

**60th Annual
2ADA Convention**

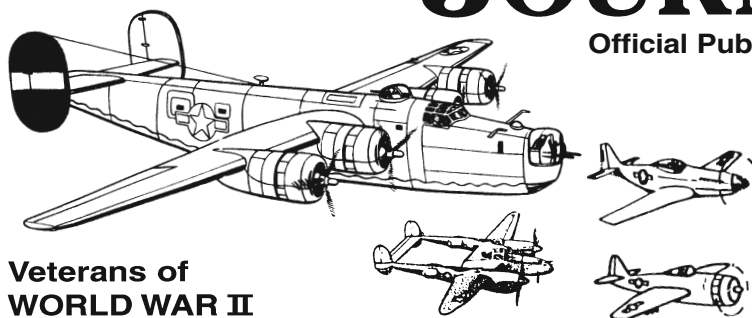
**August 30 -
September 3, 2007**

Grand Rapids, MI

SEE PAGE 19

THE JOURNAL

Official Publication of the:



**Veterans of
WORLD WAR II**



Volume 46 Number 2

Spring 2007

Before There Was an "Air Force"

BY RAY PYTEL (445TH)

The recent Air Force Memorial dedication spurred several questions on the predecessors to the Air Corps, the Army Air Forces, and finally the U.S. Air Force.

The USAF Historical Division has established a concise official record as a reference tool for historians and researchers in an official volume called **Air Force Combat Units of WWII**. Rather than taking excerpts, we shall print the "Introduction to Early U.S. Airpower":

At the peak of its strength in World War II, the United States Army Air Forces (AAF) had more than 2,400,000 men and women in uniform. There were pilots, navigators, bombardiers, flight engineers, gunners, and radio operators, clerks and typists, artists and flautists, teachers, mechanics, statisticians, and engineers — for it took many talents and skills to conduct and support the war in the air. All these persons, from privates to generals, had to be welded into an organization capable of giving direction and coordination to their diverse activities. For combat the men were formed into squadrons, and squadrons into groups. Above the groups were wings, and wings were organized into commands, and commands into the 16 air forces of the AAF. The upper part of the structure had to be built while the war was on, but the foundation was old. Some of the squadrons, two of the groups, and one wing had combat records from the First World War. One squadron, the oldest in the Air Force, could trace its history back to 1913.

1913-1917

The Army had established an Aeronautical Division in the Signal Corps on 1 August 1907 and had acquired its first plane in 1909. Army men had learned to fly, but for some time the aviators were not organized into units for operations. Consequently in 1913, when relations between the United



The last American aircraft produced before the end of the First World War, the Standard E-1 entered service in early 1918 but never saw combat. Although it was stable and maneuverable, it proved too slow and underpowered for use as a fighter. Instead, the United States Air Service accepted it for use as an advanced trainer.

States and Mexico were strained as a result of a revolution in Mexico, there was no aviation unit for service along the Mexican border. The Army, however, sent some of its flyers and planes to Texas, and on 5 March 1913 these were formed into the 1st Aero Squadron, a provisional organization made up of two companies. Later that year, in December, after the provisional unit had moved to San Diego for training, it was organized officially as an Army squadron. Following Pancho Villa's raid on Columbus, New Mexico, in March 1916, the squadron joined the force that Brig. Gen. John J. Pershing organized to try to capture the Mexican bandit. Thus the 1st Aero Squadron, which provided communication and reconnaissance services during the Mexican expedition, was the first American aviation unit to take the field for a military campaign.

Meanwhile, although war had broken out in Europe, little progress had been made toward expanding the Army's air arm. Congress created an Aviation Section in the Signal Corps by an act approved

on 18 July 1914, but the legislators provided little money for the new service. Moreover, the Signal Corps naturally used the meager resources to develop aviation as a means of communication, observation, and reconnaissance, rather than as an instrument for combat. One company of the 2nd Aero Squadron was organized in 1915 and sent to the Philippines. The following year plans were made for five more squadrons. One, the 7th, was formed in February 1917 for duty in the Panama Canal Zone. Another, the 6th, was organized in Hawaii in March 1917. Three others, the 3rd, 4th, and 5th, were being formed in the United States at the time the nation entered World War I in April 1917.

WORLD WAR ONE

Pershing, who became commander of the American Expeditionary Forces (AEF), soon developed a plan for the deployment of 260 combat squadrons to France. Later the plan was revised with the number of squadrons reduced to 202, all of which

(continued on page 29)

DIRECTORY

Honorary President JORDAN R. UTTAL
Town Village North • 12271 Coit Road #3201 • Dallas, TX 75251
Telephone: 972-788-9041

OFFICERS

President OAK MACKEY
6406 East Presidio, Mesa, AZ 85215-0972
Telephone: 480-641-3033 • Fax: 480-641-0506
E-mail: oakmackey@msn.com

Executive Vice President EARL ZIMMERMAN
P.O. Box 40897, Indianapolis, IN 46240
Telephone: 317-846-1462

Vice President Membership EVELYN COHEN
06-410 Delaire Landing Road, Philadelphia, PA 19114-4157
Telephone: 215-632-3992 • Fax: 215-632-8319

Treasurer E.W. (BILL) NOTHSTEIN
1359 Harwood Lane, Macedon, NY 14502
Telephone: 315-986-7374

Secretary and Director of
Administrative Services RAYMOND E. STRONG
642 Cedar Club Circle, Chapel Hill, NC 27517-7215
Telephone: 919-967-2301 • E-mail: rstrong2@cochill.net

2ADA Representative
Board of Governors CHARLES WALKER
9824 Crest Meadow, Dallas, TX 75230-5331
Telephone: 214-987-0467 • E-mail: b24man@aol.com

GROUP VICE PRESIDENTS

Headquarters RAYMOND E. STRONG
642 Cedar Club Circle, Chapel Hill, NC 27517-7215
Telephone: 919-967-2301 • E-mail: rstrong2@cochill.net

44th Bomb Group RICHARD D. BUTLER
16828 Mitchell Circle, Riverside, CA 92518
Telephone: 951-697-2908 • Fax: 951-697-5875
E-mail: rdb24@earthlink.net

93rd Bomb Group JOHN L. LEE
930 Preston Trail, Melbourne, FL 32940-7822
Telephone: 321-259-6861 • E-mail: jlee1922@aol.com

389th Bomb Group JOHN M. RHOADS
13 Whalen Place, Sherwood, AR 72120-3616
Telephone: 501-834-6392 • E-mail: rhoads392@comcast.net

392nd Bomb Group OAK MACKEY
6406 East Presidio, Mesa, AZ 85215-0972
Telephone: 480-641-3033 • Fax: 480-641-0506
E-mail: oakmackey@msn.com

445th Bomb Group CLARENCE A. LUHMANN
673 290th Avenue, Blue Earth, MN 56003-9710
Telephone: 507-773-4431

446th Bomb Group CARL ALBRIGHT
3300 Utah NE, Albuquerque, NM 87110
Telephone: 805-298-5988 • E-mail: calbri@comcast.net

448th Bomb Group KING SCHULTZ
1089 Rancho Santa Fe Road, Encinitas, CA 92024-6834
Telephone: 760-943-1641 • Fax: 760-943-0771

453rd Bomb Group LLOYD PRANG
2451 Willow St., Greenwood, IN 46142 • Tel. 317-885-0224

458th Bomb Group RICHARD PULSE
11 South Lakeway, Reisterstown, MD 21136-5923
Telephone: 410-833-2681 • E-mail: DICK2ADA@aol.com

466th Bomb Group JAMES H. LORENZ
5331 East Poinsettia Drive, Scottsdale, AZ 85254-4716
Telephone: 480-951-0343 • E-mail: jameslorenz@aol.com

467th Bomb Group WALTER J. MUNDY
15533 Swallowtail Road, Edmond, OK 73013
Telephone: 405-340-1677 • Fax: 405-359-9537
E-mail: warminok@att.net

489th Bomb Group MEL PONTILLO
837 Childs Avenue, Monaca, PA 15061-1318
Telephone: 724-774-2398 • E-mail: mel489th@webtv.net

491st Bomb Group JOHN A. PALLER
2 Walnut Drive, Flemington, NJ 08822
Tel: 908-782-3791 • E-mail: diananana@peoplepc.com

492nd Bomb Group W.H. "BILL" BEASLEY
1525 South Garfield Street, Denver, CO 80210-3022
Telephone: 303-756-4766 • Fax: 303-759-3684
E-mail: beasley492@hotmail.com

JOURNAL

Editor RAY R. PYTEL
P.O. Box 484, Elkhorn, WI 53121-0484
Telephone: 262-723-6381 • Fax: 262-723-7981

HERITAGE LEAGUE

President BRIAN MAHONEY
6410 Windham Avenue, Alexandria, VA 22315
Tel: 202-232-1423 • E-mail: bricamera@mindspring.com

2ND AIR DIVISION MEMORIAL LIBRARY

Trust Librarian DEREK S. HILLS
2ADA / Fulbright Librarian GLENN GRAY
SECOND AIR DIVISION MEMORIAL LIBRARY
The Forum, Millennium Plain, Norwich, Norfolk NR2 1AW U.K.

SECOND AIR DIVISION ASSOCIATION



JOURNAL



TABLE OF CONTENTS

The President's Message OAK MACKEY	3	489th Notes MEL PONTILLO	27
Executive Vice President's Message EARL ZIMMERMAN	3	491st Ringmaster Reports JOHN PALLER	10
The Editor's Contribution RAY PYTEL	4	492nd Happy Warrior Happenings BILL BEASLEY	26
Report of the 2ADA Representative on the Board of Governors of the Memorial Trust CHUCK WALKER	5		
Your Heritage League BRIAN MAHONEY	6		
Folded Wings	10		
60th Annual Convention Information	19		
Letters to the Editor	33-35		
GROUP REPORTS			
Division Headquarters RAY STRONG	16		
44th News DICK BUTLER	28		
Open Letter to the 93rd JOHN LEE	9		
389th Hethel Highlights JOHN RHOADS	14		
392nd Bomb Group OAK MACKEY	26		
445th Bomb Group CLARENCE LUHMANN	23		
446th Flixton-Bungay Update CARL ALBRIGHT	13		
The 448th Speaks KING SCHULTZ	15		
News of the 453rd from Flame Leap LLOYD PRANG	7		
458th Bomb Group RICHARD PULSE	14		
466th Attlebridge Tales JIM LORENZ	20		
467th Poop from Group WALTER MUNDY	22		
		Before There Was an "Air Force" RAY PYTEL	FRONT COVER
		Book Review: "Birds of Britain" ELLA WOODBURY	4
		A Parachute Incident JACK KINGSBERY	6
		When the Allies Did Not Trust Each Other THE CUSTER-HAWK GAZETTE	8
		Book Review: "Flak Houses" Then and Now F.C. CHANDLER JR.	9
		8-Ball Liberator Men in Britain FRED B. BARTON	11
		The Sky Was Their Battlefield 446TH BOMB GROUP ASSOCIATION	13
		Airmen Superstitions WILLIAM E. BARRETT	17
		Pride is Justified in 2ADA JORDAN R. UTTAL	18
		Don't Judge a Book by Its Cover MALCOLM FORBES	20
		The Freckleton Tragedy JOHN THRELFALL	21
		Age-disabled Vets "Aid and Attendance" Benefit RAY PYTEL	22
		Misery and Teamwork Over Misburg FRANK FEDERICI & VINCENT MAZZA	23
		"On the Ball" in Old Britain: A Nice Combat Diversion in World War II "REALM" MAGAZINE	25
		At the Air Force Memorial	BACK COVER

MEMORIAL TRUST BOARD OF GOVERNORS

MATTHEW MARTIN Chairman

Dairy Farmhouse, Low Common, Swardeston,
Norwich NR14 8LG, Norfolk, England

RICHARD J. ASHTON

Director, American Air Museum,
Duxford Airfield, Cambridge, CB2 4OR, England

PROFESSOR CHRISTOPHER BIGSBY

School of English and American Studies
University of East Anglia
Norwich, Norfolk, NR4 7TJ, England

MRS. FRANCES DAVIES

57 Church Lane, Eaton, Norwich, Norfolk, NR4 6NY, England

DAVID DOUGLAS

Wilkes Barn, Elmton, Saffron Walden, Essex, CB11 4NL, England

BEN DU BROW

Framingham Cottage, FRAMINGHAM PIGOT,
Norwich, Norfolk, NR14 7PZ, England

JOSEPH M. DZENOWAGIS, JR.

23890 Middlebelt Road, Farmington Hills, MI 48336 USA

PETER FOSTER

8 Albermarle Road, Norwich, Norfolk, NR2 2DF, England

DAVID Q. GURNEY

Bawdeswell Hall, East Dereham, Norfolk, NR20 4SA, England

DAVID J. HASTINGS

"Westering," Salthouse, Norwich, Norfolk,
NR13 6RQ, England

ANDREW HAWKER

10 Rectory Lane, Mulbarton,
Norwich, NR14 8AG, Norfolk, England

DAVID HILL

Shotesham Lodge, Shotesham All Saints,
Norfolk, NR15 1YL, England

MICHAEL LONGE

The Willows, Woodrising Road,
Hingham, Norwich, NR9 4PN, England

MICHAEL MACY

Cultural Attaché, U.S. Embassy,
24 Grosvenor Square, London, W1A 1AE, England

JEAN STEWARD

14 Claremont Road, Norwich, NR4 68H, England

CHARLES WALKER

9824 Crest Meadow, Dallas, TX 75230-5331 USA
2ADA Representative on the Board of Governors

The President's Message

BY OAK MACKEY (392ND)



Oak and Maxine Mackey

The 2007 Second Air Division Association convention will be in Grand Rapids, Michigan, August 30 – September 3. Why Grand Rapids? Evelyn Cohen had told the Executive Committee at their meeting in Falls Church, Virginia that she would try to locate a suitable hotel in Philadelphia for the 2007 convention. She was unable to find anything there in the 2ADA's price range. Bud Koorndyk's home is in Grand Rapids and he knew the old Pantlind Hotel there had been completely renovated plus it was now connected to a brand new 26-floor tower. This new hotel is called the Amway Grand Plaza. Bud told Evelyn about this hotel; she investigated and negotiated a suitable and practical package.

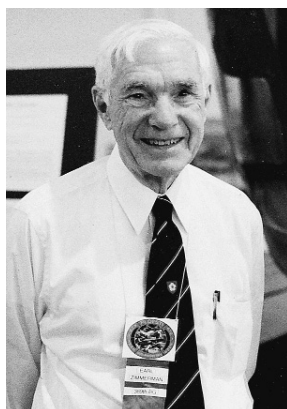
The AAA rates this hotel as a four diamond facility and it is located right downtown. There are six restaurants, one at the top of the tower. The Gerald R. Ford Museum is located nearby. For complete information on the hotel go to www.amwaygrand.com and you can see a complete brochure, or call the hotel at 616-774-2000 and they will mail you a printed brochure.

Elsewhere in this *Journal* you will find a 60th Annual Convention Reservation Form to be filled out and mailed to Evelyn. This is a convention to visit with friends and to make new ones. As of this writing, no bus tours have been planned. Many of you live within driving distance to Grand Rapids. The airport is located at the southeast edge of the city and is served by Northwest, American, United and perhaps by other airlines. The population of Grand Rapids is 197,000 so it is not a large city. You can expect the weather in late August to be in the eighties under fair skies. No one can predict how many more Second Air Division Association conventions there will be, but the average age of our veterans is now 85, so there won't be many more. Make your reservations with Evelyn today!

In 1825 there were several Ottawa villages near present day Grand Rapids and a Baptist mission was established. In 1826 a fur trader, Louis Campau, located a trading post at the present downtown location. When the city was incorporated in 1850 it was already famous for its furniture manufacturing. By 1900 it was the largest furniture-manufacturing city in the U.S. and was called "Furniture City." The city's economy has since diversified into many fields, but fine office furniture is still manufactured there. That's all for now, good friends, and as Red Skelton used to say, "God Bless." ■

Executive Vice President's Message

BY EARL L. ZIMMERMAN (389TH)



By now you should have received the information regarding our next 2ADA convention which will be held in Grand Rapids, Michigan, August 30 – September 3.

President Oak Mackey has appointed me as a member of the committee to go over the 2ADA bylaws to see if they need updating, deletions, changes, etc. So far I have received many suggestions and after consultations with the other two members, hopefully we will have our recommendations ready for the next Executive Committee meeting.

I plan to attend the Southwest Regional Reunion in March, to be held at the Sheraton Grand Hotel, DFW Airport.

Matthew Martin, Chairman of the Board of Governors in Norwich, England has advised that Lord Douglas Hurd, a former British Foreign Secretary, will deliver this year's lecture on Anglo-American affairs on the 14th of November, 2007. This lecture helps promote our Memorial Library. I plan to be there for the lecture and to search the archives of the 389th for some information.

If you have any suggestions regarding the bylaws, my address and phone number are in the "Directory" on page 2. Take your pills, and I hope to see you at the convention in Grand Rapids. ■

SECOND AIR DIVISION ASSOCIATION



THE SECOND AIR DIVISION ASSOCIATION traces its initial meeting to 1948 in Chicago, Illinois. It was organized as a nonprofit corporation in the State of Illinois on January 10, 1950. Members of the original Board of Directors were 2nd Air Division veterans Marilyn Fritz, Howard W. Moore, Jordan R. Uttal, and Percy C. Young. The association's purpose is to advocate and support an adequate, effective and efficient Army, Navy and Air Force at all times; to perpetuate the friendships and memories of service together in the 2nd Air Division, 8th Air Force in England during World War II; to support financially, and in any other way, the Memorial Trust of the 2nd Air Division as represented by the 2nd Air Division Memorial Library of the Norwich Millennium Library; and to undertake such other activities as may from time to time be deemed appropriate by the membership.

REGULAR (VOTING) MEMBERSHIP in the association is limited to those personnel, military and civilian, American or British, who at any time served with the Headquarters organization of the 2nd Bomb Wing, 2nd Bomb Division or 2nd Air Division during World War II and any person who served with any bomb group or fighter group or any other unit of the 2nd Air Division assigned or attached. Provisions are made for Associate (Non-Voting) memberships and also for subscribing memberships (Non-Voting).

We make every effort to mail your *Journal* within 90 days of the article submission deadlines of February 1, May 1, August 1 and November 1. Your receipt of the *Journal* will be anywhere from one to four weeks later, depending on the U.S. Postal Service — especially your own post office. If you don't get your *Journal* by the next deadline, contact Evelyn Cohen immediately.

New British B-24 Stamp

A new British stamp issue honors the U.S. airmen who flew secret missions from Northamptonshire during World War Two. It is in the form of a first day cover for Royal Mail's "Sky at Night" stamps and shows a Consolidated B-24 Liberator dropping a British agent as part of Operation CARPETBAGGER. The package also features wartime images of the black B-24s operated by the USAAF 801st/492nd Bomb Group and the memorial that now stands to them. For more info, go to www.bletchleycovers.com.

— FLYPAST —

The Editor's Contribution

BY RAY PYTEL (445TH)

I have received a number of inquiries as to when the *Journal* readers can expect their *Journal*. As you know, the 2ADA Executive Committee voted to return to four issues in 2007.

This is my schedule: The Spring issue should be in the mail by April 1st, the Summer issue by July 1st, and the Fall issue by October 15th — with the 2ADA convention in Grand Rapids, Michigan over Labor Day weekend, we should be able to fit in last-minute convention results before we go to press, but if you have anything from that time frame, get it in to me as soon as you get home. All other stories and articles should be in by then as the deadline will be August 1st.

The 2008 Winter issue will be out after the holidays, sometime in January 2008.

ANSWERS TO THE WINTER QUIZ

1. The picture was submitted by Jim Reeves. It is of Liverpool Street Station in London, the famous "take off and return place" for all Second Air Division personnel while visiting London Town.

2. Franklin Roosevelt and Winston Churchill purportedly lounge in the summer sun on Old Bond Street, apparently waiting for their wives at one of the Mayfair's chic shopping thoroughfares in London. The sculpture seems to represent a post-war time, despite the fact that Roosevelt died on 12 April 1945, a month before WWII ended in Europe.

SPRING QUIZ

1. When was the first heavy bomber mission on the continent of Europe?
2. What was the target?
3. What type of plane participated?
4. How many planes participated?
5. Where did they take off from?
6. What were the results? ■

BOOK REVIEW

Birds of Britain

by Robin Reckitt

REVIEWED BY ELLA WOODBURY

Don't you love it when a writer and illustrator of birds have a name like Robin? Robin Reckitt has illustrated birds for a magazine named *Evergreen* for 21 years. In this book 81 of her paintings are reproduced beside a page of informative writing.

It is amazing when a person travels to another place and the people are much the same but the birds can be quite different.

Some are much the same. The song thrush, the nuthatch, the mallard and the black gull would be recognizable. The kingfisher is much more colorful in Britain, according to the author. If it had a fish hanging from the beak we might be able to guess.

Most of us would recognize the house sparrow. The author claims they interfere with the breeding of other birds.

What we call the redwing is vastly different in England. It is a winter thrush. It has color and a light breast and spots like our thrush, according to the author.

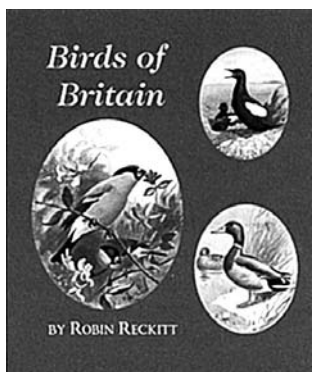
A British legend says that in World War II in bad weather those birds were walking while the RAF and the 8th AF airmen were flying.

The book was published in 2006 by This England Books. It is a book to have on your bookshelf if you love birds.

— FROM THE PUBLISHER —

Enjoy the rare beauty of Britain's delightful birds!

"They shared the sky with the Air Forces"



Whether it's feeding pigeons in the park or ducks on the pond, putting out tidbits in the garden for regular visitors such as the robin, sparrow or blackbird, or merely enjoying the dawn chorus as it heralds the beginning of a new day, everybody in Britain is aware in one way or another of our varied bird population. Since the first edition of our sister publication *Evergreen* was published in Spring 1985, one of the most popular features in the magazine has been "Birds of Britain" by Robin Reckitt in which the renowned country artist has described and depicted in detail dozens of species from the familiar to the more exotic. Now, in response to requests from readers,

81 of these magnificent paintings have been brought together in a lavish new book. For easy reference, the birds appear in alphabetical order, from the Arctic Tern to the Yellowhammer, and each picture is complemented by descriptions of their habits, habitats, eggs, song, etc. (168 pp, hardback, size 8-3/4" x 7-1/4").

