

★ 451 ★ A-D-LIB

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

ISSUE 17

WINTER 1988

NORFOLK REUNION: WELL REMEMBERED

With the winding down from our October Norfolk, Virginia Reunion, time can be taken to savor the good parts and to reflect on the bad ones. Unlike San Antonio, we did not have the rain, but we did encounter an unusual cold front. This didn't work in favor of our Thursday boat excursion. It was unforeseen, but accepted by most of those that took part.



Mike Staugh checks historical data

Throughout Thursday and most of Friday, registration took place in the "French Quarters" of the Holiday Inn, Norfolk, Virginia. First contacts with long sought after crew/tent mates were culminated with hearty greetings and "bear hugs." A chance to visit with the workers of our Group book, was afforded those that took the time to "drop by."

Friday morning our buses pulled up to the west side of the Holiday Inn and our prepaid Friday excursion began. Historical sites, Naval shipyards, and a tour on board one of our Fleet Ship was offered. Lunch at Fort Monroe Officers Club was a welcomed time-out from the mornings activities.

Our Friday evening Opening Ceremony, with the 564th Air Force Band in concert, out of Langley AFB, was truly a splendid start. Though limited by Air Force regulations to give only a limited performance, they still gave us a tremendous effort. The Band Leader was very appreciative of the response that was generated by our Group. The Officer in Charge, 1LT Bledsoe, confided to me later that normally these events are not appreciated to the degree that our people received them. The warmth of

our applause stirred his musicians to perform even better than usual. I could tell, from my vantage point, that between pieces they were openly enjoying our company.

The fill-in, between the AF Band and our feature program, The Sawyer Sisters, gave me the chance to take the stage and have an open discussion with those in attendance. We took a count of the crews that had the most members in attendance. It seemed that Bill Paddock, 725th, with his crew of 9, were the most abundant. Cortland Read, 727th; George Tudor, 725th; Marshall Coulter, 727th; Stanley Jackson, 724th; Lew Morse, 726th; Gates Christensen, 724th; and Charles McCutchen, 724th (plus others) also made accountable showings.

We were fortunate to have Mrs. Anne Brusselmans, and her daughter Yvonne Daley, attend our reunion. I was hoping she would accept our invitation since I had read so much about her and her efforts in saving our downed air-men in the Belgium area of Northern Europe.



Anne Brusselmans receives 451st honors

Anne has been honored by many organizations for her heroism, but I believe this is the first time that a 15th AAF Group has shown her the recognition she truly deserves. It was my pleasure, in behalf of the 451st Bomb Group, to present her with a spray of flowers and a nicely framed picture of "PATCHES." She was most gracious in her acceptance, and expressed her appreciation with a generous acknowledgment of our tribute and of our

hospitality. We hope she and her daughter, Yvonne, will grace our modest gatherings for many years to come.



"THE SAWYER SISTERS"

A performance by the "Sawyer Sisters" (40's singing in the fashion of the Andrew Sisters) was enthusiastically received. It should be noted that I was (jokingly) accused of booking a "lip-synced act." (Lip-synced; being that they were mouthing the words off a record and not actually singing) I was later granted absolution from that charge. Everyone agreed, "They were GOOD!"

Saturday evening (our GALA presentation) was honored to host 590 plus of our 451st members and guests.

Our colorful SOUVENIR PROGRAM included a message from the President of these United States, Ronald Reagan; plus the Governor of Virginia, Gerald Baliles; and Mayor of Norfolk, Joseph Leafe.

Lt. Col. (Ret.) Alex C. Kuras, 726th BS and member of Lew Morse's crew, acted as Master of Ceremonies. Colors were presented by the Hampton High School Junior Air Force ROTC, with the singing of "America the Beautiful" by Bill Bihn, 726th Line Chief, set the patriotic tone for the rest of the evening.



"General Robert E. L. Eaton's Comments"

Major General (Retired) Robert E.L. Eaton (1st Group Commander) was never in better form when he was called upon to say a few words. But in truth, his talk may have been overshadowed by the fact that we had the "real" head of the Eaton household to watch him. Mrs. (Jo Kathryn) Eaton was a most welcome addition to our Head Table. Jo Kathryn is an exceptionally gracious lady and it was a pleasure, after all these years (and letters) to finally meet her.

Our Guest Speaker, Brigadier General Robert A. Buethe, Jr. M.D., USAF, gave us a pictorial accounting of his visit to the Soviet Union to observe their Space Program. General Buethe went there, together with the Air Force Chief of Staff, by invitation of the Soviet government and was there when the ill-fated Iranian Air Liner was shot down over the Persian Gulf by our naval ships. General Buethe described their situation as "cautious," but not threatening. He explained the situation by saying that their hosts were more interested in working with the Americans than in creating a conflict over the incident.



Guest Speaker Dr. Buethe

General Buethe gave us a nicely documented slide presentation, chronicling various aspects of their trip into the Soviet Union, and what could be shown of the Soviet Space Program and their participants.

Recipients of Special Awards from the Group was General Buethe. He was presented large framed photo of our infamous PLOESTI MISSION, duly inscribed to the General for his kindness in partaking of our 5th Biennial Reunion. (photo courtesy Bill Dwyer).

Awards to Mrs. Frank (Lois) McNerney, Reverend John C. Pafford, and Bill Bihn, for their effort in each and every one of our reunions.

Lois McNerney has performed as piano accompanist for special programming and our Sunday Church Services.

(I call her; "Mrs. Music")

Bill Bihn has always been available to lend his talent to wherever a hearty song is needed.

(His moniker; "Mr. Voice")

To Reverend Johnny Pafford, who underwent surgery prior to attending, and delayed still other needed surgery so he could fill a role he has grown to accept and (I hope) enjoy; spiritual leader of our reunion Group.

(His handle; "Mr. Words")

In the course of myself presenting awards, Lt. Col. Jack Hoppock, 727th Squadron Commander, requested a few moments to introduce John Anderson, 727th Gunner, and his lovely daughter, Pam Eckert. It was their wish to present ME with an award in remembrance of John's late wife, Anetia Anderson. (Anetia was part of our very first reunion committee in Chicago and is still deeply missed by family and friends.) John and Pam presented me with a charted needlepoint 15th Air Force insignie, with Group and Squadron numbers, mounted in a frame measuring 16" by 20". Pam did a more than professional job on the finished product, and they both gave me a solid reminder of what friendships are all about.

The evening was concluded with the clearing of tables from the dance floor and a lot of "40's" style music and jitter bugging, by those that still remember HOW.

During the dance program two of our most talented musicians came forth and took part in the festivities. Bill Jackson, 726th Pilot, clarinetist par excellence (dedicated reed man), and John O'Connor, 724th Pilot, trumpet virtuoso (purely brass man), together with the other musicians put on a bit of a Dixieland Jazz performance. They put the hired musicians through the "musical knot-hole" when it came to ability.

At intermissions we conducted drawings for some fine decoupage art work. Raffle tickets had been sold throughout the week by Art and Carol Morin, 727th Gunner, and wife. Their effort afforded the Group some \$700 plus for the treasury. Sunday Church Services, conducted by Reverend Pafford, was inspirationally and beautifully performed with the aid of Lois McNerney, Bill Bihn, and John O'Connor. More than 250 people took the time to attend, while the rest went about the chore of catching the early flight home.

Some folks stayed beyond Sunday and extended their vacation, thereby affording them the chance to visit historical sites, that, without this trip, may never have been enjoyed.

FT. WORTH B-24 (50th) BASH: UP AND RUNNING

To those of you that are malingering as to your plans for attending the 50th Anniversary celebration of the origin of the Consolidated B-24 (Liberator), the time has come to "get with it." May 17, 1989 isn't that far off.

A lot of serious effort has gone into making this one of the biggest and best specialty get together ever held. And, too, this one is so well planned that hotels have already been taken and/or set aside for the various Bombardment Groups taking part. It will behoove you to reread the information sent from this office last August and get those reservation in - presto-quicko.

The 451st has been assigned to the STOCKYARDS HOTEL, located in the northern part of Fort Worth. The setting is within the historic district of the old Fort Worth stockyard, on the corner of North Main and Exchange Avenue. Close by is the famous "Billy Bob's" emporium.

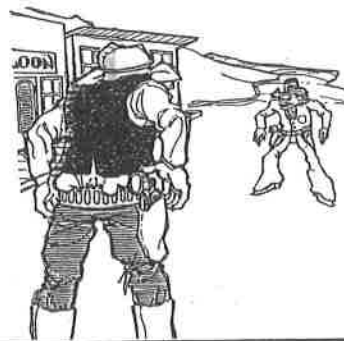
This does not seem to be a hotel of modern and abstract styling, but rather a hotel with remnants of an almost forgotten western culture.

Our overflow hotel, should that become necessary, will be the Best Western Sandpiper Inn, not too far from the Stockyards Hotel.

The Reunion Committee promises committed transportation to and from our location for all events.

Though the plans of the 50th Anniversary Committee seem to be well organized, there are questions when it comes down to the individual Bomb Groups. The Project Director, Colonel Bob Vickers is forwarding me "numbers" of our proposed attendees, but I am not getting names till shortly before the actual event. I have already been questioned by some that will be attending, "What about our Group's Saturday Dinner?" That may not seem like a serious question, but I'm sure that most available Banquet Rooms will be taken up very shortly. The Stockyard Hotel staff has been searching for such an accommodation. I told them to wait till I get a better understanding on the numbers involved. To all you folks that are now making plans, let me know how this office can work in your behalf to alleviate this little "glitch" about "feeding the troops."

By the way, "Please check your guns at the desk."



WHATEVER HAPPENED TO: THE LEFT-OVER B-24s

Of all the WW-II aircraft manufactured none were more numerous than the B-24. Some 18,000 (some historians claim as many as 19,256) aircraft were manufactured and served in as many as Air Forces as were active during the hostilities.

Now, after some 50 years, we have come that part of history that very few remain. *Most* of these "old birds" are on non-flyable static display, sprinkled around the world. Very few are left to show future generations what we were once all about. And still fewer flyable aircraft are around for us to look at, or to reminisce about. Since we (as an organization) have been active I've been asked on occasion where one could be found, one that could actually be looked at and touched. (Perhaps to kick a tire or two) Through the kindness of CMS Virgil W. Falkner, USAF (Ret.), out of Tucson, Arizona, a list of known A/C and their locations has been offered.

LB-30: Located at Harlingen, TX, belongs to the Confederate Air Force. *Kinda like a B-24 but without bomb bays, turrets, or superchargers.*

B-24D: (serial #42-72843) Located at Air Force Museum, Dayton, OH Only known "D" model in existence. *This A/C (Strawberry Bitch) was once stationed at our base of operations when we were sharing the airfield at San Pancrazio with the 376th BG.*

B-24J: (serial #44-44213) Located at New Delhi, India.

B-24J: (serial #44-44272) Located at Topeka, KS. *Belongs to Yesterdays Air Force.*

B-24J: (serial #44-48781) Located at Barksdale, LA.

B-24J: (serial #42-50551) *Owned by Dave Tallichet. Was located at Liberal, KS, now relocated at March AFB, CA.*

B-24J: (serial #44-44175) Located at Pima Air Museum, Tucson, AZ.

B-24J: (serial #44-44052) Located at Stow, MA. *Owned by the Collings Foundation. Now being restored to "zero" time.*

B-24L: (serial #44-50154) Located at Ottawa, Canada. *Belongs to the Canadian National Aeronautical Collection.*

B-24L: (serial #44-50206) Located at RAF, Cosford, Hendon, England.

B-24M: (serial #44-51228) Located at Lackland AFB, TX.

B-24J: (serial # UNKNOWN) Located at Castle AFB, CA. *Restoration in progress.*

Some Liberators may still exist in the jungles of the South Pacific; in the ocean off some remote atoll; perhaps, even in some obscure place here in the U.S. There may be a few A/C lost in the deep recesses of Europe's mountain-



Pima Air Museum B-24 (1976) his time in, and around, the B-24 at the Pima Air Museum. Although he has worked to maintain the ship for show, he is fighting an almost futile battle against the elements. He has, in desperation, watched the care taken of the B-17 that is on the same grounds. Over the years a fund had been created to maintain the Fortress, and as a final outcome, have appropriated monies to build suitable hanger for the A/C. Now, as Virg informs me, "The restorers have cover under which to work."

Virgil wants me to put out a plea among our troops to see if adequate funds could be garnered for this B-24 to be put under roof. For further information, or to send a donation, his address is: CMS (Ret.) Virgil W. Falkner, USAF, 8936 Calle Kuehn E., Tucson, AZ 85715.

I had the opportunity, back in 1976, to see that A/C and was appalled at its (then) condition. The plexi-glass, at the various stations, was so weather-beaten that it was impossible to even see through them. Karl Eichhorn, 726th Armament Section, visited the site in early 1988, and was also dismayed at its condition.

Should anyone be traveling through the Tucson area and want to contact Virgil, I'm sure he will make it possible for you to go through the ship. Just tell Virg that the 451st sent you. Karl is kicking himself that he wasn't aware of these circumstances so he could have enjoyed getting a hands-on evaluation.

The fact that Dave Tallichet's A/C is now in March AFB, CA rather than in Liberal, KS, comes by way of Jerry Keilman, 727th Radar Mechanic. He noted an article in the Riverside, CA Press-Enterprise last August giving the facts.

Since that time I've passed this information on to Duane Maybay, 724th Pilot, and he went out to see it. Not only did he "see it," he became so engrossed in its well-being that he has volunteered to help in its restoration. So now it seems that we have B-24 ventures going on at both ends of the country; the Collings Foundation and now the Tallichet effort. Between Frank Tedesco, 726th Pilot (Collings restorer) and now Duane Maybay (Tallichet restorer) we have an ongoing battle of, "*Who will make it first to the Fort Worth B-24 Anniversary in May of 1989?*"

ous area, and, too, some may be locked in icy regions above the Arctic Circle. But for now these are what Virgil Falkner has found and cataloged.

Virgil Falkner, a devotee of the Liberator, spends much of

ITALIAN AIR FORCE: OUR UNKNOWN ENEMY

How many of you were aware that after the Italian surrender on 8 September 1943, there became two opposing Italian Air Forces?

One Air Force, under Allied control, was stationed in the south and was called the Mediterranean Allied Air Force/Co-Belligerent Air Force. Within its ranks were merged those resolute airmen (those that shared the motivation to stay) into three Wings (Raggruppamenti) and were used mainly for aerial ground support.

After their original Italian aircraft, Macchi 202s and Macchi C.205s plus some three engine Cant.Z 1007 bombers, became in-operational due to shortage of spare parts (still being manufactured in northern Italy) the Italian pilots were furnished P-39s (Airacobras), Martin Baltimores and British Spitfire Vs. With these aircraft the unpublicized, unheralded, *but* assimilated Italian pilots continued to perform their limited and restricted duties.

