

new recruits to the squadron, the bombardier and myself cued the boys on the navigational check points. We strongly emphasized the pitfalls of ditching a B-24. We went over this point many times, but I guess it just didn't sink in.

We were in a flight well north of Yugoslavia, when the pilot from group, who was sitting in the co-pilot's seat, received a message from the aircraft Delena was flying, that they were going to abort, as he couldn't climb and probably split a couple of supercharger sleeves. The flight commander instructed Delena to get over Yugoslavia at 10,000 ft and bail out the crew, including himself. We next heard that he would try to make it to the Island of Vis. Then we next heard that he had enough fuel to make it across the Adriatic. But a subsequent message stated that they were turning around to head back to Vis.

Evidently they must have run out of fuel and had to make a dead stick landing in the Bay of Vis. Delena and five of his crew perished in the crash. The radio operator, one of the survivors related the ditching to me. I don't remember if the co-pilot, Hower, who had a previous tour of duty with the merchant marine and had made the perilous Murmansk run to Russia on several occasions survived the ditching.

When I was assigned to targets north of Lake Balaton, shivers would shoot up and down my spine. Those Me-109s were something else. I practically flew all of my missions in a B-24 painted olive drab, numbered 62.5, a small five after the decimal point. Why a small five, I don't know. The ship had a radar dome in place of the Sperry Ball Turret*. When you next see Marion Pruitt, give him my regards.

Sincerely,
Armand Bottiglia, 767 Sq.

** Editor's Note: This was a, "Mickey Ship," The small five may have indicated that the ship was modified to carry radar after receiving a squadron number.*

Dear Bud:

In your recent letter, you asked for a list of my duties with the 461st BG. I am enclosing a copy of a proposed citation which describes my job better than I can.

As you will notice, one aspect of the job was to attend daily briefings and provide the radio operator with frequencies and code words of the mission, give instructions for the use of chaff (known now as window, small strips of metal foil), and on other occasions provide other pertinent information.

These instructions, or orders were given to me at the time of briefings by our CO, his deputy, or Operations Officer. I always thought that our CO, especially Col Glanzberg, enjoyed good relations with 49th Wing personnel, but I never knew how much negotiating room they had relative to the daily missions. By the time I received the orders, they were no longer negotiable.

PROPOSED CITATION

John A Wagener, Major Air Corps, Headquarters 461st Bombardment Group (H), United States Army. For meritorious achievement in the direct support of combat operations from 2 April, 1944 to 25 April 1945. Major Wagener has been Group Communications Officer of the 461st BG since its activation and during this time has distinguished himself by his outstanding performance of duty. He has carried out his responsibility for the maintenance of all radio and communications equipment in his group's aircraft in a superior manner ever since the group began combat operations, despite the many problems with which he has been confronted.

His work in the briefing of radio operators for combat missions and supervising the preparation of radio logs has always been painstaking and accurate. Under this officer's skilled direction, both control tower and a ground station are being operated on the base very successfully. Major Wagener's outstanding efforts in all of these activities have meant a great deal in furthering the efficiency of his organization in combat operations.

Despite the difficulties of a critical lack of necessary equipment and trained personnel, he has nevertheless successfully established and maintained both an excellent telephone network and electric lighting system on his base. These important services have not only been instrumental in increasing the operating efficiency of his group but have also added to the comfort and morale of its personnel to a high degree. By his outstanding professional skill, resourcefulness, and untiring devotion to duty, Major Wagener has materially increased the efficiency of his group in combat operations, thereby reflecting great credit upon himself and the Armed Forces of the United States of America. Residence at appointment, Sparkhill, New York.

John A. Wagener 461st HQ

Dear Bud:

The article I am enclosing appeared in the Abbeville, South Carolina Press and Banner. The mission was to Austria and not Italy as printed.

Bob Bray 826 Sq.

Reunited: World War II Buddies Reunite In Abbeville After 44 years.

Coy Argo was reunited with two faces from the past, belonging to his two buddies from his days in World War II, last week at his home in Abbeville. He hasn't seen either for 44 years. All three men had undergone flight training in the United States as members of the same flight crew. They had only known each other for three months, the last day Coy