



CERIGNOLA CONNECTION

455th Bomb Group Association Newsletter

Fall 1998 – Editor, Tom Ramey, 1211 Montclair Ct., Appleton, WI 54915 (920) 731-2500

From Your President

Even though we do not have a reunion this year, plans are already in progress for the 1999 reunion. With the retirement of Col. Lou Hansen for health reasons, we had no one with real experience in arranging for a reunion. With the help of our director, Frank Lashinski, we contacted Armed Forces Reunions, Inc. After receiving information and conversations with its director, our Board of Directors voted to let Armed Forces Reunions, Inc. handle our 1999 reunion arrangements.

Our committee selected San Diego as the site for the 1999 reunion. Gen. Eugene Hudson is acting as our contact man in San Diego and has already made arrangements for a hotel for our meeting place in September, 1999.

The Group's new Executive Director, Lt. Col. Gus Wendt, has worked all fall and winter familiarizing himself with and up-dating the records.

It has been determined that many of our members are delinquent in payment of dues. It is important that we all stay current if our organization is to continue. Our Board has voted to subsidize a portion of hotel room expense for members attending the next reunion whose dues are paid for 1998 and 1999. Some widows have sent checks to continue as Associate Members. These checks have been returned because, according to our By-laws, widows of members are considered to be Lifetime Associate Members.

Tom Ramey is continuing to publish the Cerignola

Connection. Thanks, Tom! It is our job to keep him supplied with photos and articles for publication. As plans develop for the reunion, you will be informed through the magazine and by letter.

C.E. (Ed) Riggs

FINAL FLIGHTS

Joseph Romako 1/21/98
Sgt 742nd Squadron
Waist Gunner, Ed Mlcak's crew

John Ceklynski 1/12/98
S/Sgt 742nd Squadron
Tail Turret Gunner, Winton S.
(Windy) Reynold's crew

T/Sgt Alexander Bathie 1981
740th Squadron

Pierce Edward Glefke 1/2/98
M/Sgt 743rd Squadron

John Hammond 1/31/97
Capt 741st Squadron
Co-Pilot, Charles Painter's crew

Nicholas Winkelhorst 1996
Navigator, Bob Baker's crew

Sam (Jernazian) Jerian 1998
Bombardier, Lou Dolan's crew
CM/Sgt George E. McKnight, USAF
RET 1/6/98

Flight Engineer on Ed Rigg's crew
740th Squadron

Claude M. Forbes 11/96
Rear Turret Gunner, John Preston's
crew
740th Squadron

S/Sgt Richard "Pete" Peterman
4/5/98
Waist Gunner, John Preston's crew
740th Squadron

S/Sgt Robert D. Skinner 10/28/97
743rd Squadron

Capt. E. B. Morrison, Intelligence
Officer 742nd Squadron

Frank Randall 5/12/98
743rd Squadron

Our hearts are with and sympathies go to the loved ones of the 455th members.

Belated DFC

On 26 Aug. 1997, TSgt John J. Carey Jr. was presented the Distinguished Flying Cross for "extraordinary achievement while participating in aerial flight" on 18 Dec 1944 by order of General Ronald R. Fogleman, Chief of Staff and the Honorable Sheila E. Widnall, Secretary of the Air Force. On 18 Dec 1944, Sgt Carey, 455 BG, 743 BS, worked in an open bomb bay to release armed bombs which hung in the racks and jeopardized the crew and aircraft. He accomplished this feat standing on a narrow catwalk at fifty degrees below zero and at 27,000 feet without a constricting parachute. We salute you, John.

DUES

Annual dues should be paid no later than 1 November for the following year. Life Memberships are \$100. Annual dues, \$15. Widow Associate Members pay no dues. Your address label on this issue will tell you how many years you are in the arrears. Checks should be made out to: **455th Bomb Group Association, Inc. P.O. Box 4043, Sierra Vista, Arizona 85636.**

Chaplain's Corner



You have given me another day
O God, untouched and new. I ask
you to renew me, too!

Forgive the many errors that I
made yesterday and let me try
again, dear God, to walk a little
closer to you.

But Father, I am well aware I
can't make it on my own. Take my
hand and hold it tight for I can't
walk alone.
Amen

San Diego Chosen For 1999 Reunion

San Diego has been chosen for the site of the 1999 reunion. It will officially start on the 23rd of Sept. The banquet will be on the 25th and departure will be on Sunday, the 26th of September. For the first time we have contracted with Armed Forces Reunion, Inc. to do the "detail" work. They have a lot of experience doing this. Details are now being worked out with them.

This is the seventh 455th reunion to be held. As many of you may recall, the first reunion was held at the Raintree Inn in Colorado Springs in mid-October, 1987. Since then we have had reunions throughout the mid-US and on the East Coast in 1993, but, never on the West Coast. Several members asked about having a reunion on the West Coast. San Diego was chosen because of its beautiful fall weather and many available activities. The Town & Country Resort has been chosen as the site. This is a very posh resort with several acres of gardens, six dining and food facilities, including a pizza kitchen and a deli. There are even four outdoor pools.

The resort has a total of 900 rooms available. Based on past experience, we've asked for 150 rooms to be set aside for our reunion. We will have a buffet dinner on Thursday night and banquet on Saturday night that will be held at the resort. (As usual, Friday night is saved for the special activities held by others.)

The resort has given us large space for our "Hospitality Room", a place where we can meet and talk about our "real experiences." (If you ladies believe just half of what you hear, your-----!) Speaking of the ladies--They might like to visit the largest shopping center in the San Diego area. It is immediately adjacent to the resort and within easy walking distance.

From San Diego Airport to the resort is a 15 minute ride. The San Diego Airport is served by 13

major airlines. We are working on arrangements for transportation to and from the airport.

