CERIGNOLA CONNECTION

455th Bomb Group Association Newsletter

Spring, 2009 Editor, Craig Ward, 813 Peterstow Drive, Euless, Texas 76039
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Message from the President

Looking Down the Road Ahead

By Rod Clarke,
President 455th BG Assoc.

After reading the details describing our forthcoming Reunion in Indianapolis, I get the feeling that we're in for a great time again. However, unlike our 2008 Reunion in Louisville, we'll have some serious business to consider.

First, let's review some facts that guide the way we operate.

The 455th Bomb Group Association, Inc. is incorporated in the State of Iowa as a non-profit public benefit corporation. It is also organized as a tax-exempt entity organized under Section 501(c)(19) of the IRS Code. Our purpose, quoting from the bylaws, is "to perpetuate the history of the 455th Bomb Group; to honor the members who were wounded, killed, POWs, or missing in action; to educate for posterity, both the public and the airmen's loved ones, of the great sacrifices made by the flight crews, operational staff, ground crews, medical and supply personnel."

The Association by-laws require us to hold a Business Meeting every two years to consider matters of interest to the Members as well as electing a slate of officers and directors. The current officers and directors were elected at the previous Bi-annual Business Meeting (San Antonio, 2007), and their terms of office will expire on 31 October, 2009. Of course, they can be re-elected if the members so choose.

The Members are individuals who served in the 455th Bomb Group, 15th Air Force, and who have paid the dues established by the Association. Only Members may hold office, and vote in matters affecting the Association. Membership has been extended to three non-

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WWII veterans who provide special services to the Association.

At present, the number of non-veteran members is limited to no more than 10 percent of the membership.

There is another class of membership called Associate Members, which consists of the widows, spouses, sons and daughters of 455th BG veterans, as well as anyone else interested in the goals of the Association. They have all the privileges of membership, except voting or holding office, provided they pay their dues.

The ranks of our Members are growing smaller. Many of those who remain are unable to do all the things that we'd like to do. Our sister organization, the 454th, who used the runway adjacent to ours on San Giovani Airfield, chose to discontinue their organization in 2005 because of this fact. That option is open to us as well. Before we choose that route, let's consider some alternatives.

It takes a minimum number of attendees to support a reunion such as we had at San Antonio or Louisville. At some point, there are not going to be enough Members able to provide that support. But that doesn't mean we have to fold our tents. We could --

(a) amend the bylaws to allow Association business to be transacted by the Board of Directors using alternate forms of communication (e.g., letters, email, videoconferencing, conference calls).

(b) accept more Associate Members as Members, staying within the 10 percent IRS limit, thus allowing them to serve as officers and directors.

(c) use the money left in the treasury to support the continued publication of the *Cerignola Connection*.

There are undoubtedly other alternatives that could apply, but you get the idea.

In any event, at the forthcoming reunion at Indianapolis, we are required to elect a President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer and Executive Director. The last two offices may be combined in any given two-year term, and has been the case for some time.

We also must elect ten Directors. Not later than mid-August, I must appoint a Nominating Committee consisting of at least four Members and a chairman. Their job will be to nominate a slate of Members to fill each of the Officer and Director positions. I will need help in selecting the members of the Nominating Committee and I expect that they, in turn, will need help in fulfilling their responsibilities. Complicating the task is the fact that the pool of Members has shrunk since the last reunion.

For those reasons, I call upon you, the Members, to volunteer to serve on the Nominating Committee, or to serve in one of the officer or director positions. My email address is rory@his.com; my snailmail address is 400 Madison Street, Apt 709, Alexandria, VA 22314.

Even if you find yourself unable to serve in one of the open positions, I'd like to hear from you about these issues.

* * *

In October, 2008, Jim Smith submitted his resignation as Secretary of the Association. After consulting with the other members of the Board of Directors, I appointed Mark Mason to fill the unexpired term of Jim Smith.

Mark is one of the non-veteran members of the Association. Although Mark is well qualifed to fulfill the responsibilities of the office, he volunteered to serve only if none of the eligible veteran members agreed to accept the position.

He will serve until 31 October, 2009, by which time we will have elected a new slate of Officers and Directors.

Roderick W Clarke
President
455th Bomb Group Association

Can You Help?

Dear Editor,

Do you, or one of your readers, happen to know where Amendola Airfield is located?

It was a B-17 airfield located somewhere in southern Italy. It doesn't appear on my charts. Thanks!

Capt.Alex Kandel
P.O.Box 146
CH-4030 Basel Airport
Switzerland
Email: aeromiltec@bluewin.ch

455TH BOMB GROUP ASSOCIATION, INC.
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1st Lt. USAAF
Craig Ward
Son, Lt. J. T. Ward (740)
Editor, *Cerignola Connection*

AVIATION HUMOR

The scientific theory I like best is that the rings of Saturn are composed entirely of lost airline baggage.

An old pilot is one who can remember when flying was dangerous and sex was safe.

Both optimists and pessimists contribute to the society. The optimist invents the airplane, the pessimist the parachute.

Airlines have really changed ... Now a flight attendant can get a pilot pregnant.

If helicopters are so safe, how come there are no vintage/classic helicopter fly-ins?

Dear Editor,

I have seen some really great articles about the July 27, 1944 mission to Budapest, listing the planes and crews of the 741st and 742nd squadrons. Interestingly, I could not find Bill R. Adams' plane (42-78435, '32') among the 741st planes I thought was flying on this mission. Since I have been researcing this mission for years, I would like to obtain some further data on the 740th and 743rd squadron planes and crews participating this mission. Also, a formation plan (graphical) showing the position of each crew in the 455th BG formation.

So far, I have made several color profiles of the 455th planes, and I would like to complete this research.

Could you please help me with squadron documents and photos, operational plans, lists, etc. regarding this July 27, 1944 mission?

Many thanks for your help in advance,
Gabor Horvath (Canada)
gghs@hotmail.com

Dear Editor,

I am trying to send an email to Jack Dekker (743).

My uncle, Casmir Rogolski, was the radioman on *Tepee Time Gal* (743). I believe that Jack is a surviving member of that bomber crew.

I would appreciate it if you could help me get in contact with him, and / or anyone who might have served with him.

Thanks for your help.
Darel Gustafson
darelgustafson@yahoo.com

Can You Help? Response

Editor's Note:

Dear Lloyd Croft,

I received this response from Mario Capocefalo of Cerignola, Italy. He was responding to your request (Fall, 2008 edition of the CC) for information on the crash in 1944 that killed your wife's grandfather.

Mario was a child / tent boy from the local town that hung around the 455th BG base and did chores for the airmen. In return for his chores, the airmen gave him food and taught him English.

Mario witnessed the crash that day. His description of the event is below. Please note that it may be disturbing to read portions of his recollection. The crash must have been very horrific and violent, and the aftermath as described by Mario is hard to read.

