



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

Issue 32

Price \$5 (Free to Members)

Spring/Summer 2000

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

DATE: 20 to 24 September 2000

HOTEL: Hilton Saint Louis Airport

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HOTEL RATE: \$69 - Plus 13.975% Tax
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Could it be that you're still 'on the fence' about attending our 'Millennium Reunion Bash?' Perhaps a little push will bring you over to our side. What little I've told you, up to this point, may not be enough, but believe me there's a lot more to our reunions than just looking for old buddies.

Striking up conversations with guys from your Squadron can bring up topics that the both of you remember and can elaborate on. (e.g. "Golly-Gee-Whiz, Sam, I remember that ship - or that day - or that crew - or that mission. Where you there too?") Get involved and see how it works.

As to what's going to take place, regarding activities?; 'Stay Tuned.' You will ALL be mailed your registration notice, with V-Mail form and pertinent information about our agenda; All in plenty of time.

But the main thing is that you can plan your transportation (Air, Train, Bus or Car) for the above dates. Since some are already planning their itinerary, and are requesting hotel accommodations: I should give you the Hilton's phone number -314.426-5500. Say that you are with the *451st Bomb Group* and make sure get a **CONFIRMATION NUMBER**.

As an aside - To those wanting to know about the newly re-published '*Fight'n 451st*' book. If you want to pick up your new edition at the reunion - Turner Publishing will be 'ON SITE' to offer them for sale.

"AD-LIB"**451st BOMB GROUP (H), LTD.
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We reserve the right to edit or clarify any article submitted to the Ad Lib. We may choose not to include an article due to length, content or negative implications Editor

451st AFFILIATED WEB PAGES

With the advent of the 'wonderful world of' computers, and their potential, we can offer our 'on-line,' computer oriented members, something to view with dedicated interest. And to participate in, as well.

Two sites are already on-line, with the possibility of two more coming up soon. These are dedicated to Squadrons, rather than to the Group itself.

One site is for the 725th Squadron. It was set up by Chris Pollard (Associate Member) under the auspices of Harvey Brown, Copilot (Charles Trumper's Crew) from the 725th. It can be found under the heading:

http://members.tripod.com/hey_moe/index.html

If following through its 'string' you can then access what is called an 'e.group' which puts you into a bulletin board type format where you have direct contact with other 451st members, as well as other interested persons.

The other site is for the 726th. It too has a dedicated webmaster (Chris Rink) who is doing it in honor of his father, Wes Rink, Copilot (Bob Taylor's Crew). Check out:

<http://www.b-24.com/>

Two other sites being worked on are for the 724th and the 727th. Hopefully they will be on-line soon. When they do, I will promote them through your e.mail addresses I already have. So if you aren't in 'my address book' drop me a line, via this same format, or by letter, so you may be the first to know. My address is listed above: but in case it suddenly vaporizes

bobk451@aol.com**FLYING THE NOSE TURRET**

by Achilles Kozakis

Having the "Best Seat in the House" has it's consequences and they also say that about "Seeing is Believing." I instantly became a believer - in a big way - during my second mission over Vienna, Austria

We were flying at 26,000 feet, the weather was CAVU and I had a great view of what was coming ahead. At 10 o'clock level and at approximately 15 to 20 miles distance, I could see heavy flak and smoking aircraft. My selfish thoughts told me that we were heading for another target. WRONG! We instantly made a sharp left turn on the I.P. Oh my God! We were heading into the same hell I had witnessed just moments earlier.

I had one thought greater than all others: Will I live? Instantly I began praying, again and again "Our Father Who Art In Heaven", until I gathered my wits and strength to overcome my fear. Above all, I could not let my crew down and so I continued with my watchful duties.

Bombers flying in tight formation began to break up as aircraft, riddled with flak, falling out of formation with smoking engines, some with chunks being blown off. First one, then another, then another Oh God, is there no let up? Aircraft rolling on their backs and falling straight down. I followed them until they were out of my view. I could see no parachutes, only trailing smoke.

There was nothing I could do for my fellow crews who were being mauled and chopped up by flak bursting around all of us. It was so thick - not only could you walk on it, you could smell it too!

A far cry from my first mission: a milk run over Sarajevo's Marshalling Yards - Troop Concentration. I had no idea how difficult these missions would get.

On the third day following the Vienna mission, we were bombing an Oil Refinery in Blechhammer, Germany. By this time I had been baptized under fire and my fears, although never completely absent (you never get over it), were somehow weaker, diminished and more controllable.

Six days of stand-downs due to bad weather followed, giving me and my crewmembers a well deserved rest. But the war goes on and the following days earned me five more missions, along with my first Air Medal and a Purple Heart. The missions included:

Munich, Germany - Marshalling Yards
Blechhammer, (South) Germany - Oil Refineries
Villa Franco, Italy - Airdrome
Vienna, Austria - Oil Refineries
Blechhammer (South), Germany - Oil Refineries

I was told at the end of this memorable month that I was now a "veteran" and had earned the right to tell my war stories and to bitch about it. They say, "War Is Hell."

CLOWER'S CLOSE BRUSH WITH WATERY GRAVE

The following is a story that crossed my desk just in time to be added to this newsletter. It came from one of the survivors of Olds' 726th Crew. Some of you 726th men may remember the incident, or circumstances surrounding the incident: - Ship, "Merry Barbara," gets shot up over Ploesti on 17 August 1944 - tries to make it back with major gasoline leaks - makes it almost to Italian Coast - crew bails out over water - nine of the twelve on board drowned (including the Squadron's Engineering Officer).

The one currently surviving crewmember, Ervin Clower, passed along relevant documents that were gathered upon his return to the U.S. From these letters, and the documents that I had in-house, I put together this tale of valor and tenacity.

****The makeup of the crew that day:**

1Lt. John W. Olds, Pilot - Rescued - Deceased 8 September 1984

2Lt. Eugene C. Shaner, Copilot - KIA

2Lt. Alphonse E. Witwicki, Navigator - KIA

2Lt. Clarence R. Fuller, Bombardier - KIA

1Lt. John L. Sharp, Passenger - KIA - 726th Engineering Officer

S/Sgt. Ervin G. Clower, AEG Top Turret Gunner - Rescued

Sgt. Agustin Solis, Ball Turret Gunner - KIA

Cpl. George Bruce, Waist Gunner - KIA

Cpl. D.L. Penland, Nose Turret Gunner - KIA

Cpl. Clyde C. Williams, Tail Gunner - KIA

S/Sgt Donald R. Burns, ROG Waist Gunner - Rescued - Inducted from Derby, Virginia - Yet to be located

Sgt. John C. Sutter, Photographer - KIA

Letter from Lt John Olds' father to Ervin Clower's wife.

Wed - 10th '45

My Dear Mrs Clower, I was so glad to hear from you and that you were glad to receive the pictures. They were good, and fortunate for us they were taken. I do hope you get to see Jack, but fearful you won't get to, unless you already have, or do right away, as he leaves the 16th for Gunther Field, Montgomery, Ala. I know Jack would love to visit with you because your husband was a most unusual engineer and "tops" in Jack's evaluation. He said that he had had several engineers with him in his 45 missions and never one that was as capable as your husband. Not only that, but he was such a swell fellow and good in every way. As I give you the details, I will speak of him as the "Engineer," because he played a prominent part in that fatal mission. It has been mighty hard writing letters to

the others because their son or husband was lost, but it's a real pleasure to write to you and give you these details because your husband was not only saved, but was a real hero. Did you know that he got the DFC for what he had done? He sure did and richly deserved it, so Jack said. The remarkable part of it, if I remember correctly, this was about the 3rd mission your husband had gone on. I might be wrong in that statement, but I know he hadn't gone on very many. Well, here goes the story - They had 2 extra men along making it a crew of 12, instead of the usual 10. These two men (I will brag a bit on Jack to you, which I couldn't do to the others) asked to go along for the "ride" so's to get in an extra mission. These men wanted to go with Jack because they felt he was one of the 2 best pilots there and wouldn't go with any other pilot, except for the other pilot, that they considered as good as Jack. He didn't want them to go and told them that it was no "milk run," being over "Ploesti," (By the way if you hadn't read last week's "Post," be sure and read it because it gives a long article on the missions over "Ploesti.") but the two men insisted and Jack let them go. They were hit before reaching the target, but not seriously. They made their bomb run and "smashed" the target. As they came off their bomb run, they received several direct hits, knocking out the #2 engine, hitting their nose turret, injuring the radio man, knocking off the bomb bay doors, cutting gas tubes to tanks, and cutting wiring to the instrument board. There were numerous holes all thru the wing and body of the bomber. One waist gunner was hit by a piece of flak in his thigh. The raw gas spurted out into the middle of the ship and the floor was flooded with it, and hydraulic fluid. The engineer crimped the gas lines and stopped the gas leakage, then spiced the wires to the instrument board (a most remarkable piece of work) and got it to working. The piece of flak that knocked out the wiring had gone thru just under Jack's left arm, missing his body by fractions of an inch. They were "limping" back home on three engines. The gas gauges were reading near empty. The engineer had to estimate the amount of gas left. He and Jack talked it over and thought that there might be enough left to take them back. Worth the try, at least. The two wing bombers stuck with them, although they were well behind the flight. They lightened the ship of everything they could throw overboard

and the engineer took an axe and knocked out the top turret and threw it overboard, piece by piece. It weighed 700 pounds and the first time it had ever been done and he received the DFC for this. As they flew over "Yugoslavia," Jack told the crew that they had better bail out as their chances in getting back were slim. He didn't order them to bail out because of the possibility of their getting back, but left the decision up to them. They asked,



1LT John W. Olds Crew - 726th Squadron
S/Sgt Ervin Clower; Front Row, 2nd From Left

"Skipper, what are you going to do?" Jack replied that he intended to fly the "crate" back, if possible. They talked it over and said they would stick with the ship. About 1 PM, when about 30 miles out at sea and only a short while from safety, the gas gave out and the engines quit. Jack at once ordered the crew to "bail out." The engineer helped the 9 to bail out and reported to Jack that the 9 were safely away. (I couldn't say in my other letters, and please don't you write to any of them, but one officer, I won't say which, lost his nerve and refused to jump, so the engineer had to push him out thru the bomb bay opening.) Jack had been in constant contact with his base and the two wing bombers, who were still with them. Now rescue ships were on their way. The two wingmen also reported to Jack that all nine chutes opened okay and they were going down safely. They bailed out at 5,000 feet and there was a stiff wind so no doubt would be badly scattered. When the engineer reported to Jack, Jack told him to "bail out," which he did. He then ordered the copilot, who all this time was helping Jack hold the bomber as level as possible, but it was in a pretty steep dive, to also bail out. Both chutes opened okay. Jack took one last look around and bailed out. The ship was going down in a vertical dive and Jack didn't dare pull his ripcord because the ship and he were falling together. He was also less than 1,000 feet up when he jumped out. When he did pull the rip cord and the chute opened, his body swung right, then left and he hit the water. The bomber hitting a short distance away, at about the same time, broke up and sank. Jack was pulled thru the water by his chute and he said it was like being pulled by a speed boat. He went under and thru waves and thought he would be drowned before he could free himself from the chute. Jack is an expert swimmer and thinks if he had not been, he would have drowned. The stiff wind made the sea very rough. Jack received chemical burns all over his chest, abdomen and legs, due to reaction of gas, hydraulic fluid and salty sea water. He was in intense pain. He swam and floated about, until 5 PM. All this time he could see the rescue planes circling in the distance like small birds. He was several miles from where the rest of the crew had bailed out. He prayed constantly and about 5 pm, when he had begun to think they never would find him, he saw one plane leave the rest and fly in a direct line to, and over, him. He waved his arms and splashed the water until they



Caption from Newspaper Article
15th AAF IN ITALY — Staff Sergeant Ervin G. Clower, 23, engineer gunner on a B-24 Liberator Bomber examines the Mae West life jacket which kept him afloat for 23 hours in the Adriatic Sea after he bailed out of his ship. The Liberator, riddled with flak over Ploesti, Rumania, ran out of gas within sight of the Italian Coast, and the pilot gave the order to jump. He was one of three survivors to be picked up.

Formerly of Matador, Tex., he now lives in Paducah
CERTIFIED AND PASSED BY FIELD PRESS CENSOR

saw him. They came back and sat down in the water and dragged him on board, as he was too weak from shock and pain to climb up by himself. They put medication on his burns and he then directed them back over the course that his bomber had taken. They searched until dark, about 2 hours, but didn't locate any of the boys. They then took him to the hospital where he spent several days. He was heart-broken when he learned that only two besides himself had been saved; the radio man, who Jack understood was picked up 20 minutes after being in the water, but the radio operator says it was more like 2 hours. Your husband, who floated for 24 hours, to within five miles of the shore, was then picked up by a fishing boat. Jack asked him about it and he likewise watched the planes searching for them, far off in the distance. When darkness came, saw them give up the search. A terrible experience it must have been for him. Jack said that your husband about gave up, but kept on praying because of his loved

ones at home. Jack said that being in the water for twenty four hours made his tongue so swollen he couldn't talk at first and was near death when picked up. But he made a swell recovery. Prayer and willpower kept him going. He (your husband) told the board of inquiry he never wanted to fly with any other pilot than with Jack, which made Jack feel good. In his 45 missions, these were the first men lost and first ship lost by Jack. It hurt him terribly. He had been shot up several times and three times had brought his crew and ship back safely on two engines. If they had had just a few more minutes of gas they would have made it safely this time. The wing bombers told Jack later that there was such a fog all about his plane, due to fumes of escaping gas, and no one understands why the ship didn't explode in the air. Only God can answer that. They excused the last five missions Jack had to fly and let him come home, although they told him if he would stay, his promotions would come rapidly. But Jack felt he never wanted to fly a bomber again where he would be responsible for the lives of a crew. He arrived home the last of September, was here a couple weeks, then he and his wife, Barbara, (a mighty sweet girl, and after whom the "MERRY BARBARA" was named) and a Captain Robinson, a navigator (one of the best, so says Jack), whom no doubt your husband knows, drove to Miami, Fla to spend a couple weeks there. Jack was then transferred to Smyrna Field, Tenn. Then on to Randolph

Field for schooling as instructor and finished there. As I said before, the 16th he reports to Gunther Field to be an instructor for the duration ... we hope. We have two others in service and a son-in-law. Fred, our oldest, is attached to the 17th Bomb Grp. He spent Christmas, two years ago in Africa - last year in Sardinia and this year in France. He was a bombardier/gunner, but got hurt before going overseas and was made a S/Sgt and took care of supplies. Then about a year ago they made him a draftsman, he is a good artist, and he now illustrates the route to a target and the main target on a big map. He loves this kind of work. He and Jack got together twice over there, once in Italy and once in Sardinia. Then there is Billy, just 20 years old. He is a Pharmacist 2/C and has been in the So. Pacific - spent his second Christmas there. He went thru the "Saipan & Tinian" Campaigns and though we hear from him, we don't know where he is just now. He is attached to the 2nd Marine Division. We fear he is in this last invasion of the Philippines. Then "Woody," Kay's husband (our daughter) is a Lt. in the Navy and on convoy duty in the Atlantic. He is on a Destroyer. They have a boy two years old and a baby girl three months old. Kay and her babies live here with us. We have one other child, Janet, nine years old and a great comfort to us. We are so glad your husband was saved. Jack had told me the names of those saved, but I had forgotten, so when I wrote you earlier, I didn't know your husband was the engineer. You are to be complimented on having such a swell husband and such a fine engineer. We do hope he comes back to you safely - and soon.

Respectfully yours, Dr. F. C. Olds

P.S. I had to hurry so, in writing this letter, you may not be able to read it - NO excuse for the bad writing.

Editor: Indeed it was a struggle to decipher the longhand script that Dr. Fredrick C. Olds placed upon paper that day. Dr. Olds was probably using his best prescription writing hand to get his message across. I tried my best to transcribe the thrust of his message. Dr. Olds, back in 1945, was an Osteopathic Physician, practicing out of Warsaw, Indiana.

To add further to this journal of the 17 August 1944, Ploesti Mission, I should include the deposition that the 726th Intelligence Officer, 1st Lt. Albert Roemer, included. It reads thusly;

21 August 1944

"Statement of Circumstances"

On 17 August 1944, First Lieutenant John W. Olds, 0-681469, was pilot of aircraft Number 42-78484, on a mission over the Romano-Americano Oil Refinery at Ploesti, Rumania. In the target area his aircraft was severely damaged, one engine was rendered inoperative and on the return journey he was seen to abandon most of his removable equipment. At approximately 41°21'N. 16°40'E., in the Adriatic Sea, seven parachutes were seen to leave the airplane and the airplane was seen to crash in the sea. The location of the crash was called in to Air Sea Rescue by another airplane of this Squadron which circled the area for three quarters of an hour. Two Spitfire type aircraft were also seen circling the area. Up to the present time Lieutenant Olds and his radio operator, S/Sgt Donald R. Burns, 13035012, have been picked up by Air Sea Rescue Service and it is the opinion of the undersigned that two other unidentified crew mem-

bers have also been picked up. The undersigned has no opinion as to the fate of the remaining crew members.

(signed) Albert L. Roemer

Ed: Still further confirmation of facts comes from the pilot himself, 1st Lt. John W. Olds;

I, 1st Lieutenant John W. Olds, 0-681469, was pilot of B-24 J type aircraft, AAF number 42-78484, on 17 August 1944 on a bombing mission over Ploesti, Rumania.

We were going over the target area when my plane received a direct hit by flak in the bomb bay, rupturing the fuel lines. We dropped our bombs and the ship received several more hits in the bomb bay, fuselage and left wing. My engineer made what repairs he could and switched over to the auxiliary tank. There saw enough gas left for approximately one hour's flying, so I decided it would be best to try and make the Italian coast. In the meantime I called BIG FENCE for homing instructions. I called them again to take a bearing on my plane and to keep contact with me in case I had to ditch.

Approximately thirty miles off the Italian mainland at 41°21'N, 16°40'E, number one and three engines quit due to lack of gasoline. I could not say for sure as to the distance I was from shore but in my opinion it was between twenty or thirty miles from shore. I gave the order to jump at approximately 1300, at an altitude of about 5000 feet. I myself abandoned the ship a few minutes later at about an altitude of 2000 feet. To the best of my knowledge all men on the plane jumped when I gave the order, but I did not see any parachutes after I myself had jumped. I hit the water and the plane crashed about a mile from me. I took off my clothes and swam towards the wreckage, finally finding a gas tank which I clung to until I was rescued. I had been in the water about four hours and had been drifting in a westerly direction all the time. At about 1700 o'clock I was picked up by the Air Sea Rescue plane. I was taken to the hospital for observation and found that my radio operator was also safe, having been rescued by Air Sea Rescue also. I do not know what the fate of the other men on board my plane might have been, nor do I know of the extent of the search made. The search was made by the Air Sea Rescue Service, located at Foggia Main Air Field, Italy.

(signed) John W. Olds.

Ed: At this point in time, the finding and rescue of S/Sgt Ervin G. Clower hadn't been officially noted in the Missing Air Crew Report. Instead I found this newspaper clipping dramatizing Clower's ordeal

PADUCAH BOY ADRIFT AT SEA MANY HOURS BEFORE RESCUE

An unusual story has been released by the AAF in Italy of a Paducah boy who would not quit and would not give up to die. The boy is Ervin G. Clower, 23, son of Mr. and Mrs. John Clower who lived here until a few years past. They now live in Roswell, New Mexico.

