

15th AIR FORCE

1991 LAS VEGAS REUNION with MR. WAYNE NEWTON

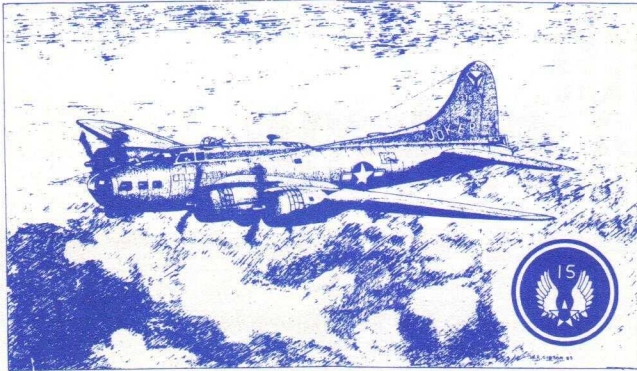


**GENERAL & MRS BYWATER PRESENTING OUR 1991 REUNION HEAD-
LINER – MR. WAYNE NEWTON – WITH AN HONORARY LIFE MEMBERSHIP**

The 15th Air Force Association Post Exchange

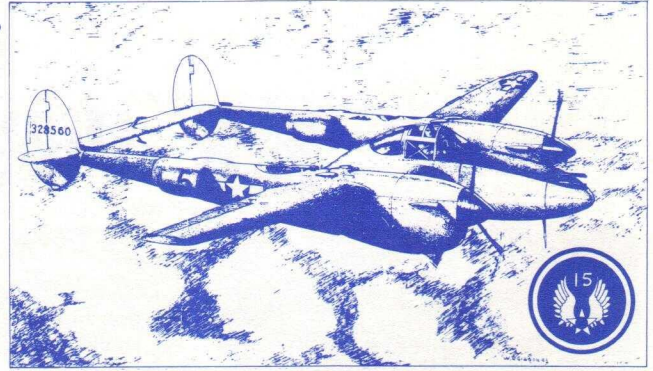
Our new PX is a mail order operation which offers a reasonably priced line of quality concession items useful to promote our history, raise needed funds, and provide another member service, since most of the items are unique and not generally available. Our current offering includes over 50 items. The order form on page 20 has complete listings with prices and directions for ordering. Space limitations prevent a complete description of each item in every edition. This page will be devoted to descriptions and photos of some items in each edition. The item number is keyed to the order form.

40.



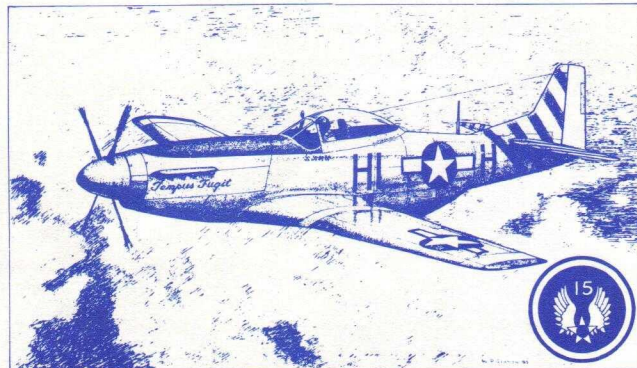
A B17 Flying Fortress Bomber of the 15th Air Force

41.



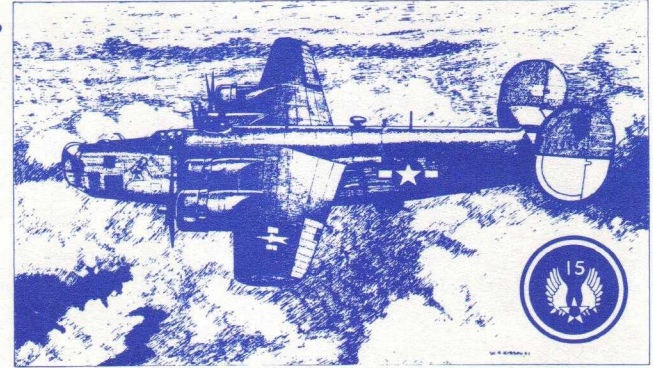
P38 LIGHTNING of the 15th Air Force

42.



P51 MUSTANG "TEMPUS FUGIT" of the 15th Air Force

43.



B 24 LIBERATOR "REDDY MAID" of the 15th Air Force

Items 39 thru 44

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Development of the B-24 Liberator, cockpit controls, flight characteristics, power plant, crew positions, etc. 164 pages, 115 photos, drawings, and graphs. 8½" X 11" softbound.

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A long overdue tribute to the U.S. bomber and attack plane gunners who took on the best German and Japanese fighter pilots. First hand accounts from every theater of battle. Pearl Harbor, Polesti, Midway, and more. 256 pages, 26 illustrations. 5¼" X 8¼" softbound.

SORTIE

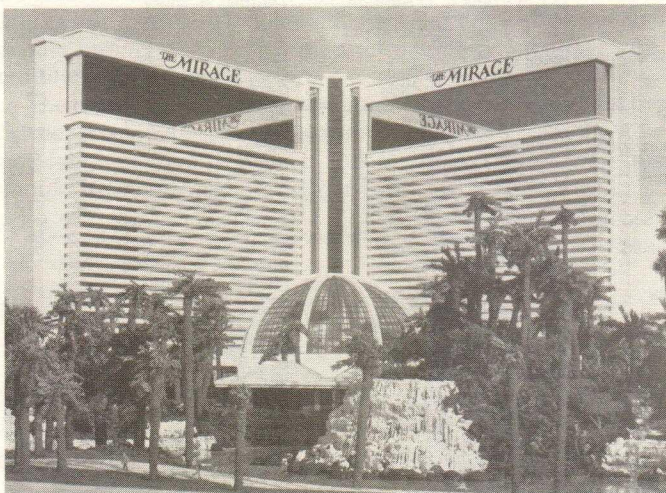
FIFTEENTH AIR FORCE



Vol. VI, No. 2

P.O. Box 6325, March Air Force Base, California 92518

15th AIR FORCE ASSOCIATION 1991 REUNION RETURN TO LAS VEGAS



IT'S LAS VEGAS AGAIN FOR OUR 1991 REUNION!" With these words, we finally ended months of agonizing over our 1991 reunion site as we unanimously agreed to return to Las Vegas.

It was a hard decision and came only after carefully weighing the numerous factors which ultimately determine whether a reunion will be successful—and that became the overriding criteria in final site selection—we wanted to insure that we selected a site where we had the resources to plan and conduct a successful and entertaining reunion program.

While we are reluctant to hold another reunion in the West, we have become victims of our own growth and feel that we have limited options for reunion sites. Two of our past reunions were held in cities which were distant from our headquarters and required local chairmen and reunion committees. In each case, the reunion chairman literally devoted over a year of his life to planning, arranging, coordinating, and conducting his reunion. Both had extensive management backgrounds, were willing—and more importantly—able and well connected in their city—and yet worked at great personal sacrifice for over a year. In our deliberations we were concerned that we have grown so large that it is not realistic to expect to find local members at suitable reunion sites who would be willing—and more importantly—

able, and with the resources and local connections, to plan and coordinate a reunion of our size and scope. We now approach 2,000 in peak attendance. Larger groups like the Air Force Association have the resources to hire full time planning staffs and can afford to pay expenses for frequent travel to distant sites. On the other hand, on site arrangements for smaller groups can be coordinated by a single visit or by local members.

We are also making a concerted effort to avoid becoming a 'last man club' by attracting 15th Air Force active duty people to membership in our association and want to encourage large numbers of them to attend our 1991 reunion. Our active duty advisors believe that this is only possible if we meet near the core of our bases which would enable them to attend selected events without extended time away from their duty stations—this became more significant with the demands placed on our people in supporting Desert Shield operations.

Budget cuts have also placed constraints on travel for our Band of the Golden West which is such an integral part of every reunion program.

And finally (and certainly significant) Wayne Newton has agreed to headline our reunion banquet show if we meet in Las Vegas and can coordinate our dates with his schedule!! Mr. Newton is, without question, the premier showman of our time and is year after year the top show business attraction in a city of star-studded shows. We appreciate his thoughtfulness and his generous offer and are in the process of coordinating our dates with his staff and with our hotel in an effort to facilitate his appearance. We will have firm dates in the next *Sortie* and should also be able to confirm Mr. Newton's appearance and our selection of a reunion hotel, but for planning purposes, we expect a date in Sept or early Oct 1991.

We have tentatively selected the new Mirage Hotel as our reunion site contingent upon working out our dates around their availability of rooms and Mr. Newton's schedule. The Mirage, as many of you may have seen on national TV, is a wonder of the modern world—there are exploding 'volcanos', huge waterfalls, white Bengal Tigers, and a montage of attractions and entertainment to wow the most blasé. We promise you will be impressed and entertained—and most importantly, will have every opportunity to enjoy old friends and make new ones. We will also insure that the 'Stars and Stripes' and your proud heritage are properly recognized and remembered.

Please make your plans now to join us in the fall for a celebration of your proud and distinguished service to our country!

OUR LIFE MEMBERS... WE SALUTE YOU!

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 General James P. Mullins
 General Leon W. Johnson
 General Jack J. Catton
 General Paul K. Carlton
 General Charles C. McDonald
 Lt Gen William K. Martin
 Lt Gen William F. Pitts
 Lt Gen Bryan M. Shotts
 Lt Gen John J. Murphy
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 Lt Gen James V. Edmundson
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 Maj Gen John A. Brashear
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★ The national McDonnell Douglas Corporation ★

★ Northrop Corporation ★ Howell Instruments, Inc. ★ Lockheed Corporation ★

★ American Sound & Video Corporation ★ Armed Services Mutual Benefit Association ★

NOTE: New life members are bold printed.



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Enthusiasm for our association continues, and we are pleased and grateful for the support we receive from our membership.

We are currently endeavoring to increase our membership through the regional vice president's effort and though it may take a while to get off the ground, we felt it should be pursued; we are encouraging membership of the active duty folks through the Active Duty Advisory Board; we have established the Patron Membership plan and have our first one; we are encouraging corporation memberships to raise needed funds; and, we are well into the planning of our next reunion, which we are looking forward to with great enthusiasm.

Our first Patron Member is Evelyn P. Brier. This distinguished pioneer aviator was recognized last year by the Wright Brothers Memorial Foundation. Her contribution of \$1000 is a significant assistance to the association. We would encourage any of our members to join in this program as well as the corporate membership program, and funds are essential to the continuity of the association.

The reunion plans will be discussed in another section of the Sortie, but with Wayne Newton as our headliner and the new and fabulous Mirage Hotel in Las Vegas as the location, we should have an outstanding occasion.

Murray A. Bywater Murray A. Bywater
President

SMALL TALK

I send my best regards to each of you and look forward to seeing you in Las Vegas next year.

REUNION: While many important details remain to be resolved, as we noted on page 3, we are already making plans for our banquet and show—I promise you that our 1991 program will, to quote my favorite phrase, “blow your socks off”—and you can take that to the bank! With the Wayne Newton Show (his backup singers and his band), the 15th Air Force Band of the Golden West, and an assortment of our usual and unusual surprise events, this should easily be the best! I am also optimistic that we will be able to make the necessary arrangements to include Mr. Newton in our show. Will confirm in the next Sortie.

