CERIGNOLA CONNECTION

455th Bomb Group Association Newsletter

Fall 2000 – Editor, Tom Ramey, 1211 Montclaire Ct., Appleton, WI 54915 (920) 731-2500

The 2001 455th Bomb Group Association Reunion Will be Held at St. Louis

All the votes have been tabulated and you have chosen St. Louis for the location of our next reunion. A total of 47 votes were cast. The final count gives 27 votes to St. Louis; 9 votes for the Orlando area; 10 votes to Minneapolis/St. Paul; 4 votes for Houston and 2 votes for Dearborn.

So our next reunion will be held at St. Louis in early October 2001. The 2001 Spring issue of the Cerignola Connection will have the required registration and hotel room reservation forms. In addition, there will be a schedule of local sight seeing trips that you may want to sign up for.

We received several letters suggesting other places, or complaining about the sites that were chosen. However, although the suggestions and complaints may have been perfectly valid, we could only count votes for the locations chosen by our members at the San Diego bi-annual meeting.

At our St. Louis reunion we will discuss several locations for the 2003 reunion, and then vote to select the top five or six sites. These sites will be then presented to the membership for a vote to select the site of our 2003 reunion.

We now have had reunions on both coasts and several in the central U.S. Experience has shown that we have bigger turnouts when the reunion is held in the central U.S., so lets make the next reunion, in St. Louis a great one. There is sure a lot of things to see and do in St. Louis.

See you in St. Louis for the 2001 reunion of the 455th Bomb Group.

From Your President

Once again I am privileged to greet all members of the 455th Bomb Group Association family. My wife, Dorothy, and I wish all of you good or improved health, and good fortune.

Many events have taken place since my last communication. Amongst the most notable was the excellent response to Gus Wendt's and my appeal, to hear from the members who had not communicated with the association for years. This, and the changes in the life membership requirements, voted on at the last reunion, have led many to become life members this past year. It was my honor to issue your membership card and certificate.

Members of the 455th Bomb Group Association have received a request from Stephen Ambrose for their personal World War II experiences. This notable and respected historian is writing a book about the Fifteenth Air Force and the B-24. I understand the 455th Bomb Group will represent the Fifteenth Air Force and the Liberator in this book. The Fifteenth and the Liberator have stood, too long, in the shadow of the Eighth Air Force and the B-17. The Eighth and the B-17 played a great role in the victory over the Axis. However, we of the Fifteenth and the Liberator; added in a significant and telling way, to the Nazi defeat in Europe. The Eighth lacked range to attack targets vital to Germany. These were primarily oil and aircraft targets. We destroyed them, and secured dominance of air, essential for our victory. It is time this story is told.

The 455 B.G. Associations prime objective is to preserve our history and heritage. I urge everyone without delay, to submit to Dr. Ambrose, his contribution of this history. Dr. Ambrose is nearing the end of his research for this book and will soon be writing it, so hurry.

I observed this past Memorial Day in Columbia Missouri, at a reunion with members of The Air Forces Escape and Evasion Society. The AFEES membership consists of airmen who evade or escape capture after being forced out into enemy territory. AFEES purpose is to acknowledge, recognize and honor the civilians who risked life and property to help these airmen. About thirty Helpers attend each reunion. Recent reunions have included a greater number of Helpers from the Balkans. If you meet the above requirements and wish to join AFEES contact: **Membership Chairman Clayton David at 19 Oak Ridge Pond RD, P.O. Box 9554, Hannibal MO, 63401-9554.**

Your officers are at work for the group reunion in the new millennium. Plans for the next reunion will start soon, based on the member's votes to select the reunion location. I welcome your ideas and suggestions, and look forward to your support. You can have pride in our organization.

Frank Lashinsky

455th E-Mail Roster

Below is a listing of e-mail address' of 455th members that were sent to us for publication in the Cerignola Connection.
*Indicates a new listing since last published in the Cerignola Connection. If you want your e-mail address included in this roster, please send it to us;
**455th Bomb Group Assn, Inc.;
P.O. Box 4043
Sierra Vista AZ 85636-4043.**

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

Jack Blum (741), New Port Richey, FL. **jblum 15677@aol.com**

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

Robert Caldwell (741st), Prescott Valley, AZ. **rc7306@aol.com**

Howard Cooper, Staton Island, NY. **howgladcoop@worldnet.att.net**

Robert (Bob) Collette, St. Petersburg, FL. **dotybob1@juno.com**

* James A. Cowden, (742) Tascaloosa, AL. **jcowden@earth-link.net**

William (Bill) Crim (741), Lakewood, CO. **brcrim@aol.com**

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

Curtis Diles (740), Dayton, OH. **curtis-diles@prodigy.net**

Paul H. Ditchett, (742), Safety Harbor, FL. **paul546@juno.com**

Bob Emick (741), Battle Creek, MI. **rfemick@aol.com**

James A. Fedewa (740), Dunnellon, FL. **jcfedewa@cs.com**

William B. Gemmill (740), McAllen, TX. **geml@laguna.com.mx**

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

Lou Hansen (743), Spencer, IA. **lohansen@nwiowa.com**

Harvey Hewit (743), Haverford, PA. **lhhew@aol.com**

Thomas L. Kablack (742), Crown Point, IN. **techmart@mail.icongrp.com**

* Milton Kaplan (743), Croton, NY. **mkaplin@bestweb.net**

Erling Kindem (742), Farmington, MN. **erlingk@aol.com**

Jack Lancaster (742), Clovis, NM. **mandj@3lefties.com**

* George L. Liddle (742), Sun City, CA. **olgeorge@e32.net**

* Dave Matheson (742), Harrison, AR. **hatebugs@northarkansas.net**

* Vic Murray (743), Longwood, FL **dhmurray@mindspring.com**

Robert E. Newberg (743), West Des Moines, IA. **newy7aces@home.com**

Charles Oltarzewski (740), Gallatin, TN. **murphB24@aol.com**

* Roland J. Pepin (741), Johnston, RI. **pep4400@aol.com**

* Jack Phelps (740), Dallas, TX. **B7606@ix.netcom.com**

Wesley Powell (740), Seabrook TX. **wesjulia@gateway.net**

Sid Schoengold (740), Monroe, TWP, NJ. **harsid1@juno.com**

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

Walt Shostack (741), Dayton, OH. **shirlystack@compuserve.com**

Charles E. Stark, (740), Pittsburg, PA. **Carchar@aol.com**

(Dr.) Stanley Vogelfang (741), Houston, TX. **stanvog@aol.com**

FINAL FLIGHTS

Lou Dolan, 7/99
Captain, 740th Squadron

Ned Paul, 4/14/2000
Lt, 743rd Squadron

Everett B. Crumpler, 1999
C/M Sgt., 740th Squadron

J.W. Scott Jr. 2/12/2000
Bombardier, 741st Squadron

William C. Parker Jr., 8/7/99
Ex-POW
Bombardier, 743rd Squadron

Raymond F. Root, 2000
742nd Squadron

Joseph Hunt, 1/1999
740th Squadron

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

A Special Salute To a Grand Lady!

If you met her or even just talked to her on the phone, Marjorie Riggs was a grand lady. She was a loving wife and mother, an accomplished artist and seamstress, and a friend to many. Marjorie was deeply involved in volunteer work and the Presbyterian Women's Association. Our hearts go out to Ed Riggs and his family. Marjorie filled a special place here on earth and she will in Heaven, too. Ed would like to thank all members of the 455th who called, sent flowers, or wrote.

History, Is History!

The last 455th BG history book has been shipped – no more are available. 490 books were printed with a "break even" cost. An additional rerun is not anticipated. This was not a revised or updated edition. But a re-run of the original. 880 books were printed on the first printing making a total of 1,370 books in hands of members, relatives, and certain libraries.

Unfortunately all members of the 455th BG are not listed in the roll call section. What names listed came from old orders, pams, and memory. No record existed of the over 4,000 individuals assigned to the 455th at one time or another.

Things You Didn't Know...

Americans on average eat 18 acres of pizza every day.

American Airlines saved $40,000 in 1987 by eliminating one olive from each salad served in first-class.

Reunion of the Vulgar Vultures
By: Susan Gemmill

The men remind one another they had all been thinner then, young and eager to serve. The laughter in their throats barely contains the memory alive in their eyes.

They trained in Khakis in the brave Texas sun. Bill jokes about the endless drills in the Sepia desert. Joe recalls mesquite trees, barbs-in-waiting impaling an unwitting cadet who climbed for a view of anything but the surrounding bleakness.

Faces tighten as officers talk their way back to Cadet graduation, silver wings and deep brown leather flight jackets.

Faint echoes of raids on Ploesti, Vienna, Trieste, Innsbruck ride on the crews voices. Fear stalks then bravery takes a spin in the nose, shuffles through the waist brushes by Ritt in the tail.

Mike rescues the bombardier low on air, out on the catwalk. Losing oil, Wes feathers number one. Murph Coaxes the remaining engines over the Alps then home.

Ordering another whiskey, they softly remind themselves of those early days when it was easy to be eager.

Ed- Susan Gemmill is writing a book and the above submission is part of her introduction to the text. We are pleased to publish it.

A Tid Bit From Reid Peck

I've never seen mentioned that part of the 455th trained at Scotts Bluff, Nebraska. Maybe you could mention this in the Cerignola Connection and get some response.

From Richard Cramer



I am writing in behalf of my father Dallas W. Cramer who was a member of the 742nd. He was a waist gunner. On a mission on Aug 17, 1944, his plane was shot down over Romania after a bombing run on Ploesti.

After parachuting from his burning plane, in which he received severe burns on his hands and face, he landed a top a farm house which was being used as a field HQ. He was immediately captured and remained a POW until the end of the war.

He is on your mailing list and receives your newsletter and he recently purchased a bomb group history. He was extremely pleased with it's preparation and content. I also was impressed. I am an Air Force veteran, having spent 24 years in the service of my country. I am a Vietnam and Desert Storm veteran. When I look back on the history and stories of the 455th it makes me proud of my Dad and his contributions and sacrifices that he made as a member of the Army Air Corps.

Thank you for all the efforts you have put forth to bring forth the achievements of the 455th Bomb Group. I wish you continued success.

Richard Cramer

American GI Honored

The House of Representatives unanimously passed a resolution proposed by Rep. Robin Hayes (R-N.C.) naming the American GI the "Person of the Century."

"The spirit of the American GI – soldier, sailor, airman, and marine – that can-do spirit is why we honor today the American GI as the citizen of the century," said Hayes.

A portion of the text of H. Con. Res, 282 reads, "Whereas in large measure due to the heroic efforts of the American GI, more people around the world enjoy the benefits of freedom at the end of the 20th century than at any other time in history."

