
About this Issue



This Issue's Theme

The most difficult task in creating a new issue of the *Flyer* is beginning with a theme. Usually I have a stack of documents, letters, and graphics that has to be converted into readable text. Once the text is compiled and laid out in printed form, it still has to make sense and be interesting to read.

In the case of the Odertal story. The facts of the mission were in a file folder given to me by Bill Keese some years ago. There were many related documents and some drawings to meld into one cohesive piece. I couldn't understand for example why the losses of our sister group, the 461st were so high in comparison to ours on that day. This explanation was in the letter we received from our new member, Herb Weinstein, describing his monitoring Luftwaffe fighter command radio transmissions, and directing our own escort fighters to intervene. I discovered also that the 332nd Fighter Group's black pilots and their red tailed P-51's were part of the returning escort. They have claimed they had never lost a bomber. I believe Himmler's ship was shot down before the P-51s arrived, and that Martin's ship suffered a similar fate in the inbound track. The theme then is cause and effect as seen in the Odertal Mission itself, in the story "A Glimpse from the Ground," and in the letter (the Letters to the Editor section) from Karl Affenzeller.

This Issue Is Late

I am three months late in getting out this issue and want to thank all of our readers for their patience. A heart cath led to a repeat by-pass operation in October, with unexpected complications that slowed my recovery. I wasn't able to return to partial working status until recently.

The Essay

The Essay by Kit Bacon Gressitt, who attended the Dayton reunion, is a heart warming piece. As a journalist, as well as the

daughter of member Tillman Gressitt, she is able to make an objective and personal assessment of the WWII generation, and we see ourselves in reading her words.

A View From the Ground

Felix Rameder's story "A Glimpse From the Ground" is a window for us to see into what the effects of daylight bombing had on the enemy population. His experience of surviving under the bombs is from a school boy's perspective which makes it uniquely interesting as we compare our own boyhood experiences with that of Felix. It was a mixture of fear when the earth was shaking from exploding bombs to great excitement when he could observe the battle.

We have been very fortunate also to receive a letter from Karl Affenzeller of Freistadt, Austria. His letter to the editor also tells of his childhood surviving the bombs. It is interesting to note that in the old country of WWII one, either young or old, did as he or she was told, in the case of this letter, to fill bomb craters.

Odertal mission of 17 December 1944.

The story of the Odertal mission of 17 December 1944. The information comes from many sources. Without a mission roster the crew names were taken from the Association's database files where again the names were assembled from orders and documents. Expect to find some errors here. The pilot's flimsy is reproduced from the original document. As you read on you'll find the mission was flown almost exactly as ordered. It's like the old saying "when all else fails, follow orders".

The General Orders appearing on page 39 were sent in recently.

Your comments are always welcome.