



The 461st

Liberaider



Vol. 6, No. 2

MAY 1989

SOMEWHERE IN THE USA



THE 461ST BOMB GROUP (H)

IT'S EARLY DAYS

MISSION #2
3 April 1944

MISSION #3
5 April 1944

For the second "freshman mission" the group went back to Yugoslavia. This time the Marshalling Yards at Drnis. Lt. Col. Hawes was the formation leader while Col. Glantzberg flew as second section leader. Flying with Col. Hawes in the lead plane were flight leader, 1st Lt. Floyd Woodard, Capt. Pruitt and Lt. Leffler. In addition to Major Burke and the four squadron commanders, Capt. William Bock and Capt. David McQuillan, the two squadron operations officers that had not flown on the first mission were on this mission. The speed of the lead aircraft was too slow which resulted in a formation that was badly spread out.

The day was hazy and the group lead had difficulty indentifying the target against the tan background of early spring. The mission wasn't as successful as the first one had been and the crew members began to realize that targets were not easy to identify and hit.

This mission, to the Marshalling Yards at Nis, Yugoslavia, was led by Major Robert E. Applegate, the 765th Squadron Commander. Col. Glantzberg flew deputy lead position. The deputy group commander, the group operations officer and the four squadron commanders also flew this mission. To the haze, experienced on the second mission, was added an 8/10ths undercast. As a result of the haze, the undercast and the tan background below, the target was missed completely. For the first and only time during these early days no pictures of the bomb drop were obtained.

The formation was the best flown thus far. However, mistakes were made. The group failed to let down during a 360 deg. Turn in order to bomb below the overcast; it failed to get on the step before the bomb run; it didn't cover a cripple on the way home; and it failed to get under the overcast on the return trip across the Adriatic.

Note: These two missions did not make an auspicious start for the fledgling 461st Bomb Group. See the related article on Page 3.

The 461st LIBERAIDER
461st Bombardment Group (H)
Activated: 1 July 1943
Inactivated: 27 August 1945
Incorporated: 25 November 1985

CORPORATE HDQRS: 313 Hill St., Box 638, Oakland, IA 51560

FEDERAL IRS TAX EXEMPT, Internal Revenue Code 501©(19) No. 42-1272736

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LIBERAIDER

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The LIBERAIDER is published three times a year on behalf of the members of the organization and is mailed from Torrance Post Office, CA 90510-9703.
Permission is granted to use articles provided source is recognized.

WE HAVE A "MOVING" PRESIDENT

Frank and Millie have flown the land of "fruits and nuts" and landed in Sunny Tucson, AZ. Trouble is they flew mypersonic and got there 3 months before their house was ready. Temporary address: P.O. Box 36600, Tucson, AZ 85740. Temporary phone: (602) 887-7681

* * * * *

ACTIONS OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The board approved a donation of \$500 to the Collins Foundation toward the restoration of a B-24. (See the associated articles on pages 10 and 15)

The board approved the formation of a committee to establish a memorial in the name of the 461st Bomb Group at the Air Force Museum at Wright-Patterson AFB, Dayton, Ohio. The chairman will be Edward Izzo (765). The committee will research the project and make their recommendations to the board.

Paid memberships totaled 920 for 1988.

TIDBITS

Webster's Dictionary:

Tidbit—A titbit

Titbit—A choice morsel; a tidbit

Now you know! We print only the best!

SERGEANT PILOTS—The Army Air Corps Enlisted Pilots Association is attempting to locate men who trained as aviation students with the Army Air Corps and flew as sergeant pilots in 1942 or trained as enlisted pilots with the Royal Canadian Air Force and transferred to the Army Air Corps as sergeant pilots. Contact Leonard Sweet (618) 537-6261.

DISCHARGE CERTIFICATES—To obtain a copy of your discharge certificate (DD214) or equivalent) or other documents from service records complete and send Standard Form 180 to National Personnel Records Center in St. Louis.

CHECK YOUR LIFE INSURANCE—All military retirees who have civilian life insurance should double check to determine if the policy is still valid. Some benefits of private insurance companies decrease in value when the member retires, providing lower dollar amounts to beneficiaries. The decrease in value varies between companies.

REUNION '89

Are you going?
Have you made your room
reservation yet?

If not you should do it soon
or you may have to stay at
another hotel

Holiday Inn Westport
St. Louis, MO
(314) 434-0100
(800) 465-4329

Tell them you're with the 461st

Registration—Thursday October 12
Departure—Sunday, October 15

I WAS AN AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHER

By Jim Van Norstrand (765)
(with a few editorial changes)

ORIGINAL LIBERAIDER

Vol. 1 No. 1
April 1945

The last lines of the article on Mission #1 in the October 1988 issue of the Liberaider read: "Bomb strike photos give incomplete coverage of bursts". Those words may have been what started a series of actions that led to the creation of an added crew member called "Aerial Photographer" - my job. (See page 1 of this issue for results of Missions 2 and 3).

I remember the day very well that Big G strode over to the photo lab and lined us all up out front and said, "Men, we're not getting bomb strike pictures of the target, so we're adding a man just to get those pictures. I can't order you but I'm asking for volunteers". Just like somebody pushed me from behind, I stepped forward and several others followed. That put me on flying status.

As I was the first one to volunteer, I flew the first mission as "official photographer" and extra crewman. As I recall, I wasn't very well accepted. I could understand that as the regular crews were very close. Only after I'd flown five or ten missions did I begin to feel at home. Since I flew with a different crew almost every time, it took a while to fit in but things got better.

I recall the first mission vividly as I'd had no check-out or training as a flight crew member. I didn't really know how to hook up the oxygen mask until a waist gunner helped me; then there was the flak suit and so on. I learned gradually. Once I got started I wanted to finish my missions as did everyone else, but it took me almost a year to complete my tour. I'm glad I volunteered, tho, as it was much more exciting than the photo lab could ever have been.

* * * * *

THINK REUNION '89

Come talk about those "exciting" days in Italy, some 45 years ago.

In previous Editions of the 461st Liberaider we have reproduced pages from the original Liberaider. A list of the editions and original pages reproduced is provided below.

| | | | |
|--------|-------|-----------|---------------------------|
| Vol. 4 | No. 1 | Feb. 1987 | Pages 1 & 2 |
| Vol. 4 | No. 2 | July 1987 | Pages 3 & 4 |
| Vol. 5 | No. 1 | Apr. 1988 | Centerfold Pages 6 & 7 |

Pages 5, 8, 9 and 10 of the original issue are reproduced on pages 6, 7, 8 and 9 of this issue.

(Editor's note: I'm sure not all of you saw these issues. I'm equally sure I'll get requests for copies. If I do I'll do my best to meet the demand.)

