



CERIGNOLA CONNECTION

455th Bomb Group Association Newsletter

Fall 2002 – Editor, Tom Ramey, 1211 Montclair Ct., Appleton, WI 54915 (920) 731-2500

Dues

455th Bomb Group members, we value your membership, annual dues are payable November 1 for the following year to be current through November 1, 2002.

Dues are only \$15 a year. A life membership can be obtained for \$60 – then you don't have to worry if you are current or not. If you have 10 consecutive years paid, your life membership is only \$25.

To continue the Association and publish the Cerignola Connection we need your help. Check when you last paid and then mail your check to: **455th Bomb Group Association, 5100 John D. Ryan Blvd. #1103, San Antonio, TX, 78245-3535.**

Thank you

Your New Association Officers -Board of Directors

Officers

President – S. Sgt. Francis L. Lashinsky – retained - 740

Vice President – 1st Lt. Stanley M. Iverson – retained - 740

Secretary – T.Sgt. Carl R. Loiocano – retained - 741

Treasurer – Lt. Col. Gus H. Wendt – retained - 741

Directors

*1st Lt. Jack F. Blum – New - 741

Col. Roderick W. Clarke – retained - 741

Col. John F. Davis – retained - 741

S/Sgt David J. Frawley – retained - 742

*Lt. Col. William B. Gemmill – New - 740

Maj. James D. Gould – retained - 743

1st Lt. Edward C. Mleak – retained - 742

Maj. John W. Nash – retained - 742

Capt. James H. Smith – retained - 741

S/Sgt. Elfred J. Specht – retained - 743

Executive Director

Gus H. Wendt Jr. – retained - Lt. Col - 741

Final Flights

Gerald F. Graham, 12/15/01, Engineer Gunner, 742nd Squadron

Donald Bauer, 1/6/02, T/Sgt, 741st Squadron,

Raymond T, 7/8/02, 743rd Squadron

God Bless The Veterans:

Once, Nazism strove under a fool to force the world to follow Hitler's plan

Of being ruthless, arrogant and cruel to all, except those who were Aryan!

Instead of people's "of" and "by" and "for" as Lincoln vowed in Gettysburg's address

World government, with Hitler at its core

Would everyone but Aryans oppress!

Had he successful been, today his law:

"of", "by" and "for" the Fuhrer would be rife;

Atrocities, trustworthy people saw would be denied, as would freedom and life.

How good the world to veterans should be!--

They kept that mad man from fueling the world:

Because of them, the world can now be free and flags of liberty can be unfurled.

*Fred Czerwionka
4829 N
IL 60625-3623*

It was NOT the Senior Citizens Who Took...

The melody out of music,
The pride out of appearance,
The courtesy out of driving,
The romance out of love,
The commitment out of marriage,
The responsibility out of parenthood,
The togetherness out of the family,
The E out of education,
The service out of patriotism,
The Golden Rule from rulers,
The nativity scene out of cities,
The civility out of behavior,
The refinement out of language,
The dedication out of employment,
The prudence out of spending,
The ambition out of achievement,
or, God out of government and school.

So Long Jerry!!

Gerald A. Bradbury...was an exceptional man. He had, on many occasions, written to have his letters in the Mail Box column, which was appreciated by your Editor. At the end of each message he always had words of encouragement for us. They were appreciated and cherished. Now I must write a farewell message to this exceptional man.

Much of what I write comes from those who have known him more intimately than this writer, but by no means takes away from Jerry and what he had accomplished in this organization.



*Gerald A. Bradbury
Captain, Eastern Air Lines*

Jerry was a resident of Fort Lauderdale, Florida for 32 years, a resident of Exeter, New Hampshire and Bridgewater, Maine.

Jerry was born in Bridgewater where he attended Bridgewater Classical Academy lettering in baseball, basketball and track. At one time he was the fastest man in the world, bettering Jesses Owens' 1939 Olympic time in the 100 yard dash by 0.1 seconds while attending Presque Isle Normal School in Presque Isle, Maine. Even though the track meet at the small Teachers College was not a sanctioned event, his unofficial time stood until 1960 when it was finally bettered by Bob Hayes. World War II interrupted his schooling in 1942 when he entered the United States Army Air Corps and attending Pilot

training as an Air Corps Cadet. On leave in Clovis, New Mexico in 1943, he married his hometown sweetheart, Arlene Howard of Hodgdon, Maine.

After completing his training, he ended up flying B-24's with the 454th Bombardment Group in Cerignola, Italy. He survived 50 missions flying only two airplanes, which included raids on the oil refineries in Ploesti, Romania, destruction of which finally broke the Wehrmacht's ability to make war.

Jerry had many close calls, but always returned home with his crew.

Back home safe in 1945, Jerry returned to Bridgewater and turned his energies toward making a success of his IGA General Store and raising a family of two boys and a girl...Penny, (Mrs. Armstrong), Skip (Jerry Jr.) and Bruce. However, the wild blue yonder beckoned and finally surrendering in 1952 to it's call, became a pilot with Eastern Air Lines where he retired in 1970.

His retirement was occupied with travels between his summer home in Island Falls, Maine and winter home in Fort Lauderdale. He was also a world traveler. He continued to associate with his pilot friends from WWII and Eastern Air Lines. He served as President of the 454th Bomb Group Association in 1998, and Chairman of the Board in 1999.

Like a proud Grandfather, he was a mentor to his Grandsons, devoting large blocks of time spoiling them as much as possible. He always took a great interest in young pilots.

In 2002, just past his 82nd birthday, he finally received his college degree from the University of Main at Presque Isle at his class reunion.

Jerry was always available to lend a hand to his friends and neighbors, deriving great joy from being able to help those in need. Gerald A. Bradbury, at age 82, died of heart failure on July 25, 2002.

He will be sorely missed by his lovely wife Arlene, to whom he

was married for 59 years, and by his two sons, his daughter, and two grandsons. Services were held on Wednesday, July 31, 2002.

Taken from the Post San Giovanni Newsletter

Service Anniversaries

US Air Force

The United States Air Force was added as a separate branch September 18, 1947. Begun on August 1, 1907, as the Aeronautical Division of the U.S. Army Signal Corps, later as the Army Air Forces on June 20, 1941.



NOAA Birthday

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration will celebrate 30 years of service as part of the US Department of Commerce on October 3, 2002.



US Navy

The Continental Navy was founded on October 13, 1775, by direction of the Continental Congress to outfit two armed sailing vessels.



Orlando Chosen For Site of 2003 Reunion

The Sheraton World Resort in Orlando, Florida, has been chosen for the site of the 2003 455th Bomb Group Association reunion. Several entertainment sites, such as Disneyland are in the immediate area and a tour to Cape Canaveral is being planned. Registration will start on 8 October and the banquet will be on Saturday evening the 12th of October. Departure for most will be on Sunday, October 13th.

The Airport at Orlando is served by several airlines and is located just a few miles from the Sheridan World Resort.

The Spring issue of the Cerignola Connection will have complete details and the necessary forms for you to fill out.

Figure on setting aside the second week in October 2003. It will be a great reunion. Also, it will be the 60th anniversary of the activation of the 455th Bomb Group (H).

