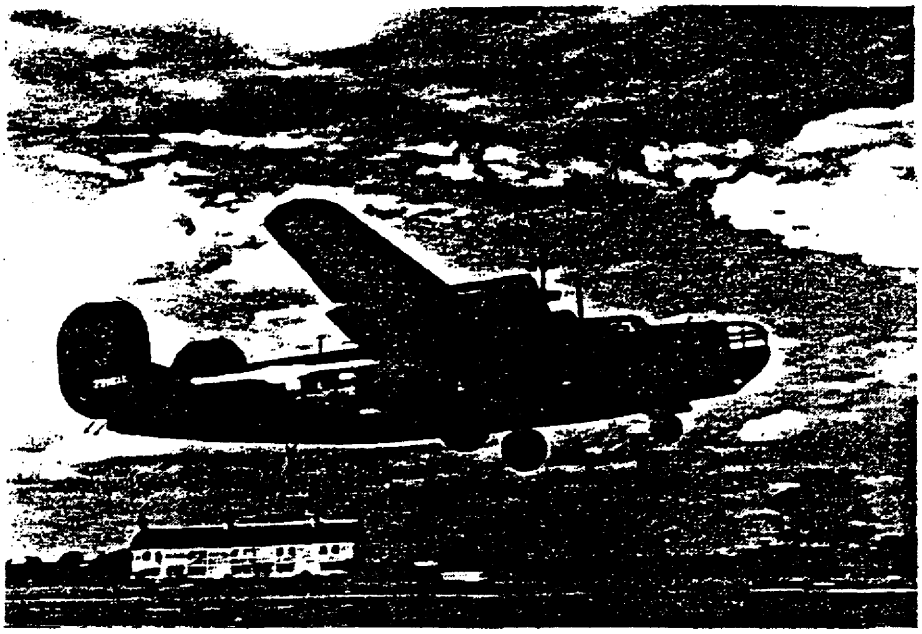
MEMORIES

AS TOLD TO
COL. ROBERT M. FISH

OF THE

801ST/492ND BOMBARDMENT GROUP

"CARPETBAGGERS"



A BLACK B-24 LIBERATOR BOMBER TAKING OFF FROM U.S. AIR FORCE STATION #179 AT HARRINGTON, ENGLAND DURING WORLD WAR II. CLANDESTINE NIGHT MISSIONS WERE FLOWN FROM THIS SECRET BASE, DROPPING MUNITIONS AND SUPPLIES TO UNDERGROUND RESISTANCE FORCES IN NAZI OCCUPIED EUROPE, FROM APRIL 5, 1944, TO APRIL 27, 1945. THE 801/492ND BOMB GROUP "CARPET-BAGGERS" ALSO PARACHUTED AGENTS INTO FRANCE, HOLLAND, NORWAY, DENMARK AND GERMANY FOR SPYING AND ESPIONAGE ACTIVITIES, IN ADDITION TO FLYING NIGHT BOMBING MISSIONS.

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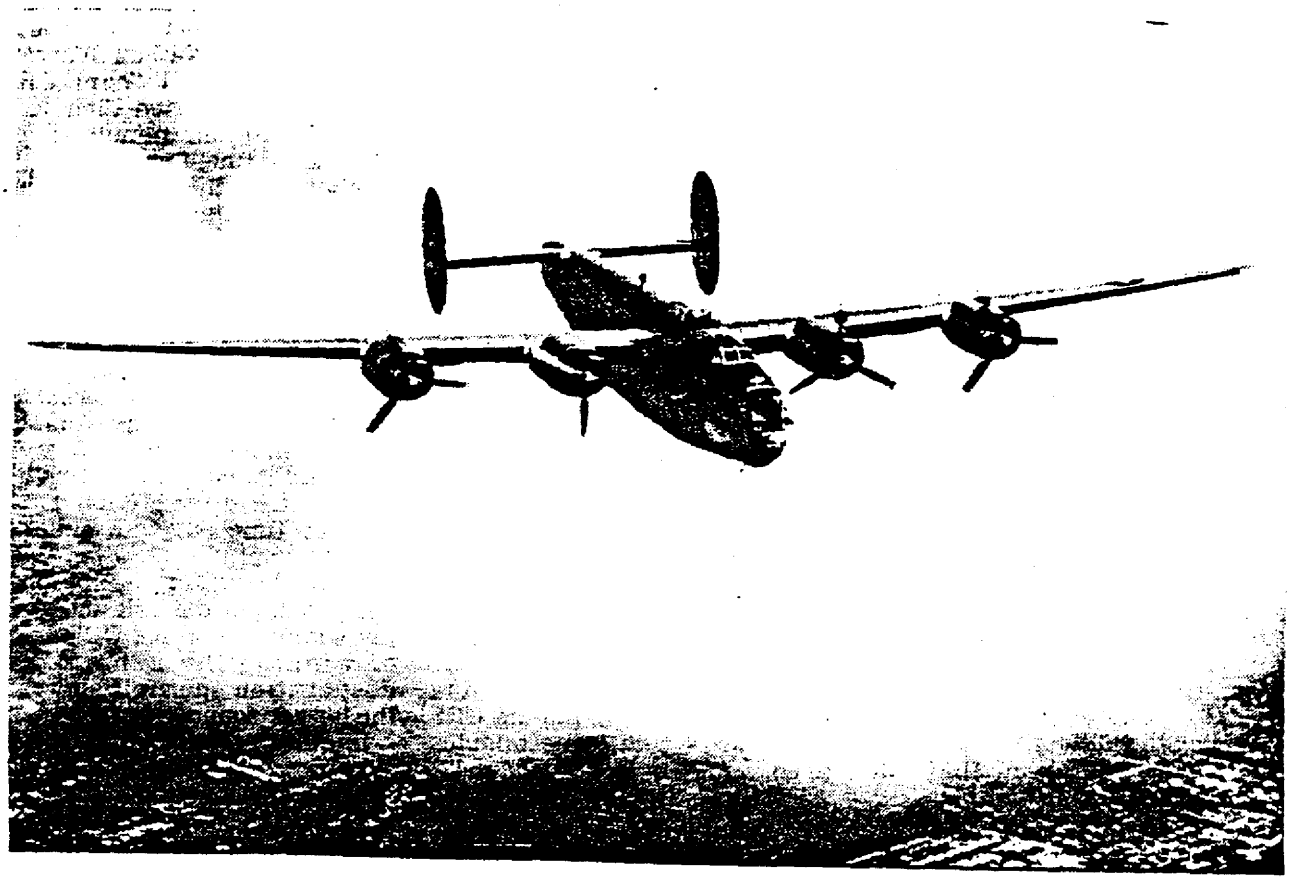

801st/492nd BOMB GROUP
EIGHTH AIR FORCE
CARPETBAGGERS
Robert W. Sellers

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I thank all of my 801st/492nd Bombardment Group comrads who have supplied information and articles for this book.

Where stories included can be attributed to a specific individual, that individual's by-line has been added.

Most of the stories recorded in this book have been contributed by men who were members of the group during World War II. In some instances the sources used have been official military records and records of related entities. One of the most frequently used sources has been the 801st/492nd Bombardment Group Association's "Carpetbagger Newsletter".

I owe many thanks to my principal typist, Sofia Gonzalez of Zapata, Texas and to my wife, Jean Carter Young, who was my principal proof reader.

My sincere appreciation to my war time comrads, Peter Sanders and Robert Sellers, for the design of the covers and the frontispiece.

Lastly we owe a vote of thanks to our Carpetbagger Newsletter editor, Richard T. Sizemore for supplying the photographs.

Robert W. Fish
San Antonio, Texas
August 1990

PREFACE

THIS BOOK IS A COMPILATION OF SOME OF THE MEMORIES OF THE MEMBERS OF THE 801/492 BOMBARDMENT GROUP WHICH FLEW MISSIONS SUPPORTING THE UNDERGROUND FORCES IN GERMAN OCCUPIED TERRITORIES OF THE EUROPEAN CONTINENT DURING WORLD WAR II. BECAUSE THESE MEMORIES ARE OVER FORTY FIVE YEARS OLD THEY MAY VARY SOMEWHAT FROM THE DETAILS OF THE ACTUAL EVENTS WHICH THEY PURPORT TO RECALL. DUE TO THE EXTREME SENSITIVITY OF THE CARPETBAGGER OPERATIONS DURING THE WAR YEARS PERSONAL DIARIES AND SIMILAR RECORDS BY INDIVIDUAL AIRMEN WERE STRICTLY PROHIBITED. THIS COMPILATION IS THE FIRST WRITTEN RECORD OF MANY OF THE EVENTS RECORDED HEREIN.

THIS BOOK IS NOT COMPILED TO BE A HISTORY. IT HAS BEEN COMPILED PRIMARILY AS A MEMORIAL TO THE MEN WHO PARTICIPATED IN THE RECORDED EVENTS.

FOR A MORE FACTUAL AND FORMAL ACCOUNT OF THE HISTORY OF THE CARPETBAGGERS THE READER IS REFERRED TO BEN PARNELL'S BOOK ENTITLED "CARPETBAGGERS, AMERICA'S SECRET WAR IN EUROPE", PUBLISHED BY THE EAKIN PRESS OF AUSTIN, TEXAS.

ROBERT W. FISH
20 SEPTEMBER 1990

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A UNIQUE STORY

by

BEN PARNELL*

(The following presentation was given at the 1988 Carpetbagger reunion in Las Vegas, Nevada. It was recorded in report on that reunion. It is presented here as it appeared in the Carpetbagger Newsletter.)

I am honored to be here to address this group. Over 40 years have passed since you flew in, serviced or dispatched those black-painted Liberators over war-time Europe.

To paraphrase a recent newsletter: You were special men for special times: the best that America had to offer. You were the cream of the crop. You were young, bright and highly trained.

As you were aware, the Carpetbagger Operation was and is a unique story. There are a few areas of this operation that I did not cover in my "Carpetbagger" book.

The OSS Operation out of Leuchars Field in Scotland was under the command of Col. Bernt Balchen who was born in Norway but a naturalized citizen of the United States.

The first of these operations was called "Operation Sonnie" under the cover of the Air Transport Command; to transport 2,000 Norwegian male subjects from Stockholm to England by air. Seven crews trained at Harrington flew Liberators modified by installing seats for 35 and painting out the AAF insignia. These crews wore civilian clothes and the plane was not armed. Over 4,000 individuals were brought out in "Operation Sonnie".

The "Ball Project" began in June 1944 and continued until September 1944. The black-painted Liberators were equipped with a "Joe Hole" and fully armed. The Harrington trained crews wore US AAF uniforms. Col. Balchen was to carry out two distinct operations from Leuchars at the same time. Some of the Carpetbaggers who served in the "Ball Project" were: Pilots David Schreiner, George Bledsoe and Orrin Boland; crew members Wilford Bollinger, Albert Krasevac, A.L. Sharps and Frank Miller.

A short-lived operation called "Sea Otter" was organized with the intent of kidnapping Wolfgang Feher, head of the Norwegian Gestapo. This mission was soon abandoned when it was decided that many, many Norwegians would be murdered in reprisal. The effort was not all wasted. While working out the details of the kidnapping, it was learned that a couple of Germany's V-2 missles had landed

intact in Sweden and one was available to the Allies if they could get it out. It was immediately flown out in a war weary C-47.

There were other Carpetbagger type operations. In November 1944, Major Bestow Rudolph left Harrington with a Carpetbagger Liberator to fly to New Deli, India, carrying as passengers OSS personnel to study the feasibility of Carpetbagger operations in the CBI Theater. It was decided a new group would be organized for the CBITO from units already there. During the last of March 1945, 2 Carpetbagger Liberators and crews were transferred to the 14th AF and left Harrington on PCS to Kunming, China, to help establish Carpetbagger operations.

As you know my brother was one of you. He flew 8 high altitude daylight bombing missions from North Pickenham; 8 Carpetbagger missions from Harrington; then flew 8 Leaflet missions from Cheddington before the fatal crash on November 18, 1944.

You have a strong organization. I enjoy my contact with you and your operation. Together we have served as sort of a clearing house for information relating to former Carpetbaggers. The best to you and your organization in the future.

/S/ Ben Parnell

* Ben Parnell is the author of the book entitled "The Carpetbaggers - America's Secret War in Europe" which is the best and most complete history of the Carpetbagger operations printed to date.

THE ROOTS OF THE CARPETBAGGERS

(Contributed by Robert W. Fish)

The following story of the origins of the Carpetbagger personnel who conducted aerial operations from the British Isles during World War II is based on many memories stored for half a century in the deepest recesses of the author's mind. Many of the facts of these memories have been partially obscured by the passage of this long period of time, while others remain as fresh as they would be if the experiences had occurred only yesterday. If I fail to stress some facts and incidents that should be expressed, and if I color other experiences with hues of color that my comrades may think they do not warrant, I beg their tolerances. In their turn many of my comrades have contributed their memories as they perceive them as viewed through the fogs of war and the constraints of time. I honor their memories.

Many of the Army Air Forces personnel that composed the initial Carpetbagger organization came from the 46th Squadron of the 41st Bombardment Group. The 41st Group was activated in 1941 when the 19th Bombardment Group at March Field in California was split into three groups, the 19th, the 30th and the 41st early in 1941. In May of 1941 the 41st Group moved from March to Davis Monthan Field at Tucson, Arizona. On 9 December 1941 the 41st Bomb Group moved to Muroc Dry Lake (which later was designated Edwards Air Force Base). The squadrons of the 41st were each equipped with four obsolete B-18 aircraft. At Muroc the aircraft of the 41st Group were used to fly anti-submarine patrol off the Pacific coast of the United States. One of the aircraft operated by Lt. Robert W. Fish's crew, with Lt. E. W. Tresemer as navigator, was used to calibrate the fledgling radar equipment that was being installed along the west coast.

Early in 1942 the 41st Bomb Group was re-equiped with some new two engine Lockheed Husdon bombers that had been built for sale to Great Britain. These bombers were a military conversion of a Lockheed passenger aircraft that had been designed and built for civil airline use. It was a poor excuse for a military aircraft, but it was deemed to be better than nothing. It had a short range and could carry only four depth charges.

From Muroc the 41st Gp. Headquarters was moved to Hammer Air Force Base at Fresno, California. Its squadrons were dispersed at Bakersfield, Visalia, Fresno, Merced and Oakland Naval Air Station.

Within the assignment of roles and missions under the War Department, anti-

submarine patrol was one of the Navy's missions. At the start of WW II the Navy had not built capability sufficient to satisfy that mission. Therefore it was temporarily assigned to the Army Air Forces.

Early in 1942, the 46th Squadron under the command of Lt. Col. Clifford J. Heflin was moved to the Cherry Point Marine Corps Air Station and assigned anti-submarine patrol duties on the Atlantic Coast. At this time it was still equipped with the Lockheed Hudson Bombers. Cherry Point was a major airfield with ideal facilities for air operations. The 46th Army Air Corps Squadron was sent there to provide anti-submarine surveyance off the Atlantic Coast until the Navy could obtain sufficient aircraft to assume its anti-submarine mission.

While on this mission at Cherry Point, the 46th Bombardment Squadron was redesignated the 22nd Anti-Submarine Squadron. It was subsequently equipped with B-24 type aircraft and transferred to Bloominthal Field at Wilmington, North Carolina.

In August of 1943 the 22nd Anti-Submarine Squadron was moved, via the North Atlantic air route, from Wilmington, North Carolina, through Gander Field in Newfoundland and Prestwick in Scotland, to Dunkeswell in southern England, to fly anti-submarine patrol over the Bay of Biscay. The 4th Anti-Submarine Squadron was also moved from the east coast of the United States to Dunkeswell to participate in that same anti-submarine patrol mission.

It was while flying on these anti-submarine patrol sorties that two of the air crews of the 22nd Squadron encountered their first German air opposition. The stories of those encounters are chronialed in subsequent pages of this memory book.

By the autumn of 1943 the United States Navy had acquired enough B-24 type aircraft to enable the Navy to assume their anti-submarine patrol duties out of Dunkeswell. The 22nd and 4th Anti-Submarine Squadrons were relieved of that mission.

On 24 October 1943, Lt. Col. Clifford J. Heflin, the Squadron Commander of the 22nd Anti-Submarine Squadron; Major Robert W. Fish, Squadron Operations Officer; Lt. Robert Sullivan, and Lt. Bruce Akers, the Squadron Engineering Officer, were called to a meeting at Bovingdon Air Base west of London.

At Bovingdon they met with Colonel Williamson, A-3 of the Eighth Air Force Bomber Command; Group Captain Fielden of the RAF Special Unit at Tempsford Air Base; Colonel Oliver of the Eighth Air Force Headquarters; and Colonel Haskell and Major Brooks of the United States Office of Strategic Services in London.

At this meeting the officers of the 22nd Squadron were sworn to secrecy and then they were briefed on a new mission being assigned to their unit. This new mission was designated by the code name "Carpetbaggers". All of the personnel of the 22nd Squadron and only the non-aircrew personnel of the 4th Squadron would be involved. Two new squadrons would be organized from the manpower pool of the two anti-submarine squadrons.

Under the code name, "Carpetbaggers", the two squadrons would be assigned the mission of parachuting saboteurs, intelligence agents, weapons and other supplies to the underground forces of the countries on the continent of Europe that had been overrun by the German Armed Forces.

For all practical purposes the personnel of the two anti-submarine squadrons would form the air arm of the Office of Strategic Services (OSS). Working closely with British Intelligence, the OSS would provide for overall supervision of the mission. The OSS would designate the targets, package the arms, ammunition and other supplies into air dropable containers, train agents and saboteurs to be parachuted behind the German lines, and provide for the required communications with the reception parties in German occupied areas.

The Army Air Forces would be responsible for supplying and training aircrews, providing aircraft, providing for special modifications of the aircraft, and for planning and conducting the air operations required for each mission.

Shortly after the Bovingdon meeting, the 22nd and the 4th Anti-submarine Squadrons were deactivated. On 28 November 1943 two new squadron designations were assigned to the Carpetbagger units. These new squadron designations were the 36th and the 406th Squadrons. Lt. Col. Heflin assumed command of the 406th Squadron with Captain Boone as his operations officer, and Major Fish assumed command of the 36th Squadron with Captain St. Clairas his operations officer. Both squadrons were attached to the 482nd Pathfinder Group at Alconbury Air Base, Huntingdonshire, England.

Prior to the entry of the Army Air Force units into Carpetbagger operations the personnel needed to be trained and the B-24 aircraft needed to be modified.

The RAF had a "Carpetbagger type" unit in a fully operational mode at Tempsford RAF Base in Bedfordshire north of London. Arrangements were made with Group Captain Fielden, the commanding officer of RAF Tempsford, to have the experienced RAF personnel train cadres of the US Army Air Force intelligence and aircrew personnel on Carpetbagger techniques.

The training at Tempsford consisted of both classroom and flying training.

The aircrews were thoroughly indoctrinated in the techniques of low altitude night navigation and in making parachute drops at 400 feet above the terrain in the black of night. The operational flights in order to avoid radar detection and tracking by the Germans were required to fly at extremely low altitudes. Air drops had to be made at very low altitudes (400-600 feet) and at very low air speeds to assure that the parachuted containers did not drift from the target area.

On 25 October 1943 a cadre of officers and enlisted men were placed on temporary duty at Tempsford to observe RAF training and to undergo training for their new mission. Major Robert W. Fish, Lt. Sullivan and one aircrew led by Captain Robert Boone were the first personnel to receive training at Tempsford. Other crews quickly followed them to Tempsford.

Captain Boone, after receiving a thorough indoctrination at Tempsford, was placed on TDY to the air depot at Burtonwood to oversee and coordinate the modification of the anti-submarine B-24's into Carpetbagger B-24's.

Most of the missions to supply the underground forces were flown during the moonlight period of each month. Moonlight was required to facilitate night pilotage which was the primary form of navigation used to locate reception committees on the ground. The most experienced aircrews were sometimes used to fly missions during the dark periods of the moon when requirements to supply underground units were extremely urgent.

The moonlight periods of November and December 1943 were used to train USAF aircrews. This training was conducted primarily at the Tempsford RAF Base.

The pilots, bombardiers and navigators each flew two nighttime operational missions with an RAF crew in an RAF aircraft. Lt. Col. Heflin was the first pilot to fly his two flights with the RAF. Major Fish, Captain Boone and Captain St. Clair flew their missions with the RAF on succeeding nights of the November moonlight period.

It was during this 1943 November moon period that the first member of the American Carpetbaggers was lost to enemy action. On 3 November 1943, Captain James E. Estes went MIA while flying a "buddy" mission with the RAF. A few nights later, Lt. Gross on 11 November 1943 went MIA under similar circumstances.

To assure continuity in the leadership of the new Carpetbagger mission, Lt. Col. Heflin would allow no more than one of the officers in command positions to fly combat on any one night.

While at Tempsford, Lt. Sullivan made a detailed study of the RAF intelli-

gence organization and techniques. He used the knowledge he gained from that study as a basis for building a US intelligence organization and function. Major Fish made an overall survey of the RAF operational organization and training functions and he subquently used that knowledge as the basis for organizing the functions of the US group's headquarters and squadrons.

On 14 December 1943 both Heflin and Fish were relieved of the command of their squadrons, the 406th and 36th respectively, and were assigned to the headquarters of the 482nd Pathfinder Group at Alconbury. Heflin became the Air Executive Officer for Carpetbagger operations and Fish became the Operations Officer of the Carpetbagger Special Project of the 482nd Group.

Captain Boone then assumed command of the 406th Squadron with Lt. Lyman Sanders as his operations officer. Captain St. Clair assumed command of the 36th Squadron with Captain Robert L. Williams as his operations officer.

Original plans had been to base the Air Force Carpetbaggers on a landing field at Watton, England. Some Carpetbagger personnel actually moved to Watton during the first few months of 1944. A subsequent survey of the Watton Airfield determined that field to be unsuitable for B-24 operations. The personnel and their associated units were next assigned to Alconbury.

On the 4th of January 1944, Col. Heflin, using Lt. Stapels' aircraft and crew, with Lt. Stapels acting as his co-pilot, flew the first all American operational Carpetbagger mission to a drop zone in France. The reception committee was located and the supplies were dropped for a successful mission. This flight departed from and returned to the RAF Base at Tempsford.

During this January 1944 moonlight period six missions were flown by the 36th Squadron crews and nine missions were flown by the 406th Squadron crews. No aircraft were lost and no aircrew personnel were injured on operational missions.

At the end of the January moon period the US crews and personnel returned to Alconbury for further training. The air base at Alconbury lacked the intelligence organization required for operational Carpetbagger missions. It did have runways that could handle B-24 aircraft and some housing for personnel. Alconbury Air Base had the primary mission of providing "pathfinder services" for the 8th Air Force Bomber Command. That Pathfinder mission had priority at Alconbury. The Carpetbagger mission was secondary at Alconbury. It could, on temporary basis, house the Carpetbagger personnel for training purpose. During the non-moonlight periods training missions were flown over England.

The Carpetbaggers would return to RAF Tempsford for the operational moon periods of February and March 1944. Some missions for the March period were flown from Alconbury.

On 21 February 1944 the 36th and 406th Squadrons were relieved from assignment to the 482nd Group. On 26 February 1944 these two squadrons were relieved from assignment to the First Air Division and assigned to the VIII Air Force Composite Command at Cheddington Air Base in Hertfordshire, England. On 27 February the 328th Service Group was designated as the Group Headquarters element for the Carpetbaggers. Col. Heflin assumed command of the 328th and he appointed Major Fish as the Deputy Commander. Major Edenfield was appointed Executive Officer, Capt. Fletcher was the Adjutant and on 3 March Captain Sanders of the 406 BS was moved up to become Group Operations Officer. Lt. Sullivan became the Group Intelligence Officer. On 25 March 1944 the advance echelons of 36th and 406th Bomb Squadrons arrived at Harrington. On 28 March the 801st Bomb Group (Provisional) was designated the Group Headquarters for the Carpetbagger mission. The 36th and the 406th Squadrons and the support units were attached to the 801st.

On 17 May 1944 the 788th and the 850th Bomb Squadrons joined the Carpetbagger mission at Harrington. The 788th was under the command of Lt. Col. Leonard McManus. The 850th was under the command of Lt. Col. Jack Dickerson.

The arrival of these two additional squadrons caused major problems at Harrington. Harrington had housing accommodations for only two squadrons. The two new squadrons had to move into tents. Two tent areas were built, one for each of the new squadrons. Some members of the new units felt they were discriminated against. Fortunately both Lt. Col. McManus and Lt. Col. Dickerson were strong leaders. Their leadership created in many respects, a higher morale among the men in the tent areas than existed among some men in the Nissen hut housing areas.

On 13 August 1944, the group designation of the Group Headquarters was changed from 801st Bomb Group (Provisional) to the 492nd Bomb Group. Col. Heflin assumed command of this new group designation. The manning of the headquarters staff remained unaffected by this new group designation. The squadron numerical identities became the 856th, 857th, 858th and 859th.

Several other operations, not previously mentioned in this introduction were associated with the Carpetbaggers. One was a leaflet operation that was primarily operated out of Cheddington Air Base. The 801st/492nd furnished some

aircraft and crews for this endeavor. In this operation the aircraft and crews involved flew at high altitudes at night over Germany and the German occupied countries and dropped millions of leaflets in support of the Allied operations. The bulk of these missions were planned at and flown out of Cheddington and not out of Harrington. Carpetbagger aircraft out of Harrington did at times carry and drop leaflets, but these operations were mainly an adjunct to and diversion from the main air resupply operation. Leaflets when carried on Carpetbagger operations were dropped enroute to or enroute from the supply drop zone to help mislead the Germans as to the main purpose of the Carpetbagger flight.

In September 1944 General Patton's Third Army tanks out ran their supply lines and their drive against the Germans bogged down. The 492nd Carpetbagger Group was assigned the task of hauling gasoline to Patton. The B-24's were used for this mission. Extra tanks were installed in the bomb bays for this mission. The outer wing panel tanks were also used for 80 octane tank fuel. The fuel was delivered to grass fields in France and Belgium. Upon landing the 80 octane fuel was pumped out of the aircraft into storage facilities and tanker trucks. This operation lasted about one month and during that period 822,791 gallons of gasoline were delivered. Because the 80 octane tank gasoline had a chemical reaction with the linings of the aircraft fuel tanks, those tanks could no longer be used for aircraft fuel. This condition so limited the range of the aircraft that they were useless for either bombing or Carpetbagger operations. It being too expensive to change all of the contaminated tanks, the aircraft were flown to the depot at Burtonwood and the 492nd was issued new B-24 aircraft.

After the invasion of the continent by the allied armies and the liberation of major parts of France the demand for Carpetbagger operations diminished. The Army Air Forces in England now had a sufficient surplus of aircraft as to allow for diversification of US air operations. Headquarters decided to develop a night bombing capability. That mission was assigned to the 492nd Carpetbagger Group.

As soon as a nighttime bombing capability was developed in the 492nd Group, the US Eighth Air Force and the British Royal Air Force designed a concept of using the two forces in support of each other. Under this plan the 492nd bombers would launch a feint toward targets deep in Germany and on a route many miles from the route to be followed by the RAF. The 492nd aircraft would appear on the German radar and cause the Germans to launch their night fighters. The

492nd Group would then drop its bombs on nearby targets and be on their way home before the German fighters caught up with them. At this point the Germans would know they had responded to a feint. They would have to get their fighters back on the ground and refueled to face the RAF attack. Theoretically these actions significantly reduced the German defense against the deep penetrating incoming massive RAF attack.

One of the last operations that the 492nd launched was reconnaisance flights over the Ruhr Valley to show our non-aircrew personnel the awesome effects of having to bomb the German nation to its knees. The devastation was almost unbelievable!

CAPTAIN JAMES ESTES
MEETS THE GERMAN LUFTWAFFE FIGHTERS

Captain James Estes of the 22nd Antisubmarine Squadron was flying an antisubmarine mission out of Dunkeswell when he attained the honor of being the first of our aircraft commanders to be accosted by German fighters. Captain Rodman St. Clair was his copilot. My failing memory denies me the names of the other crew members.

Captain Estes went down to see the source of smoke he saw rising from the water in the Bay of Biscay. He found an RAF plane that had just been shot down by the Germans. The fighters were still in the area and attacked Estes' aircraft. Estes took violent evasive action but his aircraft suffered extensive damage before the Germans ended their attack.

Captain Estes was a small southern man whose ability to maneuver the heavy B-24 was handicapped by his diminutive size. Due to his short legs he had a problem exacting full rudder travel from the B-24. Under the stress of the situation, he called to his copilot, "Hep me, Saint!, Hep me!".

He landed his heavily damaged aircraft, (Playmate # 1) at a small airfield at Lands End, England. Mone of his aircrew were injured but the aircraft was so badly damaged by the German machine gun fire that it was beyond economical repair.

MY FIRST ENCOUNTER WITH THE GERMAN AIR FORCE

by

ROBERT W. FISH

In September 1943 while flying an anti-submarine patrol over the Bay of Biscay I had my first encounter with German Air Force fighter aircraft. We were flying just above a thin stratus deck, searching the area with our radar.

I had my regularly assigned crew on board. It was the crew I had with me when we had flown the North Atlantic route to England. That crew consisted of Lt. James A. Cassidy, copilot; Lt. Edward Tresmer, navigator; Lt. Charles Teer, bombardier; T/Sgt. William Jesperson, engineer; T/Sgt. Al Sage, radio operator; S/Sgt. Harold Falk, assistant engineer-gunner; S/Sgt. Minor Bobin, assistant radio operator-gunner; S/Sgt. Joseph Bennet, waist gunner; and S/Sgt. Samuel Cooper, tail gunner.

Our RAF Liaison Officer, Squadron Leader "Boop" Beaudeau was along on this mission as an extra pilot and tactical advisor. "Boop" had completed three tours of duty as a fighter pilot in the Battle of Britain before he was assigned to our squadron.

After we had been out on patrol for several hours I turned the pilot's seat over to "Boop" while I went to the rear of the airplane to attend to the wants of nature.

Just as I arrived aft of the bombay in the aircraft, five German fighter aircraft appeared off our right side. They were flying a right echelon formation. They pulled ahead of our aircraft in preparation for a head on attack against us. Just as they turned into our flight path, Sqdn. Leader Beaudeau dived our B-24 down through the thin layer of clouds which was less than one hundred feet thick. This maneuver thwarted the Germans' attack. They dived through the clouds and lined up in echelon again for another attack. "Boop" then climbed our aircraft back up above the cloud layer. On top again, the Germans positioned themselves for a head attack. Again they were foiled by our diving through the clouds. After these maneuvers were completed eight or ten times the Germans left us and flew back toward France. Why they didn't split their forces, part above and part below the clouds, we will never know. When they left us they probably did so because they were low on fuel.

We were fortunate to have had Sqdn. Leader Beaudeau with us that day. He knew the best techniques for thwarting the German attack.

When we landed at Dunkeswell and reported this incident at our debriefing, our intelligence officer informed us that the fighters we had encountered were probably from a German fighter training base near the coast of France. The pilots were probably students and were not knowledgeable enough in fighter tactics to really press their attacks.

LIKE FATHER - LIKE SON
(EXTRACTED FROM A CARPETBAGGER NEWSLETTER)

Carpetbagger Profile - When Carpetbagger Jim Burger, now living in Linwood, N.J., was a young co-pilot (weren't we all?) on Lt. Leonard Brenner's crew at Harrington, little did he think that he'd have a son, who -- 43 years later -- would be flying supersonic aircraft out of a base only 20 miles away at Alconbury! (And, coincidentally, a base where the 801st/492nd BG had it's beginnings, flying Carpetbagger missions in 1943 and 1944). But -- that is exactly what happened. Jim's son, Major James E. Burger (not a junior -- named after Jim's father) is a "Hot" pilot of a TR-1, the successor to the famous U-2 Reconnaissance plane -- flying out of Alconbury. (I included an article on this aircraft in the March 1987 Newsletter.) James and his wife, Heidi, and 3 year old son, Bowie, live near the base. Jim proudly points out that his son James has been recently awarded an Air Medal for "Exceptional Airmanship and Courage"; "A difficult medal to get in peace time," Jim said. (Dad has one also -- for 14 missions out of Harrington -- plus an Oak Leaf Cluster. But -- in those days, he was being shot at.) Jim is rightly proud of his son's achievements in the Air Force. "An Air Force Academy graduate, he's not only a TR-1 pilot, but is also a check pilot for all NATO Reconnaissance Units. This month, he is slated to become Chief of his branch." Of course, "Pop" was no slouch at Harrington either. On April 23, 1945, with the war winding down (we thought) Jim's aircraft was badly shot up by German anti-aircraft fire. So badly, that the plane was "junked" when they limped back to Harrington. Two of Jim's crew mates were wounded and received Purple Hearts. One of them, Jim Monahan, is on our mailing roster -- living in Wheaton, Md. Two other crew mates of Jim's are also on our roster -- Joe McConnell of Sacramento, Calif, navigator; and Al Trassati of Torrance, Calif, bombardier.

"JUST THOUGHT YOU'D LIKE YO KNOW..."

The first reference to the group being called "Carpetbaggers", was by General Jimmy Doolittle in a conversation between General Tooey Spaatz, his deput, Maj. General Fredrick Anderson and Col. Bernt Balchen at a dinner one evening when a request for planes and crews were made for operations in Norway. Available planes were scarce as everything was tied up for an expected push starting soon in France. General Doolittle, who had just become Commanding General of the Eighth Air Force made the suggestion (his own words), "How about Col. Heflin's Carpetbaggers? They are already under OSS orders. Intelligence has cleared them and we can pull some crews out of that group."

Thus was born an identity, from a code name to a fact.

The above was taken from an autobiography by Col. Bernt Balchen in his book "Come North With Me".

* * * * * * *

The above extract from Balchen's book is in error. The incident related by Balchen was probably the first time that he ever heard the word "Carpetbaggers" applied to clandestine operations. It was not the original application of that word to such operations.

The Army Air Forces in England and elsewhere maintained a list of code words and nicknames to be used to enhance the security of various projects and operations. The word "Carpetbaggers" was one of those words which was selected and applied before Balchen's operations in Norway were conceived. It was first revealed to Colonel C. J. Heflin on 24 October 1943 when he and a few members of his staff met with Eighth Air Force authorities at Bovingdon Air Station. It was at a later meeting as referenced in the above paragraph that Balchen's Norway operations were brought into the "Carpetbagger" family. As Heflin's operations officer I was privy to both projects.

Robert W. Fish
Colonel USAF Ret.

The 13th Annual 8th Air Force Reunion will be held in Pittsburgh, Penn. -- October 14 - 18, 1987. (Four weeks after our Harrington Reunion/Dedication.) This reunion will salute the fighter groups of the 8th Air Force --- Our "Little Friends".

The Air Forces Escape and Evasion Society Annual Meeting will be held at San Antonio, Texas, May 24 - 28, 1987. Those interested can obtain details by writing to them at P. O. Box 844, Beaufort, South Carolina 29901.

Bill Dillon sent in a letter he received from Forrest S. Clark of the Swiss Internees Assoc. of South Plainfield, N.J. Clark related how he had been shot down on a 44th B.G. B-24 mission over Augsburg, Germany on April 12, 1944 and was interned in Switzerland. Seems that in December 1944, he and other internees escaped and traveled to Annecy, France, where they were flown back to England by one of our crews. Clark wrote, "I have a special place in my heart for the Carpetbaggers." (It's nice to be appreciated.) Bill thought some of you might recall that particular flight from Annecy to Harrington.

Sebastian sent in this gem, culled from old records: "August 14, 1944 -- B-24 'Slick Chick' took off -- 1245 hours -- mission to the town of Montargis, France -- Jedburgh Team 'Bruce' on board -- consisting of Lt. Jacques P. Favel, 2nd Lt. Louis Giry and Major William E. Colby. (Recognize that last name? He ended up Director of the CIA a few years back.) Do any of you remember who crewed that mission?

Bill Dillon and Sebastian Corriere have successfully convinced the 8th AFHS to rectify the mistake they originally made in our Memorial Plaque, unveiled at the Air Force Museum Memorial Wall in Dayton, Ohio several years ago. Seems they had the 801st BG shown at North Pickenham as of June 6, 1944. Actually, you 801st fellows know that you were at Harrington then and had been for several months! The 8th AFHS resisted correcting the mistake for several years due to the cost, as well as not wanting to "destroy" the wall, taking it down. Thomas L. Thomas, board member of the 8 AFMMF, notified Bill Dillon in December of a happy compromise. They are going to affix a new plaque on a bench back in the Memorial Gardens, containing addendum and corrections for several outfits. However, due to Bill's persistence, our correction will be first listed (and longest) as follows: (Nice going, Bill!!!)

E T O
CARPETBAGGERS

by

GEORGE A. REYNOLDS

DEDICATION: This publication is respectfully dedicated to all former members of the 492nd Bombardment Group and the European Air Transport Command who were, for an enemy, all that the name "Carpetbaggers" implies. And especially those for whom duty required their lives or limbs.

* * * * * * * * * * *

Curiosity of friend and speculation by foe abounded. But the deep mystery surrounding airmen in a series of projects that began under the code name "Carpetbagger" remained as intriguing as the dull-black dress of their aircraft. The true purpose of these missions in the European Theater of Operations (ETO) is one of the longest, best-kept secrets of World War II. Now, with official records declassified and personnel unrestrained, the gist of those extensive operations can finally be told.

Naturally, the flyers were called "Carpetbaggers" when they began dropping leaflets in that initial project over France in 1943. Then aircrews in subsequent but different projects were dubbed with the term and carried it for the war's duration. Delivery of espionage agents and vital supplies for the underground, propaganda leaflet drops and retrieving interned airmen from neutral Sweden became their tasks. These were done under a guise of electronic counter measures, reconnaissance or Pathfinder Forces, and routinely in weather that usually grounded combat flights.

The U.S. Army Air Forces and RAF colaborated in the projects from October 1943-May 1945. To a man, dedication, strict silence and devotion were the price of accomplishing a colossal assignment, and the tab grew extremely high. From January-May 1944, twenty-five of their fifty B-24s were shot down, and eight others were scrapped because of battle damage. Today, much of the total account lies buried beneath the Baltic and North Seas. But surviving essentials tell an incredible story of successful accomplishment rarely expected from military units.

Born in chaos, the unit thrived amid mobility unknown to most organizations. The 479th Anti-submarine Group was disbanded in August 1943, and from its remnants came the original Carpetbaggers-charged with agent and leaflet drops in France. Next the Eighth Air Force created new squadrons, and this collection of personnel was attached to the 482nd Bomb Group (Pathfinder). Additional personnel and

eventually increased to seventy-two crews operating sixty-four aircraft, and at a given time, forty of the black Liberators were operationally ready for service. When actvities were later assumed by the Air Transport Command, C-47's replaced the war-weary B-24s.

A British Mosquito bomber bearing the American star and bars is taking off from Watton AAF 505, England on a weather recon mission in connection with Carpet-bagger operations. These swift aircraft had sufficient speed and range to reconnoiter flight paths and objectives in a timely manner, and became an important function in the highly sensitive projects. These ships as well as the popular Spitfire were on loan from the RAF. The slower and farther ranging B-17 "Flying Fortress" was also employed in Carpetbagger activities.

Cargo containers were predestined by the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) for specific places. Here, crewmen are stenciling on code numbers to insure proper delivery and minimize errors by aircrews. Every conceivable type of equipment and supplies went into the containers which were loaded into the bomb bays with a parachute attached. They were released in the fashion of bombs over a drop zone. One primary item that went into the containers was radio gear for resistance groups, freedom fighters and patriots for relaying vital intelligence data back to the Allies.

More than 400 different items were dropped over occupied Europe in the Carpetbagger operations, and included the usual military hardware, medicine, food, money, assorted tools, radio gear and booby traps. Leaflets or "nickels", originated these missions and even warned dwellers along the French coast on June 4th that a massive invasion of the continent was immient.

Agents, or "Joes", dropped by the Carpetbaggers carried identification papers, ration, census and occupation cards, certificates of residence and birth certificates-all expertly forged. They were always dropped from the perilous altitude of 600 feet. Lower, it was hazardous for the person, and higher, spoiled accuracy.

A shadowy veteran of 35 Carpetbagger missions waits on a hardstand at Leuchars, Scotland for its next assignment. Note the flame responders on the top turret gun barrels, missions chalked up just beneath the cockpit window and a special radio receiving antenna on the nose section.

The antenna is for the "Rebecca" receiver, simliar to shoran, which picked up the "Eureka" transmitter. A ground party, or "reception committee" displayed one of three versions of white-red lights in a triangular form as a preliminary recognition signal. Airmen then requested the day's code letter from the

reception committee by S-phone, a walkie-talkier type radio. Eureka transmitted the code, and if Rebecca received the correct letter, a drop was made. Such precautions were necessary to prevent super-sensitive equipment and personnel from falling into enemy hands.

SCOTLAND - SCANDINAVIA

Kenneth Armstrong of Boody, Illinois recalls some of the activity. "In September 1944 about forty of us were sent to a small RAF base at Leuchars, Scotland. There we saw those black B-24s we had serviced earlier at Watton plus others in green. They had resumed Carpetbagger-type operations into Norway. I remember one specific flight when agents were dropped, and on the return run, the B-24 was shot down by a Russian ship. The Reds claimed mistaken identity for a JU-88. All of the crew was rescued from the North Sea except the CO, Lt. Col. Keith N. Allen, who was killed by the anti-aircraft fire. The Russians transferred the men to a British ship, and they arrived back at Leuchars ten days later."

"The black B-24's were used for night operations, while the green jobs were used in daylight missions. Those flown in daylight had the U.S. civil or NC, serials. They flew into Stockholm, Sweden's Bromma airport, and the crews wore civilian clothing and carried passports issued by the American Embassy in London. There were ground crews in Stockholm posing as civilians to service the planes. How we envied those fellows. Then we found out that all Americans were being shadowed by enemy agents and their rooms ransacked daily, unsuccessfully, to find information on the routes our planes were using. The planes carried supplies and mail into Sweden for the Norwegian Legation. On return runs they brought back Allied airmen from internment or Norwegians who had escaped to the neutral site. The Norwegians went into a special army unit being trained in Scotland. Once, the entire Norwgian governmental staff was flown out."

"About Thanksgiving 1944, our unit moved to Metfield. Operations by the black B-24s soon ended, but the green ones continued their flights until the war ended. The Leuchars unit was awarded the Meritirious Service Award. They deserved this badge, because crews flew missions of up to thirteen hours every other day and in all kinds of weather. Many of the planes were shot down in combat, and another CO, Col. Clifford J. Heflin, was killed in this type of action."

EAGER VOLUNTEERS FOR CARPETBAGGER OPERATIONS

by

FLT. COMMANDER GEORGE JOHNSON

(An account of volunteering in the service, by default, and the ensuing "finger-pointing".)

The order came into the 467th BG that our squadron was to be stood down from the daytime bombing operations. That's when rumors started to fly. We were going to be sent to the Middle East --- we were going to be sent to the Far East --- or our squadron was going to be broken up and we were going to be going out as replacement crews. Naturally, at times like these, when something is so drastic, there's all kinds of rumors. We watched the other 3 squadrons go out on daylight ops and we just sat there waiting.

Finally word came in that we were going to be sent to a place called Cheddington. Nobody had ever heard of Cheddington --- and of course they wouldn't because it was a secret airfield. We arrived at Cheddington and spent, I think, about 3 days, not knowing why we were there --- couldn't find out, of course, because at Cheddington nobody talked to anybody. So, I think, it was the morning of the 4th day, we were all assembled in this steel and concrete building and Col. Fish got up on the platform, stated that he was going to tell us 2 or 3 things --- that what he was going to say was absolutely TOP SECRET --- it was not to be repeated under any circumstances, anywhere, anytime. He was going to give us something to think about. First he said, "You are going to learn to fly your airplane 400 feet above the ground --- 10 miles per hour above stalling." You could hear the intake of breath in the room. He said, "And in addition you're going to do this at night and you're going to do it as a single ship mission."

Now, of course, by that time we were so dumbfounded, I don't think there were any gasps. I think we all just stopped breathing. And he said, "I'm going to give you 5 minutes to think about it." "Now," he said, "If you don't want to be a part of this all you have to do is to get up and walk out. You'll go back to your group and nothing will be said and it won't reflect against your record but remember what I said in the beginning about saying anything at all to anybody." We were all sitting there in rows as crews. That's to say pilot, co-pilot, bombardier, navigator, engineer, radio operation --- down the line. So we sat there looking at each other and then we were looking at the other crews but it seems as if most of us didn't have anything to say, really, because we didn't

know what to say. The first pilot to stand up probably would have others standing too but it would look as if he wanted to be the first. I didn't want to be the first to stand up. I could sense that my crew wasn't too fond of the idea and you could sense that the others felt pretty much the same way but I suppose this was one of those times when the word "chicken" comes into play.

Anyhow, 5 minutes elapsed, Col. Fish got up on the platform and said, "Very well, I will then accept that nobody has decided to leave the room and that all of you are to become part of the program." So he moved aside a curtain, and a huge map on the wall by the platform and it exposed a lot of red circles around Europe. And he said, "Now, these are the locations of the Underground Groups, the Maquis, the French Force of the Interior, the Partisans. These are the people you are going to be working with. You'll be going in at night --- by yourself --- delivering supplies to the underground and you'll be dropping agents." He continued to elaborate. He showed us another map that indicated where the anti-aircraft batteries were located all over Europe and informed us that our communications with the underground was so good that if the Germans moved an anti-aircraft battery --- within 24 hours it would be known in London at OSS Headquarters and the information would be relayed to our base, Harrington, another secret base and that circle indicating that anti-aircraft battery would be put in its new place. When he was finished with the briefing, we went outside. This was the first time we got to mill around and talk. So some of the pilots looked at me and said. "Well, why didn't you stand up?" At the time I was a Flight Commander. And I said, "Why didn't I stand up? Why didn't you stand up?" I didn't want to be the first to stand up. My crew looked at me and said, "Why didn't you stand up? We're not too fond of this idea." It turned out that nobody was particularly fond of the idea. They weren't necessarily looking for some kind of exotic adventure and then we all busted out laughing because we all knew it was the old game of "chicken" again and nobody wanted to be No. 1.

To this day, I believe that if some one crew, some one pilot had stood up --- his crew probably would have stood up with him --- they'd walk out and there's no telling how many more would have got up and walked out behind him. But that wasn't the case, so we were all in, and that's the way it began.

CONTINUITY

Colonel Robert W. Fish provided a principle link of continuity during the entire Carpetbagger operation. He was present at the first meeting which developed the mission and its scope. During the entire time of the 801st/492nd Bombardment Groups Carpetbagger operations he was completely involved. When the operations started he held the rank of Major. When its mission was completed he was a Lieutenant Colonel. During the period of operations he was a Squadron Commander, the Group's Operations Officer and/or the Group's Deputy Commander. When Col. Heflin was on leave to the United States he assumed the Group Commander's position. When Col. Heflin returned, he reverted to Deputy Commander. When Col. Heflin was transferred back to the U. S., he again assumed Command. When Col. Upham was assigned to the Group, Lt. Col. Fish again reverted to Deputy C. O. When Col. Upham was transferred to Italy Lt. Col. Fish again assumed command. He flew one of the early Carpetbagger missions over France. He flew the last wartime Carpetbagger mission when he flew some members of the Danish government in exile to Copenhagen the day before the Armistice was signed.

A HEFLIN POLICY

Squadron Commanders could pick the missions they would fly. They must balance the easy missions with the difficult, the long flights with the short flights. Only one Squadron Commander could fly any one day. They could not attempt to accomplish all of their missions quickly and be rotated to the USA. They were in the Carpetbagger business for the duration. Their knowledge and experience were essential to the over all mission accomplishment.

All of the Commanders wanted to fly the Mosquito and A-26 missions. Due to the limited number of these aircraft which were available and the special training required, missions in these aircraft were restricted to a very limited number of specialized pilots. Squadron Commanders need not apply! They had too many other things to do.

BACKGROUND OF COL. ROBERT W. FISH

Born: Michigan, May 30, 1917

Reared in Ohio

Graduate: Ohio State University

Degree: Electrical Engineering

Graduate: Army Air Corps Flying Training Program, Class 40-C, June 21, 1940

First Military Assignment: 19th Bomb Group March Field, California

May 1941: Assigned to 46th Squadron of 41st Bomb Group
David-Monthan Field, Tucson, Arizona

Dec. 7, 1941 was Officer of the Day at Davis-Monthan Field, Tucson, Arizona. Group Commander was on leave. Squadron C.O. not available. Moved the 46th Squadron out of Tucson by 8:30 a.m. on Dec. 8, 1941 to Muroc Dry Lake, California

Early 1942: Flew calibration of new radar net on West Coast U.S. Also flew anti-submarine patrol on west coast.

Mid 1942: With 46th Bomb Squadron was transferred to Cherry Point Marine Corps Air Field in North Carolina for anti-submarine patrol of east coast 46th Bomb Squadron redesignated 22nd Anti-Submarine Squadron

June 1943: 22nd Anti-Submarine Squadron transferred to England

Oct. 1943: Assigned to the Carpetbagger Mission 801st/492nd Group

July 1945: Transferred to 384th Bomb Group at Grafton-Underwood in U.K. Moved 384th to Istres le Tube near Marsailles, France. Mission at Istres was to fly "high point" U.S. Service men to Casa Blanca, Africa on the first leg of their air lift trip home. Also flew displaced forced laborers from Germany to their respective homelands, i.e. Greece, Turkey, Africa, etc.

Nov. 1945: Returned to U.S. Assigned Tactical Air Command Headquarter McDill A.F.B., Florida

Sept. 1946: Assigned to Ohio State University to get a degree in Personnel Management

July 1948: Assigned student, Air Command and Staff School, Maxwell A.F.B., Alabama

Jan. 1949: Assigned Tyndall A.F.B., Florida as Instructor Air Tactical School, Squadron Officer Course

Jan. 1951: Assigned Air University, Maxwell A.F.B., Alabama as instructor in

Air Command and Staff College. In June 1951, I was asked to go to Washington, D.C. to organize a new "Carpetbagger" force within the U.S.A.F. I declined the honor. I had made plans to be transferred to Headquarter Strategic Air Command. I judged that Strategic Air Command would be a major advance in my military career.

Three times a senior officer from the Pentagon visited me at Maxwell A.F.B. Each time I said, "No thank you, I want to go with S.A.C."

Shortly after this third visit I was called to the office of the Commandant of the Air University. That was General George Kenny. When I reported to him, he said, "The Chief of the Air Force wants to talk to you." After that remark, he picked up his telephone and called the Pentagon. He then handed me the phone. I put the receiver to my ear and said, "Yes Sir."

The voice I heard on the telephone said, "Colonel, this is Vandenberg. I want you to come to Washington, D.C. and help organize an unconventional warfare capability within the United States Air Force. I understand that you do not desire to do this. Why?"

I answered him quite frankly. "Sir, I worked unconventional warfare in WW II. I feel that returning to that activity would be a step backward for my career. I feel that a tour as a planner in Strategic Air Command Headquarters would greatly enhance my value to the Air Force and would at the same time enhance my career."

General Vanderberg's next comment was, "At this time I need you here in Washington on our unconventional warfare plans. That is why I am asking you to come to Washington. If you ever determine that this job is adversely effecting your career, I expect you to call me."

A lowly Colonel just does not say "No" to the Chief of Staff. I said, "Yes, Sir! I'll be there." Within two weeks I was in Washington.

I helped organize and train the Air Resupply and Communications Service. In the process, I arranged that I would be given command of the 3rd Wing under this program.

In 1953, I took command of the 582nd Air Resupply and Communications Wing. I organized and trained its personnel. These wings were large organizations, being composed of over 8,000 personnel.

In 1954, the Air Force severely curtailed the Air Resupply and Communications Program. The strength of the 582nd was reduced to about 3,000 men. I was reassigned to Headquarter Military Air Transport Service as Deputy Chief of Staff for plans.

Dec. 1955, I was appointed Air Attache to the Republic of Nationalist China on Taiwan. That was an interesting assignment. I was the only Defense Attache assigned to a Country at War.

1958-1963, Air Staff Headquarters U.S.A.F.
Policy: Unconventional Warfare

1963-1964, National War College

1964: George Washington University
Master's Degree
International Affairs

1965-1968, Headquarters Air Training Command

1968-1970, Vice-Commander, Lowry A.F.B. Military Training Center

Feb. 1, 1970, Retired with 30 years service

1970-1987, Lived at Zapata, Texas along Rio Grande and Falcon Lake

June 1987, Moved to Air Force Village II, San Antonio, Texas

Military Decorations:

Legion of Merit with two bronze stars
U.S. Distinguished Flying Cross
R.A.F. Distinguished Flying Cross
French Croix de Guerre a vec Palm
Danish Liberation Medal
Norwegian Liberation Medal
Belgian Liberation Medal
U.S. Air Medal with Four Clusters
Outstanding Unit Award
American Defense Medal
American Campaign Medal with one Bronze Star
Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal
European-African Campaign Medal with one Silver and one Bronze Star
WW II Victory Medal
National Defense Service Medal
Air Force Longivity Service Medal with four Bronze Oak Leaf Clusters
Republic of China Cloud and Banner

A RISKY BUSINESS

by BOB FISH

My target was a drop zone named Henry V in the south-eastern part of France. My mission was to deliver three "Joes" and a bombay full of containers to that target.

Our trip to the target area was uneventful. We crossed the French coast at an altitude of 4,000 feet to get above the possible danger of machine gun fire from coastal defenses. After crossing into France I immediately dropped down to between four and five hundred feet above the ground. This altitude was good for pilotage navigation by my bombardier. But more important it helped to keep a German night fighter from attacking us from below and from the rear. If a fighter was going to attack from the rear he had to come at me from above.

To defend against an attack from below we had only the two fifty caliber guns in the rear tail turrent. By our staying low we could force him to attack from above where we could bring the two top turrent guns to bear on him as well as the tail turrent guns. To my way of thinking this position doubled our defensive fire power.

Approaching the target area we immediately saw the lights of the reception party and I opted for a straight in run on the target. I lowered the landing gear and lowered half flaps to slow the aircraft to between 120 and 130 miles per hour with a somewhat reduced throttle. It appeared to me that our drop zone was on a fairly large cleared space on a hill side in fairly hilly area. As soon as I lined up on the target lights I lost sight of them under the nose of the aircraft and my bombardier riding in the glassed-in nose had to guide me into the release position.

Our plan of attack was to salvo the containers and then drop the "Joes" all on one pass over the target. We planned to drop from 600 feet obove the ground, I had two instruments on the aircraft instrument panel which I could use to control

my altitude. One of these instruments was a barometric altimeter which gave me my altitude above mean sea level. The second instrument was a radar altimeter which showed my actual altitude above the surface over which we were flying. A few seconds before we reached our container release point I noted that our altitude above the ground was reduced to 550 feet and decreasing. I doubled checked my barometric altimeter and it was steady at the selected altitude above mean sea level. This told me that the earth surface under the aircraft was sloping upward. By this time I was flying strictly by reference to my instruments. I increased the power on the aircraft motors so that we could start a climb. Even though I put on a lot of power the heavily loaded B-24 responded slowly. The altitude above the ground was 500 feet when we dropped the containers. Immediately thereafter the three "Joes" departed at an altitude of about 400 feet.

With their departure I raised the landing gear, moved the throttles to maximum power and started a gentle climbing turn to the right.

The tail gunner called me on the interphone system and reported that all of the parachutes had opened. We headed toward our home base in England. The remainder of our flight was uneventful.

The next day we received a radio message from the "Maquis" at our target area acknowledging the receipt of our load. But they had some bad news for us. The first "Joe" landed O.K. The second "Joe" had a hard landing and suffered a broken leg. The third one slammed into the ground and was killed.

We held a critique to ascertain what went wrong. The reception party had laid out their target lighting pattern in a position that caused us to drop on a rapidly rising hillside. It being dark at night time we had no way of knowing this until the reading on the radar altimeter showed a decreasing altitude above the ground while our barometric altimeter showed we were flying at a constant altitude.

The parachutes we used in WWII tended to oscillate when

first opened. After a couple of wild swings the oscillations tended to rapidly dampen out. Due to the rising hillside our third "Joe" was dropped at approximately 350-400 feet. Even though his parachute opened he was slammed into the ground by the oscillation with sufficient force to cause his death.

CARPETBAGGERS

STANDING: (L-R) unidentified, unidentified, unidentified, Capt. Marvin Blockman, DC; Capt. Edward Bettcher, DC.

KNEELING: (L-R) Capt. Ralph Everly, MC Sqdn Surg.; Capt. Loren Martin, Sqdn Surg.; Major Paul Gans, Gp. Surg.; unidentified.

Morris Turner photo

DUTY ABOVE AND BEYOND
SUBMITTED BY MORRIS TURNER

The following article appeared in a Northampton newspaper in 1944. Lt. M. L. Turner, one of the judges, is Morris L. Turner who was the Med. Adm. Officer at Harrington. He served under Major Paul Gans, Group Surgeon. Morris said his claim to fame at Harrington was that he was the individual

who usually dispensed combat crew whiskey to returning crews following their missions.

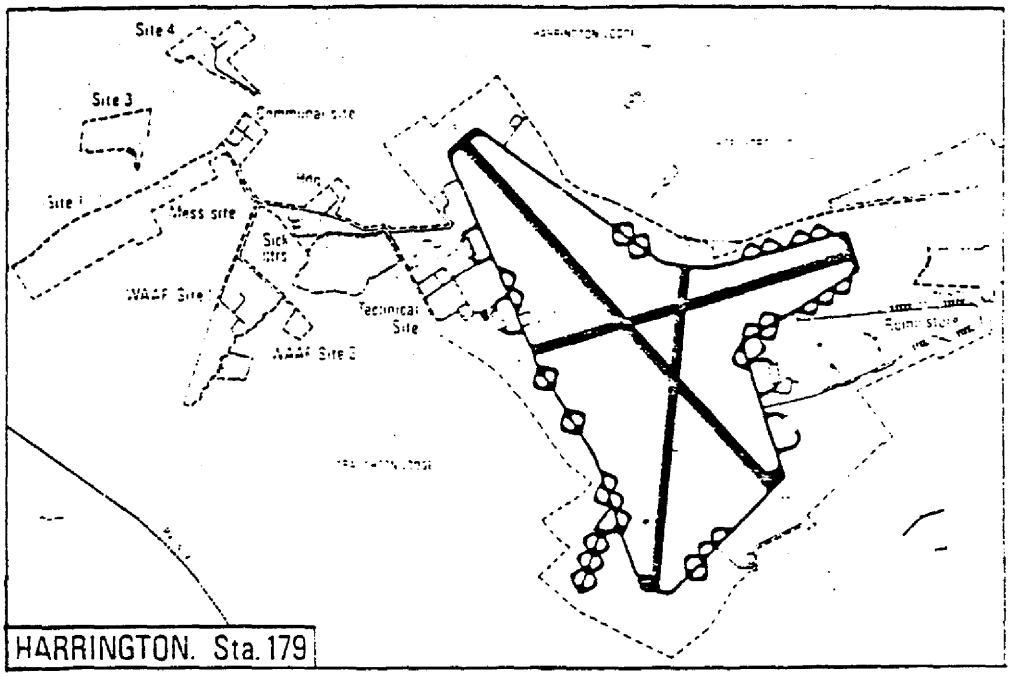
"MISS UNITED NATIONS"

Feature of the dance organized by Mr. E. Martin on behalf of the First Cadet Battalion Northamptonshire Regiment, Northampton Company, held at the Salon-de-Danse, Northampton, was the choosing of "Miss United Nations" by an international committee of Allied fighting men.

Nearly 30 competitors entered the contest and the final selections were: 1) Miss P. Green, 2) Miss D. Joy, 3) Miss I. Jeyes.

The judges were: Lt. L. M. Turner, USAFF of Georgia; Sous- Lt. A. B. Clapper, FFFF of Paris; Flt. Lt. M. Kopecky, of Bohemia; FO A. H. Davis,RCAF of Montreal; PO F. Bromage, RAAF of Melbourne; RFM J. Groopman, of the British Army, who has recently returned from Holland, and Capt. C. W. Couch from the Northamptonshire Regiment.

The proceeds will be devoted to the Company Welfare Fund. The dance section of the Northamptonshire Regimental Band played.



HARRINGTON

STATION 179

MAP BY ARTHUR CARNOT

BASE INFORMATION BY GEORGE JOHNSON

AIRFIELD CODE H R

Elevation is 535 feet above sea level

Built by 826th and 852nd Engineer Battalions

Built to Class A Standards

******

Resident Flying Units

From 11 Jun. 43 - 31 Mar. 44

A Satellite of RAF OTU84 Using Wellington AC

From 1 Apr. 44 to 13 Aug. 44

801st Bomb. Gp. (Prov) Using B-24's and C 47's

From 14 Aug. 44 to 4 Aug. 45

492nd Bomb. Gp. Using B-24's, C-47's, A-26's- Mosquitos

COMMANDING OFFICERS
801st/492nd BOMB. GROUP

Col. Clifford J. Heflin	1 May 44 to 26 Aug. 44
Lt. Col. Robert W. Fish	26 Aug. 44 to 2 Sept. 44
Col. Clifford J. Heflin	2 Sept. 44 to 22 Oct. 44
Lt. Col. Robert W. Fish	22 Oct. 44 to 17 Dec. 44
Col. Hudson H. Upham	17 Dec.44 to 29 Apr. 45
Lt. Col. Robert W. Fish	29 Apr. 45 to 5 Jun. 45
Lt. Col. Robert L. Boone	5 Jun. 45 to 7 Jun. 45
Lt. Col. Jack Dickerson	7 Jun. to 1 Jul. 45
Maj. Ernest W. Holzworth	1 Jul. 45 to 4 Aug. 45

Harrington was the most westerly of Eighth Air Force combat bases, being situated 5½ miles due west of Kettering and a similar distance south-east of Market Harborough. The airfield extended south from the village of Harrington across the B576 road and was some 500 feet above mean sea level, making it also the highest base used for combat operations by the Eighth Air Force. It was built by the 826th and 852nd Engineer Battalions of the US Army in 1943, as a Class A airfield intended for heavy bomber use and was completed in the Spring of 1944.

Harrington was selected as the base for the Eighth Air Force's Special Operations Group which was established there at the end of March. A provisional unit, the 801st Bomb Group had four squadrons using black-painted Liberators for night operations over enemy-occupied territory. Their mission was the support of resistance forces in France, the low countries and Norway, by parachuting arms, equipment and agents. In August 1944 the organization became officially authorized under the designation 492nd Bombardment group. with the liberation of France, operations were on a diminishing scale and eventually the group was reduced to two squadrons.

US forces left Harrington in July 1945 and although it gradually fell into disuse returning to farmland, it received a new lease of life when it was selected to become one of the RAF's Thor missile sites in the early 1960's. Three rocket launch pads were constructed together with ancillary buildings, the whole area being declared top security, fenced off and floodlighted. The IRBM WS-315A missile system had a range of 1,500 nauticle miles and was developed by Douglas Aircraft Corporation of America during 1955-56. Deployment with RAF Bomber Command began in December 1958 before being phased out with the advent of the manned V-bombers in 1963.

UNITED STATES ARMY AIRFORCE AQUIRES STATION 179

On May 1, 1944 Colonel Heflin accepted a deed to the Harrington airfield from RAF Squadron Leader E.D. King. The British Union Jack was lowered and the Stars and Stripes raised on the flagpole in front of Station Headquarters. At night, practices were held, involving a C-47 making a night landing on a short stretch of runway, by flashlight, and unloading eighteen men, before quickly taking off again. Seven men stationed on the ground with ordinary flashlights, guided the plane in for the landing. Colonel Heflin was the pilot of the C-47 and he made a remarkable landing right on the mark. A very busy day for all involved, ground and air personnel.

INSTRUMENT APPROACH PROCEDURE

Although the runways are no longer there, the former Carpetbagger pilots and copilots may want to refresh their memory of Instrument Approach Procedure at Harrington at Harrington, Station No. 179.

This information was submitted by former Carpetbagger pilot, Denzil L. Prather.

R E S T R I C T E D

INSTRUMENT APPROACH DETACHMENT

FLYING AND LET-DOWN INSTRUCTIONS ON SCS-51.

1. Home to field on Radio Buncher, VHF-DF, or QQDM's.
2. Turn on SCS-51 and Radio Compass before reaching field.
3. Obtain a QFE or QFF, and an approach clearance from tower.
4. Setting power, flaps, and gear for let-down, descend to 1500 ft. above ground on reaching field.
5. Intersect Localizer beam and fly out QDR; bracket to establish wind drift. (Localizer beam is flown in coordination with the Gyro compass).
6. Fly QDR until Glide Path indicator gives a continuous up indication, then do procedure turn, letting down to 1000 ft. above ground.
7. Follow beam QDM at 1000 ft. until the Glide Path beam is intersected.
8. Follow Glide Path and Localizer beams keeping indicator needles centered. (Descent should be approx. 500 ft. per min.)
9. Intersect Field Boundary Marker at an altitude of 50 ft. approx. (Visual landing is possible under most weather conditions at this point)

PRECAUTION

1. Never get <u>below</u> Glide Path when close to the ground.

HARRINGTON

INSTRUMENT APPROACH PROCEDURE

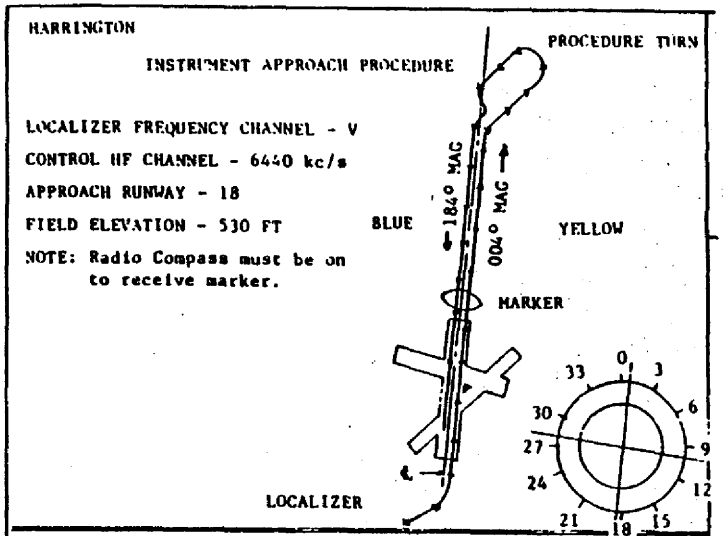
LOCALIZER FREQUENCY CHANNEL - V

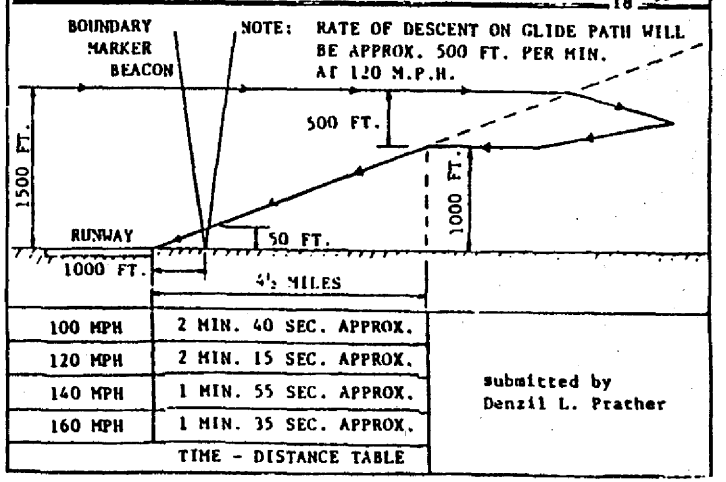
CONTROL HF CHANNEL - 6440 kc/s

APPROACH RUNWAY - 18

FIELD ELEVATION - 530 FT

NOTE: Radio Compass must be on to receive marker.

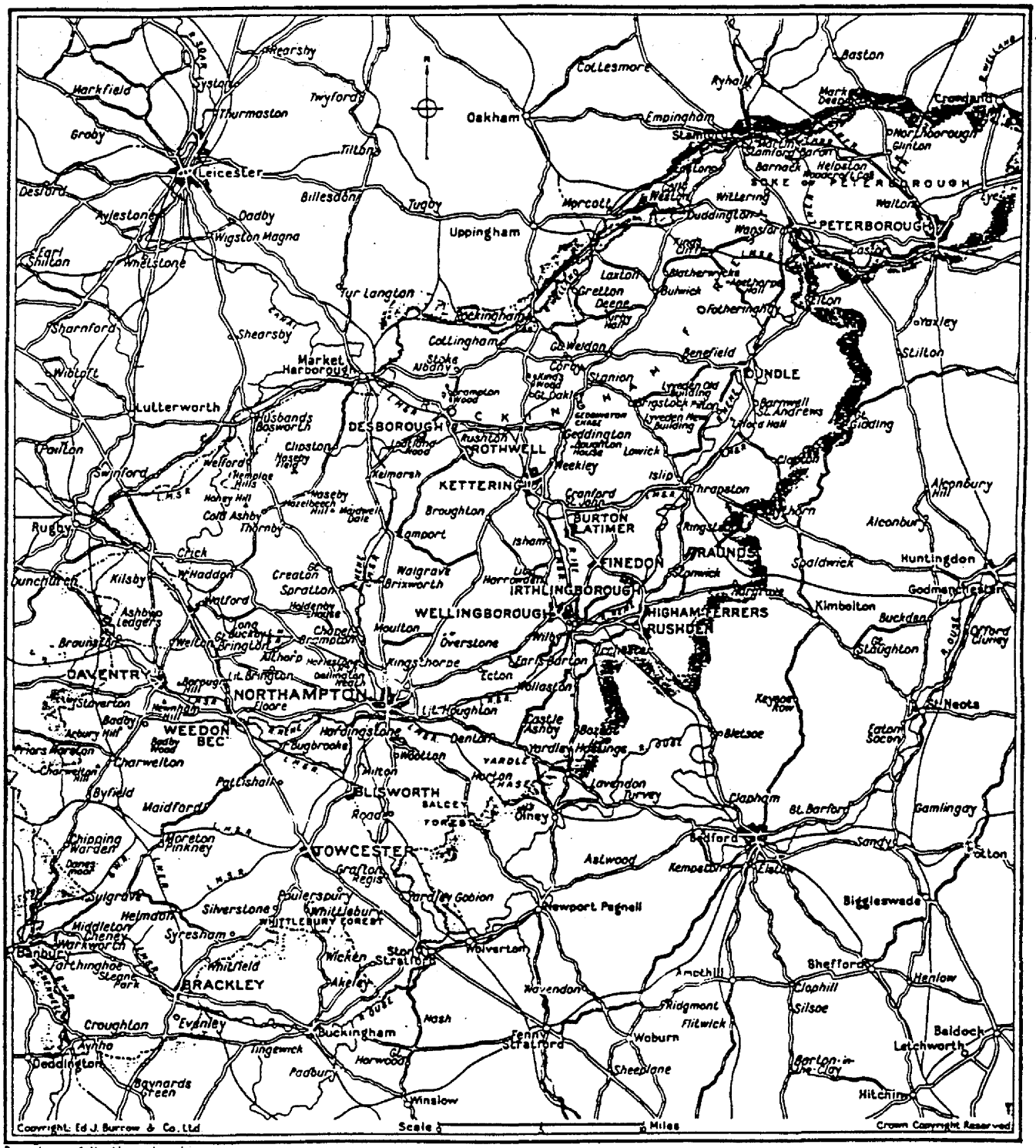




100 MPH	2 MIN. 40 SEC. APPROX.
120 MPH	2 MIN. 15 SEC. APPROX.
140 MPH	1 MIN. 55 SEC. APPROX.
160 MPH	1 MIN. 35 SEC. APPROX.

TIME - DISTANCE TABLE

submitted by
Denzil L. Prather



Boundary of Northamptonshire .....

ROAD AND RAIL MAP OF NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

The following Ordnance Maps cover Northamptonshire: *One-inch Scale*—Popular edition sheets 64, 73, 74, 83, 84, 94. *Half-inch Scale*—Sheets 18, 23, 24, 28. *Quarter-inch Scale*—Sheet 8a (Soke of Peterborough falls on 6a)

THE UNSEEN ARMY

Submitted to ARMY TALKS

by

JOHN NUTT

A bomber base is something like a little mining town back home. Each day a large part of its population sets out on the one big and dangerous job for which it exists. The rhythm of its life, like that of the mining town, follows the pace of the one industry. But there are many on the base who don't set off each day into the air, just as there are many in the town who don't go down into the earth. They are the unseen army at work on a hundred different jobs. For every bomber there are thirty or so men on the base who never fly. Some of them handle the bombs, bombsights, guns, or the ever-growing battery of flying equipment. Some clothe or drive or feed the combat crews. There are many again who have less direct contact with planes or flying, but who are essential to the life of the base and therefore to the success of a mission. The difference between a Group with an outstanding operational record and a run-of-the-mill outfit is as often as not the work of this unseen army and the smoothness of their teamwork with the fliers.

As a Fort or Lib thunders down the runway and heaves its thirty tons into the air, it carries with it the hopes and anxieties, the sweat and cursing, the patience and ingenuity of hundreds of men. It is the streamlined spearhead of months of training and experience, weeks of preparation, hours of planning. Every mission is a campaign, worked out to the last second, to the last man and to the last pound. Every mission is different, with its own problems of weather and target, route and procedure. And yet every mission follows a general pattern from the first stand by warning to the repair of battle damage.

"Stick your nose out the door, Mac, and see if the flag's changed." Before Mac summons up the energy to roll off his bunk, Tex comes in. Yes, the blue flag is now flying, the stand by has become an alert. "What's the time, Joe?" Joe grunts what sounds like ten-thirty. "They'll probably scrub it as soon as we get through," says Tex, "looks like rain." Tex is an armorer and a pessimist. It's nothing new to him to bomb up and unload three times in one night. Mac says nothing. He's asleep again. Why worry? They'll be routed out when they're needed. Sleep while you can, is his motto. Two weeks ago they ran eight missions in eight days and Mac, an air mechanic, averaged four-and-a-half hours sleep a

night, keeping two planes flying.

While Mac and plently of others are hitting the sack, the Operations men are just settling into their stride. Operations at headquarters gradually works up steam. until about 4:15 in the morning, it will rival Grand Central. Right now everyone is waiting for the orders to come through from Division. As soon as the teletype ticks out the details of the mission, the ops phone will start ringing all over the base, bodies will jerk out of bed, jeeps and trucks will roar as the first preparations are made.

A SALUTE TO MECHANICS FROM AN UNKNOWN PILOT:

Here's to the people with the greasy hands,
Who fuel the plane when the pilot lands;
Who fix the canopies and stop the leaks;
Change the tires and oil the squeaks;
Who smooth the scratches and rivets the panels;
Check "loud and clear" on the radio channels;
Who read the write-ups; and make repairs;
Check wires and cables for chafing and tears;
Who pull the chocks and walk the wings;
And do a million maintenance things;
Who watch as the bird takes off and flies;

So here's a salute to the gals and guys
From a group of fliers who seldom ponder
The ones who keep them in the wild blue yonder.

Sumbitted by Storm Rhode--100 BG
Reprinted from "TALL TALES", 8AFHS,
Georgia Chapter.

MANY BRANCHES OF SERVICES WERE NEEDED IN AAF

Although the greater part of the AAF was composed of its own personnel, the troop basis authorized by the War Department for the AAF included large numbers of men from other branches of the Army as well. In April 1943, for example, enlisted personnel from the other arms and services who were assigned to the AAF made up one-quarter of the total enlisted strength of the air arm. In November of that year the AAF was authorized to integrate arms and services personnel into the AAF proper, but the transfer was subject to numerous restrictions and progressed slowly. ASWAAF personnel performed duties which had been traditionally outside the sphere of Air Corps functions, such as those belonging to the Medical, Ordnance, and Finance Departments, the Signal, Engineer, Quartermaster, and Military Police Corps, and the Chemical Warfare Service. Most of the enlisted personnel of these branches were classified as non-specialists and did not attend service schools. Appropriate training for specialists was provided partly by the AAF and partly by the particular branches concerned, but in keeping with the move toward integration of arms and services personnel, the AAF assumed increasing control over their training. If enlisted men, they were usually sent to AAF basic training centers before assignment to units or schools, and after 1943 distinctions in treatment between AAF and ASWAAF personnel were less and less apparent.

Throughout the war the greater part of individual ordnance training for the AAF, particularly that of third and fourth echelon specialists, was conducted by the Ordnance Department. In order to supplement the graduates of the service schools and to provide sufficient numbers of technical personnel for operational training units, the First Air Force instituted its own ordnance training in February 1943. The First Air Force program, taught at two schools, consisted of instruction and practice in ordnance supply procedures, automotive maintenance and operation, small arms, and ammunition supply and issue. Graduates of the course were usually absorbed into ordnance sections of the operational training squadrons. After the middle of 1944 the ordnance program of the First Air Force, being no longer needed, was terminated.

Excerpt reprinted from The Army Air Forces in World War II. Edited by W.F. Craven and J.L. Cate.

During the war, the AAF required four technical specialists for every man who flew. The ratio total ground personnel to flying personnel was nearly seven to one, and for every man actually committed to air combat there were sixteen individuals who served within the AAF on some noncombat assignment.

In the early days of the Air Service, practically all enlisted technicians, whether or not they were concerned directly with the maintenance of aircraft, had been known as airplane mechanics. But as the work of the technicians became more and more specialized, the term "airplane mechanic" was gradually restricted to men who maintained airframes, aircraft engines, and accessories integral to the plane; these accessories included such equipment as propellers, hydraulic and electrical systems, carburetors, and generators. Tehnicians who specialized in such equipment as armament, cameras, and radio devices---equipment not considered strickly as parts of the aircraft---came to be known by special names and were trained in separate programs. The primary responsibility for aircraft maintenance in the AAF during the war belonged to teams of enlisted mechanics, each team working under the direction of a noncommissioned officer called crew chief. Before the war it had been customary for each pilot to supervise the maintenance of his own airplane, but after 1941 this responsibility was assumed by a non-flying squadron engineering officer. Maintenance activities in the squadron were limited to the first and second echelon, that is to say, to regular servicing of aircraft, routine inspections and adjustments, and minor repairs. For the more difficult jobs, including periodic overhauls, the squadrons depended upon depts and sub-depots serving the needs of more than one combat unit for what was officially designated third and fourth echelon maintenance. The distinction between these several levels of service depended in no small part upon a difference in equipment.

During the year 1938-39 fewer than 900 men had been graduated from the basic mechanics course of the Air Corps Technical School at Chanute Field. Between July 1939 and August 1945 graduates of courses in maintenance given by or for the AAF totaled more than 700,000. Although this number includes many who graduated from more than one course, it serves to show the staggering proportions of the maintenance training that had to be provided. When it became apparent in the Spring of 1943, that the demand for mechanics was nearly satisfied and the casualties among ground crews were proving extremely light, the number of trainees was drastically reduced. After June 1943, students were no longer entered in civilian mechanics schools, and the number of factory schools and AAF technical

schools was reduced.

Excerpt reprinted from The Army Air Forces In World War II. Edited by W.F. Craven and J.L. Cate.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

If at first you do succeed---------
Try to hide your astonishment.

.....Anonymous

1077 SIGNAL COMPANY SERVICE GROUP

The following article is reprinted from the Sept. '84 Cheddington Leaflets, the newsletter of the Cheddington (STN 113) Association.

by Bob Downs

In Feb. '44, when the 8th Air Force Composite Command moved from Northern Ireland and the CCRC moved out, the requirement for a signal company was removed, therefore, in a short time a detachment moved to Clutno in N. Ireland to carry out signal duties there as "Det A". The remaining men and officers left Cheddington for their new home at Harrington at 1300 hours on April 2nd, 1944. All arrived safe disputing a well known army fact that for a given number of men moved a short distance, 10% will be lost. The move proved good in that hot running water was close at hand at Harrington and each hut had its own "throne". Mind you they were not all used, as T/5 Emil Gray was reduced to the rank of Private as one night he could not wait and urinated in the doorway of the Military Police Headquarters in Northampton!

A General Order on Dec. 5, 1944 directed the remaining men at Harrington to return to Cheddington so again the 1077 became one unit again.

TIME AND DISTANCE DISTORTS MEMORIES

by

JOHN A. REITMEIER AND ROBERT W. FISH

The following letter from John Reitmeier to Douglas Walker touches on several interesting incidents. It is submitted for its historical value and because it provides some good examples of how time and distance from an incident can impact upon the facts.

* * * * * * * *

11 June 1978

Dear Douglas:

I received your letter today and thought that I would answer while I am in the mood as I'm not too hep on writing these days. Your account was O.K., but how would you like to bail out around a thousand feet? Ha, ha. You know that I dismembered the picture album that my Father kept of my Army travels. Well, I sent some pictures to Serge Blandin in France and also to Phillippe Bailley who was one of three who picked me up. I sent Phillippe a picture of our planes remains and asked that he finally give it to Blandin. The picture was taken by a Pierre Rogert who was boarding in a house in Roanne where I was hiding. Pierre actually saw our burning plane circle North of Roanne before crashing. The next day he rode out and took this picture--the Germans were searching the debris and were eating chocolate that they found while the people and children were watching. He also had pieces of my charred maps--I brought two small ones home and sent them also to Bailley.

I was holding other pictures to send to Corrierre (believing he is an Air Force Historian and collecting Archives?), but I lost his address and am now sending them to you to complete the demolition of my album. About a month ago I received a letter from a Martin W. Bowman of England who is writing and researching for a book--he got my address from Seb Corrierre. He will most likely be at Harrington in the fall. I gave him a picture and the negative of the King and Queen. You know we flew from Harrington down to Tempsford on the afternoons before flying a mission that night as the English loaded our planes. Our crew and a few others were present that day and we were reviewed by the King and Queen as were English crews. The two Princesses reviewed the WAFFS. We were down the line and not in the picture, but anyway we got to be introduced to the King and shake hands with the Queen (now the Queen Mother).

It's a shame that Col. Heflin has his back to the camera, but it's a good picture of the rest and of Maj. Fish. Maybe I shouldn't tell stories out of school, but I wonder if Fish remembers putting his nose wheel through the hanger roof at the end of the runway in Bangor, Me? We were fully loaded and taking off for England, I remember it was a short runway and Benny Mead hit the brakes to turn on the runway and we were going 70 mph. Anyway, the joke was on all of the crews because Fish's plane had all of our B-4 bags. He told the crew to lighten the plane as he circled to land and Tressemer, his navigator, threw all of the baggage except his own over the beautiful pine forests of Maine. After we were at Dunkeswell for about two weeks Col. Heflin asked me one day when I was getting in uniform, but I, along with others, had a good excuse. Ha, ha.

You know Doug, we went over seas as the 22nd Anti-Sub Squadron and were stationed in Dunkeswell, England--near Exeter from where we did patrol duty in the Bay of Biscay. When replaced by the Navy, we were sent to Alconbury with the Pathfinders probably because of our 12 hour over the water flights. Anyway, we ended up as Carpetbaggers. I remember flying two missions with an English crew as they wanted the navigators to get a little doctrination of mission procedure. The crew pictures I am sending were taken while assigned 22nd Anti-Sub Squadron, but all were the originally formed Carpetbagger Squadron. The pilots of these crews were: Major Benny Mead (my crew), Capt. Van Zyle, Capt. Jr. Estes, Col. St. Clair, Col. Boone, Lieuts. "Willie" Stapel, "Pinky" Williams, Claude Cummins, Sanders, Rudolph, Archibald and Schreiner. When I was shot down in May we were not a full squadron--around seventeen planes, and when I returned to England in Sept. Col. Heflin had just left. They said Gen. Degaulle had visited the base the week before and passed out a few French Croix De Guerres--one of which was awarded to Major Benny Mead.

Incidentally, the ranks that I gave were those which the pilots had achieved by Sept. '44. I did forget to mention that I sent Bowman an interesting invitation--maybe you could get a copy from him? When we finally found a home at Harrington we were all sent an invitation to a party which was to celebrate the opening of our Officers' Club. I must have sent it home because it was in the album. Incidentally, the party was a terrific success!!!!

When I read about Jim Heddleson and the area St. Cyr de Valorges I got a strange feeling which I will relate to you. We made a drop in the South of

France and it could have been to the same operator. We went straight in to the drop and everything went O.K. until Benny turned to go on course home. I always told him to turn right or left to avoid the highest ground in the area. John Mead, our Bombardier, always looked out on a level keel to play safe, and all of a sudden he started screaming for Benny to pour on the power while climbing. It's a good thing that he did because when we closed the bombay doors we were on the tree tops. When we got back to base we were all taking pieces of wood and pine branches that were caught in the doors while closing (for souveniers). I checked my maps at briefing and reported that this hill was not on the area map. Could it have been the same place where Jim Heddleson's crew met their destiny?

Well Doug, I guess your tired and bored with reading about now so I'm going to sign off. Thanks for the letter and information. Keep well and I hope you can use the info and pictures.

Sincerely Yours,
/s/ John A. Reitmeier

* * * * * * * * *

John A. Reitmeier
16 Rutgers Dr.
Delran, NJ 08075

Dear John:

Doug Walker sent me a copy of your letter to him which was dated 11 June 1978. I was very pleased to receive your version of my adverse flying incident at Gander Air Base in Newfoundland while enroute to England during WWII. If you have no objections, I plan to use your account of the incident when we publish our book of memories of our Carpetbagger activities.

At the reunion in England in 1987, when I offered to compile this book of memories, I stressed the idea that many of our memories would be dimmed by both embellishment and the passage of time. I consider your memories of my incident at Gander to be a good illustrative example.

I will now chronicle the incident as I recall it.

The night I was scheduled to take off for England many, many other aircraft were similarly scheduled. I must have been about the 20th or 30th plane in the

line up for take off. All of the aircraft, a mixture of B-17's and B-24's, ahead of me, except for five, got airborne before the heavy thunder storm came across the airbase. The storm took about half an hour to move across and depart the area of the base. During that time all take offs were suspended and we shut down our engines and held our place in line.

Prior to the thunder storm, air traffic control had been using the longest runway (7500 ft.). As the storm passed, the wind direction shifted and take offs were changed to a shorter runway (4800 ft.).

When take offs resumed, I watched two B-24's and three B-17's ahead of me take off. They appeared to have no problems getting airborne, although each used all of the runway length.

I was flying the latest model B-24 we had received; one of the first with a nose gun turrent. It was a few pounds heavier than our previous models, but its engines were supposed to put out more power, which theoretically compensated for the added weight.

Even so, I was somewhat concerned about the shorter runway. Based on the weight of my aircraft I had computed that I needed 4400 to 4500 feet of runway to become airborne in a twelve mile per hour wind. I concluded that we had at least a little better than an even chance to make a successful take off.

I next made an erroneous decision. I would attempt the take off because I was damned if I would give anybody an excuse to say that Bob Fish was chicken. I didn't inform my aircrew of this rationale!

What I did not know was that the Canadians had a reveted anti aircraft gun emplacement about 200 feet off the end of the runway I was using. There is always at least one unknown in every situation.

I started my take off role. About halfway down the runway I pushed all four throttles through the turbo supercharger safety stops. That procedure increased the power of the motors significantly. It could be used in emergency situations, but only for a few minutes before the motors would blow off a cylinder.

I became airborne before we ran out of pavement on the runway. As my co-pilot, Dave Love, hit the landing gear retraction switch our nose wheel hit the anti aircraft gun. The nose wheel was knocked back into the airplane and came to rest between the pilot and the co-pilot. We could touch the rubber on the tire.

The contact with the gun threw our airplane probably ten feet higher into

the air. Our engineer, Sgt. Jesperson, was observing our take off from the side window aft of the bomb bay. He reacted very quickly. He came on the interphone and said, "Don't retract the gear; we have large amounts of barbed wire hanging on them and we may never get them down again". Captain Love, my co-pilot, moved the retraction switch to the down position.

By this time we were into the tree tops of the pine forest surrounding the airbase. Our propellors were really cutting off the tree tops. In a few seconds we flew out of the trees and were over Gander Lake where the air was very smooth. We nursed the airplane up to 2000 feet in the smooth air and then we radioed the airport control tower and explained what had happened.

The tower gave us landing instructions but we informed the tower that with the gasoline load we had on board we were very much too overloaded to land. We appeared to be flying O.K. and we wanted to dump some of our weight before attempting to land.

We asked Lt. Tresmer, my navigator, and the other crew members in the rear of the airplane to throw out everything they could to lighten our load. (John, there went your B-4 bag.) I asked Sgt. Jesperson if he could rearrange the hose connections on the bomb bay gasoline tanks so as to be able to pump that gasoline overboard. He did it.

After some two hours of circling over Gander Lake we were ready to land. By this time the overseas flights had all departed. We put all of the crew except the pilot and the co-pilot in the very tail end of the airplane so as to keep the nose of the aircraft off the concrete as long as possible. We knew that the aircraft would be resting on the nose of the fuselage when it came to a stop.