* * * * *

(Continued from page 2)

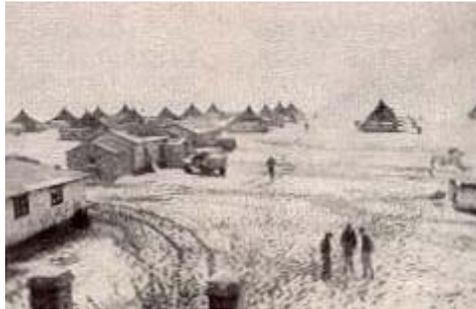
AMATEUR RADIO ANYONE? - As Editor I don't have to know anything, all I need do is report the "facts". Here is a good example. The following is culled from a newsletter published by Jim Van Norstrand (765) in October 1988. Jim is apparently the "father" of the "Air Forces Flyers Club", an amateur radio activity. The letter contains jargon that only pigs—oops, I mean hams understand. Call Jim WA6IFX in Wyoming for details. Due to antenna restrictions in his area, he operates a mobile Kenwood 430 with a whip antenna. Back in October Jim indicated they had two nets (I don't think he meant tennis or volleyball) for which he provided the following data.

(Continued on page 10)

| | |
|-----------------|----------------------|
| Each Sunday | 20 meters 14.308 MHz |
| Net Control | Harry W5VXM—Texas |
| Asst. Net | Frank W6QZH—Calif. |
| Time (Standard) | 6 Nov.— 1600 UTC |
| Each Saturday | 15 meter 21.420 MHz |
| Net Control | Don K3LQQ—Fla. |
| Time (Standard) | 5 Nov.— 2100 UTC |

ITALY REVISITED—1988

By Frank O'Bannon



The 764th Squadron area—Winter 1944-45
Remember?

Friday, September 30, 1988

Came dawn and eighteen men leaped from their beds, donned their armor, gulped down a hasty breakfast and mounted their steeds for the fray they were about to encounter. For this was “Return to Cerignola Day”. For Len and Grace Cole, Gerry and Ann Huizenga and Frank and Millie O’Bannon this “Return” would be a review of the 1982 tour. For Paul and Alvina Bella, Bill and Lois Dietrich, Dick and Dorothy Durand, Paul and Betty Ferguson, John and Norma Lazier, John and Jean McGarr, Joe and Ann Mullahey, Vern and Gwen Nelle, Barb O’Bannon, Gail and Verna Peterson, Burnie and Bonnie Presho, Ed and Wilma Schrader, John and Gladys Simeroth, Harold and Dorothy Watson, Bill and Muriel Wilkins and Ed Callahan this would be a really big day.

A short drive from Foggia, over the same road that we used in 1944, brought us in front of the Cerignola City Hall. We were joined by Dr. Domenico Rinaldi, Vice Mayor and Alberghina Giovanni, Chief of Police, who acted as our escorts during our visit. With Officer Difulippo Salvatore leading the way we were off to the areas of the Group. It was apparent that the police had scouted our areas as they knew exactly where we wanted to go! The roads are all paved and well taken care of—well—almost. The lane between Group headquarters and the 765th Squadron has not been improved in the least. The wives can now appreciate just what it was like to go from one squadron area to another back in those old days.

The runway is gone! A super highway now runs thru that area at about the half way mark. The permanent buildings in each area look as if time had stopped and waited for our return. One by one we visited each of the sites. The men walked all over reminiscing. Many of the wives noted teary eyes, probably due to specks of dust in their husband’s eyes.

Group headquarters is still used but the land around it has many weeds that were not there in 1982. We were able to get into the buildings but the briefing room building was locked up. Across from the headquarters building you can see some evidence of our being there. A small garden has several pieces of pierced steel planking (PSP) attached to posts to serve as a fence. This was the only item we found that related to our stay there.

The 764th area was approached by a new road that runs along the ridge to the west of the old road. The lit-

(Continued on page 5)

tle creek now has a dam across it which forms a lake that covers the old road.

The other three sites were the same as when we were there. While at the 765th area an Italian man drove up and talked to a couple of our men. He said that as a small boy men from the Group used to give him chocolates and caramels. Regretfully we did not get his name or picture.

We had requested the Mayor's office to help us locate some of the Italians we knew back at the time of the war, but time had marched on. They knew where our people had gone but we were unable to talk to them. The Huizenga's were able to get a picture, taken during the 1982 tour, back to the Italian family that had befriended them at the 766th area.

All of the buildings and improvements that we made during our stay had been removed immediately after the war. There are olive trees, vineyards and cultivated fields now where there used to be tents (like those shown above). The Mayor told us that the Baron's fields were split up after the war and given to the people of Cerignola.

The aging warriors, in their rusting armor, settled down to review their latest conquests, to dream of past battles and to make plans for getting the rust off their armor for their grandchildren's sake.

MEMBERS OF THE 461st BOMB GROUP (H) 1943-1945
VISIT THE SICILY-ROME AMERICAN MILITARY CENETERY
October, 1988

On their way to Rome, the group visited the Sicily-Rome Cemetery to place a wreath in memory of our men lost in combat. The group believes that every gravesite of a 461st member who is buried there was visited by a member of his respective squadron. A group insignia was forwarded to the cemetery for display.



Back Row L-R: Richard Durand (764), John Simeroth (765), William Dietrich (765), Vernon Nelle (764), Leonard Cole (HQRS), William Wilkins (765), Burnie Presho (765), Paul Bella (764), Ed Schrader (764) and Paul Ferguson (767)