We have many "inactive" members. We'd sure like to get them "active" and come to one of our reunions (before it's too late). Therefore, the board of directors has voted to give a \$45 subsidy to all members who come to the reunion and who have paid their 98/99 dues by the time the spring issues of the Cerignola Connection is mailed. The mailing label on your spring issue of the Cerignola Connection will show 98/99 or an asterisk in the upper right hand corner if you are qualified.

The Spring issue of the Cerignola Connection will carry more details about the next 455th Bomb Group Association reunion and the reunion activity forms for you to mail into AFR. They are our agent!

Well, see you in San Diego!

Missing or Inaccurate Addresses MIA? WE NEED YOUR HELP!

The Postal Service advises us that it cannot deliver the Cerignola Connection to our members listed below. Thus, we have deleted them from our mailing list. They are still on our membership roster, with an asterisk in front of their first name. They are:

John V. Brett; 2 Pillow Lace
Lane Apt 424-D, Ipswich, MA.
01938

Wayne H. Fullbright; 36 1/2
Turnpike Rd., Brevard, NC.
28712

Martin J. Goldman; 407 Beech
St., Hackensack, NJ. 07601-
1341

Kenneth R. Hampton; 414
Colleen Dr., O'Fallon, IL 62269-
3401

Mrs. Eugenia M. Linnell; 528 S.
Quebe, Tulsa, OK 74112-4198

Alvin E. Riewe; 17811781
Pebble Beach Dr. apt 114, Ft
Meyers, FL. 33907-6736

Jerome C. White; 217
Cunningham Ave., Cadiz, OH.
43907-1004

If anyone knows their whereabouts, or has any information about these members, please let us know so we can bring our database up to date. **Send info to 455th Bomb Group Assoc., Inc., P.O. Box 4043, Sierra Vista, AZ. 85656-4043.**

OLD COMRADES

I walked among
my comrades
brave,
Upon that bloody
hill I saw no movement,
None at all,
For it was deathly still,
There were no cries from death-
ly lips.
No soldiers blasphemy,
I call their names out,
Everyone,
But no one answered me.
I know each rock, each clump
of trees,
That marks this hallow ground
For in my mind I see them fall,
And hear that battle sound,
But now the silence takes my
breath
For all that I can see
Are rows and rows of crosses
where
Old comrades used to be.

--Unknown

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Bill Arnold Writes—



I hope this finds you and yours in good health and enjoying life. I recognized the mystery aviator in the Cerignola Connection!

I regret to inform you of the death on January 12, 1998 of John Ceklynski who served with the 455th and belonged to the Association. He was a tail gunner in the 742nd Squadron. His pilot's name was Winton S. (Windy) Reynolds and their airplane was the "Windy Clipper". Have attached a list of his crew members in case someone keeps track of these things. John had been in poor health for a couple years.

John and I lived in the same area for many years and only about 5 years ago I discovered we had both been in the 455th. We had some good times together, along with some other -24 buffs in the area. We had planned to go to the last reunion but we both ended up with medical problems at that time.

At some point during John's tour with the 455th, circumstances prevented him from flying with his crew on one mission. His crew did not return from that mission and 'till his death he was distressed by this.

Tom, I always look forward to the Cerignola Connection and read it with a great deal of interest. Thanks for all the effort you have put into this over these many years.

Bill

Crew of the "Windy Clipper" 455th Bomb Group – 742nd Sqdn

Pilot—Winton S. (Windy) Reynolds
Co-Pilot—Kenneth L. Phillips
Navigator—Paul L. Rink
Bombardier—Clyde W. Arthur

Radioman—Harry Frontz
Nose Gunner—Bill Laxenby
Top Gunner—Bill Kincaid
Ball Gunner—Gayle Cunningham
Engineer—Earl Bears
Tail Gunner—John Ceklynski

It is believed that all these people except for Ceklynski were lost on one of the 455th missions, some of them may have been repatriated.

The Real Heroes

As we travel along life's rocky road
so filled with pain and strife,
Let's remember the one that
shares the load;
she's the ex-POW's Wife.

Our memories are filled with
days long ago
when we lived a dangerous life,
And the one who shares them,
as we all know,
is the ex-POW's Wife.

Our moods swing like changing
tides and the notes of the
flautist's fife,
But the one that endures and
always abides is the ex-POW's
Wife.

So when her days on earth are
over
and painful memories no longer
rife,
Dear Lord, make her a bed of
sweetest clover,
for she was an ex-POW's Wife.

*Robert L. Taylor; May 5, 1987
reprinted from the Stalag XVII-B
newsletter, and X-POW*

The New Year

The man who goes into the new year without some priorities governing his life and without some principles guiding his behavior, is prey to the tempting, unimportant and destructive things in life.

The new year is an opportunity to sort out the useless tasks and plan for the important; to review the failures and resolve to be successful; to take an inventory of causes and pledge life to purpose and service. These being done, the new will truly be new, different and better.

C. Neil Strait

Are You Missing a Photo?



Again, another photo without the name and address on the back. This photo was with other 455th photos and became disconnected from the lot. I'm sure it was included with the group by error and it's owner would cherish it back. If you know who this is, please let your editor know and he will see that it is returned.

Ed

Thoughts To Ponder



By the time you make ends meet, they move the ends.

Budget: A method for going broke methodically.

Ever stop to think and then forget to start again?

The following article appeared in the recent news letter, The Journal, of the Second Air Division Association (2ADA). The 2ADA had the combat B-24's of the 8th Air Force assigned for operations during WWII. The 455th has a respectable showing of names for the large plaque that will be mounted on the B-24 model a total of eleven. The names of Colonels Cool and Snowden are included. A total of 15 names by the 455th will appear in the Book of Remembrance. Of course, other groups of the 8th Air Force did much better, e.g., the 93rd with 61 names on the plaque and 99 in the Book of Remembrance. Many of you will remember that Colonel Cool, Thayer, Keefer and myself served in the 93rd before joining the 455th.

