



*The 461st*

# **Liberaider**



Vol. 13, No. 1

June 1996

SOMEWHERE IN THE USA

## **“IN THE BARREL”**



Mission No. 96—3 September 1944  
Smederovo Ferry Slip, Yugoslavia  
See Page 19

The 461st LIBERAIDER  
461st Bombardment Group (H)  
Activated: 1 July 1943  
Inactivated: 27 August 1945  
Incorporated: 15 November 1985

CORPORATE HDQRS: 1407 W. 4th St. P.O. Box 5160, Spencer, IA 51301

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#### "Liber Raider"

George D. Dickie—Editor—P.O. Box 615, East Sandwich, MA 02537-0615  
The "Liber Raider" is published twice a year on behalf of the members of the organization. Permission is granted to use articles provided source is given.

## ATTENTION!!!

### Please read carefully and respond

The U.S. Postal Service is going to automate and mandate that our address labels conform to their specific requirements or they will not accept the "Liber Raider" for the discounted bulk mailing rate. We can not afford to send out the newsletter unless it is at the bulk rate. The December 1995 issue cost \$0.18 each for postage. When I send out single copies to those that didn't get theirs it costs \$1.24.

We have to update our address labels by October 1, 1996 or the "Liber Raider" will not be accepted by the new automatic postal machines. So, before you read further I ask you to look at the label on this issue, on a separate piece of paper make any corrections needed in accordance with the information given below and mail it to Pete Peterson, P.O. Box 461, Spencer, IA 51301. Do it now!! Even though you might have sent in an address change recently.

The postal service reads your address from the bottom up. The ZIP Code, the town and then the street address or P.O. Box Number. They really don't care

who it is addressed to. With first class mail any errors in the address will just delay delivery because the employees have to try to find the right address or return it to the sender. With bulk mail they are not obligated to do anything but deliver it to the address shown. If there is an error that makes the piece undeliverable they just trash it. Small errors can mean you don't get your copy.

The most important part of the address is the ZIP Code. All nine numbers (ZIP plus four) are required. If you do not know your full ZIP Code number get it from your mailman or post office. You must get it to get the "Liber Raider".

Of course the city and state shown must match that indicated by the ZIP Code or the mail can be trashed.

Check the street number, house number, apartment number, etc. and your P.O. Box Number. Any errors could mean somebody else will get your mail.

This may sound trite but it is very important when dealing with bulk mail, especially with the automation procedures and practices. This brings up to the new requirement that all address labels must be bar-coded to be compatible with the new automated sorting machines. The barcode is a 62-character "picture" of an address. When all the addresses contain the correct information and are entered onto our computer disk, the data must be processed through another computer program that will print the bar-coded address on the label. After October 1, 1996 we will not be able to mail the "Liber Raider" without barcoded address labels. A typical barcoded address label is shown below.

GEORGE DICKIE  
OR CURRENT RESIDENT 01/0149  
PO BOX 615 30462  
EAST SANDWICH MA 02537-0615



The first step is up to you. We have to have your correct and complete address to start with and we need it now.

### Put it in the mail today!!!!

\* \* \* \* \*



## MAIL CALL

Editor's note: The following four letters were received in response to the article on the Lyon, France supply missions published on pages 33 and 34 of the December 1995 issue of the "Liber Raider". Two of them report on an incident involving a P-47 which I had never heard of before. The other two provide interesting perspectives on the Lyon missions and the parts that each writer played in them.

Thanks for your responses. They are what keeps your newsletter coming and gives me a warm feeling in knowing somebody out there actually reads the "Liber Raider". Keep them coming!!

Dear George,

January 22, 1996

Just a brief run down on my part in the 461st. I was a Staff Sgt. assigned to the 461st B.G., 766th B.S. armament section. Joined the Group at Wendover Field, Utah, went to Hammer Field, California and eventually ended up at Cerignola, Italy—Torretta Field for 19 months.

During that period of time I had a chance to fly on one of the supply missions to deliver gasoline, bombs, etc. to Lyon, France. This is my account of that mission through the eyes of a ground crewman—it also might clear up a reference to a smoking B-24 on a taxi strip at the airport.

The mission was posted on a bulletin board asking for volunteers so I thought I'd sign up to see what it would be like to take an active part in an actual flight.

Early in the morning on the following day after breakfast, I rode out to the flight line and was dropped off at the aircraft with the rest of the crew. I was told that when we reached Lyon my job would be to toggle the unarmed 500 pound bombs onto the ground and help unload the 55 gallon drums of airplane fuel.

We then boarded the aircraft and I joined the crew who were all jammed up front in the cabin of the aircraft. Engines were started up and someone yelled into my ear—"Go down below and shut off the A.P. U. (Auxiliary Power Unit) when we get airborne—I'll let you know when." By now we were taxiing out

of the revetment and believe it or not we were loaded so heavy the tail end of the fuselage scraped against the ground. We slowly reached the end of the runway and with brakes applied the pilot revved up the four engines to full throttle and finally, when he got the green light from the control tower, he released the brakes and the aircraft slowly lumbered forward. As it began to pick up speed I heard a voice cry out, "We're not going to make it! - we're not going to make it!" - finally I felt the airplane lift off the ground and we were on our way. Once airborne I got the order to shut off the A.P.U. and we were dispersed to the waist section and other parts of the aircraft.

After flying over Sicily we passed over the port of Marseilles, France where hundreds of boats were docked—we then flew to a lower altitude where we passed over green fields and red-tiled farm cottages.

Finally we reached our destination at the Lyon airport where we landed and taxied to deposit our cargo on the ground. After getting the bombs free of the airplane we unloaded the barrels of airplane fuel. The crew then took off for town while I guarded the aircraft.

What a busy airport—B-24's landing and taxiing by to unload their bombs and gasoline. Fighter aircraft of many varieties also taking off in all directions. Directly in front of me I saw a P-47 Thunderbolt taking off—at the same time I observed a B-24 coming towards our parked aircraft. The pilot of the fighter plane was evidently not aware of the B-24 until too late to avoid a collision. The P-47 struck the #4 engine of the bomber and peeled the engine off the wing. The Thunderbolt then shot vertically upwards about 500 feet into the sky and then plummeted straight downwards until the nose of the aircraft hit the ground. The pilot freed himself from the cockpit and hopped down onto the ground. No fires—no injuries—no damage except a smoking B-24 taxiing down the runway minus one engine.

The return trip was uneventful. Clouds obscured our view most of the way back. By and large this day was one I'll forever remember. I can still hear that voice shouting "We're not going to make it!" - wish someone would have told him to pipe down.

Les Toleen  
766th B.S. Armament Section

*(Continued on page 4)*

*(Continued from page 3)*

Dear George,

Reference your request for stories concerning the air-lift to Lyon, France in September 1944.

A serious incident occurred while B-24's were landing at the airfield. We had just landed and were getting out of our aircraft when we noticed 3 "Jugs" (P-47's) taking off with a 500 lb. Bomb under their fuselage. A B-24 had just landed and was turning left when for some reason it stopped. The leader of the P-47's tried to clear the left wing of the B-24 but couldn't make it and flew through it. He glanced upward and landed straight ahead in a field, got out of his plane and walked toward us. The wing of the B-24 was completely sheered off and no fire resulted. A miracle that no one was hurt. A tough bird the P-47.

You mentioned that personnel at Lyon took just enough fuel from the B-24's to enable them to make it back to their base. I believe they wanted a little extra from us as when we neared our runway which was the closest to the coast, we lost an engine through lack of fuel, but we made it OK. Luckily we didn't have to fly any further.

Bert Abents  
766th B.S.

