



The 461st

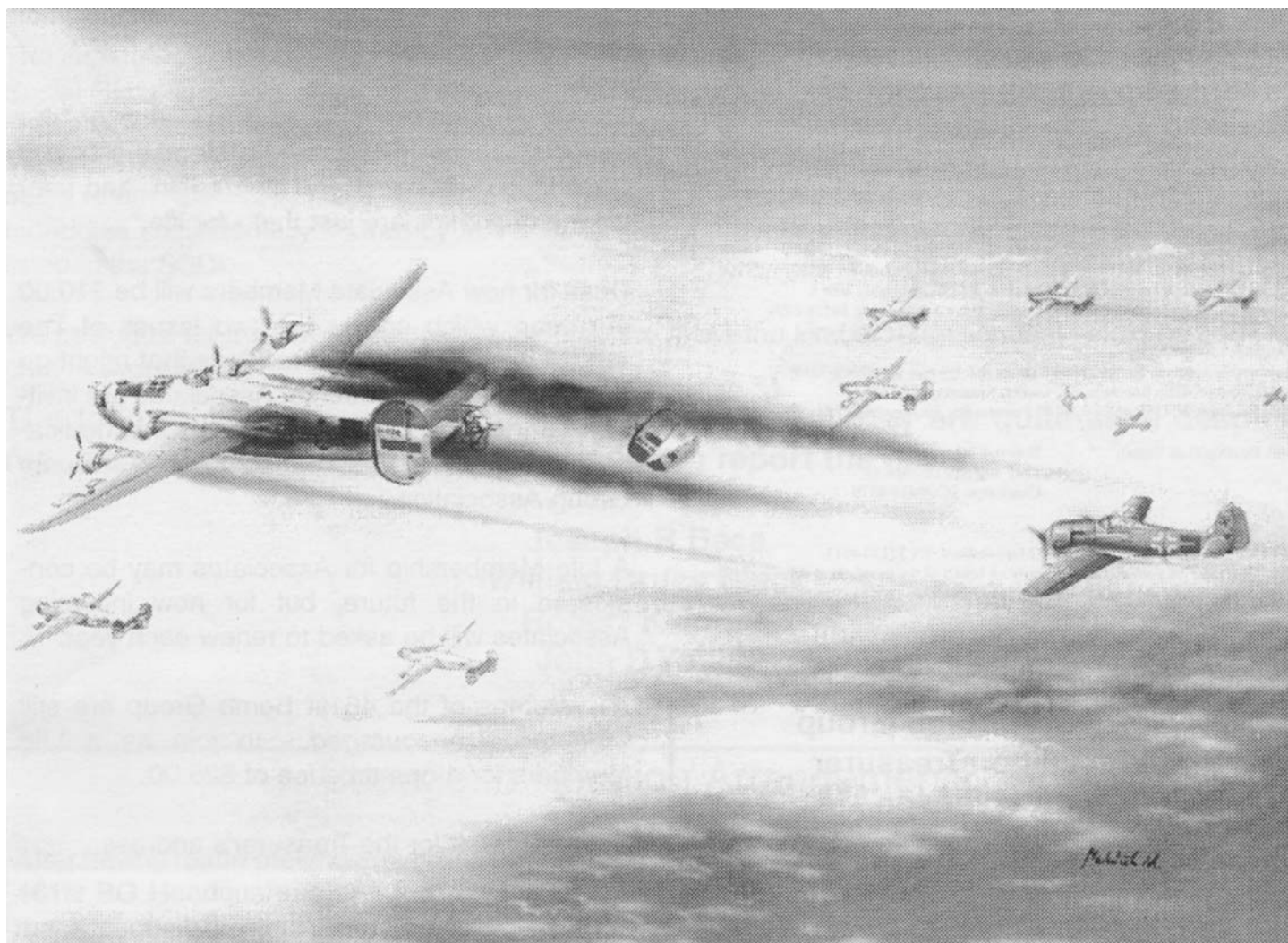
Liberaider



Vol. 17, No. 2

December 2000

SOMEWHERE IN THE USA



In This Issue:

First Mission M-A-C

Women of Courage

Odertal Survivors Return

Crew Photo Project

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

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"The 461st Liberaider"

Rob Hoskins—Editor—310 Tyne Ave., Murfreesboro, TN 37130-4513

The "Liberaider" is published twice a year on behalf of the members of the organization.
Permission is granted to use articles provided source is given.

New 461st Bomb Group Associate Treasurer Ed Stevenson

Ed Stevenson, who hosted the Reunion in Shreveport, has stepped in as Associate Treasurer since the death of Bob Casey, who passed away July 21, 2000.

After having done such fantastic job making us all feel so welcome at the reunion, Ed graciously accepted the position on very short notice, and we appreciate his service to the Group.

Please send all dues to:
461st Bomb Group Association
c/o Ed Stevenson
6485 Pine Hill Road
Shreveport, LA 71107-9698

Bylaws Change

Associate Members have always been a welcome part of the 461st Bomb Group Association and the increased interest shown by the children, grandchildren and other relatives of 461st BG personnel has prompted a review of membership policies to accommodate the inclusion of more of the 'Young Folks'.

These changes will not affect any of the Associates who joined as Life Members before 2001—you will be 'Grandfathered' in, and your life memberships are just that—for life.

Dues for new Associate Members will be \$10.00 per year, which covers the two issues of The 461st Liberaider and any mailings that might go out to members. Of course, Associates are invited to participate in any of the reunions, dedications, or other events held by the 461st Bomb Group Association.

Life Membership for Associates may be considered in the future, but for now incoming Associates will be asked to renew each year.

All veterans of the 461st Bomb Group are still welcome—encouraged—to join as a Life Member for a one-time fee of \$25.00

See below for the Treasurer's address.

On The Cover

The cover illustration is taken from a print that was produced in honor of the return of the 461st Bomb Group Veterans to the Czech Republic in September 2000. The print was commissioned by the Czech Airmen's Society, and is based on a sketch drawn by Ernst Schroeder, a German fighter pilot flying with II Gruppe, JG-300 on 17 December 1944.

The painting depicts the attack on Tom West's B-24 by the FW-190 A-7 flown by Paul Lixfeld, who was immediately knocked down by the Liberator's severed vertical stabilizer.

The rumor of my demise is greatly exaggerated...

Mark Twain

The expansive 'TAPS' section in the last issue (Vol. 17, No. 1) contained the results of a search of the Social Security Death Index (SSDI) conducted by Frank O'Bannon in an effort to find the names of deceased Liberaiders who may not have been reported through normal channels. The 300 names on the list that Frank's search produced cleared up the mystery over many of the Liberaider magazines being returned as 'Unknown'. However, it contained a few regrettable errors resulting from names and birthdates coincidentally shared by 461st Bomb Group members and certain unfortunate decedents listed in the SSDI.

We apologize for the errors, but we are delighted to make the kind of retraction that would be a joy to print in every issue.

The following Group members have alerted us that they are quite alive despite reports to the contrary, and we are happy to report the news!

Joseph R. Baca
William Bruce Black
Robert K. Jones
John D. Young

Change In Reunion Arrangements

After having made arrangements for Reunion 2001, the lines of communication between 461st BG Headquarters and the reunion organizers went unusually silent. Repeated attempts to make contact went unanswered and 461st BG Association President Bob Hayes took over as Reunion Coordinator. Arrangements have now been made with The Four Queens Hotel (www.fourqueens.com) in Las Vegas, and the information on tours and activities will be available soon.

**Reunion 2001 is slated for:
October 1—5 (Mon.—Fri.)
LAS VEGAS, NEVADA**

Full details on all the arrangements for this year's reunion will be sent to all members this Spring, and will be available on the 461st BG website (www.461st.com) as they become available.

Thank you for your patience as this change in plans has delayed the printing of this issue of "The Liberaider".



Regarding the unidentified crew photo on the bottom of page 24 (Vol. 17, No. 1), I am the Navigator of the crew and here are crew members:

Top Row L-R: T/Sgt. Michael Myers (E); T/Sgt. Robert F. Brusso (R); S/Sgt. Densal E. Lacleff (TG); S/Sgt. Robert A. Lizotte (BG); S/Sgt. Lloyd E. Barnes (WG); S/Sgt. Carl J. Linhares (NG)

Bottom Row L-R: F/O Horace A. Walker (B); 1st Lt. Robert L. Heald (P); 2nd Lt. Byron D. Cocking (CP); 2nd Lt. John Gavora, Jr. (N).

We were an original crew of the 767th Squadron. We flew from Fresno to Tunis and eventually to Torretta.

We were shot down June 11, 1944 on our 34th mission—Target: Girgui, Romania, a pumping station on the Danube.

We took a direct AA hit to No. 1 engine and with that, lost all hydraulics in No. 1, so propeller could not be feathered. We had to descend to maintain flying speed and the pilots finally got control at about 7000 ft. At that time 2 Messerschmitts arrived, in meantime we had thrown overboard all loose material, including guns and ammo, so pilot decided we had to bail out.

Entire crew got out safely and we landed in Bulgaria on the south side of the Danube. We became prisoners of the Bulgarians and spent some three months in Shumen POW Camp

In September we were released and put on a train to Greece and rode west in Greece till we came to Turkey where we spent several days on ocean liners moored in Istanbul. After several days we were back on a train which took us to Syria, which at the time was under British control. The train stopped outside Aleppo and we were driven to the airport

there and were picked up by ATC and flown back to Cairo. After a few days, the 15th AF flew B-24s to Cairo and flew us back to Bari. Our Group (461st) picked us up and flew back to Torretta. After records and administrative matters were cleared we were flown to Naples to await a vessel to the US. We arrived in Portsmouth, VA in October then were sent to Army bases nearest to our homes and then sent home for 30 days.

Keep 'em Flying!

John Gavora, Jr.

339 St. Cloud Avenue

West Orange, NJ 07052-2517



Dear Rob:

Your report on the 461st Bomb Group's aircraft losses in the December 1998 issue of the Liberaider was most interesting. You asked that we fill in the blanks or correct any errors, so I am now putting in my 2¢ worth. Please see Page 19 of the December 1998 issue.

On 10-4-44, I was flying co-pilot on Lt. John L. Turner's ship which was named "Bubble Trouble". Our target was the Marshalling Yards in Munich. We were flying No. 4 position in our Squadron. I was told later that the ship in No. 7 position above and ahead of us, dropped its bombs on our lead ship. As you know, at that time, the lead Bombardier of each squadron triggered his bombs after the Group Bombardier released his bombs and sometimes the No. 7 ship would fall behind its formation.

The only HBB abbreviation in your report was given to aircraft No. 1, so I assume it was our Squadron lead ship. I believe Major William M. Tallant was Aircraft Commander rather than Lt. William M. Powell but I could be wrong. It could have been Lt. Powell's plane, but on this flight Major Tallant was probably in the left seat. On Page 24 Major Tallant

was listed as Operations Officer from 1 March '44 to 4 October '44 and I am sure hea was on that plane. Anyhow I guess it's a moot point. In any event, flak did not knock us down. Sorry, but I can't help you with a code for our accident.

Another thing that puzzles me is that Plane No. 44-41039 went down over Mining, Germany rather than Munich. I don't have a map of Germany, but Mining could be a city between the IP and the Marshalling Yards. We remained airborne for several minutes after our lead ship blew up, so that could explain the difference in our destinations. And finally, after 55 years, my memory is a little vague, but I believe the number of our plane was 13.

Cordially,
Barry B. Jones 0-711-690
509 Argyll Dr.
Sanford, NC 27330



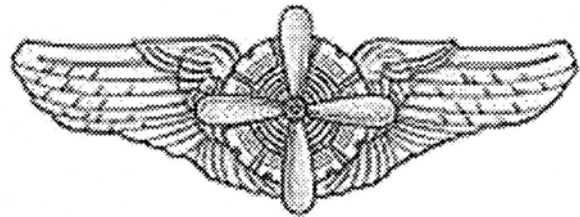
On September 15, 1990 I went to North Vernon, Indiana with the express purpose of finding out everything I could about the pilot who led the mission over Linz, Austria July 25, 1944. Lt. Joseph B. Hesser was killed in that mission as he did not escape from his B-24 after it was hit.

I found the farm where his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Walter Hesser lived. They owned a coal company in town called Walter Hesser & Co. The home was about five miles north of town. Their son, "Brad" Hesser, as he was known in the community, was an only child. I returned to the states June 12, 1945 and was home on leave when a Red Cross representative contacted me quite by accident or coincidence at the Fourth of July Celebration at Pekin, Indiana, my home town. The man from the Red Cross saw me in Air Force uniform, stopped me, asked if I was in the 15th Air Force. When I said "yes" he proceeded to ask group number, squadron, etc. He nearly lost his composure when I told him my plane flew in #3 po-

sition on the mission to Linz, Austria on July 25 one year earlier. Lt. Hesser was in the lead plane. I, of course, had been an eye witness to what happened that day. Hesser's wing started to dip down and we were afraid his plane would hit us; however, it slid underneath us and missed us by five or ten feet as it was losing altitude. I saw seven parachutes. In about ten seconds after the plane passed under us it exploded. I remember very vividly the terrible spectacular sight of engines, wings and other parts being blown every direction. It seemed like I was watching a movie, but I knew it was real.

The outcome of our conversation was I had seen the same number of chutes as was officially reported. Survivors were accounted for either as prisoners of war or detainees by the Russians. Now this was 1945, the war in Europe was over and Lt. Hesser was still missing. In another week the U.S. War Department would declare Lt. Hesser dead. It was, and still is amazing to me that the Red Cross representative had picked Pekin, Indiana that day to go looking for witnesses who would have information he needed. It is incredible that in a crowd of 15,000 people he was able to find the one person who had seen it happen.

Eugene W. Brock
1332 N. Nursery Road
Anderson, IN 46012



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Fact, or Fantasy?

By
Harlan P. Ross

April 2, 1944 was the day the 461st would take to the air on its first combat mission. The aircraft were ready. The crew members looked forward to the day's activities with both anticipation and trepidation. Many wondered: Were they ready? How would they perform as individuals and as team members? What lay ahead? Would the Group measure up?

