



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

Issue 27

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Fall 1996

MINNESOTA REUNION TOPS THEM ALL

BOY, what a great REUNION we had in Minneapolis! Everything went off almost like clockwork. From Wednesday, when many of the members arrived, to Sunday when most departed, it was truly a fun filled five days of meeting, greeting, and just plain--"going." I, as coordinator, never had experienced such cooperative hotel staff (Hilton), Casino staff (Mystic Lakes), photographers, nor tour directors (Metro Connections), as there. Everything fell into place, regardless of my frenzied antics and the many spasmodic seizures I had, while in the planning stages.

Wednesday evening had two full buses and a partially loaded, headed for the Mystic Lakes Casino's some 10 miles distant.

Catching a bite to eat was more than I expected. The noted "buffet table" was being deluged by way too many people and some of us had to catch a bite at the "deli." I don't think that anyone came away rich that night, nor did I hear of anyone that lost very much. It was just a fun evening to "break the ice," as to meeting new people and hanging out with the regulars. Four hours later we were back at

the Hilton and ready for rest. Some stayed up for a "night cap" at either of the two bars that were in the Hilton.

Thursday was Registration Day. All packets were brought out and people were allowed to thumb through and find their own, and those of their friends. In this way they could also take their crew/friends packet and place all their names on the "Saturday Banquet Seating Layout Board," so's crews/friends could be together on that evening. The Hilton had placed us on the balcony so the newcomers could easily find us. Of course, the big 451st Banner hanging across the front of the balcony was also a clue as to "where the action was." Art and

Carol Morin, 451st sales personnel, were doing a fairly brisk business selling some of the artifacts that we had assembled as souvenirs for the membership. Caps and T-shirts were a must, as two years of wear on the old ones had pretty well wore them out.

Thursday evening started our planned programing: which we entitled "Make Your Woes Be Gone," a spin-off on the famous Garrison Keillor theme of "Lake Wobegon." When the doors

were opened we entered to view a beautiful laid out buffet in the center of the room. Some creative decisions were made as to making this "Theme Party" something native to the Minnesota area, even to the selection of the foods. Food selections were from Roast Turkey to Walleye Pike; From Vegetables to Wild Rice Salad. The buffet was thoroughly enjoyed by all.

At 7:30 o'clock Leroy Larson and the "Minnesota Scandinavian Ensemble" started off a musical program of Schottisches, Polkas, Hambos, Waltzes and a bunch of vocal medleys that drove home the theme of "Old Rural Minnesota." After a melodious warm up by the band, a pair of Scandinavian costumed dancers took the floor. They showed us the various old time steps that it took to dance some of the more intricate melodies. After an introduction of this fancy footwork, they went into



724th Crewmates Back Together Again
John Dilks, Navigator – Leo Cegla, T Gunner (Rollins' Crew)

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"AD-LIB"

**451st BOMB GROUP (H), LTD.
PUBLICATION**

Compiled and Published by Bob Karstensen

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many Air Force planes there, but in another hanger. The only hint of a B-24 was a photo stuck away in a display case against a far wall.

The second stop for many of us was the Minnesota Air Guard Museum. There we viewed aircraft from "vintage" to "current." Among the current was the noted "Blackbird, spy plane of the 60's. At each aircraft was a person versed in the abilities and capabilities of the plane. In some cases we were allowed to get the feel of the aircraft by sitting in the cockpit.



the audience and picked on a couple that wished to take the floor with them. The male dancer danced with the selected woman and the woman dancer latched onto the selected man. A short whirl around the floor and the dance team put the selected couple back together and went into the crowd to grab another couple. This went on until just about every able-bodied couple was out on the floor. Most of the participants said that it was a GRAND way to be introduced to Scandinavian style of music. I was proud that my heritage was so openly displayed, as this was what I grew up with during my youth, back in Minnesota.



**EX-Pilots Catch Disortation On P-51 by "Planes of Fame" Curator
L to R: Curator, Unknown, Don Schaffner, Paul & Barbara Malone**

Friday morning had us on the road with our sponsored tour. Because of the numbers involved, our group split for the first couple of stops. The tour included a visit to the "Planes of Fame Museum" where we had an excellent buffet of Barbecue Chicken and Ribs (with all the trimmings). This museum is unique as all the aircraft on display are flyable. They are frequently called upon for air shows and static displays. Many of the aircraft in one of the hangers are of the naval type, but there were

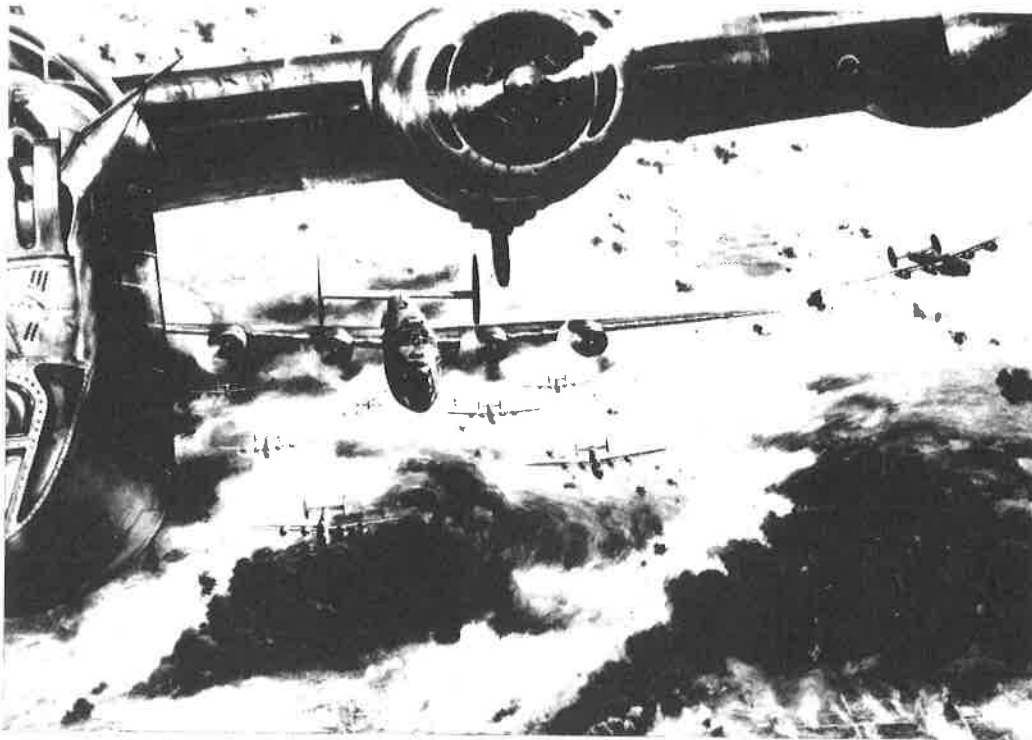


**A Three Rad Lead; Gentlemen
Ready - Aim - FIRE!**

The last stop was at the historical "Old Fort Snelling." Though normally closed during the week, (after Labor Day), they purposely kept the staff on hand for this influx of interested ex-soldiers. We had a chance to examine the living quarters of the frontier soldiers that once inhabited these grounds during the earliest days of the frontier settlers. We saw the vantage point from which these soldiers guarded the joining of the Mississippi and Minnesota rivers, that saw to the safety and protection of the river travelers. While there we experienced the firing of the old muzzle loading cannon. There was a lot of pomp and ceremony before the actual firing, but the BANG was worth it. Then it was back to the Hilton.

Our Patriotic Theme Night was heralded as one of the best we've ever done. With the aid of Chuck Thomas, former 727th pilot, we managed to secure the services of an elite group of "Ancient Free and Accepted Masons" to perform the presentation of COLORS and to recite a brief history of our flag. These men came dressed in the garb of our Revolutionary Soldiers (circa 1776). This team of patriots called themselves the Heroes of '76," and gave us the following ritual entitled

Air Force Chief of Staff, General Ronald R. Fogleman, Honors 451st With Special Recognition



World War II
50th
Anniversary
Fine Art Series



To: THE FIGHTING 451ST BOMB GROUP (H)

A Picture says a thousand words ... Your B-24s over Ploesti serve as a tribute to your
Bravery and Dedication. Your Sacrifice set an example that is still held in the highest
regard today ... Your Actions helped prove the power of Airpower and established
the foundation for the dramatic success of our Air Force in Desert Storm and Bosnia.
Best wishes on the occasion of your 1996 Reunion!

RONALD R. FOGLEMAN
CSAF

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RONALD R. FOGLEMAN, GENERAL, USAF
CHIEF OF STAFF UNITED STATES AIR FORCE

"Old Glory Speaks;"

There have been 27 different arrangements of stars from the first flag to our present flag of fifty stars.

Now listen to the message it brings you as Old Glory speaks.

I am the flag of the United States of America. I was conceived in the dreams of liberty and in the hope of freedom. I was adopted by the Continental Congress in 1777 and proclaimed the national emblem of a nation newly born on this continent. Fighting valiantly for survival and destined to bring to all mankind a new concept of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

I have been in many places and have witnessed many events in our American history. I was there when the

fired the shot heard around the world, and when General Washington became Commander-in-Chief. I was there in the late twilight at Fort Mifflin and inspired Francis Scott Key to write the Star Spangled Banner. I saw Molly Pitcher take the cannon swab from the hands of her dead husband and help carry on the fight for freedom. I felt the biting cold at Valley Forge and gave comfort to the tired and hungry Continental Army. I rode with Ethan Allen and the Green Mountain Boys and saw the signal that started the midnight ride of Paul Revere. I was flown above the decks of Old Ironsides and from the masts of the Yankee and the China Clippers, and I blazed the trail west with Daniel Boone and Davy Crockett. I was carried through the halls of

Montezuma and to the shores of Tripoli. I fell to ground at Custers Last Stand and there were no friendly hands to pick me up. I galloped up the slopes of San Juan Hill with Teddy Roosevelt and the Rough Riders. I stayed with the boys until it was over, over there, and was with them on the battlefields of Marne, Chateau Thierry, St Mihiel and the Argonne Forest.

I saw many of the youth and manhood of our nation fall and lie still in death. They had given their last full measure of devotion. The war was over for them forever, but I have kept my lonely vigil over their graves and have stayed to watch the Poppies grow, row-on-row, in Flanders Field. I was raised by five brave men during the hell of Iwo Jima. I waved farewell to the four immortal Chaplains, who went down with their ship in honored glory. I proudly waved over our troops fighting in Korea, the jungles of Vietnam, Grenada, Panama, Lebanon and Saudi Arabia.



**"Heroes of 76"
Flag Presentation Team**

I have been carried to the South Pole, the North Pole and to the moon. To some I am yesterday, today and tomorrow. To others I am a glorious child, to some a grand old man or a more gracious lady. I am in the mansions of the rich and the homes of the poor. I am in the white house with the President, in the fields with our Armed Forces, in all the churches, cathedrals and synagogues, with Boy Scouts and the Girl Scouts, Campfire Girls and other youth groups. I am in all the schools and public buildings.

These events have not come without cost. Throughout our brief history as a nation, when danger has threa-

tened, millions of Americans have left their homes and families to defend me and the nation for which I stand. Some never to return. Yet they are embraced forever in my folds, for their purity is remembered in my Stripes of White. Their blood had given me Stripes of Red. Their souls are cradled in my Stars, and their courage embedded in my Blue.

I am many things to many people. I am an inseparable link to the chain that binds men to God and Country. I am called the Red, White and Blue, The Star Spangled Banner, The Stars and Stripes, but I am most commonly known by a nickname given me by a sea captain, who called Old Glory. At this moment, while I fly in peace in turbulent times, men and women from nations around the world are striving to reach my shore. To touch and stand beside me; a symbol of liberty, a light of humanity, an emblem of mans faith, a beacon shining into the darkness and here I will always be, for I am the Stars and Stripes forever "I Am Old Glory."

This beautiful oration was followed by the 34th Division Army Band playing about 45 minutes of patriotic music as well as a full variety of, "Makes you want to march" music. It seems that having the 34th Division Band in concert make the circle once again go around. If you will remember, the 34th Army Division was along the Italian front lines during most of the offensive action in Italy. We had several occasions to "support bomb" in front of them before a "push" was made against the Germans. This effort, on their part, was, I think, a repayment for our helping them back in 44' and 45'. They did a fine job and we certainly appreciated their wonderful music and classic demeanor.

Saturday morning found many of our members boarding busses for either the Stillwater, or the Twin Cities tour. Both tours proved to be rewarding and entertaining.

In the evening the attendees enjoyed a Wine & Cheese Appreciation hour. To the surprise of many, one of our members had donned his Scottish Kilts and pumped up his Bag Pipes for an impromptu concert while the members tasted, toasted and gasped. We thank Jim W.L. Park for letting us know, prior to his attending, that he was well versed in this form of entertainment. He raised many an eyebrow.