God bless these heros that paid the ultimate price for our freedom.

Dear Editor,

I just read the last *Cerignola Connection.* A request for information from Lloyd Croft made me recall a horrible incident 64 years ago.

April 16, 1944 ... As usual, I arrived at the base at 0715 local. The sky was clear, and all aircraft were getting ready for the mission on the hard stands.

First thing I did was greet the James Cavanaugh & Billy Ray crews. I helped them erect a new tent.

Not far from the 737th squadron mess was a collapsed farm building. It was easy for me to climb onto the highest wall and watch the planes take off. I always tried to recognize the planes of my friends.

Suddenly, one airborne B24 crashed only 200 yards from my position. After 64 years, that terrible incident is still very alive in my mind. I was just 13 years old and unable to understand the great danger as I watched this hellish incident unfold.

I remember very high flames and two booms with loud hissing and bomb fragments flying around.

The Good Lord took care of me. Not a single thing hit me.

I then heard the kitchen sergeant screaming at me ... MARIO, GET YOUR G--DAMNED ASS DOWN FROM THERE AND COME HERE!!

I noted some smoke coming from the tent of my English teacher (Lt. Alfonso Riccardi), bombardier of the Bill Sherman crew. I asked for help from Billy Ray, and with another officer, we extinguished the fire with canteen water.

Black spots on the ground attracted my attention. I can't write how I felt when I realized that the black spots were pieces of burned human flesh. I took a large empty box from the kitchen and collected most of the pieces. I was horrified to find a severed hand with a broken watch around it.

Exhausted, I delivered the full box to the Red Cross hut.

Regards,

Mario Capocefalo
Cerignola, Italy
mario.capocefalo@alice.it

Editor's Note:

I received the following correspondence from Mr. Croft after he read the crash description from Mario:

Dear Editor,

Mario's email was incredible! After receiving his first email, I sent another email to Mario in hopes of asking some more questions. He has been with family in Rome for a few months, but I received an email from him today.

Over the past year, I have been in contact with Ralph Brandstetter, who was involved in the now inactive 454th BG Association. After receiving Mario's email, I contacted Ralph. He remembers Mario well, as well as several of the people Mario mentions in recounting the crash he witnessed.

He said Mario even attended a past 454th reunion. I will correspond with Mario and ask him some more questions and try to jog his memory for any more details. Thanks so much for your help. As I find more info I will pass it along.

In particular, I am trying to track down the serial number of the aircraft. The crew had been at Cerignola only a couple of weeks before they were killed, so it has proven to be a challenge. I know you can appreciate when someone uncovers unknown details about fallen loved ones.

Lloyd Croft
lloydandstacy@insightbb.com

Editor's Note:

Another quick story about the B-24 explosion in April, 1944:

My father, Lt. J. T. Ward was a pilot with the 740th squadron, and was based in

Cerignola during most of 1944. He survived his 50 missions and came home in late 1944.

As a child, I remember a small chunk of metal (olive colored, about 2 inches square, twisted and torn with sharp edges) that Dad always kept in plain sight on his dresser ... next to his car keys and glasses. A day never went by without him seeing it at least once.

I finally asked him what the chunk of twisted metal was. As I recall, he told me that he witnessed a terrible crash of a B24 as it was taking off. He said the aircraft was blown into small pieces, and one of the pieces landed near where Dad was standing when it happened. Dad knew there was nothing he could do for the crew, as the fire was too intense.

He picked up the piece of metal. It was so hot, it burned his fingers. After it cooled down, dad put the piece of metal in his pocket, and returned from the war with it.

I remember Dad had a tough time holding in his emotions when he occasionally spoke of this and other WWII combat events. I was too young to understand the emotional scars that these warriors lived with after the war. As someone who never served in combat, I know I will never totally understand.

I don't know if this incident with Dad was the incident referenced by Mr. Croft. I do know the events sound similar, and I wouldn't be surprised if it was the same event.

Dad never said this to me, but I surmise that keeping this chunk of metal in plain sight all those years was his individual way of honoring the memory of his heroic buddies who paid the ultimate price for American freedom.

OBITUARY | HARRY W.O. KINNARD

General who inspired 'nuts' comment to Germans in '44

Lt. Gen. Harry W.O. Kinnard, who inspired the storied retort "nuts" to a German surrender ultimatum during the Battle of the Bulge, died Jan. 5 in Arlington, Va. He was 93.

His death was announced by his family.

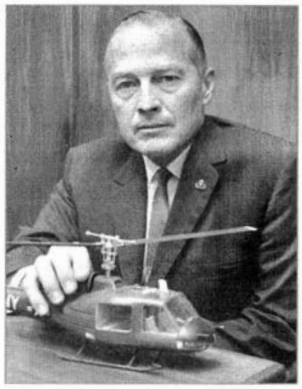
He parachuted into Normandy in the first hours of D-Day in June 1944. He received the Distinguished Service Cross for heroism during Operation Market Garden, the airborne attack in the German-occupied Netherlands later that year. And he helped pioneer the airmobile concept, sending troops into combat aboard helicopters during the Vietnam War.

But he was perhaps best remembered for what happened in December 1944 at the Belgian town of Bastogne, where the 101st Airborne Division, short on clothing and boots in a snowstorm and bitter cold, was surrounded by German troops.

Bastogne, at the intersection of important roads, was a crucial objective for the Germans in their surprise attack in the Ardennes region of Belgium, an offensive that had created a "bulge" in Allied lines.

On Dec. 22, two German officers approached the American lines in Bastogne carrying a demand that the American commander surrender his troops within two hours or face annihilation from an artillery barrage.

The message was passed on to Brig. Gen. Anthony McAuliffe, acting as division commander while Maj. Gen. Maxwell Taylor was in Washington.



Lt. Gen. Harry W.O. Kinnard helped to develop the concept of using copters in infantry warfare.

Gen. Kinnard, a lieutenant colonel at the time and the division's operations officer, would recall that Gen. McAuliffe "laughed and said: 'Us surrender? Aw, nuts.' "

As Gen. Kinnard related it long afterward in an interview with Patrick O'Donnell, a military historian: "He pondered for a few minutes and then told the staff, 'Well, I don't know what to tell them.' He then asked the staff what they thought, and I spoke up, saying, 'That first remark of yours would be hard to beat.'

"McAuliffe said, 'What do you mean?' I answered, 'Sir, you said, "Nuts." ' All members of the staff enthusiastically agreed. McAuliffe then wrote down: 'To the German Commander, Nuts! The American Commander.' "

The note was carried back to the German officers by Col. Joseph Harper, a regimental commander. The officers did not seem to understand it, so Col. Harper told them, "If you don't know what 'nuts' means, in plain English it is the same as 'go to hell.' "

The 101st held out, and four days later an American column broke through the German lines, lifting the siege. That response of "nuts" came to epitomize the grit of American soldiers in the face of seemingly overwhelming odds.