Price: £14.95 inc. post and packing to U.K. addresses. Overseas surface mail [airmail in brackets] £17 [\$22] or U.S. \$30 [\$39].

UNITED STATES DISTRIBUTOR:

This England, P.O. Box 6435, Santa Barbara, CA 93160

Tel. 1-800-607-4489 • Fax: (805) 964-1702

(10 am – 6 pm, California time)

E-mail: usa@thisengland.co.uk

"We keep on flying for you!"

FRONTIER JUSTICE: Courtroom Antics of the "Wild West"

Prosecuting Attorney to Defendant: "But, besides the facts, what else have you got to back up your story?"

Judge Roy Bean to Defendant: "Now, have you got anything to say for yourself before I pronounce you guilty?"

Court Ruling: "A Smith & Wesson beats 4 aces any time."

Report of the 2ADA Representative on the Board of Governors of the Memorial Trust

BY CHUCK WALKER (445TH)

There has not been any exciting activity in regards to the Governors of the Memorial Trust since the last *Journal*. The Memorial Library has participated in several community activities and continues to enjoy excellent usage.

I neglected to tell you in my last article about the special treat the younger members of our November party enjoyed. After a wonderful dinner for our whole party, the David Gurneys invited Joe Dzenowagis Jr., Irene Hurner, Andrew Horlock, and Carol Holiday to spend the night at Bawdeswell Hall, thus to enjoy the experience of manor living. Jacqui and David Gurney are most gracious hosts, and the "kids" reported having thoroughly enjoyed the experience. (Bedrooms were not a problem as there are sixteen in Bawdeswell Hall!)

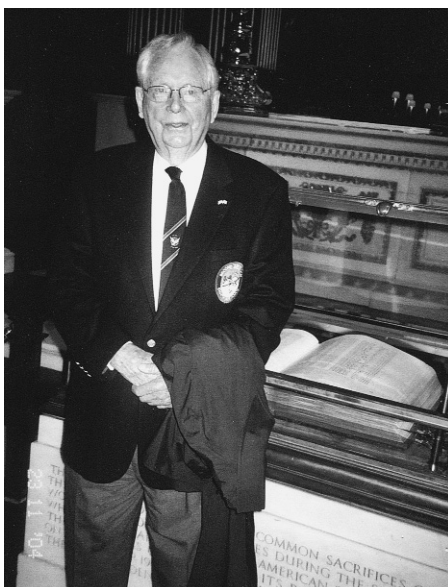
David Neale, Chairman of the Friends of the Memorial Library, reports that the Friends' annual Thanksgiving Dinner was well attended and enjoyed by all. David does an excellent job of keeping the Friends' organization active as he schedules visits to many points of interest including some of our old bases.

The principal reason I have so little to report is that our Chairman of the Governors has taken a month's holiday to visit southeast Asia. I have always enjoyed his phone comments from which I have gleaned many bits of information for my articles. Hurry home, Matthew!

I said I was awaiting pictures for my last article. They did not arrive in time for the last edition, but here they are now. They bring back great memories. ■



Back row (L-R): David Gurney, Andrew Hawker, Andrew Horlock, Chuck Walker, Mike Longe. Front row (L-R): Joan Patterson, Irene Hurner, Jacqui Gurney, Carol Holiday. Picture taken at Bawdeswell Hall.



Left: Chuck Walker at St. Paul's Cathedral. Note the Roll of Honor in the background. Some 28,000 American names! Approved by President Ike. Right: Chuck laying a wreath, with David Hastings' help, at the Memorial Garden.



Greetings and I hope that this finds us all enjoying a nice springtime and in good health.

The Heritage League finalized plans for its convention alongside the 8th Air Force Historical Society in Kalamazoo, Michigan, July 17-22, 2007 and as coincidence would have it, the 2ADA will be in Grand Rapids a few weeks later! But be assured that we will have a visible presence there, too. Having our annual business meeting behind us may free us for more socializing and conversations between yours and our executive committee members on the looming future.

We face it with excitement. We are strengthening our connections with other organizations that, like us, have a commitment to *perpetually* remember the service and sacrifice of those in the Second Air Division, and all units attached and assigned, during WWII. Our current interest is in having meaningful discussions — within our board, between our members, and with these allied organizations — about how to best lever the energies and talents of our grateful generation

YOUR HERITAGE LEAGUE

BY BRIAN H. MAHONEY
Heritage League President

and the new technologies into a strong foundation for following generations to keep before the general public a clear, relevant, compelling picture of your important role in freedom's hard-earned history.

The Internet has brought together many who would otherwise not have met. It has allowed researchers around the globe to be many times more effective, on their own and in concert with others. It even lets my board meet much more often, in the "virtual" room of an online audio "meeting." Just like wheels on luggage

and ibuprofen, it seems "just in time" for my appreciative group of Baby Boomers. Retirement, here or close for most of my contemporaries, will let us do more in perfecting data sets, in working with museums and archives, and in presenting your memoirs as documentaries, books and web pages.

We, your living descendants, value all of the "quality time" we have had with you to date. We think of things we *should* have asked many of your departed colleagues. We try to just enjoy your company while also pestering you about all sorts of things, because we do not have a lot of time left to *get it right*. We are wistful in realizing that success in *our* mission will mean imparting your legacy to generations that have not had the privilege to know you personally.

We are here to listen to your ideas about what we should be doing. We are serious about stewardship of your legacy after the 2ADA, its regular members, and all of us associate members are "history." In Grand Rapids and at your other meetings, you will find us to be "all ears." ■

A Parachute Incident

BY JACK KINGSBERY (458TH)

I was a crew chief on B-24 bombers in the 458th Bomb Group, 754th Squadron, stationed at Horsham St. Faith air base in England. When we had to change an engine because of combat damage or mechanical problems, the plane had to be test flown for about thirty minutes at five thousand feet to be sure it was functioning properly.

There were several Air Force nurses at the base hospital and I had known the brother of one of the nurses at Texas A&M College before the war. I was visiting with her and another nurse at the base PX one day and she said she and her friend would like to go up in a B-24 sometime when it was being test flown. I told her that I had to change an engine on my plane the next day and that I would let her know when it was going to be test flown and they could go up in it.

Two days later the plane was scheduled to be test flown at nine o'clock in the morning. I told my nurse friend that the two of them needed to go by the operations office to report that they were going on the test flight and pick up parachutes. A Jeep brought them out to my plane site at about 8:30 a.m. The parachutes had a harness that was strapped to the body

while the parachute itself was in a separate pack that snapped onto the harness when a person was about to jump. The harness was heavy web material that fitted over the shoulders and around the waist with two long strips down the back that were pulled up tightly between the legs.

The test flight crew came out of my plane about the time that the nurses arrived, and began putting on the parachute harness. The nurses were wearing their uniform skirts that extended just below the knees. The girls watched the crew put on their harnesses and tighten them up. I told them to hurry and get their harnesses on. Ladies were a lot more modest then than they are now, so they were hesitant to get into the harness wearing skirts. They put the straps over their shoulders and around their waists, reaching for the straps that had to go between their legs. They would pull the straps a little bit and try to push their skirts down, but of course that was impossible. The girls were both very embarrassed and almost backed out of taking the flight. I insisted that they go ahead and buckle up and make the flight, and I helped them as much as I could with the harness.

The nurses finally got their parachute

harness on properly and made the flight. After the plane landed, they took off the harness before they got off the plane. They thanked us and said they enjoyed the flight. And we enjoyed finding out that the nurses had very pretty legs. ■

The Discharge

This soldier, having completed his tour of duty, stood in line for his discharge. The old commanding officer, well known for his harsh discipline and attention to detail, was about to hand him the final paper releasing the soldier from the service, when he decided to give the soldier a "last shot" of discipline, and after this upbraiding he handed the soldier his discharge.

"I suppose that when I die you will come and urinate on my grave," the old commander taunted the soldier.

"No, sir; I'm through with the military, and I'm not about to stand in line for anybody," replied the new civilian. ■



NEWS OF THE 453RD FROM FLAME LEAP

BY LLOYD W. PRANG

Recently we got a call from **Andy Cumming** of the 732nd Squadron. Andy was the crew chief of "Arrowhead." At the end of the war "Arrowhead" was one of ten veteran B-24s with 100 missions or more. "Arrowhead" had survived a total of 113 missions. Andy called to advise me that although he was now 90 years old he intended to be at the 453rd reunion in Las Vegas in April. Listen up, all you guys who say no to buying green bananas. Andy managed to get "Arrowhead" through the whole war, with 113 missions on it, and he's still going strong — and still playing golf! Andy is a perfect example of "it ain't over until it's over." By the time you get to read this column it'll be too late for you to come to Las Vegas, but you still have time to make reservations to come to the 2nd Air Division Association convention in Grand Rapids, Michigan. It's scheduled for this Labor Day weekend. Hope to see you there.

Also **Wib Clingan** wrote: "Can it really be 2007 already? Sorry, Irene, to hear you have joined our group of TWF (those who fall). I've done so three or four times but Diana is by far the leader of our group. Three or four of hers have caused some time to be spent in one hospital or another. Las Vegas sounds attractive. We won't commit but we won't just dismiss the idea either. Thanks again for all your time and effort. Cheers, Wib."

Bill Norris keeps finding interesting articles and sending them out over the Internet. This one, which I've edited severely because it was originally eight pages long, is by George H.W. Bush, W's father. It starts by mentioning that he once had slipped getting into the bathtub. No harm was done, but it shows that starting at age 80 we have to begin to be very careful. Maybe when we see others ache and repeat themselves and tilt when they walk, we'll see we are not alone. Hopefully, this article might encourage us to head more confidently toward the finish line.

There are a lot of changes that take place in us at around age 80. You probably still feel like charging ahead and living life to the hilt, but your body lags behind. Your mind may be out there cir-

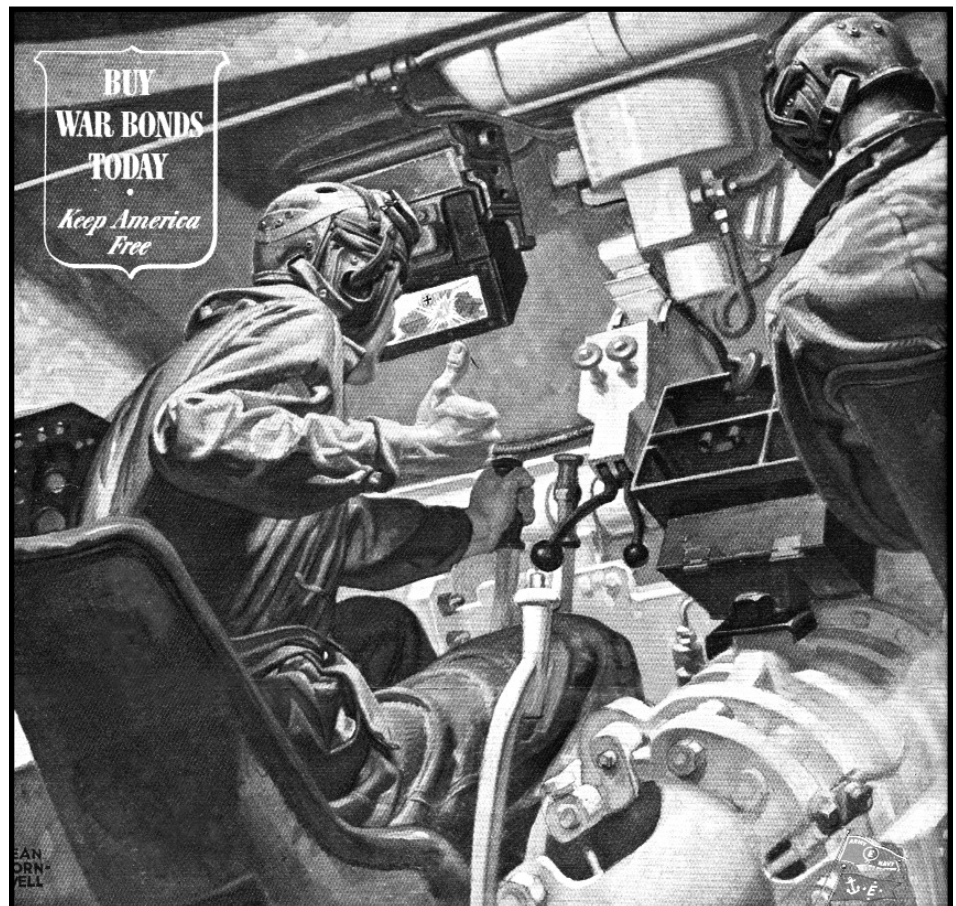
cling the globe, but your skeletal structure cries out suggesting you give it a break. And your balance begins to offer great challenges. Oddly, your lack of balance does not get much sympathy from the younger crowd. One little falter and your kids look at you like you're the town drunk! Also, your back probably aches more now; so do your legs. Everyone says, "When you get older you must stretch

more." You may have tried this. The problem is that stretching is boring. You may be able to walk fast, but jogging is out.

Now, what was your question? Oh, yes — hearing. Your hearing may be deteriorating, but not dangerously so. If you wear a hearing aid you can hear selectively and tune people out when you want to. You have to be careful with the tuning out, because if a question is shot directly at you, you don't want to look dumb. A hearing aid helps when you're watching a rented movie, but it tends to kill you when you're at a party and someone crumples up some paper. It could sound like a low-yield nuke going off.

Forgetfulness: You may be able to re-
(continued on next page)

WARTIME ADVERTISING



Victory pace *by Fisher*

GREAT masses of heavy armament are now helping to write the prologue to victory.

Fisher Body has produced its share of this armament—tanks, anti-aircraft guns, gun-breech housings, fighting planes, bombers and delicate flying instruments.

To do this we had to disregard the normal limits of our business, and build products entirely new to us. We had to explore

technical fields foreign to us. We had to enlarge our plant facilities.

Looking back on those hectic days and nights of conversion, we realize that an understanding of true craftsmanship proved to be, literally, a lifesaver. Precision work on armament came easily to precision workmen. Long-acquired skills and crafts met demands for the most extreme accuracy.

The Army-Navy "E" flies above four Fisher Body plants for excellence in aircraft production and from two others for tank production, while the Navy "E," with four stars, is flown by still another Fisher Body plant for its naval ordnance work.

And an important reason why Fisher Body has yet to fail at a war job is because craftsmanship has never yet failed us.

Every Sunday Afternoon
GENERAL MOTORS SYMPHONY OF THE AIR
NBC Network



D I V I S I O N O F G E N E R A L M O T O R S

When the Allies Did Not Trust Each Other

Reprinted from *The Custer-Hawk Gazette*, November 2006 • Presented by Operation World War II Remembered, Inc.

You can't trust the French. That's probably what Winston Churchill was thinking in June 1940 during Germany's successful invasion of France. Though the French army may not have been hard for the Nazis to conquer, they did have a decent sized navy. The fourth largest navy in the world, to be precise.



Sir Winston Churchill

In the years preceding the occupation, Admiral Jean Darlan had built up the French navy in order to compete with the Italians in the Mediterranean. A partnership between the British and French navies would most definitely keep the Mediterranean Sea in Allied hands. The fate of the French navy under a German occupation of France was Churchill's main concern until Admiral Darlan promised Churchill that the navy would never surrender.

On 22 June 1940, France and Germany signed an armistice. Adolph Hitler promised that the French navy would not be used in combat except to guard the coasts and to mine sweep. Since no one believed Hitler was capable of keeping his word, the Allies took action. Some French vessels escaped to harbors in Great Britain while others continued patrolling near French colonies. However, two fleets remained in the Mediterranean at Alexandria and Mers-el-Kebir, Algeria. The British feared the consequences if Germany and Italy obtained those fleets. There was no way the British could fight off the combined navies of Germany, Italy and France. The British needed their supply lines in the Mediterranean in order to exist. Without victory in the Mediterranean, the survival of Great Britain would be extremely difficult — if not impossible. On 3 July the British gave the French Admirals Godfroy and Gensoul ultimatums. The French would either fight alongside the British to defeat the Axis; sail to English ports and disarm; sail to the West Indies or America and disarm; sink their ships; or resist and have the British attack and sink their ships for them. The problem was the French Admirals had been given orders not to surrender to anybody, Axis or Ally.

In Alexandria, Egypt, British Admiral Andrew Cunningham and French Admiral Rene Godfroy conducted serious nego-

tiations. Fortunately, after many close calls, Admiral Godfroy yielded. His fleet was neutralized and his ships placed in non-fighting condition. The fleet remained at Alexandria until 1943, when they joined the war with the Free French.

At Mers-el-Kebir, however, stubborn personalities prevailed. British Admiral James Somerville sent French-speaking Captain Cedric Holland to deliver an ultimatum to the surrounded French in the harbor. The French Admiral Gensoul was offended by a mere captain bringing the message, so he refused to deal personally with Captain Holland. Gensoul's lieutenant and Captain Holland went back and forth trying to explain each other's predicament. In the end, the French would not give in to the British aggressors. As Captain Holland was riding back to his ship, the British opened fire. The battle was short and one-sided. Even though the French started firing back, the English made it through without a single casualty.



French Admiral Marcel Gensoul

Admiral Gensoul's French fleet was not as fortunate. By the end of the day, 350 French sailors were wounded and 1,300 perished. The British disabled several vessels, sinking one battleship and severely damaging two more. One French ship, the *Strasbourg*, managed to escape and sailed to the French port of Toulon. The *Strasbourg* remained safe at Toulon until 27 November 1942 when the Germans tried to capture the French fleet there. The French scuttled all of their ships at Toulon including *Strasbourg*, before the Germans could gain control.

The swift battle at Mers-el-Kebir did not help relations between Great Britain and France. The French blamed the British for killing more Frenchmen in this one attack than the Germans did in their entire invasion of France. The decision to attack the French fleet was also quite controversial in England. Many felt that sinking the ship of an Ally was out of line, while others realized the risks of a Ger-

man-controlled Mediterranean. The destruction at Mers-el-Kebir happened due to a lack of trust — trust by the British in the French ability to protect their own navy from Axis forces, and trust by the French in the British ability to treat them as equals. ■

NEWS OF THE 453RD (continued from page 7)

member some things that happened 40 years ago, and yet can't remember where you put your glasses. Sometimes it's hard to recall the names of close friends. However, you can always bluff your way through it by saying "How's it going, pal?" or "How's the wife?"

Hey! Do you find yourself reading the obituary pages a lot more? Now it's easier to understand what Phyllis Diller meant when she said, "All my friends are dying in alphabetical order." Another important point to remember after you've passed the age of 80 is to never discuss your body parts with anyone unless you are ready for a lengthy discussion about his operation, his prostate surgery or his wife's gall bladder removal.

After age 80 the motto "early to bed and early to rise" makes good sense. After dinner you can easily say "I am so darn old, I hope you'll forgive me if I excuse myself and go to bed." No one argues; everyone understands. In fact, the younger ones are probably glad to see the old fogey go.

Being over 80 is okay; not bad at all. Life has been good. You have many happy memories to look back on and talk about. However, it's true, the older you get, the faster time flies. Right now it's going by lightning-fast. There still are a lot of breathtaking sunrises ahead, and many brilliant sunsets, too. Satchel Paige was right when he said, "Don't look over your shoulder; something might be gaining on you." So let's look forward and live life to its fullest.



When we were in the Army Air Forces we young pilots looked forward to and prayed for CAVU: Ceiling and Visibility Unlimited. Now, at beyond age 80 that is where our life is now. Our lives are CAVU. Until next time, Cheers! ■



HARDWICK

Open Letter to the 93rd

BY JOHN LEE

Greetings to each one of you. This should be a banner year for the 93rd. There are many things going on. We would like to see some of you take part in the upcoming activities. As you are reading this, Paul Steichen will be making final arrangements for leading a group to Norwich to commemorate VE Day. He has a wonderful agenda planned, including a visit to our Memorial Library. He plans a memorial service at the American Cemetery near Cambridge and sight-seeing to the Queen's estate at Sandringham as well as the Duxford Air Museum. The group will be staying at the Swallow Nelson, checking in on May 3rd and departing on May 9th. He says that the timing is probably too tight at the time of this printing, to make arrangements to accompany them on this trip, but if anyone is in Norwich at that time they would be welcome to join in on the planned events. He would welcome inquiries via e-mail at Paulsteichen@comcast.net.

It is not too early to begin planning for the rest of the year. The 2007 convention of the 2ADA will be held August 30 thru September 3 at the Amway Grand Plaza Hotel in Grand Rapids, Michigan. This sounds like a great place, and it may be more convenient for some of you who live in the general area. The registration form and additional information can be found elsewhere in this *Journal*.

John Marx informs me that the 93rd BG reunion will be held at the Sheraton Bloomington Hotel, Minneapolis South from September 27-30. This hotel is very well located only about nine miles from the Minneapolis/St. Paul Airport and close to the Mall of America. The hotel provides shuttle service to and from the airport and the Mall of America throughout the day. They offer several different types of reservations, all of which include a continental/hot breakfast each morning of the reunion. The hotel's website is sheraton.com/bloomington. John and other members of the "Younger Generation" have a great agenda planned for this reunion. It begins with a welcome banquet on Tuesday evening, and there will be a concert and dance by the Roseville Big Band (a 19 piece swing band in the Glenn Miller and Tommy Dorsey style) on Saturday. They have also planned a picturesque journey

on the Minnesota Zephyr railroad. We will enjoy an elegant Sunday dinner in one of the beautifully decorated dining cars. All in all, it sounds too good to miss, especially since we will have time to meet and greet our friends once again. One last thing John says may be an option, for those who feel like spreading their wings, is a ride in a B-25. This is still in the development stages.

Paul Levine indicates that many of our younger generation and Heritage League members are involved in the perpetuation

of the legacy of what the men of the 93rd and 2AD contributed during WWII. The results are that the generations of the future will enjoy the freedom we have today. He mentioned the book *Masters of the Air* written by Donald L. Miller. He states that it is a documentary and concise historical perspective of the flyboys who flew in the 17s and 24s and what they had to endure. Paul heard Mr. Miller speak recently and was most impressed with his knowledge and research. You can get more information at www.Miller@Lafayette.edu.

