Death</u>
Brown, Jack E.	Perryville, AR	1035	06/01/15
Klarsfeld, Milton A.	Slingerlands, NY	1034	01/01/16
Nayes, LeRoy M.	Bismark, ND	1035	2014
Vladyka, Vahl	Austin, TX	1092	03/27/16

766th Squadron

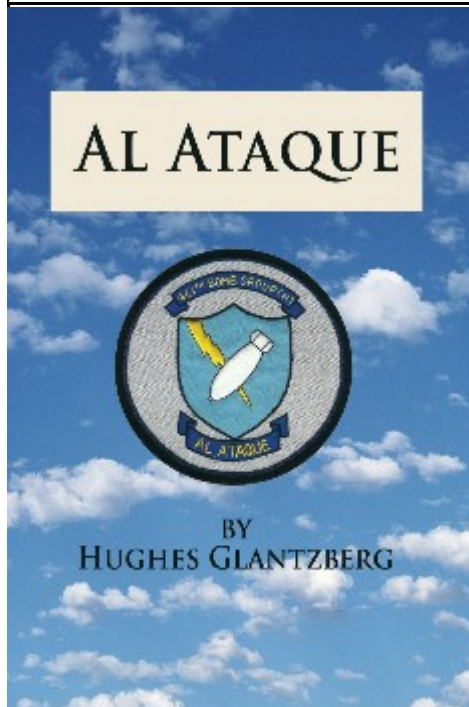
<u>Name</u>	<u>Hometown</u>	<u>MOS</u>	<u>Date of Death</u>
Mayer, Earl L.	Williamsburg, VA	748	11/27/15





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**

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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obstacle we discussed then has already been successfully crossed. I hope for that, too, although those things are often annoyingly pugnacious and won't let you go so easily. Try to forget and start from scratch.

Did you hear about the lady who hoarded her meat ration tickets for several long weeks in hope of being rewarded by a smuggled, but just as juicy steak from her favorite butcher? One morning she decided she could wait no longer, so down to the butcher shop she went. The butcher was very apologetic but confessed that the only meat he had to sell was a fresh rabbit his son had killed the night before. Quite distressed, the lady took the rabbit and stamped out of the store. Upon collision with the door she was thrown off balance bumping smack into a thoroughly inebriated old drunk. The calamity was climaxed by her loss of the parcel, the rabbit rolling out on the dirty sidewalk. With a look of utter dismay she looked up into the surprised and immediately sympathetic drunk's eyes. The drunk, feeling that he must say something to assist this lady in distress, offered in consolation "That's all right, madam, it would have been an idiot anyway; look at the ears on the poor thing!"

Seriously, I trust you're warming up the old pitching arm by now. Play hard, well, and clean, Richie, but don't gripe. I should like to have heard you do the Gilbert and Sullivan play. Congratulations anyway, on a job well done. Work hard, Richie, and stick to your guns. That's the big thing – stick to your guns. Write to me, too, and maybe I can help. Give my best to Mr. Niehaus, the Head, and Choate. And think of me in Chapel once in a while.

More soon, your loving brother,

Bill

From Italy; one of several letters to Dean Archibald MacIntosh of Haverford. He knew where he had gotten the things of greatest value, and he was grateful for them.

*c/o Postmaster, New York
Thursday, March 9, 1944*

Dear Dean Mac:

It's been a long time since I've had any communication with any of Haverford, but I'm grossly to blame for that, I'm afraid. It's rather hard, though, to find appropriate times to write to a person like you who must receive an infinite number of similar letters every week. It almost seems as though one must blow one's own whistle or exhibit a case of the G.I. gripes to provide any subject matter.

For old times' sake and for my own satisfaction I want to write once again to put you more nearly up to date on one more ex-Haverfordian. I'm not sure what is the latest news you have of me, but I think I sent you an announcement of my graduation from Cadets in the beginning of last November. I was ever so proud of those new shiny pilot's wings, quite awed at the honor and responsibility bestowed upon me in the form of a commission, and more than anything I was extremely excited at the prospects of being sent to P-38 training school. Time has washed the first shiny glow off those first two sentiments and completely obliterated the last. There was a month or two of utter confusion and bitter disappointment, and when the smoke finally lifted I found myself winging my way overseas in the co-pilot's seat of a B-24.

I shall not drag down long descriptions of hard times in the Army, for I remember ever too distinctly the talk I had with you just before I left Haverford. But I want to tell you

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that I have remembered your words many times when I felt like griping or objecting to the million and one things one finds to object to in the Army. And I have only to think of you and the men like you in the last war going through the same troubles with far less and greatly inferior equipment, and my sense of proportion returns quickly, enabling me to button up my lip and turn to other things for distraction.

I am reminded of Haverford very often whenever I wear that wonderful football sweater, of which I am so proud. Besides its warmth I get a tremendous kick out of seeing those bright red numerals stand out on my chest. They signify a great accomplishment for me. I had never dreamed I could play Varsity ball even for a minute, and the sweat and bruises, highlighted, of course, by the few good jobs done once in a while, gave me the first solid boost toward self-confidence I's had. It was proof that something apparently over my head could still be licked, and I have extreme doubts as to whether I should ever have endured Cadets to the end without my football lessons to fall back on.

That would sound to some like I'd made All-American, to be so proud of my football. Indeed, I realize I had hardly begun so far as football talent or usefulness to the team was concerned. That is plainly shown by lack of a full letter. Nevertheless the battle inside was won for the main part, and it remained for the last two years to show what I could do in the game. I don't imagine I was the only one who thought wistfully of football camp last autumn, but this is war - .

If my Army experience has done any one thing for me, it has brought out to me full appreciation of the wonders of education. I'm not even sure that you'll be able to remember me from

the hundreds of others who have left college for the service, but if you do, your impression was probably one of an extremely young, inexperienced, bewildered boy. That is how I think I must have looked. I *still do* to a great extent. But I have learned some valuable lessons, too. As you can imagine, I am bewildered at the tremendous number of Americans who are so close to illiteracy that one has to see them read and write to regain confidence in American education. I realize now how true it was when they used to tell me I was of the fortunate one-tenth of one percent. And I am forever grateful to Choate and to Haverford for all that they gave me. But, as every day shows more and more painful examples of what the lack of developed intellect and reinforced background can do, I become more and more determined to place whatever goal in life I may establish deep down inside the heart of education. It is almost impossible to imagine the day of peace and discharge from the Army, it seems so far away, but if I'm not an old, gray haired invalid by then I know that I shall want to return to Haverford if it is in any way possible. I have many more concrete ideas on what I should like to study - I even have some ideas now on what I should like to study *for* - and more than anything I shall never be able to forget the reasons *why* I want to study and learn and explore. I can't imagine how you'll be able to handle all those who want to return to college plus those who want to start anew - that is if financial situations permit it - but I want you to know that here is one humble soldier who is sorely conscious of his many shortcomings and lacks of equipment with which to face the new world of "peace?". And I hope sincerely that I may have a further opportunity to equip myself with the strength of firm ideals and the protection of sound logic which are such clearly shining beacons at Haverford.

Since I entered the service my older sister has been married and is nearly ready to proclaim me an uncle at nineteen. Molly, next oldest of

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the Barnes tribe, decided to follow in my footsteps and be an Aviation Cadet. She applied for and was accepted to Miss Cochrane's pilot training school for WASPS. After a very successful completion of Primary, she ran into an unfortunate personnel situation with a basic flight commander, who by various ways and means was finally successful in obtaining her elimination. It was an unfortunate situation, so very cruel to one so inspired by the indescribable thrill of flying, especially since her abilities were guaranteed to be exceptional and her training progress so far quite brilliant. She took the whole thing beautifully, however, and is still hoping to be able to connect herself in some way with flying and service to her Country. I have just learned that she, too, has been married – last month to a young Navy pilot, so we're quite a flying family.

My little brother is fit to be tied that age keeps him out of a cockpit, too, but he knows most everything else about airplanes that there is to know. He is now making a name for himself in the lower forms at Choate, and from the marks, etc., that he has, I know you couldn't believe he's *my* brother. I'm ever so proud of him. I'm afraid he's running into the very same problem I did there, and when the time comes, I shouldn't be surprised if he wanted to go to Haverford. I hope he will, although I doubt that he's even thought of it yet – quite naturally.

And my Mom and Dad are still faithfully plugging away at their community burdens and responsibilities and keeping home fires burning in much the same way as I imagine you and Mrs. MacIntosh are doing. Please remember me to her, and Charlie, too. And, of course, to any of my teammates you see – especially Doc Leake. My very best hopes and wishes for all Haverford always.

Very sincerely,
Bill Barnes '45

V-mail from Italy to Daddy.

c/o Postmaster, New York
Sunday, March 12, 1944

Dear Daddy,

I just finished a letter to Mom and had doubted I could fill a page. I have tried to write especially to you several times but have failed miserably each time. I can at least take the opportunity to thank you ever so much for your faithful V-mail, too. It's hard to stay away from sore points and not spoil a letter. But I can encourage you with the fact that, although it's hard to find a lot of subject matter to write about, my spirits are just as invincible as ever.

I mentioned the quotation, "Faith, hope, and love, these three" in Mom's letter. I know you understand the strength and encouragement that these three can give to those that want them and try to keep them intact. So you will not worry about me. Each word I get from you and Mom and Richie, Kitty and Molly, Beans, the Head, Mr. Niehaus, and Boof – each word I hear from them entrenches deeper all that in which I have faith and those people plus the reaffirmation of my faith give me strong, unshakable hope. And because I have these two, - faith and hope – I can do nothing but deepen and expand my love for those people and what they represent to me. But it's kinds useless and hard on us both to write about the first two, though, and I can find no further way of trying to describe the last any more fully than I have. I can only remind you often of its strength and immortality.

In a few minutes I shall have to put on my water wings and pontoons and launch myself in the direction of a delectable Sunday dinner of various kinds of beans and coffee in the mud. But I have only to think of the men in the fox-holes up front and I find myself in a plush-lined easy-chair, by a warm dry fire, eating

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lamb chops, mashed potatoes, corn – and orange ice on meringues. Ah, me, what fools we mortals be! Mr. Neihaus said he wanted me to have a book or two he had in mind. If any books strike a similar note in your mind and are expendable, please do send them. I must stop for now. God bless you and your wonderful work.

Your loving son,
Bill

Another paragraph to Beans, showing again his overwhelming yearning for a single-engine plane, as he described what was in store for his friend.

c/o Postmaster, New York
Tuesday, March 14, 1944

Dear Beanser,

If you are like me in this field as you are in so many others you will soon find a new and very consuming love, to which you will become whole-heartedly attached and unanimously pledged to as long as this _____ war lasts. If you don't yearn to have power in that nose and sturdy, stocky strength in the structure of your craft so that you can roll and roll and roll – if you don't thrill and thrill every time you pull that wing lazily over you like a blanket in the early-morning hours and then go streaming down in a graceful and physically sensational arc, the engine whining at your restraint on the

way down and the wings screaming their joy – the engine finally letting out as thrilling a victory roar as you ever hear when you pour the coal to it all the way and go straight back up, up, up in that same arc over on your back, almost stop still and then lazily snuggle that wing back over your shoulder again and continue flight as though nothing had ever happened – if that isn't your soul-consuming desire before long to do again and again and again – then honey-chile, you ain't human!

To his Mother, about British Tommies, and books, and Choate Chapel, and "if death is my lot"; with the casual reminder that he might write a good letter if he were not surrounded by the racket of an arguing crew.

c/o Postmaster, New York
March 16, 1944

Dear Mom,

You need not worry that I will have trouble with my burdens for after all I have ample evidence each day of how insignificant they are in the tremendous balance of burdens in this world. Here I am contemplating return to college some day. And look at these poor Tommies I talk to often. They've been fighting away from home for six years or more. And they have as long or longer a wait ahead of them than I before they may return. And what

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The 461st Liberaider
461st Bombardment Group (H)
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Incorporated: 15 November 1985

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have they to return to? Their homes have been wiped off the map – some of them. Few of them have even thought of college since the percentage of opportunity must be considerably lower for them than for an American. They plod along sunnily on half the pay we get. And as for missing weddings – they probably have missed more funerals than I weddings. I shall at least have my sisters safe and sound to visit when I return. And I have a home and a little brother that they wouldn't believe possible even after they'd met him. So the chin remains fairly well up, if a little more firmly and determinedly than before.