The article has a form for your use to register for the dedication ceremonies at the Air Force Academy on September 25, 1998. All are welcome, one need not have participated by making donations. I will look forward to seeing 455th veterans, your families and friends.

Al Asch

Our B-24 Bronze Memorial

OUR GOALS ARE IN SIGHT

Thanks to many of you, the light at the end of the tunnel is shining brightly. We are rapidly meeting our goal of raising \$150,000 for the sculptured bronze model to be placed in the Honor Court at the United States Air Force Academy at Colorado Springs, Colorado, with dedication ceremonies on September 25, 1998. We have over 180 individual names from the 2ADA and one organization shown separately, the 3rd Service Air Division, as sponsors. These will appear on the large bronze plaque to be mounted on the pedestal of the B-24 model. Names are listed under their group headings. Some groups made very generous contributions from their

treasury funds. Eleven persons from other organizations, including the 15th Air Force, one Navy person and one B-29 pilot, contributed and their names will also appear on the plaque. We are receiving more contributions almost daily.

SPONSOR NAMES ON THE BRONZE PLAQUE

Fund raising is always difficult, but there are up sides to it. I took on the job of designing both plaques for the pedestal of the model with the task of arranging the names of contributors for the larger one. I had the pleasure of talking with many of you by phone and interfacing with a number of others through the postal service. We have more than 20 names for the plaque that are sponsored by others. Most of the 20 are deceased; some were killed during the war, I talked to the sponsors for these honorees and experienced the closeness, caring, and respect that continues to exist from our flying combat in our beloved B-24.

NOTABLES FOR THE PLAQUE

We have some notables for the plaque, three having received the Medal of Honor and 18 who flew the famous low-altitude raid against the Ploesti oil refineries on August 1, 1943. One of our notables, General George S. Brown, became Chief of Staff, Air Force and later served under three Presidents as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. General Leon Johnson, Medal of Honor recipient; had a distinguished Air Force career (see the out-standing article in the Winter Journal by Dick Butler) and B/Gen. James Stewart (Jimmy) also had a distinguished career during World War II flying with us and he subsequently carried out several important assignments for the Air Force as a reserve officer. The names of other notables having outstanding military and civilian careers are included. We are all proud that we served with these individuals. Their start in life was from our B-24 organizations and from serving with outstanding personnel who made sacrifices to win the war. The

Air Force Academy cadets study military history, including Air Force leaders, as a part of their curriculum, and I know many will note the names on our plaque. The inference will be there that these notables started from our B-24 organizations during World War II.

EXCELLENT REPRESENTATION OF 2ADA MEMBERS

Dave Thompson of the 93rd has helped me organize the names and organizations for the larger plaque and has built up the data base in his computer system. We made a chart, 20 x 45, with titles, organizations and names in the size print to be on the plaque. We both studied it and concluded that it has some resemblance to an operations order or a personnel movement order. A complete cross-section of grades are included; i.e. sergeants, flight officers, lieutenants, captains, majors, colonels and generals. Through my research and interfacing with some of you, I found that all skills necessary to build up a group are represented; i.e. pilots, bombardiers, navigators, pathfinder operations, gunners, aerial engineers, radio operators, radio maintenance, armament, ordnance, maintenance men, operations, intelligence, administrative and other support personnel. One viewing the plaque will quickly see that the memorial was sponsored by B-24 World War II veterans, most from the 2ADA. Not a single company which profited by building the B-24 and its components contributed. We should all be proud of this.

THE B-24 OPERATED IN ALL THEATERS

Dave Thompson and I have completed the design of the smaller plaque, 16" x 16", and sent it to the sculptor for his production work. We are using the theme that our B-24 operated in all theaters and was flown by several allied countries in addition to the United States. You will see this when you visit the Academy.

BOOK OF REMEMBRANCE

All names, regardless of the amounts contributed, will appear in

the Book of Remembrance, some details of the format are yet to be developed. However, names of persons and groups that sponsored others (Honorees) will be shown. We are planning to print enough books so that copies will be available for those who want one. Copies will remain at the Academy for people to read and for other uses.

DEDICATION CEREMONIES

All parts of the project are on schedule. Mark September 25, 1998 on your calendar for the dedication ceremonies. There is a registration form on this page for your easy use. **My telephone number is (301) 881-1376 until May 10; thereafter: (616) 629-4056.**

Letters To The Editor

Re Cerignola Connection, spring edition 1998. Thought I would let you know that the picture on page 23 of the above edition of Lou Dolan's crew is from the 740th Squadron. Ray Ciccone has attended the past two reunions. Lou Dolan, Sam Jernian and Steve Truhan attended in Colorado Springs several years ago.

Stanley Iverson

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Re Cerignola Connection, spring edition 1998. Please correct name in photo lower left to Patrick Schiavo.

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As soon as the newsletter came, I read the whole thing and want you to know that all the work you must do to get it out is appreciated.

Charles B. Wells

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Thanks for Spring '98 copy of the Cerignola Connection. I've read it and enjoyed every paragraph. I'd hoped, maybe a paragraph put in the newsletter about a copy of the history book someone would have? (455th) I bought 5 - one for each of my children and one for myself. I gave my copy to a son, who's neighbor moved and left no forwarding address and took my son's copy. So I gave mine up. I'm anxious to read about the next reunion. You're doing a great job and we do enjoy your efforts to bring us the news.