IN RETROSPECT:

We all could look back at the extensive training we had to achieve our flight specialties.

We all knew our equipment and our jobs.

Within our crew we knew each other.

We had a good idea of each other's capabilities.

Our crew, #52 had flown together 257 hours as of this April date. That said to us...

"Crew 52, You are Ready!"

HISTORY

Formation of the Group had begun during October 1943. Our crew #17-S36* formed 10 October 1943 amidst the ever present dust at the Army Air Base, Mountain Home, Idaho. While there, we flew B-24E aircraft a total 18 hours as members of the 803rd Squadron, 470th Group, 2nd Bomber Command, 15th Wing. The officers also spent many hours shooting skeet. We became very proficient killing clay pigeons.

On 18 October we were transferred as a crew to the 461st Bomb Group at Wendover Field, Utah and placed on ordinary leave to report for duty with the 461st after it relocated to Hammer Field, Fresno, California.

At Hammer Field we became crew #52 assigned to the 766th Squadron. A brand new B-24H, #41-29268 became our aircraft. It also bore the number 52. We said it was so we, the crewmembers, would know what plane to get into. Actually the numbers were assigned to the crews as they achieved their minimum combat training requirements. These crews were afforded the new Flyaway aircraft as

they arrived. Our pilot, with concurrence of the crew, named it "TOU JOUR GAY". The name when painted on the nose section was dwarfed by the big painted #52.

We spent roughly 118 hours flying and preparing the ship, and ourselves for combat. We calibrated equipment; flew practice bomb and gunnery missions. We participated in formation and in solo flights. We rehearsed every situation that we believed could happen to a B-24 aircraft both in and out of combat. Each crewmember had specific responsibilities during in-flight emergencies.

I vividly recall a solo, over-water navigation flight, out of sight of land, the plane suddenly became unstable fell off on one wing. That snapped the pilots out of their reverie. They had to fight to maintain level flight and altitude. Fresno advised us to land for repair at a particular airfield near San Luis Obispo. Needless to say after an exciting flight and a safe landing we had a very relaxing but too short, overnight stay while repairs were made. It was here that the Bombardier taught the Navigator how to drop various items into a can in an alley, three floors

below.

January 1944, the 461st Bomb Group (Hvy) was ready to move overseas. First however aircraft and crews would have to be processed for movement through Hamilton Field, California. Physicals, immunization updates, and issue of overseas personal equipment were required. Additionally the aircraft required special modification for the journey.

The 766th Squadron passed through the processing between 14—18 January 1944 and returned to Hammer Field for several days before actual departure. It was during this waiting period that most of us thought we were going north. We believed we had been issued Arctic Gear.

We also learned to throw the trench knives we had been issued. They were well balanced and good for throwing. I doubt that any one of us had a blade attached to the hilt when we left. The barrack walls however, gave evidence of our skill

I cannot recall the date we actually left Hammer Field, but I knew we would all MOURN the loss of our favorite watering hole—

THE HOTEL FRESNO BAR

BUT THEN

Our trip became a memorable

Over Georgia, a crewmember quipped that the circles around the trees on the ground were the tracks made by revenuers chasing the moon-shiners from their stills.

At West Palm Beach we had a most unbelievable party. It ended with a borrowed car stuck in the sand and the crew walking through the Palmetto swamp, toward the rotating beacon, to get to the base.

At Trinidad, the Tou Jour Gay became mired in the mud. The starboard main gear wandered off the taxiway and required assistance to be lifted from the mud.

Enroute to Belem, search a they would, not one

crewmember managed to spot the Equator when it passed beneath us.

At Belem we all bought trinkets to mail home.

At Natal we rested in preparation for the night flight to Ascension Island. Then -

The Navigator was amazed when he found Ascension Isle by Celestial Navigation.

At Dakar we slept in coffin like bunks in windowless barracks. When we were ready for departure the next day, the aircraft that took off ahead of us exploded at wheels up.

Between Dakar and Marrakesh we refueled at the most elaborate Palace I had ever seen. Shining colored tile located miles from nowhere. The jewel of a service station, shining on the sand.

We also learned to throw the trench knives we had been issued... I doubt that any one of us had a blade attached to the hilt when we left...

At Marrakesh the Tou Jour Gay had a stripped thread on an oil sump. We had to remain over night while it was fixed. While waiting, we had a true Arab style steam bath. We lounged, along with the native gentry, on stone slabs soaking up the steam, listening to their Moslem music and watching them smoke Hashish in their water pipes. The stone floor was heated by fires below the slate floor. The steam made by throwing buckets of water on the floor. After enough heat and steam was had and a bather wanted to leave, an attendant would douse him with cold water and provided copious toweling to run down with and dry. In town we saw a man dropping boulders on his head for coins. We visited the public baths and toilets built on a steep hillside to provide drainage.

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(Continued from page 7)

That night at a local USO Club, we saw the crew Navigator ruin a good evening when he told a group of army nurses, "You WACS are all alike!"

At Oudna #1 we built crystal radios and ate Oranges sold to us by natives screaming "HORANGES" as they came in from the desert. It was here that the Bombardier strained his back when he and the Co-pilot lifted the back end of a Jeep so we could change the flat tire we had while joy riding in the desert. It was here that the Navigator saw a BIDEET for the first tie in his life, and it was here that the Bombardier and the Navigator had a group of street urchins swoop down on them and steal several dozen bottles of wine from a two handled basket they were carry-

ing between them.

At Cerignola (Torretta) we built a super aviation gas heater to warm our tent. The chimney was made of shell casings; the stove a cut down 50 gal. drum; the burner a pinched piece of tubing with a valve attached to the feed lines made of tubing scrounged from abandoned British aircraft. A Jerry can provided the fuel tank. Somehow we managed not to blow up the tent.

Our co-pilot learned that no matter how dull the finish, your mess kit should never be cleaned with a blitz cloth. The result is most draining on the body.

APRIL 2, 1944 OFF WE GO!

The morning of 2 April. It looks as if the mission is a go. The mission that was scheduled for April Fools day was cancelled because of weather. From the view point of our co-pilot, much better today than yesterday as he had quite a bout with bowels versus blitz cloth. "OK for today", he said.

Briefings completed we were transported to the aircraft. We became involved with our individual preparations for departure.

It was noted that of the entire crew, one man the nose gunner, had elected to wear the plug-in electric heated suit. He looked pretty snazzy but I wondered at his wisdom. The rest of us preferred the reliability of insulated parkas, etc. Finally, all checks and preps completed, the crew settled down and waited the start of the adventure. The members of crew 52 of the 766th Squadron of the 461st Bomb Group (Hvy) would fly their first mission into enemy territory.

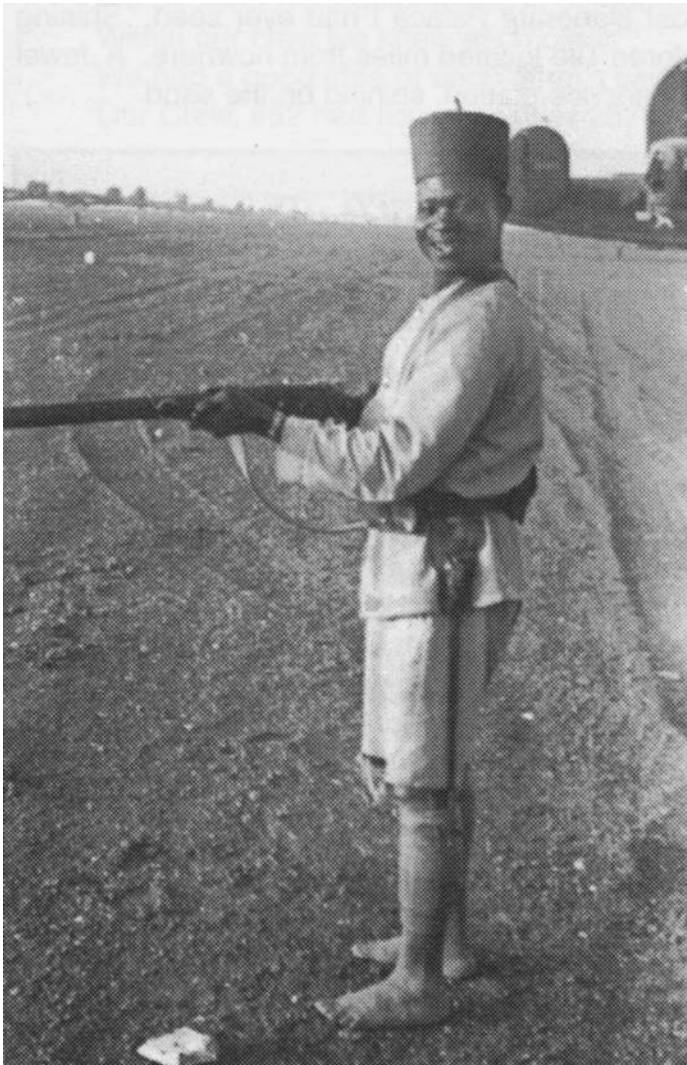
They waited. Time passed slowly. Would engines ever start?

When they did start it seemed we were never going to taxi! How long before we taxi?

Then things started to happen. We were rolling!

We were in line for take off! Our interval for take off approaching! Prepare for take off! The engines

(Continued on page 9)



A barefoot African soldier guards 461st Bomb Group aircraft at Oudna, Tunisia as the Group prepares to deploy into Italy.

roared! Ground speed increased! Would the Tou Jour Gay lift that load of fragmentation bombs in the bomb bay into the air?

INTO THE WILD BLUE

Suddenly we were airborne! The wheels coming up! We were turning and climbing! We were in our position in the lead Flight as #5. It seemed like an eternity as the aircraft climbed and circled as the aircraft of the various squadrons joined in assigned flights and took their place with the Group formation.

Just prior to the completion of the formation, the commander of the lead aircraft of our flight placed the Tou Jour Gay into the lead position and left the formation. It chilled me a bit to find myself suddenly, without warning, in the lead aircraft. I breathed a sigh of relief when we moved back to #5 slot and the Group Commander took over.



Standing: Wilson, Sydney S. (P); Loftus, Joseph W., Jr. (CP) [W/M]; Ross, Harlan P. (N); Whitney, Emil L. (B); Wallace, Irving G. (E/WG)

Kneeling: Fine, Dale V. (TT); Childs, Homer D. (BG); Goldstein, Gerald (RO/WG) [KIA]; Ulrich, Edward G. (NG); McCoy, Clifford A. (TG)

The lead flight consisted of Donovan #1, Aldredge #2, unknown #3, Zumsteg #4, Wilson #5. The formation approached the target at 19 to 20,000 feet altitude.



It was reported later, by a crew-member on the aircraft in @3 position in the lead formation, that Lt. Lt. Zumsteg pulled out of #4 slot before bombing began. He could not tell where he went. He noted that Lt. Wilson in aircraft #52 had moved into the abandoned #4 slot.

Bombing was begun slightly after 1100 hours. 1111 hours, BOMBS AWAY!

Several clusters of bombs did not release from our bomb racks in Wilson's ship. The bombardier had to go and release them manually.

This photo of Zumsteg's crew #62 needs identification.

(Continued on page 26)

Women of Courage

By Jary Johnson McKay



I was not one of those pilots who dreamed about flying from early childhood, even though my father sent me up in a Jenny with a barnstormer when I was a little girl. I found my wings as a student at the University of Michigan and heard about the glider club.

At the Ann Arbor airport was a Franklin open-cockpit single-seat glider in which the pilot sat ahead of the wing with his hair blowing in the wind. Every flight was solo, of course. All instructions were given on the ground by other members of the club, most of whom were students in the university aeronautical engineering school. The glider was pulled by a rope attached to a truck. Since the glider had only a single wheel, and therefore rested with one wing tip on the ground, someone had to lift the wing and run beside the glider, holding the wing until

the speed was enough to keep the wings level. The first flight was simply rolling along the runway slowly enough to just keep the wings level, while the pilot learned to control the attitude of the glider with the stick and rudder. Successive runs were gradually faster. The pilot flew first at about a foot above the runway, then climbed a little higher with each flight until he finally flew as high as the rope would allow, pulled a release level to detach the rope, and circled around for a landing.

The summer after I graduated, two other club members and I towed the disassembled glider on a trailer to Elmira, New York, to participate in the international glider meet on Harris Hill. The hill is part of a ridge where currents of air flowing up from the west provide a lifting force.

When it was my turn to fly, I climbed into the glider and the rope from the wrench was attached to the nose. The wrench motor whirled, the rope tightened, and I felt a sudden acceleration. The ridge dropped away behind me, and I pulled the lever to detach the rope. I was alone in the air over the val-



I met the author, JARY JOHNSON MCKAY, one year ago. Intrigued by her stories, I mentioned her in E-Mail to the Editor who asked for this article...

Jary still flies out of Santa Monica, snow skis in season, submerged to 600 feet last July in a two person submarine, flew with a friend in a Stearman to Santa Maria for a reunion in September, and just returned from two weeks in the Andes!! She is an amazing lady. If you enjoy the story, you might want to drop her an E-Mail at mcjary@worldnet.att.net

GERRY SMITH
765th Squadron

ley at 1700 feet, about seven times higher than I had ever flown before. a long war for me to ever fly for the Air Corps.

I relaxed, enjoying the view, the silence, and the wind in my face. Suddenly the nose dropped and I found myself falling out of the sky, heading straight down. In my short instruction periods I had not absorbed the importance of airspeed, and I had gone into a full stall. Not having been taught how to get out of a stall or a spin, instinctively I pulled back on the stick as hard as I could, trying to bring the nose up to flying position. I did not know that this is the easiest way to put an aircraft into a spin. Fortunately the glider was stable enough to come out of the dive in spite of me and I leveled off at about 500 feet. From that time on the glider landed where it wanted to—not on the airport. It cleared a fence by about a foot and I landed safely in a farmer's field.

