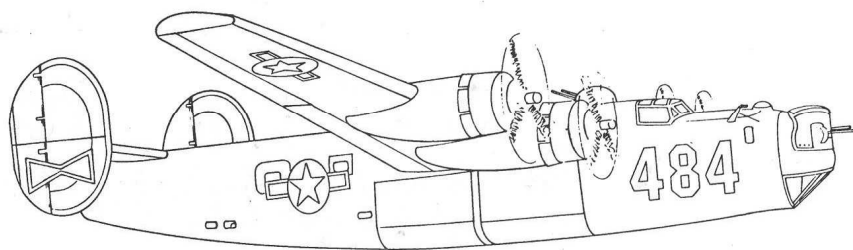


The Torretta Flyer

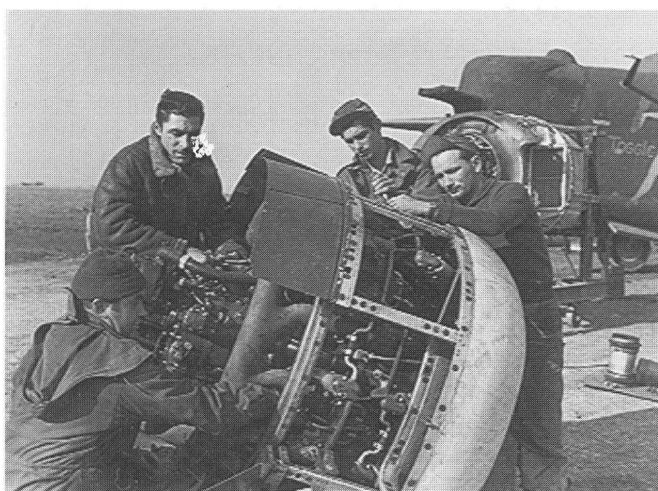


Torretta Flyer No 34

484th Bomb Group Association

Winter -Spring 1998-1999

1999 Reunion Set For St Louis Missouri



Toggle Annie undergoes an engine change, See story starting on page 20



Flight officers undergo plane side debriefing from a single plane mission in front of their grey "Mickey Ship." See the story "Catch 22" starting on page 15.



A typical "Mickey Ship" note the radome hung in the place of the ball turret.



Aircraft from the 484th Bomb Group preparing to land at Torretta Airfield. Note the parked B-24s on the various hard stands along the bent taxiways.

Tales From The Internet And News Of The Association

New Friends

One of the nicer things that the internet provides is the making of new friends. Wally Forman is one of them. He and I have exchanged information on B-24 serial numbers and names used by the 484th Bomb Group. Subsequently he published a book containing an alphabetical listing of over 7000 names. Aircraft are also listed by unit. The 484th names appear on pages 164-165. The book is called "B-24 Nose Art Name Directory," by Wallace R Forman, published by Specialty Press, North Branch, MN. Members who served later on in the war will recall that the nose numbers were enclosed within a large black or red circle to enhance recognition from a distance. The 461st was summarily directed to use a rectangle. Members have told me that some of the nose art was lost during these conversions. Apparently the conversion was not carried out on the whole fleet because my airplane 44-49939 "Roll Me Over" still showed a huge red "74" when photographed in March 1945.

New Books and The Internet

Another new internet friend is Fernando D'Amico from Italy, who in collaboration with another Italian, Gabriele Valentini, the book's illustrator, and Nick Beale, from England, wrote the book "Air War Italy 1944-45". The book is written from the defender's viewpoint giving the reader a fresh look at the air war from the other side. It has many photographs, most not seen before and full color side views of Italian and German aircraft, and maps of the airfield used by the German and Italian pilots.

Italian fighter pilots who aligned themselves with the German cause flew ME-109s and Fiat G55 from German held airfields in Northern Italy. They would attack American bomber formations and stragglers returning from missions. Instead of the Luftwaffe cross they carried an Italian flag consisting of green, white and red bars on the fuselage sides and on the vertical fins. An Italian 1944 attack on or about 4 November, 1944, using ME-109s on the 484th Bomb Group, is described on page 121.

"Cap Bellagambi led a flight of six Me's taking off from Aviano to attack seven B-24s of the 484th Bomb Group. The Italians shot down two, but claimed a third. Cap. Bellagambi got a B-24J that became separated from the main formation shooting it down into the sea 10K south of the River Piav's mouth. The second was downed in the same area by Ten. Rosas. The third was claimed by Ten. Valenzano of the 1st squadriglia but was corrected to a probable in the official communique.

One ME was hit and badly damaged by the American defensive fire, leading the pilot Cavagnino to make an emergency landing on a small strip of ground. The aircraft came down safely, but its canopy refused to open. Through a side panel Cavagnino called for help from a few farm workers keeping well back from the smoking aircraft. At least two came to the rescue and forced the hood open, dragging them to safety. Seconds later the ME-109 exploded. The other five Messerschmitts landed at Aviano at 1310. The Association's records show ship 42-551852 Nose 27, 824 sq. shot down by flak near Raum Erding. The Crew:

William F Gaskill-P
Eugene C Stamm Jr-C/P
Telsa I Johnson-N
Stanley G Zawaskas-B
William H Hiller-E
Harold A Sax-RO
Marcus D Armfield-G
Raymond G Bush-NG
Donald L Olson-UG
Marshall D Preston-TG

The Flak Towers



A new book available through Borders is "The Flak Towers in Berlin, Hamburg and Vienna 1940-1950," by Michael Foedrowitz. Any crew member who ever flew a mission over Vienna can tell you about the Flak Towers built in three locations within the city. The huge 128 mm flak guns that played such havoc with our bomber formations, were mounted atop the hard concrete construction.

"On every tower, 300 to 500 foreign workers were employed, particularly Yugoslavs and Greeks, but also Italian military internees and a few Austrian skilled workers. There were also construction units of the RAD and the Wehrmacht, as well as Jewish forced laborers. The building materials were brought to the building sites on newly-laid rail lines, sometimes even on streetcars, from the Danube and the Aspang depot.

The Viennese Flak towers were built on concrete slabs at least two meters thick. A very hard type of concrete, reinforced with spirals, was used. The outer walls were two meters thick, the roofs up to 3.5 meters. On the towers themselves, cranes were mounted, sometimes on rails which had been mounted on the roof to give them flexibility to serve all four 128 mm gun mounts. The building time was half a year, and the last tower to be ready for action, in the early summer of 1944, was the Stiftskaserne gun tower.

No tower was completely finished, though all were ready for action by the summer of 1944.

The gun mounts were similar to those of the Wilhelmsburg Flak tower. The crews of the 128 mm Flak guns were somewhat safe from splinters and light bombs hitting the roof because of the fact that the guns in the towers were protected by steel cupolas.

In the upper third of the gun towers, lower platforms for light Flak weapons were built, though they never actually seem to have been installed. Every bunker had a water supply and its own power plant. They were used as storehouses for valuable cultural

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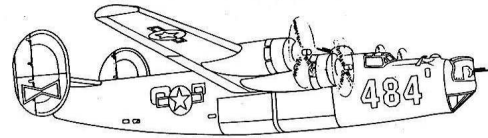
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484th BG Logo patch, stitched, 2 3/4 " in diameter -----	\$5.00.
B-24 three- dimensional tie tac, silver, 1 3/4 " -----	\$5.00.
Association Pin with 484th Logo 7/8" -----	\$5.00.
Baseball Cap, red & white. side view of 484th silver B-24 on front, postage inc. ---	\$12.00.
Miniature Plaque 1 3/4 " with display stand, postage inc.-----	\$25.00.
Back issues of the Torretta Flyer, (24) Nos 10 thru 33, postage inc.-----	\$130.00.
Individual issues-----	\$7.00 ea.

The Torretta Flyer



Issue #34 Winter Spring 1998-1999

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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. Only clean typewritten manuscripts and Microsoft Word disks are acceptable. Handwritten letters will no longer be published. 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

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484th Bomb Group, Bud Markel, Bea Markel, John Billings, Ken Hubertz, and Ed Schwartz

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Direct all inquiries to the Editor, Torretta Flyer, 1122 Ysabel St. Redondo Beach, CA 90277-4453-13, USA Phone (310) 316-3330 . We can be reached via the internet at BUD484BG@AOL.com. Also, visit our web site at <http://members.aol.com/bud484bg>. Faxes can be received at prearranged times.

Continued Tales From The Internet And News Of The Association

objects, housed military offices, and 15,000 civilians found shelter there at times. In all the gun towers there were hospitals, some with more than 800 beds. Armament industries were likewise housed in the Flak towers, where they produced aircraft engines, electrical parts and ammunition.

Personal history:

With Japan threatening the West coast in the winter of 1941-1942, fear of invasion and air raids was uppermost in the minds of most adults and children in the city of Portland, OR where I was born. While standing in the downtown Army recruiting office with other boys from city high schools about to take the oath of allegiance three months later in March 1942, (it took awhile to get my parents' permission to join up). I was unsure of what the future would bring to myself wondering if I was doing the right thing, and what effect this would have on my family, and America too.

A cavalry officer of Captain's rank entered the room impeccably dressed in first class uniform, a polished Sam Brown belt with brass hook to carry a sword was worn over his officer's blouse that showed no traces of wrinkles anywhere. I caught myself thinking how could this officer wear such a perfect uniform without getting wrinkles at the elbows and thighs. His highly polished cavalry boots could be seen under his matching brown pants ironed to a knife edge. Close cropped hair combed to perfection completed the picture. This was my first encounter with a person who had such a commanding presence, a presence whose very appearance was strong enough to slay dragons.

He assumed a ramrod military stance, feet slightly apart with hands drawn behind him. He had a fixed gaze that almost burned through me. I was so awe struck it took most of my self control to keep from fainting dead away. Then with eyes narrowed, he began to speak with uncompromising conviction, and pausing to emphasize each word slowly, "We Will Win This War!" I straightened up feeling a pride never before experienced. From that point on I never again had any doubt as to the outcome of the war. Years afterwards, I would recall this phrase when faced with adversity. Bud Markel 827 Sq.

Let me hear from you, our members, and family, of your own personal experiences.

Air Classics Magazine's Special Offer Discounts for Members and for the Association too.

Challenge Publication's magazine Air Classics magazine will add \$5.00 for each discounted subscription placed through the 484th Bomb Group Association. Here is how it works, you pay the special price of \$19.95 for a yearly subscription to Air Classic, the Association remits \$14.95 to Challenge publications, earning the Association \$5.00 for each subscription of 12 monthly issues off of the special price of \$19.95. The regular subscription price is \$25.95. This looks like a win-win situation for all of us.

Air Classics magazine, now in its 34th year of publication has a readership of more than 76,000 aviation enthusiasts each month. Air Classics has proven itself the perfect vehicle in which

to make AAF/USAF veterans aware of service organizations and their annual reunions. The magazine publishes reunion notices free of charge to America's service veteran organizations.

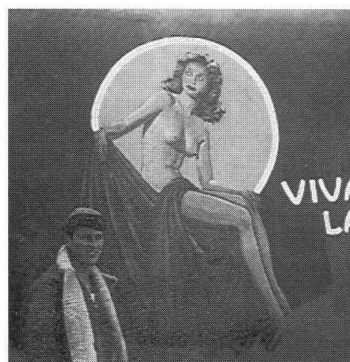
Just send your check of \$19.95 to the Association office. We'll do the rest.

Note: Please allow a maximum of 45 days for subscriptions to commence from the date Challenge Publications, Inc., receives your order. Orders may be sent in any quantity without restriction, but should be forwarded to us as soon as possible to promptly commence service.

WW29 Vets fought for their Special Ladies

Your editor sent the following letter to the Wall Street Journal and it was published

January 9, 1998. Beatrice (co-editor) and I frequently send letters and E-mail expressing the point of view John Lehman's review of the book Citizen Soldiers by Stephen Ambrose ("How They Fought—and Won," Leisure & Arts, Dec. 22) struck a warm note with this humble Army Air Force engineer-gunner. Mr. Ambrose says in the introduction to his book



Vivacious Lady

World War II citizen soldier, whether enlisted or drafted, fought not only for cause or patriotism, but for the safety of his buddies and the pride of his unit.

I would like to add something else—the strong identification with our war vehicles. As a World War II veteran tells his war stories, inevitably his ship, tank, or aircraft is mentioned. In effect, our vehicle represented all of the people in our lives. That is the reason these vehicles were humanized. One could observe mechanics and air crew members pat the side of their aircraft and talk to it. A gunner might mutter under his breath, "Old girl, don't forget your promise to bring us home today."



Knock Out

We decorated the slab side of our venerable B-24 Liberators with paintings of scantily clad females or with mottos that were personally important. My own ship, a Ford-built B-24L, was named "Roll

Continued Tales From The Internet And News Of The Association

Me Over,” after a bawdy song of the time. We pasted a pinup from Esquire magazine just below the name. This quarter-million dollar aircraft was handed to our crew of ten mostly high school graduates in Topeka, Kansas in 1944. We were so proud of the confidence that the Army Air Force bestowed on us with this gift, it would be a matter of personal disgrace if in our inexperience we damaged the ship while in our charge.