Marquette E. Vralsted

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I was looking through the spring 1998 edition of the Cerignola connection and noticed an apparent error in the crew pictures. On page 21 you showed a picture of the Wrightson crew. That was a picture of the Don Montgomery crew which was also shown in the fall edition, 1997, page 21.

ID of the crew is as follows:
Front row, L to R: Jack Bell, Tail Turret Gunner; David Nelson, Nose Turret Gunner; William Gallagher, Waist Gunner; Jim O'Conner, Radio Operator; John Healy, Engineer.

Back Row, L to R: Don Montgomery, Pilot; Magnus Siegfried, Co-Pilot; John Billington, Bombardier; Clayton Knowles, Navigator.

Magnus Siegfried

RESERVATION FORM

**B-24 Groups Memorial Inc. • B-24 Sculpture Dedication
Air Force Academy, Colorado Springs, Colorado
September 25, 1998**

Name: _____

Group: _____ Air Force: _____

Spouse: _____

Nicknames: _____

Address: _____

Phone/Fax: _____

COST: \$50.00 per person, which includes registration kit, lunch at the Officer's Club, and banquet at the Radisson Hotel.

HOTELS: Blocks of rooms are being held at three hotels under "B-24 Groups" until August 24, 1998. Make your own hotel reservations.

Radisson Northcall (719) 598-5770

Hampton Inn Northcall (719) 593-9700

Best Western Palmer Housecall (719) 636-3108

Free airport shuttle service is available from all hotels with 24-hour notification required. Taxi is about \$35 each way. A summary of available tours will be in your registration kit. Grey Line Tours will pick up at all hotels.

Please send this form and \$50 per person to:

"B-24 Groups Memorial, Inc."

c/o Neal Sorensen, Treasurer

132 Peninsula Road, Medicine Lake, MN 55441-4112

Telephone (612) 545-2698

NOTE: Colorado Springs is 6100 feet above sea level. The Academy is 7100 feet above sea level. Strenuous exercise or elbow bending may be a health risk!

Number for Dinner:Steak _____
.....Chicken _____

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I received my Spring '98 Cerignola Connection yesterday. Surely thought it was great. Congratulations Tom R. I noted that December 3, 1944 is the latest mission (#159). Our crews arrived on December 1 to the 455 B.G., 743rd Squadron. How well I remember. Cold and no place to sleep. So... we all spent about a week sleeping in the O-Club. I tried a big chair the first night but after that used the crap table. Some used the Ping-Pong tables, others on the floor.

Bill Rohler

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Ed: Sure, you can teach an old dog new tricks!

As usual I not only read the Spring 1998 issue in one sitting – but went back and read parts of it for a second time. Thanks for your time and effort. You are really our only link to our “glorious” past and I think it is getting more important by the day – witness “final flights.”

After almost 53 years we known survivors of Brook's crew (original Tee Pee Time Gal Crew) (743rd) finally located our Ball Turret Gunner Omer Cluck (Arkansas). He's responsible for 2 of those swastikas on her “Wall of Honor.” But, unfortunately he was very ill and passed away in December 1996. I think it was sad to be so late. I personally enjoyed your “not too old” column. I could be in that column, too, I have to brag a little (a lot).

1. When I moved to AZ in 1984 after 29 years of lawyering in Illinois, I studied for and took the AZ bar exam. Passed it first time at the age of 60.

2. I wanted to be a pilot in 1942 but classification at Santa Ana said I was more qualified for navigator so I was sent to navigation school and eventually flew with our beloved 455th – 743rd in the greatest plane, bar none. “Tee Pee Time Gal.”

On return to the states, July

1944, I applied for pilot school as a student officer. (Still waiting to steer.) Unfortunately my instructor at Brady, TX, class of 45 F, Stearmans didn't think I had the right stuff to “steer.” So I never got to learn to be a pilot on army time. But I didn't give up. It took a while but attached is copy of evidence of my first solo, 4/8/95 at the age of 71!

I am purposely using Scottsdale Insurance notepaper to evidence that I am still employed full time, flying a desk in the Claim Department as a Litigation Specialist – supervising trials all over the country. I now have 200 open suits in various stages in about 20 states. My specialty is Suits for False Arrest and Excessive Force by Police Officers. We insure 4,000 small police departments and sheriffs around the country and legal marketplace. We insure attorneys in many states. My age ...74 and still going daily.

Sy Gaynes

ED: A copy of Sy's solo flight certificate was enclosed, nos 327628191, attested by Michael C. Africe, Certified Flight Instructor.

THE 455TH BOMB GROUP IN COMBAT (a continuing series)

DECEMBER 1944

Mission 160, December 6 Thirty-seven B-24's took off to bomb the marshalling yards at Graz, Austria. All planes returned to base when weather prevented them from reaching the target. Some of the planes jettisoned their delayed fuse bombs in the Adriatic while the remainder brought their bombs back to base.

Mission 161, December 7 On the third anniversary of Pearl Harbor, two B-24's took off at 0223 hours to bomb their primary target at the head of the Adriatic. One aircraft abandoned the mission because the weather appeared to be clearing and offered no cover from enemy fighters. The other aircraft

bombed the alternate target, the marshalling yards at Klagenfurt, Germany. This aircraft dropped 1.5 tons of 100# RDX bombs by pathfinder method and returned to base at 0730 hours.

Mission 162, December 8 Two B-24's took off to bomb targets in the Vienna area. One aircraft returned early because of a malfunction of the pathfinder equipment. He jettisoned his bombs in the Adriatic. The primary target was clear and the other aircraft bombed the marshalling yards at Graz, Austria by pathfinder method with good results, as fires were seen in the target area. Flak at the target was moderate, inaccurate and heavy. Both planes returned to base safely.

Mission 163, December 9 Fifteen B-24's loaded with 500# RDX bombs struck the industrial area of Linz, Austria by pathfinder method. They reported that they had a good run on the target. Flak at the target was moderate and inaccurate. No observations were made due to the cloud-cover. All planes returned to base.

