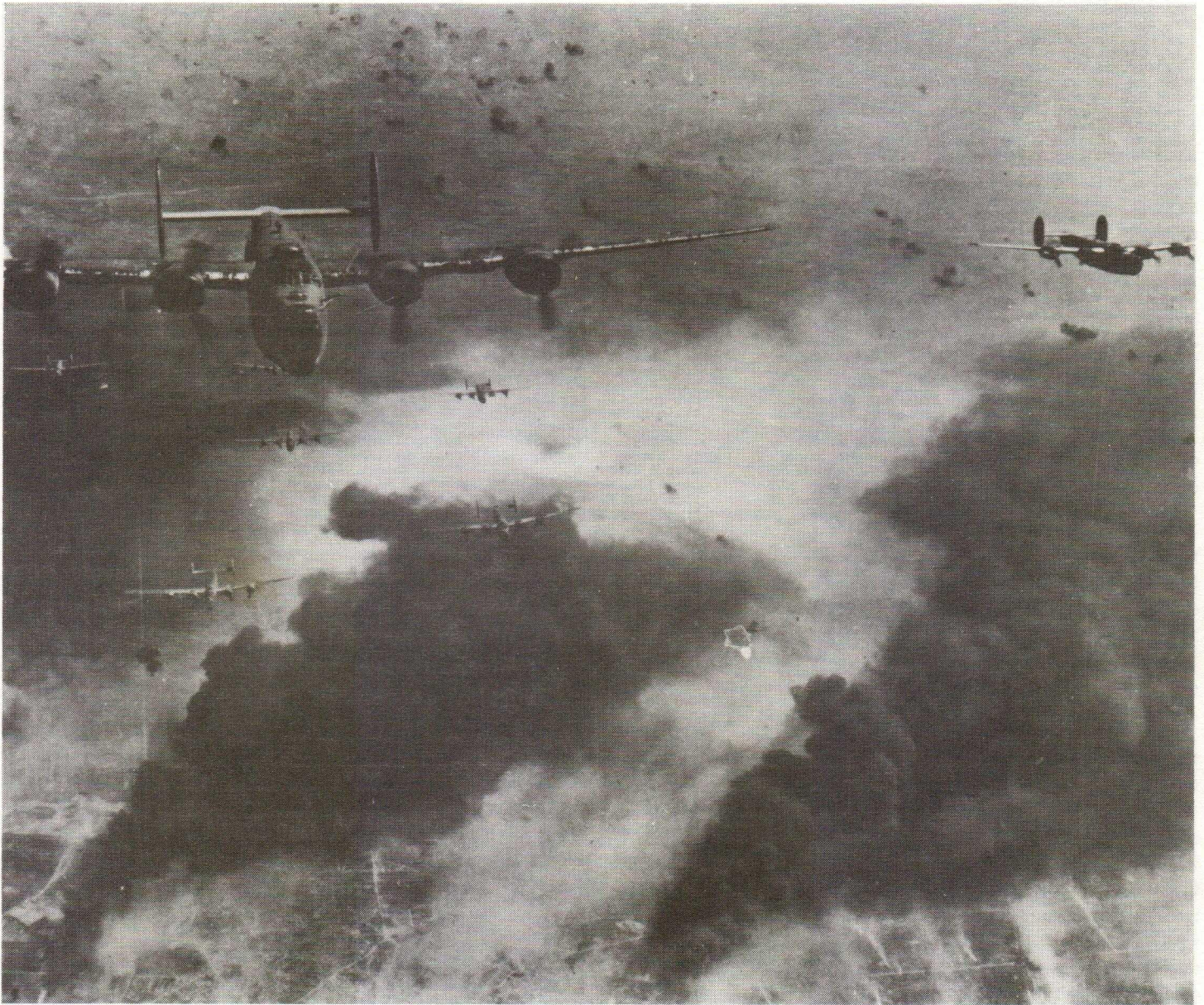


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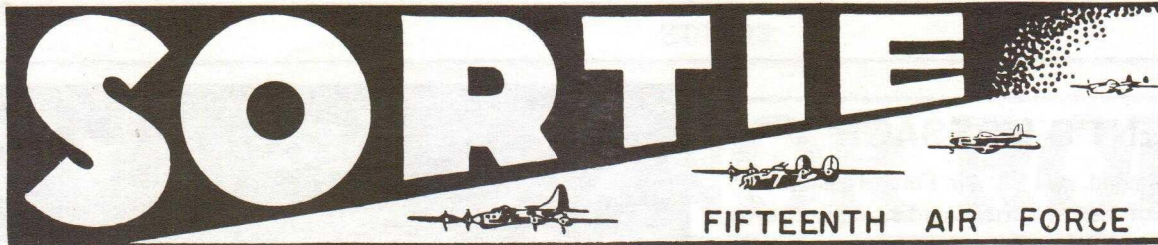


FIFTEENTH AIR FORCE



# OUR LIFE MEMBERS . . . WE SALUTE YOU

Gen James H. Doolittle  
 Gen James P. Mullins  
 Gen Leon W. Johnson  
 Gen Paul K. Carlton  
 Gen Charles C. McDonald  
 Gen John A. Shaud  
 Gen Russell E. Dougherty  
 Lt Gen William K. Martin  
 Lt Gen William F. Pitts  
 Lt Gen Bryan M. Shotts  
 Lt Gen John J. Murphy  
 Lt Gen James E. Light  
 Lt Gen James V. Edmundson  
 Lt Gen Richard A. Burpee  
 Lt Gen E. G. Shuler Jr  
 Lt Gen Robert D. Beckel  
 Lt Gen Arlen D. Jameson  
 Lt Gen John E. Jackson  
 Maj Gen John A. Brashear  
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 Maj Gen Stanley C. Beck  
 Maj Gen Robert E. Dempsey  
 Maj Gen Lewis E. Lyle  
 Maj Gen Francis W. Nye  
 Maj Gen Patrick J. Halloran  
 Maj Gen William G. MacLaren  
 Maj Gen William B. Maxson  
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 Maj Gen Frank W. Elliott  
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 Maj Gen Edward M. Nichols  
 Maj Gen Alan V. Rogers  
 Maj Gen Leo C. Lewis  
 Maj Gen Thomas G. Darling  
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 William A. Parsons  
 L/Col Harry J. Pascoe  
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 Col John V. Patterson  
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 TSgt Ernest J. Pellington  
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VOL. VIII No 2

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

## 15TH AIR FORCE LEAVES MARCH

### CHANGES AT 15TH HEADQUARTERS

The 15th Air Force, born nearly 50 years ago to battle Hitler's forces and nurtured to become the Cold War's most feared fighter, has departed from March Air Force Base, where it had stood guard since 1949. Once part of the mighty Strategic Air Command (SAC), whose motto was "Peace Is Our Profession", the 15th and SAC itself were done in by the peace they were instrumental in creating.

The 15th flag was solemnly cased in a ceremony attended by about 200 guests and veterans. It was unfurled again, signifying a re-birth, at Northern California's Travis AFB, which will be the 15th's new headquarters. Part of a reshuffling and consolidation of forces, the former bomber, tanker, recon, and missile command will now oversee cargo and air refueling wings as one of two major headquarters within the Air Mobility Command.

There was a tremendous competition between 15th Air Force and its counterpart, 8th Air Force at Barksdale, LA. Now 8th Air Force has the bomber force under the Air Combat Command.

Lt Gen John E. Jackson Jr. took a bare bones staff of 50 to Travis. The 15th Air Force Band will stay until further decisions are made regarding the disposition of the active forces. At Travis, 15th Air Force replaced the 22nd Air Force which was retired in separate ceremonies. Lt Gen Walter Kross assumed command of the 15th Air Force from General Jackson shortly after the transfer and General Jackson departed for his new assignment at Air Mobility Command headquarters. General Kross and his staff will oversee transport and air refueling wings at six bases plus smaller units at six other bases belonging to other commands. The 15th Air Force will total nearly 30,000 personnel.

In a separate action intended to reduce costs, March will phase out active duty operations over the next three years, eventually becoming a Air Force Reserve and California Air Guard Base. Surplus property and buildings will be designated for civilian use.

A smaller Air Force and a shuffling of forces is reminiscent of what the 15th Air Force went through after WW II when we had also "won the peace". Let us hope and pray that this time history will not repeat itself!

Courtesy: Parts excerpted from Press-Enterprise story by Marlowe Churchill

### 15TH MEMORIAL UPDATE

With the departure of the 15th Air Force and our cancellation of the reunion, the local chambers of commerce and other civilian support groups are planning a joint affair to mark the 50th anniversary of 15th Air Force and the 75th anniversary of March Air Force Base. It will consist primarily of a banquet on October 30th at a facility on base which has seating capacity for about 400. There will also be an open house at March with an airshow featuring the USAF Thunderbirds. While we expect a gala affair, it will not be a 15th Air Force Association "reunion type" function with singular focus on our 15th Air Force heritage.

We still have hopes of dedicating a 15th Air Force Memorial during this time, but currently the donations are insufficient to guarantee this. We desperately need some large donations to insure that we can complete the project as planned.

We still plan to place the memorial at the site of the new March Field Museum which is now located on the perimeter of the base and fronts on a major freeway. We expect that the museum site will be secure under any plan considered for future utilization of March Field. However, we will not make a permanent placement of the memorial until this assurance is received by the March Field Museum Foundation from the Air Force.

Our final design incorporates a wall which will extend 180 feet and reach heights of 10 feet in selected areas. Centered on the wall will be a large bronze rendering of the 15th AAF insignia. A bronze plaque will show that the memorial *is dedicated to the honor and memory of our comrades who died in defense of our country; dedicated in tribute to the magnificent achievements of those who served in the 15th Air Force keeping the peace; and dedicated in recognition of those who serve today and will serve tomorrow in the great traditions of service pioneered by those who have gone before.* A bronze bust of the first 15th Air Force Commander, General Jimmy Doolittle, will stand in the courtyard in front of the wall.