.

As you see, I have finally remembered to send the requests you mention for magazines. I am gypping a little and taking advantage of a remark which I suspect was sent rather as an afterthought – that is adding “Like” to National Geographic Magazine. If they don't have an overseas system or something, just forget that one, but I sure would love to see Life over here if it can be managed. Thank you ever so much for those gifts. If we ever see any of them, it's really a big event. The pilot likes National Geographic especially, and he's getting “Outdoor Life” he hopes, too. That isn't any special thrill to me, but it is for him. It's a sad sight to see the boys searching high and low for new murder mysteries and the few novels like “Green Light,” “The Great Impersonation”, etc., which are scattered over the camp in the form of pocket books. I think each book must have been read by every member of the Squadron. Almost, anywho. I can't see those detective stories and wild west stories, for the most part, although even I have become acquainted with a Captain North of American Intelligence, a Mr. and Mrs. North of American Ignorance, and one Hercule Poirot, the latest Sherlock Holmes, by one Agatha Christie. Most everything else is too silly to bother with, or is one of the few novels I have read! So those maga-

zines will be a great gift to a lot of men if they ever get here. Thank you again ever so much.

Mr. Niehaus suggested vocabulary or language study, an idea I had long contemplated. So if you are stuck for ideas, I could be very happy, brushing up on my German and trying to write it or read it. I suppose the censor's eyebrows might rise a little, though, when he opened a German vocabulary book or grammar! But perhaps you know someone you could ask about that for an O.K.

And, of course, we don't starve, but what growing boy doesn't get in the doghouse time after time for snitching cookies, etc., between meals even after a second or third helping at chow time? So although there are no vital needs concerned in the mention of food, you can see how big a hit such extras would be! Thank y'mam!!!

I wish I could tell you more about the news that Daddy refers to, but unfortunately that is not possible – now, at any rate. If it will help any, I find that I can now assure you that I am a part of the 15th Air Force, a conclusion you have probably come to long ago without being told, since you knew what kind of work I was going to do and now you have known for some time, I trust, that I am in Italy, 2 and 2 make 4 and the news broadcasts often talk in terms of air forces – so – you know now definitely, anywho.

.

I have not received any word from Choate concerning the Thursday evening Chapel idea, but I'm very glad I heard it from you first. It's Thursday night right now – about time for the bells to be playing a tune and in a minute or two the Head will come up the center aisle. I am certainly in my old seat in spirit if not in the flesh. I pray as much here that Choate and every Choate boy will safely and successfully

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complete their missions as at least one little fella I know will be praying for me. Dr. William Lyon Phelps' much quoted – "It takes far more courage to live well than to die well" – is the thought in my mind. I think of that idea often. Although there is to me no alternative course that I may undertake at present, because I want to try to "live well" later, I do not envy those who are still at home for one reason or another, if I am not to return. There is only one simple course – Duty – now, and if death is my lot, the job will have been met comparatively easily because of the lack of alternative. But those young fellas at Choate and the older ones who cannot come over – their job remains for them to figure out and to tackle faithfully and with perseverance. Those who win those battles and complete their missions successfully will be far greater heroes than any of us here. It is a shame that there seem to be so few that will qualify for such "hero worship", but Choate is certainly a mint, comparatively speaking, in its storage of the character necessary and the production of said-character-equipped personalities.

I am unfortunately trying to maintain a line of thought over the noise of a persistent bull session featuring the bombardier and armorer gunner. So I can't express myself as I should like to, but I think you can get the gist of my theme.

Chapel will be closing now with a closing hymn, and then Richie will be off to Study Hall. I think we have been very close together in thought. – Nope, darn it, I forgot, - you're six hours behind us, aren't you! Well, then, I've anticipated the proceedings for this evening. Richie will probably be getting ready to warm up the pitching arm for an afternoon's workout. Perhaps I can dream of him about the time he makes his way down to those tall white pillars and the peaceful sanctuary behind them.

Thanks very much for the cartoons. They caused many a good laugh and there are some of them that will be good to turn to time and again to regain a humorous view of like. I look forward eagerly to the clipped poetry you mentioned as being sent soon after the cartoons.

I must cut this short and get it in the mail first thing tomorrow. I had intended to finish this much sooner, but no such luck! I'll try to write again sooner. Say hello to Molly for me again – and as always to all the family –

Loads of love,
Bill

To his mother, about his favorite spot on earth, his Waterville Valley, in New Hampshire. He speaks of "sanctuary"; his efforts to draw; and Mother's Day.

c/o Postmaster, New York
Friday, March 31st, 1944

Dear Mom,

How clearly I can hear you saying this morning "What a lovely Waterville day!" and then "I hope Billy's flying today." Well, I'm not, but I was up yesterday when the sun was just as bright and the sky as blue. I have been sitting for some time trying to think of something special to talk about for a Mother's Day letter which would touch a spot in each of our hearts without introducing a predominant note of sadness or regretfulness. Then that phrase came to mind and I knew I had struck the right theme.

I have often wondered, recently, just what the status quo is for Waterville these days, and I keep meaning to write and ask. I remember there having been considerable talk about selling our cottage in the valley, but for one reason or another nothing definite had happened when

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I left for the Army. Have you found a bid and sold the cottage?

If you haven't, perhaps you still have intentions of doing so since you may feel it an illegitimate liability on the budget. If you have, I'm afraid what I am going to ask may be painful for you to hear at this late date, but in faith that the cottage is still ours, I'm going to say my say as I've so neglectfully intended to often before.

If the cottage is still ours, I want to put in my bid for closing the offer of its sale and keeping it as a family treasure and source of immense peace and pleasure. It was an only half-appreciated paradise in my childhood days, and it is to me now the place of Sacred Sanctuary that would correspond to many Catholics' feeling toward a Cathedral near home. It has grown to that importance for me. I am looking to it now as the same sort of place it was intended for Daddy in past years. How much I want to get away from all humanity, but my own family and friends, for a little while, you can well imagine. Flying a pea-shooter would have gone a long way in that line, but my sanctuary is no longer recognized in the clouds

.

It is to me almost as much a crime as though we were a bunch of blood stained Nazis crushing through one side and out the other of a humble village church in a mammoth man-made, mass of machinery of destruction.

The nearest then that I can come to those doors of nature is our beloved Waterville. And how I should hate to have to miss that cottage in a visit to the valley. I think it would be very much harder to assume and maintain the spirit of that Valley if I should have to stay at a Hotel in modern fixtures and accommodations and to mingle with those who have never witnessed the beauties of the woods surrounding at all

hours and seasons. I should have to miss the red sunset over Tecumseh. Would I stumble on a porcupine when approaching the steps of the *Hotel*? Could that lovely, little series of crystal-clear waterfalls and rivers and ponds ever look and taste the same, if it were not *our* spring and if I were not going on up the steep trail to *our* cottage? Would the dinner bell sound the same in the Hotel as when it chimed out to us hidden in the pines above it and echoed and reechoed from the misty walls of Tecumseh? And would I still be able to capture the same spirit of adventure and thrill starting out to Greeley Ponds, or Osceola or Tripyramid from the civilization of the Hotel rather than from the home and sanctuary above the ski-trail?

I know I didn't need to mention how I felt about the cottage in respect to the Valley, but the Valley just wouldn't be the same if that were not my base of operations. And I do want to see Waterville again – and again. I think you feel that Kitty no longer looks to the Valley as *the* place of retreat. Molly, I think, would still love the Valley but will probably have other places for vacation, too. But for me Waterville is *the* place for vacation paradise, no matter what the season. I should sincerely like to keep the cottage in the family another generation if it can be managed.

I have not mentioned how I think you feel toward the place because it seems too self-evident. I imagine that you and Daddy could still have worlds of joy and peace and refreshment from the Valley if you had a few of us with you who felt the same way so that you felt the expense of the vacation a mutual asset to us all. I think Richie would still have a wonderful time there, and it would certainly be an ideal setting for the two of us to reestablish the companionship I look forward to so much.

Please do let me know if we still have the cot-

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tage or not. And if we haven't, don't feel badly, 'cause the Valley will never change, and I am sure that if we still go there often enough and want to keep going, we shall find a way around that problem.

Incidentally, we have another Waterville patriot in Beans. He loves wild nature and was very much impressed with my description of it in college. He spent a night there last summer on his bike trip, and he refers to the Valley nearly every letter and a dream we two have connected with it. When I make my third million I plan to fix the cottage so it'll be a livable place in the winter and then it would be fun to go up there with him for skiing – and, joy of joys, Richie will be big enough then, too!

I started this letter yesterday and was afraid my second page was decidedly too sentimental so I had to quit. I was happily alone, for a change, all afternoon, and being quite discouraged in the letter writing line, I finally gave in once more to the urge to try to capture beauty on paper in another way. Perhaps I will get the ambition to try to sketch some landscapes some time for your benefit when I return. But I have my doubts on my abilities there. Yesterday I preferred to undertake the drawing of a portrait, enjoying most the anticipation of playing with highlight and shadow if I could once catch the right feature. You have probably guessed my subject already – it was Betty's picture. Copying a photograph should be a cinch – but it *wasn't!* I had a world of fun, though, and I venture to say I did fairly well, all things considered, particularly my inexperience. I was handicapped, however, with a very poor pencil – too hard – which made very little difference between dark and light strokes. Nevertheless I got a good enough resemblance so that when the boys come back from their varied wanderings they were caught quite by surprise and offered unanimous congratulations. They all agreed, of course, with me that I had not really caught the real person altogether.

er. Nevertheless, from a bunch of Damon Runyon characters, I considered the remarks indicative of sincere astonishment and mutual praise. How I do bask in my glory!!

It was fun, though. But the picture was not nearly true enough to be of value to me to be an added remembrance of the object of my young puppy affections. So I regret to inform you that my work of art has been quite obliterated now.

It seems that our armorer gunner had spent some little time and experience with an uncle in the photographic business. And he learned how to touch up photographs with transparent oil colors. Well, just as I was beginning the dabbing and erasing process, which would only have ruined the picture more, he came in – also alone – hoping to engage me in a game of cribbage, in which game he checked-me-out a short time ago. After the initial surprise of viewing the results of his co-pilot's "hidden talents," he ascertained the fact that I did not value it as a real treasure – merely a source of pleasure – so he asked if he could try to color it. I was delighted, hoping that a touch of color here and an accidental blob there might disclose the source of unreality to the whole face. At any rate, he could do no harm and he might get a real kick out of trying. So he got his paints and went to work. But unfortunately the only paper I had was this stuff I am writing on now and it absorbed all the paint instead of allowing it to dry transparently and show the penciling below as it was supposed to. At any rate, he spent some time playing with his paints and ended up with a very pretty girl, even if she didn't even vaguely resemble my Betty any more.

It was such fun, though, and I achieved such encouraging results that I think I shall try again when I have another opportunity. Along that line, I would be ever so happy if you could find

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one of those boxes of Eberhard Faber colored pencils that smooth into water colors when touched with a wet brush. I'm afraid you'll not be able to find any nowadays, but they'd be a swell birthday present if you could find some somewhere in N.Y.C. maybe.

