



CERIGNOLA CONNECTION

455th Bomb Group Association Newsletter

Summer 1992

455th Reunion Time is Just Around the Corner

1993 will be upon us sooner than you think. In less than 18 months we'll be reliving WWII, telling war stories again. Two site suggestions have been made so far: Wright Patterson, Dayton, Ohio and Langley Field. Langley was where our group got together - began to function as a group - where we finally had enough personnel to accomplish training and prepare for combat. There are lots of historical sites in the Norfolk area, Williamsburg and Yorktown to name a few, and many fine beaches, inviting at that time. Wright Patterson/Dayton offers the Air Force Museum, an unbelievable experience if you haven't been there. Your president, Hugh Graff would like your site suggestions, too. Just drop him a line at: 12515 Sheldon Rd., Mantua, Ohio, 44255.

Ladies - Front and Center

The 455th Bomb Group Association wants to make the 1993 reunion the best ever, not only for the guys, but the ladies, too. In order to provide an activity program that you'll enjoy and remember for time to come, we'll need your suggestions. Just drop a line to Hugh Graff and tell him what you would like to see and do at the reunion.

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Speaking of Dues

Dues for 1992 were due November 1, 1991. If you haven't already done so, get your check for annual dues \$15, to Louis Hansen, PO Box 6125, Spencer, Iowa 51301. Many are receiving the Cerignola Connection who are not regular dues paying members - join today! It's well worth the \$15.

Final Flight

Major General Fay R. Upthegrove, U.S. Air Force Retired, died at the age of 86 in Bradford, PA. He commanded the 304th Bomb Wing, 15th Air Force in Italy. The 455th Bomb Group was under General Upthegrove's command.

General Upthegrove was born Jan. 28, 1905 in Port Allegany. In 1930 he married Marcella Driscoll who died in 1970. In 1974 he married J. Elizabeth "Betty" Staley, who survives.

General Upthegrove graduated from Bradford High School in 1923. In June 1927 he graduated from the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, where he was appointed second lieutenant of infantry.

He won his wings in San Antonio, Texas, in 1928. His service career spanned three decades and much of the globe, with duty assignments from the Far East to the North African and European Theaters of operation during World War II.

In April 1942, he was appointed commander of the 99th Bombardment Group and in February 1943, he took the group to North Africa. During this period, he flew more than 340 hours in the B17 Flying Fortress, participating in 58 combat missions over North Africa, Italy and Southern Europe.

He was chosen to command the lead plane in the first Army/Air Force Hundred Bomber Attack on enemy territory, and he led his bombing wing in the first bombing of Rome.

A year later, he became commanding general of the 304th Bombing Wing of the 15th Air Force in Italy. Assignments after World War II included command of Chanute Air Force Base, II, in May 1946; commanding general of the U.S. Air Force in Europe at Wiesbaden, Germany; deputy commander of the Second Air Force of Barksdale, LA; commander Fourth Air Division in October 1952; commander of the 20th Air Force Okinawa in march 1955; and commander of the 313th Air Division in March 1955.

On March 1, 1955, he assumed command of the Keesler Technical Training Center in Biloxi, MS, a position from which he retired after a 30-year career on July 27, 1957.

Among Gen Upthegrove's numerous awards and decorations are the Distinguished Service Medal; the Silver Star; the Distinguished Flying Cross with one oak leaf cluster; and the Air Medal with 10 oak leaf clusters.

He was a rated command pilot, command observer, and senior aircraft observer.



Major General Fay R. Upthegrove

Surviving in addition to his wife are two daughters, Mary Jane Scott of Xenia, OH, and Sue Kinch of Gales Ferry, CT; eight grandchildren; three great-grandchildren. He was preceded in death by a sister and a brother.

General Upthegrove will be sorely missed by his associates and friends in the 455th Bomb Group.

Final Flight

James W. Peterson died February 24, 1992. He served in the European theater during World War II in the 455th Bomb Group and was held prisoner of war in Luft 64, Stalags XIII-D and VII-A. He was a member of the Central Florida Chapter of AXPOW. He leaves a daughter and three grandchildren.

Ed: from the American Ex-Prisoners of War publication.

Smitty's Crew 13

Wayne Smith, nicknamed "Smitty," was our pilot in the 740th Squadron. He was the smallest pilot in our squadron, if not the Group. I doubt he weighed more than 130 pounds with a rock in each hand, but he could certainly fly that B-24. I always thought that the Air Corps put small guys in fighters, but not Smitty. There he was with an extra back cushion and backpack chute, manhandling our love and joy, "ole 239." He had us well-trained and disciplined for combat as evidenced by the fact that our Squadron Commander and Operations Officer used to use us on several occasions to fly in the lead ship when our squadron led the Group. I have stayed in contact with Smitty and we both recall one mission where we were not certain we would return.