The Banquet started, under the leadership of our Master of Ceremonies, Bob Kacena. An invocation by our Pastor, John Pafford, presentation of the Colors by our own men was a fine start to our evening. A few words from me, Bob K.; a warm up dialog by our 3rd Group Commander, Colonel Stefen



**J.W.L Park (726th Pilot)
In Concert**

(Retired). (Who showed a real talent for the telling of comic jokes, ala Henny Youngman) Bob Kacena steered the proceedings in an orderly manner; that is until he had to introduce our Guest Speaker, Colonel Neil Kacena USAF. A bit of jocularly and sparing took place as Lt. Colonel Bob Kacena (USAF Retired) tried to lord it over his son, Neil Kacena, who was a rank above what Bob had attained in his military career. Neil held his ground as long as his dad could put it out. But when Colonel Kacena got to the point of his discourse, he could really tell it like it was. Colonel Kacena was kind enough to offer me a copy of his text, and for those that did not hear his words, I hereby offer them now



"M.C." Bob Kacena
& Wife, Margaret

Colonel Stefen, Bob, Members of the 451st, family and friends: I would like to begin my remarks by thanking Bob Karstensen and the 451st Bomb Group LTD. for the opportunity to participate in your 1996 Reunion, a gathering that this year takes on even more meaning due to its alignment with the 50th anniversary of the United States Air Force. The individuals in this room are not only responsible for the development of Airpower, but in large part for the development of America as we know it today. Yours is a proud and highly decorated unit: three Presidential Unit Citations, the most accurate Bomb Group in 15th Air Force, countless individual medals, and had so many thirteens imbedded in your 100th combat mission that Lady Luck must have been on the 451st roster as well. I bring greetings from my boss, the honorable Arthur Money, the Assistant Secretary of the AF for Acquisition and some special words direct from the Air Force Chief of Staff, General Ronald R. Fogleman. I'm honored to represent the active duty military before this group of American military stock holders. Normally any reason to leave the Washington beltway area is desirable, but to come to Minneapolis, the home of the Minnesota Mauler, is doubly exciting. Although stationed at the Pentagon, I arrived this morning fresh from a trip to U.K. and can confirm that there is still considerable confusion about who won the war there. While most believe it was Bomber Harris' RAF, a few indicated that they thought the Eighth AF made some lasting contributions. No one I questioned displayed any knowledge of the 451st and the 15th AF. This of course was confusing to me as I had been brought up with the concept that the 451st had pretty much been responsible for winning the war even though some other peripheral activity had contributed.

I considered a number of subjects that I might discuss with you here tonight including experiences associated with a two year assignment to the embassy in Doha Qatar (If you haven't been offered the goat's eyeball as the guest of honor at an Arabic dinner - you haven't lived), a recent trip to Russia, (if you haven't had the experience of taking the night train from Moscow to Kiev; you've missed something) That is a trip I wish each one of you could make. The experience will forever crystallize a person's understanding of how lucky we are to be Americans and how important it is to

preserve and protect our way of life, but I am also sure that a wartime tour of duty in 1944 Southern Italy would have much the same effect. I also considered talking about deploying a squadron of F-15s to Dhahran Saudi Arabia to support DESERT STORM (11 hours is a long time in a single seat fighter); or a short tutorial explaining my current organization's mission and activities: And I will show you a couple of slides illustrating how my organization is carefully spending your tax dollars. However if there is a theme tonight it relates past, present and future through the vehicle of the USAF's 50 Anniversary celebration which was kicked off last Monday 16 Sep 1996, with a ceremony and flyby at Hap Arnold's grave site in Arlington National Cemetery. The theme of the Golden Anniversary is Golden Legacy: Boundless Future. The 451st is a key part of that Golden Legacy and you as members should be proud of your contribution to the development of Airpower and its applications. That does not mean that you should have any less participation in the AF's Boundless Future - maybe a different kind of participation, but certainly no less of a role.

So, I'd like to briefly describe some of the exciting activities that will be held across the Nation over the next 16 months to commemorate our golden anniversary and to salute all members of our Air Force team.

One thing is for sure, it is going to be a busy, historic, and exciting time for all of us.

For you sports fans, this weekend the Air Force will perform opening ceremony fly-bys at 7 NFL games in recognition of POW-MIA Day and our 50th Anniversary.

In December, our latest B-2 will be christened the "Spirit of Kitty Hawk"...

Then it will overfly the Wright Brothers Monument at Kill Devil Hills at exactly the same time as the first manned flight occurred 93 years ago.

In January, the AMC Band, Secretary Widnall and Gen Thomas Moorman (VCSAF) will participate in the Tournament of Roses Parade and Bowl Game as part of a tribute to our golden anniversary.

Then, next April, the Air Force will host 110 international air chiefs at Las Vegas for an unprecedented global air chiefs conference. What an event this is going to be!

That conference will be held in conjunction with the Air Force Association's 50th Anniversary International Symposium and a tremendous two-day, air power Golden Air Tattoo at Nellis AFB.

That airshow will include the Thunderbirds, 8 foreign aerobatic teams, and vintage warplanes. (Read that the world famous B-24).

In late April, the opening of the Kentucky Derby Festival ... "Thunder over Louisville" ... where approximately 650,000 spectators will help pay tribute to the 50th Anniversary of the Air Force.

In mid-May, we will hold an air power extravaganza at Andrews AFB as part of celebration activities in the local area.

In late May, the world-famous Indianapolis 500 will highlight our anniversary with appropriate activities to include the Chief serving as the Race Grand Marshal.

In early June, Air Mobility Command will mark the 50th anniversary of the Berlin Airlift ... the first use of air power to resolve a post-war crisis.

I'd like to encourage each and every member of our extended Air Force team to think about and take pride in our past accomplishments.

Also, I encourage you to take part in 50th anniversary events.

Your participation is as crucial to our success in celebrating this our golden anniversary year as it was to getting us here.

This is going to be a great next 16 months ... which I think will provide a wonderful springboard to the next 50 years.

In the next century, as in the last, I'm sure will see a bright and prominent future for the world's most respected air and space force.

While dramatic changes have taken place in our AF between WWII and today, I submit that more has stayed the same than has changed. You be the judge as I highlight some comparisons.

UNIFORM: BLUE / US/ DEVICES/AAF CUFF LINKS/LEATHER JACKET

MANPOWER: FROM OVER 2 MILLION IN 1945 TO 960,000 WHEN I JOINED TO JUST FALLING BELOW 400,000 LAST MONTH ON THE WAY TO 375,000. MAYBE THE NUMBERS HAVE CHANGED BUT THE INDIVIDUALS AND THERE COMMITMENT HAVE NOT.

MAINTENANCE AND SUPPORT: THEY STILL DO THE ESSENTIAL WORK, GET LITTLE OF THE CREDIT AND JUST LOAN THE UNIT'S AIRCRAFT TO THE AIRCREW TO FLY.

MISSION: THE SAME DOCTRINE (USED TO EXTREME EFFECTIVENESS IN DESERT STORM) - USE AIRPOWER TO STRIKE DIRECTLY AT THE ADVERSARY'S CENTER OF GRAVITY(S).

ADMINISTRATION: STILL THE SAME ONEROUS TASK ONLY PAPER HAS GIVEN WAY TO COMPUTERS.

ORGANIZATION: WE HAVE COME FULL CIRCLE IN 50 YEARS - BACK TO GROUPS AND WINGS AND MAINTENANCE WORKS FOR THE SQUADRON COMMANDER.

BASES: THE NAME HAS CHANGED FROM FIELDS AND THEY MAY BE FEWER AND MOST I'M SURE STILL RECOGNIZED BY MANY OF YOU, BUT THEIR PURPOSE HAS NOT.

UNIT EQUIPMENT: B-24s TO B-2s AND P-38s TO F-15s - PERFORMANCE HAS CHANGED BUT THE PURPOSE HAS NOT.

CHAFF - WINDOW - CARPET: RADAR COUNTER-MEASURES FOR THE B-24 HAVE TRANSITIONED TO THE RADAR EVADING STEALTH TECHNOLOGY ON THE B-2. SAME CHALLENGE WITH A SLIGHTLY DIFFERENT APPROACH.

CAPABILITY: THE NUMBERS HAVE CHANGED, BUT THE RESULTS HAVE NOT.

BELIEF IN AIRPOWER: I BELIEVE THAT THE ONLY GENERAL OF THE AIR FORCES, HAP ARNOLD, WOULD BE BOTH PROUD AND AMAZED

BY THE TODAY'S REALITY OF HIS VISION

DETERMINATION: Let me digress here for a moment.

THE FIGHTING 451st - A LEGACY OF VALOR

Two hundred years ago Thomas Paine encouraged American revolutionaries when they struggled and fought for freedom. He said, "... tyranny, like hell, is not easily conquered; yet we have this consolation with us, that the harder the conflict, the more glorious the triumph ..."

His sentiments resonate today as we commemorate the legions of men and women who have protected our nation's liberties and freedoms throughout the years. Today is for ALL veterans - those who HAVE served and those who are serving.

Their service, courage and sacrifice is typical of American mettle. We're known around the world for our spirit and tenacity. As I look around this audience and I see veterans. Like you, those serving in today's all-volunteer force have made a decision that isn't right for just everyone. They have dedicated their careers, and are willing to give their lives, to preserve the American way of life.

You see them on television or read about them in newspapers nearly every day. They're performing their military mission - they're alert, vigilant and prepared. In the world environment today, they're also involved in humanitarian efforts to bring food, shelter and medical relief to people in distress. They're participating in peacekeeping actions in Bosnia and Southwest Asia; providing earthquake relief in Armenia and India; or working side by side with volunteers in flood control efforts right here in the Midwest.

Those who have served have protected our interests throughout this century. Fifty some years ago the world was in peril. Death and destruction marched across Europe, and the invading armies' appetite for conquest couldn't be satisfied. Secretary of Defense William Perry said, "The enemies of peace and freedom thought that democracies would not or could not fight to deter or defeat tyranny and aggression. They were wrong 50 years ago. They were wrong during the Cold War. And they are wrong today."

The memory of World War II veterans lives on today - the free world is your legacy.

The importance of airpower was another legacy. The allies believed long-range bombing could cripple the German war effort. In the early part of the war, the skies were the only path to the heart of the enemy. While the Army cut its combat teeth at Kasserine Pass, the Airmen had painful lessons of their own to learn. The last American ground soldier to fight without Air Superiority was at Kasserine Pass. Establishing Air Superiority over the continent was a task that had to be accomplished.

Gen. Carl Spaatz commanded strategic bombing operations in Europe. His objective was to join our Royal Air Force allies in a combined bomber offensive. Round-the-clock bombing, the RAF at night and daylight runs by American "heavy" bombers targeted industries, factories and shipyards. The intermediate objective was to disable German fighter strength while creating a bottleneck in their war economy. I would like to illustrate

the 451st's role in this gigantic endeavor.

PLEASE EXCUSE ME WHILE I READ THIS SHORTENED VERSION OF THE JUSTIFICATION FOR THE 451st's SECOND PRESIDENTIAL UNIT CITATION

Subject: Proposed Second Citation of the 451st Bombardment Group (H), Army Air Forces.

To: Commanding General, Fifteenth Air Force, A.P.O. 520, U.S. Army.

1. In accordance with Section 3, War Department Circular 342, dated 12 October 1942, and NATOUSA Circular 216, dated 7 November 1943, request a second citation for the 451st Bombardment Group (H) for outstanding and heroic performance of duty in action on 5 April 1944, during an unusual and hazardous bombing mission on the vital target of great military importance at Ploesti, Rumania.

2. The maximum effort of the Fifteenth Strategic Air Force was scheduled in a plan to destroy the vital oil refineries and communication lines so necessary to the German War Machine.

3. Fighter groups were assigned to escort the formation to the prudent limit of their endurance and other fighter groups were assigned to provide cover on withdrawal. The known enemy capabilities for interception were over two-hundred and thirty (230) fighters.

4. The bombing mission to destroy the marshaling yards, adjacent oil refineries, and workshops was of the utmost importance in that the refined products from that source were shipped both to the Russian Front and to the interior of Germany for further distribution. The Ploesti oil fields and refineries produced at least one-half of Germany's natural oil resources. The demolition of the source of production and the interruption of the means of conveyance would be regarded as a crippling blow to the industries and the mechanized equipment throughout the German held territories.

5. The exact target of the 451st Bombardment Group (H) was the Astra Oil Refinery and the adjacent marshaling yards near the choke point.

6. The 451st Bombardment Group (H), commanded by Colonel Robert E. L. Eaton, was operating at the time from two widely dispersed airdromes. The limited facilities made it necessary that operations be carried on under the most difficult of field conditions.

7. Upon receipt of the orders for this important mission, the ground crews set about the task of readying available airplanes for the take-off and the Group rendezvous was successfully completed despite the adverse weather conditions in the rendezvous area and with the use of at least 43 flares. Eight-tenths cloud coverage prohibited normal procedure in assembling the formation.

10. The intercepting forces; consisting of FW 190's, ME 109's, ME 210's, JU 88's and MA 202's. The enemy aircraft persistently and relentlessly pressed home the attack for over one hour, methodically concentrating their fire on the low attack unit and with the exception of one airplane, completely destroyed it. Aware that the fighter escort that was to cover the withdrawal had been intercepted, the enemy continued the running battle, using a total of one-hundred and fifty (150) fighters in the encounter.

11. The German and Rumanian fighters one by one destroyed the aircraft which made up the lower unit of the wave.

12. Immediately before the arrival at the target, the leader of the second attack unit received a direct hit by enemy anti-aircraft fire. Despite the inability to maintain altitude, he continued to lead the formation directly over the target and to release his bombs on the marshaling yards. The remaining airplanes in the formation, realizing the desperate condition of the leader, continued in level flight over the target and dropped their bombs in a perfect pattern on the objective.