I'm not sure whether I've asked for writing paper or not. But I need that badly. It is rationed to one small pad of this stuff for four weeks, which is hardly sufficient to cope with the books I write every so often, and a lot of little ones, too. V-mail we can get, however, so don't worry that you'll not hear from me if this pad runs out before its time. I'm sorry I didn't tell you that I *did* receive my repaired identification bracelet. I *did* receive it. And it has endured my maltreatment wonderfully so far. I hate to discourage the idea of a new one, but the present one is very lovely and plain, as I like them, and it reminds me of Molly and her flying so that I should really hate to lay it aside for another. We are only allowed NAME, RANK, AND SERIAL NUMBER on anything we take with us into the flower gardens of Jerrie's flak parties, so any extra information would immediately disqualify it

I'll repeat my request for your offer of socks and underwear just so you'll be sure to have it. Cotton socks, or partly cotton anyway are best, because the G.I. laundry is rough on 'em and wool socks don't usually survive. *Richie* couldn't wear *some* I've got! But the knitted socks will be swell for extra layers in my wool lined flying boots and for sleeping as long as it's "chilly" at night. And there is *no* community spirit here so gifts are neither offered, nor gratefully accepted. If something is wanted and is in the vicinity, it becomes available by one means or another, and there is no gratitude or sharing concerned. The Yale Lock Company should be a flourishing, prosperous firm when the Air Corps comes home! When my

socks or underwear are useless to me if the laundry doesn't involuntarily trade for me, I give them to our Crew Chief who has good use for rags around the engines and on our windshields, and the gunners need them for their guns and turrets.

Mother's Day may be rather lonesome in that big house this year, but we shall all be there in spirit, and I shall be hoping you will find happiness in faith and pride and can overlook the quiet around you. I think of you *every* day and always with the same grateful devoted spirit. But I shall remember you especially Mother's Day and hope you can feel the extra love, gratitude, and pride I shall feel for you. Perhaps if you have a minute or two to spare you can play a record or two which will make me seem closer and more real. No son could be more grateful for the faith and spirit and education you have given me.

Loads of love,
Bill

In many of his letters Bill apologizes for the degree of "sentiment" or "emotion" that get into them. His carefulness in observing the "security" rules limited the scope of his subject matter. There was plenty of excitement in what he was doing, but he could not write about it. But there was another reason, too, for the spiritual depth of the letters. He felt a great urgency to give us something important while he could.

This sense of urgency is shown particularly in his letters to Richard. He knew that Richard was away from home at Choate. He knew Richard was building the foundations for all his living, and he knew that he, Bill, had a lot of important answers to the problems of living. He knew there is only one kind of man worth struggling to become. He wanted more than anything else to help Richard become that kind

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of man. In a letter written May 2nd, 1944, to "Boof," is this paragraph.

"And how my heart yearns to be near Richie these days to help give him the reassurance and faith he needs. I think he'll make it OK, and I am relieved no end that he has so many lovely people to back him up. But I think I could be of special help to him because you will remember that I fought a very similar battle not long ago. The Army has certainly proved to me why I was urged to stick to my guns, though, and I should so like to be there to look into his eyes when I try to encourage him. I have written, though, as that's about the only thing I can do, and although I probably went over his head often because he could not see my face when I said things, I have hopes that he may have gotten some little spark of the flame I have burning for him over here."

After reaching North Africa, early in February, before going into combat, he wrote Richard a sixteen-page letter with a depth and beauty that leaves one speechless. It is too intimate to include in this group, and so are parts of another written in April. In their completeness they show Bill's spirit better than other letters, and so, to get some of this, we shall include fragments of the later one.

c/o Postmaster, New York
Tuesday, April 11, 1944

Dearest Richie:

If I wrote every day, it wouldn't be often enough, and who knows better than you that I *don't!* But I have another chance to start at least, so here goes.

I think of you so much, Richie, and my life would be happily complete if just a few of the many hopes and dreams I have for you would come true. It must be awfully hard to try to stand up to all the things you have to these

days, wondering often if even the most devoted of us understands what you are up against and what you would like to have happen. So it is awfully painful not to be able to write to you even more than I do, for I have confidence that if I can say enough to you you will be able to obtain at least a little encouragement and perhaps find a new line to work on every so often.

Don't be envious of me that I have finished school and had a little college and have won my wings. Am I sitting on top of the world? For all of it I'm just another co-pilot among thousands and with thousands of first pilots and higher-ups ahead of me. But it's still a matter of how hard and how well you use your training, background, and brains. I was the last co-pilot into the outfit and without experience. Some of the co-pilots have more flying time than some of the first pilots. And yet I am second on the list in the outfit to be checked out as a first pilot. That's an honor, Richie, for the baby of the outfit to get such priority. But it was sweated for. Don't be too excited, though, 'cause the Air Force never does do exactly what it says it will – things move too fast and there are too many changes. In all likelihood I will probably have many predecessors to get checked out into the left seat, but the fact remains that I was considered valuable enough under ideal conditions to rate first breaks. We shall see what we shall see about what actually happens.

But the point I want you to get is that no matter how crooked and distasteful the "political" set-up of whatever organization you're in, when the pick comes you'll get your chances because the it's to blazes with pals and apple-polishing – it's pick the most likely men to come through with the goods. I'm not trying to blow my own horn, but, darn it, Richie, there are darn few people who have had a wonderful person like

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Daddy to use as an Ideal and to follow from the first day we could walk. And there are not many more that have been to a place like Choate where sportsmanship and excellence and dignity prevail and every individual can learn what wonderful powers he has a chance to use for the benefit of others. And there are darn few with that much who have gone out to sweat out a job on a scrub team in the minor leagues and been awarded with such a clear picture of why one must put his whole body and mind and soul into his job together with all his teammates to make a winning combination. Combine that with the extra amount I learned as a Flying Gadget, add on the sobering of taking some hard kicks in the pants like being a co-pilot and seeing Molly hurt as she was – that makes quite an individual, Richie. He's different from any others who have passed the majority of their time rolling along with the mass and receiving copious amounts of superficial pleasures instead of giving now for a much bigger and deeper reward later.

That's enough for now. I wish I could write down the innumerable cases, however, where I can prove failure or a bad job came from this lack of effort every day – this lack of giving.

.

I wish you best of luck – and don't forget to be grateful for some of that luck you've already had in the persons of Mr. Niehaus and your parents, and all. And here's hoping the day will come soon when I can pull into NYC and run for you and show you the pride and praise I feel for you. Perhaps between us we'll be able to have a lot of extra happiness to make up for the overdoses we're taking now on the other side.

I'm sorry there's no exciting news to tell you, but perhaps soon I'll be able to tell you I'm a first pilot with my own crew and plane. Perhaps not.

I wish I could be breaking in my arm for the new baseball season, but I hope you'll keep our end of things up till another year when perhaps I can.

“God, give me sympathy and sense,
And help to keep my courage high,
God, give me calm and confidence,
And – please – a *twinkle* in my eye!”

Say hello to Choate for me. Remember how much I love you and keep pulling for you –

Your devoted brother,
Bill

V-mail letter from Italy. There is nothing of unusual interest in the subject matter of this letter. It is included because it was written the day after Bill's Group engaged in such “Outstanding performance of duty in armed conflict with the enemy” that they were awarded a Unit Citation, notification of this Citation being received by Bill's family late in November 1944. This Citation reminds us of the violent action in which Bill was involved so deeply during all this period.

c/o Postmaster, New York
April 14, 1944

Dear Mom,

I hate to write so few letters your way these days, for I know how much you and Daddy hope for them. But it's the same old story of insufficient legitimate subject matter. I'll just write again to say hello and let you know all is well with little “junior”.

I just got your letter with the newest clippings, cartoons and brain-twisters. I haven't any nickels or dimes – it's all lira over here – but I'll pass plenty of time on that little puzzle, I'll bet, if first glance is proved true after I really tackle it. Thank you very much. These little

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gems are as much appreciated as they always have been.

I wrote to Richie the other day and it turned into a pep talk, but perhaps it wasn't quite so thick as the first one. That'll be one more letter to keep the stream a little more steady, but I'm afraid it was pitifully lacking in detail of news or anything for your eager ears.

I got a collection of V-mail from Molly, too, which was happily preserved. I do hope she'll get a break on flying soon.

It seems that at last I'm going to be in one place long enough to find some familiar faces in the neighborhood. That is to say I ran across a classmate from Advanced the other day, the first former acquaintance I've run into in one heck of a long time. With a little luck, perhaps I'll see someone else I know before long. I've pretty well given up hope of seeing anyone from home or school, though, since Dr. Barlow seems the only one you know about, and I haven't seen him.

I've gotten several Englewood Presses lately, too. Hasn't been much of special interest to me, but it's fun just to read about familiar names, schools, and places. Perhaps more tomorrow. Good night now.

Lots of love,
Bill

Part of a beautiful letter to Beans.

c/o Postmaster, New York
Monday, May 1st, 1944

Dear Beanser,

.

You tossed slander at yourself willingly at balking the issue of the future and what you can make of it. But I should like to scold you

for that. You know yourself better than that and so do I! I did the same balking when I was back there and with the same guilty feeling that I'd never have the guts to carry out my ideals toward those high goals. But bring in two things now for contemplation, psychology and faith in the mystery but sure benevolence of God's will. First the psychology. What are you now and how do you think these days? You're an Aviation Cadet. You and I have really never started at the bottom of any job in life and had the opportunity to sweat it out to the finish and see whether we have been as successful as we'd dreamed we could be. We've made some progression – you more than I. You have been successful in sports, becoming distinguished from your hard efforts and you have had the success of being made a team captain by the approval of those who know the value of your abilities and the spirit behind them. I did not get that far, but far enough to sneak in some pride at at last being accepted as a devoted cog in the wheel of a winning team. And my numerals are proof of the encouragement and congratulations for a successful start at a hard job. An athletic team has importance then, Beanser, because you are competing with other and matching spirit and ability with them. My spirit was not as full as it should have been or my ability would have had more support. But it was young and specific and showed encouraging signs of the proper kind of hardening and pugnaciousness like a healthy developing muscle.

But really we haven't any *big*, complete accomplishments behind us. We've been learning. And it's only a recent development in us to yearn to finish a good job successfully. The Service has provided a quicker chance than we should probably have had in a peaceful world. But what we lose in the lesson of learning patience we gain in learning to accomplish. And if we accomplish our job well we'll have learned patience in the bargain for it's an es-

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sential. But what could be a place of less surety of accomplishment than the position of a Cadet? Our studies are of no use for the most part in the job of flying although physics and math help. So we're down on the bottom again and quite a helpless feeling it is, isn't it! So it's understandable to be wondering if you will ever accomplish what you know in the bottom of your heart you should before you leave this world God has seen fit to put you in.

Now your faith in the feeling that Someone – we call him God – put you in the world for a purpose. You do believe that, don't you? Surely there is one infinitesimal cog in the massive scheme of things that will be our special responsibility. Perhaps it is only to become a respected and admired member of a group of people, then to make the big sacrifice of life for death. But surely there is even a purpose there, for others will find surety of purpose and new determination from our loss, as the loss of others to a cause has inspired other groups – and *they* will have as *their* purpose to finish successfully the job that we started with them.

But I have hoped that my particular training and education will be used for even a greater purpose – one that has not been disclosed to me yet, but still I have hopes that I shall live to *construct* something, to build or develop something in the world which is at present under T.O. strength, so to speak!

If such is true, then surely, we are not being side-tracked into the fighting of a war with no bearing on our real purpose in life. It is intended that we learn and progress with these days as well as in those of before, and ahead in college and schools.

For one thing, flying could be no more graphic an example of the repeated facts that no matter how much we learn, we are always beginners. And for me overseas duty is fast developing

and hardening my fortitude *muscle* in the body of my character.

In me is an individual character the like of which has never existed nor ever will. The same applies to you and to every human being and animal and living thing. I was born at a different moment and place and environment than anyone else. So were you. No one has ever lived your life's time schedule in your world with your reactions before. See what I'm driving at? Who knows what my real mission in life is – or yours? There must be Someone – that is where religion becomes an essential in our lives.

Why this sermon? Well, of course, I'm getting a kick out of putting thoughts and feelings into words, but I really am trying to coax you to regain faith in the job you and I both know we have in this world. Surely by now you must have found that there are darned few people around who'll stick up for those things we used to stay up all night hashing out. One more lesson learned from the Service.