On May 24, 1944, the Group sent 36 B-24s loaded with fragmentation bombs to destroy the Munchendorf Airdrome in Austria. The flak in that part of the war zone was always heavy, intense and accurate and we could always expect fighter opposition. This day was no exception as we lost two B-24s to flak over the target. I wrote Smitty my recollection of flying the mission and he filled in the missing pieces in a return letter as follows:

"Larry, I was delighted that you remember our Muchendorf mission. It was either forgotten by our historians or maybe we didn't make enough noise about it when we landed. Your remembrances are quite accurate but maybe I can add a little to it from my point of view as the first pilot that day. Our copilot was a pilot from another crew who was showing signs of combat fatigue. He was assigned to us that day as copilot because we had



Top row, left to right: Co-pilot Grif Griffen, Navigator Alex Draghi, Pilot Wayne Smith, Bombardier James Clowery. Bottom row, left to right, Radio Operator Lazarus L. Wolk, Ball Turret John A. Good, Tail Gunner Cloyd Carringer, Waist Gunner William Conlin, Armorer Gunner Ruben Nyquist, Engineer Rol L. Cassidy.

a very stable crew and had been fortunate in our abilities to handle the rigors of combat flying. Hopefully, this flight would help him stabilize and continue flying combat. I was a flight leader that day. The flight to the target was routine, except that there were clouds below us. Nevertheless, the Group made its bomb run.

Just after bomb release and still over the target area, we received a flak burst directly under our open bomb bay doors. The burst blew the bomb bay doors off their tracks and we could not close them. The burst also punctured our fuel tanks, causing serious fuel gushing out until the self-sealing properties of the tanks plugged the holes. The burst also knocked out our #2 engine and cut the throttle linkage to #1, which left us with only

65% power on that engine and the left side of the aircraft. In addition, a piece of flak came into the cockpit and hit the instrument panel, knocking out most of the instruments. Our left wing man later told me that when he saw the burst, he thought we received a direct hit. His crew couldn't believe it when they saw us coming out of the flak smoke with only #2 engine feathered. By this time, our copilot was losing control of himself and becoming a problem. Larry, after you radioed the bombs away report, I recall calling Jim Clowery, our bombardier, to the flight deck and the two of you got the copilot out of his seat and calmed him down a little. Clowery acted as copilot for the remainder of the flight.

continued on page 9

At approximately 4:00 a.m. on the 21st April, 1944, I was awakened by an aid to the Operations Officer for the 740th Squadron. "Butler you are slated to go on today's bombing mission with Lt. Willie W. Moore and replace Lt. Richard Ennis." "But of course" I sleepily replied. Lt. Ennis was assigned back to his original crew the next day.

This will be my first combat mission and must go with an experienced crew, then I can return to my original crew for further bombing missions. All new combat crews must be assigned to experienced crews before assembling with their original crew. That was the criteria of the 15th Air Force, 304th Bomb Wing, 455 Bomb Group and finally my outfit, the 740th Bomb Squadron.

We were stationed near the town of Cerignola, Italy. Our landing field's name was San Giovanni (an ex-monastery). It had twin landing strips. Ours, the 455 Bomb Group and the other strip was home for the 454th Bomb Group.

We were briefed by an intelligence officer from Group Headquarters. "Gentlemen, you are to bomb the Bucharest, Rumania railroad marshaling yards. It will be a ten-hour double mission. You will hit the yards from the SW and depart the target to the SE. By this route, you will miss fifty percent of the German 88mm anti-aircraft batteries stationed to the north of Bucharest and nearby Ploesti oil fields."

At 6:00 a.m. the 304th Bomb Wing commanded by Brigadier General F.R. Upthegrove and 21 Squadrons, 198 B-24's were on the way to the "Wild Blue Yonder" and the Bucharest marshaling yards.

A B-24 (Liberator) is sometimes called a "flying prostitute" as it has no

No Visible Means of Support

by Raymond C. Butler

visible means of support, with small wings for the size of the plane. I still prefer the 24 over the 17 (Fortress) as it could fly higher and faster. The B-17s "Fly Fortresses" of the 5th Wing, commanded by Brigadier General C. W. Lawrence, were dispatched to bomb the Ploesti yards and/or the oil fields.

Weather east of the Adriatic was then reported to be very poor, and higher command, Major General N. F. Twining of the 15th Air Force, ordered our two wings not to complete the missions and return to their respective fields. The 5th Wing received the message and aborted as instructed. The 304th Wing did not receive the signal and on we went.

Our long range P-51 Mustang fighter, escort of the 31st Fighter Group, received the signal and returned to Italy. The other P-51's

attached to the 5th Wing did not receive the signal and were 100 miles north of us. These facts we did not know, but found out much later.

While the 31st Fighter Escorts were scrapping with the German fighters north of us, and out of sight, Messerschmitt 109's and Folk-Wulf 190's were lining up on our plane at 4:30 and level. Before they started the run on us, I counted twenty-five German fighters. One at a time, they made their passes, firing 20mms, then peeling down into a split S. Two very brave Luftwaffe fighters dove into our squadron and shot at us head-on. I could see the 20mm tracers curve like a fast baseball pitch. They made two passes head-on. On the second pass, one of our gunners nailed him. They didn't try that again. In the meantime, the enemy fighters continued to spray us with cannon fire. Our gunners were busy as "hell" shooting back. Our crew shot down three more and a probable fifth. Not bad, five out of twenty-five. We were in the "Purple Heart" corner, which is the last place at the end of the Wing. We were not "Lucky Louies."

