

Apple Valley, CA
Dear Bud:

I am enclosing several photos of my airplane "Old Flutter Butt"* and its crews.



Photo 1 The ground crew who were very good as we never missed a mission or had to abort.



Photo 2 Ship #40 B-24H-15 42-52602, North American built from Ford knock down kits at Dallas, Texas.



Photo 3 Front Row left to right; John T Kinsky-E W/G, Robert J Person-N/G, William G Freeman-R/O W/G, Raymond T Cromer-2nd E U/G, Clarence P Konertz-B/G, and Ward L Martin-3rd E T/G. Front row James C Langdon-P, Ranscomb E Roth-N, and George W Adams-B. Lucky F Moorhead-C/P is not in the picture.

James C Langdon 825 Sq.

* Editors Note: "Old Flutter Butt" and "Stew Bum" are listed as the same 42-52602. It was shot down June 13, 1944 by fighters near Natters. Capt. Robert C Quinlan and crew were captured and spent the rest of the war as POWs.

Alma, WV
Dear Bud

The big storms of the winter of 1993-1994 left us without power, one time for five days. Our only source of heat was a fireplace insert. I had ample time to think and remember. This is the 50th anniversary of tent 39 heater. It wasn't restricted to us, everyone had one and no one really knows how many there were in Italy or for that matter who invented it.

It was truly one of the great inventions of WWII. Simple, cheap and easy to fabricate from unusual pieces that were available and fit together as though they were meant to be.

It also put out more than enough heat. I don't know who invented it. Ours was the work of Otto Zelenka. He was a charter member of the "jack of all trades" club, and probably made most of the ones in the 827 squadron.

Fabrication started with the familiar 5 gallon Jeep auxiliary gasoline can. With the can laying on its flat side instead of the usual upright position the filler cap was toward you, a round hole was cut in the opposite corner for the exhaust flue. On the bottom a hole was cut to accommodate the burner can, usually a thick brass 75 MM shell case. Slots were cut in the open end for combustion air and fuel entry. Containers for 75 MM shell were welded together, then attached to the left rear top of the fuel can. The stove was supported by a four legged bomb fin holder.

The heater is now ready for the fuel system. A 55 gallon drum was outside the tent high enough to allow gravity feed to the fire pot. Aluminum tubing was used to carry fuel from the drum to the fire pot.

Tent 39 had five youngsters and one old man of 38, Frank Simmons. He looked out for us like a father so the line and shut off valve went under his bunk ("sack"). Frank would open the valve in the morning and get a few drops in the fire pot and light it with a long taper usually a rolled up "Stars and Stripes." It took only a few minutes to get the tent warm and five youngsters leaping out of the "sack" dressed, and on to briefing and the flight line. On colder mornings the heater would glow cherry red.

One added feature of the heater was that it could be used as a cooking stove. Frank used to enjoy making his own recipe of Arkansas coffee. Using his canteen cup 1/2 full of coffee and 1/2 water he would boil it to perfection and pour off the liquid. He was the only one in the tent who could