Roland Pepin Still Looking for a Crew Picture

If it strikes a hot button please let Roland know at– **7 Red Oak Drive RI 02919 or e-mail pep4400@aol.com**. The only crew names he is positive of are:

Pilot	Lt. Barnhill	Texas
Co-Pilot	Lt. Haselett	Ohio
Navigator	Lt. Pepin	RI
Bombardier	Lt. Duncan	PA
Radio Operator	Sgt Morello	MA

There's Always Time for Humor



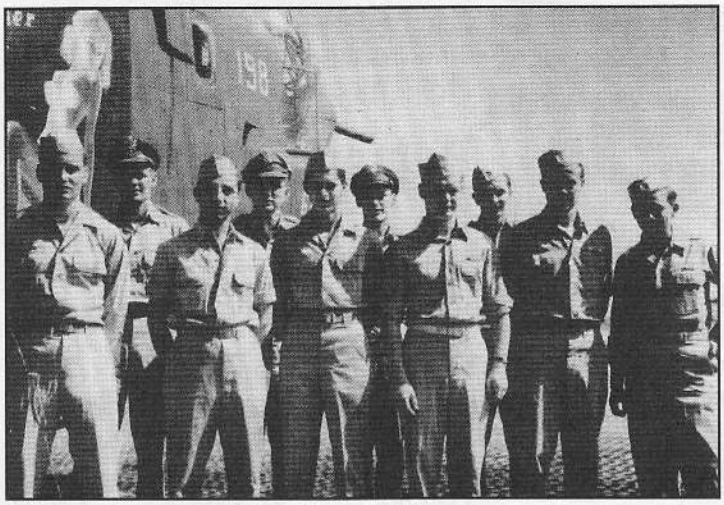
Having gotten all of her children off to school, the young mother proceeded to clean her house from top to bottom. About 2 p.m. she was ready to collapse, so she poured herself a double bourbon, downed it in one gulp and relaxed on the living room sofa. At 2:45 p.m., her 6-year-old daughter was the first to return from school. She ran into the house, threw her arms around her reclining mother and gave her a big kiss, but immediately leaned back and exclaimed, "Mother…you're wearing Daddy's perfume.

More Things You Didn't Know…

Some lions mate over 50 times a day

The ant always falls over on its right side when intoxicated.

The words racecar and kayak are the same whether they are read left to right or right to left.



Front Row L to R: S/Sgt Liddle, T/Sgt Rosa, S/Sgt Theodore, S/Sgt Hoey, T/Sgt Behn, S/Sgt Murray. Second Row, L to R: F/O Donelon, Lt Naler, Lt Drummond, Lt Leonhard.



Front Row L to R: Martin Maurer (pilot), Harold Tigert (co-pilot) Verle Caple (navigator), Bill Freiheit (bombardier) Back Row L to R: Joe Ferbanis (flt. engineer), Ray Chlan (radio op), John Vojko (gunner), Charles Gulley (assistant flt. engr.), Earnest Olsowsky (gunner, Henry Everhart (gunner)

Youngest Age-Shooter

Weather permitting, Emmett Ledbetter of Jackson, Tenn., plays golf five or six times a week, riding in the summer and walking in the winter. Ledbetter shot his age, 63, on Sept 24, 1988, at the 6,099 yard Humboldt, Tenn Golf and Country Club. He's still in there swinging and at 76 still shoots around 80, plus or minus. Emmett is a 455th member.

Roger Caple Writes–

I noted with interest the story by Al Cratch in the fall 1999 issue of the Cerignola Connection. He stated that he was a member of Capt. Clifford Norgard's crew that was shot down over Rumania on April 21, 1944 while flying the B-24 "The Captain and his kids: I was the navigator of the crew that picked up this plane at Mitchell Field, New York and flew it to Cerignola via the South America – North Africa route, arriving at San Giovanni Field on April 14, 1944. Our pilot was Martin Maurer. Upon arriving there we were assigned to the 743rd Squadron. We were disappointed in not being able to keep the plane we had delivered to the 455th. I was aware that it had been shot down but didn't remember that it was just one week after we had arrived there. If anyone got a picture of it before it met its doom, I would appreciate receiving a copy of it.

We were later assigned our own plane which we named "The Piecemaker and Her Ten Aids." When I left the 455th in July 1944 it was still flying missions. Should anyone know of its fate after I left, I would also appreciate receiving that information.

Roger Caple
2652 Fir
Longview, WA 98632

POW's Come Forward!

From time to time your editor has requested 455th members who were POW's to submit stories to the Cerignola Connection. These should be on the lighter side. To date we've had no coverage on these experiences of 455th POW's. I'm sure this would be of interest to all our readers. Send yours to the address on the mast head.

John Skelton is Still Building!

Remember the Cerignola Connection article about the house that John built in Italy, on base, during our stay there. Received a letter from John, complete with pictures, of all the building projects John has completed currently, and John has just recorded 89 years. Guess I'd better get my tool kit out.

Ed

Rules to Live By–

1. Follow your dream! Unless it's the one where you're at work in your underwear during a fire drill.
2. Always take time to stop and smell the roses and sooner or later, you'll inhale a bee.
3. Do not walk behind me, for I may not lead. Do not walk ahead of me, for I may not follow. Do not walk beside me, either. Just leave me alone.
4. If you don't like my driving, don't call anyone. Just take another road. That's why the highway department made so many of them.



Your Help Is Needed!

George Folk is looking for members of his 743rd Squadron crew. If you can identify any of them let George know at: ***205 Pine St., Bambarg, SC 29003-1428****. George flew as a belly turret gunner.*



George Folk being congratulated and awarded the DFC by Lt. Colonel William Snowden, 455th Group Commander.



This picture keeps haunting me. If you know any of the crew members – and squadron let me know. I'll forward the photo on. Ed

The Lost Crew Member

I receive many requests to help find missing crew members. Occasionally I am fortunate, but most of the time unsuccessful. Nearly every issue we've published an appeal for any help you can give. If you can it would be appreciated.

Ed

Photos, Too!

Lost or missing crew pictures can't be replaced. If you can help recover a missing photo, you'll have one happy crew member.



They still keep coming to see the "The Dragon and His Tail!"

From Waiter Heidmous

Date 17 April 1945 – my 20th mission – wake up 0645 – brief 0745 – take off 1000 – target Troop Concentration near Bologna, Italy – Group Mission #246
Pilot – Lt. Robert A. Helbig
Co-pilot – Lt. Martin Schwab
Nav. – Lt. Ed Keafner
Engineer – Sgt. John Wade
Gunners – Sgt. Gerry Grahorn, Sgt. Charles Van Doren, Sgt, Wm. "Bill" Hess, Sgt. George Winkleman, Sgt. Emil Kirchbaum
Bombardier – Lt. Walter Heidmous

Everything went right on schedule including into and off the target until our engineer gunner who's responsibility was to check the bomb bay after bombs released, announced that there were three bombs hung up in the bomb bay. I immediately crawled from my position in the nose to the bomb bay door and saw the three bombs. They were in the front right bomb bay. A quick assessment pointed out that the three bombs were log jammed forming a pyramid and the propellers were gone from the nose fuses and the arming wire for the tail fuses were all out indicating the three bombs were armed and dangerous. Realizing that any bumping of anyone of the three nose fuses meant doom for A/C and crew.

I advised the pilot to fall out of formation and explained the situation. Should the bombs break loose and a fuse is bumped it will detonate in the bay or directly below the A/C because the bombs mount velocity is equal to the A/C's speed. We have the following choices. Put the A/C on auto-pilot, dumping fuel from a point of land south of the bomb line with a heading pointed to the mid Adriatic Sea and abandon the A/C. Or I can attempt to remove the fuses without activating any of the fuses, then we'll try to dislodge the jam.

I explained the choices to the crew and the fact that I'm right handed and will have to remove the nose fuses left handed. By removing the nose fuses I was certain we can avoid bailing out and save the A/C. But the decision was theirs alone to bail out or sweat it out. My vote was to remove the fuses, the pilot's and Nav. also agreed to stay with the A/C and finally the gunners agreed to stay. This vote of confidence by the crew lifted my ego and I knew I had to be right in my assessments.

Because I had to reach so far down into the bay, lower than the catwalk and no chute and the inconvenience of the walk around O^2 bottle attached to my chest, I needed someone to hold me back while I reached for the nose fuses. The engineer and a waist gunner volunteered to assist me and also come into the bay without chutes and O^2 bottles and held me by my chute harness while I removed the fuses. Thank God the armament crew had the fuses hand tight and I was able to remove them left handed with no effort. Once the nose fuses were removed I then removed the tail fuses. All the fuses were thrown clear of the A/C. By this time we were over the Adriatic and at a lower altitude. Now we can safely attack the problem of getting the bombs to un-jam and fall out. But, this we couldn't do. The weight of the bombs was too much for the amount of leverage we could apply. I suggested to the pilot to pull a high speed stall causing negative "Gees"-no success. So the only option left was to secure the bombs to the A/C in case they unlodged in landing. I used all the arming wires and heater cords and tied the bombs to the bomb shackles. Since I couldn't reach the bomb luggs, I harnessed the fins. Theory, if the landing should dislodge the jam the bombs would dangle vertically in the bay like tear drops.

Since we fell out of the formation declaring an emergency, we were late in returning and requested to land last declaring an emergency with lose bombs in the bomb bay. The tower acknowledged our request and alerted the crash crew to stand by. The pilot greased in the landing, the bombs didn't even quiver.

To my surprise – nobody came to see the three loose bombs and my handy work. Another day – another dollar. (mission)

Since bomb behavior was my responsibility, I could never have accomplished the removal of the fuses and the tying down of the bombs without the co-operation and assistance of Sgt's John Wade (deceased) and Gerry Graham (Major ret) who held onto me while I leaned down into the lower level of the bomb bay. Without their assistance we would have had to abandon the A/C.

Their efforts were above and beyond and I was grateful to have had them aboard – Thank you – I've never forgotten that ride.

Walter N. Heidmous
Major USAF Ret.

The Last Crew of the 455th To Leave North Africa

Reid B. Peck

Due to a malfunctioning engine, Dan Neumans "Leakin' Deacon" crew remained at Djedieda, Tunisia, after the rest of the group had left for Italy. With time weighing heavy on our hands, we decided to go buzzing on our next to last day there. After several hours of enjoying Dan's favorite pastime, we returned to the field where another group had arrived. Captain Neuman made a very low level approach to the tent area where a large number of personnel were meeting. They couldn't see our approach and most of them hit the ground when we passed over. Captain Neuman banked around aka a P-38 and we touched down. Needless to say, there was a jeep waiting at the hard stand. An officer told Neuman that the C.O. wanted to see him. The Capt. was told in so many words what would happen if that ever happened again. The next morning was our scheduled departure for Italy. We

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all had the same idea in mind, which was "Should we or shouldn't we." Well it was unanimous we should so Neuman proceeded to buzz again. So our flight to Italy was anti-climactic. But the next 7 1/2 months was not!

Toward the latter days of our stay in Djedsida with a few crews remaining, a young boy was seen coming out of one of the occupied tents and run towards the nearby hills. Several of us, including Andy Oven (whose tent the kid was seen exiting) followed him. There was a small tent city of gypsy like nomadic people there. On our approach the head man came out to meet us. Of course we couldn't understand him, nor him us, but finally Andy made his point when he pulled out his .45 and shot between the old mans legs. That soon produced the boy and Andy's billfold. We then took the boy into the town (more like a cross-road) to the police station. What happened after that, I never knew.

On one mission to the Udine area we turned a tight left after dropping our frags. That's when I, in the ball turret, heard a .50 cal chattering. It was Ledbetter in the top turret. I said "What's up?" He said "I'm just strafing." I had never realized that the top turret didn't often see what was going on below. We were at our usual altitude of 20,000 ft.

Lost Records in the 1973 St. Louis Fire

The Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs has provided the following information to assist those veterans whose records were lost in reconstructing their file.

The National Archives and Records Administration is the official depository for records of military personnel separated from the United States Air Force, Coast Guard, Marine Corps and the Navy. The records are housed in three locations: The National Archives in Washington, DC., and the Washington National Records Center in Suitland, MD., and the National Records Center (NPRC) in St. Louis, MO.