Our number four engine was on fire which we put out with the CO2 bottle in the engine compartment. Our wings and fuselage had many holes and rips. We were losing power. As we reached the I.P. (initial point) to start our bomb run on the marshaling yards, a 20mm entered our cockpit at my right shoulder, tearing my flight suit, cutting my thumb and exploded, wiping out our instrument panels. I also was hit in the left knee with some shrapnel. Still, we kept flying, but much slower. Soon after I was wounded, a 20mm blasted the bubble right in the face of our Engineer operating the top turret in our com-

continued on page 15



From Al Dahlstrom

As a former M/Sgt., Communications Chief, M.O. 542 at Cerignola and as a new member of the 455th Bomb Group Assn. I received my first copy of the newsletter today. Makes for very interesting reading. Having noted that photos are welcomed, here's my contribution.

The 740th Squadron, communication section, headed up by Capt. Norman B. Updike, all newly arrived at Cerignola, December, 1943. Except for the airstrip, bare fields and a couple of ancient stone barns and sheds greeted us. The tent in the background and many more like it became our home and work place for the next two years. I'm the guy in the doorway under the sign reading "740th Communications."

It was our job to maintain all radio and telecommunication equipment. I wish I could remember the names of each one but it has been nearly 50 years...My best wishes to all of them.

The 455th Bomb Group Association Has Roots!

The roots of the 455th bomb Group Association go all the way back to Langley Field. Tom Lyle Mitchel, Intelligence Officer for the 743rd Squadron put together the Vulgar Vulture Association, issued membership cards, Walt Disney designed our emblem, and we were off and running!

When WWII ended, Tom started a newsletter in an attempt to hold former members of the 455th together. This was mimeographed in letter form and as time passed, Tom had put together quite a list of interested and former members of the 455th.

He also spearheaded three reunions - St. Louis, Chicago and Milwaukee. After the Milwaukee reunion it was difficult to get everyone together again - everyone was busy attending school, setting up in business or practice, rearing families, or doing their own thing.

Of interest, I am extracting excerpts on a random basis, from Tom's newsletters, covering the period of 26 July 1947 through December 15, 1950.

Excerpts from July 26, 1947 Newsletter

Ex-Navigator Dave Woodlock is in advertising and adventuring into fatherhood! Lt. Col Bill Keefer sees the "Rock" when his duties take him out California way from the Office of Deputy Commander, Hqs., AAF, Washington.

Leroy Crum says that Freeman May is at Barksdale with the ARC. Gen. Upthegrove is CG at Chanute. Col. Robnette, A-4 Tech Division, Scott Fld. Al Coons says that Marty Heade is with NBC Television. Paul Livingston is in Law School. Bob Lanneye is in the Recruiting Service at Green Bay, WI. Jim Clowrey and Constantino are at Ohio State.

S/Sgt Catt is crewing AT 6's and is an Engineer on a B-25, at Keesler. Buckley flew in to visit him. Capt. Jack Prather is with AAF HQS, Atlantic Division, ATC, Fort Totten, Long Island, NY, married, two youngsters. Jim Gould is 2nd Lt. in a N.G. Inf. Co. at Brunswick GA. Bill Zane is a membership counselor and insurance salesman for AAA in Jackson,

AIR FORCE TROPHY HONORS WITTMAN

Former 741st Squadron 455th Bomb Group Pilot

A trophy honoring the late Captain William Wittman has been presented to the most outstanding B-52 crew of the 72nd Bomber Sqdn, 4134 Strategic Wing, Mather Air Force Base, CA, according to his widow.

Mrs. Wittman, of 14 S. B St., Lake Worth, said the trophy, to be retained by the squadron will be named the Capt. Wittman trophy in honor of her husband who was a member of the squadron until his death in July, 1960.

A command pilot of a B-52 Stratobomber, Capt. Wittman served in two theaters of World War II. He was recalled to active duty during the Korean Conflict with the 349th Troop Carrier Group, Miami.

He received the Air Medal with five oak leaf clusters; the Good Conduct Medal; American Defense Service Medal; Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal with two bronze service stars; the European-African-Middle Eastern Campaign Medal with four bronze stars; World War II Victory Medal, Armed Forces Reserve Medal, National Defense Service Medal; Distinguished Unit Citation Emblem



with three oak leaf clusters and the Air Force Longevity Service Award Ribbon with three oak leaf clusters.

Bill Wittman Died Young

Bill Wittman died young, but he packed a lot of work and devotion to the military service in the 19 years he served in the U.S. Air Force. By the way, he had earned his Majority rating just before he died.

Bill enlisted in the Army Air Corps at 18, wishing to fly, but soon learned he was too young to enter Flight School.

