CERIGNOLA CONNECTION

455th Bomb Group Association Newsletter

Fall 1997 – Editor, Tom Ramey, 1211 Montclaire Ct., Appleton, WI 54915 (920) 731-2500

From Your President

Since this article is being written prior to our up-coming reunion, I won't have any news to write about the event itself. However, there are a number of people that I wish to thank for their help. Col. Jim Shumard and Lt. Col. Ross Strode who both live in the Dayton area have furnished much of the foot-work. Gen. Gene Hudson and Col. John Davis have been invaluable as consultants.

Most of all, we are indebted to Frances Hansen, wife of our Executive Director. She spent many days and hours working on reunion business from hospital and hotel rooms during Lou's illness and long hospitalization. Without her dedication, we may possibly have had to cancel the reunion.

Much was written about Jimmy Stewart this summer. To me, he was not only my all-time favorite actor but a long-ago friend.

In early June, 1943, I reported to Gowen Field, Idaho, for B-17 pilot training. It was quite a surprise when I learned that 1st Lt. James M. Stewart, my instructor, was Jimmy Stewart, Academy Award winning actor.

I was transferred to another base for a few weeks and then returned to Gowen Field to check out on the B-24. James Stewart, now a captain, was again my instructor. During this period we had adjoining rooms in the officers' quarters. When not flying we spent many evenings in his room or mine just talking. Since about 30 of the original crews of the 455th were made up at Gowen Field, possibly some of those pilots also had him as an instructor. He was an excellent pilot and a true gentleman, and those memories of my association with him will never be forgotten.

He also flew B-24's in combat, not the B-17 as several of the national news magazines reported.

C.E. Riggs

Changing of the Guard!

The 455th Bomb Group Association has nominated and elected the following officers and board members to a new term.

Lt. Col. Clarence E. (Ed) Riggs. President 740
Lt. Col. Winfield S. Bowers, Jr., Vice President 741
Lt. Col. Lincoln H. Townsend, Secretary 740
Lt. Col. Gus H. Wendt, Treasurer 741

New Directors elected –
Maj. James D. Gould III 743
S/Sgt. Donald F. Lonergon 741
T/Sgt Ralph R. Holdsworth 740
S/Sgt Francis J. Lashinsky 740

Appointed by Board of Directors –
Lt. Col. Gus H. Wendt, Executive Director 741
Col. Louie O. Hansen, Executive Director Emeritus 743

Nominating Committee Members –
Maj. Gen. Eugene L. Hudson, Chairman
Col. John F. Davis
Capt. James H. Smith
S/Sgt David J. Frawley

Col. Louie O. Hansen was to have been a member but health precluded participation.

Last Call

741st Squadron History Volumes will be available November 1, 1997, these at all original prices.

Volume 1	$62.50
Volume 2	$62.50
Volume 3	$62.50
Volume 4	$50.00

Send your orders, with check to:
Col. Horace Lanford
150 Colonade Circle
Naples, Florida 34103.

FINAL FLIGHTS

T/Sgt Charles W. Gage 8/15/95
S-4, 740th Bomb Squadron

Capt. Robert Kafka 4/11/97
Pilot, 741st Bomb Squadron

1st Lt. James M. Paurice 11/20/96
Co-pilot, A.D. Catlin's Crew, 743rd Bomb Squadron

Sgt. Emmett J. Harbaugh 6/17/97
Tail Gunner, Orville Lee's Crew, 743rd Bomb Squadron

S/Sgt. Cleo S. Grossman 5/12/97
Nose Gunner, Harold Gorecki's Crew, 742nd Bomb Squadron

Maj. Russell J. Welsh 12/26/96
Squadron OPS Officer, 741st Bomb Squadron

T/Sgt Fred Neubarth 8/28/96
Headquarters Squadron

S/Sgt Thomas F. Farrow 3/5/97
Right Waist Gunner, Robert Asa's Crew, 741st Bomb Squadron

1st Lt. Howard M. Furbish 3/6/97
Navigator, James Kiernan's Crew, 743rd Bomb Squadron

Sgt. Scottie L. Spurlock Eng/TTG
Gunner, Edward Dahl's Crew, 743rd Bomb Squadron

S/Sgt. William J. Rabe 7/5/60
Gunner also served in Korean War
740th Bomb Squadron

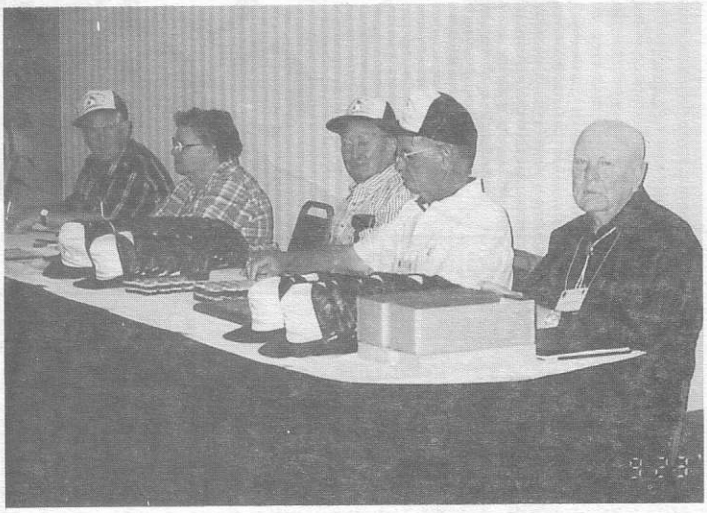
Capt. Ed Kieselback 8/30/97
Pilot, had been a POW from the 742nd Bomb Squadron

Maj. Dave Loughrie
Co-Pilot, 741st Bomb Squadron.
POW 4 days after joining unit.

REUNION '97, DAYTON OHIO



A hearty 455th welcome from Fran and Lou Hansen.



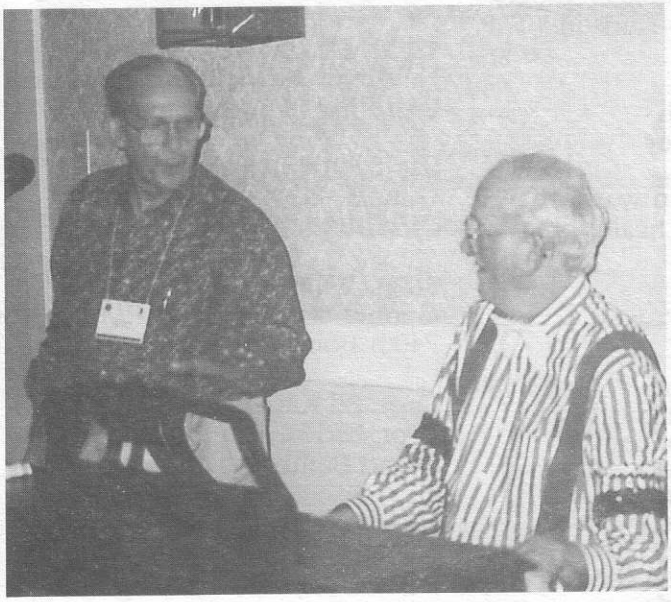
Registration and PX sales. L to R: Lou and Fran Hansen, Charles Rein, Jack Casteel, Ross Strode.



All aboard the Turtle Creek Trolly!



Dining at the Golden Lamb.



Bill Green joins the Honkey Tonk Piano Player in song!



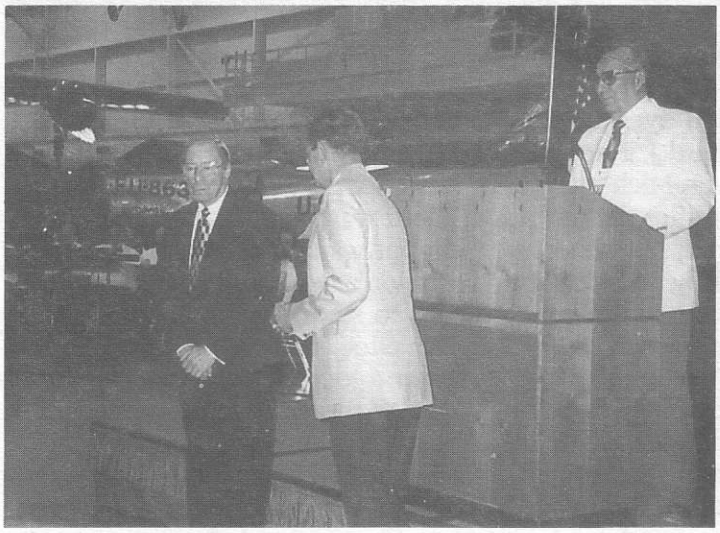
Miami Valley Dinner Theater – a big hit!



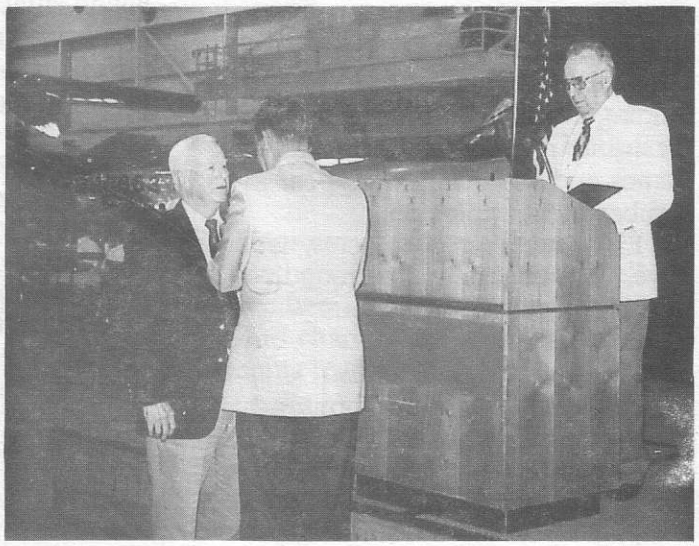
Ladies, I don't know why they are serving SPAM. I was just in charge of the buses. L to R: Margaret and Jim Shumard, Theresa Shaw, Ed Riggs.



While they dined among the planes – the band played on. (Fairborn Civic Band).



Maj. Gen. Eugene Hudson pins the Purple Heart Medal on Clark Dudley as Pres. Ed Riggs reads the citation.



Maj. Gen. Eugene Hudson pins the DFC Medal on John Carey as Pres. Ed Riggs reads the citation.



Lou Hansen tells a story!



A standing ovation for a job well done!

April 20, 1944 Bob Cook's Crew 455th Bomb Group 743rd Bomb Squadron

The story of a B-24 Liberator heavy bomber of the 15th A.A.F., manned by a battered crew which refused to bail out and leave an injured buddy.

15th Army Air Force—Bullet-torn and rocket-blasted from a vicious air battle, a B-24 Liberator heavy bomber of the 15th A.A.F., manned by a battered crew which refused to bail out and leave an in jured buddy, staggered back victoriously hundreds of miles to a flapless, brakeless, almost rudderless landing at its home base, only to crash into a gas truck, break into flames and practically disappear in a subsequent explosion.

Every member of the crew is alive, with the tail and turret gunners alone sustaining serious injuries.

The crew's numbers just weren't up. More than a thousand holes of all sizes are estimated to have been blown through the cabin, the wings and other parts of the plane. The tail turret and top turret were completely shot out of the ship. The fluid from the wrecked hydraulic system, sloshing around the bombay, caught fire while the bomber was in flight. After the crash, the plane's ammunition was popping from the heat of the flames. The pilot became pinioned in the cockpit at the crack-up with his flak suit afire.

