

The 461st



Liberaider



VOL. 12, NO. 2

DECEMBER 1995

SOMEWHERE IN THE U.S.A.

“THE BOMB YOU HEAR WHISTLING DOES NOT HIT YOU”

Part 2 (See Page 3)



Bad Vöslau, Austria—April 23, 1944

The 461 st Liberaider
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- PETE'S NEW P.O.BOX IS 461.PLEASE SEND DUES,ETC.TO THE NEW BOX NUMBER.

NOTICE **Change of Command**

As of 1 January 1996 I am stepping down as Editor of the "Liberaider". After eight years and 16 issues of your newsletter I feel it's time for a change. It's time for the harness to rub in a different place. It has been a rewarding experience working with the other Officers of the Association and corresponding with you members who provide the material which is the backbone of the "Liberaider". I have enjoyed creating this publication and take pride in the way it has grown over the years. However, an opportunity arose for me to hand over the reins to an eminently qualified member of the Association, so I took advantage of it. With the blessings of our President, Dave Nelson, Radio Operator with the 765th Bomb Squadron, will take on the job of Editor beginning with the June 1996 Issue of the "Liberaider". I'm sure that you will support him in the same manner that you have me. He will need your articles and personal stories to make the "Liberaider" a vibrant and meaningful publication of the 461st Bomb Group. Thanks for supporting me during my tour of duty.



David Nelson - Your New Editor

I came into the 765th Bomb Squadron 1 August 1944, three days after turning 20. I was the Radio Operator on John Moore's crew. I finished my missions in five months. By then I was thirty something.

The G.I. Bill provided me a combined College Degree in Engineering and Economics. When I learned I was somewhat creative, I pursued the goal of furniture designer after completing other courses in cabinetmaking, finishing, art and design.

So, I spent a lifetime designing stuff. Product design was my big thing. Results were mixed; won some, lost some. But it put food on the table for a wife and three kids.

With what free time I had, I dabbled in writing, wishing I had more time for it. That time arrived with Social Security. I just completed my fifth book.

Recently, I sent a letter to Frank O'Bannon complimenting him and his staff on the super job they are doing with the 461st Bomb Group Association. This resulted in a letter from George Dickie asking if I would like a "cushy" job, like Editor of the "Liberaider". As for writing, my mind is about dry right now, so George's offer comes at a good time for me. I accepted, but I'll need your grist for this new miller's grinder. Be seeing you in the papers next June.

Editor's Note: Part 1 of Felix's story covered the period up to the beginning of 1944. The 461st Bomb Group was just finishing their training at Hammer Field and were preparing for their departure to the air war in Europe. The 461st flew their first combat mission on April 2, 1944 and their first mission (# 13) to the Vienna area on April 23, 1944. The target was the airdrome at Bad Vöslau, Austria. The picture on Page I is one of the bomb strike photos taken during that mission. The history of the 461st Bomb Group has this to say about the mission.

Mission No. 13. 23 April 1944 - Bad Vöslau A/D. Austria

When the crew members learned at briefing that they were to attack their first target in the Vienna area, they fully realized that they were now in the big time.. Before our group hit its target the 304th Wing had performed an outstanding job in practically demolishing the buildings at the airdrome. Uncovering the three flights of each section in approaching the target, the Group, led for the first time by Captain Dooley (766th BS), completely sprayed the landing field with fragmentation bombs. The bombing pattern was one of perfection. The returning crews doubted if it would ever be necessary to return again to that target. Several encounters were had with twenty-three enemy fighters, two of which were claimed as probably destroyed. Fourteen planes over the target were hard hit by flak. One aircraft was lost. The mission was scored as superior.

There were two casualties as a result of this mission: Bombardier F/O R.B. Stewart and Ball Turret Gunner Sgt. P.N. Godino, both on 2nd Lt. G. Fulks' crew. Each was hit in the foot by flak.

COMMENDATION

From: Operations Office 49th Bomb Wing

To: Commanding Officers, 451st, 461st and 484th Bomb Groups

"The bombing of Bad Vöslau, 23 April, by the 49th Wing was excellent.

Please pass to all participating my commendation for a job well done.

Col. Lee desires to express appreciation for a job well done."

"Lee"

Although Felix does not comment expressly about this mission, he does recognize it near the end of his narration for April 23, 1944 on Page 8.

Part 2

The Bomb You Hear Whistling Does Not Hit You

By Felix Raineder, Ebergassing, Austria

Information for The Civilian Population

high in the winter sky.

After the air attack on November 2, 1943 you could often hear the radio announcement: "Heavy bomber formations approaching to Carinthia and Styria" but no raids were flown to the Vienna area. The radio announcement "Single enemy aircraft over the Vienna area and Wiener Neustadt" really scared the people. They would look at the sky fearfully to watch the glittering dots with vapor trails moving

Regarding the -air raids, only a little information was given to the civilians by the German broadcasts. Listening to foreign radio stations was punished severely. Let me give you some examples of the news in radio and newspapers.

On the 13th of August 1943 it would sound like this:

Official information for the population: enemy aircraft attacked the southeastern territory of Germany. Several buildings have been destroyed and people were killed by highly explosive and incendiary bombs.

Wiener Neustadt would not be mentioned.

Or on November 2, 1943 when the 15th AAF flew their first raid to Wiener Neustadt:

An air attack of enemy air forces to the southeastern territory of Germany caused damages on buildings and the death of several people. Seven planes were shot down.

Again Wiener Neustadt was not mentioned. Also, the 2 raids to Klagenfurt on November 24th and 30th were not reported.

Only in December 1943 when Innsbruck was bombed twice was the name of the city broadcast. Still, only damages on residential buildings were reported. Also, the civilians were not told where the approaching bombers came from. The only information they got was, that the bombers flew to Southern Germany.

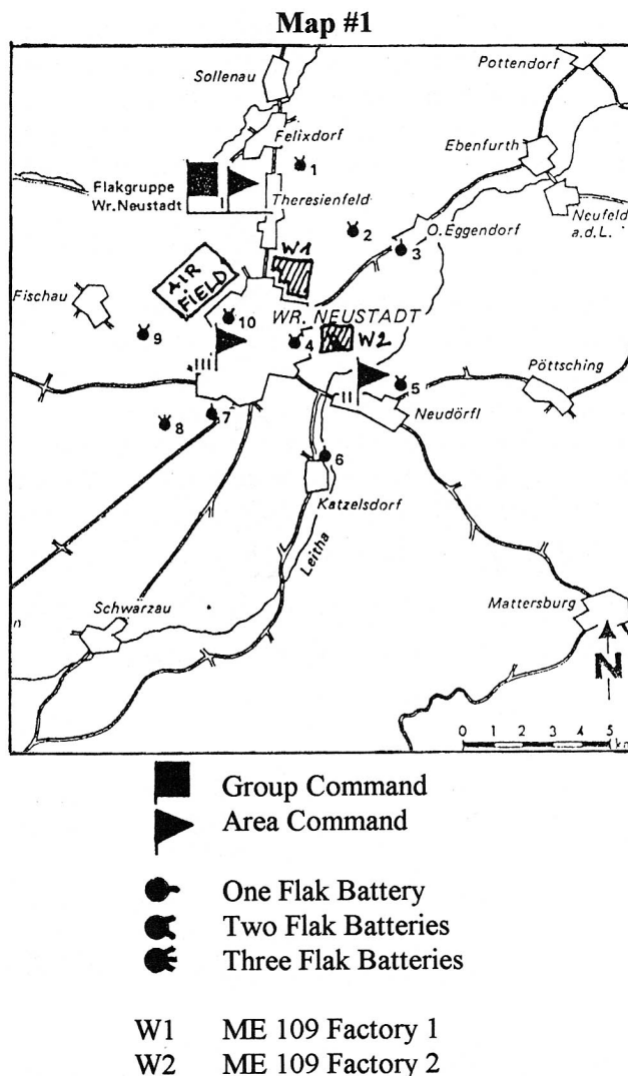
Defense After Fall 1943

When there was a winter break for the Vienna area after the raids in the fall of 1943, the Wiener Neustadt defense forces were massively strengthened. This should explain how:

At beginning of May 1944 Wiener Neustadt had 18 flak batteries with 94 guns: 64 guns 8.8 cm, 22 guns with 10.5 cm and 8 guns with 12.8 cm - railroad flak. See flak map #1 at the top of the next column.

The 3 flak rings around Vienna (Areas I, II and III shown on Map #2) consisted of heavy flak batteries with 324 guns: 20 guns 12.8 cm, 56 guns 10.5 cm and 248 guns 8.8 cm.

16 guns with 12.8 cm were placed on the 2 recently finished flak towers in Vienna. The flak towers would defend the center the center of the city. One a radar tower and the second one - the gun tower - was still in construction.

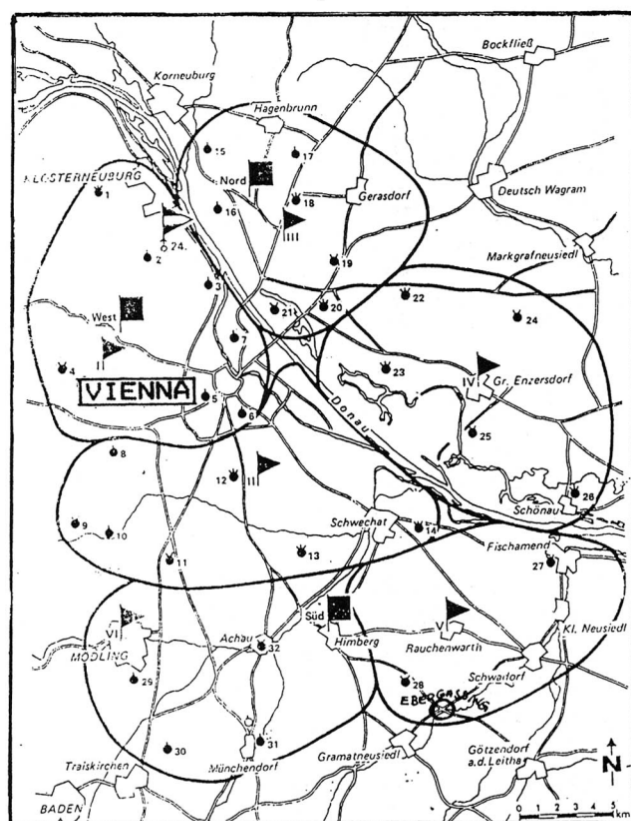


To fulfill the increased need for operational personnel for these flak batteries, at the beginning of 1943 school children of the birth years 1926 and 1927 (sixteen and seventeen year old boys) were trained for this purpose. Whole school classes were assigned to a flak battery and the kids got their education there. The teaching took place in special school barracks. 16 batteries were staffed by only RAD men. (Reicharbeitsdienst). In spring 1944, children born in 1928 were called up. The remaining gaps in personnel were filled in the fall of 1944 by foreign auxiliary personnel, which meant Russian prisoners of war and refugees from the Balkan.

At this time - the fall of 1944 - in and around Vienna there were 61 heavy flak batteries with 432 guns: 28 guns 12.8 cm, 48 guns 10.5 cm and 35.6 guns with 8.8 cm.

Considering that every gun could fire 16 shots per minute, you can imagine the huge fire power.

Map #2



➤ Division Command

■ Group Command

▶ Area Command

● One Flak Battery

⊗ Two Flak Batteries

⊗ Three Flak Batteries

The 8.8 flak could start to fire at target at a distance of 12 kilometers (7.5 miles), the 10.5 cm guns at 15 kilometers (9.3 miles) and the 12.8 cm. guns at a distance of 18 kilometers (11.2 miles). This meant that the 12.8 cm. guns on the flak towers in Vienna could hit the bombers when they were still approaching Ebergassing. These flak and fighter measurements had good results at clear weather such as on June 26 and July 8, 1944 when the planes were clearly visible.

Also, the fighter groups stationed at air fields in the Vienna area were strengthened starting in March 1944:

Fels am Wagram. 1st Squad. JG 27 44 ME-109
7th Squad. ZG 26 10 ME-109
1st Squad. JG 302 39 ME-109
(were moved to Götzensdorf in June 1944)

Götzensdorf 3rd Squad. JG 27 23 ME-109

Seyring 3rd Squad. JG 301 FW-190
1st Squad. JG 27 ME-410
7th Squad. JG 27 ME-410
Com. Squad. JG 27 5 ME-109

At each of the Hungarian airfields (GYOR and VESPREM) there was one squadron of the Hungarian FG-101 equipped with ME-109 G6.

By the beginning of May there were still 187 fighter planes available which were quite successful from May 24 to May 29. By the middle of May 1944 only 106 planes of all these squadrons were still in operation. If necessary they were supported by fighter planes from southern Germany and Silesia. Their number decreased after D-day to 60 to 80 planes and 40 destroyers of the type ME-110 and ME-410. After heavy losses in July and August 1944 only the first squadron of fighter group 302 and the Hungarian fighter group were in operation. All the destroyer groups were reduced drastically so that they could not be put into operation. Planes and pilots had to be reorganized.

In May 1944 the boys of fighter group JG 27/3rd Squadron who were stationed in Götzensdorf would come to Ebergassing to meet the girls there. Once three of those boys were waiting for a girl that lived in our house. I took that chance and asked them why they were not able to shoot the American bombers down. Two of them did not say a word, finally the third answered: "They are too many". Shortly after that the whole group was moved away from Götzensdorf. Today I know that they were moved to France because of the "invasion".

But all of this was in vain. After 5 attacks in April and May the arms production facilities in Wiener Neustadt were destroyed completely. The ME-109 production was moved to several locations and also several flak batteries were shifted from Wiener Neustadt to Moosbierbaum and to the flak ring around Vienna. Two batteries were moved to Brüx, Tchechia and two other batteries went to Linz.

Now let me tell you how I experienced the raids in 1944 and 1945.

This Is How I Experienced The Air Raids:

From January till March 1944 it was still relatively quiet in the Vienna area. We heard several air alarm announcements and cuckoo calls in the radio when Klagenfurt and Steyr were attacked but that was all before March 17, 1944.

March 17, 1944

It was a cloudy and foggy day. At 12:30 in the afternoon air alarm was announced that enemy bombers approaching our area (5 and 6 on map, page 5 of June 1995 Issue) were reported. Shortly after this message you could hear the roaring of aircraft engines over Ebergassing. As no planes could be seen we went down to the basements of our homes for shelter. Suddenly we felt the ground tremble and heard the booms of exploding bombs. We had to live through this two more times. On the next day we heard that the whole area around Schwechat got hit. Ebergassing is only six miles away from Schwechat as you see on Map 2.

April 12, 1944

Then April 12, 1944 came. On this day I saw from very close up the first air attack. The target was FischamendMarket, plant number three of the Wiener Neustadt ME-109 production unit.

These were the announcements given by the Air Raid Alarm Service based on what I have been told by the workers of this plant and on what I have seen myself.

Announcement at 11:00: Enemy planes are approaching from Southeast 40 kilometers east of Karlstadt, Yugoslavia.

At 11:07: Enemy planes are in the Zagreb area.

At 11:10: A new formation of 100 enemy bombers is approaching from South near Banja Luka, Yugoslavia.

Announcement at 11: 13: The first formation is over Kopronitza, Hungary heading northwest.

At 11: 15 highest aerial danger was announced.

A worker of the ME-109 factory in Fischamend told his co-workers about the announcement. Everybody became nervous and scared. Many of the workers had gone through the raids on Wiener Neustadt when the Plants one and two were destroyed. After these raids they had been moved to Fischamend.

At 11:20 the 27 planes, of the first wave headed for Szombathey, Hungary.

At 11:25 Air Attack Alarm was announced. All workers left the production buildings. Many ran to seek shelter in the two bunkers that had been built into a nearby hill. It was said that this bunker was bomb proof But many more workers ran to some woods south of the plant.

At 11:32 the announcement sounded like this:

The first formation has reached the Sopron area. The second formation is in a distance of 15 minutes flight time to Wiener Neustadt. An attack to Wiener Neustadt must be taken into consideration.

At 11:42:

Enemy planes are over Lake Neusiedl. There is air combat with German fighters.

At 11:50 a new formation appears north of Sumek, Hungary. 120 planes are heading to north.

At 12:03 - many formations are approaching Wiener Neustadt. 120 planes are located over Lake Neusiedl heading to north.

At 12:15 - enemy planes over Parndorf.

This formation consists of the planes of the five groups of the 5th Bomb Wing. Their target is Fischamend. Initial Point is Parndorf. Fischamend is only six miles away from Ebergassing.

In the East we can see many tiny black dots in the sky. You can hear a far droning which is constantly growing louder. I looked through my binoculars and saw the typical high rudder assembly of a B-17. I shouted to my friend "They are Fortresses!" These are the first American planes I could see from close up. We knew

that this attack was meant for Fischamend.

At 12:19 the first planes reached Fischamend. The air is full of a roaring that is impossible to describe, the roaring of nearly 500 engines. Now the four flak batteries which are positioned around Fischamend begin to fire. You can see the black blasting dots between the planes of the first formation. Suddenly one plane goes down on fire. I can see seven parachutes. Then the ground starts to tremble. The roaring of the engines is mixed now with the bursting of the bombs. Thick smoke rises from Fischamend only six miles away. The whole scene seems unreal. After the bombs are away when then the first formation turns south to the direction of Ebergassing I also run into the basement and wait until everything is over.

At 1:01 p.m. the attack is over.

In the afternoon I rode my bicycle to Fischamend to see what it looked like. The attack was a success for the bombers. The whole factory was destroyed. Still today you can see the ruins.

