★ 451 ★

AD-LIB

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

Issue 23 | Price $3 | Summer 1993

M/GENERAL ROBERT E. L. EATON SUCCUMBS

BURIED AT ARLINGTON NATION CEMETERY, APRIL 19, 1993

I BURIED MY COLONEL TODAY

Tribute to Major General Robert E. L. Eaton - by Bob Karstensen

Far from the battles we once had endured, from the trauma of death in the air; I sat by my Colonel in silent repose, and remembered the bonds that we share.

My Colonel was called, from this life here on earth, for a far better tour up on high; Where missions are flown with his heavenly host, in that beautiful infinite sky.

He started THIS mission, this long final flight, as a pilot with a goal to renew; For somewhere's out there, from out of his past, he will meet with the rest of his crew.

He will join with his pilots; like Vail, Boyle and Hunt, who will coach him back to the fold; They will reach out and greet him, his boys from the past, and tell him of missions unflown.

He'll again take his place in the front of the flight, and do like he did long ago; Telling his pilots to "Tuck it on in! Make room for them - the echelon still down below."

I hope some day, when my time draws near, I will hear my good Colonel say; "Circle once more, boys, our flight's not quite full. Let's make room for this lost lonely stray."

We'll miss you, my Colonel, though it's hard to believe, for your rules on training still ring. Just leave a slot open as you fly on by, and we'll tuck it right under your wing.

Colonel Robert E. L. Eaton: 451st Bomb Group Commander

"AD-LIB"
451st Bomb Group (H), Ltd.
Publication

Compiled and Published by Bob Karstensen

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 may be made out to the **"451st Bomb Group,"** and mailed to . . . . . .1032 S. State Street, Marengo, IL 60152. . . . .Phone (815) 568-7766----FAX (815) 568-0451....

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Horse Drawn Caisson Brings Casket to Cemetery

Military Honor Guards Remove Casket

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THE BOB EATON LEGACY

News of the death of Robert E.L. Eaton came while making site considerations of hotels in Nashville and Memphis, Tennessee. It was when I checked back with my daughter in Marengo on 5 April that she told me that Lt. Col. Jack Dunsmoor (724th), Rockville, Maryland had called, alerting me to this turn of events. I immediately called General Eaton's daughter, Sallie Eaton Elliott, to get particulars. She filled me in on most of what had transpired, but referred me to Henry Eaton, her brother, for more specifics. Henry was most considerate and promised to send me whatever information that I could use to let the Group be totally informed.

Major General died on 3 April while playing golf. As his daughter, Sallie wrote, "I did want to let you know that he passed away very suddenly on Saturday afternoon while finishing a round of golf. It was his Club's [The Burning Tree] 'Opening Day' Tournament, and he had played 17 1/2 holes before collapsing. His foursome still came in 5th and they won sweaters, so he was a true winner to the end!"

News of General Eaton's passing were carried in the Washington Post, Washington Times, and various other publications. But the most concise and direct overview of "our Colonel," came from the hand of his son, Henry. I present it as offered to me:

Robert E. L. Eaton, 83, a retired Major General in the United States Air Force and a Past National Commander of the American Legion, died of a heart attack on April 3rd.

A resident of Chevy Chase, Maryland, he founded the public relations consulting firm of Eaton Associates, Inc., after his retirement from the Air Force in 1961. He served as its Chairman until his death.

General Eaton was born in Hattiesburg, Mississippi, attending the University of Mississippi for one year before being appointed to the United States Military Academy, West Point, where he graduated in 1931. He transferred to the Army Air Corps in 1933 completing pilot training at Mitchell Field, New York. He spent the remainder of his military career in the Army Air Force and the United States Air Force. In 1936 and 1937 he

attended the Massachusetts Institute of Technology where he did graduate studies in meteorology and served as an Air Corps weather officer until the outbreak of World War II.

During World War II he commanded the 451st Bomb Group in Italy, flying 50 missions in B-24's from 1943 - 1944. He then served as Deputy Director of Operations, USAAF Headquarters Europe for the remainder of the War.

From 1945 to 1953 he was stationed at the Pentagon serving in numerous positions with the Army Air Force. Upon the establishment of the U.S. Air Force in 1948, General Eaton became the Service's first Deputy Director of Legislative Liaison. In 1949 he was appointed Director and served in that capacity until 1953.

From 1953 to 1955 General Eaton was Commander of NATO Air Forces Southeastern Europe, 6th Allied Tactical Air Force, headquartered in Izmir, Turkey.

In 1955 he became Commander of the 10th Air Force, Selfridge Air Force Base, Michigan and served in that capacity until 1959 when he returned to the Pentagon as Assistant Chief of Staff Reserve Forces, USAF. He retired with 30 years service in 1961.

Among his military decorations are the Distinguished Service Medal, the Silver Star with Oak Leaf Cluster, the Legion of Merit, the Distinguished Flying Cross with Cluster, the Bronze Star, and the Air Medal with Four Clusters.

After a distinguished military career General Eaton founded the public relations consulting firm of Eaton Associates, Inc., and served as its President and Chairman until his death.

In 1973 he was elected National Commander of The American Legion for 1973 - 74. He was the first Marylander to ever be named to the American Legion's top elective office. From his arrival in Washington, following World War II, he has been a member of the Fitzgerald-Cantrel Post 105 of the American Legion, Bethesda-Chevy Chase, Maryland.

He was a member of the Mississippi State Society of Washington, Columbia Country Club, Burning Tree Club, the Metropolitan Club of Washington, Pine Valley Golf Club of Pine Valley, New Jersey, The Army Navy Club of Washington, and The Jefferson Island Club. He was also a member of the Masonic Bodies of the District of Columbia, including the Temple-Noyes Cathedral Lodge No.32, a 33 degree Member of the Albert Pike Consistory of the Scottish Rite Temple, the Almas Temple and the Royal Order of Jesters Capital Court No.50. He also belonged to the Sons of the American Revolution, Sons of the Colonial Wars, and was a founding member of the Air Force Association.

General Eaton is survived by his wife of 53 years, Jo Kathryn, a daughter, Sallie Eaton Elliott of Chevy Chase and two sons, Robert E.L. Eaton, Jr. of Bethesda and Charles H.S. (Henry) Eaton of Silver Spring, a sister Marjorie Eaton of Bethesda, and one granddaughter, Kathryn Eaton of Silver Spring.

On the 19th of April General Eaton was laid to rest at Arlington National Cemetery, with Services held in the Fort Myers Memorial Chapel adjacent to the cemetery. I was privileged to attend the ceremony, and be part of the cortege that laid our "Commander" to rest.

Ceremonial Folding of the Flag

Formal Transfer of Flag for Presentation to Family

It was with the aid and assistance of Col. Dunsmoor and his lovely wife, Sherley, that my pilgrimage was made a lot easier.

In attendance, from the 451st Bombardment Group, were Colonel & Sherley Dunsmoor, Major General Kendall S. Young (727th), and myself. The Services, and the Burial, were most impressive and truly worthy of the man we were honoring.

During the eulogy to General Eaton, Robert Eaton, Jr., his son, read one of the General's favorite pieces of writing. It goes as follows:

REMEMBER ME

I was born in the raw wilderness of a new world and fought - first to establish, then to expand, and then to preserve, this nation of ours.

I fought with whatever weapons I had, or with bare hands when I had no weapons, and never counted the odds against me.

I fought, and continued to fight when needed - not for personal gain, but for duty, for honor, and for freedom.

I am a composite of every nationality on earth, yet I am wholly unlike any other nationality on earth.

I am every color outside, but only one color inside - the color of courage.

I am the fiercest fighting machine on earth in time of war, and the most compassionate in time of peace.

When those at home are fully behind me I cannot loose; if they are not, I cannot win.

I am what made America great in spite of her enemies. I have helped her grow into the greatest nation on earth, for I have protected her homes, land and industries from invaders.

Mine is a job that no one wants, yet it is a job that must be done.

Think of me tonight when you close your eyes to rest, for wherever you sleep - in the skies, on the seas, or on land, I will be protecting you.

I AM AMERICA'S FIGHTING MAN - Remember me.

But the legacy and the memory of our honored commander lingers on; as it will in the hearts of those that knew him - and flew with him. In a recent letter sent to one of our members he gave an insight as to some of his thoughts about his wartime past. The letter reads, in part:

Jo Kathryn and I did miss going to the Reunion, (California 1992) but it was just too complicated for a number of reasons, and we were unable to make it. But I continue to be impressed by the spirit of those who come to the Reunions and all of us certainly owe a great debt to the hard working crew who put on the shows.

One of the first things that comes to mind in answering your letter is, of course, comparing me with General Curtis LeMay, which is very flattering and far fetched. In the latter part of my career, I got to know General LeMay quite well through serving directly under him. In my last assignment as Assistant Chief of Staff for Reserve Forces, I attended daily staff meetings at which General LeMay presided as Vice Chief. It was said that when he cleared his throat, the top three rows of ribbons buckled on the chest of the Flag Officers in the front row. I never found it to be that way, and any time that I had a comment it was readily received and honestly answered by him. A little later he was unfairly treated when he was Chief of Staff in the MacNamara period. During that period I had a discussion with General Eaker in which General Eaker indicated that General LeMay had asked his advice about resigning in protest over some of the decisions with which he seriously disagreed, and in which later history has proven him to be correct. General Eaker advised him NOT to resign and said, "You are in a position where you can make your views known and even though not successful, do a better job than whomever is selected to take your place." I agree with General Eaker on this point.

When the 451st cadre was in Orlando we were briefed in great detail about the requirement to maneuver the formation between the IP and the target. It seemed to me at that time a foolish idea due to the obvious difficulty in maneuvering the formation and still hit the target. I asked the instructor (a 1st Lieutenant with wartime service in the Aleutians) about the size of the largest formation that he had seen in combat and he said, "3 B-24s." You can understand from that that the idea was not based on practical experience. At the same time, we began to get input about General LeMay's concept of stacking the airplanes high vertically so that the front guns which had just been added to the B-17s would have the best opportunity to be effective against frontal attack. (You will recall that in our experience, there were very few frontal attacks.) But for a period in the early days in England when B-17s without front turrets operated, the Germans had apparently used frontal attacks with success. The problem with the stacked up formation with the B-24s was that the Davis Wing resulted in a very critical performance of the B-24 in regard to speed variations due to altitude, so a stacked up formation resulted in the airplanes stringing out and creating great difficulty in keeping the formation properly together. General Jack Mills (then Colonel Mills), Commander of the 450th and a great disciple of General LeMay, vigorously tried to use that formation when we first got to the Theater with the results to which you referred. In our experience we did not actually use the stacked up formation, although in my first meeting with General Hamp Atkinson, who commanded the 47th Wing, he said bluntly, "No maneuvering from the IP to the target (to which I vigorously agreed) and the use of vertical stacked up formation (which we actually did not attempt)." The results, of course, speak for themselves. I note just in passing that one Bomb Group in General LeMay's outfit lost 7 planes with great difficulties in operating on the following days. On the Markersdorf Raid in August we lost 9 planes out of 24 and the next day there were no aborts on the mission. In that action we were attacked by the famous "Storm Group" which attacked us from the rear. During the action I asked the tailgunner in our airplane if we were strung out. He responded, "Colonel, we are so close I can reach out and touch them." All of this happened a long time ago and our memory becomes confused about it, but I certainly felt fortunate that I could do my 50 missions (42 trips to the target) and be around to talk about it later.

After my turning over the Group to my successor, and before I departed for the European Headquarters, I had a couple of weeks in the 15th Air Force Headquarters to get my wings "swept back." During that period, General Twining visited the Group (he asked me to accompany him, but I told him that it wouldn't be fair to the new Commander). That night he had me to dinner at his villa and at one point during the evening he mentioned to me, and I quote, "These things change, but as of today, your Group is the best Group in the 15th Air Force." These words from the 15th Air Force Commander I prize highly. It is a tribute to all of you who served in the 451st.

After my experience in the 451st, I was sent up to work in the European Headquarters Operations Section as Deputy Director. We had operational command of the 8th and 15th Air Forces. I was the only fully combat

experienced officer in the Section and, naturally, was treated with some respect. I think that I was able to influence a number of things in the last 8 months of the War. Incidentally, I was interested, while there, to note that the 2nd Division of the 8th Air Force (all B-24s), during the last 8 months of the War consistently led the 8th Air Force in performance; i.e., less losses, bombs on target, morale, etc.

Subsequent to VE-Day, I was most fortunate with my assignments in the Air Force Headquarters and elsewhere. For a period I was General White's Deputy in a Pentagon division. I knew General Twining from the 15th and as I mentioned, General LeMay. I admired all *of them very much. It seemed like, that at the time of the writing of the Constitution, we had lots of strong minded people of high principle who did great things for their country. Similarly, we had great leaders in the Air Force in World War II. If I were going to list them, I would hasten to include, in order: General Spaatz, General Eaker, General Vandenberg, General Fred Anderson, General Tommy White, and certainly, General LeMay. I think America was fortunate to have these leaders in the Air Force at that time.*

I don't want to say that leadership in the Air Force has gone out of style. Our present Chief of Staff, General McPeak, I regard as a most outstanding man.

I have rambled on a bit and I hope that you will forgive me. I very much appreciate hearing from you. Best wishes, and I certainly hope to get to the next Reunion, but you will recall that at that point I will be a little bit older and it might not be possible. In the meantime, my great respect to you and all the others who participated in the activities of our Group overseas and were responsible for it's success.

Sincerely,

Robert E.L. Eaton

Major General, USAF (Ret.)

(Editors comment)

But, does the legacy of our first Group Commander leave off with a just a simple review of his life and his accomplishments? **HARDLY!** Bob Eaton leaves, with those of us that knew, and had the good fortune to fly with him, something that is hard to describe. At the time of our youth he was "the old man; the Colonel; our Group Commander; our tormentor; our mentor; and our boss." Above all he was an unflagging influence in shaping what we were later to become: worthwhile citizens of our communities.

Most of us came away from our military experiences with the knowledge that we had done about as good as, and perhaps better than, any other Group that fought the war in the skies. Bob Eaton's perseverance and drive, later to be translated into an esprit de corps, made the 451st a recognizable instrument that helped defeat the German war machine.

What Colonel Eaton left with us will stick with us until the last of us draws our final breath on this earth. He started the 451st as an embryo of roughened G.I.'s, learning what it took to deliver bombs to the target .... to a finely honed cadre of professionals that "could do the job - anytime, anywhere."

During all of his military career he had to look back on the 451st as his personal Group. From the guys that made up its flying corps, right down to its duty soldier, he knew and admired them all.

He was, to me, a man to be counted on when it came to our reunions. Never without a tribute to his men when he spoke at our banquets; never without a joke to set up his audience; never without respect for those that made the reunions possible. He tried to attend all that were planned, with the exception of our last one in Irvine, California .... and with the knowledge that he wasn't going to be able to make that one, sent an apologetic note telling me so.

He felt that our effort to seek-out and draw-in our old comrades was extremely worthwhile. His monetary contributions were offered when, and if, needed. I'm sure that with his passing he would still want to see our effort continue. His family noted, at the conclusion of the newspaper obituaries:

"The family suggests that expressions of sympathy be in the form of donations to a favorite charity."

What better charity than to help maintain the 451st Bomb Group, Ltd.; One of Bob Eaton's greatest achievement, and perhaps as he may have quietly wished. Note your contribution as a gift towards "a tribute to General Eaton's legacy." I'll list all contributors (with offerings of $25 or more) in the next newsletter. No names will be listed unless noted on check or in letter.

Make donation check payable to "451st Bomb Group."

