



CERIGNOLA CONNECTION

455th Bomb Group Association Newsletter

Spring 1999 – Editor, Tom Ramey, 1211 Montclair Ct., Appleton, WI 54915 (920) 731-2500

From Your President

Plans have been taking shape all winter for the September reunion in San Diego. Gen. Hudson and Col. Wendt have spent many hours on their own and with a representative of Armed Forces Reunions, Inc. in setting up a schedule of events. This will be our first reunion on the west coast and we hope many members from the Western U.S. will attend. At the 1997 reunion in Ohio we were pleased to see many sons, daughters, and grandchildren in attendance, and we would like to have them return and also many more.

At the Group's business meeting we will be electing officers and directors to replace those whose terms are expiring. If any of you are interested in serving as an officer or director, please let our Executive Director or me know and we will have our Nominating Committee contact you. The tendency is to nominate those whom we know so we can use your input.

I had the privilege of attending the bronze B-24 sculpture dedication in September at the Air Force Academy. There were several hundred people affiliated with the B-24 and about two hundred tourists who witnessed the ceremony. Several members of our Group, including Col. Al Asch who was one of the speakers, were in attendance. If you are near the Academy, you should stop and see this beautiful model. It is a 1/6 scale and weighs about a ton and is located in the Air Gardens of the Cadet Area.

You will be receiving more information elsewhere in the "Cerignola Connection" regarding the reunion and will be receiving a "sign-up" mailing soon.

See you in San Diego in September.

Ed Riggs

MIA We Need Your Help

We received address corrections for four of the seven MIA names listed in the fall newsletter. Good Work!

However, the P.O. has given us more names. Following is our total MIA listing:

Murray Abromowitz, 3803
Williamsburg Rd., Cincinnati, OH
45215

James R. Castle, 1212 Parkside, Park
Ridge, IL 60068-1903

Joseph P. Dumesnil Jr., 3501
Woodside Rd., Louisville, KY 40222

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

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

Mrs. Betty J. Hutton, 3415 SW
Jardine Terrace, Topeka, KS 66614

Mrs. Mary C. McKelvey, 1357 Piney
Rd., N Fort Meyers, FL 33903

Warren F. Schoene, 3101 SW 34th
Ave., #905 Box 124, Ocala, FL
34474-6432

Jerome C. White, 217 Cunningham
Ave., Cadiz, OH 43907-100

If you have any info about any of the above persons, please send it to: **455 Bomb Group Assoc., Inc. PO Box 4043, Sierra Vista, AZ 85636-4043**

455th E-Mail Roster

Several members have asked if we have a roster of 455th members who have e-mail address. The answer is that we don't. However, we think it is a good idea.

For those of you that have e-mail, please send us your e-mail address and we'll make up such a roster and have it published in the next Cerignola Connection Newsletter. Send your letters to the **455 Bomb Group Assoc. Inc., P.O. Box 4043, Sierra Vista, AZ 85636-4043.**

FINAL FLIGHTS

Max D. Harper, 7/10/95
S/Sgt 743rd Squadron

Harold Gorecki, 9/5/98
Lt Col 742nd Squadron, Pilot

Wayne Swartz, 1998
1st Lt 742nd Squadron, Co-pilot

Edward Jones, 8/18/98
Capt 741st Squadron, Adjutant

Joseph McGinnis, 6/21/98
Sgt 743rd Squadron

Ralph J. Rovie, 3/11/98
743rd Squadron, Navigator

Lloyd M. Griffen, 3/10/98
740th Squadron, Pilot

Jerry A. Thuma
T Sgt 743rd Squadron, Flight Engineer

Sam Bakanauskas
Lt 741st Squadron

Preston Simon, 7/10/98
740th Squadron

Clark Leonard Dudley 1/11/99
T Sgt 742nd Squadron, Radio Operator

Marvin W. Kuhn 5/17/98
T Sgt 741st Squadron, Radio Operator

Franklin Nichols Jr. 3/19/98
1st Lt 743rd Squadron, Pilot

Marshall Bruce Jr. 2/10/99
T/Sgt 741st Squadron, Tail Turret
Gunner

Gerald Oliver, Jr. 2/22/97
M/Sgt 743rd Squadron, Flight Engineer
Capt. Leon Stath's crew (KIA)
Later Lt. George Frayne Co-pilot,
Assigned A/C

George Rother, 1999
Lt. 742nd Squadron

Frank Schuster, 1/2/99
Sgt. 742nd Squadron, Tail Turret
Gunner
Capt. Marshall Chamber's crew

Warren Levasseur, 7/18/98
T/Sgt 743rd Squadron, Radio Operator

John E. Huggins, 11/25/98
Lt/Col 742nd Squadron

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

Vienna Revisited

I was a tail gunner on a B-24 attached to the 15th Air Corps, stationed in Cerignola, Italy. We were in the 455th Bomb Group, 742nd Bomb Squadron.

On Feb. 11, 1945, we were on a mission to bomb an oil refinery in Vienna. We took off at 10:45 and part way up we were joined by an unidentified B-24 (each squadron had its own tail markings and theirs was unfamiliar to us). While still over the Adriatic, this ship pulled in behind us. Our command pilot could not raise it on the radio, so our radioman came back to my turret and tried to raise him with a signal light.

Again, no response.

We were advised to fire a couple of bursts across his nose, and when that was done, their radio and signal lights came to life. Unfortunately, they gave the wrong call letter. (Call letters were used for identification and were changed every hour.) The call went out for fighter escort and we were soon joined by two P-38s. They sat right on his tail and told him if he tried to leave the formation, he would be shot down.

We finished our mission and the P-38s escorted him to our base. Upon landing a crew of Germans got out of the ship with their hands up.

Apparently the Germans salvaged parts from other B-24s they had shot down and got one flying. Their purpose was to radio their anti-aircraft gunners our altitude, air speed and wind direction to make them a little more accurate. We were LUCKY.

From the Long Island New York "Newsday"

*Staff Sgt. Robert A. Frank
Dix Hills*

The Father's Eyes



Bob Richards, the former pole-vault champion, shares a moving story about a skinny young boy who loved football with all his

heart. Practice after practice, he eagerly gave everything he had. But being half the size of the other boys, he got absolutely nowhere. At all the games, this hopeful athlete sat on the bench and hardly ever played. This teenager lived alone with his father, and the two of them had a very special relationship. Even though the son was always on the bench, his father was always in the stands cheering. He never missed a game. This young man was still the smallest of the class when he entered high school, but his father continued to encourage him but also made it very clear that he did not have to play football if he didn't want to. But the young man loved football and decided to hang in there. He was determined to try his best at every practice, and perhaps he'd get to play when he became a senior. All through high school he never missed a practice nor a game, but remained a bench warmer all four years. His faithful father was always in the stands, always with words of encouragement for him. When the young man went to college, he decided to try out for the football team as a "walk-on". Everyone was sure he could never make the cut, but he did. The coach admitted that he kept him on the roster because he always puts his heart and soul into every practice, and at the same time, provided the other members with the spirit and hustle they badly needed. The news that he had survived the cut thrilled him so much that he rushed to the nearest phone and called his father. His father shared his excitement and was sent season tickets for all the college games. This persistent young athlete never missed practice during his four years at college, but he never got to play in the game.

It was the end of his senior football season, and as he trotted onto the practice field shortly before the big play off game, the coach met him with a telegram. The young man read the telegram and he became deathly silent. Swallowing hard, he mumbled to the coach, "My father died this morning, is it all right if I miss

practice today?" The coach put his arm gently around his shoulder and said, "Take the rest of the week off, son. And don't even plan to come back to the game on Saturday. Saturday arrived, and the game was not going well. In the third quarter, when the team was ten points behind, a silent young man quietly slipped into the empty locker room and put on his football gear. As he ran onto the sidelines, the coach and his players were astounded to see their faithful teammate back so soon. "Coach, please let me play. I've just got to play today," said the young man. The coach pretended not to hear him. There was no way he wanted his worst player in this close play-off game. But the young man persisted, and finally feeling sorry for the kid, the coach gave in. "All right," he said, "You can go in." Before long, the coach, the players and everyone in the stands could not believe their eyes. This little unknown, who had never played before was doing everything right. The opposing team could not stop him. He ran, he passed, blocked and tackled like a star. His team began to triumph. The score was soon tied. In the closing seconds of the game, this kid intercepted a pass and ran all the way for the winning touchdown. The fans broke loose. His teammates hoisted him onto their shoulders. Such cheering you never heard! Finally after the stands had emptied and the team had showered and left the locker room, the coach noticed that the young man was sitting quietly in the corner all alone. The coach came to him and said, "Kid, I can't believe it. You were fantastic! Tell me what got into you? How did you do it?" He looked at the coach, with tears in his eyes, and said, "Well, you knew my dad died, but did you know that my dad was blind?" The young man swallowed hard and forced a smile, "Dad came to all my games, but today was the first time he could see me play, and I wanted to show him I could do it!"

San Diego Bound! September 22-26, 1999

Plan on heading to San Diego, California, September 22-26, 1999 to attend the 455th Bomb Group reunion. You'll hunker in at the Town & Country Hotel and then the fun will begin. (If you haven't received your reunion packet call or write Gus Wendt at: **4934 Bannocks, Sierra Vista, Arizona, 85650 or 520-378-9431.**) Your committee has gone all out to provide a trip and reunion that you'll remember in days to come. The hospitality room doors are always open to give you a meeting place for attitude adjustment, meet old friends, gather your crew together, meet new 455th members, tell war stories (they get better every year) or just relax.

Two optional tour days have been scheduled. On Thursday, September 23, you can begin a guided bus tour in La Jolla, the 38th wealthiest community in the country; drive up Mount Soledad, the tallest mountain in the city. You'll continue the drive over Mission Bay on your way to Sunset Cliffs. As you drive along Harbor Drive you'll see the Star of India, the oldest sailing ship in the world. Lunch at Seaport Village - enjoy the 75 shops and 13 restaurants for lunch and shopping on your own. Reboard for Balboa Park to tour the Aerospace Museum. Besides a dazzling dis-

play of vintage aircraft you'll visit the International Hall of Fame, the only one in the world that honors, in portraiture and narrative, those men and women who have made a substantive contribution to the advance of aero space sciences. Then it's back to the hotel in time for a festive luau.

Fridays a free day—but there's plenty to see and do in San Diego, at your own pace. It's also crew night. If your a single crew member any of the other crews will be glad to sign you up for the evening.

On Saturday another exciting optional tour is planned. Enjoy a narrated harbor cruise of San Diego Bay. See the Naval Base, San Diego Harbor, Navy Piers and slip under the Coronado Bay Bridge. You'll get a close up view of the Star of India, the oldest iron-hulled vessel afloat. After the cruise you'll board your bus for Old Town, which has flourished since its purchase by the State of California in 1969. This historic area was the site of the first European settlement in California. In addition to historic buildings, the park also contains specialty shops and restaurants, with Mexican cuisine the favorite. Then it's back on the bus in time for the "banquet".