Our engineer, Sgt. Jesperson, had arranged with one of the other crew members, that as soon as the airplane stopped its landing role, he, Jesperson, would drop out of the fuselage and the other crew member would hand him a fire extinguisher. That was very good planning.

The problem was that the other crew member had his finger on the release trigger of the fire extinguisher. Under the tension of the moment when he handed out the fire extinguisher he squeezed. Sgt. Jesperson caught the full force of the discharge of CO_2 right in his face. Our only casualty during the whole incident was the slight frost bite that Jesperson suffered on his nose.

My co-pilot during that incident was apparently a very religious man. He seemed to pray a lot while our travails endured. To this day I have always

suspected that it was more his prayers than my piloting skills that guided us through our perilous situation.

Within a week, the Army Air Forces provided us with a new airplane, B-24 type, and we flew on to England.

Except for my personal bias, I believe this chronicle is a fairly accurate account of what happened. I was there. I was also in the left seat.

With Nostalgia,

/s/ Robert W. Fish

* * * * * * * *

Dear Col. Fish,

I was surprised to hear from you and sorry that our stories differed. However you know how details can change when something is repeated numberable times. Of course I was in Dunkeswell, England by then, patiently awaiting the arrival of my B-4 bag.

If it interests you, I was in the cockpit when we took off from Gander and Benny Meade was sweating out the short runway, in that we were fully loaded. He approached the runway very fast and applied his brakes to aid in turning onto the runway. We were going seventy miles per hour by the time we were lined up on the runway. We completed our take off with plenty of concrete unused.

I hope you have a picture of that inspection line at Tempsford. Our crew was in the line, but not in the picture. However it was very good of you and the King and Queen, but a shame that Colonel Heflin's back was to the camera. I took the picture from my album and sent it to Doug Walker or someone else who was gathering memorabilia about the Carpetbaggers.

Anyway, my letter to Doug Walker reveals how I recall the incident of your take off from Gander Air Base and the incident of my missing clothes. Colonel Heflin did ask me once when I was going to get into the proper uniform.

I wish you success with your book and future good health. It will be enlightening to read about the Carpetbaggers because I never realized that the 801st/492nd Bombardment group grew so much.

I was shot down in May 1944 and upon arriving back at the home base knew mostly only those from the original 22nd Anti-submarine Squadron.

While at the processing center in Atlantic City, New Jersey, I went to

dinner and bumped into Colonels Boone and St. Clair; also Major Tresmer. From the processing center I was assigned to Pueblo Air Force Base in Colorado where I again met Major Meade and Captain Van Zyle. I flew most of my missions with Benny Meade. After the war I tried to locate Benny but to no avail and also Johnny Meade, our bombardier. If you have any information about them I would be most appreciative to hear it.

Sincerely,
/s/ John A. Reitmeier

KING AND QUEEN VISIT TEMPSFORD

Left to right: RAF Aide to the King, King George, Colonel Heflin with his back to camera, Major Fish, RAF Wing Commander Trilsby, Queen Elizabeth, unknown US pilot, three US sergeants, names not known.

SCARLET PIMPERNELS OF THE AIR

Their Assignment was Code-named "Carpetbagging"

by

ALLEN A. MICHIE

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Casual listeners to BBC newscasts to occupied Europe in the long months before V-E Day were frequently surprised to hear announcers say, "Uncle Jean has two shillings in his pocket," or "Tell Marie to wear her galoshes." Such seemingly nonsense was a coded signal to some French underground radio operator, often meaning that a plane would be over a Maquis landing field that night to drop arms and supplies, or perhaps land saboteurs.

Much of Hitler's troubles in occupied Europe came from a secret British-American air force. In Tempsford, a little town in Bedfordshire, there was a road marked "Closed to the Public." The villagers knew it led to an airfield, but the airmen who drank in the local pub were under threat of court-martial if they talked of their job. A few miles away at Harrington, Northamptonshire, some 3,000 US airmen operated another secret airfield. Even administrative officers and groundcrew men weren't told what was going on. When they asked why the B-24 Liberators were painted black, the reply was "for night pathfinding operations."

From these fields two RAF special mission squadrons and the American 492nd Bomber Group delivered arms, ammunition, radio sets, thousands of carrier pigeons, food and sabotage equipment to the undergrounds of Europe. For the Norwegians they dropped skis and sleighs; for the French Maquis, jeeps, bazookas, mortars, bicycles and tires --- made in England but with French trade-marks. These Scarlet Pimpernels of the Air transported hundreds of Allied spies, underground agents, saboteurs and resistance leaders in and out of Europe under the very noses of the Gestapo.

The US 492nd Bomber Group, from the time it began in January 1944 to the war's end in Europe, dropped 4,500 tons of equipment and landed hundreds of agents in France, Belgium, Holland and Denmark. The two RAF squadrons which began operating from Tempsford in February 1942 made their drops in 19 countries from the Arctic Circle to Africa.

Just before and after D Day, these secret air forces dropped "Jedburgh" teams in France --- specially trained teams of American, British and French officers plus a radio operator --- to organize and spark-plug the resistance attacks on German rear communications and supply dumps.

In the operations rooms at Tempsford and Harrington, huge wall maps showed a tiny flag for each drop reception ground and landing field in Europe. There were thousands of flags, from the tip of Norway to the remotest corner of Austria. Hundreds clustered around Paris, Oslo, Copenhagen, Brest and Brussels. There were even drop areas outside Berlin and Hamburg and in the Bavarian mountains, and throughout the war Allied agents parachuted down on them.

In 1942, when Reinhard "The Hangman" Heydrich, ruthless Gestapo boss of Czechoslovakia, was murdered while driving near the Czech village of Lidice, obliterated by the Nazis in reprisal, the world wondered where the killers had come from. They were Czech parachutists who the night before had taken off from Tempsford.

During the last weeks of Germany's fight, Allied columns were pushing with apparent recklessness deep into the Reich. But the Allied commanders knew just what they were doing. Intelligence men dropped by the special air squadrons kept telling them exactly where the Germans were. And when the German radio was still boasting of a last-stand fight to be made in the Bavarian mountain "redoubt," the Allied commanders knew the redoubt was a myth. Dozens of agents dropped into the area reported that there wasn't any redoubt.

In preparation for D Day, the Allied Supreme Command determined to build up a huge backlog of sabotage materials in Festung Europa, and American Liberator squadrons, experienced in long navigational flights because of anti-submarine work, were chosen for the new assignment. The Liberators were painted black, the waist guns were yanked out to give space for packages and a circular opening --- known as the "Joe Hole" --- was cut in the floor through which to make drops. An historically minded Southerner code-named the assignment "Carpetbagging".

A complex chain of organization linked the airfields, the London headquarters, and underground hideouts all over Europe. Local resistance leaders selected the reception fields --- usually farmlands or sports grounds --- and sent the location by secret wireless or by pigeons to an obscure building in a drab London street. There the reception fields were given code names, such as "Bob", "Percy", "Luke". Often reconnaissance aircraft would zip across and photograph the field and surrounding landmarks. When the field was approved,

another colored flag blossomed on the huge wall maps at Tempsford and Harrington, marked with the dates when underground men would be standing by to receive drops.

If a Maquis leader asked London for supplies or arms, a plane was loaded with steel canisters and wicker baskets, with parachutes attached. That evening, a BBC man would say, over the air, "Henri has found two francs." That meant the drop would be made at reception field "Henri" about two in the morning.

Few reception fields had secret radio to guide the planes in. Most drops were made into a boxlike formation of flashlights pointed upward by waiting Maquis. Sometimes the Germans built fake drop areas but they seldom received the cargo because they couldn't give the correct flashlight signal. Often German radar would spot the plane and night fighers would attack it. Two night fighters set an American Liberator afire and wounded the tail gunner and radioman, but the plane staggered home to Harrington, where they counted more than 1,000 bullet holes in it.

The agents dropped were a varied lot, American, British and other Allied officers, French-Canadians, anti-Nazi Germans, young boys, girls and old men. On the afternoon before their flight they were brought to the secret airfields by car. Intelligence men searched them thoroughly - a London bus ticket, an Americar cigarette, would give them away on the Continent --- and then dressers took over. Each agent was clad in a baggy jump suit abundantly fitted with pockets into which went a daggerlike knife, concentrated rations, a flashlight, a first-aid kit, bundles of radio parts, secret maps and papers. One agent even stowed away a phonograph record denouncing Laval which was to be slipped into a Vichy radio program. A rubber cushion was placed in the seat of the suit and rubberized cloth was wound around the agent's feet. Knee-high boots and a rubber crash helmet completed the rig. The agent by now looked like a lumpy mattress.

Approaching the drop zone, the agents would slide along the floor to the "Joe Hole" and on a light signal from the pilot would drop into darkness below. One German was dropped five times, once dressed as a German colonel, again as a lieutenant, later as a corporal and twice as a civilian.

Since the underground needed more material than could be dropped by parachute, it was decided that heavy planes carrying large loads must land behind the German lines. Flying antiquated single-engined planes, which could land on a 150-yard strip of rough ground, RAF pilots had already been putting down and taking off from France with a couple of agents each trip; larger aircraft were a bigger problem. The British practiced with Hudsons until they could land in 450 yards

and the Americans decided to use C-47 Dakota transport planes. A month after D Day, Colonel Clifford Heflin set his C-47 down in a half-harvested wheat field in southern France. Tne waiting Maquis quickly uprooted trees and replanted them around the C-47 so that it was invisible to the Germans and 48 hours later, after having been wined and dined, Colonel Heflin took off for Harrington with two American airmen, a Canadian gunner, an RAF navigator, a British agent, a young French girl and a Frenchman to attend a sabotage school.

When a Hudson bogged in a French field, enthusiastic Maquis mustered 200 men, ten oxen and four horses and in four hours had the big plane on firm ground. An American C-47 nosed over landing in France on a flashlight flarepath. Mechanics were flown over from Harrington and in a few days had the plane serviced for the return trip.

The leader of the Danish resistance movement told the fliers at Tempsford that 90 percent of the arms and equipment dropped was reaching underground hands and being put to immediate use. The agent in the Lyons area was brought out to Harrington to tell the Americans that in the month previous his Maquis had killed 1,000 Germans with the arms dropped from the air.

On a plain granite memorial near the French village of St. Cyr de Valorges is carved this inscription: "In memory of five American airmen found dead under the debris of their aircraft, shot down in flames at this place April 28, 1944, whose mission was the parachuting of arms to our secret army for the liberation of France and the restoration of our ideal." That simple monument to five unknown warriors of the Anglo-American special air squadrons will stand in history as a symbol of the gratitude of the free peoples of Europe for their help.

NOTES FROM AN ABBREVIATED

DIARY

by

BOB BOONE

10-22-43 Squadron at Dunkeswell ceases operations today. Bob and Cliff off to confer on what happens next.

10-23-43 Nothing doing all day.

10-24-43 Bob and Cliff off again for a conference---home by dinner time--- I'm to pack and leave tomorrow---Where?---To do what?---I don't know.

10-25-43 Here we are, me and my aircrew---I know now---its not for my diary.

10-26-43 Busy today looking at equipment, getting an idea of our work---looks beautiful---We are the only Americans here---Good food---Batman to shine my shoes, bring hot water, make my bed, etc. (We are at Tempsford of course.)

10-27-43 Started work at 9:00 a.m.---it is socked in, so we saw "GEE", "DRC", "BABBS", "LORAN"---What sweet equipment---our modified A-1 seems to be better than "LORAN". I heard about their Rebecca but haven't seen it yet.---Talked over our long range in B-24's with a Polish pilot---we get good results---on last flight we got 142 gallons per hour consumption rate. Also looked at S-2 kits, maps, etc. What an organization! 400 targets to pick from according to the weather.--- Flak areas are drawn in to the last detail. Also saw chutes, Joes, nickles.---Viewed briefing and waiting rooms.---We are to be trained-given a couple of flights-lay the ground work for our own program. My crew will prepare all others for operations-including instructions on new equipment-new methods. Glad we have such a great crew. Freddie Edwards is a hell of a navigator. Charlie Shull is a crazy but talented guy and will teach map reading with Freddie. Archie is a rock and is good at instruction. Rest of crew headed by Sammy Braudt are also very capable in their specialties. I will ride first time or two with each crew for training purposes. We are to be redesignated the 104th Bombardment Squadron (H)---We will work from Alconbury Air Base, APO634, we are to get new airplanes, B-24's, stripped for our work-no nose turrets.---Not necessary for this work. It has been recommended that we take out the radar, the side guns, the armour plate, oxygen, slick and camera mechanisms. We knocked off work at

4:00 p.m.-had tea at 4:30-so will put on a blouse and play hearts with the gang until dinner time which comes at 7:00 p.m. I gave my crew a pass from 3:00 today until 9:00 a.m. tomorrow morning. They will head for Bedford.

10-29-43 Missed writing anything for 10-28-43, easily explained, was drunk last night with Freddie, Charlie and Archie. Didn't feel good this morning. Talked last night with Phillipe Livery, a French navigator. He has flown 97 missions in cloak and dagger-quite a man, big, good looking, about 45, family still in France-he flew over his home 8 times last moon period. Saw a party going on at his house on one of those times-was furious-mad as hell. We met a new roommate, Rus from Rhodesia, he is miffed at British soldiers for living with black women in his homeland. He swiped a can of salmon, head of cheese, case of beer from the mess. We had a feast in our barracks before bedtime. During evening I talked with boys from Australia, Hong Kong, Uganda, Poland-Very interesting-One Pole just got back from a forced landing in Sweden, was treated well.

10-30-43 Flew one hour in Halifax LW 272 today. Made two drops. Four of our crews came in today-showed them around-were they surprised!? Going to get Mead's B-24 in tomorrow and will give each crew a couple of day time and night time drops. My ship still has bays and carriers in. Sullivan went up to Alconbury. Had a game of snooker with Edwards, Shull and Tresemer.

11-01-43 Bad weather again. Walked to the line with Bob Fish to see what was doing-nothing-looked for Cliff but he didn't come in. Spent rest of day indoors playing snooker, hearts, reading newspaper, listening to radio. War news looks very good. Morale high in Britain due to Moscow Conference and trap in Crimea. We look forward to operations with the British for the next moon period, then possibly an organization of our own with a split in the squadron to form a group-means I might make a little more money.

11-03-43 I was in operations, about to take off for Alconbury to bring back a B-24 that was to have come in yesterday, when I heard the tower clearing two B-24's for landing. It was Bob and Cliff, each bringing in a ship. We had the first operation on our new mission tonight with a British crew in a Halifax.

11-04-43 One of our planes is missing. Jimmie Estes didn't come back last night.

Here's the story. Eight of us went out, one to each of 8 Halifaxes, five pilots and four navigators. Targets were all in France. Mine was 15 containers and one Joe, a German. I had a long talk with him on the way back as we were unable to drop him due to weather. He was in the uniform of a German army corporal-had a 9mm lugar, a 6-35 Spanish automatic, French chocolate, etc. This was his third trip. He told me about his home life. Due to bad weather we were diverted to Tangmere, a huge RAF fighter base. Didn't land until 3:00 a.m.-ate ham and chips for breakfast-to bed at 5:00 a.m. and up at 11:00 a.m.-flew back to Tempsford at 2:00 p.m. We avoided flak last night-saw no fighters-crossed the coast at 6000 feet.

11-10-43 Had my second mission the other night. It was twofold, the first part being a drop of eight containers which we accomplished (the lights-3 in a row, red-and a white light blinking "L"), the second part, a drop of seven containers and a "Joe"-second part was not able to perform due to very low clouds reaching right to the ground. The drops, by the way, are done at 230 mph and 400 feet-very touchy flying in the dark-but a thrill! The "Joe" was a young Frenchman about 19. He couldn't speak English--was so relieved when we couldn't drop him that he wanted to talk--so I asked him how he felt. "No understand," he said. I tried recalling my French, "Comment allezvous?" "Trez bien, merci," he replied. "Vous parlez Francais, n'est pas?" I said, "Oui monsieur." He answered and then came a series of questions and statements by each of us about France-his home, America-my home, my wife and "bebe". Much of the time I was saying, "quesque c'est?" or "new comprend pas"---but we got along very well and he seemed to understand me quite well.

11-14-43 The next two nights were a riot. We went to "Pops", which was a pub. What dirty songs the RAF people know---"Mr. Minglestein", "Salomey"-and scads of others including "Roll Me Over". Jeff Pitt (S/1) and a whole bunch of British boys went along. I was the only American in the group, but that didn't bother any of us.

The next night we went into Bedford and I joined a Key Club which was for British officers. Each member paid 5 pound 2 shillings for a year's membership and got a key to enable members to get in. Pitt came along, and Bob Fish, Tresmer, Freddie and Mac (an Englishman)

came out of the club and found our jeep gone. The MP's had taken it, we were parked illegally!

Oh yes, the King and Queen visited Tempsford. What a great thing that was! We all turned out in ranks by aircrews. We had six crews there. Cliff introduced me (us) to the King and Bob Fish introduced us to the Queen. King George asked how long we had been there, how we liked England, how many aircrews we had, how we happened to have been picked for our job, and how old was I. The Queen asked where my home was, and mentioned what wonderful work we were doing. After meeting them we had tea with them.

11-16-43 During the last few days I have been training the other crews, flying sometimes both day and night. Got news from Cliff today that he is traveling to London upon orders that the squadron is to be split into two squadrons. That's great news---It means I might get a squadron and more pay and more rank.

11-25-43 This is the last entry in the diary. I was next sent to Burtonwood to over see the modifications on our airplanes. I arrived in Burtonwood last Sunday the 20th. I have been busier than hell, but have had a great time of it. I'm on the line from 8:00 in the morning until 5:00 p.m.-sometimes much later. Major Arnold, the Chief of Maintenance on the field, gave me authority to direct the work as I saw fit, ask for any thing I need and take all the short cuts I want. Some one must have told him to give us priority-Cliff or Bob Fish or maybe somebody higher.

The boys in the hanger stop me and asked questions about the modifications on our planes. I have been asked to inspect every damn part on the engines, asked if they should change a cracked supercharger, a leaky prop., a busted bomb bay door, a split rim and dozens of other things. Makes me feel good but inadequate with no engineering training. The work is going well. Had a meeting with Major Saper, Major Arnold, and Major Parkhurst (who with Mr. Williams is in charge of experimental modifications). I showed them how I thought the instrument panel should be changed because we would rely heavily on instrument flying. Mr. Williams, who is a British civilian, and Major Parkhurst were a great help, agreeing with me. There was no problem with the others who said, "You've got to fly them and if that

is how you want it, that's what you get."

I have been advised by Capt. D.E. Williams and Lt. Poulsen, who are in charge of the hanger where our aircraft are being modified that they must have confirmation of the work done. So I called Cliff and told him what I had done and he said, "You're the one who went to instrument flight school so I'll advise them that all of your changes are approved." God bless him.

We worked our fannies off trying to get the "Joe" holes right. These guys are smart and nothing stumps them for long. They engineered the whole thing beautifully, and took great pains setting the strong points for the 'chute static lines. They took great care in the hinging of the "Joe" door and smoothing of the metal shroud in the hole itself.

It seemed such a waste to yank out all the oxygen equipment, armour plating and machine guns, but they are useless for our mission and the more we lighten the aircraft the more speed we will pick up and the more maneuverable we will be over the target area.

There seems to be a page missing from this diary but this is all I have.

NOTE BY BOB FISH:

Bob Boone, if we had known you were keeping an abbreviated diary you would have been put in a padded cell for the duration. But because I am compiling this memory book I am glad you didn't get caught with it. It adds much to our story!

CALLING THE SHOTS

by

BOB FISH

One of the unusual procedures of the 801/492nd Carpetbagger Group was the almost total control of the operation exercised by the Group Commander. This varied greatly from the procedures followed in laying on routine bombing mission by other units of the 8th Bomber Command. For the 8th Air Force bombing mission's higher headquarters elected the targets, forecast the weather, designated the take off times, designated the routes to the targets and the routes to return to the home bases.

In the Carpetbagger operations the Group and Squadron commanders exercised the control decisions. The local Harrington weather section forecasted the weather. The Group and Squadron commanders picked the targets. The individual crews selected their routes and altitudes into and away from the targets. The Group Commander decided when to scrub a mission and when to fly.

The weather forecasters at Harrington consisted of two officers and a master sergeant. One of the officers contributed a mathematical background, while the other contributed a weather technicians viewpoint. The master sergeant brought a long-term, down to earth, practical experiences to the team. Experience early on in the Carpetbagger operation convinced me that when these three technicians agreed on a forecast that forecast could be relied upon.

Weather in England in the winter months is a curse against aviators. Fronts roll across England, often only fifty miles apart. Operable weather between fronts may exist for as little as half an hour at a time. Our weather forecasters had to tell us when that operable weather would be at certain bases to assure our aircrews of a place to land when they returned to England from a mission. Many times we sent out missions knowing that they could not land at their home base when they came back to England. But we always had at least three or four bases which they could use as alternates. These situations worked hardships on our flight crews but they did allow us to complete important missions.

I remember one period during the horrible winter weather of 1944-45. The weather was so bad that the entire 8th Bomber command remained on the ground for three days. My 492nd weather people forecasted that we would have at least three air bases in England that would have weather conditions which would permit our aircraft to land. I decided to fly.

As soon as I called British Air Defense Command to secure clear flight paths for our aircraft I got a call from 1st Air Division asking if I knew what the forecast weather conditions would be at the time we were coming home. I explained that I did. I further explained that our flights were by individual aircraft as compared to the great mass flights used by Bomber Command. This allowed us to operate in weather that would ground their large mass flights. They thought I was taking a big chance.

We flew and all our aircraft had a place to land when they got back to England.

The next night we followed the same routine. Again I got the calls from higher headquarters. Again we flew and again we had places to land in England.

The third day dawned with the same type of weather forecasts. Again our forecasters said we would have places to land. I was beginning to feel a lot of pressure. On the two previous nights we had completed the most urgent requirements. This third night I concluded that the previous two nights we had been fortunate. On this third night I lost my confidence. I cancelled all our proposed flights.

The following morning I learned that there were air bases that were open. We could have flown.

ON BASE

(The following is reprinted from the pamphlet "Army Talks for the Eighth Air Force" which was written in 1945. The bomber base described is an actual base and the incidents are a part of its history. "On Base" is more than a true story. It is an account which typifies life and work as it existed on scores of American heavy bomber stations in England.)

"What did you do over in Europe?" "I was in the Eighth Air Force." "Oh, how exciting! What did it feel like, flying over Germany?" "Ma'am, I didn't fly over German, or anywhere else. I stuck around our base in England."

"Do tell me what it was like."

Well, what is it like? You could tell them about your job, about the guys in the outfit, and chow and so on. But when you come to think of it, life on a bomber base is hard to describe. It's hard to give the feeling of being tucked away in the peaceful English countryside and yet living at the heart of the

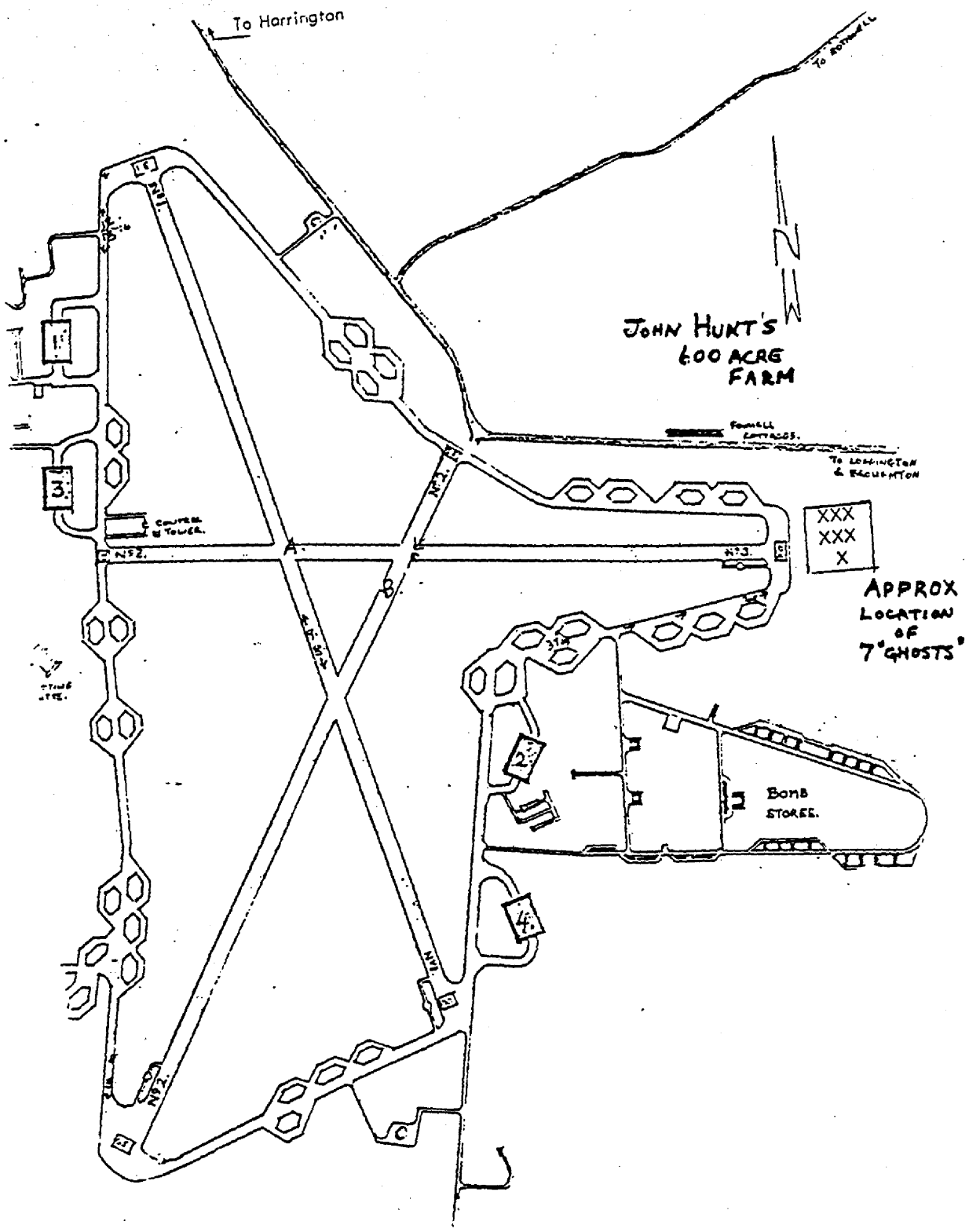
aerial assault on Germany. That is perhaps the strangest thing about a bomber base--its contrasts. For a week straight you may be sweating your guts out day and night, and then for several days you are sitting around wondering when the weather will clear. In most jobs everything happens at once and then you're waiting for the next piece of trouble to come up.

There are plenty of other contrasts on the base. Your jeep may be held up by a lumbering wagon on its way to a three hundred year old farmhouse just off the perimeter track, and surrounded by the newly erected temporary buildings of war; there is a haphazard air about the winding roads, the cluster of huts, the parked planes, and yet they form a careful and economical pattern. The Nissen huts, hangers and tents give the impression of a western mining camp, yet they house precision instruments whose details are still secret, equipment worth hundreds of thousands of dollars. Strangest of all is the contrast between the sleepy countryside and the vast machine of destruction which reaches out day after day to the heart of enemy territory.

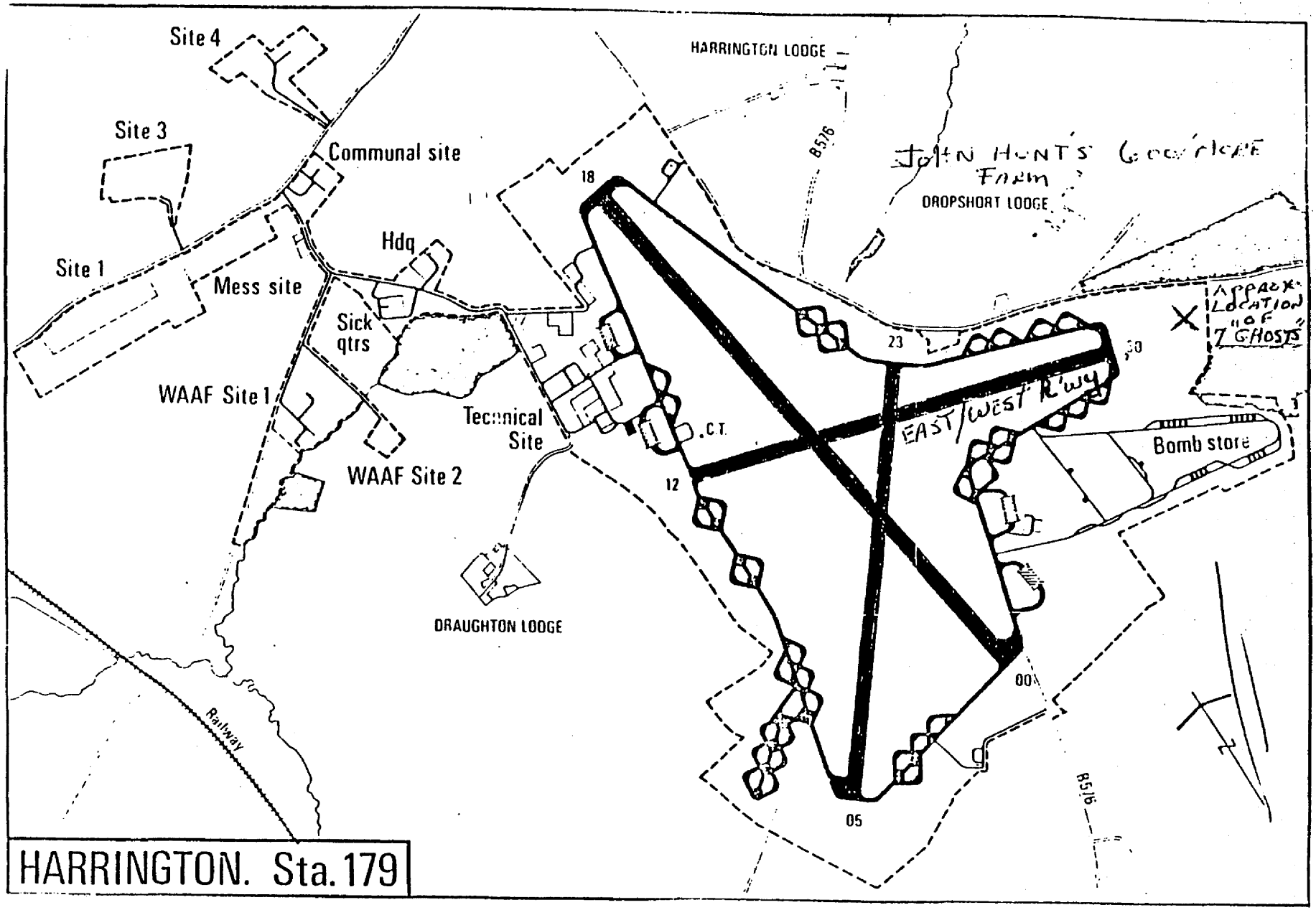
The bomber base is the striking arm of the Eighth. Although less than a third of its men fly the planes, everyone on the field, whatever his job, shares in the victories and losses of heavy bombardment. Everyone hears the earth-shaking roar of the planes as they thunder into the sky. Where are the boys headed for this time? A quick job on the Rhine to help out the Ground Forces? A long zig-zag course to an East German aircraft plant? The synthetic oil plants at Merseberg --- one of the toughest flak belts in Europe? When the heavies touch down again more than three thousand minds frame the same questions again --- how did they make out? Could they see the target? Is everyone back safely?

The tough jobs which didn't work out so well disappoint the men on the line and the office workers as well as the combat crews. When the returning fliers grin from ear to ear as the planes taxi to the hardstands, everyone brightens up. The ground crew swell with pride at a bull's eye job and the Group, from the control tower to the bomb dump, catches the spirit. At times like that you know that your part in this war counts for something.

Submitted by John A. Nutt



HARRINGTON AIR BASE


Site 4
Site 3
Site 1
Communal site
Mess site
Hdq
Sick qtrs
WAAF Site 1
WAAF Site 2
Technical Site
DRAUGHTON LODGE
HARRINGTON LODGE
DROPSHORT LODGE
John Hunt's Goodmore Farm
Approx. Location of 7 Ghosts
East/West R'wy
Bomb store
C.T.
18
23
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B576
Railway
HARRINGTON. Sta. 179

AS I REMEMBER
as told by
EDDIE ALBERS

I was one of the crews that came to the 801st from the original 492nd (H) BG. My original crew trained at Boise, ID. Then flew a brand new B-24 from Lincoln, NE., to Manchester, NH., to Goose Bay, Labrador, to Iceland and on to Valley, Wales and left the new plane. Then to N. Ireland for more gunnery training. Then to the 492nd Base at North Pickenham, England. On the eve of June 5, 1944, we flew three missions as a crew. Then while our pilot was hospitalized, the ill-fated mission to Politz, Germany was called on 20 June 1944. Five flight personnel from our crew were called to fill positions on other crews. Twelve planes from our squadron departed with the group. Twenty minutes from the target one plane developed engine trouble and turned back. Ten minutes after the plane left and ten minutes before the target, German fighters attacked and shot down all eleven remaining planes. Without a crew I didn't fly for approximately a month. Then I was assigned to Lt. Hamilton's crew as a replacement engineer and top gunner and flew 10 missions of heavy bombardment with them before the group was broken up because of very high losses. Some squadrons were sent to other groups to join their bomb squadrons. Our squadron was sent to the 801st (Prov.) at Harrington.

I remember many missions I flew with Lt. Hamilton's crew and I also kept a log. One I especially remember...as we taxied out for take off, I noticed two of the small lights above the windshield were on, which would indicate two of the prop control switches were sticking instead of returning to neutral or off. I called this to the co-pilot's attention by telling him to watch the switches. Our bomb load was eight 1,000 lb. bombs with 2,400 gals. 100 octane gas aboard. Our target was a bridge on the outskirts of Paris. After a good take off and sufficient altitude the pilot called for reduced power. The co-pilot worked the switches to increase pitch and reduce RPM. Shortly after I glanced out the right cockpit and the ground was getting closer, and looking at the gauges, one engine on each wing was wind-milling at 1000 RPM and should have been turning about 2400 RPM. I bumped the co-pilot and asked him what was the matter with those engines. We both had forgotten about the switches, which brought the props to hig pitch, low RPM. The pilot called for more power and the co-pilot worked the switches to high RPM-low pitch. Just about then we chopped the top out of a tree with the left inboard prop. We continued on our mission to Paris. Because of poor visibility we did not drop

our bombs but brought them back.

June 27th, 1988 I returned from New York where 7 members of Lt. Hamilton's crew (my second crew) had a reunion on June 25th at the Viscount Hotel. It was the first time some of the members had seen one another in 43 and 44 years. It was a grand reunion.

I enjoyed our Memorial Reunion in England. I thought things were planned quite well and was gratified to see the participation and hospitality of the English people. An English gentleman from near Kettering looked me up because he found out a man from Montana was in the bunch. He had been in the US to visit a daughter who lives at Washington, D.C. He also has relatives living near Livingston, MT. We met again at the hotel the night of the banquet. Bill Williams, the bombardier on my second crew, and I asked him how we could get to N. Pickenham and he said, "I will take you". The next morning about 10:00 a.m. he picked us up at the hotel and drove us and Bill's wife to N. Pickenham. It was about a 2 hour drive one-way. He wouldn't hear of us paying him. It was great to see the area of the Old Base. Most everything has been torn down. A few old Nissen huts still stood in wrecked condition. The main runway was still there being used as a base for a turnkey operations building.

BULLET HOLE PATCHERS

ROLAND L. ROUSSEAU

Ground Personnel

850/857th Bomb. Squad.

CARPETBAGGERS

Sheet Metal Crew: (L-R) Howard W. Willson; Joseph C. Firko; Alfred H. Wiesner; Roland L. Rousseau; Walter Levine.

Don Rousseau photos

Perhaps some of the flight crews of the 850/857th Bomb. Sqdn. may remember Roland Rousseau, one of the maintenance men on the Base at Harrington. His MOS number was 555, meaning sheet metal maintenance, which was an important job to the flying crews in keeping their planes in the air. You can appreciate the difficulty of their job when you realize that in just one aircraft (B-24D Plane No. 294) came back to the base with over 1,000 holes shot in it. What with the sheet metal shortage, the men shown in the photo above, using great ingenuity, scrounged tin cans from the mess hall to patch and repair the aircraft.

Roland is now deceased but according to his son, Don, was very happy in his last weeks to have found our Association and was looking forward to getting involved in his old "Bomb Group" from Harrington and possibly locating some of his buddies in the photo. Don is compiling a scrapbook of his dad's wartime activities, especially his time at Harrington and asks if anyone who knew his father or kniowledge of his friends or work to please contact him. Mr. Don Rousseau, 724 North Lincoln Ave., Lakeview, Mi 48850.

STONED PROPELLERS

by

BOB FISH

At one time during the winter of 1944-45 we were using more propellers than any other group in the U.K. The Deputy Chief of Staff for Material at 1st Air Division became very concerned that the European Theather of Operations would run out of B-24 propellers. He sent an inspector to Harrington to ascertain the reason for our high propeller utilization rate. It was determined that the propellers were picking up stones and gravel that had been tracked onto the taxi ways. The stones striking the propellers rendered the props unsafe for continued use.

It was determined that the stones were brought onto the taxi ways when the truck drivers got off the paved surfaces of our very narrow roads. The ground was rain soaked and muddy. Gravel sized stones stuck to the mud on the truck wheels, and then fell on the taxi ways where the aircraft propellers picked them. Wherever a stone struck a propeller it made a dent. Dents led to propeller failures. A propeller failure in flight was an undesirable incident.

Warnings to our truck drivers did not solve our problem. Our rate of prop damaged remained unacceptably high. It was so high in fact that the Commanding General of 1st Air Division called and told me to get it under control or he would get a new Group Commander. He got my attention!!!

We held a special staff meeting to determine a course of corrective action. No one came forth with a sure cure. There seemed to be no way to keep the truck wheels out of the mud. Every truck driver we interviewed adopted the altitude that it wasn't he, it was somebody else. That left me in the hot seat.

My reaction was that we must apprehend the offending drivers. How? We didn't have enough MP's to patrol all of the roads all the time. There had to be another way.

That is when I decreed that we would dig a ditch on both sides of each roadway on the base. We would dig those ditches about eighteen inches deep. The ditches would serve as a trap for any careless driver who allowed his wheels to get off the pavement.

The troops who had to dig the ditches didn't like it. The truck drivers didn't like it. Whenever a driver dropped a wheel into one of those ditches it required a wrecker to get him out.

That approach worked. Our consumption of B-24 propellers dropped to a very acceptable limit. I retained my job as Group Commander!!

DR. PAUL J. GANS IS COURT-MARTIALLED

Reported by

BOB FISH

During the period of late autumn 1944 we had several minor court-martial cases that were rejected by higher authorities for procedural reasons. I imagine that Colonel Heflin was receiving some flak from higher headquarters about these rejections. Anyway, he called me to his office and directed that I hold some training sessions about how to conduct a court-martial and thereby train our key officers on the approved procedures. I was faced with the problem "how do I go about this task?"

It occurred to me that holding routine classes where I lectured on proper procedures would be a dull waste of time. Most of our officers were more concerned about winning a war than they were about court-martialling their delinquents. I had to do something that would get their attention and that would teach at the same time.

I talked to Col. Heflin about it and he concurred. We would hold a mock trial. But we would have to build a case. Who should we try. We reviewed all of the incidents we could recall that had occurred over the past month. Surely somebody had screwed up some how. While we were searching for a culprit a message was delivered to Col. Heflin announcing the promotion of our Group Surgeon, Captain Paul J. Gans to the rank of major.

That message focused our attention on Doc. Gans. Why not court-martial him?

We had a good case. A week earlier, a dance had been held on the base at Harrington. Doc. Gans had used two of his ambulances to carry some U.S. Army nurses from a nearby army hospital to Harrington base so they could attend that dance. Col. Heflin, as the base commander, had the authority to authorize the use of government vehicles for recreational purposes. He had done so on prior occasions. Only this time Doc did not request the use of the Colonel's authority. He just assumed that he had permission based on prior incidents.

This situation provided us with a good basis for an exemplary court procedure. Only a few key personnel were privy to the fact that this court-martial would be a training vehicle. All of the procedures and paper work were prepared to be real authentic.

On the appointed day of the court-martial I convened the court at the stated time. Doc had received his summons a few days before. The officers and non-commissioned officers who were my student trainees were assembled by order of the CO, as observers. Just before we started the trial I briefed them on the fact that what they were about to witness was a training procedure for them. Then we brought Doc. Gans into the courtroom.

For the first hour of the court's proceedings Doc thought it was a joke on him. By the time we were well into the second hour Doc was beginning to get worried. Maybe this wasn't a joke. It was becoming quite evident that he had used governement transportation illegally. By the end of the second hour big beads of pespiration were beginning to appear on his forehead. He was worried. Maybe this wasn't a joke. He knew he was guilty and he knew that we had proved he was guilty.

After two and a half hours we completed the procedures of his case. I found him guilty as charged and sentenced him to be promoted to the rank of major. By this time it took him a few seconds to realize that it was all a mock trial. Then he was able to produce a big smile.

As a closing gesture I pinned his major's insignia on his uniform and congratulated him for his promotion.

Dr. and Mrs. Gans, 1989

Paul and Isabell Gans, 1942

Gans' celebrate 50th anniversary

Dr. and Mrs. Paul Gans will celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary June 22 at a family gathering in their home in Lewistown.

Isabell Brown came to Lewistown in 1935 after graduating from the University of Montana with a degree in history. She moved into the Calvert Hotel and began teaching history, typing and bookkeeping at Fergus High School.

Paul Gans graduated from the University of Minnesota medical school and moved to Lewistown in 1937. Living at the Calvert Hotel, he practiced medicine at the Attix Clinic and later at the Doctors Building.

The couple met at an Elks Club dance and were married June 22, 1939 at St. Francis Xavier Catholic Church in Missoula. Mrs. Gans ended her teaching career that year and has been active in church and civic activities in Lewistown.

Dr. Gans served in the Army and Army Air Corps from 1941 to 1945. In 1979, he retired from his private medical practice and continued to serve as County Health Physician for several years.

The couple has traveled in the Orient, Europe and throughout the United States. They have five children and three grandchildren.

TALK ABOUT A PARTY!!

Prologue by

ROBERT L. BOONE

I recently visited with an old friend and mentioned that I had been contacted by our old group. "You mean that great outfit that threw the party you flew me to and that crazy man flew me back to the wrong Whitechurch?", he wanted to know. "Same one," I told him, "and since you have such a fantastic memory why don't you tell it like it like it happened and I'll send it to our newsletter. They might even publish it."

So --- here you are. When we're with a bunch of old college friends and are slightly gassed someone is bound to ask for the Whitechurch story, and Laurie obliges. Those were indelible years.

* * * * * * * * * * *

Congratulations!!, "Carpetbaggers", on your survival and spirit to come together in Las Vegas in 1988. Forty-three years after your invaluable service to this nation, the 801st/492nd BG should be memorialized.

I was only with you at Harrington for two days, and as an AWOL Infantry officer at that, but that visit remains a fond recollection of you wonderful guys who eased our way onto the Continent and across Europe to victory.

Your LTC Robert Boone and I were friends in grammar school through college. It was inevitable that when my headquarters, Ninth Army, arrived in Bristol to await "The Invasion", I would seek out Bob.

It wasn't easy. Our Signal Section furnished me a string of network codes from Conquer to ---- and I progressed north, shouting through the weakening sound, to arrange a rendezvous, although my unit was restricted to the immediate area.

Boone and co-pilot flew a "24" to Whitechurch, the airport near Bristol, to bring me back up to Harrington for your celebration, scheduled because there were no missions. There had been a delivery of whiskey and meat from "near-by" Ireland and local girls were coming to dance.

The pickup was perfectly timed, and a good thing too, because the aircraft touched down just as my jeep delivered me to the field but Bob was out on the tarmac as I approached, giving me the "hurry up" signal---his wheels were sinking into the not-so-hard standing.

But my friend took off and climbed out of what I didn't know was an all too short runway. In about an hour we arrived at the base. This still-to-see

combat infantryman was impressed, being where you "glamour boys" had been attacking from for months.

I noted, at once, the well stocked bar and the relaxed clientele'; guys that looked like kids rather than Clark Gable or Jimmy Stewart. Bob, however, pointed out several of your mates who had performed more heroically than any screen scenario (like the two who made it down on one parachute).

On to the party. Some "clown", I think his name was Rudy, cut off my uniform tie at the door to the hall where the big band sounds were tenderizing the dance couples. Still, at about 2000 hours, when the whistle blew to announce it was time for the ladies to board Colonel Fish's trucks, the entire out front meadow seemed to rise from it as one sheet of British general issue blouses.

I, the conventional army officer, was startled to be awakened when Boone's orderly entered the Quonset the next morning and ordered, "Hey, Boone!! Get your ass out of the sack", while offering a pail of cold water to my friend to soak his head in.

After a great, late breakfast in the mess, we were about to continue the party with libations, (Hair of the dog) when word came down that there would be a mission that evening which involved Boone's command and Boone. I was not only AWOL but SOL for a timely return to Bristol.

Bob rose to the situation by securing a command aircraft to be flown by a Lt. Kelly, who had been grounded for some reason not made known to me and there was a co-pilot/navigator. We took off and then I told the map reader to lay a course for "Whitechurch". However, Kelly first circled your base and expressed his bad feeling by buzzing Colonel Heflin's quarters, very low and very loud, to interrupt a meeting.

We flew and we flew before landing at dusk. I hurried Kelly off to get them back by dark and walked over to the tower marked "Whitechurch". When I asked the RAF airman on duty if he could provide transportation to Bristol his eyebrows shot up and his mustache bristled. "Do you know where you are, Sir?", he asked. "Of course," I replied, "this is Whitechurch." The "Limey" came right back, "But, Sir, there are seventeen Whitechurchs in England and you are now 300 kilometers from Bristol." Our navigator had picked a place 150 kilometers north rather than the one 150 kilometers south!

Fortunately, we were close to the city of Leeds where the North-South railroad passed through about 2200 hours. The train was loaded with people returning from holiday and I stood up, hanging on, for nine hours, arriving at Bristol at

0700 hours and reported just in time to take my men for a five mile run over the moors.

Being young, I got through the day but when I called my Bristol lady friend that evening, I found myself shaking so much that I had difficulty getting those big coins into the telephone slots. I never felt worse and the medic pronounced that I had para-pneumonia, after first erasing the suspicion that I was malingering in the face of the coming invasion.

Bob and I have told this "war story" many times and they like the way Bob and I convey the humor of free spirits, cast into the disciplined structure of the military, where so many bad things can happen that we can even laugh at the small misfortunes of others, in this instance, me.

Seriously, the "escapade" was worth every day I spent in the hospital. The wind blows, hauntingly, across the base at Harrington but I can remember it in its "Glory Days" when you showed so much courage and devotion to duty. So, be proud survivors and have a great time at Las Vegas.

Convivially yours,
Laurence W. Dickey
Lt. Col. USA Inf. Ret.

REFLECTIONS OF A MORE SERIOUS NATURE

by

FRANK J. MILLER

The story to be related is one that has been told to only a few and only one other small group. That group was my Sunday School class, a couple of years after my discharge from the Air Force.

I have never been what some people would call a very religious person, and have never felt it was necessary for me to be present every time the church doors were open as long as I tried to live by the "Golden Rule". On this particular Sunday our lesson was about the Holy Spirit. After our teacher had finished the lesson, she asked if anyone had what might be conceived as a Holy Spirit experience. I felt compelled to tell the class of my experience.

Before joining the Carpetbagger group at Harrington I had completed ten daylight bombing missions with the original 856th Sqd., 492nd Bomb Group at North Pickenham. It was during that period the following took place.

Our crew (Lt. Bowland) was one of the first replacement crews to join the original 492nd Bomb Gp. The date was June 5th, 1944. After we had completed three missions as a crew, our pilot became sick with the flu or something. These were hard trying times for the decimated 492nd Gp. and there was a shortage of complete crews. The worst was yet to come! Since our crew was without a pilot for the time, the remainder of the crew was available to fly as replacements on other crews that did not have a full complement.

On June 20, 1944 the target was Politz, Germany and five of my crew members were scheduled to fly as replacements on other crews. I must admit that at this time I was eager and envious of those of my crew that had been selected to fly as replacements. I was so eager in fact, that I got up with those that were to be briefed. After breakfast I went to the briefing room with my crew members, still hoping that if anyone on the other crews were not able to make the flight, I might go as a replacement. Such was not to be. As my crew members and others headed for the flightline, I hung around operations for a while and then walked back toward my Nissen Hut.

Now the crux of this story. It must have been one of the clear days for there was a moon. Just as I reached the hut our first plane became airborne. When I looked up the plane formed a silhouette against the moon. I must have still been thinking how unfortunate it was that I was not making the flight. At

that moment a strange feeling came over me and a voice or thought within said, "Go back to bed you were not meant to make this mission." I was aware that this was a different emotion than I had ever experienced before and I can't emphasize enough the strange feeling that gripped me.

The significance of this feeling was not really apparent until later when some of us went to the flight line to sweat the returning planes. None of the planes of the 856th Sqd. returned that day except one (Velarde), who was forced to abort with engine trouble after having flown most of the way to the target. Six planes of the fourteen missing from the 492nd Gp. reportedly made it to Malmo, Sweden. If any of the five from my crew made it through I am not aware. That was the only time that I felt I had been spoken to or communicated with in a manner which is still not fully understood. It was only the beginning, however, of a rather unusual set of circumstances that saw me through to the completion of my tour.

On July 6th I flew as a replacement on Lt. McMurray's crew to Kiel, Germany. (Lt. McMurray and crew had survived a June 15th bailout over allied beach head territory in France.)

On July 7th Lt. McMurray and crew went down with no known survivors. I don't know if the crew member that I replaced the day before rejoined the crew or if they were flying with another replacement other than myself. For this mission I flew as a replacement on Lt. Beard's crew but the plane had super charger trouble and we could not stay up with the group and had to abort. My diary indicates that five more planes of the 856th Sqd. went down this day and an additional six from the remainder of the 492nd Gp. One more member of my original crew was gone.

I did not fly another mission until July 19th, but in the meantime I flew a practice mission with a new replacement crew. I was supposed to fly with them on a permanent basis. After that practice mission, I went to either the Squadron C.O. or the Group C.O., I don't recall which, and asked to be assigned to a different crew. I assume that it was the Squadron C.O. but the issue could have gone as far as the Group C.O. My feelings and reasons were very specific and that was the nearest I ever came to outright insubordination. Permission was finally granted and I was placed on a veteran crew. The only reason that I bring this up is because it seems to be an integral part of the overall picture. The crew I was to fly with was later in a collision with another plane while landing after a mission. The only one killed on the crew was the one that took

my place. The crew crashed a second time while flying out of Harrington with no known survivors.

In no way do I wish to cast reflections on any member of that crew, however, call it what you will; fate, fortunes of war, or the hand of God, the change to another crew saved my life.

Frank J. Miller
856th B.S./492 B.G.
857th-858th B.S./801-492 B.G.

IN MEMORIUM

JAMES W. BAKER Eulogy by Doug Walker

We sincerely regret the passing of one of our staunchest Association supporters--Carpetbagger Jim Baker, of Harleton, Texas--on January 19, 1988. Jim, unfortunately, became too ill to attend the Harrington Reunion last September, but was solidly behind our fund drive to erect the Memorial. In fact, Jim was our most generous contributor. He was the Bombardier on Rudy Rudolph's aircraft and after many missions, was promoted to Group Bombardier. Captain Baker was awarded the Croix de Guerr by General Koenig, General De Gaulle's Deputy, at a ceremony at Harrington on September 22, 1944, along with Colonel Fish, Major Rudolph and others of his Comrades. We salute this gallant man who was admired and respected by all who knew him.

Although several months have elasped due to the quarterly printing of the Newsletter, if you wish to drop a note of sympathy to Jim's wife, Katherine, here is her address: Mrs. James W. Baker, Sr., PO Box 668, Harleton, TX 75651

RAUNCHY---A True Carpetbagger

Submitted by Rudy Rudolph

Raunchy was Jim Baker's dog, although Raunchy didn't consider himself a dog—just one of the boys. He was something else. Each night he would be at the club and loved beer. The men would put their beer mugs on the floor when they would be sitting in a chair, playing cards, "shooting the breeze", etc.. Raunchy would go around sniffing the beer until he found the dark type. Then he would drink all he could until caught. Each night he would follow a ditch down to the living site, then follow around certain buildings until he got home. Each night he would be so drunk he could hardly walk. He always had deep blood-shot eyes. Every day the same thing.

Editor's Note: We Salute You, Raunchy. You were a better man than a lot of Carpetbaggers who couldn't find their way back to their bunk after a "Pub Crawl".

856th RADAR OFFICER
CAPTAIN PAUL F. ADER
PUBLISHES FIRST NOVEL

I remember those long nights in the 856th Radar Shack, waiting for the Carpetbaggers to return from their mission on the Continent. My job was to train navigators and bombardiers in the use of the latest hi-tech equipment, and to maintain the equipment on the planes - LORAN, Rebecca and radio altimeters among others. In my spare moments, I dreamed up the characters and plot of a novel I wanted to write about 8th Air Force personnel and, just incidentally, some of the British people they met and knew.

I'd written half a dozen novels earlier, but had never managed to get one published. I pounded out a hundred thousand words on my new subject and called the book BOOMERANG, after the aircraft's name. Up to London I went, and after two trips I sold the book to W.H. ALLEN & Co. I had to cut it down to 65,000 words since there was a paper shortage in 1944. The publisher, Mark Goulden, changed the title to WE ALWAYS COME BACK, the novel appeared in 1945, just before we were to rotate to the States and transition to B-29's and head for the Far East. But WW II ended with a bang, and I found myself in New York, a civilian again.

One of my fellow officers, Captain Peyton Knight, joined with me in forming a small publishing company in New York - PEYTON PAUL. Our first book was WE ALWAYS COME BACK. Although well reviewed (e.g. The New Yorker), the book didn't sell very well, and Hollywood turned it down because, in 1946, there was beginning a wave of thumbs-down on war novels. John Hersey's A BELL FOR ADANO took the cream off. Interest in war novels was revived years later.

In New York, I stayed at the home of Major Roland O. Barber, who had been the 492nd's Group Radar Officer. The house was on Leroy Street in the Village, and one of our associates there was Sam Abelow, my former clerk in the 856th Radar Shack. Abelow went to work for CBS. Roland and I began our careers in authorship. I sold my second novel, The Leaf Against The Sky, to CROWN PUBLISHERS, where my editor was Hiram Hayden. The year was 1947.

Roland Barber got off to a good start with his first book, THE NIGHT THEY RAIDED MINSKY'S, excerpts from which appeared in Life magazine. The movie, starring Jason Robards, came out the following year. Barber went on to write SOMEONE UP THERE LIKES ME, which also appeared as a movie. By this time, Roland

was living in Hollywood, and I returned to The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, to take a Master's in American Literature. In Chapel Hill I met my wife, Cicely Peeples of Chattanooga, Tennessee. In the summer of 1951, I was recalled to the Air Force, assigned to USAF SECURITY SERVICE, where I stayed until my retirement in 1969.

During the years since 1969, I've published three books, the first being a treatise on handicapping thoroughbred horses, published in hardcover by Henry Regnery, Chicago, and in softcover by Contemporary Books, Inc., Chicago, 1977. In 1984, I had another novel published, THE BIG WIN, on the subject of horse racing, by Pentland Press, Edinburgh, Scotland. That book was followed by THE COMMANDER, a novel reflecting my experiences at RAF Chicksands, England, from 1960 through 1964, the first draft of which was written while I was stationed on the Aleutian Island of Shemya, as commander of an AF Squadron of the USAF Security Service, headquarters in San Antonio, Texas, where I now live with my wife. Our three children, Don, Lindy and Alison, are all out on their own, pursuing their various careers. Don in Lexington, KY, Lindy in San Antonio, and Alison on the Big Island of Hawaii.

Alison is the mother of our only grandchild, Ariel Emily Kay.

Work in progress: a volume of poems, titled DESIGNS AND OTHER VERSES, and a novel featuring the first two professional female 18-wheeler drivers.

Paul F. Ader, LTCOL USAF RET.
519 Serenade Dr., San Antonio, TX 78216

SOME MEMORIES OF LIFE AT HARRINGTON

by

GEORGE WINDBURN

Penicillin was a new drug when I was new in England. And it was decided that everybody was to get some. Sick or not. Just show up at the specified place in tent city and get checked off for having taken a dose. I remember the tent, which was a sort of squadron HQ office, was down a wooden walk just past the barber's tent. I went in, was handed a few pills which I popped into my mouth and walked out. I have no idea what it was to save me from. I think they were seeing if it would stave off respiratory illnesses.

And well they might. Our fuel (what is that?) allotment was one small bucket, wastepaper basket size, of coal a week. No more. Freeze your buns, but no more. It is hard work to get coal to fire up. You just don't take a few twists of old newspapers and use them for starters. Besides the newspapers were printed on super thin sheets and a whole paper was no more than six pages in total.

Our tent was cold. The stove was in its very center with the stove pipe going right up besides the main support pole. The pole and the stove was placed on a square cement slab, the only consession for being one slight cut above the raw earth.

The sides of the tent were pegged into the earth and our beds were iron frame affairs with matress and pillow set along the sides. We had a sort of writing desk attached to the center pole and very close to the stove.

The reason I remember this so well is that one evening I was seated there writing a letter when I thought I felt something on my right leg just below my knee. I reached down cautiously and sure enough I felt a kind of lump.

What the devil! I stood up and stamped my right foot on the cement square. Out fell a little mouse who quivered there for an instant and then ran out of the tent.

I am ashamed to say I was both so startled and angry that I went charging out of the tent tearing after the little creature as it scurried down the wooden walk towards the end of the street.

It ran up the side of a metal water tank which was for fire fighting in case a tent should catch on fire. On one side of the tank there was a hole to allow for runoff of rain water. The mouse spied the hole and dove in. It had eluded me, but I fear it had chosen suicide to my clubbing it to death.

But Yankee ingenuity overcame the coal problem. Some bright soul, and I feel just short of sainthood, made a discovery in the bomb depot. Of all places to find an end and a better fuel than coal. No, we didn't dismantle bombs and burn the gun powder.

Each 500 pound bomb was packaged with two rings around its chubby little body. And these rings were made of a pulp material which was at once very sturdy but could be cut up and it burned beautifully. Easy to start, burned a long time, gave off wonderful heat. You could make toast on the top of the stove, it was so hot.

By the way, bread was bought from a local baker who drove his small and strange little truck to one of our gates to the airfield. We could walk there and make our buy. We would take this bread, more of a European style, not your thin sliced sandwich loaf a la USA, and place it in a 50 cal. empty amo can which we hung by a string. This was to avoid mice, rats or other uninvited guests.

I don't think anybody I knew thought of this as camping out. There wasn't a boy scout aura to this at all. It was uncomfortable and we spent as much time in the officers' club as we could. I would prefer to skip over our toileting facilities entirely as you would say I was being too gross. Sanitary it might have been, but it lacked everything else which would allow a few words of description.

You have to somehow get a hold of the idea that we were people who were quite suddenly thrust into a vast change in life with not a great deal going for us. We were informed about up to news headline depth. We didn't know didily squat about most everything. I could not have given you the chain of command from top to our level. I didn't know anything about one other single bomb group outside of our own and even then I was not exactly overflowing with the facts.

We were day by day people who were interested in the next meal, the comfort of warmth, mad at our toilet facilities, mad at living in tents, and were wanting better food. Combat came somewhere after these considerations. Oh yes, leave off base, our weekly cigarette ration, cold beer.

The joke I remember about food was the typical meal we were served on bombing missions. We got what we jokingly called "combat steak", which actually might be hot dogs with beans or somesuch concoction which would cause gas when we were flying up at altitude and on oxygen. Just plain dumb and we resented it.

The flip side of a mission, bombing or carpetbagger, would be going to the mess hall after debriefing and receiving a shot of scotch and the special treat of one egg cooked (?) the way (?) you wanted it. In all cases it would be dripping

oil. Well, at least they meant well.

There just wasn't anyway to avoid the mess hall. There were no outside food sources. The golden arches, Burger King had not been dreamed of at that time. It was the mess hall or starve.

As I have said we resented living in tents and I'm sure we let it be known. But higher ups decided to take us down a peg and they decided there was going to be an official quarters inspection. They actually were going to treat us like cadets and give our tents an inspection.

I was not going to go along with it. Charley and Bob tidied up around their bunks on the morning of this inspection, but I just stayed in bed under the covers playing possum.

The Major came in, looked around, asked somebody else who I was and left. Needless to say I was reported to our squadron CO and was asked to report to him.

I made my way down the wooden street, past the barber's tent and into our rustic HQ. Another Major sat there and I introduced myself to him. I had a plan as to what I was going to do. I was going to change this from my being chewed out to my opportunity to have an airplane awarded to my crew.

And that was exactly what happened. I opened up with the remark I was looking for this opportunity to speak with him about an important matter. I had been down to the flight line checking our squadron's aircraft and discovered that a B-24 D model, Next Morn, S, Sugar had not been assigned a crew and I was making a formal request for this airplane.

The Major readily agreed, I thanked them and left the tent. I felt it had gone rather well.

Unfortunately, S, Sugar came to a tragic end some time later as a new crew came on the field and used the ship for a night low-level cross country flight in Wales. They flew right into a mountain, killed crew, and demolished the plane.

So, we had no co-pilot and in a short time didn't even have our own plane. We made it from there on in with a pick-up co-pilot, flying someone else's airplane. Since I can write about this now we must have made out OK.

PRODUCING GREY HAIR

by

ROBERT W. FISH

On several occasions the Red Cross Aero Club would arrange for dances for the men at Harrington. The local British Red Cross and similar organizations would arrange for local young ladies to come to the base to serve as dancing partners. The only transportation we had was 2½ ton military trucks which we would send to the surrounding towns to pick up the girls and haul them to Harrington. It wasn't a very gallant form of transportation but it was all we had. After the dance, the trucks would return the girls to their respective villages.

After one such dance, I was awakened at about one a.m. and informed that one of our trucks loaded with girls had upset not far from the base. I immediately departed in my jeep to ascertain if there had been injuries.

At that period, all vehicles drove "blacked out". That means they used only a very dim purplish light that only dimly lighted the roadway about fifty feet ahead.

As I approached the scene of the accident I was suddenly confronted with the rear end of a huge fuel hauling tank truck stopped right in the center of the road. I slammed on the brakes and came to a stop with the hood of the jeep rammed under the rear of the truck right up to the windshield. For me it was a near brush with death. The tanker had stopped because the upset truck load of young ladies was blocking the road.

Fortunately, none of the young ladies were injured. With aid of a wrecker, we were soon able to get the road cleared and return the young ladies to their homes before daylight.

Not all such incidents are injury free. That is just one of the type incidents that turn young commanders pre-maturely grey.

NO-MUSTARD-ON-THE-FRANKFURTER

by

Douglas D. Walker

As the spring of 1945 drew near, the weather began to warm-up and the days grew sunnier. Our 8th Air Force Base became a brighter and cheerier place to live.

We had been flying clandestine night missions throughout the severe winter of 1944-45 from Harrington, England. I was on a Carpetbagger Crew", flying black Liberator bombers with the 856th Bomb Squadron of the 492nd Bomb Group. We dropped OSS agents into France, Belgium, and Germany--as well as munitions and supplies to the underground Resistance forces in Nazi occupied Europe.

During the winter months, I had learned that one of my Hempstead High School (Long Island, N.Y.) chums--Joe Uzmann, was a bombardier on a B-17, flying out of an 8th Air Force Base near Bury St. Edmunds. I wrote him a letter and established contact. In April 1945, I traveled to his air base and we had a happy reunion--relieved that, so far, we had survived the vicious air war. (After the war, Joe served as my best man when I married my high school sweetheart, Jacqueline Cannon.)

Joe and I decided to get away from the 8th Air Force for the weekend and traveled north by train to a prewar beach resort on the North Sea called Skegness-On-The-Wash. A friend of mine, the Radio Operator on Lt. Donald F. Heran's aircrew--Sgt. Donald J. McHale--was the "wit" of our 856th Bomb Squadron. Noting the abundance of descriptive British place names which were "on" something such as "Richmond-On-The-Thames",--"Stow-On-The-World"--"Stoke-On-The-Trent"--etc.--, McHale would bedevil and confuse the British railway ticket sellers, when we were traveling to London on a pass, by asking for a ticket to "No-Mustard-On-The-Frankfurter"--or--"No-Onion-On-The-Hamburger"!)

When Joe and I arrived at Skegness-On-The-Wash, on a Saturday afternoon, we quickly settled into a Bed and Breakfast home and prepared to go out on the town. As we left the B&B, the proprietor warned us rather stuffily that he locked his door at precisely twelve midnight--and, if we weren't in by that time, we would be out of luck for a place to sleep!

We roamed the beaches of Skegness that afternoon, most of which were covered with barbed wire, steel tank traps, and other anti-invasion paraphenalia. After a restaurant supper, we found the local Palais-de-Dance and danced with some of the damsels. Because we weren't alert to the time, we suddenly noticed it was about 12:10 A.M.--just past the Cinderella hour given us by the proprietor. We ran back

to the house--a mile away--and arrived about 12:30! Sure enough--the place was dark!

Bound and determined to sleep in the beds we'd rented, Joe and I leaned on the doorbell for several minutes, with no results. The proprietor was obviously in no mood to co-operate. We then searched the front of the house and decided to try and enter through a window. I cupped my hands and gave Joe a lift up so that he could try and open a window. Just then, while Joe was teetering on the sill--a flashlight beam spotlighted us, a commanding English voice said, "What are you lads doing up there?"

To our embarassment, an English "Bobby" was standing there, glowering at us! We explained our predicament--and--with a smile, he beckoned us to follow him and began banging on the front door with his nightstick--loudly calling for the proprietor! The door soon opened and, to our amusement, there stood the proprietor dressed in a tasseled nightcap and a flannel nightgown--peering at us from behind a candle, like a character out of Dickens! The "Bobby" asked if we were staying at his B&B. When he said, "Yes"--the policeman said, "Alright then, sorry to waken you, but the Lads are ready to sleep now--so why not be a good chap and let them in?" As we walked by the policeman, he gave us a sly wink and said, "Good night Yanks--sleep well."

OVER THE HILL TO GRANDMOTHER'S HOUSE

by

DOUGLAS D. WALKER

I arrived in England in November 1944 and, after a period of night flight training, my aircrew began flying combat missions. After flying missions all winter, I wangled a three day pass in April and decided to visit my grandparents in Aberdeen, Scotland. (Both my parents were born and brought up in Aberdeen before emigrating to America in the 1920's.)

I traveled to Aberdeen by train and met a warm welcome from my paternal grandmother and grandfather. (My mother's parents had passed away earlier.) I met many relatives I had never seen and enjoyed a "bonnie" weekend. I slept on a wonderfully soft goose down mattress in the bed that my father slept in as a boy.

On the second morning of my visit, I went out early with my grandfather to the nearby Aberdeen beach front. Seems that the stormy North Sea had beached a loaded fishing trawler the night before and the captain decided to hand out his perishable cargo to the towns people before it spoiled. We joined a long line to the trawler and each received a large codfish -- a welcome addition to my grandparent's rather thin larder.

Before I had left the base to travel to Aberdeen, I paid a visit to our Mess Sergeant. When he learned that I was on my way to visit my grandparents, he generously filled my B-4 bag with a large tin of Spam, five pounds of sugar and several pounds of butter. Of course, to a Scottish family who were on strict war time food rationing, it was a real bonanza. Their eyes opened quite wide as I unloaded my bag of "goodies". I felt like Santa Claus! (The Armed Forces in the British Isles had a benevolent requirement that all personnel going on leave to stay with a British or Scottish family were to be issued food rationing stamps. They realized that any food served to our GI's by the family couldn't be replaced by the generous hosts without stamps. So, I also brought along a generous supply of food rationing stamps -- to their delight.)

The last morning of my visit was Thursday, April 12, 1945. Tuesday and Wednesday mornings, my grandfather had wakened me at 7:00 a.m. bearing a hot cup of tea, to help me ward off the chill of the unheated bedroom as I dressed. On Thursday morning, he opened the door and gently shook me awake. "Laddie," he said, "I have bad news for you -- your president has died." FDR, our Commander in Chief, had passed away.

I left that afternoon to return to Harrington. A month later the war was over and I was on my way home -- never to see my grandparents again. In 1985, 40 years later, my wife and I visited Aberdeen. Of course, my grandparents had since died, but we enjoyed a reunion with many of the other relatives I had met in 1945.

As my grandfather said to me in 1945, "If ye can say it's a braw bricht nicht tonicht -- you're a'richt -- ye ken!"

THE DISAPPEARING ACT

by

DOUGLAS D. WALKER

Not only did the 492nd "Carpetbagger" aircrews fly black Liberators to evade enemy flak and fighters on our night missions, but some of us perfected a "disappearing act" to evade the First Sergeant when he was pursuing us to stick us on extra duty assignments.

We flew clandestine missions at night, dropping agents in France and Germany as well as munitions and supplies to the French, Danish and Norwegian underground resistance forces.

Between missions, during the day, we enlisted aircrew members lounged around our Nissen Hut quarters reading, writing letters home, playing cards, swapping stories and storing up some good "sack time".

Our Nissen Hut was snug in winter, heated by a pot-bellied stove. We also had other advantages in that our quarters were located only a short walk from the mess hall and a short bicycle ride from the local pub.

However, it had one large drawback! It was located smack dab in front of our 856th Squadron Orderly Room ----- which meant that we were smack dab in front of First Sergeant Smith ----- relentless and determined First Sergeant Smith. Relentless and determined to put us to work on any dirty work detail he could dream up.

Sergeant Smith was a large, loud, cigar chewing old Army man, cast in the mold of Sergeant Bilko of TV fame. He had two loves in life --- raising pigs (he was born and brought up on a dirt farm) and harassing enlisted aircrew members.

Unfortunately, the First Sergeant's penchant for raising pigs resulted in a two porker pig pen close of our quarters that, on sunny, mild days, smelled more like a two holer "thunder box", Chic Sale.

But that minor annoyance was the least of our problems. First Sergeant Smith's additional hobby of harassing enlisted aircrewmen was our major annoyance.

Whenever he needed a clean-up crew, a hole digging crew or a latrine swabbing detail, he ignored the rule that combat aircrews were excused from such duties between missions -- and would stalk out of his orderly room -- look straight ahead -- and, naturally, our hut was first to invade his field of vision.

He would then make a beeline to our door, fling it open and bark, "You, you and you (I was usually the last 'you') outside on the double and grab those brooms."

Of course, we felt that when we flew over enemy territory at night, facing the possibility of being blown out of the skies at any time, we could care less if we left a dirty latrine behind to offend our chief pig raiser's sensibilities.

So, it became a stimulating cat and mouse game. We soon developed an effective "disappearing act" that frustrated our First Sergeant and provided us with many a laugh to break the between missions monotony.

We first established a lookout, one of our bunk mates closest to the rear window, overlooking the front door of the Orderly Room. With proper warning, we were out of our front door in seconds, disappearing behind the hedge row adjacent to the road in front of our billet, leaving behind us an empty Nissen Hut and a puzzled First Sergeant.

However, one day our warning came too late to allow us to rush out the door. The Sergeant was only a few yards away from our hut when our bunk mate near the window spotted him and gave us warning. But, as if we had become magicians, eight men put on a perfect "disappearing act".

Four men, including our radioman, Bernard Beverley, jumped out of the rear casement windows; three men slid under their bunks; I jumped under my overcoat, which was hanging on my clothes rack behind my bunk. I stood partially upright, with my head and body concealed in the coat. Of course, my feet and legs were concealed by my bunk.

The Sergeant barged in, looked around disgustedly, chomped on his ever present unlit cigar and grunted, "Hell, I could have sworn those guys were in here!!" With that, he stomped out of our hut to invade the quarters next to us.

We reassembled a short time later to pursue our leisurely ways with much laughter at our "Keystone Cops" comedy routine.

Our radioman, Bernie Beverley, and I still laugh at that memory whenever we talk over the "good old days" at Harrington AFB.

However, our friendly First Sergeant had the last laugh. On May 8, 1945 --- VE Day --- three of us were filing out of our quarters about noon to go to the NCO Club to drink a few toasts to celebrate the end of the war. (We had been restricted to the base by the Base Commander, however, the NCO Club was still open.)

As we left our Nissen Hut, the Sergeant swooped down on we unsuspecting, soon-to-be merry makers and snarled, "Here are three Tommy Guns --- follow me, you're on guard duty to keep those guys from sneaking off the base to go to town."

Crestfallen, we were each assigned an area near the perimeter fence to

patrol. There were hundreds of our guys trying to get out over the fence and hundreds of girls beseeching us to let their boyfriends out to celebrate the day.

At first, with a "misery loves company" attitude, we kept the GI's away from the fence. Finally, we turned our backs and let them climb the fence. The war was over --- who the heck cared if they did a little celebrating!

Finally, about two hours later, the First Sergeant returned and relieved us from duty. We made a run for the NCO Club. On the way, we saw a tipsy GI fire a flare into the sky. We watched as it gracefully arched across the road and landed in the middle of a large haystack on a neighboring farm. It was soon ablaze from the burning flare.

We watched in amazement as the flames soared through the dry hay and then laughed as we saw a girl in disarray emerge from the burning stack --- followed by a Lieutenant Bombardier dashing madly after her! It was a scene to remember, and a day to remember!

* * * * * * *

NOTE BY BOB FISH

I have a sequel to the above "haystack story". The farmer put in a claim against the US Army Air Force for burning his haystack --- only he made one big major mistake. He told the judge that he saw an American airplane fly over his haystack and drop a flare into it. What he didn't know was that all aircraft in England had been grounded that day to keep wild young pilots from celebrating VE Day in the air. The US claims officer showed the judge the order grounding all US airplanes on that day and the judge was therefore compelled to rule against the farmer's claim. If the farmer had simply stated that the "Carpet-baggers", in their celebration, had burned his haystack he would have been paid for it.

A TRAGIC FATALITY

(AS VIEWED BY VARIOUS CARPETBAGGER MEMBERS)

Reported by

ROBERT W. FISH

To provide our aircrew gunners with an opportunity to practice aiming at attacking aircraft we made arrangements with an RAF fighter training unit to have their pilots make simulated attacks on our aircraft when we were flying daylight training exercises. As soon as we started this training it produced a tragedy.

After the completion of one of these training sessions the fighter pilot who had been simulating attacks against one of our aircraft landed his Spitfire at Harrington to help us critique the training exercise and have lunch at our mess. This pilot was a young Polish airman of limited experience. When he prepared to leave Harrington some of our airmen urged him to give us a good demonstration of acrobatic flying as he departed. That request was one that no red-blooded fighter pilot of that era could turn down. His response was, "I will show you bomber boys some real flying!"

The following action is pretty hazy in my mind after forty-five years, but I think I recall that he attempted a barrel roll immediately after leaving the runway. My memory is based on the report of the accident investigation, but it has been forty-five years since I saw that report. (He may have tried an inside loop immediately after becoming airborne.)

As I recall, when he came out of his roll he had lost enough altitude that his wing hit a tree. This caused him to crash into our finance office which was in a Nissen hut. The Nissen hut was destroyed, the Spitfire was demolished and the Polish pilot was killed. Fortunately there was nobody in the finance office when it was destroyed.

Forty-five years after this event it is interesting to consider how various members of our group remember this incident.

Comments by our editor, Si Sizemore: Just Before The Tragedy ——

A Polish pilot, flying a British Spitfire, crashed and was killed at Station #179, Harrington, England. As an eye witness from an area near the radar shack, I watched as the aircraft did an "inside loop". It was like watching in slow motion to see the aircraft nearing the bottom of the loop and realizing it was not high enough to complete the loop. The plane hit the ground and seemingly bounced and hit a tree. Whether or not the Spitfire hit the tree before slamming

into the corner of the Finance Hut, I do not know. The view from where I stood was not that clear.

One latrine rumor was that he was an Ace with twenty-some-odd kills. Another was that he had just finished his flight training and was "showing off". In any case he was doing acrobatics for the benefit of the "Yanks".

The Carpetbaggers, that returned to the old base during the Reunion last September, saw the tree with its top sheared off --- a reminder of this grim event.

If others have remembrance of this event, send the story to Si.

* * * * * * *

The story "Just Before The Tragedy" that appeared in the last issue of the Carpetbagger brought forth more stories of that event as well as a big question concerning the picture. A report back from Ron Clarke, our English Rep, that several ex-RAF flier friends looked at the photo with a magnifying glass and identified the plane as a P-47 (others still say it is a Spitfire). Be that as it may, two things are certain; it was a Polish pilot who crashed in a Spitfire. The story evoked memories of 43 years ago.

Editor Si

* * * * * * *

The event as recalled by Sam Giordano:

Dear Si,

As I recall the event, I was biking back down to the flight line. I saw him in a dive, a colliding dive. I thought, "He'd better be pulling up soon." Then the plane hit a stand of trees, sheared them like a giant knife blade. As I saw it (or think I did), he struck the trees, it may have been as you said, he bounced off the ground and then hit the trees. I remember it hitting the Finance Hut and that fortunately no GI's were hurt. I may have heard about this part later.

Again, it was so long ago but I think the Spitfire went into flames when it hit the trees.

Sincerely,

Sam Giordano

* * * * * * *

The accident as recalled by Ben Sinclair:

Dear Si,

I received the "Carpetbagger" a few days ago and read the story on the Polish pilot. It's amazing the way different people see events that take place before their eyes. Our hardstand was near the runway and I saw the Spitfire land and after

lunch as he taxied out for take off. We watched as he prepared to move for the take off. I remember saying to another crew member, "He isn't going to make it." The engine was backfiring, indicating a lack of time for warm up. I saw the plane lift off and go into a roll and the right wing, I believe, hit the tree on the turn, clipping the tree and banking to the right and crashed through the back of the Finance Building. The Spit was far too low for an inside loop, the way I saw it, but from a greater distance than from where I was and it was on the right side nearer the crash area. However, I do agree he might have just gotten out of flight school, for I doubt a veteran pilot would have at least let his plane's engine reach temperature before doing tricks with an engine popping as his was or the pilots in the RAF would have been in need of more pilots as well as Spitfires.

Stay well and take care,

Ben Sinclair
856th BS

* * * * * * *

As seen by Max Berger:

Dear Si,

Regarding your article in the June issue concerning the Spitfire that crashed: I was working in Group Headquarters when I heard a tremendous noise, so I ran outside and just behind me was our Exec Officer LTC Endenfield.

I guess we were the first on the scene and was amazed at what I saw. For one thing, the plane was demolished and smoking. The pilot was lying on the ground, clothing on fire and he was dead! We vacated the area quickly when we heard the "ammo" exploding, due to the extreme heat.

I'm enclosing a photo of me holding a piece of the plane, and you can see what happened to the tree.

I have a very vivid memory of the incident.

Best wishes,
Max Berger

* * * * * * *

As seen by Clayton P. Scott:

Dear Si,

Yes, I remember the Polish pilot who crashed his RAF plane soon after take off at Harrington. This was in the Spring of 1945 - we were just leaving a mission briefing in the late afternoon. My navigator (Lt. Archer) and I were

walking to the flight line when we saw the fighter (thought it was a Hawker Hurricane) taking off. He did a barrel-roll soon after becoming airborne and his engine sputtered and conked out. He didn't have much altitude, however it appeared he was trying to do a 180 degree turn in returning to the runway. After completing approximately 135 degree turn to the right, he evidently tried to glide to an open spot in the Headquarters area, coming directly at us! Of course, we dived for the roadside ditch! After the crash we saw where he had hit the tree tops, then sheared off the large tree 5 or 6 feet above the ground just across the road from us, then skidded into the corner of the finance office. The fuselage came to rest beyond the finance building in the clearing, with his body several yards beyond and then the engine furtherest from the impact point.

Several parts of the plane, including wheels, machine guns and 50 cliber bullets were scattered from the tree, across the road, around us in the ditch, and on into the cleared area. Evidently we looked pretty shaken-up as our pilot, Captain Rocky Norman, asked if we felt like going on the night mission as scheduled. Of course, we did as we were wanting to finish our 30 missions before the war ended in Europe.

Sincerely,
Clayton P. Scott

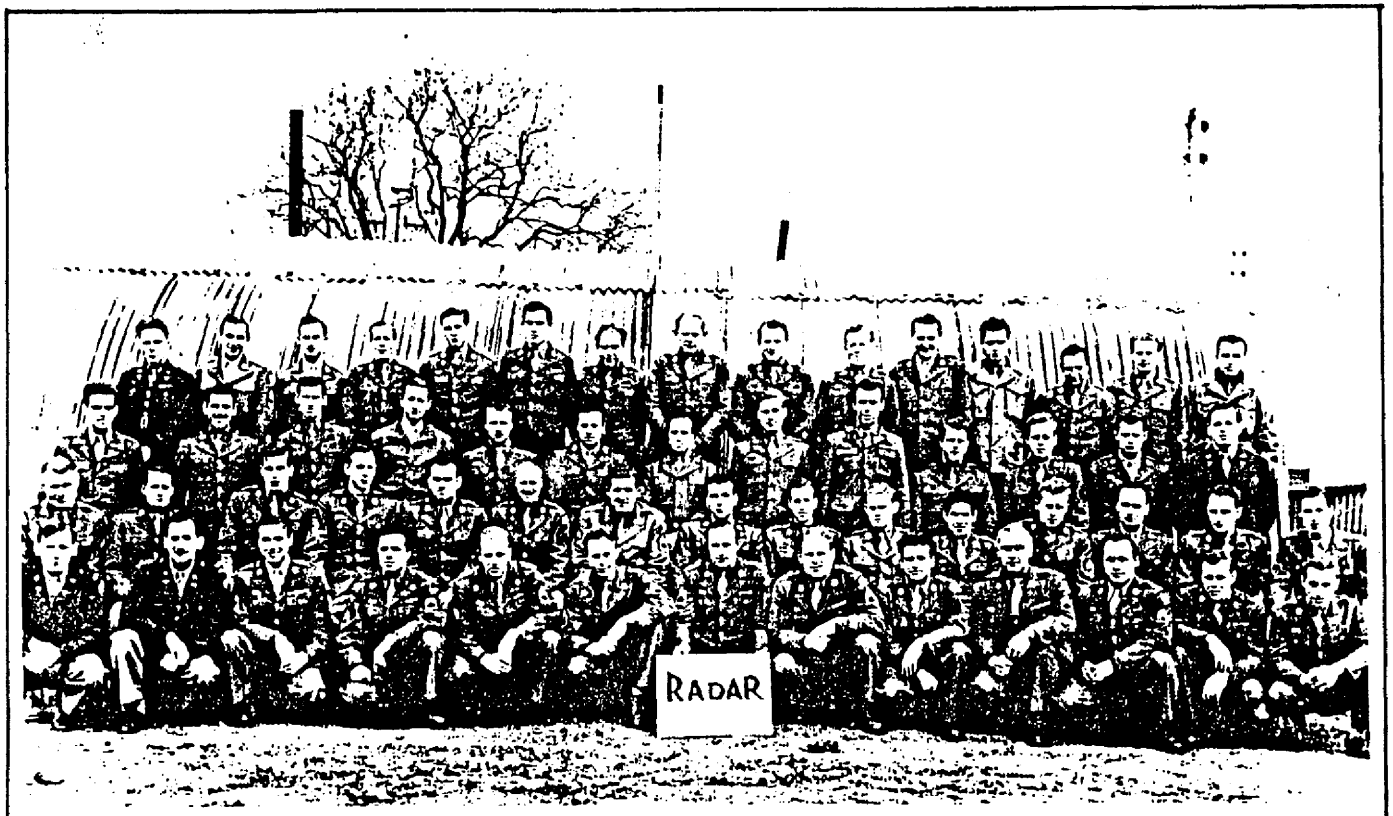
* * * * * * *

IN MEMORIAM

FLT. SGT. K. PRUSAK

After 43½ years the Polish pilot, who crashed and died on our airfield, has been identified. Bernard Tebbutt (whose home is where the Administration Area on the base used to be) wrote to say the Northamptonshire Aviation Society had reseached the crash and forwarded the following information. The Polish pilot was Flt. Sgt. K. Prusak and is buried in the Newark-Upon-Trent Cemetery, Nottinghamshire. He died on February 27, 1945 at 1424 hours. He was a member of the 303 Squadron, flying a Spitfire MK IX Serial No. MA81LL.

We salute Flt. Sgt. K. Prusak a Comrade-in-Arms.



THE GROUP RADAR SECTION

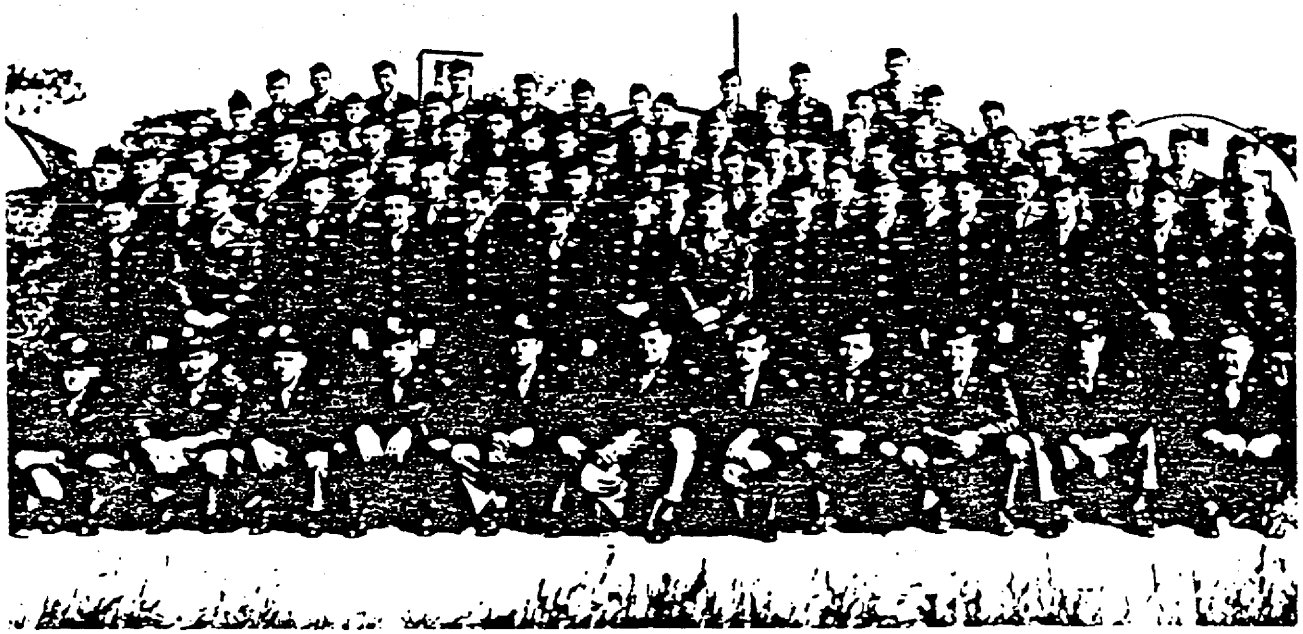
TOP ROW: 858th Bomb Sq. (L-R) Capt. Ader, Helzer, Stuart, Williams, Dowling, Adams, Huey, Luckhurst, Weber, Chernisky, Smith, Burns, Wilson, Ratchovsky, Buzby. (Missing: Troutman, Geising, Clore)

3RD ROW: 406th Bomb Sq. (L-R) Capt. Barber, Cianciulli, Dean, Lux, Jones, Reid, Warner, Bennett, Conway, Spencer, Hardy, Chittenden, Lt. Zatlin. (Missing: Etkin, Ray)

2ND ROW: HQ. 801/492ND. (L-R) Zigenhagen, Schreiner, Haberstroh, Parks, Carder, Marhak, Kirkeby, Garland, Wilkinson, Rosater, Robolino, Queeny, Quast, Kelly, Sizemore.

1ST ROW: 856th Bomb Sq. (L-R) Lt. Clark, Lt. Reitman, Martin, Davis, Williams, Jack, Kepler, Wallens, Ascher, Kaminski, Schwandt, Hawley, Boles.

Offical 8th AF Picture taken at Harrington, England, April 30, 1945
"Si" Sizemore photo



HEADQUARTERS

FRONT ROW, Kneeling: (L-R) Capt. Frank M. Silkebaken, Capt. Emanuel Choper, Capt. Richard A. Dennis, Capt. Joseph W. Hartley, LTC. Robert L. Boone, Capt. Harry A. Gibson, Capt. Robert D. Sullivan, Major Paul J. Gans, Capt. Samuel C. Wakefield, 1st Lt. Charles L. Guimento, Capt. Edward P. Bettcher.