TWO HEROINES' OF WW-II FAME JOIN THE HONORED

Two wonderfully brave women of WW-II, truly of the "Heroine" status have recently died.

One will be remembered from our 1988 Norfolk Reunion. She was Anne Brusselmans, originally from Belgium. The 451st honored Mrs. Brusselmans during our Friday evening program.

The other "Heroine" was Princess Catherine Caradja of Romania. News of her demise came from the dedicated newsletter of the "Association of Former Prisoners of War in Romania," edited by John M. McCormick. It read as follows:

Princess Catherine Caradja died on May 26, 1993, in Bucharest Romania, at the age of 101.

Princess Catherine had spent the past few months of her life at her beloved St. Catherine's Crib, an orphanage which she founded and which she sponsored during the majority of her lifetime.

The Association will miss her lively spirit and dedication to the cause of freedom for mankind. Shortly after I heard the news of the Princess' demise, I was listening to National Public Radio and was enraptured with the announcer stated it was Maurice Ravel's Pavane for the dead Princess. A very moving melody which I spiritually dedicated to our Princess.

Both women were credited with the saving the lives of numerous American and Allied aviators that came into their control. Anne Brusselmans through the "underground" that spirited Allied airmen out of northern Europe and back into England. Anne died at the age of 88 in her family's summer home near Gainsville, GA.

News of Anne's death came from Colonel Larry March (724th).

The Princess will be remembered to those that had the misfortune to be shot down as a result of the Ploesti target. Without regard to German orders she housed and saw to the care of American airmen, openly and almost with disdain towards the German command.

Both ladies had a huge following of dedicated survivors ..... myself included (except for the fact that I never was a POW, and wasn't acquainted with neither one until long after the war.) ?

KANSAS CITY CHOSEN AS 1994 REUNION SITE

After a series of on-site inspections of some 5 cities; Wichita, Kansas City, St. Louis, Nashville and Memphis - the winner was: KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI!

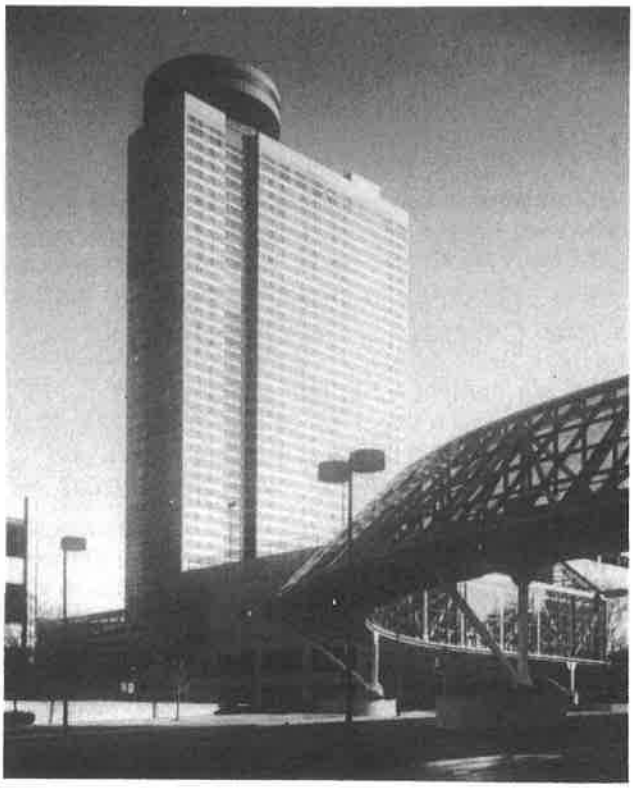
And the hotel that garnered the most votes was Hyatt Regency Crown Center in downtown Kansas City. For a variety of reasons the Hyatt seemed to have what we need, and expect.

The dates selected are from Thursday, 15 September 1994 to Sunday, 18 September 1994. But - it is hoped that you will give yourself extra time to visit and sightsee, by coming in a day early.

Unlike our most recent reunion, Kansas City lies in a most preferable location. It's smack-dab in the middle of the country, and easily accessible by car, air and rail.

For those that attended our last California Reunion, you know the quality of the Hyatt hotels. As a chain, they can't be surpassed. And, too, this Hyatt can almost guarantee NO unexpected phenomena's, such as earthquakes, et cereta. They can't speak for tornado's and floods, but promise that none of Mother Natures other surprises will befall us.

So, mark your calendar for the middle of September 1994 as an important meeting time. Contact your buddies and lay out your schedule. I'll get more information to you as we near that date.



Hyatt Regency Crown Center - Kansas City, Missouri

ACCOUNTING OF WW-II BOMBERS

The B-17 is commemorated in numerous ways and touted by the media and authors as the only bomber that did anything in WW-II.

There were **18,188** B-24s built. There were 11,000 B-25s built. There were 7,385 A-20s and 2,446 Douglas B-26s or 9,831 Douglas bombers of similar design built. There were **8,685** B-17s built. There were 5,157 Martin B-26s and 3,970 B-29s.

Almost as many B-24s were lost to accident, weather and combat as there were B-17s made. The percentage of B-17s lost was comparable to B-24s lost.

All USAAF aircraft in WW-II played their role. (Rand McNally Encyclopedia of Military Aircraft 1914-1980 by Enzio Angelucci - Military Press, NY 1983) was the source of numbers and information.

SCHAIDT'S CREW TAPS AIR FORCE FOR SPECIAL PRIVILEGES

It was ***"BACK IN THE AIR FORCE"*** for members of the William Schaidt's crew (725th) last 13 May 1993. In an unprecedented gesture of good will, the Richard-Gebaur Air Base, just south of Kansas City, Missouri, threw open it's facilities to 7 members of the crew, their wives, and guests. (including your editor and his special guest).

It was with humor and intent that the wives made snide remarks on; "So - this is how it was back then! ... Here I was almost feeling sorry for you." It took a lot of explaining by the guys, that our Army Air Force was nothing like what we were experiencing now.

What we were experiencing was the handiwork of Ball Gunner, Jack Sites, Leawood, Kansas. Jack was put in charge (or, heaven forbid, **VOLUNTEERED**) to put on the 2nd such crew reunion in as many years. Armed with a personal letter from Hap Arnold (written eons ago) that extolled the merits of a "young Jack Sites," former POW and escapee, he approached the Base Commander, Colonel Bob Efferson, and was granted certain and special privileges. Not that Jack wouldn't have been happy with just one or two little privileges, but he kept asking for more. He asked for three nights billeting for his guests; meals at the "O Club;" Banquet facilities; and bus transportation to and from the Harry S. Truman Library and Museum. All of which were granted by the Base Commander.

It all started on Thursday the 13th when we checked in at the Richard-Gebaur Billeting Office, on base. The rooms were spacious and close to what you'll find at any quality hotel. But, since you shared a bathroom with an adjoining room; some discretion had to be maintained when the need for sole occupancy was sought. A rapping code was worked out with our new neighbor. That evening we all met at the "O Club" and we introduced ourselves.

Standing: Mark Melton, Blaine Briggs, Bill Schaidt, Jim Scott
Kneeling: Abbott Sydney, Harvey Quint, Grover Asbury, Jack Sites

Two members of the original crew were missing. Bart Nelson (copilot), had eye surgery and had to forgo this gathering. James Houston had a recent death in the family and was forced to cancel. Had these two made it we would have had all the living crew (Robert Donovan, bombardier, died some years back) in attendance. As it was we had: William F. Schaidt, pilot; Blaine A. Briggs, navigator; Grover L. Asbury, gunner, Mark E. Melton, AEG; Harvey W. Quindt, gunner; James J. Scott, gunner; and Jack Sites, gunner.

Finding these guys after 45 years was an achievement that befell several of us. Some joined us through open channels of locations. Others had to be ferreted out via several different means. Grover Asbury was located by writing to the post office in the town where he had once lived. The postmistress remembered that Grover still had a sister residing in the area, and duly informed her. Others were located by contacting someone (by phone) with the same last name, still living in the town from which they (the quarry) originally resided.

Edna & Abbott Sydney (Elusive Bombardier)

The real challenge was to locate Abbott Sydney, replacement bombardier on the 26 July 1944 mission in which most of the Schaidt crew were shot down. Abbott Sydney originally came from New York City; a mean city to locate anyone from. He was the original bombardier from A.W. Johnson's crew, but subbing on this day for Donovan. (A.W. Johnson is still not located - any help to find him would be appreciated) After a couple thwarted phone attempts, I remembered my affiliations with "Bombardiers, INC.," and proceeded to call Ned Humpreys, CEO and Founder. In the twinkling of an eye (and with the aid of his trusty computer) we had Abbott Sydney located in California; street address, phone number and all. I immediately relayed my find to Jack Sites and he called the elusive Sydney and convinced him into coming to Kansas City for this "BASH." Jack called me right back and told me of his success. All these phone calls took less than an hour to accomplish. But what it all meant to the crew, to have finally found Abbott, is hard to measure. We had located all the living Schaidt's Crew, plus one more. For my effort in all this,

Bob K. & J. Bock

I was invited to participate, not as an outsider, but as part of the total festivities. I took on the role of "spare gunner;" or in the terms of being on guard duty, a "supernumerary." Mrs. JoAnn Bock, my special guest from our 1992 California Reunion, chose to accompany me; again, as my special guest.

On the evening of 14 May the Air Force put on an elaborate dinner and ceremony wherein three of the original Schaidt Crew, plus the replacement bombardier, Sydney, received their POW Medals (Bart Nelson and Jim Houston would have been included, if present). The other four were called on-stage for recognition as having evaded capture from the German troops. All-in-all it was a most impressive ceremony; as only the Air Force can put on.

Wm. Schaidt Crew Receives Medals and Recognition

The Richard-Gebaur Air Base chose to cooperate with Jack Sites in this venture, not because Jack flashed the Hap Arnold letter under their noses, but because the Base chose to be considered as a World War II Commemorative Community. And in the course of applying for that recognition, wanted to honor some of the hero's of World War II. When Jack came through that C.O.'s office door, he may not have known it, but he was "prime meat." They jumped on him like lions on a guy wearing a pork chop suit. We were treated with every courtesy that could be bestowed. The wives and guests found out how the Air Force could really "put on the dog."

On one of our afternoon's we were bussed to the "line hanger" and had the chance to look over the A-10 (Warthog) aircraft, best known for it's duty in "Desert Storm." We had the distinct honor to be briefed by the "Top Gun" of the Air Force, Colonel Roger Disrud. Being "Top Gun" may sound like a superfluous title for something of little importance; but believe me it really means something in the Air Force. It means that in shooting competition (air to ground) he's the best of the whole Air Force. We saw some of his handiwork when we withdrew to the theater and viewed the films from his gun camera's. Truly remarkable when you consider he didn't have a "ring and bead" sight to work with. He was damn near as good as we (once) were.

Colonel Dusrud Explains Cockpit Instrumentation

Saturday evening, 15 May, we all gathered at Jack and Norma Sites' back yard. The Sites' had gone all out in making us feel at home. We were lavishly feasted and feted. It was a marvelous time for picture taking and spinning yarns. Everyone felt completely at ease and stories seem to run rampant. All based on fact; mind you.

After breakfast on Sunday we all "broke" for home. We left with the feeling that what we had experienced was in it's own way unique. Apart from the fact that it didn't happen at our Group Reunion, it was fully as emotional. I hope to be invited to similar Crew Reunions, whenever 5 or more of you guys can set a time and date.

THE LADIES: L - R; Edna Sydney, Norma Sites, LaVerne Briggs, Geneva Scott, Margaret Asbury, Lois Quindt, Evelyn Melton, JoAnn Bock

Another Bash, of smaller proportions and less structured than the Richard-Gebaur Air Base gathering, took place in Rockford, Illinois.

Four 727th comrades met when three ventured out of the South to visit Herb Schrader, residing in the Rockford area. The date of the encounter was 11 June 1993. Those three venturesome souls were; Terry Tomberlin, Gunner on C.W. Wilson's crew; John Doedyns - Crew Chief; Leonard Strickler - Refueling Section; Herb Schrader - Mechanic.

A quick phone call brought me scurrying to their side. We met at one of Rockford's plush Italian oriented restaurants; complete with ''Spagget, Vino and Cream a'de Ice (Spumoni).'' Much shop talk, relevant to the war, was talked over, plus what was NOW going on in each other's lives. It was an interesting, and totally comfortable, couple hours spent in the company of old friends. Plus, it was another chance for me to mingle with special folks I like - those that served in the 451st. I hope I didn't spill too much wine, and the wives will excuse the slurping of my spaghetti. Perhaps, even with these gaffe, they will re-invite me when they come back into the area.

727th in action - Doedyns, Strickler, Tomberlin, [Karstensen: 724th] & Host: herb Schrader

John O'Connor's (724th), ''Wolfwagon Crew'' will be getting together in Dorr County, Wisconsin this fall. John tells me that the ''bomb bay doors are cracked'' for me and my guest to attend. I like that!

Some of the old songs..... REMEMBER THEM ?

1943

''Amor''

''Besame Mucho''

''Comin'in on a Wing and a Prayer''

''Do Nothin' Till You Hear from Me''

''Don't Get Around Much Anymore''

''Don't Sweetheart Me''

''A Gay Ranchero''

''Goodbye, Sue''

''Holiday for Strings''

''How Many Hearts Have You Broken''

''I Couldn't Sleep a Wink Last Night''

''I Had the Craziest Dream''

''I'll Be Seeing You''

''In My Arms''

''It's Love, Love, Love''

''(It Seems to Me) I've Heard That Song Before''

''Let's Get Lost''

''A Lovely Way to Spend an Evening''

''Mairzy Doates''

''My Heart Tells Me''

''My Shining Hour''

''Oh, What a Beautiful Morning''

''Oklahoma!''

''People Will Say We're in Love''

''Pistol Packin Mama''

''Shoo-Shoo Baby''

''Speak Low''

''Star Eyes''

''Sunday, Monday or Always''

''The Surrey with the Fringe on Top''

''Take It Easy''

''Taking a Chance on Love''

''They're Either Too Young or Too Old''

''Tico Tico''

''Walking the Floor Over You''

''What Do You Do in the Infantry''

''You Keep Coming Back Like a Song''

''You'll Never Know''

1944

''Ac-cent-tchu-ate the Positive''

''All of a Sudden''

''Candy''

''Don't Fence Me In''

''Down in the Valley''

''Evalina''

''Dream''

''Going My Way''

''Holiday for Strings''

''How Blue the Night''

"I Dream of You"
"I Hear Music"
"I Love You"
"I Should Care"
"I'll Get By"
"I'll Walk Alone"
"I'm Making Believe"
"Is You Is or Is You Ain't My Baby"
"It Could Happen to You"
"Jealous Heart"
"Lili Marlene"
"Long Ago and Far Away"
"My Heart Tells Me"
"Right as the Rain"
"Roll Me Over"
"Rum and Coca-Cola"
"San Fernando Valley"
"Saturday Night is the Loneliest Night of the Week"
"Sentimental Journey"
"Spring Will Be a Little Late This Year"
"Swinging on a Star"
"Till Then"
"Time Waits for No One"
"The Trolley Song"
"Twilight Time"
"You Always Hurt the One You Love"

1945

"All of My Life"
"Along the Navajo Trail"
"Aren't You Glad You're You"
"Autumn Serenade"
"Chicery Chick"
"Close as Pages in a Book"
"Cruising Down the River"
"Doctor, Lawyer, Indian Chief"
"Dream (When You're Feeling Blue)"
"For Sentimental Reasons"
"Give Me the Simple Life"
"I Can't Begin to Tell You"
"I Should Care"
"I Wish I Knew"
"If I Loved You"
"I'll Be Yours"
"I'll Close My Eyes"
"I'm Beginning to See the Light"
"It Might As Well Be Spring"
"It's a Grand Night for Singing"
"It's Been a Long, Long Time"
"J'Attendrai"
"June Is Bustin' Out All Over"
"Just a Little Fond Affection"
"Laura"
"Let It Snow, Let It Snow, Let It Snow"
"The More I See You"
"My Dreams are Getting Better All the Time"
"Time"
"Oh What It Seemed to Be"
"On the Atchison, Topeka, and The Santa Fe"
"(You Came Along) From Out of Nowhere"
"Seems Like Old Times"
"Symphony"
"That's for Me"
"There, I've Said It Again"
"When the Angelus Was Ringing"
"You'll Never Walk Alone"

AND WE SHOULDN'T FORGET

"Tuxedo Junction"
"In The Mood"
"The Jersey Bounce"
"Pennsylvania 6-5000"
"Don't Sit Under the Apple Tree"
"White Cliffs of Dover"
"Jim"
"He Wears a Pair of Silver Wings"

This list of WW-II songs was coped from the pages of the "461st Liberaider" newsletter; who, in turn, requisitioned them from the "Cerignola Connection" 455 BG newsletter. Our thanks to both organizations for this fine list of our old favorites.