In the north the Italian pilots and ground crews regrouped under the flag of the Fascist Repubblica Sociale Italiana (RSI). With the tide of the war turning against the Nazi and Fascists idiom, the Germans were glad to accept, on their side, these airmen for the role they could play.

Many of these Italian airmen chose to fly for the Germans with much the same reasons and dedication as other Italian airmen chose to accept the position of the Allies in the south. Such decisions were determined by where the unit was located at the time of the armistice, political sympathy, loyalty to family, or, perhaps just the ties of comradeship.



A Co-Belligerent Macchi C.202

As the Co-Belligerent Air Force in the south lessened in scope, the ANR (Aeronautica Nazionale Repubblicana) in the north grew, and with the aid of Luftwaffe technology, perfected its capabilities. The ANR was not compelled to abandon its excellent fighter aircraft; the Macchi C.205s and Fiat G.55s, nor its torpedo bombers, the Marchetti S.79s, right away, since replacement parts, as well as some replacement aircraft, were still available.

(It should be noted that the Marchetti S.79 were used against the Allied invasion of Anzio sinking one 7,000 ton vessel with the loss of three of their aircraft to Allied night fighters.)



ARN Macchi C.205 flies formation with a German ME-109

It was with these Macchi and Fiat fighter aircraft, and their adopted German markings, that is of interest to the 451st Bomb Group.



Italian Pilots scramble to their Macchi C.205s

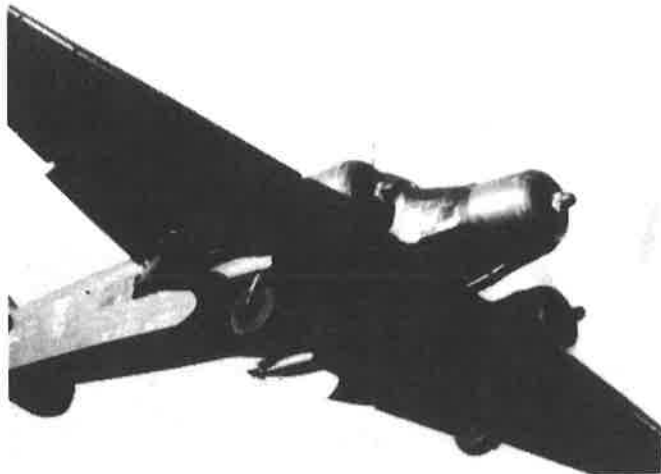
Although we were always endangered by their presence when we came within their range, we have no actual confirmation of them having shot down any of our aircraft; nor of we downing any of theirs. This fact should be framed in the understanding that while under fire many airmen could not positively differentiate between the Italian Macchi/Fiats and the German ME 109s that were more evident. All three had a similar engine covering, with perhaps the Macchi and Fiat being a bit more elongated. But the difference would hardly be perceptible while under fire. Further reference to the silhouette difference is noted in the 325th Fighter Group report, when claims were made to downing of a "long nose" ME 109.

The Italian Group (ANR) that would be giving the Allied forces (American and British) trouble in March 1944, were based at Venaria Reale, near Turin, Italy. It was called the "Squadriglia Complementare Montefusco," and consisted primarily of Macchi C.205s and Fiat G.55s.



Fiat G-55 of the ANR 2nd Fighter Group

Along with the ANR Fighter Groups, there were formed some Torpedo Bomber Groups, Transport Groups (flying S.81s and S.82s), anti-aircraft defenses and early warning radar systems. All these units worked independently from the German Command, but with, and in close support, being given technical training and military supplies for their efforts.



S 79 Torpedo Bomber

(Note torpedo slung beneath fuselage)

So now, with this bit of background as to howcome, whyfores, and whereas's, out of the way; we arrive at the meat of our story.

In the June 1987 issue of the Air Force Magazine, I noted a small questioning article relating to the 451st. It had to do with our, and other 15th AAF Groups, involvement in the 29 March 1944 mission into Northern Italy.

Giancarlo Garello, Italian historian by avocation and transcontinental airline pilot (ALITALIA: Boeing 747s) by vocation, was researching the situation as it pertained to the ANR and the American forces on that day. In his studies he had found that the American Groups lost four B-24s and one B-17.

In his initial research Giancarlo had thought that one of our 451st bombers had been "bounced" by a Lieutenant Giuseppe Biron, flying a Fiat G.55 out of the Base at Turin, Italy.

I wrote to Giancarlo Garello, offering our full

support in whatever way I could. I had researched our files and found that Joe Younger (725th Pilot) and crew were our only MIA victim of that mission. Joe and his crew bailed out over Trento, some 50 miles south of their primary target, Balzono, Italy. With this as a probability, I wrote to the crew members explaining the route I'd taken in this exploration. The replies I got from the crew members was emphatic, "We were not hit by fighters, but by flak."

Members of Younger's crew on mission:

Joseph M. Younger, Pilot	John E. Sherbert, ROG
James F. Thompson, Co-pilot	Jack M. Patterson, AG
John P. Hollis, Nav.	Floyd Hamm, AG
Edwin E. Bliss, Bomb.	Daniel J. Kenny, AG
Philip J. Zaumbrecher, AEG	William W. Briggs, AG



ME-109G carrying both ANR and German insignias

In the meanwhile, Giancarlo had widened his search and found that *it was a B-17* that had been downed by Lt. Biron, and a W/O Luigi Iellici. With the flight log book of Lt. Biron, and photos of the aircraft in question, it was determined that Younger's crew was not the recipient of the Italian aerial attack, rather it was this Flying Fortress type aircraft (#42-97152) of the 2nd Bomb Group. But, as it is with all dedicated researchers, Giancarlo will continue with his search. To date he has located and visited two pilots of the ANR; Lt. Giuseppe Biron and W/O Luigi Iellici. Warrant Officer Iellici, on the date of 29 March 1944, was unceremoniously taken out of the fight by one of the escorting P-47s. He survived by bailing out of his burning Fiat G.55 at the last moment and landing near the home of our historian, Giancarlo Garello. The P-47 was from the 325th Fighter Group as previously documented in the Issue 15 of the AD-LIB.

NOTE: Information was furnished by Giancarlo Garello, with documentation of "Two Italian Air Forces" condensed from REGIA AERONAUTICA--Squadron/Signal Publication, Volume 2.

(Update to Giancarlo's story, he has since located the B-17 Pilot in question, Ed Wronkoski, residing in Chemung County Pennsylvania. They first got together by phone, but are making plans to visit face to face. Ed Wronkoski will be pleased to find out that Giancarlo is a former graduate of our U.S. Navy Pilot Program.)

ALL SQUADRON & GROUP INSIGNIAS, ACCOUNTED FOR: SIR!!

Thanks to our Photo Officer, Bill Dwyer, we have accounted for all four of our Squadron emblems. Major Dwyer included them in a shipment of negatives that he loaned this office. It is now our wish to have them accepted by the various military heraldry organizations interested in this information. The final "find" was that of the 725th, which was clearly depicted on one of the negatives.



724th. SQ.



725th. SQ.

Little is known of the designer of the individual Squadron insigne, but we have various AD-LIB's (circa 1945) articles that give us a picture of how the Group insigne came about. The first story surfaced in the *March 8, 1945* issue.

INSIGNIA CONTEST STARTS; OPEN TO ALL PERSONNEL

The 451st Insignia Contest opens with this issue of AD-LIB.

Here is a rare opportunity for all personnel of our organization to conceive and design a lasting symbol of the 451st and its extraordinary record of bombardment in this global war.



726th. SQ.

This contest is open to officers and men.

There are a few general rules to observe. For instance the design should not have more than three colors. (Air Corps colors should be used. They are blue and yellow.)

The design should be simple - for effectiveness as well as printing. It should indicate the nature of our work - heavy bombardment. Our work is mighty serious business, so any slogan should be serious.

The insignia will be permanent. So take care in your art and your selection of words. Use pen and ink on best available paper. Allow yourself at least a full page (letter size) for your drawing.

We are the best bombardment group in the Air Forces. Let our insignia be the best.



727th. SQ.

Submit your drawings to *INSIGNIA CONTEST EDITOR, AD-LIB*, before midnight April 1. Names of the judges will be announced later.

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This little reminder was run in the *March 15th publication*.

WHERE ARE THE ARTISTS?

In case you have forgotten, there is an important contest afoot.

We need a Group insignia.

Since the contest opened, we have received some nifties, but the field of ideas and art has not been sufficiently covered. Dig out the pen and ink, squat, and let yourself go.

Remember that your suggestions should be of serious tone - because heavy bombardment is a serious business.

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From the *April 12, 1945 AD-LIB*

INSIGNIA CONTEST ENDS THE 19TH WINNER TO GO TO REST CAMP

A trip to Rest Camp will be the winning prize for the officer or enlisted man who submits the best design for the 451st insignia, it was announced today by Colonel LeRoy L. Stefonowicz, Group Commander.

The contest which opened Feb. 15, last, has stimulated considerable interest in squadrons and many have submitted attractive and arresting suggestions. However, the Commanding Officer believes that more ideas should be offered, either in word-design or in art.

"It seems to me," Colonel Stefonowicz said, "That in this group there are still more good ideas for the insignia. Our idea men should get on the ball as a matter of organizational pride and personal achievement. The 451st has been awarded Unit Citations three times. This is an unusual distinction in any Air Force, and it is particularly outstanding in the 15th Air Force. That we should have an insignia is agreed to by all, but all of us are not doing our best to bring this about."

"The designs and suggestions that have been submitted are worthy of considerations, but I think we should have more ideas offered before we close the contest. Some of the designs are of a comic nature. These have been considered but found wanting. Let us remember that the design should have dignity, in addition to color, attractiveness, and suggestiveness of the nature of our work - heavy bombardment. The insignia will be permanent and must meet with the approval of the War

Department. In planning your design keep these points in mind."

Closing date for the insignia contest will be announced April 19th.

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Small squib in the April 19th Issue

INSIGNIA CONTEST CLOSED

The group insignia contest closed today. The name of the winner will be announced in the next edition of AD-LIB.

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From the April 26, 1945 publication.

FOUR ARTISTS VIE FOR HONORS

The Group Insignia Contest has reached the elimination stage with four designs vying for honors. At the suggestion of Colonel Stefonowicz, Group Commander, the four artists will submit a final design within the week, which will include the most desirable features of those already submitted.

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Finally, in the May 10th edition.

Staff Sergeant Robert McAvin, 727 gunner, and former commercial artist, was today revealed as the winner in the 451st Insignia Contest.

In announcing the winner, Col. LeRoy L. Stefonowicz, Group Commander, paid tribute to the originality, color and descriptiveness of the design.

"I believe that all personnel will be pleased with this excellent design which graphically portrays our role in the air war. It is striking in every respect," he said.



Lt C.L. March's runner-up insignie

"The other artists who submitted designs, however, are to be complimented for their artistic ability. Selection of the winning design was difficult, and narrowed down to three. After careful consideration of all angles we elected Sgt McAvin's as the best."

This marks the second art contest that McAvin has won.

Last March he won the AD-LIB masthead contest.

The runner-ups in the contest were Lt. A. Eckstein, 726 navigator, and 2nd Lt. C.L. March, 724 pilot.

The finalists will be recognized equally for creating the insignia in view of the fact that parts of their designs were incorporated into the one selected. Sgt McAvins's final drawing best presented the ideas expressed in the designs.

All three artists will have the opportunity of

visiting a rest camp as a reward for their efforts.

Plans are now underway to have the winning insignia made into patches for wear on the flying and field jackets. The approximate cost to individuals desiring patches is \$5.00. Personnel should communicate with Capt. Daniel J. Coffey, Group Special Service Officer, for orders.

The design will be forwarded to the War Department for approval.

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At this point, the history of the 451st insigne becomes more obscure. Upon questioning a few years ago, Colonel Stefen, seems to think that, due to the winding down of hostilities, and our readiness to return to the States, the War Department failed to act upon our request for insignia recognition.

I contacted Illinois Senator Paul Simon's office and asked what my procedure would be to take up the challenge of having our insigne "finally" accepted by the Department of Heraldry. His response was that it would be almost impossible at this late date, but should we feel that our emblem was of viable origin, we should accept it without hesitation.

For some unknown reason the 726th and the 727th Squadron insignia were recorded in the Department of Heraldry, perhaps due in part that they were not, nor would ever become, part of the 451st Strategic Missile Wing (circa 1961). On that occasion the 724th and 725th Squadrons became known as Strategic Missile Squadrons.

It is my guess that some form of restraint was placed on them not to use the accepted (but unofficial) insignia of their 724th and 725th Squadrons.

If anyone feels that they have influence in having our three "orphan" insignia officially recorded, please let me know and I'll work to that end.

Reproductions of our Group Insigne, in a cloisonne "clutch back" pin - measuring one and one eighth inch in diameter, are available through this office for \$5 -- shipping and handling included. If enough interest is generated in the other Squadron pins we will consider having them reproduced.



Our Group Flag showing Group Insigne

PRELUDE FOR GOOD READING

During the course of working on our AD-LIB newsletter I have received various documents (personal epics and related Army Air Force papers) pertaining to the 451st and associated WW-II events. Since our last AD-LIB (Issue 16) I have received two such epics that are of superior literary quality, as well as of an informative nature.

The lead one, sent me by Doctor Louis Head (copilot, 725th BS), arrived along with an invitation to attend their (Lt Colonel Paul Harden's crew) reunion to be held in Evanston, Illinois in late October 1988. I felt it an honor to attend for I had worked with Colonel Harden when we, as a Group, had visited Colorado Springs, Colorado, for our 1982 Reunion. Then, too, I knew something of their wartime ordeal and wanted to sit among them to absorb the atmosphere of those hectic, bygone days.

I was not disappointed. Dr. Head had not only brought together 6 original crew members, but had included a guest of German birth that had, during WW-II, been a flak gunner. This man, now a doctor himself, and had served in the US Army in that capacity after the war. He related facts that were quite fascinating. For one thing; during the later part of the war German youths of 12, 13, and 14 years of age were recruited and used as ammunition haulers, loaders, general assistance, and in some cases "trackers and aimers," in the flak batteries. Seasoned German soldiers, were of course, put in charge of supervision and

technical aspects of anti-aircraft gunnery.

In all, I spent an interesting, enlightening, and memorable evening with the crew, the wives, and the various guests.

The story that unfolds, about the Harden Crew, was written by Dr. Head, and illustrated by Duane Borden. I received the booklet in its copyright form, and Dr. Head has given permission to reprint the text in its entirety.

