



THE TORRETTA FLYER

Torretta Flyer No 17

Redondo Beach, California

Spring 1989

1989 REUNION SET FOR AUGUST 31 TO SEPTEMBER 3, IN NEW ORLEANS AT THE NEW ORLEANS MARRIOTT HOTEL

(See page 3 for Reunion information)

Scholarship Awards for 1988 Announced

(see page 5 story.)

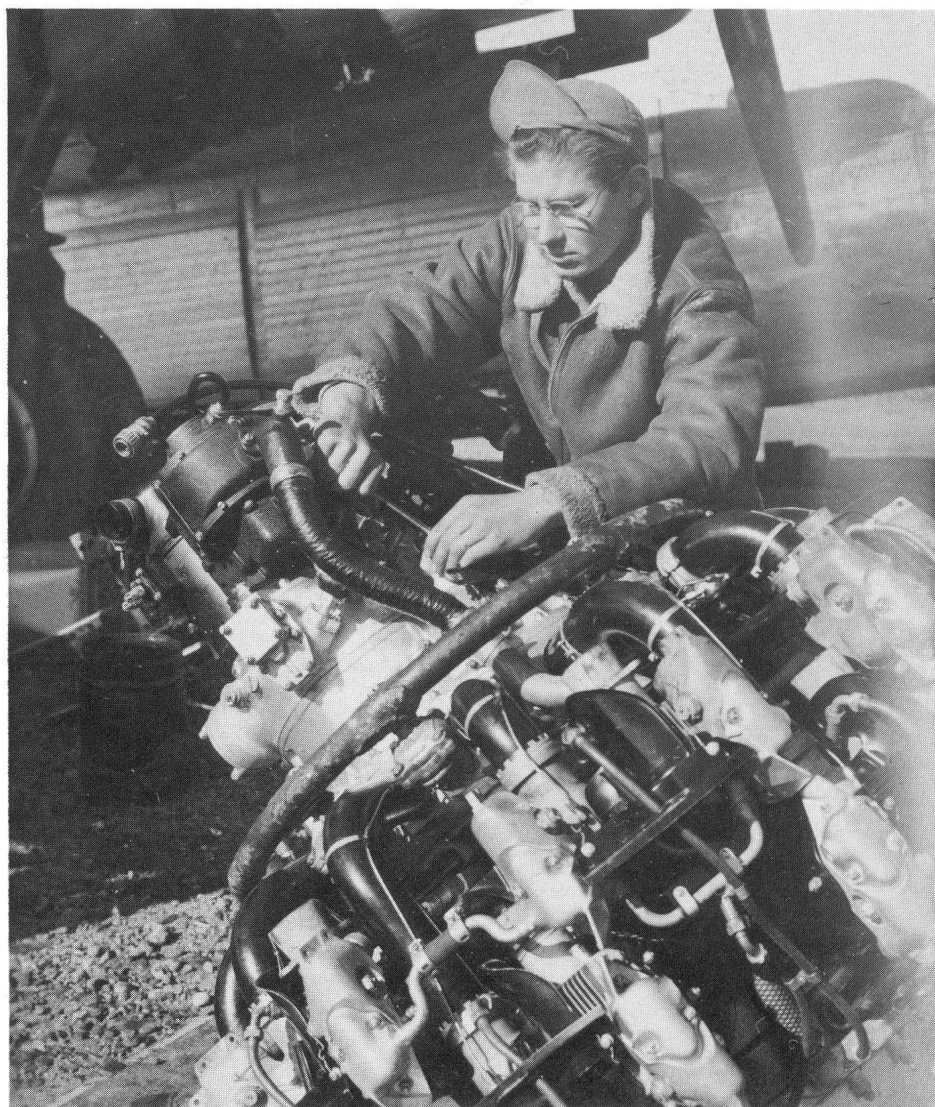


New Orleans Marriott Hotel

The New Orleans Marriott Hotel 555 Canal St. New Orleans 70140, LA is the site of the 1989 reunion of the 461st & 484th Bomb Groups Association. Dates are: August 31 to September 3, 1989. The reunion room rate is \$60.00 single or double. Use the tear slip on page 29 to make hotel reservations. Phone Numbers (504) 581-1000 or (800) 228-9290

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Bob O Billings (827 Sq) awarded Soldiers Medal - Story Page 6

NOTES FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

In carrying through with the history theme from the last issue, we have included a short history of the 15th Air Force along with a list of 15th Air Force Units and a description of the Airfield at Torretta. Below is a suggested list of recent publications that should be available at your book dealers or local libraries.

A Short History Book List

New in paperback, **Disaster at Bari**, by Glen Infield. The Luftwaffe attack on Bari Harbor December 2, 1943. A well researched book on a most successful German Luftwaffe attack on Allied shipping by Ju-88's and the lingering effects of bursting mustard gas shells on the citizens of Bari.

New Hardcover books

Men of the Luftwaffe, by Samuel W Mitcham Jr.

A history of the German Luftwaffe as told through its leaders. The men who made up the modern German Airforce were brilliant, ambitious, ruthless, deceitful, weak, and also powerful. The book covers the reason Alfred Kesserling favored 2 engine bombers over 4 engine bombers, and how this oversight and others led to the destruction of this mighty air force.

Hap, by Thomas M Coffee. General of the Air Force, Henry H "Hap" Arnold, an incurable maverick the hidebound US Army tried to contain. Hap fought hard for the Army Air Corps which eventually became the greatest air force the world had ever seen.

Whittle, The True Story, by John Golley. The story of the RAF officer who invented the modern jet engine. Sir Frank Whittle, a technical prodigy, who in the 1920s foresaw powerful turbine engines to power the next generation of aircraft. By sheer chance in the month of May 1942, a visit to England by Hap Arnold resulted in the Whittle engine being brought to the United States for manufacture, and what was to become the birth of the jet engine industry in the United States.

The Interrogator, by Raymond F Toliver. The story of Hans Schraff, the Luftwaffe's master interrogator. The magic spell used by Hans Schraff made Allied prisoners of war talk, even though they were conditioned to remain silent. His methods broke down barriers so effectively that after the war, the United States Air Force invited him to lecture senior officers at the Pentagon on POW interrogation.

Reuben Fleet, and the Story of Consolidated Aircraft, by William Wagner. Reuben Fleet, an early airmail pilot was the founder of Consolidated Aircraft in San Diego, the builder of the famed B-24 Liberator bomber. Learn how the B-24 was developed from a seaplane design with a Davis wing and twin rudders. (Seaplanes need large rudder area to control maneuverability in the water). As a result performance suffered until the B-24 N series with a single tail was built. Unfortunately, the B-24 N appeared too late to be operational in the war torn skies of WW2.

History Theme Continues

The historical theme that was started in issue No #16 Fall/Winter 88, **Torretta Flyer**, with the story, "History of the Army Air Forces 1907-1947" is continued in this issue with several stories starting on page 13 and continues on page 18 and 19. The "History of the 15th Air Force in World War Two" (page 13) is illustrated with photographs taken from the Association's collection. "The Engineer's Report on Torretta Field" was researched by member William Warren, whose father was William Miles, pilot, 827th Squadron. Additional historical articles will appear from time to time as the material becomes available.

The Histories of World War Two Air Force units are stored in two places, The National Archives, Washington DC for combat records, and Maxwell Field, Alabama for unit histories. 16MM microfilm historical summaries are available from Maxwell Field for some of our units. The Association has ordered microfilms in the past and will purchase additional reels this year. Prints will be made from these reels and will be bound for display at future reunions

Scholarship Awards Ceremony

It is hoped that the Scholarship Awards Ceremony can be arranged for the the third or fourth week in September, 1989 in the city of Cerignola, Italy. Members who wish to attend the ceremony should contact the Association office now. We will keep the membership informed as to the correct dates when the information is available to us.

Thank You, Thank You, Thank You, Thank You!!

We wish to thank those wonderful people who helped so much to make the 88 San Francisco reunion one of the best. They are: Charles H Bell, 825th sq, Jim Doppee, husband of Darlene Doppee, 827th sq, Clark and Doris Ection, 825 sq, and Harold Meshel, 824th sq.

The Torretta Flyer



The official publication of the 461st & 484th Bomb Groups Association, is published several times a year for members of the Association.

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Editor Bud Markel
Associate Editor Beatrice Markel

The Association welcomes stories and photographs dealing with the Air War over Europe during World War Two, and on the history of the B-24 Liberator Bomber. Stories of the Luftwaffe's flak arm and fighter defenses are also welcome. Direct all inquiries to the Editor, **Torretta Flyer**, 1122 Ysabel St. Redondo Beach, California, 90277. Phone (213) 316-3330

NEWS OF THE ASSOCIATION

With New Orleans as the site of the 1989 reunion, members and guests will be travelling to the Crescent City at the foot of the Mississippi River. With its reputation for Southern hospitality, great dining and the continual spirit of Mardi Gras, everyone should have a great time. There will be a tour to Keesler Air Force Base where many mechanics and flight engineers trained (including your editor). With the French Quarter just behind the Marriott, and the famous St Charles Street Car (that still runs today) just across Canal St., most of New Orleans is within walking distance from the Marriott, the official reunion hotel.

It is suggested that members make their hotel reservations with the New Orleans Marriott Hotel **EARLY** to avail themselves of the convention rate of \$60.00 per night. **The cutoff date for room availability at this reunion rate is August 4th.** A reservation form to be mailed directly to the Marriott is provided for your convenience on pages 30-31.

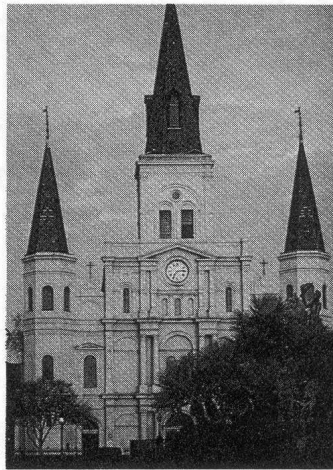
The Assistance Fund

An assistance fund (or needy fund) was established to help members of modest income attend future reunions. The 1989 reunion in New Orleans will be the first one for which this fund will be used. Members could help by identifying those who would welcome help in attending the reunion. Contributions to the assistance fund are always in order.

The Annual Meeting Agenda

1) Members have been writing to us regarding placing memorial plaques at the Air Force Museum in Dayton, Ohio, and at the Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, Colorado. Some time back there was also discussion regarding an installation of a plaque in Cerignola, Italy. These items could be presented for discussion.

2) We have received letters from members who suggested that the Association make a contribution towards the restora-



tion of the B24J now undergoing complete overhaul in Kissimmee, Florida. This item could be presented under new business. Please bring your membership card to the meeting.

Meetings Calendar

May 19-21, 1989

50th Anniversary of the first flight of the B-24 Liberator Bomber in Fort Worth, Texas. For information call the project officer at (505) 821-4484, or write to the Project Office 6424 Torrcon Dr Albuquerque, New Mexico 97109



August 13-17, 1989

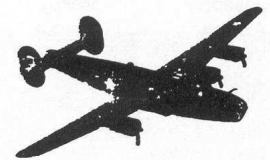
15th Air Force Reunion. Las Vegas Riviera Hotel. Members interested in attending this reunion may contact the 15th AF at PO Box 6325, March AFB, CA 92518. The 15th AF suggests that members who plan to attend should indicate by post card to the 15th so that space can be arranged.

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August 31- September 3, 1989

1989 reunion of the 461st & 484th Bomb Groups Association. New Orleans Marriott Hotel. A Tour to **Keesler Air Force Base** is scheduled. **Tours** to interesting sites in or near New Orleans may be booked at the concierge desk. New Orleans has a new **trolley line** that parallels the Mississippi River. Use it to visit **Jackson Square, the French Market, or Morning Call** (For those fabulous beignets and coffee au lait) Three blocks from the Marriott down Canal Street, **Paddle Wheel Steamers** ply up and down the Mississippi River from their dock just opposite from the Hilton Hotel. **Jazz buffs** will enjoy the many night spots featuring Jazz from Dixie Land style to the latest fusion. Most of these are within walking distance from the Marriott. **Eating out** has always been a special treat in New Orleans. You can choose from Cajun to Creole style with everything in between. Use registration form on pages 30-31, this issue for hotel reservations. **DON'T PUT IT OFF! REMEMBER THE CUT OFF DATE IS AUGUST 4TH!**



**You're Invited
to a
Celebration!**

September 20-24, 1989

B-24 50th Anniversary Celebration of the first flight of the B-24 Liberator Bomber San Diego, California. Write to the International Liberator Club, PO Box 841, San Diego, CA 92112.

The two press clippings appearing at right announced the 1988 Scholarship Awards of the 461st & 484th Bomb Groups Association. They were sent to us by Professor Umberto Albanese of Cerignola who heads the Italian staff that makes the yearly selections. As might be expected the scholarship program has made many friends for the Association in Italy. What we are doing is unique among 15th Air Force veterans associations and that makes us special with the citizens of Cerignola. **Donations** to the Memorial Scholarship Fund are always in order. You may use the tear slip on pages 27-28. If the contribution is made in the name of a deceased member, it will be so noted in the published list of contributors to the Scholarship Fund. The donors list shown below includes contributions from October 1, 1988 to early March 1989.

DONORS TO THE MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP FUND

John M	Billings	825
Joseph C	Bott	825
<i>Given in the Memory of</i>		
<i>Don Reid 825 Sq</i>		
John H	Boyd	766
Ralph W	Carr	825
Oscar	Detweiler	765
Peter	Drill	484
Colin E	Dye	826
<i>Given in Memory of Brother</i>		
<i>Keith Hamilton Dye</i>		
Joseph J	Ercole	824
George S	Flamand	825
Bill	Franklin	766
J Jordan	Glew	826
Dwyer A	Green	764
Joe	Hebert	826
Mike	Hendrickson	824
Bernard F	Hiss	824
Clare T	Ireland	826
Dan	Joba	826
William T	Kesey	766
Charles T	Lomax	767
James D	Mackin	767
Joseph F	Malloy	827
Adolph	Marcus	824
Val R	Miller	765
Judson W	Moore	766
Vincent W	O'Shea	826
Harold I	Reeve	766
Mrs. Walter	Rix	824
<i>Given in Memory of</i>		
<i>Walter M Rix 824 Sq</i>		
Claude F	Schroeder	827
Jack L	Schwartz	766
Charles G	Shaffer	827
Alfred J	Solomon	826
TV	Stradley	764
Robert J	Swanson	825
Charles E	Trinkle	826
Lawrence P	Weakley	824
William F	Wilson	826
Merle P	Yanney	824

The Scholarship Program of the 461st & 484th Bomb Groups Association Well Received in Italy

cronaca di Foggia

CERIGNOLA

RECEIVED JAN 13 1989

Assegnate le borse di studio dell'associazione piloti Usa

CERIGNOLA — E' noto che gli americani sono uno dei popoli più «esperti» della terra. Forse perché crogiuolo di razze e culture diverse, mettono al primo posto il senso dell'amicizia e della solidarietà.

Una riprova, sia pure minore, di questa realtà è verificabile a Cerignola. Nel lontano '44-45 stazionarono molti piloti Usa, facenti parte dei gruppi bombardieri che misero in ginocchio la Germania nazista. A distanza di 44 anni, un'associazione di reduci del «461st and 484th Bomb Groups» (presidente Bud Markel, direttore sezione borse di studio Chris Donaldson, Ed Gore, Ross Wilson) continuano a mantenere in

vita una simpatica iniziativa in favore dei figli studenti di famiglie abitanti nelle zone di Torretta, Tre Titoli e Pozzoterrano, dell'agro di Cerignola, in cui erano ubicati i campi di aviazione americani.

