



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

Issue 46

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## NOTABLE ALUMNI FROM THE 451st

Throughout my efforts, via research, I keep encountering persons of note that have made a contribution, in one way or another, to the fabric of these United States. Be it in law, sports, literature, or simply advancing the Air Force legacy. Thus far I have uncovered some eight persons of such distinctions. You may know of others. If you do, let me know.

### In the LEGAL PROFESSION

**Samuel Dash:** 724th - 2Lt. Bombardier - Member of the Fred W. Kuhn Crew. [Born 27 February 1925 -- Died 29 March 2004]

A member in high standing within the legal profession. Studied law at Harvard University. Went on to teach law at the Georgetown University Law Center. Professor Dash became involved, as Chief Counsel to the Senate Investigation Committee, that led to the impeachment of President Nixon. All caused by the break-in of the Democratic National Committee Headquarters in Washington D.C. and

the revealing of the discriminating Oval Office tapes.

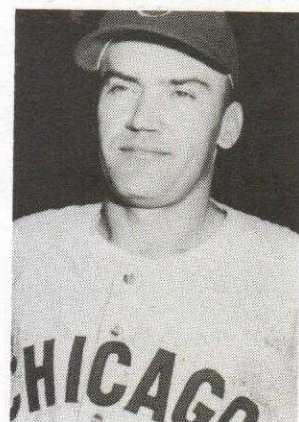
Professor Dash went on to serve justice in all corners of the world. For one: he was involved in the mediation efforts with the South African government that eventually led to Nelson Mandela's release. Another time he served on human rights missions to Northern Ireland to investigate the 1972 'Bloody Sunday' incident. His membership number, within our organization was 1859.

### In the field of SPORTS

**Andrew "Jess" Dobernic:** Sgt. 725th - Electrician. [Born 20 November 1917 -- Died 16 July 1998]

In 1939 he started playing baseball as a pitcher with the Chicago White Sox farm club. He played some softball/baseball while in the Army Air Force in World War II, and after the war resumed his career as a Relief Pitcher for the Los Angeles Angels of the Pacific League. In 1947 he was named Most Valuable Player and received the Pitchers Fireman Award. In 1948 and 1949, he pitched for the Chicago Cubs and Cincinnati Reds. He later played in the Minor League for the Toronto Maple Leafs and Tri City Braves in Washington state, retiring from baseball in 1954.

In retirement he became a butcher in the meat packing industry in St. Louis, Missouri, staying



'Jess' Dobernic

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**"AD-LIB"**

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with that effort for some 20 years. His membership number, within our organization was 1461.

**Arthur D. Devlin:** 727th - 2nd Lt. Bombardier - Member of the Charles W. Wilson Crew. [Born 7 September 1922 -- Died 22 April 2004]

Ski jumping champion, motel owner and Olym-



**Art Devlin**

pic Committee Vice President for the 1980 Lake Placid XIII Winter Olympics. Art was referred to as "a four event skier," but was far better known for his expertise of jumping on the big hills. His credits read thusly:

1942, 1950, 1951 - Won the Paul Bietila Memorial Trophy, the award signifying the highest placing American in the National Ski Association's Jumping Meet

1944 - Named to the mythical "All American Ski Team."

1946 - Class A National Champion in Steamboat Springs, CO.

1952 - Member of the U.S. Olympic Ski Team in Oslo, Norway, placing 15th overall.

1956 - Member of the U.S. Olympic Ski Team in Cortina, Italy, placing 21st in overall with a total of 195.5 points.

1963 - Elected to the National Ski Hall of Fame in Ishpeming, MI.

1980 - He was influential in a group of organizers for getting the Olympics to Lake Placid. He also served on the Organizing Committee during the construction for the games, plus, during the running of the games.

He was a long time member of the Sno Bird Ski Club of Lake Placid.

He was known internationally as a television sportscaster, particularly on televised ski jumping events.

In attempting to research Art Devlin's post-war history, I was confronted with a lot of misinformation. Some of it submitted by Art, himself. Case in point: He lists himself a WW-II pilot. It may well have been, but not in combat. This misinformation I found by talking with some of his former crewmates. His crewmate claims that Art has a display in his motel that shows all his awards. Many contrary to what really was. It may well have been that he gained his pilot wings AFTER his combat duties. But not while overseas. Another falsehood is that his resume reads that he was awarded three Purple Hearts. False! - One, YES. That was when he took a chunk of flak in the butt on one of his later missions.

I have to conclude this dialog by saying that I saw Art compete, sometime in the late '40's or early '50's, while attending a Norge Ski Meet (Fox River Grove, IL). At that time I was not aware that

Art and I were both veterans of the 451st. His membership number within our organization was 0324.

**Meryll M. Frost:** 726th - Sgt. Ball Turret Gunner - Member of the James N. Hunt Crew. [Born 21 May 1921 -- Died 17 March 1992]

After surviving a crash on take-off, 8 February 1944 where only three crewmen survived: Copilot Edward S. Niederkorn, Gunner Ola D. Thaxton and Gunner Meryll M. Frost. All suffered severe burns, and as a result Meryll was relieved from combat and received his separation from the service.

He went on to graduate school at Dartmouth College, Manchester, NH and became Captain of the football team during the 1945/46 season. He was chosen as Outstanding 'Player Of The Year' in the Ivy League.

His other endeavor was in the formation of the Air Force Association in 1947. I have seen pictures of him in various magazines, in the company of President Harry S. Truman, General Jimmy Doolittle, Movie Actor Jimmy Stewart and several others of lesser note. Meryll became one of the first Vice Presidents of the AFA.

Although this office tried several times to recruit him in 1988, he never responded to our effort. Therefore he carries no membership number with our organization.

In the field of **LITERATURE**

**Elliott Arnold:** 726th - 1Lt. Squadron Intelligence Officer. [Born 13 September 1912 -- Died 13 May 1980]

One of our more prolific authors having written, or collaborated in writing some 33 books.

He was born in Brooklyn, New York and became a feature writer with the New York World-Telegram. Among his books, Elliott Arnold is probably best known for his novel, '**Blood**

**Brother'** that was made into the acclaimed 1950 motion picture, '**Broken Arrow,**' starring Jimmy Stewart and an ensuing 1956 television series of the same. Among his other



Elliott Arnold

works were '**Mediterranean Sweep,**' written, in part, while serving with the 451st. Another of his works that became well known was a biography on Sigmund Romberg which was made into the 1954 musical film, '**Deep in My Heart.**'

Since Elliott Arnold died in 1980, at the time of our organization being formed, we did not have the chance to recruit him. Therefore we have no membership number for him.

**William C. Anderson:** 725th - 1st Lt. Aircraft Commander. [Born 7 May 1920 -- Died 16 May 2003]

William, otherwise known as 'Andy,' was the author of several novels; historical, fictional and true life stories, and authored or coauthored several screenplays for film and television, including the adaptation of his own '**Bat\*21,**' which was made into a film starring Gene Hackman and Danny Glover, and '**Hurricane Hunter,**' made into a TV-movie for ABC starring Martin Milner.

He served in the 451st from October 1944 to June 1945 and stayed in the Air Force up through the Vietnam War, retiring as a Lt. Colonel. He began writing in the 1950s, with a series of columns for MATS Flyer, the magazine of the Air Force's Military Transport Service (later MAC Flyer, after MATS became the Military Airlift Command).

Several of his books were autobiographical accounts of the adventures of Anderson, his wife, Dortha, and their children, Ann, Scott and Holly.

His fiction books all featured a supporting character named Colonel Cornelius C. (for 'Catastrophe') Callaghan. Callaghan, a career Air Force officer, is a wheeler-dealer who uses his detailed knowledge and skill to help the lead charters, often despite regulations or higher authority.

In addition to his books, Anderson wrote a monthly column for 'Motor Home,' under the titles 'Back Roads' and 'Off Ramp.' The last column was published two months before his death.

Of special note is his book, '**Bomber Crew 369,**' published in 1986, which gives a semi fictional accounting of an air crew from the 451st. In total, Anderson wrote some 21 books.

**Julius A. Altvater:** 727th - 2nd Lt. Bombardier - Member of the Francis M. Boyle Crew. [Born 26 July 1920 -- Died 10 June 2003]

Unlike the two previous authors, Julius only had one book to his credit: '**Off We Go .... Down In**

**Flames.'** This is the remembrances of himself, a WWII Bombardier, in the air war over Europe and his experiences as a Prisoner Of War in Romania. This is not a flag-waving book. There's no glory here. It tells the story of a badly burned Bombar-dier, parachuting into a field in enemy territory, and finding the morphine missing from his first-aid kit. His membership number within our organization was 0584.

**Nathan U. Firestone:** 725th - 2nd Lt. Navigator - Member of the George E. Tudor Crew . [Born 4 March 1919 -- Alive and still kicking]

And last but not least is our most recent entree into the field of literature. Nathan Firestone (using

the pen name of Nicky U. Fox) has authored a book on the 725th aircraft, '**Extra Joker.**' This had been the crews originally assigned aircraft for most of their missions, but through a last minute 'change of aircraft' on the 23 of August 1944, the day it was shot down, they would have been in it. The Tudor crew witnessed its demise when Pilot, Kenneth Whiting, and the crew of 10 were KIA. Well publicized pictures of its final moments were captured on film by Photographer, Sgt. Leo Stoutsenberger.

Nathan carries the membership number within our organization of 0687.

## I SURVIVED FIVE CRASHES

By: George Olson

*From the remembrances of the late George Olson, Radio Operator -- 724th*

I only spent seven months with the 451st, and with new crews coming and going, your own crew were really your only close friends. Our crew arrived in August of 1944, and speaking just for myself, finished my missions on the 30th of March 1945. I was lucky enough to fly my last mission with the Group CO, Colonel Leroy Stefanowicz (a.k.a. Stefan). I was relieved of duty and a few days later was on my way to Naples to return to the good old U.S.A.

I flew 20 missions with my original crew. We were shot down and bailed out over Russian Territory. Our crew was broken up so I had to finish my remaining missions with anyone who needed a Radio Man. That was not easy to do, or take.

### #1 B-24 Crash:

This was on my fifth mission and we were returning from our target, and we were shot up pretty badly. My Pilot, William H. McKenney, didn't think we could make it back to our base, but with God's help we made an emergency landing at a P-51 fighter airstrip in Italy. The Pilot did a super job



Sgt George Olson

of landing, but the runway wasn't made for B-24s, and we smashed it up quite a bit. In fact we were lucky to walk away with a smile.