The NPRC contains records pertaining to:

- U.S. Army officers separated after June 30, 1917, and enlisted Army personnel separated after October 1912.
- U.S. Air Force officers and enlisted personnel separated after September 1947.
- U.S. Naval officers separated after 1902; and naval enlisted personnel separated after 1885. U.S. Marine Corps officers separated after 1895, and enlisted personnel separated after 1904.

U.S. Coast Guard officers separated after 1928, and enlisted personnel separated after 1914. Civilian employees of predecessor agencies (Revenue Cutter Service, Life-Saving Service and Lighthouse Service) of the U.S. Coast Guard from 1864-1919.

A fire at NPRC in St. Louis on July 12, 1973, destroyed about 80 percent of the records of Army personnel discharged between November 1, 1912 and January 1, 1960.

About 75 percent of the records for Air Force personnel with surnames from "Hubbard" through "Z" discharged between September 25, 1947, and January 1, 1964, were also destroyed.

It is hard to determine exactly what was lost in the fire, because there were no indices to the blocks of records involved. The records were merely files in alphabetical order for the following groups.

- World War I;
  Army; November 1, 1912 - September 7, 1939
- World War II;
  Army; September 8, 1939 - December 31, 1946
- Post World War II;
  Army; January 1, 1947 - December 31, 1959
  Air Force; September 25, 1947 - December 31, 1963

Missions of records, especially medical records, had been withdrawn from all three groups and loaned to the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) prior to the fire. In fact that one's records are not in NPRC files at a particular time does not mean were destroyed in the fire.

If a veteran is advised that his or her records may have been lost in the fire, he or she may send photocopies of any documents they possess to the NPRC, particularly separation documents. The address is **National Personnel Records Center, Military Personnel Records, 9700 Page Blvd., St. Louis, MO 63132-5100**. This enables the NPRC to reestablish files by adding those documents to the computerized index and filing them permanently.

In the event a veteran does not have any records in his or her possession, the essential military service data may be available from a number of alternate sources.

- The department of Veterans Affairs (VA) maintains records on veterans whose military records were affected by the fire if the veteran or a beneficiary filed a claim prior to July 1973.
- Service information may also be found in various kinds of "organizational" records such as unit morning reports, payrolls and military orders on file at the NPRC or other National Archives and Records Administration facilities.
- There is also a great deal of information available in records of the States Adjutants General, and other state "veterans services" offices.

By using alternate sources, NPRC may often be able to reconstruct a veteran's beginning and ending dates of active service, the character of service, rank while in service, time lost while on active duty, and periods of hospitalization.

NPRC is usually able to issue NA form 13038, "Certification of Military Service", considered the equivalent of a Form DD-214 "Report of Separation from Active Duty", for the purpose of establishing eligibility for veterans' benefits.

The key to reconstructing military data is to give the NPRC

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enough specific information so the staff can properly search the various sources. The following information is normally required.

- Full name used during military service.
- Place of entry into the service.
- Branch of service.
- Last unit of assignment.
- Approximate dates of service.
- Place of discharge.
- Service number.

456th BG Newsletter

The Chaplain's Corner

The spirit of Christmas; a priceless gift

At Christmas time, it is easy to lose perspective as to why we do all the "hustle and bustle." Christmas isn't about expensive gifts, even though we all adore them. It isn't about filling our schedules so full that we forget to schedule a little peace and tranquility.

The spirit of Christmas is an attitude of love, compassion, patience and kindness. Genuine gifts of the heart are priceless. They come wrapped in joy for the giver and receiver. By sharing our time, talents or resources with those we meet or those less fortunate, we spread the spirit of Christmas.

We might all agree that this kind of spirit is something we can benefit from every day, not just on December 25. Here are a few ideas for celebrating Christmas, that will add joy throughout the year:

- Let someone in line ahead of you
- Take time to smile at someone you don't know
- Slow down, just a little bit
- Make angels in the snow
- Take time to really listen to a child
- Be thankful for the gifts you already have
- Visit an older adult, let them know they are remembered and priceless
- Laugh with a friend long distance
- Volunteer in your community, at church or for a neighbor
- Do something nice for someone without anyone knowing who did it
- Be patient with store clerks or restaurant staff, give them a wink
- Send a hand written note to someone you have had a hard time forgiving
- Spend a few moments being grateful for the goodness of the year

May this holiday season, and the new millennium, bring you a little more peace on earth and goodwill toward all.
Ed

Pigeon That Saved A Brigade

In Italy during WWII, the British 56th Infantry Division was trying to take the village of Colvi Vecchia, but it was strongly defended by Germans. The British radioed the nearest American air base to bomb the village off the map. Then, in the confusion, a British brigade of 100 men swept into Colvi Vecchia and took it over – only to realize that the very bombs they had ordered to help them would soon smash them. Their radio equipment had been lost. How to stop the American bombers? Then they realized they had with them one American homing pigeon, a blue check-splashed bird named GI Joe. The British had to send the pigeon out with a message or they were doomed.

On that smoke-filled morning of October 1943, GI Joe went winging away, managed to elude gunfire, flew 20 miles in 20 minutes, and reached the American airfield just as the bombers were about to take off. The British brigade was saved. Three years later, GI Joe was brought to London to become the first non-British animal to be decorated with the Dickin Medal for Gallantry, presented to heroic animals. The bird was then retired to Fort Monmouth, NJ.

Credit–EX-POW, Diana Thomasian

YOU KNOW YOU'RE GETTING 'MARVELOUSLY MATURE' WHEN.....

- You and your teeth don't sleep together.
- Your try to straighten out the wrinkles in your socks and discover you aren't wearing any.
- At the breakfast table you hear snap, crackle, pop and you're not eating cereal.

Eligibility for Combat Action Ribbon Extended

The Combat Action Ribbon (CAR) previously was awarded under the title of the Army's Combat Infantryman's Badge, only to Army personnel in combat and on duty December 7, 1941 and beyond.

In 1969, the congress authorized a Navy and Marine Congress equivalent to the Combat Infantryman's Badge, the Combat Action Ribbon, to be awarded retroactively to March 1, 1961 to cover the Vietnam area. This action prevented a large number of WWII and Korea veterans from receiving this special recognition.

To achieve parity, the current bill which was signed into law on October 5, 1999, "authorizes the Secretary of Navy to award the Combat Action Ribbon to a member of the Navy or Marine Corps for participating in ground or surface combat during any period after Dec. 6, 1941, and before March 1, 1961, if the secretary determines that the member has not been previously recognized for such participation.

Form SF 180–Request Pertaining to Military Records must be submitted along with a copy of your discharge.

Welcome James Cowden!

Jim is a new member of the 455th Bomb Group Association. He was co-pilot on James Knights' crew, 742nd squadron. A tip of the old garrison cap to you, Jim.

Front Row, L to R: James Ryan; George Balmer; Robert Keller; Dale Dearing; Chas. Clapsaddle; Joseph Parnik. Back Row, L to R: Howard Mc Guire, Navigator; James Cowden, Co-pilot; James Knight, Pilot; Matthew Dowling, Bombardier.





Home From Moosbierbaum!

June 26, 1944. Moosbierbaum. 742nd Squadron lost 7 ships and crews. Pictured is the only crew to return.

Front Row, L to R: Anthony Brodeur, Radio Operator; Howard Blumbery, Waist Gunner; James Thomas, Engineer; Kenneth Lacey, Ball Turret Gunner.

Back Row, L to R: William Pelkey, Tail Turret Gunner; Chester Pratt, Waist Gunner; Lt. Kelly, Pilot and Operation Officer; Glen Nelson, Bombardier; Charles Swanner, Co-pilot.

Herb Weaver Writes–

The attached pics may be of interest, Lane and Mc Connell (my tentmates) had just finished their tour and about to leave via their deluxe transport.

The previous article on Radar Navigators (Micky) was of special interest. I was taken off my original crew as a bombardier and sent to Radar Navigation school at Langley.

This made me an orphan (no momma, no poppa, no crew). However, at our reunions I was adopted by my friend and ex-neighbors Dick Hollrock and his crew.



Tour Completed

McConnel, Pilot; Hurley Lane, Pilot; Jenkins 740th Squadron



L to R: Hurley Lane, Pilot; Herb Weaver, Radar-Navigator-Mickey Operator; Don McConnell, Pilot. 740th Squadron

Harry Anderson Writes–

Enclosed is a Poem I received from my daughter on Memorial Day this year and I was very moved by it. I would like very much for it to be published in the fall newsletter. The picture of 492 is the one she requested to be sent with the poem.

After she composed the poem and reviewing last years association news letter wrote the enclosed letter to the members of the 455th Bomb Group. She would be grateful to hear from any Air Force brats who's father served with the 455th.

I am requesting you return the picture as it will be used by an artist to paint the nose art on 492. The model will be built by a company in Scottsdale AZ. You can bring up the company on the internet (http://www.warplanes.com) and see the model along with others they build.

Harry W. Anderson
411 Sandalwood Ln
San Antonio, TX 78216-6844

Dear Readers of the Cerignola Connection:

Last year my father, Harry W. Anderson, sent me a clipping from the Cerignola Connection. It was the Last Flight column. He had highlighted that one of the names was listed as being from the crew of the Linda Ann.

I was shocked. I had no idea that my name on that plane had any meaning to others besides my dad and his crew at his time of service. To see my name there in your publication opened my eyes to many things I had never understood before that day. To be a namesake, like a living mascot, was overwhelming to me. I felt a deep pride and connection to those who had flown the Linda Ann. To realize that my name is recorded in the records of WWII even though I myself did not serve is a very wonderful thing to me. I am very honored to have played even a small



role in the lives of those brave men who crewed that beautiful plane, the Linda Ann and Her Wee Wabbits. The nose art painting was of a rabbit pushing a wheelbarrow full of bombs.

Like many others, my dad never spoke much of the war. I had seen the pictures of the Linda Ann in our albums over the years and thought it was neat, and cool, but not much more past those thoughts. However, that day of revelation it became clear to me that my dad had done a wonderful thing for me. When I see all the names of the other planes I can see the trend was to go for sexy women and wives and girlfriends names. Dad bucked the trend and named his plane for just a little baby girl he left behind when he went to war. I'll bet he took quite a ribbing for that! But to me today it speaks clearly about my dad.

Dad recently told me that the Linda Ann was the last plane to take off on missions and the first one back in the line up by the runway, so maybe someone remembers passing her on take offs and landings. My dad, Lt. Harry W. Anderson served in the 740, Jun-Dec, 1944. Does anyone possibly know what happened to that aircraft?

I would be honored to hear from anyone who flew on, worked on or remembers my dad or the Linda Ann and Her Wee Wabbits.

Very sincerely,
Linda Ann Anderson Lisciarelli
3639 W. Mescal Ave
Phoenix, AZ 85029
e-mail: garylin65@aol.com

Memorial Day 2000
By Linda Ann

I was your wings carrying you safely through the sky. I surrounded and protected you on those perilous flights. I took you through danger and was there with you. You gripped me tightly as we faced fear and death.

You counted on me to bring you home safely. I counted on you to bring me home safely. We were there together through the perils of war. But I never knew. You never spoke of the war.

Only today do I realize that I was there with you. On all those flights through hell. Only today do I know that I soared and roared. Through danger with you on those great strong wings.

Only today do I look at the picture of that great flying fortress and see my father's love for me on the plane he named. There, painted on the side for the whole world to see. Your plane, my name, "The Linda Ann".

Only today do I realize that I am immortalized with the Great Liberator and the Memphis Belle. Which proudly and lovingly carried precious men to war. Like I carried you, Dad.

