



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

Issue 43

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## 2008 REUNION IN THE WORKS

What say we try it again? This will be our 15th biennial reunion, and probably our last one.

Since we had our first reunion (1980) in the Chicago area, it's only fitting we have our final 'hurrah' back in the Chicago area -- back where it all began. In seeking out a fitting hotel, in which to house and entertain our guests, yours truly visited the Ramada Hotel site, where we had our first gathering and found out that it had been converted to a Holiday Express and had no where's near the facilities we had in the past, nor what we need now. Further exploration of the hotels near the Chicago O'Hare



DoubleTree Chicago - Arlington Heights Illinois

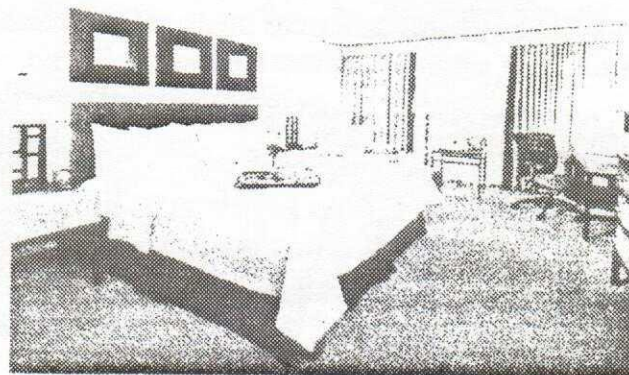
Field (for the benefit of our fly-in members) proved no better. Most, that offered shuttle service to and from the airport, had NO decent parking for those that were driving in. Plus, the closer to the airport, the costlier was the parking. Thus I was obligated to seek accommodations somewhat apart from the immediate (close-in) area of O'Hare Field and settled for the Double-

Tree Hotel in Arlington Heights, Illinois. It has all the amenities we have expected from our previous reunion locations: (e.g. Shuttle service, adequate (no cost) on-site parking (including Motor Homes), sufficient Ballroom area, nicely appointed rooms and an in-house restaurant and lounge.

At this time I'm working with the DoubleTree Staff in working out the details, and with other agencies in regards to any off-site excursions.

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Typical Guest Room At The DoubleTree



**"AD-LIB"**

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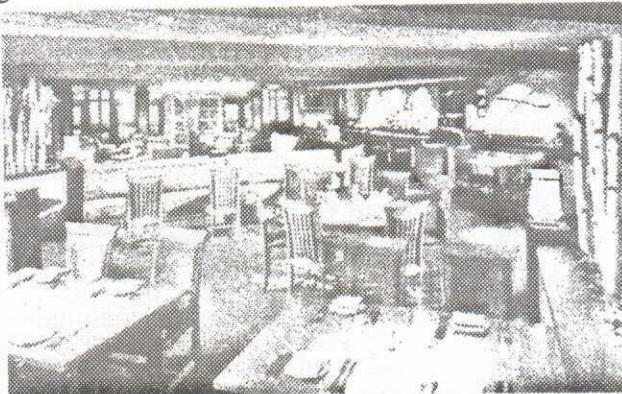
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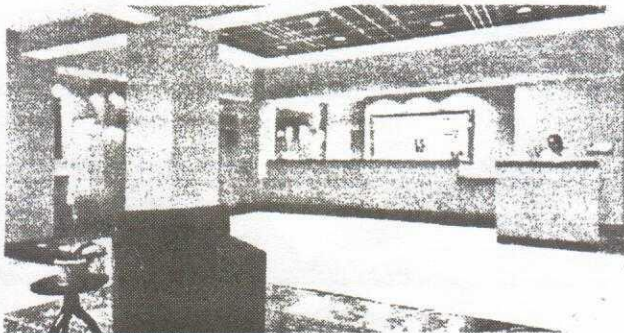
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Further information will be mailed from this office as our October 16, 17 & 18, 2008 reunion date approaches. So start packing your ol' barrack bags for this "LAST HURRAH!"



**Birch River Grill & Lounge**



**DoubleTree Registration & Lobby**

**REMEMBERING EASTER AS A  
'POW' IN GERMANY**

*(Editor ... Originally published in The Indianapolis Star on April 18, 1992 and now offered by Major James F. Thompson (Retired), 725th, for our use.)*

Easter Sunday, 1944, was an important day for me. I was a Second Lieutenant Army Air Corps bomber Copilot, flying a B-24 Liberator out of Italy, bombing targets in Germany, France, Austria and Italy.

After a few hair-raising missions, I was shot down by flak while over the target in the Brenner Pass. The whole crew bailed out over the Alps and, except for me, were captured as soon as they hit the ground.

I got into civilian clothes with the help of an Italian Priest and some schoolboys, and headed for the Swiss border on foot, by train and by bus, using my high school French lessons and my little English-Italian dictionary to communicate with the natives.

I traveled mostly on foot. Because of the too-small Italian shoes I was wearing - my flying boots having disappeared when my parachute opened - I had big blisters on each heel. They slowed me down, and I was captured by the Border Patrol five days after I last saw our airplane hit a mountain in an orange ball of flame.

After spending a few days in filthy Italian jails, I arrived in Verona, Italy, where the "Interrogation Center" was. My crew had all been through the center a few days before and, as 10 parachutes were counted, but only nine soldiers had been captured, it was no surprise to the Germans when I arrived.

**BERLIN AT EASTER**

Two German soldiers who were going back to Germany on leave were assigned to escort me to a prison camp in Pomerania on the Baltic Sea.

Early Easter Sunday, we arrived in Berlin on a train. Berlin had been the target of numerous Allied bombings, and looked it.

There were long delays between trains, so the three of us took a taxi to the home of one of the soldiers, where we spent Easter Sunday.

An air raid interrupted the noon meal, and we all went down to the air-raid shelter until the raid ended.

One of my escort guards was a young para-



trooper who carried a guitar. He played 'Stars and Stripes Forever' on the train, for my benefit, although it wasn't appreciated much by the other passengers.

That Easter dinner was the best meal I had had in two weeks, and it was the best I was to have until after the Russians liberated our camp and drove in a herd of cattle for the POWs to butcher.

### SWEATING AND WAITING

That evening, we again rode in a taxi to the train station and north to Stettin, then on to the Baltic coast, where I spent the next several months, first sweating out the invasion in June, then just waiting until the Russians approached our camp to liberate us.

My camp was Stalag Luft I. At the same camp were two other Hoosier bomber Pilots, Austin Rinne of Indianapolis and Charles Geyer of Fort

Wayne. There may have been more, but they are the only ones I happened to know.

A few months ago, William J. Weisner of Columbus wrote to 'The Star' about his Christmas memories of a POW camp. He reports he was also in Pomerania, in Stalag Luft IV. I enjoyed his description of Christmas in POW camp very much. At our camp, the scene was quite similar, and his story brought back many vivid memories.

Anyone who may be interested in the way American POWs lived while in Germany can see a special exhibit at the Air Force Museum at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in Dayton, Ohio. Many of the actual items the Kriegies (prisoners) made, from any available materials, such as tin cans, wooden bed slats and barbed wire, are there, along with photos taken at the time.

## RETURN TO THE AZORES

Each day I read the local paper for news of interest. One Sunday, last January my wife, Audrey, read to me a notice about a trip to the Azore Islands with the Nantucket Historical Association. I called early the next morning to be told that the trip was fully booked. I could be put on a waiting list and hope that someone might cancel.

The very next day, Tuesday, I got the call that we could join the group for the excursion to take place in June.

It had been 61 years since I stopped on the island of Terceira at Lajes Air Base after an eleven hour flight from Gander, Newfoundland. Our aircraft was a B-24J with two 400 gallon bomb bay tanks and a ten man crew with all the luggage and supplies. Two B-17's, with crews, were to arrive and land at about the same time. The weather on the trip was unpleasant. We were fortunate to have made it safely. The next problem was to land, since



Dave Eagles and Friend Looking Northwest, Off The High Ground, Towards Lajes Airbase

By: David Eagles

the airport was socked-in!

The tower at Lajes directed us to fly out at 130° to the southeast for five minutes, do a 180°, then, turn and come back in on 310°. On our return our Navigator, Bob Ashba, had us increase the course to 315°. The two B-17s executed only to the 310° and were flying at a lower altitude. We

broke thru the cloud cover, saw the field and landed safely. The two B-17s crashed into the low hills and all were lost.

One of my main objectives in returning to the Azores was to view the airfield and surrounding terrain. The second was to visit the Base and find out some history and facts of the incidents that happened on August 9, 1944.

On June 2, 2006 we departed from Logan International Airport at 10:15 PM, via SATA flight #220 for the San Miguel Island.

It was an uneventful flight and as we ap-



proached the archipelago we were greeted by a beautiful sunrise. We landed at 7:15 AM at Ponta Delgada. After clearance through customs we were taken by bus to the Hotel Marina Atlantico, which was very modern and very clean. For the next three days we toured the island, visiting forts, churches, historic buildings, whaling stations and museums. On one day we went to Sete Cidades, area of the twin lakes, the clear Lagoa Verde (green lake) and the deep Lagoa Azul (blue lake). We visited Furnas, a valley on the eastern part of a huge crater. The Azores were formed eons ago from volcanic eruptions.

On June 6th we flew to Faial, called the blue island for its different hues that decorate the houses. We stayed in a hotel which was formerly an old fort in Horta. Horta is a favorite spot for yachts crossing the Atlantic. There we visited the Scrimshaw Museum and Henrique Square, a tribute to Henry the Navigator. It was here that I would have liked to have placed a plaque to our Navigator, Bob Ashba, for his deed on August 9, 1944.

During the 1800's whaling ships from Nantucket and other U.S. east coast communities stopped in the Azores for supplies and to round out their crews. It was because of this connection that whaling became the industry in the Azores.

The Germans operated whaling ships during WW-II. They would load their vessels with whale oil transporting it under a neutral flag until they reached German waters where they would hoist a

German flag. All's fair in love and war!!

From Horta we took a ferry to Pico. There are winerys there and grapes are grown on the grounds, amid a maze of volcanic rocks for heat. Pickers work on their hands and knees. One of the products of these vines is known as "Verdelho do Pico," a superb aperitif.

On June 10th it was off to Terceira. We landed at Lajes International Airport. The runways are shared by the U.S. Air Force and the Portuguese Aeronautical Military Command. We stayed at the Angra Garden Hotel in Angra do Heroismo. It was again a very modern and comfortable facility. Our tour director was able to arrange for us to be taken to Lajes early on the morning we were to fly home. We hoped to meet with the Air Force Public Relations Officer to learn about the events of August 9, 1944. The person who was in charge of historical records had recently been discharged and it would be two months before the records would be available. However, a young man, Lt. Mikel Hyland gave us a tour of the Base, which is very extensive. The Portuguese military are completely separated from the U.S. residents. Much of the Base is off-limits to civilians.

I was able to visualize the approaches we used in 1944 and know why the other planes crashed into the hills. It all happened so long ago!!!

Note: Lajes Air Base is the second busiest fuel stop for the U.S. Air Force in the world.

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## PUPTENT POETRY

### TRIBUTE

Far out in the Mediterranean  
Many miles from either shore,  
There's a bomber crew that's sleeping  
'Neath the mighty water's roar;  
No mounds of clay are heaped up o'er them,  
No poppies grow 'round their graves  
But there's a mound for every flyer,  
In the vastness of the waves.

### SUPPLY

I drew a jacket yesterday  
And still am throwing tags away;  
When I am sure de-tagging's done,  
I'm bound to find another one.  
I worked last night 'til very late;  
Detected, pried off twenty-eight.  
There's something tickling at my spine:  
B'Gad, I'll bet it's twenty-nine.



## MY OVERSEAS TOUR (Concluding Chapter)



Shimanski Crew

BY: Clyde W. Phifer

**March 1, 1945**

Got paid \$70.10. I am still a Corporal.

**March 4, 1945**

Mission # EIGHT Date: March 4, 1945 Pilot: Shimanski Plane number: 54 Target: Graz Marshalling Yards, Austria Take off time: 8:15 am Time of landing: 3:30 PM Bomb Load: Eight 500 lb R.D.X. Bombs Visibility over target: Hazy at target Altitude: 26,500 feet Temperature: -45 degrees C. Enemy Fighters: 40 expected Enemy Flak: 27 guns expected

Joe saw eight puffs of flak. I saw none. Good mission, Very cold all day. All crew flew except Ted and Todd.