But the first formation dropped the bombs too early. Not all of the bombs hit the factory buildings but also the woods half a mile south where many people had tried to find shelter. 150 dead bodies were found. After this attack the production of the Me 109 plant was split up to many other factories. A part of the production came to Ebergassing.

On the same day Wiener Neustadt was bombed by the 47th Bomb Wing and Bad Vöslau by the 34th Bomb Wing.

A lot was changed after this attack, also in Ebergassing. Two kilometers away from Ebergassing a flak position for two batteries was built. Mid of May it was equipped with two 10.5 guns.

In Ebergassing there is a soccer field. On this soccer field a temporary camp - a camp with wooden barracks - for the foreign workers was set up. The foreign workers came from the Netherlands, Belgium and Italy. These people had to work in the former carpet factory in Ebergassing to produce jigs for the Me 109.

After April 12 raid the maxim for an air attack was to try to get out of the village as far as possible. Some men build slit-trenches far away but still in walking or running distance from the village. Many people used the old wine cellars in the villages and out in the fields as shelters, also during the second raid to my area on April 23, 1944 when the target was the Heinkel factory in Schwechat.

April 23, 1944

April 23 was a Sunday. At one o'clock p.m. heavy enemy bomber formations approaching Carinthia and Styria were announced on the radio. At 1:15 the cuckoo call was broadcasted. It was kind of scary. All the people who owned a radio had turned it on. When the cuckoo call was sent the only thing you could hear in our house with 16 apartments was a cuckoo calling.

My mother and I had an air alarm emergency bundle prepared. In this bundle we put all our documents and some valuables. We took that bundle, mounted the bicycles and rode about two kilometers away from Ebergassing to a gravel pit where we had dug our slit-trench. While we were still on our way the sirens hooted air alarm.

Shortly after we arrived at the gravel pit we could see the planes coming in four waves from the east flying over Fischamend to Schwechat. The planes were B-24's. Then the flak batteries around Fischamend began to fire, the blasting clouds hit the last wave of about 30 planes. Suddenly one plane showed a bright flame on the left inner engine. With howling engines the plane fell out of the formation and went down. She began to spin but the pilot pulled her out of the spin and held her in normal position for a short time. Now three crew members jumped out of the plane. But then the plane again got into a spin. At this moment two men jumped out. The plane went down vertically and crashed one mile east of Fischamend. The plane burnt and a large cloud of smoke could be seen. Later the plane exploded probably because of the bombs in the fuselage.

The bomber formation kept on flying and bombed the Heinkel factory and the airfield in Schwechat which is a distance of five miles from Ebergassing.

The flak continued to fire at the bomber formation. After bombing, the formation turned to the south and flew directly over us. Then, the same thing that happened to the bomber crews, happened to us, too. The fragments of the exploded flak shells fell down to the ground buzzing like thousands of bees. We had to hide in the slit-trench to not be hit by one of the fragments. On this day again Wiener Neustadt and Bad Vöslau were bombed.

Now we were in the middle of the bomb war. In the nights you would often hear the announcements of the approach of single enemy bombers dropping mine barriers in the Danube. These mine barriers were meant to destroy the oil transports from Ploesti.

May 10, 1944

The next raid on May 10, 1944 I did not see as close as the ones I have described before. I will tell you about it based on the findings of my research work.

At 10:04 the approach of heavy enemy bomber formations to Styria and the southeastern territory heading to the north is announced.

Already at 10:27 the formation turns over Lake Balaton and heads to the Vienna area.

At 10:40 the air alarm is announced for the Vienna area.

At 10:45 the formation is over Lake Neusiedl approaching Wiener Neustadt. The second bomber formation has just crossed Lake Balaton and the third formation has reached the lake.

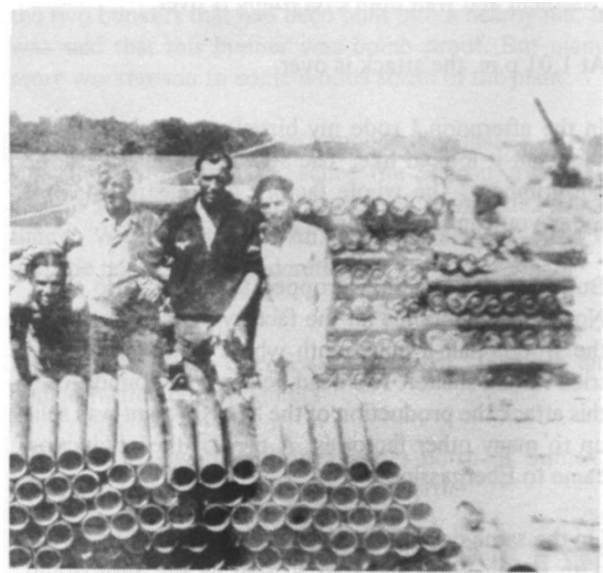
When the first and the second formation reach Lake Neusiedl they are attacked by 30 ME-109 of the fighter group 27 and by 50 FW-190 (Fokke Wulf) of fighter group three. When the bombers get into the flak area the fighters break away because now the flak takes over and the work of the flak soldiers starts. The radar devices show interferences so that the bombers have to be covered by optical means only.

At 11:09 the fire bell calling for group fire rang in eleven flak batteries in Wiener Neustadt. These batteries had eleven guns 12.9 cm, 58 guns 8.8 cm and 24 guns 10.5 cm. Now each gun fired up to sixteen

shots per minute at the bombers. The result could be seen clearly. Three B-17's of the first group were hit and crashed down even before reaching the targets. Another B-17 makes it to Wiener Neustadt with burning engines and crashes down ten kilometers south of the target.

Then the second bomber formation with B-24's reaches the flak fire. Two B-24's catch fire immediately and break away from the formation. Four crewmen manage to jump out of the plane before she explodes. Another plane crashed on fire and explodes on the ground.

It is 11:15 and six bombers are burning on the ground around Wiener Neustadt and over the target, Plants I and 2, there are thick black smoke clouds.



Empty Shells At Flak Battery

In the Flak Positions 1,460 empty shell cases are standing around, the shells used up for the bombers in the sky. After leaving the target area the bombers were attacked by German fighters again. Again two B-17's and two B-24's tumble on fire to the ground. The German fighters have losses too. The 27th fighter group loses five pilots and the third fighter group has one death and two wounded.

At 11:45 the third bomber formation reaches Wiener Neustadt and the target is the airfield of the ME-109 factory. During the approach the formation gets into the range of two flak batteries near Lake Neusiedl. Two B-24's are hit and crash down before reaching the target.

Editor's Note: I believe this is Mission #21 for the 461st Bomb Group. I do not have a bomb strike photo for this mission but the Group Historical Record says the score for the mission was poor.

Two more bomber formations approach Wiener Neustadt at 12:05 and 12:15 and bomb the ME-109 production plant. Again the flak fires with all they have.

At 12:52 the air attacks are over and from Wiener Neustadt to Karlovac in Yugoslavia there are twenty-eight crashed bombers and three escort fighters on the ground. In Wiener Neustadt both ME-109 production plants are severely damaged and nine buildings are destroyed completely. One 10.5 cm Flak battery got two hits and had several deaths and wounded.

No sooner than the damages were repaired to a certain extent the next attack followed on May 24, 1944.

May 24, 1944

On this day I had a unique experience. Shortly after 9:00 in the morning I sat in the classroom of our school 3 kilometers away from Ebergassing as ME-109 fighters which was stationed at Gbtzendorf airfield rushed over the school. We got nervous. Half an hour later the principal entered the classroom and said: "You are still here! Air Attack Alarm will soon be announced!". We hurried out of the school, took our bicycles and rode home to Ebergassing as fast as we could. Suddenly the sirens were hooting but we kept on treading. As we reached open field we already heard the roaring of the engines and saw a Liberator formation coming through the clouds from north. At this moment the flak began to fire. We threw ourselves in the road ditch and looked at the bombers. Then we heard the whistling of the bombs. I was really frightened. The roaring of the engines, the cracking of the flak and the whistling of the bombs. Then the earth was shaking and soon I heard the bombs explode. I looked towards the south and saw a dark cloud of smoke over the village of Moosbrunn about two miles away from where we lay in the ditch. Then everything was over. Editor: This was not a 461 mission.

I took my bicycle and went home but my mother was not there. She went to the slit-trench one mile away from Ebergassing. So I rode to her and shortly after I arrived there a B17 formation was approaching from

formation was surrounded by exploding flak shells. Three B-17's with smoking engines flew behind the formation but they did not crash down as long as I saw them.

At 11:30 we heard the continuous tone of the sirens telling us that the attack was over and we had made it once again.

May 29, 1944

May 29, 1944 was Whit-Monday, which is a catholic holiday in Austria. It was a wonderful spring morning, warm and the sky was blue. "Bomber Weather" we called it and really at 8:39 the radio program was interrupted for this message:

"Attention, attention, heavy enemy bomber formations are approaching Styria. So we knew that they would come again today. It is interesting that the attacking bombers were just called "they" by the people. Nobody said "the bombers", or "the Americans". We would ask ourselves whether "they" would come again tomorrow, or would we talk about "them" having bombed Wiener Neustadt again yesterday.

On this day at 9:21 we knew very well that "they" would come because the air alarm was announced. My mother and I had carried that bundle with all our important things such as documents, quilts and so on down to the basement and left the village by bicycle. We rode about two miles away from the village to a place near the new flak battery where a big concrete tube run below the road. We thought that this place would be safe. After about thirty minutes we saw, south of Vienna, a bomber formation approaching from the West. First the tiny glittering dots with vapor trails and ahead of the formation two twin engine planes. When this formation arrived over the industrial area south of Vienna, the two twin engine planes turned in a bow. Their vapor trails drew a circle in the sky. Then the bomber formation flew through this circle. I think they marked the target.

Shortly after that we felt the ground trembling caused by the exploding bombs. The linear distance to the target was only ten miles so we crept quickly into the concrete tube. Then the nearby flak started to shoot and between the cracking of the flak shots we heard the roaring of the bomber engines. When we crept out of the tube again.

west after bombing the oil refinery in Atzgersdorf. The

we could see huge fires burning in the area of Atzgersdorf and Wiener Neudorf. Clouds of smoke were rising high up in the sky. We never went son to the place near the flak battery to seek shelter. On our way home we also saw smoke clouds over Wiener Neustadt.



Bomb Strike Photograph - Mission #34 - Wiener Neustadt Werke 1, Austria

Editor's Note: The 461st did not fly many of the missions discussed by Felix in his story. His eye witness portrayals were of missions close to his home town of Ebergassing. Since he lived relatively close (about 25 miles) to Wiener Neustadt he often commented on seeing smoke rising from that direction. The mission write-up of the cover picture (See Page 3) is a case-in-point. Another such mission was flown on 29 May 1944 to Wiener Neustadt. Felix alludes to this mission at the end of his narrative for that date. The 461st history recounts details of that mission as follows:

Mission No.34. 29 May - Wiener Neustadt Werke, Austria

Wiener Neustadt again. This was Lt. Col. Hawes's second trip to this target as Group Leader, and Lt. Strong's second trip as lead pilot. The field order dispatched thirteen groups of the Air Force to the airplane manufacturing and servicing installations on both the Nord and Wollersdorf Airdromes. Our target was Werke I on the Nord field. The 461st Group was one of the last groups to arrive over the target. After the group was on its bombing run, it was necessary to change course because of the possibility of being dropped through by another group flying directly overhead. As Lt. Strong pulled the formation to the right, the lead bombardier, Lt. King, released his bombs on the four large buildings nearest the line on Wollersdorf field.

As a result of the bombing done by the thirteen groups, Wiener Neustadt really burned. As combat crew members looked back when leaving the target area, they were convinced it would be a long time before they would have to return again to the target they disliked more than any other target to which they had been assigned. Again, flak was intense, accurate and heavy over the a large area, and the enemy fighters were aggressive. Our gunners claimed three enemy airplanes destroyed without any losses to our group. The combat crews flying the mission were enthusiastic about the coverage given by our fighter escort. The group records score the mission as good.

The photograph on the previous page confirms that there was a lot of smoke as Felix states. There should have been if thirteen groups (approximately 400 aircraft) bombed the target.

May 30, 1944

the plane.

On the next day, May 30, 1944 we were allowed to leave school at about ten o'clock. I rode my bicycle to the factory where my mother was working. In the meantime the air alarm was announced and the workers could leave the factory. We both went home then. My mother would ride the bicycle and I would run behind her. We learned that only small bomber formations were approaching the Wiener Neustadt area. Therefore we stayed at home.

By the end of May and the beginning of June English bombers often flew night raids to our area to drop mines in the Danube. At these occasions you could observe the defense against the bombers very well. Around Vienna there were many searchlight batteries, too. When these search light batteries tried to locate the bombers and when finally one battery caught a bomber in its light rays, several other batteries moved their light rays to this bomber. I could see indescribable dramas in the night sky when the pilot tried different maneuvers to get the plane out of the light rays. The bomber would go into a nose dive to escape the light rays while the flak batteries fired with all they had at

Now in June no air attack alarm was announced when there was only penetration of some single planes. If one or two planes would appear, that means if one or two glittering dots with vapor trails were to be seen in the sky, we knew that they were Americans and probably recon planes.

June 16, 1944

After a few quiet days, on June 16th 1944 at around nine o'clock in the morning air danger was announced. Heavy enemy bomber formations were approaching Styria and around 9:30 the cuckoo call could be heard in the radio. We were allowed to leave school and rode home on my bicycle. As usual, I brought all our valuables down to the basement and rode to the factory to meet my mother there. Many workers were already waiting at the factory gate. I went to the security officer of the factory and said: "Please let the workers leave. They are already over Lake Balaton!" But he replied: "I have my orders, I must open the gate only at air attack alarm." At last the siren wailed and my mother walked

through the gate, got on the bicycle and I ran behind her.

We rode to our slit trench in the gravel pit. Already many people, some of them our neighbors, are already there. From the East we hear bombs exploding and shortly after that we see many glittering dots in the Northeast. We do not yet know in which direction they are flying but after a few minutes they grow bigger and bigger - they fly towards us. Then the flak in Schwechat starts to shoot and we have to hide in the slit trench because the shell fragments fall down to the ground. In the slit trench we can feel how the ground trembles caused by the bomb hits. We hear the rumbling and the explosions and the roaring of the engines, they are exactly above us! Please let them have no more bombs left! At the entrance to the slit trench an old man is sitting and he will not let me out when the noise of the engines is getting less and less. I force my way through and can see one formation flying some five miles away to the South. Behind the formation I can see a black cloud and two parachutes in the air. Later I hear that a plane has crashed near our neighbor village.

June 26, 1944

Ten days later, on June 26th 1944 the same happens again. leave school, meet my mother, go to the slit trench. The planes approach from the Northeast again. They come from Slovakia and are heading to the West, then every bomber group turns to the South towards the target. The first and the second formation continue their way to the West and attack Korneuburg (Editor: Mission 950 for the 461st BG) and Moosbierbaum. The third and the fourth formations fly towards us, their target is Schwechat. All the people are already in the slit trench. I try to stay out as long as possible to watch the attack. The flak batteries fire at the bombers and I can see two bombers crash. Then I have to go down to our shelter. I get a scolding from some of the men. They say: "The bombers could see you and drop a bomb on us!" When the bombers left I saw some of the men who were members of the Nazi-party and who wore the uniform of party members, ride with their bicycles to the crash sites of the two bombers to capture the bailed out crew men. But I knew what their real reason was. They wanted to get the silken parachutes and all the other things the Americans had with them,

and which we did not have any more.

On this day the first approaching formation is already attacked by the Hungarian FG-101 over Gyer. Three B-24's and one US Fighter are shot down. The FG-101 loses 3 pilots.

Over Malacky in Slovakia there are again aerial combats. The 2nd Squadron of ZGI which is equipped with ME-410 and stationed at the airfield Wels is attacked by US fighters before reaching the bomber formations. They suffer some losses, but several ME-410 make it to the formation where they are welcomed by severe defense fire. The bottom line of the attack is five dead and two wounded pilots.

Also over Hungary, another bomb wing is attacked by the 1st Squadron of the FG-302 which is stationed at Götzendorf. During the following aerial combat two B-24's of the 485th BG and three ME-109 of the 1st Sq. FG-302 are shot down. All three ME-109 pilots are killed. The aerial combats continue until the bombers leave the target area Floridsdorf, Moosbierbaum and Schwechat.

From Bavaria 2 squadrons of the FG/JF 300 equipped with ME-109 G6 and FW-190 are directed to the bomber formation which is approaching Moosbierbaum. They attack the bombers and shoot down two B-24's and lose one ME-109 and three FW-190. When already leaving the target area a FW-190 of the 2nd Sq. FG-300 collides with a B-24 of the 455th BG and both planes crash down.

According to German reports in total 16 German pilots were killed and three were wounded. But from Gyer in Hungary to the targets in the Vienna area there are 26 crashed bombers on the ground, shot down by fighters and flak. The 455th BG loses 10 B-24's. The 464th BG loses the Group Commander Col. Bonner. His B-24 gets a flak hit and crashes on fire 5 miles south of Floridsdorf.

This was the last time we went to the slit trench in the gravel pit. I told my mother that I would not go there any more. I could observe the raids better from our home and I could also use my binoculars there as I was not allowed to use them outdoors.

July 8, 1944

When the airfield Zwolfaxing was bombed on July 8th 1944 and several bombs fell down only 200 meters away from the slit trenches in our gravel pit, nobody went there anymore and I added a few bomb fragments to my collection of shell fragments.

