



The 461st

Liberaider



Vol. 38 No. 1

JUNE 2021

SOMEWHERE IN THE USA

Reunion Information

The 2021 Bomb Groups Reunion will now include a total of twelve bomb groups. This year we will be going to Albuquerque, NM. Please check out the details beginning on page 16 and sign-up information on page 20. I say this every year, but it's true that this definitely promises to be another fantastic reunion thanks to the Reunion Committee.

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Shot at and Missed The Story of Guyon Phillips

Pilot
Phillips Crew #76R
767th Squadron
461st Bombardment Group

Guyon Phillips knew privation from a young age. He lost his father at age twelve, and his widowed mother struggled to make ends meet while raising young Guyon and his brother in Depression-era Spartanburg, South Carolina. Phillips went to work each

day after high school classes ended, and though life was hard, he found true love in all things aviation. He was fascinated with airplanes, and when Japan attacked Pearl Harbor, Phillips was ready to volunteer immediately for the Army Air Forces (AAF). At his mother's wish, Phillips agreed to wait until he got his draft notice, delaying his exposure to war. After waiting nine months, Phillips

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Special Intelligence Report No. 110

Operations of the GAF 1939-1945
15 April 1945

The following statement has been secured from a senior and experienced GAF flying officer captured recently on the Western Front.

The purpose of my statement is to show the development of air warfare during the last two years as all its possibilities as well as its actual course, which I experienced as pilot, as "Gruppenkommandeur" and as "Geschwaderkommandore". I should like to stress right away that I am not taking the "flax" into account as my knowledge of that subject is too

slight and I had little to do with it.

Before coming to my main subject, it is first necessary to give a short survey of the development and especially the preliminary steps of air warfare up to that period, in order to facilitate the understanding of the subject. We all witnessed the triumphal march through Poland, Norway and then in the spring of 1940 in the west with great admiration and enthusiasm. It made clear to us the importance for successful modern warfare of motorized troops, and especially tanks, on the ground and of the GAF in the air.

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Taps

May they rest in peace forever

Please forward all death notices to:

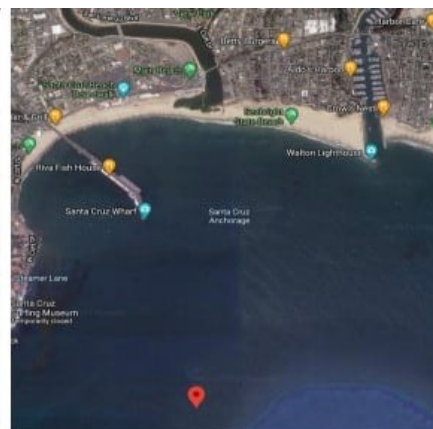
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764th Squadron

<u>Name</u>	<u>Hometown</u>	<u>MOS</u>	<u>Date of Death</u>
Gilmore, John T.	Port Washington, NY	1092	01/01/2018
Clerke, Earl E.	Ft. Pierce, FL	612	04/21/2021

766th Squadron

Baumann, Edwin	Rancho Palos Verde, CA	1092	05/28/2021
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Per his wishes, Linda & Barbara scattered his ashes in Monterey Bay where our sister Carol (12\12\1998) and our mother Margie (1/16/2006) were also scattered. Afterwards we celebrated with a toast of his favorite birthday/Easter treats "peeps". Due to COVID, we missed celebrating his 100th birthday.

Thomas Randolph Moss

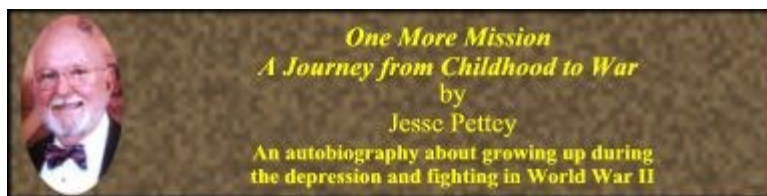
March 17, 1921

To

June 20, 2020

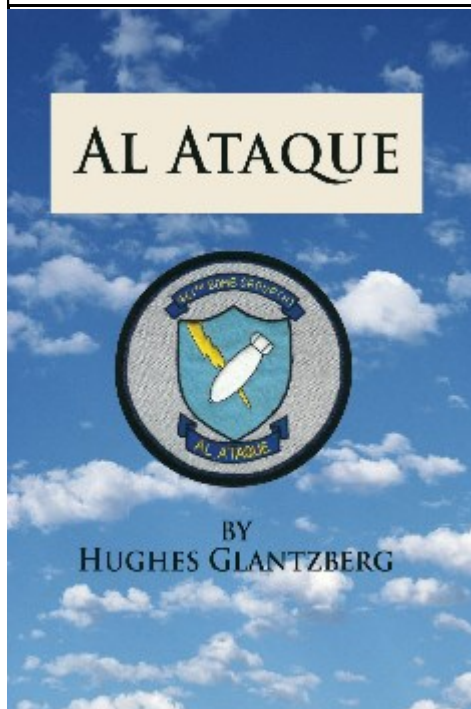
clear skies and





With a special interest in World War II and the 461st Bombardment Group in particular, I found this book excellent. Most of the men who fought during WWII were in their late teens and early 20s. It's amazing to be able to read about their activities. Liberaider Editor

Available from Amazon.com, Barnes & Noble and Xlibris (at a 15% discount) (<http://www2.xlibris.com/bookstore/bookdisplay.asp?bookid=11013>).



Al Ataque

History / General

Trade **Paperback**

Publication Date: Nov-2006

Price: \$26.95

Size: 6 x 9

Author: Hughes Glantzberg

ISBN: **0-595-41572-5**

413 Pages

On Demand Printing

Available from Amazon.com, Barnes and Noble, Ingram Book Group, Baker & Taylor, and from iUniverse, Inc

To order call 1-800-AUTHORS

Trade **Hardcopy**

Publication Date: Nov-2006

Price: \$36.95

Size: 6 x 9

Author: Hughes Glantzberg

ISBN: **0-595-86486-4**

describes the preparation a bomb group goes through before being deployed overseas as well as the problems of shipping over five thousand men and supplies along with some eighty B-24 aircraft from a stateside base to a foreign country. The book details the establishment of Torretta Field which was used by the 461st for the duration of the war in Europe. The 461st Bomb Group flew two hundred and twenty-three combat missions between April 1944 and April 1945. Each of these is described in the book. Personal experiences of veterans who were actually part of the 461st are also included.



Music Bravely Ringing

by

Martin A. Rush

767th Squadron

This is the story of a small town boy who, during WWII, wandered onto the conveyor belt that turned civilians into bomber pilots. Initially awed and intimidated at the world outside his home town, he began to realize that this was an opportunity to have a hand in stimulating and challenging dealings larger than he had expected. He had a few near-misses, but gradually began to get the hang of it. His story is that like the thousands of young men who were tossed into the maelstrom of war in the skies. He was one of the ones who was lucky enough to live through it.

Available from Amazon.com, Barnes and Noble, Ingram Book Group, Baker & Taylor, and from iUniverse, Inc.

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got his notice, volunteered for flight training, and was inducted into the AAF in early 1943.

Phillips had been fascinated by flight ever since seeing Charles Lindbergh parading through Spartanburg in the back of a large four-door touring car following his solo non-stop flight from New York to Paris. Soon after getting into flight training, Phillips was as comfortable upside down as he was right-side up, and by the time he reached advanced training, Phillips felt fortunate to be assigned to single-engine aircraft, which would be followed by transition to fighters. After a couple of weeks in advanced training, however, he and 27 other men received orders transferring them to multi-engine aircraft, which dashed any chance for fighters. "It was the last thing I wanted, but what can you do?" he recalled.

Phillips completed the training, got his wings and his commission, and went off to Idaho for combat crew training. A few months later, Second Lieutenant Guyon Phillips was at the controls of a B-24, fresh off the assembly line at Willow Run, Michigan, with only eight hours' flight time on its engines. It was heavy on the controls and felt sluggish and underpowered, "the last plane I wanted to fly," he recalled.

By the time the crew arrived at Torretta Field and the 461st Bomb Group, Fifteenth Air Force, the war was nearly over. Phillips flew one mission as a copilot for another crew on a milk run to a target in northern Italy in mid-April 1945. As for the rest of his crew, 25 April was to be their baptism by fire. When the briefing officer pulled back the curtain that morning to reveal Linz, Austria, as the target, Phillips didn't understand why the veteran crews emitted moans and muffled curses. He soon would.

