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# W A D - L I B



FOR THE MEN WHO FLY 'EM • FOR THE MEN WHO KEEP 'EM FLYING

ISSUE 16

SPRING 1988

PLOESTI PHOTO VERIFIED AS 451ST ORIGINAL

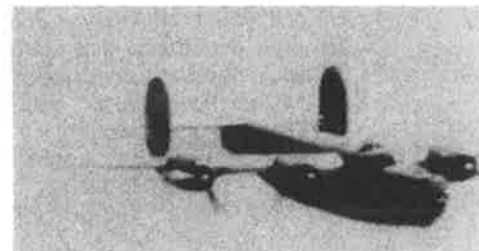


**INDISPUTABLE EVIDENCE OFFERED BY MAJOR DWYER TO OWNERSHIP OF HISTORIC PICTURE**

Once upon a time (you know the era to which I refer) while based at Castelluccia di Sauri, most of us took advantage of our Photo Section. We often selected photos taken by our talented and outstanding combat photographers, to add to, or start, our own wartime photo collection. Many were the hikes we'd take up to Group Headquarters to look over the efforts of these (so called) non-combatants. And like a child in a candy store, we were dazzled by what was available.

Major William M. Dwyer, Officer in Charge of "Photo" (pseudonym given to that section) made it a policy that all unclassified photos should be made available to those that wished them. This kept everyone within his command busy, and the recipient of this generous offer very happy. Under his leadership, technical and innovative photographic methods were experimented with, and adopted.

Though not every picture brought back from a mission was of Time/Life caliber, in the main, the overall quality of the pictures were exceptional. Major Dwyer was continually faced with the task, as OIC, to sort the superior combat photos from the better than excellent ones.



Such is the case with the above PLOESTI picture. Since the time it first came through the "Hypo, Fixer, and Washes" of the Photo Section darkroom, this photo has drawn a lot of recognition and acclaim. So much, in fact, that many newly reactivated 15th Army Air Force Groups are using it to show their followers just how it was over Ploesti. These organizations, though not taking credit for the photo, have left the impression among their members that this photo may have come from their Group's photo section.

As custodian of much of our Group's history, this caused me some concern. I know its ours; Bill Dwyer knows its ours; the guys in the photo section know its ours, as do many of you guys associated with that time in combat, know its ours. Nowhere have I seen credit given to the 451st Bomb Group for this photo. In most cases it is just listed as 15th AAF over Ploesti. Ken Rust, in his publication "THE FIFTEENTH AIR FORCE STORY" (page 25) even offers the date of 31 May 1944 as the date of the mission: even that I'm beginning to question.

(continued next page)

**"AD-LIB"**

451st Bomb Group, Ltd.  
Publication

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(Donations deeply appreciated)

CONTRIBUTION

TAX EXEMPT #36 307 0772

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(PHOTO PROOF, Con't)

To satisfy my need to know, and confirm the authenticity of the photo, I wrote to Bill Dwyer asking for his guidance in getting to the facts. Bill, upon receiving my letter, phoned me and said he would make every effort in pinning down the viability of the ownership. Though he could not, with positive conviction, tell me who was the photographer, he (and later confirmed with Al Nerroth) thought it was Neil Weinberg. But Bill thought he had some ideas as to how this photo could be verified. Page 1 you see the results.

Bill had the original negative enlarged to an eleven by fourteen inch print; then singling out the aircraft on the far right; lessening the contrast in degrees, thereby bringing out the tail markings with sufficient clarity to satisfy even the most skeptic of critics.

Upon closer scrutiny, the name of the aircraft can "just" be made out. With a comparisons of aircraft names and nose art pictures that are in our archives, it is believed to be THE SOD-BUSTER. The SOD BUSTER was the aircraft primarily flown by Cortland Read of the 727th Squadron.

The Super Photo, was often used in publicity shots of our Command Officers. This was an ambitious effort contrived by the Photo Section for this very purpose. Many of our ranking Group Head-

quarters people posed in front of this colossus 4 by 5 foot photo, just for the purpose of Public Relations back in the States.



COLONEL KNAPP IN PUBLIC RELATIONS SET-UP



LT (LATER MAJOR) DWYER LOOKING OVER THE BEST

The making of this grandiose print showed the imagination and creativity that the Photo Section had. Major Dwyer perfected the method of making this big oversized print, even though photographic paper of this size (4'X 5') was not available. The largest photographic paper, in our theater of operation was only 16 by 20 inch, thereby causing some serious "head scratching." The final outcome was that an enlarger was set up to project the proposed 4'X 5' image. Then with the use of a grid type layout, each 16"x 20" paper within each grid area, was given a critical exposure and then developed. The resulting exposures were then trimmed to match the adjoining photo and with gum arabic fastened onto a rigid backing.

The impact of the photo; its "bigger than life" size; its easily availability, caught the attention of Brigadier General William Lee, our 49th Wing Commander. Thus the Photo Section was pressed into making another print.

Not good enough to have the print in two different headquarters, (Group and Wing) General Nathan F. Twining from the 15th AAF Headquarters saw the print and with a touch of diplomacy, commented

on it by saying how nice a print like that would look at 15th Air Force Headquarters. Thus Major Dwyer's WHIZ KIDS were pressed into service to fill the demands of their superiors.



DWYER CHECKS PICTURES THAT MADE FRONT PAGE

The demands, or requirements, of the Photo Section weren't necessarily in the vein of only publicity pictures, though they were at times, the most fun to do. The priority of the Section were to produce BOMB STRIKE PHOTOS. I'm sure we can all remember seeing the bigger cameras that were set up over the camera hatch in the waist section of the mission ready aircraft. Their function was to take pictures while on the bomb run. These cameras were operated by a photographer on board. But till the bomb run was being made, the photographer was busy with his hand held, K-20 camera. Once the bomb run was started the photographer opened the waist floor hatch and lowered his camera into position; then setting the timing device, allowed the camera to snap pictures by itself, at pre-set intervals. He could then returned to his K-20.



PHOTO SECTION CAMERA INVENTORY

The importance of these bomb strike photos was important to Group, Wing and 15th AAF Headquarters. An evaluation of the damage to the area bombed was critical to Intelligence (A-2 and S-2) of Group, Wing, and 15th AAF Headquarters at Bari, Italy. Photo Intelligence read the photos, and by their interpretation, determined how long the marshalling yards, factory, oil refinery, or air field would be

out of commission. Thus long range planning as to how soon, and if, it would be necessary to return to the target. The speed in which the prints were handled, processed and distributed by the 451st Photo Section brought much acclaim to the men and their Section Leader.



The cadre that made up the original Photo Section are shown in the above picture. Reading from Left to Right, with resident Squadron added: Ennis, Edward D.(725th); Barton, Robert F.(727th); Nerroth, Alex (725th); Mathes, Paul G.(727th); Tribbett, Robert J.(725th); Pachter, Leo (727th); Obier, Earl T.(725th); Petty, Frank A.(727th); Dwyer, William M.(HDQ - OIC); Woodman, Allan S. (726th); Wagner, Regis H.(HDQ); Prato, Nicholas J. (726th); Hoffman, Robert N.(724th); Trask, William W.(726th); Rogers, Herbert (724th); White, Reginald C.(726th); Hotchkiss, Henry K.(724th); Humphries, William B.(724th)



COMBAT PHOTOGRAPHERS (KNEELING: NEIL WEINBERG)

Major Dwyer included in his resume of his department that as of 8 February 1945 he had recruited more than 66 qualified photographers from the ranks of the 451st. Of these 15 completed their missions and went home; 6 quit before completing their missions; 3 were known to have been KIA; 4 were POW; and 12 were MIA. This information was compiled in early 1945 and though accurate from the standpoint of hearsay and what returned Red Cross information we learned about, it was not a total accounting as would be compiled by the time the war ended in May 1945.

(PHOTO PROOF, Con't)



PHOTO TRAILER USED AT SAN PANCRAZIO, ITALY



ALEX NERROTH MAKING TECHNICAL ADJUSTMENTS

There were more camera men added to the staff; some from the ranks of gunners hoping to get home a little sooner; others from the ground troops, hopeful to accomplish the same thing. The Photo Section, as we remember them, were a resourceful band of dedicated and talented individuals. From the technicians that repaired the cameras; to the men that worked the darkroom; and to the camera men that took the pictures, much of the pride ingrained in us towards the 451st is due, in large part to them. The Bronze Stars, Soldiers Medals, DFC's, Air Medals ... and the Purple Hearts - they earned them all.

Photographs furnished by William M. Dwyer, Leo S. Stoutsenberger, and 451st Bomb Group (H), Ltd. photographic archives.

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**REUNIONS: GATHERINGS: MEETINGS**

On 14 October 1987 eight former members of the 451st Bomb Group converged on the city of Colorado Springs, Colo. in preparation for the 15th Air Force Association Reunion.

Those in attendance from the 725th; Charles Christy, Sam Miller, Earl Numrich. From the 727th; Stan Halverson, Art Morin, Archie Piirainen, John Thomas. There was no one from the 726th, although Bob Blair was registered we couldn't find him, and only yours truly, Bob K., represented the 724th.

The four plus days were spent in sightseeing, meetings, and socializing.



FLYING "W" RANCH ATTENDEES

Left/Front to Back:	Right/Back to Front:
Ann Karstensen	Art Morin
Carol Morin	Jack Thomas
Archie Piirainen	Marty Thomas
	Earl Numrich

A Dinner and Program at the Flying W Ranch set the tone of the reunion on Thursday evening.

A one hour Briefing by the NORAD staff, as to our military capabilities ran throughout the first two days to those that were interested.

Memorial Dedications by the 22nd, 99th, and 450th Bomb Groups were conducted at the Air Force Academy on Friday, followed by our 15th AFA Banquet.

Saturday saw us in attendance at the Academy's "Falcon Stadium" for the battle between the football gladiators of Air Force and Notre Dame.



AIR FORCE CHAPEL  
Earl Numrich & Art Morin



#### 15th AFA BANQUET

Left to Right: Elizabeth Miller, Sam Miller, Bob K. Archie Piirainen, Earl Numrich, Art Morin, Jack Thomas, Marty Thomas, Carol Morin

Sunday saw the closing of operations and the "homeward flight" of its participants.

At the Business Meeting of the Association on Friday, it was decided that the 15th AFA would merge their next reunion efforts with the 50th Anniversary of the B-24 in Ft. Worth, Texas. From that point of view, this office will keep an eye peeled as to what we may do in that regards.

\* \* \*

In San Jose, California, Paul and Bonnie Castoro (726th) took on the task of put together a mini-reunion of some 451st families living in that area. This event was scheduled for the 22nd of October, giving yours truly, and daughter Ann, (my traveling companion throughout this excursion) time to leave one reunion to attend another. Paul, with some help from this office, got together 8 families living in the area that could take time off to get assembled at the 94th Aero Squadron in San Jose.

From the 724th; Don Kelly, Bob Saurin, and yours truly. Joe Younger represented the 725th. A delegation of five from the 726th attended: Nick Battistella, Paul Castoro, Dick Chase, Harold Schauer, and Herb Guinness. No 727th emissary attended.



#### 94th AERO SQUADRON, SAN JOSE, CALIFORNIA

L to R: Harold Schauer, Herbert Guinness, Margo Guinness, Paul Castoro, Bonnie Castoro



Dick Chase and Dominic Battistella



Joe Younger

\* \* \*

Traveling on ..... In Saugus, California, just north of Los Angeles, Bob and Janet Macey underwent the same procedure in assembling a mini-reunion. Again, with prior aid from this office, a gathering was set up with the date of 26 October. At this event we had nine in attendance. From the 724th were DeWitt Macey, Duane Maybay, Dale Mayswinkle, and myself. No representation from the 725th on this occasion. The 726th fielded these stalwarts; Martin Hutchison, Roscoe Griffith, John Schneider. Ruth Monsen, wife of the late Roy Monsen (726th), graced our gathering by her presence. The 727th brought us Bill Hysell and Tom Graham.



Standing L / R: William Hysell, Martin Hutchison, Bob Macey, Duane Maybay, Tom Graham  
Seated L / R: John Schneider, Roscoe Griffith, Bob K., Dale Mayswinkle (con't)



(MINI-GATHERINGS, Con't)

\* \* \*

These mini-gatherings, much like the crew reunions that I've been hearing about, are most enjoyable. In various ways our people are trying to re-associate. It seems that the passing of years has brought into focus the loss of contacts we once had with our WW-II comrades. Different crews are meeting, through the locating efforts of this office, and finding great satisfaction in doing so. Ground personnel are finding tentmates, or fellow workers, and figuring out ways of getting together.

It is truly enjoyable to work towards these goals, as can be attested to by Paul and Bonnie Castoro and Bob and Janet Macey. Just to have a hand in getting all you great people together is our real reward.