I was but a baby and I never realized until today. When I saw through wiser eyes that I was there with you. You never told me. You never spoke of the war. Dad, I am so proud. Thank you, Dad. I love you.

Linda Ann

On American Soil!

Winter is an excellent time to recall one of the little-remembered campaigns of World War II – the struggle for Alaska's Aleutian Islands. Stretching more than 1,100 miles across the northern Pacific, the Aleutian archipelago was an unlikely source of conflict due to its isolation and terrible weather. However, a decision by Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto, commander-in-chief of the Japanese combined fleet, would bring war to this inhospitable island chain.

The Japanese attack on the Aleutians in June 1942 was not intended to secure a staging area for an assault into mainland Alaska. Instead, it was a diversionary element in Yamamoto's plan to draw the battered American fleet out of Pearl Harbor and into a decisive battle with the powerful Japanese Navy at Midway.

Unfortunately for Japan, the diversion failed because U.S. Navy intelligence had broken the Japanese codes and was aware of Yamamoto's intentions. The attack at Midway would become a disaster for the Japanese Navy and a turning point in the war.

In an effort to ease the sting of the Midway defeat, Yamamoto ordered his northern fleet to continue its operations in the Aleutians. The fleet had already launched an air attack against American military installations in Dutch Harbor, Alaska, on June 3, and now turned its attention to the islands of Attu and Kiska at the western end of the archipelago. The Japanese landing forces encountered no opposition, and by June 7, both islands were under their control.

Although the original plan envisioned the occupation of the islands only during the summer months, Yamamoto now decided to establish permanent airfields and naval facilities to harass American forces. Despite the fact that these installations were militarily insignificant, there was considerable concern on the home front, fanned by frequent media speculation, of an attack on the United States from the north. To allay these fears, planners decided it was necessary to clear the enemy from the Aleutians.

It was not until the spring of 1943 that the U.S. was able to collect the forces it needed to assault the islands. The 7th Infantry Division, stationed at Fort Ord, Calif., was selected to retake the first objective, Attu Island, which was thought to contain only 500 enemy troops. The Americans eventually learned that the enemy garrison numbered nearly 3,000!

After several days of weather delays, elements of the 7th Division landed unopposed at cold and foggy Attu on May 11. As they attempted to advance, however, enemy fire began to rain down from the tops of the island's jagged hills.

After more that two weeks of hard fighting in often harsh weather, the battle ended when the final Japanese troops, estimated to number 800, launched a last ditch charge against the American lines on the night of May 29. By morning, the Japanese had been completely defeated and the Army took possession of Attu.

The battle had killed nearly all of the Japanese defenders (only 28 surrendered), and left the Americans with more that 500 dead and 1,100 wounded. Further, the poor weather had sidelined 2,100 American troops – who had come unprepared for extended combat in cold conditions – with non-combat injuries.

Taking stock of the experience of Attu, the U.S. Army committed more than twice as many troops to the attack on Kiska three months later. The Japanese garrison, which numbered around 5,000, was also subjected to continual bombing raids and a heavy pre-invasion naval bombardment.

This time, however, the enemy decided not to fight a hopeless battle. In a bold gamble, a small naval force, aided by an almost continuous fog, managed to evacuate the entire garrison in less than an hour on July 28.

U.S. forces, whose intelligence gathering had been hampered by poor weather, were unaware of the evacuation, and invaded on August 15. Encountering no initial opposition, many assumed that the enemy had merely retired to the island interior and would fight to the last man as the defenders of Attu had done. It wasn't until August 22 that the Americans finally realized what had happened.

Although undefended, the seizure of Kiska was not without cost. Several troops were killed or wounded by booby traps and other mishaps, but the most serious loss occurred when a Navy destroyer sank after hitting a mine, killing 70 and wounding nearly 50.

Despite its limited impact on the overall war, the Aleutian campaign furnished several important lessons in amphibious and poor weather operations that were applied in later campaigns in the European and Pacific theaters. It also provided green American troops with valuable combat experience.

For the public though, the most important aspect of the victory was that it secured America's "northern flank," and eased fears that the islands would be used to launch an invasion against the mainland.

For Japan, the Aleutians diversion was a failure. Although it had provided morale-boosting propaganda at home, it was ultimately a waste of valuable resources.

Credit-World War II Memorial Newsletter

YOU KNOW YOU'RE GETTING 'MARVELOUSLY MATURE' WHEN.....

- Your back goes out but you stay home.
- When you wake up looking like your driver's license picture.
- It takes two tries to get up from the couch.
- When happy hour is a nap.

Howard Cooper Writes –



Sometime in the past, I believe I sent a request to "The Cerignola Connection" that asked any former enlisted members of the 740th Squadron that was in Italy during the period, June to December 1944, if they remember Elias. I recall a civilian employee of Egyptian background that worked in our EM Mess Hall. Elias had a gravely, accented voice.He was short and quite rotund in stature. There was a sign in the mess hall that said "Eat with Elias". Does anyone out there remember him?

When a friend obtained a small vehicle, Elias said he knew of an out of the way town in the hills that was real "Old world" and had many interesting things, and girls of unusual beauty. (By Elias' standards) About 5 or 6 of us piled in to the vehicle, and Elias directed our driver. I cannot recall the direction, but it was about an hour's drive. As we approached the hill that the town sat upon, Elias broke the news that the town was "off limits" to US personnel. It was starting to get dark, and we could see this picturesque town setting atop the hill, with only flat, open plains in all direction. We drove past women with baskets of clean laundry on their heads, walking up the hill, for washing had to be done at the stream down in the valley.With the setting sun in the background, the town did indeed look like something out of an artists painting. We went into the town square and found a displaced American who claimed that the 1930's crooner, Russ Columbo, was born and raised in this town. If I knew the name of the place, I would tell you, but cannot remember it.

After about 2 hours of looking around and having a lot of laughs, a boy came running over to tell us that an MP jeep was heading up the hill. We quickly gathered up the guys, and headed down a back road just as the jeep came in to the town. We made it!

Does the description of Elias or the trip to the hilltop town ring any bells with anyone out there? As I get older, the memories seem to get stronger of the distant past, but why I went to the garage a minute ago, eludes me. I understand this is not unique among our contemporaries. I do recall the reunion a few months ago, and had a nice time even if I knew no one there. The few remaining members of my crew that I contacted, were not going, and my bombardier who lives in Escondido was hospitalized, but was improving, and we did travel to see him.

Now, if you can use any part of this or all of the story, I would appreciate it. Perhaps I will reach someone who remembers Elias and even our trip to the hill town.

Howard Cooper
741 Vernon Avenue
Staten Island, NY 10309-3044

A Report From the National World War II Memorial

Dear Colonel Riggs,

I am pleased to forward copies of the Winter 2000, National World War II Memorial Campaign Newsletter. As you will see in the newsletter articles, we are making great progress and continue to attract nation-wide support for the memorial.

We are still optimistic about ground breaking during this year. Veteran organizations continue to play a big role in contributing towards this effort. To ensure that your organization continues to get full credit for all donations we receive from the organization or its members, it is very important that the mail code that you have been assigned is used on checks or correspondence sent to the campaign. The mail code for the 455th Bomb Group Association, Inc. is VG0FE.

If you have any question regarding this or need any additional information, please contact me at (703) 696-3121 or Kimberly Frazier at (703) 696-9274 or call toll free 1-800-639-4WW2, option #3.

As always, thank you for your continual and strong support for the National World War II Memorial.

Bob Patrick
Assist Director for Veterans Affairs
& Grassroots Programs
National World War II Memorial

Black Bread Recipe

Former prisoners of war of Nazi Germany may be interested in this recipe for World War II Black Bread. This recipe comes from the official record from the Food Providing Ministry published as Top Secret Berlin 24.X1-1941 from the Director of Ministry Herr Mansfeld and Herr Moritz. It was agreed that the best mixture to bake black bread was:

50% bruised rye grain
20% sliced sugar beets
20% tree flour (saw dust)
10% minced leaves and straw

From our own experiences with black bread, we also saw bits of glass and sand. Someone was cheating on the recipe!

Credit–EX POW

Thank You

Colonel Riggs;

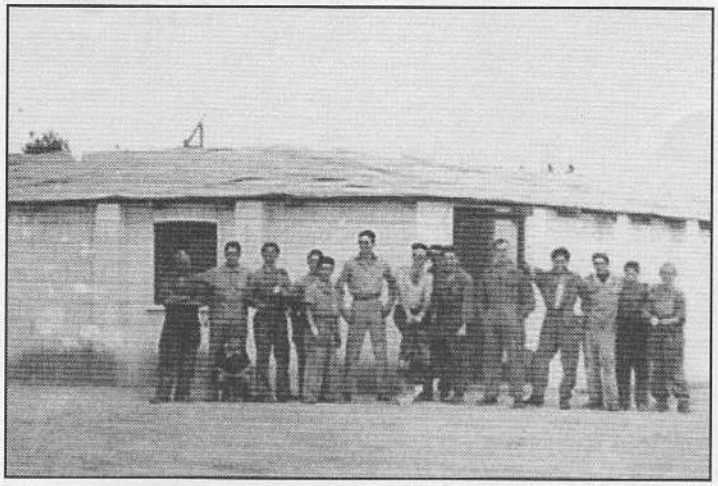
I wanted to take a moment to thank you for the donation of the 455th Bomb Groups History book. It was very thoughtful of you to order a copy expressly for our library.

With people like you behind our efforts here at the Tulsa Air and Space Center, we can't help but achieve our goal of touching the lives of Tulsa's young people in a positive way.

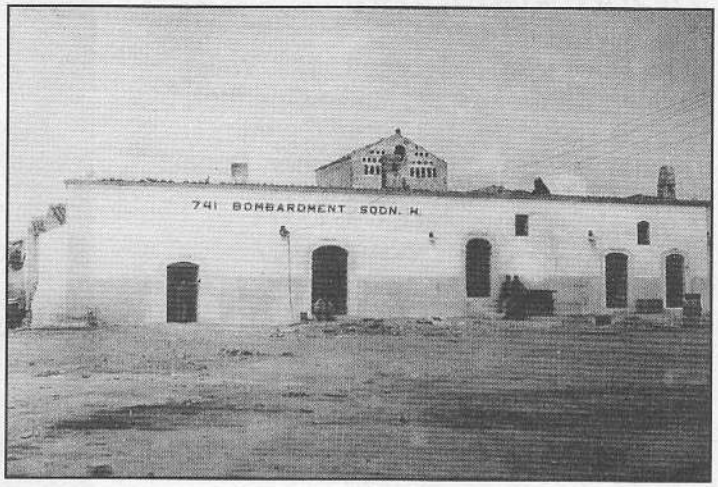
I hope all goes well with your upcoming surgery and I look forward to seeing you again soon!

Kim Jones, Curator

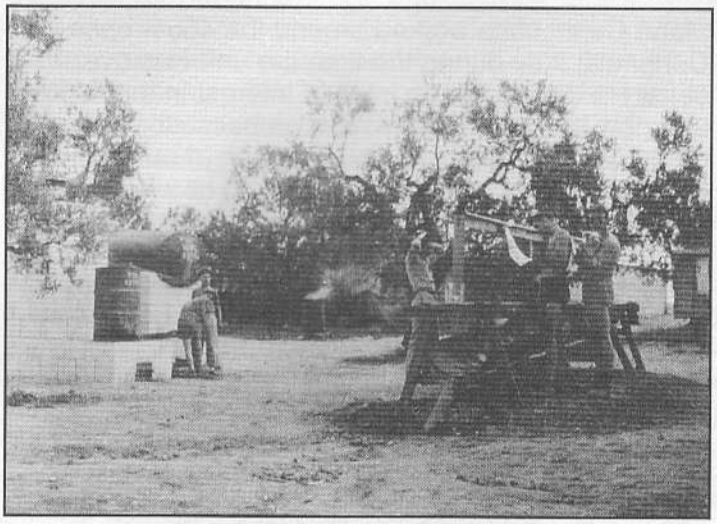
From the Picture Albums



741st Sqd mess hall.