Phillips flew in the Tail-End Charlie position for the 767th Bomb Squadron. Green crews were typically put there because that spot in the formation was the easiest to fly. An hour into the mission, however, the B-24 in the number six position developed engine trouble and turned back for base. After another hour, a second Liberator pulled out with the same problem. Phillips had started the mission at the back of the formation and now was off the wing of the squadron leader. "Upon moving up in (the) ranks, you didn't feel like a rookie any longer," Phillips recalled.

As Linz neared, flight engineer Walt Dubina handed an armored vest and apron to Phillips, who tucked the latter over his groin and lower torso to protect his sensitive areas. Next was the large steel flak helmet, "the biggest helmet I ever saw," as he described it. Very soon after turning onto the bomb run, the black puffs of flak bursts were visible right at his eye level. Even though gunners across the formation had been dumping bundles of chaff to confuse German radar, the flak crews had the altitude nailed.

The volume of flak grew heavier and heavier. Phillips focused his attention on staying close to the lead ship, but he would periodically sneak a peek out the front window to see what was going on. "Looking out ahead, the air was just carpeted with puffs of anti-aircraft shells," he recalled. Suddenly, a burst passed between Phillips' Liberator and the lead ship. "I jumped, and when I did, the big helmet dropped over my eyes, and I had to take my right hand off the throttle and shove it back up," Phillips remembered. The B-24 slipped slightly out of formation, but Phillips quickly brought it back in tight on the leader in time for bomb release.

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“With the bomb bay doors open, you felt like your drawers were down, and you were naked and exposed,” Phillips recollected. The rookie pilot flew straight and true through the tempest of explosions, the oily bursts resembling dark hourglasses that angrily twisted and boiled into amorphous shapes. The formation’s bombs struck in a good pattern on the North Main Marshaling Yard, and Phillips rallied off the target with the rest of the squadron.

The green crew survived the European air war without a scratch, the pilot later writing that, “We were there long enough to know what it was like to be shot at, and the good feeling to know that they missed.”

The war ended days later, and, for many of the men, the morning after Victory-in-Europe Day brought not only hangovers, but a return to stricter military discipline than most had experienced since departing the States. At the 461st Bomb Group’s section of Torretta airfield, the powers-that-be called air and ground crew personnel into formation for announcements. “Uptight GI protocol one day after the war was over in Europe seemed totally out of place,” Phillips noted. “My gosh, I hadn’t stood in formation since getting my wings.” Senior officers announced that the men were to participate in a multi-group simulated bombing of the Fifteenth Air Force’s headquarters in Bari.

During the mock mission, Phillips, flying in the number three position off the left wing of the leader, noticed that the aircraft in the number two position was having great difficulty maintaining a tight formation. When the beleaguered pilot drifted farther out of sync, the lead ship began to slide closely under Phillips’ Liberator to take the number two spot. “It wasn’t very smart for me to do so,”

Phillips recollected, “but I got on the horn and said, ‘Here’s somebody who’s going to show us how to fly formation.’”

After the hot dog in the lead ship pulled ever closer to Phillips’ aircraft, Phillips put his wing in even tighter. Then, “he did it again,” the airman observed, “and I moved even closer.” The duel of wits got so intense that Phillips placed his wing tip right outside his competitor’s left waist window, and the gunner there began waving frantically for Phillips to back off. After a few minutes of delicate aerial rivalry, the lead ship pulled away. “Mark one up for the little guy who wouldn’t be bested in formation flying,” Phillips claimed.

Phillips found himself at the controls of a war-weary Liberator for the journey home. Though, according to his flight engineer, all four engines needed major service, ground crews had only managed to overhaul both in-board engines prior to their departure. With a lot of tender loving care from Phillips and his copilot, the tired engines made it most of the back to America before one finally gave out. Less than an hour into the flight from Dutch Guiana to Trinidad, the Number 4 engine gave up the ghost, spewing oil in a black cloud behind the right wing. Phillips feathered the propeller and radioed ahead for permission to make an emergency landing at the airfield at Georgetown in British Guiana. “Flying a B-24 on three engines is not an emergency,” he later wrote, “but with the weight of the fuel and twelve men plus baggage, it was more than a routine situation.”

The field was, in Phillips’ recollection, a round clearing carved out of the jungle, with runways radiating outward like spokes on a wheel. He lined up on the closest one and brought the Liberator in hot. “Intent on hit-

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ring the first part of the runway,” he recalled, “I failed to notice the olive and green camouflaged vehicles, bristling with antennae, just short of the strip.”

Seeking to dodge the hazard, Phillips gunned the engines, but, to his surprise, “the heavy old bird didn’t lift an inch.” He was certain the landing gear brushed the antennae before settling down onto the runway. They’d made it, and one of Phillips’ passengers ran up and gave him a bear hug after exiting the Liberator.

A few days later, the damaged engine replaced, the men set down at Hunter Army Airfield in Savannah. “That was my last time to fly the Lib,” Phillips recalled with nostalgia. “While it was the last plane I ever wanted to fly, we made our peace with each other and had become friends.”

“While I still wish today I had had a chance to fly Mustangs and Thunderbolts,” Phillips

wrote in 2006, “the challenge of being responsible for a bigger plane—and a crew of ten—was a valuable experience that forced you to grow up in a hurry. You just have to figure things will work out for the best.”

Guyon Phillips received a bachelor of science degree from UNC-Chapel Hill in 1949. He worked for Burlington Industries for 33 years and retired in 1987. Phillips was an avid golfer and also hiked the entire Appalachian Trail, from Maine to Georgia, in a great adventure with his wife of 62 years, Jeanne. Guyon Phillips passed away in 2015.

Sources: - Guyon Phillips interview with Mike Croissant, 30 August 2013. - Guyon Phillips, “Tail-End Charlie,” *The 461st Liberaider*, Vol. 23, No. 2, December 2006. - Guyon Phillips, “Dress Parade Over Bari,” *The 461st Liberaider*, Vol. 23, No. 2, December 2006. - Guyon Phillips, “Meanwhile, Back to the States,” *The 461st Liberaider*, Vol. 23, No. 2, December 2006.



Standing L-R: Phillips, Guyon L. (P); Culbertson, Henry G. Jr. 'Grady' (CP); Kerr, Graham S. (N); Noegel, Fred (B)
Kneeling L-R: Keuziak, Michael (NG); Dubina, Walter (E); Gruber, John B. (RO); Elliott, Edward A. (AsstE); Sundeen, Robert W. (BG); Bailey, Walton A. (TG)
 Noegel did not deploy to Italy with Crew

(Continued from page 1)

I don't think it is an exaggeration to say that the main factor which enabled us to crush and defeat France in so short a time and drive the British Expeditionary Force from the continent was the GAF. After the French campaign was over we airmen often wondered about the continuation of the fight against England; we thought the next step would be to throw in the entire GAF against England's most sensitive spot, her shipping. We all agreed the thing to do would be for us all to take a torpedo on board and try and cut England's life-line. Instead of that came the battle against England itself, against London. Before the air-offensive started, our General Staff promised that our opponents would consist of three hundred British fighters, part of whom would be piloted by very young and inexperienced pilots and also that, to some extent, with the exception of Spitfires their aircraft were inferior. As a result we were amazed when in the battle of Britain the three hundred fighters drew to an end. There weren't just three hundred but at least as many as we had. At the time we had about nine hundred or a thousand fighter aircraft operating and the English had the advantage of fighting over their own territory. The British armament industry had prepared for this period with great foresight. The construction of fighters was given priority over all other types of aircraft during the battle of Britain; pilots, reconnaissance and bomber pilots were retrained in order to be able to be employed as fighter pilots in case of emergency. As a result we were faced with a fighter force of practically equal strength to ours which had the additional advantage of having plentiful material reinforcements at hand. If a pilot was shown down over England - and it transpired that 60 or 70% of them landed safely by parachute - the following day he went at us again in a new aircraft. That was a situation which unfortunately the GAF never experienced.

