



CERIGNOLA CONNECTION

455th Bomb Group Association Newsletter

Spring, 2008 Editor, Craig Ward, 813 Peterstow Drive, Euless, Texas 76039
phone: (817) 540-1068 **email:** aphp@tx.rr.com **website:** www.awardphp.com



Message from the President

Let's Meet In Louisville

by Rod Clarke

The location for the 2008 Reunion of the 455th Bomb Group is Louisville, Kentucky, at the Downtown Holiday Inn, October 1-5.

Louisville, the largest city in Kentucky, is the 17th in size in the USA (701,500 in 2006). It's the home of what some say are "The Most Exciting Two Minutes in Sports" -- the Kentucky Derby. I suppose that is why it is sometimes known as the Derby City (presumably, it has no connection with hats).

Louisville is also known as the "Falls City", in that it is situated at the Falls of the Ohio River, the only natural obstacle to navigation in that major waterway.

Actually, these falls are a

far cry from the spectacular Niagara Falls, but they were enough of an impediment to require prudent early navigators to unload their cargoes before attempting to pass through them. The resulting trade accounts for much of the city's growth over the years.

Another name is "The Ville". That may have something to do with the controversy surrounding the pronunciation of the name.



The sign shown in the figure above hangs in front of Louisville's Convention and Visitor Center, and lists several of the phonetic renderings of the name. The first one is "Looavul", followed by "Luvul", "Lewisville", "Looa--ville", and "Looeyville".

The latter makes sense because it was named by its founder, George Rogers Clark in 1778 after King Louis XVIII of France. The small print at the bottom of the sign tells us -- "Your kind of place . . any way you say it." (continued, page 2)

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The Louisville metro area is regularly referred to as Kentuckiana, because it includes counties in southern Indiana. Although it is situated in a Southern state, Louisville is influenced by both Mid-western and Southern culture, and is commonly referred to as either the northern-most Southern city or the southern-most Northern city in the USA. Travelers should be aware that Louisville is in the Eastern time zone, and observes Daylight Saving.

Notable Louisville residents have included inventor Thomas Edison, the first Jewish Supreme Court Justice Louis Brandeis, boxing legend Muhammad Ali, newscaster Diane Sawyer, writer Hunter S. Thompson, & actor Tom Cruise.

Notable events occurring in the city include the first public viewing of Edison's light bulb, the first public library open to African Americans, and medical advances including the first human hand transplant, the first artificial heart transplant, and the development site of the first cervical cancer vaccine.

Elsewhere in this issue of the *Cerignola Connection*, you'll find details relating to our hotel and the places we can visit as a group, if you choose to sign up for the tours. The Holiday Inn has given us a very reasonable room rate, considering the times we live. We'll have an "open all day" hospitality room.

On Thursday, we will be able to take a scenic driving tour of Louisville's many attractions, that will culminate in a luncheon cruise on the Ohio

River aboard The Spirit of Jefferson, a two-deck riverboat.

On Friday, we can visit the Kentucky Derby Museum at Churchill Downs. After a buffet luncheon at Masterson's Restaurant, we can visit the Louisville Slugger Museum, and the facility where they make famous baseball bats.

On Saturday, we'll have the opportunity to visit the General George S. Patton Museum at Fort Knox, after an all-you-can-eat lunch buffet.

Unfortunately, we won't have time to visit the Fort Knox Gold Depository, but we should be able to catch a glimpse of it as we drive by.

There has been some concern that the cost of the reunion will deter members from attending. It has been suggested that perhaps the reunion timespan is too long and should be limited to fewer days and fewer tours. This subject was discussed at the membership meeting in San Antonio and the consensus was that the tours are an important part of the reunions, and should be continued to be offered.

"Offered" is the operative word -- the reunion package is not an all-or-nothing deal. People are welcome to join us for the full reunion or pare down their participation to simply the Saturday evening banquet dinner. We want people to come, so join us for as much of the reunion as you can.

Additionally, there is no compulsion to take any or all of the tours. They're optional, and as we all know, many of the past

attendees opted not to take them, preferring to make full use of the hospitality room where common recollections and war stories abound.

Others prefer to take full advantage of the downtown location of the hotel with copious shopping opportunities.

And the common tours are just one thin layer of the attractions of the Louisville area. The hotel is offering the reunion room rate for three days before and after the reunion dates. This will allow those who choose to visit some of the attractions we didn't have time for.

In my own previous visits to Louisville, I was richly rewarded by visits to two places in particular -- the Falls of the Ohio State Park Interpretive Center across the river in Clarksville, Indiana, and historic Locust Grove, the final residence of Louisville founder George Rogers Clark.

The Interpretive Center functions as a natural history museum, covering findings in the nearby exposed Devonian fossil bed as well as providing a remarkable view of the falls. Locust Grove portrays life in the early days of the city.

For those who have access to the internet, a visit to the Wikipedia entry on Louisville will provide more information about it than you'll be able to digest in one sitting.

I'm very excited about another visit to Louisville. I hope you are, too. See you there!

Rod Clarke (743)
President, 455th BG Assoc.
rory@his.com

**455TH BOMB GROUP
ASSOCIATION, INC.**
P.O. BOX 93095
AUSTIN, TX. 78709-3095

PRESIDENT

Roderick W. Clarke

Col. USAF (Ret.)

VICE PRESIDENT

Francis Lashinsky

S/Sgt., USAAF

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR /

TREASURER

Gregory Riggs

Col. USAF (Ret.)

P.O. Box 93095

Austin, TX. 78709-3095

SECRETARY

James Smith

Captain, USAAF

PAST PRESIDENT

William B. Gemmill, II

Lt. Col. USAF (Ret.)

DIRECTORS

John F. Davis

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Maj. USAF (Ret.)

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T/Sgt. USAAF

Ormond H. Buffington

T/Sgt. USAAF

Theodore V. Tronoff

Capt. USAAF

C. Henry Paris

S/Sgt. USAAF

Carl A. Barr

Major USAF (Ret.)

Elmo J. Henske

1st Lt. USAAF

Mark Mason

Son, S/Sgt. Robt. Mason (742)

Craig Ward

Son, Lt. J. T. Ward (740)

Editor, *Cerignola Connection*



Available Now!

455th Bomb Group Association Mugs
Each 11-oz. mug sports two 455th BG aircraft:

One in natural metal finish and one in olive drab

Cost per mug is \$12.00 (\$7.50 plus \$4.50 packing and postage)

Make checks payable to, and mailed to:

455th Bomb Group Association

P.O. Box 93095, Austin, TX 78709-3095

These Mugs Make Great Gifts!

Order quickly to ensure processing for Christmas

(Not a fund raiser ... these are being offered at cost)

A Humbling Experience for a Fighter Pilot

A fighter pilot was in a badly crippled P-38 fighter over the Adriatic, preparing to ditch near the coast.

Settling on a spot, he carefully set it down, extracted the inflatable life raft, and began paddling, certain that he could get away from the Germans.

