



The 461st

Liberaider



Vol. 19, No. 1

June 2002

SOMEWHERE IN THE USA

Behind The Wire

By
LeRoy H. Grebe

Text in italics is from the diary kept by LeRoy Grebe in back of a book (Science and Health) while a POW. After being brought before two German officers in Yugoslavia who examined the book, they gave it back. LeRoy wrote his diary with a stubby pencil he carried in his flying suit.

My mishap occurred on March 9, 1945 over the Adriatic Coast of Yugoslavia near what I can best recall a small village named Senji. After I bailed out I landed in the

(Continued on page 15)

Remembering Blox

By
William Braun

To tell a story as it were I will begin with our leaving Manchester, NH on July 11. We were held up for a few days in the Azores awaiting an engine part. On July 20 we were assigned to the 764th Squadron. In the afternoon we were given an orientation flight. It was our understanding that the Squadron had experienced some heavy losses shortly before our arrival so the next morning we were

on the board for mission #66 and went to Brux. Except for a few flak hits it was a relatively uneventful mission even though it was our first. In the afternoon I was sent to a training class on radar bombing. On the morning of the 22nd we were again up for mission #67. Lt. Bill Paradise was assigned copilot-pilot since he had combat experience. We also had a photographer aboard giving us a complement of eleven in aircraft "Lucky Seven".

(Continued on page 4)

Liberation

By
Paul Hartal

The snow melted. But spring came reluctantly and slowly. Although the days now became longer, it was still rather cold. In the skies more airplanes flew than birds.

I was hungry and starving. Yet being deprived of adequate nourishment for long months, coupled with the brutally harsh conditions that existed in the concentration camp, eventually made me lethargic. I became feeble, enervated, languid and phlegmatic.

Surrounded by barbed-wire fence, I was moving around the lager of Strasshof in my worn-out wooden shoes and dreaming about food. I was eight years old.

One brisk and sunny day I roamed around the barracks. The blue vault of the sky was cloudless. Quiet and peaceful. But suddenly airplanes appeared in the high azure. Hundreds of humming iron birds were flying in unison. Then small feather-like clouds began to appear around the airplanes. Slowly the tiny puffs filled

(Continued on page 6)

Inside this issue:

<i>Behind The Wire</i>	1
<i>Remembering Blox</i>	1
<i>Liberation</i>	1
<i>POW Story</i>	5
<i>Reunion 2002</i>	12
<i>What Next?</i>	19
<i>Biography of Frederic E. Glantzberg</i>	20
<i>Comments by I.B. Bloxom</i>	23

Taps

Please forward all death notices to:
 Hughes Glantzberg
 P.O. Box 926
 Gunnison, CO 81230
 hughes@hugheshelpdesk.com

or
 Bob Hayes
 2345 Tall Sail Drive, Apt. G
 Charleston, SC 29414-6570
 BOB461st@aol.com

Missing No Longer

764th Squadron

<u>Name</u>	<u>Hometown</u>	<u>MOS</u>	<u>Date of Death</u>
Ashley, Charles	Chicago, IL	747	Dec. 1985
Bailey, John A.	Carmichael, CA		Oct. 9, 1999
Balfour, Sanford B.	Burbank, CA	751	Nov. 29, 2000
Breshinsky, Joseph		1035	Dec. 2001
Campbell, Marvin R.	Boise, ID	757	Mar. 3, 1998
Carnahan, Robert P. Jr.	Apollo, PA	521	Jul. 16, 1996
Ciemiega, Albert S.	Troy, NY	511	Jun. 22, 1995
Clark, Daniel H.	N. Olmstead, OH	612	Nov. 4, 1998
Demjen, Frank J.	Martinsville, IN	1092	Jun 4, 1992
Duckworth, Edward R.	Venice, FL	757	May 10, 1998
Martin, Grady A.	Raleigh, NC	1034	Jan. 29, 2001
Van Buren, John D.	Newburg, NY	1035	Jan. 26, 2002

765th Squadron

<u>Name</u>	<u>Hometown</u>	<u>MOS</u>	<u>Date of Death</u>
Berg, Sonje		1035	Mar. 1977
Bing, Bryan V.	Oakwood, TX	502	Dec. 6, 2001
Blake, Robert T. (Bob)	Independence, MO	1092	Jul. 9, 1989
Blalock, Clyde C.	Sevierville, TN	612	Nov. 5, 2000
Blanford, Carl H.	Hagerman, ID	750	Sept. 25, 2001
Caughlin, Charles B. Jr.	Temple, TX	502	Jan. 15, 1998
Cento, Peter A.	Brooklyn, NY	685	Jun. 22, 1994
Childred, Jackson F.	Richmond, VA	1092	Oct. 10, 1992
Cipriani, Vito	Bedford, OH	747	Oct. 15, 2001
Colvin, Don E.	Celina, OH	612	Dec. 24, 2000
Dendor, Edwin H.	Jacksonville, FL	612	Jun 18, 1997
Deutsch, Vincent	Monroe, NY	932	May 12, 2001
Donaghue, James R.	Lowell, MA	612	Nov. 1, 1994

766th Squadron

<u>Name</u>	<u>Hometown</u>	<u>MOS</u>	<u>Date of Death</u>
Adams, Cecil E.	Reno, NV	612	Jul. 26, 2001
Baker, Edward E.	Sparks, NV	612	Jan. 15, 1995
Berenson, Howard S.	Boca Raton, FL		Oct. 17, 2001
Benedict, Claude S.	Lancaster, PA	809	Mar. 5, 2002
Bolland, Donald	St. James, MN	748	Sept. 14, 2001
Boyle, John T.	Lowell, MA	612	May 11, 2000
Brannan, Peter N.	Carmel, CA	501	Mar. 14, 2001
Bryant, Donald B.	Tucson, AZ	757	Jun. 8, 1998
Burr, Henry B.	Southport, CT	757	Dec. 17, 2001
Butch, William R.	Struthers, OH	612	Aug. 21, 1993
Clark, Bevins	Huntington Bch, CA	612	Feb. 7, 1999
Cooper, Ralph W. Jr.	Fairview, NJ	612	Sept. 17, 1995
Courtney, Richard O.	Worcester, MA	1034	Apr. 24, 1992
Destro, Michael A.	Jamestown, NY	911	Apr 21, 2000
Nelson, Donald K.	Salt Lake City, UT	405	Jan. 26, 2002
O'Toole, Lawrence W.		612	Jun 24, 2001

767th Squadron

<u>Name</u>	<u>Hometown</u>	<u>MOS</u>	<u>Date of Death</u>
Alderete, Melquiades	Albuquerque, NM	755	Mar. 3, 2001
Aldredge, Ausbon E.	Fairfield, CA	1092	Apr. 28, 1995
Allen, James, E.	White Mt. Lake, AZ	612	Jan. 27, 2001
Besser, Victor H.	Banning, CA	1035	Mar. 7, 1999
Blair, Luther		521	Mar. 31, 1995
Brought, Byron V.	Mechanicsburg, PA	612	Jan. 9, 2002
Cheek, Dennis M.	Abilene, TX	757	Feb. 22, 1996
Cheshier, Elton E.	Garland, TX	757	Jan. 2, 1996
Colas, John W. Jr.	Houston, TX		Nov. 18, 1993
Gourley, Clyde Marshall Jr.	Colorado Springs, CO	1035	Jan 1, 2002
McGrady, William H.	Hurst, TX	612	Jan. 30, 02
Stauffer, Clarence E.	Tamarac, FL	1092	Nov. 25, 2001

(Continued from page 1)



Shortly after crossing the Adriatic we experienced difficulty with engine #2 I believe it was and were forced to feather. Being a new crew we were reluctant to turn back for fear of being accused of cowardice. This was probably not too good a decision. As we approached the target I opened the bomb bays and prepared to drop. About this time we had a direct hit on another engine, not only knocking it out but also completely eliminating our electrical system. I am not sure what caused the electrical condition. As you know a B-24 was not noted for its ability to stay up on two engines. We were losing altitude very fast. I came back to the flight deck and Bloxom asked me to tell the fellows in the rear to bail out. So I took off my parachute so I could get through the catwalk and told the men to leave. I then went back to the front of the ship to put my chute on when the engineer mentioned that they were going to try a crash landing. Looking down at the ground that seemed like a good idea. I crawled through the catwalk to the bombsight and put a couple of shots into it with my 45 to disable it as much as possible. I hurried back to the flight deck and threw myself down on the floor just as we hit the ground, wheels up of course. Whatever maneuvering for a landing Bloxom had to do it had to be manual since we had no electricity. There were 5 of us left in the plane. I believe it was the engineer who acted as copilot-pilot, the radio operator, and another enlisted man, Bloxom and myself. Several days before our radio operator had discovered that his chute harness was

merely basted and the final stitching was not completed. We traded it in for another. It is our thought that our navigator, Lt. Armstrong may have had a similar defect in his harness since the men who saw his body related that he had no harness on and his pants legs were torn. We felt that as his chute opened the harness gave way at the top and threw him backwards ripping the pants as the harness came off. He was the only one killed and one of the nicest kids I had ever met – no smoking, drinking and no women. It was tough to lose a good friend.