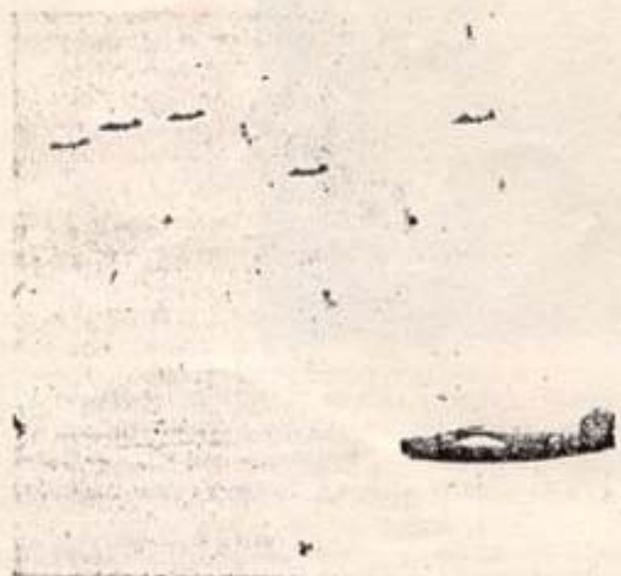
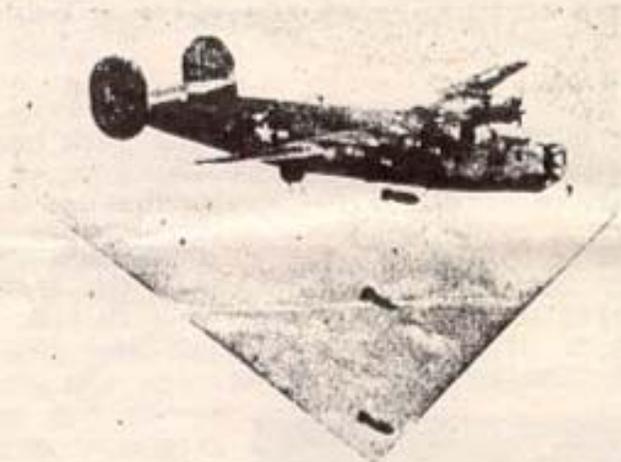
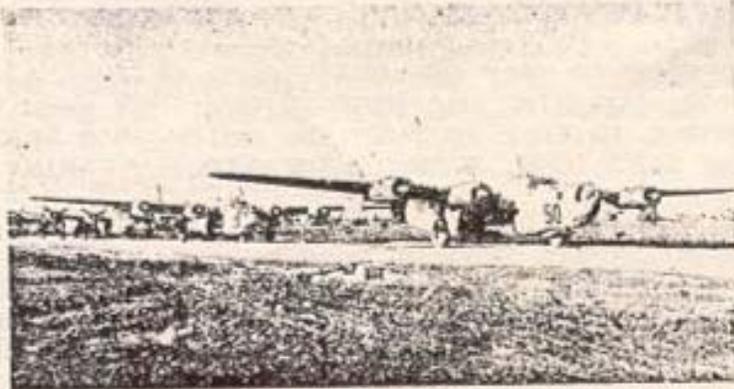
Front Row L-R: Harold Watson (766), John Lazier (764), Frank O'Bannon (764), Gail Peterson (765), Joseph Mullahey (HQRS), Gerald Huizenga (766) and John McGarr (767).

April, 1945.

THE 461st LIBERAIDER

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Picture Section



Highpoints in the day's mission are these shots with ground and aerial cameras.

Top left: The Libs await their turn to take off.

Top right: The formation on its way to the target.

Center left: "Bombs Away!"

Above: Like a sheepdog, our P-40 heads a straying B-24 back into formation.

Lower left: Plak bursts all through a formation of our Liberators.

Your Choice - One's Hot, One's Cold



"Soup's On" for the Italian Alpine troops camped nearby.

"He eat, it!" (and says he likes it), does Cpl. Robert Zewe, 367th gunner and he lifts a heaping spoonful as proof. Maybe, says Clark the cook, left, but after watching men's reactions to C rations for over a year, he has his doubts. Before he came into the army, Zewe cooked and canned the stuff in Pittsburgh's H. J. Heinz factory. That might explain it. Then, too, he's only been overseas a few weeks.

Oklahomans



Pride of the 30-odd men in the 461st who hail from Oklahoma was the "Tulsamerican," the last of the B-24s to come from the Douglas Aircraft factory in Tulsa. Bought by bond sales to the factory employees, she arrived in this theater, covered from nose to tail with signatures and addresses of Oklahoman subscribers.

A fellow Oklahoman, Cpl. Raymond D. Yount, of Oklahoma City, tended her on Jake Genusari's ground crew in the 760th. Sgt. John F. Toney, of Muskogee, Okla., and S-Sgt. Charles E. Priest, Tallant, Okla. flew as tail-gunner and aerial engineer, on the Tulsamerican.

On her twentieth mission, December 17, the ship was ditched in the Adriatic after a furious battle over the Odessa oil refineries.

Plenty of Rank



Standing on group headquarters roof, watching the planes take off are, from left to right, Colonel Layton, General Lee, Lt. Gen. McNarney, commander of all American forces in MTO, and, right, Maj. Gen. Twining, 15th AAF base.

A G.I.'s Impression of Italian Scene

By Sgt. Arthur R. Foley

As we steamed into sight of Italy, which was to be our home for months to come, we were impressed by its beauty. How fortunate we were to be stationed in such a picturesque country. But disillusionment was not long in coming.

We awake the next day convinced white Italian marble might be ideal to decorate buildings. It never would take the place of interspersing marbles. Knowing that our "hotel" was unheated some of us mistakenly provided for the contingency by perking of the local vino and cognac. A few days later we left our delightful surroundings after most of us had scorned the local youths' efforts to sell everything from souvenirs to signoria.

Next came our introduction to the Italian freight car, a vehicle ill-adapted to the transportation of human beings, or troops. One of these served about twenty-five of us as both parlor car and sleeper. At night we filled ourselves like sardines on the floor so that no man had more than eight feet sticking in his face. The car was cold for our efforts to build a fire served only to put us in danger of suffocation whenever we crept through a tunnel. The next day we three doctrine tablets from our Kratons to the unsuspecting natives.

After perflighting another field we came to our present location. Here we watched it rain day after day until the entire area looked a mixture of coffee and oatmeal. We ate mud, brewed mud, wore it and slept in it. Anytime anyone mentioned "Sunny Italy" he drew a torrent of sulfurous language. For a long time we waited for the "Blue Italian Skies" of the song and the travel folders.

Almost as soon as we arrived, we were besieged by the local peasants, who solicited our laundry for their wives to do in their spare time. Hitherto the days of the latter were spent in idleness, cooking,

washing, sewing, tending their children and working in the fields. To vary the drab monotony of their lives, their thoughtful and considerate husbands seldom failed to keep them perennially pregnant.

In many ways we found the country and its people like a page out of the Middle Ages. The peasants were woefully ignorant, superstitious,

and subservient to the Podrone. On their houses and barns we often saw horns nailed as a protection against the "Evil Eye". Work was done in the most primitive ways, necessitating the worker to toil from dawn 'till dusk. The donkey was the beast of burden and when we saw the loads he had to haul, it was easy to see that the S.P.C.A. was not string-

ently. The dress of the peasants might be called picturesque but to us it was merely evidence of grinding poverty, for their clothes had often been patched until little of the original garment was left.

In the towns we found a shrewder, and we might say a less likeable type. Here was the unscrupulous trader out to overcharge us for whatever he had to sell. Here we walked warily, for the dominating hobby of the small fry were infanticide. The children lagged after us begging for candy, chewing gum, or lire.

If one did not mind the smell, a trip down the side streets of the town always produced scenes of human interest. One might see a mother combing the rats out of her daughter's head, a funeral procession with its caparisoned horses and professional mourners, a cooper or wheelwright at work, or kids turning wheels in order to make some kind of lace. Even the painted signs dabbed on the buildings held human interest. Pagan motifs extolling Minerva were partially obliterated and new ones praising the new regime substituted.

Now after a year we find conditions improved. The people are better fed and clothed. But Italy still gives the impression of being weary and bewildered. To put the country on its feet after the war much rebuilding is in order. In the meanwhile the people apparently are content to clear away the rubble and live in the ruins.