Handwritten Letters

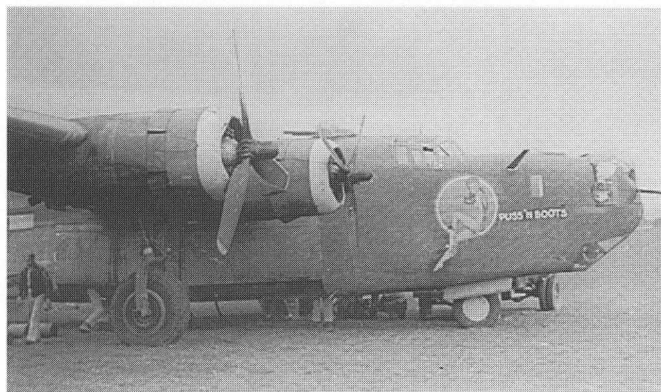
We are no longer able to accept handwritten letters and manuscripts for publication in the Flyer. It is too time consuming for your editor to convert handwriting into print. This delays final production of the Flyer. I ask all members who wish to submit letters or stories for the Flyer to convert your material into print before submission. You'll save me a lot of work.

Book Reviews

World War II seems to have been rediscovered by younger generations for there are many new books being published on WWII. You could help by reviewing these books for the Flyer. Interested parties should contact the Flyer for further information.

**1998 New Members
Welcome To The Association**

Daniel L Denny	825
Son of David E Denny Jr(D)	
J R Dunn	824
Joseph C Frye	827
Kit-Bacon Gressitt	827
Daughter Tillman Gressitt (D)	
Scott Gressitt	
In memory of father Tillman Gressitt(D)	827
Bobby W Province	825
Victor P Ranalletta	827
Miriam E Sheddon	825
Wife of David W Sheddon(D)	
Hugh Sheetz	826
Sharon P Short	
Daughter of Bobby W Province	825
Russell C Smalley	826
William B Snyder	826
Judson N Suddarth	827
Frank B Vardman	824
George M Venslove	824
Emil W Wright	825



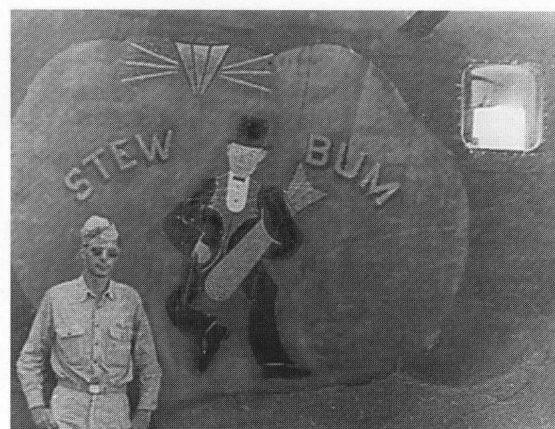
Puss N' Boots



Miss Fire in Flight

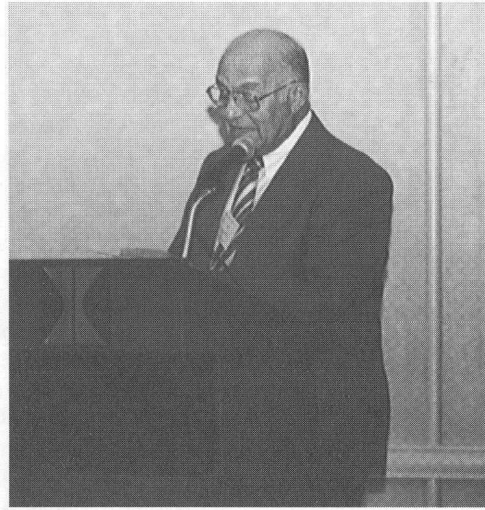


Miss Fire



Gene Stewart in front of Stew Bum

1998 Reunion Report



Ed Schwartz speaks at the banquet

A Personal Note Of Thanks

To all the attendees at the Tucson reunion, as well as members not attending, for the outpouring of good wishes and prayers, your phone calls, E-Mail messages, letters, and cards, in response to the absence, due to illness, of your Chairman of the Board. Bea and I were overwhelmed by your concern and thoughtfulness. We received a lovely indoor-outdoor plant and a monetary gift from the attendees and we were really touched by this symbol of your appreciation. We understand that our two Directors, Ed Schwartz and Ken Hubertz, did an outstanding job in taking over for us and, of course, we cannot thank them enough for all they did. Ed Schwartz and Ken Hubertz supplied the information for this report. As this is being written, I am still in the healing process, but by the time this issue goes to the printers, hopefully, I will be in better shape.

Report On The Tucson Arizona Reunion

About two hundred happy people attended the 1998 reunion in Tucson, Arizona, the weather cooperated, and the tours arranged by the Armed Forces Reunion, Inc. were well attended, including the trip to the Pima Air Museum and the B-24 on display. The Memorial Service in the Davis-Monthan Air Base Chapel was presided over by Major Fred McFarland, D-M Chaplain, and the Luncheon at the Officers Club was excellent. The Banquet was a success with the Speaker, Pat Murray, Historian, giving a review of the history of the 484th and then on to the future of the Air Force in the new age of technology. The Rick Stanley Band played music for listening and dancing, and seemed to hit the right sound for our Group. By prearrangement, our ailing and absent members, Fang Hansen 824 Squadron, and his lovely wife Edith,

supplied bottles of Andre's Cold Duck for each of the tables at the banquet.

We would also like to thank the following for their participation and efforts in making the reunion a success: At the banquet: the Pledge of Allegiance by B Von Ehrenkrook 826 Sq, Invocation by Rev John Nicolai 827 Sq, Roll Call by Ed Schwartz 826 Sq, Toast to Departed by Dexter Schultz 824 Sq. The text for the Toast to Departed was written by absent member Gordon Graham 824 Sq. The Memorabilia Room Setup Help: Bud Pressel, Russ Hayhurst, John Nicolai, Clyde Barr, Dexter Schultz and Al Davidson. Fred Derksmeier took photos of all 4 squadron dinners. Bette Schroeder, wife of Claude Schroeder, made a gift of scissors holders for the lady attendees. Art Shaw provided candied pecans for the Memorabilia room. We salute you all!

Election Of Directors

By resolution at the meeting of the Board of Directors, due to extenuating circumstances, the annual meeting of members for the election of officers was not held as noticed and in accordance with the By-laws of the Corporation, the election of the Directors was voted on by written ballot distributed to all members of record entitled to vote and the ballots were returned to the office of the corporation. The slate of officers for the year 1998-1999 were elected as follows:

Bud Markel, Beatrice Markel, John Billings, Edward Schwartz, and Harry K Hubertz.

The 1999 Reunion is tentatively being planned for October 6-10 in St Louis, Missouri. The Armed Forces Reunion, Inc. is negotiating with the St Louis Airport Marriott Hotel for a glitch-free reunion!



*Walter Chapman Receives a DFC from Dick Olson ,
son of Richard C Olson , (D) 826 Sq. Chapman
was his crew member.*



*Guest Speaker Patrick Murray addresses the 1998 Reunion
Banquet in Tucson, Arizona.*



824 Squadron Dinner



826 Squadron Dinner



825 Squadron Dinner



827 Squadron Dinner

1998 Scholarship Report

The 484th Bomb Group Association gave scholarship awards of \$600.00 each to six Italian students living in the Cerignola area, near the old airbase in Toretta, Italy. They are: Donatella Dambra, Maria Bonavita, Ivana Chieti, Caterina Muolo, Antonella Gallo, Rosaria Parisi. An honors certificate from the 484th Bomb Group (in place of a monetary award) was presented to Immacolata Calice, a highly qualified student, whose sister had been a previous awardee. Professor Albanese once again was able to select these highly qualified students with high grade point averages. Their letters follow this report. The ceremony took place on 11 May, 1998, in the Library of the City of Cerignola, Italy, there were 100 in attendance as well as the six awardees, the staff, teachers and the participants in the ceremony, Attorney Tortora Raffaele from the University "La Sapienza" of Rome, Judge of the Supreme Court of Cassazione, Teodato Labia, from the office of Public Education, Rossella Rinaldi, and, of course, Professor Umberto Albanese.

Once again, one award of \$1,000 together with a Scholarship Award Certificate, was made to a Harvard, Nebraska Public School student, Stephanie Colvin, at the graduation ceremony at the school in Harvard, Nebraska, on May 9, 1998. One of the Scholarship Awards Requirements was the Career Goal Essay submitted by Miss Colvin which was very impressive and indicated her leadership skills and high motivation to attain her goal.



The students selected for the 1998 annual scholarship award that took place in Cerignola earlier this year shown with Professor Umberto Albanese.

Contributions to the Scholarship Fund tabulated to date and since publication of Torretta Flyer No. 33.

Mrs Walter	Rix	824
Ray R	Lee Jr	825
In the Memory of Hershell Hendryx		
Paul W	Kerr	826
Dave	Mitchell	824
Joe	Hebert	826
John	Hicks	826
Thomas J	Bolt	825
In the Memory of Dwight Pelton		
Edward R	Schwartz	826

Rosaria Parisi

Corso Aldo Moro 139
71042 Cerignola (fg) ITALIA
To: Bud Markel

I am so happy and excited to correspond with you as the recipient of the scholarship award that will help me not only materially but above all gives me the incentive to always to do my best and to appreciate that this comes from people that I do not know. I know that this letter should be written in the English language, but I feel much more secure writing in the Italian language. As I would like very much to travel, I would like to come to the United States one day in order to thank personal all of the people who showed their belief in my ability and helped me to further my education.



Excuse the lateness of this letter and thank you for the award and for reinforcing the bonds between our two people, Italians and Americans.

Thanks. Rosaria Parisi

Maria Grazia Bonavita

Viale di Ponente No.19
Cerignola 71042 (fg) Italy



Dear friends

Since a few days ago, I didn't know this scholarship for students of secondary school in my town; certainly a beautiful and interesting initiative.

I feel a great joy because of this marvelous gift. At once I have esteemed this recognition as a prize to my commitment which I try always to keep constant and diligent.

I have not enough words to tell you how glad I am. Thank you.

Sincerely, Maria Grazia Bonavita



Antonella Gallo

Via Nino Bixio, 33, Stornara 71047 (fg), Italy
Bud Markel
484th Bomb Group Association,

I thank you for the assignation of the scholarship, as you know, on the eleventh of May. I want you to know what an important moment of my life this is, which has stimulated my scholastic endeavors. The money which I have received will be used only for scholastic needs. I wish to study at the University "La Sapienza" in Rome. I want to thank you for your trust in the selection of my teacher, Umberto Albanese, a dear man.

Yours faithfully,
Antonella Gallo



1998 Scholarship Report continues

Ivana Chieti , Top Photo
Via Torre Quarto 56
Cerignola 71042 (fg)
Italy



Caterina Muolo
Via Ugo Foscolo 12
Cerignola 71042 (fg)
Italy



Dear Sirs,

Our names are Caterina and Ivana. We are seventeen years old and we attend the fourth class in a Liceo specializing in scientific studies. We are writing this letter to thank you heartily for the interest that you have shown towards us. We are very happy to have taken part in this initiative, because we think that this recognition is a starting point to do our best in our next studies.

We wished we could thank you personally but for the moment we have to do it with a letter, hoping to welcome you here in Cerignola the next year. We would like to come in the USA one of these days to visit your wonderful country and to make this tie between our town and the "Bomb Group Association" deeper. We will never forget this beautiful experience. Thank you so very much. Caterina and Ivana P.S. we would like to correspond with you !

Caterina & Ivana



Immacolata Calice

Via M.S. Ausiliatrice, 163
Cerignola 71042 (fg) Italy

I'd like to thank the Bomb Group Association, Prof Umberto Albanese and all those who participated in the ceremony. Thanks a lot for having given to me this beautiful honor. I consider this gift very important for my studies and my life. I thank all the students that know me and those that don't know me for having expressed there sentiment of joy and their congratulations. I hope this gift gives to me and even to them the strength of going on and to do the best that one can do.

Sincerely
Immacolata Calice



Dambra Donatella

Via Gubbio 4
Cerignola, 71042 (fg)Italy
Dear friends,

I am Donatella Dambra and I thank all of you for the cash prize that you awarded to me. It has been a very pleasant surprise!

It increases my gladness because my father is a soldier (he is a Major of the field artillery) and serves our country as you served your country during the Second World War, for freedom and peace.

I know you are very fond of Cerignola and I hope our friendship will last long, so I promise that your prize will be a spur to study always with profit. Thanks a lot.

Yours, Dambra Donatella



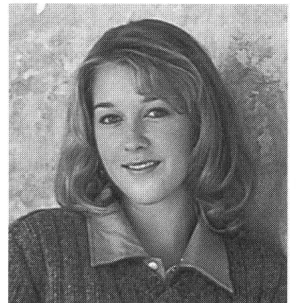
Stephanie Colvin

Harvard, NE

Hold fast to your dreams, for if dreams die, then life is like a broken winged bird that cannot fly.
Langston Hughes

An archeologist, an astronaut, a "movie star," an author, and a professional basketball player--these are all different careers I have wanted to pursue during the past eighteen years of my life. Although most of these "dreams" may seem unattainable to many people, I had no doubt in my ability to succeed! My dreams changed quite often during the early years of my life. I would eagerly inform my parents each time I made a new decision of what I wanted to become when I "grew up." My parents always greeted these new, sometimes crazy, ideas with warm smiles and words of encouragement.

