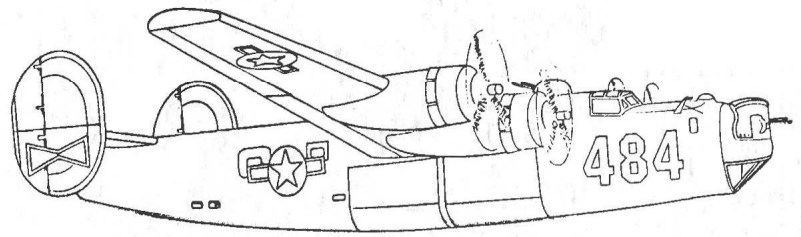


# The Torretta Flyer



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Torretta Flyer No 29

484th Bomb Group Association

Winter Spring 1996

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**1996 Reunion of the 484th BG Association Set for  
San Diego, October 2-6, 1996**

*see pages 6-7*



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## 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.

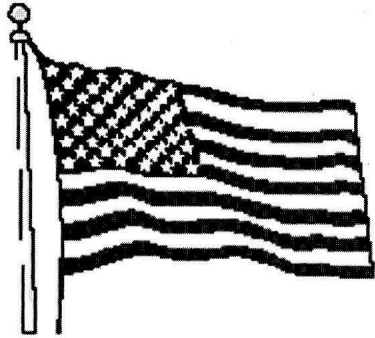
### ***Odertal mission of 17 December 1944.***

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.*



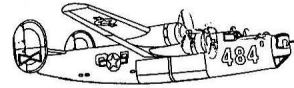


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Cover Painting via Jack Messersmith, 824 Sq.

# The Torretta Flyer



## Issue #29 Winter Spring 1996

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The Torretta Flyer is the official publication of the 484th Bomb Group Association. Normal distribution is limited to members only. Requests from nonmembers for copies should be directed to the Editor.

Contributions of stories, articles, memorabilia, and graphic materials to the Torretta Flyer are always welcome. Clean typewritten manuscripts and Microsoft Word disks are preferable. Other forms also are acceptable. Please contact the Editor for further information.

The Torretta Flyer reports primarily on the history of air warfare during WWII and the accomplishments of members of the 484th Bomb Group 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.

*Editor*, Bud Markel  
*Associate Editor*, Bea Markel

*Board of Directors* 1995-1996  
484th Bomb Group, Bud Markel.  
Bea Markel, Frank Valdez, John Billings, and Charles McKew.

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*Membership Committee*  
Charles McKew, Al Kline, Vernon Janke, Adolph Marcus,  
Leonard Nucero, Jack Robson

*Publicity Committee*, Adolph Marcus

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# Report On The Dayton Reunion

## Dedication of the Plaque at Dayton

The highlight of the 1995 reunion in Dayton, Ohio was the dedication of the plaque in the Memorial Park of the Air Force Museum. Both Col. Bill Keese and Lt/Col. Chester Busch were present to address the assembly.

A registration memento of a miniature plaque was given to members and guests as they registered for the reunion. The miniatures proved to be so popular that all extras were sold out at the end of the reunion. The plaques were reordered and are on hand for sale to members. They are priced at \$25.00 including shipping.

Now as far as the arrangements for the plaque is concerned, it was the board of directors who felt a permanent place or institution would be a good place to install the plaque. Most of the aircraft on display at Air

Force military airfields throughout the continental United States are owned by the Air Force, but with the closing of many military bases planned or already taking place the board agreed on the Dayton location for the first plaque installation, with the approval of our members. The Dedication of the 484th Bomb Group's plaque took place on Friday, September 15, 1995 in the Memorial Park adjacent to the Air Force Museum's main building. After the conclusion of the Dedication ceremony, guests visited the Air Force Museum. A bus service between the Dayton Marriott and the Museum shuttled members and guests to and fro.

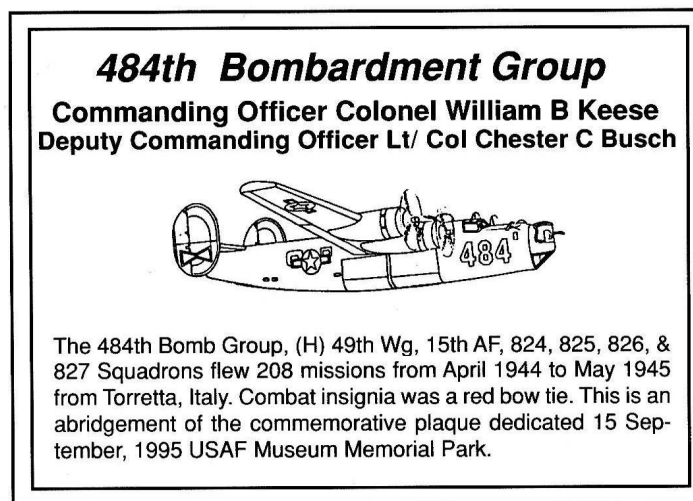
## Our Second Reunion in Dayton

The 1995 reunion in Dayton is our second visit to the city that hosts the United States Air Force Museum. We had previously been in Dayton in 1982. For those who remember, the Sheraton Hotel where we were staying was too small to hold the annual dinner dance resulting in the use of the Dayton Convention Center just two blocks away.

Arrangements for the banquet including ordering the food and table decorations was done through a company completely separate from the Convention Center. Without a face to face meeting or even a hand shake, the company agreed over the phone to provide the food and decorations. After the reunion they sent us a bill, which

was promptly paid, and included a nice thank you letter. How they knew we were good for the money, we don't know to this day.

For this 1995 Dayton reunion, recognition is given to our local Dayton members Jim and Mary Pool, for all of their efforts on our behalf.



*Drawing of the Miniature Plaque that was given to all attendees of the 1995 Dayton Reunion.*

## The Ceremony

This was a full military ceremony. The guests were welcomed by the museum official, Bob Bobbitt, followed by the posting of the colors by Sgt. Merlyn Yeager's uniformed company from VFW Post No 3283 of Huber Heights, Ohio, then the invocation was given by Chaplain Joseph Hanna. The President of the Association Bud Markel gave a brief history of the of the 484th Bomb Group. At this point, Bill Keese, the Commanding Officer was introduced to speak, followed by Chester

Busch, the Deputy Commanding Officer, who spoke briefly about the organization. The plaque was unveiled by Arthur Shaw, 827th Sq, and then Charlie McKew, one of our five Directors, presented the plaque and the accompanying green ash tree to the museum. The Air Force Museum's Director, Richard L Uppstrom accepted the plaque and tree for the museum. Chaplain Hanna then gave the benediction. The firing party fired four volleys, then withdrew while a bugler in full Air Force Blues played taps. The color guard company then retired the colors, and the audience was invited to take pictures. After the reunion the Association tendered a check to the museum for perpetual care of the plaque and tree.

For members and families information: The location of the 484th Memorial plaque and tree is Site 267, in the Memorial Park, which is adjacent to the Air Force Museum, at the outermost edge of the Park.

One of the most popular activities at reunions, and the 1995 reunion was no exception, was the display room. Most of the orders received by the Association over the years have been duplicated and placed in display folders. Other materials include documents, maps, and photographs. At Dayton we were fortunate to receive mounted photographs from the King Beach (827th Sq) Photo Collection which were exhibited for the first time in the display room.

*Continued on page 5*

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## ***The Squadron Dinners***

Herb Weinstein, 825th Sq, one of our new members recalled, at the squadron dinner after the meal when everyone was encouraged to tell a war story, of how he was able to dodge enemy fighters. It's an interesting story and a part of the December 17, 1944 Odertal mission story.

Fang and Edith Hansen could not attend the reunion as they were too infirm after an accident in which their car was destroyed. They hosted each and everyone in their 824th squadron to a bottle of Cold Duck sparkling wine. Fang is well known among the members for his acquiring and serving a barrel of Coors beer at the Colorado Springs Reunion.

## ***The Banquet***

We were very fortunate to have Felix Rameder and his daughter, Beatrix at the reunion. They were guests of Reed Sprinkel. Felix Rameder and your editor have been corresponding for years, and he has contributed stories to the Torretta Flyer previously. Felix was our guest speaker, but because of time restraints, he gave a shortened speech. The full text of his speech "A Glimpse From The Ground" with photographs is printed in this issue.

He relates within these pages of what it was like to be on the ground when the American Air Force was dropping its ordinance on them. It makes for excellent reading.

Members who have not had the opportunity to attend previous reunions may not know that every since the first reunion in Torrance, California, the banquet has been a dinner dance. We always have a live orchestra playing during dinner and for dancing after our guest speaker is finished. The Joe Aceto orchestra entertained our guests last year at Dayton.

## ***Ladies Fashion Show And Luncheon***

The fashion show presented by the Junior Group of Goodwill on Saturday at the Dayton Marriott was a huge success. Some sixty-five or more of our guests enjoyed the very professional modelling of antique clothing and accessories of the 1900-1950 years. The wedding outfits were especially nostalgic.

## ***Annual Meeting Report***

The annual business meeting took place on Saturday, September 16, 1995, at 9:30 am. The minutes of the last meeting and financial report were read and approved.

## ***Scholarship Report***

A report from the Memorial Scholarship Committee chairman Richard Muscatello was presented, including the current financial status of the scholarship fund. He reported that the awards for 1995 had been made on March 16, 1995, in Cerignola, Italy, through the efforts of Professor Umberto Albanese, and that three full awards of \$600 each and one \$600 award was shared equally by two awardees. With membership approval, the Committee will undertake an expansion of the awards program and investigate the

eligibility of high school students in the city of Harvard, Nebraska, one of the 484th bomb group training bases during WWII, in order to establish one scholarship award of \$600 to be given to one eligible student of a Harvard, Nebraska High School based on scholarship, service and need. This award will be given in addition to the four 1996 awards to be made to the eligible students in Cerignola, Italy.

## ***Election of Officers***

In accordance with the notice of the annual meeting for the purpose of electing directors for the year 1995-96, the election of directors took place. The Directors are: Bud Markel, Beatrice Markel, Frank Valdez, John Billings And Charles Mckew.

## ***1996 Reunion***

Under new business the recommendation was made and approved for the 1996 reunion to be held in San Diego, California, in the fall of 1996. A video of the San Diego area was shown after the meeting.

## ***1997 Reunion***

Also under new business, it was announced that negotiations were under way with the hotels in the Washington, DC Area for the specific purpose of holding the 1997 annual reunion in conjunction with the dedication of a 484th Bomb Group Memorial Plaque in the Arlington National Cemetery Memorial Park.

### ***The 484th PX***

484th BG Logo patch, stitched, 2 3/4 " in diameter -----\$5.00.

B-24 three-dimensional tie tac, silver, stick pin 1 3/4 " ----- \$5.00.

Association Pin with 484th Logo 7/8" - - - -  
-----\$5.00.

Baseball Cap, red & white. side view of 484th silver B-24 on front, postage inc. - - -  
----- \$12.00.

Miniature Plaque 1 3/4 " (see pg 4) with display stand, postage inc. - - - - - \$25.00.

Back issues of the Torretta Flyer, Nos 10 thru 28, postage inc. - - - - - \$36.00.



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# *The 1996 San Diego Reunion*

## ***Mission Valley Hilton Hotel***

The 1996 Reunion will be held in San Diego, California October 2 through October 6, 1996 at the Mission Valley Hilton Hotel, 901 Camino Del Rio South 92108. The room rate for single to quad occupancy is \$67.00 per night.

This rate is available three days prior and three days after the reunion. Free underground and surface parking is provided for all guests. Complimentary shuttle service from the San Diego Airport to and from the hotel is provided for guests arriving by air.

To receive the special convention rate, individuals must indicate that they are attending the reunion of the 484th Bomb Group Association, Check in time is 3:00 PM and check out time is 12:00 Noon. Luggage storage is provided if the room is not ready by at 3:00 PM and luggage storage is available for those departing after 12:00 Noon.

## ***Things to Do and See***

### ***Balboa Park***

Many of the city's museums are located in Balboa Park, a short freeway ride from the hotel, including the San Diego Aerospace museum, the San Diego Zoo, Automotive Museum, Reuben H Fleet\* IMAX Theater and Science Center, Museum of Man, Museum of Art, Photography Museum, Model Railroad Museum, and many more attractions. A carousel and miniature train ride for children is open on the weekends

Balboa Park was built for the 1915 Panama-California International Exhibition, and was used again in 1935-36 California-Pacific World's Fair \* Reuben H Fleet, one of the first air mail pilots with the federal government established Consolidated Aircraft Company where the B-24 was first built.



## ***Mexico***

A visit to Tijuana Mexico via the trolley is a short taxi ride from the hotel to the trolley terminus. It takes you to the California-Mexican border. The San Ysidro discount stores can be reached from the last trolley stop at the border.

## ***Seaworld and Seaport Village***

Sea World, the marine park offers Shamu, the dolphin pool, a seal and otter show, a shark exhibit and more. Great for the grandchildren.

Seaport Village on San Diego Bay features shopping, dining, turn of the century Carousel, a lighthouse and waterfront boardwalk. San Diego Harbor cruises with dining service are available, or go whale watching.

## ***Cabrillo National Monument***

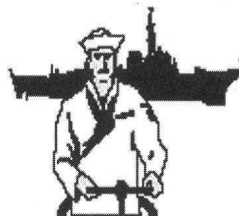
From the southern tip at Point Loma, not far from the Light House, there is a breathtaking view of San Diego Bay, Shelter Island, Harbor Island, Coronado, and the Embarcadero.

## ***Home of the Pacific Fleet***

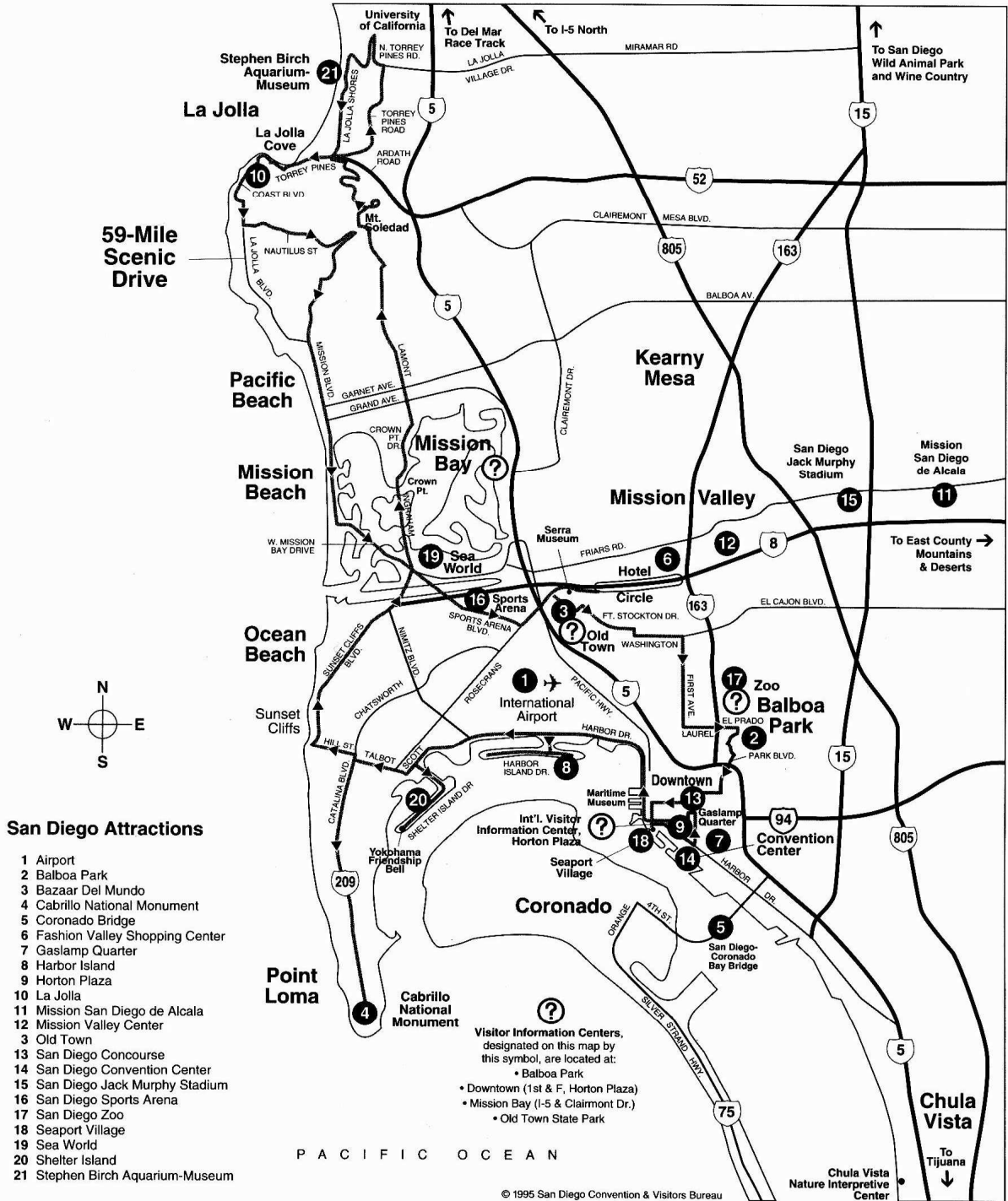
Tours of US Naval Vessels in port are available including the giant aircraft carriers. More information on navy tours and other activities will be in the Reunion Bulletin that will be mailed out in Spring 1996.

## ***Shopping***

Downtown San Diego, Horton Plaza, and the Paladium. On Interstate 8, (near the Hilton) Fashion Valley, and Mission Valley Center, Outlet Malls North County Outlet Center San Marcus, and San Diego Factory Outlet Center San Ysidro At the end of the trolley line USA/ Mexican border.



# Map of San Diego



## ***Contributions to the Scholarship and Plaque Funds Received Since Publication of the Last Flyer***

### **Contributions to the Plaque Fund**

Anthony	Giammattei	827
Rudolph S	Martino	827
William H	Dowd	826
Wilburn H	Kitchen	827

### **Contributions to the Scholarship Fund**

William	Aubel	827
Roben C	Baker	824
Clyde S	Barr	824
Rex	Bennett	824
George	Christie	765
Bruce C	Dein	824
William J	Delanzo	827
Lloyd R	Edgecombe	826
Franklin S	Ennis	824
Stanley L	Forster	826
Anthony	Giammatei	827
J Jordan	Glew	826
Robert W	Goble	826
Theodore R	Gressen	824
Tillman J	Gressin	827
Donald G	Hanson	825
Russell L	Hawes	827
Joe	Hebert	826
H M	Hendrickson	824
John	Hicks	826

***In Memory of (SMOJ) TSgt Thomas E Key K9A***

William B	Keese	484
Paul W	Kerr	826
Albert	Krapf	826
Charles B	Lowell	827
Harry L	Marshall	826
Jeanette C	Marshall	826
Francis C.	Mathis	824
Dorothy	McGuire	825
Walter A	Menn	826
Jack D	Messersmith	824
Richard P	Muscatello	824
Barrow F	Neale	826
James D	Pool	827
Albin A	Rogers	824

***In Memory of (SMOJ) Peter Rogers,  
Albert H Hitzing, & Edward Kabasa***

Hyman L	Rutman	825
Walter H	Scheurs	825
James B	Schoonover	825
Bruce W	Smith	824
Raymond L	Snyder	826
Alfred	Solomon	826
Harold T	Toomey	824
Robert R	Warne	826
William M	Warren	827

***In Memory of (SMOJ) John Dunn***

Harry R	Watkins	827
Robert J	Wehner	827
Herbert	Weinstein	825
Edward J	Whalen	827
Jack A	Williams	825
Thomas R	Woolcott	824



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## Essay

By Kit-Bacon Gressitt

### *Noble War Still Vivid In The Minds Of Its Aging Veterans*

DAYTON, Ohio, they arrived from all points of the compass: from bucolic calm and frenetic cities, from sedentary retirement and the flush of new-found love.