**March 8, 1945**

Mission # NINE Date: March 8, 1945 Pilot: Shimanski Plane number: 53 "PATCHED" Target: Hegyeshalom Marshalling Yards, Hungary Take off time: 7:55 am Time of landing: 2:45 PM Bomb Load: Eight 500 lb bombs Visibility over target: Clear Altitude: 21,000 feet Temperature: -33 degrees C. Enemy fighters: None Enemy flak: None

65th mission for "Patches." No flak, no fighters. Hit bad propwash while we were rendezvousing over the Adriatic Sea. Another group flew in front of us at our altitude. When we hit their propwash we did a 100 degree bank to the left and swept across the formation, barely missing two other ships - then nosed almost straight down - then pulled out. A perfect job by Ed and Art. I thank God they were our pilots. I was sitting in the Nose Turret watching the Adriatic Sea coming up fast and my blood was forced to my feet by the "G" force when we pulled

out. We had a full load of bombs and fuel. Ed and Art said they both had their feet on the instrument panel and pulled on the control column with all their might.

**March 9, 1945**

Just took it easy. Went to a show and saw Eddie Cantor in "Show Business."

**March 10, 1945**

Stand down. Ship #50

**March 12, 1945**

Mission # TEN Date: March 12, 1945 Pilot: Shimanski Plane number: 55 Target: Vienna Oil Refineries, Austria Take off time: 9:05 am Time of landing: 2:45 PM Bomb Load: Eight 500 lb bombs Visibility over target: 10-10 over target Temperature: -38 degrees C. Enemy Fighters: 40-50 (Few sighted) Enemy Flak: 325 guns.

Lots of flak, but off to the left and in front. A P-51 shot down an enemy fighter plane right over the target. I had two ME-262 Jet fighters in my gun sights, but I saw a P-51 coming down from my left and I held my fire. The P-51 shot them down right under us.

**March 14, 1945**

Mission # ELEVEN Date: March 14, 1945 Pilot: Shimanski Plane number: 55 Target: Weiner Neustadt Marshalling Yards, Austria. Take off time: 8:45 am Time of landing: 2:45 PM Bomb Load: Eight 500 lb bombs Visibility over target: 10-10 Cover at target Altitude: 20,000 feet Temperature: -30 degrees C. Enemy Fighters: 40 to 50 Enemy Flak: None

Jerry saw two puffs of flak. I saw a streak of blue smoke real close to the left side of nose. It just shot up and out of sight. Something like a red flare seemed to come out of a load of bombs in front of us. It left a red streak.

**March 16, 1945**

Mission # TWELVE Date: March 16, 1945 Pilot: Shimanski Plane number: 47 Target: Moosbierbaum Oil Refineries, Austria Take off time: 10:30 am Time of landing: 6:30 PM Bomb Load: Eight 500 lb bombs Visibility over target: Hazy at target



Altitude: 24,000 feet Temperature: -38 degrees C.

Enemy fighters: 40 to 50 Enemy flak: 90 guns

Lots of flak and accurate. I felt a hit, jarring the whole ship. Number one engine leaking oil and smoking. We were in flak for about two minutes. No one hurt. Hazy smoke screen at target. We had some holes in ship.

#### **March 17, 1945**

We went to Group Headquarters to be awarded an Air Medal. Partially, I got it for bailing out in enemy territory, but they give it anyway for the first five missions and a cluster for each ten after that.

When I came back from MIA all the other guys were Buck Sergeants and the Colonel said that all Sergeant ratings were full. So I am still a Corporal. I was listed as Staff Sergeant on the list for awards. Pete is a Staff Sergeant and was listed as Buck Sergeant. I stood up with all the Staff Sergeants and Pete stood back with the Sergeants and Corporals. Oh well, this is the Army.

#### **March 18, 1945**

Scheduled in ship number 1, but had a stand down. Then scheduled for a gunnery mission in ship number 48 at 1:00 PM Also a stand down. Two in one day.

#### **March 20, 1945**

Mission # THIRTEEN Date: March 20, 1945 Pilot: Shimanski Plane number: 47 Target: Wels Marshalling Yards, Austria Take off time: 8:48 am Time of landing 3:30 PM Bomb Load: Forty 100 lb Demolition bombs Visibility over target: Clear over target Altitude: 19,000 feet Temperature: -22 degrees C. Enemy Fighters: 40 to 50 Enemy Flak: None

Two bombs collided and blew up over target. Saw flak on the way home, but it was not very close.

#### **March 24, 1945**

Mission # FOURTEEN Date: March 24, 1945 Pilot: Shimanski Plane number: 66 Target: Buedjovice Marshalling Yards, Czechoslovakia Take off time: 7:15, 7:45 & 8:30 am Time of landing: 2:55 PM Bomb Load: Forty 100 lb demolition bombs Visibility over target: Clear over target Altitude: 19,000 feet Temperature: -22 degrees C. Enemy Fighters: 40 to 50 Enemy Flak: None

Air speed indicator problem. I had a Consolidated Tail turret in the nose. NO GOOD!!! Just very glad we had no enemy fighters around. The

turret operation was jerky, not smooth at all.

#### **March 26, 1945**

One year in the Army. Joe and I went to Foggia. I got Bobbie a necklace and bracelet, along with a jewelry box. I bought a hand made guitar for \$30. Joe bought an accordion.

#### **March 26, 1945**

Todd, Pete and Jerry flew a mission. Todd and Jerry were in #53, "Patches." They were short of gas on landing. #1 and #2 engines cut out on final approach. Lucky they had a good pilot. The plane hit the dirt alongside the steel mat runway. The Pilot pulled the nose up high and dragged the tail to stop. When he got out of the plane I heard him say, "I have never said so many 'Hail Mary's' in all my life."

#### **March 31, 1945**

I bought a pipe at the P.X. It is pretty good. Bobbie always wanted me to smoke a pipe. So maybe she will like this one, I do anyway. I sure am lonesome to see my girls. Maybe I will soon.

#### **April 1, 1945**

Mission # FIFTEEN Date: April 1, 1945 Pilot: Smimanski Plane number: 52 Target: Bruck & Klagenfurt Marshalling Yards, Austria Take off time: 12:05 PM Time of landing: 6:30 PM Bomb Load: Eight 500 lb bombs Visibility over target: 10-10 coverage at target Altitude: 23,000 feet Temperature: -32 degrees C. Enemy Fighters: 40 to 50 Enemy Flak: 30 guns

We pulled an April fools joke on the Germans. We flew all over southern Austria with eight 500 lb bombs and didn't drop them. Some flak at both targets. One hole in ship in right vertical stabilizer. Targets too small to be picked up by I.F.F. Did not drop bombs.

#### **April 2 & 3, 1945**

Ground school all day, both days.

#### **April 4, 1945**

Luke built a cabinet. I put a light over the one that Pete built the other day. It is a nice place to write.

#### **April 7, 1945**

Took off at 12:00 noon in ship #55 to bomb Bressanone railroad bridge in northern Italy. Bad weather and had to turn back. Landed at 5:20 PM No mission credit.

#### **April 8, 1945 Sunday**

Played volley ball. Went to a U.S.O. show and



wrote two letters to Bobbie. We are scheduled for ship #52, "PATCHES," again tomorrow.

#### April 9, 1945

Mission # SIXTEEN Date: April 9, 1945 Pilot: Shimanski Plane number: 53 PATCHES Target: Area Apple Ground Support, Italy Take off time: 12:30 PM Time of Landing: 5:15 PM Bomb Load: 120 Fragmentation bombs, six in a cluster. Visibility over target: Clear Altitude: Clear Enemy Fighters: Always possible Enemy Flak: Some expected  
79th mission for PATCHES. Mission was of utmost secrecy. It was in direct support of the British 8th Army drive. The I.P. was marked by smoke screens in line from beach to target. Large white "T's" all along the front lines, some two miles ahead of it. Friendly flak all along our front lines at 15,000 feet. Red neon signs, large fires and yellow smoke screens. All so we won't miss the target. After bombs away, I saw several flashes of artillery fire. I guess they really started advancing, as we were the last bombers over the target. Enemy flak was inaccurate at target. No fighters.

#### April 10, 1945

Mission # SEVENTEENTH Date: April 10, 1945 Pilot: Shimanski Plane number: 53 "PATCHES" Target: Area Baker Ground Support, Italy Take off time: 9:42 am Time of landing: 2:30 PM Bomb Load: 120 Fragmentation Bombs Visibility over target: Clear Altitude: 20,000 feet Temperature: -25 degrees C. Enemy Fighters: Unknown Enemy Flak: Possible

80th Mission for "PATCHES." Same crew, same plane and the same mission as yesterday. As we were rendezvousing I saw a lot of C-47s in formation. I think they were paratroopers, and by now they are probably on the ground and really going to town. I hope we helped them a lot. The war is looking good. Maybe I will be back with Bobbie and Clyrene, and with my other loved ones soon.

#### April 19, 1945

Mission # EIGHTEEN Date: April 19, 1945 Pilot: Shimanski Plane number: 45 Target: Avisio Railroad Bridge, Italy Take off time: 7:15 am Time of landing: 2:15 PM Bomb Load: Eight 500 lb bombs, plus leaflets Visibility over target: Clear Altitude: 24,000 feet Temperature: -25 degrees C. Enemy Fighters: 40 to 50 Enemy Flak: 22

Flak heavy, accurate at altitude, but off to each side and in front. A Colonel from the 49th Wing

Headquarters (an Air Inspector) rode with us as an Observer. He brought along a thermos of coffee. When he opened it there was coffee all over the cockpit. It froze as soon as it hit. He didn't get to drink any of it. He seemed like a swell guy.

#### April 22, 1945

I got a nice notebook from Bobbie the other day. I have been writing in it all day. I had notes made of all of this. I just copied it down the last couple of days. The wind is blowing like the devil today. Just like in Mew Mexico. I just heard that the Russians are in Berlin. "Buono!!" It also made us happy when they took Vienna, Austria. It had a minimum of 375 flak guns.

#### April 23, 1945

I had guard duty this morning from 2:00 am until 6:00 am. I slept until noon. Got a package from Mother today. Pete and Luke flew today in Ship #54. They saw a lot of German truck convoys moving north. Allied planes strafing, and a lot of artillery fire at our front lines. They had a lot of flak at the target.

#### April 24, 1945

Ed, Art, Luke, Joe and I flew this morning. A test hop in ship #49. I got about 30 minutes stick time. Then Art got up and left me alone in there and Joe sat down in the pilot's seat and both of us flew for a few minutes. Then I got up and left Joe there all alone. Then Ed sat down in the copilot's seat and Joe flew a little. Then Joe got up and Luke flew some. I really enjoyed it.

Queenie had two puppies on the 21st of April. One died on the 22nd. We went to gunnery class this afternoon, then we had a lecture that night.

#### April 25, 1945

We went to a lecture at Group Headquarters this morning. Flew a gunnery mission in ship #45 this afternoon.

#### April 26, 1945

Mission # NINETEEN Date: April 26, 1945 Pilot: Shimanski Plane number: 47 "SAD SACK" Target: Sachsenburg Marshalling Yard, Austria Take off time: 7:25 am Time of landing: 2:10 PM Bomb Load: Nineteen 250 lb bombs, plus leaflets Visibility over target: Clear Altitude: 21,000 feet Temperature: -28 degrees C. Enemy Fighters: 50 to 60 Enemy Flak: None

Our primary target was a munitions dump, but had 10-10 cloud coverage over target. Instead we



hit the rail yards good at our alternate target. Saw the bombs, from the flight ahead of us, strike the target. They hit the side of a hill and walked right through a small town, including the rail yards. The target elevation was 5,000 feet. We bombed from 21,000, so we were only 16,000 feet from the ground.

#### **April 27, 1945**

Saw a show at the 725th Squadron .. "Maisy Goes To Reno."

#### **April 29, 1945**

Went to G.I. movie at the 725th Squadron tonight. We just heard that Italian Patriots shot Benito Mussolini and some other Fascist.

#### **April 30, 1945**

There was a small fire in the 726th Mess hall at noon today. They put it out with carbon tetrachloride. It smelled so bad that we ate in our tent.