We landed in a wheat field near the little town of Alexandria. We tried desperately to burn the plane, but you never saw 100 octane gas so involatile. Shortly a small Romanian training plane landed with a man in shorts and a T-shirt. We later found out he was a Lt. In the Romanian Air Force. He told us to extinguish the fire, which of course we had to do.

We were now guests of the Romanians in a building that had formerly been a school in the heart of Bucharest. We were always afraid when the sirens went off that the 15th was going to drop in. We did have a few close calls with the British at night. We were picked up by B-17s with plywood in the bomb bays and brought back to Italy on the 31st of July. We landed at Bari and were greeted by General Twining who broke down as he began to talk. After several days we were sent back to the Squadron and Bloxom and I met with the Operations Officer. I don't remember his name but he poured us each half a canteen cup of his own liquor. Since we were the only crew returned from the 764th he closed the Officer's Club and our crew was allowed to use it for a party. Lt. Rosenberg who had been our copilot-pilot during training brought along a bottle, which he had scrounged from somewhere and shared it with us. I understand he finished his missions as first pilot. Sometime toward morning the Operations Officer came down in a weapons carrier and distributed us around the field, some in the hospital, and put us to bed. It is my understanding that a bomb from above hitting his plane while on a mission later killed this man, a Captain.

Even more than clearing up the mystery of the disap-

(Continued on page 5)

POW Story

By
Paul T. Haggerty

I was on a crew that got shot down on December 16, 1944. I ended up in Stalag Luft I. The pilot, Lee Ward, co-pilot, Tom Merkouris, and navigator, Charles Mundy evaded capture for over 30 days. The Germans finally captured them when someone tipped off the Germans where they were hiding. They ended up as POWs in a camp at Nuremberg. There were eight of us (Harry Dunham was a photographer attached to us for the mission to Brux). The rest of us were Thomas Byers, nose gunner; Melvin Tenhaken, radio Operator; Jesse Palmer, ball gunner; Ken Merry, Bombardier; R.C. Wakefield, tail gunner; Thomas MacDonald, engineer and Paul T. Haggerty, top turret gunner. The eight of us bailed out and were captured by the Ustascha at Rovte, Slovenia. We were turned over to the Gestapo and imprisoned in the law court of Ljubljana. We later went to Oberursel, then Dulag Luft at Wetzler and finally to Stalag Luft I. We arrived there on January 3, 1945. Unfortunately I believe that Lee Ward, Harry Dunham and Tom MacDonald are deceased. I do not know about Jesse Palmer, but I have been in contact with all the others.

Harry Dunham was from Headquarters. This was the first time we met him. It was also the first time we met Lee Ward. All the rest of us were on the

Merkouris crew. The regular co-pilot was R.G. Smith. He did not fly with us on that day.

Al Arrotta was a roommate in Stalag Luft I. Homer Hymbaugh and Bud Grainger were also roommates. Another roommate was Johnnie P. Barks who was also from Fall River, Mass. like myself and we knew each other from high school. He was shot down on December 17 along with Homer and Bud.

In February, our room capacity jumped from 18 to 24. Boards were nailed from one wall to the other; three high and 18 guys slept 6 to a row. Six other bunks on the outside wall corner were also put up. We slept two guys to a bunk. We slept buddy style to keep warm. When the Russians arrived around the end of April, we were allowed to go to town.

The Russians arrived and everybody was happy. We had permission to go to town so Al Arrotta, Russ MacDonald and myself decided to see what it was like to be free and do what we wanted to do. We walked into town and in all honesty, we thought about leaving and heading for the American lines. We came across a Russian soldier sitting in the driver's seat of a Chevrolet sedan. As we approached with the usual Tavarish greeting we noticed that he was eating a fish – a raw fish. We saw him bite it and it wiggled. Anyhow, we tried talking to

(Continued on page 18)

(Continued from page 4)

pearance of "Lucky Seven" I want to express my admiration and appreciation for the skillful job Lt. Bloxom did bringing us down safely. I learned later that 9 times out of 10 in a crash landing the top turret crashed down on the flight deck. I was right under it. Had that landing been very rough I am sure I wouldn't be writing this. Bloxom is a fighting fool. He had been a fighter pilot instructor when he was reassigned to bombers. He wasn't too happy with this and sometimes flew like he was still in a fighter. Af-

ter we got back to Italy he wanted to fly a P-38 with me as bombardier. He would have loved that low-level stuff. Since we had been POW's the Geneva Convention prevented us from staying in the theater. Our orders were "not to be assigned outside the continental United States". I don't know how he did it but I heard he flew one of the first C-54s into Tokyo. Again my heartfelt thanks to "Blox".

I know that Bloxom is no longer with us, but perhaps he'll read this anyway and know how much I appreciate what he did for me.

(Continued from page 1)

the entire dome of the firmament with a carpet of white feathers. In the white carpet there were holes from which you could see the blue color of the atmosphere. The white puffs were created by the German anti-aircraft shells fired from artillery batteries on the ground.

Many years later I read stories of American and British aviators who flew dangerous missions during the Second World War. To them the flak looked very different. From the airplane they saw the exploding anti-aircraft shells around them as irregular patches of dark smoke or shapeless black balls. Thus, what looked to me from the ground, as harmless small white clouds were in fact deadly explosions. During the war German flak shot down thousands of allied airplanes. Anti-aircraft shells could shatter a plane into pieces, or blast it out of the sky. Sometimes the flak hit the bomb cargo on the aircraft and turned the flying fortress into an exploding huge fireball.

I think that the small feathery white clouds that I saw around the planes from the ground were not the exploding shells themselves but mare's tail generated by the flak. They were somewhat similar to the long and narrow stripes that airplanes frequently draw in the upper air. I remember from my physics class that at high altitude the water vapor condenses around the tiny fuel grains emitted by the aircraft engines. It turns into minute water particles by the cooling air. So the white wispy patches that I saw in the sky during air raids were an after-effect of the flak. The anti-aircraft shells blasted metal shrapnel in every direction. Yet the explosion also pulverized shell parts into a smoky dust that at high altitudes condensed the water vapor into puffy cirrus clouds. So the fire created water.

During air raids we didn't go into bomb shelters. For the prisoners there were no bomb shelters at the concentration camp.

My mother left the barrack early in the morning for work. I was supposed to keep an eye on Vera, my three-year-old sister, but I am not sure that I excelled in this role. I was drifting around aimlessly in the barbed wire camp. When the airplanes appeared in

the sky I watched them mesmerized.

Escorted by P-28 and P-51 fighter airplanes, large formations of B-17 and B-24 squadrons flew over Strasshof for bombing and strafing missions. They often attacked military installations, oil refineries, and railroad marshalling yards in nearby Vienna. A garden village bordering on the Austrian capital, Strasshof lies just twenty-five km away from the city of waltz. A favorite target of the air raids was Wiener-Neustadt, another suburb of Vienna.