Because my parents believed in me as a young child and continue to believe in me today, I am not afraid to pursue my dreams! My dreams for the future are not exactly the same today. Instead of becoming an archeologist, digging up dinosaur fossils around the world, I have dreams of becoming a television anchor person for a nationally televised news program! I also have dreams of possibly becoming involved in politics and law!



The Mission

By Art Ouellette



Mike Rainey, Art Ouellette, and Rix De Lambert in front of our tent.

How the Pilot almost got nailed by his Own Propeller

to the flight room for the morning's briefing. This was a time of trepidation for most of us as we awaited the impending announcements. The arrival of the briefing officer usually was cause for much stirring about as the crews openly wished for an easy mission, and secretly prayed for a milk run. After preliminary remarks the curtain was finally parted to display the target for today plotted out on the plastic coated king size map that covered the wall. We could all see that the target would be somewhere in Northern Italy. Unlike the moans that usually greeted the unveiling of a particularly tough target, this new destination

The guy with the flashlight wasn't too early that morning so that was an early indication that today's mission might not be a lengthy one. All of our crew were on call for that day's mission so there was stirring in the four corners of the tent. Although it was early January, the 4th in fact, I really didn't feel the outside cold as at this early hour our stove still had not run out of fuel. The zippers on most of the sleeping bags were slowly being pulled back by the early risers. A few of the six still lay still as they opted for a few spare moments of rest, but we all realized we must get up. There was no phone on the night stand available for a last minute call to the boss to advise him that we were taking one of our many available sick days. Getting out of flying a mission at this last hour would have been a betrayal to the rest of the guys. Men throughout our group were at this moment crawling out of their sacks. Bare feet hitting the freezing floors, were a constant reminder of the cold outside. A few Brrrrs were heard after the floor contact followed by some minor moans and groans as each of us tried to rub away the latest kink we had picked up during the night's sleep.

At this stage of our missions (4 more to go) all the small talk, verbal exchanges or serious disagreements had been placed on the back burner. Serious silence now dominated these early morning awakenings as the men slowly dressed. Breakfast was usually scrambled eggs, sausage, toast and coffee. The chow hounds still rushed to head up the line, and ate heartily for sustenance, others for the sake of maintaining stability in their stomachs opted for toast and coffee. After this early morning meal we would proceed

brought little reaction from the attending crews.

"Our target for today will be the marshaling yards at Trento, Italy". So spoke the briefing officer that morning. Today, if you were to check the 208 missions flown by the 484th Bomb Group you would find that Trento, Italy was hit only once by our group. Today, if you asked any of the survivors from that mission, I am sure they would all say once was enough.

This would be the 140th mission flown by the 484th. We were told that 28 B-24's would be used in this raid. Of that number only one was forced back to base by mechanical failure. That is a pretty good indicator that this target did not put much fear in the minds of the crews and they seemed anxious to chalk up this soft touch. We were then told that flak would be light as there were few guns in the area. They assured us there was little chance of being hit by enemy fighters and our return would be covered by friendly fighter escort. That was the kind of information one liked to hear and the confidence level was rising by the second. Sounded like this might be a milk run.

After that briefing I believe most of the crews that day believed we indeed were in for a much needed breather. We filed out of the flight room to the awaiting trucks for the bumpy 3 mile ride to the flight line supply room to draw our flying equipment. This would include heated suit, boots, oxygen mask, Mae West, parachute, 45 caliber pistol, an escape kit that contained \$48, a food ration, and maps, and the newly arrived flak jacket and helmet. These would be topped off with our new Alpaca flying suits. The outmoded sheepskin and leather suits had been replaced by

the F-3 electric suits. They comprised of a light weight jacket, trousers, boots, and gloves all wired to be plugged together and worn under the outer flying suit. The old sheepskin boot was still being worn here. For gloves we started off with the thin silk glove that allows us gunners to work on our guns at high altitude without our skin sticking to the metal. These were then covered by the heated gloves. This whole get up had proved much more comfortable and allowed for greater ease of movement for crew members. All this gear was thrown into the large B-2 equipment bag, tossed onto the trucks for the trip to the hard stands and the awaiting planes that were being checked out by their respective crew chiefs. The truck pulled up near B-24 number 24, and our crew piled out. I hadn't even bothered to zip the equipment bag shut for the short ride and immediately started to dress. Some of the guys would dress aboard the ship others like myself preferred to dress right there on the hard stand. As I discarded my regular clothes they went into the B-2. I put it into the waist section of the plane through the open door of the back hatch, and hoisted myself aboard. The bag was stowed into any available corner that was out of the way, and I went about a visual check of my turret and oxygen equipment. I was as ready as I was going to be. The bulk of our missions had been flown aboard plane number 24 so the crew was pretty familiar with this plane and its crew chief, Sgt. Coleman. He was the tech sergeant who was assigned to mechanically care for this particular ship. Most of these engineers knew their business and their planes. They were even capable of pulling complete engine changes right there on the flight line. Number 24 was in its original aluminum state as they no longer painted the planes because it only added extra drag to the ship. The nose of this plane didn't sport any painting as nose art already was becoming a thing of the past. Just the large numerals 2 and 4 graced the metal skin of the front of the fuselage, and 14 small stenciled red bombs under the pilot's window indicating this aircraft had completed 14 missions. We always thought of number 24 as being ours but the twin tails bore the red bow tie design of the 484th so it had also been flown by other crews. Some of our crew had their A-2 Jackets painted with a bathing beauty riding on a bomb but that was our only personal touch.

Number 24 was ready to go and Sgt. Coleman gave our pilot Chief Don Zimmerman the thumbs up, and they started their pre flight check. I was in the waist section and never did learn a whole lot about engines. Usually riding back there with me were tail gunner Rix "Buck" De Lambert, Nose gunner "Big" Jim Carney, and Top Gunner Mike Rainey. Normal waist passengers, engineer Kahn and radio man Kinney were attending to business on the flight deck and would only return to their waist guns when the flight was under way when they would shift positions with Rainey and Carney who moved forward to their combat positions.

By now the pilots were revving the engines to see if they passed the test, and soon we would be ready to taxi to the runway. We were all plugged into the intercom as we listened to the exchanges going on between the flight leaders, the tower or our pilot as they made ready for take off. We prepared to leave the hard stand and assume our proper position in the take off line up. I listened to the purr of the warmed up engines as they prepped themselves for the lunge forward. Soon the commands came down and every ship in turn approached the take off point, pushed the throttles forward to unleash their full fury, released the brakes and the big birds slowly moved forward as they sought freedom from the ground. We were airborne and all aboard felt a relief as we

finally lifted from the metal matting. Now the long process of forming up the group began as we started to gain altitude in a series of large lazy circles. The crew would get to their normal positions during these maneuvers and ready themselves for battle.

Shaping a bomb group into a battle formation was a slow methodical process that required patience on every one's part but eventually the geometric designs of the individual Able, Baker, Charlie triangles would form into the group master plan for the raid. This particular day, by the time we had reached that point we were high over the Adriatic Sea as we headed north toward the target. All the gunners by now had taken their positions in their turrets awaiting the pilots command to test their guns. This soon was heard and I let fly a few short bursts away from the close formation. I followed the tracers in flight, there were no malfunctions, my guns were ready if the need arose. I then started an occasional panning of the air space beneath me. Right and left, and then slow 360's. We were on our way. Up to this point things were pretty much like most of our other missions.

We kept climbing slowly getting to the altitude they wanted to attain. They reached that elevation, and then cruised north over water up the Adriatic Sea. When we reached a turning point just about between Venice and Trieste the formation banked left toward Trento. We were now flying overland and not too far left of the Ossoppo airstrip near Udine. This at one time was a base for German and Facisti ME 109 fighters who enjoyed hitting stragglers from here.

There was a report that a twin engine jet scout-bomber had also flown out of here for awhile. Trento lies near the foot of the Dolomite Alps in Northern Italy. The elevation of these mountains runs from 5000 to 12000 feet at their highest point at Marmolata. Any train to Austria had to follow the Dolomites north to the Brenner Pass. Recon reports to mission planners at 49th Wing command had the double tracks at the Trento marshaling yards clogged with rolling stock.

The pickings would be good for the 15th Air Force that day. We reached another turning point and headed for our IP. From that point it was a straight arrow course directly to the target. The formation ahead of us were now on their bomb run and had a successful drop without getting any flak. At that moment all hell broke loose in our formation, the 824th and the 825th squadrons. Before we hit the IP to start our bomb run heavy and intense flak started to explode into, above and below, the planes in our V formations.

I can only tell you of what I saw and felt that day. If there were no fighters reported in the target area it was the practice of the ball gunners to bring their turrets to a stop and open the turret door during the bomb run. This at least allowed for some possibility of escape in case of a direct hit.

I was standing on the seat of my turret as our ship was being rocked by the Flak, and the black puffs seemed to be everywhere one looked. It sounded as if someone was beating on the sides of our ship with a baseball bat. I picked this up even though my ears were covered by the ear phones of my flight helmet. I could also see black puffs through the waist windows, as I looked right and left.

The plane was swaying as I held on to the post that supported the ball turret. The three of us in the waist as well as the tail gunner, who had opened up his turret were looking about for damage as the plane continued its run on the target.

We had not even been ordered to throw out any chaff that day. Radio silence was now broken as we heard the call for "Bombs Away". This came from our Bombardier who followed the drop of the lead ship in the formation. The Pilots quickly responded to the sharp left dive of the formation leader as they all tried to escape the flak from the gunners below who seemed to have a dead fix on us as they continued to pound away. The formation tried to pull back together as the leader set out for the waters of the Ligurian Sea as he intended to return home over water down the west side of Italy. The formation seemed to be regaining some sort of order and us gunners all resumed our positions as we pointed out to each other the many visible flak holes that had riddled the ship. As I started to pan around I could see that all was not well with the ships in our formation. The tightness of the vees had gone up in smoke you could say, and quite a few of the planes were struggling to maintain their positions. Years later a pilot discussing this mission claimed to have seen losses of up to 7 ships in our group. Officially 2 were reported. I never understood this discrepancy. I also had seen more than 2 planes struggling. I now started to hear a lot of technical jargon about engine troubles coming over the intercom from many sources. The order for our engineer to come to the flight deck was one order that I did recognize as I felt a noticeable change in the flight and sound of our plane. An engine on the right side was running rough. The pilot now advised us that a couple of the engines had been hit and that the number three engine was losing oil. They were working on the situation but we were going to drop back of the formation as he could not keep up. He proceeded to drop down to get away from the rest of the formation. Everyone in our crew still remained at their positions. I could see that the last formation had completed their bomb run, and the flak had disappeared as the batteries cooled off. For some reason the first and last formations had been spared but the middle of the group had been saturated by all they could throw at us. You name them, Ploesti, Vienna, Munich, we had hit them all but we had never experienced flak like what we had just felt and seen. It was a known fact that the Germans mounted their ack-ack on railroad cars and trucks. This had been observed by partisans. It is possible that they had taken the few batteries at Trento and moved them up into the nearby mountains. They could easily have gained 5000 to 10,000 feet above sea level by their move. Add this to the fact that we went in lower than normal, well just maybe the cannoners had an edge that day.

We were having all types of problems with number 3 and we were losing altitude. The gunners were ordered out of their turrets and the crew was told to stand by. We had dropped down, and now lagged far behind the formation. We weren't the only ones as there were other stragglers still in view. Pilot Zimmerman now informed us that the number three engine was running away. We should open the escape hatches, put on our chutes and stand by.

He was going to try to maneuver the plane, and make the prop fall off away from the plane. We were not to jump till he rang the bail out bell which he would now try so we would know what it sounded like. We were scrambling around for our chutes as the startling tinny test was sounded and frankly it didn't have a reassuring ring.



Plane 42-51694 nose no 24, showing battle damage to the right rudder after being dragged to the bone yard.