The Liberator, of which Clower was a member, was making a flight over Ploesti laden with 1000 pounds of bombs. They made their target, but as they turned to go home their ship was hit so heavily that everyone had to bail out. Gasoline was pouring from the tanks and the engines were so badly damaged the ship was going down.

The pilot gave everyone orders to bail out over the Adriatic. Clower was one of the last to quit the ship. He forgot to open his chute until near the water, but did so in time to break the shock and release himself.

S/Sgt Clower had not been in the water long until his shoes were soaked and he had to cut them loose with a knife. To aid his life belt he removed his pants, tied the legs and fastened the top around the midriff, bringing the legs up over is neck. The pants thus inflated and helped to float his body. He said he learned that from a teacher in school.

Five planes circled overhead, but they did not see him. He looked for his buddies, but could not spot any of them. The day passed on. He kept paddling towards shore, which was 30 miles away. Night came and he spotted a star to guide him.

When the waves would turn him around he would immediately locate his star again and paddle on. Before morning he said he had almost given up, as he was becoming sick from the salt water. His tongue began to swell; but, when back in the hospital he stated that the thought of again seeing his parents and the family kept him working towards shore.

Ship Sighted

Early in the morning he saw a searchlight poking about in the sky around Bari. This gave him new hope and he kept watching his star and struggling on as best he could. He examined his trousers. They still held air and he decided he could make it.

Then, from out of the west, a small fishing boat hove in sight. But it was more than a mile away and his efforts to attract the crew was in vain. He kept drifting towards shore, now about twenty miles away. The little fishing craft came into sight again. This time it was much closer, not more than an eight of a mile away. He shouted as best he could, flailed his arms to be seen.

From his hospital bed in Bari, S/Sgt Clower was all praise for the four Italians in the fishing boat who rescued him.

"They tried to feed me with some bread, cheese and wine, but I couldn't swallow a thing," said Clower. "They took off my clothes and dressed me with some of their own. When they brought me to the beach some Americans offered them money, but they wouldn't take it. I certainly would like to see something done for them," he said.

The ordeal cost S/Sgt Clower twenty pounds of flesh, but he is rapidly regaining strength in the hospital according to news released from officials.

This was the last flight for the Liberator, "Mary Barbara," on which Clower was a crew member, and came near being the last for the Paducah boy who would "not give up."

Ed: Another excerpt from still another article;

FORMER RESIDENT AWARDED HONORS

S/Sgt Ervin G Clower, son of Mr. and Mrs John Clower of Roswell, N.M., former Matador residents, has been awarded the Purple Heart, Air Medal and Distinguished Flying Cross, according to a message received from his wife, at Houston. Sgt Clower is a graduate of Matador High School, Class of 1939.

Ed: Further documentation from that day:

The day of August 18, 1944, I was fishing near Santo Spirito for New Laus during this fishing I saw a man calling help, immediately I went towards to give him help and pick him up. I took him and brought him to Bari to the nearest place that I thought it was where he can have all his cure as possible.

When the man became okay I examined that he was a motorist of airplane. The mans name was CLOWER.

(Signed) CAPPELLUTI DOMENICO Via Bari No. 15 Molfetta, (Bari)

MEMORIAL TRIBUTE BY ARCHIBALD MCLEISH

The young dead soldiers do not speak.

Nevertheless they are heard in the still houses.

(Who has not heard them?)

They say,

We were young. We have died. Remember us.

They say,

We have done what we could

But until it is finished it is not done.

They say,

We have given our lives

But until it is finished no one can know what our lives gave.

They say,

Our deaths are not ours,

They are yours,

They will mean what you make them.

They say,

Whether our lives, and our deaths were for peace and new hope

Or for nothing

We cannot say.

It is you who must say this.

They say,

We leave you our deaths , Give them their meaning.

A MISSION AND TRIBUTE TO OUR DEPARTED COMRADES

Not too many miles from my home in Marengo, IL (251 to be exact) lies the city of Keokuk, IA. It lies nestled in the southeastern most tip of Iowa, along the mighty Mississippi River. I set my goal one spring day to pay a visit there. Purpose of my visit was to pay my respects to one of our 451st crews that lay buried in the Keokuk National Cemetery.

What's so unusual about these men of the 724th Bomb Squadron being buried there? Only the fact that six out of the eleven aboard the aircraft are buried in a common single grave.

I was alerted to this fact by Charles W. Anderson (surviving member of the Powers' Crew), who, after reading our story about the Cornelius Donaghue Crew being buried in New Mexico under similar circumstances, told me about this situation. Charles was invited to participate in the re-interment of the remains when they were returned, January 1950, from the cemetery at Neuville, En Codroz, Belgium.

Those laid to final rest were:

2nd Lt. James H. Powers, Pilot
2nd Lt. Merle E. Vanderhorst, Copilot
2nd Lt. Ray F. Chisholm, Navigator
2nd Lt. Sydney Samet, Bombardier
Corporal Leonard L. Wagner, Gunner
Corporal Franklin D. Atwood, Gunner.

Other crew members that survived and became POW's were:

Corporal David C. Beck, Gunner
Corporal Alfonso J. Garde, Gunner
S/Sgt Charles W. Anderson, AEG
Corporal Daniel Suzyn, Gunner
S/Sgt Dwight L. Moss, Cameraman.

The mission that brought a close to the lives of those interred, was our infamous 23 August 1944 mission to Markersdorf A/D, Vienna. Whereupon we lost three a/c from the 724th; three from the 725th, one from the 726th and one from the 727th.

From three eyewitness reports, filed during after-mission debriefing, it was reported that they were hit

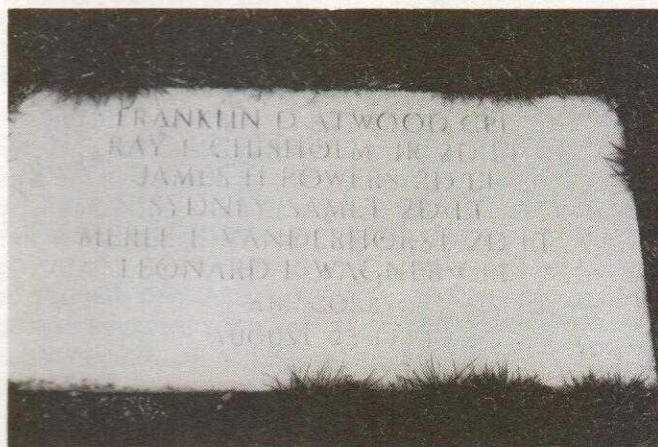
by fighters and immediately set afire. In the confusion of being attacked by enemy fighters, none of the witnesses saw any parachutes leaving the a/c. And it was apparent, that after the crash and examination of the wreckage by the Germans, identification of the individual bodies was not possible.

A very detailed description of the mission was filed by Daniel Suzyn when queried by the War Department, sometime after his discharge. *It reads:*

On August 23rd, 1944, I flew a bombing raid with my regular crew into the St. Polten, Austria area. Besides our regular crew members, we had the Squadron Cameraman along, making it a crew of eleven for that mission. The name of the cameraman is Dwight L. Moss, S/Sgt, and his home is 101 Carmen Street, Halls, Tennessee. After our plane was shot down, I did not see him again til December 1944, when he arrived at Stalag-Luft #3. It was then I learned he had been severely wounded in both legs by fragments from enemy 20 mm shells and that he had spent some time in German hospitals. I lost track of him again when we evacuated the prison camp for that eighty-six day march across Germany. As far as I know, he came through it all as well as the rest of us.

Although we flew our own B-24 over, it was taken away from us just before we reached our base. On our arrival at the base, we found that it was the custom for crews to fly their missions in different planes. It is for this reason I cannot give a detailed description of the plane we flew for the first, and, as it turned out, the last time. I do recall, however, (and this I am certain of) that this B-24 had a painting on its fuselage, as most planes did, just aft of the nose and below the first pilots seat. It was the picture of a naked girl sitting cross-legged with her hands folded over her head and below it the legend, "Hard to Get." I mention this apparently trivial detail with the hope that it may prove to be a clue in tracing the wreckage of the plane and thereby establishing the exact locality in which it crashed.

(Editor ... I'm not sure how Corporal Suzyn could



BEHIND WREATHED PLAQUE (top photo) LIES THE FLAT GRAVESTONE OF:

(lower photo in alphabetical order) FRANKLIN ATWOOD, RAY CHISHOLM, JAMES POWERS, SYDNEY SAMET, MERLE VANDERHORST, LEONARD WAGNER

be so sure that the a/c was named "Hard to Get," since the one I have in-file, was an original a/c brought overseas by Lt Richard Coleman (726th Squadron). It was lost, along with most the Coleman Crew (all but one survived) on the Regensburg Mission on 25 February 1944.



The MACR does give credence to the fact, by listing a/c #42-78523 as also being named "Hard to Get" (but there is a small check mark after it -- for whatever that means). Lt. Coleman's a/c was #42-7738. Could it have been renamed, with an identical reproduction of the original nose art? I leave it to you 724th & 726th Ground Crews to sort it out.)

No untoward incident occurred on the way over until we neared the target. We had been thoroughly briefed to be on the lookout for enemy fighters and we were on the alert for same. I was standing at the right waist gun and the Engineer, Charles Anderson, was at the left waist gun. All other crew members were at their respective positions. We were flying "Tail-end Charley," and our Navigator, Lt. Chisholm, had just informed us that we were turning on the I.P. I noted the time to be exactly 1210 hours. At almost the same time our tail gunner, Frank Atwood, called out, "Enemy fighters--six o'clock, low." I heard and felt both his guns going off. Then we were hit and I was impressed with the 20 mm's popping off along the entire length of the plane. The first one caught the tail gunner, squarely in the chest and knocked him out of his turret. I did not hear his guns again, and am almost certain he was killed instantly. It was the third 20 mm, hitting in the vicinity of the camera hatch, that set the waist of the plane on fire. The last thing I remember in the plane is groping in the flames for my parachute and trying to fasten it on. Then I passed out.

The next thing I do remember is the jolt of the chute opening up, bringing me back to consciousness. How the parachute opened up, I will never know. I do not recall pulling the rip cord. My outer flying clothes were still smoldering and I was severely burned about the head and face. I did not see any planes for the simple reason that my left eye was burned closed and my right eye kept filling with blood from a slight wound under it. The only way I could see at all was by wiping my eye out and blinking it several times. I finally landed in a rather mountainous region outside a little village and just had time to burn the radio flimsy and a few personal things before I was captured. Although I tried, I was unsuccessful in obtaining the name of this little village I was taken to.

Eventually I came in contact with the rest of the survivors of the crew, namely: Charles Anderson, Engineer, David Beck, Upper Gunner, Alfonso Garde, Ball Gunner and Dwight Moss, Squadron Cameraman. Of the whole crew, David Beck is the one who seems to have the best information concerning the fate of our plane. He claims

he was the last one out, and that as he parachuted down he saw the plane hit the side of a mountain and explode. As far as he knows, and he seemed to be pretty certain of his knowledge, all the members of the crew who are presumably lost, were in that plane at the time of the explosion. I might add, also, that our Bombardier, Lt. Sidney Samet, did not have his dog-tags with him on that mission. I remember he mentioned leaving them in his tent, and that it was too late for him to get them as it was take-off time.

I sincerely regret that existing circumstances prevented me from obtaining the information when it mattered most. I have tried to set down the details in this report as precisely and as accurately as possible, and I trust I have left out nothing of importance. If there is anything else I can do to help clear up this matter, I shall be only too willing to comply.

(signed) Daniel Suzyn

Another follow-up detailed report came via David C. Beck (Upper Turret Gunner) when queried by the War Department as to his remembrances. It reads:

Only reason for knowing these boys were in the plane when it crashed, was that I landed near the plane and I was taken prisoner by the Germans. The next day the Germans brought, and showed me the dog-tags of Powers, Vanderhorst, Chisholm, Wagner and Atwood. And Samet, our Bombardier's identification bracelet that they had taken from the wrecked plane.

At that time no other crew members identification was shown me and I had no knowledge of their surviving.

To the best of my knowledge I have answered these questions correctly. Any other information I might be able to give you, I will be glad to do so.

Burial information from overseas:

Remains of Unknowns X-7666 thru X-7671, interred in USM Cem., Neuville en Condroz, Belgium, Plot II, Row 5, Graves 124 and 125, Plot JJ. Row 5, Graves 101 thru 104; have been identified as a Group Burial, but individual identity cannot be established: ATWOOD, Franklin D., Cpl., 16080090; CHISHOLM, Ray F. Jr., 2/Lt., 0-717600; POWERS, James H., 2/Lt., 0-700968; SAMET, Sydney, 2/Lt., 0-772886; VANDERHORST, Merle E., 2/Lt. 0-771842; WAGNER, Leonard L., Cpl., 37670156.

(signed) R.E. Barry, Capt. QMC - Ident. Section

It was not without some controversy that the Keokuk National Cemetery was chosen. In reviewing facts contained in the 'Deceased Personnel File,' there was a strong indication that the remains were first scheduled to be interred in the Zachary Taylor National Cemetery in Louisville, Kentucky. Upon notification to the families of this fact, and with communications between the bereaved families, the families banded together and had the change made. The following letter showed the determination of one of the families:

War Department

Dear Mr. Freeman

Received your letter and informing us of the recent information concerning our son, the late 2nd Lt. James H. Powers, ASN 0-700968. Why couldn't that burial, or interment, be Iowa instead of Kentucky. So much closer to home .. or Rock Island Illinois. Three of that group

are from Iowa, one from Illinois and one from Missouri. Then the sixth is, of course, from North Carolina. Our wish is to have the interment in the Keokuk, Iowa National Cemetery .. Second choice, Rock Island Illinois National Cemetery. We received a letter from Mrs. Dot-tie Wagner and she too wishes burial in Keokuk National Cemetery. I have written to Mrs. Vanderhorst to see what she says. But I know, she too would feel like we do.

(Signed) Mr. & Mrs. W.H. Powers

This is the follow-up letter that came from the War Department:

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Powers: May I refer to my letter of 5 October 1949 relative to the National Cemetery designated for final interment of the group of remains including those of your son, the late Second Lieutenant James H. Powers.

I wish to advise that, when a National Cemetery is selected for final burial of a group of remains, special consideration is given to it's geographical location in order that the burden of travel may be distributed, as equitably as possible, upon all the next of kin involved. After further consideration of the residences of the next of kin of the decedents whose remains are represented in this group, it was found that the Zachary Taylor National Cemetery, Louisville, Kentucky, had been erroneously chosen for interment, and that the Keokuk National Cemetery, Keokuk, Iowa, was the one which should have been designated. Our records have, therefore, been amended to show that the remains of this group will be returned for burial in the Keokuk National Cemetery. All of the next of kin concerned are being advised accordingly.

Permit me to again extend my deepest sympathy in the loss of your beloved son.

(signed) W.E. Campbell, Lt Colonel, QMC - Memorial Division

Later the Powers' family received this letter:

Reference is made to the interment of your son, the late Second Lieutenant James H. Powers, and his comrades, which was made in Graves 328 and 329, Section D, Keokuk National Cemetery, Keokuk, Iowa. It is regretted that because of the fact it was impossible to identify individually the remains of your son, you were deprived of the comfort and consolation which you might have been afforded by interring his remains at home.

You are assured that the grave will always be cared for in a manner fully commensurate with the sacrifices your son made for his country. Any desired information concerning the grave or the cemetery will be furnished upon request.

(signed) Jas. F. Watt, Lt. Colonel - Memorial Division

With all this information at hand, I wandered through the Keokuk National Cemetery, mindful of the fact that I was paying my respects to comrades that I served with, but may have never personally known. These men, as were all the men buried there - from the Civil War on - they were my heroes.



The cemetery lies on a sloping hillside, some distance from the Mississippi River which carried Civil War dead to their final resting place. It was said that this was as far up the river as the packet boats, of that era, could navigate, due, in part to 'Lock & Dam #19' blocking further passage.

**THE MUFFLED DRUMS SAD ROLL HAS BEAT
THE SOLDIER'S LAST TATTOO.
NO MORE ON LIFE'S PARADE SHALL MEET
THAT BRAVE AND FALLEN FEW.**

**YOUR OWN PROUD LAND'S HEROIC SOIL
MUST BE YOUR FITTER GRAVE.
SHE CLAIMS FROM WAR HIS RICHEST SPOIL,
THE ASHES OF THE BRAVE.**

KEN BARMORE'S POW WARTIME JOURNAL



2nd Lt. Paul E. Krueger .. Pilot
 2nd Lt. Robert K. Barmore .. Copilot
 F/O Charles M. Hawkins .. Navigator
 2nd Lt. George E. Stauffer .. Bombardier
 S/Sgt Charles L. Joines .. AEG
 S/Sgt Leon Stephens .. Nose Gunner
 S/Sgt Lyle J. Clark .. Ball Gunner
 S/Sgt Archie Eakins .. Waist Gunner
 Sgt Maurice R. Kelly .. Waist Gunner
 S/Sgt George P. McDonald .. Tail Gunner

MAY 5, 1944

At 1420 hrs. we were to bomb the Marshalling Yards at Ploesti, Romania. We were flying "DEVIL'S DUTCHESS." As we turned from the IP onto the bombing run the anti-aircraft fire over the target looked like a huge rain cloud and the planes ahead of us were barely visible going through it.

We got through the flak okay and dropped our bombs on the target. While rallying to the left I could feel several severe flak hits. I had just called each mem-

ber of the crew and there had been no hits up to then, but I knew we were in trouble now.

Paul Krueger gave me the controls, rang the emergency alarm bell (the signal to bail out) and was out of his seat fast. His oxygen system had given out and he went to the radio table to get a supply of oxygen. After I took over I knew for sure that we would not get home. I lost my oxygen about then too, and pulled my mask off.

At the time the alarm bell had first sounded, Leon Stephens, George Stauffer and Charles Hawkins had bailed out. Looking up I could see our Group leaving us behind. We went into a slow spiral and down.

The upper turret had been hit and Charlie Joines came out with blood all over his face and hands. When I had the chance I cleaned some blood from his face and found that he was okay, only small wounds from shards of plexi-glass that put out lots of blood.

Lyle Clark, ball gunner, came up to the flight deck about then and told me that there had been a bad hit in the waist section and he needed help back there. We had already feathered engines #2 and #4 and #3 was about done. The interphone, oxygen and hydraulics were gone and without them the plane was almost impossible to control. Lyle Clark and Charles Joines went through the bomb bays, into the waist, and out the camera hatch. I followed them but got stuck between the bomb racks and couldn't move forward or backwards. I could hear the wind howling and the bomb bays was being soaked with hydraulic fluid and gasoline. I had a seat pack chute on and there wasn't enough room to squeeze thorough. *(Later when I got back into a B-24 again, I tried to go through the bomb bays with a seat pack on and it was near to impossible.)* I guess I was being watched over, because I broke loose and went into the waist section. When I reached the waist, George McDonald was working over the injured Archie Eakins. He got him



KEN BARMORE
 AT CASTELLUCCIO AIR FIELD ALONGSIDE "SCRAPPY"



PAUL KRUEGER - LEON STEPHENS - MAURICE KELLY
 (KELLY HOLDING SMALL MONKEY)

to the camera hatch and got him out. I told him to get out, too. Eakins and Maurice Kelly were both hit very badly from the hip area on down and unable to move. I got Kelly's chute on and asked him if he could just pull the release if I pushed him out. He said he could, so I pushed him out the hatch. Paul Krueger had gone into the nose section to check on them, then bailed out the nose wheel hatch.