Strasshof was surrounded by pine forests, part of the legendary *Wiener Wald*. Among other things, it inspired in the nineteenth century the famous waltz of Johann Strauss, *Tales from the Vienna Woods*. But now the forest did not arouse the muses. The sounds of war replaced the sounds of music. Once during an air raid I suddenly heard the sharp and loud coughing blasts of a heavy machine-gun hidden somewhere in the woods. It was firing at a low-flying aircraft.

When iron birds appeared aloft, strange things could happen. Sometimes paper fell slowly from the sky, like tree leaves in autumn. They were British or American leaflets in German. On several occasions as I watched the planes flying high in the air, glittering pieces of silver strips started to descend from above. They trickled and danced in the wind. These shining metal ribbons resembled the silver tinsel that decorates Christmas trees. Bomber crews dropped from the planes these glistening bands in enormous quantities in order to disable the anti-aircraft cannons of the Germans. Spreading like a huge tinsel carpet in the air, the falling chaff distorted electronic data and caused false reading on the German radar screen.

I did not know it then but in those days the Russians were already advancing on Berlin along the extended eastern front. By the end of March, the Soviet forces of Marshal Zhukov were not very far from Strasshof. About seventy miles eastwards the Red Army clashed in fierce battles with the remnants of the German army in the Lake Balaton region of Pannonia. By April 4, 1945, the Nazis were pushed into Austria and the Soviets completed the liberation of Hungary.

(Continued on page 7)

(Continued from page 6)

The Red Army fought on a very wide front. As a matter of fact it began an offensive against Vienna on March 16, even before German resistance was crushed in Hungary. Zhukov's soldiers battled the Germans in brutal street combats. The Soviets managed to secure the Austrian capital on April 13.

However, a couple of weeks before the fall of Vienna into Russian hands, the Nazis decided to evacuate the prisoners from Strasshof. One day yelling German soldiers ordered us to assemble in front of the barracks of the concentration camp. We were surrounded from all sides by barbed wire fence. The guards in the watchtowers aimed their machine guns at the assembly. The soldiers organized us into columns. They opened the lager gate and soon we were marching toward and unknown destination. My mother carried my little sister in her arms. Vera just turned four years old of age. I was pacing alongside with them.

We reached the railroad station of Strasshof. Here the Nazis pushed us onto crammed cattle wagons. Oh, here we go again, I thought. Being on this train was not a new experience, but the tedious familiarity of a *déjà vu*. The train reminded me of an earlier voyage in a similar cattle wagon from Hungary to Austria. I remembered the journey to the concentration camp. It was an inhuman and a nightmarish trip that lasted for three days. About eighty terrified Jewish men, women and children of all ages were crowded in each freight car. The wagons were sealed. By the end of the ride, even before we arrived at the concentration camp, some were dead because of the heat, the thirst and the exhaustion.

So now here I was in Strasshof on this Austrian cattle wagon, onto which the Nazis boarded again a

crowd of frightened people. The Germans locked the doors. We sat on the floor and waited for the train to depart. But the train did not move. Instead, all of a sudden, the sirens began to howl, warning of the danger of an imminent air raid.

I heard this blood-curdling loud sound many times before, although my experience of bombing attacks until then was not bad at all. It seemed almost as if the worst part of an air raid consisted in the ominous cry, in the unnerving scream of the sirens. The roar of the sirens was both a doleful moan and a spine-chilling hysterical wail.

Be that as it may, this time the sirens were right. A horrific air raid followed. Bombs began to fall and burst into deadly flying pieces with deafening noise. The cattle wagon started to tremble and shake as if preparing for take off.

The rumbling detonations were unbearingly loud. The bombs exploded with ear-piercing thunder, causing devastation, panic, and shock. People were screaming in ultimate terror.

Mother pulled Vera and me under her protecting arms. We all lied on the wagon floor as mother tried to shelter us with her body. A dreadful hell opened its bloody gates. It wanted to tear us into pieces by flying shrapnel, to swallow us in melted asphalt, to consume us in flames of fire. The bomb attack did not last long. Nevertheless, the indescribably scary experience had etched itself into my memory for a lifetime.

When the air raid was over, the Germans opened the doors of the cattle wagons. We got off the train and stood on the platform of the railroad station. Now

(Continued on page 8)

The 461st Liberaider
461st Bombardment Group (H)
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Inactivated: 27 August 1945
Incorporated: 15 November 1985

Officers:

Robert V. Hayes, President, 2345 Tall Sail Dr., Apt. G, Charleston, SC 29414-6570
Carl H. Peter, Vice President, 2523 I Street NW, Washington, DC 20037-2211
Ed Stevenson, Treasurer, 6485 Pinehill Rd., Shreveport, LA 71107-9698
O'Bannon, Frank, Historian, 9260 N Fostoria Dr, Tucson, AZ 85742-4884

Directors

Nye E. Norris, Hdqtrs Sqdn, 559 S. Waverly Street, Columbus, OH 43213-2756
Don C. Johnson, 764th Sqdn, 8513 Underwood Avenue, Omaha, NE 68114-3514
Walter D. Fries, 765th Sqdn, 3958 Howerton Road, Northampton, PA 18067
Eugene W. Brock, 766th Sqdn, 1332 Nursery Road, Anderson, IN 46012
Socrates Delianedis, 767th Sqdn, 305 Caracas Drive, Las Vegas, NV 89128-0137
Gail M. Peterson, Director at Large, P.O. Box 461, Spencer, IA 51301-3024

The 461st Liberaider

George Dickie, Editor, P.O. Box 615, East Sandwich, MA 02537
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(Continued from page 7)

the place was transformed into a hellish nightmare. But what I saw was not just a bad dream. It was a real abyss, a horrible scene of torment in a catastrophic inferno. Fires were raging everywhere. The railway lines were broken in several places. The enormous power of bomb explosions bent the tracks into different directions. They looked like huge paper clips twisted and curved by giant hands.

Several wagons of the train were destroyed in the bomb attack. Freight cars were derailed and overturned. Our own wagon managed to stay on the rails but its wall was perforated by many shrapnel. The holes almost formed a continuous line at waist height. Death and serious injury were just an inch away. Mother saved our lives by pulling us onto the wagon floor when the bombs started to fall.

Others, however, were not so lucky. Many were killed and injured in the air raid. Covered with blood, I saw a girl of my age carried away by her mother. I used to play with her.

Panic-struck Germans ran here and there. This was the first time that I saw dead and wounded German soldiers. They were lying on the ground or carried away on stretchers. Their uniforms were soaked with blood. Their faces beneath the helmet now lost the habitual arrogant expression of the "master race". Watching these wounded and dead German soldiers made me realize that they were not invincible after all; that they were vulnerable just like anybody else.

The bombing of the marshalling yards at Strasshof prevented the Nazis from transporting us into Germany. The strange irony of this terrible air raid was, that in spite of being almost killed by our liberators, the attack probably saved our lives.

After the bombing raid the Germans returned us to the concentration camp of Strasshof. A few days passed without particularly notable events. Then one cloudy morning a young Jewish man came to our barrack. He was panting. He said something about the German guards and that a soldier hit him with his gun butt. It was not clear to me at that time what he was talking about; but years later I understood. Ap-

parently what happened was that the Germans began to abandon the concentration camp. This man tried to take advantage of the confusion and to sneak out of the lager. Then a German guard noticed him. The prisoner was lucky that the guard did not shoot him. But nevertheless, he received a blow from the butt-end of the German's rifle.

One crispy day in early April I was moving aimlessly around the camp. The sun was shining but the air was cool. Suddenly, I noticed a mysterious stranger that seemed to appear from out of nowhere. He moved in my direction and approached quickly with a peculiar rocking movement. He proceeded with assurance and as he got closer he gave me a friendly smile. I found this quite unusual because an amiable gesture was a very rare commodity in those days. I looked at him and noticed that he was dressed in an unfamiliar way. He wore a black leather jacket and held his hands on a weapon with a pockmarked barrel and a circular cartridge magazine. I never saw a uniform and a weapon like this before. The strange soldier said nothing, just continued to walk. Soon he passed by me and before long he disappeared from sight. The smiling infantryman with his peculiar machine gun and black leather jacket was the first Russian soldier that I met. As he crossed the concentration camp the front was moving with him onward through Strasshof. As he passed me, along with him, the front was passing me too. It left behind a deceptive aura of the unawareness of a momentous turning point in my life enveloped in the delusive silence of a fleeting war episode. The passing front just gave back my freedom from enslavement and I didn't know that.