Went to gunnery class at Group Headquarters from 3:00 PM until 5:00 PM

There was a friendly argument tonight on what to name "Queenie's" pup. Luke, Pete and Todd say, "Prop Wash." Joe, Jerry and I say, "We don't know, yet."

#### **May 1, 1945**

Went to an Ordinance lecture at Group Headquarters today. It was really good. I learned more about bombs and fuses today than I had ever known. It was really interesting. We go on guard duty tonight from 10:00 PM until 2:00 am. We had a black out last night, but we didn't know it until tonight. The lights went out, but we just thought it was 'as usual.' The power goes off all the time for short and long periods. We expect it.

#### **May 2, 1945**

Slept until 10:30 am. Mussolini death confirmed. Hitler died in Berlin. We are restricted to Base, today and tomorrow. Hitler was 56. His birthday was in April. Hitler was succeeded by "Grand Admiral Doenitz." No details of Hitler's death given yet.

#### **March 3, 1945**

Just read in the Stars and Stripes that an unconditional surrender by all of Northern Italy and was signed by a German Lieutenant Colonel, a representative of German General Von Viebinghoff and a German Major representing S.S. Commander General Wolff. It was accepted by Lieutenant General W.D. Morgan, Chief of Staff of A.F.H.G.. He

signed as the representative of Supreme Allied Commander, Field Marshal Sir Harold Alexander. Just took it easy all day.

#### **May 4, 1945**

We went to ground school all day.

#### **May 5, 1945**

Joe, Todd and I went to Foggia. Bought a few things for souvenirs. We boiled some eggs in the tent. They were pretty good.

#### **May 6, 1945**

We took it easy again today. We are leaving tomorrow for Rest Camp. "The Isle of Capri." Bill is leaving for the USA this Thursday (Lucky Boy). We all think we will be going in a few weeks, or probably in a few days. But who knows. We might go to the Pacific.

#### **May 7, 1945**

We took off for Capri in ship #29, a 725th Squadron ship. The B-24 was packed with too many guys. We were even standing in the bomb bay area. The ship was really overloaded. When we landed at Naples, I was standing in the bomb bay and the doors were open about four inches. I was looking at the ground, then saw the runway, and we just kept going on and on until I was dirt and grass. We finally touched down. We stopped just a few feet from a large ditch. We would all have been killed for sure if we had not stopped when we did. The young pilot was pale and trembling when we all got out. I overheard him say that he had not wanted to take off with such an overloaded plane. That was close.

We ate dinner (lunch) in Naples. We were taken to Capri on a boat. Just off shore from Naples they announced the unconditional surrender of Germany. V.E. Day at last !!!

On Capri we stayed in room #10 at the Windsor Hotel. It had a large French window overlooking the harbor and the town of Capri. A very beautiful view. We ate at the La Palma Hotel. We ate breakfast in the inside dining room and lunch and dinner on the terrace. It was really nice to have the waiter serve us. We were served in big style. Appetizers, soup, the main course, then dessert. But the chow wasn't that good. There were roving musicians playing tunes like "Lily Marlene," and other popular songs all over the dining areas.

#### **May 8, 1945**

After chow we went for a row boat ride half



way around the Island and saw the "Blue Grotto." It was really a beautiful thing to see. It was a large cave with a small entrance. We had to almost lay down in the boat to get into the cave. The light had to come up through the water under the rock entry arch. It made the white rock walls and ceiling of the cave a beautiful blue. The Italians call it "Grotto Azzurro," meaning the Blue Arch. The water in the cave was about 150 feet deep, with fish swimming all around. When they were between you and the light, they were black silhouettes. And when they were on the other side of the boat, they looked silvery blue. There were various kinds of crawling creatures on the ceiling and walls. The more our eyes became adjusted to the low light, the more beautiful everything became. The creatures on the ceiling and walls were every color you could imagine. I think we stayed in there about an hour.

After lunch we went to Anna Capri, which is another town on the island. There we saw an old church, "The San Michael." It is very old. The floor is made of tiles, which are put together like a jigsaw puzzle to form one big picture. It was remarkable because each piece was painted and baked separately. Some of the pieces came out lighter and some darker after being baked. Then we went to a villa that was built in the 1850s. The pillars and statues were as old as 23 AD. Then we saw another old church, or a kind of study for Bishops.

It would have been just too perfect if Bobbie could have been along. After dinner, Todd, Jerry and I saw the movie, "Keys of the Kingdom." Capri is a wonderful place, but it makes me so blue for Bobbie.

#### **May 9, 1945**

Todd, Jerry and I went to the ruins of the castle of Tiberius. He was the Emperor of the Romans after Caesar. It is called the "Mosaeca" castle. Built over 2,000 years ago, the castle is supposed to have had over 400 rooms. All but a few are covered in dirt and sand. We saw two floors of bath rooms, two floors of guest rooms, large dining room, library, sun dial for telling time, and four large cisterns. They were very large stone lined rooms. When one got full it overflowed into the next, and so on. We also saw where Tiberius had his wives bathe in donkey milk. It was said when he got tired of one he threw her over a 325 foot cliff. We saw that cliff. It had large rocks at the bottom where all

the wives met their demise. They said he tried to throw them out to sea. When one was gone, he would select another one from all over Italy.

After lunch we laid in the sun in our shorts and later played ping pong.

#### **May 10, 1945**

Just looked around and went to two nice Red Cross buildings here. One is a nice home that someone turned over to the Red Cross for us to enjoy. It is white trimmed in green. It is a very nice place. The other one is a Villa that was turned over to the American Red Cross. It is nice too, but I liked the Valentino Club better than the Terrace Club. I would like to stay here forever, if I just had Bobbie and Clyrene with me.

#### **May 11, 12 & 13, 1945**

Just walked around and enjoyed the two Red Cross places.

#### **May 14, 1945**

We got up at 7:30 am. Packed up and ate breakfast. We rode the "Funicular" trolley down to the pier and got on the boat. Ate lunch in Naples. Walked around a little and then got on a truck and went to the air base. Waited until after 5:00 PM for the plane to take off. Got to our 725th Squadron about 7:00 PM. Ate cold chow (out of a mess kit BAH!!!). I got several letters.

#### **May 15, 1945**

Got PX rations. Heard that we are going to fly home in a few days. Boy Oh Boy!! Went to Group Headquarters tonight and got all my records fixed up. Boy! Just think!! I will have my wife and baby in my arms in a few days.

#### **May 16, 1945**

I laid out in the sun for a little while. I guess Bobbie will have a good tan and I will be white as a lily. We go on guard duty tonight from 2:00 am until 6:00 am. Went to a show at the 725th Squadron. Saw "Flame of Barbary Coast," with John Wayne. Todd and I said that we would try to go to Graumans Chinese Theater in Hollywood, three weeks from tonight at 8:15 PM I hope we can.

#### **May 17, 1945**

Got all of our Air Corps supply today and I got my Form 205 checked. I have 19 missions and 137 hours and 50 minutes combat time. Heard today that we would probably leave Sunday. I'm sure Bobbie will wonder why I'm writing with "Free" mail stamping. The Mail Room stopped selling Air



Mail stamps and I ran out. Everyone is just about ready to pull out.

**May 18, 1945**

Had detail at Supply, sorting lumber, hauling, and building boxes to pack things in.

**May 19, 1945**

We will be briefed tomorrow at 9:00 am. I packed all my things today. I am ready to go and am very anxious.

**May 20, 1945**

Wind blew and dust flew and my hay fever is giving me hell. We went to briefing this morning. We leave in three or four days. We turn in our overcoats tomorrow.

**May 21, 1945**

Heard today that half the crews leave Wednesday and the rest on Thursday (23rd & 24th). All Italians leave the Base by tonight. GIs will pull K.P. and all other details from now on. The whole Group will be gone in less than two weeks, we think. It seems that we will never get started. I want to see my wife and baby, and all my loved ones.

**May 22, 1945**

Darned wind and sand really blew and my hay fever is getting worse. I'll really be glad to get out of here. We should leave any day now.

**May 23, 1945**

We tore our tent down today and moved into the parachute building. Queenie ate so many rats her sides stuck out like they did when she was pregnant. There were a lot of them under our floor boards. I haven't said much about Queenie until now. She was a very intelligent dog about 10 inches high with short light brown hair. She loved to chew gum. She would just lie there chewing like a human and stretch it out with her front paws from her mouth. She was very independent. She would choose one of us that she wanted to be with and ignore the rest, even if we called her. She was our dog, or rather she adopted us and would have nothing to do with any other crews. Joe, Jerry and I to go on guard duty from 5:00 PM until midnight.

**May 24, 1945**

We dodged detail all day today. Took some things out to the ship. It is ship #52. Pretty nice condition. Wind and sand still at it. I typed some letters last night.

**May 25, 1945**

Policed the area this afternoon (walked around

picking up trash, etc.). This place sure looks barren with all the tents torn down. After supper the whole Squadron of Enlisted Men policed the area some more and moved several big lumber piles in back of Supply.

**May 26, 1945**

All ground personnel took off in trucks at about 10:30 am, along with crews that were destined to sail to the US. We leave tomorrow about noon for Gioia, Italy. The boat for the ground crews is waiting in Naples, Italy for them. They should be home soon. We eat at 725th Squadron Mess Hall. We ate lunch there today and it was pretty good. Lucas is on K.P. this afternoon, and Pete goes on in the morning. The dust has blown like the devil here all day. It is 5:30 PM now and it is still at it. Gosh this place is deserted. Well, this is our last night in the Squadron and I'm not a bit sorry. I am really anxious to get started on my way home. I can hardly wait to get my wife and baby in my arms. I hope neither of us find any changes in each other, unless it's for the better. I don't think I have changed, but I don't suppose I could tell if I had.

**May 27, 1945**

We were supposed to take off at 1:30 PM, but we took off at 10:30 am. Queenie followed us to the plane and tried to get aboard. She had never tired this before. She was standing behind the plane in the wind and dust when we taxied out. It was very sad. We got to Gioia, Italy about 11:00 am. Ate and took showers. Then we got the surprise of our lives. Normally crews are here about three days. We processed this afternoon and are ready to leave in the morning. The ship is loaded and ready. The guys that came down yesterday are not processed yet and are they mad. But for us it's "BUONO."

We were sitting in a big conference hall, maybe about 100 or 200 men listening to lectures, when we heard some guys calling "Queenie." They were trying to get her to come to them. She found us and jumped in our laps and was so happy. She just went from one of us to another. She spent the night with us, then in the morning we had to leave her again. The last time I saw Queenie she was behind the ship as we taxied out, with the wind from the props blowing sand and dust all over her. I'm not ashamed to say that I cried.

**May 28, 1945**

Left Gioia, Italy at 8:30 am and arrived in Mar-



rakech, West Africa at 6:30 PM 10 hour non-stop is a mighty long hop. Longer than any of our missions. We went to Mess Hall and ate in trays, first time in over five months. Then took a good cold shower. Right now I am sitting on the wing of our ship #52 (44-48593). It had 44 combat missions and we had flown it once or twice. A nose gunner was blinded in the nose turret. The turret was torn up so bad by flak that it had to be replaced. Now there are patches all over it where it had been punctured by flak. It is now 8:30 PM in Italy, 7:30 PM here in Marrakech, 12:30 PM in New Mexico and 11:30 in California. Just think, I will be home in about a week. On the way over here we cane across Sicily, Tunisia, Algiers, Palermo and all the way across Africa.

#### May 29, 1945

Joe developed a rash and went to the dispensary. They put him in the hospital, so we are staying over one more day. The rest of the boys went to town. I volunteered to guard the ship, I want to see the good old U.S. of A. I am tired of being over here. I laid out in the sun all afternoon and I'm a bit red.

#### May 30, 1945

All Joe had were some mosquito bites - HA!! We left Marrakech about 8:30 am and landed about nine hours later in Senegal, French West Africa, about eight miles from Dakar, Mallard Field, Africa. I bought some souvenirs. We have two Master Sergeants; Neuton and Cumm riding with us as passengers to Trinidad.

#### May 31, 1945

We left Senegal at 8:45, Italian time, landed in Brazil about 2:00 PM, New York time. They made us taxi to an area away from other planes. We were not allowed to open any doors. It was very hot in the plane with everything closed up. It was only a

little while, but it seemed like a week, two men came up in a Jeep. They came in and sprayed everything in the plane, including each of us, thoroughly. When we got to our barracks we started out to the shower area and it started to rain real hard. The shower area was inside a high wall with no roof. We just soaped up and rinsed off in the hard rain. The rain stopped on the way back to the barracks. Very typical tropical weather. I bought some perfume (Channel #5), an alligator purse, some silk hose and a pair of boots for me.