\* \* \* \* \*

Dear George,

January 8, 1996

I read with keen interest the article about the Supply Missions to Lyon, France, that was in the December issue. The reason it was so interesting to me was because I was a passenger on a mission to Lyon, the only mission I flew on during the nearly 18 months I was with the 461st in Italy (Weather Officers weren't expected to fly missions).

First, a little background to let you know how I became a passenger on a flight to Lyon:

As the Group Weather Officer, I wrote my own forecasts, but at Briefings I was required to use the forecast that 15th Air Force sent me by Teletype. Most

of the time the two forecasts were identical, but occasionally they differed, and generally they were correct, but if they were wrong, and the mission was cancelled, I still had the authority to give a weather clearance for flights from Cerignola.

On one of the days during September of 1944, I thought the weather was fine for a Supply Mission to Lyon, but the Weather Officer at the Air Force Headquarters in Bari cancelled the mission. About 30 minutes before my 8 hour shift ended (and my 32 hour off-duty started), I was begged to give a weather clearance for a flight to Lyon, because some important part was needed. I can't recall what was so badly needed, but the request had come from Group Headquarters.

I told the pilot that if it had been left up to me, I wouldn't have cancelled the mission, and I saw no weather problems. I then suggested that they take me along as a passenger, since I was off duty until 1600 the next day. He agreed and immediately we started scheming to spend the night in Lyon.

We made the trip fine, except we bounced thru a weak front, and one of the engines had to be feathered. With these minor problems, we were able to enlist Maj. Hudson's help in persuading the Wing Colonel in command that it would take until the next day to fix the engine, and I told him that the front would build up in the afternoon and it would be dangerous to fly back to Cerignola that afternoon.

So off to Lyon we went, trading cigarettes for booze, meeting pretty girls and friendly citizens. The next day we flew back, after a delightful stay in Lyon, and I reported back to duty at 1600.

I wish I could remember the names of the pilot and crew, and if any of them remember the trip, I would like to hear from them.

Stanhope Elmore  
Weather Officer  
461st Bomb Group

\* \* \* \* \*

Dear Mr. Dickie,

January 8, 1996

In the December issue of the "Liberaider" you re-

*(Continued on page 5)*

*(Continued from page 4)*

quested some personal stories of the Lyon-Bron supply mission and also talked of a picture of a burning B-24 on that mission. I never received the "Liberaider" issues of 1993, however I did see a picture of a burning plane in a booklet called "B-24 Liberator In Action". It really brought back memories because I was in the third plane in line.

Enclosed is a rough draft of my story on that mission.

### **Supply Mission to Bron Airfield, France**

As a member of the ground crew working on aircraft 18 (LADY DUZZ), 764th Bomb Squadron, 461st Bomb Group located in Torretta, Italy, I wondered what was going on when a large truck unloaded 18 empty 55 gallon steel drums on the edge of our hardstand, then came the armament group with eight 500 pound bombs and many belts of 50 caliber ammo, actually 3,000 rounds. When we were given orders to remove the ball turret from our aircraft, I knew it was for a supply mission but also a very big one since all the other aircraft were going through the same activities.

The unfused bombs were hung on the bomb racks and the ammo was laid on the catwalk in the bomb bay. Then we fitted the 18 steel drums into the waist area between the opening in the floor where the ball turret had been and the wall of the bomb bay. The fuel tanks were filled to maximum capacity—2,700 gallons. Everything on our aircraft was in working order and it was ready to fly.

Captain Wylie, the pilot of the Lady Duzz, speaking to the ground crew asked for a volunteer from this group to go on this supply mission to France. Thinking of the adventure and a much needed change of scenery, without hesitation, I said, "I'll go."

Awakened very early the next morning, we were taken out to the aircraft to go through all the preflight activities with the ground crew. Capt. Wylie said I would be flying in the waist alone since it was important to see if the landing gear and flaps were retracted properly after take off.

It was a perfect morning for flying—visibility was

clear and unlimited. We flew directly over Rome and headed for Corsica. Our flight distance was about 625 miles and should have taken about 4 to 4-1/2 hours. We were not flying in formation, traveling alone but I did see another aircraft from our squadron below us when flying over Corsica. After flying 3 hours we turned north following the Rhone river toward the Bron airfield near Lyon. Flying at an altitude of 1,500 to 2,000 feet, looking down, I saw burned out hulks of German combat vehicles 100 to 200 feet apart. At every turn in the road leading to the bridges over the Rhone river 2 bomb craters blocked the road, and most of the bridges were partially under water. The twelfth Air Force really must have been proud of the job they did.

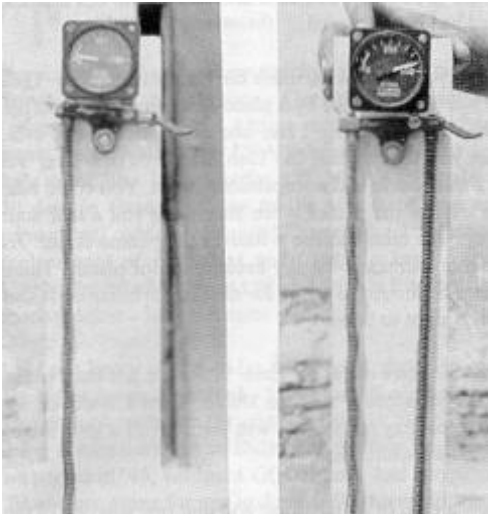
Suddenly my sightseeing was jolted when Capt. Wylie's voice in my intercom said, "Sharp—you better get into the tail turret and keep a look out for German fighters, there could be some around." Fortunately there were none and I finally got out of the turret as we started our approach to landing at the Bron airfield.

After reporting that the landing gear and flaps were down O.K. I settled onto the floor with my back to a steel drum as we landed. As we taxied to our unloading position, the first two bombers were already there. I noticed the entire airfield except for the runway and taxiways was completely pock-marked with bomb craters. The airfield was the target of the Fifteenth Air Force bomb groups about a week or so earlier.

As we were unloading the bombs, ammo, drums, and pumping the fuel from our aircraft, we had plenty of help from the ground crews stationed at Bron. The bombs which had been lowered gently from the bomb racks, were rolled onto the grassy area away from the aircraft. Suddenly all this activity stopped as we saw a boiling column of black smoke coming from the first plane in line. Many of the men were running away from the smoking plane. When the plane burst into flames the frenzy started around the plane in front of us. Our plane was about 75 feet behind the second one and although we could feel the heat from the burning plane we finished the unloading. About this time the French people from the area around the airfield were attracted by the smoke and all the bombers landing and came to see what was happening—I estimated at least 2,000 people there. It was hard to believe, but the engines and the propellers of the second plane had completely drooped. The tubular structure could not support the weight of the

*(Continued on page 6)*





*(Continued from page 6)*

shown in the pictures. I assume that the “master” or good spring is on the left and stays there at all times. The “test” spring is inserted on the right side. It appears that the tester is designed to apply an upward force to the right hand side of the fulcrum so that the master spring is compressed and the test spring is elongated. The force on the fulcrum is generated by applying air pressure to the system (as shown on the gauge).

It must be understood that a spring is normally a linear device. This means it will compress or elongate a certain distance when a force is applied. If that force is doubled then the distance the spring moves will be doubled. Therefore, you can test a spring of a given design by applying a force and noting how far it moves. Or, you can compare two springs of the same design by applying the same force to both springs and checking to see if they move the same distance. This I believe is the principle behind this spring tester. Delmas Cowley received the award for designing a tester that eliminated the use of weights and therefore was quicker and easier to use.

\* \* \* \* \*

God and a soldier all people adore  
 In time of war but not before;  
 And when war is over and all things are righted,  
 God is neglected and an old soldier is slighted.