Yet liberation did not occur in a sharply defined moment. It was a process. The war did not end yet. Fighting with the Nazis in the defeated Third Reich continued until early May. Conditions in Austria now were still utterly confused, turbid and perilous. We could not go home yet.

Stalin's commandos were combing Strasshof in search of Nazis. Mind you, notwithstanding the friendly smile of the first Soviet soldier that I met, subsequent encounters with the Red Army were not

(Continued on page 9)

(Continued from page 8)

always that pleasant, to say the least. Actually, the second Russian soldier that I met threatened to kill me, together with my mother and little sister.

We were in the barracks. Suddenly a Russian soldier kicked the door open and aimed his machine gun at us. He was tall, wide-shouldered and wore a padded, dirty green uniform. His coarse face was distorted by a cruel expression. I think that he was drunk. After all, the daily ration of combat units in the Red Army also included a generous allowance of vodka. Anyhow, this Soviet infantryman was raging with anger. Brandishing violently his weapon, he yelled furiously in Russian with a husky voice: "Nyemtzi, Nyemtzi" (Germans, Germans). Moving around with nervous agitation he shoved my mother, sister and me to a corner. He checked carefully everything in the room before he left. He scared the daylight out of us.

I also felt frustrated and sad that I could not explain to him that for us he was our redeemer; that we were on his side. I wanted to tell him that we were his friends, not his enemies. But we did not speak Russian; and even if we did, I am not sure that he would have listened. Even when people do speak the same language they still may not be able to transcend the limits of communication, or the boundaries of their current physical condition, mindset and vision.

The Romans, who were astute observers of human nature, used to say, "man is a wolf to his fellow man" (*homo hominis lupus*). This is true even in times of peace, and moreover in times of war. Armed human conflict debases the ultimate value of life. Killing a human being, mind you, is not a big deal during war. It turns into a trivial thing, or even into a desired goal. After all, this is what soldiers are trained for: To kill the enemy.

Once I heard a story from a friend of a former Jewish partisan. One day during the Second World War the partisan knocked on the door of a Ukrainian peasant. He asked the farmer to give him food. The Ukrainian stared at him for a while and said that he had no food. The partisan did not argue with him. He just shot the peasant through the heart. He interpreted

the refusal to supply him with food as a sign that the farmer collaborated with the Nazis. After the war the ex-partisan immigrated to America wherein he became a respected citizen. Such are the vagaries and paradoxes of war.

But let me return to Strasshof. The Red Army liberated the concentration camp on April 9, 1945. However, it did not complete yet the conquest of Vienna. Intense fighting went on for a few more days. Allied air raids already caused cataclysmic destruction in the city of Beethoven and Mozart. Now the horrendous human slaughter and material devastation continued. The air raids, artillery bombardment, street battles and scorched earth tactics rendered parts of the Austrian capital into ghost towns. The suburb of Wiener-Neustadt had been razed to the ground.

However, by April 13 Marshal Zhukov's divisions took full control over Vienna. Three days later they launched a heavy offensive against Berlin. The German capital already was severely damaged by air raids. Now artillery shells and combat from house to house reduced the city to rubble. In the end of April when most of Berlin was already in Soviet hands, the Fuhrer finally got the message that he had lost the war. His plan to enslave the world for a thousand years under the boots of the "master race" of the Third Reich evaporated in smoke and fire.

It was easier for Hitler to make a world war than to marry his mistress. Nevertheless, on April 29 he decided to marry Eva Braun in his bunker. On the following day the Nazi dictator and his newly wed wife committed suicide. *Sic transit Gloria mundi* (thus passes the glory of the world), the Romans used to say.

In any case, the fuhrer in reality never harvested shining glory but bloody terror and death. For, glory can stem merely from constructive accomplishments, whereas the Nazi dictator brought upon the world only unimaginable suffering and destruction.

Hitler and his followers were motivated by xenophobic venom, which culminated in their frenzied hatred of the Jews. Their evil oppression of other nations

(Continued on page 10)

(Continued from page 9)

dragged the world into a brutal war, unprecedented in history for its horror and scale. On the European continent alone almost 40 million people died in the war. The Soviet Union lost twenty million human lives. In Poland by the end of the war about 5.5 million people died, half of them were Jews. On the eve of the war an estimated 10 million Jews lived in Europe. Six million of them perished in the systematic mass slaughter of the *shoah*, as the catastrophe is called in Hebrew. The Genocide that the Nazis set into motion wiped out entire ethnic minorities, including the murder of half million Gypsies.

Instead of the promised millennium, the Third Reich lasted for twelve nightmarish years. It ended in suffering and chaos, in death and defeat. Between 1939 and 1945 seven million Germans died, most of them civilians.

Although our liberation from the concentration camp of Strasshof did not bring immediate deliverance, the hardest part of the ordeal was over. It was most unnerving to wait for the departure but eventually the great day arrived and we set off for home. We were of course very excited. However, to return home was not an easy task. As a matter of fact, the voyage back to Hungary turned to be arduous, exhausting and dangerous. In the beginning we could not find means of transportation. So mother found somewhere a wheelbarrow and made it as much comfortable as possible for my sister. Pushing Vera on the wheelbarrow, mother and I made our way on foot, walking along the Danube River from Vienna to Bratislava, the capital of Slovakia. Known also as Pressburg in German and Pozsony in Hungarian, the city was in earlier centuries the capital of Hungary. There were no bridges left across the mighty Danube because the Germans destroyed them. Did it change its color since the nineteenth century? I do not know if Johann Strauss really saw the Danube as a blue river or just used his poetic license. In any case, to me the Danube looked gray, notwithstanding the famous waltz of the Viennese composer.

Since then lots of water flowed down between the banks of that formidable river and the long wanderings of the war had ended many years ago. Never-

theless, the lonesome odyssey of haunting memories through the hidden chambers of consciousness continues for a lifetime.

Yet history itself is bigger than memory and the story is still incomplete. Ironically enough, despite the frailty of eroding memory, in many respects now I know much more details about the events concerning my liberation than when they unfolded. Mind you, I always was curious about the identity of the raiders of our train in that Austrian railroad station. Who were they? Were they British or American? I did not rule out even the possibility that it was the Russians who bombed us. How many planes did participate in the air raid? And what happened in the skies during the attack? Where are the pilots now? Throughout the years I posed these intriguing questions and others to myself many times without avail.

Recently I was searching the Internet for information about Strasshof during the war. To my immense surprise and excitement I discovered the air force unit that attacked our train at the railroad station. I also found out the name of the mission leader, as well as of the names of two other pilots who participated in that air raid. Led by Major Poole of the 461st Bomb Group from the 15th American Air Force, it was Mission No. 203, which almost killed us on the train. This bombing attack took place on March 26, 1945. It was my sister's birthday. She did not get even a piece of cake.

According to the documents published on the web, the airplanes attacking the marshalling yard at Strasshof dropped 100-pound general-purpose bombs "which brought excellent results." They destroyed "the west choke point of the yards", states the website, "and started large fires".

On January 21, 2002, I wrote a letter to LTC USAF Ret. Frank C. O'Bannon, Jr., Past President of the 461st Bomb Group (H) 1943-1945 Inc. I asked for more information about Mission No. 203. He immediately replied. In his letter of January 24, 2002, Colonel O'Bannon says, "there were 24 planes that took off" for the Strasshof raid. One of these

(Continued on page 15)

Mail Call

I was a radio operator on crew #64 in the 767th Squadron in the original Group. Col Glantzberg was our Group commander. I have flown with him many times as our crew flew lead many times. My pilot was Harold Strong. I know there is a website which will show our crew photos because some other member sent one to me. I am having trouble finding the website that shows this. Can you help ?

Hardy Brogoitti

Hardy,
The 461st BG website is at www.461st.org.