Shortly after the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor, his outfit, the 49th Fighter Group, pulled out of West Palm Beach and headed for San Francisco by train, enroute to Australia and Port Moresby, New Guinea. After a year there he was flown back

to the states to enter flight school at San Antonio, Texas. He graduated 8 months later at Lubbock, Texas and then on to Clovis New Mexico where he became a member of 741st. Bombardment Sqdn, 455th Bomb Group. He was one of the original first pilots, his crew flew their plane to Italy and they flew 50 combat sorties over enemy territory without an abort. Bill was a member of Louie Nangeroni crew.

Bill got out of the service in July 1945 and became a student at the University of Florida, working toward a degree in Civil Engineering.

He was recalled to active duty

March 1, 1951 with the 76th Troop Carrier Sqdn., 435th Troop Carrier Wing located in Miami, Florida, during the Korean conflict.

Bill had a distinguished career in the Air Force, serving much of the time in the Installation Engineering Sqdn. in this country and overseas, but flying various planes too.

In June, 1957, Bill volunteered for the B-52 Stratobomber training and served in that capacity until his death at 37.

Louis Hanson found me through the B-24 "The All American" in July, 1990. The All American had come to Fort

continued on page 9

BITS AND PIECES

T/Sgt. Bernard (Mac) McRoberts Writes:

From the Sortie dated Spring, 1992: What ever became of Balls O'Fire? I think that plane crash landed in January or February, 1945. The ball gunner from Dreher's crew was flying in it. I remember him getting back to the tent early in the morning. It was his second mission and he had been in a plane that crash landed on his first mission. He was S/Sgt Wayne Amdor. As he walked in the door he said, "Son of a bitch! I am going to sign a separate peace." I think he was 17 years old then.

Balls of Fire Still Burning!

Did you see "60 Minutes" on TV which had the interview of General Powell? He said he was inspired by the men of the 99th Squadron. A picture was shown with some of those men posed by "The Balls of Fire." It was the plane my crew flew in. (from Dick Skagenberg)

From the EAA Aviation Foundation

Thanks for presenting a copy of the history of the "455th Bomb Group (H)". We are pleased to place this in the Boeing Aeronautical Library so that EAA members and aviation enthusiasts can enjoy it. (from Tom Poberezny, President)

Ned Bowers, Pilot B-24 All American

I hope you know that there are no bounds for my efforts on behalf of the sensational achievements of flight crews who served in World War II. I've read cover to cover the history of the 455th in combination with many books covering the history of WWII. My admiration and respect to all of you is endless. My generation may take for granted your leadership. But as I am privy to just what you did accomplish and the odds in which you achieved success, future generations will discover the same. As always, I cannot say thanks enough. As always, I look forward to many years of being the 455th's biggest fan.

Consolidated B-24D Liberator - Wright Field Museum, Dayton, Ohio

The B-24 was employed in operations in every combat theater during the war. Because of its great range, it was particularly suited for such missions as the famous raid from North Africa against the oil industry at Ploesti, Rumania on August 1, 1943. This feature also made the airplane suitable for long over-water missions in the Pacific Theater. More than 18,000 Liberators were produced.

The B-24D on exhibit flew combat missions from North Africa in 1943-44 with the 512th Bomb Squadron. It was flown to the Air Force Museum in May, 1959. It is the same type airplane as the "Lady Be Good," the world-famous B-24D which

disappeared on a mission from North Africa in April 1943 and which was found in the Libyan Desert in May 1959.

SPECIFICATIONS

Span: 110'0", length, 66'4"; height, 17'11"
Weight: 56,000 lbs. loaded
Armament: Ten .50-cal. machine guns, 8,000 lbs of bombs
Engines: Four Pratt & Whitney R1830s of 1,200 hp. each
Cost: \$336,000

PERFORMANCE

Maximum speed: 303 mph
Cruising speed: 175 mph.
Range: 3,200 miles
Service ceiling: 28,000 ft.

Three Words

In the all-important world of family relations, three words are almost as powerful as the famous "I love you." They are "Maybe you're right."

Ode to All 455th Golfers

May your drives be true and you putts be few
And your irons be sound when the chips are down.
May your anger give way to the beautiful day,
And the friendship of partners in play.
May the air be filled with the sound of birds,
Instead of the words we all have heard
May your humility match your ability,
And lead you to clubhouse tranquility.
May your days be merry and bright,
And all you handicaps be right.



Lecture Hall Lounge, 743 Squadron. (foto courtesy Frank Pappalardo)



Lt. Col David Thayer, 743 Squadron Commander, Capt. Tony Mitchell and Lt. Harrington interview crew returning from enemy territory, 1944. (foto courtesy Frank Pappalardo)



"The first time I saw flak, my hair turned white!"



743rd Squadron S2 - Front row, L to R: Sgt. Perry, Cpl. Pappalardo. Back row, L to R: S/Sgt McDermott, Lt. Harrington, Capt Mitchell (foto courtesy Frank Pappalardo)



"The Uninvited" drops bombs beyond the Brenner Pass. (foto courtesy Robert Tank, 740 Squadron)



WOOPS!

After leaving the target, we were so under-powered that we could not keep up with the formation. It was about this time we found a fuel leak. Bill Conlin and Cassidy went into the open bomb bay to try to staunch the flow of the precious fuel. As Bill Conlin recalled, the only thing they had to slow down the gushing fuel was a tourniquet from the first aid kit. It probably didn't completely stop the leak but it certainly slowed it down, which gave us enough fuel to get home.

