



*The 461st*

# **Liberaider**



Vol. 31, No. 1

JUNE 2014

SOMEWHERE IN THE USA

## **Reunion Information**

The 2014 reunion will include not only the 484th, but for the first time will also include the 451<sup>st</sup> and 455<sup>th</sup>. It will be held in Oklahoma City, OK. This will be our first visit to this city and promises to be one of the best reunions we've ever had. Check out the details on page 18 and sign-up information on page 20.

### ***Inside this issue***

<i>Reunion Information</i>	1
<i>Declassified Plans</i>	1
<i>A little Big History</i>	1
<i>Woodstock Angel</i>	16
<i>A Funny Thing Happened</i>	23
<i>WWII Log</i>	27
<i>Humor</i>	36
<i>Redtails</i>	38
<i>President's Corner</i>	39
<i>Webmaster Comments</i>	40

## **Declassified Plans for WW II Invasion of Japan**

Deep in the recesses of the National Archives in Washington, D.C., hidden for nearly four decades lie thousands of pages of yellowing and dusty documents stamped "Top Secret". These documents, now declassified, are the plans for Operation Downfall, the invasion of Japan during World War II.

Only a few Americans in 1945 were aware of the elaborate plans that had been prepared for the Allied Invasion of the Japanese home islands. Even fewer today are aware of the defenses the Japanese had prepared to counter the invasion had it been launched.

Operation Downfall was finalized during the spring and summer of 1945. It called for two massive military undertakings to be carried out in succession and aimed at the heart of the Japanese Empire.

In the first invasion - code named "Operation Olympic"- American combat troops would land on Japan by amphibious assault during the early morning hours of November 1, 1945 - 69 years ago. Fourteen combat divisions of soldiers and Marines would

*(Continued on page 4)*

## **A LITTLE "BIG HISTORY"**

### **Tinian Island, Pacific Ocean**

It's a small island, less than 40 square miles - a flat green dot in the vastness of Pacific blue.

Fly over it and you notice a slash across its north end of uninhabited bush, a long thin line that looks like an overgrown dirt runway. If you didn't know what it was, you wouldn't give it a second glance out your airplane window.

On the ground, you see the runway isn't dirt but tarmac and crushed lime-

stone, abandoned with weeds sticking out of it. Yet this is arguably the most historical airstrip on earth. This is where World War II was won. This is Runway Able.

On July 24, 1944, 30,000 US Marines landed on the beaches of Tinian. Eight days later, over 8,000 of the 8,800 Japanese soldiers on the island were dead (vs. 328 Marines), and four months later the Seabees had built the busiest airfield of WWII - dubbed North Field - enabling B-29 Superfortresses to launch air attacks on the Philippines, Okinawa, and

*(Continued on page 9)*

# Taps

May they rest in peace forever

Please forward all death notices to:

Hughes Glantzberg  
P.O. Box 926  
Gunnison, CO 81230  
editor@461st.org

Headquarters

<u>Name</u>	<u>Hometown</u>	<u>MOS</u>	<u>Date of Death</u>
Baxter, Joseph W.	Beachwood, OH	784	02/08/14

764<sup>th</sup> Squadron

<u>Name</u>	<u>Hometown</u>	<u>MOS</u>	<u>Date of Death</u>
Alexander, Clair B., Jr.	Copley, OH	1092	12/10/12
Kucera, Joseph	Mesa, AZ	1034	08/18/12

765<sup>th</sup> Squadron

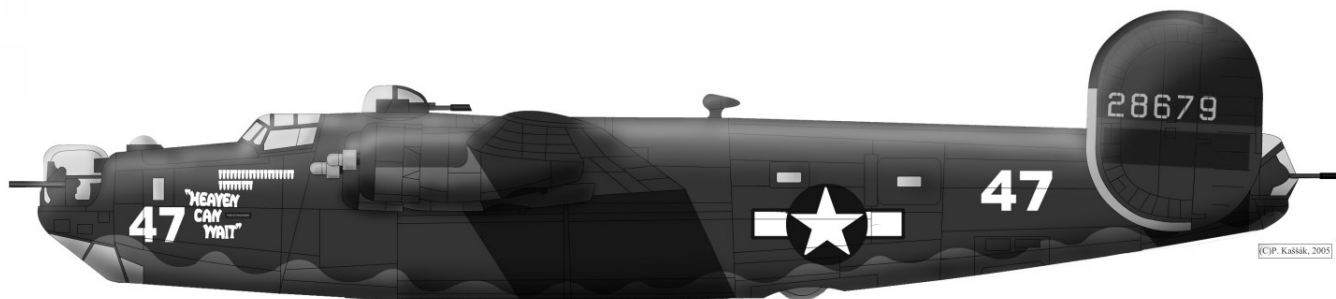
<u>Name</u>	<u>Hometown</u>	<u>MOS</u>	<u>Date of Death</u>
Modrovsky, John R.	Spring Hill, FL	612	04/19/14
Oberholtzer, Ernest	Spencer, IN	1034	12/23/13

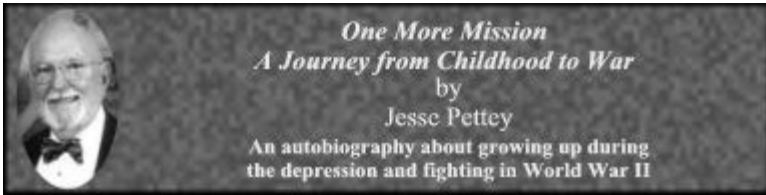
766<sup>th</sup> Squadron

<u>Name</u>	<u>Hometown</u>	<u>MOS</u>	<u>Date of Death</u>
Hollingshead, Howard K.	Monroe, OH	1035	03/14/14
Jensen, Robert E.	San Diego, CA	1092	11/26/13

767<sup>th</sup> Squadron

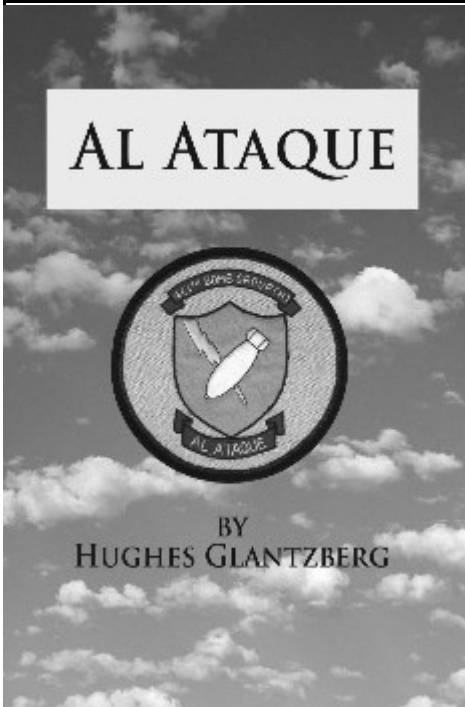
<u>Name</u>	<u>Hometown</u>	<u>MOS</u>	<u>Date of Death</u>
Carney, Richard A.	Cassville, MO	612	08/25/13





With a special interest in World War II and the 461st Bombardment Group in particular, I found this book excellent. Most of the men who fought during WWII were in their late teens and early 20s. It's amazing to be able to read about their activities. Liberaider Editor

Available from Amazon.com, Barnes & Noble and Xlibris (at a 15% discount) (<http://www2.xlibris.com/bookstore/bookdisplay.asp?bookid=11013>).



## Al Ataque

History / General

Trade **Paperback**

Publication Date: Nov-2006

Price: \$26.95

Size: 6 x 9

Author: Hughes Glantzberg

ISBN: **0-595-41572-5**

413 Pages

On Demand Printing

Available from Amazon.com, Barnes and Noble, Ingram Book Group, Baker & Taylor, and from iUniverse, Inc

To order call 1-800-AUTHORS

Trade **Hardcopy**

Publication Date: Nov-2006

Price: \$36.95

Size: 6 x 9

Author: Hughes Glantzberg

ISBN: **0-595-86486-4**

describes the preparation a bomb group goes through before being deployed overseas as well as the problems of shipping over five thousand men and supplies along with some eighty B-24 aircraft from a stateside base to a foreign country. The book details the establishment of Torretta Field which was used by the 461st for the duration of the war in Europe. The 461st Bomb Group flew two hundred and twenty-three combat missions between April 1944 and April 1945. Each of these is described in the book. Personal experiences of veterans who were actually part of the 461st are also included.



## Music Bravely Ringing

by  
Martin A. Rush  
767th Squadron

This is the story of a small town boy who, during WWII, wandered onto the conveyor belt that turned civilians into bomber pilots. Initially awed and intimidated at the world outside his home town, he began to realize that this was an opportunity to have a hand in stimulating and challenging dealings larger than he had expected. He had a few near-misses, but gradually began to get the hang of it. His story is that like the thousands of young men who were tossed into the maelstrom of war in the skies. He was one of the ones who was lucky enough to live through it. Available from Amazon.com, Barnes and Noble, Ingram Book Group, Baker & Taylor, and from iUniverse, Inc.

*(Continued from page 1)*

land on heavily fortified and defended Kyushu, the southernmost of the Japanese home islands, after an unprecedented naval and aerial bombardment.

The second invasion on March 1, 1946 - code named "Operation Coronet"- would send at least 22 divisions against 1 million Japanese defenders on the main island of Honshu and the Tokyo Plain. Its goal: the unconditional surrender of Japan.

With the exception of a part of the British Pacific Fleet, Operation Downfall was to be a strictly American operation. It called for using the entire Marine Corps, the entire Pacific Navy, elements of the 7<sup>th</sup> Army Air Force, the 8<sup>th</sup> Air Force (recently redeployed from Europe), 10<sup>th</sup> Air Force and the American Far Eastern Air Force. More than 1.5 million combat soldiers, with 3 million more in support or more than 40% of all servicemen still in uniform in 1945 - would be directly involved in the two amphibious assaults. Casualties were expected to be extremely heavy.

Admiral William Leahy estimated that there would be more than 250,000 Americans killed or wounded on Kyushu alone. General Charles Willoughby, chief of intelligence for General Douglas MacArthur, the Supreme Commander of the Southwest Pacific, estimated American casualties would be one million men by the fall of 1946. Willoughby's own intelligence staff considered this to be a conservative estimate.

During the summer of 1945, America had little time to prepare for such an endeavor, but top military leaders were in almost unanimous agreement that an invasion was necessary.

While naval blockade and strategic bombing of Japan was considered to be useful, General MacArthur, for instance, did not believe a blockade would bring about an unconditional surrender. The advocates for invasion agreed that while a naval blockade chokes, it does not kill; and though strategic bombing might destroy cities, it leaves whole armies intact.

So on May 25, 1945, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, after extensive deliberation, issued to General MacArthur, Admiral Chester Nimitz, and Army Air Force General Henry Arnold, the top secret directive to pro-

ceed with the invasion of Kyushu. The target date was after the typhoon season.

President Truman approved the plans for the invasions July 24. Two days later, the United Nations issued the Potsdam Proclamation, which called upon Japan to surrender unconditionally or face total destruction. Three days later, the Japanese governmental news agency broadcast to the world that Japan would ignore the proclamation and would refuse to surrender. During this same period it was learned -- via monitoring Japanese radio broadcasts -- that Japan had closed all schools and mobilized its school children, was arming its civilian population and was fortifying caves and building underground defenses.

Operation Olympic called for a four pronged assault on Kyushu. Its purpose was to seize and control the southern one-third of that island and establish naval and air bases, to tighten the naval blockade of the home islands, to destroy units of the main Japanese army and to support the later invasion of the Tokyo Plain.

The preliminary invasion would begin October 27 when the 40<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division would land on a series of small islands west and southwest of Kyushu. At the same time, the 158<sup>th</sup> Regimental Combat Team would invade and occupy a small island 28 miles south of Kyushu. On these islands, seaplane bases would be established and radar would be set up to provide advance air warning for the invasion fleet, to serve as fighter direction centers for the carrier-based aircraft and to provide an emergency anchorage for the invasion fleet, should things not go well on the day of the invasion. As the invasion grew imminent, the massive firepower of the Navy - the Third and Fifth Fleets -- would approach Japan. The Third Fleet, under Admiral William "Bull" Halsey, with its big guns and naval aircraft, would provide strategic support for the operation against Honshu and Hokkaido. Halsey's fleet would be composed of battleships, heavy cruisers, destroyers, dozens of support ships and three fast carrier task groups. From these carriers, hundreds of Navy fighters, dive bombers and torpedo planes would hit targets all over the island of Honshu. The 3,000 ship Fifth Fleet, under Admiral Raymond Spruance, would carry the invasion troops.