This has strung out long enough. Stick to your ideals and high goals, Beanser. They're worth more than anything in life. And think of the multiplication of happiness in your dream of a "happy home" if you can be working toward those goals, upholding those ideals, with a devoted wife to back you up. Only that kind of girl is good enough for you, Beanser. Surely you can see the advantage of that kind of happy home combined with a happy physical marriage compared with a physical marriage alone.

I hope you'll think about the future some when you get a chance and see if you agree with me at all. I know you used to. We didn't know how we could accomplish our purpose but that'll work out. If you love Spanish – teach it, and teach life into it. If your students leave your classroom with something more than an

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enforced minimum of vocabulary and grammar you will have done a beautiful thing. Young learning minds are the most susceptible and if we have something to do with sending off just one young character into the world on the right track, we will have some justification in feeling that God did not misplace responsibility when He put us in the world.

I have lectured long enough – too long to be sure. I'm forever grateful for the gracious manner with which you put up with all these outbursts. We used to have such fun, though, talking like this.

As Betty begged me, I beg you – stick to your guns, Beanser. Be the good hot peashooter pilot I know you will be and when the time comes to hang up the uniform for good you'll be a long way ahead on the road to those ideals and goals we cherish so. Then I urge you to follow them and never lose faith in them or allow yourself to believe you're not good enough for them. It takes guts, but you never get something for nothing, and you've got what it takes.

Perhaps I should close with factual news or a discussion of weather, but alas, they're all military secrets and besides they're quite non-essentials.

I am happy inside no end from the devoted admiration and support you and Betty and all my family and friends.

Who knows if I'll ever get off an unserious slap-happy letter, but I'll try soon. My environment at present rather encourages deep thought on life's various ways and purposes – Good luck at Chapel Hill and Happy Landings.

Devotedly,
Bill

A letter largely in reply to one from his Daddy

in which was included a copy of a letter written to his Foreign Missions Board urging a more nearly adequate effort to meet the World's call to the Christian Church in this year.

c/o Postmaster, New York
Wednesday, May 17, 1944

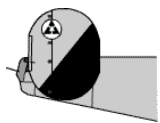
Dear Daddy,

Just got your lovely letter of April 26th. I can't find words to express my feelings, but they involve the emotions of extreme pride and gratitude among others. I am so proud that at last I am doing something from which you can get pride and encouragement that you are right in the way you have lived and are living. Despite the fact that I think I have at last discovered and surrendered to the strength of religious faith, which should be enough in itself to encourage any man that he cannot fail, I still get tremendous additional encouragement and strength of purpose from letters such as this one of yours. Perhaps this is his way of returning strength for faith. I'm talking of things way over my head still for a young mind, but perhaps you can interpret my feelings into more efficient phrases.

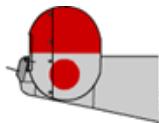
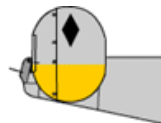
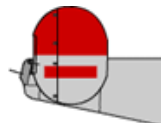
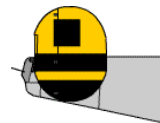
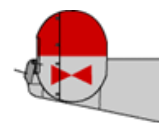
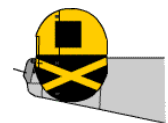
Anyway the spirit and the thought in that letter to the Board are identical with the general result of the confusion in my mind. We touch very little on the subject of the possibility of my not returning, but I can't let this opportunity go by to tell you that I am forever grateful for those words in your letter regarding that possibility. Since *my* pattern of life has always tried to work toward a similar one to *yours*, I have always known how you would carry on, regardless, but your acknowledgement of my biggest aim – to live life as you do – and your spirit of generosity in saying that you'll be living both our lives as far as ideals and purposes go is the highest tribute I've ever received. I'm so proud that I'm your son, and I do so want to

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2016 Reunion Itinerary



376th

451st455th461st465th484th485th

Thursday, October 13, 2016

Arrival and check in day. The hospitality room and registration table will be open all day with hors d'oeuvres served in the afternoon. A welcome team with gift bags from the municipality of Farmers Branch will be on hand to greet you at the hotel.

6:00 PM—Informal welcome dinner in the Couture I and II rooms

7:00 PM—Mayor of Farmers Branch welcome and informational meeting.

Friday, October 14, 2016

9:00 AM—Depart the hotel for a tour of the Cavanaugh Flight Museum. Box lunch in one of the hangars.

1:00 PM—Return to hotel.

2:30 PM—Presentations by veterans and others about WWII.

5:30 PM—Social Hour before dinner with a cash bar. Photo op before social hour.

6:30 PM—Individual Group Banquets

Just before the Social Hour, our esteemed veterans will be asked to gather in the common area near the banquet rooms for an all-inclusive group photo. Individual group photos can be taken as desired by each group in their own banquet room.

Saturday, October 15, 2016

9:20 AM—Begin departing from hotel for Sixth Floor Museum where Lee Harvey Oswald fired on President John F. Kennedy on November 22, 1963. Buses depart every 10 minutes.

12:00 PM—Return to hotel.

2:00 PM—Presentations by veterans and others about WWII.

5:00 PM—Social Hour before dinner with a cash bar.

6:00 PM—All Groups Banquet in the Couture Ballroom. Live entertainment by the Ladies Liberty whose performance will include hits from the 1940s and Big Band era that were performed by the likes of Bob Hope and the Andrews sisters.

Sunday, October 17, 2016

9:00 AM—Memorial Service led by Chaplain/Captain Chris Cairns and Reverend Bob Oliver.

12:00 PM—Depart hotel for a tour of the Dallas Holocaust Museum followed by a leisurely driving tour of Dallas.

4:30 PM—Return to the hotel.

6:00 PM—Informal “Farewell Fajita” dinner in the Couture 3 & 4 banquet room.

For additional details on these activities, please check the website.

No cost to veterans for Registration fee, Group Dinner, Banquet or Farewell Dinner.

2016

REUNION HOTEL INFORMATION

Dallas, Texas

October 13 – 16, 2016

Wyndham Garden Dallas North Hotel

2645 Lyndon B Johnson FWY, Dallas, TX 75234

Phone (972) 243-3363 Ask for In-House Reservations

Group Booking Code is: Bombardment Groups 2016 Reunion

If You Prefer, Reserve Online:

<http://tinyurl.com/j46d9es>

- **Complimentary airport shuttle to BOTH Love Field and DFW airports.**
- **Room rates are \$89 plus tax and includes up to two full, hot breakfast buffet coupons (including made-to-order omelets) per room per day. Each additional person in a room will be charged \$5.00 for breakfast each day. Reservations may be made by calling the hotel directly (recommended) at (972) 243-3363 and mention the booking code Bombardment Groups 2016 Reunion to receive the group rate. If you have mobility issues, be sure to mention this when you make your reservation and the hotel will attempt to accommodate you near the elevators. Room refrigerators are available upon request. The group rate is good three days prior to and three days past the reunion dates so come early and enjoy fall in Dallas.**
- **Reservations need to be made no later than 5:00 PM (CST) September 22, 2016 to receive the group rate. Reservations will be accepted after that date at the group rate as long as rooms are available, but no guarantees are made after September 22nd. PLEASE MAKE YOUR RESERVATIONS EARLY. Should it become necessary, you can cancel your reservation no later than 11:59 PM CST the day before arrival WITHOUT penalty.**
- **Parking is plentiful and free.**

BOMB GROUPS REUNION

October 13—16, 2016 ~ Dallas, Texas

Name _____ Group _____ Squadron _____

Address _____ City _____

State _____ Zip _____ Phone _____ Email _____

Names as they are to appear on name tags: _____

Registration fee _____ # people _____ @ \$15.00 each Sub Total _____
(461st VETERANS only. Include in # people but NOT Sub Total or Total)

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 13TH (461st VETERANS only. Include in # people but NOT Sub Total or Total)

Informal Welcome Italian Buffet Dinner # people _____ @ \$27.00 each Sub Total _____

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 14TH

Cavanaugh Flight Museum & Lunch # people _____ @ \$44.00 each Sub Total _____

Individual Group Evening Dinner

Salmon # _____ Chicken Chablis # _____ Veggie Option # _____
@ \$30.50 each Sub Total _____
(461st VETERANS only. Include in # people but NOT Sub Total or Total for DINNER ONLY.)

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 15TH

Sixth Floor Museum # people _____ @ \$35.00 each Sub Total _____

All Groups Evening Banquet

Petite Filet # _____ @ \$40.50 each Sub Total _____

Chicken Cordon Bleu # _____ Vegetarian Tart # _____ @ \$36.00 ea Sub Total _____
(461st VETERANS only. Include in # people but NOT Sub Total or Total for DINNER ONLY.)

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 16TH

Dallas Holocaust Museum & Driving Tour of Dallas

people _____ @ \$37.00 each Sub Total _____

Farewell Fajita Informal Dinner # people _____ @ \$29.50 each Sub Total _____

(Fajita buffet will include some items for Vegetarians too.) (461st VETERANS same as above for DINNER ONLY.)

Total _____

Emergency Contact: _____ Phone _____

Wheelchair(s) needed? _____

Mail this form with your check (payable to Bomb Groups Reunion) to:
Dave Blake - Bomb Groups Reunion - 648 Lakewood Rd., Bonner Springs, KS. 66012-1804

A NOTE FROM THE REUNION COMMITTEE CHAIR PERSON

As we approach that time of year again, the Reunion Committee has tried hard to provide a first class reunion for you all. Some say it's a lot of work but for our veterans and their families, it's well worth the effort. We sincerely hope you enjoy the program that has been put together.

I believe the tours that await you in Dallas are first class venues that you will really enjoy. For some, there may be more walking involved than you'd care for but rest assured, the venues have wheelchairs on hand and we will also be carrying some on the tour buses. Please don't hesitate to ask for a ride as we'll be more than happy to accommodate you!

We will visit the Cavanaugh Flight Museum which is an extensive collection of various military aircraft that you can walk right up to; for example you can walk right up to and put your hand on the nose of a P-40 Warhawk. I didn't want to leave the place when I visited there.

One thing Dallas is unfortunately known for is the assassination of President John F. Kennedy. We will visit the site and you will be able to stand on the 6th floor of the Texas School Book Depository building just a few feet from where Lee Harvey Oswald fired on JFK. You can't help but feel a sense of awe.

We will also visit the Dallas Holocaust Museum. This is a small but very powerful museum that should serve to remind us all of one of the reasons that WWII was fought.

Near the end of our banquet Saturday evening, we will be treated to a performance of Ladies Liberty; a trio of ladies that will perform hits of the 40's and will be somewhat reminiscent of a USO show.

Again, as in the last few years, we will have multiple Bomb Groups gathering together. It would be ideal if our 461st Bombardment Group Association was still big enough to continue having reunions on our own but the simple truth is that we are now far enough along that "stand alone" reunions are simply not feasible. The groups we are gathering with were all based in Italy, flew many missions together and in the case of the 49th Bomb Wing, all three groups are together. This helps us maintain a vibrant and viable sized group and in turn helps insure that we have quality reunions at as fair a price as possible. One of the hopes that I have is that you too will feel a sense of pride that our humble group is leading the effort that is allowing people just like ourselves to attend a reunion of their comrades that would otherwise not be able to.

Please consider joining us in Dallas if you possibly can. I believe you will be glad you did. I cannot wait to see you all again.

Dave Blake

Reunion Committee Chair

461st Bombardment Group (H) Association Membership

For membership in the 461st Bombardment Group (H) Association, please print this form, fill it out and mail it along with your check for the appropriate amount to:

Dave St. Yves
5 Hutt Forest Lane
East Taunton, MA 02718

If you have any questions, you can E-Mail Dave at dstyves@pmn.com.

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

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

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

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come back some day and go to Waterville and then from there into life to do my all to prepare to carry on the torch when the time comes -. Those are my hopes, but they are conditional to the phrase – “Thy will be done”.