Betty and I plan to attend both reunions and look forward to seeing all of you there. Let's all do whatever we can to help make our country safe from the threats we are facing in the current situation. Have a wonderful day. ■

BOOK REVIEW

"Flak Houses" Then and Now *The Story of American Rest Homes in England During World War II*

by Keith Thomas

REVIEWED BY F.C. CHANDLER JR. (491ST BG)

Commanders and flight surgeons of the Mighty Eighth Air Force observed "flying fatigue" by flight crews as they flew their allotted number of missions which by the end of the war had been extended to thirty-five. The emotional trauma endured by the young airmen needed release through wholesome activities in a relaxed atmosphere. The "flak houses," actually first class hotels or estates in the English countryside, were established as an alternative to "booze and broads" in the cities. It was a more relaxing and therapeutic time for those suffering the emotional trauma of battle.

Flak, German anti-aircraft used in defending Germany, was the cause of much anxiety and stress among those flying the dangerous missions over Germany. The respite afforded by a week at a rest area was widely appreciated by those fortunate enough to be ordered to these facilities. The respite occasioned "gallows humor" by the nickname "flak house." There were finally seventeen facilities with an additional four designated informal.

Keith Thomas, with his wife Iris, was the long-time English sponsor of North Pickenham, home of the 492nd BG and the Ringmasters of the 491st BG in 1944-45. Their hospitality and warm friendship to those of us who returned to our World War II base was legendary. Now Keith has recorded in his book another facet of the air war little known and recorded previously.

The before and after pictures of all these oases are compelling. The text describes the activities supervised by the Red Cross and the fond memory of airmen who spent their leaves in these surroundings. The book is beautifully done and worthy of inclusion in any library's World War II history collection. I found it a well-written nostalgic memoir of my Scottish visit.

Publisher: *After The Battle, The Mews, Hobb Cross House, Hobbs Cross, Old Harlow, Essex CM17 0NN. American Distributor:* RZM Imports, Inc., 151 Harvard Ave., Stamford, CT 06902, tel: (203) 653-2272, fax: (203) 965-0047, e-mail: info@rzm.com, website: www.rzm.com. **\$31.95 plus shipping.** ■



**491st BOMB GROUP
POSTREMUM ET OPTIMUM
the
RINGMASTER
REPORTS**

BY JOHN A. PALLER

As I am writing this we are experiencing our first really cold spell of the 2006-07 winter here in the four-season country of northwestern New Jersey. It is fresh and invigorating to have wintertime feel like winter. I know the sun-belt folks and "snowbirds" will think I've lost touch with reality.

OCTOBER 2006 GROUP REUNION

This past fall, the 491st had its annual reunion in Denver from the 12th through the 15th of October 2006. A memorial service was held at the Air Force Academy Chapel honoring our departed comrades. Our group chaplain, the Rev./Dr. William L. McClelland, spoke eloquently. His message centered on discipline and virtue. This inspiring memorial address was printed in its entirety in the Fall 2006 *Ringmasters Log*. After the memorial service the group assembled at the Academy Officers Club for a tasty luncheon.

On Saturday evening, at the banquet closing out the 2006 reunion, John Guion, the outgoing president, was presented a lead crystal engraved plaque in recognition of his leadership during the past two years. The reins were then turned over to Jerry Ivce, our next president.

During the business meeting, plans were made for the next two years with Dayton, Ohio selected as the site for the 2007 reunion and preliminary plans were made designating Orlando, Florida as the location for the 2008 reunion.

THE ONGOING CONTROVERSY

It appears that the B-17 "Flying Fortress" vs. B-24 debate will go on beyond our lifetimes.

It started shortly after 20 December 1939, the day when the XB-24 first took to the air from Lindbergh Field in San Diego.

As recently as October 2006, there appeared in *Air Force Magazine* a well-written article by Frederick A. Johnson, Public Affairs Director for NASA's Dryden Flight Research Center, titled "The Making of an Iconic Bomber" wherein the writer enters this never-ending controversy. The story started in 1935, the year the XB-17 was first flown. This was almost six years before the first flight of the XB-24. There-

fore, the "Flying Fortress" had a real jump-start in getting attention well before the start of WWII. The films *Test Pilot* (a pre-war flick) and *Air Force* (a 1942 movie featuring a B-17 in the Philippines at the start of WWII) reminded me of the crew cutting off the tail cone from their B-17C and installing a tail gun to ward off the Japanese fighters. Also the heroics of Capt. Colin Kelly and his crew involved the B-17. She was always the queen of battle in the eyes of writers and correspondents plus many of the old Air Corps brass. Even in the 8th AF the B-17s were first, arriving in England in the summer of 1942, whereas the B-24s flew into combat from England in October 1942. The fact that B-24s had been diverted to North Africa, flying missions as early as 11 June 1942 followed by the low-level Ploesti mission on 1 August '43, did nothing to nudge the B-17 from the queenly throne. Nothing the B-24 crews would accomplish seemed to close the popularity gap.

By the war's end, over 18,100 Liberators had been built. B-17 production stopped at 12,731. Flying Fortress production was channeled into two numbered Air Forces — the 8th and 15th — whereas B-24s were spread all over the world in nine different numbered Air Forces. Additionally, B-24s served many allied nations as well as the U.S. Navy as the PB4Y. ■

BRAIN CRAMPS

These will make you feel smart!

Question: If you could live forever, would you and why?

Answer: "I would not live forever, because we should not live forever, because if we were supposed to live forever, then we would live forever, but we cannot live forever, which is why I would not live forever."

— Miss Alabama in the 1994 Miss USA Pageant

"Whenever I watch those poor starving kids all over the world, I can't help but cry. I mean I'd love to be skinny like that, but not with all those flies and death and stuff."

— pop star Mariah Carey

"Smoking kills. If you're killed, you've lost a very important part of your life."

— actress Brooke Shields, during an interview to become a spokesperson for a federal anti-smoking campaign

"I've never had knee surgery on any other part of my body."

— University of Kentucky basketball player Winston Bennett

Folded Wings

93rd BG

Donald Lance
LTC Richard J. Preziose
Ralph G. Tissot

389th BG

John H. Cahill
Donald E. Ford
Winfield F. Hanssen
H.E. Hetzler
Jack E. Hutchinson
James L. Kissling
William J. Meyer

445th BG

George C. Anderson, Jr.
Orville P. Ball
Charles H. Beck

446th BG

LTC Thomas L. Mason

448th BG

Paul E. Goeken

453rd BG

Michael L. Kostan
Glen A. Tisher
Eugene J. Vossmer

458th BG

Wayne L. Austin
Peter J. Moran, Jr.
W.C. Spratt

466th BG

William R. Modene
Joseph E. Roth

467th BG

Frank Giosta



Liberator

MEN IN BRITAIN

BY FRED B. BARTON

REPRINTED FROM "PLANE TALK" — MARCH 1944

Ed. Note: We kept the original 1943-44 text.

I've just returned to London after four days at a Liberator bomber base in England — two bases, in fact. This theatre of the war has been setting up a new Liberator division. The Libs have been here all the time, except for a diversion to Africa to handle the Ploesti oilfields mission. What is happening now is the arrival of large enough numbers so that Libs can begin to operate alone, rather than as companions to the Forts. Because of some variance in speed, the two don't go together well in the same formation.

General James Hodges, himself a flyer and veteran of several bombing missions, is now commander for the Liberator units in Britain.

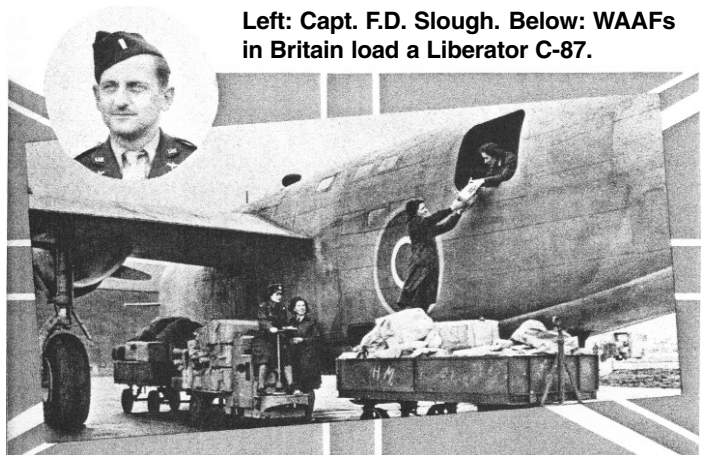
Liberators first came to Britain in the fall of 1942, when Brigadier General (then Colonel) Edward Timberlake flew his men over in shiny new B-24s, fresh from the factory. Soon after came Colonel Frank Robinson with his "Flying Eight-Ball."

Brigadier General Leon W. Johnson, recently head of the "Flying Eight-Ball," and now promoted to a larger spot in the same command, is America's first living officer to hold the Medal of Honor in the 8th U.S. Army Air Force — the big show in the war so far. He is a Kansas man of 39, just now promoted from Colonel to General. He does his flying in person as well as in the briefing room.

Enlisted men in his outfit like him because he never passes anyone on the road — officer or man — without picking him up, if the car isn't full already. When he drove to London to attend an important conference and dinner, one of the army cooks at his mess asked for a ride to town and back, a four-hour run each way. Johnson said yes; he was glad to have the company.

They hung the ribbon of the Congressional Medal of Honor around his neck not long ago, over here in Britain, and almost the same day he received his overdue promotion from Colonel to Brigadier General.

Only an official few attend the General's briefing sessions, which outline the day's bombing mission, give the height above sea level of the target, the route and bombing altitude, and the exact moment at which the enemy is to be presented with a salvo of bombs. Very few ever visit the highly private room with



Left: Capt. F.D. Slough. Below: WAAFs in Britain load a Liberator C-87.

the wall map three times a man's height, on which appear enemy objectives such as factories and air bases.



In his camouflaged field headquarters in a corner of rural Britain, General Johnson summarizes our air war progress in short, telling sentences.

"I believe May 14, 1943, was the first big date in our victory over Germany," General Johnson says. "That was the day of the first battle of Kiel. It was the first time Germany had felt our growing power. There had been other raids into Germany. But I believe when the history of this war is written, they'll say the turn of the war came then. We speak now of 'invading' Europe. Well, our air force started the invasion right there.

"In that first mission to Kiel we destroyed the shipbuilding yards, the Krupp Works and the port area. Kiel was plastered by a half-dozen groups of B-17s and a group of twenty-one B-24 Liberators. The target was very well covered with bombs, both H.E. (high explosive) and incendiary.

"That day demonstrated the ability of our air force to go deep



Review of Liberator crews in Britain when Brig. Gen. (then Col.) Johnson received the Congressional Medal.

into Germany and carry the war home to the heart of the enemy homeland.

"Our next big step was getting our fighters to go with us, to sustain our bombers and to cut down the German fighters. America's fighter planes have repeatedly demonstrated their ability to knock down many more planes than they lose.

"We know that Germany is feeling the effects of our daylight precision raids. They are taking their night fighter planes, as well as their day fighters, and trying to stop our day precision bombing. They wouldn't take their night fighters for day work, if we weren't seriously hurting their factories and their industry.

"I have learned two things in this war. One is the absolute courage of our American boys. The other is what I would call a frightful carelessness of the boys with their lives. They neglect to take care of equipment designed for their protection. They are careless with their guns and with their planes; their preparation for a mission is not as thorough as I would like to see it. Dr. Bruce Hopper, the 8th Air Force historian, says that courage and carelessness are characteristics of American youths.

"These bomber pilots of ours go into battle willingly. Not joyfully, because it isn't the American way to bomb civilians. But they like to go after a military objective, and they like to knock out the target.

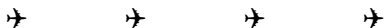
"Regardless of their losses, their morale does not suffer at all, if they accomplish their mission. But if they lose one plane unnecessarily, that will knock the spirit of the whole group. These lads like to know that they are being used for some real purpose.

"Every American soldier wants to know why a job is being

(continued on next page)

LIBERATOR MEN IN BRITAIN *(continued from page 11)*

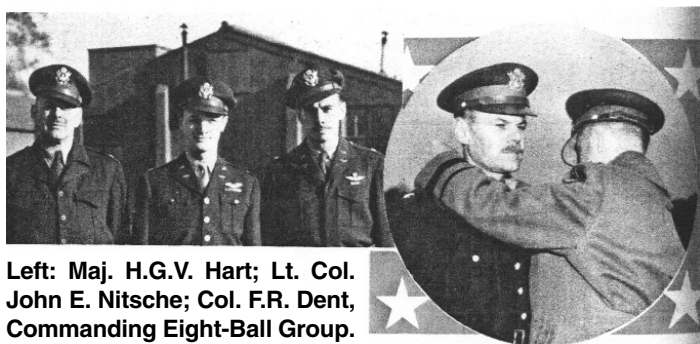
done in a certain way. We tell him the reason, because we appreciate his concern and he will give us better cooperation if he knows why.”



These bombing crews are tough. They need to be tough in their business. Yet, before each mission each man that is flying attends a brief prayer meeting, right before the briefing. The various chaplains take turns. The service was started by Colonel Frank Robinson; now back in the States in command of Air Technical Training. General Johnson, a seasoned Army man, wondered about the effectiveness of these meetings. He knows now.

“The prayer is for one thing only,” he says simply. “That we have the strength to conduct ourselves like men, no matter what happens. We know we can’t ask God to bless our work for the day. We don’t ask Him to bring us back safely, because we know in advance that some men may not come back. But, we hope for the strength to conduct ourselves like men.”

General Johnson has great admiration for his ground crews, never cited for bravery, but often doing heroic work in servic-



Left: Maj. H.G.V. Hart; Lt. Col. John E. Nitsche; Col. F.R. Dent, Commanding Eight-Ball Group.

Right: Gen. Devers hangs the ribbon of Congressional Medal upon Gen. Johnson’s neck.

ing planes overnight, working in the blackout and under freezing conditions. And he likes to tell you about the feat of the men who take the smooth-running Liberators forth to do battle against the Nazis.

Major “Johnny” Diehl, of Carlsbad, New Mexico, was a lad who did the unusual. “Twice,” says General Johnson, “he saw one of our planes that was wounded and knocked out of formation, and he went down and covered it and mothered it home, because all his guns were working and his crew were on their toes.

“Of course, it is against our policy toward medals for acts like that, no matter how brave they are. In fact, we had to call Diehl in and reason with him; had to tell him he weakens the formation by dropping out of line, and that he has got to follow orders, got to maintain the integrity of the group.”

Yet in his heart, General Johnson admires the man and his crew for doing the humane thing, brave and unselfish.



I met and talked with U.S. Army Air Force colonels, with flying majors still in their early twenties, with staff sergeants and gunners, with repairmen. I met bombing crews who had flown planes in any and all kinds of weather, from 48 below at altitude to well over 100 above on desert sand. In Libya, across Rumania, Belgium, Poland, France, Norway, Italy, Albania, Greece, Germany, Yugoslavia and a handful of other countries, these men have flown their B-24s.

They talked to me. Not so much about themselves, though they are hungry to have personal news about their work and their daily life flashed to the folks back home. But more about the airplanes they fly. To a man these bombing crews bragged

and boasted about their Liberator bombers.

Captain Frank D. Slough (pronounced to rhyme with “how”), a veteran flyer in both RCAF and USAAF, is a group leader, which means he pilots the lead ship in many Liberator bombing missions.

“Libs will go faster and further, and with a heavier load,” he says. “That’s why we went to Ploesti. No other airplane in the world could do it.

“One time I lost two engines, Nos. 3 and 4, both on the same side. That was over Naples. Those two engines were turning but they weren’t pulling very much. So I fed all four engines at slow speed and coasted down to Malta. Any bombing plane has the gliding angle of a brick, we say among ourselves. But in a pinch a B-24 will glide to a landing practically with dead engines.

“Some of our B-24s have landed without any power at all. And some have been flown with the rudders almost shot away.”

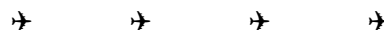
Major H.G.V. Hart of Stamford, Connecticut, intelligence officer of a bombardment wing, says: “Not a man here would want to trade his spot in a B-24.” Major Hart is the man who designed the “Flying Eight-Ball” insignia worn on the chests of the men in his bombardment wing. He adds:

“The Ploesti mission proved the Liberator. Here we went in at zero altitude — planes actually came back with wheat all over the bomb bay doors.”

Lieutenant Colonel John E. Nitsche of South Bend, Indiana, operations officer at one of these bomber bases, says we’ll be talking about Ploesti for a long time to come, for that one raid gave the Russians so much support in stopping the German missions.

“There are half a dozen reasons why Liberators have not been used so heavily in this particular theatre of war,” says Nitsche. “They all boil down to this: Other makes of airplanes can handle the bombing of Germany as well as a Liberator can. But up until now, only a Lib can do the job in the Pacific where the distances are so great.”

Colonel Fred R. Dent of Kerrville, Texas, new commanding officer of the “Flying Eight-Ball” group, has an unusual viewpoint on the stuff that is built into a B-24. He was a test pilot on some of the first Libs to roll off the assembly line. That was back in 1940.



At another Liberator bomber division, Captain Harry A. Cody of New York acts as public relations officer. To him come the daily reports of all the pilots — some secret and highly confidential, for official eyes only; some suitable to be sent home to hometown papers.

“The Navy wanted Libs for patrol duty,” he says, “because a Lib is the best anti-submarine airplane there is. As you know, the Navy has taken over the anti-submarine patrolling job here, using both land-based planes and water-based planes.

“Production of B-24s couldn’t at first catch up. The Pacific and the Navy got the first call, and UK (he meant United Kingdom, or Britain) didn’t receive enough.

“Because of that very smallness of number of planes, our B-24s in Britain have done a number of experimental jobs. Some couldn’t be told for quite a while, such as the anti-submarine patrols. Many can’t be mentioned even yet.

“Also B-24s in this area have experimented in types of formations that could be flown. Also, in maintenance. They have experimented in modifications for this theatre: how to prevent ice from forming on the wings on an early morning takeoff; how to prevent frost forming on the windows; and so on.

“The big Bordeaux raid, last May 17th, was a milestone in America’s air victory over Germany. That was the longest trip till then. Most of it was over water. We went in one formation, two groups of us, and bombed the submarine locks all to hell.

(continued on next page)



446TH BOMB GROUP FLIXTON-BUNGAY UPDATE

BY CARL H. ALBRIGHT

The following article was authored and edited by members of the 446th Bomb Group Association and is intended for use by students to increase their understanding of World War II.

“The Sky Was Their Battlefield” PART 1

For crews, the day of the mission began in the dark of the night . . .

One would lie in the sack wondering what the target would be — a milk run or a deep penetration into Germany. It would be another sleepless night. The fire in the stove in the middle of the hut would go out — it was too cold to get out of the warm sack to start it again.

Later, the door at the end of the hut would open, letting in a blast of cold air. A voice in the dark would rattle off the names of the crew. “Okay, guys, briefing at 0300.” If he was a college man, he might call them “gentlemen.” Bitter cold, you had to be a contortionist to dress under the covers, praying to God for strength to calm your nerves.

Washed and shaved. If you didn’t shave, the oxygen mask wouldn’t fit snugly; cheekbones might get frostbite. The men walked or got a ride to the mess hall.

Mission day, food would be good — fresh eggs! Breakfast finished, they would climb aboard a truck to take them to the briefing rooms. There were separate briefings — the pilot, copilot, navigator, bombardier, engineer and radio operator would attend one. The other was for the gunners.

In the briefing rooms, a curtain covered the RAF map of Europe. When it was uncovered, a long red ribbon was stretched from the base to the target. If it was a deep penetration, there would be groans. A milk run brought sighs of relief.

The CO or Group Operations Officer and the Intelligence Officer explained the target, the route in and out, timing, enemy aircraft that might be encountered, where they might run into flak and where there would be friendly fighter cover.

The Weather Officer gave a forecast of weather going in and returning. European weather was a constant foe for the flyers who trained in the sunny skies of Texas and Arizona. He always took a razzing because the weather from the Atlantic Ocean, the North Sea and the Continent was difficult to predict. The only thing predictable about the weather in England was it was unpredictable.

Navigators, bombardiers and radio operators then attended a more detailed briefing. The Escape and Evasion Officer collected all personal items — letters and photos, anything that might be of aid to the enemy if they were shot down and captured. Escape kits contained maps, a compass, money, a saw and other items were issued. Chaplains gave their blessings.

Trucks took them to the hardstand where the plane was being checked by the crew chief and his men. They boarded the plane.

WHAT THEY WORE

The Army Air Corps was tardy in developing flying clothing. Before World War II no one ever thought planes would be bombing from 25,000 feet in the sky at forty to fifty degrees below zero. During the winter of 1942, seventy percent of the Eighth’s casualties were due to frostbite or deaths from hypothermia.

As the war progressed, the Air Staff improved the apparel for combat. Over woolen long johns, most airmen wore an elec-

trically heated suit. Then flying coveralls covered by a sheepskin-lined suit in which they could hardly move. To top it off, a flak vest made of overlapping tiers of small steel plates sewn into a long and sturdy canvas jacket. The Air Corps asked the Wilkinson Sword Co., manufacturers of razor blades, to help develop the body armor. It was a suit of mail that reached from the neck to the pelvis and was designed to protect from flak splinters and bullets. On the feet sheepskin boots were worn. A bright yellow lifejacket, known as a Mae West, was draped around the neck. A parachute, either a chest pack or backpack, was worn. On their hands, they wore electrically heated gloves that they dared not remove, fearing frostbite. Their heads were covered by warm woolen caps topped off by steel helmets. At high altitude, an oxygen mask was worn. Each crewmember had a headset and mike connected to the intercom.

IMPACT OF AIR COMBAT

Flight surgeons determined who was to fly and who was grounded. They voluntarily flew combat missions searching for answers to questions such as: What would be the psychological impact of aerial combat on young men in their teens and early twenties? How would they withstand the rigors of attacks from the ground and air, flying five miles high? Would they be able to fire machine guns in subzero temperatures, with flak so heavy that some crews said: “It was so thick you could walk on it.” How would they react to seeing a plane explode in a ball of flame and men jumping with chutes on fire? How would they react when their buddy’s bed next to theirs was empty? A flight surgeon once invited medical officers to consider the role of the combat flyer. He asked them to consider if they could manage 130 controls, switches, levers, dials and gauges of a bomber cockpit from the comfort of their swivel chairs. The flight surgeon continued: “Cut the size of your office to a five-foot cube — engulf it in the roar of four 1,000 horsepower engines — increase your height above the ground to four or five miles — reduce the atmospheric pressure by one-half to two-thirds, and lower the outside temperature 40 degrees to 50 degrees below zero. That will give you an idea of the normal conditions under which pilots, engineers, navigators and bombardiers must work out mathematical relationships of engine revolutions, manifold and fuel pressure, aerodynamics, barometric pressure, wind drift, air speed, ground speed, position, direction and plane attitude. As a final touch to their picture of concentration, *add the fear of death.*” ■

LIBERATOR MEN IN BRITAIN *(continued from page 12)*

It was the first time we had a chance to show what we could do. That Bordeaux raid, to my mind, was when Libs became of age.