#### June 4, 1945

We left Natal, Brazil and landed at Atkisson Field, British Guinea, South America. It rained about every ten minutes. A very tropical climate. Jungles all around the field. We crossed the Amazon river. It is really large. It is so wide it is almost like an ocean. We left the Master Sergeants there. They will be stationed there.

#### June 5, 1945

Took off from Atkission Field about 7:00 am. Landed about 3:00 PM at Broenquen Field, Puerto Rico.

About six weeks ago we wrote "USA by June 5" on the glass in the door of our tent. It looks like we missed it by a couple days, as we are still a couple days from home. It wasn't a bad guess though, since war was not over at that time.

#### June 6, 1945

At Borenquen Field we were the first plane to taxi out to take off, but our left wing tip hit the rudder of another plane on our way out to the strip. So they made us taxi back and we had to lay over another day.

#### June 7, 1945

We took off from Berenquen Field and landed in the good old USA, Hunter Field, Savannah, Georgia. .... **HOME AT LAST!!!**

---

## PUPTENT POETRY

### ORDERS

"At five AM we're taking off," The Colonel sternly said, So the Major sent the order down, "*At four we leave our bed.*"

Well, a Captain took no chances, because Captains never do,

And so he told the CQ "*Have the men get up at two.*"

At midnight the CQ woke us, And here we sadly sit, Because now it's almost noon, And we haven't flown out yet.



## ERNIE CUMMINS' 60th AIR SERVICE SQUADRON JOURNAL ( When The Hair Was Short And The Dollar Was Long )

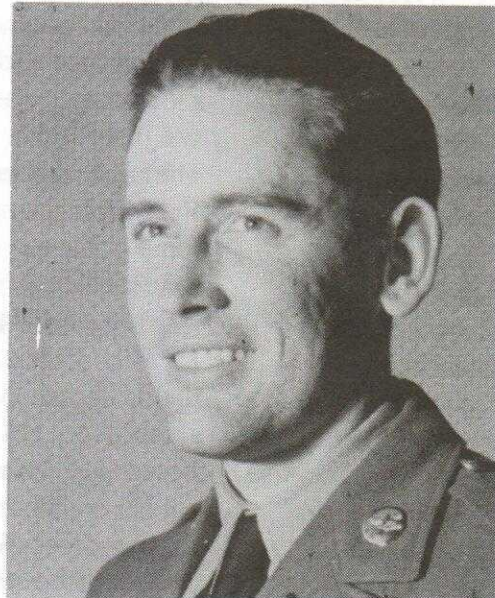
**11 May 1945 - Foggia, Italy  
(Uncensored)**

Dear Mabel: Well, well, it sure seems strange to write the name of a town on a letter again. Actually our airfield is miles away from the city, but we can look down on the plain and see the buildings off in the distance.

Well, things look pretty good, now the war is over. Today the Stars and Stripes came out with the "point" system for releasing men from the Army - sorry Peanut, I haven't enough to get out right now, but maybe the next best thing will happen to us. I know we are busy as beavers doing an old familiar job, and for once we enjoy this type of work. The 60th transportation department is keeping trucks on the road all the time, but we have a lot of new men driving. Some of them are replacements from Infantry outfits and they like this easy work, no matter what the hours. Compared to some of the similar tasks the old 60th has tackled, this should run off like clockwork.

The C.O. (Major Bivens) gave us all the dope a few days ago, as to future prospects. He told us several things we still can't write about, even though censorship is relaxed. So just be patient, baby, and take things easy. Thinking back to the travels of this outfit, we were pretty lucky. One man killed in a truck accident was our only loss. Of course there were the two fellows (Dave Martin and William Lewis) who were shot down over enemy territory last summer after transferring to flying jobs. All things considered, the 60th came through rather lucky.

A little while back a ship unloading ammo blew up in a port near here (Bari) and a couple of our boys escaped injury, even though they were right on the waterfront at the time. A year ago, in that same harbor (December 1943) a Jerry air raid raised particular hell, and again two of our drivers



**ERNEST R. CUMMINS**  
B. 25 December 1916 / D. 20 December 2000

came out of that mess uninjured.

Mabel, in case you don't yet know what Ernie has been doing the past year, (I know my hints have been vague) I have been running a wrecking truck. A big rig fitted with a crane and winches. The main job was clearing away crashed planes, but it was used for lifting anything too heavy to manhandling. Remember my reference to water tanks and roof rafters?

That three way crash that you took to mean three trucks tangling was anything but that. One plane with a flat tire blocked the landing strip, so

out I went with the crash rig to pull him off to the side. Meanwhile the other ships, anxious to land, started coming in and before I got the first one moved, another had chopped off its tail. The next one down came within an eyelash of piling into us headon, but the pilot thought fast and skidded sideways at the last moment. This maneuver saved a lot of lives, including mine I think, because all three of these aircraft were loaded with bombs and by colliding sideways his ship was broken completely in half. Nothing exploded and we worked the rest of the night taking care of the cripples. Two were repaired, one was salvaged.

**12 May 1945 - Foggia, Italy**

Dear Mabel: Goodie! The mail came through today with two of yours, one of Mom's, another from Aunt Mae along with a Time Magazine. Gosh, it is good to know the war is finished and soon I will be hearing your sweet voice real close beside me! Things are looking good these days. I'm really feeling spry and chipper. I guess it's what you could call anticipation. We done got hot rumors, something like the old days when we would grab an Atlas, only this time, instead of distance to the front lines, it's travel time to home we figure on!

I can tell you this much regarding my buddies -



Harold Crooks, Ray Brackney and Ernie Cummins will be the only old guys left in the motor pool. This is besides Robert Hanna (a dispatcher since Hamilton Field days). So the three musketeers are still together. Of course, Reuben and some other ex-drivers are still around, but they have been in other shops or departments.

Seems like I'm dreaming, planning trips to see our relatives, and such. But, I've got to have you to myself for a couple weeks, so even Mrs. Dewing will have a hard time finding her son. Before you jump with glee, remember toots, I have to get home first and all this will come later. I sure want to celebrate our anniversary in a way we've never had a chance to.

**18 May 1945 - "V" Mail - Foggia, Italy**

DEAR MABEL: SO YOU RECEIVED HAROLD'S LETTER AND ANSWERED SAME? I PICKED UP HIS MAIL TONIGHT ALONG WITH MINE, AND I HELD OUT ON HIM UNTIL I READ THE ONE HE WROTE TO YOU AND YOU FORWARDED TO ME. THE OLD GUY DID GET A KICK OUT OF IT! HE IS SITTING NEXT TO ME NOW, COMPLAINING BECAUSE YOU DIDN'T SIGN IT WITH "LOVE," JUST "SINCERELY."

HONEY, MY POINT SCORE IS 77, AND THAT ISN'T NEAR ENOUGH TO GET OUT. IT WILL PROBABLY TAKE OVER 100 FOR GUYS IN THE AIR FORCES.

WELL DARLING, THIS WEEK HAS BEEN A BUSY ONE. IN FACT I HAVE TO START OUT AGAIN EARLY IN THE MORNING. DON'T SEND ANY MORE LETTERS UNTIL I SEND YOU MY NEW ADDRESS, OR YOU SEE ME IN THE FLESH. I LOVE YOU PEANUT!

ERNIE

\*\*\*\*\* COMMENT \*\*\*\*\*

Recent replacements, who did not have enough "rotation points" to qualify for home leave were, transferred into other units and had to stay overseas to mop up the rear area and do clean-up work. At the barracks we used in Naples, within an old stone building high on a hill, we found wooden beds; no springs or mattresses, just a couple of blankets on a few planks. But in a happy mood, the old timers of the 60th didn't gripe much. Two nights were spent there and then trucks took us to the docks and we

skipped aboard a troopship. We were the first batch to board, and for a reason. The ship had been fitted and prepared to carry wounded and was rigged as a hospital ship with only two bunks stacked, white linens and pillows. thick mattresses and lots of space for doctors and nurses to tend patients. We changed all that.

As always we were assigned as a work detail. Squads of men stripped off the sheets and pillows, carried mattresses to the open deck and tossed them into an open hold, where other gangs stacked them below decks. Additional bunks were then hung between and above the two already on the stanchions. Twelve hours of hard labor and then other troops came on the ship. On the third day we were ready to leave port.

On the first night, before the main bunch of troops came onboard, I found a poker game in a deserted section of the lower decks. It was just by following the sound of clinking chips, I found the source. The players were all 60th men. I watched until one went broke, then I sat in with a twenty dollar stack of chips and another twenty in reserve. It took an hour of steady play to nurse that up to one hundred. Then a run of phenomenal luck, several times with cinches in stud hands, made the other guys fold more easily, and I bought some pots from hands that had me beaten. Our occupation Lira had been exchanged for "Gold Seal" U.S. currency, and the largest bills were of the \$10 denomination. When the game broke up, I fished all the loot out of my coverall pockets and made a count that totaled \$550. The first thing I did the next morning was to look up First Sgt. Wilson and hand him most of that sum with the instruction to hold it until we were ashore in the States.

Well, wouldn't you know it? My working days were still not over. Sgt Cummins became the head coffee maker in one of the two messes that fed the troops. Using two thirty gallon urns to brew the stuff, the two meals per day consumed at least 150 gallons. I even made some strong and some weak, to suit all tastes. An advantage was that, us the kitchen help got, was to eat with the ship's crews and their menu was superior to what the passengers got. They ate well, as the ship had lots of choice meats, fresh vegetables and ice cream; things we hadn't seen much of for years.

Out through the Strait of Gibraltar we steamed, on a due west course, life jackets left on bunks and



all lights burning brightly at night. Peacetime cruising at last.

**15 June 1945 - WESTERN UNION - 7:26**

**PM**

**CAMP PATRICK HENRY VIRGINIA**

MRS ERNEST CUMMINS 104 SAN FRANCISCO BLVD SAN ANSELMO CALIF ITS A LONG STRETCH FROM NO MANS LAND BACK TO YOU BUT I MADE IT WELL AND SAFE - SEE YOU SOON

LOVE ERNIE

(The above was a "pick the message by number" telegram sent from the debarkation center where we were waiting the making-up of troop trains an processing travel orders for 30 day "R & R leaves..)

\*\*\*\*\* COMMENT \*\*\*\*\*

A nine day crossing in good weather brought us to Newport News, VA, there the piers were hung with banners saying "**WELCOME HOME. BOYS.**" Right after debarking with our gear, we mustered at a hall, where the group was split into smaller units depending on where they were heading. The sifting was done according to what State we picked for our thirty day leave. Those going to California were lucky. In the Richmond rail yard the total number of sleeping cars, thirteen were dispatched for our use. All other destinations used day coaches. There was such a flood of traffic from east to west that we saw long strings of empty sleepers being dead-heading back to the Atlantic ports.

Before hitting the rails we all ate big steak dinners, drank quarts of milk, had melons, corn on the cob, salads and desserts and all sorts of other goodies. Enough to make a guy sick - almost. There was nothing remarkable about that trip, other than the men were in a "glow" most of the time. Either from

liquor or anticipation (or dread) of what they would find at home after three years absence. Gambling was down to a minimum, either because the experts had cornered the cash crossing the ocean, or more likely, now that the men were "close to the barn," they saw chances to spend their loot to better effects.

With fresh uniforms, cash pay and allowance in the pockets, and tickets on Greyhound bus to Marin County, Sgt Bezona and I left the crowded bus at Vallejo to hitch hike via the Black Point cut-off to San Rafael. A big black sedan picked us up, driven by the publisher of the San Rafael Independent, a daily newspaper where I had been employed ten years before. Mr. Brown went out of his way to deposit us at my mother's home. The next morning he had a girl phone for information to use in their "Servicemen" columns.

There we were back in the shadow of Mount Tamalpais, the same peak we had seen from the deck of the West Point as we left the Golden Gates some years before. We were home again.