Just to let the 461st know, my article on 461/764 B-24J "**TenMenBak**" commanded by Kenneth B. Smith and lost on 17 December 1944, has been published in the April 2002 issue of AIR CLAS-SICS.

I've read the online version of LIBERAIDER-- nice job!!

John Bybee

First, allow me to complement you on the great job you all have done with the 461st web site. My father was S/Sgt James R. Donaghue 31015578, who was assigned to the 765th from June to December of 1944. He was a tail gunner, and flew 35 missions during that time period, some aboard the "All-American". Sadly, my Dad passed away 11/1/94, but my son and I keep his memory going with frequent visits to web sites about B-24's, WW II, and the like. My son actually found your web site and told me about it. I have all my father's service papers, certificates, etc., and I would like to send some of the info along to you, and maybe collect some info we do not have.

A picture of my father is in the web site in "**Crews**". In the top picture under "**Lt Robert**

Arburthnot", he is the shirtless individual standing whose head is directly in front of the "4" of the "24" on the side of the "All American". (There was only one chin like that ever). We also have the names of the other men in the picture from another B-24 web site, and maybe it would be easier if I mailed a copy of that to you. He did not fly the 7/25/44 mission to Linz. (I have his mission list, and according to it, he did not fly that day).

He was also an armorer/gunner, but I'm not sure what that distinction meant.

He also told me that "his" original plane was lost after hitting some power lines while landing after going on a parts run to another base, and that he was not aboard on that flight. If you have any more information about that aircraft loss, I would like to know about it. We are planning a trip to Europe in a few years, and would like to visit the Foggia area then.

Thanks for all your good work!

Bob Donaghue

Glad you are taking over and doing a good job. I am in the process of reading Jesse Pettey's book One More Mission and am finding it even better than Ambrose's The Wild Blue probably because it is written more as a first person narrative and also because his experiences are more like mine-- same time, same squadron, mostly same missions.

I would like to contact Pettey via e-mail if that is possible and tell him how much I like his book. Do you have his address?

Joe Donnelly

Jesse Pettey now has a website about his book. Visit www.jpettey.com.

Charleston Travel and Cruise Center

1525 Sam Rittenberg Blvd., Charleston, SC 29407

800-868-0132 843-556-8646 843-556-3365(fax)

May 15, 2002

461st Bomb Group

Reunion 2002

Hello Liberaiders,

Plans are being finalized for another fantastic reunion this fall. The reunion is scheduled for September 26th - 29th, 2002 and will be held in Linthicum, Maryland at the Holiday Inn Airport. This hotel has a AAA Three Diamond rating and is conveniently located near BWI Airport. If arriving by air, the hotel offers a 24hr complimentary airport shuttle.

Please plan to arrive no later than Thursday, Sept. 26th. On Friday Sept. 27th, we have planned a tour of Annapolis, Maryland. This trip will include a guided tour of the U.S. Naval Academy, lunch at the famous Phillips Seafood Restaurant, a harbor cruise, and free time to browse shops, galleries and historical sites in downtown Annapolis.

The Squadron Dinner will be held Friday evening with a Maryland Theme dinner buffet and a Dixieland Band Trio, the Sheiks Of Dixie, to entertain us.

Saturday we will have the opportunity to visit Ft. McHenry National Monument, "Home of the Star-Spangled Banner". This will be a self-guided tour with a 15-minute film to watch. From there, buses will take the group to the Baltimore Inner Harbor, where you will have free time to explore the Aquarium, shops and restaurants. You may choose to tour the USS Constellation, the only civil war era vessel still afloat, which is docked at Pier 1.

The Annual Banquet and Dance is planned for Saturday night with a D.J. to play your requests.

We will close the reunion with a Memorial Breakfast Sunday morning Sept. 29th.

Enclosed you will find your registration information. Please fill out the form, and send it back to Charleston Travel and Cruise Center as soon as possible. All payments should be made by July 31st, 2002. The Holiday Inn is holding a block of rooms for us, so don't hesitate to call and make your reservations. If you have any questions, please contact Kelly McKenzie at 800-868-0132.

See you in September!

Sincerely,

**Bob Hayes
President, 461st Bomb Group**

461st Bomb Group
21st Reunion
September 26th-29th, 2002
 Linthicum, MD

PLEASE COMPLETE THIS REGISTRATION FORM AND MAIL WITH CHECK TO:

Charleston Travel and Cruise Center
Attn: Kelly McKenzie
1525 Sam Rittenberg Blvd.
Charleston, SC 29407

Registration Fee _____ @ \$10.00 per person **subtotal** _____
 # of persons

Annapolis Tour _____ @ \$49.00 per person **subtotal** _____
Includes Lunch _____
Sept. 27th # of persons

Squadron Dinner _____ @ \$38.00 per person **subtotal** _____
Sept. 27th # of persons

Ft. McHenry/ _____ @ \$18.00 per person **subtotal** _____
Inner Harbor Tour _____
Sept. 28th # of persons

Banquet and Dance _____ @ \$38.00 per person **subtotal** _____
Sept. 28th # of persons

Memorial Breakfast _____ @ \$11.00 per person **subtotal** _____
Sept. 29th # of persons

TOTAL _____

NAME _____ SQUADRON _____

NAME(S) FOR NAMETAGS _____

SPOUSE _____ CHILDREN/GUESTS _____

ADDRESS _____ CITY _____

STATE _____ ZIP _____ PHONE _____

Please attach a return address label below (if available)

461st Bomb Group-Reunion 2002

HOTEL INFORMATION

DATE: September 26-29, 2002

LOCATION: Holiday Inn BWI Airport
890 Elkridge Landing Road
Linthicum, MD 21090

ROOM RATES: \$99.00 plus tax, per room per night
(1 king bed or 2 doubles)

RESERVATIONS: Call 1-800-HOLIDAY (800-465-4329)
Be sure to mention that you will be attending The
461st Bomb Group Reunion 2002
Major credit card required for guarantee

PARKING: Free

AIRPORT SHUTTLE: Complimentary, 24hrs a day

Be sure to make your room reservations prior to August 17th, 2002

(Continued from page 1)

mountains separated from the rest of my crew.

I Bailed out on Yugoslavia coast at 1600 9 March 1945. Spent night in mountains. Was captured on 10th of March by Ustasche soldiers.

I spent two days at Senji, Yugoslavia.

I spent the night in the mountains undetected by the enemy. Finally the following night I noticed a woodcutter gathering firewood in the hills. Thinking he was a partisan, I made contact displaying my American flag on my flight jacket and offering him my pack of Lucky Strike cigarettes from my escape kit. He was friendly and motioned for me to follow him down the mountain path to the village. I was taken to a residence and offered some cabbage and hog hocks which I ate graciously.

The head of the house offered to take me across the hills to friendly territory. He spoke fluent English

having been in the U.S. before the war. I offered to compensate him from my escape kit and while we were negotiating, shots (rifle fire) were fired outside the residence and I knew that I had been double-crossed. A detachment of Ustasche soldiers took charge of me and marched me to their headquarters. I had hurt my side landing in a tree in the mountains for which I was treated by a medical team headed by a German doctor.

I was taken to Ottoschat, Yugoslavia on 16 March. I spent about a week in jail with partisans and civilians. The food and living conditions were very poor.

I was taken to Bleni, Yugoslavia from Ottoschat and was locked up in a cellar – cold and very lonesome here.

The Germans let me out and walk around at daytime for a few hours. I am full of fleas

(Continued on page 16)

(Continued from page 10)

“aborted due to a fire in one engine before the target”. He points out that another bomber “was hit by flak over the target and eight known crewmen were seen to get out of that plane”.

According to the website of the 461st Bomb Group the flak at Strasshof was slight and inaccurate. Nevertheless, “two planes failed to return to the base and two others were hit”. Second Lieutenant Raymond Spehalsky was one of the pilots whose plane was hit by the flak. He was forced to leave the formation and his plane crashed. However, fighter pilots escorting the mission later told the bomber-pilots of the formation over the intercommunication system that “they had seen eight chutes open from the plane before it crashed”. I believe that in his letter Colonel O’Bannon refers to these crewmen.

