

★ 451 ★ NAD-LIB

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

Issue 33

Price \$5 (Free to Members)

Spring 2001

MILLENNIUM (Y2000) REUNION REVIEW

NOSTALGIA

I think we could summarize our St. Louis Y2K Reunion as such: "A nostalgic success." From the first get-together on Wednesday evening, when we bused out to St. Charles, Missouri, for an evening of dining and gambling, until Sunday when Reverend Johnshoy, at the close of his Church Service, told/ordered us to bid each other a fond good bye, with a hug ... I think we all had precious memories to bring back home.

I am sorry that I didn't 'block' more rooms at the Hilton. Although I did increase my original block of rooms from 125 to 145 (we could have used 200), it seems that the ACE HARDWARE CONVENTION came into the city and took all the available rooms in the downtown area, as well as those near the airport. By time the Hilton and I recognized the shortage, Ace Hardware had totally moved in. My apology to those that were forced to take rooms at the Double Tree and the Holiday Inn, some miles distant. Course, I shouldn't be



so hard on myself .. Though this was unexpected, I was pleased that we had that large a turnout. There were over 400 (Members and Family) in attendance. Some were children of our "High Squadron" members who came to experience some of what their father's had fought for. Through them we live on. Truly, it was a nice meld of folks.

Our registration table was set up in the Hilton lobby on Wednesday, for those arriving that day. Envelopes containing Name-Tags, Saturday Banquet Seating Stickers and tickets for your Entree Choice, Restaurant Discount Coupons, etc., were distributed as each member came 'Front and Center.'



Our 451st PX
(Photo: K. Barnes)

CONTENTS

"Little Friends" 49th Fighter Squadron	5
Poems	7
Ernie's Journal - 60th Air Service Squadron	8
Gremlins - By Paul Schriebmaier	11
Search & Research (Overseas Contacts)	12
John Foster's Journal - Italy, Yugoslavia & Trip Over	14
Our Diminishing Ranks - Final Fly-By	18
From Horseman To Airman - Frank Scott's Story	19
Words From The Flight Deck	20
Short Bursts And Hang Fires	20

Thursday saw our formal 'Signing In' setting, replete with our 451st Sales Table (hosted by Art & Carol Morin - 727th and assisted by Jack & Rita Garrison - 726th). As an added attraction we had the father and son team of George and George R. Frisbee (725th) displaying artifacts of WW-II at an adjoining table. The display had everything from a manikin in full high altitude paraphernalia - sheepskin clothing, oxygen mask, parachute harness [including a 'chest chute], etc., to 'Tech Order' books on how to repair a B-24. It would have taken you all the reunion to have reviewed what

"AD-LIB"

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

Compiled and Published by Bob Karstensen

All rights reserved on contents by the 451st Bomb Group (H), Ltd. Reprinting, in whole or in part, without previous written permission is prohibited.

COPYRIGHT 2001, 451st "AD-LIB"

No membership dues are assessed
(A not-for-profit organization)

The publishing of the AD-LIB; the seeking of new members; and all efforts towards the preservation of our 451st heritage is funded by donations and contributions. Checks may be made out to the

"451st Bomb Group"

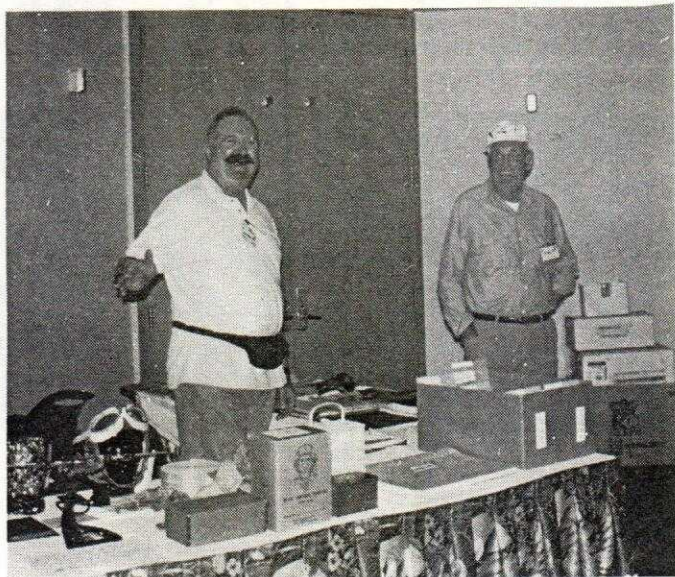
and mailed to: 1032 S. State St. Marengo, IL 60152
Phone (815) 568-7766 FAX (815) 568-0451

E.MAIL - bobk451@aol.com

Tax Exempt Contribution #36 307 0772

We reserve the right to edit, shorten, clarify any article submitted to the Ad Lib. We may choose not to include an article due to length, content or negative implications - Editor

was there. George R., later at the Banquet, raffled off a B-24 model and some other artifacts -- all for the benefit of the 451st treasury.



**George R. and George Frisbee
(With Unique Display of WW-II Artifacts)**
(Photo: K. Barnes)

Thursday evening the Hilton served us a sumptuous buffet dinner. Since this was a "Riverboat Theme," we had a Mark Twain impersonator do his monolog about his thoughts and views. Dancing to Dixieland Music



GARMENTS OF YORE
(Photo: K. Barnes)

rounded out our evening.

Friday, amid fits and starts with transportation, we bused out to Scott Air Force Base for a guided tour of the existing facilities and to have luncheon at the Scott Officers Club. Since Scott AFB did not have any special visitor's amenities, General Robertson's staff made plans for us to visit the Missouri Air National Guard at Lambert Field and the Boeing Museum nearby. We split our convoy (later to 'flip-flop' and view the other complex) and were given excellent orientation at both places.

Friday evening proved to be one of the highlight of the reunion. After our Wine and



**Florence Leiter, Dorene & Steve Cushner
Enroute to Scott AFB for Luncheon**
(Photo: K. Barnes)



Entrance Marker & Scott Officer's Club
(Photo: K. Barnes)



Colonel Brandt (Commander Missouri Air National Guard) Discusses A/C Inventory with 451st Member, Bob Merklein
(Photo: K. Barnes)



Eagles Elite Drill Team

Cheese Appreciation; compliments of the Hilton Hotel, a corps of young ladies called The Eagles Elite Drill Team, out of Edwardsville, IL, (they ranged in ages from 11 to 19) posted our Colors and presented us with various precision rifle spinning routines that would put the best of us to shame in the skill and accuracy they displayed. These girls have been selected

to perform at the inaugural of the proposed WW-II Memorial in Washington, DC. A free-will offering by some of our members helped their need for extra fund-



Scott AFB "Band of Mid America [Shades of Blue]" WOWs 451st Audience with Music and Song

ing for their trip to Washington.

Second part of our evening was again aided by Scott Air Force Base. They gave us the honor and pleasure of having a large component of their "Band of Mid-America;" the 17 member swing band called "Shades Of Blue," perform for us. They gave us some 45 minutes of GREAT music. The applause for them is still ringing in my ears. It would be hard to recall an evening more pleasurable than we enjoyed with the young ladies "Eagle Elite Drill Team," and the AF's "Shades Of Blue."

Saturday morning had the buses loading for two different tours; St. Louis City Tour and Grant Farm Tour. Folks seemed to have enjoyed their specific tour, as I heard no complaints.



Margaret, Neil and Bob Kacena
(Head of Household & Two Retired Colonels)
(Photo: E. Williams)

Saturday evening saw our Gala Banquet take place. After posting our Colors, offering the Pledge of Allegiance and giving a Toast to our Departed Comrades, we settled in to 'Chow Down.' It was once again a Father/Son extravaganza that we offered our attendees. Our Master of Ceremonies (again) was LTC Robert Kacena (Hdq) USAF (Ret.) and our Featured Speaker was COL. Neil Kacena USAF (Ret.). In between these two illustrious speakers was sandwiched the likes of Bob Karstensen (of little note) and Colonel Edward Rasmussen, 451st Group Operations Officer (more significant in oratory). COL Rasmussen polled the audience to see how many second and third generation people were in attendance; how many first timers and other meaningful categories had been generated by this biennial gathering. It was heartwarming to see the results.

COL. Neil Kacena gave us a very descriptive and enlightening slide show of the differences between our armament, the B-24, and what is in the USAF inventory, as of this date and not cloaked in military secrecy.

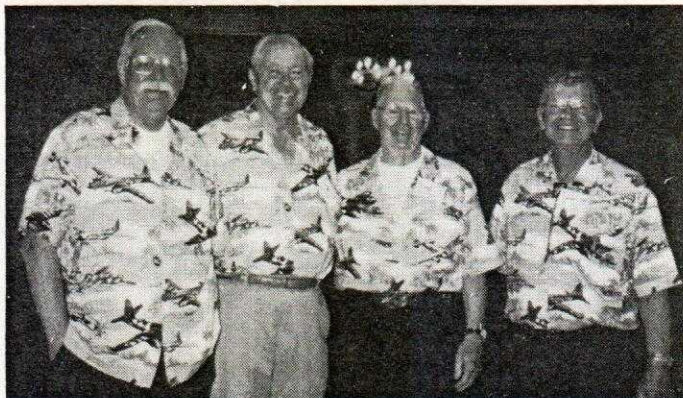
Following the formal part of our evening, we had dancing to the music of two of our stalwart musicians; William Jackson (726th), on the clarinet and John O'Connor (724th) on trumpet. They were accompanied by a local musician, David Brandt, on the piano. Seems that most of the folks appreciated this form of music more so than a 'brassy' ensemble that we've had in the past.



Another glitch surfaced when we discovered that not enough wine glasses had been ordered to meet the unexpected number of attendees at the closing Gala Banquet. There were only 390 glasses for the 400 plus guests. I have ordered glasses for those who have requested them, but the size of the order had to be much greater than the ten missing glasses, plus the extras for those who requested more. I now have a superabundance of "Year 2000"

wine glasses! If you wish to relieve me of the surplus, I'll mail them to you at \$5 per glass (S&H included). (Those of you who did not receive a glass at the banquet need not pay this cost, and if you haven't already, let me know that you didn't get one at that time.) That should make up only ten of the order. I now have "Molti Vino Bicchieri" (Many Wine Glasses) to unload. Remember folks, it is a great souvenir of the millennium, more meaningful than many others commemorating the year 2000!

OTHER PHOTOS OF INTEREST



Spare Gunner With "Hopkins Crew" Gunners
L/R Bob Karstensen, Winson Jones, Paul Johnson & Jack Jones
(Photo: W. Jones)



Colonel Brandt Explains Intricacy of F-15 Aircraft
(Photo: K. Barnes)



Left: Combat Flying Gear as Collected and Shown by George R. Frisbee at Reunion



Below: Model Aircraft Raffled Off During Banquet Program
(Photos: K. Barnes)



Troops Head For Hangar Briefing
(Photo: K. Barnes)

"LITTLE FRIENDS:" THE 49th FIGHTER SQUADRON (Continued - 9th Installment By Royal C. Gilkey)

It has been the purpose, throughout these series of historical episodes, to match our bombing missions with the accompaniment of the 49th Fighter Squadron. But with the advent of the 49th Fighter Squadron moving to, and being based in Corsica, our involvement with the 49th became minimal. The 49th was temporarily stationed in Corsica (doing fighter cover for the invasion of Southern France) from 11 August 1944 until 21 August 1944, when they returned to their original base at Triolo Landing Ground in Italy. We take up their story from there:

August 21, 1944 marked the return of the advance echelon (which had materially supported the invasion of Southern France) to home base at Triolo Landing Ground near the spur of the Italian boot. I was good to have these fliers and their ground crews (together with necessary administrative personnel) back at "the hoose." They had been through a costly ordeal. Figures showed that the Group had lost aircraft and men in unprecedented numbers during the operation. The crash of the B-17 was very costly. Not only was the four-engine bomber serving as a transport destroyed, but personnel on that ill-fated plane were added to others that had fallen. All told, 26 men in uniform lost their lives, six more than the number of aircraft sacrificed. This amounted to the severest loss ever suffered by the 14th Fighter Group in the same amount of time, since the beginning of combat operations. No wonder the troops were glad to get back to Italy, such as it was! Some of them felt demoralized by what had happened during their sojourn on the island of Corsica and welcomed the change of scenery that a return to the mainland entailed. Most of those returning took it easy for the rest of the day, except for some who felt impelled to get into the routing of things at the base again. Rest and relaxation, however, dominated the atmosphere. Refreshments, liquid and otherwise, were eagerly consumed by the returnees.