The ground looked awfully close when I went out, so I pulled the rip cord as soon as I felt the wind in my face. As I floated down I could see the plane was on fire and had crashed. I was certain that I would land in the fire, but I luckily came close, but not in. As I got out of my chute I saw Kelly land about 150 feet from me. Then I saw McDonald coming down behind some trees. I was the last one out and probably the first one on the ground. I went right to Kelly. He was lying just as he had landed. He had nothing much left of his upper legs on down, but seemed to suffer no pain. I gave him a shot of morphine from the escape kit and tried to make him comfortable.

Soon we were surrounded by a large group of farmers and one of them brought some water for Kelly. There were two Romanian Officers there and later two village Gendarmes took charge of us.

McDonald was brought up limping from his jump. Together we tried to make Kelly more comfortable and got the peasants to bring a wagon for him to ride to the village. We saw the people were friendly and I got one to go and bring my chute, which we used to try and bandage, or at least, cover his legs. They lifted Kelly into the wagon and we started off for the village about a mile away. We were taken to the village police station and they tried to find out where the rest of the crew were. We tried to make them understand that we had no idea, as some of the crew bailed out before we were able to. We tried to get them to understand that we wanted to get medical attention for Kelly, but from their gestures we saw that it was too far to go for medical help. Kelly was very ashen and I didn't see how he could live very long. He did talk to us some and didn't seem to be in any extreme pain. Nevertheless, we felt very helpless.

They took us into a building and had us spread out our escape kit's contents on a table and asked a lot of questions that we didn't understand at all. A man came in and motioned us to come outside to the wagon where Kelly laid. By that time Kelly was almost gone and he passed away about 1700 hrs with McDonald and I at his side. Later a very old woman put candles in his hands and blessed him. She cried as if he was her own. They kept us at the jail and an old man brought us some hot milk and bread. Although we were hungry, neither of us could eat. We slept on the floor in a room in which there were two beds. About eight Romanians slept in that room with us. They used the beds. Needless to say we had a very bad night's sleep. The odor was overpowering.

MAY 6, 1944

The Gendarmes awakened us at 0500 hrs and took us out of the room. The man that brought the food last night brought us breakfast that tasted like sour milk mush. When we went outside we saw that Kelly was still in the wagon, all covered up. A German officer came up in a car, talked to the Gendarmes and drove

down to the wreckage of our plane. I thought that we would be taken by the Germans, but soon found out that they wanted nothing to do with us. He later came back and then drove away again.

About 0900 hrs, McDonald and I were put in a wagon with all our equipment and drove us to the Gendarmerie Headquarters at Targovesti. On the outskirts of town a truck passed our horse drawn wagon and we saw Clark and Joines in the back. Now we could account for 5 of our crew.

At Targovesti we were interrogated and put in a secluded room. Shortly, a door opened and Paul Krueger came in. He told us that he had landed with Archie Eakins and that he (Archie) had been taken to a hospital with very bad leg wounds. We were to later learn that in the hospital, in Targovesti, he had his leg amputated, but died from loss of blood on the morning of May 6th.

We spent the whole day in Targovesti and in the afternoon we could see bombers overhead as they bombed some targets nearby. We saw one plane get hit and could see some chutes. We wondered if we were to spend the night here, but after dark they came in and took us outside and loaded us into a truck. There were other POW's in the truck with us, but we didn't know any of them. We had no idea where we were to be taken. I made myself as comfortable as I could on a pile of parachutes and tried to catch some sleep.

In my relaxed state I felt something was being put in my hand and moving very slowly I saw that it was a ".45" pistol. What a thing to have! It was a very bright moonlit night and a guard was sitting on the chutes just above me. I was very concerned that he would see it. I slowly moved my hand until it was over the side of the truck and when we went over a small bridge, above a stream, I let it go.

Around midnight we stopped on a slight hill under a tree. We could hear planes and see the searchlights moving around the sky. We learned later that the RAF had bombed the Marshalling Yards at Bucharest. It looked just like a huge Fourth of July fireworks. The anti-aircraft shells were bursting all over the sky and put on a beautiful show.

When the raid was over we moved on and finally came into Bucharest. We were taken to an Army garrison and put into a small room that had boards on either side and double decked bunks, which was to be our room and beds for that night at least. The place was filthy and smelled bad. After a little sleep we got up and looked around. First we realized that we would get very little to eat. Secondly the garrison was in the shape of a rectangle with an open courtyard in the middle. The latrines were in the center of the courtyard and we had to be escorted from our room in two's, with a guard. It was a long wait for each person's turn, as there must have 20 or so of us in there. When it came my turn, another fellow and I went out just as it was getting dark. Without too much trouble we took the rifle away from the guard and marched him to the latrine, went inside, came out and marched him back to our room. Once inside we pushed his rifle back out through the barbed wire on the door. He really kicked up a real fuss and we realized that it had been a pretty stupid thing to do. Good thing that the guards were drafted peasants and not real Army.

In the early afternoon the AAF came over in B-24's and B-17's. One fellow said that he counted 404 heavy bombers. We stood at the window and watched them go overhead. Flak was bursting all around but we didn't see anyone get hit. Every once in a while a piece of flak would hit on the roof, or on the road, and bounce around a bit. In the afternoon they let us sit out in the sun. It was then that they brought in some new fellows and we spotted George Stauffer and Charles Hawkins, and then Leon Stephens. Hawkins had hurt his knee when he landed, but was okay. We were very happy to account for all the rest of our crew.

MAY 8, 1944

The air raid alarm sounded at midnight and the RAF came over. We found that they were hitting the rail yards just north of the garrison. We weren't too scared, yet, but then a flare landed in the courtyard, followed by two bombs. We heard the first one whistle and then we really got scared. One hit only ten feet from the building in one corner and the other in the open yard. I was under a bed and was never so scared as at that moment. At daylight we saw how close we came to being hit.

MAY 12, 1944

There were lots of rumors that we would be moved nearer the center of Bucharest, to a school building. We were to leave at night, so as soon as they fed us we started the move. The school was about a mile away and we walked the distance. There were quite a few people on the streets watching us go by, but they were pretty quiet and didn't bother us. There were about 20 of us in the group.

When we arrived we were given a chance to shower and then put in our rooms. The showers were in one large room with the shower heads in the ceiling. This building was a lot better than the garrison. We had 16 POW's in our room; Number 7-8. The cots were very close to each other and had a thin cover over the springs. The toilets were normal for this country. They consisted of a hole in the floor with two footprint impressions, one on each side. There was a Canteen we could use later, when we were given chits to use as money.

We found the food to be better, also. We had two meals a day consisting mostly of cabbage soup and potato soup. The food was prepared by Russian POW's, and we had a Russian barber, as well. The guards were all Romanian peasants, conscripted into the Army and were pretty friendly. The Romanian Army Colonel in charge was a very fat man and pretty hard on his men.

The fellows in our room were: Stan Krushat, Chuck Hawkins, Bud Lindus, Paul Krueger, Ken McCoy, Wilson Tuten, William McIntosh, George Stauffer, Glen Mensinger, Stu Weil, Roscoe Wilkes, Bob Pardue, Tony Fogel, Tom Dawson, Hal Dyer and myself, Ken Bar-more.

MAY 17 - 31, 1944

There were several air raids by both the AAF and RAF around Bucharest and Ploesti.

JUNE 6, 1944

The AAF bombed this morning around 0900 hrs, up north of us. Probably in the Ploesti area. The big news was that we knew that the invasion of France had started.

JUNE 10, 1944

There was an alert at 0830 hrs. We saw no bombers, but one P-38 was seen flying very low over the city with flak bursting right behind him. We later learned that P-38's had dive bombed a refinery at Ploesti. Rumor had it that twenty seven planes were supposed to have been lost.

We had a small courtyard out the back entrance and there were basketball hoops at either end, so we organized a pretty intense basketball league, by room. It was our only place to get any exercise and it was very popular. Inside we played a lot of Bridge, having made playing cards with anything we could find. Our room had a "Liberation Lottery," where we each picked two dates, which would be the date we were released.

There was a small supply of books to be read, including a Bible, which was very popular. Lt. Bill Rittenhouse, who, after the war became a Minister, was our Chaplain. We had Church Services each Sunday. It was amazing how many verses we could recall and put together for hymns. If we knew the tune, we could sing the hymns.

Another form of entertainment was crushing the lice that we found in our underwear each morning. We also had our share of bed bugs. I wore my flying suit most of the time, so I could tighten up the sleeves and also around the ankles to keep the bed bugs out at night. Some fellows suffered bad bites and some sat up most of the night reading in the hall to keep from being bitten.

Every so often the Colonel would round us all up in the auditorium; make two lines facing each other and have his soldiers count us. I really believe he never knew exactly how many POW's he had. The guards would count up one side of the line and some of the POW's would move over to the other line and that would give one count. Another count would have four or five move, unseen, into a different line. The count never came out the same two times in a row. The Colonel would slap faces and have his men count again. This gave us a lot of fun and drove the Colonel crazy.

Eventually we had the Canteen in operation and were able to buy some small items. I bought three very small note pads and kept this diary and other information in them. We were also able to buy some sweets that were very good. One of our higher ranking officers was allowed to go to the public market with a Romanian Officer in order to buy fresh vegetables or fruits. We would then have some fresh peas, or other things like apricots. I felt that we had as much as the general population had, although it still wasn't too much for us.

JUNE 15, 1944

We heard that the AAF has been given bases in Odessa, Russia and can now shuttle bomb.

JUNE 18, 1944

We heard that B-29's had bombed Japan from 55,000 feet and had no operational losses.

JUNE 19, 1944

The Swiss Legation of the International Red Cross came but nothing of importance was done. Every time our CO brought up the fact that we have received no Red Cross parcels, he was told that they were in the Marshalling Yards and either the RAF or the AAF had

bombed and they were lost. We were given two shots to test for immunity to diphtheria. My reaction was negative.

JUNE 28, 1944

The 15th AAF came over at 0930 hrs. The target probably being the northern Marshalling Yards. I was at a window in the Mess Hall and could see the bombers pass overhead. Before the B-24's came into sight I saw a fighter get hit and start to smoke. He started to spin straight down and just as the plane went out of sight I saw a chute open up. The heavies hit the yards and came right back over us. Every plane was streaming vapor trails and it sure looked beautiful. There were a few stragglers and a few smoking a bit, but I saw none go down. If the smoke from the target area was any indication, they did a good job.

JULY 1, 1944

The majority of the Enlisted Men were moved to the garrison and the Officers were brought to the school house. The Enlisted Men in our crew stayed here, but we soon expect that they will also go.

JULY 3, 1944

The RAF came over at 0100 hrs and gave us a good scare. Along with several others, I was under a table in our Mess Hall. The room was partially below ground level, but the upper windows gave us a view of the sky. The bombs and the flak shrapnel hitting all around made it quite noisy. One bomb whistled overhead and hit a few blocks down the street. Even the table was shaking. When we looked out, after day light, we saw that the Marshalling Yards were smoking badly. At 1115 hrs the AAF followed up by hitting the Yards again and also two air fields on the other side of Bucharest. We could hear fighters and then saw one Bomb Group on the bomb run. They were in very bad formation. They came straight towards us and then turned to the right. One ship kept going straight. Another Group followed and turned left and then another that also turned left. The flak was heavy but seemed inaccurate. Some of the fellows saw some chutes, so we may have some new POW's arriving to give us updated information on the war. We could see smoke all afternoon and there were new explosions every so often.

JULY 6, 1944

The Enlisted Men were moved from the garrison to the hospital near the Marshalling Yards.

JULY 11, 1944

Sgt's McDonald, Stephens and Clark were moved from here to the hospital. That left T/Sgt Joines the only Enlisted Man in our crew to still be with us.

JULY 13, 1944

Charlie Joines was taken with the rest of the Enlisted Men to the hospital.

JULY 15, 1944

The air raid siren sounded at 0915 hrs and the 15th came again. I stayed in our room and soon the heavies could be heard, but the sound soon died out. The raid lasted 2 hours and 40 minutes, but we could see very little. Out one window we could see two Groups coming towards the city from the east, but they turned north. We heard only a few burst of flak during the whole raid. They hit something close, but we couldn't figure out what?

JULY 22, 1944

We had a raid today that started at 0950 hrs and lasted for two hours and fifty five minutes; the longest raid yet. The bombers could be heard almost constantly, but no bombs were dropped here. There was very little flak, but a few P-38's were seen. They must have gone to Ploesti and Constanza. It seems odd that planes could be heard so close, but have encountered no flak. Could the flak guns been moved away?

JULY 24, 1944

The RAF came over at 0045 hrs and gave us quite a show. They hit the Marshalling Yards again. There was an awful lot of flak thrown up at them, which answers my question as flak batteries. Several planes were seen in the searchlight beams, diving and turning to get out of the light. One plane went down so low that it went out of sight below the buildings and came up again on the other side. They were so low that 20mm guns were used to try and knock them down. They were gone in no time at all. This raid lasted about an hour and was the loudest that we've gone through at night. No bombs hit near us, but the flak was bouncing off the roof tops.

JULY 25, 1944

Four new POW's came in today and told us that they left the States on the 10th, and in 15 days they were already prisoners. We added two more to our room; John Williams and Ed Lyman.

JULY 26, 1944

We had an alarm at 1230 hrs, the second alarm coming ten minutes later. A P-38 pilot, shot down last week, said that it was probably the P-38's returning from a shuttle mission to Russia. The all clear sounded at 1330 hrs and we had seen nothing. At 2315 hrs we had another alarm and at this time it was the RAF at Ploesti and Gugui. I went to the basement, but came up when I saw they weren't bombing here. The fellows in the back could see a lot of flashes up north, towards Ploesti. I saw one plane caught in the search lights and they shot plenty at him, but didn't hit him. The raid ended at 0115 hrs.

JULY 27, 1944

The alarm sounded at 2310, so I went downstairs to the window in the kitchen with McCoy. The second alarm sounded and the searchlights came on. A plane dropped a flare and then all was quiet. Finally some flak went off towards the Marshalling Yards, but since it was overcast so we thought the RAF would go away. Shortly after this about 12 flares were dropped just north west of us. We thought they were after the Yards and were just off with their release. A green flare burst above the white ones and a RAF pilot said that it meant to take an alternate target. We really started to worry when the flares drifted right over us. Then we heard the first planes and heard the bombs whistle. We all hit the deck! We had no shelter, except to go down to the kitchen and get under anything we could. The bomb sounded as though it hit a wing of our school building. I thought I'd been scared at the garrison when bombs dropped near us, but that was nothing compared to this. More flares came down on us and in the morning we heard that one flare had landed on the roof of the Guard Shack. We knew that the bombs had hit close to us as we could see red reflections in the sky and smell smoke. For a time

we thought our building was on fire. When we came up to our room we could see just how close they had come to us. A block to the south of us was a hit and flames were shooting up a couple hundred feet. We could feel the heat in our room. North of us, about two blocks away, was another big fire and there was a smaller one a block to the east. They had hit all around us. Windows were broken in some rooms and glass was all over. We all agreed that we wanted no more of that. It's a helpless and scary feeling hearing a bomb whistling towards you and getting louder and louder all the time and thinking that it has your name on it. The one that hit south of us must have cleared our building by only a few feet.

JULY 28, 1944

The AAF came over at 0930 but we saw nothing, although we could hear planes and flak in the distance. After last night we were pretty edgy.

JULY 31, 1944

The AAF came over at 1020 and hit the Marshalling Yards to the north of town. I saw the first Groups go over from west to east and then another Group came over from the north. I saw one plane in trouble and alone, but he dove into a cloud and I lost sight of him. We found out later from a crew that was shot down and that they also bombed Targovesti.

AUGUST 3, 1944

The Red Cross packages came at last and it was just like Christmas here. They distributed the clothes according to when we were shot down. I received OD pants, khaki shirt, sox, underwear, shoe laces, tooth brush, tooth powder, soap, razor blades, shaving soap, comb, handkerchief and a big white towel. The fellows that needed shoes got new GI shoes. I wore mine on the mission, so I was okay. Next; we look for food packages.

AUGUST 4, 6, 7, 8, 1944

We had air raid warnings each day but could see nothing and could not hear any planes. Lt. Rittenhouse had a Communion Service on the 6th, which was very nice. He does a wonderful job as our Chaplain.

AUGUST 9, 1944

The RAF came over at 2225 and bombed Ploesti again. Two planes came directly overhead and one was seen to get shot down. All Clear around midnight.

AUGUST 10, 1944

The alarm sounded at 0905 and the second soon after. I went to the north window and we soon could see bombers heading to the west. I could see one straggler and he was going down. He turned in towards us and then there was a flash of flame and the plane came down in three pieces. No chutes could be seen. We thought that was the last of the raid, but then a flight of P-51's came over with flak bursting behind them. About ten minutes later some Groups went from south to north-west, being followed by a lot of Groups heading west. The whole 15th AAF must have hit here today! The flak was light as far as we could tell.

AUGUST 12, 1944

For a change, I'll put down some rumors we've heard. According to BBC (Our CO has a radio stashed away), Antonescu has handed in his resignation and disappeared. That, along with the news that Romania is seeking peace, sounds pretty good. Around 1700 we heard and saw quite a few fighters, at high altitude,

heading north. We will probably have more hot rumors tonight.

AUGUST 17, 1944

The alarm sounded at 0915 and the second alarm thirty minutes later. I was in the west latrine window and could see a lot of bombers going over, heading east between Bucharest and Ploesti. When they came back they were on the same course. They may have gone to Constanza. I could see some planes to the north, so Ploesti may have gotten hit as well. Another Group went overhead, heading north. They got some flak, but not much. The formations, on the whole, were very bad. There were more stragglers than we've ever seen before. One fellow just happened to see a bomber blow up and when I looked, I saw several red pieces falling from the sky, and that was all. I saw about 15 fighters around the bombers, but couldn't identify them. The all clear sounded at 1145. The RAF came over at 2230 but didn't appear to be very close. There was some flak and flares to the north. The raid lasted just an hour and fifteen minutes.

AUGUST 18, 1944

The AAF came at 1015 this morning to bomb Ploesti again. I could see the bombers after they rallied off the target and were heading home. The formation seemed very ragged, possibly because we could see the silver ships a lot better than the OD ones. I saw one enemy fighter pass the formation and do a 180 degree turn to make a head-on pass at them. The raid lasted some 3 hours.

AUGUST 19, 1944

The AAF came again at 1000, but we couldn't see much. I saw a few Groups going west, up near Ploesti, and later some Groups passing Bucharest, again heading west. As it turned out, this was the last bombing mission against Ploesti by the 15th AAF.

AUGUST 23, 1944

Two days ago we heard that the Russians had started a drive on the Romanian Front near Iasi. Last night it was confirmed by BBC, and today we heard that they were already 40 miles south of Iasi. Looks like we may be free soon if they keep coming.

Lost a basketball game to room #2 by just 3 points.

AT 2300 WE HEARD THE GOOD NEWS THAT ROMANIA HAD MADE PEACE WITH THE RUSSIANS AND ARE NOW ON THE SIDE OF THE ALLIES.

We're all ready to leave here on a moments notice. George Stauffer and I will stick together. This overshadows the news that our Red Cross packages arrived today. I now have chocolate and cheese, etcetera.

AUGUST 24, 1944

The night passed fairly quietly with us just waiting to leave here. We thought we would be taken out of town, but nothing happened. As soon as daylight came the Germans came over in Heinkels and bombed all around us. They had no opposition, except for very little flak. They made bomb runs over Bucharest at very low levels and from all directions. When the all clear sounded, ME-109's came over and dive bombed and strafed the streets. We heard that there was street fighting in town and that the Russians had some Germans trapped and were killing them off. After the raid we all assem-

bled in the courtyard and were planning to leave the city, but our CO heard that the Germans had barricaded the streets.