### #2 B-24 Crash:

On this mission all the planes were lined up getting ready for take-off. I think we were the fourth plane, as we were in the lead Squadron. Full throttle ahead and going about 100 mph, our #2 engine ran away and across the field we went. The Pilot feathered #2 and BANG, our landing gear collapsed with 10,500 lb bombs in the belly. The plane broke in several pieces and before we stopped, there were several fire trucks close by, spraying foam for fire protection. We all got out of the plane real fast, or, I might say 'by the speed of light.' Again luck was with us as no one was badly hurt.

*(Editor ... In researching these 2 previous crashes, I could find no reference to #1, either in Missing Air Crew Reports (MACR), nor Accident Reports (AC). That's not to say it wasn't as Sgt Olson describes, it's just that it may not have been written-up, or if it was, I don't have it in hand. There were many Accidents within the 451st, all the way from minor happenings to major ones; like*

wing tips clipping on taxiing to those that involved deaths within the crew.

*The other incident, crash #2, I have the Accident Report and it varies somewhat from Olson's rendition. The Report (dated for 2 December 1944) reads that the aircraft, Serial Number 44-52047, did make a successful take-off, but had engine trouble immediately after leaving the field. It reads that they salvoed the bombs over the Adriatic Sea and returned to Castelluccio Air Base in an attempted emergency landing. It was then that they lost control, ran off the steel matting, busted up the landing gear, which resulted in the total destruction of the aircraft.)*

### **#3 B-24 Crash**

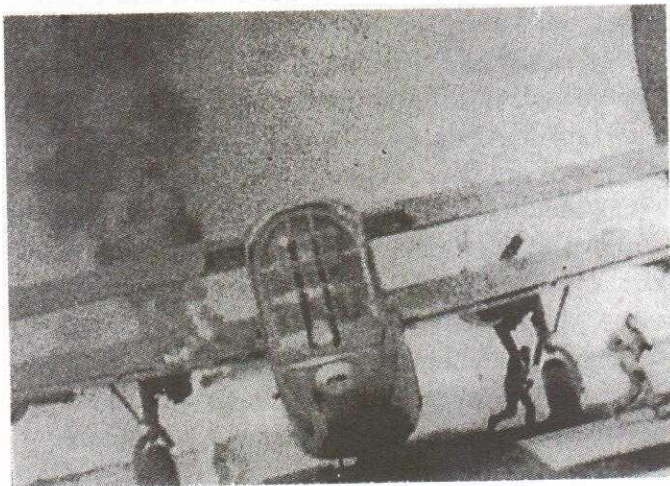
This was my 20th mission and the target was a tough one: Blechammer, Germany. The date was December 18, 1944. We dropped our bombs and were going away from the target when we got hit in several places. Our plane dropped about 10,000 feet, which threw everybody every-which-way. The Pilot, W.H. Mckenney, put on the auto-pilot because manual and other instruments were out. We had no radio, nor compass. The good old B-24 began flying itself and how the Pilot did what he did is a mystery yet, as he was wounded in his right arm, between his elbow and shoulder. I mean it was almost severed. We did our best to bandage him up. I was hit in the left hand and part of my little finger was gone, but it was no big deal. I guess one has to count his blessings. The Engineer was hit on the side of his face, but that was not too bad either. We kept flying for some time, not knowing where we were. Our Navigator was new to us and was on his 35th mission. He must have thought, 'why did he have to fly with us instead of his regular crew?' The Pilot finally gave orders to get ready to bail out. We were concerned if the Pilot could open his chute. He said he could, and he did. Lucky for us we started leaving the plane when we did, as we were over Russian Territory. We were spread out over a large area and some of the crew said that they were being shot at from the ground. I landed in a clump of trees and my chute hung up in the branches. I was soon surrounded by a bunch of rough looking men within just a few minutes. They gave me quite a beating because they thought I was a German. They finally took me to their Russian leader. I could not understand them, nor they me. But they did look at my bandaged hand. I carried a

silver dollar in my pocket for good luck and I think that helped to say I was an American. They finally got us all rounded up and took us to Plotava Russian Hospital. I never got my silver dollar back, nor any of my other personal things; watch, ring, knife and a few Lire. They took very good care of us in the hospital and they did a super job on the Pilot's arm. Three other crewmen were fixed up for broken ankles and fractured legs. Six of us were taken to Cairo, Egypt by air where we spent Christmas. I don't recall when the other four returned. We were all interrogated in Cairo at great lengths.

*(Editor ... The aircraft flown on that mission was A/C #44-49412, (no nickname) and it was on it's very first combat mission. The MACR shows that there were 11 onboard, which included a Photographer. The crew consisted of: McKenney, Pilot; Mozley, Copilot; Jikutz, Navigator; Rogers, Bombardier; Morkes, AEG Upper Turret; Olson, ROG Left Waist; Simpson, Lower Turret; Gardner, Right Waist; Keegan, Tail Turret; Peterson, Nose Turret; Forkey, Photographer.)*

### **#4 B-24 Crash**

We were flying in formation, going over the Adriatic. We were in the number four position behind the lead plane. We always test fired our guns over the water. The Tail Gunner from the lead plane accidentally fired into our #2 engine and a fire broke out at once. I was the left Waist Gunner on this mission and I called the Pilot to tell him, "Fire in #2 engine." He dropped 5,000 feet right now and the fire was still there. We salvoed our bombs and the Pilot, Maurice Brown, contacted the lead plane who said we should land in Yugoslavia at an emergency field at Zara. I think the lead plane made contact with them. I was with a crew that was new to me, and for some it was early in their tour. The fire was getting bigger by the minute. We had to get to land, or bail out. Being over water is always a worry, so the Pilot told us we'll try and make it to the landing strip. We finally saw the strip. They knew we were coming and had everything ready. Down we go, with the flames getting bigger and bigger. when the plane hit the runway the Pilot said to get out quickly, even before the plane stopped. Some of us got out while the plane was still moving. When the Pilot and Copilot came out they were on a dead run and got about 200 feet away before the plane blew up. I still have a piece of the melted metal.



**Pilot & Copilot Hastily Evacuating Aircraft**

*(Editor ... I wouldn't necessarily have called this a 'Crash Landing,' but more like a 'Forced Landing' with a disastrous follow-up. Lt. Brown landed the a/c (44-49458 - no nickname) with only 10% flaps, thus making it a very 'hot' landing. All the crew evacuated in haste, with the Pilot and Copilot the last to leave. The Zara Field Fire Truck was basically ready, but as they neared the plane they called out, "Are there bombs onboard?" To which Pilot Brown answered, "YES!," forgetting that the bombs had been salvaged over the Adriatic. Needless to say the Fire Truck made a hasty retreat. Several Jeep's came close to where the crew was gathering, and took them to a safer distance. Although there were no bombs to blow up, there was still the danger of the 50 caliber bullets "cooking off."*

*After lunch at the Base Mess Hall, and with a newly repaired B-24, the crew flew out that afternoon for their home base at Castelluccio. Before leaving the crew had a chance to see, close-up, what was left of the bomber. The only identifiable parts were the tails sections, and due to the hardness of the steel, the engines and the guns. The rest was all melted metal from the aluminum fuselage.*

*Upon arriving back to the 724th Squadron they were met with some apprehension, as the crew had already been written-up and considered as MIA. There was a scramble in the Orderly Room to tear up those reports before they were passed up to Group and later to Wing.*

*You may, by this time, be wondering how I knew the details of this 12 March 1945 mishap.*

*Well, it just so happens that I was on that plane, trying for my 24th mission. I was the Nose Gunner for the Captain Rollins' (724th Operations Officer) crew. I, along with Lt. John Dilks (Navigator) and S/Sgt Eldon Morrill (Ball Turret Gunner), also from Captain Rollins' crew, filled in as spare crewmen for Lt. Brown.*

*Lt. Brown lost 4 of his original crew by premature bail-out when returning from bombing mission to Vienna, Austria. This was on 15 January 1945.*

*I have to differ with Sgt Olson's description of our position in the flight. What I remember is as we were in the number 3 position. This is predicated on the angle that the bullets had entered the #2 engine's cowling. Had we been in the number 4 position, I'm almost sure the a/c behind us (position number 7) would also have taken some hits and reported same.*

*Two lingering memories that I recall. One was when Sgt Olson reported the 'hits and fire' in the #2 engine and I (in the Nose Turret) turned around and looked at the cowling on #2 and saw about 3 holes that weren't there before. The second memory was that in evacuating the Nose Turret I left behind my cigarettes, in a fancy cigarette case, and an orange that I planned to eat on the way back from our target. I'm just glad I didn't go back in and try to recover them.)*

#### **#5 B-24 Crash**

*We were coming back from my 33rd mission. It had been a tough target and our fuel was getting low. The Pilot called the field and asked if we could come straight in. The field cleared us. We couldn't get the main gear down. The Engineer said he could get the nose wheel down, so that was the way we came in for a belly landing. The field was ready for us, so we came in and put it on the crash strip. It was a much better landing than I expected. Since it was very close to the end of the war I don't think they repaired the plane.*

*(Editor .. I could not find anything of this at-Base crash in my files. That's not to say it didn't happen, but I don't have any documentation on file. My records show that the 724th lost two aircraft that 'next to the last month' of the war. One was the afore mentioned Zara Forced Landing on 12 March and the other was the MINNESOTA MAULER (42-50906) being flown by Lt. Frederick Ade that also crash landed at Zara on the 9th of*

March 1945.)

### Final Combat Mission .... NO CRASH

My last mission I flew with Col. Stefanowicz. I often wondered if I was chosen because they wanted to get Olson out of here before some got killed flying with him. So my last mission, dated March 30, 1945, off we went on a mission to Vienna. I flew as Radio Man and to spread propaganda leaflets. I had nothing to do but sit at my radio and act smart. It was a special thing to me. The Colonel was a super Command Pilot, we went in

low and fast. The mission took six hours and it was usually about a seven hour mission. I was so happy to set down at the Base. I don't remember if I kissed the Colonel, or not, but I should have.