Good...Better...Best!

Remember the old saying good, better, best. Never let it rest, until the good is better and the better best? We can relate this to dues too! We still have arrears out there. To help us be reminded Gus Wendt has added a new feature in the Cerignola addressing system. This has been added to the label. There is a number in the upper right hand corner of the label. This number indicates the last year that records show that you paid your dues and is a "reminder." If your records differ, please advise Gus, and indicate the date and the check number that you paid your dues. 1999 dues were due Nov. 1, 1998. If there is an (*) in the upper right hand corner, you are on the books as a life member. If there is a number sign (#) in the upper right hand corner, you are carried on the books as an associate life member. Associate life members do not pay annual dues.



Aboard A Liberator (Spirits Ride High With The Plane)

Have you ever been aboard a Liberator
As she climbs into the sky,
Loaded with bombs and
bristling with guns!
Her crew flying to "do or die"?

Have you ever felt the lift of the ship,
Or the majestic surge of power,
As wheels leave the earth and
she's skyward bound
To deal death on the fateful hour?

Have you ever sat tall on a 24
As she climbs into the blue,
Watching and waiting and wondering,
Along with the rest of the crew?

Have you ever watched this great bomber
Flying in formation tight?
Wonder about the thoughts of her crew
And marvel at all her might?

If all these things you yet lack,
Take it from one who knows—
These are my thoughts coming back.

It's thinking I am of a home far away,
As flak blossoms all around;
I see that hallowed patch of earth
And it's there my heart's a-ground.

*S-Sgt. Wayne T. Robinson
742 Bomb Sq*

Keep Those Letters and Stories coming!



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

The 'Mickey' of the 455th

By Roderick W. Clarke,
Colonel USAF (Ret.)

'Mickey' was the code name for the H2X bombing radar system that was introduced into the European theater early in 1944. Its introduction provided an enormous increase in strategic bombing capability by allowing targets to be acquired and attacked when they were obscured from visual observation by clouds or smoke. The 'X' in the designation indicated that the radar operated in the X-band, the frequency range which provided 3-cm wave-length capability and thus a much better resolution than the earlier 10-cm H2S system (code name -- 'Stinky'; get it?). I'm not sure what the 'H2' part of the name stood for. My understanding is that the initial development work in the technology was done by the Brits and that was their designation; the USAAF designation was AN/APS-15.

As a consequence of the code word name, the crew members who operated this equipment were known as the 'Mickkeys'. They were rated radar navigator-bombardiers (MOS 1038) and had originally been rated as aerial navigators (MOS 1034). After a few weeks of training in the use of the equipment at Langley Field they were dispatched to a combat theater in a radar-equipped B-24 as a member of a replacement crew.

The purpose of this article is to recall how the 455th Bomb Group became radar-equipped and the names of some of the people who were involved. What follows is based primarily on my recollections of 54 years ago except for some reference to my special order file, Form 5s and ACO Form 66 in regard to the details of what was happening in those heady days of yesteryear.

The B-24 Mickey Ships

Mickey ships -- B-24s equipped with H2X equipment--had the ball turret replaced by a radome con-

taining the radar antenna and receiver-transmitter components. This assembly was winched down after aircraft take-off and winched up before landing. The radar control console was located on the starboard side of the flight deck just behind the copilot's seat with the operator facing aft. In non-radar B-24s this was the radio operator's position; in 'mickey' ships, the radio operator's position was located just forward of the waist over the bomb bay. The navigator's position was on the port side of the flight deck rather than in the nose which had the advantage of having access to a B-3 driftmeter. The downside was much poorer visibility for pilotage fixes.

It is my understanding that the 455th (and other Bomb Groups of the 15th Air Force) had no mickey aircraft when they deployed and began flying combat missions. I'm not sure when the first of the latter arrived in the theater but, based on what I learned when I got there in May 1944, it hadn't been much earlier than late March. All of the mickey aircraft and operators assigned to the 304th Bomb Wing were physically located with the 739th Bomb Squadron, 454th Bomb Group. The latter shared the San Giovanni Air Field with the 455th. My recollection is that in May there were only about ten mickey aircraft and operators to support the entire 304th Wing. With so few available, only two of them were allocated to a group for a mission that required radar bombing support. These were flown by the lead and deputy lead crews of each group for that mission. This meant that the mickey navigators only flew on the tough missions -- the double credit ones. When supporting the 456th and 459th groups, the aircraft and operator were sometimes flown from San Giovanni to the other bases on the evening before the mission.

Looking back on the situation, I suppose that the reason for having all the mickey aircraft and operators in one place was to make maximum use of scarce radar maintenance capabilities. The radar

equipment had reliability problems as did most electronic gear in the age of vacuum tubes; in addition, there were security considerations. The down side of this arrangement was that the reliability of the mickey aircraft suffered. Perhaps this was because the aircraft and engine maintenance resources made available to the 739th BS weren't of as high a quality as those used to maintain the aircraft normally flown by the lead crews. Another drawback was that the mickey operators didn't have day-to-day contact with the lead crews they flew with as they would have had if they were in the same squadrons. As a result, there was a lack of crew integration and esprit that is so essential to high performance in combat.

Mickkeys Join the Squadrons

All this changed in July 1944 when the mickey aircraft and operators physically moved from the 739th BS area to the areas of the squadrons we were to fly with. I suppose that sufficient radar maintenance resources were now on hand to make this practicable. Or perhaps the lead pilots got tired of having unreliable aircraft. In any event, those involved in the move to the 455th beside myself were 1st Lt. Carlos M. Baralt, 1st Lt. George A.P. Hojer, 2nd Lt. Joseph R. Martin, 2nd Lt. Lawrence A. Bruni and F/O Zellig C. Shapsis. I don't remember the latter two gentlemen but I was well acquainted with the first three as they were my tent mates prior to moving.

According to 455th BG Special orders, Baralt was assigned to the 741st BS, Hojer to Group HQ, and Shapsis and I to the 742nd BS; there's no mention of Martin or Bruni. However I only have copies of the Special Orders that applied to me. By a process of elimination, one or both of them must have been assigned to the 740th BS because, despite what that SO provides, I was the only mickey assigned to the 743rd at that time. Furthermore, I have a strong recollection of having had frequent conversations with Joe Martin after the

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move so he didn't move to another group.

After mid-July 1944, all my missions were flown with the lead crews of the 743rd and Capt. Tom Mitchell, the 743rd S-2, Lt. Sol Felzer, 743rd Squadron navigator and Lt. George Defenbaugh, 743rd Squadron Bombardier were my tent mates. Despite the facts, it wasn't until 13 September that 455th BG got around to actually assigning me to the 743rd. That order listed me as a 2 Lt. although I had been wearing silver bars since 8 September. So much for Special Orders as a treasure trove of historical fact.

The accompanying photo shows some of the 455th 'mickeys' while they were still with the 739th BS - (L-R) Carlos Baralt, George Hojer, myself and 'Chud' Chudynski. The latter gentleman was shot down before the rest of us joined the 455th.

After leaving the 455th to return to the States, I had no further contact with Carlos or George. However, two years later while attending Purdue University, I

renewed my acquaintance with Chud who had survived his POW experiences and was now a fellow student there.

Radar Bombing Pays Off

There was never any doubt on the part of the lead crews as to the value of the radar bombing capability so far as I could detect. This was particularly true after we started employing the tactic of synchronizing the radar sighting angles with the Norden optical bombsight settings to establish a better calculation of ground speed and last-minute repositioning of the Norden cross hairs before bomb release.

743rd BS Co Major Thayer and Exec, Major David Bellemere and the other 743rd lead crew members provided all the encouragement and support that a guy could stand.

However, I recall that the rumor mills were operating at full tilt among some of the other crews and one couldn't escape hearing how the radar 'beams' attracted flak or caused crew members exposed to them to become sterile.

Despite the rumors, radar assisted bombing was the wave of

the future. From then on, all—not just some— heavy bombers were radar-equipped – B-29, B-47, B-52, etc. When I was recalled to active duty in 1950 after the outbreak of the Korean 'police action', I flew with the 90th BS, 3rd Bomb Wing from Iwakuni in Japan and even some of our A/B-26 Invaders were equipped with the APS-15 radar. Most of our operations over Korea were armed recon missions at night and often in bad weather; the radar navigational experience that I had acquired in my 743rd days paid off handsomely again!

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Chaplains Corner

It is not what a person is or has, it is the Godly things they leave behind that are eternal.



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For ex-prisoner of war, hard times are gone but not forgotten

Frank Lashinsky's War 740 Sqd 455 BG

Friday marked a day of recognition for Prisoners of War and those missing in action. SUBASE held a wreath-laying ceremony at the POW/MIA tree at Fort Griswold. This, and other observances, holds a meaning for anyone who has a friend or relative who was, or is, a POW or MIA.

But, perhaps, the ones who feel the impact most are the people who have experienced firsthand what it means to be missing in action and a prisoner of war.

One such individual, Frank Lashinsky, now resides in Old Lyme. Lashinsky spent but a short time in the Army Air Corps during World War II. In that brief period, he was missing in action twice. During one of these occurrences, he was even captured and held prisoner by the German army, leaving him with memories that will not likely fade.

Lashinsky grew up in Pennsylvania reeling from the Great Depression. Despite a poor financial upbringing, he knew where his destiny lay...he knew he wanted to fly. His opportunity came when he enlisted in the U.S. Army Air Corps in 1943.

At this point in the war, the corps was fighting its battles in German skies. Because of the push in the war effort, basic training was a hurried cram course. At the courses completion, Lashinsky was an air crew tail gunner, and his first combat mission came in 1944.

The German force was on its last legs, having been driven from most of the territory it had conquered in years prior.

Despite its rapid decline, the German army continued to develop and produce more advanced fighting planes; and their dabbles in the fields of jet and rocket propulsion made the German air force a threat to constantly be reckoned with.

The German fighters were still so lethal to Allied fighting forces that in the first couple months of this combat duty, Lashinsky's B-24J Liberator was shot down on a bombing mission leaving the crew forced to bail out. According to Lashinsky, those who bail out of an aircraft and use a parachute enter the Caterpillar Club (parachutes were made of silk at this time, and certain caterpillars are known to produce the material).

Luckily, he landed in the friendly Yugoslavian territory Bosnia-Herzegovina. He was pronounced missing in action for weeks, but eventually was able to return to his base. Little did Lashinsky know, he would soon become a member of the Caterpillar Club a second time, less than a year after his first bail out.

Unfortunately, his second jump wouldn't land him in such a friendly place.