As the gates were now wide open, the CO told us we were free to seek what shelter we could from the German bombing. Stauffer, Weil, Pardue and I stayed together and spent most of the day near an air raid shelter by the school building. The bombers and fighters came over most of the day, bombing and strafing. Of course we whistled at, and tried to talk to the girls that had walked past our camp for the last few months. And we did meet a couple of them, now that we could walk around freely. Up close we were not impressed.

We slept in the school at night. I stayed in the basement and slept under a bench, or rather, tried to sleep. The Germans bombed all night; mostly with one plane circling around. Then about every ten or fifteen minutes he would drop just one bomb.

We had one rumor that American paratroopers had landed at Ploesti and Constanza, but this probably not true. Major Yeager was supposed to have contacted Italy. What we have heard is that the Germans are holding the outskirts of the city and are doing as much damage as they can. The Romanians had agreed to let the Germans pull out with no opposition, but the Germans went to airfields that they controlled, loaded up with bombs and came right back.

AUGUST 25, 1944

The day started like yesterday ended - with more bombing by the Germans. I'm sitting outside the shelter writing. The weather is closing in, so we hope it will keep the planes from being overhead all day. At noon I talked to a Romanian fellow, who was about my age and who was apparently quite rich. I tried to get some clothes for us to wear, as we didn't have much left. His English wasn't very good, so Tony Fogel talked to him in German. He said he could take us out of the city to his family farm about 70 miles from here, near Ploesti. Stauffer, Fogel, Mensinger and I agreed to go. He said his brother was an Officer in the Romanian Army and had an official car.

We had lots of good news today. The Germans were pulling out in the south and the Allies controlled the air fields. We were told that we would leave at 0700 in the morning for a large farm about ten miles out, where it would be safer. The bombing eased up a lot, but I did see an ME-109 dive bomb a half mile away. The bombing at night was very light, so I had a good nights sleep.

AUGUST 26, 1944

The day started quietly enough. We were supposed to leave at 0700, but were told that we wouldn't leave until later. We learned that the fellow that we had talked to yesterday came by after dark to pick us up. But since we had changed our minds, we didn't attempt to meet him. We spent part of the morning just walking around, but not far from the school. A girl came by the school and gave George Stauffer a ride on her motorcycle.

Around 1100 the 15th came over and bombed just north of us, where they suspected that the Germans were supposed to be. Boy did they look good! They weren't

far away, but everybody, including civilians, stood in the streets and watched. We could hear the bombs rumbling from here. There was no flak at all.

Weil, Pardue and I went across the street to see the two little girls that we had been waving to from the window. They were about 8 and 10 years old. Their mother and father brought out some wine for us and we tried to talk to them. I gave Maria, the oldest girl, one of my dog tags and her mother gave me a picture of the two of them, with their address on the back.

We were told that we would be leaving about 1530, the air raid alarm sounded and more German planes bombed about a mile away. They're still around! I went to the shelter across the street and the bombs really sounded very close. But by now we seemed to be a little more use to it. As soon as the all clear sounded, trucks pulled up and we loaded up. But then the alarm sounded again. I had wrapped my 2 bottles of wine in an old shirt I had been wearing and when the alarm sounded my first thought was to get to the shelter. I jumped out of the truck, but before I did, I dropped my bundle over the side and immediately realized that my wine was in it. It shattered and the old shirt smells of wine now.

Eventually we loaded and drove to an old garrison about 5 miles from the school; out in an open field with lots of slit trenches around. No food this night.

AUGUST 27, 1944

An alarm at 1800, so we're sitting in slit trenches now. I spent most of the day walking around the fields, in the sun. I got a pretty bad windburn, but being outside felt good. We had only one meal today, which came at 1600 and was bean soup.

AUGUST 28, 1944

Very cold last night. We had better get on our way home before long, because we don't have much to keep us warm. The Germans bombed Bucharest again last night, but the bombings are getting farther apart all the time. We were told that the Russians are between Constanza and Bucharest. We had some luck in getting food and I spent most of the day doing KP for the first time in the Army.

AUGUST 29, 1944

I saw Sgt McDonald today. He took off from the hospital when the Germans dive bombed it and has been out at a fort, a few miles from where we are now. George, Mac and I walked for a few hours today and saw a flak battery and a few small towns. The Russians are in Bucharest and our Staff went to contact them. At the main gate we now have a Romanian flag and American flag next to it. The Stars and Stripes look beautiful.

Two B-17s landed at a field near here with a Colonel and some other Army men onboard. They had top cover of P-51s. Intentions were to take 30 POW's back for interrogation, but our group didn't get the message in time and they took off a half hour later.

AUGUST 30, 1944

At the formation this morning, we had it confirmed that two B-17s were here. They will be coming back tomorrow to take us all back to Italy. Colonel Gunn had gone to Bari in a ME-109, stuffed in the radio compart-

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

ment and flown by a Romanian Captain. He had made the arrangements to get us all out.

McCoy and I got a pass today to go into Bucharest to try and round up as many of the POW's as we can and get them back here. We met a Romanian who had a jeep and he picked us up. He claimed to be in the ruling family and pretty much a 'big wheel.' We picked up a combat photographer, named Woody Mark, who took pictures of the Russians coming in tanks, with lots of guns. (After the war I was able to contact Woody and got copies of the pictures he took over there. We have remained friends over the years.)



RUSSIAN TANKS IN BUCHAREST

I was able to trade cigarettes for a German pistol. I'm glad that I didn't have to use it because I found out that the firing pin was bent. We went to the old garrison that was our first POW camp and found it now had a lot of Germans in the same spot we were in. While there, George Stauffer and Wilkes joined us in town. The Romanian that picked us up took us to lunch and drove us all around the town to see the damage that was done. The AAF wrecked the Marshalling Yards and several blocks nearby, but it was the Germans that did the real damage in the town itself. The Palace is a wreck and surrounded by many buildings that were almost leveled. We saw a lot, as well as talked to some of the Russians that arrived. A Romanian man got down on his knees and pleaded with me to try and get him out of the country with us. He said, with gestures, that his throat would be cut by the Russians as soon as they arrived.



B-17s - AIR TAXI HOME TO BARI, ITALY

We found that the Romanians were terrified of the Russians.

AUGUST 31, 1944

At 0830 we were at the airfield waiting for the B-17s. They arrived about 1000. Before we saw them, P-51s flew low over the field in pairs, checking to make sure it was safe and that we controlled the field. Flares were to be shot off if we were in charge, but they made doubly sure. What a sight those P-51s were. The B-17s landed on the grass field and pulled up in line and we boarded; 20 to a plane. Alphabetically I was in the first plane in line. It was flown by a Lt. Colonel with a General sitting in the copilot seat. I went up to the nose section and rode there the whole way back to Bari. We were escorted by many P-51s and some ME-109s of the Romanian Air Force. Later P-38's picked us up near Yugoslavia. We landed at Bari, Italy, where we were met by General Twining, who welcomed us back.

My POW days are over.



**GEORGE STAUFFER & KEN BARMORE
(UPON RETURN TO BARI, ITALY)**

Editor's Addendum ... A point of interest I brought up to Ken in the form of a question, "Who was the American Commander that instigated your flight out of Romania after being set free?" Ken, not totally sure of who it was, had me assuming that it was Colonel James A. Gunn (Deputy Commander of the 454th Bomb Group, and at that time a POW, himself), that had coordinated this evacuation. Colonel Gunn had commandeered a Romanian Pilot and had requisitioned a ME-109 to fly back to Bari and set up the evacuation of the POW's. Word recently received in this office, via the 'Former Romanian POWs' newsletter, tells of the passing of Colonel Gunn. He died October 2, 1999 in San Antonio, TX. He was 87 years of age. Another memorable chapter of our heritage now gone. Maybe not for the bulk of our readers, but for certain few, he was instrumental in getting them out of Romania and back into Allied territory.

ERNIE CUMMINS' 60TH AIR SERVICE SQUADRON JOURNAL (Alias: Ernie's Journey)

(Con't from Issue 31)

12 July 1944

Dear Mabel: Well, your hubby spent an unusual night, to say the least. Decided to see some of this country, a section of Italy I have never before been in. I set out from our rest camp one morning with a half dozen other G.I.'s hitching rides. Got into a town for some sight-seeing, where Jim, one of the fire fighters, bought two rings for his girl. Personally I thought they were lousy. Ate eggs and chips and started homeward early in the afternoon as we knew traffic would be scarce. But just how scarce! From three to ten P.M. we waited in vain, surrounded by hoards of Italian kids, each waiting for us to finish a smoke so they could scramble after the butt..

After it got dark we all but gave up hope of any trucks coming by and hiked out of town to lay down in a wheat field. One little kid who followed us carried straw for us to sleep on. None of us had any jackets - only our Suntans. One fellow stayed on the road to wake us if anyone did happen by, but by four a.m. no one had. We built a fire and waited for sunup, when we started to hike. At eight o'clock we did manage to get a ride the last twenty miles into the monastery and I slept the remainder of the morning. In the afternoon went down to the float and sunburned for two hours, swam a little in the cold water, mostly to get clean after hobbing in the straw the night before.

You have to remember, those old stone castles were built with no sanitary arrangements. We don't boast any showers, unless you walk slowly along a path below the cliff; the drain water from the kitchens, four stories straight up, sprays down sort of a-la Bridal Veil Falls! As for the shaving, etc., two basins service all of the Enlisted Men. Don't know how the plumbing stacks up in the Officer's Quarters.

Tomorrow we have to leave, making room for another bunch of soldiers. I wish I could stay another week, four days is not enough. The only mail that is sent here is for the guys who run the place. I'm hoping a stack is waiting back in camp for me. Chow time again, so love from E.R.C.

***** COMMENT *****

Rear echelon supply areas were subject to much "Midnight Requisitioning," especially by pack-rat Americans who would hesitate to double park back in their hometowns. But once in awhile the thefts were done by real crooks wearing uniforms, as follows:

A replacement came into the 60th in 1944 who was a product of the Philadelphia docks, an Irish stevedore with a broken nose and a bus driver slouch that declared to one and all, "I'm not about to work hard." His name was (real name withheld - but for the sake of contiguity we'll call him 'Mick') and he lived in my tent for two

months. During that time he had cozied up to our dispatcher and had been making the Post Exchange runs, as well as the ration hauling for our Mess Sergeant. These trips gave him entrance to supply depots, and his experience in stealing on the waterfront got him going in the black market in a big way.

One evening as I drove into the compound about dusk, after a three hundred mile drag to turn in empty oil drums to an English-run refinery, a missing silhouette against the skyline startled me.

"Hey Hannis, where the devil is my tent? Are you guys pulling a practical joke?"

"Hell no! The damned thing burned down about one P.M. Zeager saved your cot and foot locker. Crooks and Kondraski got all their gear out, but 'Mick' lost his bedding. That's where we think the fire started."

"That bastard smoking on his lunch hour! How come I get all the long runs and some bum gets to lay around setting things on fire?"

We scattered to other quarters that night and were excused from duty the next day, to erect a new Pyramid Tent. At that stage of our life, the camp was semi-permanent with such frills as wooden floors, tent frames, electric lights, piped in music to earphones, etc., etc.

After breakfast the next morning, four of us were cleaning up the ashes, hammering together another floor and getting set to put up another 'Big Top.' 'Brother Mick' was nowhere to be seen. After a latrine visit, I sauntered into the Dispatch Office where sits the missing member of our crew, chewing on a cigar and reading a comic book. I invite him to join in on the fun and festivities. He declines. I insist. He turns mean. I question his ancestry. He thinks about whipping my ass, but forgoes that pleasure to avoid a stretch in the guard house, and the loss of considerable black market profits.

We finish the rebuilding without 'Mick' and never had him for a tentmate again. He was picked up two months later with a truck full of leather flight clothing that he had no paper work for and had to serve six months in confinement. When I cussed him out, I'm sure I made a tempting target for that ex-boxer, but that was one man that made me mad! Burned me up! Well, my tent, anyway!

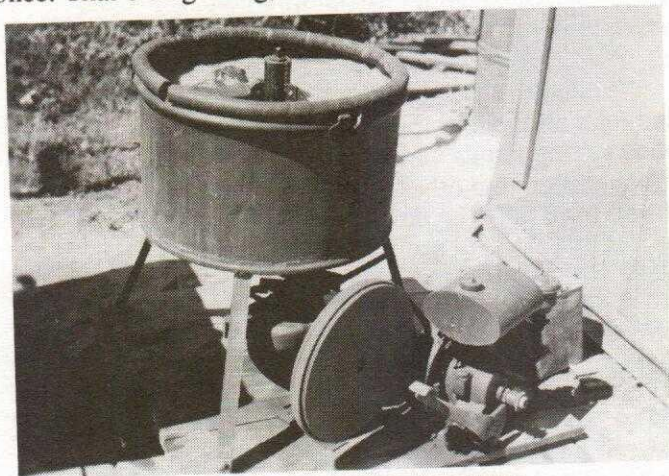
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26 July 1944

Dear Mabel: Over a week since my last letter to you. I've been so busy that I took a one day pass today, otherwise I might not get to write for another week. Been getting up with the sun and working until after dark. One day I started at 5 a.m. and finally got to bed at 2 the next morning. I wasn't fooling around either, and a very hot day made it even worse.

Day before yesterday I was on a "run" and came back to camp about 1 P.M., anxious to get what was left

in the kitchen before the K.P.'s gave it away to the laborers. Boy, was I in for a surprise! Driving up the hill to my tent to get my mess kit, I blinked my eyes and looked in vain for my home. Nothing there but some charred wooden lockers, burned cots and some smoldering blankets. Somehow the darned thing caught fire when all of us were out - either away from camp or eating chow. Luckily my metal locker was husky enough to protect my best clothes. All the heat did was to blister the paint and melt the rubber edge around the lid. All my personal stuff was in it, except for my ditty bag filled with extra toilet articles; soap, etc., which was a total loss. Some of my equipment was saved by a guy (I think it was Ray Brackney) who threw out what he could reach before the tent collapsed. My stuff was just inside the door so he had an easy reach. I had the only gun to be saved in the bunch, also my helmet. I even found my two remaining cans of beer; Glory Be! What I did lose was a barracks bag full of dirty clothes and another plumb full of things for winter wear. Also lost were rubber overshoes, sweaters, wool underwear - and that fluffy new scarf you sent me. Damn it, I only used it once. That's disgusting, Isn't it?



CLOTHES WASHING MACHINE
SOME INGENIOUS MEMBER OF THE 60th SS COMES UP WITH
THIS ENGINE DRIVEN CONTRAPTION

We will be issued new gear to replace the losses, with the exception of one item we cannot get. Bath towels are never issued after the initial one is given the G.I. recruit. So I'll have to buy mine at the P.X. At least I don't have to pay to have the dirty clothes washed.

I'm sleeping in another tent while we are getting our new home constructed, using Dickson's bed. He won't need it for six months as he languishes in durance vile, so to speak.

Yesterday we cleaned up the mess and made a frame for the new tent which should be delivered today. Made a deal with some cigarettes and got a load of gravel for the floor. After we get it fixed up we'll have a better home, nicer than before.

I still eat an average of half my meals away from camp in other Mess Halls, so you can figure how much time I have "at home." The Red Cross Club has hot showers, so some days I run in there and get cleaned up. The Italian kids are getting as bad as the thieves of Cairo, all sorts of things left in trucks parked around the Red Cross building disappear. So I take anything that is

loose into the check room and there it is safe.

***** COMMENT *****

Canadian Tank Transport convoys used to snake their way down a steep switchback highway near Foggia, on their way from supply ports to the front lines. At the top of the grade a halt is made and the decent was done in the following manner. The towing vehicles are Mack trucks, built somewhat like dump trucks, with extra tank threads and tools carried in back for weight and traction. Sherman Tanks sit on multi-wheeled trailers, chained down, with gun turrets facing to the rear. The lead transporter was joined by two more Macks who had unhooked from their tanks and they chained themselves to the back of the tank trailer. With the added braking power they slowly wound down the grade, like three locomotives with one box car between them. All three Macks then went back up the hill to get the next tank. They repeated the process until all were safely on level ground below.

I had driven some mountain stretches of Highway 101 in Northern California where logging trucks, with long loads, were escorted by State Police clearing auto traffic so the logger had full use of both traffic lanes. This tank operation was about the same. If I was headed "upstream," a wait was required until several transports were coaxed down, then all of us had a crack at the hill while the Macks were getting back to the top themselves.

Canadian troops were much like us in speech and action. One group that were stationed near us for a few months were Dispatch Riders, using motorcycles to speed across the countryside with messages. To keep in practice their Officers found an almost vertical slope and set the men to hill climbing on their bikes. While watching one of these drills, I counted five cycles disabled and three riders hauled off on stretchers. They were surely not fooling around. We traded supplies with the Canadians; our food ration for their whisky.

THE FOLLOWING LETTER WAS SENT TO ALICE B. SULLIVAN, WHOSE HUSBAND WAS NOT IRISH, BUT ENGLISH. SHE FORWARDED IT TO MABEL.

28 August 1944

Dear Alice & Sully,

A quiet morning so far. The only job for Ernie was to collect the Italian laborers, tailor, carpenters, barbers, etc., from the town up the road from camp.

Having a good Irish name, you folks will get a kick out of this tale. A couple months ago a new man in our outfit moved into my tent, name of 'Mick.' This guy was a very pleasant character, except when under the influence of 'vino,' which was about half the time. He was an ex-railroader and bus driver, so his job with us was to haul supplies. This afforded him many opportunities to 'win' various items in depots (I recall Sully's stories about WW I, when every sailor had one typewriter, at least!), and it wasn't long until 'Mick' had a miniature warehouse right under his cot. Well, one day when all of us were away from camp working, this enterprising Gent lost the entire stock, as well as his personal gear, when the tent burned down.

The rest of us found very little of our own stuff we

could save, but a reissue of clothes, blankets and equipment brought us back to normal. Our homemade lockers scorched, but protected the junk we kept inside. Well, the story goes this way. When we got our new tent to replace the defunct one, our boy, the lazy Irishman, refused to help us set it up. So for the first time in my memory, Ernie got sore and told him just what a gold-brick he was! He almost swung at me for that, but before transferring to us, he had beaten up his Top Kick and put him in the hospital and the resulting trial cost him his pay for the next six months. I reckon he gave that a thought too, because the next day he moved to another tent.

Now the payoff! Who comes moseying around wanting to move into the vacant space but another hard drinking, happy go lucky Irish Gent. This one being forty years old and a willing worker, in contrast to the other bum. When he moved in we found him to be a much better tentmate, but always out for a good time. He succeeded in having one so often it wasn't long before he was restricted from our Enlisted Men's Bar and was pulling steady guard duty as punishment for his miss-deeds. An ex-prize fighter and a regular "talking machine" (sings old songs and sentimental ballads like Ted Lewis), he keeps us in gales of laughter. This Army sure has some strange birds.

Best of all is this big heavy kid out of Florida, with a slight drawl. A baker by trade, who got tired of kitchen duty and took a job in transportation. His name - no fooling - is J.L. Sullivan, no less. He still does us a favor, twice a week, by baking pies or cakes in the Mess Hall. He is very popular around the outfit.