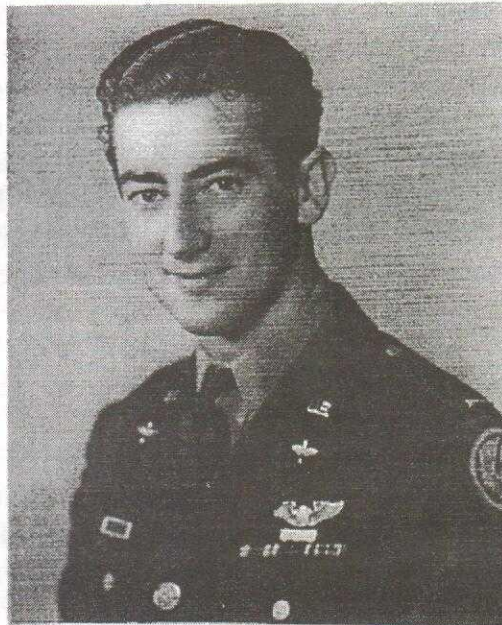
*(Editor ... This mission was termed a "lone wolf" type mission, as they flew only a 4 a/c flight. The scheduled target was to be communication targets in the Vienna area, but because a more important target at Klagenfurt Marshalling Yards, Austria was CAVU, they opted to bomb that instead.)*

## WORLD WAR II LETTERS

By: William F. Jackson

**6 September 1944** - Still safe and sound. I didn't get a chance to mail my note yesterday so am enclosing it with this one. I can tell you that I am in Italy. Have been treated darn good. I wish I could speak Italian. Maybe I'll pick up a few bits of the language. Was talking to Foran this evening. He and I have been together ever since San Antonio Pre-Flight. It was a long time ago, now wasn't it? Just so I don't wear out this flashlight battery, I'll sign off and hit the cot.

**7 September 1944** - Received a bundle of mail for the crew this afternoon. This included you letters of August 7, 14, 18 & 21. I'll look at your letters in order and try to answer anything that comes up. As I remember it, the last letter I received from you mentioned Dad's illness and I did mention it in the next letter I wrote, hoping that he'd be well soon, and kidding him a little about going back on baby foods. I remember how he use to turn up his nose at them. Ha! Every time I have said: "I hope everything is okay at home," and I was thinking of that, mainly. Perhaps I should have been more specific because I don't want any of my family to feel



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that I'm not thinking of them, or very deeply concerned about their health and happiness. However, I'm not one to worry about anything, it's in the Lord's hands, not mine, and I'll let it go at that.

One thing I might bring up at this time. Beginning with September's pay, you should receive \$100 every month. I leave it up to you to take out of that (or my bank account), enough to cover my expenses, such as film, snapshots, or anything you might send to me. Also, I am unaware of your financial status, but if you need money at any time (you mentioned the doctor bill) you are to take it out of Dad's and my joint account. It's yours as much as it is mine, because, well, I can never repay for everything you have done for me.

I still have my diary. I wasn't in New York, though we flew over the city and over Ted's section of the Bronx. That was the closest he has come to home in 20 months and he really appreciated that.

You say you got the crew pictures but didn't say whether or not they had sent you a negative. I told them to make one. If you don't have it, better write them and ask for it as we will probably want more

than the ten prints. Did they turn out well? Send me six -- I have a few people in mind. If you have the negative, you might get a few more printed, if you think they're worth it.

Yes, continue to send the clippings. I don't have any special needs right now, but would really like a box of candy. Any soldier here with lipstick (!) can have all the women he wants.

This censoring is a problem at times. I censor the mail of my Enlisted Men and there's always the threat of a court martial for letting information go through. Of course we didn't know that our letters were postmarked "Hamilton Field," or that other places that carried a local postmark. I sign my name in the lower left hand corner of the envelope, indicating that censorship rules have been complied with.

Yes, the crew have been together all the time and we flew over in our own ship, and have to say crew members in order for you to know that it's all the individuals in the crew I'm talking about. I certainly wanted to fly over Quincy, but we weren't close enough.

Have you seen my clothes and suitcase that I sent from Hamilton Field? My gold bracelet for my wrist watch was left at home when I came into the Army.

Well, that answers your letters. Now for the rest. This place is like a Boy Scout camp. We live in tents and eat out of mess kits, and take a shower under cold water! The climate is pleasant and life isn't really bad at all. I'll have to be shot at before I'm to realize I'm in a war, I guess. I have visited a town already and have seen plenty of Italians. Today is your birthday, Mom. Be a good girl. I'll see if I can find something for you.

**8 September 1944** - I mailed that last letter by 'air mail special delivery' and I'm sending this one FREE. Let's see how much sooner that air mail arrives. I have little to add in this letter. I might mention that you can send your air mail letters to me for 6 cents instead of 8 cents.

I've heard many people mention Bill Rupp many times, but I don't believe I know him.

Maybe the Quincy Airport will be ready when I get back.

I see that Russ Flothoetter is in Italy. You might send me his address because you never know where I might be. Italy isn't such a large country. I've

talked to fellows who have visited Rome, but they didn't brag about the beauty of the Italian girls there, like Russ did.

**11 September 1944** - I sent a night letter today to inform you of my new address. This is our final destination, only a short distance from the last station. Arrived yesterday and have done little but get settled and acquainted. I am well satisfied with our assignment. We are in the 726th Squadron of the 451st Bomb Group of the 15th Air Force. A very good Group, I assure you, and the best Squadron in the Group! The 726th Squadron has received two Presidential Citations! Everyone has been very friendly and helpful. We live in tents, but only the Enlisted Men eat out of mess kits. There is a very nice (?) Officers Club where the Officers are messed. We arrived just in time for the Sunday evening meal and had a special treat: fried chicken! Frankly, I was amazed. I hope I'm amazed again and again, 'cause it was sure delicious.

There's so much to tell that I can't decide upon the proper angle. The censorship isn't so strict now that I'm a transient no longer. Examples of good old American ingenuity are plentiful. You know what cold weather will do to the occupants of a flimsy tent? Well, most of the tents are patched up in one, or more ways with stone, tin, wood, etc. You see, we have some work ahead of us. And we're planning on four stone walls. Still sleeping on cots under mosquito netting and wearing leggings and taking malaria tablets and using insect repellent. Under the present set-up, we go home after 50 missions. Can't judge the future from the past, so won't hazard a guess as to how long that will be. The Officers are in one tent and the Enlisted Men in another. Four in one and six in the other makes pretty comfortable quarters, not like when we were all in one. Electric lights are now available, for those with light bulbs. I wish that I had known the set up before leaving the States. I'd have stocked up on a few things. A 15-year old Italian boy gave me a shave and a haircut this morning for 20 lire. Expect to receive mail in about a week. We have only received that one bunch of letters.

Ratings are fairly good here. I put in for my Enlisted Men's promotions. Wally is looking forward to a gold bar soon. I'll be at least a 1st Lieutenant at the completion of the missions. I hope you are both well. You know, the closer I get to combat, the less



terrifying it becomes. They work us in gradually. I fly as a Co-pilot with another crew the first mission.

P.S. We did stock up on gum while in Newfoundland, that that's the only thing.

P.P.S. I ran into Lt. King, whom I co-piloted for his solo flight at Liberal, Kansas. I keep bumping into Pilots I've met in training, at one field or another.

**12 September 1944** - We had ground school all day, covering all the pertinent data we should know before starting our missions. I'm in the Officers Club right now - they have light bulbs in here, and I'm listening to the radio. I have written very few letters and I'm going to have to 'get on the ball' - TONIGHT! I just made a deal with an Italian boy to have my laundry done. Three packages of cigarettes is better than a dollar and a half to him. I suppose you know I visited the Azores. The night we were there, the moon shining on the water was a beautiful sight!

**14 September 1944** - The weather is pretty nice today. Yesterday the wind was blowing up the dust like mad. Reminded me of Ft. Stockton, Lubbock, Liberal and Tonopah. I visited Foggia, Italy. I don't know the population, but it's pretty good sized town. Wally, Ted, Charley and I toured the spots together. As a city, it offers very little to the sightseer. The American Red Cross Officers Club is about the only hangout. I signed the register and looked for other names from Quincy. There was one: Lt. Jack Meyer. I don't believe I know him. In the towns, which I have seen, all the homes and buildings are of stone or a type of cement, all joined together. You can't distinguished the homes from the business district because the buildings are all alike and there's absolutely no space for yards, or trees, or grass, or flowers. They do have parks in the city area. I saw several nice looking girls. The poor people are friendly, but those with money have nothing to do with the soldiers. The women's shoes are all one solid piece, instead of the heel and toe type you see in the States. Very few of the women wear make-up. The ones who do are generally the town prostitutes. We attended the Red Cross Theater and saw Gary Cooper in "Casanova Brown" - pretty good movie and a recent one.

Many horses are on the streets, but they are very small animals. They pull various types of carts and surreys. Such as their taxis. We got our rations at

the PX in town. Each week: 8 packages of cigarettes, 2 packages of gum, 5 candy bars. I paid for my laundry this morning with three packs of cigarettes. It was clean and ironed well, but I don't believe my clothes will hold up very long. Today is "stand down" day for this Squadron. That is a day when no combat missions are flown. So, last night was beer night at the Officers Club here. Each man is allowed four beers and two cokes. It was quite a jovial occasion and we had a lot of fun singing songs with accordion accompaniment. The fellows all know who Jackson is now, because I brought my clarinet over and gave them some music. The accordion player played chords for me and some of it wasn't too bad. There's a 'Group Dance Band' in need of a sax player and I'm going to play with them, if I can find the time.

I don't believe I told you about visiting Marrakech, North Africa. What a place! The natives are filthy. I've been looking around to find something suitable for your birthday, Mom, but I haven't found anything yet. Certainly hope to see some mail soon. Keep everything under control at home.

**16 September 1944** - I didn't write yesterday because I wanted so much to have something to answer. Well, the mail came this afternoon. Everyone in the crew received some mail. I received ten letters, three of them were from you.

Incidentally, one of your letters that I received, in the bunch of mail September 7, was numbered 6, but I haven't seen any numbered 1,2,3,4.

Yes, I appreciate the clippings. I see one here that mentions S/Sgt Paul Mathes as being here in the 451st Group. I'll look him up. I knew Bob Mathes; undoubtedly is his brother.

I would have telephoned home, Mom, if we'd been allowed to. My only chance would have been in San Francisco and I didn't that I'd ought to risk it, since the law was laid down to us by the Major.