741st Sqd orderly room.



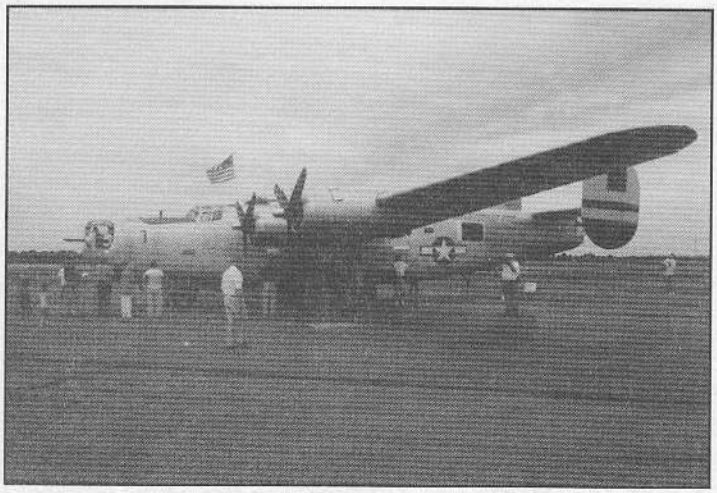
Bathing 741st style.



741st mechanics take a break in front of a visiting p39.

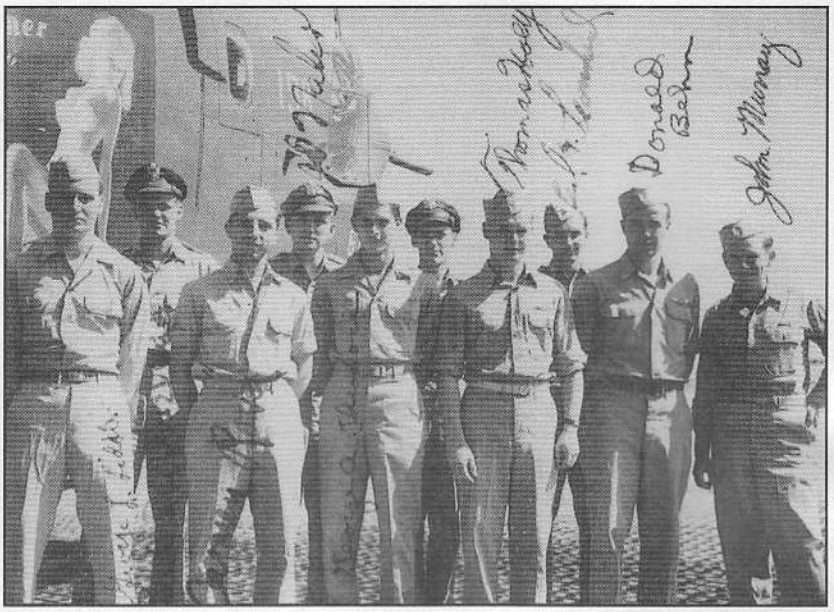


741st brass!



The Silver Bullet!

J.D Nadler's Crew 742nd Squadron



Front Row: L to R: George Liddle, Waist Gunner; Carmon Rosa, Radio Operator; George Theodore, Tail Turret Gunner; Thomas Hoey, Ball Turret Gunner; Donald Behn, Engineer; John Murray, Waist Gunner.

Back Row L to R: Unk., Navigator; J.D. Naler, Pilot; Unk., Bombardier; Earl Leonhard, Co-Pilot.

Ed – If you know the names of the Navigator and bombardier on this crew let George Theodore know at **3702 Ootewah, Ringgold Rd, Ooltewatt, TX 37363.**

George McGovern Returns and Mario Greets Him!



L to R: Mario explains to George and Mrs. Mc Govern that the old guonset hut is the only building by Americans left standing. It is used for implement storage and growing seedlings

Mario Capocefalo worked around the 455th base in Cerignola, Italy during the time the unit was overseas. He developed an intense interest in the 455th and now is the self proclaimed ambassador for our group. He maintains a small museum of our unit plus acts as a greeter and ambassador to all who have the opportunity to visit. He has coordinated local visits for Lou Hansen and 455th Tour Group who have had the opportunity to return to memories now over 50 years ago.

Recently George Mc Govern, 741st Squadron, and now ambassador to Rome, went back to revisit younger years and Mario was there to greet him. Our hats are off to Mario for all his help and interest.



L to R: Mrs. Mc Govern, US Embassy Secretary, George and Mario at the San Giovanni field as it looks today.



The chapel at the Castle, still in use today.

Emmett Ledbetter Writes–

From Emmett Ledbetter T/Sgt. 743rd Sqd 455 Bomb Gp. Flight Engineer and Top Turret gunner on "Leakin' Deacon" B-24 airplane.

There are only 3 of us still alive of Dan Neuman's crew. They are Maj. Wylie Smith, S/Sgt. Reid Byron Peck and T/Sgt Emmett Ledbetter. Also ground crew chief M/Sgt Frank Stewart. We were one of the original crews of the 743rd Sqd that trained at Langley AAB.

First I would like to say how lucky our crew was as one of the first few crews to complete the 50 missions. All but S/Sgt. Peck who was on your (Tom) crew when you made a parachute landing on Vis, finished together. Due to the German Fighter Force being at maximum strength and heavy anti-craft fire around the target area made losses great for the original crews. Neuman's crew was on the April 2nd Steyr mission and the June 26 Moosbierbaum mission for which we received the "Unit Citation". Here are some of the problems that we encountered.

I don't recall which mission but we had completed several missions when this happened.

After completing our bomb run we discovered that we still had a bomb that the front had released but the rear was still in the bomb rack. Later on when we were away from the enemy fighters I called S/Sgt Peck and informed him of the problem. We put on portable oxygen masks as we were above 20,000 feet. I opened the bomb bay doors and we proceeded on the narrow catwalk and released the armed bomb from the bomb rack. I will never forget how narrow the catwalk was and how far the ground below seemed.

The second event was as follows. This happened in May or June 1944.

After take off we discovered that the nose wheel had some kind of problem and had turned sideways and would not retract in the wheel compartment of the airplane. After lowering and raising the landing gear several times the problem still existed. I then removed one of 50 cal. gun barrels from the top turret and used it as a lever to straighten the nose wheel and retracted it into the nose compartment. When we landed I again used the gun barrel to hold the nose wheel in a straight position hoping that it would not collapse when it touched the ground. Luckily all went well and we made a safe landing but it sure was a trying time for me not knowing if the nose wheel would fold up with me in this dangerous position. We received no recognition for these events. We considered it part of our job in getting our crew and plane back and being able to keep going forward to complete our tour of duty.

Tom as you probably remember how pilots like to "Buzz" the mess hall of the 743rd Sqd. I am not positive but I think Dan Neuman was the last to "Buzz" it while we were there. He came so close to the smoke stack that he nearly blew it over as he flew low over tent row of the 743rd.

Emmett Ledbetter

Report From S2

I read with interest John McBains column on page 10 (Spring 2000) issue. The part I was interested in was the flying of the cargo to the British Army near Trieste.

Since many of our crews had nothing to do – the war was over – many of our planes were assigned to fly cargo to Gowza, Italy.

One of our planes was flying with 20-40 mill meter mortar sheets and since I heard what a nice town Gowza was, I hitched a ride. The landing field was a grass strip (fighters). Nobody got off the plane – unload and fly back. Since the big wheels were afraid that Tito would take Trieste that was the reason for the rush.

The field just north of Gowza – Urdine – is now our primary base and was used in the Kasova bombing

Frank Pappalardo
743rd S2

Bill Crim Writes–

On the last page of the Spring 2000 Cerignola Connection where you put my plea for help on Keegan, there is a photo of a medical unit showing 2 UNK's who are identified as John Mackofsky and Clyde Drummond.

I have not received any info on the whereabouts of Don Keegan but did get letters from Adrian Earl and Norman Steinhauer informing me that Bob Crowley had passed away in the early 1970's.

Bill Crim

Surgeon Chat



Five surgeons are discussing who makes the best patients to operate on.

The first surgeon says, "I like to see accountants on my operating table, because when you open them up, everything inside is numbered."

The second responds, "yeah, but you should try electricians! Everything inside them is color-coded."

The third surgeon says, "no, I really think librarians are the best; everything inside them is in alphabetical order."

The fourth surgeon chimes in, "you know, I like construction workers...those guys always understand when you have a few parts left over at the end, and when the job takes longer than you said it would."

But the fifth surgeon shut them all up when he observed, "you're all wrong. Politicians are the easiest to operate on. There's no guts, no heart, and no spine, and the head and rear are interchangeable."

Heading for the Final Tour!

Submitted by George Underwood

The enclosed write-ups about the 15th Air Force basketball championship with the Mixed Ranks, a bomb group team might be interesting to some who wondered about physical conditioning.

A few of us looking for a place to get a hot shower, or maybe a warm shower, went to a school two or three miles from the 455th base. We donated a few lira to the janitor, and he warmed some water for us and let us play in the gym. The distance from the 455th base (742) might have been more than two or three miles.

They had a place we could shoot baskets, and about a dozen of us heard of a group that had a much better gym in Foggia, so we managed to visit there a couple of times, then we matched games with a bunch of fellows from that area. Our bunch beat the teams that played there, and we were told of the competition at or around Bari, so we matched a game with a bunch there. We flew down and played them.

There, we heard of the 15th Air Force tournament. A sergeant in the 742nd adjutants office or squadron office, joined us in an effort to get in the tournament.

We played several games around the Foggia, and the Bari area, and they let us enter the championship tournament.

We had about ten that enjoyed the playing and relaxation. Five of us were pilots and we had two or three sergeants, all but one were on flying status. We played two or three games after flying a mission during the day.

I found these write-ups among my treasures that I kept, so thought it would give some fun activities that we shared in.

I have attended a few reunions, but I have never seen any of the team, which might vary some due to missions being flown that particular day, except I did run into Siegfried, who was a pilot – We were all from the 742nd.

Fifteenth Air Force Reports

Red Tails Play Mixed Ranks

Defeating Daddy's Boys 32 to 19, the powerful, well balanced Mixed Ranks cage squad advanced to the final rounds of the Fifteenth Air Force play-offs against the underrated Red Tails, champions of the Fifteenth Fighter Command.

The mixed Ranks were too much for Daddy's Boys from an air depot group to cope with in the semi-final basketball contest played at the Athletic Club Sunday night, Feb. 25. From the opening goal by Magnus Siegfried the victors pulled steadily away to a 14-9 lead at half time.

Bill Abney and Dave Aiken, the tall guards on the Mixed Ranks club, monopolized the backboard, and Aiken tapped enough balls in the right direction to score eleven points which was high for the evening. George Underwood was spectacular in keeping the ball from the opponents to make a ten point margin work on a large court. The winner's tight zone defense completely stymied Daddy's Boys except for several set shots.

Williams led the losers attack with six points, while Drake trailed him with five counters.