Dear Editor,

The enclosed clipping about the B-24 found in Brazil after 51 years (see page 27, December 1995 issue of “Liber Raider”) was a chilling reminder that I and the rest of crew #48, 766th Squadron, 461st Bomb Group, almost made the Brazilian jungle our final resting place in February, 1944. (See article on page 24 of this issue of the “Liber Raider”.)

Fresh from our training as 461st “originals” at Hammer Field, Fresno, California, we were en route to our eventual combat destination at Cerignola, Italy in our new B-24. We, like the plane in the clipping, had left the island of Trinidad for Belem, Brazil. It was a long boring flight over ocean and endless green forest. The plane was on autopilot and everyone on board was at least dozing, and more probably, sleeping.

Suddenly, with a tremendous lurch, we were diving straight down at the jungle, 9,000 feet below. A full power dive! Supposedly a malfunction in the gyroscope of the autopilot.

The pilot, F/O D. Robertson, and the co-pilot, Lt. Paul Smith, were forced to the ceiling and couldn’t reach the controls. I, as radio operator, found myself on the floor, wedged tightly between the radio operator’s seat and the big liaison radio transmitter. I made one or two tremendous efforts to get free. My parachute was on the other side of the radio room, and then I would have had to go down and open the bomb bay doors. All quite futile as I found myself unable to move due to the forces of gravity and inertia. I had just relaxed and thought, “This is it, Lord! Here I come,” when they managed to get hold of the yoke and pull the plane out of the dive.

The co-pilot soon went to the rear of the plane and found several crew members injured with cuts and abrasions from being thrown against the corrugated aluminum ceiling. He returned and asked me for the gallon thermos jug. I gave it to him and as he left, I remembered that while passing through West Palm Beach, Florida, some “expert” had informed us that we’d get no Coca-Cola overseas.... So we had filled the thermos with a gallon of Coke!

After using this to give first aid to the injured, Lt. Smith was a bit testy about “What the hell was that Coca-Cola doing in there?”

*(Continued on page 8)*

*(Continued from page 7)*

Anyway we survived, while that other crew didn't, and nine of us completed our 50 missions. Our navigator, Lt. James Laulis, became a POW while flying with another crew.

Don Bryant  
766th B.S.

\* \* \* \* \*

Dear George,

I read the story of Melvin Dumdei's experiences in the December issue of the "Liberaider" pages 43 to 47) and it brought back a lot of memories. The part that did it was the description of the December 19, 1944 Blechhammer mission (see page 45).

As we were short of navigators, I was constantly being shuttled from one crew to another, and flew very few missions with my original crew. I happened to be the navigator on Melvin's ship that day.

We were hit at the target, and had holes in the gas tanks. In order to save fuel, we eventually dropped out of the flight formation and tried to fly at a slower speed at a lower altitude.

We were between two layers of clouds and just about along the coast of Yugoslavia. We had no radar, and I could not see the ground. The fuel gauge was showing very little fuel. I could not tell if we were over land or over water. I was in the nose with one hand on the handle of the nose wheel door and the other hand on the parachute for about an hour.

Suddenly with very little fuel left, there was a hole in the clouds. Our pilot decided to go through it to see where we were. Sure enough, there was the island of Vis right below us. Vis had one landing strip between two mountains. When we banked to land, the upper engine cut out. We landed OK, but did not have enough fuel to taxi off the runway.

Our pilot, Mike LaRock, had worked up such a sweat during the flight that he did not realize that the cord to his heated suit was cut through by flak. When we

were on the ground, he felt cold and first found out that the cord had been severed.

We stayed with the partisans on Vis for three days. Then we were flown home by a plane that came to pick us up. While we were there I had one of the best thrills ever. That was the day that the 15th Air Force flew over Vis on a mission. It was a stupendous event. You could hear the hum of the planes when they were still a half hour away. The hum became a roar as they came closer. As the roar increased the sky became full of planes. These planes continued to fly by for at least 20 minutes. It was truly a sight to behold.

I was 20 years old at the time. When we got back to the 766th Squadron I went to shave. Then I discovered I had three gray hairs. That was the start of a long life of premature white hair.

I flew a total of 30 missions, and that one was one of the most memorable of all. I would like to hear from any of the other crewmembers.

Best regards,  
David Feldman  
140 Woodlake Drive East  
Woodbury, NY 11797

\* \* \* \* \*

Dear George,

I am trying to locate a photograph taken possibly February or March of 1945. Word went through the 461st that there was to be a fly-through an uncovered hanger in the area. I grabbed my camera and took off (cannot say now where the hanger was) but when I arrived there was quite a large gathering, many with cameras. I positioned myself at the exit end of this uncovered hanger. The pilot of the small plane (I think it must have been a cub or some recon plane) made 2 or 3 dry runs down along side of the hanger—then squared off and flew through it. I have lost or misplaced many of the pictures. At that period of time, I was just a "bambino" but sure appreciate to have a copy of this photo if any one took a picture and would send me a copy which I will gladly pay for, and dance at their wedding.

I was inducted at Fort Sheridan—basic at Amarillo—

*(Continued on page 9)*



*(Continued from page 8)*

gunnery at Harligan—crew training and assignment at Topeka, then to Bangor, Goosebay, Greenland, Iceland, Wales, North Africa, and finally southern sunny Italy. We left the USA February 21st—arrived Italy April 7th—long time for a flight? We spent about 30 days in Greenland due to the effects of a severe windstorm which required repairs to engines, replacement of plexiglas and trying to keep warm. Coming home after the end of hostilities in Europe, was much quicker—Italy—Azores—USA.

I did not know of the 461st 43-45 until about 3 years ago when I was contacted—I had lost all contact with former crewmembers for several years. In '94, 5 of the living 6 members met in Dallas for the first time since we parted in '45, we had a GOOD time, had another in '95 and are going for one in April 1996. I was surprised to see how old some of these guys looked.

Also among lost photos is the one of our CO buzzing the 2 story brick building on his leaving for the States. I would appreciate to hear from any of my “buddies” at any of the places before mentioned—if they remember a little short Cpl.

David R. White  
Tail Gunner—764th B.S.

\* \* \* \* \*

**CHAFF**

B-24 Groups assigned to the various Air Forces during WWII.

Air Force	No. of Groups
5th AF	(5)
7th AF	(3)
8th AF	(22)
9th AF & 13th AF	(2)
10th, 11th & 14th AF	(1)
12th AF	(0)
15th AF	(14)

The list of Bomb Groups assigned to the Fifteenth Air Force were the: 98th BG, 376th BG, 449th BG, 450th BG, 451st BG, 454th BG, 455th BG, 459th

BG, 460th BG, 461st BG, 464th BG, 465th BG, 484th BG and 485th BG.

In the years during WWII, the Army Air Corps/Army Air Force trained approximately 193,000 pilots, 50,000 navigators and 45,000 bombardiers, but top spot in aircrew training went to the aerial gunners. Flexible gunnery schools turned out 297,000 graduates and most of them were enlisted men. A very high percentage were volunteers who, like bombardier trainees, knew they had one destination on graduation, and that was **COMBAT!**

From the “Pathfinder”, 459th Bomb Group

\* \* \* \* \*

**Draftee Dentist Drilled Message In Japanese General’s Dentures**

Sacramento, CA—Nearly lost amid the World War II retrospectives is a postwar prank that literally had Japan’s vanquished military leader chewing on the words: “**Remember Pearl Harbor**”.

A draftee dentist drilled the message in Morse code inside Gen. Hideki Tojo’s dentures while the genral was imprisoned in occupied Japan. The dots and dashes remained for three months before the secret got out and they had to be removed.

“It wasn’t anything done in anger,” recalled E. “Jack” Mallory, who made the full upper and lower dentures for Tojo in 1946. “It’s just that not many people get a chance to get those words into his mouth.”