#### NORFOLK, VIRGINIA - REUNION #5



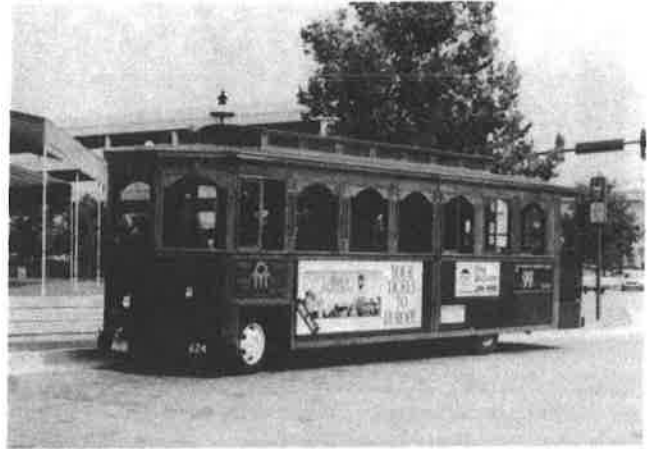
HOLIDAY INN - REUNION HEADQUARTERS

Plans are proceeding nicely towards our next biennial reunion. If it has slipped your mind, we have selected the Holiday Inn (Waterfront Area/Downtown) as our Host Hotel. The dates chosen are from **13 October** (Thursday) through **16 October** (Sunday) 1988.

The "Holiday" is able to provide ample lodging for what we hope to be a great turnout. And there should be no trouble with parking, as they have plenty of adjacent free parking (in the open) for your limousines, motorhomes, compacts and/or motor-bikes.

Plans are still in the staging mode as to the various side trips that we will try to negotiate. Such added tours seemed to work out quite well in San Antonio, even though the weather was against us. As you can imagine there are a plethora of historic and scenic places to visit. Just what we can plan on is yet to be worked out.

I've had the privilege to meet with some of our members that live in the area. I find them to

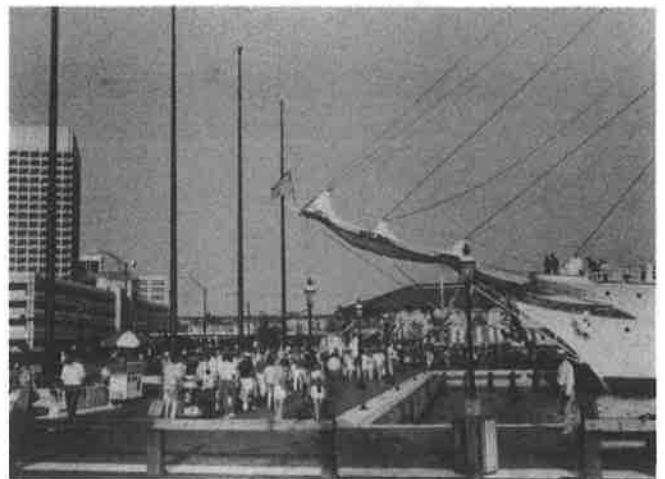


LIKE SAN ANTONIO, A MODE OF TRANSPORTATION

be an enthusiastic group and totally interested in your welfare. Those that I dined with on my visit to Norfolk were; Alex and Eileen Kuras (726th), Sam and Trudy Rosenblatt (724th), Walter and Alice Hack (725th). Edwin Crider (726th) and Ben Tingelhoff (727th) were out of town on that particular day, but professed their interest in working with us as we proceed.



AERIAL VIEW OF WATERFRONT



DOCKSIDE VIEW OF WATERFRONT



DAYS OF THE ANCIENT MARINER



NAVAL PORT FOR REFURBISHING OF WARSHIPS

This reunion gathering should prove, to those with time to spend looking around, to be one of enormous interest. So much history is packed within this area that it boggles the mind. I guess that all along the eastern seaboard can be found places and things that relate to the Revolutionary and the Civil Wars, that you could spend your whole vacation seeking them out.

If you are driving, and have the time, Washington, D.C. is the place to see. (D.C. was a consideration in earlier reunion plans, but hotel costs and accessibility to various places took it out of the running) All the cultural museums and government buildings are just begging for your attention. Arlington National Cemetery and Mt. Vernon, home of General Washington, is a must. Boating down the Potomac is interesting -- sorry, my yacht will be in drydock at that time. Maybe the Prez will let you use his.

We hope we can make this Reunion as fulfilling as past ones. We are going to work hard on it.

You will receive a FLYER in time to consolidate all your plans. It will contain all the related costs, details and specifics about the Reunion. Just for now, note the dates and make your vacation arrangements. We want to see you all there.

## 60th SERVICE SQUADRON TO JOIN 451st

Back when our Group was first making its mark in the effort against the axis powers, we were ably assisted in maintaining some of our more distressed aircraft by the 60th Service Squadron. The 60th first made its association with us when we were stationed at San Pancrazio/Manduria Air Bases and were with us in Castelluccia till the end of the war.

In the evolvement stages of our current organization I had been receiving letters from past members of the 60th requesting information as to "if" and "where" an organization had been formed in their behalf. Knowing of none I had to reply in the negative. Since that time I had been checking out all veteran and military magazines with that thought in mind. After an unsuccessful search this office has given strong consideration to granting the 60th Service Squadron membership under the umbrella of the 451st Bomb Group (H), Ltd. We hope you guys are agreeable to this proposal. Now when we run our reunion notices, and "seeking members" ad, we will include the attached 60th Service Squadron to our effort.

The original 60th cadre was formed up in September of 1940 under the designated title of 2nd Material Squadron; changing its number to the 60th Material Squadron in January of 1941. It was redesignated as the 60th Service Squadron in June 1942 and carried that designation till the time of its de-activation.

Its primary duties then were to maintain fighter aircraft from the 20th and 35th Pursuit Group at Hamilton Field, California. On 15 February 1943 the 60th went to their Port of Embarkation, San Francisco, and traveling via the South Pacific, off-loading in Egypt.

After working with various Fighter and Bomber Groups in North Africa, the 60th arrived in Italy during November 1943. Their labors were mingled with the 451st throughout our stays at Gioia del Colle, Manduria, San Pancrazio, and Castelluccia di Sauri, but becoming truly attached while we were stationed at the latter three.

Many of you will remember the 60th as being stationed at the upper end of Castelluccia Air Base, adjacent to the 727th Squadron. Their duties were many and varied. They had a fire brigade that functioned when an aircraft crashed; maintained and supplied parts for our aircraft; and numerous other duties not too well defined in the historical documentation I have reviewed.

The 60th was under the jurisdiction of the 37th Service Group, but seemed to function under its own identity. It had a cadre of 8 Officers and approximately 230 plus EM. This number could be envisioned, with rotation and turnovers, as a potential of 300 to 400 possible candidates for membership. The possibility of the earlier cadre joining (those prior to the 451st involvement) is indeed a possibility, and should not deter them

(con't next page)

(60th Service Sqdn, con't)

from joining us, nor we from welcoming them. If their numbers become active, and have the desire, may wish to "go it on their own."

To those of you 451st guys that have kept in touch with various members of this Service Squadron I would appreciate hearing about them. I will mail them our usual questionnaire; and upon getting it back, will offer them membership and send them the usual packet of newsletters and "goodies."

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### WE'RE LOSING OUR KEY PEOPLE (Circa 1944)

Too often now, word is reaching us of a fallen comrade. News comes to us by way of a family member, a comrade, or via the Post Offices' sterile declaration, "Addressee Deceased." And again, in some cases we never get word at all.

Names of members (those reported) that have succumb to the inevitable, and have taken their "Final Flight," are as follows:



Glen A. Chambers  
(1919 - 1987)

A pilot from the original cadre, **Glen A. Chambers** 726th Squadron, passed away on 20 February 1987. Glen was a strong supporter in our 451st effort, and after being located, attended our Dayton, Ohio Reunion in 1984. His wife, Dorothy, sons, Charles and James survive.

In memory of her late husband, Dorothy asked that we continue our AD-LIB mailings for the benefit of her sons and grandchildren. (It will be our pleasure)

In the pursuit of trying to find other members of Glen Chambers' crew, I prevailed on Robert Keup, (726th) Riverside, Calif. to seek out and locate **Roy Monsen**, co-pilot for the crew. Bob Keup had moderate success; he found Mrs. Roy Monsen (Ruth), but was

told that Roy had passed away 11 April 1983. Ruth also asked that we add her name to our mailing list for the benefit of Roy's descendents.

Roy Monsen started his 451st career as a co-pilot, but was given the Lawrence Gresham crew when Gresham transferred to a P-38 outfit before the Group left the States for overseas.

Also in the vein of having our members lend a hand in finding our comrades, I asked some of the San Francisco guys to see what we could accomplish in seeking out **Willis Malakowski** (Pilot 725th). They did an admirable job. The members I asked

located ONE (repeat, 1) person with that family name living in the area. It happened to be a sister-in-law. This poor lady received a plethora of phone calls from our ambitious members. (I have since written to apologize for our intrusion) What we gained through all this was the address of the widow of **Willis Malakowski**, Nadine. She informed me that Willis had passed away in 1970. She, too, is now listed as a complimentary member.

A kind letter from the widow of Colonel **Leonard J. Rohrs** (Mildred), San Antonio, Texas, tells us that Colonel Rohrs passed away on 12 August 1981. Colonel (then Major) Rohrs will be remembered as the Group Executive Officer, up at Headquarters.



Pilot John O'Connor & Navigator William Hutton  
William Hutton, Jr. (Deceased April 1987)

Another loss felt by family and crewmates is that of **William Hutton** (Navigator, 724th). Bill was on the John O'Connor crew. Bill is survived by his wife Virginia.

Other confirmed losses suffered by the 451st Bomb Group, Ltd. are;

<b>Arnold B. Cheatham</b> , 726th	10 February 1987
<b>Alfred Felderhoff</b> , 727th	UNKNOWN 1987
<b>Clifford W. Gary</b> , 725th	19 June 1987
<b>Alton C. Little</b> , 726th	UNKNOWN
<b>Clifford C. Lourie</b> , 726th	4 May 1987

But now it seems, as our organization becomes more participatory and we get to know each others family members better through our biennial reunions, other losses are becoming apparent.

Recently I was informed that **Hilda Street**, wife of Dana Street (Hdq) had passed away on 28 May 1987.

Hilda will be readily remembered as the lovable easy going, ever smiling side-kick of her affable, easy going, ever smiling, husband, Dana. Together they made an engaging couple, and projected that attitude to all those that came in contact. Hilda and Dana, if you recall, spear-headed the effort in getting the computer for this office.



Hilda Street  
(Deceased May 1987)



The passing of another old friend (in terms of tenure with our Groups earliest formation), was **Anetia Anderson**, wife of John Anderson (727th).

To those that attended our very first 1980 Chicago Reunion, you may remember our registration tables near the elevator doors at the Ramada O'Hare Inn. Behind those tables worked several Chicago Committee people, with the most harried being the Andersons. Signing in the attendees wasn't the hardest; the last minute walk-in entries and making out the nametags was. With the August heat and the pressure of the situation things could have become more tense than wanted, but with the unruffled attitude of Anetia and the other Committee Members; peace and stability prevailed.

Word from Ralph and Helen McBeth (725th, San Antonio Committee) tells of losing their 39 year old son in February 1987. Heart attack. It was a sad year for many of our people.

To all now departed I offer these words:

God saw you fight and struggle hard,  
But his help was not to be;  
He put his arms around you,  
And whispered, "Come with me."

With tearful eyes we watched you go,  
And slowly fade away;  
Although we loved you dearly,  
We could not help you stay.

Your youthful heart stopped beating,  
Your struggling hands now rest.  
God broke our hearts to prove to us,  
He only takes the best.

"We'll miss you all"

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#### CATERPILLAR CLUB: WHICH ONE?

I was recently asked for an address for THE Caterpillar Club by one of our members who would be eligible for membership. I diligently started my search for such an address, coming up with the one that is currently running ads in most military magazines. That address is:

Caterpillar Association of the U.S.  
Attn: Johnny Brown  
P.O. Box 1321  
Kenosha, WI 53141  
Ph. (414) 658-1559

And still another address that came to light is the location of the parent organization for the U.S. branch. It is located in England and can be reached by writing:

Irvin Great Britain, Ltd.  
Attn: Sect'y Caterpillar Club  
Icknield Way  
Letchworth, Herts SG6 1EW  
England

The Irvin Parachute Co., the original sponsor of this elite organization out of Canada, is no longer in existence, but the England company is still processing applications.

Information I am offering is from the 459th Bomb Group Association newsletter, **PATHFINDER**. A very definitive publication out of Rochester, NY.

Further comments relative to what is available from the England Caterpillar Club is as follows; again quoting from the **PATHFINDER**:

"You will need to cite for them the Group, date, type of A/C, time of day, locale nearest to bail-out, and the A/C Commander. They have marvelous records and will photo copy your chute data as sent to them from your Group at the end of WW-II."

"The solid gold pin, as issued in 1945, is available for 14 Lbs., with the membership card at one lb. extra. (Figuring the lb. at \$1.15, (circa early 1987) this amounts to less than \$20.00 for the gold pin and card) No postage is required. There is a sterling silver pin for 8.5 Lbs."

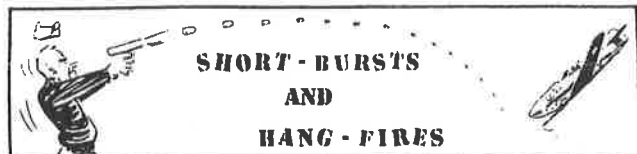
What I have been able to find out about the U.S. Caterpillar Club, as it is currently set-up, has to do with the demise of the Canadian group, and the semi-inactivity of the English faction. Due to this inactivity, Johnny Brown, a former P-51 jock, took it upon himself to give the Caterpillars a new breath of life. Apparently, and with the consent of the British organization, he is attempting to activate those stalwarts of "Hit the silk!" fame into a rejuvenated group based on the theme of the now defunct Canadian unit.