Last week I broke down on a highway and while thumbing my way to a phone to call our mechanics, I ran into a rough looking combat G.I., who inquired the

whereabouts of the 60th camp. Just back from Southern France, he wished to visit his nephew-one J.L. Sullivan. As some fellows are, after a rough bit of action, this guy had a bad case of nerves. After I guided him to our out of the way location, he made the most of our liquor supply. That night he refused to sleep on a cot (said he could not find any rocks to put in it), so right on the floor he snoozed. About daybreak, when our planes started buzzing overhead, you should have seen that half drunken tank driver dive into a slit trench! I feel sorry for those boys and thank the Lord that I don't see the things that make them such wrecks.

Another laugh - Our Mess Sergeant just phoned this office (from where I'm scribbling this) and said the driver who trucked in the rations this morning, better return 'one each' case of cheese! Guess who that was? Old soak Clifford, the second Irishman that I described above.

So, Mr. & Mrs. Sullivan, you can see our side is well supplied with "Wearers of the GREEN," be they shady characters, tough brutes, or regular Joes. They all have hearty senses of humor and a strong desire to consume the entire output of the world's breweries and distilleries.

Well Alice, another phone call, this one, darn it, summing me to work - so good bye for now. Will write a more chatty letter next time. This seems to consist mainly of observations. If you can bear parting with this literary gem, I wish you would send it along to Mabel. Even she gets very few letters of late, due to our jobs keeping me busy all hours. Anything she finds in the mailbox is eagerly received. Even if it's nothing but nonsense, like this one.

(signed) Ernie

Oh, That B Dash Two Four

Some of you may remember this ditty. It spread throughout the ranks of B-24 veteran; especially those stationed in Italy. It was sung to the tune of: "Oh, That Strawberry Roan."

Down in flak alley, where the black mushrooms grow, the 451st and her bombers did go. We were briefed in the morning, and were told there's no flak, so let's drink to the boys, that never came back.

CHORUS

Oh, That B dash two four, Hear those four engines roar. The boys that fly in her are sure bound to lose. At fifty-five inches She won't even cruise. Oh, That B dash two four.

CHORUS

They wake us for briefing at 1:45, there's hardly an airman can open his eyes. The targets Vienna, the fifth time this week. The Mickey can't find the target we seek.

CHORUS

We're told the weather is CAVU, but we can't see the ground, at a hundred feet true. Three layers of clouds, hide the earth from the sky, to clear all that weather, we've got to fly high.

CHORUS

We rendezvous over the Isle of Capri, we wonder wherever our Mustangs can be. Then off to the target, without an escort. One look at the target, and wise men abort.

CHORUS

We take-off for France with a full load of gas. If we lose an engine, it'll sure be our ass. Nine hours formation, the sortie counts one. No flak, no fighters, no damage to the Hun.

CHORUS

We look at the ground thru a powerful glass and see all the Huns, shooting skeet in the grass. The results are most horrid, it's always the same, as a foolish young moth, flying into the flame.

CHORUS

We feathered our fan o'er Vienna one day. We called for the Group, but they'd all gone away. Left to the mercies, of fighters and flak. It's a hell of a wonder, we ever got back.

CHORUS

The Colonels and Majors the milk runs do fly, but they send us to targets where many men die. And just 'bout the time they crawl out of the sack, we've feathered a fan and are on our way back.

CHORUS

EXCHANGE OF LETTERS AND MEMORIES

After the Issue 22 newsletter was sent out, and a squib in the Short Burst column caught the eyes of Ernie Cummins (Sgt - 60th Air Service Squadron), which had been inserted by the late Lt. David Henshell (726 Engineering Officer), an exchange of letters took place between them. Things long forgotten were brought to memory and recorded for future use ... This being that FUTURE, I'd like to offer them to you for your perusal.

It seems that Ernie initiated the first contact with his introductory letter. This is what came back:

May 15, 1993

Dear Ernest & Mabel:

Thank you for your recent letter and your response to the simple letter that I wrote to the 451st Ad-Lib. Glad that Bob furnished you with my address; as its always a pleasure to hear from a person out of the past.

I will try to answer your question as best I can, from what is now a bit of a distorted memory. First of all, I stayed in the US Air Force, formerly the US Army Air Corp, and completed thirty years. I was in the Korean conflict along with Vietnam, which eventually was the reason I chose retirement, for one tour there was more that sufficient to affect one's service commitment.

Back to the 451st; for of all the units that are in my service library, none gave me the fulfillment of friendship, and reason for being, as much as the second world war service, and the organizational camaraderie that prevailed. I had the unique opportunity to evaluate all three, and I can tell you that the 451st and its people stand heads above, in one's looking back.

At the time we arrived in Castelluccio, I do believe that I joined the 451st about May of forty four. I had come over from the 454th, over near Foggia, as a replacement for an Engineering Officer who had to leave and he had been with the 725th Squadron. I was in a free lance position for the first week or two, and I was asked if I could help out in possibly finding more beds or other items that could enhance the Squadron, or the Group. The Major that asked me was Major Ted Gorton. He gave me a jeep and, believe it or not, I was free as a bird to try my hand.

I made the mistake of following the trail of the 8th Army and an English outfit, which brought me under gunfire, but that's a separate story, however I was advised by an English Officer to go to Naples, so that's how I ended up there. I met a guy named Julio who ran the "Shippers Club," which was specifically for the Officers of the various ships that

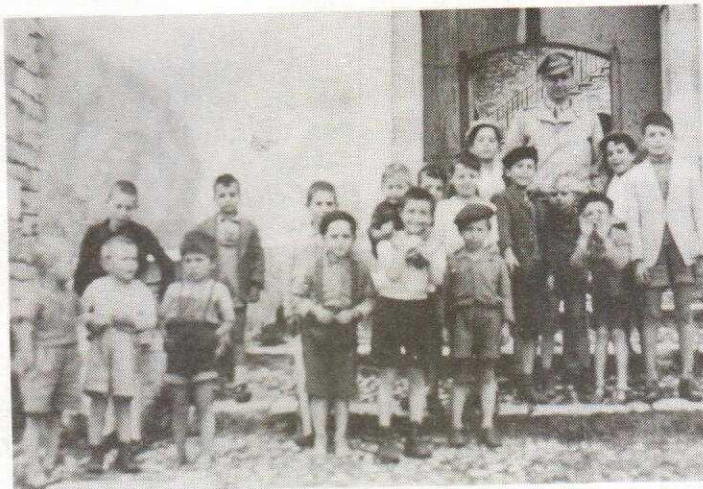
brought our needs to Italy. I gave Julio my A2 jacket as a token of friendship and that became my ticket to help, for he introduced me to the current ships officers that were in-dock and I drove back to Castelluccio and obtained a truck and trailer, which I drove myself. I believe that someone at Group Headquarters OK'd it, for Colonel Eaton signed the release. This was in June of '44, I believe ... My memory isn't what it use to be. The Commander of the ship that was giving me the dunnage, gave me a release slip to show the guard. I used the same release for the next five trips. I also exchanged about five or six Parka's, which I obtained from Supply; with permission .. of course.

While doing this, I was also informed of the fact that a Cement Factory existed at Battapaglia, below Naples, where all the cement was controlled by the Army. There was a Sergeant there by the name of Anthony Facima with whom I struck up a great friendship, and believe it or not, I exchanged a damaged Jeep for two trailer loads of forty pound sacks of cement; which is how the entire outfit was able to build the holding structures for the Cleechi Blocks that were used. I wish I could tell you more of this adventure that took two weeks and three days of back and forth rides to complete.

I used a total of one Jeep and sixteen jackets to assure that everyone had their share. Colonel Stef knew about it, I am sure. But as to the remainder of the outfit; I don't know. I don't know, but I am sure that your outfit was where they obtained the Flatbed, for it was brought to me at the flight line and left from there on out with "Group Dispatch." I kept the Flatbed for the entire round trips of the lumber and cement; with an intermittent trip when I exchanged the Jeep for a Motorcycle, which is what the Sergeant at the Cement Factory gave me to get back to Castelluccio between trips.

One other little thing that took place to help me was that the guy, Julio, who originally asked me what I was looking for, eventually had a situation where his daughter was getting married. He asked me to get some parachute material for the wedding dress; which I was able to do. That sealed our position with him and he did many other little favors for us, which I won't go into detail at this time.

I really am not sure of the 60th's position in what I did, for I was not the negotiator. I have to believe that somehow your Captain knew about it .. that cab-over had to be serviced each trip I made.



LT DAVID HENSHELL
(WORKING WITH HIS FAVORITE PEOPLE - ORPHANED KIDS)

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

I hope I haven't exhausted your eyesight with my lengthy discussion. I'm glad to see that you have an organization of your own. It's one area that most of us look at, but not having the time to realize, when we were kids and overwhelmed with our excess' of vitality, that somehow seems to leave us too soon.

There is another story of a little girl we got from the orphanage named Carmelita, who was the pride and joy of our outfit. I believe one of our Sergeants eventually adopted her. That's a story of its own and I am sure would make a helluva movie; for we all fell deeply in love with that four year old gal.



CARMELINA

I am sure that you have a multitude of things that your people did that all of us could relate to. Anyway, I want to thank you for your interest and hope that should you travel East again that you make sure that you accept our hospitality. By the way, you asked if I came from Camp Hill. No I didn't .. I happened to be transferred to the Air Base that use to be here at Middletown, and when it closed I bought a home here, while I was on my way to Vietnam.

(signed) David Henshell

(Editor's note: A more factual accounting of the "Carmeline Castiline" story. It can be found in our Ad Lib 'Issue 28,' Page 11.)

Ernie answered with this letter:

June 8th, 1993

Dear Dave & Rita,

Many thanks for your May letter. Your memory is excellent, any "blurring" is due to 30 years of your service in many places and situations. In my short four year hitch, all Army life is easy to divorce from post war jobs. I think one reason for regarding WW2 as a "high Spot," was the mix of men in uniform. All walks of life and trades were thrown together with the aim of getting it over with, not competing for promotions or personal advantage.

You wrote about "following the trail of the 8th Army." That brought back some memories of my own, as the 60th "followed" them for eight months, from Egypt to Tunis. Having to do with fewer supplies than we Yanks, the English were accounting for every item; a paperwork nightmare. It was a source of pleasure when I managed to steal four thousand gallons of 100 octane fuel from an English depot without signing for it; the clerk was asleep in his office.

About the 40 foot flatbeds, the 60th had two. The one that was used in the States, and shipped overseas with us, became swayback due to overloading in Africa. Ever-after, even empty, it sagged between the wheels and goose-neck. The Autocar tractors were cabover, the original Stateside models had steel tops, full doors and roll-up windows. Those issued in the field had canvass tops, side curtains, etc.. From your Naples dates, I am certain that all the lumber and cement trips were made without my participation, although your method of ope-

ration must have been passed on to some other Eager Beaver. My involvement was just after Christmas, 1944.

With a Sergeant as copilot, we left Castelluccio at 4 A.M. under a bright moon, made the docks by 10. Loaded and headed home at 2 P.M.. We followed a longer route back that had fewer hard climbs. A couple of hours later, as we neared the crest of a long grade, the engine suddenly revved up. The drive train still worked, so I pulled over to see what had happened under the hood. Turned out a pulley hanger had broken, the V belt lost, and as a result the air compressor ceased to function. No air - no brakes - end of trip! The Sergeant hitched back to base to send out a mechanic with replacement parts.

Sleeping in a truck cab in freezing weather on an Italian mountain top was not such a hot prospect; specially without blankets, or even a wide seat cushion. Conserving the air in the tanks, I got in 'compound low' and eased down the slope in search of food and shelter. The first camp I found was a British prison compound, where the main gate was controlled by a couple of M.P's. I parked across from them and asked where I might bum a meal. Directed to a mess hall up a little hill (there was no level area of any size anywhere, everything was "up, or down" from anything else) the cooks took me into their kitchen. With a tin pie plate and a mug, they served me chicken and dumplings, some fresh vegetables - I think was turnips - chocolate pudding, and sweet milky tea. Asking for their C.O., next stop was a stone building of three rooms. My uniform was work coveralls, a knit wool cap (the kind that fit under helmet liners) and a fleece lined leather jacket with mo insignia showing.

A Lance Corporal, in the outer office, after I explained my need for assistance, went into a second room and summoned me a minute later. At his desk sat a thin gentleman wearing three "pips" and a Ronald Coleman mustache. My immediate thought was to give this Officer a temporary promotion;

"Major," I said, "I've broken down my transport right outside your gate. Is there any chance of a bed here, while my mechanics comes for repairs?"

"What' your rank?," he asks.

"Sir, I am a Buck Sergeant," I counter.

Picking up his field telephone, he gives it a crank and says, "Sergeant Major, there is an American 'Top Kick' here in my office. See to it he is bedded down and fed!"

Thus elevated to 1st Sergeant by confusion of slang terms, I was treated accordingly. The Sgt/Major called out a couple of Privates and sent them off to draw a folding cot and blankets, which they set up in the Sergeant's own private tent. I couldn't lift a hand to do a thing. Then off to the N.C.O. Club, where I had previously had my meal, and now for a round of drinks. Seeing me again, the chief cook protested, "Why didn't you tell us you were a six-striper? We have china and glasses instead of tin plates and mugs."

Discussion with these 'blokes' revealed that the camp was for confining deserters and other offenders of military rules, not an enemy prisoner among them. The permanent cadre were all veterans of many campaigns, older than most G.I.'s, probably selected, as a reward for

long service, to this rear area post. As for the prisoners, a small number were black marketer's, or had killed another in drunken fights. But most were infantry troops who had decided (after five years of combat) it would be better to end the war as a live traitor than a dead hero. NOTE: After the war, a general amnesty did indeed take place.

They had full glass for both my hands, and after enough sweet Vermouth, powerful Groppi and smooth Canadian Club, old Ern was feeling no pain. One fellow at an old upright piano hammered out songs on request. The only tune my soggy mind thought of was "St. Louis Blues." Everybody's favorite was "Lili Marlene." By the time I staggered off to the tent and collapsed, my host was well plastered too. The next morning, when Ray found my truck and fixed it, he had a harder time getting me in shape to drive than he did with the fractured machinery. We returned to Casertlucio, on slippery roads in a heavy snowstorm, hung-over

all the way. That was the drunkest Cummins ever got during his entire military hitch, and could well be blamed on the English regard for superior rank! -- "Bang On, Ruddy Good Show!" --

I do not recall which Squadron got the dunnage lumber, some of which was impossible to drive a nail into. WE also hauled 'sized lumber' from Bari that came from the U.S.

(signed) Ernie Cummins

A little insight what two ol' soldiers recall from almost 50 years into the past. Adventure, duty and levity mustered up from the havens of the mind. What's left now, but to recall it. We ain't planning to do it again. Most of us have toiled our lives away in one form or other; doing as good a job as we did when we served our country in wartime. We have put away the sword and tried to make room for the next generations ... Hopefully in a better world. I guess it's their turn; but we've still got our memories.

SONS TRIBUTE TO HIS FATHER: SGT ALFRED LEONARD (724TH)

Members of the 451st Bombardment Group; Today I am writing this letter with many mixed emotions. First, I regret to inform you that one of your comrades has left the ranks of the living and had taken his Final Flight. (Sgt) Alfred H. Leonard, Sr., of the 724th Squadron, who lived in Bethel, CT, died November 15, 1999 in Danbury CT with his family close by. He was 79 years old. He will be greatly missed by his family, friends, VFW, The American Legion and the Parks and Recreation Department of Bethel where he served in one capacity or another with the Bethel Baseball Association for over four decades. My father was a proud man, proud of his country and of his Service in the cause that helped keep it free. He would often share stories with me about his days in the 15th AAF while stationed in Italy during WW-II. Dad served as ground Crew Chief for ship #21, 'SHEHASTA' and has many other pictures of himself while working on a ship called 'HARD TO GET.' And if my memory serves me right, I think he said that ship was lost. He and I would go through his pictures and I'd hear a story about Walt, Benny and Frank, and the things they would do. Stories about how the ground crews would take a panel off the wing and put their beer in there, then replace the panel. After the ship had made it's run and returned, the ground crew would remove the panel and have a cold beer. Many of his stories are what inspired me, when I became of age, to enlist in the Army and serve this country. My father was my hero. Not a Superman or a John Wayne, but a man like so many other men who, when asked, served their country. My father flew our flag at his house each and everyday. When asked why, he simply would reply, "I believe in the flag I went to war for. I will stand each and every time it is raised and I will salute it." And he added, "I will never forget the price so many men paid in order for us to be free." Back in the spring of 1988, I remember my father called me with excitement in his voice and asked me to guess what he had found? After guessing to no avail, he told me how he had gotten in touch with the 451st Bombardment Group and was getting their news-

letters. He had hopes that maybe he could get in touch with a few of his old friends. I don't know if he ever did. I would ask if anyone knew my father during those years, maybe to write me or e-mail me and let me know if there is a memory that I can add to the ones that he left with me (see address below). I will never forget the price my dad, and so many others, paid for this country and I will always honor those men who went to war in the pursuit of Freedom and Liberty. Now, talk about a small world .. I live in Albuquerque, NM. My father, born in New Haven, CT, lived in Norwalk, CT (at the time of his enlistment) and after the war settled in Bethel, CT, about 2200 miles as the crow flies from my home in Albuquerque. Well, my wife and I like to help an elderly couple, here in Albuquerque. One day, while at their house, I noticed a plaque on the wall with the 15th AAF emblem on it. I asked Henry about it and he told me that during the war he was with the 15th AAF in Italy. As the conversation matured I found that Henry was with the 305th Group, stationed in about the same area as my father was. Henry was shot down and taken prisoner by the Nazis until Patton's Third Army liberated the camp he was in. In a sense, since my father has passed on, I spend just a little more time with my friend Henry, listening to stories of his time in Italy and the dark times he had as a POW. Henry went on to serve in the Air Force until 1973 and retired as a full "Bird Colonel," and has become more than just a friend. In closing I would like to thank Bob K. and all the people of the 451st Bomb Group for the newsletters and for helping to bring a little joy to my fathers life, as well as helping to bring the road of history to present day generations.

Again .. Thank You and God Bless You,

Fred W. Leonard 1837 Madeira NE Albuquerque,
NM 87110

e.mail .. fleonard@firstpresabq.org

COMPASSIONATE THOUGHTS OF AN ARMY DOC

I am a doctor specializing in Emergency Medicine in the Emergency Department of the only two military Level One trauma centers. They are both in San Antonio, TX and they care for civilian emergencies as well as military personnel. San Antonio has the largest military retiree population in the world living here because of the location of these two large military medical centers.

As a military doctor in training for my specialty, I work long hours and the pay is less than glamorous. One tends to become jaded by the long hours, lack of sleep, food, family contact and the endless parade of human suffering passing before you. The arrival of another ambulance does not mean more pay, only more work. Most often it is a victim from a motor vehicle crash.

Often it is a person of dubious character who has been shot or stabbed. With our large military retiree population it is often a nursing home patient. Even with my enlisted service and minimal combat experience in Panama, prior to medical school, I have caught myself groaning when the ambulance brought in yet another sick, elderly person from one of the local retirement centers to cater to military retirees. I had not stopped to think of what citizens of this age represented.

I saw Saving Private Ryan. I was touched deeply. Not so much by the carnage in the first 30 minutes, but more by the sacrifices of so many. I was touched most by the scene of the elderly survivor at the graveside, asking his wife if he'd been a good man. I realized that I had seen these same men and women coming through my Emergency Department and had not realized what magnificent sacrifices they had made. The things they did for me and everyone else that had lived on this planet since the end of that conflict are priceless.

Situation permitting I now try and ask my patients about their experiences. They would never bring up the subject without the inquiry. I have been privileged to an amazing array of experiences recounted in the brief minutes allowed in an Emergency Department encounter. These experiences have revealed the incredible individuals I have had the honor of serving in a medical capacity, many on their last admission to the hospital.