Imagine his surprise when the German troops came wading out in the knee-deep water to capture him.

Perhaps he should have wondered why his aircraft did not sink.

Story Courtesy of Maj. Carl Barr, USAF Ret. (743)

War's End Foreseen

"I could see omens of the war's end almost every day in the blue southern sky when, flying provocatively low, the bombers of the American Fifteenth Air Force crossed the Alps from their Italian bases to attack German industrial targets."

Albert Speer, Hitler's Minister for Armaments

Can You Help?

Dear Editor,

I am passing on a question from Radovan Zivanovic regarding the loss of B-24 Serial Number 42-51935 on 29 December, 1944. They were with the 742nd BS, and the pilot was 2nd Lt. Walter Goss.

He's found some wreckage from the crash site in Croatia, including an M2 .50 cal machine gun that we have confirmed is from the aircraft (see picture below - that is his son in the photo).

He'd like to contact anyone with additional information on the aircraft, crew, or the crash, especially any surviving crewmembers or photographs. Four of the crew survived (Hague, McDonald, McClain, and Richman).

He already has the MACR, and I've sent him a photo with most of the crew (see photo at right), but in front of a different aircraft.

Regards,

Dave Ungemach

Son of Wm. C. Ungemach (742)
210 Southland Station Dr, #223
Warner Robbins, GA. 31088



THE BLUE ANGELS "BUZZ" LADY LIBERTY



Back row, left to right: 2nd Lt Walter F. Goss; F/O Robert F. Hague; F/O Abe Perlmutter; and F/O Gene W. Gould.

Front row, left to right: Cpl Thomas M. Ferguson; Cpl Ivan W. Richman; Cpl Charles T. McDonald; Cpl George D. McClain Jr.; Cpl Kenneth Duncan; and Cpl Douglas H. Long.

18 October 2007

The Board of Directors met in the Sam Houston Room of the Omni Hotel, San Antonio, Texas, on Thursday, 18 October 2007. The meeting was called to order at 0800 hours by Rod Clarke, vice president, acting in the absence of Bill Gemmill, president. Members present for the meeting were:

Rod Clarke, vice president
Greg Riggs, treasurer and executive director
Frank Lashinski, past president
Carl Barr, director
Ormond Buffington, director
John Davis, director
Elmo Henske, director
Carl Loiocano, director

Rod Clarke asked Greg Riggs to give the current financial balance of the association. Greg Riggs reported that the association had a total of \$12,731.15 as of 1 October 2007. Greg Riggs also reported that the association has 455 members and associate members as well as 115 widows on the mailing list.

Rod Clarke then asked each person present to be considering the question of whether or not to continue as an association, whether or not to have another reunion, and when and where such a reunion might be. He then adjourned the meeting until 1600 hours.

Rod Clarke reconvened the meeting at 1600 hours in the same location. The same members were present with the addition of Jim Smith, secretary, and Ted Tronoff, director.

Jim Smith read the minutes from the previous board of directors meeting held 22 October 2005. They were approved as read. Greg Riggs then gave a more detailed financial report for the previous two years and a more detailed membership report. The board decided to remove from the mailing list those who fell more than one year delinquent in membership dues. Widows of active members will continue to receive the newsletter for as long as they wish.

Greg Riggs reported that Al Asche, former association president, had donated materials from the term of his presidency to the University of Tennessee and established an "account" there for receiving additional materials concerning the 455th Bomb Group. Greg Riggs asked for recommendations about where association materials should be donated at some unspecified time in the future. After discussion, the board selected the Air Force history center at the Air University, Maxwell AFB, Alabama.

The board voted to reimburse Gene Hudson \$220 which he spent to send an association wreath to the funeral of Horace Lanford. Although this reimbursement is being made, the board decided to keep in force its previous decision (20 October 2005) not to fund funeral wreaths.

After much discussion, a decision was made to recommend to the general membership plans for another reunion in 2008. Because this will leave very little time for decision making, Greg Riggs was appointed to make arrangements for the reunion rather than appointing a reunion committee. No location was recommended beyond the standing guidelines of central U.S. avoiding extreme cold and high altitude. Suggestions will be taken

at the general membership meeting. There also was no decision made on whether or not to recommend the next reunion be advertised as the final formal reunion. The general membership will also be queried as to the relative merits of guided tours versus simply a place to meet and talk.

Bill Gemmill had been unable to form a nominating committee; therefore, the board of directors performed that task. The board is recommending to the general membership the following slate of officers and directors:

Rodrick (Rod) Clarke, President
Francis (Frank) Lashinsky, Vice President
William (Bill) Gemmill, past president
James (Jim) Smith, Secretary
Gregory (Greg) Riggs, Executive Director/Treasurer
Carl Loiocano, director
John Davis, director
Craig Ward, director
Elmo Henske, director
Ted Tronoff, director
Ormond Buffington, director
Carl Barr, director
James Gould, director
Mark Mason, director

There will be an attempt to get one other nomination for director from the floor; however, the by-laws permit between six and ten directors.

The meeting adjourned at 1737 hours.


James Smith, Secretary

HOW TO STAY YOUNG

1. Throw out non-essential numbers. This includes age, weight and height. Let the doctors worry about them. That is why you pay them.

2. Keep only cheerful friends. The grouches pull you down.

3. Keep learning. Learn more about the computer, crafts, gardening, whatever. Never let the brain idle. "An idle mind is the devil's workshop."

4. Enjoy the simple things.

5. Laugh often, long and loud. Laugh until you gasp for breath.

6. The tears happen. Endure, grieve, and move on. The only person who is with us our entire life is ourselves. Be ALIVE while you are alive.

7. Surround yourself with what you love, whether it's family, pets, keepsakes, music, plants, hobbies, whatever. Your home is your refuge.

8. Cherish your health. If it is good, preserve it. If it is unstable, improve it. If it is beyond what you can improve, get help.

9. Don't take guilt trips. Take a trip to the mall, even to the next county, or to a foreign country, but NOT to where the guilt is.

10. Tell the people you love that you love them, at every opportunity.

AND ALWAYS REMEMBER:

Life is not measured by the number of breaths we take, but by the moments that take our breath away.

455th BOMB GROUP ASSOCIATION, INC.
MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

20 October 2007

The Board of Directors met in the La Hoya room of the Omni Hotel, San Antonio, Texas, on Saturday, 20 October 2007. President Rod Clarke called the meeting to order at 0946 hours. Members present for the meeting were:

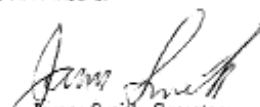
Roderick (Rod) Clarke, President
Francis (Frank) Lashinsky, Vice President
William (Bill) Gennill, past president
James (Jim) Smith, Secretary
Gregory (Greg) Riggs, Executive Director/Treasurer
John Davis, continuing director
Carl Loiocano, continuing director
Craig Ward, continuing director
Elmo Henske, continuing director
Ted Trouoff, continuing director
Ormond Buffington, continuing director
Carl Barr, continuing director
James Gould, III, continuing director
Mark Mason, incoming director
Henry Paris, incoming director

Greg Riggs read the minutes from the 18 October meeting which were approved as read. Rod Clarke recapped the results of the general membership meeting which had just concluded.