Everyone in the waist section was now standing around the open floor door that had been cracked open by gunner De Lambert. We kept looking at one another as the plane started to go into a series of moves. One of us just kept shaking his head, another seemed to be praying. My reaction was a nervous unbelieving throaty chuckle as I noticed the label on my chute. It had been made by the Atlantic Parachute Co. in Lowell, Massachusetts, my hometown. We all wound up staring at the open sky below us. They also had opened the bomb bay doors. Unbeknownst to us some of the crew were standing on the catwalk ready to bail out. The whirling prop was making an unbelievably high pitched eerie sound as once more the pilot started to put the plane through these odd movements. No one knows how or why but I experienced this so I know it really did happen. The prop did fall free and clear of the engine, not away from the plane but towards it. One of the prop blades like a sharp knife pierced it and came through the right side of the plane into the bomb bay. The blade cut back as far as it could, until it came in contact with the cat walk support post in the middle of the bomb bay. This stop caused the whole prop assembly and blades to cad wheel away from the plane, but as they spun away they had one more hit and cut to make. As the blades passed near the right rudder they sliced off about half of it before spinning away from the plane. The cut off piece of the rudder followed the whirling prop assembly, and they both fell earthward. As soon as the blade had sliced into the bomb bay, three of the crew members standing on the cat walk had bailed out believing that the ship was falling apart. If you could have heard the noise that slicing prop had made you would have done the same, I'm sure. We, who were standing by the waist escape hatch saw the three bodies hurtle by right below us. Just then in the waist there

was a move to follow but a cooler head prevailed and reminded us of the bail out bell. We all plugged into the intercom and listened intently as the pilot brought us up to speed. We were told that we would head back via an inland route as the pilot believed we could reach friendly territory and find an allied airfield to land at, if we had to make an emergency landing. Everyone seemed to prefer this to staying over water, and chance having to ditch. We were losing altitude so we should try to lighten the plane by throwing out everything that wasn't needed in an effort to maintain altitude. He also told us to make sure that one of us in the waist stayed on intercom, and then he kind of threw an off the cuff remark at us like, "the manifold pressure is dropping on number 2 engine, but we are watching it closely." I had never heard Pilot Don Zimmerman get excited about much of anything before, and evidently he wasn't showing any of it at this point either.

First, the bomb bay and escape hatch were closed to cut back on the drag. Second, we started throwing out everything that wasn't welded or glued down. Flak jackets, steel helmets, and the ammo cans went first, followed by a steady stream of whatever. For a couple of reasons I especially enjoyed throwing out an ammo can that one of the guys had defecated in on the way up here. I was hoping it would bounce off the head of the German gunner who had put that large flak hole by my turret. Even the extra clothes were going out the windows. All I wanted right now was what I was wearing, my parachute harness, a chute, and my GI boots.



Nose section of ship 24.

We had been keeping an eye on the oil trailing onto the wing from engine #2 as it hit the slip stream, and splattered onto the wing on our left side, and wondering how serious that was when the intercom crackled;

"I am going to have to feather number 2, we are going to try to make it to an English emergency landing strip just behind the German lines. Keep getting rid of everything you can and see if you can drop the ball turret out of the plane."

This message caused a new flurry of activity and any fear of the fighters from Udine was thrown to the wind along with all the machine gun parts and ammunition we could work loose. If we couldn't shoot at them at least we could throw things at them. Actually the situation now struck us all as being extremely serious.

I had immediately got hold of a few tools we hadn't thrown out and started the procedure of loosening the ball turret in an attempt to drop it out of the plane.

Try as I might I can not to this day recall ever being shown how to accomplish that task, but with the help of one of the other guys we seemed to have managed to have loosened all the retaining nuts except the last one.

We advised the pilot of the situation, he hastily responded that we should drop it as soon as possible. We had a hard time working the last nut from its bolt as the full weight of the turret was on that point, suddenly the retaining bolt snapped and the turret dropped wedging itself in the turret well.

I came across a gun barrel that hadn't made it out the window yet and started a steady pounding on the edges of the ball retaining ring but to no avail.

The ball was partly out the bottom of the plane but hopelessly wedged in there. We reported this to the pilot but by then we had been losing altitude so fast that all his and the co-pilots efforts were going toward trying to keep the ship aloft. From a previous experience we knew he had

flown the B-24 with only 3 engines but flying with 2 engines gone was a whole different ball game.

We didn't know it yet but we had managed to get beyond the German lines, and were now fast approaching some kind of a city or town and the pilot alerted us to prepare for a crash landing as they tried to line the ship up with the small runway for an attempted landing. The hydraulic system like everything else was in chaos and the gear had to be manually cranked down by crew men up front.

We all rushed to the bulkhead leading to the bomb bay and braced ourselves for what was coming as the rooftops and landscape whipped by the open waist windows.

We were at tree top level and soon we could see the approaching steel matting through the openings around the ball turret. We heard the familiar squeak of a tire as it made contact with the runway. The squeak

of the second shoe hitting the floor never came. It was replaced by a screeching, grinding, wailing sound that terrorized us all as the plane slid on the metal matting.

That was now replaced by the sight of grass as we spun and bounced out of control off the runway onto the turf. Just before the plane made its final movement, the wedged in ball turret that had been bouncing along with the plane freed itself and sprang up in front of us. We were all pressed up tight against the bulkhead.

The ball turret now seemed to momentarily pause in mid air, and then it hurtled into the tail section like a thrown baseball on its way into a catcher's mitt, and settled there. With that the suddenly old #24 moaned, groaned, tilted to one side and died. In the waist we were all alive although pinned in by the crumpled aluminum. The metal had pressed up against my chest but quickly I slipped out of its grasp headed for the nearest opening and like Superman I bounded out an open window just as the plane uttered its last gasp. I landed on my side in a large pool of gasoline but almost in shock I couldn't feel a thing. Fearing a fire or explosion I got to my feet in a hurry, and ran to escape the approaching holocaust

A quick look backward assured me that there was no fire, so I slowly came to a halt, bent over, placed my hands on my knees, took a deep breath and spoke to God in silent prayer. This mission was over. There were people coming towards the plane from all parts of the airdrome. Before we knew it some of us in the crew were forced outside of the inner circle of the curious onlookers as all tried hard to get a look at the twisted mass of the wreckage., I made my way through the gathered assembly back to the front cockpit and could plainly see that Pilot Zimmerman was still calmly seated there in the main pilot's seat. One of the blades of the feathered #2 engine had sliced through the skin of the plane. It was a strange sight because it seemed to be resting in the seated pilot's lap as if it had cut off his legs.

In answer to queries about his health and safety he was reassuring everyone that he was OK, and he started to extricate himself from this odd position. I drifted back to the waist section with some of the others and retrieved a parachute that I had plans for. After Pilot Zimmerman was out of the ship he called for a head count and we found that besides the three who had parachuted over enemy territory we were all accounted for and except for a slight cut on Jim Carney's hand all had come through without a scratch. A virtual miracle had to occur to bring seven men out of that mess without a serious injury. One of the onlookers, an RAF pilot, told me they were taking bets that no one would come out alive. He also took pictures of the wrecked B-24 and later he mailed me copies that I still have and treasure. We had touched down on one wheel but then the good old unreliable nose wheel had collapsed right on schedule just as predicted it would. The other main landing gear evidently had not locked and it collapsed on ground contact causing the plane to spin off the runway. We grinded our way off the matting, and wound up on the turf part of the field sliding between the tower and a parked Spitfire before old #24 spun to a stop. This British airdrome was exactly 32 miles from the German lines. The milk run had turned into a near total disaster.

We each gathered a few remaining mementos including my parachute, calls were made, and pretty soon we were aboard a C-47 on our way to Ciampino airport in Rome. We were kept

there for a few days at an Air Force section. We were debriefed by intelligence personel there who seemed very interested in the details of our mission. We were not allowed to leave the base, and that was as close as I ever got to seeing the city of Rome except from the air. A plane from group came over from Torretta and took us back to base. With only 3 more missions to go we ran into a stretch of bad weather that held us up till the 7th of February. By the 17th we had finished our missions.

On the last three raids we went to Regensburg, Vienna and Rosenheim, Germany, where we saw our first German jet but it did not attack. Not exactly a couple of milk runs but we made it. Two of the missions were flown in a battered old veteran of a plane that was still painted green, but the old tub carried us back safe and sound. Bravo, Ole, and Hip, Hip, Hoorah.

The missions were ended.

By the 28th of February, 1945, I was in Naples awaiting shipment to the USA aboard the USS Richardson. The sailing was a success and we made it back to the states where I served out the rest of my stay in the service. I soon was discharged from the Air Force and returned to my hometown Lowell, Massachusetts in better shape than when I left. What happened to the parachute you ask? I managed to get it back to our tent at Torretta. There I pulled the ripcord, cut out two full panels for myself, gave the other panels to any one who wanted them and buried the pack under the floor of our tent. I wrapped my panels into a neat tight little package which I brought back with me when I returned. I kept the silken panels till after I was married. I then had them made into a nightgown that I then presented to my wife, whom I have known and loved dearly for 50 years. She still has it in a cedar chest with some of her other keepsakes.

The only time I have ever been up in any type of aircraft since I returned from that last mission was when I just couldn't resist going up in a visiting gas balloon some few years ago.

The End



No 3 propeller sliced into the skin of the plane and into the Captain's seat.

Catch 22 Addendum

Story by Richard Hugo, 825th Sq



Once in a while a friend will ask me what I think of *Catch 22*. When I'm asked I feel faintly uncomfortable because, being a writer and having been a bombardier in the 15th Air Force in Italy, I suspect my answer is supposed to carry some extra weight and I don't like bearing the responsibility of the expert critic. My admiration for those who do is considerable.

I enjoyed the book, and I'm sure I would have enjoyed it without my background of experience, but given that, Heller brought memories pouring back, some painful, some delightful, and all of them welcome because bad or good they are mine.

The bombers in *Catch 22* are mediums in the 12th Air Force, and the airfield is located in Corsica. Rome, readily accessible in the novel, is subdued by war, slightly sinister, but a relief from the boredom of the airfield. Under the squalor, life still pulsates. Women and booze can be had.

Our bomber was the B-24 a heavy bomber, the flying pregnant water buffalo we called it. We flew fewer and longer missions, and we flew at high altitude. And we were located near Cerignola, which is not Rome, in drab, hostile Puglia.

If modern war is a "giant slapstick" as Karl Shapiro said somewhere, is really a spectacle of men and whole nations gone bananas—and I think it is even when a war is as close to being "justified" as was World War 11—then I suppose no one has captured that insanity better than Heller, at least not since Byron's hilarious description of battle in "Don Juan."

Funny as *Catch 22* is, it is more sad than funny. Accuracy wouldn't have it another way, and Heller is much more accurate than a stranger to the experiences that initiated the novel could imagine. After the misery, despair, boredom and fear are modified or erased by years, the sadness remains, a gnawing constant. My favorite book about the war remains *The Gallary* by John Horne Burns because, despite its dated style, it confined itself to the essentials of suffering and fear, most of all to a sad-

ness undiluted by sociological or political idealism. When someone is trying to kill you, you try to stay alive. The side you happen to be on makes little difference, and even if it did, you had little or no control over it to start with. Idealism is a luxury most poor people can't afford. I wish this weren't true.

Some critics have objected to Milo Minderbinder bombing his own airfield. Psychologically it's a rare weak point in the book. When men are as terrified as Yossarian is, they are dangerous. Milo would have shot on the spot because funny as war can be, the men involved are often deadly serious. One story that made the rounds in Italy was about a line sergeant (a sergeant who worked on the flight line on the field) who was finally caught after ten B-24's had exploded on takeoff over a period of several weeks. The sergeant, the story went, had been getting 1000 dollars a plane and 100 dollars a man from the Germans, a total of 2000 dollars an explosion. He was tried, convicted and executed within a half hour after he was caught. His immediate superior, a lieutenant, had put a .45 to the sergeant's head and pulled the trigger a minute or two after the sentence was read. I don't know if the story was true or not but I never met anyone who didn't believe it.

Aside from objections to the Minderbinder bombing, *Catch 22* seems most accurate when it is screwiest. I clowned my way through the war as best I could, and so did others. What else could a sane person do. If we were sane. The events were out of control. Yossarian is a sane man in a world gone ape. Even rational scientific laws are suspended. Planes disappear into clouds without a trace, and mystical as that may sound to someone who wasn't there, it is true.

Yossarian can accept this mad world and fly more and more missions as the quota increases until finally the odds run out and he is killed. He can escape it by telling lies, by saying the madness is really sanity, and giving glowing reports to high level Washington officials about perverted and degenerate men. Or he

can run away.

In a stretched sense, some of us did all three. The quotas of missions were not increased arbitrarily in the 15th Air Force and I doubt they were in the 12th. I presume this was a dramatic device employed by Heller to good purpose. And you could get out of flying anytime you wanted to. All you had to do was ground yourself and lose your flight pay. Flying was voluntary in World War II, and if you quit, the command had no recourse except idle threats. It was the Cathcart in you that made you go on, that part of you that wanted the approval of others, that couldn't risk social censure. I flew because others were flying and I couldn't have faced their scorn. And the missions increased too, not in real numbers, but in the size those numbers became when compounded by fear. The final mission may be only one, but that one was a million. The fictionalized facts in *Catch 22* were psychological realities, and that's the worst kind.

Yet my hero of those days was a man from Texas named Marshall who, after a series of crashes and dangerous missions, finally had his plane so badly shot up over Vienna one day that almost every system in the plane malfunctioned. He managed to fly the ship by holding the stick deep into the pit of his stomach which would normally put the nose straight up. Even then he lost altitude and managed to stagger over the Yugoslavia border where he and his crew bailed out.