It was a sky battle in an attack by a B-24 on Trieste Harbor installations and shipping, April 20, that sent the Liberator on its dogged journey. About 40 109's closed to clash with the formation, ten of the fighters at first and later others, concentrating their attack on the tail turret of the Liberator, piloted by 1st Lt. Robert L. Cook, 24, Harrisburg, PA.

The tail turret position was manned by S/Sgt. Leslie H. Stockdale, 20, of Blue Springs, Mo., who shot one Nazi down for sure and he saw another in flames but the victory was not confirmed. Nazi fighters kept swooping and zooming. Their aerial rockets, 20 mm cannon shells and machine gun bullets wrecked the turret, severely wounded Stockdale and put his guns out of action.

Other gun positions on the Liberators were having their troubles. With a good start, the Nazis apparently decided to keep concentrating on this one B-24. The top turret glass suddenly disappeared, but T/Sgt. Abe Azie, 24, Lawrence, Mass., engineer-gunner, escaped injury.

Flying shrapnel hit the left waist-gunner, Sgt. Grover W. Jenkins, 24, Opelika, Alabama, on the face and right arm but he kept firing. He also called over the interphone to F/O Richard J. Haney, co-pilot, 21, Big Beaver, Michigan, for permission to look after the wounded tail gunner, but was advised to keep firing and wait until the Nazi attack had ended.

The battle continued with the swirling Germans becoming more respectful until they finally stopped attacking altogether, and allowed the Liberator, which had dropped behind its formation in the melee, to limp along unmolested.

2nd Lt. John Greco, 24, bombardier, of Everettville, West Va., and Sgt, Jenkins immediately went back to assist Stockdale, despite his own wounds, Sgt. Jenkins took off some of his clothing to put around the injured tail gunner, while Lt. Greco administered first aid.

The engineer started taking stock of the damage to the plane. The hydraulic system was completely shot out. The wheel brakes were unworkable. That meant if a landing were successful, the heavy bomber would have to roll until it stopped of its own accord. The landing flaps would not work. That meant the landing speed of the plane could not be cut down safely. The rudder control cables had been severed. The engineer spliced them with a bit of string. Two turrets were gone. That lightened the load a little. Then there were the thousand or more bullet holes of all sizes. The crew was aware of the danger in an attempted landing. A quick check showed nobody wanted to leave under the circumstances. "What about Stockdale?" they asked. The pilot said later that if it had not been for the tail gunner's injuries, the order to abandon ship would have been given unhesitatingly.

T.Sgt. Clayton A. Brewer, 36, radio operator and nose gunner, of Mansfield, Pa., opened a hatch before the landing, "just in case." This proved to be a life-saver for some members of the crew, because the crash almost sealed the door.

The landing was good, although a trifle fast because the flaps couldn't be put down. The big Liberator settled on the runway at well over 100 miles an hour. There was nothing the crew could do but wait. The wheel brakes wouldn't work and there was no way to steer or slow the speed. The pilot could not even attempt a ground loop. He cut the switch.

Off the end of the runway the bomber rolled, and kept rolling for 300 yards. Then plunged down a 50-foot embankment and crashed into the unattended gasoline truck trailer. The trailer was carried an additional 100 feet before the plane partially buried itself in the ground.

A raging fire immediately broke out and spread rapidly. All of the crew members except the pilot managed to get clear of the wreckage. The pilot was half pinned down at his controls. The co-pilot helped evacuate the navigator, 2nd Lt. David J. Woodlock, 27, of St. Louis, Mo., who was slightly dazed. They both crawled through a hole caused by the accident.

S/Sgt. Henry C. Paris, 20 of 21 West Elm Street, Rocky Mount, N.C., ball turret gunner, whose left foot was broken in three places, helped to assist critically injured Stockdale, the tail gunner, from the wreck.

Continued on Page 5

Continued from Page 4

Slightly wounded, the right waist gunner, S/Sgt. Ralph W. Friese, 33, of Beverly Hills, Calif., and the other members of the crew made their way through the hatch way that had been opened by Sgt. Brewer, radio gunner, just before the landing.

Lt. Cook, pilot, was still trapped in the cockpit and flames were leaping around him. During this time the ammunition was exploding constantly and there was the added danger that the gas tank would blow up. Lt. Woodlock, the navigator, rushed to help his pilot, whose clothes were already aflame. Woodlock's condition, however, left him without sufficient strength to properly aid Cook.

At this point, Captain Harold F. Schuknecht, flight surgeon, 38, of Chancellor, South Dakota, who had been waiting with an ambulance, arrived on the scene. Without hesitation, he climbed up to remove the pilot. The fuselage was enveloped in flames and fire was spurting out the waist window and the cockpit. Captain Schuknecht grabbed Cook and yanked him out through the cockpit window. Cook fell head first toward the ground. Cook landed squarely on top of the navigator who was standing by, half dazed, trying to help. Cook states he would have been seriously injured if the navigator had not broken the fall.

The flight surgeon and the navigator dragged the pilot, his clothes burning briskly, away from the spot, and rolled him on the ground until the flames from his flak suit were smothered. A minute after they had gotten the pilot to safety, the gasoline tanks exploded and there was little left of the plane or the trailer.

Cook later said his hand had been pinned around the control wheel, at the impact, and part of the instrument panel had jammed forward, hampering the movement of most of the arm. His legs were wrapped under the seat which had gone forward. He could not move them.

"The fire was getting hot," he said, "and I was getting desperate. I figured it would be better to injure my hand than burn to death so I gave my hand a good jerk. It came clear but the jagged metal tore huge gashes in my flesh. I struggled to get my feet clear, but it was no soap. My clothes were on fire but I only felt the heat and not the flame. My flak suit was absorbing most of the punishment. It was Captain Schuknecht's help that freed me."

455 BG Lost Crew

I was in the 455 BG, 741 BS at Cerignola, Italy 24 Nov. 44 to 22 June 45. I don't remember all the names of my crew, but do remember the pilot was Barnhill from TX: co-pilot Hazelett from OH; bombardier David Duncan from PA; and radio operator William Morello from MA. I would appreciate help in locating them. **Roland Pepin, 7 Red Oak Dr. Johnston, RI 02919.**

455 BG Buddies

Cannot attend the reunion, but would like to hear from any buddies from the 455 BG, 740 BS. Also searching for lost crew members Henry A. Hanson, Fredrick W. Voss, Stanley E. Trellier, Henry N. Liles, and James H. Colson. **Howard Cooper, 471 Vernon Ave. Staten Island, NY 10309. HOWGLADI@JUNO.COM.**



A man was having difficulty communicating with his wife and concluded that she was becoming hard of hearing. So he decided to conduct a test without her knowing about it. One evening he sat in a chair on the far side of the room. Her back was to him and she could not see him. Very quietly he whispered, "Can you hear me?" There was no response. Moving a little closer, he asked again, "Can you hear me now?" Still no reply. Quietly he edged closer and for the 3rd time whispered the same words, but still no answer. Finally, he moved right behind her chair and said, "Can you hear me now? To his surprise and chagrin, she responded with irritation to her voice. "For the **fourth** time, YES!

HUGS



It's wondrous what a hug can do,
A hug can cheer you when you're blue.
A hug can say, "I love you so,"
or, Gee! I hate to see you go."
A hug is, "Welcome back again."
A hug can sooth a small child's pain and bring a rainbow after rain.
The hug! There's just no doubt about it.
A hug delights and warms and charms, it must be why God gave us arms.

Hugs are great for fathers and mothers, sweet for sisters, swell for brothers
And chances are some favorite aunts love them more than potted plants.
Kittens crave them,
puppies love them,
Heads of state are not above them,
A hug can break the language barrier, and make the dullest day seem merrier.
No need to fret about the store of 'em,
the more you give, the more there are of 'em.
so stretch those arms without delay, and give someone a hug today.



How ice cream calories work:

The harder the ice cream is to dig out of the container, the more calories you burn, the more ice cream you can eat.

A Granddaughters Love



My grandfather enlisted in the Air Force in 1943, when he was 22 years old. He began preflight training, (an orientation to army life) in February of that year. This was where he met the other members of his crew he was to belong to for most of the next two years. A crew consisted of a pilot and co-pilot, a bombardier (belly gunner), a navigator, a radio operator, who doubled as a nose gunner, two waist gunners on the sides of the plane, and a tail gunner. There was also a top gunner who was the crew chief. My grandfather was a pilot and a co-pilot. After preflight school, which lasted for three months, he went on to basic flight school in Coleman, Texas. By August he was in Sherman, Texas for Intermediate flight school, and then he was off to Amarillo, Texas for advanced flight school. In November he started B-24 school in Liberal, Kansas.

The crew served in Salt Lake City, Utah for three months, and then they were transported to a camp in southern Italy. As a second lieutenant, my grandfather was separated from his crew and placed on a new crew as co-pilot. After five missions, he was reunited with his original crew as the pilot, promoted to first lieutenant and became the squadron leader.

An average mission day went like this: the crew got up about 4:30 or 5:00 am, got dressed, and ate breakfast. Then they went to a briefing where they were told what targets to hit, and what anti-aircraft fire to expect. They would fly the mission from about 6:00 am to 2:00 pm, usually in Germany or Czechoslovakia. When they got back to camp, they would have debriefing sessions, where the crew would tell their impressions of the mission and how it went. They would then go back to their tent and take a nap or do paper work. Dinner was about 6:00 pm, and then they they hung out in their tents and went to sleep.

My grandfather remembers three main missions. One time, he and his crew were sent to bomb a shoe factory in Czechoslovakia, and lost two of their four engines to enemy fire. They hit the factory, but had trouble getting back to Italy, and had to coast the last few miles. The second mission he remembers was the only time a member of his crew was hurt. His top gunner/crew chief was hit in the thigh. The last memorable mission was when they had been assigned to bomb mines on the beaches of Normandy to prevent the troops from getting hurt. When they got there, the soldiers had already landed, so they had to drop their bombs at sea and return to Italy.

After my grandfather had completed 25 missions, he was made a captain and transported to San Markos, Texas. There, he flew planes so that navigators in training could get practice navigating planes. In April of 1945, he was sent to Massachusetts to train B-17 pilots to fly B-24's. He was home by mid-July, at age 24.

Because of the war, my grandfather says he concerns himself more about world events. He and his crew served at a time when the worst of the aircraft warfare was over, and modern jets had not yet been invented, so he was grateful for his lucky timing. Even though the missions were exciting, my grandfather says his pilot training was the most memorable aspect of his part in the war. He and his crew had been well prepared for war.

My grandpa made close friends with the other members of his crew. He and my grandmother visit the bombardier every couple of years in Minneapolis, and he has visited his navigator twice in Boston. He has also visited the nosegunner once in Houston. The tail gunner and a waist gunner have each visited him once, he was in his co-pilots wedding, and they had a reunion a few years ago.

Surprisingly, he says the war didn't really make that big of an impact on his life!

Casey Krichner

Ed: Alyce Kafka writes that her husband Robert passed away this April. In 1992 her granddaughter Casey had to interview somebody for an English class – and she chose her grandfather. Her interview is published above.

Where is Casey now? A Sophomore at Purdue University, studying Engineering. She has a co-op with NASA in Houston and is taking flying lessons.

