

planes and flew awkwardly due to the extra weight of armored pilot seats, and flat armor around the flight deck. Thus when power was decreased, the momentum carried them forward, and the only speed control was to raise the nose, which sometimes was impossible due to the position in the formation in which it was assigned. We could have rammed the plane above, which would be fatal to both planes, and possibly others that were close by.

Quote from his Diary:

"One of these planes in our group flying the "Brownnose Position," was caught in a drift on the bomb run. Being under the lead plane he could not slow down by lifting his nose. At that moment the time came for bombs away and an unarmed 500 pound bomb fell on the nose just forward of the flight deck crushing the flight controls by snapping cables, pulleys, and push pull rods, disabling the plane completely. The plane fell off in a tight spin the wing tip in an almost 90 degree bank trapping the crew inside with the centrifugal force. We saw no parachutes, or no flak. It disappeared into the clouds below never to be seen again".

I bring this matter up as a follow up to the photograph of "Rhapsody in Junk" that appeared on page 11 of Torretta Flyer No 21 showing the armored cockpit window and armor plate bolted to the outside of the fuselage. Incidentally this same airplane was involved in a double mission on April 28, 1944, when the same aircrew of 458th Bomb Group, 8th Air Force flew two missions in one day.

### **Those Crashed Airplanes in Southern France**

We received another letter from Philippe Castellano ( See page 20 Torretta flyer No# 20) regarding B-24's from the 461st Bomb Group that fell in Southern France during the latter half of 1944. He wants to invite the survivors of the crash of a B-24H 42-52399 May 27, 1944, piloted by Gerald G Maroney to visit the crash site in France. They are: Al Raines-T/G, Owen Streeper-B/G, and Benjamin Norrid-N/G. They will be surprised to see what he has found.

He goes on to say that in the cemetery book of the small villages of Seillons and Ollieres, he found the names of Richard V Darvie, Arnold R Ducatman, and Robert D Cumming. The History of the 461st Bomb Group shows that the crew of Chester A

Ray, 766 squadron, was missing in action on December 7, 1944, on a mission to Nimes, France. Other members of that crew reported missing were: Merrill T Spring, Rudolf H Wild, Andrew T Smith, Gerald Rahl, Arthur D Morgan, and Thomas J Moss Sr. On that same day another B-24 of the 461st Bomb Group piloted by Richard S Fawcett was reported missing. The other members of that crew are: Frank J Dunstead, Walter J Graham, Robert M Sanders, Walter Gladowski, James W Kelly, Robert J Weisfeld, Dunne J Lantow, Joseph A Brnetich, and Leonard J Johnson. Mr Castellano would like to know if there are any survivors of these crews. I have sent him what information we have.

Mr Castellano and his associates are also excavating crash sites in France and gathering parts of the aircraft in a similar manner to what the English have been doing, as reported to you in the last edition of the Flyer, Although he doesn't say if the aircraft parts have been put into a museum like setting. We are not aware of similar activities in Italy and other countries where our planes fell. Mr Castellano can be reached at Rue Chateaubriand Mandelieu, France 06210.,

### **The Cover Photograph**

The photo shown on the front cover of this issue is one of a series taken on August 13, 1944, on a mission of the 484th Bomb Group to bomb the marshalling yards near Vienna, Austria. See page 25 The war diary of Roy Nichols, 825 squadron. Official photo 484th BG via Robert A Harrison 825 squadron

### **Acknowledgments**

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# **The Torretta Flyer**

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The Torretta Flyer reports primarily on the history of air warfare during WWII and the accomplishments of members of the 461st & 484th bomb Groups during WWII. From time to time the magazine will cover other subject matter related to aeronautical events as material becomes available. Readers are encouraged to submit their own stories or material from other sources.

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