*(Editorial Comment ... For whatever reason Ernie and his beloved Mabel parted company and were divorced in November of 1945. As Ernie concluded his journal: "As the purpose of these pages is to record the details of my Army life. The one fact of interest that makes the inclusion of all the letters possible was the reuniting of Ernie and Mabel in 1983." With the passing of Ernie in 2000 and Mabel in 2004 the ties with the Cummins family is now a part of our history. But it was not before Ernie wrote the 451st Bomb Group into his will and at the time of his death bequeath us \$5,000 to continue our cause. To Ernie, I offer a thank you and a well deserved hand salute!)*

## PUPTENT POETRY

I wonder if my comrades  
Now are walking through,  
New sky-paths of laughter,  
New sky-fields of blue.

If God reached down  
And raised them high  
(From crisply burning pyre)  
Gave the brave new wings.  
In freedom's breath to fly.

Or are their faces blackly twisted  
(Numb with death's rough grasp)  
Seeking still the swift release  
From pain-racked, last, great gasp?





# OUR DIMINISHING RANKS -- THEIR FINAL FLY-BY

## REPORTED SINCE OUR LAST NEWSLETTER

### Headquarters

Charles Chronopolis - 19 September 2006

Robert C. Kacena - 7 May 2007

### 724th Squadron

Alex M. Ballan - 20 May 2007

John Battaglia - 3 October 2006

Earl C. Bennett, Jr. - 2 October 1992

John H. Euwer, Jr - 21 December 2006

Stanley J. Groom - 21 January 2007

Richard H. Hayford - 29 January 2007

Stanley W. Jackson - 25 December 2006

Henry H. Jenkins - 17 February 2001

Willard B. Rogers - 6 January 2007

Elmer G. Snyder - 11 January 2007

Walter E. Thorne - 26 May 1991

Carl O. Winterhalder - 12 November 2006

### 725th Squadron

Joseph F. Arsenault - 9 November 2007

Charles L. Barduca - 14 March 2006

George R. Boege - 4 March 2007

Robert H. Cass - 27 June 1991

Fred W. Flickinger - 14 March 2002

John A. Foster - 31 May 2006

Robert E. McVicker - Date Unknown

Edward M. Shirk - 19 January 2007

Harold L. Stone - 6 November 2006

Robert T. Suvada - June 2007

A. Jay Woods - 12 October 2005

### 726th Squadron

Rosser I. Bodycomb - 27 September 2002

Larry O. Broadwater - 4 March 2007

Joseph A. Cancila - 28 July 2007

Harold E. Jasper - 6 June 2007

Harry A. Kelly - 3 June 2007

Millard E. Mulry - 8 January 2007

Harold C. Schauer - 12 October 2006

Burton Schilling - 2 July 2007

### 727th Squadron

William T. Adams - 30 January 2007

Glen D. Blythe - 28 December 1996

Robert D. Phillippi - 15 July 2001

Martine H. Stansberry - 3 September 2006

Benjamin M. Tingelhoff - 5 July 2007

Terry G. Tomberlin, Sr. - 28 March 2007

Richard A. Turnbull - 11 January 2007

John J. Whitworth - 29 November 2006

## SPECIAL MEMORIAL TRIBUTE OFFERED IN THE NAME OF:

**Joseph F. Arsenault**, 725th - From Wife, Joan  
**Earnest W. Atkins**, 727th - From Crewmate,  
Winson "Big" Jones

**Robert E. Barnd**, 726th - From Wife, Marion

**James E. Burns**, 727th - From Crewmate,  
Winson "Big" Jones

**Albert Burrell**, 726th - From Comrade,  
Achilles Kozakis

**Joseph A. Cancila**, 726th - From Comrade,  
Achilles Kozakis

**Robert H. Casavant**, HDQ - From Wife, Alice  
**Charles Chronopolis** (aka Cronis), HDQ -  
From Comrade, Achilles Kozakis

**John A. Foster**, 725th - From Friend, Robert  
Painter

**Harold A. Ginsberg**, 726th - From Friend,  
Achilles Kozakis

**Harold A. Ginsberg**, 726th - From Wife, Edna  
**Stanley J. Groom**, 724th - From Daughter,  
Patti Stapish

**Philip Hershkowitz**, 727th - From Wife, Lois  
& Children

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



**John D. Hulser**, 727th - From Crewmate,  
Charles Sciullo

**Robert C. Kacena**, HDQS - From Lockheed  
Martin Aeronautics - Wife, Margaret, Sons, Neil,  
Jeffrey & Douglas

**Robert C. Kacena**, HDQS - From Comrade,  
Leland Younkin

**Robert C. Kacena**, HDQS - From Comrade,  
Bob Karstensen

**Frank J. Lather**, 727th - From Wife, Sally

**Harold I. Moe**, 727th - From Crewmate,  
Winson Jones

**Albert F. Ogg**, 726th - From Comrade, Albert  
Roemer

**Harold C. Schauer**, 726th - From Crewmate,  
Samuel Nuccio

**Harold C. Schauer**, 726th - From Crewmate,  
Elmer Brinkmeier

**Burton Schilling**, 726th - From Crewmate,  
Achilles Kozakis

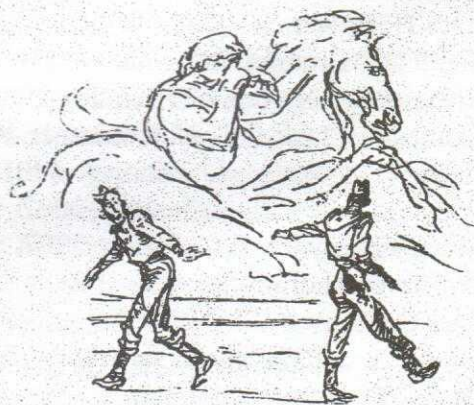
**Edward M. Shirk**, 725th - From Wife,  
Almeda: Sons, Edward Jr. & Robert

**Richard A. Turnbull**, 727th - From Crewmate,  
Leonard Kovar

**Carl O. Winterhalder**, 724th - From Wife,  
Pauline

**Joeph A. Wood**, 724th - From Comrade,  
Walter Cutchin

**To all that flew the 5 April 1944** Ploesti Mis-  
sion - From Jack Bennett, 727th



### CHATTER FROM THE FLIGHT DECK

Bob Karstensen

### EVALUATION TIME

I guess there comes a time when an evaluation of our organization is needed. The evaluation is in the context of how our organization is growing, or NOT growing. (See addendum - Page 17)

Of prime concern is in the lack of growth and the loss of active members, as per our 'Diminishing Ranks' column. Our last recruit happened a short time back in October of this year when we located (or, rather was located by another member) who became member #1953; Lemuel McManness (Assistance Engineering Officer in the 724th Squadron.) Prior to that our previous recruit came into the or-

ganization in February of 2006. Some of the 'leads' that I could explore, and did explore, either expressed no interest or didn't respond at all. To keep hammering away at these potentials would just be a waste of postage.

Right now I'm mailing to over 850 living (hopefully interested) 451st members and some 350 family members of our deceased comrades. But I'm finding it increasingly difficult to maintain any consistency in this operation without sufficient contributions/donations. Right now I'm being confronted by lack of funds in trying to organize our 2008 reunion. Mailings, Hotel deposits, Travel, etc. are



right now a major factor. Much of these current costs are coming out of my own pocket. I don't begrudge this fact, as I feel I owe it to you guys for what you have meant to me over the years. Since 1978, when Peter Massare and I began the organization, Peter instilled in me the need for this type of an organized group. I have found it easy enough when more members were active and appreciative of this effort. I don't mean to say that we don't have some consistent and generous donators, but on the whole I ain't hearing it from the rest of you guys.

As to the continuation of the Ad-Lib ... that becomes another question. To cut the cost of printing and mailing, I could lessen the size of the newsletter. But to me that's taking away the expectation that many of you have come to enjoy and expect. At least that's what your telling me! Let's hear it from you guys ... Are you with me?

**On another subject ...** Many of you that attended our Springfield (2006) Reunion received a post-reunion mailing from our respected 727th member, Winson 'Big' Jones. With cooperation from this office, Winson compiled a 75 page booklet of wartime memoirs that our reunion attendees, when upon request, were sent to him. All stories relating to their tenure with the 451st while overseas. Winson has a few booklets left, after distribution to those on his original mailing list, and will offer the rest for sale (through the office of this 451st) at the cost of \$22 (S & H Inc.) To those interested, make your check out to '451st Bomb Group.' I'll record it and get word to Winson that you are in need of his, and the various writer's effort. He only has a limited number left, so get your request in early.

## ADDUNDUM

The following named members; 1.) I have either lost via returned mail and no forwarding address given, 2.) Have died and I cannot confirm, nor been informed 3.) Or just plain disinterested.

If any of you guys know what's going on ... Let me know.

### LOST, DECEASED, OR DISINTERESTED MEMBERS

#### FROM THE 724th

Ronald F. Bluhm, Crew Chief

James J. Dougherty, Operations Clerk

Louis F. Hoffman, Gunner - Johnson's Crew  
John L. Kearney, Pilot - Aircraft Commander  
Willard O. McGinn, Gunner - Vernon's Crew  
John P. Nicastre, ROG - Innerst's Crew

#### FROM THE 725th

Joseph I. Beasley, Gunner - Cameron's Crew  
Frank R. Gerrity, Copilot - Pries' Crew  
William H. Meyer, Gunner - Custer's Crew  
Samuel R. Miller, Armament Section  
Raymond A. Roethle, Mechanic  
Joseph Spalla, Crew Chief

#### FROM THE 726th

Ralph A. Chiavelli, Gunnery Instructor  
Jack E. Clifford, Navigator - Kelly's Crew  
William C. Ershler, Gunner - Harris' Crew  
Charles W. George, Copilot - Jackson's Crew  
Leon Gold, ROG - Anstett's Crew  
Joseph F. Grace, Bombardier - Beaucond's

Crew

Willard E. Greene, Copilot - Slater's Crew  
William F. Hipple, Pilot - Aircraft Commander  
David S. Moore, ROG - Young's Crew  
Edward J. Shimanski (aka Sherman) - Pilot -

Aircraft Commander

John S. White, Gunner - Pilot Unknown  
Theodore N. Withers, Motor Pool

#### FROM THE 727th

Gerald A. Arndt, Bombardier - Mack's Crew  
Stanley Cisz, Gunner - Hook's Crew  
Harry W. Grater, Gunner - Coulter's Crew  
Daniel H. Greenberg, Navigator - Wilson's

Crew

William J. Kennedy, Bombardier - Doherty's

Crew

Merle D. Larson, Pilot - Aircraft Commander  
Earl F. Reitz, Bombardier - Kavanaugh's Crew  
Russell Ruoff, Gunner - Friedman's Crew  
Raymond T. Travis, Navigator - Bickford's

Crew

Wayne A. Vorpahl, ROG - Smith's Crew  
Hugh F. Ward, Ordnance Section

#### FROM HEADQUARTERS

Lloyd H. Lipkey, Cryptographer





# MISSION LOG

**BY: Ray R. Kravetz**

*Editor ... The following is the 'Mission Log' of Bombardier, 2nd Lt. Ray R. Kravetz, 727th Bomb Squadron. The log describes, in a rather bare-bone fashion, the fundamentals of bomb load, altitude, weather, target and results, plus other items of interest. As editor, I've added some relevant information as I considered of interest.*

*The crew that Lt. Kravetz was part of, when arriving overseas on April 11, 1944, consisted of:*

*2nd Lt. James W.L. Park, Pilot [Member #1702]*

*2nd Lt. Winfield S. Cartwright, Copilot [Member #1250]*

*2nd Lt. James E. Piasecki, Navigator [Not Located]*

*2nd Lt. Ray R. Kravetz, Bombardier [Member #1703]*

*T/Sgt. Clyde L. Clemmons, AEG [Not Located]*

*T/Sgt. Charles D. Kelsall, ROG [Member #1708]*

*S/Sgt. John A. Racinowski, Nose Gunner [Member #1700]*

*S/Sgt. Chester H. Johnson, Upper Gunner [Deceased]*

*S/Sgt. George A. Lokke, Ball Gunner [Deceased 1986]*

*S/Sgt. Hermilo J. Sanchez, Tail Gunner [Member #1704]*

*Lt. Kravetz was, in a way, responsible for naming the aircraft that they flew overseas: "CON JOB." At first sight of the aircraft, Lt. Kravetz was heard to say, "We've been conned." It turned out that "CON JOB" became its name. Later it became the well known photo of the 31 May 1944 mission to Ploesti. On that mission it was flown by Lt. Hubert Anderson in the #4 position. It was lost in combat on 22 August 1944, when on a mission to Vienna, Austria, and flown by Lt. Richard Turnbull. Lt. Kravetz's 'log' is as follows:*

\*\*\*\*\*

Sortie #1 ..... Mission #1 & #2

Date: April 13, 1944

Bomb Load: 500 lb. G.P. (General Purpose)

Altitude: 20,500 Feet

Weather: C.A.V.U. (Ceiling And Visibility Unlimited)

Target: Budapest, Hungary (ME 109 Aircraft Factory)

Target Hit

*Editor ... One aircraft from the 727th was lost. "Miss America;" 42-52084. Pilot, 1st Lt. Paul Pfau, along with 6 of the 10 crewmen were KIA.*

\*\*\*\*\*

Sortie #2 ..... Mission #3 & #4

Date: April 21, 1944

Bomb Load: 500 lb. G.P.