The website of the 461st Bomb Group also mentions the aircraft flown by 2nd Lt. Lloyd R. Heinze in Mission No. 203. On its way to the target Pilot Heinze’s plane was hit by anti-aircraft cannon fire over Strasshof. He managed to navigate the bomber and it “was

seen at good altitude with an engine on fire near Pecs, Hungary”.

So these are some of the stories of the flying men from the 461st Bomb Group who had participated in Mission No. 203. They are altogether strangers to me and at the same time their lives and mine are connected through the whimsicality of fate and the capriciousness of history. I have admired the courage of freedom fighters in the Second World War, especially the bravery of those young aviators who flew dangerous missions risking their lives to liberate the world from the claws of evil. They are my heroes and brothers.

The pilots and crewmen who took part in Mission No. 203 were aware that their target was the marshalling yard at Strasshof but were unaware whom they bombed. They possibly saved my life and at the same time they almost killed me. Now owing to the technological marvels of the electronic age, the bombers and the bombed can communicate, or even meet and hug each other in the spirit of brotherhood and freedom.

(Continued from page 15)

and lice.

On about 17 March, I have been here about a week now. Four Luftwaffe men just brought two American flyers in and I was told we would leave for Zagreb tomorrow. It's good to talk to an American again. One of the boys also had some extra dry black bread and a little meat which we ate with great delicacy.

We didn't leave today for Zagreb. The fleas and lice are driving me nuts. I had my usual small ration of black bread & margarine and unsweetened tea this morning with thin soup for supper.

As my diary states from here on it was detention in local jails. I spent several nights in the same cell with slave laborers who were brought in each night from work details and taken out the next morning back to work. Many of these people were suffering from malnutrition and related diseases making me ever so thankful that my immunization record was current. Fleas and lice almost drove me crazy especially when exposed to sunlight. They seemed to thrive on my fur lined flight jacket and boots. I had failed to secure my shoes to my chute and left the plane with only my flight boots. However, while on the march to Mooseberg later, I traded a pack of cigarettes from my Red Cross parcel to a German for a pair of hob nailed shoes.

We're on our way to Zagreb all right. Traveled a few kilometers and we'll have to wait for transportation. The Luftwaffe officer and men seem to be okay – at least it's better to lie beside a brook in the sun than in a cold cellar all night. I also got a little more food from these guys and was given more freedom. Thank God.

We have been here for about five days now and will start for Zagreb today.

Incidentally, I never knew what had happened to the

rest of our crew until after liberation when I found that seven crewmembers were immediately captured; one was lucky enough to be taken by partisans; and our nose gunner was never officially accounted for and was probably killed. The last I saw of Joe was as he was coming out of the nose of the plane ready to bail out.

Here we are in Zagreb after being strafed a few times by partisans. Never heard so much yelling and hollering by guards since taken prisoner.

March 27

I am on my way to Nuremberg in a few days.

April 1

I arrived at the interrogation center at Nuremberg today.

April 4

I was assigned to my first prison camp today.

April 5

With the yanks approaching like they are we are on another journey – this time by foot to Mooseberg, Germany. They say we will walk about 150 kilometers if the yanks don't overtake us.

April 6

I received my first Red Cross parcel and boy did I eat. Slept in a farmer's barn in Plankstadt, Germany. We had plenty of spuds and also ate my first egg in a long time.

Having been reared in a German-speaking environment in America I could understand everything the Krauts were saying. One incident I well remember while being detained in a local calaboose. The Germans were deciding what to do with me as they had

(Continued on page 17)

(Continued from page 16)

picked up a bunch of women looters that needed detaining. "We can't keep that American flyer in the same cell with these women," I heard them say. I was taken out and spent the night in some small holding cell.

April 21

Our march finally came to a conclusion when we reached Moosberg, Germany and Stalag VIIA.

Another incident I well remember took place in a bomb shelter in Vienna in the railway depot on a Saturday night on my way to Nurenberg. As allied planes were overhead the depot was invaded by a group (don't remember how many – 4 or 5) of S.S troopers all keyed up with hatred. Spotting me in my flying suit they demanded that my Wehrmacht Guard turn me over to them. Saying in German, "I had no business (an American flyer) in a bomb shelter with women and children." After an exchange of words my guard stepped back, cocked his "burp gun" and backed them off saying he had orders to take me to Nurenberg and for them not to come any closer. Boy! That was a close one!!

On the brighter side of experiences were the prevalence of Red Cross parcels on our march from Nurenberg to Mooseberg. The closer we got to the Swiss border, the more parcels came. With a "kriege burner" (miniature tin can blower driven stove) and a Red Cross parcel one could cook up a meal in a jiffy and suffer diarrhea afterwards.

April 21 to 29

This week was mostly spent sweating out the Americans. We live in tents and with the weather we're having we usually sleep in water every night. It's been snowing also here every day.

Sunday April 29

We just finished cooking breakfast when we were surprised by shell fire. The shells are

whistling around the prison camp. Yes, the American 7th Armored Division just rolled in. The "Kriegies" are going wild with joy. The time is 1205. The American flag is flying from the Stalag.

May 1

We tasted our first piece of white bread in ages today. Oh, boy! Is it good!

May 2 to 6

We are waiting for transportation. The weather is bad. We had snow and hail again.

May 7

Well, we are off to Landstadt to catch a plane to France.

May 8

We finally landed in Rheins, France today in a C-47.

May 10

Rode a Red Cross (hospital) train from Rheins to Camp Lucky Strike. The food is okay.

May 11 to 21

We were processed through Camp Lucky Strike. The food is good. We got clothes, eggnog and shoes.

We left Camp Lucky Strike on Tuesday morning, May 22 at 0130 for camp near La Heave. We stayed ½ day here and are now on a boat, the USS Sea Owl and homeward bound. I tasted my first orange in months. We left France at 1900 tonight.

May 23

Docked at South Hampton, England to pick

(Continued on page 18)

(Continued from page 5)

him and wanted him to give us the car. Naturally he didn't know what we were talking about, but he did offer us a bite of his fish. We hemmed and hawed back and forth, but finally gave up when all he did was offer us the fish. We left him and walked on into town.

We were looking for a bank. If it was broken into or open we were going to go in and make ourselves instant millionaires. We were too late and the place was all smashed up and deserted. There were some Russians nearby so we figured we had better leave well enough alone.

There were other groups of Russians all over the place; some were in houses and others just seemingly looking for trouble. We paid them no attention and just walked around. There were other ex-POWs walking around also. The whole thing was that we were finally free again. We could do what we wanted, when we wanted and it was just great.

Oh, yeah, we turned a corner and saw three Russians even more drunk than all the others. They had machine guns and were spraying the buildings and laughing and drinking. They were really loaded. They saw us and called us over. We hesitated, but the way they looked at us told us we better go meet them. They were friendly at first. They were laughing and drinking and offered us a drink. We didn't take any drinks and they seemed happy (more booze for them). We finally decided that we wanted to leave so we tried to tell them that we had to go back to camp. In trying to get the information across I

pointed in the direction of the camp. This is when it happened. My shirt slid up my arm when I pointed and one of the Russians saw my watch (it was not a military watch, but was a gift from my parents to me for graduation from high school. It was a Helbros and cost about \$75.00). The Germans never took it from me. I took it off when we were interrogated at Oberursel, the interrogation center and when we got to Barth. I held it in the palm of my hand and no one ever noticed. The Russian's eyes gleamed. He asked me for the watch pointing at the watch and then to himself. I kept saying no, no, nyet, nyet until he finally grabbed my wrist. I tried to jerk my arm away until one of the other Russians put the end of his machine gun against my neck. Al and Russ said, "Give him the watch. Don't get killed now that the war is over." I really didn't move and the Russian slid the watch off my arm. I know I was mad, but there was nothing I or we could do. The Russians continued to laugh. The guy with my watch looked at me and laughed and bowed like he was saying thank you and we all separated. As soon as we got to a corner we took off because they started heading our way again. We went back to camp and stayed in the general camp area until we flew to Lyon, France, then on to Lucky Strike.