Mission 164, December 12 Four B-24's equipped with pathfinder equipment took off to bomb the oil refinery at Blechhammer, Germany without escort. Two of the aircraft bombed the primary target as briefed. The other two bombed a target of opportunity at Neisse, Germany by pathfinder methods. One of the bombs dropped at the primary target was a leaflet bomb and in falling, it shattered the ball housing the pathfinder equipment. Three aircraft returned to base and one made a forced landing at the island of Vis.

Mission 165, December 15 Twenty-five B-24's dropped 50.5 tons of 500# RDX bombs on the freight yards at Linz, Austria. Bombing was accomplished by pathfinder method, so no results were seen. Flak at the target was moderate, inaccurate and heavy. No planes were damaged and all returned to base.

A Mystery...

By Charlie Stark



Immediately following the San Antonio '95 reunion my son in San Diego showed me a reissue of a May 1945 Time magazine.

In a two page ad with a picture of an aircraft, Buick was bragging about the large number of engines they had built for B-24s. The aircraft pictured wasn't a B-24 because it had a large single vertical tail fin. It could be a PB4Y Privateer but—the nose section was too long so I figured it must be a B-32 which I had talked to someone about back in San Antonio.

A trip to the Air & Space Museum Library in San Diego seemed to confirm what I thought, the aircraft pictured was a B-32.

The problem was the B-32 used Wright engines and not Pratt & Whitneys. So I wrote a story castigating Buick for not knowing what the aircraft looked like for which they were building engines.

Fortunately the story didn't make it into the Cerignola Connection.

Without the opportunity to reexamine the picture again, I believe the pictured aircraft was a PB4Y-2 which I have now found out, did get an eight foot nose extension during the war along with bigger 1350HP engines. Surprisingly, with these larger engines and the same gross weight as the B-24, the cruise speed of the PB4Y-2 was listed as 140 MPH and 8 MPH slower than the PB4Y-1. Its cruise range of 2800 miles was also slightly less than the BP4Y-1 and its ceiling was only 20,000 feet since it was intended primarily for patrol activities.

Disregarding all this, I have thought the PB4Y-2 with its majestically high tail was aesthetically a nicer looking airplane than our B-24 and the B-24 might have received more recognition for its accomplishments during the war had it looked like the Privateer. I hope I don't get charged with heresy for that statement.

It wasn't difficult to figure out that the Liberator, Privateer and the B-32 Dominator were all related. They all used the long narrow Davis wing similar tricycle landing gear and originally the B-32 started out with a B-24 type twin tail. When it came to the fuselage the B-32 differed from the other three since initially it was designed with pressurized compartments. It had a cylindrical fuselage.

Stability problems during testing led Consolidated to try a B-29 tail section on the B-32 but that didn't totally solve the problem so they designed their own single vertical fin tail.

Technical problems and faulty production workmanship plagued the B-32 throughout its design life. Its first test flight was terminated in 20 minutes due to a rudder trim tab problem with the plane landing at North Island Naval Air station after taking off from Lindbergh Field in San Diego. They are only a few miles apart.

Six months later in May of 1943, Richard McMahan a Consolidated test pilot was killed and test records were destroyed in a take off crash caused by a flap malfunction. Repetition of tests caused additional delays in the development program.

Contract cancellations were proposed several times by the military and the pressurized cabin feature was eliminated which increased its maximum bomb load to 20,000 pounds.

The B-32 even had problems with its name. Originally it was called the "Terminator" and that was changed to "Dominator." In May of '45 "Dominator" was considered politically incorrect and it became just the B-32.

Finally in January of 1945, crew training got started with planes that had ballast added in place of gun turrets. Pilots got 50 hours training in the TB-32 and Co-pilots got 25 hours with 25 hours of observer time.

The B-32 still would not have made it to the war zone if General McKenny had not insisted on using

the B-32 since he could not get B-29s for his operations.

A very few operational test missions were carried out in the Philippines in late May of 1945. With limited flak and no fighter opposition, the B-32 was considered operational.

The 386th Bomb Sqdn was converted from A-29s to B-32s and moved to Okinawa following the dropping of the "A" bomb in August of 1945.

Hostilities were supposed to have ceased and some B-32s were assigned to photo recon missions over Tokyo. On the 17th of August 4 B-32s were hit with radar controlled flak and fighters. Several fighter kills were claimed. The following day two B-32s were again over Tokyo on photo recon. This time, one B-32 was badly shot up with one crewman killed. Two fighter kills were claimed with one probable.

This mission gave the B-32 the distinction of having flown the last combat mission of the war on Aug. 18, 1945.

The last B-32 mission of the war was flown on the 28th of August with four assigned a photo recon again over Tokyo. One lost an engine on take off, slid off the runway and exploded killing its 13 crew members. Returning from Tokyo, and other B-32 lost 2 engines, the crew bailed out and two lives were lost.

About 115 B-32s were built plus 12 incomplete aircraft that were flown to storage directly from the factory.

The B-32 certainly did not have an enviable record.

One B-32 was supposed to have been set aside for static display at the Air Force Museum but unaccountably went to the chopper in Arizona in 1949.

The preceding is a very condensed version of the B-32 history taken from the internet. It would be interesting to get a first hand report about the B-32 from someone who flew them. Collapsed nose wheels were quite common and I wondered if it was caused by

pilot error or inferior design. At this late date there are probably very few surviving that flew the Consolidated B-32.

