

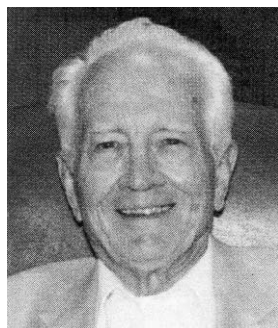


CERIGNOLA CONNECTION

455th Bomb Group Association Newsletter

Fall, 2009

Editor, Craig Ward, 813 Peterstow Drive, Euless, Texas 76039
phone: (817) 540-1068 **email:** aphp@tx.rr.com **website:** www.awardphp.com



Message from the President

**By Carl A. Barr (743),
President, 455th BG Assoc.**

Twenty 455th BG Association veterans were one-third of the attendees at the final wing-ding. By the time this letter goes to print, I should have several photos posted to <http://carlbarr.homestead.com/Carl-Barr--Home-Page.html> so you will be able to see some of the action. Some of the photos are also printed herein.

The few of us who were able to attend the 2009 Reunion in Indianapolis had a most enjoyable visit with each other. Despite that, the decision was agreed to by the membership present that we would discontinue meeting in this formal reunion setting.

We have all been

considering the wisdom of this move for the past two or three years, so it should come as no surprise.

Our newsletter, *The Cerignola Connection*, will be continued as long as funds exist to cover the expense, perhaps for another five years or more. Craig Ward has agreed to continue as the Editor, a decision for which we are most appreciative.

To keep it as a quality publication, he will need to have continued input from the members. Everyone has memories, stories, photos, and ideas to share -- don't be shy about it.

Changes were made to the by-laws, which Greg Riggs has summarized elsewhere in this newsletter. They will reflect changes in the makeup of the Board of Directors, and the length of terms for the members thereof.

We voted into full membership John Rohrer, son of deceased veteran Carl Rohrer (740), and Julie Summerfield, daughter of deceased veteran Walter Summerfield (743). This brings to five the number of second-generation full members.

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We will experiment with ways to meet as a Board, using electronic technology in lieu of face-to-face, as we have done at our reunions. The first such meeting will take place this month.

Veterans Day was celebrated just a few days before this publication went to print. I hope that each of you enjoyed your own personal celebration of this important day.

Merry Christmas and may God Bless You with a Happy New Year.

Thank you for trusting me to serve as President of our Association.

Sincerely,
Carl A. Barr
Email: carlbarr@bellsouth.net

F.Y.I.

Frank Hosimer (741) has provided the Association with a copy of a newsletter published on behalf of pilots who served during the Second World War.

The bi-monthly newsletter may be of interest to any 455th member and / or his family. If you are interested in further information, the publishing organization is named Pilot Classes of WWII, and the newsletter is entitled *The Poopsheet*.

The secretary of the publishing organization and the editor of the newsletter may be contacted at:

13671 Ovenbird Drive
Fort Myers, Florida 33908-5816
239-466-1473
Email: ACPILOT44@EMBARQMAIL.COM.

Dear Editor,

How wonderful to have this connection – and how sad I was to read in your latest newsletter that the 454th Bomb Group's organization no longer exists.

However, I would like to know if anyone knew my father - Julius Frank Ray (6942490) of the 454th BG.

He was a radio operator from Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. Thank you so much.

Judy

Email: lalondecj@rogers.com

Dear Editor,

I would like to find out how I can get a subscription to your newsletter for my father, S/Sgt, Edward "Red" Nestler, aircraft armorer with the 455th.

He will be 85 years old in October, and I have been corresponding with Dave Ungemach about my father's plane, *OMIAKINBAK*.

Using your website, (<http://www.awardphp.com/veterans.php>), I have printed out several of the newsletters and various pages from some of the older issues as well. He has really enjoyed looking at these, and it has brought back a lot of great memories.

Thank you for any help you can give me.

Cynthia Smucker
Email: csmuckerbvs@yahoo.com

Editor's Note:

Thank you, Cynthia, for your interest in subscribing to the *Cerignola Connection*. To subscribe, please send \$15 for 2010, or \$60 for a lifetime membership, to the 455th Bomb Group Assoc., Inc., PO Box 93095, Austin, TX. 78709-3095.

To Members of the 455th Bomb Group Association, from your Editor:

Thank you for the beautiful plaque that you awarded me for editing the

Cerignola Connection.

The plaque, and the message written on it, are both humbling and appreciated.

The work and time required to create the newsletter is a labor of love. It is also a great honor that you allow me to do it.

I look forward to serving as *Cerignola Connection* Editor for many years to come.

Sincerely,
Craig Ward
Son of Lt. J.T. Ward (740)

Can You Help?

Dear Editor,

I am attempting to locate any available information or pictures of my father, S/Sgt. Millard Dean (743). He flew in the ball turret and nose gun sections. I also believe he was the flight engineer. We had an old picture of him and the crew in front of his plane *Menacing Messalina*. Unfortunately, the picture has disappeared.

I have located one picture of his plane on the internet, but he is not in that picture. He was from Richmond, Va. I also have the names of three other crew members:

Orville Lee from Iowa
Charles Denton from N. Mexico
Joe Collins (hometown ??)

Thank you.

Rusty Dean
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Email: RDean@blakemoreva.com

**455TH BOMB GROUP
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Son, Lt. J. T. Ward
Editor, *Cerignola Connection*

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Available Now!

Vulgar Vulture Logo Stick Pins

Each pin is one and one quarter inch in diameter
Each pin has a brass-colored finish and four-color enameled logo
Each pin is secured with a standard "frog" fastener on the back side
Make checks payable to: 455th Bomb Group Association
Mail to the association at: P.O. Box 93095, Austin, TX 78709-3095

Great Gifts!

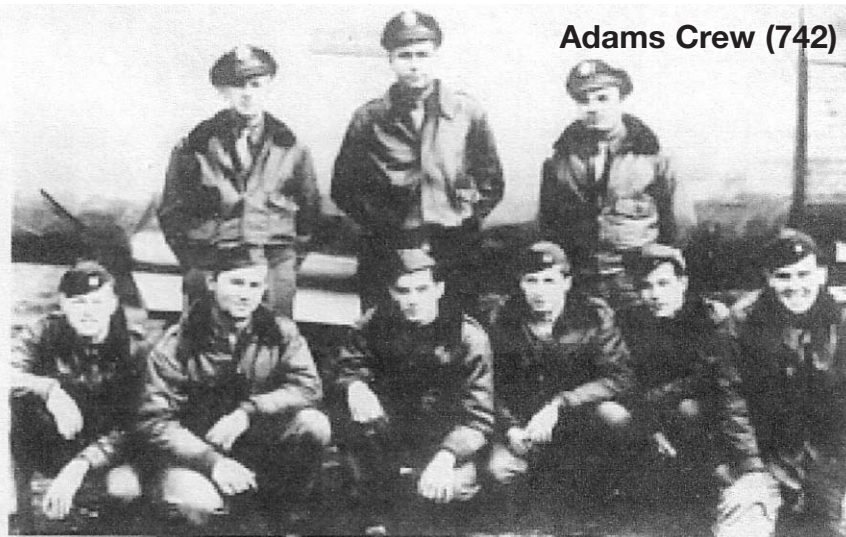
Order quickly to ensure processing for Christmas



On the left: a 455th GROUP pin, \$4 each

On the right: a SQUADRON pin, \$6 each

Squadron pins are available for each of the four squadrons. The 740th has a yellow bomb, the 741st has a green bomb (pictured), the 742nd has a black bomb, and the 743rd has a red bomb.