“Then on June 1st they took us off bombing missions and we spent a month here in Britain practicing low formation flying. It was exciting, flying across farms and pastures and scaring the cows, though the farmers didn’t like it. Then we went to Africa. From Africa we made our first air raid — on Rome.

“Then after a few more missions into Italy and Sicily they pulled us off operations altogether, and the newspapers forgot us. That was when we got in our heavy practice for Ploesti, there on the desert. That went on from July 19th to August 1st, when we took off for Ploesti. And the rest you know about.”

So the story goes. It is the Cinderella story of the war, the way the Liberator bomber has grown to fame. Libs were buried and overlooked by newspaper headlines; they plugged quietly along at whatever job was assigned to them. Now they come back to the big show in Britain in greatly enlarged numbers.

These Liberator pilots and crews have almost a fanatical passion for their airplanes. For their money, they consider the Liberator the war’s outstanding heavy bomber. ■

458th BOMB GROUP

HORSHAM ST. FAITH



BY RICHARD PULSE

As a diversion, here's a bit of official Air Force history from the book *Air Force Combat Units of WWII*:

458TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP

Constituted as 458th Bombardment Group (Heavy) on 19 May 1943. Activated on 1 Jul 1943. Prepared for combat with B-24's. Moved to England, Jan-Feb 1944, and assigned to Eighth AF. Flew diversionary missions on 24 and 25 Feb 1944 to draw enemy fighters from German targets being attacked by other AAF bombers. Began bombardment on 2 Mar 1944, and afterward operated primarily against strategic objectives in Germany. Hit such targets as the industrial area of Saarbrucken, oil refineries at Hamburg, an airfield at Brunswick, aircraft factories at Oschersleben, a fuel depot at Dulmen, a canal at Minden, aircraft works at Brandenburg, marshalling yards at Hamm, and an aircraft engine plant at Magdeburg. Carried out some interdiction and support operations in addition to the strategic missions. Helped to prepare for

the invasion of Normandy by striking gun batteries, V-weapon sites, and airfields in France; hit coastal defenses in support of the assault on 6 Jun 1944; afterward, bombed bridges and highways to prevent the movement of enemy materiel to the beachhead. Attacked enemy troops to aid the Allied breakthrough at St Lo in July. Ceased bombardment during Sep 1944 to haul gasoline to airfields in France. Struck transportation lines during the Battle of the Bulge, Dec 1944 – Jan 1945. Attacked enemy airfields to assist the Allied assault across the Rhine in Mar 1945. Flew last combat mission on 25 Apr 1945. Returned to the U.S., Jun-Jul 1945. Redesignated 458th Bombardment Group (Very Heavy) in Aug 1945. Trained with B-29's. Inactivated on 17 Oct 1945.

SQUADRONS

752nd: 1943-1945. 753rd: 1943-1945. 754th: 1943-1945. 755th: 1943-1945.

STATIONS

Wendover Field, Utah, 1 Jul 1943; Gowen Field, Idaho, 28 Jul 1943; Kearns, Utah, 11 Sep 1943; Wendover Field, Utah, 15 Sep 1943; Tonopah AAFld, Nev, 31 Oct – 29 Dec 1943; Horsham St Faith, England, Jan 1944 – 14 Jun 1945; Sioux Falls AAFld, SD, 12 Jul 1945; Walker AAFld, Kan, 25 Jul 1945; March Field, Calif, 21 Aug – 17 Oct 1945.

COMMANDERS

Lt. Col. Robert F. Hardy, 28 Jul 1943; Col. James H. Isbell, 16 Dec 1943; Col. Allen F. Herzberg, 10 Mar 1945; Capt. Patrick Hays, 13 Aug 1945; Maj. Bernard Carlos, 17 Aug 1945; Maj. V.R. Woodward, 22 Aug 1945; Lt. Col. Wilmer C. Hardesty, 3 Sep – 17 Oct 1945.

CAMPAIGNS

Air Offensive, Europe; Normandy; Northern France; Rhineland; Ardennes-Alsace; Central Europe. ■

HETHEL HIGHLIGHTS

BY JOHN M. RHOADS



Greetings to all of you in Second Air Division Association (2ADA) land, wherever you are. By now you know that I was elected in absentia as vice president of the 389th Bombardment Group in October by group members attending the convention in Washington, D.C. I regret that I was not able to attend the convention and the dedication of the Air Force Memorial. I consider it an honor to serve you during this coming year.

Depending upon my situation when the next 2ADA convention is held, I may have to call on another 389th attendee to represent me. In March I turn 85 and my family is pressuring me to hang up my car keys except for local driving (for good reason). I have agreed that should I wish again to go to my hometown, 75 miles down I-30 from Little Rock, I will have someone drive me. My 82-year-old younger brother died there in December, the last of my siblings living there, so I have no real incentive to go back. I find it hard contemplating relinquishing my independence, but those long-distance drives may be out of the question. I am not overly fond of flying and my wife Millie will not fly. I will have to cross that bridge when the time comes.

If you are in touch with anyone who was at Hethel during the war and is not currently a member of the 2ADA, please send the name and address to Evelyn Cohen, Vice President Membership, 06-410 Delaire Landing Road, Philadelphia, PA 19114-4157.

Also, send it to Kelsey McMillan, 389th Bombardment Group Historian, 1905 Avenue D, Katy, TX 77493-1658.

Emme, wife of Barney Driscoll, our past 389th BG vice president, suffered a stroke and has been hospitalized since December 15th. Heart surgery was found to be immediately necessary. Following a quintuple bypass, Emme was in intensive care until January 15th at Conroe Regional Medical Center, Conroe, TX. As I write, she is in her own hospital room and in therapy. Our sincere prayers are for a speedy recovery for Emme and for comfort for Barney during this trying time.

I know you have experiences to tell us of life in the Second Air Division, and in particular of life and times at Hethel AAF Station 114 and the neighboring countryside. Such stories will not be told unless you do it. We welcome them from both combat crew members and ground men, including those of you who were assigned to attached units. There have been many stories by combat crew members and a few by ground men appearing in our group newsletter. Some ideas may be communal life and the pranks played on members in your living area hut (SECO), which will make for good copy as well as your wild and hilarious encounters off-station, etc. A couple of my experiences have appeared in past issues of our group newsletters. You may have read of my wild night taxi ride from Norwich in a recent issue. I have written my memories of World War II, of which the greater part pertains to my time with the 389th Bombardment Group, specifically as a member of the 566th BS operations section, to which I was assigned at El Paso in January 1943. Your historian is clamoring for your memories as well as for photos. Please identify everyone in the photos whom you know. Send these to Kelsey McMillan, Historian, 389th Bombardment Group, 1905 Avenue D, Katy TX 77493-1658, or if you have e-mail, send them to Kelsey at hethel1944@houston.rr.com. ■



SEETHING

The 448th Speaks

BY KING SCHULTZ

FOLDED WINGS OF THE 448TH

Earl B. Bernard (2004)

Steve H. Burzenski (Dubaey, FL, 12-31-2006) – Steve is particularly remembered as one of the greatest crew chiefs in the 448th, and as a member of the 448th BG Association. He was 90 years old.

John E.D. Grunow (Old Greenwich, CT, October 2006) – Graduate of Columbia University and Harvard Law School. His military career began as a member of the horse cavalry under Major George Patton. He was transferred to the Army Air Corps and assigned to Wright Field where he became a flight instructor. In 1943 he was transferred to the 448th BG. In March 1944 he was shot down over Berlin and became a POW until war's end. He rose to become president of the Natural Resources Division of the Martin Marietta Corp. and vice president of Martin Marietta.

Col. Carl H. Holt (August 2006)

THE PHOTO

Can you find yourself or anyone you remember in this photo of a dance at Seething?

RAY PYTEL

All of the 2ADA and the 448th in particular are delighted to have Ray Pytel, editor in chief of the 2ADA *Journal*, back in the saddle. Arthritis whacked him hard. In addition, his hearing is impaired, which he primarily attributes to his time in the upper turret. Thank you, Ray, for what you do for all of us.

MAJOR ROBERT CARICO

His daughter Bobbye Carico Jerone shares this beautiful letter he wrote just before departing for overseas:

A Message to My Daughter

“In a few hours I leave you in your mother’s care for a long time. Perhaps for the rest of your life. I do this not from choice but because there are certain forces in this world which must be removed so that you may be able to live a life of freedom and happiness. Before I go, let me leave you with what few things I have learned and perhaps things will be a little easier. Value personal integrity above all else — for you must have self-respect before you can have respect from others. Be calm when you have to; choose and always reflect before acting, for anger and impetuosity lose sight of reason. Read good books and make good sincere friendships. Have simplicity in your tastes but choose things that are lasting. Last, my dear, take your mother’s advice and strive to be like her, for she is the sweetest woman in all the world.”

— YOUR LOVING DAD, ROBERT M. CARICO, CAPT. AC



KETTERINGHAM HALL DIVISION



BY RAY STRONG

Jim Reeves is not well, and since I am his assistant group vice president, I am filling in for him. In looking for something that might be appropriate for the *Journal*, I ran across the following letter I received from David Hastings, Memorial Trust Governor. David and his wife Jean were invited to the Anniversary Ball of the USAF, held at RAF Mildenhall in 2006. He wrote:

"We thought you might like to know what happened last evening when Jean and I were among the guests invited to attend the USAF Anniversary Ball in Europe which was held at RAF Mildenhall — a night that we will never forget.

"We had to arrive at 6:00 p.m. and it was for us a black tie and long dress affair with all the U.S. servicemen and women in their very smart mess kits and medals. The West Row back gate of the Station had been specially opened as the event was being held in the massive new aircraft-servicing hangar. After the security check we were offered either valet or self parking and we chose the latter as we had decided in the end not to take up the Station's kind offer of a room overnight at Mildenhall but felt it better to drive home.

"After parking we walked the short distance to the hangar in a perfect evening with a clear blue sky and warm breeze. The entrance was through a long Air Force blue canopy with a red carpet and the smart Honor Guard standing to attention on each side — we felt like royalty!

"On entering the darkened massive hangar we were stunned by the décor, which took your breath away. Very attractive theatre style spot lighting had been used with great flower displays, flags and bunting and in the middle of all the dining tables was a KC135 tanker very cleverly lit and around the walls were huge video screens with welcome messages plus films on the USAF history over 60 years. (A note for Joe Jr. — we saw how visuals could really be used). At the far wall was the Big Band rostrum and stage, again cleverly lit. The whole setting was awesome. We were met and again secu-

rity-checked, given our own 24 shot camera to record the evening, and escorted to our 100th Operations Group table by the stage to be welcomed by the base commander, Colonel Michael Stough, who then presented Jean and me to General William Hobbins, the four star General who commands the USAF in Europe. He was charming and I was touched to find that he knew all about the 2nd Air Division Memorial in Norwich and also that we had been friends of the U.S. Air Force for over 64 years. Next we were escorted to have our "official photograph" taken, followed by cocktails from the cash bar and assorted hors d'oeuvres. We just could not get over the amazing effect they had created in the hangar with the KC135 to celebrate the aircraft's 50th birthday.

"After a very enjoyable reception, chatting to our many friends in the squadrons, the formal dinner part of the evening began with the arrival of the Official Party, the Posting of the Colours, the singing of the National Anthems, the Invocation by the Chaplain (who incidentally had just returned from a visit to Hethel as a relation of his flew with the 389th), then the welcome by Colonel Stough followed by your tradition of a 'Table for One' in recognition of the POWs and MIAs, something that Jean and I always find terribly moving.

"Next came the ceremonial cutting of the 60th Anniversary Cake. What a ceremony! Colonel Stough cut the first piece and handed it to General Hobbins. He divided it and then handed a piece to our very own Lt. Col. Bill Wuest (ex Trust Governor) who was the oldest American airman present. Bill then divided it again and gave the last piece to the youngest U.S. airman present, to signify the passing of experience from the old to the young. A really wonderful idea and moving ceremony.

"Then we all sat down to dinner with my 100th Operations Group boss, my new commander and a really great guy, Colonel 'JD' Clifton and his charming wife Nancy. Also at our table were the chaplain and his wife, the Deputy Commanded and the First Sergeant so we were really well looked after. 'JD' was responsible for spoiling our grandchildren and family last week with two hours in the flight simulator and again he spoiled us by presenting Jean and me with a special coin to commemorate the 60th Anniversary of the USAF — an amazing memento to treasure. I had to suffer much leg-pulling from him and the Deputy about my flying of the KC135 simulator!

"The meal was outstanding and here is the menu wording. *First Course*: Tantalizing selection of shrimp, crab, scallops and lobster on a bed of assorted greens

lightly dressed with a Mary Rose dressing. *Second Course*: Lemon Sorbet with a fresh lemon shell with a mint sprig garnish. *Main Course*: Beef Tenderloin surrounded by puff pastry served over a marsala wine and mushroom sauce accompanied by a tender breast of chicken filled with sliced ham and sage, served with ratatouille and golden duchess potatoes. *Dessert*: A light and airy chocolate mousse surrounded by a rich vanilla sauce.

"After the meal was over, Colonel Stough as the 100th Air Refueling Wing Commander then introduced General Hobbins for the main address of the night and he was superb, keeping us all enthralled for nearly 30 minutes, not only talking about the U.S. Air Force of today and its responsibilities as well as the 60th Anniversary but also about the 8th Air Force and the close links that had been established in the forties with Norfolk and Suffolk — we felt proud for you. He ended by letting us see on the massive screens the latest U.S. Air Force recruiting video. He received a well-deserved standing ovation and Mike Stough presented him with a 'Golden Eagle' to mark the occasion.

"Then it was back to the huge screens once again to watch a superb film to celebrate fifty years of the KC135 tanker, and it was revealed that the KC135 that towered above us in the hangar was the oldest one of the squadron. By then we were both spellbound by the event.

"Finally, Chris Smith and his 'String of Pearls' huge big band took to the stage and announced that they would be playing the 'Music of the Forties,' and boy could they play Glenn Miller. Everyone began dancing in that amazing atmosphere. As 11:00 p.m. neared, we wondered how we could slip away without spoiling the evening, but the problem was solved when you saw that Mildenhall is always on duty. My boss, Colonel Clifton, received a call that a task had come through for early Sunday and he left us to sort two crews who had to get to bed. Having done this he came back and said that he also would have to get home and get ready for the early start, so we left with him and Nancy after saying our 'thank you's.'

"So ended for us a truly amazing 'once in a lifetime' experience, which we would never have had if we had not met the 2nd Air Division in 1943. God bless you all. We were off the base at just after 11:00 p.m. and with quiet roads we arrived back home at just after midnight with memories of the kindness of the USAF that will last forever."

— David and Jean Hastings
Friends of the U.S. Air Force
1942-2006 ■

Airmen Superstitions

BY WILLIAM E. BARRETT

When you are foolish enough to ask serious questions during an hour of relaxation around an airport, you get some wonderful answers.

The boys who blamed bad luck on Gremlins probably just started the stories for the benefit of newcomers, and flyers today are sick of the Gremlin legend.

Still, there is something about the loneliness of a pilot's life in the air that contributes to mysticism. Anyone who has done any appreciable amount of flying can tell strange stories if he feels that he is with kindred spirits. There are cloudscapes of unbelievable grandeur to be seen upstairs; lonely ice fields of clouds, towering castles, mountain ranges, and strangest of all, the faces of people cut sharply in cloud shapes.

Some flyers claim that they have seen the same person, or perhaps several people, time after time in the clouds — that there is expression on their faces, and that sometimes these faces warn of dangers ahead. Some have worried when, over a period of time, a certain face was missing. Others, of course, laugh at such fancies as these. And few, even those who believe, will risk ridicule by discussing such matters with any but people they trust implicitly.

If I were to pit science against legend, I would venture the guess that eyestrain on long flights has something to do with the visions that airmen see. But never would I brush such visions aside as mere yarns.

The flyers' superstitions would fill a book. There are few who do not carry some particular object with them on all flights, an object intimately associated with their luck.

Foremost in this field, apart from the inevitable medals and lucky coins, is the doll. Flyers have always been suckers for dolls. (I mean the stuffed kind that a little girl gets on Christmas, not the kind that is whistled at.) If the doll is one that a favorite girl owned and loved, or looks like the favorite girl, that is all the better. Due to pocket limitations, small dolls are preferred to big dolls. And the dolls, which have the most air hours, are very likely to be rag dolls only a few inches high.

In the First World War, one famed American flyer had a doll made to order whose face was modeled after the face of the English actress with whom he was in love. He scored many victories. On the first flight he ever took without his mascot, he

Flyer carrying his baby shoes



was killed. When men hear those things and know, from unimpeachable sources, that they are true, it is hard to convince them that mascots are only a throwback to primitive witchcraft.

Many fly today with skullcaps made from a sweetheart's stocking. That custom too, originated in the First World War where stockings were worn as scarves if not as skullcaps. One important detail to be remembered in that the stocking must be taken from the girl's left leg. There is no luck in the right leg. Don't ask me why.

Be careful if you are seeing anyone off on a flight. You may watch the take-off, but *never* watch the plane out of sight. Turn around and leave while it is still above the airport.

Of course, three lights on a match is an old superstition. Flying men cannot claim that one as their own. But watch this some time, when it is windy around airports: A pilot will try to light a cigarette. He will strike two matches; if the cigarette does not light, he will put it regretfully away and give up the idea of smoking. He will not take the risk of using a third match to light it, because three matches to a cigarette is unlucky. Not all, of course, believe this, just as not all believe the three-cigarettes-to-a-match theory. But a lot of them do.

No flyer with a decent belief in his own destiny will lend his personal helmet, nor allow anyone to touch the helmet that he wore on his solo before he makes another flight. Many pilots will go to great lengths to avoid entering a ship from the right side. A great many will spit on the elevators of a ship that they are flying for the first time. Then there are lucky numbers — and that subject is endless. But most like the number "13."

Photographing a pilot before a flight is one of the oldest hoodoos known to wings.

A great many pilots refuse under any circumstances to permit pictures to be taken before a flight. There is a long tradition behind this prejudice.

A new pilot photographed Baron Manfred von Richtofen, Germany's ace of aces in the First World War, beside his plane — and he flew out to his death. Captain Ball, who was at the time of his death the greatest of England's aces, carried a double jinx into combat. He was photographed beside a plane on the last day of his leave, and photographed again when starting on the patrol that ended in his death. Almost any airport which has existed long enough to build up a history of its own can supply other stories of the photograph jinks as it acted in times of peace.



Ed. Note: Mr. Barrett was Consultant in Aeronautics for the Denver Public Library, Aviation Book Reviewer for the Boston Post, and a flyer well-known as an author and an authority on the literature of aviation. ■

The Chaplain Gives Thanks!

Seldom do we have a humorous story involving a Chaplain, but here is one told by a Marine in the Pacific during the heavy fighting on Guadalcanal.

It seems that one night, in doing his daily rounds of visiting the troops on the frontlines, this chaplain wandered off behind the lines and got lost. After considerable walking he began to hear very unintelligible "talk" in the bushes, and realized he was in enemy territory. He kept on walking and each time he stopped he could hear the enemy jabbering, so he kept moving on almost all night, until he was completely exhausted. He sat down and listened quite intently, when all of a sudden he heard a conversation with many swear words and cussing in plain English. He gave a big sigh of relief, and said, "Thank God, I am back among Christians again!" ■

Pride is Justified in 2ADA

BY JORDAN R. UTTAL (HQ), 2ADA HONORARY PRESIDENT

Greetings to you all, along with my sincere thanks for the many holiday greetings I received by mail and phone from so many of you. I am sure that you are aware of my strong feelings of respect and affection for you who have supported our 2ADA and more particularly our beloved 2AD Memorial to those who made the supreme sacrifice during our wartime effort.

In the Winter 2007 issue of the *Journal* there were many remarks regarding how proud we should be of what we have achieved with our 2ADA. President Mackey's message on pages 3 & 4 was particularly stimulating for me in his description of our Memorial Library. Of particular pride to me is the Roll of Honor on which we worked for so many years up through 2003. The beautiful calligraphy on the elegant vellum pages is indeed a treasured salute to the 6,881 men whose names are listed.

Over the years, our great library staff in Norwich has purchased books with funds furnished by the Capital Fund and also from individual members who participated in our "Special Endowment for Books" program. This activity permitted those who made Endowments investments which are separate to have the annual interest from each individual's fund to purchase books annually in memory of the individual named in the Endowment. Also, our "Special Contribution for Books" program enabled any individual member to have a book or books purchased at any time during each year.

Each book purchased from these two programs has a special bookplate naming the donor and the person in whose honor the funds were donated. Both programs have been successful and appreciated by the donors and the families of the honorees.

I was also very pleased with the succinct message to us all from our Executive Vice President, Earl Zimmerman, in which he encouraged us to further the aims of our Association which are clearly stated on page 3 of each issue of the *Journal*, at the top of the right-hand column.

My long abiding interest in these issues comes from the many opportunities you

have given me, one of the original founders of the 2ADA in 1948, to serve you as two-term President (1953 and 1963), 2ADA Representative on the Board of Governors (1972-1989), Life Governor of the Board of Governors since then, Honorary President of the 2ADA since 1989, and Historian for the last four or five years.

In view of this treasured experience, I stand ready to try to answer any questions you may have about our efforts to go down in history as a major contributor to having our 2nd Air Division remembered with honor and respect. I am proud indeed of your efforts in this direction.

Fondest good wishes to you all. ■

WARTIME ADVERTISING

war goods
WHEN BETTER AUTOMOBILES ARE BUILT
BUICK WILL BUILD THEM

BATTLE-BOUND ON BUICK POWER

ENEMY eyes look at this plane—and don't like what they see.

They don't like the big load of bombs that it carries.

They don't like its Dead-Eye Dick accuracy over the target.

They don't like its range, which brings more and more of Fortress Europe within its reach, and they don't like the speed its four Buick-built engines provide to get it in and out—*fast!*

But that's why we *do* like the job of building original-equipment engines for the Liberator.