The remnants of the World War II Army Air Corps' 484th Bomb Group, 49th Wing, 15th Air Force, no measly designation for these men who would reunite to pay annual homage to an honorable war. In they came, perhaps a motley crew today, but heroes all in their youth. Now in various stages of old, some were sprightly, some hobbled by age and infirmity.

Yet all were ready to drink to their own and the world's past, to boogie to the 1940s brass and reed voices of Joe Aceto and His Big Band, to make mirth of their fore shortened futures.

They gathered ostensibly to erect a memorial of black granite and brass: an investment in eternity, an edifice more solid than the fickle flesh God had bestowed. But in truth, they came to reclaim the intimacy that war had given them. An intimacy born in dark and frigid tents; in makeshift games of baseball; in pickup quartets of faithful, hopeful song; in the innovation of desperate necessity. Theirs was a camaraderie known only to those who have shared the brutality, the fear, the graphic imagery of war. An intimacy that peace took away.

And as they reminisced, they began to regain it, recounting common and solo moments that ultimately would define for each of them whom they would become when their 50 bombing missions were complete.

They juxtaposed stories of the war with tales of today, merging black and white with brilliant color—the unique vision of a generation soon to be lost to us. The last generation to know for certain both the horror and glory of going to war for a just and worthy cause to win the right for all to be free.

As we poked at our chicken dinners, the gunner, who 50 years ago served his nation so well, now rhapsodized over strange and fantastic conspiracies his government purportedly perpetrates. And while he was at it, he shared his certainty that the same had gone on back then, for sure.

Others talked of Hungarian girls, orphans of the war, who waved from their pockmarked window ledge to two downed fliers awaiting return to their Italian base. "Come up," they said, "tell us of America." On a piano that couldn't carry a tune and with the meager utensils of a war refugee's kitchen, the soldiers found the chords and rhythm of the tunes of Capt. Glenn Miller, the Dorsey brothers, Les Brown. And later, when the more innocent was plied with his first French kiss, he stammered to the girl, "We don't do

that where I come from!" It could have been the war cry of his squadron.

One couple, retired from the loving but short-reined demands of a Lutheran congregation, now travel a world the minister had known as his battlefield. On maps once sectioned into quadrants and marked with bomb targets and flak batteries, they plot routes to beautiful vistas and quaint villages where the scars of war have been covered by the detritus of 50 years.

Some spoke of the Italians, who loved the romantic heroes as only the Italians could and taught them their language. They used B24 Liberators as blackboards, imparting to the bombers—crew and bird alike—the critical phrases of communication: "Buon giorno." Good day, "Come sta?" How are you? "Quanta costa?" How much? And most important to the young warriors: "Volete venire a passeggiata con me?" Will you take a walk with me?"

Today, the fliers pool their funds, from slight and abundant sources, and send scholarships, to the descendants of their hosts, the grandchildren of the Torretta, Italy airfield. And the students say "Our grandfathers remember what you did for them during the war and they are very proud of having known such courageous and generous men. Loyalty, courage, friendship: This is the message we get from you and we want to continue."

But the bombardier-turned-actuary gives the 484th only another eight years or so to share their stories, to recapture their youth, to enjoy the contentment and peace for which they flew so bravely.

So they will continue their annual pilgrimages until the actuary's predictions come true, until the last crew member's valiant pilot-soul bails out, until World War II exists only in history books and on weathered memorials planted by the soldiers themselves, until they are gone. Except to those of us who knew them. For us, they will remain in our hearts, and when we look into the wild blue yonder we will sorrowfully miss those brother men who flew.

Kit-Bacon Gressitt is a free-lance writer and editor who lives in Fallbrook, California. She can be reached via e-mail at [kit-bacon.gressitt@sdcs.org](mailto:kit-bacon.gressitt@sdcs.org).

The above essay is reprinted from the Oceanside California publication, North County Blade-Citizen September 1995.

*Editors Note: Kit-Bacon Gressitt is the daughter of Tillman Gressitt 827 Sq*

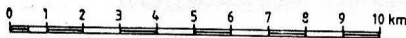
# A Glimpse From The Ground

## By Felix Rameder

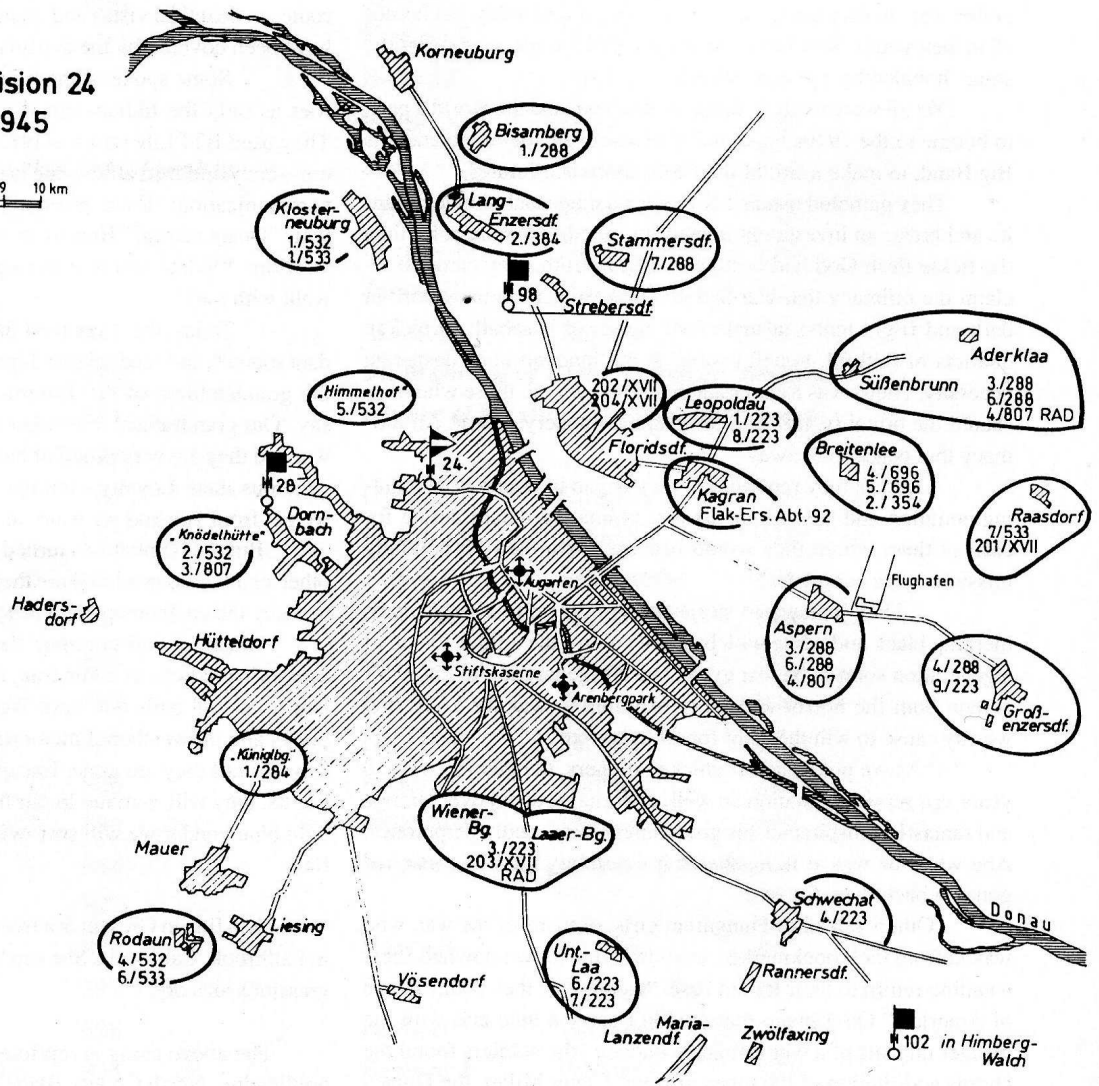
The story that follows on page 11 is a lengthened version of the speech Felix Rameder gave at the 1995 Dayton reunion. Felix has been a longtime contributor to the Torretta Flyer. His life long interest is in aviation and the historic events he witnessed as a schoolboy during World War Two. It was because of these interests that he had occasion to meet Reed Sprinkel who was in Austria at the invitation of the State to participate in an cultural event celebrating the progress of Austria since the end of World War Two. Reed invited Felix and his daughter Beatrix to be his guests at the reunion. It was in Dayton that your editor met Felix for the first time.

Flak Map of Vienna

### Der Einsatz der Flak-Division 24 im Raum Wien, April 1945



- Stab Flak-Division
- Stab Flak-Regiment
- Flakturm
- Stellungsraum Flak-Battr.



The Danube. Already a hundred years ago the water power of these rivers supplied the energy for industrial settlements making this area one of Austria's largest industrial centers. Already in the first World War Wiener Neustadt had the largest aircraft factory in the Austrian-Hungarian Empire. The famous Albatross DIII Fighters of First World War were built there.

When Germany occupied Austria on the 12th of March 1938 one of the first orders Hitler gave concerned the production facilities in this area. Hitler commanded that all available production facilities in the Vienna area switch to war material production. The largest project was the aircraft production facility in Wiener Neustadt. Within one year 20,000 workers built the largest fighter production factory in all of Germany. Already on the 27th March 1938 General Feldmarschall Goring visited

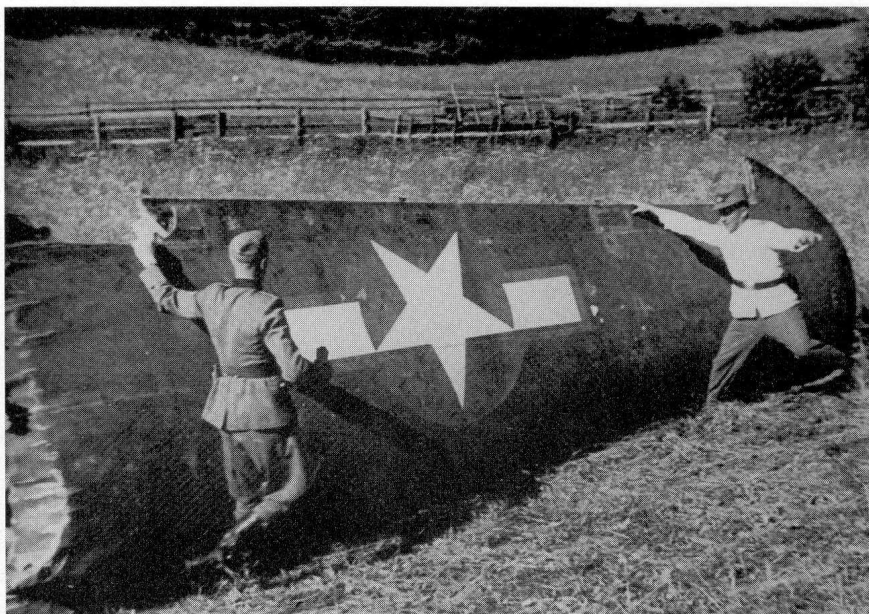
Wiener Neustadt and commanded first priority for all related activities. So at the end of March 1939 the first Me 109 E fighter left the production line and by the end of this year 119 fighters were produced in plant I and II. From 1941 on the Vienna area was one of Germany's most important war material production centers.

Let me show you a short list: In the War Material Production Center Vienna Area, Guns or parts of guns were produced in eight factories, tanks and parts of tanks were produced in four factories, engines for tanks in two factories, Me 109 were manufactured in two plants in Wiener Neustadt and in one factory in Fischamend which was called plant three.

After decentralization of production in 1943 aircraft were also produced in Bad Voslau and Zwolfaxing.

In five oil refineries; Floridsdorf, Kagran, Korneuburg, Schwechat and Vosen-dorf/Atzersdorf gasoline was produced. In the so-called oil harbor of Lobau, the oil

from Ploesti, Romania was received, stored, processed and distributed. In addition to that, there was also the refinery at Moosbierbaum thirty kilometers west of Vienna. In Wiener Neudorf a huge Mercedes production facility for aircraft engines was built. But in June 1944 it was destroyed without having produced a single engine. Finally, I should also mention the nine air fields that were set up



*Left outer wing panel of a B-24 inspected by German troopers. It was later sent on to the aluminum smelters to be reused in building German fighter planes.*

in the Vienna area.

To protect all of this, a ring of flak batteries was drawn around Vienna. Many of those batteries were moved to Russia at the beginning of the Russian campaign. But already in the spring of 1943 three flak rings were established around Vienna and in the early summer of the same year the batteries south of Vienna were reinforced. The positions were furnished with two or three batteries and the batteries themselves were increased from four to six guns each. It was only after this point that the Flak batteries in Wiener Neustadt were set up. There was no fighter defense of the Vienna area.

Although increased activities of allied recon planes were reported from spring of 1943 on, air attacks of US bombers were believed to be impossible. The severe losses of the US bombers at Ploesti supported the opinion of the German air force commanders that there would be no air attacks in the near future in the Vienna area.

Then, during the noon hour of the 13

August 1943 suddenly 61 B-24's approached and bombed Wiener Neustadt heavily and the illusion of the safety of Austria's air space was destroyed. Production was cut down by a third. None of the attacking bombers were shot down. Only one B24 had to land in Switzerland but this was due to a manufacturing flaw. The approaching bomber formation had only been recognized over the lake Balaton which is only about 24 (twenty four) minutes flying distance away from the target Wiener Neustadt. Only then a hectic reinforcement of the air defense and the aircraft reporting service began.

On the 31st of August the Luftwaffe moved two fighter groups of the Jagdgeschwader (JG) II/27 equipped with Me 109 to Fels, Wagram, and one group to Gotzendorf. Those three groups and the strengthened flak around Wiener Neustadt were able

to cause severe damage to the US bombers.

During the next attacks on the 1st of October and 2nd of November 1943 there was a winter break for the Vienna area after the raids in the fall of 1943, the Wiener Neustadt defense forces were massively strengthened. This should explain how at beginning of May 1944 Wiener Neustadt had 18 flak batteries with 94 guns, 64 guns 8.8 mm, 22 guns 10.5 mm and, 8 guns 12.8 cm railroad flak. The three flak rings around Vienna consisted of fifty four heavy flak batteries with 324 guns, 20 ea. 12.8 mm guns, 56 ea. 10.5 mm guns, 248 ea. 8.8 cm guns. 16 ea. guns with 12.8 cm were placed on the two recently finished flak towers in Vienna. The flak towers would defend the center of the city.

To fulfill the increased need for operational personnel for these flak batteries at the beginning of 1943 school children of the birth years 1926 and 1927, sixteen and seventeen year old boys, were trained for



this purpose. Whole school classes were assigned to a flak battery and the kids got their education there. The teaching took place in special school barracks. 16 batteries were staffed by only RAD men (Reicharbeitsdienst). In spring 1944 children born in 1928 were called up. The remaining gaps in personnel were filled in the fall of 1944 by foreign auxiliary personnel, which meant Russian prisoners of war and refugees from the Balkan. Flak batteries in and around Vienna in the fall of 1944 consisted of 61 heavy flak batteries with 432 guns: 28 ea. 12.8 mm, 48 ea. 10.5 mm guns, and 356 ea. 8.8 cm guns. Considering that every gun could fire six shots per minute you can imagine the huge fire power. But all of this was in vain.

After five attacks in April and May the arms production facilities in Weiner Neustadt were completely destroyed. This could not be prevented by the 27th and 51st fighter groups consisting of four squadrons. They were stationed in air fields around Vienna. Two destroyer squadrons of Me110/210 and one fighter squadron were stationed in Bad Voslau, and one squadron in Hungary.

The Me 109s production was moved to several locations and also several flak batteries were shifted from Weiner Neustadt to Moosbierbaum and to the flak ring around Vienna. Two batteries were moved to Brux, Tchechia and two other batteries went to Linz.

After this rearrangement the oil refinery in Moosbierbaum in summer 1944 was defended by 17 heavy flak batteries with 112 guns; 4 ea. 12.8 mm guns, 28 ea. 10.5 mm guns, and 80 ea. 8.8 cm guns. The Vienna area had 604 guns that were prepared to fight against the long distance bombers.

478 guns 8.8 mm  
 94 guns 10.5 mm  
 32 guns 12.8 mm in total 1604 guns

Guns that were mounted on flak towers in Vienna consisted of 88 flak guns could start to fire at target at a distance of 12 kilometer, the 105 mm guns at 15 kilometer and the 128 mm guns at a distance of 18 kilometer. This meant that the 128 mm guns on the flak towers in Vienna could hit the bombers when they were still approaching Ebergassing. These flak measurements



*Ground Level View of Bombs exploding near Vienna*

had good results in clear weather such as on June 26 and July 8, 1944 when the planes were clearly visible.

By the beginning of May there were still 187 fighter planes available which were quite successful from May 24 to May 29, 1944. By the mid-May 1944 only 106 planes of all these squadrons were still in operation. If necessary they were supported by fighter planes from southern Germany and Silesia. Their number decreased after D-day to 60 to 80 planes and 40 destroyers of the type Me 110 and Me 410. After heavy losses in July and August 1944 only the first squadron of fighters from the 302nd group and the Hungarian fighter group were in operation. All the destroyer groups were reduced drastically so that they could not be put into operation. Planes and pilots had to be reorganized.

In May 1944 the boys of the fighter group JG 27/III who were stationed in Gotzendorf would come to Ebergassing to meet the girls there. Once three of those boys

were waiting for a girl that lived in our house. I took that chance and asked them why they were not able to shoot the American bombers down. Two of them did not say a word, finally the third answered: "They are too many." Shortly after that the whole group was moved away from Gotzendorf. Today I know that they were moved to France because of the invasion.

Now I would like to describe the flow of events of an air attack, First there was an Air Raid Warning. When approaching over the Mediterranean Sea the bomber formations were located by radar sets installed on the Istria peninsula, a part of Croatia today. The bomber warning was then transmitted to other aerial region control stations all over the land also equipped with radar sets. The civilian population was informed about the air raid warning by an interruption of the radio program.