KARL EICHHORN'S 726th JOURNAL

(We Continue with the Final Installment of Karl's Memoirs)

YEAR OF VICTORY

The year 1945 arrived with bitter cold weather and three inches of snow on the ground. We had a turkey dinner on New Years Day but I missed it because I was working on my plane and lost track of the time. January was to become the nadir of our overseas duty. It was a month of frustration, disappointment and sheer boredom. The problem was the awful Italian winter weather. For most of our scheduled combat missions either the target or our field was socked in. As a consequence, we flew a total of only eight missions during the entire month, most of them against marshalling yards and oil refineries in Austria.

When a mission was cancelled, as was the case most of the time, our Operations people would immediately schedule some sort of practice mission. That meant that we armorers had to go out and drop the bombs we had just loaded the night before. Then, more often than not, the practice mission was scrubbed and that night we had to re-load the same bombs once again. This happened day after day and we became very angry and frustrated about it because there was nothing we could do but follow the orders, however stupid. To be sure, the new crews needed all the practice they could get, but the way things actually worked out, only the armorers were getting the practice and we sure as hell didn't need any more experience loading and unloading 500 pound bombs! I wrote in my diary that I was ready to ship out to the Pacific Theater any day the Air Force wanted me to go!

On 8 January I observed that when our planes returned from a mission to Linz, Austria they were covered with a heavy coating of frost from the -60 degrees Fahrenheit they experienced at bombing altitude. I had never seen that before. On the 12th I received a new plane, #456. This became the only plane in our Squadron to be given a name by her crew during the previous six months. She was named "Sad Sack." I spent the next three days getting all the armament ready for operations. Sad Sack was to be the last B-24 to which I was assigned - she lasted until the end of the War.

On January we lost one of our radar planes when #055 crashed into a mountain, killing the entire crew. Ironically, the plane was on a practice flight and I suppose the radar scanner was designed to look down at targets, rather than ahead.

For most of the month the weather remained uncomfortably cold and we received alternating snow and rain, which turned the roads and tent areas into seas of mud. Though we knew what to expect in winter, and tried to prepare for the worst, we were still pretty miserable most of the time.

February brought much better, and warmer, weather as well as the good news that the Russians were only 45 miles from Berlin. We made up for January with a vengeance and flew a total of 26 missions in February, The greatest monthly total which we achieved during our service in the 15th Air Force. Most of our targets continued to be marshalling yards and oil refineries in Austria, with a smattering of other targets in Germany and Yugoslavia. On the 24th we flew our 200 combat mission.

"Victory Return - 200th Mission

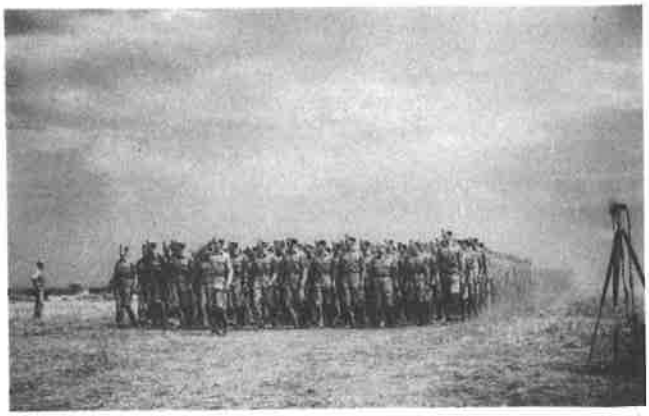
When the planes returned from Klagenfurt most of the ground crew were formed up near the control tower in a big "200" formation. We held pieces of white cloth or paper over our heads so that the returning air crews could see the number.

On the second of March we flew our 18th consecutive combat mission and by that time none of us were bored from inactivity! We flew a total of 23 missions in March, all but six of them to targets in Austria. It was beginning to look like there were no targets left in Germany. However, even though the Luftwaffe was pretty well out of business, they were still able to put up formidable flak over most targets, especially places like Vienna, Linz, Wels, Weiner Neustadt and Moosbierbaum. On the 23rd we had four planes (including mine) so badly shot up over Vienna that all had to be sent to the 60th Service Squadron for major repairs.

The weather in March was unsettled, as usual, with temperatures ranging from quite chilly to very warm. By the end of the month most of the cold, wet weather was over.

On the 13 and 14 March we had marching practice in preparation for the formal presentation of our third Distinguished Unit Citation. About the same time I started to put together a crystal radio set from scrounged parts and a crystal my parents had sent to me. I fiddled with it most of the month in my spare time. Sometimes I received a weak signal from the Armed forces radio station, but mostly I got just static.

Captain Daniel Coffey Conducts Formal DUC Presentation



By Squadron: Pass in Review

On 2 April we had the formal ceremony at Group Headquarters for presentation of our third D.U.C. (for Markersdorf A/D, Vienna on 23 August 1944) by General Twining. Formalities such as this were the exception, rather than the rule, overseas. Generally we lived a life of military informality. On our field we always dressed in fatigues or work coveralls, except when on Guard Duty, where Class A uniform was required. Officers were always treated with the usual courtesy but there was a sort of general understanding that we didn't bother saluting any officer under the rank of Major, except when reporting on specific orders. Even more informality applied to non-commissioned officers. Master-, Technical-, and Staff-Sergeants (''first three graders'') worked right along with Privates and Corporals. We mostly thought of ourselves as simply mechanics, armorers, radiomen or whatever, and we worked together in harmony, for the most part. Those of us in the lower ranks naturally did what the N.C.O.'s asked us to do, but there was no big deal about it - we didn't quaver in our boots, or ''snap to.'' I am sure it was a much different experience from that of the Infantry, for example. When we went to one of the Italian towns we wore class A uniforms, but without ties, when on pas, or fatigues when on some sort of detail. When on pass we saluted all officers, including all foreign officers, as a matter of ordinary military courtesy.

On 5 April we received what was to be our last new B-24. It was #885, an ''M'' model, indicating how many major changes that bomber went through during the course of the War, recalling that the first B-24's to fly combat as operational bombers were ''D'' models.

In early April our Group was ordered to do no more radar bombing over Austrian targets. From then on visibility had to be perfect before bombs could be dropped. Apparently, friendly ground troops were closing in on many of our targets and the Air Force was taking no chances on some sort of ''incident.''

On 13 April we were all shocked to learn of the death of Franklin D. Roosevelt. For many of us he was the only President we had known, since we didn't really couldn't Hoover. He seemed like a permanent national fixture and we couldn't believe he was gone. Mixed with our grief was a great concern over what sort of President Mr. Harry Truman would make. We knew virtually nothing about him and we were afraid he was of the usual Vice Presidential caliber. We truly felt a terrible void that day.

The weather continued to get warmer and by the latter part of the month we were once again having dust storms.

We flew 24 combat missions in April, of which 18 were to targets in Northern Italy in support of the Eight and Fifth Armies. The targets were mostly highway and railway bridges in an effort to impede the withdrawal of Kesselring's forces. As noted previously, these were poor targets to assign to heavy bombers and it was a sure sign that our usefulness, in a strategic sense, had about run its course. On the 24th my plane somehow ran short of fuel on one of these missions and the pilot made

a forced landing in what was not much more than a cow pasture north of Pescara. That afternoon the crew chief and I flew up in the new plane, #885, and landed at a nearby airfield. There we were met by an Army truck which had several drums of aviation fuel aboard. We drove to the emergency landing site and could scarcely believe that the pilot has been able to land on such a small field. While the pilot and crew chief transferred the fuel to the plane, I removed most of the ammunition and eight of the machine guns to reduce weight. The guns, ammo and empty drums were put on the truck and sent back to be loaded on #885, which then flew back to our field.

The three of us; pilot, crew chief and I, walked the full length of the field and back, removing some rocks and a couple logs and looking for any holes or ditches. We found one depression which we marked with a stick and cloth flag. The crew chief helped the pilot start the engines of our plane and then acted as copilot as I guided them while they taxied to the very end of the field and turned into the wind. I climbed aboard and the bomb bays doors were closed. While almost standing on the brakes the pilot opened all four throttles, then started his takeoff run.

I sat on a jump seat just behind the cockpit and watched as the trees at the far end of the pasture seemed to race towards us. The field was very rough and the landing gear rumbled and shuddered. I was not sure we would make it and for an awful moment wished I had returned on #885. Then, at what must have been the last moment, the heavy vibration ended and we were airborne. I felt one last tremor, then saw the ground dropping away from us. We landed at our home field just as the sun was setting. After the plane was parked in its revetment and we had gotten out, we saw what had caused that final tremor. There were tree leaves snagged on one of the main landing gears!

On 25 April we bombed the marshalling yards at Linz and on the following day we hit additional marshalling yards near Sachsenburg, Austria. Though we did not know it at the time, that was to be the last combat mission of the 451st Bombardment Group. That same day we were told we would have a P.O.M. inspection within two weeks. After forty years I cannot remember what P.O.M. stood for, but it was a special sort of inspection which was always conducted just before any outfit moved to another location, so we knew a move was coming. At first most of us believed we would be transferred directly to the Pacific Theater. We had all of our personal papers and records reviewed on the 27th and on the following day we had an inspection of all clothing and equipment.

Heavy rains returned on the 28th and 29th and while confined to our tents by the weather I began to sort through all of my things, throwing away anything I didn't want to keep and separating those things I would mail home, rather then carry on my back.

On 30 April we loaded 1000 pound bombs on 12 planes, but removed them the following day when the mission was cancelled. We received news on the first of May of Hitler's suicide and we knew the end had come! On the second of May, to our surprise, we were again ordered to load 1000 pound bombs on 12 planes, but once more the mission was cancelled when we learned that all German troops in Northern Italy had surrendered. Those were the last live bombs I handled or saw in World War II.

On 4 May we heard that all German forces on the Western Front had surrendered and on the 7th Admiral Donitz surrendered unconditionally. During this period our planes continued to fly practice gunnery missions. We all had physical examinations on 7 May. The 8th of May was VE day and our C.O., Major McKinnis, spoke to the entire assembled Squadron. We turned in all of our persona arms that day, perhaps for concern that someone would be accidentally shot by a drunken celebrator after the war was over.

On the 9th of May we began to get our planes ready to leave. We removed all the ammunition except for 100 rounds per gun and put a coating of heavy oil on all guns. Two days later we were ordered to remove all the remaining ammo. All the tools and equipment in our armament shop were cleaned, oiled and packed in crates. The rumor started to circulate that we would be going home!

Four of our older planes, #860, 497, 465 and 176 left the field on 12 May, we were not told of their destination. I began to ship packages home and was getting bored from the uncertainty and inactivity. The formal P.O.M. inspection was held at Group H.Q. on 14 May and two days later we received official word that we would be returning to the States. A rumor circulated that we were going to a base in New Hampshire to be assigned to the Air Transport Command. I thought that was pretty silly, but it turned out to be fairly accurate. Incredibly, on 17 May we received four brand new B-24's to replace the first four which had left! What on earth were we to do with them? I suppose the pipeline was full of replacement planes and there was nothing for the Air Force to do but make deliveries which had been planned.

The weather was very hot and dusty by now. For lack of anything else to do, I re-packed my bags for the third time on the 18th. On 21 May we started to tear up the walls and floors of our tent. I took one final pass to Foggia on the 22nd where I sold several cartons of cigarettes for 1500 lire each. Since I didn't smoke I usually traded my monthly quota of cigarettes to another fellow for candy, etc., or sold them in town.

We were placed on 72 hour shipping alert on 23 May. We finished tearing up all the woodwork in the tents and hauled all the scrap lumber to the supply building. Then we took down all the tents and several stone buildings around our Squadron area. There were the Officer's and E.M. Club buildings, a maintenance garage, a supply building, engineering and armament shops and similar structures. These buildings now became crowded sleeping quarters for the next three nights, I slept in the garage with other armorers.

We were each advised of our individual Reassign-

ment Centers on 24 May. Mine was Camp Atterbury, Indiana. Our barracks and duffel bags were stenciled with our shipment number - 22046-C. That afternoon all of our special vehicles, such as wreckers, weapons carriers, and tankers left for Caserta. By the 25th we had finished all packing and we were ordered to thoroughly police our entire Squadron area. Naturally, the enlisted men also had to clean up the officer's area, which was the worst mess of all! Everything, and I mean every stick and piece of trash, was picked up and hauled to a dump. If our base was any example, the American forces left no mess behind them in Italy and I thing that is something to be proud of. All we left behind us were the buildings, which I am sure were put to some good use by the local people.

We left our field at Castelluccio by truck convoy at 1030 on 26 May. We traveled to Bagnoli via Ariano, Benevento, Caserta and Napoli. At every rest stop along the way we were immediately surrounded by a mob of kids in tattered clothing to whom we threw most of our candy and gum. They would surly miss the rich G.I.'s. We arrived at the same camouflaged orphanage complex which we had first been assigned to 18 months before. But what an incredible change! The building looked about the same on the outside, except for the new windows, but inside they had undergone a complete metamorphosis. During the intervening months the Army had installed modern latrines, showers and double bunks, as well as kitchen and mess hall.

On 27 May we had to make out full customs declarations, listing everything we were carrying back to the States. There could be no finer example of federal bureaucracy run amuck! Most of us spent whatever spare time we had at Bagnoli at the nearby Red Cross Service Club where we could actually buy ice cream, get our hair cut, boots shined, etc. We learned that the Empress of Britain and another large troop transport pulled into Napoli Harbor on the 28th, and wondered if either transport was ours.

On the 29th, while at the Service Club, I won a drawing which entitled me to a free guided tour of Pompeii that same afternoon. Naturally, I jumped at this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity and spent a great afternoon entranced by the sights of this historic Roman ruin. I used up most of the film I had left for my camera. On both the 30th and 31st I and some other fellows took passes into Napoli to see the city and harbor. The city was quite dirty and still showed signs of bombing as compared with Rome, which was comparatively clean and undamaged. There was nothing at all to purchase. Most shops were closed except for places that offered service only.