13. The anti-aircraft fire was intense and accurate.

14. Emerging from the maelstrom of enemy anti-aircraft fire, the badly mauled but thoroughly determined airmen closed together in a strong defensive formation and prepared for what they knew would be a suicidal assault by the remaining enemy fighters. During the ensuing forty-five (45) minutes, the gun crews accounted for a total of thirty-five (35) enemy fighters destroyed and damaged.

15. The results of the activities of the 451st Bombardment Group (H) on this 5 April 1944 consisted of extensive damage and destruction to the most important of all enemy oil sources; the destruction, probable destruction and damage to thirty-five (35) of their sorely needed fighters and the loss of five B-24 type airplanes of the Group.

16. The heroic sacrifices of the five gallant bombardment crews and the determined battle of the twenty-three (23) crews who returned to the base, together with their successful accomplishment in delivering a crippling blow to the enemy, writes a glorious page in the United Nation's effort against the aggressors.

17. The determination of the leaders and the brilliantly executed and heroic mission flown by the aircrew members and the indefatigable and efficient work by all ground personnel for the 451st Bombardment Group (H), demonstrates their loyalty and devotion to duty in the face of adversities. Their willingness to accept responsibility and the extraordinary heroism in the outstanding performance of duty under the most trying circumstances, has upheld the highest traditions of the Military Service and has reflected the highest credit upon the Armed Forces of the United States of America.

This mission may not have become famous or be widely written about outside the 451st' history, but it set the standard for today's AF. The B-24 Liberators of the 451st battled an impressive defense with a powerful offense in a restricted airspace. The B-24s of 15th Air Force over Ploesti, like all American airman, established a tradition that was demonstrated here recently in Bosnia and comprehensively in DESERT STORM. They have never been turned back from a target by the enemy, even while taking debilitating losses.

It's now over fifty years later. We're still hoping that we will have seen the end of war. Let us pursue peace with freedom, condemning tyranny and oppression, and despising war. Let us respect and honor those who defend the nation today.

Many have answered duty's call to defend the freedoms we cherish. Many of these veterans came home

safe, and told their stories of survival. Many didn't make it home, and their families and friends told stories of their memories. And there are far too many who survived the war, to come home and constantly live with physical or mental suffering. They continue to pay a price for our freedom.

The stories are an important part of understanding and perpetuating the U.S. Airman's proud legacy. In a previous Pentagon assignment this kid from Iowa had the benefit of spending a day in a Maryland duck blind talking with a retired AF General officer who had been a heavy bomber Group Commander in WWII. This crowd may recognize the name. Major General Robert E. Lee Eaton had a front seat to the development of airpower and the birth of the U.S. Air Force. He not only led the Fighting 451st back to Ploesti, site of the heavily defended Romanian oil fields, again and again, but went on to develop the final air plan that defeated the Axis powers in Europe and, in 1947, he initiated the fledgling Air Force's organizational interface with Congress, known today as Legislative Liaison. From first hand association he spoke of the founding fathers of today's Air Force as "Hap" Arnold (the AF's only 5 star General of the Air Force), "Tooey" Spaatz (first AF Chief of Staff), Ira Eaker, "Nate" Twining (third AF Chief of Staff and ultimately Chairman of the JCS), and "Jimmy" Doolittle. He also spoke about another kid from Iowa and his contributions. This kid showed up in Italy in the vanguard of a new airborne radar system that facilitated the attack of weather obscured targets, which up until that point had been a major cause of ineffective bombing, while exposing the airmen to excessive risks. I mention this, not to highlight how proud I am of my father, which I am, but as he was held up as one of the many individual examples of a unit that he fondly spoke of. By the way the same individual's name came up in relation to a certain group 360 executed over the target because the initial approach was unsuccessful. He explained to me the value of doing the job today and not making it necessary coming back tomorrow. He was part of the 451st family and emphasized its credo: DISCIPLINE, DESIRE, DETERMINATION and DEDICATION. I urge you, members of the 451st, not to let an opportunity pass to tell your story face to face with the coming generations, especially during this 50th Anniversary year. You have real war stories to share, stories that form the foundation of today's esprit de corps.

That war gave what was perhaps the most important victory in our history and you were the reason for that success. I mentioned earlier that I had traveled to Russia last year. If the opportunities available each country were compared, we couldn't even use the same scale. The level of success experienced by the United States since WWII was graphically brought home to me. The only way to build on this success is through remembering and continued individual and collective contribution to a nation that is unique.

As a young boy, I attended a VFW Post 788 summer picnic at ZCBJ park. As the day was ending with mothers chasing errant children and cleaning up picnic lunches, and groups of veterans just telling stories, I overheard an old soldier, by the name of Denny Collins, mutter, "so these are the winners." Many within ear-

shot chuckled softly, assuming that Denny was sarcastically describing the commonness of it all. Having lived in countries like Thailand, Germany and in the Middle East and traveled to many more in between, my experience tells me that there is nothing common about the American fighting man - Denny had it right - "These are the winners."

Today we face a diverse set of national security challenges. These challenges demand a strong, flexible military force that's ready to deter aggression at a moment's notice, and we have that force.

We honor those who are serving today while never forgetting the valor of those who went before.

Millions of Americans lives have been forever altered because you donned a uniform to protect the freedoms and rights we take for granted today. We owe you an eternal debt of gratitude.

PRESENTATION OF LITHOGRAPH: I know that you need no reminding of the aircraft that the 451st rode to victory, with names like the Extra Joker, Jolly Roger, Bad Penny and Minnesota Mauler. Nor do the following targets sound unfamiliar to this group: Budapest, Ploesti, Wiener Neustadt, Vienna, Blechhammer, Belgrade, and Markersdorf. From a personal perspective, it is clear that in a very short time span, April 43 - September 45, the 451st did more in three years than folks like me have done in twenty-three. In today's vernacular, my 10 year old would say that you have been there -- done that -- and bought the T-shirt. On 31 May 1944 the 451st went to Ploesti, just one of ten total missions to this critical oil target. That challenge presented by that target complex was captured by a 451st combat cameraman in this famous photo. Although claimed by other groups the 451st's own AD-LIB has proved conclusively which unit is being photographed. I believe that I can contribute to the Group's history by presenting Bob Karstensen with the 451st photo with an inscribed message by the current USAF Chief of Staff, General Ronald R. Fogleman.

(See Portrait on page 3.)

On this September day, another step leading to the culmination of the USAF's 50th Anniversary, let there be no doubt about the valor of the Fighting 451st, some of you standing here today, with your friends and relatives, and especially those at rest in our nations cemeteries, at home and abroad. On behalf of the men and women of today's Armed Forces - **I salute you.**

The feeling of the audience was profound. When John Pafford rose to give the benediction it was apparent that he was overwhelmed, as were many of us by the Colonel's speech, so instead of a prayer John suggested we sing Amazing Grace.

Dancing was the last thing of the evening.

This was one of the best Banquet Programs that we've ever had. From start to finish it went like clockwork with hardly a person moving for the 45 to 60 minutes that we stayed tuned-in to the Colonel's remarks.

Sunday, Reverend John Pafford sent us on our way with his excellent and befitting Church Service. Another occasion for us to bring out the hankies to wipe away the tear that seems to come all too easily.

GORDON BUTTS OFFERS STALAG LUFT III MILITARY REPORT

Early this year (1996) Gordon K. Butts, gunner from the 725th Squadron, offered me a written report that was generated out of the need to address the conduct, behavior and happenings within the POW compound in Germany. It is a rather lengthy tome, but interesting to read, as it puts into perspective much of what was endured by some of the POW's from the 451st.

Gordon was one of the fortunate ones that survived the loss of aircraft 41-29220; "HONEY CHILD." The mission of 17 April 1944 was to bomb Belgrade Zenum A/D in Yugoslavia. The a/c was piloted by James G. Price (original cadre) that arrived overseas with the Group in December of 1943. His crew was made up of: copilot, Alexander J. Muszynski; Navigator, David O. Ryon; Bombardier, Herbert W. Massa; AEG, Gordon K. Butts; ROG, Charles L. Isenhower; Gunner, Everett L. Sanborn; Gunner, Robert W. Bissell; Gunner, Harry A. Parsons; Gunner, Andrew M. Tittle.

The a/c was hit by two bursts of flak over the city of Mostar, Yugoslavia. One hit the tail section and caused the pilot to drop out of formation; the second burst, as reported by eyewitness, Squadron Bombardier Pat Collins, came in just below the bomb bays and further disabled the flight capabilities of the ship. As the a/c plummeted earthward, only three parachutes were seen to leave the ship. The three that survived were Gordon Butts, Everett Sanborn and Andrew Tittle.

Gordon Butts, knowing my interest in the various aspects of what the downed airmen endured, (e.g. the Lyle Baker Wartime Journal) wanted me to have this manuscript so I could chronicle what went on inside some of the more noted POW camps. Gordon prefaces this manuscript with the fact that not all items mentioned happened in all areas, but enough of it is true to make a composite overview of the camp's operation.

AMERICAN PRISONERS OF WAR IN GERMANY Prepared by; **MILITARY INTELLIGENCE SERVICE, WAR DEPARTMENT** 15 July 1944 (An Early Overview) **STALAG LUFT III**



Aerial Engineer Gunner: Gordon K. Butts (725th)

STRENGTH

3,363 AAF Officers.

LOCATION

Pin point: 51-35' North latitude. 15-19'30" East Longitude. Camp is situated in pine-woods area at Sagan, 168 Kilometers Southeast of Berlin.

DESCRIPTION

Three of the camp's 6 compounds are occupied by Americans, 3 by RAF officers. Each compound is divided into 15 buildings or blocks housing 80 to 110 men. The 12 rooms in a block, each house 2 to 10 men. Barracks are one-story, wooden huts resembling old CCC

barracks in this country. Beds are all double-deckers.

TREATMENT

An American P/W in this camp was fatally shot and another wounded under circumstances appearing to be in violation of the Geneva convention. Fifty British Ps/W were murdered in March. Prior to these recent incidents, treatment has been excellent.

FOOD

Food is adequate only because of regular arrival of Red Cross food parcels, although for a time during March, 1944 Ps/W received only German rations insufficient for subsistence. Vegetables from individual garden plots lend variety to diet. Food parcels are pooled and men in each room take turns at cooking. One stove is available for each 100 officers. A food exchange is maintained by Ps/W. Cigaretts serve as the medium of exchange.

CLOTHING

Clothing is furnished by the Red Cross. Germans issue only booty and very little of that. Men need sum-

mer issue underwear.

HEALTH

Health of the Ps/W is good. Calisthenics are compulsory by order of the Senior American Officers. Adequate medical care is provided by British and French doctors. Dental care is not satisfactory, and difficulty is experienced in obtaining glasses. Washing and toilet facilities are adequate, although hot water is scarce.

RELIGION

Complete religious freedom is observed. Services are held in specially constructed chapels by 9 chaplains, 7 of them Protestant, 2 Catholic. One chaplain is Lt. Eugene L. Daniel, and American; the others are British.

PERSONNEL

South Compound - American Sr. Officer: Col. Charles G. Goodrich. Center Compound - American Sr. Officer: Col. Delmar Spivey. West Compound - American Sr. Officer: Col. Darr H. Alkire. German Commandant: Oberst von Lindeiner.

MAIL

Airmail from camp averages 1 1/2 months in transit, surface mail 3 months. Next-of-kin and tobacco parcels average 2 1/2 months travel time. Sometimes they are pilfered.

RECREATION

This camp has the best organized recreational program of the American camps in Germany. Each compound has an athletic field and volleyball courts. The men participate in basketball, softball, boxing, touch football, volleyball, table tennis, fencing. Leagues have been formed in most of these sports. A fire pool, 20' x 22' x 5' is occasionally used for swimming. Parole walks are sometimes permitted. In each of the compounds theaters built by the Ps/W, plays and musical comedies are frequently presented. Top-flight swing bands and orchestras perform regularly, and several choral groups take part in religious services and camp entertainments. Other recreational activities including bridge tournaments, building of model planes, visits to occasional movies, listening to phonograph recordings. Competent instructors teach a wide range of cultural and technical subjects, and lectures and discussions are numerous. A newspaper posted 4 times weekly is edited by the Ps/W. Each of the compounds has a well-stocked library.

WORK

Men are paid on a sliding scale according to rank. Lts. receive 81 marks monthly in lagergeld of which 40 are deducted for food and orderly services. The remainder may be used at the canteen which had weak beer 4 times a year and a meager supply of harmonicas, pottery, and gadgets.

AMERICAN PRISONERS OF WAR IN GERMANY Prepared by MILITARY INTELLIGENCE SERVICE WAR DEPARTMENT 1 November 1945 (Later Overview) STALAG LUFT 3 (Air Force Officers)

LOCATION

Until 27 Jan. 1945, Stalag Luft 3 was situated in the Province of Silesia, 90 miles southeast of Berlin, in a stand of fir trees south of Sagan (51-35' North latitude - 15-19'30" East longitude).