Jamie Johnson sent me a couple pictures. Glad he dropped in to see you. I wrote to Mr. Heald at the YMCA just yesterday. No, I haven't received the films. I am keeping a diary, of sorts. It's complete, but brief.

The last time I got weighed was in Frisco and there I weighed 170 lbs., even though my picture makes me look thin. I haven't lost any weight.

I halfway promised one of the pictures to Bernice Thomas, but I haven't heard from her for so

long that I'm not so set on giving her one. Send me one of the pictures. I'd like to see what they look like and I'll mail it to a girl friend. You can do as you think best with the other two.

This thing of putting in everything in a letter that you think you can get away with isn't the way we look at censorship over here, Mom. I censored a bunch of Enlisted Men's mail here yesterday (all the Officers take turns) and cut out a few items. As an Officer, I sign my name on the envelope indicating that I've complied with the regulations and then seal it. I doubt if it's ever opened. We don't tell the things we shouldn't, because we're the ones that would be hurt. Regulations here are not strict at all. One thing that is considered secret is my route over here. You can understand why, of course.

Seventeen days have passed since you wrote of Dad's condition. I trust his health is much improved by now.

Charley and I are now living in a different tent, and Ted and Wally also. They had to make room for new crews and that's the Army's asinine way of arranging things. You see, they expect to get us back together all in the same tent as the older fellows finish their missions and go home. We haven't

been flying yet. Seems as though they're trying to finish up the boys who are about done. Will get started soon, I hope.

Yesterday was a poor day for moving. We had rain all afternoon. (I'm permitted to tell anything about the weather.) And it's a good thing your August 30 letter came with the previous two, or as you thought, I might have scolded you, Ha!

Went to the open-air theater last night after the ball game. The Officers play softball against the Enlisted Men almost every evening after supper. "Standing Room Only," was showing. I had seen it before, but got even a bigger kick out of it this time.

I don't believe I mentioned before that I visited Tunis. We spent a night in what might have been a fine hotel, except that was completely barren, without electricity, etc.

I'm not a bit worried about flying combat missions and would rather get started than sit on the ground all day. I've had so much training, it's beginning to come out my ears, and so far I haven't done anything for the army.

Well, that's enough for this time. Cheer up and enjoy life, I am. Watch your health.

## REMEMBRANCES OF FRANCE

By: June "Jody" Keller

*The following literary passage comes from the 'FORWARD' in a book titled "The Legend of Jenny's Angels," written by June (Jody) Keller.*

Did you ever stroll by yourself along a remote stretch of beach and suddenly feel you are not alone? Or, see a faint movement out of the corner of your eye, and when you looked, there was nothing there? Maybe you are lying on a gurney in a hospital ER, frightened and in pain, when a stranger with a 24-carat smile came and stood beside you. Her soft voice and kind words calmed your fears. Later, you couldn't recall the precise words that passed between you, but you



June "Jody" Keller

knew everything was going to be all right -- and it was.

In the aftermath of the horrific tragedies that have befallen our country, when total strangers rescued so many lives, it's impossible to deny the existence of earth angels and the impact they have on our lives. Some folks call their deeds coincidences even as they watch them in the remarkable performance of their duties. Who else could be so strong, and in just the right place at just the right moments? When have we ever

needed earth angels more than today? The following is a true story for you to consider.

My fear of falling from high places has kept me grounded for most of my life. No doubt, the dread

began when I heard how my brother died after a routine WWII bombing mission over Nazi-held oil refinery in Le Pontet, France. The B-24 Liberator, Patsy Jack, went down in flames in a wheat field, strewing its crew over three communities, August 2, 1944. My brother, Winston Fleming Dandrew, was the only casualty -- his parachute never opened.

The surviving crew were invited to a memorial ceremony in France in 1995, spurred on by a former French pilot, Marcel Ertel, and Robert Karstensen of Marengo, IL, whose efforts to honor these men raised enough money to afford each aviator and/or his family and incredible two weeks of honor, medals, meals, hotel rooms, and a tour bus -- free of charge.

On August 2, 1995 I took a window seat on the wing of a Boeing 747 Air France, and told myself over and over, I can do this! Air travel upsets the delicate balance in my digestive/respiratory/cardiac/DNA continuum. The date coincidence couldn't be a friendly omen either, yet here I was. The hospitable, generous French citizens had provided for our every comfort and entertainment. What's more, they named a Square in Les Setoux after my brother. I had to be there! If he could die on the alter of freedom, I could "suck it up" for the six plane rides ahead of me.

As I studied the wing of the monster jet, I saw a football field stretched before me and thought of my sons. I remembered Russ stealing a football from AuSable Valley and running it back for a touchdown (among other heroics). As we waited behind umpteen other planes ahead of us on the tarmac, a man seated himself in the aisle seat, leaving the middle seat open "To put our junk on," he said.

We visited, ate a delicious dinner (I hadn't been able to eat all day, but suddenly I had a voracious appetite), I watched him play Solitaire with a French deck (that he later gave me), and tried to watch a movie. My heebie-jeebies subsided once we got past the horrifying take-off. "I used to be a nervous wreck like you, but look at me now. I fly everywhere," he said thumping his chest. At every shudder of the big bird, he assured me it was "nothing to worry about." I clung to those words.

Before we deplaned in Paris, I thanked him for effectively "tranquilizing" me. We said our good-byes and he hurried off. Halfway down the covered walkway I saw a lady holding a sign, "JUNE



**Jody At The Gravesite Of Her Brother  
At Rhone National Military Cemetery - France**

KELLER." My seatmate was several people ahead of me, but he turned to point me out to the sign-holder. Then he vanished completely!

He knew my name! How? I hadn't given it to him or shown him any documents. It's a hard and fast rule with me: no names, addresses, or phone numbers. Yet he knew my name.

I'm convinced he was an earth angel, and on that day, I was his assignment.

*Jody will be fondly remembered as a guest of Marcel Ertel and the 'Cappleman Crew,' on that visit to France, back in early August of 1995. It was especially poignant for Jody to visit the grave of her brother; Sgt Winston F. Dandrew, located in the Rhone National Military Cemetery in Draguignan, France. It so happened that we visited the cemetery on the 10th of August, which happened to be the birthday of the deceased.*

*I am indebted to Jody for adding Marcel and myself into her 'FORWARD' in her first book. June Ida 'Jody' Keller has had two books published. The second one is titled "BEHREN'S LAKE." These books are available via the 'AMAZON' webpage on the Internet, or by way of your local book store.*



## CAPTURED

(Third Installment by George Held)

*(Editor's note: The closing statement by Lt. Held, in our last Ad Lib, were that he was incarcerated in a Hungarian Penitentiary and was placed in a solitary confinement cell.*

*He wrote; "As the days ran into each other, I found it more difficult to fight off the loneliness and surrender that began to take hold. It was critical for me to ward off this depression, and with concerted effort, I redirected my thoughts to happier times." Thus we continue.)*

I was home; an Aviation Cadet stationed at Maxwell Field, Alabama; a member of the class of 43-J, in pre-flight training. What an exciting time it was; We were so enthusiastic; we embraced the war with the attitude that we would make the world a safer place and rid it of its demons.

The fancy Cadet uniform issued generated envious expressions from the young men and women alike as we strutted through our routines. Often, when we were off post, the Enlisted personnel, who did not recognize the uniform, would salute us. We were part of the U.S. Army. The Air Corps had created the Cadet Corps for training purposes; we were Non-Commissioned Officers attached to the Southeast Army Air Corps. The pilot training program consisted of a pre-flight training course, primary flying, basic flying and advanced flying school. Each phase of training required three months to complete, or a total of twelve months to win our Wings. To the aspiring pilot, his fate as a Fighter (single engine) Pilot or a Bomber (multi-engine) Pilot, could not be determined until he had completed basic flying school.

The three months at Maxwell Field crammed pre-flight theory, intensive instruction on aerodynamics, theory of flight, aircraft parts and function, aircraft engines and maintenance. New words like



Lt. George Held  
Born 1921 - Deceased 2006

aileron, altitude, horizon, lift, spin, stall and bank, began to preempt our vocabulary, and we began to live and breathe flying in preparation for primary training. Pre-flight training was all classroom, unexciting; it was all theory. When we finally completed our required classes, we anticipated hands-on experience ahead. Primary flying school was our next stop at Decatur, Alabama.

My first day at primary flying school was breathtaking; the quarters resembled a country club. Lodged in civilian facilities, we were two to a room. The instructors were civilian pilots dressed in civilian clothing. The dining hall had tables set for four with tablecloths, napkins, and silver service. Civilian waiters served us. This was, in fact,

a civilian facility adapted to serve military personnel. It was more like being stationed at a hotel; I was so impressed that I immediately called my mother to describe the setting and asked that she come to see for herself. She was quite pleased, and agreed to visit. Just being an Aviation Cadet inflated the ego; imagine what this new development added. We were all delighted with our new accommodations, and we learned later not only were trained pilots in short supply, but so too were Army Air Fields and housing facilities. The only military personnel on the Base were the Commanding Colonel and his Administrative Staff; the rest were civilians.

The first day on the flight line was to introduce each instructor to his new class of eight student pilots. Our first encounter was all questions, "Have you ever flown before?" "Do you get airsick?" "Do you have a pilot's license?" I wondered, why these questions, as he informed us that each would receive an introductory flight with him at the controls. He led us to the hangar where we drew equipment in preparation for this first eventful flight.

The airplane we would be flying was a Stear-

man PT-17, a bi-plane with two open cockpits in tandem; its strutted fuselage covered with tightly drawn and doped canvas; its radial engine supported a laminated wooden propeller with metal tips.

The equipment we had drawn for this introductory flight consisted of a leather helmet, goggles, and a backpack parachute. We stood ready, waiting to go, when the instructor selected one from our group at random. He directed the student to the front cockpit as he entered the rear. We stood back as he revved up the engine and taxied to the end of the runway. Spellbound, we all watched as they slowly became airborne and winged their way out of sight. Fifteen minutes later, as we impatiently waited our turn, we caught sight of our plane over the downwind leg of the runway. We watched as the instructor banked the plane into his final approach and made a perfect three-point landing. As he taxied towards us, we all approached excited to greet our fellow student. Our instructor was calmly taxiing the plane in sweeping "S" curves, carefully looking about, while our friend in the front cockpit had his head hanging precariously over the side of the aircraft. A trail was spewing from his mouth to the tail of the plane. What had happened? Poor fellow, he looked half-dead. We soon learned that the instructor was "wringing us out," that is, the introductory flight was an exercise whereby he put the aircraft and the occupant through every acrobatic maneuver he had mastered and many the he had not tried. It was his method to test how much we could take, and although the environment was civilian, this was not a lesson in civility. We immediately learned to approach our instructors with respect and trepidation since we were now on the firing line. The instructors were responsible for exposing us to every experience they deemed appropriate. Only the fittest would survive. I weathered that first flight cautiously, but from the starting eight in our class, three of my friends "washed out" of the pilot training program before they could solo.

