



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

Issue 31

Price \$5 (Free to Members)

Summer/Fall 1999

Y2K REUNION UNDERWAY

DATES: 20 to 24 September 2000

LOCATION: St. Louis, Missouri

HOTEL: Hilton St. Louis Airport

After much consideration, research and many, many hotel inspections, a Midwest location has been selected for the upcoming (Year 2000) 451st Bomb Group Reunion.

St. Louis, with its proximity to Scott Air Force Base, Illinois, offers us the best, and probably the most interesting choice of locations, we've yet encountered.

The Hilton Hotel, minutes away from the Lambert International Airport, offers us the best of facilities for the reunion. Accommodations worthy of any hotel we've yet accepted; And a per room rate of only \$69 (plus state and city tax). Negotiations with the Hilton have already garnered us some useful amenities. (e.g.: Free shuttle, to and from the airport; Room rate honored 3 days before and after reunion; Discounted meal prices at restaurant and room service; An hour of beer, wine and cheese appreciation on Friday evening, etc., etc.) As always, we strive to offer our guests the very best. From past experiences, you know that all of the hotels we've accepted have been top notch. This one should be no exception.

So, start your planning now to kick off the new millennium with your old buddies from the past. They will be waiting for you! Start talking it up with those that you've been in contact with. Seeing them in person will roll back the years.

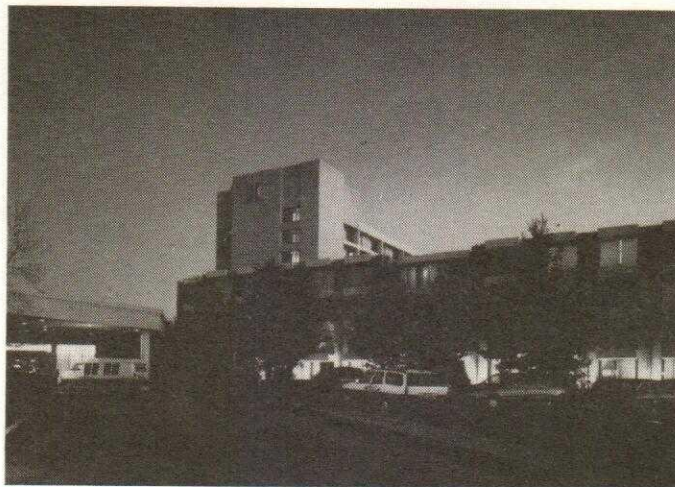
Now I'll ask a favor of you. With our diminishing ranks, along with the advancing years, I am hard pressed to calculate just how many of our (over 1,500) active members will take advantage of this "Millennium Kick-Off Reunion." Before, I could guess with some accuracy, what our attendance would be. All the way from the highs of 600 attendees at Omaha and Norfolk, we've dropped to just about 400 at Atlanta. You could sure take a load off my mind if you could drop me a note, or post card, letting me know if you plan to, or aren't planning to, join us in St. Louis. That way I'll have a better handle on what activities I should plan for the membership. I'm not asking for a definite committal, but your answer will at least indicate which way you're leaning.

A 1st Class mail-out, with details, will be sent to all at a later date, regardless.

SO: 'Meet me in St. Louis, Louie. Meet me at the Hilton.' Okay, so it doesn't rhyme ... but what the HEY!

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Hilton St. Louis Airport
10330 Natural Bridge Road/Just off I-70

"AD-LIB"

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TRIBUTE TO A FRIEND AND MEMORABLE INCIDENT

(By Lt. Robert Strang)

Bill Coyle's death notice in the Spring '93 issue of the "Ad-Lib" brought, in addition to a feeling of sadness, one of nostalgia. I didn't know Bill well -- we flew only one mission together but that was one not to be forgotten. It just happened to be my 13th mission. The date was December 26, 1944 and the target was the oil refinery at Oswiecim, Poland (better known by its German name, "Auschwitz"). By either name it was a long way from home.

We were flying Fox lead. Our pilot was Cameron Pearson. Our regular copilot, Al Hartland, was flying with another crew so Bill Coyle was our copilot for the day. We had left our bombardier at radar school, Stateside, so we were assigned a bombardier for each mission -- lucky guy that day was Ted LeComte. Balance of our regular crew: John Hall, nose; Jack Fruchter, top; John Estabrooks and Bob Hanlen, waist; Ray Guilfoyle, ball, and Pat Shrader, tail.

We lost the first engine over the target, the second as we rallied, and the third shortly after that. That wasn't good so Pearson and Coyle restarted the engine they had feathered over the target. Someplace along the way the hydraulic system had bled to death. We threw everything overboard that wasn't essential and were rocking along about one notch above stalling speed. Gradually the whole 15th Air Force faded from sight. That was lonesome. Al Hartland kept radioing us from his ship with words of encouragement, like, "If you guys don't come back, I'll eat all your fruitcake."

We prayed our way south and were over the Island of Vis when the damaged engine gave up. The pilots cut the remaining engine and we went in 'dead stick' from about 10,000 feet. Anyone familiar with Vis will recall that it was held by British and Yugoslav Partisans and that it had a short emergency landing strip. They will also recall that there was a mountain at one end of the strip and a valley immediately at the other. We came in over the mountain dead stick and with no flaps or brakes. The landing gear had been cranked down but one of the mains failed to show "locked," but it held. Pearson and Coyle, being very resourceful, put the controls full forward after we hit the ground, which collapsed the nose gear and brought us to a grinding stop on our nose, just short of the valley. Those of us on the flight deck bailed out through the top hatch.

The guys in the waist had their own mini-experience. The plane was completely filled with dust and everything happened so quickly that no one was sure of what was going on. As I was told, the first guy to reach the camera hatch hesitated when he was how far it was to the ground. The second guy couldn't see that, so booted his buddy out through the hatch, only to hesitate himself. Each succeeding guy had the same experience and the last one jumped at his own discretion.

There's more. It turned out that, as we were coming in, a B-17 with only one fan going was attempting to

I AM A SOLDIER

(by Captain George Skyepeck)

I was that which others did not want to be.
I went where others feared to go,
and did what others failed to do.
I asked nothing from those who gave nothing,
and reluctantly accepted the thought of
eternal loneliness should I fail.
I have seen the face of terror,
felt the stinging cold of fear,
and enjoyed the sweet taste of a moment's love.
I have cried, pained, and hoped, but most of all,
I have lived times others would say are best forgotten.
At least someday I will be able to say that I was proud
of what I was -- a soldier.
It wasn't always easy,
it wasn't always fair.
But when we were called, we answered.
We were there.



land from the other direction. Picture a B-24 standing on its nose at the end of the runway with the twin stabilizers sticking up like goalposts. The B-17 had to clear that (We have him 3 points for a field goal) so he was floating down the runway towards the mountain. Equally resourceful, he pulled up, stalled out, and hit the runway with a hell of a thump.

The only (near) casualty was Coyle, who, as he fled down the nose of the 24, got out of phase and stepped on what was left of the nose turret. When the plexiglas broke, it threw him for a loss and he thought for a moment he had broken his leg, but the injury was superficial.

We didn't realize how lucky we were until our guys checked the wreck and found that the resurrected engine (feathered over the target) had one cylinder completely shot off and that there were about 250 flak holes visible in the carcass.

The final chapter took place that night as we tried to get some sleep on the third floor of a battle-damaged build-

ing (no windows, no Doors) right on the waterfront. Some of our guys spent the evening celebrating with the Yugoslavs, so when they finally came to the third floor they were rather rowdy. The B-17 pilot (Captain) took umbrage with this drunken revelry. That got Pearson (1st Lt.) and Coyle (1st Lt.) started on what they thought of B-17's and the people who flew them; all in the spirit of slightly alcoholic fun. The Captain of the B-17 threatened severe disciplinary action in the morning, but of course nothing came of it. Sleeping wasn't easy under these conditions and, for me, that night redefined "cold."

They sent a C-47 over for us the next day and I flew my next mission on the 28th.

Over the years I have thought of Bill Coyle whenever this adventure came to mind -- and of this adventure whenever I thought of Bill.

These are my recollections, accurate to the best of my memory - and without embellishment.

Farewell to Bill Coyle.

RETROSPECT OF COLONEL STEFONOVICZ (A.K.A. STEFEN) HIS LIFE AND TIMES

Always exploring the historical make-up, and personnel of the 451st, I ran across the following newspaper article dedicated to our third 451st Group Commander. After reading the article I was captivated by what it didn't say. The hometown of Wildrose, up there in North Dakota, is not unlike the town were I (and perhaps you) was born in Northern Minnesota. I could picture the Colonel's earlier years living in a small town and doing all the things that relate to that time and culture. Thus, I requested from our Colonel, some insight to his earliest upbringing, and a word or two on what happened in later life. His returned responses truly fleshed-out what I was seeking.

But first, the article that peeked my curiosity:

Newly assigned to Grenier Field as Deputy Commander is a real combat flier, Col. Leroy L. Stefonovicz, a veteran of both the Pacific and the European theaters of operation.

The Colonel is credited with the sinking of a Jap Destroyer in the Pacific. He holds two Air Medals from the Navy, a DFC and Bronze Star



and three Battle Stars from the Pacific area. In the European theater he was awarded the Silver Star, DFC and Bronze Star, four additional Air Medals and six Battle Stars.

Graduating from Kelly Field in 1938, the Colonel was commissioned a Second Lieutenant and assigned to Mitchell Field, N.Y., as a pilot. He was transferred from there to Langley and Jackson Air Fields doing a six month tour in each. Then as the war loomed he was rapidly moved from one U.S. field to another, finally assigned to the 70th Bomb Group as a B-26 pilot.

INTO PACIFIC

This Group was immediately shipped into the Pacific to help stem the overwhelming Japanese air threat in the days following Pearl Harbor. At the time, Colonel Stefonovicz said, there were only one B-17 Group, two B-26 Squadrons and two Fighter Squadrons operating in the entire area, with the exception of a small Marine detachment.

Going into action nearly every day, the Group participated in the Fiji, Midway and Guadalcanal battles as well as several less publicized campaigns.

Returning to the States in 1943, the Colonel was assigned to the 49th Bomb Wing, a heavy bombardment unit flying B-24s. After completing a training program this Wing was ordered to Italy in January 1944, and became part of the famous 15th Air Force under General Nathan A. Twining. Colonel Stefonovicz served as Operations Officer of the Wing for 10 Months. At this time the Colonel became Commanding Officer of the 451st Bomb Group, one of the Components of the 49th Wing. Under his supervision the Group completed 34 missions, taking part in the bombing of the Ploesti Oil Fields and in raids on Munich, Vienna, Blechhammer and other targets in the German homeland.

While under Colonel Stefonovicz' command the Group was awarded three Unit Citations for successful missions in the bombing of Germany.

Although he completed 70 bombing missions, 36 in the Pacific and 34 in Europe, the Colonel never received a scratch in spite of having flown several times over the Ploesti Oil Fields where the Germans had concentrated one of the heaviest anti-aircraft defenses of the war. It was almost a usual occurrence for the planes of the 451st to be hit, however, "It sounded and felt as if the planes were being beaten with sledgehammers," the Colonel said.

Coincidentally, when the 451st Group was disbanded in June, along with the major part of the 15th Air Force, the Colonel had completed just 451 combat flying hours.

After the Group was disbanded, Colonel Stefonovicz was immediately assigned to the ATC and eventually received orders to report to Grenier as Deputy Commander.

The Colonel is a native of Wild Rose, N.D., where his parent, Mr. and Mrs. F.E. Stefonovicz still live. He is married to the former Eleanor Lephart of Queens Valley, N.Y., and the father of a son, Jim, who "doesn't know me yet."

His wife and son will join him here in Manchester as soon as he can find a place to stay, the Colonel added.

In response to my request for added information about the Colonel's postwar history, he sent me this: I'm flattered and amazed that your research led to the article about me back at Grenier. Most of it is accurate, but we should by all means correct a statement regarding "The Armed Forces in the Pacific." The only

"Army Air Forces" units were as described in the article, but the war there was primarily a Navy war, backed up by Marines and the rest of the U.S. Army.

But to continue: From Grenier I went to Stanford and got a degree, then to the Pentagon where I was launched into a career in Special Weapons (atomic). Then to Maxwell, where I was Course Director of the Weapons Orientation and Guided Missile Orientation courses. From there to Research and Development Command (now Systems Command). Then I was a student again, this time at the Industrial College of the Armed Forces in Washington DC. Then to the 3079th Wing where we had weapons storage sites and C-124 airplanes to haul them around the world. Then, luckily, I was assigned to the European Command just outside Paris. The job there was to help get the atomic weapons into the strike forces of the NATO allies. After two more assignments of lesser importance, I retired in 1967 and took a job teaching Economics at the Daytona Beach Community College. I retired from that job in 1985, married Dr. Dorothy Humphrey, built a house and am now enjoying the "Golden Years."

When asked to elaborate even further on the years before entering service, Colonel Stefen sent me the following:

As stated before, my hometown was Wildrose, North Dakota. Current population is now 153. Born January 6, 1917. Graduated from High School in 1934 during the depression. I was raised in the lap of poverty, but we did not realize it because no one else in town had any money either. Spent a lot of time hunting; ducks (limit back then was 15 per day) and upland game. I left for the University of North Dakota after High School. I played piano in an orchestra while in college, and for Lawrence Welk's cousin before going to the flying school in 1937. My first wife was Ellie. We divorced in 1970 and I married Dorothy in 1973. Dot has a doctorate in education, so I'm academically outranked in my own house ... I only have two Masters Degrees. Dorothy is a health and fitness buff, who goes to the gym almost every day and is superbly disciplined in watching her calories.