Overheard At The Nursing Home—

At a nursing home a group of seniors were sitting around talking about all their ailments.

"My arms have gotten so weak I can hardly lift this cup of coffee," said one.

"Yes, I know," said another. "My cataracts are so bad I can't even see my coffee."

"I couldn't even punch out the chad at election time, my hands are so crippled," volunteered a third.

"What? Speak up! What? I can't hear you!"

"I can't turn my head because of the arthritis in my neck," said a fourth, to which several nodded weakly in agreement.

"My blood pressure pills make me so dizzy!" explained another.

"I forget where I am, and where I'm going," said another.

"I guess that's the price we pay for getting old," winced an old man

as he slowly shook his head.

The others nodded in agreement.

"Well, count your blessings," said one woman cheerfully, "and thank God we can all still drive."

Yes, it is good to count our blessings!

Chaplain's Corner



AUGUST PRAYER

In the stillness of Your presence,
God,
I am completely at peace. As I
surrender myself
And my life to Your wisdom and
Your grace,
I am blessed beyond measure.

AUGUST AFFIRMATIONS

I am one with the infinite wisdom
of God
That guides me in all I do.
As I rest in the peaceful presence
of God,
I am healed and renewed.
Open and receptive to the blessings
of God,
I realize true prosperity.

From my computer came these ONE SENTENCE SERMONS

A family altar can alter a family.
A lot of kneeling will keep you in
good standing.
Exercise daily. Walk with the Lord!
Forbidden fruits create many jams.
Give God what's right, not what's
left!
Give Satan an inch and he'll be a
ruler.
God grades on the cross, not the
curve.
Having truth decay? Brush up on
your Bible!
He who is good at making excuses
is seldom good for anything else.
He who kneels before God can
stand before anyone!
Most people want to serve God,
but only in an advisory capacity.
Plan ahead. It wasn't raining when
Noah built the ark.
The will of God will never take
you to where the Grace of God
will not protect you.
WARNING: Exposure to the Son

may prevent burning!

We set the sail; God makes the
wind.

We pray this month that God may
supply you with courage and
strength to continue the race and
in His own time give you the victory.

How Important Are Your Knees?



Have you ever really thought
about how important your knees
are? The knee is actually a joint,
and the reason it is there is so that
the leg can be flexed. In other
words, we were designed to have
bent knees, or knees that bend.

Taylor, a 16-year-old high-
school boy who loves to play bas-
ketball, has just returned from a
visit to the doctor. He has pain in
his knees. They grind when they
bend. It's hard to run when your
knees won't bend.

Already, the snow is starting to
fly at the high elevations of some
of our mountains in the western
part of the United States. Skiers and
snowboarders are starting to wax
their skis and boards. When they
get on the slopes, do you think
they will make it down the moun-
tain unless they bend their knees.
Skiers need strong knees, because
skiing is a sport that requires the
ability to bend and flex the knees.

Have you ever tried walking
without bending your knees? It's
very awkward and difficult, if not
impossible.

Actually, there is no physical
activity that does not require bent
knees. Even when you sleep, your
knees are bent.

There's only one area of life
where some people apparently
believe we can get along without
bent knees: our spiritual life. Some
Christians think they can walk with
God without bending their knees
in prayer. It can't be done. Just as
in our physical life, if we try to
walk with God without bending
our knees, we'll fall flat on our
face.

How long has it been since
you've spent some time alone with
God in prayer? Make prayer your
daily habit. It will make your walk
with God that much more comfort-
able and successful!

You Know Your Getting Old When:



- * Your joints are more accurate than the National Weather Service.
- * You quit trying to hold your stomach in, no matter who walks into the room.
- * Your investment in health insurance is starting to pay off.
- * You enjoy discussing operations.
- * You can't remember the last time you laid on the floor to watch TV.
- * You have more hair in your ears than on your head.
- * You get into heated discussions about pension plans.
- * You got cable for the history channel.

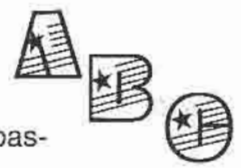
The Benefits of Growing Old are:

- * You can eat dinner at 4:00 pm.
- * You know the words to elevator music.
- * Kidnappers are not interested in you.
- * In a hostage situation, you are likely to be released first.
- * Your secrets are safe with your friends because they can't remember them either.
- * Things you buy now will not wear out.
- * No one expects you to run into a burning building.
- * There is nothing left to learn the hard way.
- * Your eyes won't get much worse.
- * You don't get calls after 7:00 pm.
- * You no longer think of speed limits as a challenge.
- * You can have a party and the neighbors don't even know it.

What a Difference a Century Makes... The year was 1902, one hundred years ago:

- The average life expectancy in the U.S. was 47 years.
- Only 14% of the homes in the U.S. had a bathtub.
- Only 8% of the homes had a telephone. A 3-minute call from Denver to New York City cost \$11!
- There were only 8,000 cars in the U.S. and only 144 miles of paved roads.
- Alabama, Mississippi, Iowa and Tennessee were each more heavily populated than California.
- With a mere 1.4 million residents, California was only the 21st most populous state in the Union.
- The tallest structure in the world was the Eiffel Tower in France.
- The average wage in the U.S. was 22 cents an hour.
- The average U.S. worker made between \$200 and \$400 per year.
- More than 95% of all births in the U.S. took place at home.
- Ninety percent of all U.S. physicians had no college education.
- Sugar cost 4 cents a pound. Eggs were 14 cents a dozen. Coffee cost 15 cents a pound.
- Most women only washed their hair once a month and used Borax or egg yolks for shampoo.
- The American flag had 45 stars, Arizona, Oklahoma, New Mexico, Hawaii and Alaska hadn't been admitted to the Union yet.
- The population of Las Vegas, Nevada, was 30.
- Crossword puzzles, canned beer and iced tea hadn't been invented yet.
- There was no Mother's Day or Father's Day.
- One in 10 U.S. adults could not read or write.
- Only 6% of all Americans had graduated from high school.
- Eighteen percent of all households in the U.S. had at least one full-time servant or domestic.
- There were about 230 reported murders in the entire U.S.

Puption Poetry



Milk, we know is pasteurized,
But this old Army is alphabetized.
To be a PFC, or a glamorous NCO,
You have to be authorized by a damn TO.
The CQ in HQ and the BC in CP
Throw ARs at a guy like me.
All is fubar, all is snafu, so —
The EM in the AAA at the APO
Get munched from the tough CO,
The SOS, the AGO, WOJG and CWO
Whether it's AAF, QM, FA or FD,
The RA, AUS, NG, OCS or ERC,
The Army's not the place to be
If you never passed the ABC.
When you're on guard, or on CQ,
Thinking is the only thing you do;
You remember the USO and ARC,
And cuss the guys in the ASTP.
AWs are enforced by the OD,
VD is classified now as LD;
Even here across the seas,
We have trouble with the MPs.
Whether WAC, WAVE or GI,
No matter how hard you try —
This axiom is apparent yet,
The Army's run on the alphabet.