When the war started it was said: "Well, we'll have plenty of aircraft, too many in fact; but we'll lose our

pilots; there will be a shortage of them because the training lasts so long and we won't manage to provide the necessary reinforcements." That situation never actually arose; it was always just the opposite. We always had enough pilots, reinforcements of crews were at hand but we lacked reinforcements of equipment of aircraft. England has to thank her policy of retraining pilots for defense and her total concentration on defense in the air for the fact she won the battle of Britain and that, after both sides were completely exhausted, we had to give it up. Now the English say that they only had twenty fighters left on the last day, or after the last day raids, but we hadn't many more either.

The next phase of air warfare was the transition from day raids to night raids, which it was possible to keep up for a relatively long period until British night fighting had developed to such a point that night raids also became too costly for us. Then our battles in the southeast started, followed by fighting in the east the following year. That gave England a breathing space. They were able to bring their fighter arm up to strength and increase its numbers, and above all, it enabled them to start building up their strategic air force, building bombers, which by the end of 1941 and beginning of 1942 were already coming out as four-engine models.

Then we experienced a similar situation at home. Night raids started on the Reich, on Germany. We started developing night fighting, which already existed in its preliminary stages; and night fighting was developed in a relatively short time into at least a weapon to be reckoned with. The whole development was further delayed by the fact that instruments still had to be constructed, and even invented, and tested in operation. At the time our night fighting only had one aircraft, the ME-110, at its disposal; it was first used operationally as a long range fighter bomber; it was intended as a long range fighter and

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

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was then specially equipped with instruments for night fighting, but with no other improvements. At first we tried equipping the approach lanes used by the enemy aircraft with a belt of searchlights which were to illuminate the enemy aircraft approaching at night. Our night fighters were waiting above and tried to attack the enemy aircraft and shoot it down while it was in the cone of searchlights. It was a fairly exciting but not very successful enterprise. At the same time we developed the so-called dark night fighting restricted to a given area. It was based on the following principle: a whole belt of WT beacons were placed along the entire coast, from Jutland down as far as possible towards the Brest area. An aircraft, a night fighter circled around each of these beacons whenever enemy aircraft were approaching, and these night fighters were directed to the enemy aircraft by control from the ground. The disadvantage of this method was that the instruments we had at the time only covered a radius of 20 km; they described exact circles of 20 km, adjacent circles of 20 km; there was a second similar belt of them behind the first forming a double ring. If you succeeded in directing your own night fighters on the tail of the enemy aircraft while it was within this 20 km radius, by instructing it to: "fly slightly to the left or to the right, or somewhat higher or lower". The exact height and everything was given to the fighter until he was immediately behind the enemy aircraft, could see it an attack it visually.

This method of night fighting, this restricted area night fighting, as it was called, was to be built up in such a way that this one belt extended all along the coast and then there was to be a second belt, a little inside the Reich, running from north of the Ruhr district, west of the frontier of the Reich down as far as Switzerland. That was the second belt which was planned; then thirdly, there were planned similar belts near the second belts near the most important objectives, the Ruhr district, Frankfurt-on-Main, the industrial area of the Upper Rhine, Berlin, etc. That was to be the third line of defense.

These night fighter tactics would have been more successful - and some aircraft were actually shot down; the number varied between 15, 20 and 25 per night - had not the enemy adopted their tactics to our defense methods. How did British bombers avoid being shot down? Firstly, they approached at a very high altitude and secondly, after these areas where

the night fighters were operating had become known, the enemy dived down to cross these areas at the greatest possible speed. Their aircraft nosed down, that is, they converted their height into speed and thus reduced to a minimum the period in which they could be attacked.

After we countered that by instruments covering twice the radius and able to locate the enemy and direct out fighters within a 40 km radius instead of 20 km, the enemy changed to a policy of approaching in thick streams, that is to say they assembled all their bombers over England and approached like a narrow stream at low level. It was the real bomber stream, as we are experiencing it even today in daylight. It put out night fighters under a great disadvantage, as it was no longer possible to direct individual fighters with all those enemy targets; even when it was possible we could only bring three, four or five night fighters into fighting contact with those enemy aircraft.

Of course the development of our tactics continued during this time; we switched over to free-lance night fighting when each aircraft was fitted with an instrument, a radar, to enable it to home on to enemy aircraft on its own once it had been directed into the neighborhood of the stream of enemy bombers. That was the period when our night fighter successes increased and we used to shoot down an average of 40, 50, 60 and sometimes even 70 a night. That was the period, roughly from the end of 1942 until the beginning of 1943, during which the British bombers suffered such heavy losses that one could reckon on their having to give up these attacks sooner or later.

However, parallel with those British night raids came the growth of the American Air Force in England. Vast airfields were laid out and runways and underground battle HQs were built in the area of the north-east of London, right up to the Wash, fog-dispersing plants were constructed, working as follows: you burn petrol on the airfield; you spray it out of some sort of pipe-lines and it produces great heat. The hot air disperses the fog, that is to say the air can absorb the humidity in it and thus it is possible to clear airfields of fog up to a height of 100 m.

Apart from this, there is to be observed from the middle of 1942 onwards, all the training which was taking place in England, where American crews were

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working up and being trained in formation flying and, as soon as they were ready, undertook their first flights over France. With what could we oppose those American four-engine aircraft: What was our fighter arm like at the time? Our standard model was the ME-109, the further development of the '109' with which we had entered the war, and the recently added FW-190.

The armament of the '109 at the time consisted of two MG 17s with the normal caliber of 7.9 mm, and an MG 131, a 13 mm MG. The armament of the '190' was better; it consisted of two MG 131s and two MG 151/20 that is two 20 mm cannons. With that armament our fighters on the Channel coast met the first attacks made by the four-engine formation. In their initial experiments the enemy flew in with a tremendous fighter cover. Forty or fifty bombers were protected by about a hundred or a hundred and fifty Spitfires. Our only chance was for our fighters to gain height in time and just dive through the enemy fighter formation, fire a short burst at the bombers and dive down further in order to avoid being involved in dog fights with the superior number of enemy fighters, as these fights always led to considerable losses on our side owing to the numerical superiority of the enemy. In order to make myself clear I must add that we only had about a hundred fighters along the entire coast, the huge stretch from the Heligoland Bight to Biarritz. Of course, it was never possible to assemble these fighters being in the air so long that they would have run out of fuel; usually about fifteen or twenty aircraft was the maximum number that operated in these invading bomber formations with fighter protection.

This disparity in number was reported to higher authority by the "Verbandsfuhrer" concerned and an increase in the number of night fighters was asked for. It had little or no effect, the reason being: that we were tied down in the east; our valient fighter pilots were as indispensable on those immense fronts as they were in Africa, down in the south. After the American Air Force realized that their fighter protection was superfluous because we had too few fighters anyhow and the ones we had were badly armed and as a result very seldom shot down a four-engine aircraft, they started flying without fighter protection. The raids were always on territory occupied by us. Paris was attacked, Lille, in the northern French Industrial area, Holland, with the result that their losses

were very much less than the Americans had estimated. I should like to add another example: A Fortress, a Boeing B-17 is flying home alone from a raid over Holland with one engine shot to pieces, a wave of ME-109s with the armament mentioned above, two MG 17s or a MG 131 attacks the Fortress. Three out of the four aircraft are shot down by the Fortress and the fourth gets the wind up and makes off. That was the situation at that time. As a result it was said that Fortresses were not to be attacked, as no fighter can shoot them down. That was the first blow to morale German fighter pilots had. It was realized that their armament was inadequate and something was done about it too. The "109" was given two MG 131s instead of two MG 17s, that is two 13 mm MGs and instead of one of its 13 mm MGs it was given a 20 mm one; that is to say its explosive capacity was quadrupled; the FW-190 was given four cannons instead of its two and retained its two MG 131s. That made us at last capable, as far as armament is concerned, of taking up the fight against four engine bombers with success.