It would take eight hours of dual instruction before anyone would be prepared to solo, and that training period remains fondly in my memory. I recall my instructor yanking at my pants leg as he reached forward beneath my seat in the cockpit when I did not maintain a level horizon during flight. Often he would scream instructions to me through the intercom tube, the only method to communicate between cockpits. Instruments were lim-

ited and simple, a stick that controlled the front and rear ailerons, two foot pedals for banking and rudder control, a throttle to accelerate the engine, an altimeter to indicate the height of the aircraft, an air speed indicator to measure velocity, a compass for direction, a fuel gauge and magneto switch. We were required to practice many procedures, among them were "landing on the clouds" (using clouds as practice landing fields), acrobatics and spins. It was all to feel and master control of the aircraft. We were flying by the seat of our pants.

It was a bright morning, not long after completing the required dual instruction training, when my instructor directed me to land at an auxiliary landing field. There, after we both exited the plane, he gave me final instructions before turning the aircraft over to me for my solo flight. I was so excited; finally I was about to fly on my own. I remember stopping long enough to gather my wits before taking off. I gave her the gun as the plane gracefully soared into the air. As I climbed to 1,500 feet making the necessary two ninety-degree turns, I was on my downwind leg. Meanwhile I had to time my next two turns, while reducing altitude and stalling the plane for a landing. All the training paid off. I successfully touched the plane down, although with a few extra bounces.



**Cadet George Held In Pilot Training**

Successfully executing my first solo flight was a thrill. To fly alone was to taste a newly discovered freedom, and since we were required to accumulate flying time, practicing aerobatics and exploring the area became a full time adventure.

Our Base was located in the north central region of Alabama near the Tennessee Valley with Wheeler Dam and many lakes dotting the area; this

picturesque terrain was made for flying, and around every bank was a fresh new sight to discover.

On many occasions, instructors who had observed my antics while flying solo in the area had admonished me. It was during this free flying time that I performed unauthorized low altitude flying, buzzed buildings and objects: in general doing what made me considered to be, "a hot-shot pilot." My ship's identification numbers had been reported to the CO (Commanding Officer) on several occasions after performing these illegal maneuvers; promptly put on report, I was threatened with expulsion from the Cadet Corps. I never took these warnings seriously, I believed it was "cool" to display this bravado, especially since every class had at least one "hot-shot" in its group.

As promised, my mother wrote to advise me that she was taking a train down to Decatur for a short visit. I arranged to meet her at the station. To say she was overjoyed would be putting it mildly; I would say she was ecstatic to see the conditions at the Base. She spent a few days with me; I spent what free time I had showing her the sights and some of my required daily routine. When she had to leave, I helped her with her luggage to the train station. As we approached the platform to board the train, I noticed two 'Red caps' loading a flag-draped casket into the baggage car. My mother's head dropped, as she pretended to be unaware. We did not exchange a word on the subject; there was a silent acceptance. We said our goodbyes and Mom headed back to New York. Returning to the Base, I learned that a Cadet had crashed and been killed during a training flight.

The remainder of primary flight training was spent in fine-tuning our newly acquired skills; mastering acrobatics, conquering cross country flying, and adapting to the ground looping habits of the Stearman. With study, commitment, and good fortune, I, together with four of the original starting class of eight, finished primary flight school training and headed for basic flight training.

Cornith, Mississippi, was the new location of our Basic Flying School; not too far from Decatur, Alabama, but in many respects, it was light years away. The Base was strictly "G.I." It was all military personnel and what one would expect for mind at a military base. Someone had just taken away our 'candy bar,' and all those extras we had grown ac-

customed to were gone; we were back in the Army. Returned to the Army lifestyle and introduced to a new trainer, the BT-13A, affectionately known as the "Vultee Vibrator," we greeted our new aircraft. This plane was much larger than the Stearman; it was a low wing monoplane with a sliding canopied hood. Beside greater horsepower, faster cruising speed and more complicated instrument panel, the Vultee was equipped with radio, a radio compass, landing flaps, gyro-controlled artificial horizon and turn and bank indicator. Although the routine was more stringent than it had been in primary training, I immediately entered headlong into the training program. Our instructors were Army pilots, just as demanding as our civilian pilots had been; however they could demand more respect since they were Commissioned Officers.

During this period, we maintained a rigorous program to keep us in top physical condition. We began every morning with a six-mile run around the airport runways before mess; followed by flight instructions, and finishing with ground school classes. We had instruction ranging from dead reckoning navigation to hand packing our own parachutes. The thrill and excitement to fly solo changed in basic flying school since now it required only learning that intricacies of a new aircraft. We quickly accomplished the required eight hours of dual instruction, and went on to new challenges. Night cross country flights as well as instrument flying were all part of our advanced flight training, as we accumulated flying time and experience. The practice area was familiar territory because we were still in the Tennessee Valley in sight of Wheeler Dam with lakes and bridges over local waters.

One clear morning as I began to taxi towards the flight line, I must have produced a pretty picture because an Army photographer approached me. He had been gathering publicity photographs that the Air Corps would use to encourage enlistments. When I allowed him to take a picture, I never dreamed he would use it. A few weeks later I received a call from my mother telling me that my picture appeared in the New York Daily News, captioned with my name and my status in the flying program; I was flattered, and she was proud.

As we neared the conclusion of our basic training, my cocky attitude only heightened. I adopted a daredevil attitude, challenging my friends to chase

me under bridges, buzzing local buildings, engaging in make-believe dogfights, while keeping an eye out for instructors who would police the skies. A managed to avoid detection even after I lured others to follow in my sport.

Of course, in hindsight, I cannot imagine what possessed me to perform these outlandish pranks; blame it on youth, inexperience, or just plain defiance, but do them I did!

On my own one day, completing a pass under a local bridge, and instructor immediately jumped on my tail when he spotted me. Since he was flying a much faster plane, he hovered over me and forced me to land at an auxiliary field. I knew I was in trouble and decided to make no excuses as I answered all the questions put to me. As instructed, I followed him back to the base field where he placed me on report. The next morning, as directed, I reported to the Colonel, the Commanding Officer of the post, who promptly reprimanded me, and ordered that I take a flight check. I appeared on the flight line later that day with the senior pilot instructor. Since a check flight was required to prove your flying ability before you were "washed out," I believed that I still had a chance to remain with the pilot training program.

On my best behavior, and in exemplary fashion,

I performed the necessary maneuvers to prove my competence as a pilot. Convinced that not only had I met, but had also surpassed the standards of the examination, I was optimistic when I was summoned to appear once again before the Colonel. The meeting was a disaster, not only was I admonished again, the Colonel reprimanded me once again for disregarding orders, endangering lives and despite the fact that I had passed the check flight; we was making a example of me. I feared a court martial was imminent, while confined to my quarters awaiting further orders.

Flying was my life, my childhood dream. Devastated, embarrassed and humiliated, I saw awaiting my fate while my friends continued with their flight training. In a few days I received new orders to report to the Commanding Officer of the Navigation Training Program at Selman Field, Monroe, Louisiana. I was dismissed from the pilot training program. Shocked, I boarded a train bound for Monroe, Louisiana. I did not look forward to he program ahead. I never expected they would boot me from the pilot training program. I could fly, I knew I was capable, and I so wanted to fly fighters. As the train left the station, I resented the action taken against me. In retrospect, there was no one to blame but myself.

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## FORCED LANDING AT ZARA NEEDS ANSWERS

By: Irvine Levine

*(Editor . . . I regret that I didn't include this in the George Olson's 'I Survived Five Crashes' story (Page 4). It just came to my attention as this Ad Lib was being laid out. Nevertheless I'll add it now.)*

I recently received the Winter/Spring 2009 issue of the 451st Ad Lib - I finally saw a picture of you. I could not identify with any of the members who attended the 2008 Reunion. I attribute it mostly to the fact that I did not join the 451st with the men with whom I originally went into training with. I was a maintenance test pilot in Pueblo, Colorado for 7 months, prior to coming over.

I am amazed at some of the information you

have available and I hope you can enlighten me, as I never recorded any of the dates and targets of my missions.

I hope you can give me the date and target of the mission when I landed at Zara.

I lost my #3 and #4 engines over the target and was unable to get my engines feathered until I was down to 18,000 feet and doing 160 m.p.h. and losing altitude at almost 1,500 feet per minute. My Copilot, Lt Upchurch, required two feet on the left rudder to keep the plane in straight flight.

I finally got the plane down to around 125 m.p.h. - near stalling speed but losing altitude at

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

about 50 feet per minute, at which time I decided I could make it to Zara.

I had the gunners in the back of the plane jettison everything possible, and managed to have the 250 lb. bomb in the bomb bay dislodged. The gunners tied a parachute to each of the waist gun mounts and stood as close to the bomb bay for the best balance possible.

The intent was to slow down the plane at which point they would run to the back of the plane whereby their weight would cause the tail to drag and slow us up.

Neither idea worked!

Fortunately I was able to make a straight approach, but the parachutes broke loose and the weight of the men was insufficient to drag the tail. Luckily, I still had enough hydraulic fluid to brake to a stop.

Apparently the parachutes were taken by the British, who also used Zara as an emergency field, and though attempts were made to recover them, no one knew anything about them.

While waiting to be picked up, I noticed the tail section of a plane which I thought was the plane

which you abandoned on fire when you flew with Lt. Brown. I also thought it was the plane which I ferried up to Bari from Topeka, Kansas. If I am right, the date of my mission would have been after your landing at Zara. A C-47 brought us back to the 724th and when I reported to Headquarters, that same afternoon, I was listed on the blackboard as MIA - OH, how I wished I had a camera.

My crew wrote up the details of this mission and submitted it, hoping it would yield a DFC, but was told that it wasn't necessary because I would be getting one anyway.