We were placed on 48 hour shipping alert on 1 June. We had to turn in all of our Lire (invasion currency, as well as any Italian money) for which we received only a credit slip for the equivalent amount in U.S. dollars. From then on we had no money with which to buy even a candy bar. We finished packing on the second, but our shipping orders were cancelled. Finally, on 4 June, my birthday, we were rousted out at 0439, had breakfast, finished our packs and blanket rolls, and were shipped by truck to the wharf area at Napoli. Our troop ship was the U.S.S. General Meigs, a two-stacker which was loaded with 6000 troops, mostly 15th Air Force and Fifth Army. We weighed anchor and moved out of the harbor at 1600, having a wonderful finally view of incomparable Vesuvius.

We were assigned to hold A403L of the General Meigs, which was three decks down. The ventilation was poor and it was usually hot and stuffy as well as very crowded. Our meals aboard were generally very good but the chow lines were terribly long. I could not stay on deck at night, as I had on the way to Africa, since everyone was ordered below decks at 2100 each night. The ship traveled at a fast 22 knots and it seemed strange to have no escort and to see our lights blazing at night. We passed Gibraltar at about 2030 the night of 6 June.

The passage home was generally uneventful, even boring at times. From the moment we cleared Napoli Harbor until we reached the States, continuous high-states poker and blackjack games ran in our hold. I mean they were going night and day. Players came and went but the games never stopped. I didn't play, as they were often betting $50 to $100 on a card, but I often watched in amazement. Since we had no cash they were playing with I.O.U.'s and guys clutched handfuls of slips of paper with various amounts of money with names written on them. One of our armorers, a fellow from Tennessee, had won over $5,000 in the first three days. We all urged him to quit and take his winnings, as I am sure it was more money than he had ever seen or heard of before. However, he was hung up on it and by the time we reached the States he had lost every cent of that and was several hundred dollars in debt. I have often wondered how many of those I.O.U.'s were actually paid off.

The General Meigs had 4" and 5" guns and the Navy gun crews test fired them on three different days. I did not understand why, but I suppose there might have been a German sub out there somewhere which had not gotten the word. The deck guards on the ship were Marines, rather than Army M.P.'s and they were all obviously fresh out of boot camp. One day several of us were standing by the rail amidships when one of the Marine guards, who was particularly impressed by his own assumed importance, ordered us to move forward, away from that area. Two of the fellows in our group were tough old Master-Sergeant crew chiefs, one of whom asked, "What did you say sonny?" The Marine repeated his order and when asked why we should leave, he said the area was off-limits to soldiers. Someone pointed out there was no "Off-Limits" sign anywhere, at which point the Marine started cussing and waving his billy club in the air. One of the Sergeants said, "That does it buddy, over you go!" With that the two Sergeants each grabbed an arm and a leg and held the Marine spread-eagle face down. Someone else threw his billy overboard, then the Sergeants started counting as they swung the Marine's body back and forth over the rail. The Marine started screaming something and at the count of "three" the Sergeants swung him well out over

the rail. I thought for a moment they might actually lose him but they then dumped him in a heap on the deck. The Marine jumped up and dashed down the deck and entered a companionway. We never saw him the rest of the voyage and from that day on we never saw another Marine guard on our deck. When we did see them they were always standing somewhere up on the superstructure.

The weather during the trip varied from hot, sunny days, with the sea almost as calm as a lake; to cold, rainy days with a high chop. The sea was never as rough as we had experienced it on the way to Africa and the big trooper was, of course, much more stable than our Liberty Ship had been. In spite of that, many men again got seasick as son as we hit open water and remained so for the entire trip.

On 12 June we sighted our first seaweed and gulls. The next day there were many more gulls and we started packing our gear. On the morning of the 14th we were on deck early to watch for land. At about 1030 we sighted the coast of Virginia on the horizon. We had been told we would land at Newport News. A Navy blimp and several aircraft escorted us into the harbor. Everyone had to go below decks while the ship docked. I suppose this was to get the G.I.'s out of the way of the sailors while they were mooring the ship. Afterwards we went up on deck and stood at the rail all afternoon watching real automobiles and whistling at any girl who walked within sight. We had dinner on board, then everyone had to go to assigned holds while the unloading process began. The hold was very hot and crowded and our uniforms were wringing wet with perspiration by the time our turn came. It is a wonder some of us didn't pass out from heat exhaustion in that hold.

We got on a train and left for Camp Patrick Henry about 2100. There were many people along the way who waved at us, even at that time of day. We had a welcoming speech by the Camp Commander and then were given the best meal I ever had in the Army. I remember only a very fine steak and all the fresh milk I could drink. I must have drunk at least a quart and a half. We were waited on by German P.O.W.'s, with whom we were not suppose to talk. I did, however, carry on a limited (part German, part English) conversation with the fellow who waited on our table. His name was Werner, I remember, and he was from a small village in Bavaria. He had served in the Africa Korps and was captured near Bizerte. He was very concerned about his family, having no word from them in over two years.

On 15 June I was issued two new uniforms and new underwear, and, after waiting around all day, left by train for Indiana at 2030. The train was a typical dirty, smoky troop-train with no sleepers. After our fine welcome at Camp Patrick Henry, we had hoped the Army might find a better train for us! We arrived at Camp Atterbury the morning of the 17th and spent all afternoon being "processed," as the Army called it, and were issued two more new uniforms.

This was strictly an ARMY camp and whenever the troops were expected to do anything; eat, fall out, get up, etc., they flew a bugle over the P.A. system. We hadn't the foggiest notion what all those bugle calls meant so we just lay around in the barracks waiting for something to happen. As a result, we missed several formations the very first day. Finally, in exasperation, some Buck Sergeant came into the barracks to find out why we hadn't done this or that. One of our Tech-Sergeants looked up from his cot and said, "Look, fellow, we're Air Force and we only answer to whistles, not your goddamned bugle! When you want us to do something, knock on the door, or blow a whistle and tell us what the hell you want!" And it worked! From then on some Corporal always came to the barracks to get us for meals, processing, or other duties.

I managed to get all my insignia sewed on my new uniforms, received my back pay from Italy, had my papers all checked and then, on the 18th, was issued my 30 day furlough papers and railroad ticket home. I took a bus to Indianapolis where I had to spend the night at a hotel, since I missed the last train to Columbus. After changing trains in Columbus and departing in the middle of the night, I finally arrived in Barnesville at 0500 on 20 June.

The first thing I did was to open the back door to let our old Fox Terrier, Jerry. He was so excited to see me that he couldn't control himself and urinated all over my pant leg. Then I awakened Mother and Dad. I was home from the WAR!

AFTERTHOUGHTS

In looking back on my Army days, even after more than forty years, and especially after writing this personal history, I find myself more and more fascinated with that unique experience. While many of the events I saw and experienced still stand out in stark relief in my mind's eye, many other details seem to be lost in the dusty corridors of memory. I now regret that I did not record those experiences in greater depth in my diaries.

In retrospect I am certain that the Army did its best to care for the serviceman of World War II. Medical care was the best available at the time, consistent with field conditions. I never heard of a case of body lice, the bane of soldiers in all previous wars in history. Food, even in combat areas, was generally adequate and satisfying, even the much maligned "K" and "C" field rations. Equipment and weapons, almost without exception, were reliable and dependable and served us well. G.I.'s loved to gripe and complain, but overall they were better cared for by their government than any other soldiers in history up to that time. My only lasting gripe, after all these years, was the strict officer/enlisted man caste system. Though privilege of rank and discipline are necessary in any military organization, there is no justification for treating enlisted men as social and mental inferiors as was the policy of too many officers.

I have always been, and remain, proud that I was able to serve my country in time of need. During the nearly three years I was in the Army Air Forces I experienced periods of severe physical discomfort, long hours of very hard physical labor, countless examples of

military snafus and inefficiencies, and even, at times, pangs of hunger. Yet, interspersed were equally memorable experiences of great pride and excitement, numerous examples of bravery and devotion to duty and stirring scenes which, unfortunately, only war can create. Overall it was an experience I probably would not trade for any other I can think of, except, perhaps, a trip to Mars. Nor would I wish to go through it ever again!

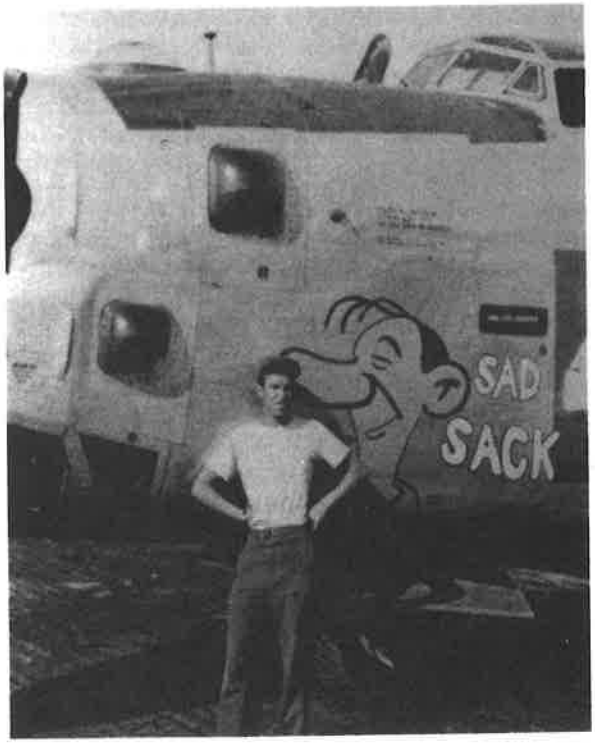
With the benefit of hindsight one is often tempted to speculate on "what if?" I have often wondered where I would have ended up had I waited until after my high school graduation to enter the Army. There is the possibility, at least, that I might have ended up face down in the sand on Omaha Beach. One can never know. Had I been more concerned about my future prospects, I suppose I should have applied for Officer Candidate School, as my interviewers at St. Petersburg want me to do. But I have never regretted asking for assignment to a combat group as an enlisted man, for I had no desire to be a "ninety day wonder." I was in good company as a "G.I.," and I still take pride in that simple and earthy appellation.

I am especially proud to have served in the 451st Bombardment Group which was the only Heavy Bomb Group to have received three Presidential Unit Citations while under the command of one Commanding Officer (Colonel Robert E.L. Eaton). And the 726th Bombardment Squadron was the best of the Group. At the time most of us scarcely realized what an outstanding record our outfit was making, but as the years fly past, that achievement takes on an ever more satisfying glow.

*** - END - ***

This office (and it's Ad-Lib editor) wishes to thank Karl Eichhorn for the opportunity to publish his remembrances of his early training; deployment overseas; combat duty; and his return to the U.S., as experienced within the 451st Bomb Group. His diary has been critiqued by others that took part in some of the same exploits. Though a occasional comment may filter in from someone that feel he may have error on some critical historical point, or editorial comment, that THEY recall, for the most part his rendition of the "close up" 451st history stands intact. This office thanks Karl for the opportunity to edit some of his generalized statements as to overall Air Force makeup and composition.

Short Break in the Working day for Eichhorn



Corporal Karl Eichhorn with "Sad Sack:" Last Assigned A/C

LITTLE SILVER BELL

by: Marvin Resnick

It was on my second mission that it occurred to me, flying is not the safest occupation in THIS world (although it might be in the NEXT) especially if somebody is shooting at you.

While at rest camp, on the Isle of Capri, I came across a lucky charm. It was a little silver bell, known as "The lucky little bell of San Mechele." Now I'm not superstitious (knock on wood) but what harm could a little bell do, besides it MIGHT REALLY be lucky; so I bought five. I was determined to try the bell out on my next mission. I figured if one would bring luck, five would bring five times as much luck.

The morning of the momentous day dawned, dark and dreary. I was very excited and a little tired. I went to briefing about 3 o'clock a.m. with five bells attached to various parts of my body. I sounded like Merry Christmas when I walked. Of course I put up with a lot of kidding from my crew and the rest of the boys, but I was determined.

The target was the sausage factory (euphemism for this grinder of a target) in Vienna, Austria, and they only had 400 heavy guns. Well, I figured, they could have had 405, so my bells were bringing me some luck, besides it was better trying them out on a harder target than an easy one (quick another needle).

We went to chow after briefing and they serves us Vienna sausage. I guess they wanted to get us fighting mad; which they did.

I was flying as observer that day.

The take off was uneventful and we climbed into our position which was "Tail End Charlie" in the formation. It is a heck of a place to be if fighters hit you - but I had my bells.

About a half hour away from the sausage factory we were hit by fighters. The Hun was determined not to let anything happen to that plant. One made a pass at us, but he only clipped our radio. Our own fighters came in and drove them off.

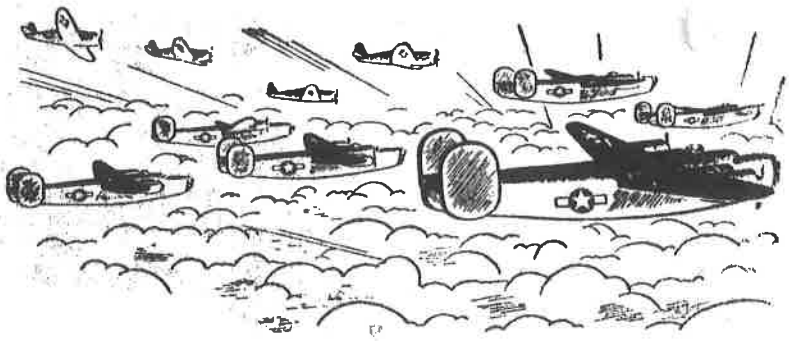
We could see Vienna by the wall of flak they put up around it. My bells were really going to get the test.

We opened our bomb bays and started a run on the target. I had complete confidence in the bells, but I put on my flak suit and parachute just in case they had an off day.

The Germans were very accurate, they put the flak right were we were. They hit our No. 3 engine and the pilot feathered it. Then they hit our No. 1 engine, and that would not feather. We dropped our bombs and pulled off the target with two engines out and a ship full of holes. We fell out of formation because we couldn't keep up with the others. The pilot gave the order to throw out all excess baggage; out went the guns, radio's and flak suits. Then two gunners grabbed hold of me, but the pilot said the order did not include the observer.

We got about two hundred miles away from the target when another engine went out and the pilot gave the command to bail out. The engineer opened the bomb bay doors, and out he went; the navigator was next and I right behind him. He looked down at the ground and turned green. He said to me, "Coming Bob." I said, "Right behind you Jim." He looked at the ground again and repeated, "Coming Bob." Again I said, "Right behind you Jim." Once more he repeated the phrase, and I responded in kind. Finally, with a little help, out he went. The plane hurled, I lost my balance and out I went. We were about 8,000 feet and I decided to free fall a few thousand feet, but somehow my hand sneaked over while I wasn't looking and pulled the rip cord -- The next instant I found myself coming down head first with my feet wrapped around the shroud lines. I knew it would prove fatal if I landed head first, so I tried to right myself. I finally got my feet down and my head up, but the shroud lines were still twisted. I was still a few thousand feet in the air after all this, so I decided to relax and enjoy the trip. The scenery was beautiful and my mind started to full up with poetic phrases and beautiful sayings, but all I could get out was "Give me strength."

I landed right near a German held village and I could see the Germans coming after me. I took off my chute and started to run. There was a stream that ran into the hills. I heard shots, but did not bother to investigate, nor to seek out who they were shooting at. I just jumped into the stream and swam and walked as fast as I could - away from the village. I worked my way up stream for about 8 hours, when I was picked up by some peasants who turned me over to the Partisan Underground. The Germans kept after us for about a week. I was finally taken to a British mission deep in the mountains, where I was flown back to my base. It took me a month to get back. But now, when I think about it, its a good thing I wore my bells or I might have gotten into real trouble.