1st ROW, Standing: (L-R) Cpl Angelo P. Pasque, S/Sgt Charles R. Hall, Pfc Silvio A. Alexander, Sgt Edwin W. Owens, S/Sgt James L. Melito, Cpl Nicholas F. Robolino, Cpl Richard N. Combs, Sgt Kenneth L. Nixon, Cpl Reuben Schreiner, Sgt James S. Ehly, Sgt John C. Scotchel, Sgt Marvin L. Arrighy, Sgt Alfred B. Fichera, Cpl Richard A. Reed.

2nd ROW, Standing: (L-R) S/Sgt Frank Lengyel, S/Sgt Max Berger, Pfc Joe H. Lamie, Cpl James R. Evans, M/Sgt Wilson L. Miller, Pfc Burnett Bean, Cpl William A. Wilkinson Jr, Pfc Harold B. Sacks, Sgt William P. Dallas, M/Sgt Wesley W. Gifford, T/Sgt Robert W. Turner, Pvt Mack Martines.

3rd ROW, Standing: (L-R) Sgt Lamb W. Chauncey Jr, Cpl Joseph A. Marossi, Sgt Beverly B. Burnett, Pfc Donald W. Lockwood, Cpl Howard V. Young Jr, Cpl Bennie M. Griego, Sgt Wilbert V. Quast, Sgt Howard C. Carder, S/Sgt Edward J. Schmiedeberg, Cpl Brumo Gruszecki, S/Sgt James K. Cheeseman, Pfc William N. Barringer, T/Sgt Clarence L. Gorden, T/Sgt Joseph P. Caltagirone, Pfc Woodruff W. Lee.

4th ROW, Standing: (L-R) Pfc Clyde H. Church, S/Sgt John H. McDougald, S/Sgt O.B. Mathis, Sgt Thomas F. Kelly, Cpl Gerald A. Parks, Pfc Charles E. Coleman, Sgt Donald H. Queeny, Cpl Clarence W. Haberstroh, Sgt Martin J. Marhak, T/Sgt William H. Bush, Cpl Richard T. Sizemore, Sgt Champion D. Epperson, Sgt Jack M. Crippen Jr, T/Sgt Earl C. Kirkeby, S/Sgt Samuel A. Cassady, Sgt John J. Rogowski, Pfc John J. Ryan, Cpl Hallett R. Gates.

5th ROW, Standing: (L-R) Pfc Curtis A. Barker, Sgt John L. Hannah, T/Sgt Henry R. Dannhouser, Sgt Frank A. Ziegenhagen, Cpl Joseph M. Hailey, Pfc Hugh O. Haney, Cpl Paul V. Curran, S/Sgt Robert H. Shanesy, Cpl Phillip A. Hudson, Sgt Vincent T. McGrath, Cpl Joseph F. Preshoot.

6th ROW (top), Standing: (L-R) Cpl Albert Dahlke, Pfc Fred A. Ozment, Pfc Herman M. Dutkiewicz, Tec 5 John B. DiPietro, Sgt Sol S. Shoppe, Cpl Lewis J. Kobyarz, Tec 5 Oliver L. McClarin, Pfc Peter P. Gvora, M/Sgt Delbert L. Blair.

Official 8th AF Picture taken at Harrington, England, June 18, 1945
"Si" Sizemore photo

THE WASTE OF WAR

by

ROBERT W. FISH

16 September 1944 was a day of foul weather over both England and the continent. Because the underground forces in France were in desparate need of supplies the 492nd was flying in spite of the weather. We had thirty two aircraft out on missions that night.

We lost one B-24 aircraft and crew due to a procedural foul-up in Group Operations.

Our aircraft were equipped with a radar transmitter that emitted a coded signal that identified our aircraft to our night fighters and to our anti-aircraft artillery. This devise was known by the name "identification friend or foe" or most frequently by the shorthand "IFF". It was devised to prevent our aircraft from being shot down by our own forces.

By September 16th, 1944 we had received solid intelligence that the German night fighters had been equipped with a devise that allowed them to home in on our IFF signals. Because of this intelligence, we gave our aircraft commanders the option of not using the IFF if they deemed it wise to do so. It was recommended by our group headquarters that it not be used.

This latter recommendation was based on two factors. Number 1, the German night fighters did not like to come down to our low altitudes without our IFF signal to home in on and number 2, we received hourly updates on the locations of all of the allied anti-aircraft batteries on the continent. This latter fact allowed us to brief our crews so that they avoided all allied anti-aircraft emplacement.

Our army's anti-aircraft batteries, not being concerned about night fighters, relied on the IFF as the only identification of friendly aircraft.

On the late afternoon of 16 September 1944, Battery A of the 115 AA Gun Battalion had set up its guns at the bend in a river that Lt. McLaughlin's navigator had picked as a pilotage navigational check point. His navigator in preparing his flight plan had checked the map showing anti-aircraft gun locations and found no flak battery at this point. He therefore selected it as a check point.

At 6:00 p.m. I checked the late teletype messages and found nothing in them that would adversely effect our aircraft.

Shortly thereafter I was called to the control tower because of an emergency problem on the airfield. After we had corrected that problem I elected to remain in the control tower until all of our mission aircraft had departed.

Normally I would have gone back to the Group Operations office and would have monitored the take offs from there. This evening the weather was so bad that I decided to remain in the control tower and monitor departing aircraft from that vantage point.

In the meantime a teletype message arrived in Group Operations detailing the location of the guns of the 115th Battalion. The communications clerk laid the message on my desk assuming that I would come back and see it. He had no way of knowing that one of our aircraft was planning to fly over the gun position announced in that message. None of the other personnel in operations thought to look at that message or to call it to the operations clerk's attention. We all fouled up at the same time.

Lt. McLaughlin was never warned. He flew directly over the gun battery. The gun battery's radar challenged his IFF and received no response because it was turned off as a protection against night fighters. The ground crew assumed they were looking at a German aircraft. They fired four rounds. All four hit McLaughlin's aircraft. We lost some good and valuable air crew members and an essential aircraft, all because of human error.

That incident was burned so deeply into my conscience that I have never forgotten it to this day.

McLaughlin's crew:

Lt. James M. McLaughlin	
Lt. Carl Lee, Copilot	dead
Lt. George F. Bradbury, Nav.	unknown
Lt. Ernest G. Skwara, Bonb.	dead
T/Sgt. Alforne A. DeVries, Eng.	dead
T/Sgt. Henry Stee, R. O.	unknown
S/Sgt. James G. Pirtle, T. G.	unknown
S/Sgt. Merrill G. Brewer, Disp.	dead

CARPETBAGGERS

Seated: (L-R) Reverend Hugh J. Gallagher, and unidentified chaplain.

Standing: Two unidentified enlisted men.

If you can identify these other three men, please write to R. Sizemore, 2318 East Sugnet St., Midland, MI 48640.

Sebastian has located Rev. Gallagher. He wrote directly to Major General John P. Dounough, Chief of the Air Force Chaplains. Within days he had two calls from his office to supply him with names of two chaplains by the name of Gallagher that had served in England in WW II. Thus, Rev. Hugh J. Gallagher, 13524 Thraves Road, Garfield Heights, OH 44125 was located.

Upon being contacted by Sebastian he said he expected to be with us next year at our Memphis Reunion.

Red Monaghan photo

CARPERBAGGERS IDENTIFIED

I believe that I can help identify the additional men on page three of the December 1989 edition along with Capt. Hugh J. Gallagher, Catholic Chaplain. Upper right is Sgt. Beverly B. Burnett (deceased) from Granger, Wa. (his wife now resides in Vancouver, Wa.). Lower right is Capt. Harry L. Rogers (Protestant Chaplain).

The man in the upper left is Sgt. Frank ___?___. I took Bev Burnett over to see him in the mid-60s at which time Frank was a mailman in Berwyn, Ill.

I knew Bev Burnett from Dec. 1942 when he was in the 1077th Signal Company. He transferred out of the Signal Company while at Cheddington and was either in Hdq, Sqd. or the Station Compliment. Bev Burnett did make a trip to England with his family in the mid-60s, at which time he visited both Harrington and Cheddington.

Regards,

Art Carnot

REV. GALLAGHER TRIGGERS MEMORIES

1st Lt. Ed Blume introduced me to Father Gallagher and to Rev. Harry L. Rogers, shown sitting next to Father Gallagher. Lt. Blume was studying for the ministry and met with Capt. Rogers for bible study on Thursday evenings at 8p.m. Ed and his entire crew were lost on about Feb. 1st, 1945. I believe Capt. Rogers was from Raleigh, N. C.

I do remember that Father Gallagher liked to smoke cigars --sure enough-- in the picture he is holding one in his right hand.

Our navigator, Richard Green from N. Y. was killed about a month later, Mar.'45, after going on a Mosquito Mission. The plane caught on fire about 50 miles from Harrington and Dick bailed out without his leg straps fastened. He had to get out first so his pilot could jump. I never did know the pilot's name. Our crew, Ralph Sampson, pilot; Ted Shimpus, bombardier; Dexter Forbes, Nav.; Hank Ford, engr.; Lester Schiff, radio op.; and myself as copilot, were on 45 days of TDY at Metfield, Station 1409. Flew several missions to Stockholm, Sweden. Returned to Harrington by May 13, 1945.

It would be great if we could find Capt. Rogers in time for the Memphis Reunion.

Sincerely, "Bart"

Wm. S. Bartholomew

WW II DRESS STYLE

EXTRACTED FROM THE NEWSLETTER

Lt. General Thomas Hickey, DCS Personnel, announced that the Air Force has approved the wearing of World War II style flight jackets for aircrew members assigned to combat ready operational units. The Air Force will start issuing the jacketts this Fall to active duty, Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve crew members. This will once again more quickly identify these people who are a separate group and should be properly identified for the job they are doing.

The cartoon was reprinted with permission of Bob Sullivan. Bob was a former aircrew member of the 458th BG flying b-24s out of Horsham St. Faith's, close to Norwich. Bob said, "I was a flight engineer and when I got back from a mission ('specially a 'wooley' one) I looked like some garage mechanic and badly needed a drink and a place to lie down".

THOSE DANGEROUS PUB MISSIONS

by

DOUGLAS D. WALKER
856th BOMB SQUADRON

TO ALL HARRINGTON PERSONNEL

AS OF THIS DATE, ANY PERSONNEL REPORTING TO THE BASE HOSPITAL WITH INJURIES DUE TO BICYCLING ACCIDENTS WHILE RETURNING FROM PUB VISITS WILL BE SUBJECT TO DISCIPLINARY ACTION

BY ORDER OF:

Col. H. D. Upham
Base Commander

Remember those olive drab, GI bicycles many of us were issued while at Harrington? Of course, they were ideal for getting around the base -- where the flight line, the communal sites and the chow hall were scattered all over the map.

But -- apart from the convenience those two wheelers afforded us in helping us in gamboling about the base -- I fondly remember them for a different reason -- our jolly "Pub Missions".

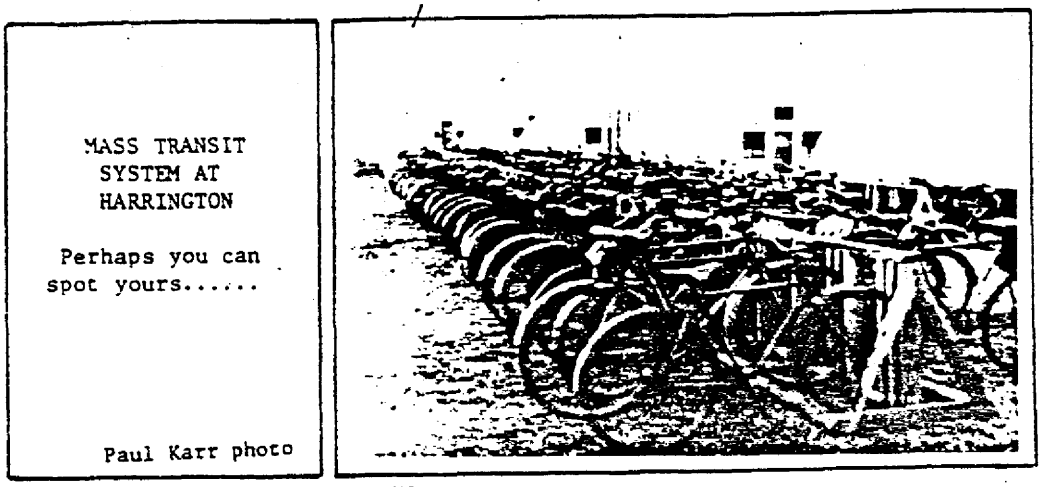
I remember riding to a small local pub (can't remember the name) located about two miles from the base, down a winding, narrow country road -- as the sun sank slowly in the west! I also remember the beer mugs colorfully painted along the tubular bar of the bicycles, ridden by those habitual visitors to the pub, signifying each "pub mission" (Some guys had a slew of them painted on their bikes -- obvious emblems of many a good time at that proud English institution -- the pub.)

The trip to the pub was usually uneventful -- but, the trip home was a different story!!! After an evening of copious quantities of pints of bitters --a few games of darts -- and a rousing song or two -- we staggered out to our wheeled steeds and roared off into the night -- (or, rather -- we wobbled off). The road on the way back seemed curvier as we sped along -- singing and laughing -- carried along on the fumes of Bacchus! Alas, the inevitable crashes frequently happened -- flinging laughing airmen into the deep ditches along the side of the road! Scratches -- abrasions -- sprains -- and an occasional broken bone resulted in the above notice on all Squadron bulletin boards in January 1945.

This directive undoubtedly slowed down the volume of hospital visits after those nocturnal outings -- however, I don't remember it slowing down the "Pub Missions". It just meant that the injured "Pub Crawlers" had to treat their wounds in the privacy of their own quarters -- and the good doctors on night duty at the Base Hospital could go back to their poker games! (Just kidding, medicos.)

MASS TRANSIT SYSTEM AT HARRINGTON

by Bob Fish



Our mass transit system at Harrington put life and limb at risk. Putting bicycles into the hands of young airmen created a situation in which disasters were just waiting to happen. Some airmen such as Sammy Braudt, with his motorcycle prowess, could handle the bicycle bit safely. Other neophytes such as your some times commander, Bob Fish, met disaster.

Bob was returning to the Air Base from a pub run one evening when he lost control. The road way was a curve going down hill. A fist-size rock became a major obstruction when contacted by the front wheel. Bob left his cycle and found himself suspended on many distressing barbs in the hedge at the bottom of the curve.

Undaunted, he bravely remounted his cycle and proceeded to the base where he paid a courtesy visit on Doc Gans. When Doc saw the multitude of thorns in Bob's chest he laughed and laughed, just as any good military doctor should.

Then he gave Bob a cup full of bourbon to sip on while he cut out the broken thorns.

This event occurred long before the arrival of Colonel Hudson H. Upham. Therefore I was not the basis of Upham's letter re bicycle accidents. You other gents brought that on to your selves by refusing to learn from my experience.

An Added Note About The Bicycles: On a more serious note: While visiting some of our English friends in and about Harrington, we learned about an alleged incident in July, 1945 at our base -- prior to our leaving for home --- which appears to have left a sour taste in our British friends.

The story, as related to us by several people, concerned the thousand or so bicycles we had to leave behind. Seems that the personnel who were winding down the base activity, prior to turning it back to the RAF -- supposedly dug a huge ditch, ran a few bulldozers over the bicycles-- and then buried them. This story may have some validity, because-- you'll recall, much equipment and material in Europe was destroyed after the war, because it was cheaper than shipping it back to the U.S.! War, after all, is wasteful.

However, you'll also recall that the bicycle was the most important means of transportation in war torn England. For many -- particularly in the rural districts such as Harrington and vicinity, it was the only way they could get to their daily work. The lack of autos and gasoline created a serious shortage of hard to get bicycles, during and after the war. Thus, you can imagine the reaction of our British neighbors when this story began to circulate after we left. Frankly, it still sticks in their craw, after all these years, as another example of how the "rich Americans" wastefully disposed of much in demand items, at a time when they were destitute.

I hope that this alleged incident is wrong. It doesn't sound like we generous Yanks. Can any of you Carpetbaggers remember what happened to those bicycles way back then? Did this really happen?

BICYCLES WERE NOT BURIED

By M/Sgt. John J. Kiley

(Extracted from December 1989 Newsletter)

Let me set the record straight on the "bikes" we left behind at Harrington. THEY WERE NOT BURIED. I sent two 40 foot long flat-bed trucks to Cheltonham with those bicycles on board. This was per instructions from higher headquarters.

I could have sold everyone of those bicycles as I went through the small towns on the way to Cheltonham.

Editor's Note: John had charge of the 1737th Ordance S & M Company. That outfit kept things running at Harrington.---- Your editor also heard some one remark at the Milwaukee reunion that, "the same rumor was said about Clipton Air Base. Rumors were rampant at all of the bases while they were being closed.

HISTORY OF SPECIAL SERVICES
ARF STATION 179
(ARTICLE PREPARED BY
CAPT. RUSSELL R. BELL,
SPECIAL SERVICES OFFICER)

Approximately 1 April 1944, Special Services slowly began to organize and function.

At the start there was very little to offer base personnel in the way of recreation or entertainment due to a lack of equipment and facilities. Immediate steps were taken to secure adequate Stars and Stripes; and movies were shown whenever films could be secured.

The next development was the establishing of an enlisted mens' lounge in the buildings reserved for the future Aero Club installations. The facility was only intended as a fill-in until the American Red Cross could establish its Aero Club and begin to operate.

During this period, Special Services was in the process of constructing a stage in the snack bar of the future Aero Club. This facility was intented to handle all live entertainment presented on the Station.

The first dance on the base was sponsored the latter part of April, about the time the stage was completed. In spite of its being an initial effort, the affair was apparently successful, complete with service girls from surrounding British military installations, and civilian girls from Northampton serving as hostesses. A buffet lunch was served. Similar dances were held periodically from that time on until the Aero Club was established.

APRIL 1986. PRESENTATION OF 801/492nd BG PHOTO MEMORIAL TO LAMPORT SWAN PUB FOR PERMANENT DISPLAY. OUR GROUND CREW AND AIR CREW PERSONNEL FREQUENTED THIS NEARBY PUB IN 1944 & 1945. L TO R - MYSELF (856th BS VET - LT. ROBERT SWARTS CREW), NICK PRATT - (OUR REP IN KETTERING), PROPRIETORS FRED & SYLVIA JOLLIFFE.

Photo Courtesy Of Northamptonshire Evening Telegraph

PIG TALES

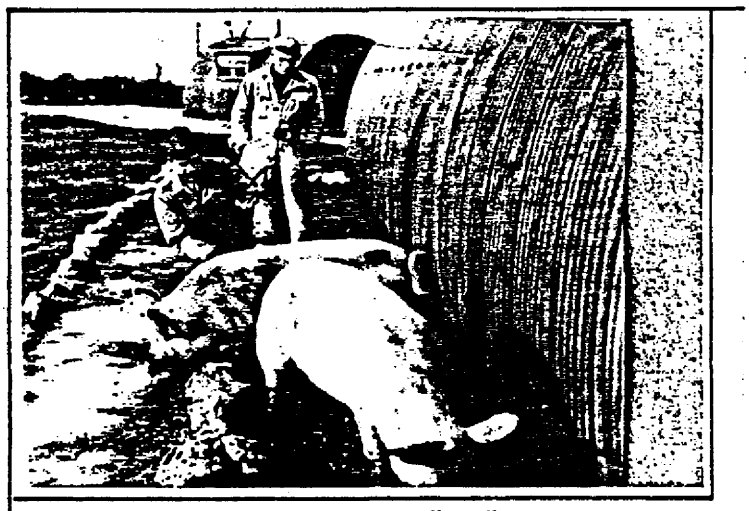
BY DOUGLAS WALKER

In the August 1986 Newsletter, Doug ran this picture and the following story of

"THE TWO LITTLE PIGS"

The same barracks site in April 1945 -- 41 years ago! The Nissen hut in the foreground was the 856th BS Headquarters, the office of our popular Squadron CO, LTC Rodman A. St. Clair. The man shown kneeling is First Sergeant Smith -- (who raised pigs on the side -- the side nearest our hut -- phew!). I do not know the name of the gent standing, nor of the pigs. I only know that the latter never took a shower!

Bernie Beverley and I lived in the hut in the background of this photo with other members of Lt. Robert Swart's crew.



Leo "Red" Monaghan photo
858th BS photographer

A postscript about the pigs. In September 1987, st the Carpetbagger Reunion in Harrington, England, we invited a dozen English "Locals" who remembered us from WW II,

to attend our wine and cheese party at Lamport Hall. At the get-to-gether, I began chatting with one of them, a Mr. Jim Willis, a local farmer who was there in 1944. To my surprise, he began reminiscing about how he had "sold a couple of young pigs to one of your First Sergeants who wanted to raise them for a profit". I said, "So you are the gentleman who sold them to him. Do you know that he kept them in a pigpen behind my Nissen Hut quarters -- and, the odor was revolting -- especially on a mild day when we had the windows open?!" Of course, he was sstounded to be talking with someone who remembered his pigs 43 years later. And, I was equally amazed to meet the man who had supplied the First Sergeant with those odiferous porkers! A remarkable coincidence! I asked him if the First Sergeant sold them back to him after fattening them up? He said, "No--he sold them for a good price to someone else and I was miffed that he didn't give me a chance to buy them back! "

IN A PIGS EYE!!

If you think you've heard the last of the 856th Pig Farm. The following story from Joe Bodenhamer explains how and why the 856th BS took up farming.

In regard to the pigs, Sgt. Booth and myself bought them as little baby pigs from a nearby farmer. The money was from our Company Fund, and the purchase was approved by Group and Squadron. The purpose was to raise them and have a squadron barbecue. The guys brought left-over show from the Mess Hall to feed them and we built a pig-pen from lumber from a nearby glider base. When the pigs matured, we couldn't kill them and cook them so we sold them and used the money to buy beef from Ireland and had a party in the Mess Hall with Irish beef

and Irish "likker". Sgt. Booth also had a potato patch across the road from the Orderly room, to the rear of the M/Sgt's huts and bath house. All of which brings back many fond memories.

IN THE DARK OF NIGHT

by

SEBASTIAN CORRIERRE

At one time some fifty of our ground support personnel were placed on orders supplementing the 1139th Military Police Co. in emergency actions. I was one of those fifty. This supplementary action was taken based on warnings from OSS Headquarters in London and German radio threats.

One night after spending two weeks digging a slit trench along side of one of the runways, we had a practice alert for just those on duty. It was one of those nights with not too much light from the moon and a breeze blowing across the open field. As is the case when alone with no one to talk to, more time was spent in keeping watch. On this particular night I kept looking over the runway and suddenly what appeared to me to be someone coming towards me, was coming very slowly. I kept peering intently into the darkness with all sort of things going through my mind. With our group dropping agents in Europe to create havoc for the Germans what was there to stop them from doing the same to us, and to our base. It seemed the more I looked the more something was coming. I decided to follow the first order of guard duty and that was to holler "halt!". Still shaking in my boots from what could be, I hollered "halt!" a second time. I pulled back the bolt on the Thompson I was using and was just going to holler "halt!" for the third and last time before firing my "Tommy gun" when I heard a noise behing me. I whirled around and heard "Hold it, this is the Sergeant of the Guard". With him was the Officer of the Guard. This settled me down and in explaining what I thought I saw, showed nothing. The fellow on guard

on the other side of the runway later said that when he heard me holler "halt!" the second time and then heard the metalic clang of the Tommy bolt, he hit the dirt in the expectation of my opening fire. It just shows what tricks the eyes can play when the mind goes wild when a person is alone, as I was that dark night. It prepared me for the night the order came over our Tannoy system after we went to two part of an alert, "Shoot to kill". I said to myself in Italian, "Now, you will find out if you're a man or mouse". Thank God the order was recinded within a hour and I never found out. To this day, that question has bothered me, I"ll never know.

A MEMORABLE NIGHT
2/3 MARCH 1944
As related by Edward H. DeCoste

I will try to relate to the best of my knowledge and memory the events when we were shot down by the Germans on the night of 2/3 March 1944. My crew consisted of:

Frank G. McDonald, pilot
Fred C. Kelly, co-pilot
Thomas Kendall, navigator
Edward Shevlin, bombardier
Norman Gellerman, flight engineer
Warren L. Ross, radio operator
Leroy Goswick, dispatcher
Edward H. DeCoste, tail gunner

Norman Gellerman was killed in the crash. Seven of us survived but suffered some serious injuries.

Lt. Kendall, Lt. Shevlin and radio operator, Warren Ross, exited on the left side of the plane unbehnown to the rest of us. Lt. McDonald, Lt. Kelly, Leroy Goswick and myself got out through the tail -- the tail turret snapped off in the crash landing. The plane blew up in a matter of seconds.

It was four days before we made contact with the French underground in Contay, Somme Sector. They planned to get us back to England by submarine but before they could do so the Germans caught and shot all of their contacts on that route.

We made it to the foothills of the Pyrenees Mountains. Spain was our destination. I was captured by the Germans before I could get across the Spanish border.

Because I was captured in civilian clothes I was considered by the Germans to be a spy. I eventually convinced them I was a U. S. airman. I was placed in Stalagluft IV at Gross Tychow in Pomerania near the Baltic Sea. My P.O.W. number was 2961.

On 6 February 1945 the Germans took us from our prison camp and started us on what turned out to be a death march. For the next 84 days we walked 600 miles, suffering starvation and much abuse from our German guards. We were freed on 2 May 1945 by the advancing Allied Forces.

LT. FRANK G. McDONALD AND CREW
(AN OFFICIAL REPORT)

On the night of 2 March 1944 one of the 36th Squadron's aircraft failed to return from a sortie. Missing in action were Lt. Frank G. McDonald and crew.

Unknown to the command post at Harrington at that time, McDonald's B-24 had been hit by flak while flying at low altitude. When it was hit the plane was too low to allow the crew to bail out. The parachutes would not have had time to open before striking the ground. The only recourse was to attempt a nighttime crash landing. Fortunately it was a moonlit night and the ground was visible in the moonlight.

The plane's crew that night was composed of: Lt. Frank G. McDonald (pilot); 2nd Lt. Frederick C. Kelly (co-pilot); 2nd Lt. Thomas K. Kendall (navigator); 2nd Lt. Edward F. Shevlin (bombardier); S/Sgt. Leroy F. Goswick (waist gunner); T/Sgt. Warren L. Ross (radio operator); S/Sgt. Norman G. Gellerman (engineer); and S/Sgt. Edward H. DeCoste (tail gunner).

Lt. McDonald displayed great skill as a pilot in landing the plane in such manner that it remained fairly intact.

Here follows the stories of two of the crew members as to what happened then and later:

S/Sgt. Edward H. DeCoste: "In the crash, Sgt. Norman G. Gellerman was killed. Lt. Thomas Kendall and Lt. Shevlin with Sgt. Ross, the radio operator, exited on the left side of the aircraft. Lieutenants McDonald and Kelly and Sgt. Goswick, the waist gunner, got out on the right side. I got out through the tail as the tail section had snapped off in the crash landing. We did not get out a second too soon as the aircraft blew up in a matter of seconds after the crash. It was four days before we made contact with the French underground. They tried to get us back to England by submarine but all of their contacts had been captured by the Germans and shot. DeCoste was captured by the Germans while he was dressed in civilian clothes and for a time he was treated as a spy. When the Germans were finally convinced that he was an American airman, they sent him to the prison camp "Stalag IV" in Gross Tychow, Pomerania, on the Baltic Sea. On the 6th of February 1945 the prisoners in Stalag IV were started on a "death" march which covered 600 miles in 84 days. They suffered much starvation and abuse until they were freed from the Germans on 2 May 1945."

Another crew member, Lt. Frederick C. Kelly, had a different story to tell. After leaving the plane, they walked several miles in the dark and then slept in a gully where they stayed all the next day. After approaching some old men and identifying themselves, they were told that some women from a nearby village would bring them food and water and clothes to replace the flying suits they were wearing. They were given food and were told to stay at one of the nearby houses until a guide could be found to help them across the Pyrenees Mountains into Spain. After several setbacks and close encounters with the Germans, Lt. Kelly did finally return to the airbase at Harrington on 1 June 1944.

EVADING A NIGHT FIGHTER

by

DOUGLAS D. WALKER

We had heard about the enemy's use of radar equipped night fighter pursuit aircraft, but did not give this development much thought.

After all, we flew singly in black Liberators -- so how could they spot us, let along pursue us on a dark night? They would have to be very lucky to pick us up, we thought.

Our mission on a moonless night in March of 1945 was to drop a load of munitions and supplies to the Norwegian underground forces. We had an uneventful flight to Norway over the North Sea. The navigator and the bombardier quickly found our target area and the underground fighters lit up the usual burning cross on the ground to guide us to the drop zone. We made our first pass over the drop zone and dropped our large containers from the bomb bay. As we made our turn for the second pass to drop our smaller containers from the waist, the tail gunner, Ralph Schiller, reported in on the intercom and said, "Tail Gunner to Pilot, bright lights just came on over to our right -- it looks like an airport -- and there is a plane taking off with its landing lights on."

We had stirred up a real hornets nest. The Nazi airfield was only a few miles away and they had obviously sent up a night fighter pursuit plane to zero in on us.

We completed our second pass in a hurry and turned toward the North Sea. When we were over the water a few minutes later, we began to relax, feeling that the night fighter had missed us. Just then, Ralph spoke up again, "There is a plane directly to our rear. I can see the glow of his exhaust and his faint silhouette."

Instantly, Lt. Swarts threw the Liberator into a dive towards the cold waters of the North Sea. When he levelled off the Liberator, we were only a few hundred feet over the water. Swarts then zig-zagged the Lib for about five minutes before climbing back to our cruising altitude. The tail gunner reported no sign of the night fighter.

We had successfully evaded real trouble, thanks to Ralph Schiller's alertness and to Lt. Swarts' flying skill -- and we had developed a new found respect for German night fighter technology.

ONE AIRCREW'S HISTORY

(Extracted from Page 2 of the Staff Reporter, 9 June 1989, Vol. 8 Issue 13, published by the St. Paul School District 625)

SHAGER SURVIVES WARTIME BAILOUT: FLIGHTS INTO ENEMY-OCCUPIED TERRITORIES

Most people can readily recall a day in their lives when something significant happens that forever remains etched in their memory.

Each year on July 13, Bob Shager, teacher and veteran supervisor of the district's Instructional Media, pauses to remember one of those fateful days in his life, a day during World War II when he almost lost his life.

Bob was a very youthful pilot of an eighth Air Force four engine B-24 bomber whose wing was assigned on that day to a deep penetration mission into Germany. The invasion of Europe had taken place a little over a month ago and the war was raging on the ground and in the air.

Bob said groups of bombers took off that morning from many air bases in England and grouped into defensive formations as they headed across the channel and toward their bombing assignments. Bob's unit grouped over the channel and over the Low Countries as they headed toward German. "We were flying at a fairly low altitude, maybe 12 to 15 thousand feet rather than the normal 25 thousand feet, when our plane got jarred by an anti-aircraft shell burst under our right wing. The explosion blew the wing of the plane violently upward, it was that close!

"I asked the navigator if he could see any damage, and within a matter of seconds, he said we were losing oil heavily from our number three engine and the number four engine was beginning to lose oil pressure. A short time later we lost both engines.

"I remember asking Pappy Trent, my navigator, who was 28 years old and the oldest crew member, how long it would take us to get back to England. He gave me an estimate and we decided to try to make it back on our two remaining engines."

Bob said the entire crew began throwing everything they could remove from the craft and all bombs were jettisoned over the channel. The two remaining engines were at full throttle to maintain altitude, and as the airplane crossed the English coast, it became obvious to the 22 year old pilot that they couldn't make it to an airfield for an emergency landing. Bob ordered his crew to bail out while thinking that he and his co-pilot could land the ship. That was not to be. The engines were burning out and the airplane was losing altitude. Bob was the last to leave the stricken Liberator.

The hectic moments of leaving the airplane and parachuting to earth are hazy in Bob's memory. "It all happened so fast!"

Bob and his crew survived the jump although shaken by the experience. "They gave the crew two days leave in London before returning us to our assignment and another B-24. When we got back, we were assigned a maximum effort daylight bombing mission the next day.

"After the second raid into Germany, I heard about a call for a crew to volunteer for an assignment with the North Atlantic Wing of the Air Transport Command. I thought, 'Oh boy, this is for me!' so I volunteered myself and my crew and we were told to report to Duneby, Scotland, where we were assigned to work with the legendary Bert Falcon, a pioneer pilot who had flown over both Poles."

Bob said his crew was trained to fly runs into Norway, the Low Countries, Germany, Italy, and Sweden to drop agents, supplies, guns and other equipment used in underground sabotage and espionage.

"Everything was very secretive. We often didn't know where we were going or the purpose of our mission until the last minute. We flew at night and dropped men or material when we reached our destination after getting the right signal from the ground. I was amazed at the extensive network for gathering information and carrying on guerrilla activities behind enemy lines."

Bob flew 19 sorties, 29 counting his bombing missions. He flew several missions into Nazi occupied Norway, Holland and Denmark. "We moved to France after Patton's Third Armored Division moved toward the Elbe River. From France we flew into Germany until the war ended in May with the German surrender."

Bob returned to England where he logged over 300 hours in C-47 transportation planes in anticipation of being reassigned to the China-Burma-India theater.

Bob and his crew were assigned to return to the United States before his new assignment and on July 13, 1945, one year to the day he and his crew had bailed out of their crippled B-24, Bob's squadron of B-24's was making its way back across the Atlantic to New Hampshire. "We brought our planes back home on our final assignment."

The war ended suddenly and Bob was discharged in September 1945.

It was 45 years ago when a very young Bob Shager flew those 29 missions in a conflict that raged throughout the world. He was fortunate for he survived a war that cost so many their lives!

THE TRIALS AND TRIBULATIONS
OF
JAMES J. HEDDLESON
AND
GEORGE W. HENDERSON

On the night of 27/28 April 1945 the 36th Squadron lost another of its aircrews. The aircraft, #42-40997, in which this aircrew was lost was piloted by Lt. George W. Ambrose. In addition to Ambrose the aircrew consisted of Lt. Robert H. Redhair, co-pilot; Lt. Artnur B. Pope, navigator; Lt. Peter Roccia, bombardier; S/Sgt. Charles M. Wilson, engineer; Sgt. George W. Henderson, tail gunner; and Sgt. James J. Heddleson, radio operator.

Some of the reports that came in about Lt. Ambrose and his crew, came in through from Baker Street (OSS Headquarters). According to a piece of equipment received from the field with a note in French attached, the aircraft arrived over the target and made three descending circles. On the third circle, it struck the ground about 500 meters from the reception party and burned. The information seems not to be quite clear. One other plane had already dropped on this target before #42-40997 crashed nearby. The reception committee had to gather up the load of this former aircraft and get it hidden before the Gestapo arrived. This they managed to do and then sent one of their men back to the scene of the crash. However, for a long time the man could not approach the aircraft because of exploding ammunition.

The story was vague, but it seemed that five members of the crew were killed in the crash and apparently three were still alive. One of the three is now a POW. He was helped away from the burning airplane by a woman, then either captured or turned in to the Gestapo by this woman. He was wounded and had been taken to this woman's house. The man's name was Jim Mooney and the note stated he was from Cincinnati, Ohio. The message went on to list as definately killed in the crash the following: C.W. Ambrose, Robert H. Redhair, A.B. Pope and Charles M. Wilson.

Two members of the crew unaccounted for. It is assumed the unidentified member of the crew was Lt. Roccia who would have been in the nose of the plane and would probably be badly mangled and burned. This leaves Sgts. Henderson and Heddleson. This is what happened. The aircraft had reached the target area, identified the reception lights, and was coming in for the drop. The ground

consisted of a clearing surrounded by high hills and as the aircraft banked in descending circles a wing struck a hillside and the plane crashed.

Sgt. Henderson, the tail gunner, was hurled from the tail to the bomb bay by the force of the crash. Sgt. Heddleson, the radio operator, was jolted halfway through the camera hatch and then back into the airplane, when it struck the ground and bounced and crashed again. Henderson, after the initial shock, climbed out of the wreckage. He looked around for other crew members and saw Heddleson, who was struggling in a maze of cables. With Henderson's help, Heddleson extricated himself, and then the two men, despite their bruises and the severe head cuts Heddleson had sustained, began running away from the crash. They were not more than twenty-five yards from the airplane when it blew up, illuminating the entire night sky and showering the two men with sparks and fragments.

For a mile and a half they ran at random, motivated by fear and shock. Then they stopped. Calmly now, they sat on the ground and began to plan, determined to evade capture by the Germans and to escape to England. From their emergency kits they drew compasses and set themselves a heading for the southeast, where the Pyrenees and Spain lay. Then having rested a short while, they began walking in the direction they had set for themselves. Progress was slow because they kept to the woods and out-of-the-way paths. They walked until 0530 hours when they stopped in the woods to hide and rest. Later they found out the Germans had blocked off all roads within a radious of ten miles from the crashed aircraft, and that Dornier 210's and JU-88's were reconnoitering the area for the men who had escaped from the crash.

Henderson and Heddleson remained in the woods until 0830 hours. Then they left the woods, walked up a hill at the summit, looked down upon a group of houses. There was too much activity around the houses, however, and they remained hidden, watching. Finally, at 1130 hours, when the way seemed clear, they decided to approach a house which was somewhat removed from the others. However, Sgt. Heddleson's wounds had weaken him so much that it was difficult for him to move. And so, he remained behind while Henderson left his hiding place alone and advanced to the house, holding his flier's wings in his outstretched hand.

The farming people who lived in the house knew about the airplane crash, and as soon as they saw Henderson's wings they understood who he was. Immediately, the man of the house went to the hiding place where they got Heddleson and helped him to the house. The two men were given water to wash their wounds and Henderson, using a knife sterilized in cognac, extracted four pieces of steel from the back

of Heddleson's head. He patched the skin together with the adhesive tape from his aid-box. Then the two men returned to their hiding place in the woods, and, while the farmer stood guard, they slept.

At 1400 hours, they were awakened by the farmer. Handing them field glasses, he pointed down into the valley. The Germans had come to haul away the airplane wreck, and from where they were standing, Henderson and Heddleson could see a platoon of German soldiers load the unrecognizable remains of their B-24 into two lorries and then drive away.

They did not have much time to brood over the scene, however, because the farmer had become nervous at the presence of German soldiers, and he told the two men they would do well to leave rapidly and at once. They left in accordance with his wishes and traveled for the rest of the afternoon. They did not cover much ground because they could cover only two hundred yards at a time, because of hilly country and their legs being so cut and swollen.

At a stream they were able to fill their water bottles. By 1700 hours, they had managed to travel a mile and a half, and entirely exhausted, they laid up under some trees and rested keeping a watchful eye on the adjacent road. At 1800 hours they started out again across an open field. They progressed slowly for about an hour, came to a creek which they jumped with difficulty and at last saw a farmhouse. They decided to approach it. A small boy was the only one about, but he managed to convey that his mother would be back soon. In about a half hour the mother returned. She acted in a friendly manner toward the two Americans, fed them and allowed them to put up for the night in the hay gathered in her barn.

At 0800 hours the following morning the men were awakened. The farm woman gave them breakfast and pointed out a direction for them to follow. They thanked her for the help she had given them and set out again cross-country.

They came across railway tracks, rusty with disuse and decided to follow the tracks because the steep banks on either side provided good cover. The tracks led to a tunnel and the two men followed the tracks through the tunnel, emerging to their astonishment, in the center of a small town.

Realizing it would be conspicuous to turn suddenly and retrace their steps, they continued following the tracks through the town. They were still wearing their gaberdine flying suits and leather jackets, and while most people stared and some even waved, they were not stopped and no one spoke to them. On the far side of the town they approached a man and asked for help. The man was jittery, however, and said, "Partez, partez" (Leave, Leave). The two immediately left

the tracks and continued cross-country through the woods. They came to a road and decided to follow it. But before long a German truck approached and the two men quickly jumped into a roadside ditch in order to prevent detection. When the danger passed, they realized it was not wise to follow an open road and accordingly they took to the hills again.

They came to a narrow stream and stopped to drink and wash up a bit. Then they set out again.

They passed by a Frenchman working in his garden and asked him for help. The man appeared reluctant to do anything, and they left. They had gone only a short distance when the man called them back. He had decided to help them. Accordingly he showed them a clump of bushes in which they were to hide and indicated to them that they were to wait there. Then he left.

Heddleson and Henderson remained in the bushes, wondering if they were being gullible, wondering whether the man was trustworthy, speculating about being set up for a trap. But they decided to wait. They were tired and hungry. Perhaps this would be their contact with the underground organization.

After what seemed an interminable wait, the Frenchman returned. He carried a note, written in English, which he handed to the two men. It read, "Teacher of school will come at five o'clock. Courage. We are your friends." It was the real thing. They had made the contact they had hoped for since landing on French soil. Impatiently they waited for five o'clock. At last it arrived, and punctually on the hour a man came to them carrying a large suitcase. It was the school teacher. The suitcase contained food, weapons, ammunition, mercurochrome and whiskey.

They were led from their hiding place to a farmer's house where they were given bread, cheese and wine. The teacher rode off on his bicycle.

At 2120 hours the teacher returned accompanied by another man, who was in effect a walking arsenal. Stuck in his belt were pistols and knives, and from his pockets grenades stuck out. Heddleson and Henderson were given guns and escorted from the farmer's house, through a town, to the teacher's house on the other side of town. They had not been at the teacher's house very long when a car arrived and the two Americans were driven to another town some distance away. There they were joined by an English-speaking Frenchwoman and taken to a farmhouse where they met the leader of the local resistance organization. That night they slept in beds with real sheets.

The following morning, the resistance leader came to the farmhouse accompanied

by two women, an elderly man and a doctor. The doctor examined the two Americans and treated their legs, which were badly swollen. Then he dressed Heddleson's head wounds.

That night the two men were moved to an old abandoned house, where they were to remain hidden until arrangements could be completed for their removal. For five days Heddleson and Henderson lived in total discomfort waiting to be moved. Since there was no furniture in the house they slept on a cement floor. Once a day a Frenchwoman and a man came to the house bringing a bowl of soup, a chunk of bread and a quart of water. Those were their provisions for a twenty-four hour period. They used the water for drinking, washing and even shaving. Behind the house was a good-sized lake, but the men could not leave the house to get to it.

At the end of five days, the resistance leader accompanied by an English-speaking Frenchwoman came for the men. The date was the 5th of May.

Heddleson and Henderson were taken to the Frenchwoman's house where they were treated with every consideration. The Frenchwoman was eloquent in her condemnation of the plan which had kept the men for five days on the cold cement floor of an abandoned house.

During the time they spent here, all the necessary contacts and arrangements were being made for their eventual journey out of France. However, their stay at the Frenchwoman's home came to a premature and abrupt end. On the 14th of May, a woman visited the house and before evening the whole town knew that two American fliers were being harbored in their midst. As a result of this woman's talkativeness, the men moved early the following morning to a farmhouse six kilometers away. There a rendezvous was made with the chief of another resistance organization which had agreed to take over the two Americans.

Heddleson and Henderson remained at this farmhouse for twelve days. During this time Gestapo men made regular visits, since it was this farm which supplied them with eggs. The Americans simply remained in their room until the Gestapo men had transacted their business and left.

On the 24th of May, the resistance chief brought a young English-speaking Frenchman to the house. Heddleson and Henderson were asked for their name, rank and serial number, and for their PW photographs. It was explained that the photographs would be sent to London for corroboration.

The next night they were moved from the farmhouse into a nearby town. Here they remained for more than two months, while verification of their identity

could be received from London and when verification had been received transportation out of France could be arranged. During those two months, several interesting incidents occured.

On the 23rd of May, they were visited by the people who had sent the report of their aircraft's crashing. These people had been hunting Heddleson and Henderson for a month. They told how five members of the crew had been killed outright by the crash and how Jim Mooney, the dispatcher, had been helped away by a Frenchwoman but had been betrayed to the Germans by a collaborationist and was now a Prisoner of War. At times Heddleson and Henderson were taken on guided tours of the town. Their only activity in town, however, was to purchase cigarettes which set them back 150 francs (three dollars) for a package of twenty. It was a far cry from the three-penny package of American cigarettes at Harrington.

One day, a patrol of six mean-looking German Storm troopers came to town. It was reported that they were looking for "two men". While it was not clear exactly which two men were being hunted, it was decided not to take any chances, and accordingly Heddleson and Henderson were spirited out of town and hidden away in an old barn until the German patrol left. Before the Germans left they visited a house where an old woman lived alone. Desiring to gain information about her son's whereabout, they proceeded to beat up the old woman, displaying their vaunted Teutonic efficiency during the operation. The old woman would not talk but her son gave himself up in order to spare his mother. When the Germans left with the son as their prisoner Heddleson and Henderson returned from their hiding place.

On the 18th of July, the two men made an expedition with a resistance group. The group consisted of four Frenchmen and the two Americans. Armed with English Sten guns, they mounted bicycles and rode twelve kilometers to their destination, a bridge employed by Nazi supply trains. The Frenchmen placed bombs at strategic places and set the fuses while Heddleson and Henderson acted as guards. Then they waited, hidden in nearby bushes. But the fuses were badly set and as the men watched two German trains passed safely over the bridge. A circumstance which visibly irritated the leader of the group. In the next moment, however, the bridge blew up, so that future trains at least would be delayed. Then the group remounted their bicycles and rode the twelve kilometers back to town.

Again, on the 23rd of July, Heddleson and Henderson accompanied the same group on another operation. Their destination this time was the home of a

collaborationist family. The purpose of the expedition was to throw the fear of God into the collaborationists as well as gain some necessary information. The six men reached the house and surrounded it. The leader called out his orders but the frightened people inside the house refused to come out and began to throw chairs and assorted bits of furniture out of the windows at the men surrounding the house. The leader threatened to set fire to the barn and this threat chastened the collaborationists so that they came out of the house. Sgt. Henderson, armed with a machine gun, took the women in charge while the men were being questioned. The result of the operation was completely successful. The necessary information was obtained and Henderson returned with the machine gun in one hand and a gigantic ham in the other. The ham had been pressed upon him by one of the women as a token of her essential good will.

On the 27th of July, the group who had sent the report on Lt. Ambrose's aircraft which had been received at Harrington had arrived to take Heddleson and Henderson on a reception operation. They drove their car, which contained a Eureka set in the back seat, to the reception ground and waited. There was intensive RAF activity in the vicinity and no aircraft arrived for the dropping operation at the ground, which was an "Astrologer" target. Finally, the reception committee left. The next morning the BBC signal was received, "Astrologer fell in the well", meaning that the previous night's operation had been cancelled, probably because it might have interfered with the RAF activities. Later in the day another signal indicated that the same operation was on for that night. Accordingly, the committee, accompanied by the two American sergeants, posted themselves again.

After a tense period of waiting the Eureka indicated the presence of an aircraft. It was an RAF Sterling. The aircraft circled the reception and, from the unusually high altitude of 2,000 feet, made its drop of twenty-four containers. Wind conditions were favorable, however, and none of the containers went astray. Until sunup the reception committee worked gathering up the containers and hauling them in a horse-drawn cart to a town ten kilometers away where the containers were hidden in an old barn.

Just as the last of the load was being transported to the barn, the sun came up and the people of the town were sticking their heads out of their windows.

The following day word was received that Heddleson and Henderson would be leaving the next day, to make connections with an airplane which would fly back to England. Accordingly, at 0730 hours on the morning of July 30th, the two men

were taken in a lorry to the rendezvous point 110 kilometers away. The truck skirted around, keeping to back roads and out-of-the-way lanes. It stopped only once and that was to allow Heddleson and Henderson to see the five crosses marking the graves of their fellow crew members who had been killed. The graves were neatly trimmed and decorated with fresh flowers. Three kilometers further on, the truck passed by the scene of the crash and the men could see bits of wreckage around the burned place on the ground.

Finally, the truck reached a town which was its destination and the men spent the night comfortably in a small hotel.

They spent the next day waiting for a radio signal which would confirm the flight. In the course of waiting, they sat for a while in the terrace of a cafe. As they sat, sipping drinks, a group of German soldiers rode by on bicycles. The Germans carried English Sten guns which they had taken from the maquis. As they rode by they looked over in the direction of the two Americans but said nothing and did not stop.

At 1330 and again at 1930, the radio signal approved the flight, but at 2113 cancellation was signaled. Rather than spend another night in town, Heddleson and Henderson were moved to a farm house on the outskirts. The farmer and his wife had a large brood of children and when everyone gathered for a meal the table groaned beneath the combined weight of nineteen people. Ten quarts of wine were consumed at each sitting. And in this domestic setting, the two men lived for three days.

Then a car arrived and they were again driven back to the hotel in town. The flight was again cancelled and they spent the night in the hotel. On the following day, the flight was laid on but later in the day was cancelled for the third time. They were beginning to get nervous and restless. The moon period was waning and they looked with dread upon the prospect of remaining in France for another month.

The next day they were driven to a maquis-liberated town where they remained for three more days. They walked freely about town and everyone seemed to know they were Americans.

At last the great day arrived. The flight was approved all the way. From the maquis-liberated town Heddleson and Henderson were driven ten kilometers to rendezvous with a maquis chief, who it turned out, had recently been to London and had spoken to Colonel Heflin. Protected by carloads of maquis soldiers, they were driven out to the landing field. The entire route was guarded by sentinels and all around the field a total of four hundred maquis soldiers stood guard. It

was known that nearby a group of fifty-five Germans were stationed. The Germans, if they knew what was going on, showed understandable reluctance to do anything about it. At the field, Heddleson and Henderson met their fellow passengers. These included, besides a group of agents, a Canadian Spitfire pilot and a Lancaster navigator. Precisely at 0130 hours, an aircraft arrived and began circling the field for a landing. It was a Lockheed Hudson and with its landing lights on presented the most beautiful picture that the two men had seen for a long time.

The Hudson landed and the two Americans, who had been given a 4 and 5 priority number boarded it. Shortly afterwards the Hudson took off. The flight to England was uneventful and in a few hours Heddleson and Henderson were back on English soil again.

It had certainly been "the long way home".

* * * * * * *

The following item has been abstracted from the 801/492nd Bombardment Group Newsletter.

* * * * * * *

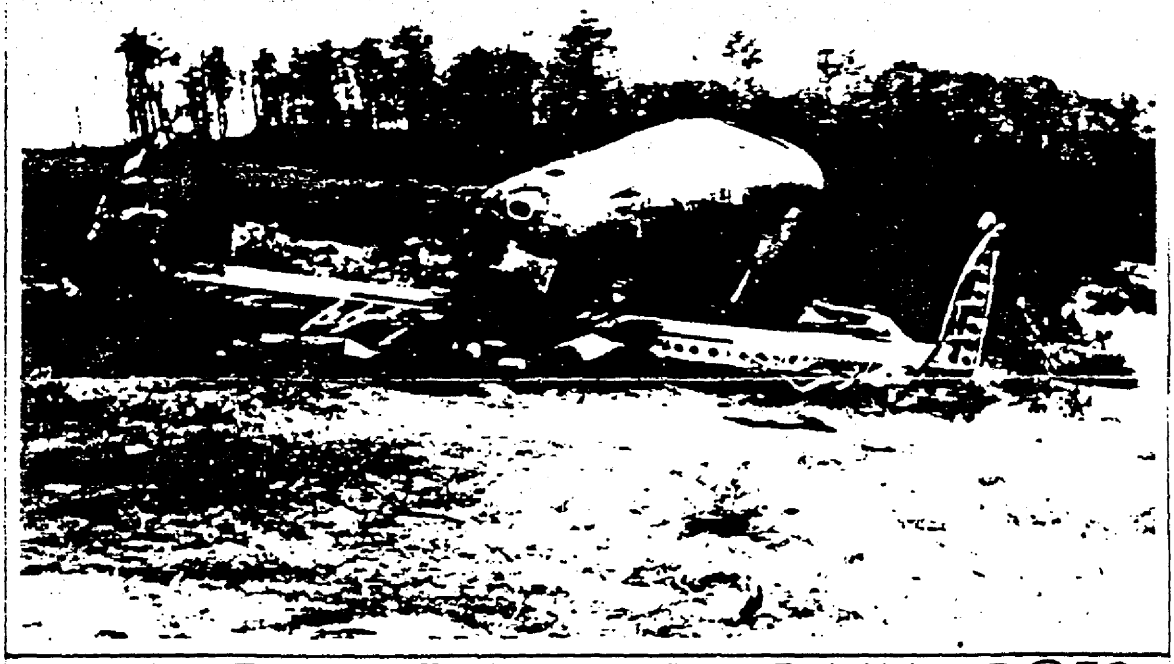
There are many great stories of survival in our group's history -- due to the nature of our low level missions in the dark of night. Two of these stories belong to a lucky couple of Carpetbaggers. The first is Jim Heddleson of Louisville, Ohio. Jim, who was the radio operator on pilot Lt. George Ambrose's crew, flying in the 36th/856th BS, survived a chaotic, frantic "dive" after their Liberator hit a hillside and struggled to gain altitude. Two of his fellow aircrew members, James Mooney and George Henderson also survived. Unfortunately, five other fellow air crewmen died that night of April 27/28. (Lt. George Ambrose, pilot; Lt. Robert Redhair, co-pilot; Lt. Arthur Pope, navigator; Lt. Peter Roccia, bombardier; and S/Sgt. Charles Wilson, engineer.

According to Jim, he was in the tail (his <u>first</u> piece of luck) checking on some gear, when the Lib made the first recognition pass at low level, over the drop zone near St. Cyr de Valorges. On the second pass, to make the drop, the plane suddenly started to labor as Ambrose tried to gain altitude -- closing the bomb bay doors as it climbed. Jim suspected "something was wrong". On the third

pass, "the plane hit something -- a tree, or a part of the hill — and began to shake violently -- all the time trying to gain altitude on failing engines." Jim Mooney dove out of the "Joe Hole" and Jim remembers Henderson helping him out of the aircraft as it gyrated all over the sky. Jim hit the ground, "a crashing blow -- seemingly as soon as I cleared the plane. My legs were hurt from the blow hitting the ground. I'm certain that my chute never had time to open fully. But, miraculously, except for some pieces of steel in my head and some bruises, I was OK."

On the ground, Jim met up with Henderson, but they couldn't find Mooney. They made their way to the plane, and found it a shambles with no survivors in it. As they sprinted away, it exploded, showering them with sparks and hot metal. Later, the resistance fighters told them that Mooney had broken his back in his jump and they had reluctantly turned him over to the Germans so that he would receive immediate hospital treatment, that they could not provide. He survived and was placed in a prisoner of war camp. Jim Heddleson and George Henderson (who died of Leukemia in 1950) after hiding and stumbling around the countryside for several days, were taken in tow by the local school teacher, who delivered them safely to the local maquis -- the "Resistance of Loire". They stayed with the maquis for over three months, even joining in on several "raids" against the Germans. One night, Jim and Henderson went out on a bicycle mission with the maquis and helped them blow up a railroad trestle. The last two weeks of their ordeal, they were in hiding with two notable Frenchmen: M. Leon Blum (former head of the French Cabinet), and Jacques Chaban-Delmas (a future Prime Minister and President of the National Assembly. At the time Jim met him, he was the General commanding the resistance fighters). The maquis arranged for a British Hudson bomber to pick them all up at a secret "strip" and return them to England.

In 1946, the people of St. Cyr de Valorges erected a stone monument to Jim's crew, to honor their valor in helping save France. They have had Jim and his wife Ruth back to help them rededicate the monument, making Jim an official member of the French Resistance Fighters and an Honorary Citizen of Tarare, France. In 1974, they gave Jim the <u>ultimate</u> honor -- they named the Town Square of St. Cyr de Valorges, "Place James Heddleson"!!!



TRAGEDY AT ST-CYR-DE-VALORGES

THE LAST MISSION OF THE "WORRY BIRD"

April 28, 1944. Robert L. Boone photo

MONUMENT AT SAINT-CYR-de-VALORGES

Buried under this monument are the five crew members who died in the crash. They are Lt. George W. Ambrose, pilot; Lt. Robert H. Redhair, copilot; Lt. Arthur B. Pope, navigator; Lt. Peter Roccia, bombardier; and S/Sgt. Charles M. Wilson, flt. engr.. (crew of the 36th Squadron).

Their names along with the following are inscribed on the monument.

"In memory of the five American airmen found dead under the wreck of their plane which crashed in flames on this place on 28 April of the year 1944. Their mission was to deliver arms to our Secret Army for the liberation of France and the restoration of our ideal".

Surviving the crash were Sgt. George W. Henderson, Sgt. James C. Mooney and S/Sgt James J. Heddleson. Heddleson and Henderson made their escape to southern France and were later returned to England by British "Dakota" operations. Mooney, badly injured, was helped from the crash area by a French woman, then was taken prisoner by the Germans.

Sgt. George Henderson died in 1950. Sgt. James Mooney survived his POW time but contact with him has been lost. S/Sgt James J. Heddleson is one of our Association's strong supporters.

THE SYMBOLISM OF THE MONUMENT

Translated from a French description

The monument's shape is like the plane's wing, stamped with the U.S. star and the red sky of the sunset, a symbol of a living fire is represented by the red granite.

Roger Doche, the Frenchman who was instrumental with the help of "Marious Plannus" in erecting the monument, made a speech at the monument's dedication along with Lt. Col. Robert L. Boone.

Roger Doche's moving speech, made at that time will be run in a forth coming issue of the Carpetbagger.

MY TRIP TO THE DEDICATION CEREMONY

(written on May 6, 1945)

Robert L. Boone

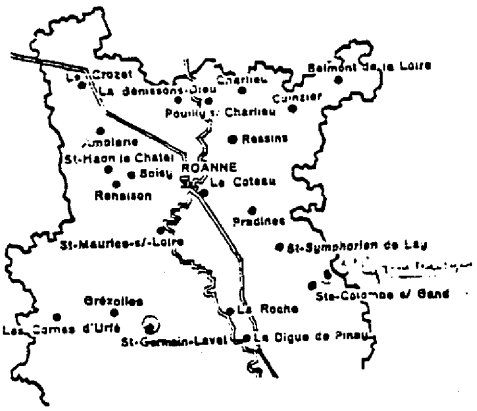
I was called to the phone and asked to be present at a certain hotel, in a specific little French village at nine in the evening on a certain day where I would be met by an officer with whom I had worked before. The purpose of the trip, I was told, was to be present at a ceremony to be held in honor of a crew of mine that had been lost over France sometime back. I flew to one of the large cities and took a train from there to the village. The train consisted of an engine--a diesel engine, pulling two beautifully modernistic and clean cars at the rate of 15 miles per hour. Getting on the train was a major battle. I went to the R.T.O. (railroad traffic office) to get a ticket. That was easy. But a Frenchman didn't want to let me on--said it was too crowded. I showed him my ticket with the seat reservation, but he said that made no difference--the seats were already full. I seems that they sell seats on the side and make a little extra money. I ranted and raved and finally swore and pushed by him, yanked a Frenchman out of my seat, gave him a pack of cigarettes and sat myself down. The ride was beautiful--in hilly country. It lasted an hour and a half. They weren't going to stop at my village, and I was going to pull the emergency cord to halt the two car'd affair. But we were all such good friends (the engineer even came back for a chat) that they stopped. I asked directions at the station and started wandering my way to the hotel. I met my old friend half way from the hotel. We spent three hours eating and talking about the ceremony next day and about a hundred other things that came to mind. We drove up to another and smaller village after breakfast in the morning. This was where the event was to take place. I was taken to the exact spot where the ship first hit the ground, and the whole thing was explained to me by eye-witnesses. Then I was taken to the spot where most of the ship finally came to rest--the place where five of the crew were found dead. The French had erected a monument on this spot--a very impressive monument explaining the reason for its erection, and naming the five who were killed. After a glimpse of the monument and a talk with those who had seen the crash, we decended to the village.

Upon entering the village square, I noticed that there were banners over every street intersection reading "Vive L'Amerique" or "In memory of the 5 Americans who died here"---many such things. Each window held American and French flags, streamers adorned every building. Flowers were abundant. Every citizen was present. I had noticed on the way to the village that there were many people out walking. Now I learned why. They were all on their way to this little village. They came by bicycle, cart and car. They came by foot. They came in whole families, with their lunches and Sunday best clothes. They came as a pilgrimage. I could see them winding through the valleys, converging on our little center. They pressed into the square. I had now met the Mayor, the American Consul, the American Military Attache, the representative from the American General commanding Southern France, the French Regional Commander of Air Forces, and many high ranking French officials and also lesser titles whom I had met in previous dealings. I was finding that this was a truly huge thing of great significance and potential Franco-American accord. I was amazed at being introduced to a correspondent fro O.W.I. (Office of War Information) who represented not only our government but the French newspapers and an American controll-French magazine. It was getting along toward 9:30 in the morning, so we were taken into the church (Catholic) where we underwent an hour and a half Mass, all of which was devoted to the Americans and the war. After Mass we congregated again in the square for one or two selections by the bands (2 bands were there), we

saluted to the Americans, British and French anthems. Then began the two mile trek up the hill to the monument. The bands led, being followed by the school children. Now this was something. The villagers had let their children out of school early for two weeks previous, teaching them to walk in step with the band. It was very impressive. On the way up the hill, people ran ahead to snap pictures, both photos and movies. At the monument the speeches began. I had asked the night before if I shouldn't speak in French, suggesting that my friend could write me a flowery talk and coach me in delivering it. But he and the others were of the opinion that it would be more impressive if I spoke in American and had it translated. This we did--I can remember exactly what I said. I was what I felt. I said--"I have flown 30 missions to France at night, in the dark, delivering supplies to the French Secret Army. I am very pleased to be here on the ground to see the beauty of your country which I could not see at night, and to feel the warmth of the people which I could not feel in the Liberator." I pause while a Frenchman translates, applause, then I continued--"I have flown here today from an American airfield in England. It is the same airfield where those who were killed here were based. They were my boys. They were in my Squadron.* I knew them well. I am speaking for them, and for their families, and for all of the Americans in my Squadron and Group in England. I am touched and moved beyond words by what I see here. To me this symbolizes all of the American airmen lost while fighting with France. I shall take it upon myself to write the families of those who died here and tell them of the great honor which you have bestowed upon them. May God bless you." It was translated after every one or two sentences. Throughout the speeches I would notice a lady whispering to her little daughter or son and point to me. The little tyke would then scamper up, push a bunch of flowers in my hand, curtsy and run off. I was loaded down. Others put the flowers on the tomb--as I finally did with the ones I had. When the ceremony was over we walked back to the village for wine at the Mayor's house and lunch in the banquet hall of the best restaurant in town. It started at one and at six we were still eating. We had a course of spinach, another of potatoes, then cold meats, then soup, then roast chicken, then roast veal, then salad, then cheese, then pudding. What a meal.

I had planned on getting back to the Base that evening but it was too late by the time the banquet finished. After it was over there were lots of pictures taken. People kept coming up bringing wine for presents. They were tickled that the C.O. of the boys had come to their dedication. A man came up and gave me the dog tags belonging to one of those killed. Another gave me a boy's crash bracelet. I spoke with the little lady who had hidden two of the injured boys and gotten them back to us. She had a letter written to her from one of the lads letting her know that they were both safe in the States. She is a proud women--and she should be. She did a great and dangerous thing. I spoke with the farmer who had sheltered one of the wounded men, but had been discovered by the Krauts and had to hide. The kid was taken prisoner. So it went--until I had to leave.

* It was not until the Las Vegas Reunion that Bob Boone, in talking to Jim Heddleson, found out that the crew was not a member of his Squadron but that of LTC Rodman St. Clair of the 36th Squadron.



LTC Robert L. Boone

at St-Cyr-de-Valorges
April 22, 1945

(L-R) Col. Paul Riviere, Lt. Col. Robert L. Boone, Mayor of St-Cyr-de-Valorges and Col. Van der Stricht.

All photos from Bob Boone taken in 1945

MONUMENT AT SAINT-CYR-VALORGES

"EN SOUVENIR DE CINQ AVIATEURS AMERICANS TROUVES MORTS SOUS LES DEBRIS DE LEUR AVION ECRASE EN FLAMMES EN CE LIEU 28 AVRIL DE L'AN 1944 DONT LA MISSION ETAIT DE PARACHUTES DES ARMES A NOTRE ARMEE CECRETE POUR LA LIBERATOR DE LA FRANCE ET LA RESTAURATION DE NOTRE IDEAL".

Lt. G.W. AMBROSE
Charles M. WILSON A.B. POPE
Robert H. REDHAIR Lt. Peter ROCCIA

* * * * *

(Crew of the 858th Squadron)

"In memory of five American airmen found dead under the wreck of their plane which crashed in flames on this place on 28 April of the year 1944. Their mission was to deliver arms to our Secret Army for the liberation of France and the restoration of our ideal".

* * * * *

One can read on the marble slab:

"A nos amis tombes ici en...."
O.S.S. et M.U.R.

* * * * *

"To our friends fallen here in.."

* * * * *

M.U.R. is for "Mouvements Unifies de la Resistance".

On April 28, 1944 the "Worry Bird crashed near the small French village of Saint-Cyr-de-Valorges, killing 5 of the 8 airmen aboard. The French people erected a monument over the spot where the largest section of the plane came to rest. Every year since then, on the Sunday closest to April 28, the people of St-Cyr-de-Valorges and the surrounding area, hold a memorial service at the monument.

OUR BIGGEST ENEMY WAS THE GROUND ..... BECAUSE WE FLEW INTO IT.

Col. Robert W. Fish

The memorial service is held, not only for the 5 American airmen, but for all the Allied personnel who helped the French Resistance during WW II.

THE FITZPATRICK CREW SAGA

On the night of 29/30 May 1945, twenty-three B-24's were dispatched on Carpetbagger sorties. Lt. Ernest B. Fitzpatrick and his crew failed to return from this night's operations.

The members of Fitzpatrick's crew were: Lt. Ernest B. Fitzpatrick (pilot), Lt. Richard V. Thiriot (co-pilot), Lt. James S. Sherwood (navigator), Lt. Joseph J. Lasicki (bombardier), S/Sgt. James E. William (W/gunner), T/Sgt. Paul P. Kasza (radio operator), T/Sgt. Walter W. Swartz (engineer), Lt. Cornell Degrothy (of the 788th flying navigational check-out) and S/Sgt. William E. Schack (T/gunner).

For over three months nothing was heard of the crew. Meanwhile Eisenhower's armies invaded France and moved eastward into Belgium. In the middle of September, as a result of the progress achieved by the liberating armies, many Allied airmen who had been hidden by Belgium patriots began returning to England. Among those were Lt. Fitzpatrick and four members of hiw crew, Lt's. Thiriot and Sherwood, Sgt's. Kasza and Swartz.

This is the story of what happened to them in Belgium.

On the night of 28 May an aircraft had successfully completed a dropping mission at a ground near Osric 14 which was the target for Fitzpatrick's crew on the following night. As the result of activity on the night of the 28th, the Germans moved in mobile flak units and placed night fighters in readiness. Unfortunately, the Belgium patriots were not able to transmit this information to London immediately. In effect, therefore, Fitzpatrick was flying straight into a German ambush.

The airplane took off from the Harrington drome on schedule at 2300 hours. The flight over the channel was uneventful and the airplane proceeded to Belgium. At 0100 hours the target was reached and identified. There were no lights to indicate the presence of a reception committee. Then, as the aircraft circled the area, all hell broke loose from a flak battery on the ground. The aircraft was hit, and as it veered away from the area it was attacked by a waiting JU-88, which raked it with 200 mm cannon fire. The airplane enveloped in flames. Further flight was impossible, and Fitzpatrick sounded the bail-out alarm.

Struggling with the controls, he steadied the aircraft until he was certain that all members of his crew had jumped. Then, putting the airplane on AFCE, he made his own jump. The aircraft crashed forty kilometers from London. It was a total wreck.

BEHIND GERMAN LINES

Reprinted from
Bay Village (OH) Journal

by

NICK KOVIJANIC
JOURNAL STAFF WRITER

More than 43 years have elapsed, but that fateful morning in Belgium remains vivid in William Schack's memory.

Somewhere over Belgium, just before 2:30 a.m. May 30, 1944, and Schack is poised at his customary tailgunner's spot, one of eight men on a mission to provide supplies to the underground in the Nazi-occupied country.

But this venture, the 18th of its kind for Schack and the crew of the B-24 Liberator plane, ends abruptly when a German nightfighter finds its target through darkness and forces the Americans to bail out in enemy territory.

"I knew exactly what was happening. It just happened so fast," recalled Schack. "I was firing at the German plane and he was firing at us. I could see the flames coming back from our wing. We were totally on fire and the pilot pushed the bailout bell and I scrambled to get out."

From there, the scene intensifies. Schack parachutes safely to earth, wanders around the countryside until morning, and when daylight becomes the enemy, he seeks refuge. The grounded airman comes upon a farmhouse, knocks on the back door and is taken in. It proves to be his initial contact with the Belgium underground.

For William Schack, age 22, at the time, the real tale begins at the farmhouse in Hannut, Belgium. That's when Schack met up with 18-year-old Rene Londoz, a 2nd Lt. in the Belgium underground and the man who guided Schack through 30 turbulent days eluding the German Army.

And for a week last month, 65-year-old Schack and his wife, Kathleen, went back to Belgium with three other crew members, to retrace those 30 days shared with the underground, a group that Schack said saved his life. It was an emotional trip back to a turning point in his life.

Note: The three other crew members mentioned above were Ernest B. Fitzpatrick, pilot; Walter W. Swartz, flight engineer; and Paul Kasza, radio operator (all members of our Association).

Fitzpatrick made a successful jump, landing unhurt in a field. He immediately hid his parachute and Mae West, and began walking rapidly towards the south, in the direction of the French frontier. He walked without stopping until 0630 hours, covering a distance of about 14 miles. Then it became light and not being inclined to expose himself until he had taken stock of the situation, he took refuge in a field and hid in a clump of bushes. At 1800 hours, an old farmer crossed the field, intent on gathering his cows together. The farmer appeared trustworthy, and Fitzpatrick hailed him, language card in hand. The old man spoke only Flemish but Fitzpatrick managed to convey the idea that he was an American flyer, and in need of help. The old man signalled Fitzpatrick to remain where he was, and then he left. Ten minutes later the old man was back, accompanied by three men, younger than he. They brought food and beer for Fitzpatrick, and they sat with him as the hungry American ate and drank. The old man went away, leaving Fitzpatrick and the three men. They remained in the field, talking, until it grew dark.

At 2200 hours, the men led Fitzpatrick to a house in a nearby town. There he met Lt. Lasicki. Several days later the two lieutenants were moved to a farmhouse where they met Sgt's. Schack and Swartz.

Sgt. Swartz recounted his experience. He had bailed out of the airplane at 7,000 feet, when he saw the rest of the crew jumping. His parachute opened at 6,000 feet, and he continued falling. He hit the ground very hard, was jolted badly, but recovered quickly. It was then 0130 hours. He quickly buried his parachute, checked his compass and headed north, thinking that he might meet some of his crew. He walked until daylight and then hid in a small woods. Around noon, he looked out of his hiding place and observed a farmer working in a field next to the woods. At last Swartz left his hiding place and approached the farmer.

Although the farmer spoke only Flemish, Swartz, using his language card and pantomine, communicated the fact that he was an American flyer. The farmer was friendly, offered Swartz some cold coffee from a jug and had told him that ten German soldiers were stationed in the nearby village. Swartz set out again, this time heading south, towards the French frontier. He walked some distance, and at last found a young man working in a field. Swartz approached him. The young man could speak French, which made it easier to converse with him. Hearing that Swartz was an American flyer, he led him to a far edge of the field, showed him a hiding place in a swamp and instructed Swartz to remain there. Then he left,

returning shortly with food and drink. As Swartz refreshed himself, the Belgium told him that "one of his comrades" was nearby. It was too dangerous, however, for Swartz to move just yet, so he remained hiding in the swamp and his benefactor left.

At 1800 hours the Belgiun returned, bringing a jacket and a straw hat for Swartz. Together they made their way to a farmhouse, and there Swartz met Sgt. Schack. Schack's knee had been wrenched in the course of bailing out but otherwise was alright.

While the two American sergeants were enjoying their reunion, the farmer was engaged in contacting the underground Intelligence. During the afternoon of the following day a representative of the underground arrived at the farmhouse. He questioned Schack and Swartz closely, gave them papers to fill out and sign. He seemed satisfied that they were bonafied Americans and before they left the farmhouse three days later he had delivered passports and identification cards to them.

Schack and Swartz were given civilian clothes, food and a place to sleep. They also managed to catch up on washing and shaving. Thus three days passed.

In the evening of the fourth day a horse-drawn cart arrived bearing Fitzpatrick and Lasicki. The men had little time to celebrate their reunion, however, because they were taken almost at once to the home of a member of the underground some distance away. The guide walked ahead of the cart, two of the Americans rode in the cart, and the other two walked about fifty feet behind. In this manner they arrived at their destination.

At the house, they were given food and drink. It was decided that Lasicki and Schack would remain at the house and Fitzpatrick and Swartz would be taken to another place. Accordingly, the latter two men traveled a distance of twenty kilometers to a village. They found the house to which they had been directed to and made themselves known. They were taken in, and remained there for a week. The day after they left, a week later, the Germans came to the house, looking for room to billet troops.

Fitzpatrick and Swartz left on foot. As they walked along they noticed two Gestapo men walking ahead of them. The two Americans slowed down. But looking back over their shoulders they saw two more Gestapo men behind them, heading in their direction. Their first reaction was that the Gestapo was closing in on them, that they were trapped. It would never do, however, to make a run for it. So they continued their slow walking pace. After a few endless minutes, the

Gestapo men overtook them and passed them without glancing at them.

Fitzpatrick and Swartz turned off into a side road and quickly covered the rest of the way to the house which was their destination. They arrived safely and were taken in and hidden.

The next day Swartz was moved to another house, while Fitzpatrick remained. But after one night, Swartz was returned to Fitzpatrick's house. They heard later on that the Gestapo had been searching for Americans in the house where Swartz had spent the night.

Fitzpatrick and Swartz stayed where they were for nine days. Finally, their former guide came for them and they traveled by bicycle and foot, for sixty kilometers to their next destination. Here they met Lasicki and Schack again. They spent the night, and on the following morning, all four of them took a train into the nearby city of Liege.

In Liege, they went directly to White Army Headquarters, where they filled out new forms, and received new papers and identification cards. They remained here for four days. Then, Lasicki and Schack were taken together to one house, and Fitzpatrick and Swartz to another. A week later the Gestapo cracked down on the White Army Headquarters. The only member they found was a woman member of the White Army. The Gestapo beat her brutally, but could not force her to give any information.

Fitzpatrick and Swartz were taken to a house on the outskirts of Liege. They had been there only a short time when they were warned that the Gestapo had been informed of their presence. It seemed that the Germans had discovered Lasicki and Schack and had taken them prisoner. The woman of the house that they were living in told the Gestapo where Fitzpatrick and Swartz were staying.

Warned in time, Fitzpatrick and Swartz hid out in the fields until the danger was past. White Army men came to protect them, bringing guns, ammunition and food. Then they were taken to another house, where they remained in safety for seven weeks.

From there they were moved to a castle on the outskirts of Liege. They lived in comparative luxury for four days, enjoying food and comfortable beds, hot water, and pre-war whiskey. Then they moved again, traveling by train into Liege.

The American advance continued to roll on, and at last was at the gates of Liege. The city was bombed and shelled. Street fighting began and sniper bullets whined through the streets. Fitzpatrick and Swartz remained in the house to which they had been brought. One day, the young Belgium who had been their guide was in

the street and saw a man struck by a bullet. He was attempting to help the man, when a German patrol passed, saw him, hit him in the chin with the butt of their rifles, called him a terrorist and shot him through the head.

Fitzpatrick and Swartz will never forget the boy (for he was no more than a boy) and they will never forget the Germans for their crime of assassinating him in cold blood.

Finally, after a month, Liege was liberated by the Americans, and Fitzpatrick and Swartz were safe.

The stories of the three other members run in more or less of a parallel with each other. They are Lts. Sherwood and Thiriot and Sgt. Kasza.

Thiriot made a safe jump, landing very near a small village. He hid his parachute and Mae West with brush and began running southwest across the open fields. Coming to a road he jumped an embankment, severely wrenching his ankle. He continued running, but the pain from his ankle made him decide he had better get help. He saw three houses by the side of the road, but it was too dark, he thought, to approach them. Therefore, he hid himself in some brush until daylight.

As it was getting light, an old man came out of one of the houses and passed the brush in which Thiriot was hiding. Thiriot beckoned to him. The old man approached, understood the situation at a glance, and making sure that no one was about, brought Thiriot into the house. The American was fed and given a place to sleep.

Later in the day, when Thiriot was awake and refreshed, he met a twenty-one year old boy who described the shooting down of his airplane. The boy, a member of the reception committee had seen it all. When the attack began, the load carried by the B-24 had been salvoed. The boy told Thiriot that the remains of all twelve containers had been gathered up by the committee.

Thiriot was told it would be best for him to remain there in the house until arrangements could be made for him with the escape organization of the Belgium underground. To this end, Thiriot shortly received a note which indicated that the writer was "a comrade of the underground", and that a fellow crew member was nearby. It turned out that Sgt. Kasza was in fact in the house next door, being cared for as Thiriot was. Kasza and Thiriot began to maintain regular communication with each other.

Kasza had made a good jump from the doomed airplane, but he had been somewhat cut up when landing on some barbed wire. He had hidden his 'chute and cross-

ed a field, heading south. Reaching a small town, he jumped a fence and skirted around town. He heard dogs barking and fearing bloodhounds he changed his direction to north, walked for a while and turned southwest. After a few hours, he saw three houses, watched them for unfriendly indications and when he saw none, approached one of them. With some difficulty he convinced the people that he was an American and obtained their promise to help him. They took him in.

It was the house next door to which Thiriot had made his way.

After a couple of days, Thiriot and Kasza were taken to another village. Here they lived in a barn and slept in a haystack. They were told that before long a car would come for them, they would be driven to a secret airfield from where they would be flown to Spain. But that never happened. June 6th, with the invasion, German patrol activity increased. Roads were blocked and everyone was being stopped for questioning. They had been living in the barn for several days when another American was brought in. It was Lt. Sherwood.

Lt. Sherwood had landed unhurt in an open field, buried his 'chute and walked for an hour, then coming to a woods he hid himself and slept until daylight. When it was light he set out again, walking eight kilometers to the village of Lens St. Remy. It was still early in the morning and the only person in sight was an old man. Sherwood approached him for help. The old man quickly understood Sherwood's predicament and took the American to his home. Sherwood received food and civilian clothes to wear. In the afternoon he was visited by an officer of the White Army, who asked Sherwood various questions in order to establish the authenticity of his cliam to be an American flyer. When the officer was satisfied, he advised Sherwood to spend the night in the old man's home and promised that help would be forth-coming.

The following day a guide came for Sherwood, and the two men traveled by bicycle to the town of Fallais, ten kilometers away.

While plans were being made for the disposition of them, they remained in hiding. There was only one incident that marred their stay. An eighteen year old Belgium boy, whose patriotism had been corrupted by the Germans, discovered their hiding place and wanted to divulge it to the local Gestapo. Fortunately, he was stopped in time by the White Army men and threatened with quick and violent death if he breathed a word. The threat was very effective.

Finally, the three men were moved to a village near Fallaise. Kasza and Sherwood lived together and Thiriot lived in a house not far away. They remained here for eight weeks, meeting once a week, but for the rest of the time keeping

under close cover. While they were here their passports and identification papers were being prepared. For the most part they lived comfortably and had enough to eat. Occasionally they were visited by chiefs of the White Army and heard first-hand accounts of the exploits carried out by that group of Belgium patriots.

One night Kasza helped a White Army man retrieve a radio set from a cemetery where it had been dropped by an RAF supply airplane. Then Kasza helped put the set together.

Finally, contact with the escape organization centered in Brussels was made and arrangements completed. During the first week in August a representative of the organization appeared, accompanied by a guide. They started out on bicycles. Thiriot, Sherwood and Kasza following the two men single file, at 200 yard intervals. In this manner, they reached the city of Namur, where they continued on their way, this time led by two girls who acted as guides.

They passed through Namur and continued on to Dinaunt. At one point, Kasza, who brought up the rear on his bicycle, was stopped by a Belgium gendarme. To the gendarme's questions spoke in French, Kasza could make no answer. It was apparent to the gendarme that Kasza was an American. The situation was indeed ticklish for the sergeant. At last, however, the gendarme's patriotic instincts over ruled all others, and he motioned Kasza to get going.

Finally, the procession reached Dinaunt. Bicycling through the main street, Thiriot found the street blocked by a knot of German soldiers. Thiriot's reaction was to do what he would have done if he were bicycling in Harrington -- he sounded the bell. The Germans cleared out of the way, and Thiriot rode past them, his heart in his mouth and his fingers crossed, figuratively speaking.

On the outskirts of Dinaunt the three men spent the night in a cabin, well concealed in a woods. The following day another guide appeared and they set out again. Their destination was twenty-five miles to the south. Halfway there they met four more Americans who were also evading, and all seven of them followed the guide in a long bicycle procession to a woods. There they found they were to stay until further arrangements could be made. They remained for two weeks, living in a shack and supplied from a nearby chateau in which a patriotic family lived. While they were there, eighteen more Americans joined them. After two weeks, they learned that the local German forces had learned something of their whereabouts, so in the dead of night, the band of Americans left their hiding place and walked single file, to a camp on the Ardennes forest. They had been in this camp

for a week, when they began to hear a great deal of gunfire, and they heard that the Germans were retreating on all sides.

At last, on 8 September, an American patrol of sixteen soldiers found the camp.

They were safe, at last.

This accounted for all but two members of Lt. Fitzpatrick's crew, Sgt. Williams and Lt. Dogrothy. It is known that they both bailed out without mishap. but as yet have not been heard from.

CARPETBAGGERS RETURN TO BELGIUM

by

ERNEST FITZPATRICK

We have just returned from our visit to Belgium, and I would like to share our experiences with you. Walter Swartz-engineer, Bill Schack-tail gunner, Paul Kasza-radio operator, and myself-pilot, returned for the first time to meet with our helpers in the Liege and Warreme area. Bill and Paul arrived on 9/10/87 and were able to meet with some of their people before Walt and I arrived Sunday the 13th.

We were overwhelmed with the reception we received. Our visit had been reported in the papers prior to our arrival, which coincided with the annual reunion of A.S. OTARIE, and it was estimated that close to 1,000 were on hand at the memorial services in Hasbey. Wreaths were laid at each of three Memorial sights along with bands, speeches by local dignitaries and officials.

We were then taken to the Town Hall in Warreme where we were greeted by the Mayor; the former Prime Minister and the Belgian Ambassador to Washington, more speeches of praise and gratitude and we were presented with Medals, Commemorative Plates, etc. This was quite an emotional gathering since more of the people we had direct contact with were present.

We then attended a typical Belgium luncheon, excellent food, wine, etc., which lasted about four hours, along with more speeches, gifts and greeting by friends.

We were the first crew to return to this zone since WW II. We were a "Carpetbagger" unit and had dropped supplies, arms, etc. into this area on various missions. In fact, our packages that we dropped the night we were shot down contained Limpit Charges that the A.S. used shortly after that, to sink a

German ship and barges in Antwerp harbor, to enable the resistance to keep the harbor open for Allied vessels.

The whole week will be remembered by all of us, especially the warmth of the Belgian people. Even though some of the places in which we were hidden had changed ownership. the present occupants opened their homes and showed us the rooms and attics we had stayed in and if renovations had been made, explained and showed us what had been done so we could recall the original.

It was truly an overwhelming experience and I would strongly urge any of our members that might be able to return and meet with their friends and helpers to do so at their earliest opportunity.
(Reprinted from Air Forces Escape and Evasion Society.)

A CREW CHIEF WELL REMEMBERED
as told by
BRUCE COWART

Samuel D. Braudt came to Tuscon, AZ (Davis Mountain Field) in July 1941 from the 19th BG at March Field. This cadre formed the 41st BG at Tuscon. He was crew chief on B-18A, SN 38589.

I was assigned to him as my first assignment in the Army Air Corps. We became good friends for we both like to "soup up" cars. He had a 1939 V8 Ford that we "hot-rodded" on weekends. He was a mechanical whiz and taught me an awful lot about aircraft engines and systems. The 41st BG went to Muroc, CA and I went to A.M. school at Love Field, Dallas, TX. The 41st BG left and went to Hammer Field, Fresno, CA and got A-29's and a new CO (Clifford J. Heflin). I returned to the 41st BG --- 46th BS and was assigned back to Sammy. The 46th BS left Fresno and went to Cherry Point, NC (Marine Air Station). We became the 22nd Anti-Sub Squadron and did anti-sub patrol off the Carolina coast. We moved to Wilmington, NC and got B-24's. Sammy was the crew chief on Rudy's aircraft, B-24D, SN 42933, made by Ford at Willow Run, MI.

While at Wilmington (Bluenthal Field) Sammy and I worked on an Alcohol Beverage Control officer's car. His name was Bob White and my wife and I had a room at his house. Bob had a 1939 V8 Ford and he mentioned to me one day that he had a "bootlegger" that was outrunning him all the time. I told Sammy about it and he told me to tell Bob that we could soup his Ford up for $250 and White said, "Go to it". We took his car out to the field one Saturday and changed Sammy's hot-rod parts to Bob's car, for they were both alike. We put dual carbs and high-lift cams in it and adjusted the carbs for high speed. About a week later Bob came home all smiles --- he said he caught the bootlegger and was very happy. He said the bootlegger wanted to look under his hood to see what he had --- so Bob let him look. He said, "I see how you caught me" --- that's all he said.

In August 1943, the 22nd Anti-Sub Squadron left for England via N. Atlantic. Sammy was still our crew chief. On August 21, 1943, 10 hours and 25 minutes after take off we landed at Prestwick, Scotland. Our B-24D was either 6th or 7th off at Presque Isle, Maine and 1st to land at Prestwick, with more fuel than any other aircraft in our flight. Verified by Lt/Col. Heflin. Sammy and I would move our crew's baggage in order to keep the aircraft on what is known as "the step". The fuel deal was to lean the engines out until the cylinder head temperature began to rise, then move the mixture control up one notch at a time until the cylinder head temperature stablilized. All this is done between Auto-Lean and Idle-Cut-Off on the Mixture Control Quadrant. To my knowledge there was never an engine failure or an aborted take off due to engine malfunction on any aircraft that Sammy was crew chief on --- he was as I said a mechanical whiz. I would go out to the aircraft when we were not flying and Sammy would put me in possible situations and ask me how was I going to get out of it. He was like a brother to me and I will never --- never forget him. We corresponded after the war and the last time that he wrote me, he was crew chief on a B-17 DRONE at Elgin AFB, FL. I answered the letter and never heard from him again.

FIELD CHANGES

as told by

BILL ORBAN

We had three rainy days, so the time arrived to sort through my papers. It was interesting looking over some of the material. Horace "Rags" Ragland flew several missions with us in France. He was a good man but we couldn't keep him on.

I believe M/Sgt Sam Braudt was our crew chief on the modified B-24 we flew. It was a fast plane, with the built-in head-wind removed for the sloped plexiglas modification.

The seats were the old cast seats and practically immovable. That was one thing I did not like on her---so, when a nice new wounded B-24 landed at Dijon, we decided to requisition the seats. That went off so well, we decided to swap nose gears. The engineer would have to give ours a kick every so often to help it down. The project was proceeding very well and we had their gear on our plane. But with the tail tied down and the nose in the air on the other---two captains arrived to fly it back to England. I told them it had nose gear problems and we would wire their base so they could take-in Dijon. That tickled them to death and after telling them how to get to town and where to go, I warned them to be sure to check their nose gear on landing because we would not have time to correct the problem. That's the last we saw of them as they took off the next morning for England.

Every newsletter seems to include people long forgotten. One name triggers a memory.

It really does make Comradeship mean something special.

* * * * * * *

GROUND CREWS

From the book "The War of The Cottontails" by William R. Cubbins, B-24 pilot of the 450th BG, 15th Air Force. Based at Manduria near Brindisi, Italy.

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"Combat missions are tough on the ground crews. They'd no sooner get to know a flight crew when that crew would return with dead or wounded, or else fail to return at all. They didn't seem to be able to work hard enough or long enough to do their part. Perhaps it was their way of apologizing for not being in a position to be shot at. If so, it was a misguided sentiment. We knew and appreciated the

difficult conditions under which they labored. More often than not red-eyed from lack of rest, when a mission was expected to be a tough one they'd forego vital sleep while we were gone and wait to see if their crew would return. Their loyalties seemed to be divided between the aircraft and the crew that flew it. Fine men, heroic in their own manner, they often worked to exhaustion to keep us flying. Without their selfless efforts and devotion to excellence, combat would have been even more dangerous."