Being alone over enemy territory with several hundred miles to go in a crippled B-24 wasn't my idea of a Sunday drive, but Crew 13 took it in stride in spite of the obstacles. Navigator Alex Draghi did a great job. We had no visual references to the ground since we were between cloud layers and he brought us home on the nose.

Larry, your recollection of gushing fuel is accurate; we were on final approach and the gear would not come down. I tried a pull up and a go around and the sudden change of attitude when I brought the nose up, cause the fuel in the tanks to rush back and burst the plugs out. Roy Cassidy told me there were two holes about the size of a baseball bat that the fuel was gushing out from. During the 360 degree turn you and Cassidy cranked down the gear. I couldn't gain altitude and you guys were watching the trees scoot by, just a few feet below. It was too dangerous to fire flares, indicating our emergency to the field because of the gas fumes, nor could we land wheels up because the whole aft section of the aircraft was saturated with 100 octane fuel. Sparks from the wheels up landing would have certainly caused a fire and

ultimate explosion. We were too low for anyone to bail out. We landed and came to a stop just short of a drop-off at the end of the runway.

Larry, I was never so proud of anyone as I was of the crew. Everyone did his job and was strictly professional; there was no sign of panic by our crew and we were all willing to take any risk to bring the ship back. Such acts of duty and heroism of your going through those flapping bomb-bay doors being saturated with hi-octain fuel, barely 200 feet off the ground, to get in back to help stop the ship by dragging the tail, is just one example of great deeds accomplished by nine ordinary guys who made up Crew #13.

Yes, I got the D.F.C. but each and every member of the crew deserved it. I also recall John Good was trapped in the ball turret for some time until Bill Conlin, Ruben Nyquist and Glen Car-ringer got him out. I also remember that no one took the offer to bail out and we all elected to try to bring "Ole 239" back, but our hopes were in vain because she was scrapped after we got her down. I recall Mac McNealy our crew chief, telling me he counted 110 holes in the nose and flight deck alone; he didn't have time to count the bomb bay, wings and tail section.

I was an important mission in spite of the poor target damage due to the bad weather. It was quite possible though, that without the bad weather we never would have made it home along. We would have been sitting ducks for Herman Goering's Flying Circus yellow-nosed ME-109s.

(This article was submitted by Lazarus Larry Olk, now living at 6264 Spring Meadow Lane, Highland CA, 92346)

Attention: **741st Personnel Message** **from Horace Lanford**

Volume I and II of the 741st history will be disassembled thirty days after you receive this issue of the "Cerignola Connection" and all pictures returned to their owners. If there is anyone who wants a copy of Volumes I and II, please notify Gene Hudson or Horace Lanford within this 30 day period... together with a check or money order for \$62.50 (\$50 for reproduction costs and \$12.50 for postage). It is planned to complete Volume III, devoted to replacement crews, this calendar year. Anyone with pictures or experiences to submit are invited to do so immediately. We need replacement crew pictures and rosters.

Thanks, best personal regards.

Horace.

Wittman - *continued from page 6*

Lauderdale for a visit the year before and of course I had to visit it and signed the foster and this is how they contacted me and invited me to become an associate member.

My husband Joe and I were at the reunion in Colorado Springs in October. It was good to see again Bill's crew members and to meet other people.

Theresa M. McLaughlin

P.S. By the way, I enjoy reading the Cerignola Connection very much. It is good to be back home with the people Bill and I knew, seemingly a few short years ago.

From a Kriegie's Notebook!

Kriegie is the slang translation of the German word meaning prisoner. 179 members of the 455th Bomb Group were taken prisoners of war as a result of enemy action. They brought back with them many memories. Some of suffering and hardship. But some on the lighter side. We like to remember the lighter side.

Kriegie contributions to the Cerignola Connection for this continuing series will be most welcome. If you have a favorite incident or story about having been a prisoner of war, let us know. Original material will be returned. Send to Editor, Cerignola Connection, 1211 Montclair Ct., Appleton, WI 54915.

There Was No Temple

There was no temple for our Lord
When we were banished to this place
Of soldier-exile, Yet we saw
Within the barbs His lonely face.

So we save up the precious wood
Of crafts and scraps of tin,
And built on sands of solitude
A House where God might enter in.

And weathy men on golden hills,
And men despoiled by luxury's kiss
Have never a temple for their lord
As beautiful and true as this.

God loves the wealth of barren spots,
And we are none the less His own
Because when Jesus enters in
We seat Him on a humble throne.

For He, impatient when His ear
Has caught the plea of princely sin,
Whispers: "Wait! While first I hear
The honest prayer of lonely men!"