There was frail, elderly woman who reassured my young enlisted medic trying to start an IV in her arm. She remained calm and poised despite her illness and the multiple needle-sticks into her frail veins. She was what we call a "hard stick." As the medic made another attempt I noticed a number tattooed across her forearm. I touched it with one finger and looked into her eyes. She simply said "Auschwitz." Many of later generations would have loudly and openly berated the young medic in his many attempts. How different was the response from this person who'd seen unspeakable suffering.

A long retired Colonel, who as a young USN officer, had parachuted from his burning plane over a Pacific island held by the Japanese. Now an octogenarian, his head cut in a fall at home where he lived alone. His CT scan and suturing had been delayed until after midnight by the usual parade of high priority ambulance

patients. Still spry for his age, he asked to use the phone to call a taxi to take him home, then realized his ambulance had brought him without his wallet. He asked if he could use the phone to make a long distance call to his daughter who lived 70 miles away. With great pride we told him that he could not, as he'd done enough for his country and the least we could do was get him a taxi home, even if we had to pay for it ourselves. My only regret was that my shift wouldn't end for several hours and I couldn't drive him myself.

I was there the night MSG Roy Benavidez came through the Emergency Department for the last time. He was very sick. I was not the doctor taking care of him but I walked to his bedside and took his hand. I said nothing. He was so sick he didn't know I was there. I'd read his Congressional Medal of Honor citation and I wanted to shake his hand. He died a few days later.

The gentleman who served in Merrill's Marauders, the survivor of the Bataan Death March, the survivor of Omaha Beach, the 101 year old World War I veteran, the former POW held in frozen North Korea, the former Special Forces medic now with non-operable liver cancer, the former Viet Nam Corps Commander. I remember these citizens. I may still groan when yet another ambulance comes in, but now I am much more aware of what an honor it is to serve these particular men and women.

I am angered at the cut backs, implemented and proposed, that will continue to decay their meager retirement benefits. I see the President and Congress who would turn their back on these individuals who've sacrificed so much to protect our liberty. I see later generations that seem to be totally engrossed in abusing these same liberties won with such sacrifice. It has become my personal endeavor to make the nurses and young enlisted medics aware of these amazing individuals when we encounter them in our Emergency Department. Their response to these particular citizens has made me think that perhaps all is not lost in the next generation.

My experiences have solidified my belief that we are losing an incredible generation and this nation knows not what it is losing. Our uncaring government and ungrateful civilian populace should all take note. We should all remember that we must "Earn this."

Rangers Lead The Way!

CPT Stephen R. Ellison, MD

PRESENT DAY AIR FORCE HUMOR

Helicopter Pilot [talking to Ground]: "Roger ... I'm holding at 3000 feet over beacon."

Urgent second voice interrupts: "NO! You can't be doing that! I'm holding at 3000 over that beacon!"

[Brief pause, then first voice again]: "You idiot, you're my co-pilot!"

Thanks to the fine 461st "Liberaider" newsletter for letting me borrow.

"LITTLE FRIENDS:" THE 49TH FIGHTER SQUADRON (Continued - 8th Installment By Dr. Royal C. Gilkey)

The initial mission of a series the next day (August 16, 1944) was flying patrol for an hour. A quartet of 49'ers took off at 0500 hrs. A defective radio caused an early return in one instance. Another "Lightning" ran into difficulty shortly after takeoff & turned back to base. Tragedy ensued. The pilot, 2nd Lt Wayne R. Woody (Tacoma, Wash.) had called in to report a bad engine at 3,500 feet. His wingman noted he was losing altitude to 2,000 feet in a controlled glide. No one saw him try to ditch his plane, which was seen burning in the sea half a mile from the lakes east of Aghione A/D & offshore from Aleria, Corsica. Lt Woody initially had enough altitude to bail out, but nobody saw him try to do so. Nor did anyone see him "pancake" his plane. A subsequent search turned up nothing but pieces of wreckage & an oil slick on the sea's surface (4208 N. 0935 E.). Fog obscured this accident at 0515 hours, when his wingman lost sight of him in the murk.

A pair of P-38s that were operating normally continued on the mission, patrolling the "Grapes" area from 0545-0700 hours. There were no observations to report, the weather being hazy under low, hovering stratus. Returning to base at 0750 hours, the two "Hangmen" who completed the mission received sortie credit. The other pair who could not finish the assignment got none.

Mission number 2 on the 16 August 1944 involved dive-bombing coastal gun positions east of Toulon in Southern France. A quartet of "Lightnings" were off at 0635 hours, heading from their Corsica base to the target area. They arrived at 0800 hours and dropped their bomb load (eight 500-pound bombs) after identifying the target (as marked on a special map). The bombing run was started at 8,000 feet, with bomb-release at 2,000 feet. No hits were scored, though bombs struck near the targeted guns. The P-38s then climbed to 12,000 feet in order to patrol the invasion coast (referred to as the "Grapes" area) from 0810-0925 hours, as briefed. They then flew back to base (per "Box Car's" instruction), landing at 1015 hours. During this 350-mile trip, our pilots encountered no enemy aircraft; but 50 caliber bullets were fired at them from the position targeted. None were hit because the firing was poorly aimed and scant.

A third group of P-38s left Aghione at 0935 hours to dive-bomb medium guns elsewhere along the invasion coast. Our pilots arrived over the designated target at 1045 hours, began their dives at 8,500 feet, and released their bomb-loads (consisting of eight 500-pound bombs) at 4,000 feet. Two pilots scored direct hits with their four bombs. The other pair

sent bombs plunging earthward that struck the ground a little short of the target. All four fliers had no trouble identifying the targeted medium-size guns used for coastal defense. After dive-bombing, the four "Hangmen" patrolled the "Grapes" area, as briefed, from 1050-1211 hours at 12,000 feet. They were released from patrol duty a bit early, being instructed by "Box Car" to fly back to base, which was reached at 1255 hours. No flak or enemy aircraft were reported. The pilots reported clear weather, except for a scattering of cumulus along the way. Haze, however, hung over the Mediterranean Sea. Such was the third mission on 16 August 1944.

[Note: Different spellings of the controller make advisable the single reference "BOXCAR," which will be used henceforth in the interest of consistency and simplicity.]

The fourth group of "Lightnings" was to dive-bomb the highway west of the Vichy French Naval Base at Toulon located on the Mediterranean coast east of Marseille. Originally, the Squadron's planes were to attack quartet of gun-emplacements at another location, but "BOXCAR" changed the objective. After takeoff at 1240 hours, our pilots flew the briefed route to a point a bit southwest of islands called Les Dhyeres. It was then that "BOXCAR" directed them to dive-bomb the highway going west from Toulon towards Marseille. No grid-coordinates were supplied to the "Lightnings." They proceeded to the southernmost of two highways going west from Toulon. A pair of 500-pound bombs or eight dropped hit the highway with the remainders straddling it. The roadway was easily identified before the attack on it. When the dive-bombing ended, our P-38s climbed to 12,000 feet and patrolled the adjoining region (referred to as a barely decipherable "STEALERS area" in the record). remaining on patrol from 1400-1520 hours, when "BOXCAR" instructed them to return to base. All four arrived home at 1620 hours. No enemy aircraft were encountered, but a lot of flak was at Cape

Sicie (Cap Sicie), south and slightly east of the target. There 2 mm. and small arms fire was intense but inaccurate.

The next 16 August 1944 mission (narrated in "Report #5") sent four P-38s via a briefed route to Les Dhyeres, a group of islands south and east of Toulon Harbor (more accurately called Iles d'Hyeres). Our pilots swung south and wide of the naval base to reach the targeted highway running to the west. When over a curve on the highway along a river named Rappe north of the town of Ollioules, the P-38s released a couple of thousand-pound bombs and four 500-pounders at 1650 hours. One of the 1000-pound bombs



scored a direct hit on the highway. Two of the 500-pounders narrowly missed it. The rest of the bombs landed in the river bed just west of the highway. There was no difficulty in identifying the target. "BOXCAR" acceded to a request from the pilots to dive-bomb 10-minutes late. After they had dive-bombed, the four "Lightnings" flew patrol over the invasion coast ("Grapes" area), flying at 12,000 feet from 1700-1915 hours. The controller "BOXCAR" then released them to return to base, which they reached at 2015 hours. The pilots reported no incident during the patrol. The sky was clear of enemy aircraft, but a lot of flak was fired at passing medium bombers (B-26s). The controller was heard to say that Draguignan and Le Luc had fallen to the Allies. They were strategically-placed towns inland from the coast of Southern France. The weather was hazy, with cumulus clouds cover about 5/10. Noticeable inland was a thick bank of clouds.

The sixth mission flown on August 16, 1944 called for dive-bombing and patrol-flying. Four "Lightnings" left base at 1825 hours, flying to a point east of Cannes, where they dive-bombed a specifically designated gun-emplacement. It was easily identified. The P-38s dropped a couple of thousand-pound bombs and four 500-pounders on the coastal guns there. The latter landed directly on target, as did one of the thousand-pound bombs. The other 1000-pound bomb struck slightly west of the target close to a jetty. This attack took place at 1940 hours and was believed to have destroyed the target. Flying patrol came next, four "Lightnings" started this phase of the mission at 1950 hours. Two of the P-38s had to leave early at 2010 hours because the pilots felt sick. The other pair continued to patrol the "Grapes" area until 2120 hours, when "BOXCAR" released them to return to base. The pilots who started back earlier reached base at 2055 hours; the others touched down at 2220 hours. All four participants in the mission earned sortie credit. No enemy aircraft were encountered. There was, however, intense flak along the coast east of the erstwhile resort city of Cannes. "Friendly" naval units may have been the source of this flak. Haze covered the sea, but it was clear over the target; inland were cumulus clouds.

A tragedy occurred at Aghione when the 49th Fighter Squadron's B-17, being used as a transport, came in for a landing and suddenly shot skyward before falling off to the right, crashing, and burning. In the crash, which was the severest in the unit's experience, a half-dozen enlisted 49'ers perished, among others.

They were T/Sgt Edward R. Segelken, T/Sgt Walter E. Jones, S/Sgt Francis N. Purtell, Cpl John J. Herrion,

Cpl Richard J. Schrodtt, & Pvt Donald E. Breahm. A trio escaped from the flames of the exploding aircraft, one of them dying later at the hospital. He had belonged to the 48th Fighter Squadron, as had another who survived. Sgt Brennan was the deceased, and the survivor was Sgt Gemmel. The third was a Cpl William R. Campbell, a 49'er (of long service from 1942 on) who survived.

Others were lost when the B-17 crashed, exploded and burned at Aghione Landing Ground. They included these from the 48th Fighter Squadron: Capt. Halford, Lt. Starbuck, and Cpl Lambie. The 14th Fighter Group headquarters lost Lt. Kurtz, Sgt Duncan and Cpl Franklin.

NOTE: The printed record of the 49th Fighter Squadron dates the unlucky and unforeseeable accident befalling its B-17 as August 16; but the Squadron's anonymous diarist inserted on handwritten page: "Correction: B-17 crashed on 17 Aug. 1944."

News of this terrible mishap caused considerable sorrow among the Squadron friends of those killed. There was speculation as to whether cargo inside the plane had shifted, causing it to lose equilibrium at a critical moment. No sure explanation could be given.

....(Editor: The 451st Mission Listing shows that we did not fly a mission on 16 August 1944. The day previous, 15 August 1944, seems to have been our last mission to fly in support of "Operation Dragoon/Anvil." Mission #104 for the 451st. At that time we bombed the Frejus Beach Area, West Southwest of Cannes. It was not until we brought gasoline, bombs and ammo into Bron Airdrome (Lyon, France - 10 September 1944) did we visit France again.

Operational Order #186 reads - 15 August 1944: The plan for the Air force is support of the present invasion of Southern France. This Wing is to disrupt communications in and around FREJUS. Shortly after we bomb, this town will be attacked by ground troops.

Further directives show that we were to drop "propaganda leaflets" from the water's edge to about 30 miles inland.

We lost no aircraft that day.

Bracketing the efforts of the 49th Fighter Squadron, on their busy day of 16 August 1944, shows that on 17 August we again continued our effort to knock out the oil refineries at Ploesti, Rumania. On that day we lost two aircraft: the 'Merry Barbara' (Lt John W. Olds, Pilot - 726th) and 'Dirty Girtie' (Lt James D. Young, Pilot - 727th). Nine aboard the 'Dirty Girtie' became POWs, while the story of the Olds' crew can be found on page 3.

TAKEN FROM THE 1944 "STARS AND STRIPES"

B-24 Liberator Group Marks 100th Mission

MAAF HEADQUARTERS, Aug 11 -

A B-24 Liberator group which first saw action on a flight to Fier, Albania, Feb 3, 1944, completed its 100th mission yesterday by bombing oil installations at Ploesti. During the 100 missions, the group had dropped 6,773 tons of bombs in 3,079 individual sorties and has destroyed 134 enemy planes.

Personnel of the group, commanded by Col. Robert E.L. Eaton, Belleville, ILL., holds two Legion of Merit awards, eight Silver Stars, 81 DFCs and Clusters, ten Soldier's Medals, 41 Purple Hearts and 3,513 Air Medals and Clusters.

JOHN DAYTON'S TRIBUTE TO PETER MASSARE (727th PILOT & CO-FOUNDER OF THE 451ST BOMB GROUP (H), LTD.)

It was Friday, October 13, 1944; 1st Lt. Pete Massare was to be our pilot in place of Lt. Robert D. Mack who was shot down on his first mission, along with our regular nose gunner, Sgt Joe Naranjo.

We had flown our first mission to Bologna, Italy on the 12th and we knew that Pete was a great pilot. He had flown 43 sorties and was ready to go home with just several more to go.

Our position in the flight was #4 and he had taught me how to hold position in the formation without moving the throttles. Just slide over to the inside of the turn and you'll keep good position. He had encouraged me very much on that first mission.

Vienna was a dreaded target as it was heavily defended, but today it was to be a cinch. The target was supposed to be totally covered with overcast and we were going in at 21,000 feet on an instrument run. There would be plenty of chaff for the waist gunners to toss out so the Jerrys couldn't do a job on us.

Everything went smoothly until we started down the run. About ten minutes before "BOMBS AWAY," the sky opened up and there was our target - Dead ahead! And there we were like sitting ducks with 268 guns blazing away - "CAVU."

Our number three ship was first to slide out to the left - afire - then it exploded. One parachute was seen floating in the sky.

Then the lead plane took a direct hit, veered to the right and took out our number two ship. Both exploded. About that time our waist gunner advised us that number six had bailed out and tail end Charlie just took bombs from the lead ship in the high flight.

While all this was going on we lost number four engine, feathered it and number three was running away @ 3,400 R.P.M's. Pete gave me orders that I should try



1LT PETER A. MASSARE
1922-1996

to feather number three and when it came down to 2,400 I stopped feathering. It took three attempt at this procedure before that engine finally settled down to hold at 2,400 R.P.M.

Now it was time to check the ship and crew. Everybody was okay, but next to my right leg was hole 12 inches long and 3 inches high, with insulation all over my right leg, plus a piece of "88" flak wedged by my left foot; just inches away. I picked it up and laid it on the quadrant. Pete just shook his head and then said, "Dayton, you'll make it through your tour, 'cause you really kept your cool." I'll never forget the confidence that his remark gave to me.

We floated home by ourselves, as we had only two planes left out of the starting seven. The BBC radio advised us that American Heavies bombed the targets with little resistance - and no losses. This was hard for us to swallow after our baptism of fire.

Our crew was honored to have been introduced into combat by such a person as Pete Massare and I used his chute all the rest of my tour. He had a

seat pack and that meant that I had a way down, if necessary.

Most of my 35 missions were never easy, but that one on Friday the Thirteenth is deeply imbedded in my memory.

I was later checked out as First Pilot and on my thirteenth mission, with a brand new airplane, got to land at Vis because of fuel shortage. Later it was determined that the automatic lean wasn't working on the two in-board engines. We came into Vis on three only; landed safely and stopped just 50 feet short of the end of the runway. The next morning we took off after fuel was flown in and we had survived one more mission. Yes, we slept in that barn upstairs, with about 300 Yugoslavs on the floor.

A SMALL CHILD'S PERCEPTION

[LEVITY OFF THE INTERNET]

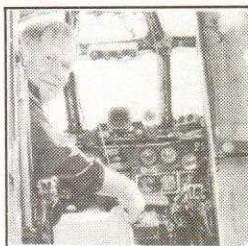
One Sunday morning the Pastor noticed little Alex staring up at the large plaque that hung in the foyer of the Church. The plaque was covered with names, and small American flags were mounted on either side of it.

The seven-year old had been staring at the plaque for some time, so the Pastor walked up, stood beside the boy, and said quietly, "Good morning Alex."

"Good morning Pastor," replied the young man,

still focused on the plaque. "Pastor McGhee, what is this?" Alex asked. "Well, son, it's a memorial to all the young men and women who died in the service."

Soberly, they stood together, staring at the large plaque. Little Alex's voice was barely audible when he asked, "Which service, the 9:00 or the 11:00?"



CHATTER FROM THE FLIGHT DECK

Bob Karstensen

I took some time, a few months back, to look into the computer and examine our membership roster. I keep a sector in the file that allows me to record my incoming mail.

What I found amazed me. Going back to some of our earliest joiners, but not as far back as those that recently signed on, I found a lack of communication by more than 350 of these "once 'hot to trot' members." With our present roll call of some 1345 members that I mail to, it seemed ironic that I shouldn't have heard from these guys (some for more than 10 to 15 years).

So, what do I undertake? ... I mail a personal letter to each of them this past January. In each letter I attempted to coach them into dropping me a line. I didn't try to badger them, but rather tried to find out why it was that I hadn't heard from them. I codger them with platitude and reasoning; accepting the fact that illness in the family gave reason not to write. I made a note that our upcoming get together in St. Louis could be an excuse TO write and let me know what their intentions were, as to attending. I even baited them with the fact that this office needed an updated computer, and if they weren't 'hot' to scribble something in the form of a letter; a small stipend, coming from them would suffice.

I know that health in the family can always be a problem. Lack of interest can also become an excuse. The inability of getting into the writing mode, too! But, in the final analysis; death could be the singular cause.

The outcome of my venture into psychoanalyst leaves me puzzled. Some three hundred and fifty (350) letters go out .. about fifty respond! Sixteen of them are 'notification of death' by family or friends. My question is .. What's with the other three hundred I mailed to? Has 'Father Time' caught up with them and left them

totally disinterested. Or, are they no longer with us. And is it that the family does not take-on the task of letting us know? I'd hate to think the latter. But with little other facts to go with, I have to continue to mail to that same address. But after a point in time, if no word is received, I'll have to drop them.

I'm not going to publish the names of these errant members, but if you other members will take a survey of your known tentmates and let me know if you still have contact with them, it would be appreciated.

As a follow-up to my previous analysis (about some may having gone to their higher rewards), I did a survey, via the Internet Web Page (Social Security Death Index), and with what information I had on hand: date of birth, last residence, last time I'd heard from them - I added another forty-plus to the deceased list.

I hope you guys, as well as family members, can aid me in this cause. A clarification of what's happening among our comrades would be appreciated by this office.

Something else I'm going to undertake, something that you can help me in doing. Over the years I have compiled a list of addresses of known/found members. All have been mailed our 'Recruitment Questionnaire' - needed to allow me information on their 451st past. Some I have even talked to by phone. At first blush they seem to be interested, but after my mailing I get no responses. Who knows what the reason may be? Some may just 'sluff it off' as an insignificant attempt to bring back the past. Some may be, or have become, ill since the first mailing was received. Some may think that organizations, such as ours, are just for reunion purposes.