Harry William Osborne Kinnard II, a native of Dallas, entered military service after graduating from West Point in 1939.

Having fought extensively with the airborne, he oversaw a more modern way to get troops into combat quickly when he commanded the 11th Air Assault Division (Test), created at Fort Benning, Ga., in 1963 to develop the airmobile concept.

That became the 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile), and he commanded it in November 1965 when it undertook the Army's first major engagement of the Vietnam War, the Battle of the Ia Drang Valley. North Vietnamese casualties were heavy, but that encounter in the Central Highlands left more than 300 Americans dead.

The battle was recounted in the 1992 book *We Were Soldiers Once ... and Young*, by Lt. Gen. Harold G. Moore and Joseph L. Galloway.

Gen. Kinnard retired from military service in 1969.

He is survived by his wife, Libby, two sons, three daughters, two stepdaughters, a stepson, 16 grandchildren and 15 great-grandchildren.

Can You Help?

Dear Editor,

My wife's granddad was a crew member in the 454th BG. He was killed in a crash on April 15, 1944 that occurred near the airfield that was shared with the 455th.

In the publication *"Flight of the Vulgar Vultures"*, the 743rd Squadron listed "Significant Events and Dates to Remember". One of the events was "Squadron ambulance crew performed rescue efforts for the first time at a crash scene 15 April 1944."

Though not part of the same Group, I wonder if they were responding to the crash of my wife's granddad's aircraft.

Here is the question: Does the 455th Bomb Group have a roster that might have names of who was part of the squadron ambulance crew during this time?

Thank you for your help.

Lloyd Croft

Email: lloydandstacy@insightbb.com

Can You Help?

Dear Editor,

Your e-mail address was given to me by Reid at the 459th BG. My sisters and I are trying to get as much info on our father, Israel Goldman (742), who flew out of Italy as a tail gunner on a B24 with the 455th BG.

Our objective is to locate any of his crew mates. We have his separation papers and names of his crew, along with a photo in front of his plane.

We look forward to your reply. Thank you.

Don Mann

Email: kaymann@socal.rr.com

Life isn't about how to survive the storm, but how to dance in the rain."



DO YOU RECOGNIZE ANYONE IN THIS PICTURE ?
IT WAS TAKEN IN EITHER 1944 OR 1945,
POSSIBLY IN CERIGNOLA, ITALY.

455th Bomb Group, 742nd Squadron, Crew 141.
Israel (Irv) Goldman's family is trying to locate and communicate with any of his crew or their spouses. We can be reached at 818-347-0530, or email to kaymann@socal.rr.com

Irv Goldman is bottom row, second from the right. Other possible names of these crewmembers are Don Johnson, Joe Meek, Vern Russel, Harold Durant, Charles Deeler, & George Clayton. However, we do not know which name goes with which face. Please call or email if you can help. Thank you!

Dear Editor,

Other than the American Flag patch on the right shoulder and the 15th AF patch on the left shoulder, were there patches for the 455th Bomb Group and the 742nd squadron ? If so, can they be purchased so that my dad's original jacket can be refurbished?

The large round breast patch must have been hand painted. However, it is not recognizable. Is it possible to learn what specific things were on that patch? So many questions, so few answers. It would be great to talk to any of the crew members or their spouses. Thank you in advance for any info you can send me.

Regards, Don Mann

kaymann@socal.rr.com

Dear Editor,

I discovered your wonderful website (*www.awardphp.com*) and excitedly called my father-in-law, James W. "Bill" Hunziker, to tell him about it. (I am married to his son, Kenny.)

Bill was a turret gunner on *Miss I Hope*'s second 100 missions. His nickname was *"Red"* back then. He would enjoy hearing from others who served with him.

Bill came back to Knox City, Missouri in September, 1945. He soon met the woman he would marry at the neighborhood one-room school house's annual pie supper. Everyone had been telling him he needed to meet the pretty new teacher, Willa O'Neal. He went to check her out, bought her a pie, and the rest is history! They married and had 2 children; 9 grandchildren and lots of great-grandchildren.

Bill farmed for a living until retiring 12 years ago. He raised corn, soybeans, wheat, hay, cattle and hogs.

He lost his beloved Willa two years ago, but Bill himself is in great health. His mother lived to be 107, and we're hoping he will, too. He enjoys working in his yard, reading, watching movies and FOX News, visiting and baking pies to give to others. Willa loved to bake and she taught him how to bake pies before she died.

He has some photos of his squadron, aircraft, Cerignola, Isle of Capri, etc. that I want to scan and send to you for your newsletter.

Meanwhile, if any one would like to contact Bill, his address is:
Bill Hunziker
502 S. Shumate St.
Edina, MO 63537
Phone # 660-397-3135
E-mail: willah@marktwain.net

Thank you!
Lois Hunziker
Knox City, MO

Can You Help?

Dear Editor,

I enjoy the *Cerignola Connection*.

My dad, Edward Keefner (743) was a B-24 navigator. I am wondering if there is any way to connect with anyone from the Van Doren family. There were lots of pictures of them at the last reunion and I believe Charles Van Doren was the nose gunner in the same plane as my dad .

I keep some historical pictures available at **http://www.keefner.com/susan/** There is a nice picture of the the entire crew there as well: **http://www.keefner.com/susan/archives/dad_HelbigResize2.html**

Thank you for any assistance in advance, and thank you for the *Cerignola Connection* newsletter.

Craig Keefner
Email: craig.keefner@gmail.com

Can You Help?

Dear Editor,

My father, Randall VanSkiver, served on the ground crew (probably a mechanic) of the 454th BG. I have read some issues of your group's newsletter and wondered if there was an equivalent for the 454th?

I have not been successful in finding one. He died in 1959 at the age of 35, and I have been trying to piece together his service experience through veteran memoirs, etc.

I have enjoyed seeing the pictures from your group as they also represent what my father would have seen.

I have a picture of him in probably the enlisted men's "pub." Was there one for each group or just one for the whole field? He may have bartended there.

Any assistance regarding my father or the 454th would be greatly appreciated. I have also attached a good likeness of him when he was in Italy (below).
Diane VanSkiver Gagel
5837 Red Leaf Lane
Monclova, OH 43542
Email: dvgagel@aol.com



War does not determine
who is Right ...
War determines who is Left

Final Flights

John Martsching (741) took his final flight on August 25, 2008.

Family Note: *I am John Martsching's nephew, Richard Martsching. I was reading your fall issue and wanted to advise that John passed away last August. I surely enjoyed many of the stories he told about the 455th. God Bless the 455th BG veterans one and all.*

Walter Shostack passed away in early February, 2009.