We discussed the topic of inviting former members of other bomb groups to our future reunions. The discussion began with the idea of inviting former members of the 454th Bomb Group Association since that association had disbanded shortly after the 2005 reunion. One consideration was potential costs of trying to contact them. After much discussion, the following items were decided:

- Former members of 304th Bombardment Wing would be permitted to join the 455th Bomb Group Association as associate members and attend future 455th Bomb Group reunions.
- Informal attempts would be made to contact former members of all 304th BW units. This would be done by networking through personal acquaintances and by free announcements placed in various military and veterans magazines. Carl Loiocano will be in charge of placing magazine announcements. Additionally, Carl Barr has a nationwide website which he will use to post information. Greg Riggs will provide essential information for each of these approaches so that he will receive the information he needs if people respond. He will also send Carl Loiocano the list of publications he used in advertising the 2005 reunion.

Rod Clarke expressed his views that this had been a successful reunion. There was no further business, so the meeting adjourned at 1003 hours.


James Smith, Secretary

Bush honors America's last surviving WWI vet

WASHINGTON — Calling it a high honor, President Bush on Thursday warmly greeted 107-year-old Frank Woodruff Buckles, described by the White House as the last known surviving American-born veteran of World War I. "Mr. Buckles' mind is sharp, his memory is crisp, and he's been sharing with me some interesting anecdotes," Mr. Bush said in the Oval Office. Mr. Buckles sat quietly with his hands clasped as the president spoke during a short photo opportunity.

Mr. Buckles, a resident of Charles Town, W.Va., was born in 1901.



Frank Woodruff Buckles, 107, the last known surviving American veteran of World War I, visited the White House on Thursday.

New Airline Motto

"We're not happy until you're not."

To Members of The 741st Bomb Squadron

Our squadron fund is used to pay for reunion expenses, such as dinner for guests, speakers, bar bills, and other incidental expenses.

Four years ago, Horace Lanford turned it over to me with about \$300.00. This money was depleted two reunions ago. Since then, a few generous individuals paid the bills out of pocket.

We are requesting contributions from 741st members to the squadron fund.

Make checks payable to:

Anthony M. Corsello
15 Tangle Lane
Wantagh, NY 11793

We will escalate our squadron celebration in direct ratio to the amount received. Thank you in advance for your contributions.

Women and cats will do as they please, and men and dogs should relax and get used to the idea.

-Robert A. Heinlein

20 October 2007

The General Membership of the 455th Bomb Group (H) Association, Inc. met in the "La Hoya" room of the Omni Hotel, San Antonio, Texas, on Saturday, 20 October 2007. Vice President Rod Clarke presided, acting in the absence of President Bill Gemmill.

The meeting was called to order at 0902 hours by Rod Clarke, at which time he welcomed members to the meeting. The minutes of the 22 October 2005 General Membership meeting were read by Secretary Jim Smith and accepted as written.

Greg Riggs briefed the members on the present association membership and financial status. There are presently 570 individuals on the association mailing list of which 339 are life members and 115 are widows of former members. He advised those attending of the Board of Directors' decision to drop members from the Cerignola Connection mailing list if they become more than one year delinquent in annual dues. Presently this could affect as many as 116 members; all others on the mailing list are life members or widows who are exempt from annual dues. The association had \$12,731.15 as of 1 October 2007. If we receive no further income from donations or annual dues, this would be sufficient to pay this year's reunion expenses and fund the Cerignola Connection for approximately four more years. The financial and membership reports were approved.

Greg Riggs gave a brief accounting of the unsuccessful attempts to combine the reunions of the various bomb groups from the 304th Bombardment Wing. The members present voted to hold a 455th Bomb Group reunion in October 2008, breaking with the tradition of biannual reunions. Because of the relatively short notice this provides for planning, the location and details were left to Greg Riggs to determine assisted by Frank Lashinsky and Carl Loiocano. The topic of reunion tours was discussed with the general sensing that they are important but do not make or break a reunion. This was important information for selecting a reunion site.

Rod Clarke acknowledged the services of John and Eunice Smoot and Laura Flanagan in running the hospitality room's refreshments. They are the daughters and son-in-law of Ormond and Marie Buffington.

President Bill Gemmill had been unable to form a nominating committee; therefore, the Board of Directors had fulfilled that function in their meeting two days prior. Greg Riggs read the proposed slate of officers as well as nominations for nine of the ten director positions. A tenth director was nominated from the floor. Nominations ceased and the nominees were elected by acclamation. The officers and board for the coming year are:

Roderick (Rod) Clarke, President
Francis (Frank) Lashinsky, Vice President
William (Bill) Gemmill, past president
James (Jim) Smith, Secretary
Gregory (Greg) Riggs, Executive Director/Treasurer
John Davis, continuing director
Carl Loiocano, continuing director
Craig Ward, continuing director
Elmo Henske, continuing director
Ted Tronoff, continuing director
Ormond Buffington, continuing director
Carl Barr, continuing director
James Gould, III, continuing director
Mark Mason, incoming director
Henry Paris, incoming director

There being no further business, Rod Clarke thanked the members for attending and adjourned the meeting at 0937 hours.



James Smith, Secretary

Dear 455th BG Association Members,

I just want you to know I'm home after three months in the hospital. That's not much to say, but if you choose to write me, I promise I'll try to answer.

Best Regards,

Bill Gemmill (Past President)
11294 Richford Lane
Spring Hill, FL. 34609

When Insults Had Class

"I have never killed a man, but I have read many obituaries with great pleasure."

-- Clarence Darrow

"He has never been known to use a word that might send a reader to the dictionary."

-- William Faulkner (about Ernest Hemingway)

"Poor Faulkner. Does he really think big emotions come from big words?"

-- Ernest Hemingway (about William Faulkner)

"He has the attention span of a lightning bolt."

-- Robert Redford

"They never open their mouths without subtracting from the sum of human knowledge."

-- Thomas Brackett Reed

"He inherited some good instincts from his Quaker forebears, but by diligent hard work, he overcame them."

-- James Reston (about Richard Nixon)

"In order to avoid being called a flirt, she always yielded easily."

-- Charles, Count Talleyrand

"His mother should have thrown him away and kept the stork."

-- Mae West

"Some cause happiness wherever they go; others, whenever they go."