Anche quest'anno, infatti, l'Associazione dei reduci Usa ha assegnato borse di studio da 500 dollari a studenti che si sono distinti nell'anno scolastico trascorso. La consegna ai tre vincitori, Assunta Lepore dell'Istituto Commerciale, Antonella Cicirelli e Paolo Conversano, del Liceo artistico, è avvenuta nel corso di una manifestazione svoltasi nella biblioteca comunale, alla presenza del sottosegretario alla Pubblica Istruzione

Savino Mellillo, del rappresentante dell'Amministrazione comunale Luigi Bonito, di presidi e docenti di altre autorità locali.

Il rappresentante per l'Italia dell'associazione Umberto Albanese, impegnato animatore a livello locale della simpatica iniziativa, ha ricordato le finalità dell'Associazione, tendenti tutte a commemorare e onorare la memoria dei commilitoni che non fecero ritorno dalle missioni di guerra. Bonito, consigliere comunale, ha parlato di piacevole appuntamento annuale e, sottolineando la validità dell'iniziativa, ha messo l'accento sul significato di contributo alla pace fra gli uomini che la stessa persegue. L'on. Mellillo, che all'epoca, ancora ragazzo, viveva a Cerignola ha piaciuto l'iniziativa dicendosi lieto di poter partecipare in prima persona.

Si è soffermato, poi, sui problemi della scuola, parlando di crisi di crescita e puntando sull'esigenza del rinnovamento che deve avvenire soprattutto per merito degli stessi operatori scolastici. Mellillo ha detto inoltre che questa legislatura è decisa per accelerare il processo di adeguamento della scuola alle necessità della società, per questo deve trovare celere approvazione il disegno di legge che concede notevole autonomia alle singole unità scolastiche. M. C.

RECEIVED JAN 13 1989

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LA LICOGNA

15 dicembre 1988

BORSE DI STUDIO AMERICANE

Si è rinnovata, quest'anno, la tradizionale assegnazione di borse di studio americane. L'iniziativa, come è noto, è dell'Associazione «461st and 484th Bomb Groups Association». È un'associazione di reduci americani che, come chiamiamo dopo, ha costituito alcune borse di studio destinate a studenti cerignolani. La cerimonia si è svolta nei locali della Biblioteca Comunale di Cerignola ed è stata onorata dalla partecipazione del Sottosegretario alla P.I. on. Savino Mellillo.

In apertura, il professor Um-

berto Albanese, ha esplicitato i motivi della bella e significativa manifestazione. L'iniziativa ci riporta ai tempi della seconda guerra mondiale. Nel 1943-44 e 45 — come è noto — Cerignola era sede di basi aeree americane per le azioni di guerra in Germania e nei territori occupati dai tedeschi.

Molti avieri non fecero più ritorno alla base. I reduci, rientrati in America, a fine guerra, si costituirono in Associazione e, tra le altre iniziative, adottarono quella di istituire borse di studio in memoria e a ricordo

dei loro commilitoni che non fecero più ritorno alle basi aeree di Cerignola. Portatisi nella nostra città, i dirigenti della predetta associazione affidarono al prof. Umberto Albanese l'incarico di organizzare annualmente l'esplicitamento del concorso per l'assegnazione delle predette borse e la cerimonia stessa di assegnazione.

Ed il prof. Albanese, puntualmente, adempie il gradito incarico, rappresentando in loco il presidente dell'Associazione Bud Markel e i direttori del settore borse di studio Chris Do-

Donaldson, Ed Gore, Ross Wilson. L'ammontare di ogni borsa di studio è di 500 dollari.

Quest'anno le borse sono state appannaggio dei giovani Lepore Assunta (Istituto Tecnico Commerciale), Cicirelli Antonella e Paolo Conversano (Istituti del Liceo Scientifico "Einstein").

Presenti alla cerimonia i presidi prof. De Gemmis e prof. Astolfi, numerosi docenti, uomini di cultura e di scuola. L'av. Luigi Bonito rappresentava l'Amministrazione Comunale.

L'on. Savino Mellillo, sottosegretario alla P.I., si è vivamente rallegrato per la magnifica iniziativa e si è compiaciuto con il prof. Albanese e i dirigenti americani dell'Associazione promotrice. Si è compiaciuto anche con i giovani assegnatari delle borse, ai quali ha augurato un futuro. È un'iniziativa che stimola tutti al bene, allo studio, alla cultura, all'adempimento dei propri doveri, all'incremento di quei valori sociali e culturali che la gioventù studiosa sta riprendendo, incoraggiata dalla Scuola che, nonostante le carenze strutturali e le critiche, dimostra di essere sempre all'avanguardia sul piano educativo e formativo delle generazioni italiane.

SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS FOR 1988

November 28, 1988
Cerignola, Italy
Dear Mr Markel:

I'm very glad to have received one of your scholarships, and thank you for it. It is a great honor for me, above all because this award has been founded in memory of those valiant American soldiers who fought for their country and ideals in which they believed, at the cost of their lives too during the Second World War. I am sure these awards to deserving students contribute to keep up the memory of all those men who died for their country. I have not yet definite plans for my future studies. I hope to come to America one day, and have the possibility of meeting you and thanking you personally.

My best regards,
Paolo Conversano



Cerignola, Italy
November 27, 1988
Dear Mr Markel:

I apologize to you beforehand for this concise letter, because I study French and don't know your language.

However I hope to be able to express my gratitude to you for the grant.

I want you to know that your scholarship has a value more symbolic than material for me, because it bears witness to the sacrifice of all young American soldiers that fought and died for America. I feel

The Association office received the letters shown below from the three Italian students who were chosen to receive the scholarship grants for the year 1988. Each year the Association gives scholarship grants of \$500.00 each to three students whose families lived in the vicinity of the airfield at Torretta, Italy. Professor Umberto Albanese chooses the three finalists from applicants who must meet strict academic criteria.

great admiration towards them.

I hope to meet you sooner or later and to thank all of your Association personally.

My best regards
Antonella Ciciretti



Assunta Lepore
Via Salnitro 21
71042 Cerignola
November 25, 1989
Dear members of the 461st & 484th

Bomb Groups Association:

My thankfulness to all of your members for granting me the \$500. award.

I am sorry none of you will be able to come to Cerignola for the "awards giving ceremony." But I am sure you will be in Cerignola some time or another. You must, not only for my joy but also to renew personally your war fallen memories.

My parents too hope to meet you and thank you for your generosity.

The scholarship grant in fact will allow me to go to the University. I want to study literature and your award is almost freeing me from university taxes, books, and expenses, relevant to the first year.

I will attend the University in Bari, a sea-coast town about 200 kilometers from Cerignola.

It is also my duty to thank professor Umberto Albanese whose unselfish work has been so important to accomplish your initiative.

I look forward to meeting you.

With very special regards,
Assunta Lepore





Robert Altman photo 484th BG

Libports' Deliver the Goods Supply Hungry TAF with Bullets, Bombs

(reprinted from the Stars and Stripes)

ADVANCED ALLIED HEADQUARTERS, Oct 26, 1944 Napoleon's often quoted military axiom, "a soldier marches on his stomach" still goes today say the Air Force Quartermasters, and now they have revealed "how it was done" in the case of the Tactical Air Force the 7th Army miles ahead of its normal supply lines in the early days of the Southern France invasion.

What the Tactical Air Force was "hungry" for was aviation fuel, bombs, and ammunition so they could maintain air superiority.

They began to supply by air. This isn't new but the use of Liberators as transport was new. On September 10, 1944 the first "Libports" stripped of turrets, and turret guns and loaded with supplies took off from their home fields of Castelluccia and Torretta in Southern Italy *(Note 1). Landing eleven hours later *(Note 2) at the Lyon airfield. Off came the bullets, bombs, and fuel. Portable pumps were rigged to the Liberator fuel tanks and the precious fuel pumped into empty fuel drums, just enough being left to enable the Libs to make the return trip.

All in all, between September 10, and October 2, 1944, the 15th AAF Liberators of a wing commanded by Col. William L Lee, *(Note 3) Weatherford, Texas flew 704 transport sorties without escort carrying 847,015 gallons of high octane fuel, 1,276,030 rounds of ammunition, and 802 pounds of bombs. as well as oil, empty drums, grease, and bomb fin crates.

tie on bottom tail fin).

* Note 2 The flight time seems to be in error. It would be approximately correct for total round trip time.

* Note 3 Later was promoted to Brigadier General.

Bob O Billings Receives Soldiers Medal

(see Front cover photo)
(reprinted from Stars and Stripes)

At the risk of his own life, an Albia (Iowa) man recently prevented injury and possibly death, to personnel of his organization (827 Squadron, 484th Bomb Group) and saved a B-24 Liberator.

In recognition of his heroic efforts, Sgt Bob O Billings was recently awarded the Soldiers Medal for, "performance of an act of heroism involving risk of life."

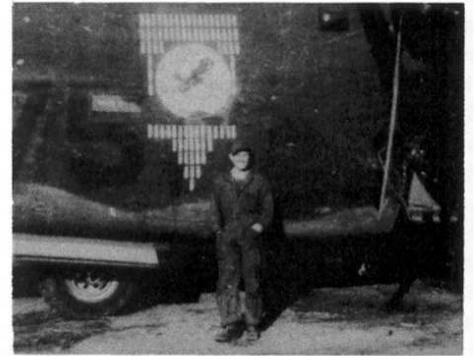
A few weeks ago Sgt Billings was watching planes of his squadron return from a mission. He noticed a nearby plane turn off the hard surface of the revetment. As the aircraft did so, one of the propellers struck a filled gasoline drum near the parking area. The gasoline splashed on the side of the ship and instantly burst into flames. Realizing that the plane might explode at any minute, the crew ran for safety.

Sgt Billings, knowing what an explosion could do, immediately ran for the ship. He made his way through the flames and into the cockpit, cut the switches and applied the brakes. He then grabbed a fire extinguisher and played it on the flames. In the meantime, fire fighting equipment arrived

* Note 1 This was the 49th Wing comprised of the 451st BG (red ball on bottom tail fin), 461st BG (Red dash on bottom of tail fin, & the 484th BG (red bow

and now that the propellers had stopped turning, the firemen were able to get close to the plane. After a few minutes the flames were extinguished.

In the words of the citation, " The lives of many men in the vicinity were saved because of the gallant act. Sgt Billings by his unselfish devotion to duty and unflinching courage has reflected great credit upon himself and the Armed Forces of the United States of America."



Generator Joe showing its bombing missions just above the insignia (Bob O Billings photo 827 Sq)

When Bob was asked why he didn't run like the rest, he answered, "Well after being with a ship for almost a year, you get to like it. In other words you feel like a mother to it. That ship went through too much to blow up right here on the ground."

Since then the aircraft (#75 Generator Joe) has flown 15 more missions over Hitler's Fortress Europe and its crew has destroyed three enemy fighters.

War weary after over 100 combat missions it was converted to R & R and cargo aircraft.



Generator Joe 75 After being converted to a squadron supply ship (Richard Moon photo 827 Sq) Hastings, FL

Dear Bud:

I am enclosing an Escape and Evasion report, along with a diary report written by crew member Ralph N Christensen, of the mission of December 11, 1944. Cpl Edward Yurochko ASN 33767134 KIA on the mission is buried in the St Gospa Catholic Cemetery near Benkovac, Yugoslavia. He was awarded the Purple Heart and and Air

Medal posthumously.

Sincerely
Calvin R Teel 825 Sq

**ESCAPE
STATEMENT
December 15, 1944**

On December 11, 1944 the crew of Reuben J Kaiser was on a mission to Vienna. On the way to the target, engines No 1 & 3 were running rough and had to be put on automatic rich. The IP was reached and owing to too sharp a turn being made the formation got split up. After regrouping the formation went on the alternate target, Graz, which was bombed successfully.

On the return to base Kaiser's ship remained with the formation for an hour, when owing to a fuel shortage they left formation to take the shortest route home.

Finding that they had not sufficient fuel to reach the Italian mainland, the pilot headed for the Isle of Vis. Over Yugoslavia the no 3 engine started cutting out and the fuel pressure fluctuated. At 11,000 feet all four engines cut out over the Benkovac area (44 03N 15 36 E) owing to lack of fuel.

Lt Kaiser saw what appeared to be a piece of smooth white terrain, so circled around to land. At 3,500 feet he was able to see that the ground was not level and so ordered the crew to bail out. Seven bailed out, but as the radio operator left his chute in the waist, and had no time to fetch it. Lt Kaiser and co-pilot Chester L Jones stayed with him and the plane to land it.



Crew of Reuben J Kaiser 825 squadron. Front Row from left: Charles F Elsesser-nose gunner, Pope-ball gunner (who replaced Yurochko), Ralph N Christensen-upper turret gunner, Calvin R Teel -radio operator, and Charles J Shanklin-engineer. Back row from left: Albino Frigo-tail gunner, Charles E Laster Jr-bombardier Reuben J Kaiser-pilot, Chester L Jones-co/pilot, and Lane S McKone-navigator. Note that the crew is wearing new clothing that was issued after returning to the squadron from Yugoslavia. (Ralph N Christensen photo)

The hydraulic system was out. Lt Kaiser made a good belly landing and none on board were injured. The plane landed 2 miles east of Benkovac and was wrecked.

After destroying secret equipment, Lt Kaiser, F/O Chester L Jones, and Calvin Teel left the plane and were at once contacted by Partisans, who took them to Benkovac. The rest of the crew, (Lane S McKone, Charles E Laster Jr, Charles F Elsesser, Ralph N Christensen, Albino Frigo, and Charles J Shanklin) that bailed out, landed in an area of about two square miles, five miles East of Benkovac. They were never in the hands of the enemy.

All were picked up in small groups by Partisans and were joined with the rest of the crew at Partisan Headquarters in Benkovac.

One member of the crew (Cpl Yurochko) who bailed out, landed in a pit and was killed instantly by hitting his head on the side.

At the Partisan's headquarters the crew was well treated. Their personal effects and baggage was brought from the plane.

After spending the night in the house of the Mayor of Benkovac, where they were well treated and cared for, all attended the funeral of Cpl Yurochko at St Gospa

church in town. The Partisans gave Cpl Yurochko a funeral with full military honors. A service by two Catholic Priests was given for him and he was interred in the Catholic Cemetery, one mile east of Benkovac, and the grave was marked.

On the afternoon of December 12, 1944 the crew was taken in a bus to Zara (44 06N 15 15 E) (a three hour journey). The road narrow and hard, as well as a temporary bridge, was crossed without difficulty.

The party embarked at once on a British Cruiser where they spent the night of December 13, 1944, and on the following morning were transferred to a British

destroyer which landed them at Bari Harbor.

The crew were all well treated on both ships, in spite of crowded conditions on the Destroyer which was carrying 38 extra personnel, many of them escaped British POW's.

J G K Kennedy
Capt. IS 9
Interrogator

**Diary Report
By Ralph N Christensen**

Monday December 11, 1944. Briefed for a mission to Vienna, Austria at 4 AM. Flew ship #77 borrowed from the 827 squadron. This plane had just been repaired after a crash landing on the Isle of Vis. Missed the target at Vienna passing to the right because of overcast, but saw lots of flak. The lead ship ordered us to bomb the 5th Alternate, Graz, Austria marshalling yards. Saw flak in four different places, the last over Zagreb, Yugoslavia. We dropped on Graz and were hit with more flak, one of our engines was hit and it too was now

running rough. The lead ship took us the wrong way for we used up much precious fuel. Our engineer Charles Shanklin was busy transferring fuel while we headed for the emergency landing strip at Vis. We dropped down to 12,000 feet now with two engines out. Lt Kaiser told us to prepare for a crash landing. Four of us got in the waist and braced ourselves against the rear bulkhead. The pilot gave the order to bail out about 5,000 feet. I was the first out of the bottom hatch, and pulled the rip cord and I was jolted severely. I tried to turn around and count the chutes coming out of the plane but couldn't maneuver the chute. In about a minute with the ground coming up fast, I hit the ground hard on my back. I cut my head in two places, cut my lip and got a bloody nose. It finally stopped. We landed about 30 miles from the Yugoslavian coast.