The following is a short description of the armament of the four-engine bombers, and of the way in which, in combination with the tactics they employed, i.e. close formation it affected the attackers, our fighters. The Flying Fortress has been advertised since 1940; we knew they were coming. When attacking from the rear you are faced by six or seven MGs, firing to the rear at the fighter. Let us reckon according to the law of probabilities, six MGs against three MGs in the '109'. This is, however, to some extent compensated in favor of the fighter by the difference of size. Now it must be realized that you're not faced by a single aircraft, but by at least fifteen in close formation. At the start, eighty to a hundred and twenty aircraft used to fly over the Reich in the very closest formation, a flying achievement of the first order. If you take the average of eighty aircraft approaching in close formation you have to reckon with 720 MGs firing out to the rear at you. You were already hit at a distance of 1000 m. The first aircraft were shot down while they had little chance of hitting a bomber on account of their armament. The MG 12.7 has the advantage over our cannon that owing to its initial velocity it has a considerably greater range. That proved that these aircraft cannot be attacked from the rear, and attack from the front turned out to be the only possible method. From the front you are only faced with the defensive fire of two or four MGs. In

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addition, you have the tremendous speed at which you approach your target; the bombers do about 400 km at a height of 8000 m and your own speed when you approach 600 km; as a result you are approaching your target at 1000 km and are only exposed to the enemy fire for a very short time. On account of the dispersion fire and the density of the cone of fire the most dangerous distance for the fighter is between 1000 and 600 m. Once you are nearer than that the dispersion from those guns is so slight that the smallest error of aim will cause the whole cone of fire to miss you. Once you've passed the effective range of 1000 to 600 m it is much more difficult to hit you and you have a chance of bringing them down. There are many advantages besides which make frontal attack appear to be especially appropriate: firstly you can kill the crew straight away and secondly the four engines are in front and they're most vulnerable, the tanks are in front and they are more easily hit by an attack from the front than the rear.

With the start of raids into the Reich proper, which took them first to the Ruhr district, then the industrial areas of the upper Rhine, then beyond the Main, Darmstadt, Ludwigshafen, the so-called defense of the Reich was initiated. We had a fighter "gruppe" of about thirty aircraft at our disposal in Holland. Twenty of them were operational. We also had at our disposal in the Reich the fighter schools with the so-called operational 'Schwarme'. They consisted of one or two 'Schwarme' that is four to eight aircraft piloted by instructors. We had at our disposal the so-called industrial 'Schwarme' manned by industrial test pilots. That was the fighting force which was the foundation of the Reich. What happened to this fighting force was that they also on account of their lack of experience had heavy losses and little success. Then we started denuding our front lines; we brought up fighter formations from the south, from the southeast, from the east, from the west, in order to obtain more or less adequate fighting force with which to oppose that assault. 'Divisions' were formed: seven fighter 'Divisionen'; whenever we actually went into operation, each fighter 'Division' had from thirty to fifty aircraft in the air. That is to say, if two fighter 'Divisionen' both threw in their aircraft together. These raids proved the impossibility of operating according to old principles or to principles which were all right in the east; that is to say to send them up simply on the strength of 'Fluko' reports; a

thoroughly reliable ground control had to be developed. I shall skip this development as it would take me too far afield. Finally the defense of the Reich was as follows: the 'Divisionen' who were to put fighters into operation, received detailed reports about enemy raids from 'Korps' and from their own range-finding posts. As soon as the first aircraft took off in England and reached a height of 500 m we received the report: "Assembly has started was continuously observed until they started to leave, as soon as the assembling of those many hundreds of aircraft, a thing which presents colossal technical difficulties, was completed. Then their flight was followed to establish where they were going, whether they were heading due east, or north across the North Sea or southeast. From all those items we formed our decisions. The 'Divisionen' for day fighting were able to make use of battle HQs which had already been prepared for the night fighters. Slight alterations were necessary but on the whole this huge apparatus could be used for direction by day too. Then the formations got the take-off order: "Take off at such and such an hour." Usually ten minutes or a quarter of an hour before. Assembly point for instance at the end of 1943 or beginning of 1944 - Hanover and Brunswick, at a height of 8000 m. The all the formations flew to that area and assembled at the prescribed height. After assembling, this close formation of 50, 80, 100, 150 aircraft was directed towards the enemy formation until it sighted them. As soon as it sighted the enemy the leader of the formation had the task of organizing the attack in whatever way seemed most favorable. This control was fairly easy as long as there was no fighter escort present. The first attacks, which were carried out without fighter escorts, were easier to combat and were easier for the ground control to direct than they were in later developments. The most famous and widely known was that attack on the ball bearing factory at Schweinfurt, which resulted in the first large victories, which, I believe were announced as having been shot down, 67 or 68 were actually found on Reich territory and in the occupied countries i.e. barely half the number announced - and about 300 were reported as having been shot down. How can one explain that? Is it simply the pilot's dishonesty or are there other reasons? I can assure you that there are other reasons, and one of them is as follows: in an air battle everything happens so tremendously quickly that the whole thing is over in a few seconds. One fellow fires on an aircraft and it catches on fire, in the same

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instant a second fighter, say further behind on the right, fires at the same aircraft; the pilot sees that it's on fire; still a third fighter comes up and in his excitement doesn't see that it's on fire, open fires on it as well, and suddenly the bomber falls earthwards. Result: three fighters report shooting down an aircraft. In addition to all that: after air battles like those, aircraft always landed all over the place, fighters which took off from Munich landed in Holland, on the North Sea coast, or in the industrial area, and there they handed in the reports of their victories at the airfield HQ. In addition to which the pilot rang his home airfield and said "I shot one down." Again a duplicated report. Why? Because the authorities have demanded to know within two hours the exact numbers of aircraft shot down. I know of one single instance only where a 'Divisions kommandeur' refused to pass on a report, because the 'General' ... was rung up maybe three, four, five times by the Reichsmarshall. "How many aircraft did your fighters shoot down?" and he kept repeating: "I can't say; they haven't arrived back yet; they landed all over the place; if I do tell you, the reports may turn out false."

Why weren't the successes any greater? At that time the 'Defense of the Reich' had already about 250 to 300 fighter aircraft. The long range fighter bomber Geschwader 26, to which I belonged, was then also withdrawn from both the western and southern fronts and put on the Reich defense. You will have noticed that it never happened either in the east or the south that 50, 80 or 100 of our aircraft flew in a body and carried out any major operations. In Russia they flew in 'Rotten' of two or 'Schwarne' of four. The fighters, that is. What were the long range fighter bombers doing? They had been dropping bombs and had thereby lost all feeling for flying as fighters, and now, thanks to a situation forced on us by the enemy, thanks to the huge formations in which they fly in and which in turn can only be attacked with huge formations, our fighter arm suddenly had to conduct the fight in a strength to which it was never accustomed. The few who could have done it right from the beginning of the war were no longer there. They had already been killed. As a result only individual dogfights developed in all those raids. An enormous number of us arrived, a crew of 30, 50, sometimes 60 aircraft, but each pilot simply attacked wildly at random. Result: Each of them was shot down wildly at random. The long range fighter bomber and flew FW-190 then received, in addition to their other ar-

mament, the so-called 'mortar shell' 21 cm, the one you know from the 'Nebelwerfer'. That would have been a marvelous thing had we had the necessary sights for it. Two such 'mortar howitzers' were build into each wing of the '110' for instance, making four mortars in all; the fuse was ... at 1000 or 1200 m. It kept changing during this experimental stage. Some very good successes were actually scored with it; my predecessor shot down two four engine aircraft with one round from it. Their fuselages simply broke in half and the two huge things plunged earthwards. But, taking it all round, one had to say that successes due to the 'mortar shell' were infinitesimal, in fact so few that it was withdrawn again. I had no instrument in the aircraft for calculating exactly how far away I was from the enemy aircraft. The only means I had was that so-called 'Reflex' sight. That's an illuminated circle with a graticule in it, there's a target ... in it, rather similar to a telescopic sight, and I know that when the Boeing takes up a third of the diameter I am 1000 m away from it. But it's impossible to say whether it's exactly 1000 m or 1100 m or 900 m. That's why it kept occurring that people fired at too great a range; especially the inexperienced crews were always afraid of those huge aircraft which already had so many victories to their credit, so they didn't wait to open fire at 1000 m but fired at 1500 m, 2000m and 2500 m. The 'mortar shell' also had a bad effect on the pilots; they wouldn't close in any more nut remained at a distance at which it was impossible to engage in combat. That's why, having introduced that 'mortar shell' in the autumn of 1943, they started to remove the thing again at the beginning of 1944, and rightly so, as I had to admit afterwards, although I was all for it in the beginning.