I never received it - "cest la guerre."

I hope you are able to help me in this quest.

I was not an original member of the post war 451st, but your sending me some of the older Ad Libs helped to bring me somewhat up to date.

Rest assured, I have enjoyed reading every line of every issue and certainly hope they will continue for a long time.

*(Editor: A gave Irv answers to his quest, as best I have them in my research. What was included, via the George Olson' article, may further clarify some of his questions.)*

## TECH SERGEANT LINDLEY MILLER'S MISSIONS

*(Editor ... I have to admit that in the back of my mind I'm rather grateful to the late Lindley Miller, for his mission journal. It truly gives me the opportunity to research each of his listed missions. Other than to make some grammatical, and spelling, corrections, I'm trying to keep his journal as written. But the time spent in checking my data bases and seeing information on the Internet, is keeping me busy.)*



SGTS -- MILLER, GRAHAM & MOREAU

### November 4, 1944 - Munich, Germany

Today another double into Germany with my new crew. Lt. Fish is a good Pilot, but the rest of the crew isn't too sharp. The Copilot is a "Good Joe," but too darned nervous for my money.

We were after the Mar-shalling Yards and the Messerschmitt Nessergergnutt Factory at Augsburg, a little town northwest of Munich. We went over the target but couldn't pick it up; but we did receive plenty of flak. We then headed south and bombed the Messerschmitt Yards at Kufstein, Germany. We hit our target well, but also smashed hell out of the town which was very picturesque with the Alps as a

background. Some of our bombs were delayed action (as much as 72 hours) so you can imagine the slaughter to come. Anyway, I guess that's all part of war; and the Germans are really asking for a total one.



*(Editor ... For the most part, Sgt Miller's journal is basically correct. My records show that we lost one aircraft; 42-95239, nicknamed "Ape." It was piloted by 2Lt William R. Young; 727th Squadron. The records show that all 11 onboard were KIA due to an unexplained crash in the high mountain elevations in the friendly territory of Northern Italy.)*

#### **November 6, 1944 - Vienna, Austria**

We again headed today for Vienna; and I was really scared as hell as our last two raids were veritable nightmares. I was again flying as Engineer for Lt. Fish, and we were out to hit the Vienna South Ordnance depot; but had several other alternative, in and around the city. The weather was perfect, but I was really praying it would be overcast over the target, as the flak is less accurate in such a case. Our escort was poor, but no enemy fighters were encountered. We bombed by radar, as the target was covered by weather, and the flak was heavy but quite inaccurate. However, both our main gears came down over the target for no earthly reason, and we couldn't raise them. We lagged behind, but received escort home and arrived safely, but a little late.

*(Editor ... November 6th was an 'Able'/'Baker' type mission. 'Able' was, as Sgt Miller described, to the Vienna Ordnance Depot, Austria. 'Baker' was to the Salorno Transformer Station, Italy. Neither target cost us any aircraft.)*

#### **November 7, 1944 - Sarajevo, Yugoslavia**

Today we set out on what was to be a milk run, to bomb Marshalling Yards and Troop Installations at Sarajevo. German troops were supposedly concentrated there on their way North, from their route in Greece. We made two runs over the target before dropping our bombs, and on the second run the flak became very heavy and accurate; tracking us throughout the entire bomb run. We were hit, but not badly, but did wipe out the target completely and a whole Infantry Division with it.

*(Editor ... Seems that Sgt Miller and myself were on this same mission. I, in the 724th and he, in the 725th. I wrote the mission thusly: "5:30 hour run to Sarajevo, Yugoslavia. Suppose to be a 'milk run.' Flew nose turret with McKenney's crew - #3 position. Made 2 runs over the target - 1st one was about 15 miles off course. 2nd one smashed primary target. Flak was ready for us on the 2nd run. Heavy accurate and intense. In flak for 3 minutes.*

*Radio Operator had flak tear a hole in his jacket. No injuries aboard ship. Trip back uneventful. Take-off time 9:30 am. Landing 3:00 pm."*

*I should add this to the mission description; We lost one aircraft from the 726th, due to severe damage. #42-52045 (no nickname) piloted by 1Lt John N. Morris. One was KIA and two were POWed. The other 8 made it back to Base in damaged aircraft.)*

#### **November 11, 1944 - Linz, Austria**

Today we set out to bomb the Benzol Plant at Linz. It was really cold this morning, and even before we reached ten thousand feet we were leaving treacherous vapor trails. At 26,000 feet the temperature was 49 degrees below zero (F). I was flying waist (because of the fuel transfer system); but shortly before we reached the target, we lost No. 2 engine. Previously we lost our waist, and nose guns which had frozen tight without heaters. We turned off the target with about five lbs. of fuel pressure in No. 2 engine and a severe gas leaking the bomb bay. I used the transfer system, getting gas from the No. 4 gas tank; but shortly afterwards we lost our turbo in Number 1 and had a runaway prop on No. 3 which we couldn't control. We dropped our bombs on a little town (Unidentified) in Austria and headed for Rimini, only ten miles behind the front. We were forced to land in between two runways as one was blocked with a burning B-17 and the other with a crashed B-24. We landed okay, but our nose dug in the mud when the brakes locked, and it collapsed. We piled up in the middle of the field; but the plane wasn't too badly damaged. We returned home two days later in a newly repaired plane which proceeded to crash the following day when its wing came off. This was a poor repair job on a main wing and it took eleven men's lives and we could well have been the ones.

*(Editor ... Nowhere could I find any mission to Linz, Austria that Sgt Miller says happened on 11 November. We didn't bombed Linz anytime from 16 October to 15 December of 1944. The target for that day was the Aviano Airdrome, Italy.*

*My aircraft records show that we had two incidents involving 725th aircraft. Aircraft 42-51923 (Short Stuff) caught fire on the Base and was taken out of the inventory.*

*Aircraft 44-41632 (no nickname) crash landed away from Base. Probably the aircraft that Sgt Miller was referring to.*

*As to the aircraft that they flew back to Base*

and Sgt Miller said it went down a few days after their return, with another crew flying it.

This is what I have on it: Aircraft 42-51090 (nicknamed HEY MOE, renamed LOIS M) crashed on a gunnery training mission on 14 November 1944 with 2Lt William Sellers, Pilot. It was, as Sgt Miller described it, having the left wing (between #1 and #2 engine) separate from the rest of the aircraft while in flight. All accounts indicate that there was an internal electrical explosion from the #2 engine causing it's structural failure. It had some 288 hours of flight since it's previous wing repairs by the 60th Service Squadron.)

**December 3 1944 - Innsbruck, Germany**

Today we set our on a new kind of raid - a nuisance raid and we carried delayed action bombs (some to go off as late as a week) with schemers attached. Our target was the Marshalling Yards at Innsbruck which was sending supplies to the Italian

front. This was a single ship Mickey run and could be very dangerous if it was clear over the target, or if enemy fighters spotted us. I was flying as Engineer to Major Dooley, our new C.O., and the trip proved to be another wonderful "milk run" over the Alps. It was clear as a bell, but just south of Berchergaden (Hitler's home) the weather closed in and we went to 26,000 feet. We encountered no flak over the target and had a pleasant trip home. I like those single trips a lot as one doesn't have to rendezvous over the field for an hour or so, but go right up to the target, climbing on course.

(Editor ... Sgt Miller was a bit incorrect in this mission description. Innsbruck lies in: Austria not Germany. And it was 3-ship missions rather than a single ship mission. These 3-ship missions were occasionally flown, sometimes just to harass the enemy.)

## OUR DIMINISHING RANKS -- THEIR FINAL FLY-BY

**REPORTED SINCE OUR LAST NEWSLETTER**

### *724th Squadron*

- Glendon J. Baldwin, 21 March 2007 - AEG
- Reinhart T. Gertz, 18 March 2007 - Pilot
- Edward F. Gust, 28 April 2009 - Gunner
- Allen J. Harju, 15 August 2008 - Gunner
- Chester A. Jurus, 29 May 2009 - ROG
- George M. Olson, 16 January 2009 - ROG
- Samuel H. Rosenblatt, 24 January 2008 - Bombardier
- Glen A. Swearingen, 29 August 2008 - Mechanic

### *725th Squadron*

- Burl W. Brunson, 28 November 2008 - Gunner
- Jerome B. Finegold, 26 April 2009 - Bombardier
- Wilbur W. Fowler, 12 December 2008 - Propeller Section

- James L. Houston, 5 July 2005 - Gunner
- John E. Lambkin, 15 July 2007 - Armament
- Richard M. Otto, 28 November 2008 - Gunner

### *726th Squadron*

- Harold A. Brinkmeier, 18 November 2008 - Bombardier
- Richard H. Keeffe, 30 March 2009 - Bombardier
- Wesley W. Rink, 4 September 2009 - Pilot
- Albert L. Roemer, 27 December 2008 - Intelligence Officer
- Ray W. Tolle, 17 July 2005 - Radio Mechanic

### *727th Squadron*

- Robert E. Beaupre, 1 July 2009 - Gunner
- Vincent Cantelmo, DOD Unknown - Bombaradier
- James T. Casperon, 11 June 2009 - Pilot
- John D. Hulser, 1 March 2007 - Gunner
- John A. Lipan, 7 November 2008 - Gunner
- Andrew J. Matala, 30 March 2009 - Crew Chief
- Don W. Robinson, 24 January 2009 - Pilot
- Robert M. Shupe, 19 November 2008 - Gunner
- Gordon M. Snyder, 4 August 2009 - Gunner

## SPECIAL MEMORIAL TRIBUTE OFFERED IN THE NAME OF:

**Henry B. Ford**, 726th Aircraft Commander/Operations Officer - From Comrade Harry Rohde

**Wilbur W. Fowler**, 725th Propeller Specialist - From Comrade, Neal Byrd

**Chester A. Jurus**, 724th Radio Operator Gunner - From wife Dorothy

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

**George M. Olson**, 724th Radio Operator Gunner - From wife, Mern

**Charles M. 'Chuck' Thomas**, 727th Aircraft Commander - From Comrade, Sedgefield Hill

**Douglas G. Wadlund**, 727th Aircraft Commander - From Comrade, Sedgefield Hill

**Edward F. Gust**, 724th Gunner - From Brother, Robert

### REMEMBER

***A donation of \$50 or more to the 451st Bomb Group in memory of a deceased comrade as an alternative to flowers and other memorials, is an option for all members to consider.***

## "LITTLE FRIENDS:" THE 49TH FIGHTER SQUADRON (Continued 20th Installment by Dr. Royal C. Gilkey)

On October 21, 1944, Squadron pilots flew in another direction. The target for bombers under escort being the Szombathely Marshalling Yards in Hungary. The P-38s were to give close escort to the last couple of groups of the 304th Wing bombers during penetration to, and withdrawal from the target. Seventeen "Lightnings" took off at 0730 hours (7:30 a.m.). One of the P-38s had to return early because of mechanical trouble. Another was obligated to land early at Vis Island because of having run out of fuel. Actually, 16 Squadron planes, which were leading the Group, got over the target, remaining there of 10 minutes, from 1100 hours to 1110 hours (11-11:10 a.m.). Fifteen returned to base at 1255 hours (12:55 p.m.) minus the plane that had landed at Vis. The briefed route was followed during the flight home.