On March 12, 1945, Staff Sgt. Frank Lashinsky and the rest of the crew of the new B-24L bomber were among 42 planes tasked with destroying the Florisdorf oil refinery in Vienna, Austria. This was to be Lashinsky's 25th mission.

Lashinsky said because of his crew's experience, they were selected to lead the mission. To aid in this responsibility, his Liberator was outfitted with a new radar to help with navigation and bombing accuracy, in the event of obscured visibility.

He also recounts the preparation the crew received, "(The briefing prior to the mission) instructed us to land at the airfield at Pecs, Hungary—which had been captured by the Soviets—if we could not return to our base." And with that, the bombers were off.

Lashinsky said takeoff was textbook and the flight to Vienna was routine. The only obstacle the bombers faced was cloud coverage beneath them, but the mission proceeded because the radar was supposed to prevent situations like this from being a problem.

As usual during these types of missions, flak began to appear.

This didn't seem too threatening because few shells burst at their altitude. The planes then dropped their bombs on the target and began to exit the flak.

According to Lashinsky, as the plane turned around, the crew noticed the number four engine was damaged by a piece of flak. The engine was shut down to prevent further damage to the craft, and Lashinsky's pilot, Capt. Richard von Schrititz, turned command of the formation over to another crew. He then dropped the bomber from formation.

The plane was losing altitude and, per the briefing, von Schrititz decided to head for the airfield in Pecs, Hungary. To maintain altitude, he ordered the jettison of equipment. The jettison was successful because the bomber stopped falling. However, one of the pieces thrown from the plane smashed the radar dome and damaged it. Lashinsky stated, "Without radar, or visual references (because of the cloud coverage), our course was set by compass. Our ground speed and true heading was unknown."

When von Schrititz believed the plane was close to the air strip, they began to descend. Visual contact with the ground was established when the plane reached 4,000 feet, but the air strip was nowhere to be found.

Lashinsky said, "We only learned later, around the late 1980s or early 1990s, that we had stumbled upon a battle between German forces and Soviet-Bulgarian forces. We must have added to the confusion that normally surround any battle. Our approach from cloud cover from behind German lines probably led the Soviets to believe we were hostile. The Germans, likewise, identifying the plane as a Liberator, must have also classified us hostile."

Anti-aircraft fire began to smother the plane, and three fighter planes were already reaching toward them to attack. After assessing their situation and the extent of damage to the plane, the order was

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given to bail out.

Lashinsky and bail turret gunner, Staff Sgt. Art Colton, left the turret area of the plane and prepared to make their jump. Colton jumped first, and the latch that held the hatch open released. His flying boot was stuck between the hatch and the frame. Lashinsky said, "The mental picture I had was Art hanging out of the plane, held by his foot, stuck in the hatch.. I faced a dilemma. He may have struck his head on the aircraft. Was he conscious or unconscious?"

He then gathered all the strength he could muster, and attempted to hold the boot with one hand, and raise the hatch with his other. To Lashinsky's relief, when he got the hatch open, all he had was an empty boot. Now, it was his turn to jump. Shortly after he did, the plane was a ball of flame.

Lashinsky pulled his ripcord, and the chute opened. No sooner did it open than he heard the sound of bullets flying past him. His only chance to avoid being hit was to spill air from his parachute to make him fall faster. The quick drop gave him a hard landing, making his ankle swell.

Lashinsky described what he saw after he landed, "I was in a field of barbed wire. Twenty yards away, there was a trench. A bare head appeared above the parapet. He crooked his finger and beckoned me to come his way. The head disappeared." Since there was no hostility, Lashinsky didn't think the person was an enemy.

Thinking the man to be one of a friendly force, he ran into the trench. "the next sight was the outstretched hand of the individual who welcomed me seconds earlier. It was not an extended handshake. He held it palm up and said, 'pistol.' I raised my eyes and saw the Nazi eagle and swastika embroidered above the left tunic pocket." He also noticed about ten other German soldiers in the trench, so he slowly handed over his gun.

The troops led him through the

system of trenches. He said by this point of the war, German forces were all but defeated. Many German troops knew their country's surrender was not far off. As they walked, one of the soldiers said to Lashinsky in English, "If you can survive for two months, you will be a free man."

At the end of the journey, Lashinsky was escorted to a small town. They entered one of the bigger buildings, which Lashinsky believed was the command post for the German unit. The building was strewn with field desks.

Lashinsky was led to an officer in the far corner, where a strip search was ordered. He remembered the thoughts that raced through his mind as his clothing was being searched. "Did they intend to torture me?... (Allied forces) had heard rumors, later confirmed that Hitler ordered captured airmen executed."

He recalls what the Germans found when they rummaged through his clothes: a small Catholic prayer book he brought on every mission (which the German officer slapped across his face) and a photo ID card. He was amazed the Germans gave these back to him.

At the same time, questioning began. With every question, Lashinsky responded with name, rank and serial number. Each response further infuriated the German officer. When the officer had reached the end of his patience, he asked Lashinsky what his response would be when he found out he was to be executed. Lashinsky once again gave his name, rank, and serial number. They returned his clothes and told him to get dressed.

When he was dressed, he was led to a building across the street. Here, Lashinsky was reunited with five of his crew members. In this room, the six were imprisoned for four days, sustained by four rye crackers per day.

The group was transported to the prison Dulag 161, and then moved into a train boxcar, where

they would remain for the next six weeks. The stay on the train was one of little comfort. An area large enough for 20 people was now occupied by 33.

The train began to move the afternoon following. It traveled short, slow distances due to destroyed tracks and Allied attacks. Allied air forces would raid the train several times. Following many of these attacks, senior German soldiers came to the boxcar in which the prisoners were held, and attempted to execute them as a form of retaliation. The prison guards would not allow the soldiers to do this. Lashinsky describes why the guards prevented their deaths, "The motive of most of the enemy was to live long enough, and be in the position to be captured by Western Allies, preferably Americans, not Soviets. I think our guards viewed us, more or less, as safe conduct passes for their eventual surrender."

The prisoners were finally transported to Stalag VIIA prison camp in Moosberg, Germany. Shortly after they arrived, Gen. George Patton organized a tank force and liberated the camp. This was the largest liberation of Allied prisoners during the war, freeing some 27,000. Lashinsky arrived home Memorial Day of 1945. His time as a prisoner of war lasted from March 12 to April 29, 1945.

Lashinsky received the Prisoner of War Medal almost 45 years after he left the service. He is still asked about his time missing in action and as a POW. "People ask, 'How long were you a prisoner of war?' When I say from March 12, 1945, to April 29, 1945, they remark, 'You're lucky it wasn't long.' I wonder if they would feel the same way if they had been in my shoes. The television and movies have trivialized so much. I suppose I shouldn't fault the one who posed the question."

*Article By JO3 Phillip Hall,
from the Dolphin*

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B-24 Bronze Memorial Dedication

By Al Asch

Much of this article was taken from the fine report to the Executive Committee of the Second Air Division Association by Neal Sorensen and the outstanding article by Ralph Davis in the December, 1998 issue of "Poop from Group 467".

God's golden sunshine bathed the more than 500 B-24 brown shoe veterans, wives, children, grandchildren, and Academy personnel assembled in the Honor Court for the September 25, 1998 dedication of our bronze B-24 sculpture. The magnificent setting of the majestic mountains, outlining the awe inspiring Academy Cadet chapel will forever be etched in the memories of those present.

Retired Lt. Col. Neal Sorensen acted as Master of Ceremonies. The audience arose in respect for the arrival of the Official party consisting of Lt. Gen. Tad J. Oelstrom, Superintendent of the Academy; Ray Pytel, Secretary of the B-24 Groups; Robert Henderson, Sculptor; Alfred Asch, B-24 Groups Vice President; and Brigadier General John Brooks, III.

The audience remained standing while the color guard from the Academy posted the colors and the National Anthem was sung by 2nd Lt. Holley M. Vandehei, also from the Academy. The invocation was given by Captain (Chaplain) Scott A. Ofsdahl. Neal recalled the comfort of our Chaplain's prayers prior to each combat mission in his introduction of Captain Ofsdahl.

Neal made a few remarks on how funding for the memorial was accomplished through the B-24 Groups Memorial, Inc. There were over 600 individual and organizational contributions to the fund. Every group of the Second Air Division Association (2ADA) contributed and there were approximately 150 individuals and organizations outside the 2ADA that made donations. (Fifteen individu-

als of the 455th made generous donations and Colonels Cool and Snowden were sponsored through Group treasury funds. Their names appear on the commemorative plaque.) There were over 200 individuals and organizations that sponsored others to appear on the commemorative plaque and in the Book Of Remembrance.

The B-24 Memorial was draped with a parachute and was unveiled by the Sculptor, Robert Henderson, and 9 members of the 2ADA who played a part in the fund raising. The B-24 was finally at home in the Honor Court of our Air Force Academy. It is located at the top of the stairs to the Honor Court making it the first memorial that the cadets will see when walking west from the cadet "quadrangle" and chapel. The memorial portrays a B-24J in a climbing left turn with a moderate bank; a very nice pose. The other bomber of WWII is located directly west of our B-24 and is flying "straight and level," making it rather difficult to see from a distance. Further, our B-24 model is next to the P-51 which gave us so much protection during WWII from the German Luftwaffe.

Acting for the more than 600 donors, Neal "Gifted" the sculpture to the Academy. General Oelstrom accepted the gift with deep gratitude. In his acceptance talk, he said that as a kid his perception of WWII had always been portrayed by the B-24 Liberator. He thought it was the slickest thing with wings, "until I saw a fighter". He remarked that the Liberator was the plane that carried the air war to Germany. He was reminded after seeing a memorial to "The Lady Be Good" at the old Wheelus Air Base, Libya about 30 years ago that a lot of men gave their blood for freedom over places like Ploesti and a hundred other targets. The Superintendent also mentioned that he will remember the memorial dedication for all time due partly to a single incident. The memorial had been completed the Tuesday before the Friday dedication. As the General was leaving Harmon Hall,

he noticed a "Doolie" (Freshman Akin to Plebe at West Point) come running up the stairs with his weapon at port arms, stop, execute a right face on the marble square and recite his "cadet knowledge" of the B-24. The General continued that there will be a lot more cadets like that one reciting his knowledge of the B-24 as long as there is a United States and a US Air Force. The remarks from the General were excellent and befitting to the occasion.

Ray R. Pytel and Robert Henderson gave the memorial credits. Ray related the genesis of our organization and its achievements. Mr. Henderson, the Sculptor, described how he was "volunteered" to do many of the sculptures on the Honor Court. He is an excellent sculptor and has done many of the sculptures on the Honor Court, including the P-38, P-40, P-51, B-17 and the B-24.