*(Continued on page 5)*

*(Continued from page 4)*

Several days before the invasion, the battleships, heavy cruisers and destroyers would pour thousands of tons of high explosives into the target areas. They would not cease the bombardment until after the land forces had been launched. During the early morning hours of November 1, the invasion would begin. Thousands of soldiers and Marines would pour ashore on beaches all along the eastern, south-eastern, southern and western coasts of Kyushu. Waves of

Helldivers, Dauntless dive bombers, Avengers, Corsairs, and Hellcats from 66 aircraft carriers would bomb, rocket and strafe enemy defenses, gun emplacements and troop concentrations along the beaches.

The Eastern Assault Force consisting of the 25<sup>th</sup>, 33<sup>rd</sup>, and 41<sup>st</sup> Infantry Divisions, would land near Miyasaki, at beaches called Austin, Buick, Cadillac, Chevrolet, Chrysler, and Ford, and move inland to attempt to capture the city and its nearby airfield. The Southern Assault Force, consisting of the 1<sup>st</sup> Cavalry Division, the 43<sup>rd</sup> Division and Americal Division would land inside Ariake Bay at beaches labeled DeSoto, Dusenbergl, Essex, Ford, and Franklin and attempt to capture Shibushi and the city of Kanoya and its airfield.

On the western shore of Kyushu, at beaches Pontiac, Reo, Rolls Royce, Saxon, Star, Studebaker, Stutz, Winston and Zephyr, the V Amphibious Corps would land the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, and 5<sup>th</sup> Marine Divisions, sending half of its force inland to Sendai and the other half to the port city of Kagoshima.

On November 4, the Reserve Force, consisting of the 81<sup>st</sup> and 98<sup>th</sup> Infantry Divisions and the 11<sup>th</sup> Airborne Division, after feigning an attack on the island of Shikoku, would be landed -- if not needed elsewhere - near Kaimondake, near the southernmost tip of Kagoshima Bay, at the beaches designated Locomobile, Lincoln, LaSalle, Hupmobile, Moon, Mercedes, Maxwell, Overland, Oldsmobile, Packard, and Plymouth.

Olympic was not just a plan for invasion, but for conquest and occupation as well. It was expected to take four months to achieve its objective, with the three fresh American divisions per month to be landed in support of that operation if needed. If all went

well with Olympic, Coronet would be launched March 1, 1946. Coronet would be twice the size of Olympic, with as many as 28 divisions landing on Honshu.

All along the coast east of Tokyo, the American 1<sup>st</sup> Army would land the 5<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, 27<sup>th</sup>, 44<sup>th</sup>, 86<sup>th</sup>, and 96<sup>th</sup> Infantry Divisions, along with the 4<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Marine Divisions.

At Sagami Bay, just south of Tokyo, the entire 8<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> Armies would strike north and east to clear the long western shore of Tokyo Bay and attempt to go as far as Yokohama. The assault troops landing south of Tokyo would be the 4<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, 24<sup>th</sup>, 31<sup>st</sup>, 37<sup>th</sup>, 38<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup> Infantry Divisions, along with the 13<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Armored Divisions.

Following the initial assault, eight more divisions - the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 28<sup>th</sup>, 35<sup>th</sup>, 91<sup>st</sup>, 95<sup>th</sup>, 97<sup>th</sup>, and 104<sup>th</sup> Infantry Divisions and the 11<sup>th</sup> Airborne Division -- would be landed. If additional troops were needed, as expected, other divisions redeployed from Europe and undergoing training in the United States would be shipped to Japan in what was hoped to be the final push.

Captured Japanese documents and post war interrogations of Japanese military leaders disclose that information concerning the number of Japanese planes available for the defense of the home islands was dangerously in error.

During the sea battle at Okinawa alone, Japanese Kamikaze aircraft sank 32 Allied ships and damaged more than 400 others. But during the summer of 1945, American top brass concluded that the Japanese had spent their air force since American bombers and fighters daily flew unmolested over Japan.

What the military leaders did not know was that by the end of July the Japanese had been saving all aircraft, fuel, and pilots in reserve, and had been feverishly building new planes for the decisive battle for their homeland.

As part of Ketsu-Go, the name for the plan to defend Japan -- the Japanese were building 20 suicide takeoff strips in southern Kyushu with underground hangars. They also had 35 camouflaged airfields and nine seaplane bases.

*(Continued on page 6)*

*(Continued from page 5)*

On the night before the expected invasion, 50 Japanese seaplane bombers, 100 former carrier aircraft and 50 land based army planes were to be launched in a suicide attack on the fleet.

The Japanese had 58 more airfields in Korea, western Honshu and Shikoku, which also were to be used for massive suicide attacks.

Allied intelligence had established that the Japanese had no more than 2,500 aircraft of which they guessed 300 would be deployed in suicide attacks. In August 1945, however, unknown to Allied intelligence, the Japanese still had 5,651 army and 7,074 navy aircraft, for a total of 12,725 planes of all types. Every village had some type of aircraft manufacturing activity hidden in mines, railway tunnels, under viaducts and in basements of department stores, work was being done to construct new planes.

Additionally, the Japanese were building newer and more effective models of the Okka, a rocket-propelled bomb much like the German V-1, but flown by a suicide pilot.

When the invasion became imminent, Ketsu-Go called for a fourfold aerial plan of attack to destroy up to 800 Allied ships.

While Allied ships were approaching Japan, but still in the open seas, an initial force of 2,000 army and navy fighters were to fight to the death to control the skies over Kyushu. A second force of 330 navy combat pilots was to attack the main body of the task force to keep it from using its fire support and air cover to protect the troop carrying transports. While these two forces were engaged, a third force of 825 suicide planes was to hit the American transports.

As the invasion convoys approached their anchorages, another 2,000 suicide planes were to be launched in waves of 200 to 300, to be used in hour by hour attacks.

By mid-morning of the first day of the invasion, most of the American land-based aircraft would be forced to return to their bases, leaving the defense against the suicide planes to the carrier pilots and the shipboard gunners.

Carrier pilots crippled by fatigue would have to land time and time again to rearm and refuel. Guns would malfunction from the heat of continuous firing and ammunition would become scarce. Gun crews would be exhausted by nightfall, but still the waves of kamikaze would continue. With the fleet hovering off the beaches, all remaining Japanese aircraft would be committed to nonstop suicide attacks, which the Japanese hoped could be sustained for 10 days. The Japanese planned to coordinate their air strikes with attacks from the 40 remaining submarines from the Imperial Navy - some armed with Long Lance torpedoes with a range of 20 miles -- when the invasion fleet was 180 miles off Kyushu.

The Imperial Navy had 23 destroyers and two cruisers which were operational. These ships were to be used to counterattack the American invasion. A number of the destroyers were to be beached at the last minute to be used as anti-invasion gun platforms.

Once offshore, the invasion fleet would be forced to defend not only against the attacks from the air, but would also be confronted with suicide attacks from sea. Japan had established a suicide naval attack unit of midget submarines, human torpedoes and exploding motorboats.

The goal of the Japanese was to shatter the invasion before the landing. The Japanese were convinced the Americans would back off or become so demoralized that they would then accept a less-than-unconditional surrender and a more honorable and face-saving end for the Japanese.

But as horrible as the battle of Japan would be off the beaches, it would be on Japanese soil that the American forces would face the most rugged and fanatical defense encountered during the war.

Throughout the island-hopping Pacific campaign, Allied troops had always outnumbered the Japanese by 2 to 1 and sometimes 3 to 1. In Japan it would be different. By virtue of a combination of cunning, guesswork, and brilliant military reasoning, a number of Japan's top military leaders were able to deduce, not only when, but where, the United States would land its first invasion forces.

*(Continued on page 7)*

*(Continued from page 6)*

Facing the 14 American divisions landing at Kyushu would be 14 Japanese divisions, 7 independent mixed brigades, 3 tank brigades and thousands of naval troops. On Kyushu the odds would be 3 to 2 in favor of the Japanese, with 790,000 enemy defenders against 550,000 Americans. This time the bulk of the Japanese defenders would not be the poorly trained and ill-equipped labor battalions that the Americans had faced in the earlier campaigns.

The Japanese defenders would be the hard core of the home army. These troops were well-fed and well equipped. They were familiar with the terrain, had stockpiles of arms and ammunition, and had developed an effective system of transportation and supply almost invisible from the air. Many of these Japanese troops were the elite of the army, and they were swollen with a fanatical fighting spirit.

Japan's network of beach defenses consisted of off-shore mines, thousands of suicide scuba divers attacking landing craft, and mines planted on the beaches. Coming ashore, the American Eastern amphibious assault forces at Miyazaki would face three Japanese divisions, and two others poised for counterattack. Awaiting the Southeastern attack force at Ariake Bay was an entire division and at least one mixed infantry brigade.

On the western shores of Kyushu, the Marines would face the most brutal opposition. Along the invasion beaches would be the three Japanese divisions, a tank brigade, a mixed infantry brigade and an artillery command. Components of two divisions would also be poised to launch counterattacks.

If not needed to reinforce the primary landing beaches, the American Reserve Force would be landed at the base of Kagoshima Bay November 4, where they would be confronted by two mixed infantry brigades, parts of two infantry divisions and

thousands of naval troops.

All along the invasion beaches, American troops would face coastal batteries, anti-landing obstacles and a network of heavily fortified pillboxes, bunkers, and underground fortresses. As Americans waded ashore, they would face intense artillery and mortar fire as they worked their way through concrete rubble and barbed-wire entanglements arranged to funnel them into the muzzles of these Japanese guns.

On the beaches and beyond would be hundreds of Japanese machine gun positions, beach mines, booby traps, trip-wire mines and sniper units. Suicide units concealed in "spider holes" would engage the troops as they passed nearby. In the heat of battle, Japanese infiltration units would be sent to reap havoc in the American lines by cutting phone and communication lines. Some of the Japanese troops would be in American uniform; English-speaking Japanese officers were assigned to break in on American radio traffic to call off artillery fire, to order retreats and to further confuse troops. Other infiltration with demolition charges strapped on their chests or backs would attempt to blow up American tanks, artillery pieces and ammunition stores as they were unloaded ashore.

Beyond the beaches were large artillery pieces situated to bring down a curtain of fire on the beach. Some of these large guns were mounted on railroad tracks running in and out of caves protected by concrete and steel.

The battle for Japan would be won by what Simon Bolivar Buckner, a lieutenant general in the Confederate army during the Civil War, had called "Prairie Dog Warfare." This type of fighting was almost unknown to the ground troops in Europe and the Mediterranean. It was peculiar only to the soldiers

*(Continued on page 8)*

The 461st Liberaider  
461<sup>st</sup> Bombardment Group (H)  
Activated: 1 July 1943  
Inactivated: 27 August 1945  
Incorporated: 15 November 1985

Officers:

Hughes Glantzberg, President, P.O. Box 926, Gunnison, CO 81230  
Glenda Price, Vice-President, 1621 Devoe Drive, Lincoln, NE 68506  
David St. Yves, Treasurer, 5 Hutt Forest Lane, East Taunton, MA 02718  
Glenda Price, Secretary, 1621 Devoe Drive, Lincoln, NE 68506  
Hughes Glantzberg, Historian, P.O. Box 926, Gunnison, CO 81230-0926

Directors

Lee Cole, Hdqtrs Sqdn., 9010 North Grand, Kansas City, MO 64155

Jeanne Hickey, 764<sup>th</sup> Sqdn, 535 Gibbs Hill Road, Kane, PA 16735  
Dave Blake, 765<sup>th</sup> Sqdn, 648 Lakewood Road, Bonner Springs, KS 66012  
Barbara Alden, 766<sup>th</sup> Sqdn, 2360 Rudat Circle, Rancho Cordova, CA 95670  
Jeanne Hickey, 767<sup>th</sup> Sqdn, 535 Gibbs Hill Road, Kane, PA 16735  
Director at Large  
Jim Fitzpatrick, San Diego Magazine 1450 Front Street, San Diego, CA 92101  
Hughes Glantzberg, Webmaster, P.O. Box 926, Gunnison, CO 81230  
Dave Blake, Reunion Chairman, 648 Lakewood Road, Bonner Springs, KS 66012  
The 461<sup>st</sup> Liberaider  
Hughes Glantzberg, Editor, P.O. Box 926, Gunnison, CO 81230  
The Liberaider is published twice yearly on behalf of the members of the organization. Permission is granted to use articles provided source is given.

*(Continued from page 7)*

and Marines who fought the Japanese on islands all over the Pacific -- at Tarawa, Saipan, Iwo Jima and Okinawa.

Prairie Dog Warfare was a battle for yards, feet and sometimes inches. It was brutal, deadly and dangerous form of combat aimed at an underground, heavily fortified, non-retreating enemy.