HELP: As you can see, we are making major financial and personal commitments to insure that your 1991 reunion is the best. We need your help to pull it off. We don't ask for help with the finances (although we could certainly use it), or help with the myriad tasks and details that are part of the year's planning effort. We only ask for an expression from you of your support for our plan to return to Las Vegas. We **MUST** have an accurate estimate of attendance.



Zig finally gets his handshake in Las Vegas!

PLEASE take a few minutes to drop us a note or postcard to advise us of your intentions regarding the reunion. Just scribble a note and tell us if you plan to attend and how many you expect in your party—this will not obligate you if your circumstances change prior to the reunion, but will aid us immeasurably in our planning. (Box 6325, March AFB, CA 92518.)

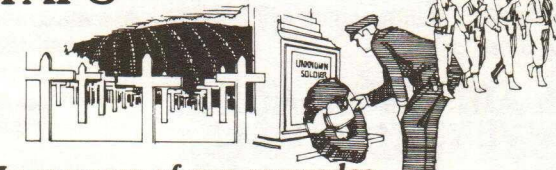
WE NEED YOU: If there is insufficient interest expressed by your response, we will reluctantly be forced to cancel the reunion before we reach a point of financial commitment that could seriously jeopardize our future. **PLEASE DROP US A CARD.**

REGIONAL PLAN: In our last issue we reported on the concept of a regional plan with chapters in all parts of the country. We felt that this structure would allow us to more effectively serve your interests and increase opportunities for fellowship and camaraderie. We agreed to implement the plan on a limited basis in Texas and in the Northwest to first test the concept and gauge your interest and support for the plan. While there have been some expressions of interest, it has not been conclusive enough to warrant expanding the concept to other regions. We have, therefore, decided to continue our efforts in the test areas and suspend further action until there is a greater expression of interest. We will also make the regional concept an agenda item for our membership meeting in Las Vegas.

Finally, I appreciate your many kind words and letters of support and encouragement—I miss you all. God bless.

Ben

TAPS



In memory of our comrades who now rest in honored glory

- | | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Jack E. Abbott (455 BG) | Sidney J. Levin (450 BG) |
| Paul D. Anthony (98 BG) | Frank Lozier (485 BG) |
| Louis J. Barbieri (455 BG) | H.H. Mark (450 BG) |
| Lyle A. Beccard (99 BG) | John Mason (450 BG) |
| John Chonka (449 BG) | Kenneth H. Matz Jr. (62 SG) |
| Jack A. Crumbliss (484 BG) | Mrs. Donald J. McDowell (463 BG) |
| Wallace T. Hyde (449 BG) | Vern Pulaski (450 BG) |
| Joseph Kohlenstein (22 BW) | Paul M. Schauder (376 BG) |
| Peter Kulak (460 BG) | Howard J. Tessier (31 DRS) |
| George W. Leggat (464 BG) | <i>Our heartfelt sympathy to their families and friends</i> |



The *Sortie* is published quarterly on behalf of the members of the Fifteenth Air Force Association, Box 6325, March AFB, CA 92518, a nonprofit organization dedicated to the preservation of the heritage, legacy, and traditions of the Fifteenth Air Force. Contributions are tax-deductible.

- PRESIDENT** Murray A. Bywater
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- EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR/EDITOR** C.E. Ben Franklin
Lt Col, USAF, Ret.
- WRITER/PHOTOGRAPHER** Wayne Corbett
Col, USAF

OUR LIFE MEMBERS... WE SALUTE YOU!

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 General James P. Mullins
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Harry H. Bumgardner
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 SSgt Louis E. Cook
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 Lt Col Roger C. Craig
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 Lt Robert M. Cunha
 TSgt R.D. Currier
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 Maj R.W. Danielson
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 Capt Frank S. Day
 CMSgt Irvin S. DeGross
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 Roy P. Denney
 Lt Col John J. Devlin
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 Col John P. Doolittle
 Max A. Dosland
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 Col I. Louis Hoffman
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 Lt Col Lamar R. Landry
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 1Lt Jack A. Levin
 Col William E. Lewis
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 Sgt Lucinda J. Loris
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 Louis J. Mancano
 MSgt William J. Mansfield
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 Bud Markel
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 Joe B. McCaskill
 Arvin McCauley
 Paul McCollum
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 Donald L. Menck
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 Lt Col Chester J. Milczarek
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 Col Glenn E. Miller
 SSgt Clarence P. Miller
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 Charles E. Miller
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 Gregor W. Milne
 Alfeo E. Minato
 1Lt Chester W. Mitchell
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Wayne Newton
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 Prentiss Noble
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Reiner Nowak
 Robert Nugent
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 Lt Col James R. O'Brien
 Maj Kenneth B. O'Connell
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Charles Pappas
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CORPORATE MEMBERS

We salute our corporate members, who share in the heritage and are committed to the service of our country and the defense of our nation.

★ The national McDonnell Douglas Corporation ★

★ Northrop Corporation ★ Howell Instruments, Inc. ★ Lockheed Corporation ★

★ American Sound & Video Corporation ★ Armed Services Mutual Benefit Association ★

NOTE: New life members are bold printed.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Enthusiasm for our association continues, and we are pleased and grateful for the support we receive from our membership.

We are currently endeavoring to increase our membership through the regional vice president's effort and though it may take a while to get off the ground, we felt it should be pursued; we are encouraging membership of the active duty folks through the Active Duty Advisory Board; we have established the Patron Membership plan and have our first one; we are encouraging corporation memberships to raise needed funds; and, we are well into the planning of our next reunion, which we are looking forward to with great enthusiasm.

Our first Patron Member is Evelyn P. Brier. This distinguished pioneer aviator was recognized last year by the Wright Brothers Memorial Foundation. Her contribution of \$1000 is a significant assistance to the association. We would encourage any of our members to join in this program as well as the corporate membership program, and funds are essential to the continuity of the association.

The reunion plans will be discussed in another section of the Sortie, but with Wayne Newton as our headliner and the new and fabulous Mirage Hotel in Las Vegas as the location, we should have an outstanding occasion.

Murray A. Bywater Murray A. Bywater
President

SMALL TALK

I send my best regards to each of you and look forward to seeing you in Las Vegas next year.

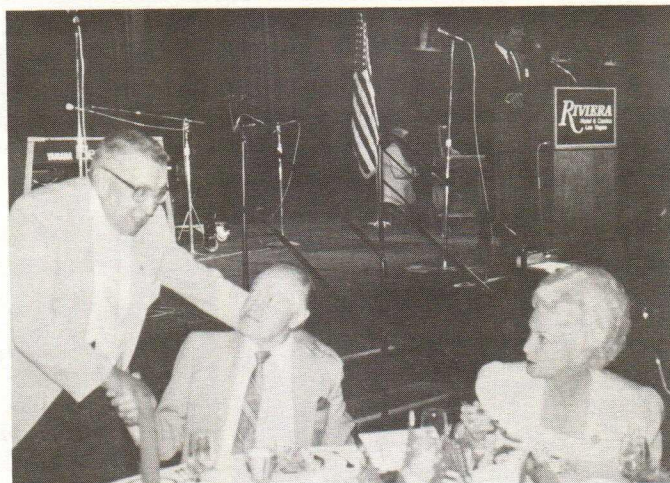
REUNION: While many important details remain to be resolved, as we noted on page 3, we are already making plans for our banquet and show—I promise you that our 1991 program will, to quote my favorite phrase, “blow your socks off”—and you can take that to the bank! With the Wayne Newton Show (his backup singers and his band), the 15th Air Force Band of the Golden West, and an assortment of our usual and unusual surprise events, this should easily be the best! I am also optimistic that we will be able to make the necessary arrangements to include Mr. Newton in our show. Will confirm in the next Sortie.

HELP: As you can see, we are making major financial and personal commitments to insure that your 1991 reunion is the best. We need your help to pull it off. We don't ask for help with the finances (although we could certainly use it), or help with the myriad tasks and details that are part of the year's planning effort. We only ask for an expression from you of your support for our plan to return to Las Vegas. We **MUST** have an accurate estimate of attendance.



The Sortie is published quarterly on behalf of the members of the Fifteenth Air Force Association, Box 6325, March AFB, CA 92518, a nonprofit organization dedicated to the preservation of the heritage, legacy, and traditions of the Fifteenth Air Force. Contributions are tax-deductible.

PRESIDENT Murray A. Bywater
Brig Gen, USAF, Ret.
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR/EDITOR C.E. Ben Franklin
Lt Col, USAF, Ret.
WRITER/PHOTOGRAPHER Wayne Corbett
Col, USAF



Zig finally gets his handshake in Las Vegas!

PLEASE take a few minutes to drop us a note or postcard to advise us of your intentions regarding the reunion. Just scribble a note and tell us if you plan to attend and how many you expect in your party—this will not obligate you if your circumstances change prior to the reunion, but will aid us immeasurably in our planning. (Box 6325, March AFB, CA 92518.)

WE NEED YOU: If there is insufficient interest expressed by your response, we will reluctantly be forced to cancel the reunion before we reach a point of financial commitment that could seriously jeopardize our future. **PLEASE DROP US A CARD.**

REGIONAL PLAN: In our last issue we reported on the concept of a regional plan with chapters in all parts of the country. We felt that this structure would allow us to more effectively serve your interests and increase opportunities for fellowship and camaraderie. We agreed to implement the plan on a limited basis in Texas and in the Northwest to first test the concept and gauge your interest and support for the plan. While there have been some expressions of interest, it has not been conclusive enough to warrant expanding the concept to other regions. We have, therefore, decided to continue our efforts in the test areas and suspend further action until there is a greater expression of interest. We will also make the regional concept an agenda item for our membership meeting in Las Vegas.

Finally, I appreciate your many kind words and letters of support and encouragement—I miss you all. God bless.

Ben



In memory of our comrades who now rest in honored glory

- | | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Jack E. Abbott (455 BG) | Sidney J. Levin (450 BG) |
| Paul D. Anthony (98 BG) | Frank Lozier (485 BG) |
| Louis J. Barbieri (455 BG) | H.H. Mark (450 BG) |
| Lyle A. Beccard (99 BG) | John Mason (450 BG) |
| John Chonka (449 BG) | Kenneth H. Matz Jr. (62 SG) |
| Jack A. Crumbliss (484 BG) | Mrs. Donald J. McDowell (463 BG) |
| Wallace T. Hyde (449 BG) | Vern Pulaski (450 BG) |
| Joseph Kohlenstein (22 BW) | Paul M. Schauder (376 BG) |
| Peter Kulak (460 BG) | Howard J. Tessier (31 DRS) |
| George W. Leggat (464 BG) | <i>Our heartfelt sympathy to their families and friends</i> |

OUR CURRENT NEWS

PATRON MEMBERSHIP

In response to many inquiries from friends of the 15th Air Force who have expressed an interest in helping us in a substantial and tangible way, we have established the 15th Air Force Association Patron Membership. The \$1000 membership fee will enable us to launch a number of worthwhile programs that require more financial investment than present circumstances allow. If any of our present members wish to become part of this effort to assist us in reaching our full potential, please advise us; we would welcome your participation as a Patron Member. We also continue to offer Corporate Memberships as indicated on page 4 and encourage those of you who own businesses or corporations to consider this avenue to assist your Association.



Evelyn "Pinky" Brier, first Patron Member.

FIRST PATRON MEMBER

Evelyn "Pinky" Brier (photo above) is truly a living legend in her own time. Having logged over 50,000 flying hours—owning her own airport and many aircraft—having trained hundreds of pilots—and having flown numerous Heads of State and executives of aeronautical firms—she has made a mark in the world of aviation that challenges the best in her sphere.