Pvt. Frank Stebbins, POW

I Am Not Alone

Your hand reached out across the
miles and touched
Mine for a little while tonight; your
laughter
Echoed and re-echoed down the
vaulted
Arches of my memory's hall of dreams,
And for a little while the room was
bright;
It sparkled with your smile. But now
the
Loneliness comes rushing in again to
drown
My dreams and stifle all the hope your
words arouse.
And I am not alone; there are
The others here with me, so closely
packed
Our souls have hardly elbow room to
move
Around, - yet each apart from one
another
In his self-consuming misery.
The unused, empty days crawling
slowly
By each leave a question burning in
The mind: How long? A little while?
For what?
But stabbing at us, underneath them
all:
The price we're paying, is it worth it
all?

Lt. John M. Colpinger, POW

The Pilot's Secret (parental Guidance Advised)

He grabbed me by my slender neck
I could not call or scream.
He dragged me to his darkened room,
Where he could not be seen.

He tore me from my flimsy wrap,

He gazed upon my form.
I was so cold, so wet, so damp,
And he delightfully warm.

His burning lips he pressed on mine,
I gave him every drop
He took from me my very soul,
I could not make him stop.

He made me what I am today,
That's why you find me here,
A broken bottle thrown away,
That once was full of beer.

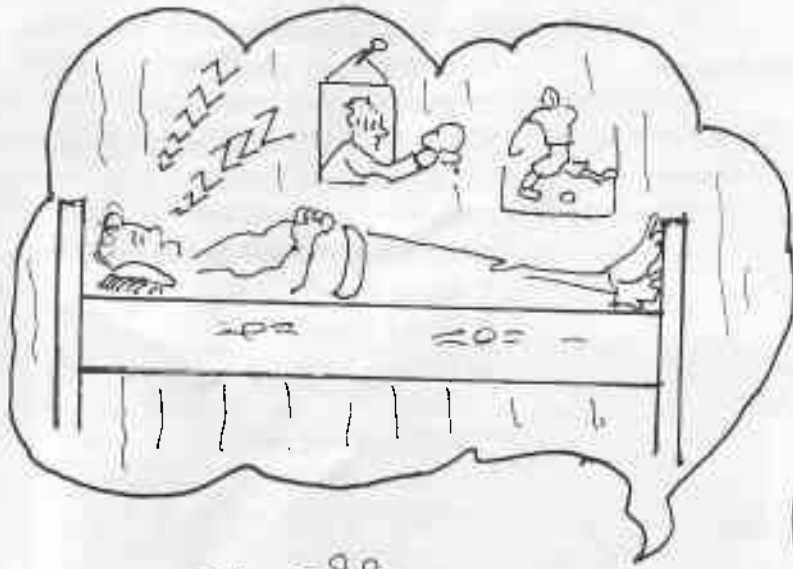
Anon

Escape

Stealthily he treads half crouching
Breaks into a run, his madly beating
heart
Pounds, but he feels it not.
His mind preoccupied with
The sweeping search light beam
That flickers...
Then fades into the distant dark.
The final spurt, the wire is cut.
Good! This. The jagged tear he crawls
Unseen and rising runs
Despair fades - freedom lies ahead.
Fantastic shapes ahead
First one, then two and three.
Posterns...it can't be true!
The guttural command jars
His shattered nerves.
Halt! Halt! Halt!
He races on, a vain attempt -
The orange spurt of doom
Flash from slender tubes and die
A dull blow hurls him forward
So he lay bleeding and sobbing
Prostrate on the ground -
Frustrated, someone had informed.

Donald Bruce

FROM A KRIEGIE'S SCRATCHBOARD!



NOW WHEN I WAS A KRIEGIE
I SPENT ALL MY TIME WORKING!
"Boten"



REMEMBER WHEN...*They were playing our songs!*

1943

"Amor"
"Besame Mucho"
"Comin' in on a Wing and a Prayer"
"Do Nothin' Till You Hear from Me"
"Don't Get Around Much Anymore"
"Don't Sweetheart Me"
"A Gay Ranchero"
"Goodbye, Sue"
"Holiday for Strings"
"How Many Hearts Have You Broken"
"I Couldn't Sleep a Wink Last Night"
"I Had the Craziest Dream"
"I'll Be Seeing You"
"In My Arms"
"It's Love, Love, Love"
"(It Seems to Me) I've Heard That Song Before"
"Let's Get Lost"
"A Lovely Way to Spend an Evening"
"Mairzy Doats"
"My Heart Tells Me"
"My Shining Hour"
"Oh, What a Beautiful Morning"
"Oklahoma!"
"People Will Say We're in Love"
"Pistol Packin' Mama"
"Shoo-Shoo Baby"
"Speak Low"
"Star Eyes"
"Sunday, Monday or Always"
"The Surrey with the Fringe on Top"
"Take It Easy"
"Taking a Chance on Love"
"They're either Too Young or Too Old"
"Tico Tico"
"Walking the Floor Over You"
"What Do You Do in the Infantry"
"You Keep Coming Back Like a Song"
"You'll Never Know"