In the mountains behind the Japanese beaches were underground networks of caves, bunkers, command posts and hospitals connected by miles of tunnels with dozens of entrances and exits. Some of these complexes could hold up to 1,000 troops.

In addition to the use of poison gas and bacteriological warfare (which the Japanese had experimented with), Japan mobilized its citizenry.

Had Olympic come about, the Japanese civilian population, inflamed by a national slogan - "One Hundred Million Will Die for the Emperor and Nation" - were prepared to fight to the death. Twenty-eight Million Japanese had become a part of the National Volunteer Combat Force. They were armed with ancient rifles, lunge mines, satchel charges, Molotov cocktails and one-shot black powder mortars. Others were armed with swords, long bows, axes and bamboo spears. The civilian units were to be used in nighttime attacks, hit and run maneuvers, delaying actions and massive suicide charges at the weaker American positions. At the early stage of the invasion, 1,000 Japanese and American soldiers would be dying every hour.

The invasion of Japan never became a reality because on August 6, 1945, an atomic bomb was exploded over Hiroshima. Three days later, a second bomb was dropped on Nagasaki. Within days the war with Japan was at a close.

Had these bombs not been dropped and had the invasion been launched as scheduled, combat casualties in Japan would have been at a minimum of the tens of thousands. Every foot of Japanese soil would have been paid for by Japanese and American lives.

One can only guess at how many civilians would have committed suicide in their homes or in futile

mass military attacks. In retrospect, the 1 million American men who were to be the casualties of the invasion were instead lucky enough to survive the war.

Intelligence studies and military estimates made 50 years ago, and not latter-day speculation, clearly indicate that the battle for Japan might well have resulted in the biggest blood-bath in the history of modern warfare.

Far worse would be what might have happened to Japan as a nation and as a culture. When the invasion came, it would have come after several months of firebombing all of the remaining Japanese cities. The cost in human life that resulted from the two atomic blasts would be small in comparison to the total number of Japanese lives that would have been lost by this aerial devastation.

With American forces locked in combat in the south of Japan, little could have prevented the Soviet Union from marching into the northern half of the Japanese home islands. Japan today could be divided much like Korea and Germany.

The world was spared the cost of Operation Downfall, however, because Japan formally surrendered to the United Nations September 2, 1945, and World War II was over.

The aircraft carriers, cruisers and transport ships scheduled to carry the invasion troops to Japan, ferried home American troops in a gigantic operation called Magic Carpet.

In the fall of 1945, in the aftermath of the war, few people concerned themselves with the invasion plans. Following the surrender, the classified documents, maps, diagrams and appendices for Operation Downfall were packed away in boxes and eventually stored at the National Archives. These plans that called for the invasion of Japan paint a vivid description of what might have been one of the most horrible campaigns in the history of man. The fact that the story of the invasion of Japan is locked up in the National Archives and is not told in our history books is something for which all Americans can be thankful.



*(Continued from page 1)*



Tinian Island from the air.



An aerial view of the runway.

mainland Japan.

*(Continued on page 10)*

*(Continued from page 9)*



Abandoned tarmac and crushed limestone runway

Late in the afternoon of August 5, 1945, a B-29 was maneuvered over a bomb loading pit, then after lengthy preparations, taxied to the east end of North Field's main runway, Runway Able, and at 2:45 AM in the early morning darkness of August 6, took off.

The B-29 was piloted by Col. Paul Tibbets of the US Army Air Force, who had named the plane after his mother, Enola Gay. The crew named the bomb they were carrying Little Boy. Six hours later at 8:15 AM Japan time, the first atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima.

Three days later, in the pre-dawn hours of August 9, a B-29 named Bockscar (a pun on "boxcar" after its flight commander Capt. Fred Bock), piloted by Major Charles Sweeney took off from Runway Able. Finding its primary target of Kokura obscured by clouds, Sweeney proceeded to the secondary target of Nagasaki, over which, at 11:01 AM, bombardier Kermit Beahan released the atomic bomb dubbed Fat Man.

Here is "Atomic Bomb Pit #1" where Little Boy was loaded onto Enola Gay.

There are pictures displayed in the pit, now glass-enclosed. This one shows Little Boy being hoisted into Enola Gay's bomb bay.

And here on the other side of ramp is "Atomic Bomb Pit #2" where Fat Man was loaded onto Bockscar.

The commemorative plaque records that 16 hours after the nuking of Nagasaki, "On August 10, 1945 at 0300, the Japanese Emperor without his cabinet's consent decided to end the Pacific War."

Take a good look at these pictures, folks. This is where World War II ended with total victory of America over Japan.

Most people, when they think of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, reflect on the numbers of lives killed in the nu-

*(Continued on page 11)*

*(Continued from page 10)*



"Atomic Bomb Pit #1" where Little Boy was loaded onto Enola Gay



Little Boy being hoisted into Enola Gay's bomb bay.

clear blasts - at least 70,000 and 50,000 respectively. Think about the number of lives saved - how many

*(Continued on page 12)*

*(Continued from page 11)*



"Atomic Bomb Pit #2" where Fat Man was loaded onto Bockscar.

more Japanese and Americans would have died in a continuation of the war had the nukes not been dropped.

Yet that was not all. It's not just that the nukes obviated the US invasion of Japan, Operation Downfall that would have caused upwards of a million American and Japanese deaths or more. It's that nuking Hiroshima and Nagasaki were of extraordinary humanitarian benefit to the nation and people of Japan.

Let's go to this cliff on the nearby island of Saipan to learn why.

Saipan is less than a mile north of Tinian. The month before the Marines took Tinian, on June 15, 1944, 71,000 Marines landed on Saipan. They faced 31,000 Japanese soldiers determined not to surrender.

Japan had colonized Saipan after World War I and turned the island into a giant sugar cane plantation. By the time of the Marine invasion, in addition to the 31,000 entrenched soldiers, some 25,000 Japanese settlers were living on Saipan, plus thousands more Okinawans, Koreans, and native islanders brutalized as slaves to cut the sugar cane.

There were also one or two thousand Korean "comfort women" (kanji in Japanese), abducted young women from Japan's colony of Korea to service the Japanese soldiers as sex slaves. (See "The Comfort Women: Japan's Brutal Regime of Enforced Prostitution in the Second World War," by George Hicks.)

Within a week of their landing, the Marines set up a civilian prisoner encampment that quickly attracted a couple thousand Japanese and others wanting US food and protection. When word of this reached Emperor

*(Continued on page 13)*

*(Continued from page 12)*



Cliff on the nearby island of Saipan less than a mile north of Tinian.

Hirohito - who contrary to the myth was in full charge of the war - he became alarmed that radio interviews of the well-treated prisoners broadcast to Japan would subvert his people's will to fight.

As meticulously documented by historian Herbert Bix in "Hirohito and the Making of Modern Japan," the Emperor issued an order for all Japanese civilians on Saipan to commit suicide. The order included the promise that, although the civilians were of low caste, their suicide would grant them a status in heaven equal to those honored soldiers who died in combat for their Emperor.

And that is why the precipice in the picture above is known as Suicide Cliff, off which over 20,000 Japanese civilians jumped to their deaths to comply with their fascist emperor's desire - mothers flinging their babies off the cliff first or in their arms as they jumped.

Anyone reluctant or refused, such as the Okinawan or Korean slaves, were shoved off at gunpoint by the Jap soldiers. Then the soldiers themselves proceeded to hurl themselves into the ocean to drown off a sea cliff afterwards called Banzai Cliff. Of the 31,000 Japanese soldiers on Saipan, the Marines killed 25,000, 5,000 jumped off Banzai Cliff, and only the remaining thousand were taken prisoner.

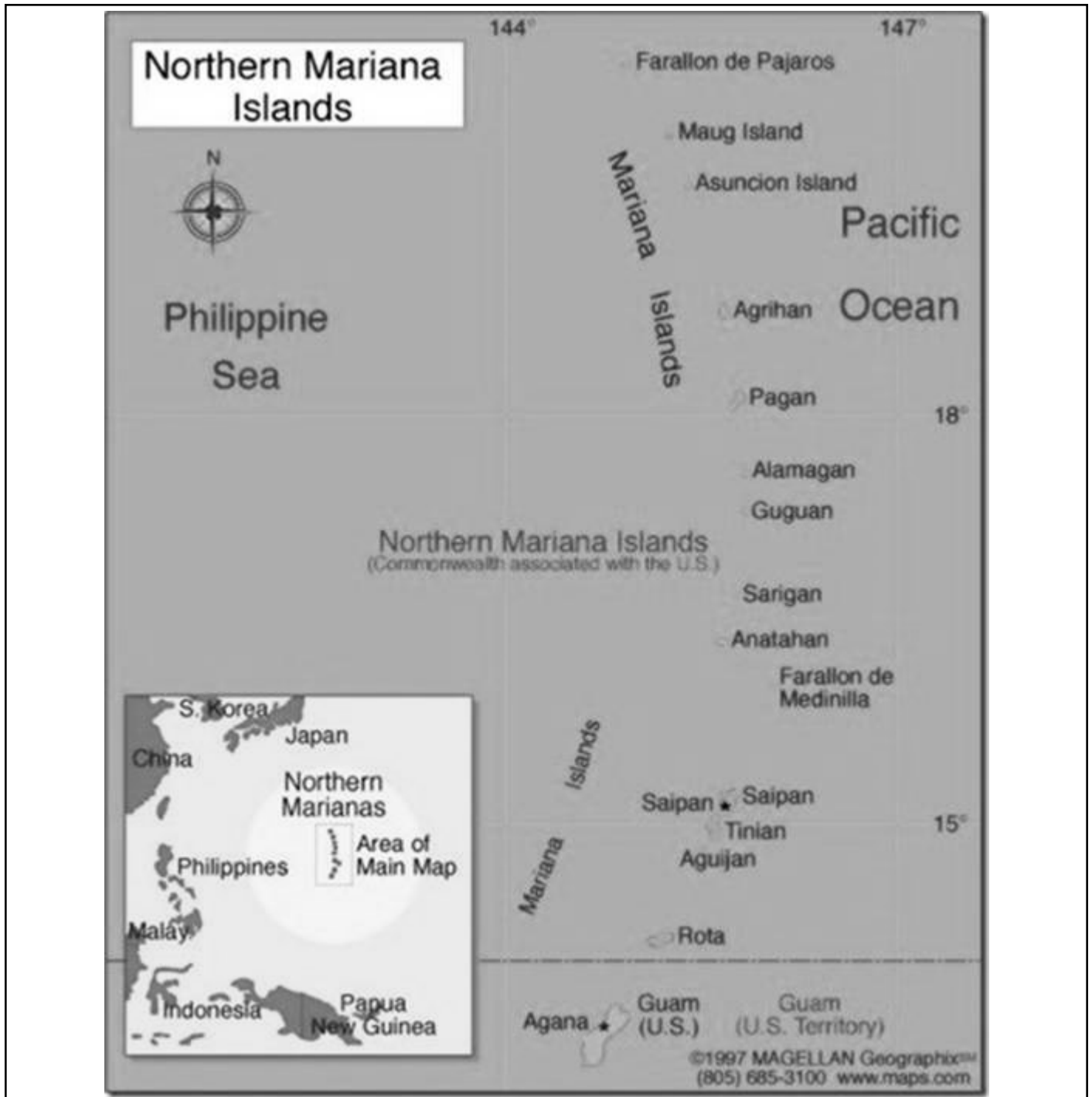
The extent of this demented fanaticism is very hard for any civilized mind to fathom - especially when it is devoted not to anything noble but barbarian evil instead. The vast brutalities inflicted by the Japanese on their conquered and colonized peoples of China, Korea, the Philippines, and throughout their "Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere" was a hideously depraved horror.

And they were willing to fight to the death to defend it. So they had to be nuked. The only way to put an end to the Japanese barbarian horror was unimaginably colossal destruction against which they had no defense whatever. Nuking Japan was not a matter of justice, revenge, or it getting what it deserved. It was the only way to end the Japanese dementia.

And it worked - for the Japanese. They stopped being barbarians and started being civilized. They achieved more prosperity - and peace - than they ever knew, or could have achieved had they continued

*(Continued on page 14)*

(Continued from page 13)



fighting and not been nuked. The shock of getting nuked is responsible.

We achieved this because we were determined to achieve victory. Victory without apologies. Despite perennial liberal demands we do so, America and its government has never apologized for nuking Japan. Hopefully, America never will.

(Continued on page 15)

*(Continued from page 14)*



Beautiful Saipan beach.

Oh, yes... Guinness lists Saipan as having the best, most equitable, weather in the world. And the beaches? Well, take a look.

Although we do not forget, history fades into the shadows of our mind and we seldom think about it. But, we should remember and we should be constantly reminded of our history, where we came from and how we got here.