Her name "Pinky" comes from her family name of Pinckert—her brother was the famous All American football player from the University of Southern California. She was dubbed Pinky in her early years and the name stuck. She began her career in 1938 flying Piper Cubs, Travelairs, and Wacos. During WW II she trained hundreds of pilots at her flying school, many of whom went on to impressive flying careers.

She was called to fly such dignitaries as General James Doolittle, Gene Tunney (the heavyweight champion), many movie stars, and the President of Boeing Aircraft, C. Wilson to name but a few.

Pinky is a strong supporter of the Fifteenth Air Force Association and endorses its goals. We are grateful for her generous contribution which will assist our Association in attaining those goals.

15th AIR FORCE AGAIN ANSWERS THE CALL!

One by one the strategic bombers taxied to their holding positions near the end of the runway. Loaded with a full contingent of conventional weapons, the B-52 crews awaited their turn as they went over their final checklist items in preparation for takeoff. With a slow, forward push of the eight throttles, the crews guided their ageless bombers down the long runway at Castle AFB, Calif, and into the gray morning sky.

What had started out many hours before with a call to report to their units, was now moving along at a rapid pace that

would eventually take these warriors to a predetermined overseas forward operating location in support of Operation Desert Shield.

Throughout the previous night and early morning, 15th Air Force crew chiefs, maintenance and supply personnel, weapons loaders, and support staff worked feverishly to ready each aircraft and crew for departure. The strong possibility of using these weapons of deterrence was in everyone's thoughts as their everyday tasks took on more importance. All previous training became more meaningful as pieces of the preparation puzzle fell into place. Meanwhile, KC-135 tanker crews at Anderson AFB, Guam also geared up to meet refueling requirements in support of the Castle bomber deployment.

As the force of B-52s gained altitude and turned to their programmed flying routes, the crews were already at work tracking their tanker support. In the hours that followed, KC-10 and KC-135 aerial refueling tanker crews off-loaded thousands of gallons of much needed fuel to the strategic bombers, ensuring their safe nonstop flight to their final destination.

Eyes on the ground looked skyward, and the bomb laden B-52s positioned themselves for their final approach to their new operating location. As the ramp parking spaces began filling up with the arriving bombers and tankers, ground crews hurried about greeting the new arrivals and performing post flight inspections on the aircraft.

Soon ground crews began refueling the new arrivals and bringing them up to alert status in preparation for any new orders that might put the bombers back in the air.

For weeks, 22 AREFW personnel have assisted with the loading and deployment of Marines from March AFB to the Persian Gulf. Many specialists from the wing and other 15th Air Force bases have deployed in support of Desert Shield. In the past weeks the 15th Air Force has played a prominent role in support of our mission in the Persian Gulf as our KC-135 and KC-10 tankers, our bombers, hundreds of crews and mission specialists have deployed literally around the world.

God bless them all.

Courtesy: Portions from SACNS.



KC-10 aerial refueling USAF fighter

OUR SORTIE - 4 FEB 1945

MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS

Two major developments of the 15th, not available at the time Italian bases were established, will mark future operations. One is the radar device called *Mickey*; the other is the daily use of weather reconnaissance planes. Radar scored its greatest successes during the last month of 1944 when missions by the 15th against oil targets in Czechoslovakia and Silesia which were almost invariably covered by clouds or smoke resulted in substantial damage at all points bombed. It has now been demonstrated that accurate "blind bombing" is feasible.

The other development dates back a year ago when a squadron of Lightnings was attached to the 15th to fly weather reconnaissance. Previously the unit had flown tactical reconnaissance for ground forces in Africa. It has now flown over 1000 weather missions for the heavy bombers. Use of P-38s to scout out conditions on routes and over targets has resulted in a substantial reduction of abortive missions. Before their introduction an excessive number of missions, wasting precious fuel and even occasionally resulting in needless losses, were dispatched only to find bombing at assigned targets impossible. Last minute and exact weather information is now radioed back to the incoming bombers by the Lightning pilots.

PUBLIC SPEAKING

Fitted for the job by his experience as assistant casting director and character actor for Paramount Studios, SSgt Scott G. Groves instructs a cross section of Air Force combat pilots, ground crews, and clerks in public speaking. Groves, at the request of his P-38 unit's orientation officer, conducts the class one night a week covering the practical aspects of the subject with stories of his experiences among motion picture people. The program is designed to aid these men in the post war world.

"USED TO WORRY ME"

Special recognition is due a man who flies 58 combat missions armed only with an aerial camera. This is the experience of Sgt Warren E. Conarroe who has one of the best combat photography records in 15th Air Force. Since Aug he has flown over such targets as Ploesti, Blechhammer, Vienna, Munich, Brux, Budapest, and Wiener-Neustadt catching hundreds of action shots which have appeared on the world's front pages. In his own words, "I was always ready to take any picture but I usually got my best shots right after the target. Hanging from the camera hatch to get bomb strike pictures used to worry me, especially when the flak was real heavy."

HOLLYWOOD

The movie forecasters are predicting a surge of drama pictures for 1945 on the order of *The Song of Bernadette*, *Key for the Kingdoms*, and *Going My Way*. The hottest news to come out of Hollywood in the last few years is about Mary Pickford's plan to produce the Broadway show *One Touch of Venus* with either Ginger Rogers or Rita Hayworth in the stellar feminine lead and Frank Sinatra in the male spot. Spencer Tracy and Katherine Hepburn will again team up in the motion picture version of *Without Love*. Keenan Wynn, son of the famous radio and stage comic [Ed Wynn], will handle the comedy relief.

HENRY WALLACE REJECTED

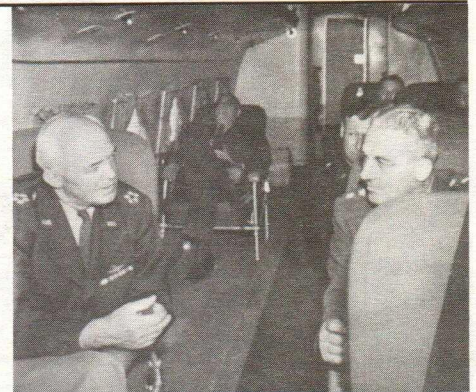
Ex-Vice President Henry A. Wallace held the spotlight of Capital City controversy as the Senate Committee rejected his nomination to be Secretary of Commerce in FDR's cabinet. Earlier in the week there was talk that Wallace might take his case to the people. Later, the President himself offered an appeal in an address read at a Wallace testimonial dinner by Mrs Eleanor Roosevelt.

MASTER MECHANIC

Corp Stanley Newborn worked tirelessly on the auto pilot of a Liberator bomber that seemed to pass every preflight ground test but would not respond in the air. Finally, in exasperation he gave up, saying, "Darned if I can see why it doesn't work upstairs." The same day on a mission over Austria the plane went into a steep bank, and with stabilizer damaged by flak, started to spin. The pilot realized that he couldn't pull the plane out of the spin, so he ordered the crew to bail out. In a last minute desperation reflex, he flipped the auto pilot switch on, doubting that it would work. With a shudder the heavy bomber righted itself and returned to its base with the full crew aboard. Upon landing the pilot demanded to shake the hand of the mechanic who had worked on the instrument. After shaking hands Corp Newborn shrugged his shoulders and headed for the next bomber in need of repair.

STAR TIME

Adriatic Depot recast as *Star Time*, the nightly 10 pm show over the British Forces Station, now features a parade of top notch American radio stars in the form of transcribed programs furnished by the Armed Forces Radio. These broadcasts, especially staged for overseas radio stations are presented seven nights a week by the *Adriatic Depot*. Included on the program are: the Charlie McCarr-



General Arnold and General Twining hold discussion while flying to next Group inspection - April 12, 1945. Courtesy George W. Potts

thy Show, Command Performance, Jack Benny Program, Music Hall Varieties starring Bing Crosby, Kay Kyser's Kollege of Musical Knowledge, The Hit Parade, and The Bob Hope Show. Frequent outside broadcasts are also heard on the station. Some of the recent shows that have been featured are: The Opera Series, D'Artega and his all girl orchestra, and the regular Wednesday night jam session featuring the 15th Air Force orchestra under the baton of Chuck Hill, well known trumpeter from the old Glen Miller Band.

DINAH

The GI's of the 15th Air Force selected Dinah Shore as the outstanding radio singer in an AES "sweetheart" contest conducted by the Armed Force Expeditionary Station. Closely following Dinah in the voting was torchy Billie Holliday. All votes for Frank Sinatra were discounted.

NEWS FLASHES: On the west coast Lockheed Aircraft announced that its new P-38 Lightning fighter is 7% speedier than earlier models and can carry bomb loads heavier than the first B-17 Fortress...In Chicago the government announced through U.S. District Attorney J. Albert Well that it would appeal the decision of Federal Judge Phillip L. Murray who decided the President's seizure of Montgomery Ward was illegal...New bills calling for substantial increases in benefits to returning servicemen were introduced in the Calif legislature...Claire Booth Luce cabled her congratulations to the Italian premier on the granting of voting rights to women...CIO Chief Phil Murray called for a national conference on production problems in a letter to the War Production Board and to all international unions associated with the CIO. The Supreme Court agreed to review Harry Bridges petition to escape deportation as an undesirable alien. Bridges, Australian born west coast labor leader, is accused of Communist affiliation...Lau-chin Currie, Pres Roosevelt's administrative assistant, leaves for Switzerland to seek reduction in shipment of Swiss war supplies to Germany.

OUR HONOR ROLL

301st BOMB GROUP



WE SALUTE YOU

FOR OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE OF DUTY in armed conflict with the enemy. On 25 Feb 1944 thirty-one B-17 aircraft of this group took off to participate in the bombardment of heavily defended enemy aircraft factories and production centers at Hagensburg, Germany, in one of the first coordinated attacks by Air Forces operating out of different theaters against a target deep in the industrial heart of Germany.

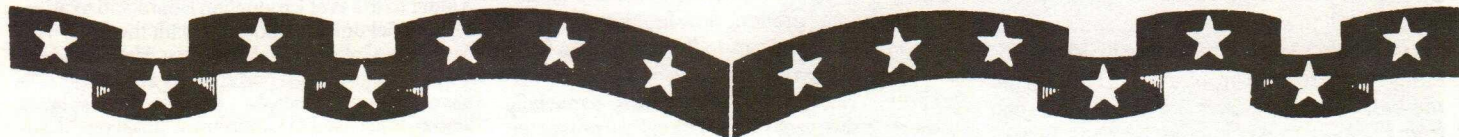
Ten aircraft of this group were forced to turn back shortly after takeoff, seriously decreasing the fire power and the formation strength while enroute to the target. After the rendezvous with other wing units and without the support of friendly fighter escort, the formation encountered its first opposition near Flume, Italy, where it was attacked by more than one hundred enemy fighters. These were constantly replaced by fresh enemy planes until the total strength of the attackers was estimated at over two hundred hostile fighters. Throughout the intense and vicious air battle that took place enroute to the target, the 301st Bombardment Group lost eleven aircraft. However, with grim determination and spirit, a highly successful bombing run was made through heavy and intense

barrages of enemy anti-aircraft fire, causing grave damage to be inflicted on this vital enemy manufacturing center and aiding materially in its almost complete destruction.