Sidewalk Madonna



Scenes like this are familiar to us at home only in connection with Community Chest drives. In Rome, sidewalk poverty is neither unusual nor remarkable.

Third Citation?

To those of you who have been wondering where that third Distinguished Unit Citation is, let Lt. Louis C. Pflizer, group statistic officer, be ready to reply; right on General Twining's desk, awaiting his eyes or ears.

The recommendation, submitted some three months ago, was for our mission of October 4 to Munich.

Familiar Roman Views



To many Liberaiders, Rome was one of the best rest camp spots. At left above, Victor Emmanuel's "Birth day Cake" Memorial looms up behind the ruins of ancient Rome. In the center — the Tiber Terrace, AAF Rest Camp club. At the right, the Tiber, with the Dome of St. Peter's in the center background and the Castel St. Angelo to the right.

Grogan Brothers Meet



Lt. Col. Edwin A. Grogan, left, of Portland, Ore., group executive officer, meets his brother, S/Sgt. James R. Grogan, Salt City, Ga., right, after four year's separation.

Colonel Grogan's first knowledge that his brother was in Italy came in a letter from home. He went over to the neighboring B-24 group, where James is a tail gunner, to pay him an informal call. His plan miscarried when someone saw the silver leaves on his shoulders and thought it meant a sneak inspection. The reunion was broken up by the arrival of the squadron commander, ready, to escort the visitor.

Varied Civvy Jobs in 767th

When at long last the battle jackets are laid away the lads in the 767th will be returning to a varied assortment of occupations.

Jack Samozwanaky, for instance, was a foreman in a ladies' garment factory; they say he measured women for form-fit clothes. Joe De Paolo, telephone lineman from Jersey, worked in an embroidery shop; but he is not telling exactly what his duties were. Joe Hudson, a member of the original crew, was a twogun sheriff, while Jack Nantovsch helped manage a dude ranch, and Mike Aldrete was a cow-puncher.

Lt. Herman Wainstock gave up a job making toys to navigate a B-24 through the skies of Europe; Paul

Pushman put his head right between the lion's jaws when he took a job with the New Jersey Draft Board. Frank Dougherty's close association with the Bar dates back before his army days, though he used to be selling and drinking instead of just drinking. Everyone knows that Capt. Wilcof was a lawyer, but it may be news to some that Major Poole was a salesman of wholesale goods, Major Bennett a botanist, Captain Huber a purveyor of medical products, L. Ozanich a machine operator.

Duke Peagley exchanged flowers for bombs when he joined the army, and Harpe Parman was the proprietor of a famed Hollywood tailor shop. Mechanic Jack Inman made sails.

Kentuckian Fourth, C. O. Of 767th Bomb Squadron



The fourth commander of the 767th Bomb Squadron is Major Frank M. Poole, of Columbia, Ky. Major Poole assumed command December 12 with the rank of Captain and received his promotion a few weeks later.

A former instructor in B-24s at Fort Worth, Tex., and for a year an instructor in twin-engine ships, Major Poole had over 2,000 hours of flying time before arriving in this theater in September. Since that time, he has flown 22 combat missions, and won the DFC for his mission of March 9 to Graz, Austria. He also wears the Purple Heart for wounds received on the February 21 mission to Vienna.

Command of the 767th was formerly held by Major Joseph N. Donovan, Lt. Col. James R. Knapp, and Capt. Royce B. Glenn.

Here's How 767th Grew To Manhood

By Sgt. Dan H. Fenn, Jr.

On 11 August, 1943, at a base in Idaho, an infant was born. About all it had was a name conferred by its Uncle Sam: "767th Bombardment Squadron".

But it wasn't long before this child of war began to develop a personality all its own. To show how this useless baby grew to an adult member of that fighting family, the URAAF, the following snapshots from its life are presented:

SCENE I: A barracks at the Idaho base. Time: 10:00 A.M. A short little man with a bald head, sporting two shiny golden bars and a suntan shirt with the OCS insignia still on the pocket opens a door and looks at a couple of GI's still sound asleep. "Sgt. Fisher, Pfc. Latal. Don't you think we should open the orderly room now? It's ten o'clock". But suddenly an enormous man with a hillbilly air about him, and the railroad tracks of a captain on his sho. ubbers hauls him back, and the two go off to a few games of poker, and then lunch.

SCENE II: A dusty spot somewhere in Utah. Characters are beginning to arrive, first in doublets, then in a steady stream. The same captain we saw before, unable to get down comfortably, after a chawing from Colonel Converse, sKitt, Killa, Killa Lewis, puts each arrival on the shoulders affectionately and assures him that there are plenty of ratings open. Prominent among the new members are, «Brooklyn» Lieblich, Harry Sullivan, Bob Huber, Ed Jaffe, George Feinstein, Tom Gatti, and O'lindo Onnetelli, all fresh out of various AAF tech schools. Suddenly there is a great rumpeling in the distance, and the wheels roll in from Florida, with their stripes and wings. Things are obviously beginning to happen.

SCENE III: The background changes, and a bright, beautiful airbase, surrounded by glorious mountains and green plains, appears. It's another field in Utah. That stream of figures hugging barracks bags and gas masks has now become a flood. Suddenly a horde of second lieutenants and their retinues of gunners

sweep across the stage. The crews have arrived. As the men come in from the left, they pour out on the right to another sign that says: «State Line Hotel» and «Purpleoughs». Prominent among these heading toward the former is a group led by Duke Peagley, and featuring Greek Kermidas, Floyd King, Tony Godek, Larry Bonshoff, and Henry Kolinski. Not far behind is Geroumo Jaungud.

SCENE IV: An annex to the «Bamboo Room». There is a great clattering of books offstage, and a herd of teleas comes prancing in. If you look carefully, about three lower than the others, you can see two little coils: Shryver Boyd and Ned Dinnell. Among the rest there is Harry Bloom, Nick Brehmer, «M» Mosniak, and «OD» Taylor. All over the stage meanwhile, big things are happening. «Sunless» Geary is steadily taking in and issuing supplies; «Mac» is showing mobs of patient GI's the care and use of the gas mask; soldiers are running hither and yon with packing crates, and over the whole mess stands Major Knapp, snapping a long whip. But, if your turn towards the right, you can see Fessenden, Calhoun, Douglas, McDonald and a number of officers (including, incidentally, the second lieutenant and captain we saw earlier) sneaking out in the direction of the Hotel Californian.

SCENE V: At first glance, you would think you had squandered your way into a lardine can. Soldiers (of the civilian variety) are stacked in piles in a little box, which is rolling and tossing like a boat on a very tough sea. As a matter of fact, that is exactly what it is. All of a sudden there is a great rush for cans strategically placed in the hold. The curtain falls hastily.