On August 22, 1944, seven Squadron "Lightnings" were dispatched to provide escort for the 49th Wing bombers originally briefed to bomb an oil storage facility in Lobau, a city east of Dresden, Germany. Instead of that, the P-38s switched to escorting the bombers to an alternate target at Bratislavia, located east of Vienna (Wien) but just across the border in Czechoslovakia. Takeoff for the 49th Fighter Squadron's planes was at 0747 hours (7:47 am). There were three early returns in mechanical trouble. The remaining four continued on to rendezvous with the bombers, the time being 0930 hours and at the altitude of 18,000 ft. The coor-

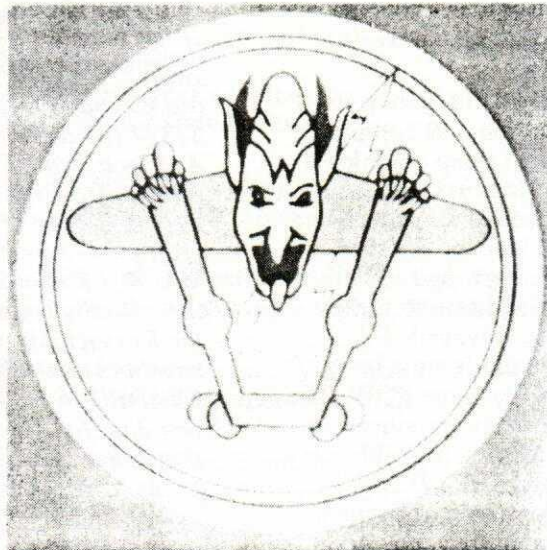
ordinates where rendezvous took place were 4515 North - 1720 East. By 1045 hours, our fighters were over the target at 26,000 feet, just in time to pick up bombers coming off the target and accompany them in withdrawal at an altitude of 18,000 feet. Not until 1135 hours did they leave the bombers at 18,000 feet, the coordinates for departure being 4600 N - 1625 E (northeast of Zagreb in Croatia, Yugoslavia).

On the way to the target, the P-38s were jumped by 30-50 enemy planes (consisting of more ME 109s than FW 190s) at 4710 N - 1625 E (north of Lake Balaton in Hungary). The altitude of the encounter was 26,000 feet. The enemy pilots approached from 12 o'clock, coming up from below to get at the bombers. Our "Lightnings" then turned into the enemy planes, which abandoned the attack, split S'ing away towards the deck. Unfortunately, however, eight of the attackers got through to the bombers, sending four or five of them down in flames. Our pilots fired at the attackers but were not close enough to score any visible hits. Later, the pilots reported seeing a bomber explode while flying at 10,000 feet, the time being 1205 hours and the place not far from the Adriatic coast in the vicinity of Split. Pilots pinpointed the coordinates of the exploding plane at 4345 N - 1632 E. During the mission, flak was encountered. An intense barrage was sent up at the target. Flak also arose from AA guns not far from Topleza (4654 N - 1727 E [possibly from Nagykanizsa] southwest of Lake Balaton in Hungary). Having flown 1,000 miles, our pilots were glad to get back to base at half-past 12 (1230 hours). The 49th had no formation leaders, its four P-38s being interspersed with "Lightnings" from the 37th and 48th Fighter Squadrons.

It is to be noted that the mission report for August 22, 1944 bore the signatures of both Intelligence Officers in the 49th Fighter Squadron, vis., "HOWARD F. WILSON, Capt, Air Corps, Squadron S-2." &

"ROYAL C. GILKEY, 2nd Lt., Air Corps, Ass't Squadron S-2."

On August 23, 1944, 10 P-38s took off at 0926 hours to fly target-cover for three groups from the 304th Wing, briefed to knock out a railroad bridge at Ferrara, Italy. Of the 10, three of our pilots returned early, one from sickness and two for mechanical difficulties. Near Ravenna, the "Lightnings" caught up with the bombers, at 1100 hours. They were then flying at 27,000 feet. Ten minutes later, the fighters arrived over the target at 26-27,000 feet, remaining over it until 1215 hours, when they left for home via the same route. Flying second in the Group, the pilots had logged 650



miles. They reported the weather clear over the Adriatic Sea, but cumulus clouds were scattered at 15,000 feet over the target area centered on Ferrara along the Po River. Haze there cut down the pilots's visibility to about 10 miles.

Over the target, there was trouble in the air. A bomber was seen on fire and going down in the general area at 1145 hours, its altitude estimated at 23,000 feet. Radio reports were heard at 1215 hours telling of a bomber under attack by half-dozen ME 109s. Our "Lightnings" sought to go to the aid of the bomber, but were unable to turn up anything.

The Ferrara mission left its mark. Many bombs struck in the target area. It appeared that the final wave of the bombers showed more accuracy in dropping their bomb-loads. Clouds of dust rendered impossible observing anything with precision, however. As for the bomber going down in flames over the target, fighter pilots were too far away to see if there were any parachutes leaving the stricken craft.

At the Squadron's Triolo base, flight crews worked hard to ready their planes for the morrow's mission. That was to be a long one to Czechoslovakia. On the morning of 8/24/44, nine Squadron "Lightnings" took off at 0847 hours. They were to rendezvous with, and give close escort to, 55th Wing bombers during target penetration to a prudent limit in an attack on petroleum refineries and an airdrome at Pardubice, Czechoslovakia.

The P-38s caught up with the bombers at Jablonec (nad Nisou), the first checkpoint, at 1020 hours, their altitude being 15,000 Feet. When the I.P. was reached, 25,000 feet over Hlinsko at 1215 hours, our fighters turned for home, having flown to a prudent limit. At the time, there were too far away from flak seen in the direction of the target to be able to classify its character. The Squadron's eight P-38s got back to base at 1429 hours, the ninth "Lightning" having returned early because of engine trouble. This 1150-mile-long mission was led by Col. Daniel S. Campbell, of San Antonio, Texas. The Squadron's position was first in the Group, making him both Squadron and Group leader. All except the early return got sortie credit for the mission.

.... [Editor: What must be the problem with all matters of historical recounting, I find some interesting variations with the above written narrative. Our accounting, according to OUR Group history, reads as such]:

August was a memorable month for the Group for it was on August 10th that the 100 mission was completed and it was August 22nd and 23rd, the Group completed the most disastrous missions in it's history. On these two (2) missions, 108th and 109th, fourteen (14) planes were shot down by aggressive enemy fighters and another plane was so badly damaged that the crew had to bail out rather than attempt a landing. In addition to these losses, two (2) more planes had to be salvaged. 140 crew members were MIA as a result and it must be assumed that some did not survive to become POW. The Luftwaffe paid heavily again for its victories, since our gunners destroyed thirty-three (33) planes, probably destroyed fifteen (15) more and damaged nine (9). The Lobau Oil Plant and Markersdorf Airdrome at Vienna, Austria were targets that those two missions and the

enemy reaction proved conclusively that the Luftwaffe was not dead. Returning crew members told of waves of enemy fighters attacking without regard to losses, in waves of ten (10) or more. Fighter cover was not available at the time and it was inevitable that our losses would be heavy.

.... [Editor: Thus said ... It seems that both the 49th Fighter Squadron and the 451st had it's hands full with enemy fighters on the 22nd of August. The "Narrative Report" I have at my disposal, reads;

A.) Fighters: 50 E/A encountered at 1008 near LAKE BALATIN and made aggressive attacks to 1030 just before target. Attacked from 0700 high, line abreast then peeled off and came in from 0300 and 0900.

B.) Flak: Intense accurate heavy flak at target. M.A.H. (Moderate-Accurate-Heavy) at CSORNA, HUNGARY and S.E. corner of LAKE NEUSEIDLER, AUSTRIA. S.A.H. (Slight-Accurate-Heavy) at PAPA, YUGOSLAVIA.

My records further show that we lost five (5) planes on the 22nd; 42-78445 "Toddlin Trollop," Alfred Donelson (724th), Pilot -- 41-28816 "Scrappy," Robert Worsthorn (725th), Pilot -- 42-52111 "Old Taylor," Maurice Beaucond (726th), Pilot -- 42-51300 "Wet Dream," Valerian Klein (726th), Pilot, and 42-78145 "Con Job," Richard Turnbull (727th) Pilot. In total we had 22 KIA and 26 POWed.

On the 23rd of August, while we were again being pounded by the Luftwaffe at Markersdorf Airdrome, the 49th Fighter Squadron was escorting the 304th Bomber Wing to Ferrara RR Bridge in northern Italy. It must have been that the 304th didn't quite get the job done, cause the 49th Wing (461st, 484th and 451st Bomb Groups, in that order) attacked the same bridge (or, one nearby) on the 24th of August.

As a further follow-up to our Markersdorf Mission, the 49th Wing led the attack with the 484th in the lead with the 451st and 461st following. Other Wings involved were the 55th, 5th and 47th, also in that order.

On that mission we lost nine (9) aircraft: 44-40196 (no nickname), Robert J. Anderson (727th) Pilot -- 42-51729 (no nickname), Robert L. Beach (724th) Pilot -- 42-78523, "Hard to Get," James H. Powers (724th) Pilot -- 42-78471, "Fertile Myrtle," Cornelius E. Donoghue (724th), Pilot -- 42-7763, "Available," Willis H. Malakowski (725th), Pilot -- 42-95379, "Extra Joker," Kenneth A. Whiting (725th), Pilot -- 42-78171 (no nickname), Glenn S. Panyity (725th), Pilot -- 42-51334 (no nickname), Harvey S. Clapp (726th), Pilot. And by a strange quirk of circumstances we lost another aircraft from the 726th that has no Missing Air Crew Report file in the National Archives. That was the aircraft piloted by Albert R. Kozsuch. Since I have no MACR, I do not know who was onboard that day. But as the casualty count stands (without an accounting from the Kozsuch aircraft. Perhaps one of the located crewmembers can enlighten me): 30 KIA, 40 POW and 8 EVADED. As our history relates - it was a disastrous two days for the 451st, but one that warranted a Distinguished Unit Citation (The third of our three). Thanks to the brave men that flew those missions.]

POEMS

SID WINSKI SHOWS POETIC INSIGHT

Sent in by Sid Winski, former Pilot and, Operations Officer of the 726th Squadron. This poem, not unlike the previously ode, printed in Issue 32 Ad-Lib ("Oh, That B Dash Two Four"), found interest among the combat crews of all Squadrons.

THE RAVING (Ca. 1943, Author Unknown)

[A parody on Edgar Allen Poe's "The Raven"]

Once upon a mission dreary,
When of combat I'd grown weary,
I had flown a thousand hours,
And was sure to fly no more.
Suddenly there was a knocking,
Sounded like some ack ack popping,
Popping like the very devil,
Just beneath my bomb bay door.

T's some Jerry thought I,
Trying to improve his score.
I will use evasive action,
Even if he does get sore.
Turning then I saw before me,
Blacker then e're before,
Ack ack bursting close and heavy,
Guess I'd better turn some more.

Opening wide I swung the bomb doors,
And to my surprise and horror,
Flashing fast and bright below me,
Were some ninety guns or more.
And above the shrapnel screeching,
I remembered then the briefing,
When they told us with much speaking,
There were only three of four.

Leveling then I made my bomb run,
It was not a very long one,
For the varsity was on duty,
And I'd seen their work before.
Then an engine coughed and chattered,
And the glass around me splattered,
And I knew they had my number,
Just my number, nothing more.

(From "The Last Liberator" by Jerry Yulsman)

For there's a sort of manic madness in the supercharger's whine., As you hear the ice cubes tinkling in the Turbo-Balance line., The runway strips are narrow, but the snowbanks they are wide., While the crash trucks say, in a mournful way, you're on your final ride.

The nose gear rocks and trembles, for it's held with bailing wire., And the wings are filled with thermite, to make a hotter fire., The camouflage is peeling off, it lends to added luster., While pilot heads are filled with lead, to help the Load-Adjuster.

The bomb bay doors are rusted, they close with a ghastly shriek., And the Plexiglas is smeared with some forgotten oil leak., The oleo struts are twisted and the wheels are not quite round., The bulkheads are thin (Ford builds with tin) to admit the slightest sound.

You taxi out on the runway, 'mid groans of tortured gear., While you feel the check-rider's teeth, gnawing your tender rear., The copilot is sitting on the right, in a liquor-laden coma., Mixes his breath, the kiss of death, with the put-put's foul aroma.

So it's off to the overcast yonder, though number one is missing., While the hydraulic fluid escaping, sets up a gentle hissing., The compass dial is spinning in a way that brooks no stopping., And row by row, the fuses blowing, with an intermittent popping.

It was named the "Liberator" by a low and twisted mind ...

Then at last the bombs were toggled,
And alone away I hobbled,
With some fifty seven inches,
And a feathered number four.
While outside like ducks migrating,
Was a drove of 'ME's' waiting,
Waiting all with itching fingers,
Just to even up the score.

I had lost my upper turret,
And alone, defenseless, worried,
I was the saddest creature,
Mortal woman ever bore.
For each bright and screaming tracer,
Coming nearer, ever nearer,
Made my spirit sink within me,
Just my spirits, nothing more.

Then at last to my elation,
I caught up with my formation,
And the 'ME's' turned and left me,
By the tens and by the score.
But my wings were torn and tattered,
And my nerves were completely shattered,
And as far as I'm concerned,
The war is o'er.

Now my sinus starts to seeping,
Every time they mention briefing,
And for this they'll change my bars to double bars
And I'll have my fun and frolic,
And a case of combat colic,
Here in Cairo with the Cossacks,
'Mong the Eagles and the Stars

Now I've learned the art of living,
And my secret I am giving,
To the rest of those among you,
Who may care to live some more.
For my sinus still is seeping,
Everytime they mention briefing,
No more flying, no more missions,
No more combat, never more, never more.