Editor's Note: Mr. Shostack wanted to have his ashes scattered off the coast of Connecticut (his home state).
His widow, Shirley, called the Coast Guard. Unfortunately, they no longer perform that service.

Mr. Shostacks son-in-law came up with the idea of flying in the Collings Foundation B-24 to accomplish this. Shirley's family can't think of a greater tribute to Walter than to have a B-24 doing his last mission.

Shirley's email address is:
Shirleynef@woh.rr.com

Joe Dumesnil (1st Lt., 743) took his final flight on November 26, 2008 in Louisville, KY.

I know he would have liked to have attended the 2008 reunion, but he was not well enough to participate.

I honor him, and all of you, as the greatest generation.

Regards,
Craig Dumesnil (Son)

Carl Rudolph (741)
Dear Editor,

I'm the son of the late John I. (Jim) Merritt, Jr., a 455th BG veteran who died in 2003. I've kept in touch with most of his crew over the years. I want to report the death, in March 2008, of his navigator,
G. Carl Rudolph, of Point Pleasant Beach, N.J.

Here is a brief obit for "Final Flights," based in part on one that appeared in the Asbury Park (N.J.) Press of March 22, 2008:

G. Carl Rudolph, a bombardier with the 741st Squadron of the 455th Bomb Group and a crew member of a B-24 named the *Liberty Belle,* died March 19, 2008, in Point Pleasant Beach, N.J. He also had a home in Naples, Fla. Before retiring in 1986, he lived in Cedar Grove, N.J.

Carl spent 37 years as an engineer at the Penwalt Corp., in Newark, N.J. He is survived by his wife, Eleanor; two sons, Bruce and David of Carlsbad, Calif., and Palmer, Alaska; five grandchildren; and a great-grandson.

The *Liberty Belle* was shot down Oct. 7, 1944, over Vienna. The crew-members bailed out over occupied Croatia. They were rescued by Partisans, and rejoined their command seven weeks later. Other crewmen were Jim Merritt (pilot), Don Maes (copilot), Keith Martin (bombardier), Nicholas Corbo (engineer), Robert Wheeler (radioman), and gunners Arnold Dupree, Elliott Cunningham, Harry Carver, and Art Johnson.

Their story was told in *"Goodbye, Liberty Belle: A Son's Search for His Father's War"* (Cooper Square Press, 2002), by son J.I. Merritt.

William A. (Bill) Arnold (743) passed away Sept. 9, 2008 at the age of 88.



He served in the US Army Air Corps as a B-24 pilot, having completed 50 combat missions in the Mediterranean Theater.

He was born & raised in Elmira, NY. He was a devoted & loving husband, father, uncle & grandfather. Bill lost his wife just 40 days before his death.
He is survived by 5 children and 4 grandsons. In civilian life, he was a Mechanical Engineer for IBM, where he received numerous awards and patents.

On a mission to Steyr, Austria, he and his crew survived a direct hit to *Turbo Culosis* and lost 2 engines.They were able to miraculously return the plane back to base at San Giovanni.

His group received a Presidential Citation, and Bill received the Distinguished Flying Cross "for extraordinary achievement in aerial flight as pilot of a B-24 type aircraft" as a result of this mission. Bill received the Air Medal plus 4 Oak Leaf Clusters, and a Medal of Valor.

Bill kept in touch with his crew over the years, attending many reunions. In 2003, he rode on the Collings Foundation B-24 in Lancaster PA with his son, daughter, and grandson. It was quite a thrill for him.

455th BOMB GROUP ASSOCIATION REUNION
OCTOBER 14-18, 2009
SHERATON INDIANAPOLIS HOTEL & SUITES
INDIANAPOLIS, IN

Wednesday, October 14

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

Thursday, October 15

10:30am			Board of Director's Meeting
4:00pm	-	5:00pm	**Reunion Registration open.**
			(Additional hours will be posted at the reunion, if needed)
5:30pm	-	11:00pm	BEEF AND BOARDS DINNER THEATRE
			(description follows)
9:00am	-	10:00pm	Hospitality Room open

Friday, October 16

9:00am	-	10:00pm	Hospitality Room open
10:15am	-	3:15pm	CONNER PRAIRIE (description follows)
6:00pm			Cash bar
7:00pm	-	9:00pm	741st Squadron Dinner

Saturday, October 17

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

Sunday, October 18

Farewells and departures

REGISTER ONLINE AND PAY BY CREDIT CARD!!
www. afr-reg.com/455bg

CANCELLATION AND REFUND POLICY FOR ARMED FORCES REUNIONS, INC.

For attendees canceling reunion activities prior to the cut-off date, Armed Forces Reunions, Inc. (AFR) shall process a full refund less the non-refundable registration fee ($10 per person). Attendees canceling reunion activities after the cut-off date will be refunded to the fullest extent that AFR's vendor commitments and guarantees will allow, less the non-refundable registration fee. *Cancellations will only be taken Monday through Friday from 9:00am until 5:00pm Eastern Standard Time, excluding holidays.* ***Please call (757) 625-6401 to cancel reunion activities and obtain a cancellation code. Refunds processed 4-6 weeks after reunion. Canceling your hotel reservation does not cancel your reunion activities.***

455th BOMB GROUP ASSOCIATION REUNION
TOUR DESCRIPTIONS

BEEF & BOARDS DINNER THEATRE
Thursday, October 15

Enjoy an evening of food and fun at the Beef & Boards Dinner Theatre, which was ranked among the top six dining hot spots by Destinations Magazine. After a delicious buffet dinner that includes four entrees, guests will be treated to one of Broadway's best, *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*. From the Bible to Broadway, enjoy one of the most successful musicals ever! You will recognize the well-known music of Andrew Lloyd Webber and Tim Rice. As Indiana's only year-round Equity Theater, Beef & Boards brings together top-notch professional actors and local talent to produce all its own shows.

5:30pm board bus, 11:00pm back at hotel
$76/Person includes bus, escort, and dinner show.

CONNER PRAIRIE
Friday, October 16

Today we'll leave the 21st century behind. Arrive at Conner Prairie, a living history museum. The first stop is the theater for an introduction and short film. Enjoy a boxed lunch at The Eatery, Conner Prairie's Restaurant, before beginning your tour of the re-created 1836 pioneer village. You'll be able to chat with the doctor, the innkeeper, the blacksmith or the baker about life, religion, or politics of their day. Don't miss the Pioneer Adventure area, where you can try your hand at 19th century activities such as candle dipping, weaving, or barn dancing! Visitors may choose to tour the historic estate of William and Elizabeth Conner for an additional charge.

10:15am board bus, 3:15pm back at hotel
$58/Person includes bus, guide, lunch, and admission.