We were left in the camp for two weeks after the Russians arrived. VE Day was the 8th of May, but we were not allowed to leave – no planes, no nothing, just rumors. Well, Roger W. Armstrong wrote a book entitled "U.S.A. The Hard Way" and in it he mentions that we were actually held hostage by the Russians until the United States turned over General

(Continued on page 19)

(Continued from page 17)

up sick and wounded.

May 24

Left England this morning and are homeward bound at last. I met a Kramer boy from Prairie Hill on the ship. Also Joe Bruse from Brenham is on the same ship.

May 25 to June 3

We had a good trip and arrived in Boston, Mass. This morning. The weather is cool – we have to wear coats. It's good to see the U.S. again. We had a storm at sea and things got pretty rough. Home at last. I gave thanks to God for blessing & sparing me from the many close calls I had had.

Although memories as a POW will linger forever, experiences are some I wish had never happened.

What's Next!

By
Frank J. Procopio
11070706
748

Yes, I remember what happened to "What's Next!". I was the flight engineer on the crew of Edward C. Demmond and we were assigned to "What's Next!" on 25 April 1945 for a run from Torretta, Italy to Linz, Austria. We had something of a reputation as a hard luck crew, and I remember we joked about the name and what's next for us.

Over Linz, we were hit by flak. The first thing I did was to check the tanks to determine if we were losing fuel. We were not, and there appeared to be no other problems for our return trip.

As we approached Torretta the landing gear was lowered and the tower immediately radioed to tell us the left wheel and tire had fallen off, the result of the hit we had taken. The tower then gave us instructions to fly out over the sea, bail out, and ditch the aircraft. Pilot Demmond declined. He flew along the edge of the airfield as seven of the crew jumped. I remained on board with the pilot and copilot. We raised the gear and came around to land.

As we bellied in the aircraft went left and then shot right, off the runway and onto the grass. The three of us climbed out without injury. I looked back, as we drove away in the pickup jeep, and that is the last time I saw "What's Next!".

(Continued from page 18)

Andrei Vlassoc and his Russian army that were fighting for the Germans against the Russians. General Vlassoc and an army of about 60,000 were captured early in the war. Stalin had sent them no supplies and they were desperate. Vlassoc surrendered his army to keep them from being slaughtered. After Vlassoc was captured, the Germans worked on him and told him that they would need strong Russian leaders like himself to help run Russia after the war. Eventually he gave in and signed pamphlets that the Germans dropped over Russian lines. Many Russians surrendered to the Germans. As the war was drawing to a close, Vlassoc and his army fought with the Germans in Czechoslovakia and as soon as the Americans got close his army then turned and started fighting against the Germans. They helped free Prague and then surrendered to the Americans. The Russians knew this and kept us hostage until the Americans turned Vlassoc and his army over to them. Needless to say they were all shot.

I talked with Cheryl Cerbone, (Editor of the ex-POW

bulletin) whose dad was a POW in Stalag Luft I. He told her that six guys in his room left with the Russians (the Russians were always trying to get us to go with them) and they were never heard from again.

I had a tent mate who flew with the 8th and one afternoon a C-47 flew in and we went up to it and talked to the pilots. We shot the breeze and they asked us if we wanted to go to England. Well, we had no orders, nobody knew who we were or where we were so we grabbed our stuff and flew to Kent. The guys took us to a pub and we had a great evening. They then took us to London and we stayed at Hans Crescent Hotel for about a month. We got a few bucks from the Red Cross and had a ball. We finally went to Plymouth and came home on an LST. Eighteen days to Norfolk.

I then went to Camp Devens and finally home for a nice long furlough. I had to go all the way from Fall River, Mass. To San Antonio, Texas to get discharged.

Biography of Frederic E. Glantzberg

Frederic E. Glantzberg was born on December 10, 1903 at Springfield, Mass. He received his high school education at DeWitt Clinton High School in New York. While an engineering student at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, he was cadet captain in the ROTC. Upon graduation in 1927 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Mechanical Engineering, he was awarded a reserve commission in the U.S. Army Air Corps.

2nd Lieutenant Glantzberg reported to Brooks Field, Texas for flying training. He graduated as a pilot and as an observer from Kelley Field advanced school on June 25, 1928.

Temporarily shelving his military status, he took a job with the Ford Motor Company, flying the company's huge transports from Detroit to Chicago and Detroit to Buffalo on the Model Airway.

On Feb. 21, 1929 he was commissioned as second lieutenant in the regular army and joined the 9th Observation Group at Mitchell Field, Long Island, N.Y., and then in November of 1929, he was transferred to the Air Materiel Command at Wright Field, Ohio. There he was assigned as research engineer, Equipment Branch. While at Wright, he married, on April 5, 1930, Miss Claire Jackson whom he had met during his flight training at San Antonio, Texas.

The Philippines was the his next assignment. In December of 1931 he reported to Nichols Field where he served briefly with the 2nd Observation Squadron; later as assistant engineering officer, Philippine Air Depot and, at the time of his reassignment to Langley Field, Va., in late 1934, he was engineering officer for the 28th Bomb Group.

First Lieutenant Glantzberg arrived at Langley in February 1935 and assumed command of the 20th Bomb Squadron. In June 1938 he participated in the record breaking over water formation flight from Miami to Buenos Aires, Argentina in the then new B-17 Flying Fortresses --- along with generals Curtis LeMay and Robert Olds.



After leaving Langley Field, "Big G" had three assignments specializing in Latin American affairs. In June 1939, he was assigned as technical adviser to the Colombian Air Force, stationed at Bogota, Colombia. He remained there until October 1941 when he was transferred to Albrook Field, Panama Canal Zone, as Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations, 6th Air Force.

In March of 1942 "Big G" was reassigned to Headquarters U.S. Army Air Corps, Washington, for duty with the Plans Division. He also wore a second hat as air member of the Joint Mexican-United States Defense Commission.

A combat command loomed next. After a brief tour with the 467th Bomb Group at Orlando, Fla., then Colonel Glantzberg reported to Hammer Field, Calif.

There he was checked out in the B-24 Liberator and assumed command of the 461st Bomb Group on 25 October 1943. The general later took the group to Italy where, as part of the 15th Air Force, it served with distinction. While in command of the group, Colonel Glantzberg flew 50 combat missions and logged more than 300 hours of combat time.



In October 1944, the general was recalled to Washington to serve as deputy director of the Scientific Advisory Board. Dr. Theodore Von Karmen was

(Continued on page 21)

(Continued from page 20)

chairman of the board. "Big G" was awarded the Legion of Merit by General H.H. Arnold for a long-range blueprint of the Air Force, which outlined and laid the foundation for the modern weapons and aircraft now coming into the Air Force inventory.

In October 1945, "Big G" was one of the first officers assigned to the Air University at Maxwell Field, Ala. He participated in the organization of the Air Command and Staff School and later served as one of the instructors.

He attended the Air War College before returning to Washington to again serve for eight months as deputy director of the Scientific Advisory Board with the additional duty of assisting in organizing the Human Resources Division in the Directorate of Research and Development.

With school and staff assignments behind him, Brigadier General Glantzberg returned to his first love, command of and active participation in the flying activities of combat organizations. On 4 April 1949 he took command of the 2nd Bombardment Group and Wing at Chatham Field, Ga., and converted it into Hunter Air Force Base, Ga.

During 1952, Brigadier General Glantzberg commanded the Air Task Group at the Atomic Energy Proving Grounds, Eniwetok. On 6 January 1953, Major General Glantzberg assumed command of the 4th Air Division at Barksdale, La., which was then converting from B-29s to B-47s. From 1954 to 1956 he commanded the U.S. Air Force in Europe's 17th Air Force with headquarters in Rabat, Morocco.

In the summer of 1956, Major General Glantzberg and his family returned to Washington where he spent eight months as chairman of the ad hoc committee on single manager for airlift services before becoming vice commander of the Military Air Transport Service in June 1957 and moving to Scott Air Force Base, IL.

In September 1959, Major General Glantzberg retired from the United States Air Force and moved to Savannah, Ga.

General Glantzberg died June 26, 1970 in Kerrville, TX. He was buried on June 30, 1970 at Fort Sam Houston National Cemetery in San Antonio,

Texas.