We are very grateful for each of you who have contributed to the memorial and we will place a permanent Memorial Book at the site which will recognize and honor each donor. WE NEED YOU! PLEASE HELP US AND USE THE DONOR COUPON ON PAGE 20. God Bless You.

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

All past changes of command at 15th Air Force Headquarters have engendered a sense of loss as a friend and strong supporter has transferred from the area. But this has always been tempered by the arrival of the new commander and our relationship with him. The recent change of command has, of course, been different. Not only did the commander leave, but this time, the 15th Air Force left - and all of us feel a deep sense of loss.

We publicly express our great gratitude to Lt Gen John E. Jackson Jr. as he assumes his new position at Mobility Command Headquarters. He has given us wise counsel and has been supportive of our efforts to preserve our heritage. We shall miss him.

And we welcome Lt Gen Walter Kross as the new 15th Air Force Commander and pledge our continued support. While physically separated from the headquarters, we are linked by the strongest of bonds - our common heritage and our love of country. Welcome, sir. You are among friends.

While we deeply regret the decision to cancel our 1993 reunion and will miss seeing all of you, subsequent events have confirmed that it was in your best interests. We are considering a number of options for future reunions and will notify you when a decision is made.

MURRAY A. BYWATER  
Brig. Gen, USAF, Retired  
President

## SMALL TALK

I join General Bywater in expressing my regret that we will not have the opportunity to see you in October - all of us will miss the fellowship and special times we share at reunions.

**Base Changes:** The active forces at March AFB will be phased out over the next 3 years and the base will then become a reserve and air guard base. While the departure of the 15th Air Force for Travis Air Force base has been traumatic for us old soldiers, the long term impact on our Association will actually be minimal.

We will undoubtedly miss the day-to-day camaraderie with the headquarters people and if we lose the band, it will require us to revamp our reunion programs, but we will re-group - and remain in the Riverside area - and since most of our members



331 Signal Company Christmas Party in 1944 at Manduria. Gen Rush and Col Kyle are in the middle. Courtesy: **Gilberto Vera**.

are WW II and Korean vets, the long term effect should not be too great - the loss will be mostly emotional.

**Memorial:** We have generally covered the status of our 15th Air Force Memorial and the fund raising on page 3. Let me add that we will continue to do all that is possible to complete this Memorial and to place a Memorial Bench at the Air Force Museum at Wright-Patterson. I have only to read the accounts of heroism and sacrifice in this Sortie to know that we must not fail - we must insure that they are all remembered and honored - we have a debt to pay to our comrades. I know that you will not fail them! Also, there will be a place opposite the name of each donor in the permanent Memorial Book to enter a brief "In Memory of" entry if the donor so designates - otherwise the donation will recognize all who have served in the 15th Air Force.

**Annual Dues:** We will be mailing renewal notices to about 400 of you in the next month. The bulk of our renewals, however, fall toward the end of the year. You could help us immensely and save us some postage if you would respond prior to our renewal mailings - I will insure that you receive proper credit if your dues are received early. - God Bless you.



Sortie is published on behalf of members of the 15th Air Force Association, Box 6325, March AFB, CA 92518, a nonprofit organization dedicated to the preservation of the heritage, legacy, and tradition of the 15th 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/PGOTOGRAPHER .....Wayne Corbett  
Col, USAF

## † † † † TAPS ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

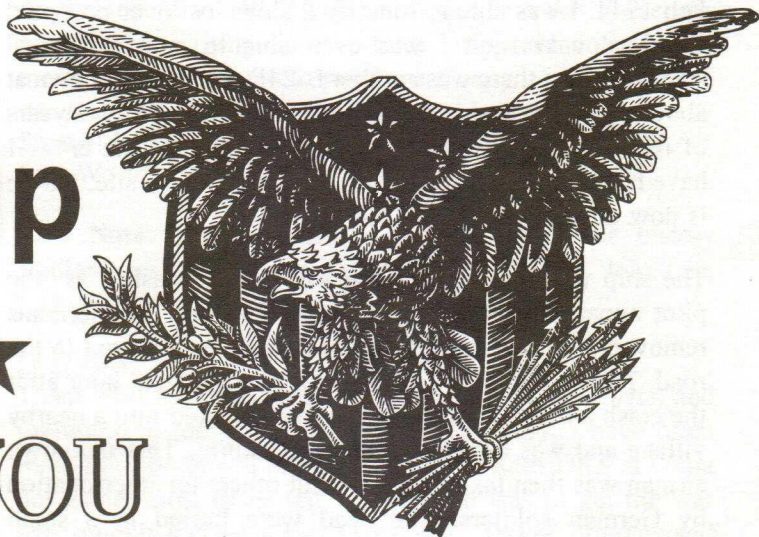
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|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| Leroy Adams 450 BG       | Vern Pulaski 450 BG       |
| Catherine Caradja        | Ralph W. Raines 485 BG    |
| Roy K. Hornung 99 BG     | Jack N. Story 460 BG      |
| Lewis D. Kaiser 459 BG   | Joe Thompson              |
| Edward J. Macafee 450 BG | John Tierney 450 BG       |
| Lester McCracken 31 DR   | Charles A. Wallace 301 BG |
| Robert G. McFall 460 BG  | Mary Lou Watkins 484 BG   |
| James D. Mehegan 455 BG  | James C. Williams 449 BG  |
| Lionel A. Olyer 450 BG   |                           |

# OUR HONOR ROLL

## 99th Bomb Group



## WE SALUTE YOU



For outstanding performance of duty in armed conflict with the enemy on 5 July 1943. When it was necessary to neutralize Sicilian based fighters immediately prior to the invasion, the 99th Bombardment Group was called to furnish twenty-four (24) B-17 type aircraft to attack with fragmentation bombs and destroy enemy fighters and installations on the south half of the main airfield at Gerbini. As twenty-seven (27) Fortresses of the 99th Bombardment Group neared the target, they were attacked by an estimated one hundred (100) enemy aircraft consisting of ME-109's, FW-109's, and Macchi 202's, which made persistent aggressive and determined attacks from all angles, singularly and in groups, in a furious attempt to break up the bomber formation. Returning the fire with devastating effect, the 99th Bombardment Group successfully penetrated the enemy defenses and dropped three thousand, two hundred, and forty (3,240) fragmentation bombs, covering the assigned target so completely that twenty (20) out of twenty-eight (28) enemy fighters on the ground were destroyed and many installations including hangers, fuel supplies, and ammunition dumps were severely damaged.

During the battle with enemy fighters in the air which continued before, during, and after the bombing run, the Fortresses of the 99th Bombardment Group took a terrific toll of the enemy planes. Officially approved claims consisted of thirty-eight (38) fighters destroyed, eleven (11) probably destroyed, and one (1) damaged, against the loss of three (3) bombers. The destruction of seventy (70) enemy fighters by this group in a single mission was a serious blow to the defenses of Sicily, and played a major part in setting the stage for the invasion five (5) days later.

By the courage, heroism, and determination of the air crews, together with the professional skill and devotion to duty of the ground personnel, the officers and men of the 99th Bombardment Group have upheld the highest traditions of the Military Service, thereby reflecting great credit upon themselves and the Armed Forces of the United States of America.

*By Command of Major General Twining*



## MAIL CALL ★ MAIL CALL ★ MAIL CALL

Dear Col Franklin:

My investigation starts with a mission to Regensburg on 22 Feb 1944. I was able to identify 2 ships lost over occupied Czechoslovakia and I was even able to contact several survivors. But there was another B-24D which went down at about the same time as the other two and, despite three years of research, I could not determine the fate of the crew. I have heard from a Czech who was at the crash site, but he is now dead. He gave me this info:

The ship was attacked by one ME-110. It crashed as the pilot apparently attempted a crash landing. The Germans removed 8 dead airmen and placed their bodies next to the road. The bodies were left there for two days. An hour after the crash an airman wearing one shoe walked into a nearby village and was arrested by the Volksturm. This unknown airman was then taken with several others for interrogation by German soldiers. The dead were buried in a small cemetery.

About 20 days later, one more dead airman was found hanging in a pine tree. He was also buried in the cemetery. The Germans destroyed all documents before the end of the war and all Germans who lived in the village are now dead. I was going over some old records and noticed that a B-24D - 376 BG, 513 BS - target Regensburg - collided in mid air at 1253 hours on 22 Feb 44 and crashed with one of the survivors captured by the Volksturm - another was apparently captured in another place. The two survivors are TSgt Frank P. Fox and SSgt Horace V. Quinn. Would like to contact either survivor.

Manuel F. Van Eyck  
12365 Cohasset St, N. Hollywood, CA 91605

Sir:

I got your address from *Can Do Notes* of 305 BG. I was a pilot with the Red Dog Sq and am familiar with the 97 BG and the 301st. Both of these groups were in England, but were later sent to N. Africa to form the 15th AF. Six of us pilots trained several pilots of the 97 BG, and then pilots of the 301st. I have often wondered what happened to those pilots. I would like to contact them.

A. Frankewich  
Rd 1, Box 489, Mohawk, NY 13407

Dear Ben:

I recently returned from a visit to Ploesti, Romania which I made in conjunction with a video I am producing on my crew and our plane *The Buzzer*. Meeting our former enemies was a fascinating and emotional experience. One of the men I met and interviewed was George V. Radulescu who was a

manager at the Romano American Refineries during the war. Mr. Radulescu sent me the enclosed account of his experiences and emotions during the Allied air offensive against Ploesti in 1944. He would like to have his account published and I have looked into several possibilities which are pending.