A warm, deep and calm woman's voice said: "Attention, attention we are bringing you an aerial situation report. Heavy enemy bomber formations are approaching Carinthia and Styria". Later on there was again an announcement, that would sound like that: "Enemy bomber formation over Lake Balaton". Then suddenly you could hear a cuckoo's call on the radio for one minute. This cuckoo's call was only sent when there was a high probability of an air attack. A few minutes later they gave pre-alarm warnings where the sirens were hooting three times high and three times low. If the bomber formation continued to fly in the direction of Vienna then they gave the main warning. The sirens were hooting twelve times high and twelve times low. The radio program was terminated. Only announcements about the location of the bomber formations were broadcast. These announcements were encoded. To decode them we had to use this map that is divided into grid squares. So if you listened to the

radio and heard the announcements you could look at the map and see in which square the bomber formation was approaching. So you knew where the bomber formation flew and in which direction. Then there was the Air Attack Alarm. When the bomber formation was located within fifteen minutes flight time from a probable target, an air attack alarm was given for this area. But often the air attack alarm and the bomber formation reached the target at the same time. In Vienna after the announcement "Bomber formations approaching from Carinthia and Styria" you could see many people, mostly women and children, wandering to midtown where the flak towers stood. Only flak towers gave safe shelter. Today these flak towers still stand but they are used for storage purposes.

At the beginning of the air raid alarm things always happened in the same way. After the hooting of the sirens a tremendous quietness lay upon all places. Most people went down to the basements and started to wait. Some courageous people stayed in the building, the windows of which were opened widely, and watched the sky to see whether the bomber formation is approaching or not. From the aerial state announcement and from the map you knew from which direction the bombers must come. When there was a clear day you could suddenly see many tiny glittering dots often with vapor trails already from a distance of thirty miles. If this was the case the bombers would reach you within ten minutes. Ebergassing lay right on the outer flak ring around Vienna. Therefore the flak began to fire when the bombers were approaching Ebergassing. It was always the same picture, the flak shot a barrier and the bombers flew through it. It was a real sight. First the roaring of hundreds of engines, then the cracking of the flak guns, the bursting of the shells in the sky and the crashing of one or more planes. When a plane went out of the formation and down you could hear a sound just as if the plane would howl. This howling was probably caused by the engines working with full power. Then the waiting to see if the crew could bail out. When a target near Ebergassing was bombed I could hear the whistling of the bombs and if we could hear this sound we considered ourselves lucky. There was a common saying,

some kind of rule: "The bomb you hear whistling does not hit you".

After twenty minutes everything was over until the next aerial state announcement was given, informing about a new bomber formation approaching which could be followed again by the announcements and the Aerial State map. If no other formation was approaching within half an hour they gave the "All clear" signal. The siren was wailing in a continuous tone for one minute.

Now let me tell you how I saw the



*Young gunner awaiting orders to fire.*

first raid and what was to follow: On the 13th of August we had daylight saving time which meant that the clock was put two hours ahead at the beginning of summer. About half past one a.m. I was fishing in a brook next to the carpet factory in Ebergassing when I heard the loud noise of engines in the air. I looked in the sky to the South and saw some planes flying to the West. They flew high in the sky and I could not recognize the type. Shortly after that I heard a dull rumbling. The earth was shaking. I thought that this was a result of the practice firing of the German Army. But suddenly the sirens in the factory were wailing. I did

not care and kept on fishing. Ten minutes later the director of the factory came running to the brook where I was fishing and shouted to me that I should go home at once because there was an air attack warning. So I ran home. But my mother was working out in the fields about one mile away from the village. So I ran to her. I met her in the open fields. She pointed to the direction of Weiner Neustadt which lies approximately 20 miles away and said that there was bombing. I saw three huge clouds of smoke rising 10,000 feet straight up in the sky drifting towards the west. That evening our neighbor who was working in Weiner Neustadt told us about the attack. He was assigned to the flak. They had their 37 mm flak gun in position on the roof of a workshop building. Shortly after the air attack alarm many people were still walking slowly across the airfield to the air shelter. He said that the planes were approaching in V formation from the South. The leader of the flak position looked through his binoculars and shouted, "They are Americans!". The flak crew was only able to shoot a few shells at the bombers. Then they had to seek shelter because the bombs were coming down. Some bombs broke through the roof on which the flak was in position and exploded in the workshop building. The attack came as a surprise to the people also to those who did not reach the air shelters. There were many casualties.

Also at the second air attack on October first, 1943 the air raid alarm system was not fully in place in the whole area. On this day, it was a Friday, I was still in school when shortly before 12:00 o'clock noon the earth was shaking as if there was an earthquake. Soon after that we heard a dull rumbling and sirens wailing. We ran out of the school building to a bus stop from where a bus usually drove us the three kilometers home. This bus stop was situated on an elevation where already a few people were standing looking to the direction of Weiner Neustadt. From there for the first time I saw the maneuver of an air attack. The people said that the first wave of aircraft had already dropped their bombs but in the East you could already see the second wave approaching. And indeed there I saw a number of glittering dots in the sky approaching a light gray cloud. At this point I knew that

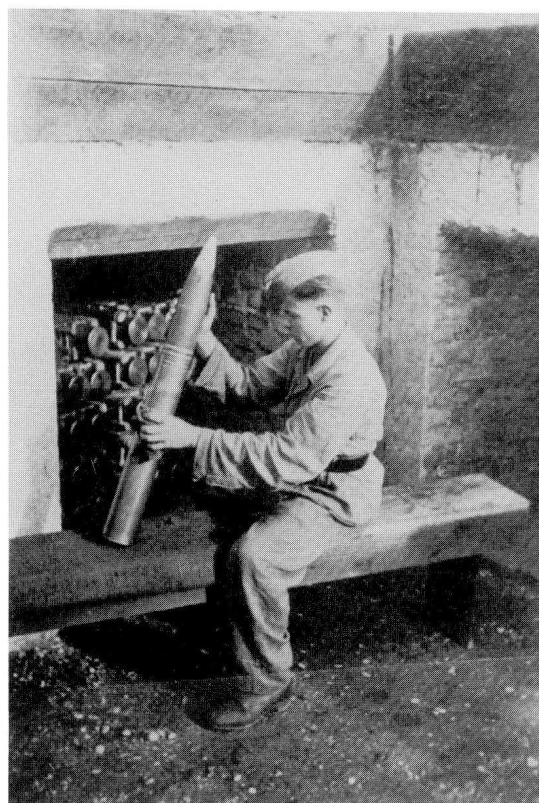
these planes were enemy planes. Suddenly around these glittering points you could see shells exploding. The number of shells grew constantly and left a lot of small dark clouds in the sky. The planes flew through these clouds and were partly hidden by the flak clouds. Then for the first time I saw a plane crash down. A big burning dot with a long tail of smoke was tumbling down to earth in a wide bow. Shortly after that a second plane came down burning less than the first one and again the rumbling of the far away bomb hits. The flak clouds grew lighter and broader covering the sky over Weiner Neustadt from where two huge clouds of smoke rose high in the sky. But then it was quiet again. Even the people at the bus stop said no word except for the school boys who discussed about all the strange new things they had seen. Today I know that the second wave was the 44th BG. On the 24th of October 1943 and on the second of November I was not able to observe anything as we children were led by the teachers to an air attack shelter. An old sugar beet storage cellar served as shelter. We had to stay there till the air raid was over.

None of the simple people knew where the bombers came from as everything was confidential. It was strictly forbidden to listen to "enemy radio". Suddenly the war had reached our own homes. Everybody feared what would come next.

After November 2nd, 1943 for a long time there was no air attack, no aircraft were seen. No exact reports about raids to other areas were available. Many people thought that the Vienna area would not be bombed again. But then the year 1944 came.

Only a little information was given to the civilians by the German broadcasts. Listening to foreign radio stations was punished severely. Let me give you some examples of the news in radio and newspapers. On the 13th of August 1943 it would sound like this: Official information for the population: enemy air craft attacked the south eastern territory of Germany. Several buildings have been destroyed and people were killed by highly explosive and incendiary bombs. Weiner Neustadt would not be mentioned. Or on the second of November 1943 when the 15th Airforce flew their first raid to Weiner Neustadt:

An air attack of enemy air forces to the south eastern territory of Germany caused damages on buildings and the death of several people. Seven planes were shot down. Again Weiner Neustadt was not mentioned. Only in December 1943 when Innsbruck was bombed twice was the name of the city broadcast. Still only damages on residential buildings were reported. Also, the civilians were not told where the approaching bombers came from. The only information they got was that the bombers flew to



*Cleaning 88 mm shells*

Southern Germany.

From January until March 1944 it was still relatively quiet in the Vienna area. We heard several air alarm announcements and cuckoo calls in the radio when Klagenfurt and Steyr were attacked but that was all before March 17 1944.

It was a cloudy and foggy day. At 12:30 in the afternoon air alarm was announced that enemy bombers were approaching our area, five or six were reported. Shortly after this message you could hear the roaring of aircraft engines over Ebergassing. As no planes could be seen we

went down to the basements of our homes for shelter. Suddenly we felt the ground tremble and heard the booms of exploding bombs. We had to live through this two more times. On the next day we heard that the whole area around Schwechat got hit. Ebergassing is only six miles away from Schwechat as you see on the map.

Then April 12 1944 came. On this day I saw from very close up the first air attack. The target was Fischamend-Market, plant number three of the Weiner Neustadt ME 109 production unit. These were the announcements given by the Air Raid Alarm Service based on what I have been told by the workers of this plant and on what I have seen myself: Announcement at:

11 :00 A M Enemy planes are approaching from Southeast 40 kilometers east of Karlstadt, Yugoslavia.

At 11 :07 Enemy planes are in the Zagreb area.

At 11: 10 A new formation of 100 enemy bombers is approaching from South near Banja Luka, Yugoslavia.

11: 13 The first formation is over Koprornitza, Hungary heading northwest.

At 11: 15 Highest aerial danger was announced.

A worker of the Me109 factory in Fischamend told his co-workers about the announcement. Everybody became nervous and scared. Many of the workers had gone through the raids on Weiner Neustadt when the Plants one and two were destroyed. After these raids they had been moved to Fischamend.

At 11 :20 the 27 planes of the first wave headed for Szombathey, Hungary.

At 11 :25 Air Attack Alarm was announced. All workers left the production buildings. Many ran to seek shelter in the two bunkers that had been build into a nearby hill. It was said that this bunker was bomb proof. But many more workers ran to some woods south of the plant.

At 11 :32 (eleven thirty two) the announcement sounded like this: The first formation has reached the Sopron area. The second formation is in a distance of 15 (fifteen) minutes flight time to Weiner Neustadt. An attack to Weiner Neustadt must be taken into consideration.

At 11 :42 Enemy planes are over



Lake Neusiedl. There is air combat with German fighters.

At 11 :50 a new formation appears north of Sumeck, Hungary, 120 planes are heading to north.

At 12:03 many formations are approaching Weiner Neustadt. 120 planes are located over Lake Neusiedl heading to north.

At 12: 15 enemy planes over Parn-dorf. This formation consists of the planes of the five groups of the 5th Bomb Wing. Their target is Fischamend. Initial Point is Parndorf. Fischamend is only six miles away from Ebergassing.

In the East we can see many tiny black dots in the sky. You can hear a far droning which is constantly growing louder. I looked through my binoculars and saw the typical high rudder assembly of a B-17. I shouted to my friend, "They are Fortresses!" These are the first American planes I could see from close up. We knew that this attack was meant for Fischamend.

At 12:19 the first planes reached Fischamend. The air is full of a roaring that is impossible to describe, the roaring of nearly 500 engines. Now the four flak batteries which are positioned around Fischamend begin to fire. You can see the black blasting dots between the planes of the first formation. Suddenly one plane goes down on fire. I can see seven parachutes. Then the ground starts to tremble. The roaring of the engines is mixed now with the bursting of the bombs. Thick smoke rises from Fischamend only six miles away. The whole scene seems unreal. After the bombs are away when the first formation turns south to the direction of Ebergassing I also run into the basement and wait until everything is over.

At 01 :01 p.m. the attack is over.

In the afternoon I rode with my bicycle to Fischamend to see what it looked like. The attack was a success for the bombers. The whole factory was destroyed. Still

today you can see the ruins.

But the first formation dropped the bombs too early. Not all of the bombs hit the factory buildings but also the wood half a mile south where many people had tried to find shelter. 150 dead bodies were found. After this attack the production of the Me 109 plant Fischamend was split up to many other factories. A part of the production came to Ebergassing. On the same day Weiner Neustadt was bombed by the 47th Bomb Wing and Bad Voslau by the 304th Bomb Wing.

A lot was changed after this attack, also in Ebergassing. Two kilometers away from Ebergassing a flak position for two



*A Flak Battery Company*

batteries was built. In the middle of May it was equipped with two 105 mm guns.

In Ebergassing there is a soccer field. On this soccer field a temporary camp with wooden barracks for the foreign workers was set up. The foreign workers came from the Netherlands, Belgium and Italy. These people had to work in the former carpet factory in Ebergassing to produce jigs for the Me 109.

After the April 12 raid, the maxim for an air attack was to try to get out of the village as far as possible. Some men build slit-trenches far away but still in walking or running distance from the village. Many people used the old wine cellars in the villages and out in the fields as shelters. The same was

true during the second raid to my area on April 23 1944 when the target was the Heinkel factory in Schwechat.

April 23 was a Sunday. At one o'clock p.m. heavy enemy bomber formations approaching Carinthia and Styria were announced on the radio. At 01:15 PM the cuckoo call was broadcast. It was kind of scary. All the people who owned a radio had turned it on. When the cuckoo call was sent the only thing you could hear in our house with 16 apartments was a cuckoo calling.

My mother and I had an air alarm emergency bundle prepared. In this bundle we put all our documents and some valuables. We took that bundle, mounted the bicycles and rode about two kilometers away

from Ebergassing to a gravel pit where we had dug our slit-trench. While we were still on our way the sirens hooted air alarm.

Shortly after we arrived at the gravel pit we could see the planes coming in four waves from the east flying over Fischamend to Schwechat. The planes were B-24's. Then the flak batteries around Fischamend began to fire, the blasting clouds hit the last wave of about thirty planes. Suddenly one plane showed a bright flame on the left in-

ner engine. With howling engines the plane fell out of the formation and went down. She began to spin but the pilot pulled her out of the spin and held her in normal position for a short time. Now three crew members jumped out of the plane. But then the plane again got into a spin. At this moment two men jumped out. The plane went down vertically and crashed one mile east of Fischamend. The plane burnt and a large cloud of smoke could be seen. Later the plane exploded probably because of the bombs in the fuselage.

The bomber formation kept on flying and bombed the Heinkel factory and the airfield in Schwechat which is in distance of five miles from Ebergassing.

The flak continued to fire at the bomber formation. After bombing the formation turned to the south and flew directly over us. Then the same thing that happened to the bomber crews, happened to us, too. The fragments of the exploded flak shells fell down to the ground buzzing like thousands of bees. We had to hide in the slit-trench to not be hit by one of the fragments. On this day again Weiner Neustadt and Bad Voslau were bombed.

Now we were in the middle of the bomb war. In the nights you would often hear the announcements of the approach of single enemy bombers dropping mine barriers in the Danube. These mine barriers were meant to destroy the oil transports from Ploesti.

The next raid on May 10, 1944 I did not see as close as the ones I have described before. As this was the first raid of the 484th bomb group to the Vienna area I will tell you about it based on the findings of my research work.

At 10:04 AM the approach of heavy enemy bomber formations to Styria and the south eastern territory heading to the north is announced. Already at 10:27 the formation turns over Lake Balaton and heads to the Vienna area.

At 10:40 the air alarm is announced for the Vienna area. At 10:45 the formation is over Lake Neusiedl approaching Weiner Neustadt. The second bomber formation has just crossed Lake Balaton and the third formation has reached the lake.

When the first and the second formations reach Lake Neusiedl they are attacked by 30 Me109 of the fighter group 27 and by 50 FW 190s of fighter group three. When the bombers get into the flak area the fighters break away because now the flak takes over and the work of the flak soldiers starts. The radar devices show interferences so that the bombers have to be covered by optical means only.

At 11:09 the fire bell calling for group fire rang in eleven flak batteries in Weiner Neustadt. These batteries had eleven guns 12.8 mm, 58 (fifty eight) guns 8.8 mm and 24 guns 10.5 cm. Now each gun fired up to sixteen shots per minute at the bombers. The result could be seen clearly. Three B-17's of the first group were hit and crashed down even before reaching the targets. Another B-17 makes it to Weiner Neustadt with burning engines and crashes down ten kilometers south of the target.

Then the second bomber formation with B-24's reaches the flak fire. Two B-24's catch fire immediately and break away from the formation. Four crew men manage to jump out of the plane before she ex-

plodes. Another plane crashed on fire and explodes on the ground.

At 11:15 and six bombers are burning on the ground around Weiner Neustadt and over the target plant one and two there are thick black smoke clouds. In the flak positions 1,460 empty shell cases are standing around, the shells used up for the bombers in the sky. After leaving the target area the bombers were attacked by German fighters again. Again two B-17's and two B-24's tumble on fire to the ground. The German fighters have losses too. The 27th fighter group loses five pilots and the third fighter group has one death and two wounded.

At 11:45 the third bomber formation reaches Weiner Neustadt and the target is the airfield of the Me109 factory. During the approach the formation gets into the range of two flak batteries near Lake Neusiedl. Two B-24's are hit and crash down before reaching the target.

Two more bomber formations approach Weiner Neustadt at 12:05 and 12:15 and bomb the Me109 production plant. Again the flak fires with all they have.

At 12:52 the air attacks are over and from Weiner Neustadt to Karlovac in Yugoslavia there are twenty-eight crashed bombers and three escort fighters on the ground. In Weiner Neustadt both Me109 production plants are severely damaged and nine buildings are destroyed completely. One 105 mm flak battery got two hits and had several dead and wounded.

No sooner than the damages were repaired to a certain extent when the next attack followed on May 24 1944.

On this day I had a unique experience. Shortly after 9 in the morning I sat in the classroom of our school 3 kilometers away from Ebergassing as an Me 109 fighter which was stationed at Gotzendorf airfield rushed over the school. We got nervous. Half an hour later the principal entered the

classroom and said: "You are still here! Air Attack Alarm will soon be announced!". We hurried out of the school, took our bicycles and rode home to Ebergassing as fast as we could. Suddenly the sirens were hooting but we kept on treading. As we reached open field we already heard the roaring of the engines and saw a Liberator formation coming through the clouds from the North. At this moment the flak began to fire. We threw ourselves in the road ditch and looked at the bombers. Then we heard the whistling of the bombs. I was really frightened. The roaring of the engines, the cracking of the flak and the whistling of the bombs. Then the earth was shaking and soon I heard the bombs explode. I looked towards the south



*A dreaded 88 mm cannon with three victory rings around the barrel*

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and saw a dark cloud of smoke over the village of Moosbrunn about two miles away from where we lay in the ditch. Then everything was over.

I took my bicycle and went home but my mother was not there. She went to the slit trench one mile away from Ebergassing. So I rode to her and shortly after I arrived there a B-17 formation was approaching from the west after bombing the oil refinery in Atzgersdorf. The formation was surrounded by exploding flak shells. Three B-17's with smoking engines flew behind the formation but they did not crash down as long as I saw them.