By the way, she got an A on the interview.

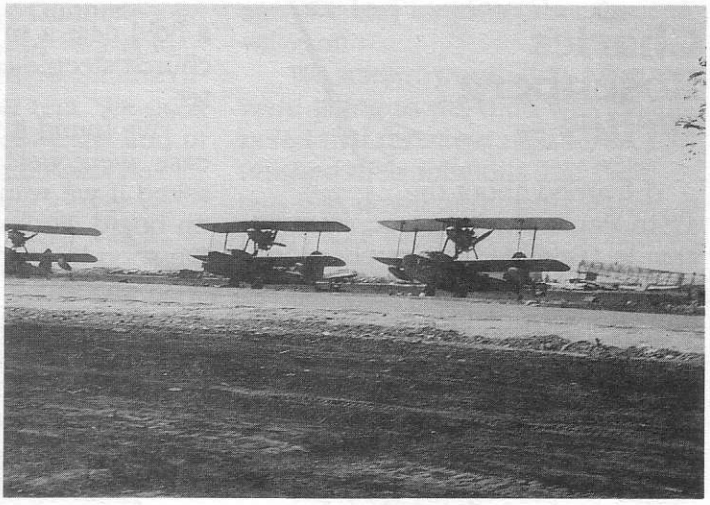


BELIEVE-IT-OR-NOT

Victor Murray was a radio operator on a 455 BG, 743 BS crew in Italy in 1944. All of the six enlisted men on the crew had completed their 50 missions and were billeted in an eight-man tent preparing to return to the States. Since there were two open bunks in the tent, two Field Artillery sergeants were assigned to their tent. The six on Murray's crew had their Air Medals and Citation with Cluster, but one of the Field Artillery sergeants, SSgt William Kriedler, was the proud recipient of the Distinguished Flying Cross and the Air Medal with four Oak Leaf Clusters. He got in a little ribbing of his fly-boy tent mates. Sgt. Kriedler was awarded the medals while serving as an air operations observer. On one mission, his pilot was wounded and he took the controls and landed the plane safely. The medal situation in the tent was apparently unusual enough that it appeared in Ripley's Believe-It-Or-Not.

Lifted from Sortie



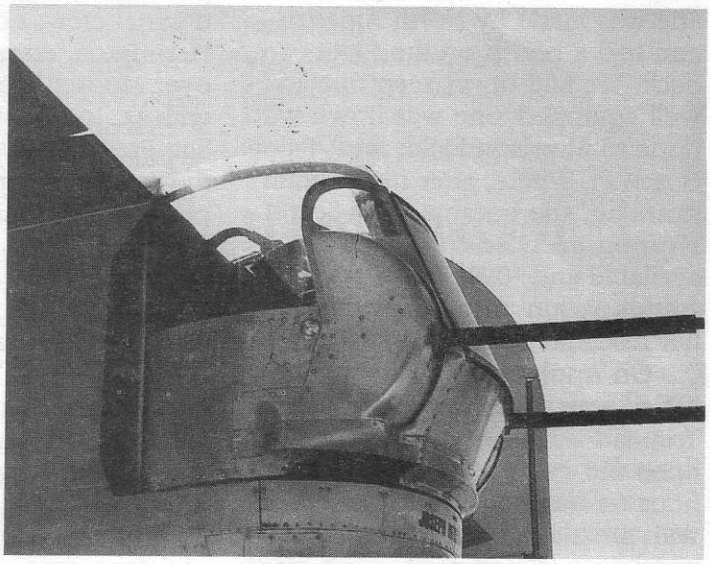


Ed: Leave it to S2 to come up with this story. Frank Pappalardo (R), 743rd squadron, is trying to convince me that he was on assignment, during wartime, to Pisa, Italy, to buy liquor for the officer's club. He says that his friend, on the right (name unknown), an MP, would back him up.

And to top that off, Pappalardo says the above is part of the Italian Air Force.



WHO? WHAT SQUADRON?



GOT CHA!

A Crew Identified

In the fall issue, 1990, crew photos were illustrated without legend. Ken Lacy answered the plea with his crew identification, standing in front of the plane "Our Love." ie backrow: Kenneth Lacey, ball turret gunner; Chester Pratt, waist gunner; Anthony Brodeur, nose turret gunner: James Thomas, engineer & top turret gunner. Front row: Watson, pilot; Glen Nelson, bombardier; Charles Swanner, co-pilot; Raider Ramstad, pilot.

As Ken writes – this plane and crew is that of Raider Ramstad (Ray as everyone knew him) with the exception of Lt. Watson who we were flying with when assigned to the 742nd squadron. We later flew at times with Lt. Watson after Ray Ramstad was shot down over Moosbierbaum, June 26, 1944.

Charles Rosenberg Writes –



I learned about the 455th Bomb Group Assoc. from an item in "Briefing," the publication of the International B-24 Club, by Ben G. Owen of Victoria, Texas. Consequently, I wrote to him. He referred me to Col. Lou Hansen and now I am a member.

Lou Hansen sent me some back copies of your publication, and on page 4 of the Spring 1996 issue, there was a picture of "The Secret Weapon." The crew of old "Zero Niner Niner," pictured on the attached, is the crew that flew it over the south Atlantic route in April, 1994.

We were probably one of the first replacement crews to the 455th. "099" was assigned to us at San Francisco. What a thrill! Our very own B-24. I even signed for it. She was made by North America and had a bench on the flight deck. We had never seen one so well equipped. She was flown with pride to Morrison Field, West Palm Beach Fl, where, after much brain storming, she became "The Secret Weapon." A nose-artist was readily available and "099" had a sexy "pistol-packin' mama" painted on her fuselage.

On April 11, 1944, the crew of "The Secret Weapon" took off for Trinidad with instructions not to open our orders till we were one hour on our way. Exactly one hour, with great anticipation, the orders were opened and read to the crew. We were ordered to report to the Commanding General, NATOUSA, at Tunis in North Africa. Almost two adventurous weeks later we landed at the base at Tunis. We were not received by the Commanding General, but were advised by a Sgt. in the operations tent that our destination would be Italy. Take-off was to be the next day. We were instructed to fly across the Mediterranean at one thousand feet and land at Cerignola. Cerignola would be easy to find. All we had to do was find a field near a small town with a church steeple rising from its center.

We found it with unexpected ease, were welcomed warmly and asked if we wanted the K rations on board. Foolishly, we said "No." We soon learned that "The Weapon" was to be separated from us and the crew broken up and assigned as replacements to other crews. I was soon assigned to Lt. Julio Locatelli, whose co-pilot, Lt. Rezin, had been lost while flying with another crew. This was fortunate for me. Lt. Locatelli was a seasoned pilot and a competent and mature airplane commander. I think I flew 18 missions with him, before being assigned the plane and crew of another replacement pilot.

I never flew "The Secret Weapon" in combat. It was lost over Vienna on June 15, with Lt. Wurtz as pilot. I never had the privilege of flying with any of the original crew, either. Lt. Walt Harrington, co-pilot, went down over Moosebierbaum on June 26 with Lt. Jordan. Engineer-gunner, Sgt. Fred Huggins went down on the same mission, when a disabled plane ran into his plane, piloted by Lt. Keogh. On a mission to Wels, Austria, on May 30, a plane piloted by Lt. Fetty was lost, with Sgt. Thomas Elder, radioman, and Sgts. Raymond Tarpy and Myrel Schenk, gunners, on board. Happily, Sgt., Huggins survived.

Sgt. Raymond Beauvais distinguished himself, and finished his tour, having been awarded the silver star.

I have no information about Lt. Nicholas Winkelhorst, Flt, Officer Nellis or Sgt. Robert Fowlkes. I would love to hear from them, or about them.

Fortunately for me, I finished my tour the end of April and departed the race track at Naples for the U.S. on October 9, 1944.

The Way It Was

There was a corner in the sky
Where once black blossoms grew
With snowy tendrils trailing by
The ancient chariots flew

The silver steeds flew high and far
Beneath a cold bright sun
And often like a falling star
We lost another one

On and on and on we went
With faces grim and white
Somewhere above the Devil sent
A message from the night

God knows what prayers were offered up
As youthful blood fast flowed
How many sons "drank from the cup"
On that last flight they rode

There was no future for the boys
Who's luck ran out that day
Too bad they'd never know the joys
Of children out at play

What poet or astronomer
Who's spirit ended there
Would never ever give the world
A gift of something rare

The mists of time becloud the past
As time so often does
No memory of that will last
But that's the way it was.

John Smidl

A Volunteer's Prayer



I thank thee, Lord, as a volunteer
for the chance to serve again this year;
To give of myself in some small way
to those not blessed as I each day.
My thanks for health of mind and soul
to aid me ever toward my goal;
For eyes to see the good in all,
A hand to extend before a fall.
For legs to go where the need is great,
Learning to love – forgetting to hate.
For ears to hear, and heart to care,
when someone's cross is hard to bear;
A smile to show my affection true,
with energy aplenty the task to do;
And all I ask, dear Lord, if I may
is to serve you better, day by day.

Author Unknown

The Chaplains Corner



If my days were
untroubled and my heart always light
Would I seek that fair land where there is no night?
If I never grew weary with the weight of my load
Would I search for God's peace at the end of the road?
If I never knew sickness and never felt pain
Would I reach for a hand to help and sustain?
If I walked not with sorrow and lived without loss
Would my soul seek sweet solace at the foot of the cross?
If all I desired was mine day by day
Would I kneel before God and earnestly pray?
If God sent no "WINTER" to freeze me with fear
Would I yearn for the warmth of "SPRING" every year?
I ask myself this and the answer is plain–
If my life were all pleasure and I never knew pain
I'd seek God less often and need Him much less,
For God's sought more often in times of distress,
And no one knows God or sees Him as plain
As those who have met Him on "THE PATHWAY OF PAIN"

The Case of the Disappearing Tent



In the winter of 1944 at San Giovanni Air Field in Italy I was in the 15th Air Force, 455 Bomb Group, 740 Bomb Squadron. Six enlisted crew members which consisted of T/Sgt. Bill Carter, Engineer S/Sgt. Virgil Crane (KIA), Armorer S/Sgt. Walter Dragich, Belly Gunner S/Sgt. Chuck Brookman, Nose Gunner S/Sgt. Sterling Bryant, Tail Gunner T/Sgt. Jess Muro, Radio Operator – Mechanic-Gunner.

In the winter, it got very cold and we were allotted 10 gallons of fuel oil per week per tent, we used to run out of fuel before the end of the week. Our situation was desperate, so after talking it over we decided on a plan. There was a high octane fuel depot on the top of a hill with 55 gallon drums, guarded by a Canadian soldier.

Our tent was also located on top of another hill, the last tent in the squadron. Our make shift stove consisted of a half 55 gallon drum with a cut out on the bottom, which we fitted a battle helmet as a reservoir for the fuel, which dripped in from a copper tube with a shut off valve. The tube went to the outside of the tent to a 55 gallon drum, on a stand, which served as our supply source. Another cut out was made at top of stove for 6 inch pipe for a smoke stack which went through the top of tent.

We decided that when it got dark, Dragich and Muro would approach the soldier and keep him occupied by shooting the bull. In the meanwhile, Crane and Bryant would roll a drum down the hall and Carter and Brookman would roll it up the other hill to our tent. The next day we poured some gasoline in the drum on the stand and started the stove, it got nice and warm. After another hour the pipe was red hot up to 3 or 4 feet, so we shut it off.