Aided by the Partisans, he came back about a month later, white as tile, and announced that he would never fly again. For a while some superior officers threatened him but he held fast. When he said never, he meant it. They couldn't even fly him to Naples to take the boat back home. They had to haul him across Italy in a truck. I remember standing in the Puglia mud and watching him wave good-bye cheerful and resolute, the only man in the back of the truck. I was so young it never occurred to me that I admired a man for doing what I feared to do because if I did no one would admire me.

I accepted without question a world where events defied explanation. Planes that disappeared from formations without anyone remembering what had happened to them. The huge orange rectangular mass, like a geometric fish flopping or maybe a billowing bed sheet on the bank of the Danube at Wiener Neustadt. The train at Szeged exploding into a lovely fireworks display with rockets and flares oozing out over the buildings from the marshaling yard. Fear on the ground. From altitude sheer spectacle. We had fears of our own. I remember once a friend criticized a long bombing mission poem I'd written because he said I showed no awareness I was bombing people, and in a rare burst of intellectual superiority I said that's exactly the point. We were not bombing people. Towns looked as real as maps. Bomb impacts were minute puffs of silent smoke. The first time I saw "the enemy" was after I returned to America where German POWs were waiting on us in the mess hall at Camp Patrick Henry, Virginia. Somehow they didn't look like the enemy.

I ran away too. I drank heavily. I hitchhiked into Cerignola to find something to do though I knew nothing was there. I wanted to feel in town and out of war. I hitchhiked to Foggia and played Benny Goodman and Tommy Dorsey records in the USO club. Those records seemed terribly important. I had to hitchhike over thirty miles one way to hear them. In one way or another others were running away too. Bombardiers were denied the lead position on their last mission. They had a habit of dropping the bombs a few miles short of the flak area to insure a safe return.

I think the reason we accepted the madness was that we didn't know it was there, or if we did we didn't care. The more missions you flew, the narrower became your concerns until finally all you really cared about was your own survival. I remember our pilot, Lt. Howard (NMI) Steinberg, telling me a Jewish joke once about a young man who couldn't wait to get into combat. He volunteered eagerly for the infantry and all through the training he grumbled impatiently and expressed his dissatisfaction with a system that delayed him from confrontation with the enemy. Finally he got to North Africa and was facing the Germans. His first taste of combat was a prolonged devastating German artillery attack, and when it finally stopped he stood up and yelled in Yiddish, "My God. A man can get killed out here."

That's no joke. I had volunteered for the Army Air Corps for the cheapest kind of romantic personal reasons. I felt weak and inadequate, and foolishly thought facing and surviving danger would give me spiritual depth and a courageous dimension I lacked and desperately wanted. "I went hunting wild after the wildest beauty in the world." And when, like the Jewish soldier in Steinberg's joke, I woke up one day, around my fifteenth mission, and realized I could be killed, things were never the same. I was not mocked by "the steady running of the hour." I was terrorized by it.

It wasn't the reality of the war, but what your imagination did with it. You had nothing but time, mocking hours, in which to dwell, and you dwelled on being killed. Your imagination expanded your chances of dying hopelessly beyond statistical chance.

Another dreadful story I heard I would play back over and over to myself. Like the story about the flyers who bailed out over Munich to be marched naked into the center of the city before screaming mobs and then beaten to death. I could see it vividly, by day in my mind and at night in dreams. And the panic in my belly was physiologically real. Every morning explosive diarrhea and phlegmatic choking. When lucky I avoided the bizarre dreams by drinking myself into insensibility. One bombardier carried liquor in the plane and started drinking at 14,000 feet on the let down, as soon as he could safely remove his oxygen mask. And when we picked up an Axis Sally broadcast, either in the air or at the base, I could no longer laugh off her threats. She was out to kill me and I knew she could do it.

It would be unfair to infer I was typical. Most of the flyers, while tearful, handled their fears better than I could. They had gone to war with less illusions than I had, and they were simply more stable to begin with.

Yossarian was mature enough to have a kind of honor despite his fear, and the old Italian in the whorehouse was old enough to have none. He would have told the lies Cathcart wanted him to, and so would I but for far less sophisticated reasons. The Italian knew it made no difference. Worried as I was about myself I would never have seen the truth about Cathcart. Fear stopped me from seeing the most obvious madness, let alone distinguishing right from wrong.

I didn't question it when some idiot in Air Force Headquarters hatched the idea that when the entire Air Force was bombing the primary target, we could divert the German's attention by sending a lone bomber to another target on what was called a "nuisance raid." We never asked how one plane could divert the attention of a nation from 1500 hundred planes, especially when those 1500 planes were several hundred miles from the one plane. And no one asked just what the hell "German's attention" really meant

anyway. As if a nation has the organic senses of a man. We were giving Austria our famous eye fake.

When these "nuisance raids" started, no one in our squadron was getting any medals or citations, except, of course, for the automatic ones like the Air Medal which was given after five missions with an oak leaf cluster added after each successive ten. Medals were awarded on the basis of a written report submitted by the squadron intelligence officer. What you actually did had little effect. But what the report said you did, and how it said it made all the difference

Our squadron intelligence officer was a man named Barudi or Buradi, something like that, a nice, mild, honest man as I remember. I think he had been a physicist teaching at Kentucky or Virginia. Whatever his talents, he couldn't write and no one was getting medals. You could have hung by your heels from the bomb bay and shot down ME 109's with bow and arrow and the report issued from the squadron would have made it sound drab routine.

Barudi (I'll call him) took a month's leave around the time the nuisance raids were starting and his replacement was a big, fat, cigar chomping American blowhard. What nation could have provided him so readily? He was everything Europeans lampoon in the American. He talked in a loud coarse voice and was unaffected by anything, dismayed by nothing And he could write. He could pour bullshit onto paper as easily as he could pour it into the air.

And in the entire Air Force, against odds of around 1500 to one, we, Lt. Howard (NMI) Steinberg and crew, were selected to run a nuisance raid on Innsbruck while the rest of the Air Force was bombing Vienna. Not going to Vienna where the Germans had over 300 flak guns was fine. On the other hand, even with Anthony Cartwright, our English immigrant tail gunner who had eight Zeros in the South Pacific and three ME 109's with us to his credit, going it alone over Austria wasn't inviting. In those days a bomber alone was virtually a sure target for a fighter.

Two navigators were on the flight deck behind the pilots. One, who I think was named Moody, operated a radar set that could scan the earth through the cloud cover below. The other operated what we called a C Box, a radar set that gave navigational fixes from impulses sent from fixed tower positions in allied-held territory. Our crew navigator, Ryan O'Brien, was in the nose turret just forward and above me doing pilotage navigation, taking fixes whenever the clouds parted and he could see recognizable check points.

Once I had pulled the cotter pins from the bomb fuses, usually when we were climbing from 9000 to 11,000 feet, allowing the bombs to arm as they fell, I had nothing to do until we reached the

target. The trip north was usual. Uneventful. The long ponderous climbing, the boring roar of the engines, the way the earth below gradually lost all vertical contour and flattened out as it wavered and fell back. Sometimes I pretended to sleep, tried to sleep, and often to show others how courageous I was I told them I slept.

I'll have to explain, I hope clearly and briefly, what happened on a radar mission. The radar navigator could see the town reproduced on the radar scope, though the bombardier could see only the clouds below. The town would appear about the size of a quarter, depending of course on the size of the town, and while we were avowed to be concentrating on a particular strategic target, say the railroad marshaling yards at the south edge of the city, in reality we weren't fooling anybody. The chances of hitting even the town were only fair.

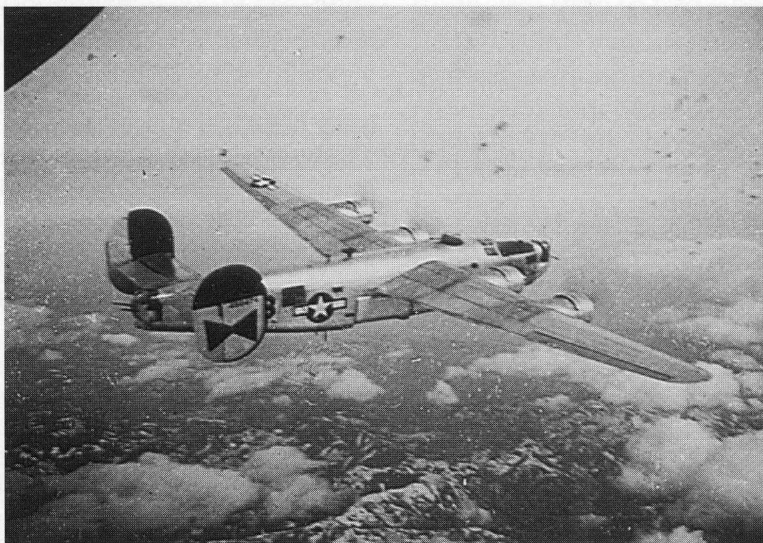
I would operate the bombsight just as if I could see the target, only the radar operator would act as my eyes by reading the information from the radar scope to me over the intercom. I

would kill course, that is fly the plane directly toward the target without drifting off course, by cranking corrections into the course knobs on the sight in response to the radar navigator's orders, "Left, Bombardier. Right, Bombardier." And I would kill rate, that is adjust the bomb sight so that the rate of a motor driven index toward a stationary index was corresponding to the rate of approach of the plane to the target. I did this by adjusting position of the stationary index on the bombsight in response to the radar navigator's announcements of approach angles to the target, "Sixty-five degrees. Sixty-degrees." When he said "fifty-five," the movable index should be moving exactly past fifty-five on the bomb sight. The indices were also electrical contacts, and when they met they sent an electrical impulse to the bomb racks and the bombs dropped.

Everything was set. I had the bomb bay doors open. My panel lights were on. The voice of the navigator was clear. I adjusted the stationary index, which really adjusted the rate of the moving index until the moving index was crawling up the dial on the sight at exactly the announced rate of approach.

The first thing that went wrong was my throat mike went out. This happened about two minutes before bombs away, so although I could hear the radar navigator I couldn't answer him. When the movable index touched the stationary index the panel lights indicating the bombs in the racks failed to go out, meaning the bombs hadn't fallen. I hit the salvo handle and still the lights burned. I hit it again. Nothing. Meanwhile, the radar navigator was saying over and over in my ear, "Bombardier, drop the bombs. Bombardier, drop the bombs."

There we were, flying through clouds 25,000 feet over Inns-



44-50476 "Peggy Ann" flies into a flack barrage

bruck with a load of bombs. I couldn't drop the bombs and I couldn't tell anybody I couldn't drop the bombs. Getting rid of the bombs was the important part of the mission to flyers because, not only did it remove a terrible danger, it meant you had another mission to your credit and were that closer to going home, and it made the plane lighter, faster. When the bombs fell out you could feel the plane jump like a horse, suddenly freed of all that weight. And you would peel off, if you were in a flak area, and take advantage of that speed as you went down and out, away from the black bursts that were threatening your life, the plane screaming from speed, the wings vibrating from the strain.

This day there was no flak. Still the urgency of getting the bombs out was there, and by now it seemed like everyone in the plane was yelling at me to drop the bombs. I was so frustrated I beat my gloved fists against the plexiglass bubbled windows in the nose. I attacked the salvo handle like a savage. I swore, prayed, swore, begged and swore to no one in particular. The racks were frozen and the bombs were stuck, and I couldn't tell anyone.

I stood up with my head in the astro dome, one foot on either ammo can that held the ammo for the nose turret guns, and I looked back through the dome and the pilot's windshield at Steinberg. I suppose a case can be made for man's ability to speak with his eyes, though I suspect the whole facial expression is involved in wordless communication. If eyes alone can talk, they can probably say, "I love you" or "You turn me on, let's shack up" or "You're boring me" or "I hate your guts." But try with eyes alone to say, "The bomb racks are frozen and my throat mike has malfunctioned." Steinberg and I stared helplessly at each other over the tops of our oxygen masks through two layers of glass.

I hooked onto a walk-around oxygen bottle, took my parachute and started back through the narrow passageway to the flight deck. Unattached from the electrical heating system, I immediately felt the terrible cold, around - 70°. When I finally reached the pilots, I tore off my mask and yelled explanations at Steinberg over the engine scream. Steinberg yelled back that the only thing we could do was toggle the bombs out one by one by prying a screwdriver against the release arm of each bomb shackle. We had tried the pilot's emergency bomb release cord and that was frozen too.

I took the screwdriver, had the engineer close the bomb bay doors, and walked out the catwalk to the bomb racks. Then I wedged myself between the racks, rapped a mugger's grip around the left rack with my left arm, and signaled the engineer to open the doors. As the doors rolled open, the blast of air into the bomb bay shocked my eyes. I'd had to leave my parachute behind because the space between the racks was too narrow, and I was standing in that roaring rush of air, one arm tight around the shackle, on about ten inches width of catwalk, five miles above the earth. That sounds brave, I suppose. Oddly, I felt no fear of the height or the situation, and I think for several reasons. One was simply that I was young and had no real sense of what I was doing. Another is that, while I'm quite frightened of heights, I had no sense of height because five miles without reference ceases to be distance and becomes a vague void. Then static distance, looking down the side of a skyscraper (I'm always intimidated when I'm in New York) is far different than being propelled by engines. In a sense, the engines keep you from falling because they are holding you up.