At 11 :30 we heard the continuous tone of the sirens telling us that the attack was over and we had made it once again.

May 29, 1944 was Whit-Monday, which is a Catholic holiday in Austria. It was a wonderful spring morning, warm and the sky was blue. "Bomber weather" we called it and really at 8:39 AM the radio program was interrupted for this message:

"Attention, attention, heavy enemy bomber formations are approaching Styria". So we knew that they would come again today. It is interesting that the attacking bomber were just called "they" by the people. Nobody said "the bombers", or "the Americans". We would ask ourselves whether "they" would come again tomorrow, or we would talk about "them" having bombed Weiner Neustadt again yesterday.

On this day at 9:21 we knew very well that "they" would come because the air alarm was announced. My mother and I had carried that bundle with all our important things such as documents, quilts and so on down to the basement and left the village by bicycle. We rode about two miles away from the village to a place near the new flak battery where a big concrete tube runs below the road.

We thought that this place would be safe. After about thirty minutes we saw south of Vienna a bomber formation approaching from the West, first the tiny glittering dots with vapor trails and ahead of the formation two twin engine planes. When this formation arrived over the industrial area south of Vienna the two twin engine planes turned in a bow. Their vapor trails drew a circle in the sky. Then the bomber formation flew through this circle. I think they marked the target.

Shortly after that we felt the ground trembling caused by the exploding bombs. The linear distance to the target was only

ten miles. So we crept quickly into the concrete tube. Then the nearby flak started to shoot and between the cracking of the flak shots we heard the roaring of the bomber engines. When we crept out of the tube again we could see huge fires burning in the area of Atzgersdorf and Wiener Neudorf. Clouds of smoke were rising high up in the sky. We never went again to the place near the flak battery to seek shelter. On our way home we also saw smoke clouds over Weiner Neustadt.

On the next day, the 30th of May 1944, we were allowed to leave school at about ten o'clock. I rode my bicycle to the factory where my mother was working. In the meantime the air alarm was announced and the workers could leave the factory. We both went home then. My mother would ride the bicycle and I would run behind her. We learned that only small bomber formations were approaching the Weiner Neustadt area. Therefore we stayed at home.

By the end of May and beginning of June, English bombers often flew night raids to our area to drop mines in the Danube. On these occasions you could observe the defense against the bombers very well. Around Vienna there were many searchlight batteries, too. When these searchlight batteries tried to locate the bombers and when finally one battery caught a bomber in its light rays, several other batteries moved their light rays to this bomber. I could see indescribable dramas in the night sky when the pilot tried different maneuvers to get the plane out of the light rays. The bomber would go into a nose dive to escape the light rays while the flak batteries fired with all they had at the plane.

Now in June no air attack alarm was announced when there was only penetration of some single planes. If one or two planes would appear, that means if one or two glittering dots with vapor-trails were to be seen in sky we knew that they were Americans and probably recon planes.

After a few quiet days, on June 16th 1944, at around nine o'clock in the morning air danger was announced. Heavy enemy bomber formations were approaching Styria and around 9:30 the cuckoo call could be heard in the radio. We were allowed to leave school and I rode home on my bicycle. As usual, I brought all our valuables down to the basement and rode to the factory to meet my mother there. Many workers were already waiting at the factory gate. The gate was only opened when the air attack alarm

was announced. I went to the security officer of the factory and said: "Please let the workers leave. They are already over Lake Balaton!" But he replied: "I have my orders, I must open the gate only at air attack alarm." At last the siren wailed and my mother walked through the gate, got on the bicycle and I ran behind her.

We rode to our slit trench in the gravel pit. Already many people, some of them were our neighbors, are there. From the East we heard bombs exploding and shortly after that we see many glittering dots in the Northeast. We do not yet know in which direction they are flying but after a few minutes they grow bigger and bigger, they fly towards us. Then the flak in Schwechat starts to shoot and we have to hide in the slit trench because the shell fragments fall down to the ground. In the slit trench we can feel how the ground trembles caused by the bomb hits. We hear the rumbling of the explosions and the roaring of the engines, they are exactly above us! Please let them have no more bombs left! At the entrance of the slit trench an old man is sitting and he will not let me out when the noise of the engines is getting less and less. I force my way through and can see one formation flying some five miles away to the South. Behind the formation I can see a black cloud and two parachutes in the air. Later I hear that a plane has crashed near our neighbor village.

Ten days later, on June 26th, 1944 the same happens again. Leave school, meet my mother, go to the slit trench. The planes approach from the Northeast again. They come from Slovakia and are heading to the West, then every bomber group turns to the South towards the target. The first and the second formation continue their way to the West and attack Korneuburg and Moosbierbaum. The third and the fourth formation fly towards us, their target is Schwechat. All the people are already in the slit trench. I try to stay out as long as possible to watch the attack. The flak batteries fire at the bombers and I can see two bombers crash. Then I have to go down to our shelter. I get a scolding from some of the men They say: "The bombers could see you and drop a bomb on us!" When the bombers left I saw some of the men who were members of the Nazi-party and who wore the uniform of party members, ride with their bicycles to the crash sites of the two bombers to capture the bailed out crew men. But I knew what their real reason was. They wanted to get the silken parachutes and all the other things the



Americans had with them, and which we did not have any more.

The Bomber Group that bombed Korneuburg was the 484th. One plane was shot down. I have found an eye witness report and a flak map of this crash. The eye witness is a teacher who supervised the school boys who served as flak helpers in a battery.

Here is a translation of this report: On June 26th 1944, I had the duty to supervise the flak helpers in the flak battery Haschhof and to hold the classes. At nine in the morning air attack alarm was announced. Immediately I went to the command stand of the battery and there I could observe the following:

Around 9:30 one bomber formation was approaching from the direction of Korneuburg. The batteries started to fire at the formation after a short while. Between the planes of the formation I could see the clouds of the exploding flak shells. While the flak was still shooting at the formation I could see a white trail of smoke on one plane in the third row of the formation. The formation passed the battery and turned to the direction of Tulln. Three or four minutes later I could observe the plane with the trail of smoke crash down nose ahead burning brightly. I could not see when the plane hit the ground as the mountains were in my way. This is the end of the eye witness report.

This plane with the number 31 42-94748 of the 825th squadron crashed down near the village of Chorherrn near Tulln. This was the last time we went to the slit trench in the gravel pit. I told my mother that I would not go there any more. I could observe the raids better from our home and I could also use my binoculars there which I was not allowed to use outside the house.

When the airfield at Zwolfaxing was bombed on July 8th, 1944 and several bombs fell down only 200 (two hundred) meters away from the slit trenches in our gravel pit, nobody went there any more and I added a few bomb fragments to my collection of shell fragments.

Starting with July more and more targets on the outer edge of Vienna were bombed and I had found a place where I was rather safe from shell fragments and from where I had a good view to three directions, North, East and South. There was the wall

of the house in the East I used this hiding and viewing place until the end of March 1945. From this place I could observe all the formations coming from the Southeast very well and I was not hit by the fragments of the shells shot by the batteries of the Viennese flak barrier that began over Ebergassing. Only when the bombers approached directly over Ebergassing to Vienna I did have to seek shelter in the house as the flak in Fischamend shot earlier and I could have been hit by one of the fragments. Furthermore some very clever men told me that the Americans could see me and would drop bombs on me, Felix the target!

July 26 is again a day of raids where several targets close to Ebergassing are bombed, Weiner Neustadt aircraft engine factory, Vosendorf oil refinery and Zwolfaxing air field. The formations approach from the West. We can feel the explosions of the bombs very heavily. The windowpanes rattle but it is cloudy, so that I can only watch the formation that is approaching Zwolfaxing. This formation consists only of about thirty B-24's which are attacked by the flak before they reach the airfield. Two of them crash down on fire in the target area. A third



*High schools boys checking out a shot down bomber.*

one gets hit in the fuselage and breaks into two parts. I cannot see the hit, I only watch the two parts, the tail section and the wings with the control section witch break away.

In 1973 the widow of a bombardier of the 460th Bomb Group who died in one of the crashed planes visited me and I

showed her the place where the bomber hit the ground and the target Zwolfaxing. Still today this village has a military camp for tanks.

Around mid-1944 you could read in the faces of a lot of people that they did not care any more what would happen to them. You could not do anything against the air attacks you only could take them as a given.

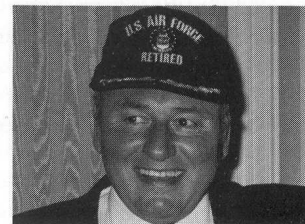
There were more and more air attack alarms. In May there were only four a day and one by night. In June we had five per day and two by night and in July we lived through seven by day and three by night. In August there were nine by day and three by night. Already in June bombs fell down close to Ebergassing and in September the city of Vienna itself was bombed for the first time.

From that point on the daily routine was controlled by the US bombers and the US fighters. Because of the strafing fighters the farmers would bring in their harvest during the night and the factories started their work only at noon if they did not work around the clock. In January 1945, our school closed down as there was no coal available to heat the class rooms.

When in January 1945 my father came home for three weeks leave after 21 months of military service, he said that at home it was worse than on the front. During this time every day there was an air attack alarm and by the mid-March nothing was working any more.

On March 30th, 1945 I saw my last B-24s flying in three groups and B17s flying in four groups over us.

As of April first the planes over us were IL2s, PE2, and A20 Douglas Boston. And then on April 3rd at 4:30 in the afternoon, after we had spent the day in the basement because of artillery fire, three Russian soldiers showed up in front of our house, we thought that we had the worst behind us and we were wrong. But that is another story.



*Felix Rameder*



# Mission 132 17 December 1944

## Odertal Oil Refinery

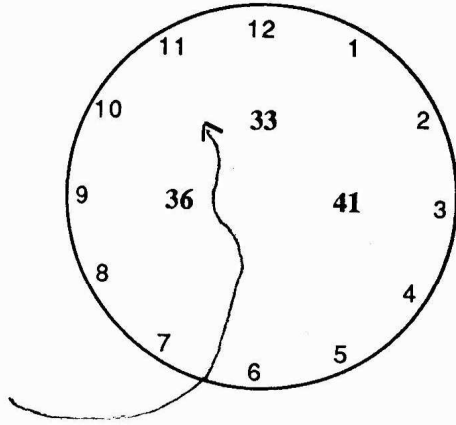


Diagram of attacking Me 109 that was shot down

The 15th Air Force's attack on the German Petroleum industry is well known by veterans of the 484th Bomb Group. When the Operations Order came down from Wing HQ on the evening of 16 December 1944 the intelligence personnel at group immediately began to decode the order. It called for a maximum effort by the 49th Wings four bomb groups namely the 484th BG (Bow tie), 451st BG (red Ball) and the 461st (Red Dash). Two groups from the 47th Wing and four groups from 304th wing were also ordered to bomb Odertal also, approaching the target from different directions. (See attack Map)

Other groups of the 15th AF and the 8th AF were also ordered into battle in a coordinated effort to cut German aviation fuel production by 80%. This would be a tall order even in ideal weather conditions

At the early morning crew briefing the target selected for the 49th Bomb Wing was the refinery at Odertal, Austria. This synthetic refinery employing coke ovens produced 4000 tons of avgas (aviation fuel) per month. A photo recon of 2 December revealed damage to the cracking plant but no new damage to the synthetic installations.

The target lay due east of the town of Odertal on the east side of the main railway line to Berlin. The Oder River lies 1 1/2 miles at the nearest point. The refinery works are surrounded by open country, Blechhammer North and South lie approximately 8 miles SE of Target. Alternate targets were given also. (1) See notes at the end of the report.

The German fighter defenses were awesome in spite of the reduced efficiency of Luftwaffe Units, up to 50 single engine fighters in the Vienna. There is the possibility that 25 to 30 single engine fighters are in the target area and believed to be drawn from training units and may not be first line opposition as likely to be encountered in central Germany and not the same fighting capacity as units which opposed our formations during this past summer.

In addition to the bombing efforts the 15th Fighter Group was ordered to strafe railway traffic and installation from Roseheim to

Wells, Austria.

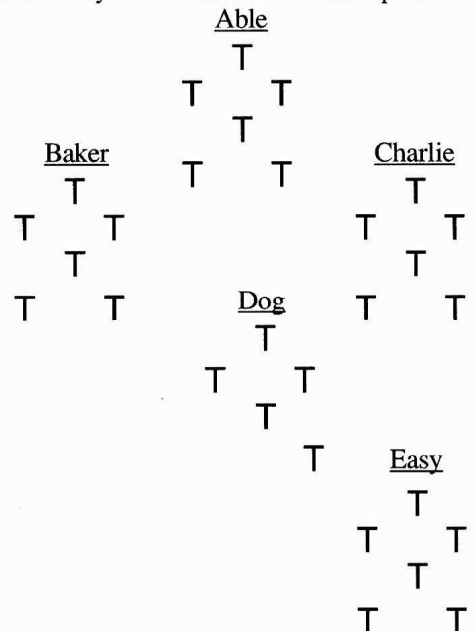
Flak defenses were always considered serious business. 139 guns were expected to be at target area, 151 guns at Gleiwitz to the South-East. therefore the Rally was ordered sharp left off of target. On briefed route North of turning point 2 reported intense flak installations East of Bratislava area. 54 guns in range, 44 radar directed, and smoke screens. The groans would swell up in the briefing shacks when the enemy's defenses were announced. Veteran crews knew better, railroad flak was always a menace even on so called "Milk Runs" The stuff could be anywhere, and usually was. Flak was expected also at Letenye, Gyor, Bratislava, Blechhammer, Gleiwitz, Mor Ostrava, and Oswiecim.

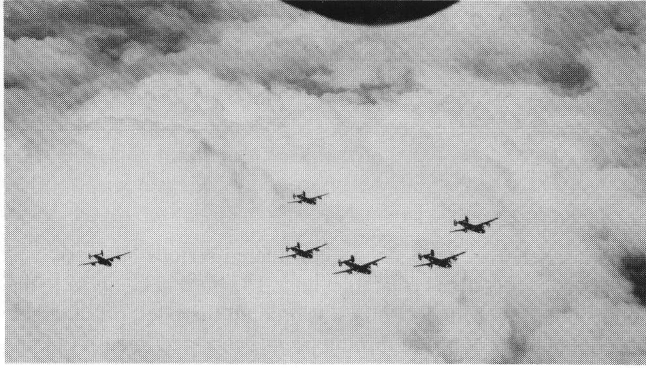
As a way of throwing the crews a bone, to escape capture if shot down they were told that there was partisan activity in central Slovakia near the same hill area previously mentioned. The Romanian Air Staff advised Romanian army command on the Hungarian front who organized a system for picking up allied airman. They were warned of two POW camps to avoid, 1) West section of Kosel 2) City of Blechhammer. They were ordered not to bomb unassigned targets in Yugoslavia and Hungary. Assigned KP time must be maintained to keep proper spacing of formation in the target area, planned timing and rallies designed to split enemy flak defenses.

Signals to the Russians were given as: 1) Dip left wing two or three times, 2) Rock wing 3 to five time and fire a green flare.

### The Actual Attack

The cruising formation of the 484th BG combat boxes is shown below. They correspond with the information shown on the top of the pilot's flimsey shown elsewhere in this report





*A Six plane attack unit,*

The Odertal oil refinery was bombed using the synchronous method (bombardier and radar operator working together as a team) utilizing PFF (pathfinder radar bomb sight). The C-1 autopilot was used on the bomb run. Bombing altitude from group lead box was 24,000 ft with bombing airspeed of 160 MPH. The bombsight data was preset. The bomb run was 240 seconds long. The attack was flown in tight formation hitting the refinery at 1215 hours. The wind off of the target was from 260 degrees at 52 knots. The temperature at bombing altitude was -32 degrees. 210 Bombs were dropped. Bombs were dropped into a 8/10/undercast.

Flak was encountered enroute as briefed at: Letenye, Gyor, Bratislavia, Parndorf, Blechhammer, Gleiwitz Moravska-Ostrava, and Oswiecim. See (2) for other flak observed.

At 1155 hours, position 50-16°N, 17-23°E, at 24,000 feet the formation was attacked just as the outbound escort departed. From 25 to 30 enemy fighters attacked from low and level from three to nine o'clock with 20mm cannon. The enemy pressed the attack aggressively, but appeared to lack battle experience. Identification and Markings Yellow noses, silver and black & OD black aircraft, red, white and yellow stripes around the fuselage.

Because the B-24 was built to defend itself from attacks from the rear and at this time the pursuit curve was known by most gunners, defensive fire from the bombers could be very effective. As a result the destroyed claims of one FW 190, six Me 109s, two Me 109s probables, and one ME 109 damaged are easy to understand. A coordinated attack of 3 to 6 aircraft from 5 to 7 o'clock. Several feints were carried through before the attack pressed home.

The lead bombardier for each box was 1/Lt E M Duke. The bombs were dropped into a 8/10 undercast by PFF. Radar type used APS-15 (H2X). Bombing accuracy was unknown, but believed to be excellent. Bombardier and PFF coordination was very good with

visual pre-run rate synchronization. Each aircraft carried eight 500 RDX pound bombs and dropped on target. Bombing airspeed 160 MPH, Rendezvous made with 8 P-38s at 1126 AM, position 49-01 N, 17-35E. See (3) for Mickey report

Penetration escorts were met at 10:36 (P-38s) at 20,000 feet and returning escort of P-51s were met at 12:28 at 22,000 feet.

Bombs were on target at 1215 on a heading of 70 degrees at an indicated airspeed of 158 MPH. The plane suffered damage in the nose.

At Papa at 1110 AM from 22,000 feet an enemy airfield with 36 single engine fighters was seen. At 1154 AM observed a B-24 from the group behind one B-24 blew up, no chutes were seen. At 1203 PM a B-24 on fire going down in a spin from the Bomb Group behind. On returning to base observed a B-24 aborting to the airfield on the Island of Vis, time 1503. As briefed on return course until Lake Balaton where formation went west of TP #1 to avoid unbriefed flak.

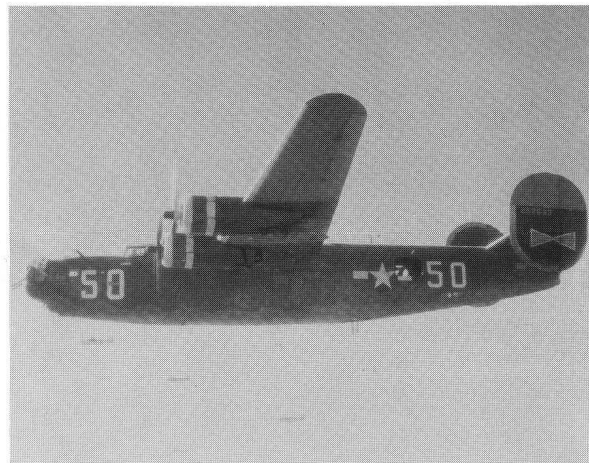
Combat Claim was made at 1210 From 24,000 feet by Anthony L Cartwright 825 squadron the tail gunner on ship #33 shooting down a mottled black and gray Me 109 with red and white stripes around the fuselage about 5 inches wide. The enemy ship came in for an attack of ship #36 from high between six and seven o'clock but appeared to be undecided in pressing the attack, while hesitating to attack he came within 50 yards of the tail of A/C #33 presenting a 3/4 head on view. Cartwright fired 200 rounds into the cockpit and center section. the canopy came off and surrounding fuselage blew off. Smoke billowed out and the A/C went into a straight downward spin and disappeared in the clouds. This was

witnessed by L J Whetstone Upper gunner, R E Self R/H waist gunner, and R F Stewart L/H waist gunner.