Tojo, who had approved the surprise attack that drew the United States into the war, asked for the dentures so he could speak better at his war crimes trial. He was convicted and executed in 1948.

Mallory, then 22, knew that writing out the words “Remember Pearl Harbor” could get him court marshaled. An amateur radio operator, he decided to inscribe the letters in Morse code instead.

Also in on the secret was George Foster, who died in 1990. He was assigned to provide dental services at Sugama Prison near Tokyo, where he extracted Tojo’s teeth and sought Mallory’s help in making the dentures.

When the dentures were done, Mallory said he and Foster told others in the dental service.

*(Continued on page 10)*

(Continued from page 9)

"We took them on an excursion to the prison to show them our masterpiece." Mallory said. "The only ones in on this were my dentist roommates and myself, all sworn to secrecy."

But the secret was too juicy to hold. One of the men wrote about the escapade to his parents in Texas, who passed it on to a brother, who broadcast it on a local radio station. Soon, the story was broadcast all over the world.

Mallory confessed to his commanding officer, who told him to hide while the story was denied. Late that night, Mallory and Foster drove to the prison and woke a bewildered Tojo in the middle of the night to "borrow" his dentures. Using a crude grinding stone, Mallory removed the dots and dashes.

Mesa Tribune via Associated Press  
Copied from "Kelly's Kobras" Jan 1996

### **Humor and Poetry**

Upon stopping a speeding car, the officer noticed that the driver was a priest. The following exchange ensued:

O: "Father, I'm sorry I had to stop you, but you were speeding."

P: "Oh, I'm sorry. I guess my mind was on something else."

O: "Well, I'm sorry too, but I will have to write you a ticket."

Then the officer noticed a bottle lying on the seat beside the driver.

O: "What's in the bottle?"

P: "Oh, that's just my water."

O: "May I see it please?"

The officer removed the cap, took a sniff and said, "This isn't water. It's wine."

Lifting his eyes to heaven, the priest exclaimed, "Oh, Lord, you've done it again!"

\* \* \* \* \*

A police officer pulled over another off-duty policeman who was driving his car.

O: "I'm afraid I'm going to have to give you a citation for making that illegal left turn you just did."

D: "What are you talking about? I didn't just make an illegal left turn."

O: "You just did it, right in front of my own eyes."

D: "Listen, I'm a police officer myself, and I know I didn't make an illegal left turn."

The officer then spoke to the driver's wife and said, "You look like an honest woman who would tell the truth. Didn't your husband just make an illegal left turn?"

Wife said, "I'm sorry, but I know better than to argue with him when he has been drinking."

\* \* \* \* \*

A friend asked the husband, "How is the little wife?" "She's still an angel ... always up in the air, harping about something."

\* \* \* \* \*

She refuses to give him a divorce. She says, "I've suffered with the bum for over fifteen years, and now I should make him happy!"

\* \* \* \* \*

Husband: "Janice, when I see you in that hat, I have to laugh."

Wife: "Good! I'll put it on when the bill comes in."

Stolen from the B-17 Combat Crewmen and Wingmen

\* \* \* \* \*

### Smile When You Say That

A smile is quite a funny thing,  
It wrinkles up your face,  
And when it's gone, you never find  
Its secret hiding place  
But far more wonderful it is  
To see what smiles can do,  
You smile at one, he smiles at you,  
And so one smile makes two.  
He smiles at someone since you smiles,  
And that one smiles back,  
And that one smiles in truth,  
You fail in keeping tract.  
And since a smile can do great good,  
By cheering hearts of care,  
Let's smile and smile and not forget  
That smiles go everywhere.

455th Bomb Group Assoc. "Cerignola Connection"

461st BOMB GROUP (H) INC. REUNION  
SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH  
Headquarters: Red Lion Hotel  
September 24-29, 1996

PLEASE RETURN THE ATTACHED REGISTRATION FORM TO:

461st Bomb Group  
C/o The MariMac Corporation  
6790 E. Calle Dorado  
Tucson, AZ 85715

The MariMac Corporation will handle all registrations for the hotel, meal functions and optional tours.

Registrations will be numbered and dated upon receipt. CUT-OFF DATE FOR THE HOTEL IS 30 AUGUST 1996. Registrations received after that date may or may not be housed in the Red Lion but we will get you into another hotel nearby if possible. CANCELLATIONS MUST BE RECEIVED BY 17 SEPTEMBER. Cancellations will be fully refundable (except the registration fee) unless MariMac has been required to obligate funds prior to receipt of cancellation.

#### GENERAL INFORMATION

Hotel rooms and tour space are restricted and will be handled on a FIRST COME-FIRST SERVED BASIS. We are holding 180 rooms on the peak nights (Thursday, Friday and Saturday), and 120 rooms for Wednesday. Please get your reservations in early in case we need to increase the room block.

PARKING: Plenty of parking if you are driving.

AIRPORT TRANSFERS: Complimentary

ROOM COST: \$91.00 SINGLE OR DOUBLE, INCLUDING TAX OF 10.725%  
\$102.00 TRIPLE  
\$113.00 QUAD

CAMPGROUND: Camp VIP—1400 W. North Temple PHONE: (801) 363-5580

Salt Lake City is a beautiful clean city and I am sure everyone will enjoy it. The hotel is only a couple of blocks from a shopping mall, so it's an easy walk.

Temple Square is a short walk from our hotel and they have free walking tours every 45 minutes around the square. Just walk up and join in with one of the groups. The Family History Library is at Temple Square and they will help you with your family tree search. Numerous restaurants are in the immediate area of the hotel—there is an Olive Garden (Italian) next door.

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- Wed, 25 Sep  
Noon—6:00 PM      Registration desk and hospitality suite open at 12:00 noon. Complimentary coffee available in the hospitality suite. Free to walk up to Temple Square and join in one of the free walking tours.
- 6:00—9:00 PM      Dinner at Lion House, beautifully restored home of Brigham Young. Following dinner, a member of the Mormon Tabernacle Choir will lend insight into the choir and perhaps even sing!
- Thu, 26 Sep  
9:00—3:00 PM      Park City tour will provide an exciting look at the historic beginnings of mining and wealth in Utah.
- 5:00—6:00 PM      Board Meeting
- 7:00 PM              Squadron Dinners
- Fri, 27 Sep  
9:00—3:00 PM      Hill Air Force Base Museum, where some 50-60 aircraft are on display. Following time at Hill, we move across the causeway to Antelope Island, which boasts unique wildlife, including a buffalo herd that has been on the island since pioneer days. “Buffalo burgers” will be served for lunch.
- 6:00—7:00 PM      Annual Meeting
- Sat, 28 Sep  
8:30—12:30 PM      Salt Lake City Historical Tour—Capture an appreciation of the unique beginnings of the city with a tour that takes in some historic sites and buildings.
- 6:30 PM              Cash bar available prior to the dinner dance.
- 7:30 PM              Annual banquet and dance.
- Sun, 29 Sep  
7:30—8:45 AM      This is a big and busy day, beginning at 7:30 AM  
Memorial Service followed by breakfast buffet
- 8:45 AM              Depart for Temple Square for the Mormon Tabernacle Choir broadcast. All must be seated by 9:10 AM. Broadcast begins at 9:30. Immediately following the broadcast, we will board our motor coaches and travel into the foothills to the LaCaille restaurant for a continental breakfast, consisting of 4 courses. This is more than the typical continental breakfast and LaCaille is an 18th century French chateau nestled in a 22-acre stream laced garden setting. Following breakfast it's off to Snowbird

For a ride on the tram, which soars to 11,000 feet. The view is so extensive that Nevada and Wyoming can be seen. Then it's back to the hotel by 3:00 PM and time to say goodbye until next year.