Just as I reached for the first bomb shackle with the screwdriver, the bombs fell out. All this time we had been circling aim-

lessly through clouds, but I suppose more or less in the Innsbruck area. Our navigator, O'Brien, had come back from the nose turret and, with much more strength than anyone else in the plane, had finally pulled the pilot's bomb release cord free.

I watched the bombs going down, converging as they seemed to into one mass. Just then the clouds parted and I watched that hunk of component explosives falling farther and farther away toward a bleak, blue black uninhabited region of the Alps. Before the bombs landed, the clouds snapped shut. We had no idea of exactly where we were. There's a possibility we were over Switzerland, which is less than fifty miles away from Innsbruck, a meager distance when you are at high altitude, flying. I'm sure of one thing. We had contributed nothing to the war effort. Those bombs fell where there were no towns, no farms, no roads.

When we returned to the base, the big blowhard was waiting to interrogate us, as the squadron intelligence officer did after each mission. We told him everything in detail. He listened. Chewed his cigar and when we were through, said in his coarse booming voice, "I'll see to it you boys get the DFC for this." Someone, I wish it had been me said, "For what? The mission was all fucked up." "Never you mind," the loud fat man said.

A month later, Barudi was back but the blowhard had done his work. A line of flyers at least two city blocks long stood in a field and received medals from a general flown in for the occasion. I hate to risk a detail sounding this apocryphal, but the general actually took the medals he pinned to our chests from a cigar box held by a colonel. And so the officers (enlisted men were given few citations) of Lt. Howard (NMI) Steinberg's crew were given the DFC for bombing some remote mountains, maybe in Switzerland.

Yossarian couldn't help but fall in love with the chaplain at first sight because in the chaplain he recognized himself, a sane man caught up in a world controlled by ugly creeps. The chaplain, like Yossarian, is bewildered and ineffectual. A good man can offer the world the gift of his good impulses and in war they are ignored or rejected.

And I hope Heller would have treated that big blowhard with generosity and love too. Wherever I've gone in institutions, I've met a few men like the blowhard. In industry. In universities. In the military. They are easy to make fun of but not so easily dismissed. They seemed to know, to have always known, that most organized human endeavor, waging war or building cities or citing men for bravery, is essentially bullshit. Many of them don't know they know this, but they know it all the same. Sociology isn't my strong point, but I hope many of them learned it watching Marx Brothers movies.

And like the blowhard, their answer to bullshit is more bullshit. And they get things done not because they believe in them but because they don't. Laws. Rules. These are created to occupy people. The healthy cynics cut through it all, booming and laughing and chomping cigars the whole way.

And I don't think I'd like people whose code of ethics is so rigid they'd be critical of the lies in that written report on the Innsbruck nuisance raid, lies that rang like nature's deepest truth—"despite intensive damage to their aircraft by enemy flak and fighters . . ." "... persevered through a series of frustrating malfunctions to lay their bombs squarely on the target." Not when a few months later those medals and citations meant discharge points, meant a lot of us were finally getting out and going home.

The End

Notes on Catch 22 Addendum

by Ryan O'Brien, 825 Sq

Richard Hugo was a highly regarded poet in literary circles and Universities before his passing some years ago. The Catch 22 Addendum is a combination of his critical review of the book Catch 22 by Richard Heller with his own combat experiences of the December 3, 1944 mission. This story has been published in book form previously.

The target was the Innsbruck marshaling yard in Austria at the top of the Brenner Pass. We flew a single ship mission and were briefed to turn back if the weather cleared up and we became visible

from the ground. The interphone went dead and we could not bomb by PFF. We dropped the bombs nine miles East of the target on the return route. We tried to find Bergesgarden, Hitler's Retreat, on the way back. The bomb load was four 500 pound time release bombs with booby trap fuses, two 500 pound general purpose bombs with one-tenth of a second delay in order that they would bury about ten feet before they exploded, and one load of leaflets. We never did know what was printed on leaflets as they were always packaged up and none available. Ryan O'Brien 825th

825TH BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON (H)
Office of the Operations Officer
APO 520 U S Army

3 December 1944

OPERATIONS ORDER)
NUMBER 163)

1. The following Aircraft and Crew participated in Aerial Flight today, 3 December 1944L

A/C 41-28765 Sq #301 Pathfinder

P/Steinberg, H., 1st Lt.
CP/Swanson, R.J., 2nd Lt.
M/O'Brien, R.M., 2nd Lt.
NV/Moody, S.V., 1st Lt.
B/Hugo, R.F., 2nd Lt.
E/Self, R.E., T/Sgt.
RO/Stewart, R.P., T/Sgt.
NG/Crytzer, L.B., S/Sgt.
TG/Cartwright, A.L., S/Sgt.
BG/Inapp, H.H., S/Sgt.
TTG/Whetstone, L.J., S/Sgt.

By order of Major GORTON:

JOEL O. MOE
Major, Air Corps
Operations Officer

OFFICIAL:

JOEL O. MOE
Major, Air Corps
Operations Officer

Official Orders showing the Richard Hugo crew On December 3, 1944,

Saga Of Toggle Annie

by Allan Davidson, 826 Sq



"Toggle Annie , " A True 100 Mission Ship



The Crew of "Toggle Annie "prior to shipment overseas. Standing from Left: H Meckler-B, Dana A. Stewart-- P, Robert J. Reed- C/P, Daniel J. Miller- N, Kneeling front row: Darrell Johnson- N/G, Odis C. Johnson- E, J. W. Delk- T/G, W Wilson-R/O, Allan L. Davidson- U/G, and Louis V. Galgano- B/G

Saga of Toggle Annie continues

Serial Number 42-52705 826th Squadron 484th Bomb Group 15th Air Force. Webster defines saga as "a long heroic story"; so I guess the title fits. This story probably won't be as long as I would like, but I have no doubts about the heroic part.

Toggle Annie first saw the light of day on or about the ninth day of January, 1944, when she rolled off the assembly line at Ford's Willow Run Plant near Ypsilanti, MI. (That name alone, is enough to make one deny their birthplace). This plant was built on land that, three scant years before, had been quiet Michigan farmland where about the only things with wings were chickens and honeybees.

To explain how I determined Toggle Annie's date of "birth"; a couple of years ago, I drove over to Willow Run (about 100 miles) and visited the Yankee Air Force Museum there, with that mission in mind. On display there, I saw a picture of the 1000th plane completed by Ford there, 3 November 1943, with the serial number 42-52283, which is 422 less than Toggle Annie's 42-52705. I also purchased there, a copy of "Willow Run Colossus of American Industry" written by Warren Benjamin Kidder. (Incidentally, his family's farm property was included in the construction of Willow Run. Appendix A of his book, is Chronological Data 1 Jan 1941 through 3 December 1944, covering the inception, construction and the majority of production of Willow Run. From this appendix, I learned that the 1400th plane was completed 6 Jan 1944 and the 1500th plane was completed 21 Jan 1944. Assuming that the planes were built in the order of their serial numbers, and more or less even production; a little arithmetic shows me that Toggle Annie rolled off the final assembly line on or about 9 Jan 1944. Close enough for me! This sounds about right since O'Shea's crew received Toggle Annie on 14 February 1944. This would leave time for compass adjustment, turret and gun testing, fueling, flight testing, and Army acceptance, etc.. I would be remiss if I didn't, at this time, give you a little of Toggle Annie's pedigree. The B-24 airplane was designed and first built by the Consolidated Aircraft Company in San Diego, CA. The first B-24 flew on 29 Dec 1939. When the Army Air Force decided to rely heavily on the B-24 for their strategic air force, Consolidated's goal of one plane per day was totally insufficient to meet their needs. Consolidated opened a second plant in Fort Worth, TX, Douglas began building the aircraft in Tulsa, OK, as did North American Aircraft in Dallas, Texas. But, still not enough!

In January of 1941, Ford got into the act by request and/or choice. Under the guidance of Charles E. Sorenson, Ford's Director of Production, a plan was devised to build a facility to produce B-24's using the mass production techniques so successful in the automobile industry, a la River Rouge. Only bigger. The story goes that the Willow Run plant was built in an "L" shape to avoid crossing the county line; and I guess it's true. Not to imply that it takes up a whole county, but it does give you some insight into the immensity of the place.

The Army's original plan was for Ford to mass produce sub-assemblies of B-24s for Consolidated and Douglas, but Sorenson persevered and convinced the Defense Dept. that Ford could produce the entire B-24 better, faster, and cheaper than anyone else. And for a time, Ford did produce subassemblies for others as well as complete planes. Of all the stories in Kidder's book, I believe the part about the center wing, intrigued me the most. As you know, the center wing section, which includes the four engine mounts, the landing gear, etc., is the backbone of the B-24 every thing else fastens onto it. In San Diego, Consolidated built the center wing outdoors on pipe racks. Two factors came into play which produced unacceptable tolerances, and required an inordinate number of shims to assemble the aircraft. First, was the temperature difference between the sunny side and the shady side of the work in progress. Anyone who has picked up-or should I say, attempted

to pick up a piece of metal that has lain out in the Southern California sunshine, can appreciate that. Secondly, (and surprisingly, to me, anyway) the rise and fall of the alluvial plain where the factory sits, with the tide. To cure these (and other) problems, inside the Willow Run plant, Ford poured a massive concrete block. They also designed and had built a gigantic machine tool costing \$168,000 (in 1941 dollars), that could perform all the necessary machining operations on a center wing section using only six men and thirty-five minutes. It was estimated that this machine tool alone saved over ten million dollars in its three and a half years of use. All told, Ford produced 8685 B-24s more than any other company. And not only did they have to build a factory, in which to do so; they also had to recruit and train and maintain a work force of about 30,000 souls to do the job. Enough pedigree! For the next part of my story, I would like to quote, in its entirety, a letter I received from Ellsworth Goodell, dated 14 January 1995:

"Dear Allan, Just a word to let you know who I am. I'm Ellsworth Goodell, the radio operator on the original Toggle Annie crew. Chickie (O'Shea) sent your letter to me. She intends to answer it, but feels that I have more information than she could give you.

We got our new plane February 14, 1944. We flew it to Lincoln, Nebraska, March 16th. I guess you know our Group was formed Jan 1st at Harvard, Neb. Our crew formed in Salt Lake City November 28, 1943. We trained together for a month at Colorado Springs, until the 484th was activated Jan 1, 1944.

Anyway, March 21st we flew it to Morrison Field, Florida, that's at West Palm Beach. We left there on the 23rd and flew to Trinidad. Next day to Belem, Brazil and then to Fortaleza, Brazil. These were all one night stands. Left March 26th for Dakar, North Africa, then to Marrakech in French Morocco. Then flew to Djeideida, Tunis. We arrived there March 29th. Stayed there until April 14th as our field wasn't ready yet. We arrived in Italy the 14th. We trained for a couple of weeks and flew our first mission April 29th. Toggle Annie flew on the first and second missions that our group went on. We were off to a good start. Incidentally, two of our flying crew had to come over by boat, as we took other airmen over with us. One was a Lt. Col, who didn't have his own plane. We were supposed to begin operations April 26th, but we were grounded because of the weather. Some missions were easy and some weren't. You know how it was. July 16th we went to the Vienna area. We lost one and a half engines on the way back and had to drop out of formation; threw out everything that we could to lighten the plane. Anyway, we made it back. July 19th we went to Munich.

Our co-pilot got hit in the thigh by anti-aircraft fire. He was hospitalized and didn't fly any more missions. During the month of July we went to Capri for a week's rest. Two of our crew members finished their missions July 25th. I was the third one to finish. My last mission was to France August 6th. Our fuel lines were hit and we were forced to land on Corsica. That was the last time I saw Toggle Annie. Another plane in our squadron landed on Corsica, with a badly wounded upper turret gunner, so we hitched a ride back to base on it. I got back to the States in September. Had to go back by boat. I don't know what NAITCH is or was. It wasn't on the plane the last time I saw it. I think Toggle Annie was salvaged in New Mexico or Arizona I may have some more information on it but I can't find it right now. The engineer on the crew, Johnnie Barber, is still living and we both went to Dayton. The co-pilot and the assistant engineer have died, as has the pilot, Vincent O'Shea. I think the bombardier is still living but doesn't belong to the Association. These are the only ones I know about. It says in "the Flyer" that McMurtre was on our crew but he wasn't. Sorry to hear your wife died. Mine did too, April 1, 1993, and I miss her terribly. Hope this filled you in a little. Best regards, Ellsworth Goodell"

You might say that Ellsworth was a wee bit modest. In his letter to me he did not give any of the details of the 6 August 1944 mission, nor did he mention anything about them in our telephone conversations. However, the following article appeared in the Manchester, NH newspaper and was reprinted in "The Torretta Flyer" #24 in 1993. This is the semi-annual publication of the 484th Bomb Group Association.

"A retired Manchester letter carrier was awarded the Distinguished Flying cross last night, nearly half a century after risking his life in the fuel laden bomb bay of a B-24 over occupied France. Ellsworth E. Goodell, who is 72 and a 1937 alumnus of Central High School, received the medal he earned in World War II during a reunion of the 484th Bomb Group in Dearborn, Mich.