-- Oscar Wilde

More Pictures From Reunion, 2007 San Antonio, Texas



Henry Paris with Mavis, Frank and Doris Lashinsky, Bernice Larson and Bob Caldwell



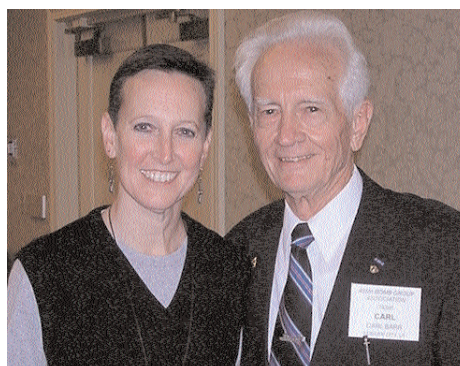
Carl Barr, Carl Straka,
Gil Gilson



Rod Clarke with Guest Speaker
Chief Master Sergeant Mark
Luzander, US Air Force
Education and Training
Command



Brad Gilson, Gil Gilson, Sen.
George McGovern, Jim Gilson,
Grandsons Randy and Alex
in front.



Julie Summerfield and
Carl Barr



Ed Riggs and Rod Clarke



We Hold Our Banner High !



Bob Caldwell and Bernice
Larson, Lee and Bob Slane
(Lee is a cousin of
Bob Caldwell)

Carl Barr has created a web page for photos of the 2007 reunion.
<http://carlbarr.homestead.com/Carl-Barr--Home-Page.html>

Can You Help?

I need help finding information on my father, Paul C. Roadman (741). He was a T/Sgt. for the 455th Bombardment Group. He said his plane was the *Pin Down Girl*. He was a radio operator from about Feb 1944 – June, 1944. He told us his plane was “forced” or “shot” down. He had injuries and spent time in a hospital in Italy. That was about all he ever said about the war. We are very interested in learning more about his service. If there is anyone that can give us more information about his service, please let us know. Thank You !

Sharon Ardrey
1507 Vintage lane
Naples, FL 34104
(239) 434-4020

**455th BOMB GROUP ASSOCIATION REUNION
OCTOBER 1-5, 2008
HOLIDAY INN LOUISVILLE DOWNTOWN**

Wednesday, October 1

1:00pm - 6:00pm **Reunion Registration open**
5:00pm - 10:00pm Hospitality Room open

Thursday, October 2

8:00am Board of Director's Meeting
8:30am - 9:00am **Reunion Registration open**
9:45am - 2:15pm CITY TOUR (description follows)
3:00pm - 4:00pm **Reunion Registration open.** (Additional hours will be posted at the reunion, if needed)
9:00am - 10:00pm Hospitality Room open

Friday, October 3

9:00am - 2:45pm KENTUCKY DERBY MUSEUM / LOUISVILLE SLUGGER MUSEUM
(description follows)
9:00am - 10:00pm Hospitality Room open
6:00pm Cash bar
7:00pm - 9:00pm 741st Squadron Dinner

Saturday, October 4

8:30am - 10:00am Membership Business Meeting
9:00am 5:30pm Hospitality Room open
10:00am - 11:00am Board of Director's Meeting (Incoming Board)
11:00am - 4:00pm FORT KNOX (description follows)
6:00pm Cash Bar
7:00pm - 11:00pm Banquet Dinner

Sunday, October 5

Farewells and departures

NEW FOR 2008! REGISTER ONLINE AND PAY BY CREDIT CARD!!
www.armedforcesreunions.com/455bg

CANCELLATION AND REFUND POLICY FOR ARMED FORCES REUNIONS, INC.

For attendees canceling reunion activities prior to the cut-off date, Armed Forces Reunions, Inc. (AFR) shall process a full refund less the non-refundable AFR registration fee (\$7 per person). Attendees canceling reunion activities after the cut-off date will be refunded to the fullest extent that AFR's vendor commitments and guarantees will allow, less the non-refundable AFR registration fee. Cancellations will only be taken **Monday through Friday from 9:00am until 5:00pm Eastern Standard Time, excluding holidays.** Please call (757) 625-6401 to cancel reunion activities and obtain a cancellation code. Refunds processed 4-6 weeks after reunion. Reunion registration and hotel reservations are separate, and each must be cancelled separately.

455th BOMB GROUP ASSOCIATION REUNION TOUR DESCRIPTIONS

CITY TOUR / LUNCH CRUISE

Louisville's Main Street has the second largest collection of cast-iron storefront facades; only New York City has more. Enjoy the morning with a scenic driving tour of Louisville. See the Humana Building, the Kentucky Art and Craft Gallery, and the Fall's Fountain. View the historic areas of West Main Street and St. James Court as you take in the beauty of many of the nation's finest Victorian mansions. Afterwards, board the Spirit of Jefferson, a modern steamboat with two decks. Enjoy a scenic cruise up the Ohio River with a lavish luncheon buffet.

**9:45am board bus, 2:15pm back at hotel
\$55/person includes bus, guide, and lunch cruise.**

KENTUCKY DERBY MUSEUM / LOUISVILLE SLUGGER MUSEUM

Thundering Thoroughbred hooves, rolling hills of bluegrass, visit Churchill Downs, home of the Kentucky Derby. Enjoy a 360-degree multi-media show that surrounds you with the images and sounds unique to Derby Day, "the most exciting two minutes in sports." Take a tour of historic Churchill Downs (weather permitting). Weigh in on a jockey scale and test your betting skills with their computer. Then make a final stop in the Finish Line Gift Shop for Derby memorabilia and souvenirs. Next, head to Masterson's Restaurant establishment for a buffet lunch. After lunch, tour the Louisville Slugger Museum. After watching a short film, walk through the full-size dugout and onto the museum's playing field. See rare baseball equipment and memorabilia. Complete the tour with a walk through the Louisville Slugger manufacturing facility and see bats being turned for today's baseball stars and tomorrow's major leagues. Your tour includes a miniature bat.

**9:00am board bus, 2:45pm back at hotel
\$66/Person includes bus, escort, admissions, and lunch.**

FORT KNOX

Enjoy an all-you-can-eat lunch buffet at Doe Run Inn, which includes fried chicken, baked ham, roast beef, and all the trimmings. After lunch, continue on to Fort Knox and begin your self-guided tour of the Patton Museum of Cavalry and Armor, dedicated to General George S. Patton, one of the most colorful of all twentieth century military leaders. The exhibits depict the history of Fort Knox, where the Armored Force was formed in 1940, and the development of cavalry and armored weapons, equipment, and uniforms from the Revolutionary War to the present. The Patton Gallery contains many of the General's personal items, including his famous ivory-handled pistols. Outside, you will see many historically significant vehicles and equipment. Finally, take a drive through Fort Knox and drive by the famous Fort Knox Gold Depository.

**11:00am board bus, 4:00pm back at hotel
\$44/Person includes bus, guide, and lunch.**

Driver and guide gratuities are not included in the tour prices.

Please plan to be at the bus boarding area at least five minutes prior to the scheduled time.

All trips require a minimum of thirty people, unless otherwise stated.