CITY TOUR
Saturday, October 17

Board bus for a driving tour of Indianapolis, home to the American Legion since 1919 and the Amateur Sports Capital of the World. The professional guides will give you an informed narration of the past and present as you ride by the State House, Lucas Oil Stadium (the Colt's future home and home to the 2012 Superbowl), and Meridian Street, known for its history-rich mansions, exquisite gardens and social elite. The Governor's mansion is located on Meridian Street. Also see the Indiana World War Memorial that pays homage to the Indiana men killed in World War I, World War II, Korea, and Vietnam. Drive by the Scottish Rite Cathedral, judged in its early days by the International Association of Architects to be one of the most beautiful buildings in the world. A stop will be made at the Circle Center Mall while you enjoy lunch on your own at their Food Court. Proceed to the Indianapolis Motor Speedway Hall of Fame Museum with one of the world's largest and most varied collections of racing, classic, and antique passenger cars. See thirty-two Indy "500" winning cars on display and view the half-hour film depicting the history of the track. For an extra charge you may board the Speedway buses for a spin around the track (weather and race schedule permitting).

10:00am board bus, 4:30pm back at hotel
$44/Person includes bus, guide, and admission. Lunch on your own.

Driver and guide gratuities are not included in the tour prices.
Please plan to be at the bus boarding area at least five minutes prior to the scheduled time.
All trips require a minimum of thirty people, unless otherwise stated.

A Brief War Story

In the spring of 1944, I was a Navigator on a B-24 on a bombing mission to Turin, Italy to bomb a complex of Fiat plants.

During the bomb run, we lost two engines out of our four, the left outboard (No. 1) and the right inboard (No. 3). The pilots struggled to keep the plane in the air.

I immediately plotted a course to Corsica, the nearest friendly base with adequate runways, and announced to the pilot via intercom the selection, its advantages and the compass heading.

The crew, mostly bachelors, listening, asked if there were any girls available on Corsica. I had to admit that I thought most would be spoken for with squadrons of B-25s, B-26s, and fighters already using the airfields of Corsica.

The pilot, also a bachelor, asked for an alternative field more likely to have available females. I knew that Naples had recently been taken by the Allies. There was a fighter field just below Naples called Capodochino, a grass field, probably too short for a B-24 to land.

While the crew men were throwing out everything not nailed down and putting on parachutes, they took a vote and Naples was agreed upon. It was touch and go with gas running low and the two remaining engines laboring,

I plotted a course alongside the Italian coast down to Naples. When we got close, we learned the field was being used by Tuskegee airmen in P-47s.

We declared an emergency, and they gave us priority to land. With the use of parachutes out the waist windows, the pilot was able to land the B-24 on that short grass field even without brakes. The right inboard engine (No. 3) was the source of hydraulics, but that engine was dead.

This shows we Americans appreciate our democratic way of life, and our right to exercise a vote, even when disaster looms, and even in the Army Air Force.

By the way, there were plenty of females in Naples for the several days we awaited repairs. A skeleton crew flew the plane back to base. Getting out of that grass field is a story in itself!

Best Regards,
Seymour Gaynes
Col JA AUS (Ret)
9055 SW 73rd Ct. Apt. 1506
Miami, Fl. 33156-2956
(305) 670-2254

Another War Story

On June 26, 1944, the 743rd squadron took off with nine aircraft to join the 455th on a mission to bomb the Oil Refinery at Moosbierbaum, Austria.

I was the Ball Turret Gunner on B-24 number 4252184 (*Minne HaCha*). We were under heavy fighter attack as we approached the target area.

Our plane was struck by a bomb just outside the number 4 engine. It tore a big hole in the leading edge of the wing, just short of the main spar.

We continued the bomb run and dropped our bombs. However, we could not keep up with the formation. We then were under heavy fighter attack.

Pilot George Keahy put the plane in a dive to get in some cloud cover. We survived the fighter attack, but we had a long way back to Cerignola.

We were an hour and a half late getting back to our home field.

Regards,
Jim Thiel, Ball Turret Gunner
Email: bellyguner@yahoo.com

Can You Help ?

Dear Editor,

Thanks for making your newsletters and unit history available on the internet.

www.awardphp.com

I was researching someone from the 742nd BS and it has helped alot. In your 455 BG unit history book (p. 236), there is a crew photo that I was interested in getting.

The pilot is Harold Gorecki. I was interested in framing it. Do you know anyone who might have an original photo of this crew? I will cover any costs involved in getting a copy of the original photo.

Also, in the photo, it has the plane number 602. Are there more numbers connected to this?

Thanks!
Brad Weaver
Email: astor3@roadrunner.com

War Stories of a Bomb and True Power

by Leland Burns

Editor's Note: *I went to high school with the author of this story. Leland is an Air Force veteran. He shares my admiration and appreciation of WWII veterans.*

*He is also the author of "*JUMP into the Valley of the Shadow"*, which chronicles his father's experiences in the 82nd Airborne Division.*

Leland's father, Duane Burns, fought behind enemy lines in the 1944 D-Day landings, and also saw action in Operation Market Garden and the Battle of the Bulge. I highly recommend the book. I got my copy online at Amazon.com.

Please contact your editor if you need assistance in acquiring a copy of the book, or email Leland at jumper@newworldranch.com.

Once I read a small self-published book titled *My Story, Every Soldier Has a Story,* written by Walter Horace Barrett. I knew him as Horace; a World War II paratrooper who served in the same regiment as my father.

I thought his book title was near perfect, due to the well-established fact that former soldiers always have a story to tell.

My military service was given in the United States Air Force as an aircraft crew-chief. I spent more time in Germany than any other assignment.

With three years in maintaining military jets and earning a third stripe, I finally had the right to have an aircraft assigned to me. She was an F-4 Phantom named "*Proud Mary*", tail number 7575.

The airbase, named Spangdahlem, or as most of us Americans called it, *"Spang"* was an active nuclear alert pad.

It was my understanding at the time that the U. S. Air Force in Europe, commanded by Alexander Haig, conducted one full base nuclear alert every year in Europe. During my stay in Germany between 1977 and 1979, the event rotated to Spangdahlem.

A few days before this war game started, our base security became intense. With one day to go, a C-5 *Galaxy*, the armed forces' largest aircraft, landed, parked at the far end of the flight-line, and became quickly surrounded by security guards like ants to a picnic.

"There are a whole lot of Nukes on that big bird," said Sergeant Ryder, a veteran of Viet Nam. He wasn't kidding.

The idea was to load up the entire base with nuclear bombs that would be ready to take-off and fly into the USSR with only 15 minutes' notice. Aircrews and crew chiefs would be kept in a common day-room while awaiting the Claxton.