Benedict Yedlin (449 BG)  
Princeton, NJ

**Ed's Note:** It is interesting to read of our offensive against Nazi oil from the prospective of those being bombed. We will attempt to publish excerpts in *OUR WAR STORIES*.

Hello:

Would you please forward information regarding the 15th Air Force Association. I was attached to the 346 BS, 99 BG - four years in WW II.  
Thomas J. Wright (99 BG)  
Addison, IL

Sir:

I am interested in becoming a member of your association. Also would be interested to learn if there is a 459th association and/or one for pilot class 43-B.  
Lester R. Thurston Jr. (459 BG)  
State College, PA

Gentlemen:

We were in Foggia for Christmas! Foggia had a snow storm with up to 60 inches accumulated. In the picture is my husband, Angelo Siragusa who was a medic with the 463 BG from Mar 1944 to Oct 1945. I am from Foggia - married Angelo in 1946. I worked for the 15th Air Force three years - last year in the legal office. Enjoy your Sortie.  
Mary Siragusa (463 BG)  
Phoenix, AZ

Friends:

Thanks to Bill Rains of Goldsboro, I received a call from Eldred Specht, the ball gunner from our crew. The last time I saw him was 48 years ago at Camp Kilmer. What a thrill! He gave me telephone numbers of 3 other crew members.  
Harry N. Middleton (455 BG)  
Greenville, NC

Dear Sir:

I would like information regarding membership in the 15th Air Force Association. I was assigned to 461 BG, 767 BS at Cerignola in 1944 and 1945.  
Robert N. Sturm (461 BG)  
Cincinnati, OH

## MAIL CALL ★ MAIL CALL ★ MAIL CALL

Sir:

I was given a "Winged Boot" for walking back from Pecko, Hungary after a mission. I was a replacement top turret gunner and never knew the pilot's name. After WW II, I was in the 91st SRS at Yokota, Japan. I was NCOIC Photo Ops and designed the equipment and flew the mission that obtained the first acceptable high altitude night photos. I was given the choice of a commendation or a promotion. I took the promotion and was the first TSgt promoted to MSgt while on flying status. I don't believe there is any record of same. I would like to be recognized for my "first" achievement. If you can find any record that would substantiate my claim, I would really appreciate it.

Robert R. Ott (98 BG)  
Apache Trail, AZ

Dear Ben:

Kudos to Alfred Asch (455 BG) for his splendid recap in *Sortie*. If anyone wants a complete history, they can contact Floyd E. Gregory, 2014 S. Anderson, Urbana, IL 61801 who has a history of 783 BS, 465 BG, 55 BW. Also, the photo of the burning plane in your request for memorial funds is from 783 BS. The crew was Lt Col C.J. Lokker, Capt Milton Duckworth, 1Lt Joseph T. Kutger, 1Lt Robert Hockman, TSgt Lee Billings, SSgt Edmund Miosky, Sgt James Bourne, Sgt Paul Flynn, and Sgt Jack Rabkin. After parachuting (all got out), Lokker, Flynn and Rabkin were shot by the Germans. Duckworth, after a stay as a POW, stayed in the Air Force and was shot down twice in Korea and twice in Vietnam, rose to the rank of Col only to succumb to cancer last year. Kutger, Hockman, Billings, Miosky, and Bourne were freed at the end of the war. This happened over Blechhammer on 20 Nov 1944.

Golden Nathan Jones (465 BG)  
Amarillo, TX

Attention Memorial Fund:

Enclosed is my check. You know the expression, "what goes around, comes around!" The photo of the B-24 that took a direct hit has a very personal meaning for me. I was attached to the 465 BG, 781 BS. My pilot was Carl Dahl. I was a nose gunner. Our crew was selected to fly lead on a raid to Blechhammer in Nov 1944. We got down to the flight line and at the last minute, a starter on one engine malfunctioned. Col Lokker, our CO, was to lead the Group. As a result of the bad starter, our crew was scratched and another crew went in our place. Over the target, a 360 degree turn was made due to a bad initial approach and the lead ship was hit as shown in the photo. The rest is history. Ironic isn't it?  
Milton Levinson (465)  
Middletown, DE

Gentlemen:

As the son of a WW II veteran of the 15th Air Force, my purpose in writing is two-fold: information regarding membership; and how to purchase a copy of *The Fifteenth Air Force Story* which you published in 1986.

Samuel L. Edwards (449 BG)  
Fort Worth, TX

**Ed's Note:** There are still a few copies of the history available and they can be purchased through Mrs. John Lee, P.O. Box 5175, Fullerton, CA 92636-0175.

Dear Ben:

Thank you for your good letter, recent copy of *Sortie*, and invitation to join. Over the past half century, I have often thought of buddies I served with in the 88th DRS at Gioia del Colle; most of us felt our mission was to get the war over quickly and we achieved that goal. Today, I find myself thinking that this achievement was a significant part of our heritage, one we should keep alive for future generations - count me in.

Victor Timoner (88 DRS)  
Bardonia, NY

Dear Ben:

Re: Initial meeting of German jets, Wilbur Knecht's letter in Mail Call. The 463 BG also hit Memmingen Airdrome 18 July 1944. Harold Rubin's *The Foggia Era*, a fine history makes no mention of us encountering jets on that day, however Carl Cassidy's great *History of Allyn's Irish Orphans, the 775th BS*, does mention our encounter with German jets at Lechfield, Germany on 12 Sept 1944. And, yes, they were fast - much faster than anything we had ever seen. I was a radio operator/gunner in the lead ship piloted by then Maj Robert Allyn, later Col and commander of the 775 BS (Allyn's Irish Orphans). At the briefing we were told that the Germans were desperate and were getting ready to use their experimental jets. Also, unfortunate for them, they had all their jets and support equipment at Lechfield Airdrome in the Munich area. The Germans were aware of the approach of our 5th Wing with all B-17s and were able to get off about three of the six jet fighters. The 463 BG was flying lead and was over the airdrome when the jets set on the horizon lobbing 20mm shells from their nose cannons trying unsuccessfully to break up our tight formation, which was our forte and which saved our butts on many a mission. We successfully completed our mission and got through unscathed - or so I thought - Rubin's documentary says we lost one plane to heavy flak over the target.

Michael Geller (463 BG), Littleton, CO

# OUR SORTIE

## 15 APRIL 1945 SORTIE

### 455TH LEADS

In a recent Fifteenth Army Air Force general order the 455th Bombardment Group was cited for performance of duty in armed conflict with the enemy. On 26 June 1944, 36 Liberators, loaded with maximum tonnage, assumed the lead of the other wing groups on a mission against the Moosbierbaum Oil Refinery in Austria. Enroute to the target the formation was attacked by eighty twin engine and sixty single engine fighters. Heedless of the seemingly overwhelming opposition, the Group held its lead in the wing formation, bringing it through the enemy defenses for a highly successful bombing run. In the aerial battle to the target, 455th gunners destroyed 34 enemy fighters and held the Group's losses to ten heavy bombers.

### PRESIDENT TRUMAN SPEAKS

Yesterday was observed throughout America as a national day of mourning for President Franklin Delano Roosevelt. The new President, Mr. Truman, in a formal proclamation said last night of Mr. Roosevelt: "He lived to see the first foundations of a free and peaceful world, to which his life was dedicated, but not to enter into that world himself. But although his voice is silent, his faith is not extinguished."

### 2ND CITATION FOR 450TH

Presentation of its second Distinguished Unit Citation was made recently to the 450th Bomb Group for striking the initial blow in the battle of Ploesti one year ago. Maj Gen Nathan F. Twining, commanding general of the Fifteenth Army Air Force, pinned the new streamer on the group's color standards at special ceremonies held at the unit's base. In the course of the historic mission, the group's formation was subjected to aggressive attack by more than one hundred ME-109s, FW-190s, and JU-88s. 450th gunners engaged the fighters in a savage air battle and were officially credited with the destruction of 27 enemy aircraft. Veteran of 250 combat missions, the 450th has participated in every major strategic bombing operation in this theater since December 1943. It was awarded its first Distinguished Unit Citation for outstanding leadership on a mission to Regensburg, Germany on 25 February 1944.

### 484TH CITED

Fifteenth Army Air Force, in a recent general order, has cited the 484th Bombardment Group for its successful

bombing run in which it obliterated an alternate target, the marshalling yards at Innsbruck, Austria. On 13 June 1944, in spite of adverse weather conditions, 37 B-24s took off with a maximum load to hit the marshalling yards at Munich. Upon approaching the yards, fifty single engine and twin engine enemy fighters attacked the bomber formation. In the aerial battle which ensued, five heavy bombers were lost, while gunners, in defense of their aircraft, destroyed 18 enemy aircraft. Anti-aircraft fire and a dense smoke screen made conditions unsuitable for a successful attack. Although the formation had been seriously crippled and men wounded because of air and ground opposition, the group hit the marshalling yards at Innsbruck in an accurate and highly successful bombing run which obliterated that center of enemy communications.

## 1 APRIL 1945 SORTIE

### 483RD SCORES

In the Fifteenth Army Air Force's battle against Nazi jet fighters over the Berlin area, the 483rd Bombardment Group holds an unofficial record of six destroyed and five probables. On the 22 March Ruhland mission, the 483rd chalked up its first jet fighter when three of a formation of 12 jets attacked the group. Because of the extreme speed of the attackers and the blinding action which ensued, credit for the kill could not be placed with any individual and so the group as a whole was given credit for a probable. The jet fighter was seen plummeting earthward trailing smoke. It was noted on this mission that the jets, unlike other models of enemy fighters, attacked the bombers while they were in the midst of a heavy flak barrage. During the historic mission to Berlin on 24 March, the 483rd encountered about 16 jets, mostly ME-262s. 483rd gunners were credited with six ME-262s destroyed and four probably destroyed. The 483rd lost one Fortress on this mission.