Somehow from another paragraph in the letter I think you have sensed the importance of my travels to me. So perhaps you will not be so disappointed as I had feared when I returned without the minute details on tourist travel that Mother and Kitty would so like to hear. It is the vastness of the deserts, the immensity of the oceans, and the steaming of the jungles and rains and rivers and trees and animals that interest me. I see the people only long enough in each place to impress a picture in my mind of them and how they must approach life. I imagine I’ll be able to carry on for a long time about my travels in that aspect – but as for noting historic places and unique sights – I haven’t gone very far. After I’ve seen enough for myself in each place I inevitably get the feeling that the people must resent my curiosity as a monkey in the zoo must resent it, so I go out of my way to spare them my unwanted presence. Still I imagine Mom will be able to get satisfaction to a certain extent by asking questions, ‘cause I’m trying to see everything I can in passing along, and I shouldn’t be surprised if she could pull more descriptions out of me than I thought I had.

I am ever so grateful for the drawing things – although they haven’t arrived yet – and for your wonderful tips on how to get what I see on paper. It’ll be fun to try, and those tips will save a lot of trial and error discoveries. It’s a shame I couldn’t catch the color of the poppy covered fields these days, but perhaps there’ll be some when the colors get here, and I might have a chance to try. They’d be a wonderful chance to learn about your instructions on color affected by various distances. It’s really quite a sight to see long fields of pure reds, yel-

lows, blues, and greens with no off-colors and such perfect blending and yet individuality. I’ll enjoy trying to capture it.

I am ever so strongly in agreement with that feeling of restlessness to lay now the foundations for the enormous task of tomorrow which you felt strongly enough to write that letter to the Board. But your problems seem to be mostly involved with the world abroad. Of course, that’s what the Board of *Foreign Missions* is for. But, perhaps selfishly, I feel that my heart will be devoted for some time to the Board of *Home Missions*! Certainly all people in the world are in need of help and encouragement – but they always will be. And perhaps it is because I am so young that I feel so strongly the self-conscious need to perfect oneself before trying to help others to follow what we believe is the *right* path. They must decide for themselves. And certainly they will not choose to copy the American who is now abroad in the world. That American, for all his better education, environment, and country, is no better a person than most Italian farmers or African shepherds or Brazilian plantation workers or Chinese merchants. In ever so numerous cases, since he is at present a nomad and his own master to a large extent, he is considerably worse than those simple people.

If ever this is to be “One World” in peace and community, there must be those to lead and those to follow. There must be those with the guts and genius to take the first steps toward generosity, fair play, disarmament, and honesty, safety and surely. Only by such leads will the less educated, more persecuted, and more skeptical people fall in line. Such a community cannot be forced; it must be voluntarily initiated by everyone. The genius will be needed first to discover a proper move and then to find the correct diplomatic pressure point to overcome ignorant, disinterested obstacles.

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There are only two countries in the world of tomorrow that I feel can fill such a capacity – Russia and the United States. Russia is to me an unknown quantity. But undoubtedly any strong moves two years from now will have to have the support of at least one of these countries for any real success. Surprisingly enough, I have more hopes for constructive cooperation from Russia than I do from Britain, and if Russians do come through with a peaceful and cooperative attitude toward the world, I consider their weight considerably heavier than Britian's.

But, with the possible exception of Russia, there is no other country better equipped for the task that confronts the world than our own United States. And I *know* it's going to take *some doing* to have that equipment used even to advantage, much less to *full* advantage. Your problem of trying to arouse the Board out of tragic dormancy is an example. And that is by no means the hardest element. For you are petitioning intelligent people who have at least at one time professed support to a Christian world. We have yet to touch the 50% ignorant, the 40% disillusioned, and the 9% antagonists. They must *all* be *awakened* and *shown* and *prodded* to make their decisions one way or another. My strongest terror these days is that such a wonderful opportunity will be rejected by my own beloved countrymen. How truly you say that Christ is now abroad saying, "Leave everything and follow me." If we fail Him He will be gone for a long time searching other places – surely He will return again and again, but how we shall have the face to see Him come again if we have failed Him now, I cannot imagine. If Russia is not our sincere friend, then the world will have many tragic, non-progressive years with resulting disaster again, if *we* do not answer the call ourselves and follow Him! That is how *I* feel, - The Board cannot make a more historic move in the path of Christianity than to accept and devote

itself completely to the leadership it is offered this day.

Golly, gee, is it ever wonderful to start thinking clearly again about the "practical" world versus the "ideal" world, and be able to find even the smallest connection! It all certainly fits in to the hopes and plans I have been forming piece by piece since 'way back at Maxwell Field. I think that's where it first started, when I tackled the problem of coaxing my roommate through his courses and trying to clarify a few of the apparently hopeless muddles of his mind. I think it was then that I first had the nerve to challenge my age-old aversion to most teachers and observe their possibilities. My interests are so varied and closely governed by the pains and joys of people that it occurred to me I would never find myself sufficiently qualified as an expert in any one field to take advantage of leadership to promote my ideals. Surely my greatest service would be to help young minds find the right approach to the special fields which they will feel more specifically theirs than I ever can. That is the treasure of Choate to me. And Richie – my goal. If I as a master could change just one of the little fellas beside Richie who are not learning what he is, surely the job would be worth the effort of a lifetime.

For if our citizens of 1944 fail to follow *now*, the opportunity will in all probability never return to them, and it'll be Richie, and the Richies to follow, that must be shown their responsibility as livers of life: and a school, plus a family, plus a church are the formula to give them the moral depth and the intestinal fortitude which will be required.

See I think more and more of finishing college and acquiring the necessary credentials and professional background (education) with which to employ myself in the "Practical" world, so that I may do my job toward the

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“ideal” world.

I have considered the idea from every angle I can think of. I can think of infinite resources against the challenging demands of anyone I should try to teach. It could not be a fuller life for me either for work or for pleasure. For I would have the resources of an institution of education to explore. I could study things like Philosophy and History and Sociology and Economics on my own. And I could never appreciate music and art more than with a wide and deep environment like that surrounding me.

All very good, I’m sure. Probably I’ll be a *grocer* after all that! But I thought you might like to know that some ideas and plans have begun to form in my mind. It was one of my biggest question marks when I was in school.

I must cut this book short - . Thanks again for the lovely letter – both the encouragement and tribute of the Board letter and the tips on sketching and the news of the chickens and all. They must be loads of fun to watch and care for.

Paradoxically enough, never has my heart been more full of the richness of love than these days. And how blessedly lucky I am to have such true personifications of every kind of love on whom to attach my love . . . I’ll try to write again soon, but I’ll be thinking of you every day and night anyway.

Your loving son,
Bill

How can anyone describe this letter to Kitty, written on her birthday, about her “thumper” who was soon to be born?

c/o Postmaster, New York
May 23rd, 1944

Dear Kitty,

Well, I guess it won’t be long now till Thumper becomes an individual out in the big wide world. What a big day that will be for you and for us all!

for in the time from your last birthday to this one you have surely been reflecting upon all that has happened. And of a certainty, in that short time, Thumper became at last more than a dream – a reality! And in the year to come, much of the deepest and richest of life will pass through your home as Thumper takes his place in the world.

Yours is a very envied place in life, for in you and Rog is placed the sacred trust of a human life whose character and personality for years, perhaps a lifetime, will be gauged by the strength and beauty and courage and faith of you two.

It’s not a simple nor entirely beautiful world (s) he will enter shortly – but the worst of the present sacrilege will be history by the time Thumper begins to observe it. And there will be imperishable love and faith, and there will be cold, clear streams and rugged mountains – nor shall he miss the wonders of the wrens in May or the beautiful creation of flowers and trees and skies and earth.

What a wondrous thing it is to see the light in a child’s eyes each day as he makes a million new discoveries. The heat of fire, the cold of snow, the wetness of rain, and the stimulation of the wind. There are never two pebbles in the driveway exactly alike. How many million little grains of sand are there in his sandbox? What makes him feel that no two faces are

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c/o Postmaster, New York
Sunday, June 4th, 1944

alike? Surely it is easy to recognize Mummy and Daddy, but why don't I ever mistake the grocer for someone else? And why do I like him better than the bitter-looking face on down the counter? And what's this? A face as young as mine – and different too! And then there'll be the wonder when there is someone even younger! Smaller hands, more questions in his eyes – less stable on his feet – see, already I am ahead of somebody. Ahead? Where am I going and for what am I ahead? And then school and on and on – always with Mummy and Daddy.

What an inconceivable and beautiful adventure each individual has. And how lovely that two people called Mummy and Daddy can feel the thrill and pride of having been chosen the instrument of such a sacred creation – and the guides and guardians of its development.

God has already blessed you two – and may He always continue to do so! Perhaps some day I too, shall be given that deepest of responsibilities and dearest of treasures – but if that is not to be, perhaps you will let me feel that I too have been an essential instrument in this new creation. For it is in my heart that many such beautiful children may have been cruelly deprived of the treasure of life, and, although my job is not even a complete drop-in-the-bucket – it is at least an unshatterable molecule in the fortress far distant from my beautiful world geographically, but deep in the backyard of every living thing that a beautiful spirit has seen fit to create.

I must stop writing now, but will keep on thinking of you each day and night and hoping you remember I am and always will be

Your loving brother,
Bill

Another letter to Beaner – “What a prayer is,” etc.

Dear Beanser,

I made one attempt at reply to your most recent, but it ended in a swell bonfire, discarded as illegitimate claim for longevity pay. Besides which I got in about fifteen feet over my head without my water wings.

At any rate, I now make a new attempt to present greetings from “Sunny Italy”. As I remember it, there was considerable meat in that last little epistle, which was the cause of my first blast of hot wind mentioned above. I'm sorry I don't have it with me right now for reference, but, although my memory is intentionally insufficient in all matters of recent occurrence, I think I can remember enough to say a little of what I started to say then, and perhaps this evening I can hold myself to excusable length.

I shall say this. You can well imagine that my deepest convictions and most obligating decisions about God have been no end accelerated and extended by recent experiences. When I left the States, I felt almost identically the same way you do now on such matters. I respected the Word and the implied Person of God, mostly because most of my elders whom I most respected believed in him emphatically. For me, however, He was more or less the personification of perfection, ideals, love and natural beauty. But recently I have felt the decided need to apply my faith, my loves, and my hopes and pledges to Someone, not just a combination of linguistic somethings. In my life in the Service I have not met *one* man who even presented minor qualifications for such idolizing. There are a few people however, that I consider as near present day perfection of living Christianity as I can conceive possible in a

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human being in this world. None of them, however, embodies each and every one of my faiths and ideals and loves to completion and perfection. Until recently it has never seemed necessary to me that anyone or even any combination of people meet these qualifications. But when the indubitable possibility of exactly one tenth of a second of life is left to a man – particularly when he has had time to anticipate such a crisis and nevertheless commits himself to it – I find it necessary to pour out my humbleness, gratitude, love and desires for the happiness of my beloved to Someone. That is where God has taken form for me. If I am not to live to do my all for the happiness of those I love so dearly, I cannot merely pass on disinterestedly – I yearn for the consolidation that there will be Someone to fill my place or even to do me one better.

And disregarding for the moment the immeasurable sense of relief and strength from complete faith in conviction of that connection to “God”, it is pleasing to find how satisfactorily all ideals and loves and admirations can be confided and entrusted to this single faith. How inconceivable it seems that there could be Anyone miraculous enough to be responsible for the beauties of nature as you and I love it, for the existence of animals and human beings, for the enchantment of music, and above all, for the basic emotion of the world – *love*, in all its varied application and understanding of these things creates the unquenchable urge in a moment of crisis to express gratitude, admiration and desire for such things’ continuance and perfection – despite all that weak men can do to destroy them. It is obvious that my father, who is my pilot as a liver of life, did not create Waterville Valley or lovely sunsets. It is incredible that my little brother created all the ideals and widespread hopes in my mind for the betterment of the world as a place in which to live. No combination of these people and things and ideals even with any other tangible

additions can explain the unfathomable mystery, beauty and ecstatic stimulation of my Betty’s eyes when they meet mine. And, in turn, my Betty is, alas in no way connected with the creation of such people as you and the Headmaster at Choate and the other people who to me are each in themselves beautiful enough characters to inspire me to the risking of my own life on earth that they may live and continue in happiness. Do you see what I’m driving at? I must *have* to profess my awe and devotion and gratitude for these and many other things – all in a split second, since I may not have the opportunity an instant later. That has come to be my definition of what a prayer is. And a prayer is given in the strength of faith. Each has his own faiths. I have found it necessary to attach the prayer to Someone no flak or anything will ever even distract. So – !