Adams Crew (742)

Front row, l to r: John Pearce, armorer gunner; David Steadman, radio operator; Dilabattino, engineer; Malcolm Burr, ball turret gunner; Jack Eggert, tail turret gunner; Contratto, waist gunner. Back row, l to r: Hutchins, bombardier; James Adams, pilot; Hodgins, co-pilot.

Editor's Note:

David D. Stedman (742) sent your Editor his WWII memoirs earlier this year. A few short stories from his memoirs are told on the next page. (See David's crew picture above.) Thank you, David, for sending your stories for inclusion in the *Cerignola Connection*.

STORIES WORTH REMEMBERING

by David D. Stedman (742)

Infantry Takes to the Skies

A soldier from the front lines came to visit his brother in our bomb group. His brother was an aircraft mechanic. The airplane involved was a troublesome plane, so the Crew Chief decided to replace all four engines.

Rules were that if you did major work on a plane, the ground crew had to go on the first flight. The infantry soldier went with his brother.

Shortly after takeoff, the electrical power generator (aptly named *PUTT-PUTT*) caught on fire. After using up the fire extinguisher, the Pilot decided to bail out.

The picture of the soldier rolling up his parachute made *Stars and Stripes* magazine, our military newspaper.

One Brave Airman

Albert N. Edelstein flew as a Co-Pilot with new crews. At this stage of the war, the procedure that was used to introduce a new crew to combat was that the Pilot would fly with an experienced crew as a Co-Pilot for three missions. Then an experienced Co-Pilot would fly with new crew for two missions.

The first five missions is when most make small mistakes that sometimes lead to a bad outcome. When an experienced Pilot is willing to fly continuously with new crews, he a brave soldier. It was on one of these missions that he bailed

out and his parachute collapsed, leading to his death.

Hot Pilots on the Way Home

Seven airplanes were scheduled to return to the States. Our crew was selected to fly one home.

The Pilots decided to BUZZ the group headquarters after takeoff and enroute to Bari, Italy.

We came very low over the runway in formation with the Bombay doors open. I could see the individual gravel (clods of dirt) on the runway.

The Commander radioed the Pilots to return to base, but no one paid any attention.

We went to Bari!

Questions people ask most often when **Dave Stedman** appears at speaking engagements and / or air shows:

Q: Were you ever scared?

A: Yes! On every mission.

Q: Would you be willing to go to war again?

A: Yes, in a New York minute, if the country needed me.

Q: How long were the missions?

A: Most of them between 8 - 11 hours.

Q: Which target did you dread most?

A: Vienna, Austria.

Dear Editor,

A few months ago, I contacted you, researching a bombing mission on February 28, 1945. You gave me the phone number of Mario Capocéfalo.

Last week, I had the chance to go to Cerignola and to meet him. It was wonderful to speak with Mario.

Thanks to you, Mr. Ward, now, I have a new friend.

Regards,
Casagrande Nevio
Email: nevio.casagrande@tin.it

Dear Editor,

In June 2009, I requested a *Cerignola Connection* newsletter subscription for my father, Edward Nestler.

Somewhere along my investigations on your website, I saw some other items that could be purchased, such as hats, mugs, etc.

If you can direct me to those things, I would appreciate it very much.

My father will be 85 next week, and I think something from the 455th for Christmas would be something he would like.

Thank you for your help.
Sincerely,
Cynthia Smucker
405 N. Galena St.
Tiskilwa, IL 61368

(Editor's Note: If anyone can assist Cynthia with an extra mug, hat, etc., please contact her at the address above.)

455TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H)
Member Information

Name: _____ Squadron: _____

Spouse's Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Telephone: (____) _____

E-Mail Address: _____

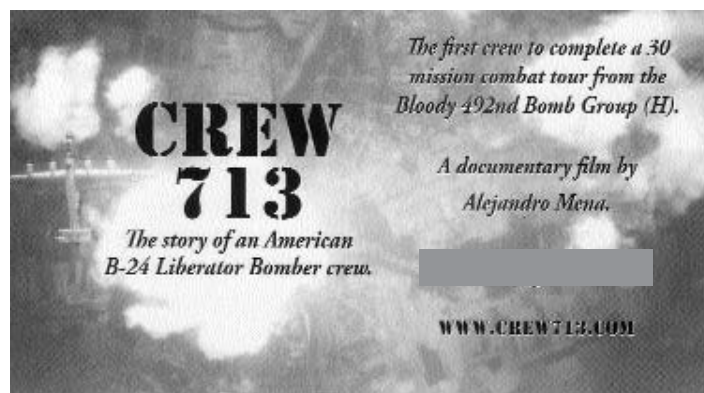
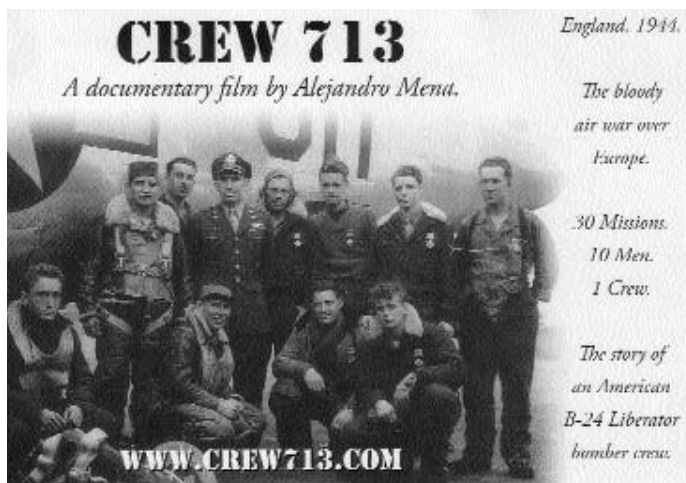
May we publish your e-mail address in the newsletter? ____Yes ____No

Current members may retain this form and use it to report a future change of address or other contact information. The form can also be given to anyone interested in membership. Please return completed forms to: 455th Bomb Group Association, P.O. Box 93095, Austin, Texas 78709-3095. This information is strictly for the internal use of the 455th B.G. Association, and will be kept confidential.

Dear Editor,

My name is Alex Mena. I am a documentary film maker. I wanted you and your readers to be aware of my film about my father's B-24 bomber crew from WWII.

Crew 713 - The Men Who Flew "The Irishman's Shanty"
Releasing in 2010



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Standing (L-R)

2nd Lt Harry C. Hall
2nd Lt Edward R. Eber
2nd Lt Rodney S. Perrill
2nd Lt John W. Stuart Jr.
T/Sgt Dominick J. Fragale

Kneeling (L-R)

S/Sgt Allen L. Holeman
Sgt Ulys P. Taylor Jr.
S/Sgt Grover C. West Jr.
S/Sgt Glenn A. Borstad
T/Sgt William J. Malcolm

Dear Editor,

Since early 2009, I have actively been researching my Dad's military career. With a photocopy of his WWII discharge papers, I was able to find the 742nd Bomb Squadron and the 455th Bomb Group.

Finding the *Cerignola Connection* newsletter was like a dream come true for me! I have read every edition that is available online, and cannot believe what a treasure trove of information it contains.