\*\*\*\*\*

PLEASE NOTE THAT WE HAVE ADDED A WEDNESDAYEVENING PROGRAM FOR THE FIRST TIME. ALSO, THE SUNDAY PROGRAM HAS BEEN EXTENDED PAST THE MEMORIAL BREAKFAST.

IN ADDITION, ALL TOURS WILL INCLUDE UNIFORMED ESCORTS AND NARRATION.

Please remember to pay in full for the options, and don't forget to put your squadron number in the space provided.

NOTE: A \$10.00 LATE FEE WILL BE ASSESSED FOR TOURS OR MEALS BOOKED AFTER ARRIVAL IN SALT LAKE CITY.

This year we are also offering a choice of steak or salmon filet. If you cannot eat red meat, please indicate "salmon" in the margin beside the total amount for the banquet. If you do not indicate "salmon", you will be served the steak dinner.

There will be a seating diagram at the registration desk, so be sure to stop there and arrange for your table. You must bring a ticket for each person for whom you reserve a seat. YOU CANNOT RESERVE SEATS OTHERWISE.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to call Marietta at 1-800-292-1490.

Thank you for your cooperation, and we look forward to seeing all of you in Salt Lake City.

PLEASE NOTE THAT TIMES ARE APPROXIMATE, SO WATCH THE BULLETIN BOARD AT THE REGISTRATION DESK.

461st BOMB GROUP (H) 1943-45, INC. REUNION  
 24-29 SEPTEMBER 1996  
 SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH  
 Headquarters: RED LION INN

PLEASE FILL OUT AND MAIL THIS REGISTRATION FORM WITH CHECK TO:  
 461st Bomb Group, c/o The MariMac Corporation  
 6790 E. Calle Dorado  
 Tucson, AZ 85715

Enclosed is my check as payment for the following:

REGISTRATION FEE	_____	@ \$10.00	_____
	# of Persons		Total Amount
LION HOUSE DINNER	_____	@ \$31.00	_____
Wed, 25 Sep	# of Persons		Total Amount
PARK CITY TOUR	_____	@ \$18.50	_____
Thu, 26 Sep	# of Persons		Total Amount
SQUADRON DINNER	_____	@ \$26.00	_____
Thu, 26 Sep	# of Persons		Total Amount
HILL AFB	_____	@ \$27.00	_____
Fri, 27 Sep	# of Persons		Total Amount
SALT LAKE CITY	_____	@ \$17.00	_____
Sat, 28 Sep	# of Persons		Total Amount
BANQUET & DANCE	_____	@ \$35.00	_____
Sat, 28 Sep	# of Persons		Total Amount
MEMORIAL BREAKFAST & BROADCAST	_____	@ \$15.50	_____
Sun, 29 Sep	# of Persons		Total Amount
LA CAILLE/SNOWBIRD	_____	@ \$35.00	_____
Sun, 29 Sep	# of Persons		Total Amount

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_  
 (AS YOU WANT IT ON YOUR NAME TAG)

SQUADRON: \_\_\_\_\_

SPOUSE: \_\_\_\_\_

CHILDREN/GUEST: \_\_\_\_\_

YOUR ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

STATE: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

ARRIVAL DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

DEPARTURE DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

FORM OF PAYMENT FOR HOTEL: \_\_\_\_\_

Check or Credit Card Name, No., Expires

TOTAL AMOUNT SUBMITTED BY CHECK: \_\_\_\_\_

TAPS  
MAY THEY REST IN PEACE FOREVER  
November 1995—June 1996

<u>SQD</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Hometown</u>	<u>MOS</u>	<u>Date of Death</u>
HDQ	Howe, John B.	Shelton, WA	657	29 Dec 94
	Hudson, James L.	East Point, GA	590	14 Dec 94
764	Bullard, Malachi F.	Houston F.	612	18 Apr 85
	Cain, Alfred R., Jr.	Winter Haven, FL	612	10 Oct 95
	Klein, Paul F.	Thermopolis, WY	1035	12 Dec 95
	Rhodes, Verlin A.	Indianapolis, IN	1034	4 Dec 94
	Sanders, William F.	Bryans Road, MD	612	18 Jul 93
	Schwerdt, Paul	Illion, NY	612	15 Jun 96
765	Brina, Robert R.	Manhasset, NY	1034	23 Sep 95
	Broderick, James W.	Unknown	612	6 Feb 95
	Decker, Richard C.	Canton, OH	1035	10 Oct 77
	Harvey, William J.	Columbus, GA	748	5 Aug 95
	Koester, Robert R.	Deland, FL	1034	16 May 94
	Lewis, Henry J. Jr.	Glenolden, PA	612	13 Mar 94
	Manke, Melvin F.	LeSueur, MN	911	25 Mar 96
	Nelson, David R.	Faribault, MN	757	5 Jun 96
	Ormiston, Lloyd	Oklahoma City, OK	748	6 May 96
	Ritter, Howard E.	Gobles, MI	685	11 Nov 95
	Sadowski, Edward R.	Racine, WI	678	10 Oct 95
Yount, Daymond D.	Oklahoma City, OK	747	13 Jan 96	
766	Bayles, Charles W.	Jackson, TN	405	6 Nov 95
	Boswell, Archie K.	Graham, NC	748	Dec 84
	Jordan, William L.	Tulsa, OK	750	17 Oct 93
	Noyes, Colby H.	Ft. Worth, TX	1092	19 Mar 94
	Reithoffer, Patrick E.	Lighthouse Pt., FL	1092	94
767	Ashbrook, Walter J.	Marlette, MI	748	11 Mar 95
	Bolin, Richard H.	Rupert, WI	612	4 Jul 95
	Calhoun, Robert D.	Boise, ID	751	16 Jun 94
	Engelke, Wilfred A.	Brownwood, TX	757	1 Jan 95
	Heald, Robert L.	Westfield, NJ	1092	29 Nov 95
	Jazwa, Walter E.	Ashway, NJ	748	1 Jan 96
	Love, James	Flushing, NY	1035	3 Jan 96
	McDaniel, Donald S.	Huntington, WV	612	31 Mar 94
	Neary, James T.	Bellmore, NY	612	12 Jun 96
	Norton, Harold R.	Southington, CT	612	19 Oct 95
	Webster, Herbert N.	Lake City, FL	748	20 Nov 95

**DAVID R. NELSON  
1924—1996**

We are very sorry to report that Dave Nelson died on 5 June 1996. According to his wife his whole life turned around when he accepted the position of Editor for the 461st “Liberaider”. He was very excited about putting out his first edition. As a writer the job was perfect for him. Then disaster struck.

We did not know that he had a blood problem and had to have it checked regularly. One day he fell and hit his head on the hard floor. About a week later his wife noted strange behavior and took him to the hospital. They found that he was bleeding internally in the brain. A short time later he passed away.

There isn’t much we can do except offer our condolences and prayers. We send his wife and children our deepest sympathy and share in their loss.