Two people had a happy marriage despite their not-quite-compatible interests. He was crazy about golf and she spent all her free time at antique auctions.

One night, he cried out in his sleep, "Fore!"

She, also sleeping, responded, "Four-fifty!"

One waiter complained to another, "It took me all morning to fill this salt shaker."

"How?" the other waiter asked.

"Do you have any idea how hard it is to get the salt through those little holes on top?"

## Woodstock Angel Receives Honor



John Billings of 484<sup>th</sup> BG has flown more than 150 patient missions for Angel Flight.

Woodstock resident John Billings is an angel in more ways than one -- he has a set of wings and he carries people when they most need help.

For the second time, he has been named Virginia Pilot of the Year by Angel Mid-Atlantic, which provides free medical flights.

Billings, who began working for the charity in 2005, has flown more than 150 patient missions, according to a news release from Angel Flight.

"With the slogan 'the shortest distance between home and hope,' Angel Flight serves ambulatory patients of all ages, with medical conditions ranging from rare diseases to burns to cancer," the release states. "In this suffering economy, patients often lack the financial means to pay for long-distance transportation."

It adds that more than 600 pilots volunteer their time and aircraft -- including the cost of fuel and upkeep -- for Angel Flight Mid-Atlantic. In Virginia in 2011, Virginia pilots flew 151 missions, worth \$116,200, according to the release.

Aviation captivated Billings from an early age.

"I like to tell people it was my father's fault," Billings, 88, recalled in a phone interview Friday. "When I was 3-years-old, he went out and bought two tickets on a local airplane and [we] flew around the local area. That infected me. Later on, for my 15th birthday, he paid for my first flying lesson."

Nearly 30 years after he retired as an airline pilot, he

tries to make one Angel flight a week. He ferries patients from infancy to old age.

"The one that affected my senses the most was a little boy who was to be 1-year-old a week after I took him, him and his mother," Billings said.

He was flying the mother and child from North Carolina to Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center. The boy had an auto-immune disorder which robbed him of all four of his limbs as well as part of his face, including his nose.

"The thing that affected me the most...while [the mother] was getting in, I held the child, and that child did not weigh as much as my cat," Billings said. "He was 8 pounds, and he was almost a year old."

Billings flew the youngster a year later, and by that time, he had been fitted with one prosthetic leg.

This month, Billings, who is originally from Massachusetts, will take one of his oldest patients to New York.

"I'm taking a man who was born in 1919, and he was a soldier that came ashore at Normandy Beach," he said.

The man is being recognized with other D-Day soldiers, and will fly from New York to London, and then go on to France, Billings said.

*(Continued on page 17)*



*(Continued from page 16)*

Like that old soldier, Billings is a World War II veteran, having served in the U.S. Army Air Corps, as well as the Operation of Strategic Services, for which he flew nearly 40 secret missions from Italy, according to the news release.

"When I approached [the] age of draft, I did not want to be a soldier and fight eyeball-to-eyeball," Billings said. "That to me was scary. I decided I would enlist instead and request [the] aviation cadet program. And, I was lucky enough to be awarded that, and the rest is history.

"I haven't got it out of my system yet."

According to the Angel Flight release, Billings has more than 27,000 flight hours, and was given the Wright Brothers Master Pilot Award by the Federal

Aviation Administration six years ago.

Billings moved to Woodstock in 1996 from Mt. Vernon. He'd been flying out of Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport before then, and was the airport's Air Safety Committee Chairman.

These days, he flies out of Luray Caverns Airport in a four-seater Cessna Cutlass RG-II.

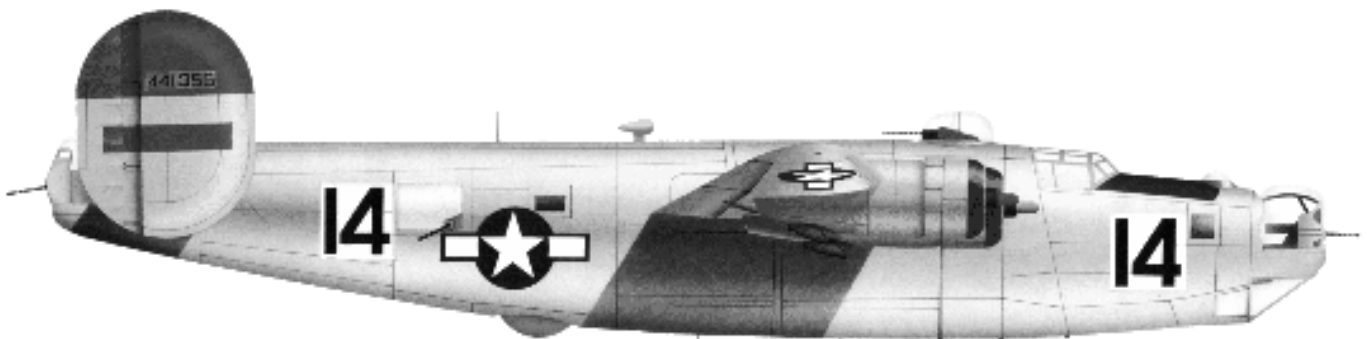
Billings plans to continue flying for Angel Flights "as long as my bank will let me."

"It really gives me a good feeling to be able to do that," he added. "I'm happy to do this.

"I only fly when there's a good excuse, like it's daytime, or it's snowing, or it's raining."



Woodstock resident John Billings sits inside his Cessna Cutlass RG-II airplane outside Luray Caverns Airport earlier this week. Billings has been chosen by Angel Flight Mid-Atlantic as Virginia Pilot of the Year, marking the second year he has won the award since flying for the organization since 2005.



# Bomb Group Annual Reunion

## September 18-21, 2014

### ITINERARY

A full, hot breakfast buffet for up to two people per room is available each morning in the hotel restaurant.

**Thursday, September 18<sup>th</sup>** – Arrival and check-in day. The registration desk will be open all day outside the Hospitality room in the hotel atrium. Heavy snacks will be available in the Hospitality room but meals are on your own. There are several restaurants nearby and, of course, the hotel restaurant will be open. An informational meeting will be held at 7:00 PM in the Aspen ballroom.

**Friday, September 19<sup>th</sup>** – We will depart the hotel at 9:00 AM for a bus tour of Tinker Air Force Base, followed by lunch at the Cimarron Steak House. After lunch, we will tour the 45<sup>th</sup> Infantry Museum, which houses a superb collection of military memorabilia as well a wonderful collection of original Bill Maulden cartoons. We will return to the hotel by about 3:00 PM. Social hour before supper will begin at 6:00 PM with a cash bar in the common area near the banquet rooms. Individual group dinners will be served at 7:00 PM in three neighboring banquet rooms.

**Saturday, September 20<sup>th</sup>** – We will depart the hotel at 9:00 AM for a highly regarded bus tour “See OKC” which traces the story of Oklahoma City from its spirited beginnings. Tour stops include downtown, the iconic Bricktown district, historic Stock Yards City, the Land Run Monument, historic Heritage Hills residential area and State Capitol building. A tasty buffet lunch at the National Western Heritage and Cowboy museum, America’s premier institution of Western history, art and culture, is next on the agenda and then a tour of the museum. For our return to the hotel, at 3:00 PM, we will be escorted by the Patriot Guard Riders who will then honor and welcome our veterans as we depart the motor coaches. Members of the Oklahoma City Chapter of The Tuskegee Airmen will join us beginning with lunch and continuing through supper to visit with those they escorted on missions. Social hour before supper begins at 6:00 PM with a cash bar in the common area near the banquet rooms. The combined groups’ banquet will be served at 7:00 PM in the Aspen Ballroom. Oklahoma’s favorite son “Will Rogers” aka Dr. Doug Watson will entertain us with his folksy humor after supper.

**Sunday, September 21<sup>st</sup>** – We will take time to remember those who didn’t make it home from Italy and those we’ve lost in the past twelve months at the Memorial Service beginning at 9:00 AM in the Aspen Ballroom. We will depart the hotel at Noon for lunch at The Spaghetti Warehouse in the Bricktown area of downtown. Next is a guided tour of the Oklahoma National Memorial and a self-guided tour of the Oklahoma National Memorial Museum, commemorating the 1995 bombing of the Murrah Federal Building. This is a very powerful, sobering tour and should not be missed. We will return to the hotel by 4:00 PM. Social hour before supper will begin at 6:00 PM with a cash bar in the common area near the banquet rooms. The Farewell dinner will be served at 7:00 PM in the Aspen Ballroom.

**NOTE:** The Tinker Air Force Base portion of the Friday tour is an ON BASE tour and each person that plans to be on board the bus that day must be on a pre-approved list. If you're taking the tour that day and DO NOT have a D.O.D. identification card (Military or civilian ID) you MUST provide a name, date of birth and drivers license number with state of issue or other state issued ID. Anyone not on this pre-approved list will not be allowed on the base tour. Please submit this information on a separate piece of paper along with your registration form.

**NOTE:** The Association voted to pay some of the cost of 461<sup>st</sup> veterans to participate in this reunion. These costs include: registration fee and group meal costs.

***Bomb Group Reunion***  
***HOTEL INFORMATION***

- DATE: September 18-21, 2014
- LOCATION: **Wyndham Garden Oklahoma City Airport**  
2101 South Meridian Avenue  
Oklahoma City, OK 73108
- ROOM RATES: \$89.00 per room, per night plus tax. This rate will be good for three days prior to and three days after the reunion. Two coupons for a hot breakfast buffet are included with each room (gratuity not included). Children under 18 are free when staying in the same room as their parents.
- RESERVATIONS: (405) 685-4000 to make your reservation.  
Tell them you are with the Bomb Group Reunion.  
Major credit card required for guarantee.
- PARKING: Free

**Free hotel shuttle to and from the airport 24-hours a day.**

*Reservations may also be made online by going to*  
**<http://tinyurl.com/461stBG>**

**Bomb Groups Reunion**

September 18 - 21, 2014

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma



Please complete and return this form by August 21, 2014. However, late registrations will be accepted. Cancellations may be made with a full refund if you find later that you cannot attend so please, get this form in soon.

Name _____ Group _____ Squadron _____		
Spouse _____ Family/Guest Names _____		
(Note: Please enter names as you would like them to appear on the name tags)		
Address _____ City _____		
State _____ ZIP _____ Phone _____ E-Mail _____		
Registration Fee	_____ @ \$15.00 per person # of persons including Veteran	Subtotal \$ _____ (Do NOT include cost for Veteran)
<b><u>Friday, September 19th</u> Tour Tinker AFB with Lunch at Cimarron Steak House. Tour 45th Infantry Museum (PROVIDE DRIVERS LICENSE NUMBER, STATE OF ISSUE AND DATE OF BIRTH ON SEPERATE PIECE OF PAPER. INCLUDE WITH THIS FORM. ADVISE IF YOU HAVE A DOD ID CARD.)</b>		
<b>Individual Bomb Grp Evening Dinner</b>	_____ @ \$48.00 per person # of persons	Subtotal \$ _____ (INCLUDE cost for Veteran)
New York Strip 8 oz.	_____ @ \$28.50 per person # of persons including Veteran	Subtotal \$ _____ (Do NOT include cost for Veteran)
Baked Tilapia	_____ @ \$25.50 per person # of persons including Veteran	Subtotal \$ _____ (Do NOT include cost for Veteran)
Vegetable Fajitas	_____ @ \$22.50 per person # of persons including Veteran	Subtotal \$ _____ (Do NOT include cost for Veteran)
<b><u>Saturday, September 20th</u></b>		
<b>See Oklahoma City Tour with Lunch and Tour at National Cowboy and Western Heritage Museum</b>		
<b>Combined Group Banquet/Program</b>	_____ @ \$62.00 per person # of persons	Subtotal \$ _____ (INCLUDE cost for Veteran)
Prime Rib of Beef Au Jus	_____ @ \$38.00 per person # of persons including Veteran	Subtotal \$ _____ (Do NOT include cost for Veteran)
Stuffed Chicken Breast	_____ @ \$29.00 per person # of persons including Veteran	Subtotal \$ _____ (Do NOT include cost for Veteran)
Lemon Basil Pasta	_____ @ \$25.50 per person # of persons including Veteran	Subtotal \$ _____ (Do NOT include cost for Veteran)
<b><u>Sunday, September 21st</u></b>		
<b>Lunch at Spaghetti Factory and Tour of Oklahoma National Memorial and Museum</b>		
	_____ @ \$52.00 # of persons	Subtotal \$ _____ (INCLUDE cost for Veteran)
<b>Farewell Combined Group Dinner</b>		
London Broil 8 oz.	_____ @ \$29.00 per person # of persons including Veteran	Subtotal \$ _____ (Do NOT include cost for Veteran)
Grilled Pork Tenderloin	_____ @ \$29.00 per person # of persons including Veteran	Subtotal \$ _____ (Do NOT include cost for Veteran)
Penne Pasta	_____ @ \$21.00 per person # of persons including Veteran	Subtotal \$ _____ (Do NOT include cost for Veteran)
EMERGENCY CONTACT: _____		GRAND TOTAL \$ _____
PHONE: _____		Could You Use a Wheelchair? Yes ___ No ___

PLEASE COMPLETE THIS REGISTRATION FORM AND MAIL ALONG WITH YOUR CHECK TO:  
Bomb Group Reunion, Attn: Dave Blake, 648 Lakewood Road, Bonner Springs, KS 66012-1804

## A NOTE FROM THE REUNION COMMITTEE

With the exception of a few last minute details, planning is complete for the 2014 Reunion. It's my opinion that this could be "one for the record books!" A representative of the 451<sup>st</sup> and 455<sup>th</sup> Bomb Groups approached us and asked to join our reunion as we did with the 484<sup>th</sup> in 2011. What this means is that for the first time since 1945, the 49<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Wing (H) will be together again and joined by the 455<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group, the group that Senator and 1972 Presidential candidate, George S. McGovern was assigned to.