### THE VETERAN 99TH

B-17 Flying Fortresses of the veteran 99th Bombardment Group, commanded by Lt Col Raymond V. Schwanbeck, yesterday began their third year of operational bombing. In two years of combat flying the Group has destroyed 460 enemy planes in the air, more than any other heavy unit in the 15th Army Air Force and has the phenomenally low lost record of .7 percent, based on 73 bombers lost in more than ten thousand combat sorties.



# OUR CREWS



**98 BG Crew.** Enlisted members of "Lil Jughaid": Joe Redfield, Engineer-gunner; Roy McCracken, Ass't radio-waist gunner; Walter Cybulski, Radio; Donald Osburn, Ball gunner; Manuel Rangel, Ass't engineer-gunner; and Al Laidlaw, Tail gunner. Courtesy: Manny Rangel.



**456 BG, 746 BS Crew.** (standing from the left): Harold E. Deen; Henry C. Grundmann; Clyde G. Huggins Jr.; and William Chapin. (kneeling from the left): Robert M. Lamphier; Harold A. Shay; Edward D. Wilson; Herbert Marowitz; Roger O. Sjordal; and Claude O. Sylvester. Courtesy: Bill Chapin.



**460 BG, 760 BS Crew.** (standing from the left): James Joyce, Roy Fleischman, Jean Collins, & Dan O'Reily. (kneeling from the left): Merle Scarce, Clifford Larsson, Al Ward, Harry Burger, Richard Hayes, & Edward Gillan. Courtesy: Clifford Larsson.



**301 BG, 352 BS.** (top from left): William Shaw, Waist gunner; Lynn Kelley, Eng/top gunner; William Hopkins, Ball gunner; William Frank James, Armorer/tail gunner; & John Caldwell, Radio/gunner. (middle): Ground crew - Unk. (bottom from left): Mark Pellitier, Pilot; Lewis Miller, Bombardier; James Butler, Co-pilot; & Francis Flanagan, Navigator. Courtesy: William Frank James.

# SOFTIE

FIFTEENTH AIR FORCE

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## 154th Weather Squadron Gets Citation For Ploesti Reports

Veteran of more than thirty months' foreign service, the 154th Weather Reconnaissance Squadron has been presented the Distinguished Unit Citation.

This high award was given in recognition of the part played by the unit in the final attacks on the Ploesti oil refineries. Assigned the important and entirely new task of covering this high priority target before and during the attacks by the Fifteenth Army Air Force heavy bombers, in order to report to the bomber formations which of the targets were clear of the effective smoke screen that had made Ploesti such an elusive target to hit, the squadron so successfully handled the assignment that Ploesti was written off a future target of the 15th AAF.

Handing a new assignment on short notice and with such success is nothing new to this unit that has flown nearly 1500 missions and more than 2500 sorties against the enemy since beginning its foreign service. During the months of service in England, Africa, and Italy this squadron has been called upon to chart, types of aircraft, assignments, and pioneer new

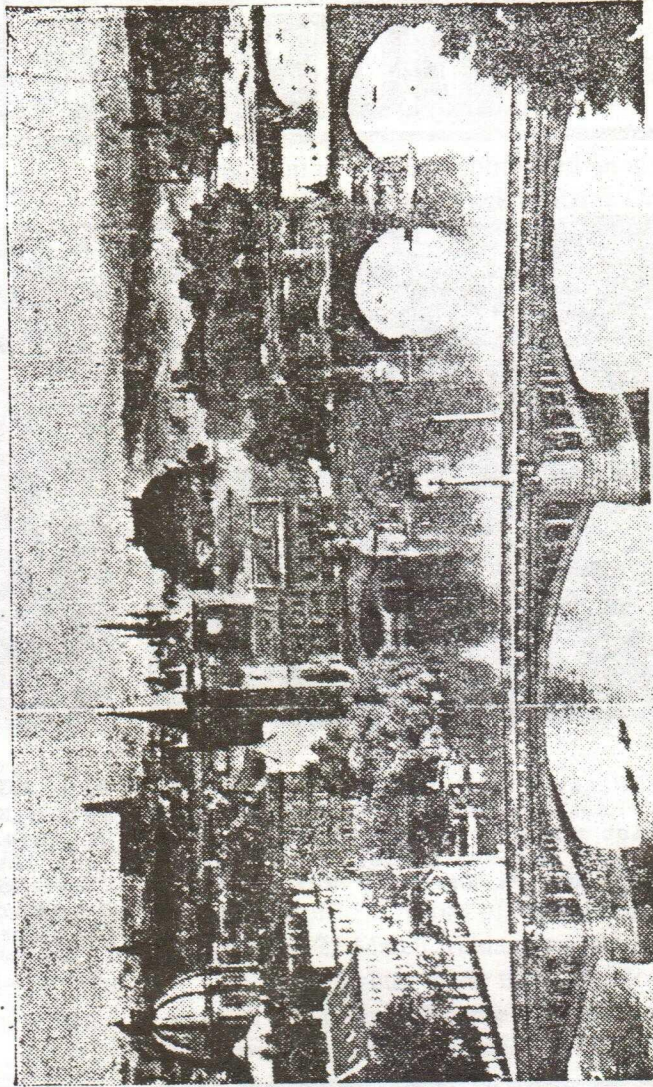
## RAF Decorates Three 15th Men For Airmanship

Tribute was paid to the courage of Fifteenth Army Air Force personnel by the Royal Air Force this week when three American airmen were decorated by Brigadier General J. T. Durrant, air officer commanding the 205th group, RAF. The private ceremony was held in the office of Major General Nathan F. Twining, commanding general of the 15th AAF.

Major Norman L. McDonald received the British Distinguished Flying Cross in recognition of his conspicuous gallantry during a period of intense aerial activity from 15 March to 7 April 1943 while flying escort missions with Hurricane squadrons in North Africa.

Technical Sergeant Raymond A. Day, aerial engineer with the 431st Bomb group, and Technical Sergeant Wilbur L. Medairy, aerial engineer in the 301st Bomb group, were awarded Dis-

## Nazis Make Last Stand



Nazi troops under the command of Field Marshal Schoerner continue to battle Russian armies in Prague, capital of Czechoslovakia and scene of stiff German outlaw resistance

## Nazi Outlaws Continue War Against Russian Troops In Czechoslovakia

## Unit For Interviewing Soldiers

Air Force General Depot number five recently installed a radio recording unit, designed for personal interviews with officers and enlisted personnel in this area, at its public relations office.

This unit will be available for use by all American personnel under the Fifteenth Army Air Force, the 15th Air Force Service Command, Army Air Force Service Command Mediterranean Theater of Operations and the Adriatic Base Command. Contacts with the public relations officers of these commands will be made by those desiring to make recordings which will be sent back to the States and played over home-town radio stations. After being played over the home-town station, the recordings will be given to the family of the interviewee and may be kept as a souvenir.

### Two Studios

Concerted effort has gone into building two sound-proof studios for making these recordings; a small studio, available for personal interviews, and a large one, designed for handling groups and live shows such as orchestras, plays, skits and quartets. Sergeant D. D. Jones, long associated with the Squadron-airs band in this area and a veteran of several years' experience in radio announcing at WMT in Cedar Rapids and WHO in Des Moines, Iowa, will do the announcing and make the interviews. A team of script writers

## V-E Day Brings 30 To 15th Newspaper

With the advent of Victory in Europe which brought combat operations for the Fifteenth Army Air Force to a close, this issue completes *Sortie's* publication.

first assignment in combat for the squadron was anti-submarine patrols with the completion of this assignment the squadron, without training or change in personnel, was assigned the task of reconnaissance for the air and ground forces during the Tunisian campaign. Operating as the only active United States reconnaissance unit in the African campaign, the squadron, flying pursuit type planes, was instrumental in bringing it to a close.

Arriving in Italy in February 1944, the squadron was given a new type plane and a new task. weather reconnaissance for the 15th AAF. Rapidly developing from a small unit with comparative minor task of target and route checks of weather for the heavy bombers, the squadron, undertaking new duties that called for skill and courage, rapidly developed into the important station it holds today in the 15 AAF.

## Freed G. I.'s To Run PW Camps In U. S.

**New York, (CNS)**—American soldiers who have been returned to the United States after liberation from German prison camps will be assigned to operate enemy prisoner of war camps in the Second Service Command. That was announced recently by Major General Thomas A. Terry, who declared: "American officers and enlisted men who have experienced captivity and detention by the enemy are considered to be eminently qualified for these duties."

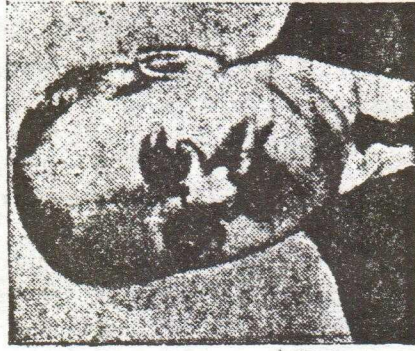
## Mo'tov Leaves S.F. Conference After Showing Soviet Influence

Vyacheslav Mikhailovich Molotov, Russia's Foreign Commissar who was reported to have left the San Francisco World Security conference last Friday, has been one of the important figures at the peace parley, not only because he heads the Russian delegation there, but also because he is considered one of the Soviet Union's foremost statesmen.