One day when we weren't flying, we went to our plane (The Uninvited) a B-24 bomber, to clean and oil our 50 caliber machine guns. We started back to the squadron. When we were about 1/2 mile from the tent area we noticed smoke and wondered what they were burning. As we got to the top of the hill and into the tent area, we could see the smoke was about where our tent was located. We started running and it sure was our tent. It had burned down to the flap on the sides, our cots and clothes were next to the flaps, so they didn't burn. The 6 inch pipe must of come down slowly because it didn't do any more damage. We had forgot to shut the valve off.

We started wondering what we were going to do, then we remembered that the crew next to us, had finished their missions and their tent was down and neatly folded. It didn't take long to figure what we were about to do.

We took what was left of our tent and folded as best we could, hiding the burnt edges of the flaps.

Then we put the other tent up, it was getting dark when we finished.

The next day the orderly came over and asked if there had been a fire in the squadron? We said not that we knew of. He said that if Major Burch (officer in charge of supplies) found out whose tent had burned down, he was going to make them pay for the tent.

Good ending, we didn't pay, and after that when we left the tent, we double checked on the stove.

Jess Muro
4027 Sacramento St.
Concord, CA 94521

Stolen from Briefing

Happy Days In Italy!



Happy days in Italy, nights also. On a clear evening our squadron opened a new N.C.O. Club, just across a field from our tent city. Happy juice really flowed, out of cleaned out garbage cans. We all just drank our fruit juice, we didn't know anyone would spike our juice. We drank it by the pitcher. After a few hours many of us decided to leave for our 741st tent city.

I started to walk, about 20 feet from the door. I joined many others, raised the ground – after I layed there, I just slept awhile. When I awoke I just crawled in the direction of tent city. Of course the street lights were out. I made my way across the field, getting around other sleeping campers on the field. I finally got to tent city. Now

Continued on Page 10

Continued from Page 9

someone moved my home tent. So I just crawled into an empty tent, found a soft piece of ground and went to sleep. As I was in dream land, some jerk put a flashlight in my face, and rolled me to awaken me. As I looked around the jerk was the C.Q. with a new crew arriving. They wanted to know what happened, the C.Q. just told them, nothing new - he just came in from a mission today. It affects some this way.

The C.Q. knew me, so he and a couple others carried me to the tent. I don't know how long I was in dream land, but when I got up the next day or so – I met all my fellow crew members twin brothers. We all had good time for a couple days. We really had a tent full with their brothers joining us. I don't know when they left – or when I came back.

Didn't we have good times? Remember the best of times–good friends all.

Bill Bowles
741st Sgt.
Nose Gunner

Bob Christenson Crew: Heathcote C.P.
Bialas, Mayfield, Swann, Padget, Abbot
Sure would like to hear from any buddies.
Write to: **William Bowles Jr.**
106 Creed St.
Struthers, OH 44471

The Beast



Many of my contemporaries from the old Army Air Force look back with fondness, yea reverence, at the airplanes they flew in the glory days of WWII.—How I envy them when the conversation waxes hot over the merits of the P-40, P-51, A-20, B-25, Corsair, and of course the P-38. Most times I sit quietly outside the circle and just listen. What can one say about the B-24, except that it was a beast! The only pride I have is that after a year of struggle I finally mastered the son-of-a-bitch and brought it to heel.

It is surely a testimony to the adroitness of American youth that so many survived the war—the war against the B-24-not the Axis. Compared to the B-17, which flew like a model A Ford, the B-24 was like a Mack truck with hard rubber tires and chain drive axles.

How well I remember those training missions under the relentless Texas sun when formation flying was the order of the day. Good Lord – what an excruciating experience that was. All limbs were in motion at the same time; left arm hauling and twisting, right hand sawing the throttle, feet jamming the rudder back and forth, mouth spouting curses, and ears full of my instructors sarcastic advice —and, oh yes, the sweat pouring off my forehead and into my eyes.

Practically all air time was devoted to emergency procedures (thank God for that). I can still see the ripples on Lake Worth as I struggled to keep the beast airborne with one - then two engines out on take off. (That exercise later saved my life) We never flew with a full panel of instruments, hell anybody could do that.

All this was in a "D" model with 90 octane power settings and a light airplane. At that time all we had to think about was flying the thing. Later on after we got our crew there was a lot more going on. The responsibility of being an "airplane commander", and keeping tabs on others, was an added diversion that sometimes took one's thoughts from the first order of business-flying. Some good pilots found this to be quite oppressive, those who had a few bad apples to contend with. Lucky for me I had a great crew.

As time went on each added experience gave me new confidence, and without realizing it flying became a lot more fun. Of course I loved to fly anyway, and worked hard to be as good a pilot as possible. About that time the Beast started to change into a dog; not a puppy dog but a dog nevertheless. I got to know my dog for what it really was—an airplane that had to be flown! When done correctly it would respond quite well, but you had to stay with it. I'm sure not many of us in those days were nearly as good as we thought we were. The more we flew the more humble we became. Later on I had to laugh at those Texas formation flights – as I sat back with two fingers on the wheel and only occasional touch on the supercharger knob. Times had changed all right!

The Beast had turned into a dog—but it was My dog! - and NOBODY better kick my dog!

John Smtdl
743rd Bomb Squadron

It is June 9!

When Bob Greenquist and crew get together for their annual story session on POW life, war stories, and WWII, keep doing it on June 9. That's the date of the Munich raid, confirmed by Gerald Adams. The group history lists the wrong date. Gerald verified this from the 15th Air Force Story by Kenn C. Rost. He says the book might still be available by contacting **Historic Aviation, 1401 Kingsweed Road, Eagan, MN 55122.**

CORRECTION

Page 9, Spring 1997 Cerignola Connection, Windows for Remy. The correct zip code is 95236.

U.S. AIR FORCE

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1947 - 1997

Bob Emick writes –

I was very interested in your spring issue of 1996, page 4. You published a picture of the "Doughty Dragon" aircraft after an accident. Our crew, with pilot Maxwell Gates, were shot down in this aircraft on July 27th, 1944 over Budapest. I would be most interested in the details of the accident, date, reason, when returned to active duty and most of all some additional photos. I would be more than willing to pay any expenses incurred. Thanks for any assistance you can provide as I have no info on this aircraft.

Bob Emick, Navigator
#4
3 Hiawatha Cove Trl.
Battle Creek, MI 49015-3598

New Address for Retirees Records

720,000 U.S. Army retirees who want copies of their military records have a new mailing address to request their records.

The new address is: **National Personnel Records Center, Military Personnel Records, 9700 Page Ave., St. Louis, MO 61312-5100.** All requests must be in writing.

The records had been stored at the Army Reserve Personnel Center in Granite City, IL. Because of a recent agreement between the U.S. Army Reserve and the National Archives and Records Administration, all military retirees records are now at the same location.

As the largest section of the National Archives, the personnel records center contains military personnel and related records including enlistment/induction records, discharges, commendations, awards and medals and disciplinary actions.

On July 12, 1973 the records center was swept by a devastating fire and many computerized records were lost. Most of the 18 million destroyed records were Army and Army Air Force records from 1912 to 1960.

Many of the "lost" records were "found" in old computer tapes and other storage media and many were recovered and added to the St. Louis records. So if in the past you asked for your records and were told they were lost in the fire, try writing again and request your records. You may be pleasantly surprised.

Ed: Thanks to Gerald Adams for the Munich date correction and the article on Retirees Records.

If You Have Medals Coming...



"It is very important for veterans of next of kin of deceased members to write to the National Personnel Records Center (NPRC) in St. Louis to request review for entitlements to awards and decorations. This address is where the individual service members' military personnel records are maintained. With their written request, NPRC will conduct a review of the members' records and if unable to verify a certain award(s), only then will they forward to our office here at the Air Force Personnel Center for review. If there is not enough justification for entitlement, our office will then thoroughly evaluate and review the veteran's case for entitlement of the medal. We are only slowing the process down when individuals write directly to our office.

"All requests sent directly to our office without the records of the individual being sent with them, will be returned back to the member for them to submit through the proper channel, the National Personnel Records Center. The correct address for all former service members or NOK to write for verification of all awards and decorations, whether for replacement medals or first time consideration is:

Air Force Reference Branch
National Personnel Records Center
NPRC/NRPMK
9700 Page Avenue
St. Louis, MO 63132-5100

"We thank you for your assistance and attention in this matter and look forward to helping those who may have been overlooked for consideration of the Air Medal and other awards under criteria in effect at various times throughout our military careers. Thank you for your understanding in this matter. If you have any further questions, you may contact me at **(210) 652-5880.**

Manuel A. Hidalgo, Jamor, USAF
Chief, Recognition Programs Branch
Directorate of Personnel Program Mgmt"

About the B-24!

The B-24 Liberator was designed by consolidated Aircraft to specifications of:
speed 300 m.p.h.
range 3,000 miles
altitude 30,000 ft.

It first flew in December 1939. Consolidated Aircraft (which eventually became General Dynamics) produced the aircraft at San Diego, California and at Fort Worth, Texas (the same plant that produced the F-16's.) Ford produced B-24's at Willow Run, Michigan; North American at Fort Worth and Douglas at Tulsa, Oklahoma.

During WWII B-24's flew more missions and dropped more bombs than any other aircraft. It served the Air Corp in every theater of the war, and flew for 15 allied nations.



BACK TOGETHER AGAIN – AFTER 50 YEARS!





The nine crew members at a reunion at Fairhope display a photo of a B-24 bomber like the one they flew in during WWII. They are (front row, from left) Willard Whitehead, top gunner; Lloyd Yoho, nose turret gunner; Bob Tarkenton, ball turret gunner; Foster Arrington, tail turret gunner; Don Vance, radio operator and waist gunner; and Kenneth Cziok, engineer and waist gunner, and (back row) Kenneth Lee, pilot; Harry Hinderliter, co-pilot, and Bob Thompson, navigator. The men appear in the same order in the photo that shows them in front of their plane.

They may be a little grayer, but after 50 years it was like a group of teenagers reunited again.

The nine members of the 15th Air Force crew that flew over the skies of Italy in 1944-45 assembled for a reunion to mark the 50th anniversary of the end of World War II.

"This is the fourth reunion we have had over the last 50 years, but this is the first time all nine of us have been able to attend," said Lloyd Yoho of Fairhope, who was a nose turret gunner with the crew. He was the host for the reunion.

The nine-member crew flew B-24 Liberator bombers out of Italy and on occasions were escorted on longer missions by the Tuskegee Airmen, the first squadron of black fighter pilots in the Army Air Corps.

"You didn't think about it back then, but now it's a piece of history," said one of the gunners.

The crew had a number of adventures to talk about, but while flying together they never encountered any real problems.

"The only real trouble we ever had while flying was flak hole damage from anti-aircraft gunfire," said Don Vance of St. Augustine, Fla., who served as the radio operator and waist gunner.

"We didn't really face a lot of enemy fighter planes because at that time the German air force was pretty well decimated" added Vance.

Within the last year, all of the members were finally located and notified about the reunion.

"Some of us kept in touch with each other over the years, but sometimes you just drift apart from some friends and don't realize it till something like this comes about," said one of the gunners.

"While listening to the radio one day, I heard about an outfit that traces people that other people are looking for."

"After contacting them, the last three members of the crew were found and here we are today," added Yoho.