IT' S EASY TO GET LOST IN THE DARK

by JOE SOWDER

Our load was one-half million dollars, in German currency to be delivered to the Belgium Freedon Fighters. We flew south around Paris then up into Belgium. Out of Brussels we couldn't find the target or the underground resistance forces. We circled around four or five times and finally located them and made the drop. But I was lost.... So we flew south into France into the outskirts of Paris, over a Nazi air field. As we flew over the air field, three search lights coned us in. As we pulled up out of the dive, the tail gunner blasted away at one. The search light exploded and put the other two out of commission. The tail gunner was credited with three search lights. They shot the sh... out of us, 90° Left — hit the deck. We pulled up above the village roof tops, all 90° Right — all four engines full power. Must have broken some windows and scared a lot of people.

We were lost again .....We were east of Paris but I couldn't find us on our maps. We called London Radio. Radio silence but they gave us a fix on our position. From there we got back .... being shot at some. The Germans knew where we were too.

We got a new B-24 as our old B-24 was shot full of holes. We had a few days in Ireland (Belfast and Dublin) to pick up the new Black B-24. The Irish converted them for our missions.

The Homing-pigeon we dropped along with the money did not get lost...he got back to England before we did.

A "CARPETBAGGER" WITH THE FRENCH FORCES OF THE INTERIOR

Lt. John Mead--Guerrilla

Lt. John B. Mead, known familiarly as "Johnny" by everyone in the group who knew him, was a bombardier in the 858th Squadron (then the 406th Squadron). He had been in the Carpetbagger Project from its inception, and was considered one of the most skillful practitioners of Carpetbagger bombardiering. One of his closet friends was Captain Robert D. Sullivan, the Group Intelligence Officer, whom he and his wife, Dorothy, had known back in the States.

For four months, Johnny Mead flew on Carpetbagger missions, contributing his particular bit to the growing success of the group. And then, on 5 May 1944, it happened. The aircraft, piloted by Lt. Murry L. Simon, in which Mead was bombardier, failed to return from a mission to France.

The whole group was saddened by the news. Everyone knew he would miss good-looking Johnny Mead, his friendly smile, his enthusiasm, his drawling speech. Captain Sullivan wrote to Dorothy, offering what consolation he could, telling her not to give up hope. But three weeks went by and no further word was heard. As each day went by it became more difficult to hope.

Then, on 29 May, something happened. As 858th aircraft piloted by Lt. Munn, was engaged on a mission to a point deep within central France, in the vicinity of the town of Roanne. As the aircraft circled the target area, the radio operator, T/Sgt. Clarence H. Brown, succeeded in establishing an S-phone contact. He was somewhat surprised to hear a voice speaking in perfectly unbroken English.

"Are you British or American?"

Perhaps because the voice from the ground had a noticeably southern drawl, Brown replied, "Neither. We're Yankees."

"Who's your pilot?", the voice then asked.

"Lt. Munn," Brown replied.

"Well, I'll be damned!", the voice said. "Tell him hello. Tell everybody hello. This is Johnny Mead."

Startled almost to the point of speechlessness Sgt. Brown managed to ask Lt. Mead how he and the rest of the crew were. The answer came that everyone was perfectly all right. Mead would not give any details over the S-phone regarding the evasion or discovery by the underground.

By this time, Lt. Munn's aircraft was in a position to make its dropping run. Lt. Mead gave detailed instructions from the ground, and a perfect com-

pletion was accomplished. When the drop was completed and Lt. Mead had acknowledged that it was a good one, he instructed that the radio operator tell Colonel Heflin that "The Colonel's doing a good job too."

Nothing more was heard from Mead until 4 July when a wireless telegraph message came over one of the circuits from the French underground, saying that John Mead was in command of a group of Maquis and an able assistant to the senior commander.

The next day, 5 July, Captain Sullivan was telling this story in the Intelligence office at Harrington. As he talked an orderly brought in an airmail letter from America. Captain Sullivan ripped open the envelope, read it hurriedly and passed it to another officer without a word. It was a brief and heartbreaking note from Johnny Mead's wife, Dorothy, asking for some crumb of information about Johnny. But Dorothy will have to wait and suffer until Johnny returns from working with the Secret Army, or until the war is over, because to tell her anything now would break a stern security rule which protects Johnny and thousands of others -- British and American soldiers and French Guerrillas.

In the meantime, Johnny Mead is running true to form and is a good guerrilla -- a soldier in the Secret Army of France.

* * * * * * *

Journey to Johnny Mead

In the middle of October, after Carpetbagger operations had ceased and while 492nd personnel (including Johnny Mead) were engaged in a special mission in France, the Group Historian flew to the Haute-Savois to interview Mead. The bombardier turned Maquis was altogether too reticent about his exploits. He was first of all reluctant to describe incidents in which his role could be construed as "heroic". He shuddered at the thought of appearing dramatic or heroic. Moreover, he did not wish to submit for permanent record any facts which his chiefs, the British agents "Geegee", "Victor" and "D'Arien" had included in their official reports, since he considered this a breach of discipline. This account, therefore, is the historian's own recollection of Mead's informal, off-the-record conversation. It must not be interpreted as a definitive report of the activities carried on by the Maquis group of which Mead was a member.

First of all, Mead was able to supply the last word to the story of how his airplane, piloted by Lt. Simon, was brought down. It was on 5 May 1944, at 0032 hours, twenty kilometers North of Cheney le Chatel, altitude 1,200 feet, that the

airplane was shot down by twelve 20-millimeter flak guns mounted on a troop train. The train, at the time, was blacked out and not in motion. Immediately after the airplane was hit, a German telegraph, tapped by the French Resistance, sent out a message as follows: "Enemy aircraft fired on and damaged to such an extent, should fall in near vicinity."

Mead bailed out at 700 feet. It was a good jump and he landed on his feet in a cow pasture. Unhooking his parachute, Mead hid it, his Mae West and his harness. Then he lit a cigarette and attempted to get his bearings. At that moment he heard an explosion and looked up to see his airplane blow up and go down in flames. Immediately, Mead took out his escape kit, removed the compass and began walking in a southerly direction.

Daylight found him in a populated area near Vivans. He began to think of getting help and to that end he approached an isolated house. Meeting a farmer near the house, he introduced himself with the aid of his language card. The farmer showed a willingness to help. Mead asked if there were any Germans nearby, and the farmer replied in the negative. Then they entered the house, and while Mead was given food and drink, the farmer sent his daughter in search of assistance. In this way, contact was made with the Resistance.

Mead remained in this house until 9 May. Then he was called for by the British agent known in the field as "Victor", and the two men journeyed on bicycles to a secret Maquis headquarters in Roanne. In the course of their conversation, Victor told Mead that he was short handed and would like Mead to remain in France and work with him. Mead expressed a willingness to do so. And so, when they reached Roanne, Victor despatched a coded wire to London requesting that Mead be permitted to remain and help the Resistance in that area.

Mead remained hidden in Roanne until late May, when an answer arrived from London, "Regarding your 0733073 (Mead's Army Serial Number), keep him." And from that time on, until the final liberation of France, Mead stayed and worked in the Resistance as an assistant to the British agents who were chiefs of Resistance forces in that area.

At this time the organization was primarily concerned with sabotage, but it was decided that Mead could work as instructor of American equipment, thereby laying the foundation for beginning an active Resistance unit. To this end, quantities of material were requested from London and delivered by air, largely by Carpetbagger crews. By a remarkable turn of events, Mead found himself on the ground as leader of a reception committee, instead of in the air pinpointing

the dropping grounds.

Receptions were set up in the following manner. Six men, armed with tommy guns and grenades, stood on guard one kilometer away, three more men were stationed a half kilometer away, and at the ground itself were five men. Then, when the airplane was in the target area, the men from the outer ring were called in to assist in the reception. The drops, Mead said, were generally good. Only someone who has been at a reception can appreciate the anticipation with which the French people awaited the loads. Though the danger was extreme, even mothers of families would come, just to see the drop. It was at one of these receptions that Mead spoke over the S-phone to Lt. Munn's crew.

After a drop was completed, and the packages and containers had been collected, Mead and his men would transport the load into Roanne, usually by ox-cart. Once, when a drop had been made quite late, it was beginning to get light. Mead described how he had driven the ox-cart, loaded with containers and parachutes, into Roanne, which was then garrisoned by 2,000 Germans. On his lap was resting a machine gun. Looking back at this incident, Mead could hardly believe that no evil consequence had befallen this overt indication of resistance, but none had.

The resistance used the abandoned warehouse of a textile factory in Roanne as a warehouse and assembly shop. Here they clandestinely stored the material they had received by air, unpacked, cleaned and assembled it. Mead, at the time, was living in the home of a prominent engineer. Everyday, dressed in civilian clothes, he would walk to work at the warehouse. The route he chose to walk was past a German barracks, because it had been found that that was one place where no one was ever stopped for questioning. All of Mead's papers were in order, even to a bicycle-tax receipt. He had French pin-up girls in his billfold, and he carried a lunch basket complete with a bottle of wine (of course, a Sten gun was cradled at the bottom of the basket). If he had been stopped, his papers would have identified him as Jean Noel Dumbret, a deaf-mute.

On 26 June, Mead was commissioned to take active charge of a small unit, and he moved out of Roanne into a mountain headquarters, sixteen kilometers southeast of Roanne. There he formed a unit known as "Maquis Violette". The FFI name for the unit was "Groupe de Fragny". From this time on, Mead operated in his capacity of instructing the men in American field equipment and in basic military tactics. Moreover, sabotage activities were carried out from this headquarters. Johnny Mead was getting to be a dyed-in-the-wool guerrilla.

On 15 July, Mead received the following telegram: "Congratulations on your

good work and regards from your Colonel and your friends. Signed Heflin."

"Maquis Violette" was attacked in force by German troops and Vichy French Milice on 21 July. The group was forced to withdraw and disband. But in accordance with pre-arranged plans, the men of the group rendezvoused a week later at another position near Pic de Rochefort, thirty kilometers southwest of Roanne. At this time the Germans, faced with disaster in the north, were intensifying their attacks against the Maquis throughout the rest of France. The Maquis were reorganized into small, compact groups of men who were by now well trained; and Mead was moved with his group to work the area northwest of Roanne. Here, Mead and his group began intensively to interfere with German communications, and to engage in road, telegraph and railway sabotage.

At Fragny, the group of twenty-eight men led by Mead found themselves on a hill surrounded by German forces. The first information Mead received was that a patrol of thirty Germans was moving up the hill towards him. Instead of retreating in the face of such a small force, Mead decided to defend his position. He gave the order to fire. Unfortunately, the information he had received proved, as usual, to be incorrect, because after four minutes of continuous firing he observed that his position was surrounded by close to six hundred Germans. Mead decided to lead his men in a break-through to safety. Cautiously, the Maquis slipped down the hill as the Germans moved up. At the bottom of the hill was a field and at the edge of the field a road, Highway 82, ran. The Germans had fast cars, armed with machine guns patrolling the road. Led by Mead, the Maquis group crawled across the field. Mead waited until the cars were at the greatest distance from his position, and then gave the signal. The men leaped across the road. One armored car swung sharply around and opened up with its machine gun. Mead could hear the bullets whistling about his ears. But his Maquis aide, an Alsacian, stood up and fired his tommy gun. The German machine gun was silenced.

Mead's group had suffered casualties, but he had led most of his men to safety. Mead himself, however, was not yet out of danger. He and his staff of four were being hotly pursued by six Milice. Mead and his men headed for the Loire. At his order, the four men split up, two going north and two south. Mead and his Alsacian aide were together. Reaching the Loire, and still pursued, they dove in and swam, under fire from the Milice, the two hundred feet to the opposite shore. They reached safety and later rendezvoused with the rest of the group.

At Tarare, Mead led a unit of sixty men, part of a force of three hundred and sixty, in an attack against twelve hundred Germans. Displaying a brilliant com-

mand of field tactics, Mead disposed his small force so skillfully that they succeeded in demoralizing and routing a large group of Germans, preventing them from retreating, and driving them into the hands of Canadian paratroopers. When Mead entered Tarare he found the bodies of nine Frenchwomen and three Frenchmen. Mead discovered the cause of their death. It seems that they had been driving down a road and had been shot in cold blood by a retreating German officer.

This is only one example of German atrocities to which Mead can personally attest. At St. Yan he saw the bodies of thirty unarmed men who had been slaughtered at the entrance to the town's hotel. And at St. Gingolph there were the 800 people, of all ages, massacred in a church. This is quite beside the instances of individual torture, the mutilated, burned and broken bodies of Mead's own comrades who had fallen into German hands.

Finally, on 20 August, as the Allies advanced in France, the efforts and sacrifices of the Resistance bore its final fruit. Roanne was evacuated by the Germans and all German control in the area ceased. On 23 August, Mead received the following wire: "Advise me present work not in line of duty. Suggest you return immediately if possible. Don't take any chances. Signed, Heflin." This wire may seem to cast a dubious light on Mead's stay in France. Actually, USSTAF had issued secret orders that he remain and work with the Resistance. That is why Colonel Heflin's wire was not in the form of a direct order, but was rather a "suggestion" that Mead return "if possible".

At any rate, the Germans were cleared out and the work of the Resistance in that area was at an end. On 24 August, therefore, Mead joined Lt. Reitmeier, who had been the navigator on Lt. Simon's crew in Roanne. They remained there until the roads were cleared, and on 5 September left for Lyon together. From Lyon they went to Amberieu and from there they caught a ride in a B-25 to Salon. From Salon they flew in a C-47 to Caserta, Italy, arriving on 8 September. Mead was interviewed by General Cabel, Headquarters MAAF, who requested that Mead return to aid in the work of the Air Force Recovery Unit. On 10 September, Mead received orders from General Spaatz, placing him on detached service with ACRU #2 for an indefinite period. So Reitmeier went on to England, and Mead, after cabling the news of his survival to Dorothy, his wife, returned to France.

Johnny Mead returned to England, at last, on 4 November, to find that it was now Captain John B. Mead. Moreover, he had been recommended for a Silver Star "for gallantry in action against an armed and determined enemy, while engaged in a special assignment with the French Forces of the Interior".

ANOTHER MYSTERY SOLVED

The picture on the left appeared in the June 1987 newsletter. Bert Butlin, an Englishman, is shown holding the tail fin of a Messerschmitt BF-109G Luftewaffe fighter plane which was found while draining a pond on the south side of Harrington Airbase. The tail fin was given to Bert by the farmer who found it in the pond.

Robert Allen of the Northampton Aviation Society sent us the picture and asked if any of the old Carpetbaggers might know the story behind it. Our first guess was that it was brought back from Germany on a post-VE Day visit by a Carpetbagger and then discarded when he learned that he could not take it back to the U.S. with him when he returned home.

Upon receiving Allen's letter, a request was made, via the newsletter, for anybody having further knowledge about the tail fin to come forth with that information. Richard E. Bellgardt of Itasca, Illinois provided the following story.

It seems that in 1945, an A-26 medium bomber under the command of pilot Ross D. White stopped at Weisbaden, Germany to refuel at a P-61 "Black Widow" night fighter base so they could then continue into Germany on their mission to drop a "Joe" agent in Germany. The "Joe" became ill during that refueling stop and was taken to a hospital suffering from an attack of appendicitis.

Because the mission was then aborted, our crew had to stay overnight and then return to England the next day. To kill some time that evening, they visited the officers club to have a drink or two. They found the night fighter personnel to be rather unfriendly so they decided to call it a day and left to go to their quarters. On the way out, they noticed the Messerschmitt tail fin hanging over the entrance to the club as a trophy of a confirmed "kill" on the part of the

night fighter group. Feeling a bit miffed over the inhospitable treatment they had received in the club, they took the trophy down and brought it back to Harrington the next day. It hung in their quarters at the 856th Bomb Squadron until they returned home -- at which time they left it behind. (Chances are someone cleaning out their quarters later on just threw it into the pond.)

HERE'S PROOF THAT EXPERIENCE PAYS OFF!

This story taken from CROSSHAIRS, The Bombardiers, Inc. Newletter.

John Lusk Moore, 856th BS, recounts this most unique and interesting story:

"My original 8th Air Force Group was broken up and became the 492nd Bomb Group, known as 'The Carpetbaggers', flying black B-24's. Normally we flew supplies to Underground people in northern Europe...500 feet at night! However, occasionally we flew night bombing missions (to show the Royal Air Force the 8th AF could do it!) using RAF tactics---flares, etc.

"I believe it was in January 1945 during one night bombing mission we were trapped in three visually aimed search lights. I asked our pilot, Jim Watson, if he could do a 'RAF Corkscrew' to get out of them. He could and did and we did.

"Seven years later in 1952 Jim Watson and I were back together again. This time we were in a B-29 over North Korea. We were caught in three of four Chinese visually aimed search lights. I asked Jim if he remembered the same 'RAF Corkscrew' so successfully used in Europe (the 'Corkscrew' won't work with radar directed lights). He remembered, executed it, and it worked again!"

(Editor, Ned Humphreys, of Crosshairs, comment: "The use of an identical tactic in two combat situations 7 years apart in different parts of the world against different opponents is enough to cause one to sit upright, but when the pilot and bombardier have been reunited <u>after</u> the bombardier was recalled after once being discharged.....who can match or beat that?")

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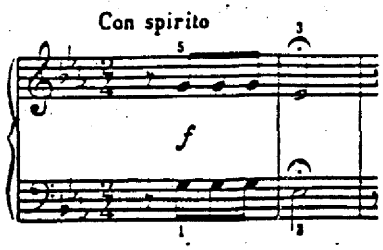
Music from World War II

The Famous Four



Before he began his highly popular "Concert on the Square" series in Madison this summer, Director David Lewis Crosby of the Wisconson Chamber Orchestra, looked out over his audience.

"We shall start," said Crosby, "by playing the most famous four notes in all musical history."

Many in the crowd of thousands knew what he meant. The opening concert would feature Ludwig von Beethoven's Symphony No. 5.

The Fifth Symphony was already historically renowned by World War II, but then a single, emotional act lifted it into the hearts of tens of millions throughout the world and time.

It was 1940-41 and Britain stood alone. Nazi armies had overrun Europe, and its bombers night after night dropped their loads on English cities. It was Britain's darkest (tho finest) hour.

Prime Minister Winston Churchill was determined to strike back, even if it meant beginning in little ways.

Then someone remembered that the first four notes of Beethoven's Fifth spelled out the letter "V" (dot-dot-dot-dash) in the International Morse Code. And "V" stood for Victory!

From then on, day and night, the Famous Four were broadcast over the BBC to occupied Europe and round the globe. It gave the conquered a message of hope.

In a recent telecast on Beethoven, Host Peter Ustinov recalled that the Famous Four meant "very much to the resistance movements."

Pastor Fred Hallanger of St. Luke's Lutheran Church, Middleton, resisted in his own way. He was living with his missionary father on the French island of Madagascar which was under the Nazi heel.

"My brother and I heard The Four. One day we went out into the forest, cut down a small tree, shaped it into a pole, and every day we ran a homemade American flag up to wave. We were never bothered by the French authorities who were secretly on our side."

TWO FOR ONE

by

WILMER L. STAPEL

I received this clipping from Wilmer L. Stapel a couple of years ago relating to an incident that happened to one of our crew. I have sent this in with an accompanying story to the 8th Air Force Historical Society for the 8th AF News. As soon as they get permission to use the believe-it-or-not from whomever they have to get it from, they will put it in. For the benefit of those that might not see it I have taken the liberty to put it in my newsletter.

It happened 41 years ago, the 27th of June 1944.

While on a training flight, one of the 850th Squadron's plane was attacked by an enemy night intruder over England. While flying at about 2,000 feet east of Bedford, the pilot was at a loss as to why the Liberator had suddenly shuddered so violently and by the time they realized the bomber was under attack the fuselage was ablaze.

No one on board expected to encounter an enemy intruder in the sky over this part of England. At the "bail out" signal, the bombardier, Robert Sanders, left his position in the nose, scrambling up to the flight deck to fetch his parachute lodged near the bomb bay bulkhead. To his horror he found the area was a mass of flames and his parachute burning. He quickly returned to the nose where the navigator, Robert Callahan, was about to jump through the hatch he had opened. Sanders explained his fearful situation. There was now only one way in which it would be possible to save the bombardier's life. Callahan sat down on the edge of the hatch and let Sanders straddle his back and wrap his arms around him. Locked together both men dropped into the slip stream. Sanders with a vise-like grip on Callahan's harness. The jolt when the chute opened was the critical moment but Sanders maintained his hold. He then worked his way around so that both men could lock their arms around each other to better their position for the inevitable heavy landing. Supporting a double load the parachute descended rapidly and moments later, after leaving the stricken bomber, the two men thudded into the ground. For Callahan it was a broken ankle while Sanders sustained a sprain with both a few cuts and bruises, minor injuries in view of the manner of their arrival in a wheat field near Eaton Socon. The only other person of the six to escape from the doomed B-24 was the badly burned radio operator, Randal G. Sadler. Callahan was recommended by Col. Heflin for the Silver Star.

ONE-WAY PIGGYBACK RIDE

SINGLE 'CHUTE BRINGS 2 FLIERS SAFELY DOWN FROM BURNED LIB

A LIBERATOR BASE, July 12 (UP) --- Two members of a Liberator crew recently leaped from their burning bomber with only one parachute between them. Holding on to each other, they dropped safely into a field.

The plane was returning to Britain when fire broke out in the bomb bay. The parachute of the bombardier, 2/Lt. Robert L. Sanders, of Chicago, was burned.

When the pilot gave the order to bail out, the bombardier climbed on the back of the navigator, 2/Lt. Robert Callahan, of Milwaukee, and held on to the chute's shoulder straps.

"I sat down and slid out of the plane with the bombardier on my back," Callahan said. "I pulled the ripcord as soon as we left the plane and there was only a slight jolt when the 'chute opened."

As they floated down, Sanders worked his way around to the front of Callahan so that they could hold on to each other. The double weight caused them to hit the ground with a severe jar, but both men suffered only slight injuries.

* * * * * * *

AS I REMEMBER: by Paul C. Karr

These two were in the 801st BG. A night intruder aircraft followed them back and shot them down nearly in our Flight Pattern. One chest pack was on the catwalk back of the nose wheel and became inaccessible because of fire. They bailed out thru the nose wheel hatch.

I cut this out of the daily paper many years ago.

"

R E S T R I C T E D

HEADQUARTERS EIGHTH AIR FORCE

Office of the Commanding General

11 August 1944

General Orders)
Number 478)

AWARDS OF THE SILVER STAR.

I. Under the provisions of Army Regulations 600-45, 22 September 1943 as amended and pursuant to authority contained in Letter, Hq., USSTAF, AG 200.6, 3 April 1944, Subject: "Awards and Decorations", the SILVER STAR is awarded to the following named Officers and Enlisted Men:

ROBERT CALLAHAN, 0-703088, 2nd Lt., Army Air Forces, US Army. For gallantry

in action, while serving as navigator of a B-24 aircraft on 27 June 1944. The airplane in which the Lt. Callahan was flying burst into flames as the result of an attack by an enemy night intruder aircraft. When the flames began to engulf the whole plane, the pilot gave the order to bail out. Just as Lt. Callahan was preparing to jump, he noticed that the bombardier's parachute was out of his reach and on fire. Acting with coolness and courage, he instructed the bombardier to lock his arms about him and they would jump together, using one parachute. Although at a fairly low altitude, Lt. Callahan delayed pulling the ripcord in order to lessen the shock, which might have broken the bombardier's grip on him. Lt. Callahan sustained a broken ankle on landing. His gallant actions on this occasion saved the life of the bombardier. Entered Military Service from Wisconsin.

By command of Lt. Gen. Doolittle:

John S. Allard
Colonel, GSC
Chief of Staff

CARPETBAGGER EFFORTS INCREASE

On 10 May 1944 the 788th Bombardment Squadron, under the command of Major Leonard M. McManus, was transferred from the 467th Bombardment Group at Rackheath to the 801st Bombardment Group (Provisional) at Harrington.

On 11 May 1944 the 850th Bombardment Squadron, under the command of Major Jack M. Dickerson, was transferred from the 490th Bombardment Group at Eye to the 801st Bombardment Group (Provisional) at Harrington.

These transfers doubled the size of the Carpetbagger forces.

On 13 August 1944 the 801st Bombardment Group (Provisional) was redesignated the 492nd Bombardment Group. The 36th Squadron became the 856th Bombardment Squadron; the 850th Squadron became the 857th Bombardment Squadron; the 406th Squadron became the 858 Bombardment Squadron; and the 788th Squadron became the 859th Bombardment Squadron.

The Carpetbagger forces had now reached their peak in organizational structure.

GOOFING OFF

EXTRACTED FROM THE JULY 1985 NEWSLETTER

There is one good reason for reading our newsletter, you can never tell what will be in it.

* * * * * * *

Now that the Statutes of Limitations has run out, this story can now be told. Donald (Herk) Taylor, who retired after 30 years service, was very happy to see one of his crew is also a member of our unit. In his letter he was proud that the "old man" of his crew helped me find a lost soul in Chicago. **Zeke, Herk says you were the best engineer he had in his 30 years in the Air Force.** Anyway here is the short story as Herk wrote it.

When we left RTU at Petersen Field, Colo., we flew to Topeka, Kans., and picked up a brand new B-24H to deliver to England via the southern route. Zeke had an outer ear infection and everywhere we went he would ask, "Skipper, do you want to stay here awhile?" If I said yes, he would turn himself in to the Flight Surgeon and get grounded until the Flight Surgeon got tired of looking at him. We stayed 3 days in West Palm Beach, we didn't like Borinquin, P.R., nor Trinidad, or Belem, Brazil, but Forteleza was different, so we spent 3 days there. When we got ready to leave, and the officers were briefing for the long over-water flight to Belem, the enlisted men were preflighting the aircraft. About the time we were close to leaving, an MP rode up on a bike and parked it near the aircraft. Zeke and the 2nd Engineer decided they would need transportation in England, so at the last minute they put it aboard, unknown to me. When we reached Dakar and spent 3 days there, they disassembled it and hid the parts so I wouldn't know about it. They knew I was a career man since '39 and didn't know me very well. I had replaced their original A/C, he being hospitalized in Colorado Springs. We spent 4 days in Dakar, one in Lands End, Wales and then on to Blackpool to the Depot, where we left the aircraft. We had thought this was to be our aircraft to fly into combat and we had already named it "Old Taylor". But that was not to be. Now I still didn't know about the bike and didn't find out until our 40th anniversary reunion. We all laughed wondering what the people at the Depot thought when they found all these bicycle parts hidden around the aircraft, and how they kept it from me. *****I wonder want kind of a story that MP gave on the disappearance.

* * * * * * *

FINDING OLD COMRADES

Speaking of finding old comrades -- Bill Dillon was excited last month when he located a fellow member of his crew from the Harrington days! Last year, Bill sent in a contribution (his third) to the Harrington Memorial Fund in memory of his navigator, Cornell De Grothy. (He thought he was dead.) The last time Bill saw his navigator was in 1944, when De Grothy was assigned to fly one mission with another crew. Bill said that De Grothy was apprehensive about that mission -- and Bill bucked him up, saying "Don't worry --- it's only one mission --- you will be back with us tomorrow morning." That Liberator, piloted by Lt. Ernest Fitzpatrick, was hit by flak that night (May 29, 1944) and crashed --- but, the entire crew bailed out safely and survived. De Grothy ended up in a POW camp -- but, Bill Dillon never heard from him again. He often wondered if De Brothy had survived, but reluctantly began to consider him as KIA. Several weeks ago, I gave Bill a "Tracking Service" address that Sebastian had sent to me and he sent in De Grothy's name, rank and serial number, a self-addressed envelope and $2.85. EUREKA! A few weeks later, they sent De Grothy's address to Bill --- he was alive and well and living in Wisconsin. Bill visited him in May and had a great reunion with his old navigator. If you want to try that outfit, write: AFMPC/DPMD003, Northeast Office Place, 9504 IH 35 North, San Antonio, Texas, 78223-6636.

(Note: The service for retired military people is free.) I tried them out but wasn't so lucky. I sent them an old buddy's name, rank and serial number from Harrington days and they wrote back and said they couldn't help me unless I sent them his SS Number and a bunch of other things I didn't have. Incidentally, several of De Grothy's fellow crew members from that flight are members of our association. The pilot, Ernest Fitzpatrick, and the flight engineer, Walter Swartz, both live in North Fort Myers, Florida. (That place must be saturated with Carpetbaggers --- another member of ours, Bruce Cowart, also lives in North Fort Myers.) The tail gunner, Bill Shack, lives in Bay Village, Ohio and the radio operator, Paul Kasza, lives in Seven Hills, Ohio.

A BIT OF A RECORD

Here is a little bit of information that you may find handy when talking to friends. Did you know that the 8th AF burned over ONE BILLION gallons of gasoline? - expended 99 million rounds of machine gun ammunition? - 256,341 rounds of 30 calibre ammunition? - Lost 5,982 Bombers; 3,000 Fighter planes PLUS 146 other types of aircraft; and lost more than 46,000 men killed, wounded or captured?? The ground maintenance crews of the 8th AF repaired 59,644 battle-damaged aircraft and also linked and loaded 99,256,341 rounds of ammunition?? Gas consumption (Imperial gallons) - Grade 100/150, 53,321,258 gallons; Grade 100/130, 811,466,295 gallons; Grade 87/91, 2,776,564 gallons - a total of 867,564,117 gallons!! The operational flying time to the nearest hour - August 1942 to May 1945 was 3,192,081. Non-operational hours were 1,398,110 for a total of 4,590,391 hours. The 8th Air Force was in action a total of 459 days.

HIGH FLIGHT

Oh, I have slipped the surly bonds of earth
And danced the skies on laughter-silvered wings;
Sunward I've climbed, and joined the trembling mirth
Of sun-split clouds - and done a hundred things
You have not dreamed of - wheeled and soared and swung
High in the sunlit silence
Hov'ring there, I've chased the shouting wind along, and flung
My eager craft through footless halls of air,
Up, up the long delirious, burning blue
I've topped the windswept heights with easy grace
Where never lark, or even eagle flew.
And, while with silent, lifting mind I've trod
The high untrespassed sanctity of space,
Put out my hand, and touched the face of God.

John G. Magee Jr.

This poem was submitted by Chris Burger upon the death of her husband, James E. Burger.

REFLECTIONS AS WE APPROACH OUR FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY

Reunions are a competitive sport. At early reunions classmates compete with each other about jobs and incomes; at the 25th it's spouses and children and vacation homes while regarding with envy or glee, classmates' waistlines, hairlines, wrinkle lines. As we approach our 50th Reunions we enter a new phase of reunion competition, the one described by Woody Allen when he remarked, "Ninety percent of life is just showing up."

It is said there are "Three Ages of Classmates": youth, middle age and "you haven't changed a bit". But change is the name of the game.

Consider: We were before television, before penicillin, polio shots, antibiotics and frisbees. Before frozen food, nylon, dacron, Zerox, Kinsey. Before radar, fluorescent lights, credit cards and ballpoint pens. For us, time-sharing meant togetherness, not computers; a chip meant a piece of wood; hardware meant hardware and software wasn't even a word.

In our time, closets were for clothes, not for coming out of; bunnies were small rabbits and rabbits were not Volkswagens. We were before Grandma Moses and cup-sizing for bras and we thought a deep cleavage was something butchers did. We were before Rudolph the rednosed reindeer, Snoopy, DDT and one-a-day vitamin pills. Before the white wine craze, disposable diapers, jeeps, The National Gallery of Art, Grand Coulee Dam, Paine Webber, Merrill Lynch and M and Ms.

When we were in high school, pizzas, frozen orange juice, instant coffee and McDonald's were unheard of. We thought fast food was what you ate during Lent. We were before FM radio, tape recorders, electric typewriters, word processors, Muzak, disco dancing - and that's not all bad. Almost no one flew across the country and transatlantic flights belonged to Lindbergh and Amelia Earhart. We were before India, Pakistan, Indonesia, The Philippins and a host of others - were independent countries. And, God help us, we were before the catclysm of nuclear fission.

We were before panty hose and drip-dry clothes. Before icemakers, clothes dryers, freezers and electric blankets. Before students held cocktail parties or had their own apartments. Before unmarried members of the opposite sex took trips together. Before men wore long hair and before premarital sex (it says here). Anyway, we got married first and then lived together. How quaint can you be?

In our day cigarette smoking was becoming fashionable, grass was mowed, coke was something you drank and pot was something you cooked in. We were before day-

care centers, househusbands and full-time baby-sitters. When we had a baby it was a seven-day hospital event, not something you did on your way to work. In the late 1930's, "made in Japan" meant junk and the term "making-out" referred to how you did on an exam. We had five-and-ten cent stores where you could buy things for five and ten cents. For just one nickel you could ride the bus or street-car, make a phone call, buy a coke or buy enough stamps to mail one letter and two post cards. You could buy a new Chevy coupe for $659 but who could afford that? A pity, too, for gas was eleven cents a gallon. If anyone had asked us to explain C.I.A., N.A.T.O., U.F.O., N.F.L., E.R.A. or I.U.D., we would have said alphabet soup. We were not before the difference in sexes was discovered, but we were before sex changes. We just made do with what we had. And we were the last generation that was so dumb as to think you needed a husband to have a baby.

But the late 1930's and early 1940's were super days. We had Tommy Dorsey, Glenn Miller, Glenn Gray and Ray Noble. Who can ever forget them? We played thick 78 RPM records -- often with cactus needles that always seemed to need sharpening. Unlike the remote control dancers of today, we knew how it felt to have your partner hold you close and double-dip. We didn't have to deal with consciousness raising or sensitivity training. We didn't have to jog or like pasta sauce, pump our own gas or practice yoga.

We have witnessed and dealt with the above changes, and we have returned for our reunion to reassure ourselves that there are some things that never change -- that is our ability to have a good time, and our pride in and love for our classmates and our Alma Mater!

THE ANNECY MISSION

Submitted by

ROY THOMAS

In October 1944, the 492nd Bomb. Group became involved in the work of the "Annecy Mission". Briefly, the background of the mission is as follows:

Since the liberation of the Haute-Savoie department of France, in September, the Mediterranean Air Force had sent in personnel to the area adjacent to the Swiss border, in order to pick up air force men who were beginning to escape into France from internment in Switzerland. The efforts of MAF, however, did not represent an organized repartriation movement, and since the need for such a movement clearly existed, the work was taken over by USSTAF and delegated to Eighth Air Force, inasmuch as the majority of internees in Switzerland were from units of that air force. Eighth Air Force, in turn, designated the 492nd Bomb. Group as the unit to handle the repatriation mission. Lt. Col. Fish, acting CO of the group, named the 856th Bomb. Squadron as the operating unit.

By 5 October 1944, the mission was established and operating in Annecy, France, with the following key personnel: Captain Shapiro, Administrative and Intelligence Officer; Lt. Stewart, assistant to Captain Shapiro; Captain Dresser, Medical Officer. Captain Shapiro and Lt. Stewart were later replaced by Lt's. Connett and Singleton, and Captain Dresser by Captain Everly. Enlisted men who were sent at various times to Annecy included: T/Sgt's. Blazon and Beaman (Radio Operator); S/Sgt's. Leinninger and Cait..... (Radio Operators); S/Sgt. Scozzafava, Sgt. Townsend and Sgt. Tipton (Mechanics and drivers); Sgt. Carter (Medical Assistant) and S/Sgt. Abelow (Administrative and Intelligence Assistant).

In early October the mission took over the Hotel Beau-Rivage on Lake Annecy as a base for operations. USSTAF kept one of its PW and X Officers, Captain Wortmann, as "Commanding Officer, Advisory". Actually, the delineation of authority was as follows: USTAF (through Captain Wortman and his assistants) would control the operational end of the mission, with the purpose of getting escapers safely to the Hotel Beau-Rivage: 492nd Bomb. Group personnel would operate the hotel, take charge of processing escapers (this included clothing, feeding, billeting and interrogating them) and provide necessary transportation, first by motor vehicle to Lyons/Bron airport and then by C-47 aircraft to the U.K. In the case of Fifteenth Air Force repatriates, arrangements were to be made at Lyons/Bron for air-lift to Naples by ATC aircraft. In order to coordinate information between

Annecy as to the number of men requiring transportation and England as to weather conditions and the availability of aircraft, a small staff was maintained at Lyons. Captain Engel, T/Sgt. Hartzie and T/Sgt. Kirkpatrick were radio operators. Weather information was provided by a USSTAF weather office at Bron airport. In order to house the staff and provide billets for aircrews and repatriates in the event of enforced stopovers, the Chateau Marieux at Collonges au Mont d'Or was acquired. Sgt's. Meyer and Blomer were sent to Lyons to act as drivers, mechanics and major domos of the Chateau.

The administrative organization was at best informal, and while this informality did not interfere with operations efficiency, it did lead to occassional misunderstandings and disagreements between USTAF personnel on the one hand and 492nd Bomb. Group personnel on the other. This was apparent to Colonel Daniel of the 8th Air Force Inspector General's Office when he came to Annecy on a tour of inspection in January 1945. It should be emphasized that whatever misunderstandings existed did not in the least detract from the increasingly impressive success of the mission. Colonel Daniel pointed that out. But it was necessary to make a clear-cut statement of responsibility in regards to quartermaster supplies, hotel property and administration, and so forth. In accordance with Colonel Daniel's recommendations, it was once more brought to the attention of all personnel concerned that USSTAF's role ended with the arrival of the escapers at the Hotel Beau-Rivage and from there on out the process of repatriation was an 8th Air Force (i.e. 856th Bomb. Sqdn., 492nd Bomb. Group) function. To implement this delineation of authority and to strengthen the organizational aspects of the Annecy mission, Colonel Upham, CO of the 492nd Bomb. Group, issued an order setting up detachment "A" 856th Bomb. Squadron. Captain McKee was named Commanding Officer, Captain Bodenhamer arrived to assume the duties of Adjutant, and S/Sgt. Abelow was given the duties of 1st Sergeant of the Detachment.

When one or more men had successfully crossed the border into France, contact by telephone was immediately made with the Hotel Beau-Rivage in Annecy. No matter what time of the day or night this occured, the staff (856th Bomb. Sqdn. personnel and their USSTAF associates) was ready. A driver and a staff officer started out in a detachment vehicle to the point on the border where the crossing had taken place. There the ususally civilian-clothed escapers saw the Americans who were part of the Annecy organization. After their AGO cards and dog-tags had been checked, the men piled into the vehicle and were driven to Annecy. During the winter months, these trips between Annecy and the border took place under the

worst possible conditions. Huge drifts of snow piled up in the dangerous mountain roads, which were made especially hazardous by ice and hairpin turns. It is a tribute to the skill and hard work of the transportation section of the Annecy mission that no serious mishaps occurred and that all vehicles were kept in good operating order at all times.

When the escapers reached the Beau-Rivage they found the staff waiting for them. "Back in the Army" was invariably their comment. For those who needed immediate medical attention (usually for frostbite, blisters or bad ankles) "Doc" Everly was available.

First of all, the men sat down to a hot meal. The solid GI food expertly prepared by a French chef, always worked a good psychological effect on the tired men. After the meal, the men were registered and assigned to rooms in the hotel. Then they were given a complete issue of clothing, including toilet articles and cigarettes. By order of Captain Everly, each man was required to take a hot bath. This they did and then changed into their newly issued uniforms.

For security reasons, the men were restricted to the hotel during their stay in Annecy. The stay lasted anywhere from overnight to ten days. But the men kept occupied with books, games, radio and phonograph, ping-pong, billiards and so forth.

As soon as possible after the preliminaries of registration, clothing issue and bathing had been completed, the men were interrogated. A complete account of each escape was recorded. Information was also given on the circumstances of each man's landing in Switzerland, the nature of the Swiss interrogation he had received and any observations of a military nature (such as freight traffic between Switzerland and Germany, industrial activity, etc.) he might have been able to make.

Military information was forwarded to the directorate of Intelligence, USSTAF. A copy of each interrogation was retained in the files at Annecy.

Communication by radio was maintained with Harrington and by telephone with Lyons. Through these means Annecy kept informed of weather conditions and the possibility of flights on the following day to England and Italy. When word was received that a flight could be laid on for the next day, the men were told to be ready to leave early in the morning. Arrangements were made at Lyons to have the necessary number of 856th Bomb. Squadron C-47's on hand for the men returning to England and with ATC for the men going to Naples. Early the next morning, after a hot breakfast, the men were moved by motor vehicle to Lyon. In the event a sudden change in the weather took place making flight to England impossible, the

men were billeted for the night in the Chateau Marieux.

In September 1944, there were approximately 1,200 American internees in Switzerland. Prior to USSTAF/856th Bomb. Sqdn. control, MAF had repartiated 120 men. Beginning in October 1944, weekly results of the Annecy mission were as follows (the following numbers were copied exactly as they appeared in the official records, there are obviously some original errors.):

1. 5 October to 14 October: (preliminary period following transfer of control to Annecy mission): 104 (81 - 8AF; 11 - 15AF; 12 American Ground Forces.)
2. 14 October to 21 October: 29 (25 - 8AF; 3 - 15AF; 2 - 12AF; 3 - 9AF; 4AGF; 6RAF)
3. 21 October to 28 October: 45 (27 - 8AF; 3 - 15AF; 2 - 12AF; 3 - 9AF; 4AGF; 6 RAF)
4. 28 October to 4 November: 39 (30 - 8AF; 7 - 15AF; 2 - 12AF; 1 - 9AF)
5. 4 November to 11 November: 35 (27 - 8AF; 5 - 15AF; 2 - 12AF; 1 RAF)
6. 11 November to 18 November: 21 (15 - 8AF; 4 - 15AF; 2 RAF)
7. 18 November to 25 November: 29 (23 - 8AF; 6 - 15AF)
8. 25 November to 2 December: 22 (17 - 8AF; 3 - 15AF; 2 AGF)
9. 2 December to 9 December: 41 (29 - 8AF; 10 - 15AF; 2 RAF)
10. 9 December to 16 December: 55 (31 - 8AF; 16 - 15AF; 8 RAF)
11. 16 December to 23 December: 54 (34 - 8AF; 11 - 15AF; 8 RAF; 1 Polish)
12. 23 December to 30 December: 56 (36 - 8AF; 14 - 15AF; 6 RAF)
13. 30 December to 6 January: 28 (22 - 8AF; 6 - 15AF)
14. 6 January to 13 January: 26 (16 - 8AF; 10 - 15AF)
15. 13 January to 20 January: 22 (15 - 8AF; 7 - 15AF)
16. 20 January to 27 January: 14 (7 - 8AF; 7 - 15AF)
17. 27 January to 3 February: 1 (1 - 15AF)
18. 3 February to 10 February: 40 (30 - 8AF; 8 - 15AF; 1 - 12AF; 1 - RAF)
19. 10 February to 17 February: 2 (2 American Ground Forces)

TOTALS: 465 - 8th Air Force, 132 - 15th Air Force, 6 - 12th Air Force, 4 - 9th Air Force. 35 RAF, 20 American Ground Forces, 1 Polish equals 663, plus 120 repatriated by MAF equals a grand total of 783 repatriates brought out through this organization.

In the middle of February 1945, arrangements were completed through military and diplomatic channels for an official exchange to take place of American and German internees in Switzerland. The rate of exchange was to be two to one, two Germans to one American. Actually, America had the better end of the bargain,

because the German internees were mostly middle-aged ground force personnel, while the Americans were highly-trained airmen. Personnel of the Annecy mission were assigned the task of bringing the repatriation train from Geneva to Marseilles. The 856th Bomb. Squadron was represented by Captain Bodenhamer, Captain Everly, T/Sgt. Blazon, and S/Sgt. Abelow.

A total of 512 men were repatriated in this manner on 17 February 1945. This event marked the end of the Annecy Mission.

CONFUSION

Submitted by

ROY J. THOMAS

(The following comments have been extracted from an oral interview tape by Gene Dobbs when he came to Annecy from Switzerland. Gene entered Switzerland on 21 July 1944 on an aircraft of the original 492nd Bomb Group, 859th Squadron. His aircraft was B-24 J #44-10496.)

They took us into Annecy, France arriving on December 15, 1944. They had a station there. American base there, post. This was about the time that the battle of the bulge started in early December (it was already going on). So they were taking everybody that could carry a rifle, cooks, everybody they could get, send them up to the front. Well, they put us guys up. They interrogated us and took our clothes away. Gave us a uniform and said they were going to ship them back for somebody else to wear. After they interrogated us they cut secret orders on us and they couldn't move us out. We had to go where we were sent to. About these clothes we got while we were in Zurich, there at the Legation, they came up with these clothes.

While we were there in order to eat they had a courier that came over from France everyday on a motorcycle. Well, he filled his saddlebags full of K rations. That's what we ate all the time we were in the American Legation because they didn't have any facilities to cook. Back in Annecy we got our first taste of real good food. The Swiss food wasn't too bad, most of it enough to wet your whistle, keep you alive. Once and a while you had enough. Most of the time you didn't. We didn't feel too bad about it, the Swiss didn't either. That's just one of the things that went with the situation. But I was taken from Annecy then, they took us back to England. We landed at an English base instead of American because of the weather.

U.S. AIRMEN HELPED THE MAQUIS

Only fiction in its wildest flight of fancy could vie with the dramatic role played by the U.S.A. air base at Harrington, near Kettering, in building up and supplying Resistance Movements in the occupied countries of Hitler's European fortress.

From the quite corner of Northamptonshire has gone much of the material which, in the hands of the French Maquis and the partisans of Belgium, Holland, Denmark and Norway, has been instrumental in helping to break the Nazi stranglehold upon their countries.

WHEAT FIELD LANDINGS: Night after night, from the beginning of 1944 until the Allied occupation, the squat "Black" Liberators - with which the base is equipped have flown to secret Continental rendezvous.

There, by means of parachute or daring landings upon wheat fields or other equally bad terrain, they have landed almost every conceivable object which would assist the partisans to wage war.

In all, 4,000 tons of weapons, ammunition, grenades, radio equipment and food to such diverse articles as money and motor cycles, has been dropped. The missions have not been confined only to the supplying of materials, but scores of agents, specially trained in the art of sabotage, have also been landed.

These gallant men, who would have received scant mercy at the hands of the Nazis, became leaders in the underground movements and assisted in maintaining contact with Allied headquarters.

BROUGHT THEM HERE: On return trips the planes from Harrington would often bring back young partisans eager to receive training as ace saboteurs. Very often, too, the chiefs of resistance movements were brought back to the drome to give first-hand descriptions to the air crews of the work the partisans were doing, and explain to them how the materials they dropped were used.

Capt. R.D. Sullivan, an Intelligence Officer attached to the drome, stated to one of our reporters:

"Over 2,500 sorties were flown from this base, and the boys have been pretty wonderful. Imagine flying at night over enemy territory at an altitude of little over 400 ft. to a predetermined pin-point with a time schedule to keep, and you have some idea of the difficult nature of their task.

"Because of the vulnerability of aircraft flying at such low altitudes they had to be routed as much as possible from any flak zone, which often resulted in

long trips, requiring an exceptional degree of navigation. The remarkable measure of success obtained in these missions and the low scale of losses suffered reflects great credit upon the men themselves and the excellent training they received."

Our reporter was shown a large volume of many hundred pages --- a complete history of the drome, compiled for official purposes by Staff Sergt. S. Abelow.

In it are recorded the adventures of gallant men --- real life adventures which even an Edgar Wallace would have had difficulty in conjuring up.

Here are told the stories of men who have crashed, who have lived with the partisans and have fought with them --- men who have escaped the clutches of the Gestapo by inches and who have taken their lives in their hands every minute. In it there is material for many films which, if produced by Hollywood, would be called fantastic.

There is the story of how a German eagle and swastika emblem came to be hanging in the office of the Commanding Officer of the base.

Col. Clifford J. Heflin, of Fresno, California, had piloted a Dakota aircraft (without armament) to a secret field in France to supply the Maquis of Ain. There it was found after landing that there was not sufficient time to unload and make a get-away before dawn. Undaunted, the air crew and partisans unloaded the vital supplies, then, unable to move the plane out of sight, proceeded to camouflage it. This they did by uprooting large trees whole sale from a nearby wood, digging holes about the aircraft, and planting a complete copse around it.

Undetected, it remained for 48 hours until weather and darkness permitted it to take off again.

During this time the crew remained with the Maquis and Col. Heflin was presented by their chief with the band's most treasured possession --- the Nazi emblem.

This had been taken by them the previous night in a raid upon Gestapo headquarters.

It is inscribed: "To my American friends, this trophy of the Maquis of Ain, taken from the Germans on the night of July 5th, 1944 at _____ by the Maquis of Ain."

MY FIRST TRIP INTO ANNECY

by

ROBERT W. FISH

During WW II, many aircrew members who were shot down over southern Germany and eastern France made their way to neutral Switzerland where they were interned for the duration of the war. The Swiss government walked a tight rope of neutrality.

In October 1944, the 492nd Group was assigned a mission of moving into the appropriate U.S. channels, all "internees" "escaping" from Switzerland. This mission was made possible after the allied troops had driven the Germans north of the France-Switzerland border. I further assigned responsibility for this mission to the 856th Bombardment (Carpetbagger) Squadron.

Soon after we received this mission I used a C-47 and hauled some of our personnel into a grass airfield near Annecy, France. I also carried a jeep on that trip. I never have figured out how my maintenance crew managed to insert that jeep into the C-47.

As usual the weather at Annecy was bad; rain; a more or less ragged one thousand foot ceiling and no wind. Braking action on the wet grass was almost non-existant. We remained within the boundaries of the field by virture of a ground loop made possible by the wet grass. No damage to the sturdy C-47.

After a night's rest at the Beau Rivage Hotel, we prepared to return to England. Several "escapees" were brought to the field to return with us. One "escapee", a First Lieutenant, informed me that he might not be a "legal escapee". After he was interned, he had agreed to a Swiss parole which allowed him to attend the University of Zurich. He had left the university without resigning his parole. He was concerned. I told him not to worry. My job was to transport "escapees" back to England and he was obviously an "escapee". I took him to England and sent him to London for interrogation.

Two days later, I received a telephone call from our embassy in London. The caller told me to get that lieutenant back into Switzerland as fast as I could. The Swiss government was vigorously protesting that he had broken his parole. I explained the situation to our London Air Force Headquarters, and they sent him back to Harrington. The next day we carried him back to Annecy, took him to the Swiss border, turned him over to the Swiss border guards, and they placed him in an internment camp. His parole was revoked and the Swiss were satisfied.

About five days later, he again escaped and came to Annecy. This time he was a legitimate "escapee" and the Swiss had no objection. We transported him back to Harrington, sent him to London, where he was processed and returned to the U.S.A.

The requirements of international neutrality and protocol had been satisfied.

* * * * * * *

Dear Mr. Fish,

I hope you had a happy holiday season. Ben Parnell gave me your name and address and suggested that you might be able to help me.

I was only two when the war ended. In my senior year in high school I had a teacher who was a B-17 pilot by the name of Robert Meyer. He was shot down over Augsburg on 16 March 1944 and managed to get his plane into Switzerland. Bob ditched his plane in Lake Zug and was interned until March 1945. He has never spoken much about his experiences. Recently I've become very curious about what happened in Switzerland for the internees and have attempted to find out as much as I can. Little is available in published form.

I've discovered that 167 planes ended up in Switzerland. However, there is not a list of the men who were interned there. Mr. Parnell indicated in his book that 783 men were repatriated through Annecy and the Mediterranean Force. Who were these men? In addition I've discovered that some fliers who were shot down over occupied territory were able to evade capture and got to Switzerland and then probably left there. Did any of these men leave Switzerland via Annecy?

In September 1988 I attended the reunion of the Swiss Internees Association in Dayton, Ohio. There I heard about Annecy from James Brown, who was an internee. I drew a dead-end until I came across the Carpetbaggers in November and as a result have been referred to you.

I would like to learn as much about the operation of the 856th as possible. Some of my questions include: Who were the men that were repatriated through Annecy?; Who coordinated the escapes and how?; What was your role in the operation?, etc.

Any ideas, sources, information, personal experiences, etc. that you would be willing to share would be appreciated. Of course, I'm willing to share anything I've learned also. Just let me know.

With warmest regards,

/s/ Roy J. Thomas

Roy J. Thomas

COLD FEET TO FREEDOM

Submitted by

ROY J. THOMAS

(The following story has been extracted from a statement by Oscar Koeppel who was incarcerated in Switzerland. Oscar arrived in Switzerland on 9 December 1944 via a badly battle damaged B-17 G #448193 of the 773rd Squadron of the 463rd Bomb Group. This extract is from his report on his escape from Switzerland.)

Water was covering the bottom of the boat. The only thing that gave us hope was a light we could see on the other shore. After what seemed like forever we finally reached shore. When I tried to get up my legs were like icicles. I could not stand up. I crawled along the seat on my side of the boat and was lifted out and helped into the cottage which was our destination. There was a roaring fire in the fireplace which we tried to get close to. We were held back because we had no clear idea how hot it was and we were freezing. I and perhaps others were wrapped in a quilt and given hot chocolate. It seemed like forever before some warmth came to my feet.

The following day some trucks picked us up and took us to a holding area. We were there about a week. The weather was nice, with a lake (probably Lake Annecy) next to our building. We relaxed and enjoyed being free and healthy again. I remember watching out the window at some of our group throwing hand grenades into the lake, comparing American and German shapes and explosive power. I also remember a wooden puzzle left there earlier. No one could assemble it. I played with it until it fell into place. After more practic I told a roommate of my success. He would not believe me because no one had solved it in months. I gave him a choice of a large bet of $5.00 to show him. He gave me the $5.00 gladly to show him the solution so that he could bet with others and show his skill.

We were now taken by Army trucks to Lyon to catch a train to Marseilles. The trip on the truck through the mountains was terrible. The road was icy and our truck spun around hitting a raised retaining wall about a foot high and almost tipped over on a steep drop-off. What a relief to get to Lyon. I found a ten franc coin in the railroad depot which reminded us to change our Swiss francs into French money. This was a great bargain for us. The train ride was great, especially when we saw a line of German vehicles about a mile long strafed and burned on the roadside. What a sight Marseilles was, bomb craters and filth. The smell was terrible. Now back to real life. Enlisted men were sent to barracks and officers to better quarters.

A SCENIC TOUR

by

DOUGLAS WALKER

Towards the end of the war, in March of 1945, we began flying missions into southern Germany to parachute agents into the mountainous Bavarian region.

SHAEF Allied Headquarters were concerned that the Nazis would pull their forces into that mountainous stronghold to fight a "last ditch" stand against the advancing Allied troops. The agent's job was to determine if there was any evidence of such a move.

Our crew was transferred on temporary assignment from our base at Harrington, England to Lyon, France to fly several of these missions.

On our first mission from Lyon, the pilot, Lt. Swarts, informed us to our surprise that we were given permission to fly over Switzerland on our way to the drop zone in Bavaria. Normally, neither the Allies nor the Nazis were permitted to overfly Swiss territory because the Swiss were neutral.

We could only speculate that the Swiss Government could see that the Nazis were losing the war, particularly after the failure of their Ardennes offensive in December 1944, and decided to allow the Allies some special priveleges.

In any event, by flying from Lyon to southern Germany over Switzerland, we cut the flying time considerably. More importantly, we avoided flying over a considerable portion of enemy territory bristling with anti-aircraft guns and night fighter pursuit planes.

That night, as we flew over the jagged Swiss Alps, we were all spellbound by the majestic beauty of those lovely peaks glistening in the moonlight under their white mantle of snow and ice.

We were all a little nervous about flying over neutral Switzerland --- even with their permission! We were concerned that instructions from higher Swiss authority not to fire on us might not trickle down to the Swiss gun crews in time to insure us a safe overflight.

As we flew towards the City of Geneva, we were awed by the sight of the blazing lights of the metropolis, sparkling by the side of Lake Geneva. It was a peace time scene which we had not seen in some time.

We were accustomed to flying over totally blacked out cities in the rest of war torn Europe. It was such a drastic change to see brilliantly lit skies over neutral Switzerland's cities.

We were all peering out of the Liberator's window at this startling scene --- when suddenly the interior of the Lib was illuminated to almost daylight intensity!

The Swiss gun batteries around Geneva had thrown several searchlight beams on us! We felt naked and vulnerable as we held our collective breath --- waiting for "friendly" Swiss flak to hit us!

However, the word must have filtered down to the gun crews and we flew on without a shot being fired.

On the way back to Lyon, after we had dropped our agent in Germany, Lt. Swarts carefully avoided the larger Swiss cities, just for added insurance.

Needless to say, we were relieved that our Liberator did not get shot full of holes --- like Swiss cheese!

CARPETBAGGERS COVER ALL OF GERMANY

BY ROBERT W. FISH

As more and more areas of France and the low countries were recaptured from the Germans, the requirements for Carpetbagger missions to them decreased. Carpetbagger missions to Norway, Denmark and parts of Holland did continue.

The Office of Strategic Services wanted more misions into the heartland of Germany. Much to the annoyance of the OSS, Colonel Upham refused to send his Harrington based B-24's across the Dutch-German border. He believed that single B-24's engaged in clandestine missions over the heart of Germany would be easy prey for the German night fighters.

At Lyon, France he restricted B-24 operations to southwestern Germany only.

OSS thought Upham was being "hard-nosed" about the possible German attacks on our aircraft. They were anxious to dispatch their growing number of Anti-Nazi agents into Germany. His actions caused a meeting in London at the highest levels to resolve this matter. As a result of this meeting the U S Strategic and Tactiful Air Force ordered the 492nd Bomb. Group to extend its missions to cover all of Germany. This order did not result in excessive losses.

MISSION #9 August 9. 1944 490/492nd Gp. (McKinley)

Our target was in Central France near Le Blanc. The pilot was Lt. Ellis and this was his thirty-fifth and final mission. We came in over the top (heavy flak area on north central coast of France) and I was very scared when we entered the continent.

It was dark and hazy going in but I pinpointed us at the Seine River which is ideal for pilotage. We stayed on course very well but Capt. Bales' experience (his plane was shot up last night) was fresh in my mind and I was looking around for fighters with more persistance than usual.

We had three British Paratroopers to drop besides the regular load. They were nice looking chaps and we talked for a couple of minutes before getting into the plane. When I asked, "Are you fellows going down there to take Paris?" They looked up seriously and said, "Paris? No. No."

We crossed the Loire River at the proper point and picked up our IP shortly afterwards. After overrunning our ETA for a minute, we did a 180 degree turn. While turning I spotted a light on the ground off to our right. It turned out to be our target and we dropped our load and the three paratroopers.

MISSION #16 September 4, 1944 490/492nd Gp. (McKinley)

"Whizzer" White, the bombardier on Sandburg's crew, was unable to fly this day and I was designated to replace him.

The target was north of Dijon and we had five American Paratroopers to drop. Altogether the group had ten ships on this target with sixty "Joes" to drop along with containers and packages.

The trip was pleasant and peaceful. Weather was good at the target and with a full moon we could even see the trucks hauling the loads away from the target grounds.

I was pleased the mission went well as Lt. White was an outstanding bombardier and a hard act to follow. We later had him fly as a navigator on missions. He was the only bombardier that I knew of to do this.

A NEWS REPORT FROM THE
STARS AND STRIPES NEWSPAPER

Sabotage Sprinklers

REVEAL LIBS DROPPED SPIES INTO NAZI MOUNTAIN REDOUBT

How Liberators, as late as April 26, flew from Dijon, France, at night deep into southern Germany, where the Nazis were expected to make their last ditch stand, to drop agents and equipment into the mountainous redoubt area was told yesterday for the first time by USSTAF. The agents radioed code reports of enemy movements to London. The reports in turn were transmitted to Allied armies in the field.

Lifting the veil of secrecy around the achievements of the 492nd Bomb Group, based west of Kettering, USSTAF also disclosed that the group's Libs last year flew at low level over France, Belgium and Holland to drop hundreds of trained agents and saboteurs, as well as tons of equipment, to aide the resistance movements in those countries.

Code word for the parachuting of supplies and men over pin-point targets was "carpetbagging." The original "carpetbaggers," however, were personnel of the 801st Bomb Group, commanded by Col. Clifford J. Heflin, of Fresno, California. In August 1944, the 492nd, also commanded by Heflin, took over. Col. Robert W. Fish, San Antonio, Texas, commands the group at present.

During the Nazi occupation, 492nd Dakotas landed at secret fields in France. Coded messages read over the British Broadcasting Corp. and beamed to Europe informed the Maquis when the "carpetbaggers" were coming.

Main purpose of the landings --- in addition to rescuing Allied airmen and others --- was to bring underground workers to England for instructions and training in sabotage.

Landings were made on primitive strips prepared by the Maquis. Flashlights were used as improvised flare paths. First of the hazardous flights was made by Col. Heflin soon after D-Day, when he took four passengers to France. On his return he carried Allied airmen, as well as two Hindus who had been rescued from the Nazis by the Maquis.

In the months before VE-Day the 492nd also continued to fly men and equipment from England for parachuting into Denmark and Norway.

But such work wasn't all the 492nd did. Last September the group's planes hauled nearly 750,000 gallons of gasoline to the Continent to feed the tanks and

trucks of the advancing Allied armies.

* * * * * *

A FLIGHT INTO THE GERMAN REDOUBT

by

ROBERT W. FISH

I recall one mission I flew from Dijon into the German southern redoubt area. It was an easy mission on a bright moonlight night. We could see for miles. The most memorable aspect of this mission was the startling and impressive beauty of the Alps Mountains. Their beauty was almost breath-taking.

The purpose of this mission was to resupply an intelligence team that had been dropped into the redoubt area on a prior mission.

I can't recall whose crew and aircraft I used on that mission. Being the group Deputy Commander I no longer rated a crew of my own. When I flew missions I always had to use one of our regular pilots' crew. The regular crew commander usually flew as my co-pilot. None of the crews were ever too happy about this arrangement even though I thought I was the best and most experienced pilot in the group. They always thought their regularly assigned pilot was the best.

After take off we flew to the intersection of the Swiss, French, German border. We crossed into Germany at that point and followed the Swiss-German border until we were deep into Germany. The moon was so bright that had a German night fighter found us he would have had little trouble blasting us out of the sky. Fortunately for us, at that late time in the war Germany was conserving its night fighters for use against the large mass night time raids of the Royal Air Force. As a result of that fact we had a trouble-free ride.

As I recall, the drop zone was on the slope of the Alps at about 7000 feet. It was also on a thirty degree slope. The reception committee gave us a good lighting pattern plus we were able to contact them by voice radio. We made our approach from the low side of the slope, dropped our cargo and flew a chandelle to the right to avoid the mountain. We saw no signs of life except the lights of the reception party.

As we withdrew from the area, our radio operator querried the reception party for any messages or requests. Their cocky radio operator responded, "Yeh, send in a stock of bananas and a couple gross of condoms."

Our trip home was uneventful. That night I spread my sleeping bag on the floor of a bomb damaged hanger. I managed very little sleep because a loose piece

of metal roofing kept banging in the wind.

LUCKY RABBIT'S FOOT

One of the World's greatest superstitions dictates that a rabbit's foot brings good luck. During World War II, I saw firsthand evidence of this in a very practical sense.

We occasionally flew missions out of Lyon and Dijon, France, dropping agents into Southern Germany. While in Lyon, we aircrews lived in a chateaux in the suburbs. We frequented a workingman's pub a few blocks away when we wanted to down a few vin rouge or vin blanc. We became acquainted with the daughter of the proprietor--a woman of about 30. One afternoon, as we were leaving to go back to the chateaux, she asked if we would like to visit her home and meet her mother and father. (We had an Army interpreter with us and he spoke French.) The three of us accompanied her to her home where we spent a pleasant hour drinking wine and swapping stories with she and her parents.

During the conservation, her father made a reference to the "rabbits in the cellar". When I inquired about this, the daughter asked us to accompany her to the basement. There, she showed us about 10 rabbit hutches against one wall.

She told us that, during the German occupation of France, they did not have much to eat. They were fortunate enough to have a relative who farmed a few acres outside of town--so they managed to obtain some vegetables and potatoes now and then. However, the only meat they could obtain regularly was by raising rabbits in their cellar. This effectively hid them from the Germans and enabled them to help assuage their hunger.

After the War, I read an article in Reader's Digest about this interesting food source. According to the article, the Nazis had a master plan to systematically starve the people of the occupied countries so as to affect their health, creating a sub-par slave labor force, to support their grandiose plans for their "1,000 Year Reich". To further these ends, they plundered the food from all of the occupied countries, to help feed the German "Master Race".

However, the people of the occupied countries began raising rabbits in the privacy of their cellars--one of the few high protein meat sources they could raise in the dark--away from German scrunity.

So--the French will tell you--a rabbit's foot <u>is</u> a good luck charm--especially when you are hungry!!

A TEARFUL COINCIDENCE

by

DOUGLAS D. WALKER

When those of us in the 856th Squadron flew out of Lyon, France on "Carpet-bagger" missions, we were billeted in a Chateau on the outskirts of Lyon, completely separate from any other military station or activity. This isolation was necessary to help protect the secret nature of our missions.

In March of 1945, an incident occurred at the Chateau which developed from one of those peculiar coincidences which happen in any war.

In order to take care of the aircrews billeted at the Chateau, two French-women had been hired to cook and clean and wait on tables.

One evening we were in the dining room eating supper. The pilot and navigator were perusing a large map which covered a section of Germany where we were to fly that night to parachute an agent near a town in the Bavarian region.

As the waitress leaned over to place a platter of potatoes on the table, she suddenly screamed and ran out of the room sobbing.

Seems that her husband was a prisoner of the Germans and when she leaned over to serve the food, she had inadvertantly glanced down where the navigator's finger was pointing on the map and recognized the town as the one where her husband was imprisoned.

The French "locals" knew that we were airmen, but guessed erroneously that we were bombing aircrews engaged in bombing targets in Germany. We, of course, said nothing to dispel this supposition. Naturally she thought that the town that the navigator was pointing to was to be bombed and she became terrified at the thought that her husband's life was in danger.

The pilot found her in the kitchen, sobbing --- and managed to calm her down by explaining that the town that the navigator was pointing to was only a check-point on the route we were to fly on our "bombing" mission that night. She immediately became her cheerful self and managed a relieved smile.

(Note by Bob Fish: Excuse the breakdown in our security. It seems from this story that our security in Lyon was quite ragged.)

BEAUCOUP COURAGE

by

DOUGLAS D. WALKER

My outfit in the 8th Air Force during World War II was the 856th Squadron, 492nd Bomb Group. We bore the code name "Carpetbaggers" because we flew clandestine missions at night, dropping agents in France and Germany and munitions and supplies to the French, Danish and Norwegian underground resistance forces. We flew out of Harrington Air Force Base near Kettering, England.

The agents we parachuted into France and Germany were working with the OSS --- the Office of Strategic Services. (This was the forerunner of the CIA.)

For security reasons, we referred to them as "Joes". The special opening in the floor of the B-24 Liberators we flew, where the "Joes" exited the plane when they parachuted, was called the "Joe Hole". (This was the opening left when the belly turrets were removed when our squadron took delivery of the black Liberators.) The official title of we "Belly Turret Gunners" was then changed to "Dispatcher".

The Joes we parachuted into France and Germany wore as standard garb a canvas jumpsuit, gloves, boots, a back parachute and an English paratrooper style helmet to protect their heads upon landing. Each Joe also carried a trench shovel shoved into the webbing of their parachute straps, so that they could bury their parachutes upon landing, to hide their arrival from the Germans.

On one of the "Carpetbagger" missions out of Harrington AFB, I was in the waist of the Liberator preparing for the mission while I awaited the arrival of the Joe. The generator was running, so I had a dim light to work by.

I looked up as the Joe stepped into the aircraft. I nodded to him, not paying too much attention, as I was busy arranging the static lines.

An OSS Colonel stepped in behind the Joe and walked over to me. "Sergeant," he said, "Take good care of your Joe tonight --- she is a special cargo!"

I turned to look and she had removed her helmet, unveiling a cascade of blonde hair down to her shoulders.

I smiled at her in welcome and told the Colonel, "Don't worry, we'll deliver her in good condition."

He then told me that she understood only French and German and that her mother and father in France had been killed by the Nazis --- the reason she had volunteered to be dropped into Germany. Seems we were dropping her into the Bavarian Alps region to determine if Hitler was really setting up a "last ditch"

stronghold in the so-called mountain redoubt, to hold out against the Allied armies.

After we took off, I made her as comfortable as I could --- as comfortable as could be managed in a drafty, unheated bomber on a cold night in January 1945.

With my fractured French and her equally disjointed English, it was difficult, but we managed to communicate enough so that I could at least keep her mind occupied until the time came for her to jump into Germany.

I'll never forget the sight of that pretty, brave girl as she sat in the "Joe Hole" awaiting my signal to jump into the night.

Here we were, flying in pitch blackness over enemy territory at 2,000 feet --- and she had the courage to parachute into enemy skies, not knowing what fate awaited her below.

I wished her "Bon Chance" as she jumped --- and she answered with a smile --- "Merci Mon Ami".

The tail gunner, Ralph Schiller, reported that her parachute had opened and we flew back to England and safety --- leaving a very brave woman behind in a very unsafe place.

We never learned what happened to her, but we were all agreed that she was one of the bravest people we had ever met.

ANOTHER DARBEY MEMORY

In our tents in the 857th Squadrons housing area we had very low voltage- about 50 volts as I remember. It provided a very dim light. The central latrine and shower building had 220 volts.

Our 857th men spent many clandestine hours laying a secret underground electrical cable from this shower building to our tent area. It was a slow project and well camouflaged. From it we were able to have 110 volt lights in our tents. The "Clerk-of-the-Works" went crazy for a few weeks until he finally discovered our claudestine electrical line.

LANDING BEHIND THE LINES

by ROBERT W. FISH

The decision to commit the Carpetbaggers to landing behind the German lines in Europe was made in General Doolittle's office at Eighth Air Force Headquarters in April 1944. The OSS Headquarters' officers had placed the requirement upon the US Air Force. A meeting was called in Doolittle's office and I was summoned to be there.

The British Royal Air Force had initiated such landing operations several months before this date using the small single engine Lysander aircraft. The Lysander operations had proven the feasibility of such tactics. It was time to expand this method of supplying the various underground forces and of extracting individuals from the continent. Larger aircraft were needed as the number of shot down aircrew members in hiding increased.

It was agreed that the RAF would expand its capability by using its twin engine Lockheed Hudsons. The US Air Force would use the Dakota C-47. A problem was that all of the C47's coming into England were urgently needed for building the capability of the Army's airborne units in preparation for the coming invasion of the continent. It would require weeks of time to program a C-47 from the USA for Carpetbagger use.

General Doolittle solved the immediate problem. He said, "I have a C-47 that has been assigned for my use. I have no urgent needs for it at this time. Give it to the Carpetbaggers for this mission". That is how we got our first C-47. Subsequent C-47's were programmed from the USA.

The C-47 acquired from General Doolittle required some modifications for out mission. We flew it to the big repair depot at Burtonwood for these mods. When we landed at Burtonwood we were greeted by a couple of General Officers and a bevy of Colonels. They had come to the flight line to meet General Doolittle. What we had not known was that some Doolittle aide had previously distributed the number of Doolittle's airplane to all the US air bases throughout the United Kingdom. When the personnel in operations in Burtonwood saw that number appear on our clearance they assumed that General Doolittle was on board.

Colonel Heflin piloted the first C-47 landing in France at night. I remember his co-pilot on that trip was Willie Stapel. Stapel was the aircraft commander on the second flight that the 801/492nd landed in France.

All of our squadron commanders were eager to get into the act and fly such missions. It was a challange to all of our red blooded American pilots to get into these intriguing operations.

Because I was in a position to select which missions I flew I was privileged to make four such behing-the-lines night time landings. They were fun, challenging and interesting. On the final approach on such landings the adrenaline in the pilots system was really pumping. He never knew for sure what kind of a situation he might be getting into. Would he be greeted by the French Maquis or by the Gestapo. I found that adventerous situation had lots of appeal. Fortunately our planes were always greeted by the Maquis. The worst aspect was that the landing places which the Maquis selected for us were usually extremely marginal. On two occasions our aircraft were damaged and had to be reapired before we could fly them out. Fortunately these incidents occurred after the Allied invasion at Normandy. The German forces were primarily engaged in countering that invasion. They had very few forces to throw against our clandestine efforts. The Maquis were able to secure the areas around our damaged aircraft for a length of time sufficient for us to repair them and fly them back to England.

MISSION #15 September 2, 1944 490/492nd Gp. (McKinley)

This was another C-47 "Dakota" mission and one long to be remembered. Our load was mostly ammunition along with bazookas, rifles and sundry other small arms. There also were three "bodies", Yanks in this case, one of whom was a photographer who took several photos while we were landing at the field near Limoges.

We entered the continent at the western tip of Cherbourg Peninsula and could plainly see the harbor which was lit up like the proverbially Christmas tree. From the harbor, truck convoys moved endlessly and relentlessly southeast. Rows of truck lights stretched as far as the eye could see and one realizes these vast supplies contribute so much to the amazing success of our armies.

The trip down was uneventful except for an unusually beautiful night. Lush, fluffy white fields of clouds and a full moon. The airfield was lit up nearly as bright as ours here in England and after overshooting on the first run, Col. Dickerson landed nicely on the second.

On the ground to meet us were several hundred Frenchmen and a few English officers, one of whom was quite intoxicated. They stated immediately that their most urgent need was for more petrol. Apparently they had the men and arms but couldn't catch up with Germans for lack of fuel.

We had two cartons of cigarettes and distributed them among the French who grabbed and jumped about viciously for them.

Getting out of the plane I noticed two young girls nearby and soon found that the airfield was more like a bizarre night club. Near the runway was a large white brick building about three stories high with the second story smaller in circumference than the first, obviously the operations building. Many people were milling about and several young Armed Guards with "FFI" arm bands were near the doorway. We walked in to discover the most motley group of men and women and a large bar which was doing a brisk business.

Our English officer was most kind and friendly. We started right in drinking the most delicious wine I've ever tasted. He told us again how sorely they needed petrol and asked us to notify London that six Frenchmen were killed by our fighter pilots the previous day. He wanted the pilots told to not strafe vehicles with a white star on them and said the Germans would not have time to paint their vehicles.

I walked outside to watch the people and the night. There were no clouds and the moon lit up the field gloriously. The wine did the same for me and I tried to talk with the young French guards who were very friendly. They knew no English and I very little French. We had a picnic though with gestures, I point to the moon and say "moon" and they say "lunar", or something similar. A cute girl was nearby "petite mademoiselle" was all I could say. How I regret quitting French in high school.

The Colonel and Jack made off with a bottle of champagne each before leaving. Lt. Dibble knows French fairly well and gathered from the guards that the girls were off limits because of venereal disease.

At the end of the runway, ready to return, we opened the door to let twenty escaped airmen in the ship. After reaching the channel I went back to see how they were getting along. Huddled together like a bunch of starved refugees, they were miserably cold and uncomfortable. Their clothing for the most part was just light summer trousers, cotton shirt and a light sweater. Most of them had no stockings on and the shoes were worn through.

Jack and I gave them our flight jackets to wear. The first two I reached were pathetically anxious to talk and in high spirits. They had been shot down three months ago and had endured real hardships trying to escape. One of them had been into Spain twice and each time the police there, contrary to international law, had forced him back and the second time he was turned over to the Gestopo. That group called them spies, accused them of various crimes, took their dog tags away and generally were obnoxious. For food they had some sad form of broth.

Two of the men had been flying Moquitoes and were shot down while flying fifty feet above Bordeaux. They both crash landed on the Garonne River. One man, a British Paratroop Officer, had been dropped sixty miles south of the place he should have been dropped on D-Day. That was embarrassing for us in Air Corps to hear.

BEHIND THE LINES

by

JAMES DARBY

My first C-47 flight to land behind the German lines in France was with Colonel Clifford Heflin as my pilot. I will always remember how relaxed he was. On the other hand, I was scared to death. I later flew on three of these missions where I was the pilot in command who landed behind the lines. I will vouch for the fact that the "Maquis" underground forces were not the greatest experts at selecting landing areas for C-47's, especially when the runway was outlined by just a few flashlights.

On one occasion we sent a C-47 nighttime landing mission into the Rennes area of France. I don't recollect the pilot's name, but the airplane ended up in a ditch that was parallel to the very narrow landing area. One prop was damaged and all hydraulic fluid was lost for the brakes, gear, flaps, etc. (flaps may have been electrical - I can't remember for sure).

At the time of this event I was the Group Operations Officer. Tommy King was the 857th Maintenance Officer. Tommy convinced me that he and a hydraulic specialist under the guidance of Line Chief Master Sergeant Waller, could repair the airplane sufficiently for a one time flight. Since the area where the damaged plane landed was fairly secure, Colonel Fish concurred and we flew the maintenance team in to the field where the damaged plane was located.

When Tommy King gave us the word that the repaired airplane was ready to fly, Colonel Fish designated me to take another C-47 into the same field with a crew to fly the damaged plane back to England. Captain Bill McKinley flew as my navigator. I do not remember who the rest of the crews were.

On landing in France we were met by a delegation from the French underground forces. With great fanfare, much to our consternation, we were driven into a nearby town to a hotel lobby where there was much toasting with various wines. Then we were very secretly taken to a cellar for some food and more toasting.

Bill McKinley disappeared from our group. When the time arrived for us to return to England that night he was nowhere around. After waiting and inordinate length of time for him I took off and returned to England without him. After some apparently wonderful adventures Bill returned to England on another flight several days later.

RANDOM MEMORIES

by

JAMES DARBY

I flew thirty-two missions of which the last few were night bombing missions which were made with me standing on the flight deck behind the pilot and the co-pilot. I was supposedly serving as the Group Leader. That position was one of Upham's stupid ideas. In that position there was nothing I could do to contribute to the mission.

Most of my missions were fairly uneventful, but of course they were filled with suspence. We always saw some ground fire --- usually 20 mm fired straight up. Sometimes it seemed to cover hundreds of acres, but we just flew around it and no harm was done.

I only recall one heavy artillery anti-aircraft shelling and that was my fault. We crossed the coast of France at Etrett and I stupidly climbed to 8000 feet altitude since there was a lot of search light activity. Several shells exploded near us and I peeled off into a rapid descent, ending up literally between the blades of grass. I never exceeded 5000 feet of altitude in any subsequent mission.

All of the crews had their own flak charts based on personal experiences and exchanges with other aircrews. Of course we had intelligence briefings on flak locations but our own flak charts were confidence builders.

The low altitude navigation by our navigators and bombardiers was unbelievably accurate --- using rivers, forests, roads and railroad tracks they could put us on precise coordinates in France, the Netherlands, the Lowlands and in Norway. On the other hand a wind shift not readily apparent caused inaccurate navigation that on one occasion resulted in my most memorable mission. Our target was a drop area southeast of Paris. We crossed the French coast in the Dieppe area and flew to a point just south of Paris --- then turned to an easterly heading leading to our target area. After we completed a successful drop, our navigator, Bob Thompson, gave me a westerly heading designed to take us well around Paris, to the south, before we turned north on a heading for England.

We were at 4500 feet when suddenly we found ourselves over a very large city that had to be Paris. A few search lights were turned on in our direction but no real effort seemed to be made to "cone" us. Phil Guilfoil, my co-pilot, started to increase our RPM but I instinctively stopped him and we just continued on our

way at 4500 feet of altitude as though we were a German aircraft. I told the waist gunner and the dispatcher to throw out the leaflets which they did with great humor. As we reached the outskirts of the city the sky lighted up as though it were daylight. We descended like a streamlined brick and made our way to the coast at about 100 feet of altitude. Our escape was just short of miraculous!

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The 857th Squadron was one of the squadrons that were housed in tents at Harrington. The tents were really quite comfortable after we got organized. We had little or no coal for heat and the weather, or course, was miserable. Our maintenance men rigged up oxygen tanks fastened to the top of the tent poles with a copper line running down into the heating stoves, thereby allowing us to use aircraft engine oil to drip and burn on a hot brick. This conversion made a marvelous tent heater.

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I also remember the night we dropped about forty-five men under the command of Prince Obolensky into France. I will always remember Obolensky at the warm up ramp saluting each aircraft as it took off.

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The failed mission on which Tresmer was killed.

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Shaving off one half of Captain Sullivan's mustache in the club one night.

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That on the return of our crews from missions, each crew member was given fresh eggs for breakfast and a shot of bourbon to facilitate their relaxation. Most crew members saved their bourbon for a blast when their next three day pass came around.

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The night bombing pathfinder missions with the RAF were pretty grim. Four or five of our B-24's flew in trail with the RAF bomber streams of aircraft. We were mixed in with the RAF Lancasters and Wellingtons. As soon as the German Luftewaffe night fighters were committed we were instructed to turn back to England. We were required to carry bombs and to drop them on German targets on the way home. We were required to do this just to say that the United States was engaged in 24-hour bombing operations. This was stupid. We did no damage to speak of and our lives and aircraft were in extreme danger for no reason except public relations.

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The missions that I enjoyed the least were those daylight missions we flew into Belgium to supply General Pattons' Third Army with gasoline. You will recall that his tanks advanced so fast that he out ran his logistic support, particularly his supply of gasoline for his tanks.

We were directed to reconfigure our B-24's into flying gas tanks to carry 80 octane gasoline into a small grass field in Belgium. We put large rubber bomb bay tanks in the B-24's to carry this low grade gasoline. We also carried it in our auxiliary wing tanks. We retained the main tanks in our aircraft for 100 octane fuel to feed the aircraft's engines. There was little or no risk of enemy air attack against this operation but we were all concerned about an aircraft fire.

I don't recall that we received combat mission credit for these flights.

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After V-E Day, a group of correspondents came to Harrington and several of us were interviewed. I remember there was a Readers' Digest article written entitled "Scarlet Pimpernels of the Air". I would like to have a copy of that article if you have it.

MISSION #13 August 27, 1944 490/492nd Gp. (McKinley)

We finally got to fly a C-47 mission and landed in France. Lt. Col. Boone was the pilot and Lt. Col. Dickerson the co-pilot. Jack Sayers navigated and a radio operator from the 856th Squadron was the only other crew member except for me.

In the afternoon we met a French major who had come from the target area where we were to land. The field was ten miles southwest of Le Blanc and the major said there were 8,000 German soldiers ten miles further west who were trying to get started back to Germany. Our load contained mortars and various types of ammunition. The French major spoke excellent English and apparently knew the location of every German for miles around Le Blanc.

We were scheduled to take four "bodies" along, they had not shown up at take off time and Col. Boone said, "To hell with them" and we took off at eight fifty.

The trip was most peaceful and uneventful. Over the channel I swapped seats with Col. Dickerson and did pilotage from there. Because of heavy haze on the continent I was able to see little except for Lake Ploermel and the Loire River where we turned.

At the target four lights popped up faithfully and another one blinked out our code letter. The runway ran North-South and we landed to the South. On the final approach Col. Boone turned on the landing lights which lit up a nice green field. The runway was quite bumpy and Jack, along with the radio operator and I, had a rough time trying to untie the ropes from the cargo while taxiing.

When the plane doors opened we found about twenty noisy French soldiers along with a British 1st Lt. in charge. We had a large box containing cigarettes, cigars, gum and soap. All of which excited and delighted them no small amount. They reached like eager children and were profuse with thanks, although we understood little of their talk. The English officer said he wished to God he understood their language so he could get along better with them.

It took about ten minutes of hard work to unload everything. The weather was extremely warm.

PLAYING A DOUBLEHEADER

by

BOB FISH

In the summer of 1944 I flew a Dakota mission into central and southern France. My memories have been so dimmed by the passing years that I can no longer recall the names of the other members of my air crew. The minimum crew would have consisted of myself, my co-pilot, an engineer and a radio operator. I do remember that Major Thayer of the OSS was with us because we were to pick up some spies and downed air crew members when we landed. We encountered no enemy air opposition during our entire flight.

We carried a full load of mortars and mortar shells into a "Maquis" area just south of Limoges, France. We found the reception party with no problems. We saw their flashlight flare path as we approached the target area and were able to make a straight in approach and landing.

When the aircraft came to the end of its landing roll we were greeted by some ten to twelve Frenchmen. The first thing they wanted to do as a welcoming gesture was to drink a toast to each of our crew members. They appeared to have an unlimited supply of wine which they had brought for toasting purposes.

Each member of the ground party wanted to drink a personal toast with the pilot. They were so enthusiastic that it was virtually impossible to kill their high spirits by refusing to respond to their honorific salutations.

I recall that there was a British army major in their group. He served as our interpreter. After half a dozen toasts he reminded me that the wine they were using was very potent and could possibly cause illness to the uninitiated. He handed me a loaf of bread and suggested that if I ate copiously of it that it might soak up some of the alcohol in the wine. I thanked him and ate some bread.

With the aid of the "Maquis" members we had the airplane unloaded in about twenty minutes and we immediately took off for the second part of our mission which was to land near Bordeaux, France and pick up some passengers, mostly air crew members who had had their aircraft shot down by the Germans.

Again we found our landing site with no problems, and immediately landed in the designated pasture. The time was about 1:00 a.m. Here we were greeted by a group of some twenty to thirty Frenchmen. We were surprised by the size of our reception committee and somewhat concerned about the safety of our mission. The

greater the number of people involved the greater was the chances that the Germans would discover our location. If they caught us we would be taken as prisoners of war but the Frenchmen involved would be shot. These facts did not seem to dampen the enthusiasm of the Frenchmen in any way.

They took us into a nearby farm house for a French type welcoming event. In one room of the house was a table I would judge was about seven feet long and four to five feet wide. The entire top of this table was covered with liqueur glasses each containing some type of liqueur. The local "Maquis" wanted to toast each of our crew and every aspect of victory that they could perceive. We were on the ground there for about half an hour, far longer than was wise or was planned.

By the time I got the aircraft back into the air I was beginning to feel the effects of the alcohol I had consumed. By the time we were a half hour into our flight back to England I was really ill. Beads of persperation the size of marbles were forming on my brow. My co-pilot was no better than I was.

At 4000 feet we set the aircraft on auto pilot and flew the entire length of the Bay of Biscay coastline from Bordeaux to the English Channel and we were unable to detect that the German gunners on the ground ever fired a shot at us. Is it possible they were all asleep?

ART OF WAR

by

PETER "SANDY" SANDERS

When they were organizing the Carpetbaggers Group in England, I was an "air to air" gunnery instructor at the aerial gunnery school at Las Vegas, Nevada. Two of us (instructors) were called in to HQ and were told a new outfit was being formed overseas and they needed volunteer instructors for a gunnery school in connection with it. We had qualified and would receive promotions, etc., combat flying time, etc., new training, etc. So being tired of desert flying, etc., we signed up. We were immediately sent to England and to a RAF base and were assigned to a night flying school in Worksop, England, located near the border of Scotland. While there as students, we were given very good training, 12 hours per day in the fine art of flying in the dark and in tactics of night flying German fighter planes.

We were then sent to our new home in Harrington Field, where we were taken to an empty hangar right next to the Quartermasters Commissary hangar where we met with about 18 other instructors. We were told that this hangar was for a new night gunnery school, so start building what we needed. During the next two months we built a new school with some of the best parts of wrected B-24's from all over England. All the while we were flying Carpetbagger missions with any crews which had a man shortage. We started the flight crews through our new school. The inside of the hangar was painted black. We could close the hangar doors and we had simulated night. When the doors were open it was very dreary and uninspiring. 1st Lt. Baker asked me if I could come up with a design or a spot of color on the open area wall that might brighten up the place. Something appropriate.

So, I came up with a color sketch, to scale, with colors that would be compatible with the operation and at the same time liven up the place. We then placed the sketch in one of our projects and focused it on the plywood "canvas" to the right proportions and got approval from the powers that be. We then got up on ladders and traced the lines from the projector on to the plywood with charcoal. Being unable to get any oil paint in Kettering I had to settle for poster paint. All of us on the school project chipped in and bought paint and brushes. The poster paint, of course, would not blend on the board so I painted it poster style.

The central figure represents the "Spirit of Aerial Combat". The recruits on the left are approaching the school, represented by the books whose titles, weapons, night vision turrets, Rad-sighting, etc., etc. represents the subjects they studied under the eyes of the "Spirit". The graduates are leaving on the right in flight gear to the flight line for their missions to occupied territory.

All new replacement crews that came in from the States that were assigned to our outfit went through our night flight training and one of us had to fly with them on their first mission and sometimes more. (Guess who worked like hell to see that the new crews learned their lessons well.)

When hostilities ceased some of the air raid wardens and the plane spotter organization from the local area were invited to visit our base. (You remember our base was secret, no one knew what went on there except "Axis Sally", "Lord Haw Haw" and the whole damn intelligence outfits of the Nazi military!) Anyway, among the group of people were several from the village of Clipston, whom I had met during a number of "Bicycle Pub Missions" that Armand Hartzie and I had made. One of them was a retired "Major Regnant" who seemed to be in command of the group. Anyway, we gave them the full tour of our little training center. They were interested in the mural and asked many questions concerning its meaning, etc. They were astounded that we would bother to decorate a military establishment.