Molotov won a decided victory at the conference when it was agreed to have the White Russian and Ukrainian republics represented in a general assembly of the proposed world organization. This will give Russia a total of three assembly votes, as the Soviet Union will be included separately.

Russia's commissar for foreign affairs visited both the United States and England for conferences in 1942, and he also presided at the Anglo-Soviet conference held in Moscow in September 1941.

Appointed commissar of foreign affairs in 1938, Mr. Molotov, in Soviet politics. An associate figure in the Russian Revolution of October 1917.



**Vyacheslav Molotov.**

now 55, has long been active in Soviet politics. An associate figure in the Russian Revolution of October 1917.

mand of Field Marshal Ferdinand Schoerner fight on in Czechoslovakia against Russian Armies.

By his refusal to fall in line with the rest of the German armies, he has under the surrender terms, outlawed himself and his troops and are no longer protected by rules of war.

Although none of the high-ranking Nazis now in Allied hands have been executed or even tried, Red Army authorities are free to deal with Schoerner in any fashion they deem fit.

General Schoerner began his rapid rise to prominence as general in command in Finland in 1943 and just over one month ago was appointed Field Marshal, assuming command on the disrupted Eastern front.



(Released By PWB and United Nations News Service)

## HOME

New York radio reports that SHAEF in Paris has issued a letter from General Eisenhower t all senior commanders containing a guarantee that veterans who have fought in both North Africa and Europe would not be sent to the Pacific.

Washington: Rumors of Japanese peace offers circulated in diplomatic quarters are believed reliable. All Allied officials are maintaining strict silence as it is understood that the Japanese have not yet made offers of unconditional surrender, which is the only one acceptable to the Allies.

## EUROPE

Moscow radio reports that Soviet-Polish Treaty of Alliance and Mutual Aid concluded in Moscow 21 April was yesterday ratified by the Soviet government 21 April was yesterday

London: Latest story in Hitler mystery is that the Fuehrer was killed by Russian shellfire 21 April and his body now lies beneath tons of Reich Chancellery masonry in Berlin. This story carried in London newspapers gives as source one of Hitler's liaison officers. This officer claimed that Hitler was tired and worried, but healthy and sane. He was expecting relief for Berlin from the north and the south the night Soviet guns blew the Chancellery to bits. Himmler's whereabouts is also a mystery since he was met by Count Bernadotte in Luebeck 24 April. Bavarian claims saw him in southern Redoubte in the village

(Continued On Page Eight)

# OUR WAR STORIES

## DROOPSNOOT

Circling over the airfield at Belgrade at 5,000 feet in my P-38 droopsnoot, I glanced down at the runway and spotted four Russian Yak fighters on a formation takeoff roll. In minutes they were initiating a fighter attack pass on my aircraft.

It all started after I had completed a tour with the 94th "Hat in the Ring" Fighter Squadron, 1st Fighter Group at Foggia #3, Italy. After flying 68 combat missions, I learned that MAAF HQ was looking for a P-38 pilot to fly its droopsnoot. The aircraft was assigned to Lt Col Tex McCrary, the MAAF public relations officer. I volunteered. Col McCrary received a call from 15th Air Force Headquarters at Bari asking if we would be willing to fly a low level dicing mission taking pictures of a number of bombed out bridges in the Balkans. I agreed and Tex and I headed for the mission briefing at Bari.

We were briefed on the route and after we had prepared route maps, Tex climbed into the nose and on 7 Nov 1944, we headed across the Adriatic for Yugoslavia. The first shot was of a bridge across the Morava River at Kraljevo. The next target was the bridge across the Danube at Belgrade. Since the bridge was close to the Russian airfield, I thought it wise to circle the field so they could identify our aircraft and not fire at us on our low pass.

So here we were with four Russian fighters closing in on us. It appeared that the Yaks were about to attack (later confirmed), so I hastily dropped the gear and the Yaks formed in pairs on each wing. The flight leader signaled "down" with his thumb and guided us to a landing. After we parked, we were taken to a building and told to wait. It was quite cold inside and we wandered into a room which appeared to be part of a medical unit and was the only one heated. I stretched out on a table until a Russian colonel arrived and chewed me out for lying on their operating table. We explained our mission and asked for permission to complete it, but were told that he would have to get approval from higher headquarters.

After explaining that we were mistaken for a ME-110 and the Yaks were going to fire, he challenged me to a dogfight. But I refused with the excuse that I didn't want to drop my belly tanks. After five days spent in a heatless hotel with one blanket and eating horsemeat soup with the Yugoslav Partisans, we were notified that we could leave.

We completed the mission and returned to Bari. Since we were unable to get a message to 15th about our plight, the HQ had declared us MIA. My first greeting was to be chewed out for endangering my boss by "allowing" him to go with me. But the final blow occurred when the photographer gave us copies of photos he had taken of us prior to our departure. When we inquired as to why the photos had been taken, we discovered that the mission had originally been assigned to the 3rd Photo Recon, but had been refused when they learned that 15th had been unable to get Russian approval of the flight plan. The photos had been

taken for a news release in case we failed to return!

Courtesy: **W. G. "Beans" Campbell.**

## PLOESTI

This is the account of a low level raid on the Ploesti Oil Fields of Romania on 1 Aug 1943 by crew 28 of Col John R. "Killer" Kane's 98th Bomb Group flying out of Benina Main in Benghazi, Libya (see photo of crew and aircraft "Lil Jughaid" on pg 9).

Prior to the raid we practiced low level flying since our heavy bomber was designed for high altitude. First thing I remember after takeoff that early morning was the crash and resulting explosion of another B-24 which was attempting takeoff with its full load of bombs and fuel. We had to battle all the way to the target and I remember the sky full of enemy aircraft and thick flak all around us. While inbound at low level, we lost our two wingmen. As we watched out the windows we could see the pilots trying in vain to gain enough altitude to allow the crew to parachute. But both planes pancaked into the ground leaving nothing but a cloud of smoke and dust.

We dropped our bombs on the assigned target but had to fly through smoke, fire, and the exploding bombs of the formation ahead of us which had erred in its route and timing. It was like flying through Hell that day and after the target we still had to content with more flak and enemy fighters.

We took some hits and Joe Redfield and I had to patch up the wounded navigator and bombardier. We also had to patch the aircraft to keep it flying. Joe and I moved forward and assisted the co-pilot since the pilot was exhausted and no longer able to fly the airplane. Despite fourteen rough hours, two engines out, and no hydraulic fluid, we landed safely at Benina. A lot of the crews that we had trained with every day did not make it back. We spent 17 months in combat and flew 53 combat missions.

Courtesy: **Manuel R. "Manny" Rangel.**



# OUR WAR STORIES

## SCRATCH ONE FW-190 NEITHER IN THE AIR NOR ON THE GROUND

Heavy bombers of the 15th AAF today hammered at railyards in Austria, following up yesterday's record breaking assault on two yards in southern Germany during which the heavies rained down about 2,000 tons of explosives - a new record in bomb tonnage for the 15th. Amstetten and Wels, two of the objectives hit today by the escorted Fortresses and Liberators, are on the main line from Vienna to Munich and Regensburg. Crewmen reported good results were scored.

In yesterday's attacks over southern Germany, the 15th AAF Fighter Command also set a record, flying more sorties than on any previous day. Their bag included 31 locomotives destroyed, and 21 damaged, and 57 rail cars destroyed and 170 damaged. Railyards at Muhldorf and Landshut, both northeast of Munich, were devastated in the record breaking raids by the heavies according to bomb strike photos.

One Liberator wing was led over Landshut by a group marking one year of combat operations. At the controls of the lead bomber was Brig Gen George R. Acheson, Tampa, Florida.

The heavies met no flak or aerial opposition. Three jet-propelled ME-262s made unsuccessful passes at strafing Mustangs and other P-51s shot down an FW-190. One of three FW-190s on flat cars in transit was knocked out by Capt Davis J. Watson Jr., Phoenix, Ariz., who was baffled as to where to record the victory. "it wasn't airborne," he said, "and yet it wasn't parked or standing still. Anyway it looked a lot prettier there than on your tail."

Courtesy: *Stars and Stripes*, 21 March 45, from **Dick Downey**.

## THE LONG WAY HOME

I was assigned to the 416 BS, 99 BG and filled in on 23 March 1945. We were #3 standby, however, due to the long trip to Rueland, Germany, several turned back for one reason or another and we joined the show. We got hit by flak at the IP and #2 and #3 engines caught fire. We turned toward Russian lines and bailed out over a 30 mile distance. The tail gunner said he saw two fighters make a pass but I did not see them. I did not see anyone else on the way down, but was shot at by machine guns, rifles, and flak bursts.

There were dead soldiers on the ground where I landed and I took off to the east. Just before dark, I was captured by young Russian boys who took me to a Russian officer. They then took me to Hanau, Germany where there was house-to-house fighting. They put me in a basement in an old house with dead soldiers on the floor and one hanging out a window. Later, they brought in two more of my crew members. We stayed three days and then were moved in a little truck down a road lined with dead soldiers where a bull dozer was digging a mass grave. Several times we turned around due to enemy fire.



Waiting at Poltava. Willis is standing on right end.

We finally reached a large cow pasture and a C-47 (or Ruski Douglas as the Russians called it) landed. They put two bodies in along with a couple of Russian women soldiers and the three of us. A FW-190 made a pass over the field and Yak fighters took off in every direction. We took off, dodged the trees, and flew to Leningrad. They would not let us leave the landing area and as soon as we refueled, we flew on to Lwon, Poland.

They put us up in an old hotel for about three weeks while most of our crew joined us there - all except the co-pilot who broke his leg and was a German POW and the tail gunner who went out through Odessa by boat.