I retired from the Air Force in 1967 and came to Florida to teach Economics at the Daytona Beach Community College. What a lucky break to have the opportunity to come and enjoy the great winter weather of Florida. I've always felt that somebody up there likes me. I flew 35 missions against the Japs and 34 in Italy, and didn't suffer a scratch.

I shortened my name from Stefonovicz to Stefen in 1953. I have a son Jim who is a dentist in Fort Myers, and a daughter Judy who is a supervisor in the U.S. Post Office in Tampa. Two grand children: Kelli and Quinn, neither married so no great grand children. My hobbies, other than Dorothy, are Piano, Tennis (City champ in 1973) and traveling.



speed. Gioia del Colle Air Base runway was washed away, in part due to storm conditions, and we needed to find another airfield, possibly in the Foggia area. After receiving this information from "BIG FENCE," High Flight aircraft had a parting of the ways. Each aircraft was now on its own.

I asked Dick Long to climb to 2,000 feet as I anticipated the flight over the spur of Italy towards Foggia. Dick told me he could not climb so I set a heading towards Manfredonia, which is located at the southern part of the spur. The heading I gave Dick required a turn to the right. He had to make a real shallow turn to the left at 270 degrees, since the dead engine was on that side. I also alerted the pilots to look out for barrage balloons and directed them to follow the railroad tracks and find us an airfield. I exited my position in the nose of the aircraft and met Dave Spencer and Ed Longenecker who had vacated their positions a few minutes before. The final flight over the Adriatic Sea seemed so low and slow that I thought I would get wet feet.

As I arrived on the flight deck, Pilot Dick Long and Copilot John Schneider, were really tugging hard on their controls. A double strip airfield was spotted and we were ordered to land on the crash strip parallel to the two runways. On the landing run, John Schneider was busy letting down the flaps and wheels when one of the waist gunners announced that the right tire was shot up. Without a moment's hesitation, Dick ordered the left waist gunner to shoot out the left tire. I thought, "Oh, boy, what a man!"

We landed heavily on the crash strip and came to a stop a long way down the strip. As Dick attempted to taxi off the strip, the engine next to the dead engine ran out of gas.

We were very happy to kiss Mother Earth after a very hectic, exciting and frightening mission.

After the debriefing session, and our ration of whiskey, we were given assigned quarters and rations. After chow we had some big entertainment. Freeman McVitty played the piano and others added to help us try to get back to the calm one could expect back home.

The next morning most of the crew went out to see "Screamin' Meemie." She was a real mess; we stopped counting the number of holes in her. It looked like a sieve and I could not believe that we all escaped without wounds. The #3 engine was hit almost dead center and everything was torn out towards the intercoolers. The two tires were completely shredded.

It was the last we say of our old base, Gioia del Colle. Our crew and our personal effects headed towards a temporary base near San Pancrazio. I guess this was the end of the "BIG WEEK" with the emphasis on the German aircraft factories and parts manufacturing facilities at Regensburg. It was some time before the 15th Air Force scheduled further missions in that area. The rewards gained on this mission included the 451st Bomb Group's first Presidential Unit Citation and both Dick Long and myself were awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross at a later date. The 726th Bomb Squadron lost one aircraft on this mission; that of Lt Richard D. Coleman.

Editor: Further follow-up on BIG WEEK (what the United States Strategic Air Forces [USAAF overall command organizations in Europe] called: Operation ARGUMENT) shows that the first bombing of German strategic targets came on 20th February. It continued through until the 25th when we, the 15th AAF heavies, struck Regensburg. The lead, 5th Wing, consisted of B-17s from the 2nd Bomb Group, followed by B-17s of the 301st BG, then the 47th Bomb Wing.

At that time we were in the 47th Wing and were third in line, from our Wing, to strike the target. First was the 450th BG, then came the 449th BG, followed by the 451st. Our losses were 7 aircraft lost: 2 from the 724th; Nate Wiersema, 1 KIA 9 POW; Ed Johnson, 7 KIA 2 POW. 725th; Edwin Pries, 5 KIA 5 POW; Nick Zender, 3 KIA 7 POW; Richard Kimmel 5 KIA 1 POW 4 EVADED. 726th; Richard Coleman 1 KIA 9 POW. 726th; David Compton 6 KIA 4 POW.

Although losses were heavy among all the Bomb Groups, weather was the primary reason that the 15th AAF did not fly again until the 2nd of March.

THE LIBERATORS

(by Zane R. Anderson II, Grandson of the late Joseph R. Anderson -
Gunner/Photographer, 725th)

Steel thunderbirds once owned the sky
Tearing through black polka dots of smoke
They conquered and died.

Beaten, battered, torn to their end,
The way of life they fought to defend.
Broken crosses weighed upon their backs,
Swarms from hells fiery attacks.

Firm in their stance, never flinching in pain,
Never dodging the broken crosses fiery rain.
Strong as the men wrapped in her womb,
A protective mother for some, For others a tomb.

Some say then fly no more, but I know
They still do.
They fly in our hearts, in me and in you,
The man who once tested his heart,
We never knew.
He flies higher now in the yonder deep blue.

You can still hear them now,
For their engines will never die.
They still run strong and roar
Where the angels fly.

SPECIAL LETTER

Seems that Jack Thomas has found a discrepancy in the earliest written history of the 451st. He writes, "I am enclosing information only to show you that we flew a mission on the 15th of February 1944 in support of the Anzio Beachhead and to bomb Monte Cassino Monastery, our target that day."

Jack's letter sent me searching through all the written material I had on the early history of the 451st and I found him to be correct. It seems that his evidence was merited and contrary to my earlier findings. The list of missions I have been using over the years shows that we supported the Anzio invasion on 12 February. But according to Jack we must have bombed the area on the 15th.

In fact I'm still quite puzzled in trying to piece together all the facts of the case. I'll try and rectify it by listing (what I had thought to be correct), the single missions for January and for all of February. It should be stated that what I found about each mission is truly sketchy; one page per mission. Whereas, most later missions had page after page of summations and reports.

Mission #1 30 January 1944 - Fier Radar Station - Albania

Mission #2 2 February 1944 - Durazio Radar Station - Albania

Mission #3 3 February 1944 - Arreso M/Y - Italy

Mission #4 8 February 1944 - Piombino M/Y & Steel Mills - Italy

Mission #5 10 February 1944 - Velletri Troop Support - Italy

Now comes the 'sticky' point. Our history shows that we spent our -

Mission #6 12 February 1944 - Anzio Troop Support - flying to the coordinates of 41~38'N; 12~39'E, which put us in the area of Anzio, as was the previous mission when we went to Velletri in support of our ground forces by hitting inland German installations. Jack Thomas backs up his claim with 'flight logs,' both, from himself and that of crew mate, Carl Webber, showing that it should have read for the 15th of February. In addition Jack sent documentation from the book, "Fifteenth Air Force" by Kent Rust (1976) reading, in part: "On 15 February, while B-24s of the 47th Wing went after marshalling yards, the 5th Bomb Wing sent its Fortresses to aid in the battle for Cassino. After the monks at the Abbey of Monte Cassino were given due warning. 142 B-17 in several waves dropped 353 tons of bombs on the monastery which the Germans were using as a strong point in their defense line." Kent Rust dedicates less than a paragraph to this event. And our narrative history skips that era altogether. But to continue:

Mission #7 16 February 1944 - Sienna M/Y - Italy

Mission #8 22 February 1944 - Regensburg A/C Factory - Germany

Mission #9 23 February 1944 - Steyr A/C Factory - Austria

Mission #10 25 February 1944 - Regensburg A/C Factory - Germany

Just to balance out the confusion that I currently find, let

me relate what Jack has written in his journal about the missions he flew in February.

Feb. 2, 1944 - Second mission - to Durazzo, Albania 20,500 ft. 4 hrs & 45 min. Another radar station. This time we had some flak thrown at us. No enemy aircraft, but we did see some British Spitfires; 3 or 4 supposed to be our cover off the target.

Feb. 3, 1944 - Arezzo, North Italy (3rd Mission) Railroad Marshaling Yards. 6 hrs & 45 min. A fair amount of flak. We saw about six ME-109s observing us, but none came in for the attack.

Feb. 4, 1944 - Practice mission 4 hrs & 45 min.

Feb. 8, 1944 - Fourth Combat mission to Piombino, North Italy. Seven hours, 21,000 ft. Very good bombing of the local railroad Marshaling Yards. A reasonable amount of flak, no enemy aircraft.

Feb. 12 & 14, 1944 - Practice mission. 5 hrs & 50 min.

Feb. 15, 1944 - Allied beach head at Anzio, Italy just below Rome at 17,500 ft. 6 hrs. 5th combat mission, 6th for the Group. This was a big day as we were going to help our infantry and artillery soldiers who were stuck on the Anzio Beach Head. We were briefed that we would fly two missions that day - one in the morning and one in the afternoon. We would also fly west from the Adriatic Sea across the German line (known as the Gustav Line) to Anzio Beach Head and drop our bombs on the high Casino Hill, then out to the Mediterranean Sea, turning around and flying back across the German lines again, and do this twice in order for it to look like we had several thousand big bombers.

It didn't go too well as we approached the Beach Head at 17,500 ft. All the hills looked like they had Abbey Cassino on top. Anyway our Group picked out one and let the bombs go. The flak was so thick you could have gotten out and walked on it. Our plane was being bounced around like a rubber ball; our rudder and elevators were just about shot off. I believe both the Germans and the Americans were shooting at us. (We called it flak alley.)

When we returned to base they immediately cancelled the second mission because there were too many bombs going astray and falling on the American side. They learned a costly lesson here that you can't support ground soldiers from high altitude bombing. For the rest of WW-II ground support was given to the Fighter Bombers and Medium Bombers at low altitude.

Feb. 16, 1944 - My 6th combat mission (7th for the Group) - Sienna, North Italy. 20,000 ft. 6 hrs long. There was some flak in the distance and a few fighter planes observing, but no attack. The target was the railroad Marshaling Yards.

Finally we had some time to ourselves. The weather was bad and our crew was not scheduled for the next mission: #8.

Feb. 17 to 22nd 1944 (Bad Weather)

There you have it. Where and when does this discrepancy of mission and dates come to a conclusion? It can happen if you earlier crew members check your journal entries as to those specific dates. Jack and I both hate to think that either one of us could be wrong; although I now fall into scenario that Jack laid out ... so we leave it in your hands.

OUR DIMINISHING RANKS -- THEIR FINAL FLY-BY

SINCE OUR LAST NEWSLETTER

Allen, Frank B., 726th - 27 January 1999
 Asp, Preston H., 726th - March 1999
 Bodenchuk, John M., 726th - 11 November 1998
 Boesenberg, George W., 724th - 16 June 1999
 Carter, Kenneth K., 725th - 12 April 1999
 Chase, Richard A., 726th - 25 January 1999
 Clancy, Paul T., 725th - 1 August 1994
 Crans, Russell K., 724th - 13 November 1998
 DiCristofaro, Vincent A., 726th - 7 October 1998
 DuBois, Herbert V., 725th - September 1998
 Ford, Henry B., 726th - January 1987
 Garde, Joseph F., 727th - 7 March 1999
 Gilbert, Paul M., 727th - 14 April 1999
 Gould, Richard F., 725th - 1 January 1999
 Gramando, Louis F., 727th - 29 April 1999
 Janelle, John R., 725th - 17 March 1999
 Johnston, Bruce G., 724th - 31 October 1998
 Keebaugh, Harper B., 724th - 16 April 1999
 Knapp, James B., Headquarters - 18 February 1999
 Lucas, Charles, 725th - 12 June 1997
 Lucas, Elwood, 726th - 25 December 1998
 McKelvy, Edward B., 60th - 2 January 1999
 Nall, Edward E.D., 726th - 4 November 1998
 Perkins, Robert B., 725th - 16 March 1998
 Pichelmayer, Billy D., 725th - 5 November 1993
 Risher, John B., 726th - 17 October 1998
 Schultz, Glendon G., 724th - 5 July 1997
 Stone, William E., 727th - 24 September 1998
 Tupper, Robert S., 725th - 25 August 1997
 Wheeler, Donald L., 724th - 23 January 1999
 Whiting, Roman J., 726th - 19 April 1999

WHAT WE FOUGHT FOR

It is the soldier, not the reporter,
 Who has given us freedom of the press.

It is the soldier, not the poet,
 Who has given us freedom of speech.

It is the soldier, not the campus organizer,
 Who has given us the freedom to demonstrate.

It is the soldier, who salutes the flag;
 Who serves beneath the flag;

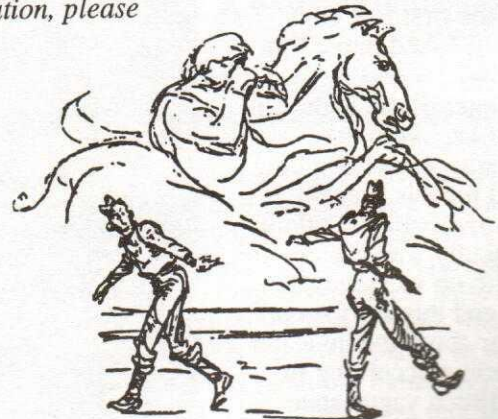
And whose coffin is draped by the flag.
 And it is he who allows the protester to burn the flag.