Meanwhile my friends at the top of the hill had watched me disappear from sight going straight down. They jumped into our truck and sped to the valley, greatly relieved to find the glider and me intact. They didn't even complain about having to take the wings off the glider, haul it in pieces over the fence, and load it on the trailer.

After earning my private pilot's license I busied myself accumulating flying hours. This came to an abrupt halt when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor. All civilian flying was immediately banned within 300 miles of the west coast.

As one of the persevering pilots, I continued flying—ride pooling on weekends at least 300 miles to Blythe, Lone Pine, or Olancho, California to get an hour or so of flying time on each trip. At some point the rumor reached me that Jacqueline Cochran, a famous racing pilot, was recruiting women with at least 300 hours of flying time to go through cadet training and ferry military airplanes. I had 60 hours. Calculations showed that it would have to be

A friend of mine, Dorothy Nichols, who had nothing more than a private license, told me one day that she was going to quit her job and go to Fort Worth, where civilian flying was not restricted. Her goal was to fly until she had enough hours to join Miss Cochran's program. After a few moments of consideration I decided to announce my resignation from my job as secretary to the Plant Manager at Lockheed and go with her. We left a few days later in my car, with the fond blessing of my boss, Cliff Pelton. It was November, 1942.

We proceeded to fly as many hours a day as possible at a nearby small airport, planning to notify Miss Cochran when we had accumulated 300 hours. Two weeks and a meager number of hours later we received a telephone call from Miss Cochran's office. Would we like to join the second training class at the Houston Municipal Airport? Would we!!!

With far less than the required number of hours of flying time we reported incredulously to the airport. We found a rather disorganized group of women with much more flying time than ours taking ground school and flying mostly light civilian planes. Leoti Deaton, a former Red Cross administrator, and Lt. Alfred Fleishman, the manager of an army supply subdepot, had cobbled together a flying school modeled on the standard Air Corps cadet training.



Jary discusses an aerial maneuver with other WASPs in a language spoken by aviators the world over.

(Continued from page 11)

Flying every day when the weather permitted, we mastered Fairchild PT-19s in primary training, Vultee BT-13s in basic training. And North American AT-6s and twin-engined Cessna UC-78s (AT-17s) in advanced training. For instrument training we used Link Trainers and flew under the hood. We flew at night, stacked in layers over the airport. When not flying we studied in ground school or marched and did calisthenics under orders from Lt. Fleishman, who was intent on preparing us for the rigors of military life.

While we were training at Houston, an elite group of 28 women pilots averaging 1100 hours of previous flying experience, were stationed at Wilmington, Delaware, ferrying military trainer planes under the direction of experienced pilot, Nancy Love. Their designation was Women's Auxiliary Ferrying Squadron, or WAFS. Later all the women pilots became WASP, or Women Air Force Service Pilots, with Nancy Love in charge of ferrying and Jacqueline Cochran responsible for training.

In April 1943, the first class graduated with a ceremony at nearby Ellington Field, after Lt. Fleishman marched us past the men's barracks with the men gapping out of the windows, much to my embarrassment. In May our class ferried some of the training planes to Sweetwater, Texas, where the training program had been running at Avener Field since February. We had a graduation ceremony at Avenger and then dispersed to the four Ferry Command bases—Long Beach, California; Dallas, Texas; Wilmington, Delaware; and Romulus, Michigan, near Detroit. Dottie went to Long Beach; I to Romulus.

At Romulus I found some members of the "original" WAF group from Wilmington and some women from the first training class, busy ferrying new liaison planes and primary trainers from factories to training bases. All of the women lived in a military barracks on the field. A small shack nearby served as an office. The squadron leader was Adele Scharr, one of the original WAFS.

Although we were civilians, we had officer status on the base and were welcome to the meals and ameni-



Jary Johnson in 1942

ties in the officer's club. Our seven-day-a-week ferrying schedule did not allow much time for amenities, however.

Here are the logistics of a typical ferrying mission:

- Report to the Romulus Operations office.
 - Receive official military orders with the name of the factory, type of aircraft, and place of delivery.
- Orders usually listed a group of pilots—men and women—who had been assigned to the same delivery.
- Ride as a group to the factory in a military plane—usually a B-17.
 - "Buy" the new airplane at the factory; that is, sign papers accepting full responsibility for the plane until delivery at the destination.
 - Check teletype weather information in the air-

port meteorological office.

- If the weather is VFR (visual flight rules) and there is time to fly to the first fuel stop before sunset, take off and fly by the most direct route to the destination that includes authorized airports having the required type of fuel.
- When grounded at a fuel stop by weather or sunset, take military transportation to a hotel (or barracks if at a military base).
- Go to a telegraph office and send a RON (Remain Overnight) message to the home base giving our overnight location.
- Take off again the next morning as soon as possible after sunrise.
- “Sell” the airplane to the military authority at the destination by accepting the signature of the receiving officer on the official papers.
- Receive military orders to either return to the base or to be flown to a factory for another ferry mission. This was usually a late night trip.

In the beginning we were ordered to return to the base by train. On one of my flights during that period, when I was a flight leader with four wingmen, we delivered our planes to a base in Florida.

According to directions, we then boarded the first train for Detroit. However, there was no sleeping car on the train. We were faced with sitting upon rather uncomfortable no-reclining seats for a day and two nights. I knew that when we returned to Romulus we would probably be assigned to other ferry flights, and I felt we would not be in fit enough physical condition for safe flying. My solution was to get off the train at night, sleep in a hotel, and board a train again the next morning. Our first overnight was somewhere in the south. Then our long day’s ride took us to southern Ohio. The only hotel room available was a large showroom with cots, and we went to bed quite exhausted. We had almost fallen asleep when the telephone rang. It was a ferry command pilot calling from the hotel lobby telling us to pack up and be flown home to Romulus. I fearfully

anticipated a severe dressing-down from someone in command at the base, but no one ever said a word to me about it. Not long afterward, all the pilots’ orders were changed to return to the base by commercial airline.

Flying airlines was comfortable and pleasant, but it was unsettling that ferry command pilots had priority over almost anyone else below the status of the President of the United States. If the flight was full, passengers had to surrender their seats to us. It was painful to walk past some sad or angry person who had been “bumped” so that I could take his or her seat.

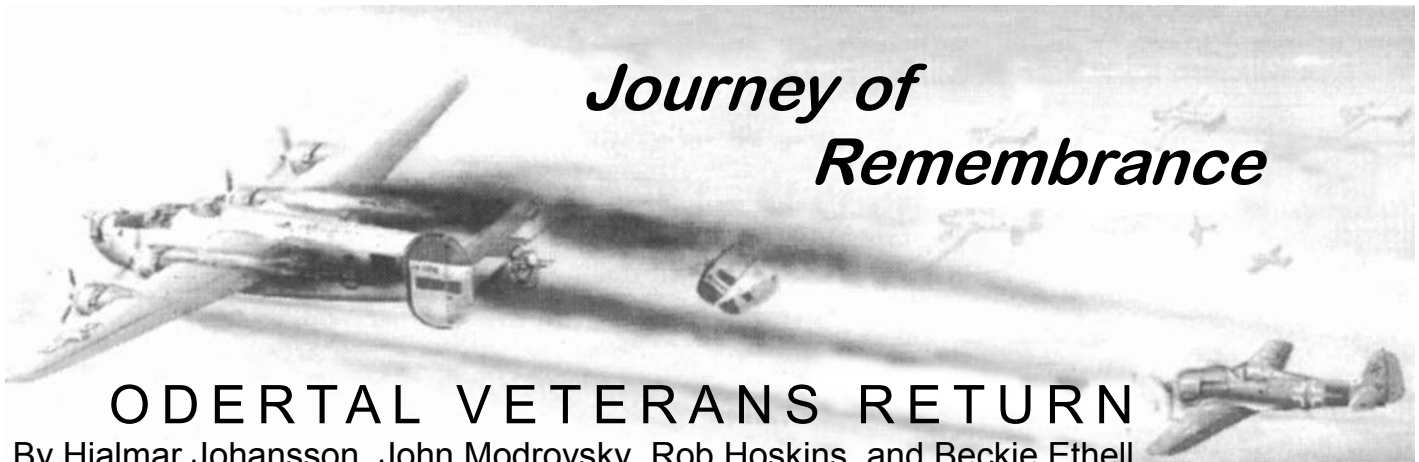
Soon after that, the Ferry Command established a military airline, affectionately called “Snafu”, to return all pilots to their bases at the end of the missions. The planes were B-17 bombers with “bucket” seats, so that the only way to ride was to sit in a seat on one’s parachute, leaning against a window, or at night lie on the bare metal floor with the jacket and parachute for bedding and pillow. It was usually cold in the unheated planes; I don’t remember ever going to sleep even when flying for several hours at night. The next morning we were often sent out on another mission.

On one trip in primary trainers I was in a flight with four other women. Arriving in Chicago too late to go on to another stop, we parked our airplanes and made arrangements for a hotel. The only accommodations we could find were at the Palmer House—a fashionable hotel and more expensive than we would normally have chosen.

Not having yet received our handsome blue WASP uniforms, we wore our standard temporary uniform—khaki shirt and pants.

The only distinguishing mark was the silver wings we wore over the left pocket. We felt rather out of place in the lobby, especially being definitely unpressed after a day of flying. While we stood at the front desk checking in, a very well-dressed lady stood watching nearby. With her nose in the air and a disapproving look she grunted audibly, “What are

(Continued on page 29)



ODERTAL VETERANS RETURN

By Hjalmar Johansson, John Modrovsky, Rob Hoskins, and Beckie Ethell

In August and September, two groups of 461st Bomb Group veterans made their ways to Central Europe to visit crash sites in the Czech Republic and Slovakia.

For both groups the reception was overwhelming, and the bonds between our two cultures were refreshed in the spirit of remembrance and appreciation.

Anti-Americanism is common in many European countries with "Yankee Go Home" signs prevalent... but not so in the Czech Republic when five World War II U.S. Army Air Corps veterans arrived in Prague on September 12, 2000. Their story goes back 56 years to December 17, 1944 when American B-24 bombers from bases in Italy appeared over German occupied Czechoslovakia enroute to an oil refinery target in what is now southern Poland.

A heavily armed 'Sturmgruppe' (attack unit) of German aircraft from the elite fighter wing JG-300 took to the sky and the battle was on. In no time at all the lumbering American bombers were under a vicious attack as the darting Luftwaffe fighters ripped the bomber formations to shreds with their cannon rounds and rockets. Prior to the fighter attacks the bombers had been hit by murderous anti-aircraft fire sent skyward by flak batteries along their route.

It was a battle of epic proportions involving 231 Fifteenth Air Force heavies heading for the Odertal Refinery with only 182 reaching the target. Twenty bombers were shot down or damaged beyond repair with nearly 200 American crew members killed or

missing in action. The German losses were also heavy with 50 planes lost, 19 pilots dead and 7 wounded.

From the ranks of our Czech hosts Paul Jasa and Jaroslav Schoen recounted how, as young boys, they witnessed the spectacular air battle from their vantage point on the ground. They watched with rapt attention, eyes riveted on the aerial battle highlighted against an azure blue December sky.

One after another, bombers began falling from the sky, some on fire, others blown into small pieces. The German fighters frequently concentrated on the crippled and straggling bombers which were most vulnerable.



Tom Qualman (765) congratulates a local musician after a ceremony in Kokory, and obliges the trumpeter with one of many autographs signed during the visit.

The boys on the ground watched in awe as silky white parachutes carrying precious human cargo emerged from the falling airplanes. From a distance the parachutes looked like silken seeds blown from a faded dandelion blossom. And our five veterans were in the middle of it, with four parachuting into Czechoslovakia and ending up as prisoners of war.



Our dauntless band of explorers visits the Czech Military Aviation Museum at Kbely, near Prague.

L-R: Hjalmar Johansson (461/767), Ed Kussler (461/767), John Modrovsky (461/765), Rob Hoskins (Liberaider Editor), Tom Qualman (461/765), Orville Hommert (484/827), Paul Jasa (chief Guide and Obstacle Remover)

As the Czech boys watched they thought to themselves, "What a wonderful country America is, to send its sons from so far away to liberate us from Nazi tyranny and now we see with our own eyes how many are being killed". This was the theme and bottom line of the whole trip... the gratitude and appreciation expressed by our Czech hosts for what we did 56 years ago. One of the Czech boys now middle aged said, "I saw it all, and you are my heroes." and then they really rolled out the red carpet...

After arriving on Czech Airlines we were met at the airport in Prague by Joe Brazda, a Czech Partisan who had aided Tom Qualman in his attempts to evade capture by the Germans. Members of the Czech Airmens' Society soon arrived with a twin engine airplane to fly us the 200 miles east to prerov which was the center for the activities to come. Receptions and ceremonies presided over by Mayors and other dignitaries including US and German Embassy personnel followed one after another with thanks, tributes and gifts being showered on our in-

trepid veterans—all being recorded on national television.

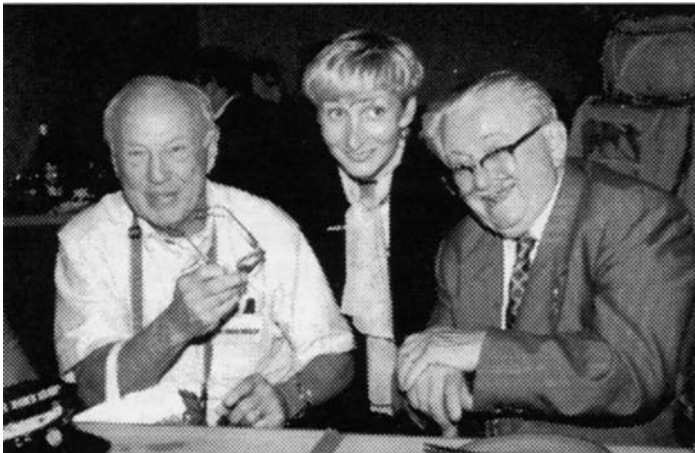
Of special note was the solemn ceremony at a large monument erected in the Troubky cemetery. It honors the six airmen from Tom West's crew who were unable to parachute from their spinning bomber which crashed in a nearby field. For one of the veterans in our party, Tom Qualman—a 19 year old Navigator at the time—it was a very moving experience since he was on the same airplane, and only survived because the airplane exploded. Finding himself falling in open space he pulled his parachute ripcord and floated to Earth.