Another document of significance, with a very much in-depth detail, came from Karl Eichhorn of the 726th Bomb Squadron. Karl would be remembered as an armament man, with a fascination towards photography. He also had an inclination to detail, as his manuscript indicates. As a ground man Karl has kindly offered us the opportunity to run his story, in part, within our publication. Karl sent me more than 100, single spaced, pages to edit as we deem necessary. That may seem like an easy task, but in the reading (*and with the thought that anything I left out is really a microcosm to the duties of the ground crews involved*) I felt chagrined to leave out anything. Therefore, in the case of Karl Eichhorn's detailed remembrances, I shall attempt the old "Colliers Magazine" ploy; run the story in serial form. With your indulgence, you will find his story under the heading of "The Wartime Journal Of Karl Eichhorn, 726th."

THE ODYSSEY OF PAUL HARDEN'S CREW

During the last part of January, 1945, in the late afternoon, their B-24 Liberator entered the landing pattern to a single runway parallel to the hills between the east and west coasts of Italy. This six thousand foot strip, composed of steel mesh, located on a plateau near the hillside village of Castelluccia, was the focal point of the 451st Bombardment Group. From it, this organization for over two years, had carried out daily high altitude attacks against the Axis Powers. Besides this runway and its parking revetments, were a supply of B-24 aircraft. Enough to put four squadrons into the air each day, weather permitting. Maintenance crews, supplies and equipment, tent areas, armament personnel, and all those ground activities needed to support planes in the sky, were there, organized and seasoned. Supply lines from the Adriatic Sea transported gasoline, bombs, food and equipment shipped from the USA. Communication networks wove the bombardment group's life into the fabric of the 15th Air Force and the activities in the European theater.

(by Louis Head, MD)

theater of war.

The sky was grey. the rain had ceased. The landing traffic pattern was free of other aircraft. Barometric pressure on the ground, radioed from the control tower, was set into the new B-24M's altimeter; the airfield's altitude checked from charts in the cockpit; the gyro-compass set to match its heading, and the down wind phase for landing, parallel to, and one thousand feet higher than the runway, was entered. The landing check list was initiated.

Paul Harden's crew had ferried the new equipment from Topeka, Kansas for delivery to the 451st. Their thirty mission tour of combat duty was to be flown with the 725th squadron during what were to be the last months of the war in Europe. Unlike flight personnel participating during the build up and development of high altitude bombing, their B-24 training had been more sophisticated, being



PAUL HARDEN'S CREW

(Standing) Duane Borden, Morton Sheffler, Hubert Odom, Richard Fulmer, Louis Head
(Kneeling) Everett Alleman, Ken Brandstetter, (?) Green, Paul Harden

based on the necessities of war. All instructors had completed combat duty. Frequent emergency landings and crash landings had occurred during their combat schooling. They felt seasoned in flying the B-24 and more at home, there, than on the ground. Though flying had become a serious business, they liked it; had mastered the techniques, and were prepared for assignments that lay ahead.

With the plane crabbed into a cross wind from the west, air speed at 120 mph, the landing gear were lowered, power settings readjusted, flaps partially dropped, and the cowl flaps of all engines opened to decrease the rising cylinder head temperatures. On the instrument panel, a green light indicated the wheels to be down and locked. Checked from the waist compartment windows, the main gear were seen to be down and locked.

After the 90 degree turn into the base leg, crew members took their landing positions. on the final approach, power was reduced, flaps lowered fully, trim tabs set, and the air speed held at 120 mph. The B-24 lined up with the end of the runway. The crossing wind adjusted to.

Over the end of the field, throttles withdrawn to power off, the nose held high, the air speed dropped. Coordinated hard right rudder was applied to swing the aircraft, slanted to the wind, directly in line with the landing strip. Touch down was straight ahead. The raised nose gently descended into the nose wheel. Full brakes were need to slow the ground speed by the end of the runway. The flaps were raised. The two inboard engines were shut off. The cowl flaps were opened widely. The flight controls no longer

effective, brakes and engines were used to guide the ship to its parking revetment.

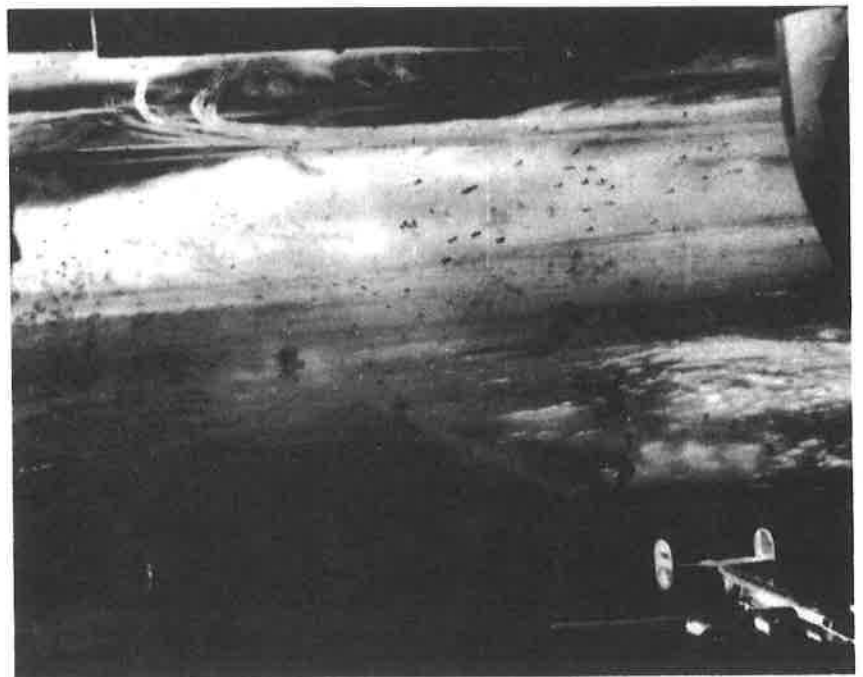
Confident in their abilities, but green to combat, Paul Harden's crew, having been briefed and checked out in formation flying, then, flew missions into enemy territory every third day through February, until March 16, 1945. On that day, being the only plane not to return from a strike on a synthetic oil refinery located along the Danube upstream from Vienna, the 451st reported all aboard to be missing in action.

Interrogation of crews, taking part in the engagement, indicated their plane, when last seen, to be still flying. They were out of

formation, losing altitude, one engine was feathered and out, a second was smoking and on fire. Gasoline streamed from beneath the aircraft. A heading to Russia had been requested.

Ten days later, headquarters at the 451st heard, through the British intelligence unit in Bari, Italy, that the co-pilot, Louis Head, was at the British mission in partisan held territory at Topusko, Yugoslavia. The remainder of the crew were unaccounted for.

April 8, 1945, Lt. Head returned to duty with the 725th squadron at Castelluccia. There was still no information of the whereabouts or condition of the rest of the



"RUNNING THE GAUNTLET"

crew.

This remained the situation after European hostilities formally ceased in May. In Yugoslavia, Marshal Tito's partisans still had to consolidate their position. Fighting there was not over for several weeks. Advice, both from the 451st and the 15th Air Force headquarters, was to make no comments and wait.

As the group prepared to return all the B-24s and the personnel to the States, Paul Harden, Duane Borden, and Tinio Odom arrived at the 725th to gather their belongings. 15th Air Force intelligence at Bari, Italy had informed them that everyone else was in good condition and returning home.

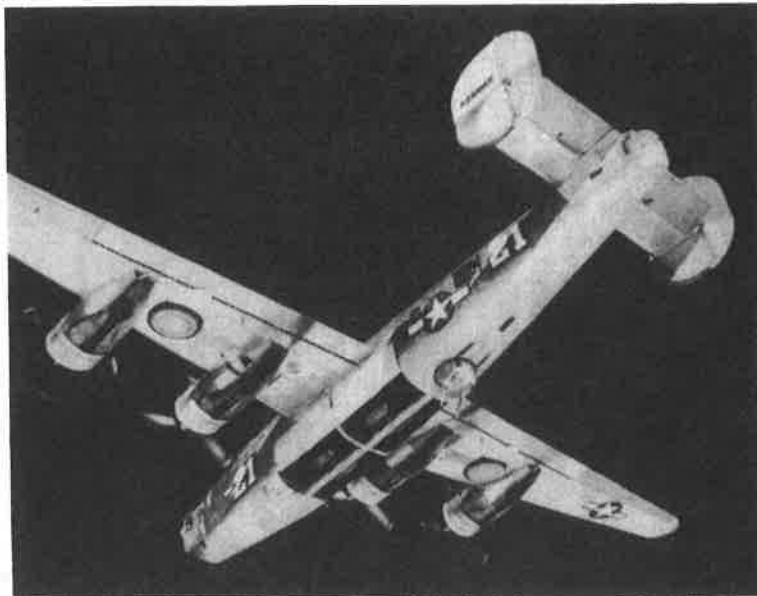
Dispersed through the fortunes of war, their tour of combat incomplete with the ending of hostilities, this was the sad fate of Paul Harden's B-24 crew. Sad in the sense that their ambitions were never achieved. Their ultimate combat role with the 451st had never been realized. Their experiences together finished.

What possible ambitions could they have had, other than completing their tour of duty, or ending the war? What had disrupted this organized unit on March 16th? As they gained combat flying time, a lead ship role seemed a possibility. The confusion of their trials on the ground over shadowed their organization in the air.

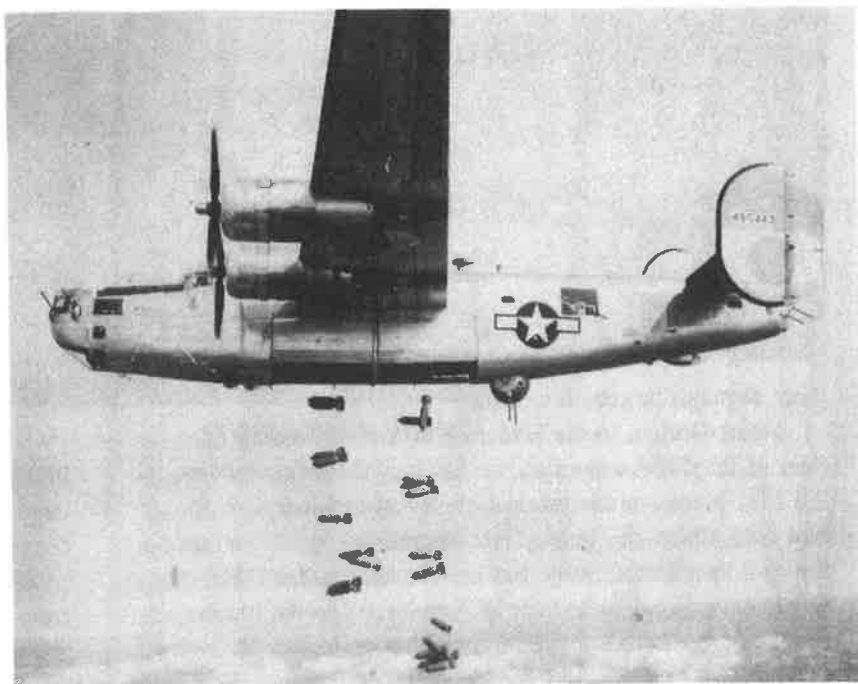
THE MISSION

Traversing the Adriatic, holding twenty four thousand feet over the Alps, with air speed 160 mph, the 451st Bombardment Group's formation approached the check point from which the bomb run would be lined up. Paul Harden's crew held the number four position just behind and below Major Gorton's lead ship. Two additional crew members were assigned for the mission; a bombardier and a bomb sight, a camera man and the photographic equipment. If called upon, the number four plane was prepared to make the bomb run. Prepared to record the bomb pattern on the ground.

The added crew brought the number of men aboard to eleven: pilot, copilot, navigator, engineer, radio operator, four turret gunners, cameraman and bombardier. All were nearing the half way point in the assigned tasks of striking the enemy and being shot at in return. By doing this over and over again, the initial emotional impact of being under fire had lessened so that a more objective view, concerning the events, was possible.



On course -- On line

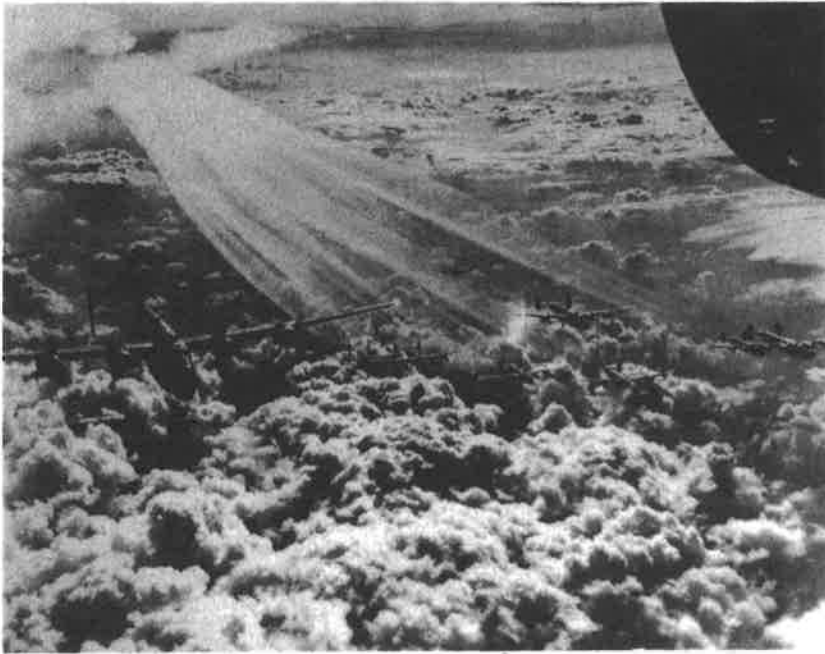


"BOMBS AWAY"

They were becoming an experienced or seasoned or maturing combat crew. The barrages of anti-aircraft bursts, through which they had slowly flown, proved to be less damaging than at first appearance, since the black powder smoke of shells, whose fragments had long ago fallen to the ground, continued to hang in the upper atmosphere. Most of a mission consisted of eight hours of formation flying, to and from the target, with only sev-

eral minutes under fire. Altitude was found to be important. The higher in the sky one was, the less accurate the enemy fire.

Fighter plane opposition was non existent. P-51 escorts and the fifty plane B-24 group formation, with five hundred machine guns, kept the Germans on the ground. Enemy gasoline had to be used to best advantage. Attacking B-24 formations was a waste of men, planes, ammunition, and gasoline as no 15th Air Force group had ever turned back from a mission because of fighter planes. However, gun crews on the ground knew that anti-aircraft protection of their important industrial areas, was necessary and effective. It severely disrupted bombing accuracy. As the German frontiers contracted, the concentration of



guns, at major targets, increased.