I remember that I was seated next to 1st Lt. Gary Scott when the alarm sounded. Gary had attended the same high school as I, although he was five years ahead of me. I actually knew him through my older brother. It was just by chance that we were at the same base.

Lieutenant Scott was a Weapons Safety Officer; a.k.a. "back-seater". At the claxton, crew-chiefs and crew members jumped and ran for the planes. We would fire up the jet engines and report ready to roll. The Phantoms, of course, never would take off with those powerful bombs on-board, but that was the plan in case of all-out nuclear holocaust.

This is how the USA would show the communist nations that we were not standing down and we could strike at a moment's notice.

This, however, is jumping ahead of the actually story.

We had three squadrons of fighter jets at Spang, but only enough bombs for slightly more than two-thirds of the planes had been delivered. Proud Mary was scheduled to get a bomb.

Airman First Class Chris Massey, my assistant, and I made sure the shelter was clean and the plane was ready. Then ,we hoped the rain was over as we watched a parade of vehicles arrived.

The munitions crew had a tug towing the nuke behind and a metro-style box van that carried most of the loading crew. Another van dropped off one or two security guards. A pickup followed with a military inspector, a high ranking non-commissioned officer, who was there to make sure we passed the event. The man was dressed like I once did while in a regional drum and bugle corps. Heavy starched creases in his shirt and pants, and bloused britches to show off his super polished boots.

There was a time limit for the loading, so our bomb crews were stressed to get it right, by the book, and within the schedule.

Chris started up the auxiliary power unit. We both left the shelter after that to stay out of the way. This was a nervous but exciting time.

I could hardly believe what my eyes were telling me. Traditional in shape, the nuclear bomb was solid white, but very dull in color. I had no idea what it weighed, but it was slightly longer than the little Fiat sedan I drove. The air crew showed up just as the activity got started and I met the pilot and his WSO.

We agreed that later, when the Claxton rang, we would run from the day room to this shelter. Some teams with their jet in a shelter further away would ride in another of the boxy "Metro" vans.

Munitions sent one man into the cockpit as others manned the trailer with a hydraulic lift. The ranking member had technical orders in his hand to serve as their check-list. Reading the concern on their faces was easy. I didn't know how many bombs they would have to load, but this wasn't their first, nor would it be their last.

First, they prepped the plane at the belly's centerline. The trailer was brought to a position underneath the plane and then the great white beast was raised slowly.

"We have green lights" came a voice from the cockpit. "The weapon is good."

Munitions tightened everything down with a torque wrench and then the team leader invited the inspector under ship to view a hand-held ohm meter.

With the final panel buttoned up, the loading team left. They were off to retrieve another "weapon", so as to do it again on the next assigned air-frame.

There was no defined duty for Chris and me. Nor for the aircrew, but one of us, either the pilot or I had to accept the loading with an entry in the maintenance log.

Afterwards, Chris and the pilots left for the day room. I remained briefly with security.

"I'm going in to have a last look around." I announced to the guard.

He hesitated only a second, then nodded his approval. In a way, this was now his plane. Security wasn't going to let any one in but air crew and crew chiefs during the alert or munitions when the event ended.

I walked in from the side and went around the wing. I shut down the aux power then proceeded to the tail section. Nothing was amiss.

To exit, I ducked my head and skirted under the plane next to the great bomb. At reaching the aft end, I extended my arm and ran the fingers of my right hand down the length of the great white nuclear bomb.

I had already accepted the fact that I would be loaded down with cold chills and goose bumps. I thought briefly if this chance in life would change my life. Towards the end of the long stroke, I had a brief passing thought about static electricity, what effect I might be having, and then as I came out from under the plane, I realized there was a chance the guard would be yelling at me for touching the most powerful thing mankind had ever developed.

From under the centerline, I arose. The guard seemed not to notice or care; his attention was directed outward. I looked down at my hand. I felt - nothing.

I didn't feel a thing.

There was just the slightest bit of oxidized powder on my fingers' end that I was aware of, but emotionally, on a cellular level, my nerves felt no apprehension. With puzzled wonder, I sort of shook the hand under my glare.

Was I that cold?

Maybe my nerves were already heightened as much as possible from the loading. Bidding my guard farewell, I walked to the day room, questioning myself with each step.

This second story occurs months later. The four years of my enlistment were up, and I was now serving an extension of duty. Time had my three Senior Airman stripes turn into Sergeant NCO stripes, and I was within days of having to decide if I would sign on for another tour of duty or not.

I wasn't prone to sign on to any more service, although I was desirous to stay in Europe and attend school. If I followed that course I would be out of the military in six to eight weeks. It may have already been too late to "re-up."

Over the stretch of my

two year assignment in Germany, the Spangdahlem airbase had lost three aircraft.

One flew right into the side of a hill for reasons the common airman never learned. Both aircrew members were lost.

Another jet with crew was on a mission to link up with a British counterpart and conduct some sort of NATO exercise. As the two aircraft came together, the Brit' asked our crew what was wrong with their plane.

"There's nothing wrong," they answered. "What are you talking about?"

The English pilot explained. "Well, you're trailing an extreme amount of smoke." Then before our pilot and WSO could start reviewing the gauges for a problem they experienced a double engine flame-out. Both ejected safely.

In the third case, the Phantom jet just started shaking uncontrollable and wouldn't respond properly to flight control inputs. The WSO ejected. The pilot, perhaps falsely believing he could bring it around, went down with the plane.

I don't know who had the job of collecting all the sorted pieces when an accident happened, but it wasn't anyone off the flight line. The remains of these planes, however, were stored under lock and key in a 60' by 120' shelter within my section.

These days were during the Carter administration, and budgets to the military were coming under close scrutiny. There was a strong push to keep the planes in the air so that mission hours would be up. We heard that flight hours related to how much money we would get for pens and paper.

That, of course, didn't make any sense, but we thought it to be true because the other rumor we heard was that the generals had borrowed our maintenance money in order to buy their precious pens and paper.

Thus was born the problem of trying to fly missions in order to buy parts to fix our jets. The Air Force had put itself in a "cart before the horse" scenario.

Out of this backward thinking, one of the job controllers who helped coordinate our maintenance efforts developed a brainstorm.

There were three crashed jets locked away, and surely we could pull off all the good pieces and place those into our surplus thereby saving a few dollars. I'm still surprised such a thought found all the right approvals, but one afternoon the line sergeant was told to drop off his two most experienced crew chiefs at the shelter where the wreckage was kept.

I was pleased to be counted on, but in fact there were only two NCOs on the truck.

Staff Sergeant Dennis Harbin and I got out of the maintenance van. Harbin had a trainee with him. The young airman hadn't been with us much more than a week. I don't think he had even earned his first stripe.

Someone from job control met us at the shelter, opened it, and made us promise to lock it back when we were done. Our line chief said he'd check on us in about a half hours' time.