In the Jan. exodus, the South Compound and Center Compound moved to Stalag 7A, Moosburg (48-27' North latitude - 11-57' East longitude). The West Compound and North Compound moved to Stalag 13K, Nurnerg-Langwasser (49-27' North latitude - 11-50' East longitude) and then proceeded to Moosburg, arriving 20 April 1945.

STRENGTH

On 14 April 1942 Lt. (j.g.) John E. Dunn, 0-6545, U.S. Navy, was shot down by Germans and subsequently became the 1st American flyer to be confined in Stalag Luft 3, then solely a prison camp for officer PW of the Royal Air Force. By 15 June 1944, U.S. Air Force officers in camp numbered 3,242, and at the time of the evacuation in Jan. 1945, the International Red Cross listed the American strength as 6,844. This was the largest American officers' camp in Germany.

DESCRIPTION

When the first Americans arrived in 1942, the camp consisted of 2 compounds or enclosures, one for RAF officers and one for RAF NCOs. The rapid increase in strength forced the Germans to build 4 more compounds, with USAAF personnel taking over the Center, South, West and sharing the North Compound with the British. Adjoining each compound the Germans constructed other enclosures called "vorlagers" in which most of the camp business was transacted and which held such offices as supply, administration and laundry.

Each compound enclosed 15 one-story, wooden barracks or "blocks." These, in turn, were divided into 15 rooms ranging in size from 24' by 15' to 14' by 6'. Occupants slept in double-decker bunks and for every 3 or 4 men the Germans provided simple wooden tables, benches and stools. One room, equipped with a cooking range, served as a kitchen. Another, with 6 porcelain basins, was the washroom. A 3rd, with 1 urinal and 2 commodes, was the latrine.

A "Block" could house 82 men comfortable, but with the growth in numbers of PW, rooms assigned for 8 men began holding 10 and then 12, and the middle of Sept. 1944 saw new PW moving into tents outside the barracks.

U.S. PERSONNEL

Lt. Col. Albert P. Clark, Jr., captured on 26 July 1942, became the first Senior American Officer, a position he held until the arrival of Col. Charles G. Goodrich some 2 months later. The enforced seclusion of individual compounds necessitated the organization of each as an independent PW camp. At the time of the move from Sagan, camp leaders were as follows:

Senior Allied Officer - Brigadier General Arthur W. Vanaman. SAO South Compound - Col. Charles G. Goodrich SAO Center Compound - Col. Delmar T. Spivey SAO West Compound - Col. Darr H. Alkire SAO North Compound - Lt. Col. Edwin A. Bland

The staff of a compound was organized into two categories:

Main Staff Depts. a. Adjutant; b. German property; c. German rations; d. Red Cross food; e. Red Cross clothing; f. Education & Recreation

Secondary Staff Depts. a. Mail; b. Medical; c. Coal; d. Finance; e. Canteen; f. Orderlies, etc.

The basic unit for organization was the barrack building or block. Block staffs were organized to include the same functions as the Compound Staff, and the blocks themselves were sub-divided into squads of 10 men each.

Each compound had a highly organized Security

Committee.

GERMAN PERSONNEL

The original commandant of Stalag Luft 3 was Oberst von Lindeiner, an old-school aristocrat with some 40 years of army service. Courteous and considerate at first sight, he was inclined to fits of uncontrolled rage. Upon one occasion he personally threatened a PW with a pistol. He was, however, more receptive to PW requests than any other commandant.

After the British mass escape of March 1944, Oberst von Lindeiner was replaced by Oberstleutnant Cordes, who had been a PW in World War I. A short while later Cordes was succeeded by Oberst Braune, direct and business-like. Stricter than his predecessors, he displayed less sympathy toward PW requests. Nevertheless, he was able to stop misunderstandings such as the one resulting in guards shooting into the compounds. In general, commandants tended to temporize when dealing with PW, or else to avoid granting their requests entirely.

Most disliked by PW were the Abwehr or Security officers - Hauptmann Breuli and his successor Major Kircher.

The Luftwaffe guards were 4th rate troops either peasants, too old for combat duty or young men convalescing after long tours of duty or wounds received at the front. They had almost no contact with PW. In addition to uniformed sentries, soldiers in fatigues were employed by the Germans to scout the interiors of the compound. These "ferrets" hid under barracks, listened to conversations, looked for tunnels and made themselves generally obnoxious to the PW. The German complement totaled 800.

Occasionally, as after the March 1944 mass escape, Gestapo groups descended upon the camp for a long, thorough search.

TREATMENT

Because of their status as officers and the fact that their guards were Luftwaffe personnel, the men at Stalag Luft 3 were accorded treatment better than that granted other PW in Germany. Generally, their captors were correct in their adherence to many of the tenets of the Geneva Convention. Friction between captor and captive was constant and inevitable, nevertheless, and the strife is well illustrated by the following example.

On 27 March 1944 the Germans instituted an extra appel (roll call) to occur any time between the regular morning and evening formations. Annoyed by an indignity which they considered unnecessary, PW fought the measure with passive resistance. They milled about, smoked, failed to stand at attention and made it impossible for the lager officers to take a count. Soon they were dismissed. Later in the day another appel was called. This time the area was lined with German soldiers holding rifles and machine guns in readiness to fire. Discreetly, PW allowed the appel to proceed in an orderly fashion. A few days later, nevertheless, probably as a result of this deliberate protest against German policy, the unwonted extra appel was discontinued.

Since the murder of 50 RAF flyers had been attributed to the Gestapo, acts of atrocious mistreatment involving the regular Stalag Luft 3 Guard complement

may be narrowed down to two.

About 2230 hours, 29 Dec. 1943, a guard fired a number of shots into one barrack without excuse or apparent purpose. One bullet passed through the window and seriously wounded the left leg of Lt. Col. John D. Stevenson. Although Col. Stevenson spent the next 6 months in hospitals, the wound has left him somewhat crippled.

About 1230 hours, 9 April 1944, during an air raid by American bombers, Cpl Cline C. Miles was standing in the cookhouse doorway. He was facing the interior. Without warning a guard fired at "a man" standing in the doorway. The bullet entered the right shoulder of Cpl Miles and came out through his mouth killing him instantly.

FOOD

German rations, instead of being the equivalent of those furnished depot troops, compared with those received by non-working civilians - the lowest in Germany. While insufficient, these foods provided the bulk of staples, mainly through bread and potatoes. A PW average daily issue of foods, with caloric content included, follows:

TYPE OF FOOD	GRAMS	CALORIES
Potatoes	390	331
Bread	350	910
Meat	11	20
Barley, Oats, Etc.	21	78
Kohlrabi	247	87
Dried Vegetable	14	38
Margarine	31	268
Cheese	10	27
Jam	25	69
Sugar	25	100
TOTALS	1124	1928

A conservative estimate of the caloric requirement of a person sleeping 9 hours a day and taking very little exercise is 2,150 calories. German rations, therefore, fell below the minimum requirement for healthy nutrition.

Food came from 4 other sources: Red Cross parcels, private parcels, occasional canteen purchases and gardens. Of the Red Cross parcels, after the spring of 1943, 40% were American, 25% British, 25% Canadian and 10% miscellaneous such as New Zealand parcels, Christmas parcels and bulk issue from the British colony in Argentina. These were apportioned at the rate of 1 per man per week during periods of normal supply. If the International Red Cross at Geneva felt that transportation difficulties would prevent the usual delivery, it would notify the camp parcel officer to limit the issue to 1/2 parcel per man per week. Such a situation arose in Sept. 1944 when all Stalag Luft 3 went on 1/2 parcels. Average contents of American and British parcels were as follows:

AMERICAN

Food Weight (OZ)

Spam 12; Corned Beef 12; Salmon 8; Cheese 8; Dried Fruit 16; Biscuits 7; Klim 16; Margarine 16; Soluble 4; Orange Powder 4; Liver Paste 6; Chocolate 4

BRITISH**Food Weight (OZ)**

Meat Roll 10; Stew 12; Cheese 4; Dried Fruit 6; Biscuits 10; Condensed Milk 14; Margarine 8; Tea 2; Cocoa 6; Jam 10; Powdered Eggs 2; Chocolate 4; Vegetables 8

Since the kitchen equipment of 10 boilers and 2 ovens per compound was obviously inadequate, almost all food was prepared by various room messes in the block. These messes obtained from the kitchen only hot water and, 4 times a week, hot soup. Cooking within the block was performed on a range whose heating surface was 3 square feet. During winter months, PW were able to use the heating stoves in their rooms as well. With few exceptions, each room messed by itself. All food was pooled, and the room cooks were responsible for serving it in digestible and appetizing, if possible, form. Since the stove schedule provided for cooking periods from 3 p.m. to 9 p.m., some rooms ate their main meal in mid-afternoon, while others dined fashionably late. Below is a typical day's menu:

Breakfast - 9 a.m.: Two slices of German bread with spread, coffee (soluble) or tea.

Lunch - noon: Soup (on alternate days), slice of German bread, coffee or tea.

Supper - 5:30 p.m.: Potatoes, one-third can of meat, vegetables (twice a week), slice German bread, coffee or tea.

Evening snack - 10 p.m.: Desert (pie, cake, etc.) coffee or cocoa.

A unique PW establishment was FOODACCO whose chief function was to provide PW with a means of exchange and a stable barter market where, for example, cocoa could be swapped for cigars. Profits arising from a 2% commission charged on all transactions was credited to a communal camp fund.

HEALTH

Despite confinement, crowding, lack of medical supplies and poor sanitary facilities, health of PW was astonishingly good.

For trivial ailments, the compounds maintained a first aid room. More serious cases were sent to 1 of the 2 sick quarters within the camp. Sick quarters were for the South Compound originally consisted of a small building with 24 beds, a staff of 3 PW doctors and some PW orderlies. This also served the North and West Compounds. The Center Compound had its own dispensary and 2 PW doctors. On 1 June 1944, the three-compound sick quarters was replaced by a new building with 60 beds.

The Germans furnished very few medical supplies. As a result, PW depended almost wholly on the Red Cross. Large shipments of supplies, including much-needed sulfa drugs, began to arrive in the autumn of 1944. PW were also glad to receive a small fluoroscope and thermometers.

Most common of the minor illnesses were colds, sore throats, influenza, food poisoning and skin diseases. When a PW needed an x-ray or other attentions of a specialist, he was examined by a German doctor. It usually took months to obtain these special attentions.

Cases requiring surgery were sent to one of the English hospitals, as a rule Lamsdorf or Obermassfeld. Emergency cases went to a French hospital at Stalag 8C. one mile distant.

Dental care for the North, West and South Compounds was provided by a British dentist and an American dental student. In 14 months, they gave 1,400 treatments to 308 PW from the south Compound alone.

Sanitation was poor. Although PW received a quick delousing upon entry into the camp, they were plagued by bedbugs and other parasites. Since there was no plumbing, both indoor and outdoor latrines added to the sanitation problems in summer. PW successfully fought flies by scrubbing toilets daily, constructing fly traps and screening latrines with ersatz burlap in lieu of wire mesh.

Bathing facilities were extremely limited. In theory the German shower houses could provide each man with a three-minute hot shower weekly. In fact, however, conditions varied from compound to compound and if a PW missed the opportunity to take a hot shower he resorted to a sponge bath with water he had heated himself - the only other hot water available the year around.

CLOTHING

In 1943, Germany still issued booty clothing of French, Belgian or English derivation to PW. This practice soon ceased, making both Britons and Americans completely dependent on clothing received from the Red Cross. An exception to the rule was made in the winter of 1943 when the camp authorities obtained 400 old French overcoats from Anglo-American PW.

Gradually, Americans were able to replace their RAF type uniforms with GI enlisted men's uniforms, which proved extremely serviceable. When stock of clothing permitted, each PW was maintained with the following wardrobe:

1 Overcoat .. 1 Blouse .. 2 Shirts, Wool or Cotton .. 1 Pr. Wool Trousers .. 2 Pr. Winter Underwear .. 2 Pr. Socks .. 1 Pr. Gloves .. 1 Sweater .. 1 Pr. High Shoes .. 1 Belt or Suspenders .. 1 Cap .. 4 Handkerchiefs .. 1 Blanket (added to 2 German blankets)

WORK

Officers were never required to work. To ease the situation in camp, however, they assumed many house-keeping chores such as shoe repairing, distributing food, scrubbing their own rooms and performing general repair work on barracks.

Other chores were carried out by a group of 100 American orderlies whose work was cut to a minimum and whose existence officers tried to make as comfortable as possible under the circumstances.

PAY

The monthly pay scale of officers in Germany was as follows: F/O & 2nd Lt. - 72 Reichsmarks .. 1st Lt. - 81 Reichsmarks .. Capt. - 96 Reichsmarks .. Major - 108 Reichsmarks .. Lt. Col. - 120 Reichsmarks .. Col. - 150 Reichsmarks.

Americans adhered closely to the financial policy originated by the British in 1940-42. No money was handled by individual officers but was placed by the accounts officer into individual accounts of each after a

sufficient deduction had been made to meet the financial needs of the camp. these deductions, not to exceed 50% of any officer's pay, took care of laundry, letter forms, airmail postage, entertainment, escape damages and funds transmitted monthly to the NCO camps, which received no pay until July 1944.

Officers at Stalag Luft 1 contributed 33% of their pay to a communal fund, and the entire policy was approved by the War Department on 14 Oct. 1943. Since the British Government, unlike the U.S.A., deducted PW pay from army pay, Americans volunteered to carry out all canteen purchases with their own funds, but maintained joint British-American distribution just as before.