Major Gorton, in the lead ship, was commanding officer of the 725th squadron, on his last of thirty missions. All fifty planes in the group flew tuned to his lead ship. Not only, did each plane adjust its position in the formation to follow him closely, but he was in command. He would navigate them to the check point, make the bomb run, and drop the bombs. Everyone else would see the eight, fused, five hundred pound bombs drop from beneath his plane. Then, toggle switch their load to produce a pattern on the ground that reflected the formation above.

On any given mission, there were choices for the lead ship. Should weather intervene, or other conditions not be optimum, alternate targets were indicated, often without protection. On many occasions, Major Gorton had selected these, on any pretext. Credit was given for these missions even though the strategic objective had not been accomplished. On March 16th there were no alternative targets. The sky was clear. The sun shown brightly. The major target, protected by fifty anti-aircraft guns, had to be hit.

As the check point neared, word was passed to the formation that trouble had developed in the Major's radar equipment. That run would be aborted. Lt. Beasley, flying in position off his left wing, would lead a new one.

Beasley had proven himself in the lead ship position by his tactical flexibility in achieving the strategic objective of hitting the target with the least damage to his formation. On a previous mission to heavily fortified Linz, Austria, the 451st had struck the railroad marshaling yards directly with an above average bomb pattern. On that day, seeing the heavy fire ahead and the resulting fragmented formations, Beasley had altered the check point and flown the bomb run two thousand feet higher than assigned. No flack barrage was encountered. Whereas bombs from those groups under fire were scattered over the countryside, the 451st's were on target.

Beasley, on March 16th, then, led the group through a gentle 360 degree turn holding altitude and air speed meticulously. Since the gun crews below could not predict the new initial point, a fifty gun barrage, through which the entire formation would have to fly, could not be used. They were forced, instead, to track each ship separately. There was ample time for them to set their fuses to the exact altitude, to calculate the air speed well.

At the last minute before the run, (bombardier and bombsight controlled the formation once it was started) the lead ship climbed two hundred feet and increased air speed from 160 to 170 mph. There was no time for the gunners below to change their tracking or fuses. Their anti-aircraft fire was all behind and below the formation. The run was relatively undisturbed.

Bomb run photos and later recognizant data showed the target to have been destroyed. The group did receive some damage but only one plane did not return to base.

Shell bursts from the gun, tracking Paul Harden's crew, fell into the empty air below and behind their plane. However, those intended for Major Gorton's ship fell close by. There were no direct hits, but concussion waves, from nearby shells, rocked the plane. These were followed by sounds like gravel striking the underside of the B-24.

After bombs away, during the steep right turn and loss of altitude used to clear the target area, all crew members were contacted. None were injured. Damage assessment indicated the number two engine without manifold pressure. It was feathered and shut off. Number three was smoking, on fire, and likewise turned off. A major gasoline leak in the bomb bay area spontaneously stopped. Since the remaining two engines continued to

run, the main tanks were considered intact. The auxiliary supplies in the wing tips were thought to have emptied from injured connections to the, automatically balanced, main tanks. Altitude was being lost rapidly. There was poor response from the controls on the flight deck. In the waist section, there was a defect in the fuselage, a six by eight inch gaping hole, severed control cables. Duke Alleman, the engineer and Dick Fulmer, his assistant, spliced the major cables together, while Tonio Odom and Duane Borden, the gunners, threw all loose equipment out the waist windows. Ken Brandstetter, the navigator, in the shaken nose area, gathered his navigational equipment from the floor. Morton Sheffler, the radio operator, called his base for a heading to Russian held territory, at that time, not far east of the target. Paul Harden was able to restart the number three engine. This additional power and better responses to the controls enabled the plane to hold altitude at 9,000 feet and clear the Alps.

Lt. Harden planned to return the plane and crew as close to base as possible. He obtained a heading for an emergency landing strip at Zara, along the Dalmatian coast of Yugoslavia. Shortly after Brandstetter had given an estimate time of arrival, fifteen minutes to Zara, all three engines ceased. Fuel supplies had been exhausted. The alarm bell was sounded. The entire crew bailed out. The B-24's powerless engines wound up. Dropping fast, turning to the left, she crashed and burned.

CAPTURE AND EVASION

The plane had been lost, but an orderly line of eleven parachutes descended across the sky landing one by one into what was suppose to be partisan held territory. From there, they would be quickly returned to Castelluccia and combat duty, as had been the case for so many other flyers. This organized retrieval, however, was not to develop. As the chutes neared the ground small arms and machine gun fire interrupted their peaceful descent. On the roads and through a small destroyed town, there was much activity of men and motor vehicles.

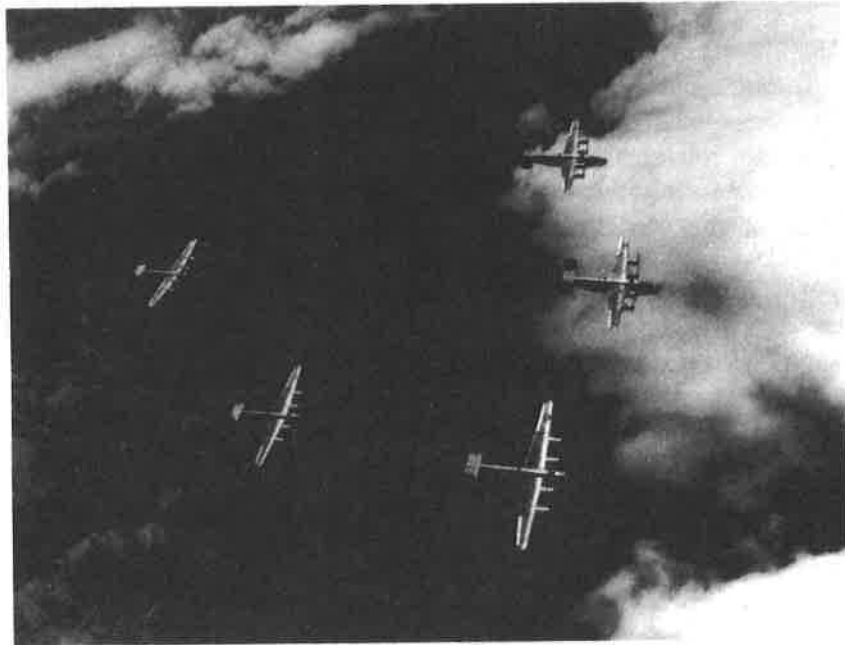
The camera man and the bombardier, landing early on, were captured by the German troops in the area and sent to prisoner of war camps in the north.

Dick Fulmer broke an ankle from a hard landing the result of spilling air from the corner of his chute in a successful attempt to avoid landing in the village. Duke Alleman sprained an ankle in his landing. They were taken

prisoner, sent to a hospital in the nearby city of Bihac, and later by train, to one in Zagreb.

Morton Sheffler was with them, but sent on a different route after reaching Zagreb. Preferring the Russian heading alternative, though alive and well, he has since been unavailable for comment. There has been no discussion of his adventures. At the time, the crew, as a whole, had little understanding or knowledge of the Jewish problems inside Germany.

Early the next morning, Brandstetter and Gene Bourdette were taken prisoners. They were sent another route, to Karlovac. Yugoslavia, by cart, then to Nuremberg, Germany, by train. Here, they were placed in the top German Air Force prison camp. Long standing prisoners were taking correspondence courses from Oxford. However, Brandstetter had to prove, during interrogation,



COMING BACK MINUS 1

that he actually was Kenneth A. Brandstetter of Cleveland, Ohio. Name, rank, and serial number were not enough to identify himself. He, very properly, had to accurately recited dates of his enlistment, commissioning, and training schedule to correspond with the data already contained in German intelligence files.

Landing in the hills, Louis Head, the copilot, remained hidden for five days until the battle lines moved southwards towards the city of Bihac. Partisan supply lines could be identified and contact with them made. He was put into the evasion network returning flyers to Italy.

Paul Harden, Duane Borden, and Tonio Odom were captured the next day. Kept with the retreating German army, constantly under attack from the partisans, they were moved, on foot, into Bihac where they were held prisoners until March 26th. The Germans evacuated to Zagreb. The partisans captured Bihac.



BOMBING ALONG THE DANUBE

Even under these adverse circumstances, the German troops, though on occasion short tempered, maintained their morale, discipline, and organization. The prisoners were, overall, well treated. Tonio Odom and Duane Borden along with a partisan prisoner did have to help dig out unexploded bombs, duds, so they could be defused. They were almost executed by an irate medical officer upset by a British bombing of his hospital, where gasoline supplies were also stored. Moved outside the city during the daytime attacks, returning to their prisons for the night, they often found them completely destroyed by the day fighting.

During the German evacuation from Bihac, Paul, Duane and Tonio, under heavy partisan fire, were instructed to lead the remaining troops across the exposed bridge in the center of the city. This was done without injury to close shots to them, whereas the troops behind received the fire. Outside the city, placed on trains, they were sent to the prisoner of war camp in Zagreb. With the surrender in Europe the Germans departed, leaving the camp to its own devices.

Hostilities in Jugoslavia, however, continued on for several weeks. Marshal Tito's partisan forces had secured Bihac, neutralized competing partisans to the south, and announced the formation of the Federation of Jugoslavian States. Remaining bands of Italian trained forces, in the area around Zagreb, produced continued fighting there.

First Lieutenant Harden, ranking officer in the camp, led the freed men, under fire, to a cave nearby. From there, contact was made with Partisans who gave instructions for, and directions to the home of Baroness Von Michalic. She had been a part of the evasion network used to return flyers to Italy. They accepted her hospi-

tality until it became known that an allied headquarters had been set up in Zagreb. Paul marched his men into the city. From there, they were flown out to their respective units. That war, for them, was over.

Paul Harden's crew had been dissolved. All of the men were alive and returned to the populations from which they had been gathered together.

The 451st Bombardment Group also vanished. The single runway, the parking revetments, the B-24s, the tent areas, the headquarters, the supply lines, the communication networks, all were gone as if the large variously structured formations of a billowing cumulonimbus cloud, after sundown, had been resorbed into the atmosphere from which it came. Not a rack was left behind. There were only men here

and men there who remember.

Old photographs, interrogation reports, battle orders, rosters, supply requisitions, and all the other accumulated documents still exist, scattered in various files. Castelluccia is in Italy. The bridge in Bihac still crosses the river. There are a few B-24s around. But, only men remember the vast and individual organizations that made the intensity of life and fear in combat an achievement.

Today, in the center of Vienna is a new opera house, less than fifty years old. Far from any strategic area, it contains a small remnant of the previous beautiful and ornamental building.

EPILOGUE

The events surrounding March 16, 1945 can be as ephemeral as the organizations, equipment, and men involved.

Memories, too, can be insubstantial. They change, fading with time. Personal diaries can help recall the past.

With relaxation and attention, the indulgence of your imagination can reconstruct these actual adventures, and condense the facts from the atmosphere of bygone times.



725th SQUADRON AREA

THE WARTIME JOURNAL OF KARL EICHHORN (726th)

(Karl left High School prior to graduation (but with diploma in hand) and was sworn into the Army on 4 January 1943. He was classified as to his MOS at Fort Hayes, - accepted into the Air Force - took his basic training at St. Petersburg, Florida. We take up his journal when he arrives at Buckley Field, Colorado: 1 April 1943)

ARMAMENT SCHOOL

We had no assigned duty on our first day at Buckley. I took advantage of the time to send my uniform to the base cleaner, get a haircut, and polish my shoes. I also picked up a book of 10 tickets to the base movie theater for \$1.20. I was pleased to discover that there was an excellent P.X. (meaning Post Exchange, a hangover, I suppose, from Army frontier days) on the field. The following day we all took a physical examination for aerial gunnery school. I passed everything but the vision test, and so qualified for overseas duty but not gunnery school. On Sunday we were officially welcomed to Buckley Field by the C.O. at the base theater. The following day, 5 April, we started our Armament class work.

Generally, mornings are assigned for routine things like drilling, calisthenics, gas mask drills, obstacle courses, squadron duty and barracks cleanup. The actual class work started right after lunch, ran all afternoon, with ten minute breaks each hour, and then resumed after supper with an evening session until 2200. Our first assignment was to learn all about the Browning Caliber 50 aerial machine gun. We had to memorize the names of each of the 175 parts, learn how to strip it down completely, then re-assemble it, eventually while blind-folded.

I had scarcely gotten started in class when, the evening of 6 April, I suddenly became very ill with a high fever. The following day I tried to remain on duty but by mid-afternoon I could hardly stand up and had to go on sick call. With a fever of 104 degrees I was immediately put in an ambulance and sent to the base hospital. That night my right ear again began to drain - obviously it was a flare-up of the same infection I had in St. Pete, only this time much worse. I was sent to a specialist in the E.N.T. clinic, a young Captain who seemed to know his business. He immediately put me on one of the new Sulfa drugs to combat the infection. I went to the clinic everyday and after about four days my fever abated. I was extremely worried about my ear but I never told my parents that I was in the hospital. I tried to be cheerful in my letters, even though I surely didn't feel that way. While in the hospital, I received from my Aunt Esther

(Essie) a nice G.E. portable radio. I was delighted with it, as I had greatly missed being able to keep up with the world news. It was not a portable in the sense of today's radios, since it used vacuum tubes and four large heavy "A" and "B" batteries. It was about the size and weight of a typewriter.

By the third week of April my ear was much improved and by the latter part of the month I knew I was getting better when I was assigned to light K.P. work in the hospital kitchen. I was finally released from the hospital on 2 May and assigned to a new barracks on the other side of the field. Though still rather weak, I had to carry all my gear over there, making two trips. The E.M. barracks at the newer bases, such as Buckley Field, were long, narrow single story wood-framed buildings covered on the outside simply with tar paper. Inside double-deck bunks were lined up along each wall. At one end was the latrine and at the other a separate, private room where the resident C.Q. (the Non-com, usually a Corporal or Sergeant, in Charge of Quarters) lived. In the center of the building were three or four coal burning space heater stoves. At older, longer established bases most barracks were two story buildings, with the second floor exactly like the first. On Monday, 3 May, I started my Armament classes again. The first couple days were easy, as I had already had that subject matter. I continued with the normal training/class schedule, except that I was excused from doing the obstacle course for a couple weeks and had to return to the clinic for check-ups once a week for three weeks. In my spare time I went to the P.X. or base theater, polished shoes, sewed on my shoulder patches, etc. I really enjoyed having the radio. We usually received one day off each week and I sometimes went into Denver via bus and streetcar. It was a very nice city and the people were surprisingly friendly to Servicemen.