Altitude: 23,000 Feet

Weather: Undercast

Target: Bucharest, Rumania (City and Marshaling Yard)

Dropped on E.T.A. (Estimated Time of Arrival)

Received Air Force Commendation

\*\*\*\*\*

Sortie #3 ..... Mission #5 & #6

Date: April 23, 1944

Bomb Load: 120 lb. Fragmentation

Altitude: 22,300 Feet

Weather C.A.V.U

Target: Bad Voslau Airdrome, Austria

Target Hit

\*\*\*\*\*

Sortie #4 ..... Mission #7

Date: April 29, 1944

Bomb Load: 1,000 lb. G.P.

Altitude: 20,000 Feet

Weather: Undercast

Target: Toulon Sub/Pens, France

Results not seen due to smoke screen

\*\*\*\*\*

Sortie #7 ..... Mission #10 & #11

Date: May 6, 1944

Bomb Load: 500 lb. G.P.

Altitude: 22,300 Feet

Weather: C.A.V.U.

Target: Pitesti Marshalling Yards, Rumania

Target Hit

\*\*\*\*\*

Sortie #8 ..... Mission #12 & #13

Date: May 10, 1944



Bomb Load: 120 lb. Fragmentation  
Altitude: 21,100 Feet  
Weather: C.A.V.U.  
Target: Weiner Neustadt Airdrome, Austria  
Results Undetermined

*Editor ... A somewhat disastrous mission for the 451st. 3 aircraft were lost. The 724th lost "Mack's Flop House;" 42-64465, Piloted by 2nd Lt. Ben J. Moore with all becoming POWs. The 725th lost "The Pontiac Squaw;" 42-94753, Piloted by 2nd Lt. John A. Foster. All evaded. The 727th lost "Lakanookie;" 42-52501, Piloted by 2nd Lt. Gilbert M. Whitfill; 1 KIA, 9 POW.*

\*\*\*\*\*

Sortie #9 ..... Mission #14  
Date: May 12, 1944  
Bomb Load: 500 lb. G.P.  
Altitude: 23,500 Feet  
Weather: Undercast  
Target: Bologna Marshalling Yards, Italy  
Bombs Brought Back.

*Editor ... This could have been a split-mission as I have it in my database that we supported our Ground Forces by bombing the area of Piombino, Italy.*

\*\*\*\*\*

Sortie #10 ..... Mission #15  
Date May 14, 1944  
Bomb Load: 500 lb. G.P.  
Altitude: 21,000 Feet  
Weather C.A.V.U.  
Target: Padua Marshalling Yards, Italy  
Target Hit

*Editor ... My records show that we lost a 727th aircraft, "Bigger Boober Girl;" 41-28957 crash landing at our home Base; Castelluccio Di Sauri.*

\*\*\*\*\*

Sortie #11 ..... Mission #16  
Date: May 18, 1944  
Bomb Load: 500 lb. G.P.  
Altitude: 21,225 Feet  
Weather: Overcast & Undercast  
Target: Ploesti Oil Refineries, Rumania  
Bombs Brought Back

\*\*\*\*\*

Sortie #12 ..... Mission #17 & #18  
Date: May 19, 1944  
Bomb Load: 2,000 lb. G.P.  
Altitude: 17,650 Feet

Weather: Undercast  
Target: Recco Railroad Viaduct, Italy  
Results Not Seen

*Editor ... I dispute these last two entries. Italian targets were not two credit missions, nor was Ploesti a single credit mission. Rather the opposite for these last two entries.*

\*\*\*\*\*

Sortie #13 ..... Mission #19  
Date: May 22, 1944  
Bomb Load: 100 lb. G.P.  
Altitude: 17,000 Feet  
Weather: Undercast  
Target: Marina De Carrara, Italy - Ammo Warehouse  
Results Undetermined

\*\*\*\*\*

Sortie #14 ..... Mission #20  
Date: May 23, 1944  
Bomb Load: 500 lb. G.P.  
Altitude: 17,800 Feet  
Weather: Undercast  
Target: Troop Support, Subiaco, Italy (Highway & Bridges)  
Slight Damage Done

\*\*\*\*\*

Sortie #17 ..... Mission #24  
Date: May 26, 1944  
Bomb Load: 500lb. G.P.  
Altitude: 20,800 Feet  
Weather: C.A.V.U.  
Target: Lyon, France - Marshalling Yards  
Target Hit

\*\*\*\*\*

Sortie #18 ..... Mission #25 & #26  
Date: May 30, 1944  
Bomb Load: 500 lb. G.P.  
Altitude: 20,500 Feet  
Weather: C.A.V.U.  
Target: Wells, Austria - Aircraft Factory  
Target Hit.

\*\*\*\*\*

Sortie #19 ..... Mission #27 & #28  
Date: May 31, 1944  
Bomb Load: 500 lb. G.P.  
Altitude: 22,700 Feet  
Weather: C.A.V.U.  
Target: Ploesti Oil Refineries, Rumania  
Target Hit



Picture of "Con Job" over target published as 'Front Page News' in America.

\*\*\*\*\*

Sortie #20 ..... Mission #29 & #30

Date: June 2, 1944  
Bomb Load: 1,000 lb. G.P.  
Altitude: 15,000 Feet  
Weather: C.A.V.U.  
Target: Szolnok Marshalling Yard, Hungary  
Target Hit

\*\*\*\*\*

Sortie #21 ..... Mission #31

Date: June 4, 1944  
Bomb Load: 500 lb. G.P.  
Altitude: 16,400 Feet  
Weather: C.A.V.U.  
Target: Gad, Italy - Railroad Bridge & Canal

\*\*\*\*\*

Sortie #22 ..... Mission #32

Date: June 5, 1944  
Bomb Load: 1,000 lb. G.P.  
Altitude: 19,000 Feet  
Weather: C.A.V.U.  
Target: Rimini, Italy - Railroad Bridges  
Target Hit

\*\*\*\*\*

Sortie #23 ..... Mission #33 & #34

Date: June 6, 1944  
Bomb Load: 500 lb. G.P.  
Altitude: 19,700 Feet  
Weather: C.A.V.U.  
Target: Ploesti Oil Refineries, Rumania  
Results not seen due to a heavy smoke screen over target.

Editor ... One aircraft lost on this mission from the 724th Squadron. Aircraft 42-7757 named "Windy City" and was Piloted by 2nd Lt. William R. Harris. All 10 of the crew evaded capture.

\*\*\*\*\*

Sortie #24 ..... Mission #35

Date: June 7, 1944  
Bomb Load: 1,000 lb. S.A.P.  
Altitude: 15,900 Feet  
Weather: C.A.V.U.  
Target: Antheor Railroad Viaduct, France  
Target Missed

\*\*\*\*\*

Sortie #25 ..... Mission #36

Date: June 11, 1944  
Bomb Load: 250 lb. G.P.  
Altitude: 22,600 Feet  
Weather: C.A.V.U.  
Target: Giurgiu, Rumania - Oil Storage Facilities

Target Missed  
Editor ... Loss of one 724th aircraft, 42-29251, "Impatient Virgin," Piloted by 2nd Lt. Charles R. Haun. 9 POW, 1 KIA.

\*\*\*\*\*

Sortie #26 ..... Mission #37 & #38

Date: June 13, 1944  
Bomb Load: 100 lb. Incendiary  
Altitude: 23,100 Feet  
Weather: C.A.V.U.  
Target: Munich, Germany - Airdrome  
Target Hit

\*\*\*\*\*

Sortie #27 ..... Mission #39

Date: June 22, 1944  
Bomb Load: 300 lb. G.P.  
Altitude: 20,100 Feet  
Weather: C.A.V.U.  
Target: Rimini, Italy - Railroad Bridges  
Target Hit

\*\*\*\*\*

Sortie #28 ..... Mission #40

Date: July 6, 1944  
Bomb Load: 500 lb. G.P.  
Altitude: 22,100 Feet  
Weather: C.A.V.U.  
Target: Aviano, Italy - Oil Storage  
Target Hit

\*\*\*\*\*

Sortie #29 ..... Mission #41 & #42

Date: July 8, 1944  
Bomb Load: 500 lb. G.P.  
Altitude: 21,300 Feet  
Weather: C.A.V.U.  
Target: Vienna/Korneuburg, Austria - Oil Refineries

Target Hit .... ME-109 claimed as destroyed by right waist Gunner. (Confirmed by S-2 on July 12, 1944.)

\*\*\*\*\*

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



Sortie #30 ..... Mission #43

Date: July 14, 1944

Bomb Load: 1,000 lb. G.P.

Altitude: 20,500 Feet

Weather: Slightly Undercast

Target: Petfurdo, Hungary - Oil Refineries

Target Missed

*Editor ... On this mission the 726th lost, both aircraft 42-78208, "Lucky Bucky" and its Squadron Commander, Major Charles C. Haltom, POW. The aircraft was under command of Captain Richard S. Long. No lives were lost but 5 of the 12 onboard became POWs, while the other 7 EVADED capture.*

\*\*\*\*\*

Sortie #31 ..... Mission #44

Date: July 15, 1944

Bomb Load 500 lb. G.P.

Altitude: 23,100 Feet

Weather: Undercast

Target: Ploesti, Rumania - Creditul Oil Refiner-

ies

Results not seen due to smike screen over target.

\*\*\*\*\*

Sortie #32 ..... Mission #45

Date: July 17, 1944

Bomb Load: 1,000 lb. G.P.

Altitude: 19,800 Feet

Weather: C.A.V.U.

Target: Arles Railroad Bridge, France

\*\*\*\*\*

Sortie # 33 ..... Mission #46 & #47

Date: July 18, 1944

Bomb Load: 1,000 lb. G.P.

Altitude: 22,200 Feet

Weather: Undercast

Target: Friedrichshafen, Germany - Dornier

Werke A/C Factory

Target Missed

*Editor ... One aircraft, 42-78478 "Politicians" from the 726th Squadron made it back to Castelluccio Air Base and crash landed. Pilot unknown.*

\*\*\*\*\*

Sortie #34 ..... Mission #48 & #49

Date: July 19, 1944

Bomb Load: 1,000 lb. G.P.

Altitude: 23,250 Feet

Weather: C.A.V.U.

Target: Munich, Germany - Scheissheim Air-

drome

Target Hit

\*\*\*\*\*

Sortie #35 ..... Mission #50 & #51

Date: July 21, 1944

Bomb Load: 1,000 lb. G.P.

Altitude: 23,100 Feet

Weather: C.A.V.U.