Finally, we received orders to pack up everything and go home. Lt. Baker asked me what I wanted to do with the mural. I did not want it, the army did not know it existed. So, he asked if I thought any of my friends in Clipston might want it. That evening I went down to Clipston and found Major Regnant in the Bulls Head Pub and asked if he knew of any organization or group who would like to have the mural. He answered, "I am a member of the local school board and I am sure they would love to have that beautiful decoration for the local school as a souvenir of the friendship of our two countries and of our joint struggle. It will be a constant reminder of the boys who were stationed here. So, he arranged for the school board to meet and accept the mural the following day, with all the pomp and ceremony that would be given the "Mona Lisa".

While we were loading it on a GI truck, the photography hut sent a camera man down to take a picture of it. That is I holding it with the other end in the truck.

The mural is still on the school wall in Clipston and they are proud of it. They would not allow the boys to remove it to use at the reunion.

Hartzie saw a print of the mural in the photo shack and he promoted a

deveoped print of it. Many years later he sent me a print.

So, that is the story of the mural. Actually it is pretty crude due to the circumstances under which it was painted but, it served its purpose and I am glad it is still giving pleasure to its viewers.

NIGHT GUNNERY SCHOOL

by

PETER SANDERS

April 27, 1990

Dear Col.,

In answer to your request for names of fellows I worked with at the Harrington night gunnery project, it took a lot of looking and a lot of strain on my memory. However, I did find an old notebook where I had written down some of their names and adresses (these adresses are 45 years old). Each of us had a short nickname and for the most part many of us never knew all of the full names, and be able to put a face with it. So the following are the only one I am sure of.

Hugh L. Gary Jr. (Gary), Buck Sergeant, Wildwood Plantation, Greenwood, Miss. Gary was a top turret gunner and instructed in that position for night vision sighting and firing. He went to Canada and joined the RCAF. He received flight training and was awarded the Victoria Cross in Combat. When the U.S. entered the war he transferred to the U.S. Army and into our project.

William E. Murphy (Murf), Buck Sergeant, 364 E. 323rd St., Willoughby, Ohio. "Murf" was in charge of the skeet range and was very good with a shot gun. He was a gunsmith and kept the equipment in fine shape. He instituted using dark shooting glasses for his classes to simulate nighttime firing. He was a successful instructor.

Gerald E. Trueblood (Jerry), 301 4th Ave. NW, Cedar Rapids, Iowa. Jerry was a belly gunner and instructed off-set sighting and firing from that position on our mock up.

Don D. Carrithers (Don), Tech Sergeant, 147 Oglethorp Ave., Athens, Georgia. Don was a sharp flexible machine gunner and instructed from the waist gunners position. He also lectured on night vision theory to new crews.

Hal E. Williams (Hal), Buck Sergeant, 330 W. Ocean Drive, Longbeach, Calif. Hal was a waist gunner and instructed that position and lectured on Nazi attack tactics.

William J. Wentworth (Capone), Buck Sergeant, Chicago, Ill. "Cap" was a top turret gunner and instructed that position as well as the pistol range. He helped all of us in the side arm use.

Curtis Keebler (Keeb), Buck Sergeant, 2155 Dana Street, Toledo, Ohio. "Keeb" was a tailgunner and instructed that position on the mock up. He also lectured on Nazi tactics and responsive tacties with the film projector.

Robert S. Chapman (Chappy), Buck Sergeant, 1070 N. Chester Ave., Pasadena, Calif. "Chappy was a flexible gunner and instructed the waist position on our mock up. He flew most of his missions on the A-25 (?) we had on our base.

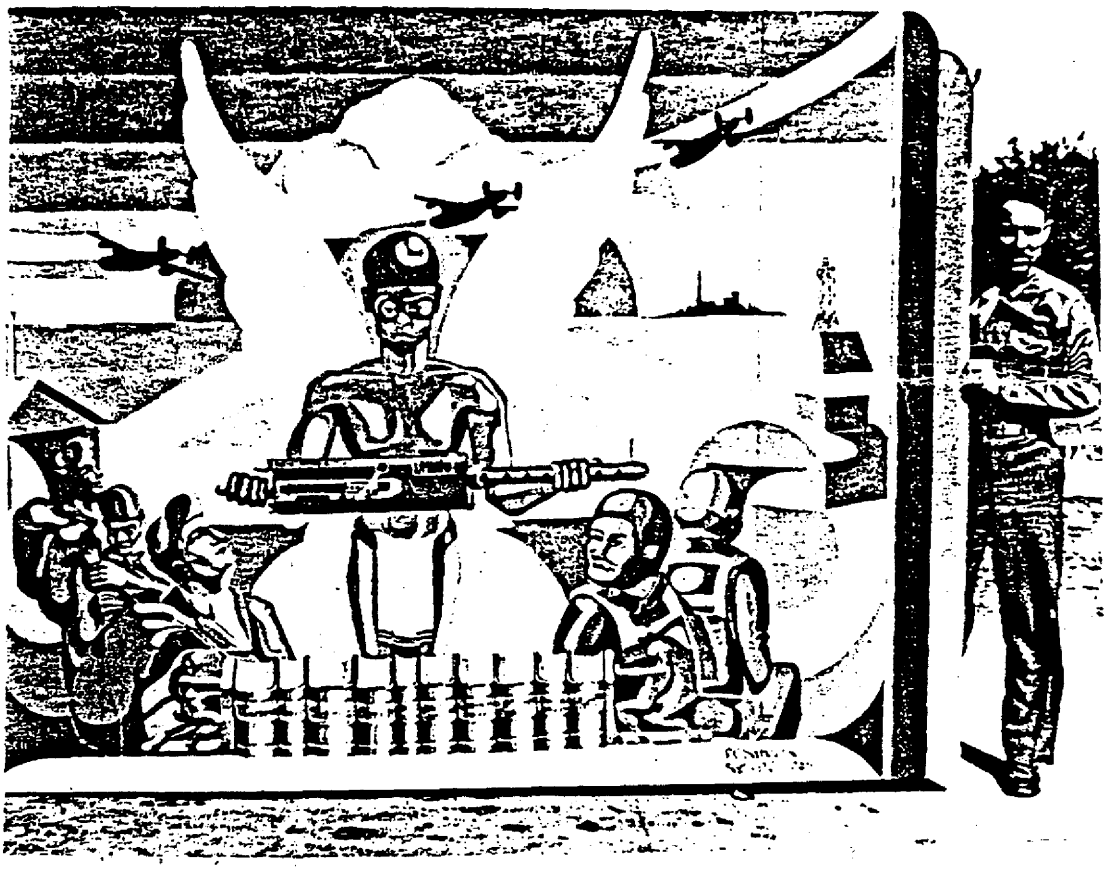
There was a Staff Sergeant who did all of our organizing and record keeping whose name seems to have vanished. I believe he was awarded the Bronze Star for his part in the invention of the "Joe Hole" where we dumped out saboteuers over the target. He was not a flyer nor a gunner but was a wizard when it came to getting supplies and materials for mock up building.

Then there was 1st Lt. ____ Baker, who was our Officer in Charge. I don't suppose I ever heard his first name. He was a gun enthusiast and was an expert with the forty-fives and loved the skeet range. He was a soft spoken man and was highly respected by all of the enlisted men, as an officer and as a man.

We had no Army manual, there was none. Lt. Baker encouraged us to compile one. Each one of us did our part to write out the instruction procedures we had found to produce the best results. We tried to adapt our state side gunnery schools, the RAF night vision and our own observations of our low altitude flying at nighttime, using some common sense, to the problems as seen from our own departments. Each week we gave Lt. Baker another chapter. Our teaching methods were improving, we changed some of them from time as we tested them. The idea was to develop a manual for teaching or changing regular air crews to nighttime, low flying "Carpetbaggers". We were nearly finished when the cessation of hostilities stopped all production.

SANDY,S GUNNERY MURAL

COMMENTS BY DOUG WALKER



The above mural has an interesting history. The man standing beside it(and who sent me the picture) is Pete Sanders. ex-carpetbagger, now a retired art teacher in Cottonwood, Arizona. I learned from Armond Hartzie of Oakland, California (also a carpetbagger from the 858th Bomb Squadron) that Pete had painted a bright colorful mural in 1944 to hang in the Gunnery Hanger to brighten the drab dark walls. (Pete was in charge of aerial gunnery instruction at harrington). At Armond's suggestion I got in touch with Pete Sanders to obtain the details ------ just to see if by some weird shance that the mural was sill hanging some where. Pete, who is still doing the Rembrandt bit in Ari-

zona told me that after the war was over, the base opened up for tours by visiting locals. Several good citizens from Clipston (about 4 miles from Harrington) whom Pete and Armond had met on their outings to the Boar's Head Pub, liked the mural very much and asked if they could have it. Pete talked it over with the Gunnery Officer and they decided to award it to them. Before handing it over, Pete painted a message on the bottom of the mural --"To the friendliest little village in the World". The Clipston folks hung it in the local school and invited Pete and some of his buddies to a dedication tea in July 1945--just before we all headed for home. After talking with Pete -- I wrote to our teacher friend in Harrington -- Liz Coverey, who wrote us that nice letter I printed in a recent buttetin, -- to see if she could track it down for us. She did! Believe it or not -- it is still hanging on the same wall in the Clipston School -- 42 years later! Ron Clark saw it last week and told me that it still looks bright and colorful! Pete Sanders was very happy to hear the news! Unfortunately, we won't be able to view it during our reunion. Try as we did, we just couldn't find the time in our already tight schedule to view it during our stay. However, it sure is nice to know that the citizens of Clipston still think enough of us to keep the mural on display-- after all these years. We appreciate it! It's nice to have a few links left with the past.

YANKS DROP FROM THE SKY

(The following article appeared in an issue of the NATIONAL GEORGRAPHIC MAGAZINE)

The white war was not Norway's alone, although her white'clad saboteurs, vanishing into the blizzards like bodiless spirits of the tempest-blown snow, were the chief actors.

Neither the United States nor England ever forgot the land of the northern lights. Perhaps the most thrilling episode of the ghostly fighting was a 16-man invasion of the aurora haloed white mountains last March by American paratroopers of the Norwegian Operations Group.

Most of them were soldiers of Norwegian descent belonging to that colorful American military organization, Maj. Gen. William J. Donovan's Office of Strategic Services. The plan was to cut the north-south railroad line and thus break up German troop transport.

In all, five attempts were made to land. Twice the white-clad paratroopers commanded by Maj. William E. Colby set out from Scotland, once in January and once in February. Both times they were forced back when their B-24 bombers encountered heavy snowstorms. The third attempt, a week before Easter, was partly successful.

The expedition started with 36 men and officers. Of these, 16 parachuted successfully to within a few miles of the rendezvous point, a high mountain lake northeast of Trondheim. The planes carrying the others with their equipment were unable to get through a storm and turned back. On the fourth and fifth attempts to rejoin their comrades, a plane crashed each time; 10 paratroopers and 14 airmen in all were killed.

It was 20 below zero in the mountains the Sunday before Easter. Snow wraiths swirled in the wind through the high passes and over the glasslike ice of Jaevsjo (sjo means "lake"). The men dropped over a radius of about ten miles. It was eight hours before they were able to assemble in one spot. The snow over which they made their way on skis was five feet deep. The country, near the Swedish border, was almost uninhabited.

The men were dressed in snow-white parkas of wind-resistant cloth, light, durable, and serviceable. Unlike the Germany Army, the American Army does not favor furs for winter mountain fighting. Especially in eastern Germany, vast warehouses filled with fur garments, loot from the furriers of two-thirds of Europe, were overrun. These quickly became heavy, cumbersome, and, even in the

coldest weather, too warm for battle uniforms.

The Americans who landed on the lake quickly made tents of their white parachutes to shelter themselves from the wind. Several of them were old hands at the game. They had parachuted behind enemy lines before in France. They had been given intensive training for months for this particular exploit in the Scottish Highlands region, especially on the high slopes of the Grampians.

They were to be joined at Jaevsjo by a small group of Norwegian Underground saboteurs. Arrangements had been made by radio. There was hardly a day for five years when the Norse resistance men were not in radio communication with their army headquarters in London, and Major Colby's group rarely failed to get a daily report of its activities back in OSS offices in England.

A Gun Recalls the Password

The passwords had been agreed upon. The American was to ask an approaching native:

"Is there good fishing around here?"

The answer: "Yes, especially in winter."

But the first Norwegian, a native of the section, challenged by Colby forgot in his excitement and answered what he knew to be the truth:

"No, it's no damned good!"

He quickly recalled the correct answer when a gun was pressed against his back!

With the men had been dropped approximately ten tons of equipment, including three tons of explosives. Much of it fell into small fjords or forests in 15 feet of snow, and the men had to work about a week to recover it. Then it was cached on the lake and well camouflaged with snow and with the white parachutes.

On the trail each ski trooper carried 85 pounds of equipment on his back. Every third man alternated every two hours in dragging a toboggan loaded with 2-pound blocks of a plastic explosive far more powerful than dynamite, which could be molded into any shape by hand.

The landing on the lake had been unobserved. There were no German patrols in these lonely mountains. The men kept well hidden for a week. Any fire, of course, was out of the question, despite the intense cold. Smoke certainly would arouse suspicion.

The first bridge-blowing job was accomplished successfully on Easter Sunday. It was snowing. The enemy had left only a couple of sentries on duty while the rest of the guard were attending Easter services at a nearby village church.

With ski tracks quickly covered by falling snow, the white-parkaed Americans made their way back to the parachute-tent bivouac without any clash with the enemy.

An intensive search for them started immediately. German ski patrols combed the mountains, and it was necessary to cut loose from the base of operations.

The next job was on a larger scale and correspondingly more difficult: to blow up about four miles of the north-south rail line, which was well guarded with sentry posts. This feat also was accomplished in a storm, with the white-clad men hidden in the whiteness of the snow. They infiltrated the sentry line in groups of three. The demolition job was a complete success. A hundred charges went off in two minutes.

But the Easter Sunday job had put the Germans on the alert. The chase started at once, with the Americans outnumbered ten to one. But they were better men on skis. They fled 50 miles into the mountains without pausing for breath. This probably was a record of some sort.

Penicillin Saves Wounded Patriot

One soldier, a Norwegian patriot who had joined the group, had a bullet wound in his abdomen. He was treated with penicillin and dragged on a sled hastily improvised from a pair of skis. The man was unconscious most of the time. He was taken over the Swedish border and placed in the care of some villagers. He is now recovered.

Return to the lake was out of the question. The ski troopers found shelter in the cabin of a seter, one of the high mountain pastures used by farmers in summer for their cattle and goats. Food was restricted to the amount each man carried on his back.

Once, however, a German food cache was found. It contained flour and champagne. This curious combination is not surprising. Wherever German troops were stationed, even at the loneliest outposts, there was always plenty of champagne, presumably looted from France. The Americans had several good meals of pancakes and champagne.

A long halt anywhere would have been suicide, for the mountains were full of enemy ski patrols. The Americans must keep constantly on the move, living off the country as best they could. At one time they were reduced to eating reindeer moss for a couple of days.

What seemed at first a big break in luck came when they encountered a nomad Lapp with a herd of reindeer. He was fleeing from the Germans. The paratroopers bought and ate one of the animals.

Though constantly on the move, the Americans managed to keep in touch by radio with London. Their superior officers knew where they were, but could not help them. The group hid in the mountains until the war ended.

When they heard over the air the news of the German capitulation, they came out of the mountains toward the little town of Steinkjer. From a farmhouse they telephoned to the Steinkjer hotel asking that dinner and beds be reserved for them.

When the bearded, long-haired, white-clad Yanks and their Norwegian companions reached town a half hour later, they were greeted by the mayor and a band in the central square.

Throughout the war, RAF, American, and Norwegian pilots risked their lives night after night, flying low over ice-covered mountain peaks through cloud and snow and swooping blind through narrow valleys to drop supplies to the Norwegian resistance forces. Many planes and men were lost in the white war.

Heroes of the Underground

But the major credit for everything accomplished against the common enemy in Norway belongs to the resistance forces, the little groups of hunted, sleepless, nameless men who for five years fought against odds of a thousand to one. A month after the German capitulation I met a leader of the movement at an Oslo cocktail party. Before the war he had been a rising young attorney. He still was going under an assumed name, because of various complications arising from work left undone. His wife, whom he had not seen since the beginning of the war, still thought he was dead.

The movement in Norway was on much the same pattern as in other invaded countries. The men were organized in small groups. Each group knew only its own leader. It did not know the members of any other group or the higher officers from whom orders came for sabotage jobs. Lifelong friends, members of different groups, knew nothing of each other's activities. Old neighbors were amazed when, after the capitulation, they found that both had served as saboteurs. Sometimes they actually had suspected each other of serving the Germans.

For the most part, these little groups hid out in the mountains from which, moving swiftly and silently as ermines through the snow, they raided German installations.

The chill of late winter still was in the air when I encountered one of these groups at a high mountain inn at the peak of a ridge between Oslo and Trondheim. They had just left their hiding place. They were led by a Norse paratrooper who had been flown from Britain and dropped into the mountains with special sabotage

equipment. A few weeks before, they had been living in a comfortable Eskimo-type igloo which the leader had learned to build as a Boy Scout.

Naturally, the resistance groups were of valuable aid to the Americans and British in locating German secret installations. A precious memory of the war is a night spent with the local resistance group at Lillehammer after a raid on a country hotel which had served for a time as German staff headquarters. Many secret documents still were concealed there, but staff officers who remained were almost perpetually drunk. They had large supplies of champagne and cognac which they knew eventually must be handed over to the Allies. They were trying to consume as much as possible before the day came. The raiders had acted on information from a German deserter who had joined the Norwegian Underground.

After the last war, a large number of German and Austrian orphans were taken into Norwegian homes and reared and educated as members of the families. They returned to their own countries later. When the forces of the Reich invaded Norway in April 1940, charges were made that these same boys and girls served as guides and that their intimate knowledge of the country played an important part in its quick reduction. This was true.

But there is another side to the story which throws a better light on human nature. Some of these orphans were not wholly ungrateful. On the contrary, a number had volunteered because of their gratitude. An appeal had been made to them to help save Norway, which they loved. Norway, they were told, had been invaded and was being oppressed by the British. The German Army's mission was to liberate their benefactors, whom they looked upon as fathers, mothers, brothers, and sisters.

When the orphans, especially those from Austria, learned the true picture, some of them shot themselves and many others deserted to the Underground. Some remained on duty in German uniforms, an excellent position in which to serve as spies for the Underground. They played a real part in the white war.

With the weird white war passing into history, the mountainous, forested land of the Vikings and the northern lights seems the happiest country in Europe. That is why its people dance all night in the avenues and the squares.

A MISSION TO NORWAY

by

WILLIAM C. BASTIAN

(As told in a letter to Robert W. Fish)

Dear Bob

The December Newsletter prompted me to write of one of the missions that I remember best because it was so long and I was sure we wouldn't make it back. I was flying with Abner Pike who was an excellent pilot and on his second tour in the UK. I was the radio and top turret gunner. The date must have been 24 March 1945 since my copy of the sortie record shows 13:10 hours.

I know we flew to an RAF base in northern Scotland and stayed overnight. Naturally I never was aware of our destination. However upon arriving at the plane early in the evening. There were about 8 men dressed in white Artic Type gear loading a lot of bundles and cylinders into the rear of the B24. I was told not to talk with these men or to ask questions. We also had a radar set installed opposite my station on the flight deck.

Anyway hours later we crossed the Norwegiam coast at a very minimum altitude and made our way up some Fjords to a point, I was told, somewhere between Oslo and Trondheim.

The eight men or so then pushed their gear out the back hatch and bailed out themselves over a snow covered mountain.

That certainly took more pure guts than most of us could imagine. I was later told that Col. Bernt Balchan was part of that group and they intended to blow up a main rail line but were scared off and skied to Sweden for refuge.

Altho our radar officer spotted some other aircraft over the water we did not have any problems with the German night fighters based in Norway.

Some explanation was offered on this later on in a day flight to Oslo after the British had occupied the area. A German Luftwaffe officer told us that they had not had any aviation fuel for months. There must have been 30-40 fighter aircraft lined up along the taxiways. The British had removed the rudders but the aircraft looked in good shaped otherwise.

That trip was also memorable since we witnessed the return of Norwegian troops to Oslo for the first time since the Germans ousted them at the war's start.

Also I obtained a Luger pistol from a Luftwaffe officer and I still have it.

Altho I was sometimes very scared on some of the night bombing missions with the 801st, I feel that I and the others were extremely fortunate to leave the daylight bombing back in July 1944.

Its interesting that I provided Sebastiam with the photo of the black B24. I had it in my files since the war but couldn't remember how I got it.

I assume that Col. Boone reported to you as Group Commander.

RESCUING CARPETBAGGERS FROM NORWAY

by

BOB FISH

On the night of 20/21 April 1945 we dispatched twelve B-24's to Norway in support of the Norwegian underground. The war was obviously winding down and it was deemed important by the powers that be for the Norwegian underground to have enough supplies to assure the surrender of the German forces in Norway. To this end we were increasing our missions to that country.

From this night's operations we lost another crew and aircraft. Lt. Ralph W. Keeny and his crew failed to return to England. The RAF lost six aircraft that night.

Shortly after this aircraft crossed the Norwegian coast inbound to its target it was attacked by a German night fighter. The B-24 was heavily damaged. Lieutenant Keeny, realizing his serious situation, turned toward the nearest Swedish border hoping to be over that neutral country if they had to abandon their aircraft. Before they could get to Sweden they encountered another heavy attack, this time from anti-aircraft fire from the ground. Realizing that his aircraft was out of control, Lt. Keeny sounded the bail out alarm.

One crew member, Lt. Marangus, the bombardier, could not get to his parachute. He therefore jumped with Staff Sergeant H. H. Brobec, clinging to Brobec's parachute harness. Brobec's parachute opened and Marangus managed to hang on until they almost hit the ground. He apparently lost his grip and fell to his death. The other crew members all survived but some suffered injury when they landed.

Lt. Jack L. Divine. the navigator suffered a broken ankle. Staff Sergeant A. L. Green was also injured badly enough to be hospitalized. Both men were placed in a German military hospital. When the war ended on 7 May 1945 these two men were transferred to a hospital in Oslo. The Norwegian underground notified the OSS headquarters in London of their location. OSS notified the 492nd.

We immediately dispatched a B-24 to Oslo to reclaim our own. Major Paul J. Gans, our flight surgeon, was sent to arrange for their release from the hospital in Oslo and to attend to their requirements while enroute back to Harrington. We were all pleased when we had them installed in the U.S. Army hospital in England.

Back in England, Major Gans told me that the red tape procedures with which he had to comply to get these two men released to his custody, made our U.S. red tape look real efficient.

I cannot recall the crew that flew on this mission of mercy. I hope that one of the crew members, when he reads this story, will recall the incident and contact me with further details.

EXTRACTS FROM A LETTER
DAVE SCHREINER TO BOB FISH

The composition of your combat crew when I joined it as Aircraft Commander was:

2nd Lt. James A. Cassidy	C.P.
2nd Lt. Robert C. Durham	Nav.
2nd Lt. John Kolhouski	Bomb.
T/Sgt. Wm. C. Jesperson	Eng.
S/Sgt. Harold E. Falk	Asst. Eng.
T/Sgt. Albert Sage	Radio
S/Sgt. Minor Robin	Asst. Radio
S/Sgt. Joseph L. Bennet	Gunner
S/Sgt. Samuel L. Cooper	Gunner

I assumed command of this crew in Dunkeswell, England in 1943. This is the crew I took to Leuchers with me.

THE BEAUTIES OF NORWAY AT NIGHT

by

BOB FISH

It must have been in early 1945 that I flew my first mission to Norway. My memories of the flight are clear, many of the details have faded. I can no longer recall whose crew I flew with.

We left Harrington and flew to Leuchers where we were assigned our mission and were briefed on the details. We carried only cargo, no "Joes." Our drop zone was in the far northern part of Norway.

We entered Norway at a point west of Oslo at an altitude of 8000 feet. The night was very clear and the moon was very bright. We would have been a very easy target for a night fighter in the moon light. Fortunately we encountered no fighters.

I vividly recall the beautiful grandeur of the snow covered mountains in the moon light. It was almost as bright as day.

About fifty miles short of our drop zone we began to encounter scattered clouds. A few more miles and we were in solid cloud. We turned back to the clear area in an attempt to go in under the cloud. It was impossible because the clouds covered the mountains and filled the valleys. More cloud cover was rolling in from the west. There was no way we could get into the high valley to our target location. We had no choice but to return to England.

The weather was turning bad as we flew southward toward the North Sea. We were flying at 8000 as we crossed the coastline. Just as we crossed there was a loud explosion in the number 3 engine in the right wing. My first reaction was that we had taken an anti-aircraft shell in that engine. We immediately pushed the propeller feathering button and the propeller came to a full feathered position and the engine stopped.

Simultaneously with the feathering procedure I threw the aircraft into some violent evasive maneuvers. There being no further evidence of anti-aircraft gunfire we decided that we had blown a cylinder on number 3 engine and I therefore stopped evasive action. We leveled off and checked the condition of the entire aircraft. The only damage we could ascertain was the dead engine.

By that time we were in clouds over the North Sea and we began to pick up ice on our wings. Because we were now reduced to the power of only three

engines I knew we could not continue flying at 8000 feet with a heavy load of ice forming on the aircraft. Fortunately our radio navigation systems were working and our navigator could determine good positions.

I descended to an altitude of 1000 feet. At this altitude we were in and out of clouds. We caught occasional glimses of the whitecaps on the water.

Our navigator reported that we were flying into a seventy mile per hour head wind. This wind would extend our flight time back to Leuchers by almost an additional hour. We just had to sit there and hope we didn't lose another motor. If we did we faced the probability of a forced landing in a rough sea driven by seventy mile per hour winds. Our chances of surviving such an event were practically nil.

Fortunately our three remaining engines kept running. We eventually made a land-fall on the coast of Scotland. This fact relieved much of our stress. If we had to bail out we would at least be over land.

Without any further adversity we landed at Leuchers just as the daybreak was arriving. The landing was without incident and we all breathed a big sigh of relief as the B-24 coasted to a stop. We went to bed and slept for a night and a day. An aircraft was sent from Harrington to take us back to our home base. Our B-24 remained at Leuchers for an engine change.

A WARTIME NIGHT FLIGHT

by

JOHN GLEESON

John Gleeson was flying a night mission 12,000 feet over the sea off Iceland when a funny thing happened.

All four engines of his B-24 bomber cut out at the same time. Flight crews were accustomed to occasionally flying with three engines or slowly home with two. But nothing stays up for long with none.

"Every needle on the instrument gauges swung to the left," said Gleeson, who was a 19-year-old flight engineer. "The pilot was in the back of the plane and the co-pilot sitting next to me was frozen. I didn't know what happened and only the good Lord knew what to do."

The plane quickly lost speed and dropped its nose seaward. He jumped up to a large panel of fuel line switches behind him and changed the positions on every switch. He remembers that "it didn't take long to do".

One, two, three, four, they all started right up again. "To this day I don't know why it happened or how I fixed it."

Another incident he recalled went unrecorded for many years. He and his crew of five were issued civilians clothes and passports and took off with all armament removed and markings painted black.

"We were alerted to go an hour or so before a scheduled take off," said Bleeson. "Our course was an 11-hour flight over the North Sea to avoid the German night fighters. Our bomb bays were jam-packed with Red Cross packages about the size of microwave ovens."

The crew assumed the packages were supplies for the U.S. allies in Europe. Upon arrival in Stockholm's Broma International Airport the plane was isolated far from buildings and unloaded. Crew members were given passes that identified them as Swedish Air Line officials, enabling them to dine in the city's finest restaurants. After elegant meals, the men were driven back to the airport and flew the empty plane back to Harrington, England.

Gleeson made four of these trips, never encountering enemy aircraft. It took years for him to find out what they had actually been hauling in the airplane trips to Norway.

"I read a book titled 'Hitch Your Wagon to A Star' by Col. Bernt Balchen, in which our missions were described. I found out that our Red Cross packages were,

in reality, high explosives for the Norwegian underground. We would have been much more concerned about our landings if we had known that!"

Gleeson, who moved to Hawaii 17 years ago, never lost his love of flying and still is in the air as often as he can get there in a sleek glider.

* * * * * * *

FOOTNOTE: John and his wife, Barbara, visited Vasteras, Sweden, home base for U.S. Air Force crews interned in Sweden during the war years and the residents hosted a reunion for those crews. They joined his old comrades there and then continued on to our reunion in Kettering.

A NEAR MISS

by

ANDY DAHLKE

The leaf in the picture was picked up at Sens, France on July 20, '44. We were on our third mission --- over the target --- made the drop and gave the big bird the gas but nothing happened. The bombardier yelled, "Pull her up, Hank, pull her up." The next thing I remember is a loud swish and tree branches and leaves all over the cabin. (The bomb bay doors were still open.) Then I heard the roar of the good old Pratts take hold and away we went. I do not know just what caused this, anyway there was silence for about two minutes and then the pilot to crew check. We landed and checked the plane. There was tree sap, leaves and small branches all over the front. The Lord was with us on that one, as well as all the rest.

Col. Fish once stated that we would fly 400 feet, sorry, we got a little lower. I think how close to death we came --- seconds and maybe 5 feet lower. WOW!! "Miss Fitts" flew again.

The crew: Dick Paik, waist gunner; Clem Ruh, engineer; _____ Newton, co-pilot; Hank Gilpin, pilot; _____ Eubank, bombardier; _____ LaPoine, navigator; Andy Dahlke, radio operator; and _____ Wersell, tail gunner.

LONG AGO & FAR AWAY

Submitted by

JOHN A. REITMEIER

I am writing as September's edition of the Carpetbagger was most interesting to me having been in Col. Heflin's original squadron and also knowing St. Clair, Boone and Rudolph when they were 1st Lts. and also Col. Fish when he was a Capt. I was the John he mentioned in his article who lost his B-4 bag---will never forget because Col. Heflin asked me one day when I was going to get into uniform as I was wearing khaki pants on a cold English day!! I never heard anyone mention this secret operation and I will now tell you a little about it because I was one of the original crew members who was chosen for this hush-hush operation. Time has erased some of my recollections and if any part of my story is not believed or too sensitive at this late date, please forget about it. This is my recollection of the operation.

A few crews were picked out for this operation and Capt. Dave Schreiner was the ranking officer among the pilots. Benny Mead was the pilot of our crew and bombardiers were taken off of each crew for this assignment. We were sent to London where we were introduced to Col. Bernt Balchen, who was to be in charge. We weren't ever informed what this operation was all about. In the meantime, we were taken to one of the leading department stores and fitted for civilian clothes---suit, raincoat and the whole works. We were also issued forty-five pistols and given the OK to go to this firing range and expend all of the ammunition that we wanted to in order to become familiar with them. Boy, did we have fun shooting cans in rapid fire, etc.

After these things happened, we had passports made out in the American Embassy to Sweden and Soviet Russia. After this, the first inkling of any mission came about when we were shown maps of the Artic Ocean, including Norway, etc.---of course we navigators were a bit concerned as navigation in the Polar Regions is a bit more complicated. Anyway, from this point on, everything changed with no explanations and we were sent back to the 492nd to continue our tour of duty. I was later shot down on my 28th mission but after getting back to England and before going home I thought about this passport. Thinking it would be a good souvenier, I went to the Embassy one noon hour---sweet-talked the nice secretary on duty---and obtained the passport which was evidently on file. I managed to get down the front steps when some excited Colonel ran up

to me and asked for it. I naturally surrendered it to him as he very seriously explained that should a spy obtain possesion that he could infiltrate our ally nation, Soviet Russia.

The clincher to this whole story came a few months after I was out of the service. There is a little club near Maguire Air Force Base which is frequented by the locals in our area and I went over one night thinking I might meet some of my high school friends and who did I meet but Capt. Dave Schreiner. His crew was the only one kept by Col. Balchen. This is his version of what happened. The United States wanted to get the start on having a world airline route and the civilian personnel wouldn't fly these routes and we were to take over for them and land in Stockholm and then on to Russia---I forgot to mention that we were issued airline flight overalls and told only to have our dog tags and carry no personal items. This supposedly in case we were captured that we would not be shot for being a spy. Dave told me that the reason that things were cancelled was because the English did not want us to get ahead of them and therefore would not clear our planes from the U.K. to fly to Sweden. The Swedes would not give the English clearance to land there, so Anthony Eden, who I believe was the Prime Minister at the time, stopped the operation.

Dave's crew was later moved to Leuchars Airfield, near Edinburgh, Scotland where they later regrouped and continued the operation. Dave told me that he was shot down in the water out from Murmansk, Russia, by the Russians who mistook his plane for one of Germany's. He was picked up and interned in Sweden where he was released after Germany's defeat.

Incidentally, Sgt. Lou Hart was our crew chief (see the September Carpetbagger, page 8) and if I remember correctly, he waited quite a while for our return the night we didn't get back. The picture is of our flight engineer, Leo Dumesnil, who was from Louisiana and could speak both French and German. I heard he broke his ankle when he hit the ground. The French fixed him up but I heard that he was a little too bold and got picked up by the Gestapo while hoisting a few in a local bar.

ST. ELMO'S FIRE

Earl Zimmerman, a radio operator from Indianapolis, Indiana, flew Carpetbagger missions. "During the spring of 1944 I was assigned to a 'make-up crew' and sent to Leuchars on temporary duty."

"My unit was commanded by Col. Bernt M. Balchen, of Byrd Expedition fame and Medal of Honor winner. We flew night missions over Norway into Sweden on the BALL project (the ball turret was removed as one of many modifications on our B-24s, thus the name). We trained for two weeks in night flying-including many hours on a Link trainer by the pilots. The pilots and radio man also trained to coordinate ground controlled approaches using a liaison transmitter, as all messages were sent by CW."

"Crews consisted of pilot, co-pilot, navigator, engineer, radio man and tail gunner. All excess weight, including the oxygen system, was removed for extra speed. Bomb bays were left intact to carry the huge containers destined for the underground."

"The green light was always given by Col. Balchen, and a typical mission was about like the one that I recall. About supper time, he wandered from the hanger, hands in pockets, staring at the darkening sky and said in a thick Norwegian accent, "Ve go tonight, boys." Our ships were prepared, we were briefed, chowed down, waited for total darkness and took off. This trip we were carrying containers for the underground plus extra cigarettes and chocolate for the reception committee personnel."

"We crossed the coast of Norway at 8,000 feet and immediately searchlights picked us up. However, prior to take off we had been given the enemy color of the day by Norway's clandestine radio. The very pistol had been loaded with those colors and it was fired instantly. The lights winked off and we continued on our way."

"Our flight plan was to make a 360-degree turn at three different locations to confuse enemy radar men on the real drop zone (DZ). Approaching the first turn area, we saw a very bright flame pass across the plane's nose. It was very disconcerting as no one could figure out what it was. We went on to DZ, saw the correct light pattern on the ground, got the right radio code made a successful drop."

"The pilot wheeled the bird around and headed for the coast. Weather was building and lightning flashed in the distance. Soon after arriving over North Sea things got nasty, and we tried to go over the top. But at 15,000 feet we were still locked in the storm. Our old war bird bounced like a jumping bean,

and she groaned from every rivet. RPM was increased, and we began letting down hoping to get under the system. Visibility was nil and lightning flashed every few seconds."

"Descending, we slowly picked up St. Elmo's Fire. At first it was a frightening experience, almost as though the ship was on fire. A light blue glow filled the cockpit, formed halos around the gun barrels and props and ran along the wings leading edge. This strange phenomenon seemed to mesmerize the crew, and we silently absorbed the beauteous color for about ten minutes then it slowly spilled away as we continued downward toward the sea. The altimeter read 100 feet and still no waves were spotted below. We climbed back up to 5,000 feet and bored into the storm's fury."

"Radio contact was finally made when we reached the Scottish coast and the storm began subsiding. That previous intensive training would not be used. Bearings were received from Leuchars, and a classic approach was set up. As we prepared to touch down our landing lights showed we were lined up perfectly - on a village. A few more minutes of muddling through unveiled the base. We're home at last."

AIR TRANSPORT COMMAND AND THE PROJECTS

The SONNIE project was the first of these Scandinavian operations to be planned, and the one that continued longest. It was launched in early 1944 for the purpose of bringing from Sweden to the UK about 2,000 Norwegian air crew trainees and American internees that might be released by the Swedish government.

In spite of a slow start and persistent difficulties, much more than this original objective was accomplished. From April 1, 1944-June 25, 1945 SONNIE aircraft brought a total of 4,304 passengers from Sweden to the UK, including Norwegians, American internees and the nationals of at least six other countries. The flights were about the only dependable means of any communication between the American Legation in Stockholm and the outside world. They were the only way of getting supplies and equipment to the U.S. air crews there, thus enabling them to repair nearly two-thirds of all American aircraft force landed in that country. Also, they carried vitally needed supplies that could be transshipped to the Norwegian underground, and brought ball bearings and other critical items back to Britian. Indirectly, they helped prepare the way for entry of American civil aviation into Scandinavia, by demonstrating the flexibility and reliability of our transport aviation.

During the long period of SONNIE, assigned personnel acquired considerable knowledge of Scandinavian terrain and weather. And it was logical that other projects in the north should be assigned to them. Of those additional operations the most important two were known as the BALL and WHEN AND WHERE projects.

BALL PROJECT

It operated only from July-September 1944. But it included dropping weapons, ammunitions, food, radios and sabotage equipment directly into the hands of Norwegian underground forces and the planting of agents behind enemy lines in northern Norway. Six especially modified B-24s were used for this operation. A total of sixty-four missions were attempted, and thirty-seven were successfully completed. About 120 tons of highly specialized cargo was delivered to "reception committees" at widely scattered pin-point locations. Most of the target areas were in southern and central Norway, but a few drops were made in the north. Unlike SONNIE, all BALL missions were made in armed aircraft under combat conditions.

WHEN AND WHERE PROJECT

This was accomplished during the first half of 1945 and was the most varied of all ATC operations in Scandinavia. Like SONNIE, it dealt with transporting passengers and freight from one airfield to another. Like BALL, it also dropped cargo at designated points in Norway. Unlike either, it included the use of improvised landing strips-one was marked off on ice on a frozen river.

In one case, when not even an improvised strip was available, two doctors and a nurse were dropped by parachute at the scene of a mine explosion.

OLD SOLDIERS

John R. Hirsh of New York City, New York served at Leuchars. "I remember when Lt. Col. Keith Allen flew a C-47 to Stockholm. The mission was one in which all Britons would have been keenly interested had they known. It was to pick up an intact V-2 rocket - the first to arrive in England in a condition to reveal all its gory secrets. It had been launched for test purposes without a warhead and landed in Sweden rather than in the Baltic Sea."

"Col. Balchen was a regular guy, and none of the GIs could badmouth him with the usual guff for a CO lest he had someone to reckon with. Once, he mentioned to me that he hadn't written to his wife in the States for over eighteen months. He reasoned that if anything happened to him the Red Cross

would let her know."

Immediate supervision of the Scandinavin projects was assigned to Col. Balchen on recommendation of Gen. Carl Spaatz. It was a fortunate and very natural choice. The colonel was born in Norway in 1899, and had an intimate and extensive knowledge of Scandiavian terrain and flying conditions. His experience reached back almost to World War I in Swedish-Norwegian aviation. In 1926 he was a mail pilot on the New York-Cleveland route. From 1928-30 he was chief pilot for the Byrd Expedition, for which he won the Medal of Honor in 1932 and later became a naturalized American citizen.

The coming of war to Europe sent Balchen from Norway back to the U.S. in September 1941 to report to active duty in the military service. His first assignment was as CO of the Greenland Base Command where he served until November 1943. He then spent two months with the War Department in Washington before being assigned to lead the first ATC operations in Scandinavia.

Subordinates and associates found Col. Balchen an easy man to talk to, for he had no "side." He treated everyone from private to general as an equal. Yet beneath the quiet, unruffled exterior, it was easy to sense the steel core of this man. And for an untried operation - flying unarmed transports over enemy territory or dropping war materials to the underground this combination of velvet and steel was especially desirable.

Leadership for those "Carpetbagger Projects" required a unique order of diplomatic ability. To insure their success, it was necessary to achieve working balance between the many conflicting, interests of all countries concerned. These were the U.S., Great Britian, Norway, Sweden, and to a less degree, Russia and Iceland. Col. Balchen knew every important Norwegian and Swedish government official plus leaders of the underground, personally. To an unusual extent, he had the confidence of Scandinavians of all classes and positions. This was a priceless asset for an operation in which informal understanding meant everything.

Col. Balchen died in a New York hospital in October 1973 at seventy-three and was buried at Arlington National Cemetery on what would have been his seventy-fourth birthday.

RELIEF

Sometimes there was a comic relief, even for the Carpetbaggers. One crew returned from a mission and told the story about a French lady-agent whom they were carrying. She was slow getting to the Joe-hole because of the heavy gear

she was wearing and was not allowed to jump, as the reception light went out before she was ready. She sulked on the way back until nature put her under pressure. She was directed to the "relief tube" in the airplane's rear section. The dispatcher gallantly turned his back while the girl struggled with her zipped up man's flying suit, in an effort to use the tube that was, unfortunately, designed for the male's anatomy. Finally, the girl burst into laughter, and when the dispatcher turned around, she demonstrated to him in rapid-fire French and gestures that her personal "operation" had not been completely successful. She was considerably dampened below the waist (but not in spirits).

OVERSHOT

Another time, a radio operator reported that as the aircraft crossed over a target without making the planned drop, he heard a woman's voice on the ground S-phone yelling in a cockney accent. "For Christ's sake, come back 'ere! Turn around and come back!"

HORSES DROPPED BOMBS ??

by JOE SOWDER

In a recent letter, Jow Sowder, Bombardier with the 856th BS, mentioned his crew dropped "horse turd" bombs to the Maquis. Being unfamiliar with this term I asked him for clarification and received the following answer.

Horse turd bombs has the size and look of a horse turd. Our crew dropped them by parachure — two or three times to the Maquis. They would scatter them on the highways and roads when the Nazi convoys ran over them it would put them out of commission. We also dropped, to the Maquis, thermite coal brickettes. When these were put in a coal bin they burst into flame in buildings.

On one of these missions, along with our load, we had 3 "Joes" to drop—one woman and two men. We spotted a German convoy and by S-phone, I talked to the drop people—Maquis—and told them about the convoy. They told us, "We know about them. We have covered the road with "horse turds".

On another mission, we dropped a container of jelled nitro— one bullet into it and we would have no more worries, no more troubles. They didn't tell us until we got back home to Base. Wonderful Base — and to bed. In and out of briefings, all of us — all the crew —were in a kind of shock. Stunned!! Quiet, meditative. Then to bed, sleep. Astounded into unbelief that we were back safe — Shocked into sleep.

TRANSPORT AND TROOP CARRIER

As in the case of the liaison plane, the AAF had to adapt already proven commercial transports to military use, and it became necessary to modify combat aircraft, bombers specifically, for transport purposes. The planes which formed the backbone of the AAF's transport fleets were the C-47, C-46 and C-54.

A steady and proven aircraft, the C-47 earned for itself a reputation hardly eclipsed even by the more glamorous of the combat planes. The work horse of the air, one found it everywhere, whether shuttling freight or airborne troops, it did the job dependably. Before the war was over the AAF had accepted more than 10,000 DC-3 type planes, which was nearly half the transport planes it received between 1940 and 1943. In troop carrier units the C-47 usually carried a four or five-man crew.

Among the bombers modified for transport service, first choice fell on the B-24, because of its range. Designated the C-87, the modified bomber performed important transport services for the AAF from the beginning to the end of the war. Many unmodified B-24's saw unanticipated service as transports and tankers in theaters throughout the world, a notable example being the use of a wing of Eighth Air Force B-24's in September 1944 to haul gasoline for Patton's Third Army in France.

HOW WE WERE SHOT DOWN BY RUSSIANS

by

DAVE SCHREINER

Our intelligence people had ascertained that the German battleship "Tirpitz" was hiding in one of the fjords in the uppermost tip of Norway. Our intelligence headquarters wanted to keep it under surveillance. They proposed we parachute a two man team in the mountains on the north tip of Norway. This team would have a radio with which they could notify British intelligence headquarters if the Tirpitz tried to escape.

We installed two bomb bay gas tanks in a B-24 to enable us to make the extremely long trip to the top of Norway and return. We were to take off at 3:00 p.m. on 20 September 1944 and return to Leuchers by 9:00 a.m. on 21 September 1944. All went well during the first half of the journey. We made our drop but when we started to bring our wheels up and our flaps up for our return trip to Scotland we lost power on our #3 engine. We had to feather the prop. Now what to do?

Should we try to go back to England over the North Sea on three engines which would be an eight hour flight or should we go to Russia, which was our ally and only two hours away. We had the proper flares in our signal pistol to identify ourselves as friendly to the Russians. We decided to go to Russia. We went out over the water and turned east. When we arrived at the Kola inlet we headed south for Murmansk flying at 1500 feet with our lights on. We had about ten miles to go to reach Murmausk. At Vaenga the sky lit up. Every Russian ship in the harbor was firing at us. We caught fire. Col. Keith Allen would not leave the aircraft. The rest of us bailed out, some landing in the water and some landing on land. I was in the water. I was in the water for quite a while before the Russians picked me up. My watch stopped at 12:30 a.m. It was 21 September when they picked me up and took me to a Russian battleship that was in the bay. I guess that their whole fleet was there at that time.

The Russians took good care of me. In mid-morning I was taken to the British headquarters and the Royal Navy Hospital on shore. My crew was waiting there. Our Navy liaison officer, Captain Frankel met us and took charge. The Russian Admiral, Gulafgo, told Captain Frankel he was sorry for the unfortunate happening but was grateful for saving eight of our nine man crew. Captain Frankel made arrangements for Colonel Allen's funeral and our trip back to

Leuchers. We were transported on the British battleship, HMS Rodney, Captain R.O. Fitzroy, to the northern part of Scotland, either Orkney Iles or Shetland Islands (Berwick). We talked the British Navy into flying us back to Leuchers. They provided two seaplanes to complete our trip. We arrived back at Leuchers on 5 October 1944.

The crew of our aircraft when we were shot down were as follows:

Maj. Dave Schreiner, pilot
Lt. Col. Keith Allen, co-pilot
2nd Lt. Robert C. Durham, navigator
T/Sgt. Wm C. Jesperson, engineer
T/Sgt. Albert Sage, radio operator
S/Sgt. Harold E. Falk, asst. engineer-gunner
S/Sgt. Minor Bobin, asst. radio operator-gunner
S/Sgt. Joseph L. Bennet, gunner
S/Sgt. Samuel L. Cooper, gunner.

COME FLY WITH ME - NORTH
as told by
DAVE SCHREINER

There is one thing that we did at Leuchers that has not come out. We transported the first V-II that arrived in England. The story is this, it seems the Germans wanted to see what the V-II would do. So a dud was sent up to land in Sweden. They did this thinking that the Swedes would complain and the Germans could pin point where it hit. Then they could make their calculations for directions. But the Swedish government didn't do this. They kept quiet and made arrangements with our Air Force to pick it up at Broma Airport, Stockholm, and bring it to Leuchers, Scotland, then on to England. The British Air Force refused to do this. Our CO at Leuchers, Col. Bernt Balchen, said we would do it. We took an old DC-3 shuttle from Prestwick and removed all the seats. Then the crew of Col. Keith Allen, pilot; Withrow, co-pilot; Bob Durham, navigator; Jesperson and Sage flew to Stockholm. The Swedes loaded the V-II in boxes and then into the DC-3. Col. Allen and crew flew the plane to Leuchers. Olen Cup and I flew the plane to London where the British experiment headquarters were located.

LT. HUDSON'S CREW

by

DOUGLAS D. WALKER

During B-24 Liberator aircrew training at Gowen Field, Boise, Idaho, I made several friends on other bomber crews.

One crew in particular, besides my own, sticks in my mind ---- even after 40 years.

The pilot was William H. Hudson, a stocky, curly haired extrovert from Virginia with a ready smile. He was a lot of fun to be around and was respected by all who knew him.

During training at Gowen Field in the fall of 1944, I became quite friendly with the various enlisted members of his crew, continuing friendships which had started while we attended air gunnery school at Harlingen, Texas.

After our training period at Gowen Field was finished, our group of aircrews was shipped to the Boston port of embarkation, where we shipped out to England aboard an ocean liner in early December 1944.

Four of the aircrews in our training class were assigned to Harrington Air Force Base including mine --- Lt. Roger McCormick's crew. When my aircrew was re-assigned to the CBI Theatre of War, Burma, in January 1945, I was ordered to report to Lt. Swarts' crew as a dispatcher. This crew was already a veteran one, with 24 missions under their belt. (The "dispatcher" was responsible for seeing that the agents in the "waist" of the Liberator bailed out over the jump area when the bombardier gave the signal over the intercom.)

This outfit in the 8th Air Force was the 856th Squadron of the 492nd Bomb Group. We flew out of Harrington Air Force Base, located near Kettering, England. We bore the nickname "Carpetbaggers". We flew clandestine missions in black Liberators at night, dropping agents into France, Germany and Norway, as well as munitions and supplies to the French, Danish and Norwegian underground resistance forces.

The agents we parachuted into German-occupied Europe, were working with the American OSS --- the Office of Strategic Services --- the forerunner of the present day CIA.

When I joined Lt. Swarts' crew, I moved into his enlisted aircrew's Nissen hut which we shared with Lt. Hudson's crew. I quickly resumed my friendship with them and, in between missions, we shared many a laugh together.

One evening in February 1945, Lt. Hudson came into our quarters wearing a big smile and handed out cigars to his crewmen and to us. "My wife just had a baby boy!," he said with obvious pride. We all congratulated him and drank a toast to the newest member of his family with a cup of GI coffee.

A few nights later, Lt. Hudson's crew and our crew --- Lt. Swarts' --- took off on a dual mission to drop American commandos of Norwegian descent, together with munitions and supplies, into the Jaevsjo Lake area northeast of Trondheim, Norway. This was a point near the Swedish/Norwegian border.

The commandos were under the leadership of Major William E. Colby and their objective was to cut the north/south railroad line in that area, thus hampering Nazi troop movements. They were to blow up the rail lines and railroad bridges and then retreat into the mountains to evade the inevitable German pursuit.

Our aircraft was carrying the commandos and Lt. Hudson's was carrying the munitions and supplies the commandos needed to operate.

We first flew to Soctland where we picked up the commandos and refueled. We then headed for Jaevsjo Lake, which was located in a very mountainous area of Norway.

As we neared the drop zone, we encountered severe snowstorms and turbulence. After flying on for over an hour, the decision was made by Lt. Swarts to turn back. We couldn't possibly locate the drop zone in that miserable weather, let alone fly low enough to parachute the commandos to an accurate landing.

We flew back to Scotland and dropped off the commandos, then flew on to Harrington, disappointed at not being able to complete our mission. After our arrival at our base, we waited for Lt. Hudson's aircraft to appear, but to no avail.

We haunted the Operations Office for several days, with no answers about Lt. Hudson's crew forthcoming. We kept hoping for the best --- that they had put down at an alternate base on their return to England and were just slow in reporting back.

Finally, we learned what had happened to them. The Norwegian underground forces had radioed that their Liberator had crashed into a mountain in the blizzard. The underground located the plane the next day and buried the eight crewmen to prevent the Nazi's from finding their bodies. We all felt a tragic sense of loss at this bad news.

In all, two Liberator aircrews from Harrington crashed in the attempt to land those commandos in Norway, due to the severe winter weather conditions in January and February 1945. (These two Liberators carried 16 aircrew members.)

Finally, in February, 16 of the original 36 commandos were successfully dropped near Jaevsjo Lake and, although outnumbered 10 to 1, they completed their mission with honor. They teamed up with a local group of Norwegian resistance forces and blew up several rail bridges and four miles of heavily guarded rail lines.

Easter Sunday of 1945 found them in a demanding 50 mile ski chase, pursued by Nazi ski troops. They managed to skillfully evade the searching Nazis until the end of hostilities in May.

Two of the men on Lt. Hudson's aircrew were Angelo Santini, the tail gunner, and Jack Spyker, their dispatcher.

About two weeks after this tragedy, we were awakened in our quarters about midnight by an apologetic voice asking, "Angelo --- are you here?" We switched on the light to revel Angelo Santini's brother, in England on a furlough from his infantry outfit in France. To our dismay, he hadn't heard about his brother's death and had traveled to our base for a happy reunion with his brother. He hadn't seen Angelo in over two years.

We broke the bad news to him and gave the grieving man a bed in which to spend a fitful night. He was naturally desolated by the grim news which had awaited him in Harrington, but departed the next day expressing gratitude that the Norwegian underground forces had given his brother a decent burial.

Several months later, about the middle of June, when we were getting things ready to fly home --- the war finally over, we had another saddened visitor.

It was Jack Spyker's father. He had pulled some strings and managed to pursuade the Government to allow him to fly to England. He wanted to know as much about Jack's last days as possible and explained that he was on his way to Norway to claim Jack's body to return him to America for burial in the family plot.

His grief was great. Jack was an only son.

MEMORIES OF A POST WAR FLIGHT

by

GEORGE WINDBURN

The war was over. How strange it was. Just walking around. Why, it was going to be a wonder if we would get any flying time in to qualify for flight pay. Forget combat pay. Just flight pay was the worry.

Then this period of nothingness was changed. I was appointed leader of a flight of three planes which would carry ground personnel to Norway. These people were to oversee the surrender of the German Forces there. They had not participated in the general surrender of days ago.

The flight was to be to Trondheim. In daylight. This time I could pick my own co-pilot. In the war I took whomever I was given. Usually it was a first pilot who needed one or two missions to end his tour so he could rotate back to the States.

This had a special effect on people. These men didn't know how good a pilot I was and they didn't know how good a crew we were. So they felt in jeopardy by going out with the unknown. I felt for them, but that was the breaks.

For this trip, which I figured as a fun trip, I asked my good friend Jerry to fly with me. Jerry agreed and this made my crew very happy as he and his crew were our close friends.

How this whole thing got off the ground is rather fuzzy. It was a very short briefing. What was there to it? Just a milk run up Norway, no fighters, no anything. Good weather.

Since I was the lead ship, I got the American Colonel and those people he chose to go with him. They appeared to be Scandanavians who had somehow enlisted in the American Army. Each ship carried about the same number of passengers, about twenty in all as I recall.

Well, this turned out to be anything but a milk run. It was a disaster in many ways. Can you believe we actually got lost? The truth. Having flown at night with a perfect record, here we were in daylight screwing up. We had been in and around the clouds. Not on the wave tops where we would have probably done better. We were playing at airliner and not making a go of it.

We were just stooging around as time passed. Because we had passengers standing around us on the flight deck I couldn't speak up in plain language and ask Charlie, down in the nose, what we were doing wrong and what we were going

to do about it.

And then the most incredible thing happened. Out shot a civilian airplane from a nearby cloud, pulling a red glider-on a pleasure flight.

What in the world was going on? Did you see that? It was a glider, wasn't it? Here is a break in the clouds and I immediately turned to capture it and to corkscrew down the hole and see the earth once more.

Lo and behold there was a fairly large grass airfield in front of us. I throttled back a bit and kept on descending. But, look down there, cars are being driven out onto the field making it quite plain they did not want me to land.

It was then, with the national flag plainly in sight, that one of the passengers spoke up and said that we were over Sweden.

Sweden? How in God's name could we have been so left of course as to have ended up here? No matter. The cat was out of the bag. Now everybody knew we were lost and that we had screwed up. What to do?

The same Scandanavian said he knew where we were. He said we were about due East of Trondheim. Just make a left turn and keep going that way.

The clouds opened up every once in a while and through those holes all I saw were more hills. Whether Swedish or Norwegian, I couldn't tell.

But our new navigator knew. He was given the best view obtainable. After all, he was going to save our bacon.

He proved to be so correct. We flew over the tops of the snow capped mountains East of Trondheim Airfield confidently as we listened to our source of information eagerly. It is now a little frightning to think this was probably his first-ever flight and certainly his first time giving aerial directions.

And very suddenly, there was the airfield right in front of us. I mean, right in front of us. It caught me by surprise. I was practically on a straight in approach. The only trouble was I was a little too high and going too fast. To get down to the ground we would have to zoom down. It was time to end the show.

Zoom we did. Flying much too fast. Much too high. A lot of people and activity on the ground. What the devil. I can get it on. Just keep nosing it down.

Our touchdown point was maybe halfway down the runway, doing a zillion miles an hour. I was riding the brakes immediately, trusting they would not be burnt out, or that I wouldn't mess up the wheels or gear with such a strain.

A turn-off to the right at the end of the runway was a lurching maneuver

which was easiest for me because I was strapped to my seat. Everybody else had to hang on and wonder. It was a very swift and swaying turn, and it was the great expanse of concrete which allowed me to get things under control.

While still zinging down the runway doing a ridiculously high ground speed, I glanced out to see a camera man taking movies of the whole fiasco. What a record! It was humiliating.

Needless to say, the whole airfield with its supporting complex was seen as a German military installation. You will recall Trondheim was a bomb-proof submarine base from which they went out and attacked shipping. They dug out the mountains at water's edge and made these forces unreachable.

The people on the ground around our plane were a curious mix of armed civilians and uniformed Germans. The crew and I parted company with the passengers. We each went our own ways. Our way being dictated to us. We were taken to another part of the complex to a barrack-type building where we met crew number two of the three plane flight. Here we learned that the thrid plane had trouble and had landed at the German airfield in Bergen, farther down the coast towards home.

I was struck with the generic similarity of the German and American military housing. However, the Americans made a complete fetish of black construction paper.

Once in the building I couldn't help but notice the window shades. But of course they were essential for two reasons.

First, there were twenty-four hours of daylight now. And second, this was the brothel for the non-commissioned officers. The ladies had already been removed before our arrival. The early arrival crew had seen them and had said a few words. The girls came from occupied territory and they were to be understood for the choices they had in life in those days. At Trondheim there were no air raids, no shooting, no knocks on the doors. There was food and clothing and who knows what other kinds of perks. Their's was a rotten life no matter what they did. And the rot came from what others did to them.

All of us Americans were standing around in a huddle, not knowing what was going to happen when a German officer came into the room and in his language was going to make the sleeping arrangements.

It was here my two years of German first made its strategic appearance. I said, quite boldly, "Wir schlaffen alle zusammer." (We all sleep together.) We did not want to be broken up and dispersed around the complex. It was going to

be in one group. Period. And that was the way we went to bed.

I was still wearing my Colt 45, strapped to my right leg. I can't think of any other weapon among the whole bunch of us. I don't know who I was protecting, after myself. Did I sleep with it? I don't remember, but I could have.

There just wasn't meant to be any sleep for me. No matter what, I was just wide awake. All of those Germans, a handful of us. They were in the thousands to give you a better view of the odds. What was I doing in this brothel? I didn't like hearing German being spoken as German soldiers went about their routines as though the war was still on and I was in some weird way merely a spectator. I was being saluted by them as an officer and I was returning salutes. It was strange to say the least. Some kind of internal gears needed to get into synch.

When morning came, and I don't know how one could tell except by the sun's eastern swing, we were told to report to another building to meet with the American Colonel. Once there, he immediately said he needed the people from Bergen in the downed plane. He asked for a volunteer.

I volunteered.

Now the tables were turned and we were to be briefed for flight by the Luftwaffe. They had telephone connection with their field in Bergen. They had metorology. And more importantly, they had gasoline.

There is a lot of fog in my memory about the take off and such details as that. I know we navigated very easily, simply a matter of keeping the ocean on our right. Bergen would jump up at us when we got there.

And got there we did. We found out that the airfield was just an island. And not a very big one at that. We could see the B-24 on the ground. We made our circle to land.

Out of habit we had our radios on and at the usual frequencies. When I was lined up for final approach to one of the two runways an American voice comes on the radio saying, "Don't land. Repeat. Don't land." By the voice I knew it was their navigator and for some reason I was upset that he would warn me off and stop the flight.

Jerry and I just looked at each other and I kept right on landing. It was as we were leveled out and just prior to making contact with the ground that I noticed this was a wooden runway. Not packed dirt or so-so concrete as it appeared while in flight. Whole logs laid side by side across the runway.

Nothing to do but complete the landing. We were headed right into a Fiord

with its towering walls and the possible go-around would have called for some fancy footwork.

So there we were. On the ground, turned around and taxiing back to find a parking sapce. Our arrival didn't go unnoticed. We were met by Americans and the Luftwaffe.

It would be too easy to relate all the perils of this encounter, such as the shooting of a dog by an angry Luftwaffe officer. This while I was alone in the plane. Those shots almost made me jump out of my skin. Better to cut this short and tell you that the Americans, the Colonel wanted, refused to fly out with me. They said I couldn't get out of there in a B-24. So, what to do?

Nothing. If they wouldn't go, I would and it was going to be right back to Harrington. We figured we had enough gas to make it.

Jerry and I walked off the runway. We had its distance figured out. There was a marker along side the runway and I said to Jerry we would use that as our go-no go marker. We would either lift off at that point or he would punch the crash button and we would all duck for some sort of end-of-runway smash.

We briefed our crew. This time they were to be in their crash positions from start of the take off roll. It wasn't only the Americans who thought we wouldn't make it. The Germans had the same idea. They came out in great numbers, sitting casually on the hillside of the runway to watch the fun.

I had Tom, our engineer, walking outside the plane as he guided us to the outmost edge of the runway we could command. Once there, he came inside, took up his crash position with Vince on the flight deck.

We ran the engines up. All the way up. We kept them winding and winding. When some inner voice said to go, I released the brakes and started the roll.

This was going to be a maximum take off effort. No flaps to start with. Roll on down the runway picking up speed. Looking at the speedometer (air speed indicator) and trying to watch for that marker we had selected while on foot.

"Half flaps" to Jerry. And we began to lift off. Now put the nose right down and pick up some more speed. Milk the flaps up, keep the nose down, clear those rocks at the end of the runway. Hold it there, kick a little right rudder to point you towards those high walls of the Fiord because you knew you were going to chandell up and away from them or splatter yourself all over them.

It was a nice, flashy high kick turn away from the walls and a more gentle roll out to fly directly back over the runway we had just lifted off.

But with one minor exception. We really passed to the right of the runway

as we were going to buzz those Germans who came out for the crash. They had to duck, I'm sure of that.

Sure we made it back. We told our story. I still consider that a combat trip and call it my twenty-first.

4/13/89

THE NIGHT I OBEYED THE LADY

by

ROBERT W. FISH

The time was late summer of 1944. I was on a resupply "Carpetbagger" mission to an area southeast of Paris, France. I can no longer remember whose B-24 and whose crew I was using for that flight. When I flew combat I made it a practice to act as the aircraft commander and to fly from the left side pilot's seat.

We were only a few miles from our initial point when our flight engineer stepped onto the flight deck and informed me that we had a fire in the bomb bay. I gave that bit of intelligence a split second's worth of thought and then said to him, "Don't tell me your troubles; go back and put it out." He did! An electrical short adjacent to a hydraulic fluid leak had ignited the fire.

With the situation back under control we elected to continue our flight to the target drop zone. The moon was very bright, the night was clear, we could see for miles. It was an ideal condition in which to be "zapped" by a night fighter.

Upon arriving at the target area we were disappointed by no reception party. That left us no choice but to return to England.

A few minutes into our return flight, the tail gunner came on the interphone and said, "Hard right!! Hard right!!" That got my attention and I did a diving hard right turn of about 90 degrees followed by a few violent cork screws right on the deck. My immediate reaction was that we had a night fighter on our tail. I next asked him why the alert.

He told me that we had had another B-24, one of our own aircraft, overtaking us and about to ram us from the rear. He estimated that it was less than one hundred feet behind us and exactly on our altitude when he saw it in the moonlight.

About halfway between Paris and London we lost power on our number 3 engine and had to feather the propellor. We climbed to about 2,000 feet of altitude to give us some room for maneuver in case we had to bail-out.

As we approached the French coast I radioed the British Air Defense Controller to request a change in my flight plan to allow us to take the most direct route home to Harrington.

Our approved flight plan called for us to skirt around London to the southwest before we turned north to our base at Alconbury. That route would add about twenty minutes more flight time than a direct route.

I received an immediate response to my request. A female voice came on the radio and requested that we make a ninety turn to my left. This was an identification maneuver to allow the radar operator to positively identify my aircraft. As we completed the turn that same voice came back on the radio, "I have you identified. Follow my instructions and I will take you home. Fly a heading of 353 degrees." That heading would fly me right over the heart of London. The heart of London was not normally a friendly area to any aircraft, especially at night. The anti-aircraft gunners in defense of London became very nervous whenever an aircraft entered their defense territory. I did not relish the idea of exposing my aircraft to them, so I began to bear a little more to the right so as to pass east of London.

In about three minutes she requested my heading and altitude. I reported 2,000 feet and 10 degrees. Her response was immediate. In very firm tones she came back at me with, "Listen to me, Yank! I gave you a heading of 353 degrees. Now get your ass back on that heading and hold it until I tell you otherwise! Please acknowledge!" I did, "Yes Mam!" She guided us directly to our landing field where we landed without further incident.

JOHN W. GILLIKIN SURVIVES

On June 21, John W. Gillikin returned to Duerne, France accompanied by his two sons and daughters-in-law. John had been invited to return by Mr. Serge Blandin, an honorary member of our Association.

About 2:00 a.m. August 15, 1944, in a hilly area near Lyon, at the designated drop site Sgt. Gillikin, the dispatcher, said, "We had just made the drop. I heard the pilot yell, 'Pull up, pull up!' Then we touched, pulled up sharply then crashed. When I came to, I was out in the middle of the field and I could see the plane burning. There wasn't anything I could do. So I managed to get over to a hedge row at the edge of the field and crawled in."

Members of the Resistance forces were waiting, taking turns dozing and watching for the plane to make the drop. When they heard the crash and saw the entire hill in flames, they began to climb the hill to help the survivors....if there were any. When they arrived, they saw that the plane was engulfed in flames. The searchers could find no evidence that anyone survived the crash. The next morning two members of the Resistance found John Gillikin near a haystack, severely injured and burned. John had been thrown a great distance from the burning plane.

When he awoke, the burns on his face had caused so much swelling he had to pry one eye open with his fingers to see where he was.

"About daylight I heard voices. I pried one eye open; I decided they were probably friendly, so I turned myself in to them. They interrogated me for a long time then had a farmer and his wife take me to their house and hide me in the cellar."

Despite the constant presence of the enemy, the bodies of the dead airmen were wrapped in the parachutes and buried nearby.

One night several weeks later, one of the Carpetbagger planes was scheduled to fly in, land and pick him up. The Maquis took him to a designated spot and waited and watched but it never came. Years later, he was told that the Nazis had a big convoy in the area and the plane couldn't land. He stayed there several more weeks until the Allied Forces worked their way up from the Mediterranean and got to Lyon. They flew him to Italy to a hospital. The Italian hospital was not equipped for skin grafts and he was soon flown back to an Army Hospital in Augusta, GA. There John spent eight months in recovery.

John Gillikin's visit, 45 years after the crash, was celebrated by survivors

of the Resistance movement and their families.

The celebration included a memorative ceremony in Duerne, after which John saw, for the first time, a huge monument erected on the site of the crash. The ceremony included the posting of flags, a roll call of the missing, the laying of wreaths and the playing of Taps. Next came the playing of the national anthems of France and the United States of America. A banquet and reception honoring the visitors followed the ceremony.

Some of the special guests participating in the ceremonies included the following: M. Galerga of Lyon, the consul general of the US; Andre Beniere, mayor of Duerne; Joseph Besson, Resistance leader who saw the crash and later wrote a book about the supply drops to the Resistance; Mrs. Decultieux and her family, who personally housed and assisted John during his recovery; Col. Paul Riviere, who was in charge of all secret operations in eastern France during the war; his wife, Jannick Riviere, who was John's nurse after the crash; Marius Girard, member of the Resistance and the man who checked John's eyesight after the crash; and many other former Resistance members and dignataries.

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Footnote from "Carpetbaggers" by Ben Parnell.

"The 856th Squadron crew of 2nd Lt. Richard L. Norton, Jr., also left Harrington on the night of August 14 for a mission to France. Nothing was heard of the B-24 or its crew until a letter arrived from the 93rd Evacuation Hospital dated Sept. 8 addressed to the CO, 36th BS, 801st BG. The letter stated that Sgt. Gillikin had come to the hospital as a patient the night before. His bomber had crashed and he was the only survivor. It was likely that Sgt. Gillikin would lose several fingers but otherwise he would recover."

Members of that fateful crew were:

2nd Lt. Richard L. Norton, Jr., pilot;
2nd Lt. Connie L. Walker, co-pilot;
2nd Lt. Benjamin Rosen, bombardier;
2nd Lt. Lloyd L. Anderson, navigator;
S/Sgt. James H. Husbands, engineer;
S/Sgt. Wayman B. Skadden, tail gunner;
S/Sgt. William H. Moncy, radio operator, who died after the crash
Sgt. John W. Gillikin, dispatcher, lone survivor.

MISSION #6 August 4, 1944 490/492nd Gp. (McKinley)

There was not much of an excuse for me to go on this mission. Three squadron crews had Belgium targets and it had a reputation of being a "hot" country. Some fellows complain and say, "Why don't the wheels take these missions, they have the rank, etc., etc."

I hadn't flown on a mission for three weeks and was bored stiff with the job of Squadron Bombardier in a squadron which did no bombing and every crew was on their own each mission. In the office, I have a chart on which I color in green for completed missions and red for uncompleted ones. Outside of flying missions and training new crews, this is the sum of my work.

Besides all this I'd been paid on the 31st and promptly lost it (on the dice). There was nothing to do and life was boring.

So I went for several reasons, the main one was to experience the thrill of a mission. There was also the fact that the men would respect me more and realize I'm not sitting on my ass because of fear. Then too, I could see what Belgium looked like and advise better on good pilotage points for navigation.

Lt. Wright was the pilot and I sat up in front (bombardier's position) with Lt. "Whiskey" Sauer, his bombardier. We had two targets, one to drop three "Joes" on via parachute and to drop a normal load on the other.

Take off time was 2300 hours and the three "bodies" or "Joes" showed up only a few minutes before then. One, to our pleasant surprise was a very lovely young girl. When introduced to Lt. Brinkman, the navigator, he told her she was the first lady they'd had the pleasure of taking over -- "and she's very pretty, too". She blushed and said demurely, "Thank you kind sir." One of the two "Joes" was her husband. A Navy photographer took a flash photo as we were standing outside the ship.

Lt. Wright has a wonderful wit and personality. Yet he is a fine pilot and has one of the best crews in the group. It is certainly one of the happiest ones and I love to fly with them.

We took off for the eastern coast and the interphone buzzed every minute with conversation concerning the pretty girl in the waist section of the plane. Everyone wanted to swap jobs with the sergeant dispatcher who was to have the pleasure of throwing her out the "Joe Hole". There was so much talk about her, it became trite even with such a good subject. The channel was beautiful that night.

THE JOE WHO WOULDN'T GO

BY FLT. COMMANDER GEORGE JOHNSON

We had a full load to deliver plus one Joe. And as was our standard operating procedure, the Joe was not delivered to our aircraft until the air crew was at their respective stations in the aircraft. This last minute delivery of the Joe to the aircraft was a security procedure that was designed to protect the Joe. In case the aircraft and air crew were shot down during the mission they would be unable to identify the Joe under the pressure of interrogation by the Germans. The dispatchers in the waist section of the aircraft were the only crew members to see and talk to a Joe.

We had an uneventful flight to the drop zone. Our reception party was ready and gave us the proper identification signals. We flew over them and dropped our containers and packages. We turned and came back over the drop zone to drop our Joe. He was, according to our dispatcher, sitting at the edge of the hole positioned to drop out. On signal from the bombardier the dispatcher slapped the Joe on the back which was his signal to jump. All he had to do was push himself forward from his sitting position and out he would go. Only this Joe didn't go. To land close to their reception party on the ground the Joe must go immediately when he is slapped on the back or he will miss the target area and land somewhere out in the "boonees". The dispatcher called me on the interphone and told me the Joe had failed to jump on signal. I informed the dispatcher to get ready and I would fly one more pattern to come back over the drop zone, but only more because of security reasons for the reception committee on the ground. We could not expose them by continuing to circle over them. The dispatcher passed that information to the Joe. A few moments later the dispatcher called me and told me, "the Joe isn't gonna go!" I called back on the intercom and

stated, "The hell he isn't. This guy has been trained for this and he's going to jump!" The dispatcher called back and said, "No he isn't! He says he has decided that he's not going to go. He's out of the jump hole and is now sitting along the side of the airplane". So I continued to fly a drop pattern that would put us back over the drop zone, and said to the dispatcher, "You tell him I"m coming back there and I am going to personally throw him out. That son-of-a bitch is going to go out of there one way or another. In a few seconds the dispatcher called again and said, "He says he is not going to jump and he has taken off his parachute. Now he is taking off his jump suit. This guy is really scared. He is not going to jump!"

I gave the situation a few seconds of thought and then told my dispatcher, "There isn't any more we can do about it. If he won't wear his parachute and is taking off his jump suit you might as well close the jump hole and we will go home to England. Heaven only knows what is going to happen to this guy when we get back. We have given it our best shot".

So we brought him home. When we got near Harrington Air Base we called for landing instructions and also informed the Control Tower that we had our passenger still on board.

When we got to our parking hardstand there was a car waiting our arrival. The last I saw of that Joe, a couple of beefy characters were escorting him from our aircraft to an unmarked car. I don't what happened to him but I sure as hell wouldn't have wanted to be in his shoes.

TOO MANY AIR FIELDS

Forty-five years is a long time to remember things that happened in complete detail. However, the basic story is true and remains as one of my favorite anecdotes of my Carpetbagger days.

Norman Russell

Returning from one of our missions about the middle of July 1944 we encountered a light layer of clouds over Harrington airbase. As we circled the field and asked for landing instructions we were told to land 36 and we were the only plane in the pattern. As we lined up with the landing runway we lost it completely in the thin hazy layer of clouds. We called the tower and told them we couldn't see the runway. They said to circle again and try once more. We did and again lost the runway. Passing over the field we could look directly down and see everything but looking horizontally through the thin cloud we could see nothing. The tower operators said to circle again and they would have some flares shot off the end of runway 36. We could see the flares easily but could not see the runway. So we called the tower and said we would look for an alternate field. Jim McKenna, our navigator, suggested we take up a heading of 60 degrees and he would give us a frequency to contact a nearby British landing field. I was the co-pilot and handling the radio. I called the British airbase and received instructions to land.

We landed and rolled to a stop at the end of the runway. I asked which direction should we turn? My radio contact said, "We do not have you in sight yet." I replied "We're sitting on the end of your north-south runway." At that moment another voice came over the radio, "You're on our field, turn left." We had been in radio contact with one British airfield and landed on another. After a two hour wait we flew back to Harrington.

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This crew was made up of Maurice "Jake" Jacobson, pilot; Norman Russell, co-pilot; Jim McKenna, navigator; Dave Cleveland, bombardier; Bob Marriett, engineer; Mitch Hart, radio operator; and Joel Carter, dispatcher-gunner.

MISSION #7 August 6, 1944 490/492nd Gp. (McKinley)

Our original target was way down in France near Switzerland. At the weather briefing a sudden change in targets was announced and we were given one in Brest only a couple of miles from the harbor itself. The load was to contain material which was to be used to prevent the Jerries from destroying the harbor before the Yanks took it over.

Heavy flak was plotted on both sides of the target but I assumed it was out of commission or else we would not be sent to such a ticklish spot. There was a strong rumor floating about that an armored spearhead of tanks was in the target city already.

Haze and ground fog were already descending on central England when we took off at twenty three zero five. I crawled up to the nose at take off but could do little pilotage because of the haze. So I just sat there and dreamt of how thrilling it all was.

Capt. Willard Smith was the pilot, Lt. Leon Dibble, co-pilot, and Lt. Jack Sayers, navigator. We were off on what appeared to be a "milk run" and everyone was in high spirits. Lt. Melinat's enlisted crew was with us and a fine bunch they are to work with. We left England on course and headed across the channel with a huge glorious full moon off to our left. The gunners test fired their guns and all was well.

There were six ships going to this target and for safety we all agreed to enter the continent at the same point, the mouth of a river. Jack's special navigation equipment burned out completely thrity miles prior to the enemy coast. This left us with only Dead Reckoning and Pilotage for navigation. However, there was a solid undercast as we neared the coast, leaving only DR.

A minute before the coast I saw flak shooting up a few miles ahead of us and told the pilot to turn fifteen degrees right so we could go around it. The turn screwed up our DR a bit.

The undercast covered the entire peninsula including the target and I saw nothing until we overran our ETA and flew over the harbor itself. Searchlights began popping up all around us and then light flak followed by a few bursts of heavy flak which was much too high. The light flak was accurate enough to be frightening. We did evasive action down and out into the harbor and were clear of it after three minutes.

Jack gave the pilot a heading over the interphone, "340 degrees and pray

God to help you." He said this in such a sad voice that Captain Smith remarked, "Ah, come on now Jack, it's not that bad." I agreed with Jack, it was that bad. Jack is a great navigator and an outstanding person.

When we were turning there was much activity to be seen. Searchlights had someone coned and flak was pouring brightly into the center of it. In the harbor a couple of barges or destroyers were throwing a great quantity of shells into the searchlighted area. Up there in the air we could not be sure whether the fire was from friend or foe.

After the turn we deliberated whether to go down and try to get under the clouds or not. They were obviously within a few hundred feet of the ground and if we were off a couple of miles our plane would be duck soup for the guns below. We decided to go back and that Jerry was still very much in control of the harbor. Later we learned that none of the planes had dropped on the target. It was not an accessible target that night.

MEMORIES

As told by

RAYMOND J. ELLIOTT,

MEMBER OF CUNNINGHAM'S CREW

We flew 35 "Carpetbagger" missions. We started flying in late May 1944 (had 4 missions in by D-Day) and completed our 35th mission in late August or early September 1944, just before the Carpetbagger Operations were concluded. We then spent a few days starting to convert the planes to carry gasoline and then starting our trip back to the States.

On one of the missions we dropped 5 American Rangers and their equipment behind the enemy lines. It was successful, as far as we know. They were going in to train the Maquis..... help them with the demolition of bridges to slow down the German Army in retreat.

One other thing I remember is that on the first day after Paris was liberated by our forces, our radioman Arnold Brown flew with our Base Commander, Col. Heflin, I think, to Paris to meet with the French Underground. They flew in a C-47 and Arnold acted as interpreter as he could speak French. He brought each of us a beret with the Maquis emblem on it. I still have mine.

A FREE TRIP HOME

by

DOUGLAS D. WALKER

My outfit in the 8th Air Force during World War II was the 856th Squadron of the 492nd Bomb Group. We flew out of Harrington Air Force Base near Kettering in Northamptonshire, England. We bore the code name "Carpetbaggers" because we flew clandestine missions at night, dropping agents in France and Germany and munitions and supplies to the French, Danish and Norwegian underground resistance forces.

The agents we parachuted into France and Germany were working with the OSS — the Office of Strategic Services. (This agency was the forerunner of the CIA.)

One night, while preparing the waist of the B-24 Liberator for the arrival of the "Joe" (the agent we were to drop into Germany that night), I was beckoned out of the aircraft by an OSS Captain.

He warned me to be careful that night, and to keep my distance from the "Joe". Seems that the agent we were to drop was a former POW German Army Sergeant who had volunteered to join the American OSS and return to Germany as a spy for the U.S.

"Of course," the Captain said, "we have no way of knowing if he is going to spy for us or if he is just looking for a one way free ticket back to the "fatherland". Watch out that he doesn't try to pull you out of the aircraft when he jumps. You'd be a good prize for him to deliver to Hitler."

My concern at this bit of news was further heightened by the actions of the "Joe" after we had leveled off and headed for Germany. I felt him move over to my side of the plane in the darkness. (I had deliberately sat on the floor opposite him on take off.)

He put his lips close to my ear and shouted over the roar of the engines in broken English, "Das is Liberator airplane?"

I yelled back, "Yes, Why do you ask?"

He responded, "My gunnery crew shoot down many Liberators in North Africa." I could hear the smile in his voice. This was enough to fuel my already suspicious concerns.

I pulled away from him, dug out my flashligh and jerked my 45 cal. pistol from it's holster. I pointed the weapon at him in the glare of my flashlight and yelled, "Move to the other side of the plane — Mach Schnell." He stopped smiling and moved with alacrity to the other side of the waist.

For the next few hours, I flashed my light on him every 5 to ten minutes, still clutching my pistol in my hand. He didn't move.

When he parachuted out of the plane, I stood five feet away from him when I yelled the signal for him to jump.

I have often wondered if he was just looking for a way back to German. He certainly said the wrong thing to an American Air Force man. I must admit, I had to fight down a passing thought to "mistakenly" not hook up the static line to his ripcord as a little revenge for the American flyers he and his gunnery crew killed in North Africa. He probably wondered the same thing, until his chute opened.

AN ANGRY "JOE"

Submitted by

ROBERT W. FISH

In 1944 (I cannot recall the specific date) I flew a mission to an area in Central France. The purpose of the mission was to drop a Jedburgh Team into that area. The leader of that team was Prince Serge Obolenski, a Russian prince in exile in New York City. In New York City he was the chief "honcho" of the Roof Garden Restaurant on top of the St. Regis Hotel. He was a real "gung ho" type.

When we arrived at the target area there was no reception party in sight. I refused to let the team jump. Obolenski was furious. He said he knew that area as well as he knew the palm of his hand. He claimed he required no reception committee to make a safe entry into that area. I still refused to let him and his team jump.

On the way back to England, Obolenski came forward to the flight deck and cussed me out for at least fifteen minutes in English, French, and Russian. He was fluent in all three languages. He swore he would never speak to me again. He never had a chance to do so.

He was inserted into France at a later date by another crew.

MY FIRST FLIGHT TO PARIS

by

ROBERT W. FISH

Two days after Paris fell to U. S. Army forces who were battling the Germans, Major St. Clair and I flew a C-47 into Le Bourget Airfield in Paris. Our mission was to transport some Officers of Strategic Services (OSS) personnel to Paris and to return other OSS agents to England. The flight to Paris and the landing at Le Bourget were without incident. Our aircraft was met by some OSS officers who informed us that our return passengers would not be available until the next day. This meant that we would have to spend the night in "gay Paree". It also meant that the air crew was stranded in Paris with no transportation and no place to spend the night.

We parked our aircraft in what seemed to be a relatively safe place. We were the only airplane on the field. Our engineer and radio operator announced that they were going to sleep in the airplane to assure its safety from whatever dangers might arise. Saint and I decided to make a visit to downtown Paris if we could "hitch" a ride from the airfield into the inner city.

We picked up our B-4 clothing bags and walked a quarter of a mile to what was left of the airport passenger terminal. The terminal had been badly damaged. Part of the roof was gone and most of the windows seemed to be broken. There was nobody in charge of the terminal. With the exception of a half dozen men in civilian attire who appeared to be sleeping, there was nobody else in the main part of the building. It was obvious that there was no organized activity in charge of the place.

We walked through the building to the door on the street side of the terminal. The front of the building was a large portico supported by stone columns.

A long convoy of U. S. Army trucks was passing the portico traveling towards downtown Paris. These trucks were packed solid, standing room only, with German soldiers who had been captured the day before. From the roof tops across the street from where we were standing many French civilian citizens were gaining some vengence by shooting at the German prisoners packed in the trucks.

As soon as we assessed the situation we stepped behind the large stone columns because the French people were shooting in our direction when they

shot at the German prisoners.

This convoy of German prisoners was quite long. I have no idea how many German soldiers were killed and wounded by the irate French people who were satisfying their desire for vengence. The Germans were packed into the trucks so tightly that those hit by gunfire could not possibly fall down.

From our sheltered position behind the great stone columns we had a good view of the action by peering around the sides of the columns.

Near the end of the convoy we saw two men in civilian clothes jump out of one of the trucks and run for shelter behind the columns we were using for protection.

When the last of the truck convoy had passed we turned to talk to the two escapees from the convoy. Much to our amazement we recognized two 492nd Bombardment Group crew members who had been shot down at a much earlier date while on a mission over northern France. They had been befriended by some French citizens and hidden until the area they were in was liberated by advancing U. S. Army troops. To facilitate their travel to the rear of the front lines they had joined the convoy of German prisoners. We were all very glad to see each other. We promised them a ride back to England the next day.

After the convoy had passed we soon ascertained that there was no transportation from the airfield to downtown Paris. After some delay we "thumbed" a ride on top of an Army tank that for reasons unknown to us, was going back into Paris. This ride took us right to the heart of Paris where we grabbed our B-4 bags and jumped off the tank.

After a few inquiries we learned that the U. S. Army Headquarters for Paris was in the George V Hotel very near to where we had terminated our "piggy back" tank ride. We reported to the Army housing officer in the hotel and explained our situation. We were informed that the George V was booked full of U. S. Army people and that there was no space for itinerate Air Corps people in that hotel. We were told that we could get rooms in a fourth class hotel nearby. We agreed to take these rooms and proceeded to our new lodgings. The accommodations were shoddy and well supplied with bed bugs. But they were a place to sleep.

When we had checked in at the Army office at the George V we had been informed that the only electricity in Paris at that time was from an Army diesel generator plugged into the George V Hotel. We had also been informed that we could obtain dinner and breakfast at that hotel.

After depositing our bags in our "flea bag" quarters, we returned to the George V for dinner. The dining room was very formal. The tables were set with complete silverware including silver service plates. The waiters all wore tuxedo type grab. A bottle of good French wine was served at our table. Our dinner was brought to our table by waiters bearing large covered silver platters. When the covers were removed, the waiter, without smiling, laid a box of U. S. Army K rations on each person's plate. It was all very formal.

The next morning we were able to arrange through the Army transportation office in the hotel, for a truck ride to the airport. We were told that there would be a delay of a couple of hours before our transportation arrived and we therefore had time to walk around the area within a few blocks of the hotel. In the course of our walk we came to a sentry guarding the entrance to a large building. Thinking that such a large building might be a part of the army headquarters we asked the sentry what offices were there. He informed us that he was guarding the largest bordello in Paris, "The House of All Nations", which boasted at least one "lady" from every ethnic group known to Frenchmen. The place had been put off limits to U. S. troops. I sensed that St. Clair was disappointed that the guard would not let him enter!

When we arrived at our airplane we discovered that our passengers for the flight back to England, in addition to our comrads from the convoy, would be some valuable German prisoners of war who were being taken to England for interrogation. I learned through the officer in charge of these prisoners that they were most apprehensive about being on our flight back to England. They were so brain-washed that they were sure that the German fighter planes would shoot us down before we could arrive in England.

We arrived back at Harrington without incident and turned our cargo of prisoners over to waiting OSS troops from London.

ADDED NOTE !

St. Clair says my memory is poor. He was not with me on this trip to Paris.

Bob Boone thinks he was with me but that he went as a passenger and I had another pilot as my co-pilot.

Bob Fish

AN ADDITIONAL NOTE ON THAT FLIGHT TO PARIS

Extracted from page 3 of June 1990 issue of THE CARPETBAGGER

Comments by Raymond J. Elliott

"One thing I remember is that on the first day after Paris was liberated by our forces, our radio man, Arnold Brown, flew with our base commander, Col. Heflin, I think, to Paris to meet with the Franch Underground. They flew a C-47 and Arnold acted as interpreter as he could speak French. He brought back to each of us a beret with the Maquis emblem on it. I still have mine."

THE VOICE OF CHARLES DE GAULLE

ROBERT VIDALIN, 86, a French actor known to millions as the voice of Charles de Gaulle's resistance fighters during WW II, died Sunday, December 2, 1989 in Paris.

Mr. Vidalin, an actor and member of the Comedie Francaise national theater, gave up acting in 1939 to join the underground movement after the Nazis invaded France. He later joined de Gaulle in London and became one of the best known radio announcers on the popular British Broadcasting Corp. news program, "Les Francais Parlent aux Francais" ("The French Speak to the French").

Mr. Vidalin was among many who transmitted coded messages to the resistance and announced the June 6, 1944, invasion by Allied forces. After the war, he returned to acting in Paris and taught drama as well as performing at the Comedie Francaise.

JUSTICE MISCARRIED

by

BOB FISH

On one occasion that I recall we had one of our senior sergeants reduced one stripe on a charge of failing to salute Brig. Gen. Hill, Commanding General of the Composite Command at Cheddington.

My first knowledge of this incident was when General Hill telephoned me and told me that I needed to teach our 492nd airmen military courtesy. He told me that he had been riding in his staff car along the aircraft parking area when he drove past a master sergeant who failed to salute him. He directed me to reduce this master sergeant to the rank of tech sergeant until he learned to act like a soldier. This incident occurred at Cheddington and involved one of our line chiefs.

I had no choice but comply. But I immediately launched an investigation to determine exactly what had happened.

The facts that I learned convinced me that this was a miscarriage of justice and discipline. When this incident occurred Sergeant _____ was up on a maintenance stand assisting in the changing of an aircraft engine on a B-24. The General drove by that B-24 riding in the rear seat of his big black Lincoln sedan. Sergeant _____ was intent on his task and was not thinking about passing generals. He kept right on working.