One of the new drills we had was a gas mask drill with real gas. We went to a large building where we put our masks on "by the numbers" before entering. After standing around for a while in the building we were told to take our masks off. The building was filled with tear gas and we quickly found ourselves rushing for the exit! A gas mask was a very uncomfortable thing to wear, but this little exercise demonstrated its potential value in a very effective way. In class we went from the Cal. 50 machine gun to the Cal. 30 (which, by comparison, seemed like a toy) then to the 20mm cannon and, finally, the 37mm cannon, which had 200 parts to memorize. One time we were sent to the malfunction range where nine Cal. 50 machine guns were set up to fire at a target with real ammunition. Each gun has deliberately been bugged by removing a part or installing a damaged part so that it would jam or misfire. Every student had to fire each gun, and determine exactly what the malfunction was and correct it. I found it rather easy and was most impressed by the noise those guns made!

We also had lectures on the old Springfield rifle and went to the rifle range where each man fired 20 rounds at a standard target at 200 yards. I had often engaged in target practice at home with a .22 rifle with Mother and Dad, so firing the Springfield was nothing new for me, except for the recoil, and scored 80 out of 100, the highest in my class. I was truly surprised at the number of soldiers who had never fired any sort of gun and were actually very apprehensive about it.

The weather at this time in Colorado was very unsettled and we had combinations of rain, snow and sleet all through May. The ground was usually very muddy and it was rather cold most of the time. We usually had inspections on Saturday mornings, in the time-honored Army manner. On 22 May we were inspected by the Base Commander, General Lawton, and we really prepared for that one!

In mid-May I was promoted to Private First Class (as were all other students who had not gotten into any trouble) and was paid \$20.00. Up to that time I had been paid only \$10.00 in three months. We finally finished our class work at Buckley on 22 May and on Monday the 24th we were loaded on large horse vans (perhaps from the Cavalry??) and moved to nearby Lowry Field for the



advanced Armament School.

At Lowry Field we were immediately assigned to the K.P. Squadron and marched to our barracks. We were not issued any sort of bedding. There were two rather soiled blankets on each cot and that was all. We assumed we would be on K.P. just one or two days - little did we realize it would last a full week! For some reason, I escaped K.P. the first day, but was placed on barracks detail, instead. However, on the 26th I was assigned to "C" shift K.P. We started at 1700 and worked all night until we were relieved at 0600 in the morning. The base was on an around-the-clock training schedule and so, of course, were the mess halls. I was on K.P. every night Wednesday through Sunday. One night I had a comparatively easy job, but every other night I worked on the China Clipper. The next Monday, the 31st, I had barely gotten to bed after K.P. when they rolled us out to be assigned to a new barracks to start our advanced training. We were finally issued bedding, plus a pillow, mattress and a pair of rubber overshoes, after which we went to a theater to receive the usual welcoming and orientation lectures. Our actual training at Lowry started on Tuesday, 1 June. Again I was assigned to the night, or "C" shift.

Our routine schedule was to roll out at 1000 for calisthenics and drill in the morning, followed by lunch. It was hard to get used to, since we would have breakfast at 0100, just before going to bed and then get nothing to eat after rising, until lunch time. After lunch we had a one hour session each day on aircraft recognition. We had to be able to quickly identify the silhouettes of all current Allied and Axis military aircraft.

This was really a snap for me because of my long time interest in aviation - I could already identify virtually every aircraft in the sky, both military and civilian. On quizzes I always got the highest score in my class and almost never missed. We had tests wherein slides of various planes were quickly flashed on a screen and we had to write down the make and model of the plane. After the A/C recognition class we had free time until after supper, when our Armament classes began at 1830. These classes lasted till 0030 when we went to the mess hall for our 0100 breakfast.

The subjects we studied in class included the following:

Wiring & electrical circuits	Bomb racks
Gas warfare	Bomb shackles
Bombs & fuses	Aerial torpedoes
Explosives & ammunition	Hydraulics
A-2 Bomb release	A-1 Arming device

Sperry gun sight
 Sperry upper turret
 Consolidated tail turret

Sperry ball turret
 Martin upper turret
 Ammunition belting

The classes were usually in the form of lectures and demonstrations, with occasional training films. Oral and written quizzes were given almost every session. I was so impressed and interested in the powered gun turrets that I requested to be sent to the special turret school after I finished at Lowry. I was sure I could get the assignment because of my high grades, but that was not to be.

We were given one day off each week and mine was Saturday. My first pass was on the 12th and I went to Denver where I went to the Telenews Theater and then to two regular movies. I also had a very nice restaurant meal. Sometimes I went to an amusement park near Denver called Lakeside, where I went on the various rides. One Saturday two other fellows and I went on a train excursion from Moffat Station. The train went about 75 miles up into the Rockies, going through 31 tunnels on the way. To one from the mid-west it was a marvelous experience - the beauty of the mountains was beyond anything I had ever experienced. My only regret was that I had no camera to record the trip. I had not taken my Argus with me into the service because cameras were not allowed on training bases. This train trip cost all of \$1.45.

My back pay finally caught up with me on 16 June when I received \$112.73 in cash. It was the most money I had ever had at one time in my life and I sent most of it home to my parents. Towards the end of the month I received an additional \$47.50 so I no longer had to count every penny. During the last half of June we frequently went on cross country hikes of up to seven miles in place of having calisthenics every morning. This was in preparation for our final exercise at Denver. We finished Armament School on 4 July and were issued musette packs and harnesses, a horrid piece of equipment, probably leftover from 1918. All soldiers who finished at Lowry had to go on a one week field exercise at a place called Camp Bizerte, located some distance from Denver - exactly where, I never knew. On 5 July trucks loaded us and our gear and headed for the location of our field exercises. We were dropped off with full packs seven miles

from the camp and hiked the rest of the way. Upon arrival we were assigned to a bivouac area where we pitched our tents and camouflaged them with vegetation. By current backpacking standards, these tents were really terrible. Each soldier carried one "shelter half," one tent pole and two wool G.I. blankets. Two men connected their shelter halves together at the ridge and pitched them as sort of a pup tent without floor or insect netting. They tended to leak at the joined ridge line and provided very little protection from a driving rain. We had no sleeping pads of any sort, and found the ground rather hard! We also found that this area was heavily populated with an unusually vicious species of ant.

We ate from a field kitchen, using mess kits which were cleaned by scrubbing well with sand. Water was trucked in and placed in Lister Bags and was purified with iodine, which made it taste rather bad.

Our schedule at Camp Bizerte was quite full. We learned how to fuse

and load 500 and 1000 pound bombs, using a wrecked B-25 fuselage as a test facility. We fired Enfields at the rifle range twice, the second time for the record. I qualified as Marksman the first time. We also fired Carbines and Thompson sub-machine guns at the range. One day we practiced camouflaging a wrecked B-24 bomber - something we never had to do again, even overseas. And of course, there was the usual calisthenics, close order drill, manual of arms, obstacle course and even K.P. in the field kitchen. One night we were treated to a concert by the

Lowry Air Force Band which was very enjoyable. There was often talk about rattlesnakes, though I don't think anyone ever saw one in the camp. One night about midnight there was an awful scream near our tent and I heard several cries of "snake, snake!" Two guys had jumped out of their sacks taking the tent with them down the slope. It turned out that a couple jokers had placed a hemp rope under their neighbors' tent and in a curved form and then started pulling on it about midnight, giving, apparently, the



sensation of a large snake moving under the tent. A little comedy always helps.

Camp Bizerte was located on the edge of what looked like a dry river bed. It was, in fact, an arroyo and one day after we had been having a light rain we were amazed to see a wall of roaring, muddy water come rushing down that dry bed. It was so strong that it took out our Army bridge and washed away a bunch of mess supplies. At that time I had never heard of such a thing and was completely astounded as to where such a flood of water could have come from without warning.

On the 12th of July we broke camp and hiked out to the highway where trucks returned us to Lowry Field. The next day we were formally graduated from Armament School and received our diplomas and Armorer's sleeve patches. But Lowry was not yet through with us, for on the next day we pulled 12 hours of K.P.

On the 15 July we entrained at 1030 for Salt Lake City Air Base. This was the best troop train shipment I experienced in the Army. We not only had Pullman sleepers, but regular dining cars, as well and our route took us straight across the Rockies with the most magnificent views one could hope for. The following day we detrained at Salt Lake AFB where we went through a clothing inspection and were given another overseas physical. We were issued some new clothing, pistol belt, helmet liners, the infamous musette bag and harness, two wool blankets, a shelter half with pole and pegs, a first aid pouch, canteen and a new barracks bag. Then we were assigned to barracks and had a chow. The following day we were placed on shipping alert, but had little to do other than police our barracks area and stand Retreat that evening. The term, "police" has nothing to do with security, of course, but simply means clean up. When policing an area we went by the old Army slogan, "If it moves, salute it; if it doesn't move, pick it up; if you can't pick it up, paint it!" On Sunday, the 18th I was on K.P. all day, but it was the easiest I had ever pulled - the work wasn't too hard and the food was very good. The next day saw the usual routine of calisthenics, drill and a run over the obstacle course. I was scheduled to ship out on the 20th, so I dressed in my Class A O.D.'s, packed my bags and hauled them to the Dayroom to be picked up. Then we were marched to the R.R. Station where we had two roll calls, after which, to our amazement and disgust, we were marched right back to a Provisional Squadron on the base and assigned to another barracks!! This sort of Army nonsense defies any and all reason or logic and one learns



quickly not to ask why. So we drew bedding again, unpacked our bags and had supper followed by Retreat. I did learn one thing from this foolish exercise; my shipping orders indicate that I had been assigned to a new unit, the 451st Heavy Bombardment Group, which was formed in Tucson in May.

I pulled K.P. again on the 21st - this time in the Base Exchange. Even though I worked on pots and pans it was fairly good day, as I could make myself as many chocolate malts as I wanted and the meals were better than in the mess hall. I even got off early enough to go into Salt Lake City to look it over and go to a movie. On the next day, without any warning, I was again roused out at 0300 to go on K.P. in the Squadron mess. That day was much rougher as we had a couple of the worst "pushers" I had ever encountered. A "pusher" was a soldier, usually a Corporal, with an I.Q. of about 29 who spent his time in the mess overseeing the work of the K.P.'s and pushing them to get the work done. I always thought it unfortunate that Hitler didn't choose to exterminate K.P. "pushers" rather than innocent Jews. On Saturday the 24th I came down with my first bad case of Army diarrhea, commonly called the G.I.s. This was fairly common in the Army in spite of the fact that its cause was well known - improperly washed cooking or eating utensils. It

was not funny - it usually just knocked a person out for about 24 hours. It started with gas on the stomach which had the sensation of rotten eggs and proceeded from there. Fortunately, the Army Medics had some pills which would quickly stop it and after going on sick call I was feeling better by evening. Those of us who were assigned to the 451st Bomb Group were again placed on shipping alert that day. There seems to be no escape from it - on Sunday night I was again put on K.P. in the Base Exchange; at least it was better than in the regular mess hall. On Monday morning, 26 July those of us in the 451st were told that we would ship out at 1630 that day.

I expected another fiasco, but at the appointed hour we loaded into a bunch of 6 X 6 Army trucks and moved out in a long convoy at 1730. We had been told that we were going to Wendover Field in Utah, a distance of 125 miles.



We passed along the Great Salt Lake and then across a bleak and desolate desert. It was like a moonscape. We arrived at Wendover at 2300 and were assigned to a tent area where large pyramidal six-man tents were already erected. We threw our blankets on the canvas cots which were already in the tent, unpacked some of our gear and wearily went to sleep.

(To be continued in future issues)

Force happenings, and historical aviation events. He is a *(Editors note: as you can see by the meticulously assembled diary that Karl Eichhorn has offered, this is a chronicle I could not pass up. To those of you that may have gone the similar route as Karl, it should bring back some bittersweet memories. To those of you that went a different route in your training, this may point out how others fared that were to later serve at your side. -- Graphic illustrations taken from PUPPENT POETS - circa 1945, Italy)*



COLONEL MARCH: 451st CHAMPION

Colonel Christian (Larry) March, formerly of the 724th Bomb Squadron, still flies (on occasion) with the 72nd Tactical Training Squadron, 56th Tactical Training Wing out of MacDill AFB, Florida. Though he likes to portray himself as an, "*Old bold fighter pilot*," Larry has proved himself more than just a proponent of the current Air Force, he has also been a strong advocate of what *we're* all about.



COLONEL LARRY MARCH "OLD BOLD WARRIOR"

strong supporter of the internationally renown Order of Daedalians, having served as President of the Suncoast Flight #25 in 1981. (The Daedalians is an organization of military pilots, dating back to WW-I, banding together to extol the benefits of strong air power as an instrument of national policy.)

Larry played a big hand in introducing our organization to Anne Brusselmans, former Belgium underground heroine.

Prior to our Norfolk Reunion, Larry wrote and expressed his regrets that he and his lovely wife Eddie, would not be able to to make this gathering. This would be the first of our five reunions that they have missed. In lieu of their absent Reunion (V-Mail) Registration, Larry and Eddie instead mailed a donation check for \$1000.

This was not the first major donation that the March's have offered. Besides their generous annual contribution, Larry was instrumental in placing some \$300 from the sale of his "runner up" Group Insigne lapel pins into our treasury. Larry had these manufactured, at his own cost, in time for our Colorado Springs Reunion in 1982. (More about insignias in this AD-LIB)

Aside from his monetary support, Larry has offered much good information that has kept me abreast of Air

It was Larry that paved the way for Anne to accept our invitation to attend our Norfolk Reunion, thus affording us the chance to honor her on the eve of our Friday Night Opening Ceremony. Anne was accompanied by her daughter, Yvonne Daley.

The Group is deeply indebted to the March's for their devotion to, and the help in, sustaining this operation.



OUR THINNING RANKS

Its always a sad duty to record the passing of one of our comrades. Its even sadder to relay the fact that since our last AD-LIB (Issue 16) we have to report that 17 of our buddies are gone. As has been my custom in the past, I try to include a written expression of sorrow and remembrance; perhaps a bit of prose, maybe a touch of poetry. But on this occasion I will yield the eloquence of the written word to someone that felt an inner compassion for the memory of one of his fallen comrades; one he calls, "his wingman."

When I offered, to close squadron comrades, the fact that Reuben C. Hagen (original cadre, 726th pilot) had passed away, Sam Hornbeak offered the following words:

REUBEN'S SONG

*Twos years ago I first embarked
along embattled way,
And those who shared the sky with me
would laugh, would cry, would pray.*

*The bond of flying wing to wing
through flak-infested sky
Was welded deep within our hearts -
a bond that could not die.*

*Ensuing years have not erased
our comradeship and care
For the precious cause of freedom
defended from the air.*

*But now the greatest of all flights
I've taken on my own,
And even as I climb on high,
I know I'm not alone.*

*I soar with angels skyward,
not needing man-made wings
To discover deathless freedom
from mortal sense of things.*

*So wish me well, my brothers,
until we meet once more
In arm-to-arm formation
above life's golden shore.*

Written in memory of Reuben C. Hagen, my fellow-pilot from the 726th Bomb Squadron, 451st Bombardment Group, WW-II.