Some of the airmen traveled from as far away as Nevada and Arizona to be reunited with their comrades.

After life in the military, some of the men went on to work for such organizations as the FBI.

One even became the speaker of the state House of Representatives in Pennsylvania. Kenneth Lee of Eagles Mere, who was the pilot of the crew, was Speaker of the House in 1967-68 and also from 1973-74. He also ran for Lieutenant governor in 1974.

One of Lee's buddies said he should run for governor. But Lee just smiled, shook his head, then went back to talking about the old war times.

While in the area the men visited a number of places, including Fallingwater, Johnstown Flood Museum and Seven Springs.

"Some of the guys have to head for home Friday (today), but the ones staying are planning to go to the jubilee in New Centerville," Yoho said.

Before turning to reminisce with the others, one crew member said, "This is a wonderful thing to be back together again with the entire crew, and time permitting, I hope we can all be together again one day for another reunion."

Sno Fun like ski racing for John Davis – 742nd Sqd., 455 Bomb Group



Ed: In the spring '96 issue of the Cerignola Connection we started a new series of profiles or a recap of the years since WWII. Send us yours – we'll be pleased to print it.

John Davis of Des Moines is a super-achiever in amateur ski racing, in a competitive program known as NASTAR. Among NASTAR skiers age 70 or older, Davis ranked third in the nation last winter and ninth the year before that.

In NASTAR rankings for Iowa, Davis was tops in his age group and had a better time than all but three ranked competitors of any age. "I really worked on it this past year," he says. Besides, he had new skis.

Davis, who turned 79 in December '96 is a retired lawyer who took up skiing in his mid-40s. Although there is a NASTAR program at some Midwest ski areas, Davis does most of his racing in Colorado.

Interview by the DesMoines Register

How did you get into ski racing?

I didn't have skis on until I was 45. I didn't know anything about it, so I took some lessons for a time. I think it was in Taos, NM. The instructor said, "Now in my class, everyone runs NASTAR after the class because I want to see how much you learned."

The other guys (in the class) said, "Oh, that's great," and I said, "Forget it. I don't want any part of that." I was a little older than the rest of them. Well, you have to know these friends of mine; before they got through with me I ran NASTAR. I got a silver medal and I was so encouraged I thought, "Well it's possible."

Also, I found...when you're free skiing, it's a little difficult to tell if you're edging properly. Well, when you go around those gates, if you don't edge properly, you know in a minute because the moment you start to skid you lost time.

What would you say to people who might be a little scared to try racing?

Don't try to set a record the first time you run it. The beauty of doing NASTAR is watching yourself improve.

How are NASTAR rankings established?

They get one of the best skiers in the nation and have him run at a particular place. Each participating NASTAR area is required to have what they call a pacesetter, who runs against the national pacesetter. Whatever amount slower the local racer is than the national pacesetter, they take that percentage.

If the national pacesetter runs at 20 and the local guy runs at 22, the percentage is 10, so he has what is called a 10 percent handicap. On the day you and I run (at any ski area with a NASTAR program), that local pacesetter will run the same race. Whatever his time is, they take off 10 percent. Then it's just as if the national guy raced that course that very day.

If the 20-to 30-year-old racer comes within 15 percent of the fastest guy in the country, the national pace setter, we give him a gold medal. If he comes within 30 percent, we give him a silver. If he comes within 45 percent, we give him a bronze...

They add five handicap points for each of the 10-year age groups: within 15 percent for a gold for a 20-year-old, 20 percent for a gold for a 30-year-old, 25 percent for a gold for a 40-year-old.

There's only one exception to that. They found out a few years back that the 70-year-olds weren't getting as many golds. So they added an extra 5 percent between 60 and 70. At 45 percent, I can get a gold...

A gal is allowed 5 percentage points more than a guy.

How do you prepare for NASTAR racing?

They've run up a bunch of practice courses at most of the areas now, where it doesn't cost you much. I think at Winter Park it's only 50 cents to run the practice course. You don't get medals, but you've got an automatic timer...

The interesting thing is, most of the practice runs are actually harder than the NASTAR course, for a reason. If you can turn on a shorter gate or on a steeper area, then it should make NASTAR a little easier.

What has made skiing a good lifetime sport for you?

I think the thrill of doing it. I like cross-country skiing. I didn't think I would; my wife got me started on that a while back and I enjoy it, because there's a special technique. But there's a thrill to going downhill.

I can still remember the first time I was out west and looked down that mountain. I was so apprehensive I was about ready to go back home but it is a thrill.

How much do you ski each year?

My hoped-for schedule – I go with the Iowa Ski Club generally – is for a short trip in November, a December trip, a January trip, a February trip and, if things work right, maybe even a March trip. That's what I work for. I'd say any more I get about three weeks a year, anyway. If it works right, I'd really have about 4 1/2, but things happen.

You certainly look fit. If you're skiing 21 days a year, what are you doing the rest of the time to stay in shape for skiing?

Well, I play golf and I walk the golf course. This year, for the first time I beat my age in golf...Probably my second favorite sport is windsurfing. Golf has gone down from first to third.

From the DesMoines Register

What Happened to the Kids That Flew...in 1942?

Ed: Another in our series of profiles.

Major General Eugene L. Hudson was born on Oct. 6, 1921, in Los Angeles, Calif., where he graduated from Fairfax High School in 1940 and attended Los Angeles City College. He enlisted in the Army Air Corps in 1942, attended aviation cadet training, and graduated from flying school in May 1943 with his pilot wings and commission as second lieutenant. He earned a bachelor of science degree in engineering at the University of Southern California in February 1949, a master's degree from the George Washington University in 1963, and graduated from the Air War College in 1963.

General Hudson, a veteran Bomber pilot, flew combat missions during World War II, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War. During World War II, he was a B-24 pilot and went to Italy with the 455th Bomb Group, where he flew 36 combat missions over Europe. During the Korean War, he was a B-29 pilot and maintenance office, flying combat missions over North Korea. General Hudson had two tours in Vietnam/Thailand: the first flying B-52 and KC-135 missions out of Guam and Thailand; the second as Assistant Director of Operations of the 7th AF and later as Director of Intelligence for both 7th AF and the Military Assistance Command Vietnam (MACV).

In October 1949, he attended the Atomic Energy Training Course and the Airborne Electronic Maintenance Course at Keesler AFB, Miss. In September 1950, he was assigned to the 43rd Bomb Wing at Davis Mountain AFB as a pilot and Armament and Electronics Maintenance Office. In December 1952, he was assigned to the 98th Bomb Wing Yokota Air Base, Japan as a B-29 pilot and Armament and Electronic Officer.

General Hudson returned to the United States in August 1953 as Commander of the armament and electronics maintenance squadron for the 320th Bombardment Wing, and as the staff maintenance officer with the 12th Air Division at March Air Force Base, Calif. He moved to Dyess Air Force Base, Tex., in July 1956 to become Director of Operations, 819th Air Division, and later assumed the position of Director of Operations, 96th Bombardment Wing. In April 1958 he became Chief of the Missile Program Branch, Directorate of Plans, Headquarters Strategic Air Command, Offutt Air Force Base, Nebr.

After graduation from the Air War College in 1963, his assignments included Commander, 4000th Combat Support Group, Offutt Air Force Base, Nebr., from July 1963 until September 1966; Deputy Commander for Maintenance, Headquarters 68th Bombardment Wing, Seymour Johnson Air Force Base, N.C., from September 1966 to April 1967; Commander of the 68th Bombardment Wing at Seymour Johnson from April 1967 to July 1968; Commander of the 42nd Bombardment Wing, Loring Air Force Base, Maine, from July 1968 until April 1970; Commander of the 40th Air Division, Wurtsmith Air Force Base, Mich., from May 1970 to February 1972; Assistant Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations, Seventh Air Force, Republic of Vietnam, from February to May 1972; director of Intelligence for Seventh Air Force and Military Assistance Command Vietnam, and later the United States Support Advisory Group (USSAG) in Vietnam and Thailand from May 1972 to May 1973.

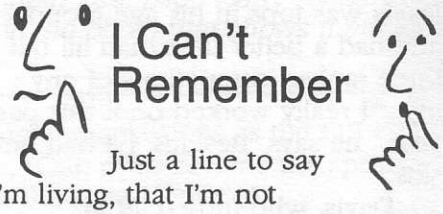
In June 1973, he was appointed the Deputy Chief of Staff, Logistics, Headquarters Strategic Air Command, Offutt Air Force Base, Nebr.

General Hudson was reassigned to Headquarters U.S. Air Force, Washington, D.C., as Director of Logistics Plans and Programs for the Deputy Chief of Staff, Systems and Logistics, in January 1975. He assumed the position of Assistant Deputy Chief of Staff, Systems and Logistics, in August 1975.

His military decoration and awards include the Distinguished Service Medal, Legion of Merit with one oak leaf cluster, Distinguished Flying Cross, Bronze Star Medal, Air Medal with four oak leaf clusters, Joint Service Commendation Medal, Air Force Commendation Medal, Distinguished Unit Citation Emblem, Air Force Outstanding Unit Award Ribbon, and the Republic of Vietnam National Order of Vietnam.

General Hudson is married to the former Pamela Grace Evenden of London, England.

He was promoted to the grade of major general effective Aug. 1, 1972, with date of rank July 1, 1969.



Just a line to say I'm living, that I'm not among the dead. Though I'm getting more forgetful and mixed up in the head. I got used to my arthritis, to dentures I'm resigned. I can manage my bifocals, but God I miss my mind. For, sometimes I can't remember when I stand at the foot of the stairs, If I must go up for something or have I just come down from there? And before the fridge so often, my poor mind is filled with doubt. Have I just put food away or have I come to take some out? And there is a time when it is dark with my nightcap on my head, I don't know if I'm retiring or just getting out of bed. So if it is my turn to write to you, there's no need getting sore, I may **think** that I have written and don't want to be a bore. So, remember that I miss you and try not to pout, But now it is nearly mail time so I must hurry out. Here I stand beside the mailbox with face so very red. Instead of mailing you my letter, I opened it instead.

A MIGHTY MAN SHALL LEAD THEM

Told to Al Asch by Hugh Graff. Reprinted from "Flight of the Vulgar Vultures."

There are accounts of individuals hiding from the Germans by day and traveling at night to escape and reach friendly forces. Perhaps the most brazen escape is told by Hugh Graff, the Group Deputy Commanding Officer. Here is his story: "On the evening of the 100th Mission Party, David 'Rock' Thayer, 743rd Squadron Commander, asked me to take his place on a mission the following day to bomb the German barracks at Bucharest. (This was the mission where up to 10,000 German troops were killed and many aircraft destroyed which paved the way for the air lift and escape of our POW's from Rumania.) This was to the area that had always brought some shudder to anyone scheduled to go there. Col. Cool had overheard the conversation and insisted it was his turn to go. We dealt a hand of poker to see who would go and I won. The mission was a 'milk run' until on the way back the Group went over a flak battery and our B-24 took a direct hit in the bomb bay or close to it. The rubber fuel lines in the bomb bay and flight deck were ruptured and burst into flames. Fanned by the wind coming through the opening that had been blown out, the fire was a problem for anyone on the flight deck to escape. There was no chance to fly the 'wounded bird' as the flight controls were gone. I punched the alarm button for bail out and hit the #2 engine feathering switch and told the co-pilot, Lt. Vandergrift, to leave. The noise from the fire and the wind prevented any communications so it was every man for himself. I forced my way through the pilot's window and was blown over the top of the wing. I struck the tail and thought about whether I had buckled my parachute on. I had, and I pulled the rip cord, swung three times and hit the ground with a thud, injuring my feet and ankles. One odd note in the episode was that Vandergrift had started out between the seats into the fire when he saw I was trying to go out the window. He turned to try going through his window when he noticed that his side of the airplane had a hole big enough to get through without any effort so he left that way.