After a kind reception by the Mayor of Troubky we

President of The Czech Airmens' Society, Jaroslav 'Jerry' Schoen is seen here with his grandson at the monument to the six members of Tom West's crew (765) who perished on 17 December 1944. Jerry was instrumental in organizing the many ceremonial events and lovely receptions to honor the American veterans during our visit.



(Continued from page 15)



After a long day of emotional ceremonies and autograph sessions, Ed Kussler shares a joke with Kate Krpec (wife of the District Military Commander) and Czech triple-ace Gen. Franticek Perina (Battle of France, Battle of Britain), in the Archbishop's wine cellar.

were surprised at the crowd that had gathered at the cemetery, including many school children.

Two Luftwaffe pilots participated in the festivities and gave their impressions of the events of December 17, 1944. One of them, General Gunther Rall, WWII super ace and final wartime commander of JG-300 gave his impressions and told us how he had been shot down on eight different occasions. (He had us all outnumbered.) And then he laughed and toasted to each other's health with good Czech beer.

He reminded us that today, US and German military units cooperate closely and share NATO facilities. We concluded that drinking beer and socializing with an adversary is more enjoyable than shooting at each other.

At a Czech Air Force base we toured the facilities, watched paratroopers in action, and we

were treated to a mock helicopter assault. We later exchanged stories with the pilots and had lunch in the Officer's Mess.

Other events included visits to bomber crash sites where plaques had often been made from pieces of downed planes, each bearing the names of the Americans who had perished. Visits were made to Czech President Havel's personal castle as well as other local castles, wine tasting in the archbishop's cellars. All this, plus nightly dinners and celebrations guided and sponsored by the Czech Military and the Czech Airmen's Society.

Gifts, pictures and memorabilia of all sorts including military medals were lavished on our veterans.

On the outskirts of Prague we visited the Air Force Museum in Kbely and saw vintage aircraft and MIG's as well as Soviet space capsules.

A final side trip was made to Poland to visit the synthetic oil refinery which was our target 56 years ago. Once again we were royally welcomed by our Polish hosts who also thanked us for coming to their aid so many years ago.



After visiting the crash sites of Tom West (765/461) and James Creekmore (464), former enemies share a few stories and more than a few round of Slivovice in an orchard near Prerov.

L-R: Walter Schmekl (JG5), Gunther Rall (JG52, 11, 300), Rob Hoskins (Editor), Hjalmar Johansson (767/461), Ed Kussler (767/461). Johansson and Kussler were shot down on 17 December 1944. Rall was shot down on eight occasions but is the third highest scoring Ace with 275 victories, mainly in



District Military Commander, Col. Dusan Krpec swaps head-gear with 461st BG veteran and former POW John Modrovsky (765), Ball Turret Gunner from the crew of Arsenic and Lace.

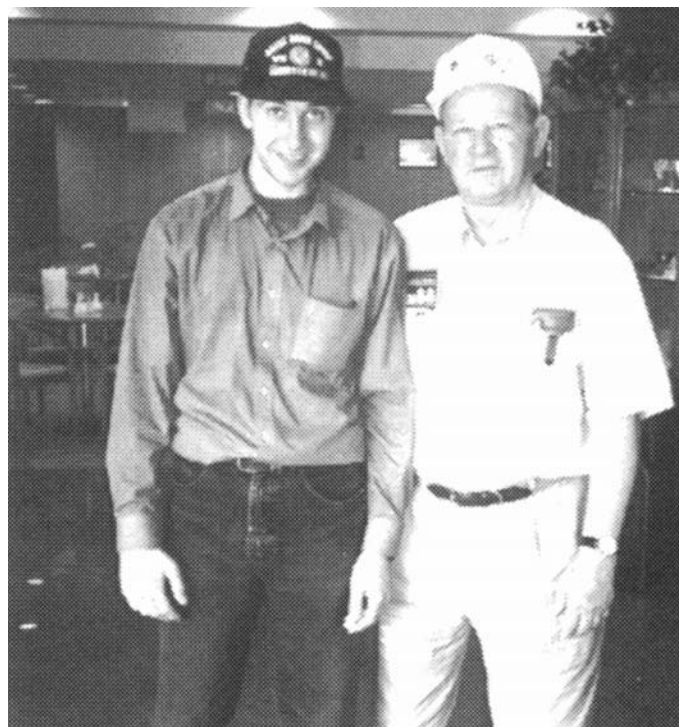


Our Polish friends from the Aircraft MIA Project (AMIAP) pose beside a WWII bomb shelter during our tour of Blechhammer South Refineries.

L-R: Refinery Guide Andrzej Hynek, Piotr Wisiewski (AMIAP), Mike Mucha (AMIEP), Szymon Sewatka (AMIEP), Zygmunt Kraus—Director of the American Airmens Museum in Wadowice.



Tom Qualman points to a plaque listing his fellow crew members who were killed when their B-24 was attacked by German fighters on 17 December 1944. The plaque is made from metal retrieved from the nearby crash site.



Jan Hlavacka from the Czech Airmens' Association slows down long enough for a picture with Orville Hommert (484) in the lobby of the Hotel Jana in Prerov, Czech Republic. Jan was pivotal in making the trip possible, and seemed to be in a state of perpetual motion, making sure that everyone's needs were taken care of during our stay.

In parting we tried to express our thanks to our Czech hosts by explaining that when we were in the military we were fed and taken care of by a very stern father figure carrying a stick but here, you treated us like a loving mother would treat her favorite son by picking us up and hugging us to your bosom.

(Continued on page 18)

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An Emotional Return to Slovakia...

**by Beckie Ethell,
Daughter of Bob Trumpy**

On August 20, 2000, 5 of the remaining 6 crew members of the "Tenmenbak" crew traveled to the town of Trencineska Teplice Slovakia for an incredible week.

Newcomers to Torretta Field, December 17, 1944 was their first mission (a milk run so they were told). The target for the day was an oil refinery at Odertal, Germany. Everything was going as planned until they lost power in the #3 engine due to a failure of the turbo charger and fell behind the formation, becoming "sitting ducks".

Under attack from German FW-190's, the plane ab-



Slovak Marines stand guard at the gravesite of Roland Morin (764), where a touching memorial has been constructed with pieces of the aircraft in which he was killed.

sorbed severe damage in the waist and caught fire. Everyone bailed out safely except for Roland Morin who was hit by flak and died in the plane.

One of the highlights of the week was that for almost 56 years the townsfolk of Trencineska Teplice have kept the memory of Roland Morin alive - a man none of these people knew. In 1994 a permanent monu-



The Smith crew Returns: L-R Charlie Foss (RO); Ken Smith (P); Gino Dinucci (tour sponsor); Bob Trumpy (TT); Ed Burkhardt (NG); Frank Hokr (N). Seen here during their visit to the monument erected in honor of their slain gunner, Roland Morin. Not pictured: Urban Granger (TG); Homer Hymbaugh *deceased* (E); Chet Rudel *deceased* (CP); Harry Edminston (WG).

ment was erected for Roland Morin approximately 100 yards from the crash site. On August 23, 2000, a memorial service was held at the monument and was attended by Ken Smith, Pilot, Frank Hokr, Navigator, Charlie Foss, Radio Operator, Ed Burkhardt, Nose Gunner, and Bob Trumpy, Top Turret Gunner. Unable to attend due to health problems was Urban Granger, Tail Gunner. Each crew member placed 2 red roses at the memorial, representing the ten man crew. It was a very emotional morning for all.



Bob Trumpy (L) and Charlie Foss (R) pose with Sister Sofia, who nursed the injuries of both men when they were shot down on 17 December 1944 en route to the Odertal Refineries.

Another highlight of the trip was a visit to Sister Sofia. Sister Sofia was a nurse at the hospital where Charlie Foss, Bob Trumpy and Chet Rudell (deceased), Co-pilot, were taken after they were captured. All three had been injured. To be able to see and thank this "Angel from God" for all she had done for the three of them was truly an incredible experience.

The outpouring of love and gratitude from the Slovakian people toward these 5 American ExGI's was something to behold. I will never forget the experience. They were treated as true heroes.

All of this would not have been possible if it had not been for Gino Dinucci, who found the memorial while traveling in Trencineska Teplice, located the crew, and arranged for the entire trip. To say "Thank you" to Gino will never be enough. I hope he truly realizes the gift he gave these 5 men has changed their lives forever.

Plans are already being made for a return trip to the Czech Republic in the Autumn of 2001. The Czechs, Slovaks, and Poles are all interested in hosting any veterans of the 461 st Bomb Group who were involved in missions over Central Europe.

If you would be interested in participating in the next excursion, please contact your Editor at the address on the cover.



Although the men of Ken Smith's crew looked forward to christening their B-24 'TenMenBaW', they were shot down on their first mission. The aircraft they were assigned on 17 December 1944 (42-51324) was a veteran of many missions with Nahkunst's crew and was named "Paulette" in honor of Crew Chief Joe Benson's wife.

Target: Shreveport

461st Bomb Group Reunion 2000

Preparations for the 461st Reunion 2000 started with the Holidome Marquee welcome of the "461ST BOMB GROUP REUNION 2000". The Shreveport-Bossier Convention Bureau placed their "Smart Cart" near the hotel entrance with Louisiana and area brochures. A 15th Air Force banner was placed over the Hospitality Room door.

Registration was to start at 12:00 noon October 19, 2000, but everything was set up and ready to start about 9:00 am, and many eager beavers were registering and having a good time talking before noon. The hotel had given us a fairly large Hospitality Room which was set up with registration table, refreshment table, display tables, TV with VCR, and chairs. Everyone seemed to enjoy this time together. Refreshments were available at all times, Coffee, Cookies, Cokes, and Tea. The hotel staff was very helpful in setting up everything we ask for.

October 20, 2000, was a very busy day. At 9:00 am three busses loaded for Barksdale AFB, and at 9:30 am one bus loaded for the Norton Art Gallery. I think the people that went to Norton's got the best deal. At Barksdale a Readiness Inspection and Alert was in progress which was not known when our schedule was made; that meant we were not allowed to go on the Flight Line. All we were able to do on Barksdale AFB was visit the 8th Air Force Museum. The museum had a lot of Air Force memorabilia and quite a few aircraft on display. We finished touring the 8th Air Force museum by about 10:00 am and would have loaded the busses for a tour of downtown Shreveport but the bus drivers had left the Base. After waiting around until 11:30 am, the bus drivers returned and we loaded for the trip to Louisiana Downs. Meanwhile, the people who went to Norton Art Gallery enjoyed a very fine Art Gallery including American and European paintings, sculptures and decorative arts spanning more than four centuries.

The Gallery has an impressive collection of Western art by Frederic Remington and Charles M. Russell. At 11:30 am this group also reloaded the bus for Lou-

isiana Downs.

With the entire group now at La. Downs, we were escorted to the upper deck Sky Room. La. Downs had prepared a lovely buffet including two cakes decorated with the 461st Bomb Group name and logo. The buffet line was a little long but after the first wave of diners, anyone could return as many times as they liked. La. Downs is a thoroughbred horse race track. The second race of the day was dedicated to the 461st Bomb Group and for the Trophy Presentation of that race, General and Mrs. Burke, Bob and Peggy Hayes and Ed and Faye Stevenson, went down to the Trophy Presentation area and had their picture taken along with the winning Jockey and Trainer. We left La. Downs about 3:30 PM returning to the hotel for a little rest before a very busy night.

A Board of Directors meeting was held from 4:30 to 5:30 PM. Major Carl Peter gave a presentation of "ICEBIRD" -the recovery of damaged aircraft from remote regions of Antarctic Plateaus.



Frank O'Bannon receives 'The Glantzberg Award' for outstanding leadership and initiative. Seen here after the annual meeting are (L-R) Hughes Glantzberg (son of Big G), General William Burke, Frank O'Bannon, and Bob Hayes.

(Continued from page 20)

At 6:30 PM the Squadrons began assembling in the hotel Banquet room for a Squadron Dinner consisting of a Cajun Buffet. Many of the Cajun dishes were toned down a little, at our request, because Cajun cooking is sometimes too hot (with pepper) for diners not used to it. Most thought the Cajun Buffet was very good. Although it was not the time of the year of Mardi Gras, some of our friends that belonged to the Krewe of Centaur, agreed to bring in about twenty of their group for a Mardi Gras Parade. For the parade there was marching, dancing, bead throwing, and Cajun Music by our Master of Ceremonies Mr. Robert Trudeau. The tables had been decorated with a Mardi Gras motif. A decorated Mardi Gras Hat was the center piece on each table and under one chair at each table a number was placed. The person sitting in that numbered chair got the hat. A fun time was had by everyone. Hopefully everyone received Mardi Gras beads and cups. For some this was their first exposure to Mardi Gras.

Saturday October 21, at 9:00 AM the busses were loaded for the trip to the American Rose Center. Although the summer months had been extremely dry, the roses were blooming very well. The American Rose Center was moved to Shreveport several years ago to a donated site of about 100 acres. About 40 of those acres have been developed into the Rose Gardens. Many of these gardens are sponsored and maintained by different cities and states from all over the U. S. The Rose Center were very helpful in providing Golf Cart transportation for the handicapped. The ladies enjoyed the Rose Center gift shop. We returned to the hotel about 11:30 AM to give everyone time to have lunch on their own and a short rest.

The Annual Meeting began at 1:30 PM with a short presentation from Professor William Oldson, Director of World War 11 Experience at Florida State University; on the importance of preserving WWII memorabilia.