We entered a pitch black shelter and had to hit the light switches. The shelter used gas charged lights that were slow powering up. You could see them light up right away but they were dim and took a minute or two to reach full brightness. It was much like a slow "fade-in from black" at the movies.

As the overhead lights found their strength, the shelter grew equally in eeriness. All three of us were taken aback at the sight unfolding before us. Other than the camouflage paint on the exterior there wasn't anything in the shelter that reminded us of Phantoms. Nothing was larger than an office desk.

The larger pieces had rolled and turned over so many times I couldn't tell from where on the aircraft it had come from. Every piece was twisted; it was all pure carnage.

In retrospect, I know that the combat veteran has probably seen worse damage caused by artillery, but none of us were expecting this and it really chilled our backbone.

Harbin broke our silence. "Well, I'll go this way and one of you can go that way and we'll see whatever is in here." Then he stepped off to the right.

I nudged the fresh recruit to the left and I found myself sort of wandering around the middle.

There was no clear path through the destruction; it was sometimes hard to find concrete to walk on. Occasionally, I tried to over turn a larger piece in order to see what I thought would be the inside but there was many sharp edges to deal with.

"Sergeant Burns," The trainee called. "Would you come here, please?"

His voice brought an alarm to my already uneasy feeling. First, no one ever called me Sergeant Burns, but more important his tone made me think he had found a snake hiding among the wreckage.

I had to climb over a lump of metal to reach him. Before I could ask "what was what", he quietly babbled out his own question while pointing to the ground.

"Is that what I think it is?"

The young soldier had too much respect to touch anything and held his ground. I realized right away what he was pointing at and I squatted down beside it.

With my left hand, I reached over and picked up a palm-size piece from an aircrew member's helmet.

"Is that blood?" the young man asked.

"I don't know." But I figured him to be right, and as I started to stand I lightly rubbed the smear with my right fingers half expecting them to rub off. The coloring remained, and I didn't make it to my feet.

Instead, I became weak at the knees as a shock wave like cold electricity ran up my right arm to flood the core of my nervous system.

I can't remember if I caught myself, or if the trainee had a hand in helping to steady me. I couldn't shake off the feeling that had caught me unprepared, but I did find my equilibrium and managed to bring myself upright.

"I would say that's blood." I repeated. I held the piece of helmet a few seconds longer then gently retuned it with respect.

"What's the way out of here?" I asked. Suddenly, I had no desire to touch anything and I only wanted to step on designated floor space. I wanted a path back to the door. This place was sacred. Disturbing anything at all seemed wrong.

Upon reaching the door, I caught Harbin's attention and he returned.

I told Dennis, "I've seen enough." "Spooks getting to you?" He tried making a joke, but he was closer to the truth than he realized. I could see right through him. He was ready to leave himself.

Dennis manned the multiple light switches indicating for us to step out. I was happy to do so. I longed for the sun shine. I thought that whatever had touched me might wash away in full daylight, but it didn't.

The feeling stayed around and haunted me for several days. Outside we were mostly quiet. We hadn't spent more than 15 minutes inside the shelter. It pleased me to get back in the van.

Harbin explained to the line sergeant that the shelter was worthless for salvaging parts. I concurred, and that was the truth. I didn't believe there was anything in there that wouldn't take many days and a crow bar to retrieve. It was a waste of man-hours to try and work in there.

Then later, to nobody in particular I shared, "I guess you don't have to be at war to die for your country."

It dawned on me a few days later how these two preceding military events were connected. Although the wild, chilling shock I took in the shelter had diminished, I was still thinking about it some. I thought about how briefly I had touched the DNA of another man. It was just a quick once-over with a couple of fingers that had brought on that odd feeling. My mind tried to dismiss it as something normal, but I couldn't find anything to dismiss it to.

I mean, hadn't those same fingers only 4 or 5 months earlier rubbed the entire length of a nuclear bomb and felt nothing.

Over time the contrast in power sank in. The nuclear weapon I stroked for several seconds was made by man; a prime example of mankind's ability to create a destructive force.

But the briefer contact with blood was with something created by God. It nearly sent me to my knees. Just a small stain from hardly more than a drop's worth of blood was vastly more powerful than megatons of explosive nuclear force.

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Dear Editor,

This is in reference to my contacting you back in January, 2009 regarding identities of crew members in that great photo and article which appeared in your Fall 2008 issue of the *Cerignola Connection*, page 21.

I might be able to identify some of the crewmembers in this picture, especially me! So here goes:

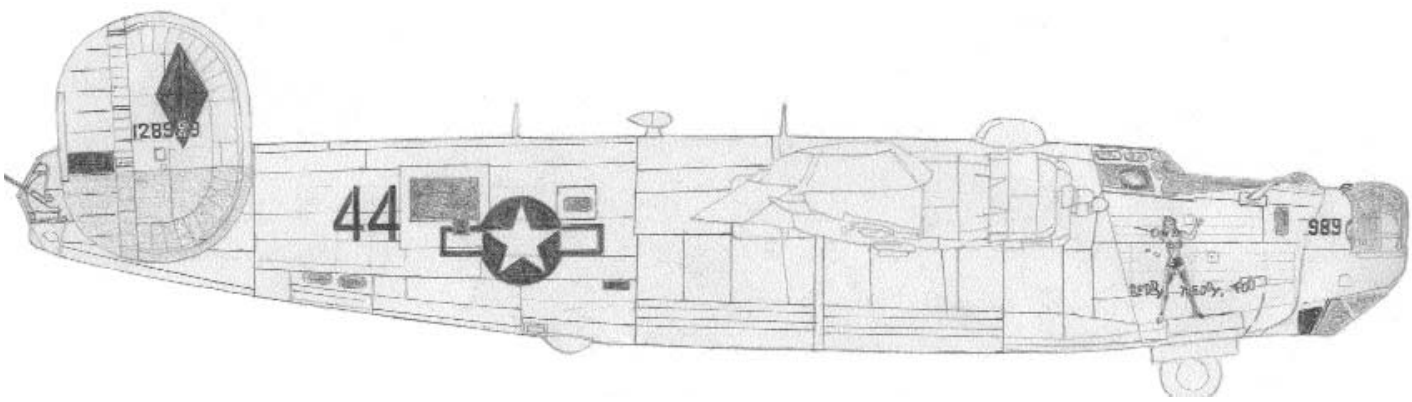
William H. Solley, who lived in Alabama…PILOT
David Ansel, (that's me), lives in NYC...PILOT (Own my own Advertising Agency)
Barney E. Tarshes, lived in L.A., Calif.,.NAVIGATOR
Frank Kiernan, lives in Charlottsville, Va…NAVIGATOR (Attorney)

The rest of the crew I regretfully cannot identify except for …
William F. Flynn, our tail gunner (far left, front row). Bill Flynn was an FBI agent.
(He's mentioned in an obituary in your Spring, 2000 issue.)