ERNIE CUMMIN'S 60th AIR SERVICE SQUADRON JOURNAL

(When The Hair Was Short And The Dollar Was Long)

We start this installment of Ernest Cummins' 60th Air Service Squadron Journal with a deep sense of sadness and pain. I was notified by close friends that Ernie had succumbed (Joined the 'High Flight') on the 20th of December 2000. My feeling of loss is only exceeded by that of his loving and devoted wife, Mabel and the men of the 60th Service Squadron, with their long time association. But those of us that crossed Ernie's path during our past reunions, will recall his jubilant and outgoing manner. He was always upbeat and made a great buddy to hang out with.

As a part of his legacy, to those of us that remain, I have asked his wife, Mabel, if we may continue quoting from his memoirs of WW-II. She has graciously consented to doing this for the Ad-Lib.

COMMENTS ON MOVIES

Most Air Corps units had movie projectors that were suppose to be used for training films. But as a morale factor, it was recognized that movies for entertainment would be a boon, so even rough camps in the field, where all hands slept under canvas, had a theater of sorts. Some kind of screen leaned against the mess hall wall and a cleared area where five gallon cans, or bomb fin crates, made improvised seats; the projector on a table with power cables running off to a generator "putt-putting" a little distance away so as not to overpower the sound from the speakers. Transportation men had even better seats than the "can sitters" by driving their rigs up to the rear, as if it was a drive-in theater.

60th movies were shown about once a week, with films traded from unit to unit. If any deals could be made, we got pretty current movies. However the projector itself was in sad shape, and the quality on the screen was not the best. Determined to improve our lot, but not being authorized to "draw" a new machine, the Supply Sergeant came up with a first class solution to get one.

"Hey Breeze, how the devil did you pull that off? We saw you and Riley carry that beauty in. Who did you bribe, anyway?"

"Cut that out! You know we are honest and didn't spend a penny. The head guy at the Bari Depot is about to go home on rotation points and his replacement will never know how the carton came to be empty. It's way back in the rear corner of the stack and it will be months before they realize it. Nothing too good for you bums!"



ERNEST RANDOLPH CUMMINS
Corporal: United States Army Air Force
B: 25 December 1916 / D. 20 December 2000

COMMENT ON MILITARY CLOTHING

A fashion note about the clothing we were issued. The olive drab Class A uniform (referred to as O.D. Color) that was standard for garrison life in the States had a suit-like jacket; regular lapels and buttons. This was replaced by the Eisenhower Jacket; waist length with snap belt fastener. There were two type of Field Jackets; one with soft lining and slit pockets that close by zipper to waist length. The other, a longer heavier cotton with buttons and large patch pockets that held bulky items.

Fatigue outfits for work details were two piece; pants with belt loops and square tailed shirts with flapped pockets. This was close to what is known as "denim" today, but in a green color. Coveralls were of the same material and had metal buttons or snaps. Long wool overcoats and rubberized raincoats were the outer garments issued. Sun Tans were con-

ventional for warm climates and the shirts and trousers were of the conventional cut. They were used for both dress and work.

Headgear was varied. Some G.I.'s purchased visor caps, such as the flyers wore, but the standard was an oval beanie, either Sun Tan or O.D.. Baseball type caps matched the fatigue outfits, and wool knit caps with ear flaps of the rolldown kind were winter gear. Plastic helmet liners did great as rain protectors, and tropical Pith Helmets with mosquito netting gave relief from sun and insects. In the war zone everyone had a steel helmet, but ours were mostly used as wash basins.

In cold weather, when driving, my favorite combination was long johns for warmth, clear to the ankles, wool socks, regular O.D. trousers and a heavy knit sweater that was almost a turtle neck. Over all that I pulled on a pair of coveralls and some fleece lined flying boots. A knit cap and mittens, plus leather gloves for loading and tying down, working winches or handling hoses, finished off this 'scarecrow.' With a Dispatcher's Trip Ticket to prove I was working, no necktie was required. But when on pass I carried one in my hip pocket. Just in case an M.P. was sighted. There were no heaters in military vehicles, so every human had to generate, or learn to conserve his own heat.

MILITARY VEHICLES

Some further comment on trucks and transport may be interesting to the "nuts and bolts" set. One feature of American heavy equipment was the ease of handling.

The bigger the truck, the more power boosted controls. On Biderman and White chassis, used for our C-2 wreckers, the steering had air boosters, and in the event of battery failure, an inertia starter was provided. If you ever saw an old newsreel movie showing a mechanic standing under an airplane cranking a long handle, that was how the starter worked. For use on a truck, the crank was slipped through two bearing points mounted on the top of the front bumper, so the man faced the rear and grasped the crank handle outside the left front fender. A coupler from the forward end of the engine crankshaft came through the grill beneath the radiator, and was engaged to the starter only after the flywheel had been coaxed into a steady whine by hard work, lasting maybe three or four minutes. All the energy put into that little gadget did it's job in ten or fifteen seconds, turning the cold stiff engine with ease.

Some foreign trucks had strange designs, to our minds, at least. It seemed their method of increasing load capacity was to make everything bigger. For obvious reasons they could not build them twice as wide, but they went twice as high - twice as strong - twice as heavy. Our guys would have added wheels of the same size and doubled the number of axles. But the Italian rigs used huge tires, mammoth springs, raised the bed four feet to accommodate extra frame members and continued to use oversized single axles. Even the steering wheels grew to a size that would look good to an American riverboat helmsmen.

6 August 1944

Dear Mabel: Wow, what a rain storm we just had! About supper time I could see, off in the west, a big dark cloud with electrical flashes, so I scurried over to take a shower bath. While I was soaking up hot water, the wind started and I got the heck out of the shack before the darned thing collapsed (it didn't really, but I figured it might!) and put on clean clothes. I ran over to our messhall, just beating out the real storm by a foot or two.

The tin roof sure made a racket. With all that water dumping on it, you couldn't hear ourselves talk. But, it was dry inside and I waited until the hamburgers were cooked and ate a delicious meal; iced tea, boiled spuds, bread and butter, real catsup to flavor the burgers -- Now I'm getting even with you on the eating score.

It rained so hard that only a few characters even came to eat until the storm was over. That seems to be the way; sweat all day under a hot sun and within a half hour it's pouring! Our baseball team (champs of the area) had a big game scheduled with another good outfit, but it was so muddy on the diamond, it was put off for a couple of days.

When our tent burned, I put my remaining junk in Harold's tent, where I stayed until our present home was built. He started to read on of my books, "How to Play Chess," and inside the pages he found one of my snapshots of you. The next thing I knew, there was your smiling face pinned up over Crook's bed! I sure put that back in my wallet and Harold claims that it was a dirty trick to swipe his "inspiration gal" when he was gone.

Well, be good lover, and I'll go to bed and dream of our happy years together. Good night baby, a million kisses from the guy that misses you like the devil-Cpl C.

10 August 1944

Dear Mabel: Your very welcome letter answering my July 18th one, was received, Peanut. And the way you explain things made me proud to have such an intelligent little gal for my Mrs. Mabel, the millions of little things you say and do, and the way you have about you; the smiles and twinkling eyes, generous nature and happy affectionate humor, all seem so very clear to me. All this being combined into one sweetheart is something to marvel at, and my luck to be the fellow to share your life and try to make you happy, makes me pinch myself. How a stupid person like Ernie gets such a splendid wife remains a mystery - love and admiration of your plucky spirit, desire of your warm beautiful body, and a selfish motive, too - to possess for my own all the understanding sympathy and cheery encouragement your heart gives out.

"Everybody loves my baby, but my baby don't love nobody but me!" The words of an old song, but how true describing my Peanut. Thanks honey, for giving me so much to live for, to look forward to and dream about. Those little Cummins kids what will be scooting around underfoot. Then I want to take you and our family traveling over the States, maybe around the world, and generally give the kids a real slant on how other people live. This trip the Army gave Ernie made me realize what a blessing our home live was, the advantages we enjoy in the U.S., and above all else, just how empty life can be without you. Your letters and pictures keep us close together, otherwise I can't imagine what this experience would do to me; I certainly feel sorry for the boys who have no ties like mine back home, or those who have lost the since coming overseas. It boils down to simple doing our work, existing somehow in a strange society, taking things as they come, and just waiting for the days and years when this is all over. A lonesome G.I. sometimes feels sorry for himself and his fate, but millions are experiencing worse during this war; when the subject is considered from all angles, perhaps it adds up to benefit our future.



Camp Show - Local Talent
(Would Anyone Dare To, Or Even Care To, Identify Subjects - Cross-Dressers - In Picture?)

16 August 1944

Dear Mabel: Evening Sugar, how is the girl I love? Taking care of herself so she will be "in the pink" when I get home?

Wrote Peg a letter - Started it on the 13th and finished it today. A couple of day's work in between .. and has it been HOT lately! Just like old times - sweating in the shade. Our tent is floored with wood over fine gravel and the sides are left up all night. This lets the sunshine in early (my cot is on the east side, too) but you know the first few in the chow line get the stuff piping hot. Most days I miss one meal, at least in camp, but when we have a special menu, like today, I manage to avoid any trips. Chicken and Peach Pie for supper; Ern made a real pig of himself! Had to lie down after eating, because my protruding personality was sure overhanging my belt. I feel fine now, though.

Last night, when I got in from a run, there was a jazz band playing for us. I went over and listened to a couple hours. Darned good musicians, most of them. It was a mixture of colored and white G.I.'s playing dozens of tunes by ear. One of my tent mates, half drunk, climbed up on the stage and sang, "Somebody Else Is Taking My Place," in the Ted Lewis style. He, being an old guy with a bald spot, a red face and expressive hand gestures, did very nicely, thank YOU! I had noticed the band, which had traveled miles to entertain us, eyed Cliff with apprehension as he swayed towards the microphone. But after a few lines of his song, the swung out a fine accompaniment.

Well, now we have our new clothes and gear. I feel like a regular recruit - even new shoes. They have the smooth side inside, rough leather outside, so they don't need polishing. Big new mosquito bar over my cot, and with all the flies around, we use it during the day, too.

Well, Peanut, as for our camp life, I'm writing this in a cute little stone building which has a concrete floor and sheet metal roof. It's the Motor Pool Office, erected in three days by Eyetic masons. A Colonel, visiting our area today, liked our shack so well that he counted the blocks of stone so he would know what was needed when he built one. My cot sports a new straw tick now. Since the fire I used a borrowed mattress. The tent is neat and tidy - looks better than any other I've had - and none of the mates snore!

Time for lights to go out, lover. Good night and sweet dreams, Peanut. I do love you and miss you an awful lot. Knowing you need me, keeps me going. So until that day, all my kisses and hugs. - Cpl. C.

COMMENT

After the landings in Southern France, the forces put ashore were limited in their advance by supply mobility and Foggia bombers were pressed into service as transport planes. For a couple weeks B-24s were loaded with fuel, ammunition and bombs, and were ferried into captured airports north of Marseille. The fliers loved this duty; Officers came out dressed in their "Pinks" to impress the girls in France. After the ships were unloaded, pilots were hard to find, unless you looked in the cafes for wine sipping cowboys.

23 August 1944

Dear Mabel: Sometimes I think I should switch jobs

so I could spend more time writing letters to you. For a week I've been on the go - some long hauls and some local ones. One night my "copilot" and I pulled into the camp where our outfit was during the rainy, muddy months last winter. As it was after midnight, we woke the C.Q. of this transit camp and he obliged us with a tent and two cots .. but no blankets. By morning we were pretty stiff and cold from sleeping in our suntans on bare canvas. This sort of thing does happen every once in a while.

The old place looked better this time of year .. no mud. Ate at their mess (I've used at least a dozen chow halls lately) and had to laugh at the complaining I heard some Officers doing over their food. Evidently, fresh from the States, they didn't see why all the grub they had for breakfast was bacon and eggs, melon, mush, toast, butter & jam and coffee. Just wait, brothers! Chuckle --

One night when I came "home" (silly name for our tent!) I found three pink letters of Aug. 4th, 5th and 8th. In one was the "V" Mail of Gabe's. Nice of him to write. I did get to see Lax twice since I wrote you. One day he and Steve visited here and another time when I was working I stopped off to talk awhile. Poor old Gabe, such a job he has! Anytime I pop into his office I find him reading a Life Magazine .. and his face has lost all the tan acquired out in the desert sun. His one big beef was the mail situation. He hadn't had a letter from Minnie for six weeks. Wonder if Min is sick? Gabe has cabled her to get the lowdown. Sure hope she is O.K and in no trouble.