Enough for now. When we are together again we shall compare reactions. If I have suggested something you’d like to write about or have clarified it’ll be fun to keep on writing about it. The extent of my own realizations and convictions are not anywhere clear in my own mind, so by discussing them I progress by having to try to pin down seemingly intangible emotions and sensations.

Go to it, keed, and write again soon. If I’m a little ahead of schedule, it won’t be long anyway till you *are* flying again.

I must go hit the sack now. If this passing my censoring in the morning I’ll address it and send it off. Best of luck, lady –

Devotedly,
Bill

There is more to the Barnes story, but enough for this issue. I’ll continue this story in the next issue of the Liberaider.

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help in the orderly room to get the Army regulations and the records straightened up. They had just started reactivating that division, and I worked in there for several months. I read almost all the Army regulations from George Washington down to that point, and so I ...

Larry Ordner: What was it like when you first came onboard, what were your first days like in the military?

William J. Muller: We went through basic training down in Texas, and we thought, was rough. It was hot down there, and we weren't in real good shape. We went through the basic training, and I decided I didn't like the infantry very much at that point. But after the basic training, getting assigned to the first infantry division, things were better. That job was about to run out, and I knew that there were other divisions being activated at that time. The sixth infantry division was being activated, and a friend and I found out that they were going to have some people in the payroll department. I was promoted to sergeant, and I was transferred to the sixth infantry division, and we were doing payroll, typing up payrolls, and so on. I had hoped to get into the Air Force, but I didn't have enough college background. Then the Air Force opened up the applications so if you could pass the tests physically and mentally, you could get into the cadet program. I passed and got into the cadet program and became a aviation cadet. I got into pilot training and I went as far as the last part of the primary training and was washed out. Then I had the choice of either going back to enlisted man or becoming a bombardier or a navigator. I decided to be a bombardier. I went through bombardier training and was commissioned as a second lieutenant as a bombardier. From there, I was assigned to ...

Larry Ordner: Now was this still prior to the U.S. entering the war?

William J. Muller: This was after Pearl Harbor.

Larry Ordner: Okay.

William J. Muller: Yeah. Pearl Harbor happened while I was in the first infantry.

Larry Ordner: I was wondering if you could tell me, where were you and what were your thoughts when you heard about the attack at Hawaii?

William J. Muller: This I remember real good. It was on a Sunday morning and we were in the barracks and we heard on the radio that Pearl Harbor was bombed, and everybody was excited. I remember one of the old-time sergeants was really excited. He said, oh, we get to go to war. I didn't feel the same about it. I knew from my one year in the service to just forget about that, so that was Pearl Harbor Day. And everybody was really shocked and we all became pretty patriotic. We had a feeling of what we need to do to win the war. So I went through bombardier training and was assigned to a crew in Boise, Idaho. Something happened to that crew and they disbanded it, and I became an instructor there for a few months training on bombsights. The reason for that was most of the fellows were trained on the Naarden bombsight and some of the planes had Norden bombsights so we had to give them some training for that. While I was doing that, I knew I would eventually be put on another crew, but I met one of the boys that I was in training with earlier as a cadet and he was a pilot and they were going to get a crew, so I decided if I could get transferred to their crew, that I would, and I did. I went on that crew and we were assigned to the 461st Bomb Group and they were the training in Fresno, California. So we went through the training period there, and from there, we were assigned to the Fifteenth Air Force that was in Italy. After the training period, we went to Italy and were assigned to the 766th Squadron.

Larry Ordner: Now, what was it like, someone who grew up in Louisville, Kentucky, born in Louisville, what was it like just leaving the country and suddenly ending up in Italy, of all places?

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William J. Muller: We flew planes that were assigned the planes in California, and we had a new B-24 airplane, and the crew flew it across the country and down into South America and then crossed the Atlantic and landed in West Africa. The country was a French Nigeria, I think it was. It's right on the western tip of Africa. From there we flew it to Marrakesh, Morocco, and then to Tunis, and then we flew over to Italy. At that time, the English and the Americans had conquered the southern part of Italy, and our squadron and group was placed near a town called Cerignola which is right at the spur on the southern end of Italy, and that's where we operated from.

Larry Ordner: How soon after arriving did you undertake some missions?

William J. Muller: When we landed, the field that we landed on had been made from farmland by the English, and they had operated what they call the Wellington bomber, which is a two-engine rather light plane. The runways were just earth, and when we landed, of course, they moved out and then we took over the field. The Fifteenth Air Force took over and had several fields right in that area. When we landed, the plane got down to the end of the runway and just sank into the mud. The wheels sank all the way up to the belly of the plane. We got there sometime in January, and it was more than a month they had the U.S. Engineers came in and worked the field over and paved it with rock and the metal revetments, and so on. This was a good month or six weeks before we flew a mission. We flew out of there and we bombed in Yugoslavia and northern Italy. One of the best missions we had was to bomb Ploesti, which was where the Germans had big oil refineries. It was over in eastern Romania. And we got a Presidential Citation. We had very good bomb results there. The first mission that bombed Ploesti was August 1, 1943. The planes came out of Africa and most of them were either shot down or got lost. It was a really bad mission, but they did a lot of damage to it. That was one of Germany's

main sources of fuel.

Larry Ordner: What were your friendships like with your fellow pilots? I assume the Air Force had good, tight friendships there.

William J. Muller: Yeah, we did. We went through quite a bit of the training with the same crew, and they were a pretty tight group. However, our plane, we flew 23 missions—22 missions, and on the 23rd mission, we were shot down over Wiener Neustadt, Austria. The way it turned out, the plane caught on fire and one engine was knocked off. I was wounded and we peeled off and were actually descending some. The nose gunner and I bailed out, and the plane blew up shortly after that and killed the other eight men. They didn't get out of the plane. It was a pretty tough up there.

Larry Ordner: So when you were bailing out, can I ask you what your thoughts were at that time? What was going through your mind?

William J. Muller: The plane was on fire and we had to go through some fire to get through the nose wheel door and get out. That was all. We knew that the plane wasn't going to last very long. It wasn't fear or anything. In floating down, it was really quite an experience. However, I was hurting a little bit because I had gotten shot in the leg, and I was very lucky to get out. The other thing was I landed about a mile or less from a German army hospital. I was taken there and I got good treatment there. Now, the other boy wasn't hurt or anything. They picked him up and sent him to a prison camp. I don't know whatever happened to him.

Larry Ordner: What was his name, do you recall? Maybe the last name?

William J. Muller: Can't remember it right now. Golly.

Larry Ordner: That was the last you heard of him?

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William J. Muller: Yeah. We got shot down on May 24, 1944 and I got out of the prison camp in June of 1945 so it was just about a year. I was in that hospital for about two months, and we got real good treatment there. I was lucky in that. After leaving there, the Germans took us to Frankfurt where they had an interrogation center, and all of the American and English airmen were sent there before they took them to a prison camp. When I went there, they interviewed me, and the German guy that was talking to me was kind of buddy-buddy, offered me a cigarette and so on and then started asking me questions. I told him just like we were instructed to tell him—name, rank, and serial number. That's all I would tell him. He told me, "You're old stuff, you've been shot down a couple of months." And he said, "Let me tell you something about yourself. He told me where I went to school, where I was from, all the information. I was amazed that they knew all of this. He asked me, "Well, isn't that right?" I said, "Well, you're doing the talking." So he dismissed me. From there, that same day ...

Larry Ordner: Did he know about your family, too?

William J. Muller: He knew what school I went to and where I lived and all that. I think they had all the newspapers. Local newspapers would have somebody graduated from a gunner school or a pilot school or whatever. And there were people that sent that information back to Germany, I guess. So they knew what was going on as far as personnel was concerned. Then I was sent from there by train up to Stalag Luft One, which is directly north of Berlin on the Baltic Sea. I was there until the end of the war, which came about May 1945.

Larry Ordner: And how were you treated there at that stalag?

William J. Muller: We didn't have much to eat and if things were going well with the Germans, they were real pushy and so on, but if they weren't going so good, then they were our buddy-

buddy trying to keep going. No one ever escaped from that prison camp. Well, two fellows did, but they caught them right away, I think. When we got there, there were only, about 1,500 prisoners there. By the end of the war there were around 5,000. They kept the English aviators separate from the Americans. There were mainly Americans in Stalag Luft 1 as they called it. But you just didn't get enough to eat.

Larry Ordner: Typically, what did they feed you, do you recall?

William J. Muller: All the Germans gave you was bread and potatoes and rutabagas. They didn't have any meat - oh, at one time they had a little, I think. And then at one point early when we were there, they had like a mess hall set up, and you went through one meal and they had something like barley oatmeal. But a lot of times it had bugs in it. The bread was real hard, real doughy, kind of like rye bread or something like that. But it had a lot of it. I think all over Germany they had that same kind of bread. It's a lot of chemical stuff in it, but it was good and healthy, but we never got more than just a small hunk of it. At that prison camp, we had -- about 16 guys in a room, and they had bunks. You had a straw mat and probably about six slats that you laid on and the straw would get beat down making it a really rough thing and one blanket is all they issued you. I had a GI overcoat that was given to me at that interrogation center. They gave you supplies for shaving and personal stuff, I think one towel and things that you might need like that. But they also gave me an overcoat, and this was, of course, in warm weather. A lot of the guys, they were reckless with their coat, gave it away or traded it or something. But I kept this old GI overcoat and it came in handy. We only had one blanket to lay on. And it got fairly cold. That was way up in the north. It's about equal with Maine, but I think the Baltic Sea there keeps it from getting the currents from Florida cross the Atlantic there and go up into the Baltic Sea, and it doesn't get severely cold. It's just kind of a wet, nasty cold.

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Larry Ordner: What were your thoughts when you were in that camp? Did you think that maybe you would not be getting out of there, perhaps they'd send you someplace else? What was going through your mind?

William J. Muller: We did that, because toward the end of the war, as the Russians advanced, we were just about in the middle between the Russian forces and the Americans and English, and the Germans didn't have any place to move us. Now, a lot of the prison camps that were farther to the east and to the west, the Germans would make you leave and march on to another place. And a lot of those fellows were real cold, got frozen feet and they had to sleep on the ground, and so on. But we were lucky there. We were alerted to thinking that we were going to have to move almost any day. But as the war ended, we didn't move from that camp.

Larry Ordner: I suppose during that time you had no idea at all how the war was going. What did the Germans tell you about how the war was going?

William J. Muller: Well, we had a radio in that camp, and we got the news from the BBC every day. Actually, they had a group of guys that kept the Germans from getting that radio. They might have bribed some of the German guards, and they might have allowed it. I didn't really know. I wasn't involved in that, but they had a latrine or a building that had a wash stand in it and toilets and so on. Sometime before we were locked up in the evening, we would go there, and there were some of our people assigned as news officers, and so on. And they'd come in and they'd discuss what the news was. We knew exactly what was going on, and that was good. And toward the end of the war, the guys would, holler, "Come on, Joe!", for Stalin. We knew they were likely to get there first. And they did, actually. The Russians came in a couple of little tanks. These were the first thing we saw. One evening, one day, the Germans just disappeared. They took off. And they went toward the American

lines and they probably were picked up by the Americans. They didn't want to be picked up by the Russians. But the Russians, they had these two little tanks and they rolled up in front of the prison camp and just bulldozed the fence down and then several more of them came. They came by horse and wagon and by foot. So they were kind of a rough bunch. Now, the elite Russian troops were all down pushing on, going into Berlin and fighting down that way, but there wasn't a lot of shooting up that way. But they rounded up a bunch of cows and brought a couple of cows into the camp and the guys butchered them and we had the first hamburger that we'd had in a long time.