The outgoing trip did achieve rendezvous with



the bombers at a point east of the briefed course, the place being Szakcs (4633N 1806E). From there, they escorted the bombers across Lake Balaton, so as to resume the course as briefed to the target. There were complications. As previously stated, the "Lightnings" rendezvoused with the bomber formation at Szakcs (4433N 1806E). The time was 1040 hours (10:40 a.m.); and the altitude, 24,000 feet. Our P-38s then began to escort the bomber formation northward across Lake Balaton.

While doing so, they spotted another bomber formation escorted by "Lightnings" proceeding over the Lake's southwestern tip in front of them. Increasing their speed, our P-38s managed to head off the other bomber formation and escort it to the target, which was reached at 1100 hours (11:45 a.m.). The entering altitude was 24,000 feet, which was maintained until exiting 10 minutes later at 1110 hours (11:10 a.m. They escorted the bombers upon with-

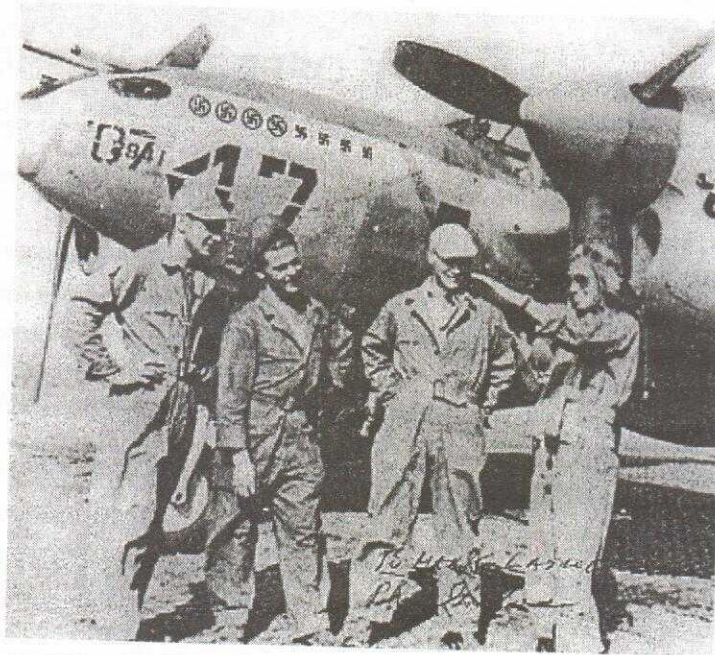
drawal as far as Glina (4521N 1606E) and then their altitude was 21,000 feet. The flight homeward was uneventful for the 15 "Lightnings" that landed at 1255 hours (12:55 p.m.) after leading the bomber Group on a 950-mile mission. The fighter formation was reported as good, but the bombers appeared to be somewhat scattered and strung out along the route.

The mission could be adjudged as successful from the standpoint of bombing results. Bombs plastered the target area. The Marshalling Yards at the western Hungarian city of Szombathely were covered by bomb bursts, with no more than one or two bombs falling wide of the mark and striking the cities northern outskirts. The good bombing results may well have been due to utter lack of aerial resistance and flak.

Pilots reported seeing a bomber dropping bombs on Gercze (4713N 1702E) from an altitude of 24,000 feet at 1053 hours (10:53 a.m.). Also observed during the mission was a V-shaped formation of five launches seen from 18,000 Feet at 0850 hours (8:50 a.m.), the coordinates being 4346N 1454E. It was thought a plane had been obligated to ditch in the vicinity because of an overheard radio call for the placement of a sea marker. Our pilots were unable to locate any signs of difficulty, however.

The weather caused no trouble over the target area where it was clear, and visibility unlimited (CAVU). In general, there were strings of scattered stratus with tops rising to 23,000 feet over the route to the target. This stopped just short of the Mission's bombing objective.

On the subject of radio security, the P-38s, while over their first checkpoint, Zapuntel, put in a



Fighter Pilot and Ground Crews Talking It Over

call for the bombers' estimated time of arrival (ETA) at the initial turning point. The response was that the bombers would be four minutes late, causing the "Lightnings" to turn completely around in an effort to find the bombers. Four minutes of flying to the rear turned up nothing; so the fighters made another 180-degree turn and got back on course because there was nothing else to do. It was believed that the missing bombers were not following the briefed route, making for some confusion in achieving rendezvous. Over the tar-

get area, the fighters got a call at approximately 1058 hours (10:58 a.m) inquiring whether the P-38s were the escort for the caller. The response was yes.

Sixteen of the Squadron's pilots received sortie credit for the Szombathely mission, one of them having landed on the Adriatic Island of Vis (Otok Vis), Yugoslavia during the return flight because of lack of fuel. One early return because of mechanical difficulties did not qualify for the sortie credit.

*(Editor ... Although, we the 451st Bomb Group, were not involved with the afore described mission (we were on stand-down), it was interesting, nevertheless, to record the details as described by the 49th Fighter Squadron, Intelligence Officer Royal C. Gilkey.)*



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



## CHATTER FROM THE FLIGHT DECK

Bob Karstensen

I guess it's time for my annual evaluation of where this Group's efforts are going. My decision to discontinue our biennial reunions (Issue 44) was predicated on the numbers of our members that have been reported as deceased and the less-than-enthusiased about holding another one. When Winson Jones volunteered to try for another one, I could only wish him God-Speed. Our turnout at Chicago was admirable, but it took a lot of encouragement (by phone) to induce those that would try to attend. There were about 44 (as Winson called/named us) 'survivors' in attendance.

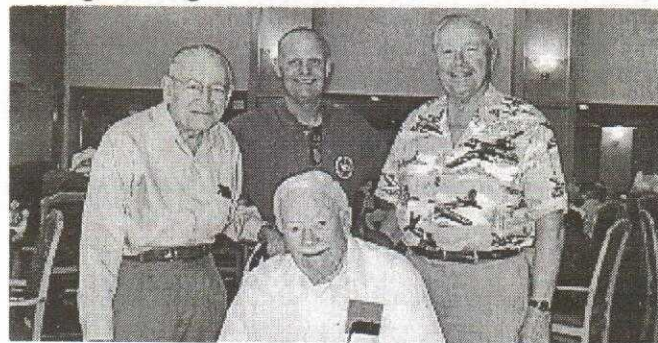
This leads to another situation that I have to consider. Just how long can we continue to publish the Ad Lib? Up to this point I've malingered in putting this issue out. With those that have joined the 'Diminishing Ranks,' and the decrease in contributions/donations, it's getting to be something that has to be considered. True, some of you have been very generous in sending in a donation for our continuation, but the annual input is barely enough to publish this newsletter, in the manner in which you members like to see it, much less to do the research that forwards the history of the 451st.

It's been over 30 years that I've been communicating with you via this newsletter format. Right from the very first 2-pager in 1978 to our more voluminous 40-plus pager. Maybe it's a case of me having a burn-out that puts me in this mood. Maybe if I saw a little more enthusiasm by some of you that haven't had much contact with this office, I'd perk up a bit more.

Speaking of enthusiasm, none can beat Winson "Big" Jones in that area of interest. On September 5, 2009, 'Win' came to my Marengo area and we had dinner at one of our noted local restaurants. You'll remember 'Win' as the coordinator / manager of our final biennial nationwide reunion held in Chicago last October 2008. He is still gung-ho to continue the tradition of having reunions, but more on a REGIONAL mini-basis than for a nationwide reunion. These types of REGIONAL reunions I wrote about in Issue 44 Ad Lib, page 2.

Proof of this is in "Big" Jones' doing a couple

mini-reunions while wintering in the Phoenix, Arizona area. With cooperation from this office, in furnishing updated local members addresses, he managed to bring together quite a few members and guests. Not to make that good enough, "Big" Jones ventured down to the Tucson area, and with a few Phoenix area members in tow, pulled off another mini-gathering with those locals.



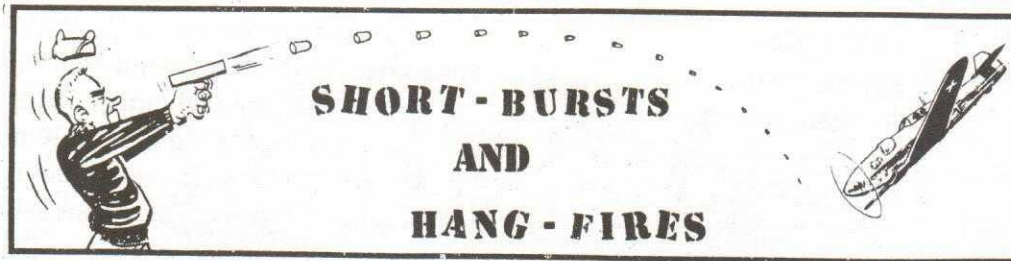
At Tucson: Standing Mike Stauth, Randy Jones, Win Jones  
Seated: Paul Harden

From what 'Win' told me, at OUR 2-person reunion, he's trying to put together another one for the Washington state members. But Washington is a very large state and most of our members are quite a distance apart, making it difficult for those that would wish to attend. And too, there is no concentration of members in one location, such as was the case in Arizona. But, as was proven at our nationwide reunion in Chicago, many of the offsprings are bringing their father, or grandfather, to these memorable events. But that requires a coordinated effort in finding the time for that offspring to leave work, and if these mini-reunions require a lay-over before heading back home.