(Author Unknown)

MEMORIAL TRIBUTES

TO Harry F. Beegle - from wife, Mary
 TO John M. Bodenchuk - from wife, Martha
 TO Kenneth F. Brust - from son, Peter
 TO Cecil Burr Crew - from Sedgefield Hill
 TO Kenneth K. Carter - from John B. Caputo
 TO Matthew A. Cindrich - from William R. Glynn
 TO Russell K. Crans - from Rev. Paul Johnshoy
 TO Robert E. Dixon - from Harvey A. Brown
 TO Andrew 'Jess' Dobernic - from Samuel R. Miller
 TO John R. Janelle - from wife, Opal
 TO Stanton M. Leiter - from wife, Florence
 TO George H. McConnell - from Lloyd L. Jenkins
 TO Edward E.D. Nall - from wife, Marinel
 TO Edward E.D. Nall - from Remaining Crewmates
 TO Barton E. Nelson - from Duane C. Maybay
 TO Melvin G. Schwulst - from Robert W. Finkle
 TO John R. Sohn - from Harold A. Ginsberg
 TO Leslie J. Westberg - from Edward J. Leahy

REMEMBER: To place a Memorial Tribute to a buddy, friend or relative, please submit a \$50 contribution in that persons name. Only one name, crew or section per donation, please



ERNIE CUMMINS' 60TH AIR SERVICE SQUADRON JOURNAL

(Alias: Ernie's Journey)

Con't from Issue 30

6 June 1944

Dear Mabel: Today is a Big Day! We heard on the radio reports of the invasion of France, and only yesterday Rome fell. So at least things are happening. Now if all goes well, the war will not keep us apart too long. Golly, I'd like to see the big newspaper headlines you are reading.

As for your CPL, he is still working steady and honey, you will simply have to get used to fewer letters, as this isn't like the old days when I worked four or five hours and was finished. Nope, Peanut, my spare time is limited, so you tell the folks any, and all, the news I pass along. They are probably thinking I forgot all about them.

I just finished a nice warm shower and had to padlock the shower room, turn the key back into the C.O.'s tent, as no one is to undress after dark ... pesky skeeters come around about then, so we have to be extra careful.

A few days ago I found myself near a hospital where an 'old 60th man' was recuperating from a broken leg, so I dropped in to see him. You should see the swell modern buildings; and the staff that fixed up so many of our boys would read like the list of doctors at the Mayo Clinic. Pretty nurses, too. Luck has it, I don't ever get sick.

9 June 1944

Dear Mabel: Darn it, the man isn't happy unless he's talking continually, and he would have to be living in my tent! Joe, the Italian from New York has been bending my hear for an hour, and all that time I've been hinting that I wanted to write, and it doesn't come close to stopping him!

I got the good news about you meeting Sgt and Mrs Chestnut. I bet you wives drove him crazy asking questions, right? His views will be much more accurate than Cecil's, and of course will cover information right up to our present camp. How did he look after the first few days with his wife? And him a thin man anyway!

That one letter of the 29th is all I've had of late, since we figure the shipping is all going to England for this French push. Our mail will straggle in later. I'd gladly wait three months with no messages if that helps end this stuff sooner. All we hear about the invasion is "Proceeding according to plan," and such vague statements. We are certainly racing

north, above Rome; a little good news every day adds up to quite a lot over time.

It was very warm today with no wind (for a change) and the flies are becoming very pesky. I am sitting on my bunk, protected by mosquito netting, after a supper of baked ham and green peas, iced tea and the regular little yellow pill called "atabrine" (our Malaria protection). I can hear Sgt Casey out on the volleyball court, cussing because some guy on his team was caught out of position. They sure have a time! It is getting close to the hour when news comes over the radio, so after posting this, I'll drop into our Day Room.

18 June 1944

Dear Mabel: The Morning After! Yes Ma'am; Here it is a cool Sunday morning and your Number One Boy is reporting on his day off. Got started about nine, caught three rides into town where Laxult is stationed. Found he was away, so continued my journey. Used a new system of thumbing rides, Peanut - at the edge of town there are usually a group of Americans and another group of English Tommies waiting for rides. I thought up the idea of getting one or two Limeys off by themselves and I'd flag the U.S. trucks, and they the English lorries. The net result was that I rode quite a distance with English drivers and had some interesting talks as well. Went off the main road into a little village (the size of a town has no bearing on the population) and right on the city square found a couple of ice cream stands. They were just like the beach shacks at home, bright canvas awnings, too. Had two dishes (hope the milk was healthy) and bought a kid a cone.

Drank several Vermouths and met two Tommies who were recuperating at a nearby convalescent hospital. They had some real tales to tell of the "bloody deadly" battles up front, where they took a "bashing, but got their objective. It was that Monastery, which was so tough to crack a few weeks ago. They said the worst

work was digging foxholes when troops are moving forward; they no sooner get one finished, then up they go again. Fifteen different trenches a day is a fair average; enough to blister any pair of hands.

Well, I finally found a good place to eat - after several false starts. The first three cafes had nothing but eggs and I was set on fried potatoes. For one buck I got all the spuds I could put away, a jug of vino, brown bread, onions and three fired "Wovas," sunny side



up. The owner talked American too. His wife was a little "New York Italian." There was an American Indian from South Dakota eating there, who just amazed us by doing away with three omelets in a row - totalling twelve eggs! Hungry Brave, wasn't he?

Had a long wait for a ride home, but finally got back out to the highway with an Eyeie truck. Wow, what drivers they make! Home again about eight p.m., were I found three more of those extra special builder-uppers (my honey's sugar reports) in the mail box. I was so tired I just read them and dropped off to sleep; dreaming of you.

29 June 1944

Dear Peanut: Now about the USO shows. I guess you read the other letter first, so this is sort of a second section. First we had an Eytie "Review," with a big orchestra. The band leader was a dead ringer for C.J. Sloetzer, except he was even thinner; the mustache and wrinkles were exactly the same. The piano player was the life of the party. All the fellows called him Jerry, as he looked so much like Cologna. They also had some dancers, a very clever juggler and some comics to boot. The next evening an Arabian show came to camp, starting a famous dancer from Tunisia. She had danced for the Bey of Tunis when Roosevelt and Churchill were there, so "Franklin" didn't see anything we didn't, ha. Unless she was wearing more clothing over here. For her singing, a four man Arab band made a lot of noise in their sing-song way. A Syrian Staff Sgt acted as Master of Ceremonies. The girl's mother was a native of Columbus, Ohio, and she had two brothers in the Army, so we kept our "Ohs & Ahs!" restrained; she talks perfect English. But that daughter, what a wiggle!

The best part of the show was a guy who performed some "Yogi" stunts; laying on spikes, piercing his cheeks and arms with needles. But the most amazing thing I've seen yet, was as follows: Two wooden saw horses are placed about four feet apart on the stage, and during a period of silence this guy puts his hands to his head and goes into a trance. His assistant catches him when he falls and places his rigid body across the horses, face up. Then they lay a huge stone on his "bread basket" and a big husky G.I. from the audience swings heavy sledge, breaking the rock but not affecting the Yogi in any way! Noting fake about this act -- our own Vic Rose did the "hammering." The Yogi must have pressed his nerve centers some way.

Well, here I am sneaking a few minutes off to write this, and Cpl Hannis, the motor pool dispatcher is out looking for Ernie. So it's off to work for me. I have a hunch there will be more swell letters from Lake Tahoe tonight -- So cheerio to my sweetheart, remember who loves you.

1 July 1944

Dear Mabel: Well, we just finished our raffle of war bonds - and out of seven winners, Ernie was entirely missing. First prize of \$500 went to Joe Sansone, the fellow I described to you some time ago as sleeping in my tent (it was before I moved this last time), an Italian New Yorker who was formerly a hotel chef. Our Top Kick, John Wilson, got a hundred, as well as several other guys I knew. Wish me better luck the next time, Peanut. I sure would like to send you a nice juicy Bond!

We have another pet. This time a white puppy, with big enough feet to promise a good sized pooch when he grows up. His big drawback is that he is nuts about picking up our socks and making us hunt all over hell to find them. Last evening I did my own laundry. It's been a long time since I detailed myself to that job. Now I've got to rig a clothes line to dry the stuff. I'm still using the soap you folks sent in the Christmas boxes.

July 10, 1944

Dear Mabel: After receiving those "yellow vacation specials" from Lake Tahoe, this set-up of mine seems strange -- the story is that Ernie is enjoying a vacation too, at a rest camp which, incidentally, is built on the shore of a lake!

Remember our first date in the country; McNear's Lake, and the poison oak? Well, this lake is about the same size and it has another twin lake right beside it. The land between the two being only a hundred feet wide. The main difference between this pool and McNears is the depth, which is reported to be 270 feet. The hills are very steep, covered with dense growth and the entire country is high. The building is situated under the peak of a mountain and is an old monastery built in 1059 A.D. with additions built in 1870, or sometime like that. There is a very steep trail leading down to the lake about a quarter mile away (seems straight down) and during warm days a lot of us are in swimming or paddling boats around. The boats are yellow life rafts, the same emergency type that fliers use. A float has been built with a diving board and beach chairs are placed all around for sunbathers.

We sleep in a room with eight cots; the ceilings arch and there are many little alcoves, etc.. When they put this old stone thing together, long ago, they must have lost the plans! As it is called a "Rest Camp," we can do just about anything we wish. Some guys sleep most of the day. Breakfast served at 7:30 and by golly, I hear the cooks hollering "Come and get it." So, I'll go see how the hotcakes taste -- more after chow, Peanut; don't go away. ... (Turned out to be fried eggs and bacon.)

Today is cloudy but I expect the sun will burn that off by mid morning. I think I'll make a sketch of the place just to give you folks an idea of the architecture. The day we came up here from the 60th camp, I missed the truck that brought the men. But since the C.O. was also going to the Rest Camp, and he was bring his jeep, Ernie rode with him. It was comfortable, fast and not so dusty. The Major drove all the way and only got lost once. But by phoning for instructions on which road to take, we made it okay. A very good driver on this kind of mountain road.

*****COMMENT*****

In the interior mountains, near the town of Melfi, there was a Rest Camp where I stayed for five days on uneventful leave. There was no road traffic at all in that region; maybe a wagon of charcoal or a load of straw moving down the dirt track with a little donkey's feel clipping along underneath it. The M.P.'s patrolled the back country and they demanded papers from all the military they saw, as they seemed to think that deserters would find these hamlets attractive places to disappear into. The Rest Camp was in an old monastery building, represented to be over a thousand years old. It sat on the

side of a mountain with a view to the East and the road leading to it came to a dead end. Once each day a supply and mail truck up this road. And once, after he unloaded, I hitched a ride down the hill to a town 15 miles away. I had to walk back, sleeping in a haystack overnight. NO traffic, NO rides!

The monastery building was massive; heavy stone blocks mortised together into thick walls and low arches. It was so sturdily designed that it will no doubt still be there after another thousand years have passed. This led to speculation on how the Western World looked at permanence, or endurance, in buildings:

“Sam, What do you think of the guys that put this hunk of rock together? Is anything in America likely to last as long?”

“Well, Pete, the builders were probably slave labor. The church wasn’t above that. Remember they preserved all the culture that lasted out the Dark Ages. The U.S. has some old Indian cliff dwellings in the Southwest that we could rate right up there.”

“Yea, but I mean modern construction” Sam continued, “Seems like when one of our skyscrapers is being built, some joker is already studying how to demolish the darned then. They plan how to wreck a building before it’s even completed!”

“What I find interesting is how many generations of warriors have been trampling over these mountains and came upon this same monastery? And how many more may in the future? Maybe your great, great, great grandchildren will stand right here some day, talking just as we are now.”

Not content with letting any discussion end on a philosophical note, Sam, the Signal Corp. Sergeant offered this:

“And the way you guys are carrying on in this country, at least some of those grandchildren are going to be born close to Melfi.”

(con’t next issue)



MELFI
60th Air Service Squadron Rest Camp
Arrow points to Melfi (Region of Campania), Italy



**CHATTER
FROM THE
FLIGHT DECK**

Bob Karstensen

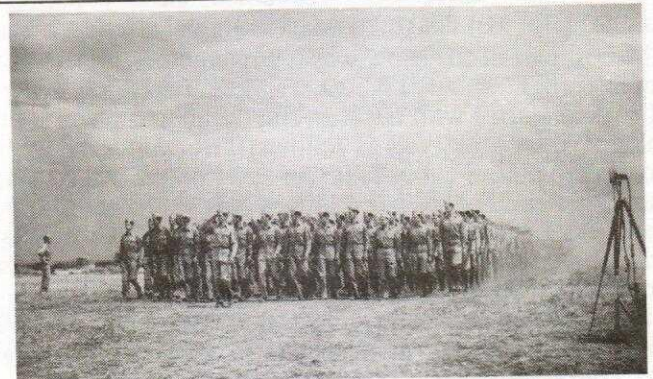
ARCHIVE FILM FOUND

Always searching, always probing, I have uncovered an internet source for vintage WW-II films. Not the commercial movies, as you would think (Gable, Peck or Wayne), but rare military films taken on-site and from various combat zones.

One such minor (silent) production was that of our 451st Bomb Group. It was taken while we were formally being presented our first two Distinguished Unit Citations by General Nathan Twining. (First two while under the command of Colonel Robert E.L. Eaton and the third presentation while under the command of Colonel Leroy L. Stefonowicz.)

The film (converted to video), is but 11 minutes in length and shows a lot of dusty marching soldiers (Officers & Enlisted Men), along with a soundless Lt. Daniel J. Coffey (Special Services Officer) reading the two proclamations. First one for the Regensburg, Germany (25 February 1944) mission; Second, for Ploesti, Rumania (5 April 1944).

For the most part, this film was taken at a distance and may not reveal faces all that clearly. But if you remember taking part in the ceremony, then it could be that



Colonel Eaton Leads His Troops in DUC Ceremony

you could identify - and place where you were during the ceremony. Without a doubt it was filmed by official 15th AAF photographers out of Bari, Italy. All this took place on 3 September 1944. The 3rd, and last Unit Citation was presented on 2 April 1945, under the command of Colonel Stefonowicz (a.k.a. Stefen), but was not (to the best of my knowledge) put on film.