After that lack of success a strongly worded order was received from the Reichsmarshall in which he again reminded fighter pilots of their duty to protect the Fatherland, to get to close grips with and shoot down the enemy, and ordered that the attack be delivered from behind and that fire must not be opened until the range had closed to 400 m. If one can get to within that distance, there's a lot of point in what he said, but we have already seen that the probability of attaining that range was extremely small. That was because it's also harder to shoot down an aircraft from the front. Naturally, the inexperienced crews had little success when they started attacking from the front and only after half a dozen operations did they find out how it should be done and really record

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some successes. For these reasons, there were the strictest orders that the attack must come from the rear and anyone who didn't comply was court-martialed. Result: our fighter forces which was already sickening under a shortage of experienced pilots, obstinately pressed home its attacks from the rear and were dreadful to see; they approached from the rear, flying in closest formation, and doing a slightly greater speed than the enemy and 50, 60, 70% or even greater percentage of them were shot down.

To the existing dilemma there was added, at the end of 1943 or beginning of 1944, the Allied fighter escort, the American long distance fighter, the Thunderbolt and then the Mustang. The first time the Thunderbolts escorted them as far as the Rhine everyone was horrified and utterly confounded - what-ever next? Then they got auxiliary tanks and flew as far as Hanover. The troops reported this but they were laughed at and were told they were seeing things; "It's impossible for a fighter to fly that far," said our GOC fighters and said the Reichsmarshall - nobody dared tell the Fuhrer that it was possible for enemy fighters to fly so far into Reich territory. The GOC fighter himself took off with his inspector in order to have a look and see how his fighters pressed home their attack. He was fortunate enough to meet four Mustangs and the Mustangs took him in charge and chased him all the way to Berlin, so then he knew how far the things could fly and believed it; but despite that no one dared report the air situation to the Fuhrer. Orders to our fighter pilots remained the same, to avoid air battles with enemy fighters and go solely for the bombers. I should like to add here that by the beginning of 1944 no one was attacking from the rear anymore, despite the 'Reichsmarshall's' orders and despite the fact that this order is still in force today; it was just impossible. I have several times requested, even in writing, that that order be rescinded, but it was in vain. That order which I mentioned earlier, to attack only the four engine bombers, is, of course, understandable insofar as it was only the bombers which were a nuisance to us, because it was they that dropped the bombs. The order was, however, psychologically wrong. When talking with one of the Reichsmarshall's staff officers in January or February of 1944, I said: "It's absolutely essential that one day in one of those penetrations we attack only the fighters, to take them down a peg, make them lose their feeling of superiority and make

them suffer losses for a change." This desire on the part of the men, which wasn't only my own wish, was passed on; it went up to the 'Division' the 'Korps' and to the GOC fighters; it was turned down with the remarks: "We must shoot down the bombers, those are the ones we don't like, the ones which are dangerous to us." What was the result of that? The flight of an American fighter over Germany was the safest flying in existence. Not a soul attacked them. The pilot had no need to look around to see whether there was anything coming up from behind which would try to shoot him down. It never happened, he merely had to look ahead - "what is down there ahead of me that I can shoot down without endangering myself?" There again we felt the effect of this factor. To start with, the Americans were rather apprehensive and attacked very unwillingly. But once they noticed that nothing happened to them they grew increasingly cockier and more daredevilish. Then they had successes and got a taste of how wonderful it is to be able to shoot down an aircraft; until finally it got to the stage when our fighter formations were no longer able to reach their bomber formations because they were shot down first by the fighters, which always had the advantage of coming from a higher altitude. The moral effect of that on us was that all our pilots whether rightly or wrongly, I'll leave open, felt inferior to those enemy aircraft, and the collapse of our fighters' moral dates from then. The inferior aircraft at those heights was the FW-190 which, although it had shown excellent performances at low level, was inferior to the enemy aircraft at altitudes of 8000 m. Equal to the Mustang and superior to the Thunderbolt was our '109'. In addition to all that, on account of the losses suffered in those air battles, the ground control made the greatest effort to direct their own fighter formations so as to avoid the enemy fighters and bring them on to a bomber formation which had no fighter escort or only a small one. As a result, this feeling of inferiority increased still more, and you ran into fighters again anyway, for it's impossible to get such a clear air picture as to be able to say: "There are fighters there, there are no fighters there." In the end they were all over the place. This difficult situation for us was complicated still further in the spring of 1944 by the attacks of the enemy air force on our fighter industry, Augsburg, and the large aircraft factory at Wiener-Neustadt which produced 600 fighters a month was destroyed. Also destroyed were the engine factories at Cassel, the aircraft factories at Posnan, at Sorau in Silesia, everywhere and it

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was really remarkable with what spirit and energy the industry and our workers succeeded in the shortest possible time - at Augsburg for example, from that completely ruined and oft-bombed factory they reached not only the equal production figure but an even higher one within fourteen days; they hadn't a rook over their heads, either. You met with the same picture practically everywhere. Despite that however, we were faced with the necessity of splitting up and dispersing the whole aircraft industry. Small workshops were set up in villages, engines were mounted there; one workshop produced the rudder, the second produced the elevator, the third the fuselage end, etc., etc., and in the fifth or sixth the whole thing was assembled. It was a Sisyphen task, which had now become necessary. When the enemy air forces realized that they couldn't completely destroy the aircraft industry, they switched over to smashing our fuel industry. We have learned in the meantime, with what success.

We flyers had one ray of hope in that situation and that was the new jet fighter, the ME-262. The ME-262, armed with four cannon 108, caliber 3 cm, is the first combustion turbine aircraft to be used operationally. First an explanation of the superficial details; a low-decker with extremely thin wing profile, with a wonderful aerodynamic rounded shape and a so-called tricycle undercarriage. The two wheels, just like in ordinary aircraft, fold inwards, but the nose is drawn backwards into the fuselage. Now, as far as I'm able, just a short description of the combustion turbine. The principle is as follows: air is sucked in in front through the revolution of the turbine, which is first started up with a small two-stroke (?) engine. This sucked in air then passes into a combustion chamber after it has been compressed before induction by compressors and there it is mixed with a substance similar to diesel oil - it can also be crude oil - and this mixture is then ignited and explodes and it then propels the turbine, which is at the back, and the exhaust comes out the back. With the high RPM - the thing works out as follows: air is sucked in in front, the aircraft literally sucks its way forward. In other words a suction and pressure effect with the pressure effect considerably greater than the suction effect, of course. The normal cruising speed of this type of aircraft is over 800 KPH. When one thinks that the highest speed of the most modern fighters is 600 KPH one can realize how superior this aircraft is, as regards speed to all other aircraft so far used

operationally. The disadvantage of this aircraft firstly, it is difficult to move on the ground and for this reason has to be towed by tractors or MC tractors or similar things which are capable of pulling the aircraft. It weighs about six tons. For just taxiing once around the airfield one uses about half the amount of petrol which in flight is sufficient for one and half to two hours of flying time, according to the height. The aircraft is simply wonderful from the point of view of flying. Of course with that speed, the take-off presents difficulties, as does the landing, because it needs a very long run. So we put all our hopes on this type of aircraft and kept hoping that when it went into operation it would finally turn the scales of the air war again. As luck would have it, my 'Gruppe' was chosen to be retrained on to this pattern of aircraft in May 1944. Unfortunately, I was unable to accompany them, because I then had to take over the 'Geschwader'. After the 'Gruppe' had already started retraining and some of the pilots were already accustomed to this pattern of aircraft, and others were still re-training, an order was suddenly received from Supreme Command: "This aircraft will not be employed as a fighter, but as a bomber." So after we were already up to our necks in trouble this type of aircraft began to be tried but as a bomber, as a fast bomber, to be exact. A fierce struggle went on between Air Staff Officers and the Fuhrer. But they stuck to it at the time, that the aircraft was to be tried as a bomber. It was badly suited to that or not suited at all; its maximum load was one 500 kg bomb, and its flying time barely an hour.

Question: What was its consumption of fuel compared to that of an ordinary Messerschmitt?

Answer: Of course, with those turbine aircraft the consumption of fuel is terrific, corresponding with the performance. The aircraft needs about 1800 liters of fuel to be able to fly as much as an ordinary twin engine aircraft; but ... that you can fill it up with anything combustible, diesel oil, crude oil and one can therefore obviate the need for all kinds of fuel, etc. In May last year there was still no acute shortage of petrol, there was still sufficient petrol available. Meanwhile the aircraft was actually employed as a bomber and dropped an odd 500 kg bomb here and there. But as there was also no bombsight for use at this speed, they didn't hit anything and now they have at last reached the point of saying that the aircraft is to be employed solely as a fighter, now

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when it is already too late.