Because of the sudden evacuation from Sagan, Allied PW had no time to meet with German finance authorities and reconcile outstanding Reichsmark balances. The amount due to the U.S.A. alone from the German Government totals 2,984,932.75 Reichsmarks.

MAIL

Mail from home or sweetheart was the life-blood of PW. Incoming mail was normally received 6 days a week, without limit as to number of letters or number of sheets per letter. (German objected only to V-mail forms.) Incoming letters could travel postage free, but those clipper-posted made record time. Correspondence could be carried on with private persons in any country outside of Germany; Allied, Neutral or enemy. Within Germany correspondence with next-of-kin only was permitted. A PW could write one letter per month to next-of-kin in another PW camp or internees' camp.

SOUTH COMPOUND INCOMING MAIL

Month	Letters	Per Capita	Age
Sep 43	3,190	3	11 weeks
Oct 43	5,392	5	10 weeks
Nov 43	9,125	9	10 weeks
Dec 43	24,076	24	8 weeks
Jan 44	7,680	7	12 weeks
Feb 44	10,765	9	12 weeks
Mar 44	11,693	10	12 weeks
Apr 44	16,355	15	12 weeks
May 44	15,162	13	13 weeks
Jun 44	13,558	11	14 weeks
Jul 44	26,440	20	14 weeks
Aug 44	14,264	11	15 weeks
Sep 44	10,277	8	16 weeks

The travel time reverted to 11-12 weeks in the autumn of 1944, with airmail letters sometimes reaching camp in 4 to 6 weeks. All mail to Luftwaffe-held PW was censored in Sagan by a staff of German civilian men and women.

Outgoing mail was limited, except for special correspondence, to 3 letter forms and 4 cards per PW per month. Officers above the rank of Major drew 6 letters and 4 cards while enlisted man received 2 letter forms and 4 cards. Protected personnel received double allotments. PW paid for these correspondence forms and for airmail postage as well.

SOUTH COMPOUND OUTGOING MAIL

Month	Letters	Postage in RMs
Sep 43	3,852	924.60
Oct 43	6,711	2494.60
Nov 43	7,781	2866.66
Dec 43	7,868	2968.00
Jan 44	7,811	2915.30
Feb 44	7,968	2907.10
Mar 44	7,916	3095.80
Apr 44	8,460	3154.90
May 44	8,327	3050.20
Jun 44	10,189	3789.60
Aug 44	8,780	3366.50
Sep 44	8,777	3288.30

Each 60 days, a PW's next-of-kin could mail him a private parcel containing clothing, food and other items not forbidden by German or U.S. Government regulations. These parcels too, were thoroughly examined by German censors.

MORALE

Morale was exceptionally high. PW never allowed themselves to doubt an eventual Allied victory and their spirits soared at news of the European invasion. Cases of demoralization were individual, caused for the most part by reports of infidelities among wives or sweethearts, or lack of mail, or letters in which people failed completely to comprehend PW's predicament. Compound officers succeeded in keeping their charges busy either physically or mentally in maintaining discipline. The continual arrival of new PW with news of home and the air force also helped to cheer older inmates.

WELFARE

The value of the Protecting Power in enforcing the provisions of the Geneva Convention lay principally in the pressure they were able to bring to bear. Although they might have agreed with the PW point of view, they had no means of enforcing their demands upon the Germans, who followed the Geneva Convention only insofar as its provisions coincided with their policies. But the mere existence of a Protecting Power, a third party, had it beneficial effect on German policy.

Direct interview was the only satisfactory traffic with the Protecting Power. Letters usually required 6 months for answer - if any answer was received. The sequence of events at a routing visit of Protecting Power representatives was as follows: Granting by the Germans a few concessions just prior to the visit; excuses given by the Germans to the representatives; conference of representatives with compound senior; conference of representative with Germans. Practical benefits usually amounted to minor concessions from the Germans.

PW of Stalag Luft 3 feel a deep debt of gratitude toward the Red Cross for supplying them with food and clothing, which they considered the 2 most important things in their PW camp life. Their only complaint is against the Red Cross PW Bulletin for its description of Stalag Luft 3 in terms of appropriately used in depicting life on a college campus than a prison camp.

PW also praised the YMCA for providing them generously with athletic equipment, libraries, public address systems and theatrical materials. With YMCA

headquarters established in Sagan, the representative paid many visits to camp.

RELIGION

On 1 Dec. 1942, the Germans captured Capt. M.E. McDonald with a British Airborne Division in Africa. Because he was "out of the cloth" they did not officially recognize him as a clergyman, nevertheless, he was accredited chaplain for the camp and conducted services for a large Protestant congregation. He received a quantity of religious literature from the YMCA and friends in Scotland.

In April 1942, Father Philip Goudrea, Order of Marry Immaculate, Quebec, Canada, became the Catholic Chaplain for a group which eventually numbered more than 1,000 PW. Prayer books were received from Geneva and rosary beads from France.

On 12 Sept. 1943, a Christian Science Group was brought together in the South compound under the direction of 2nd Lt. Rudolph K. Grumm, 0-749387. His reading material was forwarded by the Church's War Relief Committee, Geneva, as was that of 1st Lt. Robert R. Brunn active in the Center Compound.

Thirteen members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Later Day Saints, sometimes known as the Mormon Church, held their first meeting in the South Compound on 7 Nov. 1943. 1st Lt. William E. McKell was nominated as presiding Elder and officiated at subsequent weekly meetings. Material was supplied by the European Student Relief Fund, the Red Cross, the YMCA and the Swiss Mission of the Church.

RECREATION

Reading was the greatest single activity of the PW. The fiction lending library of each compound was enlarged by books received from the YMCA and nest-of-kin until it totaled more than 2,000 volumes. Similarly, the compounds' reference libraries grew to include over 500 works of a technical nature. These books came from the European Student Relief Fund of the YMCA and from PW who had received them from home.

Athletics were second only to reading as the most popular diversion. Camp areas were cleared and made fit playing fields at first for cricket and rugby and later for softball, touch football, badminton, deck tennis and volleyball. In addition, PW took advantage of opportunities for Ping-pong, wrestling, weight lifting, horizontal and parallel bar work, hockey and swimming in the fire pool. The bulk of athletic equipment was supplied by the YMCA.

The "Luftbandsters." playing on YMCA instruments, could hold its own with any name band in the U.S.A. according to those who heard them give various performances. PW formed junior bands of less experienced players and also a glee club.

Through the services of the YMCA, PW were shown 7 films, 5 somewhat dated Hollywood features and 2 German musical comedies.

Other activities including card playing, broadcasting music and news over the camp amplifier called "Station KRGY," reading the "Circuit" and "Kriege Times" journals issued by PW news room attending the Education Department's classes which ranged from Aeronautics to Law, painting, sketching and the inevitable stroll

around the compound perimeter track.

SAGAN EVACUATION

At 2100 hours on 27 Jan. 1945, the various compounds received German orders to move out afoot within 30 minutes. With an eye on the advancing Red Armies, PW had been preparing 2 weeks for such a move. Thus the order came as no surprise. In barracks bags, in knotted trousers and on makeshift sleds they packed a minimum of clothing and a maximum of food - Usually 1 parcel per man. Each man abandoned such items as books, letters, camp records and took his overcoat and one blanket. Between 2130 and 2400 hours, all men except some 200 too weak to walk, marched out into the bitter cold and snow in a column of threes - destination unknown. Their guards, drawn from the camp complement, bore rifles and machine pistols. They marched all night, taking 10 minutes break every hour.

The exodus was harrowing to PW of all compounds but especially those of South, which made the 55 kilometers from Sagan to Muskau in 27 hours with only 4 hours of sleep. Rations consisted only of bread and margarine obtained from a horse-drawn wagon. PW slept in unheated barns. At Muskau, on the verge of exhaustion, they were billeted in a blast furnace, which was warm, and an empty heating plant, which was cold. Here they were given a 30-hour delay for recuperation. Even so, some 60 men incapable of marching farther had to be left behind. The 25 kilometers from Muskau to Spremberg on 31 Jan., the South Compound, plus 200 men from the West Compound, went to Stalag 7A at Moosburg. They traveled 2 days and 2 nights in locked, unmarked freight cars - 50 men to a car. On 7 Feb., the Center compound joined them. The North Compound fell in with the West Compound at Spremberg and on 2 Feb. entrained for Stalag 13D, Nurnberg, which they reached after a trip of 2 days.

Throughout the march the guards, who drew rations identical with the PW's, treated their charges with sympathy and complained at the harshness they all had to undergo. German civilians encountered during the trek were generally considerate, bartering with PW and sometimes supplying them with water.

STALAG 13D CONDITIONS (NURNBERG)

Conditions at Stalag 13D, where PW stayed for 2 months, were deplorable. The barracks originally built to house delegates to the Nazi party gatherings at the shrine city, had recently been inhabited by Italian PW, who left them filthy. There was no room to exercise, no supplies, nothing to eat out of, and practically nothing to eat inasmuch as not Red Cross food parcels were available upon the Americans' arrival. The German rations consisted of 300 grams of bread, 250 grams of potatoes, some dehydrated vegetables and a little margarine. After the first week, sugar was not to be had and soon the margarine supply was exhausted. After 3 weeks, and in answer to an urgent request, 4,000 Red Cross food parcels arrived from Dulag Luft, Wetzlar. Shortly thereafter, the Swiss came to make arrangements for sending parcels in American convoy, and soon Red Cross parcels began to arrive in GI (Red Cross) trucks. Throughout this period, large numbers of American PW were pouring into camp - 1,700 from Stalag Luft 4, 150 a day from

Dalag Luft and finally some from Oflag 64. Sanitation was lamentable. The camp was infested with lice, fleas and bedbugs. 3,000 men each with only 2 filthy German blankets, slept on bare floors. Toilet facilities during the day were satisfactory, but the only night latrine was a can in each sleeping room. Since many men were afflicted with diarrhea, the can had an insufficient capacity and the men performed soiled the floor. Showers were available only every 2 weeks. Barracks were not heated. Only 200 kilograms of coal were provided for cooking. Morale dropped to its lowest ebb, but Col. Darr H. Alkire succeeded in maintaining discipline.

NURNBERG EVACUATION

At 1700 hours on 3 April 1945, the Americans received notice that they were to evacuate the Nurnberg camp and march to Stalag 7A, Moosburg. At this point, the PW took over the organization of the march. They submitted to the German commander plans stipulating that in return for preserving order they were to have full control of the column and to march no more than 20 kilometers a day. The Germans accepted. On 4 April, with each PW in possession of a food parcel, 10,000 Allied PW began the march. While the column was passing a freight marshalling yard near the highway, some P-47s dive-bombed the yard. Two Americans and

1 Briton were killed and 3 men seriously wounded. On the following day the column laid out a large replica of an American Air Corps insignia on the road with an arrow pointing in the direction of the march. Thereafter, the column was never strafed. It proceeded to Neumarkt, to Bersheim where 4,500 Red Cross parcels were delivered by truck, then to Mulhauser where more parcels were delivered. On 9 April, the compound column reached the Danube which Col. Alkire flatly refused to cross since it meant exceeding the 20 kilometer-a-day limit. With his refusal the Germans completely lost control of the march and PW began to drop out of the column almost at will. The guards, intimidated by the rapid advance of the American Army, made no serious attempt to stop the disintegration. The main body of the column reached Stalag 7A on 20 April 1945.

“SOURCE MATERIAL FOR THIS REPORT CONSISTED OF INTERROGATIONS OF FORMER PRISONERS OF WAR MADE BY CPM BRANCH, MILITARY INTELLIGENCE SERVICE, AND REPORTS OF THE PROTECTING POWER AND INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS RECEIVED BY THE STATE DEPARTMENT (Special War Problems Division).” Taken from the introduction (general) of camps.

MEMBERS SHOW WW-II ARTIFACTS TO STUDENTS



Jack Thomas with his WW-II display for students

ern route through South America, North Africa and finally into Gioia del Colle, Italy and ending his tour at Castelluccia di Sauri. Jack always felt that he was the lucky one as he saw a lot of his friends end up as POWs or KIA. By the time Jack had finished his fifty missions, he could account for 6 empty tents among the enlisted men in the 727th area.

Jack found great satisfaction in telling the young students about his experiences, and I don't have to think that Jack embellished on what he was telling them. Jack isn't that way. Nor is it possible to tell the students ALL that took place. At least Jack could show them something from the past and since becoming a part of all our reunions, can show some memorabilia from the present. If the students enjoyed it half as much as Jack did; then there are some happy enlightened students out in New Jersey.

Another member that surfaced in this regards was Ed Shafer, mailman in the 727th Squadron. He went to his local school and brought along memorabilia that he thought the students would appreciate. Among the items he brought to their attention was the "Fight'n 451st" book. In his words, "It took me quite a while to get it back." Apparently the students found it quite interesting.

Still another concerned member, Andy Clark, 724th AEG (O'Connor's Crew) added his experience. He writes "I sat up a display with pictures and books. I was very surprised by the interest of the young people. Paul Johnshoy, 724th (Pilot and Ops O.) was there in uniform."