Sam L. Hornbeak

May 29, 1988

I'm sure that Sam would share this same feeling for the rest of our recently departed comrades. Thus I offer these names in memorial, with the compassionate wording of Sam's poem still ringing in our ears.

Wilfred L. (Bill) Bias	726th - 11 January 1988
Spencer Brandeis	725th - Unknown
Emanuel Brown	724th - Unknown
Virgil B. Burch	724th - 15 January 1988
Kenneth Gevry	724th - 31 March 1985
Reuben C. Hagen	726th - May 1988
Donald E. Hardwick	725th - September 1987
Robert J. Heier	727th - 30 July 1987
Garland H. Jarvis	724th - 22 March 1986
Joseph A. Konopka	725th - 2 March 1988
William A. Mathieson	725th - Unknown
Harold J. Moore	726th - 31 December 1987
Burnis A. Nichols	726th - 27 June 1984
Jack M. Patterson	725th - Spring 1988
Dana Street	HDQ --- 24 January 1988
Clyde L. Wagner, MD	HDQ --- 19 June 1987
Harry T. Waite	727th - 9 August 1988

Note should be taken of the variation of time in reporting the date of death. In some cases the family fails to notify us and it has to be confirmed by a buddy or crewmate.

In the case of (M/Sgt) Dana Street the family made a prompt and personal effort in notify me of Dana's passing. Over the years Dana, his late wife, Hilda, (who proceeded Dana in death by less than a year) and recently Barbara Fox, (married daughter whose husband, S/Sgt John Fox, was stationed for a while at Chanute AFB, IL) and I became



Dana Street (1921-1988)

good friends.

Dana was with his daughter in Germany when his health began to fail. He was brought home by military aircraft, and after a brief time passed away in the hospital

at his hometown of Presque Isle, Maine.

His son, Barry Street (Major USAF Retired), and daughter Barbara Fox (plus Dana's three grand children) survive. He will be mourned by all that remember his congeniality at all our previous reunions.

"Doc" Wagner left this life in a very peaceful manner, according to his wife, Marion. "He was working in the garden and sat down to rest when his heart failed him."



Bias Crew (Bias standing at far left)

Bill Bias, according to his executor, passed away as a result of lung cancer. Bill will be remembered at the Dayton reunion as the committeeman with the video camera.

Garland "Jeeter" Jarvis (724th) died in his home in Florida from a brain hemorrhage. He was alone at the time.

Harry Waite was confined to a nursing home, in Fairmount, N. Dakota, during the later stages of his illness. Although he was unable to communicate during the last phases of illness, his eyes showed recognition when reference was made to the 451st and the part it played in WW-II.

In just about every case with the aforementioned members, they all had a strong desire to maintain this organization as their link to a distinguished past. Each had a war remembrance that transcended almost anything that had happened to them since those adventurous youthful days. Many of them gave of themselves, both financially and spiritually, to keep us operational.

It is with a deep sense of loss we commit their memories to our past.

EVIDENCE MOUNTS ON PLOESTI PICTURE

Again, through the kind efforts of Bill Dwyer (Photo Officer), more light is being thrown (and lenses focused) on the "Ploesti Picture;" a cover story I had used in the last AD-LIB. Bill has recovered, and reproduced, the series of six photographs that were taken over the target by our elusive, (and still unknown) cameraman. With this comes new documentation of the aircraft immediately behind (in the #4 position). Bill has made a fairly clear reproduction showing such details as two names on the front of the nose turret and above the bombardiers compartment. The two names read "Dolly" for the nose turret, and "Sylvia" for the bombardiers windows. The "slab side" nose art is visible, but not discernable. From the angle viewing that one gets, lots of name possibilities are conjured up.

But the final clarification came from Michael Hill (working with his dad, Sedge Hill, on our forthcoming 451st book) when he found another photo (from another mission) showing both girls' names and the fact that it had "braced" pitot tubes on the nose section. The clarification picture shows it to be "CON JOB" (#42-78145) out of the 727th Squadron. Though there is no question from the photo, the newsletter reproduction will not show the nose art.

Please note the following pages with pictures of: (a.) series of six "Ploesti" shots taken from both sides of waist section, moments apart: (b.) enlargement of #4 ship: (c.) confirming picture of "CON JOB" with braced pitot tubes and nose lettering of wife or girlfriend names.

Since the last AD-LIB this office has received many well meaning, but uncorroborated, testimonials from those that thought they knew all about the incident and the persons involved. In most of the cases I could give proof of where their remembrances were flawed; in others I could only say, "Let's wait and see what further evidence turns up." Just what type of clarification is needed, I don't know. We need to know who was aboard the aircraft (CON JOB), on all the various Ploesti missions. Knowing who was assigned to the aircraft in the squadron, isn't the answer. They may not have been on the mission. We are all aware that even though you felt you HAD an aircraft assigned, (even had some nose art painted on it) you didn't always fly missions in it. There were times when an aircraft was "down for repairs," and you flew your mission in another plane.

What we need to know is:

Who was the photographer in the lead ship taking the pictures?

What was the date of the mission?

Who were the other crews involved?

Why was the Army Air Force, specifically the 15th AAF, so reluctant in giving the 451st credit for it?

What we know is:

*The mission was to Ploesti, Rumania.
The close-up squadron involved was the 727th.
The # 4 position was flown by the aircraft, "CON JOB."
We think the number 6 position was flown by "SOD
BUSTER," though Jack Thomas (original AEG for the
ship) sorta disputes that perception.*

What we do know about the final history of "CON JOB," was that it was "downed" on 22 August 1944 over Vienna, Austria. The pilot on that occasion was Lt. Richard A. Trunbull. One crewman was KIA and the rest were POW'ed. We have located Richard in Wichita, Kansas, but after sending 3 invitations to join, has not responded.



Series shot #1



Series shot #2



Series shot #3



Series shot #4



Series shot #5



Series shot #6



"CON JOB" Verification Photo From Different Mission
(Name shows better on Original Photograph)



Emmett C. "Doc" Hageman, 724th: I am enclosing a few pictures and a small donation towards your annual "Clam Bake." Sorry I can't make the scene. I have more 724th pictures but as of now I have not been able to find them. When I do, I will send them on to you. Been flyin' blind, for a year now and it is a real bummer, to be sure. *(editor ... Glad you were able to find your way into your foot locker and locate those 724th pictures. They help to augment our photographic archives)*

Nick Ruha, 724th: Enclosed are several photos and route maps that I located in my "hardly ever looked at" files. Add these to the 451st collection, if you find any merit in them. (1. Route map of March 8, 1945 mission to Hegyeshalom M/Y, Hungary. (2. Strike photo of hits on St. Veit R.R. Viaduct, Italy. Direct hit was made by 724th Fox Flight which I flew as lead bombardier, along with recon photo. (3. Route map to Bronzola, Italy marshalling yard on April 11, 1945.

(editor ... Nick you may not have known it but I was flying as waist gunner on Lt. Sieber's (724th) crew on that 12 April mission (the St. Veit Bridge). I definitely remember we made, not 1, not 2, but 3 (yes, 3) passes before dropping the bombs. So you were the culprit responsible! My journal says that we made excellent hits, so you are excused. The day before, 11 April, our tail gunner, Leo Cegla, took a chunk of flak in the leg while flying lead with Lt. Bunch. I remember the 38 flak guns seem like 138. On that day I was subing on Lt.



"Ploesti Mission" Close-up of #4 Aircraft
("Dolly & "Sylvia" Clearly Readable on Nose Section)

Innerst's crew and we temporarily lost our hydraulic and electrical system, and definitely our #3 engine. We had a hell of a time getting flaps and gear down without our full hydraulic capability. AH, Nick, you do stir some memories.)

William Paddock, 725th: ... The Norfolk reunion of the 451st will be one of the highlights of my life. Your efforts in getting so many former members of the 451st to join the Association is extraordinary; and your planning of the reunion was equally as great.

(editor ... Bill, having all your crew together (9 of you guys) wasn't all my doing, but thanks anyways. You also put a lot of effort in finding them. Plus - your job of encouraging them to come was a major effort. I know you did a lot of hand-wringing by time all were in-house.

Frank Lather, 727th: ... Since I have been on the "MIA" list for 44 years it makes me regret that I missed the previous reunions, but God willing I intend not to miss future ones. I must have made contact with at least 20 guys from the 727th -- some who knew me, some who didn't (I wasn't the most memorable CO!). Since Col Stef, B.J. Mckinnis, Bev Pearson, and Ed Rasmessen and I were all assigned at Grenier Field in Manchester, NH, it was great to reminisce with them. I had not met John Hoppock before the reunion but we put our heads together and confirmed that I was his predecessor in the 727th (as you had told me)



"Grenier Field"

L to R = Lt Col. E.D. Rasmessen, 2 unidentified women (civilian), unidentified Captain, Captain Doug Sanford, Major Frank Lather, Col. LeRoy Stefen

(editor ... As one to "come aboard" only recently, you have done well in getting yourself reoriented and getting involved...But rather than Hoppock following you in command of the 727th, you took over from Jack. I'm sure you knew that - it was just a case of writing "predecessor" rather than his "successor.")

Art Gallagher, 726th: ... The great entertainment excelled all before this. The Sisters were great, but the General speaking on Russia, was a real eye opener.



"THE SAWYER SISTERS"

(editor ... As a former Dayton Committeeman and devotee of 451st Reunions, I prize your evaluation. Thanks Art, and you too Margie, for your valuable and continued support.)

Albert Bostner, 726th: ... Inclosed is a copy of the obituary notice concerning the passing of Lt. Colonel Russell C. Hempel. He was a member of the 726th Squadron.

(editor ... Thanks Al. I had been trying for some time to get Russell as a member, but apparently his business ventures, after retiring from the military, kept him tied up. Once fully retired he ups and passes away. Russ was Bombardier on the Lester Snyder's crew #50.)

Ernest Erickson, 727th: ... I finally had a video made of my 8mm film which I had taken on my tour with the 727th, 451st Bomb Group. It is not the best but what can I expect from something that is over 40 years old. The video is for the Group and if you can use it in any way, please do.

(editor ... Another welcome addition to the archives of the 451st. Thanks Ernie. I remember you showing it at our Colorado Springs Reunion. I was impressed at quality of it, even then. Perhaps I can find a way to have copies made and offer it to the

membership. I'll look into it.)

Joe Jadick, 724th: ... In my earlier correspondence with you it seems to me that you suggest that only by photographic evidence could my claims for successful fishing trips be believed. Elsie and I have been knocking the trout dead in our 10 ft. aluminum lake fishing boat. Since we fish only with flies, larger trout (see example picture on back of letter) are difficult to get on board. We have reverted to releasing those outsize fish while fishing, rather than create coronary problems for the senior citizens who check our catches back at the dock.

(editor ... Your evidence is overwhelming, Joe. The picture you supplied confirms your truthfulness. And you even kept the crayon colors within the lines. Us mid-westerners aren't that refined when it comes to equipment and bait. We use muskie poles, gallon milk containers for bobbers, and in the course of the day "drowned" a lot of night crawlers. But our carp, catfish, and gar will match your old trout in size, anytime.

Harry Pascoe, 726th: ... I am in full accord with your plan for the flag and enclosed a check for \$50. You may use all or any proportionate breakdown you wish for flag or other needs. You may count on me again in a few months for another annual donation.

(editor ... I doff my hat to you, Harry and Margo. You helped in a large measure in getting our flag made. I hope you had the chance while at the Norfolk Reunion to take a good look at the final results. The designers really deserve all the credit. You and I were only instruments in getting the eventual product made.)

Harvey Brown, 725th: ... Enclosed is a copy of my diary entries covering the period from May to November 1944 ... Most of my entries agree with Colonel Anderson's memoirs, as printed in the Spring 1988 AD-LIB. There are several discrepancies but I guess that is understandable considering these events occurred 44 years ago - long enough for a few cobwebs to form upstairs!

(editor ... I can understand your frustration when certain dates (that you know to be - for sure-) don't jibe with what's written in your journal. I can only suggest you contact Colonel John Anderson and get them thrashed out. My journal shows, on 6 September 1944, if Anderson is correct, that I was flying nose guns for Colonel Eaton on that mission. If evasive action had occurred, I did not see or feel it. But then again, I had a forward view and the lead ship is suppose to be as sturdy as a rock. I remember we got the "be-jabers" shot out of us over Belgrade with their 60 (?) flak guns. Upon landing our brakes held on the right wheel only. This caused us to cross the north infield at a high rate of velocity, (kinda like a scalded cat) and wound up, rather unceremoniously, with the nose wheel caved-in, setting in the drainage ditch near the main taxi-way.)

William Heath, 724th: ... Your last bulletin, containing Colonel Anderson's itinerary of his missions, was especially interesting to me. As you will remember, you and I finished our missions at the time he was our Commander. In fact, he went with my crew to the Isle of Capri for R & R - so it was especially interesting to me to read his itinerary. Just wish I had had the forethought to keep a diary of my missions and eventually write a paper on my tour of duty.

(editor ... True, Bill, we flew a lot of missions while under the iron hand of Commander Anderson,

but I ended up with several other commanders; namely Tom Moran, Douglas Sanford, and Henry Rollins; then Sanford, again, when he returned from Russia. Since our last newsletter we've heard from another that was mentioned in Anderson's journal, pilot Walter Rutkowski. He surfaced hoping our reunion would work out for him to attend. I guess it didn't since neither of you guys were seen in the area. I understand you've been spending some time in the Philippines with your daughter and her family.)

Robert Blair, 726th: ... I have tried to explain to people many times that when I left West Palm Beach my bombardier and 3 gunners were removed from the crew and sent to Italy by surface vessel. I never saw them again. I was loaded with 2 radar men and lots of spare radar parts and blankets. When I reached the 451st the radar plane and the navigator were also taken from me. I flew about half my missions with anyone that was available and then I got the bombardier and navigator from Wilfred Bias' crew and three gunners from some place. When I got to the 726th the crews had 12 to 15 missions. I was the second to finish the 50. Most crews got a week of R & R on Capri, I got 3 days in Naples.

(editor ... Seems that they took everything but your self-esteem when you went overseas. Even that as suffered till they loaded you up with a new crew. You must have felt like a "bastard child" when you were assigned to the 451st. To a degree you suffered a reverse syndrome from those that lost most of their crew while they "sat on the sidelines during that off mission")

Al Romitti, 724th: ... My copilot was Duane Maybay, not Kenton G. Slankard as you questioned in your letter. Also you asked about Lloyd W. Schmitz, our crew chief. Lloyd passed away shortly after being discharged.