Simultaneously with this experimental employment of the '262' as a fighter, the ME-163, 1 peculiar looking aircraft of which the principle of propulsion is completely different from the ME-262, was sent into operation. The '163' which is armed with three (?) 3 cm cannons, is entirely a rocket aircraft with proper rocket propulsion. It has broken entirely new ground. It retains hardly any similarity to an ordinary aircraft; it no longer has an elevator at all, and that accounts for its peculiar shape. The elevator is incorporated in the aileron which can be set to alter the direction of flight according to the height. This aircraft may possibly play a tremendous part in the future as a so-called specific target fighter or flying flak. The speed of this type of aircraft amounts to about 1200 KPH in horizontal flight, and it can climb to 8000 m within three minutes. I have seen a film of a '163' taking off and I thought at first it was a trick film; as a matter of fact I saw the film in Berlin. For taking off, this aircraft has two wheels, a small undercarriage on which the aircraft rests; there is a skid on which it slides when it lands again. When the rocket fuse is actuated, a huge cloud of smoke comes out behind with a deadening noise, and with terrific acceleration the aircraft shoots forward, leaves the ground after a short run, jettisons the wheels undercarriage and then climbs at an almost vertical angle of about 80° until the fighting altitude of 8000 or 9000 m, whichever is necessary, is reached - then it changes over to horizontal flight and tries to get into a favorable position for attacking the enemy aircraft. The pilot has seven minutes in which he can, so to speak, keep the throttle open, and if after several minutes he has still failed to attain a favorable position for attack, then the propellant will have been used up, there is no longer any propulsion and all there is left for him to do is to come down to earth again like a glider. Several have been shot down in these circumstances and if they weren't shot down at once, because of their excellent maneuverability, then they were shot up on the ground as soon as they had landed.

The success of this aircraft which has been employed in the Leipzig area since August last year, has remained negligible; the losses were terrific. It also frequently happens that these things explode or catch fire and in that case even an asbestos suit, etc., which

the pilot had to wear was no protection. They were only employed as day fighters. A further development permitting a longer flying period would give us the means of waiting on the ground for the enemy, spotting him, then taking off and shooting it down within sight of the object to be protected. The aircraft cannot be maneuvered at all when it is being propelled, but once the maximum speed has slackened, it is extremely maneuverable, that's to say it is more maneuverable in ordinary gliding flight than any fighter because it is very light and its construction is extremely suited to flying tight curves.

It was then recognized in all these developments that our greatest weakness is the small number of aircraft we can send into operation. A so-called 'Fighter programme' was accordingly set in motion, which, by the stopping of production of all other aircraft, whether bombers, reconnaissance aircraft, or anything, achieved in November 1944 the production of 4000 fighters a month. A terrific number which is larger than the total production of fighters in England and America, then came the dark side of this mass-production, and above all this production in primitive work shops under unimaginably unfavorable conditions. In September I started to reequip the first 'Gruppen' of my 'Geschwader' and to bring up yo strength and to equip the second 'Gruppe' which was already in operation against the invasion. The 'Gruppe' were brought up to a strength of about 60 to 70 aircraft and a corresponding number of pilots, and then the re-training started.

Question: To what kind of aircraft?

Answer: FW-190 and ME-109. The third 'Gruppe' flew the '190'. During the retraining I lost the following: six excellent pilots killed, a large number seriously wounded, and between 40 and 50 aircraft, I can no longer remember the number exactly. Only because of technical defects! Each time a 'Gruppe' went on a so-called 'Gruppe' training flight, I had to count on probably one killed and two, three, four or five emergency landings of which a certain number of aircraft had to be written off because they were damaged. I should like to describe one sortie on which I flew in the Aix La Chapelle district with the second 'Gruppe' after Christmas. I took off in bad weather - we had about a 100 m (?) visibility - that's to say you could just see the limits of the airfield.

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Those were weather conditions in which we would never have flown in the old days. I took off with rather more than 40 aircraft, and then set off in the direction of the Ruhr district. Over the Ruhr district, and not more than 500 m visibility, and an emergency landing was consequently impossible, and was also inadvisable after the losses we had already sustained which could have been avoided if the pilots concerned had bailed out in time I have him the order clearly and concisely: "Bail Out!" Then, of course, everyone looked to see whether he would get out. He landed all right, the aircraft was done for. These were conditions which of course do not contribute towards raising pilot self-confidence or strengthening their confidence in their aircraft.

I have already described the effect of the enemy air raids on the aircraft industry, and also the effect on the fuel industry which then led in the summer and autumn of last year to an acute petrol shortage. I will touch briefly on the effect on communications centers.

The bottle-neck industries which were attacked by the enemy, such as the ball bearing industry for example, resulted for instance in the latest engine produced by Daimler Benz, the 'DB 603', having sleeve bearings for its crankshaft instead of ball bearings which were no longer attainable; these sleeve bearings are a type of bearing which is quite useful for reasonable peacetime use by suitably trained personnel, but is, however, not as reliable as a ball bearing, and it has recently led to an extraordinary amount of engine trouble.

In view of the whole situation, it was fairly clear to us airmen what course the invasion would take. The whole available fighter force would be thrown into action - we had been told that beforehand - and it was quite obvious to us personally that the whole fighter force would be destroyed after two, or at the most three days. That's what happened, too, and that's why the invasion was a success which we saw it to be. With the approach of the front to the borders of the Reich, came the fighter bomber post in action to all the other enemy air attacks. Fighter bombers spent hours darting about the territory near the western frontier of the Reich, and attacked trains and engines driving along, and fired into petrol dumps and houses, and it was these attacks which caused the complete collapse of all means of transport. It was,

for instance, no longer possible for us to move the petrol tanker by day. Petrol supplies could only be brought up at night - the passenger trains were normally from 15 to 20 hours late, they had to stop umpteenth times on the way, and all the passengers had to tumble out of the carriages and lie in the ditch or take cover somewhere. I heard from a railway man that at the end of last November there were about 60 smashed locomotives at Zwolle in Holland which has been smashed up in these attacks. That was only one station. It was no longer possible to transport from the Ruhr district the available coal which was being requested and which in November amounted to about 30,000 trucks of coal. It was equally impossible to take ore and rare materials to the Ruhr district to be worked up there. Along with the transport system generally, the post, which had previously carried on fairly well, naturally also suffered delays. I have received ordinary letters which have taken three to four weeks from Austria to central Germany. I am also convinced that 90% of the letters we write from here don't arrive at their destination.

Now I should like to touch quite briefly on how this utter failure of the GAF came about. If our leaders had realized at the end of 1942 that we hadn't finished with Russia, we had to reckon with the American Air Force, and that we must, therefore, change over to the defensive not only on the ground, but also in the air, then it would easily have been possible to quadruple the fighter arm in one year. By the middle of last year we could easily have had a force, not of 1000 or 1200 fighters as we did have, but of 4000. It would have been possible to inflict right at the coast such heavy losses on all enemy air forces that they would never have penetrated into the Reich territory. It would have been impossible for the enemy to start the invasion. Our Fatherland would have been spared this fearful devastation which is its lot, not only by night but now also by day. The fighter programme which I have mentioned did not get under way until towards the end of last year. It was started in the middle of the year, and was halfway completed by the end of the year. Not until towards the end of last year did we take steps to retrain the bomber pilots we had into fighter pilots, as far as they were suited to it, because we could no longer manage the training. It was not until last year in November that an attack by about 2000 to 2500 fighters was to be mounted against a penetration into the Reich territory. The planning was wonderful. The

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The 2021 Bomb Groups Reunion

461st Bombardment Group (H)



...a note from the reunion committee chair.

Dear 461st Veterans, family and friends,

I don't have to tell you how crazy life has been for the last 15 months or so.

Of course the question is, is it safe to hold our beloved reunion or not?

As of this writing in mid May, there is every reason to believe that we'll be just fine holding our reunion. I for one felt really let down and depressed that we could not safely meet last year. I for one don't intend to go for two years without a reunion. Vaccines are readily available for anyone who wants one, the number of new cases of the virus are steadily plummeting all over the country, likewise with hospitalizations and recovery rates are over 99%. Plus the host hotel and transportation services have enhanced cleaning protocols in place for all places and in particular high traffic areas.