Target: Brux, Czechoslovakia - Oil Refinery

Target Hit

*Editor ... This mission was not without aircraft loss. The 726th Squadron lost 42-78428, "Eskimo Nell," piloted by Captain William A. Ramsdell, when it crash/landed on the Isle of Vis, Yugoslavia. All crew returned to Castelluccio Air Base.*

\*\*\*\*\*

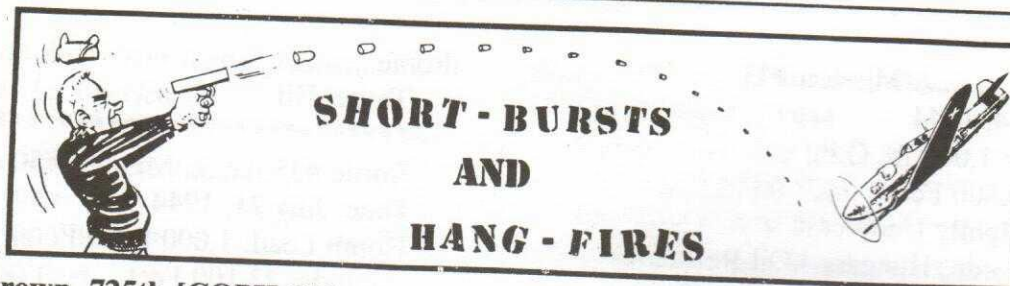
*Editor ... Thus concludes the Mission Log of Lt. Kravetz. His combat time amounted to to some 248 hours and 55 minutes. With his 'tour' over, he departed the Group for the U.S. on July 30, 1944*

*It has been to me, and still is, the manner in which 'missions' and 'sorties' were administered. It seems that the various Air Forces, Wings, Groups and Squadrons had diverse ways of bestowing medals, credits and missions. When I entered the 724th Squadron in late June 1944 there was a system in place, which, if you flew beyond a specific radius, you were listed as having flown 2 sorties, and still one mission. A mission, in the 724th, was considered; take-off, bombing the target and returning to Base. A sortie was going beyond that certain distance to bomb the target.*

*It is apparent, as per Lt. Kravitz's journal, that the earlier members of the Group, went by the 2 Mission credit, rather than the 2 Sortie credit. In my AAF Form No. 5 (commonly referred to as an A-5), 724th Squadron Operations had two columns; one marked "Sortie," the other "Missions." They ceased listing the two columns in November 1944, and from then on it was only listed for Combat Missions.*







**Harvey A. Brown, 725th [COPILOT:  
CHARLES TRUMPER'S CREW]**

It has been some time since I have heard from you, or even donated a small check for the continuing operation of the 451st Bomb Group.

I'm sorry I couldn't make our reunion last year. I did hear from David Eagles about the reunion - which they truly enjoyed.

Similarly I lost contact with Chris Pollard, but was pleased to relocate him. He, if you recall, put my Web Page together. He says he may upgrade it in the near future.

*(Editor ... Glad to hear from you, Harvey. As to your Web Page, I scrutinize it almost every day .. especially the Guestbook. For those not familiar with your effort, here is the address to put into the 'browser' to locate them:*

[http://members.tripod.com/~Hey\\_Moe/](http://members.tripod.com/~Hey_Moe/)

<http://guestbooks.netservices.gr/readgb.chi-name=heymoe>

**Wyatt L. Custer, 724th [GUNNER: PILOT  
UNKNOWN]**

Just received the latest copy of Ad-Lib. Wyatt is unable to see and read anymore, but I started reading it to him and he really enjoyed it. We will continue reading it until we get through it. Thanks for your dedication.

(Signed) Doris Custer

*(Editor ... Thanks for passing on (verbally) the contents of Issue #42 to Wyatt. I hope, sometime in the near future, Wyatt will let me know who the pilot was that he went overseas with. He stated, on his questionnaire, that his papers were destroyed, but certainly he has to remember who his pilot was.)*

**Robert Roberts, Jr., 724th [BOMBARDIER:  
CHARLES L. SMITH'S CREW]**

Just received Issue #42 and as usual found it very interesting reading. In particular Clyde Phifer's, "My Overseas Tour." We, the C.L. Smith's crew, picked up a new B-24J at Hamilton Field and flew to Briggs Field, then to Gander and basically the same route to Gioia, minus the stop at Bari. I

had forgotten some of the details, but was reminded of them by the article.

*(Editor ... Glad to hear that the 'ol memory juices' are still flowing. It sometimes takes a reminder, such as the Phifer journal, to bring some memories back in focus. I guess that's the purpose of putting out the Ad Lib .. 'keep the juices flowing.')*

**Elmer Brockmeier, 726th [BOMBARDIER:  
HAROLD C. SCHAUER'S CREW]**

Wish we could have been more of a part of the 451st, but we were shot down on our 2nd mission. It was to Budapest. We were shown the devastation in Budapest that night by our captors. We told them we did a pretty good job. They didn't appreciate our comments.

*(Editor ... I can well imagine what the enemy felt about your comment on the devastation. You were lucky that you got away with such provoking dialogue. Other reviews from American captives tell of humane treatment by the German soldiers. Seems that you at least got that much ... Your still here with us.)*

**Ernest Sabec, 724th [NAVIGATOR:  
CLAUDE WOODS' CREW]**

Thank you for sending the 2006 Reunion Review, and congratulations for another successful mission.

I was surprised to see my name in print (Short Bursts - Page 34). As an addendum to the Os-wiecim Poland mission that I referred to in that last issue: When the lead ship took that hard hit, it drifted back and part of the flight formation was sent into disarray, we suddenly we realized that we were all alone!

We had been briefed about railroad mounted AA, and particularly at Komarno, Hungary. Although I had monitored our course to the target, I also had placed my maps aside in preparation to the toggling of the bombs. I experienced some chaotic moments wading through my maps and trying to establish our position and plot a new course. Two flak bursts confirmed my hunch were we were!



We were on shaky ground -- a lone plane was a sitting duck, so to speak. However, with the help of a Higher Power; the skill of our Flight Deck; and a crew vigilant for an enemy; as well as feeding me checkpoints; we made it.

Regretfully, Willard Rogers left us on January 6. I am forever grateful for the camaraderie and the bond of friendship of my crew mates.

*(Editor ... Elegantly stated, Ernie. It's getting tougher and tougher to put out our newsletters; whether it's me getting older, or the remorse I feel in seeing our ranks slowly but surly slimming down. They shall be missed.)*

**Donald Weissend, 724th [ROG: ADAM METZ'S CREW]**

Received my issue of Ad Lib #42 a while back. So glad you're still in the publishing business because I certainly enjoy reading it. It kind of turns back the clock to a much different period in my life.

Time has certainly taken its toll of the men of the 451st. Glad you're still in there doing a great service.

I'm still in reasonably good health. Able to live a fairly active life, except for minor ailments now and then.

Sorry to hear of the small turnout at the reunion, but it seems like WW-2 is just a memory: and to many people it's now ancient history.

*(Editor ... Thanks Don, your comments are appreciated. And until it's just you and I that are left, I'll break out that bottle of Brandy that I've been saving, and we'll hoist a couple for the guys that have flown on ahead.)*

**Robert M. Carringer, 724th [NAVIGATOR: JAMES COYLE'S CREW]**

So sorry we had to miss the reunion this year, but our traveling days are getting fewer and fewer. Thanks for sending the "Reunion Review." You work so hard with all the preparations, etc - and it is appreciated by everyone.

*(Editor ... Thanks Bob for the brief, but meaningful message. True, I had a passion to put on these 'gatherings' and see the enjoyment everyone experienced. BUT, due to the diminishing ranks, and like yourself, not wanting to travel too far, it amounts to less leverage I have with the chosen hotels. Only time will tell if we can continue with our present status of biennial reunions.)*

**Renee-Noelle (Orden) Felice [ASSOCIATE 726th MEMBER]**

Almost two years have passed since the death of my father, Burt Orden. I have settled into my new home very comfortably, and have buried his ashes in my front yard, under a new bush, in a ceremony attended by some cousins, and two friends up here who knew and admired him.

What most people remembered about Burt was his energy. At the first service, my cousin Tammy concluded her remarks by saying, "Wherever he is now, somebody is struggling to keep up." This was in my mind when I wrote the enclosed adaptation of the Army Air Corps song, which I learned when I was still very young. I thought you might like to see it, and to know that I am still grateful that all of his Air Corps things are in a place in which they are honored.

**ARMY AIR CORPS SONG**

Flying high into the wild blue yonder, Soaring high into the sun. Now that we've had time to grieve and ponder, We rejoice: a new flight's begun. Even in life, we had to run to catch him, Now he has zoomed out of view. His soul is free, And now this tree, Will honor the life of our dear Burt

We dearly love him. Will honor the life of our dear Burt.

*(Editor ... Nicely put, Renee. Your dad (aka, by 726th comrades as, Burt Ordenstein) attended quite a few of our biennial reunions and will be remembered for his participation. The memento's you sent to this office, reflects his feelings for his wartime experiences, and later affiliations with the 451st.)*

**Leonard J. Kovar, 727th [BOMBARDIER: RICHARD TURNBULL'S CREW]**

I have discovered that the "Irvin Aerospace Canada, Ltd." (who made the parachutes that I, and my crew used on August 22, 1944, the day we went down) will send a beautiful "Caterpillar" Award Pin to those that used their parachutes in order to save their lives.

It is a very nice gold pin to place on a uniform or suit.

The caterpillar is a symbol of the silkworm that produced the silk that was used in the early parachutes.

The company will send such a pin to eligible people - and there is no doubt that many in our Group that will qualify.



For further information contact:

Ms. Eileen Carlton Executive Assistant Irvin  
Aerospace Canada Ltd. P.O. Box 1510 Belleville,  
Ontario, Canada K8N5J1

*(Editor ... Thanks for the lead, Lenny. It would be interesting to see how many take up your suggestion to apply for said pin. I'm sure there are more than one that would be interested and entitled.)*

**Samuel J. Nuccio, 726th [GUNNER:  
HAROLD C. SHAUER'S CREW]**

2006 was a bad year for our B-24 crew. We lost Harold "Bud" Schauer to cancer and this adds additional credence to your statement about our 'Diminishing Ranks.' The crew is down to two left: Elmer Brockmeier, Bombardier, and myself, Tail Gunner.

Schauer was our pilot and he carried a lot of self blame for what happened over Lake Balatan, Hungary on 27 July 1944. I remember reading historical reports in the newspapers that our side lost some 70 bombers on that raid. I always felt that we were shot down because we lost power and became sitting ducks, but Harold didn't see it that way.

I want to encourage you to continue your efforts. Time is not what we thought it was when we were 21 years old.

*(Editor ... My records show that your 726th aircraft, THUNDERMUG II [aka ROMAN'S CANDLE - 42-52153] was the only loss we had on that mission to Budapest, Hungary. My records also show that you lost one crewman, Sgt David J. Valdes, who did not survive the mission, while the other nine of you became POW's.)*

**Albert L. Roemer, 726th [INTELLIGENCE OFFICER]**

Enclosed is a check to keep the "Ad Lib" going. If you would, I'd like to pay tribute to the following men of the 451st: William H. McGuire, George L. Rafter, Jack M. Garrison, Cyril G. Lawson, Bob Karstensen and Lloyd H. Lipkey.

*(Editor ... Thanks Al for including me in that group of awesome 451st members. Tis appreciated.)*

**Verne H. Mason, 726th [GUNNER: JOHN GRAF'S CREW]**

With respect to crewmates re-associating, I would like to share a couple of things with you. Thanks to your assistance, about a year and a half ago, two of my crew members made phone contact with me. I was delighted that such a thing could

happen after 60 years.

We have continued to have regular phone conversations ever since. I am referring to Angelo Valenza (Radio Operator - Gunner) and Jimmy (Bud) Carter (Tail Gunner). They have been very warm, friendly and thoughtful.

This past January, en-route to our winter retreat, on the Gulf Coast at Naples, Florida, we took a detour and stopped in the charming little town of Colquitt, Georgia. Bud Carter extended us one of the most enthusiastic and gracious "welcomes" I have ever had. He was most hospitable and charming and we spent nearly a full day together. We had not seen each other for 62 years. It was a wonderful stop!

When we leave Naples, later this month, we have decided to return to the Chicago area via Maryland, where Angie Valenza lives. He plans that we should tour the new Air and Space Museum and the World War II Memorial. He and his wife, Marie, have also promised us a fancy Italian dinner that their home. Needless to say, we are truly looking forward to all of it.

*(Editor ... Tis comforting to note that these old friendships can be rekindled by just asking if I have anything current on a former crewmate/tentmate. That's one of my purposes, and why Pete Massare took on the task of reorganizing the 451st.)*

**Ken Duncan, 725th [GUNNER: KENNETH MORSE'S CREW]**

The Collings B-24 (Witchcraft) was here in Ankeny, Iowa (just north of Des Moines & Clive) for an air show a few weeks ago. Sure makes the old body trembles just to see the old '24 again. I almost paid for one more ride in the old bird, but felt it would be too crowded and not the same.