"The award was requested 48 years ago by Goodell's commanding officer Vincent W. O'Shea, who subsequently returned to the United States without knowing the outcome of his request. Until recently O'Shea didn't know his request for the prestigious medal had been lost in the shuffle, nor did Goodell know that one had been sought for him. On Aug. 6, 1944, O'Shea was command pilot on the B-24 and Technical Sergeant Goodell was the radio operator/gunner on a mission over Southern France. "We received heavy anti-aircraft fire which severed our main fuel line almost causing fatal damage to our plane," O'Shea recalled. "In a very heroic effort, Sgt. Goodell and our engineer/gunner, Technical Sergeant John F. Barber, squeezed into a small space over the bomb bay and held the fuel lines together by hand until we were able to get to a lower altitude where we could make temporary repairs.

"Goodell's memory of the mission is as good as his commanding officer's. 'We were on a bombing mission over German occupied France. Over the target, heavy anti-aircraft fire was encountered and we were hit with exploding flak shells.' Goodell dismisses the incident like it is an every day occurrence. 'We noticed gasoline leaking out, like a mist, flying around inside the compartment' he said. 'Sgt. Barber found some old rags and we wrapped them around the pipes where they were leaking, and held them until the pilot landed on Corsica'

"Although it was mid-summer, the temperature at the altitude at which we were flying was 15 degrees below zero, and the two men were exposed to freezing cold causing severe burns over their bodies', O'Shea said. 'With winter garb, heavy flying suits, metal flakjackets and leather helmets with oxygen masks, the compartment was cramped and low. They had to lie face down on the floor, holding the fuel lines. By their outstanding devotion to duty they not only assisted materially in the destruction of an important objective, they also made possible the safe return of our aircraft to its base in Italy.' O'Shea immediately recommended both men for Distinguished Flying Crosses. 'We returned to the United States and lost track of each other,' O'Shea said. 'I heard no more regarding the disposition of my recommendation. 'Eight years ago Goodell and O'Shea began to meet at reunions of the combat group. They located Barber and he attended a recent reunion. It was only at that point that the medal came up in conversation. 'Sgt. Barber informed us that the recommendation had been approved and that he had been presented with the medal when he separated from the service in 1945' O'Shea said last week. 'However, Sgt. Goodell had never been informed or received the medal.' O'Shea went home and started writing letters to the Air Force. After what O'Shea terms 'extensive correspondence' the 100 octane gasoline story received approval for the medal and the medal was sent to O'Shea. Asked if he suffered burns, Goodell admitted he and Barber 'had to put some salve on our arms, later on. That was my last mission' he said. 'I shipped out ten days later and the information that I

received the DFC never caught up to me. I never knew about it until three years ago when I went to a reunion and I was talking about how I had accumulated the various points needed for a discharge and Sgt. Barber commented that it didn't hurt, point wise, to get a DFC. 'I told him I didn't have a DFC!' Goodell said." The two preceding documents are about all the information I have about Toggle Annie's first thirty or so missions. In a trip to the National Archives in Washington DC, I found that the records for the first 31 combat missions of the 484th Bomb Group, covering the period 29 Apr.- 14 Jun. 1944, are not there. Nor does anyone know where. The composition of the first crew to fly Toggle Annie in combat, as reported in the obituary of Vincent O'Shea in the "Torretta Flyer" # 26, is as follows: Pilot- Vincent W. O'Shea- Deceased 2 May 1944. Co-pilot- Norman J. Dion- Reported deceased by Ellsworth Goodell. Navigator- Guido Mattei- Living in FL. Bombardier- Gerald S. Fluxgold, Deceased 1978 (Dept. of Veteran Affairs). Engineer- John F. Barber, Living in TX. Radio Operator- Ellsworth E. Goodell- Deceased, 30 Sep 1996. Upper Gunner-James H. Malone- Deceased, 11 Apr 1978 (Dept. Veteran Affairs). Ball Gunner- John W. Malony-Reported deceased by "Chickie" O'Shea. Tail Gunner- Raymond E. Adler. Nose Gunner - Newman McMurtre. Ellsworth Goodell wrote in his letter that McMurtre was not on their crew but he didn't say who was the nose gunner; and it's too late to ask him now. It would appear that there are only two surviving members of O'Shea's crew- Barber and Mattei. O'Shea and his crew flew fifty missions (usually, but not always, as a unit) . Actually 34 missions, but he received double mission credit for 16 of them. When the Group first arrived in Italy, the tour of duty was 50 missions; but some sorties received double credit. I have never been able to find out what the criteria was for a double mission or whether it was determined before or after the fact. They flew almost exclusively in Toggle Annie, except the mission 3 Jul 1944, and the missions after 6 Aug while she was under repairs in Corsica. By the time we arrived in Italy, the double missions had been eliminated and the tour of duty was 35 missions.

Toggle Annie flew 107 credited missions between 29 April 1944 and 23 April 1945 with the 484th Bomb Group, 15th Air Force. (She also participated in at least ten other mission for which she did not receive mission credit, for various reasons). In an attempt to verify these missions, I went to the National Archives in College Park, MD, 19- 20 June 1995, to inspect their records. Here is a synopsis of what I found: As I said before, there are no records there for the first 31 missions flown by the Group from 29 April- 14 June 1944. The mission numbers assigned at the Archives go hand-in-hand with the list of missions in the "Torretta Flyer" #23 up to and including mission #84, 6 Sept 1944. The eight "Supply Missions" 11 Sept- 22 Sept inclusive, and the mission, 7 Oct 1944, Failed to Rendezvous, are not assigned numbers at the Archives. The "Bad Weather" missions are a mixed bag. Missions on 10-23, 10-29, 10-31, 11-5, 12-8, 12-9, 12-10-1944 and 1-8, 2-18, 2-24, and 2-26-1945, are not included nor assigned numbers. However the "Bad Weather" Missions 5-19, 6-30, 9-1, 9-5 10-10 and 10-17-1944, and 1-5, 2-22-1945 are included and assigned numbers, but not all were given mission credit. For some reason, missions 11-21-1944 and 4-6-1945, are not included nor assigned numbers. The missions 6-26, 6-28, 7-8 and 7-16-1944, are numbered, but the folders for those missions are empty. (See addendum). To sum up the missions flown by Toggle Annie, that I can account for, are the ones appearing in the Mission Numbers National Archives column; (92) , plus the 6 Supply Missions minus missions noted 4, 6, or 9 (10)=88. To sift it out another way, I

have confirmed from the records available, that thirty-nine pilots flew Toggle Annie on ninety-nine combat missions (although not all received mission credit). Herewith are the pilots and their number of missions: O'Shea, Vincent- 13 confirmed (plus 16 probabilities). Stewart, Dana 19 (plus three as copilot). Gregg, James- 7. Bird-5. Pearson, W and Eiden, Everett- 4 each. Shobe, Zeimantz, and Walrond- 3 each. Myers, Latimer, Mauldin, Cox, Foss, Vance, Branson, and Dippel- 2 each. Nichols, Noel, Ireland, McClung, Stone, Porter, Taylor, Howell, Colvin, Forster, Robson, Nowacki, Crockett, Tackes, Anderson, Loveall, Halliday, Gannon, Paul, Scott, Trotter and Stewart, Rod- 1 each. As you can see, Toggle Annie's 107 missions can be divided into three almost equal parts. (1) O'Shea's tenure from 29 Apr-15 Aug, 1944 to 16 Aug-20 Dec 1944, when anybody and everybody flew Toggle Annie and (3) 27 December 1944- 24 Apr 1945, when Dana Stewart's crew flew most of the missions. Even though other crews flew some of the missions, we always thought of Toggle Annie as "our" airplane. Other than what I have already told you, I have no details on any of the missions prior to our arrival in Dec 1944. I have tabulated the missions that I flew as a member of Dana Stewart's crew. This information I gleaned from my diary of 1944-45 with some help from The National Archives. On the first three missions, Zeimantz flew as our pilot and Stewart flew as copilot. With very few exceptions, we flew our missions as a congruent crew. On some missions, we carried a bombardier, but usually we did not. The navigator did double duty and threw the toggle switch to drop our bombs simultaneously with the lead plane. To my knowledge, our plane never had a bomb sight; and that accounts for the name of Toggle Annie. On at least one occasion, namely Toggle Annie's 100th mission, we carried an aerial photographer. So basically, our crew consisted of nine men, which is as follows: Dana A. Stewart- Pilot Robert J. Reed- Copilot Daniel J. Miller- Navigator Odis C. Johnson- Engineer, Walter D. Nilson- Radio operator, Louis V. Galgano- Ball turret gunner, Allan L. Davidson- Top turret gunner, Darrell Johnson- Nose gunner, J. W. Delk- Tail turret gunner.

Again with the help of my diary, I will try to give you the high lights of some of our missions. Several were so mundane that they were scarcely mentioned in passing in my diary. On our very first mission, the target was a railroad viaduct just south of the Brenner Pass in Italy. We missed the target but managed to obliterate a nearby village. Our third mission's target was Zagreb, Yugoslavia. The target was obscured by clouds so we returned the bombs to base; but we got credit for the mission anyway. Our fourth mission, to Vienna, was really our baptism to fire. On some crews, the engineer flew in the top turret for various unknown reasons. So it was decided that on this mission, anyway, our engineer Odis would fly in my turret and I would get his waste gun position. Fortunate for me; not so fortunate for him. As was always the case with Vienna, the flak was heavy and accurate. We garnered many flak holes in the plane, an engine mount in number four engine was severed, and a piece of flak penetrated the top turret dome and drew enough blood in Odis' forehead to earn him the Purple Heart. For some reason, that was the one and only time that I flew the waist position. One memory that I still have, is when the flak got close I ducked down behind the fuselage. Later I realized how stupid that really was. The Plexiglas in the waist window would stop a hellava lot more flak than the thin aluminum fuselage. Out of sight, out of mind I guess.

Our next two missions, six and seven, are undoubtedly the most memorable of all, at least in my mind. Toggle Annie flew both, but with other crews. My crew flew both in plane #61. Toggle Annie never treated us so shabbily. Mission six's target was the jet airfield at Newburg, Austria but the target was overcast, so

we floated around over central Europe and finally dropped our bombs on Rosenheim and got some good hits. On this mission we flew home, not over the Alps, but rather through the Alps. We were getting low on gas and as we came off the target we lost engine #2 and the turbocharger on #3. We dropped out of formation and descended to a lower altitude to get more power from #3. This was all well and good. One of the Tuskegee airmen stayed with us as long as he could. But as we approached the Alps we were unable to gain the proper altitude. As the pilot frantically scanned the horizon looking for a pass through the Alps, it behooved him to order us to prepare to bail out, just in case. It was comical in retrospect, that J. W. the tail gunner, whose heated suit had gone out and he had left his turret, was sitting near the camera hatch without his headset plugged in, blissfully unaware of what was going on. When he saw Lou exit the ball turret, and all the scurrying around, he plugged in his headset just as the navigator said, "When you bail out, head east." As he said later (in 1995), "My hair stood on end!"

But fortunately, with the Lord's help, Dana was able to find a pass through the mountains. But, I swear, I could look up at the peaks on both sides. (Walt Nilson, the radio operator, tells me that the pass we flew through was the same one where they found the "Ice Man" a few years ago. He almost had some company that day!)

The briefed target for mission #7 was Wells or Vienna, but the weather stood us down until 11:30 am when we took off for the harbor at Trieste, Italy. While we were still over the waters of the Adriatic, the two lead planes of the Group, #501 and #502 went to change positions and collided in mid-air. As you can imagine, the planes in the formation scattered all over the sky, but we managed to regroup and, after two passes over the target, successfully dropped our bombs. Also on this mission, the tail gunner, J. W. received a cut on his hand from flak. Another Purple Heart. Fortunately, no one else of the crew received any injuries (other than Odis) during all of our missions. But when Bob Reed retrieved his ball-cap from beneath his seat after this mission, he found a three inch piece of flak lying in it.

Vienna was again the target for mission #8, but we bombed Graz, Austria instead because of strong head-winds. The flak was scant, but accurate. The instruments on engine #1 were shot out and we received many flak holes in the wings, waist and stabilizer.

We took off 21 Feb 1945 for a mission to Vienna but blew a cylinder head on #2 engine on takeoff. In a great show of skill, Dana managed to circle the field once and land. This is the only mission that we ever aborted.

Mission #9 to Linz, Austria. If we should have aborted another mission, this is that one. Shortly after takeoff, we noticed a gasoline leak; and landed to tighten a gas cap and top off the tank. After the second takeoff, we noticed an oil leak, so landed again to replace an oil sump plug. By the third takeoff, the formation had left and we didn't catch up to it until we were about twenty minutes away from the IP. I never could decide whether the pilot was foolhardy or just plain stupid!