Red Tails Win 15th AAF Crown

Coming from behind in the second half, the Red Tails won the Fifteenth Air Force basketball championship by defeating the Mixed Ranks 48 to 38, Saturday night, March 3, at the Athletic Club. The Red Tails, from the Fighter Command, will now be the Air Force representatives in the Adriatic zone play-offs.

Playing a tight zone defense, the Mixed Ranks, a bomb group team had the fast, colored Red Tail cagers stopped in the first half to emerge with a 20 to 14 lead at the end of the period.

In the second half the Red Tails opened with an overhead attack Chester Burris, captain and left forward for the champions; Spooner, right forward; and Henderson, right guard, alternated the attack from their positions to toss in set shots which won the game and the title.

Bill Abney, former Texas Christian court star, was high scorer for the evening with 18 points for the Mixed Ranks, while Chester burris was high for the winners with 16. George Underwood who played a tricky game at guard for the Mixed Ranks was a Haskel Indian and Texas Tech cage star.

Play Mixed Ranks

Scoring an early lead, Daddy's Boys from an air depot group, defeated a service group team, the Terriers, 33 to 24 to win the semi-finals in the Fifteenth Air Force lower bracket basketball play-offs Feb. 21.

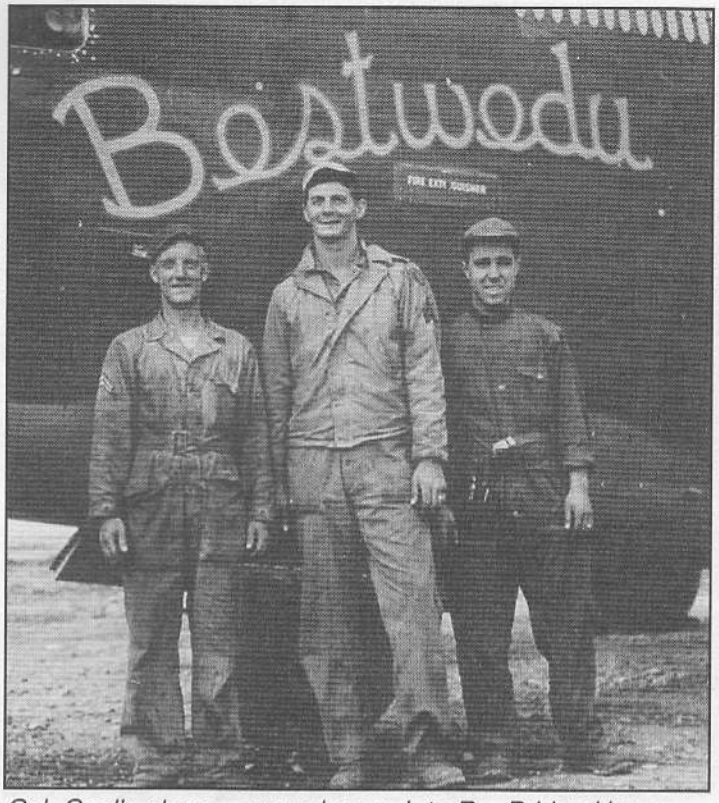
Tonight, Feb 25, Daddy's Boys will meet an aggregation from a bomb group called the Mixed Rank to decide the winners of the lower bracket who will pay the upper brackets famed Red Tail team for the championship of the Fifteenth Air Force, March 3, at the Athletic Club.

The basketball game tonight should prove to be one of the better all games of the year in this area. Daddy's Boys have Tom Williams, with four years of experience with the great Texas Tech team at center, and former Purdue University star, Noble Hunt, as captain and left forward Keith Brown, although a guard, is the high scorer for the Foggie area, having accounted for 125 points in the nine league games he has played this year.

Not to be outdone as far as player strength and experience

Continued on Page 20

Nose Art ...By Henry Groen



Col. Cool's plane – ground crew, L to R – Bridge House, Duncan, Horn.



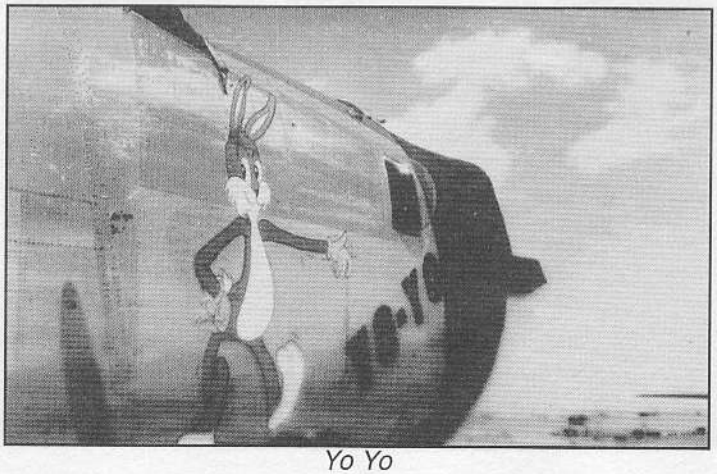
Peel Off with artist Henry Broen.



Multa Bona "That's Italian!"

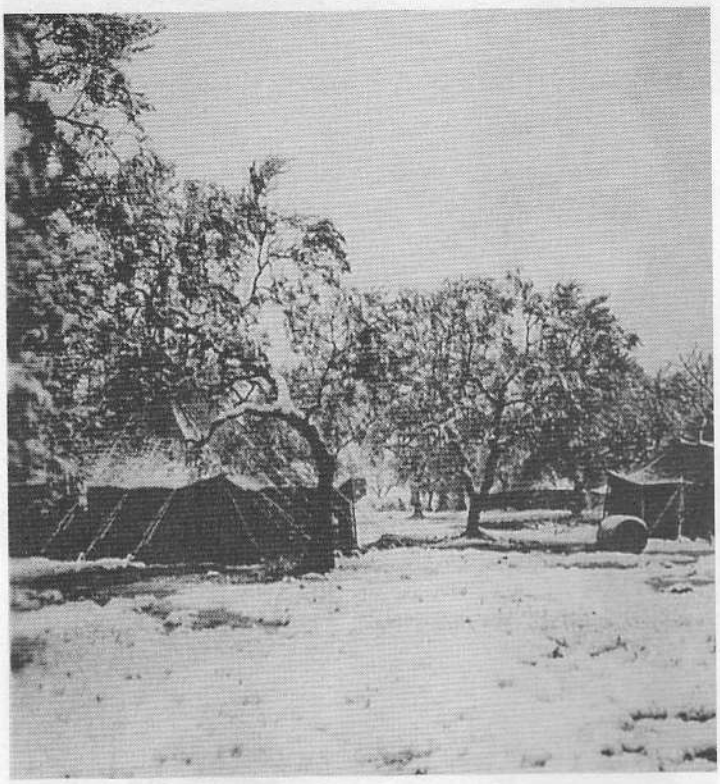


Ground crew, L to R – Morrey, Hewet, McGuire.

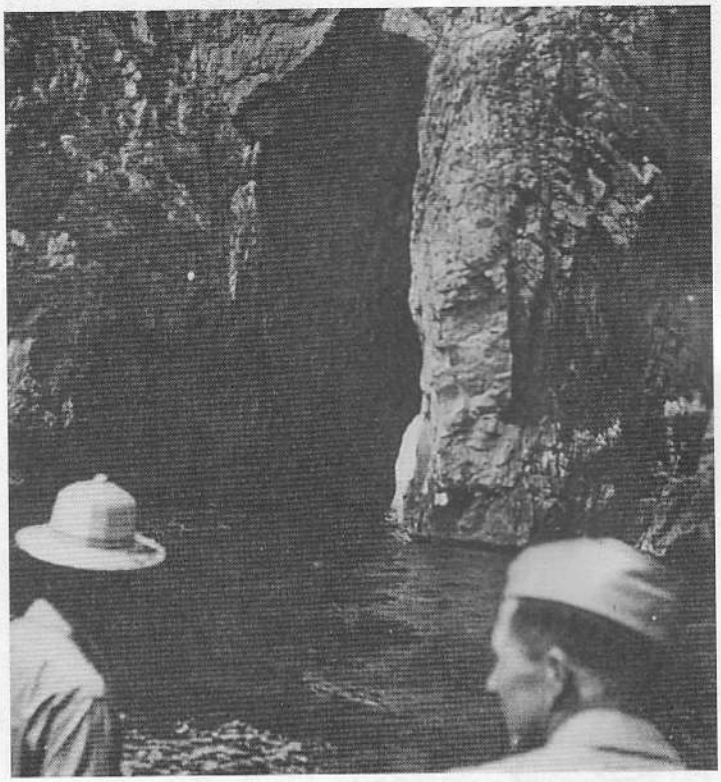


Yo Yo

From The Picture Albums



743rd squadron area during a spring snow!



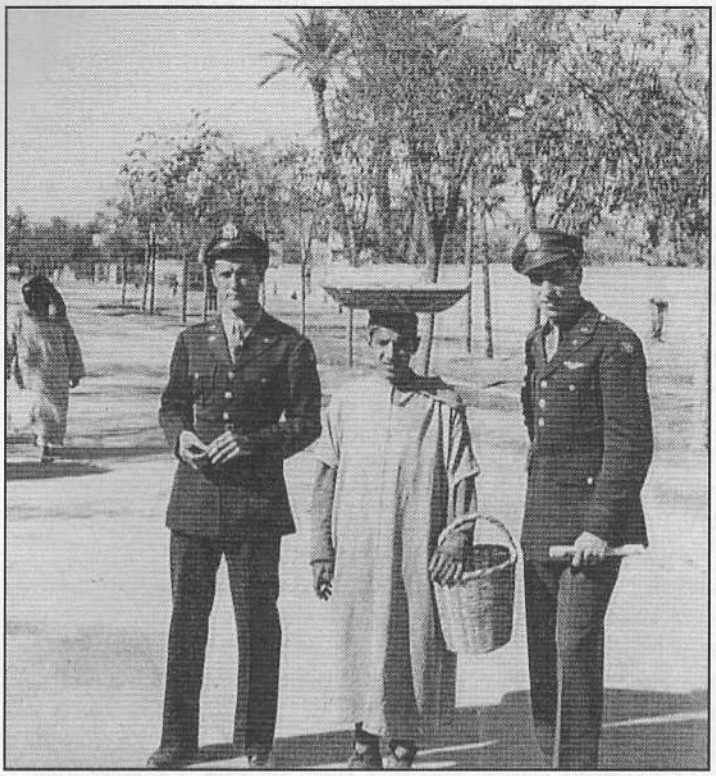
Blue grotto – Capri.



Ruins of Pompeii.



Last flight of the Menacing Messlina.



