

of Cerignola, Italy by our tent area in 1944.  
Warmest regards,  
Jack "Geronimo" Jauregui 767 Sq



**They are: from left, Kenny Sprague, gun sight and power turret specialist, Jack " Geronimo" Jauregui, gun sight and power turret specialist, and unknown armorer.**

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Col G V "Fang " Hansen  
Little Rock, Arkansas  
(Copy to Bea and Bud Markel, Editors  
Torretta Flyer

Dear Sir:

Thank you for the picture of my crew chief, Walter M Rix, now deceased. While I haven't seen or heard from Sgt Rix since the 484th Bomb Group broke up in May 1945, I have never forgotten him.

Now another picture of Rix in the latest edition of the "Torretta Flyer" ,No 15, Winter1987/1988 , brought a lump to my throat. It is true, there were only three of us on the ground crew of the B-24 #11 during the most furious part of the air war in southern Europe fought by the 15th Air Force. Yes! the Torretta Flyer is correct, we worked hard to keep the motto of the Army Air Force (AAF) ground crews which was, "Keep 'em Flying."

For those who may have forgotten us, the three ground crew members on No 11, 824 squadron:

- 1) M/Sgt Walter M Rix, Crew Chief
- 2) Sgt George R Calande,Assistant Crew Chief
- 3) Cpl David E Denny Jr, Assistant

As the air war wore on, I remember that the later air crews were sometimes suspicious of our airplane because it was one of the old original ships having camouflage paint. The newer sleek unpainted B-24's without camouflage paint were a few miles faster, I suppose. Old #11 went through 56 missions, including the double ones which we marked in red. Our luck finally ran out when she caught a burst of flak in the No 2 engine. Rix had always said, "When I change one engine, I'll change them all." And so we did.

When the air war began to run down, beginning in the spring of 1945 #11 was made a supply and courier plane. Rix didn't need as many crew men after that so I was given other duties.

Strangely, we never had a name for our airplane Rix was

superstitious, so everyone just called it "Old #11." By the way, Colonel, our crew always had the greatest respect for you, Sir, as our engineering officer. You were then Captain Hansen, remember?

Cordially,  
David E Denny Jr 824 Sq.

[Editors Note.] The following letter was written to Armand Bottiglia 767 Squadron in response to his letter published on pages 17, and 18 of Torretta Flyer No 15. The author Carl B Peterson was on board the crashed B-24 referred to in the published letter.

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Riceville,Iowa  
Dear Armand Bottiglia:

It was good to see your letter to Bud Markel in Torretta Flyer 15. It is the first I have heard from someone who knew the score. I was the tail gunner on my fourth mission and did not get the full briefing that some of the other crew members received.

The ship which we dropped into the Adriatic Sea was a brand new B-24L and had the stinger tail instead of the Consolidated tail turret.

We prepared for an organized ditching by jettisoning all of the machine guns and ammo. The left waist gun was hung up by the release pin and couldn't be removed. Several Me 109's or FW-190's drew up along side of us. I got gun camera pictures but these were lost when the ship went down.

Suddenly all engines quit at about 3000 ft and we went in nose first. I was last to finish preparing and just before we hit the drink I didn't have time to get into the new ditching position which was on the afterdeck against a specially manufactured curtain of canvas reinforced with wooden slats, where the rest of the enlisted men were huddled.

I could observe the sea coming up at a rapid rate as the bombay doors opened just prior to impact. I had crouched in back of the sperry ball turret with my hands back of my neck. My neck was permanently injured and I still suffer to this day. I received multiple cuts and bruises as did the rest of the survivors.

The next thing I remember was an explosion similar to when the bomb dump was blown. I regained consciousness down under the water. I escaped through the left waist window. The raft from the left side was free and floating by itself and drifting quickly away. I failed on my first attempt to crawl aboard and I went down deep again, the next attempt I made it. I pulled up RC Neel to safety on the same raft and he promptly passed out on the floor of the raft. When he came around, he helped me recover William Nourse, ball gunner and Wallace D Olson, nose gunner who was fast sinking. I was cut and bleeding from the head and hands.

Ist Lt William Ungenthum was our navigator- bombardier, together, or bombigator, whichever. His father was a retired full bird colonel from somewhere in the New England States.

Thank you.  
Carl B Peterson 767 Sq.