Al Asch, who wrote a B-24 Liberator History that was included in a book of Remembrance for the program, encapsulated the WWII achievements of the B-24 in all theaters of war. Salted with comments of the Liberator's superiority in speed, bomb load and range, Al noted that the B-17 flew slower and carried a lighter bomb load due to the presence of a Public Relations Officer being added to each crew to make certain there was always publicity. His tongue in cheek humor was warmly appreciated by the audience.

General John Brooks presented a brief history of the Scouting Force of the 8th Air Force which led bombers to the target (or secondary) to avoid bad weather and achieve better bombing results. John's recollections of the bravery of lost comrades brought tears to all eyes as he concluded his comments with a eulogy to the fallen. Following a moment of silence, an original composition written by Larry Anderson, was freely sung by him as a tribute to the occasion. Larry's composition, "Flying into the Morning Light" concluded in reverent silence which erupted into

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warm applause for his gift to us.

Chaplain Scott Ofsdahl concluded our dedication with a Benediction:

Lord Guard and Guide the Men Who Fly

Lord guard and guide the men
who fly

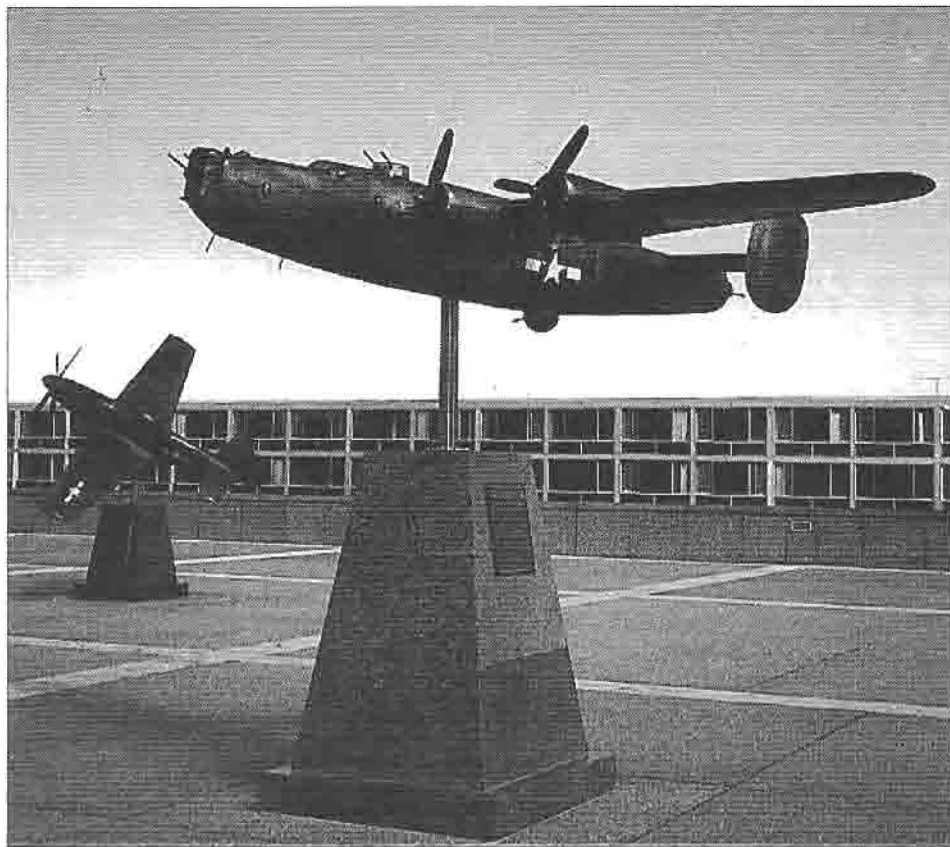
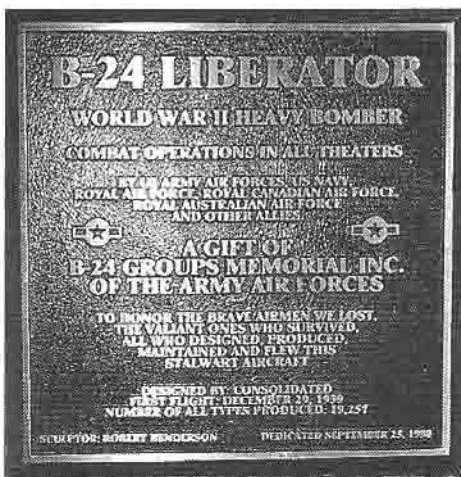
Through the great spaces of the
sky;
Be with them traversing the air
In darkening storms or sunshine
fair.

You who support with tender might
The balanced birds in all their
flight;
Lord of the tempered winds be
near
That having you, they know no
fear.

Control their minds with instinct fit
When'er adventuring they quit;
The firm security of land
Grant steadfast eye and skillful
hand.

Aloft in solitudes of space
Uphold them with saving grace:
O'God protect the men who fly
Through lonely ways beneath the
sky.
Amen!

The ceremonies lasted about 45 minutes. The people stayed long after that and visited friends and admired the B-24 and took pictures. There was press coverage. Luncheon was over subscribed at the Academy Officer's Club. The evening banquet was also well attended.



Into The Air Army Air Corp By Charlie Stark

Most of our members were flyers or were associated with flying over the years. I wonder how many out there are still actively flying real airplanes? I gave up private flying twenty years ago when I retired mostly because of the expense. You should either do a lot or none at all for safety reasons. I couldn't be flying to see my out of town sons every other week end and I wasn't interested in flying in circles and returning to the same field so I quit. However—once afflicted with the flying bug, the urge keeps surfacing.

Two and a half years ago I decided to fly the same model plane I had built in 1941. It had hung between the joist in the basement all these years. The covering of course was totally deteriorated but aside from accidental damage the base structure was readily repairable, just balsa wood, blue, silk span and dope. I wanted to fly this plane using radio control. I had lost it twice in free flight, once in 41 and once in 46 when I took first place in the only contest I ever entered. The maximum engine run time was limited to 17 seconds in such contests. At 31 minutes into this flight, it disappeared into a cloud and I had no idea where to look for it.

Riding home from work with my father the next day he said, "Wouldn't it be something if that plane was sitting in the back yard when we get home." We got out of the car, walked toward the house past the garage and there sat my airplane. Some kind souls had spotted it landing, (they thought it was a Piper J3 Cub from the Butler Airport making an emergency landing) and they drove 30 miles to return it to me. In 1941 it had been lost for a month. A squib in the local paper read, "Plane on the ground, boy in the air." This time I had a local private pilot take me up in a JC Cub to look for it. We

didn't spot it because it was on a cottage porch while we were circling overhead. The people called me the very next day to say they had found the plane. They lived in Avalon, two miles away from West View where I lived. Needless to say, I was overjoyed to have it returned since I had spent all my spare time for two years building that engine. All this interest in airplanes and engines of course lead me to enlist in the ARMY AIR CORPS. The Navy Cadet recruiters turned me down, but I learned the right answers there. If they hadn't, I would probably have been fish food in 1944.

Getting back to 1997 with my antique airplane and engine ready to fly, I had to join AMA (Academy of Model Aeronautics) and then join a local flying club, MARS no less. That stands for Model Airplane Recreational Association and is located in the vicinity of Mars, PA.

Being a hot shot pilot I was just going to go out and fly this thing. After, it flew quite well by itself, I was just going to give it a little guidance. The old timers at the field just kind of stood around watching, knowing full well what was going to happen. I managed to get it off the ground but very shortly coming toward me, it started into a diving spiral to the right and I suppose I applied right rudder and I had another week's work rebuilding it. The club members were very congenial and offered advice, which I heard but, "hey" I flew these things before I knew how to fly. There were more crashes for the same reason and one day one guy said, "Let's see you taxi it around the field a little bit." I thought, "Well okay," and I promptly ran it into the safety fence. I charged that off to a faulty tail skid arrangement. Along about the fourth or fifth attempt, it's going up great and I realize I've lost elevator control and it's going up and up and I'm having trouble keeping it pointed toward the field. I have no throttle control on this engine. It's getting smaller and smaller and I'm

seeing this as the third loss. I hollered for help and an old veteran took over and managed to keep it headed toward the field. It looked so small in the distance that it was difficult to tell just what it was doing. Finally it ran out of fuel and it looked like it might land on the interstate highway. This could have serious consequences. With the elevator problem it started to porpoise and disappeared from site in a construction storage area about a half mile from the landing strip. Tony Gallagher jumped in his truck and I followed in my car. He spotted it and all there was left was a shattered pile of debris. It had hit a Jersey Barrier head on. So hard in fact that it broke the aluminum crankcase on the engine and bent the connecting rod too. There was no rebuilding the 1941 Play Boy Senior.

However I had an almost identical plane built in 46 to replace it. I also had a spare aluminum crankcase casting to rebuild the engine. This plane and a commercial Olson 60 engine I had purchased had never really been flown.

In 1946, apparently I became more interested in girls than model airplanes and that is why these planes hung in the basement ceiling joist for 50 years until 1997.

More crashes followed the ones related and it occurred to me that maybe I should enlist the assistance of a flight instructor. Since then I have spent much less time rebuilding. The old saying that, "Any landing you can walk away from is a good one," and I've always managed to do that so I guess my landings really weren't that bad.

In my two years in this hobby I have managed to hit the runway just once with minimal damage. Currently (January 99) I'm ready to fly a purchased trainer plane using the Olson 60 engine with modified spark control to provide engine power adjustment. In the gasoline engine days, wide open was the only throttle setting. Today alcohol powered glow plug engines use

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throttle control on a carburetor to control engine speed.

This hobby is exciting, demanding, challenging and bound to keep you busy. The makeup of our club is mostly seniors, about 70%, with much concern about the lack of younger peoples participation. It can be some what expensive but I would recommend it to one and all. Just the camaraderie is worth it. Once a month the "Silver Eagles" meet for breakfast on a Thursday at a local pancake house to discuss their past or future escapades.

At the '95 reunion in San Antonio, Harry Anderson, my 1st pilot took me to his home to show me his "Ultimate Blue Hawk." It is a beautiful biplane which I believe he has never flown. I believe he was advised to learn on a trainer before advancing to the high performance Blue Hawk.

Following WWII Andy went on to fly B-29s in the Korean Conflict but even that doesn't qualify you to fly radio control.

I'd love to fly a plane like his Blue Hawk. We're both on the internet now and I'm hoping to hear via E-mail some day that he has finally flown the Blue Hawk.