*(Editor ... I took the same nostalgic trip when 'Witchcraft' came to the Chicago area during it's 2007 nationwide tour. I too, felt that old surge as I walked the outside thinking about 'engine start-ups' when I use to stand fire-guard before boarding for the mission.)*





# MESHALL MEMORIES

By: Bob Karstensen

The old Line Chief before me, as we passed down through the line,  
Peered into his mess kit, then whistled low and fine.

He turned to me in disbelief, his eyes were truly plexed,  
"I've done a mite of soldier'n, son, and I'll share what comes up next;

But what IS this they've handed me: Could it be my evening chow?  
Could somewhere's under that applesauce, be hiding a piece of cow?

Does the gravy on my cobbler mean I've lead a sheltered life?  
Where do I see it written that my world be full of strife?

'Don't touch those peas,' he cautioned me, 'I know they're bullet hard,  
And if I'm not mistake, son, them 'spuds' were boiled in lard.'

That marmalade they pass around, and it goes for the butter, too,  
Were made, they say, the very day that Custer fought the Sioux.

Back home I served as Deacon, in my little country church.  
I've ate at lots of picnics, from a blanket 'neath the Birch.

My Daddy often told me, and I guess it holds true now,  
'Be pleased at what's been given, and give thanks in prayer and vow.'

But I feel the Lord's grip weakening, as my stomach starts to shrink,  
For what I've just been offered is . . . . .

**TO THIN TO PLOW, TOO THICK TO DRINK."**



## LT. WILLIAM 'BOB' GIVENS' DIARY (EVASION ACCOUNT AFTER OSWIECIM, POLAND MISSION)

**17 December 1944**

... Joined the 726th Bomb Squadron today. It is located at an airfield close to Foggia, Italy. We sleep in tents. Our tent is in bad shape.

**Sunday 24 December 1944**

... Have been working on our tent the past week. It shows some improvement. Went to church today. Enjoyed the Christmas Carols.

**25 December 1944**

... It doesn't seem like Christmas. We worked on the tent all day. My name is on the board to fly a combat mission tomorrow. I talked to the Squadron Navigator and told him I did not have any maps.

He said I wouldn't need any maps. We would be flying number three in the formation and would follow the lead plane.

**26 December 1944**

... Took off at 0755 in plane number 47 (44-494 14) with Pilot Edward Nall. Bombed Standard Oil Refinery in Oswiecim, Poland. Dropped bombs at 1224. We were hit by flak at 1324. Our plane, number 3, and plane 5, in the formation of seven were hit. The Germans had moved anti-aircraft guns on flat-bed rail cars to new location. Our number 1 and 2 engines were knocked out by the flak. Our Bombardier, Walt Tuchscherer, bailed out first. I bailed out second at 6,000 feet at 1352. I landed 15 miles east of Balaton Lake in Hungary. I landed in a frozen farm field and was knocked out by the hard ground. When I came to, I hid my parachute. Heard farm animals in the distance and walked toward the sounds. In 20 minutes I came to farm yard where Walt had landed in a tree. He broke his ankle when he landed in the tree. George Ahrens, our Waist Gunner, walked into the yard after I arrived. The Russians came to the farm, took our .45 pistols and



'BOB' & IDA GIVENS  
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interrogated us. After we convinced them we were Americans, they took us to Mezokomarom where we spent the night in a Hungarian home.

**27 December 1944**

... Did nothing until 1800. Russians took us on 2 ox carts to Tamasi. It took us until 2 a.m. to get there. It was a cold and rough ride. It was especially hard and painful for Walt. Slept until 0600 of the 28th in private home.

**28 December 1944**

... Had hot wine for breakfast. My first experience with alcoholic drinks. I drank it too fast and passed out. Russians made fun of the American who couldn't drink

with them. Stayed in Russian Headquarters this night. I don't like the Russian food.

**29 December 1944**

... Walked 20 km and rode the last 5 km to Simontornya. They set Walt's ankle. We had a nice place to stay, Hungarian private home and with good food. Walt didn't want me to leave him. He was in a large barracks with Russian soldiers, both men and women.

**31 December 1944**

... Celebrated New Year's Eve with Russians at a big party. They toasted Stalin, Churchill and Roosevelt. The Russian Captain did the Russian Cossack dance and they tossed everyone up in the air on a blanket. They welcomed the New Year by going outside and shooting their guns in the air.

**1 January 1945**

... The rest of the crew came to Simontornya. They had been staying with a Catholic Priest.

**3 January 1945**

... Russians take Walt to Zachsard to hospital.

**6 January 1945**

... We leave Simontornya by truck. Crossed the



blue Danube River on a barge and rode truck to Kunszentmiklos. The Danube River is not blue, but dirty brown.

**7 January 1945**

... Rode in boxcars to Kecskemet. Thought we were on train to Bucharest, Romania, but found out it was going to Budapest, Hungary. We got off the boxcar fast. We spent the night there.

**8 January 1945**

... Had a good turkey dinner and spent another night in Kecskemet. Met an Englishman, his wife and son.

**9 January 1945**

... Rode passenger train to Szeged. Averaged 7 miles per hour. Good food there. Sleep in hotel. Really good bed. Ate a good turkey dinner for 35¢.

**10 January 1945**

... Ate ham, eggs and pancakes for 35¢. Rode truck to Timisoara, Romania. It was a long cold ride. Slept in private homes. Romania is better off than Hungary.

**11 January 1945**

... We start another long slow train ride.

**12 January 1945**

... We arrive in Turnu-Severin, Romania. It has really been bombed.

**13 January 1945**

... We arrive in Craiova, Romania at 4 a.m. Went to Romanian police who put us in private homes to sleep. We got up at 1030 and go to town to eat steak dinner.

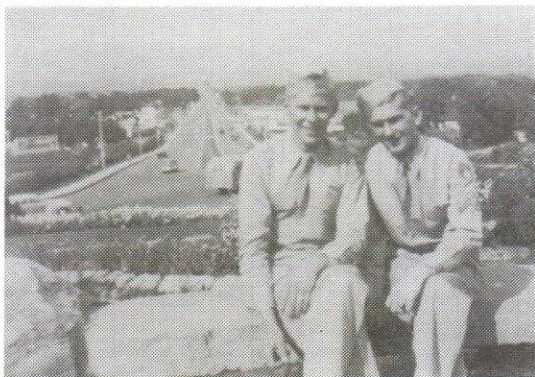
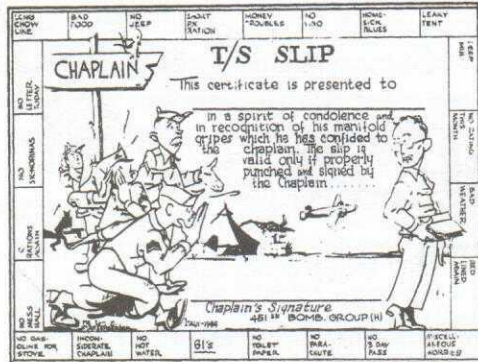
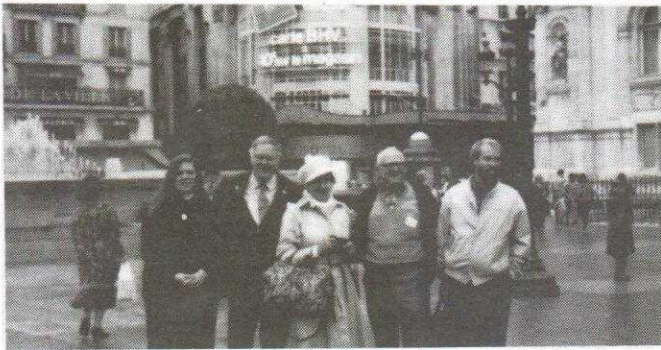
**14 January 1945**

... Leave Craiova in UW 34, a single engine mono-plane. It was a 4 passenger plane, but we packed 16 men into it. It was a miracle that it got off the ground. The snow was knee deep on the runway. The Russian was a good pilot. We arrived in Bucharest at dark.

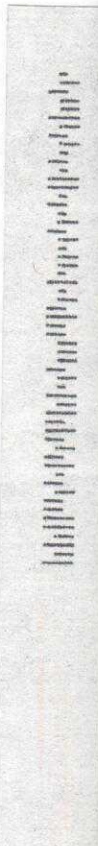
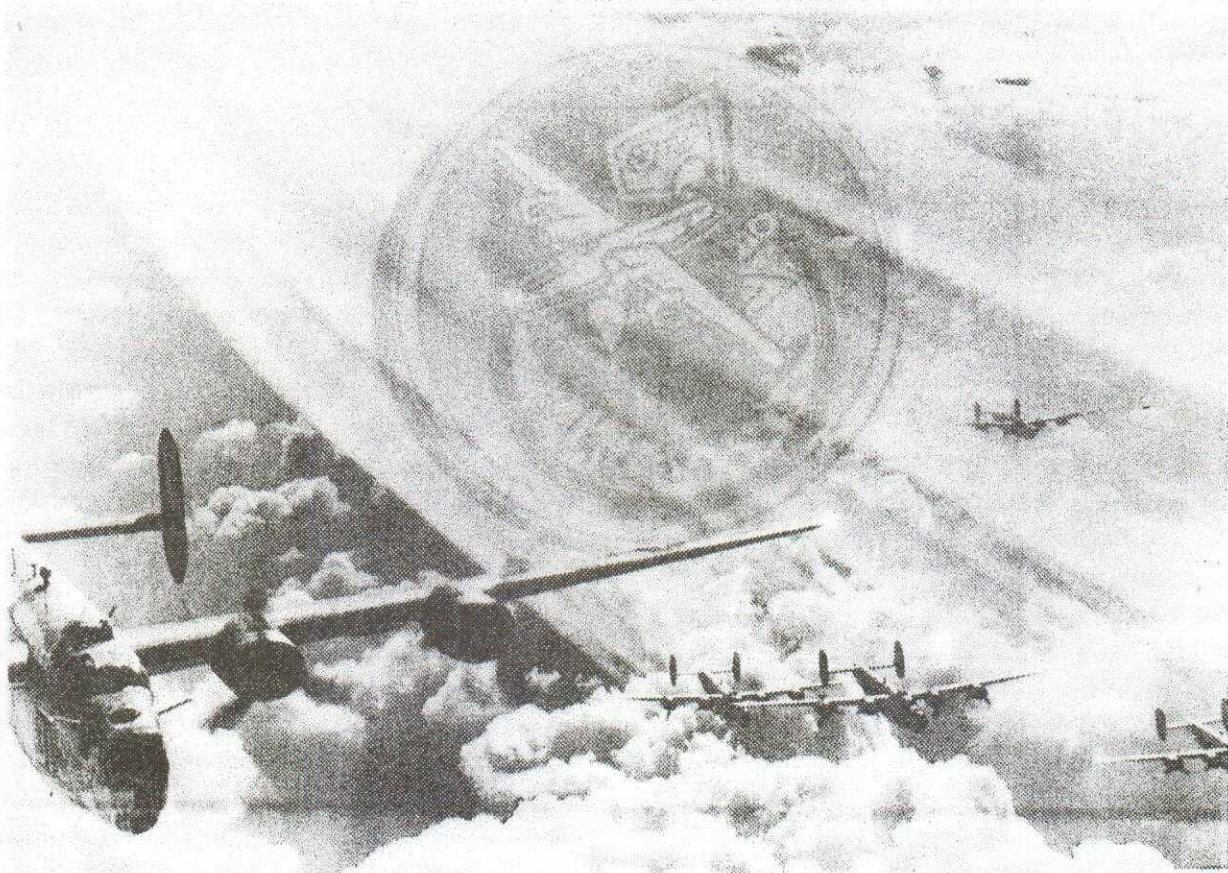
We met about 300 other U.S. airmen in Bucharest who had been shot down. We flew in a cargo plane to Bari, Italy. We were interrogated, deloused and issued new clothes before going back to 726th Squadron at Castelluccia Air Base.

*(Editor ... Another apology for this belated tale of endurance by some of our members that were shot down in the line of duty. 'Bob,' as he preferred to be called, passed away in September of 2003. It was just recently that I uncovered them (as was the case with Clyde Phifer story) and these manuscript now come to light.*

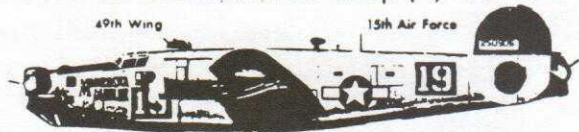
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