Imagine my surprise when I found a picture of my Dad in the Spring, 2001 edition, and a story written by Rod Perrill in the Spring, 1997 edition!

In the picture above, my father, then 2nd Lt. John W. Stuart, Jr. is pictured standing in

the back row. A picture with the same crew was published in the Spring, 2001 *Cerignola Connection*.

I am wondering if any of your readers can help me in my search to discover what my Dad did in the war. I know that he was a member of the 742nd Bomb Squadron. He was obviously a very skilled pilot, as he was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross and the Air Medal with three Oak Leaf Clusters. He served in Cerignola from Sept. 10, 1944 until April 28, 1945.

I am sad to report that Capt. John W. Stuart, Jr. made his Final Flight on May 17, 1962. He and his 12 crew mates were serving with the 40th Troop Carrier Squadron of the 322nd Air Division on a contingency mission in conjunction with the Mercury space flight of astronaut Scott Carpenter, when their C-130 crashed into a mountain near Nairobi, Kenya. There were no survivors.

I am pleased to tell you that, at long last, the Air Force is going to pay tribute to the 13 men who perished that day. On Oct. 23, 2009, a plaque will be dedicated in their honor at Cape Canaveral Air Force Station. If you go to the 317th Veterans Group home page at <http://www.usaf317thvet.org>, you can find more information.

Best Regards,
Beth Stuart
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Email: JerseyGirl1954@aol.com.
(210) 675-4656 home
(210) 422-4367 cell

The Navigator

by Kinky Friedman

**Reproduced with permission
from the author.**

Though my father won the Distinguished Flying Cross and the Air Medal during World War II, he would never call himself a hero. *That's fine – I'll do it for him.*

Because I'm the oldest living Jew in Texas who doesn't own real estate, and given my status in general as a colorful character, there are those who profess to be surprised that I ever, indeed, had a father or a mother. I assure you, I had both.

For many years, my parents owned and directed Echo Hill Ranch, a summer camp near Kerrville where I grew up, or maybe just got older.

I remember my dad, Tom Friedman, talking to all of the campers on Father's Day in the dining hall after lunch. Each summer he'd say essentially the same words: "For those of you who are lucky enough to have a father, now is the time to remember him and let him know that you love him. Write a letter home today." Many years have passed since I last heard Tom's message to the campers, but love, I suppose, has no "sell-by" date.

When my father was a young boy growing up in the Chicago of the late twenties, his first job was working for a Polish peddler. The man had a horse and cart that was loaded up with fruits and vegetables, and

Tom sat on the very top. Through the streets and alleys of the old West Side they'd go, with the peddler crying his wares in at least five languages and my father running the purchases up to the housewives who lived on the top floors of the tenement buildings. There were trolley cars then, and colorful clotheslines strung across the sooty alleys like medieval banners. My father still remembers the word the peddler seemed to cry out more than any other. The word was *kartofel*. It is Polish for "potato."

In November 1944, my mother, Minnie, gave birth to me in a manger somewhere on the south side of Chicago. (I lived there one year, couldn't find work, and moved to Texas, where I haven't worked since.)

And all this time, my father was far away fighting for his country and his wife and a baby boy he might never see. Tom was a navigator in World War II, flying a heavy bomber for the Eighth Air Force, the old B-24, also known as the *Liberator*, which, in time, it was. Tom's plane was called the *I've Had It*.

He flew 35 successful missions over Germany, the last occurring on November 9, 1944, two days after he'd learned that he was a brand-new father. As the navigator, the responsibility fell to him to bring the ten-man crew back safely. In retrospect, it's not terribly surprising that fate and the powers that be had selected Tom to be the navigator. He was the only one aboard the *I've Had*

It who possessed a college degree.

He was also the oldest man on the plane. He was 23 years old.

After each successful mission, it was the custom to paint a small bomb on the side of the plane; in the rare instance of shooting down an enemy plane, a swastika was painted. When one incoming crew, however, accidentally hit a British runway maintenance worker, a small teacup was painted on the side of the plane, practically engendering an international incident.

Tom was a hero in what he still refers to as "the last good war." For his efforts, he received the Distinguished Flying Cross and the Air Medal with three Oak Leaf clusters and the heartfelt gratitude of his crew.

Yet the commanding officer's first words to Tom and his young compatriots had not been wrong. The CO had told them to look at the man on their left and to look at the man on their right. "When you return," he'd said, "they will not be here." This dire prophecy proved to be almost correct. The Mighty Eighth suffered a grievous attrition rate during the height of the war.

After the war, Tom and Min settled in Houston, where Tom pioneered community action programs and Min became one of the first speech therapists in the Houston public schools.

In the late fifties, they moved to Austin, where Tom

was a professor of educational psychology at the University of Texas. It was in 1953, however, that my parents made possibly their greatest contribution to children far and wide by opening Echo Hill Ranch. My mother passed away in 1985, but Tom, known as *Uncle Tom* to the kids, still runs the camp.

Like most true war heroes, Tom rarely talks about the war. My sister, Marcie, once saw Tom sitting alone in a darkened room and asked, "Is everything all right, Father?" To this Tom replied, "The last time everything was all right was August 14, 1945." That was the day Japan surrendered.

On a recent trip to O'Hare Airport in Chicago, I commandeered a limo and drove through the area where Tom had grown up. There were slums and suburbs and Starbucks, and the trolley cars and the clotheslines and the peddler with his horse and cart were gone. "Kartofel," I said to the limo driver, but he just looked straight ahead. Either he wasn't Polish or he didn't want any potatoes.

Today, Tom lives in Austin with his new wife, Edythe Kruger, and his two dogs, Sam and Perky. He has three children and three grandchildren. He eats lunch at the Frisco, and still plays tennis with his old pals. He did not, as he contends, teach me everything I know: Only almost everything.

He taught me tennis. He taught me chess. He taught me how to belch. He taught me to always stand up for the

underdog. He taught me the importance of treating children like adults and adults like children. He is a significant American because by his example, his spirit, and his unseen hand, he has guided children of all ages safely through the winding, often torturous courses of their lives.,

One of them was me.

Tom's way is long over. Indeed, the whole era seems gone like the crews who never came home, lost forever among the saltshaker stars. And yet, when the future may look its darkest, there sometimes occurs an oddly comforting moment when, with awkward grace, the shadow of a silver plane flies inexplicably close to my heart.

One more mission for the navigator.

<http://echohill.org/navigator.html>

Editor's Note:

For those of you not blessed to be from the Lone Star State, Kinky Friedman is a Texas treasure. He is an author, singer, songwriter, humorist, homeless-animal advocate (his Utopia Ranch, outside Kerrville, shelters homeless pets until they can find new homes), and Texas gubernatorial candidate.

Kinky is a busy man, but not too busy to return phone calls.

As editor of this newsletter, one of my duties is to receive permission from the author prior to using any material that is not my own.

When I read Kinky's story of love and respect for his father's service aboard a B-24 in WWII, I knew our readers would enjoy reading it, too.

I emailed Kinky's gubernatorial campaign, hoping to hear back from a staffer or secretary with permission to use the story in this newsletter.

Imagine my surprise when the phone rang one morning, and the caller said, "Hello, Craig, this is Kinky Friedman."

I just about fell out of my chair. I have been an admirer of his work for many years, so it was quite a thrill to speak to the man personally.