Leaving the target area, the formation was again subjected to the fury of vicious enemy fighter attacks. Gallantly fighting their way through against almost incredible odds, the gunners of this group were credited with the destruction of thirty-one enemy planes, the probable destruction of six, and the damage of at least three additional enemy fighters. Of the crews that returned, seven crew members were wounded, three killed, and of the total participants, one hundred and ten failed to return.

By the professional skill and loyalty of the ground crews, together with the conspicuous gallantry, aggressive courage, combat efficiency, and devotion to duty of the air crews, the 301st Bombardment Group has distinguished itself, thereby reflecting great credit upon themselves and the Armed Forces of the United States of American.

By command of
Major General Twining



OUR CREWS

450 BG, 723 BS "Bachelor's Bedlam" Crew. (Standing from the left): Ambrose Maushart, Bombardier; Joseph Shellick, Co-pilot; Walter Joens, Pilot; and Calvin Hubbard, Navigator. (Kneeling from the left): Wallace Berringer, Nose turret; George Adriano, Ball Turret; Harry Franz, Radio operator; Robert Douglas, Waist gunner; Charles Blaser, Tail turret; and Robert Ambrose, Engineer. Courtesy: A.Y. Maushart. ▶



◀ **460 BG, 763 BS Crew.** (Standing from left): H.J. Castle, Bombardier; A.A. Whitworth, Co-pilot; J.C. Alexander, Pilot; L.W. Kelly, Navigator; W.B. Crowe, Waist gunner; and T.G. Meehan, Nose gunner. (Kneeling from left): D.K. Gunter, Tail gunner; J.D. Woodward, Radio operator/Top turret; J.V. Costanza, Waist gunner; and K.H. Coleman, Ball turret. Courtesy: J.D. Woodward.

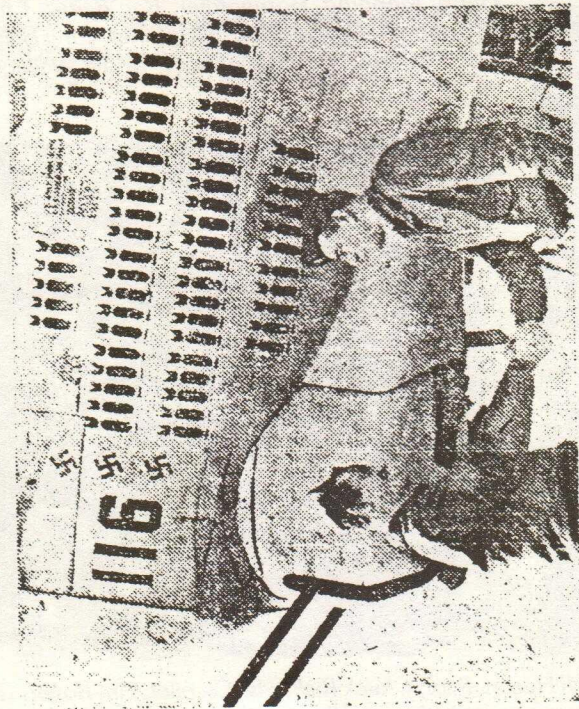
455 BG, 743 BS Crew (Order not specified): George O. Keahey, Pilot; Mark Regan, Co-pilot; Charles Spicer, Navigator; Henry Manning, Bombardier; Ray Reese, Engineer; Jim Thiel, Ball gunner; Don McNeil, Tail gunner; Tony Balchunas, Waist gunner; F.M. Moore, Waist gunner; Eddie Wallace, Radio operator. ▶

Courtesy: Jim Thiel.



464 BG, 776 BS Crew (lower right photo, standing from left): Bill Huson, Pilot; Chuck Richards, Co-pilot; Jim Rogers (deceased), Bombardier; Bill Hedrich (deceased), Engineer; Al Stewart, Radio operator; and Chuck Williams, Waist gunner. (Kneeling from left): Frank Labedz, Navigator; Jim Gordon, Tail gunner; Don Froehlich, Ball gunner; and Ed Gordon, Nose Gunner. Courtesy: Jim Gordon.

116th Mission



(Photo By Technical Sergeant Albert A. Norbut)

After completing his 116th combat mission in a Flying Fortress, Master Sergeant Alva H. Richardson, ball turret gunner, is shown being congratulated by his co-pilot, First Lieutenant William B. McCulloch

Former Pacific Gunner Flies 116th Mission

Having served in both the South Pacific and Italy as a Flying Fortress gunner, Master Sergeant Alva H. Richardson believes that the targets were rougher and living conditions better in the former theater. Of Sergeant Richardson's 116 combat missions, 106 were flown in the Pacific.

"Our targets were worse over there. We usually went over at a lower altitude which meant that we caught much more flak," explains the sergeant.

Flew Night And Day

Radio Operator Plots Course, Returns Safely

When bad weather separated a Liberator formation from its lead position, Technical Sergeant Thomas A. Sheehan, the radio operator, who had been experimenting with navigation instruments in his spare time, took the navigator's post and guided a heavy bomber back from a recent bombing mission.

Over the heavily defended Uelne valley the plane and the box it was leading became lost, so Sergeant Sheehan decided to lend a hand.

"Our plane was equipped with radio instruments to direct us through bad weather, but because it was a maximum effort flight, we were flying with a navigator who did not understand the radio equipment used in navigation through bad weather," Sergeant Sheehan says in relating the incident.

"Are you sure you know how to operate the instruments," the sergeant's pilot asked, passing some maps down through his legs.

In reply Sheehan said, "I have always been fascinated by navigation and having flown 28 combat missions, I have a knowledge of the country."

He proved his statement by guiding his plane and his box out of the flak area across the Adriatic and back to the base.

Furloughs Are Advantageous

Returning to a Fifteenth Air Force Service Command service group recently, after a furlough in the States, Sergeant Charles P. Butcher is convinced there is no place like home.

Walking down the gangplank in New York he was a little ap-

Navigator Risks Death Clearing Frozen Bombs

By inventing a hydraulic airplane tire remover, Master Sergeant Walter M. Bakula, welding foreman at an advanced air depot, has turned a job that formerly took many hours into one that takes just a few minutes.

Looking somewhat like a cross between an oversize potato peeler and an egg beater the big machine can whisk a two-hundred pound tire off an airplane without difficulty.

First one lays the wheel on something flat, then places the eight pronged remover on top of the wheel and allows the long shaft to extend through the hub, screwing it into a disc which fits into the hub on the other side. After giving the hydraulic pump lever a couple of pumps, it's off with no damage to the tire.

Sergeant Bakula sent his invention to an air service center to be tried out where the machine performed so well that the welding shop was soon swamped with orders. The sergeant is thinking about putting his invention on a mass production to furnish all the service centers in Italy.

Negro Group Notes Mark

Led by Colonel Benjamin O. Davis Jr., its commanding officer, the All-Negro Mustang Fighter group flew its 200th combat mission with the Fif-

His oversize tool proved to be his best friend when Flight Officer Lawrence J. Fleischer, Fifteenth Air Force bombardier, was on the catwalk of his plane trying to get the bombs out of his B-24 after a recent mission over Linz, Austria.

"We had our load ready," Fleischer says. "I pushed the toggle switch but nothing happened. The releases were frozen solid and the bombs had hung up."

Gas Supply Low

Carrying tons of bombs over the Alps and back to base when we had an already heavy load was out of the question. The formation fought both weather and intense cold on the way to the target, using an abnormal quantity of gas and oxygen.

"I've seen those wire walkers at the circus," comments Fleischer. "I'm no high wire guy, but I had no choice. Those bombs were my business, and I knew I was responsible for getting them out."

Going out on the catwalk without a parachute, with the earth nearly five miles below and a 50 below zero gale blowing at his legs, Fleischer went to work.

"I had a screw driver. All I had to do was trip a set of levers on each shackle. It's not a hard job, but it requires time. When the racks are frozen so completely that the levers won't rip, you kick the bombs out. That extra kick springs them."

Making three trips back to the flight deck to replenish his oxygen supply, he finished the job in 30 minutes.

"I had never been as cold or had such a feeling of being dizzy

MAIL CALL ★ MAIL CALL ★ MAIL CALL

Gentlemen: I'm sending a check for life membership and would like to know where the '91 & '93 reunions will be held. Although I officially belonged to 15 AF several times after WW II (was 452nd & 96 BG during WW II), I am especially interested in locating anyone in the 450 BG as of '43 who knew Earl F. Saucer who was bombardier of Snow's crew. Heard rumors of a stateside crash. I am also interested in locating the crew (from 2 BG) who flew an OD B-17G into Russia in July '44 and left it there. I have news about their ship.

Frank Ball (95 BW)
11962 Charter Oak Pky
Creve Coeur, MO 63146

Ben: Being able to join the 15th Air Force Association makes my 5 missions over Ploesti worthwhile!

Jack N. Story (460 BG)
Williams, CA

Dear Ben: Enclosed is my check for a life membership. Please rush me 3 more copies of Stars & Stripes Sortie and 3 applications for membership. I have three more new members.

Norman T. Kanel (450 BG)
Pittsburgh, PA

Dear Ben: Months ago I received a letter from a lady from Red Oak, Iowa, asking if I could help to find anyone who flew with or knew her husband. Since the end of WW II it seems that they lost track of everyone. A few years ago her husband passed away. She is now married again but now is getting together a scrapbook for herself and children. I gave her your name and the address of the 15th AFA. In the last Sortie I read the letter she sent you asking for help in the Mail Call section. I found out that she did find two persons. Thanks for a great job. I am sending a check to cover cost of a membership for her and any back copies of Sortie that you can send her for her and their children's memories of the father's Air Force service. He served in my outfit in Italy (450 BG). Once again, I thank you from my heart for your help.

Herman C. Hoffman (450 BG)
Haddon Heights, NJ

ED. NOTE: Herman's letter and thoughtfulness was the highlight of our week. Thanks, Herman!

Director 15th AFA: I would like to join your outfit as an associate member. I am a member of the 8th Air Force Historical Society as I flew combat as a ball gunner with the 351 BG, 510 BS. I support as many outfits as I can as us old guys are dying off now.

W.H. Hoadley (351 BG)
West Chester, PA

Dear Sir: Enclosed please find check for final payment on my life membership in your great organization. It is a pleasure to be with the 15th after being with the 463 BG in WW II. Thanking you for your consideration and happy to become a life member of your great 15th AFA, I am

Harry H. Bumgardner (463 BG)
Locust Grove, OK

Dear Sir: Thank you for the excellent copy of Sortie. In turning to the center, which is a reproduction of a 6 May 1945 Sortie, I saw a photo of Generals Arnold and Twining which brought back great memories. Sgt George W. Potts made this photo. He and I were assigned by the 1st CCU to accompany the generals on this inspection trip through the 15th AAF. My specialty was newsreel photos in 35mm motion pictures. We were told to be prepared for 3 days of filming as that was the planned itinerary. Potts and I both were excited over this mission and we planned our filming carefully. He, being an old news photographer, took double the amount of still film along—but me, while I had good experience in photography, had no real knowledge of how much film was required. I took along enough film for the 3 days of shooting plus 20% more for reserve. On the morning of the 4th day, I found my film running low and with no possibility of obtaining more. Desperate, I told Potts of my predicament and he wisely said keep shooting! So I did and by afternoon my film ran out. So for a day and a half more I did all that was expected of a motion picture photographer except take real pictures! No one knew except me and Potts until now, but we still got commended for our effort. Please send a copy of the Sortie to Potts.