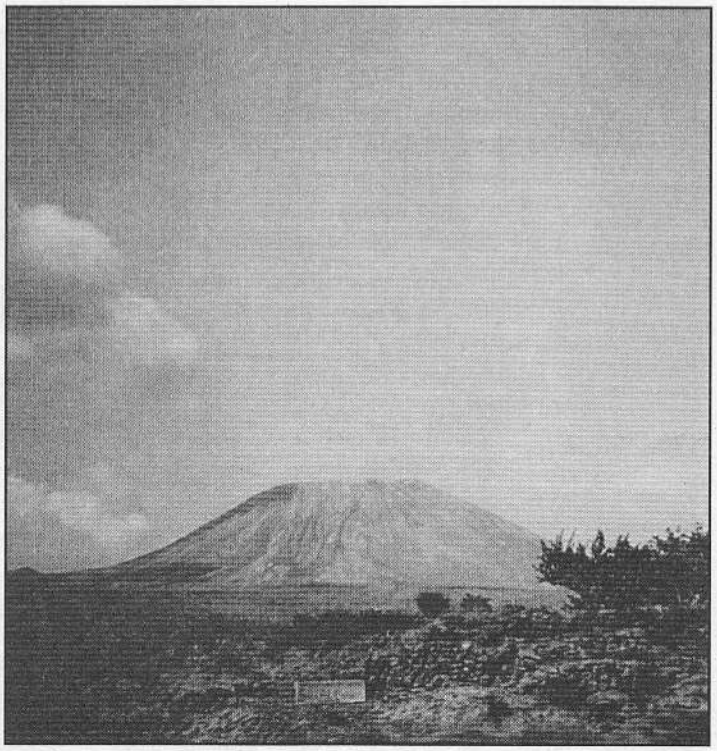
North Africa, L to R: Lt. Brooks, Native Arab, Lt. Gaynes. 743rd squadron. En route to Italy!



Before leaving for overseas. Langley field, Neuman's crew. 743rd squadron.



Lt. Wylie Smith paddles into the Blue Grotto, Capri.



Mt. Vesuus Volcano, Naples, Italy.

Continued from Page 16

goes, the Mixed Ranks have another Texas Tech 3-year ace in left guard George Underwood. At center, 6 foot 4 Bill Abney from Texas Christian should give Tom Williams plenty of trouble. The high-point man for the Mixed Ranks is Mangus Siegfried, left forward, who played for several semi-pro clubs in the States including the Curtiss Wright team in Buffalo, New York.

In What War Did We Lose All Our Committed Air Force?

On March 9, 1916, a force of 1,000 mounted Mexican gunmen, led by Francisco "Pancho" villa raided several settlements in New Mexico near the international border.

Promptly in Washington, our Secretary of War, Newton Baker, immediately ordered BGEN John J. Pershing, with an army of 5,000 men from the barracks in El Paso, to pursue and capture "Pancho" Villa.

To support this mission, the Army Signal Corps First Aero Squadron under the command of Capt Benjamin Foulois, was assigned to Pershing's "punitive expedition." The squadron had eight old, low-powered Curtiss JN3 Jennies, unsuitable for flying more than fifty miles from base.

In addition to Captain Foulois, there were nine pilots, 82 enlisted men, a civilian mechanic, and two enlisted medical corpsmen. The ground equipment consisted of ten trucks, an automobile and a few spare parts.

On March 15 the squadron reached Columbus, NM, near the border, and the next day flew a two plane mission into Mexico. On March 19, the squadron was ordered to proceed to Casas Grandes, 135 miles south into Mexico. High winds, lack of navigational equipment, poor maps, inadequate maintenance and mountainous terrain took their toll. Two planes were destroyed, leaving six. All four airmen survived.

Over the next three weeks the squadron was unable even to get a glimpse of Villa or his army. The pilots couldn't coax the Jennies high enough to reconnoiter the mountain areas where Villa's troops were hiding.

The dry climate warped the planes propellers and blowing sand wrought havoc with the engines. However the squadron still had six planes in questionable operating condition. After pleading for more planes in vain, Captain Foulios used his squadron mainly to carry mail and dispatches between the U.S. Army ground units.

Two planes were flown to the supposedly friendly city of Chihauhna to contact the American Consul for help to get critically needed medicine and food. The pilots and the planes survived several close encounters with angry mobs, but finally got away after making rudimentary repairs to the fabric of their planes that had been damaged by burning cigarettes and knives slashes.

By April 14 the squadron, after flying as many missions, as possible, was ordered back to Columbus in the US to wait for new planes. By this time only two planes were even somewhat airworthy. Finally in Columbus, Captain Foulois put a match to the two tired Jennies so that no one could order him to take them up again.

The Journal, Second Air Division Assoc 8th Air Force

Peak Performer Retiree/NASTAR Skier



- Name: John Davis
- Age: 81
- Lives in: Des Moines
- Known as: Retired attorney/amateur snow ski racer
- Training: Davis does nothing special to train for snow skiing. However, his daily routine of about 20 minutes of stretching and weight lifting, and nearly daily walk of 2 miles helps keep him in shape. He golfs frequently, choosing to walk the courses rather than ride in a golf cart. He slalom water skis and windsurfs during summer.
- Diet: This retiree doesn't deny himself foods he likes, he just eats in moderation. "Moderation is really the key," he said.
- What got him started: On one cold winter afternoon in January when Davis was 45 a friend talked him into going snow skiing on a small slope near Humboldt. Eventually he headed out west and took some skiing lessons. During one lesson, an instructor told the class every member had to run a NASTAR competition. NASTAR is an acronym for National Standard Race. Pacesetters run a course, then competitors are judged against that time. Skier's handicaps are based on their age group and how much longer than the national pacesetter it takes them to ski a course. Davis won a silver medal the first time he raced a NASTAR event and has raced ever since, earning hundreds of medals.
- Accomplishments: Davis has more than 200 gold medals to his name for NASTAR racing. During the 1998/99 skiing season, he reached a milestone: His NASTAR scores from the season of racing placed him No. 1 in the nation for his age category.

Davis finds skiing to be a challenge and plans to continue skiing and competing. "Like my wife says, I've just bought my last set of skis for the fourth time," he says with a laugh.

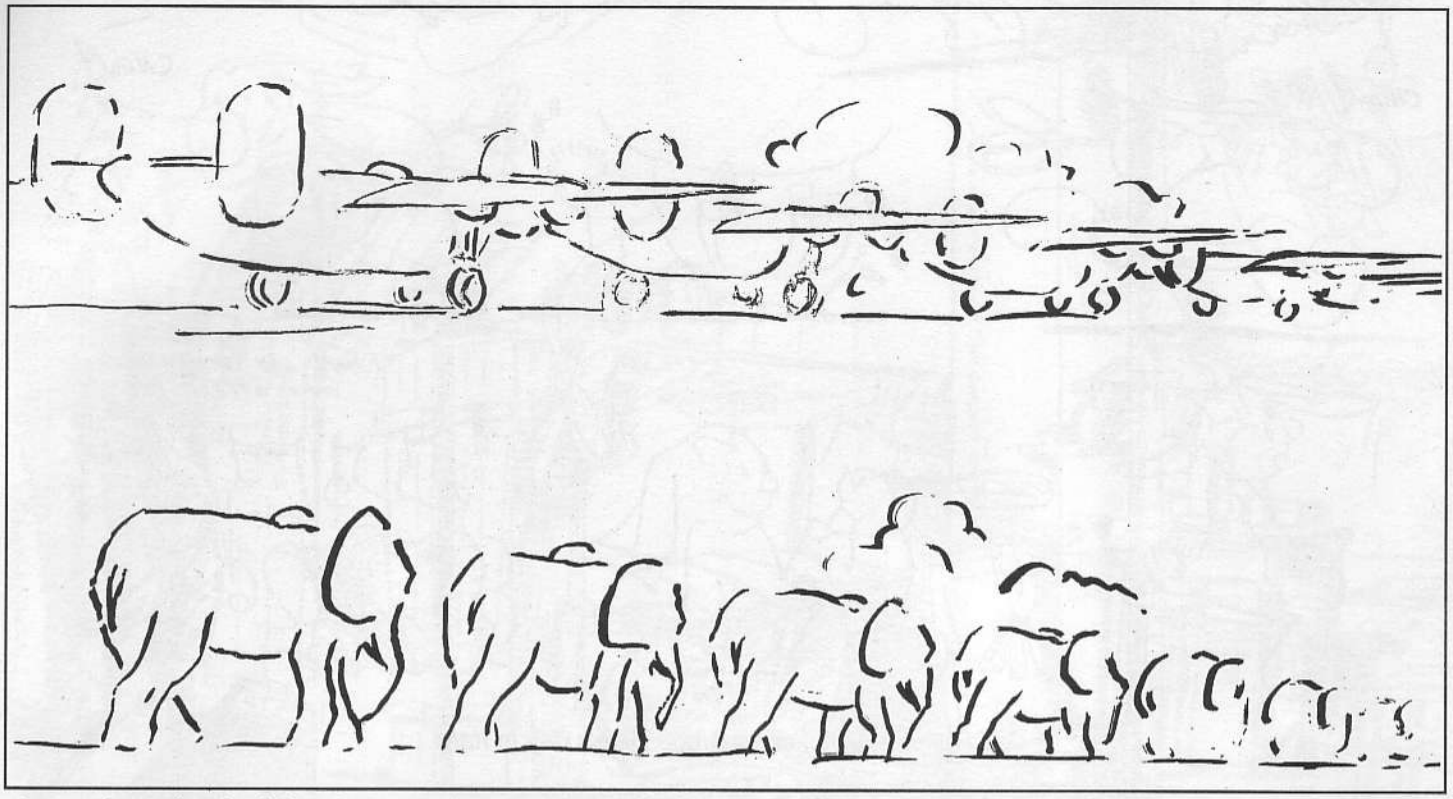
- Advice: Anyone who wants to start snow skiing should take a lesson or two first, Davis recommends. Once a person has some lessons under his or her belt, he advises taking the slopes at a comfortable pace. Go with a friend who can ski a little better, he says.

Credit–Juli Probasco–Sowers

Ed–We ran a more lengthy coverage of John's accomplishments in a previous issue of the Cerignola Connection. But as our aging joints begin to creak, it's well worth reading again.

Hidden Treasures!