At Torretta airfield, of the 30 aircraft that were airborne, one aircraft #86 piloted by Lt Williams returned early due to a gas leak, and two aircraft, # 28 piloted by Lt Himmler, and #38 flown by Lt Martin failed to return. Damage to other aircraft varied from minor to major. Malfunctions were reported by the crew of ship #33: 1) left bomb bay doors would not open, bombs dropped through it, 2) the right top turret gun ran away, manual fire mechanism broken, and 3) the right nose gun solenoid cam was up (gun could not be fired).

The 484th Bomb Group lost one aircraft to fighters, the 451st BG had one B-24 MIA, the 461st had 9 MIA. on the Odertal mission. The 461st BG was attacked by a group of 35/40 very aggressive and very experienced FW-190s in the area just North of Bruno (49-47N-16-56E). The 461st reported that E/A attacked in pairs. The E/A attacking the 461st were slate gray and white.

Escorting P-38s and P-51s made aggressive attacks on the E/A and in all encountered 70/80 E/A. A dog fight from 24,000 feet to the deck ensued and although some of the E/A reacted aggressively to the escort apparently the tactics were to engage the bombers if



*Ship #50 of Able Box*

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possible and not the escort. Some E/A were reported firing rockets. There is a conflict of reports of E/A attacking the 484th BG, one talks of Me 190s another report shows a force of 25 FW-190s. While the attacks of 17 December probably did not reach that goal because of the weather, and other factors, one being that at best the 8th and 15th Airforces could only achieve 35% bombing accuracy on the best of days. This means only 35% of bombs were dropped in the target area.

The determined defense of the German forces indicated the importance the enemy placed on aviation fuel production as well. Often inexperienced pilots, some from training cadres, were thrown into the defense. With the whole 15th AF, and RAF forces in action, the enemy had to thin his fighter forces between most of the Allied forces, resulting in mostly poor defenses. Allied losses were certainly within acceptable parameters with perhaps the exception of the 461st BG which reported 9 aircraft missing in action one of which ditched, as they were attacked by determined and experienced pilots. But conversely the 461st reported claims of 20 E/A destroyed, two probables, and one damaged. It is known that claims on both sides of the line were often exaggerated depending on how many pairs of eyes witnessed the event, conversely photo coverage of Allied bombing raids was much easier to verify.

A mission's success depended on the weather and meteorological accuracy. Luckily for the Allies, weather moves from left to right so that the weather was first observed by the Allied forces. The adverse weather of the 17 December 1944 attacks precluded the use of PFF bombing. At this time in the development of radar bombing, techniques did not correct for drift over the target when flying over an undercast.

It was known before the 17 December attacks that Luftwaffe pilot training was drastically reduced because of the already shortage of aviation fuels. This would explain the use of experienced and inexperienced fighter pilots coordinated attacks. It is ironic that continued bombing of aircraft factories did not prevent the enemy from having sufficient fighter aircraft at its disposal to defend the country, but the reduction of aviation fuel had a huge effect on the training of new pilots reducing the Luftwaffe's efficiency during the last year of the war.

The Allies placed great importance on finding ways to destroy jet fighter aircraft in the air and on the ground as the jet was considered to be the primary weapon the Luftwaffe could employ to make daytime strategic bombing too costly in the loss of aircraft and crews. In some quarters it is said that if Hitler had known of Whittle's (4) Jet engine developments in Britain at the start of the war, he may have hesitated in attacking Poland so quickly. Luckily the Germans did not realize the potential of the Me 262 and was employed too late to have an effect on the end of the war.

The reason the 484th Bomb Group's losses were so light as compared to the 461st, was given by Sgt. Herb Weinstein of A-2 Intelligence. He spoke excellent German and was able to decode enemy fighter radio transmissions. He was on board Col. Keese's B-24. In his own words he describes what happened.

Quote: " December 17th 1944 dawned early for the men of the 484th Bomb Group. The runners came and woke us at 4:30 in the morning. Why so damn early, usually they didn't come until 5:30 AM. something special must be coming up. I got up shaved, dressed and went to the mess hall for breakfast. Everyone was speculating, where do you think we are going today. It must be a long mission, because they woke us so early. Breakfast was finished

quickly and we sauntered over to the briefing room.

The Colonel was already there, in flying cloth, which meant he was going to lead the mission. The briefing board was still covered and the question was on everyone's mind. Where are we going today?

Finally Major Sawyer, the Intelligence officer, opened the briefing and uncovered the map. Odertal oil refinery is the target, it is located in lower Silesia, past Brno in Czechoslovakia. A long way to go. No wonder they woke us this early this morning.

O.K. men, Major Sawyer began his briefing, today you are going to attack and bomb the last major oil refineries in Hitler's Germany at Odertal, Silesia. This is a major effort by the Wing. The 484th will lead the Wing, Colonel Keese will fly the command ship. The 484th will be followed by the 451st and the 461st. There will be a 10 minute interval between Groups.

Then the usual information as to route, bomb load, take off information, assembly points, weather in route, flak positions, and possible fighter interception was presented.

Take off is at 7:30 AM and expect to land after 4:30 PM. This mission will be a long one, we will need every drop of gas to get back safely.

I will fly in the lead plane with Colonel Keese, and my job is listening to the German radio traffic and with the overheard information determine how many German fighters will try to intercept us and where. I plot our flight plan and routing on my maps, today I better be wide awake.

We ride to our plane and get ready to take off. Everyone goes through their preflight checks, I test my special radio equipment. Promptly at 7:30 the take off flare sends us on our way.

We circle the field until all planes are in formation and we set toward our target. Our flight takes us over the Adriatic sea where gunners test fire their machine guns. So far everything is routine,

My radio is silent, no R/T yet. The German command headquarters for fighter command and radar interception of enemy bomber formations for the southern part of Germany, Austria, Italy, and Hungary are controlled in Munich, Vienna, Udine, and Budapest respectively.

As we get into the range of the radar at Udine my radio begins to squawk. I listen but the R/T even though it mentions our group is of no major concern, we are still too far away.

We veer toward Vienna and the R/T is becoming serious, our flight routing is being continually followed and updated as we change course. As we enter the airspace into Czechoslovakia, Vienna is starting to contact fighter squadrons. Schmetterling Anton, Schwalbe Anton, Falke Anton, Adler Anton, Nachtingall Anton and a bunch of others, so many squadrons that add up to more than 200 planes. Hell, I didn't think that the Germans had that many planes left. From the position reports and the flight heading I calculate that they will intercept us in 25 to 30 minutes, 5 miles approximately, before we hit the I.P.

I call the colonel on the intercom and tell him what I heard and my conclusions and suggest that he contact our fighter escort to meet us as soon as possible. I am excited, in prior missions R/T was easily followed, once in a while were fighter vectored into bombing formations. It had not happened to me. This was my first large scale fighter intercept.

A message from the flight deck informed me that our fighter escort had been contacted. I am glued to my radio, listening to changes being radioed to the German fighters. I hear the command



“Pauke Pauke fahren gegen Moebelwagen” (Attack Attack fly toward the furniture vans. (Luftwaffe slang for B-24s)

Some one is yelling over the intercom P 51's at three o'clock. I yell watch at 9 or 10 o'clock German fighter on the way. Sure enough here come the Germans and our fighters are engaging them. Here and there our machine guns are firing, I can hear the rattat even over the noise of our engines. Ten, fifteen minutes all is bedlam and then we are at the I.P. getting ready to drop our bombs. Flak is coming up to meet us, it's heavy and we can see the black puffs all around us, but miraculously we are not hit. The bomb bay doors are open, the target is below us, and then the long awaited “bombs away”. We make a sharp left turn as we leave the target, smoke is billowing upward, I hope we plastered it.

On our return flight I am listening to the enemy R/T. Now is the time when one can hear individual planes calling in. Most of them are lost, or damaged, or low on fuel asking for landing instructions. I mark the indicated locations down carefully. Once back at the base I check these locations on a master map which indicates all the known German airfields. Should I find a location which is not indicated I call wing command and log that field. Wing will dispatch an F 5 to photograph the field and if worthwhile dispatch fighter bombers to attack and destroy whatever enemy planes are on the ground.

Finally we are getting out of range, the R/T is very sporadic and I get a chance to find out what has happened to our group. Two planes are heavily damaged, but they may make it back. The squadrons are a little scattered but we get back and land.

At the debriefing Colonel Keese informed us that we had lost one plane and that he heard that the 461st had lost nine planes and that the 451st had also sustained very high losses. The colonel attributes our low losses to the advance information I had given him and to the fact that our fighter escort was able to engage the German fighters as they began their attack against us.

Then he said we have Sergeant Weinstein here who can give you a blow by blow report. At the time I was only a Corporal and I told the Colonel “Sir may I consider this to be a promotion, since I am only a Corporal” Everybody laughed, but it must have hit the right note because on the next promotion list I became a Sergeant.

Anyway I loved the limelight and reported on the things that had happened, describing how I was able to know in advance how many enemy fighters would attack us and where and at what time. Everyone felt that I had done a good job and earned my wings. The Colonel recommended me for the DFC which was later presented to me”. End of quote.

*Editors Notes :On pages 13,14 of Torretta Flyer No 25 Winter-Spring 1994 a summary of Mission 132 is described. This report should be corrected to reflect that only 27 aircraft dropped on target and two B-24s were shot down by enemy aircraft. See also TF-28 pages 20-21 regarding Charles Himmler's crew*

*The aircraft are described on pages 16 & 17 of Torretta Flyer No 24 Summer Fall 1993 as Follows:*

*42-50934 824 Squadron, Ship No 28 “Little Joe “ (Baker #12) Piloted by Lt Charles A Himmler, shot down near Wenzeldorf, and 42-51835 825 Squadron Ship No 38 (Easy 22), piloted by Lt Roger A Martin, shot down near Liebau before reaching the target.*

*Both aircraft were carrying cameras and a cameramen indicating both aircraft were carrying crews of 11 each. All were listed as MIA after the mission.*



*Ship #81 of Dog Flight*

*This mission was protected by fighter escort consisting of 2 Forces of 36 P-38s escorting to penetration and 52 P-51s to provide escort on withdrawal This was from the 332nd fighter group, the Tuskegee Airmen. The fighter attacks took place during the bomb run when escort fighters returned to base.*

## Notes

(1)

**Alternate targets:** Oswiecim Oil Refinery, Poland (50-02N,19-17 E); TC16-3-Na; elevation 755 feet, Axis of attack 93 degrees, rally left; 97 guns; 2) Moravska 2) Ostrava Oil Refinery, Czechoslovakia (49-51, 18-16E) TC15-15-Na; axis of attack 49 degrees, rally left; 97 guns; Elevation 711 feet. Both refineries active at last reports.

(2)

**Observations:** Flak was observed by A/C #33 (Charlie #21) at Kaprnick (Yugoslavia) L I H (intensity light, accurate, and heavy) at 1152 at 21,000 feet, and Gyor (Czech) and at 1117 AM M I H. Flak was also observed by other A/C at Negakanizsa 20,500 feet at 1037 (S I H), and also Vesprem time 1100 at 21,000(S I M)

(3)

Pathfinder aircraft were used from positions;  
A-11, Mickey operator 1/Lt J E Barth.  
Bombardier 1/Lt E M Duke  
A-12 Mickey operator 1/Lt McCauley



AIR FORCE FORMATION 17 DEC 1944

ORDER OF FLIGHT: 5<sup>TH</sup> - 49<sup>TH</sup> - 55<sup>TH</sup> - 304<sup>TH</sup>

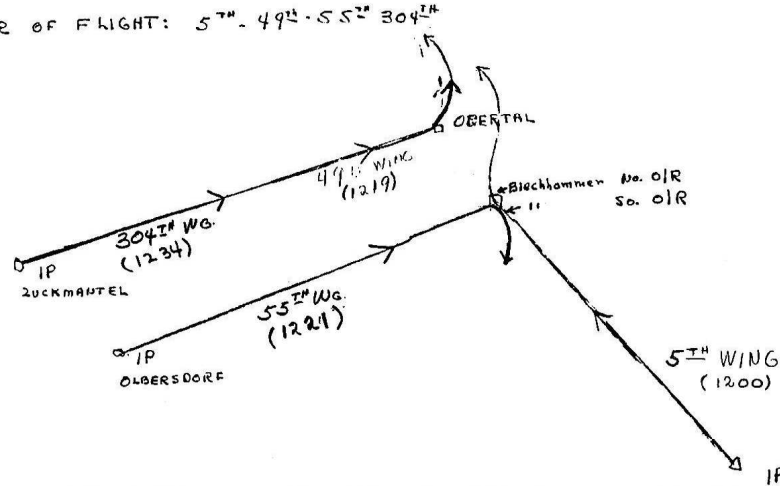


Diagram of Bomb Wings attacking Odertal and Blechhammer. The 5th wing (B-17s) were to swing by Odertal after bombing Blechhammer to draw off fighters and flak. The 55th was to swing right after bombing Blechhammer to divide the defences.

Bombardier 1/Lt Dierksmeier

D-11 Mickey operator 1/Lt W A McWhirk

Bombardier 2/Lt M P Goodman

A-11 Mickey used for navigation and bombing, set operated well during entire mission.

A-12 Mickey used for navigation and bombing, set function OK.

D-11 Set used for navigation only set worked fair, followed through on bomb run, and it appeared to be excellent.

(4)

Sir Frank Whittle an RAF officer began his efforts to build a jet engine in England in 1929.

**Other 15AF Activity December 16 to 17 1944:**

- 5th Wing 6 Groups Blechhammer North Refinery
- 55th Wing 4 Groups Blechhammer South Refinery
- 304th Wing 4 Groups Odertal Oil Refinery
- 47th Wing 2 Groups Salzburg Marshaling Yard
- 47th Wing 2 Groups Wells Marshaling Yard

**Excerpts From Intops Summary #514  
16 to 17 December 1944**

Strategic Air Force dispatched a total of 1150 aircraft during the period including 194 B-17s, 464 B-24s, 201 P-38s, 227 P-51s 38. RAF operated 38 Wellingtons, 12 Liberators by day, and 3 B-17s and 11 B-24s by night.

The main effort was directed against oil plants in Eastern Germany, while bombing and strafing attacks were made on RR communications in Southern Germany. Harassing attacks were also made on retreating enemy troops in Yugoslavia. Approximately

120/150 enemy aircraft the first major reaction to the 15th Air Force penetrations into Germany since August 1944.

A total of 56 missions, 1085 sorties, dropped 1374 tons of bombs, destroyed 48 enemy aircraft (E/A), 5 E/A probables, and damaged 7 E/A. The 15th lost 24 aircraft.

Night Operations 30 supply canisters were dropped in Northern Italy by 1 B-17 and 1 B-24 from the 885th Bomb Squadron. Leaflets were also dropped.

Day Operations On 17 December units of the 5th Wing bombed Blechhammer North from 26,000 to 29,000 feet, Moravska Strova Oil refinery, targets of opportunity, and dropped 848,000 leaflets. 463rd BG could not participate because of unserviceable runways and stood down. Bombing was by the synchronous PFF method. Flak at Blechhammer was M I H and S I H at Moravska Ostrova.

Two Me 109s were seen attacking a B-24 east of Brno. One Me 109 attacked a straggling B-17 after the target making four aggressive passes before disappearing in the clouds. The 2 and 301 BGs each lost one B-17.

Blechhammer South Oil Refinery 105 B-24s were dispatched from the 55 Bomb Wing dropping by the PFF synchronous method. Flak was M I H at the target, at Gyor and Nagykaniza, 4 B-24 were reported MIA. One enemy jet fighter was seen near the target area.

Gross Stiehlitz This target of opportunity Marshaling yard was attacked by 6 B-24s.

Two Me 262s passed one formation in the Pilsen area, two unidentified single engined fighters (SEF) closed in on the rear on another formation in Stuttgart area but were not encountered. Three Me 262s in line abreast made a head on pass on a formation North-east of Innsbruck, the center Me 262 firing, but no results were observed. Three enemy aircraft E/A believed to be Me 262s were observed

Air Sea Rescue Three B-17s of the 483rd BG (5th Wing) completed a special search.

The following information was taken from the master data base and is not an accurate roster of personnel flying the Odertal Mission. At the time of this writing January 30, 1996 the actual roster is unavailable.