Starting with July more and more targets on the outer edge of Vienna were bombed and I found a place where I was rather safe from shell fragments and from where I had a good view to three directions, North, East and South. There was the wall of the house in the East. I used this hiding and viewing place till the end of March 1945. From this place I could observe all the formations coming from the Southeast very well and I was not hit by the fragments of the shells shot by the batteries of the Viennese flak barrier that began over Ebergassing. Only when the bombers approached directly over Ebergassing to Vienna I did have to seek shelter in the house as the flak in Fischamend shot earlier and I could have been hit by one of the fragments. Furthermore, some very clever men told me that the Americans could see me and would drop bombs on me. Felix - the target!

July 26, 1944

July 26 is again a day of raids where several targets close to Ebergassing are bombed; Wiener Neudorf aircraft engine factory, Vesendorf oil refinery and Zwolfaxing airfield. The formations approach from the West. We can feel the explosions of the bombs very heavily. The window panes rattle but it is cloudy, so that I can only watch the formation that is approaching Zwolfaxing. This formation consists only of about thirty B-24's which are attacked by the flak before they reach the airfield. Two of them crash down on fire in the target area. A third one gets hit in the fuselage and breaks into two parts. I cannot see the hit, I only watch the two parts - the tail sections and the wings with the control section - break away.

In 1973 the widow of a bombardier of the 460th Bomb Group who died in one of the crashed planes visited me and I showed her the place where the bomber hit the ground and the target Zwolfaxing.

Mid of 1944 to April 1945

Around the mid of 1944 you could read in the faces of a lot of people that they did not care any more what would happen to them. You could not do anything against the air attacks you only could take them as a given.

There were more and more attack alarms. In May there were only 4 a day and 1 by night. In June we had 5 per day and 2 by night and in July we lived through 7 by day and 3 by night. In August there were 9 by day and 3 by night. Already in June bombs fell down close to Ebergassing and in September the city of Vienna itself was bombed for the first time.

From that point on the daily routine was controlled by the US bombers and the US fighters. Because of the strafing fighters, the farmers would bring in their harvest during the night and the factories started their work only at noon if they did not work around the clock. In January 1945 our school closed as there was no coal available to heat the class rooms.

When in January 1945 my father came home for three weeks of vacation after 21 months of military service, he said that at home it was worse than on the front. During this time every day there was an air attack alarm and by the mid of March nothing was working anymore.

On March 30th 1945 I saw the last B-24's flying in three groups and B-17's flying in four groups over us.

As of April 1st, the planes over us were IL2, PE2, and A20 Douglas Boston. And then on April 3rd at 4:30 in the afternoon, after we had spent the day in the basement because of artillery fire, three Russian soldiers showed up in front of our house, we thought that we had the worst behind us and we were wrong. But this is another story.



Felix Rarneder At Wiener Neustadt, 1993



MAIL CALL

Editor's Note: The following letters and newspaper article all kind of "came together" last July and tell an interesting story. Some unrelated portions of the letters have been omitted for clarity and brevity.

Hi George,

July 15, 1995

I received your letter informing me the "Liberaider" was in the hands of the U.S. Mail. It so happens I received it at the same time I received your letter. You didn't need to return the \$3 dollars I sent. You should have put it in the treasury for future use, but thanks anyway. Keep up the good work. Which I am sure you hear over and over from the members.

I was sorry to hear of Ed Chan losing his wife. I guess these days we are all becoming eligible for that next draft.

I received a letter from our Nose Gunner Kermit Harrison after I wrote to you and he enclosed a newspaper clip which tells of his reunion with George Peterson our engineer. I am not sure who he sent copies to and since you are in the business of looking for some material you may want to use it. We now can account for all of our original crew led by Ret. Colonel Jim B. Robinson, replacement crew 921.

II am also enclosing an article regarding the celebration of the 50th Anniversary of W.W. II which was held at the Reading, Pa. airport June 2-3rd, 1995. It was set up similar to a G.I. camp, with tents, ground equipment, and many W.W. II aircraft and an Air Show put on by those aircraft.

I managed to speak with the three guest speakers. "Memphis Belle" B-17 pilot Col. Morgan; Col. Pumell, a pilot from the famous black group known as the Tuskegee Airmen. They flew out of Italy and flew cover for our group on occasions; and Gunner Bill Fili, who happens to be a local fellow who wrote and published a book entitled "Passage to Valhalla". I got a book and video he made with the same title and gave them to Frank. They are with the group's collection at the reunions.

Well enough chatter for now. I think all this past history and experiences are great. I wrote a 15 page story about our last mission over Linz July 25, 1945 and about the match out of prison camp trying to stay out of British and Russian troop movements.

Best Regards,
Jim Sipple



Dear Jim;

August 2, 1995

Things happen in strange ways! I recently corresponded with you about the "Liberaider" and you sent me a package of material and a note saying you had written a 15 page report on your last mission to Linz where you were shot down. A day or so later I got a letter from a man in Austria who was a child when your plane crashed. He sent two photographs of the wreckage. Somehow he knew the pilot was Ken Githens. When I looked up Ken's crew in the 461st Directory I found you were a member of the crew. Your letter also said you had finally located all your original crew members so I assume you all got out of the aircraft.

I would like to use this material in the next issue of the "Liberaider". I need your help. I have a crew list for Crew 21-1 from our directory and I have a crew list of the men shot down on the Linz raid as reported in the history of the 461st Bomb Group. They don't match completely. Please straighten it out for me and send me a copy of your write-up of that mission and how you survived.

The fellow from Austria, Karl Affenzeller, was not an eye witness but a farmer (12 years old at the time) told him about the crash. The pictures were taken by the local Catholic priest. Karl would like to correspond with somebody from the crew.

I am not in a hurry for your write-up or the correct crew list but when you get a chance, please send me the info. It will make a good story.

Best regards,
George Dickie





Mail Call (continued)

Dear George;

August 14, 1995

I was glad to get your letter of August 2nd and found it very interesting to say the least. I was down at our trailer in N.J. for a few days and had the mail stopped until I returned.

I can see having Ken Githens shown on two crew listings can be confusing. The original crew that came to the 461st as a replacement crew in April 1944, was headed by Lt. James B. Robinson - Pilot.

Original	Revised
Replacement	Crew #21
Crew #21	Shot Down

J.B. Robinson Pilot	K.O. Githens
*K.O. Githens Pilot	M.D. Gidez
E.C. Kamps Nav.	L.J. Harp
*O.S. Moore Bomb.	W.E. Patterson
G.C. Peterson Eng.	G.C. Peterson
*G. Esser Radio	G. Esser
*D.D. Wendte Armor	D.D. Wendte
K.C. Harrison Ast. Eng.	K.C. Harrison
J.E. Sipple Ast. Rad.	J.E. Sipple
H.J. Farr Ast. Arm.	H.J. Farr

* Deceased Members

The reason for the changes was because Lt. James B. Robinson was promoted to the Operations Dept. of the 765th Sqdn. and then Lt. Ken Githens was moved up to Pilot for future missions. In the cases of Lt. Kamps and Lt. Moore they were borrowed by other crews on earlier missions and were shot down on those missions.

Your assumption that we all got out of our plane "SLEEPYTIME GAL" on the Linz mission is correct. The only injuries we received were Lt. Harp broke an ankle landing in his chute and I had a small cut on the calf of my leg. The mention I made of having found all of the crew as of now is because we were unable to locate George Peterson up until this summer when he showed up at Harrisons.

In your letter you mentioned having received a letter from a KARL AFFENZELLER in Austria, along with

pictures of our downed plane. If you plan using this info in the coining "LIBERAIDER" and can also include the photos I would be most interested in seeing them. If not, I wonder if I could ask you for a copy of the photos.

Unfortunately, Ken Githens passed away the evening of our banquet in Hampton, Va. last year. I called Ken's wife Wanda and told her of the letter you received and she said Ken mentioned that a young boy had given him some food and then shortly after he was picked up and became a POW. I am sending, copies of your letter to the other members of our crew as I am sure they will enjoy it.

I am enclosing a copy of the resume I wrote about the Linz mission. It is not a professional job. It was done more for a reminder of what took place on that final mission for me. You may want to cut it down in the event you decide to use it.

I plan to drop a line to Karl later sometime. I enjoy hearing from you and glad to be of any help I can. Keep in touch.

Best Regards,
Jim Sipple



Dear George,

July 25, 1995

Many thanks for the "Liberaider" VOL. 11 and 12. I read these excellent issues with great interest. I was sorry to find out, that the former pilot Kenneth O. Githen passed away last year.

In 1992 I localized the crash - site of Lt. Githen's ship near my domicile. This aircraft blew up in the air in vicinity of the village Rechberg, north of Danube River. Johann Raab and Austrian farmer, was an eye-witness. He told me the following: "I was 12 years old then, it was a hot, sunny day in July, and we were about to start harvesting. At about 11 a.m. I saw several formations of enemy bombers coming from the direction of Mfinzbach. They were flying quite high and were setting their course to Linz. When they were almost direct above us, they got into a combat with about 10 to 15 German fighters. I soon saw that 3 or 4 of these large American planes were hit. As they left their formation and dropped, while fire and smoke were coming out of their wings and fuselages.



Mail Call (continued)

I was able to observe the action rather well through my father's binoculars. One of these planes must have exploded right above our village. I was standing under a large pear tree that served as a shelter, when a part of the fuel tank and of the fuselage dropped nearby;

An engine dropped in the court of our neighbor's farmhouse, part of a wing was lying next to our house. I was now very scared and ran home.

The next day I went to see for the wreck parts and saw markings below the cockpit, showing bombs.

A great deal of ammunition was lying around everywhere. But I could neither see corpses nor Americans that had eloped by parachute. Several were said to have been made prisoners of war near Mauthausen. Today it would be my desire to learn about their fates." Recorded on Jan. 14, 1992

George, I have enclosed two rare photographs, taken by a Catholic priest at the place of event in July 1944. I hope that my account will be from interest for you and also for the readers of "Liberaidee". I would be pleased, if a member of Kenneth Githen's crew would be prepared to write to me in the next time. Sincerely,

Karl Affenzeller
Buchtastrae 5
4240 Freistadt,
Austria.

On Monday, June 19, as I went into the Red Apple Supermarket, I noticed a tall man and woman just coming in. I said, "Hello. I'm Anna Parks. (Columnist for local paper in Lovell, WY) I don't believe I know you."

He said, "I'm George C. Peterson and this is my wife Valeda of Redland, Calif. Do you know Kermit Harrison?"

I told him I not only knew Kermit, I also knew his parents and their family.

George Peterson said, "I have been looking for my buddy Kermit for 51 years. As I knew he came from Lovell, I told my wife we will try one more time." While getting gas, the station agent said yes, he knew Kermit, and told him where he lived. Still afraid it was too good to be true, he asked Bill Powell if Kermit lived here. Bill said, yes, he sits by him every Sunday in church. So the Petersons headed for the Harrisons.

When they arrived in their motor home, George and Valeda walked up to the house.

When George saw Kermit he said, "I haven't seen you since 11 a.m. July 25, 1944. What a wonderful surprise."

The two friends were on their 46th mission when they were shot down over Linz, Austria. They were both on the crew of a 15th Air Force B24 as engineers and gunners. The Germans were assembling their first tanks at the Goering Tank Works, and the 15th was sent to "disassemble" them, George said.



The Remains Of Ken Githen's Aircraft - 25 July 1944

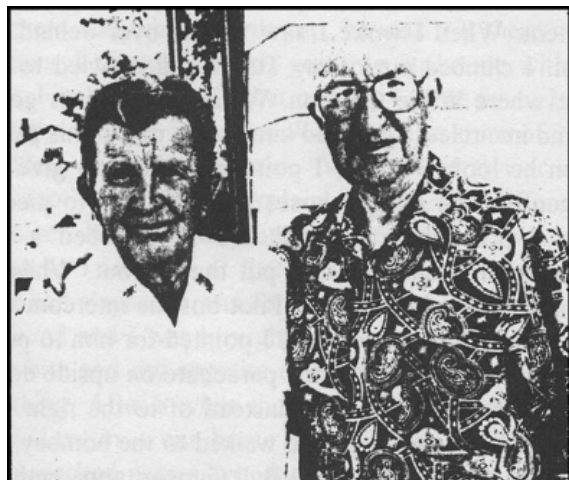


Mail Call (continued)

On this day, July 25, 1944, George was captured at once and put in a POW Camp Stalag Luft IV. Kermit landed in a tall tree. For 16 days he slept days and walked nights, digging potatoes to keep him alive. When the Germans finally caught Kermit they asked what he had been doing. He said he had just been touring Germany.

Kermit was put in the same POW camp as George, but in a different compound. Neither Kermit nor George ever knew if the other was alive. Many times they were forced to walk the death march. The British Army captured them in the first week of May 1945 and released them to the American Army. George and Kermit say the few potatoes they scrounged probably saved their lives. They both weighed 115 pounds when they were released.

Now back to happier thoughts. The Petersons liked our little town and friendly people. They really bragged about the Red Apple. They spent two nights at Horseshoe Bend Campground. Jack Dykstra took George, Kermit and wives on his tour boat down beautiful Bighorn Canyon Tuesday. I was invited but couldn't go. The Harrisons and Petersons visited me after their tour.



Kermit Harrison and George Peterson

(Yes, George and Valeda, I'm so glad I introduced myself to you at the Red Apple. It's always nice to make new friends.)

Dear George,

July 26, 1995

Our crew was shot down on the June 11th Ploesti mission. We bailed out over Yugoslavia and spent two months with the Chetniks so the Halyard Mission article was of considerable interest to me. Lt. Hefling was our pilot and Karl Pfister our navigator. Having come down with jaundice two weeks before our rescue I was on the first C-47 flown out. I still have Mikhailovich's autographed picture.

We were shot down in "Chippiedoll" (see Page 37 of the December 1994 Issue) since our plane "Evil Weevil" was so shot up June 10th we had to lighten the plane to make it back to the base and it never flew again as Jonsey (our crew chief) could never replace all the equipment we threw out!

I still have my copy of the Cheek Twitcher. All our belongings are in storage until we get located. If you'd like, I can photo it and send a copy along when it gets "dug out".

Sincerely,
Norm Elzeer, 764th BS



Dear Mr. O'Bannon

June 26, 1995

I would like to take this opportunity on behalf of all the veterans of the SouthWestern Blind Rehabilitation Center, to express our sincere thanks to you and all the members of your fine organization. Because of the generosity of your organization our veterans will be able to utilize the Hitachi 50" Ultravision TV for both their personal enjoyment and also to view training videos during their rehabilitation program.

Thank you again for your generosity and dedication to our veteran population.

Sincerely,
Joseph J. Hennessey, Director
SouthWestern Blind Rehabilitation Center (124)
Department of Veterans Affairs - Medical Center
Tucson, Arizona 85723



Mail Call (continued)

Dear Mr. O'Bannon,

26 July 1995

I am writing to thank you for your assistance in finding information concerning my father, 2nd Lt. William R. Diggs.

I am indebted to you, and your organization, for printing my letter requesting assistance in 'The 461st Liberaider'. It is difficult to express how much it means to those of us who never had the privilege of knowing fathers, brothers, or other loved ones who served in World War II, to hear from those with whom they shared this momentous experience.

Please accept my deepest gratitude for what you have done, both for me personally, and for our Nation.

Sincerely,
William E. Diggs

Editor's Note: On Page 11 of the June 1995 issue of the "Liberaider" I printed a request from William E. Diggs to be put in touch with people who knew his father. The above letter indicates that some of you did contact him. That makes me feel very good and shows that the time and effort that goes into producing this newsletter does provide a meaningful service. Unfortunately, I seldom get letters like the one above and I can't remember getting a note from any of you indicating you have responded to such a request. It would "tweak" my morale a heck of a lot if you would send me a copy of your correspondence in situations like this or just send me a post card saying you had made contact. The "RASIC" (Random Act of Senseless Kindness) makes everyone feel better!

Dear George,

I received my June 1995 Liberaider and read about the death of Willie Gibson on December 14, 1994. Now I know why I didn't receive a Christmas Card from him. God Bless him. This notice reminded me of my experience on the July 25, 1944 mission to Linz, Austria; which I will never be able to forget.

I was the Tail Gunner of Steve Sklanky's Crew. On

the afternoon of July 23, 1944 we arrived at our base in Italy. They had a big fire there and we could not get any quarters right away. The next day, July 24th the enlisted men of our crew were issued a tent with three cots, the other three had to sleep on the ground. Very early on the morning of the 25th of July we were awakened and told that my name, Jose Salas, Tail Gunner and the names of Donald Robinson, Radio Operator and John Kennedy, Nose Gunner were posted on the flying schedule for that day. We got up, saw our names on the schedule to fly and had a little breakfast. A truck was waiting for us to take us straight to the airplanes that were already waiting for us. No briefing, no nothing. We did not know where we were going nor did we know the crew we were flying with. It turned out that I was flying with one crew while Robinson and Kennedy were with another crew.