*Charlie Stark
155 Gass Rd.
Pittsburgh, PA 15229*

Frank Hosimer Writes—



The B-24 Internet site is really well done and very useful. There are hundreds and hundreds of messages on the guest book, including:

1. Notes from crew members looking for other friends or crew.
2. Children or spouses looking for someone to tell about their parents or spouses who were captured or killed.
3. Students or people interested in history looking for information.
4. Some looking for an equivalent data site on B-17s or other aircraft.

There are photographs and a bulletin board with a 1-line summary of content, author, and date. Interested readers check on it to see the actual content.

I put a message on the B-24 guest book on the internet telling about the 455th Bomb Group and looking for one of my missing crew members. Within a couple days I got a message from a lady in north Italy asking for more information about a plane that was forced down and the crew members were captured by Germans in Sept. '44. I notice that none are on our current member roster and only two are listed in the 455th BG book and first names are listed as unknown. She's doing historical aeronautical research.

I used the national directory and located two of the crew members and talked to them on the phone. One of them knows three other crew members. I've given her the two names and addresses I have.

In talking to the two crewmen and in a later communication from

her, the plane was damaged over Munich on Sept. 12 and made an emergency landing in northern Italy.

The B-24 site is really very interesting and I think it would be worthwhile putting the address in the newsletter for the benefit of the computer folks out there. It's:

www.mach3ww.com/B24/guest-book.html.

There are several options from the following address:
www.mach3ww.com/B24/.

On The Computer From Italy



I am an aeronautical local research and I am doing an Historic search of Osoppo aerodrome sited in North-East Italy during the second world war.

I read your message in B-24 Veterans sites guestbook.

In vicinity of the Osoppo airport were shot down one B-24 of 455th BG, 740th BS. I have "Missing air crew reports" and I want to put me in contact with the protagonists or any other person that can give me news/documents/photos about these episodes.

Forced landing: 2 Sept. 1944 14:30 at Tagliamento bridge at Osoppo. One dead 10 captured after a gun fire between resistance movement and German troops; 2 of them wounded.

Crews: Pilot: 2nd Lt. Thomas C. Wilcox (0-768776) (P/W - RDT) from California,
Co-Pilot: 2nd Lt. John P. Adams (0-825750) (P/W - RTD) from Indiana,
Navigator: 2nd Lt. Philip H. Robertson (0-825750) (P/W - RTD) from S. Dakota,
Bombardier: Lt. Carl A. Wilhelm (0-772907) (P/W - RDT) from Maryland,
Engineer: Sgt. Bruno Scime (20258387) (P/W - RTD) from New York,
Radio operator: Sgt. Gilbert L.

Turner (38435136) (P/W - RTD) from Texas,
Gunner: Sgt. Robert J. Hubbard (35091674) (P/W - RTD) from Indiana,
Gunner: Sgt. Charles R. Dunham (38511841) (P/W - RTD) from Arkansas
Gunner: Sgt. George W. Lehmeier Jr. (3378434) (P/W - RTD) from Pennsylvania,
gunner: Sgt. Floyd K. Wagner Jr. (13110857) (P/W - RTD) from Tytusville,
PA 1 dead

Michele

On A Sunday Afternoon

After my return from San Giovanni in 1944 and a 30 day delay en route to Atlantic City for rest and reassignment, I ended up in a fancy hotel just off the beach. I got in late at night, found my room, got cleaned up and went to bed. The next morning, at breakfast, I was told to report to an office that had been set up as an orderly room. It was a couple days before Christmas and I just wanted to rest. To my surprise, when I reported, my orders were all made out for a seven day Christmas furlough, with train tickets available in the lobby. So much for rest. I went home again, returning New Years Eve with a change in North Philadelphia. After testing, I qualified for cadets, but was talked out of that by a psychiatrist Major who thought I'd be better off as an instructor. He offered me some gratuity flight pay and six weeks in "charm" school at Larado, Texas before being reassigned to Westover Field in Chicopee, Mass., rather than heading out to flight school in New Mexico. I believe his mention that I'd remain stateside longer as an instructor than as a cadet had a lot to do with my decision.

Six weeks at instructor's school and, true to his word, I was sent to Westover Field about 100 miles

from home, as the roads wound in 1945. In late February I started teaching sighting for aerial gunnery two hours a day. I also had to take P. T. one hour a day, three days a week and I had a 50 mile class A pass in my pocket, good for most fortunately the roads between Springfield and Boston were quite heavily travelled. (I often paused to give thanks to the intelligence of that psychiatrist Major.) It was easy to catch a ride, but almost essential that you knew how to repair tires because of the condition of the roads, the age and condition of the war-worn tires and the ages of most of the driver. Travel was great, but I soon learned not to return late Sunday night. About the only thing on the road then were big, very uncomfortable trucks. Once, late on Sunday, I returned on the back of a motorcycle holding an overnight bag in one hand with a near death grip around the chest of the driver. At times, during that ride, I began to think that B-24s weren't so bad after all.

In a couple months, instructing was going well and we had learned to trade off classes to get extra days off. After a few days off, I decided I'd return early on a Sunday afternoon. I caught a ride from Woburn to Waltham on the old Route 128. (Today the new Route 128 circumscribes Boston from the North Shore to the South Shore.) On the Boston Post road another ride took me to the vicinity of Worcester. It was a rather warm afternoon in early Spring and I was still in dress O. D.s with a full blouse when, after a short walk, a big well-kept black sedan stopped with an elderly couple inside. As I entered the rear door, the lady noticed my 15th AAF patch, my wings and ribbons and almost immediately said, "have you been in Italy?" It seemed a little odd to me that someone her age would know where the 15th AAF was, but I answered in the affirmative. That started a steady stream of questions about my duty, type of plane, position, how many missions I'd completed, where I was headed and

what was I now doing. Trying to be polite and answering their questions without giving too much information, I began to wonder if perhaps I was talking too much. They didn't look like spies to me, but I remember thinking of the poster, "loose lips sink ships." At last I told them I'd been trained as a gunnery instructor and that I was now teaching at Westover Field. The gentleman who was driving said, "that's great! We're going right past the field and we can drop you off at the gate." We drove along another few minutes when the Mrs. said, "dear, there's a Howard Johnsons just up the road, why don't we stop there for supper?" In those days, along that road, their food was about the best available.