Charlie Flight

Chafin Crew

Herbert W	Abbott	825	U/G
George D	Barnwell	825	T/G
James T	Chafin Jr	825	P
Ivan K	Edgett	825	R/O
Elwin S	Elswood	825	N
Bob C	Emmons	825	B
D G	Fore	825	R/O
Harold J	Harve	825	C/P
Stanley L	Krzyzanowski	825	N/G
Jack D	Leeth	825	E
Earl K	Shelley	825	B/G

McCoy Crew

Capt William E.	McCoy	825	P
S/Sgt J C	Coats	825	N/G

Elliot Crew

Sgt H F	Cooper	825	F
Cpl Pasquale J	Libretti	825	G

Steinberg/Shelton Crew

S/Sgt Anthony L	Cartwright	825	G
S/Sgt Lynn P	Crytzer	825	G
Sgt R B	Everhart	825	F
2/Lt Richard F	Hugo	825	B
S/Sgt Homer H	Knapp	825	G
2/Lt J D	Cummins	825	N
T/Sgt Robert E	Self	825	E
1/lt Howard	Steinberg	825	P
T/Sgt Robert P	Stewart	825	R/O
2/Lt Robert J	Swanson	825	C/P
S/Sgt Leonard J	Whetstone	825	G

Dionne Crew

2/Lt Henry E	Dionne	825	P
2/Lt Robert E	Fritts	825	CP
2/Lt Garland A	Hall	825	N
S/Sg Ervan J	Hestad	825	G
Sgt David	Leap	825	G
S/sgt Mel	Marchese	825	G
2/Lt Robert C	Mills	825	BN
Sgt Roy A	Nichols	825	E
Sgt Gerald J	Roach	825	U/G
S/Sgt Vernon A	Oldfield	825	R/O
Roy A	Nichols	825	E

Ikred Crews

2/Lt C E	Ikred	825	P
D	Roor	825	UG
Philip M	Spreuer	825	C/P
Herbert R	Stokes	825	N
William E	Turner	825	B

Able Flight

Keese Crew

Raymond L	Kennedy	766	N
1/Lt Edwin T	Danowski	826	N
1/Lt Edward M	Duke	826	B
S/Sg Silas F.	Anderson	827	F
1/Lt John E.	Barth	826	R/N
Tom	Hensley	484	
Cpl Elton	Hodges	484	
Col William B	Keese	484	P
Sgt David A.	Nelson	484	
Pfc James R	Philpott	484	
Sgt George B	Reed	484	T/G

Dowd Crew

Roy C	Latimer	826	P, C/P
Carl R	Adams	826	N
Joseph	Fretto	826	R/O
Joseph L	Orth		G
Mathhew	Sucich	826	G
Alwyn E	Cornett	826	B/G
George C	Riedell	826	B
Ernest R	Stedman	826	T/G
Floyd D	Kirby	826	T/G
Joseph N	Shobe Jr	826	C/P
Willie R	Ashurst Jr	826	E

Cox Crew

1/Lt William H	Cox	826	P/
Richard F	Mulcahy Jr	826	N
S/Sg W B (R)	Walters	826	

Foss Crew

1/Lt Ray A	Foss	826	P
S/Sgt Thomas J	Price Jr	826	T/G
S/Sgt James W	Taylor	826	F
Sgt Michael	Scorca	826	G
1/Lt Charles W	Lindsey	826	B
2/Lt Walter	Fair	826	N
T/Sgt Johnnie E	Bodine	826	E
S/Sgt Gaylord	Carter	826	G
T/Sgt Leonard	Marshall	826	R/O
S/Sgt Donald O	Maves	826	G
S/Sgt Kenneth R	Monsell	826	N/G
F/O Allan F	Patterson	826	C/P

Forster Crew

2/Lt LLOYD C	Hanson	826	B
S/Sg Harry F	Humrighouse	826	U/G
S/Sgt George C	Pringle Jr	826	
1/Lt Stanley L	Forster	826	P
2/Lt Robert	Bodoh	826	N
S/Sgt Edward C	Domenico	826	E
Sgt Roy C	Humrighouse	826	B/G
2/Lt Edward J	Lechtanski	826	C/P
S/Sgt Harry L	Marshall	826	N/G
S/SgEdward R	Wiggins	826	T/G

Gregg Crew

Sgt Neals S	Cravens	826	G
Sgt Joseph B	Decker	826	G
S/Sg William C	Edwards	826	G
1/Lt James R	Gregg	826	P
T/Sg Guy R	Harris	826	E
Sgt Vernon D	Johnson	826	G
F/O Oscar R	Ness	826	B
2/Lt Crawford S	Perry	826	N
2/Lt William F	Searight	826	C/P

Olsen Crew

Cap Theodore M "Ted"	Ewing Jr	824	B
Cpl Raymond G	Bush	824	
Sgt Richard D	Feich	824	N G
<del>Sgt James F</del>		<del>824</del>	<del>G</del>
2/Lt Charles B	Harrison	824	N
S/Sg Matthew J.	Idzik	824	B/G
S/Sgt Joseph	Jurich	824	E
Sgt George E	Koch	824	T/G
T/Sg Emanuel S	Monte	824	U/G
T/Sg Joseph	O'Connell	824	R/O
1/Lt Stanley V	Olson	824	P

Himmler Crew

Sgt Frank	Carr	824	G**
S/Sg Alton E	Douglass (KIA)?	824	G
S/Sgt J. R.	Dunn	824	
S/Sg Vezio	Egizi (KIA)?	824	T/G
S/Sg Doyle L	Kargel (WIA)	824	R/O
Sgt Walter F	Kendall (WIA)	824	E
2/Lt Howard C	Long (MIA)	824	N
Sgt David	Uber (KIA)?	824	F
2/Lt Morris A	Daly (KIA)	824	B
2/Lt John	Ehnot (MIA)	824	C/P
2/Lt Charles A	Himmler (KIA)	824	P
S/Sg George R	Lee	824	U/G
S/Sg John G	Riley	824	N/G
Cpl Alex C	Pietka	824	

Frazier Crew

No information

Zimmerman Crew

1/Lt Dominick J.	Blanda	824	B
Sgt James F	Carney	824	B/G
Sgt Rix	Delambert	824	T/G
T/Sg Marshall	Kahn	824	
Sgt Donald E.	Kenny	824	
2/Lt Walter	Klus	824	
Cpl Arthur G.	Ovellette	824	
Charles R	Waters	824	C/P
1/Lt Donald G	Zimmerman	824	P

Gaskill Crew

Arnold M	Bree	824	B
Raymond	Bush	824	N/G
William F	Gaskill	824	P
William	Hiller Jr	824	E
Telsa I	Johnson	824	N
Donald L	Olson	824	G
Marshall D	Preston	824	G
Harold A	Saxe	824	R/O
Eugene C	Stamm	824	P

Hitzing crew

S/Sg Elmer D	Adams	824	N/G
S/Sg James K	Baker	824	E
S/Sg Hilton C	Bowen Jr	824	T/G
2/Lt William A	Crawford Jr	824	N
1/Lt Albert C	Hitzing	824	P
2/Lt Edward J	Kabasa	824	C/P
T/Sg Archie E	Olson	824	R/O
T/Sg Albin A	Rogers	824	E
S/Sg Cecil E	Wilkinson	824	B/G
2/Lt Stanley G	Zawaskas	824	B

Second Attack UnitLyle Crew

S/SgtOscar L	Johnston	827	G
1/Lt Edgar T	Keffer	827	P
1/Lt Richard E	Kinman	827	N
Cpl Edgar E	Livingston	827	E
Maj James P	Lyle	827	P
Pvt Louis J	Rutana	827	E

Williams Crew

George P	Agnost	827	N/G
James O	Clemons	827	E
Vernon R	Hood	827	N
Burton H	Thomson	827	U/G
George K	White	827	B/G
Edwin F	Wilcox	827	R/O
Carl	Williams	827	P
2/Lt Woodrow	Wilson	827	C/P
S/Sg Joseph H	Wythe	827	T/G

Bolton Crew

2/Lt. Russell K	Bolton Jr	827	P
S/sg Arthur D	Burnett	827	B/G
1/Lt William C	Cavin	827	B
S/Sg James	Cotter	827	N/G
George	Hughes	827	R/O
T/Sg Jack B	Hughes	827	R/O
T/Sg Richard	James	827	E
S/Sg Monty R	Jenkins	827	T/G
1/Lt Joseph D	Krakower	827	N
2/Lt Raymond L	Moore	827	C/P
S/sg Peter J	Potenza	827	U/G

Black Crew

Wayne E	Bell	827	B
Thomas J	Black	827	P
S/Sg Robert H	Butler	827	F
S/Sgt Robert E	Collier Jr	827	N/G
S/Sgt Herbert W	Pinkley	827	B/G
Charles G	Shaffer	827	N
Matt S	Shematek	827	U/G
James F	Walsh Jr	827	C/P
John	Weiland	827	R/O
T/Sgt James M	Wilhelm	827	E

McLaughlin crew

Cpl Matthew T	Bashore	827	T/G
S/Sg Irvin C	Blake	827	U/G
Cpl Darwin M	Dennis	827	N/G
F/O Joseph	Gervais	827	C/P
Cpl John J	Horsley	827	B/G
Sgt Charles	Lowell	827	E
2/Lt Edmund J	McLaughlin	827	P
F/O John A	Vinther	827	N
Cpl Kenneth R	Wegner	827	R/O
Joseph	Jervais	827	C/P

Frobom Crew

S/Sg Julius A	Adams	827	U/G
S/Sg Joseph L	Alessi	827	T/G
S/Sg Maurice G	Becker	827	N/G
T/Sg Frank J	Daniello	827	E
2/Lt. Leo	Frobom	827	P
1/Lt Thomas F	Gartland	827	C/P
1/Lt Sherwin E	Levine	827	N
T/Sg Lester V	Skelton	827	R/O
S/Sg Jack C (G)	Whitaker	827	B/G
1/Lt Michael P	Goodman	827	B

*Ship 72 easy 11*Easy FlightRounds Crew

S/Sg Kenneth E	Crockett	827	N/G
S/Sg James E	Ellis II	827	T/G
2/Lt Howard U	Heller	827	B
S/sg Paul F	Megonigal	827	U/G
2/Lt. James R	Mercer Jr	827	N
T/Sg William E	Novak	827	E
T/Sg John E	Parker	827	R/O
2/Lt. Milton J	Ring	827	C/P
1/Lt Kenneth G	Rounds	827	P

Weimer Crew

No Information

Kime Crew

George	Bouras	824	N
Richard E.	Brown	824	C/P
George E	Davis	824	E
Robert L	Hughes	824	R/O
Robert W	Kime	824	P
Adolf	Marcus	824	N/G
David A	Nickerson	824	B
John B	O'Neill	824	T/G
Charles E	Ranck	824	B/G
Arnold	Reiff	824	U/G

Svela Crew

Harry A	Gamauf	824	B
Abraham A	Abramoff	824	B/N
Thomas D	D'Ambrose	824	R/O
Warde H	Bernhardt	824	E
Arlis L	Foster	824	R/O
Norman K	Hartman	824	N/G
Howard	Hoffman	824	T/G
Douglas	Morse	824	B/G
Dexter C	Shultz	824	C/P
Earl	Svela	824	P
Frank R	Mendes	824	U/G

Martin Crew

No Information

Taylor Crew

Cpl Rocco	Boscaglia	826	R/O
Sgt Frank a	Bosich	826	E
Cpl Robert C	Fincham	826	G
Cpl Robert D	Myers	826	G
2/Lt Julian V	Ronder	826	B
Cpl Charles G	Sullivan	826	G
Cap Abbott L	Taylor	826	P
Alexander	Ulreich Jr	826	C/P
Cpl Millard G	Weaver	826	E



## S E C R E T

<u>Charlie Flight</u>			<u>First Attack Unit</u>			<u>Baker Flight</u>		
11 Chafin	40 K		11 Keese	(201) 853 X		11 Olsen	17 H	
12 McCoy	39 J		12 Dowd	(700) 993 Y		12 Himmler f	28 S	
13 Elliot F	45 P		13 Cox	1 B		13 Frazier	21 L	
21 Steinberg f	33 D		21 Foss	55 F		21 Zimmerman	24 O	
22 Diuonne	41 L		22 Forster f	50 A		22 Gaskill f	12 C	
23 Ikred	36 G		23 Gregg	52 C		23 Hitzling	19 J	

<u>Dog Flight</u>			<u>Second Attack Unit</u>			<u>Easy Flight</u>		
11 Lyle (702)	016 X		11 Rounds	72 C		Briefing	0530	
12 Williams	86 Q		12 Weimer	88S		Test Fire Guns	0945	
13 Bolton f	76 G		13 Kime	14 F		f= Camera on board		
21 Black f	71 B		21 Svela	87 R				
22 MxLaughlin	85 P		22 Maritn f	38 I				
23 Frobom	81 L		23 Taylor	63 N				

Start Engines 1st Unit 0710A: 2nd Unit 0720A

Taxi out 1st Unit 0725A: 2nd Unit 0735A

Take off 1st Unit 0745A: 2nd Unit 0750A

TARGET: ODERTAL OIL RFY (50-26,18-0)

FIRST ALTERNATE: Oswiecim Oil Rfy (50-02,19-16)

SECOND ALTERNATE: Morovska Ostrava Oil Rfy (49-51,18-16)

RENDEZVOUS: No 1 BG and No 2 BG will line rendezvous behind No 3 BG when No 3 BG flies over Bovino on a TC 332 degrees at 0915A. Rendezvous altitudes 12,000, 13,000 and 14,000 ft.

ORDER OF FLIGHT: No 3 BG Lead, No 1BG, and No 2 BG

ROUTE OUT: Base to to KP\* to TP #1, to TP # 2to TP #3 to IP to Target.

\*KP: Split (43-30,16-28) Base Altitude 18,000 at 1004A.

INITIAL POINT: Zuckmantel (50-15,17-23).

AXIS OF ATTACK: 71 Degrees INTERVALOMETER SETTING: 50 ft (Vis) 100ft.(PPF)

TARGET TIME: 1219 A. TARGET ELEVATION 607 ft.

BOMBING ALTITUDE: No 3 BG 24,000', No 1 BG 25,000', No 2 BG 26,000'

RALLY: Sharp Left off target.

ROUTE BACK: Target to TP #4, TP #5, TP #6, TP #2, TP #1, To KP, to Base.

BOBMB LOAD: 500 lb RDX fused .1 nose and mixed .01.025 mixed tail.

NOTE: Groups will be at bombing altitude and will go into left eschelon 5 minutes before the IP.

NOTE: All aircraft (A/C) load two separate cartons of Window.Dispensing will start three (3) minutes before the IP and continues at at the rate of three (3) bundles every 20 seconds until clear of flak.

COMMUNICATIONS: Tower 5210 or Channel "B" Interplane: Channel "B:" VHS Channel "A" for Fighters: VHS Channel "C" for Intergroup .

RADIO RANGE: Lake Lesina: Callsign "LA", Frequency 263 KC.

BOMBER CALLSIGNS: No #3 BG "Shockproof 1; No #1 BG Shockproof 2", No #2 BG "Shockproof 3"

FIGHTER CALLSIGNS: "Pixie with numbered suffixes. WX RECON: Route Out, "Reckless 1", Route Back "Reckless 2".

SQUADRON CALLSIGNS: No 1 Sq. "Wellfed", No 2 Sq. "Thankless" No 3 Sq. "Raceclub", No 4 Sq. "Steadful".

RECALL IDENTIFICATION CODEWORD: "Moonglow".

EMERGENCY FIELDS:

Falconara (43-37N, 13-22E) Tower 6440, Callsign: Mailsack.

Tesi 15 miles due west of Ancona: Tower 6440, Callsign "Singsong" Riferno (41-48N, 15-02-55E) Tower 6440, Callsign "Watchbox"

VISUAL SIGNALS: Aldus lamp red "W",

Order of flight 484th,451st,and 461st

Col Keese Lead, Dowd Deputy Lead

*The Pilots Flimsey (Originally on onion skin paper was later replaced with mimeo paper ) was the complete battle plan for the mission. Reproduced from the original.*

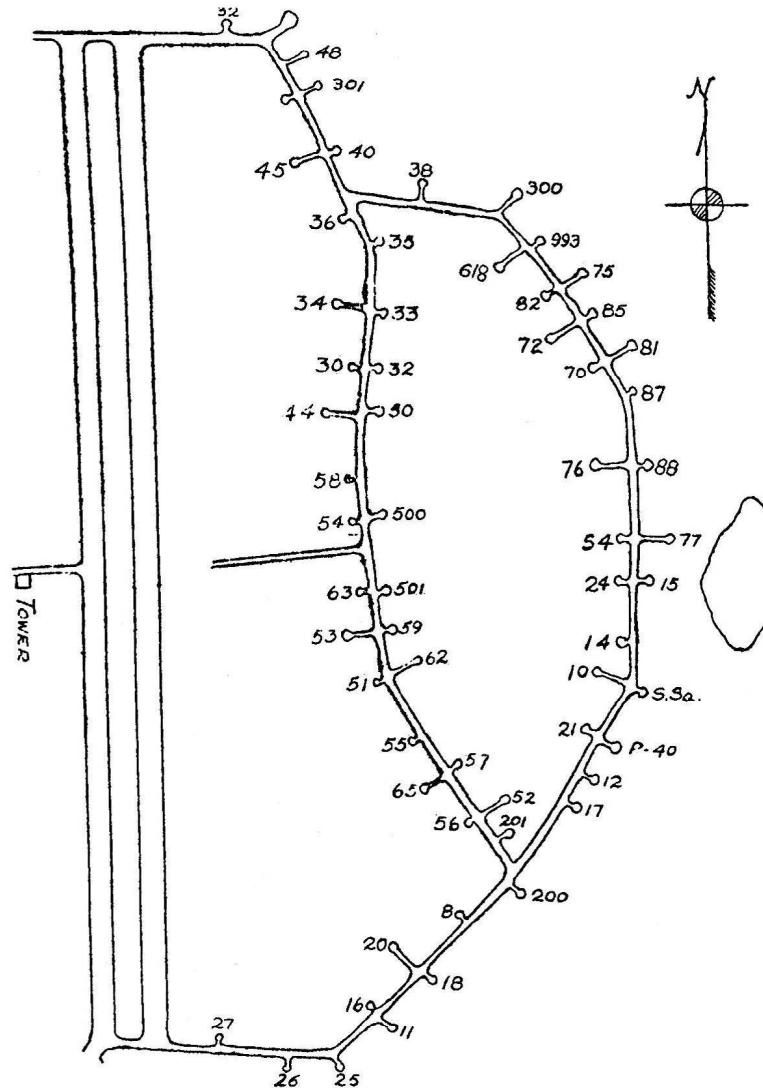
## The Parking Map

The Parking Map. ( back of each Pilots flimsey) the hardstand assignments were listed by the aircraft nose number. After briefing the crews were trucked to their assigned aircraft. The map below shows the parking assignments of the group's airplanes arranged by nose number. Aircraft with a two digit number carried standard electronics. Late model standard aircraft often were equipped with gun laying radar jamming electronics. They could be identified by the small plexiglass covers over the antennas near

the nose wheel. Three digit aircraft carried radar bombing electronics with a retractable radar scanner in place of the ball turret.

The hardstands were made of crushed gravel and sometimes paved with pierced steel landing mats. This was necessary because of the muddy soil.

After briefing the crews were trucked to the hardstands. In winter the roads developed deep ruts from the volume of truck traffic.



### SOP FOR FLARES

RED RED Will be fired by wing leader on rendezvous on abandoning primary.

YELLOW YELLOW Will be fired by wing leader on leveling off.

GREEN YELLOW Will be fired by wing leader on starting decent.

RED YELLOW WITH YELLOW TRACER Will be fired by group leader to signify that lead Bombardier has changed aimig point and Bombardier will drop on Group leader.

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## Letters To the Editor

Freistadt, Austria

Dear Mr. Markel

Many thanks for your letter and for the Torretta Flyer.

In 1944 I was nine years old but my recollection concerning American Bombers and the condensation trails are quite clear. Today I send you memories of the air raid on Upper Austria on July 25, 1944 and I hope it will be interesting for you and possibly the readers of the Torretta Flyer.

On this hot summer day heavy bombs dropped on the vicinity of Pregarten, a village 14 miles Northeast of Linz, but with no industrial plants and military bases.

In 1991 I located the crash sites of eight American bombers shot down by German Fighters on July 25, 1944 in the district of Freistadt and Pregarten. I searched for eyewitnesses. I am primarily interested to know all about the fate of the crew members.

I have a request would you be kind to send me all the numbers of the Torretta Flyer?

Enc. four photos

Sincerely yours,

**Karl Affenzeller**

### *My Keepsake from the Air Raids* by Karl Affenzeller

On the 25th of July 1944 the air raids hit my native soil, too. On this hot summer's day, at 11 a. m., heavy fighting broke out between German fighter planes and American bombers which approached Linz. Then 300 bombs dropped all over the area called "Unteres Muhlviertel" These bombs had been intended for the armaments industry of Linz, the Hermann Goering tank plant. Unfortunately several people were killed. There was considerable material damage to plants, goods, and machinery also in the agricultural land of the communities neighboring Freistadt.