"Keep 'em flying"

An Unforgettable Night

I was flight engineer and top turret gunner on Bill Loffer's crew. We had arrived in San Giovanni the first week in July as a replacement crew. Time passed quickly and we had good flying weather. We checked the flight roster the night before and found the crew was scheduled to fly the next day. Our tent was awakened about 4:00 A.M. on October 12, 1944, probably by one of our officers who had their tent across the dusty road for the enlisted men. We got dressed and splashed our faces. I made my G. Washington instant coffee on our Coleman stove to take with me on the flight. This was about the only

use I had for my canteen while in San Giovanni; the cold coffee tasted good to me, along with the box lunch sandwich, on the way back to the base. Some may have shaved while I made coffee, but at 19 I only shaved every week or so. The enlisted men all went to breakfast of pancakes with marmalade or apple butter or perhaps powdered eggs, toast and coffee; I can't be sure at this point as my memory is rather foggy when it comes to details. The thing I most remember about breakfast that morning was that no one on the crew said a word, at least to me, about this being my 50th mission. They, like myself, all kept track to be sure how close they were to finishing. Not that any of us were superstitious, but who wants to be responsible for a jinx. At briefing we found out we had a "milkrun" to Bologna, but we all realized that sometimes a "milkrun" wasn't. All went well at checkout, preflight, take-off and the bomb run although I don't know how the bombing of a bridge went that day. The trip back to base went well and the landing was real smooth.

All of the crew congratulated me, but I was too relieved to rejoice, although at debriefing I let it be known I was all through. Back at the tent I wrote two one word letters home. One to my Mother and one to Ingrid Carlson, my girl friend and a future wife. One said FINI and the other FINITO. The next day Bill Loffer, our pilot and plane commander, finished this tour on Friday the 13th. The remainder of the crew finished in about a week with the exception of George Defenbaugh who had become a group bombardier. I was alone now while the crew was flying and waiting each mission for the planes to return I had my anxious moments and realized how many of the ground crews felt.

A crew party, a bumpy truck ride to Naples and what seemed to be a long wait (not over a week) followed, before we boarded the Athos II, a Greek WWI reparation ship with a non-English speaking

French crew, for a convoy trip across the Atlantic in mid November. I can't remember the date, but it was two days before Thanksgiving early in the morning when the Statue of Liberty came into view. A loud cheer went up. For myself, and I suspect for most of the others, it was the first sighting of the statue.

We tied up on the Jersey side and boarded a train to Camp Kilmer. As I got off the train, I was rather severely dressed down by a WAAC 2nd Lt. for not saluting. I realized immediately my days of lax discipline were over. Our first stop was the mess hall where I enjoyed the best meal I'd had since I left Maine in late June. From there it was to the processing center where I completed the necessary paperwork, collected some back pay, got a fresh supply of atabrine, was issued some clothing and got a train ticket to Boston with a 30 day delay-in-route to Atlantic City. I don't know what time I boarded the train, but I do remember that it was 1 A.M. when I arrived at South Station, Boston. I was home; or so I thought for a quick minute.

As I walked from the train into the station, I was shocked to find it empty, or nearly so. I checked around to find that all public transportation stopped running at 12:30 A.M. I put my B4 bag and a partially filled duffel bag on the large oak waiting room bench, as a pillow, and laid down to sleep until 5:00 or 6:00 A.M. before I would head out to Woburn, about 12 or 13 miles northwest. I couldn't sleep and after ten or fifteen minutes, I picked up my bags and started walking home. It was very cold, but I had a GI overcoat, a winter issue cap and my flight gloves. I walked along Atlantic Avenue to the bridge over the Charles River to City Square. That bridge was my first real test of bitter cold since flying. The wind off the water was bitterly cold as I started across. I rolled my cap down to cover my ears and turned my overcoat collar up as I pulled my neck in for pro

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tection. I had to keep shifting my bags to opposite hands because my arms were so tired. As I crossed the bridge, I figured to stop at the White Tower, get a ten cent hamburger and a cup of hot coffee to warm myself up, but even the Tower was closed. Boston was blacked out and I could barely see where I was going. There wasn't a soul around, but for some reason, I was concerned about how I looked. I fixed my cap and lowered my collar to look more respectable. From delivering produce to the market, as a kid working on Crawford's farm, I remembered the route home we always took. I ducked around the corner at City Square, up past St. Mary's church and pressed on to Thompson Square and then on to Sullivan Square which was the terminal for street cars and buses. All was dark and the slit blackout lights of a car seemed to light up everything as it approached from behind. As I turned to stick out my thumb, I noticed a dim taxi sign on top. I quickly turned back and to my surprise the taxi pulled up beside me and stopped. The rear window slowly rolled down and a woman asked if she could give me a lift to the Lawrence Estates in Medford. I assured her she could and got into what seemed to be a warm oven for a ride that took me almost to the Winchester line. After thanking the nice lady and getting out, I realized I didn't even find out who she was or where she lived.

I started walking again, much encouraged by the knowledge I had only about four miles to go. I hadn't walked 100 yards when again the dim blackout lights of a car caught me and the driver of what I believe was a Chevy coupe stopped, told me to hop in and asked where I was headed. When I told him to East Woburn, he asked "What's your name?" I replied and he said "Are you Phil Bemis' kid?" I acknowledged that I was and he asked "Don't you know who I am?" After realizing how dark it was, he

quickly said "I guess you can't see; I'm Al Govreau who used to live beside you a number of years ago." We made small talk about what I was doing and about my family. He had just finished his shift at the Charlestown Navy Yard and was on his way home. That made my night. I had only seen two cars since I left South Station over an hour ago and not a single street or house light. Both cars stopped, picked me up and I was being delivered to my parents home the morning of the day before Thanksgiving.

I don't remember the details of that Thanksgiving. I was glad to be home and happy to be with Ingrid again, despite my skin being yellow and my weight below 120 pounds. Mother always put on a wonderful Thanksgiving Day dinner. That day was a great day for me, my parents, my grandfather, three of my sisters, Ingrid, her mother, sister and brother and three sailors and a WAVE from the Boston USO. Although I don't remember the details of the dinner or the activities of the afternoon, I do remember what a wonderful time was had by all.

As I look back on that night, nothing I can recall compares. Al passed away a few years ago, but I will never forget him nor the female stranger, from the Lawrence Estates, for what they did for an unknown GI about 2 o'clock in the morning, the day before Thanksgiving, 1944. I'm sorry to say, that today, I don't feel safe picking up any stranger on the road, most especially at 2:00 A.M.

Stuart A. Bemis

Lend a Helping Hand



I have been searching for information about my father and his war record as well as information about the unit he served with. I was told to contact you concerning the Cerignola Connection due to the unit he served with. He was a B-24 pilot with the 455th and flew

out of Libya and Italy—was shot down twice and evaded both times—his planes were the TeePee Time Gal and Great Balls 'O Fire. If I could subscribe to your publication or get any information about the 455th I would appreciate it greatly. My father's name was Rex Grozier.

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#1909
Houston, TX 77069
email: rgrozier@wt.net

Ed—Any help you can give would be appreciated

From Howard Cooper

I came across an article in our "Cerignola" publication from someone named Michele from Italy who stated she was doing an historic search about a crew that went down near Osoppo in North East Italy. My friend Sgt. Bruno Schime was on that crew, was captured, and I found him about 35 years ago. His mother and sister, lived on Staten Island. When his mother died, the notice in our local paper hit me like a ton of flak. His sister told me he was in town from California and would be returning the next day. We sat in the funeral parlor, looking at pictures, talking about his last flight and his life in a POW camp. He was in training with me, but on a different crew in Tonopah, Nev. in early 1944 when his crew had to bail out on a night training flight over the Grand Canyon. After a delayed rescue, he showed up in the 740th and the plane disappeared after the 4th or 5th mission. I kept after our headquarters for news, but got none until it was time for me to be rotated home. I knew nothing until the funeral of this mother. He now lives in Las Vegas at **288 Sir William Way, Las Vegas, Nevada 89110**. I don't know if he is still living, as I have had no contact for the past several years.

From Chet Hosac

I have seen some contributions of poems in our newsletter, so I am enclosing one of mine.

We flew our first mission to Graz, Austria on February 25, 1944 and finished our last mission to Moosbierbaum, Austria on June 26, 1944. In between were many tough missions, including twice over Ploesti on May 5, 1944, and May 18, 1944.

Our first plane was Menacing Messilena and on our eighth mission was shot up so badly that we were forced to crash land on a fighter field at Rome.

After returning to base, we were issued the brand new virgin plane "Tepee Time Gal." Brooks was our pilot with different co-pilots. Johnson was the bombardier, Sy Gaynes was navigator. Chuck was belly, Winn was top, O'Boyle was tail, Taylor was nose and I was waist gunner. We finished our missions in this great plane, then went to the Isle of Capri for R&R and then left Naples for home.

At our reunions, I have met several who also flew in the Tepee Time Gal. I think all of my crew are gone except Jimmy O'Boyle and Sy Gaynes, both of whom live in Arizona.

I was born and raised in Idaho and have had a good life with a great partner of almost 58 years, many grandchildren and great grand-children. We are both in good health and look forward to San Diego in 1999.

I have also written a book "The Orphan" which includes pictures of "Tepee Time Gal" and a copy of the unit citation that we received for the Moosbierbaum mission. Anyone wishing a copy of this book can write me at **Chet Hosac, 5820 No. Cloud Nine Dr., Boise, Id, 83714.**

§ * § * §

TIME

Time is of the essence.
It can't be held in suspense,
waiting for profound observations,
governed by analytical discretion,
before finally making a decision.

When you someday make up your
mind
unfortunately you inevitably find,
you've already fallen behind.
and then because of the years
regardless of shed tears,
life has not been kind.

So, don't dwell in sorrows
you've used up all your tomorrows.
It's too late now to atone
for the "ifs" and "Why didn't I's".
Every man eventually dies
and inherits the same headstone.

Some small, some large in size
dictates the timid from the wise.
Still all are just as dead
and just as soon forgotten.
Though one may rest in silk
or the other in cotton,
the body of each becomes, equally
rotten.

Chet Hosac

A Thought For The Day

A thirteen-year-old
girl told me one day,
"You know, it makes me feel good
when I see Mom and Dad holding
hands for no reason at all." Out of
mouths of babes comes wisdom.



Remember the Question?

What english word appears the
same backward, forward and
upside down when written in
capital letters?

Answer: NOON

FAMOUS PHRASES

- "Push to test." "Release to detonate"
- Those that beat guns into plows will plow for those that don't.
- If the enemy is in range, so are you.
- Incoming fire has the right of way.
- Don't look conspicuous: it draws fire.
- The easy way is always mined.
- Try to look unimportant, they may be low on ammo.
- Don't draw fire, it irritates the people around you.
- When the pin is pulled, Mr. Grenade is not our friend.
- If it's stupid but works, it isn't stupid.
- Never share a fox hole with any one braver than you.
- Don't ever be the first, don't ever be the last and don't ever volunteer to do anything.
- It is generally inadvisable to eject (bail out) directly over the area you just bombed.
- Always remember your weapon was made by the lowest contract.
- There is no such thing as an atheist in a foxhole.
- Tracers work both ways.
- The side with the simplest uniforms wins.
- Combat will occur on the ground between two adjoining maps.
- The combat worth of a unit is inversely proportional to the smartness of its outfit and appearance.
- Cluster bombing from B-52s is very, very accurate—the bombs always hit the ground.
- Odd objects attract fire—never lurk behind one.
- If you can't remember, the Claymore is pointed towards you.
- Five second fuses only last three seconds.
- Make it too tough for the enemy to get in and you can't get out.
- When in doubt empty the magazine.
- Teamwork is essential; it gives the enemy someone else to shoot at.
- Never tell the Platoon Sergeant you have nothing to do.