True, it's great to hold reunions where we can once again rehash the past - but it's not the most important thing we can do. What we're doing, with your help, is to leave something for the next generations. Soon our generation will be gone and the accomplishments, on our part in WW-II, will be forgotten.

With our growing list of deceased members, I would like to share the names of those that I think are still out there waiting to be contacted by those of you that can relate to them - personally. We need to build our Membership Roster in order to replenish those now lost. If you see a name on the following list that you know; write me (don't phone as I am not always handy to my computer/files) and I will send you their last known address. In that way you will make my recruitment job a whole lot easier.

NAMES FROM OUR 'MOST WANTED' FILE



HDQS:

Bartkowiak, John P.
Cavano, Joseph P.
Coburn, Harold B.

724th:

Anders, Nelson R.
Blasko, Peter F.
Brown, Curtis G.
Butters, Jack R.
Cranford, Francis D.

Coscia, Leonard J.
Dacey, William F.
Duval, Hugh P.
Gibson, John
Gilbert, Earl M.
Gilson, Richard D.
Gould, James H.
Gravelyn, Wallace R.
Jankiewicz, Henry I.
Keiser, John W.
Kirkpatrick, Robert N.

MORE OF OUR 'MOST WANTED'

Kulnis, Edward L.
LaCaze, John P.
Levesque, Jean B.
Lottman, Carl R.
Miley, Bruce F.
Morgan, Ezra R.
Nelson, Seabert J.
Oldham, Mason B.
Pientka, Charles W.
Reinhard, Paul C.
Sampson, Phillip B.
Thieleke, Walter L.
Thomas, Damon
Tudico, Patrick M.
Van Tassel, Everett H.
Webb, Joseph C.
Weir, John P.
Zoldowski, Henry

725th:

Adamson, Oscar C.
Bourdette, Warren C.
Byce, James L.
Cox, Byron V.
Dzwigalski, Richard L.
Falcigno, Thomas B.
Foss, Scott E.
Halper, Eugene I.
Hoyt, John C.
Johnson, Mescal F.
Kenny, Daniel J.
Kusarik, Joseph
Lyon, Clayton M.
Marks, Delmar L.
McKelvey, Donald G.
Mondello, Joe A.
Morini, Ralph G.
Nelon, Grady M.
Nelson, Clark N.
Orkin, David
Ostwinkle, Claude N.
Poole, Leon T.

Ruf, Benjamin J.
Shaw, Charles B.
Sherman, Robert V.
Sorby, William R.
Sweeney, Vincent T.
Swift, Arnold G.
Tostado, Albert D.
Towle, Jonathan D.
Tranchida, Jack F.
Wasielewski, John F.
Yenney, John P.

726th:

Barrett, George T.
Blau, Harry H.
Bradovich, Michael R.
Brown, Albert K.
Collier, Robert E.
Cooper, Alva S.
Gore, Warren Y.
Hendrickson, Dolph H.
Husky, Roman T.
LaRoe, George W.
Manley, William O.
Manning, Ralph A.
McCoslin, Waymond D.
Miller, Charles A.
Miskoff, William G.
Nickoley, Arthur J.
Olensky, Marvin
Richmond, Seymour B.
Rutledge, Victor B.
Schwartz, Harry E.
Shealy, Rufus L.
Tholcke, Fred C.
Vargo, Joseph
Ward, George W.
Weinberg, Stanford G.
Weinstein, Manuel
Willis, Robert D.

727th:

Anderson, Alfred R.

Belock, David J.
Bickford, Earle H.
Biolchini, Jeremiah J.
Cameron, Louis J.
Carey, Patrick D.
Cook, Charles E.
Cue, Aaron A.
Davis, William J.
Denayer, John C.
Drnjevech, Andrew
Foley, Charles F.
Hammond, Dilworth R.
Heath, Joe B.
Hibbeln, Richard P.
Hirsch, Eugene J.
Holland, Eldon C.
Hose, Peter M.
Huskey, Roman T.
Imperato, Adolph
Krashefski, Leo F.
Lee, Elam W.
Levingston, Albert A.
LeWarne, Don f.
Longbrake, Clarence W.
Mildrum, Charles J.
Mooha, Andrew H.
Morrin, Samuel C.
Murphy, Ivan D.
Orvek, Albert A.
Pelser, Frederick P.
Ramos, Alex
Ritota, Roy M.
Rutkiewicz, Benjamin J.
Schaeffer, Arthur E.
Soto, William B.
Stumpf, Ralph J.
Swardlick, Samuel
Thornburg, Doyle G.
Trokie, Nathan
Uhler, Samuel C.
Yonik, Leon P.

GLEANINGS FROM US & BRITISH EFFICIENCY/FITNESS REPORTS

1. Not the sharpest knife in the drawer
2. A room temperature IQ
3. A prime candidate for natural deselection
4. So dense, light bends around him
5. If brains were taxed, he'd get a rebate
6. I would not breed this Officer
7. He would be out of his depth in a puddle
8. This Sergeant has delusions of adequacy
9. His men would follow him anywhere, but only out of curiosity

10. Since my last report he has reached rock bottom and has started to dig
11. This man is depriving a village somewhere of an idiot
12. He sets low personal standards and then consistently fails to achieve them
13. Got a full 6-pack, but lacks the plasting thingy to hold it all together
14. He has carried out each and every one of his duties to his entire satisfaction

OUR DIMINISHING RANKS -- THEIR FINAL FLY-BY

REPORTED OR FOUND SINCE OUR LAST NEWSLETTER

Allen, Charles T., 727th - 16 June 1999
 Askins, Lynn D., 727th - 27 August 1998
 Balsimo, Philip J., 724th - 18 March 1994
 Beck, David C., 724th - 5 March 1999
 Benedetto, Querino, 724th - 25 February 1998
 Bilanych, George, 725th - 31 March 1999
 Blackwell, Linwood L., 726th - 23 March 1992
 Bliss, Edwin E., 725th - 23 September 1992
 Brobst, Wayne E., 725th - 5 January 1995
 Buckley, Robert J., 724th - 15 December 1999
 Burgess, Ernest M., 724th - 1 September 1996
 Calkins, Earl C., 725th - 23 November 1996
 Card, Clell M., 724th - 22 October 1995
 Carreiro, James, 726th - 5 February 1997
 Causey, Maurice L., 725th - 13 July 1998
 Cliff, Leon H., 725th - 6 October 1998
 Cochran, James H., 725th - 19 November 1987
 Combs, Russell B., 726th - 23 July 1999
 Conlon, Charles E., 727th - 25 February 2000
 Cook, Louis L., 724th - 7 June 1999
 Cumming, Charles A., 727th - 15 August 1999
 Curby, Charles J., 724th - 12 December 1997
 Daley, Donald W., 724th - February 1986
 Daugherty, Carroll O., 724th - 20 August 1999
 Dean, William L., 727th - 11 June 1984
 Devine, William J., 725th - 15 October 1995
 Doherty, Eddie, 727th - 8 January 1998
 Doran, Robert J., 724th - 2 January 2000
 Duchesneau, Arthur T., 725th - 10 May 1998
 Dugan, Clarence A., 725th - March 1990
 Eaton, Lawrence C., 724th - 13 February 2000
 Evans, Clayton E., 727th - 25 December 1998
 Farrell, William H., 726th - 27 March 1999
 Fersht, Robert, 725th - 31 January 2000
 Galenas, Edward J., 727th - 16 March 1993
 Galotti, Nicholas P., 725th - April 1988
 Garma, Peter R., 725th - 20 November 1999
 Gance, Jack A., 725th - 23 October 1998
 Glavaris, Mike J., 725th - 9 April 1999
 Grieco, Robert, 726th - 21 January 1994
 Guivens, Harold C., 727th - 12 March 1997
 Haldeman, John M., 724th - 27 January 2000
 Harris, Walter A., 724th - 22 April 1996
 Hecht, Herbert, 727th - 25 September 1998
 Hershkowitz, Philip, 727th - 3 November 1999
 Hite, James R., 725th - 3 January 2000
 Holdeman, Robert E., 727th - 25 January 2000
 Hopwood, Benny F., 724th - 27 September 1998
 Hulderman, James B., 727th - 13 June 1997
 Jana, Joseph T., 726th - 24 March 1998

Johnson, Verne G., 724th - 1 May 2000
 Kling, Harry C., 726th - 21 November 1995
 Kuhnert, William L., 724th - 29 April 1996
 Kuykendall, H.C., 727th - 3 May 1998
 Laing, John D., 724th - 3 February 1999
 Lasiter, Ralph E., 726th - 7 February 1996
 Leonard, Alfred H., 724th - 15 November 1999
 Lowrey, William G., 726th - 2 April 1995
 Lyons, Paul W., 727th - 17 June 1999
 Mahon, Herschel D., 727th - 14 May 1999
 Martin, Ervin E., 726th - 9 August 1999
 Martin, Jonathan S., 724th - 17 March 2000
 McCarthy, William R., 727th - 16 March 1996
 McElvain, Walter H., 725th - 13 January 2000
 McKnight, Theodore, SMW - 3 September 1999
 Mellem, Emil E., 725th - 14 June 1999
 Muller, Jean C., 726th - 21 May 1997
 Navarro, James S., 726th - 26 July 1999
 Nielsen, William A., HDQ - 21 August 1992
 Nolin, Albert E., 725th - 11 March 1997
 North, William A., 725th - 28 November 1995
 Ogden, James R., 724th - 15 September 1998
 Ogg, Albert F., 726th - 24 January 2000
 Packard, Lee R., 727th - April 1986
 Pafford, Rev. John C., 727th - 30 November 1998
 Pastori, Ramon V., 725th - 16 June 1998
 Patchin, Leonard, 725th - 12 April 1994
 Pearson, Earl D., 726th - 19 February 2000
 Plotkin, Marcus, 727th - 23 November 1997
 Podwin, Edward, 725th - 21 October 1999
 Pritchard, Byron J., 727th - 10 June 1998
 Pultz, Edward H., 725th - 7 May 1994
 Rixford, Henry L., 727th - 26 July 1996
 Roman, Joseph E., 727th - 9 January 2000
 Rosenberger, Charles H., 727th - 23 September 1997
 Sigle, Randall E., 726th - 20 May 1999
 Simiele, Lucian P., 727th - 31 January 1995
 Skene, John H., 725th - 12 August 1998
 Smith, Donald J., 724th - 27 September 1998
 Smith, Karl C., 726th - 25 September 1998
 Smith, Robert N., 727th - 17 August 1999
 Snyder, Lester W., 726th - 23 March 1996
 Stephens, Leon, 725th - 22 November 1994
 Stimpson, Neal U., 727th - January 1995
 Stritch, James R., 725th - 18 November 1999
 Thayer, Joseph A., 726th - 16 March 1999
 Torbol, Robert F., 724th - 14 May 1998
 Turbaville, Thomas R., 727th - 22 October 1994
 Uhl, Martin E., 724th - 12 January 2000
 Wester, Robert H., 727th - 18 May 1995
 Wilmsmeyer, Edwin F., HDQ - 14 January 2000
 Wilson, Charles W., 727th - 17 October 1998
 Winner, Seymour, 724th - 8 February 1999
 TOTAL = 104

SPECIAL MEMORIAL TRIBUTE OFFERED TO

Robert E. Barnd - From wife, Mickey
 John M. Bodenchuk - From wife, Martha
 Gordon K. Butts - From Everett L. Sanborn
 Kenneth K. Carter - From wife, Nila
 Andrew J. Dobernic - From Alex Nerroth
 Murray F. Eskew - From Thomas E. McHale
 Raymond L. Fisher - From George E. Tudor
 Ruth Frisbee - From William J. Gallagher
 Louis F. Gramando - From Carmine J. Paceleo
 Herman Green - From William M. Tuney
 Gerald Hopkins - From Jack E. Jones
 M/G James B. Knapp - From Willard C. Gill
 Elwood Lucas - From Thaddeus F. Kumor
 Herbert F. Marco - From Theodore B. Rill
 Edward B. McKelvy - Ernie Cummins
 Torivio Mercados - From Thomas J. Sullivan
 Haskell T. Michael - From wife, Evelyn
 Richard Moreau - From George E. Tudor
 Edward E.D. Nall - From Thomas E. McHale
 Barton E. Nelson - From Duane C. Maybay

Rev. John C. Pafford - From Robert Karstensen
 Norbert Paskon - From Thomas J. Sullivan
 Ralph S. Peterson - From Thaddeus Kumor
 John Prieskorn - From Thomas J. Sullivan
 Byron J. Pritchard - From wife, Genevieve
 John B. Risher - From Robert E. Ashba
 Donald P. Roemer - From Thomas J. Sullivan
 Barbara Schaffner - From husband, Donald
 Crew of 'Screamin Meemie' - From Ed Longenecker
 Edward H. Stresky - From Frank J. Lather
 William E. Stone - From Charles R. Brown

Each of these names were accompanied by a \$50 Memorial Contribution. You may wish to do the same for a tentmate or crewmate that is no longer with us. Please make a notation on your check as to whom you wish to recognize. Make checks payable to 451st Bomb Group. Only one name, crew or section per \$50 donation, please.

RE: 'SPECIAL LETTER' BY JACK THOMAS REVISITED

BOY, is this office in a quandary as to the happenings that took place on, or about the 15th of February 1944. I concur with Jack that there was a mission flown on the 15th rather than on the 12th to support the Anzio Beachhead. But why all the screw-up as to getting it correct in the Group's history, I don't understand.

I've got several 'mission lists' that gives Campalone, Italy as the target, with confirmation coming from the Photo Officer's 'photo log.' This refers to the positioning of cameramen aboard specific aircraft and the results of their efforts. But nothing from the 'photo log' indicates any bombing was made on Cassino -- on that day. It should be stipulated that there were two targets in the Cassino area; Abbazia di Montecassino (the Abbey) and Cassino (the town). There was no mention of these two positions being bombed that day.

What I found quite interesting are these fact sheets (called a 'photo log'), which were sent to me by our Photo Officer, Major William Dwyer, before his death. The various entries help confirm some of my findings. For instance: A/C #229, was piloted by William Bias (726th) with Bombardier Albert Bostner and Photographer Rogers (no first name given) on board.

Another participant: A/C #245, Pilot, Richard Kimmel (725th), Bombardier, Herbert Massa and Photographer, Neil Weiberg.

Third camera ship: A/C #103, Pilot, Terrell Prewitt (727th), Bombardier, John Haldane and Photographer Hoffman (no first name given).

And 'Tail End Charlie' (last ship, last element, last flight) was piloted by James Coyle (724th) in A/C #725

with Bombardier, Alfred Clements with Reginald White as Photographer.

Each 'log' page references the target as "Beachhead-Railroad Junction, Compleone (spelled differently on various reports) Station, Italy"

Another set of documents refers to the 15 February effort as a mission to the Siena Marshalling Yards, some 200 miles Northwest of the city of Cassino.

In this NARRATIVE REPORT #8, it reads (under Enemy Resistance):

A. FIGHTERS: 2 radial engine fighters flew along-side formation over Anzio at 1143. The formation at this time was at 25,000'. The ships climbed above the formation and a bomb was seen to fall through the formation. Results no bombing done.

B. FLAK: Over target this Group experienced moderate accurate heavy flak, but no losses. No flak enroute. Evasive action from IP to target kept barrage type flak from making direct hits.

SIGNIFICANT OBSERVATIONS:

Flak Positions: 4 guns at south end of lake (41-42N-12-42E).

Naval: 3 to 4 DD circling large ship apparently on fire off Anzio seen at 1140 from 20,000'.

As I perused through report after report, I began to wonder about the actual Cassino mission that we did fly. On one document it shows the date of 16 March 1944. On most others it dates the mission as 15 March. Also in question is the Mission Number. On the 200th Mission Map it lists the mission as the 14th. Microfilm gives it

as Mission #13. I trust the date of 15 March and Mission #13. The microfilm gives this description of the mission's purpose -- in part;

This Army support mission is designed to end the stalemate at CASSINO town and is planned as a specially coordinated attack with the Tactical Air Force.

Formation arrangement reads thus:

Target and Mission

47th Wing

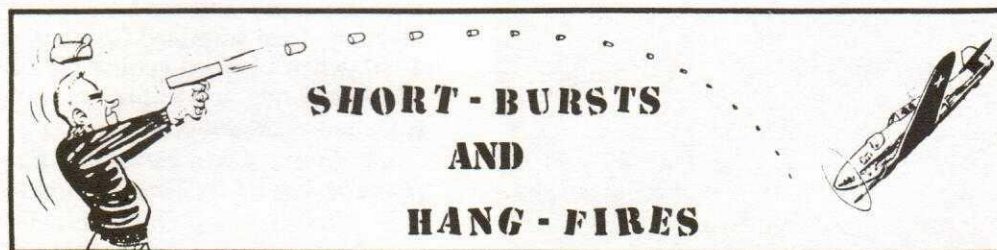
B-24's of the 376th and the 451st Groups, with fighter cover provided, will attack "B" Area of CASSINO in three waves at 0945, 1000, and 1015.

What really cements my conviction on the mission, again, comes from the 'photo log.' It lists two camera-

men scheduled for the mission; Reginald White and Allan Woodman. In handwritten words it reads, "White was in plane but didn't take off." It further reads, "Target: Cassino, Italy --Bombed Venafro by mistake."

S/Sgt Allan Woodman was assigned to fly with the 726th in the A/C piloted by James Bell and with William Butler as Bombardier. Woodman, as the lone cameraman, managed to bring back some 48 prints that were sent to S-2 for scrutiny.

So there we stand, as to "official" documented reports. Somewhere in-between lies the true facts. I guess each of you that took part in the mission has your version of what happened - and how it happened. We'll just have to live with it.



James H. Williams, 725th [NAVIGATOR: ALBERT SHERMAN'S CREW]

The "Searching by Offsprings." news has given me reason to respond promptly. Perhaps I can assist with the request by Jeffrey Reise for information about his father Lt. Alvin G. Reise (page 16, Issue 31). Al Reise was the bombardier on my crew with Al Sherman, pilot. I, as navigator, shared quarters with Al for many months and flew many missions with him. I'd welcome the opportunity to share information with his son.

Two other requests sparked a recall, though I doubt whether I can help much. Scott Hughes (page 15) and Barbara Jepson (page 13) asked about the February 7, 1945 mission to Vienna oil fields. I flew that mission. It was an unforgettable day.

Another request also brought memories to mind. Though I had met Lt. William Silliman, I really did not know him well. I was assigned to fly as his navigator on the homeward flight in June 1945. My pilot, Al Sherman, appealed this decision, and at the last minute, I was reunited with my crew. At Dakar, Silliman's plane took off shortly after we did. At Natal, Brazil, we learned of the tragic accident. A friend, Martin "Marty" Walsh, a bombardier, was aboard with Lt. Silliman.

(Editor ... Addresses of the "offsprings" should be in your hands by now. I'm sure they would appreciate any input you can offer. As to Lt. William Silliman's fatal accident off the coast of Dakar, North Africa, I still have many questions on that one. The make-up of his crew being one. After losing most of his original crew over Bruck, Austria, just exactly who became his new crew, if one was assigned to him? After all, he lost all but; himself, the copilot, Carl Roberts and his AEG, Forrest Millis. The rest bailed out and became POW's, except for Sgt Richard F. Morton who was KIA.)