455th BG E-mail Roster

Harry W. Anderson (740)
San Antonio, TX.
pomganny@aol.com

Carl A. Barr (743)
carlbarr@bellsouth.net

Dave Bathie (assoc. 740)
davidbathie@yahoo.com

Albert E. Beauchemin
1 Berkshire Square, Apt. 206
Adams, MA 01220

1st. Lt. Thomas A. 'Tom' Bell
840 Kimberly Ct.
Lander, WY 82520
tsalix@yahoo.com

Gene V. Benson (740)
Livingston, MT.
bens348@aol.com

Jack Blum (741)
jblum15677@aol.com

Earl Bodenhorn
Waterford, MI.
jebodenhorn@aol.com

Winfield S. Bowers, Jr. (741)
Mount Dora, FL. 32757
winbow40@aol.com

Thomas Boyd
kent_brewster@yahoo.com

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

Ormond H. Buffington
300 Rena Drive
Springville, Alabama 35146
buffington1@alltel.net

Robert Caldwell (741)
Prescott Valley, AZ.
re7306@aol.com

Calvin Casteel
calcasteel@satx.rr.com

Saul L. Cayne (742)
sasl@adelphia.net

Rod Clarke (743)
Alexandria, VA
rory@his.com

Howard Cooper (740)
howcoop@sdllifestyle.com

Robert (Bob) Collette,
dotybobms@msn.com

Albert E. Cratch
fishn928@verizon.net

Bill & Joyce Crawford
printsvs@earthlink.net <or>
Westerner01@earthlink.net

Janet & Russell Crocker
Janetcrockerfr@cs.com

Norman Crum
Son of Capt. George Crum
(742)
norman.crum@vpps.net

James P. Daly (740)
panadaly@aol.com

John Davis
davis87@peoplepc.com.

Jack Dekker (743)
Grand Rapids, MI.
jdek457@att.net

Theodore Deppe (741)
Bloomington, IN.
tdeppe@indiana.edu

John Devito (assoc.)
jmdevito@verizon.net

Paul H. Ditchett (742)
Safety Harbor, FL.
vacationstogo@yahoo.com

William Dixon (741)
carolddixon@peoplepc.com

William G. Doyle
wdoyle71824@aol.com

Bob Emick (741)
rfemick@aol.com

Sy Gaynes (743)
585 Live Oak Lane
Weston, FL. 33327
syjac@yahoo.com

William B. Gemmill (740)
wgemmill@tampabay.rr.com

William C. Graves (742)
Jacksonville, FL.
wgraves210@aol.com

Lt. Col. R. J. Haney (743)
haneyrj@comcast.net

Frances Hansen
lohansen@longlines.com

L. Harvey Hewit (743)
Haverford, PA.
Lhhew@aol.com

Richard H. Hollrock (740)
107 Heather Way
Hampden, Me 04444
annedickrock@ol.com

Frank Hosimer
fghosr@suddenlink.net.

Thomas L. Kablach (742)
kablach@sbcglobal.net

455th BG Email Roster (cont.)

Joe Kiernan (741)
16 Barbara Ln
Titusville NJ 08560
jokernan@comcast.net

Erling Kindem (742)
erlingk@aol.com

Viliam Klabnik
vkaquam@zoznam.sk

George L. Liddle (742)
oljorge@mchsi.com

John L. Larma (740)
jlarma@uswest.net

Don Martens
2738 West Point Rd.
Green Bay, WI 54304
dmartens2@new.rr.com

Frank Mastroleo
Masty419@aol.com

Dave Matheson (742)
ihatebugs@cox.net

Mike McFadden (Assoc. 743)
Son-in-Law of Austin Herrity
b24_455thbg@yahoo.com

Stephen E. Miller (742)
nanpopmil@webtv.net

James H. Moreland (743)
agjh@webtv.net

C.E. McMullen (741)
cmcmullenjr@aol.com

Vic Murray (743)
105 Foxridge Run
Longwood, FL. 32750-2703
vemurray3@earthlink.net

Robert E. Newberg (743)
2729 82nd PL #233
Urbandale, IA 50322
Newy7aces@aol.com

Charles Oltarzewski (740)
murphB24@aol.com

Christine Painter
Daughter of the late Col.
Charles W. Painter, Jr. (741)
painter1112@comcast.net

Peter Payant (743)
pbpayant@cox.net

Jack Phelps (740)
b7606@sbcglobal.net

Reid Byron Peck
9724 E. Javelina Ave.
Mesa, AZ 85209
bpeckfrommesa@webtv.net.

Roland J Pepin
327 Al Harvey Road
Stonington, CT 06378
virpep4400@aol.com

Wesley Powell (740)
wesjulia@gateway.net

Charles H. Rosenberg (741)
chrose3@comcast.net.

Sid Schoengold (740)
harsid12@aol.com

Walter Shostack (741)
boyar0711@woh.rr.com

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

Walt Shostack (741)
boyar0711@woh.rr.com

Sgt. John E. Skelton
woodshed704@netzero.net

Edward G. Spencer (740)
ebnezr@webtv.net

Jim Smith (741)
jsmith588@austin.rr.com

Charles E. Stark (740)
carbchar@comcast.net

Ted Stiner (Assoc. 742)
setgld@insightbb.com

Angelo Synodis (741)
angiesynodis@charter.net

Ted Tronoff (742)
tvtronoff@cs.com

(Dr.) Stanley Vogelfang (741)
stanvog@aol.com

John R. Worster (742).
haw72@aol.com

Craig Ward
Editor, *Cerignola Connection*
Son of Lt. J. T. Ward (740)
aphp@tx.rr.com

Carl J. Wiskirchen
m-meyer@insightbb.com

Leland L. Young (743)
Allison Park, (Pittsburgh), PA
llyoung@netzero.net

Paul A. Young (741)
pyoung04@tampabay.rr.com

**Guess Which Presidential
Candidate Uttered These
"Brilliant" Words ---**

"My friends, we live in the
greatest nation in the history of
the world. I hope you'll join with
me, as we try to **CHANGE** it."

Final Flights

John C. Agathon, Sr. (742)

passed away on July 10, 2007. His son, John C. Agathon, Jr., would like for anyone who knew his father to contact him. His contact information is:

John Agathon
8823 Creekwater Dr.
Spring, TX. 77379
281-804-8776

William T. McGahran (741)

from Hawthorne, NY took his final flight on February 13, 2008. He was a B-24 bombardier who flew out of Cerignola in 1944. He was 22 years old at the time.

One thing I remember him telling me was the awful feeling he would have at the 4:00 a.m. briefings when the target for the day was announced as the Polesti oil fields of Romania. I also recall him saying he was responsible for arming each bomb while en-route to the target, balancing on a catwalk thousands of feet in the air. Other than that, I know very little of his time in the Service. I would be interested in hearing from anyone who knew him.

Thank you,
Joe Gyscek (son-in-law)
bulldogsdad@comcast.net
845-598-2776.

William Crawford (740)

passed away on Dec. 24, 2007.

Bill and I went through cadet and overseas flight training and ended up in the 740th Squadron in Italy.