The POW's Prayer

Our Heavenly Father
This day — please give us — one
piece of bread.
This night — please give us —
one word from home and home
one word from us.
Tomorrow — please give us —
the courage to endure that which
will be forced upon us. Heal our
wounds that once again we may
embrace freedom. Amen
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455th E-Mail Roster

Below is a listing of e-mail address* of 455th members that were sent to us for publication in the Cerignola Connection. *Indicates a new listing since last published in the Cerignola Connection. If you want your e-mail address included in this roster, please send it to:
455th Bomb Group Assn, Inc.
5100 John D. Ryan Blvd. #1103
San Antonio, TX 78245-3535

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Jack Blum (741), New Port Richey, FL. **jblum 15677@aol.com**

Winfield S. Bowers (741), Mount Dora, FL. **winbow20@aol.com**

Marlin L. (Bud) Brown, (742), Lake Placid, FL. **barbud@htn.net**

Robert Caldwell (741st), Prescott Valley, AZ. **rc7306@aol.com**

Howard Cooper, Staton Island, NY. **howgladcoop@worldnet.att.net**

Robert (Bob) Collette, St. Petersburg, FL. **dotybob1@juno.com**

James A. Cowden (742), Tascaloosa, AL. **jcowden@earthlink.net**

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Bob Probst (741), West Columbia SC. **rtprobst@aol.com**

Sid Schoengold (740), Monroe, TWP, NJ. **harsid1@juno.com**

Gus R. Seefluth (742), Lebanon, OH. **gus@go-concepts.com**

Walt Shostack (741), Dayton, OH. **shirlystack@compuserve.com**

Charles E. Stark, (740), Pittsburg, PA. **Carchar@aol.com**

(Dr.) Stanley Vogelfang (741), Houston, TX. **stanvog@aol.com**

MEMO FROM GOD

To: YOU
Date: TODAY
From: THE BOSS
Subject: YOURSELF
Reference: LIFE

I am God. Today I will be handling all of your problems. Please remember that I do not need your help.

If life happens to deliver a situation to you that you cannot handle, do not attempt to resolve it.

Kindly put it in the SFGTD (something for God to do) box. All situations will be resolved, but in my time, not yours.

Once the matter is placed in the box, do not hold onto it by worrying about it. Instead, focus on all the wonderful things that are present in your life now.

If you find yourself stuck in traffic, don't despair. There are people in this world for whom driving is an unheard-of privilege.

Should you have a bad day at work, think of the man who has been out of work for years.

Should you despair over a relationship gone bad, think of the person who has never known what it's like to love and be loved in return.

Should you grieve the passing of another weekend, think of the woman in dire straits, working 12 hours a day, seven days a week, to feed her children.

Should your car break down, leaving you miles away from assistance, think of the paraplegic who would love the opportunity to take that walk.

Should you notice a new gray hair in the mirror, think of the cancer patient in chemo who wishes she had hair to examine.

Should you find yourself at a loss and pondering what is life all about, asking what is my purpose? Be thankful. There are those who didn't live long enough to get the opportunity.

Should you find yourself the victim of other people's bitterness, ignorance, smallness or insecurities, remember, things could be worse, You could be one of them!

For Freedom, Give as the Veteran's Gave:

To paraphrase President Franklin Delano Roosevelt:--

"Those who have long enjoyed such privileges as we do forget in time that we're indebted to a few who died and fought in wars to win Freedom for us and caused that privilege to wax continuous!"

Their spirit we can bet is what makes Freedom live--not what we each can get but what we each must give to see that everyone receives what is one's due and that depends upon a selfless me and you!

Let's each live all our days not for ourselves alone but by such means and ways that set the Freedom tone; which means that we must see that others get their rights like those who, Glory be! have fought our country's fights.

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Group History Book Available in New Format

Not a hard bound book as previous, these are no longer available. After two printing runs it was decided not to rerun the book again. Still many of you are asking where they can find a book. To solve this dilemma, a copy shop copy of the original history, in a spiral binding is being made available. Same text, same photos. If we can get enough commitments together for a "copy shop" run, we'll make these available. \$27 in the mail. Let your editor or Gus Wendt know. (**Gus Wendt, 455 Bomb Group Association, 5100 John D. Ryan Blvd., Apt. 1103, San Antonio, Texas 78245**). You will be billed before shipment.

An Escort of P-38's

Oh, Hedy Lamarr is a beautiful gal

And Madeline Carroll is, too
But you'll find, if you query, a different theory

Amongst any bomber crew --
For the loveliest thing of which one can sing
(This side of the Heavenly Gates)
is no blond or brunette of the Hollywood set

But an escort of P-38's

Yes, in days that have passed when the tables were massed
With glasses of Scotch or Champagne,
It's quite true that the sight was a thing to delight us,
Intent upon feeling no pain.
But no longer the same, nowadays in this game
When we head north from Messina Straits.

Take the sparkling wine, every time just make mine

An escort of P-38's

Byron, Shelley and Keats ran a dozen dead heats
Describing the view from the hills
Where the wildflowers play and

the winds gently sway
An army of bright daffodils
Take the wildflowers, Byron, the daffodils, Shelly
Yours is the myrtle, friend Keats --
Just reserve me those cuties,
American beauties --

An escort of P-38's

Sure, we're braver than hell
On the ground all is well
In the air it's a different story.
We sweat out our track through the fighters and flak
We're willing to split up the glory.
Well, they wouldn't reject us
So heaven protect us
And until all this shooting abates
Give us courage to fight 'em
And one other small item;
An escort of P-38's

Author Unknown-Copied from A.R.C. Officer's Club, WEEKLY BRIEFING-Foggia, Italy-June 18, '44

American WWII Orphans Network John F. Thomas

Imagine my surprise when I received a copy of "The Star" the newsletter of the above mentioned organization. I was even more surprised when I learned that the editor...was a lady, and the daughter of a deceased 454th Bomb Group Co-Pilot.

2nd Lt. Donald S. Morrison was shot down on 19 March 1944, on the 12th mission of the group, and Lt. Morrisons' fifth.

In reading the article she had written for the newsletter "The Star" generated more surprises for me than a surprise birthday party!! This young lady didn't even get to know her dad, and after many, many years later, in 1999 she received "A Missing Aircraft Report" after joining the AWON.

The AWON was founded in 1991 by Ann Bennett Mix and is headquartered in Indianapolis, Indiana.

This organization is comprised of sons and daughters of Americans killed or missing in WWII...AWON's mission is to

locate and support American orphans of WWII and to honor the service and sacrifice of their fathers and of all veterans.

Shortly after joining AWON, Mrs. Troglio learned of and joined the 454th Bomb Group Association, and Joe Chalker, Historian, was most helpful in assisting Donita Morrison Troglio...I didn't realize that this young lady had attended the reunion in St. Louis where she and her husband met Mario after her trip to Italy with her husband. It's really spooky when you think of how everyone, complete strangers, seem to come together after so many years and a feeling of closeness envelopes everyone as though nothing had ever separated them in the first place...This is just another example of why our stories mean so much, regardless of how we feel or don't feel about our time in service...Mrs. Troglio is one of the best examples of why Joe Chalker and others harp on everyone to write your experiences...not for yourself, but for those who will be your orphans in the future...give them something really personal.

Concentration Camp Story...

...The entire dome of the firmament was a carpet of white feathers. In the white carpet there were holes from which you could see the blue color of the atmosphere. The white puffs were created by the German anti-aircraft shells fired from artillery batteries on the ground.