Thanks for offering to Identify our crew members in that photo. It's been a long road since then. I'm happy that I have my health and faculties. The world goes on.

Best Regards,
David Ansel (742)





Editor's Note:

1st Lt. Irv Rubin (455th BG, 743rd, below, left) is shaking hands with Tuskegee Airman Hiram Mann (referenced in article below) at a Veteran's Day event in Titusville, Fl. The two veterans, both 87 years young, live near each other in Florida.

Mr. Rubin told Mr. Mann that he had "waited 65 years to thank him and his Tuskegee Airmen colleagues for flying fighter escort on my missions."

Tuskegee Airmen proud of invitation

Obama invites pioneers to D.C.



They helped pave the way, enduring racism before change came to the military.

Now these trailblazers are being honored with an invitation to witness more history in the making: the inauguration of president-elect Barack Obama.

The Tuskegee Airmen, a famed group of World War II black pilots, have been invited to attend next month's festivities.

While the local Tuskegee Airmen, most of them in their 80s, said ill health will prevent them from attending, they were grateful for the invitation.

"All of us are just so happy that we have lived long enough to vote for an African-American for president," said Donald Williams, 86, of Merritt Island who was a mechanical draftsman. "I'm happy to be invited."

Last year, the Tuskegee Airmen were honored with the Congressional Gold Medal. But for a long time their outstanding feats in World War II went unrecognized.

The airmen were about 990 black pilots who trained at the Tuskegee Army Air Field in Alabama. Of those, 450 served in combat. The first class of cadets began in July 1941 with 13 airmen, all of whom had college degrees. Some had doctorates. The pilots and crews were part of the 332nd Fighter Group.

In their fighter planes, they escorted bombing missions over strategic targets in Europe and North Africa.

Carole Florman, a spokeswoman for the inaugural committee, said they are hoping for a good turnout from the Tuskegee Airmen.

"They actually think we can expect quite a few," Florman said.

Noel Harris, 84, of Merritt Island, who trained as a pilot but never saw combat, said it was a wonderful idea to invite the Tuskegee Airmen. They fought bigotry and helped the military move toward integration.

"There were a lot of things we had to put up with to become airmen," he said.

Hiram Mann, a combat pilot who was a Tuskegee Airman and retired as a lieutenant colonel, said that health problems would prevent him from being in Washington to see the first black man become president.

However, the 87-year-old from Titusville felt honored to be invited.

"It's definitely a history-making association," he said. "I've seen so many changes for the good, and this is one of them." ■

Complaint Department

Luke AFB is west of Phoenix, and is rapidly being surrounded by civilization that complains about the noise from the base and its planes, forgetting that it was there long before they were. An individual who lives somewhere near Luke AFB wrote the local paper complaining about a group of F-16s that disturbed her day at the mall.

When that individual read the response from a Luke AFB officer, it must have stung quite a bit.

The complaint:

Last Wednesday, at precisely 9:11 A.M, a formation of F-16 jets made a low pass over Arrowhead Mall, continuing west over Bell Road at approximately 500 feet. What good fortune! Do the Tom Cruise-wannabes feel we need this wake-up call?

The response from Luke AFB:

Regarding "A wake-up call from Luke's jets". On June 15, at precisely 9:12 a.m., a perfectly-timed fly-by of four F-16s from the 63rd Fighter Squadron at Luke AFB flew over the grave of Capt. Jeremy Fresques. Capt. Fresques was an Air Force officer who was previously stationed at Luke AFB and was killed in Iraq on May 30, Memorial Day.

At 9 a. m. on June 15, his family and friends gathered at Sunland Memorial Park in Sun City to mourn the loss of a husband, son and friend. Based on the letter writer's recount of the fly-by, and because of the jet noise, I'm sure you didn't hear the 21-gun salute, the playing of taps, or my words to the widow and parents of Capt. Fresques as I gave them their son's flag on behalf of the President of the United States and all those veterans and servicemen and women who understand the sacrifices they have endured.

On June 15, what the letter writer witnessed was four officers lining up to pay their ultimate respects. Luke AFB will forward your thanks to the widow and parents of Capt. Fresques. It was in their honor that my pilots flew the most honorable formation of their lives.

A MESSAGE FROM 455TH BG ASSOC. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREG RIGGS

As this edition of the newsletter goes to print, we have 345 WWII veterans still on our active mailing list. As we approach the upcoming reunion in October, we need to keep in mind that we are also approaching our biannual membership meeting which will include many important decisions for the organization.

Our most important order of business will be whether or not to continue having reunions. Included in that topic will be a decision, if we decide to have more reunions, of whether or not to continue our experiment of annual reunions, or return to our traditional biannual reunions.

If we decide not to have more reunions, we must then decide whether or not to continue as an Association. Perhaps the major benefit of continuing even without reunions would be the publishing of our newsletter, the *Cerignola Connection*. I'm sure every member in the Association would agree Craig does an outstanding job as editor. I always look forward to getting my copy.

If we continue to operate without reunions, then several changes must be made to our Bylaws in October. We must establish alternate ways to elect officers and directors if we do not meet at least biannually. We may want to consider longer terms. We may want to empower the Board of Directors to make decisions that are now made by the membership. We may want to admit more non-WWII veterans to full Membership status to allow them to serve as officers and directors. Please re-read President Rod Clarke's message carefully. He has done an excellent job of presenting the situation and laying out some of our options.

Next, I would like your help on nominating sites for future reunions (being optimistic that there will be more). Here are the criteria we currently use for selecting reunion locations:

(1) Local laws and union agreements permit us to serve our own alcohol and snacks in the hospitality room (this eliminates many otherwise desirable locations)

(2) It is in the central U.S. (loosely defined) to permit reasonable car travel from any location in the continental U.S.

(3) It is near enough to a major airport to allow easy access by those who fly.

(4) It is in a location where temperatures will still be moderate in October.

(5) It is not at high altitude where reduced oxygen would present a problem.

(6) It is a city in which Armed Forces Reunions, Inc., already has established business contacts—we are no longer a large enough organization for them to go beyond their established sphere of influence.

If you would like to attend our next reunion (based on your present health), and you have a preferred location that would meet the first five criteria listed, please send me that information. You may mail it to the return address on the newsletter, or you may email it to 455BG-H@austin.rr.com. We can use any feedback I receive before the end of September, for use in Indianapolis in October, when discussing the next reunion.

October in Indianapolis promises to be an important time for the 455th Bomb Group Association. Please plan to be there. You will enjoy the fellowship, and you can help chart our future.

Greg Riggs, Executive Director, 455th Bomb Group Association

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