REPORT FROM THE 60th SERVICE SQUADRON

Little did we realize, during our overseas duties, just how much our history is linked with other outfits pursuing the same cause. We took each entity for granted: be it combat ground troops (or sailors) - British, Polish, French, or whatever. We would often see them in town, exchange cigarettes, visit a moment, then go on our way. Each Allied soldier was there to serve their purpose, which in the total was to defeat the enemy. But most of us, in our own little world, never looked beyond what we were involved in; just doing our job and getting home.

But, as editor of this Ad-Lib publication, I'm finding out just how much other units effected us; and how we may have effected them. At a recent Air Show in the Chicago area, I encountered some of the guys that made up the "Tuskegee" pilots of the 332nd Fighter Group. They were the boys that flew some of the P-47s and P-51s that gave us "cover" on our more arduous missions. It was surprising how interwoven our stories became. They, too, are feeling the pinch of trying to educate the younger generations to what WE did in our overseas stints. So it is that I'll try and broaden our perspective by occasionally inserting a story or two from somewhere's outside our immediate scope of remembrance.

But in the case of the following story, I have Ernie Cummins to thank for allowing me to include it at this time. Ernie, and the 60th Service Squadron, were overseas much longer than we were. They started in North Africa with some of the Groups that made the infamous "Low Level Ploesti Mission" on 1 August 1943. Ernie was kind enough to pass along this TOME as written by one of his guys. It tells a little of what went on while they were enroute from N. Africa to Gioa del Colle, Italy.

--- The following was printed in the 60th Squadron newsletter, starting in Benghazi, Libya when the move to Italy began as a truck convoy to Tunis ... November 1943.---

"MEMOIRS OF A 60th OLDSTER"

(by Sgt Hemmingway)

The first part of the journey was south from Benghazi and then west. The country was flat. Bomb craters were numerous, foxholes too. Later on we came to rolling country. Natives were tilling the soil with camels and wooden plows. The furrows were no more than three inches deep. What fields these natives have -- no fences, no hedges, no walls around the -- they don't even cut out the brush, but plow around it.

Evidence of war was abundant. Trenches were deep, long and sandbagged. Barbed wire was heavy; shell holes were numerous, debris was scattered, anti-aircraft shells, hand grenades, 50 calibers -- all were strewn aimlessly, hither and yon. Unsightly and unpleasant were the scattered graves and their wooden crosses. (Even some of those were missing because natives needed the wood to keep warm). In ones, twos, and rows, they pockmarked the desert, German and Allied graves intermixed. The inmates didn't seem to mind!

Mines for miles! The signs read "Danger - Mines! - "Ware of Mines!" Thousands of square miles are valueless because of land mines which explode on movement. Wandering camels will become an extinct species if they chose these lands as feeding grounds. Guns and tanks, trucks and more trucks, all camouflaged for desert warfare, lay overturned, rusty and bullet-ridden.

Continuing our convoy along the coast of North Africa, eight days of travel brought us to Tunis, a modern French city, often said to have one of the best harbors in the world. Who was looking at a beautiful harbor when there were "multo bint" (no, no I mean "beaucoup mademoiselle") to occupy every eye? I don't need to remind you of them -- do I? Nor the vino that was as prevalent as the dust at Benina.

Arabs in Egypt were deep in poverty, but in Tunis their bankrolls would easily buy a small B-24. Prices they paid: 400-500 francs for a straw matting, 400 francs for a used pair of shoes, 300 for a used pair of woolen drawers, 900 francs for a mattress cover. (One franc was equivalent to two cants). All who knew even a few syllables of French were immediately put into action to swing the deals.

Some were more ambitious than the G.I.s of the 60th when it came to getting up in the morning -- namely, the soldiers of the French cavalry unit that used the field beside our camp as a parade ground for their fine Arabian steeds. Their officer was a stern, dignified Frenchman with a big moustache who rode through our company street every morning without cracking a smile.

Nights were cold, even with blankets, coats, and flying clothing piled high on the bunk. Supply came to our aid with a kerosene stove for every tent. Two days after they were issued a special formation was called. Like lightning the rumors spread: The war was over! For what other reason should a formation be called after supper? We were wrong. By orders of higher headquarters we were given directions on how to light our kerosene stoves. (Does anyone here know the Air Corps song?)

Tunis was almost a picture of modern France -- at least that is what I'm told. Customs were similar, life was a little different, even to those open air "pissoirs" the native Tunisian quite candidly patronized.

Back at Benghazi, perhaps you recall Pop Garstang with his rule, pegs and a long white string, building a boat with five gallon cans. Impossible, you say? Well you should have been there. Funnels, hatches, upper deck,, bridge; it was all there from stem to stern. The one peculiar condition was there was no water to put the boat into. That was just good fortune, for the crate wouldn't float anyway.

You see the whole thing was set up for the transpor-

tation boys to practice maneuvering the vehicles on the limited space of a L.S.T. (Destination unknown. It was a strange life our group led at that time, waving our "Crossed Broomstick" shield, Symbol of policing activity!

The days of our moving from camp to Bizerte were crowded with activity. Tents came down the night before leaving the site near Tunis, and those freezing African nights were more fully felt during that time. The heavy dew was also to be contended with back there. The wise soldier took his trousers to bed with him so they would be dry enough to wear the next morning.

At 0430 came chow call; at 0700 we were rolling. That afternoon we were on the side of a muddy hill near Bizerte. I saw no Gerti. The following day was the one which we had prepared for back in Benghazi. Every jeep, truck, and trailer had to be backed into the hungry whale that was to carry us across. If you had seen the boys in Transportation, you would have been proud of the. "Stud" White, Bezona, Vogele, "Speedy" Leedy, Mawyer, Keefer, Kraft, Hannis, Connell, Dixon, Kondraski, and a whole crew of others got everything into the decks. In the battle of Bizerte we should also mention 1st/Sgt Wilson, and directing Major Marcella. While the P-39s played overhead we saw the last of Africa.

Our Thanksgiving meal was aboard ship as we swayed on the deep blue sea. After 44 days on the other waters getting to Africa, few were too ill to keep the luscious repast in it's human hold. Yes, we were THANKFUL, for the creeping, huddled convoy had attracted no molester. Our ship's motto was "Fustest with the Mostest!"

But how could this be Italy? Were my eyes and nose so used to Africa? Our path led through small Italian villages -- possibly a step or two higher in civilization that those on the continent we had just left. An invasion point from Greek history was in the position on the map as is Brindisi today, and this was our first home in Italy. Though the landing was at Taranto, Brindisi was the place where we really became effective -- or was it defective, after a night on the hanger floor and a mile hike through knee-deep mud to find a mess hall?

Spitfires played over our heads almost constantly, at times flak burst as gunners practiced. British and Canadian were friendly, talking of the Jerries or the underground hangers at Pantellaria or Malta. They said they got an ME or a JU every day or so. It was amazing how these lads jumped into a ship -- the engine was turned over and before you could say "Stanislas Josephat Benedict" the plane was warmed and buzzing over the grass on takeoff. Appreciation for the Spits soared higher, and for the men in them, too. We were 15 minutes flying time from enemy bases across the Adriatic.

"Oberwerkmeister" was the word over one door in the hanger. On the wall was painted a huge map of the Mediterranean, on which all the once German bases were marked. Built by the Italians, used by the Germans, but now the home of the 60th -- that was our hanger set-up.

Even as the French had peculiar ideas about the latrine situation, these lads built strange gadgets. Knight, Lynch and Garstand called them "Bombs Away, MI." Beezley and Bezona referred to them as "Squat Pots" on more than one occasion. Doc Orr was highly enthusiastic; "Now there is something that is sanitary!" he was heard saying.

Air raid alerts were not uncommon while at Brindise. Almost every evening the lights were thrown off and quickly the barracks were evacuated and fox hole area sought. No matter how some were dressed, they donned a helmet and scurried out to watch the fireworks. Maybe you remember the night of the Bari raid. The bursts of light we knew were bombs. The Roman candle tracers of red fire, each forming an arc in it's course, all together resembling long strings of glowing pearls. It was a pretty sight from a distance.

Mawyer told a different story because he was in Bari that night. Those flashes of light were terrific explosions that threw him around like Atlas would handle a kitten. And those shooting stars were 50 caliber and 20 millimeter anti-aircraft shells trying to find a target. We missed the noise and concussion, the rushing confusion of people, but Bob can tell you the details, he was there.

That was OUR convoy in Bari harbor -- The same that sailed below those cloud-high balloons. The only difference was that these ships went around the heel, and we landed at the arch. From later reports we learned this was the most destructive air raid since Pearl Harbor. Lost; seventeen ships, fifteen hundred troops, tons of equipment -- this was only part of the destruction. The Bomb Group we serviced lost both men and materiel. *(Editor's note: this was also the first time that mustard gas had been accidently been released. This was due to a German attack on U.S. cargo ships in the harbor that carried the gas, just in case the Germans started a chemical warfare attack on us.*

When the alarm sounded at the base, we cleared out of the barracks. The things we grabbed were only items we were told to take. Most of us took gas masks, rifles and helmets. Thus we would be protected from gas, paratroopers, or falling flak. And then there was M/Sgt Kratzer who came running outside stark naked after making a hasty departure from the sack. Who knows whether an incendiary bomb might land on the tinder box barracks? But did we say "stark naked?" Well, on second thought, he was wearing something -- it was his helmet!

If you have tried to pound a tent stake into bedrock, you know how it felt to be among the unfortunates of the 60th who moved to Manduria. Not four inches of soil covered the solid crust of earth. Of course it rained and the wind blew. How could the 60th move without the accompanying elements? We were in tents again after living in barracks for awhile. On the 23rd of December, with the climax of Christmas growing ever brighter, we left Brindisi; for the British and their flimsy Halifaxes had arrived. A small crew remained behind with Pappy Schneller in charge, to dismantle the war

"Skipper" As We Knew Her; De-fanged n'ready For Duty

weary "Skipper" of her guns, and repair a few of her sister B-24s.

This was to be the first Christmas overseas. Packages came in ever more numerous bags; Nordlinger's Jeep and trailer were busy two full days. During these first few weeks in Italy changes in Command were noted. Major Marcella was replaced by a Major Burke of Ordnance. Major Burke's tenure of command was brief, orders arrived naming Major (the Captain) Bevins as C.O. of the 60th. He became our fourth Squadron Commander in less than a year. On December 25th, the afternoon was spent in the uplifting job of hauling dirt to build a latrine. We used it five days. On the 31st, in a rainstorm, we moved to Gioa del Colle. *(Editor note: It was at Gioa that the 451st and the 60th met. We were later to join-up at Manduria; then Castelluccio.)*

60th Service Squadron Photo Album

Major James E. Bevins, Squadron C.O.
(Note Tower in Background for Drying Parachutes)

Sgt Spears With His Washing Machine, Next to Home Built Shower

Mix of Desert & Pyramid Tents Make Up the 60th Camp in Italy

No Red Cross Coffee Girl for These Troops
(Sgt Banchio Rides Jeep Bumper [Holding Pot] in Line of Duty)

M/Sgt R. Schneller (Already 17 Years Active Service)
Capt. F.D. Watson (Engineering Officer)

"INTERNEES:" THE FORGOTTEN, THE MALIGNED

Anyone that has an eye on television recently, has probably been subjected to the documentary called, ***"Whispers in the Air."*** I saw it - and was, to say the least, somewhat distressed by what was depicted. The story line had to do with Air Force personnel, both from England and Italy, that sought sanctuary in neutral (?) Switzerland when their aircraft (either fighter or bomber) was disabled and couldn't make it back to Base. The depiction presented wasn't very complimentary to the men that were forced to take such action.

The term "internees" is almost synonymous with "evadee" and "POW," with the exception that the internee did not expect, under the Geneva Convention, to be maligned to the degree that this documentary subjected them. They were pictured as maladjusted combat men that sought nothing better than to cross over the borders of a neutral country and "sit out the war." I found this somewhat offensive, since it was my belief that most of us were trained to get to the target and back to base. But if getting back to Base was impossible, then you "worked it out" as best you could. If a neutral country was your best bet; then you had to go with it. Although it was later proven that exchanges of internees was infrequent, and almost never happened out of Switzerland, who was to know that it wasn't happening, or couldn't happen sometime in the future.

My goal was to find out more about this situation, which led me to review some newsletters (**The Swiss Internee**; published and mailed from New Jersey). Through Robert Long, Association President, I gained a lot of insight into the perplexities of what they (1,500 plus) had undergone. Not only was I to find out about the Swiss Internee's, but was to find out that there was also an "Association of Americans Interned in Sweden," a group called "Americans Home from Siberia," and still another fraternity of "Spanish Internees." I was overwhelmed with information. The internees, not unlike most internees, were sworn to secrecy and had to destroy all papers related to their internment. But the Siberian Internees managed to come up with a fine publication called, "Home From Siberia," written by Otis Hays, Jr. The "Americans Interned in Sweden" are a tightly knitted group presided over by Jim McMahon, out of Santa Rosa, California, and send out a periodical newsletter to it's membership. I haven't been able to come up with anything substantial about the "Spanish Internees," but will keep my eyes open.

The following story was penned by Robert Long, President of the Swiss Internee Association.

THE SWISS INTERNEES

During WW-II many battle damaged and malfunctioning USAAF aircraft could not return to base. The crews of these aircraft believed they could reach Switzerland. An unknown number did not make it. Those who did wish to make the truth known.

"SEEKING SANCTUARY"

TOP: P-51, #43-24853, Pilot Lt. Robert F. Rhodes, 22 February 1945
52nd Fighter Group/3rd Fighter Squadron - 15th AAF

BOTTOM: B-17 - "LAZY BABY," 14 October 1943, 8th AAF
CP & AEG POWs - Nav. Mortally WIA - Others; Swiss Internees

In 1944 an American Diplomat assigned to Sweden wrote to the USAAF Command in England that the aircraft in Sweden and Switzerland were undamaged. He also made allegations of cowardice and desertion.

Since the end of WW-II and up through the years many magazine articles and comments in books have made derogatory statements about internees without regard to the truth. One magazine article showed pictures of a number of USAAF aircraft in Switzerland. The author commented that the ships appear undamaged. The serial numbers of the ships, date of arrival, and where allowed, follow-ups. The pilots and/or crew members have related what their problems were. The Swiss Archives and the National Archives back up the crew reports. The photos were taken at angles to hide the truths of damage and/or problems visible. Therefore, the author was in error making slanderous statements.

Other authors have made statements: most aircraft feathered a good engine and went to Switzerland; these interned had a good life, shacking up in their own apart-

ments; internees could travel all over Switzerland; those interned received full pay and allowances and per diem; another profound lie was that internees could leave Switzerland any time they wished. A fighter group was briefed to shoot down USAAF aircraft heading for neutral countries. A TV production in England was released and was filled with innuendo, and did not present truths. In addition the refuting facts that were supplied to them were not utilized. Other authors have stated that the internees lived in Paradise.

There were other Americans in Switzerland who evaded capture by the Nazi's and crossed the Swiss border on foot. They were called EVADEES and were accorded an entirely different type of treatment than that received by internees.

Many internees were ordered to sign statements they would not relate what they experienced or witnessed in Switzerland. Others were told verbally to remain silent. Indeed, there were others who received threats from the US Military Intelligence that they would be returned to Switzerland if they refused to cease telling their experiences and were forced to sign affidavits ensuring their silence. Even today we find some internees who state that they signed such statements and refuse to tell their stories about internment. Therefore, in some cases Americans were terrorized by our own Military Intelligence.