It and its gallant crews are doing a job that daily brings final victory closer.

If anything we can do can add speed to the Liberator's wings, range to its travels, power to the blows its crews are striking—count on us to do it.

So not a particle of metal goes into a Buick-built Pratt & Whitney engine that isn't probed, pried into, scrutinized to its very core.

Not a part moves out of a Buick plant in a finished engine that hasn't been checked, inspected, measured and tested in hours-long operation to prove its worth.

In the Liberator and its crew, Buick is teamed up with a gallant bunch that is writing a record anybody can be proud of.

And we're going to keep on striving to do our part in that job as loyally, as ably and as faithfully as they do.

The Army-Navy "E" proudly flies over Buick plants in both Flint, Mich., and Melrose Park, Ill., having been awarded to Buick people for outstanding performance in the production of war goods.

**Keep America Strong
Buy War Bonds**

Buick powers the Liberator

BUICK DIVISION OF GENERAL MOTORS
Every Sunday Afternoon—GENERAL MOTORS SYMPHONY OF THE AIR—NBC Network

60th Annual Convention
of the Second Air Division Association
August 30 - September 3, 2007

AMWAY GRAND PLAZA HOTEL

187 MONROE, N.W., GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN 49503 • (616) 776-6400

- Program -

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 29
Executive Committee Arrival

THURSDAY, AUGUST 30
Executive Committee Meeting, Lunch, Cocktail Party & Dinner • Registration

FRIDAY, AUGUST 31
Registration • Cocktail Party – Cash Bar • Buffet Dinner

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 1
Buffet Breakfast • Business Meeting • Cocktail Party – Cash Bar • Dinner

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 2
Buffet Breakfast • Cocktail Party – Cash Bar • Banquet

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 3
Buffet Breakfast

- Costs -

- SINGLE \$575.00
- DOUBLE \$398.00 per person
- TRIPLE \$365.00 per person
- QUAD \$330.00 per person

- Transportation -

- PARKING: Paid for by 2ADA.
- Airport Transportation: "RAPID" – Boarding across B Concourse. Phone: (877) 397-4377. Tickets can be purchased on the vehicle. One Way \$15.00, Round Trip \$25.00 per person

- 60th Annual Convention Reservation Form -

Name: _____ Spouse: _____ Group: _____

Address: _____ Phone No.: () _____

Extra Persons in Room: _____

Arrive: _____ Depart: _____ Deposit \$ _____ Paid in Full \$ _____

EXTRA NIGHTS: \$102.00 plus 13% tax for single and doubles, \$122.00 plus 13% tax for triples and quads.

Send this form and all related correspondence to:
EVELYN COHEN • 06-410 DELAIRE LANDING ROAD • PHILADELPHIA, PA 19114
PHONE (215) 632-3992 • FAX (215) 632-8319

ATTLEBRIDGE TALES



BY JIM LORENZ

I have recently read several good books on WWII. The first was *Eisenhower* by his son John — very interesting and very complete. I am surprised that Ike didn't have a nervous breakdown, deal-

ing with the top men in Russia, France, England and the USA — plus all the English and U.S. Generals.

The second book, just published — *The Rising Tide* by Jeff Shaara, is listed as an historical novel — a staggering work of fiction “bound to be a new generation’s most poignant chronicle of WWII in Africa in the early 1940s.” This is a vivid gallery of characters both immortal and unknown — like the yet-obscure administrator General Dwight D. Eisenhower. It involves the Italian, German, French, English and U.S. troops and officers who served in England in the 1944-45 era (such as Patton, Montgomery, Rommel and Eisenhower).

We continue to be in touch with our 466th friends in England. It appears that the country will not give the prospective buyers of our base permits to build upscale condominiums on the property — thus no sale right now. So we will continue to purchase flowers for our base memorial on Memorial Day and Remem-

brance (Veterans) Day.

Later this year, we will be considering how we in the 466th BG will operate in the future. The overall attendance at the 2ADA meetings is dropping. Our 466th BGA has decided to meet with the 8th AFHS and have our own hospitality room there. Both groups are now 501 (c) (3) which means that anyone (not just vets) may join as voting members and be on the Board of Directors. I'd like to hear your comments and suggestions on our future. Give me a call or e-mail me.

FUTURE MEETINGS

The 8th Air Force Historical Society will be in Kalamazoo, Michigan, July 18-22, 2007. The 466th BGA and the Heritage League will also meet at the same time in Kalamazoo.

The 2nd Air Division Association's 60th annual convention will be at the Amway Grand Plaza Hotel in Grand Rapids, Michigan, August 30 – September 3, 2007. ■

The Final Exam

The weekend before final exams, four students at the University of Texas decided to go to Dallas and party with some friends. They had a great time, but they slept all day Sunday and didn't make it back to Austin until late Monday morning. Rather than take the exam then, they decided to cook up an excuse and ask to take the exam later. So they told the professor they had gone to visit friends in Dallas and had a flat tire on the way back on Sunday. They said they didn't have a spare and couldn't get help for a long time. The professor thought it over and agreed they could take the exam on Tuesday.

At the appointed time, he placed them in separate rooms, gave them each a test booklet and told them to begin. The first question was very simple and worth five points. “Cool,” they thought, each in his separate room, “this is going to be easy.”

The second question was also very simple, but it was on the next page and was worth 95 points. WHICH TIRE? ■

Don't Judge a Book by Its Cover

Editor's Note: I'm sure you're familiar with this old adage. The following story, written by Malcolm Forbes, illustrates how true and meaningful it is.

A lady in a faded gingham dress and her husband, dressed in a homespun, threadbare suit, walked into the outer office of the president of Harvard University and asked to see him. The secretary thought that such country hicks had no business being at Harvard and didn't even deserve to be in Cambridge. “He'll be busy all day,” the secretary snapped. “We'll wait,” the man replied.

For hours the secretary ignored them, hoping the couple would become discouraged and leave. But they didn't, and the secretary grew frustrated and decided to disturb the president even though it was a task she usually regretted.

“Maybe if you see them for a few minutes, they'll leave,” she said to him. He sighed in exasperation and nodded. Someone as important as he shouldn't have to waste time on country bumpkins, and he detested gingham dresses and homespun suits cluttering up his outer office.

The president, stern-faced and with dignity, strutted into the outer office and introduced himself to the couple. The woman said, “We had a son who attended Harvard for one year. He loved Harvard. He was happy here. About a year ago he was killed in an accident. My husband and I would like to erect a memorial to him on the campus.”

The president wasn't impressed. He was shocked. “Madam,” he said gruffly, “we can't put up a statue for every person who attended Harvard and died; the campus would look like a cemetery.” “Oh no,” the woman explained quickly. “We don't want to put up a statue. We thought we'd like to donate a building of some sort to the university.”

The president rolled his eyes and glanced heavenward. He looked at the gingham dress and the homespun suit and asked, “A building? Do you have any idea how much a building would cost? We have over seven and a half million dollars in buildings here at Harvard.”

For a moment the woman was silent. The president was pleased. Maybe now he could get rid of them. The woman turned to her husband and said, “If that's all it costs, why don't we start a university of our own?” Her husband agreed.

So, Mr. and Mrs. Leland Stanford left Boston, went back to Palo Alto, California and established the university that bears their name, a memorial to a son that Harvard didn't care about. ■

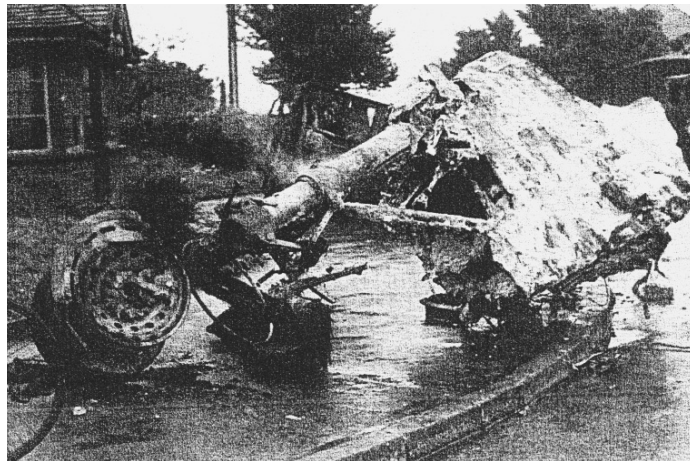
THE FRECKLETON TRAGEDY

BY JOHN THRELFALL, YOUR RAF FRIEND

Ray Pytel, your *Journal* editor, asked me if I could put together some material for a couple of articles demonstrating the opinions and relating the experiences of RAF personnel concerning the B-24. As I am only a "spring chicken" of some 69 summers, the only way I have been able to do this is by glean- ing information from books, magazines, RAF Squadron Associ- ations, and members of the civilian population who lived through the Second World War.

Ray recently sent me a newsletter entitled "B.A.D. 2 News." I discovered that B.A.D. is an acronym for Base Air Depot, which was situated at Warton, some 35 miles or so from where I live. I must admit that I had never heard of this establish- ment. Consequently I knew nothing of a dreadful accident that occurred there on 23 August 1944. I hope you will bear with me if I make this the subject of this article.

Among many other duties carried out by a B.A.D. 2 was the repairing of flak or fighter damage to aircraft and, after flight testing, returning them to their units. B-24 42-50291 arrived at

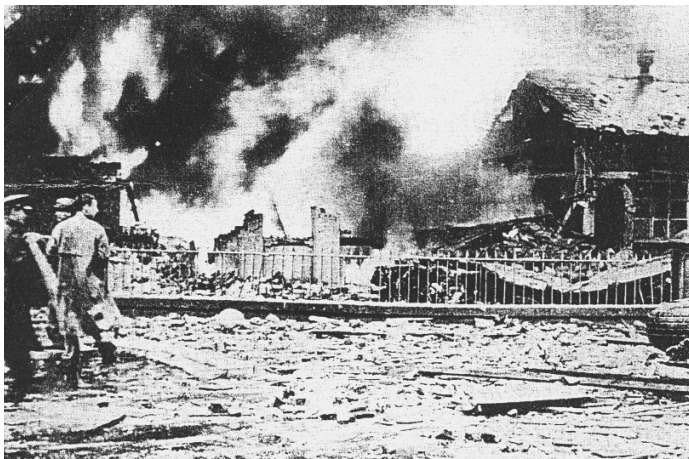


A stark reminder of the crash, one of the B-24's main undercarriage legs lies on the pavement near Freckleton's village green.

that the intensity of the rain and lightning reminded her of the storms she had experienced in her native Indiana. To calm the children in the infant's class in the local school, their teacher was reading them a story.

Meanwhile, Lts. Bloemendal and Manaserro were fighting to control their B-24s. They were being tossed about by the huricane-force winds in the centre of the storm. They also had to contend with pitch-blackness, severe squalls, and lightning. They talked over the radio and decided to head for Scotland. It was the last Lt. Manaserro heard from Lt. Bloemendal. He could not see the other B-24, so he heaved his aircraft onto a new heading and prayed he would be able to find calmer weather conditions.

As nurse Jane Chestnutwood stood staring in the direction of Freckleton, the rain suddenly decreased to a fine drizzle and the visibility became clear. It was then that she became the



A severe electrical storm hit the B-24 Liberator 42-50291, causing it to crash onto the infant's section of the Holy Trinity School in Freckleton. This photo of the crash site includes one of the aircraft's main wheels lying amongst the blazing wreckage.

Warton on August 6, 1944. She had been discarded by the 490th BG which was about to convert to B-17s. By August 22nd, with all flak damage repaired, a full refurbishment of guns and other equipment, plus a repaint, the aircraft was ready to be air-tested.

At 10.30 hours on August 23rd, 1st Lt. John Bloemendal lifted #291 clear of the runway at Warton. His crew consisted of T/Sgt. Jimmie Parr, acting as copilot, and Gordon Kinney, a Flight Test Aerial Engineer. They were accompanied by a second B-24 flown by 1st Lt. Pete Manaserro and his crew of Dick Pew and Lawrence Smith.

A few minutes into the air tests, things began to go wrong. The control tower at Warton was warned by their counterparts at Burtonwood that a violent storm was approaching from the Warrington area and that any aircraft that were airborne from Warton should be recalled immediately. The message was re- lated to the two pilots, who wasted no time in plotting a course for Warton. It was then that the storm hit them.

It was the most violent storm anyone in the area had ever witnessed. People in the village of Freckleton were alarmed by its ferocity. One man stated that the rain battering against his windowpanes was so intense he could not see the houses oppo- site him. Jane Chestnutwood, an army nurse at the station hospi- tal, was recovering from a bout of flu. She was off duty and resting in her quarters when the storm broke. She later stated



Volunteers, police and personnel from Warton probe the dis- aster area for signs of life. Although some children were res- cued, the death toll eventually reached 61, including the three- man crew of the B-24.

eyewitness of a horrific scene. A B-24 suddenly appeared from the cloudbank some five or six hundred feet above the ground. It was heading in the general direction of Warton. In the next instant it was struck by a huge bolt of lightning, which split the aircraft apart at the wing root. The two parts of the B-24 spi- ralled to the ground and there followed an enormous explosion.

(continued on next page)

THE FRECKLETON TRAGEDY (continued from page 21)

What followed next must have seemed like Armageddon to the villagers of Freckleton.

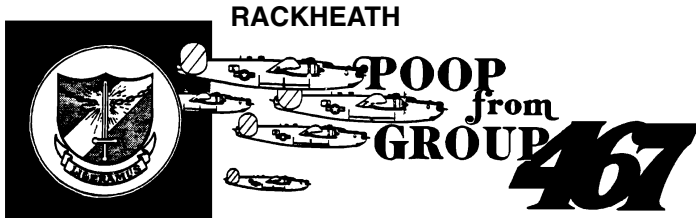
The front section of the B-24 slammed into the infant's classroom in the village school. The explosion that followed brought the whole building crashing down on the children and their teacher. To make matters worse, the aircraft had a full load of fuel on board when it took off. This fuel, now burning fiercely, covered the debris of the classroom and was also gushing down the main street of Freckleton, causing even more damage by the fires it was starting. Part of the aircraft careered across the road where it demolished a snack bar — The Sad Sack, a popular meeting place for service personnel and villagers. Of all the people who had entered The Sad Sack to shelter from the storm, there were no survivors. In all, the number of people who lost their lives through this dreadful accident was 61. This included 38 children.

The people of Freckleton have been forever grateful to the American Forces and authorities for all the help they received from them, to enable them to come to terms with this tragedy. A great bond of friendship and understanding was forged between them, and it is still as strong today as it was 62 years ago when they shared each other's grief.



Service at the memorial to the children who died in the Freckleton disaster. This photograph was taken during the B.A.D. 2 reunion in July 2006.

For the information used in this article I am indebted to Mrs. Margaret Hall, the B.A.D. 2 Association representative in Freckleton. For the photocopied pictures, my thanks go to the staff at the Public Library in Lythan St. Annes. ■



BY WALTER MUNDY

The good news is that the 467th BG annual reunion will be held October 4-8 at the Crown Plaza Hotel in Dayton, Ohio. The other news is the Second Air Division Association Convention will be August 30 – September 3, 2007, which puts the two events very close together and puts all of the attendant problems of us old veterans' travel only a month apart.

Thanks to the generosity of the Second Air Division's fourteen bomb groups and Headquarters, the campaign to raise \$125,000 to rearrange the 2AD exhibit and create an interactive exhibit of the "Fightin' Sam" B-24 nose section has been exceeded. The Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum is planning to rearrange and improve the Combat Gallery, and planning by the staff is underway. As chairman of the Legendary Liberator Campaign, I have met with the museum staff and we are preparing a listing of the number of donors and the total amount contributed by each Second Air Division bomb group and other individuals and organizations. Contributions have been received from The Heritage League USAAF, the 8th Air Force Historical Society, several Fighter Groups, 3rd ASD and the 2ADA Southern California Association, plus some unaffiliated folks that did not designate a specific organization.

The completely updated history of the 467th Bombardment Group by Allan Healy is ready for printing. Negotiations are underway to select the best quality, price and quantity. We should have these questions answered by the summer and be ready to take orders. When the 467th folds its wings, arrangements are being made for the Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum to take over the sales of this document. Don't hold your breath waiting for the 467th to fold; place your order early and get your copy of this as soon as it is off the press.

As Jack Stevens would say, "Keep 'em Flying," and "Happy Landings" from Walt Mundy. ■

Age-disabled Vets "Aid and Attendance" Benefit

BY RAY PYTEL (445TH)

More and more seniors are discovering a little-known veterans benefit that helps pay for long-term care. The benefit is gaining notice because it eases a big financial burden for disabled older adults. Seniors who can no longer fend for themselves are moving into assisted-living communities or hiring in-home caregivers, but they often must bear the cost themselves. Neither Medicare nor Medicaid typically covers it.

A private room at an assisted-living community averages \$2,968 a month, 17.6 percent more than two years ago, according to the MetLife Mature Market Institute. In-home care averages \$17 an hour. This is where the federal veterans benefit comes to the rescue of some seniors.

Called the "aid-and-attendance" pension benefit, it pays up to \$1,470 a month to a qualifying veteran, \$945 a month to a surviving spouse, or \$1,743 a month to a couple to defray the expense of long-term care.

Who can apply? To qualify, veterans must:

- 1) Have served in wartime, though they did NOT have to see combat.
- 2) Have no more than \$80,000 in assets, not counting the family home, car and personal possessions.
- 3) Prove financial need; usually by demonstrating that expenses exceed their income.
- 4) Show that they need someone to help them with basic activities of living, such as bathing, grooming or eating.

Check with your service benefit officer at your county veterans office or the various veteran organizations' service officers. ■

The *Journal* is to be sent four times this year and it is about time for me to write something for this issue.

The next 2ADA annual convention will be held from August 30 – September 3, 2007 in Grand Rapids, Michigan. It will be nice to have the convention on a weekend other than Memorial Day weekend.

I received a letter from Les Willis of Norwich, England inquiring about the address of George H. Lymburn. The mail that was sent to George was returned. The address I have for George H. Lymburn is 1225 Taylor Street #403, San Francisco, CA 94108-1456. If anyone has a different address, please let me know and I will forward it to England.

On October 14, 2006 we were privileged to be at the Air Force Memorial when it was dedicated. It is a very impressive site. I have read many reports about the memorial and all were very favorable.

If anyone has any articles they would like to have included in the *Journal*, send them to me and I will try to get them in.

The last issue of the *Journal* (Winter 2007, Vol. 46, No. 1) had an article entitled "Where Are Our Fighters?" on page 24. The article describes the 361st Fighter Group's participation in the Kassel mission of September 27, 1944, and concludes with the statement: "As more U.S. fighter escorts ranged over central Germany, the writing was on the wall [for the Luftwaffe] after the Kassel mission."

Apparently the Luftwaffe used different bathrooms, for less than two months later, on November 26, 1944, they shot down 20 Liberators, 15 from the 491st BG and five from the 445th, over the oil facilities of Misburg, Germany. I do not have access to any articles by the 491st crews, but the Fall 1997 *Journal* (Vol. 36, No. 3) carried the following article:

MISERY AND TEAMWORK OVER MISBURG

BY FRANK W. FEDERICI & LT. COL.
VINCENT MAZZA, RET. (445TH)

When the Misburg mission of 26 November 1944 was publicized in the *Stars and Stripes* in February 1945, the caption read "All In a Day's Work." This caption is appropriate because we all did our respective jobs and helped each other — a normal bomber crew procedure in order to survive.

We finally decided after 52 years (with encouragement from others) that some other bomber crews would like to read about our crew's teamwork and correlate it with their own, especially under such dire circumstances. We also thought that our children and grandchildren, as well as other living crew members, would want to know. None of our crew members gave



BY CLARENCE LUHMANN

any thought to publicizing this mission over the years because our overwhelming thought concerning Misburg was the loss of our pilot, Jim Williams. Now we feel that Jim would concur, so let us tell our story.

Our crew was assigned to the 700th Bomb Squadron and soon had become a lead crew. Gathered in the main briefing room on 26 November 1944, we soon learned that our target was near Hanover — which meant that we were going to have a rough mission. We became even more apprehensive when we learned that we would be bucking a 150 mph headwind during the bomb run!

We took off, assembled into formation, and took the well-known "American Highway" (the route over the Zuider Zee). We were leading the low left squadron or the lead squadron — we do not remember which.

After the "Zee" we continued on the briefed courses which were generally in an easterly direction north of Misburg. At this time the navigator checked our ground speed, which was 375 mph. We flew past Misburg, turned right (south) and then right again to head in a westerly direction on the bomb run with a ground speed of only 90 mph! Some of you Misburg navigators may recall this speed! (We were hanging on "Skyhooks.")

We went into our bomb run routine with the navigator talking on interphone to the nose turret navigator to pinpoint our location. In turn, the nose turret navigator (who could see directly in front of the aircraft) worked with the bombardier until the bombardier had the target in his bombsight. Once the bombardier had the target in his bombsight there was absolute silence (no use of the interphone) while he controlled the aircraft as he synchronized the bombsight. The bombsight controlled the automatic pilot during the bomb run.

During the early part of the bomb run (before the bombardier had the target in his bombsight), the navigator saw many fighters high at 3 o'clock in a big dogfight and mentioned it on interphone. They

were at about 30,000 feet (hundreds of them — P-51s and ME-109s). We saw five or six trails of smoking aircraft each time we had a chance to look in that direction. We learned after our return to base that 105 German fighters were shot down during that battle. Of course the P-51s were our fighter cover, and this day they were involved in this dogfight. Meanwhile, the enemy had assigned other fighters to hit our squadron by coming five abreast at 11 o'clock.

On the first wave, our pilot, James A. Williams, was hit with a 20mm and killed instantly. The bullet went through his flak suit and embedded in his backpack parachute. The dead pilot slumped over, and the copilot, Vince Mazza, immediately took over, with one hand trying to hold the pilot back from slumping over the controls and with the other trying to avoid a collision with other ships in our formation. The biggest problem that the copilot was having was that the pilot's flying boots were interfering with the rudder controls. The flight engineer heard this and got out of the upper turret. The copilot pointed to the pilot's boots. The engineer saw the problem, but the copilot had to apply left rudder momentarily to free the boots (even though it meant turning into the B-24 on our left and then immediately applying right rudder to avoid a collision). The engineer freed the boots from the rudder controls. Our left wing almost touched the waist gunner on the B-24 on our left! Close is only good in horseshoes and hand grenades! The engineer immediately strapped the pilot to his seat.