Last year, the board unanimously approved paying for the registration fee and meals for 461<sup>st</sup> veterans so be sure to take advantage of that.

Oklahoma City is a lovely and vibrant city that is a real gem of the Southwest. There is a tremendous amount of things to see and do. That's one reason we've added a tour on Sunday afternoon so as to be able to see more without running ourselves ragged. The people there are friendly and are happy that we're coming.

In addition, a few surprises await us in Oklahoma City. For those of you who fly, you'll notice the electronic sign board at the airport welcoming our group along with a welcome center staffed by volunteers to welcome you, help with luggage retrieval and guide you to hotel transportation.

After the Saturday tour, members of the Patriot Guard Riders will escort our motor coaches back to the hotel where they are planning a way to honor our veterans. Also that day, members of the Tuskegee Airmen Chapter of Oklahoma City will be on hand to visit with us. These courageous "fighter jockeys" escorted our groups on some of their missions. "Will Rogers" will also join us that day and do a presentation that evening.

Also, in the hotel ballroom we will construct what we're calling The Wall of Honor. This will be a place where notes, pictures, cards or other mementos can be displayed for loved ones, much the same as impromptu memorials you see on the news. We will "build" this wall throughout the reunion and call special attention to it during our Memorial Service Sunday morning.

I hope you'll find all of this as exciting as I do and make plans to attend. Please remember, you can make your arrangements now and help us plan, but should it become necessary, cancel at any time, for any reason without penalty of any kind.

I'll see you in Oklahoma City!

*Dave Blake*

Reunion Committee Chair

## 461<sup>st</sup> Bombardment Group (H) Association Membership

For membership in the 461<sup>st</sup> Bombardment Group (H) Association, please print this form, fill it out and mail it along with your check for the appropriate amount to:

Dave St. Yves  
5 Hutt Forest Lane  
East Taunton, MA 02718

If you have any questions, you can E-Mail Dave at [dstyves@pmn.com](mailto:dstyves@pmn.com).

The 461<sup>st</sup> Bombardment Group (H) Association offers three types of membership:

- **Life Membership** – Men who served in the 461<sup>st</sup> during World War II and their spouses are eligible to join the Association for a one-time fee of \$25.00. This entitles the member to attend the annual reunions held in the fall each year, receive the newsletter for the Association, The 461<sup>st</sup> Liberaider, and attend and vote at the business meetings usually held at the reunion.
- **Associate Membership** – Anyone wishing to be involved in the 461<sup>st</sup> Bombardment Group (H) Association may join as an Associate member. The cost is \$10.00 per year. No renewal notices are sent so it is your responsibility to submit this form every year along with your payment. Associate membership entitles you to attend the reunions held in the fall each year and receive the newsletter for the Association, The 461<sup>st</sup> Liberaider. You are not a voting member of the Association.
- **Child Membership** – Children of men who served in the 461<sup>st</sup> during World War II are eligible to join the Association as a Child Member. The cost is \$10.00 per year. No renewal notices are sent out so it is your responsibility to submit this form every year along with your payment. Child membership entitles you to attend the reunions held in the fall each year, receive the newsletter for the Association, The 461<sup>st</sup> Liberaider, and attend and vote at the business meetings usually held at the reunion.

Type of membership desired:		Life: <input type="checkbox"/>	Associate: <input type="checkbox"/>	Child: <input type="checkbox"/>	Father's Name:
First Name:			Last Name:		
Street Address:					
City:			State:	ZIP:	
Phone Number:		E-Mail Address:			
Squadron:		Crew #:		MOS:	ASN:
Check No.			Amount:		



## A Funny Thing Happened On the Way to Prague



Crew #71R

by  
Curt Weaver  
Co-Pilot  
Ryan Crew #71R  
767<sup>th</sup> Squadron  
461<sup>st</sup> Bombardment Group  
1/27/1999

For some strange reason, I always think of my soldiering years around Christmas time. I suppose it's because I spent the Christmas of 1944 in North Africa, and then went on to Italy for the remainder of the war in Europe.

In Italy, I was based just outside the tiny village of Cerignola- a minor dot on the map about thirty miles south of Foggia. I was assigned to the 461<sup>st</sup> Bom-

bardment Group, 767<sup>th</sup> Bomb Squadron of the Fifteenth Air Force (Army Air Corps). I was a B-24 pilot with missions as close as Northern Italy and Yugoslavia, and as far as Austria and Germany.

Early one morning, about midway through my tour of duty (probably March or April), we were briefed on a major strike which was to take place over Prague, Czechoslovakia. This was a long haul for us, and the folks in command of the Fifteenth Air Force felt that this major effort would take the Germans by surprise. For us, however, it was not to be.

About three hours into the mission, we began to lose power and we determined that we had lost a turbo

*(Continued on page 24)*

*(Continued from page 23)*

super-charger on one of our inboard engines. Despite our efforts, we were unable to keep up with the formation. We radioed our dilemma to the lead ship and were advised to abort. They also told us to call in assistance from the fighter command, which we did without arguing.

At this point, I must say that the Germans - mostly in ME-109 fighter planes - were always around. However, because of fuel shortages and decreased aircraft capacity, they were slow to attack large bomber formations, but instead, they watched and waited for stragglers or aircraft in trouble, and they would then pounce upon the "cripples".

As we slowly turned and headed back south toward the Adriatic Sea, we noticed two small dots which seemed to be growing larger by the minute, and were coming straight at us. The familiar silhouettes of ME-109s appeared and came roaring in at full throttle. At the same moment screaming out of the sun from the east, came a single P-51 American fighter. He cut directly in front of the ME-109s, fired a short warning burst, and then, like a protective mother, he did a barrel roll around our crippled ship. This accomplished, he positioned himself a bit higher and directly off our right wing, as if to say "OK you bastards, come and get it". I suppose that the Jerries in the ME-109s knew how to add because the firepower in our ship plus the rapid maneuverability and superior skill of the P-51 pilot covering us, made up their minds for them in a hurry. With great dispatch, they dropped about 500 feet or so below us, and roared out of there to become small dots once again.

When all the excitement was over (and it didn't take long), we glanced over at our protector. He had a grin on his face from ear to ear, and a skin texture that looked like fine ebony.

When we reached the Northern Coast of the Adriatic, our escort peeled off, wagged his wings, and headed south. The only thing we knew about him was that he was a hell of a flyer, and on the upper cowling of his ship he had painted "Lucifer II".

The remainder of the trip back was uneventful. We feathered the faulty engine, and returned to our base at Cerignola with a sense of relief and a feeling that we were lucky as hell.

We received a couple of shots of bourbon with our de-briefing, and received the radioed good news that our mission had been successful, and that no further casualties had been reported.

I wandered back to the tent that we called home, pulled out some clean clothes and walked down a small rise which led to a shower room. After a luke-warm shower and a shave, I dressed and walked over to a toufee block barn that we used for a mess hall. (Toufee blocks, by the way, are light aggregate bricks that are made up from sand, local mud, and whatever else happens to be available. They seemed to work pretty well and the concoction also qualified as a pretty fair mortar for the joints).

There were just a few guys in the mess hall. It wasn't quite noon, as I recall, and the squadron had still not returned. Since the lunch menu wasn't quite ready, I settled for whatever they had left from breakfast. It wasn't too bad.

A major I had met when we first arrived at Cerignola was finishing off a cup of coffee, and I moved over to where he was sitting. He was a very nice guy (an intelligence officer who handled a lot of briefings, and was also in charge of all the alcohol that was allocated to our group - a very good man to know). I told him about our aborted mission which he, of course, already knew about. I then asked him what he knew about the black airmen. He said the report on them was that they were the best qualified fighter pilots in the business, and that we were fortunate that they were assigned to the Fifteenth Air Force.

I told the major that I really wanted to see their outfit, and particularly the guy who saved our ass. My only clue to his identity was the name on his ship - "Lucifer II".

The major - I'm sorry to say that I can't remember his name - knew quite a bit about the outfit, and particularly about a fairly large contingent of southern politicians who raised a good deal of hell about allowing black airmen to train, or for that matter, to even participate in the flying end of the air corps. It seems that their idea was to confine the black folks to the mess halls. In reality, the black airmen did very well, and with few exceptions, showed themselves to be every bit as proficient as their white counterparts. In addition to that, they were required

*(Continued on page 25)*



*(Continued from page 24)*

to have much more education and flying background than their white Anglo counterparts. They became known as the Tuskegee Airmen. "To my knowledge", said the major, "the Tuskegee Airmen are set up about thirty or forty miles down the coast, and just outside a little town called Bari. I've got a jeep that will probably get you there if you don't mind a lousy transmission".

I thanked the major, and also asked him if he'd like to join me. He had already got word of the formation coming in within the hour, and he had to pass around the booze and de-brief the crews. He could only say, "Give me a rain check".

I left the mess hall, and headed for the major's jeep, which was parked in a small enclosure that was reserved for field grade officers. Bill Jones- a pilot friend of mine who was not flying that day- saw me get into the jeep, and wandered over to bum a ride down the hill to his tent. "I'll do better than that, Pal - how about joining me on a ride to Bari?"

"What happens in Bari?" Bill wanted to know. I gave him a brief story about our aborted mission, and about the black guy in a P-51 who literally saved our bacon. I told him it was probably a needle in a haystack, but what the hell - it was nice day and there wasn't anything else to do.

We tossed a couple of cigars, a beat up road map, and some candy bars into the jeep, and headed south.

The roads in Italy were nothing to write about, but the scenery was great. We followed the Adriatic, and passed several fishing towns that looked old and inviting. Bari was the largest town in the area - I'd guess forty or fifty thousand. We drove down the main drag and looked for something or someone who might direct us to the P-51 base of the Tuskegee Airmen. Neither of us spoke Italian, but we felt something would tell us where to go. We criss-crossed several downtown streets, and saw nothing familiar, and the strangest thing was that unlike Foggia, and some of the other seaport towns, we saw no uniforms. I was beginning to think that maybe we took a wrong turn or something when we both caught sight of a singular clue. It was a Red Cross sign with the word "Welcome" in both English and Italian. We pulled the jeep over to the curb, cut the engine, and walked over to the Red Cross and the door be-

neath it. It was plastered inside with posters, directions, photographs, announcements, and a bunch of additional information in both English and Italian. A young lady with an English accent said "Hello", and then asked if she could help us. We told her that we were looking for a black pilot of a P-51 American aircraft, and wondered if she could direct us to the airbase where he might be stationed. "That's easy", said the young lady. "You need to go to the base - about 16 miles west of here, and I would suggest you continue approximately one half mile on the street outside, and then turn left on guess what - AIR-DROME ROAD".

We thanked her and were almost out the door, when she said: "By the way, two streets behind you there is a bar with no name that I know of. There's a painting of a P-51 above the door, but nothing else. It may be that someone in the bar can direct you to the gentleman you are looking for. At least it's worth a try".

We thanked the lady again, and headed for the bar. It wasn't difficult to locate and we soon found ourselves walking through the doorway of a dark wooden structure that had a bar running the full length of the building. There were no empty seats, so I went over to the closest guy I saw - (they were all black) - "I wonder if you could help me". Two officers turned around and the closest one said, "What can I do for you?" I told him that I was looking for a pilot who had 'Lucifer II' painted on the cowl of his plane. He thought a minute and said, "And why do you need this fellow?"