We were seated and the waitress brought us water and the menus. As we looked over the menu, the lady said, "you must know our son, he's in the 15th AAF also." I explained as best I could, being careful not to go into specifics, that the 15th was a very large outfit with many fields spread over many different parts of Italy. I was much relieved when the waitress interrupted to take our orders and make a little small talk which changed the subject for a while. The orders arrived shortly and we all started eating. I can't remember what my hosts had, but I was making a feast of fried clams, French fried potatoes and cole slaw with the knowledge that a dish of one of their 28 flavors was on its way for dessert. Suddenly her train of thought returned and she said, "everyone seems to know our son" and she mentioned his name. I wasn't paying particular attention, but I did hear her mention that he was an officer. I told her that I was on a replacement crew, had arrived in Italy about the 4th of July and since I'd flown my first mission on the 7th of July and 50th on the 12th of October, that I really didn't have much time to socialize to meet a lot of men. I also told her that being an enlisted man that, except for my own crew, I knew very few officers. She then told me

that wouldn't have mattered to her son; he likes to get acquainted and socialize with everyone. Feeling this to be a bit out of the ordinary, I asked, "just what is it that your son does?" "Oh, she said, he's the Protestant Chaplain the the 455th Bomb Group." At this point, quite embarrassed, I figured I'd already said too much, and swallowing hard said, "I'm sure I should have, but to the best of my knowledge I've never met your son." Somewhat relieved that I hadn't told them my group number, I made sure the subject wasn't brought up again.

When they dropped me off at the gate of Westover Field that evening, I realized what a wonderful couple they were, how proud they were of their son and how nice they had been to me. I've told this story twice in the last 53 years on the occasions of being asked what my most embarrassing moment had ever been.

This experience of mine is in response to Lou Hansen's call for a Chaplain to write the "Chaplain's Corner" article a couple times a year in the Cerignola Connection. I don't know who he was or where he came from, but I suspect it was somewhere in Western Massachusetts. I know nothing about him, but judging from his wonderful parents, if you can find him, I feel sure he'd be an excellent candidate for the job. I would personally like to meet him and thank him for the wonderful experience of my chance meeting of his parents one Sunday afternoon in the Spring of 1945.

Stuart A. Bemis

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It Was the Ground Crew That Kept Us Flying

The combat achievements would not have resulted without the outstanding support of the ground echelon. Every individual was dedicated to the destruction of the German war machine. The aircraft maintenance and supply people maintained and "patched" the airplanes for the following day's mission. Some airplanes seemingly beyond repair from enemy action would fly again from the efforts of the 304th Service Group and Squadron Engineering. The combat crews marvelled at the repair techniques used. Many airplanes returned filled with holes, some having more than 50. These were patched by simply taking sheeting "skin" from a wrecked airplane, cutting it into patches to fit over the holes, and riveting in place. There simply was not time to remove sections of skin and replace it with new as is the requirement of today's aviation repair standards. Some airplanes were patched so much that they were nicknamed the "Sieve." The rugged B-24s never failed because of the makeshift patching.

More Thoughts to Ponder



Why do banks charge you a fee for insufficient funds, on money they already know that you don't have?

Why do they call it the Department of Interior when they are in charge of everything outside?

Why isn't 'phonetic' spelled the way it sounds?

How much deeper would the ocean be if sponges didn't grow in it?

Since light travels faster than sound, isn't that why some people appear bright until you hear them speak?

Crew Photos Without A Home!

The following crew photos do not have a home. If you are a crew member or friend and would like the photo, let me know and I'll forward it on to you.

Ed

Rusty Dusty
Lt. Hoctor
Hart
Brimage
Leighton Hope
Wrightson
Anderton
Beachum
Shott
Nicholas
Blankenship
Jack Montgomery
Bob Baker
Mullineaux
Lester Pinkley
William Hall
Carl Higginbotham
Adams

AIRCRAFT MAINTENANCE

Here are some actual maintenance complaints submitted by US Air Force pilots and the replies from the maintenance crews.

Problem: Left inside main tire almost needs replacement.

Solution: Almost replaced left inside main tire.

Problem: DME volume unbelievably loud.

Solution: Volume set to a more believable level.

Problem: Dead bugs on windshield.

Solution: Live bugs on order.

Problem: Autopilot in altitude hold mode produces a 200 fpm descent.

Solution: Cannot reproduce the problem on the ground.

Problem: Number three engine is missing.

Solution: Engine found on right wing after brief search.

The Price They Paid

Have you ever wondered what happened to those men who signed the Declaration of Independence?

Five signers were captured by the British as traitors and tortured before they died. Twelve had their homes ransacked and burned. Two lost their sons in the Revolutionary Army; another had two sons captured. Nine of the fifty six signers fought and died from wounds or the hardships of the Revolutionary War.

What kind of men were they? Twenty-four were lawyers and jurists. Eleven were merchants, nine were farmers and large plantation owners, men of means, well educated. But they signed the Declaration of Independence knowing full well that the penalty would be death if they were captured. They signed and they pledged their lives, their fortunes, and their sacred honor.

Carter Braxton of Virginia, a wealthy planter and trader, saw his ships swept from the seas by the British navy. He sold his home and properties to pay his debts and died in rags.

