

Dear Bud and Bea -

First of all, I want to say that my wife and I enjoyed the Williamsburg reunion immensely, and I enjoyed the renewal of old friendships most of all. I had not seen any member of my unit for thirty-nine years, although some of us have corresponded. I would like also to congratulate you on the outstanding job you did in putting the reunion together. It must have taken many hours of hard work. As of now, it looks like we will attend in '84 in Orlando.

I am enclosing an account and a

photo of a mission as I saw it, which you may possibly want to use in the *Flyer*. Last spring, I sent a crew photo and a nose art photo of our ship "Puss n Boots."

As to the aircraft on the front cover of the *Fall Flyer*, it is a Japanese Zero. On the back cover is the B-15, the only one of its kind. I saw this airplane many times in early 1945 when I was stationed at Wright Field as (of all things) a helicopter mechanic. On page 28 you have a picture of a Consolidated B-32 which I saw daily at Wright Field. I do not believe that many were manufactured, as the Air Force

seemed to prefer the B-29. For one thing, the B-29 had remote centrally controlled gun turrets as opposed to local turrets on the B-32, thereby eliminating one or two crew members. Hoping to see you again and wishing both of you all of the best, I am

Yours truly,
JOHN HICKS 826TH Bomb Sq.

Editor's Note: Refer to the preface to German Air Force story. The Plane on the front cover of the Torretta Flyer No. 9 was a FW190.

This was part of a highly successful group effort by the 484th B.G. The bridge was completely destroyed. The Germans had much mobile flak in Southern France at that time. During the bomb run, the flak was intense and extremely accurate. Almost all aircraft were damaged. In our ship, T/Sgt. Thomas Key of San Marcos, Texas, our engineer gunner was killed by flak which penetrated his flak suit as he manned the right waist gun. T/Sgt. Alvin F. Petrillo, radio operator, of E. Orange, NJ was severely wounded at the other waist gun position. After coming off the target, we proceeded to an air base on the island of Corsica where we obtained first aid for Al Petrillo before returning to base.

Just a footnote to this mission. For several years before and after WWII, I was employed here in my hometown by the Vaucanson Silk Co., a subsidiary of the Bianchini & Ferrier Co., a French firm with headquarters and main plant in Lyon. In late 1945, a young executive of the parent company, visited our plant. When he learned that I had been on this mission, he said to me, "Please do not think that we are angry at you for bombing our city, for while you were keeping the Germans busy, we were out shooting them. This man was a member of the FFI. S/Sgt. **JOHN HICKS** -826TH Bomb Squadron



Var River R.R. Bridge, Nice, France June 7, 1944.



Picture taken at Torretta Field during early spring of 1944. Crew #17-S12, 766th Bomb Squadron, 461st Bomb Group. Back row from left: Edwin Baumann, (Pilot); Galin (Gunner); Forester (Gunner); Griffin (Gunner); Millet (Flight Engineer); Laughlin (Radio). Front row from the left: Hilmer W. Larson (Co-Pilot); Joseph L. Coffey (Navigator); Louis (Gunner); James English (Bombardier). (James English photo 766th Sq.)

Dear Bud -

Perhaps I should add for historical reasons that this crew flew very few missions. Our first was Bihac, Yugoslavia on 2 April, 1944. During that month we got to the target a few times but in the process made several aborts. I thought we had a good crew and felt that Bau mann was a good pilot. It seemed to me that we were just having a little bad luck. Nevertheless, the idea was to get to the target and I guess we turned around one too many times. The crew was broken up. Baumann the pilot and Larson the copilot were transferred to other squadrons. Coffey the navigator was returned to the Z. I. I, the bombardier finished my missions with other crews, and I don't know what happened to the enlisted men. I am of the opinion that Baumann and Larson were killed in action but don't know for sure. **JAMES ENGLISH** - 766th Sq.