Another point of concern are the numbers that make up the "Diminishing Ranks" section of these last two Ad Lib's. Between this one and the last one (Issue 45), there were almost 100 listed. This is truly unfortunate, but at our ages it's probable and expected.

Now, as this Ad Lib goes out in the mails and I get back the non-deliverable pieces of mail, I'll have to do some serious research to see if the member has passed on, or has actually moved. In this regard you could be of great help in keeping our roster up to date and let me know if you are aware of any of our members have moved, or taken "The High Flight."

Thanks for taking the time to read this editor's comments.



**Neal E. Byrd, 725th [CLERK, ENGINEERING SECTION]**

We are sending another \$50 as a Memorial to Wilbur Fowler, Prop Specialist with the 725th. He passed away December 12, 2008. MY FRIEND ... no thanks is due to anyone but you for your steadfast work to keep the memories alive.

I'm sorry I can't help Leonard Steadman in his search for his Grandfather. He said his Grandfather was called "Swede." I wrote passes for all the mechanics, but this is one I can't recall.

Bob, I thank you sincerely for all you've done for the outfit. I turned 86 in late January 2009 and what you've done to bring to bring back memories is really appreciated.

*(Editor ... Thanks Neal for the Kudo's. As to aiding Leonard Steadman in his search, perhaps airing it in the Ad Lib will Stir up a few memories among our 725th readers.)*

**Leo R. Emery, 725th [GUNNER: JAMES BELL'S CREW]**

I guess you are surprised to hear from me. I'm writing for two reasons: 1. I want you to know that I have greatly appreciate the Ad Lib's that I have received. I read every article. 2. In reading the article by Barbara Baker Johnson in the last Ad Lib, "Crash Site Exploration," I was surprised and pleased with the editorial info after the article.

The B-24 involved had been my crew's plane, 'Ready Teddy' #42-52087. The crew's pilot was James Bell. We were part of the original group who picked up the new bomber at Lincoln, Nebraska.

We headed for Africa in 'Ready Teddy' on December 3, 1943. We went by way of Florida; Natal, Brazil; Dakar, French West Africa; and finally to Morocco. In January 1944 we moved to Italy.

Our crew finished our missions in July 1944 and we were, at that point, on the Italian coast waiting for a troop ship to the States when we received word that 'Ready Teddy' went down. I remember the bad news because I heard it on my 21st birthday.

*(Editor ... Boy, it sure is nice to get feed-back, such as you just offered. I realize that some articles will evoke a memory or two. But most of the time that's about as far as it will go. It's never passed on. I appreciate your follow-up, and that you wished to transmit this information on to Barbara Baker Johnson. Tis Done!)*

**Ellsworth P. Johnson, 727th [NAVIGATOR: DON W. ROBINSON'S CREW]**

A note to let you know that Lt. Don W. Robinson, our Pilot, died 24 January 2009 in Vero Beach, FL. Lt. Vincent Cantelmo, Bombardier, died a few years ago. Our Copilot, Lt. Dennis Adams, still lives in Albuquerque, NM.

The Winter/Spring 2009 Ad Lib arrived recently to nudge me into writing this note. I certainly appreciate your devotion over the years to keeping the 451st spirit alive. Our crew was with the 727th Squadron. Cantelmo and I were the only two to finish our combat tours. Don threw his knee out on a swing in a pickup ball game and was out for a month. Adams finally took over until Don returned to flying status, but the war was over by then. Cantelmo and I flew with other crews to finish our tours and were two days out of Naples when VJ Day came. The rest of the crew flew home.

Thank you again for your years of service to the 451st!

*(Editor ... Thanks for the updating on what you know about your crew. I can't seem to find the date of death of Vincent Cantelmo - ANYWHERE. I do like to file that in my database, so I have complete records. I see that he was in the teaching profession in his civilian life, while you hung-out in the Air Force Reserves and retired as a Lt. Colonel. Nice going.)*

**John P. Mahoney, 726th [GUNNER: RICHARD D. COLEMAN'S CREW]**

What a pleasure to receive the Winter/Spring copy of the Ad Lib.

I now realize what I have missed by not making a greater effort to be, at least, a little more active in the 451st reunions.

Since "HARD TO GET" was shot down on the February 25, 1944: Regensburg raid, I hardly had time to know the main part of the Group. As I recall that raid provided the first loss of a plane in combat for the 451st.

At any rate, God Bless you for all the effort you have put into this effort.

*(Editor ... You're right about the first aircraft losses were during the Regensburg Mission. We lost 6 planes that day. DOUBLE TROUBLE, 725th (41-29244); THE CITADEL, 725th (42-52168); WEE WILLIE, 725th (42-52167); HARD TO GET, 726TH (42-7738); and 2 unnamed aircraft from the 724th - (42-7765) & (43-52101). In total we lost 19 men as Killed In Action.)*

**Len Kovar, 727th [BOMBARDIER: RICHARD A. TURNBULL'S CREW]**

Just a note to say: "Thank you" for your fine work in keeping the 451st connected. I regret not giving you more support -but I do appreciate your work. Because of you, our "CON JOB" crew became connected again. That has been enriching. Thank you for enabling this. As far as I know, I'm the last of our crew.

In the last issue of the Ad Lib I learned that 2 men were killed when we were shot down. We were flying with 11 men that day, including a Group Photographer, and I have often wondered who he was.

*(Editor ... You're not quite the last of the "FOUND" Turnbull Crew. Your Gunner, Mitchell D. Cohan is alive and kicking up the sand beaches down in Boynton Beach, FL.*

*As to the 11th man on that crew make-up on 22 August 1944, that was Photographer Cpl Evert B. Hines. My records show that he was doing his first mission as a Photographer when you guys got shot down. A fact arose recently that says he successfully bailed out and was POW'd, later found to have been killed. No further information has come to light as to the circumstances of his death. This info came by way of a Hungarian Historian; Nador Mohos.)*

**Chris McClure, 727th [ARMAMENT SECTION]**

I have just received the Winter/Spring 2009 Ad Lib and have the sense of the "winding down" of the 451st Alumni Group. I have been "winding down (or, already 'wound') for the last 3 years, or so.

During our last years, living in Arizona, I attended several Memorial Services of our WW-II golfing friends. 1st of the Utah Beach D-Day invasion. 2nd of the 15th AAF (not a 451st'er).

I see the Ad Lib lost another good friend, John Hanford, 727th, whom we talked and dined with at Reunions, along with others of the 727th.

So, Bob, except for your presence and tremendous efforts for all time - we no longer have other contacts from WW-II.

*(Editor ... Glad to see that your still "hanging-in-there," regardless of how things are 'winding-down,' as you call it.*

*Hey, as long as you guys continue to support the outfit, such as your generous contribution shows, I'll keep the Ad Lib a'going til I run out of ink.)*

**Harold McWilliams, 727th [MECHANIC]**

It's time for me to anti up a little donation. I did receive the last Ad Lib and appreciated very much. Sorry I did not get to the last reunion, since it was to be the first one I have missed. I would like to have said hello to some of the guys. I don't see any, except Sedge Hill once in a while. Did get a call from John Doedyns widow, Marie, last evening. Haven't seen or heard from none of the others. Sure hope your health is holding up. Dorothy and I are just getting older. She is now on "memory pills" and I probably should be too.

Take care of yourself and thanks again for all the great things you have done for the 451st.

*(Editor ... Thanks, both for another of your generous contribution and the updating on what's happening in the McWilliams' household. You keep a tight watch on Dorothy and those 'Memory Pills' or she'll have you carrying out the garbage, two, maybe three times a day and you, without the pill, probably won't remember it anyway.)*

**Bette Froehlich [725th ASSOCIATE MEMBER]**

The last Ad Lib is on my desk to remind me to say thanks for all you have done for me. I can still remember calling you on a rainy Sunday and I said "Don't hang up - You don't know me, but I'm calling about my brother whose plane crashed coming home from Italy." And you said "Bill Silliman." I was shocked. I'm sure you have helped many more, but Bob, it was a pleasure for me. Bill had all his plans made for getting into college right away. He was going to study engineering at an Eastern

school. I have a large oil painting on the wall near by my desk. It was done in Italy while on leave after losing his plane on landing after coming back from a mission.

*(Editor ... What a nice compliment you offered me on keeping the legacy of the 451st alive. Its been my pleasure to offer what information I have to those that feel the need to know. The tragedy of 3 June 1945 that took your brother's life, and those 11 others that were on board, when taking off from an Airbase on the coast of North Africa, was indeed sad. You could say he had previously redeemed himself when he lost control of his aircraft while attempting to land on an iced up runway, following a combat mission on 9 March 1945. On that incident they lost the plane, but not the crew.)*

**Wayne A. Vorpahl, 727th [ROG; ROBERT SMITH'S CREW]**

My pilot's wife, Mildred Smith (wife of Robert Smith from Duluth, Georgia) mailed me the recent newsletter stating I was deceased. Bob, I want to inform you that I am still above ground and in excellent health. It was sad to read that two of our crew members passed away (Herbert Lee and Everett Kipp). We are now down to three remaining crew members; myself, Robert Smith (Pilot), and Ward Rathbone (Copilot).

*(Editor ... First let me apologize for the glaring error in posting you as deceased. The word got to me, via one of our members, (who ???, I can't recall) that heard from somewhere that you had passed on. I tried to verify it from the Internet, but was unable to. Thus I listed your date of demise listed as 'Unknown.' Again, I humbly apologize)*

**Sallie J.E. Elliott, Complimentary Member [COL. EATON'S DAUGHTER]**

Enclosed is our check to the "451st" which we hope will help out in your efforts to keep the "Ad Lib" going for all of us!

We look forward to each issue and find the contributors, inserts, letters and remembrances so very inspiring and interesting. We were glad that the reunion was able to take place last year and it was fun reading about it. What an effort it is to arrange something like that and as the years go by, it doesn't get any easier. What a great job you have done over the years.

*(Editor ... Thanks Sallie for the generous contribution and kind remarks. True .. it's getting tougher and tougher to work in this chosen effort. It seems that the "hurrier I go, the behinder I get." There must be a pill, or something I can take, that will take me from this lethargic mood to a more aggressive frame of mind.)*



FORMER MEMBERS OF THE  
451<sup>ST</sup> Bombardment Group (H) WW II. LTD.



GROUP HEADQUARTERS 724th 725th 726th 727th Squadrons

1032 South State Street  
Marengo, Illinois 60152

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