We finally flew to Poltava, Russia with about 30 or 40 other airmen who had escaped or evaded. They were from bombers and fighters and ranked up to a Lt Col. There were many more waiting at Poltava waiting for transportation to Iran, Cario, Tripoli, Bari, and other points west. While we were there a fellow who said he was from the *Stars and Stripes*, took a photo of a few of us and I received a copy.

There were six of us who played around with a B-17 that was badly shot up and parked at the field. We got all the engines running and even got the Russians to let us fly it around the field. Somehow, the pilot talked the Russians into letting us fly it back to Italy. This was after FDR had died and we were ready to get out of there. We took off early one morning and after about thirty minutes, they called us to return to Poltava. There was a lot of fog in front of us and we had just lost an engine, but we elected to go ahead. The six of us landed in Bari that afternoon and even blew our right tire on landing. Our squadron plane picked us up and we were back in Foggia after 40 days and nights.

Courtesy: **Richard J. Willis**.

# OUR WAR STORIES

## 483RD AGAINST ALL ODDS

As part of the strategic effort of the 15th AAF against industrial and counter air targets in southwestern Germany, a force of 167 B-17s of the 5th Wing was dispatched on 18 July 1944 to attack the Memmingen Airdrome. The importance of this target was clear in the Intell Annex: "Memmingen is one of the highest priority counter air targets in Germany."

The 483rd Bomb Group was in fifth position in the wing formation of six B-17 Groups and was led by Capt Louis T. Seth, commander of the 840 BS. Over the Adriatic Sea, flying through heavy cumulus clouds, the groups became separated. Unable to penetrate the adverse weather, two Groups with 44 Fortresses returned to base while 27 from another Group attacked an alternate target. The upset time schedules caused by the severe weather made it impossible for the escort fighters to rendezvous with the remaining bombers. Groups were further confused by bogus messages transmitted by the Germans instructing the formation to strike any alternate target.

Without a properly authenticated recall signal, the 483rd decided to attack the primary target and continued on alone and unescorted. At the IP approximately 75 ME-109s and FW-190s were observed to the right of the formation maneuvering into position for a tail attack. Then a much larger force of enemy fighters fell in behind them. In the face of these overwhelming odds, the 483rd Bomb Group, with extraordinary heroism and gallantry, made the decision to carry out the mission as ordered.

The fighter attack, which was executed by almost 200 enemy fighters, was a well planned maneuver aggressively carried out to destroy a single Group in the shortest possible time. They attacked in waves of five or six in close javelin formation on a level with the tails of the rear-most B-17s and the concentrated fire power of cannon and rockets was overwhelming. The last box, composed of 7 planes of the 816 BS, was entirely destroyed in the first attack. Three planes were shot to pieces while maintaining position in the formation, a fourth went down out of control and broke apart in a spin. The three remaining B-17s dropped out of the formation out of control with two of them on fire, but with their guns still firing.

The enemy fighters moved up making the same concentrated attack on the 7 planes of the 817 BS which was flying in the number three box position. Five bombers were destroyed in a comparatively short time with several dropping out of formation on fire and with metal skin peeling off the fuselage. Here again, the gunners were observed firing to the end. During the entire attack there was no escort and it became apparent that without fighter support, the Group would be annihilated. Yet with this certain knowledge of probable destruction, undaunted by the spectacle of Fortresses exploding and burning on every side, forced to witness comrades jumping from their aircraft, some with their parachutes on fire, the crews gallantly pressed home

their determined attack on the briefed target.

The enemy fighters then moved up to the number two box and two more B-17s went down, one of which broke apart from the impact of the concentrated fire power. The other dropped in flames but with the gunners still manning their positions and continuing to fire at the enemy.

The twelve remaining aircraft reached their objective and destroyed the target. As they turned off the target, twelve P-38s from the 1st Fighter Group appeared and attacked the German fighters. With this support, the Group successfully exited the area.

During the course of this fierce air battle, 483rd gunners accounted for 53 enemy fighters destroyed, 8 probables, and 5 damaged. Bombing results were devastatingly accurate! Bomb strike photos showed 17 enemy aircraft destroyed, 4 probables, and 14 damaged. A heavy concentration of hits covered the entire installations area with 8 large hangers destroyed; two warehouses and nearby rolling stock destroyed; and shops, barracks, and other airdrome buildings receiving direct hits causing explosions and fires.

One hundred and forty-three men paid with their lives and 14 out of 26 Group aircraft failed to return from the attack on this vital enemy target. The enemy suffered the devastating loss of 101 fighter aircraft, which represented a sizeable portion of his remaining Air Forces. The effectiveness of the Luftwaffe was significantly reduced by the heroic efforts of these gallant men. Rarely, if ever, in this war was an air attack successfully carried out against such overwhelming odds, estimated at 17 to 1, with more determination, extraordinary courage, or gallantry. The men of the 483rd Bomb Group reflected great credit upon themselves and upon the Army Air Force.

Courtesy: AAF account from A.C.E. Shepherd.



# OUR WAR STORIES

## DOG TAGS MISSING IN ACTION

It's been 48 years since Claude Porter has had to worry about being killed without his dog tags and becoming an unknown soldier. But that didn't keep him from being ecstatic when he received his WW II ID tags in the mail. "It's almost like a part of him was returned," said his wife, Eleanor. Porter, 76, lost his dog tags in August, 1944, when he was taken prisoner by Germans in Budapest, Hungary.

He was a lieutenant at the time flying a B-24 bomber which was shot down in Albania. After attempting to hike to a U.S. airfield in Yugoslavia, he and nine others were captured by the German SS and taken to Budapest where they were imprisoned in a building with steel walls and steel floors. Each soldier had been issued two ID tags and the Germans took both of his. Losing the tags added to the anxieties Porter felt after being captured. "My fear was of being blown up and my mother wouldn't know where I was," he said. Porter contracted dysentery in the prison and was later taken to a hospital in Vienna. He stayed there until the Russian Army liberated the city in April, 1945.

When Porter returned to civilian life, he worked as a conductor for C&O Railroad for 28 years before opening Porter Saw & Tool in Traverse City in 1967. He sold the business in 1976 and retired. Porter said he never expected to find his tags. But in the early 1970s, a man bought a house in Budapest that had been occupied during the war by the German SS. While digging in the garden under a tree, he found 150 dog tags from U.S. soldiers taken prisoner by the Nazis. The man didn't do anything about the tags for years because Hungary was a communist country and he couldn't be seen going to the U.S. Embassy. But in 1989, as communism was crumbling, he finally took the tags to the U.S. Embassy.

The Army doesn't seek the owners of dog tags when they are found. But the Army will send them to anyone who finds that his tags have been located, according to John F. Manning, Ass't Chief of Mortuary Affairs. In May, Porter was informed of his tags in a letter from Lyle McCarty of Saratoga, CA, historian of the 459th Bomb Group. Porter contacted the Army and received the slightly rusted, thin metal tag bearing his name, serial number, the letter A for his blood type, and the letter P for Protestant, his religious preference. "I was really flabbergasted that after almost 48 years, I could get my dog tags back," he said.

Courtesy: Story by Tom Carr, *Traverse City Record Eagle*.

## U.S. DEFENSE ATTACHE, BUDAPEST

In late July 1989 the U.S. Defense Attache in Budapest received a call from a retired official of the Hungarian Bank stating that he could provide evidence of some 150 American Airmen downed in Hungary during WW II. In early August, a Mr. Kiraly delivered 150 dog tags to the U.S. Embassy. Records indicate that 20 of the dog tag owners are unknown; of the rest, they represent

crew members of 52 aircraft, 15 of which did not crash in Hungary (but the crews did pass through Budapest enroute to POW camps); the aircraft were downed between 13 Apr and 9 Sept 1944. Forty-one appeared to have died in the crash or shortly after and are marked by a +. The available list with last-name and Group follows (only last name available to *Sortie*):

97 BG Collum, Prophater, Boone (+), Council (+), Morris, Jones  
 99 BG Dubiel, Ester, Gardner, Howd (+), Pate, Waller  
 301 BG Holloway (+), Seger, Childers (+), Kennedy (+), Sullivan  
 301 BG Garren, Kelly, Starling (+), Van Houten (+), Vowell  
 301 BG Bishop (+), Herring (+), Stever (+), Thompson (+)  
 301 BG Smith, Robt Sutton, Anderson (+), Salasek (+), Stark  
 376 BG Carter, Jensen  
 449 BG Danylak, Roessel  
 451 BG Malakowski, White, Wheeler, Vance  
 454 BG Keder, Fiorillo, Muskie(+), Sprinkle(+), Nech  
 454 BG Dubas, Kuhns (+)  
 455 BG Kilbane, Calvanese (+), Hiatt, Maxwell (+), Miller (+)  
 456 BG Miller, Phillips (+)  
 459 BG Hunt (+), Donoghue, Ross, Sutton, Tomlinson (+), Porter  
 459 BG Chernik, Bradach, Dutton (+), Emert (+), Johnson  
 459 BG Patterson, Reese, Sircus, Brown, R.L. (+), Norwood (+)  
 460 BG Oliver, Scott, Stone, Hansen, Ingraham, O'Connor  
 460 BG Pumford, Wiederstrom, Battice (+), Yanz (+)  
 463 BG Thead, Eagan (+), Fainer (+), Haggard, Markle  
 464 BG Cage, Sanders (+), Stein (+), Ennis (+)  
 465 BG Day, Sedlak, Tipton, Farrar, Holcombe, Jasico  
 465 BG Krzyzinski, Weiss  
 483 BG Medit (?), Murray, Bogan (+), Lipschitz (+), Kryloff (+)  
 484 BG Eubanks  
 485 BG Bender (+), Richardson

## CREWMEMBERS UNKNOWN TO ARMY

Agius, Vincent J.	Kesler, Earl M.
Braschart, O.L.	Kingsley, C.J.
Bonham, Edward C.	Komers, Richard M.
Brooker, Herbert M.	London, Samuel L.
Correy, Edward L.	McLaughlin, John L.
Feldt, Albert J.	Nicholl, Frederic W.
Fogel, Harry N.	Schwartz, James L.
Gardner, Francis M.	Urseth, Loren H.
James, Iven C.	Wilson, Homer L.