When I sent for copies of the film, I requested that I be offered a ‘master copy’ so more copies can be made for those that may request them. A ‘master copy’ was sent and I have the wherewithal to have it professionally reproduced and offer one to those of you that may request a copy.

If such be your wants, let me know. If enough interest is shown, I’ll have copies made. But to cover the cost of reproducing and mailing, I’ll have to put the cost at \$25

per video.

HISTORY PAMPHLET

To those of you that joined our organization early on, you probably remember that I made the effort to reproduce our micro-filmed history (with photos), four pages at a time. These were sent out in serial form (much like Colliers Magazine would have done) with each issue of the Ad-Lib. As each new member came on-board, I sent them what pages I had, so's they could be brought up to speed. Eventually I ran out. Due to requests for basic information about our wartime activities, I have had a limited number of them reprinted, collated and bound for reissue. If you wish to replace your worn out, disheveled, or misplaced copy, let me know. To you new members that may wish a copy, let me know. A contribution of \$10, or more, to cover printing and mailing, will put one in the mails - almost immediately.



SPEAKING OF HISTORY

Sedge (Red) and son, Mike Hill, are working on re-publishing our "Fight'n 451st Bomb Group (H)" book. Consultation between this office and the home of the authors, plus Turner Publishing, show that there is a strong interest out there to "do it all again." As of the mailing of this newsletter, details are being worked out between the Hill's and Turner Publishing. It is hoped to be available later this year, hopefully by Christmas.

The new book will not be an exact reproduction of the original. Sedge has asked me to verify, clarify, and define any errors that may have been inadvertently placed in the original book. This I have tried to do .. plus giving him more basic history of our Group since the first book came out. To the best of our ability, corrections have/will be made. Sedge even promised to give the book a new cover design.

This office is not involved in the sales of this new version. No profits will be realized, except by the authors and publisher. Just how the sale of the book will be handled, I am not sure. Most likely through Turner Publishing. Stay tuned.

SEARCH BY OFFSPRINGS - IN SEARCH OF

Some years ago this editor ran across a 'Memorable Quote' in one of the military magazines. I wrote it down in the event that it would have some significance in later years. Now, as I try to place the 451st in the forefront of WW-2 history, I find these words to seem to come to life. They read thusly:

"A lot of Sons and Daughters wish to share the powers of adventure that their fathers had endured in WW-II."

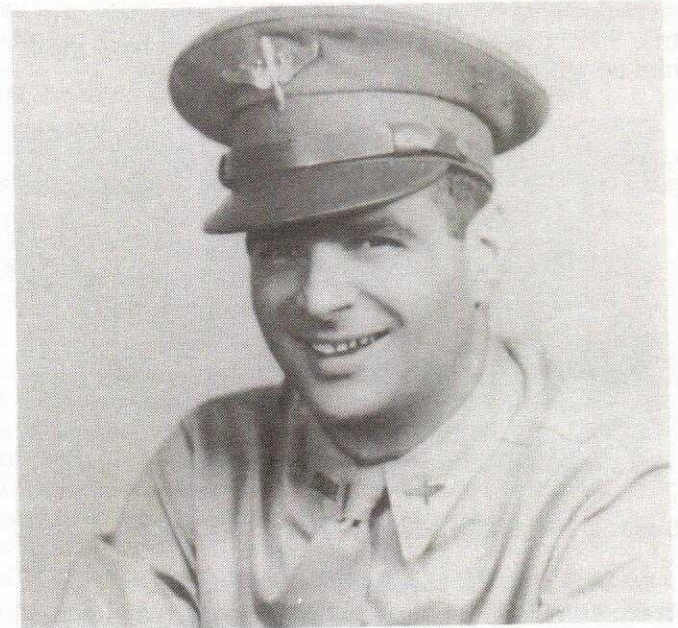
I find that holds true for Nieces, Nephews, Grandchildren - and Cousins as well. They all have a thirst to sample the frustration, the hurt, the anxiety, the thrill -- and even the JOY that was once ours. In most cases that relative has passed on (or, was Killed In Action), but, in some cases, the youngsters just wish to know ... because 'Dad/Grandpa' never speaks of those times. I do my best to pass on what I can, but you guys have a better handle on some of the finer details that they're looking for. If you can enlighten these young folks on what's being sought, let me know and I'll put you directly in touch with them.

I'm going to list the following people in alphabetical order, starting with WHO it is they want information about; then give you a sample of what their strongest requests and desires have been.

2LT Isadore Belinkie (Bombardier, 725th) ...

Daughter, Barbara Jepson.

A most ardent seeker of information about her father who was killed on the 7 February 1945 mission to Vienna. Art Klaffka (sole survivor) and I have tried to fill in the gaps for her, but could use help from those that knew her father; personally.



Cadet (Later 2LT - Bombardier) Isadore Belinkie

SGT John Borecky (Clerk, Hdq) ...

Son, John Borecky, Jr. Deep interest in the atmosphere of overseas duty. Father died in 1985 without passing on much about his military career.

2LT Lyle Baker (Copilot, 726th) ...

Nephew, Jim Brugger.

With the aid of his Aunt he is working to satisfy his interest in what Uncle Lyle endured in prison camp and by way of missions. Disastrous mission was to Weiner-Neudorf, Austria on 16 July 1944. Two survivors; Lyle Baker and Bombardier, 1LT Millard Mulry. Lyle passed

away in 1981.



Lt. Lyle A. Baker

S/SGT Kenneth Brust (Gunner, 724th) ...

Son, Peter Brust.

A typical case of the son having an interest in his father's outfit, long after the father had died. This office has been trying for some time to locate S/SGT Ken Brust, but it wasn't until recent contact was made with the son that we found out that Ken had died. S/SGT Brust was on the crew of 2LT Robert L. Beach that went down on 23 August 1944 over Markersdorf, Austria. Since that original contact with Peter, I have lined him up with three of the surviving crewmates.



Standing: L/R Lts Bob Jensen, B; Herb Klossner N; Phil Pratt, CP; Bob Beach, P.

Kneeling: Sgts. Jim Cooper BG; Mike Callahan NG (KIA); Ken Brust, ROG; Russ Ransom, AEG; Don Kelly. WG; Merlin Garrison, TG

2LT Victor L. Bunderson (Navigator, 725th) ...

Daughter, Vicki Bunderson.

Pilot of crew was F/O David F. Thompson. Upon the death of her father in 1997, Vicki professed her desire to be allowed to continue getting our mailings. She said it helped to link her father to 'what was never told.'

1LT Charles R. Campbell (Pilot, 725th) ...

Nephew, Colin Campbell.

A deeply dedicated nephew to his uncle's legacy. With photos passed along by family members, Colin is attempting to rebuild the abbreviated career of his uncle. LT Campbell was the only fatality (flying as Aircraft



Lt Charles R. Campbell (KIA)

Commander) on the mission of 11 December 1944 over Vienna, Austria. The more deeply involved Colin becomes, the more fixed he seems to be in finding the answers.

T/SGT Anthony Cardarelli (Gunner [?], 724th) ...

Son, Anthony Cardarelli, Jr.

Not much is know of our subject; his pilot, crewmembers, duties, nor missions. By elimination we know that he did his tour

and returned to the States and has since died. When I first entered Cardarelli, Jr., as an associate member, I had no idea that I would be doing an article on this subject. Maybe some exposure to you guys will add to our knowledge of T/SGT Cardarelli.

SGT John Cassidy (Gunner, 726th) ...

Daughter, Diane Cassidy.

Although SGT Cassidy passed away in 1974, Diane has had a longing desire to know more of her dad's military life. What I could give her, along with what information her father may have given her, is as follows; Lost aircraft #42-51587 as a result of a mission over Vienna, Austria on 13 October 1944. All of the crew managed to return safely. Pilot was 2LT Ibar M. Spellacy. More detailed information could come from the surviving crew, of which there are 3 alive and found.

PFC Paul Clancy (Mechanic, 725th) ...

Son Paul Clancy, Jr.

After his father's death in 1994, Paul Jr. asked us if we would continue to send our mailings. We were more than happy to comply. Paul, Sr. will be noted in the Memorial Section as being eulogized by his family. Paul, Sr. military career may not have been fraught with the excitement of combat, but it was surely filled with moments of disastrous excitement and hours of work and tedium. Such was the life of a Ground Man.

2LT Harvey Clapp (Pilot, 726th) ...

Son, David Clapp.

David has done a lot of research on his own as to his fathers military legacy. Even to the point of visiting the Isle of Krk, off the coast of Yugoslavia. That was the point of termination to which the aircraft (#42-51334) gave it's all. The mission was our infamous Markersdorf A/D, Austria, 23 August 1944. All the crew evaded back to Castelluccio Air Field. David's dad passed away in 1993. Some may remember David Clapp as the guy that brought/flew the Primary Trainer (PT) into Fairmont AAF for our 1990 Reunion.

PFC James Curtin (ROG, 726th) ...

Nephew, Jim Cunningham.

Jim has been very active with us in regards to his Uncle's tragic death on 8 February 1944. He (Jim Curtin) was killed as a result of a crash on take-off with

pilot, 2LT James Hunt. Three managed to survive the crash. Of the three survivors, 2LT Ed Niederkorn, SGT Meryl Frost and SGT Ola Thaxton, none are alive today to add to the story.

F/O Paul J. Dillon (Navigator, 725th) ...

Niece, Karen Labyk.

Unfortunately Karen never got to know her uncle, except through family stories. Her request to be allowed to participate, via newsletters and contact, was easily approved by this office. F/O Dillon was the only KIA on the 2 December 1944 mission to Blechhammer, Germany. The Aircraft Commander was 1LT John D. Eckersley, who, along with the 8 other survivors, became an unwilling guest of the Germans for the duration of the war.

S/SGT Elbert P. Fare (Gunner, 727th) ...

Son, James W. Fare.

Since his father's death in 1969, Jim has been wondered about the life and times of his dad during the hostilities. As a member of 2LT James J. Kavanaugh crew, S/SGT Fare completed his missions and returned to the U.S., but passed little information to his family. Now that curiosity has peeked with young Fare.

M/SGT Walter J. Flannelly (Crew Chief, 724th) ..

Son, Robert Flannelly.

As devoted as Walt was to the 724th Squadron, so is his son, Robert, to the memory of his dad. Pictures of 'GAS HOUSE' have become a priority on Bob's list. Any candid shots of Walt's aircraft, not previously published, would be appreciated. Walt Flannelly passed away in 1985.

PVT Eugene E. Goodner (Gunner, 725th) ...

Daughter, Ronnie Goodner.

A long time follower of our organization, Ronnie, has sought information on her dad who was KIA'd during a ditching off the coast of Yugoslavia. It occurred on 17 March 1944 while returning from a mission to Vienna. Pilot was 2LT Ralph Darrow. One other EM, PFC Joseph O'Hearn [Gunner], also drowned as result of that incident.

T/SGT Gordon S. Gunderson (ROG, 725th) ...

Son, Jan Gunderson.

After his father's death in early 1995, Jan approached me as to notifying me about his dad's passing. Jan was quite surprised to hear that his dad an I had met while I was on an excursion into the South West some years ago. It pleased me greatly to hear that Gordon's legacy is to be continued down the family line by his loving son and daughter in law, Marilyn. T/Sgt Gunderson was on the crew of 1LT Edward L. Wilson (original crew) and survived all his missions and to return home and start life anew.

PFC Edward F. Hengy (Ordnance Section, 724th)

Grandson, Matthew Reed.

Trying to recapture the spirit of what Grandpa Hengy endured as an Ordnance man within the 451st is somewhat difficult. Communications with his co-workers, from that era, would do much to fill in the gaps. PFC Hengy passed away in November 1987.

2LT George L. Hogan (Copilot, 724th) ...

Cousin, Mary Jo Potts.

I've already written much on the loss of 2LT Hogan (Issue 30, Page 5) as presented to me by Mary Jo. But there is always another story out there that could/would bring deeper insight to the life and times of 2Lt Hogan, that are not yet known.

CPL Lawrence W. Hughes (Gunner, 725th) ...

Nephew, Scott Hughes.

Generally interested in the events of his uncle, Scott wished to find out more about the happenings of 7 February 1945 when the crew of 1LT Edward W. Palaskis were downed into Russia after a bombing run on Vienna. CPL Hughes was flying with pilot, 1LT Edward W. Palaskis on this mission, along with 2LT George W. Atkinson (flying right seat) his regular pilot. Larry Hughes passed away in 1987.

T/SGT Earl J. Longlois (AEG, 726th) ...

Son, Robert Longlois.

A very recent entry into our family circle. Bob is curious about the incident, wherein 2LT Herbert Guinness was forced to ditch into the Adriatic with the loss of two lives. Since making connections with this office, Bob has been in contact with Herb Guinness.

1LT Thomas N. Mozley (Copilot, 724th) ...

Son, Thomas Mozley III.

While on one of my visits, and "get acquainted Group Dinners," down into Atlanta, GA (prior to the 1998 Reunion), I had the chance to 'break bread' with young Tom and his brother Mark. Both were eager to hear about the trials and tribulations that befell the gallant warriors of the 451st; Ground and Air Crews, alike. Those attending the dinner were not backwards in telling about the history of the Group, to which their dad was deeply involved. 1LT Mozley flew his missions under the command of Aircraft Commander 1LT William H. McKenney. Tom passed away in January 1995.

SGT Joseph A. Negrini (Unknown Duties, 724th)

Son, Joseph Negrini, Jr.

So little of SGT Negrini tenure is know, both by myself and his son, that we really need help on this one. Was he a member of an Air, or Ground Crew? Taking his name off a Shipping Order only gives me his name, rank and serial number. Apparently he left no paper trail for his son to evaluate. My records show that SGT Negrini died in January 1988.