(editor ... Thanks for the update. I have tried to enroll Ken Slankard several times, but he fails to respond. He now lives in Springfield, MO. Lloyd Schmitz I thought I'd

located in San Diego, CA, but after one try, I never tried again. I guess a person gets a premonition about such things.)

David Eagles, 726th: ... I have tried to find John Morwood and still have a (return to sender) letter in my top drawer. Last I knew he was in Albuquerque, MN, with Sims Sales Co. He was the pilot of our original crew from the States.



Lt. Ed Snow, Lt. John Dilks, Lt Harvey Miller, Capt. Rollins

(editor ... I put on a "full court press" in the Albuquerque area but to no avail. I talked to a representative of the Sims Sales organization, but they could be less concerned. I tried several Morwood's that live in New Mexico, and Arizona area, again no luck. Perhaps some of our members, living in that area can help us in locating him.)

Douglas Millar, 724th: ... Re: "451 AD-LIB" Issue #16, Spring 1988. You have no idea how surprised I was when getting to Page 3, Combat Photographers - that's me on the left - looks like I'm looking for ducks. Anyhow the photo date was 4 May 1944. Little did I know that I would be the 11th man on Mike Boyle's SHILAY-LEE the next day, 5 May. This was the first I knew about Mike receiving the D.S.C.

(editor ... Thanks for the personnel clarification. Now we know the others were, and the date of the picture; Henry Hotchkiss, Robert Hoffman and Herbert Rogers standing to your left, with Neil Weinberg kneeling.)

Joe Younger, 725th: ... Speaking of Caterpillar Club ... I had no luck with the English address, they are inactive. Then I talked with Col. Johnny Brown, who was more interested in selling jackets, etc, so I called Jim Thompson. He had just received an address for Irwin in Canada, and had ordered a replacement for his lost pin. He suggested I call the secretary there, which I did, and she was very helpful, had me send the necessary information, and even called me back. Seems they are the only ones with the real "club." She told me Johnny Brown had been trying to get them to send him "pins," but they refuse since they (the Irwin Industries) had to check out all the information on the individual request.

And below is the Canadian address:

The Irwin Industries Canada, Ltd.

Mrs. Eva Wagner, Secretary, "Caterpillar Club"

P.O. Box 280 - Fort Erie, Ontario, Canada L2ATM9

..... (I) hope there will be some consideration for a Memorial Plaque at the Air Force Academy. We realize there have been many places suggested, and important ones too, however it seems we should have one there.

(editor ... Thanks for the clarification about the "Caterpillar Club." I figured my information in the last newsletter, on that subject was a little weak. As you aptly put it John Brown seems to want to "hawk" products to build his organization. I had a hunch there was some skulduggery afoot to make the "club" a socially oriented entity rather than the prestigious fraternity it set out to be.

Regarding placing a plaque at the AF Academy in Colorado Springs; tis a great idea. But we already have a plaque at the AF Museum in Dayton, Ohio. You were not a member at that time so perhaps you were unaware. If, and when, we consider Colorado again for our reunion site, we will work that in as part of our program. I hope you understand we can't place a plaque at each and

every site that has such memorial areas.)



"Our Memorial Plaque - U.S. Air Force Museum/W-P AFB"



"General Knapp & Colonel Stefen Placing Wreath"

W.C. "Andy" Anderson, 725th: ... A quick recap; got a very nice response from the membership on *BOMBER CREW 369*. Some of them even enjoyed the book. My agent is toying around with movie interest in the tome. I think it would make a helluva movie. Speaking of which, our buddies may (again they may not) be interested in knowing that the *BAT-21* movie is scheduled for release late this year. Saw it at a sneak preview in Hollywood last week, and we just might have a winner on our hands. (editor ... If your right, Andy, the role of the bather in the "hot tub" scene (*Bomber Crew 369*) is for me! That is if you haven't already scarfed it for yourself. But then, if you should need a good bartender in a vino shoppe, I'll see if I can cultivate my Italian accent (it wouldn't sound right with a Scandinahoovian accent) and put on a few pounds so as to bring some class to the movie ... I've already heard some good reviews on *BAT-21*. I haven't seen it yet - waiting for it to come out in paper back video.)

Stan Leiter, 725th: ... Bob, you could do me a great favor if you would inquire whether there are any other *AMATEUR RADIO OPERATORS* in the Group. If there are I would like them to drop me a line and maybe we could get together on the air ... maybe even get a network started and meet each week. My address, for those interested; -- 944 Leeson Ave, Van Wert, OH 45891. My call

letters are:

W8BDC.

editor ... Okay, ole W8BDC, your message has been 10-5 (relayed). Hope all is 10-4 (OK); you stay 10-8 (in service); and your signal stays 10-2 (good). Unlike Uncle Ezra, of the old Chicago Barn Dance, I hope your equipment is better than his "powerful little 5 watter."

Bob Cass, 725th: ... Went with a Fighter Group after leaving the 451st. All my crew were killed.
(editor ... Glad to have you with us, Bob. Even through all your successes and travails, you still managed to find us - but after the Norfolk Reunion. Perhaps we can count on you when we "gather around the flag" at the next one.)

Julius "Al" Altvater, 727th: Received your most welcome letter today, thank you. Also received a book order from Harvey Brown of the 725th. Thanks again.
(editor ... I was happy to hear that the flyers I'm including with "new member" packets is still paying off. I know your book, "OFF WE GO ... DOWN IN FLAMES," is being well received by our membership. I shall continue to "slip" your promotional flyer in all "new member" packets. Thanks, too, for the generous donation)

Anne Brusselmans, Honorary Member: ...

Dear Bob,

I want to thank you and the members of the 451st Bomber Group for the very warm welcome you gave me at the reunion in Norfolk. It is always a great pleasure and honor to be amongst members of the Air Force and I am very proud to belong to such a prestigious group.

It seems so natural to help those who were risking their life in helping us to regain our freedom and we shall be forever grateful for their sacrifice. The picture is now hanging in our lounge and will be a constant reminder of you all.

With best wishes, (signed) Anne Brusselmans
(editor ... Anne, the honor was all ours. I only hope that you and Yvonne took home some good "vibes," from us that served in an area apart from your homeland. I'm sure that as time passes other organizations, such as ours, will note your contribution to the safety and well being of all airmen; whether they be 8th, 9th, 12th or 15th. President Reagan may have granted you citizenship in the U.S., but let it be the WW-II Air Forces of the European theater that makes you feel at home.)

(More comments on Page 31)

AD-LIB"

451st Bomb Group, Ltd.

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The publishing of the AD-LIB; the seeking of new members; and all efforts towards the preservation of our 451st heritage, is funded by donations and contributions.

Checks should be made out to "**451st Bomb Group**" and mailed to the above address.

(Donations deeply appreciated)

TAX EXEMPT #36 307 0772

MIDWEST CHOSEN FOR 1990 REUNION

Although the dust has hardly settled from the last (Norfolk) reunion, work is proceeding to find a suitable location for 1990.

Two midwest cities are in the running; Omaha, Nebraska and St. Louis, Missouri. Contact has already been made with the Convention Bureaus in both cities and an evaluation of hotels, tours, and special amenities are being considered. Each site offers us an air base nearby. Omaha has the Strategic Air Command, based at Offet AFB, while St. Louis offers us the Military Airlift Command, across the state line at Scott AFB, Illinois.

Beyond just saying, "We're going to (?) city," I like to know what type of cooperation we can expect from the various agencies that are dedicated to military oriented gatherings; what kind of support we can look for at the nearby Air Base; what unusual or inovative tours we can plan that will give our participants something apart from their normal expectations.

Hopefully a finalist will be selected by next fall and plans can be formulated and put into motion a program that will make an exciting event for everyone.

Basing the 1990 reunion in the center of the U.S. (as far as east to west) we do expect an exceptional turnout. I look forward to seeing more attendance when we make our setups in the such locations - and have noted that fact with the qualifying hotels that have been contacted. I am working for a reunion date in the early fall of 1990.

BELATED D.F.C.'s AWARDED TO THREE 451st AIRMEN

On 30 July 1986 three former 726th crewmen were cited with the Distinguished Flying Cross for their efforts in WW-II. The date of the incident was on 1 November 1944. (some 42 years earlier) The site of the happening was between Vienna, Austria and the Yugoslavian coast. The main participants were First Lieutenant Rosser I Bodycomb (pilot), Sergeant Ira D Richardson (upper gunner), and Corporal Cyril G Levine (a.k.a. Lawson) (photographer)



Rosser Bodycomb and Cyril Lawson (circa. 1988)

Others on the crew that day were; 2nd Lt. Alva S Cooper (copilot), 2nd Lt. John I Kautz (navigator), Captain Charlie Y Wier (bombardier), Sgt K C Collier (ball gunner), S/Sgt Manuel Weinstein (waist gunner), Sgt Spencer G Lowe, Jr (waist gunner), Sgt Curtis L Hall, Jr (tail gunner), and Sgt Coy Bufford (nose gunner). The aircraft was #42-51321, referred to as "THE BAD PENNY."

The tale that evolves comes from the loss of the military records that Cyril Lawson sought for his personal needs. When confronted with the "burning of records dilemma" in the St. Louis, Missouri Records Center, Lawson contacted his United States Representative Marilyn Lloyd of Oak Ridge, Tennessee. Together they pursued such avenues as are open to these searches. Eventually most records were pieced together and Lawson found what he was seeking.

But in the course of this search Lawson was asked to record what he could, and in particular to recalled his 1 November 1944 mission to Vienna. When his document was read by the Representative's staff, the slow process of rectifying a wartime oversight was put in motion.

The effort involved in getting the crew back from enemy territory was noted, and the three main individuals were singled out for the belated awarding of the DFC:

The adventure started out when the above crew, flying flight lead position was badly hit over the target of Vienna. With number one engine feathered, number two engine smoking, and serious gasoline leaks in the bomb bay, Lt. Bodycomb left the formation and struck a route for home. He was for a while being escorted by eight P-38 in his flight for safety. He was last seen by the formation as he lowered to about nine thousand feet in altitude and heading for the Adriatic Ocean.

From that point on the Group had no contact with the crew till they evaded into Russian territory some 76 days later.

What happened aboard the aircraft is of course the

singular event that garnered the DFC's for its three recipients.

Bodycomb and copilot Cooper, almost standing on the rudders, maintained the aircraft on a relatively stable attitude. The navigator, wounded and bleeding, was taken out of the scene as far as actively participating. The bombardier, Wier, now on the flight deck, tried to formulate a route, past flak installations, and to home base. Bodycomb, unable to work with the bombardier, remembered photographer Lawson's

past ground duties as clerk in S-2, and his ability to remember flak battery locations. Together the bombardier and the photographer worked out a route that bypassed such areas.

With the severe loss of gasoline, even with the engineer, Richardson, transferring and saving as much as possible, the engines finally ran dry and Bodycomb gave the signal for all the crew to bail out.

The effort of all three principle individuals, Lt Bodycomb, Sgt Richardson, and Cpl Lawson brought the damaged aircraft within the bounds of Partisan territory. All were picked up and housed till they could be turned over to the advancing Russian Army near the Hungarian border. After their 76 day ordeal they returned to the Group and then sent back to the U.S.

Lawson's citation reads thus:

"Staff Sergeant Cyril G Lawson distinguished himself by extraordinary achievement while participating in aerial flight over Vienna, Austria on 1 November 1944. On that date, his B-24 heavy bomber was hit by enemy anti-aircraft fire over the Vienna ordnance works, forcing the crew to drop out of formation.

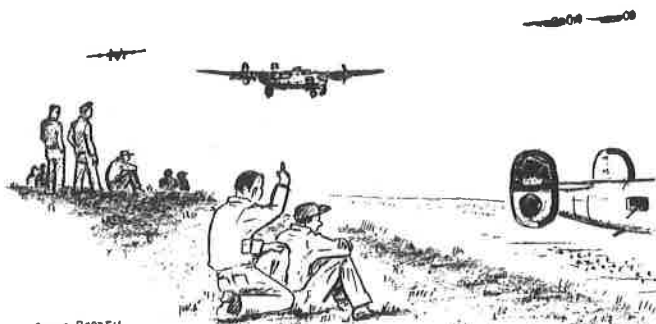
Despite the loss of operation of two of the four aircraft engines and damage to the fuel lines, Sgt Lawson, his pilot and flight engineer acted individually and in concert in such a manner that the aircraft was directed to an area controlled by friendly Yugoslavian partisans before running out of fuel. The professional competence, aerial skill, and devotion to duty displayed by Sgt Lawson reflect great credit upon himself and the U.S. Air Force."

DUANE BORDEN OFFERS ILLUSTRATIONS

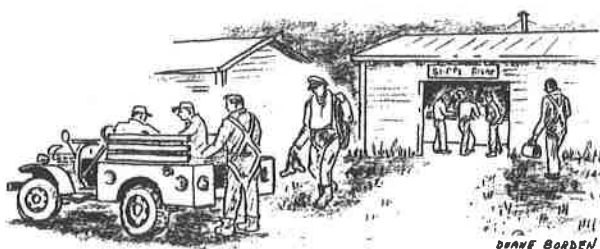
725th MISSION RECALL & POW ORDEAL WITH THE PAUL HARDEN CREW



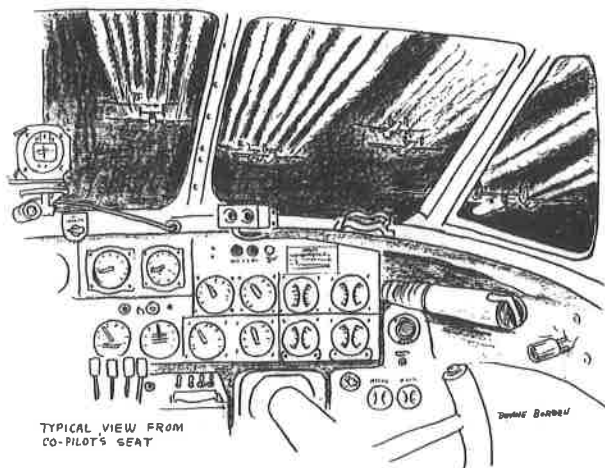
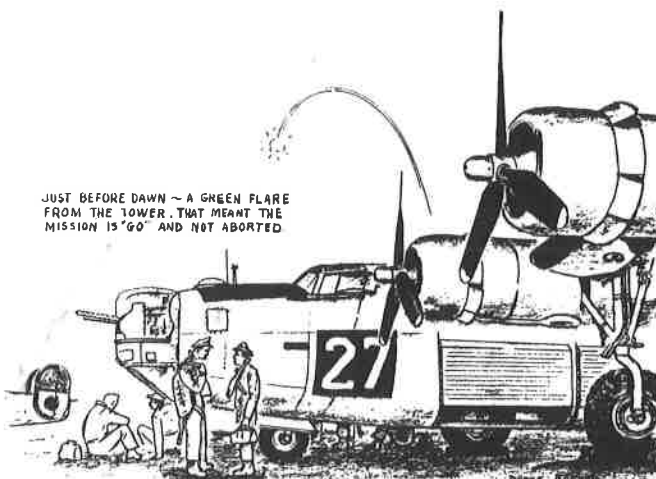
TENT CITY ON DAY OFF



IN THE AFTERNOON ON OUR DAY OFF, WE'D GO OVER TO THE AIR-STRIP AND WATCH THE PLANES RETURNING FROM A MISSION. "LANDING LIGHTS ON" MEANT "WOUNDED ON BOARD", THERE WERE MANY FEATHERED PROPS. SOME PLANES FAILED TO RETURN.