"I was apprehended by German soldiers and taken to a hospital in Skoplje under Bulgarian control, but is now a part of Yugoslavia. Three members of my crew, Ned Paul, Vandergrift and Reese shared a room with me and one other American who had been shot down earlier and was shot and wounded after he landed. The treatment was bad and we were told on the fifth day that all ambulatory prisoners would be taken to a camp in eastern Bulgaria and those who could not walk would be sent to Germany for treatment. Although my ankles were still bad and painful, I received assistance from my crew members to walk out of the hospital. There was no way I was going to Germany if I could avoid it. We were taken to a military compound where we met other 455th crew members who had been shot down by fighters the same day. We were then taken to Sofia, Yugoslavia in a large truck with soldiers sitting in the rear pointing guns at us for the entire trip. When we arrived, we were confined to a large prison which held political and Jewish prisoners as well as downed flyers. The next evening, the American prisoners were taken by train to the POW camp at Shumen, Bulgaria which is approximately 50 miles from the Black Sea. The camp, on a small mountain, had one large building surrounded by rolls of barbed wire. A small building 14' x 14' was in the compound for the commandant's office. Other 455th POW's were there with Major Walter Smith the ranking officer in charge of the Americans. Additionally, Squadron Leader Cyril Clark was the ranking RAF Officer and beyond that we had Dutch, New Zealanders, Polish, Australians, South Africans, Canadians and Yugoslavians as POW's I was the ranking officer and was placed in charge so I appointed Major Smith as my deputy.

"After settling into the camp routine, I began to make a few discoveries. Squadron Leader Clark informed me in strict confidence that he was a British Intelligence Agent and had been parachuted into Greece early in the war to organize resistance movements and had been running from the Gestapo ever since. He was on the verge of being captured when he put on a RAF uniform and claimed he was a flyer that had been shot down. They were skeptical but since he was in uniform they did not shoot him. We started hearing rumors of the approaching Russians and the Bulgarians were concerned about what would happen to them in their hands. They started negotiating for their surrender. The Germans were leaving in the west and pulling out of Greece and parts of Yugoslavia. We were asked to send one officer to Sofia to help arrange for our transfer there. I sent Major Smith.

"With this developing, Squadron Leader Clark suggested that it might be better if we got out before the Russians liberated us and took us to Russia. The main gate was not visible from the commandant's office and Clark proposed that just before dark at lock-up time when all POW's were confined to the large building, we would wait until the last man was inside and then walk from the direction of the commandant's office through the main gate as though we had permission from him to leave. I had had enough bad food and prison life, so I was ready to try anything. There were three of us: Clark; B-24 pilot Ivan Korsha who could speak five languages and acted as our interpreter; and myself. A change of guard shift was occurring and we

Continued on Page 16

Continued from Page 15

were never challenged. We made our way down the mountain into the town of Shumen. We headed straight for the garrison and were stopped for the first time by a guard. Korsha told him we wanted to see the commandant immediately. We were ushered into his office where Squadron Leader Clark began a tirade about the poor conditions at the POW camp and what we would tell the Russians when they arrived. Korsha translated and Clark told me to repeat what he had said and make it as strong as I liked. I pounded the desk as Clark had and again Korsha translated what I had said. The commandant looked at us for a long time and finally reached in the drawer of his desk and took out a bottle of wine and some cheese, and offered us a drink. He promised to put the prisoners and us on a train that night and send all to Sofia where prison conditions would be better. Trucks would be sent for the 350 POW's to leave at midnight. We then had some wine and cheese. The commandant asked me to write a letter telling the Russians that he had been most cooperative with us in getting out of prison. I told him that I would as soon as I arrived in Sofia.

"At 12 o'clock that night we, all 350, were on the train heading for Sofia. The train conductor led Clark, Korsha and me to a compartment occupied by a Maria Popov. This was 19 September 1944. We agreed that we should not go to the unknown in Sofia. Our first stop was early morning at a town called Turnova. Clark suggested we try our same routine on the station master and by the middle of the morning, all were on the way south headed for the Black Sea and Turkey. We passed through several towns and Major Smith caught up with us at Svelengrad. It seemed the people in control of POW's were as anxious to get rid of them as we were to leave.

"Before crossing the border, we changed trains and the U.S. Military Attache from Ankara met us as we entered Turkey. Accommodations progressively improved. We traveled along the Greek border and at one town, we were serenaded by the local citizens by singing the Star Spangled Banner. We arrived in Istanbul where we stayed for several nights on a ship and got most welcome hot showers. I had my first decent meal since starting on the fateful mission in August. We then boarded a deluxe train bound for Allepo, Syria. From there, the Air Transport Command flew us to Cairo where we were dusted for lice and again had most welcome hot showers. We were placed in virtual detention for screening for foreigners. I convinced the camp commander that he should give the men some money and a little freedom to avoid problems of unrest. He gave everyone a $24 advance on their back pay and some time off the base to the delight of the men. The following day, Smith, Clark and one other officer were driven to a British Intelligence base near Alexandria to be debriefed. Everyone was delighted to see that Clark had survived from his long British agent activities.

"About three or four days later, the 15th Air Force sent a flight of B-24's and flew us to Bari, Italy. We were home on 25 September 1944, just 30 days after flying that fateful mission. General Twining and 455th people met us with a hearty welcome. Major Al Coons of our Group was extremely surprised to see me as I had not been heard from since the day of the mission. My next move was to return to the Group, pick up my booze and clothing and head for home, the good-ole USA. I accomplished one more act, that of celebration with the booze Col. Cool rescued for me the day I did not return. During the course of the evening, I distinguished myself by blowing up the underground grain storage pits with gasoline which threw debris throughout the area. Everyone believed we were under an air attack. I didn't have many clothes but enough to get me to Naples and on a ship before Cool learned who had done the awful deed."

It is this author's (ASCH) view that Hugh Graff was like the Pied Piper leading 350 men to safety, a feat they will always remember. You 455th Group readers now know who the person was that blew up the centuries-old underground grain storage bins which frightened the hell out of everyone.

CAN YOU IDENTIFY THIS 455TH PILOT?



Without an address label on the back of the photo it's hard to identify and then return original photos to their contributor. If you can identify this 455th pilot, let me know. I'm sure that he will want this treasured memory back.

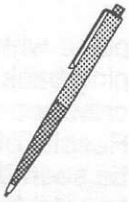


A HOLIDAY WISH

"Marge and I wish for you and your families a most Happy Holiday Season and good health in the New Year."

Ed Riggs

Gus Wendt Writes–



I want to thank you for the picture. I had forgotten about it. Also, I want to thank you for seeing to it that the "Cerignola Connection" is sent out. Too many of these wonderful things are taken for granted, even tho they are appreciated by many. I'm convinced that the Cerignola Connection is the glue that keeps the 455th BG Assn together.

While I was talking to you, I mentioned that there were some stories connected with this photo. (The photo was taken in Tonopah, NV in March 1944) I have been able to locate all of my officers. My Navigator, Puizlat (sp?), left the crew about a week before we shipped out for Italy as a replacement crew. His father became critically ill and he went home on emergency leave. He was replaced by Bill Crim.

As for their status today, I know the following. I retired from the USAF in 1966, and I now live in Sierra Vista, AZ. Lou Newfield (co-pilot) retired from the USAF in the early 1970s. He now lives in Walnut Creek, CA. (A few days ago, on the 19th of July, I went to his 50th Wedding Anniversary party). Bill Crim became an Engineer (graduating from Purdue) and worked for Martin. He is now retired and lives in Boulder, CO. Jim Scott lives in New Brownsfel, TX. He had his own glass contracting business. He is now retired and the business is run by his son.

I haven't been successful in locating any of the enlisted crew. I do know that all except Alton Smith were assigned to Barney Keogh. On that rough Moosebierbaum mission on 26 Jun 1944, Barneys' plane collided with a German fighter and they all bailed out immediately. My former radio operator and gunner, Harold Watson, gave me a letter to mail to his girl friend, Dabnie Little, if anything should happen to him. Well, I mailed the letter. About six months later I got a letter from Miss Little and it explained that Harolds' folks had received news from the Red Cross that Harold was a prisoner of war in Germany. I sort of took this with a grain of salt. I had talked to many and they all said nobody bailed out of that plane and they followed it down until it exploded.

In 1950, I was a meteorologist at Kadena AB on Okinawa. When the Korean War started, I was designated the Staff Weather Officer for the 19th Bomb Group. They were working my tail off and I was waiting for help in the form of more forecasters. One day orders came showing several weather officers were to arrive in a couple of days. One of them was a Benard Keogh. Needless to say, I made it a point to meet this Keogh fellow immediately after he arrived. Sure enough, it was the same red-headed guy and we talked a lot about his experiences. Barney explained that they bailed out immediately after being struck. Apparently, everyone was very busy and missed that. They followed the plane down after the crew had bailed out. (Remember, one heck of a fight was going on in the air.) Barney retired from the Air Force and today he lives in Boulder, CO during the summer, and in Mesa, AZ in the winter. We still get together frequently. Unfortunately, for the last several years his wife must constantly be on oxygen. Thus his traveling is limited.

Well, Tom, that's my story. And all these memories were recalled by that picture you sent to me. Again, keep up the good work.

Gus

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

Mission 78, July 15 The 15th Air Force and 304th Wing were back in the oil business. We were assigned Wing lead to bomb the Dacia Romano Oil Refinery At Ploesti, Rumania. The target was smoke covered so the Group bombed by pathfinder methods. The results were very good as we could still see smoke when we were 50 miles from the target. Flak at the target was very intense and accurate. We lost two aircraft to flak and 20 crewmen were missing in action.

Mission 79, July 16 We sent 28 B-24's loaded with fragmentation bombs to bomb the Airdrome at Munchendorf, Austria. The target was completely covered by clouds so the planes brought their bombs back to base. All planes returned safely.

Mission 80, July 17 We briefed to bomb the east marshalling yards at Avignon, France. Twenty-nine B-24's from the 455th carrying ten 500# GP bombs dropped them on the target with excellent results. The flak in the target area was very intense and accurate. We lost one aircraft to flak and ten crewmen were missing in action. All the other planes returned safely to base.

Mission 81, July 20 We were briefed to bomb the Maybach Aircraft Engine Factory at Fredrichhaven, Germany. Thirty-seven B-24's loaded with 500# GP bombs dropped 328 of them on the target. The results could not be observed as there was too much smoke in the target area from earlier bombing. Flak in the target area was heavy and intense, but we suffered no losses and all planes returned to base safely.

Mission 82, July 21 Thirty-one B-24's loaded with 1,000# GP bombs were sent to bomb the Brux Oil Refinery in Czechoslovakia. This was our first mission to this area and the reception there was no different than any other well-defended target. The flak was very heavy and intense; we lost one of our planes. This one had a squadron commander aboard. Horace Lanford of the 741st Squadron. They were last seen falling behind the formation and no chutes were seen. (This crew escaped through the help of the Partisans and returned to fly again.)