The Flight Surgeon

As replacements to the 455th Bomb Group in early July, 1944, our radioman and I took a walk to the showers to get cleaned up from the sweat and dust of San Giovanni before we went to the mess hall for our evening meal. The walk to the showers wasn't too bad and the showers were great, but the walk to our tent area was terrible. It was a very hot, sticky day and we both perspired freely with just enough wind to cause a dust storm on the dirt road. By the time we got back we were dirtier than before our showers. Fearing this would be a continual problem, we talked about other means of washing up. With the little stream that ran at the bottom of the slope, behind where we pitched our tents, seemed to us to be a good solution. The next day we decided to try this out and after a successful sponge bath, in a not very private setting, a tall, older, well dressed officer in tans, approached and introduced himself as a flight surgeon. He then lectured us on the dangers of bathing in water downstream from farms and animals and of the pollutants that might be in the water. He also informed us of several diseases we might contract from our foolishness. Needless to say that was the end of our bathing in the stream.

Fifty years later, while filling out a term for a board member of the 455 Bomb Group Association, I went to a meeting room a bit early to find only one other early arrival. We introduced ourselves and chatted as we waited for the others. This gentleman was sufficiently astute as to ask what part of Boston I came from, after catching my accent. When he learned I was from Winchester, he told me he lived in Weston, but that he was a doctor working at the Massachusetts General Hospital. From his age and height I realized, as my mind flashed back to San Giovanni, 1944, he must be the same doctor we had encountered at the stream, about fifty years earlier. He told me he was an Ear

Nose Throat Specialist now working in research. He then asked if I knew any ENT doctors in Winchester. I told him of the ENT doctor who had operated on me for sinus problems and again, fifteen years later, for polyps in my nose. He said, "oh yes, I know Roy, he was one of my students." I also mentioned my niece, who is an ENT doctor in Alaska. He even recognized her name although he had never met her. As you've probably already guessed this was Dr. Captain Harold Schucknecht. The next morning, as Ingrid and I were having breakfast at the hotel with Henry Paris, he stopped at the table to say hello. As he left, Henry said, "do you know who that was?" I told him I did and how I had just met him the day before. He continued, "you know he's the doctor who pulled Capt. Cook out of our crashed plane and probably saved his life. I was Cook's ball gunner and was hospitalized quite a while after that crash." My mind again flashed back to San Giovanni and my first two combat missions.

On the evening of July 6th, Bill Loffer, our crew's pilot, stopped by the tent and told me that he and I would be flying the next day with Capt. Cook as an introduction to combat. The next morning I thought I'd be flying my first mission as a fill-in engineer to Odertal, Germany. However, after rendezvous, I was assisted into the Sperry Ball. I had been trained on all the turrets and felt that this was just part of my initiation. The flight went well and the next day, July 8th, Bill and I again joined Capt. Cook for another mission; this one to Munchendorf, Austria, with my position again the ball turret. I was pleased after that mission because now we'd be flying with our own crew. Also, because at least one of these missions had counted as a double. Until that breakfast I hadn't realized that I was filling in for Henry Paris who had not yet returned to active duty. I also realized at that moment that I had again been touched by the actions for Dr. Schucknecht, this time

through Capt. Cook.

The doctor and I talked again, briefly, at the reunion when he inquired about my general health. I told him I was feeling well, that my sinus condition was under control and the only problem I had was a fungus infection on my feet that I had picked up in Italy. For fifty years, unable to find a cure, my feet would become raw in summer. He told me not to give up, there were new drugs coming on the market soon and that I should speak to my doctor again about this when I got home. About six months later a dermatologist my doctor recommended, treated me and cleared up the infection. From that brief conversation with Dr. Schucknecht and finding an agreeable physician, he again served me well. Today my feet are fine.

In talking with my ENT doctor about meeting Dr. Schucknecht, he shared much information about his professional qualifications and told me he was writing a chapter for his new book. He also told me of another doctor in the same office who had been schooled by the Captain and if at any time, I needed attention when he wasn't available, I should contact him. He didn't indicate he was going to retire, but he did a short time later. I'm now being treated by another student of the tall Captain I first encountered beside the stream in San Giovanni in July of 1944 and I know I'm in good hands.

It's difficult to realize how important a part a flight surgeon, who never treated me personally, could contribute so much to my well being, not only in Italy, but also fifty three years later, in my home town.

*Stuart A. Bemis
455th Bomb Group*

For Your Amusement:



- Depression is merely anger without enthusiasm.
- Drink 'til she's cute, but stop before the wedding.

Bill Gemmill Writes:

I just received my Fall '98 Cerignola Connection; it had to be forwarded to me here because I was lax by not giving you my new address. That address is the letterhead above, but it requires just a bit of an explanation.

The McAllen address is actually a Mail Boxes, Etc. facility. Carole and I actually live in Mexico – about 45 miles from Guadalajara. The Mail Boxes folks in McAllen receive mail for their clients in Central and South America. It is packaged in McAllen and sent as cargo to the nearest airport serving the area in which the client lives...in our case, the Guadalajara airport. There, the local Mail Boxes crew pick up the mail, bring it here and place it in our box - #302. This way our friends and business associates can use regular U.S. postage. I am enclosing one of our calling cards that will give you the "whole enchilada" as far as our location is concerned.

The 455th Membership roster was a welcome addition to our address lists. I note that not only my address is incorrect (my fault), but so is that of **Charles Oltarzewski** (affectionately called "Murph" by our crew – *nobody could pronounce Oltarzewski!*). His address – note the spelling of his name is **1170 Liberty Lane, Gallatin, TN 37066**. While I'm at it, Martuan Belding is the widow of Bob Belding, ball turret gunner on Wes Powell's crew.

Besides "Murph" (engineer on Wes' crew and me, Wes' bombardier), I was happy to see the names Bill Hill, our tail gunner, and Mike Stohlman, our assistant engineer and waist gunner. Seeing Bill Hill's name brought back memories of 13 September 1944 when the crew was shot down following a mission to Odertal. The parachuting crew was spread over quite a piece of real estate in Yugoslavia, and Wes and Bill were subsequently considered MIA while the rest of

the crew returned to Bari. The two missing crew members experienced a very different end to their tours of duty than did those who returned to complete their missions.

Wes and Bill were "rescued" by a band of Chetniks who were openly collaborating with the Germans, but the MIA pilot and tail gunner were protected by the Chetniks and actually lived for several months as members of the Chetnik band. As I recall, their experiences were eventually recorded in the pages of TIME magazine. The still living members of the crew had their last reunion in Houston at Wes Powell's home. A planned gathering this past September was blown away by hurricane George.

Although I am a life member, I am enclosing \$50. I hope children can qualify as associate members. If so, please use \$15 to list my daughter, Susan Gemmill (P.O. Box 581, Volcano, HI 96785), in that capacity. Please use the remainder in any way you find appropriate. The Cerignola Connection is a wonderful way to keep in touch, and I look forward to it each season's issue.

Thanks a million for all your obvious effort. Keep up the great work.

William R. Gemmill

PS My e-mail address is — gemi@laguna.com.mx. Is there any chance that you might find room to list e-mail addresses in a subsequent roster?

Ed—If you send me your e-mail addresses I'll publish them!

The Sac Museum

I have learned that a new museum is under development at Offutt Air Force Base, Omaha, Nebraska. Offutt continues to be the headquarters for the U.S. Strategic Command. They have a fine building and the makings of an interesting museum. I under-

stand the staff is restoring a B-17 for display. Something about our B-24 ought to be a part of the museum at Offutt. It would be a gross mistake if it were left out as a WWII strategic bomber. For example, more B-24s were built (over 19,000) by the U.S. than any other type airplane before or since WWII. Perhaps our 15th Air Force Association should do something. If any of you agree that the B-24 should be included, I suggest you contact your board of Governors with your suggestions and commitment of support and availability of items you would be willing to give.

Al Asch

Growing Old Is An Art



Growing older isn't just a physical thing. It's an art form that everyone needs to learn. Learning that helps a whole lot when you're trying to keep your sanity. It's that short-term memory that gets us oldies confused. So no matter what, be poised and be gracious and kind.

What made me think of all this again is a senior citizen prayer I came across the other day, called "A Prayer for Latter Years." It's labeled, "author unknown" so I can't give credit where credit is due.

I'm going to give you the whole prayer. Hopefully it will stir up some good thoughts in all of us. Then I'll comment on part of it.

"Lord, Thou knowest that I am growing older.

"Keep me from becoming too talkative, and particularly keep me from falling into the tiresome habit of expressing an opinion on every subject.

"Release me from the craving to straighten out everybody's affairs. Keep my mind free from the recital of endless details. Give me wings to get to the point.

"Give me grace, dear Lord, to listen to others describe their aches

(Continued from Page 15)

and pains. Help me endure the boredom with patience and keep my lips sealed, for my own aches and pains are increasing in number and intensity, and the pleasure of discussing them is becoming sweeter as the years go by.

"Teach me the glorious lesson that, occasionally, I might be mistaken. Keep me reasonably sweet. I do not wish to be a saint (saints are so hard to live with), but a sour old person is the work of the devil.

"Make me thoughtful, but not moody; helpful, but not pushy; independent, yet able to accept with graciousness favors that others wish to bestow on me.

"Free me of the notion that simply because I have lived a long time I am wiser than those who have not lived so long.

"If I do not approve of some of the changes that have taken place in recent years, give me the wisdom to keep my mouth shut.

"Lord knows that when the end comes for me I would like to have a friend or two left to come to my funeral. Amen."

Now, starting near the bottom, I wouldn't call it wisdom to keep my mouth shut about some of the changes in recent years that I disagree with.

For instance, the destruction and lack of respect for life at all ages and circumstances; the rape of our judicial system; ruining our environment for the benefit of the almighty dollar; giving children the right to make important decisions before their powers of judgment have matured; making a high performing economy more important than justice for all and peace in our world.

I have no doubt at all that some who have not lived as long as I are wiser than I.

I am amazed and humbled almost daily by the intelligence, talent and accomplishments of our young people.

I do think, though, that having lived longer than they that my experience and learning in the school of hard knocks is something

that should be entered into the equation of how to live a productive life.