General Hill was obviously of the opinion that when he drove by everybody should stop work, come to attention, and salute regardless of what tasks might be on going or what might happen if an airmen released his hold on a critical part just to "pop to".

There was no question but what General Hill had the authority to reduce this man's rank. In my opinion it was bad judgement to do so. The implied offense did not warrant that severe action. General Hill was in command of an administrative headquarters. He was not responsible for maintaining aircraft and getting them into the air on combat missions. I did not appreciate his interferring with my

responsibility of maintaining and using our combat capability.

While General Hill had the authority to demote the sergeant, I, as Group Commander, had the authority to promote him. I waited for ten days and restored this man's rank to full master sergeant.

About a month later I had a telephone call from General Hill during which he stated that in his opinion the sergeant had by this time probably learned his lesson and that he, General Hill, would have no objection if I restored the sergeant to his former rank if I thought the man merited such action. I thanked the general for his call. I did not bother to tell him that the sergeant's full rank had been restored a month before his call.

A BIZARRE MYSTERY
submitted by Doug Walker

Lt. Gilpin of the 788th Squadron was returning to Harrington after a successful drop in France. His dispatcer was Corporal Eugene Michalak. About three minutes after departing the French coast the aircraft made some rather violent maneuvers. The Group history record which records this event, gives no reason for this maneuver. It could have been a rough air current. In any event shortly after that maneuver the crew discovered that Michalak was missiong from the rear of the aircraft. The cover for the "Joe hole" was half open and the safety line and and the interphone cord to his headset were dangling out through the hole. They notified Air Sea Rescue. Gilpin turned back and searched the area over the English Channel for over two hours and found no sign of him in the water. They then returned to Harrington.

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SOME NOTES ON A-26 OPERATIONS

by

ROBERT W. FISH

We used stripped-down B-26 aircraft to drop agents deep into Germany. The airplane was extrememly fast for its times and highly maneuverable at all altitudes. To avoid the German radar we used it at extremely low altitudes for night flying. Our low altitudes also gave us some protection from German night fighters because they were handicapped by having to pay much attention to terrain avoidance while simultaneously trying to make visual firing contact with the extremely fast A-26 at low altitude. The odds were on our side.

The only place we had to carry parachuting agents in the A-26 was in the bomb bay. We modified the bomb bay with a platform on which the agents lay while flying enroute to their drop zone. At the exact spot over the drop zone the pilot pulled a lever in the cockpit. The lever tripped the latches on the platform in the bomb bay which then swung open and dropped the parachutist. Because the parachute static line was attached to the aircraft the parachute opened immediately. The parachute had time for one or two oscilations and the agent was on the ground. The parachutists hated this arrangement in the A-26. It took much of the glory out of parachuting when the parachutist could no long jump voluntarily. They also knew the pilot could dump them out any place he might choose to do so if he got into trouble.

* * * * * * *

ROSS D. WHITE REMEMBERS THE A-26

I had a mission to go and drop two agents in northern Germany near Kiel, but had to pick them up at a U.S. night fighter base in Germany. Some of the fighter pilots there saw this black B-26 parked on the ramp and became curious. They waited around operations until I came to take off. They asked me where I was going but I could not tell them where I was going or what I was doing. They said they were going on a night mission and would escort me. I told them, "No." They said that since they were flying the radar-equipped P-61 "Black Widow" night fighter I didn't have a choice. That airplane was fast but the A-26 I was using, all stripped down, was faster. I said they would never be able to keep up. They all thought that was nonsense.

I took off, turned on course, finished my mission and returned to land at the

fighter base for fuel, where I again met some of the pilots. They said they had lost me after my first turn out of traffic and were amazed at the speed of the A-26. Because they took off with some of them ahead of me and some behind me they were sure they could keep in touch, with their radar. A couple of them said they saw me once on their radar but could not keep up.

Incidently, the two agents were Germans who had surrendered in North Africa. I saw one after the war in Paris, and he said that when I pulled the trap door on him he thought he had bought the farm. They lost their baggage in the drop.

* * * * * * *

RED STOCKING MISSIONS

by

ROBERT W. FISH

As the war progressed and the Allies acquired many German prisoners they acquired potential agents and spies from among the prisoners. Not all German soldiers were happy with the Nazi regime because they or their families had been abused by the Nazis. Given adequate assurances and rewards, a few prisoners could be found who would agree to serve the allied cause. Additionally there were a number of Germans who had been driven from Germany prior to the war. From all these sources several agents were available. They were fluent in the language and customs in Germany and given half a chance they could melt into the German population. Of course they were always provided with the proper forged identification documents.

We dropped several of these agents into Germany. I recall one case (I do not recall the name of our pilot) when we dropped an agent in a large park in the city of Berlin. This agent survived and I met him after the war in Pilsen, Czechoslovakia, where I had gone to attend a ceremony in which various U.S. and Russian generals were given decoration for their wartime services.

If my memory doesn't fail me I recall two other agents dropped in Berlin while the war was still going on. I do not recall the total number of A-26 missions that we flew but I am sure it was not very many.

When these agents were dropped into Germany they carried with them a very small radio transmitter. The principle characteristic of this transmitter was that its radio emissions were in the form of a verticle cone. The diameter of the cone at the surface of the earth was very small being only a few feet. This made it extremely difficult to detect these emissions by direction finding equipment. At forty thousand feet the diameter of the emission cone was approximately sixty

miles. The individual using one of these transmitters was relatively safe from detection.

To pick up the emissions from our agents we used a British built two engine aircraft. I believe we eventually received six of these Mosquito aircraft but we wrecked two of them that I recall. One caught fire in the air and the second was wrecked when the pilot lost control during take off at Harrington.

At scheduled times during the hours of darkness we would place one of the Mosquito aircraft over Berlin, or wherever our agents were located, circling at 40,000 feet. The aircraft used a recording device and while circling recorded whatever intelligence messages our agent transmitted. The code word for these Mosquito missions was "Red Stocking".

Interestingly, the Germans could detect our aircraft with their radar but they didn't have any fighters that could operate at 40,000 feet. A second interesting factor about these missions was that at 40,000 feet it never got dark over Berlin in the summer time. Our Mosquito pilot could therefore see the German fighters trying to reach him but he also watched them stall out before they got to his altitude.

When the Mosquito completed its time over Berlin, the pilot simply pointed the nose slightly downward and descended all the way back to England. I recall one mission when the pilot came from Berlin back to England in one hour and twenty minutes.

I recall another mission when the U.S. Black Widows night fighters tried to catch the Mosquito and were unable to do. It was normal procedure for a mission coming home from Germany to identify itself to the Allied air defense forces when it entered their defense territory. On this occasion our pilot tuned in their frequency on his radio but he didn't transmit. He just listened. He heard their radar control launch the night fighers and vector them toward him for an intercept. The fighters didn't have the speed to close the intercept and he heard their radar control inform them, "The bogy is pulling away from you---he is very fast---he is getting away." At this time our Mosquito pilot picked up his microphone and told them, "Call your dogs off. This is a 'friendly' enroute to England."

When the Mosquito landed at Harrington, the recording wire was removed, given to a motorcycle rider who rushed it to London for analysis by the intelligence agencies.

I do not recall the names of our Mosquito pilots or our A-26 pilots.

IN MY OPINION

By Robert W. Fish

On the night of 19/20 March 1945 we lost an aircraft and crew on our first A-26 mission.

The A-26 had been added to our inventory to be used in dropping agents into the heart of Germany including the city of Berlin. The A-26 was selected as the aircraft for these missions because when it was stripped down it was highly maneuverable and could out-run any of Germany's or our own night fighters.

The A-26 being a new aircraft in our inventory it required a new air-crew configuration. Our crews had to be organized and trained as a team before the aircraft could be most effectively used.

For our missions the air-crew consisted of a pilot, a navigator, a bombardier and a gunner. The crew member serving as the bombardier did not function as a conventional bombardier. Instead he functioned as a pilotage navigator. He rode in the glassed-in nose of the aircraft and he visually matched the location of the aircraft over the earth's surface with the symbols on his maps. Our maps of Germany were extremely accurate in all details. An air crewman properly trained in night vision, could at low altitudes see these details on the ground quite clearly on a moonlight night. He could thus provide the pilot with extremely accurate positions with respect to the earth's surface.

The four air-crew members filled all of the cockpit air-crew space in the aircraft. The agents to be parachuted into Germany lay on a platform in the bomb bay. There was room in the bomb bay for a maximum of only two agents in a prone position. Usually only one agent was carried on these missions. For the agent it was a lonely flight lying on his stomach in the cramped quarters of that bomb bay.

When the aircraft arrived over the predetermined position where the agents were to be dropped the pilot simply pulled a lever in the cockpit and out they went. They were usually dropped at 200 to 400 feet above the ground. A static line attached to the aircraft automatically opened their parachutes. By this method they could be placed with extreme accuracy.

As a matter of "courtesy" the pilot alerted the agents for the forthcoming drop a minute or so before he pulled the lever. The agents hated this procedure. they could not demonstrate their "macho" by exiting the aircraft by their own initiative.

Most of the agents we dropped into Germany were Germans whose families had been tortured and killed by the Nazis. They served us in order to have their revenge against their persecutors.

On the night of 16/17 March 1945 I flew a B-24 Carpetbagger mission out of England into eastern France and after completing that mission we landed at our temporary forward base at Dijon, France. I remained at Dijon for a few days while I flew a "Carpetbagger" mission into the "redoubt" area of southern Germany and evaluated our management of our operations out of Dijon. It was while I was at Dijon that our first A-26 mission was attempted out of Harrington.

In my opinion we were not fully prepared to attempt that mission. While the individual air-crew members were all fully trained and qualified in their respective specialties, they were not a fully trained and coordinated crew. The crew was composed of three key officers and one Marine sergeant. This crew was just patched together for this first mission. It consisted of Lt. Oliver H. Emmel, (Pilot); Major John W. Walsh, (Navigator); Major Edward C. Tresemer, (Bombardier) and S/Sgt. Frederick J. Brunner (Flexible Gunner). They were four volunteers, gung ho and eager to go. They had not received sufficient training, as a team, in the A-26. The type of mission they attempted required a well trained and coordinated crew.

Colonel Hudson H. Upham had been placed in Command of the 492nd Group shortly before this mission was attempted. He had no combat experience what-so-ever, much less any experience in the highly specialized "Carpetbagger" operation. He was in an unenvyable position.

There was some pressure from OSS in London to expedite the mission. He succumbed to the urging of OSS and accepted the mission before we were really prepared for it. His basic attitude was, "if higher headquarters wants it flown now, we must do it!" He failed to recognize that the OSS personnel urging him on were non-rated army staff officers who had no comprehension of coordinated air-crew training. I think Colonel Upham knew we were not fully trained for that mission. He tried to compensate by using highly trained staff officers as some of the crew members.

Had I been at Harrington I feel that I could have reasoned with Colonel Upham and have convinced him that we should not attempt that mission until we were fully qualified with a regular crew. On other occasions he had respected my "Carpetbagger" experience and had listened to me on operational matters. This time I was not there.

As it happened we lost a highly trained agent and four very valuable airman. We accomplished nothing.

We will never know the details of what happened. In my opinion they probably flew too near the ground, something or somebody malfunctioned and they had no chance to recover before they struck the ground. When the war was over we obtained the German report on what they found and that is all we know with any certainty.

Tresemer had been the navigator on my crew from the time he graduated from navigation school. I trained him to be a crew member and he was one of the best. I knew him well. He crosstrained as a bombardier after we arrived in England. At the time of this A-26 mission he was dual qualified. On the night of this A-26 mission he did not function as a professional bombardier even though he was carried on the crew roster as

a bombardier. On this flight he functioned as a pilotage navigator.

On low level flights when he functioned as a pilotage navigator he liked to have the aircraft right down in the tree tops where he could clearly see positive details of the earth's surface. On such missions he repeatedly called for his pilot to fly lower so he could see better.

When I piloted for him at night I ignored his requests to fly lower whenever we were within 300 feet of the ground. Oliver H. Emmel who was the pilot on that fatal flight was highly qualified as a pilot, but he had not previously flown combat with Tresemer. He had no way of knowing Tresemer's idiocyncracy about altitude. There is a distinct possibility that he allowed Tresemer to induce him to fly too low.

MAJOR EDWARD C. TRESEMER

(The following information was extracted from the Carpet Bagger News Letters and other sources)

Major Edward C. Tresemer was born in Verona, North Dakota on 9 Feb. 1920. He was the only son of Edward C. and Ida May Tresemer.

He joined the Army Air Corps as an enlisted man. His enlisted serial number was ASN 17-025-584. He attended navigation school at the Pan American Airways School in Miami, Florida. He was assigned to the 46th Bomb. Sqdn. of the 41st Bomb. Gp. at Muroc Dry Lake, California, early in December 1941. At Muroc he was assigned to Lt. Robert W. Fish's B-18 crew as navigator. In that capacity he navigated the B-18 aircraft which was used to calibrate the newly installed RADAR system on the United States west coast.

He moved from the west coast of the United States to Cherry Point Marine Corps Air Station in North Carolina with the 46th Squadron early in 1942. From Cherry Point he moved with the Squadron to Bluementhal Field at Wilmington, North Carolina and from there to England with the 22nd Anti-Submarine Squadron. When the 801st Provisional Group was formed he became that Group's staff navigator.

Major Edward C. Tresemer was confirmed as killed in action over Germany on 19 March 1945 while on a secret mission to parachute a spy deep into Germany. After WWII was over, German records revealed that he was killed in the crash of aircraft A-26, serial number 43-22524 near Bramsche, Germany which is also near Schwege, a little distance from Hunteberg,

His military record reveals that his serial number at the time of his death was O-434-010 and his home was listed as Temple City, Califcrnia which is near Los Angeles. He was survived by his mother and his sister.

5604 Sedgwick Lane
Springfield, VA 22151
November 18, 1984

Mr. Ben Parnell;
Mr. Sebastian H. Corriere

Dear Folks:

I thought I would save some printer paper by including in this letter information which you both very graciously supplies me with to continue the search. I am referring to the inquiry I made to both of you about one Major Edward C. Tresemer, navigator, 856th BS, 492nd BG who was lost on a mission over Germany in 1945. Ben, you asked about his hometown. Well, I received a copy of Tresemer's Service Records and the data is noted below as reconstructed from his records:

Major Edward C. Tresemer, Jr., S/N 0-434010, was confirmed as KIA over Germany on 19 March 1945 while on a secret mission (delivering a spy). His hometown was listed as Temple City, CA (Los Angeles County) and apparently, from the records, an only son of Edward C. and Ida May Tresemer. From the records, it is again surmised that the parents were either separated or divorced. Major Tresemer was born in Verona, North Dakota 9 February 1920. "The aircraft of which he was a crew member failed to return from a secret mission to the Dummer Lake, Germany area." He was an EM, ASN 17-025-584, and re-applied at Fargo, ND for flying status as a Lt. AC. He was assigned to the 22nd Anti-Submarine Squadron, then to the 36th BS.

The aircraft used for the mission was an A-26 (Douglas) and carried a crew of 4 - Pilot, Oliver H. Emmel, 1st Lt., 0-2045247; Maj. John W. Walsh (Navigator), 0-790106; Maj. Edward C. Tresemer (Bombardier), 0-434010; and S/Sgt. Frederick J. Brunner (Flexible Gunner), 371866 (Marine Corps). All were KIA. The A-26 Medium Bomber, S/N 43-22524, left Harrington and was later found in a "moor" near Bramsche, Germany, which is also near Schwege, a little distance from Hunteberg.

I will be requesting the files on the remaining crew of the A-26 who were members of the 492nd. Hopefully, the Army will be as cooperative in the additional requests as they were in the first. If you have others who may be missing, I'll need their name and serial numbers, the unite number, and the date of death (?). As a minimum, the name and serial number may suffice.

Well, I hope this meets with your interests, Ben, and for Sebastian, a little bit of a thread which may lead to other clues ..... and solutions.

Sincerely,
/S/ Pete
"Pete" Petrenko

LIFE IN STOCKHOLM

Dear Colonel Fish:

Mary and I returned yesterday from a visit in Washington State and were surprised to find your kind letter dated March 20, 1990. The men and women in World War II certainly seemed to have lived in a stress filled, intense period of world affairs. Everyone of our "old buddies" has a story or two to tell. I know my mind is still filled with vivid memories of those days of flying cadets, pilot training, and night combat missions with the 801st/492nd Bomb Group at Harrington, England.

You are certainly welcome to use any of my statements or comments in your compilation of "Carpetbagger Memories".

Mary, my wife, and I first met John Hunt at the Lamport Swan during our visit to Harrington in August 1988. We saw the memorial stone and John told us about the annual reunion scheduled for Las Vegas, Nevada. That was our first contact with the unit since the war. What a great time. We met with Col. Boone, Ben Parnell, and a bunch of the "old gang" -- but no one from my old flight crew, however.

We did meet Walter Turchen, "Turk", and his wife Cathie at Las Vegas. Turk was a pilot from the 406th Squadron at Harrington who was sent on TDY to Metfield with us. Turk was a San Francisco Police Officer and recently retired. I also met George M. Snyder, a bombardier from Harrington, while at Metfield. Turk and George are listed in the Group Directory as is our waist gunner Howard L. Wible of Brownsville, Pennsylvania. We called Howard "Whimpy" because he liked hamburgers!

"Whimpy" was with us on our first high altitude bombardment mission on February 21, 1945; our plane was set on fire over Duisburg. I wrote a long letter to Ben Parnell, at his request, telling of the mission and our bail out near southeast Liege, Belgium. Our crew was returned to Harrington, after 4 days, by a C-47, and we flew night bombing missions to Dortmund on March 8, 1945 and to Munster on March 10, 1945.

On April 1st, 1945 we were assigned TDY to Metfield (Station 1409) for OSS flights to Stockholm, Sweden. As I recall, there were about 6 crews sent to Metfield. (See copy of Turk's special orders No. 89 attached.) We were

sent by train and bus to the US Embassy in London. We were issued US passports and our pictures were taken wearing our new tweed sport coats, pink (uniform) shirt, and necktie. We were allowed to select our coat and tie from a large warehouse type storage room at or near by the embassy. I chose a grey tweed coat and dark blue tie which I wore at the airport and on the streets of Stockholm. Our passports identified us as airlines officials.

Next we were issued ration stamps for tobacco, meat, bread, butter, etc. I have several of these stamps and some photos that may be of interest. I plan to bring them with me to our next reunion in Memphis this year. I'm sure you have seen a good number of these stamps in your time.

We all flew our Black B-24 H's and J's to Metfield. Our ship was 831-L (Love). See photo enclosed. I remember flying three or four missions to Stockholm. They were all night missions. Usually we scheduled take offs for 9:00 or 10:00 p.m. and we arrived over Stockholm about 6:00 or 7:00 a.m. These missions lasted 6½ to 10 hours, depending on the assigned routes.

Cargo usually consisted of large, white duck mail bags and all types of field equipment, skis, boots, tents, weapons, explosives, rations, ammo, etc. needed to support the Norwegian underground forces and the planned invasion of Norway. I remember the weather was usually a mixture varying between poor and awful; fog, rain, and heavy icing conditions were common. Turk remembers flying from Metfield to Prestwick, Scotland and upon landing a guard was posted on the plane while the crew went to the mess hall.

I well remember one "rotten" night. Our crew consisted of Ralph Sampson - pilot; Dexter Forbes - navigator; Ted Shimkus - bombardier; Harry Ford - engineer; Steve Dunn - assistant engineer; Lester Schiff - radio operator; and myself as co-pilot. We took off about 8:30 p.m. from Metfield into a cold fog that became dense at about 2,000 feet. We flew north over Scotland and up along the Norwegian coast for several hours (3 to 4 hours). We knew the German coastal air patrol liked to fly low patrols at about 4,000 feet; it was warmer there.

We were in freezing fog and had climbed to about 8,500 feet and we found that we were losing power on the No. 3 engine. We encountered freezing rain and ice was becoming very heavy and was slamming against the fuselage from the inboard props. Oil pressure on No. 3 engine dropped rapidly and we feathered the prop just as the oil pressure dropped past 30 lbs. p.s.i.

With the remaining 3 engines, Ralph and I could barely maintain 130 mph indicated air speed. The plane was shuddering badly. So, we decided to drop

down to a lower altitude in hopes of losing some of our ice. The whip antenna in front of the cockpit looked like a baseball bat, at times, as the ice broke off and reappeared.

Flying at 4,000 feet for about 30 minutes, we lost the ice, gained some air speed and started our slow climb as we turned east and approached the Norwegian coastline. Ralph increased the manifold pressure to about 50 inches; we didn't want to use the maximum 54 inches of boost for fear of blowing a "jug" on one of the three remaining engines.

As we began to break out on top of the clouds and got rid of the ice, we finally achieved an altitude of about 10,000 or 11,000 feet. Then we entertained ourselves by watching out for enemy patrol aircraft and mountain peaks and passes. We had been briefed that one of our B-24 aircraft was grounded in Stockholm waiting for an engine. It was part of our mission to deliver an engine for that plane. I thought, how ironic, it was that we had to fight for altitude on 3 laboring engines to clear the mountains; and all the while, we had an "extra" engine sitting, boxed up, in the back of our airplane.

I am certain that every flyer that has ever flown has felt the rush of excitement and the pangs of anxious anticipation as he listens to every throb of his engines and waits to react to the unexpected. Flying at night over enemy territory in bad weather seems, somehow, to magnify ones awareness and increase your attention.

Our navigator was 1st Lt. Dexter R. Forbes. He had completed his high altitude bombardment tour with the 392nd Bomb Grp. and was assigned to our crew at Metfield. I telephoned Dexter at Portland, Oregon (West Linn) and he tells me that some of our trips were routed first to Prestwick, Scotland and then north off the coast of Norway to a point north of a major city such as Bergen or perhaps Tronheim. Then we turned eastward and flew up a very large fjord (Tronheim Fjord) then over the mountains to a small village in Sweden. I remember receiving a blinker light signal at the turning point on one of our missions.

Broma International Airport at Stockholm was "socked in" when we arrived at about 6:00 a.m. in the morning. We were low on fuel due to increased use of power and had to fly a holding pattern for about 30 minutes. We spotted a small hole in the ground fog over a lake in the city and we dropped in under the overcast and were cleared to land.

An American agent met our aircraft and we parked in an isolated section of

the ramp. Guards were posted on the plane. Two Swedish officials (dark blue uniforms) came out to check our cargo and manifest items. One of the officials, standing under the tail turret motioned for me to come back to the tail turret. He raised his finger and pointed to the base of the turret (guns had been removed) and shook his head no-no with a scowl on his face. I looked up to see what the problem was -- one inch high red letters were nicely painted across the base of the gun turret. The sign read "Shoot, Jerry, you're faded". We had to have the sign painted black to match the rest of the plane. It appeared that the Germans were involved in air operations to Stockholm. We usually saw JU-52's landing or taxiing around Broma airport.

Our B-4 bags were loaded into a car and our agent took us directly to the Continental Hotel in Stockholm. Our entire crew was billeted in the same room; we each had a cot. We had a very large room located on the second floor directly over the front door portico. Usually we had to R.O.N. for one or several days due to weather, repairs, leading, etc. The engine that we delivered - of course - went on the other plane.

We were asked to stick close to our room at the Continental Hotel; not to talk to strangers; be back to our rooms at nightfall; and we wore our sport coats and ties with our uniform (pink) pants during our shopping trips in town. In the early evening we walked to the Bern Restaurant for some great meals with strawberries and ice cream for dessert. Each of us got two strawberries on his ice cream and they cost one kroner (25¢) for each berry - it was worth it at the time. Sampson, Shimkus, and I all bought our first Swiss chronograph wrist watches for about $74.00. We also demolished a 5 lbs. box of chocolates the first day in Stockholm.

We departed Stockholm on our last mission at about 10:00 p.m. in a driving rain. After flying through a very cold front, we spent a very cold night getting back to Metfield. The plane was frozen and as we let down to traffic altitude (1,500 feet) we developed severe cockpit icing. Our inch thick plastic and glass windows around the cockpit iced over like the inside coils of a refrigerator. There was no visibility and we couldn't find the runway until we pried the sliding side windows back 4 or 5 inches. Looking out open side windows, Ralph and I talked each down on the runway as "Pappy Ford" called out the air speed and tried to clear the front window.

We were at Metfield when Germany surrendered May 7th or 8th, 1945. We flew old 831 L (Love) back to Harrington on May 12th or 13th. Our last day at

Harrington was July 9, 1945. We flew 557 Z (Zebra) to Scotland; Reykjavik, Iceland; Goose Bay, Labr.; and landed at Bradley Field, Conn. on July 13, 1945.

I phoned Walter Turchen in San Francisco, California. Turk was made aircraft commander and Warren Leopold became his co-pilot when they joined us at Metfield. Turk sent me a short letter and a copy of Special Order No. 89 giving the names of the officers and men assigned to the Stockholm operation. A copy of each is enclosed. Also enclosed is a copy of John Gleeson's comments reprinted from our "Carpetbagger Newsletter".

I am certain that each one will have his special store of memories and experiences to relate. Bob Shager (pilot) and officers of his crew: Ward, co-pilot; Bill Tilden, bombardier; and "Pappy" Trent shared our Nissen Hut, B-39. We called it "Ye Olde Caterpillar Shack". Mary and I visited Bob and Irene Shager in St. Paul, Minn. prior to the Milwaukee reunion last year. Bob was in the hospital at the time of our visit but he still had fire in his eyes. He is doing fine now. Enclosed is a copy of page 2 of the Staff Reporter published by Bob's St. Paul School District 625. Bob tells me that Lt. Ward was last heard from in Southern California. Lt. Bill Tilden and "Pappy" Trent are deceased.

Bob Shager and his crew flew with Bernt Balchen's group prior to assignment at Harrington. I'm sure Bob can add some helpful info in reference to flying into Norway and Sweden. I hope he can meet with us this year in Memphis.

I will plan to bring some of my old photos and ration stamps, etc. to the meeting. Now --- I just bet that you have had enough! Keep well! I hope to see you in Memphis this year.

Sincerely,

/s/ "Bart"

Wm. S. Bartholomew

P.S. Sunday --- Mary and I are off to Travis AF Base to try for a Space A trip to England and Scotland. We will stop by Harrington to see John Hunt, Ron and Mary Clarke, and Fred and Sylvia Jolliffe at the Lamport Swan. I'll also buy my kilts, etc. in Aberdeen so I can play the bagpipes in style.

Best regards,

Bart and Mary

THE PATH OF MOST RESISTANCE
A WORLD WAR II PATRIOT'S STORY FINALLY IS TOLD

Gaston Vandermeerssche, Belgian Allied intelligence agent and underground resistance worker, will be the guest speaker at our Milwaukee Reunion.

The following excerpt appeared in the December 11, 1988 Milwaukee Journal and was written by Bea Mitz.

The young Belgian's wrists are confined in self-locking handcuffs behind his back. Repeatedly, guards fling him against the wall. They punch, kick and maul him without mercy. Finally, the young man pretends to faint. A guard re-enters with a frenzied German shepherd that leaps toward his throat. He senses the attack and flinches, showing his captors that he is still conscious. Confident they can break him to reveal secrets, the torture continues.....

A scene from a World War II movie? No, it actually happened 45 years ago to Belgian-born Gaston Vandermeerssche, then 22 and head of a Dutch network of almost 2,000 underground agents.

Today, Vandermeerssche is 66 and an inventor, businessman and recipient of four "Croix de Guerres" for bravery---two from France and the others from Luxembourg and Belgium. Among his other medals is the "Bronzen Leeuw" (the bronze lion, the highest military honor a foreigner can receive while still alive) pinned on him by Holland's Queen Wilhelmina.

War broke out in 1940, while Gaston was studying mathematics and physics in his first year at Belgium's Ghent University. Upon Germany's attack on Belgium, Gaston immediately left school to join the offical Belgian Army headquarters in southern France.

Two months later, the Germans occupied Belgium and Gaston joined the Belgian underground. At great risk, he distributed the underground newspaper, La Libre Belgique. Seven months later, a fellow resistance worker was arrested with a list of the members---and Gaston's name on it.

Moving under cover of night he arrived at as yet unoccupied Toulouse, France. He remained in France as an undercover agent. His mission was to establish a courier line over the Pyrenees Mountains, delivering microfilmed intelligence information to the Belgian consulate in Barcelona, Spain which was then forwarded to London. Gaston, whose code name was "Raymond", had three weeks to learn the Spanish language and customs to prepare for his mission. These missions went on for seven months.

Gaston, now 21, was chosen to head up WIM, named in honor of the queen. Taking another code name, "Raymond" became "Rinus".

Recalling those days, Gaston adds: "My whole Rinus operation was built on trust. Without it, there would have been no underground. I recruited six and they recruited more until, eventually, there was a network of close to 2,000---but only six knew who I was. We also had safe houses where we kept all the microfilm." The Perpignan safe house was a haven for agents carrying microfilm, packaged exactly like sticks of butter, a stringently rationed war item. It aroused the suspicion of neighbors who thought these "butter carriers" were black marketeers. Eventually they notified police who, seeking butter, found a cache of microfilm instead.

Gaston innocently wandered on the scene. Immediately, he and others were arrested, shoved into a van and rushed to the Gestapo headquarters. "Raymond/Rinus" was captured, but the Germans didn't know it.

Zealously, they set on a relentless course to identify him. For months Gaston's torture continued. Returning from another session with the Gestapo, Gaston met Adolph Manet, a double agent, who shouted, "That's Raymond!"

The Nazis transferred him to a prison in Haaren, the Netherlands and he was condemned to death. However, he was kept alive as a barganing tool for eventual prisoner exchange.

Two years later, on a May day in 1945, the Americans swung open the prison doors. Gaston was a free man. Free, yes, but a well man, no. Emotionally, too, he bore the scars of torture and 17,520 hours of solitary confinement.

If he could turn back the clock to those war years, would he make the same choices?

"Oh, yes," he answers quickly, "Absolutely. And I didn't, and I still don't, consider myself a hero."

A TRUE PATRIOT
WAS
JEAN REMY

Word just received from Jean Remy, one of the two distinguished Frenchmen who attended our Reunion in Harrington. Jean was one of the "Joes" dropped in France by our Group out of Harrington. His code name was "Corse" and his mission was to organize for the "Transmission-Action" circuit. His first mission was in the Paris area and the second was in eastern France where he was caught by the Gestapo and placed in the Charles III Nancy Prison. He managed to escape but not before he was tortured and severely injured by the Nazis.

He retired as an Air France Navigator in 1969, due to ill health. As an Air France Navigator, he flew as many as 40 flights a year to the United States. At the present time he is helping the French Union of Pilots in publishing "ICARE", a very luxurious magazine, which will be devoted to the air liaison between Great Britain-France. It may be published in English as well as French and is expected to be edited in the second half of 1989. One chapter is to be devoted exclusively to the 801st/492nd Bombardment Group. Jean has also donated the video tape "Operation Carpetbagger" to the MUSEE de l' LIBERATION at the French INVALIDES monument of Paris (French Army Museum) and also to the Institut Jean Moulin of Bordeaux (a very complete museum and documentation of WWII). President Chaban-Delmar, of the French National Assembly (House of Representatives), wrote to Jean saying, "This is a document of the utmost importance and I am glad that our Institut Jean Moulin will get it. Many thanks to you".

Jean Remy answered our invitation to attend our Las Vegas Reunion with the following: "Unfortunately, I will not be able to join Carpetbaggers' Reunion, September and October being alreading busy with our meetings and general assemblies. What a shame: I will not be able to gain a fortune in Las Vegas' casinos!"

In closing, Jean said he appreciated our friendship and sends his warmest thoughts and full success for our Association.

Editor's note: Anyone wishing to correspond with this fine French gentleman, a good friend of the 801st/492nd BG Association, may do so by writting to:

Medailles de la Resistance Francaise
Section de la Dordogne
Le President: Jean Remy
Allemans./24600./Riberac
France

* * * * * * * *

SONG OF THE PARTISANS

by

MAURICE DRUON

Friend, can you hear
The flight of the ravens
Over our plains?

Friend, can you hear
The muffled cry of our country
In chains?

Ah! Partisans,
Workers and peasants,
The alert has sounded.

This evening the enemy
Will learn the price of blood
And of tears.

TARGET PRACTICE FOR A BORED GERMAN GUNNER

by

DOUGLAS D. WALKER

We were flying into Denmark one night in February 1945 to drop a load of munitions and supplies to the Danish underground forces.

As usual, our pilot and navigator had selected the best route possible to avoid all known anti-aircraft flak batteries enroute to the target area. However, we inadvertantly found an enemy flak battery not shown on the Intelligence Section's maps.

Our black Liberators were normally difficult to spot at night. However, this was a clear, moonlight night and we had the misfortune to fly directly over an enemy anti-aircraft gun emplacement located on one of the small islands off the west coast of Denmark.

As was routine on these missions to Denmark and Norway, we approached from the North Sea at a very low altitude to come in under the enemy radar. Therefore, when we crossed that particular island, we presented an easy target to a gun battery on the ground at 500 feet altitude.

We later joked that the Nazi gunner had been cleaning his gun for Saturday inspection for five long years -- and when he saw us silhouetted against the moon at 500 feet, he got off his first shot of WWII in anger and couldn't believe the easy, low flying target we offered him.

In any event, I was looking out of the right waist window at the ground flashing by in the moonlight, when I saw the gun's muzzle flashes lighting up the darkness. At the same time, I heard metallic, banging sounds in the waist where I was standing. It dawned on me that we were being shot at.

Before I could alert the pilot, I felt the plane shudder slightly -- and fell to the floor as Lt. Swarts threw the Liberator into evasive action.

We flew on to our drop zone and parachuted our cargo on the lighted signal of the underground forces and flew back to England without further incident.

As soon as the Liberator came to a stop, we jumped out with our flashlights and found, to our amazement, a large hole -- about the size of a basketball -- just behind the number three engine. We couldn't understand how the shell missed our wing tanks and our hydraulic system. We felt very lucky that night.

I jumped back into the plane to see what had caused the metallic banging

noise in the waist and found several 50 caliber sized holes in the floor near where I was standing at the time and also found their companion holes in the roof where the bullets had exited.

I felt doubly lucky at our near miss.

We couldn't help feeling that it was a good thing for some of our 8th Air Force daylight bombing crews that the Nazis were wasting a crack gunner on some Danish backwater island -- instead of stationing him around Berlin. On the other hand, who in his right mind would fly over Berlin at 500 feet!

You can imagine my surprise when I received a telephone call one evening. He said, "Do you know who this is, Sebastian?" I said, "No." "This is your old CO, St. Clair." Believe me, if the teeth I have were not my own I would have dropped them. The last time I talked to him was in December of 1944 when he called me into his office to tell me he had all the papers filled out for me to marry an English WAAF I had been going out with for almost a year. I can still remember his words, "Corriere, I have the papers here. What do you want me to do with them?" I said, "Can you sign them and I'll use them when I'm ready." His reply was, "If I sign them you will use them." As we had been sending stuff for Okinawa, and I figured I had a couple of years ahead of me in the Pacific, I chickened out. I oftened wondered how my life would have been if I had married my little WAAF. Anyway, to get back to St. Clair. He has sent me negatives of a poster he received, of a DC-3 in France-1944, surrounded by Maquis, the engines running and several people running to get in the open door. This is almost reminiscent of Col. Heflin's landing in German-occupied France on July 6, 1944 and returning on the 9th. In this first "Dakota" landing as it was called, his crew was Capt. Wilmer L. Stapel as his co-pilot, Major Edward Tresemer as his navigator, Major Charles Teer as bombarider and T/Sgt. Albert L. Krasevac as radio operator. On this trip they had picked up Lt. French M. Russell of Lt. Murray L. Simon's crew missing on a Carpetbagger mission since May 6th.

A MISSION TO DENMARK

by

GEORGE WINDBURN

Charley came back from the officers' club, stuck his head in the tent and said we were posted for a mission tonight-Denmark, another drop. He went on to another tent as he told them they were also posted. Also a drop, but as always they had their own individual target. Just as ours was our own.

You reported to another building for your briefing. You got your own private briefing because your target was different than anybody elses.

We never required the enlisted men to go to these. I can't remember now just why that was. There wasn't any drama attached to this as with a bombing run.

Then you all sat together, a hundred or so men. The big map was up there on the stage and you were fascinated by all the red which signified flak areas. Then you looked at the target itself, how deep it was and last the courses drawn out with red ribbon, stretching from Harrington to the coast departure point, across the channel, onto the continent, to the IP, the run into the target, the course out, and then the course home. The last always shown as a straight line, after clearing the target area, but a course you knew was more a matter of luck than actuality. If you were hopped by fighters you knew that you could fly any darn course you could and had to. It was run and duck as best as you could. For as long and as far as you had to. Some had to do it from the target all the way back to the channel. I don't know how they did it.

But this is different. This is a drop. Actually I felt this was almost a milk run. How foolish that was. But all these runs had been made with no trouble, no sightings, and every drop completed. Batting 1000 percent. Yet statiscally we had our worst losses on drops. When the targets were known the enemy set the target up so that when the plane came over at 500 feet, gear down, half flaps, 110 miles per hour, they were sitting ducks for any kind of ground fire. I think all the crew felt the same sense of relief about drops. Maybe that is why the enlisted men never were part of the briefings.

All they really needed to know was the weather in general, the country we were flying to, the length of the whole show, the morse code letter we were to find at our target, and maybe some details about the target area itself. Such as to the east of a well defined woods, or in the boonies of some Norwegiam hillside,

and the hours the target was open.

Some targets would be open for four hours. That meant the receiving party of resistance people would be at the site for that entire length of time and they would show the light code only when they heard or saw us. How I would not want to be there for that long. The chances for discovery by the Germans must have been great. For us the open period allowed us to make our own flight plans.

How very different that was from all the other groups. There they got all that data from headquarters and they were to follow out the battle plan. In the 856th, as pilot in command I was given the option and duty of making the entire battle plan for a drop. The starting point was the target and the hours open.

This crew decided when we took off. We decided on all aspects of the course or courses we flew. We spelled out the altitudes (right on the deck for as long as we could to avoid enemy radar). We made the determination to drop or not. And we determined how to get home (fast, very fast and as low as water or ground would allow). Bombing mission all had secondary targets. Drop missions had none. It was either a home run or zip.

At briefings there were still the maps and all the red areas to stare you in the face. Funny, I never felt their threat in this almost-alone situation. Maybe it was the absense of a large anxious, sweating group of friends and strangers which changed the situation. As I looked these areas over I knew I was not going to fly some idiotic straight line, but I would be dancing around every known flak envelope shown. I was going to dance without paying the piper. It had always worked before. Why shouldn't it work once more?

Tonight's target is near a woods. Those maps were very accurate as the woods were so well drawn you would have thought impossible. As reference points for pilotage (navigation by ground reference) they were without error.

For me this was a very big plus. It put me in the navigation picture. I was no longer following compass headings. I was looking at the ground and at every moment I knew exactly where I was. It was with a real sense of peace to have that amount of control while in combat.

We did the usual routine. We first stopped off to talk with the enlisted crew. They really seemed to like these drops. They were more a part of all the proceedings, also. After all they were important eyes for us as we clipped over tree tops and roofs. They made the actual drop of all those packages which were carried in the waist. They uncovered the Joe Hole, that piece of wood that covered the hole where the belly turret guns should have been (two of the four

50 cal. machine guns we gave up), and they were the eyes which reported the parachute openings and the effect of the entire drop itself.

Also in another very important way they made a major contribution. While Bob toggled out the large cannisters with chutes from the bomb bay, and all at one go, I might add, it was a far different situation with the packages. The last thing we wanted to do was to make a second pass over the target to get rid of the last of those packages. If a cannister got hung up, and one never did, we were prepared to fly off with it hung up and to do what we had to, far away from the target.

Lingering over the target was lethal for the partisans, also. Our plane with its four engines roaring out to the country side, our blue exhaust flames making us visible if the nightlight wasn't, could be the rallying point for enemy soldiers and their superior forces.

No oxygen masks, no flak suits. What a relief. It was nice to fly low. And from my point of view the eyeball route was a pleasure. In a perverse kind of way I also felt I was communicating with those civilians on the ground in Denmark or Norway. By then they knew about the air drops and I just hoped they did hear us and were encouraged by our little visit.

At this season of the year we were not briefed on how long there might be moonlight or how long there would be darkness. On my last drop flight to Norway, and I think it might have been the last such flight made during the war into that country, the period of darkness was 20 minutes. Needless to say that tightened up our schedule considerably.

We had made our way down to the flight line to inspect the plane we were to fly. We were that lone crew who had no plane of our own. The plane was serviced early with its cannisters and packages. This was important information as it meant how difficult the drop might be. No packages were a disappointment.

With wartime double daylight savings time we had to make our take off late so we had the cover of darkness working for us. I wanted darkness soon after we were over the North Sea. Never mind losing some sleep when we got back at that later hour. Better safe than sorry. Our maps were marked. The log books, the form 21 checked out. The crew chief said the ship was okay. Back to the area and take it easy until we all met again for the flight.

As I said the drops were thought of much more lightly. So the hours that remained before taking off never were tense. Just the peace of fools or innocents.

The take off begins. We roll down that runway all by ourselves. We use the radio with the tower. No radio silence to get us going, but once in the air they never heard of us. We were on our own. And wasn't it nice? You bet it was. We were a lot freer with the intercom. We could joke back and forth. It was a milk run to the coast at a reasonable altitude.

But once the coast was in view, the North Sea in front, we ditched that altitude and went down to the fishing territory. That might sound like bravado but you had to cut it at low altitudes or hang yourself out to dry.

The only time I heard a crew member make a remark to me, personally or over the intercom, was by Vince Sabia, our radio operator, on the intercom, as we were legging it out of Norway one night.

"Skipper, do you want me to open the Bomb Bays to let the fish out?" He made his point, and while I can smile at the remark I doubt I gave him as much as one foot of relief.

When we are flying along wave tops we are at the same time looking for trouble. After all, the Germans have recovery craft for downed flyers and who knows just where they might be or what they were doing? Besides, we were to note any ships, find their positions and give them at debriefing. As it turned out the only time there were any ships, was off the coast of Denmark, when a whole crew of them were bringing back German troops out of Norway.

On that particular occasion we had the pleasure of being so low I was twisting and turning to avoid the masts and stacks of those troop carriers. It turned out that was no news as intelligance already knew about the troop withdrawal. My crew and I were the only ones in the dark. I would not have made that route choice if I had had more information. But such is war.

The hours at low altitude over the water come to an end as Charley's calculations put us minutes away from the coast. It is now quite serious. We had chosen as our entry point a lonely bit of beach which had always been empty at our passing. At the beach we did go a bit higher to clear any obstacles. We would follow the different wood outlines to our target. It wouldn't be a long trip over Denmark, but this time it was so very close to some sort of town.

At the beach we saw a lone German soldier patrolling, but we must have caught him by surprise as even I could see as I pivoted my head that he never broke stride, just looked up at us as he kept on walking.

We picked up our woods and started to fly with them as our guide. At some point we were flying close to a road and for the first time I saw a car with

slits for headlights making its way. I'm sure I hoped they would just write us off as uncatchable.

We made it to our target area. But where was the target? They were meant to have the lights set up. Three lights in a row, quite far apart and one light at the end blinking the one letter code. We were down at five hundred feet, but all cleaned up and at cruising speed. No need to get dirty until we had our lights.

But there were no lights. Wait a minute. One of the houses was raising one of its window shades up and down, trying to give us the code letter.

So that was our target. Must have been some changes made. Now as I widened the turn, I dropped the gear and put down half the flaps. We were now committed to drop. Tonight was cannisters and packages. "Dump them out, back there" were my words of encouragement to Brick and Caudel. Poor Lackey was always in the tail covering our rear. The only thing he could do was sweat and hope that the rest of us were taking care of him. But he did get the best view of our drop and it was his sighting that we counted on.

It was a charge for the house and everything went out. Soon Lackey was on the intercom. "Skipper, one of the packages opened up. It was tires-motorcycle tires. They bounced off the roof of the house."

And I should not fail at this point to say Bob was responsible for all the timing for letting the loads go. Timing was crucial for hitting a small target and to give the ground people a nice, neat, and near grouping of groceries to pick up before the enemy might get there. It was a dirty trick to string your laundry out. It could cost lives.

You can imagine that once we were empty we picked up our speed as we lowered our altitude and made our way out and around all those nasty red flak envelopes. It was pilotage time. It was heads up against time. It was a very good case of us against them. No longer at 25,000 feet sucking oxygen. This time it was our chance to surprise the enemy and by surprise out fox him. It was a great game of bluff. For this crew it worked every time.

Here it is so many years later. We hardly won the war. We were just daily participants who knew very little about the war. Who would have thought we were fighting to divide Germany, to hand Poland over to Russia, etc., etc. We thought we were fighting Hitler, Benito, and the Rising Sun.

It is all the more amazing how someone who was and is quite ordinary and who was by the rules of chance and the need for replacements could have been exposed

to and called upon to serve in such circumstances. What general officer looking ahead could have seen the likes of us in the 856th as the means for supplying the underground and to keep the Germans busy in their occupied territories? Or better yet, who would have picked us, the few and the under-gunned, as the RAF decoy force, to draw out the entire German might fighters, to allow the RAF more time to get to and drop their bombs on the big target?

It took guts on somebody's part. It just took staying alive on ours.

4/13/89

"V" FOR VICTORY

by

DOUGLAS D. WALKER

As our black Liberator sped across the unhospitable North Sea, I was understandably nervous. We were on our way to parachute drop munitions and supplies to the underground resistance forces in Denmark. Although it was the 24th mission for the rest of the air crew, it was my first. (The crew I was on originally was transferred to Burma upon our arrival in England and we drew straws to see who would remain behind in Harrington. I drew the short straw and was reassigned to Lt. Swarts' crew as his dispatcher.)

I was a stranger to the rest of the air crew. This, coupled with the fact that it was my first mission, wasn't very reassuring to me. I didn't know what to expect and, because it wasn't "macho", I hesitated to ask the other crew members what we might face.

Looking out of the waist window, I peered into the murky darkness --- occasionally getting a dim glimpse of whitecaps on the North Sea below. I shivered, it was December 1944 and very cold in the unheated B-24 bomber. I didn't relish the thought that if we had to ditch in that tossing sea as a result of enemy action, we'd probably freeze to death in a matter of minutes.

The co-pilot told me prior to the flight that we would be approaching Denmark at an altitude of 500 feet in order to come in under the Nazi radar and we would then fly at only 1500 feet all the way across Denmark to our drop zone.

As we crossed the coast line, my nervousness increased. I was stationed in the waist of the aircraft all alone and felt cut off from the rest of the crew. I wondered if the Nazi anti-aircraft gunners would open up on us --- or if a

night fighter would jump us.

As I looked out of the window at the ground below, the moon suddenly appeared. I could see that we were over a small village. I had a grandstand seat as we flew over streets and houses at 500 feet altitude --- so close, I felt as if we were at treetop level.

The town was in a total war time blackout, but I could make out individual houses. It was after midnight and the village looked like a ghost town as it slid by under us.

Suddenly, the blackout was shattered by a bright light coming from a house up ahead. As we drew abreast, I saw that it was coming from an upstairs window. The light was flashing on and off rapidly --- as if someone were pulling a shade up and down.

I suddenly realized what it was. As I looked back, I counted the flashes and their duration --- three short and one long --- three short and one long. It was the international morse code for the letter "V". Of course! The Dane was flashing the "V for Victory" signal to us.

I looked back unbelievingly. That someone, in a hamlet occupied by Nazis would brave imprisonment or death to cheer us on our way by flashing us the "V for Victory" sign as we flew over, was remarkable. I admired that person's courage..

We flew on to our drop zone. Spotting the firey cross lit by the Danish resistance forces to guide us in, we worked speedily to drop the loaded containers from the bomb bay, as well as large boxes and bales we had to push out of the "Joe Hole" in the waist of the Liberator.

We flew back to England uneventfully and landed just before sunrise. After debriefing by S-2, we headed for our bunks and blessed sleep.

Just before I dozed off. I though about that welcome from a brave Dane on my first "Carpetbagger" mission. I felt embarrassed at my nervousness, when I thought of his courage and realized that he, or she, faced danger every day from the Nazi invaders, while I faced it only a few nights each week.

I also felt a warm feeling that our efforts to help the Danes over throw their Nazi oppressors were obviously appreciated.

SCARY RETURN FROM DENMARK

Our crew was assigned a target in Denmark on 10 September 1944. We had one earlier Denmark run which had been in mid-August and, as I recall, we were not able to drop because we could not contact our ground reception group. The flight to Denmark was not particularly long but all of it was over the North Sea. Actually the only land we flew over was England.

by NORMAN RUSSELL

Again, as on our first trip, we were unable to locate the ground reception party so knowing better than to look for them we did a 180 degree turn and headed back to Harrington. We had only been flying east a few minutes when we felt the plane pulling to the left. Both Jake and I looked at the instruments and saw that number one engine tachometer was indicating an RPM of about 3000. Normally it should have been showing 2230. Manifold pressure was a little higher then normal but that shouldn't have been a problem. As we looked at the instruments and each other the plane began to noticeably pull to the left and without saying anything to each other we both put our feet on the right rudder pedals and were both turning the wheel to the right. I rolled in full right aileron trim and full right rudder trim to try to lift the left wing, hoping that we could keep the plane level. It didn't work and we were slowly losing altitude. By now we were straining to keep the left wing up and the plane headed straight. I reached overhead to feather number one engine by hitting the red feather button. We expected the engine RPM to slow down to a stop but much to our consternation nothing happened. I pulled the feather button out again and pushed it in.....nothing! I looked over at Jake and noticed that he was sweating profusely. So was I. In fact, we were both drenched. We alerted the crew that we were having a problem with the plane. We didn't have to tell them. They could sense that something was wrong. Finally, we called the crew and told them our problem and since we were still losing altitude we were going to drop our bomb bay containers and we wanted the waist cleared also. This was accomplished quickly. We leveled off but had no altitude to spare.

Holding full right rudder and keeping the wheel full right was beginning to strain both of us. We had advanced the power on the three good engines, number one being our problem, so that we were using our fuel at a far greater rate than usual, which wasn't all bad because with each gallon of fuel burned the plane became lighter. We were in no danger at that time of running out of fuel.

Eventually, we were flying over England and called Harrington explaining our engine problem. I didn't mention earlier that Jake and I took turns holding number one throttle full closed because we wanted as little fuel into that engine as possible. The blades were stuck in low pitch so that run-away propeller was acting as a big area of resistance rather than doing any pulling. We landed without incident. Jake and I sat in the cockpit for a few minutes after we cut the engines. I guess we were just too tired to get out. It didn't really occur to me to get scared until later when I was in bed. And then I began to sweat again.

Next day our crew chief found a restriction in the oil line leading into the propeller control housing. No oil was available to control the pitch of the propeller and obviously none to feather it. A propeller rotating at the speed ours was is a constant threat of letting go of its blades. Had that happened we would have had a cold swim in the North Sea.

Our crew was composed of Maurice "Jake" Jacobson, pilot; Norman Russell, co-pilot; Jim McKenna, navigator; Dave Cleveland, bombardier; Bob Marriett, engineer; Mitch Hart, radio operator; Seymour Chinich, tail gunner; and Joel Carter, dispatcher-gunner.

A FLIGHT TO DENMARK

by

GEORGE WINDBURN

May 7th has come and gone. Its passing wasn't even noted by any newspaper story that I could find. Not that I looked very hard, but I was aware there wasn't a ripple of rememberance. In its day it created the epitomy of answered prayer as indeed it did. It was, and is, the date of VE Day.

For me, May 6th, with orders to fly in Class A Uniform that day with the commanding officer of the 492nd Bomb Group in a C-47, set the stage to have me miss VE Day with my crew and friends at Harrington Air Field. For on May 6th I would fly the Danish ambassador and passengers, including one jeep, back to his country, landing at the civilian airfield in the capital city, Copenhagen.

There were a couple of things about the flight itself which were different for me. In the first place I had never flown a C-47 before. And I had never crossed the channel into enemy territory in daylight before. And I could say in passing that a captain was our flight engineer, a major was our navigator, not one enlisted man on board. The colonel was airplane commander.

One of the passengers, a war correspondent for Readers Digest, gathered the material for his rather long story of the 492nd. This was published at a date after our secrecy classification was dropped.

The in flight memories I have are of passing Holland and seeing the fields of broken gliders left behind after an airborne Allied attack of many months passed. Next would be the little, and I mean little, stubby German attack planes left behind on a German airfield. These little planes had no wheels, took off from a dropable wheeled skid. They were powered by an experimental exotic fuel jet-type engine. They probably were intended to make just one flight.

The airfield at Copenhagen was covered with British planes and soldiers. We were met by people of the Danish underground for whom we had flown many supply and agent-drop missions. These missions are called Carpetbagger missions in the Readers Digest story.

The brief ride into town was memorable in that we could see just about every civilian was carrying a wire-stock machine gun which looked very much like a water pistol in construction. I have no idea how many of these things we had probably dropped.

When we were on foot we could hear gunfire every once in a while as there were little pockets of resistance still being overcome. These were the only gunshots I heard for my entire combat exposure in WW2. And by the way, it is pure bunkum that from the flight deck you could hear the waist guns firing. And you do not hear any sounds when bombs are on their way down, nor do you hear their ground impacting explosion. Pure Hollywood.

We were registered into a hotel and then proceeded to have our evening meal. That was another special memory. It was like culture shock to sit down in a totally civilian setting, with an unheard of menu offering, music, from a small ensemble, flowers around the room. From the lifestyle at Harrington to this fine Copenhagen hotel in one short day was too much to forget.

What a difference. I certainly never ate with the colonel before. Each of us were at the same time called upon to elevate ourselves to be and to be seen as cultured gentlemen, who were incidently combat airmen of the United States Army Air Force. We were the only uniforms in the room as I recall.

We were far from being taken lightly. The small orchestra stopped at an appropriate time so that their leader could address the dining room in English (for our benefit) telling all present that we were Americans who had participated with their resistance fighters in liberating Denmark. There was polite applause. Next the music was American for some minutes.

The main thing I remember of the meal itself was the Schnapps and the strawberries for dessert. But besides the food the other event was the young lady who came up to us during the meal. She was in her twenties, wore a striking (or should I say, noticeable) red, white, and blue dress.

Most likely she was there to say something nice about us, but what I do definitely remember was the Colonel telling her I was the ranking officer of the group. Tongue in cheek, of course.

This same lady in the same dress was to later appear as a front page photo and side-bar story in a British daily a day or two after VE Day.

One of the underground people invited me to have lunch in the famous Touilery Gardens the next day, May 7th. Because of the war the gardens as I saw them had none of the features which are world renowned. Merely a pleasant grass and trees park.

Looking back today I am struck by several things. First, I really would have preferred to have stayed at Harrington and celebrated with my friends and

crew. The people on the Copenhagen trip were really strangers to me and we had had no previous social contacts.

Another thing I see as strange is the total lack of sophistication of those times and of myself. I actually had no idea on May 6th that the next day was going to be the end of the war. While that may make me sound dense, I can only attribute that to the level of access to real news.

Transistor radios will probably go down in the history books as one of the prime change agents of our days. The depth of news, opinions, and pure trash compete vigorously for the minds of all people. It wasn't like that, on that scale or with readily available equipment in those days.

For me the real end of the European War was going to come just after my 25th combat mission. This was the magic number which rotated you back to the States. May 6th was my twentieth mission. Only five to go.

May 8th and the days following shouldn't be left out of the telling. After all, if there hadn't been VE Day on the 7th, what was to follow wouldn't be what it was.

It was just plain strange. You knew, but it just didn't seem right, you weren't going to be posted for another mission. You wouldn't fly another bomb load at night. You wouldn't be doing evasive manuevers to look for fighter planes. There would be no more carpetbagger flights, just skimming over the tops of the waters of the North Sea on your way to Norway or Denmark. No more friendly moon or stars to keep you company and to give you aid and comfort for hour after hour as the engines droned on.

How many times on those long flights did I find myself the only person awake or alert in my crew at some point on our return leg? We considered the North Sea as friendly territory only on our return flight. Tensions would be reduced, safety seemed assured, and shut eye was too much to resist. After all, they knew we might be posted to go again in less than eight hours. Then the whole scenario of tension would set in again.

Where would my crew go? Where would other frineds go? We had been together since phase training in Walla Walla. I wasn't ready to say good-bye. It wasn't right for this abrupt cut off. I didn't want any more of war, but I did want something.

I was unplugged. It was unsettling. But most of all we got our VE Day.

THE DANES RETURN HOME

by

BOB FISH

On 5 May 1945 the 492nd Group received a request from OSS Headquarters in London to fly some members of the Danish government in exile back to Cophenhagen in Denmark on 7 May 1945. This Danish party consisted of among other officials, a couple of members of the Danish royal family. The flight was scheduled for 7 May 1945 because that was the date on which the German military forces had agreed to surrender.

I was requested to personally pilot the C-47 used on this mission. I chose George Windburn to accompany me as my co-pilot. I don't know why I picked George because he had never flown in a C-47 before. I probably thought that I was such a hot pilot that I didn't need a fully qualified co-pilot. I chose M/Sgt. Templeton as my engineer. Templeton was a highly qualified engineer. He had been with us since before we became Carpetbaggers. For our radio operator I selected Major Silkebaken, our group communications officer.

Because some members of the Danish party had never traveled on aircraft before this flight we took Captain Loren H. Martin, a medical doctor, with us in case the first time air passengers became airsick enroute. If my memory doesn't trick me I think we also took Major Bruce Akers, our group engineering officer with us.

On the afternoon of 6 May 1945 I was informed that there was some kind of an obstacle to having the armistice signed on 7 May. I don't remember for sure what the impediment was but I do seem to recall it was based on who had the proper authority to sign for the Russians and for the Germans. This meant that there was a posibility that we would be enroute before the armistice actually became effective. In view of the status of my passengers I was concerned that perhaps some part of the German military might not get the word. I could imagine some brainwashed Natzi fanatic fighter pilot deciding to make a name for himself by shooting down this lone C-47 when it entered German controlled territory in Denmark. There were several German fighter units stationed in Denmark. I knew that their communications system had been badly damaged. Some outfit might not get the word that the war was over.

I therefore called a friend who commanded a P-51 fighter group at a recently captured airfield in Belgium and asked him for a fighter escort until I got on

the ground in Copenhagen. He asked me how many planes I wanted. I stalled by telling him that he was the fighter authority and that he had a better idea than I of how many P-51's it would take to do the job. He countered me by replying, "Tell me how many you need!" I figured that if he wanted to play games I would call his hand. I said, "Give me a squadron of eighteen planes." There was a long pause at his end of the telphone line before he came back at me with, "My pilots are damn good. I'll provide you with two P-51's. They will escort you to wherever you want to land." I thanked him and hung up.

The next morning my passengers arrived at Harrington and we got airborne by 10:00 a.m. We flew first to a field in Belgium and refueled. Then we took off for Copenhagen. By the time we reached 8000 feet altitude we had our two P-51's join us, one flying on each side and above my airplane.

When we arrived at Copenhagen the Germans were still in control of the airfield. When I radioed the control tower, they answered in English and cleared me to land. After landing we taxied to the airport terminal and stopped. Several automobiles drove up along side our C-47. There were three old touring cars with their tops folded down. There were also a couple of wintage sedans. I assumed that the big touring cars were for the VIP's we had on board. I was wrong.

When we descended from the airplane to the pavement there were several people in civilian garb waiting to greet us. The Germans were there also but they remained a couple hundred feet away.

Our VIP's got into the little sedans and drove away. We were told that the big touring cars were for the air crew.

I explained that I wanted to move our airplane to an area where it wouldn't block the entrance to the terminal. They guided me to a spot about 250 yards from the terminal and asked me to park there. While we were putting the external control locks on our aircraft and tying it down a German Focke-Wulf 190 landed and taxied along side of our C-47. While we watched him, the pilot opened his canopy and held his hands above his head in a gesture of surrender. He obviously was trying to defect. I told the Danish people who were assisting me that he was their prisoner; I did not want him.

We were seated in the touring cars sitting on the backs of the seats and driven along the streets of Copenhagen. Large crowds along the streets cheered and waved at us as though we were conquering heros. There was much waving of hats and arms as we passed by on our way to a mid-town hotel where we were assigned rooms. Fortunately for us the desk clerk at the hotel was a Canadian

so we had an easy solution to our language problem. After refreshing ourselves from our journey we assembled in the bar of the hotel.

On my way downstairs to the bar I was accosted by a man well adorned with two pistols and several hand grenades hanging on his belt. He had an abundant growth of beard and appeared to me to be a pretty rough looking character. When we stopped on the steps he told me that they were planning a dinner party for our crew at a place about ten blocks away from the hotel. He said the cars would pick us up at six in the evening at the hotel and take us to the party. I thanked him and walked over to the desk clerk to have him identify this rough looking character for me. "He is the president of the Copenhagen Chamber of Commerce. He is also a leader in the Danish underground forces." I remarked that I thought he had a remarkably heavy beard. The clerk then informed me that he wore the beard as a disguise. If the Germans ever connected him with the resistance movement he would shave off his facial hair and continue to exist as a different person than the one the Germans would be looking for.

We attended their dinner which was for the purpose of honoring our air crew. They brought out their cute movie actresses to have dinner with us and dance with us. They made it a real gala occasion with lots of flowers and speeches. The food was a real treat after months of army chow.

The party ended about 11:30 p.m. and we returned to our hotel. The journey back to the hotel was interesting. The limited transportation they had was not readily available for our use at that hour. Rather than wait for transportation we elected to walk the several blocks back to the hotel. The street was wide with sidewalks on each side. The Danes, some of the men, were heavily armed, were gathered on one side of the street. The German soldiers who were still armed were gathered on the opposite side. There being no traffic we elected to walk down the center of the street. It gave me a somewhat eerie feeling.

We departed for England the next morning, the 8th of May 1945. When we arrived in Copenhagen we had found the Germans in control of the airport. The next morning we found a British airbourne battalion had moved in during the night and they had taken over the control from the Germans. Whereas the Germans had ignored us when we came in, the British interrogated me for about an hour before they cleared me for take off. They had difficulty understanding that we had landed while the Germans were still in control. They finally decided to let me take off for Harrington. We had an uneventful flight back to England.

We arrived at Harrington just at dusk. As we approached the airfield it

took on all the appearance of a major Fourth of July fireworks display. Flares were being fired into the air from all over the base. I was astonished and puzzled as to where the airmen had obtained the great number of flares we saw being fired skyward.

Before I had left the base on the day before I had arranged for our military police to pick up all of the arms on the base and lock them in the arms storage vault. All our air crew members had been issued 45 caliber pistols. That meant that there were dozens of them scattered throughout the base. I could foresee the possible carnage that could ensue if our people started firing those arms in celebration of the end of the war. I expected them to celebrate. They had the occasion and they had earned the right. But I surely didn't want them accidently wounding each other. I wanted to do everything I could to assure they got home to the USA in good health. I certainly wanted to avoid having to write somebody's mother and tell her that her son had died of gun shot wounds while celebrating the end of the war.

I thought I had every type of firearm under control. But it wasn't so. I had misjudged the ingenuity of the American airman. We had overlooked one source of firearms. That source was the flare pistols in the life rafts of the B-24 aircraft. Each B-24 carried two life rafts. Each life raft contained a vary pistol and many rounds of flare ammunition. It was this source that was providing the fireworks we saw as we approached the air base. "Se le guerre!"

MEMORIES AND A RESUME

by

GERALD W. BATSON

(From a letter Batson wrote to Col. Fish)

It was a very nice suprise to receive your letter after so long a time - 44 years or there abouts! I left the UK in June 1945 and brought my crew and one each B-24 back to CONUS via Iceland, Presque Isle and into Bradley Field, Connecticut. I have had little or no contact with any one from the 492nd since then with the exception of George Winburn. I am very much interested in your efforts to write about the Carpetbaggers but I'm afraid I have very little to contribute to its history. As you know, George Winburn and I were late arrivals in England. Our crews were assigned to the 492nd late in December of 1944, and I didn't fly my first mission until February of 1945. I flew seventeen combat missions, a mix of low altitude Carpetbagger and high altitude night bombing sorties. Although I saw lots of searchlights, flak bursts, and an occasional fighter, my ship, the "Ares," was never hit nor did any of us sustain any injuries. So you see I can't contribute much of great interest or excitement to your journal.

Probably the most interesting trip for me was a sortie to Copenhagen on the 8th or 9th of May 1945. There were three B-24's assigned the task of transporting people and supplies to occupy the airport. Copenhagen citizens had been celebrating V-E Day for a few days before the actual day and were in a very festive mood. We were met at the airport with a convoy of old open touring cars and escorted to the Cosmopolitan Hotel and housed there and fed there all on the house. We were bombarded with flowers and were asked for autographs and our insignia.

We soon teamed up for a tour of the city with a group of young boys who steered us around pockets of Germans who were still armed and fairly dangerous. It turned out that they and their families were members of reception parties and when they found out we were part of the Carpetbagger operation and may have dropped supplies to them, the city of Copenhagen was ours. We were taken to the home of one of their underground leaders and had a wonderful visit with many stories told. This man was a Mr. H. F. Plesner and he and I corresponded for several years after that. He also introduced me to the joys and perils of aquavit, a sort of Danish schaaps. That was an evening I will always remember.

I got out of the old AAF in December of 1945 and went back to college. I was recalled to active duty in December 1948 during the Berlin air lift crisis and was assigned to SAC at Castle AFB, California, in a B-29 squadron. I stayed there and up graded through the B-50, B-47 and finally the B-52's. I stayed in air operations as a combat aircrew commander for sixteen years and then drifted on to staff positions in command and control at SAC Hq., PACAF Hq., Hq. USAF and the Joint Chiefs of Staff. I went to the National War College, Class of 1969 and spent three more years in the NMCC as Chief of the Nuclear Warfare Status Division of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. My final assignment was as Chief of the Silk Purse Control Group, USCINCUR Airborne Command Post at RAF Mildenhall, UK in February 1974. I have worked for Boeing (everyone in Seattle does, it seems); in real estate; in insurance; and finally for Union Carbide, retiring in 1985. I still find plenty of things to do with my time and I enjoy reasonably good health.

Sincerely,
/s/ G. W. Batson

RANK HAS ITS PRIVILEGE

by

BOB FISH

I recall one occasion in 1945. For some urgent reason, I do not recall the details of why, I had to talk to one of our senior non-commissioned officers. It was late in the evening, after 9:00 p.m. I tried to locate him by telephone to no avail. Finally somebody informed me that he was at the Airmen's Club. Either there was no phone there on it wasn't working. I decided to go to the club and get him.

It seems we had a standing rule that commissioned officers were to stay out of the Airmen's Club. As soon as I stepped through the door some intrepid slick sleeved airmen challenged my right to come through the door. He was of a mind to throw me out. Fortunately one of our senior NCO's came to my rescue. He cloaked me in his authority and enabled me to explain my mission. Someone found the man I needed to talk to, I obtained the information I needed and then left. My thought as I drove back to my hut was that a few beers surely can change a man's perspective.

COME FLY WITH ME---SOUTH

as told by

AL SHARPS

The 859th BS was ordered to Italy. We were in action before January 1, 1945. On January 14, 1945, we were assigned to the 15th Air Force. We didn't wear their insignia excpet when on leave. We flew by Heflin-Balchen tactics---not by MacCloskey's nonsense. We did the job the 885th BS couldn't or wouldn't do. The 885th BS flew, to the best of my knowledge, into soft Greek or Italian targets or milk runs over southern France or the western slope of Austria.

Which gave the 859th BS plenty of room---the eastern slopes of Austria, Yugoslavia, Albania, the rough box canyons of the Alps, Moravia, Montenego, etc.

I don't think we should be overly concerned about MacCloskey's dislike of the 859th BS. We did sort of ruin his claim to being the inventor of Carpet-bagging. We also terrified him. For on his one visit to the 859th BS area he reamed out the guard at the entrance and told him to shoot at the next person who entered the area who failed to stop upon challenge. He then entered the officer's section of our just-finished hardpine privy.

The next person who entered the area was an old Italian grandmother, who knew not a single word of English, bringing back a basket of clean laundry. The challenge was made, she ran, he fired. The bullet passed diagonally between MacCloskey's open knees, shattering a pine knot so that a goodly number of splinters were imbedded in the colonel's right inner thigh. The medic happily reported that blood had been drawn although there was some regret that the barrel of the .45 had not been a trifling to the right in its aim.

McManus? Naturally he removed the guard from the gate. Had he been stationed on the other side of the entrance, the bullet would have entered the orderly room.

It bothers me that I have forgotten so much. I am aware that I never did anything unusual, heroic, or brave. In retrospect I rank myself as a spear carrier, who at times, was priviledged to serve on the same projects with greater men like Balchen, Keith Allen, Schreiner, St. Clair, Cummings. Nor do I feel, that in Italy, the 859th did anything that could not have been done by the 856th, 857th or 858th BS's.

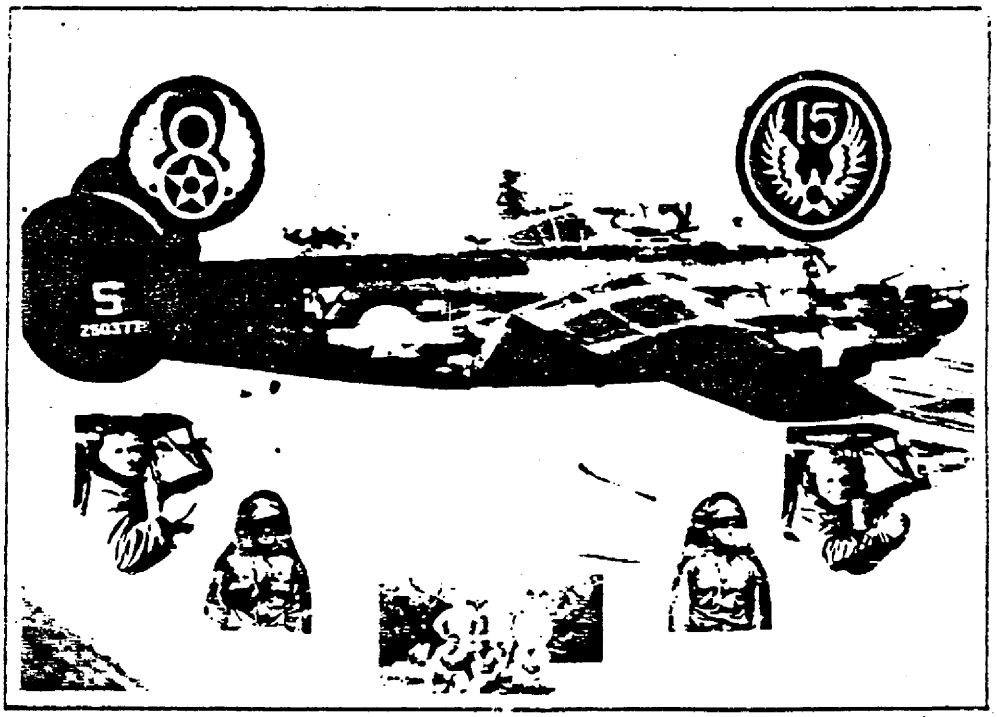
Let me give an example of forgetting. MacCloskey speaks of Polish pilots who flew materials/personnel into Poland. The only non-US bombers or transports

at Brindisi were a squadron of Wellingtons. They could have been a British RAF squadron with Polish pilots. I suppose they might have had the range to reach Poland and return but I never saw any activity around them and the plane parked closest to us had one three-bladed prop and the other a four-bladed prop. Today I cannot remember which prop was on which wing!!!

I suspect that there may be other activities of the 492nd which have never been publicized. In 1950, I went back to school to pick up a Masters. There in a large lecture hall a foreign student from Norway made a statement, in class, that in 1945 he and others were carried from an unspecified airfield in the British Isles in two black B-24's of the 858th BS and destroyed 4½ kilometers of track leading from a mine to what sounded like the dock at Narvik. Unfortunately the professor was a displaced German who insisted that the Allies would never have carried out such activities. He was noted for failing any student who disagreed with him. But there is a fragment, possibly false, that may be only something I dreamed or imagined.

NOT ALL WERE NIGHT MISSIONS
(OR FROM ENGLAND)

The following was contributed by Walter T. Jones.



The photo of my aircraft taken in late February 1945 during a daylight drop over the Po Valley, Italy, thus showing that the "Carpetbaggers" were assigned to the 8th and 15th Air Forces.

My crew arrived at Harrington Air Station, England, 492nd Bomb Group, in August 1944. We were assigned to the 859th Bomb Squadron where we went through training. My records show that we flew three missions while in England. Between August and December 1944.

On December 18th, 1944, the 859th was transferred to the 2641 Special Group, Mediterranean Theatre, 15th Air Force, Brendisi Air Station, Italy. The 859th was under the command of Lt. Col. Leonard McMannis, with Capt. James A. Seccafico as operations officer. The 2641 Sp. Grp. and the 885th Bomb Sq. were established in March 1944 under the command of Col. Monroe MacCloskey (Author of Secret Air Missions, Counter-insurgency Operations in Southern Europe).

In January 1945, the 859th went operational with the 885th Bomb Sq. flying night missions in support of the resistance forces operating in northern Italy and the Balkans. These forces included the Garibaldi Brigades in northern Italy, the Partisans (Tito forces), the Chetniks (Mittjalovic) forces in Yugoslavia and other resistance forces in Austria, Czechoslovakia and Germany.

In March 1945, the 2641 Special Group moved north to Rosignano Air Station in Italy until the end of the war. Our crew flew 38 missions while in Italy.

The following men comprized our crew.

1st Lt Kenneth W. Sacke, pilot & A/C
1st Lt Kenneth F. Whorlow, co-pilot
1st Lt William F. Croy, navigator
1st Lt Walter T. Jones, bombardier
T/Sgt Asby Boyd, Jr., engineer
T/Sgt Harry J. Beetle, radioman
S/Sgt James Fitzpatrick, gunner
S/Sgt Charles Fluharty, gunner

The picture shows that the 859th Carpetbaggers did their bit in both the 8th and 15th Air Forces in Europe in 1944 and 1945. The aircraft in the picture was flown from Harrington to Brendisi in December 1944.

Your 8th and 15th Air Force Comrade,

Walter T. Jones

Walter T. Jones Maj. U.S.A.F. Ret.

859th SQUADRON IN ITALY

by

AL L. SHARPS

The only officer I am certain who stuck with the squadron, after V-E Day, was the Engineering Officer. He was a special type Joe. We were in a British Zone at Brindisi and the only place they could find to billet the enlisted air crew and ground crew was in an abandoned Italian concentration camp for Jews and Gypsies. It measured about two hundred by three hundred feet, was latrineless, and for water was served by a single half-inch pipe.

So the Engineering Officer and enlisted men built a latrine (separate but equal) facilities for officers and enlisted men, with a 25-head, superheated shower. The framework was of British bridge timbers, the boiler and pipes liberated from a beached Italian destroyer. The flame bowls were halved high-pressure nitogen bottles used to pressurize the de-icers of the squadron of Wellingtons or "Wimpies" used on the same field by the Brits. The roof and sides were covered with flattened engine cowlings from scrapped Eytie/Kraut/Limey fighters. We flattened the cowlings by an endless chain of eager Italians who jumped up and down on them. Pay was ½" of Spam per cowling. He tapped into a high-pressure three inch (approximately) water main and a two inch 100 Octane gasoline line. Fuel was carried to the burners by salvaged hydraulic lines with the original bronze stopcocks.

But we needed shower heads. He put 15 of us, officers and men into unmarked fatigues marched us into the luxury hotel reserved for British field-grade officers. We detached and carried off the shower heads and piping. Pursued by a Brit MP, we merely pointed to the "made in the USA" on the heads. The shower worked fine.

The next project was his private yacht. Into it went the float from a large Italian plane, the contra-rotating props from an axis torpedo, and the engine from the British Wing Commander's jeep! It worked fine as long as eight to ten enlisted men perched on the prow to keep her from leaping out of the water. We trucked the craft from Brindisi to Rosignagno when we moved.

The day before we left our third field, Gioa, he had me and some others building a mess hall of bullet-holed corrugated metal. He had us getting lead from small-arms ammunition, melting and casting it into foot-long rods, sawing the rods into half inch long slugs, and then hammering the slug to a rivet,

inserting the rivet into each bullet hole, and swatting it tight with a hammer against a hammer.

I'm not sure how the 859th ended. I did note that about three weeks after we flew out, an 859th maintenance squadron appeared on the 15th T/O.

Editor's Note: If anyone remembers the Engineering Officer's name, please send to Si, the Editor. He deserves special recognition for his ingenuity.

CARPETBAGGERS IN ITALY

by

AL SHARPS

It may be of interest that of the Watton B-24s that returned to Harrington from the Ball Project three---Able, Charley and Fox---went to Italy with the 859th BS. Of these, only Charley came home. Able was thrown away one night by a "green" crew bailing out over our own lines. Fox was jumped in the closing days of the war by five Italian fighters of the "Ligurian Air Force" over the battle line. The fighter planes were modern but they were flown by four ten-hour cadets and their civilian instructor (i.e. a non-military trained pilot who may have been in uniform).

Fox went down, but the tail gunner was credited with three kills and one probable. The gunner was released by the Partisans and returned to the base within the week, and was bitter. The Krauts had required him to attend the funeral of the four cadets and he had talked to the fifth pilot whose plane was so badly shot up that it had to belly land beside the paved runway. The sad thing is, that I'm not positive of the gunner's name. I think it may have been "Joko" Jackson, who died in a crash after our return to the States, on his way back to the Base, but by then we were no longer part of the 8th or the 492nd.

A TALE OF A RED TAIL

BY Al Sharps

My wife and I were shopping in Rico Calarese's Super Market. As we went through the chect out line, a voice said. "You look mighty like a tail gunner to me". Startled, I looked up and saw a black gentleman, about my age, in the adjoining line.

"You can be only one of two men, Sir", I answered. Kindly turn around so I can see if your tail is red." "You got me", he said, "I was a pilot in the 332nd, and I believe you were glad to see me that day over Yugoslavia."

This was a strange coincidence after all these many years. We were pleased to see each other again. There was only one squadron of Negro pilots in the Air Force during WW II. They were the "Red Tails" of the 332nd based in Italy. They were the only squadron of P 51's we ever got any help from when we were on day light resupply drop missions in the area around Zagreb. They were always a welcome sight.

On this one particular mission he had helped remove the pollution (read enemy fighters) coming in on us. After rescuing us he pulled in directly behind us and took a good look at me in the tail gun turrent. He claimed that at six feet one inches tall I was the most pack-in gunner he had ever seen and that he could never forget the look on my face when I realized we were still alive!

He told me that he had crashed his aircraft while landing at his home base after that mission and had to spend some time in the hospital. He had returned to active duty in 1952. We discovered that we now live only eight miles from each other.

RETURN TO THE PAST

submitted by

COLONEL LEONARD McMANUS

Thirty one years after the end of World War II Colonel Leonard McManus, retired, returned to the scene of one of his wartime missions. That mission was a C-47 landing at night behind the German lines in France. The French newspaper, La Nouvelle Republique du Centre-Ouest/Berry--Poitou--Val de Loire Samedi, 21 Juin; dimache 22 Juin 1975, contained the following article covering that visit. A translation to English follows.

MISSION ACCOMPLISHED --- 31 years later--an American pilot and a French Secret Agent from Le Blanc who had been aboard the American's D.C. Dakota are reunited.

LE BLANC --- Again, a seemingly unimportant fact associated with so many others has created history, notably that of the French "resistance" and its allies. In this particular event, the performers were completely unknown to each other. There was no contact between the crew of the American Dakota plane and those Frenchmen on the ground responsible for a safe landing and the secret agent that was to be flown out within a short period except for a few hours spent together in an atmosphere of friendship which seemed even more precious because of the perils involved in performing their respective duties. No names were ever exchanged. And so, during the 31 years that followed since that night in the early months of 1944, those men often recalled the times when they shared with their brothers in arms, although anonymously, the vicissitudes of the resistance movement. But, far away, in the United States of America, one of the leading figures, Colonel Leonard McManus, an American Air Force officer, the pilot of the Dakota plane, living in the New York suburbs had always hoped to return to Le Blanc and meet his companions.

AN ONLY CLUE--A PHOTOGRAPH --- That hope was nurtured until the Spring of 1975 when, as a retired officer, he decided to renew past acquaintances while he would be traveling to Paris with his spouse. However, to locate companions about whom he knew nothing, not even their names, was not an easy task. Fortunately, Colonel McManus had faithfully kept a "document" that was to facilitate his research somewhat: a photograph of a few people involved which was taken during that memorable night at the Studio Eugene Perraguin in Le Blanc.

And so, on May 8, 1975, Colonel McManus sent a letter to the Mayor of Le

Blanc enclosing a copy of the photograph, outlining the odyssey in which he had participated, and requested whether it would be possible to identify anyone of the group still living in Le Blanc. The Deputy Mayor, Mr. Mourot, began his investigation with the author of the photograph, Mr. Eugene Perraguin who immediately recalled that the secret agent involved during that particular mission was Mr. Andre Boyer, President of the Free French Movement (Combattants Volontaires de la Resistance). Mr. Boyer is indeed a very well known figure and requires no introduction. Four of the Frenchmen in the photograph were easily identified: Mr. Nuttin, a businessman in Roubaix, and Mr. Pataud, also a businessman in Vendome, are bother brothers-in-law of Mr. Andre Boyer; Mr. Robert Morisset, a French Embassy Inspector, and Mr. Marcel Lambert, now residing in Tours, who formerly managed the Chateaurowx Brewery in Le Blanc.

A FEAT THAT MADE COLONEL McMANUS SHUDDER --- Mr. Andre Boyer met Colonel McManus and his wife, a Canadian national employed by the International Monetary Fund, in Paris and drove them to Le Blanc, where they were reunited with a small group of friends associated with the Free French Movement, including, among others Flight Commander Le Borgne of the Free French Air Force, Mr. Yves Choplin of the Sabotage Group from Eguzon, both being former deportees of concentration camps.

We were grateful to Mrs. McManus, who had not forgotten her mother tongue, for being able to convey her husband's impressions of this friendly reunion. The Colonel was extremely happy to have at long last made this dream a reality. However, upon viewing the actual landing field, he was aghast and wondered by what miracle he had succeeded to land and take off in the dark of night in a DC 3 Dakota plane without mishap. "It is absolutely unbelievable," said he, "one must necessarily be filled with youth's vigor and desire to achieve such a feat."

Needless to say that if the American Colonel was delighted to have located his friends, his French counterparts were also happy and eager to continue their relationship but on this occasion it would indeed not be as anonymous friends.

SOME 859th SQUADRON KEY PERSONNEL

submitted by

COL. McMANUS

STAFF

Commander	- Leonard M. McManus
Exec.	- William J. Carey
Adj.	- Russell N. Knott
Operations	- James Seccafico
Medical	- James Dresser
Engineering	- Kenneth Bechtold
Supply	- George McKeever
Asst.	- Russell P. Ford
Armament	- George Johnston
Intelligence	- James P. Steward
1st Sgt.	- James McConnell
Bombardier Off.	- Frederic Burk

PILOTS

Alford	Goodreau	Powell
Arnold	Greenway	Reilly
Boller	Gwiazdon	Robins
Brandenburg	Hayward	Sacke
Chancey	Hunter	Sage
Chandler	Johnson	Scott
Cummings	Ladd	Stamler
Davis	Lauzon	Stoehrer
Donnelly	Leichman	Sutton
Driscoll	Long	Taylor
Ewart	Martin	Wills
Fox	McKenney	Wilson
Gilpin	McLaughlin	Wood
Goldsmith	Pluff	Zincand

SOME 859th BOMB SQDN PROMOTIONS

FEBRUARY 1945

To be Master Sergeant (Temp.)

T/Sgt.	Wayne Bishop	34496174
T/Sgt.	John W. Boomer	34424291
T/Sgt.	Currie B. Thompson	38141794

To be Technical Sergeant (Temp.)

S/Sgt.	Leslie B. Turner	31318529
S/Sgt.	B. E. (io) Williams	38511993
S/Sgt.	James T. Webb	36661785

To be Staff Sergeant (Temp.)

Sgt.	Harvey J. Beetle	39038699
Sgt.	Clarence C. Chriske	39618536
Sgt.	Roman Rozmierski	12135125
Sgt.	Ashby H. Boyd	35768818
Sgt.	Kenneth C. Ladd	34436199
Sgt.	Fred H. Eisenhour	34733727
Sgt.	William V. Marck, Jr.	33563560
Sgt.	Faulkner Walling	18227482

To be Sergeant (Temp.)

Cpl.	Louis Barroll	31205378
Cpl.	Henry D. Corbin	33642128
Cpl.	Charles D. Flaharty	15141340
Cpl.	Walter A. Merritt	14122974
Cpl.	Louis J. Chorak	39406542
Cpl.	James N. Fitzpatrick	14167517
Cpl.	James S. Masterson	37616047
Cpl.	Edward J. Veazey	18248368

To be Corporal (Temp.)

Pvt.	George L. Engle	15333408
Pfc.	Constantine A. Krajewski	12158467

Pfc.	John R. Follini	32716252
Pfc.	Stephen J. Renesak	36596038

To be Private First Class (Temp.)

Pvt.	Edward N. Howard	15333408
Pvt.	Edward C. Betner	33461980
Pvt.	Raymond J. Oremus	16008465
Pvt.	Edward G. Lee	38021233
Pvt.	Eugene Milowski	16155821
Pvt.	George J. Zecca	32511543

SOME 859th SQUADRON
PERSONNEL MISSING IN ACTION

17 April 1945

1st Lt.	Thomas O. McCarthy	O-705732	1092
1st Lt.	Rosslyn C. Anderson	O-770922	1092
2nd Lt.	Robert C. Beach	O-723270	1034
2nd Lt.	Armando Carlino	O-716712	1035
S/Sgt.	James B. Tate	38437770	748
S/Sgt.	Mack H. Dias	33761086	757
Sgt.	Robert J. Webber	37486739	612
Sgt.	Charles S. Jones	37533432	611

20 April 1945

Captain	Walter L. Sutton	O-405214	1092
1st Lt.	Frank A. Stoehrer	O-824707	1092
1st Lt.	Ralph F. Anderson	O-2065208	1034
1st Lt.	Robert W. Brimmer	O-2063224	1035
1st Lt.	Earl D. Cartmill	O-773296	1035
S/Sgt.	William V. Marck, Jr.	33562560	748
S/Sgt.	Kenneth C. Lail	34436199	757
Sgt.	Edward J. Veazey	18248368	612
Sgt.	William J. Burke	37097711	612
T/Sgt.	Charles W. Schaeffer	11089131	748

22 April 1945

From Missing In Action to Killed in Action, 9 February 1945, confirmed 22 April 1945.

1st Lt.	Robert W. Maxwell	0-823426	1092
2nd Lt.	Frank E. Marcus, Jr.	0-823411	1092
2nd Lt.	Francis I. Cervantes	0-703606	1034
2nd Lt.	Robert C. Jackson	0-718102	1035
S/Sgt.	Lionel A. Tetzloff	17109621	748
S/Sgt.	William P. Kavanaugh	14201481	757
S/Sgt.	Kyle B. Jones	34728758	612
Pvt.	William W. Elliott	33686693	611

26 April 1945

1st Lt.	Edward F. Reilly, Jr.	0-675290	1092
1st Lt.	Thomas Zincand	0-832313	1092
2nd Lt.	Clayton W. Pluff	0-2002044	1034
1st Lt.	Jack H. Scott	0-750097	1035
T/Sgt.	Leslie L. Turner	31318429	748
S/Sgt.	John C. Proaps	19089738	757
Sgt.	Noland J. Griffin	33900150	611
Sgt.	James C. Johnson	37480956	612

AWARDS OF THE AIR MEDDLE
TO
859th BOMB. SQDN. PERSONNEL
FEBRUARY 1945

F/O	Clayton W. Pluff	T-127085
Captain	Walter L. Sutton	0-405214
1st Lt.	Edward F. Reilly, Jr.	0-675290
2nd Lt.	Ralph F. Anderson	0-206528
2nd Lt.	Robert W. Brimmer	0-2063224
2nd Lt.	Robert Callahan	0-703088
2nd Lt.	William E. Croy	0-2058423

2nd Lt.	Walter T. Jones	0-772977
2nd Lt.	Kenneth W. Sacke	0-705811
2nd Lt.	Jack H. Scott	0-750097
2nd Lt.	Frank A. Stoehrer	0-825707
2nd Lt.	Milton J. Trefny	0-773012
2nd Lt.	Kenneth E. Wharlow	0-721316
2nd Lt.	Thomas Zincand	0-832313
F/O	Frederick H. Long	T-128013
T/Sgt.	Leslie L. Turner	31318529
S/Sgt.	John C. Proaps	19089738
Sgt.	Noland J. Griffin	33900150
Sgt.	James C. Johnson	37580956
S/Sgt.	Kyle B. Jones	34728758
Sgt.	Harvey J. Beetle	39039699
Sgt.	Ashby H. Boyd, Jr.	35768818
Sgt.	William J. Burke	37697711
Sgt.	Kenneth C. Lail	34436199
Sgt.	William V. Marck, Jr.	33562560
Sgt.	Faulkner B. Walling	18227482
Cpl.	Louis J. Chorak	39406544
Cpl.	Henry D. Corbin	33642128
Cpl.	James N. Fitzpatrick	14167517
Cpl.	Charles C. Fluharty	13141340
Cpl.	James S. Masterson	37616047
Cpl.	Walter A. Merritt	14122974
Cpl.	Edward J. Veazey	18248368
Pvt.	William W. Elliott	33686693
Pvt.	George L. Engel	36678682

FIFTEENTH SPECIAL GROUP (PROV)
OFFICE OF THE OPERATIONS OFFICER
APO 520 U.S. ARMY

11 February 1945

S T A T E M E N T

1. B-24 42-7563 departed its base at 1019 hours on 9 February 1945 on a day operational mission. No W/T or radio telephone contact was ever established with the A/C.