SCENE VI: And now we come to an obscure spot near an obscure town somewhere in Italy. A group of dejected, beaten looking creatures are standing knee-deep in mud and snow, wiping the dust out of their eyes. They open them wide for a few minutes to look at the show. «Capporelli Capers», it is called. Every now and then cans of Vienna sausage, Creations hash, chile, dehydrated eggs pass by, and the sacks snatch at them more or less listlessly. If you listen, you can hear whoppers of «Frances», «BZ's», «BZ's», «South Pacific», «Huns», floating from mouth to mouth.



FIN - EESH, LINE TAXI!



Fin-eesh Line Taxi! The 767th ground personnel niftfully cart away to salvage the remnants of their spare-time hobby. For several months last fall, the pride of the line, this unauthorized aircraft was put together by enthusiasts from odd parts and leftover parts gleaned from British airfields. The RAF swapped a section of fuselage for an American baseball bat.

(Continued from page 3)

MAIL CALL

I hope Jim's words mean something to you. UTC must be some special kind of time used by hams. Quoting directly from the first paragraph, Jim's letter says, "Gentlemen, set your clocks! Local times will be set forward in October. Our nets will accommodate the change". I hope Jim has a "fall-back" position.

REUNION PLANNED—This information will be received too late, I believe, but it is worth noting. A reunion of pilots rescued by Chetniks or partisans in Yugoslavia during World War II was being planned for either December 22, 1988, Yugoslav People's Day, or May 21, 1989, Yugoslav Air Force and Air Defense Day. Contact Col. Fradan Ikonomic, Military Attaché, Embassy of Yugoslavia, 2410 California St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20008-1679.

AIR FORCE GUNNERS ASSOCIATION—P.O. Box 568102, Orlando, Florida 32856-8102

YOU'RE INVITED TO A CELEBRATION!! - The 50th anniversary of the first flight of the B-24 "Liberator" that helped liberate Europe and the Pacific. The gala will be held in San Diego on Sept. 20 to 24, 1989. Contact the Coordinating Committee, Liberator Cele Bration, Suite 112, 3940 Hancock St. San Diego, CA 92110.

DO YOU HAVE A PICTURE OF THE "ALL AMERICAN"? (See article on page 15)

The Collings Foundation is trying to obtain pictures of the "All American" B-24 of the 765th Squadron. They received a picture from Bob Chalmers but want to know if any more exist. We would appreciate it if all group photographers and members of the 765th would search your files and submit any photos you might have.

We will also ask for donations to the Collings Foundation to help pay for the restoration. The "All American" was one of "Ours" and we should be high on the list of contributors. More later.

Editor's note: On page 8 of my first venture into publishing the 461st Liberaider, I inserted a small article entitled "Little Known Fact". It stated that Sgt. William G. Rollins (767) got the first Purple Heart awarded to a 461st member. It was for action on 21 April 1944.

I received three letters about this article. To save space I have paraphrased the information submitted.

FROM WILLIAM ROLLINS (767) Nov. 21, 1988

Bill wasn't aware he got the first Purple Heart. He said because of his "hit" he couldn't finish the last three missions with his crew. He flew his last mission with another crew on 22 July to Ploesti. Because of strong crosswinds at our base on their return they were diverted to another field. Bill says that after that mission he asked if he could hitch-hike back to the field. He figured he had pushed his luck far enough.

FROM JAMES LOVE (767) Nov. 14, 1988

Jim provided some info on the collision of the B-24s on the first group mission. However, I was interested in his comments about the Purple Heart. His crew was shot down over Belgrade, Yugoslavia, 16 April. Six of his crew were able to get out before the plane blew up. Jim is certain the other four were killed. One of the surviving members was S/Sgt. Buren Storts. To Jim's knowledge Sgt. Storts was awarded the Purple Heart for that mission. He did not receive it until he was released from prison camp.

FROM STAN KOSIERORSKI (764) Nov. 13, 1988

Stan was a tail gunner on one of the original crews. He mentioned flying on the first few missions to Yugoslavia. His ship was shot down on Mission #7 to Budapest, Hungary, 13 April 1944. He wrote these words, "Our plane was hit by flak. A gaping hole and fire in our left wing caused us to drop out of

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(Continued from page 10)

formation. The pilot told the bombardier to get the crew to bail out. I started to get out of the tail turret just as a German JU-88 blew it up. I was very luck because I was laying back half way out when his bullets ran up my left hand. If I was sitting up I would have gotten them right in the stomach. We all bailed out and were captured by local peasants. I, as well as other members of our crew, received the Purple Heart for our actions on this mission.

Based on the information presented in these letters I have to believe that my "Little Known Fact" was erroneous data. A lesson learned. There is no need to know who was first to receive the Purple Heart but I would like to think it/they went posthumously to those who were killed in the crash of the two planes on the first mission.

* * * * *

YOU'RE COMING TO THE REUNION!!
GREAT!!

Now I'm not Col. Glantzberg (see page 3 article on aerial photographer) but as editor I would like a volunteer.

I would like someone to write an article summarizing the activities at the St. Louis reunion in October. This doesn't have to be a lengthy epistle or a literary masterpiece but should cover the activities and as many anecdotes as you feel appropriate. It is meant to document the reunion and to get the word out to the members that we do have a good time and it's worth the effort (and money) to come.

Make use of your literary talents and see your name in print, nationwide!! Who knows where it might lead. This year the Liberaider, next year the NY Times. No Pulitzer prizes guaranteed! Give it some thought, please.

* * * * *

DID YOU KNOW YOUR LEADERS?

In preparing the material for this copy of the Liberaider, especially the page 1 articles on our first missions, I became aware that I didn't really remember who was running the store back in 1944. So, using the mission descriptions, I made up a crude organization chart of the "major players" in the 461st Bomb Group. There were blanks that I could not fill in so I'll turn to those of you that have better memories or records than I do. Here is my chart. Complete it for me please.

| | Group | 764th | 765th | 766th | 767th |
|--------------------|------------|---------|-----------|----------|-----------|
| Commander | Glantzberg | Goree | Applegate | Dooley | Knapp |
| Deputy Commander | Hawes | | | | |
| Operations Officer | Burke | Tallant | Bock | Franklin | McQuillan |
| Navigator | Pruitt | Dewitt | | | |
| Bombardier | Leffler | | | Stiles | |

Note: Your Editor recognizes that there were many more "major players" than are shown here. After all, my family thought I won the war single handed. However, for brevity I left off my name and those of all the rest of you.

Editor's note: On page 6 of the October 1988 issue of the Liberaider I asked whether Col. G and his crew of aircraft 62 1/2 survived the mission to Ploesti on 22 July 1944. I received the answer from Gerald J. Mayfield who was flight engineer on the crew. He said his write-up of the mission had been printed in "The Torretta Flyer", the publication of the 461st and 484th Bomb Groups Assoc. Major Marion M. Pruitt, Group Navigator, was also on the aircraft and wrote a companion article about the mission. They are reproduced here for the interest of out members.