I like the part in the prayer where it says help me to accept with graciousness the favors others want to bestow on me.

I think so many of us oldies are so used to giving that we find it hard to receive. Sometimes we feel guilty about receiving because we don't think we have done anything to earn the favor.

Recognizing and accepting that we are getting a little older are the first elements of practicing the art of growing older.

Doing it with finesse is the secret of success. With finesse we handle the aging process skillfully. We act diplomatically in making decisions.

Those of us who are burdened with really bad aches and pains will find it difficult to be as calm, gentle and considerate as the prayer asks us to be.

We'll have to go further in our prayers and ask for endurance and a measure of healing. Our faith will likely be tested, but even faith can grow and mature with age.

The prayer asks that we be kept reasonably sweet, because a sour old person is the work of the devil.

We will find ourselves much more accepted and respected by younger folks if we try to bring joy and happiness into our and their lives.

A sour old grouch isn't any fun to have around even once in awhile. Smiling may be hard to do sometimes, but it sure helps to make friends.

Reinbart Wessing—Stolen from the Appleton Post Crescent

For Your Amusement:

- Eagles may soar, but weasels don't get sucked into jet engines.
- Early bird gets the worm, but the second mouse gets the cheese.
- I drive way too fast to worry about cholesterol.



- I love defenseless animals, especially in a good gravy.
- OK, so what's the speed of dark?
- If you choke a smurf, what color does it turn?

Howard Cooper Writes—



We are pleased that this organization is in existence, for as the years go by, those of us who have survived not only the war, but the years since. I have located a few of my crew, but others have not been found. They may be gone by now, but I keep trying.

What Is The Winged Boot Emblem?



Enclosed is a photocopy of a winged boot emblem I wore on the right side of my jacket.

I have no recollection of what it is or why it was issued to me.

I was the Bombardier on Bill Richard's crew, bailed out December 17th 1944 near Budapest Hungary evaded capture, stayed with the Russian Army, got to Bucharest Romania, and eventually got back to 743rd Squadron in late January 1945, and completed my 35 missions in April 1945.

I assume the emblem has something to do with evading capture by the Germans, but I don't know, I am ordering a display case from Medals of America. I want to include the winged boot if it can be identified.

Anything you can do to identify this emblem will be appreciated

Harvey Hewitt

Ed—If you can identify, let Harvey know at **237 Cheswold Lane, Haverford, PA 19041 or FAX 610-896-7446. E-mail: lhew@aol.com.**

B-24 Liberator To Be Displayed At American Air Museum

The American Air Museum in Britain is set to acquire a rare example of the famed B-24 Liberator. The Consolidated B-24 Liberator, once a common sight in the sky over wartime Britain, will come to Duxford from the U.S. Air Force Museum in exchange for a Spitfire.

Thanks to a generous donation of \$500,000 from the Ford Motor Company, and the support of the Museum's Founding and Sustaining Members, the B-24 will arrive at Duxford later in the year.

This particular example of the B-24 is in critical need of restoration work which is expected to take two years. Fortunately, Duxford is the home to one of the few restoration facilities in the world that is capable of the craftsmanship needed to bring the Liberator up to historically accurate standards.

"In spring 1944 there were more B-24s operating from British bases than in any other theatre of operations, the majority serving with the Second Air Division in East Anglia," said Ted Inman, Director of Duxford. "We have sought a B-24 for many years and thanks to Ford Motor Company, the U.S. Air Force, and the Museum's Founding and Sustaining Members who have been overwhelmingly generous and supportive of the project, we can now present a fitting tribute to the thousands of B-24 crewmen who fought and died flying valiantly from British bases in the Second World War. The agreement with the U.S. Air Force is another example of the special relationship between Britain and the U.S."

When the B-24 Liberator first flew in 1939, it was the most complicated and expensive aircraft ever produced. It was the first American heavy bomber with a tricycle undercarriage, produced in greater

numbers than any American aircraft before or since, and the majority were built by Ford.

At one time the Ford plant at Willow Run, Michigan, was assembling a new B-24 every 53 minutes. The B-24's slender wing, ideal for cruising flight, combined with great fuel capacity gave the bomber the greatest range of any land-based aircraft of its day.

Hundreds of Liberators flew with the U.K. based U.S. Eighth Air Force, "the Mighty Eighth," the largest air striking force ever committed to battle. Liberators of the Eighth undertook daylight bombing raids alongside B-17 Flying Fortresses in massive formations. Liberators were also particularly useful in the Pacific War because of the aircraft's great range.

The Liberator to be acquired by AAM, serial number 44-51228, is thought to have been the last B-24 flying with the U.S. Air Force. It was redesignated as an EZB-24M and was used for ice research flying, after which it was retired to Lackland Air Force Base in Texas where it has been on display since 1956.

The Spitfire being traded for the B-24 is a Mark Vc, serial number MA863, acquired in Australia. The Spitfire is currently under restoration in the U.K. before being transported to the U.S. It will be displayed by the U.S. Air Force Museum in 12th Air Force markings and form part of a Second World War in North Africa exhibition.

Ed-From the Official Newsletter of the American Air Museum in Britain Campaign. Duxford, England.

For Your Amusement

- If Barbie is so popular, why do you have to buy her friends?
- Televangelists: The Pro Wrestlers of religion.
- When everything's coming



your way, you're in the wrong lane.

- Ambition is a poor excuse for not having enough sense to be lazy.
- Give a man a free hand and he'll run it all over you.
- Beauty is in the eye of the beer holder...
- 24 hours in a day...24 beers in a case...coincidence?
- Boycott shampoo! Demand real poo!
- If everything seems to be going well, you have obviously overlooked something.
- When I'm not in my right mind, my left mind gets pretty crowded.
- Everyone has a photographic memory. Some don't have film.
- Who is General Failure and why is he reading my hard disk?
- What happens if you get scared half to death twice?
- Energizer Bunny arrested, charged with battery.
- I poured Spot remover on my dog. Now he's gone.
- I used to have an open mind but my brains kept falling out.
- I couldn't repair your brakes, so I made your horn louder.
- Shin: a device for finding furniture in the dark.
- How do you tell when you run out of invisible ink?
- Laughing stock: cattle with a sense of humor.
- Why do psychics have to ask you for your name?
- Wear short sleeves! Support your right to bare arms!
- For Sale: Parachute. Only used once, never opened, small stain.
- Corduroy pillows: They're making headlines!
- Black holes are where God divided by zero.

From Charlie Stark

Sometime ago, Joe Cadwalader, our ball turret gunner, sent me an enlarged picture of our crew. Joe had us all sign this at the time. It is our original crew except for Peter Demitri who was not flying because of a leg injury. He was killed in a crash on Dec. 24, 1944 in bad weather on the spur of Italy. The rest of the crew had departed for home 6 weeks earlier.

PS-The dog's name was Trudy. Inherited from previous tent dwellers. I brought her home with me.

455th Crew Members Liberated From Roumania

Anthony Fogel sent your editor this picture of 455th crew members, liberated from Roumania, and taken after they returned to the 455th Bomb Group. Anthony's Crew was shot down May 5, 1944 before the bomb run by ME-109's. They were captured and held POW until liberation in September, 1944. Flying back to the 455th was a little hairy, 26 POW's crammed into a B-17, without parachutes.



Front row, L to R: Joe Cadwalader, Ball Turret Gunner; Jim Booth, Tail Turret Gunner; Vince Radelski, Waist Gunner; Gil Ekstrom, Waist Gunner; Hank Lekan, Engineer; Bill Leonard, Radio Operator.

Back Row, L to R: Harry Anderson, Pilot; Chuck Stark, Co-pilot; Johnny Grim, Navigator; Ray Douglas, Bombardier

Aircraft 492, 740th Sqd. Linda Ann and Herwee Wabbits



Standing L to R, 4th from left, Glen Mensingerk Pilot; Roscoe Wilkes, Navigator; Anthony Fogel, Bombardier.



English built this swimming pool in spring of 1945. Back of 743rd tent area.



455th Gunnery school.

Robert Collette Writes



I am writing you in hope of establishing a connection with my 15th Air Force Group as suggested by Ben Franklin. The information I had was all lost many years ago in a flooded basement. I do have the enclosed crew photograph. We were a replacement crew landing at Cerignola, I believe, on June 6, 1944. The top row, left to right, are Lt. Ward, Captain Griffin, Lt. Krueger and myself. I am no longer sure of the names of the balance of the crew.

Any information you can provide to help me get connected will be very much appreciated. It would be most exciting to get to a reunion or have other contact. I know I should have done this some time ago, but better late than never. I thank you very much for whatever assistance you can give me.

Al Asch Answers

Dear Bob,

It is always good to hear from WWII guys of the 455th. I do hope you join our Association. I have enclosed a form for your use in joining.

I clearly remember Captain



Griffin's crew coming into the 740th as a replacement. Grif was the first Captain we received and he had lots of flying experience. His and Lt. Ward's name appears in our 455th history book, but not yours. However, I searched basic squadron records and found this, that you were promoted to 1st Lt. in July, 1944, on August 13, Capt. Griffin's crew went to Capri Rest Camp for 7 days, and on 29 September, Capt. Griffin left for service with the 15th AF Headquarters. I couldn't find anything combat related but that is not unusual as the daily squadron

journals were written by S-2 and should have had input from Operations.

I am sending a copy of this and your letter with photograph to Tom Ramey, editor of our news letter, for possible publication to see if others of your crew are still alive and contact you.

Ed- Bob can be reached at 727-360-2560, 7400 Sun Island Dr. So, Unit 403, So Pasadena, FL 33707-4425 or e-mail: dotybob@JUNO.com dotybob@403@aol.com

Squadron Artists At Work





Front Row, L to R: Jim Weeks, Ray Beauvais, Bob Caldwell, Herb Cornell.
Back Row L to R: John Murfeld, Bill Dis Brow, UNK, Kenny Vinchet



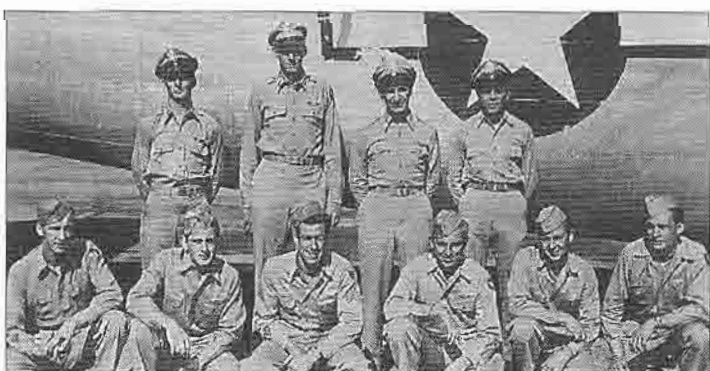
Front Row, L to R: Chester Miller, Engineer; Danny Ragusky, Gunner; Joseph Ritinski, Tail Turret Gunner; Robert Hardt, Gunner; Harry McDowell, Gunner; Victor Eggemeyer, Radio Operator.
Back Row, L to R: A. Fogel, Bombardier; R. Wilkes, Navigator; G. Mensinger, Co-Pilot; V. McWilliams, Pilot.