He told me that he would be honored to have his story in the *Cerignola Connection*. He shares my respect and admiration for WWII veterans.

So, on behalf of the 455th Bomb Group Association, thank you, Kinky, for permission to use your fine work.

Can You Help?

Dear Editor,

I am the nephew of John Molek (742), who died 12-20-1944, on Mission 169.

If any of your readers knew John Molek, or know about this mission, I would appreciate hearing from them.

Also, could you ask your readers to contact me if they know the status of Alex Smart, and how I could contact him.

Patrick Kacir

2272 Parkwood Drive NW
Warren, OH 44485-2329

Can You Help ?

Dear Editor,

I interview WWII pilots and draw their aircraft. I'm currently interviewing Senator George McGovern (741). I need detailed info on any of the B-24s he flew in combat, especially the *Dakota Queen*.

George's archives do not contain any photos that would be suitable to create an accurate rendering. Any help will be appreciated.

Thank You!

John Mollison
605-261-6070

26 October 2009

To: Gregory E. Riggs, Executive Director
455th Bomb Group Association

From: Mark L. Mason, Secretary
455th Bomb Group Association

Subject: Minutes – General Membership Business Meeting
17 October 2009

Officers, directors and members of the association met in Suites 2 and 3 of the Sheraton Indianapolis Hotel and Suites, Indianapolis, Indiana, on 17 October 2009.

Board members present included: President Clarke, Vice President Loiocano, Secretary Mason, Executive Director/Treasurer Riggs, and Directors Barr, Buffington, Davis and Tronoff. Absent were Past President Gemmill and Directors Gould, Henske, Paris and Ward. In addition, a total of eighteen others were present including regular and associate members and relatives.

Clarke called the meeting to order at 0811 hours. The minutes prepared by Riggs, acting as secretary for the last business meeting on 4 October 2008, were read by Mason. The minutes were approved as read.

Officers' reports were then submitted verbally. Riggs provided the treasurer's report, listing a balance of \$9,088.91, as of 30 September 2009, and noting the decrease over the last two-year period. The group's income levels were discussed. Reunion expenses for the last two meetings averaged slightly less than \$900 for each reunion. He noted costs for the extant reunion would be less due to the fact that there would be no guest speaker's expenses to be reimbursed. He reported the organization's largest expense as the publication of the newsletter, with total publication and mailing expenses of slightly less than \$4,700 over the last four issues.

Clarke then addressed the group regarding its future operations. He noted that this topic had already been outlined in the previous edition of the newsletter.

Riggs provided that there were currently 483 members listed on the association's roster. He then discussed the several options available to the group. He advised that the board had recommended that only two options be voted on by the general membership, and that the recommended action of the two presented be that: the group discontinue reunions, continue operations with revision to the bylaws and a reduced board, and continue to publish the newsletter as long as finances allowed.

Riggs provided a discussion of some of the proposed revisions to the bylaws in the event of the downsizing of the organization.

There was then a period of open discussion. From the floor, a member questioned the possibility of garnering additional income from the sale of coffee cups. Riggs advised that these sales had been discontinued. Also from the floor, one member presented the option of changing the organization from a 501 (c) (19) veterans', non-profit organization to a 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization. Mason advised that the veterans could turn over the operation of the association to second-generation members, who could perpetuate the group's history. Mason also commented on the revised bylaws which permitted the executive secretary/treasurer to also assume the office of president in the event of a vacancy. This allowed one person to hold three of the four offices for a period of up to four years until new elections were held, with the power of appointment to board vacancies. Riggs responded that a president assuming this duty under these circumstances would still have to have board appointments approved by the remaining board members.

A motion was made from the floor for a voice vote on the recommended option for continued operation of the group. This motion was seconded and approved. The voice vote was then conducted, and the recommendation was approved.

Upon a request from the floor, there was another brief discussion of the proposed amendments to the bylaws.

The chairman of the nominating committee, Barr, then presented the slate of candidates as proposed for the reduced board, noting that two slates of candidates had been previously approved, contingent upon the membership's approval of one of the two options for continued operation. Nominations were then opened to the floor. There were none. Again, there was brief discussion of the amended bylaws relative to the size of the board. With the reduced board, officers' positions were to include: president, secretary and executive director/treasurer. There would be four directors' positions at large. There was a motion to approve the three members nominated for officers' positions by acclamation. This was seconded and approved, thus electing Barr as president, Mason as secretary and Riggs as executive secretary/treasurer.

Positions for four directors were then approved as to be elected by the members present. Members were advised to vote for not more than four candidates. Clarke directed Mason to distribute and collect the ballots. A total of eighteen members were present and eligible to vote, and eighteen ballots were issued and collected. The eight candidates for the four positions were as follows:

Ormond Buffington, John Davis, Seymour Gaynes, James Gould III, Carl Loiocano, C. Henry Paris, Theodore Tronoff and Craig Ward.

Regarding other business, a member from the floor questioned the possibility of second-generation members holding their own meetings. Riggs replied that this could be conducted independent of the association.

Under new business, from the floor a member mentioned a video about the B-24 bomber. Clarke directed him to forward this information for publication in the newsletter.

Clarke then directed a tally of the voting for director. Barr and Mason excused themselves from the room and counted the votes. Barr announced the voting results. A motion was made, seconded and approved to accept the election results. Newly elected directors were:

Buffington, Davis, Loiocano and Ward.

The ballots were delivered to the executive director.

From the floor, a member acknowledged and thanked the board for its efforts on behalf of the membership.

The meeting was adjourned at 0910 hours.



Greg Riggs, Executive Director
Treasurer
2009 - 2013



Ormond Buffington, Director
2009 - 2013



Carl Loiocano, Director
2009 - 2013



Mark Mason, Secretary
2009 - 2013



Craig Ward, Director
2009 - 2013



John Davis, Director
2009 - 2013

John E. Fash (743)

Dear Editor,

The report below was written by my son, Thomas Van Winkle, for his history class at Heidelberg University about his Grandpa's (my Dad's) experience in WWII.

My dad John E Fash is alive and well, and still living on his own in Somerset NJ.

Thanks for keeping the spirit alive !

*Regards,
Kristin (Fash) Van Winkle*

On March 6th, 1943, John E. Fash was told that he, as many of his friends and family had been told, was being called upon by his country to fight against the axis powers in the ongoing conflict known as World War II.

My grandpa always talked about this moment, saying he received his diploma in one hand and his draft papers in the other. From his parents' home in New York City, he headed to Camp Upton, Long Island, New York, to find out where he would be sent for basic training.

His destination was Kearns, Utah. Off he went from New York to Utah, a trip that many 18-year-olds would have had a tough time handling. But my grandpa was an Eagle Scout, and had followed the Boy Scout motto: "Be Prepared", which had kept him ready for any situation.

As training wound down, many of his fellow soldiers were being shipped away for different lines of work. Many had left before they finally called my grandpa's name ... they said he

was going to start training in the Medical Field. They packed him up and shipped him to O'Reilly General Hospital of Springfield, Missouri.

He learned later that most of the men called away before him were trained to be gliders, a job that didn't have a very high survival rate.

From June 7 – July 6, 1943, my grandpa gained knowledge toward his assigned position of Surgical Technician.

The now Private First Class John Fash was put in Group D, to go through the first month of his medical training.