S/SGT George P. Penatzer (Gunner, 724th) ...

Daughter, Maureen Humphrey.

Of the military career of S/SGT Penatzer, little is really known. Maureen and I draw a blank when it comes to who was her dad's original pilot? With this information, other facts could be drawn as to the period of time spent overseas. S/SGT Penatzer apparently flew his missions without dire results, as he is not listed on any MACR's. He lived to be 69 years of age before he befell to the grim reaper in 1986, but with no details of his career were handed down to the following generations.

T/SGT Ralph S. Peterson (AEG, 725th) ...

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

Son, Dennis Peterson.

Dennis, an ardent follower of the 1LT Edward L. Shimenski (aka, Sherman) Crew, has continued to maintain contacts with his dad's crew; his dad having passed away in July 1994. He has attended several Crew Reunions, and finally topping it off with our recent Atlanta Reunion. He too, is watching the diminishing ranks of our personnel and wants to keep the spirit of his father's legacy alive forever.

1LT Paul R. Pfau (Pilot, 727th) ...

Nephew, Paul Pfau.

Family sentiment can run deep when a name is passed on to another generation. And to bear the name of a fallen hero is a proud honor that young Pfau bears well.

1LT Pfau lost his life over Budapest, Hungary on 13 April 1944. Of the crew of ten, only two survived. And of those two, only one has been located.

2LT August C. Plonis (Copilot, 727th) ...

Son, Timothy Plonis.

Eagerly awaits any information he can get as to the military heritage of a father he never got to question closely, nor in depth. Father flew with 2LT Robert A. Blain, coming into the 727th Squadron at about October 1944. 2LT Plonis died in 1994.

2LT Alvin G. Reise (Bombardier, 725th) ...

Son, Jeffrey Reise.

Although his father died in 1973 (retiring from the military with rank of LT COLONEL), Jeffrey still longs for the feeling of what his dad may have endured flying missions with 1LT Albert D. Sherman as pilot.

T/SGT Frank J. Rossetti (AEG, 724th) ...

Son-in-law, Jim McCloskey.

For the sake of his wife and children, Jim wants to let them know of the legacy that 'Dad' left behind for them. T/SGT Rossetti was on the crew of 2LT Ben J. Moore and passed away in January of 1976.

S/SGT William J. Runkle (Gunner, 724th) ...

Daughter, Carol Willie.

In trying to locate members of the 451st, I, more often than not find that person being sought has died. Sad, though it is, it's a fact of life. But even in death the legacy lingers on. Although S/SGT Runkle died in November 1975, his daughter holds his wartime career in high regards. It would please her to know that others have memories of her dad that they would be willing to share. S/SGT Runkle flew most of his missions with Captain John O'Connor on the 'Wolf Wagon.'

2LT Lawrence M. Rushing (Copilot, 727th) ...

Nephew, Robert Rushing.

Many issues back of the Ad-Lib we brought to your attention the desires of Robert Rushing to find out more about the incident that took the life of his Uncle, 2LT Rushing. We found it to be a case of 2LT Rushing being run over by a truck while in the 727th Squadron area. This happened on 7 February 1944. We may have satisfied the nephews immediate needs, but I'm sure he'd like to hear from others on the subject of his uncle.

2LT William M. Silliman (Pilot, 725th) ...

Sister, Bette Froelich.

Bette holds her brother in reverence for the part he played in WW-II. 2LT Silliman had the extreme misfortune to have been killed while taking off from an airfield

in N. Africa and splashing into the Mediterranean. A crew of ten, with two passengers, all succumb in this incident. This occurred during the exodus from Italy on 4 June 1945, enroute to Hunter Field, Savannah, Georgia. Bette wants to know more about those times and circumstances.

2LT Ashley D. Smith (Pilot, 725th) ...

Grandson, James Daigle.

With his Grandfather having passed away in 1972, James Daigle has had a lot of time to wonder what kind of stories his Grandpa could have given him. Now in contact with some of the surviving crewmembers, he is getting an overview of some experiences that Grandpa endured. Like being shot down over Vienna, Austria on the 13 October 1944 and seven of the crew taken prisoners (1 KIA and 1 Evaded).

1LT Howard C. Sparks (Pilot, 727th) ...

Nephew, Thomas Clark.

Only recently has Tom delved into the legacy of his Uncle who passed away in 1989, early in our organization's tenure. Howard carried the Membership Number of 0095. I remember, from the stories that the late Peter Massare told me about 1LT Sparks, Howard was well respected as both a pilot and comrade. Tom Clark hungers for tales that give him some insight as to his uncle's past.

2LT Laurens A. Woolhouse (Copilot, 724th) ...

Brother, Charles D. Woolhouse.

Charles, himself, a retired Air Force M/SGT, can relate to some of the military experiences that his brother may have had. But to know more, and to relate closer, is his goal. 2LT Woolhouse was originally the Copilot on 2LT Lyall E. Johnson's crew, but was bumped by 1LT Clifford Kester (flying right seat) when the crew flew into, and were interned in Turkey on 15 April 1944. 2LT Woolhouse ended up as a POW when he flew as Copilot for 2LT Charles R. Haun on 11 June 1944 on a mission to Giurgiu, Rumania. Two crew members were KIA on that mission.

(Addendum) Through the efforts of Barbara Jepson, and her continued "search," I have been offered complimentary enrollment into an organization called "American WWII Orphans Network." (AWON) It was not offered to me for any special reason, other than a way for the organization to alert others (orphans & family members) as to their existence. Once contacted they send you a registration form and other material. To become formally and totally involved, they have annual dues of \$30 for basic membership. But you can access the internet without cost. It's a good place to voice your interest in the relative that "didn't make it home."

You can mail your request to:

American WWII Orphans Network
PO Box 4369
Bellingham, WA 98227

If you are on the internet:

www.awon.org

WAYNE, NE COMMEMORATES FALLEN 451st CREW

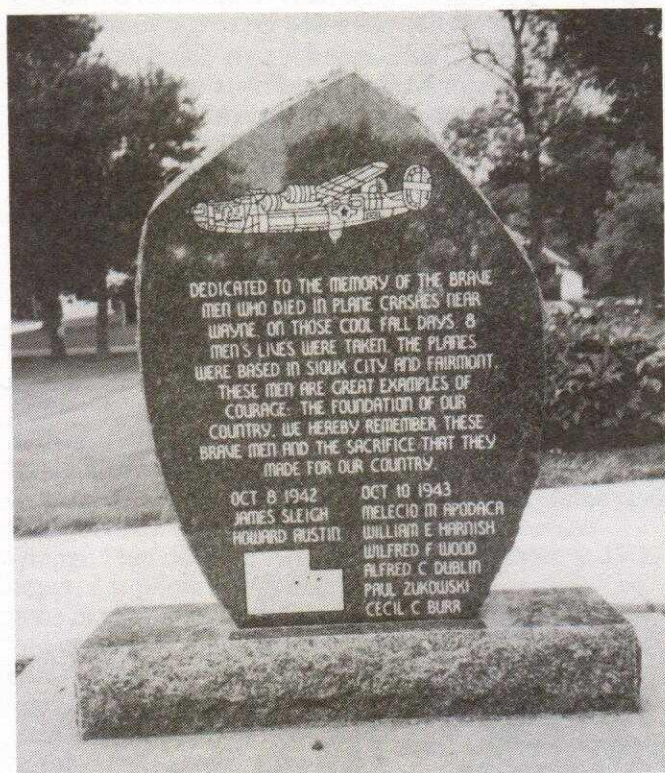
Back in the Group's earliest history, while stationed at Fairmont, Nebraska, the 726th and the 724th suffered it's first fatal crashes.

On October 10, 1943, 2nd Lt. Cecil C. Burr, with two other officers and three enlisted men, perished near Wayne, Nebraska.

On October 25, 1943, the same fate befell the crews of 2nd Lt. Charles L. Brown and 2nd Lt. James H. Williams when a mid-air collision occurred taking sixteen men to their deaths.

This past Memorial Day, May 31, 1999, the city of Wayne, Nebraska commemorated the incident of October 10, 1943, with the dedicating of a Memorial near the County Court House, to the men that perished on that day. Also memorialized were two other airmen, from Sioux City (unit unknown).

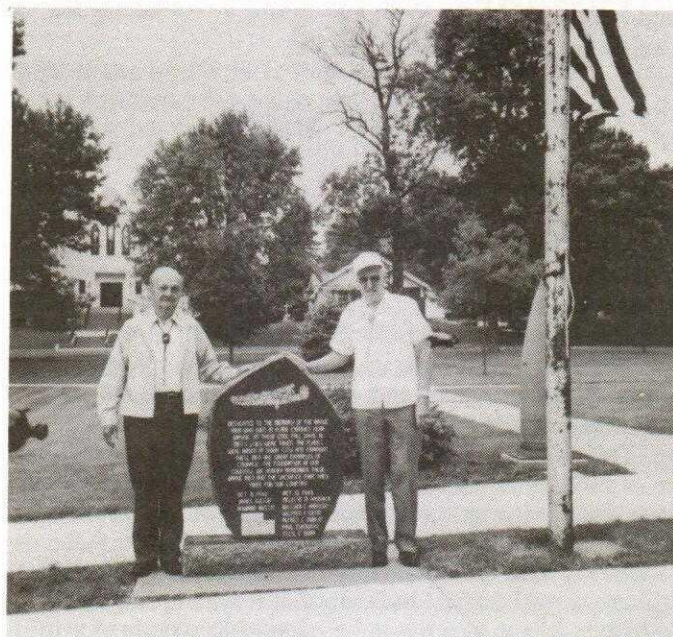
Representing our Group were two of our 727th Bomb Squadron personnel; former Sergeant Harold McWilliams and Corporal Sedgefield Hill. Both Nebraska residents.



Monument Dedicated to Crash Victims

Upon hearing of the proposed commemoration, back in the fall of 1998, I sought out and received the official governments REPORT OF AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT. It tells, in graphic detail, the conclusions of the investigation, as conducted by the Aircraft Accident Committee, Army Air Base - Sioux City, Iowa.

I hereby submit what I had gleaned from these reports; Place: 5 miles S.W. Wayne, Nebraska



Harold McWilliams & Sedge Hill at Dedication of Memorial

MONUMENT INSCRIPTION

DEDICATED TO THE MEMORY OF THE BRAVE MEN WHO DIED IN PLANE CRASHES NEAR WAYNE. ON THOSE COOL FALL DAYS 8 MEN'S LIVES WERE TAKEN. THE PLANES WERE BASED IN SIOUX CITY AND FAIRMONT. THESE MEN ARE GREAT EXAMPLES OF COURAGE. THE FOUNDATION OF OUR COUNTRY. WE HEREBY REMEMBER THESE BRAVE MEN AND THE SACRIFICE THAT THEY MADE FOR OUR COUNTRY.

Date: October 10, 1943

Time: 0730 CWT

Aircraft: B-24H #41-29181

Organization: II BC, 2nd AF - 451st BG - 726th BS

First Pilot's Hours: 77:05

Personnel - All Fatal:

Cecil C. Burr, 2Lt. Pilot 0-676739

William E. Harnish, 2Lt. Co-pilot 0-752201

Malacio M. Apodaca, 2 Lt. Bombardier 0-744223

Wilfred F. Wood, Sgt. Engineer 31104593

Paul Zukowski, Sgt. Radio Operator 12168507

Alfred C. Dublin, S/Sgt. Gunner 20841314

Weather at time of accident: Sky conditions clear.

Visibility, Lt haze, 5 to 6 mile

Wind, W at 8 mph

Temp. 42 to 45 degrees

Dew Pt. 39 to 40 degrees.

Was pilot on instruments at time of accident?: Unknown - but believed not.

Cleared from: Fairmont AAB

To: Stanton Bomb Range

Pilot's Mission: High altitude bombing

Nature of Accident: Crashed out of control - complete destruction, burned.

Cause of Accident: Unknown

DESCRIPTION OF ACCIDENT

Aircraft was cleared from Army Air Base, Fairmont, Nebraska at 0647 CWT on high altitude bombing mission over Stanton, Nebraska Bomb Range.

Apparently Aircraft had reached an altitude of fifteen thousand feet or above and was preparing to make, or had already made - it could not be determined - a target run. This is indicated by report of medical section noting use of oxygen masks and statements by observers to crash. Group tower control officer at Fairmont at no time had contact with the aircraft after it cleared that station. Further, statements by observers of descending airplane would further indicate that it was not under control, and was moving at an excessive speed prior to and at the time rudder and vertical stabilizer were stripped from the airplane.

Responsibility: Unknown

STATION HOSPITAL

Surgeon's Report to Operations Officer, Sioux City AAB

1. From the findings at the scene of the crash of B-24-H Bomber, No. 41-29181, five miles southwest of Wayne, Nebraska, on 10 October 1943, the following facts seem apparent.

a. Two of the bodies had oxygen masks in close apposition to what remained of the head and face. These

bodies were those of the pilot and the bombardier. No evidence existed that the co-pilot was wearing a mask because the entire head was destroyed. Fragments of oxygen masks were found elsewhere in the wreckage, but in no other cases in close enough conjunction or relation to the bodies to state with certainty that they were being worn at the time of the accident.

b. Parachutes, or the remains of parachutes, were found to the number of six. In the case of the pilot, the co-pilot, the bombardier and the gunner, there parachutes were found with the bodies and evidence was present that the straps were fastened. Remnants of other parachutes were found in the same general area as the other two bodies, but it can not be stated with certainty that the parachutes were being worn at the time of the accident.