While flying over Yugoslavia, we saw a few of our fighters and little flak. The top turret gunner was very happy and singing because this was his last mission and he was going home to his wife and children. He kept on singing until the Pilot put a stop to it. I do not recall anything else until we were in the middle of the biggest turmoil in my life. Flak all around us and then the intercom hollering "Fighters at 3 o'clock". I had three ME-109's and two FW-190's firing at our airplane and me firing back at them at 5 o'clock. When they passed, I saw something with the fight corner of my eye and turned my Turret and saw the flashes of an FW-190's cannons which were a direct hit on the safety glass of my Turret. I was wounded very badly and passed out for a moment. When I woke I saw fire all over behind my turret. I climbed out of my Turret and crawled to the waist where Willie Gibson, Waist Gunner was going around in circles, I grabbed him by the cuff of his pants. When he looked down, I pointed for him to give me oxygen but the oxygen hoses were all shot to pieces. Then I pointed to the tail and he grabbed a fire extinguisher, went back and put the fire out. While he was there I tried calling the Pilot but the intercom was out. When Willie came back, I pointed for him to put a parachute on me. He put my parachute on upside down with the ripcord to the left instead of to the right. He opened the escape hatch and walked to the bomb bay. He walked over the body of the Ball Gunner, apparently he did not see him. I couldn't crawl to him because the escape hatch was open and I couldn't stand up due to my wounds. When Willie got to the bomb bay he looked



Mail Call (continued)

back at me and waived his hand. I sat up dangling my legs out the escape hatch and pushed myself out. When I pulled the rip-cord my chute did not come out, just puffed up. I pulled it out with my hands. When the parachute pulled me up I gave a sigh of relief and passed out. I vaguely remember going through clouds nothing else. I woke up about 100 feet up and going straight at some trees. I pulled the strings of my chute and missed the tree by about 15 feet. Before I hit the ground I tried to hit it with my good leg but it buckled up and I hit it with my wounded leg and the bones popped out of the skin due to a compound fracture. There was a house about 500 yards from where I landed and people looking towards me from their opened door. I motioned to them and they went in the house and closed the door. I unbuckled the harness of the parachute and started crawling towards the house. I remembered my escape kit and was digging a hole to bury it when I heard voices hollering "Pistole, Pistole". Two very young soldiers were pointing their rifles at me. They called to the house and some people brought a ladder. They put my parachute and me on the ladder and took me to an upstairs room in the house. I passed out and when I woke up there was a big red headed man, probably from the Gestapo, standing over me with his big fists very close to my nose asking questions in perfect English - Where is your base located? What kind of airplanes were you flying? What instruments did you have in your airplane? etc. etc. I just gave him my name, rank and serial number. I would pass out for a moment and when I woke up, he was still there more furious. I thought he was going to strike me with his fists. Finally he asked what country I came from. I told him the United States of America, the state of New Mexico. "What?", he said, "We are not at war with Mexico." I tried to explain to him the difference between New Mexico and Mexico but he wouldn't listen so I let it go at that. I do not know how much time had elapsed, I was very hungry and asked this man for food and I was brought a boiled potato. I took the first bite and my appetite disappeared. I could not eat anything. After a while they put me in a stretcher and loaded me in a one horse buggy. When I woke up we were parked near a wooden windmill. I motioned the driver to move to the shade of the windmill. We were close to a river, probably the Danube River. There were some workers working at the river's edge. They came

close to the buggy and were saying Kriegsgefangenen. I didn't know what they meant until later. I asked them for water and they brought me a bowl full of water. At that time a German Officer arrived and they all went back to their jobs. I drank the water and gave the empty bowl to the Officer. He looked at me and was reluctant to take the bowl. Finally he took it. A whole bunch of Airmen were marched in. A Lieutenant came to me, introduced himself and told me he was Richard Freeman's Navigator. He asked me what type of blood I had. I told him Type O. He said he had Type A but he would get somebody with Type O to give me some blood. He also told me that the Top Turret Gunner had been decapitated by the enemy Fighters. Two of the crew were KIA. I passed out again and when I woke up we were traveling in a boxcar. Somebody gave me a cigarette. I don't know what happened to the cigarette, when I woke up again it was dark and we were traveling in a truck. I needed to empty my bladder. Somebody gave me my flying boot and after emptying my bladder he threw the boot away. The truck stopped right away and stayed there until they found the boot. When I woke up again I was on an operating table where they gave me three shots in my chest. Probably a tetanus and some other drug. When I woke up again somebody was telling me in Spanish "don't drink so much water." I opened my eyes and asked him how he knew I spoke Spanish and he said I was cussing him up and down in Spanish. I apologized and he said not to worry, the drug they had given me made everybody speak that way when they were coming out of it. He was a Frenchman in his late fifties who was taken prisoner by the Germans to do forced labor. I do not know how many days had gone by, if any. That day when I woke up in the hospital room a German doctor came and operated on my leg. He sawed off a part of my bones and put me in traction. I stayed in traction for 22 days.

While I was in traction, Willie Gibson, walked in the door. He was greatly surprised and asked me, "Are you still alive? I thought I had taken your dead body with both legs cut off out of the Tail Turret of our plane." I told him all that had happened up in the airplane. Actually Willie Gibson saved my life and I saved his. We exchanged home addresses and had a good talk until the guard took him away. I never saw Willie Gibson again. After the war we kept in touch with each other by mail for a while. The reason Willie Gibson was in the Linz Hospital that day was because they had taken him for X-Rays and while there he told the X-Ray technician,



Mail Call (continued)

she could speak very good English, what he had done for me up in the airplane, taking me out of the Tail Turret dead and both legs cut off. When he described me she told him there was someone fitting that description in a room upstairs and took him to my room.

I heard that Willie Gibson was very active in the 461st BG and that he used to help out with reunions. May he rest in peace.

Since I was in the Base in Italy for only two nights and one day, I never did know what Bomb Group or Bomb Squadron I was in, only the 15th Air Force Heavy Bombardment and that's what my discharge papers say. In 1986 I received a letter from Milton Rodovsky, (Rest in peace). He sent me a list of Richard Freeman's Crew. That's the first time I heard about the 461st BG and the 764th BS and which crew I was flying with when we were shot down. Milton asked me about my experiences on the mission to Linz, Austria, July 25, 1944. He said he wanted to write a book about that mission. I wrote to Milton telling of my experiences and asking him if he knew anything about Steve Sklansky's Crew. Milton wrote back and told me that Robinson and Kennedy had been KIA and gave me the addresses of the others. I wrote them Christmas Cards and they were very surprised to hear from me since they thought I had been KIA. The only 461st BG reunion I have been able to attend was the one in Tucson, AZ. My wife and I had a ball there and met a lot of very good people. And, for the first time we met Richard and Virginia Freeman, two very wonderful people. Also, for the first time since July 1944, I saw Ray Grew, Navigator in Sklansky's Crew. We were very happy to see each other and spent the whole reunion together.

Enclosed is a picture of Steve Sklansky's Crew, taken June 1944 at Topeka, KS.

Sincerely,
Jose M. Salas
764th BS



Standing L/R: S. Sklansky, Pilot; R. Gress, Co-Pilot; R. Grew, Nav.; S. Goodfriend, Bomb.; Kneeling L/R: W. Barerfield, Engineer; D. Robinson, Radio; R. Erwin, Ball Gunner; J. Kennedy, Nose Gunner; W. Mickelson, Waist Gunner; J. Salas, Tail Gunner.

Editor's Note: A few years ago I corresponded with Leroy Waning from Nobleboro, ME. This summer my wife and I were in Boothbay Harbor so I called him. We had a nice visit with him at his cottage on a nearby lake.



Leroy Waning and George Dickie - 767th BS



Mail Call (continued)

Hello George,

Oct. 15, 1995

I am enclosing a news clipping that appeared in our local newspaper last week that may be of interest to you.

I have not been able to go on the cruise this year. I have been on the sick list since the beginning of March and have been hospitalized three times so far.

Sincerely,
Walter D. Fries

Editor's Note: Walter, sorry to hear you have been out of service for a while. I sincerely hope for a complete recovery so we can see you and your wife at the next reunion.

Thanks for the newspaper article on the visit of the B-24 "All American." However, I think I will take this opportunity to suggest to the members of the 461st BG that they do not continue to send me these newspaper articles. I have received about 25 of them in the last 2 years. They are of great interest to the local people but, sorry to say, are now "old news" to members of the 461st BG and other people that flew B-24's. In every issue of the Liberaider I try to include the latest schedule of visits for the "All American" for members who might not have seen her yet. However, the Collings Foundation doesn't always have a good schedule of proposed visits at the time I'm preparing the "Liberaider. Thank you all for thinking of your newsletter. Keep sending articles on your experiences and B-24 related stories but the "All American" has had it's share of publicity.

Liberaider

Aug. 15, 1995

After 50 years with no contact, the living members of Crew 66 of the 767th Bomb Squadron, 461st Bomb Group met in Hagerstown, MD. The newspapers, TV, the Venice Inn Hotel and the people rolled out the red carpet. Very Plush!

Frank O'Bannon and "Ned" Humphreys of Bombardiers, Inc. contributed largely to this reunion.

Gerald Martin

Gathering of Heroes

'Liberaider' crew reminisces about WWII

By Clyde Ford
Staff Writer

The last time they were together was in war-torn Europe near the end of World War II.

Now they have gray hair and liver spots and memories of when they were young soldiers, warriors in the air, young and strong.

The crew of a B-24 Liberator was brought together on Tuesday at the Venice Inn on Dual Highway in Hagerstown.

The bomber's co-pilot, Robert N. Sturm, 74, of Cincinnati, started about a year ago to locate the surviving members of the crew.

During the war, they had been close as combat can forge friendships. But once they finished their 35 missions, they were sent their separate ways and lost track of each other.

Then, one by one, Sturm and his wife, Alice, located the old crew.

"They all seemed to appreciate it," he said. "Every time I'd call one, there would be a pause on the phone and they'd say, 'My God, how did you find me?'"

"It was just like detective work," Sturm said.

They called their old squadron's alumni group and got a couple of names and addresses. The addresses were old, but it gave them a starting point.

The couple went through telephone books at the Cincinnati public library, writing down everyone with the same last names and calling them.



Mail Call (continued)

When they couldn't find Francis Xavier Molloy in his home town of Baltimore, they checked other towns in Maryland until they found him in Hagerstown.

Other crew members were found in similar ways.

"We went through all kinds of phone numbers in the United States," Sturm said.

They racked up high long distance bills, but as Sturm watched the men happily sharing stories, he smiled and said it was worth it.

All but one of the nine crew members were accounted for, Sturm said. He couldn't locate Edward L. Eisemann, Jr.

Pilot Truman L. Hom, Jr. died in 1990, Staff Sgt. Wayne F. C. Kay, radioman, died in 1989, and Staff Sgt. John Vudmaska, nose gunner, died in 1987.

The others gathered on Tuesday to remember those missing and to share things about the living: Gerald E. Martin, Jr., 73, bombardier, lives in Lindale, Texas; Francis Xavier Molloy, 73, turret ball gunner, of Beechwood Drive in Hagerstown; George Panchusin, Jr., 74, tail gunner from Munster, Ind.; Norman Selden, 72, top turret gunner and radioman, of Clearwater, Fla.; and Mark L. Sherman, 70, navigator, from West Brookford, Mass.

Throughout the day, they shared their stories.

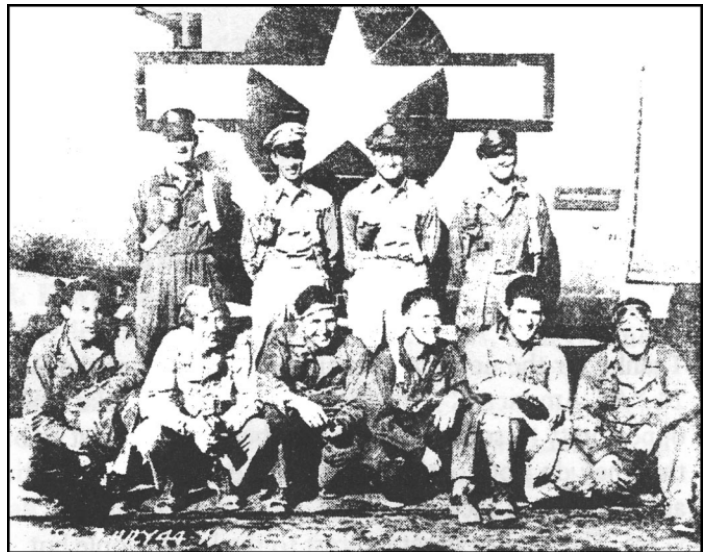
"He's never really talked about it, not even with his son," said Jill Selden, wife of Norman Selden. "He doesn't remember what he did with his keys, but he remembers little details from the war."

Martin said he remembers when fire bombs were stuck in the bomb doors. He had to take off his parachute because it was too big to make it on the narrow catwalk. With the ground 26,000 feet below him in the open bomb doors, he pounded on the bombs to knock them free before their timer detonated them in the plane.

"My flesh crawls now when I get to thinking about it," Martin said.

They talked of the missions where 30 percent of the air crews were lost. They remembered the time they flew home on one engine. Sturm said they twice asked the crew whether they wanted to bail out, but the pilots were going to stay with the bomber. Both times the crew voted to stay with them. They made it home.

"This crew here ... when we were overseas we were like one big family," Sturm said.