For a month, four groups of prospective Surgical Technicians rotated lessons to learn all aspects of their job. Group D spent a week each on Ward Work, Lectures, Clinics, Demonstrations, and Practice.

After graduation, Grandpa spent some extra time at O'Reilly General Hospital getting more hands-on training on injured soldiers that were arriving from fronts all over the world.

After awhile, my grandpa was transferred from Springfield, Missouri to an air base in Biggs Field, Texas. Biggs Field is where he finished the training that he would use throughout the rest of the war.

Biggs Field was a training ground for B-17, B-24 and B-29 crews. Grandpa got more hands-on experience as an orderly during his time here.

Some of his responsibilities were checking over soldiers getting ready to be sent overseas. He would take

care of their physicals and make sure all their inoculations were up to date.

It was at Biggs Field that grandpa saw the first of what would be many plane crashes. Planes crashes were common on air force runways, and medics had to be ready to run to a crash site to lend their expertise.

When the time came, he received his orders to go overseas.

At this time, he was back in Kearns, Utah. He boarded a train headed for Langley Field, Virginia, by way of Southern California. He told me that this was one of his most memorable moments of WWII, riding in open train cars for days, covering the entire length of the continental United States.

He told me he used to go hang out in the cooking car. He would lean on a two-by-four that the cooks had put up on the side door that they always kept open so it did not get too hot.

After the long journey across the USA, he arrived in Virginia. Because he had not had leave during his time in the army, he was given a little time off to see his friends and family.

After ten days with his family, it was time to report back. As he left to head back to the base, his dad, John H. Fash Jr. (my great grandpa), gave him this piece of advice:

"Son, please be good, and if you can't be good, be careful."

It would be almost two years before grandpa would see his family again.

When he arrived back at Langley Field, he finally received his papers on what squadron he was going to be in. He was assigned to the 743rd Squadron, 455th Bomb Group, 304th Bomb Wing, of the 15th Air Force.

He was in one of the four Squadrons of the 455th Bomb Group known as *The Vulgar Vultures*.

After he had reported, they told him he would be heading overseas on a plane. But he was replaced on the plane by another medic, and in the end would be traveling by boat.

After arriving overseas, grandpa learned that one of the planes of the 743rd had crashed during takeoff; it was the same plane that my grandpa had been replaced on at the last minute.

Grandpa's Squadron, the 743rd, was assigned to the "*Charles Brantley Aycock*" Liberty Ship. On December 13, 1943, the ships carrying the men of the 455th Bomb Group debarked for an unknown destination in Italy.

The trip would be a long one, over a month at sea with the soldiers spending Christmas and New Years Day on their ships.

Grandpa remembers many men getting sea-sick, but not him, because he was somewhat used to the sea. During the trip, the ship's rudder was damaged, and the ship had to fall back until it was fixed and could then catch back up to the convoy.

On January 7, the ships pulled into Augusto, Sicily, where they waited to get word on their destination in Italy. Their original destination of Bari, Italy (on the east side of the Italian "boot"), had been heavily bombed, so they would be arriving in Italy at Taranto, on the west side of the boot.

After the ships had pulled into the harbor, the men loaded onto invasion craft and stormed the shore, but encountered no opposition.

Upon arriving on the shore, grandpa said he knew at once that he was in a foreign country when he saw a women breast feeding an infant out in public.

From Taranto, the men of the 455th boarded box cars for the overnight train ride to Cerignola, on the other side of the Peninsula.

My grandpa made a bad decision during this train ride by sleeping too close to the hole being used as a urinal by the men. When he woke up the next day, he discovered that his pant leg was frozen solid from the result of cold weather and many soldiers relieving themselves in the hole next to where he slept.

On the dawn of January 15, 1944, my grandpa arrived at Cerignola, Italy, where the 455th would be stationed for the rest of the war.

The men that were traveling by aircraft would not arrive for another two weeks, so the men that had traversed the sea by boat were charged with setting up the camp. While setting up the base, and

repairing the commandeered airfield, it rained heavily.

Grandpa said the mud was a foot deep, and when you slept in the small tents, you had to choose between sticking your feet out into the rain or your head. In all this Italian mud and rain, my grandpa lost his Franklin K. Lane High School ring.

On February 1, 1944, the B-24's arrived at the newly constructed San Giovanni Field. Everything was set and prepared.

It was time to start flying mission's against the Nazis!

My grandpa has many stories of his time in Italy. I would like to share a few of them to get a feel of the war as he saw it.

One thing my grandpa never got to do was go on a bombing run. He tried to get on a couple different "Milk Runs", or missions that were projected to have very little enemy opposition. He was always denied.

His place was at the base, where he did a lot more than just being a surgical technician.

Along with being an orderly, grandpa took over the handling and distribution of the squadron mail. As Mail Clerk, Corporal Fash was known as a seven-day-a-week Santa Claus.

Being a mail clerk made you well-liked around camp, because you almost always brought joy to those who came to see you. Letters from loved-ones and home-cooked goodies from mom were a few

of many things that lifted the spirits of the men overseas.

In a newspaper article, grandpa was interviewed about his mail responsibilities. "It's pleasant to be able to dispense good cheer to the guys every day," he said. "The first place that the combat men go to after a mission is my mail room."

Grandpa still had many Surgical Technician duties to perform. There were soldiers that needed care because of a wide range of injuries, and even diseases.

Even though grandpa spent most of his medical time in the hospitals replacing dressings, filling out paperwork, and keeping track of recovering soldiers, there were times when he was needed on the runway. When a call of injured soldiers on an incoming plane was made, my grandpa and other medics would jump into the meat wagon and speed out toward the runway.

Sometimes planes would land with bullet holes riddled over an entire side of the aircraft. When the medics rolled up, they knew that members of the craft were likely injured.

Grandpa remembered a time when they were taking injured men out of an airplane after it got back from a dangerous mission. It was a plane on which he knew several of the crewmembers.

He was about to board the plane when one of the other men stopped him from going in. The tail gunner, a man grandpa knew quite well, had been hit, and it wasn't a site that grandpa

needed to see.

After this incident, grandpa said that he kept himself from getting to know the bomber crews well.

Sometimes, the meat wagons would roll up on an entirely different scene. Some of the damaged planes crashed when landing, scattering wreckage everywhere.

One of the biggest crashes my grandpa remembers was a plane crashing during takeoff. To explain the crash I have to explain the layout of the runway.

San Giovanni Field was built on a plateau, and the runway led to the edge of a cliff. Because of the air pressures, the planes would fall off the end of the runway before rising up into the sky. One day, Grandpa was taking a bathroom break in their crudely erected bathroom. You enter through one door and had your choice between 8 stalls that had walls that only came up to your shoulder while sitting down.

On this particular day, the bathroom was packed, and the men were watching planes take off on a bombing run. As it headed down the runway, one aircraft looked to be going a little slow. When it went off the end of the runway and didn't immediately rise back up, my grandpa and the rest of the men knew that it was overweight and going down.

Grandpa said that you will never see eight men get through one bathroom door as fast as they did that day. They all jumped on the ground as a

huge explosion sent a shock wave flying past them.

Sadly, none of the men on the plane survived the crash.

Another plane crash that had lasting effects on Grandpa was one that he didn't even see coming. One night, as he lay asleep on his bunk, he was thrown to the ground by a vicious blast.