Out in Thorofare, New Jersey there is a 451st member that took seriously the 50th anniversary of the end of WW-II. I don't know of many other of our members that went as far as he did. Some may have attended ceremonies and dedications in various places to commemorate the end of hostilities. And maybe some had a hand in planning those programs. But to this one member, and two others I'll mention, they took it upon themselves to offer the students of their local high schools some insight and perspective as to what they went through during the war.

That first member was John "Jack" Thomas of the 727th Squadron. Jack was engineer gunner on Cortland Read's crew. He came overseas with the original cadre, starting from Fairmont, Nebraska and taking the south-

REMEMBER: YOUR \$\$\$ DONATIONS HELPS OUR CAUSE

OUR DIMINISHING RANKS -- THEIR FINAL FLY-BY

We're getting older, Gentlemen! It's hard to believe that the years (starting in 1978 when we first organized) have slid by so fast .. and now, one by one, our comrades are leaving our ranks. This loss becomes more apparent when we look at the current list of comrades that have taken their final flight since our last newsletter. Some we'll recognize as close buddies from the past; some we'll recognize as new-found friends from past reunions. A few will be recognized by all, and a some will be recognized by a few. But no matter what part they played in our organization (war, or peacetime) **THEY WILL BE MISSED.**

But, to me, no one will be missed more than my long time friend and the Vice President of the 451st Bomb Group (H), Ltd.; Peter A. Massare. Pete and I became acquainted as a result of responding to an ad in the VFW Magazine, thereby forming our 451st postwar organization. We had not known each other till that time. From that time, until he entered the hospital a few days prior to his death, we maintained communications on an almost daily basis. I in Marengo IL, and he from Rochester NY. His efforts and expertise; his drive and determination, were the foundation of the current organization. Although he knew the end was near, he continued to encourage me in working for the betterment of the Group, and the men we both admired. In his name, I hope to continue.

But in the same vein, I see that some of the other Groups/Associations (big and small) are falling by the wayside. The largest, "Bombardiers, Inc." out of Daphne AL, has disbanded their sizable fraternity; due, in part, to the bad health and final death of their founder/leader, Ned Humphreys. Other Groups are beginning to see the end of the tunnel, due, again, to the aging of its members. Like sailing ships of old, and like the World War One veterans, we too will soon be a thing of the past.

SINCE OUR LAST NEWSLETTER

Atterholt, Charles W., 726th - 21 April 1995
 Balliet, Byron F., 725th - 22 August 1995
 Bennington, George W., 727th - 17 May 1995
 Berry, William L., Hdq - 19 April 1992
 Bieksza, Herbert, 725th - June 1982
 Bierbaum, Karl, 727th - 19 February 1996
 Bryant, Clifton, 60th - 23 December 1994
 Cottrell, James W., 725th - 5 January 1994
 Denham, David J., 724th - 20 August 1993
 Dysinger, William S., 726th - 24 November 1995
 Emmerling, John J., 724th - 11 August 1996
 Ernst, Stanley R., 727th - 22 March 1996
 Fenner, Ross W., 727th - 6 September 1994
 Fowler, Stanton M., 727th - 12 December 1995
 Fulmer, Richard F., 725th - 13 April 1995
 Gantt, Willie L., 724th - 29 March 1993
 Geary, Vincent, 726th - 17 January 1989
 Graf, John E., 726th - 19 February 1995
 Gursenmeyer, Gerald, 725th - 15 May 1996
 Gums, Palmer W., 724th - 19 December 1995

Hall, Rex C., 725th - 18 November 1993
 Hannon, John M., 724th - 14 May 1995
 Hanson, George W., 726th - 15 August 1995
 Henshell, David H., 725th - 24 April 1995
 Hornbeak, Sam L., 726th - 7 November 1995
 Howe, John, 725th - November 1985
 Johnson, Roy E., 727th - 8 August 1995
 Lowry, Lewis D., Comp - January 1996
 Marioles, Peter S., 727th - 24 December 1995
 Martin, Harry A., 724th - 15 April 1992
 Massare, Peter A., 727th - 25 November 1996
 McAuvic, James J., 725th - 12 February 1995
 McBride, Russell H., 727th - 22 June 1944
 McCorkle, Hugh K., 725th - 27 December 1992
 Mochamer, Robert W., 724th - 15 June 1996
 Moran, Thomas R., 724th - 10 March 1993
 Morkes, Raymond F., 724th - 18 July 1995
 Paskon, Norbert, 727th - 18 June 1995
 Peterson, Richard P., 726th - 24 January 1996
 Read, Cortland E., 727th - 12 July 1995
 Rodney, Leroy S., 725th - 29 August 1994
 Ruha, Nicholas M., 724th - 25 March 1995
 Sagi, Louis S., 725th - 9 February 1996
 Sprott, Troy O., 724th - October 1994
 Swanson, Melvin P., 60th - 9 November 1995
 Taylor, Ryan E., 726th - 26 January 1995
 Thompson, Harry R., 724th - 15 August 1993
 Tribuani, Dominic M., 727th - 14 July 1988
 Vorhaus, William G., 725th - 7 November 1991
 Wexler, Milton A., 727th - October 1986
 Williams, George E., 726th - 20 June 1993

Special Monetary Consideration to the Memory of:

Charles W. Atterholt, 726th - by Drew Folk
 Byron F. Balliet, 725th - by wife, JoAnn
 Robert E. Barnd, 726 - by wife, Mickey & Family
 Herbert Bieksza, 725th - by son, Dr David Bieksza
 Henry F. Durham, 726th - by Joe Hattersley
 Robert K. Ferguson (KIA) - by Lewis G. Jeaudoin
 Stanton M. Fowler, 727th - by wife, Rosella
 John Howe, 725th - by Daughter, Gretchen Black
 Stan Leiter, 725th - by wife, Florence
 Haskell Michael, 727th - by wife, Evelyn
 Richard P. Peterson, 726th - by wife, Doris
 Harry Pascoe, 726th - by Achilles Kozakis
 Cortland E. Read, 727th - by Donald Keister
 John Smelski, 727th - by Sedgfield Hill
 Jack Waggoner, 725th - by Charles Trumper
 CREW OF EXTRA JOKER; Kenneth Whiting,
 Oscar W. Bateman, Elmer J. Anderson, Milton R.
 Nitsch, Joseph Garbacz, Harry V. Bates, 725th - by Wes
 Nelson.

To Crewmates KIA 17 December 1944, 726th - by
 Robert A. Johnson

THRILL OF A LIFETIME - A RIDE IN A B-24

Occasionally there comes along a young man that has a deep and devoted interest in the history of WW-II, and the weaponry that made it all work. Wes Nelson is one of those. We recruited Wes from the ranks of the 451st Strategic Missile Wing. He professed his interest to me when we first started correspondence. His interest was in what the 451st Bomb Group (namesake of the Missile Wing) had done during our tenure in Italy. He envisioned the B-24 to the point that he built several models of the Liberator to get a prospective of size and visual capabilities. He almost lived and breathed what he imagined it would be like to see the real thing. His dream came true when the ALL AMERICAN came to Fort Collins, Colorado last July. What follows is his fond remembrance of that meeting. (As mentioned in the Short Burst column, Wes is sending Memorial Contributions in the name of all the crewmen of the EXTRA JOKER that were KIA on 23 August 1944; thus his early mention, in the following letter, about his inability to be punctual with his Memorial Contribution.)

(from) Wes Nelson PO Box 1506 Longmont, CO 80502-1506

(to) 451st BG 1032 S. State St. Marengo, IL 60152
Bob:

Enclosed is a check for \$50.00, in memory of Sgt. Elmer J. Anderson, nose gunner on the EXTRA JOKER.

I wasn't able to make a donation in June, because the Collings Foundation brought the ALL AMERICAN to the neighborhood, and I just had to take the big ride for \$300.00. That put a slight damper in my budget for the month.

I was scheduled for Friday AM, July 5th. I woke up about 10 minutes before my alarm went off. Hurriedly, I dressed (with a B-24 hat and B-24 T-shirt, of course), inhaled a banana, and pointed the old Bonneville toward Fort Collins, Colorado, where the flight was to take place.

I left the Interstate and headed west toward Down Town Airport in Fort Collins.

As I neared the field, I could see a large airplane, all shiny in its' aluminum skin. My heart picked up a beat or two. I pulled into the parking lot, got my camera and four rolls of film, and headed toward the tarmac.

I was all set to start snapping pictures, but there was a big pile of olive drab aluminum squatting between me and the B-24! Someone must have seen my consternation, because he caused that ugly blob to cough and belch smoke, and moved it out of the way (I think I heard B-17 or something like that. It was ugly, that's for sure).

As it moved out, there before my eyes was the prettiest sight I've seen in years. In all it's splendor and glory, there sat that beautiful B-24J called the ALL AMERICAN! The morning sun shone on it like a spotlight on fine crystal.

I snapped some pictures as the pilot started the Pratt & Whitneys. He rolled her out to the end of the runway, throttled up the engines for checkout, then started his take off roll. Those four P&Ws were purring like the precision machines that they are. Pure music! ALL AMERICAN picked up speed as she headed west down the runway. Soon, she lifted off and climbed into that clear Colorado sky, with the Rocky Mountains as a backdrop. I know that the pictures I took won't come close to depicting that moment that is forever etched in my mind.

Later, she came back and taxied to the parking ramp. With the Pratts rumbling a low chorus at idle, seven passengers came out of the bomb bay. Seven more got in. I was one of them. We sat on the floor and buckled up. Soon the big ship started rolling toward the runway. The engines roared, we picked up speed, and soon broke Mother Earth's shackles. I was thrilled almost to tears. I never thought I'd ever fly in a Liberator. The crew chief came back and told us we could unbuckle and roam where ever we wanted.

I started burning up pictures out the waist gun windows, out the tail turret, then up front and out the nose turret and the bombardier's windows. I have read many times about the narrow catwalk that runs through the bomb bay, but never dreamed it was that narrow! I wondered where the drafts were that I'd read about so often, until I went around the ball turret and then the bomb bay. My hat blew off! It's just like I've been reading about. Noisy, drafty, and cramped!

I finally made it to the flight deck, and to my surprise, a fellow passenger, a former Lib engineer, I believe, was sitting in the copilot's seat. I snapped a few pictures of the cockpit interior. The "copilot" got out of his seat, and I was offered the position. I hesitated only long

enough to get my camera strap off my neck and hand the camera to the real copilot. I was so nervous and excited, it took about a minute (seemed like an hour) to fasten the seat belt. Once settled in, the pilot asked if I wanted to take the wheel! Of course I did, and he had me make a left turn, then a right turn. I was flying a B-24!!! As I scanned the myriad instruments, lights, switches, and levers, I thought, "Sure is a lot different than that Cessna 150 you soloed in so many years ago!"

Reluctantly, I gave the



Collings' ALL AMERICAN - Ready For Take-Off

copilot back his seat. I thanked the pilot and copilot profusely, and wandered back to the tail turret. I climbed in and just contemplated what was going on. I was in a dream world. Never in my wildest fantasies did I ever think I'd ride in a Liberator! Not only did I fly in one, I actually drove the "King of the Heavies!" I flew the greatest bomber ever built!

Finally, the crew chief had us buckle up again. The pilot pointed the nose at the runway, and made a landing that was like a mother kissing a baby. How sweet it was! When the engines were shut down, we exited through the bomb bay and headed for the grass by the Ops building. It was somewhere near there that my feet finally touched the ground!

I apologize to those veterans who flew actual combat missions in the B-24 for my apparently joyous attitude about this whole affair. Yes, it was a joyous experience for me. I am a Liberator lover. But, believe me, all of the emotions that I felt on this brief flight were not completely happy. The feelings were tempered by the thoughts that, for instance, when I was sitting in the tail turret, there were no Bf-109s, no FW-190s, slinging 20mm projectiles at me, as there were on thousands of occasions when you were sitting in that cramped area. When I was sitting in the copilot's seat, there were no 88mm flak shells exploding all around me, sending pieces of shrapnel through the aluminum skin of the bomber and through the human skin of the crew. The wind that took my hat off by the bomb bay was a balmy 60 to 70 degrees, not 20 to 40 degrees below zero. Those bombs in the bomb racks were not packed with high explosives, waiting to destroy anything near them when they exploded - either the target or the bomber and its crew in the event of a crash. There were no gaping holes in the fuselage or the wings. We had two rudders and fins. No engines were on fire or feathered. When I looked out the window, I didn't see our wingman's B-24 in flames about to become earthbound forever with the guy I played poker with yesterday trapped inside. When I was at the bombardier's station, there wasn't a fellow crewman laying there with his leg blown off.

Trust me. I think I know as well as anyone who wasn't "there" that the life of a bomber crew was not glory and glitz. I've read much about the hardships and hazards. In my book, every man who ever climbed up into the innards of a bomber to go on a combat mission is a bona fide hero, in every sense of the word. They all deserve a medal for valor. When I get up in the morning, I don't have to think that there's a one in eight chance I'll never come back. Or one in five or six if the target is Regensburg, or Ploesti, or Berlin, or one of the other extremely heavily protected targets. No, I go to a modern, air conditioned building. Just as millions of Americans do.

The big difference between me and a lot of people is that I appreciate what you men did. You didn't do what you did in vain. Your comrades who had their lives violently taken from them did not die in vain. Every time I cast a vote, I do so in your honor, and in their honor.