I looked at him for a couple of seconds, and I wasn't sure what I was going to say. "Well it's like this. A few hours ago, I was flying a B-24 in a formation that was headed to Prague. About midway we lost a turbo super-charger, and had to abort our part of the mission. We turned back south, and called in fighter command for some help".

"You don't need to say anymore. I think you'll find the guy you're looking for about eight chairs down. He'll have a beat up cowboy hat on his head".

We looked for the hat, and headed to it. For some reason, I was suddenly scared to death. We arrived at his chair, and he didn't turn around. The grin I had been close enough to see in his P-51 was not pre-

*(Continued on page 26)*

*(Continued from page 25)*

sent. His collar had the shiny silver emblem of a Lieutenant Colonel. I had not experienced the pleasure of being around pilots that were Colonels, and I found myself almost mute. Without turning around, he said softly, "What do you need young man?"

I sort of choked, and finally said, "Thanks a lot for your help early this morning. I was in the aborted B-24".

He said, "OK- What else?" He still hadn't turned around.

"Well", I said, "We sure were glad to see you".

He said, "Yeah - I imagine you were. Anything else?"

"No Sir".

"Well - OK young fellow, Good Luck!"

At this point in our stumbling conversation, I said, "Thank you". My friend and I left. We never really saw him except in profile. I was still scared to death. And another thing, we never knew his name, and he never volunteered it.

This about winds up much ado about nothing. When, several years ago, a movie was made about the Tuskegee Airmen, I took another shot at finding out about my friend, but I never did any good. I talked to folks at Tuskegee and also in Washington D.C. and in New York. I'm afraid I waited too long, and even if I had found him again, I suspect that like Gary Cooper, or some of the other strong silent characters of yore, he would say, "OK Kid", and then would ride off into the sunset.



Lt. Hugh C. Weaver

## Daily Log of a World War II B-24 Pilot

By  
2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Robert E. Harrison  
1944-1945  
767<sup>th</sup> Squadron  
Crew #81R

Overseas Log of R.E. Harrison and Crew

Wellington A. Gillis  
Pat R. Macarelli  
Edward A. Loyko  
Ernest E. Gilbert  
Richard G. Bickel  
Bertrand A. Benedict  
John G. McGarr  
Lester M. Friedman  
Clarence E. Farris

October 1944—June 1945

Part IV

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

Briefing was at 0615 and the target was to be a milk run. However, a stand-down was called before we were halfway through the briefing.

So another day was spent reading mostly. A couple of letters came from Ruth with a number of snapshots and a picture of the baby. I was really pleased.

I also received notice of my promotion which took effect on the 27<sup>th</sup> of April. While overseas my pay is \$392 a month which will help the situation.

Wrote to Ruth after supper and that's about all. A stand-down has been called already and the rumors are still running wild.

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

Nothing much happened around here today. However Russians captured Berlin and the Germans in northern Italy surrendered unconditionally. So I guess as far as we are concerned here, the war is over. A mission was posted for tomorrow, but was taken down when the news was announced.

I spent the morning in town getting rations and a money order or two. The afternoon was more or less wasted – read a little and that's about all.

Wrote to Ruth after supper, but there isn't much that I can put in a letter.

Hitler has also been reported dead. Don't know how true it is though.

### **Thursday, May 3, 1945**

Today existed mostly on rumors. They were thick and flying fast. Mac left this morning so the war is over for him. For a while anyway. Ed was going on orders to or three times as were a few others. They're off now and I guess the group is going to stay at 24 crews for a while. Perhaps go home that way. At which time I hope they drop me.

I spent the day running around trying to see what is going to be done about the DFC that I may get.

A letter from Ruth helped the situation. I guess combat missions are a thing of the past.

Wrote to Ruth at night. That's about all there is.

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

Not much doing today. The Germans are surrendering all over the place and I don't imagine there will be much left after this week is over.

Spent the morning reading and then played softball all afternoon.

Then, after supper, we had a game with the 764<sup>th</sup> and beat the, 4-3.

Other than that, there was nothing. No rumors either good or bad.

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

Today was much the same as yesterday. I accomplished nothing this morning even though we were up before seven-thirty. We cleaned up the hut for

*(Continued on page 28)*

*(Continued from page 27)*

inspection which came off sometime during the afternoon.

After lunch, I went out and played ball. After supper, we had another game with group and beat them 5-2.

Two more letters from Ruth and I wrote to her tonight.

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

Not much to say about today. It felt like Sunday. The day was warm. Read in the morning and then played ball during the afternoon.

There are rumors that the war is finished. That's all.

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

The war in Europe is over. Official reports say that the surrender papers have been signed.

The day wasn't any different than the past few have been. Wrote a couple of letters this morning and then played ball all afternoon. Certainly getting plenty of sun.

We were supposed to have a game tonight, but the 765<sup>th</sup> called it off soon after supper.

I just wrote to Ruth and listened to the radio. Most of the fellows got drunk and this place is noisy at the present time.

Can't say that I'm excited about the war ending as it just doesn't seem to make that much difference.

### **Tuesday, May 8, 1945, V-E Day**

We had a formation this morning at which the colonel told us (officially) that the war had ended and that today would be a holiday. There were plenty of drunks around last night and some of the enlisted men stayed that way all day.

I didn't do much – the same as yesterday. There wasn't much to the morning, but we played ball for a little while this afternoon. Then I sat in the sun listening to the V-E program until supper. Went to the show and then wrote to Ruth. Feel rather lonesome tonight and have a little headache.

There is still plenty of drinking and our enlisted men ran out on a bender. I want to get in my flying time one of these days soon.

### **Wednesday, May 9, 1945, Supply Mission to POW Camp Spittal, Austria**

Although we got up at eight, we didn't have briefing until almost noon. We flew three ship elements – our ship was #2 in the first. I wore nothing but my O.D.s as we didn't go above 12,000 feet. The camp was in southern Austria and situated in a valley. We came down to a thousand feet above the ground with six thousand foot mountains on either side. The country up there is beautiful – pretty lakes, dense forests and nice looking towns. We passed over our targets at Villach and Hayenfront and saw how well our bombing messed up the marshaling yards. When we reached the camp, the ex-prisoners went wild when we dropped the supplies. We had to circle four times to get out of the valley. It was a very pleasant mission.

Two letters from Ruth today. The boys are still celebrating.

Today's flying time 5:05  
Total flying time 109:50

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

Not much to talk about today except to say that I went to town for my rations. It was a nice warm day so this afternoon I went to the show to cool off and then did a little reading.

There was another supply mission, but different crews flew it. I guess it was much the same as yesterday. I'd certainly like to fly another like it.

There was no mail today. Just finished writing to Ruth and I guess I'll just read for a little while.

### **Friday, May 11, 1945**

Just another day. Hung around reading and sat in the sun a while. Had a short lecture by the colonel and had to have our personal affairs record checked during the afternoon.

*(Continued on page 29)*

*(Continued from page 28)*

At night, we played ball and lost to the 767<sup>th</sup> enlisted men 4-5. It was a rough game. Maj. Poole went to the hospital with a possible broken leg.

We've installed two B-24 heater fans in the tent to help the cooling situation. They work fairly well, but make quite a noise.

It's getting hot here and each day is the same as the previous one and a little warmer.

### **Saturday, May 12, 1945**

Just another day and a hot one at that. Most of it was spent reading and writing. I managed to get two letters off which is quite a feat for me these days.

During the afternoon, I just lied around in the sun.

Sat outside after supper and wrote to Ruth. The evenings are fairly cool around here.

Maj. Poole is in Bari with a compound fracture. I don't imagine he will be around for some time to come.

Ed is flying on the supply mission this – or rather tomorrow. They've only been flying two ships a day from each squadron.

No mail today.

### **Sunday, May 13, 1945**

A very quiet Sunday. Ed flew, Ed went to the beach and Yates to Foggia. I wrote a letter this morning and then laid in the sun all afternoon reading. There wasn't anything else to do.

At night there was a show, "The Princess and the Pirate." We then met our new C.O. I guess Poole won't be back. At least not for some time.

Received a letter from Ruth and wrote to her tonight.

We're going to fly another supply mission tomorrow.

### **Monday, May 14, 1945, Supply Mission #2, Wolfsberg POW Camp**

Another supply mission. This time to Wolfsberg, not from the other camp. We took off at eleven and did-

n't have to fly formation. Just fly relative position keeping the lead ship in sight.

The trip wasn't as pretty as the last one and there was more room in the valley. We had to make three runs as some of the cases hung up. We were only three or four hundred feet above the ground. Each ship went in on its own.

There was a letter from Ruth today, but I couldn't write but one sheet to her and even that took me all night. It keeps getting harder to write every day.

We've been given 14 of the 484<sup>th</sup> ships. Hope that doesn't mean that we will have to fly them home.

Today's flying time 4:45

Total flying time 114:35

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

Just another day and w hot one at that. Wrote a letter this morning and then after lunch had to go through screening again. The rest of the afternoon was spent out in the sun reading. That's all there was to do.

After supper, we played ball and beat the group enlisted men 2-0. It was a good game even though I didn't hit a thing.

Took a shower and then wrote a short letter to Ruth. Received two from her today along with a couple of papers.

**Latest rumors:** And this one is pretty good. We're going to fly home. I've been assigned 76.

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

Just another day with not much worth mentioning. Went in to town this morning for rations. During the afternoon I read and took in the sun.

After supper, we went to the 864<sup>th</sup> and played the enlisted men. It wasn't as good a game, but we beat them 7-3.

No mail from Ruth today. Wrote her a short letter.

Some of the crew chiefs are being flown down to Gioia tomorrow. They think that they are going home. Perhaps so.

*(Continued on page 30)*

*(Continued from page 29)*

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

We had to fly some of those ground crews down to Gioia. They woke me up at 0630 and take off was supposed to be at 0830. It was going on for ten when I got off the ground.

I had to stay up for three hours so after leaving Gioia, another fellow and I got together and flew over to Naples before getting back.

Spent part of the afternoon at the movies. Other than that, I didn't do anything else. There was no mail from Ruth and I wrote her a short letter. There just isn't anything to put in a letter.

Today's flying time 3:00

Total flying time 117:35

### **Friday, May 18, 1945**

Not much to say about today. I just sat around not doing much of anything.

Wrote a couple of letters this morning and read a little. There are two copies of "Forever Amber" in the hut and they are in constant use by us and outsiders.

Received mail from Ruth and home plus some papers. Spent the afternoon outside reading and taking in the sun.

The evening was over as usual. A letter to Ruth and then listened to the radio.

Benedict was flown from Charleston where he landed to Devens. He still has to have another operation.

### **Saturday, May 19, 1945**

Another quiet day. It clouded up during the afternoon and we had a little rain which cooled things off.

There wasn't anything to do and that's what I did.

Wrote a couple of letters and read during the morning. After lunch there was a pretty good show, "Doughgirls," which we took in.

The rest of the day was insignificant. There was no mail.

Wrote to Ruth and listened to the radio.

No new rumors.

### **Sunday, May 20, 1945**

Just another day. It was cloudy and cool until late in the afternoon.

For a change, I spent most of the day writing getting out the amazing total of five.

We have to be ready to leave here in four days. It may be more, but no less than that.

I'll have to fly tomorrow, I guess.

A little mail came in with one of Ruth's among it. That's about all.

### **Monday, May 21, 1945**

(Saturday, May 26) Can't remember what happened during the day, but probably not much different than yesterday.

At night had to shoot a landing along with four others. The landings weren't much good.

Wrote to Ruth before going up.

Today's flying time 0:15

Total flying time 117:50

### **Tuesday, May 22, 1945**

At breakfast this morning, Boyer told me that Kunkes and I were on orders to Rome. Operations had blundered, as usual, and Ed wasn't included. Hatem was on the same orders along with Andam. I packed very little and as things turned out, didn't need all that I did take. We got a nice room in one of the better hotels and spent the first afternoon at the PX, Red Cross club and its snack bar. Saw Hamlin, a boy I graduated with down there. The club is the best I've seen anywhere. The evening meal isn't served until seven-thirty. Kunkes and I took in a show at the RC theater and then came back to the hotel. He stayed downstairs and I didn't see him again until the next day. I wrote to Ruth, took a bath and got to bed about midnight. The mattress and

*(Continued on page 31)*

*(Continued from page 30)*

sheets were quite the thing. As I expected, I didn't sleep too well.

### **Wednesday, May 23, 1945**

Was at breakfast when Hy walked in. He had picked up a girl (which isn't at all hard) and had spent the night with her. We went down to the RC and went on a tour at 0915. It included the Roman Forum and St. Clements Church. All of it was very interesting. It included a certain amount of walking and my legs were tired when we got back at noon. We cleaned up, then had lunch at one of the other rest camp hotels. Then we went down to the PX and picked up our rations for the week. We had tickets for the opera 'La Traviata' which was at 1730. We had quite a time finding the opera house. I enjoyed the performance very much. It was over at eight-thirty and we got back to the hotel in time to eat.