Charles Haltom, 726th [PILOT: SQUADRON COMMANDER]

I have been through the recent Ad Lib, but will

peruse it more slowly later. I enjoyed the article by Bodenchuk. As you probably know, I flew a lot of missions with this crew. That crew was the first crew (Model Crew) in the 726th and we went through combat phase training together at Orlando, FL. John was always clowning around but he was an excellent navigator and always knew where we were. Dorcas and I enjoyed seeing them at our reunions.

In regards to the Regensburg raid of the 25th of February '44, the Group Operations Officer, a very good friend of mine, was flying with Coleman as my deputy lead. After my capture in July, I was sent to Stalag Luft III, where we met up and became roommates for the rest of the war. His name was Monroe C. Quillen - a Captain at the time. His promotion to Major came through the day he was shot down. We stayed in touch for many years, but he has moved from his last address and I have been unable to locate him. What do your records show? I could never get him to attend any of the reunions.

(Editor ... Can't help you with Quillen's address, Charles; considering he's still alive. We once had him as a member, but somehow he became LOST. Maybe someone else out there has a handle on his whereabouts.)

Linn Newman, 724th [GUNNER: LYALL JOHN- SON'S CREW]

I received the Ad Lib a couple days ago. It was very welcome. Janet and I are hoping to join you in St. Louis, if we can rearrange our schedule.

Enclosed is a check to keep my membership active.

We thoroughly enjoyed our first meeting in Atlanta. I hope we can continue. It sure was nice to meet the guy that has kept all this going - Thanks.

(Editor ... Thanks Linn. You've certainly settled in to be one of our more considerate members. The story about you and the Johnson Crew evading out of Turkey was intriguing for me to research and for the members

to read. I was happy to include it in one of our earlier Ad Libs (Issue 29). Your contribution was most welcome, as well.)

Allie O. Isom, 725th [NAVIGATOR: FRED KUHN'S CREW]

I noticed you have done some research on the a/c "RED RYDER." I didn't arrive in Italy until March 1945, but I flew several missions on the "RED RYDER." If memory serves me correctly, we flew that plane back to the States after VE Day. We left it in Connecticut.

(Editor ... AH HA! A little more informational fodder on the famous "Red Ryder." Thanks Allie)

William Jackson, 726th [PILOT: AIRCRAFT COMMANDER]

You might be interested to know that the Collings Foundation B-24 flew into the Plymouth, Massachusetts airfield on Sunday, September 12, 1999. I took my next door neighbor (who flies ultra-lights) with me and we went through the big bird. The outside was familiar, but my memory of the inside was somewhat different, at least in the center and back of the plane where I seldom



went. I decided to wear my dress jacket with ribbons and my 451st cap. It got the attention of a reporter from the Patriot Ledger (Quincy, Massachusetts) and my episodes were part of the write-up in the paper the next day.

(Editor ... Bill, as you can see, I too found the Colling's [now named 'The Dragon And His Tail'] at my Rockford Illinois airport. But the truth is, and you know it as well as I; they shrunk the inside!

Frank Lather, 727th [PILOT: SQUADRON COMMANDER]

Herewith my Memorial Tribute to 727th pilot, Lt Edward Stresky and crewmates who took a hit in the bomb bay on April 25, 1945 over Linz, Austria. Ironically it was next to the last mission for the Group, (The last mission (#245), the following day, was to Sachsenburg M/Y Austria) thus making it a true tragedy. So far as I know, the only survivor on that mission was Ora "Pete" Arnold. (April 25th was my last mission)

I made a contribution to the Collings Foundation, which permitted me to honor Lt. Edward Stresky. His name has been placed on the left forward bomb bay door of the B-24. Look for it the next time the Collings airplanes are in your area.

(Editor ... According to my records, Frank, there was one other survivor to the 244th Linz mission. That was that of the Navigator, 1LT James Gore. 1LT Gore passed away in 1993, again, according to my findings.)

David Eagles, 726th [GUNNER: JOHN MORWOOD'S CREW]

I'm sure by now you have seen the new color scheme on the Collings Foundation's B-24. Bob Collings called Marti Baker in Hyannis and she called me to organize some veterans to help out during its visit to Hyannis. I am surprised Collings remembered me from 1990, when I helped getting the FBO to sponsor the B-24. At any rate, it was fun for two days and I met some real interesting people.

(Editor ... Dave included a fine newspaper article from the Cape Cod Times, with interviews and pictures)

George Tudor, 725th [PILOT: AIRCRAFT COMMANDER]

I saw the Memorial Tribute to Leslie Westberg from Ed Leahy. I sat on the bus with Ed at one of our past reunions and when he told me Les was his pilot, I filled him in on all I knew about Les in the years since the war. Les never kept in touch with any of his crew and Ed didn't know what happened to him, either.

Another thing: Remembering a mission on 7 October 1944 to Vienna. Our plane had taken several flak hits, including a shell that went through the #2 fuel tank. It did not explode - Thankfully. However the gasoline began pouring into the bomb bay. The doors were open and the wind coming in blew the gasoline into the waist section. ROG Ray Fisher's, along with the rest of them back there, clothing were soaked. Ray told me he was so sure the plane would explode, he sat in the waist window so he would be blown out, and could parachute down.

That was the last mission I flew. Our Squadron Commander, Capt. David Gould, was flying as my Copilot. He was badly injured by flak shards coming through the cockpit. He and I eventually wound up in the hospital in Bari, Italy. I had been able to land the plane on the Island of Vis. He was eventually flown back to the States for treatment. I was brought back on a hospital ship. We docked at Charleston, SC on Christmas Eve, 1944. My keenest memory, of the trip on that hospital ship, was the occasional announcement on the loud speaker system - "SHIPS FREEZER REPORT TO THE MORGUE."

(Editor ... Ed wasn't alone in not having heard from Les. The only communication I had with Les was a 'Change of Address,' since the time of his 'joining' us in 1982. You were kind enough to passed along most of the information about Les, which kept me 'up to speed' with his happenings. As to your mission of 7 October 1944 .. what can I add. Only that on that same mission we lost 'LUCKY TEN' [42-51409] out of the 727th. Pilot Harvey T. Robinett - 5 KIA, 5 POW)

Colin Campbell, 725th [ASSOCIATE MEMBER]

First, I'd like to thank you for the mention in your latest Ad Lib. Just within the last couple of days, I've received calls from Gil Fisher (Nose Gunner) and Dave Davis (Navigator), both of whom flew with my uncle (Charles Ralph Campbell). They spent the remainder of the war in POW camps, as did the rest of the crew. It's been very interesting to hear from them and I expect to correspond with them again in the future.

(Editor ... I was happy to pass along your address to Dave and Gil when they requested it. Since then I have relayed addresses of other "wondering offsprings," to other benevolent crew/tent mates.)

Angelo Veltri, 724th [GUNNER: CHARLES LYLE SMITH'S CREW]

Over the years I've lost contact with a few crewmembers. We were from Oregon, California, Texas, Oklahoma, Illinois, Maine, Ohio and Pennsylvania. We had, among us, 3 Purple Hearts and one POW. Was with the 451st from August 44 to May 45 as a Waist Gunner. Fortunately 'I' had only close calls. Had gunnery school at Panama City, Fla. and crew training near Frisco, Calif.

(Editor ... I hope the information I sent you, as to OUR accounting of the "Captain C. Lyle Smith Crew," was of some help. It's up to you now to make the necessary contacts.)

Joseph Ladoue, 725th [GUNNER: ALBERT SHERMAN'S CREW]

In Issue #31, the son of 2LT Alvin G. Reise (Bombardier, 725th), Jeffrey, wrote asking about his dad in WW-2. I was his dad's tail gunner and Aldo Conti was his ball gunner. We are both sorry to hear of his death. He was a great guy.

I wish to write to Jeffrey, but do not have his address. I would appreciate it very much if you could send that address to me.

(Editor ... No sooner said than done. Being that you are now on the Internet, that address will be in your hands before you know it.)

Harold Ginsberg, 726th [NAVIGATOR: R.G. ZIMMERMAN'S CREW]

I read with interest the item in the recent Ad Lib about relatives seeking information about their brave hero relatives from the 451st. Can you send me David Clapp's address? I'd like to write to him. You know that I went down with the Lt. Owens' crew and we also bailed out on the island of Krk. The reason we bailed out on Krk was because Lt. Roemer (Intelligence Officer, 726th) drilled it into the Navigator's heads that Harvey Clapp's crew bailed out on Krk and they got out okay, hence it was a safe place in that area. When Lt Owens said we were going to have to bail out, I told him "NOT HERE! This is Ustachi (sic) territory! There's a large island that you can see at about 2 o'clock. That's where Clapp's crew bailed out: Lets go there!" We did, and we got out. So we owe our lives to Harvey Clapp. As a matter of fact, at the 1988 reunion, which I could not attend, I understand that our Bombardier, Harry Kling (McKinnis' Crew), shared a cab with Harvey Clapp and

his wife. When Harry looked over and saw Harvey's name tag, he exclaimed, "My God, there really is a Harvey Clapp! I owe my life to you! The last thing I remember before bailing out, is the Navigator saying, 'This is where Harvey Clapp's crew bailed out'"

(Editor ... What a great remembrance, Harold. I'm sure after you contacted David, you gave him some nice vibes.)



PAOLO DeFERMI & LES BRUE
(CHECKING OUT 'OLD' FAMILIAR HAUNTS)

Leslie N. Brue, 726th [COPILOT: CHARLES THOMPSON'S CREW]

I sure did appreciate your help in finding our old air base in Italy. I really did enjoy it. I am sending a photo that you might enjoy. Paolo DeFermi was a 17 year old lad that worked in the Mess Hall. We lucked out finding him in Castelluccio

(Editor ... Glad to be of help, Les. The contacts I had with past 451st travelers to the old base I hope was a help. Dick Podoloff (727th) and 'Achi' Kozakis (726th) promised me that they would fill you in on what to expect. From what you say ... they did!)



CREW 6001, PRIOR TO OVERSEAS DEPARTURE
REAR: L - R: C.E. THOMPSON, P., L.N. BRUE, CP., J.I. KAUTZ, N., L.J. FONTANA, B.
FRONT: J.A. MINS, AG, M.H. JOHNSON, ROG, C.A. BENSINGER, AEG, R.E. HORN, G., A.J. MORESCHI, G A.F. FULOP, G

David Jackson, 727th [GUNNER: W.C. FENTON'S CREW]

Thanks for the back issues of the Ad-Lib. It reminds me of a story about the tent we lived in; in the 727th. The sides were mud blocks about the size of our cinder, or cement, construction blocks. We obtained them by midnight requisition. By that I mean we were loaned a truck and we, the EM's, went out to find a block fence to push over and confiscate the blocks. This was common practice and everybody did it, but on our way back to base we were stopped by a couple of MP's who insisted on seeing a bill of sale. Without such we went to the 'slammer' for the night. We were to return the blocks to wherever we got them. After a night in jail, we felt those blocks were OURS, so we took them to the Base regardless. The Base Commander had to go through the motions of stripping us of our rank, but we couldn't fly as Privates, so that only lasted a short while, then we got our ranks back and heard no more about it. The point of the story is that our tent walls cost us a night in an Italian jail.

(Editor ... Interesting how we fared under conditions strange to our normal standard of living. It seems that our/my crew's EM's chipped in to have clachi block walls built by Italian masons for a few thousand Lira (labor & material). At that time it seemed expensive, but saved US from a night in the "hoosegow.")



RALPH DOTY - PAT HAWKINS - SAM ROSENBLAT
(CIRCA 2000)

Patrick Hawkins, 724th [GUNNER: RALPH DOTY'S CREW]

I thought the enclosed picture may be of interest to you. I had seen Ralph Doty and Sam Rosenblatt, individually, several times over the years. However, it lacked one day of being 54 years and 6 months (From the day of bail-out on 13 February 1945) since THEY had seen each other. We met in Winston Salem, NC, along with our wives, and we had a BALL!

(Editor ... I can understand your joy at getting back together again. My research of the February 13, 1945, shows that you had a rather mixed crew. [Lt. Robert Innerst instead of Paul Bryce as Copilot: Lt. John Euwer instead of Bob Boyce for Navigator: T/Sgt Jim Smith

instead of Joe Grossman as AEG] I hope I've got that right. Doty and Innerst made it back after the fire in #1 extinguished itself. The rest of you guys spent time as "reluctant guests" of the Germans.)



COLONEL JAMES KNAPP 2ND GROUP COMMANDER

James Casperson, 727th [COPILOT: ED DOHERTY'S CREW]

I was with the 451st from October '44 to the end of the war in May of '45. I'm sure Colonel Knapp was Commander of the 451st then, but I did not meet him, personally, at that time.

When my pilot, Ed Doherty reached 32 missions, I, as copilot, had only 25. At that point I was given a check flight with a Colonel to see if I was qualified to take over as pilot when Doherty finished his 35. I failed to note the Officer's name, but it could have been Knapp. It was my first time in the 1st pilots seat - left side of the cockpit; the first time to handle the controls with my left hand and the throttles with my right hand. After an hour and thirty minutes into the check-out flight, when the Colonel told me to land, he didn't know that I had never landed a B-24 before, only assisted as copilot by reading out the 'check list, and calling out the air-speed,

I wondered if it was right that a 2nd Lt. should give orders to a Colonel, but I needed a copilot's assistance to lower the flaps and landing gear, and to call the air speed so I could keep my eyes on the runway which was fast approaching. Regardless, I hollered for flaps, landing gear and air speed to which the Colonel obeyed and we made a good landing.

It was at the 451st Bomb Group's 1990 (Omaha, NE) reunion committee meetings that I officially met Jim Knapp, now a retired Major General. At first I was a bit nervous being in the company of a retired General, but as we got acquainted we had so much in common that I genuinely liked and admired him. His knowledge of Offut Air Base, and the personnel, certainly made for a great reunion.

(Editor ... Again, another fine tribute to one of our departed comrades. General Knapp made a lot of history during his tenure with the Air Force. He once told me that in 1953 he was lead negotiator in the United Nations Peace Discussions with North Korea at

Panmunjahn. He, and his Korean counterpart, sat for days in silence, just staring at each other. It was finally resolved and the demarcation lines between North and South Korean were verified. I'd sure like to research and print the details of his military career.)



L TO R UNIDENTIFIED BUDDY & ARNOLD "JAKE" BARKER

Frank Scott, 727th [GUNNER: RAY FYHRIE'S CREW]



ED RESHKIN & RAY FYHRIE

Was sitting here one day doing nothing, so, as I sometimes do, I go back and read the Ad Lib's over again. In the Fall & Winter Issue #30, I was reading where Hobart Wyant, of Louis Cameron's crew, wrote to you concerning a wallet that was entrusted to him. Further down I noticed A.J. "Jake" Barker's name from Ed Stresky's crew. Stresky and Ray Fyhrie were close buddies. I have a picture of Jake, two in fact, one for your files and one that you can send to his wife. I think Jake had a young

son that he did not get to see. I think he would like to have a picture of his dad; he was one of the finest.

(Editor ... Sorry Frank, I have no idea where to try and locate Mrs. Barker. By now her name is probably changed, through marriage, and Jake's son would be next to impossible to find. It could be that he will try and find his legacy through the Internet. Let's hope that to be the case.)



MAJOR FRANCIS HOERMANN & CAPTAIN WILLIAM MATTES

Francis "Fritz" Hoermann, HDQ [PILOT - GROUP DEPUTY C.O.]

I was sorry to hear of Gen. Knapp's passing. I first met him in the summer of 1941 when I was in primary flight school. Lieutenant Knapp was check pilot and I was a student sweating out my evaluation. The roles were reversed several years later when I was an instructor in B-24 Transition School at Ft. Worth and Captain Knapp was a student.

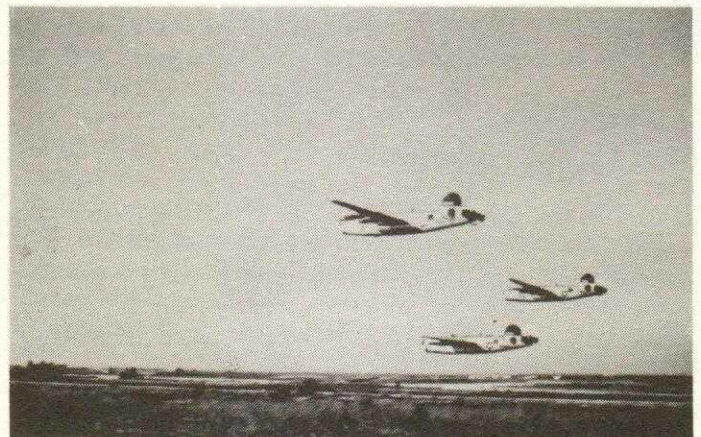
(Editor ... So many nice things are coming back to this office about our 2nd Group Commander that I'm sorry that I do not have the wherewithal to get something put together about his full military career. But, I'm constantly looking!)



L - R: AL BENNETT, JOE KASSA, ROLLO ROQUET, LEO STOUTSENBERGER, BILL ERWIN

Alphaeus Bennett, HDQ [MEDICAL SECTION]

I have been wondering about a couple of our buddies. Billy Hall was a medic in the 725th Squadron. I think he lives in this part of the country. Another fellow I have been wondering about is Harold Findley. I think he worked in the mail room in Headquarters. His home town was Bloomington, IN. I sure do appreciate the newsletter you publish. Here is a picture you may not have seen before. I don't know the first name of most of the fellows in this group photo, but maybe you can find some first names that fit the last names. The one on the extreme right, with the cigar, is Dick Erwin. He lived in Hope, AR. He passed away a few years ago.



LEO UPCHURCH'S CLASSIC 200th MISSION BUZZ--JOB

Leo Upchurch, 724th [COPILOT: IRVING LEVINS'S CREW]

I flew on the 200th mission of the 451st. When we returned the tower told us, as a salute, to "drag" the field. When our turn came we roared down the runway at a height of about 50/100 feet. I don't remember how fast we were going ... but it was considerably above stalling speed.

(Editor ... Fun, HUH?)

Ernie Cummins, 60th Service Squadron [REFUELING & CRASH UNIT]

The main reason for this report is my change of

address: 15 Rafael Drive, San Rafael, CA 94901. Last December I took a bad fall and fractured my lower spine and since then have not been able to drive, thus restricted to our second home in San Rafael where my doctors are. Please mail the next Ad Lib to San Rafael. And in case my luck runs out, the 451st is mentioned in my will with a small bequest.

(Editor ... Sorry about your 'spill,' Ernie. I'm sure Mabel is taking good care of you. She'd better! I don't ever want to collect on your misfortune. Wasn't it you and I that were going to share a bottle of Brandy at the 'Last Man's Club?')

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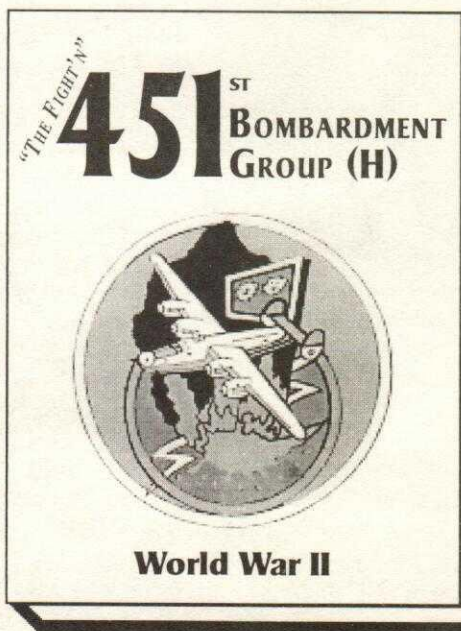
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