Many years later I read stories of American and British aviators who flew dangerous missions during the Second World War. To them the flak looked very different. From the airplane they saw the exploding anti-aircraft shells around them and irregular patches of dark smoke or shapeless black balls. Thus, what looked to me from the ground, as harmless small white clouds were in fact deadly explosions. During the war German flak

shot down thousands of allied airplanes. Anti-aircraft shells could shatter a plane into pieces, or blast it out of the sky. Sometimes the flak hit the bomb cargo on the aircraft and turned the plane into an exploding huge fireball.

I think that the small feathery white clouds that I saw around the planes from the ground were not the exploding shells themselves but mere's tail generated by the flak. They were somewhat similar to the long and narrow stripes that airplanes frequently draw in the upper air. I remember from my physics class that at high altitude the water vapor condenses around the tiny fuel grains emitted by the aircraft engines. It turns into minute water particles by the cooling air. So the white wispy patches that I saw in the sky during air raids were an after-effect of the flak. The anti-aircraft shells blasted metal shrapnel in every direction. Yet the explosion also pulverized shell parts into a smoky dust that at high altitudes condensed the water vapor into puffy cirrus clouds. So the fire created water.

During air raids we didn't go into bomb shelters. For the prisoners there were no bomb shelters at the concentration camp.

My mother left the barrack early in the morning for work. I was supposed to keep an eye on Vera, my three-year-old sister, but I am not sure that I excelled in this role. I was drifting around aimlessly in the barbed wire camp. When the airplanes appeared in the sky I watched them mesmerized.

Escorted by P-28 and P-51 fighter airplanes, large formations of B-17 and B-24 squadrons flew over Strasshof for bombing and strafing missions. They often attacked military installations, oil refineries, and railroad marshalling yards in nearby Vienna. A garden village bordering on the Austrian capital, Strasshof lies just twenty-five km away from the city of waltz. A favorite target of the air raids was Wiener-Neustadt, another suburb of Vienna.

Strasshof was surrounded by

pine forests, part of the legendary *Wiener Wald*. Among other things, it inspired in the nineteenth century the famous waltz of Johann Strauss, *Tales from the Vienna Woods*. But now the forest did not arouse the muses. The sounds of war replaced the sounds of music. Once during an air raid I suddenly heard the sharp and loud coughing blasts of heavy machine-gun hidden somewhere in the woods. It was firing at a low-flying aircraft.

When iron birds appeared aloft, strange things could happen. Sometimes paper fell slowly from the sky, like tree leaves in autumn. They were British or American leaflets in German. On several occasions as I watched the planes flying high in the air, glittering pieces of silver strips started to descend from above. They trickled and danced in the wind. These shining metal ribbons resembled the silver tinsel that decorates Christmas trees. Bomber crews dropped from the planes these glistening bands in enormous quantities in order to disable the anti-aircraft cannons of the Germans. Spreading like a huge tinsel carpet in the air, the falling chaff distorted electronic data and caused false reading on the German radar screen.

I did not know it then but in those days the Russians were already advancing on Berlin along the extended eastern front. By the end of March, the Soviet forces of Marshal Zhukov were not very far from Strasshof. About seventy miles eastward the Red Army clashed in fierce battle with the remnants of the German army in the Lake Balaton region of Pannonia. By April 4, 1945, the Nazis were pushed into Austria and the Soviets completed the liberation of Hungary.

The Red Army fought on a very wide front. As a matter of fact it began an offensive against Vienna on March 16, even before German resistance was crushed in Hungary. Zhukov's soldiers battled the Germans in brutal street combats. The Soviets managed to secure the

Austrian capital on April 13.

However, a couple of weeks before the fall of Vienna into Russian hands, the Nazis decided to evacuate the prisoners from Strasshof. One day yelling German soldiers ordered us to assemble in front of the barracks of the concentration camp. We were surrounded from all sides by barbed wire fence. The guards in the watchtowers aimed their machine guns at the assembly. The soldiers organized us into columns. They opened the lager gate and soon we were marching toward an unknown destination. My mother carried my little sister in her arms. Vera just turned four years old of age. I was pacing alongside with them.

We reached the railroad station of Strasshof. Here the Nazis pushed us onto the crammed cattle wagons. Oh, here we go again, I thought. Being on this train was not a new experience, but the tedious familiarity of a *déjà vu*. The train reminded me of an earlier voyage in a similar cattle wagon from Hungary to Austria. I remembered the journey to the concentration camp. It was an inhuman and a nightmarish trip that lasted for three days. About eighty terrified Jewish men, women and children of all ages were crowded in each freight car. The wagons were sealed. By the end of the ride, even before we arrived at the concentration camp, some were dead because of the heat, the thirst and the exhaustion.

So now here I was in Strasshof on this Austrian cattle wagon, onto which the Nazis boarded again a crowd of frightened people. The Germans locked the doors. We sat on the floor and waited for the train to depart. But the train did not move. Instead, all of a sudden, the sirens began to howl, warning of the danger of an imminent air raid.

I heard this blood-curdling loud sound many times before, although my experience of bombing attacks until then was not bad at all. It seemed almost as if the worst part

of an air raid consisted in the ominous cry, in the unnerving scream of the sirens. The roar of the sirens was both a doleful moan and a spine-chilling hysterical wail.

Be that as it may, this time the sirens were right. A horrific air raid followed. Bombs began to fall and burst into deadly flying pieces with deafening noise. The cattle wagon started to tremble and shake as if preparing for take off.

The rumbling detonations were unbearably loud. The bombs exploded with ear-piercing thunder, causing devastation, panic, and shock. People were screaming in ultimate terror.

Mother pulled Vera and me under her protecting arms. We all layed on the wagon floor as mother tried to shelter us with her body. A dreadful hell opened its bloody gates. It wanted to tear us into pieces by flying shrapnel, to swallow us in melted asphalt, to consume us in flames of fire. The bomb attack did not last long. Nevertheless, the indescribably scary experience had etched itself into my memory for a lifetime.

When the air raid was over, the Germans opened the doors of the cattle wagons. We got off the train and stood on the platform of the railroad station. Now the place was transformed into a hellish nightmare. But what I saw was not just a bad dream. It was a real abyss, a horrible scene of torment in a catastrophic inferno. Fires were raging everywhere. The railway lines were broken in several places. The enormous power of bomb explosions bent the tracks into different directions. They looked like huge paper clips twisted and curved by giant hands.

Several wagons of the train were destroyed in the bomb attack. Freight cars were derailed and overturned. Our own wagon managed to stay on the rails but its wall was perforated by many shrapnel. The holes almost formed a continuous line at waist height. Death and serious injury were just an inch away. Mother saved our lives by pulling us onto the wagon

floor when the bombs started to fall.

Others, however, were not so lucky. Many were killed and injured in the air raid. Covered with blood, I saw a girl of my age carried away by her mother.

Panic-struck Germans ran here and there. This was the first time that I saw dead and wounded German soldiers. They were lying on the ground or carried away on stretchers. Their uniforms were soaked with blood. Their faces beneath the helmet now lost the habitual arrogant expression of the "master race". Watching these wounded and dead German soldiers made me realize that they were not invincible after all; that they were vulnerable just like anybody else.