I believe in my heart that we will be just fine and we will indeed hold the combined reunion as we have in the past.

I will without a doubt be in Albuquerque this September 9-12 and hope you will be too.

On your website, www.461st.org on the Reunion page, underneath the hotel information portion, there is a big, blue button you can click titled Sheraton Hotel Reservation. If you click on that button, you will be transferred to a page specifically created for our group where hotel reservations may be made online. Unless you have special requests, please use this link instead of calling the hotel. If you DO have special requests of any kind, by all means call the hotel at the phone number listed on page 19. The hotel management is busy trying to get the sales office and administrative staff back to work as business slowly, steadily picks up coming out of the Covid pandemic but is not fully staffed at this moment and are very busy keeping up with all of the requests.

Dave Blake



2021 REUNION TOURS

Friday, September 10, 2021—The New Mexico Veterans Memorial. The bus will drop you off just outside of the Visitor's Center, right next to the World War II section of the grounds. The total memorial grounds are ex-

pansive so you can explore and visit as few or as many of the sections as you choose. Seating throughout the park to stop for a break is plentiful. We will also have many wheelchairs on hand for our veterans.



The visitor's center is like a small museum in itself so be sure to allow time to explore inside!

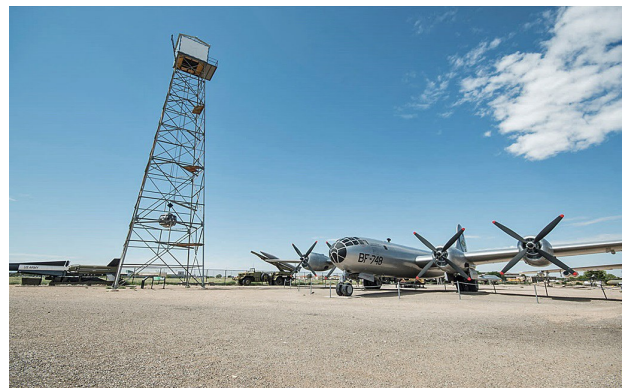
While at the Visitor's Center we will gather in the meeting room for a box lunch without the box! From there we will move to the courtyard that is just outside "in back" of the meeting room for



our Military Memorial Ceremony conducted by our Reunion Chaplain, Captain Chris Cairns, who is an active duty Army Chaplain whose Grandfather, Col. Douglas Cairns was the final commanding officer of the 485th BG.

Following the tour and Memorial Ceremony we will be treated to an open house on Kirtland Air Force base hosted by active duty members of the 512th Squadron whose lineage takes them back to the 376th BG

Sunday, September 12, 2021—After a stop at Furrs Fresh Buffet for a delicious lunch we will visit the National Nuclear & Science Museum. There we will learn more about the origins of nuclear energy, how "the bomb" was made and delivered. Outside on display are aircraft to deliver nuclear weapons and a tower like the testing was originally done with. This is a fascinating museum that you won't want to miss.



2021 FIFTEENTH AIR FORCE BOMB GROUPS REUNION AGENDA

Thursday, 9/9 Arrival and Check In Day

Registration desk and hospitality room is open from mid-morning - ?? There will be deli sandwiches, various snacks and drinks throughout the day.

6:15PM – An optional informal welcome dinner (most likely an Italian buffet with extra help to carry plates for our folks) followed by a short welcome and information meeting.

7:15PM – A greeting time and informal informational meeting.

The hospitality room will reopen after the dinner meeting until ??

Friday, 9/10

9:00 AM – Depart the hotel to tour New Mexico Veterans Memorial with lunch and Military Memorial Ceremony at the Veterans Memorial.

12:30 PM – Depart for an afternoon visit to the 512th Squadron at Kirtland Air Force base for an open house and aircraft and equipment displays.

2:30 PM – Depart Kirtland Air Force base for the return trip to the hotel.

5:00 PM – Social hour for Individual Group Dinners beginning with a cash bar at about 5:00 PM.

6:00 PM. Dinner is served. *Hospitality room is CLOSED between 5:00PM – 7:30PM*

Hospitality room will reopen after the Individual Group Dinners and remain open until ??

Saturday, 9/11

8:30 – 9:45 AM – Ladies Crafts Demo

10:00 AM – 4:00PM - Veterans Presentations today. Individual speaker times TBD but will have about a 15 minute bathroom break in between each session,

12:00 PM–2:00 PM – Lunch on your own.

5:00 PM – Veterans group picture taking. Location TBD.

5:15 PM – All Groups Banquet Social Hour; Cash bar opens.

6:00 PM. Dinner is served. *Hospitality room is CLOSED between 5:15PM – 8:30PM*

7:00 PM – Entertainment provided by Bob Hope, aka Bill Johnson.

8:30 PM – Program ends, hospitality room reopens until ??

Sunday, 9/12

9:00 AM – Optional Church Service led by Chaplain/Captain Chris Cairns

10:30 AM – 483rd BGA Private Military Memorial Ceremony

Noon, 12:10 & 12:20 - Stagger departure from hotel for lunch at Furrs Fresh Buffet and tour of National Nuclear & Science Museum

4:00 PM – Depart the museum for return to the hotel.

6:00 PM – Informal Farewell dinner. Hospitality room reopens after dinner until ??



HOTEL INFORMATION
The Sheraton Uptown Hotel
2600 Louisiana Blvd NE, Albuquerque, NM 87110

Room rates are \$118 per night plus tax. Room includes a full, hot breakfast buffet for 2 per room; due to current government restrictions, if a buffet is not allowed, plated breakfasts will be substituted. Eleven ADA accessible rooms are available. If you have any special requests or needs, please make your reservation by phone calling the sales office at (505) 830-5781 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM (MST) Monday-Friday. Please mention Bomb Group Reunion to receive the group rate. Otherwise if you have no special requests or needs, please reserve your room online by clicking the blue button below titled Sheraton Hotel Reservation. Room rates are good from September 7 - September 15, 2021.

There is much to see and do in Albuquerque. You might want to consider extending your stay to explore.

*To reserve a room ONLINE, visit www.461st.org and click on the Reunion page.
Click on a button titled **Sheraton Hotel Reservation** down the page a bit.*

- Free parking
- Rooms are large at 400 SF. Many updates have been recently completed.
- Each room has a mini refrigerator.
- This hotel is ranked #8 of ALL Sheratons nationwide for customer service.

Airport to hotel shuttle is available by contacting Tour New Mexico by E-Mail, TNM@TourNewMexico.com, or call Tam Chavez at (505) 321-4864.

BOMB GROUPS REUNION

September 9—12, 2021 Albuquerque, NM



Veteran/Fallen Hero _____ Group **461st** Sqdn _____ Highest Rank _____

Registrant Name: _____ (One Form per Registration Packet)

Address _____ City _____

State _____ Zip _____ Phone _____ Email _____

Name Tag Names (Include Veteran Relationship): _____

Registration fee # people _____ @ \$15.00 each Sub Total \$ _____

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 9TH—Welcome dinner, Christmas Enchiladas. Beef & Chicken enchiladas covered with red and green chili. # people _____ @ \$38.00 Sub Total \$ _____

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 10TH— NM Veterans Memorial Tour, lunch and Memorial Ceremony and visit to Kirtland AFB # people _____ @ \$65.00 each Sub Total \$ _____

Individual Group Dinners

Roast Beef # people _____ @ \$40.00 each Sub Total \$ _____

Chicken Corona # people _____ @ \$40.00 each Sub Total \$ _____

Vegetarian Lasagna # people _____ @ \$40.00 each Sub Total \$ _____

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 11TH

DO NOT include 461st veteran in meal sub totals

All Groups Banquet

Carved Prime Rib # people _____ @ \$50.00 each Sub Total \$ _____

Seared Salmon Filet # people _____ @ \$50.00 each Sub Total \$ _____

Basil Olive Risotto & Grilled Vegetables # people _____ @ \$50.00 each Sub Total \$ _____

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 12TH

Lunch and tour of the National Museum of Nuclear Science & History

people _____ @ \$65.00 each Sub Total \$ _____

Farewell Dinner — BBQ Brisket & Chicken, Beans & Potatoes

people _____ @ \$31.00 each Sub Total \$ _____

Do you need a wheelchair? Yes _____ No _____ GRAND TOTAL \$ _____

Emergency Contact _____ Phone # _____

Please send this form along with your check payable to Bomb Groups Reunion to:
Bomb Groups Reunion Attn: Dave Blake | 648 Lakewood Rd. | Bonner Springs, KS. 66012-1804
Registrations must be received by September 1, 2021. No changes may be made after that date.