Mission 83, July 22 This was another all-out effort by the 15th Air Force with 1,105 aircraft participating in the raid on the oil refineries at Ploesti, Rumania. The 455th effort was directed toward the Romano Americano Oil Refinery and 28 B-24's loaded with 1,000#

Continued on Page 18

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GP bombs dropped their bombs by pathfinder methods. The results were not observed as smoke and clouds covered the target area. The flak as usual was heavy and accurate, but we came through without any losses. Unfortunately, on the way back to base, two aircraft collided and we lost two aircraft and 20 crewmen; a real tragedy.

Mission 84, July 25 Twenty-five B-24's loaded with 1,000# GP bombs were briefed to bomb the Herman Goering Tank Works at Linz, Austria. Flak at the target was very heavy and intense, and many of the planes received damage. One aircraft was so badly shot up that the crew was forced to abandon their plane. Fortunately, they parachuted over friendly territory and all were safe and returned to base though somewhat later than the rest of the crews.

Mission 85, July 27 We were briefed to bomb the marshalling yards and the Manfried Weiss Armament Works at Budapest, Hungary. Twenty-eight B-24's loaded with 500# incendiary bombs were the last group in the Wing formation. Not only was the target obscured by smoke but the fighters were waiting for us as well as the usual flak. We were attacked by as many as 90 enemy fighters and they were very aggressive. We had a running battle for over 30 minutes. We lost five planes in the battle and 51 crewmen were missing in action, one of our biggest losses to date. We claimed 17 enemy fighters shot down with 14 probables. Seven of our planes received serious damage from flak and fighters, and two more suffered slight damage.

Mission 86, July 28 This day we sent 19 B-24's loaded with 500# GP bombs to bomb the Astro Romano Oil Refinery at Ploesti, Rumania. We dropped 49 tons on the target area by pathfinder methods. While the flak at the target was intense and heavy, we managed to come through without casualties.

Mission 87, July 31 We had a whole weekend of rest, and on Monday we sent 25 B-24's loaded with 500# RDX bombs to the Oil Storage area at Mogasaia near Bucharest. The target area was well covered by bombs as we bombed by visual methods for a change. Flak was very heavy in the target area and many planes received damage. One of the planes had its hydraulic system shot out and ended up over the hill at the end of our runway, "totaled."

July ended our sixth month of combat with some impressive numbers. We flew 17 missions with 525 planes over the target. We dropped a total of 1,110 tons of bombs and shot down 20 enemy aircraft with 16 probables. We lost 23 aircraft and 121 crewmen missing in action. We also lost three crewmen killed in action and many more wounded. This was a rough month of combat for the Group.

AUGUST 1944

The start of the month of August promised a lot of good flying weather. That meant more and longer missions. Longer daylight hours didn't mean the ground crews wouldn't work longer hours, they worked long enough hours as it was, it just meant that they would be able to work in the daylight. The object of our missions had not changed. It was still oil, oil, and more oil! Along with that, we would be asked to help in the invasion of southern France. On the 3rd of August we began our seventh month of combat.

Mission 88, August 3 We loaded 34 B-24's with 500# GP bombs to bomb the Zahnrad-Fabric Works in Friedrichshafen, Germany. Fabric here means metal fabrication, not cloth. The flak was not heavy but was very accurate and we lost one plane which was last seen dropping back over the Alps with ten crewmen missing in action. Results of the bombing could not be seen due to cloud-cover at the target.

Mission 89, August 6 We were back in the Oil Business but this time in France. Our target was the Port Herriot Oil Storage facilities at Lyon, France. We loaded 34 B-24's with 500# GP bombs and dropped over 83 tons on the target. Results were very good as we saw smoke rising from the target 30 minutes after leaving the area. Flak was moderate in the target area and no enemy fighters were seen. All planes returned safely.

Mission 90, August 7 Twenty-eight B-24's loaded with 500# GP bombs took off to bomb the Bleckhammer South Synthetic Oil Refinery at Glewitz, Germany. This was one of our longest missions to date and out longest into Germany. We ran into very little flak and no fighter opposition. What flak we encountered severely damaged two of our planes. The target was smoke-covered but we managed to bomb it successfully. Smoke was also seen at Budapest as we passed on the way back to base. All planes returned to base safely.

Mission 91, August 10 Our target was the Campino Stevea Romano Oil Refinery at Ploesti, Rumania. Although the flak was still awful at Ploesti we managed to come through without any casualties and dropped 64 tons of bombs on the target area. All planes returned safely.

Mission 92, August 12 We were briefed for a slightly different target for this day as we bombed gun positions in southern France along the coast. This signaled the start of another ground offensive. It was an easy mission as we encountered no opposition either from flak or fighters. All planes returned safely.

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Mission 93, August 13 Back to France again, this time it was the railroad bridge at Avignon. Thirty-five B-24's dropped over 82 tons of bombs, but again missed the bridge. Flak was very intense in the target area. We suffered no casualties but did have a few aircraft damaged by flak. All planes returned safely.

Mission 94, August 14 The targets that we received from the Wing and Air Force indicated that more is afoot than they will let on. We were to bomb gun emplacements in southern France. We sent 30 B-24's loaded with 1,000# GP bombs. The flak at the target was moderate and accurate but we came through without any casualties, only one plane had slight damage.

Mission 95, August 15 The Group experienced its first take-off and assembly at night. We assembled 25 B-24's carrying 100# GP bombs to attack beach position 263C in southern France. As we assembled we saw explosions from crashing 24's and 17's from other groups. Our hearts were beating much faster this night as we knew the invasion was on in southern France and we were all a part of it. Those who flew this mission will never forget the sight of all those Allied ships approaching the coast and the terrific bombardment that hit the coastline. We dropped our bombs and came back to base to await the news of the invasion.

Mission 96, August 17 With news that the invasion was a huge success, we returned to the business at hand. Our target for this day was the Romano Americano Oil Refinery at Ploesti, Rumania. Thirty B-24's took off loaded with 500# RDX bombs. Eight airplanes returned early with various malfunctions so that only 22 bombed the target. Flak at the target was, as usual, heavy and very intense. Seven FW - 190's attacked the formation but did not press their attacks. We lost two aircraft to flak and 20 crewmen were missing in action. Six airplanes received damage by flak.

Mission 97, August 18 We were back to Rumania again. This time we had as our target the Romano Oil Refinery at Stevea. We encountered flak en route to the target as well as in the target area. It varied from light to intense. We dropped our 500# bombs and returned to base with only one aircraft damaged by flak. No fighters were observed.

Mission 98, August 20 This was our third mission in a row on oil refineries. This time it was the refinery at Dubova, Czechoslovakia. Of the 30 B-24's we sent, only 21 dropped their bombs as "C" box was not able to line up on the target. As a result, they returned to base with their bombs. Flak at the target was light and not very accurate. All planes returned to base without any casualties.

Mission 99, August 21 We were sent to bomb the airdrome at Hadju Roszormeny, Hungary. Thirty B-24's loaded with fragmentation bombs took off but only 20 were able to bomb as the "C" box leader could not get his bomb bay doors open. These aircraft jettisoned their bombs over the Adriatic. No flak at the target nor fighters were seen, so it was a relatively easy mission.

Mission 100, August 22 For our hundredth mission they gave us a long and difficult one. Twenty-six B-24's carrying 500# GP bombs were to bomb the synthetic oil plant at Bleckhammer, Germany. Flak at the target was intense, accurate and heavy. We saw our first enemy jet at 1,000 feet above the formation but did not make any passes. We lost one of our aircraft to flak and ten crewmen were missing in action. It was our longest mission to date, seven hours and 45 minutes.

Mission 101, August 23 Twenty-six B-24's were briefed to bomb the railroad bridge at Ferrara, Italy. Planes were loaded with 1,000# GP bombs and we dropped 87 tons near the bridge. No hits were observed but the target must have been important as the flak was heavy, intense and accurate. We suffered damage to ten aircraft. Two aircraft landed at different bases as they could not make it back to home base.

Mission 102, August 24 Twenty-seven B-24's loaded with 500# RDX bombs attacked the Vacuum Oil Refinery at Kolin, Czechoslovakia. Bombing was accomplished visually with many bombs falling in the target area. There was no flak at the target and no enemy fighters were encountered. All planes returned to base safely, an easy mission for a change.

Mission 103, August 26 We were scheduled for the last time to the Ploesti area, this time to bomb the German barracks at the Baneasa Airdrome. Thirty B-24's loaded with 100# GP bombs hit the assigned target. This mission was the day following the "100th Mission Bash" and many of the men were a little under the weather but they responded as always. Flak at the target was nonexistent but flak was encountered along the route. Fighters attacked a straggler and we saw several chutes from that plane. We also lost the lead crew from the 743rd Squadron along with the Deputy Group Commander, Col. Hugh Graff, with 21 crewmen missing in action. It was later reported that 10,000 German troops were killed and numerous enemy aircraft destroyed by the 15th Air Force that day.

* * * * *

OUR CREWS

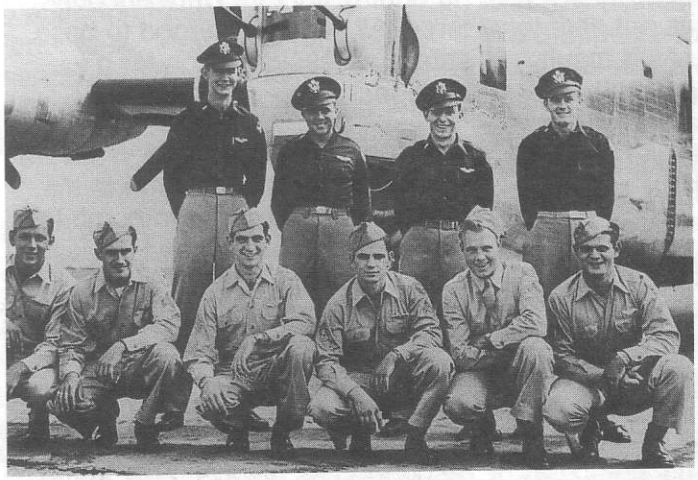
This new Cerignola Connection on-going series will include crew photos not presently in the group history "Flight of the Vulgar Vultures." Also included will be corrected photos and legend of those previously printed in error. If corrections are still necessary, please let your editor know.