### **Thursday, May 24, 1945**

Kunkes didn't "sleep out" last night and I left him at breakfast and went down to the club. They had a shopping service and sent an Indian girl with me. I bought a pair of silk stockings (which are too dark, I think) and a string of pearls for Ruth. We were out until eleven or so. I met Hy at the RC and we spent some time at the snack bar. (Yesterday afternoon before going to the opera we took in an afternoon show). After lunch we came back to the club and went on another tour that included the Catacombs. They were very interesting as was the rest of the tour. Everything in Rome is so old. After supper, we came back to the club and hung around until nine and then went to see a USO show. It wasn't bad. I wrote to Ruth and it was midnight again when I got to bed.

### **Friday, May 25, 1945**

Kunkes "slept out" again and I didn't see him until we went to the airfield late in the afternoon. I went on another tour this morning to St. Peter's. That church is immense and very beautiful. I struck up an acquaintance with an ARC girl from Hartford. It made the tour more enjoyable. We had lunch together and then did some shopping. Picked up a bracelet for Ruth, cameo for her mother and a rosary for mother. By the time we got back to the club, it was time to check out and get out to the field. Boyer was

flying the ship and we almost stayed there because of the weather. I hated to leave. There was so much more to see and do. There were five letters from Ruth waiting for me. We are supposed to leave here the 5<sup>th</sup> of June.

### **Saturday, May 26, 1945**

Quite a letdown to come back to the field and it was just the same old monotonous routine. The wind and dust made everything dirty and annoying to say the least.

Spent the morning cleaning up and at one, had a ditching lecture and procedure practice. I spent the rest of the afternoon packing a box of books and manuals that I'm going to send home. I had taken in the movie before doing that though.

There was no mail and after writing to Ruth, I spent a couple of hours digging a cache under my cot. Going to try and keep my cokes cool.

### **Sunday, May 27, 1945**

Just a quiet Sunday at home. At least until after supper. I spent the day writing mostly V-Mail, but at least the unanswered stack has vanished.

I had to fly at night – Cameron was with me and the flight was to give three navigators celestial practice. We flew between Foggia and Bari although we were supposed to go to Sicily. We were down before midnight.

No mail, no new rumors, no nothing.

Today's flying time 3:00

Total flying time 120:50

### **Monday, May 28, 1945**

Just another day. Wasted away the morning and then in the afternoon went in to town with some packages of manuals and books. Picked up a money order for Ruth and came on back.

There is a lot of packing and dismantling going on. The newest rumor has us going to Westover Field. That would be too good to happen.

*(Continued on page 32)*



*(Continued from page 31)*

I guess tomorrow I'll take my ship up for a test hop. I imagine we'll be out of here this time next week.

Three letters from Ruth today. Helps the situation somewhat. She seems a little tired.

### **Tuesday, May 29, 1945**

Didn't do anything this morning. We were alerted this noon and two crews are leaving tomorrow. The other squadrons are sending more.

This afternoon, I took the ship up for a fuel consumption check. We flew down to Bari and Gioia and stayed up a couple of hours.

Received a couple of letters from Ruth and wrote her a short note. Took a shower and just dubbed around for a while.

Today's flying time 2:05  
Total flying time 122:55

### **Wednesday, May 30, 1945**

Most of the day was spent packing. We are pulling out in the morning. It took all morning to get things together and packed. After lunch I sat outside for a while, but then began to clean out the hut a little. There were fires burning all over a lot and .45 cal shells exploding continuously.

There was no mail from Ruth, but I did hear from home.

After supper, we threw out some more stuff and I guess I'll be all set to go in the morning.

### **Thursday, May 31, 1945, Torretta-Gioia 0.25**

We got up at 0500 this morning and got everything ready to leave. There were fires all over the place and shells popping in every barrel. We cleaned out the hut and took down the tent. We picked up all records and they paid us much to my surprise.

It was two when we took off for Gioia. There were six men of another crew with us and the ship was pretty well loaded down.

Gioia is much improved, but after three hours of waiting for the truck to bring the crew in from the

line, we got stuck in a large "circus" tent all of us together.

We won't leave here much before Sunday or Monday.

I spent the evening at the open air movie with Bickel. He may process tomorrow and leave Saturday. I didn't write Ruth.

Today's flying time 0:25  
Total flying time 123:20

### **Friday, June 1, 1945**

I just hung around not doing anything. I started a letter to Ruth this morning, but didn't finish it.

Bickel processed this afternoon and he leaves tomorrow. We aren't even on the list for processing. It will probably be Monday or Tuesday before we get out of here. I don't want to sit around here for very long.

From all indications we're going to end up at Savannah. There are a couple of long hops to be made - 9 or 10 hours.

We went to the show again tonight and that just about covers the day.

### **Saturday, June 2, 1945**

We just hung around again not doing much of anything. I read some during the morning and played cards later on. Bickel taught me a couple of games yesterday.

We got on one of the flights that will process tomorrow and will probably be on our way Monday morning. I hope so anyway.

The movie tonight is the same as last night's so I'm not going to go. Might as well get to bed and try to get some sleep. So far, I haven't done too well.

I'm carrying two passengers. One will get off at Trinidad.

I combined yesterday's letter to Ruth with today's.

### **Sunday, June 3, 1945**

*(Continued on page 33)*



*(Continued from page 32)*

Today was a busy one. We began processing at eight and that took two hours although there wasn't much to it. Then the money had to be changed and that amounted to \$2027. And it was time to eat when that chore was done. After lunch we had to take the ship up for a check - another fuel consumption deal. When we got down, the boys had acquired a truck and we spent the next hour or more loading the ship. I had to do some more running around with customs and what not. Sooo, we ate and then got the dope on tomorrow - briefing is at 0530 and we take off at 0700.

I'm writing this while sitting in the ship listening to the radio.

Today's flying time 1:55  
Total flying time 125:15

**Monday, June 4, 1945**, Gioia - Marrakech 9:20  
(0.25) 9:45

We were up at four this morning and we spent a couple of hours cleaning and briefing. It was 0530 (CMT) when we took off. The flight was uneventful and the weather was good except for some showers between Tunis and Algiers. We didn't stop at Tunis and consequently it was a long trip and we pulled into Marrakech at 1445 or so. The place hadn't changed much and it wasn't bad. The food was good.

We're going out by way of the Azores and I will end up at Bradley Field. And then to Boston P.O.E. That sounds good.

We went to the show which turned out to be pretty good and then got to bed. Don't know what time we will be up in the morning.

Today's flying time 9:20  
Total flying time 134:35

**Tuesday, June 5, 1945**, Marrakech, Morocco - Dakar, Senegal 9:45 (8:00) 17.45

We didn't brief until seven and were disappointed to hear that because of weather, we are going to Dakar and the southern route. That means we'll

end up at Charleston P.O.E. Swell - as long as we get home.

Today's trip was over the desert and it seemed long and quite monotonous. There was no weather, but one of the engines is acting up a little.

We landed at Dakar about four-thirty and this isn't a bad place. I shaved, took a shower and had supper.

We have a long trip in the morning and we'll be getting up early so I guess I'll get to bed now. I'm not going to write Ruth any more.

Today's flying time 8:00  
Total flying time 142:35

**Wednesday, June 6, 1945**, Dakar, Senegal - Natal, Brazil 17:45 (9:25) 27:10

We briefed at seven and took off a couple of hours later. Contrary to conditions on yesterday's flight, this was far from monotonous. We had weather most of the way. The last couple of hours we were on instruments and conditions at Natal weren't much better. However we made it OK and landed about 1830 CMT. The time here is three hours behind so we had plenty of time to get settled. It's a swell post - the best I've seen since Mitchell and Westover. We don't leave here until two in the morning of the 8<sup>th</sup>. There will be weather all the way too.

After supper, Ed and I nosed around and finally went to the show.

I'm dead tired - these nine hour trips aren't good.

Today's flying time 9:25  
Total flying time 153:00

**Thursday, June 7, 1945**

Nothing much doing today. We just hung around and spent some money. The PX had silk stockings which went like hot cakes. I got five pairs for Ruth. I also sent her a wire telling her I'd telephone Sunday or Monday. It would just fix things pretty if we were held up a couple of days. The

*(Continued on page 34)*

*(Continued from page 33)*

ship had to have a 25-hour inspection puller, but that was done this morning.

I wouldn't mind being based at this field. It's very nice. Our quarters are good and the meals are the best we've had anywhere.

Briefing was at seven and it was there I found that we were scratched because they had decided to fix a flak hole.

So Widner, Zimmerlee and I went to the show. We can't reach the states now until Monday at the earliest. Best I get a letter out to Ruth.

Weather is lousy here.

### **Friday, June 8, 1945**

This was a dull day and the weather didn't help the situation any. It rained most of the time and I guess it will be the same all night.

This morning Widmer and I got up in time to get in the PX line and managed to get a traveling bag that sold for \$8.50. I also picked up a couple more pair of stockings.

Other than that, we just sat around all day. I did some reading and spent some time waiting to get a haircut.

We had briefing an hour ago and take off for Belem instead of Atkinson. The weather will be N.G. I'm getting to bed now. They wake us at twelve-thirty.

I wrote a short letter to Ruth this noon. There's no telling when we'll get home now.

### **Saturday, June 9, 1945**

We didn't get very far this morning. They woke us at one and it was raining. It had rained all night and I imagine that was the cause of a C-47 crashing a couple of miles from the field. It was going on for five when we tried to start the engines and #1 would only "rev" up to 1700. They cancelled our flight. The rest of the boys got off including Hatem and except Welling. He's been here five days with similar trouble.

We just hung around all day. I slept a little late in the morning, but we were in the day room at 0530 playing ping pong.

I bought a couple more pairs of stockings and a small photo album that I intend to keep for Bobby's pictures.

Went to briefing and then to bed.

**Sunday, June 10, 1945**, Natal, Brazil – Zandery, Dutch Guiana 27:10 (8:05) 35:15

This time we got up at three and were supposed to take off at 0500. It was after six when we got off. We had a little trouble with the engines. The weather wasn't bad for the first three hours or more, but then it got worse and I added two more hours to my instrument time. We were supposed to go to Atkinson, about 200 miles further north, but put in here on orders. I didn't have enough gas according to ATC. We got in between showers and it rained most of the afternoon.

This place is out in the jungle which is thick, but good. We passed over the Amazon River and the equator at the same time.

This base is OK. We had a good meal and then went to the show. We hope to leave by seven in the morning.

Today's flying time 8:05

Total flying time 161:05

**Monday, June 11, 1945**, Zandery, Dutch Giana – Porinquen, Puerto Rico 35:15 (6:40) 41:55

Had a good night's sleep and got up at five. We cleared off by seven and the trip wasn't too bad. After yesterday's two hours of instrument time I only logged one today. The only bad weather was near Trinidad. It wasn't a long trip either – mostly over water, but it didn't seem monotonous. We even picked up WBOS in Boston on the Lacuson. It was after one when we got in here and I don't mind saying that this would be the ideal spot to be stationed. The base is wonderful and have never come across a PX as they have. Our quarters are

*(Continued on page 35)*

*(Continued from page 34)*

nice houses – the best I’ve ever been in – as good as living in a home of your own.

We went to the show and as we have to get up at 0330, it’s best I get to bed.

States tomorrow!

Today’s flying time 6:40  
Total flying time 167:45

**Tuesday, June 12, 1945**, Borinquen, Puerto Rico  
– Savannah, GA 41:55 (7:00) 48:55

We were up at four and off the ground two hours later. For a change, there was no weather and I speeded up a bit. We did the last four hundred

miles at 180 or better. It was a good trip and didn’t seem to take long. It was certainly a good sight to see Florida. We landed early in the afternoon and went through a whirlwind shakedown and finished everything before five. We were even paid our per diem.

This isn’t a bad base, but it’s hotter than blazes.

I called Ruth and as usual didn’t know what to say.

Tomorrow we go to Charleston and then I go to Devens. From there, that’s another story.