"Ac-cent-tchu-ate the Positive"
"All of a Sudden"
"Candy"
"Don't Fence Me In"
"Down in the Valley"
"Evalina"
"Dream"
"Going My Way"
"Holiday for Strings"
"How Blue the Night"
"I Dream of You"
"I Hear Music"
"I Love You"
"I Should Care"
"I'll Get By"
"I'll Walk Alone"
"I'm making Believe"
"Is You Is or Is You Ain't My Baby"
"It Could Happen to You"
"Jealous Heart"
"Lili Marlene"
"Long Ago and Far Away"
"My Heart Tells me"
"Right as the Rain"
"Roll Me Over"
"Rum and Coca-Cola"
"San Fernando Valley"
"Saturday Night Is the Loneliest Night of the Week"
"Sentimental Journey"
"Spring Will Be a Little Late This Year"
"Swinging on a Star"
"Till Then"
"Time Waits for No One"
"The Trolley Song"
"Twilight Time"
"You Always Hurt the One You Love"

1945

"All of My Life"
"Along the Navajo Trail"
"Aren't You Glad You're You"
"Autumn Serenade"
"Chicory Chick"

"Close as Pages in a Book"
"Cruising Down the River"
"Doctor, Lawyer, Indian Chief"
"Dream (When You're Feeling Blue)"
"For Sentimental Reasons"
"Give Me the Simple Life"
"I Can't Begin to Tell You"
"I should Care"
"I Wish I Knew"
"If I Loved You"
"I'll Be Yours"
"I'll Close My Eyes"
"I'm Beginning to See the Light"
"It Might As Well Be Spring"
"It's a Grand Night for Singing"
"It's Been a Long, Long Time"
"J'Attendrai"
"June Is Bustin' Out All Over"
"Just a Little Fond Affection"
"Laura"
"Let It Snow, Let It Snow, Let It Snow"
"The More I See You"
"My Dreams Are Getting Better All the Time"
"O What It Seemed to Be"
"On the Atchison, Topeka, and the Santa Fe"
"(You Came Along) From Out of Nowhere"
"Seems Like Old Times"
"Symphony"
"That's for Me"
"There, I've Said It Again"
"While the Angelus Was Ringing"
"You'll Never Walk Alone"

AND DON'T FORGET...

"Tuxedo Junction"
"In the Mood"
"The Jersey Bounce"
"Pennsylvania 6-5000"
"Don't Sit Under the Apple Tree"
"White Cliffs of Dover"

"Jim"
"He Wears a Pair of Silver Wings"

1944

From Earl Kent

Thanks for your memo in your most recent edition about submitting pictures if previous ones didn't make the HISTORY.

The enclosed were taken on the ramp at San Giovanni and it took two to get the whole crew in. For some reason or another our co-pilot, Mort Whittaker, was always taking the pictures, hence left out. He is the one in the photo with his head sticking out of the pilot's window.



Front row, L to R: Bruce Johnson, Nose Gunner; J. C. Evans, Engineer; A. G. Brennan, Radio Operator; A. Z. Boyce, Waist Gunner. Back row, L to R: L. E. Brunson, Pilot; R. P. Becker, Bombardier; E. B. Kent, Navigator; A. S. Baker, Tail Gunner; J. G. Hetmanek, Ball Gunner. (Whittaker, Co-Pilot, not in picture)

We arrived on the scene in late November, 1944, and stayed on through to the end of the European fracas. Our pilot was Lloyd E. Brunson, 1st Lt. at that time and he stayed in the service, passing away in 1955, having attained the rank of major at that point.

Thanks for your good work. *Earl B. Kent, Formerly Navigator 741st.*



M. K. Whittaker, Co-Pilot, at pilot's window. Baker and Kent on top.



455th Newsletters - continued from page 5

MI. Jim Brush has a respectable beer tavern in Alma MI. Between flying for Continental Airlines, Earl Howsam is commended for working voluntarily for better government and with a juvenile court for delinquent boys. Ray Sterline is in San Diego in the construction business with Brooks. Baird is with the police force in Carthage, Mo. Dandenault, Kapitske, Tordoro, Stopa, Gudmondson are married. Pappy Knight is rumored out of the army and in the sugar industry in Cuba. Condra is running an electrical shop in Springdale, Arkansas.

From the August 28, 1948 Newsletter

Reservations are beginning to flow in for the first reunion in St. Louis. Cost \$15 - banquet of steak or fish. Carl Barr can't make the reunion — he's in Guam. Several Vet publications covered announcement and inquiries have been coming in from all over the country. C. E. Riggs says he'll spread the good word among the 740th. Harold Dolbee was with the 742nd only 17 days before his crew was shot down over Palesti and is anxious to have full details of the reunion. Ted Bernier is with the New England Telephone Company. Ted was with the 743rd. Joe Matthews was fishing with Ted last summer. Newlin Robertson owns a barroom in New Orleans. Roy Hendrickson runs a juke-box business in Eau Claire, WI.

Harold Angers is a steward at a golf club in Laconia, New Hampshire. The program for the reunion: Friday, check in. Friday night, Stag party. Special wife party. Saturday, Business meeting, Air force movies, shopping, sightseeing, baseball game, vino party, cocktail party and banquet dinner and dance. Sunday, Memorial Services.