For a few disoriented minutes, Grandpa had no clue what had happened. When he regained some of his focus and hearing, he ventured out to find that a plane had crashed near his sleeping quarters. To this day, he still has trouble with his hearing in the ear that was closest to the blast.

Grandpa has told me many stories about the venereal diseases in Italy, and how that didn't impede the urges of many soldiers. Prostitution houses were present everywhere, in spite of the military's attempt to shut them down. It was big trouble for you if the army did a raid on a house and found you there, but that still didn't discourage many of the men.

To combat this, the air force put more focus on stopping the spread of venereal diseases. My grandpa said that when the men went out on leave to an Italian town and "partied", they would stop by the medical station on their return trip.

The treatment went as follows: The men were given a syringe filled with a special concoction of medicines. They were required to inject the liquid up their urethra, and hold it in for a few minutes before

urinating it out.

This would hopefully kill any diseases picked up from the local populace. It was a painful and humbling treatment that discouraged Grandpa from ever mixing it up with any Italian women.

One funny story that my grandpa always likes to tell was about a man that was in the medical department with him. He went out and enjoyed the Cerignola nightlife one night and decided not to stop by the medical station to get treatment. He didn't want to risk infection, so he tried his own home remedy to burn the problem away. Grandpa remembers being awakened by screams when the man decided to use whiskey to disinfect a certain sensitive body part! This story always brings a smile to his face.

There was also a time when Grandpa was able to get some rest, at a resort that might not have been specifically designed for him.

There was an officer's retreat in Nice, France, which is located right in the heart of the beautiful French Riviera. An officer friend was going to this retreat to get some R&R and wanted Grandpa to come along.

Even though Grandpa was not an officer, he was somehow still able to go with his friend and get some rest in the beautiful French country-side.

One time he got word that General Patton was just up the Peninsula. In Patton's 3rd army was the 9th Evacuation Hospital, which was the platoon to which his brother Charles

Fash was assigned.

He got a jeep and headed north to see if he could find his brother, whom he hadn't seen in years.

He eventually came to a road block, where he was told that the frontline was chaotic and confused. There was no telling where, or how far, the Germans had advanced.

They said that he could proceed north if he wanted. He chose against it, and headed back to camp.

Grandpa never did get to see his brother, who had been drafted in 1940, until the completion of the war.

On May 8th, 1945 (V-E Day), Hitler was no more, and Germany had surrendered. The war in Europe was over, but my grandpa still didn't have enough points to head home.

The 455th prepared for deployment to Japan.

During this down time, my grandpa took an opportunity to get some higher education. He enrolled in Psychology at the Benito Mussolini School of Aeronautics in Florence, Italy.

While studying there, he received word that his Squadron had received its 85th point and they were being sent home! Their service was up, they had done their duty, and now it was time to go home to everything they had left behind. Everything they had fought so hard to protect during these past few years was waiting for them.

Grandpa boarded the *SS Ward Hunt*, and embarked from Naples, Italy on September 24th, 1945. This would not be a

straight shot home though; they had to make a stop in Beni Saf, Oran-Algeria.

In Beni Saf, the *SS Ward Hunt* loaded a few tons of sand as ballast, to weigh down the ship, as a replacement for all the equipment that had made the journey to begin the war, but would not be returning.

Once they had enough sand aboard, they raised anchor and sailed toward the eastern coast of the United States of America.

On October 13, Grandpa was back on US soil. A few days later, Cpl. John E. Fash received an Honorable Discharge from the Army of the United States.

He had been in the Army for 2 years, 7 months, and 19 days, with 1 year, 9 months, and 29 days of that service taking place overseas. My grandpa had done his part to defend his country in it's time of need.

He had served in the US Army Air Corps that had beaten the Third Reich into submission, and dethroned the most dangerous dictator of our time.

My grandpa, John Elwood Fash, had earned his place as a member of the Greatest Generation.

Author's Note:

The subject of this story, John Elwood Fash, lives at: 7 Landry Rd. Somers, NJ 08873 Phone: 908-507-0057

The problem with socialism is that, eventually, you run out of other people's money ...
Margaret Thatcher

FINAL FLIGHTS

George W. Campbell born May 20, 1924, died Friday.

His parents were George S. Campbell and Nina White Campbell.

He was born into a large, loving family of seven brothers and three sisters, all of whom preceded him in death. Also preceding him in death was his first wife, Dorothy Boyer Campbell.



Campbell

Surviving are their two children, a daughter, Linda Clark and her husband, William Clark, and their two sons, Bryan Clark and David Clark and wife, Melissa, and their daughter, Olivia Clark; and son, James W. Campbell and wife, Deborah, and their children, Michael Campbell and Krista Campbell.

George's second wife, Arlene Buckley Campbell, also preceded him in death.

Surviving is her daughter, Connie Schwab and her husband Louis Schwab; their son, Louis Schwab and his wife, Esther, and their two sons, Harding and Owen; and their daughter, LeeAnne Tooley and her husband, Paul Tooley, and their children, Evan and Karah, all of Truth or Consequence, N.M.

George served in the U.S. Air Force in the 15th Air Force in Italy as an aerial engineer aboard a B-24 Bomber. He was awarded numerous campaign ribbons as well as the Air Medal with Clusters and the Distinguished Flying Cross.

After the war, he returned to his civilian job and in 1950 was recalled for active duty during the Korean War with 375 Troop Carrier Wing 56 Squadron.

In 1956, he entered the ministry of the United Methodist Church, serving Blackburn, Millerstown, Tidioute, Sheffield and Glassport churches, retiring in 1988. Lat-

George W. Campbell (742)

took his Final Flight on April 17, 2009. <See obituary at left.> His daughter, Linda Clark, can be emailed at: clarkred@zoominternet.net.

James Weeks (741)

of Greenwood, S.C., flew his Final Flight in December, 2008, after a long illness. Mr. Weeks' widow told your editor that he loved going to the 455th BG reunions, and enjoyed the *Cerignola Connection* newsletters.

Efflandt, Herbert R.



85, passed away on July 18, 2009. Born December 23, 1923 to Herbert W. and Marie Higgins Efflandt in Cleveland, Ohio. Predeceased by his mother, father, sister Marien Sanford, her husband Bob and nephew Ricky Efflandt. Survived by his wife of 61 years, Virginia, his sister Anita and husband George De Shazo, his brother Fred Efflandt and wife Betty and many nieces and nephews. Herb graduated from Dallas Crozier Tech High School in 1941. He joined the Army Air Force and served with 455th Bomb Squadron based in Cherigona, Italy as an aircraft maintenance specialist. He formed a partnership with John Theobalt in 1955 as E & T Home Builders. Their master craftsmanship resulted in many beautiful homes and mansions in the Park Cities area. Herb and Virginia were currently members of the Prestonwood Baptist Church. Services will be at 12:30 P.M., Friday, July 24, 2009 at Restland's Wildwood Chapel. Visitation will be Thursday from 6-8 P.M. Donations should be made to your favorite charity. Restland Funeral Home Walnut @Greenville 972-238-7111.

William H. Dotter Sr. (741)

William H. (Bill) Dotter, Sr., 88, of Glenville, N.Y., died earlier this year after many health complications.

Born in Milton, Pennsylvania, Bill grew up and was educated in Lebanon. He served in WWII with the 455th BG in Italy from 1942-45.