Today’s flying time 7:00  
Total flying time 174:45



**Standing L-R:** Benedict, Bertrand A. (Asst E/TTG); Farris, Clarence E. (TG); Friedman, Lester M. (BG); Gilbert, Ernest E. €; Bickel, Richard G.; McGarr, John G. (Asst RO)  
**Kneeling L-R:** Loyko, Edward A. (B); Macarelli, Pat R. (N); Gillis, Willington A. (CP); Harrison, Robert E. (P)

1. Takeoffs are optional; landings are mandatory.
2. If you push the stick forward, the houses get bigger; if you pull the stick back they get smaller.
3. Flying isn't dangerous; crashing is dangerous.
4. It's always better to be down here wishing you were up there than to be up there wishing you were down here.
5. The only time you have too much fuel is when you're on fire.
6. The propeller is just a big fan in front of the plane used to keep the pilot cool. When it stops, you can actually watch the pilot start sweating.
7. When in doubt, hold on to your altitude. No one has ever collided with the sky.
8. A "good" landing is one from which you can walk away. A "great" landing is one after which they can use the plane again.
9. Learn from the mistakes of others. You won't live long enough to make all of them yourself.
10. You know you've landed with the wheels up if it takes full power to taxi to the ramp.
11. The probability of survival is inversely proportional to the angle of arrival. Large angle of arrival equals a small probability of survival -- and vice versa.
12. Never let an airplane take you somewhere your brain didn't get to five minutes earlier.
13. Stay out of clouds. The silver lining everyone keeps talking about might be another airplane going in the opposite direction.
14. Reliable sources also report that mountains have been known to hide out in clouds.
15. There are three simple rules for making a smooth landing. Unfortunately, no one knows what they are.
16. You start with a bag full of luck and an empty bag of experience. The trick is to fill the bag of experience before you empty the bag of luck.
17. Keep looking around. There's always something you've missed.
18. If all you can see out of the windscreen is ground that's going round and round and all you can hear is commotion coming from the passenger compartment, things are not at all as they should be.
19. In the ongoing battle between objects made of aluminum going hundreds of miles per hour and the ground going zero miles per hour, the ground has yet to lose.
20. Good judgment comes from experience. Unfortunately, experience usually comes from bad judgment.
21. It's always a good idea to keep the pointy end going forward as much as possible.
22. There are old pilots and there are bold pilots. There are, however, no old, bold pilots.
23. Remember, gravity is not just a good idea. It's the law. And it's not subject to repeal.
24. Always try to keep the number of landings you make equal to the number of takeoffs you've made.
25. The three most useless things to a pilot are altitude above you, runway behind you, and a tenth of a second ago.
26. Helicopters can't fly; they're just so ugly the earth repels them.

Humor for those that have been in the service or hell, just about everybody...

████████████████████  
One day the tower received a call from an aircraft asking, "What time is it?"

The tower responded, "Who is calling?"

The aircraft replied, "What difference does it make?"

The tower replied, "It makes a lot of difference..... If it is an American Airlines flight, it is 3 o'clock. If it is an Air Force plane, it is 1500 hours. If it is a Navy aircraft, it is 6 bells. If it's a Marine Corps aircraft, the big hand is on the 12 and the little hand is on the 3. If it's an Army aircraft, it's Thursday afternoon and 120 minutes to "Happy Hour."

████████████████████  
During training exercises, the lieutenant who was driving down a muddy back road encountered another car stuck in the mud with a red-faced Colonel at the wheel.

"Your jeep stuck, sir?" asked the lieutenant as he pulled alongside.

"Nope," replied the colonel, coming over and handing him the keys, "yours is."

████████████████████  
Having just moved into his new office, a pompous, new Colonel was sitting at his desk when an airman knocked on the door. Conscious of his new position, the Colonel quickly picked up the phone, told the airman to enter, then said into the phone, "Yes, General, I'll be seeing him this afternoon and I'll pass along your message. In the meantime, thank you for your good wishes, sir."

Feeling as though he had sufficiently impressed the young enlisted man, he asked, "What do you want?"

"Nothing important, sir," the airman replied, "I'm just here to hook-up your telephone."

████████████████████  
Officer: "Soldier, do you have change for a dollar?"

Soldier: "Sure, buddy."

Officer: "That's no way to address an officer! Now, let's try it again!"

Officer: "Soldier. Do you have change for a dollar?"

Soldier: "No, SIR!"

████████████████████  
Q: How do you know if there is a fighter pilot at your party?

A: He'll tell you.

Q: What's the difference between God and fighter pilots?

A: God doesn't think he's a fighter pilot.

Q: What's the difference between a fighter pilot and a jet engine?

A: A jet engine stops whining when the plane shuts down.

████████████████████  
An Air Force Chief Master Sergeant and a General were sitting in the barbershop.

They were both just getting finished with their shaves, when the barbers reached for some after-shave to slap on their faces.

The General shouted, "Hey, don't put that stuff on me! My wife will think I've been in a whorehouse!"

The Chief turned to his barber and said, "Go ahead and put it on. My wife doesn't know what the inside of a warehouse smells like."

████████████████████  
"Well," snarled the tough old Navy Chief to the bewildered Seaman, "I suppose after you get discharged from the Navy, you'll just be waiting for me to die so you can come and piss on my grave."

"Not me, Chief!" the Seaman replied. "Once, I get out of the Navy, I'm never going to stand in line again!"

## Escorted By The Redtails Then... and Now

by  
Robert M. Kelliher  
Pilot, crew 89R  
765<sup>th</sup> Squadron

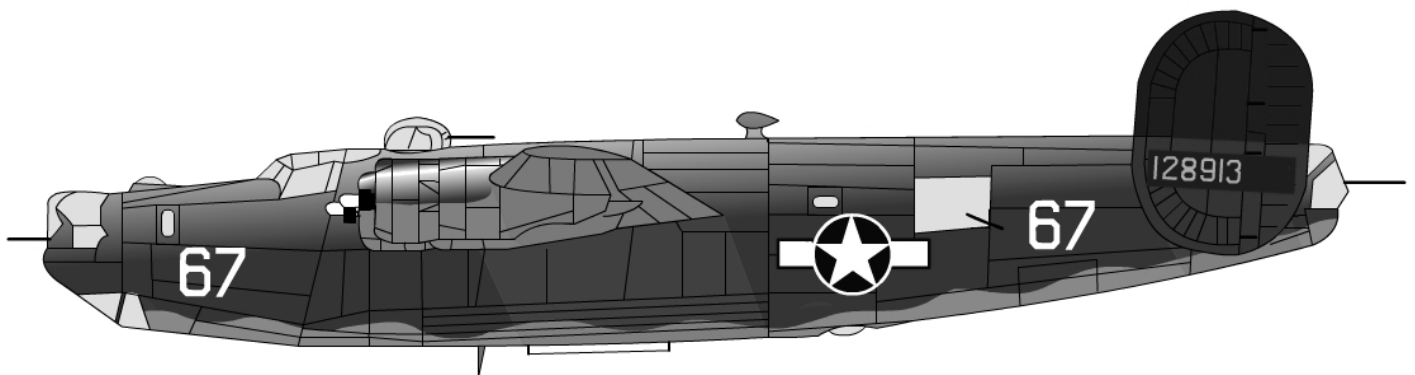
The Tuskegee Airmen were African American aviators who served in the U.S. Army Air Corps and Fifteenth Air Force during WWII. They served in North Africa flying P-40s, and then in Italy flying P-51 Mustangs. They flew both tactical and strategically support missions and had a distinguished performance record. In Italy, their group, the 332<sup>nd</sup>, was based well forward of my 461<sup>st</sup> group of B-24 4-engine heavy bombers at Torretta Field, shared with the 484<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group.

I didn't know much about them during the war, and it was quite a while after it that I learned about the "second front war" they had waged in the U.S.A. to get into military service and into combat. A flagrant example was that at a training base in Indiana, they were restricted from "white" facilities like the PX, while Axis POWs had the freedom of

the field! The Tuskegee cadets were enduring apartheid in their own native land! Perhaps the worst was the ordeal of their leader, General Ben Davis. He suffered grievous ostracizing, as the lone African American, during his years at West Point – supposedly with honorable valorous cadets being inducted to lead gallant warriors of a great, honorable, democratic nation!

About 20 years ago, I saw a newspaper notice of a meeting of the Dodo chapter of their association, to be in a nearby village. I invited myself to it, got on the agenda, and gave a heartfelt address to commiserate with them for their oppression, compliment them for their valor, and thank them for their "guardian angel" service during the war.

That initiated a lengthy congenial relationship via their historian, Rufus Hunt. I have been invited to, and often escorted to, various of their events, such as a fly-over at Lincoln Cemetery, the annual Chicago Air Show, et el. Still being escorted by Redtails!



## President's Corner

There is much to talk about when it comes to the 2014 reunion. Dave and his committee have put together a program that promises to be packed with high quality activities. They have been fortunate to have Ed Lamb of the 484<sup>th</sup> BG and his two sons, who are all from the Oklahoma City area, help in recommending tours and arranging a very warm welcome to everyone attending the reunion. Please be sure to take a moment to thank the Lambs during the reunion.

In case you have missed this elsewhere in this publication, we are once again expanding our reunion. We have brought the 484<sup>th</sup> people into our family and look forward to seeing all of their members again this year. In addition, we will be joined this year by the 451<sup>st</sup> and 455<sup>th</sup> BGs. I'm sure our veterans know that the 451<sup>st</sup> BG was the third bomb group that made up the 49<sup>th</sup> Bomb Wing. This will be the first time since 1945 that all three groups will be meeting together. The 451<sup>st</sup> has been meeting with the 455<sup>th</sup> BG so this group will also be joining us. Please extend the same warm welcome to these two groups that you have to the 484<sup>th</sup> members

For those of you flying to Oklahoma City will find a welcoming committee at the airport with help in finding your way through the airport, gathering your bags and arranging transportation to the hotel. Watch for this extra touch the Lambs have arranged. This nice touch should eliminate any confusion caused by the two hotels by almost the same name within a block of each other.

Dave has provided a very detailed itinerary so there's no need in repeating it here. I will mention that there is something a little different happening this year. We have the normal Friday and Saturday tours along with the meals. Our Memorial Service will be following breakfast in the hotel restaurant. Because Oklahoma City has so much to offer, we will have another tour Sunday afternoon followed by another dinner. I hope all of you can join us for these expanded activities.

Dave Blake and I just recently received an E-Mail from Faron Thompson of the 461<sup>st</sup> Air Control Wing. He was asking to accompany Col. Henry Cyr to the reunion in September. It appears that Col. L. Dean Worley, Jr., who visited with us in Indianapolis, IN and was then the commander of the 461<sup>st</sup> ACW, has moved on his career. Col. Cyr has replaced him and would like to join us in Oklahoma City to give us an update on the organization that honors the 461<sup>st</sup> Bombardment Group. Dave and I determined that Friday night during our group dinner would be the best time to hear about the current activities of the 461<sup>st</sup> ACW. We have invited Col. Cyr and Faron Thompson to join us for all activities on Friday, September 19, 2014 as our guest. There should be plenty of time to visit with Col. Cyr and learn of the recent activities of the 461<sup>st</sup> ACW.

I don't know how Dave and his Reunion Committee continue to come up with such interesting tours, but I hope everyone will join me in thanking the entire committee for their hard work.

As always, I look forward to September and our 2014 Reunion and seeing everyone again.



## 461<sup>ST</sup> BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H)

P.O. Box 926  
Gunnison, CO 81230

Phone: (970) 209-2788  
Email: editor@461st.org



We're on the web!  
Visit  
[www.461st.org](http://www.461st.org)

## Webmaster Comments

As I've been pulling this issue of the Lib- there is out there about our organization. I eraider together, I've heard of a very disturb- don't really believe that though. Although ing situation. It appears that every version of the size of the 461<sup>st</sup> website is almost 2.5-gig the Internet Explorer that most people have in size, I have to believe there is information used for years to access the Internet, had a out there I haven't received yet. If you have a very serious security problem. Microsoft any photographs or stories about the 461<sup>st</sup> even recommended that people should stop that I don't already have on the website, using IE and switch to another browser such please send them to me. I'll even welcome as Firefox or Google Chrome. Within just a suggestions for the website. Although I've few days, Microsoft released an update to tried to make the website user-friendly, there correct the vulnerability. Instead of waiting may be something I could do to make it easi- er to find what people are looking for. It until the middle of the month when they nor- mally release updates, they made it available seems that most of the E-Mail I receive from immediately. Anyone who has their comput- er set to automatically do updates should al- ready have this update on their system.

Updates to the 461<sup>st</sup> website have slowed considerably recently. It appears that I may be getting close to having all the information there is out there about our organization. I don't really believe that though. Although the size of the 461<sup>st</sup> website is almost 2.5-gig in size, I have to believe there is information out there I haven't received yet. If you have any photographs or stories about the 461<sup>st</sup> that I don't already have on the website, please send them to me. I'll even welcome suggestions for the website. Although I've tried to make the website user-friendly, there may be something I could do to make it easier to find what people are looking for. It seems that most of the E-Mail I receive from people today is questions about how to find specific information. I covered some of my secrets in the last couple of copies of this column so I won't repeat them here. Previous issues of the Liberaider are available on the website.