2. Interrogation of other crews of the group who had returned from the same mission revealed that two crews had seen what they thought to be an explosion in mid-air at approximately 44°46'N and 14°56'E. The crews also reported seeing a large fire on the ground a moment or two later at the same coordinates. Cloud conditions at the time prevented the crew members of either a/c to determine whether or not the explosion was actually an a/c on fire. The observations mentioned were made enroute to the target and accordingly to the time and place of the observations the missing a/c could have very well been in the same vicinity at the time the explosions were seen. No parachutes were observed. The pilots on the two crews sighting the explosion were Lt. James E. Mulligan, ASN 0-695763 and Lt. Alfred H. Hunter, Jr., ASN 0-700614 from 859th Bomb. Sqdn. (H).

3. On return from a mission to approximately the same target area on the next day, 10 February 1945, it was reported by one crew that they had sighted what appeared to be a black B-24 in a valley approximately 44°35'N and 16°05'E. The pilot was unable to descend through the clouds to an altitude suitable for a close observation but from what he could determine the plane had crash landed since the last snow and was intact. There were what appeared to be tracks leading from the a/c. The pilot of the a/c reporting these observations was Lt. Edward F. Reilly, ASN 0-675290 from the 859th Bomb. Sqdn. (H).

4. In view of the reports received relative to the missing a/c, it is the opinion of this headquarters that the a/c either crashed in mountainous country or was forced down.

5. The members of the crew of the missing a/c are as follows:

Pilot	Maxwell, Robert W.	1st Lt.	ASN 0-823426
Co-Pilot	Marcus, Frank E., Jr.	2nd Lt.	ASN 0-823411

Navigator	Cervantes, Francis I.	2nd Lt.	ASN 0-703606
Bombardier	Jackson, Robert G.	2nd Lt.	ASN 0-718102
Engineer	Tetzloff, Lionel A.	S/Sgt.	ASN 17109621
Radio Operator	Kavanaugh, William P.	S/Sgt.	ASN 14201481
Tail Gunner	Elliot, William W.	Pvt.	ASN 33686693
Waist Gunner	Jones, Kyle B.	S/Sgt.	ASN 34728758

859th BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON (H)
OFFICE OF THE OPERATIONS OFFICER

26 April 1945

S T A T E M E N T

1. B-24H No. 42-95131J departed its base at 2131 hours 25 April 1945 on an operational mission. No R/T or W/T contact was ever established with the A/C after its departure from the airfield.

2. Crew members of this squadron's A/C and the other squadron's A/C flying the same route as the missing A/C reported no unusual incidents enroute or on return from their targets that would give any indication as to what might have happened to the missing plane.

3. Extensive efforts on VHF, R/T and W/T frequencies were made to establish contact with the overdue plane. No word was ever received from the crew nor at the time of this report has any information concerning the crew or the A/C been received at this headquarters.

4. Crew members were as follows:

NAME	RANK OR GRADE	ASN	DUTY
Edward F. Reilly, Jr.	1st Lt.	0-675290	Pilot
Thomas Zinkand	1st Lt.	0-832313	Co-Pilot
Clayton W. Pluff	2nd Lt.	0-2002044	Navigator
Jack H. Scott	1st Lt.	0-750097	Bombardier
Leslie L. Turner	T/Sgt.	31318529	Engineer
John C. Proaps	S/Sgt.	19089738	Radio Operator
James C. Johnson	Sgt.	37580956	Waist Gunner
Noland J. Griffin	Sgt.	33900150	Tail Gunner

OSS MISSION TO THE CBI

(EXTRACT FROM THE OFFICIAL RECORDS)

29 November 1944

Members of the 492nd Bomb Group, accompanied by representatives of OSS, made a flight to New Deli, India, to investigate the possibilities and discuss with the OSS officials in the China-Burma-India theater the feasibility of conducting operations. A crew captained by Major Bestow Rudolph, pilot, 858th Squadron and with Captain Emanuel Choper, co-pilot; 1st Lt. Charles W. McGuire, navigator; 1st Lt. Robert A. France, bombardier; Captain Clifford M. Fulton, engineer; Master Sergeant Willis L. Delano, Jr., crew chief; and Sergeant William E. Lewis, radio operator, all of the 856th Squadron, were chosen to perform the flight and Lt. Colonels Gabel and Chandler of the London OSS Office accompanied the crew to conduct negotiations.

Aircraft #42-63980, one of the oldest B-24 Liberators in Carpetbagger work, was selected to be taken along to demonstrate the modifications and general appearance of a Carpetbagger aircraft. "Playmate",in reality "Playmate II", was Major Rudolph's plane named after a college girlfriend. The first "Playmate" had been shot up and had crash landed at Lands-End Air Base, England while on a anti-submarine patrol piloted with another crew.

On November 29th the "Playmate" took off from the Harrington drome, stopped at Bovingdon and picked up the OSS officials, then proceeded to New Deli, India via Naples and Cairo. At an OSS headquarters in New Deli, sessions were held with other OSS people to determine the need and practicability of operations in the CBI. Previous to the arrival of General Donavan and the discussions, the party from England inspected bases and available facilities in order to obtain a clear all around picture of the conditions in that theater and to determine whether or not the operations could be effectively conducted. Sites were inspected in North Burma, Calcutta and Dinjan, India. Colonels Gable and Chandler then proceeded by ATC over the hump into China to complete the investigation by inspecting the conditions in the field. After five days in China, Gable and Chandler returned and the party returned to New Deli.

General Donavan, Commanding General of OSS, arrived with his staff and the sessions began. The result of the meeting was that a Carpetbagger project was necessary for the CBI and conditions were such that the project could be accomplished without undue hardships or difficulties. It was further decided

that it would not be feasible for any part of the European Group to be sent to the CBI unless the entire Group could be made available. As long as a part of the ETO Group was still needed in that theater, a new Group could be organized from the available units in China-Burma-India.

The meeting ended 17 January 1945 and "Playmate" returned home, following the same route back. Excellent flying weather was met all along the return route. The trip was of sixty days duration, covering 25,000 miles. Although members of the 492nd Bomb Group may never operate in the Carpetbagger project in the CBI, the report of the investigation of facilities and the basic information and organizational procedures passed on from the European theater will go a long way in starting this project in the new theater of operations. Once again, members of the 492nd Group have shown the way for others to follow.

CARPETBAGGER FAIRBANKS ATTAINS RACING FAME

(From the EEA Sport Aviation Magazine)

by

NORMA PETERSEN

Don Fairbanks, of Cincinnati, OH, saw a picture of a Knight Twister airplane in an aviation magazine 'way back in the late 1930's. "One day," he said to himself, "I'll have a Knight Twister of my own."

This burning desire reappeared in 1968 when Don spied an ad --- Knight Twister Project For Sale. He drove from Cincinnati to Michigan, bought the partially built Twister and hauled the new found treasure home in his station wagon. (Now you know it's a small airplane!)

Don finished the airplane in 1970 at Lunken Airport and after the necessary inspections, made the solo flight without incident. With the Reno Air Races coming close, a furious time was spent putting on the necessary 50 hours to meet restrictions.

Satisfied that he had a real bi-plane racer on his hands, Don headed west intent on racing at Reno.

About thirty miles east of Salt Lake City, Don could see oil beginning to appear on the windshield. Don's many years of experience told him to prepare for the worst. He headed the Twister for the four-lane interstate highway. By now oil was all over his windshield, goggles, helmet and the fuselage of the airplane.

Carefully picking a spot between some cars, Don landed on the highway and managed to get stopped without damage.

The culprit was a piece of baffling that had worn a small hole in the oil cooler. It was sent into a nearby town to be welded and when reinstalled, worked to perfection. The Utah Highway Patrol blocked off a section of the highway and Don proceeded to take off with the tiny bi-plane. A slight crosswind moved the plane to the left as he broke ground. Suddenly the lower left wing collided with the top of a highway sign post --- knocking a hole in the wing, taking out most of the rear spar and putting the left aileron in the "trail" position. The plane seemed to fly reasonable well, so he headed for the Salt Lake City airport. When Don arrived in the Twister, all the fire trucks and crash equipment were waiting along the runway. Don calmly landed without incident, the trailing aileron bouncing along the runway. Don watched the Reno races from the grandstand.

Taking the "White Knight", as it was called, to Wilson, NC in June of '71, Don entered his first race and came in first.

Don Fairbanks has raced his Knight Twister every year since, setting records along the way. In Reno at the 1984 races, Don set a world record at 192.371 mph. He also holds the record for flying the most races with the same airplane (87) as well as flying the oldest designed airplane (1928) on the circuit.

* * * * * * *

MEET THE PILOT

Born Charles Donald Fairbanks on December 17, 1923 --- exactly twenty years after the Wright brothers flew at Kitty Hawk --- Don has flown since 1943 and has logged some 30,000 hours over the past 40 years. He has every FAA rating possible plus being a FAA Flight Examiner (both fixed and rotary wing). He has taught thousands to fly over the many years of running Cardinal Air Training flight school at Luken Airport.

Looking back, Don says he has enjoyed the thrills over the years, but prudence dictates it is time to retire from racing. Even Pat, who has been in twelve "Powder Puff" races herself, says she feels the time has come to place the "White Knight" on display where thousands can view the famous racer.

BRER RABBITT

by

DOUGLAS D. WALKER

During the 801st/492nd Bomb Group Reunion at Harrington, England, each Carpetbagger planted a Memorial tree in a hollow on John Hunt's farm (part of our old 8th Air Force Base) which he is going to designate "Carpetbagger Covert" on all ordnance survey maps on file with the township. This Memorial planting effort took place on Friday, September 18, 1987, after we had finished our tour of the elements of the old base. Afterward, John's good wife, Angela, served us a delicious lunch of sandwiches, cake and beverages under a balmy, sunny "Indian Summer" sky.

While enjoying this respite from my planting labors, I began chatting with one of Angela's friends who was helping to serve us, Pauline Burley.

She gestured towards her parked car and asked if I would like to meet her dad. Mr. Duncan Burley turned out to be a very pleasant gentleman in his 80's. He told me that he had a very personal interest in meeting we Carpetbaggers, which is why he had asked his daughter to drive him over to the Hunt's place that day.

It seems that in 1944 and 1945, Mr. Burley lived in the Foxhall Cottages (five connected row houses) still in existence across the street from our original East/West runway when our old airbase at Harrington was in operation during WWII. He lived there with his wife and little daughter Pauline.

He and Pauline reminisced about those wartime days and related how they had "adopted" three of our black Liberator bombers which were parked on hardstands located across the road from their row house. They told me how they watched the Libs taxi out to take off at dusk -- and anxiously awaited their return the next morning, as they rose to get dressed.

Sometimes, when one or two of the Liberators did not return from their night missions, they felt quite sad -- only to breathe a sigh of relief when they eventually arrived back -- probably after being diverted due to bad weather or mechanical problems. They said that they felt a real sympathy for those American aircrew men who were risking their lives so far from home, helping England to free Europe from the Nazi yoke!

I listened to their story with much interest and then with amazement as they told me the names of those three Liberators, "Witch's Broom", "Painted Lady" and "Brer Rabbitt". (The latter, according to Colonel Rudy Rudolph, was piloted by a

Lt. Rabbitt -- spelled with two T's -- an apt nickname for his Liberator bomber.)

The fact that the Burley's remembered the exact names of the three Libs, after 43 years had gone by, is an indication of their intense feelings about those three Carpetbagger aircrews as they watched their planes taxi out at dusk, to fly off into harm's way.

* * * * * * *

BRER RABBITT

by

DICK BELLGARDT

There must have been two, or a second "Brer Rabbitt", because if you will note that the letter on the tail fin in the photo is "G". That was the call sign of our aircraft, i.e. Garbage G. George. We also flew this plane out of Dijon, France on a few missions. In fact, when we were in England, one of our former barracks sharing crews, who had been transferred to Dijon, told me the story about a mission that our crew had flown into the French Alps, which I had vaguely remembered.

We had gone down into a valley between peaks rising to 2,500 meters to make a drop, when the only way out was to climb almost straight up. Well, apparently we hit some trees on the way out, because they said we had branches caught in our wing tips. So, apparently "Brer Rabbitt" had several close encounters with trees.

Editor's Note: Brer Rabbitt and my golf game have a lot in common. They both have an affinity for trees.

Can anyone identify the unknown crew members in the two photos?

* * * * * * *

ONLY ONE BRER RABBITT BUT TWO CREWS

by

ART BOGUSZ

As I ponder 44 years ago, my 35 missions with my flying crew, and all our night flying, I came to the conclusion that "Brer Rabbitt" had another flying crew after us.

We (all eight of us) flew together from February 1944 to August 8, 1944. When we started to fly the big black B-24 Liberator, it had no "decorations". In due time, our crew chief, whose name I think was Jack, painted a big expressive head of a rabbit with big ears on the pilot's side of the plane near the nose.

On the co-pilot's side of the plane near the nose was painted a full body rabbit. The pilot's name, Lt. Clinton Rabbitt, was printed below the pilot's cockpit window with bombs for each completed mission at that time. Also, our call sign was: Garbage G. George.

When Dick Bellgardt mentions Dijon, France, I know it was another crew and somewhat different assignments. When our 35 missions were completed, we left our plane at Harrington and the crew was separated and waited for orders for home - U.S.A.

I hope this sheds some light on the "Brer Rabbitt".

* * * * * * *

BRER RABBITT TREED

by

RUDY RUDOLPH

"Oh yes, I remember 'Brer Rabbitt' well....." This was the plane that hit a tree while making a drop and flew back to Harrington with part of the tree in the wing. Carpetbaggers were trained in low-level flights for their missions but flying through trees was not a part of their training. Lt. Rabbitt and some of his crew went to Col. Rudolph's quarters about 4:30 a.m., got him out of bed to tell him of the trip. It was worth being awakened at that hour to know that the crew had returned safely. Lt. Rabbitt gave Col. Rudolph a souvenier -- a part of the limb he had brought back to England, which he still has.

Such was the carefree life of a Carpetbagger.

SOME 492nd BOMBARDMENT GROUP HISTORY

(Extracted from the 801/492nd Newsletter for November 1983)

Constituted as 492nd Bombardment Group (Heavy) on 14 September 1943. Activated on 1 October 1943. Trained for combat with B-24's. Moved to England in April 1944 and assigned to Eighth AF. Entered combat on 11 May 1944, and throughout the month operated primarily against industrial targets in central Germany. Attacked airfields and V-weapon lauching sites in France during the first week in June. Bombed coastal defenses in Normandy on 6 June 1944 and attacked bridges, railroads, and other interdiction targets in France until the middle of the month. Resumed bombardment of strategic targets in Germany and, except for support of the infantry during the St Lo break-through on 25 July 1944, continued such operations until August 1944. Transferred, less personnel and equipment, to another station in England on 5 August 1944 and assumed personnel, equipment, and the CARPETBAGGER mission of a provisional group that was discontinued. Operated chiefly over southern France with B-24's and C-47's, engaging in CARPETBAGGER operations, that is, transporting agents, supplies, and propaganda leaflets to patriots. Ceased these missions on 16 September 1944 to haul gasoline to advancing mechanized forces in France and Belgium. Intermittently attacked airfields, oil refineries, seaports, and other targets in France, the Low Countries, and Germany until February 1945. Meanwhile, in October 1944, began training for night bombardment operations; concentrated on night bombing of marshalling yards and goods depots in Germany, February-March 1945. Ceased these missions on 18 March 1945 to engage in CARPETBAGGER operations over Germany and German-occupied territory, using B-24, A-26, and British Mosquito aircraft to drop leaflets, demolition equipment, and agents. Received a DUC for these operations, performed at night despite adverse weather and vigorous opposition from enemy ground forces, 20 March-25 April 1945. Also cited by the French government for similar operations over France in 1944. Flew its last CARPETBAGGER mission in April 1945 and then ferried personnel and equipment to and from the Continent until July. Returned to the US, July-August 1945. Redesignated 492nd Bombardment Group (Very Heavy) in August 1945. Inactivated on 17 October 1945.

Squadrons. 406th: 1945. 856th: 1943-1945. 857th: 1943-1945. 858th: 1943-1944, 1944-1945. 859th: 1943-1945.

Stations. Alamogordo AAFld, NM, 1 October 1943-1 April 1944; North Pickenham, England, 18 April 1944; Harrington, England, 5 August 1944-8 July 1945; Sioux Falls AAFld, SD, 14 August 1945; Kirtland Field, NM, 17 August-17 October 1945.

Commanders. Col. Arthur J. Pierce, 19 October 1943; Maj. Louis C. Adams, 17 December 1943; Col. Eugene H. Snavely, 26 January 1944; Col. Clifford J. Heflin, 13 August 1944; Lt. Col. Robert W. Fish, 26 August 1944; Col. Hudson H. Upham, 17 December 1944; Lt. Col. Jack M. Dickerson, c. 7 June 1945; Lt. Col. Dalson E. Crawford, 30 August-October 1945.

Campaigns. Air Offensive, Europe; Normandy, Northern France; Southern France; Rhineland; Central Europe.

Decorations. Distinguished Unit Citation: Germany and German-occupied territory, 20 March-25 April 1945. French Croix de Guerre with Palm.

Insigne. None.

I COULDN'T BELIEVE HE WANTED ME TO FLY IN THE COPILOT'S SEAT

BY WILLIAM C. BASTIAN, JR.

Now I remember , it was Col. Boone who grabbed me in the operations office one afternoon to accompany him on a flight to another base.

When we got out to the C-47, I explained to him that I was a radio operator and not a flight engineer. He said that didn't matter and told me to stow the wheel chocks and pull the aileron and rudder guards, ets.,[c] and join him in the cockpit. I couldn't believe he wanted me to fly in the copilot's seat but that was the idea. I'm sure he knew I was scared but he explained he couldn't find a copilot on such short notice and I'd do just fine if I relaxed and did as he told me on raising and lowering the wheels, ect.. I don't know where we landed and I stayed with the plane till we returned several hours later. He thanked me for my willingness and you can believe I was really relieved to get back to my radio op and top turrent job in our B-24.

406TH BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON

History-Summary
Jan. 15, 1941 - Oct. 17, 1945

The 406th BS was activated on 15 January 1941, at Fort Douglas, Utah as the 16th Reconnaissance Squadron. The squadron changed stations many times. It departed Fort Douglas on 3 June 1941 for Gowen Field, Boise, Idaho. The squadron took over the personnel, equipment and aircraft, B-18's and B-26's, of a previous squadron. The unit was reassigned to Paine Field, Washington arriving on 21 January 1942. The air echelon had operated from Paine Field, Washington from 8 December 1941. The squadron had been engaged in anti-submarine patrol along the west coast of the United States under direction of the US Navy. The squadron was changed from the 16th Reconnaissance Squadron, equipped with A-29 aircraft, to the 406th BS on 16 April 1942. Anti-sub patrol was discontinued on 4 May 1942.

The 406th BS was deployed to Alaska, with four hours notice, on 2 June 1942. The first flight of four aircraft departed for Elmendorf Field, Alaska the same day. The balance of the air echelon, consisting of eight A-29 aircraft, flight crews and support personnel, departed on 3 June 1942. The ground echelon arrived at Elmendorf by troop transport and train on 15 November 1942.

The Commander, 406th BS, reported to the Commanding General, 11th Air Force at Kodiak NAS at 0900, 6 June 1942. The squadron was assigned the primary mission of anti-submarine patrol in the Gulf of Alaska and the Bering Sea. Flight operations were started immediately at Yakutat and Naknek Air Bases and at Nome, Alaska on 20 June 1942. In early 1943, the unit started flight crew and maintenance training on B-25 aircraft. The unit was redesignated the 406th BS (M). The first flight crews from the squadron departed in February 1943 for further TDY at Umnak and Adak Air Base for combat operations against enemy targets in the Western Aleutians. The squadron air echelon was moved TDY to Adak Air Base on 15 July 1943 and was further relocated to Amchitka Air Base prior to the invasion of Kiska Island. The squadron was relieved from the anti-sub patrol missions at Yakutat Air Base and Kodiak NAS in July 1943.

The squadron completed seventeen months of TDY in Alaska during the Aleutian Campaign and accumulated a total of 6020 flying hours within the first thirteen months. The 406th BS was equipped with A-29, RA-29, B-18A and B-25 aircraft during the period. Unit missions included: anti-submarine patrol, reconnais-

sance, convoy escort, shipping alert, strikes against enemy shipping and bombing targets on Attu and Kiska islands. The squadron conducted operations from the following operating locations: Yakutat, Kodiak NAS, Naknek, Nome, Cold Bay, Umnak, Adak and Amchitka Air Bases.

After the invasion of Kiska, the squadron departed Amchitka Air Base and arrived at Elmendorf Field on 26 August 1943 with twelve B-25C, D and G aircraft, crews, equipment and support personnel. Aircraft, artic and unit equipment were turned in to the Air Depot, Elmendorf Field. Unit personnel departed Fort Richardson, Alaska by rail and troop transport for Seattle and Portland Air Base, Oregon arriving on 24 October 1943. The 406th BS (M) was deactivated 1 November 1943.

On 2 November 1943, the 406th BS, unmanned and unequipped, was transferred to the 8th Air Force, United Kingdom (UK). The 406th Bombardment Squadron (H) absorbed the personnel and equipment of the 22nd Anti-submarine Squadron, 482nd Bombardment Group (Pathfinder). The new squadron was equipped with B-24 aircraft and operated from Alconbury, England.

After one month's training, on the night of 4 January 1944, the 406th BS flew its first "Carpetbagger" mission; dropping supplies and personnel to resistance groups in enemy territory. Although the squadron moved to Watton, England in February, the aircraft continued to operate from Alconbury. In March 1944, the squadron moved to Harrington, where the runways were more suitable for B-24 operations.

On 10 August 1944 the 406th BS, without equipment and personnel, was moved to Cheddington, England, where it inherited the B-24's, B-17's and personnel of another squadron. The squadron was attached to the 801st Bombardment Group (Provisional). Its new mission was dropping propaganda leaflets over occupied areas of Europe. The squadron was reassigned to the 1st Air Division and flew leaflet missions until May 1945.

406th BS missions, under the 8th Air Force, included anti-submarine interdiction, Carpetbagger and propaganda leaflets. The unit operated primarily from RAF bases and established an enviable combat record while in the UK. The 406th BS earned battle campaign credits in all three WWII theaters of operation, a rather unusual accomplishment.

In July 1945, the 406th BS made preparations to move back to the United States. The squadron was assigned to the 492nd Bombardment Group (VH) on 5 August 1945. The unit was moved to Sioux Falls Army Air Field, South Dakota

and arrived on 14 August 1945. Personnel and equipment were lost to other units. The 406th Bombardment Squadron (VH) was transferred to Kirtland Field, New Mexico, and was inactivated on 17 October 1945.

The Linage and Honors (L & H) of the 406th BS were consolidated with the still active 906th Air Refueling Squadron (AREFS) (H) on 19 September 1985. The 906th AREFS (H), constituted on 4 March 1959, was activated on 1 June 1959. The consolidated squadron retains the current designation: 906th AREFS (H), 5th Bombardment Wing (H), Minot Air Force Base, North Dakota.

The 406th Bombardment Squadron Association is a non-profit corporation. Its primary purpose was to complete the Units History during the Aleutian Campaign. The 406th Bombardment Squadron (M) history, along with a supplement to the history, were completed in June 1987 and November 1988.

SOURCE: 406th Bombardment Squadron Microfilm, Roll A0606. Declassified, Auth: DOD Directive 5200.9 September 27, 1958.

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406TH BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON (M)

The following is a list of former unit commanders of the 406th Bomb Sq./906th A Ref S with the date each individual assumed command.

1. Capt. David H. Motherwell	15 May 41	
2. Capt. Roy R. Buschetto	8 June 41	
3. Major Harry E. Wilson	12 Aug 41	
4. Capt. Roy R. Buschetto	14 Mar 42	
5. Major Harold D. Courtney	17 May 42	406 Bomb Sq.
6. Lt. Col. Clifford J. Heflin	11 Nov 43	
7. Major Robert L. Boone	11 Dec 43	
8. Lt. Col. Earle J. Aber Jr.	10 Aug 44	
9. Major Robert H. Gaddy	7 Mar 45	
Capt. Rex C. Crenshaw	1 June 59	
Lt. Col. Robert C. Cummings	30 June 60	
Lt. Col. Richard Hargarten	22 June 61	
Lt. Col. Curtis E. Hopkins	31 Jan 62	
Lt. Col. Norman C. Boomgaard	1 Aug 63	
Lt. Col. William D. Hatcher	18 Feb 66	906th A Ref S
Lt. Col. Bruce G. Keltz	June 68	
Lt. Col. Vernon R. Huber	Jan 70	

Lt. Col. John R. Hamm	Jan 71
Lt. Col. James W. Lee	Sept 72
Lt. Col. Donald G. Krause	June 74
Lt. Col. Richard M. Tooke	25 May 77
Lt. Col. Thomas S. Bennett	5 July 78
Lt. Col. Theodore G. Alexander	3 Apr 80
Lt. Col. James E. Chapman	28 July 81
Lt. Col. Francis X. Deignan	Apr 85
Lt. Col. Arthur E. Cole	July 86
Lt. Col. Randolph P. Vranish	Dec 87

1030 N. 23rd St.
Beaumont, TX 77706
Jan. 24, 1988

Col. Robert W. Fish
5100 John D. Ryan Blvd.
Apt. 533
San Antonio, TX 78245

Dear Col. Fish,

I noticed in the 492nd Newsletter that you are recovering from surgery. I hope this finds you well and enjoying your retirement.

With reference to your request to recount memorable incidents from our days at Harrington, my first mission sticks in my mind. The full complement of gunners not being required on the B17 crew to which I was assigned at the 25th BG, a weather reconnaissance outfit based at Watton, I was transferred to the 492nd and placed on Capt. Melinant's crew, an experienced Carpetbagger crew. Our group became operational as a night bombing outfit on the night of Dec. 24-25, 1944, flying to La Rochelle, France, to bomb coastal gun batteries. This was really more in the nature of a training mission, since no opposition was expected. We did, however, encounter light flak but accomplished the mission without difficulty until we attempted to land at our base. The field at Harrington was socked in solid. Capt. Melinant made one unsuccessful pass at the field and had to pull up and go around. During the second attempt to land our navigator, Lt. Majefski, had crawled back into the nose to retrieve some of his gear, and for some reason which even he can't explain he plugged in his intercom. If he had not done this the crew would have bought it that night, for Majefski saw that we were headed straight for the control tower. He yelled "Pull up, Rudy!" just in time, and Capt. Melinant reached--barely missing the control tower. I assume that people in the control tower (perhaps you were there) were as startled as we were. We flew all over England that night looking for an open field and finally landed at an RAF training base. We went to their Christmas Eve dance in our flying clothes and spent the night. The next day we enjoyed Christmas dinner at their mess—I still have the souvenir menu.

I flew two more missions with the Melinant crew and seven with W/O Akerheilm

operating "Carpet" spot jamming equipment. We experienced fighter attack on one of our bombing missions, but I suppose my closest call was on that first mission with Rudy Melinant.

Best regards, Lawrence H. Blum

MISSION #8 August 8, 1944 490/492nd Gp. (McKinley)

Major Jack Dickerson, our Squadron Commander, was the pilot and Jack Sayers navigated. Our target was southeast of Tours. After taking off the radio operator received a message which he interpreted to be one calling us back. However, after reaching the airfield our tower informed us to continue the operation. We were therefore a half-hour late starting.

There was quite a bit of haze over England and also over the continent which prevented me from doing much pilotage. We went in through the Brest Peninsula and down to the Loire River which I could see. Between there and the target we passed through a rain storm. Jack's special equipment (Gee Box) was working well and we had little to worry about.

I did not see the Initial Point so we turned on ETA and reached the target satisfactorily although we were about three miles off course on the last leg. The target was a good one and we dropped everything on the first run.

Coming back we hit a severe storm but passed through it without mishap. A rather uneventful mission which is the type everyone prefers. I was glad, particularly for Major Dickerson's sake, because the last time we flew together we were shot at quite a bit and no doubt he was not too confident of our navigating (staying away from plotted flak areas).

After landing we learned that Capt. Bales and his crew had some bad luck. Their target was in Belgium and night fighters had picked them up shortly after they had entered the continent.

The fighters first bursts knocked out the interphone system, hit the tail gunner in the foot, and generally shot up the entire ship.

The tail gunner had a shell clear through his foot but he got out of the turret and was putting out the fire there when Lt. Doyle (the co-pilot) reached him. (This account was left incomplete.)

ONCE UPON A TIME

by

GEORGE WINDBURN

Squadron Leader Slade was an Australian pilot in the RAAF, Royal Australian Air Force, and along with his Flight Officer Bomb Aimer, bombardier, in our terminology, they were the liason and training officers who would be on our base in Harrington as we prepared ourselves for the role of diversionary bombers who were to suck out the German night fighters while the RAF forces would be in force elsewhere.

My recollection now, as I recall my perception of Squadron Leader, is that I was in awe of the report that he was the surviivor of 200 raids, an unheard of accomplishment, and that he was an older man. By older I mean that the fact he had a sheep ranch back home put him out of my generation, the recent high school grads and college under graduates. He was quiet, always dressed in what I would have called a Class A uniform. I did have a picture of the two men from down under which I took on a winter's day outside of the officers' club. I don't think I have it anymore. I wonder now how Squadron Leader Slade made out with his sheep ranch when he returned home after the war.

Well, the reason that he is brought up at all lies in the fact that he once flew with me. It was a night training mission. As I recall, we were briefed that we were to go out in bomber stream, a la the RAF, and make a simulated bomb run on the rear gardens of Buckingham Palace, London. I don't have any idea why this was said because today I feel such a flight would have been a not-too-bright idea.

What did I learn from this man? That is hard to say. Two things pop out of my mind immediately. One is that he required my crew to call me Skipper whenever they spoke to me on the plane's intercom. It was RAF. Enough said. The other item is the "cork screw" maneuver.

He made it quite clear to me that this twisting, undulating maneuver was a survival technique. Not only when in the flak envelope, but also on the inbound and exit flight while within the range of night fighters.

Oh, there is a third thing he insisted on. Before he would even fly, he examined the very thick bullet-proof glass in the tail turret. It had to be spotless. He didn't want the gunner to mistake an enemy fighter for a dirt spot on the "Plexy", as he called it. In fact, the RAF removed this glass so that

the tail gunner saw the night sky with his naked eye.

Harrington remains a small village, I am sure. In those days the airfield undoubtedly dispossessed cattle of some form and when they laid the concrete for the two intersecting runways and the perimeter taxiway with revetments (circular paved parking spots) they left the small undulations of land just as nature had left them. You could stand at the end of any runway and not see the other end for the rise and fall of the terrain foiled your eyes.

The grass surrounding everything was always cut, but I don't recall any grass cutting. Did the grass grow so slowly or did my experiences pass faster than the growth rate of the grass? Who's to know?

The airplanes sat out in the open, rain, snow, and sunshine. Because we flew at night the maintenance could at least be done in daylight. There were four squadrons in the group, while most of the time we were composed of only three squadrons, the fourth being "on paper" only. Each squadron grouped its own planes in an orderly manner along its' stretch of taxiway. And even when parked, the planes were slightly askew of each other depending on nature's handiwork. All dressed in black paint. Each one the same family, but differing as to model in some cases, and certainly their nose art and bomb raid tallies gave them their character.

The D Models were quite distinctive. They had the broad paddle blade props, designed for lower altitude flying. And they had no nose turret. In its place was a "greenhouse" -- no fifty caliber machine guns. The new nose was for a clearer view of the ground for those low and slow flying night drops of parachuted cannisters and people into enemy or occupied territory.

And all of the planes had been denuded of their ball turrets. These were the belly guns into which a small man descended and electrically routed himself and his guns with joy sticks and trigger, a 30 to 40 year forerunner of today's video arcade joy stick imaginations. Again, this was for the drop missions. This was named the "Joe Hole". A round piece of plywood covered the hole and through that opening on the drop run out would go people or packages.

So, with the loss of four machine guns, we were the formidable bomb group who was to go out and challenge the Luftwaffe. As I recall we were never more than nine or twelve airplanes who took on the whole German night fighters. Until they discovered the RAF making a slightly later and gigantic raid elsewhere. What we gave the RAF was an easier entry to their target.

But I have to back up to Squadron Leader Slade and the night he flew with

me. When you were posted for a mission you learned of it by either word of mouth from someone else who had just left the officers' club and had thus saved you a trip (daily) or you read the listing for youself. All it ever said was you were posted, the hour for briefing. Nothing else. I can assure you that they didn't type out next to my name the fact that I was to have the RAAF for co-pilot.

My squadron was the 856th. We lived in tents. And in mud. There were three of us in the tent. Three, because I didn't have a co-pilot. I lost Virgil before we went overseas. He needed a hernia operation. I got a replacement who lasted a couple of training flights with me, but was reassigned elsewhere in the UK when he went bananas as we flew through an RAF night training exercise - all of us at the same altitude, intertwining ourselves, miracle after miracle as no one collided.

There was a wooden sidewalk along the row of tents that stopped when the tents stopped. From then on it was mud, mud, mud until one reached the narrow blacktop leading around the base. Our goal was always the mess hall, the officers' club, and to the flight line. It was downhill to the flight line, on foot, but we always got a ride in a truck coming back. One of the perks for combat flying. Oh yes, there was the other stopping point --- the paymasters' hut.

I-remember that place in the road because one day a Polish pilot flying a Spitfire in a series of on-the-deck passes, crashed leaving a significant hole in the ground.

The briefing hut was a corrugated arch-shaped building whose name you would mistake for a Japanese car. It was called a Nissen Hut. Not a Nissan car. It had row upon row of backless benches, a center aisle, one door in, a stage at the far end, a raised stand holding an opaque projector placed strategically for good screening during the briefing. The stage had a curtain, about a half dozen folding wooden chairs. These would be occupied by the briefing officers who would later get up and give their contribution.

This would be for a bombing mission. A drop mission was very different. We met in another building, which had tables and few chairs. We didn't linger here. We got our target information, drew our own courses, made our own take off times, got our individual weather briefings. The targets we received were our very own. No other plane was going where I might be going. Maybe not even the same country. Somebody could be going to the continent while I would be going to Norway, etc. These flights were servicing the OSS (Office of Strategic

Services).

But back to the main story. Back to the Nissen hut and the briefing. It was here that I learned Squadron Leader Slade was flying with me. I knew I would get somebody for co-pilot as I always did. Usually I got a ranking person with a broken crew or somebody who was near to the end of his tour and my flight would give him one mission less to fly.

You sit in briefings with your whole crew right around you. Everybody makes sure that everybody is getting all the facts. Plus all the imaginings that never failed to surface --- the good and the bad would be verbalized with appropriate faces and gestures. Sometimes one crew would get a good one off; it would be repeated and everbody would laugh.

From the briefing it was down to the flight line squadron building where we stripped ouselves of contraband items, put on our sheepskin lined flying clothes, boots, electric heated items of choice, and our parachutes. Then it was out to the cement and wait for a truck to run you to your airplane.

This night I was assigned to a D Model B-24, with the large letter P on its tail. That made its name as P, Peter. I'll never forget it. And as you'll learn. Squadron Leader wouldn't forget it either. It got a lot of attention a few days after our flight.

The plane was in a revetment near the end of a runway. Within plain sight was the caravan used as the control tower to signal with a bisquit gun light when each plane was to start its take off roll. The van was painted with zebra black and white diagonal strips. It was moved by a tug or truck to the active runway as the prevailing winds dictated.

And of course, as this was a combat training mission, everything was to be done in radio silence.

We are in the airplane. I explain the rough layout of instruments to Squadron Leader Slade as he was never in a B-24 before. He wasn't very happy with anything. Nothing could replace his Lancaster bomber. And he was probably right.

Naturally, the first thing to do was to start an engine. #3 to be exact, as it provided the other three engines with its generated juice to turn over their starters. But #3 wouldn't start. And wouldn't start. And wouldn't start.

What seemed like a lot of time had passed. Other planes had taxied past us. We were soon all alone.

So now it was desperation time. Start the engine by hand. Yes, by hand.

I know that the engine is way up in the air, way over our heads, but all ships carried a very long steel crank which when placed in a tiny hole in the cowling under the engine would engage the teeth of an inertia starter.

Believe it or not, two of the crew actually did crank the engine so that it did start. Quick, get the rest of them going. We did. All the time I was looking around for other planes, some kind of activity. I needed a hint about something. The caravan was there, but there was no head to be seen in the bubble on top, no bisquit gun, nothing.

I turned on the radio to listen to see what I could learn. There were many misgivings, much emotions at this point for me. There we sat with all our engines turning over and I was at a loss as to what everybody else was doing or had already done.

The radio began to talk to me. All I could hear was another plane talking to the tower requesting transportation from the 'hard stand' (parking spot) to squadron (unidentified).

I immediately reported this to Squadron Leader asking at the same time if he thought the mission had been scrubbed. He said it wasn't.

So I began to taxi out of my hard stand and approached the end of the runway near me with the caravan at its side. I stopped there and awaited a signal light. Either a red to keep holding or a green to go. Nothing happened. Slade was agitated. I was agitated.

I decided to break radio silence. I did. I called the tower and said I was number one on the active runway and wanted take off clearance.

The tower came right back to me and gave me clearance. I put the throttles and super charger levers forward, had Slade hold all eight of them against the forward stop and concentrated on take off.

110 mph was the number we looked for. You then lifted the nose up and flew the plane off the ground. But at 110 I couldn't lift the nose. We just kept on eating up runway yardage like it was going out of style.

Our air speed or should I say, our ground speed, kept building up. But the plane just wouldn't come unglued. We used every foot of the runway and some of the dirt before I managed to get airborne.

The first obstacles I had to overcome were clearing the wooden posts holding the lead-in lights which were at the end of each runway. They were at their lowest point nearest the runway's end and highest at their starting point.

For me, I had to keep climbing as the posts were also climbing. We made it.

Then the tower came back on the air asking for the name of the pilot who had just taken off. I gave them my name.

Next, it was check list time. Squadron Leader read it off to me. He called out "Flaps up". I reached down. There were no flaps down. We had never even done a pre-take off check list while stewing with engine trouble, caravans that wouldn't give us a light, no other planes to be seen anywhere. It had been a mess.

No wonder we couldn't take off. With no flaps we were a new type of bird. Probably a Dodo bird. This was not going to be a fun flight.

We continued to climb, I was renamed Skipper, and Slade checked on everything with his eyes, but never once touched the controls. His distaste was far greater than any curiosity.

At some point we started doing cork screws. This was very simple. You put your nose down, start a turn in either direction, pick up enough speed so that you could regain your altitude while turning back in the opposite direction. This gave every pair of eyes a chance to scan the whole night skies for other planes and trouble.

It was cold. Nothing unusual in that. I had to relieve myself while on our way back from London. I don't even remember the bomb run.

There is a relief tube on the flight deck, which as pilot I could reach while being off oxygen for just a short time. The trouble that night was that it had already been used and was filled solid with ice. I had to settle for standing in the bomb bay with the bomb bay doors cracked open, letting natural currents of air carry away my you-know-what.

That was a much longer time off oxygen and it didn't go over with Squadron Leader. He told me about the finer features on the Lancaster. Another knock with another boost.

But the best was yet to come. After all, we hadn't landed yet. As we got nearer to home base we did a gradual let-down. At the same time the forward vision windscreen began to ice up. Bit by bit. Squadron Leader let this go on for just a short time and then ordered, "Use your Glycol". What was that? "For God's sake, don't you have any glycerine?" He had it on the Lancaster. It was like today's windshield wash. It always cleared up the ice for him. Him, of over 200 combat missions, a ranch owner with complete family, future ranching plans. His whole world was rapidly turning to you-know-what.

But in my bliss and ready for anything-new attitude (and some aptitude) I didn't even raise a sweat. I opened the little vent window by my head, reached

out with my left bare hand and with my thumbnail started to scratch away the ice. I finally got a hole the size of a fifty cent piece just where I could poke my head and see pretty good.

The tower was speaking again. This time telling returning planes that the runway was ice-covered and to watch ourselves. There were also to be no runway lights. Again RAF style. When Slade heard about the ice on the ground, he completely lost his cool. He was mad, mad, mad.

The whole flight in the pattern and the landing went like hot knife through butter. Just a slight sashaying on the ice. We taxied and parked ourselves.

Squadron Leader Slade started off on a mad and swearing spree that knew no bounds. Myself and the whole crew were cowed, I can tell you. It lasted on the truck ride back to squadron and only ended there, for us, as he dressed elsewhere, so he was removed from us. I am sure he would rather have it said that he removed himself from us.

Well, that is not the end of this flight. There were after shocks. For all of us.

The strangest thing was that nobody I came in contact with or the crew had any big comments to make about that night. Naturally we spoke of the take off problems, goofing on the flaps, the ice on return, but that was all.

Not the end at all. There was to be a critique a few days later. It was in the Nissen hut. It was packed out. The Colonel gets to his feet. It has began.

The only words out of his mouth were, "Is Lt. Winburn here?" I stood up, and need I say that I also stood out?

"Tell us about your flight." Was he being cute or did he mean it? Surely Slade had such a large head of steam he would have made it right to the top, with nothing left out.

So, I told everything in sequence, being particularly clear and specific about the radio talk prior to take off and the complete absense of any other plane in sight.

It was about here that I learned of the much-observed-miracle. But one I had not seen as I was at that time with my eyes glued straight down the runway straining to get up off the ground.

Here is what really happened. At another runway were all the planes on the mission. For the first time ever, the caravan which I was using as my reference as to an active runway, was a spare that should have been removed from the field. On either side of the real runway were other B-24's, with their

engines running, all keeping radio silence. The two planes at either edge of the runway waited for a light to give them take off clearance. Just as they were getting edgy about a light I came on the radio saying I was number 1 and wanted clearance. Each of these pilots thought it was the other talking. At about that time the real caravan gave a green light to one of the planes.

That plane pulled out on the runway and immediately put on the power and charged down the runway. At the same time I was charging on the other runway. Everybody in the tower, the other plane could see a giant collision about to happen at the intersection. There was no putting on the brakes for them and I was ignorant of that possible impact of doom.

We just missed each other. Now you know why they wanted to know who I was.

In the end of this session, with my account up through the take off, there were no repercussions.

Still, this was not the end of the matter. Squadron Leader Slade vowed he would never get in a B-24 again, and so far as I know he never did. What had also happened was that P, Peter, was brought to the attention of squadron maintenance. The pilot who flew it regularly had complained about its performance on take off. Now that there was some notoriety, they talked with me.

In short time they found that the horizontal stabilizer had been reset with 10 degrees of error when it was last rigged. That is one big mistake.

Well, the Colonel must not have minded the whole thing too much, this West Point man, nor was he brain-washed by Squadron Leader Slade, for the very first diversionary bombing raid the 492nd flew, which was my first bomb mission, he flew as my co-pilot. It was his first combat mission also.

AN HONEST CRITIQUE

by

BOB FISH

I was standing on the balcony which surrounded the control tower watching the airfield operations the night that the above recorded incident occurred. Never in my life, before or after that incident, have I felt as powerless and insignificant as I did that night as I watched those two B-24's aircraft rush toward each other at the intersection of the two runways. They avoided a collision by about one second. After all of our aircraft were airborne that night I returned to my room and discarded my underpants.

LIVING DANGEROUSLY

by

DELBERT E. PALMER

I can never forget the following incident, which took place on a bombing mission early in 1945. We were operating with radio silence.

We were awaiting the green light to line up for take off on the north runway when the follow-me jeep came along and signaled us to follow. We were led on around the perimeter counter clockwise to the northwest runway and given clearance to line up for take off. We were then given the green light for take off. We began the take off roll and everything on the gauges was in the green. Near the intersection of the two runways was a big building or two. One was a hangar, I think. Just as we were passing these buildings on my left I saw another aircraft emerge from the other side of the hangar obviously taking off on the north runway which we had just vacated. It was immediately apparent that he would cross that intersection a split second ahead of us so I just kept on going. He obviously had seen us also and as he crossed the intersection he was hauling that nose up to get airborne. The tailskid was dragging and the sparks really flying. We both made it and flew our missions although I don't remember who he was.

This was a bombing mission and we were loaded with GP bombs. I don't recall what the explanation was for the near miss but it's funny now but certainly could have been a disaster, both aircrafts being loaded with bombs.

By the way, the co-pilot on that other aircraft that night was Squadron Leader Slade, who was either Aussie or New Zealander. I'm sure you know who I mean.

At debriefing he stood in the "refreshment" line and accepted rations from all who didn't want their's. He expounded loudly and clearly that anyone who would fly at night in a "Bloody Liberator" should receive the DFC without ever flying a mission.

You saw many crews come and go so you probably don't remember me. We came in December 1944 and there were thirteen crews of us. The aircraft assigned to us was a fairly new B-24 L and we named her "Forever Amber". We flew most of our missions in her and brought her back to Windsor Locks, Conn. at war's end. Her crew chief was M/Sgt. Elmer Anderson and he was one of the best. My bombardier, Melvin P. Roberts, was a relatively old timer, having been an

instructor prior to joining my crew. Therefore I was appointed flight leader early on, partly because of his expertise and possibly for my age because at that time I was already 1st Lt. and several years older than the average aircraft commander.

It's fun trying to recall events such as the above and if you want anymore I have a few which I would be happy to relate.

ANOTHER SURVIVOR

The second amazing survivor story belongs to John Reitmeier, of Delran, New Jersey. On May 5/6, 1944, the then young Lt. Reitmeier, navigator on Lt. Murray Simon's crew, was on a night mission to France. According to our group's official records, "The aircraft had been hit by 20mm and 40mm flak. The main gas tank was hit, the communication system knocked out --- fire began to rage throughout the aircraft." All crew members succeeded in bailing out safely at 5,500 feet, as later related by the pilot. Reitmeier cleared the bursting, crippled airplane, thanking his lucky stars that he hadn't been trapped in the burning Lib. He pulled his ripcord and --- nothing happened. (What a time to discover that his parachute was made on Monday!) He struggled with the parachute, all the time plummeting through the dark skies like a rock. Finally, by frantically pulling on the shroud lines in the chute pack, he managed to pull the nylon into the air and, to his relief, the parachute opened with a snap. He was then only 150 feet from the ground and falling fast. The force of his landing from that short distance knocked him out when he hit the ground. When he came to, he found that he was uninjured, except for some bruises. (His escape from capture by the Germans, with the aid of the French Maquis Underground Forces is another story.) He finally returned to Harrington via Italy, Algiers and Casablanca. (No, he didn't run into Humphrey Bogart or Ingrid Bergman there.) I'd say that both Jim Heddleson and John Reitmeier have been living on "borrowed time" for the last 43 years, wouldn't you? These are just two of the hundreds of exciting tales buried in the history of our group's activities. Many more are detailed in Ben Parnell's book, "Carpetbaggers: America's Secret War in Europe". (Eakin Press, P.O. Box 23069, Austin, Texas 78735.) Ben's brother Garrett died in an 856th BS Lib crash at Oulton.

MY FIRST NIGHT BOMBING MISSION

by

GEORGE WINDBURN

In an earlier story I said I would write about my first bombing raid. It was sometime after the infamous flight with Squadron Leader Slade. Col. Upham, commanding officer of the 492nd Bomb Group, like myself had also never been on a mission before. So, on that level we were on a par. But in as much as Col. Upham was a West Point graduate, a regular officer as opposed to my wartime commission, we were quite worlds apart. He was regular army and I was the other something. This was all in my mind and I doubt it was in his.

It wouldn't be accurate to lead you to believe I was chosen out of all the possible crews for him to make his combat debut. I had no copilot, if you remember, as Erik had freeked out on a night training flight showing he was emotionally incapable of doing his job. So with that in mind, I needed a co-pilot no matter what, the Colonel stepped in and filled the gap.

Today, in 1988, after reading some books I have been led to buy in preparation of these essays for family history, I realize the transitory nature of the 492nd. Combat roles were shuffled in and out of our routine, as history now proves. But at the time of the actual event I was ignorant of what had been, not so swift with what was going on, and blind as a bat as to the future. I was there to do a job on that day for that reason. This time it was to drop bombs. Just ahead of the RAF so we would draw the Luftwaffe out, and allow the huge number of RAF bombers a clearer path to their target elsewhere.

We lived in tents, the three of us officers, myself as pilot, Charley Girard as navigator, and Bob Billmire as bombardier. In another section of the same mud pond were our enlisted men in their tents. The enlisted men were far more clever than we and had a fiberglass insolation so well in place their tent was appreciably warmer than ours was at anytime. It was positively cozy.

The tents are mentioned so that you have an idea that we were living close to nature, in a lifestyle not entirely hostile, but quite a step in a new direction for us. Our buns were freezing, we were new to the UK, we had never flown combat as a crew, etc., etc. And now it was going to be the real thing.

We were posted. We were to report to the briefing hut at the time given. No other information. Just hike on out thru the mud, down the hill to the curved, corrogated Nissen hut, get your crew together on a bench, and wait for

the show to begin.

I don't think it ever occured to me that we didn't have a co pilot and thus how could we fly? Heck, this was our first time.

Our target was Düsseldorf. We never were in large numbers, probably no more than nine or twelve bombers. We had a number of our gun teeth pulled for the carpetbagger operations. Gone were the nose 50s, gone was the ball turret from the belly with its twin 50s. That was a bunch of firepower to give away to the Luftwaffe, but we also knew we were giving away experience and we didn't care to think about that.

Briefings, besides setting your nerves or teeth on edge with the target being specified and shown so clearly on a large map to be almost totally surrounded by large red areas depicting heavy, accurate flak envelopes, were the nitty-gritty rundown of the mechanics. So there would be orderly flight, times, routes, altitude spread, target time, pathfinder responsibilities, radio call signs, color of flares, expected ground fire, expected fighters from what known locations, degree of moon, cloud coverage at target time, bomb loads, aiming point alternatives, IP (Initial Point) position, minimum altitude at the IP, turns away after bombs away and altitudes, course away from the target, intelligence reports (selling the target's importance), the dropping of chaff (X-mas tree aluminum strips started out as radar jamming chaff), approved areas for ditching bombs in case of an abort. The final act was to synchronize our hack watches, both the navigators boxed time piece and our GI issue wrist watches.

It was after all of this drama that Colonel Upham stood up and announced he was flying with Lt. Windburn's crew. How about that? It did turn quite a few heads.

The next piece of business was to return to the most natural place of all-the officers' club. It was time to get together and run this thing by. We would all share the same degree of genius, but we did get a little closer to "the old crews" as we now had some specific questions to ask. No more, "How is it?" No sir, we had some specific wonderments. The list's length depended on your degree of anxiety. Friends grouped together. This was to be something altogether different. We would not be in daylight formation where we could eyeball each other. We were going to lose ourselves in the darkness and sometime after crossing the channel we would bore a hole in the darkness of the sky and be by ourselves for the entire, rest of the flight.

Radios were dead and each crew had only itself to see, protect, to evade, to

attack, to retreat back home. There would be absolutely no supporting gunfire from another plane, no fighter protection. We already had forefitted four 50s, and we had no idea how good our marksmenship was. Don't mention a jammed waist or tail gun.

The Colonel met us on the flight line dressed just as we were. He was a lean figure, taller than myself, soft spoken, and made no attempt to be an authority figure. I never got to know him as I never flew with him again and he never called on my services for running the 492nd.

Our bombs were being loaded when we were all assembled around the plane. We were flying our own plane, "Next Morn, S, Sugar." It made me feel particularly good that I had finagled this ship so that we had something we could call our own, something to have and develop confidence in.

I decided we ought to review the core data of the mission which we did with Colonel Upham chiming in his assents. As to flak suits, those heavy but vital body armor, I decided the crew could make the flight all the way to the point where we would be going on oxygen with the suits off. But just prior to oxygen, all suits would have to go on. Upham agreed.

We now get into the airplane, start engines, and as this takes place I make a rundown of the instrument panel, my flight intentions as pilot in command, notwithstanding my rank as 2nd Lt., (politely telling him I was going to do all the flying and that I was boss, with a small b). He agreed. He then told me he had only about 50 hours in a B24, as his training had been on B17s.

My guess in 1988 is that Col. Upham graduated as a ground officer, transfered to the air sometime in 1942-43, and as a field grade officer went thru flight training from Primary thru twin engine advance just as an Aviation Cadet would. I had no illusions he had been born with wings.

Of course we were the number one plane to take off. The pathfinder planes were off about twenty minutes before us as their job was to drop red flares on the railroad yard in Düsseldorf. The flares were to be our bomb aiming points if the yards themselves were not visible.

The routine of the mission went well with no hitches. We used the intercom for oxygen checks, and this also served for calling out enemy aircrafts if spotted. I explained to the Colonel the corkscrew manuevor which I had learned from flight Officer Slade.

We are well into the mission. I have met my first searchlights which I thought looked like the fingers of something nasty pointing right up at me. I

certainly knew better than to be coned in searchlights. The Germans would punch your card for sure as coning meant they had all the data they needed for a sure knock out flak attack.

Charley Girard was doing a great job as navigator. But somewhere after the IP I made a very big mistake. I kept seeing red flares all over the sky. I wondered how the pathfinders could have dropped them so far apart. I talked of this with the Colonel. Then I got Charley on the horn and said we must be just minutes from dropping. He was quite sure I was wrong. He said we had a long way to go. But I figured my eyes were giving me the clue and I overturned his opinion and altered course slightly towards a drifting red flare.

The long and the short of it was that flare just led us no place. We could see the ground. There was no city, no railyards. We had used up our flying time. Target time had just passed and we calculated rather quickly to alter course. Following Charley's info would be making a fatal error of too late over the target which was now flack accurate and could have German night fighters circling above our altitude just waiting to jump us.

It was the Colonel who said "Go home." We did so rather silently. I knew I had jumped the gun, went off half-cocked. It was my responsibility that we had messed up. I was not pleased with myself.

I will give the Colonel credit for keeping his cool. He never even made a negative comment to me when we were close to home, down to where we were no longer on oxygen and we could have a private talk. He just chalked it up to learning as he said later in the ground debriefing. A real gentleman and he saved my face in front of my crew.

What made the last part of this mission so interesting was entirely due to the Colonel's decision we would not jettison our bomb load in a designated area of the channel. He wanted the bombs flown home.

That meant Bob Billmire had to go down into the bomb bay and while still in flight reinsert the pins into the airscrews in each bomb's nose, rendering them, we fervently hoped, explosion proof. How good Bob was, was a question I had well into our tour.

I do remember casually, well, as casual as I could, saying on the radio to our tower, known as Pipe Craft, that I had a full bomb load and was landing with it. A subtle way of saying to anybody and everybody that it might be wise to give me some room.

Yes. We made it. No sweat. We weren't smart enough for that. Or could it be I really was a red hot pilot? Who will ever know?

MEMORIES OF NIGHT BOMBING MISSIONS

by

GEORGE WINDBURN

While at the REPO Depot in Stone, those of us as new crews who had been ordered to the 492nd Heavy Bomb Group were ordered to have ID photos taken. We were dressed in non-descript civilian clothing and were told they might be used at sometime for escape in the event we were shot down.

Once operational we flew with an escape kit - one for each man. I carried my little packet in a pocket in the leg of my flying gear. I also carried a Colt 45 automatic in holster outside of the suit and had it tied down with a leather thong to my leg.

The escape kit contained a cloth map of Europe and a variety of European currency. I had more confidence in my 45 than the map.

Unfortunately or otherwise I did not fly in all the various positions in the B-24. For instance, I never flew as though I were a waist gunner, tail gunner, radio operator, etc. All I know is what it was like as first pilot. My right seat time, very brief as it was, came after VE Day and I was assigned to check out co-pilots to see if they could qualify for first pilot. So my impressions come from being glued in my seat, flying the plane.

I mention this as I had a limited idea of how communication really was carried on with so many of the crew. Poor Lackey back in the tail was all by himself, in a big way. And looking backwards almost all of the time. Not for me. The two waist positions could get their heads together, however briefly, and talk into each other's ear. Vince, at his radio position, could talk with Tom, our flight engineer, who was on his feet in the flight deck a good deal of the time. And down in the nose, Bob and Charlie could be shoulder to shoulder and carry on a conversation.

As for myself and the co-pilot, not named because I flew with so many different ones, I nudged him and pointed to instruments that needed attention or would gesture for meaning.

We stayed off the intercom. I meant it to be used for serious business such as enemy planes, hits, etc. The oxygen checks made were to keep everybody alert and to verify all were OK and watchful. This was maintained until we were back on our airfield.

Then, once out of the plane, we were great talkers as we gathered our gear

and waited for the truck to carry us back to squadron and then to debriefing.

As I said, it was our practice to stay off the intercom with chatter during flight. I would initiate an oxygen check, once we were at altitude and all on oxygen. This served two purposes, it assured the crew their pilot was alert and following good proceedure, and all of us could hear and verify each crew member was equally OK and functioning alert.

After all, it was almost pitch black, so who could see very much? Who could tell how Lackey was doing back there, out of sight in the tail turret? The two pilots did have a low intensity red light for the instruments and by it we could see each other. We could touch if we wanted to get each other's attention. Also we could inch the oxygen masks off quickly and yell at the other, all while being off the intercom system and thus not heard by anyone else.

Most typically I might touch the co-pilot to get his attention about an instrument reading that demanded attention and he might do the same to me. Or it could be enemy action in our area when at or near the target. Nothing to talk about just something to be aware of.

The usual first line of talk after take off on a mission would be between myself and Charlie, our navigator, as we began to fly our timed route and altitude which was predetermined in order that all of us in our planes would end up an orderly lump as we started out on a bombing effort.

It was always a single race track pattern with predetermined altitude gains during each leg. At a precise time there would be a departure from this pattern, high up and off our field, a departure to the target route heading which would put us over a known channel departure point.

Hitting the channel was a kind of mission marker. We knew we had to at least cross the channel in order to get mission credit. Cross the channel and then abort was the word of the day. At least get mission credit for making the effort. Then go drop your bombs in the drop zone, and make your way back home, or wherever else you could land. And mission credit built up your end game of 25, a ticket back home to the USA.

At and over the channel we were generally below 10,000 feet and not on oxygen. It would be completely dark so that we couldn't see any land very well and we certainly had lost sight of any other plane for some time. They were just not to be seen. We were completely alone.

Unlike day bombers, we never tested our guns over the channel. I don't know why this was so. Perhaps an RAF practice, but that doesn't sound very

reasonable to me today. In fact, today I would have insisted.

With some kind of moon we could see the water quite clearly. There were no lights on sea or land as blackouts were very strict by Germans and Allies. In all of England no lights could be seen. Blackouts were very strict but night vision could be quite adequate to get a pretty good impression of your immediate surroundings. I'm sure the waist gunners could see the blue flames of the engines' exhaust. From my seat as I leaned back a bit, I could look left or right and check the four engines for prop synch.

The continental coast meant mission credit and a point where we continued our steady upwards climb to bombing altitude. No zooming up as in today's jets. We worked a compromise of forward progress for altitude gain (and fuel consumption). If I remember correctly, I would say we were indicating around 150 mph on the dial while slowly going up at the same time.

With appropriate altitude gain I would be on the intercom ordering the flak suits on. Both pilots already had on whatever they wanted. It was up to the others to comply for themselves. Charlie would give a navigation report. All of us knew how important it was for us to keep on time and hit our check points on schedule, both for our safety and effectiveness.

Our weather briefings were always surprisingly good. No big blunders. But there could be different winds aloft which could either make us fast or slow. If fast, we would fly double drifts to kill time and still maintain our course. If slowing down, just pour on the coals and sweat the fuel later on the flight. Charlie was a whiz at keeping us on time and on course.

Intercom talk was the inevitable oxygen check. But as we neared the IP (Initial Point) and thus near the awaiting enemy, there would be other talk. Like calling out flak bursts or new searchlight batteries which had suddenly popped up. And at irregular intervals I would do a corkscrew maneuver so all of us could eyeball the sky for night fighters.

We flew RAF practices. It was bomber stream, not the formation flights you would have seen in the daylight operations. We were intentionally staggered by whim at differing altitudes - while all, at the same time in theory, were over the target. The differences in altitude could be thousands of feet. In my mind I could see bombs whizing by the lower planes. I always went to the highest altitude allowed.

It was at the IP that I was preparing the plane to fly its best by checking flight control trims. This was for Bob's benefit when he was to take over

flying by way of the bomb sight mechanism down in the nose.

"Center the PDI" on Bob's order meant that he was on the final moments of the bomb run and he was taking over. Next would be "Bomb bay doors open".

This last signaled that we were at a critical time and just as Bob was putting in the last corrections, having switched on the intervolometer for predetermined bomb release sequence.

It was regular practice for us to drop bombs in train and never as salvo. This means our bombs went out layer after layer, from the four layered nests making up the entire bomb bay, as we flew along.

"Bombs away" and I was once more flying. The PDI was off. I immediately changed heading and altitude to the outbound course - our departure course. From the IP on to this point we were keyed up. We were in the lion's den and we had no idea what we could end up facing. After all, we were meant to draw out the night fighters.

The flak at night was probably not as intimidating as in daylight when the accompanying cloud of black smoke added visually to the proximity of the explosion. At night, flak took on the appearance of a sparkling lighter. No flame, no smoke. Any burst near you could shower you with shrapnel so loud that you could hear it.

Searchlights were a different matter. I remember so well my first encounter. They seemed very personal. After all, real men, enemy soldiers were moving those lights around in the sky and they were looking for me. I also knew the anti-aircraft gunners were just waiting for the lights to cone a plane and they would shoot it out of the sky. Those lights were an immediate threat. Yet you couldn't do a single thing about them. No planes were going to go down and shoot them out. So the lights were immune while we were not.

Corkscrewing became a way that you could dislodge the lights, change all the geometry in the air and make their task more difficult. It was your only way to outwit them.

From the vantage point of this day I realize how melodramatic it sounds to say while all this was going on I was tightly held to my seat by shoulder and lap straps, slightly scrunched down so that I could get maximum redder action if it were needed. My bare right hand on the throttles and the left on the wheel. I was scanning the instrument panel and looking out as best I could searching as much sky as showed itself. I wore a green scarf which always had a glob of ice on it from the moisture which seeped out from under my oxygen

mask. The temperature would be in the 20 to 30 degree below zero range.

The crew, you can't forget the crew. They need to know I am OK, everything going well. Yet keep the intercom for something really big. Or did we mean really bad?

Only once did I see another plane just blown out of the sky. I never did learn who it was. The event wasn't like any films I have since seen. No wing falling off, followed by a sickening twisting spin down. It was just blown up. All gone in a blink of the eye. All sight. No sound.

You don't get to see much from my seat. Forward vision is fair if you poke your head all the way to the left and look forward through the small bubble of a window on the cabin's side. But you have no clear sweep of your entire frontal area. No way to see any part of your right side or the largest part of your rear. During the corkscrew I got to see with my own eyes portions of the sky I had been blind to and had been depending on the eyes of the crew. It was such peace to find emptiness.

Especially on nights with a bright moon. I knew we stood out almost as though it were daylight. But if we were flying between layers of clouds I knew my plan for escape was to dive into those clouds and hide myself. In those old days one could only shoot at what one could see. I had no idea of dueling with night fighters.

At those times when our flight was on top of the clouds we had the stars for company. That was a touch of a special kind for me as stars were a summer time memory of Vermont. And for Charlie, they were an additional navigational aid.

Still, it was stars that allowed us to fly one mission. Our compasses were way out of wack. As things were getting very much out of hand I decided to use Charlie's compass and I would fly all corrections by using the stars for reference. It worked like a charm. We made a successful bomb mission.

In the end it can be said every mission was hours of sitting, searching the sky looking at instruments, and using the intercom in such a way that the crew stayed alert and confident.

You never knew what to expect. It wasn't over until it was over - on the ground, engines stopped, parked in place. Then it was over. Every other minute was alert time.

We were told of the German fighters that trailed planes back to their bases and then shot them down in their own traffic patterns. We believed those reports

so much so we landed, at times, with no lights at all.

The English coast on the homeward leg once more became a landmark; an important landmark. I always wanted to keep enough altitude so that if I was in any trouble, could see the coast, I could manage to string things along so the channel would be crossed and we could hit one of three huge concrete aircraft havens made especially for crippled ships.

On some occasions when we were back over the channel and still rubbing our faces back into shape after hours on oxygen, we would see flares of different colors going off about us. No planes yet to be seen. It was late enough for us to be scurrying home, but it was wake-up time for the B-17 crews and the start of their daylight raids. Those flares were meant for them. Everybody knew their squadron colors and they would try to form on their flares for what might be a formation of hundreds and hundreds of bombers, plus their fighter escorts.

Fighter escorts? What were they? Not for us. Eight, nine or ten B-24's. We had been the terrifying warriors of the night. And with no fighters to boot. We were the RAF decoys. Allies could hear the German radio talk with their fighters and from their differing directions they knew we had done a good job.

The flight got lower and lower, closer to home, a drink, one egg, food, and bed. We followed a radio beacon only until we could see by eye just where we were and then it was the eyeball route straight to Harrington and a radio call to "Pipecraft" our code for our base. But so had other planes called in. So it was time to stay out of each other's way.

It was sweet when we touched down and were rolling out. Just a few light touches on the brakes to slow down for a nice turn off the active runway and a careful taxi along the narrow perimeter track to our squadron area and our own individual hardstand.

The crew chief would always be there waiting for us and ready with hand signals to guide us to our final resting place, while somehow always managing to give the ship a quick once over to see if there was battle damage. Our thumbs up gave him the sign everything went OK.

The fact of the matter is that being on the ground did not end the mission. As crew, we immediately got our heads together so we would have a unified report at debriefing. As friends, we wanted to know what had happened to other crews. Anybody hurt, anybody shot up, anybody see anybody go down?

In the final analysis it wasn't over until after the shot of whisky, the

lone egg and some food, the debriefing, and back to the 856th tent city. Here we visited back and forth in the tents telling and hearing about the raid we had just been on. All the details. All the sweat.

But we had better get to bed. It must be around five o'clock. Did you see we are posted to fly again tonight?

NIGHT BOMBING BEGINS

The first high altitude heavy bombardment mission of the 801st/492nd Group was dispatched from the Harrington airfield on 24 December 1944 at 1100 hours, attacking the target of Coubre Point, France.

Eighteen aircraft were scheduled but only twelve got off. All planes proceeded to the target and one aborted before reaching I.P. Eleven planes made the bombing run, and nine aircraft made the attack. Two did not attack because one had mechanical trouble and the other one failed to locate the target markers.

The attacking force went in at 18,000 feet in Bomber Stream, utilizing individual navigational and bombing procedure. The planes were over the target for four minutes, dropping 88 five-hundred pounders, the remainder jettisoned their load of 29 five-hundred pounders over water on the return trip.

The PFF aircraft totaled 3 planes, each carrying 6 T.I.'s and 1 Wagnuis (flare). Bombing aircraft carried loads of 12 five-hundred pound RDX bombs.

The official narrative regarding the result of the mission reads: "One PFF aircraft dropped T.I.'s on F.I. Other aircraft believed to have overshot target ½ mile because indicators hung-up. The main effort dropped 88 five-hundred pound bombs on T.I.'s. Bombing results believed fair, several sticks bracketed the target indicators.

The targets consisted of Coastal Defenses of the Atlantic Coasts of Central France. The mission was laid-on primarily to experience the crews in performing heavy bombardment attacks. Both the success and failure of performance of aircraft and crews involved in the mission, were of material value in determining the proficiency of the Group and extremely beneficial in helping the commanders to judge the readiness of the Group to perform large scale operations against high priority targets."

ANGER INDUCES STUPIDITY

Submitted by

ROBERT W. FISH

On 24 December 1944, the black Liberators of the 492nd Bomb Group flew their first night bombing mission. Their target was the German Submarine Pens at Point Coubre on the coast of France.

I flew the lead aircraft. I do not recall whose crew I flew with. Jim Baker was my bombardier. Our tactic was for the bomber stream to fly inland for several miles and then to turn south and west to the target and drop our bombs on the way out of France. We were using a radar bomb sight (H_2X) to find our target. Twelve aircraft participated in the bombing run. It was a learning experience for all of the air crews.

When we made our run over the submarine pens that were our target, Jim Baker failed to get his bombs away. This screwed things up quite royally. We were to have marked the target with fluorescent bombs which would have provided the following aircraft with an easy to see target. Fortunately we had back up markers in the next aircraft over the target and it placed its markers right on target.

I was so vexed at Jim Baker for not getting his bombs away that I immediately turned 180 degrees and flew against the bomber stream for three minutes. I then did another 180 degree turn back toward the target for another bombing run. The back up marking plane had by this time marked the target and we dropped our load into his markers.

On our way back to Harrington I had time to think about what a stupid maneuver I had executed. By turning 180 degrees and flying against the bomber stream I had unnecessarily endangered my own aircraft and crew but all of the other aircrafts and crews that were following us. Luckily we missed them all.

"AFTER YOU ALPHONSE"

OR

CEST LA GUERRE

by

DOUGLAS D. WALKER

The agents we parachuted and flew into France and Germany were working with the OSS — the Office of Strategic Services. (This organization was the forerunner of the CIA.) Several of the aircrews from the 856th Bomb Squadron flew "Carpetbagger" missions out of Dijon airport in France, into Southern Germany.

This was toward the end of the war, after our forces had captured a large part of France back from the Germans. Of course, the missions we flew from Dijon were quite a bit shorter in duration than those we flew out of Harrington, England (our main base), thus saving time and fuel.

I'll never forget the first time we flew to Dijon to conduct operations from there for several missions, in early March of 1945. As we approached the Dijon airfield, which was used jointly by the American and by the Free French Air Forces, Lt. Swarts dropped the Liberator down into the landing pattern.

While we were entering the final leg of our landing approach, an A-26 medium bomber zoomed directly across our nose. It then dropped onto the runway ahead of us, without so much as a "by your leave". Swarts swung quickly into evasive action when he spotted the A-26 speeding towards us and saved our skin. He then straightened out the Liberator and landed us safely.

As we walked towards the American Operations Office, feeling a bit jumpy from the close brush with the A-26, we passed some French ground crewmen rolling 500 pound bombs off the tailgate of a truck with their feet — allowing them to drop to the ground — bouncing as they hit the concrete tarmac with a loud thud.

Needless to say, we broke into a run and left the area in a hurry.

Lt. Swarts was normally a calm individual. But, after our near miss, he stormed into the Operations Office and raised hell about the near miss from the French A-26. The American Colonel in charge managed to calm him down and said, "Those A-26's are flown by French pilots who ignore landing pattern discipline. They will cut in front of you with complete abandon, with a Cest La Guerre attitude. Just do your best to avoid them and be extremely vigilant when you are taking off or landing."

Needless to say, we were glad they weren't flying when we returned to Dijon in the early morning hours, fatigued from our missions over German.

Dear Col. Fish:

Recently I began receiving the 801/492nd Newsletter. The most recent issue suggested writing you memories or incidents from the war. I was the 857th Squadron Bombardier, CO Jack Dickerson, Ops Officers Willard Smith, then Jim Darby, and Jack Sayers the Squadron Navigator. I flew thirty sorties as Bombardier Instructor or as Bombardier. The attached papers give brief and incomplete accounts of seven of those missions. These were written either the day of the flight or not later than the next day, in August and September of 1944. During my most memorable mission I remained several days in Le Blanc, France, (behind the lines in a sense at the time). I have no written account of that now but perhaps can reconstruct one later for you.

After the war I remained in the Air Force and was able to retire as a Colonel in 1965. Jack Sayers and Ralph White are the only persons from the old unit that I have been able to keep in touch with. I would like to give Jim Darby a call if you have his number.

As you know there are a number of books out with information about our secret missions. Two I have presently checked out from the Camp Pendleton Marine Base Library are THE MAQUIS by Claude Chambard and SOE IN FRANCE by M. R. D. Foot. Indexes permit one to select the parts of particular interest to our own operations as the books cover much more than the American Operations.

You have my permission to use these papers in whatever manner you select. I suspect we all regret not writing more about what we were doing back in 1944. And some photos would have helped us all.

Sincerely,

/s/ Bill

Phone 619-439 0635

WILLIAM C. MCKINLEY
1006 Plover Way
Oceanside, Ca. 92056

THE GAS HAUL

by

FRANK J. MILLER

The mind is a mysterious phenomenon. At this late date, some forty-three years after the fact, my memory of the ten daylight missions flown with the original 856th Squadron, 492nd Bomb Gp. out of North Pickenham as well as the ten night bombing and ten Carpetbagger missions flown out of Leuchars, Scotland and Harrington with the 857th and 858th Squadrons, 801st/492nd Bomb Gp., seems to be only that of a composite of each of the three types of missions. Certain details of each stand out in my memory but I cannot pin them down as to a particular mission or date with much accuracy. Having flown with three different crews and in three different squadrons does not make it easier. It seems that the things that stand out most vividly in my mind were the funny or unusual. I guess that was the old brains defensive mechanism at work.

To set the stage for this episode one must know that many of the crews at Harrington had flown many types of missions: submarine patrol, daylight bombing, night leaflet, carpetbag, night bombing and gas haul. As with most things, there was a certain competition between crews, squadrons and even groups. Everyone wanted to do their job but they also wanted to complete their tour before time or luck ran out. At one time there was a controversy as to whether a gas haul or a number of gas hauls constituted a mission. I don't recall exactly how this was rectified but I do know that some of us that did not get in on the gas hauls gave those that did a pretty hard time.

It was immediately after I had completed my tour when one of the funniest but potentially dangerous things happened to me. Some of the members of my crew and myself caught the Liberty Run to town to celebrate the occasion of my completed tour. Needless to say we did a pretty good job on the mild and bitters. Sometime before midnight I left the group to walk a young lady home that had helped us celebrate. I arrived back in the center of town, just in time to see the last of the Liberty Run trucks pulling out. I shouted to no avail, so I started walking toward the base at Harrington. After I had walked a short distance a British lorrie came by and picked me up. The driver took me to the point where the base road intersected the main road and I proceeded to walk toward the base. I can't be sure but I think I still had about three or four miles to go.

I was now beginning to worry. The picture of me in the guardhouse or swabbing the mess hall floor just when I should be heading for the States was not a pretty one. No sweat! Everyone knows that when a man becomes somewhat inebriated he is invincible, larger than life, much more handsome and sharp of wit.

While walking further I heard a vehicle approaching in the distance. It was laboring each time before reaching the crest of the small hills encountered. Now the wheels of my mind were really turning. All I had to do was jump into the ditch alongside the road and wait near the crest of the hill where I was, the fuel truck would slow down as it climbed the hill, I would jump on the back end and presto, a ride to the base. That is exactly what happened. The rest was going to be easy. The driver would approach the gate and stop, the M.P. would walk around the front of the truck to the driver's side for a credentials check, I would drop off the back, walk around the opposite side of the truck and be inside the gate. No problem! I guess I was to become invisible as well or that the M.P. would be so intent on scrutinizing the driver's papers that he would not see me walk away.

The terrain leveled out as we approached the base and the truck gained speed. When we were within a couple of hundred yards of the gate, the driver blinked his lights and honked his horn (remember this was near the end of the war in Europe and at least some trucks were running with their lights on). Security must have been very lax as well for the M.P. came out of his station and waved his flashlight and we flew through the gate without slowing down. I would estimate we were going about thirty or thirty-five miles per hour at this point. When we had gotten not far past the gate I started screaming to the driver to stop. He apparently could not hear me over the noise of the truck. We were now approaching the more populated portion of the base and men who had been on Liberty Run were walking along the side of the road to their huts. After we had passed several people, I saw the men from my crew, I was still hollering stop, and hanging on for dear life. When we passed they stopped walking, spotted me and just stood there with their mouths hanging open. When we neared the gate on the opposite end of the field I felt sure the guard would stop the truck leaving the base, but no, the same thing happened. The truck driver honked his horn, the guard came out and waved his flashlight and we were out the gate and headed for parts unknown.

This was now panic stage and we were moving too fast for me to attempt a

jump. Now visualize back in the olden days when the train robbers crawled across the top of the train to get to the locomotive and engineer. This is exactly what I did to reach the cab of this truck. I can't remember whether there was some sort of a catwalk or possibly flanged openings on the top to hold on to. I do know that while I was working my way over the top and to the cab, we went around several curves and each time I thought I would lose my grip and end up mangled and possibly dead alongside the road.

When I finally reached the front of the tank, there was another obstacle to overcome. The tank was higher than the cab with a considerable gap between the two. Somehow I managed this and began beating on the top of the cab and at the same time I leaned over and stuck my head in the window on the passenger side of the truck. You can imagine the expression on the truck driver's face as he slammed on the brakes and I hit the road running. I was quite a ways down the road headed back toward the base before the driver collected himself enough to proceed to wherever he was going.

As I continued to walk back to the base in the opposite direction from which I had originally started, a second pair of headlights approached. My first thought was to hit the ditch again and then I said to hell with it, enough is enough, I'll just take the consequences. I presume the mythical God of fate had gotten his kicks for one night for the approaching vehicle was a jeep with two happy faces aboard and they stopped and picked me up. This time when we reached the gate the officer driving the jeep stopped, the M.P. glanced inside, they both saluted and we entered the base.

The officer let me out near my hut and when I walked inside my crew mates were still talking about what they had just witnessed and were wondering how in the world I had ended up on the back end of the gasoline truck flying through the base. After I explained what had happened, one of them spoke up and said, "You just had to get one more mission in - a gas haul."

The above is a true account and is as clear to me today as it was forty-three years ago.

S/Sgt. Frank J. Miller
856th Squadron - 492nd Bomb Gp.
857th
858th Squadron - 801/492nd Bomb Gp.

ANOTHER GAS HAUL MISSION
IN SUPPORT OF PATTON'S ARMY
BY ROBERT W. FISH

In early September 1944 General Patton's Third Army tanks advanced so rapidly across parts of France, Belgium and Netherlands that they out ran their gasoline supply lines. The solution selected to assure the ground forces an adequate gasoline supply was to deliver gasoline by aircraft. The 492nd Bombardment Group was selected for this operation. Its B-24's were modified accordingly.

The gasoline for the surface vehicles of the ground forces was of a lower octane rating than that required to operate the aircraft engines. The B-24 fuel systems were therefore modified to assure that the two different qualities of fuel were kept segregated at all times. The auxiliary wing tanks of the B-24's were disconnected and blocked off to be used for surface transport fuel. Four hundred gallon gasoline tanks were installed in the bomb bays. Additional tanks holding approximately 1,000 gallons were installed aft of the bomb bays. The main wing tanks were reserved for aircraft quality gasoline to be used to power the aircraft engines.

At selected landing fields, mostly in Belgium, the Army Engineers established a system of pumps to remove the 80 octane surface transport fuel from the aircraft.

On September 21, 1944 the aircraft began hauling the fuel to the bases in Belgium. I took one of the early flights on this project. I wanted to personally evaluate the operation and ascertain the problems involved.

As soon as my aircraft came to a halt and I shut down the engines, the fuel handling personnel on the ground started pumping the motor fuel out of the aircraft tanks. The engineers had installed a system that could unload several aircraft simultaneously.

While my aircraft was being unloaded I met the Colonel in command of the engineers. We examined several areas of the grass field to assure ourselves that the surfaces would support our fully loaded B-24's.

The forward airfield we were on had been captured from the Germans just a few days before our operation began. The Germans had mined the field before they were driven from it. Our bomb disposal people were still exploding German mines on some areas.

As the Colonel from the engineers and one of his Captains walked across a grassy area with me, we came to what looked like a square five gallon tin can laying on the ground. As we walked past that can the Captain kicked it. Just as he kicked it the mine disposal crew exploded a land mine about a thousand feet from us. The Colonel and I both instinctively threw our bodies to the ground. I guess our reaction was that the tin can which the Captain had kicked had exploded. If that had actually been the case I would probably not be here today to write this account.

The Captain's Colonel was somewhat agitated. That Captain received a verbal reprimand (chewing out) that I'm sure he will remember for the rest of his life! I would bet money that he never again kicked another can!

Before the gas hauling operation ceased we had delivered almost a million gallons to the ground forces.

Because the 80 octane fuel was incompatible with our 100 octane aircraft fuel our auxiliary wing tanks were contaminated. They could not again be used for aircraft fuel. All of the tanks would have to be removed and new ones installed. There were not enough auxiliary tanks in the European theatre to accomplish this. The cost in manpower and time was prohibitive. The Air Force solved our problem by scrapping all of the aircraft used for this fuel hauling operation and by issuing our group all new B-24's.

CLOSE ENCOUNTER WITH THE MAQUIS

as related by

GEORGE JOHNSON

You may recall that Patton's 3rd Army was moving so fast across the Lowlands that his vehicles were beginning to run out of gas...tanks, trucks...our outfit was designated to haul gas. So they put four 500 gallon neoprene tanks in the bomb bay. Disconnected the so-called Tokyo tanks in the wing tips from the mains, and put automotive fuel in there. So we were carrying 2,500 gallons of automotive fuel in addition to our aircraft fuel. We were flying to a little airfield in Belgium which was really tricky to get into. As I recall, we eventually wound up with 3 B-24's off the end of the runway. The field had been a German fighter field for ME-109's and so the runways and taxi ways were not built for 4-engine airplanes loaded down as we were. Neither were they the length that we could have desired, so we learned to drag them over the tree tops and drop them on the runway. It was almost like making a carrier landing, get on the brakes and then pull off at the end.

Well, I think we were on our 6th mission and it was late in the afternoon, we had an airplane taxiing around to a point where the tanker trucks would tap into the automotive fuel. Filled up tankers would roll up on the Red Ball highway and they were off to the 3rd Army. Well, the guy in front of me was taxiing along, suddenly the taxi way caved in under his left gear. And you know a B-24, if it is bogged down, is a helpless thing. You can give it an awful lot of power but it just doesn't move. And the pilot tried to get his plane out and he just simply couldn't do it. There was nothing to do but cut the engines, wait for the engineers to send us some kind of tow vehicle which we were told by a handful of engineers who were on the field that it probably wouldn't be until morning.

Rather than spend a night in our airplane, we decided to walk into a little village that was nearby. It was in Belgium, can't remember the name of the village. So we strung out, we were told there were still snipers and I had my guys walking about 50 feet apart. Only 4 of us had weapons as I remember, myself, the co-pilot, bombardier and navigator, and we walked the 2 miles into the village. By this time it was dark. On the square was an inn. So we walked over to the inn and opened the doors into a kind of curtained vestibule. The doors had curtains over them and then there were another set of curtains after that.

We shut the doors, then we walked through the other set of curtains. We stepped into what was sort of a combination bar and dining room. Well, needless to say, when we walked in the proprietor and his wife, who were standing behind the bar cleaning glasses, were practically dumbfounded to see us and we couldn't converse because they couldn't speak English and we couldn't speak French.

We finally got the point over to them that we needed rooms and we'd like something to eat. Well, the Germans, when they left, had practically stripped the village. They left the innkeeper with a blanket for each bed. About the only food that he had left was potatoes stored in the basement and whatever he could scrounge in the daytime. I suppose some of the farmers around there helped him with some beef and whatever they were growing. Anyhow, the proprietor gave us rooms and they cooked up some potatoes and beef and they had some good Belgium beer. So we had a pretty fair meal, at least a hot meal. He also had a couple of late teenage daughters and they were getting music on the radio--music from London. So we were having a pretty good time taking turns dancing with the girls, drinking that good Belgium beer and while we were enjoying ourselves, this set of curtains parted and in walked as I recall, 7 of the ruggest guys I've ever seen. It looked like 7 "Rambos" walked into the room. These guys had bandoleers over their shoulders, pistols, knives and rifles. Couple of guys turned to me and said, "Who are they?" And I said I don't have the vaguest idea who they are.

Well these 7 guys just stood there looking at us. We sat there at our tables looking at them. Nobody was making a move. Finally one of my guys turned to me and said, "Well what are we gonna do?" The bartender and his wife hadn't said a word so I said, "Well I'm not going to let them get behind me." I stood up, backed against the wall, the other guys with me did the same and there we were...still standing there looking at each other. So one of the guys said, "Well what are we gonna do now?" And I said, "Well my gun isn't doing me any good here in my shoulder holster so I reached inside, pulled out my 45 and the other guys did the same thing.

At which point, the 7 guys, I mean they were cool, they just slowly lowered their rifles, hooked under their arms, cool as could be, and pointed them at us. By this time the proprietor finally got his voice back, I guess, and started yelling at us, "Le Maquis, Le Maquis." One of my guys said, "What the hell does Le Maquis mean?" I said these guys are the Maquis, they are the underground fighters. The proprietor looked at these 7 guys and he puts his hand up in the air and he says, "Le Americans, Le Americans." He says, "Boom-boom, boom-boom."

He's running his hand up and down like he's dropping bombs. Well the 7 guys put their rifles over their shoulders. They came over and embraced us and gave us that kiss business on each cheek and we ordered more beer and that party went on until about 2 o'clock in the morning, all of us taking turns dancing with the girls.

The proprietor and his wife pumping beer and we were fumbling through our respective languages trying to get to understand each other somehow. It turned out to be one hellava big evening, and everyone had a lot of fun. But I'll tell you, that for a while there the tension was so thick you could have cut it.

THE TRIP HOME

by

GEORGE WINDBURN

The war was over. We were cast adrift. What was there for us to do? We, our crew, had flown a trolley mission, a flight over to the continent with ground personnel, giving them an aerial view of bombed-out cities, as well as allied countries, over-flown enroute, showing further damage.

But then this ended when one day, in May, orders were cut for three crews to return to the States for R and R. And of course, for reassignment. We were listed first on the orders. At the time of this writing I don't remember just what my feelings were. If it had been unbridled joy I am sure I would remember that. I think it was more of a sense of the unknown that captured my emotions.

I know I was pleased with the prospect of "flying the ocean". That was a close link with Lindberg, a special memory for me as I had seen his New York parade up Fifth Avenue after he had returned to the States. It was a genuine link with my image of aviation, that segment I had been too young to join. While this was a long way from Spads and 07's, this was still not your everyday experience.

Getting from Harrington to the airfield in Prestwick, Scotland, was probably done by flying one of the B-24's there and leaving it to be flown, later, back to the States. At any rate, what I am telling you is my recollections some forty-four years after the facts.

The Scottish airfield was much larger than any I had been on. It was a regular terminal for cross-ocean flights used by several countries. We were to be there on a brief change-over. I remember being billited in a BOQ and sleeping there for one night.

What made that night's sleep so memorable was the temporary loss of my wallet which held some four hundred dollars, my month's pay. I had put my wallet inside my pillowcase, but wasn't so clever in the morning as I left it there. And on this morning we were going to get another plane and leave for our flight home.

Well, I did remember what I had done. I remember running back to the BOQ, finding my bed still unmade, my wallet still intact with the money, and then the run back to wherever I was meant to be.

Our return flight was not to be with just our crew. We were to take a few other passengers as well. And remembering the near disaster of the trolley flight with all four engines overheating due to tail-heavy loading of too many people in

the waist. I immediately settled the question of who was going to be where right away.

It wasn't passenger locations which was to be our big trouble. It was the fact every compass on board was contradictory to all the others. This was a repeat of a bombing mission we had flown earlier. All compasses crazy. Then we were at night and had the stars for me to synch myself to Charlie and his compass.

This was to be in daylight. The sun wouldn't do me any good. It was going to be Charlie's compass and I would use my gyro compass set according to the headings I was given. This wasn't the best of ways to set out on such a trip. But then the plane had those two big letters on each tail - WW, which said quite plainly that it was War Weary. So what could you expect? It was going to end up as scrap. The B-29's were the big bombers now, and we knew that we were headed back to the States as we were prime candidates for B-29 transition and a tour in the Pacific.

This wasn't the sort of flight we might have made back in Harrington in daylight. An "engineering flight", perhaps to check out a new engine or some such piece of maintainence which would have called for a test flight. That was done as a sort of "fire it up and let's go" mentality. You never left sight of the field, or maybe you would take a little unauthorized cross-country to eyeball all that was lost to you at night.