The printing on the Vietnam veterans' T-shirt applies to every soldier, every war:

ALL GAVE SOME. SOME GAVE ALL.



CHATTER FROM THE FLIGHT DECK

Bob Karstensen

On 2 October, of this year, your editor had the opportunity to participate in a Memorial Dedication to a fallen Navy flyer in France. This came about as a result of my efforts to locate and invite the Cappleman Crew to France in August of 1995. My ability to locate various components of those interested; Family members, Squadron VF-74 pilots, USS Kassan Bay (CVE-69) and USS Brinkley Bass (DE-887) sailors, led to this tribute to Lieutenant Commander Brinkley Bass USN.

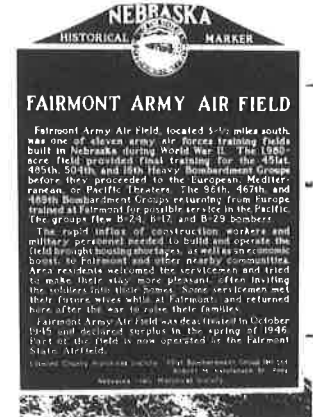


Bob K., Left, in Civilian Suit

Upon my return from France I drove out to Fairmont, Nebraska to attend a meeting of the Fillmore County Historical Society. I had a chance to visit the site of our 1990 gala get together at the old Fairmont Army Air Field. I viewed with pride BOTH the State Historical Markers that list our 451st Bomb Group as being the incentive for what came later as a result of OUR efforts.



On State Route 81 West of Airfield



On State Route 6 North of Airfield

For in June 1996 there was a full blown County celeb-

ration of the two airfields that were wartime entities at that time: Fairmont AAF and Bruning AAF. Thousands came to join in the reunion. We (451st) had a fair representation there. Almost all the Groups that served at Fairmont had a spokesman to speak in their behalf. I was privileged to speak on behalf of our 451st.



Entry off Route 81 To Fairmont AAF Reunion

The meeting of the Fillmore County Historical Society addressed the overrun cost of putting on such a formidable reunion (*ed. Tell me about it!*). It was agreed that although the costs were over what was budgeted, it could be contained by prudent spending in the immediate future and by sales of memorabilia. (Contact Don West, Historical Society President, at 402.268-6831 for further information.) They also feel that the publicity for the airfield was worth the expense. I think we owe it to the Society to keep the flame alive for all they have done for us. Don West and Ruth Black, Museum Curator, always speaks highly of our participation (monetarily and with museum memorabilia). Lets not let the flame go out.



Exeter Fire Department Food Booth at Reunion

It seems that some of my efforts, through the newsletter, are to aid and abet others that need funds or exposure for their continuance. Somewhere's in here I have to put in a PLUG for our own 451st organization. As those of you that attended the Minneapolis Reunion know, we had a lavish program and although the costs were within budget, it did leave the treasury a bit shy. It is my hope that those of you that can afford it, will send

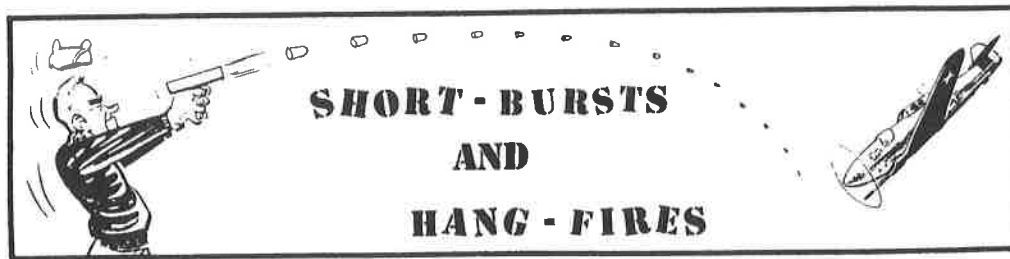
a stipend to this office so we may continue. Putting out this newsletter will bring the treasury down to a very low ebb and may limit the size of our current Ad-Lib. Because of the size of some of our current articles, I have had to skip the continuance of the sage of "Ernie's (60th Service Squadron) Journey" and "Little Friends (49th Fighter Squadron)." I hope to pick up on them in our next issue. But in the meanwhile, remember your contribution to the 451st. **Make your check payable to "451st Bomb Group,"** it will be truly appreciated.

You will note that the size of our "Fallen Comrades" page is some 53 members long. This is due in part to an effort I made last spring to make contact with some members that haven't been heard from in years. I hated to have the family members subjected to having to respond in their time of grief, but in trying to limit the size of our mailings, I had to find out if there was any interest out there. The response was truly overwhelming, as you can see by the numbers of the deceased. Of course, not all those listed were of the disinterested type. Some family members came forth voluntarily to let us know of the passing of one of our steadfast comrades. Other times it's a tentmate or crewman that has given us the word.

I am trying to list every deceased 451st man, whether a member of our current organization or not. If you have any knowledge of someone who is deceased, apart from our membership (and you have the date of death, DOD), let me know. I do have some ability to ferret out (through computer CD's - Social Security Death Index - 1937 - 1995) just when they may have died. But I should also know the date (or year) of birth and it sometimes helps to know the State in which they died.

I am surprised to see that even with the over 3,200 members listed in my overall computer roster, I am still missing quite a few of the new replacement air crews - and replacement ground personnel. I have all the original cadre taken from the earliest shipping orders and rosters, so they are accounted for. It's the later personnel that I'm seeking. When our Group returned from overseas to Dow Field, Bangor, Maine, it was written that we may have had over 8,000 men that served, at some time or other, in the Group. I believe that to be an overstatement. I can hardly guess that we had that many, probably no more than 5,000, but I do know that I'm short quite a few of our full compliment. For you later "overseas joiners" (from approximately April 44 to April 45), see if you have a shipping order that you can copy and send me, It would be deeply appreciated. Be sure the order contain the Army Serial Number that we each carried on our Dog Tags. That helps me verify if a name is duplicated, as sometimes happens. And if you ARE one that arrived overseas to join the 451st, in it's later stages, you may be one that I do not have a serial number for. When you next correspond, put your Army serial number on your letter or check.

For those of you that have been asking about my health. Let me tell you that it is excellent; other than being weary from time to time. My doctors have given me a clean bill-of-health when I saw them last. I'm embarrassed when they tell me that my PSA count is 0.00. Throughout my life I've never scored better than in the zeroes. This time I'll accept it.



Drue Folk, 726th [NAVIGATOR] ... Received and enjoyed the last issue of AD-LIB. I would like to donate this check to the memory of Harry Pascoe and Charles Atterholt, both of the 726th. Atterholt's notice of death appeared in the October issue of The Retired Officers Magazine and I noticed his name was not included in your latest list of deceased former 451st personnel ... I reported to the 726th as Navigator on Spellacy's crew. We were shot down 13 October 1944 at Vienna and returned late in November, via Yugoslavia with Tito's Partisans, as did many others in the 451st. In early 1945 I became Squadron Navigator of the 726th and flew many lead missions with Pascoe as lead pilot up until the end of hostilities.

(Editor ... Sorry to have missed including the name of Charles Atterholt in our "Diminishing Ranks" listing. Your offering was the first I've heard of it. If anyone out there knows the exact date of his passing, let me know. I try to maintain, as close as I can, the history of each and every one of you .. even unto death. As an "early separated out" enlisted man, I am not privy to the ROA Magazine and cannot scan it's pages for our lost souls. I leave it to you guys to keep me up to speed.)

Harold Mehl, 727th [GUNNER] ... Remember the pilot on our trip over to France in '95? Attached is a copy of the letter I received from him. Also I have the piece of a nose turret. It's a hell of a thing and you're welcome to it; just come and get it. I offered it to Tom Dow, so first come, first served. I wrote the pilot to thank him for his thoughtfulness.

(Editor ... The copy of the letter from our friendly Air France Captain, Roland OTHNIN-GIRARD, is worth including in this section. It reads;

Sir; Do you remember your flight, Chicago to Paris last August 2nd? I told you that I am a scuba-diver and few days after I dived in the Mediterranean Sea in the French Riviera on a wreck of a B-24 "Liberator." In August 1944 she was hit by flack and exploded at low altitude. And it is my pleasure to send to you and for the veterans of the 451st Bombardment Group, a piece of the nose gunner turret of this B-24. This piece stood 51 years by 120 feet deep and I am proud to bring it up to the surface again, and to bring it back to the USA and to send it to you. It could be an emotional recollection of this time when the American people did so much for the liberty of Europe ... Respectfully yours, Roland.

..Editor.. It would sure be nice to know just whose Group that aircraft belonged to. Our history shows that we only lost a couple aircraft (Cappleman's 'PATSY

JACK') while bombing targets in France that August. And your's didn't take to a watery grave. The only other one, that I know of, went down off the coast of France may have been ADOLPH AND TOJO or LUCKY LADY [a/c's name is not clear as both names surface when researching] flown by the late Claude Vail on 11 March 1944 - all aboard KIA)

ANONYMOUS: [Tucked under my windshield wiper while parked in a public parking lot in Rochester, NY] ... "I saw by your bumper sticker you were a member of the heavy bomb group --Thank you for spending your youth so that me and my children have a world to spend ours in! God Bless."

(Editor ... I never saw who the person was that placed the note on my car, but he/she must have been a totally caring individual. This person may never realize how much they did to "Make my day" (or to humble me), and that I would consider it useful to show our gratitude, via our Ad-Lib to the rest of the membership for those meaningful words.)

Herb Guinness, 726th [PILOT] ... I have corresponded with the "Air Sea Rescue" unit in England and gave them complete details of our B-24 ditching in the Adriatic. They will be publishing a book shortly.

(Editor ... Glad to read that the contact that the Air Sea Rescue researcher made with me paid off. When you find the date of publishing and the name of the book, let us know. I don't know how many others of our Group, who ditched, were picked up by that British Unit, but it would be interesting to know.)

Robert Gilberts, 724th [PILOT] ... Thanks for your wake-up call regarding my inattentions to support your fine efforts to keep the 451st Bombardment Group alive and well! I have no good excuse other than procrastination. Every time I resolve to drop a line and a donation I neglected to do it right away, that allowed my resolve to slip away ... I have never participated in any of the reunions either. There was always something that came up which kept me from attending. Next year it will be in Minneapolis, which is about 90 miles from my old home in Sand Creek Wisconsin. I plan to attend that one! ... In December of January of 1945 I was put on detached duty to the 885th Heavy Bombardment Group Special. We flew night missions dropping partisans and their supplies in the mountains behind German lines ... When the war ended, I was returned to where the 451st was to be, only to discover they had been redeployed to the States. When I finally got home in October 1945 I decided to leave the regular military and return to school.

AGAIN, REMEMBER: YOUR \$\$\$ DONATIONS HELPS OUR CAUSE

For the next 20+ years I flew as a pilot in the Reserves and the Wisconsin National Guard, retiring in 1965 ... As a civilian I graduated from the University of Wisconsin and among other things served as Superintendent of Schools in such places as Oconomowoc and Madison Wisconsin and in Denver Colorado till 1970. For the last 24 years I was an academic dean at the University of Oregon, retiring about a year ago ... Thanks again for the prod, I won't procrastinate again!

(Editor ... Your response was most appreciated. And, of course, so are some of the memories of you with the old 724th Squadron. You may not recall my ignominious intrusion into your life on 20 February 1945, when we bombed the harbor facilities (a target of opportunity) at Pola Italy. I was the gunner that tried to bring my chest chute through the bomb bay and it accidentally decided to "burst forth." As a replacement I took the spare seat chute, from the waist, into the nose turret and spent the mission plastered to the top of my turret. You would probably remember me as that "screwed-up face on the turret dome.")

Henry (Harry) Kelly, 726th [PILOT] ... We may have found another long lost member. While at a meeting in Hilton Head, SC I met a fellow who mentioned he had served in Italy during WWII. Piecing together several conversations, he must have been in our Group. He started with a B-24 Group in Wendover, UT, then went to Fairmont, NE before going overseas. He said he was a teletype repairman. A short time after arriving in Italy the wet weather forced his Group to move for a short period of time, then they moved to the Foggia Area; Castelluccia sounded familiar to him. When I mentioned the 451st Group he thought he was in the 459th. Then he stated he was in the 727th Squadron. A light came on. I was in the 726th Squadron, there could not be two 727's. He was certain his Squadron was the 727th. I told him that I would ask you to check into your powerful computer to see if you had his name. His name is Kevin F. Cunniff, out of Palm Harbor, FL.

(Editor ... Indeed we do have Kevin Cunniff on the "Roster of the Unfound." Your questioning proved adequate enough to flush out another of our "LOST." You do good "soldiering," (still) as a member of the organization. And, too, your donation was happily accepted. Thanks.)

Charles Trumper, 725th [PILOT] ... I have not heard from anyone who had flown "Hey Moe," on a combat mission or non-operational. As I told you in my last letter, I am attempting to write a story, "The Saga of Hey Moe," in the first person of 'Moe'. I especially wanted to determine the names of the pilots that flew it to Bari on the afternoon of November 13, 1944 and returned after dark. This is the flight on which Ernie Cummins hitched a ride. Also, I was hoping that I could find out who flew the plane on its first missions before my crew got it back. I am planning to write the Air force Historical Research Center at Maxwell Field to see if they have a record of the crew what was flying it when it crashed.