J. Byron Newton (1 CCU)
Powder Springs, GA

Dear Ben: I realized that it was about time to pay my 15th AFA dues. So what better time than now to become a life member. Enclosed you will find my check to cover my membership. Also it is necessary to advise of a change in address. Fran and I are looking forward to my semi-retirement in January and have sold our California home. We have an apartment for day to day living but now call Lake Havasu City, AZ home. I noted in the Sortie that you are busy as ever especially with the new equipment. You do a great job for all of us and believe me it's appreciated.

G.R. Van Natten (460 BG)
Lake Havasu City, AZ

Dear Ben: I just received my latest issue of Sortie and it reminded me that I haven't provided you with my address change. By the way, the job you fellows are doing is outstanding. The Sortie can make us all proud of our service in 15th Air Force. I'm living in Colorado Springs now. When I retired in 1983 I went to work for Hughes Aircraft Company in the Communications Systems Division at Fullerton (CA). It was OK but I missed the old "blue suit" world. Last year the corporate marketing office position here in the Springs opened up, I applied for it, and here I am. I run the Hughes district office here with responsibility for working with both SAC and Space Command. It's great! It's just like being a blue suit communicator again. I see guys every day that I've know for years. Say hello to everybody for me.

Jack Donahue (15 HQ)
Colorado Springs, CO

Dear Col Franklin: When Howie's group was included in the Fifteenth Air Force Association reunions, the 15th came alive again for him and for me. Seeing his buddies again, renewing old friendships, making new, hearing and retelling those wonderful stories and experiences brought such pleasure to our lives. Yes, my gentleman and gentle man indeed will be missed. I thank you for the beautiful tribute to him in your recent letter. Also, I am deeply honored by your offer to me to be an honorary life member of the 15th Air Force Association. Nothing would please Howard more, and I gratefully accept. We had such wonderful memories and the great support and tribute paid him in letters and cards I have received from this group indeed prove what a special man I married and what exceptional groups the 31st DRS and the 15th Air Force are. I do hope in the future to be able to see you all again and join in your tribute to outstanding comrades. It is a most meaningful and impressive ceremony. Thank you so much for your kind words and generous offer. I salute the 15th Air Force and you for them.

Mrs. Howard J. (June) Tessier (31 DRS)
Manlius, NY

Dear Ben: Just received the Sortie. Another great job on all your part to get it out and in such great shape. Our efforts to find men of the 461 BG has culminated in our publishing new squadron rosters of the Group. Starting with 258 names in 1984, we now have identified 5,414 men that served during the two years the Group was in existence. Of that total we have good information on 40% of the men. So far this year (May) we have located 63 men that are delighted to know that the Group did not die in 1945! Will be glad to help on 'lost' member requests for our Group. Our selection of Tucson for our next reunion is being well received by the members. Looks like over 500 will be there.

Frank C. O'Bannon Jr. (461 BG)
Tucson, AZ

Dear General Bywater: I want to thank you for being so kind for giving me an honorary life membership in the 15th Air Force Association. My son, James F. Jackson, was in the 15th Air Force in Italy and was a pilot on a B-24 Liberator. I hope some day that I might hear from some of his crew. I sure enjoy the Sortie and all the letters in it from the different boys. I want to thank you all again for letting Jimmy's mother be an honorary member of your great team.

Edith B. Jackson
200 Myrtlewood Drive #115
Henrietta, NY 14467

ED. NOTE: How good to be called boys again! Bless you, dear lady — we are honored by your membership.

Ben: Just bringing you up to date. First, thanks for the recent Sortie and for the announcement about the tour to Italy. Second, if you have about 3 or 4 Sorties left, can I have them—they

MAIL CALL ★ MAIL CALL ★ MAIL CALL

are for potential new members. Third, our count (with deposits) so far for the pilgrimage to Italy is about 30 from the following groups: 31 DRS, 455 BG, 97 BG, 98 BG, 99 BG, 451 BG, 484 BG, 460 BG, 32nd Photo Recon—also from one of the nursing corps in Naples. Thanks again and good job well done with the Sortie—I'm sure all the Groups appreciate your efforts and especially the 31 DRS.

Alex Boggio (31 DRS)
So. Pasadena, CA

Dear Ben: Bill Huson finally made his oxygen check!! Jean called me this PM at work and read me his letter. They are living in Florida, playing golf every day, and has been retired from Eastern Airlines for fifteen years. I will write to him this weekend and send you a copy. Tell everyone hello.

Jim Gordon (464 BG)
College Station, TX

ED. NOTE: Jim and crew have finally found their pilot—great job, Jim! We rejoice with you!

Gentlemen: I was recently made aware of the various activities taking place with respect to veterans of the 15th. Since my discharge in 1945, I have not maintained contact with anyone except my crew members. If there are newsletters pertaining to the 15th, I would appreciate being added to the list. My service in Italy was as a member of the 459 BG, 757 BS.

Earl J. Walter (459 BG)
Rolling Meadows, IL

Dear Col Franklin: Attached is an application for membership in the 15th Air Force Association. Alex Boggio was good enough to prepare the application for me as a result of an inquiry I made growing out of an article in the Grand Rapids Press about Ed Szymanski and his reunion with an Italian family he befriended in Bari during WWII. My unit was Headquarters Squadron, XV Air Force Service Command in Bari. Over the years I have lost contact with almost everyone in XV AFSC Headquarters. I would appreciate any information you could provide regarding names and last known addresses of members of that unit.

Lensworth Cottrell Jr.
(XV AF Service Command)
1441 Ridgewood Ave S.E.
Grand Rapids, MI 49506

Ben: We already have the videos from the reunion—all three of them. Really proud of them. Thanks.

John M. Stewart (456 BG)
Ferguson, MO

Dear Col Ben: Last year's reunion was an event that I will long remember and cherish. It was a great thrill to be reunited with my old crew. Although they had changed somewhat physically, they were the same great people. Both you and your wonderful wife Pat did such a tremendous job. Thanks again for making it all happen. I'm in touch frequently with our tail gunner, Jim Gordon. What a great guy! The

naming of Jim to a Vice Presidency was a very good idea. If anyone can make the regional concept work, Jim can. I'm enclosing my check for both 1990 & 1991 dues as well as for reunion video #1. Take good care of yourselves. See you next year, the good Lord willing.

Al Stewart (464 BG)
Grand Rapids, MI

Dear Sirs: Enclosed please find a check to cover the cost of two 15th Air Force reunion videos (#1 & #3). My husband was an ex-POW and can't wait to show his children these exciting tapes. We enjoyed every minute there!

Jeanette Jackson (456 BG)
Bellville, TX

Dear General Bywater: Last evening I visited a friend I haven't seen for many years and while there he showed me a large, hardcover book titled 'The 15th Air Force Story'. My friend was a nose gunner on B-24's in N. Africa and also Italy. I was also in the 15th Air Force and also my brother. I was a ball turret gunner and my brother (Lt. Louis W. Baker) was a co-pilot. We both served in the 301 BG, 32 BS at Foggia. Neither of us knew of the 15th AFA and would like to enroll as members. I am also interested in purchasing a copy of the 15th Air Force Story. Louis and I are members of the 301st Bomb Group Association based in San Antonio, TX.

Joseph E. Baker (301 BG)
Lansdale, PA

Dear Ben: My wife and I enjoyed talking to you at the reunion and although we video taped most of the events, we plan to order those tapes mentioned in the recent flyer we received in the mail. About a month ago while working as a census taker in Chino, CA, I had the pleasure of meeting an ex-B-24 pilot who fought with the 15th in WW II. He is still active flying out of the Chino airport. We enjoyed relating some of our experiences over in Italy and he was very interested in our present 15th Air Force Association. Please contact him and send him a Sortie. His name is H. C. Kuykendall. . . . thanks, Ben. I look forward to meeting you again soon.

Fred B. Wilmot (464 BG)
Adelanto, CA

Dear Ben: I am a member of the 461st & 484 Bomb Groups Association and because of that. I have been approached by a Mr. Edward Ahearn to procure information about his deceased brother, George Ahearn, who was killed in Italy on takeoff in a B-24 assigned to the 726 BS of the 15th AAF in WWII. The above information was obtained from the military personnel records, but brother Edward wants further information since all correspondence was lost when his mother passed away. To begin with, he was killed on 2 July 1944 in his B-24 called "The Red Raider." Brother Edward wants to know where exactly in Italy his brother is buried and which Bomb Group he was assigned to. Incidentally, he was a waist gunner. I am a member of your organization and we met in Colorado Springs after a wonderful speech you

delivered. I congratulated you and we had a brief conversation. Take care of yourself.

Adolph Marcus (484 BG)
4659 Carambola Circle N.
Coconut Creek, FL 33066

ED. NOTE: Contact Mr. Ahearn through Mr. Marcus.

Dear Ben: This is the place (clipping about Bob Hope on the island of Majuro in the Marshall Islands) where I ran into Bob Hope in the Pacific. Our outfit was attached to the naval base for rations while in transit. After one of his shows, I tried to shake his hand, but never got close—so 44 years later at the 15th Air Force Association Reunion I finally succeeded and completed my delayed handshake.

Zigmunt J. Ciecierski (92 BG)
N. Syracuse, NY

ED. NOTE: Zig's handshake photo is on page 5!

Gentlemen: Enclosed is a copy of the orders that sent Lt. Warren C. Schilb's B-24 crew to the 485 BG in Italy in August 1944. This crew contains a friend of mine, Lt. Chesnut Whitaker, who is desirous of getting together with his old fly buddies. It would be appreciated if your mailing list could be checked for Lt. Schilb's crew members. Lt Whitaker's address is 3707 Truesdell, Dallas, TX 75244. (214) 247-3835.

Benjamin F. DuBose (465 BG)
Orlando, FL

ED. NOTES: We provided the 485th contact to Benjamin but would appreciate any help you can give.

Dear Sir: Enclosed is my application for membership in the 15th AFA. I am chairman of the 12th reunion of the 483 BG which is being held in Buffalo, NY Sept 12-15, 1990. Please send me some literature on your organization and I will circulate it during our reunion. We expect 500 plus including wives.

John C. Berlin (483 BG)
Buffalo, NY

ED. NOTE: We appreciate the help in spreading the word.

Dear Ben: First off, let me say, 'I blew it!!' How I ever let my dues and membership expire, I'll never know. I guess that's what happens when you start to get old. So please accept my check for a life membership and I hope a little present that my son Mike and I started working on about six years ago and just finished this past month. We hope that it will be an addition to your library and that it will serve notice to the 'lost members' of the 451 BG that their organization is alive and well under the tutelage of Robert Karstensen over in Marengo, IL.

Sedgfield D. "Red" Hill (451 BG)
Plattsmouth, NE

ED. NOTE: The present referred to by Red is an outstanding hardbound history of "The Fight'n 451st Bomb Group"—an extraordinary job by Red, his son Mike, and Mike's wife Linda.

OUR WAR STORIES



MISSION TO FOGGIA – 1990

On 28 April twenty-seven members of the 463 BG and their wives returned to Foggia. After an extensive tour of Italy, the group visited the area of the old Celone Air Field. The highlight of the tour was the reunion with Lt Col Antonio Losasso. “Tony” started a small laundry for the men in the 775 BS and continued until the squadron dispersed in the Fall of 1945. The laundry work was done by his mother and sister. Don Traynam of the 775 BS and some from other squadrons remembered Tony. Due to Tony’s efforts the day was most meaningful. The day included a tour and reception at the Amendola 60th Brigade of the Italian Air Force where Tony is now a Lt Col—soon to retire as a full Colonel. There was a ceremony at the Fallen Comrades Monument at the Aeronautical Cemetery, where a wreath was placed at the monument. As Taps was played the whole group realized just how foolish wars are.