After I landed, a group of Yugoslav Partisans (commanded by Marshall Tito) picked me up and helped me with my shoes and out of my harness. They shook my hand when they found out I was an American. They wore what looked like British battle dress, and Nazi boots and guns they got from the Germans they had killed. They pointed out where another one of the crew had landed about 200 yards away, and took me to him. It was Lt McKone, our navigator. They pointed up on a hill nearby. We all went up and Eddie Yurochko, our ball gunner was lying there. His neck was broken and he was dead.

The Partisans carried our chutes and harnesses and took us to a farmhouse about 2 miles away. They gave us some Yugoslav wine and liquor, and brown bread. We waited while they brought in more of the crew. The first was Charles Shanklin, the engineer. He had hurt his right hip. Next was Charles Elsesser, nose gunner. He sprained his ankle. Next came Lt Laster, the bombardier. He had hurt his back and two Partisans were helping him in. Then Albino Frigo, tail gunner walked in. One of the Partisans spoke English and told us to wait while they got Yurochko's body and a truck to take into town to Partisan Headquarters. The town was called Benkovac. When we got there, we found Lt Kaiser, first pilot, Lt Chester Jones, copilot and Calvin Teel, the radio operator. They had crash landed the plane 5 miles outside of town. All three were OK. The Partisans fed us and gave us the choice of wine, cognac, vodka or vermouth. They

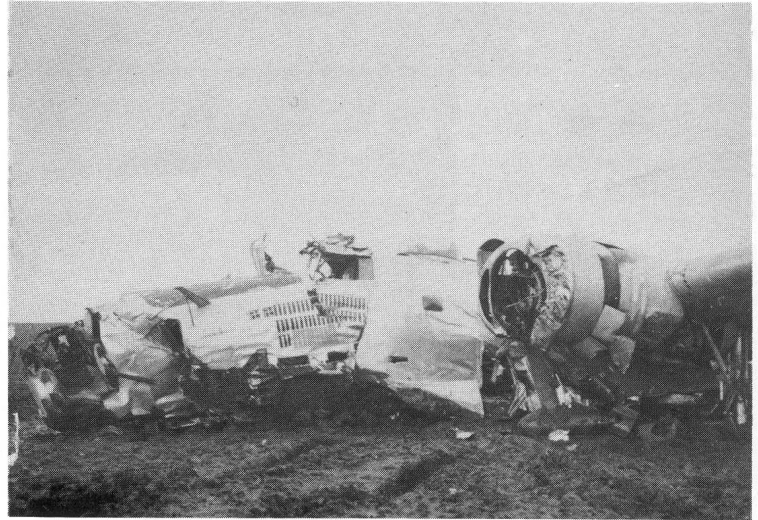
told us the Germans had cleared out just three weeks before. They put us up for the night in the mayor's house.

The name of the interpreter we had was Rudy Moscovick. He had lived in the United States and had been fighting the Nazis since 1941. Tuesday December 12, 1944. Got up at 6:30 AM, ate breakfast of soft boiled eggs, brown bread, strong coffee in addition to our choice of wine, cognac, vodka, or vermouth. We went out to the plane in a bus. Half of the belly was buried in the ground, everything was piled up against the bulkhead in the waist. The propellers were scattered all over the field. We took out all of the 50 caliber guns and ammo and gave them to the Partisans.

We rode back to town and attended Yurochko's funeral. The Partisans had arranged everything. They had six Partisan pallbearers, and a guard of honor of 25. The funeral services were in St Gospa's Catholic Church with a twenty voice choir singing the service. He was buried in St Gospa's Cathedral Cemetery with full military honors. The honor guard fired a volley of shots over his grave. Yurochko's dog tags were placed on the grave.

We went back to Partisan headquarters and waited until they got a bus and took us to Zara, Yugoslavia on the coast. On the way we saw a few skeletons of Nazi and Italian planes which had been shot down or had crashed. We arrived in Zara and got aboard a British Ack Ack cruiser, (HMS Colombo). We slept in the seaman's mess. This ship carried Royal marines.

Wednesday December 13, 1944. Ate breakfast, sausages, toast, tea. Got our bags together and transferred to a British Destroyer (L-34 HMS Bicestra) to take us to Bari, Italy. We met two other air crews who had been shot down in Austria and had taken 38 days to walk back. We also met a group of British soldiers who had been prisoners of the Germans for three



Kenneth Prien photo 765 Sq

and a half years. The British destroyer crew drank tea (no sugar) six times a day. We slept on the ship.

Thursday December 14, 1944. Aboard Destroyer L-34, speed up to 24 knots, arrived at Bari at 1:30 PM. A truck came and took us to a hospital. The doctor there checked us over, dressed our cuts and bruises. They deloused us and our clothes with DDT. We received a new issue of clothes, field jacket, olive drab shirt, tie, and olive drab pants. Also issued cap, socks, underwear, belt, shoes, and a sweater.

Friday December 15, 1944. We were taken to 15th Air Force Headquarters in Bari, and were interrogated by an English Captain. We reported Eddie Yurochko's death. They called for transportation back to our squadron. I helped Lt Kaiser write a letter to Yurochko's parents. He was only 19 years of age.

We went to the airfield near Bari. A B-24 from our squadron came and we were taken back to Torretta, landing about 3:30 PM.

The Crew of Reuben J Kaiser was shot down on another occasion. The following report was printed in the Baltimore Sun March 21, 1945.

15th AAF in Italy. S/Sgt Ralph W Christensen of Baltimore, Maryland, an armorer gunner on a B-24 Liberator of the 15th Air Force in Italy, recently returned



Lt Ivanov, Russian Occupation Army, Kecskemet, Hungary. Ralph Christensen met him on a trip to Odessa, Russia in May of 1944. Rarph Christensen photo 825 Sq

home after crash landing in the icy waters of the Adriatic Sea.

A few hours earlier the big bomber, on which Sgt Christensen is an upper turret gunner, was hit in several places by heavy anti-aircraft fire over Regensberg, Germany. The damage done by the flak was much more serious than was apparent at the time. Shell fragments had pierced a wing and ruined the intricate fuel system causing all of the fuel to pour into the tank for the #2 engine.

Despite all attempts to get the plane back to its field, two engines quit over the Adriatic Sea, because of lack of fuel due to the damaged lines. There was no chance to reach land. The pilot pushed the nose of the bomber down to maintain flying speed and called the crew on the interphone.

"I knew we were in serious trouble just as the two engines began to cough," said Christensen. " But I had hoped they would hold out until we reached land. The pilot's voice over the interphone, telling us to prepare to ditch, was far from cheerful."

Immediately after the plane struck the

water, Sgt Christensen extricated himself from the rapidly sinking craft by crawling out of the upper escape hatch, and jumped toward a life raft which had already been put in the water by another member of the crew.

"Everything was hazy in my mind at the time," stated the gunner. "The upper turret broke loose from its supports when we hit the water banging me on the head. I grabbed a rope for a few seconds but didn't have the strength to hold on. The next thing I remember was being pulled up on one of the rubber rafts."

It was three long hours before a rescue launch manned by British sailors, arrived to pick up the men. They had rowed around aimlessly, trying to stay warm. On the boat however they were bundled up in dry clothing and blankets, then given hot malted milk. It was the first fresh milk any of the men had tasted since leaving American soil.

After reaching land, the men were checked thoroughly by a medical officer at a nearby British Hospital, where they were also given a hearty meal and quartered overnight. Sometime later, a plane dispatched from their squadron landed at an adjacent airfield and returned them to their home airfield.

Returning from a mission the "hard way" is not so new to Sgt Christensen. Only three weeks before the crash landing in the Adriatic, he was flying his regular position on another crippled plane that was trying to get home. Forced down in Yugoslavia he spent five days getting back on that occasion. "In nine missions I think I have had my share of trouble for the whole war." He said. " The rest of it ought to be smooth sailing."

-30-

**Mission Diary of
Charles T Lomax 767 Sq
Magnolia, NJ**

Introduction

The missions that follow below were typed in July 1984 from my diary kept from July 1944 until Jan 1945. Many of these

missions are still vivid in my memory, but as I typed this diary many things were refreshed in my memory that had long been forgotten.

As you read these missions you will notice that there is a total of 34 recorded, that would have been enough to complete my tour. I checked my log book and found that on August 7, 1944 we went to Germany and I had recorded a 6 hour flight time. I checked the book "15th Air Force History" for August 7, 1944. They recorded B-24s going to Blechhammer, Silesia on that date. I do remember going to Blechhammer one time when we lost an engine. We could not feather it due to it seizing up. I remember how difficult it was to fly home. We lost our electrical system, and a second engine was registering low fuel pressure which we expected to lose. With much difficulty we got back to the base OK. This was an aborted mission, but we must have been awarded a mission credit which could have made mission #7.

We took phase training as a crew at Boise, Idaho before being assigned to the 767 sq, 461st BG, 49th Wg, 15th AF based at Torretta, Italy 10 miles south west of Cerignola, Italy.

The following are the crew members

Pilot: Bob Roswurm
Co-pilot: Chuck Lomax (Mem)
Bombardier: Ross Young (Mem)
Navigator: Howard Sossamon (Mem)
Engineer: Cottengain
Radio Operator: Chapman
Nose Gunner: Wyatt L Busbee (Mem)
Ball Gunner: J Johnson
Tail Gunner: D Moore
Waist Gunner: Eisenberg

Eventually Bob Roswurm, Ross Young, and Howard Sossamon went into operations. They now flew group lead with different crews. I checked out and took our original crew.

Mission List

Linz, Austria. Ship #74. July 25, 1944

Bomb Load: 5 ea 1000 lbs, Fuel: full tanks 2700 gallons.

Four groups took part in the raid on the Tiger & Panther Tank Works which was 2000 yards square. Fighter escort met us

Tiger & Panther Tank Works which was 2000 yards square. Fighter escort met us over the Adriatic Sea. Fighters were P-47, P-38, and P-51s. The group was hit extremely hard by ME-109s, Fockwulf 190s, and Ju 288s, for a total of 150 attacking enemy fighters. Our gunners set all kinds of records, one ball gunner shot down 8 fighters, another crew reported 13 enemy shot down. A third crew reported 12 more enemy destroyed. Our crew and one other had to abort before hitting the IP, Our #4 engine had dropping oil pressure.

Mission No 1

Pec, Yugoslavia. Ship #74. July 27, 1944

Bomb Load: 6 ea 1000 lb Demolition bombs, Fuel 2300 gals

The 461st Group was the only one taking part in the raid. Mission was on the marshalling yards in the City of Pec. We hit the wrong town. No fighter escort, no flak, or enemy fighters seen. Time: 4 hours 5 minutes

Mission No 2

Thorina, Greece. Ship 74. July 28, 1944
Bomb load: 6 ea 1000 lbs Fuel: 2300 Gals

The 461st BG was the only group to take part. Raid on rail bridgehead at Thorina. We completely destroyed the bridgehead and part of the town.

No fighter escort, No enemy fighters, and only one flak burst.

Bomb Accuracy 88.2%. Time: 5 hours 30 minutes.

Mission No 3

Budapest, Hungary. Ship No. unknown. July 30, 1944

Bomb Load 8 ea 500 lb high explosive. Fuel: 2700 Gals

Target: Duna Aircraft Factory. The 49th Wing composed of the 451st, 461st, and the 484th Bomb Groups hit the target along with other units. One B-17, and one B-24 was shot down. One FW-190 was shot down. The flak was extremely heavy, our ship was hit in the tail. Fighter attacks were not intense. The target was destroyed as far as the observers could see. A good bomb pattern was seen in the photos, but the target was missed. Time: 6 hours, 30 minutes.

Mission No 4

Bucharest, Rumania Ship No 74 July 31, 1944

Target: Prahova Oil Refinery. Bomb Load 8 ea 500 lb high explosives. Fuel: 2700 gals. 49th Wing comprised of the 451st, 461st, and 484th Bomb Groups took part. P-38s, and P-51s flew escort. Flak was extremely heavy, no enemy fighters were seen. 484th and 451st were hit hard with flak. As far as the observers could see, the bombs fell short, some hit the target. Time 7 hours, 30 minutes. Bombing height 23,000 feet.

Mission No 5

Target: Oberraderch Chemical Works. Ship #60 August 3, 1944

Bomb Load: 8 ea 500 High explosive. Fuel: 2700 Gals

49th Wing 451st, 461st, 484th BG, and 5th Wing (B-17's) took part. Fighter escort P-38s and P-51s. Opposition was about 74 flak guns, and 100 to 125 single engine fighters, and 15 to 25 twin engine fighters. We could not locate the target due to cloud cover. We bombed the first alternate target, which was Friedrichshaven Zahnabrik Works. Bombing accuracy was not known. Flak was moderate, but our ship did receive three holes in the left wing. Time: 7 hours. Bombing altitude 22,000 feet.

Mission 6

Miramas, France. Ship #60. August 6, 1944

Target: Marshalling yards. Bomb load 8 each 500 lb high explosive. Fuel: 2700 gals. Escort was provided by P-38s and P-51s. The flak was very heavy and accurate. A close burst hit our nose gunner Busbee, cutting his oxygen hose in two. The target was hit and completely destroyed as seen from the air. Time: 7 hours, 55 minutes. Bombing height 22,000 feet.

Mission No 7

See second paragraph of introduction for explanation.

Mission No 8

Ploesti, Rumania. Ship #65 August 10, 1944

Target: Xenia Oil Refinery. Bomb Load 8 ea 500 lbs. Fuel 2700 Gals. P-51s flew escort. We flew #3 in Able flight of second attack unit. 50 enemy

single engine fighters encountered by other bomb groups. The flak was like one big cloud, and was very accurate. There was a heavy smoke screen over the target so target damage could not be observed. Time: 7 hours, 25 minutes. Bombing altitude 21,000 feet.

Mission No 9

Genoa, Italy Ship #63 August 13, 1944

Target: Coastal guns. Bomb Load 9 ea 500 lbs. Fuel 2700 Gals. No fighter escort provided. We flew #4 position in C flight in the second attack unit. Encountered no enemy fighters, but ran into very accurate flak. Missed the target. Time: 6 hours, 45 minutes. Bombing Altitude 21,000 feet.

Mission 10

Southern France. Ship No # 68 August 14, 1944

Target: Coastal defenses. Bomb Load 8 each 500 lbs. Fuel 2700 gals. No fighter escort was provided. We flew #2 position in A flight in the first attack unit. Encountered no fighters or flak opposition. Target hit with very good pattern. Good mission. Time 6 hours, 5 minutes. Bombing Altitude 18,000 feet.

Mission 11

San Raphael, France Ship No # 63. August 14, 1944

Target: Coastal defenses and beach (264A) in preparation for the Invasion of Southern France. Bomb load 36, 100 lb general purpose demolition bombs. Fuel: 2700 gals. We had the most pinpoint target to hit, supposedly our group has the best bombing score. Our mission was to soften up the beach for the invasion forces. No flak or enemy fighters were observed. We hit the target with a good pattern. We observed many naval ships and aircraft carriers in the waters off of the target. Time: 6 hours, 15 minutes. Bombing height 14,000 feet.

Mission 12

Ploesti, Rumania. Ship unknown. August 17, 1944

Rumania American Axis Refineries. Bomb Load: 8 each 500 lbs high explosive. Fuel: 2700 gals. We were the second group to go over the target. 31 planes started over Ploesti, 20 made it over the target. The rest aborted.