With a growing membership, now at the 750 level, he is planning reunions, setting up chapters and divisions around the country, and structuring his organization by selling jackets and pins and assessing dues. Dues are; 1 year - \$15; 2 years - \$25; life membership - \$100.

So, depending on the depth of your desired involvement, here are two clubs that offer you membership. One, the U.S. organization, offers you an active participation, while the English connection offers you the prestige of a more provincial institution.

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## SQUADRON COMMANDER SHARES JOURNAL

**Carl Morton, 727th:** .. Incidentally, I painted the name and picture on Sprowles' plane: BIG BOOBER GIRL. I wonder if you remember it - or have ever run across a picture of it? (ed. ... Archie Piirainen, Engineer for Roger Sprowles' crew, sent me a large photo of a painting he had commissioned some years back. AWESOME!)

**Larry March, 724th:** I invited Annie Brusselmans, now 82, into the 451st -- along with her daughter, Yvonne Daley Brusselmans. You must have read about the dilemma of citizenship for Anne. President Reagan said she could stay in the US for life. Annie (as I call her) ran a fantastic underground in Belgium during WW-II and saved more than 130+ allied downed airmen ... Despite most of their "saves" being 8th AF types, these lovely people have an affinity for our heavy bomber troops ... I know of no other 15th AF outfit that has seen fit to honor them and I want ours to be the first before the "word" travels too far. (ed .. I followed up on your request, Larry, and I feel as you do; they are indeed SPECIAL people.--Thanks, too, for the copy of the letter sent you by Eleanor Roosevelt upon completion of one of their aerial sorties [Teheran to Shiraz] in which you handled the controls.)

**Woodie Woodman, 726th:** Sedge Hill paid an unexpected visit here a short time ago. We had a 'far-to-short' private reunion. Too bad the whole 451st doesn't live in the same town as we did once before .. Not in a tent -PLEASE!

**Bill Hysell, 727:** It was a pleasure for us to meet you and your daughter, Ann, and the others from the 451st, plus wives, on October 26th. It was a very enjoyable evening. (ed ... Bill, you and Louise (and the rest of the attendees) were the crux of that get together. It's hard to declare a party and have no one come.)

**John L. Anderson, 727th:** I sure blew 40 bucks on that C.C.C. ad. I got ONE response. Did you get any? Anyway, I wrote him to write you for an application. (ed ... Ed Aho (727th, Chemical Section, is signed-in and wrapped-up. No others have surfaced)

**Don Smith, 724th:** Please accept my apology for this very late follow-up on our June 87 telcon regarding the names and addresses of my recently located WW-II aircrew. We just had our first meeting (Reunion) here in Chicago in Sept 87. (ed ... GREAT! I'm glad to hear of these intimate and rewarding gatherings. That's what we're all about.)

**Sedge Hill, 727th:** re: authoring of a book - ... I have been doing some heavy talking and thinking on it; pictures and antidotes from individuals, mostly private adventures. Your thoughts and guidance appreciated. (ed ... Go for it, Sedge! You alone know your capabilities.)

(con't Page 26, Col. 2)

This new 451st Bomb Group (circa 1978) has indeed been fortunate to receive personal memoirs from our various members. Many of these writings have been in the form of "Combat Journals" that were kept by the individual crewman at the time of the events.

This office is also mindful of the numerous issues of personal A-5 flight folders (or copies) that managed to survive the destructive environment of civilian life. All of these nostalgic articles have been languishing in the footlocker or in the garages of our members, for lo these many years.

A tip of the hat goes to Jack Garrison (726th, D.W. Miller's crew), Vincent Reis (724th, D.D. McCabe's crew), Al Kalinka (724th, J.J. Coyle's crew), and others that sent complete copies, or partial sections of their journals to this office.

To former pilots, Merle Larson (727th), Art Formanek (727th), Bill Paddock (725th), Frank McQuaid (725th), and others too many to mention, may I again offer a salute for information (A-5 files, or individual mission lists) offered.

Each of these offerings has a great story to relate. And each person's wartime adventures are worthy of being retold in print. But for one simple reason I have refrained from publishing them: they were limited in scope, and focus upon a limited segment of an individual's contacts, basically the CREW, or persons within a particular Squadron. This does not detract from their importance; they are indeed a bit of WW-II history and will find a spot in the annals of the 451st history. And, too, I may be offending someone if I printed one journal before someone else.

But I was recently offered the wartime journal of Colonel John M. Anderson, and upon reading it, found it to be so all encompassing that I felt the membership should be granted the pleasure to view it too. John Anderson will be primarily remembered as the 3rd Squadron Commander of the 724th, replacing Major Alex Burleigh who in turn replaced Major James Beane. But John Anderson's involvement with the 451st takes place much sooner than that. The circle of those he had contact goes beyond what most of us would ever encounter. Therefore I thought this Journal, above all others, really merited being offered to our readers.

Before I get into the day by day activities of Colonel Anderson's Journal, I must first allow the Colonel to voice his disclaimer to what may be, in someone's eye, an error or omission to certain facts.

Col. Anderson (then a Major) says, "I only kept cryptic notes and it was some time after the war that I attempted to decipher them and 'flesh them out.' Even now some things do not jibe too well even in my own mind."



**COLONEL**  
**JOHN M. ANDERSON**  
**451st BOMB GROUP**  
**MEMOIRS**

**1 Feb 1944** - Departed Camp Patrick Henry, Virginia as part of Wing cadre Headed by Colonel Hugo P. Rush. Our mode of transportation was a Liberty Ship.

**29 Feb** - Debarked at Naples.

**2 Mar** - Departed Naples by truck for Bari where the 15th Air Force Headquarters was located. We were billeted in the 22nd Replacement Battalion area which meant tents for most of us. The nights were cold and "sunny" Italy dripped on us during mealtimes. In fact, one meal the menu was stew but it rained so hard that what started as stew ended as increasingly thin soup. Here Colonel Rush learned the plans had changed and that two new Wings originally planned would not be activated and that we would be used as replacements in existing Wings and Groups. This was for the best as not many of us had had any combat experience.

**4 Mar** - Departed Bari for the 47th Wing Headquarters at Manduria. Colonel Rush was being assigned as Deputy Wing Commander. While at Manduria I met a classmate, Floyd Robinson, and another casual officer, Tom Walkey.

**5 Mar** - Walkey and I were assigned to the 451st Bomb Group which was then located at Gioia del Colle and we departed for there as soon as we had orders. Robbie stayed with the 450th Group at Manduria. Upon arrival at Gioia we found the 451st had taken off on a mission that morning but in so doing had torn up the field to such an extent that it had to be diverted to other fields upon its return. Meanwhile Walkey and I just waited until we had an opportunity to meet the Group Commander, Colonel Eaton

**7 Mar** - Plans were firmed up for the 451st to operate from San Pancrazio, the home field of the 376th with two Squadrons and two Squadrons would have to be established at Manduria. Walkey and I reported to Colonel Eaton at San Pancrazio and were assigned as Ass't Group Operations Officers.

**8 Mar** - I moved to Manduria and became part of the small Group Headquarters consisting of Major Blackmon, Deputy Group Commander; Captain L. A. Younkin, the Ass't Group Ops Officer; and myself. Blackmon and Younkin had had previous combat tours. Living and operating conditions at both San Pancrazio and Manduria were mighty primitive inasmuch as we had to take such areas that the tenant units didn't want. Mud was axle deep, messing in the open, briefing and critique took place before and

after the host units were finished with the facilities, and take-off and landing had to be accomplished before and after the other units. We finally got into the air today on a practice mission although the weather was not too good. (Later it developed that another classmate, Al Witte, was killed during the course of this practice mission.)

**9 Mar** - Visited Wing Headquarters to see how others who had shared the sea voyage were faring. Found out that a close friend and classmate, Pat Williams, had had an accident in Taranto and had lost a foot.

**11 Mar** - Flew my first combat mission against the harbor facilities at Toulon, France. I could not make head nor tails out of what was going on and saw few details of what happened although I did see the flak. Maybe I was mesmerized by it. Later I learned there had been fighters; the deputy lead ship with the Group Ops Officer aboard had exploded and that the results had not been good. Flew with Boyle's crew from the 727th Squadron back in one of the tail end positions.

While operating split up, Younkin and I had to make the trip each night to San Pancrazio once the ops orders had been received in order to establish procedures for the extra rendezvous that the 451st had to make, present our orders of battle, go over recognition signals and other details. This frequently meant staying up late and then having to get up early for briefing and supervising take-off from the tower. We also tried to work in our share of missions so we welcomed any stand downs in order to improve the living conditions and catch up on rest.

**14 Mar** - Visited with Pat Williams who had been removed from a British Army hospital in Taranto to one nearby. His accident after four years at West Point and then Air Corps flight training has left him at loose ends. I'm sure he will eventually get squared away and do well in whatever line of work he selects.

**17 Mar** - Group took off on a mission to Vienna but due to extremely poor weather, no bombs were dropped.

**18 Mar** - My second mission to the Lavariano Airfield at the head of the Adriatic. Planes were loaded with fragmentation bombs and a fine pattern was laid down. The only rub was that there were no aircraft on the field. Flew with Hamer's crew from the 725th Squadron.

**19 Mar** - Raid on Steyr ball bearing plant in Austria scheduled but the mission was scrubbed before briefing.

**22 Mar** - Attempted the Steyr raid again but bad weather forced the 15th AF to return with no bombs having been dropped. I was flying with Balliet's crew of the 725th Squadron. I had worked with him before when we were stationed in Casper, Wyoming. The San Pancrazio unit lost an aircraft on take-off.

**24 Mar** - My third mission, again to Steyr, but not very productive due to weather. Flew with Brownell's crew from the 727th.

**25 Mar** - As if living conditions weren't bad enough, Younkin had to go and buy a clarinet!

**28 Mar** - Got in my fourth mission on a raid against the marshalling yards at Bolzano in the Alps. Moved up to the lead aircraft of the high flight and learned the technique with Howard's crew from the 725th.

**30 Mar** - Fifth mission to Sofia with Balliet's crew leading the low flight. The Group didn't do very well but I don't know why. I spent most of the time looking into the sun and at the same time keeping the flight in position.

**1 Apr** - Group had a rough trip to Steyr and to climax it, it didn't accomplish much.

**2 Apr** - For my sixth mission I went to Budapest. That is, we eventually got there after unusually strong and unexpected winds caused us to tour the Balkans. We bombed upwind and I thought we'd never get to the target. It also gave the anti-aircraft time to get well lined up. I flew with Tuney's crew from the 725th and picked up a good sized hole just aft of the flight deck.

**4 Apr** - Target today - Budapest - but weather kept the Group from reaching the objective.

**5 Apr** - Younkin drew a honey today - Ploesti. Results were good although losses were heavy and included all but one plane in the low flight. Fighters took the heaviest toll. At Manduria we had one plane crash and blow up on take-off. The Squadron C.O. of the 724th is among those MIA.

**6 Apr** - Today the Group started to move to a new field built for it at Castelluccia just south of Foggia after a month of operating the hard way. Major Burleigh who became Group Ops Officer shortly after I joined became 724th C.O. with Tom Walkey now becoming the S-3. Younkin who has the most experience is, unfortunately, the junior Captain and is somewhat unhappy. However, Colonel Eaton implied he is trying to rectify the situation. I moved to San Pancrazio and expect to go to the new site tomorrow.



CASTELLUCCIA GROUP HEADQUARTERS

S-2 (INTELLIGENCE)

S-3 (OPERATIONS)

**7 Apr** - Made the trip to Castelluccia and moved into the villa in which Group Headquarters is located. This is an improvement. The runway is pierced steel plank laid over a coral-like base called caleechi (phonetic). All planes have PSP revetments. The Squadrons still have to live under canvas but now that we have our own field everyone feels like putting in more effort to improve accommodations. We are now assigned to the 49th Wing

headed by Colonel William Lee. Other Groups include the 461st and the 484th.

**8 Apr** - Had a bath today.

**9 Apr** - Busy getting settled in new quarters and setting up the Operations Office.

**10 Apr** - More of the same.

**11 Apr** - Ditto

**12 Apr** - Seventh mission to Zagreb turned out to be a milk run. Flew with Carlson's crew from the 724th.

**13 Apr** - Target Budapest. One plane missing.

**14 Apr** - Stand-down. I got in touch with some friends who are in a Group nearby; the 456th of the 304th Wing at Orta Nova.

**15 Apr** - Flew my eighth mission with the target Bucharest, but cloud cover prevented bombing. I flew as pilot with a new crew from the 727; Fisher - in the first non-camouflaged plane the Group has received. I didn't find it to be the marked ship that Evans, the 727th C.O., seem to feel it would be. Group lost one aircraft.

**16 Apr** - Objective Brasov, Rumania but the results poor with a number of early returns. I went to Foggia and saw a movie. With Group Headquarters all together again we can have a schedule which permits those scheduled to fly, to get in a good night's sleep.

**17 Apr** - Stand-down

**18 Apr** - Mission went to Belgrade today and was peppered with flak, but all returned.

**19 Apr** - Stand-down so I did some more visiting.

**20 Apr** - Got in my ninth mission with Lindley's crew from the 726th Squadron. Lindley went through combat crew training at Casper, so I had to prove my confidence in the instruction we put out. Target was Ferrara but clouds interfered with the bombing.

**21 Apr** - Bucharest again for my tenth mission but I still haven't seen it. 15th AF ordered the Wings back after they got to the target area. I flew with Ryan's crew from the 724th.