MISSION NO 50

by Gerald J. Mayfield
765th Squadron

On July 20, 1944 crew #36 of the 765th Squadron landed with most of the crew completing the required 50 missions and earning a return trip stateside. The exceptions were Dennis, Bombardier; Mayfield, Engineer; and McCree, Radio Operator.

On the next mission I was scheduled to fly as a fill in engineer with another crew, some undoubtedly fill ins also. Col. Glantzberg, our group CO was to be the pilot. Col. Glantzberg never flew milk runs so I anticipated a difficult mission.

The briefing for the mission of July 22, 1944 was not good news at all. Col. Glantzberg was to fly 15th Air Force lead on a mission to Ploesti, Rumania, one of the heaviest defended targets within range of the 15th AF. At the briefing we were told that 1100 anti-aircraft guns of 88 and 105 mm caliber would be counted on to give some opposition. What an understatement. I had flown three previous missions to Ploesti and one to the refineries port of Ploesti, and was very familiar with the smoke pots that screened 100 square miles of target area. We were assigned to a new B-24J pathfinder aircraft that aimed the bomb drop by radar. With all that smoke we needed something. Pathfinder aircraft usually carried the radar scanner in place of the ball turret, meaning we had two less guns for fighter defense. Pre-flight was normal, but without the comradeship of our well knit crew #36 where everyone's strengths and weaknesses are know. It was like being alone with nine

other men.

Crew #36 had been to Cairo on R & R and a fortune teller told the bombardier that he would be wounded and some of this crew were offering 10 to 1 odds that it would happen on this mission. It was enough to make one a little more apprehensive than the usual pre-mission dreading.

Combat equipment was loaded including the "jewel" pots, these being standard steel helmets that airmen sat on when the flak got too thick. One tended to pucker from your feet up to your crotch, hence the name "jewel" pot. Of course the pilot and co-pilot could not afford this luxury.

Take off, climb and cruise were normal as we watched the 15th AF form behind us. It was quite a majestic sight. We proceeded on course to Ploesti. I checked the fuel supply equipment and my position at the right waist gun. My job was to transfer fuel from the out board reserve or "Tokyo" tanks after the bomb run when we were out of flak range. By burning this off in a designated manner, weight and balance was improved and helped to prevent an outer wing panel from being blown off if it was hit by subsequent anti-aircraft fire while still containing fuel. The other consideration was that the so-called engineers at Consolidated Aircraft forgot to install fuel quantity gauges for these tanks.

As we approached the target at around 26,000 feet we found the smoke screen in place. We hit the IP and turned toward the target. From the right waist I saw two flak bursts bracket the right wing and some-

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one in the nose called three bursts directly in front of our ship and at our altitude. Almost immediately a flak shell burst in the vicinity of No 4 engine setting it on fire and leaving a big hole on the top of the ring wing where the right "Tokyo" tank was located. It was burning too. The No 3 engine quit also.

The airplane started down out of control in the middle of the flak field. The bail out bell was ringing and Col. Glantzberg ordered bail out. Suddenly the side slip pulled the fire out of the engine and fuel tank. I started yelling on the inter-phone that the fire was out. We had been trying to ride out the aircraft until we were out of the flak field before jumping. Col. Glantzberg got the plane under control at around 4,000 feet on the No 1 and 2 engines and asked for a crew count. We were all still hanging on. He headed for Turkey. After observing No 3 engine and finding it still there and apparently undamaged it was restarted and purred like a kitten for the rest of our journey. We discussed the fuel situation because if we were to try to return to Italy we would need the fuel from the No 4 tank and any left in the right "Tokyo" tank that had been on fire.

Because of the fuel system design on the B-24J, I had to remove the fuel line and plug another over the bomb bay with a 50 caliber round in order to use the fuel in the No 4 "Tokyo" tank.

On we went at tree top level leaving Turkey and turning back to Italy without seeing another aircraft either American or German. Everything was thrown out, including our beloved "jewel" pots to lighten the load. Two and a half hours later and after the rest of the Group landed we limped in for a good landing at our base at Torretta. As we rolled to a stop fuel was leaking all over the aircraft. We didn't need a bail out bell to tell us to get the hell out once the aircraft stopped. The aircraft was junk, after just one mission, and my 50th.

When I got back to my tent, my crew were preparing

for R & R in Rome which had just come under Allied control. Col. Glantzberg had me passing information and instructions to new crews on the procedure we used to get our plane home. I never did get to Rome for R & R.

For this mission received the Distinguished Flying Cross. I didn't find out about this until 39 years later when I attended the 461st and 484th Bomb Groups reunion in Williamsburg, Virginia and saw the orders awarding the decoration.

Crew #36 departed Morrison Field, Florida February 1, 1944 flying our aircraft to South America, Dakar, North Africa and to Italy. We flew our first mission April 2, 1944 and during May, June and July of that year the 765th Squadron lost 22 aircraft and crews. Crew #36 returned stateside on the troop ship General Bliss and arrived in New York on September 1, 1944.

PART 2

by

Major Marion M. Pruitt
Group Navigator

At the Dayton, Ohio reunion in 1982 I was telling Leonard Cole (he worked at Group Hdqrs.) about our mission to Ploesti. Mayfield was listening and I was informed that he was the Flight Engineer that had plugged the fuel line with a fifty caliber machine gun shell that enabled us to return to Torretta.

I remember this mission as if was the hardest a plane had been hit while I was flying as Group Navigator of the 461st Bomb Group. This particular day was what I would call a routine start of a mission except it was a new airplane with the navigator seated behind the pilot. The radar operator, Lt. Gizelba, was seated across at the radio operators position with his back to the co-pilot. We were leading the 461st Group of the 49th Wing as well as the 15th Air Force against the Romana American Oil Refinery at Ploesti, Rumania.

We arrived at our initial point a few miles southeast

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of Bucharest, Rumania, and the bombardier took over. A normal bomb run was two or three minutes long before bombs away. We usually dropped the bombs and took a standard rally of a 45 degree to the right losing 1,000 feet in altitude as quickly as possible to confuse the anti-aircraft gunners. The planned route for the day was to go north of Ploesti and turn west and return to base. I cannot remember our altitude exactly on this mission but it was 19,000 to 21,000 feet. As we started the bomb run I was seated at a table that I used in the navigation of the plane. I turned around to look forward between the pilot and co-pilot and could see the flak was very heavy.

As we approached the point where we were due to release the bombs, I saw four bursts of 88mm flak exactly in line at our altitude. I thought we were safe from that battery of anti-aircraft artillery, but where the 5th burst came from I do not know. This burst hit our No 4 engine and set it on fire. It appeared that to feather No 4, both No 3 and No 4 were feathered, which put us into a spin to the right. The spin threw me back in my seat as the bail out bell sounded. I can remember how hard I pulled on the table to get in a position to try to bail out. A drift meter against my leg would not let me get to the aisle and bail out through the bomb bay. Also fire was all under the bomb bay.