(Editor ... Since "Hey Moe" crashed on a not-operational flight, it is not listed among my Missing Air Craft Reports, as would be an a/c if it were lost over enemy

territory. I have found that such "Accident Reports" are listed with the Department of the Air Force, Headquarters Air Force Inspection and Safety Center, Norton Air Force Base, CA 92409-7001. I have, on several occasions and at somewhat considerable cost, drawn from their library of material, and found that what was sent me to be highly detailed. If you access their files, I hope you will let us know the results by sending us copies.)

Steve Machovec, 727th [ROMG] ... Received your letter and I'm glad; I feel like I was "chewed out, and I should be. So many times I've been going to write and donate, at least for stamps. Now you've gotten to me and I hope to all the other "putter offers."

(Editor ... Sorry to catch you off guard, Steve. It was just that I hadn't heard from you for such a long time that I was beginning to wonder. I've mailed to several others and have found that some of them are seriously ill, or in some cases, had died. Then it turns into a process of listing them in the "Departed Comrade" section. That hurts!)

Phil Beckwith, 724th [CREW CHIEF] ... Looking forward to the next reunion. We had a fire upstairs in our home this fall and lost all the snapshots and albums of past reunions. We still got our memories of all those good times.

(Editor ... I imagine the most memorable memory is when you kissed Sally Rand, RIGHT? I'll bet you haven't un-puckered yet!)

Andrew Clark, 724th, [AEG] ... If you are going to have a face-off in an amour toujours contest with the ladies (see page 13 of Ad-Lib, Issue 26) I would like to enter "Hot Lips John O'Connor, Crew 11, 724th.



Trumpeter/Colonel/Pilot John O'Connor gets an unexpected 'buss' from the "II Girl" in Kansas City, MO

(editor ... a fine entry towards a final "hug and kiss-off" contest that has developed from the Kansas City USO Theme Party. First was Ken Edwards, then Phil Beckwith, now John O'Connor who puts his oar in. Will it never end!)

Forrest Rinehart, 727th [PILOT] ... In Latin, pro means FOR and cras means TOMORROW, hence the word procrastinate. I seem to have mastered this trait quite well. I received your letter today and decided that I had "pro cras"tinated long enough. I intended to write

after your last edition of Ad-Lib. The mission on p.29, under August 10, 1944 was of special interest to me because it was mine. Also on p.30, the August 13th mission you described was my last mission - thank goodness! I have really enjoyed the Ad-Lib and this issue was obviously even more special.

(Editor ... The whole meaning of what we're all about is entwined into the way these various stories, by other people, relate to what we did - have done - saw done - while we were with the 451st. Matt Cindrich's journal has brought some fine comments from the membership. Seems that all of the crewmen could relate to his starting out as "green & eager" and eventually developing the respect that most crews had for combat.)

Joe Palumbo, 724th [ADMINISTRATION S-1] ... I sure miss seeing my old buddies. In my lifetime, the three most important things are; Being married to my wife for over 52 years. Secondly, my job which I liked very much as teamster of which I retired from after 40+ years. And third, the day I joined the 451st at Wendover Field Utah. It then became part of my life. I had all the respect in the world for the combat crews and the ground force who kept you guys flying; guys like Preston, Symanski, Rasmussen, Shindler, Katzer, Decker and Skilton - I could go on and on.

(Editor ... Quite a lot of memories, Joe. It's too bad that you will not be able to make it to Minneapolis due to your wife's health problems. We'll pass around your best wishes to all that do attend.)

Bob Pfeilsticker, 726th [NAVIGATOR] ... I can't comply with our "info" request too well. Fortunately there was nothing that spectacular in our tour of duty. Perhaps the unusual duration of our tour is of interest. Wes Lindley's crew - I was the navigator - joined the Group, 726th Squadron, as a replacement in early April 44' coming in with our pride "SNAPPER." As was the procedure our crew split up for a few missions and later rejoined to find we were assigned the venerable "CAN-NON FODDER;" patches and all. We finished our missions intact by early July and were at dockside Naples without making the Capri rest break. Undoubtedly Lindley's completion time was even less than mine; 18 April to 3 July for the 51 missions. We were fortunate in the way it worked out, not having the pressure build-up associated with an extended tour.

(Editor ... They certainly did hustle you in and out of Italy in jig time. That fact alone makes for noteworthy reading. After reading of your dismay at not being assigned back to "SNAPPER," I examined our aircraft file and could not find any evidence of "SNAPPER" having stayed with the Group. As happens to a lot of 'brought in' aircraft, it probably got reassigned to another Group within our Wing.)

Jim Smith, 727th [GUNNER] ... My most vivid memories of the 451st was the spirit it had and the great people. Our experiences included a solo night mission to the Munich area and having a "dud," (88 - 108 or 155) go through the #2 engine and out the top of the B-24. We made it home with gas all over the place. Youth does make a difference! I enjoy the newsletter and information you send and always think of the 451st around the convention time. I wonder if I would know any of

the fellows who attend.

(Editor ... Jim, all I can add to the last part of your message is, "Com'on up to Minneapolis, the weather will be fine and the friendships warm.")

Anthony Luzzi, 726th [BOMBARDIER] ... My fondest memory in Italy was started about 3 AM one spring day. We were told that the Yugos, this very morning, had pushed the Germans back 12 miles from a town called Zara, and if we were in trouble we should look for this little lake with a dirt runway next to it. The British were already using it for their fighters. This information came just in time. That morning on the way back my pilot, Bill Hoag, knew we had to find it or else get wet in the Adriatic. Freddie Flickinger, our navigator, found the strip so we bounced onto it. While we were there (3 days) we tried to get to see the town, but we were met by bayoneted Yugos who turned us back even though we had given them our "Mad Money" and cigarettes.

(Editor ... Thanks for your other kind words, your generous check and the photo of your crew (circa 1944). Bill and Ginny Hoag had previously sent me a more current photo (circa 1995) with you two old warriors well ensconced on bar stools. Glad too, to hear that Minneapolis is your goal in 1996. We'll set aside a pair of matching stools for the two of you, and the rest of the crew should they show up.)

Gretchen Black, 725th [Daughter] ... My father, John Howe, has passed away. I have always been keenly interested in his military career/activities and would love to hear from any of your members who might remember him and might be willing to share remembrances/info about him.

(Editor ... I'm happy to include your request into this edition of the Ad-Lib. I'm sure that there must be some members of Roy Connor's crew that can fill you in. If not them, then certainly there would be some ground crew people that could take up the challenge. Being that your dad, S/Sgt Howe, was one of the originally trained crews (Fairmont to Italy), I'm sure that many of the 725th may recall him. Any support can be sent to; G. Black, 602 S. Thomas St., Tupelo, MS 38801)

Samuel Nuccio, 726th [GUNNER] ... I am most interested in hearing about members of the 451st Bomb Group, 726th Squadron who were POW's during WW-II bombing campaign ... Our crew went down on the Budapest raid on July 27, 1944. I was tail gunner and hit by enemy fire while parachuting down into enemy territory around the Lake Balton area in Hungary. The rest of the crew made the ground safely, except our Engineer Crew Chief, David Valdes, who died in the B-24 -I've been told. If you have more information on the fate of David Valdes, please keep me informed ... I've always been troubled about the fact that our B-24 was having engine trouble before we took off from Castelluccia on July 27th, and that a magneto replacement in No. 4 engine allowed us to take-off, but before we got to the I.P. the magneto WENT and the engine dropped to 50% power and became sitting ducks for any and all ME-109's in the area ... One ME-109 got credit for setting us on fire and downing us. The pilot must have had a ball, putting 30 cal slugs into our crippled plane ... I would like to

know more about other crews and planes that went through the same experiences that our crew went through ... In my case the enemy fire that hit me penetrated my left knee and I was easily taken prisoner by the Hungarian Peasants and later the German troops that occupied the area. No field hospital. No antiseptic dressings. Lots of interrogation. No answers from me. Transportation by horse drawn cart to some rail-head where I met up with the rest of the crew. By rail we reached Budapest at night. Taken to Hungarian Army Hospital where cast was applied to left leg. No X-Rays. No clean up. Gangrene set into the wound and my left leg was amputated on September 3, 1944 ... I would like to hear from other 451st crewmen who had to go through similar experiences ... Up to this point, in this communication, it must sound like a bunch of sour grapes to anyone reading these words, but it did happen and I am grateful that I returned to my wife and loved ones ... The Budapest Raid was our 2nd mission, thus we never got acquainted with the rest of the 726th Squadron or the 451st Bomb Group. But I'm sure you were, and still are, a bunch of fine fellows. Thank you for this opportunity to unload on you this bag full.

(Editor .. Hey, Sam - You aren't causing me anything but respect for you, the crew, and for your pilot, Harold Schauer. As for information on your Engineer, David J. Valdes; I have found that he lies buried in the Ardennes American Cemetery in Belgium, where he rests with 27 others from the 451st. Of the nine crewmembers we have accounted for, Schauer, Hilde, Muller Brockmeier, Valdes, Mattcheck, Layton, Farnell and yourself, I can bring you this information. Last word I had on the copilot, Albin J. Hilde, was that he is in a nursing home in North Dakota, and not doing well at all. This was found out some years ago. Elmer Mattscheck has recently died, verified by his wife, Thelma. Ken Layton died on 25 December 1985. And of course Valdes was KIA on that 2nd mission. That leaves only Richard M. Ives as the only hold-out, if he's still out there.)

Wes Nelson, 451st SMW - 725th SMS [Missile Maintenance Technician] ... According to page 27 of John and Donna Campbell's "Consolidated B-24 Liberator," the pilot of EXTRA JOKER was Lt. Ken Whiting. The series of pictures of the demise of that plane and crew, and especially the picture in the 1995 calendar, haunt me. I would like to donate this \$50 in the memory of Lt. Whiting. If you could tell me how to get the names of the rest of the crew, I will donate to each of them, also. The picture moved me in ways that are hard to explain, and I won't even try it here. If you would like me to, I would love to try, as I think it might do me some good. Suffice to say for now, their violent deaths were not a total waste.

(editor .. Thanks Wes for the generous donation and the fine tribute you offered concerning the Ken Whiting's crew. It surely makes us older warriors feel that "all was not in vain." I have sent you what information I have on the aircraft and crew. I hope it will help to unburden your frustration about the fate of the crew. War is hell, and not everyone can escape the wrath and fury of it. We would be pleased to hear from you as to your inner feelings about the EXTRA JOKER demise. [See page for Wes' inner thoughts])

Thomas H. Smith, 725th [Radar Mechanic] ...

Some months back I called to ask you if you knew of any of the 451st crews which flew bombing missions over Hungary and landed behind the Russian lines for refueling. Usually they stayed over night and returned to Italy the next day. Several of the flight crews reported difficulties with the Russians, mainly that crew members with blond hair and blue eyes were taken away and beaten up by Russian soldiers. Apparently they suspected them of being Germans. You told me at that time they you had no knowledge of such events. So, I am requesting you to put a note in your next issue of Ad-Lib to see if any of your readers can provide me with any specifics.

(Editor .. Okay, Tom, I've laid out (I think) what you wanted. To the reader I should have prefaced your message by saying that your research is relevant to the book you are writing called, "Communism in the 20th Century: The Gamble That Failed." It sure sounds like a very serious tome, and when you have it done I hope you will let us know.)

James B. Knapp, HDQ [2nd GROUP COMMANDER] ... We moved in here in late April. It's called the Army Residence Community - designed to simplify the everyday life of the elderly. So far it's been a rousing success.

Please keep me on your mailing list. There may be a reunion some year close enough that we can go to ... P.S. Give our very best regards to the men of the 451st.

(editor ... General Knapp sends this note from his new "digs" in San Antonio. We certainly wish him well and hope that his recent bout with illness is in the past.)

Merle Larson, 727th [Pilot] ... In your last issue of AD-LIB Massare wrote something about a B-26 (Martin B-26). I don't know if you are aware of it, but there are quite a few of us in the 451st that were B-26 men. Marshall Coulter, Cortland Read, Dick Kimmell ("Nite Mare") Ken Morse, myself and others I can't think of right now. We were going thru transition, or OTU as the case may be, in 26's, when they had a big problem with them in Europe - Washington panicked and held up the B-26 program for a month; meanwhile they sent us to B-24's.

(editor ... I was not aware, Merle, that there were so many 451st pilots that were former B-26'ers. I know that we did have a plethora of Flying Sergeants that received their commissions and became part of the 451st.)

Wes Nelson, SMW [Missile Maintenance] ... That sure was a first class get together, there at the Hilton. I met so many great people! And, I finally met the man that holds the 451st BG together! (I think I was surprised that you don't really walk on water!) Thanks for putting on a great reunion. I had a great time and met some wonderful people.

(editor ... For a guy born during the height of WW-2 (1943), you've sure shown a devoted interest in what we're all about. Your keen interest in B-24s, especially the EXTRA JOKER, shows that you're picking up where we may be leaving off. Folks will note your dedication to the crew of EXTRA JOKER when they look at the Memorial Donations column, wherein you've honored them by listing them by name.)



1Lt Peter A. Massare (b. 26 Nov 1922 - d. 25 Nov 1996) Receiving 2nd DFC from Colonel James B. Knapp



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