He was an avid skier, and enjoyed taking trips to Gore Mountain. Bill was a member of the First Reformed Church of Schenectady. He is survived by his wife of 62 years, Elsie (Stohler) Dotter, his daughter, Diane (Maurice) Robbins of Burnt Hills, NY; his son, William H. Dotter, Jr. of Cary, NC; four grandchildren, two great grandsons, and one great granddaughter.

Cpl. Anthony J. Picardi (742)

Cpl. Anthony J. Picardi, of Port Washington, NY., took his final flight July 20, 2009, at the age of 85, leaving his wife of 60 years, 3 children, 10 grandchildren and 5 great-grandchildren.

He told family that he and his buddies made a pact when they said goodbye "to someday all meet again in that Big Runway in Heaven".

His family is comforted knowing that his buddies are waiting for him with open arms.

He was a true hero in every sense of the word, not only to his country, but to his family.

Sincerely,

Rose M. Wilson (daughter)

Email: bucathree@yahoo.com

My Early Childhood Memories

by Sigrid Harvey

Reflections of an American born in war-time Germany

It is amazing what a three-year-old child remembers, when it is burned into your memory by traumatic events.

I was born in Wetzlar, Germany, in August, 1942. Wetzlar is a beautiful medium-sized city on the banks of the Dill and Lahn Rivers. It is located about 45 miles north of Frankfurt, and 15 miles west of Giessen. Wetzlar was a fairly large rail center, and had two war-critical munitions factories (Buderus and Roechling). It had a world class optics factory (Leica Leitz) that was heavily involved in the production of war material.

My mother worked in one of the ammunition factories. My father was an officer in the German army; he was an SS Officer. I never knew him.

My mother, my little sister, and I lived with my mother's parents (my grandparents) during and after the war. My grandparents' house was located on the outskirts of town, and right on a line between the railroad center, the ammunition factories, and Leica Leitz.

It was less than a mile from the first military target to the last along that line, and we were in the middle of it. Of course, the strings of bombs that fell along that line of military targets were indiscriminate.

Since we were right on the line of the bombing runs, my grandfather supervised a group of elderly men and young boys, who were medically unfit for military duty, to dig a bunker into the side of a hill very near our house so that we would have some protection during the bombing raids. There were several entrances (or exits) to the bunker that were camouflaged with large shrubs.

Rough timbers were used to shore up the walls and ceiling. There were no lights in that dirt bunker, and we used carbide lamps whenever we were in there. To this day, I still remember the sickening smell of the carbide lamps. There were long, narrow primitive benches with no backs along the clay walls of the bunker. The musty smell of that dank and dark bunker is a lasting memory.

Of course, there were no toilet facilities other than buckets inside the bunker.

At the sound of the air raid sirens, we would run as a group to our bunker and would remain there until the raids were over and the all-clear was sounded.

Sometimes we went into the basement of the house when there was not enough warning before the bombs began to fall. The basement was also a dark and terrifying place during a night bombing raid with no lights. We had to nail blankets over the windows to be certain that no light could be seen, and that added to the darkness.

We spent a lot of time in

that bunker and the basement in 1944-1945.

Because my mother was working in the ammunition factory, my grandparents were my constant caregivers. My grandmother had a serious heart condition, but she took me along when she walked to town to get bread and meat with our food ration stamps. Those trips to get food took a long time because we had to stand in long lines at the bakery, the butcher shop, and the grocery store.

Everything was rationed (if there was any), and the price of a loaf of bread was one million marks due to inflation. We also had to stand in line to get a small sack of coal to burn in the kitchen stoves. We carried the coal in a hand-pulled wagon in the summer, and on a sled in the winter. We got a small bottle of milk (about 4 cups) every other day from a relative who had a cow and shared with us. My grandfather walked to the relative's house to get the milk.

One day, while my grandmother and I were in town to get our ration of food, the air raid sirens sounded and the bombers were close enough that we could hear them. We started to run to get back to our house and bunker, but my grandmother could not run. I was terrified and crying for her to "Hurry, hurry", but she couldn't run anymore. She put me in a ditch near the train tracks and laid on top of me until the bombing raid was over.

Another time, we were hurrying from the house to the

bunker through the thick, deep mud. My grandfather had placed wide boards end to end forming a walking path to the bunker, but they were too narrow for my aunt's baby buggy with her infant. It got stuck in the mud and it seemed like it took forever to get it unstuck with the sound of the sirens and the bombers coming. The women were hysterical, and the kids were crying because we couldn't get around the stuck baby buggy.

Finally, two young men wrestled the baby buggy out of the mud and they carried it into the bunker, allowing the rest of us to pass.

We sometimes had to leave the house so quickly that we couldn't take any food to the bunker with us. There was very little food anyway, and we were always hungry. I recall one time when we had been in the bunker during three days of constant bombing. My little sister and I were hungry and crying. My grandmother kept telling me to go to sleep and I wouldn't be hungry. In desperation, my mother left the bunker to run back to the house to get something for us to eat. She was almost killed by machine gun fire from an airplane on a strafing run.

My grandfather and grandmother had six sons – my uncles. Five of the six were killed during the war, their deaths spaced out over the course of the war, with two dying in France, and three dying on the Russian front. Their other son was wounded and returned

home after the war. I remember how devastating it was when they received a death notification on my mother's birthday and another on my grandmother's birthday.

My grandfather had a hidden radio, which was absolutely forbidden, and only my grandmother and my mother knew. He listened to the BBC broadcasts to find out how the war was going. I walked in on him one day after he had taken it out of hiding, and he and my grandmother panicked and told me over and over that I must not to tell anyone about that radio. They said that if anyone found out about that radio, they would take my grandfather to the middle of town and shoot him. The Gestapo (Hitler's secret police) seemed to be everywhere, trying to discover any act of disobedience to Hitler. They wore long, green leather trench coats. My grandparents told me that "the men in the green coats" would come and kill grandfather if they knew he had a radio. The Gestapo had picked up some of our neighbors and taken them to town and shot them.

Things improved after the Americans advanced through Wetzlar on their way to Berlin. The bombing stopped, of course. We didn't have anything; no jobs, and very little food. My mother did laundry for an American officer who was stationed nearby, and he illegally paid her in coffee, flour, and sugar which could be traded on the black market for essentials.

The American trucks going through Wetzlar were swarmed by what seemed like hundreds of kids like me begging for food. They would throw us candy and other foodstuffs from their K-ration packets.

We kids even "learned English" that we would yell at the truckloads of Americans. I remember yelling hundreds of times, "How do you do with your gummi shoe." We had no idea what we were saying. The American G.I.'s were all kind and generous. The officer for whom my mother did laundry smuggled an Olive Drab U.S. Army blanket to her that she used to make me a coat. The large 'U.S.' was visible near the hem, and all my friends called me "Ooo Ess".

After the war and during the occupation, my little sister, Monica, got a bottle from under the cabinet that she thought contained milk. It was lye (it looked like milk) that my mother and grandmother used for washing clothes. She drank it and died a horrible death over a long period of time with a burned esophagus. The closest German hospital was in Marburg, about 30 miles away, and all of the railroad tracks had been destroyed by the bombing. My mother got her there and she lived several months, but it was very difficult to make the round-trip to visit with no functioning transportation system.

Another powerful memory of the occupation days was the most magnificent Christmas I had experienced in

my young life! The Americans had a base in our town, and they invited the German kids who did not have a father to meet near the large church in Wetzlar.