A beautiful luncheon was provided at the air base and many of the officers and staff joined with the 463rd for a time of fellowship. Tony was our guide as we returned to the Old City of Foggia and took pictures of the Opera House, church, and theatre that some of the group recalled from the time of their military stay.

The previous day was also very meaningful as the group toured the Isle of Capri, where many had spent their R&R’s. On arrival at Capri the group was greeted by the South Europe NATO Band. Here, too, was a ceremony in the famous Piazzetta of Capri to commemorate fallen victims of the war. We then went to the mayor’s office and were presented with a plaque commemorating our return to Capri. Many veterans of the Italian military also attended this ceremony. Wallace Holm is quoted as saying of the mission back to Foggia, “We hold many fond memories, made many closer friends, and wish everyone could have returned with us. We stirred up some old ghosts and put others to rest. We all enjoyed it!” *Courtesy: Excerpted from a report received by Eugene Parker from the 463rd group which toured Foggia.*

DIARY OF BIG BOOBER GIRL

22 Feb 1944

Archie Piirainen, Engineer/Gunner, 451 BG, 727 BS. From Gioia del Colle to Regensburg, Germany. Ship: Big Boober Girl #41-29199. The day started by being slightly cloudy and snowing early in the morning. Just about screwed up the works on fuel transfer which cut two engines for a few moments!

We flew across the Adriatic Sea to Yugoslavia and followed the mountainous regions over to Austria and Germany proper, then across the snowy Alps. The large formations of planes left tremendous vapor trails which were beautiful to observe in the bright but cold altitude. Upon nearing the target, the tail gunner reported four enemy ships at a distance off our tail. They later attacked us. They were ME-110s. They were easy to pick up at great distance because they were also leaving vapor trails. For the first time we got shots at the enemy, and the tail gunner did most of the shooting at the ME-110s and JU-88s which joined in the attack. The ball gunners knocked out one engine on one of the attackers. I also observed black smoke on two other planes which I shot at, but didn’t claim. Nose turret power operation failed on this mission with guns jamming in both the tail and ball turret. The links on the ammunition belt of the top turret also broke which required considerable time to rejoin or it seemed so during the attacks.

One B-24 was seen to go down (Straggler’s Fate). Straggling all morning it was picked up by four fighters which sent a burst into it, causing the left wing to tear off at No. 1 engine. The ship then went into what seemed to be a slow motion spiral down through the clouds. None of the crew was seen to bail out. Flak was heavy but scattered and inaccurate and no hits were made on our ship. The fighters sent out bursts of red fire which were identified as rockets. The fighting lasted about an hour. The bombs were dropped but scattered. It is not known if that target was hit. After leaving the target and heading home across the Alps we were picked up by our fighter escort of P-38s which was a great relief to all members of the crew. The flight took about eight hours.

25 Feb ’44 – Archie Piirainen, Engineer/Gunner, 451 BG, 727 BS. From Gioia del Colle to Regensburg, Germany. Secondary target: Salzburg, Austria. Ship: Big Boober Girl #41-29199.

Today’s mission was the same as previous mission over to Regensburg as the primary target. We crossed the Adriatic to Yugoslavia. The weather was clear; no vapor trails were formed. The mountains and rugged countryside of Yugoslavia were beautiful to observe. At one point a few bursts of flak were ineffectively shot at us. The trip was going nicely until just before reaching Salzburg. The rear gas cap on No. 1 main tank loosened and raised up. Gas started to siphon out of the tank. There was a tremendous loss of gasoline with an extremely dangerous situation arising. We were a fire hazard and also wondering whether we had enough fuel to reach our base. The first pilot thought of turning back but the co-pilot voted against it since we were in enemy territory.

About this time we were jumped by ME-109 fighters and the group of planes turned to bomb Salzburg instead of Regensburg. It seemed fate was with us. The bombs were dropped by the co-pilot using the emergency bomb release in the cockpit. The ball gunner said all the bombs hit the mark—a large warehouse or factory along the railroad. A lot of flak was shot at us but no damage done, although an enemy fighter was caught in the barrage. At about this time we were attacked by about 15 to 20 enemy aircraft firing rockets at us. One ME-110 was damaged by the tail gunner and left waist gunner and it was seen diving down into the valley before leveling off and not coming back up for more. Two B-24s were shot down. One was seen to go down in a slow easy spiral under control with two engines shot out and blazing.

The return trip from the target was uneventful except for sweating out the gas leak. Two engines were running off the leaking tank; then the gas stopped leaking and siphoning to my great relief. But heavy weather and rain squalls at the home field added to our worries. When the formation began to circle around over the Adriatic, I told the pilot that we had two hours of fuel left, hoping he would head for home. We finally did and landed at home field with four hours of gas left. The flight lasted seven hours.

5 Apr 1944 – A black day – Manduria. On takeoff a new ship

OUR WAR STORIES

cracked up with twelve 500 lb bombs and 2,700 gallons of gas. On its takeoff run a bump in the runway caused the ship to hop and come down on its nose wheel which buckled. The ship had tremendous speed but not enough to take off. The pilot, seeing he could not get off, attempted to brake, but the ship swerved to one side and the main gear buckled. The ship slid sideways off the runway and then exploded sending a tremendous column of black smoke into the sky hundreds of feet high. Pieces of the ship, engines, and bombs fragments were sent hurling through the air whistling as they went by. The ship then settled down to burning with two more explosions occurring as the gas tanks, bombs, and ammunition were reached by the flames. With tracers lighting the sky one crewman riding in the waist got out of the ship. He received severe burns and was in shock.

This continued to be a sad day for the squadron as the planes took off in sight of the wrecked and burning ship. The target was Ploesti and from returning crews we learned that St Peters Ferry, Craven Raven, #081, and #442 were lost to enemy fire. That night seemed lonely and desolate with the missing of boys we knew and had trained with. They were hit by fighters and one by one the complete low flight was wiped out. One top turret gunner was seen still firing as his ship was going down. Our hopes were that these boys got out OK and were safe. These were our first losses either in training or in operations against the enemy. This brought home the fact that war is hell!!

24 Apr 1944. Today we heard the sad news that Big Boober Girl went down crashing into the snow covered mountains of Yugoslavia.

The day started out beautifully with no clouds. We were not scheduled to fly and crew 59 flew today with pilot Jones. The target was the marshalling yard at Bucharest, Romania. The flak was intense over the target with many fighters attacking the formation. A burst of flak hit right under Big Boober Girl's left wing knocking out No. 1 and No. 2 engines. The ship swerved but was under control. The props on the left side were feathered and then No. 3 engine was damaged by the fighters. The pilot did an excellent job of flying keeping up with the formation. On the way the crew threw out every piece of available loose equipment including the ball turret. It was taken off and dropped to keep The Gal in the air, but to no avail. On reaching friendly territory the crew bailed out. Then the Big Boober Girl went to her death by herself on the lonely slopes of the Yugoslavian mountains. She kept on in spite of everything to bring her crew to the safety of friendly lands. Later we met the boys except for one who was a prisoner of war captured by the Germans. He had a broken leg.

5 May '44. From Castelluccia to Ploesti. Ship: Bigger Boober Girl #41-28957. Archie Piirainen, Engineer/Gunner, 451 BG, 727 BS.

The day was clear in the morning. On crossing the Adriatic and over the mountains of Yugoslavia we ran into scattered clouds. Nothing unusual happened until we reached the IP; then flak was fired at us continually until past the target. A burst directly beneath us shot out a hydraulic pressure line and the leak drained both accumulators and the system of hydraulic fluid—also the return line from the pressure regulator was severed. Using other lines we tried to fix the system to the regulator, but since our fluid was low, we could not lower our gear hydraulically. We were able to lower it manually. Due to tension differences in the cables the left gear went down first and locked in place. Then the cable had to be loosened completely to get the right main gear down. On the final approach the pilot overshot and we went around. On the turn, the right rudder locked due to flak damage. By turning the plane with the engines we made our second approach with all personnel in ditching position.

The sweetest feeling on this trip was when the wheels touched

the runway. The pilot put the plane on its tail skid because we had no brakes. We rolled on past the end of the runway and into a wheat field where we finally came to a stop. I sweated more today than at any other time in my life! Incidentally, this was our first mission in our new ship—rather a rough initiation to combat. Courtesy: "The Fight'n 451st Bomb Group," by permission of the Editor-in-Chief, Sedgefield D. "Red" Hill (life member of 15th AFA) and with a salute to Archie Piirainen (life member of 15th AFA).

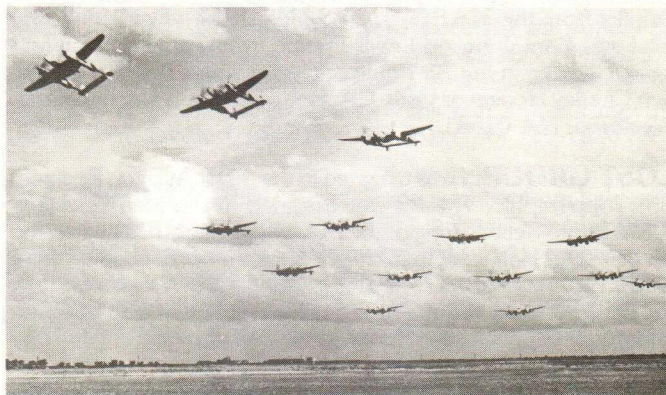
ALL ALONE AND SCARED

It was my first combat mission after being assigned to the 14th Fighter Group in Italy. I was a P-38 pilot—fresh from the states—with 37 hours and 15 minutes experience in the "fork-tailed devil." Today's target—Blechhammer, Germany. I was assigned to fly the flight leader's wing. We took off on schedule with me glued to his wing. Our squadron of 16 aircraft soon formed up. We set course to catch the bombers and give them support through the target area. Soon I realized that I missed part of the briefing somehow. Adding to my concern: my radio was tuned to the bomber frequency, but no one told me that radio jamming was part of this war game. All I could hear in my headset was Gor-ring, Gor-ring. I knew Herman Goering was sending his entire Luftwaffe after me.

We joined our Big Friends in the target area. With no cockpit heat my cold hands and feet were killing me but I hung in there. We were criss-crossing over the bombers at 32,000 feet—an altitude I had never experienced before. My training had been at lower levels with little use for oxygen or a mask. All of a sudden my leader made a hard break to the right and I did my best to stay with him. The turn was too tight and my bird snapped over into a spin. I had never spun the '38 before. While turning the wheel against the spin, I noticed considerable noise coming from the nose of my aircraft. During my panic I was squeezing the gun trigger and spraying all of Germany with my .50 calibers. The spin stopped but the dive did not. The high altitude, thin air, high speed, and minimum air flow over the elevators resulted in my stalling the aircraft each time a recovery was attempted. After two more attempts I decided it was time to bail out. I made one more effort before releasing my canopy and the bird responded at 20,000 feet. My head was spinning like a top looking for enemy fighters or friendly anything. My oxygen gauge read zero—I knew either the Jerries would get me or I would pass out from lack of oxygen. To my relief I spotted another P-38, our element lead, who had also spun out. I latched on to his right wing feeling that I had been saved.