At 9,000 feet the pilot pulled us out of this spin over the town of Ploesti and immediately began calling for a heading. I gave him one to Turkey as it was the closest neutral country. As we got on course to Turkey we found ourselves alone and quite crippled. Just the type of meat marauding German fighters were looking for. The rest of our Group was going north or west back to our base. We were fortunate that day that the Luftwaffe did not follow us. It was at this point in our journey that Mayfield plugged the fuel line with a fifty caliber shell.

South of Bucharest the pilot decided we could make

it into Yugoslavia and asked for a heading back toward Torretta. After weighing the possibilities of bailing out over Yugoslavia, trying to make it to Turkey or ditching at sea, calculations showed we had enough fuel to make it back to the base.

Approaching Torretta we found that the bomb dump was on fire with a 50 knot cross wind from the west. All the other planes of the 461st and 484th Bomb Groups were diverted to other bases with more of an east/west runway. But, Torretta was closer and our fuel supply by now was very low. We landed going to the north on the west side of the runway and came to a stop finally on the east side off in the dirt. The jar of the landing jarred something loose and opened a fuel line filling the flight deck with deadly fumes. My thought was to make it this far and then get caught on fire a second time was too much for all on the flight deck. That was one speedy evacuation.

The following day the crew chief brought the fuse from the 88mm shell that was found stuck in the No 4 engine. I in turn gave it to Col. Glantzberg as a souvenir of the mission.

* * * * *

OUR STORY OF PLOESTI

by

George D. Dickie, Editor

We were there on 22 July 1944. I'll call it "Crume's crew" because I don't remember our crew number. Lyle Crume was our pilot and, at least for that period in my life, is the reason I am still alive. He really knew how to get the most out of the B-24.

All went well until we hit the IP and then things went to hell quick. We decided to be good soldiers and follow our leader. I saw Col. G's ship get hit and go into a spin. Moments later we followed. One of our right engines was hit and both right engines had to be feathered. At the same time one of the main fuel lines in the bomb

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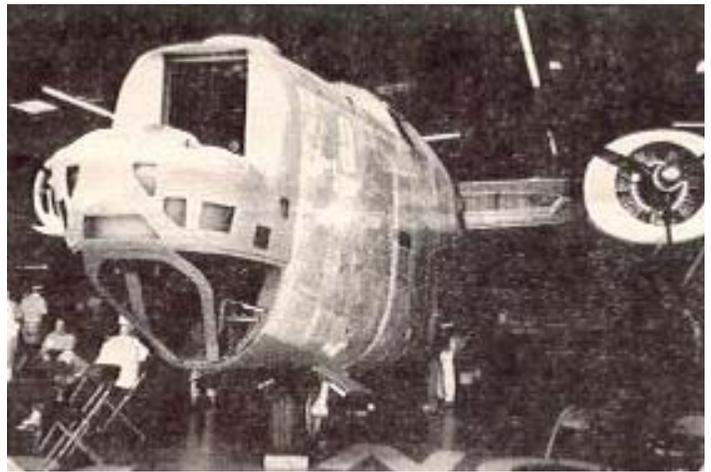
bay was severed. With the doors open the fuel was whipped into a white mist which prompted someone to call "fire". I was on the nose wheel door ready to go when the pilot corrected the call. The pilot got the ship under control and then everyone on the flight deck took turns trying to get a screw driver jammed into the fuel line to stop the leak. The fumes were so strong that they could not breathe and could only stay as long as a single breath would last. Eventually they were successful and things settled down a little. As with Col. G's ship we were able to re-start one of the engines which permitted us to gain back enough altitude to get over the mountains in Yugoslavia, but not by much. We were shot at by light anti-aircraft guns as we crossed over some ranges. I, as navigator, was doing all I could to determine our position and chances of getting back to the base. Wow! Was I confused. Not only did the aerial maps leave something to be desired but we were not briefed on the possibility of having winds aloft at around 100 knots. I kept calculating our ground speed at about 80 to 90 knots and just didn't believe a B-24 would go that slow. I finally believed my calculations and told the pilot. We decided we had enough gas to get to the Adriatic Sea where we could then decide whether to try to go across or ditch near the Island of Vis. When the time came we decided to go for it but we weren't at all that confident. As we crossed the coast of Italy and approached Torretta we saw all the smoke from the bomb dump fire and we were running on "empty" and a few prayers. Lyle Crume greased that aircraft onto the runway with that very heavy cross wind just as though nothing was wrong. I don't remember exactly how much fuel we had left but my recollection is that at least one engine died on the way back to the revetment.

I don't know which crew made it back first but I'm sure that both crews sat down and told the good Lord how pleased they were with him that day.

DO YOU REMEMBER THE "ALL AMERICAN"?

She was a B-24 in the 765th Squadron, 461st Bomb Group. If my information is correct she was flown by Bob Chalmers on 25 July 1944 on a mission to Linz, Austria. The Group was attacked by 25 FW-190 and 125 ME-109 fighters. Eleven 461st B-24s were lost over the target and four more on the way home. The "All American" made it back and was credited with shooting down 14 German aircraft. The largest number of planes shot down by any aircraft on a single mission during World War II. On 4 October 1944 the "All American" herself went down over Yugoslavia.

SHE IS BEING BORN AGAIN!!



The Collings Foundation of Stow, MA is completely restoring a B-24 from rivets to gun shells. She is scheduled to roll out on 15 July 1989. She will be flown from Kissimmee, FL to San Diego, CA to participate in the 50th birthday celebration of the B-24 on the 23rd of September. This aircraft will be named "All American" not only to honor her predecessor but also in memory of all the people that built, flew and maintained this great aircraft 45 to 50 years ago. For they too were "All Americans".

The Collings need financial help. If we can raise \$109,000 we can have the 461st recognized on the side of the ship. She was ours! We should be on it! \$20 apiece would do. Let's go for it!