Our annual Group Dinner and Dance started at 6:30 PM with music provided by the Bill Causey, Jr. Band. Although we had engaged only 11 members of his band, Bill gave us a very good big band sound. The only complaint we received was that the music



David Kraus joins in the fun with a member of the Krewe of Centaur at the Squadron Dinner on Friday night. Mardi Gras came early to the Shreveport Holidome as the 461st Bomb Group Association came together for four days of cajun spiced fellowship at Reunion 2000.

ended too early, at 9:30 PM. Last year the dance floor was almost vacant by 9:30 PM, and we thought that would be late enough for us old codgers. Sunday morning October 22 our Memorial Breakfast began at 8:00 AM with a piano prelude, a Posting of the Colors by a Barksdale AFB Honor Guard, Invocation by Chaplain Lt. Col. Dennis Kitterman, Litany, Scripture Reading, and a Memorial Meditation titled "Remembering Our Heroes" by Chaplain Kitterman, after which President Bob Hayes read the names of our comrades who had passed away since the last reunion. The service was concluded with a moment of silent reflection, a hymn, benediction, and a country breakfast. It was a very memorable and touching service.

For myself my wife Faye and all of our friends that helped with the arrangements, we considered it an honor and privilege to be allowed to host Reunion 2000. Although we were very busy most of the time, it was a real joy to see all of you again.

Ed Stevenson
Reunion Host - 2000

Advanced information on Reunion 2001 can be found on page 3 and at www.461st.com

ARCHIVIST'S CORNER

NOTES AND NEWS FROM THE 461ST BOMB GROUP ARCHIVE

Ingrid Bloxom (765) and William Black (766) have been helping to pin down some particulars regarding the 4 October 1944 mission to Munich on which the 461st suffered several losses due to the bombs dropped from a B-17 unit above the 461st's formation. Below is an interesting message from Lt. Bloxom that caused me to take a closer look at the photo I used for the cover of the June 2000 Lib-

This from Ingrid Bloxom:

As I recall we were in Squadron 765, directly behind Squadron 766. When we began our I.P. I happened to look up and see bombs failing from a group of B-17's above us. Being on the left wing outside, I immediately swung hard left. The bombs struck the planes in front of us. The group in disarray, swung right and I believe had dropped their bombs. We proceeded to the targeted area and dropped our bombs.

We then turned south but we were considerably behind the remnants of our group. We accelerated our speed and eventually caught them over the Alps. As we began to rejoin our group we noticed a parachute below us near the ground. Only one was sighted and we saw no plane.

The June issue of the Liberator carried a picture of our plane #35 on the front cover. To assist us in determining the mission and date, Rob Hoskins sent us a copy of the original photograph. The photo on the Liberator showed only 2/3 of the height showed in the original photo. Upon examining the lower section for the parachute, we believe we found the shoot but to our surprise we also found the plane. The plane was below the mountain peak and appeared still airborne. The only reason that I can come up with as to why I did not see the plane at the time we saw the parachute is the position of our plane probably



blocked the view.

Note: With magnification the B-24, at slightly below mountain top level, has on the tail section the markings of the 461st.



This photo, which appeared in a cropped form on the cover of The Liberaider Vol.17, No. 1, is believed to have been taken on the return trip from Munich on 4 October 1944.

Note the B-24 skirting the mountain tops below. Under magnification it appears to bear 461st BG tail markings.

Photos From Official

History Sought

Now that Hughes Glantzberg and Betty Spirito have completed the transcription of the Official History of the 461st Bomb Group, we are beginning to compile the photos that accompanied the monthly segments up to 15th Air Force HQ.

Please keep an eye on the "HISTORY" section of the web site (www.461st.com) as we find out which pictures we are missing. Help us make the official history of the 461st Bomb Group

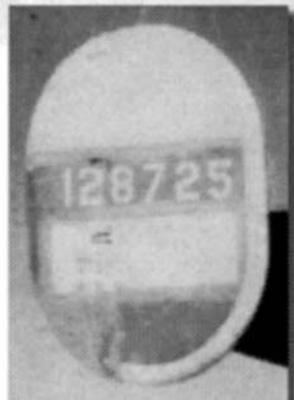
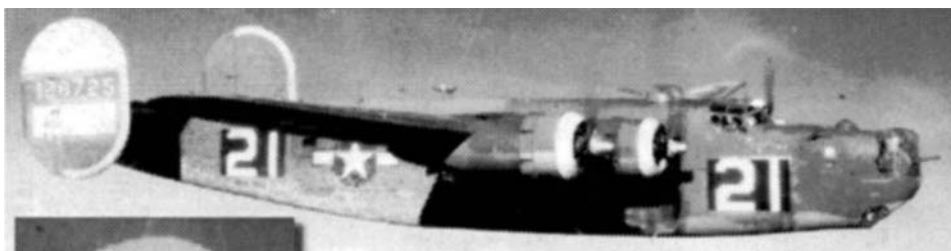
Crew 12 Questions

Kathryn Jennings (wife of William Jennings) has been trying to unravel a mystery regarding the loss of 5 members of Crew 12 after the remaining members had finished their missions.

The survivors of Crew 12 remember waiting in vain for their plane, Lazy Lady (Ship #12, 42-50970) to return on 25 July 1944, but the losses index shows their crewmates going down with Pilot Grover F. Mitchell on a different aircraft - 42-95383. Lazy Lady appears later in the index as having been lost on 4 October with John L. Turner, Jr. in command.

Hopefully, we will be able to track down the MACRs for both incidents, and that may shed some light on the question, but if you have any insight on this puzzle please contact Mrs. Jennings at:

7658 Sequoia Ct
Orland Park, IL 60462-4238
or by Email at:
kayjay@ameritech.net



Sleepy Time Invictus

Tom Moss, Pilot of original Crew 27, spotted something wrong in the cover montage on the December 1999 Liberaider. I had used a picture long identified as Sleepy Time Gal, but Tom noticed that the serial number on the tail was that of his aircraft, "Invictus" 41-28725. The large color block behind the ship number corresponds with the position of the nose art and original number "27" (below).

A quick look into the losses index shows Sleepy Time Gal's serial to be 41-28867, so Tom has intercepted another error in the record before it could become "History".

Can anyone comment on returning Invictus (or other original H Models) to combat condition? Tom would like to hear from anyone who might have information on the renumbering of these aircraft.

I am running into this type of misidentification quite a bit as I become more familiar with what is in the archive, so if you catch me perpetuating any myths, I hope you'll help me keep the story straight. Many thanks to Tom Moss for catching this inconsistency.



SHORT BURSTS

Quick Takes and News Briefs

Veterans Homecoming To Reunite Bomber Crews & Tuskegee Airmen

The Veterans' Homecoming in Branson, MO is the largest veterans gathering in the country, and this year it will feature a special series of events for 15th Air Force bomber crews and members of the 332nd Fighter Group - The Tuskegee Airmen.

November 7-12, 2001 is slated for this celebration, which will be covered by all major news networks and media outlets. Members of the 461st Bomb Group and their families are enthusiastically invited.

Free shuttles will be provided to and from the airport and all events. There is a \$50.00 registration fee, which covers all activities, shows and dinners, and free tickets to many area attractions are being made available to all 15th Air Force veterans in attendance.

The contact point for further information is:

Trish Thompson
216 Springmeadow Pkwy
Branson, MO 65616
Or call toll free:
877-336-2786



One of Ed Stevenson's helpers at the reunion in Shreveport has made a video of the festivities, and Ed can have copies made for \$15.00 per tape, plus postage.

Many thanks to David Schaper (766), who donated his B-3 Flight Jacket and his uniform cap to the Association collection.

As the archive and memorabilia collections continue to grow, we will try to find a way to safely display as much material as possible at the Group reunions and other events.

Please give some thought to anything you may have that should find its way into the Group collections.

Contact Group Historian Frank O'Bannon or your Editor for more information. These personal items and documents will be a valuable resource for historians far into the future.



The March Field Air Museum, with all its World War 11 aircraft, military aviation artifacts and memorabilia, has attained the status of a most formidable memorial to the United States Air Force. Founded by General James Mullins in 1979 when he was Commander of the Fifteenth Air Force, it is located at March Air Reserve Base, close to Riverside, California. The entrance to the Museum grounds is just off 1-215 and is readily accessible to visitors.

Presently, the Museum grounds consist of a spacious parking lot, a courtyard, a World War II-type hanger, a P-38 building, an aircraft restoration building and 60 plus military aircraft on static display.

The Courtyard is a recently completed area -landscaped and structured to facilitate the recognition of military units. For example, the building of one wall was financed by the 97th Bomb Group Reunion Association and dedicated to the Fifteenth Air Force for World War 11 units to display their unit plaques. It's a beautiful sight and a star attraction for visitors.

	Serial No	MOS	Home	Date
Group Headquarters				
Jozwik, John I	16135731	631	Gary, IN	20 Sept 1992
764th Squadron				
Baker, Robert C	42022689	757	Lake Panosoffkee, FL	17 Dec 1997
Casey, Robert T	02060186	1034	Wheeling, IL	21 July 2000
Condit, Richard R	12162939	757	Richmond, VA	15 Aug 1999
Hagie, Thomas M	33764326	612	Orbisonia, PA	25 Dec 1997
Hunt, Thomas	32916576	555	New Providence, NJ	18 Sept 2000
Jones, Henry A	20452627	750	Greenwood, IN	28 May 2000
Kursel, William J	01579903	1092	Mequon, WI	13 Oct 1999
Montalto, James J	13113077	748	Allentown, PA	15 Jan 2000
Pfister, Karl A	0692068	1034	Juptier, FL	17 July 2000
Rosenau, Frank B	01998744	1035	W Redding, CT	8 Sept 1997
Sylvester, Peter P	32464429	755	Holmdel, NJ	16 Mar 2000
765th Squadron				
Batenic, Julius M	0834353	1092	Shawnee Mission, KS	30 Dec 1997
Blaine, George D	17090505	901	Englewood, CO	1 Nov 1999
Burleson, Glenn W	0722467	1034	San Antonio, TX	
Bryant, Joseph R	14200047	612	Houston, TX	6 June 2000
Davis, Linzy T	36870249	938	Bloomfield Hills, MI	26 April 2000
Fratione, Vincent R	0558113	1092	Ardmore, PA	1968
Gulla, Nicholas M	32874629	612	Houston, PA	8 July 19
Holmes, Clayton	38468483	237		11 Sept 1996
Johnston, George R	37495913	612	Leavenworth, KS	3 Aug 1996
Nash, Roy L	33195028	813	Clearwater, FL	1 May 2000
Russell, Archie S	33804671	612	Wilmington, DE	
Shelko, Edward G	35060330	911	Thompson Tnshp, OH	31 Dec 1999
Small, Joseph W	36429564	748	East Moline, IL	Nov 1999
Smith, Van V Jr	514142	612	Kilgore, TX	25 Nov 2000
Steer, Harry B	38046311	748	Alexandria, MN	2 August, 1999
Tampas, Peter	36198541	747	Sault Ste Marie, MI	14 June 1998
Weems, William Z Jr	0671716	1092	Dallas, TX	Feb 2000
766th Squadron				
Cole, Leslie A Jr	02058911	1092	Muskegon Hts, MI	4 Dec 1997
Dean, Harry E	15377793	748	Littleton, CO	22 May 1995
Garner, Jay M	0709564	1092	Chico, CA	12 Mar 1999
Jarez, Joe	37329701	929		4 Dec 1971
Jones, William T	34354387	748	Fort Valley, GA	25 June 2000
Kiellquist, Ernest T	31125072	612	Farmington, CT	8 Feb 2000
Klein, Lloyd J	02071624	1034	Lake Tahoe, AZ	1992
Lanquette, Alfred	31022561	748	St Petersburg, FL	3 May 1999
Lloyd, Elwood	33372186	612	Vero Beach, FL	4 Feb 2000
Lolli, Alfred M Sr	0722444	1035	Boise, ID	11 Nov 1999
Morton, Henry H Jr	14123132	612	Lenoir City, TN	15 Feb 2000
Ursem, Richard V	02057464	1092	Houston, TX	10 July 1999
767th Squadron				
Boyer, James J	17169509	757	Corpus Christi, TX	1990
Byers, William E	T63175	1092	Lake Placid, FL	9 May 1999
Cunningham, Wm O Jr	0783512	1092	Boise, ID	31 May 1995
Fox, Brown B	15054024	612	Reno, NV	1996
Jakubiec, Casel J	36131853	237		2 Feb 1970
Kosten, Alexey J	19187766	612	Sebastopol, CA	Sept 1999
Walsh, Harry L	0823489	1092	Atlanta, GA	14 May 2000
Wiebe, Walter M	38268396	748	Oklahoma City, OK	25 Dec 2000
Wilhite, Roy B	17097608	757	Lee's Summit, MO	1998



(Continued from page 9)

MID AIR COLLISION

Meanwhile, a crewmember in aircraft #670, which was in #2 position in B flight, noted that Zumsteg #62 had moved left out of #4 position. Shortly later the same man noted Aircraft # 52 had moved into the #4 slot which had been vacated by Zumsteg.

When our Bombardier returned to the nose from the bomb bay he also noted that we were now in #4 position.

Several minutes after the bombardier returned to the nose section but before the turn off target was begun, there was a frantic call over our intercom, from an unidentified position stating, "? To pilot , pull her up! pull her up! PULL HER UP." This was followed another similar call from another section and resulted in the intercom being blocked. About this time, the bombardier and I both saw the nose of a B-24 approaching on our port side, about ten feet vertically below our feet. His flight path carried his cockpit beneath our feet, crossing from our nose wheel to under the nose gun turret. The Pilot and co pilot of that craft #62, passed beneath us. We, the navigator and bombardier, both climbed onto the Navigation table and climbed as high as we could. I was sure that his props would catch us! By some miracle they didn't. The planes collided and went into a spin.

The same observer on aircraft #670, B flight #2 position recounted later that some time, he said, several minutes, after acft #52 moved into the #4 slot of the

lead flight he saw acft #62 start to return to the #4 position he had vacated. #62 was slightly ahead, below and to the port of #52, out of sight of Wilson.