Interests:

Hobbies: Gardening, woodworking

Sports: Golf, tennis, squash

Habits: An early riser - frequently plays a set of tennis before going to work.

General Glantzberg is still an eager pilot of some of the most advanced types of aircraft, flies regularly all those available to the units in the field, including the century series. He has logged nearly 11,000 hours and is rated as a command pilot, and aircraft observer.

Opinions, Tastes and Evaluations:

Particularly fond of Mexican food, but likes all good food. Dresses conservatively, dark blues, grays and browns. Enjoys a good mystery story; usually watches TV on Sunday evenings.

Strong believer in not asking the troops to do anything he wouldn't do himself. As a result, has always flown whatever planes assigned to his command.

Favorite expressions:

"You've got to be quick."

"Let's not stand around on one foot."

Demands forthrightness. He wants honest opinions. Is an energetic, dynamic leader. Is admired by the troops for his down-to-earth type approaches.

Decorations and Medals:

Silver Star Legion of Merit with oak leaf cluster, Distinguished Flying Cross with oak leaf cluster, Air Medal with four oak leaf clusters, Commendation Ribbon with oak leaf cluster, Cruz de Boyaca (Colombia), Aztec Eagle (Mexican), Croix de Guerre with Palm (French), Legion of Honor, Commander's Degree (French), European Theatre of Operation Ribbon, Pacific Theatre Ribbon, American Theatre Ribbon, American Defense Ribbon

Unusual Experiences:

1.

While leading the 15 Air Force on a bombing run to

(Continued on page 22)



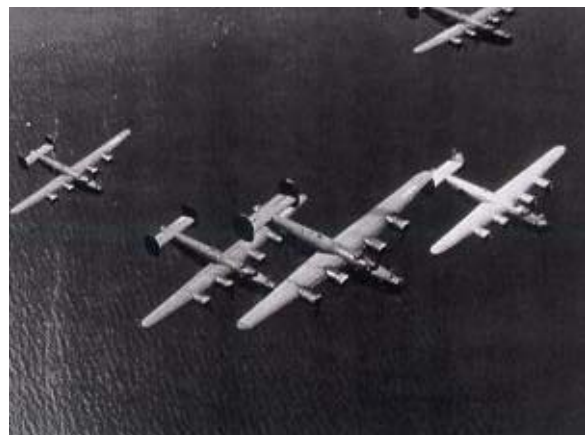
461st Bombardment Group key officers on December 14, 1943 at Hammer Field, California.



461st Bombardment Group leading officers as the Bomb Group set up at Torretta Field, Italy. From left to right: Major Lott, Col. Grogan, ?????, Col. Glantzberg, Lt. Col. Hawes, Lt. Col. Burke, Lt. Col. Hudson. This picture was taken for record purposes at a wall at Torretta Field early in 1944.



Commanding officer, Col. Glantzberg and his Jeep, "Barba Rossa" ("Red Beard").



Often our photographers were successful in taking pictures at low altitude - low over land, water or clouds.

(Continued from page 21)

Ploesti, the #4 engine was hit by flak. It set the engine on fire and blew a hole in the top of the right Tokyo tank. #3 engine quit also.

The plane started down out of control. Col. Glantzberg ordered bail out. Suddenly the sideslip pulled the fire out of the engine and gas tank. Col. Glantzberg got the plane under control at around 4,000 feet on #1 and #2 engines, and then asked for a crew count. With all the crew intact we started toward Turkey.

#3 engine was re-started. Everything was thrown over board to decrease the weight of the plane and we finally arrived back at our home base 2 1/2 hours after the rest of the Group.

2.

In 1932, a swinging antenna (22 pounds) from another aircraft flying overhead struck Lt. Glantzberg. His skull fractured, the army pilot slumped against the cowling, unconscious. The co-pilot in the seat behind, also struck senseless by the same deadly missile, relinquished his grip on the controls. The plane plummeted earthward. At 500 feet, the pilot in the rear seat came to and bailed out. Lt. Glantzberg, also regaining consciousness in the nick of time, pulled the ship out of its dive and landed safely, then lapsed into unconsciousness again, blood streaming from a hole in the right side of his head. Army doctors had to remove four square inches of shattered skull in treating the wound. Refusing to have a plate put in to cover the hole, he had a hole in his head for the rest of his life.

Comments by IB Bloxom

One of the things I would like to tell about Col. Glantzberg that you may not know is that we had four group commanders. As I remember, they were Col. Carter, Col. Glantzberg, Lt. Col. Hawes, and Lt. Col. Lawhon. My personal preference for leading the group was Col. Glantzberg because if the men listened some of the things he taught saved the lives of pilots and their crews. If he was not leading a mission on a particular day, a few minutes after we took off he would jump in his old P-40 (a plane that no one flew but him) and he would come up in that plane and show us all of the things we were doing wrong. Since he was not leading the mission sometimes a lot of the pilots would get sloppy because the guy who was leading it wasn't barking at them about what to do and not to do. But, out of nowhere the old P-40 was bumping us to tighten our positions.

If it was a rainy day we thought we were going to have a day off. We were all looking forward to goofing off and doing nothing for that day, but that was not what Col. Glantzberg had in mind. Shortly thereafter he would tell us not to return to our quarters but to return to our planes for formation flying. He would have us do every formation drill he could think of and he would make us do it tight – and without any mission credit.

On more than one occasion I was thankful for the lessons we learned. One example that comes to mind involved a German bombardier "Dutchie" that I had. One day I had him pick up the fighter frequency of a German group. He translated to me what was being said on the line by some of the Germans. He said that one of them was asking the group if they should attack our group. I won't use all the words they said, but the answer was, "no way," that we were flying too tight a formation. They said there were plenty of groups flying sloppier without their ball turrets down and there was less chance of them facing return fire from another group. In addition we were *racking* so to "Get the hell out of here and find a group flying sloppier." Racking is taking the formation and racking it like bleachers in stadium. In that formation just about every plane in the group could fire with all ten of their guns.

I will never forget on one occasion when rain was coming down so hard that we could not go up and fly a group formation. Col. Glantzberg decided to call a class A inspection. All of the officers had to dress in their proper attire with their pink pants, green jackets, our hats and each officer had to be standing out side of his tent in the pouring down rain. When Col. Glantzberg's vehicle drove up to our tent we were all standing at attention without raincoats and in our class A uniform. When he stepped out of his vehicle he was wearing the summer attire of a light tan shirt and trousers and he had the light tan cloth hat almost sideways on his head. Since our tent was the last tent for him to inspect, I thought the inspection that we received showed that he had a good sense of humor. I think the comments he made were items that made him smile after he left and we did not take them seriously.

Because of the respect I had for Col. Glantzberg, one of the nicest compliments I ever got came just before I returned to the states. When I finished my tour of duty, 55 missions, I received word that Col. Glantzberg wanted me to come to his office. When I arrived there he was sitting at a desk. I saluted him and he returned it. We talked for a minute or two and he asked me to observe a large chart that he had on the wall. After looking at it for a moment I saw that there were only pilots listed on the chart and in most cases there were comments listed on the chart beside the name, but the space by my name was blank. When he asked me what I had observed I told him that I recognized that all of the names were pilots and that all of the names had comments beside them with the exception of mine. He asked me if I knew why the space by my name was blank and I told him that I did not. He said he was getting ready to fill it in then, and would I like to know his comment. I said yes I would. He said, "What I am going to be putting in that space is that you are the only pilot I ever had that never aborted a mission." Coming from a man that I thoroughly respected this meant more to me than a hand full of medals.

I.B. Bloxom

461ST BOMBARDMENT GROUP

P.O. Box 926
Gunnison, CO 81230

Phone: (970) 209-2788
Fax: 555-555-5555



We're on the web!
Visit
www.461st.org



With 30 or more B-24s flying in each 461st Bomb Group mission, a formation was essential in order to not drop bombs on one another. Col. Glantzberg flies his P-40 herding the 461st Group formation together on one of its first missions in early April 1944. At the start, our 461st Commanding Officer, Col. Glantzberg, got into his P-40 fighter plane and "rode herd" on the pilots until they were in proper 6-to-a-unit formation.