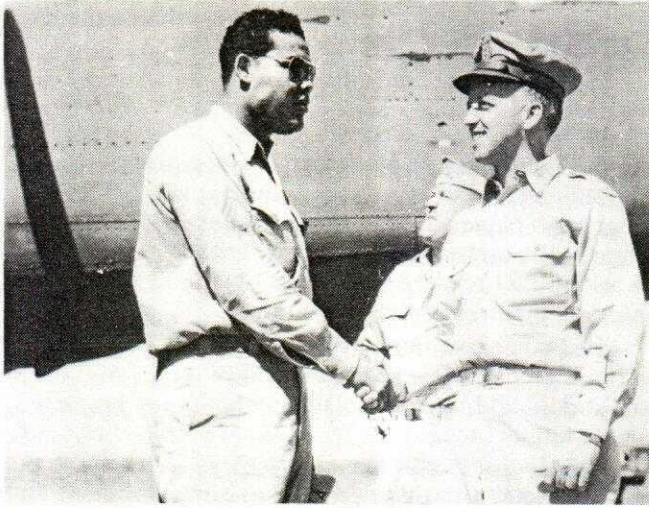
Harold Crooks just walked in after being off the base for a day. Of course the talk runs to where he went and what he did. We had some hot coffee and Spam sandwiches, so Crooks had himself a feed.

Yesterday was my day for a pass. I guessed the only way to get off the steady work was to leave camp entirely, so away I went. I visited a town on the coast where there is a place to swim. Found a nice home run by a middle aged widow with a 15 year old son .. and can she cook! Eggs and french fried spuds, tomatoes, cheese, bread and wine, fresh grapes, etc. for dinner. Only one buck, too. I asked her to get together some spaghetti for my supper, which she did, along with all the trimmings. A nice clean house, with a big room boasting a huge double bed, dining table, the usual chest of drawers and a wardrobe closet.

"Mama," as the Americans all called her, has a permit to rent the room to G.I.'s (sort of a hotel license) but the fellows have to produce their leave papers, so she can make sure they are not A.W.O.L. Mama Makes fruit cake, good soup, casseroles, and pasta dishes. So for a guy who wants to rest, eat safe chow, and enjoy clean linen on a comfortable bed, it is an ideal place to stay. I only had a one day pass, so I didn't get to sleep there. But I did nap for an hour, just to see what a genuine mattress felt like again. So, Peanut, keep that work bench in shape for Ernie, 'cause he loves solid comfort, see?

Lights going out, more tomorrow morning, lover - good night darling, pleasant dreams. --

Here we are again on **24 August**. I intended to finish this in the A.M., but couldn't get at it until after



Heavyweight Boxing Champion, Joe Lewis
(Greeted by Captain Coffee - 451ST Special Services Officer)

work. Now is that time of day when my tummy is full .. just after supper. Bought rations today (even bought Willie's seven cans of beer. He doesn't drink the evil stuff). So Peanut, your boy is all set for another week. Yesterday one of the boys in my tent went up to our Rest Camp, and as he was broke, I loaned him five bucks. There will be other guys up there who will have enough for him to drink on.

We had Joe Louis out at the base for a half hour. He did not box, just talked with the gang and signed autographs. Seemed to be just an average sized guy, not a giant of a man as I had supposed. Our mail slowed down lately - due probably to this probable new invasion of Southern France - and today we heard more good news about Paris falling. Things look better than ever before, which cheers us all up trying to figure how fast we can come home.

Mabel dear, I've a shift of guard duty to do this evening .. So good night my love .. A big hug for my sweet and kisses to the one I adore ... Ernie.

GREMLINS

By: Paul Schriebmaier

Gremlins are unique creatures, sometimes playful, often vicious. If they were not discovered by the Airmen of World War II, certainly they were exposed to the world by this group of flying maniacs, for who else but maniacs of misfits would dare to take to the skies in this troubled period of time when Gremlins were most active. I have never actually seen a Gremlin but older and more experienced pilots (WW-II time), the Venerable Ones, adamantly stated they do exist. They (the Gremlins) are of both sexes, the female variety, Fiefenellas, seem to be content to hid inside ear-phones and speakers where they can create the static and noise I have experienced since early cadet days. Their effect is to cause sleepiness, anger, anxiety and any other discomfort that can cause careless and dangerous flying by the pilot.

The males are far less subtle than the females but are the more dangerous and are prone to cause all manner of destructiveness. There are many varieties of these antagonistic males, some have hammer-heads while others have noses and fingers of many shapes, each designed for a particular mode of destruction.

My first exposure to these creatures was while I was an Aviation Cadet just growing my feathers. I experienced their deviltry but I didn't know, at that time, that they were the cause, instead, I thought the Moans, Groans, Crackles, Whistles and Buzzes I heard in my headset were just some idiosyncrasy of the electronics. It was not until I was flying the BIG-BIRD that I began to know these little rascals.

On a few occasions the Can-Opener nosed variety of these devils made their existence known. One such beast attached himself to the bottom of my right wing on a flight over the Brenner Pass in north Italy. There he proceeded to rip eighty small holes in the underside of that wing. Not satisfied with that he opened a medium sized hole in my windshield and side window.

Another one that I ran into on a dark and stormy night over South Carolina was the Ball-Peen-Headed

variety. After I flew into a particularly dark cloud punctuated by occasional streaks of lightning this little rascal and a bunch of his kin hammered small dents into the leading edge of the wings with the noise of thousand woodpeckers.

While on a bombing run into Germany one of these elves, the Box-Wrenched-Fingered kind, hid behind the cylinders of my number two engine. Each time I looked elsewhere he deftly loosened a nut on the propeller governor housing, this allowing a small stream of engine oil to leak out and flow over the hot cylinders and exhaust pipes, sending out a stream of white smoke that trailed behind the wing causing much concern to friends in other planes of the formation.

Other pilots reported running into Chisel-Nosed Gremlins that sheared off rivet heads on aircraft structures causing faring, or wing skins to peel loose. Still others met up with a Drill-Nosed kind that liked to poke neat little round holes in various parts of the plane's skin. Then there is one (whom all pilots have run into on many occasions) who insidiously shove his Pipe-Nose into fuel and oil tanks to swill away 100 octane gasoline, engine oil or hydraulic fluid.

The official explanation for all these happenings, as made by ground-bound maintenance and engineering staff, include such gems as: (1. Enemy Flak (shrapnel) damage; (2. Hail Damage; (3. Improper maintenance; (4. Pilot induced over-stress on the airframe; (5. Enemy machine-gun fire; (6. Improper fuel management, etc., but, as all wartime aviators know, these are but foolish attempts by the uninitiated to rationalize the unknown. We pilots know ----- Gremlins did the damage.

(The previous vignette was offered by Paul L. Schriebmaier Pilot from the 725th Squadron. This sketch was taken from a group of short essays that Paul offered. Many were of his sights and feelings from his overseas tour.)

SEARCH AND RESEARCH

My involvement with the Internet is keeping me busy these days. Since placing my name on various sites, as 'contact man' for the 451st, I have been sought out, both by our questioning offspring and by various historians, to research facts and items of historical interest to them. I am always happy to oblige, but in this effort I may spend hours in research for various questions posed by the sender.

Some of you, in the process of my research, may have received mail from these earnest inquisitors. If the person requesting information appears forthright and legitimate, and I don't necessarily have what he/she needs at hand, I may offer them your address, at least those of you that seem relevant to the inquiries, always in hopes that you may have the answers they seek.

But, as is often the case, a reply is becoming harder and harder to get out of you guys. Perhaps you are leery, questioning who is making contact; perhaps it's that you can barely recall the incident in question; or worst of all, perhaps you are too ill, or too busy, to respond.

Whatever may be the case, I thought I'd take several of these overseas contacts and pass them in front of you. You may be able to enlighten the gentlemen with some facts pertaining to their quests.

This first one comes from an historian, posted late October 2000, out of the Slovak Republic. He writes:

"I am looking toward to contact[ing] the men of the crews of the following planes:

B-24J 42-50630 "Round Trip," 726th Sqdn, Pilot Walter A. Harris

B-24J 44-10629 "Buzz Baby," 725th Sqdn, Pilot Charles R. Campbell

B-24H 41-29588 "Faye," 725th Sqdn, Pilot Elwood V. Wilson

B-24G 42-78414 "Boots And His Buddies," 724th Sqdn, Pilot Maurice R. Brown

These planes (maybe more) crashed for sure, or possibly, in Slovakia. It is the area of my research, so please, if you know these men, or their families, draw their attention to me and please HELP to fill in some details to the history of [the] Air War over Slovakia. Or if you have any knowledge about their losses, please contact me

Peter Kassak
Hospodarska 68
TRNAVA 917 01
Slovak Republic
EUROPE

c.mail > pkassak@yahoo.com

P.S. I know that you sent me all the addresses to these crewmen, but no one replied. So I try by this official way (by newsletter). I hope this is no problem.

Again, on 16 January 2001, Peter posted me this message:

Hello to all 451st members and friends! I am locat-

ing the crash sites of 15th AAF bombers in Slovak Republic. 451st BG lost at present level of my knowledge, two planes in here. Those were: Harris' and Campbell's crews on December 11, 1944. I would like to ask you all readers for help in obtaining some new info and pictures of these two crews.

Did you serve in one of these crews? Do you know/knew someone of these crews, and/or their families? If you do/did and have some stuff, which may help me, please contact me.

P.S. I wrote to all the addresses you sent me to contact veterans from these crews, but got little reply. Only family of Campbell replied and supported me greatly with some photo stuff. But no one more!

FROM ANOTHER OVERSEAS HISTORIAN/RESEARCHER:

Dear Sir,

I search all about the attacks at towns in our area in Low-Bavaria.

At following days groups of the 15th AF attacked: dec. 25. 1944 15th AF heavy bombers attack marshalling yards at Plattling/Isar.

March 24. 1945 15th AF heavy bombers attack air-drome at Erding, Munich and Plattling/Isar.

But I do not know which group from the 15th AF. I write to all Vet. Asso. of the 15th AF I know.

If your group was there, or you know which other group attacked Plattling at these days, please give me information.

Thank your very much for your help. Please excuse my faults in my american-english.

Georg Haberl

Hilzstr.23

Deggendorf/Germany

c.mail > habfri@t-online.de

I replied to him: Although we were active both those days (25 December 44 and 24 March 45), I have no record containing the name, Plattling/Isar. Our targets for those dates were; Wels Marshalling Yards, Austria, 25 December 1944, and on 24 March 1945 it was the Buedjovice Marshalling Yards, Czechoslovakia.

AND FROM RUSSIA, I RECEIVED THIS:

Thank you for answer to this letter.

SEEK PILOTS USAF, VETERANS OF WORLD WAR II

Purpose: Veterans meeting, [to?] present history-painting from artist.

Are sought [The people I am seeking?--Ed.] The Americans, pilots [of the] USAF, participants of World War II, members of aircrew of B-24 Liberator N 124 (board number) of 5-th bomber group placed in Italy (SWPA?) [Any idea what these designations might mean: N 124, (board number) 5-th bomber group, or SWPA, guys?--Bob K.]

Aircrew of Consolidated B-24 Liberator N 124 (board number) 1. Boots?, commander; 2. Pfeiffer?,

navigation officer - navigator

From a history: 218 BAD (Bomber Aviation Division) from IInd Ukraine Battle Line from Russia conducted battle (dashing) operations on planes Douglas A-20G and based on airfields of Hungary (Solnok, Tisza-Vigeni). Liberators from USAF ... made flights for bombardment of objects of Germany. Someone [some of them--Ed.] ... receiving damages sat on airfields 218 BAD (Solnok). All pilots were received as the friends and him there was a necessary help.

So I, in Spring, 1944, kept command with aircrew Consolidated B-24 Liberator N 124 in airfield Tisza-Vigeni has repaired motors this plane and with aircrew safely had flown on base 218 BAD in Solnok, from where this plane has departed for Italy.

Place to seek: USA Place of met: Tisza-Vigeni, Solnok, Hungary Time of met: spring of 1944 Secker: - Moscow committee of veterans - Board of veterans of World War II 218 BAD - Museum 218 BAD (Moscow school N 360) - Alexey Petrov, retired lieutenant colonel, airman from the 218 BAD, artist.

My grandfather, Alexey Petrov has few details for this question. But he no nost hope to find combat friends. He doesn't saw combat friends surname at a paper. He doesn't know their address. He wrote to administration of President Putin from this question. In answer .. very few details.

Ilya Vasilyev
Flat 18 2/14 Krupskoi St. Ballashikha
Moscow Region
Russian Federation 143900
e.mail > vita@yvw.infran.ru

I transcribed the previous message, pretty much as it came to me over the Internet (spelling and punctuation errors included, with my occasional [I hope] clarifying comments in brackets.) What I gleaned from Ilya Vasilyev's message was that a Moscow Committee of WW-II veterans is considering putting together a meeting of old wartime allies, crews that came under the protection of the Russian controlled airfield in Solnok, Hungary during 1944, and their Russian host-allies.

The names of 'Boots' and 'Pfeiffer' came to light in studying lists of crews that were forced to land at the Russian Douglas A-20 (Havoc) Base called 218 BAD. Ilya's grandfather, Alexey Petrov, apparently was based on that airbase and had immediate contact with these crews, such as that of pilot Lt. Lloyd O. Boots' (724th BS). I did inform Ilya that Lt. Rheuna B. Pfeiffer was no longer with us, having died in February 1990, but that Lloyd Boots was alive and well. By the way, Lt. Pfeiffer was on loan for this mission from the 726th Squadron. He was originally part of Major McKinnis' (726th CO) crew when they arrived overseas.