Courtesy: **John Devney** (Some have been located & notified).

## LOST CREW

Tim Bivens, Rt 5 Box 271, Dyersburg, TN 38024 seeks crew of "A-Merry-Can" (depicted below)



# 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. 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. All videos are \$19.95 each plus \$3.50 shipping and handling. Place your order by writing American Sound & Video, 7290 Miller Drive, Warren, MI 48092-4727 or by calling 1-800-869-6379 (Visa & MasterCard are accepted). Be sure to mention the 15 AFA.

**B-24 AT WAR - PLOESTI (V-2111) :** Features exciting footage of the Ploesti missions and coverage of the planes returning to base with battle damage; plus the 1986 reunion of aircrews from the Ploesti low level raids; and B-24 - The Forgotten Bomber -its true contributions and value in WW II and its lack of recognition revealed in poignant detail. B/W & Color. 75 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 BOMBERS - B-17 (V-2113):** Learn to fly the B-17. Everything from pre-flt inspection, flight & emergency operations to the induction system. B/W. 2 Hours.

**465 BG LOST SOULS:** Looking for my lost 782 BS crew members - William Johns, Leonard Unrath, Marvin Scheffrin, & Robert Neal Windom. Also would like addresses of families of deceased crew members - Donald Brink, Michael Hitchak, Samuel T. Nicostro, and Paul Steig. Theodore A. Butler, 1701 Trabert Way, Sparks, NV 89431.(702) 358-1492.

**LOST BATTALION:** Trying to locate members of the 941 Engineer Battalion which was attached to 15th AF in Italy. I started this quest at the suggestion of Bob Des Granges, the sparkplug of the 942 Eng Bn Assoc. The 942 was attached to the 8th AF in England. I was assigned to the 942 in the states and have joined their Assoc, but have no one to talk with about Italy. Please help. Howard Greene, 1350 Diamond Head Dr, Encinitas, CA 92024.

**455 BG LOST SOULS:** I was an engineer in the 455 BG, 740 BS. I have been trying to find members of my crew: pilot Melvin Shoun, co-pilot Ambrosius, ball gunner Sherman Slater, nose gunner George Cavevas, gunner Leonard Jagla, waist gunner M. J. Dean, tail gunner McDaniel, and navigator Bunn. Wilbur W. Leupold, P.O. Box 22792, Lincoln, NE 68542-2792.

**8 AF INQUIRY:** Was there a 15 AF B-17 named Little Jean? If so, was it a Model G in NMF? If so, did it make at least 75 missions? What was its serial number and Group/Squadron? Did it survive combat? If it is a 15 AF aircraft, we will send a print of it for your files. Bill Potter, 4003 Pony Express Rd, Kearney, NE 68847-2555.

**564 SERVICE SQUADRON:** Wish to contact anyone from the 564 Service Squadron which serviced the 463 BG in Foggia, 1943-45. Carl Hubbs, 17905 Haines St, Perris, CA 92570. (909) 656-2490.

**464 BG LOST SOULS:** I'm probably getting old and sentimental and would like very much to locate the following members of my 464 BG, 779 BS crew: Joyce W. Lewis, Morgan D. Vaughan, Walter H. Stutts, William F. Wrinn, Ewing C. Byrum, and Robert J. Fischer. If any of you guys are listening out there, "Raunch" and I would like to hear from you. Jim McLaughlin, 4456 AuSable Dunes, East Tawas, MI 48730. (517) 362-5740.

**CAF SPECIALS:** Oct 9-10, 1993. AIRSHO 93 at Midland International Airport, between Midland and Odessa, TX. Info: (915) 563-1000. Nov 11-13, 1993. International symposium, "A Sleeping Giant Awakens", CAF Hdq at Midland Airport. Speakers: Barry Goldwater, WWII & Korean Ace Francis Gabreski, and test pilot Scott Crossfield.

**GARRISON CAP:** Looking for a size 6 7/8 or 7 enlisted garrison cap with a peak (not overseas type) - mine was stolen. My 51 year old OD uniform still fits me but need cap. Gilberto Vera, P.O. Box 863, Alice, TX 78333.

**SON OF THE 455 BG:** The son of a 455 BG pilot has written a fascinating story of his father's adventures in WW II as he describes his last mission and their return to the site of the crash in Yugoslavia. Jim Merritt's son, Jim, is an accomplished writer who weaves together a moving story of his father's last mission with their visit to meet the former Partisans who rescued his father's crew. Goodbye, Liberty Belle can be ordered in hard cover for \$20.95 (includes postage) from Wright State University Press, 052 University Library, Dayton, OH 45435.

**GREEK-AMERICANS:** Would like to hear from Greek-Americans who flew combat with the 15 AF: name, rank, unit, position, no. of missions, name of plane, medals awarded, and if POW, Escapee or Evadee. If preferred, replies can be on postcards. John Chopelas, 508 S. Gray St, Killeen, TX 76541.



# BULLETIN BOARD

**99 BG AUTHOR:** Bill Smallwood has written an excellent account of his experiences as a bombardier with the 99th Bomb Group called Tomlin's Crew. From his training days to his combat missions to his experiences as a German POW, many of you will relive your own time in WW II. Bill Smallwood is an excellent writer and you will enjoy his account. It can be ordered for \$21.95 (includes postage) from Sunflower University Press, 1531 Yuma, Manhattan, KS 66502.

**MEXICAN-AMERICANS:** I would like to hear from any Mexican-Americans who served in the 15th Air Force during WW II. I would also like to hear from anyone who served with a Mexican-American. This is for a future article for the Air Force Magazine. Santiago A. Flores, P.O. Box 430910, San Ysidro, CA 92143-0910.

**456 BG AUTHOR:** Bill Chapin has written a poignant story of the insanity of war, lost youth, POW camps, hospitals, and surely, the invincibility of the human spirit. Its message is particularly relevant as we read of Sarajevo (1944) in the book and the insanity of Sarajevo (1993) in the newspaper. Milk Run can be ordered for \$15.95 (includes postage) from Windgate Press, P.O. Box 1715, Sausalito, CA 94966. See crew photo on page 9.

**SON'S SEARCH:** My late father, Andrew H. Clark Jr., was a member of the 15th Air Force in Italy during 1945, flying as a gunner in a B-24. Andy came from Philadelphia, PA. I am trying to do some research on his activities during WW II for our family records, but Army papers kept in St. Louis were destroyed in a fire. I am hoping that you can help me determine his unit. I would like very much to hear from anyone who may have known my father or who has any information about his WW II service. This is a very important quest for my family. My three year old son, Andrew H. Clark III, was named after my Dad, but he was born after my Dad died. Someday young Andrew will ask me what his grandfather did during the great war and I want to be able to answer him. Bruce A. Clark, 871 Clover Drive, North Wales, PA 19454. (215) 699-2527.

**CZECH HELPER:** I am a member of the Aviation Historian Assoc. in Prague. In my research of WW II, I have met the people who concealed the American airman, Buffort Stoval - he was the pilot of a damaged plane. He was concealed near the town of Lány from April 1945 until the end of WW II. Because of political situation in our country, the rescuers were prevented from contacting him. They try now through me. Pavel Tresnák, 9.května 510, 278 01 Kralupy nad Vltavou II, Czechoslovakia.

**DAUGHTER'S SEARCH:** I am searching for information about my father who was a Cpl in the 514 BS during WW II. His name was Edward T. Wolowik. Please help if you can. Reneé Pawlak, W213N10344 Oak Lane, Colgate, WI 53017.

**FRENCH FRIENDS NEED HELP:** I am sorry to bother but need your help in regard to loss of a plane from the 98 BG: On 11 Nov 1943, the 15th bombed the Annecy Ball Bearing in France. The group which flew the mission was the great 98th Bomb Group, led by Col John "Killer" Kane. On the way to the target, B-24D 42-40105 had oxygen and electrical failure and the pilot, Lt Homer S. MacCallum, turned back toward his base in Hergla, Tunisia. The German fighters shot the plane down in flames and it crashed in the Alps near the small village of Andonno, but there were survivors. I have discovered and identified the crash site. There was still a propeller, oxygen cylinders, radio, some parts, and 50 caliber machine guns. To mark the 50th anniversary, the people of Andonno want to have a memorial to the memory of the crew. The crew was Homer S. MacCallum (evaded), Allen J. Corb (evaded), Ralph W. Potter (evaded), Robert E. Moran (evaded), Joseph D. Johnson (evaded), Neville C. Benson (KIA), Joseph Gojlik (KIA), Donald R. Morrison (KIA), Harry J. Flanagan (evaded), and Arthur E. Potvin (KIA). If any of the surviving crew or relatives are interested in the memorial dedication, please contact Philippe Castellano, 500 rue Léo Brun, entrée numero 7, 06210, Mandelteu, France.

**RELATIVE'S SEARCH:** A relative, Albert William Willson, was a member of the 456 BG, 745 BS until his death on 19 Mar 1944. Bill was killed during a bombing mission to Klagenfurt, Austria. Our family would like to know anything about his WW II service and would like to contact members of his group at the time he served. David M. Grob, 423 McKee St, Batavia, IL 60510.