Then a second wave of enemy fighters came in and a 20mm explosive shell knocked out the nose turret, wounded the nose turret navigator, and blew out all of the plexiglas below the turret and in front of the bombsight. In turn, the bombardier, who had already synchronized the bombsight, was knocked over against the navigator, who in turn was knocked down onto the nose wheel doors. The bombardier's helmet and oxygen mask were knocked off and he was completely dazed. The navigator, Frank Federici, shook him and with sign language sent him back to the flight deck. The navigator called the radio operator, Carl Bally, and told him to watch for Leo Lewis or have Herb Krieg, the flight engineer, attend to him. The flight engineer and radio operator shared their oxygen masks with the bombardier until another mask could be brought to him from the waist section of the ship. The waist gunner, E.W. Goodgion, was called and asked to also bring blankets and an oxygen mask for the bombardier, whose ears and face were frost-bitten. Meanwhile, the tail gunner, Charles Bickett, had lost communication with the rest of the crew and was completely un-

(continued on next page)

MISERY AND TEAMWORK OVER MISBURG (continued from page 23) aware of the situation!

Back to the navigator-bombardier area of the ship. Since the bombardier had already synchronized the bombsight, the navigator grabbed the salvo lever, watched the movable indice come abreast of the stationary indice on the bombsight (bombs away), and salvoed the bombs to ensure that they were released on target. After the bombs were released the navigator helped the wounded nose turret naviga-



Standing (L-R): Lt. Leo J. Lewis, bombardier; Lt. Frank W. Federici, navigator; Lt. James A. Williams, pilot; Lt. Vincent Mazza, copilot; Lt. John C. Christiansen, nose turret navigator. Kneeling (L-R): S/Sgt. Kenneth J. Brass, waist gunner; S/Sgt. Charles W. Bickett, tail gunner; S/Sgt. Edward W. Goodgion, waist gunner; T/Sgt. Carl E. Bally, radio operator; T/Sgt. Herbert A. Krieg, engineer.

tor, John Christiansen, out of the turret. He was able to crawl back to the waist section of the ship where the left waist gunner, Kenneth Brass, tended his wounded leg. Most of the crew members were “busy beavers” on this particular bomb run with a considerable amount of additional activities which occurred in a few minutes!

The navigator tucked his trousers back into his boots (they came out when he was knocked down earlier). Frostbitten shins were not discovered until our return to base. At this time the navigator recognized the situation of a 200 mph wind blast at -55°C with a possible third wave of enemy fighters. With self-preservation in mind, he pulled out his .45 pistol and looked through the plexiglas hole to fight the enemy’s 20mm cannons! Quite a few profane remarks were uttered, but fortunately our Lord was with us. Another wave did not come.

The navigator recognized that the copilot had gained complete control of the ship, and since all four fans were still working, we were able to stay in formation for our mutual protection until we were out of enemy territory, in spite of the cold air and wind blast. Any straggler

was easy prey for the Luftwaffe. When we were finally able to descend, we were on our own. The navigator noticed that his maps and charts were torn and tangled in the control cables. The copilot was then assured that this was not a problem and that compass headings would be given without maps. This was feasible because this was our 25th mission and the navigator was familiar with all the various landmarks on the way to base.

To avoid much of the wind blast, the navigator sat on the navigator table and

continued to direct the pilot. It was difficult to stand and function with this gale. Meanwhile, back in the cockpit, our copilot’s eyes felt like they were freezing and he was having difficulty seeing. To avoid some of the air blast, he looked down and saw his plastic goggles dangling from the wing flap lever. He grabbed the goggles and put them on. Vince Mazza still believes that this 50-cent item probably saved our lives.

We sighted Great Yarmouth on the coast of East Anglia and continued on to the base.

The crew’s teamwork brought us home. Our pitot tube was damaged, causing the air speed meter and altimeter to be inoperative. The navigator fired distress flares out of the top hatch while the pilot maneuvered alongside of another B-24 which was on its final approach. The other pilot recognized that we were in trouble and let us move into his pattern for our landing. Our pilot had been gauging his speed and altitude while flying with the other B-24. Our copilot (now the pilot) “greased us in,” although it was fast. The flight engineer handled the throttles for the pilot. We learned later that the other B-24 was piloted by Henry Orzechowski. Again, more teamwork.

The copilot had a large double chin (due to frostbite) when we hopped out of the ship; he also had frostbitten wrists. The bombardier’s ear lobes became one inch thick from frostbite.

The crew attended the graveside services for Jim Williams and 51 others at the cemetery at Cambridge, England. Five other ships from our squadron were shot down at Misburg. This was a rough one!

Henry Orzechowski suggested to us that we should write about this mission. F.H. “Pete” Bradley, who was Charles (Chuck) Walker’s navigator, also suggested to this crew’s navigator that we ought to submit this story to the *2ADA Journal*. We finally did it, “Pete” Bradley and Veronica Orzechowski! We are certain that this would have made Hank very pleased.

“All In a Day’s Work”? Not a day we would like to repeat! ■

Starr Smith’s book picked for Library of Congress Audio and Braille Group

Starr Smith’s book, *Jimmy Stewart, Bomber Pilot*, has been taped for audio cassette and transcribed into Braille volumes by the Library of Congress’ National Library Service (NLS) for the Blind and Physically Handicapped. Smith is an international journalist and author based in Montgomery, Alabama. He knew Stewart, and his book is a personal account of the Hollywood actor’s military career as a combat bomber pilot in England with the 8th Air Force in World War II.

Fara Zaleski, director for the Alabama Regional Library for the Blind, in Montgomery, said, “We are proud and excited about Starr’s book being chosen by the National Library Service for circulation to all the network libraries in the United States, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands.” She said the NLS is a network of regional and sub-regional libraries throughout the country, which provides free library service to persons who are unable to use standard printed material because of visual or physical disabilities.

Karl Wade of Montgomery, who is blind and active in the blind community, said that Alabama has more than 6,000 members in the state and gets NLS material on a regular basis.

“On the Ball” in Old Britain: A Nice Combat Diversion in World War II

EXCERPTS FROM BRITISH “REALM” MAGAZINE

Golf is a game steeped with medieval history of Britain. Played in one form or another by Caesars, emperors and kings, there are many theories on how and where the game was born. Historians say that the Romans were the first to hit balls with crooked sticks, but the aim of their game was distance rather than sinking the balls into holes.

In the 1500s Flemish painters depicted a type of golf being played on the Belgian fields, but it is widely agreed that it was the Scots who refined the same and wrote the rules played by today.

One of the main reasons the Scots took to the new game was the suitable ground of the beautiful coastal “links” land on the east side of Scotland. The links lies between the sea and the rainy arable land, and consists of sand topped by a thin layer of turf, which allows rain to flow through the surface, preventing mud from forming. On this terrain grows an indigenous grass, which does not require mowing. Together, land and vegetation combine to provide the ideal playing surface for golf.

In the early 12th century King David of Scotland granted a Royal Charter making the links around St. Andrews public prop-



The old course at St. Andrews is revered as the birthplace of golf.



“Now hit the ball once, a couple of times twice!”

erty for recreational use. It was on this land that the aristocracy of the day refined and developed the game.

Scotland’s connection with golf is long and colourful. Mary, Queen of Scots reputedly played the game hours after the murder of her husband, Lord Darnley.

Scotland is home to many of the world’s most prestigious courses and the country’s golfing heritage was reinforced in 1897 when the Royal and Ancient Golf Club of St. Andrews drew up the first formal rules of the game. The St. Andrews clubhouse, still the majestic focal point of the old course, remains the game’s spiritual home.

During its early development, the fledgling sport was a firm favourite with the freemasons. Their bright red coats were designed for maximum visibility to avoid being struck by others’ balls, which at the time were made from feathers stitched tightly into a leather case.

Victorian golfers would play up to 36 holes in a single day, yet they would always stop at three sharp to allow ample time for the men to prepare for dinner. It was customary during these golfing party weekends to make a wager of a gallon of claret, or other large quantity of alcohol, and it was at these gatherings that betting and rivalry became an integral ingredient of the modern game.

The caddy is an intrinsic part of the sport and also has Scottish roots. The term “caddy” originates from the Scots word “kadie.” Kadies were traveling men who, although renowned for being rough and ready, were considered very trustworthy and were paid to carry parcels around Edinburgh.

The kadies found that carrying clubs for gentlemen golfers was equally profitable. Nearby fishermen also realized that caddying was a good way to supplement their meager incomes, and the role of the caddy was recognized by the Royal and Ancient when it began to retain a number of fishermen during winter months to ensure their long-term service.

As golf became increasingly popular, star players emerged. Although it had begun as a gentlemen’s sport, the first famous golfers were of low social standing. Golf’s first “superstar” was St. Andrew’s man Auld Tom Morris. He won four Open Championships during the 1860s, and his achievement is commemorated by a statue outside St. Andrews castle.

By the 1930s golf had given rise to new fashion styles and terms such as “boulder,” the name given to those who ungalantly improved their game with the aid of a bouncing ball. The red velvet jackets of the freemasons made way for plus fours and a range of more practical attire.

Around the same time, golf’s appeal was spreading to the middle classes, helped by an increasing number of municipal courses. Countryside that was considered unsuitable for farming was landscaped and transformed into venues for new clubs. No longer did you have to be part of the social elite to earn the right to join a club, although a professional occupation was still a requirement.

Today on the cobbled streets of St. Andrews, the town’s golfing heritage is proudly evident, from the specialist shops to the time-honoured craftsmen who forge the metal and carve the wood to make the tools of the game.

As time has rolled by, the rules of golf have changed little, but science and technology have altered the game forever. These days, balls are not stuffed by hand nor clubs crafted from rams horn. And the game is no longer the preserve of the Scottish gentry, but is a sport for all: men, women and children.

But one aspect will remain forever constant: the views, the scenery and the sense of history that make British golf such a special experience. ■



WENDLING 392nd BY OAK MACKEY

Veterans of the 392nd Bomb Group met in Tulsa, OK in 1985 to establish the 392nd BG Memorial Association. The purpose of this meeting was to renovate and restore the memorial monument which was placed on the old 392nd air base in September of 1945 to remember the 825 airmen who gave their lives while flying combat missions from this base. In addition, a memorial trust was created to ensure care and maintenance of the memorial into perpetuity. Brits from nearby Beeston are hired to keep the grounds and the memorial in immaculate condition, and American and British flags are replaced on a regular schedule for they became tattered and worn after six months or so. As of now, the Association is managed by Col. Lawrence G. Gilbert as CEO. Col. Gilbert was 392nd Base CO in 1945.

Charles E. Dye is President; he was the Ordnance Officer at the 392nd. James V. Goar, editor of the *392nd News*, was in charge of the Motor Pool at Wendling during the war. Now an interesting development has occurred; at the 2006 meeting of the 392nd BGMA, Annette Tison was elected Secretary. Annette is of the 2nd Generation and is an associate member. At the 2006 meeting of the 392nd BGMA, Bill McCutcheon was elected treasurer. Bill is also a 2nd Generation associate member. Also at the 2006 meeting the Board of Directors was expanded to fifteen members. Six of those directors are 2nd Generations. They are: Jim Marsteller, Greg Hatton, Ben Jones, Bill McCutcheon, Annette Tison, and Bob Books. What is going on here? Well, the 392nd BGMA has found it difficult to find suitable veterans for management positions because of old age, ill health, and death, so we have turned to our young folks for help. These youngsters have vigor and enthusiasm; their help is priceless. Other bomb group associations have also turned to their young people for help. That other 8th AF organization, the 8th Air Force Historical

Society, is choosing youngsters for directors and management. Our own Bob Books is on the 8AFHS Board of Directors. As a Group VP, I might vote in favor of young associate members of the 2ADA becoming officers on the Executive Committee. As President of the 2ADA, I am much more restrained; this idea needs careful consideration, let's look before we leap. This may be an item for discussion at the Executive Committee meeting in Grand Rapids; let's wait and see what develops.

Go to www.b24.net for the 392nd BG website. Bob Books is a "gee whizz" computer expert of incredible ability. Annette Tison can collect information from the files of the U.S. Air Force like no one else. Greg Hatton and Jim Marsteller have also made major contributions. These four have made the 392nd website second to none. The details of the April 29, 1944 mission to Berlin by Annette Tison are just incredible. See Marsteller's account of his visit to Friedrichshafen where his uncle was killed on the mission of March 18, 1944. There is plenty of material in there to keep you occupied for a long time.

That's all for now. Take care. ■



492nd BOMB GROUP HAPPY WARRIOR HAPPENINGS

NORTH PICKENHAM

BY WILLIS H. "BILL" BEASLEY

*Editor's Note: As you know, Colorado has been "snowed in" this winter, and Bill hasn't dug himself out yet — so we took the liberty of printing the official record of the 492nd BG as it appears in the book *Air Force Combat Units of WWII*.*

492ND BOMBARDMENT GROUP

Constituted as 492nd Bombardment Group (Heavy) on 14 Sep 1943. Activated on 1 Oct 1943. Trained for combat with B-24's. Moved to England in Apr 1944 and assigned to Eighth AF. Entered combat on 11 May 1944, and throughout the month operated primarily against industrial targets in central Germany. Attacked airfields and V-weapon launching sites in France during the first week in June. Bombed coastal defenses in Normandy on 6 Jun 1944 and attacked bridges, railroads, and other interdiction targets in France until the middle of the month. Resumed bombardment of strategic targets in Germany and, except for support of the infantry during the St Lo break-through on 25 Jul 1944, continued such operations until Aug 1944. Transferred, less personnel and equipment, to another station in England on 5 Aug

1944 and assumed personnel, equipment, and the CARPETBAGGER mission of a provisional group that was discontinued. Operated chiefly over southern France with B-24's and C-47's, engaging in CARPETBAGGER operations, that is, transporting agents, supplies, and propaganda leaflets to patriots. Ceased these missions on 16 Sep 1944 to haul gasoline to advancing mechanized forces in France and Belgium. Intermittently attacked airfields, oil refineries, seaports, and other targets in France, the Low Countries, and Germany until Feb 1945. Meanwhile, in Oct 1944, began training for night bombardment operations; concentrated on night bombing of marshalling yards and goods depots in Germany, Feb-Mar 1945. Ceased these missions on 18 Mar 1945 to engage in CARPETBAGGER operations over Germany and German-occupied territory, using B-24, A-26, and British Mosquito aircraft to drop leaflets, demolition equipment, and agents. Received a DUC for these operations, performed at night despite adverse weather and vigorous opposition from enemy ground forces, 20 Mar – 25 Apr 1945. Also cited by the French government for sim-

ilar operations over France in 1944. Flew its last CARPETBAGGER mission in Apr 1945 and then ferried personnel and equipment to and from the Continent until July. Returned to the U.S., Jul-Aug 1945. *Redesignated* 492nd Bombardment Group (Very Heavy) in Aug 1945. *Inactivated* on 17 Oct 1945.

SQUADRONS

406th: 1945. *856th:* 1943-1945. *857th:* 1943-1945. *858th:* 1943-1944, 1944-1945. *859th:* 1943-1945

STATIONS

Alamogordo AAFld, NM, 1 Oct 1943 – 1 Apr 1944; North Pickenham, England, 18 Apr 1944; Harrington, England, 5 Aug 1944 – 8 Jul 1945; Sioux Falls AAFld, SD, 14 Aug 1945; Kirtland Field, NM, 17 Aug – 17 Oct 1945.

COMMANDERS

Col. Arthur J. Pierce, 19 Oct 1943; Maj. Louis C. Adams, 17 Dec 1943; Col. Eugene H. Snavelly, 26 Jan 1944; Col. Clifford J. Heflin, 13 Aug 1944; Lt. Col. Robert W. Fish, 26 Aug 1944; Col. Hudson H. Upham, 17 Dec 1944; Lt. Col. Jack M. Dickerson, c. 7 Jun 1945; Lt. Col. Dalson E. Crawford, 30 Aug – Oct 1945.

CAMPAIGNS

Air Offensive, Europe; Normandy; Northern France; Southern France; Rhineland; Central Europe.

DECORATIONS

Distinguished Unit Citation: Germany and German-occupied territory, 20 Mar – 25 Apr 1945. French Croix de Guerre with Palm. ■

HALESWORTH 489TH NOTES

BY
MEL PONTILLO

Readers usually do not observe statistics, because they seem boring. However, while browsing through the Internet, I found an enormous amount of statistics and general information about World War II which was very interesting. It showed that the amount of war equipment manufactured and lost by all the nations involved in the war was astronomical and inconceivable. I was astonished by these large numbers.

There has been a great amount of material written about World War II, and most everything that happened during that era can be found on the Internet. The facts and figures posted online come from many different sources, but the United States Army Air Force seems to have more information than does any other branch of the military service. The 8th AAF with its various divisions and bomb groups has a great number of web pages dedicated to it. This includes an abundance of information on the 2nd Air Division and the 489th Bomb Group. One example is the 2nd Air Division Memorial Library's website.

In like fashion, there are web pages about most of the other Air Force divisions and bomb groups. This includes web pages about the Carpetbaggers and their secret airfield in Ain, France. Even my thirty-five combat missions and three mercy missions are posted on the Internet, along with introductory notes, and Halesworth photos of the aircrew with whom I served.

Now, I did not click on all the World War II websites that appeared on the Google search engine, but among the ones that I did view, the most amazing one was a statistical report called "United States Strategic Bombing Survey & Summary Report (European War)." This survey was established by the Secretary of War on November 3, 1944, in response to a directive handed down by the late President Roosevelt. It was then completed and published on September 30, 1945.

Three hundred civilians, three hundred military officers, and five hundred enlisted personnel participated in the fact-gathering mission, and they did so while the European War was still raging. It was found to be necessary for survey personnel to follow closely behind the Western front so that vital records would not be

come irretrievably lost.

Germany was scoured for war records that were sometimes found in expected places. However, records were also found in safe deposit vaults, private houses, barns, caves, and on one occasion, in a hen house. In fact, on two occasions, war records were found in coffins.

Some European war statistics that may be of interest to you are posted directly below:

- England devoted 40-50% of its war production to its air force, while Germany expended 40% of its production to its air command. The United States dedicated 35% of its military production to its air force.

- The number of men lost in air action numbered 79,265 for the Americans and 79,281 for the British. More than 18,000 American and 22,000 British planes were either lost or damaged beyond repair. Attacks by Allied air power resulted in the releasing of almost 2,700,000 tons of bombs on Nazi territory.

- More than 1,440,000 bomber sorties and 2,680,000 fighter sorties were flown by the Allies, and the number of Allied combat planes reached a peak of 28,000 while a maximum of 1,300,000 men were serving in aerial combat units. This included the imperiled airmen, the indispensable ground crew personnel, and the administrative staff members.

- In Germany, 3,640,000 dwelling units (approximately 20% of the total units) were either destroyed or heavily damaged. The survey also reported that 300,000 civilians were killed, while 780,000 of them were wounded. In fact, the number of civilians made homeless were approximated at 7,500,000.

- Between 1939 and 1945, over 3.4 million Germans served in the Luftwaffe. This included airmen, anti-aircraft personnel, and ground crew members. Over 165,000 Luftwaffe members were killed, over 55,000 of them went missing, and over 192,000 of them were wounded.

- The United States 8th Army Air Force, in terms of men and aircraft, was the largest air force in history. Total casualties for the United States Army Air Force was listed at 115,332. 41% of all its casualties were suffered by the 8th Army Air Force, to the tune of 47,483 casualties and 26,000+ fatalities. In addition, 28,000 airmen of the 8th AAF became prisoners of war in Europe.

- The number of B-24 Liberators lost in European combat was marked at 2,112, while the number of B-17s lost was marked at 4,754. In addition, 2,520 P-51s, 3,077 P-47s and 1,758 P-38s were lost, according to the statistics I saw.

- 86.2% of all aircrew casualties were due to flak. And in 1944, the number of heavy flak guns utilized by Nazi military

units was marked at 10,600, while the number of light flak guns was marked at 19,360.

- Even though Switzerland was a neutral nation throughout the war, the Swiss captured and interned American aviators who bailed out over (or made emergency landings in) Switzerland. And despite the fact that the captured airmen were interned at Swiss ski resorts, they had to endure subsistence diets of 1,500 calories daily and poorly heated living quarters. Over 1,700 American aviators made it to Switzerland, along with 100,000 soldiers of various nations and branches of service. 200,000+ civilian refugees also made their way to Switzerland.

- The Second Air Division's first bombing mission was flown on November 7, 1942, and the last one was flown on April 25, 1945. A total of 95,948 sorties were flown in 493 operational missions by the division's B-24s. This resulted in the dropping of 199,883 tons of bombs.

- In combat, Second Air Division gunners claimed 1,079 enemy fighters destroyed. 1,458 B-24s were lost in combat, and many others were lost in accidents. And a total of 6,700 men serving with the Second Air Division lost their lives. At full strength, the 2nd Division had 14 bombardment groups.

The various 489th Bomb Group websites have been saved for last, and it would be proper for me to dedicate some space to my favorite bomb group, simply to show that we are also represented on the Internet:

- The number of 489th sorties was 2,998 and the total bomb tonnage dropped on Nazi territory by the 489th was 6,951 tons. That was a significant and decisive amount of firepower for a bomb group whose first bombing mission was May 30, 1944 and last bombing mission was November 10, 1944.

- After the 489th made its last bombing mission in the European War, it was deployed back to the USA, in order to train on B-29 bombers. Its crew members were to be eventually deployed to the Pacific, in order to do battle. Fortunately, the Japanese surrendered before its training was finished.

- The number of bombing missions made by the 489th was 106. The number of B-24s lost in combat was 29, and other operational losses were numbered at 12. However, the number of 489th airships that returned to Halesworth battle-damaged was a much larger number. This included those aircrews, such as my own, which had to make at least one crash landing, with engines shot out, oxygen systems damaged, and/or spacious holes shot into wings and elsewhere.

- The high rate of battle damage for any bomb group, even after D-Day, was sig-

(continued on next page)



BY DICK BUTLER

Undoubtedly the best-known name of the 44th Bomb Group veterans is that of Will Lundy. This comes about as a result of his more than thirty years work in researching, recording, publishing and answering questions to literally hundreds of interested persons about 44th Bomb Group World War II combat operations and the casualties resulting therefrom. I asked Will to give me a brief recapitulation of his endeavors for this article. Here it is, in Will's own words:

"Way back in 1972 my wife, Irene, returned from her visit to Norwich, the city of her birth, to inform me that the 2ADA not only existed, but they had established a Memorial Room in the Norwich Library building. That awakened many memories of Norwich itself, but also about the nearly three years I spent at Shipdham Airfield, AAF 115. I immediately joined that unique organization, and we both visited Norwich in 1975. There I learned about their main purpose, the display of the 2nd Air Division Roll of Honor book.