The bombing of the marshalling yards at Strasshof prevented the Nazis from transporting us into Germany. The strange irony of this terrible air raid was, that in spite of being almost killed by our liberators, the attack probably saved our lives.

After the bombing raid the Germans returned us to the concentration camp of Strasshof. A few days passed without particularly notable events. Then one cloudy morning a young Jewish man came to our barrack. He was panting. He said something about the German guards and that a soldier hit him with his gun butt. It was not clear to me at that time what he was talking about; but years later I understood. Apparently what happened was that the Germans began to abandon the concentration camp. This man tried to take advantage of the confusion and to sneak out of the lager. Then a German guard noticed him. The prisoner was lucky that the guard did not shoot him. But nevertheless, he received a blow from the butt-end of the German's rifle.

One crispy day in early April I was moving aimlessly around the camp. The sun was shining but the air was cool. Suddenly, I noticed a mysterious stranger that seemed to appear from out of nowhere. He

moved in my direction and approached quickly with a peculiar rocking movement. He proceeded with assurance and as he got close he gave me a friendly smile. I found this quite unusual because an amiable gesture was a very rare commodity in those days. I looked at him and noticed that he was dressed in an unfamiliar way. He wore a black leather jacket and held his hands on a weapon with a pockmarked barrel and a circular cartridge magazine. I never saw a uniform and a weapon like this before. The strange soldier said nothing, just continued to walk. Soon he passed by me and before long he disappeared from sight. The smiling infantryman with his peculiar machine gun and black leather jacket was the first Russian soldier that I met. As he crossed the concentration camp the front was moving with him onward through Strasshof. As he passed me, along with him, the front was passing me too. It left behind a deceptive aura of the unawareness of a momentous turning point in my life enveloped in the delusive silence of a fleeting war episode. The passing front just gave back my freedom from enslavement and I didn't know that.

Yet liberation did not occur in a sharply defined moment. It was a process. The war did not end yet. Fighting with the Nazis in the defeated Third Reich continued until early May. Conditions in Austria now were still utterly confused, turbid and perilous. We could not go home yet.

Stalin's commandos were combing Strasshof in search of Nazis. Mind you, notwithstanding the friendly smile of the first Soviet soldier that I met, subsequent encounters with the Red Army were not always that pleasant, to say the least. Actually, the second Russian soldier that I met threatened to kill me, together with my mother and little sister.

We were in the barracks. Suddenly a Russian soldier kicked the door open and aimed his machine gun at us. He was tall, wide-shouldered

and wore a padded, dirty green uniform. His coarse face was distorted by a cruel expression. I think that he was drunk. After all, the daily ration of combat units in the Red Army also included a generous allowance of vodka. Anyhow, this Soviet infantryman was raging with anger. Brandishing violently his weapon, he yelled furiously in Russian with a husky voice: "Nyemtzi, Nyemtzi" (Germans, Germans). Moving around with nervous agitation he shoved my mother, sister and me to a corner. He checked carefully everything in the room before he left. He scared the daylight out of us.

I also felt frustrated and sad that I could not explain to him that for us he was our redeemer, that we were on his side. I wanted to tell him that we were his friends, not his enemies. But we did not speak Russian; and even if we did, I am not sure that he would have listened. Even when people do speak the same language they still may not be able to transcend the limits of communication, or the boundaries of their current physical condition, mindset and vision.

The Romans, who were astute observers of human nature, used to say, "Man is a wolf to his fellow man" (*homo hominis lupus*). This is true even in times of peace, and moreover in times of war. Armed human conflict debases the ultimate value of life. Killing a human being, mind you, is not a big deal during war. It turns into a trivial thing, or even into a desired goal. After all, this is what soldiers are trained for: To kill the enemy.

Once I heard a story from a friend of a former Jewish partisan. One day during the Second World War the partisan knocked on the door of a Ukrainian peasant. He asked the farmer to give him food. The Ukrainian stared at him for a while and said that he had no food. The partisan did not argue with him. He just shot the peasant through the heart. He interpreted the refusal to supply him with food as a sign that the farmer collaborat-

ed with the Nazis. After the war the ex-partisan immigrated to America wherein he became a respected citizen. Such are the vagaries and paradoxes of war.

But let me return to Strasshof. The Red Army liberated the concentration camp on April 9, 1945. However, it did not complete yet the conquest of Vienna. Intense fighting went on for a few more days. Allied air raids already caused cataclysmic destruction in the city of Beethoven and Mozart. Now the horrendous human slaughter and material devastation continued. The air raids, artillery bombardment, street battles and scorched earth tactics rendered parts of the Austrian capital into ghost towns. The suburb of Wiener-Neustadt had been razed to the ground.

However, by April 13 Marshal Zhukov's divisions took full control over Vienna. Three days later they launched a heavy offensive against Berlin. The German capital already was severely damaged by air raids. Now artillery shells and combat from house to house reduced the city to rubble. In the end of April when most of Berlin was already in Soviet hands, the Fuhrer finally got the message that he had lost the war. His plan to enslave the world for a thousand years under the boots of the "master race" of the Third Reich evaporated in smoke and fire.

It was easier for Hitler to make a world war than to marry his mistress. Nevertheless, on April 29 he decided to marry Eva Braun in his bunker. On the following day the Nazi dictator and his newly wed wife committed suicide. *Sic transit Gloria mundi* (thus passes the glory of the world), the Romans used to say.

In any case, the fuhrer in reality never harvested shining glory but bloody terror and death. For, glory can stem merely from constructive accomplishments, whereas the Nazi dictator brought upon the world only unimaginable suffering and destruction.

Hitler and his followers were motivated by xenophobic venom,

which culminated in their frenzied hatred of the Jews. Their evil oppression of other nations dragged the world into a brutal war, unprecedented in history for its horror and scale. On the European continent alone almost 40 million people died in the war. The Soviet Union lost twenty million human lives. In Poland by the end of the war about 5.5 million people died half of them were Jews. On the eve of the war an estimated 10 million Jews lived in Europe. Six million of them perished in the systematic mass slaughter of the *shoah*, as the catastrophe is called in Hebrew. The Genocide that the Nazis set into motion wiped out entire ethnic minorities, including the murder of half million Gypsies.

Instead of the promised millennium, the Third Reich lasted for twelve nightmarish years. It ended in suffering and chaos, in death and defeat. Between 1939 and 1945 seven million Germans died, most of them civilians.

Although our liberation from the concentration camp of Strasshof did not bring immediate deliverance, the hardest part of the ordeal was over. It was most unnerving to wait for the departure but eventually the great day arrived and we set off for home. We were of course very excited. However, to return home was not an easy task. As a matter of fact, the voyage back to Hungary turned to be arduous, exhausting and dangerous. In the beginning we could not find means of transportation. So mother found a wheelbarrow somewhere and made it as comfortable as possible for my sister. Pushing Vera on the wheelbarrow, mother and I made our way on foot, walking along the Danube River from Vienna to Bratislava, the capital of Slovakia. Known also as Pressburg in German and Pozsony in Hungarian, the city was in earlier centuries the capital of Hungary. There were no bridges left across the mighty Danube because the Germans destroyed them. Did it change its color since the nineteenth century?