The two aircraft collided when the #1 & #2 propellers of #52 passed between the rudders of #62 slicing deep into the upper fuselage. The two aircraft locked together and tumbled into a spin.

When the frantic interphone calls from unidentified crew members on #52 blocked the intercom, the Co-Pilot, Lt. Loftus, left his position and started aft to find out what was wrong. The collision occurred before he got there. He opted to escape through the top hatch.

One observer on Lt. Aldredge's ship, #2 slot in lead flight with bomb bay door still open, watched as the leading edge of Zumsteg's left wing started to pass under Aldredge's plane. He knew the distinctive markings that were on Zumsteg wings. A short time later his tail gunner called in the collision.

In #52, the bombardier and navigator were thrown to the floor and pinned there by the force of the collision and spin. The nose gunner told me later that he thought the nose turret had fallen off of the plane and was tumbling freely in the air. The Ball Turret gunner later told me that the impact bounced his turret into the ship and he opened his hatch and fell into the Bay. Back in the nose of the Tou Jour Gay the bombardier and navigator remained pinned where they were throughout the period of the spin. When that ended we still were held to the floor area (we didn't know it then) by the G forces caused by the pilot

From the Missing Air Crew Report

Sgt Robert D. Laughlin (#2) recounts that seconds before the collision he made eye contact with Lt. Wilson (#5) and tried to wave him off, Laughlin tried to signal Zumsteg (#4) , but said Zumsteg and his CP had their steel pots on and could not see him. Wilson's #1 and #2 props went between Zumsteg's rudders and sliced into the fuselage as deep as the upper rim of the waist windows. Zumsteg's Lib broke into three pieces, Wilson's Lib trailing white smoke from all four engines dove into a forest...

pulling the aircraft out of the spin and a very steep dive.

When the frantic interphone calls from unidentified crew members on #52 blocked the intercom, the Co-Pilot, Lt Loftus, left his position and started aft to find out what was wrong...

Lt. Wilson told me later that he had no idea what had happened. He thought there had been a blast. He knew the ship was in a spin. He followed procedures to end the spin, went into a steep dive and leveled off at 10,000 feet. He tried to apply power but found he had no throttle control. He trimmed the ship, checked to see if any crew members were aboard. Finding the ship abandoned, he put on his parachute, sat on the ramp in the bomb bay, said goodbye to the TOU JOUR GAY and rolled out.

NOTE: The doors had not been closed since the bomb drop.

It was during this period, while Wilson was bringing the ship under control, that the bombardier found and retrieved his parachute. It had somehow fallen onto the nose wheel door from its normal storage position. He then put on the chute and opened the nose wheel hatch. I signaled him to jump. His jacket collar caught on a pin of some type around the nose wheel door. I gave him a push with my foot to free him and he was gone.

SCARED? YOU BET!

The "G" forces were still restricting my movement. I couldn't stand up to get to my chute nor could I get to the latch release to the nose gunners escape door. I sat pressed into a corner under the navigation table. I watched various items fall from the table and vibrate out the nose wheel

door. When I saw my briefcase leave, I tried to rise and found that I could pull myself up by using my elbows for leverage against the wall and on the navigation table. There was still considerable downward pressure but I managed to reach my parachute and put it on. I leaned forward and opened the latch to the nose turret door. The forces of the aircraft motion pulled me to the floor. I crawled to the nose wheel door and rolled out head first.

I have no recollection of opening my chute. I am inclined to think that I passed out. That the wash of the slipstream opened my chute as I left the plane. I believe this because after I left the plane there was no sound of engines. There were no airplanes to be seen in any direction. There were only the tops of mountains seemingly at my eye level. There was an eerie silence with a vague swoosh of the breeze through the shrouds which held me to my chute. It was almost musical. At times I thought I must have been rising as the mountaintops seemed lower (more below me) and the earth below me did not seem to be getting any nearer to me. What I could see of the ground appeared brown, rugged and barren. It seemed awfully far away. I could sense no movement in any direction and I felt as though I would be suspended there till the end of time.

After what seemed an eternity, the ground was suddenly coming toward me at break neck speed. I was falling into some kind of crater. Wham! I was down. Flat on my fanny and with heels digging in, I slid to the bottom of the crater. I disconnected from my chute and was gathering it when a voice, from above shouted, "HALT!" I looked to the rim of the crater and I saw that the rim was lined with rifles, all pointed at me. The rifles were in the hands of boys in uniform. They appeared to be in their teens and they were as afraid of me as I was afraid that they would be trigger-happy. They turned out to be well disciplined, under the direction of a single, older man who said to me: "FOR YOU THE WAR IS OVER!".

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AFTERMATH

The Tail gunner of Zurnsteg's #62 was knocked out during the collision. He fell in the tail/waist section to about 5,000 ft where he came to, put on his parachute and jumped. Yugoslav Partisans picked him up. He was given the dog tags of four of his crew members they had buried. There is no record of what became of the other five. They are presumed dead.

All but the co-pilot of #52, TOU JOUR GAY parachuted into the hands of German forces and as Prisoners of War were shipped to Germany. It is assumed that the co-pilot was killed trying to exit through the top hatch.

ASSUMPTIONS

There is no known reason why Lt. Zumsteg left his flight position before Bombs Away. I personally believe he wanted to photograph the Bomb Release.

Knowing his ship had left the formation, Zumsteg should have had every man on his crew in their proper position and on alert when he tried to return. Had he himself looked up, as plebe pilots are taught to do, he would have seen his slot was occupied and averted the MAC.

Wilson followed proper procedures when he filled the vacated #4 slot.

CONCLUSION

Ten trained aircrew members were killed. Nine from aircraft #62, one from #52.

Nine crew members became Prisoners of War and were lost to the war effort.

Two fully equipped, nearly new B-24 H aircraft were lost.

One man from #62, with the help of the Partisans made it back to the 461st, and returned to flying.

THE FINAL BLOW

One day in the mid forties I was flying as a Navigator on a MAC C 54 Flight returning from Europe or North Africa. General Glantzberg was a passenger. He was occupying one of the crew berths. I said to him "General, didn't you Command the 461st in Italy?"

"Yes", he responded. I then told him that I was a member of one of the first two crews he lost on the Group's first mission over Bihac.

He responded "HUMMMP, That was a rough one", turned his back on me and went to sleep.



MY THANKS TO:

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for their assistance in creating this document.

Harlan A Ross III

Look for more material from Harlan Ross in the next edition of The 461st Liberaider, which will be dedicated to the experiences of those members of the 461st Bomb Group who became Prisoners of War.

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those women doing here in their overalls?"

In early December 1943 I was taken off flying status for a few weeks to attend the Romulus instrument school. The course included ground school and instruction in a Link trainer. After finishing instrument school I was scheduled to go to Palm Springs for a special one-month training course in flying pursuit (fighter) planes—much faster and more difficult to fly than the liaison and trainer planes.

When it was time to go to Palm Springs, I rode in a B-17 with a planeload of male pilots—a ten-hour no-stop flight with no women's restroom—nor men's either—their needs were met with "relief" tubes". Again more ground school, and flight training in AT-6s at a small practice field nearby. With the instructor in the front seat we simulated pursuit landings according to an explicit procedure. Pointing the nose of the plane down, precisely at the beginning of the runway, we continued down, aiming at the runway and holding our airspeed at 100 knots with the throttle, until we were low enough to level off and land. When our instructor felt that we had mastered the technique, he took us to any available pursuit on the flight line, gave us a review of the cockpit, and let us go. Since the planes had only one seat, every flight naturally had to be solo.

The plane that was available when I was ready was a P-39. This would be my very first flight in a plane with a tricycle landing gear. Pushing the throttle all the way forward, I was startled by the unfamiliar force that was pressing me against the back of the seat. We had been taught to hold pressure on the right rudder to compensate for the strong pull to the left as the engine accelerated. The smoothness and freedom and speed as the plane took to the air was exhilarating. In the air alone, we went through certain maneuvers that we were required to practice in each airplane.

After flying the P-39 my instructor released me to fly other pursuits as they became available the North American P-51 Mustang, the Curtiss P-40



Jary McKay (3rd from left) poses with other pilots beside a P-39 in Soviet markings.

Warhawk, and the Republic P-47 Thunderbolt. At the end of the months' training period the base photographer took our class graduation picture, showing about 60 men in snappy dress uniforms and four women in the middle of the front row, looking rather out of place in our ordinary slacks and shirts, since we had not yet received uniforms. I was the only woman from the Romulus base. The other three were from the Wilmington, Dallas, and Long Beach bases.

At the end of the training course, instead of being flown back to our home bases all the new graduates were taken as a group to Long Beach. There each one of us was assigned a brand new P-51 from the North American factory, with orders to deliver it to Newark, New Jersey. There the wings were to be taken off, the parts covered with protective coating, and the planes sent to England by ship for service in the war over Europe. Each of us flew on his own individual flight plan, with landings at authorized fuel stops. It took a few days to get to Newark, because our range was only 300 miles and we were not allowed to fly in instrument weather or at night. We encountered our fellow classmates at fuel stops along the way, such as Coolidge, Arizona; and Midland and Dallas Texas and enjoyed socializing with our friends in the evenings.

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From Newark we returned to our respective bases, and for a year I was on a 7-day-a-week flight schedule in pursuit planes. Our typical ferrying missions, in addition to P-51s from Los Angeles to Newark, were P-40s from the Curtiss factory in Buffalo to Fort Myers, Florida, P-47s from the Republic factory in Evansville, Indiana to Roosevelt Field, Long Island, and P-39s from the Bell factory in Niagara Falls to Great Falls, Montana. The P-39's went to Russia as part of the wartime lend-lease program. Because the women were not allowed to fly to Alaska, male pilots from the Great Falls Ferry Command squadron flew our P-39s from Great Falls to Fairbanks. Russian pilots received them there and flew them across the Bering Strait to the Soviet Union. (We later ferried the larger Bell P-63 Kingcobras when they replaced the P-39s.) We did not always fly every day because we were often grounded temporarily by low ceilings and weather fronts.

After one P-39 delivery at Great Falls I received orders to fly on Snafu to Long Beach with several other pilots and ferry a P-51 to Newark. While climbing into the cockpit of the P-51 I felt a snap and a sharp pain in my neck. I could not turn my head. Feeling that it would not be safe to fly in that condition, I reported to the base hospital hoping for some treatment. The doctor ordered me to undress and put on a blue hospital robe. He locked my clothes in a cabinet and sent me to a large room filled with cots. Two women were in bed there wearing red robes. Blue robes were for officers; red robes were for enlisted men and women. The two women, who were apparently friends, chatted gaily and ignored me. They obviously did not want to be friendly with an officer. The chatting and ignoring went on for three days. I was lonely. And no one came to give me any treatment. I asked a nurse for the doctor, but he never came. I had one visitor - a man I knew who was based in Long Beach and happened to find out that I was there. On the fourth day I had enough. In my blue robe I walked down a hall that I knew led to the dining room. There I found the doctor eating lunch. I told him I wanted to get out, and he said, "Meet me at my office after lunch".

There I told him my neck was better and he said "Turn your head right, then left," In great pain moved my head to one side and then the other. He gave me my clothes and I dressed and walked out, happy for my freedom and the chance to deliver my P-51.

My second overnight stop on the way to Newark was Dallas, Texas. When I arrived at the WASP barracks there I sensed a heavy pall in the atmosphere. The WASPs were talking to each other in hushed tones. They had just discovered that one of the Dallas WASPs, Gertrude Tompkins, who had taken off from Long Beach the day I did, had never reported an overnight stop. Neither Gertrude nor her plane has ever been found.

I saw the pilot jump off the wing and run. A few seconds later the plane exploded in a burst of fire and smoke.

After one delivery of a P-39 at Great Falls, on a beautiful sunny day, I stood on the ramp enjoying the view and watching the airplanes land. My attention focused on a P-39 on final approach, close to the ground - with the wheels up! Silently I urged, "Put your gear down!" The plane continued down and made a smooth landing - on the belly tank! As the plane skidded along the runway, a flame appeared at the point of touchdown. The fire followed the trail of fuel from the ruptured tank like a lighted wick as the plane skidded to a stop. After several tense seconds which seemed much longer, when the flame was within twenty feet of the plane, I saw the pilot jump off the wing and run. A few seconds later the plane exploded in a burst of fire and smoke. "I hope it isn't a WASP", I thought, but unfortunately it was, and a friend of mine at that.

In the P-39 the landing gear control is a tiny toggle switch with three positions - up, center or neutral, and down. To raise the gear the pilot moves the switch to the up position. When the gear is up, he is supposed to put the switch in the center position for the rest of the flight. To lower the gear he puts the

switch in the down position and leaves it there while the plane is on the ground. When the time came to lower the gear, the WASP moved the switch from the up to the center position, thinking that she was moving it from the center to the down position. To complicate matters, as she approached Great Falls she made the mistake of tuning her radio to the tower frequency of an airport on the other side of the river. Consequently she could not hear the tower controller at the airport where she was landing, who was screaming at her to put her gear down. She was permitted to continue flying after that, but not in



pursuit planes.

After Dottie and I had said goodbye at the end of our training and headed for our different bases we didn't see each other for a year. Her missions from Long Beach were generally along the southern route. Most of the time I flew from the northeast to the northwest. Finally we found *ourselves in* Niagara Falls at the same time for P-39 *deliveries* to Great Falls. We shared hotel rooms on our overnight stays along the way. In Bismarck, Montana we were on the ground for *several days* because of low cloud ceilings *between there and* Great Falls. *There were several pilots* there, both men and women, who gathered *there as* they became stalled by the *weather.. As* a group we played golf, rode horseback, and *generally had* a nice vacation.

One Sunday morning Dottie asked me if I would like to go to church with her. I was surprised *because I* had not known her to be a regular church-

goer. She came to the hotel lobby while I was lingering with a few pilots. "If you don't come now I am going alone", she said. I broke away and accompanied her.