We soon descended over the Adriatic Sea to land at our home base. My crew chief greeted me with all smiles as he looked at the smoke around the gun ports. "Hey Lieutenant, looks like you saw some action on your first mission." I sheepishly looked back at him saying "Yeah Sarge, I sure did," while getting in the jeep to go debrief.

Courtesy: Ed Baquet from "The Fifteenth Air Force Story."



BULLETIN BOARD

AVIATION VIDEOS: Frank Day (459 BG) and his American Sound & Video Corp have offered our members an outstanding collection of aviation videos which feature genuine AAF archive films. Those of you who attended our Las Vegas reunion saw a sampling of the videos projected in our combat theater. They are of high quality and are reasonably priced. Additionally Frank will pay our Association a percentage of the profits from all sales to our members—please mention that you are a member when you place your order. When you place your first order, ask Frank or Sherry to send you a current listing of some of the videos that are available.

All videos are \$29.95 each plus \$3 shipping and handling for the first video in the shipment and \$1.75 for each additional video ordered in the same shipment.

Place your order by writing American Sound & Video, 3100 E. Ten Mile Road, Warren, MI 48091-2191 or call (800) 869-6379 (Visa & Mastercard are accepted). Be sure to mention the 15th Air Force Association. Space does not permit a full listing of the videos that are available, but we have highlighted a few selections below.

B-24 AT WAR Series 1 (V-2111): Features exciting footage of the Ploesti Missions and coverage of the planes returning to base with battle damage. B/W. 45 Minutes.

THE B-24 STORY (V-5884): This exciting saga takes you from Willow Run's assembly lines to the B-24's Global Operations and on to Ploesti! B/W. 74 Minutes.

FLYING THE FIGHTERS—P-47 & P-51 (V-2117): Official AAF training films cover everything you want to know about these remarkable aircraft. B/W & Color. 56 Minutes.

FLYING THE BOMBERS—B-24 LIBERATOR (V-5057): Includes the history of the B-24, takes you through a preflight inspection, and teaches you the "art" of flying the B-24. Color. 1 Hour 26 Minutes.

FLYING THE BOMBERS—B-17 (V-2113): Learn to fly the B-17. Everything from the pre-flight inspection, flight & emergency operations to the induction system. B/W. 2 Hours.

THE B-17 STORY (V-2118): A look beyond the line of duty & the story of the "Memphis Belle." B/W. 64 Minutes.

HOLLYWOOD STARS (V-2121): Features Cadet Classification with Ronald Reagan; Rear Gunner with Ronald Reagan and Burgess Meredith; and Winning Your Wings with Jimmy Stewart. B/W & Color. 1 Hour 20 Minutes.

376 BG LOST SOULS: I am trying to locate my pilot and co-pilot from the 376 BG, 512 BS (July 1944—Dec 1944). My pilot was Capt Johnson Lewis French from Topeka, KS who I believe stayed in the Air Force and retired as a major. Co-pilot was Charley Hooker of Vista, CA. Bob Johnson, 3 Lincoln Street, Westboro, MA 01581.

LOST GROUP: I was assigned to the 941st Aviation Engineer Bn, Topographic. The Bn was assigned to the Mediterranean Allied Photo Recon Wing of the MAAF until Aug 1944 when the Bn was split. Half went to 12th AF HQ at Florence and half went to 15th AF HQ at Bari. The Bari contingent was stationed with the 5th Photo SQ about a mile outside Bari. I was also assigned to the 21st Engrs attached to the 15th. Can you help me find any original members, reunion organization, group contact, etc., or even anyone who served in a Engr Bn from any group. Howard

Greene, 1350 Diamond Head Drive, Encinitas, CA 92024. (619) 753-4175.

97 BG LOST SOULS: I was in the 68th Coast Artillery as a search light operator. We landed in North Africa then went to Sicily, then to Naples, and then to Foggia where I transferred to the 340 BS, 97 BG. I flew out of Foggia as a ball turret gunner on a B-17G. Lt Glidden from Maine was the pilot and the co-pilot was Lt Cox from Georgia. That is about all I remember. I would like to find at least some of the boys who flew at that time in Italy. I would also like to find some of my friends in the Coast Artillery. I should have kept up with time but it looks like time has caught up with me. I am 70 years old now and in good health and would like to hear from somebody to swap stories with. Raymond Mann, Rt 2 Box 123, Patriot, OH 45658.

454 BG LOST SOULS: I am trying to find my old buddy tail gunner Edward Shean of the 454 BG, 738 BS. Our crew was originally known as *Lonesome Polecat*. The crew was Pilot: David Phillips, Co-pilot: Joe Crawford, Bombardier: Anderson (deceased), Navigator: Clayton, Nose: Schneck, Waist: Gillingham, Tail: Edward Shean, Ball: McHutchins, Top: Norman, Waist: McCready. Edward Shean was a graduate of Notre Dame and lived around NY and PA. Write: John J. Norman, HCR 69, Box 434, Sunrise Beach, MO 65079.

LOST CREW: We were flying out of Foggia. I am looking for my crew members as follows: Pilot: Tom Ball from Breckenridge, TX; Nav: Don Cauley from CA; Gunner: Ike Eichers from MN; Ball: Bill Stumpf from Bronx, NY; and Engr: Bahati from Long Island, NY. Adam Zakett (originally Zakutynski), 706 Gayle St, N. Myrtle Beach, SC 29582.

301 BG HISTORY: I am writing a history of the 301st Bomb Group/Wing from 1942 until 1979 and I am trying to put the 301st story into the context of the air war over Europe during WW II. Therefore, I wish to establish contact with those who served with both the Eighth and Fifteenth Air Forces during the war. Prof Kenneth P. Werrell, Department of History, Radford University, Radford, VA 24142.

460 BG AUTHOR: Ted Newby of the 460 Bg has written another highly acclaimed book about our air campaign against Ploesti. It is titled *Ploesti: Graveyard of Bombers*, and will be published in hardcover by Motorbooks International in January at \$17.95. It covers the entire Ploesti campaign—life above and below the bombs. Just a few of the comments from those who have read the manuscript: Clark Mollenhoff, Pulitzer Prize winner, says "A masterful job of catching the full flavor of the 26 month bomber war on the oil refineries at Ploesti." The late Curtis E. LeMay, Air Force Chief of Staff from 1961 to 1965, said "A fine example of the nation throwing its young men into combat when we weren't ready for war." A personalized, signed copy is available from Ted in January for \$17.95 plus \$1 postage. Ted Newby, 346 Pineview Drive, Venice, FL 34293.

ITALIAN COLLECTOR: Our 31 DRS contact, Alex Boggio, writes that his friend Franco Fassio, a prominent Italian business executive, is an avid collector of memorabilia of the GI's who served our country overseas (particularly in Italy). He solicits pictures, dog tags, shoulder patches, and flight jackets with group insignias. He is willing to pay for the jackets if available. He is

BULLETIN BOARD

planning a book about the GI's who served in Italy which will include the 15th AAF. Members wishing to contact him may write: Franco Fassio, 21 Borglum Road, Munsey Park, NY 11030.

MISSING AIRCREW REPORTS: When one of our members requested a Missing Aircrew Report for his own crew, he also received copies of MACR's for two other 15th AAF crews: Lt George R. Cloer's 513 BS, 376 BG crew missing on a mission to Unirea, 10 Aug 1944, containing about 30 pages of material; and Lt James A. Cullinson Jr's 758 BS, 459 BG crew missing on the Bleckhammer mission of 22 Aug 1944 containing 32 pages. If members of the crews or friends from their groups would like to have copies, contact Henry J. Kreiensieck, 3650 1/2 So. Federal Blvd, Englewood, CO 80110.

464 BG LOST SOUL: There were six of us at the reunion in Las Vegas, but we are still looking for one 779 BS, 464 BG crew member. He is our ball gunner, Harold E. Scrensen, from Chicago, IL. Write Cornelius T. Reilly Jr., 1975 Charbonier 2, Florissant, MO 63031.

98 BG LOST SOUL: H.J. Lark is still missing three of his original crew members: Lewis G. Beemsterboer (Top turret from Chicago), James F. Grey (Nose turret from High Point, NC), and Willis Fuller (Tail gunner from Lansing, MI). They were in the 415 BS, 98 BG stationed at Lecce during 1944. H.J. Lark, 253 Preston McDaniel Rd, Pickens, SC 29671, (803) 878-3206.

YUGOSLAVIAN HELPERS: A reunion of all airmen who were downed in Yugoslavia during WW II and rescued from the enemy by the citizens, partisans, Chetniks, etc. is currently being planned. The purpose is to reunite the airmen with their helpers and to recognize their invaluable assistance. If specific names and addresses of the helpers are not available, the plan is to identify the specific geographical locations as closely as possible. Then, via local Yugoslavian newspapers, we will solicit information to help locate our helpers. It is up to you to provide the initial information. After they are identified and located, we will make plans for each participant to meet his helpers. John Blatnik, retired Congressman and former OSS officer in the Balkans, has arranged for a joint reception with OSS veterans in the US Embassy in Belgrade in mid Sept 1991. If you have information and desire to participate, contact: John Rucigay, 14 Ashley Drive, Ballston Lake, NY 12019. (518) 877-8131.

SPERRY BOMBSIGHT: Trying to locate a Sperry S-1 Bombsight for the Cradle of Aviation Museum at Mitchell Field. Write: Robert J. Sitterly, 2258 Charring Cross Road, Baldwin, NY 11510.

FAMILY CONTACT: The family of James Tocci (who served as a gunner with the 416 BS, 99 BG in Italy) would like to hear from anyone who remembers their brother. Write in care of: Alex Boggio, P.O. Box 357, So. Pasadena, CA 91031.

HELP: We need your help in supporting H.R. 2436 introduced 22 May 1989 by Congressman Annunzio to award posthumously a congressional gold medal to the late Captain Don

Gentile of the 15th Air Force's Fourth Fighter Group. The bill reads, in part, "Captain Gentile received two Distinguished Service Crosses, eight Distinguished Flying Crosses, Silver Star, four Air Medals, and numerous British, Italian, Belgian, and French medals." When he destroyed his thirtieth Nazi warplane on 8 Apr 1944, he became the highest scoring fighter pilot in American history at the age of twenty-three. Captain Gentile was cited by General Eisenhower as a 'one-man Air Force' and President Roosevelt termed him 'Captain Courageous.' Don Gentile died at the age of thirty when he sacrificed his life in a vain attempt to save the life of a passenger in his two-seater training jet. Although recommended for the Medal of Honor, Captain Gentile never achieved this highest award." You can help by encouraging your congressman to co-sponsor H.R. 2436 and assist in moving the bill to the floor for a favorable vote. There are currently 16 co-sponsors, but more are needed to secure approval. HELP.

CZECH HELPER: On 22 Feb 1944 German fighters damaged a B-24 over occupied Czechoslovakia. The crew, thought to be from the 98 BG, successfully bailed out. All men survived and were captured by the Nazis. One wounded American airman came to the house near the crash site and requested assistance. This airman had a chest wound. His wound was treated and bandaged by the Czech couple living in the house. After the wound was bandaged he took a short nap. Later he gave the wife two rings with instructions that were not understood since they spoke little English. The Czech couple still have the rings and would like to make contact with the airman. The airman was from New York and in 1944 he had one son 10-12 years old. They remember him to be of dark complexion. One of our members has researched the mission logs for the day and believes the airman was from a 415 BS, 98 BG crew that crashed near the town of Ceske Budejovice. Reports indicate all survived and returned to the US. Our researcher believes that only one crew member matches the description—SSgt Ralph V. Tropicano or Tropeano. If anyone has information that will help put the couple in touch with the airman, contact Manuel F. Van Eyck, 12365 Cohasset St, N. Hollywood, CA 91605. The couple is very old and time is important.