At that time I was only nine years old. Nevertheless, I still remember that day quite well, because then my mother took my brother and me, for the very first time to the spacious air raid shelter

*Editors Note: Karl Affenzeller and I have been exchanging letters since last May. The story following this letter gives us a look at what was happening on the ground during the daylight bombing campaign when the 484th Bomb Group was operational. This is a story about one misson.*



*Our air raid shelter 1938, after the German occupation, my mother and myself*



*Fragment of a 1000 Lb Bomb, found by a farmer in August 1944. Now a statue beside a creek*

situated next to our house. Inside it we felt secure, although we heard the thunderous crash of the bombs falling even there. My father had purchased this tunnel from the local brewery in Freistadt before the war; it was ten meters high and led about fifty meters into a rock of granite. Before it had been a cellar used for storing beer. Since 1943 this cellar had to be opened as a shelter for the inhabitants of our village, when there was an air raid.

By that time, at the beginning of August, both the German and the American pilots and the civilians killed during the air raid had been buried. Only their mourning relatives, destroyed houses and the devastated landscape covered with bomb craters remained. The crops had to be harvested; our peasants and their workers were thus not able to repair the damage caused by the bombs beside their work in the fields.

In this year of the war there was a lack of labor everywhere, and so the inhabitants of the communities not hit by the bombing were forced to help without being paid during the clear-up operation in Hagenberg and Veichter on Saturdays and Sundays.

My grandfather was in charge of the air-raid shelter in our village called "Graben". It was his task to take care that no light

was to be seen through the windows and that there was enough water and sand in each house to fight fire that could be caused by incendiary bombs. Grandfather really didn't enjoy being such an inspector. He was no member of the NSDAP (Hitler's political party) either. He had been forced by the authorities to do that. Thus he received another order from the authority called "Kreisleiter." In August 1944: he had to name a person from each family of our village that had to join the labor service in the area hit by bombs.

At 11 a. m. on the 12th of August we were standing at the station in Freistadt and were waiting for the train to Linz. Our group consisted of approximately thirty young women, girls and a few men, most of them over sixty years old, including my mother, my aunt and my grandfather, too. I was allowed to join them as a courier, who was supposed to bring them snacks.

Each of them brought along a shovel or pickax. Going by train was free of charge. There was still some time left until the arrival of the train, and so I had a look at the posters to be seen everywhere at the platform. They advertised slogans like "Wheels must turn for the victory!" or "Watch out, the enemy is listening!". Finally our train arrived and we went to Selker, a station situated

between Kefermarkt and Pregarten. Then we walked towards Pregarten along the creek called Feldaist. My grandfather and I headed the line. After half an hour he said: "Well, now it won't last long till we reach our place of work. At the Wintermuhle ( Winter 's Mill ) we saw the first bomb craters and after climbing up a little hill we saw the devastated landscape lying in front of us. There one bomb crater was next to the other, in between them the remains of fruit trees. In most cases the trunk was left over, whereas branches and leaves had been torn off by the pressure caused when bombs had exploded.

My grandfather started immediately sending workers to single bomb craters, and after a drink from the bottles brought along, the people started leveling the craters. Doing that was no easy task on such a hot day, because the pressure caused by the explosion had scattered quite a lot of earth which had become hard during the recent weeks when the weather had been fine and dry. Thus it was a strain to move the material. Besides, there were no excavators or other machinery.

My grandfather and ten helpers were working at a crater down by the creek. It was the biggest of all and half filled with water. This hole was as big as a small house, and grandfather could not tell for sure, whether they would succeed in refilling the crater which was approximately five meters deep and twenty meters in diameter, until the evening. I climbed up the hill and went to the farmhouse there. A bomb had hit the back of this estate so that its roof and all its windows had been destroyed. Fortunately nobody had been injured or killed. The farmer's wife, Mrs. Katzenschlager excitedly told me of the misfortune. Nobody had expected any bombs to be dropped here. They had never been afraid of any hostile planes either when flying over their estate, but now they were scared of the Americans.



*Gatekeeper's house beside the rail line leading from Linz to Prague. Destroyed on 25 July 1944.*



*The march to level the bomb craters August 1944*



I sat down on a big rock its parts lying slightly apart. The pressure caused by a bomb had thrown it there. I had tea and bread and butter which I had taken along. At afternoon the heat was a strain for the workers. Several young girls not used to such work complained of a backache. I went to my mother, brought her a drink and showed her bomb fragments I had collected and which I wanted to take home as souvenirs. These fragments were remains of the iron covering of the bombs which had been two to three centimeters thick and which had been blown to numerous small pieces by the explosion. These fragments which were the size of nuts, sometimes even of matchboxes or palms were scattered everywhere, mostly covered only by a thin layer of earth. They had jagged edges as sharp as a knife.

I became bored, so I climbed up the hill once more. From there I could see the remains of the gatekeeper's hut down in the valley. A bomb had been dropped direct beside the house, which had fallen to pieces and buried the baby of the Rammels, the gatekeeper's family. When the rescue team had arrived, the baby was already dead.

It might have been nearly eight o'clock p. m. when my grandfather declared the work as finished. Quickly I ran to the workers scattered all over the place and told them this news. After having washed in the creek we were exhausted and walked back to the railway station called Selker. All of us felt relieved, for a strenuous day was over. Moreover, I was looking forward to going home by train.

At home I presented the metal fragments I had collected to my mother. I still keep these fragments long after the war had been ended as a keepsake from my trip to the bomb craters in the summer 1944.

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Beaufort, NC  
Dear Bud & Bea

Sorry to be so late with our dues, we've been busy with the 50th anniversary of WWII commemorative program that took us to a number of states where we displayed our WWII collection at each stop. We appeared before 50,000 adults and students at schools, even though the program ended November 11, 1995, we still are busy visiting schools where we give talks on WWII. The governor of North Carolina signed a proclamation declaring November 4 to 11 as WW II veterans week at our urging.

The students seem to enjoy my photo album and helmet and goggles. I bring a class A uniform that still fits (not me however). I usually ask a girl to try the uniform on, they comply with great enthusiasm but have difficulty with the fly buttons as zippers were not standard issue. The United States Secretary of defense gave Blanche and I a Certificate of Appreciation for all of the work.

One of our most enjoyable accomplishments was finding living Gold Star and Blue Star Mothers, there are still a few around we found to our surprise.

**Blanch & Walt Bondarchuk 825 Sq.**

San Antonio, TX  
Dear Bud:

Re Torretta Flyer No. 28, Page 20: The reference to Alex C. Pietka, (lower right-hand column), a member of the Himmler crew, caught my attention. Later on Alex became a tail-gunner on the R.A. Dean crew. I was a member of Dean's first crew. On Nov. 20th, 1944 while returning from a mission to the Blechammer, Germany oil refineries, we were forced to bail-out, due to mechanical difficulties, over Bosnia, Yugoslavia.

After we were rescued on January 5th, 1945 and returned to Italy, we received orders to return to the United States. Bob Dean opted to stay on in Italy. It was at that time Pietka became a member of Dean's second crew.

I look forward to seeing you at the next reunion. Also I have enclosed a photo of the first Dean crew. On a note of interest, the late Eldon Fetter turned 20 years old on the day we bailed out (November 20th)!

Sincerely yours,  
**Bernard R. Button 824 Sq.**



*Photo of Robert A Dean Crew: Standing from left; Harry Hoogeveen B/G, Eldon Fetter E, Ernest Peterson T/G, Emil Horak R/O, Frank Kidd U/G, and Edward Atkinson N/G. Kneeling from left; Clarence Byers B, Robert Dean P, Jimmy Ingram C/P and Bernard Button N.*

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North Palm Beach, Fla.  
Dear Bud:

Enclosed is a check for Dad's membership dues. As before, please put the membership in Dad's name:

Dad and I enjoyed meeting you and the many other Association members in Dayton this past September. The dedication of the plaque and tree was beautiful. As always, we look forward to each issue of "The Torretta Flyer." You really do a great job.

Yours Truly,  
**Rodney E. Dillon 824th Sq.**

Harper Woods, Michigan  
Dear Bud:

In looking through my photo album I found a few pictures that might be of interest to you. I'm sorry I don't remember the names of any of the persons shown.

Sincerely,

**Justine Hadden AJM-002**  
(Associate Member)

Editors Note: *Justine was one of the Red Cross girls who brought donuts packed in an ammo box out to the field in a Jeep*



*Photo 1 Ellie's Bow Tie Cafe*



*Photo 2 Unknown Crew*

Seminole, OK  
Dear Bud & Bea:

After reading Allan Davidson's letter in Torretta Flyer No #28 (top page 22) concerning the two B-24s that collided on 17 February, 45 mission to Trieste (501 & 502)\* I was flying that day, nose gunner on Kooker's crew. I did not see any parachutes exit from either aircraft.\* Mickey ships, carried H2X radar.

**Hershell Hendrix 825 Sq.**

Marlborough, MA  
Dear Bud

Having some body work done in the hospital, I was unable to attend the 484th cruise in 1994. I was, however, one of the unfortunate few to go on the first one in the early spring of 1944.

The troop train left Nebraska and steamed across the country to Newport News Virginia. Only a few days there while the convoy was being assembled. Much to our surprise, we were given a night on the town. We boarded a Liberty ship William D, Mosely sticks in my mind) though that may be the name of the destroyer my uncle served on then.

Five hundred men were put into a hold below the foredeck with swing down cots six high. To lie on one's back with knees up would poke the man above. Meals for the first few days were fair but became steadily worse. Cooked cereal in the morn was covered with a slimy coat over which undiluted canned milk and a spoonful of sugar was dumped. Oranges, if any, had blue spots and the bread was often moldy. The big meal was at midday with a mess kit cup of soup in the evening. Litow and I spent some time describing meals his mother or my grandmother made right down to the salt and pepper.

Weather permitting, some slept on deck and during the day reading and card playing (pinochle the favorite) were indulged.

We ran into a storm along the way and Litow and I would stand at the rail leaning against the deck housing while the ship rolled from two or three stories above the waves to a few feet above. Never got sea sick though.

We heard later that the group's planes which had gone earlier to north Africa, had been greeted by a German radio voice, welcoming Col Keese and the 484th to the war and hoping to meet them in the skies over Europe So much for loose lips. Also, there was a tale of a fracas in a barracks in Africa in which a crew member was stabbed.

The ship in front of ours in the convoy was carrying ammo and had booms with steel netting hanging from each side to intercept torpedoes. Navy gun crews with 50 cal. guns and a 3 incher at the stern were our defense along with the sausage shaped balloons with hanging cables that each ship pulled. The port and starboard gun crews practiced by releasing balloons and trying to shoot them down. sometimes a sausage balloon was shot down instead.

Playing cards on deck one afternoon when someone said "There's Gibraltar." I looked over my shoulder and sure enough, there it was. "deal the cards". Late that night we were awakened by the sound of plane engines and machine gun fire. It was safe to

assume that we were one of the targets. A young sailor on one of the gun crews had been champing at the bit for a chance to shoot at some Germans and here they were but—his gun jammed on the first shot and he never got another off. In the middle of the night we were again wakened by the ships alarm clanging away. There was a sub in the area. I heard there was another alarm toward morning which I slept through. Later that day a sub surfaced but it was one of ours. The rest of the trip through the Mediterranean Sea was uneventful.

We woke up one morning to the sounds of silence. The ships engines were stopped. We all rushed on deck to find a thick white fog and just a few feet from our bow another ship. We were at Augusta, Sicily. We left there and went on to Bari, Italy where we gladly left what had been our home for thirty odd days. That night there was an air raid alert,(yellow).

We boarded some square wheeled Italian freight cars, which I believe had previously carried sheep, for the ride north. We were all issued a few cans of C and packs of K rations. After what we had been eating, this was gourmet stuff. We in the 825th slept on the ground wrapped in pup tent halves and blankets during the first night's drizzle.

It was Easter season and a mass was held in the little chapel near what was to become the headquarters building. A gray haired old man assisted the priest.

And so began the overseas adventures of the Four Eighty Fourth Bomb Group.

Take Care!

***Leroy Leach 825 Sq.***

---

Tucson, AZ

Dear Bud

Please find enclosed my diary from overseas duty.

Left January 12, 1945 from Patrick Henry to P.O.E. Sailed on S.S. John Blair. January 13, 1945. Sighted land finally January 27, 1945. Saw Oran, Algiers, and Rock of Gibraltar January 28, 1945. Landed in Naples January 31, 1945. Lots of ships sunk in harbor. Went to Caserta, what a mud hole. Left for Bari on February 3, 1945. Left Bari February 6, 1945 and came to 49th Wing, 484th Group, 824th Squadron. We had to wait 2 weeks for flying equipment.

#### SORTIES

1) February 28, 1945, Target- Bressanone, Italy, Flak- light, first glimpse of flak. Too new to be scared of it. Saw Alps for first time.

2 ) March 9, 1945, Target- Graz, Austria . Flak- moderate, Got a few holes in ship.

3) March 15, 1945, Target- Weiner Neustadt, Austria. Flak- none. Milk run.

4) March 16, 1945, Target- Moosebierbaum, Germany, flak- heavy. Got 10 holes in ship. One small piece of flak bounced off my flak suit.

5) March 21, 1945 Air Medal. Target-Progresko, Yugoslavia. Flak- heavy. Made 2 bomb runs over Bruck. Ship stalled out twice. Everyone browned out. Dropped one bomb in Adriatic.

6) March 24, 1945. Target- Budejovice, Austria. Flak- none. Eight bombs hung up in bay. 12 Jerry Jets overhead. Len, Dud, and Joe P. finally kicked bombs out over Alps.

7 ) April 2, 1945. Target- St. Polten Rail Yards, Austria. Flak- none. Blew the hell out of the yards. Perfect hits Saw bombs land on cars and rails. Passed knocked out German airfield. Fighters and bombers laying all over.

8) April 7, 1945 Target- Klagenfurt, Austria. Flak- none. Could not see ground to observe hits. Clouds very thick. Cold today as temperature was -41 degrees Celsius.

9) April 11, 1945. Target- Bronzolo, Italy. Flak- light. Few holes in ship. One burst lifted tail up.

10) April 14, 1945. Target- Malcontenta, Italy. Flak- moderate. Target overcast. We did not drop bombs so we landed with them.

11) April 15, 1945. Target- Nervesa, Italy. Flak- moderate. Saw Rome on way to target- the Coliseum, St. Peter's Cathedral, and the Vatican City. Also, we flew over the islands of Elba and Monte Cristo. At target we did not drop bombs. Pilot's windshield got cracked by a piece of flak.

12 ) April 19, 1945. Target- Auisio Viaduct, Italy. Flak- intense. Lots of smoke rising from target area. Flight entirely over land for first time.

13) April 20, 1945. Target- Lusina Road Bridge, Italy. Flak- none. Bridge entirely wiped out. Heard "Good Night, Sweet Dreams Sweetheart" on radio near target.

14 ) April 23, 1945. Target- Badia Railroad Bridge, Italy. Flak- moderate Saw front lines, artillery shells bursting, our fighters strafing Jerries on bank of Po River They really caught hell.

15) April 25, 1945. Target-Linz, Austria (Main). Flak- very intense. Roughest trip yet. One ship blew up in front of us pieces flew by us. Another ship was hit and dove straight down until wings snapped off. Flak was right down our alley.

May 8, 1945 War in Europe ends. V E- Day as all the German troops surrender.

Sincerely,

***Jack D. Messersmith, 824 Sq.***

---

Ebergassing, Austria

Dear Bud:

I send you these photos as a memorabilia of the wonderful days we spent together in Dayton, and once again thank you for everything.

I will write more if Beatrix can find the time to help me. She is very busy now at the Foodstuffs Research Institute. The first year in the E V European Union brings many financial difficulties for the food industry in Austria.

Best Regards,

***Jelix Rameder***



Note from the Editors Desk. In reference to Torretta Flyer No 27 the story on the "June 13, 1994 Mission to Innsbruck" I call your attention to pages 9 to 20. On this date B-24 S/N 42-52661 was flown by Ed Eibs. In conversation with Ed Eibs, the copilot at one of our reunions he stated that he was in command of the plane that diverted to Switzerland. This was George Ingham's crew that was forced to land in Switzerland because of battle damage. Gilbert Stover, one of the crew members sent the accompanying photograph.



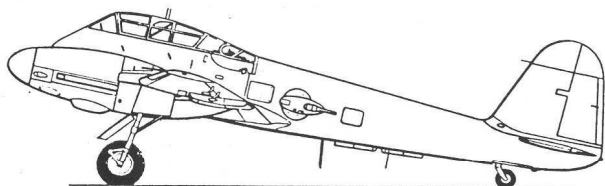
The Crew from top left: Sgt Charles Holder -T/G, Sgt Anthony Giamattei-R/O, Sgt Frank Hazelton-E, Sgt Ridgell McKinney-E, Sgt Gilbert Stover-N/G. Kneeling from left: Lt George Ingham-P, Lt Ed Eibs-C/P, Lt Allen Proddgers-N, and Lt Clifford Taylor-B.

Inglostadt, Germany  
Dear Bud:

Thank you for your November 95 letter. Regarding The crash of an Me 410 on or about June 13, 1944. The pilot Unteroffizier Strobl may have been shot down by the tail gunner Julius E Jackson of Willen's crew who later died with the other gunners in the crash of #42-52679. It was reported by a farmer who saw the action that day said that Strobl (1./ZG 76) ? was shot from behind with heavy fire, and was severely wounded.

I found in an English book a picture of a Me 410 that was marked M8 with a yellow fuselage band. This unit was based at Herzogenaurach/ Bavaria, a photocopy is enclosed. I have no other information on this aircraft.

Sincerely with Bavarian Greetings,  
**Alfred Wittmann**



Editors Note: From the book The Warplanes of the Third Reich: "During the summer and autumn of 1944 the Me 410s of the surviving 'Gruppen der Zerstorereshgwadern' 1, 26 and 76 were steadily consumed by the holocaust in German skies. Although they took their toll of USAAF day bombers, they were no match for the escorting P-51 Mustangs, and their numbers dwindled rapidly as a result of operational attrition, a process accelerated from September 1944, when in anticipation of the promulgation of the 'Jager-Notprogramm' production of the Me 410 was finally phased out."

Northglenn, CO  
Dear Bud:

I want to thank you for founding the Association and your dedication and effort all these years. It has been a valuable addition to our lives.

In the Torretta Flyer 28, page 20, it renewed many memories of that aircraft. We flew "Little Joe" from Topeka, Kansas to Torretta via Manchester New Hampshire; Gander Newfoundland; Azores; Marrekech, French Morocco, Tunis, Tunisia, Gioia, Italy then Torretta. We flew many of our missions in that aircraft.

On the day we learned of the loss of the crew and "Little Joe." We were very sad but thankful there were survivors.

I am enclosing negatives of our crew pictures taken in July 1944 at Topeka, Kansas. Our bombardier, Bob Hulling, was killed in a crash January 29, 1945 while on a practice bombing mission. There were no survivors.