When we returned to the hotel we learned that the weather had cleared so that we could leave for Great Falls. Military vehicles took us all to the airport and we strapped *ourselves into our* airplanes. *Because there were so many* planes, we had to wait in line for takeoff. I was about third in line when to my horror I saw a P-39 take off, then suddenly plunge into the runway and explode in flames. Everybody waiting for takeoff taxied back to the flight line and *we were told* that the dead pilot was Dottie. Because I was Dottie's friend I was *selected to* accompany her body by train to Los Angeles. *After a miserable* night in the hotel I *supervised the* loading of the coffin in the baggage car and sadly rode the train for *three days*. The most painful part was *meeting Dottie's* divorced mother at the station. At the funeral service *seven other* WASPs and I were pall bearers in dress uniform. Her flag-covered casket was taken to Forest Lawn *cemetery, and* after the burial *service the* folded flag was formally presented to her grieving mother. My military orders instructed me to *deliver the* body to the funeral home, attend the funeral, and then report to the Long Beach base for further orders. The orders *were to* ferry a P-51 to Newark.

In late *December of* 1944 I was in Niagara Falls with an assigned P-39, waiting for a snowstorm to blow over so that I could take off. I was handed a *telegram from* Jacqueline Cochran. It said "Sign off your plane and return to Romulus". Our WASP operation had been disbanded. Just before Christmas we were all honored at Romulus with a dinner, given souvenir medals, and sent home After that many of us offered to continue ferrying without pay, but the offer was not accepted. I was devastated, but grateful that I had the unique opportunity to fly airplanes for the Air Force for two years and to feel that I had contributed to the winning of the war.



The 461st Bomb Group Crew Photo Project

When it was proposed at the 1999 reunion that we might begin to search for and catalog all the crew photos from the 461 st Bomb Group for access on the web site, we already had about 95 crew pictures in the archive -mostly unidentified, and with no captions. Many thanks to the Group members and their families who have jumped into this project with such enthusiasm! The project is rolling along nicely now, but there are still many photos without identifying captions, so if you can supply information please get in touch with your Editor through the address on the magazine.

With the arrival of a new bundle from Frank O'Bannon, we have acquired negatives for some of the crew photos we are missing, but as we go to press I have not yet had the chance to do much of an inventory. More unidentified crew photos have also cropped up, and you will find them at the bottom of the next few pages. Please write in if you can help us identify these crews.

All of the crew photos in the archive are being posted to the website (www.461st.com), so if you can add any comments, captions, anecdotes or histories, please send those in.

This listing reflects the crew pictures we have been able to process before going to press, so we may have a few to add that are still in the pipeline. The notes on the end of each entry indicate only what is either on the web site now, or soon to be added. In many cases we have quite a bit of related material that has not yet been fully sorted, but we will fold in all the information we can once the basics on each crew are squared away. Again, patience (and typists!) will be key.

As you will see, we still need to identify faces in many of the photos, and there are quite a few crews not represented - please check to see what we have and what we are missing as regards your crew, and any crews with whom you are familiar. Sadly, in many cases, and especially for those crews who were KIA, there may not be anyone left to make these identifications.

Instances where a Copilot might have been elevated to Aircraft Commander, or where remnants of particular crews were combined into another existing crew (or to form a new one) are also areas in which we could use more first-hand information. Any help in deciphering some of these puzzles and omissions would be greatly appreciated.

If your crew photo is not in the archive, I hope you will take a moment to have a duplicate made so it can take its place in the record.

The notation ZI' in the crew number slot indicates that a crew was assigned only for processing to the US at the end of the war.

461st Bomb Group Air Crews

Listed by Aircraft Commander

<u>Pilot Name</u>	<u>Sq.</u>	<u>Date Assigned</u>	<u>Crew Number</u>	<u>Photo in Archive?</u>
Aginsky, Milton	766	05/05/44	ZI	
Ahlberg, Theodore R	766	10/18/43	42	Photo - Needs some crew positions
Aldredge, Ausbon E	767	10/18/43	67	
Alexander, Clair B Jr	764	10/02/44	11-2	Photo - Needs identification
Anderson, John W Jr	765	12/02/44	12/2	Photo - Needs identification
Arbuthnot, Robert E	765	04/11/44	39-1	2 Photos - Need identification
Arents, Bertrand J	767	08/18/44	64-1	
Arnholt, Robert C	764	03/13/45	155	Photo - Needs some crew positions
Austin, William F	767	03/16/45	4/16-4	
Baker, Jack R	764	04/11/44	84-0	Photo - Needs crew positions
Baker, Robert K	765	08/08/44	22-1	
Ballinger, Joseph A	767	04/16/45	4/16-7	
Baran, Walter Jr	765	01/26/45	118	
Barcus, Howard J	766	01/28/45	123	
Barnhart, Robert M	766	11/29/44	59-	Photo - Needs specific waist positions
Barnes, Robert T	765	09/15/44	9/16	
Batenic, Julius M	764	03/08/45	3-3 (1593)	Photo - Needs specific waist positions
Bauman, Charles W	766	10/18/43	44	
Baumann, Edwin	766	10/18/43	46	Photo - Needs crew positions
Bean, James O	764	10/18/43	3	2 Photos - Both need identification
Beatty, William H	765	08/08/44	26-1	Photo - Needs specific waist positions
Beson, Herbert J	764	04/03/45	86R	
Bell, Frank W Jr	764	09/14/44	16-2	
Bigelow, Robert S	766	10/18/43	54	
Blake, Robert T	765	07/26/44	7/26	
Blanchard, Harold C	764	10/18/43	2	2 Photos - 1 needs ID, 1 needs gun positions
Bloxom, Clarence W	764	07/27/44	4887	Photo - Needs specific waist positions
Bloxom, Ingrid B Jr	765	07/03/44	7/3-1	Photo - Needs identification
Bock, Robert K	764	09/16/44	10-1	
Bogner, Robert P	767	12/31/44	80R	
BonTempo, John C	766	01/26/45	1/26 (8432)	Photo, history
Boozer, John W Jr	764	07/25/44	17-1	
Bowyer, Edwin W	767	04/11/44	79	
Boyd, John H	766	12/19/44	44R	
Boyer, Clyde L	767	10/11/44	77-1	Photo - Needs specific waist positions
Brady, Cornelius H	765	12/31/44	24R	

These two crews have not yet been identified. Let us know if you recognize anyone!



<u>Pilot Name</u>	<u>Sq.</u>	<u>Date Assigned</u>	<u>Crew Number</u>	<u>Photo in Archive?</u>
Brewster, Robert L	765	01/22/45	1/22	
Bridges, Carl D Jr	766	05/05/45	5/5	
Brown, Frank M Jr	764	12/19/44	18R	
Brown, Walter H	765	05/07/45	ZI	
Bruning, Robert J	765	03/05/45	29R	
Burnette, Floyd W	764	04/11/44	13	
Burton, George A	764	10/18/43	8	Photo - Needs some crew positions
Bush, Kelton G	767	10/18/43	61	Photo - Needs identification
Butler, Fenton H	765	04/16/45	4/16-3	
Cameron, Donald	767	12/20/44	79-2	Photo - Needs specific waist positions
Capalbo, Frederick B	767	11/29/44	62-	
Caran, Robert	765	03/03/45	134 (3/3)	Photos - 1 needs identification
Carlisle, Jessie C?	764	12/02/44	5—	
Carr, Rudolph C	765	10/18/43	25	
Caswell, Stanley E	767	04/16/45	4/16-8	
Catana, Anthony M	767	07/03/44	63-1	
Chalmers, Robert T	765	08/08/44	23-1	Photos
Chennault, Alfred L	767	11/29/44	61-	
Chester, Walter J	766	09/01/44	9/1	
Childrey, Jackson F	765	10/18/43	36	Photo, notes
Clark, Walter M Jr	767	12/02/44	73R	
Clay, Neal Jr	764	11/29/44	88R	
Coates, Robert K	766	11/29/44	96-	
Coleman, Raymond L	766	12/31/44	58-	
Connor, Wayne W	764	03/07/45	4/7	
Connor, Cleone C Jr	767	02/11/45	2/11	
Cooper, Leo F	765	07/27/44	4614	Photo - Needs identification
Crossman, Philip J	765	10/02/44	5993	
Crumbo, Chester W	764	12/02/44	151	Photo - Needs identification
Crume, Lyle, L	767	06/09/44	62-1	Photo - Needs specific waist positions
Cunningham, William O	765	04/03/45	26R	Photo - Needs specific waist positions
Curtis, Andrew R Jr	766	12/02/44	152	Photo, artwork
Delana, Edward K	767	12/02/44	72-2	
Demmond, Edward C	765	04/16/45	4/16-2	
DeSpain, Charles A	766	04/11/44	57-0	
Donovan, Joseph N	766	10/18/44	45	
Dughi, Roger D	764	12/20/44	6-1	
Dunn, Frederick L	766	06/10/44	54-1	

This photo of the James O. Bean crew is only one of dozens for which we have a tentative crew ID, but no identification of the individuals in the picture. Can you help?



Does anyone recognize this original 765th Squadron crew? It was drawn from a stack of other 765th BS photos, but that is the only clue so far.



<u>Pilot Name</u>	<u>Sq.</u>	<u>Date Assigned</u>	<u>Crew Number</u>	<u>Photo in Archive?</u>
Eaby, Donald C	765	08/28/44	28-1	
Edwards, Robert F	766	10/18/43	40	Partial photo (8) - Needs specific waist positions
Ehrlich, Harold F	766	07/26/44	45R	
Emmert, Lloyd D	764	08/22/44	8-1	Photo - Needs identification
Falkner, Robert D	766	08/29/44	8/29	
Farnham, Arthur E Jr	766	07/27/44	42R	
Farris, Robert C	764	05/07/45	ZI	
Fawcett, Richard S	766	10/18/43	50	Photo - Needs crew positions
Fernsten, Claude D	766	12/31/44	49R	
Fink, Francis X	766	09/22/44	9/22	
Ford, Eugene P	765	10/18/43	29	Photo - Needs gun positions
Fratton, Vincent	765	??-??-??	??	Photo - Needs identification
Frazier, Earnest R	767	08/31/44	8/31	Photo - Needs some gun positions
Freierdorf, Robert R	766	08/28/44	??	
Freeman, Richard	764	10/18/43	1	Photo - Needs identification
Fulks, Glenial	765	10/18/43	31	Photo - Needs identification
Fuller, Keith L	764	10/18/43	5	Photo - Needs gun positions
Galvan, Robert A	767	10/11/44	78-2	Photo, notes
Garrett, WilliamG	764	09/14/44	16-2(R?)(157)	Photo - Needs gun positions
Garrison, Vernon	765	10/18/43	28	Photo - Needs identification
George, Edward K	767	07/26/44	61-2	
Gilbert, Gordon E	764	03/05/45	2R-2	
Gilley, Allen L Jr	764	04/16/45	4/16	
Green, Curtis G Jr	765	07/07/44	20-1	
Grey, Frederick A Jr	765	08/23/44	??	
Grimm, Walter J	765	10/18/43	35	Photo
Guyton, William A	766	10/08/44	10/8 (6485)	Photo, notes - Needs gun positions
Hailey, Max M	767	10/11/44	79-1	
Hamer, Philip T	767	02/07/45	5/7-4	
Hansen, Robert C	767	12/12/44	12/12	
Harris, James E	767	10/18/43	65	2 Photos notes - 1 needs identification
Harrison, Robert E	767	10/31/44	81R	Photo - Needs gun positions
Hatem, Roy A	766	04/16/45	4/16-9	
Hayes, John H	765	01/31/45	??	
Heald, Robert L	767	10/18/43	71	Photo - Needs specific waist positions
Hefling, Robert J	764	10/18/43	9	Photo - Needs crew positions
Heinze, Lloyd R	765	12/19/44	23-2	Photo - Needs gun positions
Henry, George T	767	01/22/45	63R	

This crew appears to be from the 764th Squadron, judging by the chest patches on their A-2 jackets. The photo has neither a caption nor a donor credit.



David Lane believes he recognizes himself as the third man from the left on the bottom row identifying this as Jack Bakers crew (84-0). Can anyone confirm this for us?