**Men Returning From Detached Service  
November 1995 to June 1996**

HDQ	Platner, Frank A.	3207 MacArthur Lane, Indianapolis, IN 46224
764	Dickey, Clarence A.	2002 Creeksedge Drive, South Bend, IN 46635-2006
765	Clay, Charles R.	1508 Westcliff Drive, #3, Newport Beach, CA 92660
	Dennis, James G.	20136 Williams Drive, Culpepper, VA 22701
	Rosdal, Joseph	1201 NE 191st Street, Miami, FL 33179
766	Zacek, Victor W.	6713 Margaret Drive, Ft. Worth, TX 76140
767	Berkman, Jason M.	11111 Biscayne Blvd. #158, Miami, FL 33181
	Falkowski, Christ	33 Creek Road #330, Irvine, CA 92714
	Panchisin, George, Jr.	8094 Tapper Avenue, Munster, IN 46321
	Seagrave-Smith, Henry	925 Moody Court, Paso Robles, CA 93446
	Sherman, Mark L.	P.O. Box 376, West Brookfield, MA 01585
	Sturm, Robert N.	4632 Joana Place, Price Hill, OH 45238

**KEEP THOSE LETTERS AND ARTICLES COMING!!!**

As noted on page 2 of the December 1995 issue of the “Liberaider” I have appreciated the letters and other material you have sent me over the years. It is the backbone of the newsletter and I cannot publish a worthwhile document without your input. Please keep it coming and when sending photographs please include:

- A) Whether you want them returned
- B) The names of the “important” people in the picture with the date and location of the action
- C) The “tie-in” to the article you sent, if there is one

Please, if the picture is not of good quality that can be copied (and all of them have to in order to be printed) don’t send it to me. Xerox copies have to be of very good quality in order to be printed. I have a box full of negatives and pictures that I have inherited of interesting things and events that I can’t use because they are not identified in any way. It is too bad because there has to be a good story behind a lot of them.



## **HISTORY OF THE 461ST BOMB GROUP**

### **CHAPTER XII CHANGES IN COMMAND, SEPTEMBER 1944**

#### **(A) Narrative History.**

The month of September brought major changes in command to the Group. On mission No. 100, which was a supply mission to Lyon, France, on 12 September 1944, Colonel Glantzberg flew his fiftieth sortie and in so doing ended his tour of duty. Having previously expressed the desire to higher Headquarters to be relieved of his command upon the completion of his combat missions, he went to Headquarters of the fifteenth Air Force a few days after returning from France to learn what his next assignment would be. There he was told he would be returned to the United States for an assignment in Washington, D.C. On 22 September, after eleven months as Commanding Officer of the 461<sup>st</sup> Bombardment Group, he relinquished his command and left the Base. He was accompanied to the field by his squadron commanders and his senior staff officers who bade him farewell as he took off in a B-24 for Naples.

After seeing Colonel Glantzberg off, Lieutenant Colonel Philip R. Hawes, who had been the Deputy Group Commander since 3 November 1943, returned to his office and posted a notice assuming command of the Group. Even before this he had named Lieutenant Colonel Brooks A. Lawhon as his deputy.

Earlier in the month, Colonel Glantzberg has seen two of his four squadron commanders who had come overseas with the Group depart from the Group. On 15 September Lieutenant Colonel James B. Knapp was relieved as Squadron Commander of the 767<sup>th</sup> Squadron and transferred to the 451<sup>st</sup> Group where he immediately became the Group Commander. Four days later the Commanding Officer of the 765<sup>th</sup> Squadron, Lieutenant Colonel Robert E. Applegate, was transferred to the 451<sup>st</sup> Group to become the Deputy Group Commander.

Major Joseph N. Donovan, who had been serving either as Assistant Group Operations Officer or as the Group Operations Officer for a few months, was named to replace Lieutenant Colonel Knapp as the Commanding Officer of the 767<sup>th</sup> Squadron. Lieutenant Colonel Applegate was replaced as Commanding Officer of the 765<sup>th</sup> Squadron by Major Francis J. Hoermann who had long been the Operations Officer in that Squadron. Captain Robert K. Baker took Major Hoermann's place as the 765<sup>th</sup> Squadron Operations Officer.

At the same time that Major Donovan was designated Squadron Commander to replace Lieutenant Colonel Knapp, Lieutenant Colonel Brooks A. Lawhon was relieved as Group Operations Officer and designated Deputy Group Commander and Acting Group Operations Officer as an additional duty. Captain Richard L. Rider, who had been the Group Air Inspector, was designated Assistant Group Operations Officer.

As the summer months passed, the going and coming of officers and men to and from the various rest camps and Rome had become a matter of routine. In much the same manner, the arrival of new combat crews and departure of original combat crew members had also become a routine by the end of September.

During part of the month of September, the Group's efforts were diverted from actual combat missions. For a period of thirteen days from the 10<sup>th</sup> to the 22<sup>nd</sup> inclusive, the Group was occupied in flying war material to France. This diversion afforded many combat crew members an opportunity to fly at comparatively low level over country over which they had been flown high altitude bombing missions and to repeatedly land at Lyon where they had formerly had one of their most successful combat missions. It also provided an opportunity for quite a few ground officers and men to get to France either for one or for several days.

The month of September marked six months of actual combat experience for this Group. Over this period of time the maintenance efficiency of the Engineering Section had gradually but steadily improved from 71 percent for the month of April, to 84 percent for the month of September. During the month of September

*(Continued on page 18)*

*(Continued from page 17)*

an average number of 61 airplanes were assigned to the Group. Of these an average number of 51 were operational.

The engineering efficiency can well be expressed in terms of early returns. In April, the early returns had totaled 14 percent. In September, the percentage of early returns was 3.2. This was but .2 of 1 percent higher than the May figure of 3.0 percent, which was the low figure for the percentage of early returns for the six month period.

(B) Operations.

During the month of September only seven combat missions were flown, all of which were against targets in Italy and the Balkans. Not a single enemy aircraft was encountered and only one crew was lost.

With an average score of 57.9, the Group ranked fourth in the Air Force in bombing accuracy. The score of 92.2 percent obtained at Smederovo, Yugoslavia on 3 September 1944 aided the Group materially in getting back among the leaders in bombing accuracy.

When the crews learned that they were scheduled to fly supply missions to France, they began to wonder whether they were about to become cousins of the Air Transport Command. The purpose of these missions was actually that of quickly providing our tactical air units in France with gasoline, oil, bombs, and ammunition.

In anticipation of these missions, the original bomb bay racks were put back in the airplanes. The planes were loaded during the night and took off individually in the morning on the long flight to Lyon. At Lyon they landed at the Bron Airdrome. Because of the possibility of attack by enemy airplanes, each plane was ready to wad off any possible attacks with every officer and man at his station from landfall to landfall over France. After the planes landed, each crew helped in unloading their planes. As each plane was unloaded, it took off to return to the base.

A total of twelve new crews were received during the month of September.

764<sup>th</sup> Squadron

2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Carl J. Schultz and crew  
2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. William J. Kursel and crew  
2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Robert K. Bock and crew

765<sup>th</sup> Squadron

2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Robert J. Louches and crew  
2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Lawrence O. Woodruff and crew  
F/O Robert T. Barnes and crew

766<sup>th</sup> Squadron

2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Walter J. Chester and crew  
1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Lee P. Ward Jr. and crew  
2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Francis X. Fink and crew

767<sup>th</sup> Squadron

2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Ernest R. Frazier and crew  
1<sup>st</sup> Lt. John Trommershausser and crew  
Captain Warren Miller and crew

## MISSIONS

### Mission No. 94 1 September 1944

#### **Target: Ferrara Railroad Bridge, Italy**

On the first mission of the new month the Group failed again to seriously damage or destroy the railroad bridge north of Ferrara, Italy. Seven of the planes became separated from the formation and bombed a bridge at Boari Pisani, Italy.

### Mission No. 95 2 September 1944

#### **Target: Mitrovica Railroad Bridge, Yugoslavia**

On Mission No. 95, veterans in the lead plane, Lieutenant Colonel Applegate, Captain Specht, Captain Murphy, Lieutenant Prien and Major Pruitt, came through with the mission that was scored at 57.3 percent against a railroad bridge at Mirovica, Yugoslavia. The photographs of the mission show a closely concentrated pattern of bombs on the west approach to the bridge with six direct hits on the tracks.