I do now know if Johann Strauss really saw the Danube as a blue river or just used his poetic license. In any case, to me the Danube looked gray, notwithstanding the famous waltz of the Viennese composer.

Since then lots of water flowed down between the banks of that formidable river and the long wanderings of the war had ended many years ago. Nevertheless, the lonesome odyssey of haunting memories through the hidden chambers of consciousness continues for a lifetime.

Yet history itself is bigger than memory and the story is still incomplete. Ironically enough, despite the frailty of eroding memory, in many respects now I know much more details about the events concerning my liberation than when they unfolded. Mind you, I always was curious about the identity of the raiders of our train in that Austrian railroad station. Who were they? Were they British or American? I did not rule out even the possibility that it was the Russians who bombed us. How many planes did participate in the air raid? And what happened in the skies during the attack? Where are the pilots now? Throughout the years I posed these intriguing questions and others to myself many times without avail.

Recently I was searching the Internet for information about Strasshof during the war. To my immense surprise and excitement I discovered the air force unit that attacked our train at the railroad station. I also found out the name of the mission leader, as well as of the names of two other pilots who participated in that air raid. Led by Major Poole of the 461st Bomb Group from the 15th American Air Force, it was Mission No. 203, which almost killed us on the train. This bombing attack took place on March 26, 1945. It was my sister's birthday. She did not get even a piece of cake.

According to the documents published on the web, the airplanes attacking the marshalling

yard at Strasshof dropped 100-pound general-purpose bombs "which brought excellent results." They destroyed "the west choke point of the yards", states the website, "and started large fires".

On January 21, 2002 I wrote a letter to LTC USAF Ret. Frank C. O'Bannon, Jr., Past President of the 461st Bomb Group (H) 1943-1945 Inc. I asked for more information about the mission. He immediately replied. In his letter of January 24, 2002, Colonel O'Bannon says, "there were 24 planes that took off" for the Strasshof raid. One of these "aborted due to a fire in one engine before the target". He points out that another bomber "was hit by flak over the target and eight known crewmen were seen to get out of that plane".

According to the website of the 461st Bomb Group the flak at Strasshof was slight and inaccurate. Nevertheless, "two planes failed to return to the base and two others were hit. Second Lieutenant Raymond Spehalsky was one of the pilots whose plane was hit by the flak. He was forced to leave the formation and his plane crashed. However, fighter pilots escorting the mission later told the bomber-pilots of the formation over the intercommunication system that "they had seen eight chutes open from the plane before it crashed". I believe that in his letter Colonel O'Bannon refers to these crewmen.

The website of the 461st Bomb Group also mentions the aircraft flown by 2nd Lt. Lloyd R. Heinze in Mission No. 203. On its way to the target Pilot Heinze's plane was hit by anti-aircraft cannon fire over Strasshof. He managed to navigate the bomber and it "was seen at good altitude with an engine on fire near Pecs, Hungary".

So these are some of the stories of the flying men from the 461st Bomb Group who had participated in Mission No. 203. They are altogether strangers to me and at the same time their lives and mine are connected through the whimsicality of fate and the capriciousness of history. I have admired the courage

of freedom fighters in the Second World War, especially the bravery of those young aviators who flew dangerous missions risking their lives to liberate the world from the claws of evil. They are my heroes and brothers.

The pilots and crewmen who took part in Mission No. 203 were aware that their target was the marshalling yard at Strasshof but were unaware whom they bombed. They possibly saved my life and at the same time they almost killed me. Now owing to the technological marvels of the electronic age, the bombers and the bombed can communicate, or even meet and hug each other in the spirit of brotherhood and freedom.

I Pledge Allegiance

1. Carved in a wall of a POW camp in Hanoi – "For those who fought for it, freedom has a flavor the protected will never know."
2. Since 1984, this is known as the POW's version of the Pledge of Allegiance.

Presented by two people in an auditorium, one person reciting the pledge from a podium or lectern on stage, the other reading the emphasis from some remote area behind the audience or balcony. It has an emotional effect on those quietly standing by and listening.



Prisoner of War Pledge of Allegiance

I PLEDGE ALLEGIANCE TO THE
FLAG...

"I am an American, I was a
Prisoner Of War, I have served my
country. I need no one to tell me
what allegiance I owe to my flag,
to my country, to my home."

OF THE UNITED STATES OF
AMERICA...

"This is my country, I have fought
for it, I have been imprisoned for it,
and many have died for it."

AND TO THE REPUBLIC FOR
WHICH IT STANDS...

"This flag stands for me, for love of
my country, for love of my family,
for love of my friends. I did not for-
sake it when I was starved, when I
was beaten, or when some were
killed."

ONE NATION UNDER GOD, INDI-
VISIBLE...

"I am one man, I have one country,
America, I worship one God.
Under God I was captured, under
God I was saved, under God I
have no fear."

WITH LIBERTY AND JUSTICE
FOR ALL...

My allegiance is to Liberty, to
Justice. My flag represents the
best of myself, my effort, my
home, my country. I will pledge
allegiance to the flag. I will pledge
under the love of God. It is my
right, my privilege, my duty, I have
earned it. Tell me not how! I have
given you much, I am an Ex-
Prisoner Of War. Take nothing
more from me.

I PLEDGE ALLEGIANCE TO THE
FLAG OF MY COUNTRY.

Monty Brothers Writes...



Thank you for your heart
warming tribute to my father in the
Spring edition of the Cerignola
Connection. I've always enjoyed
reading the Cerignola Connection
when visiting my parents, along
with the *The American-Ex Prisoners
of War* and the *Kriegie Klarion*. By
the way, is the *Kriegie Klarion* still
being printed? I read a lot of POW
books when I was a teen (perhaps
to try to understand my father bet-
ter).

I would like to get a subscrip-
tion to the Cerignola Connection
I'll send my check to the 455th
Bomb Group Association, but I
would like a copy of the Spring
edition. Is that possible? I don't
want to take my mom's copy and
would like something for my sons
to remember by.

I've searched the Internet for B-
24, POW, & other associated sites
for some years now (I've seen your
name frequently). I found the POW
Medal information and tried to get
the details from Dad, but he never
got around to getting it for me. I
am still going to try and get it
done, but I'm kind of slow at
administrative maneuvering.

I recall your name mentioned
quite a few times as I grew up.
Dad didn't talk much about the
details of his experiences until later
in life. I'm still a bit confused on
the chronology of many events. I
have heard some stories about
your time together. I guess that was
after liberation. I don't really know
how you got to be on that road
where you met my dad. Maybe
you'd tell me sometime.

Monty
David C. Brothers, O.D.
4 Maple Ln
Lexington, VA 24450

15th Air Force World War II Veterans:

The March Field Air Museum, with all its World War II aircraft, military aviation artifacts and memorabilia, has attained the status of a most formidable memorial to the United States Air Force. Founded by General James Mullins in 1979 when he was Commander of the Fifteenth Air Force, it is located at March Air Reserve Base, close to Riverside, California. The entrance to the Museum grounds is just off I-215 and is readily accessible to visitors.