Many of my ground crew buddies had volunteered to replace our combat men lost in combat in those terrible several early months at war, most of them also being shot down and MIA. We never learned what happened to them! So I had to begin my search for answers to learn what had happened, where were they? Also, several of the B-24s that I had spent so many hours, night and day, keeping them flying, had failed to return, and the answers to what happened to them was still a big mystery. What happened, and why??"

Bill Robertie, then Editor of the *Journal*, pointed me in the correct direction after telling me that no histories of the 44th BG existed, so it was necessary to purchase microfilm data, including hometown addresses of survivors, then telephone and write letters. Many of these questions had answers, but then there were more questions. The cycle never did cease — I would find some answers but then new questions arose.

Over the years I had to expand my files. I filled one photo album after another, collected more material, more stories, more diaries, etc. until I had a spare room FULL. But also, thanks to so much data I found that more and more 44thers wanted to get more specific information

about their relatives. Computer email replaced faxes, which brought in more questions. So, how could this information be made more readily available after it was located? Tom Shepherd, former 66th Squadron First Sergeant, utilizing his computer, searched for and located Arlo Bartsch, a former B-17 pilot, who had developed a computer program for his 379th BG, Eighth AF. One presentation was all that was necessary — it was terrific — and with such a great tool, we could transfer so much of the information gleaned from so many contacts with our combat personnel — and everyone.

Tony and Cathy Mastradone, living close to Washington, D.C., spent the better part of two years searching the archives, 44 boxes of our operational data, copying the original operational pages, and Arlo Bartsch managed to get it all this data entered into his database program.

After transferring all of the data from these papers into a Master Database, we had our information readily at hand; no need for the documents themselves. So where to place these papers, documents, etc.? Chris Clark advised us that the Army facility at Carlisle, PA, was expanding their facilities, placing an Educational Center there, and as we served under the Army Air Force, it was appropriate to store our records there. Better still, they would come here, package and ship it all to their facilities at their expense.

Eight months ago, about 80% of these documents, photos, maps, letters, diaries, etc. were boxed, shipped to Carlisle, and now are readily available to the public to view first hand. As soon as I complete a few other needed projects, I will be able to have my "spare" bedroom back again after over 31 years of 'collecting.' "



Ruth W. Davis-Morse, 44th BGVA Secretary/8 Ball Tails Editor, reports that 44th BGVA President Robert Paul Kay passed away the day before Christmas. Paul had heart surgery, and had recovered and was ready to go home when a clot ended his life. We are all mourning the loss of this very fine man. Kay had been a navigator on the Warner crew and all of his recollections of his missions were hilariously funny. When the war was over he became an executive in the Weyerhaeuser Corporation during which time he developed leadership skills that he graciously applied to the long-term goals of the bomb group. Although his wit carried him through all meetings during his presidency (never mind Robert's Rules) he was very creative in approaching the problems and goals of the Bomb Group. Working with Will Lundy he was able to get the 44th BG's memorabilia and records moved to the Army Heritage Muse-

um in Carlisle, Pennsylvania.

The presidency of the 44th Bomb Group Veterans Association is now in the able hands of George Washburn. He was a pilot in the 68th Squadron. ■

489TH NOTES (cont. from page 27)

nificant and par for the course. This included the 489th. For example, on July 6th, one month after D-Day, 262 B-24s were sent out to bomb the dock area of Kiel, Germany. 106 of them suffered battle damage. Then, on the following day, 373 B-24s were sent out to bomb aircraft assembly plants and oil plants. 127 of them returned to England battle-damaged, including my own crew's airship, which had an engine shot out over the target. Therefore, the 489th Bomb Group did not get off easy.

- On July 25, 1944, when American ground troops needed aid in weakening the Nazi strongholds located 1,500 yards away from them, the 489th was providing assistance with 20 lb. fragmentation bombs. That was the day I saw our right wing ship go down in flames. In addition, when the British citizenry needed the buzz bomb sites at Pas-de-Calais to be annihilated, the 489th was one of the bomb groups who came to the rescue.

- On August 12, 1944, when attacks on Laon airfields assured the liberation of Paris, the 489th was present. And on the day when Paris was liberated, Liberators of the 489th were rendering the Heinkel aircraft plant in Rostock, Germany extinct.

- In like fashion, when American airships were delivering tons of food to war-torn Orleans, the 489th which proved itself effective in providing annihilation to the Nazi war machine also proved itself effective in providing mercy to the French. Then, when the survivors of the failed Operation Market Garden needed air intervention, to prevent a Nazi troop influx from the Hamm marshalling yards, the 489th was one of the bomb groups who put those marshalling yards temporarily out of operation.

- When the smoke from the Clauthal-Zellerfield high explosives plant was rising a mile in the sky, the 489th was there, peeling away from the target on a day when 183 B-24s returned to England with battle damage inflicted on their airships. All in all, the 489th was one of the most effective combat forces in military history, and its place is among those unconquered combat units that were deployed in the sky by the United States.



I am sincerely hoping to see you all at the next 2ADA convention in Grand Rapids, Michigan, as well as at the 489th BG reunion in Branson, Missouri. ■

BEFORE THERE WAS AN "AIR FORCE" *(continued from page 1)*

were to be at the front by 30 June 1919. In Pershing's view, the main functions of the AEF's Air Service were to drive off hostile aircraft and to obtain information about enemy movements. Half of the 202 squadrons, therefore, were to be observation units assigned to 3 armies and 16 corps. Of the remainder, 60 were to be pursuit squadrons. But the plan also provided for 27 night-bombardment and 14 day-bombardment squadrons.

The first American aviation unit to reach France was the 1st Aero Squadron, an observation organization, which sailed from New York in August 1917 and arrived at Le Havre on 3 September. As other squadrons were organized at home, they too were sent overseas, where they continued their training. It was February 1918 before any American aviation squadron entered combat, but by Armistice Day, 11 November 1918, 45 combat squadrons (20 pursuit, 18 observation, and 7 bombardment) had been assigned to the front. During the war the aero squadrons played important roles in such famous battles as the Aisne-Marne, St. Mihiel, and the Meuse-Argonne. Some, like the 94th Squadron that had Captain Eddie Rickenbacker for its commander, or the 27th that had "balloon buster" Frank Luke as one of its aviators, made distinguished records in combat.

Observation planes frequently operated individually, and pursuit pilots often went out alone to attack a balloon or to meet the enemy in a dogfight. But the tendency was toward formation flying for pursuit as well as for bombardment operations. The dispersal of squadrons among the various army organizations made it difficult, however, to obtain coordination of aerial activities. Some higher organization was required. Squadrons with similar functions were formed into groups, the first of these being the 1st Corps Observation Group, organized in April 1918. The following month the 1st Pursuit Group was formed, and by 11 November 1918 the AEF had 14 groups (7 observation, 5 pursuit, and 2 bombardment). In July 1918 the AEF organized its first wing, made up of the 2nd and 3rd Pursuit Groups and, later the 1st Day Bombardment Group.

Some airmen, including William Mitchell, were advocating the formation of an air force that would concentrate control over military aviation for heavy blows against the enemy. In September 1918, for the Allied assault against the German salient at St. Mihiel, Mitchell brought together almost 1,500 American and French planes for coordinated operations in which observation and pursuit supported ground forces, while the other two-thirds of the air force bombed and strafed behind the lines.

Later, during the Meuse-Argonne offensive, Mitchell attained a somewhat smaller concentration of air power for use in keeping the enemy on the defensive.

In France, the Air Service was part of Pershing's expeditionary force. In the United States the Chief Signal Officer was responsible for organizing, training, and equipping aviation units until 21 May 1918. At that time the President created a Bureau of Aircraft Production and made it responsible for aeronautical equipment; training of personnel and units was the responsibility of the Division of Military Aeronautics, which had been created by the War Department on 27 April 1918. Although the bureau and division were recognized by the War Department on 24 May 1918 as forming the Army's Air Service, no Director of Air Service was appointed until 27 August 1918.

1919-1939

After the war the Army quickly demobilized most of its air arm, including the wing, all of the groups, and most of the squadrons. Almost immediately, however, it began to create new organizations for peacetime service. In many instances these new organizations had no connection with those that had been active during the war. For example, at Selfridge Field in August 1919 the Army organized a 1st Pursuit Group that was in no way related to the AEF's 1st Pursuit Group, which had been demobilized in France in December 1918. A little later, however, the Army began a series of organizational actions that eventually enabled many active organizations to trace their histories back to World War I. In the case of the 1st Pursuit Group, for instance, the Army reconstituted the World War I group of that name and consolidated it with the active group. This process of reconstituting old units and consolidating them with active units has continued up to the present time.

In 1920 an act of Congress (approved on 4 June) created the Air Service as a combatant arm of the United States Army. But the Air Service and the Air Corps that replaced it in 1926 (Congressional act of 2 July) did not control the combat units, for their training and operations came under the jurisdiction of ground forces. With this arrangement the Air Service and Air Corps were responsible for matters relating to personnel and materiel logistics, particularly training individual pilots and other specialists, and developing, procuring, storing, and distributing aeronautical equipment.

The composition, organization, and command of the combat elements of the air arm during the 1920s and early 1930s were based on principles laid down by the War Department General Staff in 1920.

These principles, as they related to military aviation, were reflected in a war plan that called for the following aviation organizations as part of an expeditionary force: one observation squadron for each of 54 divisions and one for each of 18 corps; one observation group (four squadrons), plus one attack wing, one observation group, and one bombardment group for General Headquarters (GHQ). Thus the war plan placed the greatest emphasis on observation aviation. It gave lesser roles to pursuit aviation, which was to destroy enemy planes and assist in attacking enemy troops and other objectives, and to attack aviation, which was to harass the enemy's ground forces. It assigned a minor place to bombardment aviation, with the mission of destroying military objectives in the combat theater and in the enemy's zone of interior. Furthermore, it placed aviation under the command of ground officers at division, corps, army, and GHQ levels. As a result, the structure was condemned by Billy Mitchell and other Air Service officers who discounted the importance of observation aviation, sought recognition for bombardment as a major instrument of warfare, desired a greater proportion of pursuit units for counter-air operations, and wanted aviation units organized as an air force under the command of airmen. One of the important facets of the history of the Army's air arm during the 1920s and 1930s was the conflict between air and ground officers over the composition, organization, and command of military aviation. While this is not the place for a detailed review of that subject, the progress that the airmen made toward gaining acceptance for their point of view is reflected in organizational changes mentioned in subsequent paragraphs.

The principles behind the war plan were applied to the smaller peacetime organization that was to be capable of rapid expansion in an emergency. For several years the striking force based in the United States consisted of three groups, the 1st Pursuit, the 2nd Bombardment, and the 3rd Attack. There also was one observation group (the 9th), and there was one observation squadron for each of the Army corps. During the same period there were three composite groups on foreign service, the 4th being in the Philippines, the 5th in Hawaii, and the 6th in Panama.

In 1926 the Army began to expand its air arm, and in the years that followed new groups were activated: the 18th Pursuit (in Hawaii) in 1927; the 7th Bombardment in 1928; the 12th Observation and 20th Pursuit in 1930; the 8th and 17th Pursuit in 1931; and the 16th Pursuit (in the Canal Zone) and the 19th Bombardment in 1932. Consequently by the end of 1932 there

(continued on next page)

BEFORE THERE WAS AN "AIR FORCE" *(continued from page 29)*

were 15 groups (45 squadrons). The distribution of the squadrons by function is significant. The number of attack squadrons (4) was the same as it had been a decade earlier, while the strength in observation aviation had decreased from 14 to 13 squadrons. The growth had, therefore, been in other types of aviation, the number of bombardment squadrons having increased from 7 to 12, and pursuit squadrons from 7 to 16. Five more pursuit squadrons were activated in 1933, bringing the total strength to 50 squadrons.

The most important change in the combat organization of the air arm in the two decades between World Wars I and II came on 1 March 1935. At that time the War Department established General Headquarters Air Force (GHQAF) and placed it under the command of an air officer to serve as an air defense and striking force. Some observation units remained assigned to corps areas, but all the pursuit, bombardment, and attack units in the United States became part of the new combat organization. The combat elements of GHQAF were organized into three wings: the 1st Wing (with headquarters at March Field) had two bombardment groups, one attack group, and three observation squadrons; the 2nd Wing (Langley Field) had two bombardment and two pursuit groups, plus three observation squadrons; the 3rd Wing (Barksdale Field) had an attack and a pursuit group, plus one bombardment, one attack, and two pursuit squadrons. The commanding general of GHQAF, who reported to the Army's Chief of Staff and was to report to the commander of the field force in time of war, was responsible for the organization, training, and operations of the air force. The Chief of the Air Corps still retained the responsibilities associated with personnel and materiel logistics.

The change of the 9th Group from observation to bombardment in 1935 should be noted because that redesignation was an indication of the decline of observation and the growth of bombardment aviation. Two years later the 12th Observation Group was inactivated. And the same year (1937) the 10th Transport Group, the first group of its kind, was activated. But there were no other significant changes, the number of groups remaining at 15 (10 in the United States and 5 on foreign service), until 1939.

WORLD WAR TWO

In January 1939 President Franklin D. Roosevelt asked Congress to strengthen America's air power, which, the President said, was "utterly inadequate." On 1 September 1939 Hitler attacked Poland, and the Second World War began. In the

months that followed, as Axis forces won one victory after another, the Army's air arm expanded rapidly. By the end of 1940 there were 30 groups. Within another year, that is, by the time the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor and the United States entered the war, the number of active groups had increased to 67, but many of them were still in the process of being organized and few had aircraft suitable for combat.

The air arm grew even more rapidly in the months following Pearl Harbor, and by the end of 1943 there were 269 groups. At that time 133 of the groups were in the United States: 77 were being manned or trained; 56, which provided the strategic reserve, served as part of the defense force, as operational training units (OTUs) that prepared new units for combat, or as replacement training units (RTU's) that trained replacements for organizations overseas. Early in 1944 most of the OTU's and RTU's were inactivated or disbanded, the training activities being given to base units. As a result the number of combat groups fell to 218, but the formation of new groups brought the figure up to another peak of 243 in February 1945. When the Allied forces landed on the beaches of Normandy on 6 June 1944, the United States had 148 combat groups in the European-African-Middle Eastern Theater for the war against Germany. By August 1945, when combat operations in the Asiatic-Pacific Theater came to an end, the United States had 86 groups in the war against Japan.

In addition to the expansion, other important changes had taken place in the air arm. By 7 December 1941 more emphasis was being placed on bombardment. Of the 67 groups active at that time, 26 were bombardment organizations; half of the 26 were heavy and the other half were medium and light bombardment groups, the light groups having replaced the attack organizations of an earlier time. There also were 26 pursuit, 9 observation, and 6 transport groups. During the war, pursuit units were redesignated fighter, observation became reconnaissance, and transport became troop carrier. With the development of B-29 aircraft, very heavy bombardment organizations were added to the combat force. In the spring of 1945, when America's air strength in the overseas theaters of operations reached its peak, the 243 combat groups of the AAF were divided as follows: 25 very heavy, 72 heavy, 20 medium, and 8 light bombardment groups; 71 fighter groups; 20 troop carrier groups; 13 reconnaissance groups; and 5 composite groups. At the same time there were 65 separate squadrons, mostly reconnaissance and night fighter, which were not assigned to groups but to higher echelons of organization.

As the number of groups increased, the number of wings multiplied. Earlier, during World War I and in GHQAF, wings had been composite organizations, that is, had been made up of groups with different kinds of missions. Most of the wings of World War II, however, were composed of groups with similar functions.

The growth of the air arm resulted in important organizational changes and developments above the group and wing levels. The separation of the combat organization (GHQAF) from the logistic organization (Air Corps) created serious problems of coordination. To correct this condition, GHQAF was placed under the Chief of the Air Corps, Maj. Gen. Henry H. Arnold, in March 1939. The two organizations were separated again in November 1940, but about the same time Arnold joined the War Department General Staff as Deputy Chief of Staff for Air, a position that enabled him to coordinate the two sections of the air arm. **On 20 June 1941 the War Department created the Army Air Forces with the Air Corps and GHQAF, the latter redesignated Air Force Combat Command, as its major components and with Arnold as chief. In an Army reorganization on 9 March 1942 the Air Corps and Air Force Combat Command were discontinued and Arnold was made Commanding General of the Army Air Forces.**

During the war most of the AAF's combat groups and wings were assigned to numbered air forces. The first four of these air forces had their origins late in 1940 when GHQAF was becoming so large that its headquarters could not exercise adequate control over the training and operations of the various GHQAF organizations. General Headquarters Air Force was subdivided, therefore, into four air districts (Northeast, Northwest, Southeast, and Southwest), which were redesignated First, Second, Third, and Fourth Air Forces early in 1941. These four air forces remained in the United States throughout the war, but others were reestablished for service overseas: the Fifth, Seventh, Tenth, Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Twentieth served in the Asiatic-Pacific Theater; the Eighth, Ninth, Twelfth, and Fifteenth operated in the European-African-Middle Eastern Theater, the Eighth being re-deployed to the Pacific after the war ended in Europe; the Sixth was in the Panama Canal Zone and the Eleventh in Alaska.

Some air forces, particularly the larger ones, had subordinate commands (or sometimes divisions) that provided an additional echelon of organization, by bringing together wings (or groups) with similar functions. An air force, such as the Ninth, could have a bomber, a fighter, a troop carrier, and a tactical air command,

the number and kind depending on the size, functions, and peculiar needs of the air force. There also were some separate commands, such as the Antisubmarine Command, which were not assigned to numbered air forces.

The arrangement of the various layers of organization is best seen by looking at the organizational position of some particular squadron, such as the 93rd Bombardment Squadron, which took part in the B-29 offensive against Japan in 1945. That squadron was assigned to the 19th Bombardment Group, of the 314th Bombardment Wing, of the XXI Bomber Command, of the Twentieth Air Force. But the organization was much more complex than is indicated by such a chain, for operational and administrative requirements resulted in the establishment of organizations above the numbered air forces.

There was, for example, the U.S. Strategic Air Forces in Europe, which had some administrative control over both the Eighth and Ninth Air Forces (the one engaged primarily in strategic and the other in tactical operations), and which exercised some operational control over the two strategic air forces in Europe (the Eighth in England and the Fifteenth in Italy). Furthermore, American organizations sometimes became part of combined (i.e., Allied) commands. In April 1942, for instance, an organization called Allied Air Forces was created in Australia to control operations of Australian, Dutch, and American air forces; and in February 1943 American, British, and French elements in North Africa were combined to form the Northwest African Air Forces. The complexity of these organizational arrangements was compounded by the assignment of AAF

units overseas to United States Army organizations, and by the relationships of those Army organizations to joint (i.e., Army-Navy) and combined commands.

This volume is not concerned with all of this vast organization but with the AAF structure from groups to numbered air forces. Within those limits, the major attention is focused on the groups, the basic operational organizations in the aerial war that America fought in the years between the attack on Pearl Harbor on 7 December 1941 and the Japanese surrender on 2 September 1945.

1946-1956

Once the victory had been gained, the United States plunged into demobilization, just as it had done at the end of the First World War. Officers and men were sent home. Bases were closed. Airplanes were stored or sold. And by July 1946 the Air Force had only 2 groups that were ready for combat, although 52 were carried on the list of active organizations. A new Air Force had to be built on the ruins of demobilization, the goal being 70 groups, the strength that was authorized for peacetime. In addition, reserve and national guard forces would be available for active duty in an emergency. There was much opposition, however, to a large military establishment in peacetime, and to the financial burden such an establishment placed on the nation. Consequently, the Air Force had to be cut to 48 groups.

Then came the Korean War, precipitated by the Communist attack on the Republic of Korea on 25 June 1950. The United States rushed combat forces across the Pacific to strengthen those already present in the Far East. Others were sent to Europe to meet the increasing threat of Communist aggression in that part of the world. At home the air defense force was expanded. Under these conditions the number of groups jumped from 48 to 87 within a year. In June 1952, when the strength was stated in terms of wings rather than groups, the Air Force had 95. By the end of the Korean War on 27 July 1953 the number of wings had increased to 106. The expansion had been accomplished in part by ordering reserve and national guard organizations to active duty. Those organizations were called for 21 months, but some were relieved before the end of that period. In fact, some reserve organizations were in active service for only a few days, just long enough to assign their personnel to other organizations. Most of the reserve and guard elements that served the full term of 21 months were replaced by newly-activated organizations of the regular Air Force.

The program for expansion had first
(continued on next page)

THE COMMANDERS

I. Aeronautical Division, Signal Corps

Officer in Charge: Capt. Charles DeF Chandler, 1 Aug 1907; Capt. A.S. Cowan, 1 July 1910; Capt. Charles DeF Chandler, 20 June 1911; Lt. Henry H. Arnold, 18 Nov 1912; Maj. Edgar Russell, 15 Dec 1912; Lt. Col. Samuel Reber, 10 Sep 1913 – 18 Jul 1914.

II. Aviation Section, Signal Corps

Officer in Charge: Lt. Col. Samuel Reber, 18 Jul 1914; Lt. Col. George O. Squier, 20 May 1916; Lt. Col. J.B. Bennett, 19 Feb 1917; Maj. Benjamin D. Foulois, 30 Jul 1917; Brig. Gen. A.L. Dade, 12 Nov 1917; Col. Laurence Brown, 28 Feb 1918 – 21 May 1918.

III a. Division of Military Aeronautics

Director: Maj. Gen. William L. Kenly, 27 Apr 1918 – (under Director, Air Service after 27 Aug 1918).

III b. Bureau of Aircraft Production

Director: Mr. John D. Ryan, 21 May 1918 – (under Director, Air Service after 27 Aug 1918).

IV. Air Service

Director: Mr. John D. Ryan, 27 Aug 1918; Maj. Gen. Charles T. Menoher, 23 Dec 1918 – 4 Jun 1920.

Chief: Maj. Gen. Charles T. Menoher, 4 Jun 1920; Maj. Gen. Mason M. Patrick, 5 Oct 1921 – 2 Jul 1926.