**23 Apr** - Bad Voslau the target, results good.

**24 Apr** - Bucharest the combat mission, while Foggia and Barletta were the objectives of Byers, Group Navigator, and myself. PX and sightseeing the targets.

**25 Apr** - Stand-down. Softball season opened with Group beating the 726th; 16-10.

**26 Apr** - Got up for an 0400 briefing and then the mission was cancelled.

**27 Apr** - Stand-down: rain

**28 Apr** - Eleventh mission completed with Bell's crew from the 726th. Bombing was poor and one plane lost.

**29 Apr** - Target Toulon. Results were good and all planes accounted for.

**30 Apr** - Good results at Alessandria and no losses.

**1 May** - Stand-down. Younkin went on a junket to Corsica.

**2 May** - Target Parma with results not too sharp but no losses.

**3 May** - Stand-down.

**4 May** - Stand-down. Got in some non-

operational flying in the stripped down B-24; SKIPPER.

**5 May** - Got a look at Ploesti today on my twelfth mission. There's no doubt we struck oil because the smoke came up to about 18,000 feet. Flew with Long's crew from the 726th, and although there was plenty of flak, none of it seemed to be concentrated on the Group.

**6 May** - Group went to Pitesti, Rumania with good results and no losses. I took SKIPPER to Naples, Gioia and return.

**7 May** - This was not my day! Ran a practice mission to test a lead plane and had the bombardier drop his practice bombs through the bomb bay doors. Upon return I landed long going down hill and ran off the end of the runway. No damage except to my pride. Group went to Bucharest with good results and no losses.

**8 May** - Ploesti scheduled but cancellation came early. The 724th had a plane catch fire and blow up. The explosion wrecked two others. Those of us who weren't aware of the fire thought the war had really returned to this part of Italy. All that remained after the explosion were widely scattered fragments and a gaping hole where once there had been a revetment. Some 724th personnel reduced the damage by taxiing other planes from the danger area.

**9 May** - Mission to Weiner Neustadt laid on but weather forced a postponement.

**10 May** - Weiner Neustadt on again today and it appears the enemy was waiting. This was my thirteenth and for a time it looked like it would be unlucky. Flak started in at the initial point where red bursts were noted. On the bomb run the ship was well peppered which resulted in the hydraulic system being inoperative. The navigator on Wilson's crew from the 725th was wounded while I was bumped by several chunks of flak that came up through the floor, but fortunately had spent their force. Fished another piece out of the seat cushion on the way home. Results were good, but three planes were MIA.

**11 May** - Stand-down



451st GROUP COMMANDER  
COLONEL ROBERT E.L. EATON

**12 May** - We were briefed at 0325 in an effort to run a double mission. The first phase was run against Piombino but poor weather and slow regeneration of the aircraft forced cancellation of the

second phase by 15th AF. We were ready to go.

**13 May** - Mission to Faenza was flubbed. No losses anyway

**14 May** - Fourteenth mission was flown with Roach's crew of the 727th. Results were good and no losses suffered although our electrical system was knocked out by the flak.

**15 May** - Stand-down today so the target was ice cream at the Red Cross Club in Foggia.

**16 May** - Stand-down. Things are pretty quiet.

**17 May** - Mission against Elba with good results and no losses. One plane had difficulty on take-off and stacked up, but no serious injuries.

**18 May** - Ploesti was the target but the weather was so bad no bombs were dropped. Younkin, who had spent about a week at the front, returned and is very happy he is in the Air Corps.

**19 May** - The Group went after the Recco Viaduct today with 2000# bombs with the results in doubt. One plane had to abort shortly after take-off and upon landing, hit pretty hard causing a 2000 pounder to break loose and come skipping down the runway behind the plane. Everyone in the tower just about bailed out, but no explosion occurred. I made a trip to the depot at Gioia and while there saw some friends from Casper days.

**20 & 21 May** - Stand-downs

**22 May** - Target Carrara with the results indefinite but no losses.

**23 May** - Got in my fifteenth mission, a short one to Avezzano, but had to hit the alternate instead. Flew with Bowlan's crew from the 724th.

**24 May** - Weiner Neustadt on the program today but bad weather prevented any good being done.

**25 May** - Received news that daughter Betsy had arrived on 19 May! Group mission to the southern part of France was successful.

**26 May** - Went for a long ride to get my sixteenth mission. Target was the marshalling yards at Lyon, France. Results were good with no losses. We were in the air for better than nine hours. Flew with Chamber's crew from the 726th.



-- 726th --

M. HUTCHISON: G. CHAMBERS: UNKNOWN

**27 May** - Salon de Provence, France. Results good and no losses.

**28 May** - Visited Manduria and those I know



there. Floyd Robinson is a Squadron S-3 and has been busily putting himself on the schedule every other day and now lacks only a few credits to be eligible for a return to the ZI. Group stand-down today.

**29 May** - Weiner Neustadt again, but this time results were good along with the no losses.

**30 May** - Steyr, Austria. Results good and no losses.

**31 May** - For my seventeenth mission, I led the second attack unit to Ploesti with Miller's crew from the 726th. Results indefinite due to smoke but no losses.

**1 Jun** - Stand-down.



MAJOR L. YOUNKIN RECEIVES CONGRATULATIONS FROM C.O.

**2 Jun** - Younkin made Major which resulted in him becoming Group Operations Officer and Walkey now is the assistant. Tom is somewhat unhappy but Younkin certainly deserves the advance as he is well into his second tour. Mission went to Szolnok, Hungary, with good results and no losses.

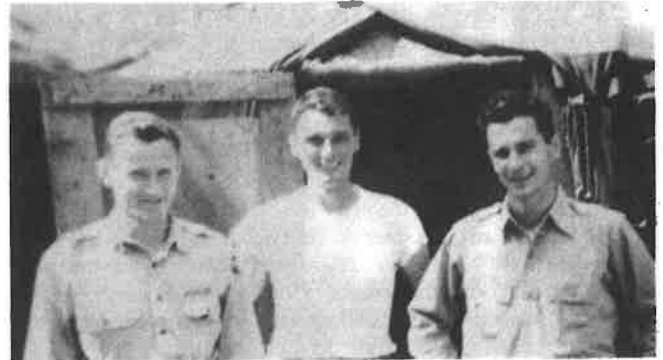
**3 Jun** - Stand-down. Colonel Eaton called me into his office this morning to tell me I am now the CO of the 724th Squadron. This came as a surprise as Burleigh seemed to be doing all right. However, apparently an injury to one of his family had him so distraught that he had been locking horns with Col. Eaton and as the latter said, "One of us has to go. Guess who?"

**4 Jun** - Mission against the Gad River bridge in Yugoslavia with good results and no losses.



724th OFFICERS LIVING QUARTERS  
PILOT - V.G. JOHNSON

**5 Jun** - First time for my Squadron to lead the Group and I racked up my eighteenth mission flying deputy lead with Johnson's crew. Kearney had Col. Eaton in the lead and it appears the results at Rimini were good. No losses.



MAJOR J. ANDERSON

CAPTAIN F. LAWTON

MAJOR M. DROBECK

**6 Jun** - Target today was Ploesti but the enemy has taken to smoking up the place so results are hard to determine. The 724th lost one. We also learned that the invasion of Europe had commenced.

**7 Jun** - An unsatisfactory mission against the Antheor Viaduct with planes scattered around after. It appears there were no losses; not in the 724th anyway.

**8 Jun** - Stand-down. The breather was devoted to maintenance which was beginning to fall behind.

**9 Jun** - Primary target was Munich but clouds forced the bombing of an alternate near Venice. No losses.

**10 Jun** - Group had a pretty good mission against oil storage facilities at Porto Marghera. I went along for my nineteenth mission with O'Connor's crew. His radio man was wounded but a flak vest prevented it from being more serious.

**11 Jun** - Poor results against Giurgiu (Bucharest) and one 724th crew was lost.

**12 Jun** - Stand-down.

**13 Jun** - Munich for my twentieth mission and a good job on the wrong target as a result of smoke pots. Flew with Bowlan's crew and there were no losses although other outfits caught fits from the fighters.

**14 Jun** - Had an easy one today - a marshalling yard in a relatively small town near Budapest. Results good. Losses none.

**15 & 16 Jun** - Stand-down.

**17 Jun** - The troops got off this morning and started assembling but the mission was then called off.

**18 Jun** - Stand-down.

**19 Jun** - We nearly got off on one this morning but rain forced a cancellation. About noon Wing Headquarters called me directly and notified me I was now a Major. This was bad etiquette as this type announcement should come from Group CO.

**20 Jun** - Stand-down. Had a presentation ceremony for an accumulation of Oak Leaf Clusters to Air Medals earned by crew members.

**21 Jun** - Briefed for Breslau but didn't get off.

22 Jun - Primary target was Trieste but weather forced a diversion to the alternate; Rimini. Results were not so hot, but there were no losses.

23 Jun - Headed east to Giurgiu. The bombing was sharper. One plane didn't make it back.

24 Jun - Stand-down. Officially opened the new Officers Club building with a party that got quite raucous.

25 Jun - Southern France was the locale for the objective today but there was little damage inflicted on the enemy and no losses on our side.

26 Jun - Had my first opportunity to lead the Group today on my twenty first mission. Target was in the Vienna area. Bowlan's crew was the lead crew and while we laid down a beautiful pattern it was well short of the target. This was an instance of all the bombardiers being really alert and dropping on the leader; unfortunately he made a mistake. He was using a technique recommended by the Group Bombardier without having practiced it thoroughly. Fortunately there were no losses in the abortive effort.

27 Jun - Stand-down.

28 Jun - Giurgiu with the results unknown and the losses zero.

29 Jun - Stand-down.



SKIPPER  
SQUADRON HACK

30 Jun - Group started for Blechammer today but weather forced a return. Group Ops notified me that I may get to go to Cairo to bring back a crew stranded there when a depot declared SKIPPER not safe to fly. Inasmuch as Col. Eaton had decreed that I fly only when the Squadron leads the Group, I am not going to lose out on more than one mission, if that.

1 Jul - Munich set up for today but called off at the last minute. These last minute cancellations are the results of early morning weather reconnaissance flights into the target area.

2 Jul - Results at Budapest were fair and negative losses.

3 Jul - Group left for Bucharest while Moran, Zraick, Carringer, Coyle and I took off for Cairo. We got off at 0645 and went via Tunis where rumor had it that SKIPPER had been moved and landed at Payne Field, Cairo, at 1815.

4 Jul - With Ed Zraick able to speak Arabic we were better able to haggle with guides, vendors and beggars.



CAIRO EXCURSION  
UNKNOWN - ANDERSON - ZRAICK - UNKNOWN

5 Jul - Visited the Pyramids, Sphinx and several Mosques. Window shopped, and in the evening took in a movie.

6 Jul - Did my shopping today for the most part at the PX. In the evening we made a tour of the night clubs. The entertainment consists of a series of belly dancers with the only variation being the costume of the dancer.

7 Jul - Wheels up at 0930 for the flight home. We landed at Benghazi for fuel and like all of the desert along the north coast of Africa it was full of wrecked material and the remains of field fortifications left over from the desert campaigns in that area. We arrived back in Castelluccio about 2030 having logged about ten hours flying time. Found the 724th had lost a crew in a raid that day.

8 Jul - Target was Vienna with good results and no losses.

9 Jul - Stand-down. Received three new crews today which were most welcome seeing as how we have quite a few Fifty Mission boys sitting around that we can't use.

10 Jul - Stand-down. A group of the original crews that had completed their missions left today. What a bunch of big grins there were.

11 Jul - Target Toulon. Losses none.

12 Jul - Nimes, France. Weather poor but no losses.

13 Jul - Stand-down. We immediately got a training mission into the air to familiarize newcomers with our take-off, rendezvous, formation and landing procedures.

14 Jul - 726th led a mission to Budapest today but the results were not very good. On the return the lead ship with Haltom, Squadron CO, and Long's crew had to bail out while over Yugoslavia. Maybe the partisans will get them.

15 Jul - Finally got in my twenty second mission - a Group lead - to Weiner Neudorf. Due to clouds we bombed by radar but a break enabled us to get photos of the results which were pretty good. Flew with Rollins who has developed into my best lead pilot. Gibbons is the lead navigator and Wolfey the bombardier. One plane was lost.

**16 Jul** - Target was Arles in southern France with fair results and no losses. **Long** of the 726th returned from Yugoslavia today which is better than par for the course seeing as how he only went down on the 14th. **Halton** apparently couldn't run as fast and was captured by the Germans.

**18 Jul** - Target was close to Switzerland today at Fredrichshaven but everyone seemed to be so worried about hitting neutral territory they missed the target too.

**19 Jul** - Twenty third mission today to Munich with fair results. One aircraft is missing. **Rollins** again handled the mechanics of flying the lead ship.

**20 Jul** - Stand-down today so we got into the air on a practice mission.

**21 Jul** - Group ran one of its longest missions today to Brux. **Col. Eaton** lead this one. There were no losses in the 724th.

**22 Jul** - Back to Ploesti again. Only loss was one aircraft on take-off, but it did not belong to the 724th.

**23 & 24 Jul** - Stand-down.

**25 Jul** - Had a rough mission to Linz today although there were no losses. **Tom Walkey**, who has become 726th CO led this one and obtained excellent results.

**26 Jul** - Had a short one today to Berat, Albania. It was another Group lead and my twenty fourth mission. **Rollins** handled the controls. One plane was lost although there wasn't much opposition.