1944 group shot of the original 10-member crew
(See next page for 1995 photo of crew at their reunion)

~~~~~

A

VERY

MERRY, GAY

JOYOUS, WONDERFUL

CHRISTMAS TO ALL OF THE

461ST BOMB GROUP (H) 1943 - 1945

M

1995



## Mail Call (continued)



**Members of B-24 bombing crew that met in Hagerstown share a laugh Tuesday. They include, front row, from left, George Panchusin, Norm Selden and Francis Xavier Molloy. Back Row, from left, Bob Sturm, Mark Sherman and Gerald Martin.**

Editor's Note: The following letter was received as a result of my inquiry on Page 24 of the June 1995 Issue of the "Liberaider". I wish to express my thanks to all members of the 461st BG who responded to the 764th Squadron alert. It is rewarding to know someone has been helped through articles published in our newsletter.

Dear George:

August 30, 1995

Enclosed are excerpts from the notebook of William Mocha (Deceased) that were sent to me by James Hardee. This clears up the mystery of how my brother came to be buried in the civilian cemetery of Albisola Superiore after their plane exploded over Savona, not Genoa as stated in the official report. Albisola Superiore is immediately adjacent to Savona and only a city limits sign separated the two when I was there last year.

The notes also tell of the heroism of Lt. Douglas Herrin in piloting his plane after the fight wing and cabin were

badly damaged by a wheel from the plane destroyed by the explosion. Ray Grew in Escondido, CA. and Joe Breshinsky of St. Louis, MO., who were on the plane piloted by Douglas Herrin, suggest that the entire notebook of William Mocha be published, I agree. The notes were sent to me by:

James L. Hardee  
1864 Herman St.  
Atwater, CA 95301

I have learned all of the above information as a result of your telling my story in the June 1995 edition of the "Liberaider". I have been contacted by several people as a result of the article, some of whom knew my brother personally. You have my heartfelt thanks and gratitude.

Sincerely,  
John P. Starkey



### **"HURRICANE HOPPING" IN THE CARIBBEAN WITH THE 461ST**

**By George Dickie, Editor**

With much trepidation, members of the 461st Bomb Group headed for Miami, Florida for an Island Cruise aboard the Carnival Cruise Ship, "Celebration". The Virgin Islands had recently suffered damage at the hands of (or winds of, as the case may be) Hurricane "Luiz", and the island of St. Maarten had essentially been blown off the map. The Atlantic Ocean was loaded with tropical storms, and Hurricane "Marilyn" was headed our way.

Undaunted, the warriors of the 461st boarded the "Celebration" on Saturday, 9 September 1995 and, like days of yore, we sailed off to do battle at about 4 p.m. The weather was beautiful, and for two days we explored the "Fun Ship" with bright blue skies peppered with white fleecy cumulus clouds overhead.

We entered San Juan Harbor, Puerto Rico, about 5 p.m. on Monday, 11 September (See picture on next page). We debarked at 6 p.m. to tour the city of San Juan. It was a very short stay because we had to return to the ship by 1:30 a.m. so the crew could prepare to depart for our next stop. Although there were many options for touring the city, many chose to attend one of the two night club shows on the schedule. They were quite good and were timed to give us a little time to shop for duty free jewelry and booze. Because it was nighttime, we could not see how much damage was caused by the passage of "Luiz" a week or so before we arrived.

We landed on the island of St. Thomas, one of the U. S. Virgin Islands, about 7:30 a.m. on Tuesday, 12 September (See picture on next page). We would have a full day for touring and shopping. Again we were to board the ship by 5 p.m. There were numerous island tours and excursions to other small islands in the area for snorkeling, swimming and partying. We arrived back at the ship loaded (Those who took the Kon Tiki Party Tour actually were) with good memories of our stay and bags full of souvenirs.

At this point our cruise took a sharp change in course. We were scheduled to visit the island of St. Maarten but, as mentioned earlier, it was severely damaged by "Luiz", so our tour was redirected. We left St. Thomas early in the evening to sail 40 miles to the island of St. Croix, another of the U.S. Virgin Islands. We arrived there at 7:30 a.m. on Wednesday, 13 September after cruising very slowly around the area all night long. We believe they did this in order to be able to open the gambling casino for the night. The casino must be closed while in port.

About this time we began to hear rumors about Hurricane "Marilyn". The ship did not comment about the storm unless, during the tours of the ship's bridge, someone specifically asked for information. Then they

(continued on Page 26)





**Please Meet Dottie O'Bannon and Escort**



**Entering San Juan  
Harbor, Puerto Rico**

**Docked at St. Thomas  
U. S. Virgin Islands**





pointed to a small weather map on the wall that showed her position. We were in no danger at the time but did not wish to share time with her.

On the island of St. Croix we visited the Whim Plantation Museum. It was a partially restored 18th century sugar cane plantation. On the grounds of the plantation were the remains of a very old windmill. When the production of sugar cane was at its peak, there were over 250 of these windmills dotting the island. They were used to provide power for processing the cane. As we traveled around the island, we saw many other windmill relics. We also visited the site where Christopher Columbus landed on St. Croix. It was a pretty, sandy, completely undeveloped beach. For the alcoholics among us, we stopped at the Cruzan Rum Distillery. It didn't appear to me to be too clean a place, but the product tasted good. We landed at Frederiksted but traveled across the island to Christiansted for shopping. It was a pretty city, at least down by the harbor, where we bought more gifts for the coming holidays. We boarded the boat by the 5:30 p.m. deadline and prepared for our voyage back to Miami.

The accommodations, service and food were excellent. There was one little touch that my wife appreciated. Each night while we were at dinner, or some time later, the Cabin Steward came in and turned down the sheets on our bed. At the same time, he would take a towel, fashion it into some kind of animal and adorn it with some item of ours that he found in our cabin. The "Sculptures" really made us laugh. A sample is shown



in the photograph below.

Ed Chan and I represented the 461st Bomb Group in the talent show. Ed played a Sing-Along with his harmonica. I told the story of "Rinderella". On Thursday night they treated us to a late night "Gala Buffet". What a spread!!!! Everything was carved or made of edible food (See picture below). We "Old Folk" went to bed. We couldn't stay up that late nor could we fill our stomachs that late at night.

We again settled down for a two day rest aboard "Celebration" on our way to Miami. The weather was again beautiful all the way back. Nobody was thinking of Hurricane "Marilyn" except the people on the Virgin Islands. Three days after we left St. Thomas she hit. The reports indicated that 80 percent of the island was destroyed. We were lucky. We dodged another bullet and the members of the 461st Bomb Group had a wonderful time on their 1995 Reunion.

### We're Glad Hagar Didn't Go On the Cruise!!





## Mail Call (continued)

Dear Editor;

November 20, 1995

In the issue of the "Liberaider" June 1995, Volume 12, No. 1, on Page 14, you state that the Group Directory shows that 2nd Lt. William R. Diggs was the pilot of Crew #71. Lt. Diggs was pilot of Crew #72 which I was on as engineer/top turret gunner.

I performed a RASK and wrote to his son sending information in several letters. He was very pleased.

I am enclosing a picture of Crew #72 and names of our crew members.

I hope this clarifies your directory.

Sincerely,  
Walter E. Jazwa

Corrected list of crew members:

|                      |             |
|----------------------|-------------|
| William R. Diggs     | Pilot       |
| Donald W. Hylton     | Co-Pilot    |
| Kenneth S. Boggs     | Navigator   |
| Donald A. Ashby, Jr. | Bombardier  |
| Walter E. Jazwa      | Engineer    |
| Mike G. Kuhar        | Radio Oper. |
| Roy V. Allen         | Ammo/Gunner |
| Gust A. Karalis      | Ammo/Gunner |
| Gerald A. Bombardier | Ammo/Gunner |
| Lester W. Shea, Jr.  | Ammo/Gunner |

Editor's Note: Thank you Walter for your letter and picture. I can't use the picture because the Xerox copy is not of good enough quality. I can use the information on the correct names of the crew members. Everyone is shown properly in the directory except for William Diggs, Pilot.

I also want to thank you for writing to your pilot's son. I'm sure the RASK has made you both feel good.

I received your letter when the "Liberaider" was about to go to the printer. I made arrangements to get it included because I also included a letter from Lt. Diggs' son on Page 18 of this Issue of the "Liberaider"

He sent his letter to thank me for my help in contacting members of his father's crew. Now, for very little effort we all feel good. Thanks again for the RASK (Random Act of Senseless Kindness).



## CHAFF

### Lost B-24 Found in Brazil

During July, Reuters carried a news story about a B-24 Liberator bomber, which had disappeared I I April 44 during a flight from Trinidad to Belem, Brazil. The plane was found in a mountainous jungle near the mouth of the Amazon river by a Brazilian Army Patrol. Some bone and scraps of leather were still at the crash site. A fifty member U.S. forensic team arrived in Belem on 4 Jul 1995 to identify what remains are left.

From 460th BG Newsletter "Black Panther"

## HUMOR

Little Girl: "Grandfather, make like frog."

Grandfather: "What do you mean, make like a frog?"

Little Girl: "Mommy says we're going to make a lot of money when you croak!"



May the saddest days of the future

Be no worse than the happiest days of the past

Irish Proverb



My you be in Heaven a half hour

Before the devil knows your dead

Irish Blessing





TAPS  
MAY THEY REST IN PEACE FOREVER



July 1995 - October 1995

**PASSING IN REVIEW**

(From the 451st Bomb Group's "Ad-Lib")

Throughout the years we've seen them pass,  
in ranks both straight and true.  
To close each day as soldiers will,  
by passing in review.  
We watch our friends come marching by,  
and note their thinning ranks.  
We see them march in perfect step,  
and salute in silent thanks.  
The bugle sounds it's clarion call,  
for all of us to hear.  
The sound of "Taps" means all is well,  
day's end is drawing near.



| SQ  | Name                 | Hometown       | MOS  | Serial Number | Date of Death |
|-----|----------------------|----------------|------|---------------|---------------|
| HDQ | Clark, Alson E.      | Sequim, WA     | 4822 | 01549683      | 3 Mar 89      |
| 764 | Nahkunst, Edward A.  | Richardson, TX | 1092 | 0705770       | 6 Sep 95      |
| 765 | Hill, Charles O.     | Dallas, TX     | UNK  | UNK           | 1970          |
|     | Decker, Richard C.   | Canton, OH     | UNK  | 0718081       | 10 Oct 77     |
| 766 | Avery, Wilfred I     | Mishawaka, IN  | 513  | 06990532      | 13 Jul 95     |
|     | Ledendecker, Carl H. | Glasgow, KY    | 1092 | 0835781       | 12 Oct 95     |
| 767 | Ashbrook, Walter J.  | Marlette, MI   | 748  | 35490880      | 11 Mar 95     |
|     | Bolin, Richard H.    | Rupert, WV     | 612  | 35602731      | 4 Jul 95      |

**Men Returning From Detached Service**  
**July 1995 - October 1995**

- 764 Remo L.H. Bacchi, 4794 Mt. Almagosa Drive, San Diego, CA 92111  
William J. Ritz, 3108 Western Acres, El Campo, TX 77437  
Frank B. Rosenau, 41 Blueberry Hill Road, W. Redding, CT 06896
- 765 Julius A. Correale, 1015 SE 16th Street, Cape Coral, FL 33990
- 766 Lyman B. Caldwell, 1 Buckskin Drive, Bowling Green, FL 33854
- 767 Paul H. Ballard, 4613 Brandi Way, Denair, CA 95316

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

Editor's Note: The following is a continuation of Chapter XI of our history and covers selected sections of the summary for August 1944.

### **Mission #85** **18 August 1944**

#### **Target: Alibunar Airdrome, Yugoslavia**

The Mission of 18 August was the first of four missions destined to be flown against German held airdromes during the last half of August. The target was the airdrome at Alibunar, Yugoslavia. Most of the fragmentation bombs dropped on this mission covered a wide area across the north end of the airdrome, while others fell in the southwest area and continued northwest to the center of the landing ground. Nine enemy aircraft received direct hits and three others received near misses. A total of fifty five enemy aircraft were counted from the photographs taken by this Group. With good weather and neither enemy fighters nor anti-aircraft defenses, all planes in the Group formation returned safely to the Base without damage or casualties.

### **Mission #86** **20 August 1944**

#### **Target: Szolnok Airdrome, Hungary**

On the frag mission of 20 August against the airdrome at Szolnok, Hungary, Lt. Colonel Knapp turned in his fourth consecutive highly successful mission of the month as Group leader. The bomb pattern started at the center of the south dispersal area and continued southeast across the target with an even pattern of strikes. Seven enemy aircraft received direct hits and near misses were scored on three others. The weather was good except for haze; the flak was slight, inaccurate, and heavy; and there was no enemy fighter opposition. Only one plane was damaged. All returned safely from the mission.

### **Mission 487** **24 August 1944**

#### **Target: Lobau Underground Oil Storage, Vienna, Austria**

Still hammering away at vital enemy installations.

This time the target was the underground oil installations at the Lobau Refinery near Vienna, Austria. Flying second in the Wing Formation, the Group dropped its 1000 pound general purpose bombs through the smoke from fires started by the lead Group, the 451st. Because of this smoke it was impossible to observe the full extent of the damage done by this Group. A close concentration of hits, however, fell through the center of the target and on underground storage facilities.

A long running fight was had with thirty four enemy fighters, eleven of which were destroyed. Sixteen of the twenty three bombers over the target were damaged by the exceptionally intense, accurate, and heavy flak which the enemy was able to aim under CAVU conditions. The plane piloted by 2nd Lt. Robert G Swinehart, one of the more experienced pilots in the Group, suffered a bad fuel leak and was lost over Yugoslavia returning to the Base.

### **Mission #88** **23 August 1944**

#### **Target: Markersdorf Airdrome, St. Polten, Austria**

The third frag job of the month against enemy airdromes. The target was the Markersdorf Airdrome at St. Polten, Austria. The first string of frags started at the southwest corner of the airdrome and continued northeast to the service apron; the second string fell across the western half of the airdrome. Seven enemy aircraft on the airdrome were hit and three other received near misses. Forty two enemy aircraft parked on the airdrome can be counted in the Group pictures.

Again enemy fighter opposition was encountered, Upward of seventy ME-109s and FW-190s were seen between Lake Balaton and the target. As a result of repeated attacks, five of these were destroyed, six probably destroyed, and one damaged. The cover provided this Group by the P-51s on this mission was exceptionally good. There was no flak at the target. The plane piloted by 2nd Lt. Gordon W. Rosencrans Jr. was set on fire by enemy fighters. More than half of the crew



members were seen to bail out from the plane.

For the second time since the Group had been operating in the Mediterranean Theatre of Operations, a strange airplane joined the bomber formation on this mission. At 461 25' North and 151 52' East a black B-17 with white vertical stabilizers and elevators joined the formation and flew a wing position for approximately thirty minutes. At the end of that time it fired upon the formation and then turned away when the fire was returned.

**Mission #89**  
**24 August 1944**

**Target: Ferrara Railroad Bridge, Italy**

For its 89th Mission the Group returned to the target area of its first really great mission. Not since Good Friday, 7 April 1944, had the Group been back to Ferrara, Italy. The target for the mission of 24 August 1944 was a railroad bridge north of the City. The bridge was missed but considerable damage was done in the immediate target area. Some of the bombs fell in a small industrial area south of the bridge; others started large fires, probably in a power house in the industrial area southwest of the bridge; and still others hit the south elevated railroad bridge cutting the tracks in several places.

Ferrara flak lived up to its highly respected reputation. Nineteen of the twenty five aircraft over the target were hit by flak, one man was injured, and 2nd Lt. John R. Wren was compelled to bail his crew out a few miles north of the bomb line at Rimini.

**Mission #90**  
**26 August 1944**

**Target: Bucharest, Otopeni Airdrome, Romania**

By the 26th of August, Romanian had requested an armistice with Russia and Romanian soldiers were fighting the Germans in the city of Bucharest. North of that city at the Otopeni Airdrome, the Germans were using the landing strips for two purposes: (1) As a place to set down large transports bringing in reinforcements; (2) As a place from which to launch aerial attacks against the city of Bucharest. The mission of the 461st Bombardment Group for the day was that

of post holing the two landing strips on the Otopeni Airdrome with 500 pound general purpose bombs.

First reports of the results of this mission clearly indicated that Lt. Colonel Knapp had failed miserably in his effort to lead five consecutive exceptionally successful mission during the month of August. With CAVU weather and in the absence of both anti-aircraft and enemy fighter opposition only 4.6 per cent of the bombs were dropped on the briefed aiming point. Photographs of the mission revealed that two enemy airplanes, one of which was six engine transport, were destroyed on the ground, but most of the bombs fell across barracks, the administration building, and the main highway leading from the airdrome to Ploesti. Only two airplanes were damaged on this mission but still another crew was lost when 2nd Lt. Howard G. Wilson, who was flying one of the two damaged planes, was forced to bail his crew out over Yugoslavia when returning from the mission.