And still another query .. one that parallels Peter Kassak's search. This one comes from Milan Beneek, Jr. It reads thusly:

I am a member of Aviation History Club in Trencin, which investigates the air events over Slovakia during WWII and I'm a representative of young generation in this institution.

First, I will try to explain the reason why I decided to write you. In my region, probably 2 American planes

fell down. I tried to find out all possible information about them so I can write an article for inhabitants of this region, and I also wanted to give some details to Museum in Liptovsky Mikulas. I started to be interested in this topic. I turned to Slovak historians, since I thought that they would have American Documents. But I wasn't successful. So I started to investigate after American planes and airmen in Slovakia. I thought that experienced writers know this problem completely and that there weren't many unexplained things. In Slovakia, Mr. Rajnec had occupied this topic for many years and he published few articles in different magazines. He had a contact with American participants of actions and with archives. But he suddenly died in 1996. It was found out that part of materials got lost and the rest was in very raw conditions, so complex study was again out of sight.

Information published in Slovakia in the past was very incomplete. If I could clarify these events, I would like to devote time to these problems in a great extent, and in cooperation with Slovak historians to process this topic as soon as possible.

I'd like you, Mr. Karstensen, request about help at identification of losses of 451.BG. I shall very glad, if you administration us any information about this crews. I hope, that myself - us together - nice specify everything available informations about this theme.

Milan went on to list one definite loss on 11 December 1944 and one that he had only limited information about. The one with detail information was A/C #42-50630 from the 726th Squadron with Wallace A Harris, Pilot. When I went into my 'research mode' I discovered that we had lost 4 A/C as a result of our bombing of Vienna that day.

Also lost from the 726th Squadron was A/C #42-51585, Piloted by Eugene H. Porter.

Two 725th aircraft were lost: A/C #44-10629, piloted by Charles R. Campbell and A/C #44-41114, piloted by Lyle L. Jensen.

Our human losses that day were 11 KIA's, 21 POW's and 10 EVADEE's.

I passed this information on to Milan, along with addresses of those within our organization that can shed light on his search. Just how fast and how deeply he seeks out this information is yet to be seen.

His address is:

Milan Beneek, Jr.
032 44 Liptovska
Kokava #265
Slovak Republic
EUROPE

e.mail > milanbeni@pobox.sk

These are just a sampling of what comes to me, over the Internet, from overseas contacts.



ITALY & YUGOSLAVIA (And The Trip Over)

By: John A. Foster (725th)

February to July 1944

Original crew on overseas manifest:

Pilot: John A. Foster

Copilot: Henry W. Roberts

Navigator: Samuel Garber

Bombardier: John W. Schmitthenner

AEG: Fred C. Campbell

ROG: Charles E. Lamka

Gunner: Helmar M. Lietan

Gunner: Charles R. Marshall

Gunner: John F. Martin

Gunner: Guerrino A. Zonghetti

On February 29th, we were ordered to travel by train to Mitchell Field on Long Island, New York. This was to be our staging base prior to our trip overseas. Here we would pick up a brand new B-24J airplane.

The first day at Mitchell was busy. We were issued parachutes, 45 caliber automatic hand guns, plus miscellaneous items we might need and couldn't get wherever we were going. At this point we didn't know our destination. Later this day we all went out to visit our new airplane and check out the new gadgets which were not on the older models we flew in training. On our second day here, we took it up for a familiarization hop. We flew it down to Washington, D.C., being very careful to stay out of the restricted air space over the White House and the Capitol. Everything worked great, and after about two hours of sight-seeing, we put the "J" safely back on the runway. After securing our "warplane" we caught a Long Island Train to New York City where we had booked lodging at a hotel built above the Pennsylvania Railroad Station.

Henry Roberts (the crew knew him as Dolan), his wife Betty and I decided to take in some of the famed "Big Apple" night life. But I had a problem; I needed a date. We agreed to meet later at one of the night clubs. Then I took off, stopping at a variety of shops and department stores, checking with numerous young ladies to see if they'd have dinner with me. Either they were married, or had seen too many uniforms, because I

got to the night spot alone. Not to worry, the meal was great and we saw a good floor show.

It was now a new day and we had orders directing us to fly to an air base in West Palm Beach, Florida. This trip was made on a beautiful day which made for excellent sight-seeing. We landed after about five hours in the air and I reported to the Base Commander. This "bird Colonel" explained that our crew was confined to the base during our short stay in West Palm Beach. He then handed me our overseas orders with instructions not to unseal them until the airplane had passed beyond the continental limits of the U.S.A.

Next day, as soon as we were off the ground and well out over the water, we broke the seal on the envelope and read the orders to the crew over the intercom. "You are to proceed, with all deliberate speed to your operational base at Manduria, Italy." Our route was to be via Borinquen Field, Puerto Rico, the to Belem, in Brazil, and to Natal, also in Brazil. Natal was to be our jumping off point for the hop across the Atlantic Ocean to Dakar in Senegal. From Dakar we'd fly north, over the Atlas Mountains to Marrakech in Morocco, then to Manduria, Italy. Our Navigator, Sam Garber, now had two immediate jobs; the first was to get us to Puerto Rico and the second to figure out where the heck is Manduria?

As we flew over water to Puerto Rico, it began to sink into our consciousness that the fun and games, plus a lot of hard work were behind us and that we were on our way to a war. Our crew spent two nights at Borinquen during which time the base maintenance people gave the airplane a thorough going over. Specifically, we needed to determine why we were burning so much fuel. Also this free time gave Garber and me a chance to carefully figure out a route for the next leg of our journey. Since we knew that we'd be flying over solid South American jungle, it was vital that we not be careless. In addition they put us all through a physical exam. The word was that in order to flunk the physical, a man would have to be nearly dead.

So, after almost three days of R & R, both the crew and the airplane were found to be in A-1 condition and we were off again into the WILD



L to R Standing: Foster, Roberts Martin, Schmitthenner & Garber
Seated: Zonghetti, Campbell, Lietan, Marshall & Lamka

BLUE YONDER. It was now the thirteenth of March and our destination was Belem in Brazil, close by the mighty Amazon River. The route that Sam had set up took us east along the north shore of Puerto Rico, to a point just beyond the Virgin Islands. From this point we turned to a southward heading in the direction of mainland South America. After just a few minutes on this heading, Zonghetti called on the intercom to tell me that, looking from his waist window, he had seen a submarine crash-dive below us. This was confirmed by Johnson, who had seen it from the other waist window. No one else had seen it, but since there were two sightings, I figured that I'd better give the Navy a call. When they determined that we were not too far from their location on the island of Trinidad, they called us in. At Naval Intelligence Headquarters on Trinidad, eight of us cooled our heels for about an hour while Zonghetti and Johnson were being interrogated. They finally came out and we were driven back to our plane. En route the two "sighters" were cussing, "Those Navy S.O.B.'s might just as well have called us liars. Next time we see something like that; 'NO REPORT ... PERIOD!'"

After getting the engines started and checked out, we were soon in the air; next stop, Blem. For about 1,200 miles, roughly eight hours, over beautiful dense jungle, Guyana, Suriname, French Guyana, the over the Amazon River in northeast Brazil and into Belem. Earlier in the war, a B-24 crew, which included football and broadcasting star, Tom Harmon was forced to bail out over this area. It was reported that Harmon was the only survivor. *[Editor .. A little research shows that Tom Harmon, University of Michigan, twice winner of the Heisman Trophy, was forced to bail out from his fighter aircraft over the jungles of South America during a tropical storm. He spent 4 days covering the 50 miles to safety. So, the report that Harmon was part of a B-24 crew were in error. Source: Detroit News - Rearview Mirror]*

As we progressed toward our destination we listened to the purr of four perfectly tuned engines. We also listened to the weather reports coming over the radio from the station we were heading for. They kept reporting C.A.V.U., which means CLEAR AND VISIBILITY UNLIMITED. Despite this optimistic reporting we flew through intermittent heavy showers. After all, the Equator and the Amazon were getting closer and we were hoping we would not have to land in a equatorial gully-washer.

Just as the city came into view, we also spotted a big black rain squall approaching the same airfield that we had to set down on. So I increased speed until we got onto our downwind leg. I dropped the flaps, Roberts got the landing gear down and we skipped the normal base leg as I put it in a fast descending 180 degree turn which got the wheels on the runway just as the rain-storm hit. We were stopped and off the runway and into a parking spot by the time the rain had stopped.

For our one night stay at this base we were housed in a barracks, the rear portion of which was in very

close proximity to the Amazon jungle. One of the officers on the base warned us not to go traipsing around in it. He told us of earlier occupants who ignored that warning and were never seen or heard from again.

That night Sam Garber and I heard about a Blackjack game being organized and decided to find out if Belem was a lucky spot for us. It was! As a result of our modest good fortune, I was able to buy an alligator purse for my mother, back in Chicago. I decided not to get the one with the creature's head still attached.

On the morning of March 14th, we flew out of jungle country along the Brazilian coast to Natal. On this leg of our journey we had a new passenger. One, or more, of the sergeants on the crew had either caught, or bought, a small Rhesus monkey. He never made it to Natal. It was either too cold for him at ten thousand feet, or he was just scared to death of flying. Before we landed, one of the crew found him dead on top of some luggage.

We spent two days at this spot, located on the most easterly tip of South America, getting a series of briefings concerning the transatlantic hop and about the approach to the African and European war zone. The airplane got a thorough inspection and was pronounced ready to go.

The destination of this over-water leg was Dakar, the capital of Senegal in North Africa. In our briefing for the trip we were told to fly at nine thousand feet, and since we would cross the equator again, we should expect a short period of rough weather as we passed through the stationary inter-tropical front. The trip was estimated to take ten to eleven hours. That would be very close to the limit of our fuel supply.

On March 16, 1944, at two o'clock in the morning we lifted off into the dark and starless sky. We'd been told that we could get a navigation fix by radio from a station on a small island about an hour from where we took off. It never happened; either the station was off the air, or we had gotten the wrong frequency. So we just stayed on the course Sam had worked out for us before we left.

No more than two hours after takeoff we found ourselves in a storm that was certainly not what had been described as the inter-tropical disturbance. Conditions kept getting angrier as we proceeded on a compass heading of thirty degrees. The airplane bounced and bucked. Our rate of climb indicator had us going up at two thousand feet per minute and then down at the same rate. I had to try to avoid the worst of the rough stuff by finding a seam between storm cells. Sam had me flying a triangulation course where I'd go left forty-five degrees for five minutes and then back to the right forty-five for five minutes. Then I'd return to the original heading. It got pretty exciting and I was pretty sure that the guys in the back of the plane were probably scared spitless. Up front we weren't too comfortable, but I figured that as long as the four Pratt & Whitney engines kept operating we'd be okay.

The weather continued almost until daybreak. When

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

things had settled down I asked Garber if he knew where we were. He said no, but that he would find out before noon. When the sun came up, Sam climbed into the top turret and began shooting sun lines with his sextant.

We both knew for certain that, if, during the three or four hours of the storm we had gotten more than ten degrees off our course, either to the right or to the left, we'd run out of fuel before we made landfall. So, until Sam could get the course corrected we could only keep busy looking for ships and practicing ditching procedures. At best, ditching in the ocean is a desperate maneuver where, if every man does his job properly, you increase your chances of a successful ditch from zero to about twenty-five percent.

About four hours out of Natal, our Bombardier, John Schmittner, came up to the flight deck and said he'd always wanted to sit in the Pilot's seat and "fly" the plane. As an afterthought, he said that he might never have another chance. Our course was what Sam had figured during his stint in the top turret. When he'd come down he told me it was the best he could do and we'd have to sink or swim with it. As soon as "Schmitty" climbed into my seat he began asking questions about the instruments. "What was this for, and what about that?" When he came to the radio-compass, he asked why we were not using it. I told him that we were too far out from Dakar radio. Regardless, Schmitty turned it on and turned to the station at Dakar. Roberts and I watched in amazement as the needle flipped back and forth a couple times and settled down precisely on zero without changing course even one degree. Within two hours we saw the coastline, then the buildings of the city. The airfield was obvious and we set down after our transatlantic adventure that kept us in the air, and on pins and needles, for just under eleven hours.

The crew drew straws for the "honor" of staying with the airplane and sleeping in it. The other eight of us slept on cots in a barracks. The next morning the two "lucky" guys told us that when they stepped out of the plane for some relief about two a.m., they were confronted by a Senegalese sentry that looked to be at least seven feet tall and so black that his skin shone in the moonlight. This contact caused them a brief fright.