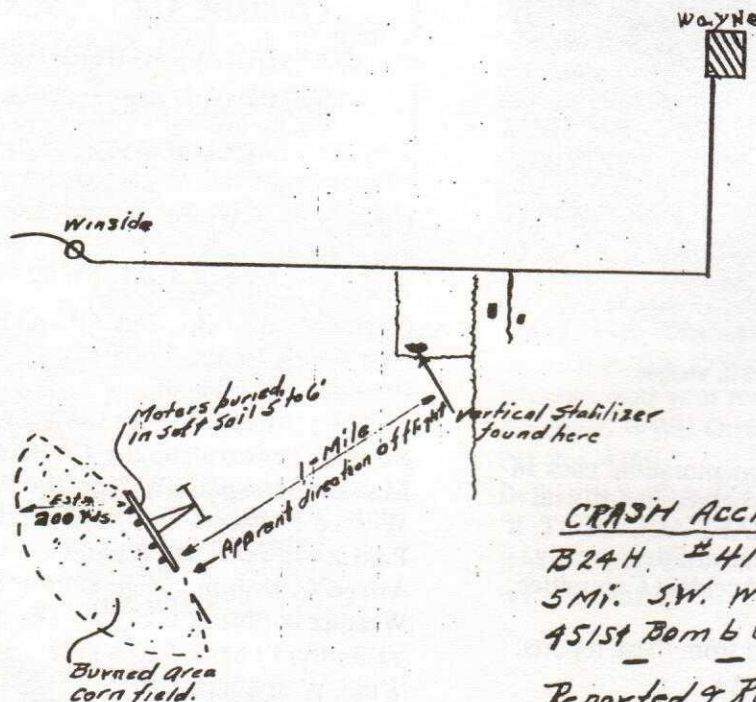
c. The seat straps of the pilot and co-pilot were fastened at the time of the accident, and the bodies of the pilot, co-pilot and bombardier, as they were later identified, were in their appropriate positions relative to the layout of the plane.

d. From the remnants of the bodies and their clothing, it is inferred that the crew was wearing heavy flying clothing, namely, the fleece lined jackets and the flying boots at the time of the accident.

(signed)

H.E. Sanders, Major M.C. - Surgeon

(Editors Conclusion); from the Aircraft Accident Report, it seems that it was structural failure that caused the aircraft to crash. The refinements of "crash reconstruction" was not known then, nor was there sufficient time to go beyond what would be called "normal procedures." It is only now, after almost 56 years, that the city of Wayne, Nebraska take the time to recognize and pay tribute to these, our earliest comrades. Our thanks to the city fathers for this honor.



CRASH ACCIDENT
 B24H #41-29181
 5 Mi. SW. WAYNE, Nebr.
 451st Bomb Gp. Fairmont, NE
 Reported & Recovered by
 ARMY AIRBASE-SIOUXCY, IA.

"LITTLE FRIENDS:" THE 49TH FIGHTER SQUADRON (Continued - 7th Installment By Dr. Royal C. Gilkey)

The French island of Corsica (ile de Corse) was to be their new temporary operational base. Hot weather and dusty terrain confronted newly-arrived men on the line. One of them discovered cooling spring water feeding a stream near the base at Aghione on Corsica. That was one advantage not enjoyed by the part of the Squadron left behind at "home base" from which they had come by plane.

Not fully manned, some departments like Intelligence (S-2) and Tech Supply had to be consolidated with Group equivalents in the interest of good improvised administration. It required a little time for adjustment to be made. In the end, the goal of efficiency was achieved.

The transitional effort continued on August 12, 1944. Things were still not operational, but rapidly taking shape. The Squadron's P-38s were readied for combat flights. The troops settled in, as if for a prolonged stay. They used sandbags to dam up a "welcoming" stream to a depth of eight feet and even erected a diving board. Back at the home encampment, 2nd Lts Royal C. Gilkey, Frank Cupo and Kurt Sterner returned with a group of enlisted men for their holiday in the "rest camp" of Rome. They's all had such a good time that a resumption of duty would never efface the memory.

On August 13, 1944 the Squadron's operational flying got underway again, with a 1st mission flown from Corsica's Aghione Landing Ground to strafe targets in Southern France in support of "Operation DRAGOON" (originally code-named "ANVIL" during the planning stage of a fourth invasion in the Mediterranean theater of war). A dozen of our P-38s took off at 1745 hours and rendezvoused with the other two Squadrons (the 37th & 48th) in the 14th fighter Group at 1800 hours, their altitude being 4,000 feet. Occupying the last position in the Group formation, they flew low (on the deck) from Corsica to a strafing target in France named Orange Plan de Dieu Airdrome. Arriving there at 1900 hours, our pilots swept over it, guns blazing. Gun emplacements and ammunition stockpile were shot up at approximately 1900 hours. No enemy planes were seen at Plan de Dieu Airdrome, or they would have come under attack. The 49'ers left the Orange area just east of the Rhone River (at 4401 N. 0455 E.) and escorted the 48th and 37th Squadrons almost to their target at Valence, the time being about 1920 hours. All 12 "Hangmen" then turned homeward, shooting up radar towers and severely damaging a railroad locomotive on the way. Crossing the French coast at 1935 hours, the Squadron's "Lightnings"

flew home in the dark. Flak was reported at Plan de Dieu Airdrome (and also at Valence along the Rhone River farther to the north). One of our planes was struck by flak, which started a fire on the under-side and caused it to somersault on the deck about 1900 hours. Another "Lightning" was forced into crash landing upon return to base. Of the dozen P-38s starting out, ten got back at 2010 hours, one having been lost in the target area and the other believed down at an intermediate friendly field. Small arms fire did some damage to one Squadron P-38. Another was destroyed with it belly landed in the dark. Thus, there were losses on the first mission, which was not a "milk-run," but a rather harrowing experience.

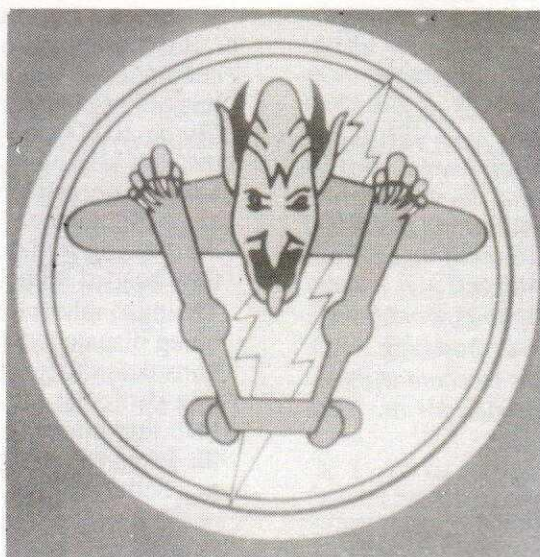
On a lighter side, there was "skinny dipping" in the Squadron's newly-built "swimming hole," which came to be named the "49th Nudist Colony." Even Col. Daniel S. Campbell tried out the pool as the best way to inspect it. It passed the inspection because the swim left him refreshed and satisfied. It would be hard to conceive of a healthier recreational asset under wartime circumstances.

August 14, 1944 involved a main mission and three patrol missions. The main mission went to Montfrin in southern France (4353 N. 0436 E..) where a German headquarters complex was to be dive-bombed. It was a Group effort, and the 49th Fighter Squadron led it. Top cover was to be flown by a quartet of 48th Fighter Squadron "Lightnings."

Eight 49'ers took off from Aghione Landing Ground in Corsica at 1600 hours. At 1750 hours, they were over the target. They carried and delivered 16 (500-pound) bombs. Direct hits were scored on the enemy headquarters (constituting the primary objective), with smaller huts clustered around the main structure also absorbing the blast. Several bombs struck in the eastern outskirts of Montfrin. Pilots reported the destruction of the primary target from dives started at 6,000 feet and bombs dropped from 3,000 feet.

After releasing their bombs, the "Lightnings" resorted to strafing attacks. They shot up boxcars strung along a railroad, as well as high-tension tower in their path. No enemy planes challenged our fliers, but flak and small arms fire were met with, along the route. One P-38 was hit in the engine, which caught fire. He was last seen going down into a valley. Another P-38 was victimized by small arms fire that sent it crashing afire. A third "Lightning" belonging to the 48th Fighter Squadron met a similar fate. Thus, the 49'ers lost two pilots.

One was 2nd Lt Moses J. Long



(Mobile, Ala.) lost to small arms fire or flak at 1805 hours, the coordinates being 4343 N. 0502 E.. He was reported M.I.A. (Missing in Action). The other was 2nd Lt Walter C. McConnell, Jr. (Cornelius, N.C.), whose plane was hit by small arms fire five minutes earlier (1800 hours), causing it to crash into the ground and burn at 4347 N. 0510 E.. Like Long, McConnell was reported M.I.A.. Both pilots were leaders on the mission, the former leading the Squadron and Group; while the latter led a flight.

As to the patrol missions flown from Corsica on August 14, 1944, the first was controlled by the Sardinian Alghero sector and covered the area between 4040 N. 0650 E and 4130 N 0720 E.. The second was controlled from the Corsican Ajaccio sector (answering to "Ducks Egg") and covered 4200 N. 0630 E. to 4300 N, 0700 E.. Each of the patrols was comprised of four "Lightnings," two of them flying at 25,000 feet to their assigned areas. Patrol #1 took off at 0750 hours and stayed over the area covered from 0800-0919 hours. From noon to 1330 hours, four of the "Lightnings" remained over the first and second areas. This patrol was vectored from 25,000 to 15,000 feet at 1250 hours to investigate a reported "bogie." The "bogie," however, faded from the radar screen, making no observation possible. The second patrol returned to base at 1420 hours.

Patrol #3 was brought up short. Taking off at 1615 hours, four P-38s were intending to patrol #1 & #2 control areas. Two of them were over the #1 area from 1650-1740 hours. Two of them never reached the patrol area because sector control instructed them to fly back to the base. This was done, and the four "Lightnings" alighted on Aghione Landing Ground at 1800 hours. There were no observations. The pair of pilots that covered control area #1 received sortie credit, but the other two did not. All the pilots who flew the first and second patrols got sortie credit.

Thus, the flying done on August 14, 1944 consisted of a regular combat mission involving dive-bombing and strafing. That was the main intent. Also flown were triple patrols, the last being truncated.

(Editor) ... The 49th Fighter Squadron was not alone in the sorties flown in support of Operation Dragoon on August 14, 1944. The 49th Wing was also assigned to bomb gun positions in Southern France. The 484th BG and 461st BG led the Wing in one wave, while the 451st BG came in as the second attack unit. Targets were assigned by map coordinates (i.e. U-448178 & Z-123388) and the Groups dropped bombs from various altitudes to eliminate formation confusion over the target. After "bombs away," the 484th and the 461st immediately dropped from their bombing altitude of 18,000 & 20,000 feet, respectively, to below 18,000 feet so the 451st would have a clear run at their target.

No Fighter escort was assigned, as Fighters would be working the area in conjunction with our bombing.

We were warned, upon withdrawal, not to come within 10 miles of shipping, nor to land at Corsica for any reason, other than for an extreme emergency.

August 15, 1944 was an extremely busy day for our fighters. They flew half a dozen missions in support of the invasion of Southern France, earning commendations from both ground & naval forces participating in it. This had the effect of pleasing Air Force headquarters.

All the missions provided support for D-Day operations. Let's see how, as set forth in carefully compiled "Narrative Mission Reports" rendered by the 49th Fighter Squadron's able S-2, Capt. Howard F. Wilson. They will be followed closely in recounting what was done.

According to "Report #1," enemy howitzers defending the coast were to be dive-bombed by Squadron P-38s. Four "Lightnings" took to the air at 0518 hours to strike at defense howitzers shown on a map of the area around Nice along the coast of Southern France. Their route went from Aghione to Borga Lake, Cape Raux, Cape Lardier and Saguinaire Island, followed by a return to base. It was a 350-mile trip. Each P-38 carried two 500-pound general purpose bombs (fused at .1-.025). A thick overcast blanketed the target area, causing the "Lightnings" to head for their secondary target; but before they got very far, a hole opened up over the primary target, whereupon two of our planes flew through it to dive-bomb the initial target at 0640 hours. They started dive-bombing at 10,000 feet, with bombs away at 5,000 feet. The release of four bombs took place about a quarter of a mile east of the target. Two of our Squadron's P-38s jettisoned their bombs into the sea. Enemy air put in an appearance, a quartet of FW-190s being seen at 10,000 feet off Cape Raux, the time being 0630 hours. Loaded with bombs, our P-38s could not then attack them. That explains why the enemy planes were not engaged. Some flak was encountered a little north of Gassin. Pilots reported some sky haze, cutting down on visibility at 7,000 feet. Our four P-38s got back to base at 0735 hours.

The second mission of the day (narrated in "Report #2") dealt with dive-bombing a couple of medium-size coastal defense guns, marked on the map along the coast of Southern France. Four "Lightnings" took off at 0540 hours for this purpose. At 0600 hours, they set course, which took them from their base at Aghione Airdrome over the same route as was followed on the first mission. This time, the P-38s had an incendiary bomb-load. When the "Lightnings" arrived over the target area, "Box Car" control instructed them to jettison their incendiaries at sea. An alternate target was not to be bombed either, and our pilots complied with these directions. Flying 10,000 feet above Southern France's coastline, the four "Hangmen" found their visibility restricted by a thick overcast obscuring the area targeted. No enemy aircraft challenged them, nor were they bothered by flak. After being in the target area from 0645-0725 hours, they headed home, arriving at 0825 hours.