A few days after this mission, the City of Bucharest was completely cleared of German resistance by the Rumanians and the Russians. Shortly thereafter approximately 1100 United Nations' Flying Officers and Men were released from prisons in Bucharest and returned to Headquarters of the Fifteenth Air Force. Among these were part or all of the personnel of four different crews lost by the 461st over Romania. When these individuals returned to the Group, they enthusiastically reported that our Group had broken the backbone of German resistance in Bucharest on the 26th of August. The bombs from our planes had practically missed their target, but they had destroyed the headquarters, the transportation equipment, the heavy guns, and a great deal of the personnel and munitions concentrated by the enemy in the area covered by our bombs.

**Mission #91**  
**27 August 1944**

**Target: Venzone Viaduct, Italy**

On the 27th of the month, Lt. Colonel Applegate, in leading a mission against the Venzone Viaduct, Italy, proved that Lt. Colonel Knapp's accomplishment leading a formation in really hitting a bridge at Avignon, France, on the first mission of the month was no fluke. The score

on the Avignon Bridge had been 73.1 percent; the score on the Venzone Viaduct was 73.9 percent.

**Mission #92**  
**28 August 1944**

**Target: Szolnok/Szajol Railroad Bridge, Hungary**

On the 28th of August, Colonel Glantzberg took his turn at leading the Group on an excellent mission against a railroad bridge. The target was the Szajol Railroad Bridge at Szolnok, Hungary. The Group bombardier, Now Captain King, continued to demonstrate his ability to knock down bridges. The score on this mission was 55.1 percent.

**Mission #93**  
**29 August 1944**

**Target: Szeged Marshalling Yard, Hungary**

Group Operations Officer Donovan, leading the Group formation for the first time after his promotion to Major, finished off the twentieth and last mission for the month in an excellent manner when 49.5 percent of the bombs were dropped within the prescribed area on the marshalling yards at Szeged, Hungary. After the formation had begun its bomb run a malfunction was discovered in the bomb sight of the lead airplane. This required the Group to make a 360' circle during which the lead was taken over by the deputy lead airplane. Six of the planes in the formation did not circle the target but left the formation to bomb the first alternate target, the marshalling yard at Subotica, Yugoslavia.

**Missing In Action**

Editor's Note: The following crews were lost during August, 1944. Only the name of the pilot is shown to conserve space.

| <u>Rank</u> | <u>Pilot's Name</u>       | <u>Date</u> | <u>Target</u> |
|-------------|---------------------------|-------------|---------------|
| 2nd Lt.     | Robert E. Schweisberger   | 8/03/44     | Friedrichafen |
| 2nd Lt.     | Robert E. Sterrett        | 8/07/44     | Blechhammer   |
| 2nd Lt.     | Thomas C. Moore           | 8/17/44     | Ploesti       |
| 2nd Lt.     | Robert G. Swinehart       | 8/22/44     | Vienna        |
| 2nd Lt.     | Gordon W. Rosencrans, Jr. | 8/23/44     | Markersdorf   |
| 2nd Lt.     | John R. Wren              | 8/23/44     | Ferrara       |
| 2nd Lt.     | Harold O. Wilson          | 8/26/44     | Bucharest     |

**Killed In Action**

| <u>Rank</u> | <u>Name</u>       | <u>Date</u> | <u>Target</u> |
|-------------|-------------------|-------------|---------------|
| F/0         | James H. Cain     | 8/12/44     | Genoa         |
| 2nd Lt.     | Robert L. Hoffman | 8/12/44     | Genoa         |
| 2nd Lt.     | Eugene C. Starkey | 8/12/44     | Genoa         |
| 2nd Lt.     | Calhoun I Hall    | 8/12/44     | Genoa         |
| S. Sgt.     | Shannon N. Seiber | 8/12/44     | Genoa         |
| S. Sgt.     | Thomas J. Dinaro  | 8/12/44     | Genoa         |
| S. Sgt.     | Witmer G. Poling  | 8/12/44     | Genoa         |
| S. Sgt.     | Richard M. Kehoe  | 8/12/44     | Genoa         |
| S. Sgt.     | John P. Hansen    | 8/12/44     | Genoa         |
| S. Sgt.     | Myron D. Layborn  | 8/12/44     | Genoa         |

### **Officially Declared Dead**

| <b><u>Rank</u></b> | <b><u>Name</u></b> | <b><u>Date</u></b> | <b><u>Target</u></b> |
|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|----------------------|
| 1st Lt.            | William J. Barnes  | 7/12/44            | Nimes                |
| 1st Lt.            | Pfilmer W. Larson  | 7/12/44            | Nimes                |
| 1st Lt.            | Edward H. Brennan  | 7/12/44            | Nimes                |
| 1st Lt.            | John H. Layton     | 7/12/44            | Nimes                |
| S. Sgt.            | Lloyd Agee         | 7/12/44            | Nimes                |
| Sgt.               | Daniel R. Hoch     | 7/12/44            | Nimes                |
| S. Sgt.            | Robert E. Anderson | 7/12/44            | Nimes                |
| S. Sgt.            | Henry H. Sievers   | 7/12/44            | Nimes                |
| S. Sgt.            | Jack G. Steles     | 7/12/44            | Nimes                |
| Cpl.               | Benjamin Botha     | 7/12/44            | Nimes                |

### **Awards and Decorations**

Editor's Note: As a practical matter, I cannot present the actual citations which accompanied each of these awards. Therefore, the following is a summary which reflects the number of awards that were presented during August 1944.

### **Distinguished Flying Cross**

There were 44 Distinguished Flying Crosses awarded in August. In addition, 3 members of the Group received an Oak Leaf Cluster for their DFC. A typical citation for the DFC reads as follows:

"For extraordinary achievement in aerial flight against the enemy in the North African and Mediterranean Theatres of Operations. Throughout the extensive air offensive against the targets of vital strategic importance deep within hostile territory, the personnel listed below, through their aggressiveness and courage, have consistently aided in the success of combat operations. Against heavy opposition from both aggressive and persistent fighter aircraft fire, with their planes frequently seriously damaged by enemy fire, they have battled their way through to their targets, defeating the enemy in the air and destroying his vital installations on the ground. Through severe and adverse weather conditions, over treacherous mountain terrain, they have continually surmounted overwhelming obstacles for successful completions of their assigned missions to attack and destroy the enemy. Through their outstanding leadership and personal example, completely disregarding their personal safety at times of great danger, though at times seriously wounded in the heroic performance of their duties, they have contributed to the ultimate final defeat of the armed forces of the enemy. Their conspicuous and outstanding achievements in these many missions against the enemy have upheld the highest traditions of the military service, thereby reflecting great credit upon themselves and the Armed Forces of the United States of America.

### **The Silver Star**

Editor's Note: During the month of August, 1944 five Silver Stars were awarded to members of the 461st Bomb Group. This decoration is the fourth highest award that can be bestowed upon members of the Air Force. Only 15 Silver Star Medals were awarded in the 461st Bomb Group during its tour of duty. The personal actions that led to the award of this decoration were varied. The recipients of the awards were as follows:

| <u>Rank</u> | <u>Name</u>            | <u>Squadron</u> | <u>Date</u>    | <u>Location</u> |
|-------------|------------------------|-----------------|----------------|-----------------|
| 2nd Lt.     | Mac L. Lucas           | 764th           | 26 June, 1944  | Austria         |
| Col.        | Frederic E. Glantzberg | H'qtrs          | 15 July 1944   | Rumania         |
| 1st Lt.     | Edward F. Veiluva      | 764th           | 26 June, 1944  | Austria         |
| S. Sgt.     | James B. Jones         | 764th           | 25 July, 1944  | Austria         |
| Col.        | James B. Knapp         | 767th           | 9 August, 1944 | Hungary         |

### The Legion of Merit

Editor's Note: This decoration ranks very close to the Silver Star. There was a single award during the month of August. There were only four of these medals awarded within the 461st Bomb Group. The citation reads as follows:

"By direction of the President, under the provisions of Army Regulations 600-45, as amended, The Legion of Merit was awarded by the Theatre Commander to the following named personal for exceptionally meritorious conduct in the performance of outstanding services:

Delmas H. Cowley, 32923480, Sergeant, 766th Bombardment Squadron, for service during the month of May 1944. He entered service from Astoria, Long Island, New York.

Editor's Note: I tried once before to get someone to provide more details about the award of The Legion of Merit Delmas Cowley died in 1986. Is there anyone else that is familiar with the circumstances leading up to this award that can tell the story? It would be interesting to everyone in the 461st. Please step forward and tell the story.



## LYON, FRANCE (Supply Missions) SYNOPSIS

Editor's Note: On Page 35 of the June 1993 "Liberaider" I showed a picture of a burning B-24 on a taxi strip at Lyon, France. I asked for someone to tell the story behind the picture. I received several responses that were printed on Pages 10-12 of the December 1993 Issue. The last of these was sent in by Ray Grew of the 764th BS. Recently I heard from Ray on another subject but he included the following article taken from the 451st Bomb Group publication. It sheds a little more light on the supply missions to Lyon.

**ISSUED BY AAF-RAF PUBLIC RELATIONS**  
**Thursday, 19 October 1944**

### **LIBERATORS RUN SUPPLY MISSIONS TO FRANCE**

This is another of those "how was it done" yarns, concerning the big-bellied B-24 Liberators of a 15th Army Air Force Wing, the 7th Army, the Tactical Air Force and the critical days of September 10 to October 5,

when the 7th Army and the fighter-bombers were almost stopped in southern FRANCE for want of aviation gas, oil, bullets and bombs.

The 7th Army was plunging up the RHONE Valley under the direct support of the Tactical Air Force, and taking everything in stride. The situation was promising. Then came the eternal question of supplies for the all-important fighter-bombers, for the air superiority had to be maintained if success of the 7th was to be assured.

There were plenty of supplies in the ships off the wrecked port of MARSEILLES, and there were even considerable stocks on the docks. But to unload and then transport over the cratered roads leading from MARSEILLES would take days to reach the emergency flying fields in and near LYON, the temporary supply center for the fighters. And time was figured in hours and minutes.



So they called Major General Nathan F. Twining, Commanding General of the 15th AAF, who in turn called Colonel William L. Lee, Weatherford, Texas, and Jackson, Miss., the Wing Commanding Officer. Colonel Lee ordered the heavy bombers of his Wing to be made ready immediately to run bombs, gas, oil, ammunitions to France.

On September 10 the first formation of Liberators, stripped of turrets and turret guns, took off from home fields loaded with supplies. Eleven hours later they landed at the LYON-BRON airfield. Officers and men and what help there was at the field unloaded the aircraft.

Portable pumps, part of the cargo, were rigged to the big Liberator's gas tanks and the precious fluid was pumped into empty drums. Just enough gas was left in the Liberators to enable them to make the return trip to Italy. As the drums were filled, the 500-pound bombs and .50 caliber ammunition unloaded, crews rushed then to fighter refueling points on the field. And the fighters took off to continue the support of the 7th, then well beyond Lyon.

The unprecedented conversion of heavy bombers into half-protected transport aircraft amazed the curious Frenchmen who came by the thousands to the air-drome to view the four-engined bombers which only five days before were blasting installations in the LYON area.

Discipline was strict for everyone. No smoking was permitted within 300 yards of a plane. Everyone had to police his own area, keeping the civilians away, and then get out as soon as the plane was unloaded.

All in all, between September 10 and October 2, the Liberators flew 704 transport sorties without escort, carrying more than 800,000 gallons of high octane gasoline and more than 1,000,000 rounds of ammunition for the Tactical Air Force.

As the ground situation improved, supplies were flown deeper into the interior, providing quicker supply for the hard-working fighter-bombers. The greatly extended supply lines of the 7th correspondingly lengthened supply for the supporting Tactical Air Force, but the promptness and thoroughness of the supplying Liberators took up the slack, and supply lines were maintained.

Total supplies transported by the Liberators: 847,046 gallons of aviation gasoline; 10,994 empty drums; 1,276,030 rounds of .50 caliber ammunition; 24,360 gallons of oil; 602 tons of bombs; 500 pounds of grease; and 90 fin crates.

Stories like this were put out by wire services and public relation departments in rampant and unbridled form. Though they did much to give the folks back home a sense of what was going on; there was not the detail, nor human experience, that we, as participants encountered. True, the media was hampered, as they are now with what are called, "bites" of both time and space to tell a story. But in our case we have the luxury of time - and retrospect - we can delve more into the particulars of that part of our history.

In that regard, I'm asking you for your stories about those supply missions. I won't say that we will be able to use all that are offered, but we can composite what we get and make them into a story that is more complete and historically documented.

### **Bomb Strike Photos**

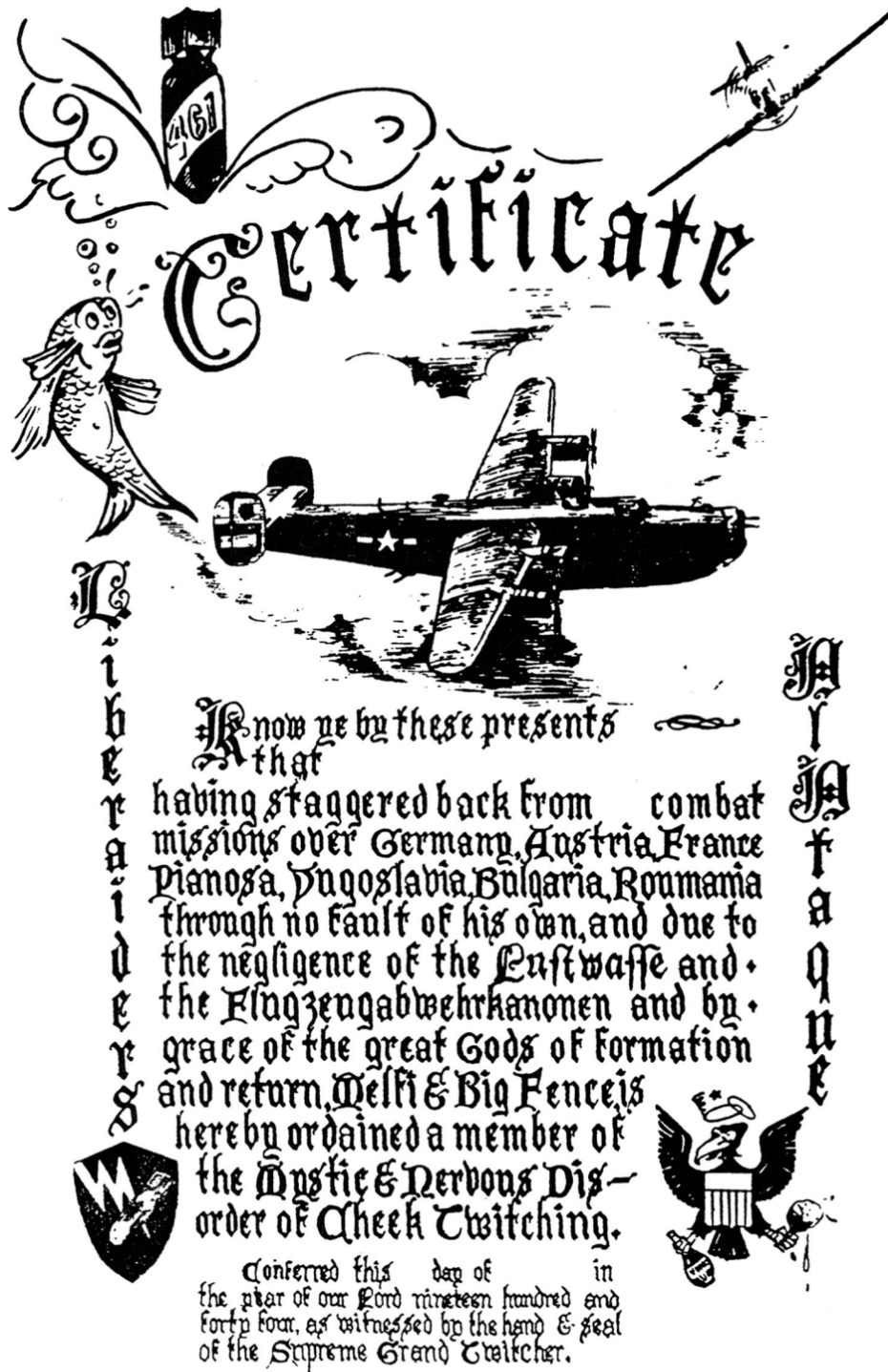
On Page 25 of the June 1995 Issue of "The Liberaiders" I requested that you send me any bomb strike photos you might have in your files and promised to return them after I had copied the ones I wanted. Several of you responded, for which I am grateful. However, I just received from Frank O'Bannon a large loose-leaf binder with a photo of every one of our missions. Therefore, I will NOT need you to send me any more. Thanks for responding as you did. From now on I will be able to show pictures of our more successful bombing missions.

### **POSTAL SERVICE TO REMEMBER POWS AND MIAS**

The Postal Service will issue a "POW & MIA" stamp this year honoring American veterans captured by hostile forces and terrorists, and remembering those who remain missing in action. The stamp will be issued during dedication ceremonies in Washington, DC, on Memorial Day, May 29, 1995. This is the second stamp issued by the Postal Service honoring America's POWs and MIAs. The six-cent "U.S. Serviceman" stamp, issued in 1970, read, "Honoring U.S. Servicemen Prisoners of War - Missing and Killed in Action," More than 67 million of that stamp were printed.

## "CHEEK TWITCHER'S" CERTIFICATE

On Page 13 of the June 1995 Issue of the "Liberaider", the narrative history of our Group states that each combat crew member that completed his missions was given a copy of the Group's "CHEEK TWITCHING" Certificate signed by Colonel Glantzberg. I couldn't remember exactly what this was so I asked someone to send me a copy. I got many, thank you very much! Here is an incompleated copy.



Editor's Note: The following was copied from the Collings Foundation Newsletter reporting on an "incident" that happened to their B- 17.

## OOPS (\*!#!)

It was a quiet Sunday evening about 9:15 p.m. when the phone rang. Mike Bachman, volunteer was on the phone from Norfolk, NE where the aircraft were visiting. "Hello Bob - Mike Bachman calling, Jon wanted me to advise you the B-17's returning from Dusk Patrol and they have a left landing gear problem. Jon doesn't think the gear will lock down and wants to know should they try a one gear locked and one gear unknown or both gear up belly landing?" This was the beginning of the Collings Foundation's version of the Apollo 13 mission.

Bob - "Has Jon tried the manual gear lowering system?"

Mike - "Yes, but it appears the screw jack which is part of both the manual and the regular system has broken or failed."

Mike - "Jon believes he can make a light landing to get a feel if the left gear is soft and likely to collapse but keep power on and take off again without any damage."

Bob - "Go ahead and do that while I try to get Tommy Garcia on the other line (Tommy is a real B-17 mechanical guru) to see what his suggestions are, - how much fuel do you have?"

Mike - "1200 gallons." While Jon's doing his go around and "light landing" I get Tommy on the phone for his suggestions. Mike - "Jon's made a light touchdown and he's sure the left hand gear will collapse." Bob - "Tell Jon to transfer fuel from the left hand side to the right hand side and then check if there are nearby airports with longer runways and more fire equipment than Norfolk Mike - "Sioux City's about 60 miles away and it is an Air Force Base as well as a Commercial airport."

Bob - "Let's get a hold of Sioux City Tower and see if they'll foam a runway for us. . ." Mike - "Spoke with the tower and the fire chief said he'd foam a runway."

Bob - "OK lets head to Sioux City and Tommy suggested we try to cool off #2 engine as much as

suggested we try to cool off #2 engine as much as possible because if that main gear is pushed back (rather than forward into the wheel well) it can drive the turbo charger up into the fuel tank. Also, Mike, ask Sioux City Tower to call me so I can speak directly to them and Jon."

A few minutes later the calls came in from Sioux City Tower - "Mr. Collings we have one of your birds heading this way and the Pilot is anxious to try to get on the ground while there is some light Our Fire Chief has decided he won't be able to foam the runway."

Bob - "Is the fire equipment in place in case we need them?"

Tower - "They will be in a couple of minutes. "

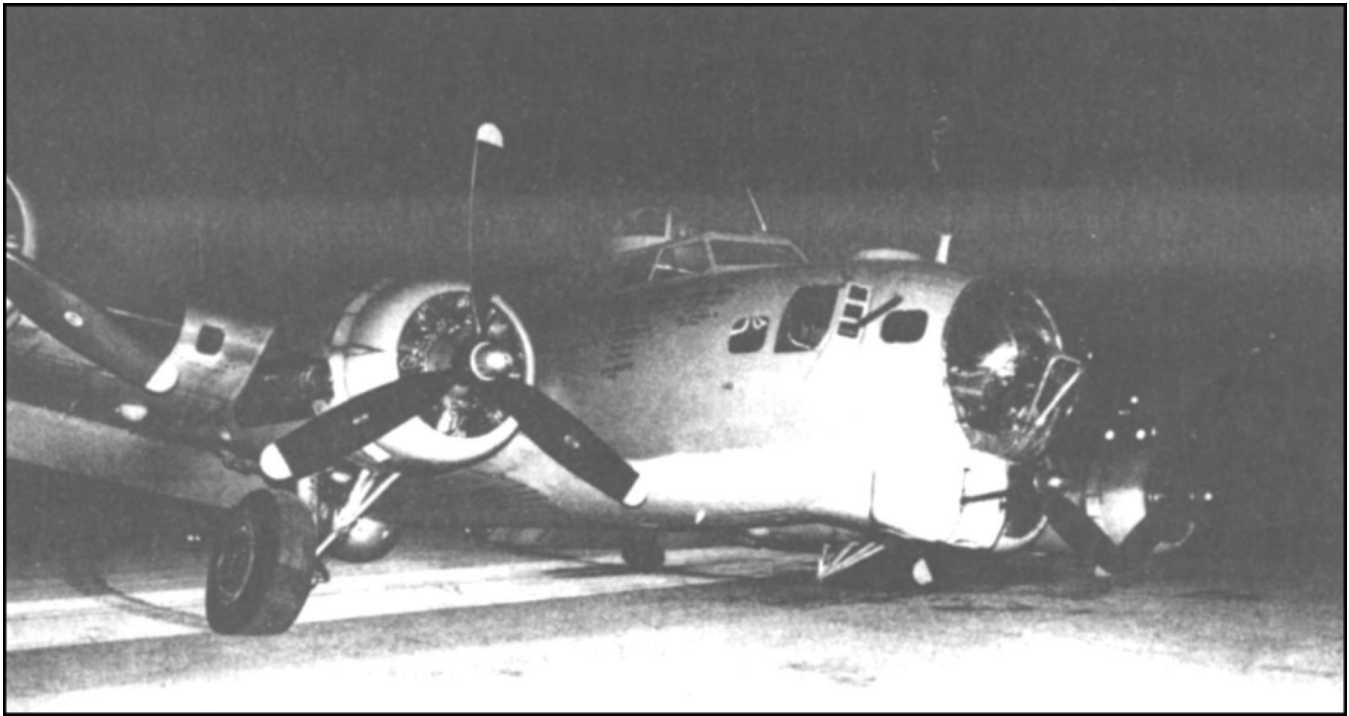
Bob - "Only thing we can do now is hope Jon makes one off his best landings and pray to God."

Tower - "B-17 is approaching the field ... It's two mile out 1500 feet. . . It's 800 feet . . . It's coming over the runway ... Flaring out ... Flaring out ... Setting on main gear . . . Looks good . . . Tail coming down . . . OH DAMN! . . . (Long pause) Left hand gear did collapse right at the end and the plane made a slow 90' arc at the end of the skid . . . No fire . . . Everyone's out. . just a minute I'll get a report from the chief .. Everybody'