Larry Ordner: How did that hamburger taste?

William J. Muller: Oh, it was really great. Yeah, tasted good. Now, our commander, the colonel, said that he didn't want anybody leaving. We could have taken off, and some guys did, but you didn't have your uniform and you didn't have identification and so on. It was dangerous to be out without any identification, and so on. So we waited. They wanted everybody to stay in camp and they said that the Americans would send in planes and fly us out of there. There was an airfield near there. The little town was Barth. Barth, Germany. But we had to stay there for almost a month before we got out. It was almost a month before the B-17's flew in and they flew us out to a camp in France, in Normandy, where they had two or three big camps where they brought the prisoners of war until they could get back. At that camp we, we had a lot of food. You could get some of your uniform and you could get some money, and so on. So after a while - I think almost a month there - we had to wait for a ship to get back to the United States, and we came back on a troop transport.

Larry Ordner: When you were in that camp, did you guys sit around and talk about things you missed?

William J. Muller: Yeah.

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Larry Ordner: What did you guys miss?

William J. Muller: [Laughing] You know, with 16 guys in a small room, I don't know the dimensions, I think it was like about 16 by 24, but the barracks were one-floor barracks and there were probably four rooms on each side. And up where we were there, it got dark fairly early, and you had to get inside. Another thing up in that area, we were located right where the Eighth Air Force would come down the Baltic Sea and turn right at that location and go down to Berlin and bomb in that area. And when we were first at the camp, these formations of American planes would come over, way high, up about 20,000 feet or more and we would cheer and so on. Finally, after a little while, the Germans got mad about it and whenever there was an air alert, everybody had to get into the barracks and they wouldn't allow you to celebrate or anything. If you came outside, they would shoot you, and there was one boy that when the air alert was on for quite a while, he just unconsciously walked out the front door and they shot him dead right on the porch. So they were brutal in a way. Then in the nights, nighttime, they had dogs that they'd turned loose in the place. But like I said before, no one ever escaped from that camp. That Stalag Luft 3 was down in the country. There were movies made of that one. And some of the fellows did escape, they dug tunnels and so on. At that camp, we were divided into areas called compounds. The one compound that I was in, there were several tunnels dug, the guys would get under the floor of the barrack, and they'd dig tunnels. The German colonel that was the commander of the camp, they'd let them get just about to the fence and then they would discover it and the guys had done all this digging and then it didn't do them any good. So they didn't get out. Then he had a sense of humor. He put a cross on the fence, and he says, here lies tunnel number five and so on. He was something else. But the guards depended on how the Germans were doing. If things were going good, kind of arrogant and cocky, and if things

were going bad for them, they wanted to buddy up with the Americans.

Larry Ordner: You know, I often wonder, so many Americans that fought over there were of German ancestry.

William J. Muller: Yeah.

Larry Ordner: So what was that like? How did ...

William J. Muller: Well ...

Larry Ordner: the Germans proceed and they could have even been finding some of their own relatives, distant relatives.

William J. Muller: Well, when I landed and was taken to that hospital, the first thing I was hurting pretty bad and I had a first aid kit that it had bandage, which I used and so on. And they also had some morphine shots that they could use for pain, and I tried to use that thing right as we were driving to the hospital and couldn't make it go. But when they got me to the hospital, they took me in and they gave me a shot of morphine. And I blanked out and I woke up laying on a stretcher in what looked like a little lab. And I was terribly thirsty, and no one was in there. And the nurse walked in. These people down there, they all spoke English, good English, and I asked her, I said, would you get me a drink of water? And standing up over me with her hands on her hips, she told me, "You've got your nerve. You shoot us and you bomb us and you come down here and you want a drink of water." And I said, please. And she got the water and I drank it. And shortly after that, the surgeon Came in. The hospital had been a monastery at one time, I guess before Hitler took over. Then they turned it into a hospital, and there were 300 beds in that hospital and it was pretty full. It was full of Germans, soldiers and whatever. And they only had one surgeon and another doctor and a older doctor that was the administrator sort of. So they

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were working pretty hard, but the surgeon was nice to us. There were about five or six fellows there, Americans that had been shot down on other raids when I came in. The word we got was they were going to get a one-leg comrade. They thought they were going to take my leg off. But as it turned out, they didn't have to do that and we got good care there. We didn't get very much to eat. They fed everybody else, and then if there was something left, we got it. If there wasn't anything left, you didn't get anything. So that's the way it went.

Larry Ordner: So what were your thoughts when liberation finally occurred for you?

William J. Muller: Well, we knew that the Russians were about to take Berlin and knew that they were close by. And we had hoped that the Americans would get to our camp before the Russians, but they didn't. As it turned out, it was just a big relief because we'd survived. We didn't have to work because we were officers. We'd just spend a lot of time during the daytime walking around, did a lot of walking and the guys played volleyball and one thing or another. A lot of guys played bridge, cards. Of course, we were up pretty far north there, and in the winter-time, it got dark about 3:00 in the afternoon. And they turned the lights out real quick, so you had a lot of time in the dark. You didn't have a whole lot to do. During that time, in the evening, the guys were all in and somebody would say well, let's not talk about politics or food tonight. So everybody would be quiet. And then all of a sudden, a guy would say, well, remember in New York there was a steak place, boy, they had the best steaks. Then a guy would say you S.O.B., shut up or they'd talk about religion and a guy would say, well, we won't talk about religion but I believe this and that, and then it would turn into a big argument.

Larry Ordner: When you talked about food, everybody talked about their favorite food, right?

William J. Muller: They did.

Larry Ordner: What was your favorite food? What food did you talk about?

William J. Muller: Oh, I think just about anything. I liked anything. We dreamed a lot about that, but ...

Larry Ordner: And you weren't able to get any mail during that time, were you?

William J. Muller: I was. Like I said, I was shot down in May, and Christmas Eve, we had a chaplain there, a Catholic priest and they had a Protestant chaplain. They had mass at a location. We had to go through checkpoints and be counted and all this sort of thing. But I remember on Christmas Eve, I got the first letter and it was from my girlfriend, which eventually became my wife after I got back. But that was the first letter in more than six months. I was missing in action for quite a few months there. They didn't know whether I was living or ...

Larry Ordner: So were your ...

William J. Muller: ... dead.

Larry Ordner: Your parents were living at that time?

William J. Muller: Yeah, my parents.

Larry Ordner: Did they ever tell you what that was like for them, going through that period of time?

William J. Muller: Oh, they were ...

Larry Ordner: I assume they got a telegram, perhaps?

William J. Muller: I think so. I don't remember the details, actually, but they did. Now, when I got back and was at home there, I had planned to talk to or go see most of the members in the crew, their folks and that. But one of the people contacted me and he was disturbed because I got out of the plane and his son didn't. So I decided

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rather than to cause a lot of anguish and so on, I didn't do that. And to this day, I don't know what happened to most of them except one the co-pilot, we were being checked out as the lead plane on that mission, and the operation officer took the place of the co-pilot, and his folks lived in Tennessee, and he was killed with the other ones. When I got back in June, they were still classified as missing in action, and they knew my name or something and they came up to my folks' house and we had dinner with them, and I talked to them and told them what happened and what might have happened to their son, and so on. And it was kind of sad, and they found out at least what did actually happen. I don't know to this day where those people are buried. I mean I tried. I was up in Washington in the cemetery out there and checked around and they hadn't gone there, but you could probably find out some way through records and so on, but I haven't done it to this point.

Larry Ordner: So what did you do after you were discharged? Did you come back to Louisville?

William J. Muller: I came back to Louisville. I had worked in Washington before that, and I just had a clerk job, so I came back to Louisville, and we got married in August. I got back in end of June, and my wife and I stayed at my folks' home, and I got a job in Louisville. And then we moved out on our own and went from there.

Larry Ordner: I wonder if you can tell me all these years after World War II, what do you think would have happened had the U.S. not played a role in that war?

William J. Muller: Oh, I think the world would just be altogether different. Without the United States, Germany would have conquered England. They ran the English out of France, Dunkirk, I think it was. And I think they very likely could have conquered England. And if they had done that, they probably have gotten Russia. Without our help, Russia wouldn't have been able to defend against the Germans. The world would be totally different than it is today, I think.

Larry Ordner: Looking back, how do you assess your contribution in that effort?

William J. Muller: Oh, I feel proud and I very lucky that I survived. And my friends didn't. I had a lot of luck, one, in getting out of the plane, the other was getting treatment. With the Air Force, when they bombed around Berlin and the Ruhr valley and so on, a guy would bail out and sometimes farmers would kill them with pitchforks and they didn't survive. But, of course, where we were down in Italy, the people weren't agitated that much around Vienna, south of Vienna, in that area.

Larry Ordner: I think you've done a wonderful job, Mr. Muller. Is there anything else you'd like to add, any other ...

William J. Muller: Well, I was talking about being lucky, I was in that first infantry division, when I first got out of basic training, and the first infantry division was one of the first divisions that landed at Omaha Beach, and they had about 80, 90 percent casualties there. And also, the sixth infantry division, which I was in for a while, they were at the Battle of the Bulge, and many of those guys were killed. And of course, in the Air Force, the Fifteenth Air Force didn't have as many casualties as the Eighth Air Force flying out of England, but there were a lot of planes lost and a lot of lives lost even out of that. And to survive that, I just feel real lucky.

Larry Ordner: Just what did being in the military mean to you as an American?

William J. Muller: Well, I felt that this had to be done from Pearl Harbor, and the Japanese. To this day, I'm not real fond of Japanese cars, even though they are very good cars. But I still have a little bit of antagonism in my feeling about that. Those experiences were just something that I didn't think I'd ever experience, but I'm glad that it happened that way. So I feel good about it. We were bombing where the Germans were near what they call the Po Valley, which was maybe halfway up the Italian boot, and there was tough fighting. That was before the Anzio landing. We bombed in support of that some, but about the second mission, man, the flak was so heavy, you could almost walk on it - the burst of shells. I thought at that time, we were supposed to fly 50 missions in Italy and 25 in England. But the difference was that a lot of ours were easier. They didn't have the resistance, they didn't have many fighter planes and stuff. But a lot of them would count for two. If it was

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going to Ploesti, that was two missions. Anyway, we flew 22. We were on the 23rd one, and then after 50 missions, you'd get sent back to the States. Of course, a lot of them did, but that group that I was in, they bombed Munich. I've tried to get this in "Time" magazine, and I think they published it, but it was in the summer of 1944, maybe July or something like that. They had a mission to bomb Munich, and I think the Germans just didn't have hardly any fighter planes anymore at that time. But they rounded up a bunch, and the group that we were in, they had a woman on the radio, kind of like the Japanese. You'd tune in and she'd play --

Larry Ordner: Tokyo Rose?

William J. Muller: Yeah. She'd be having music on and then say, you guys are -- you ought to be back and going to a football game today. Here you are bombing us, and so on, you know. And they said this group the cowlings of the engines painted. Each squadron was a different color, one red, green, white, I forget the other one. I forget what ours was. But they said the group with those fancy painted cowlings, we're going to get you, you know. And so, what do you say? Ah, bullshit, you know. Anyway, that day, I was already shot down. The group flew over and were going to bomb Munich, and they had enough German planes that they knocked down, they wiped out the group. It was like 40 planes - 44 - 36 or 44 planes. Because I met some of the them at the interrogation center, some of the guys were on that mission, so most of those guys were on their last mission at the time and they would have gotten back, but they got knocked out.

Larry Ordner: What was it like when you came home? What was homecoming like?

William J. Muller: Oh, it was fine, but you were kind of nervous, and you know, I don't know, it was a feeling that I probably never had before, just a feeling of relief and fine. Now, we were supposed to have a couple months' leave, and then you were supposed to go down to Miami on the R&R and then we were going to be sent to Japan. But while my wife and I were on our honeymoon, we went to Lake Har-
rington?

Larry Ordner: Yes.