SON'S SEARCH: I am interested in getting information about my father's service in the 15th AF. His name was Arnold Mather Smith. My information is sparse but I do know he trained in Austin, TX and was stationed in Panama, Corsica, and Africa. He flew the PT19, AT6, P-40, P-39, and P-51. My father and I were close and I was considered the keeper of the war stories, but I have forgotten a lot, and he passed away in 1986. I waited too long to document this part of my father's life and would appreciate any help in locating anyone who knew him in the 15th AF. Jonathan R. Smith, (708) 729-6704 (H), (708) 729-1820 (W).

ITALIAN MEMBER: An associate member from Italy asks for your help in researching the history of the air actions carried out over his hometown of Rimini during 1943-1944. He has some documents from the Air Force Research Center at Maxwell, but can find no information on the air raid by the 321 BG on 1 Nov 1943. He wishes to contact anyone with knowledge of the raid to assist in filling in the blanks for a history he is writing. Gaffarelli Alessandro, Viale Mantegazza 51, Rimini, Italy 47037.

PART XXII THE HERITAGE OF FIFTEENTH AIR FORCE

OPERATION STRANGLE



General Twining meets with his Group and Wing Commanders.
Courtesy J.B. Newton

AIR POWER TO BREAK STALEMATE

The failure of the Anzio landings to achieve substantial results and the unsuccessful attempts of the Fifth Army to break the Gustav Line focused attention on the idea of using air power to disrupt the enemy's lines of communication to an extent that would deny him the power to stop a major Allied ground offensive. The possibility and advantage of such a program had been pointed out by General Eisenhower at the Cairo conference in December 1943. Air leaders had been urging the program for several months. General Spaatz, during a visit to the theater in February, declared that with good weather the air forces could so thoroughly interdict communications that the breaking of the ground stalemate would be inevitable. General Eaker assured General Arnold that powerful attacks on the enemy's rail, road, and sea communications could interdict them and keep them interdicted with the result that the enemy would be driven past Rome to the Pisa-Rimini Line.

15TH CHOSEN TO "STRANGLE" ENEMY

After the failure of the ground troops at Cassino and the stabilizing of the Anzio sector, both fronts became quiet and so remained while the Allies began to regroup for a big offensive to be launched as soon as the winter rains were over. At the same time flying conditions began to improve and the stage was set. On 19 March, all Fifteenth groups received a directive from MATAF to begin the interdiction program, which in code was soon appropriately designated Operation STRANGLE. The directive of 19 March stated the purpose of STRANGLE was to reduce the enemy's flow of supplies to a level which would make it impractical for him to maintain and operate his forces in Central Italy. It gave first priority to the destruction of marshalling yards and repair facilities. While medium bombers were assigned to the rail centers south of Pisa, Fifteenth was to take the attack to the marshalling yards in major cities to the north through which flowed the bulk of men and supplies from beyond the Alps.

It is difficult to give a specific date for the beginning of Opera-

tion STRANGLE, for in a sense it represented simply a sudden and very large expansion of an old program. Between 1 January and 19 March, Fifteenth had expended more than 2,500 sorties against rail targets. Almost two months later, on 11 May, the operation merged into DIADEM, a ground and air offensive that finally broke the Gustav and Hitler lines.

15TH ALSO STRANGLES THE GAF

Opposition to STRANGLE operations by the Luftwaffe was not serious. Enemy fighters were encountered consistently only over the sector between Rome and Orvieto, and even there the 15-35 fighters which usually came up seldom offered battle. In fact, throughout the seven weeks of the interdiction program our planes were so little bothered by the GAF that mediums flew with no escort and the fighter-bombers were able to go out in small flights of as few as four planes. This allowed an almost constant stream of aircraft to operate over the interdiction area, a vitally important factor in the success of the program. The main reason for the lack of opposition by the GAF was attributed to a well planned and ably executed strike on 18 March by the Fifteenth against airfields around the head of the Adriatic. Three hundred and seventy-three heavies dropped more than 43,000 20-pound frag bombs on Udine, Villaorba, and three smaller fields on which enemy fighters were heavily concentrated as the result of a preliminary sweep by Allied fighters. Fifty-six enemy aircraft were destroyed on the ground and twenty-three in the air by Fifteenth's bombers. Escorting fighters claimed another seventeen shot down. Fifteenth's losses were seven bombers and three fighters.

THOUSAND TON RAID

The rail yards in northern Italy became increasingly more lucrative targets as supplies accumulated as a result of the cuts in rail lines to the south. Fifteenth's principal targets were at Padua, Verona, Bolzano, Turin, Genoa, and Milan. The high point in Fifteenth's campaign was a series of seven missions flown during five days at the end of March. Three of the attacks—on the 22d, 28th, and the 29th—were especially heavy, involving a total close to 1,000 effective sorties and featuring Fifteenth's first thousand ton raid on the 28th. Bombers from the 2d, 97th, 98th, 99th, 301st, 376th, 449th, 450th, 451st, 454th, 455th, 456th, and the 459th Bomb Groups inflicted tremendous damage on yards and adjacent industrial targets at Verona, Mes tre, Turin, Bolzano, Milan, Bologna, and Rimini.

HEAVIES DON'T STRAFE

On the 28th, six heavies from the Fifteenth tried low level (200 feet) attacks on the Fano and Cesena bridges, but the experiment was such a signal failure that thereafter the heavies stayed at their proper altitude and left strafing to their "little buddies." (Ed. Note: Our research failed to identify the group involved. If anyone remembers the mission, please write us at the Sortie with details.)

To Be Continued

From: *The Army Air Forces in World War II, Vol III Office of Air Force History*

REUNIONS

13 Bomb Sq (Korean Night Intruder)—Raddison Suite Hotel, Tucson, AZ. 3-7 Oct 1990. Bill Ricketts, 11650 E. Calle Aurora, Tucson, AZ 85748.

22 BW—Tucson, AZ. Oct 1990. John Donohue, 848 St Paul Street, Denver, CO 80206.

52 FG, 2 FS—Grand Island, NE. 6-8 Oct 1990. Clyde Headley, Rte #2 Box 33, Shelton, NE 68876.

99 BG—Albuquerque, NM. Apr 1991. Bernie Barr, 7413 Vista del Arroyo, Albuquerque, NM 87109.

111 Strat Recon Wing (Fairchild AFB and the 117th Bomb Sq, Langley AFB)—Planning 40th anniversary reunion in 1991. John Howe, 2618 Oriole Rd, Broomall, PA 19008.

312 DRS—Las Vegas, NV. 1st week Oct 1990. J.B. Monzella, 765 Belwood Circle, Fairfield, AL 35064

454 BG—Nashville, TN. 4-8 Oct 1990. 454 BG, P.O. Box 678, Wheat Ridge, CO 80034-0678.

460 BG—Desota Hilton Hotel, Savannah, GA. 25-30 Oct 1990. Bob Cutler, 19135 US Highway 19 North Apt A16, Clearwater, FL 34624.

461 BG—Double Tree Inn, Tucson, AZ. 3-7 Oct 1990. Frank O'Bannon, P.O. Box 36600, Tucson, AZ 85740.

463 BG—Sheraton Hotel, Colorado Springs, CO. 7-11 Nov 1990. Mike Geller, 7246 South Birch St, Littleton, CO 80122.

484 & 461 BG Assoc—Marriott Hotel, Nashville, TN. 12-15 Oct 1990. Bud Markel, 1122 Ysabel St, Redondo Beach, CA 90277.

Aviation Cadet Class 41-F (Barksdale or Craig)—50th Reunion 1991. Bill Ceely, 1103 N. Garfield Ave, Deland, FL 32724.

Air Weather Service—Planning next reunion. Details in its Jan 1991 mailing. Write: Air Weather Assoc., 5301 Reservation Road, Placerville, CA 95667.

REUNION VIDEOS

HOW TO ORDER OUR LAS VEGAS REUNION VIDEOS:

We have three professionally shot, edited, and produced VHS video tapes with the highlights of our Las Vegas Reunion. Each tape is priced to recover our costs at \$29.95. Please add \$3 for each tape to cover cost of postage and packaging. Send your order printed or typed on a single sheet of paper. Include your full name, address, the ID number of the tapes you are ordering (see tape ID numbers below), and your check for full payment made payable to 15th AFA Reunion.

If you order ONE tape, send a check for \$32.95. If you order TWO tapes, send a check for \$65.90. If you order a complete set of THREE, send a check for \$98.85.

Tape ID #1—Opening banquet ceremony by the 45 piece 15th Air Force Band—Roll call of the states—Parade of all state flags—Parade of past 15th Air Force commanders and Bob Hope—Ruffles & Flourishes—Presentation of our Colors—National Anthem—Introductions—Recognition of Bomb & Fighter Group leaders—Toasts—The Bob Hope Show. Color about 70 minutes.

Tape ID #2—Banquet show with Lawrence Welk's Bob Ralston featuring Tom Cooper and Pepper Bixby—Patriotic finale by 15th Air Force Band—Parade of 70 American Flags—Additional 100 piece marching band -'Battle Hymn' -'Stars & Stripes Forever'—'Air Force Song' -etc. Color about 110 minutes.

Tape ID #3—Highlights of luncheon program—Presentation of our Colors—National Anthem—Pomp & ceremony—Update on current operations by 15th Air Force Commander—Patriotic concert by 15th Air Force Band—Entire memorial service on Thursday morning with wreath laying—Taps—15th Air Force Band—'Battle Hymn'—'Air Force Hymn'—'Amazing Grace'—15th Air Force Prayer- Color about 115 minutes.

We have additionally included a "trailer" of crowd shots at the end of our tapes to make them a full two hours—see yourself or friends. We believe these tapes are an outstanding way to preserve precious memories for you and share an old fashioned, flagwaving, patriotic observance with your children and grandchildren.

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15TH AF UNIT _____ DATE _____ 15TH AF UNIT _____ DATE _____

MAIL CHECK AND APPLICATION TO:

FIFTEENTH AIR FORCE ASSOCIATION • BOX 6325 • MARCH AIR FORCE BASE, CA 92518



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_____	2. 3" 15AFA Sticker.....	.75	_____	27. Miniature B-24 Tie Tac.....	6.95
_____	3. 3" 15AFA Bumper Sticker.....	.95	_____	28. B-17 Ladies Necklace.....	9.95
_____	4. 3/4" 15AFA Lapel Pin.....	3.50	_____	29. B-24 Ladies Necklace.....	9.95
_____	5. 3/4" 15AFA Life Member Pin.....	4.50	_____	30. B-24 Pewter Desk Model.....	49.95
_____	6. 3/4" 15AFA Tie Tac.....	4.95	_____	31. B-17 Pewter Desk Model.....	49.95
_____	7. 3/4" 15AFA Life Member Tie Tac.....	5.95	_____	32. 15AF Poster.....	3.00
_____	8. 15AFA Cap (All Sizes).....	7.95	_____	33. 15AF T-Shirt (S,M,L,XL).....	9.95
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