Bill's crew crash-landed in Yugoslavia in late summer,

1944. They were returned to Italy by Yugoslav partisans, except for the pilot, who had a broken leg.

Bill later checked out as first pilot, and finished the required 35 missions.

Bill and his wife Joyce lived in the Sacramento area of California. He will be interred in Arlington National Cemetery.

He was a fine gentleman, and will be missed by his family and friends.

Best regards,
Charlie Stark (740)

Lt. Robert Biro (740)

of Alpharetta, GA. passed away on October 13, 2007.

Lt. James A. Cowden (742)

85, of Tuscaloosa, Alabama, took his final flight on October 21, 2007.

During World War II, he served in the Army Air Corps as a bomber pilot flying a B-24 Liberator on 49 sorties from Italy into the Balkans and southern Europe.

On his 80th birthday, he piloted a small private plane as a birthday gift to himself. His family learned about his flight the next day, when they saw his photo and story on the front page of the local newspaper!

Merle Harkey (742)

age 84, of Flint, Michigan, died Tuesday, August 14, 2007.

Mr. Harkey was born March 3, 1923, in Mucsatine, Iowa. Merle served his country during WWII with the U.S. Army Air Corps as a radio operator and tail gunner. Merle flew 50

missions in Italy, France, Germany, Romania, Bulgaria, and Yugoslavia.

He was a member of the V.F.W., American Legion, Travelers, and was a life member of the 455 Bomb Group Association.

In 1969, Merle married Irene Venne in Rock Island, Illinois, and she survives him. Also surviving are sons, Brian, Jeff, and Robin Harkey; many grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and great great grandchildren; brothers Orville (Madeline) Harkey, Ivan (Frieda) Harkey, Gene (Laura) Harkey; sister, Irene (Addison) Crouch; many cousins, nieces, and nephews.

Mr. Harkey's final resting place will be at Great Lakes National Cemetery.

Walter I. Summerfield (743)

passed away on June 20th, 2004, after spending a really fun weekend visiting American Civil War battlefields with his daughter Julie Summerfield.

Julie attended the San Antonio reunion of the 455th BG last October.

".....today's generation absolutely pales when compared to the toughness of the World War II generation. Unfortunately, American society as a whole does not have the patience nor the tenacity of those a few generations ago."



Final Flight

Paul Tibbets, the pilot and commander of the B-29 that dropped the atomic bomb on Hiroshima, Japan, died November 1, 2007. He was 92.

Tibbets died at his Columbus, Ohio home, said Gerry Newhouse, a longtime friend. Tibbets suffered from a variety of health problems and had been in decline for two months.

Tibbets had requested no funeral and no headstone, fearing it would provide his detractors with a place to protest, Newhouse said.

Tibbets' historic mission in the plane *Enola Gay*, named for his mother, marked the beginning of the end of World War II. It was the first use of an atomic weapon in wartime.

The plane, and its crew of 14, dropped the 5-ton *Little Boy* bomb on Hiroshima on the morning of August 6, 1945. The blast killed 70,000 to 100,000 people and wounded countless

others.

Three days later, the United States dropped a second atomic bomb on Nagasaki, Japan, killing an estimated 40,000 people.

Tibbets did not fly in that mission.

The Japanese surrendered a few days later, ending the war.

"I knew when I got the assignment, it was going to be an emotional thing", Tibbets told *The Columbus Dispatch* for a story on August 6, 2005, the 60th anniversary of the bomb.

"We had feelings, but we had to put them in the background. We knew it was going to kill people right and left. But my one driving interest was to do the best job I could so that we could end the killing as quickly as possible."

Tibbets, then a 30-year-old colonel, never expressed regret over his role. It was, he said, his patriotic duty -- the right thing to do.

"I'm not proud that I

killed 80,000 people, but I'm proud that I was able to start with nothing, plan it and have it work as perfectly as it did," he said in a 1975 interview.

"You've got to take stock and assess the situation at that time. We were at war. ... You use anything at your disposal." He added: "I sleep clearly every night."

Paul Warfield Tibbets, Jr. was born February 23, 1915, in Quincy, Illinois, and spent most of his boyhood in Miami, Florida. He was a student at the University of Cincinnati medical school in Ohio when he decided to withdraw in 1937 to enlist in the Army Air Corps.

After the war, Tibbets was dogged by rumors claiming he was in prison or had committed suicide.

"They said I was crazy, said I was a drunkard, in and out of institutions," he said. "At the time, I was running the National Crisis Center at the Pentagon."

Tibbets retired from the Air Force as a Brigadier General in 1966. He later moved to Columbus, where he ran an air taxi service until he retired in 1985.

But his role in the bombing brought him fame -- and infamy -- throughout his life. In 1976, he was criticized for re-enacting the bombing during an appearance at a Harlingen, Texas, air show. As he flew a B-29 Superfortress over the show, a bomb set off on the runway below created a mushroom cloud.

He said the display "was not intended to insult anybody",

but the Japanese were outraged. The U.S. government later issued a formal apology.

Tibbets again defended the bombing in 1995, when an outcry erupted over a planned 50th anniversary exhibit of the Enola Gay at the Smithsonian Institution.

The museum had planned to mount an exhibit that would have examined the context of the bombing, including the discussion within the Truman administration of whether to use the bomb, the rejection of a demonstration bombing, and the selection of the target.

Veterans groups objected, saying the proposed display paid too much attention to Japan's suffering and too little to Japan's brutality during and before World War II, and that it under-estimated the number of Americans who would have perished in an invasion.

They said the bombing of Japan was an unmitigated blessing for the United States and the exhibit should say so.

Tibbets denounced it as "a damn big insult."

The museum changed its plan, and agreed to display the fuselage of the Enola Gay without commentary, context or analysis.

He told the *Columbus Dispatch* in 2005 that he wanted his ashes scattered over the English Channel, where he loved to fly during the war.

Life's tough ... it's even
tougher if you're stupid ...
John Wayne

Editor's Note

I had the privilege of briefly speaking to General Tibbets at an aviation convention in 2004. He graciously agreed to give me his opinion regarding the B-24.

I told him that my father (Lt. J. T. Ward, 740th) was fond of saying "The B-17 got most of the credit for defeating the Germans, but when the USAAC planned their longest, toughest missions, they sent the B-24 Liberator".

General Tibbets responded, "Your father was right. That B-24 was a damn good airplane!" He said he piloted a Liberator a few times, and was very impressed with it.

I thanked him for putting together the nuclear B-29 strike force, and for flying the first of the two missions that finally put an end to that terrible war. He was extremely humble and gracious.

I have rarely been in the company of such an historic hero, with the exception of the 455th BG veterans that I have been honored to know.

CAN YOU HELP?

Dear Editor,

Recently, I downloaded a copy of this remarkably accurate documentary of the exploits the 455th Bomb Group. These three Colonels did an excellent job putting the book together.

I did not know this book existed until I found it on the internet. I was a Radio Operator-Gunner on the Adams crew. Our photo is on page 239.