**27 Jul** - Hit Budapest again but not too accurately.

**28 Jul** - Hit Ploesti. Losses two.

**29 Jul** - Stand-down. Several of us in Squadron went off on a picnic to Manfredonia. Of course yours truly was sure he wouldn't get sunburned, but was - to a turn.



MANFREDONIA SOJOURN

Standing: UNKNOWN: ANDERSON: DROBECK

Seated: UNKNOWN: PRATT: UNKNOWN: MANOOGIAN: UNKNOWN

**30 Jul** - Budapest the target again today. **Paul Johnshoy** was lucky on this one. An anti-aircraft projectile hit his plane right at the left wing root, but went through without exploding. They had gas all over the place for a while, but finally managed to plug up leaks, transfer fuel to whole tanks and get home without further incident.

**31 Jul** - My twenty fifth mission took me to Bucharest with **Rutkowski's crew**. Results were not



JOHNSHOY'S GOOD FORTUNE  
GROUNDCREW CHECKS A/C DAMAGE

good. One plane ditched in the Adriatic on the way home and three crew members who did not wait for the life rafts floated off in their Mae Wests just before dark and were lost.

**1 Aug** - Stand-down.

**2 Aug** - Returned to southern France area; Le Pontel. Pattern looked good but apparently nothing vital was hit. One ship MIA.

**3 Aug** - Tried Fredrichshaven again but still nothing accomplished.

**4 Aug** - Stand-down. Made a flight to Naples and on the way took a look into Vesuvius, which had been acting up of late. Notified I have been awarded the DFC of the 15 July mission.

**5 Aug** - Another stand-down.

**6 Aug** - A jaunt to southern France again; Miramas.

**7 Aug** - Twenty sixth mission completed today with the target Blechammer. Although this was a well defended target we found the fighters and flak concentrated on other Groups. Target was smoked in so results were unobserved. Flew in the deputy lead position with **Winden's crew**.

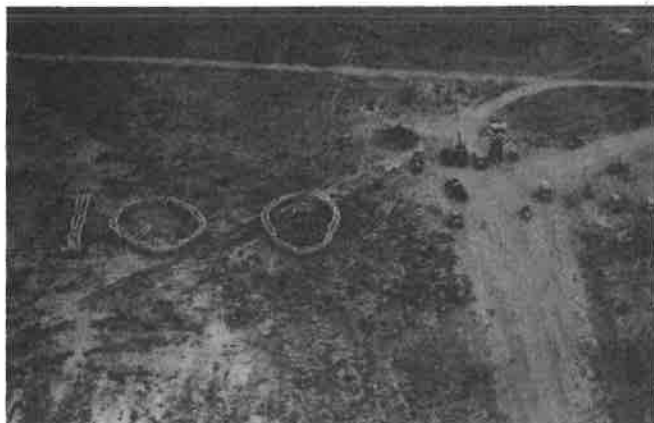
**8 Aug** - Another long one scheduled today, but called off prior to take-off.

**9 Aug** - Group did a great job on an oil refinery near Budapest.



CASTELLUCCIA AIR BASE  
TOWER RADIO CALL-SIGN: "HICCUP"

**10 Aug** - Group completed its 100th mission with a raid on Ploesti.



GREETINGS ON 100th MISSION  
GROUND PERSONNEL WELCOMES BACK FLYERS

**11 Aug** - We were all set and ready to wind up the engines this morning when the mission was cancelled.

**12 Aug** - Hit a coastal battery near Genoa.

**13 Aug** - More of the same. Bombed by flights. I went along with Heath's crew which hit the target. My twenty seventh.

**14 Aug** - Another coastal battery in southern France. Visual observation indicated it was well hit but there were no confirming photos.

**15 Aug** - The invasion of southern France is on. We supported the landing and lost a ship on take-off. Everyone was real happy our Wing had not been selected to do the dawn bombing. The 47th Wing, which was, had to practice night formation flying and even so lost quite a few when the mission was executed.

**16 Aug** - Left for the rest camp on Capri. I've been looking forward to this as I have heard it is a wonderful place.

**17 Aug** - Roamed around the island, played some tennis and swam.

**18 Aug** - Sightseeing to include the Blue Grotto, more tennis and swimming.

**19 Aug** - Hiked up to the ruins of a villa built by the Roman Emperor Tiberius. Seems strange to see the scribbled names of Germans who had preceded us in using this place. More swimming.

**20 Aug** - On our way down to the beach the fool driver - a GI - tipped over the trailer in which about ten of were riding. I was scraped along the left side but several nurses were pitched into a stone wall and hurt more severely.

**21 Aug** - Being rather stiff from the accident yesterday, I just loafed around the hotel.

**22 Aug** - Back to the olive grove today and found we lost one crew on the mission today.

**23 Aug** - Fighters really got to the 724th today in the Vienna area and three planes are MIA. Apparently they straggled a little too much. Some replacement crews arrived just before the mission return. They were a little shook up to see only 50% of our crews return. I had to reassure them this was most unusual.

**24 Aug** - Chalked up my twenty eight mission

today in an effort to get the Ferrara railroad bridge. Each of the Wings in the 15th AF had had a crack at it and today was our turn. We got the approaches on the south side but the main span is still up. The 451st was the last Group in, and the enemy flak batteries had our altitude figured perfectly. Fortunately they were a bit off in tracking, but even so it was hot for a time. One piece of flak went through the windshield in front of me and lodged in the compass bowl which probably saved Rollins from a hole in the head. Even so he got plexi-glass splinters in the face and I in the wrist. In spite of the fire which produced much damage, all the planes got out and were able to return to base.

**25 Aug** - Stand-down which was sorely needed for maintenance. A presentation ceremony was held at Group HQ with the Wing CO, Colonel Lee, making the presentations.

**26 Aug** - Bucharest. Not very good.

**27 Aug** - Went after the viaduct north of Udine - but as Colonel Eaton said at the critique, "No fighters, no flak, no damage to the Hun."

**28 Aug** - Group had fair results in an attack on a railroad bridge in Hungary.

**29 Aug** - For my twenty ninth mission I flew in the deputy lead position with Johnshoy's crew against the marshalling yards at Szeged, Hungary. The yards took quite a pasting.

**30 Aug** - Stand-down.

**31 Aug** - Stand-down again.

**1 Sep** - Target was Ferrara again but clouds prevented visual sighting and standard operating procedure prohibits radar bombing in Italy.

**2 Sep** - Headed into Yugoslavia today to a railroad bridge which was well hit. The Group is due to be presented with a Distinguished Unit Citation so we had a dry run of the ceremony. Some of our POW's, who had been held in Rumania returned to us on their way to the States. In talking with some of them I learned that Floyd Robinson had been sitting in prison camp while I had been thinking he had probably finished up his missions and gone home a long time ago.

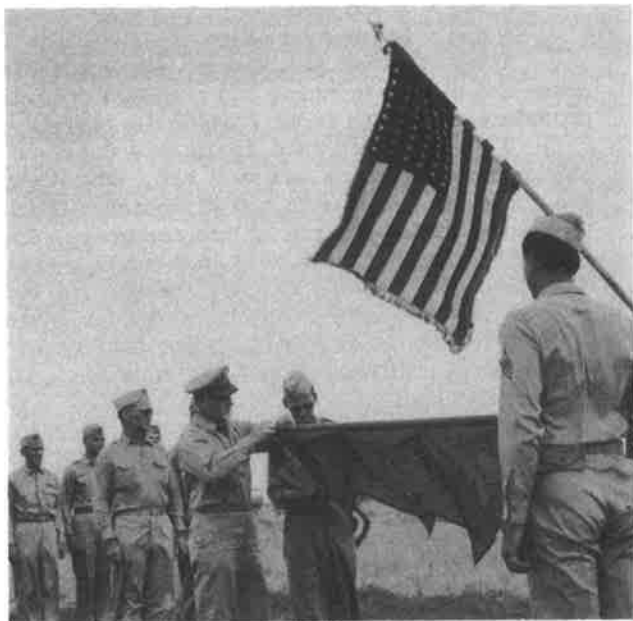


RETURNING POW'S  
726th SQUAD C.O., MAJ C. HALTOM & T/SGT E. LYNATT



TAKE-OFF MISHAP  
3 SEPTEMBER 1944

**3 Sep** - The Group started on a mission but the fourth plane had a minor accident on the end of the runway and caught fire. The crew got out alright but the plane didn't blow up for an hour and a half. The fire fighters were in a quandary as they hated to see the plane burn for so long without doing anything about it, yet it wouldn't be prudent to get close to it. The presentation ceremony took place this afternoon with General Twining doing the honors.



GENERAL TWINING  
FIRST "DISTINGUISHED UNIT CITATION"

**4 Sep** - Stand-down.

**5 Sep** - Target Belgrade; but no bombs dropped because of the clouds. My college baseball coach, Wally French, came over for a visit. He is a Squadron Executive Officer in a B-17 Group located north of Foggia.

**6 Sep** - Colonel Eaton bumped me out of my spot in the lead aircraft today and I think he intended I should sit this one out. However, he didn't make that clear so I went along for my

thirtieth mission as pilot of the #4 ship on a mission to Belgrade. Soon after starting on course I was wishing I had stayed home. We passed through another Group flying on a course about 90 degrees to ours and at the same altitude. I don't know who was right, but all I could visualize was winding up chewing the side out of, or the tail off of another B-24, or vice versa. Being in the #4 spot with the lead ship directly above, wing ships on either side, and high and low flights crossing above and below, I couldn't make any abrupt moves to get out of there. Working on the theory the lead ship didn't want to hit anyone more than I did, I pulled up real close and hung on. After this the flak at Belgrade was anti-climax.

**7 Sep** - Stand-down.

**8 Sep** - Another stand-down with indications that some unusual deal is coming up.

**9 Sep** - Stand-down to get ships prepared and plans made for ferry flights to Lyon, France. Apparently the Germans did such a thorough demolition job on the Rhone River valley road that the Seventh Army, and its supporting fighter bombers, have outrun their supplies. We are suppose to fly to Lyon with max fuel, oil, ammo, and bombs, and unload all but the fuel necessary to get us to some recovery base until such time as a more efficient supply system can be put in operation. At present, the plan is possibly to move a skeleton maintenance and operations force to an airfield outside of Marseille. This is a proposed alternate to coming all the way back to home base.

**10 Sep** - First ferry flight took off for Lyon today and will spend the night at Marseille. However, they will just load up with enough gas to get back here. Apparently refueling facilities, the supply situation and the field itself will not permit sustained operations.

**11 Sep** - Another contingent went up to Lyon today while the first bunch straggled back. They had some hair raising tales about landing on the wet sod field at Marseille and getting stopped. Guess it is just as well no attempt was made to sustain that operation.

**12 Sep** - Made one of the ferry trips today which later turned out to be my thirty first mission. At first these flights were suppose to be just so much flying time, but finally it was ruled that they count towards the required fifty missions. In the course of skirting Switzerland we were subject to interception from northern Italy and Southwest Germany, so these were considered combat missions. Finally the standard operating procedure was to unload the extra gas from bomb bay tanks and wing tip tanks into 55 gallon drums we also carried. Drop the ammo boxes, bombs if carried, drums full of oil, and get off the field again as soon as possible. What a mad house with fighters, light bombers, and recce planes taking off and landing from combat missions while the B-24s came and went and vied for parking space. If any plane came up with a malfunction that prevented it from flying, there was no telling if and when we would see it again. The crew just loaded into another ship and came home.



13 Sep - Stand-down; bad weather.

14 Sep - Another stand-down. Received a Purple Heart for my "wounds" on the Ferrara mission. The football season opened with a rugged game of "touch."

15 Sep - Another supply mission for my thirty second. While on the ground traded some cigarettes for some luscious pears. Tomorrow I'm to leave for some R&R in Rome.

16 Sep - Arrived in Rome via air lift provided by the 451st and took off on a walk to do some window shopping and sightseeing.

17 Sep - More sightseeing. I had always visualized the Roman ruins as being set apart from the more modern parts of the city, but found this idea to be false. They are scattered throughout the city.

18 Sep - Sightseeing today included the Vatican. Attended the daily audience held by the Pope.

19 Sep - Final shopping and returned after lunch to Castelluccio.

20 Sep - Stand-down.

21 Sep - Stand-down again. Might as well have stayed in Rome.

22 Sep - Got in another supply mission to Lyon today - my thirty third. This field at Lyon is really something of a tower operators nightmare. Fighters apparently take-off and land in whatever direction appeals to them. Today while standing on the wing and watching the unloading operations, a P-47 took off before a B-24 had completely cleared the active runway. The "hot rock" got off alright and then apparently trying to give the "big bird" a thrill held his plane down so as to just skim over the wing. The maneuver worked fine except that his gear had not retracted completely and he sliced the wing off the B-24 outboard of the #4 engine. The P-47 nosed into the ground and slewed to a stop at the airport boundary, whereupon the pilot leaped out, grabbed his chute and headed back for his operations tent. If he was Russian they would have shot him, but I guess he became the central figure at the bar attesting to the ruggedness of the P-47. Flew today with Rutkowski's crew.

23 Sep - Stand-down in order to get the ball turrets back in our planes and get ready for bombing missions again.

24 Sep - Back to flak alley again; only they are breaking us in gradually with a mission to Athens. The Squadron led and did a good job, but I didn't get to go.