Thomas McKeam was so hounded by the British that he was forced to move his family almost constantly. He served in the Congress without pay and his family kept in hiding. His possessions were taken from him and poverty was his reward. Vandals or soldiers, or both, looted the properties of Ellery, Clymer, Hall, Walton, Gwinnett, Hewyard, Rutledge and Middleton.

At the Battle of Yorktown, Thomas Nelson, Jr., noted that the British General Cornwallis, had taken over the Nelson home for his headquarters. The owner quietly urged General George Washington to open fire, which was done. The home was destroyed and Nelson died bankrupt. Francis Lewis had his home and properties destroyed. The enemy jailed his wife and she died within a few months.

John Hart was driven from his wife's bedside as she was dying. Their 13 children fled for their lives. His fields and grist mill were laid to waste. For more than a year he lived in forests and caves, returning home after the war to find his wife dead, his children vanished. A few weeks later, he died from exhaustion and a broken heart.

Norris and Livingston suffered similar fates.

Such were the sacrifices of the signers of the Declaration of Independence. They gave us an independent America. Can we keep it?

OUR CREWS



Front row, L to R: Schultz, Karney Anderson, Dakin, Caldwell.
Back row, L to R: Locatelli, Mac Mahor, Cahill, Kinnick.



Front row, L to R: Virgle Cain; William Carter, Engineer; Charles Brookman, Nose Turret Gunner; Waiter Dragich, Ball Turret Gunner; Jess Muro, Radio Operator; Sterling Bayant, Tail Turret Gunner.
Back row, L to R: Mc Geary, Pilot; Hurley Lane, Co-Pilot; Charles Love, Bombardier; Mike Rolak, Navigator.



Front row, L to R: Leonard Phillips, Radio Operator; John Pell, Engineer; Harold Emmons, Nose Turret Gunner; Alex Walyak, Tail Turret Gunner.
Back row, L to R: Joseph Hamel, Ball Turret Gunner; Jack Fleschig, Bombardier; Owen Flynn, Navigator; Don Bailey, Pilot; David Longhrle, Co-Pilot.



Front row, L to R: Womble Black, Engineer; Douglas Beene, Nose Turret Gunner; Glenn Caldwell, Radio Operator; William P. Erickson, Gunner; Leo Shaia, Gunner; Charles Brunow, Gunner.
Back row, L to R: Clarence Taylor, Pilot; Keith Foster, Co-Pilot; Walter Summerfield, Navigator; Alexander Beltrami, Bombardier.



Front row, L to R: Billy Finks, Engineer; Kenny Vincent, Engineer; H. Cornell, Radio Operator; Bob Caldwell, Armorer Gunner; Jim Weeks, Gunner.
Back row, L to R: Bob Wigley, Pilot; Bill Disbrwo, Co-Pilot; Joe Lukashovich, Navigator; Harry McCracken, Bombardier; John Merfeld, 1st Engineer.



Front row, L to R: Fred Francis, Art Holloway, George Hofer, Angelo Marcotrigiano; Lou Kent. (not shown-John Mills).
Back row, L to R: John Clark, Navigator; William Jerschelle, Pilot; Lloyd Reynolds, Co-Pilot; Norman Steward, Bombardier.

From Your Editor

Included with this issue of the Cerignola Connection is a correct up-to-date membership listing giving name, address, classification, and unit. By loosening the top and bottom staples of the Cerignola Connection you can remove the membership listing. This is held together by one staple in the membership listing. You'll now have two separate entities. If additions, deletions, or corrections are in order please advise: **Gus Wendt, 455th Bomb Group Association, P.O. Box 4043, Sierra Vista, Arizona 85636**

You'll love San Diego! That's the site for the 1999 reunion. The weather is outstanding. There's a lot to see and do. The fishing is great! Start planning now to attend - we're not getting any younger and won't it be great to get together once again, swap yarns and tell war stories. They get better as time passes.

Keep your war stories, photograph, and adventures with the 455th coming. It's what makes the Cerignola Connection interesting, and you newsletter. All original material will be returned after printing.

Here's something to mull around! What English word appears the same backward, forward and upside down when it is written in capital letters?



A Holiday Wish

Some children are nestled all snug
in their beds
while visions of the holidays
danced in their heads.

But some have no kerchief.
And some have no cap.
Some have no home
for a long winter's nap.

Though the holidays is a time
for glee and good cheer
to the folks in the 455th,
one thing is clear:

The spirit of giving
we hold in our hearts
must extend through our hands
to make a new start.

Would you and your family
consider what you hear
and help needy families
through the holidays year?

A food drive or mittens
or money or toys
would help those in crisis
and might bring some joy.

It's only through giving
that we can get back
the peace and the joy
that keep us intact.

Happy Holidays!



New Address Labels



You'll notice that new address labels are used to mail you the Cerignola Connection. Gus Wendt, the new Executive Director/Treasurer, had to make a new data base of the 455th members. His computer was not compatible with Lou Hansen's computer. Thus a direct exchange of data was not possible. Gus points out that he is not a typist, but, has made considerable effort to make the new data base as accurate as possible. He would like to hear from you if you note an error on your label.

One new feature has been added to the label. There is a number in the upper right hand corner of the label. This number indicates the last year that our records show that you paid your dues and is a "reminder." If your records differ, please advise Gus, and indicate the date and the check number that you paid your dues. (It should be noted that our Assn. considers you a member even if you're not current on your dues. All you have to do to re-establish your currency is to pay \$15.00 for the current year (1998). (1999 dues are due Nov. 1, 1998.) If there is asterisk (*) in the upper right hand corner, you are on our books as a Life Member. If there is a number sign (#) in the upper right hand corner, you are carried on our books as an Associate Life Member. Associate Life Members do not pay annual dues.



**455th Bomb Group Association, Inc.
P.O. Box 4043
Sierra Vista, AZ 85636**

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