

What really surprises him is a daily diary that a sergeant on his crew kept during their tour. McKone says he never knew of it during the war, despite the close quarters of the crew. The sergeant, one of the few men he knew in the war he still stays in touch with, sent him a portion of his diary two years ago.

"In those days there was censorship. You didn't tell where you went and what you did, what your targets were or the size of your fleet." McKone says. "That was a no-no. You'd get in the pokey with that stuff." The hardness he learned was tempered with an edge of uncertainty.

"You'd see the planes go out in the morning, you'd see seven go out. At night, they'd come back, sometimes six, sometimes five. You never knew where they went. They were just gone," McKone says.

"You got the feeling the odds are one in seven you aren't going to come back. You'll last seven trips." He shrugs and recalls the dump into the Adriatic when he and the rest of the crew were rescued by a British cruiser. "I can give you a guarantee. Don't ever put a plane in the water in February. That was by far the worst," McKone says.

After that, the crew was sent to Rome to recuperate and McKone and the others thought they were on their way back to the States "Up till that time whenever anyone went in the water they went home. They figured you were no good anyhow, shell-shocked," he says. But this time, the top brass kept them in the force and even had the pilot visit other bases and give talks on how to dump a damaged plane in the water. The crew was back up in the air in no time at all." It was one of those things. Somebody had to do the job. And you weren't telling the Air Force what to do with you, that's for sure," McKone says." There was only one question. It was the only choice that existed," McKone says. "That guy Hitler was nuts."

### *Mildred Brown O'Bannon*

Mildred Brown O'Bannon passed away August 1, 1994. She was born August 1, 1919 in Germantown, Pennsylvania. She and her husband, Frank C. O'Bannon, Jr., Lt. Colonel USAF Retired, had celebrated their 50th Wedding Anniversary in October of 1993.

Millie is survived by her husband Frank C O'Bannon, her children, Barbara, Tom (Leslie), and David (Christina), and her grandchildren, Tracy and Andy, as well as family, and friends.

Frank O'Bannon 764 Sq 461st BG was one of the three founding members of the 461st & 484th Bomb Groups Association, the others being Bea and Bud Markel. The 461st Bomb Group has since been formed as a separate organization

### *William L. Pietzch 824 Sq*

Second Lieutenant William L. Pietzch joined the 258-10A crew for overseas training in October of 1944 at the Pueblo Air Base in Pueblo Colorado. He flew as Co-pilot to Earl C. Downey and after training was finished in December of 1944, he flew the southern route to Cerignola, Italy and the Torretta Air Field. Here he and the crew were assigned to the



484th Bomb Group and the 824th Bomb Squadron. Lieutenant Pietzch flew 23 missions and received the Air Medal with one Oak Leaf Cluster. He was greatly respected by all the crew and will be missed.

He was killed in May of 1945 after returning from Italy. He had been temporarily stationed at McDill Field in Tampa Florida before resuming training on B-29's with the rest of the crew. He and a fellow officer had the afternoon off and decided to rent a small plane at a nearby field and go for a flight. On their approach to land, another small plane didn't see them and collided on the approach. Both Lieutenant Pietzch and his friend were killed. Lieutenant Downey accompanied the body to Beaumont Texas for the funeral.

### *Thomas G. Reimer 826 Sq*

S/Sgt Thomas G. Reimer, N/G on Robert Warne's crew, died July 23, 1994. He was born August 28, 1920, Mr. Reimer was an engineer for Conrail for 41 years before retiring in 1981. He was awarded the Air Medal with two Oak Leaf Clusters and the Silver Star. He was a charter member of his home town American Legion. Mr. Reimer enjoyed golfing and gardening.

Survivors include his wife Jean, a brother, Frank, and a sister Mrs Ruth Shoaf.

### *Charles J. Shanklin E 825 Sq*

Charles J. Shanklin of Lubbock, Texas, engineer on Rueben Kaiser's crew, died 30 June, 1993. He was born 7 July 1921 in Frankfort, Indiana. He was a member of the Kaiser combat crew. He was considering becoming a member of the 484th B.G. Association prior to the time that he died. T/Sgt Charles Shanklin was the flight engineer on our B-24 aircraft. He was a good man. We backed each other up as he stood at the right waist gun and I stood at the left waist 50 caliber gun.

Reported by Calvin R. Teel 825 Sq

### *Marvin H Watson 827 Sq*

Marvin H Watson, Engineer on Wilburn Kitchen's crew #70 passed away October 24, 1994. He joined the Association in 1984 and attended the reunion that year. He is survived by his wife and children. There are only 4 members of this crew surviving. All are members of the Association. They are; Robert W Day-U/G, John Dunn-N, Pat Layne-T/G, and Wilburn Kitchen-P.