25 Sep - Off to Athens again in spite of some awful base area weather. Results mediocre today.

26 Sep - Stand-down.

27 Sep - More of the same.

28 Sep - Test hopped a lead ship today and in the course of taking it to altitude, discovered the icing season is upon us.

29 Sep - Today the Group received replacement jeeps and the 724th got four. Naturally I got one with the others going to those sections that had taken the best care of the original issue.

30 Sep - A new idea was tried out today. Each Group was to send out a certain number of aircraft on a "Red" and a "Blue" mission. "Red" was to be a

relatively rough one and the "Blue" a milk run. So we had two briefings, but the weather stepped in and we didn't go anywhere after all.

1, 2, & 3 Oct - Stand-down; rain.

4 Oct - Got off on a double mission today to Munich and Latisana. Results at Munich were good but clouds hindered the bombing at the latter which was not a good radar target. General Twining inspected our Squadron area and encouraged our building program of putting up stone houses in lieu of staying in tents for the winter months.

5 Oct - Stand-down.

6 Oct - No combat mission today, but we had a practice one to indoctrinate replacements with our procedures. We also moved into our house which has a built in shower with hot and cold running water, cement floor, and other improvements over the old tent.

7 Oct - Finally chalked up another mission today - my thirty fourth - when Rollins and I led a strike against the Komarno marshalling yards in Hungary. Results were good.



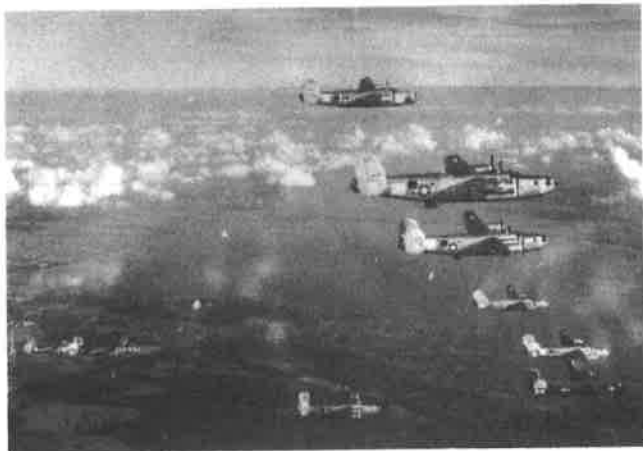
"MINNESOTA MAULER" LEAD SHIP  
KOMARON MISSION

8 & 9 Oct - Stand-down.

10 Oct - Group ran a rather abortive mission against the Castelfranco marshalling yards, but dropped no bombs due to weather. Learned today that my favorite lead plane -BURMA BOUND- which had been landed on the island of Vis with all sorts of battle damage, was probably doomed to stay there for some time.

11 Oct - Group went off to Vienna but clouds prevented any real effective bombing.

12 Oct - Had a ticklish situation for my thirty fifth mission against Bologna. The target was German troop barracks south of the city. but with the Fifth Army pushing north out of the Apennines towards the city, it was a question whether they would get to the spot before we showed up. They were supposed to mark, with panels, the limits of their advance so as to prevent our bombing our own troops. When we arrived no panels could be seen, but lots of dust well south of town seemed to indicate an artillery preparation in that area, so we went ahead and dropped. Results were good on the wrong group of barracks. Used Jackson as the lead pilot today. We had no flak.



ENROUTE TO VIENNA, AUSTRIA

13 Oct - Back to Vienna today where the Group took a drubbing. **Tom Walkey** of the 726th is MIA. He had to bail out while still over Yugoslavia on the return, but passed along instructions not to dispose of his liquor or pack up his clothes as he would be back in ten days. We shall see. **Doc Moran**, who led our flight, made a neat belly landing at our field when he couldn't get the main gear down. His hydraulic system was out and the emergency system appeared inoperative. (Later it was determined flak had cut the cable from the drum to the uplocks.) They had already pushed out the nose wheel and this really made the landing a beauty. No props were nicked and only the belly, aft of the bomb bay, was damaged. Looks as if the nose wheel down, if possible, is SOP for B-24 belly landings in the future. Just to keep it from being too easy the landing was accomplished on three engines.

14 Oct - My thirty sixth mission was to Oditol Oil Refinery in Silesia; a long haul. **Jackson** again flew as the lead pilot and did a find job. The weather was terrible with layers of clouds at all altitudes. Fortunately they were not thick and we were able to hold formation as we penetrated them. After checking with me and finding out that we were going to try to go to the primary target, the 461st and 484th pulled out and went to second-



"1" WHEEL LANDING



Top: UNLOADING GEAR THROUGH WAIST WINDOWS  
Lower: RELIEF AND CONGRATULATIONS BY ALL

aries. It turned out later that we were the only bomber Group in the 15th AF dispatched on the mission to go to this target. The fighters assured me they could make it, and they did. We started our bomb run by radar, but were able to complete it visually and got our part of the target. Flak was intense but a fifteen degree turn on the bomb run enabled us to miss a large predicted concentration. Weather on the way back was much improved.

15 Oct - Stand-down. Used the occasion to have a presentation ceremony.

16 Oct - Target today was Linz. **Rollins** led the second attack unit.

17 Oct - Objective Vienna but bad weather forced abandonment. In line with operations policy the bombs were unloaded in Germany. Photos seem to indicate that all that was accomplished was the cutting down of some trees.

18 Oct - Mission was called off at the last minute. In a masterpiece of timing Betsy's picture arrived as my birthday present.

19 Oct - Stand-down.

20 Oct - Target in northern Italy but not much good was accomplished.

21 Oct - Today we went to briefing, got in the planes and then climbed out when the mission was scrubbed.

22 Oct - Stand-down.

23 Oct - Munich today for my thirty seventh. Used **Smith** today as the lead pilot. Used radar to bomb through solid overcast. Very little flak as I guess the Germans didn't want to give us any hints

as to whether we were getting hot or not. Probably the latter

**24 Oct** - Group ordered a practice mission and I went along to observe. Two of my ships, flown by recent arrivals, ticked each other but made it back to the field with minor damage. Boy, I dislike these practice deals more than actual combat missions.

**25 Oct** - Stand-down. Walkey is back without missing his ETA by much. However, he is being sent home.

**26 Oct** - Stand-down.

**27 Oct** - Flew to Manduria and Grottaglia but wasn't able to land inasmuch as the fields were flooded.

**28 Oct** - Stand-down.

**29 Oct** - Group off for Regensburg today but weather forced a Group abort.

**30 Oct** - Had another two force mission called off today.

**31 Oct** - We were in the air on a practice mission when an ops order came through to go to Podgorica. What a Chinese fire drill getting the practice formation back, ships fueled and armed, crews fed and briefed. After all of this no one hit the target.

**1 Nov** - Off to Vienna today on my thirty eight with Rollins. Weather was not cooperative and the formation went to 28,500 feet endeavoring to get over it. This is the highest I have had a formation of B-24s, although our average altitude has been pushed up due to increased AA accuracy. We suddenly broke out over Vienna in the clear, but bombed by radar because it was too late to change to visual methods. Bombs were pretty well scattered through the city, but photos showed that nearly everyone hit something of military significance. Somebody even salvoed his bombs and hit an oil storage area. Flak was intense and accurate. We were able to nurse all the crippled planes back as far as the Yugoslavian coast. We came home blithely unaware that flak had started a gas leak over the #3 supercharger, but fortunately the slipstream kept it off the red hot metal.

**2 Nov** - Flew to Ancona to bring back Spiegel and the bombardier from Merritt's crew, who had quite a story. Their ship had been hit over Vienna but had been able to stay with the Group to the Yugoslavian coast. Here they headed directly across the Adriatic to cut down on over water time. The plane was becoming increasingly difficult to control. While Spiegel, a veteran co-pilot, was out of his seat checking the ship, Merritt decided things were getting out of hand and gave the order to bail out. Spiegel hustled back to the flight deck for a final look, found everyone appeared to have gone but decided things weren't that bad and that it would be better to stay with the aircraft until shore was reached. Shortly thereafter the bombardier, who had been slow in getting out, saw Spiegel and decided to stay too. When shore was reached they attempted to turn south but the auto-pilot was no longer able to control the out of trim aircraft, so the two remaining crew members bailed out over land and were picked up soon after. Mer-

ritt and the rest of the crew are MIA.

At Ancona we found a B-24 belonging to the Group, which had been damaged, but now was ready to be returned to us. We had enough flight personnel to make up two crews, so in spite of mud up to the axles, we managed to blast it loose and taxi it up onto the runway.

**3 Nov** - Went back to Ancona again today, but this time in a B-25 to bring back Merritt's body which had been recovered.

**4 Nov** - Mission to Augsburg today but an alternate was hit as the radar malfunctioned on both the lead and deputy lead planes. Sanford, who is serving as assistant ops officer was lucky on this one. The crew he was flying with had to abort early while crossing the northern end of the Adriatic, was hit by a fighter who made only one pass. The crew was caught completely by surprise, but as the fighter failed to follow up his advantage, our B-24 got home. This drove home the point to the new crews the value of staying alert whenever over enemy territory, even though he had ceased normal air operations in that area.

**5 Nov** - Vienna with the bombing being done by radar. One of the 724th planes is missing.

**6 Nov** - Vienna again. Our house nearly caught fire today when the feed to the stove malfunctioned. In attempting to put it out we nearly did ourselves in by using a Pyrene extinguisher in the closed area. Finally had a use for my gas mask. No real damage was done but nearly everything has a layer of soot on it.

**7 Nov** - Group mission to Sarajevo with good results. Its official now that I have flown my last combat mission in this tour because I received orders sending me home. I made thirty eight sorties which with the double credit allowed for certain targets gave me 51 mission credits.

**8 Nov** - Stand-down so I went over to the 456th to say good-bye to a good friend and classmate there only to find he is MIA on the Sarajevo mission. (Later this changed to KIA because Clark had the misfortune of parachuting into the midst of troop concentrations that had just been bombed.)

**9 Nov** - Went over to the 301st Group and said so-long to the baseball coach, Wally French. Also met a fighter pilot classmate, George Buck, who has been doing great things with the P-51s. George recently took on an overwhelming number of MEs and FWs with his formation and shot down numerous without a loss.

**10 Nov** - Packing.

**11 Nov** - Invited some of my Irish friends; Moran, Muldoon and McKenna to listen to the Army-Notre Dame game. The game exceeded my fondest expectations with the Army winning 59 to 0. Made the troops stay and listen to the whole game. Colonel Knapp, who has succeeded Colonel Eaton as Group CO, presented me with the Silver Star (Manoogian strikes again!) for the 14 October mission. This was quite a surprise.

**12 Nov** - Left the organization after lunch today and although it was hard to say good-bye to the fellows with whom I had worked closely for some time, still the anticipation of getting home eased



CAPTAIN "MANOOG" SQDN INTELLIGENCE OFFICER

the task. Also, most of the flying personnel that I had become closely acquainted had already departed, or were due to go shortly. Younkin had finished up his second tour, Byers, Hughes, Walkey, Young, Wilson, Bowen, Jarvis, Johnshoy, Moran and many others had all been replaced or were due to be replaced by new personnel who were, no doubt, just as fine and capable individuals, but somehow by not having shared many of our experiences never seemed as close. They probably felt pretty much the same and were glad to see the old fogeys go.

After my experiences with replacement depots and personnel processing organizations on the way over, I was most agreeably surprised with the single room with private bath assigned to me in the hotel in Naples.

18 Nov - Boarded the USS Mount Vernon in Naples, and on 28 November landed in Boston.

SILVER STAR PRESENTATION  
MAJOR ANDERSON - COLONEL KNAPP, GROUP C.O.

.... End of Journal ....

Post Script: All names underlined and/or boldfaced indicate members of the 451st Bomb Group, and are noted throughout the journal. This office extends its gratitude to Colonel Anderson for granting us the privilege in publishing his story. (Ed.)

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## WORDS FROM THE FLIGHT DECK

Bob Karstensen

**Pardon me** while I reshape this question mark, that hangs over my head. I want to make it into a stick to rap myself on the head in order to put into perspective what I had overheard about the 8th Army Air Force, of WW-II.

We, of the 15th AAF, always considered the 8th as the "Hollywood Air Force," knowing full well that they had many more creature comforts, better publicity, and more English speaking social amenities (girls) than we did. Reporters and photographers chose England, above the mud and heat of Italy, to file their stories and pictures. Unlike the 15th AAF, the 8th AAF seemed to have the best of everything.

But something apart from the social amenities of the 8th was driven home while I was in Norfolk, Virginia scouting out our possible host hotel. On that occasion I encountered a part of the 8th AAF, the 351st Bomb Group, having their annual reunion in that city. Not unlike me, I cozied up to some guys hoping to get a better perspective of what the area had to offer. Some of what I heard was as I expected; GREAT host city, GOOD hotel, well planned programs, etc, etc. But what put the question mark over my head leads me to write this parable.

Seated comfortably in the lobby I struck up a conversation with one of the Group's (circa 1943) higher echelon personnel. We chatted amiably about this and that, relating to the 8th and 15th AAF's history, and the degree of difference between the B-17 and the B-24. We were interrupted when another former Headquarter officer recognized my ombudsman and our visit drifted away into other topics. I listened, enjoying the rapport these two had as they reviewed their past friendship. What brought me up tight was when they started talking about other officers that had been promoted from enlisted man status to the ranks of Warrant Officer or second Lieutenant while in England. I listened in amazement as name after name was brought to light. In time I took leave of these gentlemen and tried to digest this strange set of circumstances in which enlisted men were given commissions, in what I considered wholesale lots, far different than what I'd ever heard was practiced by the 15th AAF.