fine not even a scratch on anyone." It was now 9:45 p.m. It would take another 6 hours before the crews and crane would lift Nine-O-Nine's left wing onto the back of a flatbed trailer and the truck serving as the left main gear would drive the aircraft off the runway. It would take 19 1/2 days of feverish effort to: A) Repair the wingtip, B) Replace the flap, Q Repair the aileron, D Replace 2 propellers (#1 and #2), E) Check out the #1 and #2 engines, F) Replace the broken screw jack and assorted drag links, G) Replace a couple of broken oi and hydraulic hoses, H) Replace damaged exhaust and turbo covers, 1) Repair the damage done by the crane operator.

It is truly incredible how rugged this aircraft is, and we are thankful that no one was injured. The Nine-O-Nine joined our tour again in less than 20 days from the time the incident happened (in an accident people are injured in an incident no one is injured)

(Photograph of Damaged Plane On Next Page).



**The B-17 "Nine-O-Nine" shortly after it's unscheduled and bumpy landing in Sioux City**

**"Nine- O-Nine"**  
**42-31909**  
**B-17G 30-BO**

"Nine-O-Nine" has been in the news for some time on flying tour and most recently, her mishap in Sioux City. It's time we know more about her. She was assigned to the 323rd squadron of the 91st Bomb Group on the 24th of February 1944. "Nine-O-Nine" was destined to become the group's most successful Fortress. The ship was named by radio man Jack Grosh, on Art Klinger's crew, after the three digits ending the serial number. Jack also designed the cartoon motif of Columbus riding a bomb and thumbing his nose at the Nazis but it was Tony Starcer who translated this sketch into one of the most famous nose arts of all.

"Nine-O-Nine" went on to survive the war in Europe having completed 140 missions. 126 without an abort due to mechanical problems. A superior tribute to the dedicated work of the ground crew of Master Sergeant Rollin Davis. During its long combat career the ship received 21 new engines, and 18 replacement Tokyo tanks. 15 main fuel tanks and countless man-hours of careful maintenance and patching up of battle damage sustained through the 1129 hours of flying time. "Nine-O-Nine" had included ten trips to Berlin during her service and dumped a total of 562,000 pounds of bombs. Uncle Sam surely recouped its investment in this Fortress.

Master Sergeant Davis was awarded a Bronze Star for his work - the honor was justly won and accepted on behalf of the ground crew. By November 1944 he had cared for four B-17's which had flown a total of 194 missions with only three turnbacks due to mechanical problems. Over 150 straight missions were flown before a Davis serviced B- 17 aborted. Fifty crewmen had safely completed their tours of duty in "Nine-O-Nine" during this period.

It might so easily have ended differently. After successfully completing 130 missions. "Nine-O-Nine" sustained damage to the number two engine resulting in a runaway propeller which eventually sheared off and sliced into the nose, just below the navigator's window Davis and his ground crew patched up the damage with three strips of aluminum which defaced the famous art emblem. Tony Starcer lost no time in getting to work to paint over the patches and re-complete his artwork to everyone's satisfaction.

Although many, many crews made successful missions in "Nine-O-Nine", five in particular completed substantial numbers in that plane. The first combat sortie was on the 25th of February to Augsburg with Charles Samuelson and it proved to be his only mission in the plane. Basil Hackleman's crew took "Nine-O-Nine" to Berlin on March 8th, the first ten trips for the plane was to that target. It was also the first of 15 missions his crew would complete in the plane. By the time Art



Klinger took over the ship on May 7th, for another trip to Berlin and had the nose art painted on, the ship had already completed at least 25 missions with ten different crews. Captain David Bramble completed his tour in "Nine-O-Nine" on 9 March, 1945 having flown to Oranienburg. He celebrated the event with what was described a "a medium buzz job" of the field on his return.

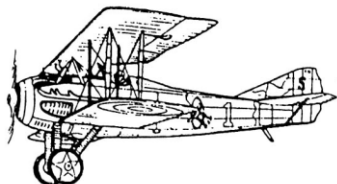
"Nine-O-Nine" took off for the last time from English soil on June 8, 1945, to head back to the USA and ultimately the smelter's torch at Kingman, Arizona. In 1987, one of the few remaining flyable Fortresses would take to the air again emblazoned with the famous "Nine-O-Nine" emblem. This was 44-83575. Davis and his team would be proud. One way or another "Nine-O-Nine" lives on. Is she an Imposter? Do we really care?

*Special Thanks to Ray Bowden, author B-17 Combat Crewmen & Wingmen.*

Editor's Note: The following regulations were copied from the 376th Bomb Group's newsletter "Intelligencer". Your editor makes no claims relative to the authenticity of this document nor does he believe the 376th BG will either.

## THE 1919 U.S. ARMY AIR SERVICE

### FLYING REGULATIONS



1. Don't take the machine into the air unless you are satisfied it will fly.
2. Never leave the ground with the motor leaking.
3. Don't turn sharply when taxiing; instead of turning short, have someone lift the tail around.
4. In taking off, look at the ground and the air.
5. Never get out of a machine with the motor running until the pilot relieving you can reach the engine controls.
6. Pilots should carry hankies in a handy position to wipe off goggles.
7. Riding on the steps, wings, or tail of a machine is prohibited.
8. In case the engine fails on takeoff, land straight ahead regardless of obstacles.
9. No man must taxi faster than a man can walk.
10. Do not trust altitude instruments.
11. Learning to gauge altitude, especially on landing.

12. If you see another machine near you, get out of its way.
13. No two cadets should ever ride together in the same machine.
14. Never run the motor so that the blast will blow on other machines.
15. Before you begin a landing glide see that no machines are under you.
16. Hedge-hopping will not be tolerated.
17. No spins on back or tail slides will be indulged in as they unnecessarily strain the machine.
18. If flying against the wind, and you wish to turn and fly with the wind, don't make the sharp turn near the round. You might crash!
19. Motors have been known to stop during a long glide. If pilot wishes to use motor for landing he should open throttle.
20. Don't attempt to force machines onto the ground with more than flying speed. The is bouncing and ricocheting.
21. Aviators will not wear spurs while flying.
22. Do not use aeronautical gas in cars and motorcycles.
23. You must not takeoff or land closer than 50 feet to the hanger.
24. Never take a machine into the air until you are familiar with its controls and instruments.
25. If an emergency occurs while flying, land as soon as possible.
26. It is advisable to carry a good pair of pliers in a position where both pilot and passenger can reach them in case of an accident.
27. Joy rides will not be given to civilians.



### ATTENTION

WHEN WRITING TO YOUR TREASURER USE HIS EASY TO REMEMBER NEW BOX NUMBER 461.

IF YOU WANT TO CORRESPOND WITH YOUR NEW EDITOR, WRITE TO:

DAVID NELSON  
715 CENTRAL - 106  
FARIBAULT, MN 55021

Editor's Note: The following article was copied from the 376th Bomb Group newsletter "Intelligencer". The 461st flew three bombing missions to Greece. If you participated in any of these missions you may be eligible to receive a Greek Medal. According to the article it won't be easy, but if you are "into" collecting medals then "Go For It"! The 461st missions to Greece are discussed at the end of the article.

### **WWH GREEK COMMEMORATIVE MEDAL**

Information and details for application for this medal were outlined in the Fall '93 issue of the *Liberandos Intelligencer*. Many of you applied for it, and have contacted me to tell me that you have never received it. After many un-answered letters to the Greek Embassy in Washington, I finally asked the help of my Congressman, and have received this information. The Embassy received hundreds of applications for the Medal, and sent those to the Greek Ministry of Defense, who advised them that the medal could be awarded only to those who participated in ground campaigns or air attacks on Greece during 1940 - 1945. Specifically with regards to the Air Force, only attacks or landings at Greek airfields are eligible. The required documents that must be submitted for application for the medal are the following:

1. A declaration that indicates years of service, the operations which the applicant participated in, or any other document which supports the right for awarding of a medal for service performed during 1940 - 1945. (Your discharge or service Record)
2. Certification from the U.S. Department of defense or a copy of the Log Book which indicates that the applicant participated or served in operation in Greece during the period above, as well as indicating the unit in which the applicant served.
3. Declaration stating that the applicant has never been convicted in any court in Greece.

Correspondence should be addressed to:

Air Attaché  
Embassy of Greece  
2228 Massachusetts Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20008

For further information or clarification, contact Lt. Col. (HAF) Konstantinos Iatridis at the Embassy:

Telephone: (202) 234-0561

### **THE 461ST MISSIONS TO GREECE**

The three missions to Greece, as described in the Official History of the 461st Bomb Group, are shown below.

Mission #71 28 July, 1944 - Railroad Station and Marshalling Yard, Phlorina, Greece.

Another chance for the jittery old crews and the completely inexperienced new crews to convert a "milk run" into a successful mission. This time the Group, led for the first time by the new Group Operations Officer, Captain Joseph N. Donovan, turned the trick by dropping 40.7 percent of the bombs on the briefed target. Greece became the ninth country in Europe in which the 461st had bombed when the railroad station and marshalling yard at Phlorina was hit with a good pattern of bombs.

Lt. Colonel Hawes flew the P-38 as an observer on this mission, but Colonel Glantzberg chose the spot of copilot in one of the last planes in the bomber formation. At the critique following the mission the Commanding Officer radiated his old confidence. Smilingly he told the crew members that he felt ten years younger after seeing the formation flying and the pattern bombing done that day.

The last paragraph of Intops Summary No. 388, dated 13 August 1944, read as follows:

"5. BOMB DAMAGE - A ground report recently received indicated the success of the attack of 28 July by B-24's of the 461st Bomb Group on Phlorina M/Y. This report states that the railroad station was badly damaged and casualties to the Germans approximately 250 killed, 750 wounded, many while waiting to en-train.

Mission # 106 24 September 1944 - Athens/ Eleusis Airdrome, Greece

By the 24th of the month the Group was back again to

flying combat missions. This mission was an attack on the Eleusis Airdrome, Athens, Greece, using 100 pound general purpose bombs. The bomb pattern started on the West edge of the dispersal area and continued South along the Eastside of the airdrome. Six enemy airplanes were destroyed on the ground.

Mission # 10725 September 1944 - Submarines in the area of Athens, Greece

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

Editor's Note: Remember, it is not enough to have been a member of the 461st Bomb Group to receive the medal. You have to have participated in at least one of these three missions to Greece. It may require that you flew on Mission # 106 since it was a Greek Airdrome.



**INTERNATIONAL  
B-24  
LIBERATOR CLUB**

The International B-24 Liberator Club is dedicated to preserving the history of the B-24 Liberator bomber and its derivatives. Consolidated Aircraft Company designed the Liberator in 1939 in response to the Army Air Corps' request for a long range bomber. The company produced over 18,000 of the twin-tailed aircraft for use during World War II at plants throughout the country including San Diego, California; Willow Run, Michigan and Fort Worth, Texas.

The club keeps alive the memories of its designers, crews and admirers and has done so since its creation in 1969. Started by the late Robert McGuire, a former B-24 combat photographer, the club has defended the Liberator's reputation for over 25 years.

Not considered the most attractive or graceful of World War II's flying arsenal, the Liberator nonetheless provided an incomparable service during the Second World War and during the Korean conflict.

The *Briefing*, the club's quarterly publication, is distributed to over 3,000 club members, as well as to schools, veterans organizations and museums worldwide. By sponsoring aircraft exhibits, flying displays and speaking engagements, the club continues to educate the public about an historic aircraft whose first mission took place long before many of today's citizens were born. Club membership is \$15 per year for the United States, \$18 overseas, and includes a subscription to the organization's highly acclaimed publication, *Briefing*.

For more information, contact:

George Welsh, Manager  
International B-24 Liberator Club  
15817 Bernardo Center Drive  
Suite 102, Box 124  
San Diego, CA 92127-2322  
Tel: Voice/FAX: (619) 679-1957



Editor's Note: Last Spring, after receiving the first installment of Felix Ramader's article regarding bombing missions in the Vienna area, I wrote him a letter asking him a couple of questions. This morning, November 30, 1995, I received his answers. I had figured out an answer to my first question during preparation of the June 1995 Issue of the "Liberator". It is his answer to the second question that I find interesting and will pass it on to you.

First of all, he has been a very busy man communicating with WWII Bomb Group personnel all over the world. This summer he was invited to attend the 484th Bomb Group Reunion in Dayton, OH. So, I can understand his tardiness in responding to my letter. Regarding this, he writes: "Concerning your letter of 5/18/95! My writing desk, I think I wrote you, looks like the Wiener Neustadt ME-109 Factory after the fifth attack of the 15th AAF. I'm now clearing up and arranging all the letters of some 15th AAF veteran's association groups and now I found your letter. I apologize my late answering"

My first question to him dealt with the scale of miles on the map he sent me. I figured out the answer.

The second question asked him to describe what it was like to be on the ground under all the flak fragments. Here is his answer.

"If the bomber formation approach Vienna from the southeast, over Ebergassing (15 miles from Vienna), the thirty flak batteries in the south of Vienna began to fire against the bombers. That was some 200 guns, each minute at least 10 shots, is more than 2,000 shells per minute. Then the shells exploded at 22,000 - 24,000 feet, each shell are maybe 60 - 70

fragments or around 130,000 fragments each minute. Maybe 30,000 hit the bombers, then 100,000 fragments fall whistling back to the ground each minute. Each fragment, little or great, had another sound. This was a singing in the air like thousands of bees. These fragments were dangerous for the civil peoples too. All had to go in the house or into slit trenches. But I found a wall at a house where I cannot be hit by the fragments. Each boy collected these fragments. I had a wooden box full with much fragments and 5 fragments of a 500 pound bomb. They were like a hand. After the war my mother told me to get away with that stuff, and I did".



## REUNION 1996

Salt Lake City, Utah

September 25 - 29, 1996



Salt Lake City is a beautiful, clean city with much to see and do, including free walking tours of Temple Square which is only a short walk from the hotel. You'll also be able to research your heritage at the Family Research Center.

- |                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|-------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Wednesday, September 25 | Registration, relaxation during the day. Dinner at Lion House, the restored home of Brigham Young.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Thursday, September 26  | Park City Tour. A historical look at the start of mining in Utah, shopping, squadron dinners.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| Friday, September 27    | Drive to Hill Air Force Museum. Visit Antelope Island and unique wildlife. Eat buffalo burgers.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Saturday, September 28  | Historical tour of Salt Lake City. Visit the Capitol and Brigham Young's Home. See Pioneer Monument at the mouth of Emigration Canyon. Reunion Banquet and Dance.                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Sunday, September 29    | Busy day. Memorial Service and buffet breakfast seating at the 9:30 broadcast of the Mormon Tabernacle Choir. Motor coaches to La Caille Restaurant, an 18th century French Chateau, for a four course continental breakfast. Then on to Snowbird for a tram ride to 11,000 feet for an expansive view of the area. Back to the hotel by 3:00 p.m. for goodbyes. |

If you choose to leave earlier, you can walk back to the hotel after the choir broadcast.

A full brochure with options and prices will be mailed out to all members soon after the first of the year.



## HUMOR

A man died and went to Heaven. St. Peter looked at his records and said, "You weren't all that good during your lifetime, but you weren't all that bad. Here's what I am going to do. If you can answer three questions correctly, I'll let you pass."

"Sounds good to me," said the man.

"First question: How many days in the week start with the letter T?"

"Four" he answered.

"How do you get four?" asked St. Peter.

"Tuesday, Thursday, today and tomorrow," answered the man.

"I'll accept that," responded St. Peter. "Now, how many seconds in a year?"

"12" said the man.

St. Peter asked, "Why do you think 12?"

"January second, February second ....."

"OK, I guess that's acceptable, but I must warn you, the last question is the most difficult, so think carefully. What is God's name?" asked St. Peter.

"Andy", said the man.

"You must be kidding! Why do you say Andy?" St. Peter replied.

"Because everyone always calls him that: Andy walk

with me, Andy talks with me, Andy tells me I am his own."

"You win! Welcome to Heaven."