Now let us return to our Diplomat's charges. General Spaatz termed the statements slanderous and absolutely untrue. He demanded USAAF officers be allowed to examine the aircraft. A Lt. Colonel was assigned to Switzerland to examine the ships with a ground crew. In September 1944 his report stated there were no USAAF aircraft in Switzerland without just cause. Furthermore he remained in Switzerland and checked new arrivals. He then remained in Switzerland to supervise the repairs of the repairable aircraft after the end of the war.

What really happened when a crippled USAAF aircraft crossed the Swiss border? Numerous ships were attacked by Swiss Me-109's and Moranes. There are Swiss newspaper stories about such events. Many others were fired upon by Swiss anti-aircraft batteries. Again there are Swiss newspaper stories about these. One such event at Dubendorf (Swiss Air Force Base outside Zurich) was witnessed by two USAAF crews on the ground and by a USAAF Captain in the Tower. The Captain was an internee who had been ordered to teach Swiss pilots to fly B-17's and B-24's which had been repaired by the Swiss cannibalizing other aircraft. A B-17 started its approach but only one landing gear came down. The anti-aircraft guns fired at point-blank range. The ship fell into the Griefensee. The only survivor was the bombardier who was thrown through the nose plexiglass. He was seriously injured, but was picked up by Swiss in a boat.

The records show 176 USAAF aircraft entered Switzerland. 96 were salvaged as junk. 71 were repaired after 19,023 hours were spent on them. They were then flown to Burtonwood, England and salvaged there. One L-5 was sold to a Swiss company, 30 B-17's and 39 B-24's were flown to Burtonwood for salvage there.

Regardless of how arrival was made; by chute, crash-landing of landing, the Swiss Army was there quickly, brandishing bayonetted rifles and machine-guns. Each man was fingerprinted, photographed and interrogated. We were criminals and were held under armed guard twenty-four hours a day during our entire stay.

Evading Crews Under Swiss Guard

We were taken under armed guard to villages high up in the Swiss Alps. We were placed in stripped hotels (some were run-down dumps). We were quarantined for two weeks and could not leave the site. After two weeks we were allowed on the street. There were limits and you better know them. The bulletin boards informed you and there was notice that you would be shot if you were beyond the limits. There were one to three bed checks per night, depending on where one was assigned.

Money was doled out by "chit" process for purchases until 1945 when pay and the allowances were paid. Upon return to the States men received sizable checks to settle pay accounts.

Food varied according to the site of internment. All portions were small. Monotony was the by-word. Some places the food was considered bad. The Swiss people were undernourished themselves as there was a serious food shortage. When Americans complained about the food received as internees, it was commensurate with the situation.

A few internees applied for "Paroles" to attend Swiss schools, work at the American Legation (Embassy), work with the International Red Cross, eleven men were granted paroles to build the American Cemetery at Munsingen, one received a parole to star in a film produced in Switzerland while he was an internee. A "parole" permitted one to leave the camp and participate in the activity. However, if one sought to escape and was successful, the US would return that one to Switzerland. One would then serve a sentence, but not at an internment camp. We have orders sending such a man back to Switzerland.

Adelboden was the primary camp called Camp

Moloney for the first American to die in Switzerland, Joseph Moloney. There were other camps. In 1944 enlisted men were sent to either Adelboden or Wengen and officers were sent to Davos.

Orders were issued by the American Legation Military Attache (an Army Cavalry Brigadier General) that no one was to try to escape. The Articles of War state you are to try to escape if the opportunity arises. In spite of this order many did seek to escape after the invasion of Southern France. If one was caught by the Swiss he was held incommunicado for a period in what have been described as medieval dungeons and then taken to the Swiss concentration camps at Wauwil or Hunenburg, which were worse than Nazi prison camps.

Switzerland did sign the Geneva Convention. However, when Sam Wood, American Consulate, sought to have the Geneva Convention agreement upheld in regard to treatment of internees, he was told; "Switzerland is not a combatant. therefore we will do as we please." Consequently, many men experienced the jails or medieval dungeons and Wauwil and/or Hunenburg. After spending periods of two months at these places they were brought before a Tribunal. If any remark was made during this trial they were returned to the places for extended sentence. The Geneva Convention and International Law state that no reprisal is to be taken against a recaptured escapee. War Crime Reports were filed by many Americans who were at these places as well as at other internment sites. However, the existence of many such reports is denied. WHY??? Certainly the men who made such reports know they did make them. All records of these camps are sealed by the Swiss Government until 1995. Does this indicate that there is something to hide?

Head Count Formation - Internee Style

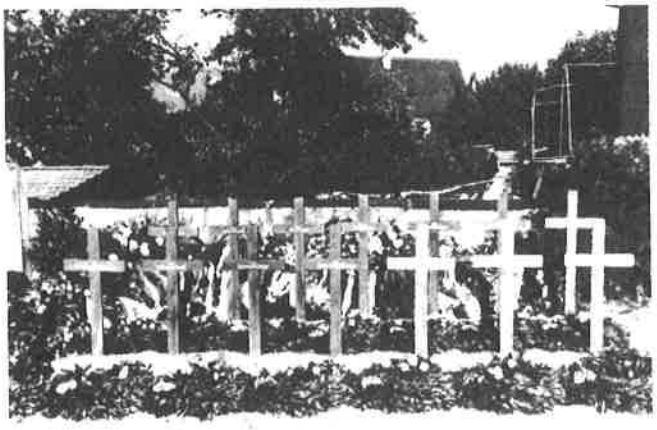
Escape was possible but fraught with risk and danger. There was an "underground" in late 1944, but it could not accommodate all who wanted out. A friendly Swiss might help. There was danger in this also, as there were "Coyotes," as they were called. They would collect from $100 to $800 and assist and provide instructions. However, when one crossed the border and followed these instructions they would walk into Nazi hands or the Nazi's would appear shortly after their arrival.

Internees on Work Detail

To walk out of the internment sites was almost impossible. The steep rock mountains are impossible without special equipment and skills. There was only one way into and out of Adelboden. There was only a cog-rail to and from Wengen. Davos had only one road and railroad through it. These roads and rails were guarded at numerous points. Every Swiss male was in the Army and had his weapons with him, or at his home.

There are known Americans who were internees who were wounded by Swiss Guards as they sought to escape.

Exchanges were possible when the Swiss Government would exchange two Germans for one American for repatriation. Therefore, we were held as hostages. If we were not hostages, how could we be exchanged? It has also been cited that Americans were held hostage as the Swiss Government feared reprisal for the strategic materials and hydroelectric power they produced for the Nazi's.



14 Airmen - Members of 2 Crews
First Interred at "Bad Racaz, Switzerland;" Later Relocated in Military Cemeteries, or Returned to U.S.

We left 61 Americans who were buried at the American Cemetery in Munsingen. One was a civilian

employee of the American Embassy. Another was killed in a crash while delivering aircraft parts to repair interned aircraft at Dubendorf, October 1945. Two other were internee suicides. If everything was so great, why were there suicides? Four died in a crash into a mountain shrouded in clouds near Klosters. Eight died due to Nazi action. The remainder died due to fighter and anti-aircraft fire, during attacks on crippled USAAF aircraft.

In 1944 General Eisenhower issued a Command that internees were considered to be prisoners of war. The National Archives possess the files: ''Americans who were held as prisoners of war in neutral countries,'' and ''Americans who were held as prisoners of war in enemy counties and neutral countries.'' It appears that over the years government agencies and others have sought to change the original concept and seek to discount the truths.

Government Agency representatives have made, in writing, these statements: There was no hostility, no American was held under armed guard, no American was imprisoned, no American was held hostage while interned in Switzerland. Where their information came from is not known. Nevertheless, exception is taken to their statements. They would not dare to face internees in a court of law and slander of libel them. The men were there and know the truth.

Editor ... Our Group was indeed fortunate not to have tried for Switzerland when the aircraft showed severe damage. We only had one plane that sought sanctuary in a neutral country; Turkey. That occurred on 15 April 1944 when Lyall Johnson/Clifford Kester (724th), piloting a/c #42-52246 on a bombing mission to Bucharest, Rumania were severely damaged by fighter attacks and headed for Turkey. Two of the crew, Navigator George Nixon and Bombardier Bob Wade bailed out over enemy territory and were subsequently made POW's. The following response came from Lyall Johnson when questioned on just what happened:

Your request for information about our internment got me to thinking about that interesting period of my life. This is the first time I have ever written anything about it. As you guessed, we were sworn to secrecy about part of our experience, but I am sure the statute of limitations has expired long ago.

Picking a place to put the plane down was a problem. We had no maps to speak of. They were blown out when the Navigator and Bombardier bailed out, so the only thing we had to navigate by was a little silk map out of the escape kit. However, we found the mouth of the Dardanelles and headed west towards Istanbul. It was mostly obscured by clouds but we spotted a runway south of the Dardanelles. That was a relief as we were on two and a half engines with no hydraulic system and smoking badly. I set up a landing pattern and on the base leg lowered the gear manually. We were then committed to land as the only place we could go was down. About that time I realized there were barricades all over the runway! The airport was just being constructed! I made a very smooth landing - ploughed right through the barricades and brought it to a stop with the air bottles.

We waited by the plane for about an hour before Turkish troops arrived and took us to a prison in Istanbul. The next day we had a visit from the American Air Attache, who told us we would be moved to Ankara in a couple of days. I was most happy to leave that prison. The lice and bedbugs were fierce there!

Our internment officially started when we arrived in Ankara. The quarters were not bad. We were kept in an old run down hotel complete with barred windows and a guard. However, we were paroled every day from 8 A.M. until midnight, and Ankara was an interesting city. The Air Attache brought us a supply of used civilian clothing, and we were ready and willing to partake of whatever Ankara had to offer.

If I remember correctly there was a breakfast of sorts available, but we were on our own for the other meals. I especially remember the six and seven course meals enjoyed at Boppa Karpich's, and excellent cosmopolitan restaurant, a couple blocks from our quarters.

We were the only American flight crew in Ankara, but there were two or three other fellows interned there also. I don't remember their exact status or nationality. We had no idea of how long we were going to stay there, so we organized a softball team to take on the fellow at the British Embassy. Unfortunately one of the British players died of a heart attack at our first game, so that ended that. We were invited to parties at the British Embassy and some of the University staff were also very friendly, so our social life was pretty good.

After about five weeks the Air Attache arranged for our escape. It was planned for the wee hours of the morning so we wouldn't violate our daily parole arrangement.

All-in-all it was an interesting experience - not one I would have volunteered for - but interesting. The Turks reported our plane had been hit some 220 times. I would have guessed considerably more!

Lyall Johnson, Lt. Col. USAF Ret.

On another page of information, Col. Johnson added that they (all surviving members of the crew) left Ankara by train and eventually by plane. Their route took them through Syria, Lebanon and Egypt. And as noted before, they were sworn to secrecy and were not allowed to serve in a combat capacity (in Europe) for the rest of the war.

LYLE A. BAKER'S POW JOURNAL

(Continued from Issue 22)

JANUARY 27, 1945 (Forced March)

For several days now, there has been a big flap in camp. The old flap indicator hovering right around the "red hot" and "going home" points. Planes are flying by Sagan by the dozen; several hundred a day, and all German. Everything from lumbering JU 52's to cadet trainers. It is very evident to one and all, even the Goon guards, that the Russians are over running large sections of Poland, Prussia, and even Silesia; hence the large scale evacuation of planes. And planes are not all that are being evacuated. Refugees by the thousands are streaming past. This morning one of the guards told us that a whole trainload of flat cars stopped at Sagan, each one covered with the bodies of frozen children. How much longer is this needless murder going to continue? Even the goons must realize that the war is lost, and yet they persist in continuing the slaughter and suffering of their own people; army and civilian alike. For two days now we have been without bread, the Germans confiscating all of our reserve to feed the refugees. Fortunately, we went back on full parcels last week. We have a 5 week reserve and it is pretty evident that we will not be here that long. Most of the Krieges feel that if we are ever to be liberated, it will be before long. And everyone is anxious for something to happen; anything to end the suspense. There is much speculation as to whether or not we will be moved. The camp is divided about 60-40, with the majority feeling that we will either die or else be liberated right here in Sagan. I can not possibly see any reason in the world why we would be moved. In the first place, Germany is becoming so small that there is not much of any place to move us - we expect the Americans to start moving east pretty soon. Also, the war is nearly over and that we would not be of any value, militarily, to our own government in this war. And how would they move us except on foot? We would be a definite hindrance to the German army, and putting 10,000 Krieges on the road in weather like this would be the most inhumane act in the world. The temperature has not been above zero now for 50 days. And none of us are in any kind of physical shape for a march after a winter so cold and hungry as this. Still the goons are unpredictable, and you can't tell what they will do. Everyone in camp is ready to move on an hour's notice. We have been saving Red Cross food to take with us if we go. We have for each man in our Combine - a box of prunes, a can of corned beef, and a can of cheese. We'll at least last a few days.

9 PM and our Combine is peacefully playing bridge or engaging in a little sack time, same as every night has been for so many months. Here is a real hand - four and a half honor count and a beautiful Heart Suit. "Two Hearts," is the bid. All at once Lt. Colonel Tyrell, our block 42 C.O., rushes in with this startling announcement, "Get ready to leave here by 10 o'clock. You can take anything you want with you, but I don't recommend very much. You'll only have to throw it away on the march." Then he's off to the next Combine. Our feelings cannot be described, they can only be experienced. It was 10 degrees below zero and a blizzard was coming up. We had no idea where we were going, or what provisions would be made for sleeping or for medical aid. We could all visualize ourselves freezing to death out in some woods. Hell, we almost froze sleeping here in the barracks these nights. What chance would we have outdoors. Everyone was obviously very nervous, and at first we could almost hear our hearts pounding out loud. Then Jimmy Hall called Pat, Joe and I together and pulled out his Bible from his sack. "Maybe this will make you feel better," and he read the 11th Chapter of Hebrews - the one about faith. And as he read, I amazingly calmed down so that by the time he was finished I was not the least bit excited and not nearly as worried. And the same went for Pat and Joe.

OUR DIMINISHING RANKS -- THEIR FINAL FLY-BY

Burslem, Robert E., 724th - 9 February 1993
Dwyer, William M., Hdqs - 14 June 1993
Eaton, Robert E.L., Hdqs - 3 April 1993
Fisher, Raymond L., 725th - 28 May 1993
Griffith, William P., 60th - November 1992
Hall, John L. 725th - 3 April 1993
Holtz, Jack G., 726th - UNKNOWN
Inks, Wilbur W., 725th - 30 April 1993
Leeling, Sam A., 725th - 1992
Leiter, Stanton, 725th - 20 June 1993
Meyer, Leonard F., 725th - 12 July 1993
Mitchell, William J., 727th - 19 October 1992
Owens, Arthur R., 725th, UNKNOWN
Painter, Charles T., 724th - 13 December 1992
Russo, John F., 725th - 2 December 1992
Wade, Chester D., 724th - 27 April 1992
Wheeler, Willie C., 727th - January 1993
Yeager, Robert L., 724th - 29 June 1993

Special monetary considerations to the Memory of Stanton Leiter by Florence Leiter; wife.

One of the most amazing things I've ever seen. Pat, Jimmy and I had stuck together ever since Budapest. We had read each others mail, played countless rubbers of bridge, and learned each others addresses so that in case only one of us lived to get back home, he could pay a visit to the families of the others. We now made a vow that we'd all get through this thing some way, regardless. We had to for the folks back home, whether we ourselves felt life worth living or not.