The new day came with the prospect of twelve hundred miles in the air, en route to Marrakech in Morocco. Approaching this town we'd be descending over the rugged Atlas Mountains. The trip turned out to be a "cinch." After landing on the outskirts, we were driven by truck to a hotel in town. On this drive we saw our first concrete evidence that we were now in a war zone. In the middle of an area that would normally be the town plaza, there was an enclosure with barbed wire strung ten feet high that housed German prisoners of war. (Note: In 1991, on a trip I went back to Marrakech. The area that held the prisoners is now a huge plaza filled with snake charmers and numerous other folks hawking their wares to the many tourists. The size of the town is now at least quadrupled from when I saw it over fifty plus years ago.)

Next day, March 18th, the nose of the airplane was pointed at Tunis by way of Oran, a port city on the north coast of Morocco, just west of Algiers. The authorities required us to be identified as we made a 360 degree

turn around a specific lighthouse at 500 feet altitude. Leaving Oran we climbed to ten thousand feet and in doing so we flew on instruments through a thick cloud layer. We'd not prepared our course too carefully and when we got above the clouds we weren't too sure about our heading. We kept going east and, as luck would have it, another plane came up out of the clouds so we decided to follow it since he looked like a military courier and probably knew exactly where he was going. In short order the entire sky cleared up and we were able to identify Bizerte on the coast and not too far from our objective.

There had been a heavy downpour in Tunis before we landed and everything off the paved runway was mud. I knew we'd have fun getting out in the morning.

That night we slept in a downtown Tunis hotel that several months earlier had been the headquarters of German Field Marshal General Erwin Rommel, the Desert Fox.

On the 19th we did get out of the mud, but we nearly had to fly it out. By 9 a.m., in more rain, we took off for Italy. We flew over places that a few months ago, in the States, we'd heard a lot about on the news. It was through Palermo and Messina on Sicily that General Patton and General Montgomery were racing to be first to secure that island for the Allies. Soon we were over the toe of the boot that is Italy, and over the Gulf of Toronto. Soon after crossing the coastline we thought we had identified the airfield we had been assigned to. We landed, checked with the Operations Officer and were told that Manduria was about thirty minutes north.

Now we're really getting eager to get there. As we did our engine checks before takeoff, it was clear that the booster pump on one engine was inoperative. After checking with Fred Campbell (Flight Engineer) it was decided we could get off without it. We got down the runway and into the air with no problems and soon we were letting down to, and rolling down, the correct runway. We had arrived at our new home away from home.

Soon after we parked our faithful "bird" a truck came out to pick up the men and their luggage and we quickly arrived in our living quarters, a community of tents. These pyramidal tents were in short supply, so we were moved into the tent of a crew that had not returned from their last mission: to Regensburg.

I'd been resting on a bunk for about thirty minutes when a messenger came by, telling me to bring our flight engineer to meet our Squadron Operations Officer, Captain Bowen, at the airplane in fifteen minutes. When we got there it was apparent that the ground crews had been busy since we'd arrived. They'd pumped twenty-seven hundred gallons of gas, all ten of the fifty caliber machine guns had been armed and twelve - five hundred pound bombs had been hung in the racks. Captain Bowen had them remove the bombs so he could give Campbell and me our welcome to the 725th Squadron of the 451st Bomb Group. This was to be a check ride to test whether we could fly under these conditions.

When the three of us were aboard and the engines started, I taxied out to the south end of the five thousand foot long dirt runway to begin going through the check list. Everything went routinely until I set the supercharger control at the normal 41 inches of mercury. Bowen,

in the copilot's seat, told me I'd never get off the ground at less than 49 inches. Since I had no idea how to get the "boost" up that high, he handed me a small screwdriver and pointed to a small set-screw at the corner of the control. A small twist and the dial read 49 inches.

When this short learning session was over I moved into takeoff position and advanced the throttles to full power while holding the brakes firmly underfoot. When I came off the brakes we moved out quickly and by the time we were two-thirds of the way down the runway we were airborne. Bowen got the gear up and told me to level off at 500 feet and fly a rectangular pattern and come in for a landing. At about 400 feet he pulled a throttle back and feathered an engine. I had to make a few adjustments before we made a left turn at 500 feet. After a minute or two the next left turn put us on a downwind leg. No sooner was I straight and level than he reached over and pulled a second throttle and hit the feather button. Now we're on two engines, but all's well and we'll soon be on a base leg, then final, then touch-down. As I got lined up with the runway, this crazy guy pulled the third throttle, but did not feather the prop. He said that I might need that engine before we landed. We landed on the one functioning engine. For a very short time I really did think that the Captain was a little crazy, but in the months ahead I learned to admire him greatly.

Captain Bowen was a pilot's pilot. Coming back from a mission into Germany when he was Squadron Leader, his aircraft was badly shot up with flak and twenty millimeter shells and he had to make a landing on the beach on the west side of the Adriatic Sea. His hydraulic system was damaged to the point where he had no normal control of his flaps and landing gear. To get fluid into the hydraulic cylinder, he used a procedure I'd never hear about. There is a toggle switch on the instrument panel which is used to get small amounts of gasoline into the cylinder so that the system will operate effectively on cold mornings. So, on his approach to this emergency landing he toggled enough gas so he had pressure to get both his flaps and gear down. The landing was a success: he and his crew all walked away from it without a scratch.

About a week after our arrival in the Squadron the original occupants of our tent returned so we moved into a tent of our own. At this time of year, even in sunny Southern Italy, heat is a necessity. The standard tent stove here was one half of a 55 gallon drum. Using aircraft tubing we hooked up the stove, INSIDE, to a full drum of gasoline, OUTSIDE. We were proud of our handiwork until we turned the valve and the gas began to flow. Just as soon as we put a match to it, we had a major conflagration inside the tent; the tubing connections had leaked. Roberts grabbed a machete he'd acquired in Brazil, and opened up one side of our new tent. We threw as many of our belongings as we could safely reach, through the newly placed opening. We saved almost everything of value, except one bottle of Canadian Club whiskey. The Supply Sergeant got us a new tent and our second attempt at stove making was much more successful.

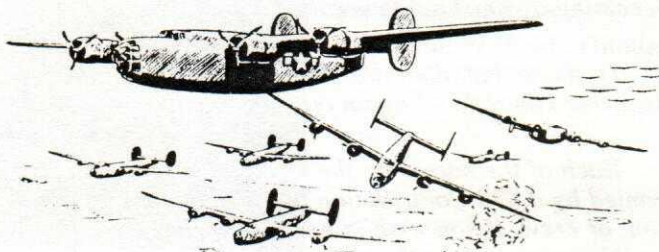
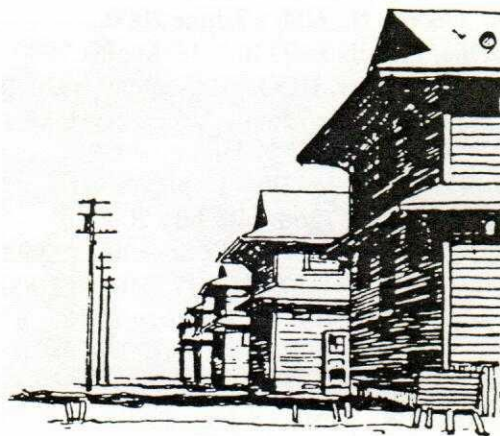
Our meals were served "buffet" style. We stood in line, rain or shine, as the "cookie" filled our mess-kits with beans, rice, powdered mash potatoes, cooked Spam,

Vienna Sausages (any meat that could be shipped in a can). For dessert we had lots of fruit salad. There was always plenty of food and we were never hungry.

Another necessity of life over here was the latrine. Each of these installations consisted of two benches with six holes each side, facing each other; there was no roof overhead. In the cold months the first troops to use the facility in the morning had the pleasure of "preflighting." This was the removal of frost or dew from the seat with body heat.

Our first organized flying duty took place during the first week at the base at Manduria. With an experienced combat pilot in the copilot's seat, we joined two other new crews for a test of our abilities to fly formation. The Squadron leadership knew very well how little experience we'd had before they shipped us overseas. This session worked out very well, except that "my boss" on this flight kept urging me to "tuck it in." He wanted me to get my left wing tip closer and closer to the aircraft on my left. This makes for a tighter formation in a combat situation so that the firepower from all the planes in the element is more concentrated. It was also more nerve wracking for the occupants of the aircraft with air currents taking us up and down at 160 m.p.h; forward speed.

We learned that in combat, tight formations were a matter of self-preservation, but in non-combat it's pretty dicey. According to the check pilot, my performance was o.k. and our crew was certified ready for duty in the shooting war.



OUR DIMINISHING RANKS -- THEIR FINAL FLY-BY

REPORTED SINCE OUR LAST NEWSLETTER

Bartlett, William L., 724th - 5 February 2001
 Betz, John A., 724th - 26 - January 1999
 Bivins, George V., 725th - 25 June 2000
 Boor, Stanley F., 727th - 9 June 2000
 Clements, Alfred T., 724th - 26 December 1999
 Clements, Harold R., 727th - 6 February 2000
 Cottingham, Miles D., 727th - 2000
 Cummins, Ernest R., 60th - 20 December 2000
 Dyer, Stanley O., 726th - 17 March 1999
 Erickson, Ernest C., 727th - 15 September 2000
 Evens, George A., 725th - 4 July 2000
 Farnell, David, 726th - 20 November 1998
 Gilbert, Raymond J., 726th - 3 May 2000
 Greene, Leo L., 726th - 26 February 2000
 Groetsch, Peter H., 726th - 21 March 2000
 Gundrum, John J., 727th - 30 October 2000
 Henry, Robert R., 724th - 19 May 2000
 Hosie, Norman E., 727th - 15 September 2000
 Johnson, Robert A., 726th - 3 September 2000
 Kammer, John J., 725th - 29 November 1997
 Lane, Calvin V., 724th - 20 June 2000
 Martan, George N., 60th - 3 June 2000
 Mussachia, Francis J., 724th - 19 August 2000
 Nerroth, Alexander, HDQ - 19 September 2000
 Paulzine, Donald A., 726th - 7 February 1999
 Pickoff, Julius, SMW - 26 January 2000
 Quindt, Harvey W., 725th - 17 May 2000
 Ruetz, Quintus C., 726th - 23 July 2000
 Russell, Charles L., 725th - 17 September 1998
 Shellman, Kenneth S., 726th - 17 October 2000
 Spornyak, John, 726th - 19 February 2001
 Ustruck, James M., 726th - UNKNOWN
 Wadlund, Douglas G., 727th - 21 February 2001
 Wike, David W., 725th - 8 June 2000
 Wojciechowski, Joseph B., 727th - 16 July 1998

Editor: My thanks to those that sent me information/obituaries on the passing of one of our comrades. Our list gets ever longer. 'Tis to be expected - We are becoming a vanishing generation.

To those that offered a Memorial Contribution to a departed comrade - I again offer my thanks.

Each of the names in the next column was accompanied by a \$50 Contribution in the name of that person, or crew. If you wish to note/commemorate a buddy by this means, place the name at the lower part of your check. Only one name, crew or section per \$50 Donation, Please.

SPECIAL MEMORIAL TRIBUTE OFFERED IN THE NAME OF:

Bruce, George - From Brother, John Bruce
 Bryan, Howard Y. - From Wife, Dena Feeney-Bryan
 Buckley, Robert J. - From Paul E. Harden
 Crans, Russell K. - From Wife, Virginia Crans
 Crans, Russell K. - From Roger A. Johnston
 Donovan, Robert C. - From George E. Tudor
 Gallagher, Arthur L. - From Wife, Margie Gallagher
 Gilbert Raymond J. - From Joseph A. Cancila
 Gilbert Raymond J. - From George L. Rafter
 Hayman, Sybil - From Husband, Bennie C. Hayman
 Hosie, Norman E. - From Wife, Marie Hosie
 Kelly, Thomas J. - From Wife, Roberta Kelly
 Leiter, Stanton M. - From Wife, Florence Leiter
 Massare, Peter A. - From Wife, Clara Massare
 Moreschi, Anthony J. - From Daughter, Judy Supan
 Nerroth, Alexander - From Bob Karstensen
 Norman, Sven O. - From Edward J. Leahy
 Olson, Richard D. - From Donald C. Ten Hagen
 Palumbo, Joan - From Husband, Joseph N. Palumbo
 Pearson, Earl D. - From Wife, Penny Pearson
 Peterson, Ralph S. - From Harold L. Todd
 Ruetz, Quintus C. - From Burt Orden & Crewmates
 Stresky, Edward Arthur Miskend, Arthur Barker, Quentin Thorvig, George Meyran, Paul Hendrix, David Peterson, KIA 25 April 1945 - From Ora Arnold
 Worrell, Joseph C. - From Lewis G. Jeaudoin

FROM HORSEMAN TO AIRMAN

By Frank W. Scott

I would like to tell you a short history of my Army and Air Force career, of which I served in both.

Was drafted October 3, 1941. Went to Fort Riley, Kansas, into the Horse Cavalry for three months Basic Training, then was sent to Fort Jackson, South Carolina. Was joined into the 102nd Cavalry, the Essex Troop, from East Orange, New Jersey. A group which was National Guard. No finer group (ground) could be found, a nice bunch of fellows. After about a year they mechanized the Cavalry. I was given a motorcycle, which I did not want to have.