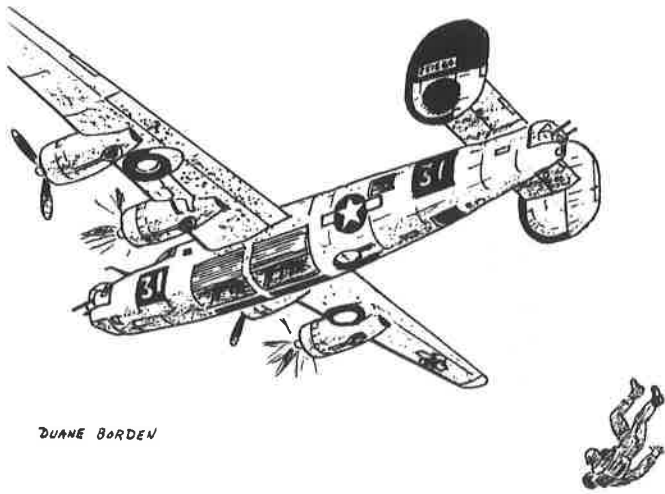
AFTER BRIEFING WE WALKED OVER TO THE SUPPLY BLDG, PICKED UP OUR CHUTES, COLT 45s, ETC. A WEAPONS CARRIER THEN DROVE US TO THE PLANE.



TYPICAL VIEW FROM CO-PILOT'S SEAT



NEAR START OF BOMB RUN THE WAIST GUNNERS WOULD THROW OUT THE "CHAFF". IT LOOKED AND FELT LIKE CHRISTMAS TREE TINSEL, IT FLOATED DOWN AND FOULED UP THE GERMAN GROUND RADAR USED WITH ANTI-AIRCRAFT GUNS. (FLAK GUNS)

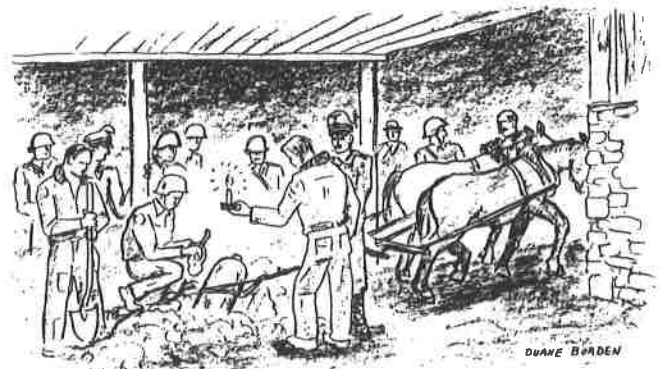
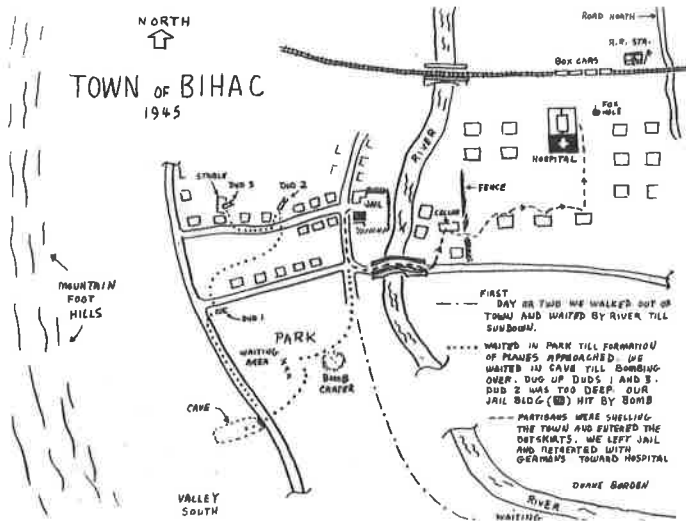


DUANE BORDEN



THE INTERROGATION WAS INTERRUPTED WHEN A SCOUT CAME IN TO GIVE HIS REPORT. IN THE HEAT OF THE ROOM, BORDEN FAINTED AND SAT ON A HOT STOVE

DUANE BORDEN



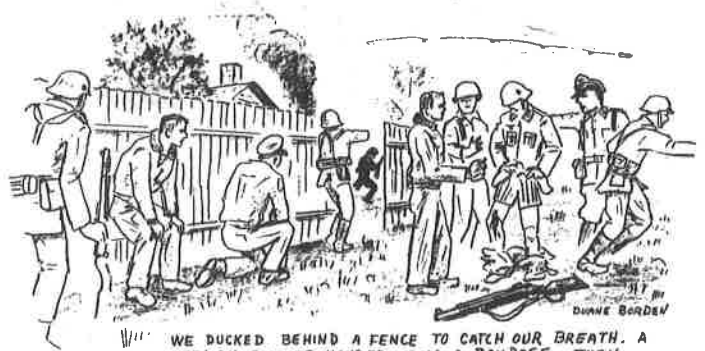
ONE DUD HIT A STONE WALL, BOUNCED AND WENT INTO THE SOFT GROUND TAIL FIRST. THEY MADE BORDEN HOLD A CANDLE OVER THE HOLE WHEN THE TEAM OF HORSES PULLED THE BOMB OUT. A GERMAN SOLDIER THEN DEFUSED IT. DIGGING UP THE 1ST DUD WAS EASY.

DUANE BORDEN



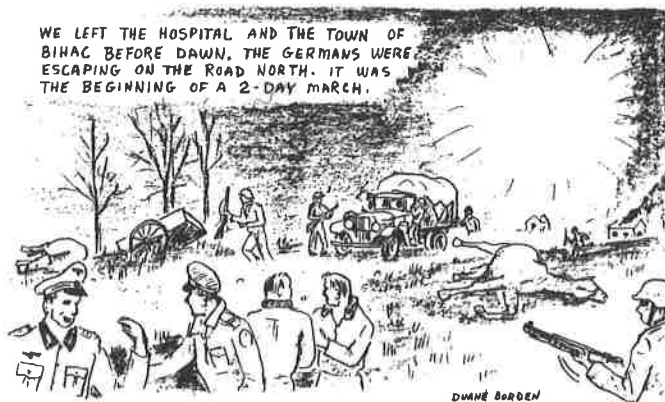
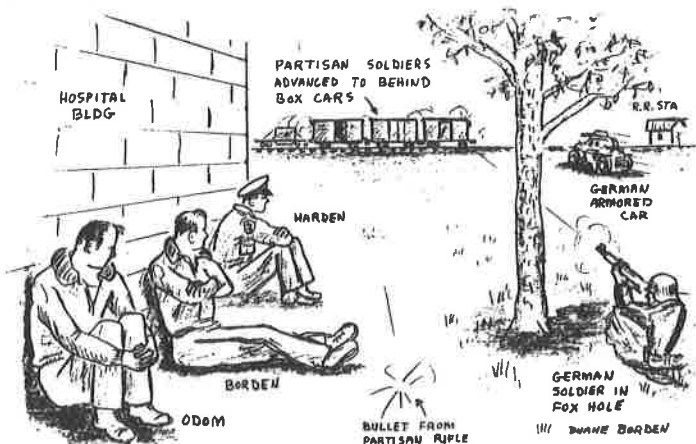
GERMAN OFFICERS STOPPED THE RETREATING TROOPS, SO THAT WE 3 PRISONERS COULD BE TAKEN OVER THE BRIDGE AND NOT GET MIXED IN WITH THE SOLDIERS.

DUANE BORDEN

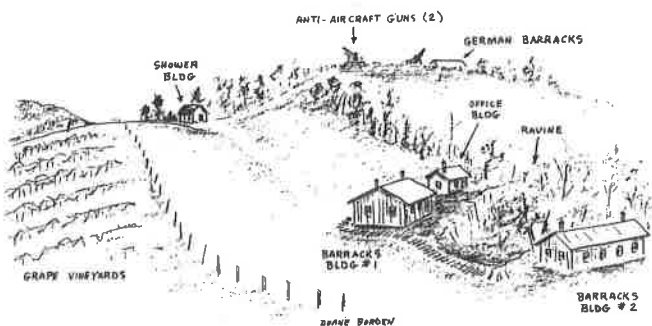


WE DUCKED BEHIND A FENCE TO CATCH OUR BREATH. A GERMAN SOLDIER HANDED ODOM A BANDAGE - THEN DROPPED HIS PANTS. HE HAD TAKEN A BULLET IN THE LEG. ANOTHER SOLDIER TOOK THE BANDAGE AND WE RAN ON.

DUANE BORDEN



WE LEFT THE HOSPITAL AND THE TOWN OF BIHAC BEFORE DAWN. THE GERMANS WERE ESCAPING ON THE ROAD NORTH. IT WAS THE BEGINNING OF A 2-DAY MARCH.



POW CAMP NEAR ZAGREB, YUGOSLOVIA
APRIL 1945



P.O.W. CAMP NEAR ZAGREB
HERE COMES THE FOOD — EITHER CORN MEAL MUSH OR GRASS SOUP. THE BURLAP BAG CONTAINED UNWRAPPED ROUND BLACK BREAD. THE TRUCK HAD A ROUND BLACK TANK BEHIND THE CAB. RAN ON KEROGENE, CHAR COAL, OR SOMETHING.

("SHORT BURSTS" Continued from Page 27)

Bob Rushing, Complimentary: ... As you and other members might recall, in issue #9 of the AD-LIB, I made a request for information about my uncle, 2nd Lt. Lawrence Rushing, who died in an accident on the base in February 1944. Your readers responded wonderfully and I appreciate the information that came of that inquiry. ... I have reached a block in my attempt to research the history of "HOP SCOTCH," and I was hoping that your readers might supply those missing links once again. ... I am hoping that your readers might have some records or recollections of flying in "HOP SCOTCH" in the time frame; April/July 1944. ... Anyone knows the whereabouts of Lt. Charles C. Beale who was with my uncle when he died. (editor ... Hope this informational plea will garner some remarks for you. I'll leave your address on the member's

doorstep: Bob Rushing, East 2224 Sanson, Spokane, WA 99207.)

Ted Dyer, 726th: ... For a long time I have been looking in any publication that might carry a listing of the 451st Bombardment Group, but to no avail. But last April I was glad to hear from Jim Carreiro saying that he had come across a listing for a reunion of the 451st to be held in October.

(editor ... Once found, you didn't let the prop-wash slow you down in getting into the action. Glad to have both you and Jim with us.)

James Knapp, CO #2: ... I had much looked forward to the B-24 Jamboree in Ft. Worth and was very disappointed when I learned that it competes with our 50th Reunion at West Point which is on 17, 18, and 19 May 1989.

(editor ... I can understand your desire to join your classmates in West Point. These 50 year marks (which seem almost impossible to comprehend) are sneaking up on all of us. What with High School, College, and Military oriented get together, its almost impossible to get in a good days work.)

Jack K. Perry, 725th: ... I have had articles printed in two newspapers, The Daily American Republic, Popular Bluff, MO, and the Greenville Advocate, Greenville, IL, about the reunion. With each article is a paragraph asking any 451st member to contact me for information how to join up and enjoy the biennial get together.

(editor ... Thanks, Jack, for the exposure. The written word stays in circulation longer than just "word of mouth" It's hard to tell where our former members have relocat-ed since the war, and using the print medium is one way to saturate all stratum of society.)

Don L. Ayres, 725th: ... I went through my old traveling orders and found one listing the members of our crew, including serial numbers. I sent them to Joe Kuchinsky, who was a member of our crew and who lives near Washington, DC. He will use them to attempt to locate members of the crew which we hope are still alive. He seems to know the method necessary to do this, using some government agency as an intermediary.

(editor ... Bear down on Joe, Don. Let's hope he can find an avenue in which we can find our comrades. I know there are a lot of guys hoping that some long-lost buddy will surface. But the government is very reluctant to allow us easy access in finding them.)

Thomas E. Fisher, 724th: ... We didn't arrive in Italy until 1945 so we missed most of what your writing about in the AD- LIB. The best part is that we were there and remember. I've been waiting 40 odd years to hear something about the 451st, the B-24, and what they did.

(editor ... Your interest is what makes the "wheels spin" at this end of the operation. We're glad your with us.)

John Hulser, 727th: ... It (reunion) was not to "Busy." We had time to see and do the things we wanted to do; the entertainment was fine; the Langley Band was great and especially the "Andrew Sisters" portion. The guest speaker was very interesting and not to long. As to the military aspect it was not overdone, and what the heck, that was why we were all there in the first place. And it sure brought back many memories, good and bad. I personally learned a lot about the Group and the Squadron that I didn't know, or had forgotten.

(editor ... Your critique' of the reunion (as a first timer) was invaluable. I look forward to seeing you as our future gatherings, now that you are "hooked.")

Vernon J. Grunewald, 727th: ... I was one of the original members of the 451st, assigned to a combat crew in September of 1943. Any names and addresses that I have in my diary of former members and no doubt not worth much, but if you think they could be useful to you, drop me a line. The following current address is for one member. - H.C. Kuykendall, Chino, CA 91710.

(editor ... Thanks for your concern as to new listings. Kuykendall is now signed-on and actively involved. Your pilot, Art Formanek, lives in the San Francisco area, but hasn't been much for corresponding.)

Cortland E. Read, 727th: ... I'm deeply impressed with the effectiveness of your whole operation; truly a reflection of intense dedication, interest and ability. The members of my crew, and myself, have many times been the beneficiaries of your untiring efforts. You have located several of them through the years and brought us in touch with each other. ... When I shake your hand, know that I am quietly thanking you for keeping the 451st the warm and living organization it is today.

(editor ... I can't close off a newsletter any better than to savor your words. It's a good thing that my ego is already as big as it can get, otherwise I couldn't get down the road between the telephone poles.)