Presently, the Museum grounds consist of a spacious parking lot, a courtyard, a World War II-type hangar, a P-38 building, an aircraft restoration building and 50 plus military aircraft on static display.

The Courtyard is a recently completed area -- landscaped and structured to facilitate the recognition of military units. For example, the building of one wall was financed by the 97th Bomb Group Reunion Association and dedicated to the Fifteenth Air Force for World War II units to display their unit plaques. The 97th also made a large donation to restore the Museum's B-17 -- it's a beautiful sight and a star attraction for visitors.

If the Museum is to grow in stature, it will need more housing for its artifacts (presently the display has to be rotated because of insufficient space) for its vintage aircraft which need protection from the weather, for a restoration center and for an education center.

But this sort of expansion requires money. Now with little time remaining for us WWII veterans, it's time to encourage all who are financially able to become donors to the March Field Air Museum expansion program.

*Bob Kimmel
97th Bomb Group
Feb. '42 - Oct. '43*

C-54 Donors Enjoy a BBQ in Their Honor

We sent out a letter in February asking many of you for donations to help with the cost of the C-54. Before the ink even had a chance to dry the donations started pouring in. Dick Van Rennes started the pot by tossing in \$5,000 followed shortly by Harry Goldsworthy with another \$5,000 and an anonymous donor (his wife might kill him if we mention his name!) came in with another \$2,500. What a great start! There were over 300 donations of all sizes making the total donations over \$26,000!!!

Dick Van Rennes decided that we needed to put on a BBQ to thank all of the donors of \$100 or more. So the wheels began to turn. The invitations went out. Dick set the menu, insisting we serve steak, chicken and all the fixings. Pat Wyatt supplied all of the paper goods and she baked over 300 cookies for dessert. She also employed the help of her son to be one of the chefs. There were volunteers and staff everywhere working to make this a great event.

The BBQ was held in our restoration hangar with over 150 guests in attendance. The food and company were wonderful.

A "flight log" listing all donors will be put in the cockpit for a permanent record of all of our generous C-54 donors.

Taken from 'Flight Lines' a publication of the March Field Museum Foundation

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Martin Rinkart--His Memory Lives On

Martin Rinkart lived 400 years ago, but his memory is not forgotten. He was not only a pastor but a scholar and a poet. He was a pastor in the small town of Eilenburg for 32 years.

It was a difficult period in Saxony, because the country was going through the Thirty Years War. Thousands of peasants poured into Eilenburg seeking refuge. An epidemic swept through the region claiming almost 5,000 victims including his wife. Pastor Rinkart sometimes buried 40 people in a day.

Twice the city was saved from the Swedish army's demands. The army, serving as the town's protectors, needed money to keep going. King Gustavus Adolphus demanded 30,000 thalers, a huge sum. Rinkart went to the commander's tent and pleaded with him, but to no avail. So Rinkart said, "Come, my children, we can find no mercy with men; let us take our refuge with God." The group fell on their knees and the pastor prayed a fervent prayer, followed by the singing of a hymn. Deeply moved, the Swedish commander relented. He reduced the levy from 30,000 thalers to only 1,350.

Martin Rinkart died a year later at the age of 66 after the bloody war was over. In spite of his difficult life, Pastor Rinkart found time and inspiration to write many hymns. One of his most well-known hymns is sung by Christians around the world, for in spite of war, famine and pestilence, Martin Rinkart was still able to count his blessings. That's why he penned the words to the hymn, "Now Thank We All Our God."

THOUGHT:

If everything seems to be going well, you have obviously overlooked something.

REGULATIONS FOR FLIGHT ENGINEERS

If the Flight Engineer will kindly observe the following rules. It will be a hell of a lot easier for the rest of the crew. Regulations are listed in their order of priority.



1. Keep the navigator awake.
2. Don't get smart with the crew -- remember your pilot is still learning to fly and he is more scared than you are.
3. Wake up the navigator.
4. Don't ask embarrassing questions of the crew, such as:
 - a. Where are we?
 - b. Where are we going?
 - c. What time will we land?
 - d. Is that a German fighter outside my window?

5. Tell jokes, but don't interrupt the radio programs.
6. Pour coffee and give a cup to the navigator to help him keep his eyes open.
7. Don't use the relief tube, use the sextant opening.
8. You just woke up the navigator.
9. *Don't ask for the comic book from the Reverend-Sir-In-The-Front-Seat until he has finished it. Where are your manners?*
10. If the left engine fails, discuss it quietly with the navigator before telling the pilot. You may scare him.
11. Take notes of anything you see. It will help your case before the board.
12. Check the navigator.
13. Brace yourself for every landing, you could get airsick after the first bounce.
14. When leaving the aircraft, bow to the East and give thanks.
15. Go back and wake up the navigator.



Old Glory Presentation

I am the flag of the United States of America.

My name is Old Glory.

I fly atop the world's tallest buildings.

I stand watch in America's halls of justice.

I fly majestically over great institutions of learning.

I stand guard with the greatest military power in the world.

Look up! And see me!

I stand for peace, honor, truth and justice. I stand for freedom!

I am confident, I am arrogant, I am proud.

When I am flown with my fellow banners, my head is held a little higher, my colors are a little truer. I bow to no one!

I am recognized all over the world.

I am worshiped, I am saluted, I am respected, I am revered, I am loved, I am feared!

For more than 200 years, I have fought in every battle of every war...

Gettysburg, Shiloh, Appomattox, San Juan Hill...the trenches of France...the Argonne

Forest...Anzio...Rome...the beaches of

Normandy...the Battle of the Bulge...the jungles of Guam...Bataan...Corregidor...Okinawa...Tarawa...

Korea...Vietnam...in the heat of the Persian Gulf and many other places on land on the sea and in the air -

long forgotten by man, but those who were there with me,

I was there with my soldiers, sailors, airmen and marines.

They loved me.

I was on a small hill on Iwo Jima.

I was dirty, battle-torn and tired but my sailors and marines cheered me.

I was proud.

I have been soiled, burned, torn and trampled on the streets that I have helped to set free.

It does not hurt for I am invincible.

I have been soiled, burned, torn and trampled on the streets of my own country

and when it is done by those with whom I have served in battle, it hurts.

But I shall overcome for I am strong.

I have slipped the surely bounds of earth and from my vantage point on the moon, I stand watch over the new frontiers of space.

I have been the silent witness to all of America's finest hours.

But my finest hour comes when I am torn into strips, to be used as bandages for my wounded comrades on the field of battle,

and when I am there to greet prisoners of war when they are liberated from enemy prison camps. When I fly at half mast to honor my soldiers, sailors, airmen and marines

and when I lie in the arms of a grieving mother at the graveside of her fallen son or daughter, I am proud.

My name is "Old Glory". Long may I wave.

Dear God, long may I wave.

PND Frank Kravetz

The Story of the POW-MIA Flag

In 1971, Mrs. Michael Hoff, an MIA wife and member of the National League of Families, recognized the need for a symbol of our POW/MIAs. Prompted by an article in the Jacksonville, Florida Times-Union. Mrs. Hoff contacted Norman Rivkee, Vice President of Annin & Company which had made a banner for the newest member of the United Nations, the People's Republic of China, as a part of their policy to provide flags to all United Nations members states. Mrs. Hoff found Mr. Rivkees very sympathetic to the POW/MIA issue, and he, along with Annin's advertising agency, designed a flag to represent our missing men. Following League approval, the flags were manufactured for distribution.