We were assigned to this group in mid-November, 1944. I was one of the lucky ones that flew 24 missions by the end of the war. I sustained no injuries, and only a couple of really exciting combat experiences.

I have been participating in the annual "*WINGS OVER HOUSTON*" air shows, from the standpoint of a "Legend". This means that I sit in the Legends tent, show my mementos, sign autographs, and tell stories. *Wings Over Houston* requires that we tell only what we know to be absolutely true.

At the airshow in October, 2007, at Houston's Ellington Field, a lady came by and told me she was Colonel Ramey's granddaughter!

Most of the World War II veterans, including me, have been negligent about telling their stories. We talk to each other, but not to the public.

I have found a renewed interest in this part of our history. I have been asked about the availability of this book.

How can a copy be obtained? Might any of your readers have an extra copy of the book that I can purchase from them?

I appreciate your help.

Best Regards,

David D. Stedman (742)
14903 Sandalfort
Houston, Texas 77095
Email: DIS848@CS.COM

Editor's Note

You can access the 455th BG history book on the internet at:
www.awardphp.com/455th_BG_History.php

OLD

The other day a young person asked me how I felt about being old. I was taken aback, for I do not think of myself as old. Upon seeing my reaction, she was immediately embarrassed, but I explained that it was an interesting question, and I would ponder it, and let her know.

Old Age, I decided, is a gift. I am now, probably for the first time in my life, the person I have always wanted to be. Oh, not my body!

I sometime despair over my body, the wrinkles, the baggy eyes, and the sagging butt. And often I am taken aback by that old person that lives in my mirror (who looks like my mother!), but I don't agonize over those things for long.

I would never trade my amazing friends, my wonderful life, my loving family for less gray hair or a flatter belly. As I've aged, I've become more kind to myself, and less critical of myself.

I've become my own friend. I don't chide myself for eating that extra cookie, or for not making my bed, or for buying that silly cement gecko that I didn't need, but looks so avant-garde on my patio.

I am entitled to a treat, to be messy, to be extravagant.

I have seen too many dear friends leave this world too soon; before they understood the great freedom that comes with aging.

Whose business is it if I choose to read or play on the

computer until 4:00 AM and sleep until noon? I will dance with myself to those wonderful tunes of the 40's and 50's, and if I, at the same time, wish to weep over a lost love, I will.

I will walk the beach in a swim suit that is stretched over a bulging body, and will dive into the waves with abandon if I choose to, despite the pitying glances from the jet set. They, too, will get old.

I know I am sometimes forgetful. But there again, some of life is just as well forgotten. And I eventually remember the important things.

Sure, over the years my heart has been broken. How can your heart not break when you lose a loved one, or when a child suffers, or even when somebody's beloved pet gets hit by a car?

But broken hearts are what give us strength and understanding and compassion. A heart never broken is pristine and sterile, but will never know the joy of being imperfect.

I am so blessed to have lived long enough to have my hair turning gray, and to have my youthful laughs be forever etched into deep grooves on my face.

So many have never laughed, and so many have died before their hair could turn silver.

As you get older, it is easier to be positive. You care less about what other people think.

I don't question myself anymore. I've even earned the right to be wrong.

So, to answer your question, I like being old. It has set me free. I like the person I have become. I am not going to live forever, but while I am still here, I will not waste time lamenting what could have been, or worrying about what will be.

And I shall eat dessert every single day, if I feel like it.

Military Humor

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

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

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

"Yours is."

An Editorial Comment from your Newsletter Editor

Our military leaders have had to show the patience of Job as they have struggled on, in Iraq & Afghanistan, despite all the poop, politics, and polls.

They will lead us to victory, if only our politicians will allow them to proceed.

Can You Help? Responses

Hello Karl,

I saw your "Can You Help?" question in the Fall, 2007 newsletter, and I think I may have some information. My dad was also with the 742nd, and researching the group has become a hobby of mine.

I've included a photo of your father and his crew. This photo below was in the archives at the Air Force Historical Research Agency (AFHRA) at Maxwell AFB, Alabama.



Back row, left to right: S/Sgt Leonard B. Skotleski, S/Sgt Emil R. Sagagese, T/Sgt Robert I. Gibbs, T/Sgt Donald W. Johnson, and S/Sgt Henry T. Holler Jr.

Front row, left to right: 1st Lt **James E. Counsilman**, 1st Lt Raymond L. Pittman, 2nd Lt William H. Casey Jr., and S/Sgt Louis F. Mortillaro.

Is this him? I'm not sure if the aircraft is *Miss-I-Hope*. I'm sure you've seen the photos at Dan Stockton's site, but just in case, here's the web address:

http://www.b24bestweb.com/Pics-M-MISS_IA-MISS_IZ.htm

I'll check to see if I have anything on the 25 April, 1945 mission (or anything else for that matter).

Regards,
Dave Ungemach
Warner Robins, GA

Hello Dan,

I found information about a B-24 pilot named **James E. Counsilman**. He transferred into the 455th BG from the 47th Wing, from the 376th BG, in April of 1945. He was later awarded a DFC when he landed his shot-up B-24 at Zara, Yugoslavia (although I found the incident in the group microfilm, there was no information on the particular aircraft).

It turns out that he was a top caliber swimming coach, with 21 out of 24 gold medals going to his swimmers in the 1964 and 1976 Olympics (the only name I recognized was Mark Spitz).

He also authored several books on swimming, and swam the English Channel in 1979 at the age of 58 - the oldest at the time.

I'm not sure if this fits the criteria, but I thought I'd pass it on to you. There's quite a bit of information about him on the Web. When I Googled "James Counsilman", I got over 20,000 hits.

Regards,
Dave Ungemach
Warner Robins, GA

Dear Editor,

I've managed to collect a tremendous amount of information on the 455th BG over the past few years, and I've slowly been indexing it all. Tons of photographs, history reports, mission diaries, etc.

I also have all of the MACRs, as well as most of the aircraft accident reports. Dan Stockton and the experts on the B24BestWeb site have been assisting me in aircraft identification, so I've got a pretty decent listing of 455th aircraft. Someday, I will get it on a Web site. Don't hesitate to contact me with questions.

Regards,
Dave Ungemach
Warner Robins, GA.

Editor's Note:
THANKS, DAVE, FOR YOUR GREAT RESEARCH WORK!

Can You Help? Responses

Hi, Artie,

I've attached one of the photos with some of your cousin's crew from the MACR (photo at right).

It's pure speculation, but I bet your cousin flew on this plane (*Glammer Gal*), or was at least familiar with it as a squadron aircraft (crews often flew different aircraft due to down time for scheduled maintenance, battle damage repair, etc.).

Regards,
Dave Ungemach
Warner Robins, GA



Back row left to right: Captain William C. Riddel; 1st Lt Henry C. Dunekack; 2nd Lt William R. Hctor; 2nd Lt Harold T. Bridgman Jr.; and 1st Lt Joseph A. Weiger Jr.