William J. Muller: Yeah, we went over in that area around Lexington on our honeymoon. And my dad had an old car we borrowed. And while we were over there, we went in town to get something, and the paper says the Americans dropped a huge bomb, you know, and it had all this stuff. When I got back home, I got orders to go and not to take a dependent down to Houston, the Air Force thing down there, and be marshaled out or discharged. So I did it there and got discharged and then came on back home. We got married the fourth of August, so that would have been about when they dropped that bomb? Right along in there. The 5th or 6th.

Larry Ordner: August.

William J. Muller: of August.

Larry Ordner: 6th, I think.

William J. Muller: 7th. Yeah, along in there. And so then I came back. Then I wondered, of course, I had enough leave to go from there to December, and I was discharged. The discharge date was in December. And I stayed in the Reserve for a little while. Then I got promoted to first lieutenant, I guess, but I don't know whether that counted or not, but I dropped out right away because I would have been put in the Korean War and the other stuff. If I survived, it would have been good, I could have retired, you know, and I would have gotten promoted, maybe captain or something. But anyway, I decided flying was not for me. I flew a couple of times just as a passenger out of Bowman Field there in Louisville, and the old planes were all rickety. And so I said, Hell, one of these days, you're going to crash on the end of the runway in one of these damn things. So I would have liked to have been a pilot. Like I say, I started off to be a pilot, and that was the biggest disappointment in my life was washing out of pilot training. That really got me. But it probably saved my life, too. Again, at that time, I remember the class was 43-F, and those guys, they were all sent to England most of them became B-17 pilots. The Germans were knocking down, like, 100 a day or something like that. You know, there was a period there that they really were knocking American planes down. And, of course, we got knocked down anyway. You just wonder, you know, I always say. But anyways, it was a good life, a good life. I'm just so sorry I lost my wife.

Which plane was it anyway?

by
Charles Parsonson
Historian
son of
Ernest C. Parsonson
Pilot
Crew #14-3
764th Squadron

For many years there has been a controversy about just which aircraft was shot down on Mission No. 180 to Vienna, Austria on February 21, 1945. Many people believe it was "The Kissed Off Kids" (s/n 42-52408). Since the vertical stabilizers from another aircraft (42-78408) had been installed on "The Kissed Off Kids" prior to the loss, and the serial numbers for 42-78408 had not been removed, it was sometimes erroneously reported that the lost aircraft was actually 42-78408. I read that "The Kissed Off Kids" was the plane lost on 2/21/45 once again in the June 2015 issue of the Liberaider.

However, there's one thing that bothered me about this story. Why did they remove the vertical stabilizers from 42-78408, a perfectly good airplane, and install them on 42-52408? A quick check of the Missing Air Crew Report (MACR #12359) shows not 42-52408 or 42-78408, but 42-58408. This number is impossible since it belonged to a Cessna UC-78 Bobcat! The serial number is obviously a typo and, by changing just one number you could create either of the aircraft in question. The MACR does give us some useful information. The aircraft lost was an "G" model. 42-52408 was an "H", while 42-78408 was a "G". The squadron number was 49. 42-52408 was number 43, but 42-78408 was number 49. The MACR also stated that there was no nickname, which again matches only

42-78408. Some might think this is because of the confusion over which plane was lost so we'll go further. The Individual Aircraft Record Card for 42-78408 gives a Final Disposition of "Condemned, Flak, 2/21/45". However, the card for "The Kissed off Kids" gives a Final Disposition of "Condemned, Crash, 8/24/44". Even more telling was an Accident Report for 42-52408 (45-8-24-509, dated 8/24/44), which states "Airplane was a complete wreck: wings were torn loose, fuselage crumpled, but all personnel aboard managed to extricate themselves before the ship caught fire. Fire totally destroyed what remained of the ship." Also, the group's history includes the following paragraph: "On the 24th of the month, 2nd Lt. Arthur E. Farnham Jr. and his skeleton crew washed out "The Kissed Off Kids" in a practice flight when compelled to crash land it in a field near the Base. 1st Lt. Ralph T. Seeman, to whom the plane had originally been assigned in the United States, had completed 50 missions in this plane previous to this accident. This was the first plane ever to be *lost to this Group* on a practice mission since the beginning of combat operations on 2 April 1944." (Italics added)

We're now faced with only two possibilities; either 42-52408 arose phoenix-like from the flames, changed from a B-24H to a B-24G, changed its squadron number from 43 to 49, and painted over its nickname, or 42-78408 was the correct aircraft all along. Apparently, this entire story was caused by a clerk who typed a "5" instead of a "7", creating 42-58408 instead of 42-78408.

Sorry "The Kissed Off Kids" fans, but the aircraft lost on 2/21/45 was 42-78408 all along.

Fascinating Story

When baseball greats Babe Ruth and Lou Gehrig went on tour in baseball-crazy Japan in 1934, some fans wondered why a third-string catcher named Moe Berg was included. Although he played with five major-league teams from 1923 to 1939, he was a very mediocre ball player. But Moe was regarded as the brainiest ballplayer of all time. In fact Casey Stengel once said: "That is the strangest man ever to play baseball."

When all the baseball stars went to Japan, Moe Berg went with them and many people wondered why he went with "the team"



Lou Gehrig and Babe Ruth

The answer was simple: Moe Berg was a United States spy, working undercover with the Office of Strategic Services (predecessor of today's CIA).

Moe spoke 15 languages - including Japanese. And he had two loves: baseball and spying.

In Tokyo, garbed in a kimono, Berg took flowers to the daughter of an American diplomat being treated in St. Luke's Hospital - the tallest building in the Japanese capital.

He never delivered the flowers. The ball-player ascended to the hospital roof and filmed key features: the harbor, military installations, railway yards, etc.

Eight years later, General Jimmy Doolittle studied Berg's films in planning his spectacular raid on Tokyo.



Moe Berg

His father disapproved and never once watched his son play. In Barringer High School, Moe learned Latin, Greek and French. Moe read at least 10 newspapers everyday.

He graduated magna cum laude from Princeton - having added Spanish, Italian, German and Sanskrit to his linguistic quiver. During further studies at the Sorbonne, in Paris, and Columbia Law School, he picked up Japanese, Chinese, Korean, Indian, Arabic, Portuguese and Hungarian - 15 languages in all, plus some regional dialects.

While playing baseball for Princeton University, Moe Berg would describe plays in Latin or Sanskrit.

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During World War II, Moe was parachuted into Yugoslavia to assess the value to the war effort of the two groups of partisans there. He reported back that Marshall Tito's forces were widely supported by the people and Winston Churchill ordered all-out support for the Yugoslav underground fighter, rather than Mihajlovic's Serbians.

The parachute jump at age 41 undoubtedly was a challenge. But there was more to come in that same year. Berg penetrated German-held Norway, met with members of the underground and located a secret heavy-water plant - part of the Nazis' effort to build an atomic bomb.

His information guided the Royal Air Force in a bombing raid to destroy that plant.

The R.A.F. destroys the Norwegian heavy water plant targeted by Moe Berg.

There still remained the question of how far had the Nazis progressed in the race to build the first Atomic bomb. If the Nazis were successful, they would win the war. Berg (under the code name "Remus") was sent to Switzerland to hear leading German physicist Werner Heisenberg, a Nobel Laureate, lecture and determine if the Nazis were close to building an A-bomb. Moe managed to slip past the SS guards at the auditorium, posing as a Swiss graduate student. The spy carried in his pocket a pistol and a cyanide pill.

If the German indicated the Nazis were close to building a weapon, Berg was to shoot him - and then swallow the cyanide pill. Moe, sitting in the front row, determined that the Germans were nowhere near their goal, so he complimented Heisenberg on his speech and walked him back to his hotel.

Moe Berg's report was distributed to Britain's Prime Minister Winston Churchill, President Franklin D. Roosevelt and key figures in the team developing the Atomic Bomb. Roosevelt responded: "Give my regards to the catcher."

Most of Germany's leading physicists had been Jewish and had fled the Nazis mainly to Britain and the United States. After the war, Moe Berg was awarded the Medal of Freedom - America's highest honor for a civilian in wartime. But Berg refused to accept it because he couldn't tell people about his exploits.

After his death, his sister accepted the Medal. It now hangs in the Baseball Hall of Fame, in Cooperstown.



Presidential Medal of Freedom: the highest award given to civilians during wartime.

Moe Berg's baseball card is the only card on display at the CIA Headquarters in Washington, DC.

So now you know!

President's Corner

The 461st Reunion seems to have received a lot of attention from other bomb groups of the Fifteenth Air Force. As you know, in 2015, we joined forces with the 451st, 455th, 465th, 484th and 485th Bomb Groups and had a fantastic reunion in Kansas City, MO. The word has gotten out that the 461st puts on a fantastic reunion. As a result, we will be joined by the 376th in Dallas this year along with perhaps some representatives from the 2nd and 99th Bomb Group. These last two are unique as they are B-17 units belonging to the 5th Bomb Wing. The 461st Reunion seems to have grown so large that some folks have begun to call it a Fifteenth Air Force Reunion. That's quite a compliment, but it isn't true. At least not yet. We may get to that point, but for now, our reunion is called the 2016 Bomb Groups Reunion. This has presented some challenges for the Reunion Committee, but if 2015 is any indication, they have stepped up to the challenge. The reunion in Dallas this year promises to be the best ever. You don't want to miss it.

The idea of a Fifteenth Air Force Reunion is interesting. The subject has been brought up by several bomb groups. I've suggested that if this were to happen, perhaps there should be an Association for the Fifteenth Air Force similar to our own Association that could organize such a reunion. This Association would have its own By-Laws and membership. It would have its own treasury from which to pay for setting up reunions. Essentially, it would have everything the 461st has, but would encompass the entire Fifteenth Air Force—everyone who was a member of the Fifteenth Air Force during WWII. I would be interested in any comments you might have and such an organization. Do you like the idea? Why or why not?

A lawyer had a leaky faucet in his office bathroom. He got the number of a nearby plumber and called him in. The plumber arrived and in five minutes had repaired the faucet. Washing his hands, he told the lawyer, "That will be \$150."

"That's outrageous!" the lawyer explained. "That's more money than I make in an hour."

"I know," the plumber said. "That's why I quit being a lawyer."

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The Government released hundreds of documents seized from Osama bin Laden's compound. Among the items is a job application for Al-Qaida. It's like a regular job application except it asks questions like, "Where do you see yourself exploding in the next five years."

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A truck overturned while transporting several hundred copies of a thesaurus. The newspaper reported that onlookers were "overwhelmed, stunned, amazed, astonished, bewildered and dumbfounded."

~~~~~

Politics is the art of looking for trouble, finding it, misdiagnosing it and then applying the wrong remedies.

~~~~~

A small boy saved his friend from drowning in an icy lake. When a TV reporter asked him what made him risk his life, he innocently replied, "He was wearing my skates."

~~~~~

The dictionary is the only place where success comes before work.

## 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

Our Historian, Chuck Parsonson, has been finding a lot of material pertaining to the 461st. Some of it is also applicable to the 451st and 484th Bomb Groups. For example, Chuck has recently found mission information for the 49th Bomb Wing. This information helps to clarify what we already know about missions flown by the 461st. It also shows the relationship between the three groups belonging to the 49th Bomb Wing. It will take me quite a bit of time to get all this information on the website, but I already have something to point out. The 484th Bomb Group was the late-comer in the 49th Bomb Wing. Until it started flying missions in later April 1944, the 451st and 461st flew their missions with the 460th Bomb Group that was part of the 55th Bomb Wing. You can check out this additional information by going to the 49th Bomb Wing website at [http://15thaf.org/49th\\_BW/](http://15thaf.org/49th_BW/).

Someone recently asked me how the ammunition and bombs were stored at Torretta Field. I had never thought about this before, but it's an interesting question. I assume there was a special place off away from the rest of the field that was used. This area may even have been shared between the 461st and the 484th. During the night before a mission, ammunition and bombs would be loaded on the planes by the ground echelon. Chuck is looking for information in the archives he has access to for something about the storage area. I'm wondering if any of our veterans can shed some light on where this area was and how it was maintained. Write an article for the Liberaider and let me know.