From Thanksgiving Day, 1948 Newsletter

Tom Mitchell writes that the "Baker" reunion is set for Chicago. Report on "Able" reunion - stag party a success. Betty Garber and Jane Froussard won at bridge. The banquet featured Barclay Allen's music. St. Louis Post-Dispatch sent over a photographer and gave us a story

featuring four buddies in attendance who had been M.I.A., Ross, Dolbee, Murphy and Ramey. During the business meeting the group voted that \$2.00 should be the annual dues. Lt. Frank Paige has been transferred to the Philippines. Col. Herschel Williams is on temporary duty in Washington. Frank Fay is farming in Kansas. Jack Reeder and O.I. Lee couldn't make the reunion, tied up with air shows. Doc Gosman is doing special studies at the Skin and Cancer Hospital in Philadelphia. Joe Levi is in business for himself. Sgt. Earl Greaver is in recruiting for the US Army and Air Force in East Rainelle, W. Va. T/Sgt Meno Gazzola is in the same activity in Greenwood, Ark. Jacob Oliker who kept the flak map up to date in the S-2 War Room has opened a law office in New York. Smitty, D.A. Smith who did art, ran the baloptican for briefings and a million of other jobs is a graduate architect. Jim Clowery, 740th Bombardier is in law school. Constantino, 740th Navigator is in law school, too. Al Coons is working on his second book.

(This feature story will be continued in the next issue of Cerignola Connection.)

We're Down to 50 History Books

Time is running out for you pick up a copy of "Flight of the Vulgar Vulture - 455th Bomb Group History." Did you get one for your grandchildren? Send your order ASAP together with your check for \$21.45 to Lou Hansen, 917 W. 11th St., PO Box 6125, Spencer, Iowa 51301.

Sunset

I stood and gazed at the setting sun
The sand in the hour glass ceased to run
Red beauty and the silence reigned supreme
It held me spellbound and seemed a dream.
The clouds darkened and faded away
The soft blackness came and closed the day.

Visible Means - continued from page 4

partment. He was not wounded but in shock for a few moments. When he recovered he went up again to man his two 50 calibers. A dear, brave boy. At this point, the enemy fled as the German 88 anti-aircraft missiles were popping all about and they wanted no part of being shot down by their own guns. They would intercept us on the way out of the bomb run.

Our compartment was full of smoke. We were losing altitude fast. I noticed Willie trying to salvo our ten 500 pound RDX bombs with an emergency release handle located on the floor between us. I immediately reached over and helped to pull the damned thing out. The bombs released so fast, the bomb-bay doors did not have time to open. They were torn open by the bombs and were flapping in the breeze. Our navigator and bombardier jumped out of the plane. I didn't blame them, as they could not see us with our heads down salvoing the bombs and the smoke screen. (They were both taken prisoners.)

When we left the bomb run and the 88mm flak, I could see our wing several miles ahead and at least 5,000 feet higher. Now is the time for those Krauts to hit us again. My knee stopped bleeding. Under these conditions, I heal fast. We were surprised to see our own P-51 fighter escorts (waiting) for us. They were the same fighters to the north of us before we made our bomb run. They chased our antagonist away. In the resulting dog fights, 17 enemy aircraft were destroyed, 7 probably and 10 damaged in the areas to the north of us and in our area. Two Mustangs and their pilots were lost in battle. What a relief — no more enemy fighters. Next time I say, "But, of course" it will be to pass the Dijon Mustard. After assessing our



problems, and their duty to protect the Wing, they left us.

Now, here we are, all alone—a mortally wounded plane limping home. Our bomb-bay doors flapping in the breeze, #4 engine out of order, #1 engine smoking, our instrument panel inoperative, and the other two engines not up to par. Now I know for sure why a B-24 is called a "Flying Prostitute."

We knew we were heading East and toward Italy, but where, we did not know. We crossed the Adriatic on a "Wing and a Prayer." After eleven hours of flying, we spotted Italy or at least an island. To the south and North, the land curved in and away like an island. Later I found out, with my escape packet of maps (and \$50.00 cash), it was indeed Italy and near the town of Carpino, just south of the German lines, and in our own territory. Carpino is located on the spur of the Italian boot.

Several minutes after we spotted land, Willie Moore said, "Ray, you know what we have to do." I nodded, saying, "We will have to jump." Our wheels are up and jammed. Never land a B-24 with wheels up because of

the high wing and other factors, it is sure death. As we approached Italy, we were constantly losing altitude. From five miles up, we were down to about 1,000 feet. We passed over the coast line, and Willie said, "Sound the alarm." I pressed the alarm five times, which informs the crew in the back of the ship to jump now. I was surprised the alarm worked, as nothing else did. I observed the boys jumping out and informed Willie. Next, our radio operator and flight engineer, in our compartment jumped, followed by me, and then Willie. I estimated we were about 600 feet. When the plane crashed on the other side of a hill, I didn't see it. One of the crew in the back of the plane didn't make it. He made up his mind too late and went in with the plane. (I found this out later and it really saddened me.)

When I landed and pulled in my chute, I put it under my head and just gazed around. My first impression was how awfully quiet. The Italian hills were like southern Ohio. All about me were thousands of poppies in full bloom. I smelled one. I thought I was in Heaven. I was in Heaven....



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\$ _____

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