

return to the United States. We have over the years credited this to the fact that our crew trained as a crew, partied as a crew. When we got into combat, we knew each other, responded like a crew, respecting each others' responsibilities.

Thomas P ("Teepee") Hendry, 764 Sq  
Granville, Ohio

461st & 484th BGA  
Dear Bud:

Received the latest issue of the Torretta Flyer, and much to my surprise, in the middle of page 22 there is a picture of my, "old ship No 11". The caption should read L to R: Lt Harold Wells, co-pilot, (later 1st pilot); Harold Smith, engineer; and 1st Lt John Trechter.

Trechter later was given another crew and took our original Orville Fisher with him. A K McGill came on as our new co-pilot with Riechert as bombardier.

Walter Rix's story about the ship flying all those hours without an engine change is very true, as it was written up in Air Force Magazine.

The photos of the 824 squadron on Page 36 are great, it sure brought back memories. When Major Dufour, went up to group, Ben Milam became our C.O. Crew #11 became a lead crew in the squadron and flew with Col Keese, Col Bush, and several other group officers. Lt Wells, Artie Wolf (deceased post war), radio operator and myself were picked to fly with these group officers while the rest of our crew stood down. Don't ask me why.

I finished my 50 missions plus several other missions that did not get into my flight records during the period April 44 to August 44. I was the squadron's aerial photographer, and remember Pres Wade, who may have taken the photograph referred to above. He and I shared fun and scary times, like the mission when the Luftwaffe shot ground rockets at us. This was on a return trip from a mission to Hungary, and we were over the coast near Trieste when they fired at us. Luckily for us they weren't accurate. It sure was hair raising to say the least. On another mission to Southern France, we had only twelve flak guns firing at us, but on the way out we got hit by 30 of 40 guns that were brought up on railroad cars. We took a pretty good shellacking then.

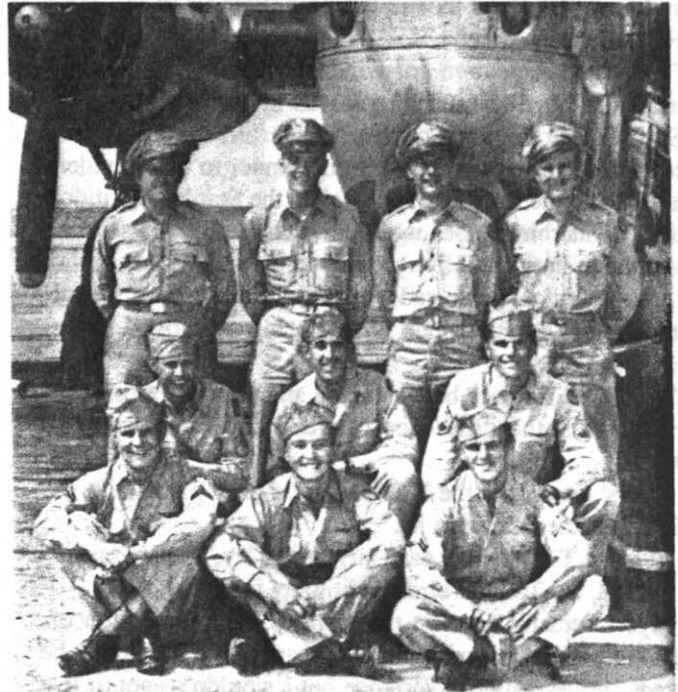
On page 12 of Torretta Flyer No #13 there is a picture of Marty Allen, who later rose to fame as a comedian. At the time he was known as Morton Alpern. I met him several times after the war in Malibu. He used to come into the sheriff's office there and spend time talking to us. He is a great guy.

Sincerely

Hal Smith 824 Sq.  
Yachats, Oregon

Dear Bud

I've been meaning to send these pictures to you for about 10 years. We were in the 461/765 from October 7, 1944, when we landed in Bari, Italy until December 17th, 1944 when our crew was shot down over Czechoslovakia. Our crew was one of the greatest. We were all together on every mission from the time we were assembled at Lincoln, Nebraska, through combat crew training in Pueblo, Colorado.



**Front Row L to R: Frank Yesia, ball gunner; Roy Doe, nose gunner; and Fred Gaul, engineer. Second Row L to R: Tom Delbert, upper turret gunner; Trefry Ross, radio operator; and Joe Mergo, tail gunner. Back Row L to R: Tom West, pilot; Tom Qualman, navigator; Tom Noesges, bombardier; and Ed Kasold; co-pilot.**

Four out of the ten crew members were named "Tom". We all went by our nicknames of course. The survivors were: Ross, Qualman, Kasold, and Noesges

*Editors Note: The story, "The Last Flight of Crew #14", was written by Trefry Ross, one of the survivors that describes in detail the events of December 17th, 1944. This was published in Torretta Flyer No 10, Spring 1984, quoted, in part, as follows:*

*"We were shot down by enemy fighters using 20MM cannon shells from either Me-109's or FW-190's. The ship immediately caught fire within minutes and exploded into several pieces. The main portion of the aircraft held the six crew members, who died in the crash, when it hit the ground."*