### Mission No. 96 3 September 1944

#### **Target: Smederovo Ferry slip, Yugoslavia**

Against the Smederovo Ferryslip in Yugoslavia on 3 September, Major Goree, Lieutenant Garrett, Lieutenant Herold, Captain DeWitt, and Lieutenant Littell led a formation that made the highest bombing score ever achieved by this Group. Under ideal conditions the bombs were dropped on and around the ferry slip in such a concentration that 92.2 percent were plotted within 1000 feet of the briefed aiming point.

### Commendation

“From: Twining  
“To: CO 49<sup>th</sup> Wing

“A study of reconnaissance photos taken after the attacks by the Four Nine Wing on 3 September on the Smederovo Ferry Docks reveals that both road and rail terminals are almost completely destroyed. The

excellence of the bomb patterns of these two pinpoint targets by the 461 group is highly commendable.”

### Mission No. 97 5 September 1944

#### **Target: Sava East Railroad Bridge, Belgrade, Yugoslavia**

The assigned target for this mission was the Sava East Railroad Bridge, Belgrade, Yugoslavia. Because of ten-tenths cloud coverage at both the primary and the one assigned alternate target, the planes were forced to return their bombs to base.

### Mission No. 98 6 September 1944

#### **Target: Sava East Railroad Bridge, Belgrade, Yugoslavia**

On Mission No. 98, the Group returned to the Sava East Railroad Bridge at Belgrade, flying in the last positions in the Wing Formation. The target area was completely obscured by smoke from the bombs of the other Groups in the Wing when the 461st arrived at the target. The bombs began falling short of the target but most of them walked into the smoke with unobserved results.

### Mission No. 99 10 September 1944

#### **Target: Lyon/Bron Airdrome, France**

The first supply mission to France, which was Mission No. 99, was flown on September 10th. Colonel Glantzberg flew the first of the thirty-six planes to take off individually on this mission. As a result of this mission one plane was lost to the Group. The plane, which was piloted by First Lieutenant Robert K. Baker, developed a fire on the taxi strip at Lyon after the C-10 generator had been started. The flames spread rapidly through the plane compelling the crew to abandon it. Lieutenant Baker made his exit through the top hatch from where he jumped to the concrete taxi strip. The bones in both of his heels were broken in this accident.

*(Continued on page 20)*

*(Continued from page 19)*

The following supplies and material were delivered on this mission. 432 five-hundred-pound general purpose bombs; 57,600 rounds of .50 caliber ammunition; 648 empty fifty-gallon drums; and 25,000 gallons of 100 octane gasoline.

**Mission No. 100**  
**12 September 1944**

**Target: Lyon/Bron, Airdrome, France**

On 12 September eighteen planes delivered 26,670 gallons of 100-octane gasoline, 900 gallons of 120-grade oil, 324 empty fifty-five gallon drums, and 28,000 rounds of .50-caliber ammunition.

**Mission No. 101**  
**13 September 1944**

**Target: Lyon/Bron Airdrome, France**

On 13 September nineteen planes delivered 26,676 gallons of 100-octane gasoline, 1350 gallons of 120-grade oil, 297 empty fifty-five gallon drums, and 54,000 rounds of .50-caliber ammunition.

**Mission No. 102**  
**15 September 1944**

**Target: Lyon/Bron Airdrome, France**

On 15 September eighteen planes delivered 24,300 gallons of 100-octane gasoline, 1300 gallons of 120-grade oil, 298 empty fifty-five gallon drums, 30 five hundred general-purpose bombs, and 4,000 rounds of .50 caliber ammunition.

**Mission No. 103**  
**16 September 1944**

**Target: Lyon/Bron Airdrome, France**

On 16 September eighteen planes delivered 24,330 gallons of 100-octane gasoline, 1650 gallons of 120-grade oil, 324 empty fifty-five gallon drums, 30 five-hundred-pound general-purpose bombs, and 18,800 rounds of .50-caliber ammunition.

**Mission No. 104**  
**17 September 1944**

**Target: Lyon/Bron Airdrome, France**

On September 17<sup>th</sup> the load of eighteen planes was as follows: 21,366 gallons of 100 octane gasoline; 1450 gallons of 120 grade oil, 288 empty fifty-five gallon drums, 30 five-hundred-pound general purpose bombs; and 16,000 rounds of .50 caliber ammunition. Due to adverse weather conditions at Lyon, all of the planes were forced to land with their loads at friendly fields and did not reach Lyon until the following day.

**Mission No. 105**  
**22 September 1944**

**Target: Lyon//Bron Airdrome, France**

On 22 September the Group completed its ferrying missions to France. 22,848 gallons of 100-octane gasoline, 1550 gallons of 120-grade oil, 246 empty fifty-five gallon drums, 30 five-hundred-pound general-purpose bombs, and 14,000 rounds of .50-caliber ammunition were delivered.

**Mission No. 106**  
**24 September 1944**

**Target: Athens, Eleusis Airdrome, Greece**

By the 24<sup>th</sup> of the month the Group was back again to flying combat missions. Mission No. 106 was an attack on the Eleusis Airdrome at Athens, Greece, with 100-pound general-purpose bombs. The bomb pattern started on the west edge of the dispersal area and continued south along the east side of the airdrome. Six enemy airplanes were destroyed on the ground.

**Mission No. 107**  
**25 September 1944**

**Target: Submarines in Athens Area, Greece**

Lieutenant Colonel Lawhon led the last combat mission of the month that was flown 25 September in attacking submarines in the Athens area. The score of the mission was 24 percent. The only crew lost to combat during the month was lost on this mission. This plane that was piloted by Second Lieutenant Ralph E. Newton, left the formation before reaching the target but failed to return to base.

## LETTERS OF COMMENDATION DURING THE MONTH

From: Headquarters Fifteenth Air Force, APO 520, U.S. Army, Dated 1 September 1944  
To: All Units This Command

“The following is a paraphrase of a message received from Lieutenant General Barney M. Giles, Deputy Commanding General of the Army Air Force and Chief of Staff.”

“The air support evidence in the invasion of Southern France is an unsurpassed example of the role to be played by the Air Forces in an operation. The fighting spirit and determined will to crush the enemy demonstrated by every individual regardless of rank or position, coupled with the brilliant leadership displayed, have won the admiration and gratitude of the entire nation. When ‘The Yanks Are Coming’, the issue is not in doubt. Please convey this message to all participating units.”

By command of Major General Twining  
J.M. Ivins  
Colonel, AGD  
Adjutant General.

From: Headquarters Fifteenth Air Force, Office of the Commanding General, APO 520, U.S. Army, Dated 18 September 1944  
To: All Units This Command

“1. The commanding General, United States Strategic Air Forces in Europe, has requested that all personnel of the Fifteenth Air Force be commended for their part in the operations of this Command with similar operations by the Eighth Air Force, have been the most effective blow so far struck against German industry.

“2. It gives me much pleasure to pass on this tribute. I realize that our successes at Ploesti would not have been possible except for the skill and industry with which all of you, in both air and ground echelons, performed your assigned tasks. By your work you have made a major contribution to an early defeat of the German war machine.”

N.F. Twining  
Major General, USA,  
Commanding

\* \* \* \* \*

### The “Liber Raider Is Looking For A New Editor

Your current Editor, as indicated in the December 1995 issue, feels that it is time to make a “career” change. If you like reading, writing and are at all “creative” in these fields, being editor of the “Liber Raider” can be rewarding and interesting avocation. As Editor, you are your own boss. Mold the “Liber Raider” to your image of what you think it should be. If the members of the 461st Bomb Group continue to send in their stories, respond to your questions and in general provide other material, the job involves being an organizer, arranging for preparation of the final text and negotiating the printing and mailing of the newsletter. The job can be split up if you can find a member willing to take on part of the job.