<u>Pilot Name</u>	<u>Sq.</u>	<u>Date Assigned</u>	<u>Crew Number</u>	<u>Photo in Archive?</u>
Herbert, Donald J	767	08/18/44	70-2	Photo - Needs some identification
Herrin, Douglas A	764	07/25/44	17-1	
Hess, Robert W	767	08/23/44	75-1	
Hesser, Joseph B	766	10/18/43	56	
Hettinger, William P Jr	767	01/19/45	1/19	Photo - Needs crew positions
Holly, William M	765	04/16/45	4/16-2	Photo - Needs specific waist positions
Holmes, Turner M	766	10/18/43	47	Photo, notes - Needs crew positions
Hooper, Josiah R	766	12/12/44	12/12	
Horn, Truman L Jr	767	07/30/44	66-1	
Hoskins, Robert S	766	01/31/45	124	Photo, notes
Huber, Roy E	765	10/18/43	37	Photo - Needs identification
Huchzermeier, Harlow R	767	01/07/45	7831	Photo - Needs crew positions
Huggard, Harry G	767	10/18/43	75	2 Photos - Both need identification
Hughes, Arthur L	765	10/31/44	90R	2 Photos, History
Hutton, John P	767	04/16/45	4/16-5	
Inskeep, Warren E	764	04/03/45	85R	Photo - Needs identification
Irwin, James D	764	05/07/45	ZI	
Jehli, Arthur T Jr	767	07/23/44	42-1	
Jenkins, Jasper T	765	06/09/44	30-1	Photo - Needs specific waist positions
Jesneck, Howard F	767	05/07/45	ZI	
Johnson, David E A	765	07/23/44	7/23	Photo - Needs identification
Johnson, James R	764	10/18/43	12	Photo & Log
Johnson, Luverne S	764	03/03/45	4/7	
Jones, Captain E Jr	767	07/03/44	68R	
Kane, John J	767	07/03/44	63-1	
Kassian, Watkins R	766	10/28/44	57R1	Photo - Needs some identification
Kelleher, William J	765	08/28/44	28-1	Photo - Needs specific waist positions
Kelliher, Robert M	765	10/28/44	89R	
King, Willard R	765	07/23/44	39-	Photo, notes - Needs crew positions
Koepell, Harold C	767	07/27/44	7/27-2	
Kollenborn, Mac A	764	10/18/43	4	
Kostka, Charles F	765	10/18/43	33	Photo - Needs specific waist positions
Krahn, Charles F	767	10/02/44	77	
Kuestersteffen, Joseph C	767	11/29/44	83-	Photo - Needs some gun positions
Kursel, William J	764	09/09/44	6-1	Individual photos
Lang, Charles V Jr	767	12/04/44	12/2	Photo notes
Langley, Doyle R	767	11/29/44	(63, 67?)	
Lalewicz, Chester, J	764	10/28/44	85	
LaRock, Michael K	766	01/30/45	1/30	
Ledendecker, Carl H	766	04/06/45	4/6	
Lenhart, Francis M	765	05/07/45	ZI	
Lightbody, Thomas B	764	11/29/44	97R	
Lively, Guy W	764	12/31/44	18/99	
Longino, Ted E	764	01/31/45	116	
Louches, Robert J	765	09/02/44	9/2	
Luebke, Robert J	767	07/18/44	7/18	Photo, notes - Needs specific waist positions
Mahlum, Conrad E	766	01/06/45	1/6 (121)	Photo
Maroney, Gerald J	767	10/18/43	73	Photo - Needs identification
Mattson, John J	767	05/05/45	ZI	
MacDougal, Danald L	766	10/18/43	41	
McDonnell, Charles P	765	04/07/45	4/7	
McGinnis, Charles D	767	12/31/44	109	
McGoey, Wilbur M	764	04/03/45	8R	
McKee, Robert R	766	12/02/44	154	
McLeod, Irving M	767	05/07/45	ZI	
McMillen, Dewey A	766	12/19/44	90?	

<u>Pilot Name</u>	<u>Sq.</u>	<u>Date Assigned</u>	<u>Crew Number</u>	<u>Photo in Archive?</u>
Merkouris, Thomas M	766	11/29/44	49-	
Mertz, Martin G	767	03/03/45	65R	
Michaelis, Donald, W	765	01/06/45	1/6	
Miller, George H	764	07/23/44	1-1	Photo
Miller, Johnson S	765	12/31/44	37R	
Miller, Warren K	767	09/22/44	74R	
Miller, William J	766	10/23/44	10/23	
Millikin, Paul H	767	07/23/44	72?	
Misius, Ralph J	766	10/11/44	56R	
Mixson, Marion C	765	10/18/43	24	Photo - Needs specific waist positions
Mohan, Bernard J	765	07/24/44	7/24	
Moore, John B Jr	766	07/24/44	31-2	
Moore, Thomas C	767	07/23/44	4276	
Morgan, Merlon G Sr	767	04/11/44	78	
Moses, Elias E	765	07/25/44	7/25-1	
Moss, Thomas R	765	10/18/43	27	2 Photos - Both need identification
Mowery, Paul S	766	10/18/43	49	Photo - Needs specific waist positions
Muller, Wm Otto	767	04/11/44	77-0	
Myllmaki, Edward E	765	07/07/44	34R	
Nahkunst, Edward A	764	07/24/44	13-2	Photo
Nayes, Leroy M	765	12/02/44	89R	
Nelson, George R	767	10/18/43	76	2 Photos - 1 needs identification
Newton, Ralph E	767	07/23/44	7/23	Photo - Needs identification
Nixon, Forrest D	765	10/18/43	30	Photo - Needs crew positions
Nixon, Roger	766	11/29/44	42-	Photo - Needs identification
Norris, Samuel N	765	10/18/44	20	Photo - Needs identification
Oliver, John G L	764	07/23/44	15-1	Photo - Needs gun positions
Olson, Edgar B	764	03/16/45	4/16-6	
Olson, Rolland T	767	07/27/44	7/27-2	
O'Neal, Joseph M	766	10/31/44	10/31	Photo
Parsonson, Earnest C	764	10/08/44	14-3	Photo - Needs some gunner positions
Pearce Thomas J Jr	766	04/08/45	55R	
Peterson, Edward W	765	10/18/43	26	Photo - Needs identification
Petty, Warren E	764	01/06/45	1/6	
Philips, Roy E Jr	766	08/22/44	8/22	
Phillips, Guyon L	767	03/03/45	76R	Photo - Needs specific waist positions
Phillips, Rollen L	765	04/11/44	38-0	
Podwolsky, George R	767	07/27/44	63-2	
Porch, Stanley P	765	12/02/44	150	
Powell, William M	764	08/22/44	4-2	
Presho, Burnie E	765	07/31/44	25R	Photo - Needs specific waist positions
Raab, Doid K	767	05/07/45	ZI	
Ramaley, Steven W	767	05/09/45	ZI	
Rathfelder, Marvin W	764	01/07/45	16-3	Photo - Needs replacement
Rawchuck, Nicholas	767	08/23/44	69-1	
Ray, Chester A Jr	766	04/11/44	58-0	
Reiland, Richard F	765	04/16/44	4/16-10	
Richardson, Thomas R	764	05/07/45	ZI	
Ridenour, James M	766	03/03/45	3/3	
Riley, Francis J	767	10/18/43	68	Photo - Needs specific waist positions
Roberts, Allyn E	764	07/25/44	52R	
Robinson, James B III	765	04/11/44	21-1	Photo, extensive notes
Robertson, Douglas L	766	10/18/43	48	
Rosenberg, Elliott D	764	??/??/??	4887	
Rosencrans, Gordon W Jr	767	07/27/44	7/27-1	
Ross, Roger S	764	01/26/45	115R	

<u>Pilot Name</u>	<u>Sq.</u>	<u>Date Assigned</u>	<u>Crew Number</u>	<u>Photo in Archive?</u>
Roswurm, Robert U	767	07/27/44	70-1	Photo - Needs some gun positions
Rush, Martin A Jr	767	08-23-44	75-1	
Russell, Leroy G	764	04/11/44	19-0	
Rutter, Sheldon M	764	07/03/44	7/3	
Ryan, Donald L	767	01/06/45	71R	
Ryder, George N Jr	764	10/18/43	17	Photo - needs identification
Sage, Joseph H	765	10/18/43	32	Photo, notes
St. John, Earl	765	11/29/44	30-1	2 Photos, notes
Sargent, Marion C	764	11/29/44	98R	
Saur, Charles W	764	10/07/44	17-2	Photos
Sayre, Robert M	764	10/18/43	13	2 Photos - 1 needs ID, 1 needs specific waist positions
Seeman, Ralph T	766	10/18/43	43	Photo - Needs crew positions
Settle, Curlos M	766	10/18/43	55	Photo - Needs crew positions
Schultz, Carl J	764	08/31/44	3-1	
Schultz, James H	767	11/29/44	73-	
Schweisberger, Robert	765	07/27/44	7/27-1	
Schwisow, Lauren L	765	07/26/44	7/27	
Shaw, Stockton B	766	08/18/44	43-1	Photo, notes
Sidovar, Nicholas	766	10/16/44	10/16-1	
Silvis, Daniel J Jr	767	03/16/45	4/8	
Simon, Robert	766	10/18/43	53	
Simons, William V	765	10/16/44	6230	
Skalomenos, Alcibiades	764	03/12/45	136	
Skinner, Ernest C	765	01/07/45	38-2	2 Photos - Need specific waist positions
Sklanski, Sol S	764	07/23/44	9-1	Photo - Needs some gunner positions
Smith, Gerald R	765	10/07/44	6409	2 Photos, feature - Need specific waist positions
Smith, John H	765	07/03/44	7/3-1	
Smith, Kenneth B	764	11/29/44	3-2	Photos, feature - needs identification
Sobieski, Thomas J	766	08/22/44	8/22	
Souther, Hubert W	764	07/30/44	12-1	
Specht, John K	765	10/18/43	22	
Spehalsky, Raymon E	764	11/29/44	87R-2	
Spencer, James H	764	07/27/44	5-1	Photo and feature
Stanko, John J	765	03/23/45	448	
Staples, Robert S	765	11/29/44	20-	Photo - Needs specific waist positions
Steele, Kay B	764	10/18/43	16	Photo - needs identification
Stegeman, John C	765	11/29/44	22-2	Photo - Needs specific waist positions
Steinberg, Dave S	767	02/07/45	2/7	
Stephens, Farrold F	764	10/18/43	14	
Sterret, Robert E	766	07/12/44	7/2	
Stevens, Clyde A	764	10/18/43	1	Photo - needs identification
Stevens, Roland H	764	10/06/44	4-3	
Stitch, Wray M	764	07/24/44	4983	
Stockton, Floyd C	767	07/23/44	71-1	Photo - Needs crew positions
Street, Samuel S	765	05/07/45	ZI	
Strong, Harold B Jr	767	10/18/43	64	
Summers, Leslie L	765	07/25/44	7/25	
Swinehart, Robert G	767	06/02/44	61-1	Photo - Needs crew positions
Taylor, James G	764	10/31/44	10/31	
Taylor, Noble A	765	10/18/43	23	Photo - needs identification
Tallant, William h	765	10/18/43	21	Photo, notes - Needs specific waist positions
Tebbens, John R	766	03/12/45	3/12	
Tetzlaff, Ray M	764	01/31/45	129	Photo composite
Thomas, David J	766	07/30/44	46R	Photo, notes
Tickle, William L Jr	765	05/07/45	ZI	
Tiffany, Donald E	764	07/30/44	2-1	

<u>Pilot Name</u>	<u>Sq.</u>	<u>Date Assigned</u>	<u>Crew Number</u>	<u>Photo in Archive?</u>
Toothman, Lawrence R	764	03/23/45	13-3	Photo, notes
Torres, Matias M	767	10/18/43	65	2 Photos, notes - 1 needs identification
Townsley, Albert W	766	07/23/44	58-2	
Traefta, Dominick	765	12/02/44	12/2-1	Photo - Needs specific waist positions
Trenner, Edgar M	764	10/18/43	18	Photos and feature
Trier, Arthur H	766	07/23/44	55-1	
Trohman, Aaron	767677	10/18/43	74	Photo - Needs identification
Trommershausser, John	765	09/09/44	9/9	Photo - Needs identification
Turner, John L Jr	764	07/23/44	14-2	
Underwood, John L	764	07/23/44	7-1	
Vanderhoeven, Gerard L	766	07/23/44	50-1	
Veiluva, Edward F	764	10/18/43	7	Photos and feature
Viliesis, Paul P	764	12/02/44	100R	
Vladyka, Vahl A	765	12/19/44	36R	Photo, notes—Needs specific waist positions
Vogel, William E	767	12/02/44	12/2-1	Photo - Needs specific waist positions
Waggoner, William E	765	07/03/44	No crew	when assigned
Wallace, William C	764	10/18/43	11	Photo - Needs identification
Wallace, Alfred	764?6?	Ca. 1945		
Walsh, Harry L	767	08/23/44	76-1	
Walters, Robert W	767	10/18/43	63	Photo - Needs identification
Ward, Lee P Jr	766	09/09/44	53-2	Photo - Needs specific waist positions
Wastman, Vernon L	764	10/18/43	10	2 Photos - need identification
Warren, Ralph E	767	10/18/43	69	Photo - Needs identification
Warren, Robert A Jr	765	07/26/44	5007	
Webb, Willis L	766	??/??/??	6781	
Weber, Ralph A	764	10/11/44	19-1	Photo and notes
Weems, William Z	765	10/18/43	34	
Weir, Robert A	764	10/18/43	6	Photo - Needs identification
Welton, Thomas B	765	10/11/44	27R	
West, Thomas K	765	10/11/44	38-1	Photo - Needs some gun positions
Westfall, Charles R	767	07/23/44	61-1	
Whalen, Russel G	765	10/11/44	39R	Photo - Needs specific waist positions
Wiemann, George F III	766	10/08/44	6413	
Wiggins, Arthur C	766	05/23/44	??	
Wilde, Norman M	766	05/03/44	??	
Wiley, Thomas R	767	12/19/44	12/17	
Willing, Thomas P	767	11/29/44	61-	
Wilson, Howard O	766	08/18/44	44-1	
Wilson, John F	764	10/18/43	15	2 Photos
Wilson, Sydney S	766	10/18/43	52	Photo - Needs specific waist positions
Wnukowski, Raymond	765	05/07/44	5/7-3	
Wojtkowiak, Leonard S	765	01/07/45	25-2	Photo - Needs specific waist positions
Wood, Robert A	766	10/18/43	51	Photo - Needs crew positions
Woodard, Floyd W	767	10/18/43	60	Photo - Needs specific waist positions
Woodruff, Lawrence O	765	09/09/44	33R	Photo - Needs specific waist positions
Wren, John R Jr	766	07/23/44	7/23	2 Photos - 1 needs identification
Wright, Jack H	766	04/11/44	52-1	Photo - Needs specific waist positions
Wright, William G	767	10/18/43	70	Photo - Needs identification
Wyllie, Roy W Jr	764	06/09/44	11-1	
Yancey, James R	765	11/29/44	24-	
Yauger, Robert L	767	12/20/44	78?	
Yetter, Jack N	766	10/11/44	56R	
Young, John A	764	10/16/44	15R	Photo - Needs specific waist positions
Zive, Samuel H	766	04/11/44	59-0	
Zumsteg, William H	767	10/18/43	62	Photo - Needs identification



"I'VE NOTICED there's NEVER a line till AFTER briefing..."

Special Edition Slated For June

The next issue of The 461 st Liberaider will be dedicated to stories and artwork submitted by former POWs from the ranks of the 461 st. We have quite a bit of very strong and compelling material for this issue, but there is always room for more. If you spent time 'Behind The Wire', please consider sending in your stories, poetry, artwork or anecdotes for inclusion. Please - only send duplicates or copies of any original material

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