~~~~~

I like my bifocals,

my dentures fit me fine,

my hearing aid is perfect,

but Lord, how I miss my mind.

Jim Sipple, 765th

Food For Thought

A man finds out what is meant by "spitting image" when he tries to feed cereal to his grandchild.

Wise are those who learn that "The 'Bottom Line' doesn't have to be 'Their Top Priority'".

The best way to cope with change is to help create it.

Hind sight is an exact science.

Ever notice that as soon as you make a mark in the world, someone shows up with an eraser?

There are three kinds of memory: good, bad and convenient.

Don't take life too seriously, it's not permanent.

Ever notice that food with half the calories costs twice as much.

Shoe



Part 2
CHRONICLES of a World War II
B-24 LIBERATOR BOMBER CREWMAN
by Mervin Dumdei, 766th BS

Our first plane was #54, which was named "Rough Rider." A nude cowgirl riding a bucking horse was painted on the nose of the plane. After each mission, a black bomb was also painted on the nose; if an enemy fighter was shot down, a swastika was painted at the location of the gunner who got credit for the kill. For each plane, three aircrews were normally assigned to it, so while two crews rested, the third one kept the aircraft in action against the enemy. Until the end of the war, I flew on the following missions which are listed in date order: Editor's Note: To conserve space, only selected missions are shown.

Most of our missions were flown as a Wing which consisted of four squadrons from each of four groups (16 squadrons in all). Each squadron had from 7 to 9 aircraft, so a typical air strike involved between 100 to 150 planes. The lead plane and the two deputy lead plane carried a bomb sight; all other aircraft dropped their bombs by toggle switch when they saw the lead plane drop its bombs. If the lead plane should be shot down or have to abort the mission, then one of the other two planes would take over.

The most dangerous and difficult of the 35 missions I flew was against the railroad marshalling yards at Munich, Germany on October 4, 1944. Our objective was to bomb the rail junctions at each end of the yards; we couldn't bomb the yards themselves because the enemy had located a prisoner-of-war camp in their midst.

Our group was assigned to fly at 23,000 feet, drop our bombs, and lead the enemy flak off the other three groups so they could take better aim on the target. The #4 plane in our squadron took a direct hit (some of the other men said it was hit by a bomb from the B-17's which were flying 5,000 feet above us). Regardless of what hit the plane, it blew up with parts and crew scattered in every direction. Rough Rider was just ahead and to the left (in the number 3 position) of the destroyed plane, so we had a clear view of the blast - I saw one of its engines with the propeller still spinning pass right behind us.

All of the planes in our squadron suffered hits; the #5, 96 and #7 planes took so much damage that they couldn't make it back over the Alps. After seven hours in the air, we finally made it back to base - only seven hours, but it seemed like forever. Our Squadron's crew chief told us the next day that we had a lot of holes in our plane. I didn't see them myself, but I didn't doubt his word either. Because of all the planes we lost in this raid, we weren't able to fly again for eight days.

On October 12 we bombed the railroad yards in Bologna, Italy (northern Italy was still under German control). It was a rather easy mission with only moderate and inaccurate flak. I think they gave us a milk run because we had five new aircrews with us. Unfortunately two bombers collided over the field upon our return; one of the planes crashed, killing nine men, but the other landed safely with only one crewman injured (the plane itself was damaged beyond repair).

On October 14, although we were assigned to strike Blechhammer, Germany, bad weather forced us to turn back. So we bombed our secondary target: a bridge at Bratislava, Czechoslovakia (Slovakia was a German controlled puppet-state). The flak was quite accurate, but fortunately light. And since we hadn't seen any German fighter planes, we were taking it easy - several of us were dozing, except Red Moore in the tail.

He was a real combat flyer who had washed out of the pilot's school. While we were napping, I heard him say something about German fighters over the intercom! Looking out the waist window I saw 40 to 50 German fighters. They had come up from Lake Balaton, Hungary, (This was a large enemy fighter base with a lot of planes, but not much fuel to fly them - quite ironic since it was also an enemy oil production center.) At the time, we only had four bombers left in our squadron since two had been shot down over Bratislava and a third had aborted the mission earlier.

Red was the first gunner to open fire; I saw his bullets hit the pilot of an Me 109 fighter plane. He slumped over in the cockpit with half his head missing. The plane spun off and down through the undercast, which gave Red the credit for the kill.

A few comments and thoughts are in order about

my friend Red: his real name was Melvin J. Moore, from, Greenville, Texas. He was married and the father of a little girl. Even though he was only 20 years old, it was his second marriage. He carried a nickel plated .38 revolver with him at all times. And he didn't smoke so he was always selling his cigarette allotment (the Army provided them to all servicemen) plus the ones his wife, Joelia, could send him. In fact, he sold everything else he could lay his hands on. He would draw clothing from the supply sergeant and turn around and sell it to the Italians in Cerignola. I recall that one day he went into town by himself (I usually went with him). Later we were sitting outside our tent when we saw this figure coming down the dirt road from town. As it drew nearer we recognized that it was Red, dressed only in his shorts and socks! - he had sold everything. The reason that I would often go with him was for his protection. There were two sections of town, one still loyal to the fascists and the other faction, the Monarchists, were friendly to the Allies. More money was to be made among the people who still believed in Musolini, so when you went there to deal, you needed someone else to watch your back. That's what I did -I'd stand guard while Red made his deals. He was quite an entrepreneur, since he would also loan money to the guys who gambled in the Enlisted Men's Club. Each \$10 loan had to be repaid with \$15 on payday. (The guys he didn't charge interest were myself and the Squadron Commander. Me, because I helped him in town, and Major Phillips because he saw to it that Red got his money on payday.) I don't know how much money he kept in his footlocker besides what he sent home each month, but it must have been a lot. But as we prepared to return to the States after the war, we took his money to the American Exchange Service in town and found out that over \$1,000 of his loot was counterfeit, which was his loss. He was a very good friend to me, like a brother. I saw him just once after the war. He had gone back to OCS school and then into pilot's school where he became a First Lieutenant flying jets. I guess he was probably killed in Korea, because it was about that time that my last letter to him came back undelivered after having been forwarded all over.

We struck a benzine plant in Linz, Austria (then a part of the 'Greater Reich') on October 16. Our bombs hit their target as smoke rose up to 15,000 feet. Enemy flak against our B-24's was surprisingly moderate and altogether inaccurate, which was most unusual since

the German Flakartillerie at Linz was almost always very good. Perhaps we should thank the B-17's flying above us since they were the ones who really caught it: I saw two of them spin down off our right side. As we left the target area, German fighters started to hit us, but our P-51's that escorted us engaged them. (Later we learned that our fighter pilots had shot down 19 German planes in a dogfight several miles behind us.

On November 7, 1944, our mission was to bomb the rail yards at Sarajevo, Yugoslavia. At that time, the Russians had overrun Rumania and Bulgaria and the British had liberated mainland Greece, so German Army Group E was in a full-scale retreat northward. We were supposed to slow them down. Since this was supposed to be a milk run, we were all fooling around back in the waist. Nobody was wearing flak suits or their flak helmets. And I was laying down on my stomach on the floor so that I could take pictures with port hole camera in the bottom of the plane. The other guys kidded around about how dangerous this mission was, and they piled their flak jackets all over my back and put three helmets on my head! Since we didn't get good aim on our first pass over the target, we circled for another run. But unknown to us, the Germans had brought in 88 mm flak guns overnight which were mounted on rail cars. By the time we came around for our second pass, the enemy fire was zeroed-in on us -one shell burst right in my face! The smoke and soot from the shell blackened my face, but it didn't get in my eyes since I was wearing goggles. But a piece of flak which could have torn my head off was stopped by the three flak helmets that my fellow crewmen had stuck on me. As it was, I suffered a minor head wound that Centanni thought was serious, and he nearly went crazy trying to tell the rest of the crew about it.

When we landed, they took me to the hospital at Cerignola where they had to put a small plate in my head. But the only ill-effects that I ever was a bad headache.

Our plane had a lot of holes in it, and one tire had been punctured. And when we landed, the plane went off the runway, breaking off one of the wings - that was the end of "Rough Rider". As we left the wrecked plane, I forgot my leather flight jacket and an extra .32 caliber revolver which I carried in the pocket (most of us carried an extra hand

gun besides the .45 which we were issued). Later, when Red went back to retrieve my jacket, someone had swiped both it and the gun.

"Full Boost" was the name of our next plane. It had a picture of a naked girl with propellers spinning on her nipples, which was painted on the nose of the aircraft.

We received tetanus booster shots, and in those days, they used the same needle on as many soldiers as possible. One of the guys must have been infected with hepatitis because our squadron was decimated by the disease. Red was the first member of our crew to come down with it, then I got it on November 22, 1944, which landed me back in the Cerignola hospital for three weeks.

There was a rather heavy-set nurse at the hospital (her name escapes me) who was always trying to put the make on the troops who weren't too sick or wounded. I can still remember seeing her in bed with several guys having sex - right there in the ward! And there was another pretty and petite nurse that all the guys had their eyes on, but the male orderly warned all the guys to keep their hands off since she was involved with the Commanding Officer of the hospital.

Finally on December 12, 1944 I was released from the hospital and returned to my squadron.

Our pilot, 1st Lt. Ward flew a mission against Brux, Germany on December 16th with a new crew since the rest of the squadron was quarantined due to diphtheria. His bomber was shot down, but he managed to bail out over northern Italy. He evaded the enemy for forty days until being captured by the Fascist Italians, who turned him over to the Gestapo.

On December 17, 1944 I finally made it back up in the air, but we had to turn back. Never the less, we bombed a secondary target - a bridge in northern Italy. Since our plane didn't have a bombsight, McVicar aimed with his toes and hit the bridge dead center! I took good pictures of the damage, so we still got credit for a mission with our new pilot, Lt. Michael K. La-Rock. As for the rest of the 461st Group, they ran into 200 German fighters, shot down eight against the loss of just one bomber.

We raided an oil installation at Blechhammer, Germany on December 19, 1944 and although the flak

was heavy we suffered only a few small holes in the plane. On the return trip we ran low on fuel so we landed on the island of Vis, which is off the coast of Yugoslavia. The airstrip was in the middle of some mountains which were controlled by Marshall Tito, the commander of the Yugoslav (communist) partisan forces. When we landed, our engineer, Tommy Yates, checked the fuel in the tanks and found 5 gallons in one, 3 in another, and not more than 30 in all of them. Considering that a B-24 bomber burns 200 gallons per hour, we only had a few minutes of gas left when we landed. Mike mentioned that he felt cold all the way back, and later discovered that his heated suit had been cut by shrapnel over the target - it had passed just under his legs.

All the way back to the base we had to fly low because of the heavy overcast. In spite of the detour to Yugoslavia, we were back in action a week later.

For our Christmas dinner, the Army Air Corps served us turkey, but unfortunately it tasted spoiled.

On December 27, 1944 we attacked the Venzone Viaduct (a large bridge) in northern Italy. We carried six 1000 pound bombs, but missed the target. Thank goodness it was a short flight of just six hours, since we were chilled even with our heated flight suits on, by an air temperature of -50°. Neither enemy flak nor fighters were anywhere to be seen.

We raided the railway marshalling yards at Trento, Italy on January 4, 1945 but again we missed the target. We turned away before the moderate, but inaccurate flak could get to us - pretty much of a milk run.

For the first time our group attempted a radar guided (PFF) attack against the marshalling yards at Vienna on January 15, 1945. Unfortunately, the Group had to abort the mission when the radar malfunctioned on the lead bomber. So we bombed our secondary target at Treviso, Italy which is near Venice. The 766th missed the target, but the rest of the Group hit it. We only encountered light flak and five enemy fighters which observed us, but did not attack. It turned out to be an easy mission considering how dangerous raids on Vienna can be.

On February 1, 1945 again we flew off towards Vienna to bomb an oil refinery at Moosbierbaum. But

again our crew had to abort the mission because a turbo went out on our plane at high altitude. The rest of the Group proceeded on to bomb the marshalling yards at Graz, Austria. That wasn't the end of our problems: both our radar and radio broke down. We didn't dare drop down through the clouds lest we should crash into the mountains of Italy or Yugoslavia - there really wasn't any way of knowing where we were.

At last we came to a break in the clouds and saw water below us. So we jettisoned our bombs and continued flying until we saw land ahead of us. Mike figured it was one of three countries: Spain (in which case we would be interned until the end of the war), northern Italy (where we would be taken prisoner), or southern France. Fortunately it was Nice, France which was just a few miles into friendly territory on the Italian frontier.

Since we were running low on gas, we had to land or bail out. Landing would seem like the obvious choice, but it was a small strip on the beach used by cargo planes and fighters. Mike was a good pilot who had all the confidence in the world, so he took us down for a nice, safe landing.

We stayed at the Negresso Hotel which was the gleaming white building that we first saw as we approached Nice. Since Mike could speak both French and Italian, he managed to get rooms for all of us. Red and I shared a room which didn't have a toilet, but it did have a bidet for the women; we thought it was very unusual. Red said, "This thing wouldn't be worth a damn if you were constipated."

Although we weren't behind the lines, we opened our escape packs that were carried in the knee pocket of our flight suits. Each pack included \$50 American cash, some food, and a rice paper map. They were made from rice paper so that they could be eaten if we were captured. The map showed the locations of people who could help us to escape.

The hotel's bartender 'helped' us convert the dollars into francs and he tried to cheat us, but Mike set him straight in a hurry. Since the money was only to be used for emergencies, the Group took the \$50 out of our paychecks when we returned to our base.

Tommy Yates finally persuaded the French who ran the base at Nice to give us 200 gallons of fuel. It was-

n't enough to get home so we took off for Marseilles on the morning of February 3rd to take on more gas.

When we got to Marseilles, they refilled our plane with gas. But since they didn't have any sleeping quarters for us, they told us we'd have to sleep under the plane on the concrete. Mike was pretty disgusted with their lack of hospitality, so he said, "For 2 cents I'd fly back to Nice and land on the short runway again." Who was I to argue. I gave him a franc which was about 2 cents. Then Mike told the officer in charge that we were flying back to Nice.

That evening in Nice, some of the Aussies and English were teasing Mike, saying "if that was all the better you can do at buzzing, you might as well stay on the ground." Well he didn't take their kidding too lightly. So when we took off from Nice the next morning, he really gave them a show. He aimed our plane straight at the control tower and raised up only at the last second, with our prop wash nearly blowing the tower over. The English controller in the tower got on the radio and told him, "I say yank, next time you come by, let me know and I'll open the window so you can fly right through." I think Mike had the last laugh after all.

Our home base was socked in by bad weather so we landed at Rome for the day. When we finally landed at Cerignolia, the Group Commander, the Provost Marshall, and the MP's were all there waiting for us. We were all temporarily grounded and interrogated while they decided whether or not to court marshal us for our great but 'unauthorized' 5-day leave.

The Group dropped the charges since they needed experienced bomber crews. So out of the flying pan and into the fire. On February 8th we flew to Vienna again. We bombed a motor depot from 26,300 feet (maximum altitude for a B-24, but the B-17's could go over 30,00 feet). Since the target was obstructed by clouds, we dropped our bombs using PFF (radar). Conversely the enemy flak batteries couldn't see us, so very little of I came close. Considering that it was against Vienna, the mission ended up being pretty easy.

Editor's Note: About this time the war in Europe was beginning to wind down. The Germans were being pushed out of northern Italy and the Russians were overrunning the Germans in eastern Europe. The Fifteenth Air Force began a long series of missions

directed at disrupting the German transportation and communication lines. This was being done in an effort to slow up their retreat back to, their homeland so that Allied Forces could take them prisoners and get them out of the war. Although there were still bombing raids on oil targets, many raids were made on troop concentrations and railroad marshalling yards in Italy, Austria, Hungary and Yugoslavia. In order to condense this article I have summarized the remaining missions reported in Mervin Dumdei's story as follows:

February 13, 1945 - Bombed the rail yards in Mari-bom, Yugoslavia. Destroyed target.

February 17, 1945 - Attacked naval installations at Trieste, Italy. Direct hit on medium transport ship. Good rating.

February 21, 1945 - Southern marshalling yards at Vienna, Austria. Heavy flak. No rating.

February 25, 1945 - Marshalling yards at Linz, Austria. Bombed by radar. No rating.

March 1, 1945 - Oil refinery at Moosbierbaum, Austria. Good rating.

March 4, 1945 - Marshalling yards, Graz, Austria. Good rating.

March 8, 1945 - Marshalling yards, Hegyeshalom, Hungary. Excellent rating.

March 12, 1945 - Floresdorf Oil Refinery, Vienna, Austria. No rating.

March 20, 1945 - Marshalling yards, Weis, Austria. No rating.

March 23, 1945 - Kagan Oil Refinery, Vienna, Austria. Fair rating.

March 24, 1945 - Marshalling yards, Ceske Budejovice, Czechoslovakia. No rating.

March 26, 1945 - Marshalling yards, Straszhof Vienna, Austria. Excellent rating.

April 11, 1945 - Bronzolo Marshalling Yards, Italy. Excellent rating.

April 14, 1945 - Ammunition factory Malcontenta, It-

aly Superior rating.

April 15, 1945 - German troop concentrations, Bologna, Italy. No rating.

April 16, 1945 - German troop concentrations, Bologna Italy. Didn't drop bombs.

April 17, 1945 - German troop concentrations, Bologna, Italy. No rating.

April 19, 1945 - Avisio Viaduct and Railroad, northern Italy. Excellent rating.

April 20, 1945 - My last mission, Lusitania Railroad Bridge northern Italy. The 461st missed target but overall rating was superior.

With the war in Europe over, we boarded a passenger liner, America on May 10 for the voyage back to the States. This ship, formerly the United States, was on lend-lease to the British so we had a British crew. In British service, it had been used as a hospital ship.

The voyage took nine days to reach New York. The food was sure different, but the same at every meal baked beans. No matter, it was still better than what we ate in Italy. When we reached New York, we received quite a welcome home: small boats with whistle blowing and people waving from their crowded deck greeted us. And when we disembarked, some ladies met us with milk and candy bars. Then we boarded a train to Camp Kilmer, New Jersey where we received a medical exam and R& R leaves of 30 days. I called Janie, who was stationed in Cincinnati at the time.

She got leave from the Coast Guard and joined me in Greenville, North Carolina, where we rented a room from a lady in a private home. There we enjoyed second honeymoon.

THE END



*Have a Holy & Joyous
Holiday Season
and a
Happy & Healthy New Year*



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