Front row, l to r: Daniel Rhodes, waist gunner; Nathan Feig, ball turret gunner; Robert Bonds, radio operator; Frank Brady, waist gunner; John Wierman, tail turret gunner. Back row, l to r: Ethridge Preston, engineer; William Wilson, navigator; Lawrence Jaffe, bombardier; Ray Hermes, co-pilot; Clifford Kolberg, pilot. 740 SQUADRON



Front row, l to r: Frank Klepper, waist gunner; James Daly, waist gunner; Merle Pebley, engineer; Joseph Francis, ball turret gunner; Walter Besau, radio operator; Homer Blackwell, tail turret gunner. Back row, l to r: John Ward, bombardier; Lloyd Griffin, pilot; Donald Kruger, navigator; Robert Collette, co-pilot. 740 SQUADRON



Front row, l to r: James Middlesworth, George Campbell, Henry Molica, Orrin Glidden, Samuel Cantella. Back row, l to r: James Hill, navigator; Glenn Pratt, co-pilot; Roy Kirkland, pilot; Edward Drabeck, bombardier. 740 SQUADRON



J.C. Ellis crew: names and positions unidentified. 740 SQUADRON



Front row, l to r: Claud Boone, engineer; Price O'Riley, radio operator; Harry Brown, waist gunner; Elmer Churchill, tail turret gunner; Goldman Vici, ball turret gunner; Arthur Bodley, waist gunner. Back row, l to r: Murray A. Bramowitz, navigator; James Austin, bombardier; William Adkisson, co-pilot; James Bethune, pilot. 740 SQUADRON



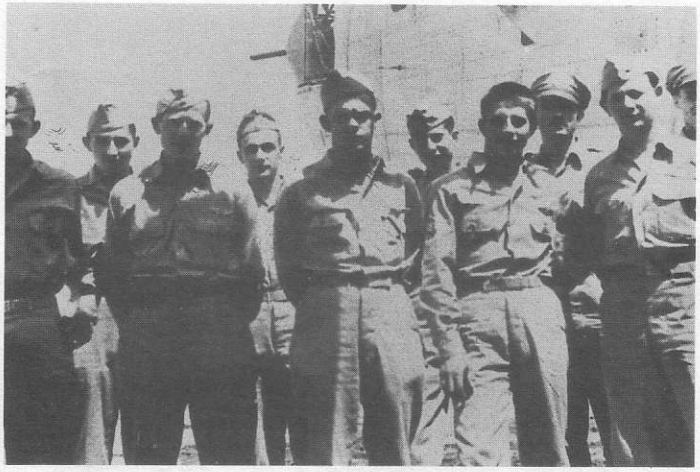
Front row, l to r: Robert Koutsky, ball turret gunner; Sheldon Towle, engineer; Charles Derock, radio operator; Robert Schwiesberger, waist gunner; Theodore Smitch, tail turret gunner; Paul Greland, waist gunner. Back row, l to r: William Moore, pilot; James Gall, bombardier; Richard Ennis, co-pilot; Leif Erickson, navigator. 740 SQUADRON



Front row, l to r: Anthony Brodeur, radio operator; Howard Blumberg, waist gunner; James Thomas, flight engineer; Kenneth Lacey, ball turret gunner. Back row, l to r: William Pelkey, top turret gunner; Chester Pratt, waist gunner; Kelly, pilot; Glen Nelson, bombardier; Charles Swanner, co-pilot. 742 SQUADRON



Front row, l to r: Jones, tail turret gunner; Verdier, nose turret gunner; Conrad, top turret gunner; Clark, ball turret gunner; Dolbee, radio operator; Beasley, engineer. Back row, l to r: Sauerwein, co-pilot; Le Clair, navigagator; Ditchett, pilot. Missing–Barshof, bombardier. 741 SQUADRON



Front row, l to r: Arthur Amborskik, ball turret gunner; Myron Ovens, radio operator; William McCoin, engineer; Donald Michaels, waist gunner; Sidney Weiss, tail turret gunner. Back row, l to r: Phillip York, waist gunner; Arthur Tilley, bombardier; Louis Friedberg, navigator; Louis Sims, co-pilot; Jack Montgomery, pilot. 741 SQUADRON



Front row, l to r: John Healy, waist gunner; Jack Bell, tail turret gunner; David Nelson, nose turret gunner; William Gallagher, waist gunner. Middle row, l to r: Lewis Price, belly turret gunner; Jim O'Connor, radio operator. Back row, l to r: Dayton Knowles, navigator; Donald Montgomery, pilot; Magnus Siegfried, co-pilot; John Billington, bombardier. 742 SQUADRON



Front row, l to r: Herschell Hamer, gunner; Charles Plicher, engineer; Brendan Gleason, navigator; Earl Schramer, gunner; Robert Adams, gunner; Alvin Brown, bombardier. Back row, l to r: Howard Shaffer, co-pilot; Carl Higginbotham, pilot; Elvin Davis, gunner; Robert Herendeen, radio operator. 741 SQUADRON



Front row, l to r: Charles Pilcher, engineer; Robert Herendeen, radio operator; Elvin Davis, gunner; Earl Schramer, gunner; Robert Adams, gunner; Herschell Hamer, gunner. Back row, l to r: George McCord, pilot; Howard Shaffer, co-pilot; Brendan Gleason, navigator; Alvin Brown, bombardier. 742 SQUADRON



Front row, l to r: Gerald Wagner, radio operator; Joe Young; Bob Belding; Curtis Diles, waist gunner; Leland Porter, tail turret gunner; Randolph Schmidt, engineer. Back row, l to r: Joe Perkins; William Crawford, pilot; Gimmel; Harry Jordan. 741 SQUADRON



Front row, l to r: Henry Hutchings, nose turret gunner; J. W. Alford, engineer; Francis McPartlan, belly turret gunner; Earl Toll, radio operator; Richard Bales, tail turret gunner; Ira Nutter, waist gunner. Back row, l to r: Henry Moreman, pilot; Kenneth Pearson, co-pilot; Anthony Corsello navigator; Russell Di Mattieo, bombardier. 741 SQUADRON



Front row, l to r: John Noske, co-pilot; next two positions unknown; Hatherly, engineer. Back row, l to r: Richard Carens, bombardier; Bob Evans, navigator. Balance unknown. 741 SQUADRON



Front row, l to r: Brewen, Shropshire, Kopple, Spencer, Dobez. Back row, l to r: Joe Dolinsky, Ruyter, Ostrander, Shostack. 741 SQUADRON



Front row, l to r: A. Swinney, Thomas Abbye, Walter Kelly, James Allen, Aplin. Back row, l to r: Bob Baker, Carson Hughes, John Matrangos, August Altese. 741 SQUADRON



Front row, l to r: Alton Smith, engineer; Stanley Lundquist, waist gunner; Harold Watson, waist gunner; William C. Logue, ball turret gunner; Alfred Puslat, tail turret gunner; Fred Dendy, radio operator. Back row, l to r: James Scott, bombardier; Paul Puslat, navigator; Lou Newfield, co-pilot; Gustav Wendt, pilot. 741 SQUADRON



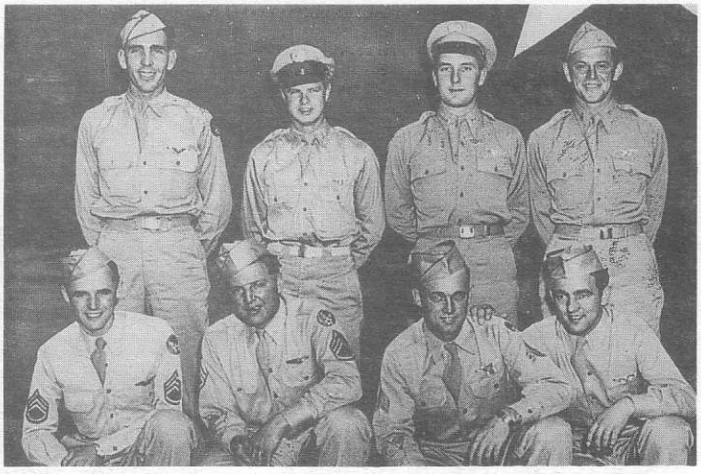
Front row, l to r: Herman Guillory, nose turret gunner; Albino Wesolowski, engineer; R. W. Johnson, waist gunner; Fred Hamilton, radio operator; M. G. Green, tail turret gunner; Eli Kaplan, ball turret gunner. Back row, l to r: Marvin Arbit, bombardier; Bertrand Peterson, co-pilot; Unknown, navigator; Byman Bensinger, pilot.
740 SQUADRON



Front row, l to r: Martinaz, bombardier; Mike Mullineaux, pilot; Red Brennerman, co-pilot; Alexander Schooc, navigator. Back row, l to r: Glen Chapman, tail turret gunner; Norman Hoffman, nose turret gunner; Roger Housman, engineer; Eugene Nunnally, radio operator; Ray Vistart, waist gunner; Roman Chemulaski, ball turret gunner.
743 SQUADRON



Front row, l to r: Charles Mc Mullen, radio operator; Fred Vessel, nose turret gunner; Carl Otto, ball turret gunner; Edward Chapoutian, tail turret gunner; Hershel Shaffer, waist gunner. Back row, l to r: Harry Wade, co-pilot; Leonard Kusawa, bombardier; Nathan White, navigator; Robert Kafka, pilot. 741 SQUADRON



Front row, l to r: Walter Galloway; John Cichon; James Choate; Anthony Schrim. Not shown: Guy Champany and Walter Disrude. Back row, l to r: William Hall, pilot; David Ridgley, co-pilot; Robert Hines, bombardier; Russ Felzer, navigator. 743 SQUADRON



Front row, l to r: Craven, tail turret gunner; Philip Root, co-pilot; Red Meade, bombardier; Lester Pinkley, pilot; Theodore Skroback, ball turret gunner. Back row, l to r: Hans Von Swarts, interpreter; Charles Glaeser, nose turret gunner; Paul Peters, waist gunner; James Henderson, engineer; Red Coyle, radio operator.
741 SQUADRON



Front row, l to r: Robert Ludeman, navigator; Fred White, bombardier; John Helbig, pilot; Irving Warhaftig, co-pilot. Back row, l to r: Joseph Wooley, radio operator; William Heitkamp, tail turret gunner; John Magee, nose turret gunner; Richard Kuhnz, ball turret gunner; Adam Czarnatowicz, engineer; Warren Pulver, waist gunner.
743 SQUADRON

NOTES FROM YOUR EDITOR

Just when everything was going fine Ma Bell decided to change our area code, this effective July 26, 1997. Note in the masthead of this issue, your Editor's new number is 920-731-2500.

* * * *

We miss hearing from you. Keep sending your war stories and other contributions. I'll get as many in the next issue of the Cerignola Connection as possible. If you are sending photos, put your name and address label on the back of the photo so these can be returned to you after printing.. If you have copies of group or squadron newsletters these are welcome and make enjoyable reading for everyone. Make a copy or I'll return your original.

$ $ $ $

Dues notices are not mailed each year as they become due. We do this in order to save on postage and mailing costs. We rely entirely on your memory for payment. As you read this issue, ask yourself, "Did I send in my dues check?" And if you didn't stop for just a moment and do it today! Annual dues are: $15, payable November 1 of the preceding year. Life memberships, $100. Make your check payable to the 455th Bomb Group Association and mail it to: **Louis Hansen, P.O. Box 286, Spencer, Iowa 51301.**

If you are not a member of the Association and receive a complimentary copy of the Cerignola Connection and would like to support the publication, send your check to **Louis Hansen, P.O. Box 286, Spencer, Iowa 51301**, and indicate it as a contribution.

* * * *

I have crew pictures and no address to forward them on to. If you have an address, let me know. They'll be in the mail the next day.

Bill Adams
Blankenship
Bob Baker
Jack Montgomery
Carl Higginbotham

* * * *



About photographs – your editor cannot use copy machine copies of photographs. These will not duplicate well. Send me a copy print or even better the original. Place your address label on the back and I'll return these to you just as soon as printing is accomplished. Unfortunately some of the submitted stories would have been much better had original photographs been included. And crew photos have been left out because copy machine copies were supplied.

Thought for the day...

IF GOD IS YOUR CO-PILOT... CHANGE SEATS!

* * * *

The Cerignola Connection is published twice yearly, occasionally more often. All mistakes, errors in spelling, grammar, punctuation, names and references are strictly the fault of the computer and not of the editor.

* * * *





May this holiday season bring you and yours a bountiful Thanksgiving and a most blessed Christmas.

Ed





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