Stunned, but somewhat reconciled from what I'd just heard, I engaged another 351st member in conversation. During the course of our visit I repeated what I had previously heard as to officer ratings for enlisted men. WELL, apparently I hit a "tap root" of information on this subject. This man, I'll call him Mitch, for lack of a full name, was a product of this same promotional ordination.

Mitch arrived in England early in May of 1943 as a Staff Sergeant. Assigned as Radio Operator on a crew he flew a total of 24 missions. What happened between his arrival and his last mission is the amazing part.

Having worked for a newspaper prior to his service, he wrote to his former editor offering what information that would clear censors, for publication in the paper - at the editors discretion. By this time he had gotten his Technical Sergeant rating (as high as was granted under his training). General Eaker, then Commander of the 8th AAF, in an effort to cement public relations with the British, decreed that anyone that showed his ability to promote, by word or action, this policy, would get a promotion. Mitch, not one to pass up a stripe, brought a copy of his article to his superiors and was immediately made a Master Sergeant! He claimed to be only one of two that flew as M/Sgt in the 8th; at that time. Barely entrenched as a M/Sgt, word was sent down that there was a need for combat experienced Radio Operators to act as instructors for the new troops coming into Group. Again Mitch offered his services; was accepted; and commissioned a 2nd Lieutenant. Before he left England, and the 8th AAF, he held the rank of Captain! Staff Sergeant to Captain -- amazing!

It seems hard to justify, at least within our tenure of combat, how easily these commissions were handed out. And all without the heroics of what we call a "battlefield commission." But, looking at the other side of the coin, we know there was a shortage of trained personnel, and where better was there a training grounds than over the "Fortress of Europe."

So, friends, as far as I'm concerned the jury is still out. Were these advancements justified? Was the "Hollywood Air Force" just living up to its reputation? Was the "Press" doing a number for the 8th that was not reflected in the news stories coming through for the 15th? "Tis a puzzlement."

\* \* \* \* \*

**Roster availability** has taken on a different format. Over the past months, since after our 1986 reunion, a new procedure has been instituted in the offering of our membership roster. Rather than sending a total GROUP listing of our members, we have opted to release names only by Squadrons. Therefore, when you make your request for a roster, be prepared to receive only those names from within your home Squadron.

Another safeguard that we've built into our presentation is to omit the street addresses. But to offer our bonafide members the opportunity to have access to these addresses with a simple request to this office for THOSE specific addresses. We are only offering ten per request. In most cases, should your need be urgent, the person you are seeking can be found through the AT&T's "Directory Assistance."

We find this new system of presentation has become imperative to the safeguarding of our mem-

bers from being placed on an unwanted, unsolicited, and unintended mailing list. The count of the members now located, nearly thirteen hundred, is certainly an enticement to many commercial mailing list firms, and unscrupulous entrepreneurs, to get their hands on a current copy to sell, or to use these addresses, for profitable ventures.

Our early intent, on the starting of our reformed Group, was to build a membership that could easily interact with each other through letters or phone contacts. In this vein we published and mailed Rosters to all viable members. But, as our membership grew, so did our roster. Each factor compounded upon itself to make the publishing and mailing of these rosters more of an onus than an asset. First off, the cost to redo was getting astronomical: Secondly, since the cost was going up, the printing of the rosters became less frequent: Thirdly, since the rosters were becoming outdated in a short time (with new members and changes of addresses of our regular members) their effectiveness was of less value to the recipient: Fourth, there were some that had no interest in receiving a current roster. Thus, we were sending out costly material to those that had no wish, or desire for same.

Our policy on offering Rosters is still in effect to viable members. But be aware, unless you request specific addresses of particular members, you will receive an abbreviated listing (without street addresses) but with sufficient information to recognize a person as to their former rank, duty and current general location. This will be presented in computer print-outs and will be up to date as to last-found member, or a current members latest change of location. Also included will be the phone number of those that are willing to share them. If you haven't, as yet, offered your phone number .. we would be pleased if you did so.

Our effort to safeguard our members from whatever unwanted mailings he may encounter by having joined our organization, may not be fool-proof in every aspect, but be assured we are attempting to plug all the holes that become known. Your privacy and protection from such unwanted mailings is upmost in our thoughts.

Also, we do not offer our roster to any other organization, no matter how well intention they appear to be. Locator Services have sought our roster to enhance their scope of references. Some have even offered a dollar amount for each viable address offered. All these overtures are swiftly rejected. Other well meaning WW-II groups are also interested in checking-out our mailing list. To these I say, "We'll be glad to run your specific requests in our AD-LIB, but no names or addresses will be given out in wholesale lots."

As you see, "We really do care."

\* \* \* \* \*

**To those that recall** our story on Jack Martin (724th), and his illusive check-out pilot, we have sad news to report. Milton Radovsky, Bombardier in

(con't Page 26, Col. 2)



## LIBERATOR TO BE REBUILT

(451st "Citadel" circa 1944)



"I am an old B-24 Liberator bomber of WW-II. Almost forgotten, unheralded, ugly duckling -- but wait, I had a range of 1,700 miles.

I dropped more tonnage, flew cargo, reconnaissance, anti-submarine, in every battle zone I was there. From China, Japan, all of South Pacific, Asia, Asia Minor, Ploesti oil fields - Hitler's fuel supply - North Africa, Italy, both eastern and western Europe, to the Bering Sea.

Yes, I rattled and banged, my old Davis wings flopped, yet I went there and usually, always, came back. My crews soon learned to love and respect me, we became as one. I really hope someday the people will give us our due credit.

We were the Liberators of WW-II, all 18,188 of us. Built by Douglas, Ford, Consolidated and North American in greater numbers than any other airplane."

\* \* \*

These words, as penned by Wesley W. Turner and printed in the Riverside, CA, THE PRESS-ENTERPRISE (sent to this office by Jerry Keilman, 727th), perhaps express what we all may feel about the aircraft that was once such an integral part of our young lives.

The fact that so very few remain is indeed a shame. At one time they were the backbone of our aerial offensive; at the end of WW-II they were lined up, row upon row at Davis-Monthan AFB, Tucson Arizona and Sandia AFB, Albuquerque, New Mexico, waiting for the scrap salvagers' torch. Very few escaped this final injustice.

The Confederate Air Force, of Harlingen, TX, managed to salvage a few "skins" with some of the more artistic artwork intact. (Gordon Snyder's SLOPPY BUT SAFE being one)

But apart from the few static (grounded) displays around the country, very few flyable models remain. The Confederate Air Force maintains one of the C-87's models (LB-30 variant cargo type) without superchargers, bomb bays, or turrets. Dave Tallichet, of Calif. owns and operates (?), whenever he can ease some funds in that direction) the B-24 called, THE DELECTABLE DORIS. This aircraft was used in the filming of the TV special "Young Joe, The Forgotten Kennedy," back in 1977.

It was for a time hangered in Topeka, Kansas, making infrequent sojourns to air shows and commemorations. When I first saw it, it was being

("Delectable Doris" circa 1978)



flown into Liberal, Kansas for the very first Liberal AAB Reunion in 1978.

Many pilots will remember Liberal as the B-24 Transitional Training Base, where the first close look at--and first attempt to learn the handling of this big bomber took place. Although I never had the opportunity to be stationed at Liberal, I went there to once again see a B-24 in flight.

I was not disappointed. It came roaring past in the manner I so vividly remembered.

It swept by, barely 200 feet off the ground, and after passing in review, racking itself into an impressive turn as it came by again before getting into its final approach. What a thrilling, stimulating and wistful feeling to see, and hear, the "old girl" once again in flight.

From Liberal, Kansas the DELECTABLE DORIS wended its way to March Air Force Base, Calif., home of the current 15th Air Force. There it was destined to languish for some years without any serious maintenance, becoming almost a derelict. Finally in October of 1986 the DELECTABLE DORIS was called upon to perform once again at the Liberal AAF Reunion. With numerous repairs to once again make it air worthy (and leaking much oil) the DORIS made it back over the mountains to the airport at Liberal. There it seemed to have gasped its last and is now the center of attention in becoming part of a new Liberal Air Museum. Though a bit of a controversy still remains as to where its final hardstand is to be, Liberal AAB or March AFB; the DORIS is now setting at Liberal.

Many of us left Italy without much emotion, and perhaps not much love towards the Liberator as we knew it then. As the years have passed we have pulled out our old aircraft photos and looked them over with a sense of nostalgia. We eye the B-24, not as the squat dumpy object that sat on the re-ventments, but rather as the sleek powerful eagle of the sky that gave us the ability to reach out and touch the heavens.

Ground men will remember each aircraft as having some individual trait. Some were to be cussed for their never ending breakdowns, while others seemed to lead a charmed life and need little other than normal care. The ground crews worried seriously about their aircraft, but mainly they worried about the crews that were entrusted to to the competence of the plane they so carefully maintained.

The tales and escapades, and even the aircraft itself; the men that flew and maintained them, may soon be a thing of the past. Like sailing ships of old, they too will pass from the scene.

But certainly not before some dedicated, benevolent visionaries take a hand at saving what few are left of these remaining WW-II aircraft. One such effort is being undertaken in Stow, Massachusetts. A B-24, originally used by the Royal Air Force and later reused by the Government of India, has finally found its way to the hanger of Bob Collings, a collector of vintage aircraft and automobiles. This aircraft, all 67'2" in length and 110' in wingspan, is being completely disassembled and refurbished. Some of the very exacting and detailed cleaning and reassembling of complex components, are being sub-contracted by a firm in Orlando, Florida - a company dedicated to restoring vintage planes.



FRANK L. TEDESCO  
(Circa 1944, Castelluccia Air Base)

One of the men that has taken an active hand in the Stow segment of its restoration is Frank Tedesco, formally of the 727th Bomb Squadron, 451st Bomb Group. Frank served in our Group as a pilot and distinguished himself in aerial warfare from August (taking his first mission to Ploesti) till April 12th. (his last mission to St. Veit Rail Bridge)

Frank relates that among the working core are many B-24 type people, given to much "hanger talk," while the project is being accomplished.

Frank is a retiree from the GE-Lynn company, manufactures of aircraft engines. The significance of this connection is that many of the B-24 superchargers were made by General Electric during the war.

The full purpose of this "labor of love" is to make the aircraft, not only visually perfect, but to restore it to its original flying capabilities.

So, while Dave Tallichet's DELECTABLE DORIS is being allowed to languish as inoperative, the Bob Collings group, with Frank Tedesco aiding, is making ready one of the "shadows from our past" .... a shiny new looking B-24.

The date for this restoration completion is

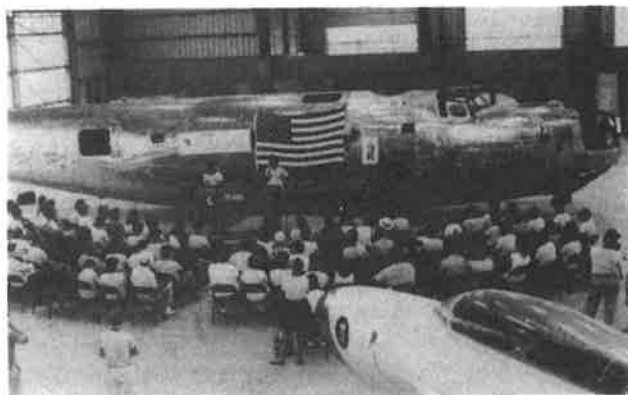


TAIL TURRET  
(With Ammo - But No 50 Caliber Guns)

slated for early 1989, in time for the Fort Worth, Texas, B-24 / 50th Anniversary in May.

A further note should be added: this venture in B-24 restoration is not being undertaken as a casual operation. A foundation (The Collings Foundation) has been set up to oversee the costs and discipline involved in this historic and worth while project. The foundation would greatly appreciate any contribution of monies to this \$600,000 undertaking. To those that still have a working knowledge of B-24s, and live in the area, I offer you this phone number: (617) 562-9182. To the rest of us more distance devotees who may wish to help, may I quote from this recent correspondence with Bob Collings:

"If every B-24 crewmen would just send \$10 we could get it done. Or if you'd like to help with a larger contribution we need WW-II Oxygen Bottles, \$40; Radios, \$50; Ammo Boxes, \$100; Overhaul of an Instrument, \$100; Overhaul of a Propeller, \$1,500; DEDICATED CREW POSITIONS, \$5,000 where you can leave the ultimate heritage - your position named after you to carry on the proud tradition; or a \$15,000 Engine Overhaul, plus lots more."



PROGRAM WITH FUSELAGE AS BACKDROP

We are one of the first B-24 Groups to volunteer our moral support to this venture. I hope our involvement will give impetus to those of you that can, after supporting our effort, find a little

something in the "sock" for the:  
 Collings Foundation  
 137 Barton Road  
 Stow, MA 01775



OPEN WING SECTION  
 (Corrosion removed, etched, alodized, & painted)

Should you make a contribution, please let it be known it came by way of the 451st, through the AD-LIB newsletter.

\* \* \*

Some day, when the history of the world is rewrote,  
 someone will discover, in a place far remote,  
 The remains of a Liberator, or maybe a Fort,  
 still crew'd and maintained -- all set to report.