Fighter escort: P-38s, and P-51s. Flak was

very accurate and very thick. One ship in what was left of our squadron was damaged heavily. T C Moore feathered one engine and was losing another. Rosencrans flew his wing toward home. T C got as far as the Yugoslavia Coast and bailed his crew out. They were picked up by a German E boat. Time 7 hours, 45 minutes. Bombing Altitude 23,000 feet.

Mission 13

Budapest, Hungary. Ship # 67. August 20, 1944

Target: Szolnok Airfield. Bomb load 4000 lbs fragmentation bombs. Fuel 2700 gals. With no fighter escort and very little flak. One ship in our wing was shot down. We hit the target and destroyed many airplanes on the ground. Time: 7 hours, 5 minutes. Bombing Altitude 18,000 feet.

Mission 14

Vienna, Austria Ship #69 August 22, 1944

Target: Lobavoil Refinery. Bomb load 4 each 1000 lbs. Fuel 2700 gals. We were supposed to have P-38 escort, but they never showed up. We were the second group to go over the target. Col Applegate led the group. Approximately 10 minutes before the IP about 35 FW 190s and 3 ME-109s hit us knocking down seven B-24s in the group in front of us. We went over the target and received a hit in our #4 engine, which we had to feather. Busbee our nose gunner shot down a FW 190 which exploded almost immediately. The German pilot ejected safely. The tail gunner D Moore, was wounded in the foot with flak over the target. Time: 6 hours, 55 minutes.

Bombing Altitude 21,000 feet.

Mission 15

Vienna, Austria. Ship #65. August 23, 1944

Target: Military Airfield. Bomb Load 4000 lbs fragmentation bombs. Fuel: 2700 gals. We had P-51s & P-38s to escort us. We were the third group to go over the target. Approximately 15 minutes before the IP the German fighters hit us again. They shot down ten B-24s in the group in front of us and one out of our squadron. We did not have any flak until we left the target. We lost our hydraulic system due to one of the accumulators

being hit with flak. Cottengain, our engineer repaired it sufficiently so we would have pressure to land safely. Time: 6 hours, 50 minutes. Bombing Altitude 21,000 feet.

Mission 16

Bucharest, Rumania. Ship # 68 August 26, 1944

Target: Military Airfield. Bomb load 8 each 500 lbs. Fuel: 2700 gals. We had P-51 escort, they did a good job. We were the second group over the target. No enemy fighters or flak encountered. Bomb pattern was very good destroying the field. Time: 7 hours, 55 minutes. Bombing Altitude 23,000 feet.

Mission 17

Budapest, Hungary. Ship #68 August 28, 1944

Target: Bridge on the outskirts of Budapest. Bomb load 4 each 1000 lbs. Fuel: 2700 gals. We were squadron lead and were supposed to have P-51 escorting us.

We saw no enemy fighters, but there was quite a bit of flak. Szolnok RR bridge was destroyed. Time: 6 hour 55 minutes. Bombing altitude 20,000 feet.

Mission 18

Ferrara, Italy Ship #68. September 1, 1944

Target: Rail Road bridge. Bomb load 9 each 500 lb. Fuel: 2300 gals. We were deputy lead of the group. Some flak was experienced, but no fighters were encountered. We hit the target, but it was found to be the wrong bridge. Time: 5 hours, 55 minutes. Bombing altitude 24,000 feet.

Mission 19

Belgrade, Yugoslavia. Ship # 68. September 3, 1944.

Target: Slips for barges. Bomb load 9 each 500 lb. Fuel: 2300 gals. We had no fighter escort, and did not encounter any enemy fighters or flak. We hit the target as briefed. Time 5 hours, 35 minutes. Bombing altitude 18,000 feet.

Rest Camp. September 4, 1944

We went to the Isle of Capri for a week's rest.

Mission 20

Lyon, France. Ship #72 September 13, 1944

Mission: Transporting supplies. Fuel 3600 gals. 2 each 55 gallons of oil. Ammunition and empty drums for motor fuel. The rail road and highway bridges over the Rhone river were destroyed by the Germans and the Allied Armies and Air Forces. It was difficult getting supplies to our armies who had moved up the Rhone River valley in the vicinity of Lyon.

Mission 21

Lyon, France. Ship #60. September 17, 1944. Fuel load 3600 gals. 2 each 55 gallons of oil, ammunition and empty fuel drums. We lost an engine on our way up to Lyon, the weather was bad, and getting worse as we flew north. We decided that we should land at the first available landing strip, and so informed the crew. We had to be careful as some strips were still being used by the Germans. One of the crew spotted a strip as we hit a break in the clouds. We started to circle and let down to get a better look. When we found it, it turned out to be a P-47 strip on a farm field. We decided to land in a driving rain storm on this short field. This would be extremely tricky even under ideal conditions. When we landed our main wheels locked and we slid the whole length of the runway across a concrete highway into the mud on the other side where we became stuck. We spent the rest of the day digging the plane out. In the afternoon a C-47 with a load of sailors on board slid down the runway just as we did and headed right for us. At the last possible moment he did a controlled ground loop avoiding a nasty wreck. We were in Valance, France for a week.

Mission 22

Athens, Greece. Ship #68. September 25, 1944

Target: Dock installations. Bomb load 8 each 500 lb. Fuel 2700 gals. We had no fighter escort as it was not needed. Flak was weak. Newton's crew went down and crash landed on an island that the British had just recaptured. They were returned to the squadron later. Time 6 hours, 40 minutes.

Mission 23

Vienna, Austria. Ship #63. October 7, 1944.

Bomb load 8 each 500 lbs. Fuel: 2700 gals. The whole air force was to hit various targets in the Vienna area. There was no fighters to be seen, but the flak was very intense as always in this area. We dropped our bombs on a secondary target in Hungary, and received one mission credit. We destroyed the marshalling yards there. Time 7 hours, 35 minutes.

Mission 24

Venice, Italy. Ship #69. October 10, 1944.

Target: Marshalling Yard. Bomb Load 10 each 500 lb. Fuel: 2300 gals. We were escorted by P-38s which provided good cover. One ME-210 came out of the clouds and was surprised as we to see him. He quickly returned to the clouds upon seeing our P-38 cover. We encountered some flak. We did not drop our bombs because the target could not be seen. Time 5 hours 50 minutes.

Mission 25

Bologna, Italy. Ship #63. October 12, 1944

Target: German Store House. Bomb load 36 each 100 lb. This was an all out raid in conjunction with the Fifth Army to take the city of Bologna. Our escort was provided by P-38s. We did not see any enemy fighters. There was some flak, but it was very inaccurate. Our bombing was good. Time 6 hours, 40 minutes.

Mission 26

Vienna, Austria. Ship #65. October 13, 1944

Target: Oil refinery. Bomb load 8 each 500 lb. Fuel 2700 gals. We had P-38 escort which seemed to be spread out all over the sky. We saw two enemy aircraft that stayed out of range near the clouds, and never did attack. This was a real bad luck Friday the 13th. A plane blew up on take off, and we had a serious mid air over Mt Melfi during assembly. One crew was killed. The other ship made it back to the base. Our target was an oil refinery right in the heart of Vienna. The group took a lot of damage from very accurate flak. We could hardly get to the strip when we got home due to damaged ships cluttering the runway. Many had wounded aboard that had

to be tended to immediately. I flew with Herbert's crew today. He is a good pilot and commander. A large plume of smoke came up from the target. Time 8 hours, 40 minutes.

Mission 27

Blechhammer, Silesia. Ship #71. October 14, 1944

Target: Oil Refinery. Bomb load 7 each 500 lb. Fuel 2700 gals. Escort provided by P-38s and P-51s. We could not make Silesia due to poor weather encountered. We picked a target of opportunity in Czechoslovakia. Bombing results were good. Time 7 hours, 25 minutes.

Mission 28

Milan, Italy. Ship #71. October 20, 1944

Target: Automotive works. Bomb load 8 each 500 lb. Fuel 2700 gals. We had no escort. We saw four German airfields, two of which had no parked aircraft. Two of the airfields were observed to have single and twin engine fighters on them. Bombing results not known. Time 8 hours.

Mission 29

Augsburg, Germany. Ship #75. November 4, 1944

Bomb load 6 each 500 lb clusters of incendiary bombs. Fuel 2700 gals. Escort was provided by P-51s. We made it as far as the Alps, when 3 and 4 superchargers gave out. It was impossible to go on and we could not stay with the formation. We were flying number 4 position. I lowered the landing gear to signal those flying my wing. We dropped our bombs on a marshalling yard in Northern Italy. We must have hit oil storage, when the 15th returned from Augsburg they reported a black plume of smoke reaching 23,000 feet. This was my first mission as first officer. Time 5 hours, 35 minutes.

Mission 30

Sarajevo, Yugoslavia. Ship #60. November 5, 1944

Bomb load 9 each 500 lb Fuel 2300 gals. We had good escort provided by P-38s . We couldn't drop because of cloud cover. We returned to base with the bombs. Time 4 hours, 5 minutes.

Mission 31

Bolzano, Italy. Ship #60. November 6, 1944.

Target: Middle transformer. Bomb load 9 each 500 lb RDX explosive. Fuel 2700 gals. We took the Germans by surprise. They were just beginning to smoke the pass as we arrived. The flak was very intense. We were told that the flak guns were mounted up to 10,000 feet in the mountains which almost put us in a cross fire situation. One co-pilot was killed instantly by a burst that hit close to him. We had two main fuel cells punctured in the right wing that had to be replaced. Time 6 hours, 50 minutes.

Mission 32

Munich, Germany. Ship #63. November 16, 1944

Target: West marshalling yard. Bomb load 5 each 500 lb. Fuel 2700 gals. We had 52 P-51s fly very good escort for us. The flak was very intense, but we didn't go through it due to an accident. The P-51s seemed to be dog fighting above us. Through all of the confusion we dropped our bombs just past the IP. As far as I know, we did not hit anything. Time 7 hours, 25 minutes.

Mission 33

Villa Franca, Italy, Ship #60. November 18, 1944

Bomb load 36 each 100 lb frag bombs. Fuel 2700 gals. We were supposed to be escorted by 55 P-51s and RAF Spitfires. The fighters were also supposed to strafe air fields in the area. We hit the target and did quite a bit of damage. Time 7 hours, 5 minutes.

Mission 34

Munich, Germany. Ship #60. November 22, 1944

Target West marshalling yard. Bomb load 6 each 500 lb RDX explosive. Fuel 2700 gals. We were to be escorted by P-51s and P-38s which we did not see due to the poor weather we were flying in. We did not see the flak, but knew it was there because we could feel it. After bombs away the group split up due to a poor rally off the target. Ships were all over the sky in the clouds. Two ships collided, but both made it back to the base OK. I tried to enter our group three times, but the formation was so messed up I could not get back in. I joined another flight of three B-24s headed in the

right direction. One crew from our squadron was missing. Time 7 hours, 50 minutes.

Mission 35

Blechhammer, Silesia. Ship # 60.
December 2, 1944

Target: Oil refineries. Bomb load 6 each 500 lb RDX explosive. We were escorted by 50 P-51s and 50 P-38s. The P-51s flew very good cover into the target, and the P-38s were supposed to fly cover on the withdrawal. We did not see them. There was no fighter opposition, although the flak was very intense. I flew #6 position. Podwolski was in position #3. Just as bombs were released a shell went through Podwolski's number 4 engine nacelle. He lost the engine and almost the wing. He flew it back to base OK. We missed the target. Time 8 hours, 15 minutes.

Author's Notes:

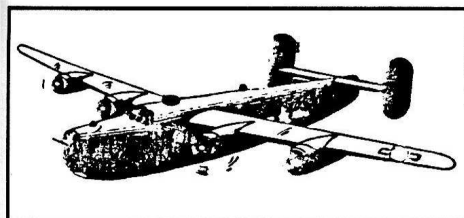
The following is a list of those crews that I recorded as going down and what happened to them. Some of those listed as unknown may have been captured. The information was probably known after I had returned stateside.

Original crews lost.

Fisher- -Captured
Kane- - Unknown
Boyer- -Captured
Swinehart- -Unknown

Replacement crews lost

Moore- -Captured
Rosencrans- -Captured
Ohlsson- -Captured
Newton- -Escaped twice
Krinkly- -Escaped from Yugoslavia
Krahn- -Ditched in the Adriatic Sea
Lange- -Unknown
Capalbo- -Blew up
Galvin- -Unknown
Hailey- - Unknown
George- -Unknown



HISTORY OF THE 15TH AIR FORCE IN WORLD WAR TWO

THE WORLD WAR II YEARS, 1943-1945 Origins of the Command

As a new command(1*) in the latter stages of World War II, Fifteenth Air Force was constituted on October 30, 1943, and activated on November 1 at Tunis, Tunisia. It undertook operations immediately and for the ensuing 18 months contributed heavily to the Allied air war effort against the Axis powers.

Fifteenth was not, however, merely created in a two-day span as either an afterthought or in response to a momentary crisis. Rather, its activation came about due to the unfolding of events and decisions associated with the overall war effort. On May 9, 1943, the North African campaign had been successfully concluded with an Allied victory over the Axis powers--the first one over Germany and Italy in the Mediterranean theater of operations.

The following August the Combined Chiefs of Staff worked on plans at the Quebec Conference for a cross-channel invasion from England to France to be launched in the spring of 1944. General Henry H. "Hap" Arnold, chief of the Army Air Forces, questioned whether Eighth Air Force was able to conduct the required bomber offensive alone. British Air Chief Marshall Portal agreed with him and pointed out that operations from southern Italy would be nearer to the vital German fighter aircraft factories in the area around Vienna, Austria.

General Arnold reflected on the possibilities opened by this idea, and on October 9 submitted to the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff a plan for creating the Fifteenth as a stra-

tegic air force to participate in the Combined Bomber Offensive. After their approval, the Allied Combined Chiefs ratified the plan on October 22.

Major General James H Doolittle of the Tokyo Raid fame(*2) served as Fifteenth's initial commander. His first headquarters was a large, modern school building in Tunis, the Lycee Carnot.

The U.S. Strategic Air Forces in Europe (USSAF), stationed in England (and later France), eventually exercised some operational control over the new air force as well as continuing jurisdiction over the older Eighth Air Force. More directly, Fifteenth became a strategic component along with the British Royal Air Force's 205th Group in the reorganized Mediterranean Allied Air Force. This bombing force came into existence to take advantage of the strategic bombing possibilities offered by the "soft underbelly" of Europe, to use a Churchillian phrase.

Although Fifteenth was the newest numbered air force at the time, it was initially composed of veteran units such as the 97th and 301st Bomb Groups, both of which had initially been assigned to Eighth and later to General Doolittle's previous command, the Twelfth, during the North African campaign. Thus, Fifteenth started its existence with experienced heavy and medium bomber units of the 1942-1943 period, with both Twelfth and the Ninth contributing groups. It was assigned four B-17 (Flying Fortresses) groups and two B-24 (Liberator) groups. For a brief time at the beginning, it also had two B-25 (Mitchell) groups and three B-26 (Marauder) groups. To protect this armada, three escort fighter groups with P-38s (Lightning) and one P-47 (Thunderbolt) group were assigned. This was soon increased by three more units with P-47s which later converted to P-51s (Mustang). Eventually, a photo reconnaissance group with F-5s joined the command. Intermediate supervision between Fifteenth and its units was exercised by eight wings. From activation to June 1944 the command gained a number of units, eventually reaching a strength of 21 Bomb Groups (6 B-17 and 15 B-24) and 7 Fighter Groups (3 P-38, 3 P-51, 1 P-47). Fifteenth thus became second only in size to Eighth Air Force among overseas air commands.