On March 9, 1989, an official League flag, which flew over the White House on 1988 National POW/MIA Recognition Day, was installed in the U.S. Capitol Rotunda as a result of legislation passed overwhelmingly during the 100th Congress. In a demonstration of bipartisan Congressional support, the leadership of both Houses hosted the installation ceremony.

The League's POW/MIA flag is the only flag ever displayed in the U.S. Capitol Rotunda where it will stand as a powerful symbol of national commitment to America's POW/MIAs until the fullest possible accounting has been achieved for U.S. personnel still missing and unaccounted for from the Vietnam War.

On August 10, 1990, the 101st Congress passed U.S. Public Law 101-355, which recognized the League's POW/MIA flag and designated it "*as the symbol of our Nation's concern and commitment to resolving as fully as possible the fates of Americans still prisoner, missing and unaccounted for in Southeast Asia, thus ending the uncertainty for their families and the Nation*".

The importance of the League's POW/MIA flag lies in its continued visibility, a constant reminder of the plight of America's POW/MIAs. Other than "Old Glory", the League's POW/MIA flag is the only flag ever to fly over the White House, having been displayed in this place of honor on National POW/MIA Recognition Day since 1982. With passage of Section 1082 of the 1998 Defense Authorization Act during the first term of the 105th Congress, the League's POW/MIA flag will fly each year on Armed Forces Day, Memorial Day, Flag Day, Independence Day, National POW/MIA Recognition Day and Veterans Day on the grounds or in the public lobbies of major military installations as designated by the Secretary of the Defense, all Federal national cemeteries, the national Korean War Veterans Memorial, the National Vietnam Veterans Memorial, the White House, the United States Postal Service post offices and at the official offices of the Secretaries of State, Defense and Veteran's Affairs, and Director of the Selective Service System.

Fred Czerwionka Writes

Here's a poem I wrote shortly after World War II. I changed the title in honor of my sister who was in the Spars, the Women's Coast Guard. "Semper Paratus," always ready, was their watchword.

My hat goes off to you for all the years you have edited our great publication, and for the "ditching" under impossible conditions, and time you spent in prison camp. May God bless you with nothing but good!

Semper Paratus

When I enlisted – "way back when"
In April '39
Three hundred sixty thousand men
Was army's total line!

The Unit I was put into
Was auth'ized sev'nty-three
Yet fifty-four men "had to do"
So under strength were we!

And many men were up in years,
From world war number one,
And they, along with West
"Pointeers"
Kept recruits "on the run."

They made us follow "army's way"
And give up our own;
We didn't have a word to say—
They set the army's tone!

The O.R.C., R.O.T.C.
The National Guardsmen, too!
C.M.T.C and C.C.C.,
Under their aegis grew;

But then induction came, you see,
With recruits by the score,
So that old army couldn't be
What it had been before:

These, new, ran roughshod

'mongst the old
"Took over" what had been,
Increased the ranks near fifty-fold—
These many million men.

But men old army men had trained,
Trained these civilian "Joes"
Who fought the war when Hitler reigned
And need for them arose.

America'd be shedding tears—
How poorly we'd have fared!—
Without those post-world-war-one years
Of keeping us prepared.

Had there not been that peace time force—
Through twenty years—and more!—
We'd now be on another course
"Cause we'd have lost the war!

*Fred G. Czerwionka
Aerial Eng, Upper
Turret Gunner
743rd Sqdn. 455th Bomb Group*

The Physical

70-year old George went for his annual physical. All of his tests came back with normal results.

Dr. Smith said, "George, everything looks great physically. How are you doing mentally and emotionally? Are you at peace with yourself, and do you have a good relationship with God?"

George replied, "God and me are tight. He knows I have poor eyesight, so he's fixed it so that when I get up in the middle of the night to go to the bathroom *poof* the light goes on, when I'm done *poof* the light goes off."

"Wow!" commented Dr. Smith,
"That's incredible!"

A little later in the day Dr. Smith called George's wife.

"Ethel," he said, "George is doing fine. Physically he's great. But, I had to call because I'm in awe of his relationship with God. Is it true that he gets up during the night and *poof* the light goes on in the bathroom, and then when he is through *poof* the light goes off?"

Ethel exclaimed, "Oh, my God! He's peeing in the refrigerator again!"

The letter from God



One day God was looking down to earth and saw all the evil going on. He decided to send an angel down to earth to check it out. So, he called on a female angel and sent her to earth for a time. When she returned she told God yes, it is bad on earth, 95% is bad and 5% is good.

Well, He thought for a moment and said maybe I had better send down a male angel, to get both points of view. So, God called a male angel and sent him to earth for a time. When the male angel returned, he went to God and told him yes, the earth was in decline, 95% was bad and 5% was good. God said this was not good. He would send a letter to the 5% that was good and encourage them, something to help them keep going.

Do you know what that letter said?

Oh, so you didn't get a letter either?

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"Old Geezers"

By: Achilles Kozakis

"Old Geezers" (slang for an old man) are easy to spot:

At sporting events, during the playing of the National Anthem, Old Geezers hold their caps over their hearts and sing without embarrassment. They know the words and believe in them. Old Geezers remember World War I, the Depression, World War II, Pearl Harbor, Guadalcanal, Normandy and Hitler.

They remember the Atomic Age, the Korean War, the Cold War, the Jet Age and the Moon Landings, not to mention Vietnam.

If you bump into an Old Geezer on the sidewalk, he will apologize. If you pass an Old Geezer on the sidewalk, he will nod or tip his cap to a lady. Old Geezers trust strangers and are courtly to women. Old Geezers hold the door for the next person, and always, when walking, make certain the lady is on the inside for protection.

Old Geezers get embarrassed if someone curses in front of women and children and they don't like violence and filth on TV, or in movies, Old Geezers have moral courage. They seldom brag unless it's about their grandchildren.

It's the Old Geezers who know our great country is protected, not by politicians or police, but by the young men and women in the military serving their country.

This country needs Old Geezers with their decent values. We need them now more than ever. Thank God for Old Geezers!

Pass this on to all the Old Geezers you know. Also anyone else who might appreciate this. God Bless America!

Poems Adapted From 'Pup tent Poet' (Circa 1945)

ORDERS

"At eight AM we're taking off."
The colonel sternly said.
So the Major sent the order down,
"At five we leave our bed."
Well, the Captain took no chances,
Because Captains never do!
And so he told the topkick,
"Have the men get up at two."
At midnight the CQ woke us,
And here we sadly sit,
Because it now is almost noontime,
And we haven't flown out yet.

— Based on works of T-5 C.D. Westerberg

FIELD MOVIE

Beneath a starry summer sky,
Upon a stubbled field,
The soldiers sprawl enraptured
While a movie is unreeled.
They weep and laugh with shadows,
They gasp at acted strife,
Drink deep of formula romance
Embrace a synthetic life,
But these soldiers move in pageant
More vast than any seen,
And know it not—for them
Drama lives upon a screen

By Sgt Virgil Scott

455th Bomb Group Assoc., Inc
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