461st Bombardment Group (H) Association Membership

For membership in the 461st Bombardment Group (H) Association, please print this form, fill it out and mail it along with your check for the appropriate amount to:

Dave St. Yves
5 Hutt Forest Lane
East Taunton, MA 02718

If you have any questions, you can E-Mail Dave at dstyves@pmn.com.

The 461st Bombardment Group (H) Association offers three types of membership:

- **Life Membership** – Men who served in the 461st during World War II and their spouses are eligible to join the Association for a one-time fee of \$25.00. This entitles the member to attend the annual reunions held in the fall each year, receive the newsletter for the Association, The 461st Liberaider, and attend and vote at the business meetings usually held at the reunion.
- **Associate Membership** – Anyone wishing to be involved in the 461st Bombardment Group (H) Association may join as an Associate member. The cost is \$10.00 per year. No renewal notices are sent so it is your responsibility to submit this form every year along with your payment. Associate membership entitles you to attend the reunions held in the fall each year and receive the newsletter for the Association, The 461st Liberaider. You are not a voting member of the Association.
- **Child Membership** – Children of men who served in the 461st during World War II are eligible to join the Association as a Child Member. The cost is \$10.00 per year. No renewal notices are sent out so it is your responsibility to submit this form every year along with your payment. Child membership entitles you to attend the reunions held in the fall each year, receive the newsletter for the Association, The 461st Liberaider, and attend and vote at the business meetings usually held at the reunion.

Type of membership desired:		Life: <input type="checkbox"/>	Associate: <input type="checkbox"/>	Child: <input type="checkbox"/> Father's Name:	
First Name:			Last Name:		
Street Address:					
City:		State:		ZIP:	
Phone Number:				E-Mail Address:	
Squadron:		Crew #:		MOS:	
ASN:					
Check No.			Amount:		

(Continued from page 15)

proportions were magnificent but it was never carried out, because the air leaders had lost their nerve and had already withdrawn three Geschwader from the west before then. They were wiped out, decimated, in no time. Then the remaining 'Geschwader' were also withdrawn and the great blow which it was supposed to be, the timing point in aerial warfare, again failed to materialize. I am convinced if this operation had been flown, in which for once we should have appeared in numbers equal to the enemy's - about 1000 fighters act as escort to round about 1000 to 12000 American bombers, so there would have been one of our fighters to each enemy aircraft. I have guaranteed that we would have shot down at least 300 to 400 bombers, and that would have been the shock the enemy need to make them cease their penetration, at least into the heart of Germany. Our command lacked the adaptability which I have described in the case of England in 1940. Above all, we failed in sending the formations into this new type of battle inside the Reich without giving them any sort of tactical training beforehand. The experience the fighter pilots gained in the west - attacks from the front, etc., - was simply ignored, and I have already described the result of this adherence to old customs. The complete collapse of the defense of the Reich came about during Rundstadt's offensive when, in consequence of the enormous losses we sustained for little gain, we simply gave up the fight against the four engine aircraft. They were allowed to fly wherever they pleased and nobody did anything about it. It's shattering that things had to reach that pitch. The change of tactics which also took place only last November - namely that everything that came along was to be attacked, regardless of whether it was an enemy fighter or bomber - also failed to make its effect felt, due to the occurrences I have previously mentioned. The order was duly issued but it no longer achieved its effect. It's a tragic fatality in German history; whatever we did was too soon or too late. One felt almost ashamed to go out in GAF uniform at home. The civilian population with their confidence and trust - the new GAF is coming - with their questions: "Well, when are the new aircraft, the fast ones about which we were told so long ago, coming out, and the good ones which are better than any others and which will shoot down masses; when are they really coming out? It must be soon. It's high time. If things go on like this we shall cease to believe that the outcome can be good." These questions were difficult to answer, especially

for us airmen who had been through the whole thing - what could we tell the people? - that in the end we hardly even left our own airfield. If I say, for instance, that I took off with seventeen aircraft - that was in the spring of last year - and of those two had to turn back on account of engine and undercarriage trouble - one of them could not retract its undercarriage and the engine of the other one was not in order. As leader of a battle formation with these fifteen aircraft I tackled an enemy division with some sixty aircraft and then when I say that of these fifteen aircraft now a single one returned, but all were shot up - half of them killed or severely wounded, and the other half had made crash landings and were wounded - then you can form a fairly accurate picture of the severity of these battles. Then when the following day I took off again with the remaining eight aircraft which we had raked together, and was then the only one to return home because I was the oldest and most experienced pilot, that only makes it clearer still.

At a conference at 'Korps' at which this attack on 1 January was briefly announced, General Pelz and General Schmidt said: "If we don't at least succeed in driving the fighter bombers from our Reich territory, then after three weeks our remaining industries will have no coal left, and in about as many weeks the industries of the Ruhr district will have no ore." These three weeks have now passed, and I have been told by a 'Hauptmann', who was only recently taken prisoner, that there are a great many factories in which the works no longer have anything to work on because there is no coal and no raw material there. Particularly the GAF, which is such a highly developed technical arm, has special need of far-sighted planning. Measures which are adopted only take effect in the available aircraft about four to six months later. You have to arrange for the necessary training and provide the necessary material. Unfortunately, we lacked this far-sighted planning, so that, as a member of the GAF, I have to admit that the war which we are now waging has been lost by the GAF.

President's Corner

The reunion is back on. We had to postpone our reunion last year because of COVID, but things are slowly getting back to normal. As a result of the great work by Dave Blake and his contacts in Albuquerque, the reunion we had scheduled for last September is going to happen this September with only a few minor changes. If you had been looking forward to that reunion as much as I had, you can now look forward to gathering in Albuquerque this September for pretty much the same venue. Check out the pages earlier in this issue or go to the website for details. I look forward to seeing everyone at the Sheraton Uptown Hotel come September.

Finances

No one ever likes to talk about money. Unfortunately it's a topic I must touch on. The 461st has had a nice bank account for a number of years. As a result, we have been covering our expenses without a problem in spite of the lack of income. The Liberaider you are reading right now is perhaps our largest expense costing several hundred dollars per issue. We have also been covering the cost of our veterans to attend the reunions. With only a few veterans still attending the reunions, this isn't a major expense, but it does cut into our bank balance. We also have some expenses in connection to our website.

The result of these expenses has reduced the bank account to the point where we need to take some action before the well runs dry.

Our veterans are paid up on their dues for life. That's one thing that we took care of a long time ago. We also have children and other interested parties that want to be a part of our family. We have charged just \$10.00

per year for Child and Associate Members. This isn't very much money, but it does help to cover some of our expenses. Unfortunately most of our Child and Associate Members have not been paying their fair share. This hurt us in the pocket book. I'd like to encourage all Child and Associate members to take a few minutes and fill out the Membership application on page 20 and mail it in to Dave St. Yves. If you know you haven't done this for a few years, add some extra.

One of the reasons we have been in such good shape over the last couple of decades is because of some bequeaths we received from veterans wanting to make sure we continue to share the history of the 461st. We haven't received anything like this for a number of years. It would be nice to receive some donations. A donation to the 461st is tax-deductible so it helps us and it helps you come tax time.

Remember, this is your Association and we can use your support.

A pickpocket was in court for petty theft. The judge declared, "Sir, you are hereby fined \$100." The lawyer stood up and said, "Your honor, my client has only \$75 on him at this time. If you'd allow him a few minutes in the crowd...."

* * * * *

I thought my neighbors were nice, generous people. Then they put a password on their Wi-Fi.

* * * * *

A woman caught her husband on the weight scale, sucking in his stomach. "That won't help," she commented. "Oh, it helps a lot," he replied. "It's the only way I can see the numbers."

* * * * *

A taxpayer received a strongly worded "second notice" that his taxes were overdue. Rushing to the collector's office, he paid his bill and apologized that he had overlooked the first notice. "Oh," confided the collector with a smile. "we don't send out first notices. We have found that the second notices are more effective."

461ST BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H)

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Gunnison, CO 81230

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Email: editor@461st.org



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