Best Regards  
**Merle Yanney**

### Correction

We regret the omission of navigator Abraham Abramoff's name from the caption under the photo printed on bottom page 30, Torretta Flyer No 28 Summer Fall 1995. He is standing 5th from left. Dexter Shultz brought this to our attention

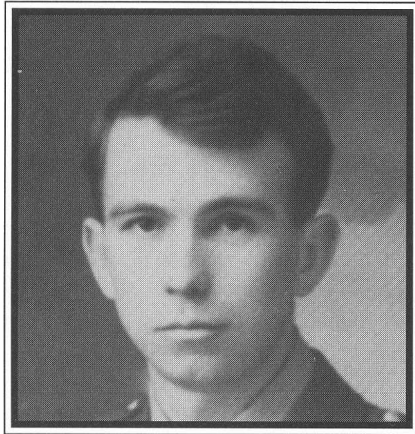




## The Last Mission

### Wilfred J Avery 766 Sq.

Wilfred J Avery a crew chief and aircraft inspector passed away February 22, 1995. He was a member of the association since 1983. He was awarded the Bronze star as a crew chief. He is survived by six children. (Photo)



Wilfred J Avery

### Harold E. Bailey 825 Sq.

Sgt Harold E. Bailey, gunner, was born January 26, 1924 and died September 1994. Harold enlisted in the Army Air Corps in 1940. After his three year hitch he re-enlisted in 1943 and was assigned to Chanute Field later assigned to the 484th B G at Harvard, Nebraska moving with the group when they were transferred to Cerignola Italy in the spring of 1944.

After service with the 484th B G at the close of hostilities, he remained in the service until 1967, during this period he was active in the Berlin Airlift.

### Carl Couch Jr 824 Sq.



1/Lt Carl Couch Jr (photo at left) the Navigator on Dick Calkins crew died September 15, 1994 of complications from surgery.

His crew:

Cpl Henry R Ronson	824	T/G
2/Lt Richard L Calkins	824	P
2/Lt E Harold Fischbein	824	C/P
1/Lt Carl Couch Jr	824	N
Cpl Bruce G Crabbe	824	G
Cpl Harry S Foster	824	G
Cpl Michael Opalenik	824	R/O
Cpl Owen E Parmele	824	E
Cpl Dominic Pettinari	824	G

### Tracy Denninger Jr 825 Sq.

2/Lt Tracy Denninger Jr the navigator on Reed Sprinkel's crew passed away February 13, 1995. Tracy had been lead instructor in navigation at the crew training center at Mt. Home, Idaho before joining the crew so he was more experienced than other navigators coming out of school. He with Morris Hatfield (Bombardier) used a team approach to locate the IP and target which resulted in many successful bomb runs.

The crew often flew Able One, which is the lead aircraft for the wing when in formation to and from the target area. The crew flew this position for at least ten missions along with Col Keese, and Maj. Moe. Tracy received the DFC for his many successes in solving navigational problems. In 1990 Reed Sprinkel and Tracy Denninger flew together once again in the "All American" B-24 on a trip from Ft. Lauderdale, to Kissimmee, Florida.

The crew is closely identified with the ship "Pot Luck 42-51851." Old "Pot Luck" was shot up pretty bad on her 33rd mission in an all out attack on the German army in Northern Italy, limping back with one engine. Her crew chief Stanley Laque of New Orleans took the plane back to its hard stand and proceeded to replace the engine overnight. At daylight the engine was running and ready for flight. Tracy also completed 33 Missions. A few days later on 21 February, 1945 the ship was shot down by flak when flown by pilot Lt. Chad E. Ikerd.



Ship #40 "Pot Luck." with Crew Chief (unknown)

He attended the 1990 reunion in Nashville. He was a retired lodging industry executive and a Major in the United States Air Force reserve (Ret). He was a world class bridge player and competed in many international competitions.

He is survived by his wife Patricia, a sister Dorris Turino, and a brother Cletus Denninger.

His Crew:

Cpl	William M	Bloom	N/G
	Gordon	Dangremond	T/G
2/Lt	Tracy	Denninger Jr	N DFC
Cpl	William P	Eckerle	U/G
Cpl	James P	Moran Jr	B/G
Cpl	James W	Peterson	G
Sgt	Kenneth J	Querry	E
2/Lt	Robert V	Skelton	C/P
2/Lt	Reed	Sprinkel	P DFC
Cpl	Robert J	Stearns	R/O



Crew Photo from top Left: 1/Lt Morris R Hatfield-B, Reed Sprinkel-P, Tracy Denninger-N, and Robert V Skelton-C/P. Kneeling from left: Unknown\* Kenneth J Querry-F, Robert J Stearns-R/O, James P Moran Jr-B/G, William M Bloom-N/G, and William P Eckerle-U/G. \* Left in Topeka, filled by James W Peterson

**John H Dunn 827 Sq.**

Capt. John H Dunn navigator on Wilburn Kitchen's crew has died. He was awarded the DFC in October 1944 for meritorious service.

He retired from the Air Force as a colonel in 1973 after 30 years of service. He married Donna Streton in 1964. He was a president in the Kiwanis, and active in the Kiwanis Pancake breakfasts and Meals on Wheels. He also was a past president of the Retired Officers Association. He is survived by his wife, a son Carey, two daughters: Connie Dunn, and Luci English, a brother James Dunn, and three grandchildren

His Crew:

1/Lt	Edward H B	Cornell	B
S/Sgt	Robert W	Day	U/G
Capt	John H	Dunn	N
1/St	Evan H	Houseworth	Radar Nav
1/Lt	Wilburn M.	Kitchen	P
S/Sgt	Patrick W	Layne Jr	E
Sgt	James H	Marton	G
Sgt	Lawrence A	Moxely (D)	B/G
T/Sgt	Hudson S.	Nance	E
1/Lt	James P	Spalding	C/P
T/Sgt	Marvin H	Watson	E
T/Sgt	Willie	Wong	R/O

**Ernest M Green 827 Sq.**

Ernest M Green, Crew Chief on "Trouble Maker" died April 24, 1995 from cancer. He was proud of his military service earning a Soldiers Medal in November of 1944, and was given a full military burial at Ft Logan National Cemetery. He was a corporation pilot for 35 years.

He is survived by his wife Shirley, daughters Shannon Kaplan, Katherine Green, and Laurie Graves, sons William and John Green, sister Nancy Rogers and many grandchildren.

This poem was read at his funeral:

Gunners' Prayer

*I wanted to be a Pilot, and you along with me,  
But if we were all pilots, Where would the Airforce be?  
It takes guts to be a gunner, to sit out in the Tail,  
When the Messerschmidts are Coming, and the slugs  
begin to wail.  
The pilot's just a Chauffeur, It's his job to fly the plane,  
Though it's us who do the fighting, we don't get the fame.  
If we were all to be gunners, then let's make this bet;  
We'll be the best damn gunners that left this station yet.*

Flight Officer Neil T Bish  
KIA July 1943 Photo Troublemaker

**Carlton M Killian 825 Sq.**

Carlton M Killian (Joe) The radio operator on Barney Miller's crew and a member of the Association since 1986, passed away February 22 1995. After surviving 35 missions including a memorable visit to Ploesti on August 17, 1944, he felt he was living on borrowed time from that time on. The last of his 35 mission was on December 16, 1944 to Brux.

That didn't prevent him from being active in sports after the war, he with his two brothers had played football and basketball in high school.

After returning from Italy he was active in Little League and worked with the Grand Island High School football coach from 1963 when his son John joined the football team, and stayed on until 1994. Joe spent most of his life in his father's trucking company and took over the business when his father died. Joe as he was known, attended the Nashville reunion in 1990.

He conducted his life personally and in business with honor and integrity. He is survived by his wife Betty, son John and daughter Jean and four grandsons.

**His crew**

1/Lt	C.O.	Kerr	C/P
S/Sgt	Carlton M	Killian (D)	R/O
S/Sgt	William H.	Miller	N/G
	William A	Miller (D)	N/G
1/Lt	Barney J	Milner	P
Sgt	Lester V	Reall	T/G
Sgt	Robert W	Bell (D)	U/G
2/Lt	Donald O	Christensen	N
Sgt	Charles G.	Lake	B/G
S/Sgt	Aurelio S	Lopez	E
1/Lt	Berton A	Tenborg	B



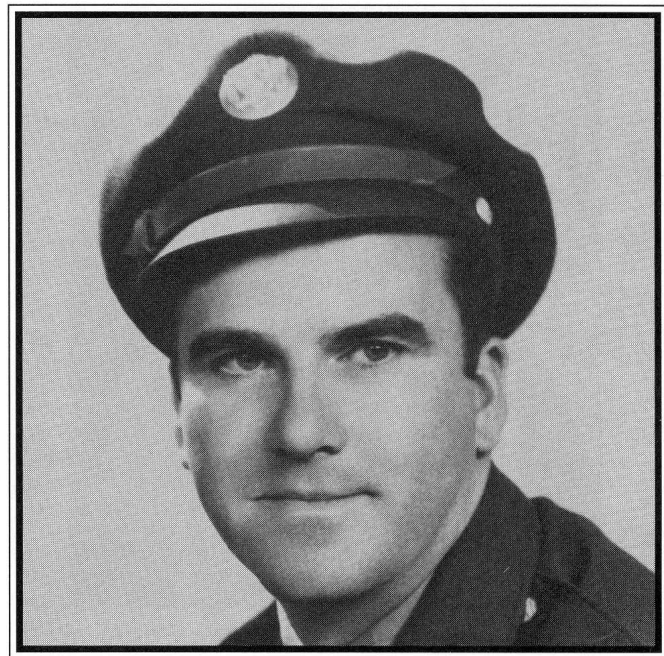
**A Lee Robinson 825 Sq.**

Arlen Lee Robinson, age 71, C/P on Thaddeus Walker's crew, passed away in the fall of 95. On August 10, 1944, his aircraft was shot down over Szolnok, Hungary. Six crew members bailed out and were taken prisoner, Arlen E Robinson was sent to Stalag Luft 3 where he remained until liberation about June 2, 1945. The others to survive are Walker, Jackson, Harris, Palmer, and Golden. The crew was flying #30 "Damned Yankee" S/N 42-52438, one of 30 aircraft in the formation, fell after being hit by falling bombs.

Arlen Lee continued to fly after the war as a Captain with Eastern Air lines, most recently as an instructor on Airbus A300. He is survived by wife Pauline, son William, daughters Susan Whatley, Sally Neal, and eight grandchildren.

	Thaddeus H	Walker	P	POW
2/Lt	Arlen Lee	Robinson (D)	C/P	POW
Pvt	Jack J	Golden	R/O	POW
Sgt	J D	Harris	Y/G	POW
2/Lt	Harley M	Jackson	N	POW
S/Sgt	John	McClellen (D)	E	<u>KIA</u>
S/Sgt	Alex	Palmer	N/G	POW
2/Lt	Elvin D	Rodgers (D)	B	<u>KIA</u>
	John F	Scarborough (D)	B/G	<u>KIA</u>
	Frank J	Schoen	B/G	

**Harold Toomey 824 Sq**



Harold T Toomey

S/Sgt Harold T Toomey, age 73, Tail Gunner on William L Adams's crew has passed away. He was born in Seneca Falls, New York on April 23 1922. After graduation from St. Aquinas Institute, he went to work for Stromberg Carlson. In 1942 he enlisted in the Air Corps and was sent to the 484th Bomb Group in Cerignola serving 50 missions before returning to the USA. He was awarded the DFC in March of 1945.

Harry loved sports and was an excellent player himself. He turned down a contract offer from a major league team to devote his time to physical training while still in the service.

Harry was a design engineer for General Dynamics (the successor to Stromberg-Carlson) retiring after 34 years with the company.

He was a deeply religious man and he practiced his faith. He loved people and loved to help anyone who needed it. He was active and participated in veterans organizations: American Legion, VFW, and as a member of the 484th BG Association since 1982, looked forward each year to the annual reunion. He is survived by his wife, Audrey, daughter and grandson, Travis.

His Crew

1/Lt	Billy	Burke	N
S/sgt	Chester	Haciass	N/G
S/Sgt.	Harold T	Toomey (D)	T/G
1/Lt	Robert W	Tissing	N
T/Sgt	Elmer W	Vermie	E
1/Lt	Duane D	Powers	C/P
1/Lt	William L	Adams	P
S/Sgt	Henry A	Haage	N/G
T/Sgt	Gaetono	Intoccia	E
S/Sgt	Merrill L	Iverson	B/G
1/Lt	Edward H	Johnson	B

## Additional Passings

*The Association has learned of the passing of the persons shown below through the efforts of Charles McKew, Adolph Marcus, and individual members.*



*Harry's crew from left: Ike Iverson, Harry Toomey, Gay Intoccia, Elmer Vermie, and Tubby Stowe.*

T/Sgt	Willie R	Ashurst Jr	826	E
Sgt	Layton T	Boulden	826	G
	Charles H	Bowler	826	N
Cpl	Ralph S.	Carver	826	
Cpl	Richard	Cilsick		
S/Sgt	Porter J	Hammonds	826	G
1/Lt	Samuel F	Huggins Jr	826	N
Sgt	Kenneth	Ignotis	827	N/G
1/Lt	James	Love	767	B
1/Lt	Arthur R	Sullivan	824	C/P
Sgt	Spartico	Valenzi	826	G
S/Sgt	Boyd	Woodall Jr	826	E
M/Sgt	William R	Woodall	484	
M/Sgt	Walter H	Woodfin	824	
Sgt	Dallas V.	Worthy	825	
Pfc	John P.	Wright	824	

*The Association would like to acknowledge the loss of the spouses of two of our members in the last quarter of 1995.*

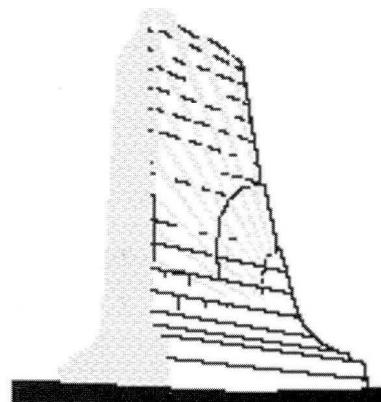
### Herman J Weber 826 Sq.

Herman J Weber, (E) a long time member of the Association passed away in April 1995 as reported by his wife Marian. They attended reunions in 1982,1983,1984, 1986,1989,1990, and 1991. He was the Engineer on John C Nowacki's crew.

Nancy Billings, wife of John M Billings, 825 Sq and Director  
Gloria Meshel, wife of Harold Meshel, 824 Sq

His Crew

1/lt	Jones Q	Adams	B
Sgt	Edward W	Adamaitis	G
1/Lt	Charles C	Crinnion Jr	N
T/Sgt	Carl B	Ferguson	R/O
Sgt	Ferdinand F	Gottschar	G
Sgt	Gerald J M	Miller	G
S/Sgt	Roland E	Monteith	G
1/Lt	John C	Nowacki	P
1/Lt	Myron J	Van Dyke	C/P
T/Sgt	Herman J	Weber	E





R E S T R I C T E D

HEADQUARTERS  
FIFTHTEENTH AIR FORCE  
APO 520

GENERAL ORDERS)  
1945

6 April,

:  
NUMBER 2125)

SECTION I AWARDS OF THE SILVER STAR, MISSING IN ACTION

Under the provisions of AR 600-45 as amended and pursuant to authority contained in Circular No. 89, Headquarters NATOUSA, 10 July 1944, the Silver Star is awarded the following named personnel Missing in Action, Air Corps, United States Army residence and citation as indicated:

PERCY H KRAMER 0677287, Captain, 825 Bomb Sq., 484th Bomb Gp. For gallantry in action as pilot of a B-24 type aircraft. On 21 February 1945 led a formation on a bombing mission against vital enemy communications installations in Austria. Despite severe and adverse weather conditions encountered enroute which precluded a successful completion of the mission, Capt. Kramer brought his formation directly to the target. On the bombing run intense, accurate, and heavy anti aircraft fire. Despite the imminent danger of explosion, realizing the importance of this vital target, Capt. Kramer courageously led the formation through the enemy defenses for a highly successful bombing run, inflicting grave damage to vital enemy installations and supplies. Leaving the objective, after rallying his formation from the target, Capt. Kramer aircraft, still under control, dropped from the protective formation and at least nine of the crew were seen to bail out before the aircraft crashed and exploded. By his conspicuous gallantry, professional skill and devotion to duty, as evidenced throughout 22 missions against the enemy, Capt. Kramer has reflected great credit upon himself and the Armed Forces of the United States of America. Residence at appointment: Savannah, Georgia. Next of kin: Mrs. Gladys H Kramer (wife) Whitmarsh Island, Georgia.

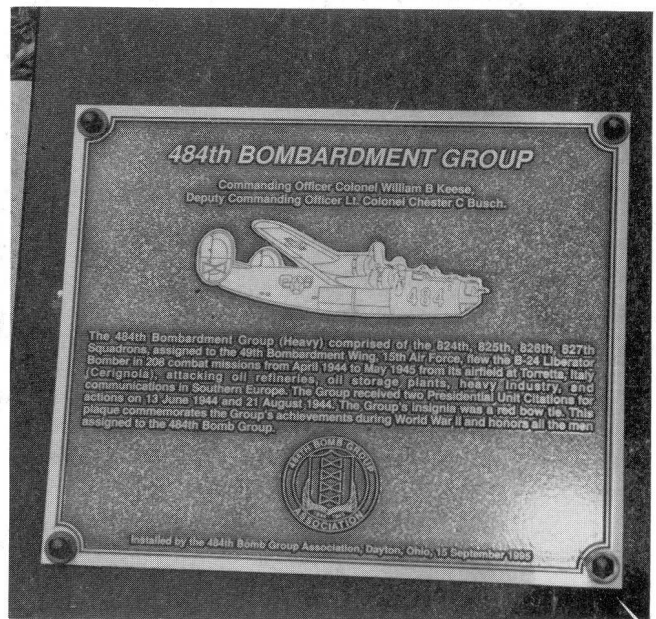
LLOYD C MCKENZIE, 0776582, S/Lt. 825th Bomb Sq. 484th Bomb Gr. For gallantry in action as bombardier of a B-24 type aircraft. On 21, February 1945, Lt McKenzie led a group formation on a bombing mission against a vital enemy communications center in Austria. Approaching the target his formation encountered intense, accurate, and heavy anti aircraft fire which severely damaged his aircraft, and set one engine on fire. Despite eminent danger of explosion, realizing the importance of his lead position, Lt McKenzie remained at his position bringing his group formation through enemy fire for a highly successful bombing run. Under his superior leadership, the bombs from his entire formation were well concentrated in the target area, inflicting grave damage on vital enemy installations and supplies. Leaving the objective his aircraft was seen to loose altitude and the crew began to abandon the stricken plane. By his conspicuous gallantry, professional skill and devotion to duty, as evidenced throughout his combat career, Lt Mckenzie has upheld the highest traditions of the Military Service thereby reflecting great credit upon himself and the Armed Forces of the United States of America. Residence at appointment: Norris City, Illinois. Next of Kin: Mrs. Ora F McKenzie, (mother) Norris City, Illinois.



Bill Keese (left) and Chester Busch (right) addressing the members and guests gathered for the dedication of the Memorial Plaque.



Charles McKew presenting the plaque to the Air Force Museum.



The 484th B G plaque as dedicated 15 September 1995

**484th Bomb Group Association**  
**1122 Ysabel St**  
**Redondo Beach, CA 90277-4453-13**

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