TAPS

| <u>NAME</u> | <u>SOD</u> | <u>DATE</u> | <u>HOMETOWN</u> | <u>MOS</u> | <u>NAME</u> | <u>SOD</u> | <u>DATE</u> | <u>HOMETOWN</u> | <u>MOS</u> |
|-------------------------|------------|-------------|-------------------|------------|-----------------------|------------|-------------|-------------------|------------|
| Albert, James F. | 461 | 5/9/62 | | 9301 | Kline, Chester G. | 765 | 1985 | Athens, PA | 747 |
| Biagi, Nelson J. | 764 | 1984 | Santa Rosa, CA | 911 | Knoll, George R. | 764 | 6/14/83 | St. Paul, MN | 612 |
| Boone, Rowland A. | 461 | 3/29/77 | Hemet, CA | 4823 | Krall, Richard L. | 766 | 8/1987 | La Habra, CA | 1034 |
| Britton, Lynn L. | 764 | 9/29/86 | Springfield, IL | 1092 | Lindauer, Charles A. | 764 | 1986 | Mission Hills, CA | 751 |
| Brown, Joe S. | 461 | 3/19/64 | | 675 | Lowery, Ernest O. | 764 | 11/7/88 | Ingleside, IL | 748 |
| Buckmaster, Alphues D. | 461 | 7/4/77 | San Antonio, TX | 2554 | Lyon, Albert D. | 764 | 1/5/80 | Portland, OR | 060 |
| Burton, Forrest | 764 | 9/16/71 | New York, NY | 501 | Maloney, Eugene F. | 764 | 11/2/86 | Brooklyn, NY | 555 |
| Carlander, Hewett | 461 | 5/31/59 | | 513 | McCormick, William W. | 764 | 6/21/87 | Philadelphia, PA | 555 |
| Cash, Joseph F. | 461 | 5/27/77 | | 867 | McDonnel, Charles P. | 461 | 9/1/45 | | 2161 |
| Churchill, Leon F. | 461 | 10/19/56 | | 2162 | Meadows, Russell L. | 461 | 1946 | Huntington, WV | 521 |
| Collins, Donald E. | 764 | 7/16/76 | Portland, OR | 901 | Medau, Fred C | 461 | 11/24/71 | Livermore, CA | 4903 |
| Dennis, Jack D. | 765 | 1960 | Filer, ID | 1035 | Mertz, Horace D. | 461 | 1988 | Lehigh, PA | 502 |
| Dixon, Walter E. | 461 | 4/12/87 | | 060 | Mudge, Warren R. | 767 | Unknown | E. Norwalk, CT | 1035 |
| Empey, William C. | 764 | 2/4/85 | Minneapolis, MN | 620 | Nelson, George R. | 767 | 9/27/88 | Kirtland, NM | 1092 |
| Farris, James P. Jr. | 764 | 4/14/70 | Pelham, GA | 751 | Owens, J. Harold | 461 | 5/15/76 | Greenwood, IN | 5004 |
| Flaherty, James P. | 764 | 5/22/65 | Portland, OR | | Parvin, James G. | 461 | 6/29/59 | | 566 |
| Friedersdorf, Robert R. | 766 | 6/2/88 | Westport, IN | 1092 | Polakowski, Carl E. | 767 | 1/22/89 | Berlin, WI | 239 |
| Fugett, Stanley W. | 461 | 10/1/81 | Richmond, IN | 502 | Pugh, Henry R. | 767 | Unknown | Richmond, VA | 501 |
| Gartian, Charles G. | 461 | 1/29/85 | | 405 | Rasmussen, Paul G. | 461 | 1/19/59 | Boston, MA | 5310 |
| Genaurdi, Jacob J. | 765 | Unknown | Norristown, PA | 750 | Reaver, Mark T. | 764 | 1982 | Baltimore, MD | 409 |
| Gillaspie, Tom A. | 461 | 6/19/88 | | 513 | Roeben, Walker J. | 764 | 9/26/84 | Long Beach, CA | 1035 |
| Gillespie, Wilfred H. | 766 | 1987 | | 756 | Rose, Seymour | 766 | 1978 | Chicago, IL | 1092 |
| Golden, Paul A. | 767 | 1984 | Archbald, PA | 1034 | Seaton, Roy L. | 461 | 5/24/65 | | 501 |
| Griswold, Chalett | 764 | 1984 | | 1092 | Seidman, Alfred L. | 767 | 1978 | Philadelphia, PA | 1034 |
| Grunewald, Melvin E. | 764 | 6/13/88 | Oconomowoc, WI | 911 | Shiffermiller, Wn E. | 461 | 10/17/86 | | 2554 |
| Haas, Allen P. | 461 | 4/10/85 | | 9301 | Shipman, Floyd D. | 764 | 1947 | Ainsworth, NE | 612 |
| Haupt, William R. | 461 | 11/6/71 | | 658 | Shipp, Carl L. | 461 | 6/12/87 | | 929 |
| Holcomb, Hadley | 764 | 2/28/70 | Erwin, TN | 612 | Shumway, Maurice E. | 765 | 6/1/88 | Spartanburg, SC | 2110 |
| Hoppes, Robert A. | 767 | 12/19/78 | Richmond, IN | 1092 | Stanford, Donald L. | 461 | 1988 | Springfield, OH | 4822 |
| Hornbaker, Allison L. | 461 | 8/9/87 | | 8502 | Steele, Harold C. | 767 | Unknown | LeGrange, TX | 748 |
| Huber, Alfred M. | 461 | 9/5/75 | Canton, OH | 0200 | Stegenson, Edmund F. | 764 | 9/17/74 | Westport, CT | 1035 |
| Hunt, Kenneth E. | 765 | 3/16/88 | Taunton, MA | 747 | Taylor, Alfred B. Jr. | 765 | 9/19/88 | Spartanburg, SC | 2110 |
| Irwin, Wilford L. | 764 | 5/13/86 | Albuquerque, NM | 542 | Taylor, Roy P. | 461 | 11/27/72 | | 673 |
| Jankovsky, Robert L. | 764 | 4/26/60 | Port Huacneme, CA | 612 | Tibbits, Frank D. | 764 | 2/4/89 | Seattle, WA | 757 |
| Jehli, Arthur T. Jr. | 767 | 1/26/87 | Crestwood, IL | | Tweedy, Howard | 765 | 1974ca | | 757 |
| Jobtanski, Thomas G. | 764 | 8/5/78 | Torrington, CT | 555 | Viviani, Anthony J. | 765 | 9/26/87 | Hampton Bays, NY | 911 |
| Junge, Paul F. | 765 | Unknown | Albia, IA | | Vudnaska, John | 767 | 9/19/87 | Burbank, CA | 612 |
| Kasold, Edward A. Jr. | 765 | 1987 | San Pedro, CA | 1092 | Waggoner, William E. | 765 | 1988 | Little Rock, AR | 1092 |
| Kendrick, John J. | 764 | 9/1/82 | St. Louis, MO | 581 | Wagner, Charles W. | 767 | 1977 | West Chester, PA | 612 |
| Kendricks, John J. | 764 | Unknown | St. Louis, MO | 501 | Walton, James V. | 461 | 1/4/80 | | 283 |
| Kienast, Bernard | 764 | 12/10/80 | Acapulco, Mex. | 911 | Waupoose, Elmer M. | 461 | 1/2/75 | Keshena, WI | 590 |
| Kilroy, Francis J. Jr. | 461 | 3/9/87 | Everett, MA | 867 | Winston, J. Lawrence | 767 | 1946 | Wellesley, MA | 1092 |

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