They picked us up in a large green bus and drove us to Giessen. When we arrived at the American base in Giessen, we were treated to cake and hot chocolate! I had never seen cake with icing on it before! The cake was so sweet and fluffy, and we loved it, especially with hot chocolate to wash it down. We thought we had died and gone to heaven!

Afterwards, the G.I.'s gave us each a Christmas present. My present was a doll, but I traded with a little girl who did not have a doll for her weaving frame with yarn. I already had a doll, and I loved that weaving system.

Those generous Americans! We had seen American children wearing cotton clothing, and we couldn't believe how beautiful they looked. Imagine our surprise and delight one summer when "Care Packages" from the United States were delivered to several families in our neighborhood.

Our package contained a pink cotton dress with ruffles on the front for me. All of my clothes until that time (including under garments) had been home-knitted. When an item was outgrown, the yarn was simply reclaimed and a new, larger item knitted. Those knitted clothes were scratchy and itchy, but that new cotton dress was so soft and beautiful.

I did not want to ever take it off!

I want you to know how much I appreciate the freedom and plenty in the USA. I am proud to be an American.

American soldiers fought and died around the world and in my native country to free my family and me from the tyranny of our evil dictator.

My relatives all tell me that no one really knew what Hitler intended to do to our beautiful country, but he was an inspirational speaker. He promised jobs, and he promised that he would fix the economy that had been suffering since the First World War. All of a sudden, he had dictatorial power and there was no way to remove him or stop his fanatical policies.

Our country was destroyed because Germany's leaders made very poor choices.

Editor's Note:

Sigrid Harvey and her husband, Curtis (USAF veteran), live in east Texas. If you would like to correspond with Sigrid about her story, please email your comments to your Editor at aphp@tx.rr.com. I will make sure your comments are forwarded to Sigrid.

Dear Editor,

Your dad and I served in the same squadron (740), and have gone through some of the same close calls while on those missions. Some of us came back to tell about it. I guess we were just a part of the lucky ones. So there was a "connection" then, and now even through you younger ones.

I was on Crew 17, Bert Peterson's radio man, and top turret for 23 missions. I have been to several of the reunions, so I'm sure your dad and I met somewhere along the way.

At one of those reunions, I got a couple of those 455th BG bumper stickers for my car. They have since gone the way all we older ones go, faded and torn, then shredded to bits. None of the bright and shining good looks of the past.

I thought I'd try to renew those bumper stickers. Is it possible that you, or one of your readers, would have a couple of them that I could purchase. I'm desperate--just tell me how much.

I also want to join the e-mail list in the newsletter. My email address is:

fastfreddy1881@att.net.

The "fast freddy" is because I got tired of golf and bowling when I was 81. I needed something a little more exciting, so I started race car driving. I just turned 95 and would highly recommend the sport to all those who want a little more out of life while there is still a little adrenalin left.

The bumper stickers are for my race car. Not on the bumpers, but one on each side so people can see them

Stay vertical, young friend. It's when we assume the horizontal that we get into trouble.

Thanks for what you are doing with the *Cerignola Connection*.

Best Regards,
T/Sgt. Fred Hamilton

Email: fastfreddy1881@att.net

REUNION 2009, INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA



Outgoing President
Rod Clarke led in
singing "*Bless 'em All.*"

Group Photo of the Twenty 455th Veterans

Standing, Left to Right: Don Martens, Tony Corsello, Warren Kraeuter, Joseph Abondondello, Stan Vogelfang, Carl Straka, Robert Emick, Ted Tronoff, William M. Doyle, Carl A. Barr, Russell Crocker, Carl Loiocano

Seated, Left to Right: John Davis, Ormond Buffington, Rod Clarke, William Doyle, Frank Hosimer, Charles Rosenberg, Seymour Gaynes, Ed Riggs



Enjoying the
Saturday Night Banquet



Group Photo of the Spouses / Widows

Standing, Left to Right: Jean Loiocano, Celine Kraeuter, Jane Davis, Fern Martens, Jane Tronoff, Nancy Hosimer, Ginny Corsello, Jeanne Vogelfang

Seated, Left to Right: Eleanor Emick, Marie Buffington, Marian Clarke, Katie Spewock, Margaret Doyle, Pat Doyle, Barbara Straka, Mary Rosenberg



455th Commemorative Coin
presented to Stan Vogelfang
by Laura Flanagan. The coins
were presented to each of the
twenty 455th Veterans who
attended the Reunion.

REUNION 2009, INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA



Hospitality Room



Loaded for the City Tour



A MESSAGE FROM 455TH BOMB GROUP ASSOC. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREG RIGGS

As expected, the 2009 reunion in Indianapolis turned out to be a watershed event. The members present voted to discontinue the group-wide periodic reunions. It was a tough decision. Along with that decision came required changes to the bylaws. I will summarize the more significant changes here.

We eliminated all references to general membership meetings since we will no longer get together as a group. Essentially all decision-making authority had already been given to the Board of Directors several years ago; however, the Board did not necessarily exercise that authority. Without general membership meetings, all governance decisions will, in the future, be made by the Board. That is the primary change.

The Board of Directors will no longer need to meet face-to-face, as Carl Barr mentioned in his article. In keeping with the challenges of electronic meetings, and the fact of a shrinking pool of volunteers, the Board of Directors was reduced in size to seven members. Of these seven, one serves as President, one as Secretary, and one as Treasurer/Executive Secretary. The term of office was extended from two years to four years. The current Board of Directors, chosen at our final general membership meeting, is: Carl Barr (President), Mark Mason (Secretary), Greg Riggs (Treasurer/Executive Director), Ormond Buffington, John Davis, Carl Loiocano, and Craig Ward.

Other items of business at the reunion included the membership and financial reports. As of October 31, 2009, the Association had 483 people on our active roster. Of these, 352 are WWII veterans, 109 are widows of veterans, and 22 are family members of veterans, mostly sons and daughters. Our records showed only 31 fewer veterans than the year before. Financially, the Association had \$9,088.91, enough to cover several more years of *Cerignola Connection* publication costs. Through a generous donation of Vulgar Vulture pins, advertised elsewhere in this newsletter, we may be able to generate sales which will extend publication even further.

As usual, for the Fall edition of the *Cerignola Connection*, I want to remind those Association members and associate members paying annual dues to renew their memberships. We currently have fewer than forty people still paying annual dues. Above your name on the mailing label will be an indication of your dues status. Most recipients of the newsletter will show "life member" or "widow." These people owe no dues. Most others will show a two-digit number indicating the most recent year for which you have paid annual dues. If your label shows a number above your name which is smaller than "10," then you need to pay annual dues before the end of 2009 to stay active in the Association. Annual dues are \$15. Checks should be made payable to 455th Bomb Group Association. If you think you have already paid for 2010 and have not been properly credited, please let me know the date and number of the check with which you paid, and I should be able to clear up any error in the records.

My thanks to all those people who have assisted in the last several reunions. Of special note is Ormond Buffington's family, and their help at the last three reunions running the hospitality room. Ormond and Marie have provided daughters, a son-in-law, a granddaughter, and a granddaughter-in-law as servers. That's a pretty impressive family representation. As most of you know, if the hospitality room isn't running right, then the reunion isn't going right. They ran it right! Thanks!

Greg Riggs, Executive Director, 455th Bomb Group Association



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