The hope of Quebec and Pentagon planners was that Fifteenth could operate when Eighth was "socked in" by the English weather. Ironically, Fifteenth soon faced the same problem in operating from the Mediterranean area. In addition, its planes had to face Alpine clouds with their hazardous icing conditions and their interference with visibility. To complicate matters, there was no convenient English channel for aircraft "ditching" purposes, and aircraft flying with one or two engines knocked out found it hard to go over or around the Alps on the return leg of a mission. Fifteenth's operational area extended over a large territory stretching westward almost to the Franco-Spanish frontier, northward through Czechoslovakia to Berlin, eastward to the Black Sea, and southward to the Peloponnesian peninsula. Normally, its objectives lay within a 700-mile arc centered at Foggia, Italy.

Combat Operations Against Hitler's Europe

Fifteenth flew its first combat mission from North African bases on its activation day. Flying Fortress groups from the 5th Bomb Wing in a ground support mission attacked both the La Spezia naval base in Italy and the nearby Vezzano railway bridge, a communications target north of Rome. The next day, November 2, the command directed its first strategic efforts against the Messerschmitt ME-109 airframe works at Wiener Neustadt, Austria, dropping 312 tons of bombs. The invaders encountered 120 to 160 enemy aircraft of which 56 were destroyed and another 27 probably destroyed, while losing 10 B-17s. This mission was considered to be the "Big Week" effort of February 1944 (described later).

It had been the intent of Pentagon planners that Headquarters Fifteenth and its newly assigned units move soon onto permanent installations located in the heel of the Italian boot. There was no problem from the standpoint of ground action, for it had been two months since

the Allied invasions of Italy, and that offensive did not stall until it was north of Naples. Rather, the airfields were not ready by mid-November due to rains and



Jim Van Nostrand Photo 765 Sq

construction difficulties. Enough progress had been made by December 1, 1943, however, that Headquarters Fifteenth was able to close down officially and reopen for business the same day 475 miles closer to its assigned bombing arena across the Mediterranean at Bari, Italy. There, 200 rooms were occupied in a large, modern office building formerly used by the Italian Air Force as a zone headquarters.

The movement of units was phased, so that no stand-down was necessary, and operations continued for some time from both North African and Italian bases. On moving day, more than 100 B-17s bombed the Turin, Italy, ball bearing works and marshalling yards. With fighter escort, B-26s attacked bridges and railroad facilities at three locations. Because of weather, B-24s and accompanying P-38s were recalled.

Fifteenth's move was a classic case of logistics triumphing over adversity. Existing airfields in the Bari/Foggia area, which had previously been badly battered by Allied bombing, had to be repaired, and new ones bulldozed out of the Italian plain. Enormous engineering problems were involved. Steel mats had to be used to keep the bombers from bogging down in the spongy turf. Steady winter rains added to the misery of men and machines. Even an auxiliary road network had to be built. Yet, although a great supply problem existed, combat crews never lacked materiel with which to fight. Bomb

stockage kept ahead of requirements, and gasoline was piped in and stored in adequate field facilities.

A month after the move General Doolittle was re-assigned as commander of the Eighth. He was succeeded by Major General Nathan F. Twining on January 3, 1944. General Twining had served in the South Pacific area (#3) before his new assignment. He remained as Fifteenth's commander until completion of the Combined Bombing Offensive 16 months later.

Space does not permit a lengthy story of Fifteenth's operational activities in the period before May 1945, but a few highlights will illustrate

the achievements. On December 19, 1943, Fifteenth made its first mass raid into Germany proper, attacking the Messerschmitt plant at Augsburg. On January 2, 1944, air attacks began in preparation for the Anzio, Italy, landing behind the ground battle line stymied in the Cassino area. In the most intensive phase of this beachhead isolation campaign, 600 sorties were flown between January 16 and January 22 against rail yards and transportation centers in central Italy, as preparation for the Anzio landing executed on the latter date.

The next major episode in Fifteenth's wartime history was one of the most controversial of the conflict. This was the bombing on February 15, 1944 of the historic Benedictine abbey of Monte Cassino in preparation for an assault designed to end the U.S. Fifth Army's month-long stalemate before the Germans' Gustav Line south of Rome. Lieutenant General Ira C. Eaker did not approve of the abbey bombing, contending it would serve no useful military purpose. Whether or not the Germans used it as an outpost is still a matter of dispute, but both General Eaker and Lieutenant General Jacob L. Devers, commander of the European theater of operations at the time, saw a radio antenna on the abbey roof when they scouted the structure several days earlier in a Piper Cub observation plane. However, continued pressures from ground commanders about the infantry advance up the road to Rome from Naples being impeded beyond the time schedule led General

Eaker to acquiesce in destroying the obstacle.

Shortly after that came the "Big Week" of February 19-25 for the Combined Bombing Offensive. During the only important period of good weather in several months, Fifteenth and Eighth jointly participated in mass raids against the German aircraft industry. Fifteenth lost 14 bombers out of 183 dispatched on its first day of participation, February 22, against Regensburg. The next day 102 bombers went against a ball bearing plant in Austria, losing 19 aircraft. On February 24 Fifteenth attacked an aircraft component plant at Steyr, Austria, losing 17 bombers. The intensity of the air battles was reflected in loss claims. On February 22, the escort fighters for the Fifteenth and Eighth forces claimed 60 German fighters at the price of 11 lost. On February 24, the bombers claimed 108 German fighters destroyed, while the escorts claimed 37.

Fortunately, the weather held good for the fourth successive day as both Fifteenth and Eighth attacked German aircraft factories in southern Germany on February 25. Fifteenth launched 400 bombers, of which 176 attacked the main target at Regensburg, while the remainder were dispatched against other targets at a shorter flying range. These actions concluded a week of maximum effort to paralyze the German aircraft industry and defeat the German Air Force before the deadline for the Normandy invasion, looming ahead in June 1944. Fifteenth lost 89 bombers total, or an average of about six percent per mission. Bomber losses per sortie were nearly five times as great as those of the escorts.

On March 15, units of Fifteenth joined with those of the Twelfth in a mass satura-

tion bombing designed to eliminate German resistance in the Cassino area; the town was destroyed, but Allied armies were unable to break through at the time. Fifteenth flew its first "thousand ton" raid on March 28, one of a five-day series of especially heavy missions against rail yards and industrial areas in northern Italy in support of "Operation Strangle." This operation was carried out from March 19 to May 11 to cut off supplies to the German troops. On April 3 bombers made the first heavy air attack on Budapest, Hungary. The next day Fifteenth's heavy bombers made the first air attack on Bucharest, Rumania. Other special missions reached

directive, strategic bombing missions were intensified against central and eastern Europe.

Previously, Fifteenth had begun strikes on April 5 against the Ploesti, Rumania, oil refining installations as a crowning achievement of the spring campaign. The refinery complex had already been struck by Eighth, beginning August 1, 1943, but the 11 remaining refineries still had a production capacity of eight million tons, a reduction of only one million. These attacks continued until August 24, 1944, when Russian land forces moved into the area.



Robert Altman photo 484th BG

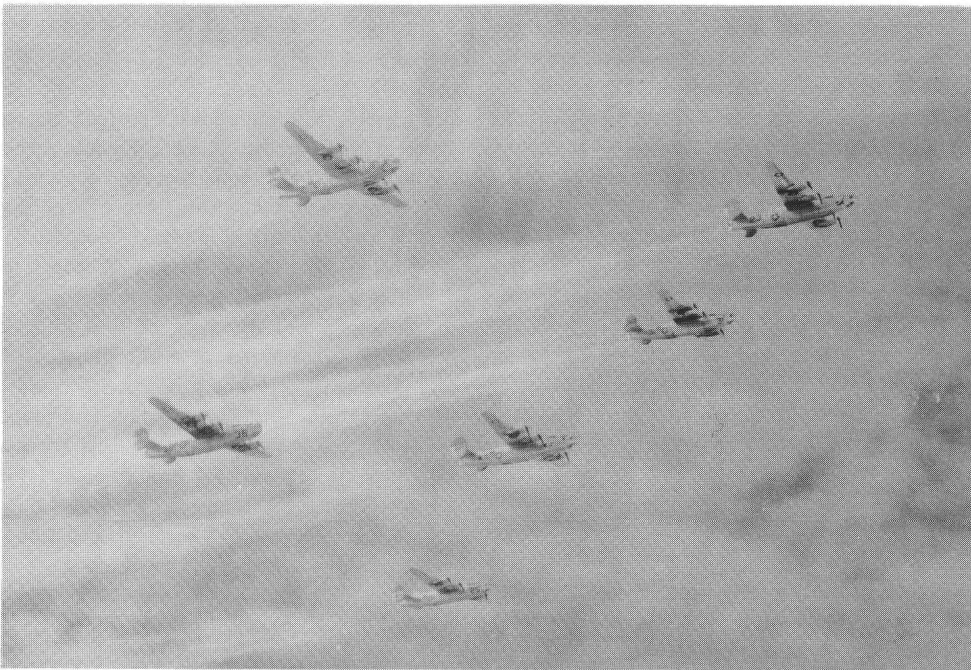
to Sofia, Bulgaria, and later to Athens, Greece. During the May 25-27 period, hundreds of bombers dropped more than 3,000 tons on 14 rail and transportation centers in southern France as part of the preparation for the upcoming cross-channel invasion.

With the success of this preinvasion bombing support, an order was issued from USSAF to Fifteenth on the afternoon of D-Day, June 6, 1944, stating: "From this day on you need spend no further effort in the battle area. We will handle it here. You go back and keep working on the sources of military strength, particularly air strength, deep in Germany." With this

Meanwhile, on June 2, 1944, "Operation Frantic" had begun. This was a system of shuttle missions by which U.S. planes bombed eastern European targets and landed at one of three airfields in western Russia. The operation began with a raid of B-17s and P-51s against Debrecen, Hungary. On July 22, Fifteenth established the first all-fighter shuttle to Russia. These missions occurred sporadically until September 13, end-

ing because of Russian obstinacy, vulnerability of the airfields to German attack, increasing distance from the Eastern front, endangerment of Russo-American relations, and relative inefficiency of the system.

At the time the Ploesti missions were ending, Fifteenth's planes supported "Operation Anvil," the amphibious invasion of southern France. Simultaneously, for the first time since the V-1 flying bombs began to attack London on June 12, 1944, Fifteenth was called in to aid the months-long effort to destroy their launching and manufacturing sites. During August a total of 773.7 tons were dropped by 323 bombers against V-weapon plants at Ober Raderach, Germany.



Harry Oglesby photo 767 sq.

Among proposals made after the successful occupation of southern France was one to move Fifteenth Air Force there from southern Italy. This could relieve bombers of the need to fly over the Alps, where flying conditions were so often well-nigh prohibitive. Both General Spaatz and Eaker opposed the plan because it would require the investment of too much time and logistical support to reestablish satisfactory French bases. In addition, Fifteenth would no longer have been able to reach the vital targets in Czechoslovakia and eastern Germany. The proposal lapsed because of this opposition, although some planners hoped that a few of Fifteenth's groups might go to Russian-controlled bases in Hungary, a move which never occurred.

After Ploesti, the most important oil targets in the operational area were three synthetic plants in occupied Silesia and one in northwest Czechoslovakia. Production at these plants was reduced by 80 percent during the post-Ploesti attack period. Many of these attacks were delivered in weather conditions which prevented the usual bombing tactics, and necessitated the use of new blind-bombing techniques. The unusual success of a series of these attacks in late 1944 led General Spaatz to describe Fifteenth as the world's leading exponent of blindbombing. These attacks curtailed resurgent German oil production

during the grim period of the Battle of the Bulge in December.

Another assist in that battle occurred between December 25, 1944, and January 4, 1945, when 25 attacks were made against transport facilities in northern Italy. This prevented Field Marshal Albert Kesselring's German forces from withdrawing to support the Axis in the Bulge area or mounting a counteroffensive to retake the vital port of Leghorn, Italy.

As German resistance crumpled and Allied armies approached the borders of the Third Reich, Fifteenth conducted its first assault against Berlin on March 24, 1945, attacking the Daimler-Benz tank engine works. German jets shot down two B-17s, the last aircraft to be lost by Fifteenth in World War II.

On March 25 the last real strategic air assault by Fifteenth was made against airfields and tank plants in the seldom-bombed Prague, Czechoslovakia, area. After this, command missions were tactical and local in effect.

Despite the change from strategic to tactical support, the largest operation ever undertaken by Fifteenth occurred on April 15. "Operation Wowser" was the air phase of Lieutenant General Mark W. Clark's Fifth Army break-through at Bologna,

Italy, the anchor of the Germans' Gothic Line since the previous September. Practically every flyable bomber, in all, 1,235--bombed troop concentrations, gun emplacements, and strong points.

After this, missions were directed at preventing German escape from Italy, dropping food to the inhabitants of northern Italy, and evacuating prisoners of war by B-17s converted to cargo and passenger carriers. As further recognition of the end of the strategic mission, on April 16 General Spaatz declared the successful Combined Bomber Offensive to be concluded. Since its beginning on June 10, 1943, when Eighth, and after November 1, 1943, with the addition of Fifteenth, the German will to fight had been broken by aerial assaults from the western and the southern approaches to the disintegrating Reich.

In support of the final Fifth Army drive in Italy toward the Brenner Pass, 2,052 Mediterranean Allied Air Force aircraft from April 15 to 18, 1945, undertook the most sustained heavy bomber support effort ever flown in the Mediterranean area.

The ground advance up the Italian peninsula was so swift that after the fall of Bologna on April 21, the German forces in Italy surrendered on April 29. Mustang fighters were the last aircraft to strike the enemy as they bombed and strafed targets. And finally, Flying Fortresses flew their last mission on May 1 against the main rail station and marshalling yards at Salzburg, Austria. Peace negotiations led to the Germans signing terms of unconditional surrender in Italy on May 2, on the same day Berlin fell. The surrender preceded by five days the final Axis capitulation at Reims, France, with May 8 being officially declared as Victory -in-Europe (V-E) Day.

General Twining, now of three-star rank, left Fifteenth on May 26 and later became commander of the Twentieth in the Pacific area 10 weeks prior to the dropping of atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan, the following August 6 and 9. He was replaced in Italy by Brigadier General James A. Mollison (*4) until the end of the Pacific phase of the war in September.

By that time most of the command's personnel and materiel and been deployed either to the U.S. or the Pacific theater.

Fifteenth was inactivated on September 15 after nearly two years of wartime existence having fulfilled its mission in contributing a generous share of the Allied war effort.

Summing Up

In any attempt to sum up Fifteenth's World War II achievements, one is almost overwhelmed with the evidence, but certainly some generalizations are in order. During almost 18 months of operations, the command had destroyed about half of all the fuel production capacity in Europe, a good part of German fighter production capacity, and had crippled the enemy's transportation system over half of once-occupied Europe.

Fifteenth had developed precision bombing to a fine point. Eight out of 10 bombs fell within 1,000 feet of the intended impact. Many attacks were delivered in adverse weather conditions, but successful use of the new blind-bombing techniques helped maintain precision drops. Strategic bombing reduced the German Air Force to impotence in terms of both fuel and materiel. It was furthermore a tremendous factor in breaking down the German submarine campaign, and upset the German war economy by causing manpower and materiel shortages.

In addition to its attacks on industry, communications and oil, Fifteenth directed much of its activity toward the rescue and repatriation of aircrews shot down in enemy territory. No other air force recovered so many of its missing pilots and crews; no other undertook escape activities in so many countries. By V-E Day some 5,998 personnel had been returned by air, surface vessels and on foot through enemy lines. In more than 300 successful operations, men were brought back safely from Tunisia, Italy, France, Switzerland, Greece, Albania, Bulgaria, Rumania, Hungary, Yugoslavia, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Austria, and Germany.