The third mission took off at 0750 hours, four P-38s being dispatched to dive-bomb as many medium-size guns defending the coast at positions marked on the map of a particular area along France's Mediterranean coastline. Our pilots set course at 0805 hours 4,000 feet over the lakes east of their base at Aghione on Corsica. They reached the target on time at 0910 hours, following the

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

usual route from base to Lake Borgo, Cape Raux, Cape Ladier, and Saguinaire Island. The target was identified as a big house, which was dive-bombed, the "Lightnings" beginning their dives at 8,000 feet and dropping incendiary bombs from 3,000 feet. A direct hit was believed scored on the target, with a remainder of the bombs bursting in the near vicinity. Flying patrol over what was designated "Grape" area was next undertaken from 0920-1050 hours at 12,000 feet. A release to go home was received from "Box Car" control at 1050 hours. Our pilots reported that things seemed to be going well on the ground. Landings were being effected west of St. Raphael and elsewhere along the Cote d'Azur. The fourth, 15 August 1944 mission (narrated in "Report #4"), sent half a dozen P-38s on a dive-bombing assignment aimed at light guns along the coast of Southern France. They took off from Aghione A/D at 1055 hours. They were over the targeted area at five minutes after noon (1205 hours), following the same route as the day's earlier missions (Aghione-Borgo-Raux-Ladier-Saguinaire). They began dive-bombing from 9,000 feet and released their bombs at half that altitude. All told, these "Lightnings" dumped a dozen 500-pound bombs, but not on anything identifiable as a light-gun position. A direct hit was scored on a structure at the briefed location. Other bombs struck a railroad a bit north of the target, and some landed nearby. After all bombs were released, the P-38s went on "Grape" patrol from 1210-1345 hours, flying at an altitude of 12,000 feet. "Box Car" then told them to proceed to base. All got home at 1430 hours. No flak or enemy aircraft sought to block the way.

The fifth mission on 15 August 1944 was 200 miles longer, the entire trip being 550 miles. Seven "Lightnings" started out at 1350 hours, their objective being a bridge at Cavailoon in south France. Minus a pair of early returns beset by mechanical difficulties, five P-38s reached the target at 1515 hours, each carrying a pair of thousand-pound general purpose bombs. Six of these bombs were dropped on target, striking not only the center of the suspension bridge, but both ends of it. This caused the bridge to collapse into the river bed below. For all intents and purposes, it was destroyed. The other bombs dropped were described as near-misses. The bombing dives were initiated at 10,000 feet, with bomb-release at half that altitude. The early-returns jettisoned their bombs into the sea, receiving no sortie credit. It was otherwise with the other five pilots.

The sixth and final mission on August 15, 1944 aimed at structure-targets near Avignon on the Rhone River north of Marseille. All six of the P-38s that took off at 1715 hours reached the target at 1855 hours. Their assignment was to dive-bomb from enemy headquarters to villas nearby. They dropped a half-dozen 1000-pound GP bombs, two of them believed to have struck a couple of villas and two to have hit a bridge south of the targeted area. The rest of the bombs burst at the target's environs. So much dust was kicked up by the bombs that it was impossible to make accurate observations. Tracking-type flak, intense but inaccurate and light, arose from the target area and Avignon. No enemy aircraft were encountered.

(Editor) The following is taken directly from "Operations Order #136, 14 August 1944."

PLAN: The plan for the 49th Bomb Wing on 15 August 1944 is one phase of Operations DUCROT. The word DUCROT is a code word used when referring to the general plan.

OPERATIONS DUCROT

The object of this plan is:

1. To cause the maximum destruction to enemy coastal and beach defenses within the assault area.
2. To isolate the battlefields by the destruction of the remaining rail and road bridges across the RHONE River up to it's junction with the ISERE River and those across the ISERE and DURANCE Rivers and by blocking defiles and rail lines running through the ALPS from the ISERE southward.
3. To drop propaganda leaflets from the water's edge to about 30 miles inland.

The following objectives have been determined the most suitable for the execution of this plan.

1. Military installations and gun positions. Initially sea coast guns and military installations affecting approach to, landing on, or passing beyond the beaches.
2. Road and rail bridges.
 - a. Road and rail bridges on the RHONE, ISERE and DURANCE Rivers, which, if destroyed, can isolate the battlefield.
 - b. In conjunction with bridges across the RHONE, ISERE and DURANCE Rivers, continued attacks on road and rail bridges and defiles in the ALPS from their conjunction with the ISERE south to the coast.

PLAN OF ATTACK

The 461st Group and the 484th Group will attack BEACH 264A between U-565332 and U-585345 and the 451st Group will attack the FREJUS Road from BEACH 264A to U-561351 FREJUS.

The specific objects for this Wing is to neutralize enemy resistance to ground troops who having previously landed nearby are expected to attack towards FREJUS shortly after target time.

Crews must be warned to adhere strictly to the briefed routes. The axis of attack is along a friendly aircraft corridor established between 1230 B and 1300 B D-Day for use of heavy bombers. No aircraft in the corridor, during above period, will be fired upon unless committing a hostile act.

Also under this plan, 4 Gps from 55th Wing and 1 Gp from 5th Wing will attack ROAD BRIDGES at PONT ST. ESPRIT, DONZERE, LETIEL, VALENCE and BOURG ST. ANDEOL.

DEFENSES:

- (1) There are 18 heavy guns at ANTHEOR, 4 1/2 miles E. of target area. Nine (9) guns at ANTIBES and 22 guns at NICE will be to SE of return course after rally.
- (2) Estimated enemy fighters capabilities will not exceed 30 s/e fighter sorties and likely will be 15-20 sorties in target area. Some possibility exists of contact enroute from 50 to 75 ME-109s, including a few Italian fighters from northern Italy.
- (3) Types of enemy aircraft which may be seen in DRAGON area include: Single Engine - ME 109, FW 190 (Some with inline engine), Twin Engine - ME 110, 210/410, JU 88, DO 217, HE 177, SM 79, Float Plane -

Arado 196 - Transport - HE 111 (Single and twin engine fuselage) JU 52, SM 82 and ME 323.

All usual types of Allied bombers and fighters will be seen. In addition, a naval carrier force will be operating considerable numbers of Hellcats.

The Hellcats may carry black and white markings similar to ATC design.

ESCAPE INTELLIGENCE

The French resistance groups, or MAQUIS, scattered over a wide area, have virtually complete control over the AIX area (bounded by AMBERIEU, CYONAU, FORENS and the RHONE River) and the ARDECHE area (bounded by ANNOUAY - H - 8429, FERAY -N - 9897 and MONTFAUCON, H - 5523). They are also active in considerable numbers at numerous points between the RHONE and the Italian border (S. of Lyon, and in the wide area south of BEZIERS). Their strength and disposition is subject to constant change and current escape bulletins and maps issued by MASAF Hq. should be consulted prior to each mission.

ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF INFORMATION

In general, current information from air crews is desired concerning the enemy reaction, air and ground and evidence of large scale ground or water movements and concentrations. Specific briefing should include:

- Is the enemy reinforcing his fighter defenses? If so, where located?
- Is the enemy concentrating his ground defenses at selected vulnerable points, or spreading out his available flak?
- Are enemy ground reinforcements moving toward the assault area? If so, by what routes? Where and how concentrated?

centrated?

d. Is the enemy utilizing the RHONE River for supply and reinforcement?

NOTE: Emphasis should be placed on reporting of accurate, specific facts, giving in each case; time, place and direction.

REPORTS

In accordance with applicable instructions and standard Operating Procedure. All observations of enemy movement or concentrations should be flashed immediately to this HQ by telephone.

Maps: France 1:100,000, sheet 16Q

BR Chart 6-94

S 1579/1 (enameled print)

Special Oblique 270 degrees (photo print)

Target photo, No. TP 6-94

(signed)

CLIFTON V. STELL

Major, Air Corps

(Editor's Addendum)

Upon further research I find that our losses for the two dates; 14 - 15 August 1944, shows only one aircraft lost. That loss occurred on take-off (14 August 1944) from our base at Castelluccio Air Field. It was not considered a Missing Air Crew Report (MACR), since it did not happen in combat and all personnel could be accounted for. It involved the crew of Lt. Wilbur F. Miller, 726th Squadron. Four of the crew perished, one received major injury, three minor and two suffered no injury. Aircraft was "Cannon Fodder; Number 42-78102.

JUST A COMMON SOLDIER

He was getting old and paunchy and his hair was falling fast, and he sat around the Legion telling stories of his past; Of the war that he had fought in and the deeds that he had done, in his exploits with his buddies, they were heroes, everyone.

And tho' sometimes to his neighbors, his tales became a joke, all his Legion buddies listened, for they knew whereof he spoke. But we'll hear his tales no longer, for old Tom has passed away, and the world won't note his passing, tho' a soldier died today.

He will not be mourned by many, just his children and his wife, for he lived an ordinary quiet and uneventful life; He held a job and raised a family, quietly going his own way, and the world's a little poorer, for a soldier died today.

When the politicians leave this earth, their bodies lie in state, while thousands note their passing and proclaim that they were great.

Papers tell their life stories from the time that they were young, but the passing of a soldier goes unnoticed and unsung.

Is the greatest contribution to the welfare of our land, a guy who breaks his promise and cons his fellow man?

Or the ordinary fellow who in times of war and strife, goes off to serve his country and offers up his life?

A politician's stipend and the style in which he lives, are sometimes quite disproportionate to the services that he gives; While the ordinary soldier who offered up his all, is paid off with a medal, and perhaps a pension small.

It's so easy to forget them, for it was so long ago, that the Tom's of our country went to battle;

But we know it was not the politicians, with their compromise and ploys, who won for us the freedom that our country now enjoys.

Should you find yourself in danger with your enemies at hand, would you want a politician with his ever-shifting stand? Or would you prefer a soldier who has sworn to defend his home, his kin, and the country, and would fight until the end.

He was just a common soldier and his ranks are growing thin, but his presence should remind us we may need his like again,

For when countries are in conflict then we find the soldiers' part, is to clean up all the troubles that the politicians start.

If we cannot do him the honour while he's here to hear the praise, then at least let's give him homage at the ending of his days. Perhaps just a simple heading in a paper that would say:

"OUR COUNTRY IS MOURNING, FOR A SOLDIER DIED TODAY."

(Author Unknown)

rude awakening that I have yet to make a small contribution to the Group. So, here it is. ... I was given a surprise, but belated, birthday gift from our son, Jim, last year. Coincident with our visit with him, the "All American" visited Kalamazoo and Jim arranged for the two of us to make a flight and, further, for me to take the controls! It all struck me as being a little funny with having to pay for a ride after formerly having been PAID to fly the bird! Interesting, however. I had really forgotten how "heavy" it was on the controls. It came back quickly, however. Jim took along his video camera and used up some film on dear old Dad. Some very unflattering shots of my posterior as I got onto the flight deck.

(Editor ... I've often wondered how many of you former pilots just 'walked away from flying' after the war. I know that some stuck with it, all the way from prop to jet, and a number of you pilots went on to become commercial pilots. I was always envious of you pilot types and swore that someday I would also learn to fly something on my own. Thus I went for my civilian private license and upon gaining it, just quit flying. I had proven my point! I wasn't as inept, or dangerous, as my Cadet Training Officers had led me to believe.)

Sidney Z. Winski, 726th [PILOT] ...

Received Issue 30 of the Ad-Lib (Fall/Winter '98), and enjoyed it very much.

Al Haggerty's write up of 'Three Feathers' (my original aircraft) was very informative. It cleared up all the mysteries about 'Three Feathers.' It certainly cleared up the mystery of the run-away props over the Caribbean, as to incorrect oil pressure. Up to now I just assumed it was due to the Bermuda Triangle.

So 'Three Feathers' was finally cut up for scrap! I always assumed she was flown back to the States, with all her 135 patched up flak holes and toured the States promoting War Bonds.

Joseph Goward, 726th [ROMG: NAYLOR'S CREW]

I noted on page 35 of the #30 issue of the Ad-Lib the comments of Edward Nall. I was the radio operator on the plane piloted by Gerald Naylor. This was the lead plane on the mission which accounted for the non-usual crew in which Murray Eskew (KIA) was involved. The Navigator, Bombardier and Major Richenbach were not the usual Naylor Crew. If my recollection is correct, Dale Miller, whole comments appear on page 33 of Issue #30, was the regular Naylor copilot. The engineer on the flight was James Hislop, the tail gunner was John Jodell; and while I can picture the waist gunners, I am not able to recall their names.

The plane suffered a flak burst in the nose and the right engines went out of control. On bailing out I and several others landed in a plowed field in Hungary at a town, best I recall, named 'Cozeccahara' (spelling and name in doubt). Before we untangled the parachutes, several truck loads of German soldiers arrived and took us prisoners. We were assembled in a barn in which two Russian prisoners were confined. I am not going into detail about the remainder of the detention as it would be too lengthy to narrate.

(Editor ... Just for a little clarification, Joe. The copilot

you referenced from page 33 was not part of the Naylor crew. Your copilot was Charles A. Miller. As to the rest of the crew on that infamous day, 7 February 1945, they were G.W. Naylor (Pilot), J. Richenbach (Command Pilot), 2 Navigators, M.F. Eskew and J.C. Robertson [both KIA], R.L. Barrett (Bombardier), J.W. Hislop (AEG), Gunners; J.B. Wilson, J.H. Jodell, E.E. DeWitt, and yourself as ROG. One of the Navigators rode the Nose Turret, thus only 5 enlisted men were aboard. I hope this clears up that little fuzziness in your memory. By the way, I found that Hislop and DeWitt are deceased; Hislop in 1978 and DeWitt in 1977.)

James Bitzinger, 724th [NAVIGATOR: DONOGHUE'S CREW] ...

Thanks to Mary Jo Potts and your excellent reporting (Issue 30, page 5), I have found comfort in knowing the fate of my crew members. The report was very complete, but I'll always wonder why they stayed with the plane.