By: Bob Karstensen

\* \* \* \* \*

FLASHBACK

It seems so long ago now,  
 so far from these fields of cotton,  
 so far from the rationale  
 of reasons we have reasoned.

We plowed then other fields  
 in instant harvest  
 of black cordite in flames,  
 and suffered their flak  
 of retribution in our names.

We ruled the heavens  
 and made our hell!  
 Think back  
 how would it be today  
 and how tomorrow?  
 We moralize  
 because we live to moralize.

The dead don't cry.  
 We cry for them.

By: Carl P. Morton  
 Poet Laureate of Alabama, 1983-1987  
 Former T/Sgt, Communications, 727th

(FLIGHT DECK, con't from Page 23)

the 461st Bomb Group, and EX-POW cellmate with John J. Kane (O-681434), our illusive quarry, reports that John Kane died in May of 1973. This information is via the VA office.

Milt has done a yeoman's job in searching this information out. How's about some of you guys that took part in the 25 July 1944 mission to attack the Goring Tank Works at Linz, Austria drop him a line telling about your remembrances. Milt is working hard to put together all the facts he can find to put into his book. What you may think is obscure and irrelevant may be of prime importance to Milt in this literary venture.

\* \* \* \* \*

Good News for all EX-POWs. According to my Illinois VFW paper, the recognition of former POWs is taking shape. The article reads:

"A Prisoner of War Medal has been established for any individual who has been designated as a POW. The contractor producing the medal will not have the bulk of the order ready until this month (December 1987). An application form for the medal is being developed for use throughout DOD. The form will be printed and distributed to post offices and veterans organizations throughout the country."

\* \* \* \* \*

(Short Burst, con't from Page 10)

**E.C. "Doc" Hageman, 724th:** I am blind and live alone and 79 years of age, I can't read or write, except type, and I am sure prone to many mistakes since I cannot read what I have written ... We of the 451st BG (H) had a wartime record to be proud of, and more specifically I was very proud of my 724th Squadron. Altogether I have 10 years service; 4 in the USMC, prior to my 3 years in the USAAF, and then 3 years during the Korean clambake as a CAMM in the Navy. (ed ... Don't stand in the background, Doc, whatever your infirmities may be, your still a 451st man.)

**Harry Waite, 727th:** Written by Mrs. Waite; Harry does enjoy the letters about the 451st. But, I'm sorry to say he has Alzheimers & Parkinsons. He seems to perk-up when I mention anything about the 451st. It was his whole life and he was proud of his part in it. (ed ... Take good care of him, Mrs. Waite, he is important.)

**John R. Vogel, 724th:** I have considered attending a reunion but am either too tied up, or they are too far away. Perhaps Norfolk, Virginia will entice me! Now a question for you: Would there still be any B-24-J in existence where I could climb through with my family? That would really be a super experience. (ed ... Somewhere in this newsletter is some of what I know about the B-24s that are still around.)

**Jonathan Martin, 724th:** Just a note to express my thanks to you for including Al Altvater's book flyer. I sent for it, received it & read it. It was a very captivating book. For me it brought back incidents that happened at the 451st that I had completely forgotten about! (ed ... It seems that "Off we go .... Down in Flames" is a HIT. I haven't heard from Al whether it's still available, sold out, or being reprinted, but from the guys that have purchased it -- they are jubilant!)

**Lewis W. Currin, 724th:** The following may be of interest to Jack Martin in regards to the check-out pilot, John J. Kane. He was the pilot of my original crew when we flew overseas. ... Kane had a well described Irish temper and he didn't mind expressing himself to higher brass. He began to tell us that he might be transferred. Things didn't improve for him and all at once he was gone. (ed ... As you will read in another part of this newsletter, the subject of J.J. Kane is almost a mute issue. With his death passes the chance for all of us to enjoy his story.)

**Michael Thorrick, 727th:** .... and joined the 727th Squadron at Wendover Field in Utah. I did my best as a Mechanic, Flight Chief, and later on as Line Chief, flying over 3,000 hours (no flight pay or wings). Several crackups (one in Lyon, France when a Thunderbolt crashed into us, cutting off the left wing). I then joined all the others when our Bomb Group was broken up, and transferred to the Air Transport Command. (ed ... Thanks, Mike. Your letter, too long to include the whole thing, was so informative and detailed that I have to abbreviate it to only what I've offered.)

**James C. Dooley, 725th:** Maybe someday I will miss attending one of the other two reunions I attend each year, and attend the 451st. I feel I am closer to the other members than to those of the 451st. Keep up the good work. I really think your organization is one of the strongest I know of. I use your attendance numbers as something for others to shoot for. (ed ... Thanks, Jim, maybe if enough of our members "get on your back," you'll take a shot at one of our gatherings. Keep well, see 'ya)

**Art Morin, 727th:** Yes, I at last got the article in the paper and hit a "BIG TUNA" right in Newnan, GA. Can you believe it? But he left town and I don't know if he plans to come back. His phone is no longer in service ... He gave me a picture that he wants to send to the son of a Campbell who was a 451st pilot, KIA. The last known whereabouts was IDAHO FALLS, ID. (ed ... Fear not, Art, the BIG TUNA has not vacated the area, only went on vacation. I've made phone contact but Christian Campbell hasn't answered my mailings. It's odd that Christian Campbell is trying to find the son of a pilot named Charles R. Campbell. Claims to have a photo he took of BURMA BOUND - taken with a cheap camera. Its exactly like one that the Photo Section uses with smoke coming from #1 engine and #3 feathered. Perhaps we can get some feed-back from our members on this photo?)

**Ed Rasmussen, Hdqs:** ... Seriously I enjoy my efforts with the Daedalians -- as I'm sure you do with the grand job you are doing - and have don - for our 451st Bomb Group .... The 451st and the

other Groups in the 49th Wg (461st & 484th) should all have been recognized for their efforts in supporting the war effort shortly after the invasion of S. France when the 3 Groups carried fuel & ammo into Lyon & later Dijon. I was directly involved, having been at Lyon on the receiving end of the fuel laden B-24s coming into off-load. C'est la Guerre. (ed ... "Rass," between you and Col Anderson, with his diary referring to the same subject, I'd really like to have our members send in their remembrances of that episode of 451st history. It would make a great story. I was in the first contingency into Lyon that saw an aircraft from one of the other Group (461st or 484th) catch fire and cause havoc. Just that day alone was an adventure.)

**Nate Firestone, 725th:** ... I am sure glad that its you, and not me, that is handling all the paperwork, etc. I don't know where you find the energy, let alone the time that you must spend on everything .... Some of the wives were saying that they were going to bring their childrens' and grand-childrens' pictures, or else they weren't going to come. Especially, when we guys were looking at some pictures that our crew members brought. But its hard for me to imagine the wives staying home. I know mine sure wouldn't - she enjoys the reunions almost as much as I do. (ed ... WOW!, what an endorsement to bear. You guys from the George Tudor crew are something else. You always show up in strength, make notable financial contributions, and work for the betterment of our organization. What more could I ask!)

**George Tudor, 725th:** ....on the CBS morning news, Faith Daniels read a brief news note on Air Force leather jackets. She said they were going to be made available to former Air Force people for \$100. Adding, at a cost to the taxpayers of 5 million. Do you know anything about this offer and how we take advantage of it. ... If possible I'd sure like to get one. (ed ... Heard nothing firm, George, only rumor. I overheard someone in Colorado Spings mention it, but could get no solid leads. Perhaps some of our members did; let's see.)

**Leo Stoutsenberger, Hdq:** ... One of my closest and dearest friends when I was overseas, was a big Irishman from Winchester, Mass., named ED LYNCH. Several times, when I've been traveling and had to go through Boston, I've tried to locate him - but to no avail. I knew him first as a weatherman, working for Capt. Finley. Later he volunteered to fly missions as a photographer and as far as I know he completed his missions a few weeks after I finished mine (Sept 1944). Is there any way you can locate this guy, Bob? (ed ... I did a quick peruse of the area, and like you came up wanting. Perhaps some of our members have a clue on him.)

**Ed Zraick, 727th:** You asked about Fred Lawton, who I remember well since he was a class-mate of mine at Harvard College, whence we both graduated in 1936. The enclosure is from a class book, and shows that Fred died in action in the Philippines in August, 1945. He had returned to the States after his service to the 451st, shifted to fighter-planes, and was killed in a take-off, just before hostilities stopped. His luck, poor man. (ed ....

Your right; Fred Lawton (former Ops Officer of the 724th) was killed in a take-off accident, but as my information shows, it was while flying B-24s with the 307th Bomb Group. By 1 August 1945, when he was killed, he had become Commander of the 371st Bomb Squadron, in the 13th AAF.)

**William Lang, 725th:** We (the Herb Fones' crew) were coming back from a mission, two engines out, no rudder control, and low on gas, sweating out the Adriatic Sea. We got over safe territory in Italy, he (Fones) decided we should abandon ship. He gave the order. I was the co-pilot at the time and after the others had jumped, he told me to go while he adjusted the auto-pilot. I went to the bomb bay and sat on the catwalk preparing to ease out when one buckle of my parachute got wedged in the catwalk. I struggled to free the buckle with little success. Pete, following me, saw my trouble, sat down beside me and freed the buckle, after which we both jumped. Pete was one of those people who never took credit for anything. He was a great one for saying, "What is, will be." (ed ... Sorry, Bill, to hear that Pete is no longer with us. Your tribute is a fine memorial to a fine pilot and former 451st member.)

**Louis Head M.D., 725th:** Am feeling better since learning about the "Escape & Evasion Society." I have already contacted them. (ed ... I'm sure your wartime experiences leave you wanting. Having the rest of your crew (Paul Harden's crew) captured and imprisoned, and you making good your escape must leave you with mixed emotions. They, with their POW status, and you, after effecting a daring escape, with nothing but a memory. Perhaps others with similar circumstances, would appreciate the address of the: Air Forces Escape & Evasion Society, Attn; Ralph K. Patton, 720 Valleyview Road, Pittsburgh, PA 15243. They would be glad to consider anyone that fulfills their criterion.)

**Grant Sturman, 726th:** ... sorry that I have been so uncommunicative. Healthwise we have had a rough time of it for the last five years. My wife passed away on May 2. ... I am enclosing a check, and please know that I am as proud of the 451st today as I was the day in June 1944, when I left to return to the States. (ed ... Thanks, Grant, for the sizable donation. Sorry to hear about the passing of your wife. I hope things go better for you from now on.)

**Don Kelly, 724th:** Having just finished reading the AD-LIB and realized we must have made the 30 July '44 Budapest mission. I remember seeing Captain Johnshoy's ship take a hit and trailing a cloud of vapor from the bomb bay. What I also recall is the way the rest of the flight opened up and spread out. We were sure they'd blow. I believe the formation, at least for awhile, was maintained -but loosely. We did get the story that one of the crew (We didn't know who) had worked from the catwalk over nothing but altitude to quick-fix the damage to stay aloft. Also, it seems to me that Capt. Johnshoy was generally known as a very, very hot pilot. (ed ... In jest .... my thoughts have to conclude that being a hot pilot wasn't quite the right terminology in this case. Good, excellent,

superior are more applicable to Johnshoy's 30th July mission. Hot denotes an explosive situation, and under his THEN predicament, any added heat may have been "bad news.")

**Robert Peck, Hdq:** You are spending a great deal of time and effort and I do appreciate greatly what you are doing, and I would suppose there must be many who feel even stronger. At least, I would hope so only to encourage you to continue this work and expense which benefits all who were concerned with the 451st. (ed ... Thanks, Bob, your encouragement and support are what makes the wheels (at least mine) wobble around.)

**Merle Larson, 727th:** Received your last newsletter. It was great. .... Also of interest was your first page picture of old "judge" Bryan and Keister. Reed's crew and our crew were buddies. We use to exchange Christmas Cards before the SOB PO got so hoggish about stamps! (ed ... Glad to hear that a renewal of friendships was generated by way of our association. You pick your friends good, Merle. They are both still stellar personalities, as are the rest of Reed's crew. Bryan and Keister are a little more mature than back in 1944: but aren't we all. I hope these renewals of friendly rapport works with the other guys, as well.)

\* \* \*

#### FOR FUTURE CONSIDERATION

**Bob Karstensen, 724th:**

I doubt if I've got a big future in the newsletter business, and perhaps after reading this you may concur. But, like a "bull in a china shop," I keep forging ahead. I have been offered the challenge, and accepted it gladly, to reorganize those of us that remain interested in the accomplishments of our past. In various ways my efforts have been accepted by many of our old and new members.

This AD-LIB, one of my most ambitious undertakings to date (all 28 pages) could not have been done without the help of many totally dedicated and interested people. The names of these folks are sprinkled throughout the foregoing pages. It goes to say that without facts, financial support, and pictures I would be hard pressed to give you what is now before you.

In future issues I could use your comments; pictures; documentation on the following subjects:

#### Ground Crew Remembrances

#### Supply missions to Southern France

**"Big Week," 451st offensive: 20 to 25 February 1944**  
**Personal evasion experiences from enemy territory**  
**Evaluation of "fly till you drop" from early crews**  
**More — Ground Crew Remembrance**

Some of you may have ideas on other stories that would be interesting. If so, please send me your thoughts. I'll give them every consideration. Also, .... **DON'T FORGET YOUR DONATIONS TO MAINTAIN THIS VENTURE, .....** even if you haven't any special ideas. After this 28 page issue the cof-fers are suffering. And, too, your heart will feel a little better.

--\* THANK YOU --\*