This was serious over-water business. You had to have talked over just what everybody was going to do and where, if you had to ditch the plane. And as pilot, ditching meant to me that it had to be about the best landing I ever made.

Yet, in the end the entire gaggle of planes that were to be that day's armada, did not take off with the precise flight pattern which we used for our bomber stream departure. And our pre-flight and engine run-ups were observed and listened to with unaccustomed alertness. After all, this was, to our observation and form 21 confirmation, a pretty suspect airplane. It was, in the end, the whole ballgame for us all. And for me, to be part of B-17's was very strange. I had the mentality of "us" (B-24's) and "them" (B-17's).

Obviously we did take off, but I don't remember that at all. What I do remember was the sight of some B-17's off to one side, and passing us, if memory serves me right. As I have said, the daylight, the B-17's made a quite different picture for me, and added to that, I really didn't know just what we were in for, as regarded the flight, and I didn't know just what was in store for me and future combat with B-29's. War in the Pacific did not becken to me.

The first leg of the flight was to end in Iceland at the airfield in or near Reykjavik. It wasn't a particularly long flight for a B-24. No fuel problems and Reykjavik would not be hard to find. Just a sort of slog it out hours in the air. Aside from a few sightings of other airplanes we made it without any events.

My main memory of the airfield was that it was a God forsaken place where the wind never stopped, the volcanic, gray soil was always in the air, and all the buildings were Nissen huts, with a generous embankment of that gray soil piled up around.

We spent just one night there, I'm glad to say. It must have been there that we were briefed about our next leg of the flight. The leg which would see us fly by Greenland. There was our only land-based emergency field. Otherwise it would be a ditching at sea. Naturally we wanted to make the field in Greenland closest to our flight path.

That field was Bluie West One. But what a field it was. The fatal attempts at landing there were emphasized first. And for many good reasons. There were limited places a landing strip could be carved out and Bluie West One was one of the best of the worst places.

You needed more than a road map to find it. It was tucked between steep mountain walls, at the end of a twisting flight path that gave no hint as to which way you should turn after each change of direction. The wrong turn, while flying low and slow, could end up as a smear on a wall which stopped your forward flying.

And the final bit of information was that the real and final turn which would reveal the airstrip to you was so quick that you had to be ready to go on down to a committed landing. Go arounds were not always possible. So much for confidence building.

Take off from here was the same strange mix of aircraft. Why did I think that B-24's and B-17's needed to be kept apart?

All of this had a familiar feel to it. We didn't know anybody else in the other planes. Quite like being back in Harrington for not only would the 856th have planes up for a bomb mission, but other squadrons in the group could and would have theirs. Again people we didn't know. It was strange how events kept us tent dwellers who stuck together as we lived with our self-imposed social restrictions. Our bonding took place in Walla Walla and never really stopped. We were a group who came in as "the new crews", and we stayed as we were --- "we've been together ever since then".

So the line-up of mixed planes, a stranger among strangers, daylight, crazy

compasses, strange people as passengers, a long flight stretching our fuel, a change in military life, etc., etc. And just like the night missions we would all end up strung out, flying our "best and correct" flight path towards the same common goal — Goose Bay, Gander.

Passing Greenland stands out vividly. We were on course, Greenland was seen off to our right. Quite a distance, but very large. Not exactly comforting though Bluie West One seemed more like a disaster than sanctuary.

Our compass was Charlie's and I reset my gyro compass from time to time. Down in the nose Charlie was taking sun shots with his sextant and up on the flight deck we were tuning in the ADF radio. Much to my surprise we were getting a perfect signal from Goose Bay way before we were supposed to.

And the ADF was telling us that we were going left of course. But could you really believe it when it was so early in the flight? We decided we could not and kept on with our navigation as it had been. And all the while the ADF was showing, by its arrow aimed at Goose Bay, that we were going on a course to the south of our goal.

This kept up for more time than I can recall today. I know we all were probably disquited by the conflicting information we were working with. But it took landfall to give us the final confirmation. Then we would have the actual coastline with its distinctive outlines to tell us, as we checked the maps.

We were south. A whole lot south. Now fuel was very critical. The two sight gauges on the flight deck which were the fuel level indicators took on a far more important role. We watched the lower and lower readings with increased anxiety. The parts of Canada we were over offered no place to sit down.

The ADF took us straight home and as I can now write about it, you have already guessed that we made it OK. But I do need to say that the next morning when we went back to the flight line I checked the paperwork and saw that our fuel refill indicated we ended the flight with a total of fifty gallons on board. That was a more than a little close.

Goose Bay still had snow in banks alongside the parking areas. This time as in Prestwick, we didn't go into hardstands after taxiing along perilious narrow taxi strips a hair's breadth away from B-24 eating mud. We had gobs of concrete to work with. It was hog heaven on the ground. If I remember correctly there was a penalty for taxiing your plane into the mud at Harrington.

The morning event all of us must recall would be the man-eating mosquitos. They could and did bite right through our leather A2 jackets. It got so bad that

we decided we would only be safe inside the airplane, buttoned up and sweating, while waiting to taxi and take off. New Jersey has nothing to compete regarding mosquitos.

Now our destination was to be Windsor Locks, Connecticut, U.S. of A. Just what would take place then was the real mystery.

The large and major land mass features of Canada made for easy pilotage and a far more secure feeling than the leg into Goose Bay. I had never flown over "my part of the world" before. All my flying had been far from hearth and home. I was going to enjoy piloting over parts of the world that looked and sounded familiar to me.

I don't know when we passed over the American border, but we must have done it. What is such a clear memory was the haze in the air when we were definitely over New England. I wanted a clear-as-a-bell view. I wasn't going to get it. It was something like my arrival in the UK and to my surprise found that while I could see quite clearly looking up, I could not see as clearly when looking forward or to the rear.

The haze, for me, proved to be a mental hazard. I didn't want to mess up finding Windsor Locks. That would be the final straw. I wanted a nice arrival.

Well, lost to me in memory as to just how that was done, I do remember the landing --- way too fast and a fancy brake job before we met the end of the active runway which had a substantial row of B-24 bombers parked there facing landing traffic. We managed to turn away just in time.

The rest of that day is lost to me. Except the event of standing in line in a hanger where we were asked to give back all our GI items. That meant our wrist watch and my Colt 45, a great pair of binoculars, etc. I wish I had kept the watch, the 45, and the sheepskin flying suit and boots. Uncle Sam wouldn't have missed a thing.

There it is. The end of the crossing. Not many dull moments. And given the plane we were given, not much dull flying either. I doubt there is anyone today who would volunteer to duplicate the route. I know I would be the first to stand aside.

None of us thought it was anything special then. And I don't today. We were once more the average crew flying the average equipment, doing just what was asked of us. No, not false modesty. Just an awareness that events and times can alter us all and we see in retrospect that there are times when any of us can be more than we would ever have suspected.

A REAL GHOST STORY

by

DOUGLAS D. WALKER

Mr. Sebastian H. Corriere
Unit Contact
492nd Bomb Group
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

From: Douglas D. Walker
Chairman, 801/492nd BG
Memorial Fund
10020 DeKoven Dr.
Tacoma, Wa. 98499

Dear Sebastian,

As you know, when my wife Jackie and I were visiting Harrington, England last May, we met John Hunt, a congenial farmer who owns the land adjacent to the previous location of the old 492nd Air Base.

He was kind enough to drive Jackie and I around several farms next to his to show us the remaining remnants of the old runways, as well as the surviving Administration Building and the S-2 Nissen Hut.

Since then, John and I have corresponded quite frequently. He is a "buff" of the 8th Air Force WWII activities and, of course, is particularly interested in the 492nd Bomb Group doings. He has volunteered to help us in our efforts to install a monument in Harrington, once we've collected the necessary funds. (Help with picking a proper location; securing property and permits, etc.)

John has been pursuing a hobby of collecting stories and anecdotes from the older "locals" about their remembrances of the 492nd activities at and around Harrington in WWII. (When he is not working from dawn to dusk on his 600 acre farm.)

Last week, John sent me a letter relating an amazing story told to him recently by a farm worker who is employed by Sir Gerald Glover, the present owner of the large farm (next to John's) which once contained the 492nd Air Base.

The story John related in his letter of December 14, 1985 is as follows:

"Today, one of Sir Gerald Glover's farm workers told me a tale that I didn't believe, but has a seasonal appeal.

In October 1967, Roy Leening, the farm worker in question, was plowing a field between Bullock's Pen Spinney and Faxton Corner (wooded areas) located about 250 yards from the east end of the old East/West runway. He turned his tractor on the head land and made a fresh row. When he was about 50 yards from the head land he looked back at his work. Something suddenly caught his eye.

On the fieldside stood a group of men. "Who's that?," he said to himself and looked again, more intently. "Without question," Roy said, "they were WWII American fliers, dressed in sheepskin lined jackets and flying boots and looking very ragged, as though they had been in a crash."

Roy thought that a film crew, or the like, had turned up to take some shots at Harrington.

Arriving at the far end of his furrow, Roy turned his tractor to make the return run. He looked ahead to the fair head land and the airmen still stood there hardly moving.

About 50 yards from the group, Roy's tractor engine started to pull harder and instinctively he looked 'round at the plow. "Just a tough spot," he thought and looked forward again to once more examine the Americans.

In his own words, "I almost fainted. They had gone!" Not a footprint or any other evidence suggested they had been there. "They were ghosts," Roy said.

Roy went right home. It was only 4:00 p.m. and he usually worked until 10:00 p.m. --- but he was so shocked at what he had seen; he could work no longer.

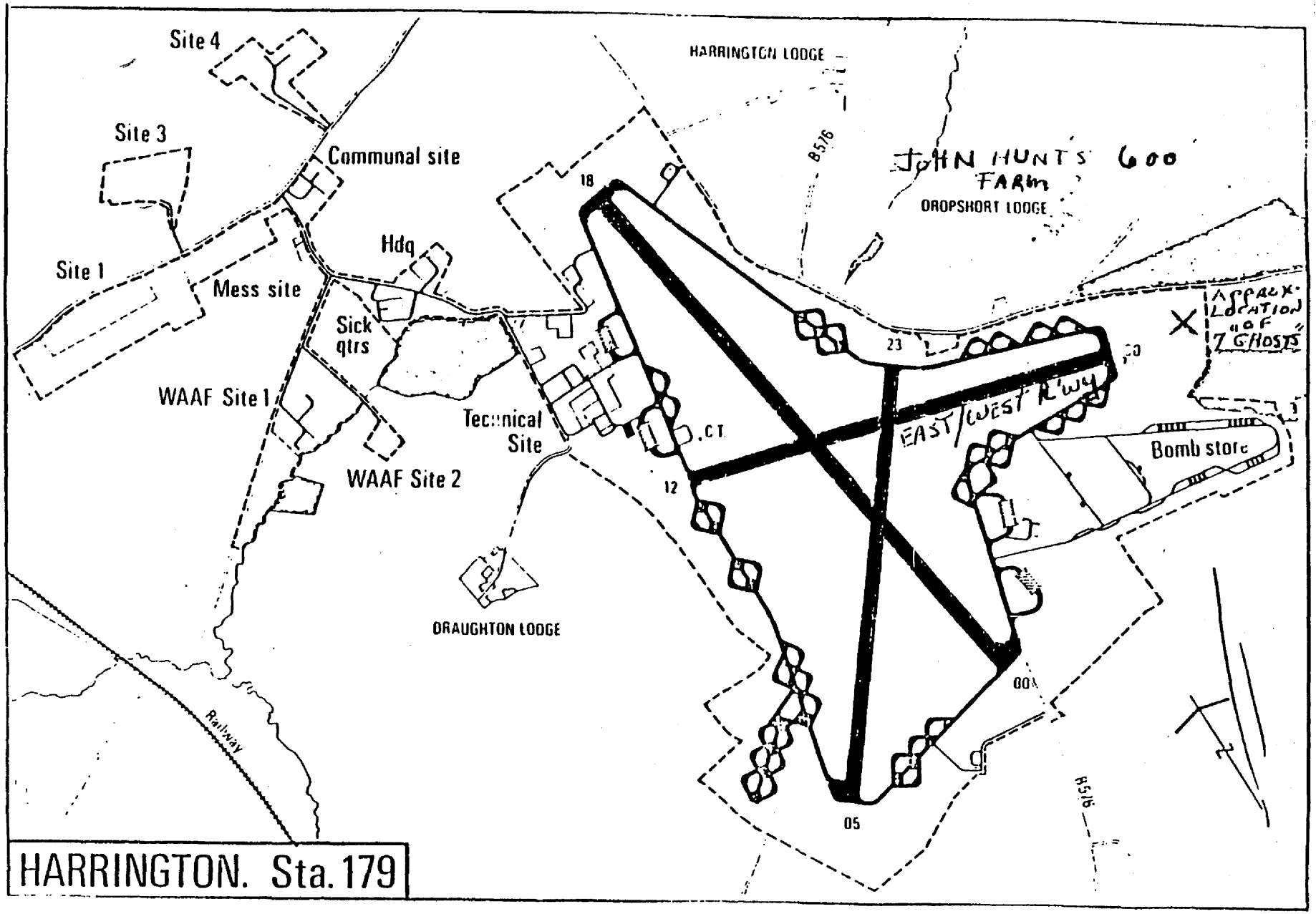
Doug, this is the story as it was told to me by Roy Leening. Roy said that he had counted seven American airmen."

Sebastian, like most folks, I don't consciously belive in ghosts. However, when I read something like this, related by a hard working farm worker who has nothing obvious to gain --- I begin to wonder. Don't you?

The attached copy of an aerial map of the old Harrington Air Base shows the approximate location of the place where Roy Leening saw the seven "ghosts".

* * * * * * *

Archie Boiselle of South Hadley, Mass., wrote us regarding the "7 Harrington Ghosts" story we related in a 1986 newsletter. Seems Archie has a possible "answer". He said, "In June or July (of 1944), we had a new crew take off for a practice night drop close to the base, but they never did drop their load, nor were ever heard of again. Complete mystery! As to their fate, this may be an explanation for the apparition to the farmhand at Harrington." (Any of you remember such a "mystery" flight disappearance?)


Site 4
Site 3
Site 1
Communal site
Mess site
Hdq
Sick qtrs
WAAF Site 1
WAAF Site 2
Technical Site
DRAUGHTON LODGE
HARRINGTON LODGE
B576
JOHN HUNTS 600 FARM
DROPSHORT LODGE
18
23
12
00
05
C.T.
EAST/WEST R'WY
APPROX. LOCATION "OF 7 GHOSTS"
Bomb store
Railway
HARRINGTON. Sta. 179

MEDALS

(Extract from March 1984 801/492nd Bombardment Group Newsletter.)

In the last newsletter in which the official history of the 492nd Bomb Group was printed from Maurer Maurer (ed) it was noted that the French Croix de Guerre with Palm had been awarded to it. In response to the several inquiries about it from the membership interested, here are the answers. From the American Order of the French Croix de Guerre, Inc. comes the following: 492nd Bomb Group, Hq & Hq Sq., 856th Bomb Sq., 857th Bomb Sq., 858th Bomb Sq., 859th Bomb Sq., French Croix de Guerre with Palm, awarded under Decision No. 332, 17 September 1946, by the President of the Provisional Government of the French Republic, with the following citation: A magnificent unit, distinguished by its dash, courage and spirit of sacrifice. From 4 January to 17 September 1944, it flew over 2,000 night and day combat missions, in unprotected planes, over French territory that was still occupied. It dropped, by parachute, many arms and much equipment for the use of the French forces of the interior, under conditions which were rendered perilous by fighter planes and by a very vigilant anti-craft. It thus made a great contribution to the Allied war and to the liberation of French territory.

They also say: With regard to the citation we wish to point out that these were <u>unit</u> citations which did not carry with them any medals for members of the unit. This compares with <u>individual</u> citations of the Croix de Guerre where individuals of the Armed Forces were decorated for specific acts of bravery or heroism. Where an individual was personally decorated with the Croix de Guerre by either the French or Belgiums he would be entitled to wear the medal. The citation in orders or award of the Croix de Guerre to a <u>unit</u> does not authorize the wearing of this decoration by an individual.

The American Order of the French Croix de Guerre, Inc. also said they were open for Associated Membership to veterans who served with units that had been cited with the French or Belgium Croix de Guerre. The French Government did authorize a medal known as the Medaille de la France Liberee to the members of the Allied Forces that participated in the liberation of France and its territories. Similarly, a medal known as the Belgium Commemorative Medal was also authorized. Both these medals are no longer issued, however, they are available to their members as collector's items.

I am giving their address for those interested. They sent one membership application, but those that want one, here is the address: AMERICAN ORDER OF THE CROIX DE GUERRE, INC., 325 Spring St. Room 346, New York, NY 10013.

A toll-free number, 1-800-873-3768, has been established to take requests for official application forms and to provide information about the medal. Former prisoners of war or their next of kin should send their request for the medal to Air Force Reference Branch, National Personnel Records Center, 9700 Page Blvd., St. Louis, MO 63132. Request for the medal must include basic personnel information so that the Records Center can verify the applicant's former POW status. Information should include full name, ASN, Social Security No., VA claim number, date and place of birth, branch of service, unit of assignment when captured, and the dates of confinement and release as a POW.

A "GONGING" CEREMONY GONE AWRY

by

ROBERT W. FISH

On September 22, 1944 several members of the 492nd Bombardment Group were awarded the French Croix de Guerre at a ceremony at Harrington Air Base, Station 179. Those members receiving these awards were:

Captain James Baker
Staff Sgt. Leo Babik
Lt. Col. Robert Boone
Captain Frederick Burk
Major Claude Cummings
Captain Frederick Edwards
Lt. Col. Robert Fish
Captain Walter Garnett
Teck. Sgt. Armen Hartzie
Teck. Sgt. George Larson
1st Lt. Robert Martin
Captain Charles Matt
Teck. Sgt. James Mays
Major Benjamin Mead
Staff Sgt. Horace Ragland
Major Bestow Rudolph
Major Lyman Sanders
Teck. Sgt. Frank Scigliano
Captain Charles Shull
Captain Wilmer Stapel
Lt. Col. Rodman St. Clair
Major Charles Teer
Major Edward Tresmer

Lt. General Koeing, highest ranking French general in the United Kingdom, made the presentations. Lt. General James Doolittle, Brigadier General Partridge, Brigadier General Sanford were present.

The day before the presentation ceremony I called General Doolittle's Aide to brief him how to get from Hq. 8th Air Force to Harrington. I surely didn't want my top boss getting lost enroute to this event. The Aide, instead of listening to me assured me that he had his roadway route all planned and he didn't need my help.

On the morning of September 22 I sent military police out on all of the principle roads leading to Harrington. Their missions were to intercept the General officer's cars and guide them to Harrington.

By the planned time all had arrived except General Doolittle. None of my police patrols could find his car.

General Koeing and our other honored guests assembled at my humble quarters to await his arrival. About half an hour later I glanced out the window and saw General Doolittle coming up the walk. I dashed out to meet him. If there is anything a base commander doesn't like is having a loose General, especially his boss, wandering unescorted about his base.

General Doolittle apologized for being late. His Aide had gotten him lost. They finally came down a country lane on the southeast side of the field. They came to a locked gate. His Aide used a 45 to shoot the lock off the gate. They entered the base, drove down a runway to the tower and got directions to my quarters. General Doolittle observed that our security was not very good because he broke into our base and drove the length of the base without being challenged. And all that while I had most of my Air Police out on the highways looking for him!!

Life just isn't fair!!!!!!!

NOTE FROM DOUG WALKER

Re

"CROIX DE GUERRE 39/45 AVEC PALME"

I have had many inquiries about the Croix de Guerre, again. At the end of the newsletter I will have a copy of a letter I got from the Air Attache in the French Embassy in Washington, dated April 12, 1984. It had taken four months for them to reply to a letter of mine. This should answer those questions. Unless you were mentioned or awarded it personally, forget about it. Instead, get a, what the French call, Croix de Guerre diploma. I mentioned this in one of the earlier newsletters. I got one and it is very nice looking, in color and in French, diploma. Very impressive hanging on the wall. For more information, write to: THE AMERICAN ORDER OF THE FRENCH CROIX DE GUERRE, INC., 325 Spring St., New York, NY 10013. When ordered, it takes from 3 to 6 months to come from France.

* * * * * * *

ITEM FROM DECEMBER 1984 NEWSLETTER

For those interested, there are two medals that were issued by the French and Belgium after the war for those who helped in the liberation of their country and people. One is the Medaille de la France Liberee and the Belgium Commemorative Medal. They are no longer issued but the AMERICAN ORDER OF THE FRENCH CROIX DE GUERRE, of whom I have mentioned in other newsletters has obtained a small supply from sources in France and can be obtained for a sum. For those who would like something for their den from France a diploma of the Association Nationale de Croix de Guerre. I just got mine in today's mail, and it is very nice. Written in French, in calligaphy, in ink. For further information write AMERICAN ORDER OF THE FRENCH CROIX DE GUERRE, INC., 325 Spring St., New York, NY 10013. For those who had been decorated personnaly, give the citation number, date and place of award. That is all I have to pass on. For those interested, the rest is up to you.

* * * * * * *

The long-awaited POW Medal is now available to 142,000 former American prisoners of war and their next of kin. The medal is free to all servicemen and women who were taken prisoner and held captive after April 5, 1917, the Defense Department said.

R E S T R I C T E D

HEADQUARTERS
AAF STATION 179

APO 639
11 May 1944

SUBJECT: Commendation.

TO : All Ground Personnel this Station..

1. All ground personnel of the 801st Bombardment Group (H) (Prov) are cited for exceptionally meritorious achievement from the time of the Group's arrival at this station to the present. Faced with the task of setting up for operations in the shortest possible time, officers and enlisted men of all sections gave their best efforts, in a spirit of unselfish cooperation, to expedite a smoothly functioning organization. The Group's operational successes during this period are the result of the collective efforts of all the ground sections. Each man has borne his share of the work - whether it was maintaining the aircraft and equipment, or supplying the innumerable needs of the men engaged in the Group's activities. Without the constant, wholehearted support of all ground sections, the Group's record of achievement would not have been possible.

2. I wish personally to commend all of you for your contribution. With your continued cooperation, we will achieve still greater success in the future.

CLIFFORD J. HEFLIN,
Lt. Colonel, A. C.,
Commanding.

R E S T R I C T E D

GENERAL ORDERS
No. 43

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
WASHINGTON 25, D. C., *19 December 1950*

	Section
GENERAL	I
LIST OF UNITS AND CITATIONS	II
RESCISSIONS	III

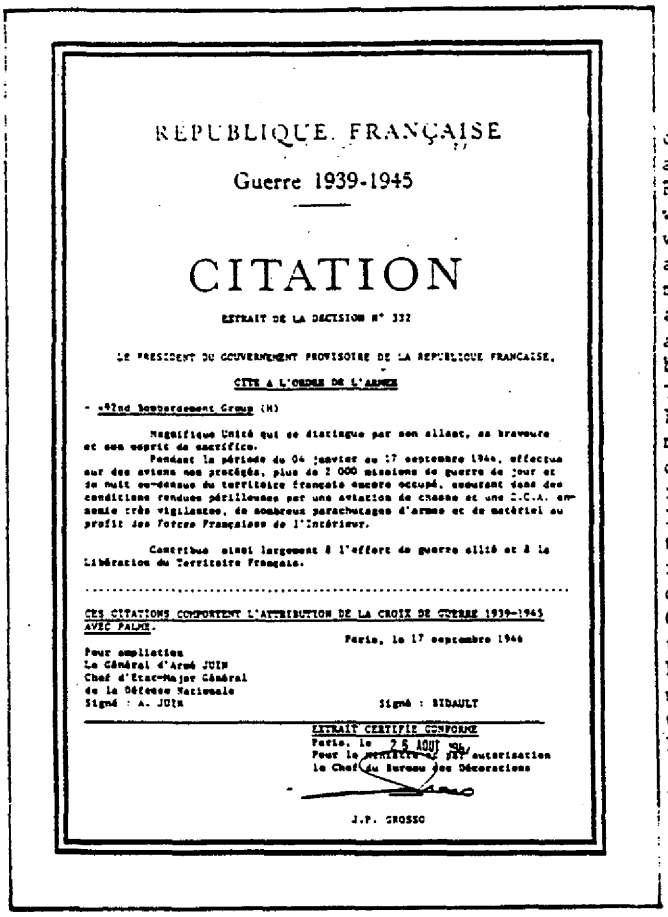
I—*GENERAL.*—1. Confirmation.—The following list of units of the United States Army to which decorations have been awarded by cobelligerent foreign governments during World War II, together with the citations therefor, is confirmed in accordance with current regulations.

2. Wearing of foreign decorations.—The wearing of foreign decorations by individuals will be in accordance with AR 260–15 and the following:

a. French and Belgian Fourrageres.— Normally, two citations are required before a unit becomes eligible for the award of the Fourragere. The award of the Fourragere is not automatic, but must be specifically authorized by decree of the respective foreign government. A citation in orders or award of the Croix de Guerre to a unit does not authorize the wearing of the decoration by an individual. Likewise, no award of the Croix de Guerre to an individual will serve to constitute eligibility to wear the Fourragere. The Fourragere may be worn permanently by individuals who participated with the unit in both actions for which the unit was cited. The French Fourragere may be worn temporarily by individuals assigned to the unit subsequent to the time the award was made, but only so long as they remain with such unit. The Belgian Fourragere is not authorized to be worn temporarily.

b. Netherlands Orange Lanyard.—The Netherlands Orange Lanyard may be worn permanently by individuals who participated with the unit in the action for which it was cited and temporary wearing of the Lanyard is not authorized.

492d Bomb Gp	2,12,30,35,40	DUC. 20Mar45-25Apr45. WDGO 29/47.	
Headquarters			H-FCDGW/P (4Jan44-17Sep44) DAGO 43/50.



REPUBLIQUE FRANÇAISE

Guerre 1939-1945

CITATION

EXTRAIT DE LA DECISION N° 332

LE PRESIDENT DU GOUVERNEMENT PROVISOIRE DE LA REPUBLIQUE FRANCAISE,

CITE A L'ORDRE DE L'ARMEE

- 492nd Bombardement Group (H)

Magnifique Unité qui se distingue par son allant, sa bravoure et son esprit de sacrifice.

Pendant la période du 04 janvier au 17 septembre 1944, effectua sur des avions non protégés, plus de 2 000 missions de guerre de jour et de nuit au-dessus du territoire français encore occupé, souvent dans des conditions rendues périlleuses par une aviation de chasse et une D.C.A. ennemie très vigilantes, de nombreux parachutages d'armes et de matériel au profit des Forces Françaises de l'Intérieur.

Contribua ainsi largement à l'effort de guerre allié et à la Libération du Territoire Français.

CES CITATIONS COMPORTENT L'ATTRIBUTION DE LA CROIX DE GUERRE 1939-1945 AVEC PALME.

Paris, le 17 septembre 1944

Pour ampliation
Le Général d'Armé JUIN
Chef d'Etat-Major Général
de la Défense Nationale
Signé : A. JUIN

Signé : DIDAULT

EXTRAIT CERTIFIE CONFORME
Paris, le 25 AOUT 87
Pour le ministre et par autorisation
le Chef du Bureau des Décorations

J.P. GROSSO

CROIX de GUERRE with Palm Branches

The Croix de Guerre certificate awarded by the Provisional Government of the French Republic. The Croix de Guerre was awarded at the end of the war but nothing was presented at that time. Jean Remy, former French resistance fighter, attended the reunion and was at the farewell banquet to hand out the certificates. The Citation to the 492nd Bombardment Group (H) for its magnificent bravery and spirit of sacrifice, during the period between Jan. 4 to Sept. 17, 1944. Flew, with no protection, more than 2000 sorties, both day and night over occuppied French Territory. Contributions of great effort that led to the Liberation of France. This Citation recognizes the competence of the Cross OF War, 1939-1945 with Palm Branches.

This extract of the Citation was issued in Paris, Aug. 17, 1987 by the authorization of the Chief of the Bureau of Decorations, J.P. Grosso.

From SAFCC
TO CO HAJ
RESTRICTED

FOLLOWING MESSAGE IS REPEATED FOR THE INFORMATION OF ALL CONCERNED COLON QUOTE THE OPERATIONAL SUCCESSES OF THE 801st PROV GROUP ARE TO BE HIGHLY COMMENDED PD IT IS MY DESIRE THAT THE GROUP STAFF CMA COMBAT CREWMEN CMA AND MAINTENANCE PERSONNEL BE CONGRATULATED FOR THE OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENTS BEING MADE BY THIS UNIT PD SGD SPAATZ PD UNQUOTE QUOTE IT IS GRATIFYING TO FORWARD SUCH A MESSAGE PD PLEASE CONVEY IT TO THE GROUP COMDR TOGETHER WITH MY OWN CONGRATULATIONS PD THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE 801st MERIT THE HIGHEST PRAISE PD SGD DOOLITTLE UNQUOTE IT IS WITH PLEASURE THAT I NOTE THIS COMMENDATION AND THE ADDITIONAL GRATIFYING REMARK OF GENERAL DOOLITTLE PD PLEASE ADD MY HEARTIEST CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL CONCERNED PD END.

----------HILL----------

SPECIAL FORCE HEADQUARTERS
* * * * *
London, W.1.

E X T R A C T

6 June 1944

TO: Commanding Officer, 801st Bomb Gp (Prov) Station 179
APO 639, U. S. Army.

THROUGH : Supreme Commander, Allied Expeditionary Force
Commanding General, USSTAF
Commanding General, Eighth Air Force, Bomber Command.

1. This Headquarters, at the direction of SHAEF, placed a high priority on operations into the heavily defended areas of **********and**********during the last operational period. Without hesitancy you immediately diverted your efforts to the accomplishment of these particularly hazardous operations with unprecedented success.

2. It is my desire to express my appreciation and compliments to you and your flight and ground personnel for your courageous work, and the distinguished record you have built throughout the flying of ********missions.

3. This Headquarters realizes the complexities of the daily coordination and cooperation you are required to maintain with both British and U. S. ground installations, the Royal Air Force and this Joint Headquarters. The great part you are playing in making the efficient operation of our total effort in support of ********is of the highest value.

S/ Joesph F. Haskell
T/ JOSEPH F. HASKELL
Colonel, GSO

AG 330. 13-1 GCT - AGM 1st Ind.
SUPREME HEADQUARTERS, ALLIED EXPEDITIONARY FORCE, APO 757, 9 June 44

TO: Commanding Officer, 801st Bomb Group (Prov) Station 179
APO 639, U. S. Army.

THROUGH: Commanding General USSTAF
Commanding General Eighth Air Force, Bomber Command.

For the Supreme Commander:

S/ E. C. Boehnke
T/ E. C. BOEHNKE
Colonel, A.G.D.
Adjutant General

373.2 2nd Ind. June 14, 1944
HEADQUARTERS, UNITED STRATEGIC AIR FORCES IN EUROPE, APO 633.

TO: Commanding General, Eighth Air Force, APO 634.

S/ J.B.G.
T/ J.B.G.

373.2 3rd Ind.
HQ., EIGHTH AIR FORCE, AAF STATION 101, APO 634, 19 June 1944.

TO: Commanding General, VIII air Force Composite Command, APO 639.

The Commanding General desires to add his expression of appreciation for the splendid manner in which recent vitally important missions, involving great hazards, have been accomplished.

By command of Lieut General DOOLITTLE:

S/ Edward E. Toro
T/ EDWARD E. TORO
Colonel, ACD
Adjutant General

373.2 4th Ind. C-D-10
HEADQUARTERS, VIII AIR FORCE COMPOSITE COMMAND, AAF STATION 113, APO 639, 26 June 1944.

TO: Commanding Officer, Army Air Force Station 179, APO 639.

I take great pleasurein forwarding this letter of Commendation, and desire that the contents thereof be made known to both air and ground personnel under your command by methods consistent with security regulations.

S/ Edmund W. Hill,
T/ EDMUND W. HILL
Brigadier General, U.S. Army
Commanding

373.2 5th Ind. A-1
HEADQUARTERS, AAF STATION 179, APO 639, U. S. ARMY 29 June 1944.

TO: All units, this Command.

In concurrance with the preceding indorsement it gives me the greatest pleasure to forward this commendation to you. I wish to take this opportunity to extend my heartiest congratulations to each officer and enlisted man under my command for their cooperation and devotion to duty in our past operations. With this close and harmonious unity our operations in the future will be even more succrss-ful.

S/ Clifford J. Heflin,
T/ CLIFFORD J. HEFLIN
Colonel, Air Corps
Commanding

S.F.H. .

MJB/MB/3215

D.O. 8 Jun 44

Dear Colonel

May I be permitted to express to you and all under your command at Harrington the warmest appreciation of the French Section for the magnificent work accomplished by crews from your Station during recent weeks. The record of successes of Harrington is really remarkable, and we have the highest possible admiration for the tenacity and perseverance of pilots in finding dropping points in difficult conditions.

I am glad to say that our men in the field have been doing excellent work in the last few days, and are all clamouring for more materials to go on doing it.

All your friends in the French Section (and that means all the officers in the Section) join me in congratulating you and all associated with you on the fine successes achieved.

Yours

Maurice Buckmaster

Colonel C. Heflin,
U.S. . .,
Harrington.

SPECIAL FORCE HEADQUARTERS,

Block II, Montagu Mansions,
Montagu Street,
LONDON, W.1.

EEMF/2650.

24 Sep 44.

My dear Fish,

In Colonel Heflin's absence I would like to thank you and all the Officers and men in your Group who have so excellently been carrying out Missions for us. I would like you to feel how much we appreciate the work you have done, and the many ways in which you have all gone out of your way to help us.

From the reports of those people who are now returning from their Missions in France in great numbers I hear nothing but praise for the way in which your operations were carried out.

May I offer you my best wishes in your new venture.

Yours sincerely,

E. Morton-Ferguson

Lt.Col. Robert W. Fish,
Commanding Area T,
Station 179.

DR/US/ 1931
TO : AL/US

16 June 1944
FROM : D/R

---

1. A message just received from Marquis* reads as follows:

"Priere transmettre mes remerciements au Colonel Heflin et a son equipage." **

2. Would you kindly convery the above to Colonel Heflin.

* - Marquis - Code name of an agent.

** - "Please transmit my thanks to Colonel Heflin and to his outfit."

HEADQUARTERS J-A-4
ARMY AIR FORCE STATION 179
Office of the Group Communications Officer

20 June 1945

SUBJECT: Letter of Commendation

TO : All Communications and Radar Personnel, 492nd Headquarters, 406th, 856th, 857th, 858th Bombardment Squadrons, and 408th Air Service Group.

1. It is my desire to express my great appreciation and admiration to each and everyone of you for your efforts in making this an efficient operating section. Now that our work in this Theater is at an end, I take this opportunity to commend you.

2. Many of you have been with this Group since its activation and have witnessed its growth from month to month, until its development into an outstanding organization. The remainder of you who have joined us since its activation have brought new skills and vigor to further advance the good record already established.

3. Whatever the communications and radar successes of the Group may be, and in my opinion they are very high, is the direct result of your labors, your loyalty, and your devotion to duty. It has often been said that a command organization or section is no better than its members and you men have amply proven that statement by your excellent work.

4. Again I want to thank all of you and wish each one of you good luck for a speedy return to the U.S.A., and most of all, return to civilian life with lots of success.

Frank M Silkebaken

FRANK M. SILKEBAKEN
Major, Air Corps,
Gp Communications O.

A GATHERING OF THE LIBERATORS

Submitted by

VIRGIL W. FALKNER
CMS USAF retired
5th Bomb Group
394th Bomb Squadron

Once the skies were darkened with their numbers. It went to war and did more than its share in liberating people of the world but what of today? As we all know, only a handful remain where they can be seen. Some may still exist on one of the forsaken atolls of the Pacific but those known to exist are listed here as a matter of information.

1. LB-30 located at Harlingen, Texas, belonging to the Confederate Air Force.
2. B-24 located at the Air Force Museum, Dayton, Ohio. Serial No. 42-72843, the only known D model in existence.
3. B-24 J located at New Delhi, India. Serial No. 44-44213.
4. B-24 J located at Topeka, KS. belongs to Yesterdays Air Force. Serial No. 44-44272.
5. B-24 J located at Barksdale, LA. Serial No. 44-48781.
6. B-24 J located at Liberal, KS. belongs to Dave Tallichet. Serial No. 42-50551. (Tail number on aircraft is 250551.)
7. B-24 J located at Pima Air Museum, Tucson, AZ. Serial No. 44-44175.
8. B-24 J located at Stowe, MA. belongs to Bob Collings. Serial No. 44-44052.
9. B-24 L located at Ottowa, Canada, belongs to Canadian National Aeronautical collection. Serial No. 44-50154.
10. B-24 L located at RAF, Cotsford, Hendon, England. Serial No. 44-50206.
11. B-24 M located at Lackland AFB, San Antonio, TX. Serial No. 44-51228.
12. B-24 J located at Castle AFB. Serial No. unknown. Starting to be restored.

The aircraft shown as being located at Stow, MA is actually being restored at Kissimmee, FL. The Collings Foundation is located in Stow, MA.

Dave Tallichet's "Delectable Doris" at Liberal, KS, needs an engine or did at last report, so being at Ft. Worth is high improbable.

For those of you who wish to participate in the restoration of the B-24 J 44-44175 at the Pima Air Museum in Tucson, AZ (Shoot.....You're Covered) can do

so by making a check payable to Pima Air Museum with a notation "B-24 Memorial Fund" so the money is set aside for that purpose. Mail your contribution to Virgil Falkner, 8936 Calle Juhne, Tucson AZ 85715. Virgil can then record the contribution for the unit whose member made the contribution.

B-24 ANNIVERSARY

From the LIBERATOR CLUB

A WW II airplane that made a major contribution to winning the was -- but lost the popularity battle -- will be honored in 1989, the 50th Anniversary of its first flight. It is the B-24 Liberator.

To salute the Liberator on its 50th Anniversary, crews will convene May 19-21, 1989 in Fort Worth, Texas, site of one of five production plants assembling more than 18,000 of the aircraft in its various designations.

On December 29, 1939, less than nine months after the prototype took shape from the designers' blueprints, a four-engine aircraft that was to be called the Liberator became airborne from Lindberg Field in San Diego, Ca.

As the most producey aircraft in the U. S. during the war years, the Liberator became the workhorse in the global struggle against the Axis powers.

But its admirers were limited mainly to its crews. Even official brass were not among fans of this slab-sided, barnlike four-engine craft with the great twin-tailed signature. Nonetheless, the B-24Liberator won honors -- and respect -- by flying longer missions, for longer hours, with greater cargo and bomb loads than any competitor until the introduction of the B-29.

Information is available for the events by contacting the International B-24 Liberator Club, P. O. Box 841, San Diego, Ca. 92112

A RESTORED B-24

from

FIGHTER FORUM

HOMESTEAD AFB

19 JANUARY 1990

ONE MILLION SPENT ON RESTORATION

The world's only fully restored World War II Consolidated B-24 bomber Liberator, and two WW II fighters, a P-51 "Mustang" and a P-40 "Kittyhawk" will land between 3:00 and 5:00 p.m., at the Kendall-Tamiami airport Sunday. The B-24 will be escorted into the Weeks Air Museum. This event re-creates a moment in the past of WW II aircraft that protected this nation in its time of peril.

Everyone is invited to see the vintage aircraft land. There is no charge for people interested in seeing the fly-in.

People who would like to come out to the airport early may tour the Weeks Air Museum, the home of many vintage and WW II aircraft. The museum costs $4 for adults, $3 for senior citizens and $2 for children.

On Monday, the B-24 will be open for tours all day outside the Air Museum. A donation of $4 per person is requested for touring the B-24 inside and out. Memorabilia of this aircraft, T-shirts, caps, photos, etc. will be on sale at the aircraft.

Early in WW II, the B-17 "Flying Fortress" got most of the heavy bomber publicity, but the B-24 could carry more bombs faster and farther than the B-17.

More than 18,000 Liberators in a number of versions were flown by every branch of the U.S. Armed Forces and by many foreign nations. They proved themselves in every theater of war in a wide variety of missions.

HISTORY

The B-24's history began in January 1939 when Army Air Corps Maj. Gen. Henry "Hap" Arnold asked Consolidated Aircraft Co., one of the companies that later merged to form General Dynamics, to design a strategic bomber that could "fly the skin off any rivals." The company made an amazing response. In less than a year, the San Diego-built XB-24 made its maiden flight, and the Liberator went on to become not only the most produced American military aircraft of WW II but of all time.

By the end of the war, Consolidated-Vultee (Corvair) workers had turned out 9,760 Liberators in many versions. Of these, 6,726 were built in San Diego and 3,034 were built in Fort Worth. Liberators producted by other companies brought the total to 18,479. General Dynamics' Fort Worth Division, which now produces the F-16 Fighting Falcon, owes its birth to the insatiable wartime demand for the bomber, which could carry a load of 8,800 pounds of bombs up to 3,000 miles, at a speed of more than 200 miles an hour at an altitude of 28,000 feet.

The B-24 did not receive as much public acclaim as did the B-17 and, later, the B-29 but its crews usually considered the B-24 a good and faithful servant, and it has a solid place in history.

RESTORATION

The Liberator that will be landing at Tamiami is the world's only fully restored and flyable Consolidated B-24.

The B-24 has been returned to factory-like condition under the auspices of the nonprofit Collings Foundation of Stow, Mass., and has been given the name "All American."

The Collings B-24 was delivered to the U.S. Army Air Forces. However, in October of 1944 it was transferred to the Royal Air Force, which used it for patrol and bombing missions in the Pacific. It saw considerable action against Japanese shipping.

At the war's end, it was abandoned by the RAF in a bomber graveyard at Khanpur, India, and did not fly until 1948, when it was one of 36 B-24's restored by the Indian Air Force. It flew for the Indian Air Force for 20 years and was retired in 1968. In 1981, it was bought by Doug Arnold of Blackbushe, England, a WW II aircraft collector. It was disassembled and flown to England in a cargo plane and was stored in a hanger with Arnold's Spitfires, Avro Lincoln bomber and other WW II aircraft.

Arnold advertised the B-24 for sale in 1984 "as is," and, after prolonged negotiations, Robert F. Collings acquired it. After a sea voyage of about three weeks, the B-24 arrived in Boston harbor and then was trucked to Stow, Mass. One cradle held the 64-foot fuselage, one held the 55-foot center wing section, and two 40-foot-long containers held the remaining parts.

Collings said that the foundation at first intended to restore the plane for static display only but was convinvced to restore it to flying status by former B-24 crew members in the area. "This made it about five times more of a project

than just a static display," Collings said. "We were convinced by the argument that only about 2,000 people a year would see it in a static display but two million might see it on a nationwide tour."

Preliminary restoration work for the static display was started in 1985 by Massachusetts volunteers, about half of whom were associated in some way - former B-24 crewmen or sons of crewmen - with B-24's in WW II. When it was decided to make the plane a total flying restoration. Collings contacted Tom Reilly Vintage Aircraft, Inc., in Kissimmee, Fla., about doing the work with its airframe and powerplant mechanics, supported by volunteers who restored the turrets, armament, radios, oxygen system and cosmetic details. Emerson Electric of St. Louis, Mo., sponsored work on the Emerson Electric nose turret, PPG Industries of Pittsburgh supplied turret glass and United Technologies of Hartford, Conn., donated a Norden bombsight.

The wings, tail group, flaps and other parts were shipped to Florida in June of 1987, and the fuselage followed in 1988.

Collings estimates that more than 80,000 man hours were expended in the restoration at a cost of more than $1 million. "If you consider the volunteer work and donated parts and materials, the cost would have been about $1.4 million," Collings said. "This has probably been the most extensive antique airplane restoration in history."

"About one-third of the cost of the restoration has been contributed by 27 corporate and 1,500 individual donations and the rest by significant loans by the foundation," Collings said. "Hopefully, now that many more people can see the aircraft, their contributions will pay off the loans," he said.

The Collings B-24 was named "All American" in honor of a 15th Air Force B-24 with the same name in World War II. The original "All American" set a record when its gunners shot down 14 enemy fighters in a single raid over Germany on July 25, 1944. The plane was lost on October 4, 1944, when it was shot down over Yugoslavia.

MEANING AND DESCRIPTION

"Also, All American has come to mean the best, and those proud Americans who built more B-24's than any other aircraft, and those flying crews who flew more missions in more theaters, and those ground crews who night after night patched them up again...were the best. And the time has come to recognize them as All American," Collings said.

The Collings aircraft has a silver finish with composite markings and colors from a number of USAAF bomber groups. The right vertical fin and rudder have the colors of the 465th Bomb Group of the 15th Air Force, and the left fin and rudder have the colors of the 453rd Bomb Group of the 8th Air Force. Collings said members of these two groups made the largest donations and have been outstanding supporters of the restoration.

Collings said the B-24 will fly at air shows, military open houses, reunions and special events throughout the country for about five years before it will be retired to static display.

Contributions to complete the restoration and keep the B-24 flying may be sent to the Collings Foundation, River Hill Farm, Stow, Mass., 01775 or for more information call 508-568-8924.

THE WARRIORS OF WILLOW RUN

They were the invisible people; housewives toiling in kitchens, sideshow freaks and the lost ones languishing at the fringes of society.

Then the war came, and, in a place called Willow Run, they mustered and built the airplane that beat Adolph Hitler.

by

CHRISTOPHER COOK
DETROIT FREE PRESS
STAFF WRITER

* * * * * * * *

The following article appeared in the Detroit Free Press on December 4, 1988 and is reprinted here with permission.

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In the summer of 1943, Joyce Laakso and two other women packed their bags, left their hometown of Hopkinsville, Ky., and headed north to enlist in the Good War.

They worked in a drained mud hole near the Huron River where Henry Ford had built the largest plant in the world for the construction of the B-24 Liberator bomber, arguably the weapon most critical to the Allied victory. They were among tens of thousands of others who came from all over the South and Midwest to become part of that other army, the one that fought the war from the home front.

Willow Run, the gargantuan complex that took its name from a puny creek that ran adjacent to its brick walls, was conceived as a bomber factory. Located outside Ypsilanti, Michigan, the plant was an isolationist's grudging concession to the inevitability of American involvement in the European war.

Henry Ford had taken on the project in 1940, when his company agreed to manufacture the nose-landing gear for the B-24 bomber being produced by San Diego's Consolidated Vultee. But Vultee's glacial pace---at full tilt, the San Diego factory was turning out just one plane a day---prompted Ford to suggest an alternative manufacturing method based on its own assembly line system. When Henry boasted that his company could eventually turn out a B-24 an hour using assembly line methods, the Pentagon, desperate to increase production, quickly approved a contract for Ford Motor Co. On December 4, 1941, workers poured the last square of concrete for what Willow Run's architect, Albert Kahn, described as "the most enormous room in the history of man," a single-story structure of a size never before conceived. Each of its two assembly lines spanned more than a mile, and when the plant was in full production, it would house 20,000 workers a shift.

But with the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor just three days later, a development that made Willow Run's mission infinitely more urgent. As the draft siphoned off much of Detroit's labor supply, women suddenly found themselves in uprecedented demand by contractors, as did another, smaller group of workers whose contribution would become critical to the war effort at Willow Run.

Sprawling Willow Run recruited perhaps 350 dwarfs and midgets, so that groups of little people became a common sight in the streets of Ypsilanti.

The war opened all kinds of opportunities for little people in this country. It was the first time they felt they could be productive and part of some field other than entertainment.

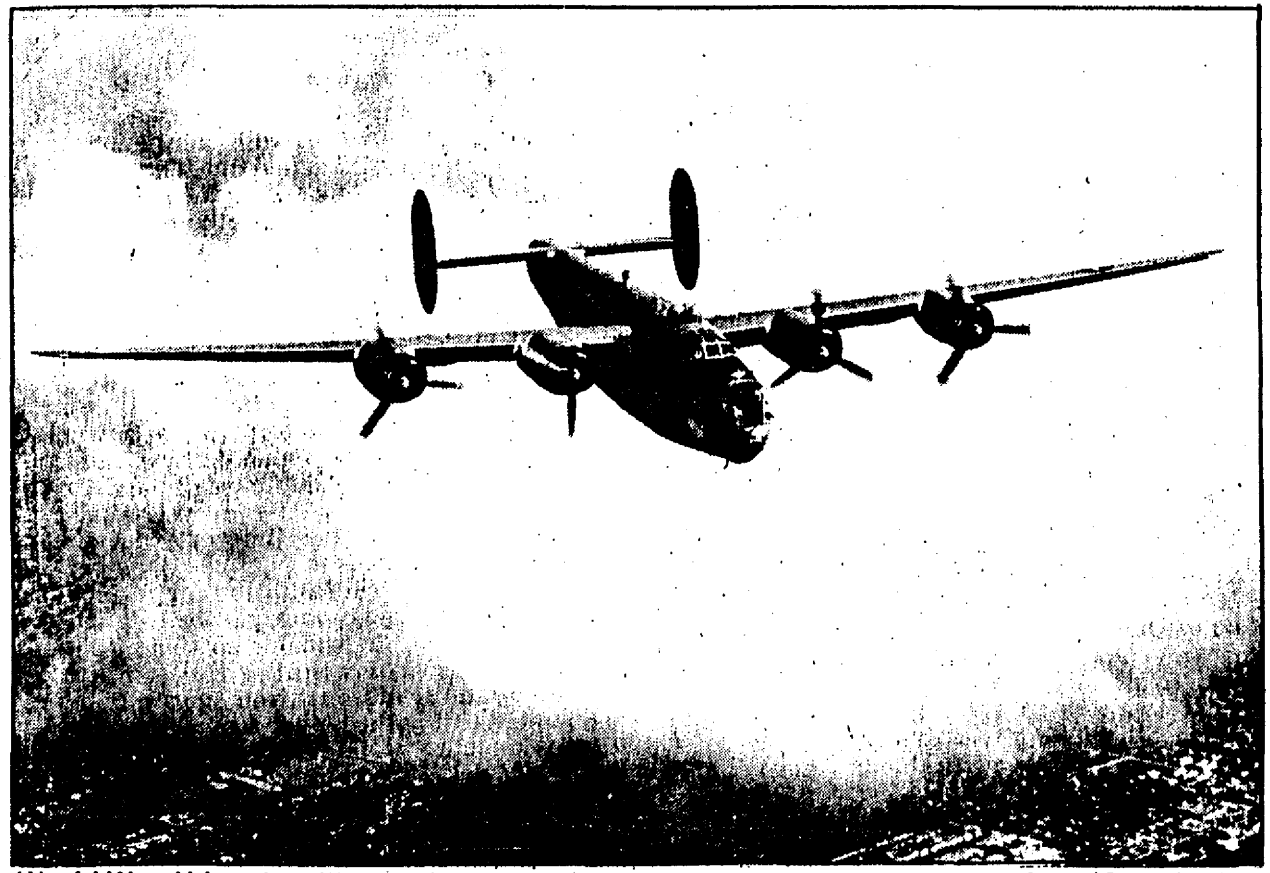
The little people were more or less pressed into service at Willow Run. Ford came to Ringling Brothers and said, "Come on, we need you." And that was it. They didn't have much choice.

Most little people worked with a riveting team that attached the aluminum "skin" to the wing forms at the Willow Run plant. The rivet gun operator fired the rivet from outside while a little person crawled into the wing and held a steel plate inside the skin to assure that the rivet spread and attached itself properly. They had many midgets working on the riveting assembly line, and many small women, too. The midgets were especially good for that and they were valuable.

Liberator produced in record volume

General Dynamics photo

The Consolidated B-24 Liberator was not only the most produced American military airplane of World War II but also of all time. Of the 18,479 Liberators built, 9,760 were built by Colsolidated — 6,726 at its San Diego plant and 3,034 at its Fort Worth plant (above) — and the remainder at Ford, North American and Douglas plants.

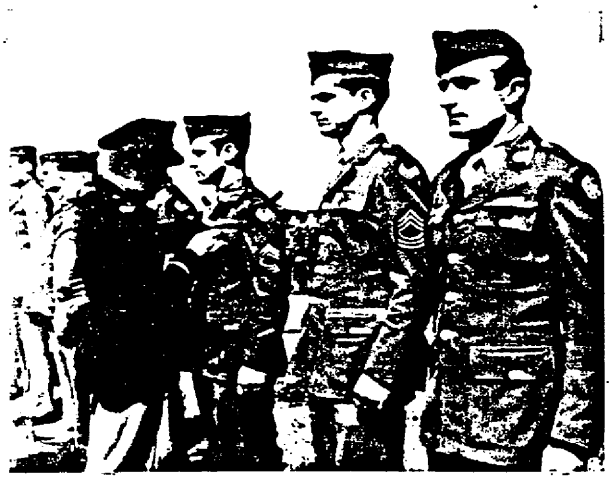


World War II bomber flies again General Dynamics photo

A Consolidated B-24J Liberator has taken to the air again after 20 years of inactivity. The bomber, which rolled off the assembly line at Fort Worth in 1944, flew combat missions and patrols in the Pacific for the Royal Air Force in World War II and later flew for the Indian Air Force until it was retired in 1968. It has been fully restored by the Collings Foundation of Stow, Mass.

Col. Fish awarding medals to enlisted men. Photo-Bob Boone.

Col. Fish awarding medals to enlisted men. Photo-Bob Boone.



Col. Fish awarding medals to enlisted men. Photo-Bob Boone.

T/Sgt Leo F. Dumesil, flight engineer, shown with wife, Jean, and mother. Nov. 8, 1942 Photo-John Reitmeier.

Col. Fish awarding medals to enlisted men. Photo-Bob Boone.

857th Tent City. Enlisted men at left and officers at right. Toilets, Squadron Hut and Supply Room in the center. Photo-"Red" Monaghan.

Christmas Party, 1944, for the local children. Photo-"Red" Monaghan.

Christmas Party for the local children, 1944. Photo-"Red" Monaghan.

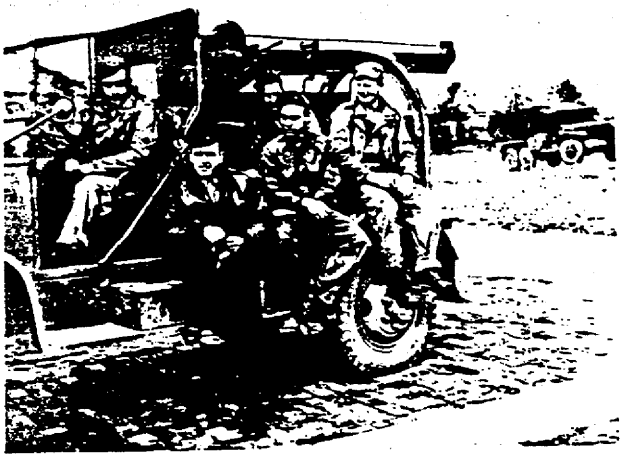
Christmas Day, 1944. L-R: Jack McCrindle, Photo Section and Mahlon Evans, bus driver. Photo-"Red" Monaghan.

Tent City, Winter of 1944. Photo-"Red" Monaghan.

Enlisted Men's Rec Room. Photo-"Red" Monaghan.

Photo Section Party, 1944. Photo-"Red" Monaghan.

Partial view of Tent City. Photo-D.E. Palmer.

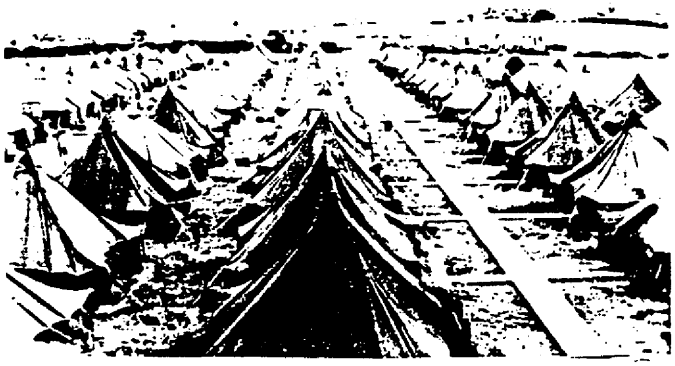


Unidentified aircraft armament crew, 1944. Photo-Clyde Coke.

Unidentified aircraft armament men, 1944. Photo-Clyde Coke.

Unidentified Carpetbagger making a final check. Photo-Clyde Coke.

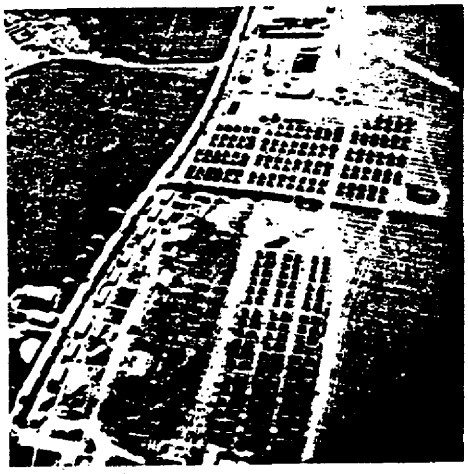
Bombardier Training. Photo-?



Tent City. Photo-Don Rousseau.

L-R: McPherson, Petrello, Duncan and Schooley, all of the 856th Shop. Photo-R.G. Watkins.

Back row (L-R): 1st Sgt. Gilbert, "Squeaky" Jones, unknown, and two unknown S-2 men. Front row (L-R): Al Kubat, unknown S-2 man and "Shorty" Williams. Photo-"Red" Monaghan.

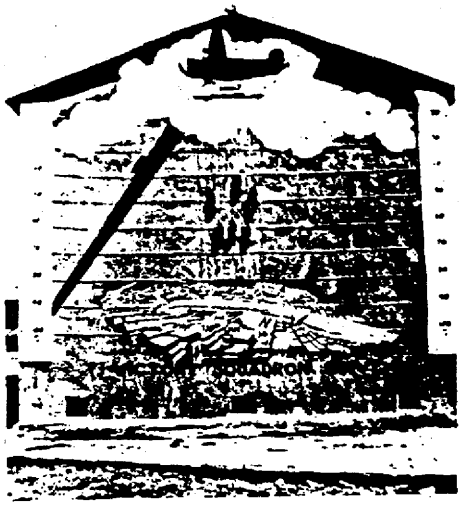


Tent City. Photo-Rudy Rudolph.

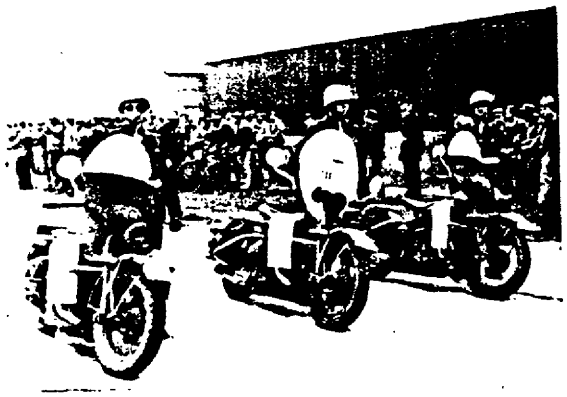
Reuben Schreiner, Radar Mechanic, Hdqtrs. Photo-"Si" Sizemore.

Enlisted men's Mess Hall. Photo-"Red" Monaghan.

Bicycles at Headquarters. Photo-Paul Karr.

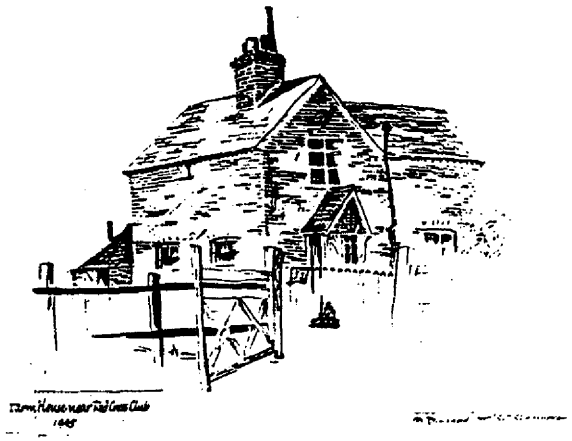


Bond Drive at Harrington. Photo-"Red" Monaghan.



Motorcycle Motorcade at Harrington for Gen. Jimmy Doolittle. Photo-"Red" Monaghan.

PX or Mail Room. Photo-"Red" Monaghan.



Warth Lodge, near the Red Cross Club and Mess Halls. Pencil sketch by "Si" Sizemore, 1945.

L-R: Johnny O. Redd, Bob Lathrop and James Fettig. Photo-Art Carnot.

L-R: Firko, Wienaner, Levine and Whalen. Photo-Don Rousseau.

L-R: 1st. Sgt. Gilbert, supply; Wilford G. Daniels, Sheet Metal Mechanic; and supply Sgt. Butler. Photo-"Red" Monaghan.

Unidentified Carpetbaggers. Photo-Clyde Coke.

L-R: Manny Silverman, James Gardner, Art Bogusz and Jack Milsap. Photo-Rudy Rudolph.

Chow line at the enlisted men's Mess Hall. Pencil sketch by "Si" Sizemore, 1945.

Kneeling: 1st Sgt. Clinton W. Booth. Other man's name is unknown. Pigs were raised for a feast for the 856th BS. Photo-"Red" Monaghan.

Richard "Si" Sizemore,
Radar Mechanic, Hdqtrs.
Photo-"Si" Sizemore.

Standing L-R: Charlie Dee, Joseph Zavatsky, Leo Londin.
Kneeling L-R: Robert Walter.
Photo-Charlie Dee.

."Shorty" Singleton. Photo-R.G. Watkins.

Larry Strohm. Photo-R.G. Watkins.

T/Sgt. R.G. Watkins, 856th BS Radio Shop. Photo-R.G. Watkins.

Photo Section. Photo-"Red" Monaghan.

S/Sgt. J.R. Eddy (with pen in hand) in the Rec Room. Photo-"Red" Monaghan.

Show Time at Harrington. Photo-"Red" Monaghan.

Rec Room at Harrington. Photo-"Red" Monaghan.

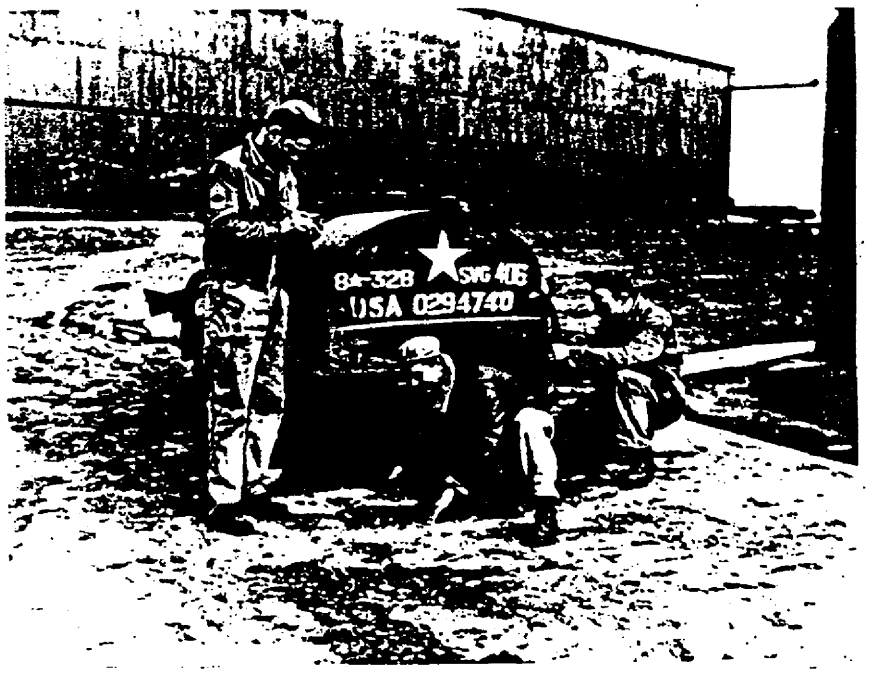
Enlisted Men's Club. Photo-"Red" Monaghan.

Jim Darby (cigarette in mouth) bartending at the opening of the Enlisted Men's NCO Club. Photo-"Red" Monaghan.

Enlisted Men's NCO Club. Photo-"Red" Monaghan.

Mechanics at work. Photo-Clyde Coke.

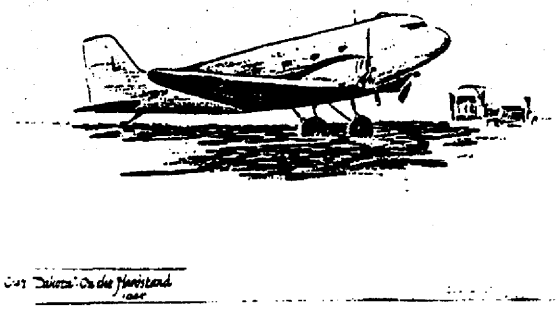
Sebastian Corriere. Photo-Sebastian Corriere.



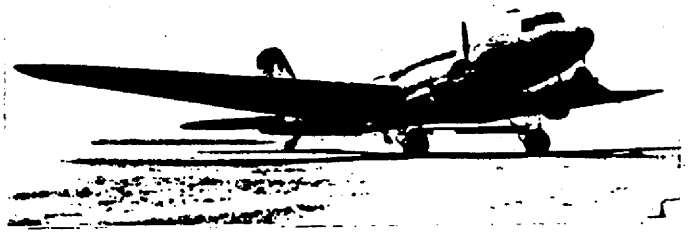
Harrington, 1944. Photo-Clyde Coke.

Group Radar Section in 1944. Photo-Vincent Stuart.

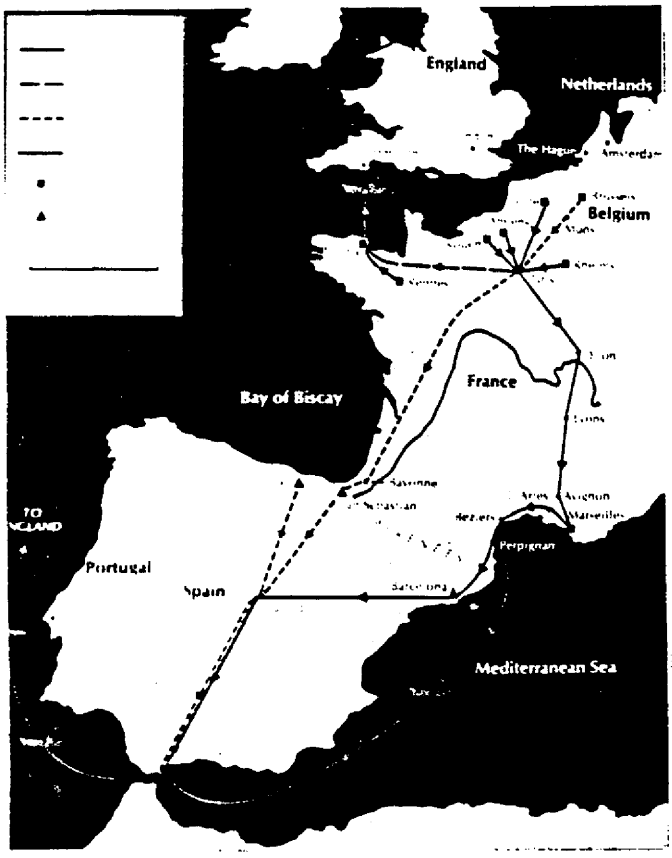
L-R: ? Bakey, "Red" Reese and Lou Hart. Photo-Paul Karr.



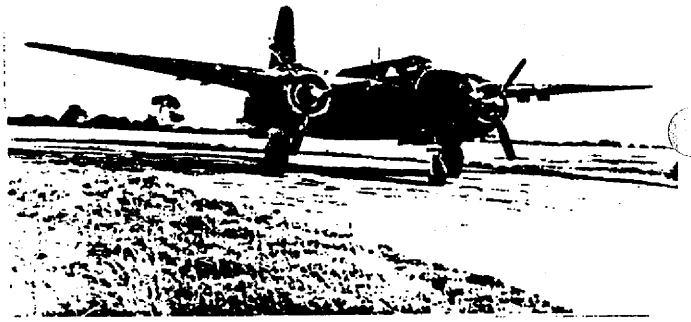
C-47 "Dakota" on the Hardstand. Pencil sketch by "Si" Sizemore, 1945.



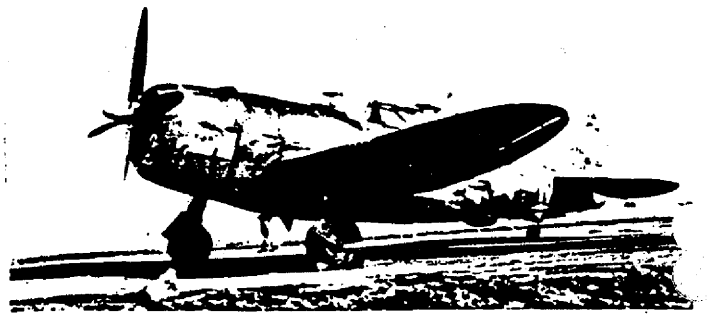
C-47 "Dakota" at Harrington. This is the C-47 that had to be repaired in France. Photo-"Red" Monaghan.



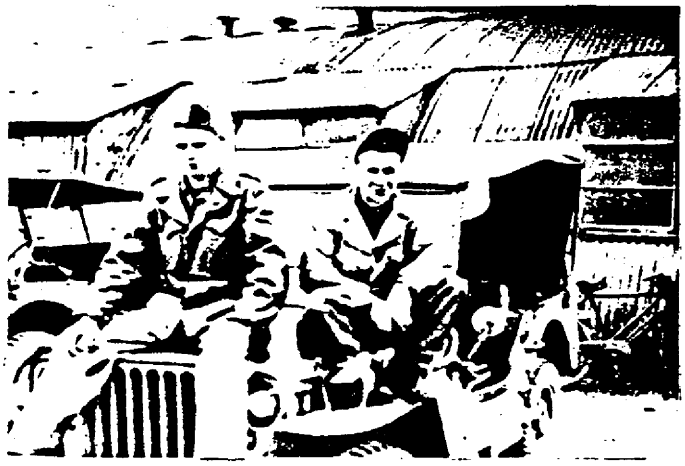
Three main escape routes. Photo-"The Resistance" by Russell Miller & Editors of Time-Life Books.



A-26. Photo-"Red" Monaghan.



P-47 at Harrington. Photo-"Red" Monaghan.



L-R: unknown, "Shorty" Singleton at the Radio Shack. Photo-R.G. Watkins.

S/Sgt. Robert Molony in the 856th BS Radio Shack. Photo-R.G. Watkins.

Harrington, 1944.
Photo-Clyde Coke

Unidentified Carpetbaggers.
Photo-Clyde Coke.

Unidentified Carpetbaggers.
Photo-Clyde Coke.

Men of the Radio and Communications Section, Brindisi, Italy. Names unknown. 859th BS. Photo-Walter Jones.

L-R: Mahlon Evans, "Red" Monaghan. Photo-"Red" Monaghan.

Crew Chiefs (L-R): ? Hadley, Elmer F. "Swede" Anderson and Samuel "Sammy" Braudt. Photo-Paul Karr.

L-R: Zackowski, Rousseau, Willson, Lehman and Whalen. Photo-Don Rousseau.

Photo Section. Photo-"Red" Monaghan.

L-R: Bob Lathrop, Vincent Denovellis at WAAF Site II. Photo-Bob Downs.

GROUP MEDICAL STAFF

STANDING: (L-R) unidentified, unidentified, unidentified, Capt. Marvin Blockmon, DC; Capt. Edward Bettcher, DC.

KNEELING: (L-R) Capt. Ralph Everly, MC Sqdn Surg.; Capt. Loren Martin, Sqdn Surg.; Major Paul Gans, Gp. Surg.; unidentified. Photo-Morris Turner.

L-R: Paul Furnival and Bob Downs at the Radio Shack Trailer. Photo-Bob Downs.

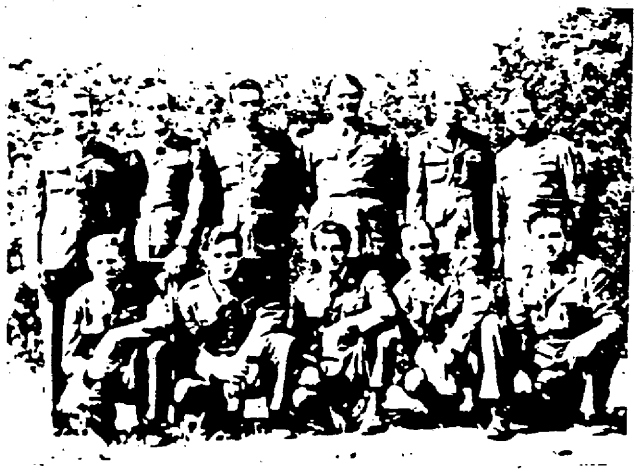
Thanksgiving Service at Cransley Church, 3 miles southwest of Kettering. L-R: Sgt. Beverly (hat in hand), Donald Lockwood, Art Carnot. Just behind Art is Bob Downs. Photo-Bob Downs.

Chaplains and Aides
Seated (L-R): Rev. Hugh J. Gallagher (Catholic), Rev. Harry L. Rogers (Protestant). Standing (L-R): Sgt. Frank ? and Sgt. Beverly B. Burnett. Photo-"Red" Monaghan.

Christmas Mass at Harrington, 1944. Rev. Gallagher at the altar. Photo-"Red" Monaghan.

Church Service at Christmas Time, 1944
Photo-"Red" Monaghan.

A load of Underground Operators "Deb" Palmer and his crew brought back to Harrington after VE-Day. They came from Norway and Denmark. Photo-D.E. Palmer.



MESS HALL GANG

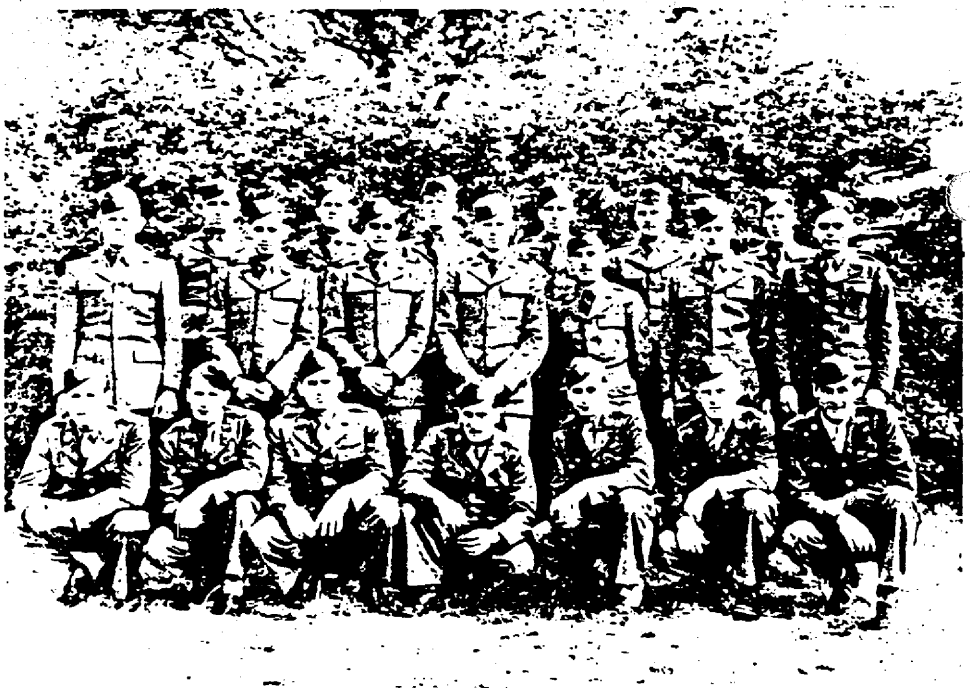
TOP ROW: (L-R) James W. Wilson, Preston M. Gaston, Robert G. Sprinkle, George Milholen, Herbert Marsh, Carl Mahlman.

BOTTOM ROW: (L-R) Malcolm Hiv, Alfred Guech, Sammy Marinda, Russell Olsen, Philip Goldfarb. Photo-Philip Goldfarb.

Joseph Zavatsky, Propeller Specialist, 859th BS. Photo-Charlie Dee.

Sheet Metal Crew (L-R): Howard W. Willson, Joseph C. Firko, Alfred H. Wiesner, Roland L. Rousseau and Walter Levine. Photo-Don Rouuseau.

Starting clockwise with hat: Sgt. David Lyon, gunner; S/Sgt. Russ Carrier, engineer; Sgt. "Pepe" Sinnott, gunner; S/Sgt. Stan Worl, tail gunner; 2nd Lt. Napoleon Mourneau, bombardier and 2nd Lt. Bill Orban, pilot. Photo-Bill Orban.



ORDNANCE GROUP: 36th Bomb Squadron

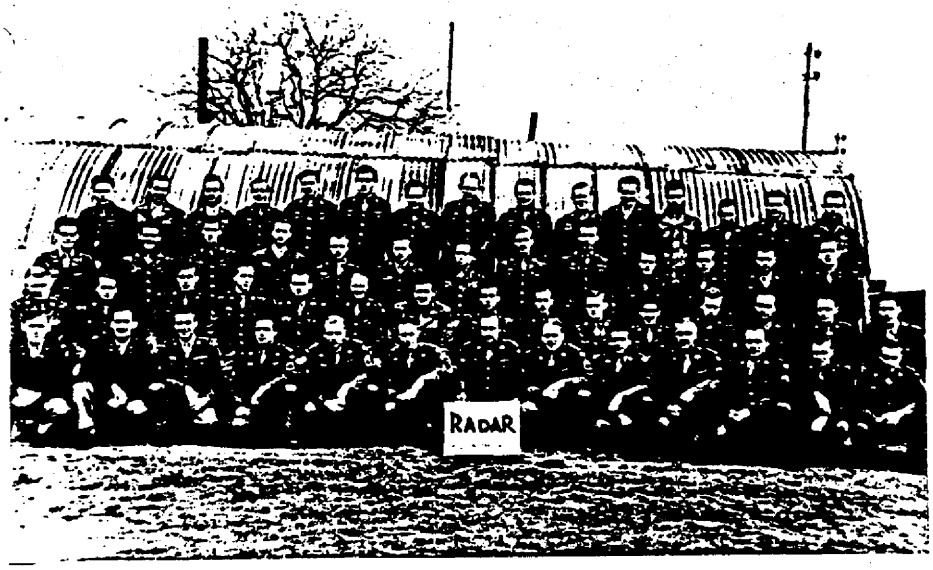
BACK ROW, Standing: (L-R) Alvin A. Merkel, Richard C. Barker, Joseph B. Coll, Charles I. Musser, Clifford E. McKee, Paul J. Dericks.

MIDDLE ROW, Standing: (L-R) Richard E. McLeod, Leon Bell, Frank Vitella, William I. Tomasow, Paul A. LaBlanche, Spencer A. Fiemster, Abe Shiffer.

FRONT ROW, Kneeling: (L-R) Stanley J. Levulis, Albert M. Palko, Steve Lozak, Walter J. Chmielewski, Thomas G. Morrow, James T. McLeod, Emilio A. Rosini. Photo-Emilio Rosini.

T/Sgt. R.G. Watkins, 856th BS Radio Mechanic. Photo-R.G. Watkins.

L-R: Bob Downs, Howard Carder and Emil Ratchovsky, Radar Mechanics. Photo-Bob Downs.



GROUP RADAR SECTION

TOP ROW: 858th Bomb Sq. (L-R) Capt. Ader, Helzer, Stuart, Williams, Dowling, Adams, Huey, Luckhurst, Weber, Chernisky, Smith Burns, Wilson, Ratchovsky, Busby. (Missing: Troutman, Geising, Clore).

3rd ROW: 406th Bomb Sq. (L-R) Capt. Barber, Cianciulli, Dean, Lux, Jones, Reid, Warner, Bennett, Conway, Spencer, Hardy, Chittendon, Lt. Zatlin. (Missing: Etkin, Ray).

2nd ROW: HQ. 801/492 (L-R) Zigenhagen, Schreiner, Haberstroh, Parks, Carder, Marhak, Kirkeby, Garland, Wilkinson, Rosater, Robolino, Queeny, Kelly, Sizemore.

1st ROW: 856th Bomb Sq. (L-R) Lt. Clark, Lt. Reitman, Martin, Davis, Williams, Jack, Kepler, Wallens, Ascher, Kaminski, Schwandt, Hawley, Boles.

Official 8th AF Picture, April 10, 1945

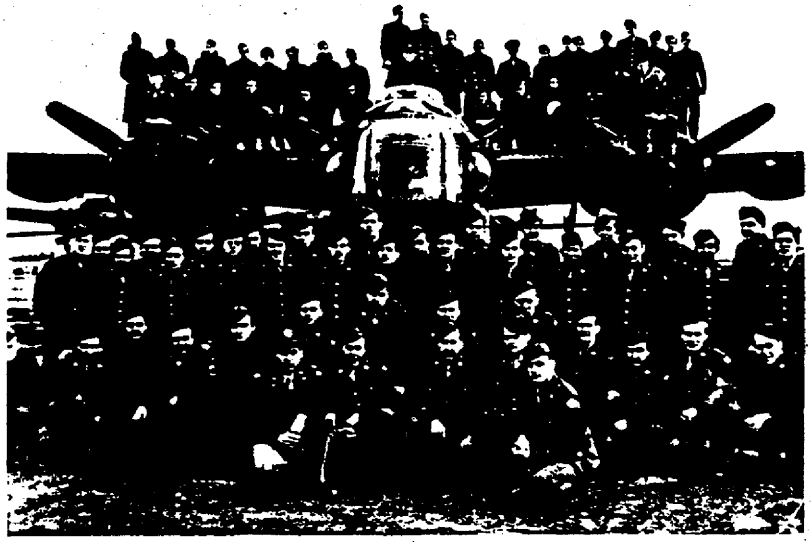
L-R: Wilford "GI" Daniels and John C. Whalen of the 850/857 th BS, Sheet Metal Mechanics. Photo-Don Rousseau.

T/Sgt. R.G. Watkins with scar from a bicycle accident. Photo-R.G. Watkins.

L-R: Ed Garland, Bill Mark and Ellsworth Luckhurst. Photo-Bob Downs.

John Pruitt. Photo-Vernon L. Gross.

Sgt. Vernon L. Gross. Photo-Vernon L. Gross.



ENGINEERING SECTION: 857th BS

1st ROW: (L-R) Capt. Tommy King, Sgt Frank hounder, Sgt James T. Pierce, Sgt William Allison, M/Sgt John P. Walker.

2nd ROW: (L-R) T/Sgt Bill Bridges, T/Sgt John Gibbons, T/Sgt James Hendricks, T/Sgt Lewis Lonk, M/Sgt Arthur Blankenstein, M/Sgt Frank Gibbs, M/Sgt Gerald C. Brown, M/Sgt Harold Jones, M/Sgt William McHolland, M/Sgt Joseph Jones, T/Sgt Anthony Zajackowski, M/Sgt Wilson L. Miller, T/Sgt Thomas J. White.

3rd ROW: (L-R) Sgt John Whalen, Sgt Arthur Boyd, Sgt Alexander Blair, Sgt William Casstevenus, Sgt Mahlon Evans, Sgt Mike Dernik, Sgt Angelo Napolitano, Sgt Robert Sauber, S/Sgt Heber Fout, S/Sgt Jack Gaskin, S/Sgt Wilfred Daniels, Sgt Ara Turchun, S/Sgt Phillip Monte.

4th ROW: (L-R) Sgt Robert Walter, S/Sgt Jack Mussey, Sgt John Shanklin, Sgt Lucian Shenefield, S/Sgt Leigh Abel, Pvt Marvin Kin, Sgt Stanley Stankiowicz, Sgt Burton Stesen, Sgt William Hannon, Sgt Benjamin Hill, Sgt Vernon O. Kellesvig, Sgt John Miller.

5th ROW: (L-R) Sgt John Jordan, Pfc Lee Knepp, Sgt Luther Condre, Sgt John Sturckler, Sgt James Reiplinger, Pvt Milton Tennyson, Pvt Stanley Smith, Sgt Alfred Puchis, Cpl William Vaughan, Cpl Charles Tyler, Sgt Leo Bezzant, Cpl Robert Semple, Cpl Sidney Martinson, Sgt Erwin Lovas.

6th ROW: (L-R) Cpl Roy Davis, Cpl Roy Jacobson, Sgt Joseph Firko, Cpl Roland Rousseau, Pvt Tullis Wright, Pfc Walter Milazzo, Cpl Leo Reller, Sgt Robert Hack, Sgt Eugene Mankinson, Cpl R.A. Hyde, Cpl Clyde Furr, Pvt Arthur Casey, Sgt Wilfred Jacobs, Cpl Robert Jensen, Cpl Walter Levine, Cpl Charles Dee, Sgt Joseph Zavatsky, Cpl Stanley Graydon, Cpl Joseph Levesque, Cpl John Lehman, Cpl Dennis Qigley.

Photo-Leo "Red" Monaghan.

HEADQUARTERS

FRONT ROW, Kneeling: (L-R) Capt. Frank M. Silkenbaken, Capt. Emanuel Choper, Capt. Richard A. Dennis, Capt. Joseph W. Hartley, LTC. Robert L. Boone, Capt. Harry A.Gibson, Capt. Robert D. Sullivan, Major Paul J. Gans, Capt. Samuel C. Wakefield, 1st Lt. Charles L. Guimento, Capt. Edward P. Bettcher.

1st ROW, Standing: (L-R) Cpl Angelo P. Pasque, S/Sgt Charles R. Hall, Pfc Silvio A. Alexander, Sgt Edwin W. Owens, S/Sgt James L. Melito, Cpl Nicholas F. Robolino, Cpl Richard N. Combs, Sgt Kenneth L. Nixon, Cpl Reuben Schreiner, Sgt James Ehly, Sgt John C. Scotchel, Sgt Marvin L. Arrighy, Sgt Alfred B. Fichera, Cpl Richard A. Reed.

2nd ROW, Standing: (L-R) S/Sgt Frank Lengyel, S/Sgt Max Berger, Pfc Joe H. Lamie, Cpl James R. Evans, M/Sgt Wilson L. Miller, Pfc Burnett Bean, Cpl William A. Wilkinson Jr, Pfc Harold B. Sacks, Sgt William P. Dallas, M/Sgt Wesley W. Gifford, T/Sgt Robert W. Turner, Pvt Mack Martines.

3rd ROW, Standing: (L-R) Sgt Lamb W. Chauncey Jr, Cpl Joseph A. Marossi, Sgt Beverly B. Burnett, Pfc Donald W. Lockwood, Cpl Howard V. Young Jr, Cpl Bennie M. Griego, Sgt Wilbert V. Quast, Sgt Howard C. Carder, S/Sgt Edward J. Schmiedeberg, Cpl Bruno Gruszecki, S/Sgt James K. Cheeseman, Pfc William N. Barringer, T/Sgt Clarence L. Gorden, T/Sgt Joseph P. Caltagirone, Pfc Woodruff W. Lee.

4th ROW,Standing: (L-R) Pfc Clyde H. Church, S/Sgt John H. McDougald, S/Sgt O.B. Mathis, Sgt Thomas F. Kelly, Cpl Gerald A. Parks, Pfc Charles E. Coleman, Sgt Donald H. Queeny, Cpl Clarence W. Haberstroh, Sgt Martin J. Marhak, T/Sgt William H. Bush, Cpl Richard T. Sizemore, Sgt Champion D. Epperson, Sgt Jack M. Crippen Jr, T/Sgt Earl C. Kirkeby, S/Sgt Samuel A. Cassady, Sgt John J. Rogowski, Pfc John J. Ryan, Cpl Hallett R. Gates.

5th ROW, Standing: (L-R) Pfc Curtis A. Barker, Sgt John L. Hannah, T/Sgt Henry R. Dannhouser, Sgt Frank A. Ziegenhagen, Cpl Joseph M. Hailey, Pfc Hugh O. Haney, Cpl Paul V. Curran, S/Sgt Robert H. Shanesy, Cpl Phillip A. Hudson, Sgt Vincent T. McGrath, Cpl Joseph F. Preshoot.

h ROW, Standing: (L-R) Cpl Albert Dahlke, Pfc Fred A. Ozment, Pfc Herman M Dutkiewicz, Tec-5 John B. DiPietro, Sgt Sol S. Shoppe, Cpl Lewis J. Kobyarz, Tec-5 Oliver L. McClarin, Pfc Peter P. Gvora, M/Sgt Delbert L. Blair.

Official 8th AF Picture, June 18, 1945

SINGLE 'CHUTE BRINGS 2 FLIERS SAFELY DOWN FROM BURNED LIB.

A re-enactment of this heroic deed is shown by these photos taken at Harrington. (A crane was used to hoist them). At left, riding "piggyback", is 2nd Lt. Robert L. Sanders with 2nd Lt. Robert Callahan in the 'chute.
Photo-Leo "Red" Monaghan.

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