Va. Air Corps

Chief: Maj. Gen. Mason M. Patrick, 2 Jul 1926; Maj. Gen. J.E. Fechet, 14 Dec 1927; Maj. Gen. Benjamin D. Foulois, 19 Dec 1931; Maj. Gen. Oscar Westover, 22 Dec 1935; Maj. Gen. Henry H. Arnold, 22 Sep 1938; Maj. Gen. George H. Brett, 30 May 1941 – (under Chief, AAF after 20 Jun 1941).

Vb. General Headquarters Air Force, redesignated Air Force Combat Command

Commanding General: Maj. Gen. Frank M. Andrews, 1 Mar 1935; Lt. Gen. Delos C. Emmons, 1 Mar 1939 – (under Chief, AAF after 20 Jun 1941).

VI. Army Air Forces

Chief: Lt. Gen. Henry H. Arnold, 20 Jun 1941 – 9 Mar 1942.

Commanding General: General of the Army Air Forces Henry H. Arnold, 9 Mar 1942; Gen. Carl Spaatz, 15 Feb 1946 – 26 Sep 1947.

VII. United States Air Force

Chief of Staff: Gen. Carl Spaatz, 26 Sep 1947; Gen. Hoyt S. Vandenberg, 30 Apr 1948; Gen. Nathan F. Twining, 30 Jun 1953; Gen. Thomas D. White, 1 Jul 1957–.

BEFORE THERE WAS AN "AIR FORCE" (continued from page 31)

provided for 95 wings, but that goal was revised in November 1951 when the Joint Chiefs of Staff authorized a force of 143 wings to be attained by mid-1955. In 1953 the goal was reduced temporarily to 120 wings by June 1956, but later the same year it was changed to provide for 137 wings by June 1957. Under these changing programs the strength of the Air Force, in terms of the number of active wings, increased steadily. By the beginning of 1956 there were 127 wings, made up of 392 combat squadrons.

There had been many organizational changes in the period from 1946 to 1956, but the most important one in the view of the professional airmen was that which gave the Air Force its independence. Congress provided the necessary legislation in 1947 when it created a Department of the Air Force and established the United States Air Force as a separate service equal to the Army and the Navy in the nation's military establishment. On 18 September 1947, W. Stuart Symington became the first Secretary of the Air Force. And a week later, on 26 September, Gen. Carl Spaatz, who had succeeded Arnold as Commanding General of the Army Air Forces, became the first Chief of Staff, United States Air Force.

Earlier, on 21 March 1946, Spaatz had undertaken a major reorganization that had included the establishment of three new combat commands in the United States: Strategic Air Command (soon known everywhere as SAC), to provide a long-range striking force capable of bombardment operations in any part of the world; Air Defense Command (ADC), to defend the United States against attack from the air; and Tactical Air Command (TAC), to support the operations of ground forces. TAC and ADC were reduced from major commands to operating commands when they were assigned to the Continental Air Command (ConAC) at the time the latter was established on 1 December 1948. ADC was discontinued on 1 July 1950 but reestablished as a major command on 1 January 1951. A month earlier, on 1 December 1950, TAC had been removed from the control of ConAC and again made a major command. As a result of these changes ConAC became responsible mainly for supervising reserve and national guard affairs. In addition to its commands in the United States, the Air Force had combat forces stationed overseas, with Far East Air Forces, United States Air Forces in Europe, Caribbean Air Command, and Alaskan Air Command as the major commands for the various areas of operations.

The World War II commands, which had been subordinate to the numbered air

forces, were eliminated in the reorganization of 1946, and the numbered air forces were made components of the major commands at home and overseas. The new organizational hierarchy thus contained the following levels: squadron, group, wing, air force, command. In 1948, and afterward, wings were redesignated divisions, and placed immediately below the numbered air forces in the organizational pyramid, new wings being constituted and activated to take the place of the ones that had been elevated to the division level. In addition to support and service elements, each of these new wings, as a general rule, had one combat group, which carried the same numerical designation as the wing itself. In 1952, however, the Air Force began to inactivate the combat groups and assign their combat squadrons directly to the wings. Consequently no organizations in the Air Force perpetuated the histories of the World War II combat groups that had been inactivated. The Air Force decided, therefore, to bestow the histories of combat groups on like-numbered wings. For example, the 9th Bombardment Wing, created after World War II, received the history of the 9th Bombardment Group, together with the campaign credits and decorations that had been earned by that group during the war.

Despite all the changes that had taken place since V-J Day, the Air Force in 1956 was to a large extent made up of elements that carried on the traditions of organizations that had been active during World War II. The history of each of those organizations had been shaped by many forces. Domestic politics, the national economy, and international affairs were important factors in fixing the size, and hence the number of active groups or wings, of the Air Force. Science and technology determined the kind of equipment available at any particular time. Fortune, too, had a part in forming the histories of the various organizations. It is evident, for example, that chance, rather than design, sometimes decided which organizations would be kept active and which would be retired. The results are reflected in the historical sketches presented in this book. Some groups, for instance, have lengthy records of service; others were created at a relatively late date or have been inactive for long periods. Some were sent overseas for combat; others were kept at home. Some received the newest planes from the production lines; others were forced to use old, worn-out craft.

But no organization had its life shaped entirely by forces beyond its control, for its own people, the men and women who gave the organization a living existence, made history in many ways. A fighter pilot flew out to battle and came back an

ace. A gunner returned from a bombing mission to be decorated for bravery above and beyond the call of duty. But one did not have to be a hero to have a place in history. The mechanic armed with his wrench, the clerk with his typewriter — each had his own important part to play. And at their head to lead them was a commander who, by virtue of his authority and responsibility, had a special role in the historical process.

Thus, through the workings of numerous and diverse forces, each organization acquired an historic character and personality of its own. At the same time, each contributed to the development of a larger history that goes back to a day in 1907 when the Army named a captain to take "charge of all matters pertaining to military ballooning, air machines, and all kindred subjects."



Editor's Note: The designation "Army Air Corps" was made by Congress in 1926 in the Billy Mitchell campaign for an independent air force, in order to keep the ground generals from pigeonholing the planes under the cavalry. Remember their motto, "The airplane will never replace the horse"? Well, this caused a problem later on when WWII came and the Army Air Forces were created by an administrative procedure within the Army.

In June 1940 when France fell, there was a sudden realization by Congress that the U.S. was really short of airpower and vast appropriations were created for the Navy and the "Army Air Corps" to train aviation personnel and to order as President Roosevelt said "50,000 planes a year."

The Army at about the same time realized that the term "Air Corps" did not fit the military nomenclature anymore, as the term "Corps" denoted a unit that assisted an army and the new goal for airpower was to conduct campaigns on their own, for example as the 8th AF did prior to the invasion on D-Day.

Thus the Army reorganized itself into three separate forces: the ground forces, the services and supply force, and the Army Air Forces.

However, the "Army Air Corps" created by Congress in 1926 still existed, at least on paper, despite the administrative Army reorganization in 1941. The new Army Air Forces had a problem as the huge appropriations in 1940 were designated to the "Army Air Corps"; thus to use the monies, the new officers and personnel were ordered to sign themselves as "2nd Lt. Army Air Corps" for pay purposes, but further down in the same document they were ordered to serve in the "Army Air Forces." ■



To the Editor:

Sorry I have taken so long to get in touch. It was a lovely surprise to receive the *Journal* with an excerpt of a letter I wrote to Dick Esenwein (Vol. 45, #2, page 31) to thank him for parts of the magazine he sent me.

As he says, we met one day when he came back to his old base and I was working a tractor on part of the landing field.

letter, our house was within the boundaries of the base. My father was transferred from West Raynham by the Air Ministry in 1942 to help prepare the grass strips beside the runways and perimeter track which he and another man kept cut all the time you guys were here. Before I left school I used to go there with him in my spare time. One of the guys used to let me drive his truck as our police couldn't stop me on the base. I was 12 years old then. Then another man taught me how to drive a bulldozer, which came in handy later. The first American troops came in June 1943 and moved into Nissen huts in front of our house. They were there when we arrived home from school one afternoon. I changed my clothes and was over there like a shot. There had been some British airmen policing it. For a while we didn't have a radio so the only thing we knew about Americans was what we had seen on films at the cinema. Clark Gable, Bing and Bob and others. The first two guys I met were one from the Bronx about five

63 years the first two jobs I worked on. I helped a carpenter in the map room of the headquarters. We made racks to hold big ordnance maps of Germany and surrounding countries. Then we moved and built a bar on the flying officers mess. Some of the wood was old mahogany that came out of a big mansion that was partially destroyed by fire. Then after that I worked with plumbers and bricklayers in most of the kitchens, in the mess hall, and the aero club. Then the day after my 15th birthday I started with the Air Ministry. Sometimes we had to give the electricians a hand. Once I remember we were doing a job in the control tower, but had to stop working for a while as the ships were landing back from a mission. So the officer in charge took us up to the veranda outside the tower to watch them come in. Two of the buildings I loved to go in were the Prop Shop as they were balanced so fine that when you walked by they would start turning on their tripods, and the Parachute Shop to watch the guys packing them. As I've told many people, the reason I have such regard for the GI boys I knew was that in the winter evenings a friend and myself used to go and play cards with the airmen. Some of them were only about four years older than me. They would say "you guys come over tomorrow night," but when we got there sometimes six of the 18 beds would have no blankets. Only the mattress and we never knew what happened to them. They weren't forced to be there as they were all volunteers.

Audrey and I keep in touch with some of the veterans. Dick Esenwein as you know, and Col. Willis Miller and his wife and two of his crew. Hal Hapigon and his wife sent me his 392nd hat a few years ago via his son who was visiting his in-laws on his way back to Germany where he was stationed. Then the other member, Lester Walters, passed away last year but his wife Ivy has written since. Bob Copp, another pilot, and his wife have called at our house but sadly he has passed away.

There is so much more I could tell you but it would have to be a book. I will try and send you some more at a later date. Like one of the MP Sergeants who was a great friend. His name was Sgt. Cocoe from Chicago. He would pick me up in his Jeep in the evening, take me to the guard room and get me one of the Provost Marshal's great coats, his belt and 45 pistol in its holster and snow drop helmet and take me on town patrol. I would say, "What if we run into trouble?" He would say, "Well you can use that 45 or we will get the hell out of here pretty quick." And if it was dark he would go

(continued on next page)



Two of Ernie Parke's model B-24s and cap at 392nd BG Memorial in May 2005. The 392nd memorial is only 400 yards from Ernie's house.

I told him I worked there all the time it was operational from Aug '43 to May '45. I transferred to RAF West Raynham in 1946. He said he had flown from here and the name of one of the ships he'd flown in was "Trips Daily." I said I knew it and where its hardstand was and by a coincidence we were only about 50 or 60 yards from it. When we walked over he could remember the small tree plantations on one side and the main runway on the other. His friend took some pictures of Dick and me and he sent me one. We have been in touch with each other ever since we met. As it says in the

foot six inches and the other guy from New Mexico was six foot six inches tall. It was interesting to listen to the difference in accents and the different names you had for things like your sweet or chocolate candy and a tap or faucet, and lots of things.

I left school at the end of July and started work the day after my 14th birthday, just before the 392nd started their missions. For the first year I worked for the firm that does all the maintenance on the base buildings. I passed the tests to be a M.T. Fitter with the Air Ministry but had to be 16 years old. I can remember after

LETTERS (continued from page 33)

into the bomb dump to where the guys were on guard and he would say, "Officer of the Day." They would sprint to attention and salute me as the coat had 1st Lt. markings on the shoulders. Then they would see it was me. They would laugh their heads off. The Provost Marshal's name was Peter Constance. He knew how close I was to a lot of his guys and he knew what went on. All the people who lived in houses within the boundaries of the base had to have passes issued by him but he would never give me one. He would say when I went to him to get one, "You are known by my men well enough to get home and if the guard is one who doesn't know you, then hard luck or in other words tuff s***." So the only pass I had was my one given to me by the Air Ministry.

Well, I think this is enough of my memories for now. Hope I have not bored you to sleep, but it is all true.

Ernie Parke
1 Herne Lane
Beeston, Kings Lynn
Norfolk PE32 2NB
England



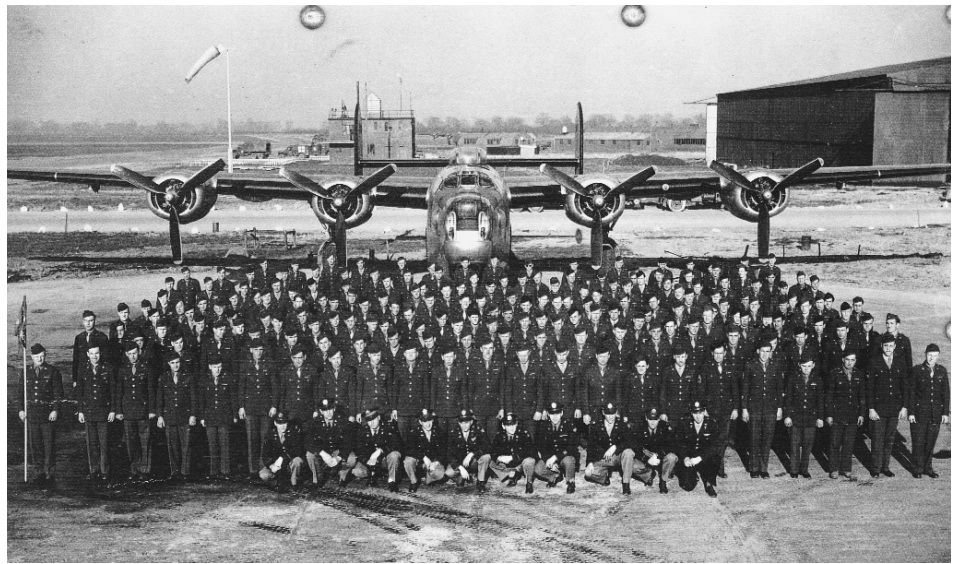
To the Editor:

I have recently been sorting through my parents' photographs, etc., and it occurred to me that perhaps you might find them to be of interest.

During World War II, my parents decided that they would have "open house" for whoever needed a place to stay. At the fall of Dunkirk, I remember as a child, seeing the first soldiers returning from the beaches of Dunkirk — they were young men who stayed briefly at our home whilst awaiting to be transferred to their regiments. Many young service men and women were to stay in our home during those war years — many have remained lifelong friends.

When the Americans came to England my parents invited some of them to our homes. I remember with special affection one rainy Christmas Eve, we had been shopping in Norwich Marketplace when we saw three American airmen looking a little lost. My parents then invited them to spend Christmas with us, this they did and subsequently became great friends — they were David Frank, Edgar West and Bobby Swimm. David Frank organized "Ye Olde Worlde Tailor Shoppe" at Seething Air Base (Norfolk) and my mother carried out numerous alterations to the airmen's uniforms.

After the war, David Frank invited my parents to stay with his family in the USA. This they did on two occasions. My



714TH BOMB SQUADRON, 448TH BOMB GROUP, 15 MARCH 1945



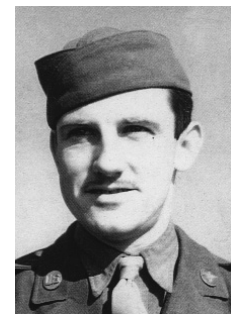
DAVID FRANK



EDGAR S. WEST



BOBBY SWIMM



GILBERT SHERMAN

mother died in 1988 and my father died in 1993 but it has taken until now for me to make contact with you. I am now a grandmother (aged 73 years) but can clearly remember much of what happened during the war years. One special memory is looking up at the sky that was almost black with planes leaving for the D-Day battle.

Gilbert Sherman was a lovely quiet man who sent me a poetry book that I still have — sadly he was reported missing.

I do have a request — I would like to know whether any of these airmen are alive, and if so, perhaps we could get in touch.

Mrs. Kris Hunt
(nee Krishna Vines)
41 Moore Avenue
Norwich NR6 7LA
England



To the Editor:

My late father wrote an excellent book about his combat tours as a B-24 first pilot with the 448th Bomb Group at Seething, U.K. I read recently in the *Journal of groups'* upcoming regional reunions and wondered whether any members would be interested in reading this book of his flying experiences, which included

64 combat missions over Nazi Germany during WWII.

I have many copies of *Sporty Course*, which I can sell for \$8.00 plus postage (\$2.00). My father flew two combat tours as a first pilot with the 448th Bomb Group. He went on to a 30-year career in the USAF. *Sporty Course* is a rare biographical history of the World War II B-24 bomber pilot who flew two combat tours over Nazi Germany from 1943 to 1945. This book written by Colonel Jack Swayze tells of the actual experiences of a pilot who survived three crash landings in central Europe, one crash landing in England, and never lost a single crew member during World War II. He received two Distinguished Flying Cross awards during his tours. This book was written by a man who accurately recorded history from his first-hand experiences.

Should you know of any members of the 2nd Air Division Association who would be interested in purchasing copies, or if they could possibly be sold at your reunions, please contact me at:

Gordon Swayze
8977 E. Mesquite View Place
Vail, Arizona 85641-6702
Tel. (520) 777-7912
E-mail: arizonaswayze@cox.net



To the Editor:

I have been trying for some time, without success, to purchase a die cast model of a B-24.

I have a number of models, nothing really expensive, just aircraft I enjoy, but try as I might, no B-24. I have a number of other USAAF bombers and fighters, but I would like a B-24 as I belong to the "Friends of the 93rd" which I expect you will know flew from Hardwick as the 93rd BG during the War.

So I am asking for your help please, in perhaps providing me with information on where I might purchase such a model. Incidentally, I am only interested in something of the size 3"-4".

Robert Lewis
Church House
The Street
Hardwick
Norwich, NR15 2AB
Tel: +44-1508 531001



To the Editor:

A mutual friend has added your name to our subscriber roster and provided you with a one-year subscription to our World War II journal, *The Custer-Hawk Gazette*. We are **Operation WWII Remembered, Inc.**, a nonprofit organization dedicated to preserving the history of WWII. One of the ways in which we do this is by publishing this journal three times a year.

Our mission is to perpetuate the information and stories of those who participated in the WWII era of 1933-1948. We do this via collection, preservation and dissemination. Through our endeavors we seek to honor what has been called "the greatest generation" and to educate current and future generations about their historical efforts. We've printed stories from the frontlines and the home front; men and women; combatants and civilians. We actively seek more stories from all perspectives and nationalities. We are dedicated to gathering and safeguarding the personal histories of WWII.

We've been publishing *The Custer-Hawk Gazette* since April 2002. Originally four pages long and only given to seventeen people, we're now sixteen (soon to be twenty) pages long and have 186 subscribers in 20 states and 2 countries! Our newsletter is found in the Research Department of the Milwaukee County Historical Society and the Wisconsin Veterans Museum; in the racks at the Milwaukee Public Library and Greenfield News & Hobby; and on the counter at the Military Collectibles Shop.

We welcome this opportunity to show you what we are doing to help remember the WWII generation. We hope you enjoy

this issue. Be sure to mention us to your friends and family and let us know of anyone interested in receiving our journal. Please contact me if you have any questions or desire to help us document and remember this unique era. Remember, we are a nonprofit 501 (c) (3) organization under the U.S. Internal Revenue Code and donations made to us are tax deductible

to the fullest extent of the law.

Welcome to our steadily growing family of subscribers!

Jason M. Waltz, CFO
Operation WWII Remembered, Inc.
5234 S. 22nd Street
Milwaukee, WI 53221
Tel. (414) 325-7609



FLASHBACK



Editor's Note:
These photos are from the files of **JAMES H. REEVES (Headquarters)**, who brought them home from files at Division Operations.

Top: Crash landing of a P-51 after receiving battle damage.

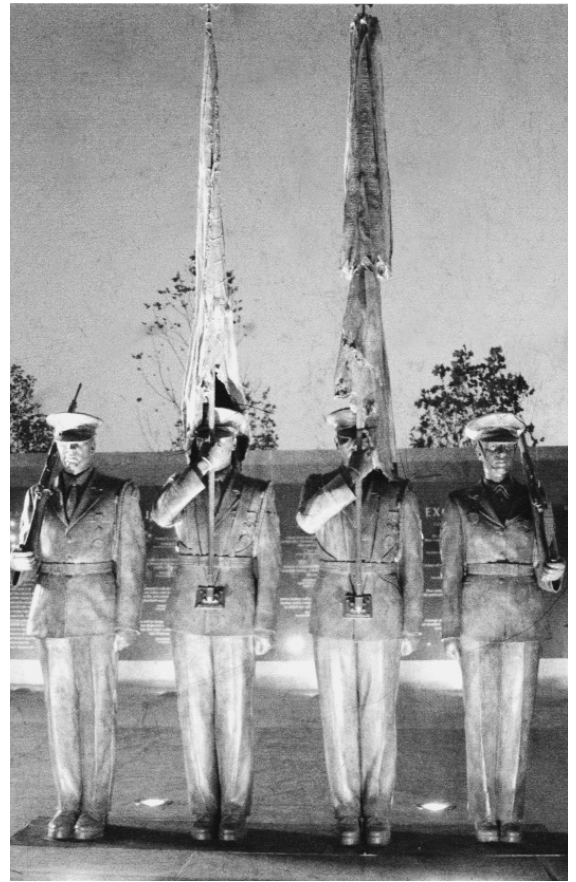
Middle and bottom: Battle damage inflicted by the 2nd Air Division, 8th AF.



At the Air Force Memorial

Right:
The Bronze
Honor Guard.

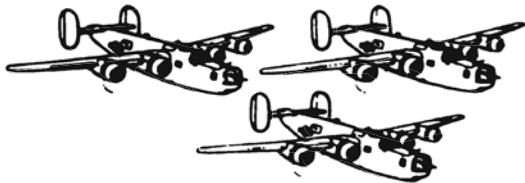
Below:
Part of the granite
inscription honoring
major donors at the
base of the memorial.



VETERANS ORGANIZATIONS
B-24 GROUPS MEMORIAL OF THE ARMY AIR FORCES
SECOND AIR DIVISION ASSOCIATION
US ARMY/AIR FORCE 98TH BOMB GROUP/
WING VETERANS ASSOCIATION

SECOND AIR DIVISION ASSOCIATION
EIGHTH AIR FORCE
RAY PYTEL, JOURNAL EDITOR
P.O. BOX 484, ELKHORN, WI 53121-0484

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Ipswich, MA 01938
Permit No. 74



FOLDED WINGS?
CHANGE OF ADDRESS?
All information should be sent to:
Evelyn Cohen
06-410 Delaire Landing Road
Philadelphia, PA 19114-4157