Front Row, L to R: Unk; Phillips, Radio Operator; Emmons, Nose Turret Gunner; Unk; Hamel, Ball Turret Gunner; Wallzak, Tail Turret Gunner.
Back Row, L to R: Unk; Pearson, Co-pilot; Baily, Pilot; Flynn, Navigator.



Front Row, L to R: Walter Burkhart, Gunner; Robert Woodward, Radio Operator; John Eldridge, Gunner; Nick Maggio, Gunner; John Dunham, Engineer; Harry Dupree, Gunner.
Back Row, L to R: Douglas Brown, Pilot; James Howarth, Co-pilot; John Oxler, Navigator; James Head, Bombardier.



Front Row, L to R: Bert Agnoli, Engineer; Darwitt Lightle, Radio Operator; Henry Liles, Gunner; Stan Tellier, Gunner; Howard Cooper, Rear Turret Gunner; James Colson, Gunner.
Back Row, L to R: Walter Perkowski, Pilot; Ollie Schoo, Co-pilot; Henry Hansen, Navigator; Fred (Bill) Yoss, Bombardier



Ground Crew on Omiakinbac – Identities Unknown



Front Row, L to R: Ground Crew; Karney; Salvo Dog and Schultz; Ground crew Chief; Anderson; Dakin; Caldwell; Ground crew.
Back Row, L to R: Ground crew; McMahon, Navigator; Cahill, Bombardier; Locatelli, Pilot; Ground crew.



They keep them flying!
Bob Betzinger and Ray Smith.



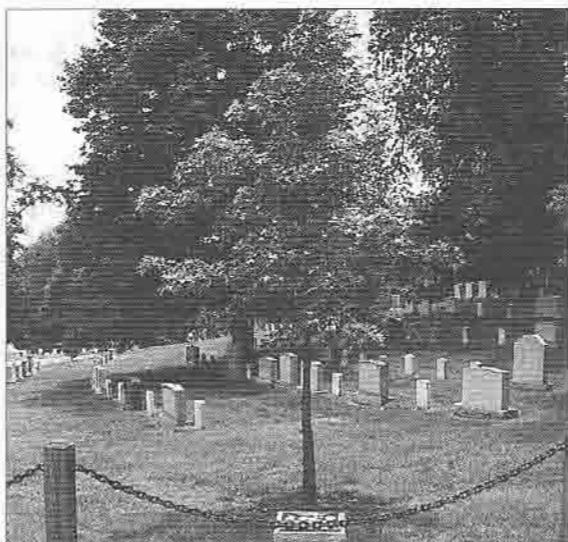
Memories from Langley Field – L to R: Buchanan, Foss and Burke at the Squadron Party.



If he says it's Arkansas Joe...It's Arkansas Joe!
Lt. Unk.



Hat's off to the hardworking ground crews. Unidentified but still remembered.



455th B.G. Memorial Tree and Plaque at the Arlington Cemetery. The tree is thriving and the plaque gets reviewed by many visitors who stroll along Roosevelt Drive at the cemetery.



Dedication of B-24 sculpture at the Air Force Academy. 600 registered for the ceremony and many tourists attended.



New Web Site

You are invited to visit the newest website that has something for all veterans of the Air Battles over Europe. **"www.ploiesti.net"**

Are You Feeling Old?

I know a few of you will be able to relate to the following and find it sad, but true...

Are you feeling old? If not, consider this:

The people who are starting college this fall across the nation were born in 1980.

They have no meaningful recollection of the Reagan era.

They were prepubescent when

the Persian Gulf War was waged.

Black Monday 1987 is as significant to them as the Great Depression.

Their lifetime has always included AIDS.

Atari predates them, as do vinyl albums.

The expression "you sound like a broken record" means nothing to them.

They may have heard of an 8-track, but chances are they probably have never actually seen or heard one.

The Digital Disc was introduced when they were 1 year old.

As far as they know, stamps have always cost about 32 cents.

They have always had an answering machine.

Most have never seen a TV set

with only 13 channels.

They were born the year that Walkmen were introduced by Sony.

They have no idea when or why Jordache jeans were cool.

They never took a swim and thought about Jaws.

They have no idea what "and my name is Charlie. They work for me" means.

They don't know that "8-6-7-5-3-0-9" is Jenny's phone number.

They don't know who Mork was or where he was from.

They never heard the term "Where's the beef?"

Do you feel old now?

Remember, the people who don't know these things will be in college this year.

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

DECEMBER 1944

Mission 166, December 16 Thirty-nine B-24's took off to bomb the Synthetic Oil Plant at Brux, Germany. One aircraft broke its landing gear on take off and was forced to jettison its bombs in the Adriatic. It then crash-landed at the Gioia, Italy airdrome. One other aircraft returned early due to engine trouble. Twenty-eight B-24's dropped 60 tons of 500# RDX bombs on the primary target by pathfinder method. One flight leader could not open his bomb bay doors so the whole flight missed the bomb run. These aircraft dropped their bombs on any target of opportunity that they could find. Flak at the target was intense but inaccurate so only one plane received slight flak damage. All planes returned to base without incident.

Mission 167, December 17 Thirty-six B-24's took off to bomb the oil refinery at Odertal, Germany. Two airplanes returned early due to gas leaks while 31 dropped their bombs by pathfinder method. Sixty-six tons of 500# RDX bombs were dropped on the primary target. Three aircraft dropped their bombs on other targets since the flight leader was out of position on the bomb run. Flak at the target was moderate and generally inaccurate. One of our aircraft was lost and was last seen about 5,000 feet below the formation with an engine on fire. No chutes were observed and ten crewmen were missing in action. All other planes returned safely.

Mission 168, December 18 Thirty-seven B-24's took off to bomb targets in Germany. Three aircraft returned early and 31 dropped 74.5 tons of 500# RDX bombs on a target of opportunity, the marshalling yards at Sopron. The bombing was accomplished by pathfinder method. No flak was

experienced in the target area or en route to the target. All planes returned to base safely.

Mission 169, December 20 Of the 37 B-24's that took off to bomb the Skoda Works at Pilsen, Germany only 27 were able to drop their bombs on the target. The others, because of various troubles, were not able to drop their bombs. The Group dropped 66.5 tons on the target by pathfinder method. The bomb load for that day was 500# RDX bombs. Flak at the target was slight and inaccurate. Despite this, we lost six aircraft, five of them to unexplained causes while one aircraft was seen to crash into a mountain. Sixty-two crewmen were missing in action. All other aircraft returned to base.

Mission 170, December 25 It was Christmas Day and 28 B-24's took off to bomb targets in Austria. Weather conditions forced 12 aircraft to return early and only 15 aircraft bombed the third alternate, Wels, Austria marshalling yards. The bombing was done by visual methods with just fair results. One aircraft was missing and was not seen after takeoff. Five aircraft returned to other bases. Ten crewmen were reported missing in action.

Mission 171, December 26 Twenty-six B-24's dropped 50 tons of 500# RDX bombs on the oil refinery at Oswiescim, Germany. Flak at the target was intense and accurate. Three aircraft were missing. One was seen with a feathered engine and heading toward Russia, another was seen jettisoning equipment and it too was heading east from the target area. The other aircraft was reported to have landed at the island of Vis. Thirty-three crewmen were reported missing in action. All other crews returned to base.

Mission 172, December 27 The weather was giving us a break and we were able to get three days in a row with favorable flying weather. We had 31 B-24's take off and bomb the main marshalling yards

at Graz, Austria. The Group dropped 62.5 tons of 500# RDX bombs on the target with fair results as 35% of them fell within 1,000 feet of the aiming point. Slight to moderate flak was experienced at the target. All aircraft returned to base with no casualties.

Mission 173, December 28 This was the fourth day in a row with good flying weather and we sent 28 B-24's to bomb the primary target, the oil refinery at Kolin, Czechoslovakia. There was no flak at the target and one en route. All planes returned to base safely, a milk run for a change.

Mission 174, December 29 Twenty-six B-24's took off to bomb industrial targets in Austria. An 80-mile an hour head wind over the Alps caused the group to abandon the primary target and they bombed the third alternate target. Fourteen B-24's dropped 30.75 tons on Rosenhiem marshalling yards. The other 12 aircraft bombed the locomotive repair shops at Udine. Flak at the target was moderate and accurate, which accounted for one aircraft being lost. Another aircraft crash-landed at Pianola, Italy as it ran out of fuel. These crewmen escaped serious injury. Nine crewmen were reported missing in action.

The month of December was over as far as missions were concerned. It was a month that saw the Group fly several different kinds of missions with two and three single planes as well as many pathfinder missions. The Group flew a total of 16 missions with 359 aircraft over the targets. These aircraft dropped a total of 649.5 tons of bombs. We lost 15 aircraft with only four due to flak and the other 11 due to other causes. There were 111 crewmen reported missing in action and 32 reported killed in action. December was not a good month in that regard. We were looking forward to the new year as one that would end the conflict.

Help-740th Squadron Members!

I've been trying to help Dave Bathie (**Dave Bathie, Dayton Farm, 140 Dayton Street, Sea Cliff, NY 11579-1606**) find a crew picture of his dad, but to no avail. Dave's dad, T/Sgt Alexander Bathie was a member of the 740th Bomb Squadron. If any of you knew T/Sgt Bathie, were a member of his crew, or have a crew photo please let me, or Dave know. This is a very important missing memory for Dave.

Ed

Frank Hosimer Writes—

After years of looking for my radio man, Marvin W. Kuhn, I finally located him about a year ago using the internet. He had just had a heart operation and seemed to think he was on the road to recovery. He was excited about being in touch with the crew and learning about our reunions. He enjoyed talking to two of the enlisted crew members on the phone.

He was living in Florida. I had occasions to be in Florida this January so I called to make arrangements to visit and found he

had died May 17th of heart problems. I went by anyway and talked to his wife and two sisters. I gave his wife some photos and showed her the latest Cerignola Connection and had an interesting visit.

You'll love San Diego!

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

John Winter's Crew—

Front Row, L to R: O'Neal Woodard, Engineer; James Nielson, Radio Operator; Eugene Milzark, Armor; John Henry, Nose Turret Gunner; Clyde Grant, Ball Turret Gunner; Woodrow Beeler, Tail Turret Gunner.

Back row, L to R: Ferdinand (John) Winter, Pilot; Moses Lane, Co-pilot; Conrad Anderson, Navigator; James Patrick, Bombardier.

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

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