When it was apparent that the war had been won, General Twining sent a congratulatory message to all units on April 1, 1945. After praising the command's accomplishments, he concluded by saying:

"Such deeds are not attained by waiving a magic wand or by use of Aladdin's lamp,



John Jacobs photo 827b sq.

but by hard work, loyalty, and a conscientious devotion to duty of the entire Force. I am greatly impressed by the effort put forth by the [Fifteenth] Service Command and the ground echelons of all units, without which such a tempo of operations would be impossible. This, with the expert planning by the organization staffs and the courage and skill of the air crews, rounded out the team that enabled [this] Air Force to attain the highest degree of effectiveness."

(*1) Only one more numbered air force was created later--the Twentieth in 1944 for the Pacific area.

(*2) On April 18, 1942, just over four

months after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, then Lt Col Doolittle had led a one-way attack by 16 B-25s from the aircraft carrier Hornet on targets in Tokyo and other Japanese cities, with mission recovery in China.

(*3) Gen. Twining also had had some heroics in that theater. When commanding 13th Air Force in February 1943, his B-17 was shot down, with 15 aboard, in the sea off the New Hebrides Isles. With the others, Twining spent six days on a life raft before a Navy patrol bomber rescued them.

(*4) Gen Mollison was chief of staff of the Hawaiian Air Force at the time of the Pearl Harbor attack.



15th Air Force Heavy Bomber Units

The following table shows Heavy Bomber units of the 15th Air Force and their nearest city or cross road locations. Commanding officers are shown as of April 30, 1945

Note: Operational dates show time commands became combat active in the MTO Mediterranean Theater of Operations until they were inactivated. Hostilities ended in May 1945. Combat flying ended in the month of April 1945. Some units remained in Europe after VE day to fly mercy and supply missions.

15th Air Force
CO Maj/Gen Nathan F
Twining.HQ Bari
VC Brig/Gen William E Hall

5th Bomb Wing
CO Brig/Gen Charles W
Lawrence—HQ Foggia 11/43 to
11/45

Group, Equipment, Operational Dates,
 and, Location

2nd BG	B-17	12/43 to 2/46
Amendola		
97th BG	B-17	11/43 to 10/45
Amendola		
99th BG	B-17	11/43 to 10/45
Tortorella		
301st	B-17	11/43 to 10/45
Lucera		
463rd	B-17	3/44 to 9/45

463 B-17	3/44 to 9/45
Celone	
483rd B-17	3/44 to 5/45
Sterparone	

47th Bomb Wing
CO Brig/Gen Hugo P Rush HQ
Manduria

Group, Equipment Operational Dates,
 and,Location

98th BG *	B-24	11/43 to 11/45
Lecce		
376th *	B-24	11/43 to 11/45
San Pancrazio		
449th	B-24	12/43 to 5/45
Grottaglie		
450th	B-24	12/43 to 5/45
Manduria		

49th Bomb Wing
CO Brig/Gen William L Lee HQ
Castelluccia

Group, Equipment, Operational Dates,
 and, Location

451st BG	B-24	1/44 to 9/45
Castelluccia		
461st BG	B-24	2/44 to 8/45
Torretta		
484th BG	B-24	4/44 to 7/45
Torretta		

55th Bomb Wing
CO Brig/Gen George R
Acheson HQ Spinazzola

Group, Equipment, Operational Dates,
 and,Location

460th BG	B-24	2/44 to 9/45
Spinazzola		
S464th BG	B-24	3/44 to 5/45
Pantanella		
465th BG	B-24	4/44 to 7/45
Pantanella		
485th BG	B-24	4/44 to 5/45
Venosa		

304th Bomb Wing
CO Brig/Gen Fay R
Upthegrove HQ Cerignola

Group, Equipment Operational Dates,
 and, Location

454th BG	B-24	1/44 to 10/45
San Giovanni		
455th BG	B-24	1/44 to 9/45
San Giovanni		
456th BG	B-24	1/44 to 10/45
Stornara		
459th BG	B-24	2/44 to 8/45
Giulia		

*98th & 376th BGs redeployed
 4/19/45

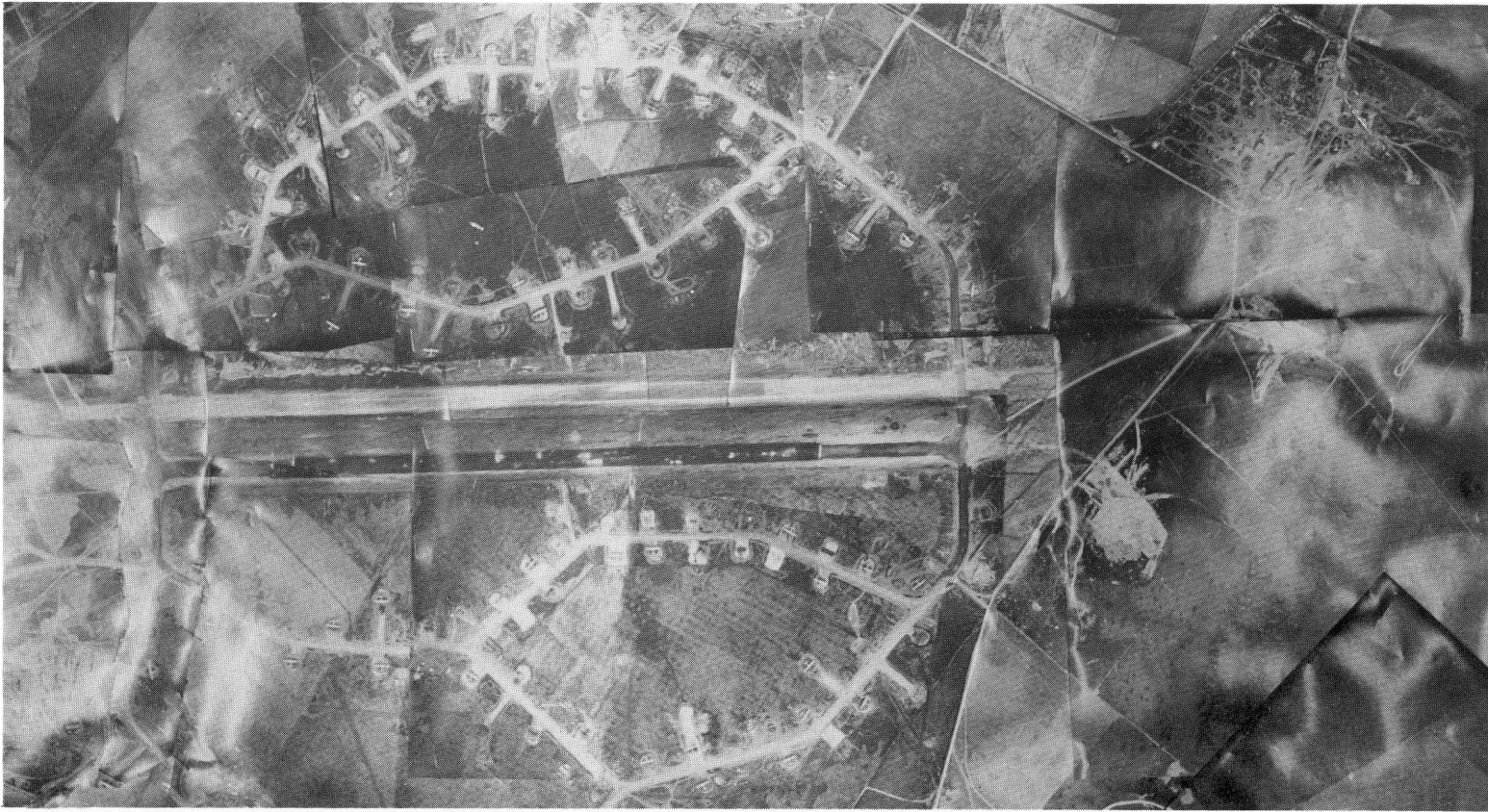
15th Air Force Fighter Units

306th Fighter Wing
CO Brig/Gen Yantis H Taylor
HQ Fano

Group, Equipment Operational Dates,
 and, Location

1st FG	P-38	12/43 to 10/45
Lesina		
14th FG	P-38	11/43 to 9/45
Triolo		
31st FG	P-51	4/44 to 11/45
Mondolfo		
52nd FG	P-51	5/44 to 11/45
Piagiolino		
82nd FG	P-38	11/43 to 9/45
Vincenzo		
325th FG	P-47/P-51*12/43	to 10/45
Mondolfo		
332th FG	P-47/P-51*5/44	to 10/45
Ramitelli		

* P-47s replaced by P-51s in May 1944



Fred Dierksmeier photo 826 sq.

Engineers Report on Torretta Field

Dated October 15, 1943, Revised April 14, 1944

**Compiled by S-3 Section
21st
Engineers**

**Researched and Submitted by
William M Warren 827 Squadron**

Name and location: Torretta,
Cerignola

Geographic position: 41 10' 50" N
Latitude, 15 45' 52" E Longitude

Map reference: 1:100,000 sheet 175
Cerignola

Magnetic variation: 2' 51W January
1943 Annual change 3' East

Landmarks: 1/4 mile West of Mass
Torretta. I mile south Cerignola, Candela
Road.
8.6 Miles Southwest of Cerignola

Dimensions: 8000 feet North/South by
8000 feet East/West landing ground.

Runway 150 by 6000 feet, bearing North
21 degrees West. Taxiways, Runway, and
Hardstands are gravel topped. 112 H/S
Surface. All in cultivation. Black loam soil.
18 inches top soil over chalice subsoil.
Runways, Taxiways and hardstands are of
clay gravel.

Markings: No Markers on the runway.
No circle and name at the time of
reconnaissance

Lighting: None

Obstructions: Secondary power line on
east side of field 30 feet high

Hangars: None

Repair facilities: Service squadron
units

Fuel and oil: 1 1000 barrel storage tank
for 100 octane fuel located 1/2 mile north
of 3 outlets located at north end of the
field. Fed by 4 inch pipeline

Communications: Telephone to
Cerignola with connections to Bari and
Foggia.

Radio communications: Unknown

Weather service: Portable field unit.

Transportation: No regular transporta-
tion, military only from areas south side
of field

Prevailing Winds: Unknown

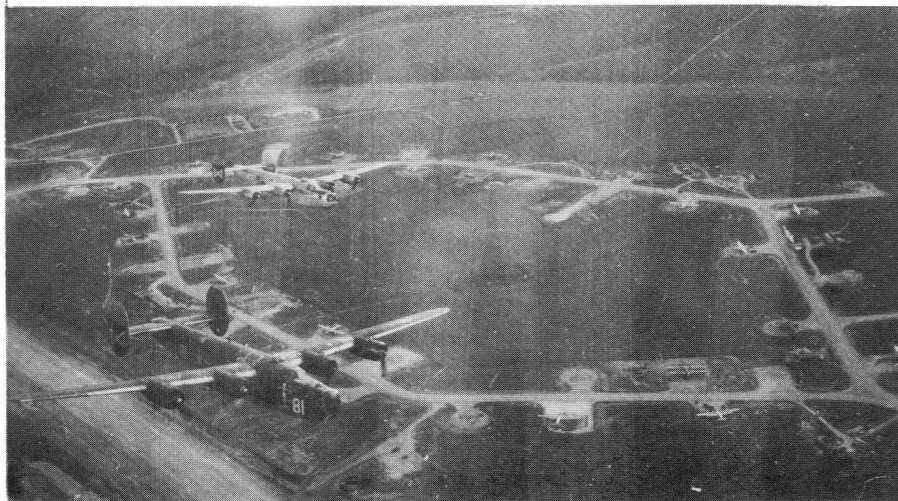
Precipitation: Unknown

Visibility: Fog reported less than 20
days a year during which time visibility
is not greater that 2 1/2 miles

Operated by British R. A. F

Remarks: Field Operational. Hardstands
and drainage system still under
construction.

Nearest seaport: Manfredonia port of
entry for 100 octane fuel. Bulk of supply



Robert Altman photo 484th BG

shipments to Bari. 5000 feet of pier space. Capacity 14 Liberty ships.

Defensive Installations: Units of British 40 millimeter anti aircraft guns.

Civil Operations: None. Tactical operations only

Hospitals and First Aid: Field medical units. Nearest field general hospital in Cerignola

Railroads: Nearest railroad and sidings at Cerignola station 3.8 miles north of Cerignola. Three sidings 1800 feet each. Two sidings 900 feet each.

Highways: Macadam highway 16 feet wide Cerignola to Bari and Foggia. 14 feet wide gravel top from Cerignola to field. 0.7 Mile gravel access road of Candela road to field.

Waterways: None

Electric Power: No electric power service, except individual field units.

Location of facilities:

Water point. Aqueduct way station at Candela 0.7 miles northeast of field. Four outlets, 1000 gallon storage tank and pump, used in conjunction with San Giovanni.

Fuel tanks and three outlets at North end of field

Radio Antennas:, transmitter and

receiver one mile north of the field. British field units.

Expansion Ability: Expansion used to the fullest extent.

Construction Capacity: Cross wind runway not feasible.

Air Units: British squadrons of Wellington bombers.

Fire fighting equipment: Unknown
Additional Information. This field is under the complete operation of the British R. A. F.

Mean monthly precipitation in inches and temperature in degrees Fahrenheit

Rainfall in inches Jan:2.1, Feb: 1.1, March: 1.3, April:1.4, May: 1.8, June:1.1, July: 0.6, August: 1.2, September: 1.4, October: 2.1, November: 2, December: ?

Days of rain per month: January: 8, February: 7, March: 7, April: 9, May: 7, June: 6, July: 2, August: 4, September: 5, October: 8, November: 9, December: 7

Temperature: January: 44, February: 49, March: 45, April: 60, May: 69, June: 76, July: 79, August: 77, September: 71, October: 61, November: 52, December: 47.

Additional Field Information from Data Compiled April 14, 1944.

Landing Area:

Runways: 150 feet by 6000 feet surfaced with gravel. 1000 feet of Pierced steel planking on south end of dual runways and 500 feet at north end.

Control tower and windsock located east side and at midpoint of right runway.

Markings: Circle " TOR " at Northeast corner of runway. Red and white wooden markers along the runway.

Lighting: Runway lights for emergency landings.

Airport Description

Dispersal area: 128 hardstands gravel and pierced steel planking. Taxiways surfaced with clay gravel

Facilities: Unknown

Hospital and First Aid: Dispensaries, ambulances at field. Hospital at Cerignola.

Accommodations: Tent areas, and administration buildings approximately 3000 feet south of the runway.

Transportation: GI bus runs hourly to Cerignola

Hangars: None

Repair Facilities: Service squadrons

Communications: Telephone, and Administration Teletype at field VHF, ADC being installed. No HF or DF.

Fire fighting: Mobile units

Electric Power: Portable field units and part time Italian power source 160-165 Volts, 260 volts 3 phase 50 cycles.

Weather service: Station at Cerignola

Prevailing winds: Northwest Southeast

Miscellaneous Information:

Air units: Two heavy bomb groups, United States Army Air Forces.

The Day We Went West to East

by Rodney T Stewart 826 Sq

Photos by Rod Stewart 826 sq.

Part 1 The Story

The orders that had come down from 15th AF Headquarters indicated that photo reconnaissance had detected a large amount of rolling stock at the Vienna marshalling yard spur. It ran West to East. 15th HQ ordered a minimum effort of four flights of B-24's.

We usually attacked Vienna from the Northwest to Southeast to pick up any tail wind to minimize the time on the bomb run and over the target. But this day we would go cross wind.