Please give it some thought and contact me if you have an interest and want more information. I will be at the Salt Lake City Reunion and can talk to you in more detail at that time. My address is on the upper left-hand side of page 2.

## **BIG FENCE**

*“Your heading is now to central USA for an ETA on 15 September 94”*



### **CASTEL del MONTE** **(Code name BIG FENCE)**

Castel del Monte, a centuries-old Italian fortress was located north of Foggia, inland from Pescara and near the Adriatic coast somewhat east of L'Aquila. It was here that the Fifteenth Air Force set up the center for their V.H.F. radio fixer system. BIG FENCE was the call sign to assist fighter and bomber aircraft needing a fix of their location. This system was credited with saving hundreds of Allied airmen's lives and also millions of dollars of equipment.

It was here that the 6649th Navigational Aids Squadron of the 15th AAF had their station set up which controlled six directional finding units in an area stretching from the Italian heel more than 300 miles up the Adriatic coast.

BIG FENCE offered several types of services, all of them depending upon fixing the position of the aircraft seeking aid. If a pilot was lost, Big Fence could take a fix and direct him to an airfield. If a crew transmitted a "MAY-DAY" call in preparation for ditching or bail-out, Big Fence promptly notified Air-Sea Rescue Headquarters of the aircraft's position and continued to send instructions to the distressed aircraft.

Big Fence triangulation system hit a new high in traf-

fic volume during April 1944 with 991 different aircraft or flights of aircraft receiving navigational aid. On 12 April 1944, their busiest day, they homed in and/or fixed 82 different aircraft.

The "STARS & STRIPES" gave a typical call from an aircraft pilot saying, "I'm over some mountains in Yugoslavia with one engine out and don't know where I am. I want to go to...", and he gives the Coffee Tower code or the name of his base. In an incredibly short time, — a matter of split seconds, the mountain-top soldiers at their widely scattered listening posts find the direction of the plane from their locations. Their findings are flashed to a central clearing station where straight lines are superimposed on a map in accordance with information received and where three or more of these lines come together — there is the distressed airman nursing his plane along. The alert enlisted men of the Nav. Aids Sqd. Tell the flyer where he is and advise a course to take.

We wish to acknowledge the help received from Dante Ferrara #045 who in turn had his friend Mark Ridley of the Center for Air Force History in Washington, D.C. furnish us with information on BIG FENCE. Thanks fellows for the details.

Stolen from the "Pathfinder" newsletter of the 459th Bomb Group, John Devney, Editor

**Greece Refines Medal Procedure**

Recently this office has received letters from hopeful applicants for the Hellenic Greek Medal telling that, after sending their request for the Medal, they have heard nothing. Some have had their request submitted to the Greek Embassy since just after it was announced in the issue 24 publication of the Ad-Lib.

Somewhat concerned that the information in issue 24 was in error I contacted the Greek Embassy by phone to verify the status of their offer. I was told by the Air Attaché, Colonel Dim, Georgiopoulos, (HAF), that some of the procedures, and qualifications, have been changed to grant only those that actually flew missions against Greece to receive the award. It seemed that the Embassy of Greece had been inundated with hopeful, but unqualified, applicants.

The letter I received from the Embassy of Greece in Washington, DC, reads as follows:

Mr. Karstensen,

Further to our telecom on Friday 9 of June, please be advised of the following:

- a) Those qualified to receive medals are those individuals who served under the Hellenic Armed Forces, or in Units of the Allied forces and who participated in operations only in Greece during the period of 28th of October, 1940 through 8th May, 1944.
- b) Specifically with regards to Air Force, attacks or landing at Hellenic airports.
- c) The required documents which must be submitted for the awarding of medals are the following:
  - 1) Declaration that indicates the year of service, the operations which the applicant participated in, or any other document which supports the right for the awarding of a medal for service performed during 1940-1945.
  - 2) Certification from U.S. Department of Defense or copy of the Log Book which indicates that the applicant participated or served in operations in

Greece, during the above time period, as well as indicating the unit in which the applicant served.

- 3) Declaration stating that the applicant had never been convicted in any court of Greece.
- d) For those who have served in the Army, inquires should be directed to the office of the Defense Attaché.

Sincerely, Colonel Georgiopoulos, Air Attaché

What seems to be the glitch, is that they want verification and documentation that you flew a specific mission against a specific target in Greece. And from our history that could only be the two (2) missions, #127 and #128; Athens/Eleusis Airdrome on 24 September 1944 and the Athens Area Sub/Pens on 25 September 1944, respectively. If you have no evidence of having been on these missions (evidence in the form of copies from you're a-5 file), then the Government of Greece rules you out. If you have not heard from them personally, then review your flight history and if you had flown either of the two missions, and document it, give it another try.

Editor's note: Sorry, I lost the reference from whom I stole this article. Please note. The 461st Bomb Group flew three missions to Greece. They were:

- Mission 71, 28 July 1944 Phlorina Marshalling Yard
- Mission 106\*, 24 Sept. 1944 Athens/Eleusis Airdrome
- Mission 107\*, 25 Sept. 1944 Submarines in Athens Area

\* See page 20 of this issue

\* \* \* \* \*

**Where Was The Birthplace Of Flag Day?**

On a state marker at Waubeka Stoney Hill School, Waubeka, Wisconsin, it is written:

**Birthplace of Flag Day**

Here at Stoney Hill School, Bernard J. Cigrand, 19 year old teacher and his students held the first recognized observance of "Flag Birth Day" on June 14, 1885, with a flag ten inches high, carrying 38 stars, standing in a bottle on the teacher's desk. After thirty-one years of crusading by Dr. Cigrand, President Woodrow Wilson on June 14, 1916, pronounced the national observance of Flag Day.

## Retiree Learns His Brother Died In '44 Amazon Crash

LOS ANGELES—When James K. Leitch heard that his brother was missing, he suspected the worst had happened. Fifty-one years later, he learned he was right, even though he didn't want to be.

"It still bothers me," said Leitch, 70. "But I'm glad it's over."

Forensics experts from the Army's Central Identification Laboratory in Hawaii have confirmed that a B-24 bomber with John Leitch and nine other airmen on the manifest went down in the Brazilian jungle during World War II, killing all aboard.

In 1944, James Leitch was a 19-year old infantryman waiting for transfer to the Pacific war zone when he was summoned to the company commander's office and given leave.

When he got to his parents' West Los Angeles home, "My mother was crying," he said. "They told me that my brother, John, had been reported missing. That was all they had heard."

In the months that followed, the Army Air Corps told the family that Staff Sgt. John Leitch, 22, was flight engineer on the four engine Liberator, making a run from Trinidad to the Brazilian city of Belem, near the mouth of the Amazon river.

The Army said a routine radio message was received from the plane as it headed inland over a largely unexplored area of the Brazilian jungle. After that, silence. Repeated searches failed to turn up a trace of the bomber.

Last December, however, Brazilian soldiers stumbled onto the wreckage of a large plane in the Amapa jungle about 250 miles from Belem.

On July 4, James' wife Helen was scanning a newspaper and spotted a wire story about the wreckage, "She asked me, 'Could this be John's plane?'" I said, "I knew it was."

The jungle did not give up the remains easily as the rescuers were up against the jungle heat, malaria and man-eating jaguars.

The U.S.-Brazilian team spent 16 days digging and blasting the swampy soil with high powered water hoses normally used by wildcat gold prospectors. The searchers recovered personal objects, more than 10,000 bone fragments and 77 teeth.

"They told me that the plane was 150 miles off course," Leitch said, "They don't know why it went down, but it could have run out of gas. They feel the whole crew was killed on impact.

Excerpts from the Associated Press/The San Diego Union-Tribune, Wednesday, August 30, 1995.

### 461st BOMB Group (H) 1943-1945, Inc.

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