Front Row left to right: Sgt Sam D. Lasser; Sgt David C. Guidroz; Sgt Stephan F. Collins; S/Sgt John R. Calvanese; Sgt Charles B. Bingham; and S/Sgt Beverly L. Seaman.



Artie,

Lucky Babe is another aircraft that your cousin may have known.

Lucky Babe (left photo)

Back row, left to right: S/Sgt. William M. Rhodes; T/Sgt. Emmett D. Hemphill; 2nd Lt. William R. Hiatt; 1st Lt. Robert S. Hespeller; 2nd Lt. William G. Bunt, Jr.

Front row, left to right: 2nd Lt. Paul Platt; T/Sgt Francis A. Wilson; S/Sgt. David Yee; S/Sgt. William T. Spotts; S/Sgt. Harold L. Viken

Lucky Babe (right photo)

Back row left to right: S/Sgt William M. Rhodes; S/Sgt William T. Spotts; 2nd Lt William R. Hiatt; 1st Lt Harley M. Watt; and S/Sgt Harold L. Viken.

Front row left to right: S/Sgt Willis C. Stephenson; T/Sgt Francis A. Wilson; 2nd Lt William G. Bunt Jr.; and T/Sgt Emmett D. Hemphill.

I Wanna Be a Fighter Pilot

Dear Sir:

I am D.J. Baker, and I would appreciate it if you could tell me what it takes to be a fighter pilot in the USAF. What classes should I take in high school to help the career I want to take later in life? How do I get into the Air Force Academy?

Sincerely, D.J. Baker

A worldly and jaded C-130 pilot, (who wasn't able to become a fighter pilot), Major Hunter Mills, rose to the task of answering the young man's letter.

Dear D.J.,

Obviously, through no fault of your own, your young, impressionable brain has been poisoned by the superfluous, hyped-up, "Top Gun" media portrayal of fighter pilots.

Unfortunately, this portrayal could not be further from the truth. In my experience, I've found most fighter pilots pompous, backstabbing, momma's boys with inferiority complexes, as well as being extremely over-rated aeronautically.

However, rather than dash your budding dreams of becoming a USAF pilot, I offer the following alternative:

What you really want to aspire to is the exciting, challenging and rewarding world of TACTICAL AIRLIFT. And this, young D.J., means one thing -- the venerable workhorse, the C-130!

I can guarantee no fighter pilot can brag that he has led a 12-ship formation down a valley at 300 feet above the ground, with the navigator leading the way and trying to interpret an

alternate route to the drop zone, avoiding pop-up threats, and coordinating with AWACS, all while eating a box lunch with the engineer in the back relieving himself and the loadmaster puking in his trash can!

I tell you, D.J., TAC Airlift is where it's at! Where else is it legal to throw tanks, HUMVs, and other crap out the back of an airplane, and not even worry about it when the chute doesn't open and it torpedoes the General's staff car!

Nowhere else can you land on a 3000 foot dirt strip, kick a bunch of ammo and stuff out on the ramp without stopping, then takeoff again before range control can call to tell you that you've landed on the wrong LZ!

And talk about exotic travel -- when C-130s go somewhere, they **GO** somewhere (usually for 3 months, unfortunately). This gives you the opportunity to immerse yourself in the local culture long enough to give the locals a bad taste in their mouths regarding the USAF and Americans in general, not something those C-141 Stratolift pilots can do from their airport hotel rooms!

As far as recommendations for your course of study, I offer these:

1. Take a lot of math courses. You'll need all the advanced math skills you can muster to enable you to calculate per diem rates around the world, and when trying to split up the crew's bar tab so that the co-pilot really believes he owes 85% of the

whole thing and the navigator believes he owes the other 20%.

2. Health sciences are important, too. You will need a thorough knowledge of biology to make those educated guesses of how much longer you can drink beer before the tremendous case of the G.I.s catches up to you from that meal you ate at the place that had the really good belly dancers in some God-forsaken foreign country whose name you can't even pronounce.

3. Social studies are also beneficial. It is important for a good TAC Airlifter to have the cultural knowledge to be able to ascertain the exact location of the nearest topless bar in any country in the world, then be able to convince the local authorities to release the loadmaster after he offends every sensibility of the local religion and culture.

4. A study of geography is paramount. You will need to know the basic location of all the places you've been when you get back from your TDY and are ready to stick those little pins in that huge world map you've got taped to your living room wall, right next to the giant wooden giraffe statue and beer stein collection.

By the way, D.J., forget about the Academy thing. All TAC Airlifters know that there are *waaay* too few women and too little alcohol there to provide a well-balanced education. A nice, big state college, or the Naval Academy, would be a much better choice.

Hunter Mills, Major USAF

Message from 455th BG Association Executive Director Greg Riggs

I am looking forward to the reunion in Louisville, our first annual reunion. Attendance at this reunion may influence our efforts to continue annual reunions, or to return to bi-annual reunions as in the past, so please plan to be there.

The mailing list for the Association has been reduced in accordance with the Board of Directors' decision at the last reunion. All annual members who have not paid their dues since 2005 or earlier have been placed in inactive status. I went ahead and left those who have not paid since 2006 on the list for one more newsletter (this one) in the hopes they will join us in Louisville and renew their active status in the Association.

If you show a "06" above your name on the mailing label, I'm afraid this will be your last newsletter unless we receive dues payment. I recommend buying a life membership for only \$60 to avoid the problem of forgetting to pay annual dues.

On a completely different topic, the sale of 455th Bomb Group Association mugs has gone well. Amazingly, we have received an additional order of mugs at no cost to the Association because the company that provided them was not satisfied with the color of the camouflaged bomber. As a result, I can now offer the mugs for only \$8. That allows me to pay for postage and still have three or four dollars to apply towards miscellaneous Association expenses.

Back to the reunion: the tours have been selected this year with different criteria in mind. Interest is always the primary consideration. This year I factored in two more criteria. I was looking for tours that did not involve vast amounts of walking, or which allowed individuals to move at their own pace. For example, in a museum, you can stay with the tour guide or move more slowly, rest more frequently, and perhaps see less of the museum, but see it more comfortably.

The second additional criterion was tours that did not require frequent embarking into and disembarking from the bus. It seems to me those bus steps get steeper every year, and we do not need to be going up and down them numerous times on each tour. I will be very interested in getting your feedback on whether or not these were helpful ideas, and whether or not we were actually successful in implementing them.

Regardless of whether or not you take all of the tours, some of the tours, or none of the tours, please join us in Louisville. Come for the whole thing or come only for the Saturday dinner, or come for anything in between. Join us in the downtown Holiday Inn, or find more economical arrangements.

The main thing is that we want to greet longtime friends and meet new ones, and that can be done in the no-cost hospitality room, open almost all day, every day. Come join us!

Best Regards,

Greg Riggs

Executive Director, 455th Bomb Group Association, Inc.

**455th Bomb Group Assoc., Inc.
P.O. Box 93095
Austin, TX 78709-3095**

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