I put in for a transfer to the Air Force. The Corporal in Headquarters said it will not go through. I asked him why? He replied, "You wanted it for your benefit. Let me write you one that will do the job." It started out, "For the good of the Government." Needless to say, it went through.

I transferred many places "To Please the Government," after that.



Frank Scott As Cavalryman

guarding our plane, and when we went back the next morning, P.D.I. was missing.

I also remember, while at Castelluccia, someone was playing "Sugar Blues" on the trumpet. It was written by Clyde McCoy, who, after the war, moved two houses from me.

I had planned to attend the Y2000 reunion in St. Louis. Even wrote to my Bombardier, Jim Smith, some time before about going. Needless to say, neither of us made it.

List of crew (727th Bomb Squadron):

Raymond W. Fyhrie, Pilot [Member #0891]

Seymour J. Reshkin, Copilot [Member #1594]

Verne E. Williamson, Navigator

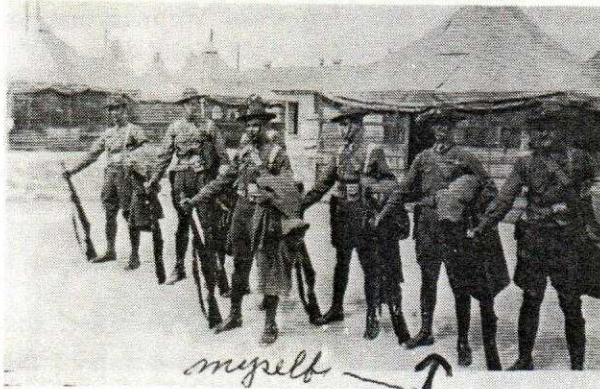
[Deceased 1994]

James E. Smith, Bombardier [Member #0140]

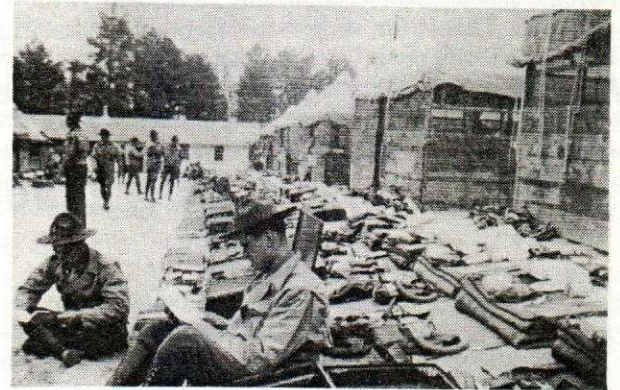
John W. Kane, AEG [Not Located]

Ralph M. Welling, ROG [Not Located]

Brack Crisp, Gunner [Deceased 1987]



Squad at Parade Rest



Camp Inspection

I got my discharge soon after the war in Germany was over, with 33 missions flown.

I noticed, in the 'Fight'n 451st History Book,' and in one of the recent Ad-Lib's, a picture of a pilot, and also of Jerry Reshkin, holding our dog, P.D.I. (Pretty Damned Independent). As I recall one of the pilots tried to "Shanghai" PDI when we left from Italy and landed in North Africa. There was an Arab

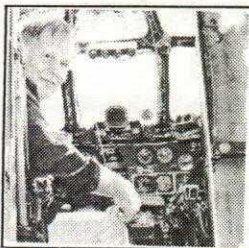


Captain John O'Connor Doing The "Sugar Blues" For The Troops

John T. Foust, Gunner [Deceased 1984]

Henry F. Chepulis, Gunner [Member #0881]

Frank W. Scott, Gunner [Member #0998]



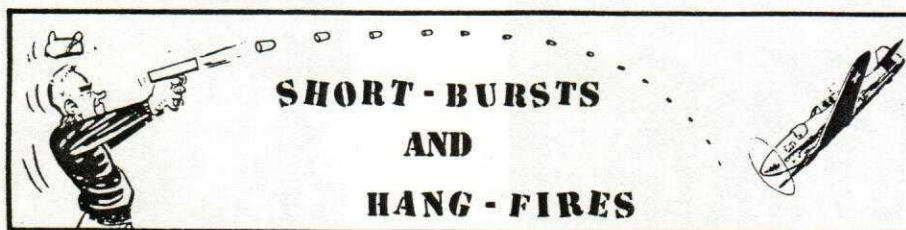
CHATTER FROM THE FLIGHT DECK

Bob Karstensen

Ernie's Journal, and the journals and diaries of other men who wrote them during the war, as well as accurate reminiscences afterwards (clearly indicated as being written afterwards) are valuable historical documents which we are passing on for historians, as well as future generations of our own descendants, by publishing them in our magazine. They will form more of the record of the "real war" than the official documents published by the government. These comments by the participants in the conflict, and those on the home front, or doing other war work, or even children's recollections of their perceptions at the time, are of great historical value. Only accounts such as these, preferably written at the time, or shortly afterwards, but even some of those written long afterwards, can give an accurate feel of the state of mind of people involved in the war. This is a feeling, an important nuance, which is missing from dry "official" accounts. This is the stuff that historians cry for when they try to understand events long pre-dating their own births. And often these accounts will contain historical

facts which are lacking from, or obscured by, official records. Our diaries, journals, and letters are important historical documents and should not be dismissed as mere "notes" or "scribbles," even if we know we weren't the best spellers or grammarians. That isn't important. The feel, the report, is what is important to history, not the spelling, the grammar, or the concern for style. In fact, a "reaching for literary style" can be a hindrance, so don't try to "pretty up" what you originally wrote, guys. Give me the "real stuff." Historians value the "real thing" more than the "prettied-up thing" -- and they can usually tell the difference. (They, and I, can also frequently tell BS when we read it, too, so don't embellish with grittiness just for its own sake. I know most of you too well to think you would do that, anyway.)

I would like to expand this into a plea for others of you out there to photo copy your diaries and send me, Bob Karstensen at the Ad-Lib, those photo copies (presuming you may want to hang onto the originals yourself, unless you want me to be their custodian, or copy them for you). I may correct some of your spelling errors for publication (if you want me to), but the documents as originally written are important as they are. In fact, sometimes, even the spelling errors can provide important clues! So don't think you have to have been a James Jones, an Ernie Pyle, or even a member of the top brass to have written an important account of World War II. Our memories are the only real account of what happened "up close and personal." We fought the war. Only we can tell it like it was, in all it's trivia and terror, its boredom and its excitement. We are the only ones who know what really happened. We must make an effort to preserve our story.



Harold McWilliams, 727th [MECHANIC]

Bob: We hope you are staying warm and enjoying good health.

Not much happening here. Just watching the fire, reading the seed catalogs and keeping an eye open for Robins. Enclosed is a small contribution to help keep things going.

(Editor ... We can't argue about good health and anticipation of better weather. I've got the first and looking forward to the second. No fault with your contribution, by the way.)

Ken Barmore, 725th [Copilot: PAUL KRUEGER'S CREW]

Keep me on the mailing list for next year.

I was recently interviewed by Irv Broughton, the

author of "HANGAR TALK," for his new book that is due out in April. It's called, "FOREVER REMEMBERED: THE FLYERS OF WW-2." It will be published by Eastern Washington University Press, Cheney, WA.

(Editor ... Glad to see your getting some exposure via a newly published tome. Hope you added a squib or two about the 451st in there somewhere.)

Ora Arnold, 727th [AEG: EDWARD STRESKY'S CREW]

Was really looking forward to coming to the Reunion, but guess it was not meant to be. I have had a heart attack and am losing blood, which the doctors have not found the source. A few more tests, and hopefully they will find the leak then.

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

Since I cannot attend, and I found out in your last Ad-Lib about the special Memorial Tribute, I am sending a check for the following members of our crew who lost their lives over Linz, Austria - 25 April 1945: Edward Stresky (Pilot), Arthur Miskend (Copilot), Quentin Thorvig (ROG), George Meyran (Nose Gunner), Pail Hendrix (Ball Gunner), David Peterson (Waist Gunner) and Arthur 'Jake' Barker (Tail Gunner).

For the past fifty years I have had flowers placed on the Altar Table of my Church on the Sunday nearest to April 25, in their honor.

I was looking forward to seeing Frank Scott at the reunion, since he was asking for identification of the other person pictured with Jake Barker; And it is Quentin Thorvig, our Radio Man.

(Editor ... Your generosity towards your deceased crewmen has been noted. As to Frank Scott - his indications towards attending our Y2K reunion came back, early on, as a possible MAYBE. The MAYBE turned out to be a no-show. (Check for Frank's early military career story in this Ad-Lib; See page 19)

Winson Jones, 727th [GUNNER: GERALD W. HOPKINS' CREW]

The meeting in St. Louis was great. It was good that several of my family, as well as crew members, could attend. Thanks again for your fine contribution to the whole program of the 451st.

Attached is a photo that may be of interest, and possible inclusion in the Ad-Lib.

(Editor ... [Check page 4 for photo] - Win, how should I file this photo? Under "4 matching 'Musketees'?" Seems right, since we're all togged out with the same 'airplane type' shirts; thanks to you.

Victor Melnick, 726th [AEG: LEW MORSE'S CREW]

In reference to Silliman's fatal incident off the coast of N. Africa (Issue #32/Page 31). T/Sgt Forest G. Millis and I went to A.M. school at Keesler Field, Miss. Then to gunnery at Harlingen, Tex. Crew training was at Pueblo Colo.

His hobbies, as a civilian, were 'Hot Rod' engines, etc. He told me how his crew came to bail out, and he didn't. Before the target run on one mission, one of the engines R.P.M gauge ran exceptionally high. The engine would not respond to shut down, or feathering. Fearful of a blade separation, the pilot, Bill Silliman went on intercom. He informed the crew of the situation and said, "I and Roberts (copilot) are getting out of our seats." After flying on auto-pilot, Millis went to the Flight Deck and reported to Silliman that the instruments were on 'normal readings.' But by then the rest of the crew had bailed out.

Later, for the trip back to the States, we were relieved of the 451st aircraft in Southern Italy and received a replacement to fly home. A group of Flight Engineers helped each other check out our aircraft prior to departure. The odor of gas in the bomb bay, of Millis' aircraft was extremely bad. We asked him to Red Line the plane. His answer was, "If I ground this plane, I might be stuck here for a month waiting for a replacement." Verification of the conversation was heard by Benjamin G. Logan (AEG on Kent Slankard's, 724th Crew) out of

Buffalo N.Y. Millis had a replacement crew, plus one or two passengers.

Due to MAG problems we stayed in Natal, Brazil. It was there that I learned of the explosion after take off over the water. One body was recovered, I was told.

(Editor ... On the mission of 21 March 1945, where 8 of the 11 on board parachuted, one Gunner was KIA. That Gunner was Richard F. Morton. The rest were POW'd until the war was over. In researching other aspects of the 4 June 1945 incident, I see that only one member of the transient crew, a S/Sgt John P. Chylek, was buried in the North African American Cemetery, ten miles NE of Tunis, Tunisia. If other bodies were recovered, they may have been returned home. If they weren't recovered, then they are listed on the "Wall Of The Missing," there in N. Africa.

William Readshaw, [BROTHER TO RICHARD READSHAW (724th) KLD 14 OCTOBER 1944 IN NON-OPERATIONAL CRASH]

I should have written to you many months back. I hated to miss the reunion, for I was hoping to find out more about my brother Dick Readshaw. I appreciate what you sent my son, Bill, in Salem, Ohio. Back when it all happened, I had our Chaplain write to your Chaplain about my brother's crash. I was told by your Operations Officer that he was left behind coming back from a mission and he hit the mountain after the weather closed in at the base. I'm glad you straightened out what really happened. It would look like he was delivering wounded persons, especially with a nurse on the flight. I am in Florida at this time and will be home by the 28th of March (2001). I would appreciate it very much if, in your next newsletter, that you would have anyone knowing Dick to please write to me.

I will be going to San Diego for the P-47 Pilot Association Reunion in May. Dick always said he would have liked to fly the P-47. I flew with the 9th AAF, 48th Fighter Group, 494th Fighter Squadron - mostly ground support for the 1st and 3rd Armies. I flew 83 missions. Had two escort missions for B-17s and B-24s on their missions into Germany.

My son Bill was very surprised when you e.mailed the information about Dick. Dick and I married sisters and Dick's wife is now deceased. They had a son, Ricky who is now 56 years of age. He lives on Whidbey Island, Washington. I guess I have said enough for my first letter to you. I would be most grateful if you would put something in your Ad-Lib about my search.

(Editor ... Happy to do this little request for you. It seems that the deeper I dig into this incident, the more info surfaces. From all reports it seems that the mission that day was to the 'Odertal Oil Refineries' in Germany. For whatever reason they landed near Naples; airfield called Marcanise, picked up some six extra passengers seeking a ride back to the Foggia area. Just how the nurse, 2LT. Geraldine Crouch fits in, I don't know. There were also 2 RAF, 1 SAAF and 2 AAF passengers listed. The rest of the manifest was of your brother's own crew. My information shows that your brother had a total of 6 combat missions up to that point. I myself remember that day quite well. Although we were losing A/C, due to combat, an accident such as hitting a mountain side made the incident somewhat more memorable.)