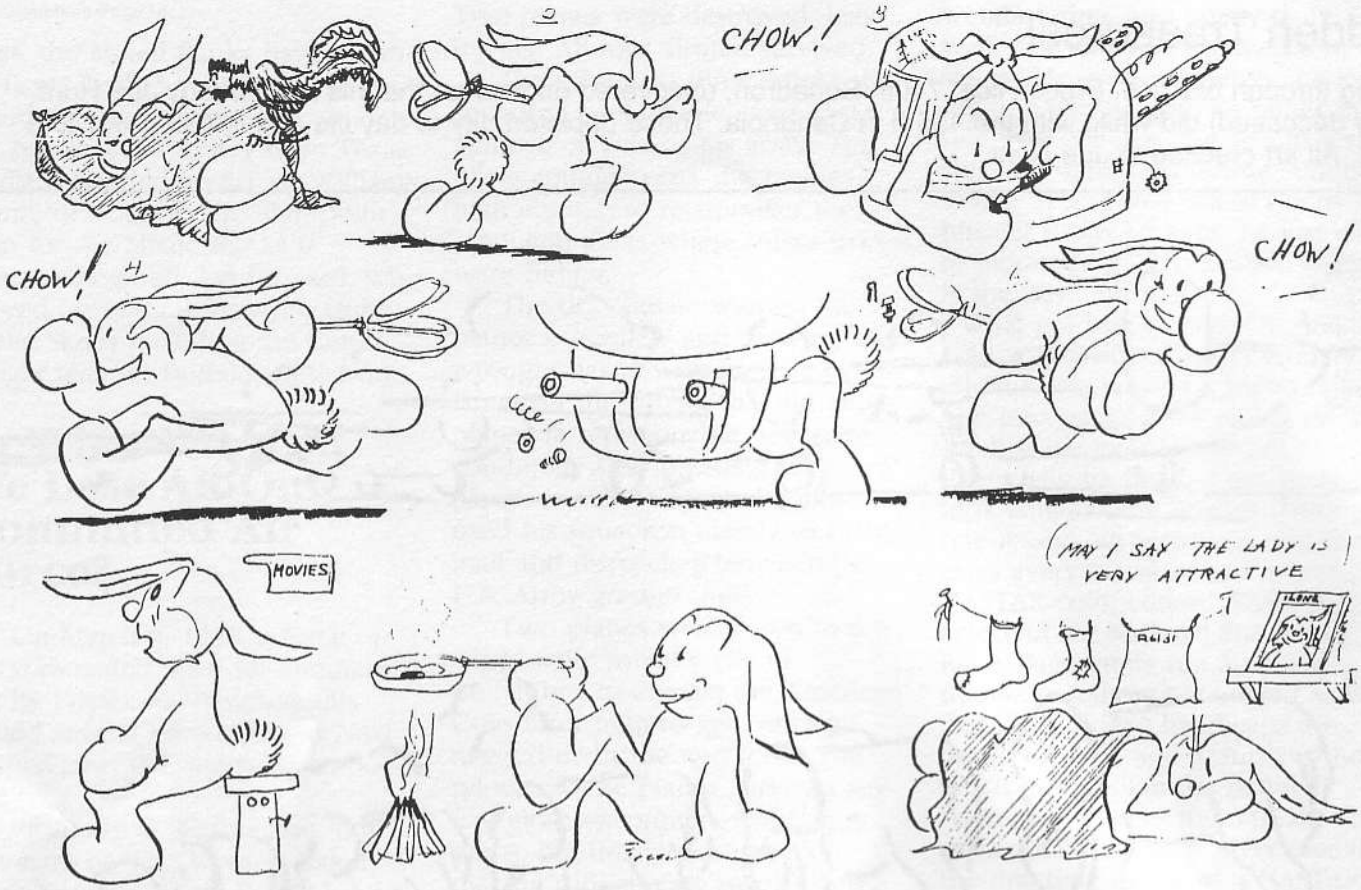
Going through old files, Bruce Rice, 740th Squadron, uncovered original art that his bunk buddy Joe Hunt (now deceased) did while with the 455th in Cerignola. These depicted day to day life during those war torn days. All art credited to Joe Hunt.



Joe made a sketch of the planes as they were to take off. Reminded him of elephants all in a line each holding the others tail in its trunk.



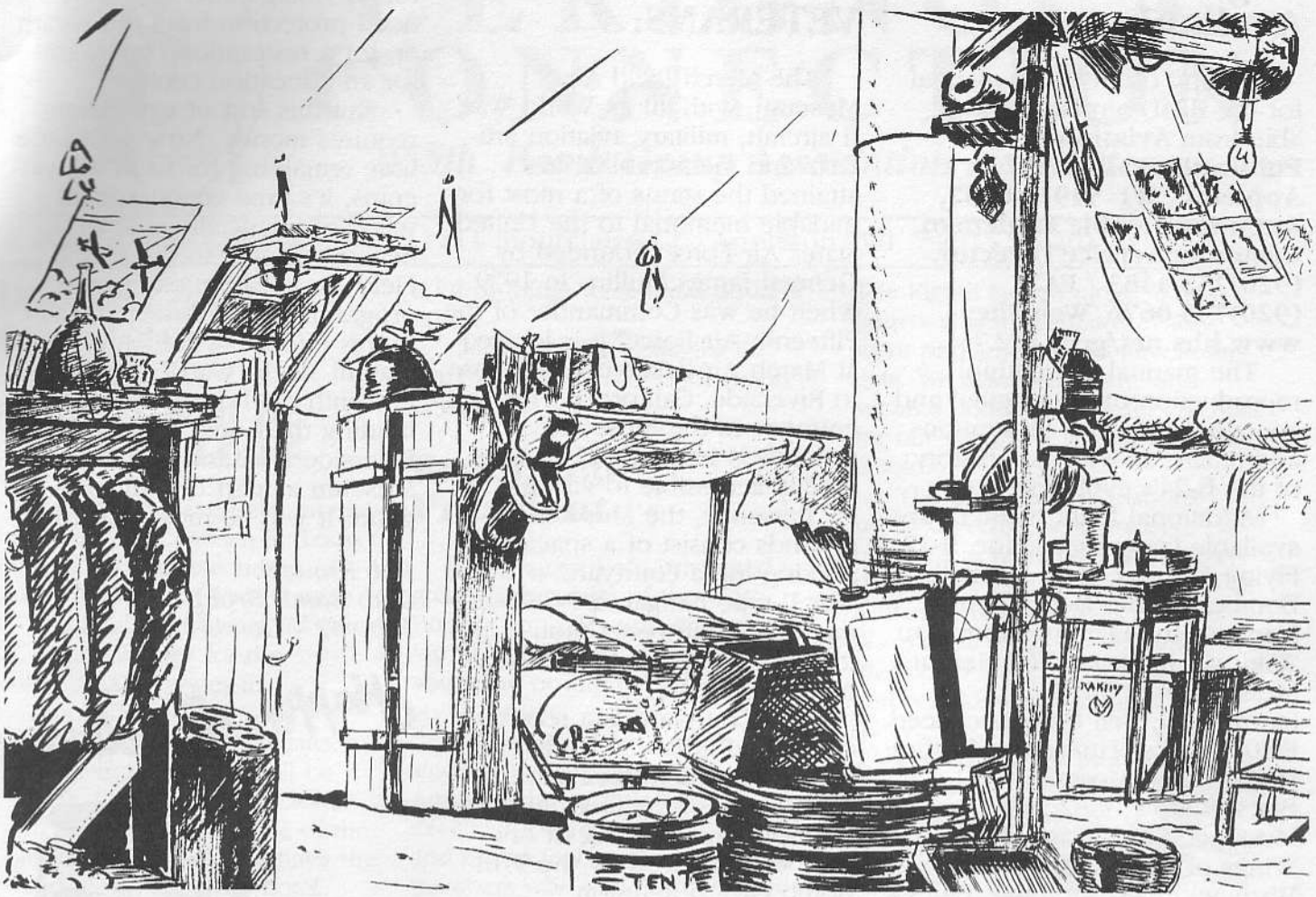
Tent 30. Bill (Pappy Hays – foreground, Sgt Walter Ziobro background and S/Sgt. Bob Kelly far right.



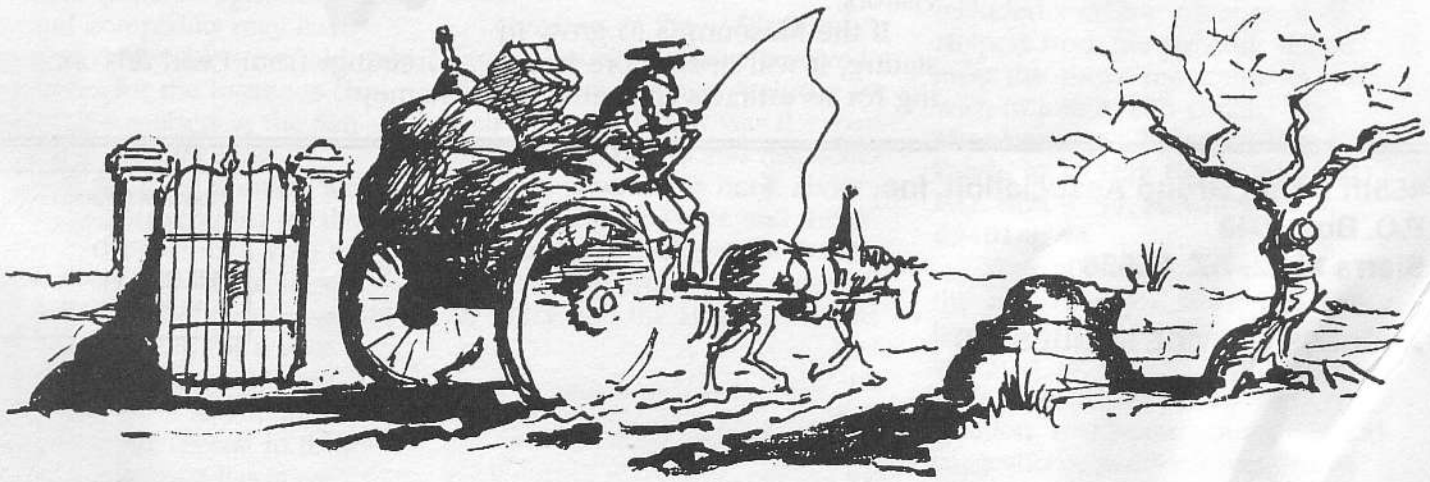
Joe Hunts description of Bruce Rice's day in Italy.



Joe Hunts representation of the Power Turret Maintenance – "Some days are like this!"



Bruce Rice's home-away-from-home as seen by Joe Hunt.



Joe Hunt looks at life in Italy!

B-24 Liberator Flight Manual Is Available

A copy of the flight manual for the B24D airplane is available from **Aviation Publications, Box 357, Appleton, WI 54912-0357, Attention Debbie Engleman, Customer Service Director. (920)733-4483 / FAX: (920)733-0676, Web Site: www.hbs.net/gcc/** $12.75

The manual is a faithful reproduction of the original and contains numerous illustrations and tables, as well as a history of the B-24's evolution.

Additional flight manuals are available (prices vary) for: B-17 Flying Fortress: B-25 Mitchell Bomber; Martin B-26; Curtiss Standard Jn4-DJenny; Grumman Wildcat; Grumman F6F Hellcat; Messerschmitt ME-262 Sturmvogel; Bell P-63; Lockheed F-80; Hawker Hurricane; Spitfire; De Haviland Mosquito; P61 Black Widow; F-82 Twin Mustang; AT6 Texan; Flying Wings of Northrop; P40 Warhawk; P38 Lightning; Bell P-39; P47 Thunderbolt; Ford Trimotor; Piper CVBJ3; Curtiss OX-5; X-15 Research.

If interested in any manual, contact Debbie Engleman at Aviation Publications.

To: 15th AIR FORCE WORLD WAR II VETERANS:

The March Field Air Museum, with all its World War II aircraft, military aviation artifacts and memorabilia, has attained the status of a most formidable memorial to the United States Air Force. Founded by General James Mullins in 1979 when he was Commander of the Fifteenth Air Force, it is located at March Air Reserve Base, close to Riverside, California. The entrance to the Museum grounds is just off I-215 and is readily accessible to visitors.

Presently, the Museum grounds consist of a spacious parking lot, a courtyard, a World War II-type hangar, a P-38 building, an aircraft restoration building and 50 plus military aircraft on static display.

The Courtyard is a recently completed area – – landscaped and structured to facilitate the recognition of military units. For example, the building of one wall was financed by the 97th Bomb Group Reunion Association and dedicated to the Fifteenth Air Force for World War II units to display their unit plaques. The 97th also made a large donation to restore the Museum's B-17 – – it's a beautiful sight and a star attraction for visitors.

If the Museum is to grow in stature, it will need more housing for its artifacts (presently the display has to be rotated because of insufficient space) for its vintage aircraft which need protection from the weather, for a restoration center and for an education center.

But this sort of expansion requires money. Now with little time remaining for us WWII veterans, it's time encourage all who are financially able to become donors to the March Field Air Museum expansion program. And in order to assist in this effort, I would suggest that all World War II unit of the Fifteenth Air Force consider holding their next reunion in the Riverside area and visit the Museum as part of their program. It will be most rewarding.

Bob Kimmel
97th Bomb Group
Feb. '42 – Oct. '43



Greetings from Pearl & Tom Ramey

455th Bomb Group Association, Inc.
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