(Editor ... Jim, I guess as to "why," we'll never know. The answers lie in the graves in Santa Fe, New Mexico and Flint, Michigan. I feel positive that no clandestine efforts were made to hide any facts. I believe these reports were true, factual and complete.)

Charles W. Anderson, 724th [GUNNER: POWERS' CREW] ...

My plane was shot down August 23, 1944 and I was liberated May 2, 1945. I believe that there are only two members of my crew still alive; myself and David Beck. All of the crew members who died in the crash are interred in a single grave in Keokuk, Iowa. This was the central location for the families and I attended the Memorial Service sometime in 1946 or 47.

(Editor ... There is still one outstanding member of the original crew not accounted for; Daniel Suzyn. I can't find him in any phone directory, nor in Death Benefits paid under Social Security. I did find an Alfonso Garde as having died in Feb 1992. There was also another member of the 23 Aug crew that is still unaccounted for; Dwight L. Moss -Photographer. Oops, I just located the family of Dwight Moss in Missouri and found that he had died on 17 September 1997.)

Jim Coyle, 724th [PILOT] ...

I didn't make Atlanta - had heart attack last spring and don't do much any more. Something bothered me in Issue #30. The list of deceased - as you know, Carlson and McCutchen were original pilots of the 724th .. and that don't leave many of us left. I was so disturbed by such a long list on page 11 that I went back to Issue #25 (Spring of 95) and totaled up thru Issue #30 and in 3 years there were 193 deceased. At that rate the organization has very few years remaining. I also wonder what happens when your number is called?

(Editor ... First off; If you could take a look at all the deceased that I have located, via the computer and internet, those numbers would come close to 1,374. That's out of a total of some 4,621 that I can account for, via old shipping orders, etc., that made up the total Group personnel. Before this newsletter goes out, there will probably be more. As to the second part; When my

number is called, I'll let you to be the first to know. But that's a long way off ... so don't hold your breath!)

Mitchel Cohen, 727 [GUNNER: TURNBULL'S CREW] ...

Thanks for the letter and comments. You mentioned sending out mail to 'passive 451st guys.' I remember when I was one of those guys. You wrote, 'I'm doing a lot of chopping, but I don't see any chips flying.' True, at the time I was so busy and my mind was a zillion miles away. Then, at a young 78, my wife decided that I should retire. We came down to Florida a little over a year ago and bought a little chateau. "Oh, what am I going to do! Guess I'll look up my 'bombing buddies,' if they are still alive and can be found." That's when I wrote to you and you were kind enough to send me the info on my crew; Four located, four deceased, and two - who knows? I have not found Jimmy Lynch, but through my library internet, am still looking. Needless to say, my Pilot, Bombardier and I were at the Atlanta Convention and renewed our friendship after 54 years. I am still bubbling over that experience.

As a final thought, let me tell you of an experience in which you later became involved. The Odyssey of the Cappleman Crew. They were in my squadron. We played softball the afternoon before the fateful mission. Don't ask me who won, because I don't remember. At any rate they are flying off our right wing when they got hit. There was that ship with fire from the engine to the tail. All of us were hoping that the fire could be extinguished, but that was not to be. We were so sad when they fell out of formation. I think we swore off any further inter-crew camaraderie. All these years we did not know what happened until you and the Ad-Lib came to our rescue. That was supposed to be a milk run, but the flak was pretty sharp. They got us too. We had to land at Corsica for repairs.

(Editor ... Thanks Mitch for the most informative letter regarding 'passive 451st'ers' (as you once claimed to be) and the remembrances of the August 2nd mission that involved the Cappleman Crew. I'm glad I was able to lift the 'veil of the unknown' from your memory.)

Joseph Jones, 725th [GUNNER: B.G. BROWN'S CREW] ...

The enclosed picture has surfaces in the Ad-Lib several times with only partial identification. The identity of the last three on the right, kneeling, are: [middle bottom row] Bonneville Rhodes, ROG; Henry Dieter, AEG; and lastly, Harmon Westerburg GUNNER (Dec. 1993). These were Tuney's original crew. Vince DiLella was ball gunner until Regensburg mission. Tuney was being groomed to replace Capt. Bowen as Operation Officer. Members of his crew were asked to volunteer for 25 more missions. The above three men volunteered.

(Editor ... Thanks Joe for the listing of those three 'unknowns.' I found out from Bob Kacena [HDQ, Radar Navigator - pictured standing on extreme left], that the officer in question - next to him - was Lt William Tausig [NAVIGATOR; A.W. JOHNSON'S CREW] who, on that mission, flew the nose turret to aid the Group Navigator, Lt Ralph Byers in his pilotage. I hadn't heard of any volunteering for more missions, as did Westerburg, Rhodes and Dieter. Maybe others can enlighten me



more on the subject of volunteering for an extended tour. Since your letter I have discovered that the gunner (extreme left) was Garland Kornegay. Now we have total identification: Standing; L-R Kacena, Tausig, Byers, Hughes, Tuney & Eaton. Kneeling; Kornegay, Petrovic, Rhodes, Dieter & Westerburg.)



**B/G Robert Scott & Jack Thomas
Robins AFB / Atlanta Reunion**

Jack Thomas, 727th [AEG: READ'S CREW] ...

Regarding the Atlanta Reunion; I'm sending a picture of Brigadier General Robert L. Scott and myself. It was General Scott that flew with the 'Flying Tigers' and wrote the book, 'God is My Copilot' in 1943. He was 91 years old in April '99. I had read his book around 1947 and to meet him at our reunion was unbelievable. It sure made my day.

Paul Harden, 725th [PILOT] ...

Thank you so very much for your January letter. I too get bogged down, forgetful, and busy. Then in this 'life of patch and mend,' the old body spends a lot of time getting ready to visit the doctors, consulting with them, and with the medical community. Then paying the 'bloody bills.' I guess at our age, we all have that in common.

Bob, you do a wonderful, outstanding job of keeping this organization going and growing. You are to be commended for your effort and time. I thank you for your devotion and dedication to this endeavor. Enclosed is a

small contribution to help you keep thing going.
(Editor ... Thanks Paul for the 'kudo's.' But I can't help but reflect back when we had our second reunion in Colorado Springs and you became my 'right hand man' in your duties as Master of Ceremonies and on-site organizer. Our membership still talks about what a great time that was.)

Marinel Nall, COMPLIMENTARY MEMBER ...

Enclosed a small contribution in memory of my husband, Edward Nall. Ed was a devoted member of the 451st and he thoroughly enjoyed being with his old friends and renewing acquaintances at Reunion time! You all had such a special place in his heart, and he was so very proud to be part of your splendid organization.
(Editor ... No more, Marinel, than we were to have him involved. He certainly carried his share, both during wartime and with his devotion to our cause. He will be missed.)

Kenneth Collins, 724th [BOMBARDIER: DONELSON'S CREW] ...

I believe that I owe you my thanks for passing my name along to Nandor Mohos, who is a young Hungarian that is doing a reconstruction job on documenting the history of airmen and aircraft that went down into Hungary during WW-II.

Should any of the 451st guys, with computers, and who were shot down over Hungary and be interested in contacting him, his e.mail address is: nandor.mohos@ntc.nokia.com. His mailing address is: Nandor Mohos, Veszprem, Cholnoky Jenő u.2 8200 Hungary. He's a young guy, in his 20's, out of the army and recently has moved to Budapest and is working as a software engineer with NOKIA in Budapest.

(Editor ... Thanks, Ken, for reminding me of the potential of gaining information right from the country from which some of our 451st history originated.)

Robert A. Johnson, 726th [GUNNER: CALVIN'S CREW] ...

I suppose you have read about the static display B-24M (44-51228) at Lackland AFB that has been given to England for display. As of this date it is still here. A company out of California has been here, then went home to make molds with which to make a fiber glass duplicate B-24 to replace this one. I thought 'BULL' until it was pointed out that the P-38 on display is a fiber glass unit and it looks exactly like the ones that escorted us on our missions. Exact in every detail.

(Editor ... I had heard a lot about the English request on the internet, arguments pro and con, but did not know where they were getting it from. Thanks for the update.)

Sallie Eaton Elliott: Complimentary Member ...

We appreciate the January letter very much and were glad to hear that all is going well with you. Of course, we know the Bomb Group interest is thriving as is evidenced in the "Ad-Lib" newsletters we receive. We enjoy each and every one of them so much and continue to learn more and more about the Group's war experiences with each issue. It makes us proud that Dad was part of such a wonderful organization and served with such exceptional human beings. Dad's only grand-

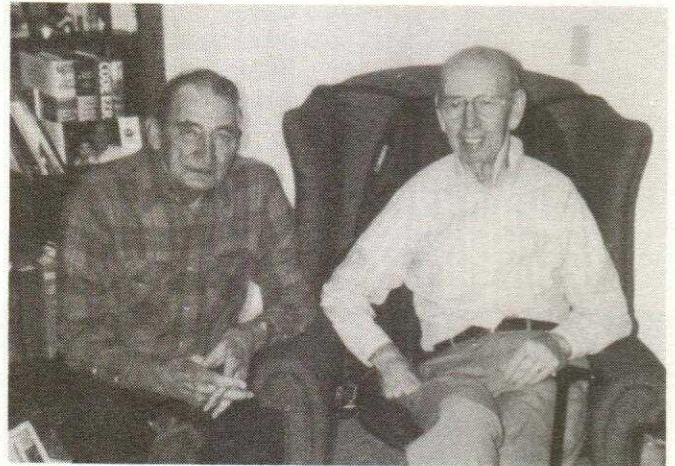
child, Kate Eaton (Henry's daughter) will be going off to college next year and we are all anticipating whether she will head South or North! She is an excellent student and just returned from a 10-day tour of Italy with her Latin class. She hasn't hit earth yet!

(Editor ... Thanks Sallie for the bolstering you give this humble effort. You are especially kind in your generous donation to keep this effort alive. I'm sure "Our Colonel" would look kindly upon you for keeping the family involved.)

Charles Dean Kelsall, 727th [ROMG: PARK'S CREW] ...

Of the pack of AD-LIB's that you sent me, I scanned the first one, Issue 16; Spring 1988 and thought they were great. But I laid them aside for later reading. Just recently I read Issue 17, and seeing the name 'CON JOB' really woke me up. Since I knew THAT plane very well and was especially fond of it. Our crew named it and brought it overseas. I ended up scanning through the 11 Ad-Lib's that I have and noticed that 'CON JOB' was mentioned several times. Just like a dream come true, since I've often wished I had kept a diary of our missions and dates of events. I was saddened to read that 'CON JOB' went down over Vienna on August 22nd 1944, but glad to hear that most of the crew escaped. On finding out about the 'Ploesti Picture.' I thought our crew would have been onboard, but after reading the diary by Matt Cindrich, seems that his crew was on the 31 May 1944 mission with the 'CON JOB.'

(Editor ... Glad to read that you refreshed some of your wartime memories, Dean. Your generous check helped us refresh some of our financial expenses, as well.)



John Caputo / Kenneth Carter

John Caputo, 725th [GUNNER: LYDECKER'S CREW] ...

I'm sending a donation for a Memorial Tribute for Kenneth K. Carter. He passed away on April 12, 1999. He was the oldest member of our crew and I was the youngest. He fathered me through some pretty rough times. We were the only two farm boys on the crew and had a lot in common. This last winter I went over to visit him in Broken Arrow, Okla and we had a real good visit, despite his series of recent strokes. I was happy I

did. So many times in life we wished we had done it more .. you know how that goes.

(Editor ... Nice eulogy to a fellow crewmate, John. Ken Carter would have appreciated it. Something you mentioned about 'stacking-up' A/C "Red Ryder" onto the runway at Vis [22 Nov 1944] and to be condemned, caused me to do some research. My reasearch showed it to be 'taken out of inventory' at about 11 APR 1945. Our 'Fight'n 451st' book shows it to have been sent back to the U.S. for a Bond Tour. It was [by my records], originally a 726th A/C, transferred on 2 OCT 1944 to the 725th. Somewhere along the line it had to have been patched up and brought back into the inventory after your Munich M/Y mission. Ah, the vagaries of doing military research!)

Peter Brust, 724th [Complimentary Member] ... (Via e.mail) Just a short note to advise you that I've returned from a short, but very successful trip to Austria and meeting with Felix Rameder (WW-2 Historian & Researcher). He and I traveled to my dad's crash site, located some pieces of B-24 wreckage and spoke with an eyewitness to the crash. It was very interesting. Felix picked me up at the train station on Friday evening and drove me around the area where he grew up to show me where German fighter bases (ME-109 factories, landing strips, hanger pads, etc.) were located during WWII; found me a place to stay on Friday night; ensured I ate (very well) on Friday and Saturday. He had located the

crash site and eyewitnesses house, prior to my arrival in Austria. We drove six hours into the mountains and back - and hiked with me and the eyewitness up into the woods (not easy for a 60 plus year-old man like myself), on Saturday, then drove me back to my train on late Saturday - all without asking a thing from me. He is a remarkable man, and his wife is most delightful.

(Editor ... Glad to hear that your contact with Felix was rewarding and successful. From all my previous contacts with Felix, he seems to be a dedicated and professional historian. Our readers can refer to page 14 in this issue for more information on your quest.)

Marion Lyons, 727th [Complimentary Member] ...

This is just a note to let you know that another member of the 451st is gone. Paul fought cancer for nine years, passing away on 17 June 1999, and he certainly gave it his best! He never complained and had a lot of determination. He always enjoyed your correspondence about the 451st.

(Editor ... I was sorry to hear of your husband, Paul's passing. Your letter (and obituary from the Ironton, Ohio Tribune) came too late for Paul to be included in this issue of the Ad-lib. His name will be listed in the upcoming issue. As it is in life, flying with the Mahon Crew, Paul showed determinatin to 'hang in there.' He will be missed.)



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