We went in with 26 aircraft, 13 in Able and Baker flights, and 13 in Dog and Easy. I was leading the second attack unit in Dog 11.

As we headed in from the IP, I dropped (ordered) Dog and Easy down about 500 feet below Able and Baker, but close behind. It was a trick I learned from older hands. The German flak crews couldn't change the altitude fusing to get both attack units.

It was an unwritten law, that no one except the pilot and bombardier would talk on the interphone during the bomb run. But today that rule would be violated.

As we went down the bomb run, I was oblivious to anything but maintaining constant airspeed and altitude for my Bombardier Lt Roderick W Campbell.

As the lead ship, we purposely dropped our load slightly short, and all the following aircraft crews salvoed their load when they saw our bombs come out. The time delay involved usually had us dropping slightly short so the rest of the group's pattern would fall directly on the target.

The famous Vienna AA batteries were at their best that day, I could hear it popping even over the noise of the aircraft, but I didn't see much as I was hunkered down below the sun visor.



Rod Stewart

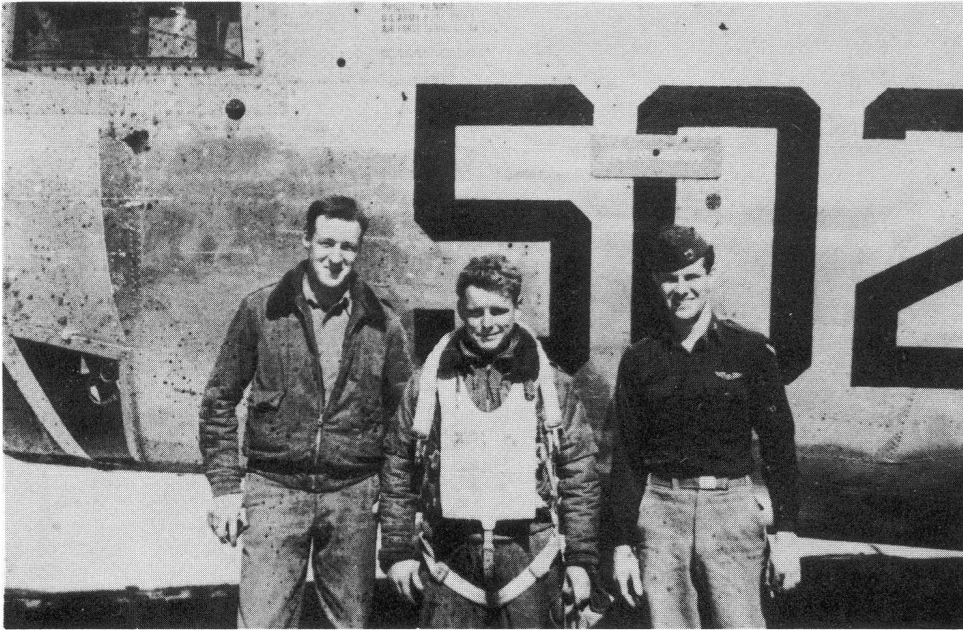
They used to brief us that Vienna had 400 guns and AA batteries. When it was captured, they found over 1200 guns, some of which were the relatively new 120MM stuff we had been seeing.

The bomb run went as usual except down to the last 30 seconds. First the co-pilot pointed up through the plexiglass roof at a lone B-24 just a few feet above us. I could see right into his open bomb bay. All I could think of was, "Don't drop on us." We were going slightly faster than he was, but as any flight leader will tell you, you just can't pull the power off on the bomb run. Your wing men, your bombardier, and your CO be they, Colonel or General, will never forgive you. You might say we were caught between a rock and a hard place.

Just then he dropped just a few hundred yards in front of us, as I heard Campbell say, "Bombs Away." We rolled off the target losing altitude and letting the airspeed build up to the red line, (Never exceed airspeed restriction. Beyond that things would begin to fly off the airplane).

The violation of the unwritten law came at the worst possible time. The tail gunner called up to say his heated suit was out and he was freezing. During that last few seconds Campbell gave me his last correction on the run, "3 degrees right." I never heard it. We missed the marshalling yard by about 300 yards to the left, and it cost us much, those who were lost on the mission, and the costs involved in repeating the mission a few days later.

The single B-24 above us was the only one left of Able and Baker flights of the starting 13. I don't know who the pilot of that lone plane was, but I do say as a combat pilot with the 826 squadron, in Korea and Viet Nam, his continuing down the bomb run all alone is the greatest demonstration of bravery I have ever witnessed. Some fifty miles south of the target, I saw a flight of B-24s up ahead and assumed that it might be what was left of Able flight. I tucked in under him and all was well. He was going too slow and making shallow turns to the left which didn't make sense. I finally got on the VHF interplane channel and said, "Able 11 this is Dog 11 put on some steam." Imagine my surprise when he came back and said this is Easy



Home from our last mission, Rod Stewart on the right.

11, take the lead." I did and we went back to Italy. All the way home I wondered about what had happened to Able and Baker flights. I was puzzled too about Easy flight, who were supposed to fly off my right wing, getting so far ahead of us.

It all came out at the debriefing. Seven aircraft from Able and Baker didn't make it back to the base (at least that day). When Able and Baker got shot up, all of the remaining planes broke off the bomb run and came back alone, except for the lone B-24.

How did Easy get so far ahead? The flight leader saw the destruction of Able and Baker ahead, dropped his bombs 22 miles short, rallied and headed home when we caught up with him.

It wasn't till then that my crew and I learned we had gone to Vienna with all of six airplanes, Dog flight.

The leader of Easy flight and my tail gunner (both to remain nameless) never flew another mission and were quickly returned to the states.

Inspection of the planes of Dog flight revealed six holes total, one for each aircraft over the target. So ended the day, "We went West to East.

Part 2

Some Comments on Torretta Flyer No 15

Torretta Flyer No 15 Winter 87/88 brought back many memories. Referring to page 8 Line 31 right side, member Herbert Weber is quite correct, August 22 & 23, 1944 were two rough missions. I know because they were my first two missions flying as co-pilot. I have one correction if I may, Markersdorf and Lobau are a lot closer to Vienna than Linz.

On the bomb run to Markersdorf, I saw a B-24 on my right wing, (Baker 12) go up on one wing, then resuming straight and level momentarily and then split S out of the formation. I did not know who was on board, but years later in 1969, I was the base commander at Loring AFB, an officer came by my door, stopped and looked in. I asked if I could help him. He said I looked familiar. Over coffee, we discovered he was the pilot off my right wing. He was a silver haired Lt Colonel now. He described his months as a POW and eventual rescue.

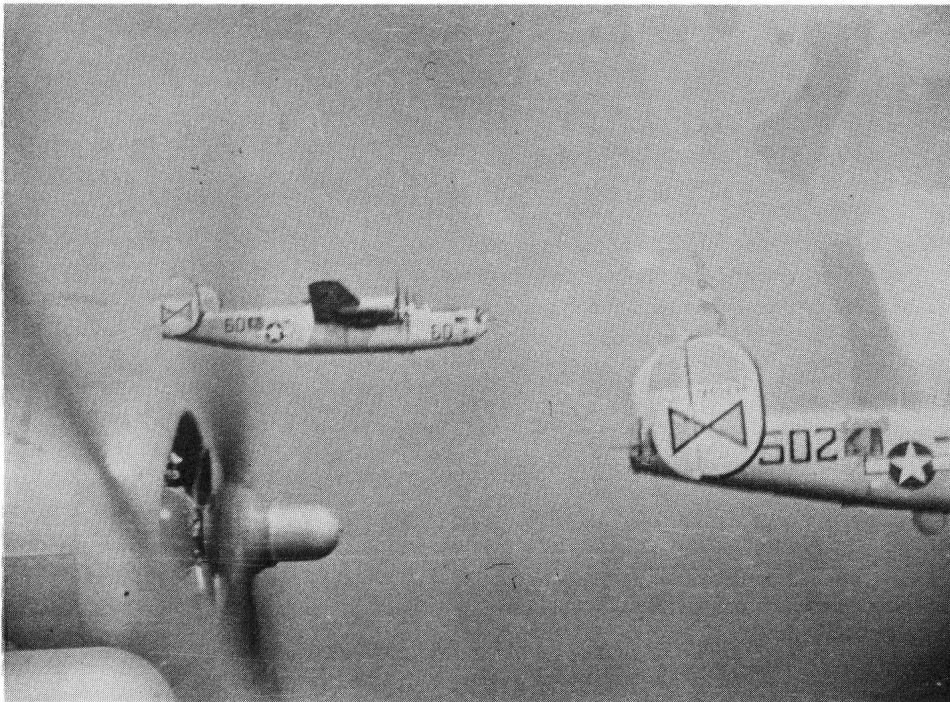
I remember the debriefing now after the mission, a ME-109 came in from 8 o'clock high shooting at us holing our rudder and stabilizer. David Hahn, our tail gunner from Los Angeles, reported he'd fired about 30 rounds per gun. Later we

found he'd fired close to 300 and burned out the barrels of both guns.

In any event the ME's burst got Baker 12 off my right wing. The clincher was this Lt Col actually got incensed that he got shot down instead of us. The Loring paper made a big spread of our "reunion" and maybe they still have a copy. Markersdorf and Lobau were not "Milk Runs" by any definition.

On Page 16 the article by Fred Roessler, "The Milk Run" and your editors note regarding the glass sight gages on the aft bulk head behind the pilot, you are so right about the sight gages on a B-24. No one told us about the pet cocks. On our mission over Augsburg a piece of flak came up through the floor and broke one of the sight gage tubes, and the one thing most feared by any flight crew member, a fire aboard ship. My top turret engineer/gunner Sgt "Stud" Sowers, Hayward, California, dropped quickly down from the top turret, turned off the fuel pet cocks and put out the fire that was now raging on the flight deck. He saved our bacon that day and again on a later mission.

Page 19. Regarding the article about "Salvo Sally", I have a little information about Floyd R Creasman, (Pilot 826 Squadron). When I got to Beale AFB, California in late 59, Floyd was base commander. One Saturday night, he, his wife and the base procurement officer went for a drive. Floyd wanted to show off his record player mounted in the glove compartment of his new Chrysler Imperial. He took off down an old aero club air strip on the base doing about 100 MPH to show his guests that the bumps wouldn't snake the needle off the record. At the last minute John, the procurement officer yelled to Floyd to remind him of the ditch at the end of the strip. Floyd slammed down the binders and laid 233 feet of constant skid marks and 342 feet of partial skid marks, until he gently went into the ditch. They were all too busy climbing out of the car to notice if the needle did jump off the record. I know all this because the 14th Air Division commander Brig/Gen Charles M Eisehart had me investigate. Every one including me thought the world of Floyd, but there was no way to cover the incident. The new SAC Wing Commander, then Paul K Carlton, later a four star general and commander of MAC, suggested to Floyd



Note Ship 502 is a "Mickey" ship carrying a radar dome instead of a ball turret.

that he retire. He did and the last word was he was a fixed base operator of a small airport just outside Spokane, Washington. He may still be there.

In reference to page 22, the letter from Bob Myers, also from the 826 squadron, I know what he means about nuclear radiation. I have been giving blood and urine samples to the flight surgeon for 3 years, per request of the Defense Nuclear Agency, for five missions I flew during the USAF Nuclear tests near Johnson Island in 1962.

Hal Smith's article on page 24 reminds me of stories about Col Keese, Col Bush, and Col Dufour.

Col Keese:

On one mission, the crew and I were flying Able 13. We came off the target and started home when a P-51 appeared just outside my left wing. About the time I gave him a thumbs up I saw a streak of Cal 50 tracers about him. I yelled over the interphone, "Get off the guns, he's a "Little Friend". Just about then he pulled a split S and we lost sight of him, but not for long.

Two days later his entire squadron buzzed the camp, and I do mean buzz. They blew three tents down and you didn't dare stand in any open space. Just to the north of the

tent row and outhouse, was a flat field. They came in that way and had to pull up to get over the tents. They scared the hell out of the group headquarters staff. I remember Col Keese grounding the offending gunner as he had put almost 200 holes in the tail section of the P-51. He was royally chewed out for his poor marksmanship as he failed to shoot the buggler down. He was sent down to recognition school for two weeks.

Col Bush:

On our last mission, a no flak run on the Badia bridge in Northern Italy. We were leading the bomber stream in Able 11 with Col Bush as the command pilot, he gave me permission to buzz the strip (drag) in front of the tower. He let the rest of the group land and then we did it, South to North. I didn't use any turbo boost, but we were rolling, and I remember looking eyeball to eyeball with the guys in the tower. The waist gunner reported we were picking up dust from the prop tips. I pulled a chandelle off the strip, dropped the gear in a 45 degree bank, caught the flaps on the base leg, and touched down with one of my better landings. Col Bush was white and still shaking when he got off the airplane and shouted, "Captain you will never do that again to me." Incidentally the date of that

last mission was 23 April, 1945 for 5:30 hours flying time. Major William F Dowd, (Member 826 Sq) Air Corps Operations Officer signed the form 5.

Col Dufour:

The pilots in the 826th squadron were asked if anyone had ever flown a UC-78 (AT-17's in advanced) to report to Col Dufour. The mission was to fly an old AT-17 the service squadron had assembled from spare parts, (the left wheel had come off a Spitfire [I was told] causing the aircraft to taxi left wing low). I was to take a group photographer up to get shots of General Twining awarding the Presidential Unit Citation in the field south of group headquarters and west of the strip. The pilot made a big mistake, he didn't have the tanks dip sticked before takeoff. Upon getting airborne, dragging the gear and so forth, your pilot glanced at the fuel gages. They had two red lines crossed across the glass and were reading empty. Both engines were turning but I knew I had to get the mother back on the ground before they quit. But before I could land, I got chased out of the pattern by the whole group returning from a mission. We did get some pictures from a distance, but by the time the whole group had landed, the ceremony was over. I finally got clearance to land. It was a thrill to see that left wing drop. The aircraft was designed for crosswinds from the left. I taxied over to the service squadron area, shut down and proceeded to raise hell because the fuel gages didn't work. I was gently told that, "Oh! we know that Captain, that is why we filled the tanks before you left." I didn't get a chance to explain to Col Dufour what had happened, and for good reason, he never spoke to me again.

I think we were on the same mission that Hal Smith speaks of, line 11 from the bottom page 24. We were heading back from Budapest, we got caught over Yugoslavia near the coast by mobile flak. We had been letting down not expecting any action, and were at about 16,000 feet when all hell broke loose. It was the Gerries evacuating Albania that caught us. Recently I was asked how much time I spent in the service, so I told him 30 years, 9 months, 14 days, 7 hours, and 22 seconds.

The End

How Former War Prisoners left Rumania by Plane, Told

(Reprinted from the Stars and Stripe)
Submitted by Joe Bryant 765 sq

Note by Joe Bryant: I know the Clay Caroland, and Arnold Hepler who went through Ploesti and Bucharest POW camps. I went thru Bucharest later, from Yugoslavia.

St/Sgt Clay R Caroland Jr, waist gunner on a 15th Air Force Flying Fortress that was forced to land while on a mission to Ploesti on July 22 was evacuated by air following Rumania's capitulation. Sgt Caroland was one of 1126 American airmen held prisoner there in stockades in and near Bucharest who were technically "freed."

That is, the doors to their military cages were thrown open. The ex-prisoners, officers and enlisted men alike, were told they could do as they pleased.

They "pleased to" return to their home bases in Italy. To do that seemed immediately impossible. There were hundreds of miles of enemy territory to cross. Revengeful and stubborn German forces were still active in the vicinity. Rumanians and Germans clashed in Bucharest, the very city where most of the Americans stood "liberated."

