



Letters to the Editor

Cincinnati, Ohio
Dear Bud:

It was early in April of 1945 that the 449th flew its last mission and since I had my mission count royally screwed-up I received the typical military solution to a crisis of this nature and they got rid of it and off loaded me and the crew. They shipped us out!

When I arrived at the 484th the Colonel to whom I reported was plain that I had "no" seniority "what-so-ever" in the 484th and everyone else was higher on the totem pole. That was certainly a nice reception for a Lead Crew Pilot and superior crew!

When the orders came down for the 484th to fly back to the States - this same bird colonel assigned to me the worst looking, war weary B-24 bird which was actually lying on its side over in the tall weeds. The mechanics jacked it-up and supposedly made it like "new?" At 23:00 hours, a day or two before scheduled 'launch' - At a Crew Pilots only meeting I was called by name and the same Colonel did a soft shoe telling me the facts of military life, i.e., "That Rank Has Its Privileges!" And that this tired and worn-out B-24 they had been feverishly working on was being assigned to a Major (Hoople)?

I had no plane to fly and the whole base was dismantled - gonesville! I was under orders to sit with our luggage on the runway from 0600 hours to dusk 1930 hours as orphans - waiting to (?) be picked up.

A B-24 sailed over us at 19:30 hours at 10,000 feet and circled and landed after sundown. Relieved, after waiting the entire day we were flown to Gioia and were allowed to pick out a new, new B-24 M with a mere 25 hours on the plane. Now, that is "factory fresh!" We acquired three Master Sergeants who were all specialists and high-tech men and I flew all thirteen of us back to the States.

When we got to Marrakech in Western North Africa we learned that "the" Major in his sadder than sad B-24 war weary was being towed to the bone yard to be scrapped due to major gas tank leakage owing to the discovery of a round from an 88mm having severed the main spar of one wing. Hence the Major had been flying a gasoline- carbomb. I didn't bother to look him up either for I remembered my soft shoe lesson - well! Rank "had" its privileges! I had a new dream boat in the B-24-M that was the "piece de resistance" the Rolls Royce, if you will, of all Liberators that were built and besides I had the bombays loaded with scarce parts needed somewhere in the States.

Today my curiosity remains as to who this important Major was who inadvertently relieved me of attempting to fly the ocean blue in a pile of junk, a real time bomb! He lost his steed somewhere over the Sahara and I had heard all the scuttlebutt I needed to hear!

Dick Asbury 449/484th BG



Bone Yard 461BG