I made a blanket roll out of two blankets, putting inside my box of prunes, cans of cheese and corned beef, and a box of sugar I'd saved. I also had a carefully hoarded D-bar. Since we knew that our backs would get very tired with a pack and that every ounce was important, I hesitated about including this story. I finally tied it together with an old shoestring and put it in. I had just started to get mail in quantity; I had gotten 20 letters that very week, making a total of 28. I hated to leave them behind, but I had no choice. In my billfold I kept the one letter I had received from mother and the four from Bunny. These five were going to stay with me regardless. My only link with the two I loved so much and who were so far away. As for clothes; I put on my two sets of long johns, two undershirts, Canadian pants, two shirts, jacket and Belgian overcoat. I wore every article of clothing I owned. On my head was a little stocking cap; something like the one that is worn inside a helmet. By 9:30 PM I was all set to go, at least physically. But my mind kept shuddering at the thought. We kept waiting for word to form-up, but it didn't come until about 3 AM, the next morning.

Finally it came. "You will form in columns of threes and march directly in back of the one in front of you. Anyone deviating from the column will be shot by the guards who will be interspersed all along the column." Well, that was one consolation. Every time we took a step, there would be a bunch of goons taking one right with us. I felt better. So out we go in the bitter cold. As we pass the Red Cross storeroom, we were allowed to take a parcel, if we felt we could carry it. Most of us took one, opened it and removed the D-bar, cheese, beef, sugar and other concentrated food, leaving behind the Klim, margarine, etc. And food was scattered all over the ground eagerly being picked up by the goons. It almost broke our hearts to realize that after starving ourselves all fall to prepare for an emergency, we were leaving thousands of parcels behind and lots of food to freeze on the ground. What was worse was to realize that in a few days we'd be hungry and yet we couldn't carry much in the shape we were in. "TS." After walking a couple of miles, we stop for a rest. But when we stopped moving the cold became rough. Yet our backs demanded a rest. That was the way it was all during the blizzard.

While we were moving, the cold didn't bother us too much, but our backs ached like hell. Then when we stopped to rest, we just removed our packs, and walked around in a circle to keep our feet from freezing. Wagon after wagon of refugees passed us; pitiful sight seeing those farmers with a few belongings and their families moving away from their homes - the knew not where - but on orders of the Nazis. Worst of all was seeing little girls with hands blue and red from the cold and sobbing softly. Said Pat, "By God, if those little girls can get through, I can too."

We stopped at a few small towns. It was there that we found out that cigarettes were priceless in Germany. The civilians were lucky to get one a day; it had been that way for months. For a pack of cigarettes some of the boys bought sleds from German civilians which pulled very nicely in the snow. I looked back at the column of threes once in a while. Mile after mile, as far as I could see, were these Krieges, all walking - they knew not where.

Much as we would have liked to have been back at Sagan, it was still good to get out from behind that damned barbed wire. It sure seemed strange not to be fenced in. American humor once more came to the fore. Back at Sagan the Germans had taken a few prisoners each week for an afternoon walk along some river; even allowing swimming in the summertime. Then they take propaganda pictures and publish them, even sending them to the States, leading everyone to think that all Krieges were that well treated. Vandegrift had been a Kriege for two years and his turn had never come for a "walk." One boy yelled, "Hey, Van, at last you're getting that walk you've been sweating out so long."

After walking about 18 kilometers we reached a town called HALBAU. There were approximately 2,000 of us from center compound and we were all led into a small church on the edge of town. It was almost as cold inside as it was outdoors. But at least we were out of the snow. I took off my socks and placed them on my belt next to my body to dry out. I followed that policy of alternating socks each night, and nearly always had dry - though very dirty socks available. I think that is why my feet never became seriously frozen. Our supper at the church consisted of corned beef on the black bread we had saved and brought from Sagan. Lying down was out of the question. We huddled together trying to keep warm, packed together almost like sardines. The church echoed with thousands of hacking coughs. Everyone had one, and the fear of pneumonia was worrying everyone. If anyone got that now, he would have had it. To say that night was long would be a gross understatement. It seemed that it would never end.

Finally morning came, and we were on the road once more, this time stopping at a barn near the town of Friewaldau. We were just as crowded as the night before, but at least here there was straw to sleep on. Rosie and I pooled our blankets, and cuddled close. With all the clothes we had on to help, we slept pretty warmly. This system worked out so well that we stayed together all during the march, even putting all our food together. Early on, I had put all my prunes in my pocket, and each time we stopped, I would eat a couple prunes and a lump of sugar. At the barn that night, we ate some frozen corned beef. The farmer was very friendly and cooked a lot of potatoes. In groups of 24, we were taken to his house and we each had one hot, unseasoned, potato. Not so tasty, but having something hot in our belly was wonderful. The next day we got a break - no

walking - so we stayed in the barn all day and night. The rest was badly needed. I got another hot potato that day. It was worth a million bucks.

On the 4th day we walked to the town of Muskau; about 30 kilometers. And my feet were really sore as we stumbled into a pottery factory. Still packed like sardines, and the floor was solid concrete, but the building was heated and we were thankful for a chance to get warmed up. Besides there was hot water available, and we could make coffee out of the Nescafe our Combine had saved.

At Muskau there were several dozen Krieges from East Camp and West Camp; which had passed through just ahead of us. They had gangrene from badly frozen feet and were unable to continue. I never knew what happened to them, and the others that were left each place we stopped. Another break; we stayed two days at Muskau. And finally the weather began to break. The bitter cold disappeared and although it was still around 35 degrees, it seemed almost like spring. At last we marched to another barn, this time near the town of Spremburg.

By this time we were trading with the civilian population. The first 4 days the Germans gave us no food whatsoever. On the 5th day we received a fourth loaf of bread, and after that we received a little bread - occasionally. That was all. But we had each brought along a few packs of cigarettes from our Red Cross parcels. Most of the boys smoked. I do not smoke myself, but I had brought some along just in case of my pals needed them. It was the luckiest thing I ever did. I was able to pick up bread (civilian bread which was much better than what we had been getting), potatoes, and onions. As soon as one of us would spot a German woman we'd say, "Haben Sie Brot Fur Zigaretten" (Have you bread for cigarettes), and usually she'd say, "Yah." Then would follow a rapid flow of non-understandable words and a lot of gesticulating with the hands before a barter bargain was struck. The price varied, but it was amazing to see what a handful of cigarettes would buy. Toward the latter part of the march, we were eating more than we had in months. None of it cooked, but at least it was filling. Another humorous angle; A lot of Krieges were sweating out the Pacific War once they were lucky enough to get out of the German War alive. Maxie Bender was walking along one particularly cold road, head down, and feeling just as miserable as the rest of us when all at once he looked up and said, "I'll be damned if I'm ever going to be trading cigarettes for 'fish heads and rice'." It brought a laugh.

One of the worst aspects of the march was the fact that we didn't know where we were going or why. We counted the kilometer signs along the road. After we had walked 85 kilometers, we saw a sign "Sagan 60 Kilometers." We walked in sort of a "U." First southwest, then gradually up to a point almost west of Sagan. Rumors floated about like mad. We were sweating out the Russians, hoping against hope that they would catch up to us. They were only 30 miles away a couple of times, but they never closed the gap. One rumor had it that we were surrounded on three sides and about to be liberated, since the goons had no way to get us out in time; hence the U shaped move.

Column after column of German army equipment kept moving up to the front; and lots of cannon fodder. They all stared at us. I guess they felt sorry for us, and sorry for themselves. They couldn't have helped but realize it was hopeless. And they couldn't do any more about the situation than we could. Our guards were mostly old men of 50 and up, and their packs were heavier than ours. They never so much as raised a gun when anyone got out of line, and after the first few hours of the trek, we paid no attention to staying in perfect columns. I often dropped back to talk to Pete and try to cheer him up, and incidentally get cheered up a little myself. He bore up much better than I expected him to. He was from Texas and had never experienced a cold winter before. But he pulled through nicely. Any of us could have escaped any time we wanted to, but where was there to go. Besides, General Vanaman told us not to escape. It was better for the group that we stick together; and besides, we figured the war could not last much longer. A few took off each night, but they all froze their feet and had to give themselves up again from lack of food. You couldn't trade with the civilians by yourself without arousing suspicion. Our guards kept taking slower and slower steps. One old man in particular, I remember, kept bending forward a little and every time I looked at him his shoulders were getting nearer the ground. The last we saw of him, he was stretched flat on his face in the snow. Two guards died of heart failure.

General Vanaman and our full Colonels were offered wagons to ride in, but they very nobly refused. Said the General, "If the men don't ride, I won't ride either." And he was in his fifties. A real leader. We all wished he would take the offer, but he never did. Nor any of the Colonels, who incidentally walked more than anyone. Colonel Spivey and Colonel Kennedy in particular kept walking back and forth along their columns, giving words of encouragement. We would have followed them anywhere.

Finally, we reached the city of Spremburg and are taken to a railway station where there are a lot of "French 40 & 8 cars." (Forty men, or eight horses) From the looks of the cars' interiors, they had just held the eight horses. Not a bit of straw in them, either. 55 Krieges were sealed in each car and started on our way. For three days and nights we traveled like sheep. We took catnaps on top of each other. Our legs got numb from the pressure of someone else's body. In the daytime we took turns standing up. The Germans had brought some parcels from Sagan and we got a half parcel per man. Rosie and I split a parcel. We also had some bread we'd picked up on the road from some frau. One night we were at the town of Chemnitz in the rail yards when an air raid siren blew. That train really tore out of there in the biggest hurry I ever saw anything in. I guess the engineer knew from experience what the RAF night raids were like. At Dresden, Leipzig, Munich and all cities, we were sweating out raids on marshalling yards and strafing from planes; but we were lucky. The

bomb damage in these towns was terrific. Bob Day was a bombardier who had been shot down on his first mission; a trip to Munich. Thus he never got to drop a bomb since he went down before they reached the target. As we entered Munich, one of his pals yelled, "Hey, Day, you finally got to Munich." American humor again.

Finally, we unload at the town of Mooseburg in Bavaria; 30 miles or so northeast of Munich. 500 of us were put in a tiny building no larger than a large size living room. A little straw was scattered on the floor. Needless to mention, we all could not find a place to lay down. The second night I found a spot in the aisle, on muddy ground, but I was so tired and sleepy I didn't care. By this time, we must have looked like a bunch of tramps, or worse. None of us had taken off our clothes for several weeks, and our beards were long and shaggy. Also lots of us were beginning to get dysentery from the lack of hot food, and the filthy conditions we'd been living in. All night long, Krieges kept stumbling past me on their way outside to trenches which served as latrines. Many of them were deathly sick to their stomach. And more than one didn't make it; just let fly wherever he was. One guy was stumbling past me when he fell flat on his face and vomited all over everyone in the vicinity. And that was a very common sight.

After a couple days in this "snakepit," as we affectionately called it, we were taken to a shower room in groups of 25. There we were searched; our clothes deloused, in a gas chamber; and given a shave and warm shower, which felt wonderful. While showering I got somewhat of a shock when I saw the bones sticking out all over my body, and a lot of my friends were looking like skeletons. We all had so many clothes on we looked fat, until we took the shower.

After the shower we were taken into the main lager of Stalag 7-A. A real hell hole. About 400 of us to a one-story barracks which in the United States Army would be limited to 40. No heat at all, and no provisions at all for cooking the food. Also, not much food. We slept in tiers of 12 - triple decked bunks; very hard and infested with bedbugs, fleas, lice, etc. I was allowed to keep the Red Cross Blanket I had brought from Sagan, but the other was taken away from me and in its place I was given a dirty horse blanket. No sheets or pillows, just the two blankets and what clothes I had on to keep warm.

For the next three months until we were liberated, I never so much as took off my pants or shirt, although at night I did take off my jacket to use as a pillow. Comfort was out of the question, but at least we didn't freeze to death. Also, the clothes kept the bedbugs and fleas from biting my body. Some Krieges were bitten so much that their arms and legs became a mass of sores. German food consisted of one seventh loaf black bread per day, along with three cooked potatoes (usually frozen and rotten), and at noon a cup of the most God awful soup I ever tasted. Most of it was made of dehydrated vegetables, weeds, roots, or anything handy. Here again the Red Cross saved our lives. We got one half parcel per week. The biggest worry was how to get something hot in our stomachs.

The ingenuity of Krieges again came to the fore as hundreds of "Kriege burners" were put together out of Klim cans and margarine cans. We burned the margarine for fuel, and the wicks consisted of pieces of belt or blanket. In this way we were able to get a hot brew about twice a day, and once in a while to warm up a little stew out of our spuds. However, we soon ran out of margarine, so we converted the burners into wood burners and used as fuel the bed boards from our bunks and pieces of the building. Also, we bribed the guards over the fence into letting us trade with the enlisted men for bundles of wood which they picked up in Munich. This camp was an enlisted men's camp, and we were the first officers there. All nationalities were represented from Hindus, South Africans, New Zealanders, Canadians, English, Russians, Americans, etc., etc. The enlisted men worked outside in work parties and had a very good deal since they could get all the bread and potatoes they wanted by trading with the civilians in Munich and other places. Then they would retrade with us (throwing everything over the wire) at a profit. The bundles of wood were very valuable; almost priceless. No individual trading was allowed; a barter team was selected and all trading was done by them. Then all articles were split up among the 2,000 of us to insure fairness. Lots of trading was done, but there were too many of us to get much benefit out of it. In all the time I was there, I received only 4 oz. of cheese and part of a loaf of bread. But the wood, as I said before, was priceless.

These Kriege burners were very inefficient and we used to spend hours just heating a stew or brew, but then we had time to burn. For here there were no recreational facilities at all; no plays; no band; no books; no nothing.

The barracks became filled with dense smoke each day as it became necessary to sit up hours for cooking. Ever so many guys had swollen eyes and eye trouble from all the smoke. At night the foul air was almost unbearable. But having something hot was a necessity. We still had two apples a day, the rest of the time we just lay in our sacks trying to keep warm, or monkeying with a Kriege burner. We split up into two man eating teams, Bob Day and I going together and splitting all food, 50-50. Arguments were many and tempers often were strained to the breaking point, but we remained good friends.

Once we ran out of Red Cross parcels, but the situation was alleviated by a new fleet of trucks which the Germans allowed to run unmolested from Switzerland to Mooseburg.

In April, the weather warmed up considerably, and we went on full parcels. The Americans were running wild through Germany, almost at will and it was only a question of time as to when we would be moved again, shot, or liberated. Again the camp was divided, 50-50. But the Red Cross, along with the powerful influence from President Truman and Stettinius, persuaded the German High Command not to move us again. Incidentally, speaking of Truman, we heard of the new President the day after Roosevelt died. When they said

Truman was now President, everyone asked, "Who the hell is Truman." We had been out of the active world so long we never heard of him.

Around April 26, we could begin to hear artillery in the not too far off distance, and we knew that things would soon approach a climax. On Saturday night, April 28, it was very close, and we were almost sure that we'd see American tanks in a day or two. Sunday morning a lone P-51 came over and buzzed the camp, entirely unmolested; the first time an American plane had ever flown low over the camp. It was a nice day outside, and nearly everyone was out with their Kriege burners, or just walking around. By this time the camp was strained to the breaking point with over 27,000 Krieges, many of whom had just walked in from Nuremburg and other places. Mooseburg was sort of a central gathering point for all Krieges when they had no place to move us in any direction.

All at once, almost out of nowhere, came a rat-a-tat and machine gun bullets were flying over our heads. One prisoner was hit in the stomach, the rest fell flat on the ground. The SAO ordered us all to go inside our respective barracks and wait. The battle was going on outside the camp, but every once in a while a stream of bullets would find their way through Stalag 7-A.