The next day August 24, 1944 the Germans Luftwaffe still powerful in local actions, loosed an infuriated bombing attack on Bucharest which lasted almost continuously for 72 hours. One American ex prisoner was killed in it.

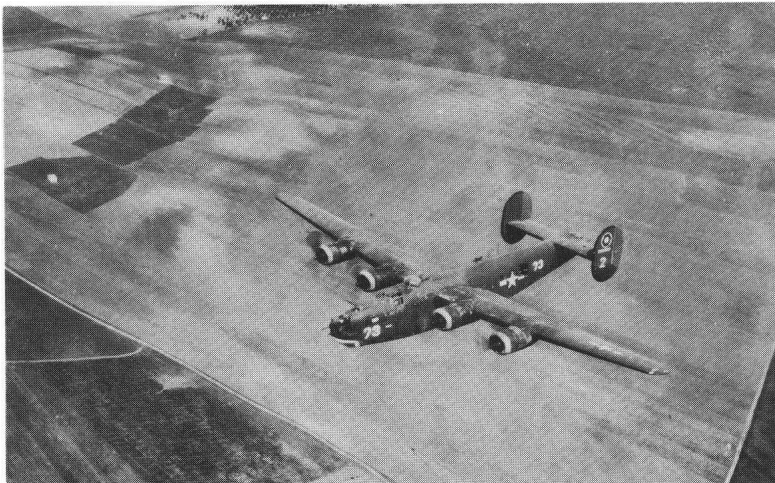
Each of the newly freed prisoners had already partaken of more than his share of war. Beginning with the famous low-level attack by American heavy bombers of Rumanian targets, principally Ploesti installations, they had parachuted to enemy territory at or near the the toughest target in the world.

Their numbers steadily increased particularly after April 4, when Ploesti became a

top priority target for the 15th Air Force. Some 1,052 of the prisoners were 15th Air Force airmen. 78 were 8th and 9th Air Force personnel in addition to some RAF fliers.

These airmen had not only gone through the unenviable experience of being shot down as hot targets, but also as prisoners that had sweated out terrific bombings from their brother airmen. At last free, they were caught between the Rumanians and the Germans in furious ground and air actions.

American resourcefulness, determination, humaneness and team spirit went into the rescue effort. Most of the prisoners had been held in two places: the capital city of Bucharest and Timis, a small town south of Brasov. At Bucharest the cantonment was in two parts, one for enlisted



Simon P Fahrety photo 767 Sq

men and hospital cases, at the hospital on the north side of town, and the other for officers, in a schoolhouse on the south side. These prisoners were mostly 15th Air Force men captured since April 4, 1944. The prisoners at Timis were mostly those from the 8th and 9th AAF low-level attack of August 1943.

It was Lt/Col James A Gunn of Kelseyville, California, whose plane was shot from under him at Ploesti shortly before the Rumanian capitulation, who joined the prison membership and offered the unorthodox solution to the men's problem.

"Why not have the 15th Air Force fly us out?" he asked. Many of the men were

skeptical, but willing to help Col Gunn who confidently started to make arrangements.

"I started asking for someone to see, and was finally taken to the new government to see the minister of war," Gunn states. "I asked to be allowed to fly to Italy to make known our situation. The minister agreed to help me."

The Rumanians gave Col Gunn the use of a pilot and a "beaten up Savoia-Marchetti plane" for the trip. A half hour out, the plane developed engine trouble and was forced back to the airfield. That was August 25, 1944. The next day, Capt. Carl Cantacuzino, top Rumanian fighter pilot offered to fly Col. Gunn to Italy in a ME-109, and arrangements were made. On August 28th they took off for Italy.

Two days later, the evacuation, the largest of its kind ever undertaken, began. Ex-prisoners had been moved to the field and were segregated in little plane-load groups. On schedule formations of escorted Flying Fortresses landed, picked up the missing in action airmen and flew them to Italy and actual freedom. More than 700 airmen were flown to Italy that first day. The remainder were flown out the following day, September 1. Most of the returned airmen have been sent home. The 15th Air Force returned to its business of bombing enemy targets.

The erstwhile prisoners had varied stories to tell. They agreed however that they were not treated badly at their prison camps. They were not required to work. The food was not too bad, the Rumanians were rather friendly. Medical treatment was furnished, and the men were allowed to send and receive mail and packages through the Red Cross. A paper was printed by hand and a radio smuggled in, furnished the news. It was the waiting and unpredictable future and indefinite separation from home ties that depressed many of the men.

The End.

Mail Call

Newton, Mississippi
Dear Bud:

The Torretta Flyer No 14, Summer 1987, was the best yet. Of particular interest to me was the picture of the crew of Lt Robert E Arbuthnot. I was a member of that crew. All of the members survived the war. We became a lead crew later, so sometimes our navigator, bombardier, and co-pilot flew with other crews. The navigator 1st/Lt Leland J Harp, and Bombardier 1st/Lt William E Patterson were shot down and became POW's.

On page 15 the Official Report of Mission No 67, 22 July 1944 Rumania Oil Refinery Ploesti, Rumania the co-pilot Jack L Gunn bailed out near the base and sustained a broken leg. If my memory is correct he was flying with 1st/Lt Taylor who was noted in the report as bailing his crew out. Our crew was not flying the day of the Ploesti mission. I remember the bomb dump fire, it was quite some display of fireworks. The smoke over the runway was bad, with a strong cross wind, making landing conditions almost impossible.

Sincerely
Hugh G Baker, 765 Sq



Dear Bud

I read with great interest the letter from Harold D "Bud" Pressel Jr 825 Squadron which appeared in your Fall/Winter 1988 Torretta Flyer No #16. The airplane on which he was a tail gunner was "OL-45" which I remember well.

Bud mentioned that on February 7, 1945, on a mission to Moosbierbaum the plane was hit or developed mechanical problems. I would venture to say that "OL-45" developed mechanical problems rather than being hit. How the ground crew ever kept this plane in the air must go down as one the great miracles of all times. "OL-45" was one of the last camouflaged airplanes in our group, because as you know most of the B-24s were unpainted the later part of 1944 and until the end of the war in May of 1945. *

When our crew arrived in Italy we were warned to hope we would not be assigned to "OL-45." Our first mission was on August 24, 1944 and you guessed it, we were assigned to "OL-45."

I well remember starting at the beginning of the runway over sheet mat, then over a long stretch of dust or mud and over sheet mat at the end of the runway and we were still on the ground. Our pilot Lt Kooker, managed to finally lift the poor worn out B-24 off of the ground but not until all of

us had aged ten years. I always wondered what happened to "OL-45" and after reading Bud Pressel's letter I can see that this poor soul finally collapsed early in February 1945. "OL-45" was indeed a credit to the B-24 hall of fame, and I am sure she flew on many worthy missions before finally giving out. It is a shame this Liberator could not make it until the end of the war in Europe.

One last point. In another letter in the same Torretta Flyer,

Ed Lawler mentions Charlie Marshall. I flew one mission with Charlie Marshall who was a fine individual and an excellent pilot. I do vaguely remember his being missing for a short time and I believe later his being made Operations Officer.

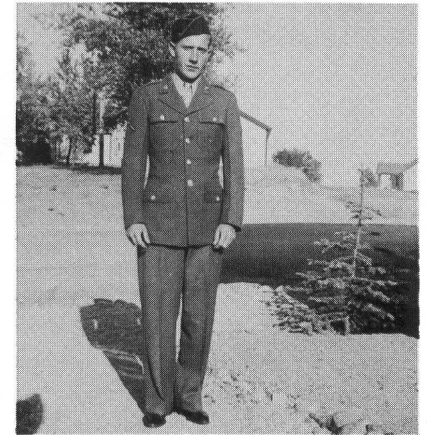
You indicated that you possibly had his address which was in Salinas, California. If you have his full address will you kindly send it to me, as I would like to write him and inform some of the crew of his whereabouts.

Many thanks
Roy R Lee Jr-Bombardier
Kooker's crew 825 Squadron

* Editors note: There were several painted aircraft still flying in some of the squadrons at the end of the war.

The Salinas address for Charles Marshall is the last known. We have no further information on him.

The Last Mission



Donald E Reid 825 sq
Deceased 10/19/88

Donald E Reid was inducted into the service April 26, 1943 and served a little over two and a half years in the AAF. He wore the service badges for the Rhineland, Air Combat Balkans, Northern France, Rome-Arno, North Apennines, Po Valley, and Southern France.

He was married to Francis Reid and had five children, and nine grandchildren. He worked as a machinist and shop foreman and was active in the VFW Hawthorne post #2075.



Fred W Carter's Crew 824 Squadron Back row from left: Jim Kelly-radio operator, Rodney E Dillon-tail gunner, John Schaus-ball turret gunner, Jim Coleman-upper turret gunner, Amendo N Colangelo-nose gunner, and Seth Woods- engineer. Front row from left: Neil Kahler-bombardier, Fred Carter-Pilot, and Joe Lachowicz-navigator. (Rodney E Dillon photo)



Presentation of Unit Citation at Torretta. Front row left is Gen Twining C/O 15th AF. Front Row right is Gen Lee 49th Wing C/O. Center row, Red Cross Girls, Elie Mae on right. Third row Sq commanders. (John D Jacobs photo 827 Sq)



Caption on back of picture reads "Dinkle"



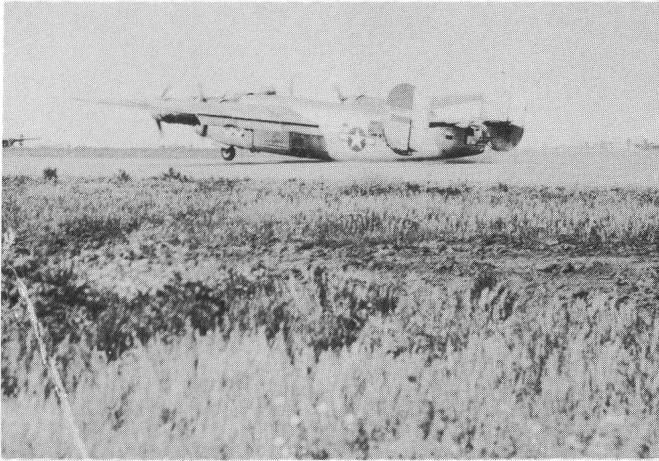
Grisvard and Herzig
(Harry Oglesby photo 767 Sq)



Hottest ??? In Town 765 or 766 Squadron aircraft
(Harry Oglesby photo 767 Sq)



Enlisted men of Corley's Crew. 484th BG 825 Sq From left standing Claude Lunt, Emmett Goff, John Bornschegel, Front / row: Ira J Harris Jr (deceased), Matthew Pake, and Michael Regenda. Emmett Goff Photo 825 Sq)



A B-24 Liberator Bomber makes a nose wheel landing at Torretta. (Simon P Faherty Photo 767 Sq)



The Ambulance crew 484th Bomb Group poses for photo. Note the ever present Italian mud. (Robert Altman photo 484th BG)



William Dipple (KIA)

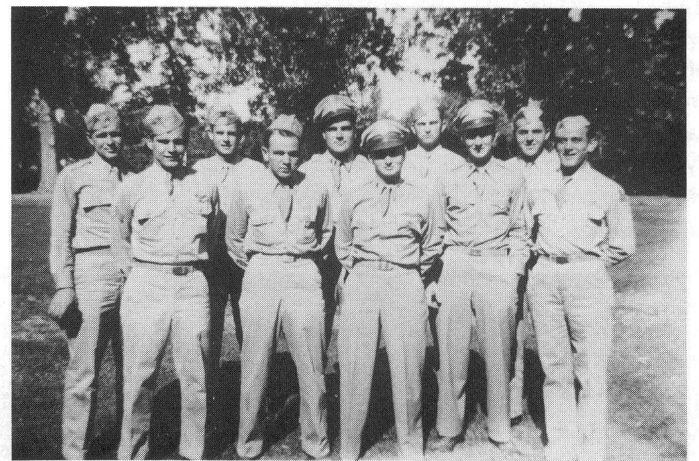
Al Solomon photo 826 Sq The Ambulance crew of the 484th



Crew of Upstairs Maid 875 Sq (John G Sonnenborn Jr photo 765 sq.)



Crew of Robert C Quinlan 825 Sq. Front row from left: Robert C Quinlan-pilot, Kenneth A Hanson-co/pilot, Charles H Bell-bombardier, and Roland K Preston-navigator. Second Row from left: Chester A Nordling-engineer, Donald W Peterson-engineer, Joseph J Canfield-radio operator, Joseph W Keene-gunner, Kenneth Whiat-gunner, and Wallace M Smith-gunner (Robert C Quinlan photo 825 sq)



Crew of Thomas J Black 484th BG 827 Squadron From left: Charles Shaffer-Navigator, John Wieland-radio operator, James Wilhelm-engineer, Herbert Pinkly-ball gunner, Thomas Black-pilot, Wayne Bell-bombardier, Robert Collier-nose gunner, James Walsh-co/pilot, Robert Butler-tail gunner, Matt Shematek-upper gunner.(Charles Shaffer photo 827 sq.)



Crew of William P Hettlinger Jr 767 squadron. Ship "The Red Head" From left: Sam Lodato, Peter Furiga, Myron Halstenson, John P Leiendecker, Walter Weibe, Walter A Deselms, William P Hettlinger Jr, Seagrave Smith, William H Parill, and Tony Lembo. (William P Hettlinger Jr photo 767sq.)



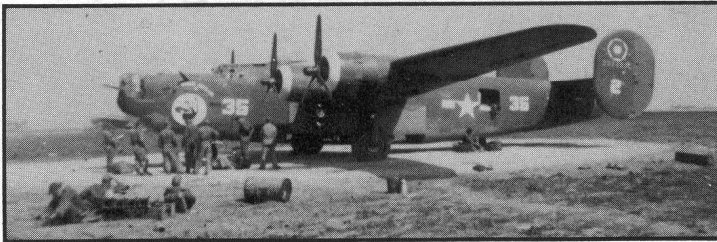
Crew of James R Johnson 764 squadron. Back row from left: Walter J Roeben-bombardier (POW) deceased, Grover H Mitchell-co/pilot (KIA), James R Johnson-Pilot, Jasper D Trout-tail gunner (POW), and Jerome R Roth-navigator. Front row: L Curtis Harell-waist gunner (KIA), Joseph Nobel-ball gunner (KIA), William E Jennings-radio operator, John De Graaff-nose gunner, and Charles Louis-Engineer. (James R Johnson photo 764 Sq)



Crew of Donald Kooker 825 Squadron. Standing from left: Donald Kooker-pilot, George Adamec-co/pilot, William Kreitzer-navigator, Roy R Lee-bombardier. Kneeling from left: Getty DeMikle-engineer, Guy Churchwell-gunner, Robert E Dysinger-radio operator, Elmer Baker-nose gunner (KIA), Hershell Hendryx-ball gunner, and Robert Henderson-tail gunner. (Hershell Hendryx photo 825 Squadron)



Crew of Conrad Malhum 766 SQ Standing from left: Conrad Malhum-pilot, Bill Rowe-co/pilot, Bill Glusko-navigator, and Bob Williamson-bombardier. Kneeling from left: Bob Muth-ball gunner, Max DeRossett-upper turret gunner, Bob Wood-nose gunner, Ellis Roak-engineer, Chuck Kline-radio operator, and Bob Hayes-tail gunner. (Bob Hayes photo 766 sq.)



Ship 35 at left. Lt R G Wester of the 765 Sq may have flown this plane. Note the hexagon design on the top of the rudder and the number 2 below. It is possible that this is an early 461st BG insignia or the aircraft could have been borrowed from another group, possibly the 460th BG. It is known that groups within the 15th Airforce borrowed aircraft from one another from time to time. Reader comment would be appreciated. See page 24 also.

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