**SCOT'S LETTER:** I am writing you after reading the 15th AF Sortie dated April 1986 and I found it to be an excellent publication. I am 40 years old and married and don't really remember WW II, but I am proud of what the U.S. Air Force did during that terrible time. I would like to hear from those who flew in the 15th Air Force. God bless you. I am sorry if I bothered you. Tom Simpson, 19 Keir Hardie Crescent, Galston Ayrshire Scotland KA4 8JL.

**ASSOCIATION OF AIR FORCE MISSILEERS:** This organization is open to active and retired members who have earned the USAF Missile Badge. AAFM, P.O. Box 5693, Breckenridge, CO 80424.

## PART XXVIII THE HERITAGE OF FIFTEENTH AIR FORCE GREECE IS NEXT



449 BG, 719 BS bombs Szeged R.R. Bridge, Hungary.  
From Alex Molnar courtesy Dick Downey.

### 15TH SUPPORTS RUSSIANS

After the Russians began their offensive in the Balkans, there was a growing feeling among senior commanders that our air forces could best assist by interdicting the German lines of communications to the Russian's southeastern front. The routes were comparatively few, were well defined, and crossed both the Danube and Tisza rivers; and all routes, including those coming from Yugoslavia, converged on Budapest. During September, 15th Air Force concentrated on vulnerable targets at the Hungarian capital: the north and south rail bridges and the marshalling yards, against which 852 effective sorties were flown and about 2,000 tons of bombs were dropped. In addition to blocking traffic at these points throughout most of the month, 15th also cut the main rail bridges over the Danube at Szob and Baja - and for varying periods they blocked through lines in marshalling yards at Debrecen, Hatvan, Cegled, Subotica, and Győr.

### 15TH ATTACKS IN HUNGARY

In October as Soviet forces thrust into Hungary and toward Budapest, the bulk of interdiction effort shifted to western Hungary. 15th bombed the Szekesfehervar marshalling yards and several rail centers on the main line from Vienna to Budapest. These efforts were supplemented by attacks along the main Budapest-Győr-Vienna railroads and on yards at Vienna, Graz, and Linz.

The destruction by 15th of vast amounts of supplies in the marshalling yards and the dislocation of the German lines of communication made a substantial contribution to the success of the massive Russian sweep.

### GREECE IS NEXT

In the meantime, during the first week of September, 15th bombers and fighters combined to inflict damage on the German exit routes from Greece and southern Yugoslavia. In the first week of September, 15th flew 1,373 heavy bomber sorties against these routes dropping nearly 3,000 tons of bombs with a concentration on more distant and larger targets such as Nis, Mitrovica, Karljevo, and two main lines from Athens to Belgrade and Belgrade to Ljubljana.

### 15TH FIGHTERS ATTACK

15th fighters disrupted traffic with attacks on marshalling yards and bridges at Konjic, Zenica, Karlovac, and Kostegnica. Their heaviest attacks came early in the week as enemy troops and vehicles began to accumulate between rail cuts. During a three day period of strafing attacks, 271 15th Air Force fighters destroyed 112 locomotives, 243 motor transports, and 413 rail cars along the well loaded roads and rail centers between Belgrade and Nis and Skopje to Krusevac to Belgrade.

### NO LETUP

On the 6th, 102 B-24s bombed troop and motor transport concentrations at Leskovac, where enemy troops withdrawing from Bulgaria were gathering for evacuation. As a result of these operations German escape routes were interdicted with destruction of substantial enemy transports. The enemy never completely overcame the effects of this week of all out effort by the fighters and bombers of the 15th Air Force.

Late in September the backlog of supplies at Salonika and Larissa, created by the interdiction farther to the north, were targets for further attacks by our bombers. Additionally, an attack by 15th on three airfields at Athens, from which the Germans were operating an aerial ferry, destroyed more than 100 enemy transport planes. By the end of Oct the Germans had virtually completed their retreat from Greece and the Aegean, but they were still having trouble in Yugoslavia. The capture of Belgrade by the Russians and the success of the Partisans in cutting the main rail lines to the north, forced the Germans to secondary escape routes through mountainous and Partisan infested central Yugoslavia. To add to their troubles, good flying weather permitted increased air attacks against the Germans as they traveled through the difficult terrain.

-To Be Continued

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

## OUR LIFE MEMBERS . . . WE SALUTE YOU (Continued from page 2)

Jack C. Schoonover  
 Capt Robert W. Schuetz  
 Dr Harold F. Schuknecht  
 Col Philip L. Schultz  
 L/Col Gerald K. Schuman  
 Nicholas G. Schwalier  
 Gerald H. Seacat  
 SSgt Robert S. Seidel  
 Maj Holger A. Selling  
 CMSgt William R. Setchel  
 SSgt George A. Setser  
 TSgt Warren E. Shaffer  
 Courtney D. Shanken  
 Irving Shapiro  
 Maj Milburne C. Sharpe  
 William B. Shea  
 Maj Paul J. Siler  
 L/Col John W. Simeroth  
 Col Jerry L. Sinclair  
 Col William D. Sinclair  
 Capt Revis G. Sirmon  
 L/Col Bryant L. Smick  
 John M. Smidl  
 Col Robert G. Smith  
 TSgt Dan O. Smith  
 Ted Smith

Norman W. Smith  
 SSgt Stephen Smith  
 Garek E. Smith  
 L/Col Donald L. Snyder  
 L/Col Fred A. Sommer  
 SSgt Alex J. Sonkoly  
 Maj Warren Sortomme  
 L/Col John C. Speight  
 Maj Reed Sprinkel  
 TSgt Norman M. Steinhauer  
 John P. Stephen  
 L/Col John E. Stevens  
 William R. Stevenson  
 Ralph S. Stevenson  
 Col Albert G. Stewart  
 Clifton J. Stewart  
 Bert E. Stigberg  
 Clifford W. Stone  
 Thomas H. Story  
 L/Col Frederick Stowell  
 Capt John E. Strang  
 Raymond Strautman  
 L/Col Ross D. Strode  
 Kenneth E. Strong  
 Capt Millard E. Stroope  
 Capt Donald Strutz

L/Col Lawrence Stumpf  
 Maj Adrian Swain  
 Col Arthur B. Swan  
 Col John R. Sweeney  
 Al Sykes  
 TSgt Angelo P. Synodis  
 Victor C. Tannehill  
 Ralph Tash  
 Joseph P. Tassone  
 Col D. Dave Taylor  
 Frank Tellis  
 Col Austin K. Thomas  
 Thomas S. Thomas  
 L.C. Thompson  
 Capt Edward D. Thompson  
 Eldon J. Tobias  
 Maj Forrest T. Tolson  
 Robert J. Tompkins  
 Harold T. Toomey  
 Capt George E. Tudor  
 Emil P. Uhor  
 Capt Robert F. Van Every  
 G.R. Van Natten  
 Neale E. Van Wagner  
 Fr Robert Velten  
 W.D. Versteegen

Dr Carlos Vest  
 Robert F. Vest  
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 Hilliard Volin  
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 Col Robert E. Walker  
 Col Jack G. Walker  
 2Lt Don Coin Walrod  
 L/Col Bruce W. Waltz  
 Harry R. Watkins  
 1Lt Arnold H. Watrous  
 Edgar E. Weakley  
 Norma Webb  
 Douglass B. Webendorfer  
 Joseph J. Weiner  
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 Maj Nimrod Wells  
 L/Col Thomas N. Weygandt  
 Col William J. White  
 CMSgt Charles R. White  
 Col Rayford B. Whitley  
 Maj Richard T. Wibalda

Col Floyd E. Wikstrom  
 Kenneth L. Wilcox  
 Col Sherman W. Wilkins  
 Col Richard G. Wilkinson  
 Irvin W. Williams  
 L/Col Paul R. Williams  
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 L/Col Clarence F. Wilson  
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NOTE: New life members are bold printed

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## REUNIONS

**22d Air Depot Supply Sq:** Tulsa, OK. 15-17 Sept 1993. Harry Potts, 4331 So. Atlantic, Tulsa, OK.

**22d Wing Assoc:** Riverside, CA. 26-28 Oct 1993. Fred Stowell, 3031 Hickok Way, Riverside, CA 92506. (909) 683-5438.

**97 BG:** Colorado Spgs, CO. 6-9 Oct 1993. Ed Leary, 390 N. Winchester Blvd, #3-1A, Santa Clara, CA 95050.

**99 BG:** Ontario, CA. 26 Oct-1 Nov 1993. Bernie Barr, 7408 Vista Del Arroyo, Albuquerque, NM 87109.

**449 BG:** Spokane, WA. 24-27 May 1994. R.F. Downey, 4859 Stanhope Dr, St. Louis, MO 63128-2848. (314) 892-4597.

**454 BG:** Norfolk, VA. 22-25 Oct 1993. Ralph Branstetter, P.O. Box 678, Wheat Ridge, CO 80034-0678.

**459 BG:** Hyatt Regency Hotel, Dearborn, MI. 9-12 Sept 1993. Frank Day, 7290 Miller Dr, Warren, MI 48092-4727. (313) 795-1900.

**461 BG:** Fresno, CA 29 Sept-3 Oct 1993. Frank O'Bannon, P.O. Box 36600, Tucson, AZ 85740-6600.

**484 BG:** Marriott Hotel, Harrisburg, PA. 30 Sept-3 Oct 1993. Bud Markel, 1122 Ysabel St, Redondo Beach, CA 90277. (310) 316-3330.

**485 BG:** Albuquerque, NM. 15-19 Sept 1993. Earl L. Bundy, 5773 Middlefield Dr, Columbus, OH 43235.

**Assoc of Former POWs in Romania:** Tucson, AZ. 29 Sept - 3 Oct 1993. Vic Young, 3003 W. Broadway #35, Tucson, AZ 85745.



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