Pete and I went out in the washroom, stoked up our burner, and started cooking every bit of food we had left. I figured if we were going to die, we might as well die with a full stomach, and if we got liberated we wouldn't need Kriege food anyway.

The battle lasted two hours, and three Krieges were wounded. Very minor casualties. But all the time, we couldn't figure out why there was a battle since the goons had agreed to leave an open area around the camp with no military activity. Later, we found out why.

Saturday night, the American 3rd Army (14th Armored Division) had pulled up just outside Mooseburg and told the German Commander that according to the agreement reached through the Red cross, he would come into Mooseburg unmolested the following morning. However, there were a couple hundred SS troops around, and they claimed that the "open area" was too large, and they were going to defend it. The Americans said they were coming in anyway, and they did; hence the two hour battle to liquidate the SS, which incidentally they did to the last man. They could have taken prisoners, but the troops were so bitter at having to risk their lives in such a senseless battle that they felt no mercy at all toward the SS. I felt the same way. Sunday morning, the SS told our guards to go out with a few rifles and fight the 3rd Army. The guards realized it was hopeless and refused; and those who refused were shot by their own countrymen, the SS.

When the American flag went up over the town of Mooseburg we all rushed outside to celebrate, and at the sight of that flag the tears just rolled down our cheeks. Nearly everyone was crying like a baby, they just couldn't help it. It was hard to realize that we were free after so many months of misery; especially for the older Krieges who had been down 2 or 3 years - many from the African campaign. That night we got white bread from the 3rd Army, and the stuff tasted like angel food cake.

Although ordered to stay inside the camp, nearly everyone went to town through holes which miraculously appeared all along the fence. I met a few boys from Penn State. Many Krieges picked up the armies policy of taking over German houses and having the women cook meals for them. The German civilians were scared to death of the liberating Russians; each of whom could rush into town intent on raping a German girl. The townspeople were plenty glad to have the Americans in their homes to protect them from the Russkies. Although we did not expect to stay at Mooseburg more than a day or two, it was not until the 8th day after liberation that we were evacuated by GI trucks to three airports in the area. I went to one at Inglestadt on the Danube River. Stayed there two days waiting for planes to fly us to France. While there, I ran into Lt. Dan Matto, a fraternity brother of mine back at Penn State, and who had been at Mooseburg all during April. He was an infantry officer and captured around Christmas Day. He and I stuck together until we took leave of France. The second day at Inglestadt, we flew to Riems, France in C-47's; 28 per plane. Incidentally, we were there the day the peace treaty was signed.

At Riems, we were issued GI clothing and barracks bag, our old clothing was burned; insects and all. We spent 24 hours there; got a shower and typhus shot and an issue of cigarettes and candy bars. Then we took a Red Cross train to "Camp Luck Strike" on the channel coast. Here were somewhere between 25,000 and 50,000 liberated Krieges. We spent two weeks here waiting our turn to take a boat. There were lots of hot showers, PX rations (every 7 days), a complete issue of Officer's winter uniforms, and a partial payment of $80.

Also, a Lt. Colonel flew over from Washington and answered all questions, of which we had many. Very few Krieges had heard of the GI Bill of Rights, so he explained that in detail. A common question was promotions which had been frozen as of the day we had been captured. Some boys had been Lieutenants for three years or more, and they wondered if it would be made up to them in some way. The answer was "yes." We all were to get a 60 day recuperation leave at home; then report to an Air Force rest home, either in Atlantic City, Miami or Santa Monica. At this rest hotel, every prisoner would get a promotion, and if it was likely that he have been promoted more than once during captivity, he would get a double promotion. Also, at the rest home, we would get physicals, psychology tests, etc.; and a new assignment. If possible we would be stationed near home. I don't believe any of us have a kick on the way we were being treated back here. It couldn't be better.

After 2 weeks at "Lucky Strike," we were moved to a tent city in a woods near Le Havre, supposedly to take a boat within 48 hours. Actually, it was 11 days before we took a merchant marine ship called the "Marine Devil." Being officers, we got a nice stateroom; twelve men, each with a bunk and a mattress.

Food was excellent; steaks, chicken, and ice cream, etc., etc. We had been on a diet for 2 weeks in France and our stomachs were beginning to expand back to normal. Having shrunk considerably, they had caused us quite a bit of trouble at first. The trip took 11 days, and on June 13, we docked at Boston, Mass.; our first sight of the USA and it really looked good. A train was waiting at the dock, and the Red Cross gave us each a pint of FRESH MILK and a couple doughnuts. We were living again.

Our first night in the States was spent at Camp Miles Standish. The paramount question in all our minds was how our families and girls were. My last letter had been in January; written the previous November. Bunny was waiting then, but was she now? Were the folks all right? Had they heard from Dett? Had Wendall ever gone overseas? Etc., etc. During my month in France, I had written many letters home and to Bunny. It had been very hard to write, not having heard from any of them for so long. All at once I felt strange; it was good to be home, but I was sort of scared about seeing everyone again. That night I stood in line 3 hours and called my mother. What a relief. Everything was all right at home. And Bunny had graduated from Penn State and was working in New York. By this time, it was 2 AM and the lines were not so busy. I called Bunny and talked with her for a long time (on reverse, my money was nearly gone). The next morning we took a train to Fort Dix, New Jersey where we stayed 4 hours; long enough to get our leave orders typed up. I went immediately to New York and spent a couple hours in a barber chair at the Hotel Commodore. I really got the works, and it sure felt good to get a good shampoo; a real haircut by a real live professional barber instead of any bombardier, or navigator, who happened to be around with a pair of rusty scissors. And, too, to get all the blackheads and ground-in dirt removed from my skin.

Then I met Bunny at her laboratory. I had waited for this moment so long and missed her so much that now as my dreams were just beginning to come true, I could hardly believe that it was all possible. I felt very strange and unfamiliar with the rapid life of an American city. And with Bunny, it seemed that I hardly knew her. Odd thing, but that's the way it was. Well, the rest is just a romance - a double romance. A romance of love and a romance of food; both very wonderful. I will not attempt to write anything about this department, but will leave it up to the specialists in the subject such as Mary Roberts Rhinehart, Margaret Mitchel, and Dorothy Parker. But I can say:

WE DID GET MARRIED

CHATTER FROM THE FLIGHT DECK

Bob Karstensen

This office has been doing a lot of debating. Debating what to do about all the "non-active" members. The ones that you donating members have allowed me to maintain on our roster. I think the time has come to make some adjustments as to policy regarding these non-functional members.

Having carried these "non-participants" has given us a sizable base from which to locate buddies that have been lost from crews; or as tentmates, drifted away. But they have done little to broaden our base as to input; written or monetary.

Little would be accomplished if we tried an annual membership fee. Those that get our initial mailing, when finding out that a charge was attached to membership, would think twice about becoming a part. It's sad enough to see just how many don't respond, even when told their involvement is initially free.

The most costly venture coming out of this office is the publishing of the AD-LIB (close to $3 per copy, including mailing). Then comes the setting-up of our reunions, along with office costs. So its either generate more funds, or cut down on the mailings, and the efforts towards the reunion. I don't think many would be in favor of either. And since some various methods have been tried in the past to solicit more funds, we will now have to try other means.

What we proposed is to look back and retrace the past two years (since the 1st of 1992). Should we find there has been no contact during that time; either with contributions or in some supportive way, we will give (whomever) just six months from the date of this mailing to "get back in the ranks." After that we will drop them from our mailings and we will place that person in what is called our "Non-active" file. In the future we will try (though not putting out too much effort) to keep those "dropped" addresses up to date for everyone's benefit. Nevertheless they will be discontinued from further mailings. That is, until they reinstate themselves with a donation, or in some supportive way. This policy will not pertain to new members that have been recruited since early 1992, but will cover those "long time members" that have gotten our mailings, but haven't donated. This should give cause for all of you "marginal" members to look to your checkbook to see just how long ago that it was since you sent in anything.

So rather than question how you now stand, send in your donation and get back that feeling that you are supporting our 451st legacy. We don't want to embarrass anyone; we just want to identify them.

GROUP'S NEGATIVES CONUNDRUM

Among the recently deceased you will note the name of William M. Dwyer (451st Group Photo Officer). We were extremely saddened to hear of his passing, since we had been working closely with Bill ever since we started our organization back in 1978. Bill was an early joiner, carrying card #0066 in the membership listings.

Upon being informed of his passing by Dick Turnbull of Wichita, I immediately phoned the family to express our (451st) condolences. I spoke to his son, William Pat Dwyer, just minutes before he was to leave for the funeral services of his father. Apart from expressing our sympathy, I mentioned the negatives that his father had in his possession, that were part of our heritage, and would like him and his mother to consider us as their "next in line of ownership."

Several weeks later I again called the family residence and spoke to our late Photo Officer's wife. I tried to be tactful as possible in discussing the final transferal of the negatives, but was confronted with her statement, "Do you know someone who wants to buy them?" I was dumbfounded. I never thought it was a case of "money" to get them back into our hands, but rather a case of natural transition.

Bill Dwyer had always spoken openly, and in front of several witnesses, that the negatives should, through standard procedure, go to our organization which is most in line and currently structured to carry on the legacy of the old Group. Apparently the family had not been so informed, or if they were, were looking more for the monetary value than the natural passage of property. Since that phone call they have not even responded to my certified mailing on the subject. As of this writing I don't know where we stand regarding the final outcome of the negatives. These pictures were taken - literally taken - at the cost of 451st lives; whether by the photographer, or by those being photographed. To see them fall into commercial hands is an insult to those that shed their blood in the cause of our Group's heritage. I will keep you posted on the outcome.

PICTURED OFFICER IDENTIFIED

A certain amount of pleasure came about when one of our members identified himself in a picture out of our History Booklet. It happened while staying out at the Richard-Gebaur AB last May, when I handed our newest member, Abbott Sydney, his packet of 451st material. Abbott retired to his room to review them. When next we met, he was bubbling over with the fact that he was one of the "unidentified" in the following photo. Time has obliterated who the other two were; but he knows he's in it, looking at the 725th Bulletin Board.

Abbott Sydney, Bombardier (far right) Identfies Himself With Two Unknown 725th Officers

Ed Rasmessen, Headquarters ... Your story about the California Reunion was excellent - My only regret is that someone took a picture of me with "Hawkeye and Hot-lips" - and I never got a copy! But then it's probably just as well since Janet wouldn't have liked to see me with my arms around "Hot-lips!!"

(Editor .. With what I know about that lovely bride of yours - I think she'd accept your dalliances with guys like us surrounding you, if for nothing more - you were safe among us older guys. Maybe the photographer will come forth and supply you a suitable photo: for framing, even.)

John Sattler, Comp Member ... Friends and Colleagues - you may be interested in this .....

(Editor .. Indeed we may. John is giving us the unique privilege of offering his new book: "Fifty Years Ahead of the News." This book puts into capsule form his 50 years of working in Public Relations - worldwide. Advanced pricing of $19.95 and available through his office at: Sattler International, Clairedale Drive, RCP, Hampton Bays, NY 11964. 320 pages -50 photographs.

Christian "Larry" March, 724th ... I am sending a check to the 451st to help continue the fast fading memory of the heroic troops who fought and suffered for the freedom we enjoy today. It is saddening to realize that the numbers who remember and appreciate the sacrifices of the soldiers, sailors, airmen and others during WW-II are decreasing spectacularly as are the heroic participants.

(Editor .. Well said Larry. Tomes can be written as to the general operation of the war, but whose to express the details; the horror, fear, pain, and sorrow. I guess it's up to us - us who survived and know some of the facts.)

Lawrence Harvey, 726th ... I noticed that Kansas City is one of the possible sites for the next reunion. I hope that it is in K.C. because I hate to travel very far. I take 6 kinds of medication and have to watch the diet - but I am almost use to it after seven years.

(Editor .. Your in luck, Larry, you won't be too far away, now that we've selected K.C. for "94." You'd better start your packing - we need you.)

Albert L. Roemer, 726th ... In Issue #22 you asked for information in regards to the crash of Lt. Hunt's plane in Italy in February, 1944. I may be of some assistance to you. At the time I was Assistant Squadron Intelligence Officer ..... Lt. William H. McGuire was then Squadron Adjutant. He requested me to write a Squadron History, which I did up until the time that Lt. (later Colonel William H. McGuire, and the Group's last CO) left our squadron ..... "On February 9th shortly after take off in the early morning on an icy cold day, Lt. James Hunt crashed in Lt. Sturman's plane. It appeared that due to climatic conditions the plane had iced-up causing the deaths of the following officers and enlisted men: 2nd Lt. James N. Hunt, Pilot; 2nd Lt. Vearl G. Maple, Navigator; F/O Fountain S. Lovejoy, Bombardier Sgt James F. Curtin; Sgt Donald S. Dobry; S/Sgt Tino V. Hernandez and Sgt Herbert L. Suereth, Jr. The Summary Court Officers were Lt. Elliott Arnold and Lt. Lloyd H. Lipkey. 2nd Lt. Edward S. Niederkorn, the copilot, and Sgt Meryl M. Frost were severely injured and hospitalized in Bari. Lt. Harry M Luhre, one of the first at the crash, assisted in the rescue of Lt. Niederkorn. Sgt Darrell Thaxton, was slightly injured in the same crash and was returned to duty."

(Editor .. Your information is truly appreciated. I'm sure the readers will appreciate the viable update you've given us. If you have "The Rest of the Story" (a Paul Harvey parity) it would be of historical benefit to publish it all.

Bill Schaidt, 725th ... It was great meeting you and JoAnn and having such a great get together in K.C. Jack and Norma (Sites) were the greatest hosts, and I'm sure we all appreciate all their hard work and planning .... I'm sure we're all looking forward to Sebring next year.

(Editor .. I know your crew reunion, as per Richard-Gebaur AB, will be hard to beat, but I know the Asbury's (Grover & Margaret) will come up with something unique. Maybe something like a walking tour through the Okeechobee Swamps, or a "look-see" at where Barnum & Bailey once hid their elephants.

Harvey Brown, 725th ... I was looking through some of the pictures of planes in the "Fight'n 451st B.G." book and on page 198 came across a B-24 named "The Rover Boys," #42-78463 with the battle number 34 .... I have some photographs of #42-78463 that I took in the summer of 1944 which shows the number 61 on the left side of the fuselage. How, and when this ship acquired the picture of the RABBIT and the number 34 (both on the same side) is a mystery.

(Editor .. This could be an over use of the word "conundrum," but that's what you seem to have posed. Let's hear what the readers can come up with. Someone certainly knows more about it than the two of us.

Maureen Humphrey, Comp Member ... I am the daughter of former crewman, S/Sgt George R. Penatzer, Jr. He was a gunner aboard the B-24 aircraft, "Minnesota Mauler." ... My father died 25 September 1986 in Pittsburgh, PA at the age of 69. ... Would you have any information on his plane or crew members? ... Enclosed is a copy of my father's discharge.

*(Editor .. As noted from your dad's discharge papers, he was originally a sheet medal worker in the 724th Squadron (perhaps on the "Minnesota Mauler;" then turned gunner. His tenure would have been to fly on anything flyable, and not necessarily with a new and total crew. I hope my info (per letter) is relevant and of interest.) [**Addendum:** Hearing from the offsprings of our deceased members is really what we're all about. We appreciate their interest. Perhaps we can dedicate an article to their causes, and bring them deeper into the fold. **STUDENTS!** [al la Kay Kyser) Let's hear from you!]*

FORMER MEMBERS OF THE
451st Bombardment Group (H) WW II, LTD.
49th Wing 15th Air Force
GROUP HEADQUARTERS 724th 725th 726th 727th Squadrons
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