**Donald C. TenHagen, 726th [COPILOT:
RICHARD D. OLSON'S CREW]**

... Also, our esteemed song leader of the 726th, one "Tennessee Tom" Thurman (Pat Patterson's copilot) had a slightly different version of the chorus of "Oh, That B Dash Two Four." He replaced the words, "Hear Those Four Engines Roar," with "Oh, That Four Engine WHORE." The rest of the song was word perfect.



Lt. Harold "Pat" Patterson's Crew

Standing: Tom Thurman [Singing Copilot], 'Pat' Patterson, Pilot; William Bodie, Bombardier; Burton Shilling, Navigator, Unknown
Kneeling: A. Kozakis, D. Rodriguez, W. O'Laughlin, L. Balzer, G. Really, W. Carrington

(Editor ... Tis fun to remember. Too bad that "Tennessee Tom" passed away in September of 1986. He would have made a fine addition to our "Stein-Hoisters Glee Club.")

**Sally Elliot, (DAUGHTER OF COLONEL
ROBERT E. L. EATON)**

The upcoming reunion in September sounds great, wish we could come. St. Louis area is very special to us ... Dad was stationed at Scott Field when he met Mom, who was from Belleville, Illinois. My twin brother, Bob, and I were born in Belleville, spent the war years there when Dad was overseas and spent out summers there visiting our Grandparents when we were kids. A long time ago, but good memories. Keep up the good work with the 451st It means so much to so many.

(Editor ... Sally, it's always great to hear from you and Earle. It sure bolsters my commitment to keep the heritage of what your father started and brought to high esteem in the annals of the Air Force and to the general public.

Edwin H. Shafer, 727th [MAIL CLERK]

Perhaps I've told you this story before, but at the risk of boring you, it is rather unique. Although I was a clerk-typist, my clerical training at South Dakota State College in Brookings, SD in the summer of '43 left me pretty short on typing skills. I was assigned to type the officer's pay vouchers with the warning, "If you make any mistakes you will do the whole form over!" After one round, Captain Bernstein and Lt. Curtis decided that perhaps I was not cut out for that assignment. Therefore they decided to make me the Squadron Mailman. On one of the first days of handing out mail at the tents in

Wendover, I had a piece of mail for a "John Hanford." This name seemed familiar to me, but we both looked at each other and there was no recognition. Subsequent mail brought him a copy of the Princeton University Alumni Magazine. By the strangest of coincidences, I had gone through my first three years of college with a Bill Ryan as my roommate. His Brother, Bernie, with John Hanford, entered Princeton two years later and roomed together. John and I became close friends and were together in our training and in Italy until he shipped out in January of '45 when he took re-training for B-29's.

I was with the outfit when I returned to the States and was assigned to Dow Field in Bangor.

I had a month at home, after separation, to go down and register at Princeton for the next term, get my room, etc. Since John Hanford was undergoing B-29 training, it apparently took a longer time for him to be discharged. I contacted him in the winter of '46 and asked him if he would like to join me as a room mate back in Princeton. He arrived for that winter term and we were there until my graduation in June, 1947.

John became a Spanish teacher at a school in New England, but then accepted a position out in Denver, CO. Over these many years we have always exchanged Christmas Cards until all of a sudden I heard from you and started receiving the Newsletter on the 451st. John had seen your notice in the Denver paper had signed himself up. The first time we saw each other since graduation, was at the Reunion in Irvine, CA, which I thoroughly enjoyed.

Attending the Reunions has been fun. It's great to have some of the 727th members come up to me and say, "I remember you; YOU were the mailman!"

(Editor ... Nice review of post war activities, Ed. I noticed that you and John had a lot to talk over at the St. Louis Reunion. I guess that's what we're all about; rehashing the past .. both wartime and post-wartime.)

**Lewis Henslee, 726th [NAVIGATOR: BILL
BIAS' CREW]**

I have just been looking through the latest Ad-Lib and noted a few items that brought back memories. On page 30 it is mentioned that according to the fact sheets sent to you by Major Dwyer, A/C #229, piloted by Bill Bias with Bombardier Albert Bostner was on the mission to support the Anzio Beachhead. I was the Navigator on this flight.

On page 31, information from the "photo log" lists two cameramen scheduled for the mission: Reginald White and Allan Woodman. In handwritten words you said it read, "White was in plane but didn't take off." It further read, "Target: Cassino, Italy -- Bombed Venafro by mistake." There is more to this story, as I remember it.

(Editor ... From an earlier letter received from Lewis)

On the question of when the 451st supported the Anzio Beachhead, I was on that mission and according to my journal, it was on February 15, 1944.

The primary target that day was the Marshalling Yards at Pontassieve, Italy. The secondary target was enemy troop concentrations at the Anzio Beachhead. Weather over Pontassieve was bad so we turned back

and came in over the Anzio Beachhead, flying from west to east at 8,000 feet - Too high for the small caliber stuff and too low for the larger caliber. We released our bombs while still over our own lines so they would fall one mile into the enemy troops.

From 8,000 feet we had a good view of the beach-head area. Every square foot of the entire area was covered by large shell craters - how anyone down there survived the enemy shelling is beyond me.

During WW-II, 16 Army Nurses were killed by enemy shelling, etc. Of these 16, 6 were killed at Anzio.



Lt. William Bias' Crew

(Editor ... Continuing with most recent letter)

On page 13 .. Ken Barmore describes the June 28, 1944 mission to bomb the Marshalling Yards at Bucharest. He wrote, "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." He was correct, but he had no way of knowing that this was the 451st. All of the planes on the mission made it safely back to the base. I know because I was the Lead Navigator on the mission. We did a good job on the target, too.

(Editor ... I truly appreciate your comments on these various articles. But you must enlighten me as to the "Rest of the Story," regarding the Cassino/Venafro mission .. as you lived it.)

A. Jay Woods, 725th [NAVIGATOR: JOHN JANENSCH'S CREW]

Reviewing Ad-Lib Issue 31, brought up some memories to me.

On page 8: My certification of missions flown, indicates it was on the 15th of February 1944 that we flew the mission in support of the Anzio Beachhead. However, I am unable to confirm an altitude of 17,500 feet. It seems to me it was closer to 15,000 Feet. I am of the opinion that none of the U.S. Infantry were firing at us as I am sure they had been briefed on what a B-24 looked like. Colonel Eaton commanded the lead flight with Lt. Byers, Navigator and Lt. Hughes, Bombardier, with a pilot and flight crew from another Squadron. We were leading the high flight with 1LT Janensch, Pilot, someone from Group as Copilot, 2LT Hess, Bombardier,

and me as Navigator. As we approached the IP, the lead flight set a course that appeared to be off to the right of Cassino Abbey. I gave LT Janensch a heading that Hess and I had agreed would take us to the Abbey. Since we had been briefed to break the formation and each flight would be bombing in line (Lead, High & Low). I believe that the low flight followed us in. There was plenty of flak to divide up among all flights. In the debriefing, I don't remember any comments concerning each flight choosing different targets.

On page 9: I think Richard F. Gould was Squadron Commander of the 725th [Editor ... Correction - Captain David Gould was CO of the 725th. Sent to Zone of Interior due to wounds suffered on mission with Capt. Tudor. Richard F. Gould was Bombardier on Bert Brown's crew]

On page 15: Regarding PVT Eugene F. Goodner. In the 17 March 1944 ditching in the Adriatic, 2LT Irving Wallace, Navigator from Brooklyn, NY, was also drowned. Irving and I went through Navigation School together at Mather Field, Sacramento, CA and were later assigned to the 451st in the original Cadre.

(Editor ... Thanks A.J. for your input on the Anzio Beachhead and Cassino Abbey mission. By dribbles and drabs it's all coming together. As to your cohort, Irving Wallace; there were three men drowned in that ditching on 17 March 1944. PVT's Eugene Goodner, Joseph O'Hearn and 2LT Irving Wallace.)

William A. Dennison, 724th [AEG: FRED L. FULTON'S CREW]

I'm one of the errant 350, I have no excuse except I'm lazy. I'm in wonderful health and will be 78 my next birthday.

I was a member of the 724th Squadron. I was the Engineer Gunner on Lt. Fred Fulton's crew. We had been transferred from the 484th Group while it was still in North Africa. We flew our first mission on 15 April 1944. On 10 May 1944, over Weiner Neustadt, Austria, a shell exploded in our left wing. It took out the cables, pulleys and crossrig to our ailerons, leaving us with no aileron control. We had other damage besides. When we got back near home, 7 of us bailed out. Lt. Fulton landed the airplane with no problem. We flew the Ploesti mission on 31 May 1944 in "WINDY CITY." I found the info about the picture very interesting

(Editor ...

Mabel Cummins, 60th Air Service Squadron [Wife of the late Ernie Cummins]

Your very welcome letter is greatly appreciated. Ernie's greatest interest was the 451st Bombardment Group, along with the 60th Air Service Squadron, which he collected members and planned reunions.

When we learned about the 451st reunions, we started attending; The friendships, the quality programs, the interesting locations held, plus the famous Ad-Libs, all gave us much enjoyment.

I would like to stay a member of your great organization that you, Bob, have made. You have given a great deal of enjoyment to many.

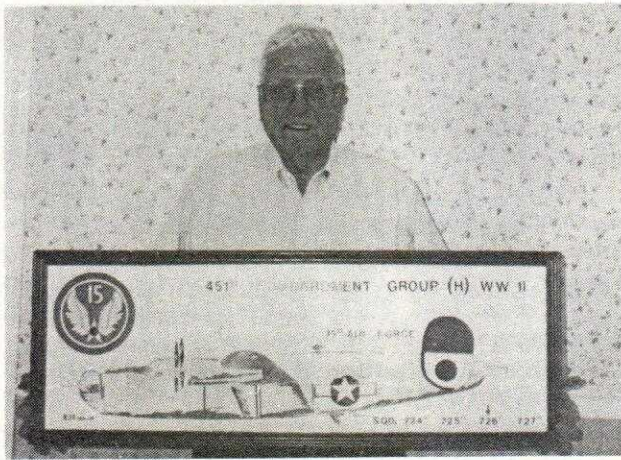
(Editor ... Thanks Mabel for your kind response to my letter of bereavement, posted just after being notified of Ernie's passing. Although I did not include your total

reply in this format, I think I got across the crux of your message to our members. Ernie will be remembered and missed, but through his memoirs, his spirit will remain.)

Rene Dorval, 726th [ARMAMENT SECTION]

Don't think that because I have never been to a convention that I never think about the 451st Bomb Group. Because I think about the outfit quite often. I just don't drive outside my hometown of Gardner, Mass. To prove that I think about the 15th AAF and the 451st, I am enclosing a snapshot of what I made for myself. The picture of the B-24, "Minnesota Mauler." I drew and framed it myself. I was on the Ground Crew of the 726th Bomb Squadron. I was in the Armament Section. Give my best to all those of the 451st Bombardment Group (H), WW-II.

(Editor ... So noted, Sergeant Dorval)



FOR THE ASTUTE INTERNET BUFF

Picture yourself back in the 451st Bomb Group, flying your B-24 into a hotly contested piece of air-space. The target: The enemy's oil refinery. Sounds familiar, doesn't it. Well, it's happening as you read this article. "Virtual Pilots" from around the world are "flying" online at <http://www.icentral.com/warbirds>. This Internet combat flight simulator allows up to 200 people to simulate WW-II air combat online. Furthermore, it comes complete with flak, dogfights, voice communications and a recent addition: the 451st BG (web page: <http://451bg.tripod.com>). We are in need of "Virtual Pilots" to fill our rolls! If you are looking for fun, intense time .. Check us out!

Editor ... This previous bit of information came to me via, Chris Pollard, Webmaster for the Hey Moe (725th) web page - http://members.tripod.com/hey_moe/index.html. This site is dedicated to the Harvey Brown, Copilot on the Trumper Crew that flew the "Hey Moe" in combat.

Another web page that may interest you is the site set up by its Webmaster, Chris Rink (726th) - son of Wesley Rink, Copilot on "Old Taylor." Its 'call letters' are; <http://www.b-24.com/>

Several other sites (not specifically 451st oriented)

B-24 Guestbook

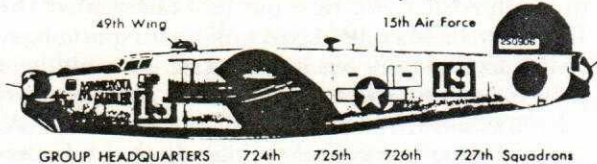
<http://cheshire-cat.mach3ww.com/b24/gb/>

B-24 Web Board

<http://cheshire-cat.mach3ww.com/cgi-bin/freethreads/freethreads.pl?action=list&board=b24>



FORMER MEMBERS OF THE
451ST Bombardment Group (H) WW II. LTD.



1032 South State Street
Marengo, Illinois 60152

FORWARDING POSTAGE GUARANTEED
Address Correction Requested



BULK RATE
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Permit No. 21