Mission #12 my diary says. Superstition I guess. This mission we flew in plane #65, one of the five missions when we used a plane other than Toggle Annie. Late takeoff (10:30 am) Went through flak over Graz and Novsky as well as over the target Bruck. Mission # 14. Vienna again. Heavy flak. Picked up a few holes. Mission #16. Plane #53. Easter Sunday. Briefed for Linz. Weath-

er bad, finally bombed Villach, Austria, Fifteen flak bursts over target, seven holes in plane. Mission #18. Pondenone, Italy. I'll always remember this one. We rallied left off the target and as I sat up in my turret looking down through the bomb bay at the falling bombs, I noticed a building with a big Red Cross on the roof and all of a sudden in a puff of smoke, it disappeared. Mission # 21. Malcontenta, Italy. Toggle Annie's 100th mission. 14 Apr 1945. Our last three missions 22, 23, and 24 were uneventful missions against front line positions in the Po Valley ending 17 Apr 1945. Toggle Annie flew five more missions between then and 24 Apr 1945. The 484th Bomb Group flew its last mission 26 Apr 1945.

To the best of my knowledge, of the sixteen original planes in the 826th Squadron only Toggle Annie and one other, Darling Darlene #50, returned to the states after the war. And during the time period that the Squadron was operational(362 days), it received twenty-eight replacement aircraft. What does that tell you?!

No small thanks goes to the ground crew whose dedication kept Toggle Annie in the air for 107 missions. The only one whom I remember was the Ground Crew Chief, Thomas Collins. I am sorry to report that he died in 1981. I guess that he took better care of Toggle Annie than he did of himself

I have not been able to find out who flew Toggle Annie home to the States. Bob Reed told me that he and Dana wanted to bring her home but they were outranked by someone. Chickie O'Shea (Vincent's widow) told me that she remembers meeting the pilot who flew Toggle Annie home at one of the Group's reunions, but doesn't remember his name. Only that he was wearing his uniform at the time. That rules out quite a few. Not too many could fit into their uniforms even if they did have them.

I have obtained a copy of "Liberator America 's Global Bomber" by Alwyn T. Lloyd which is the best text, hands down, that I have seen. Appendix X is a list of 57 B-24s that flew 100 missions or more. With the help of "B-24 Liberator, Combat and Development History of the Liberator and Privateer" by Frederick A. Johnsen I have determined that of the 57 planes listed, twelve were in the 15th Air Force. Top honors in the 57 go to Lady Corinne of the 15 AFs 486th Bomb Group with 154 missions. Next in the 15th is Boomerang of the 376th with 125 missions followed by The Blue Streak of the 376th with 110. In fourth place is Toggle Annie with 107 Missions. I realize the list may not be complete, but fourth place in the whole 15 AF is not to be sneezed at. At any rate, I believe 107 missions in 360 days may be a record in itself.

Toggle Annie made one last stab at immortality when she got her picture and a few lines of text in the September 1979 issue of the American Legion Magazine in an article entitled "What Became of the Big Bombers?" " by Clee Woods. I asked for and received permission to reprint the article as it appeared. However, my attempts to contact the author through them, were not fruitful. I wanted to determine when he actually visited the site, and wrote the article. I find it hard to believe that all those planes sat out there in the desert for thirty-four years. But having been in the military, nothing should surprise me. In the article, he states that Toggle Annie flew "90 daylight missions and 17 night runs. 107". I am sure that he was confused by the 17 red bomb symbols painted on Toggle Annie's score-board. These represented the double missions that I discussed earlier, not night missions. On my last trip through Albuquerque in March of 1996, I visited Sandia Air Base in an attempt to see if I could find out the actual date of her destruction; "her date of death" as it were. Since I had determined

her "date of birth" fairly accurately., this would have completed my chronology. But alas, it was not to be. I had been through Albuquerque a few times prior to 1979 and if I had known that Toggle Annie was there, I would have gone to visit her and perhaps made some effort to save her from her ultimate fate with the cutting torch. And so concludes The Saga of Toggle Annie.

In 1994, I managed to track down all the members of Dana Stewart's crew and found them all alive and relatively healthy considering our ages. No canes, no walkers, no wheel chairs. We have held annual reunions since 1995. But, that's another story for another time. We lost some of our bragging rights when the tail gunner, J. W. Delk, passed away 12 Jan 1998. Food for thought: 14 April 1944- Toggle Annie arrived in Italy. 14 April 1945- Toggle Annie flew 100th mission. Bob Dole injured 14 April 1954- I was married. 14 April 1994- I underwent an angioplasty 14 Apr 1998- ?????? I have included as an addendum, the following:

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The Torretta Flyer: Total Missions flown by the 484th Bomb Group From the Torretta Flyer #23.
 American Legion Magazine: What Became of the Big Bombers, Reprinted by permission of 1979.
 Mission Record, by Vincent O'Shea.
 Mission record, by Robert J. Reed.
 Willow Run, by Warren Benjamin Kidder.
 Colossus of American Industry 1995, by Frederick A. Johnsen.
 B-24 Liberator, Combat and Development History of the Libera tor and Privateer 1993, by Alwyn T. Lloyd.
 Liberator, America's Global Bomber, by Clee Wood,
 What Became of the Big Bombers 1979, by American Legion Magazine
 484th Bomb Group Association, Torretta Flyers
 Diary 1945, Allan Davidson

Numbered Notes: These apply to Toggle Annie's missions

- 1) Information on these missions missing in the National Archives files.
- 2) Bombs returned to base. Mission credit given.
- 3) Co-pilot severely injured by flak and flew no more missions.
- 4) Early return. No mission credit.
- 5) Severe battle damage. Landed on Corsica.
- 6) Aircraft failure. Abort. no mission credit.
- 7) No mission listed this date.
- 8) Loaned to 824th Squadron.
- 9) Blew #2 cylinder head on takeoff. Abort. No mission credit.
- 10) Loaned to 827th Squadron.
- 11) Landed at Zara.
- 12) Toggle Annie's 100th Mission!

Toggle Annie's Missions

AR. TF	Date	Target
62 62	8-6-44	Miramas, France 5
70 70	8-17-44	Polesti,Rumania
72 72	8-20-44	Szolnok,Hungary

73	73	8-22-44	Vienna-Lobau, Austria
76	76	8-26-44	Bucharest, Rumania
77	77	8-27-44	Borovnica, Italy
79	79	8-29-44	Szoged, Hungary
80	80	9-1-44	Ferrara, Italy
	86	9-12-44	Bron. Fr.
	87	9-13-44	Bron. Fr.
	88	9-15-44	Bron. Fr.
	89	9-16-44	Bron. Fr.
	90	9-17-44	Bron. Fr. 4
	91	9-22-44	Bron. Fr.
88	96	10-12-44	Bologna, Italy
89	97	10-13-44	Vienna
91	99	10-16-44	Linz, Austria 6
92	100	10-17-44	Vosendorf, Austria
98	108	11-5-44	Florisdorf, Austria 4
100	110	11-7-44	Alipasin, Yugo
101	111	11-11-44	Linz, Austria 6
103	113	11-16-44	Munich, Germany D-22
104	114	11-17-44	Blechhammer, Germany
105	115	11-18-44	Villa Franco, Italy
106	116	11-19-44	Vienna, Austria
107	117	11-20-44	Bleckhammer
118	118	21-44	Troop Con., Yugo 7
108	119	11-22-44	Munich, Germany
110	121	12-2-44	Blechhammer, Germany 4
111	122	12-3-44	Innsbruck, Austria
112	123	12-6-44	Maribou, Italy
117	131	12-16-44	Brux, Czech.
118	132	12-17-44	Odertal, Germany
119	133	12-18-44	Blechhammer, Germany
122	136	12-25-44	Brux, Czech.
123	137	12-27-44	Verzone Viaduct, Italy
124	138	12-28-44	Venzone RR Bridge, Italy
125	139	12-29-44	Passau, Austria
126	140	1-4-45	Trento, Italy
127	141	1-5-45	Zagreb, Yugo. 2
128	143	1-15-45	Vienna, Austria
131	146	1-31-45	Moosbierbaurn, Austria
133	148	2-5-45	Regensburg, Germany
134	149	2-7-45	Vienna, Austria
140	154	2-15-45	Pensing, Austria
141	155	2-16-45	Neburg, Austria
142	156	2-17-45	Treiste, Italy 4
143	158	2-19-45	Vienna, Austria
144	159	2-20-45	Bolzano, Italy
145	160	2-21-45	Vienna, Austria 9
146	161	2-22-45	Donauworth
148	164	2-25-45	Linz, Austria
149	166	2-27-45	Augsburg, Germany
150	167	2-28-45	Bressanone, Italy
151	168	3-1-45	Moosbierbaum, Austria
155	172	3-9-45	Bruck, Austria
156	173	3-12-45	Florisdorf
157	174	3-13-45	Regensburg, Germany
158	175	3-14-45	Weiner Neustadt
159	176	3-15-45	Pragersko, Yugo.
161	178	3-19-45	Muhldorf, Germany
162	179	3-20-45	Wels, Austria
164	181	3-22-45	Kagran, Austria

165	182	3-23-45	Kagran, Austria
166	183	3-24-45	Budjovice, Czech
167	184	3-25-45	Praha, Czech
173	190	4-4-45	Brescia, Italy
	191	4-6-45	Brescia, Breda, Italy 7
174	192	4-7-45	Campo Di Trens, Italy
176	193	4-8-45	Bronzolo, Italy
177	194	4-9-45	Area Apple, Italy 1
178	195	4-10-45	Area Baker, Italy
179	196	4-11-45	Bronzolo, Italy
180	197	4-12-45	St. Veit RR Bridge, Italy
181	198	4-14-45	Malcontenta, Italy
182	199	4-15-45	Troop Install., Italy
184	200	4-16-45	Troop Install., Italy
186	202	4-19-45	Avisio Viaduct, Italy
188	203	4-20-45	Lusia RR Bridge, Italy
189	204	4-21-45	Attnang-Puheim, Italy
190	205	4-22-45	Badia Bridge, Italy
191	206	4-24-45	Roverta, Italy



**Missions Flown by Dana Stewarts Crew 27
Dec 16 1944- -17 Apr 1945**

	Date	Target	No	Slot
	1	12-27-44	Venzone Viaduct, Italy	52
	2	12-29-44	Passau M/D, Austria	52 Dog 23
	3	1-5-45	Zagreb, Yugo.	52 Easy 22
	4	2-7-45	Vienna, Austria	52 Baker 31
	5	2-15-45	Vienna, Austria	52 Able 22
	6	2-16-45	Rosenheim M/Y	61 Dog 22
	7	2-17-45	Trieste, Italy	61 Charlie 13
	8	2-19-45	Graz M/Y, Austria	52 Baker 31
	9	2-25-45	Linz M/Y, Austria	52 Dog 22
	10	3-14-45	Weiner Neustadt, Aus	52 Baker 31
	11	3-16-45	Amstetten M/Y, Aus	64 Baker 13
	12	3-19-45	Muhldorf, Germany	52 Easy 22
	12b	3-21-45	Bruck MJY, Austria	65 Charlie 23
	14	3-22-45	Vienna oil, Austria	52 Able 31
	15	3-24-45	Budejovice M/Y, Cz	52 Dog 21
	16	4-1-45	Villach M/Y, Austria	53 Easy 21
	17	4-5-45	Brescia M/Y, Italy	52 Able 21
	18	4-8-45	Pordenone M/Y, Italy	52 Baker 21
	19	4-11-45	Bronzolo M/Y, Italy	52 Dog 13
	20	4-12-45	St. Viet RR Bridge, A	52 Easy 21
	21	4-14-45	Malcontenta, Italy	52 Baker 21
	22	4-15-45	Bologna Trp. Posi It.	52 Dog 22 ~
	23	4-16-45	Bologna	52 Dog 22
	24	4-17-45	Bologna	52



International Messages

Our Website has been drawing interest from Europe as well from the USA. For this issue International mail and E-Mail are grouped together in this special section. In this instance most letters are replies as this reduces the duplication of information.

Fernando D' Amico
Italy
[E-Mail] damico@textnet.it

I received and read your book "Air War Italy 1944-45," and I like it very much, The book includes a reference to Bob Goeble, (page 69) the fighter pilot who lives near me, he too wrote a book, "Mustang Ace" by Robert J Goeble E-mail: mustangace1@juno.com.

The reference on page 121 of your book to the 484th Bomb Group's aircraft shot down is of #42-51862 flown by Lt. William F Gaskill. My records show he was downed by flak near Raum Erding on Nov. 4, 1944.

The B-24s of the 484th Bomb Group with names and nose art are listed on pages 164-165 of a new book "B-24 Nose Art Name Directory," by Wallace R Forman. You can reach him via E-Mail at Avibuff@aol.com.

I will be sending you via s-mail a revised mission list of the 484th Bomb Group. In the list can you help find the pilots who shot down our bombers marked FTR under the field marked Fell?

Again congratulations on your book, please extend my best wishes to your co-authors, Nick Beale, and Gabriele Valentini.

Bud Markel, 484th BG Assn.

Landislav Fojtl
Czech Republic
Dear Ladislav:

Thank you for your numerous E-mails. I am very grateful for your interest in the 484th Bomb Group's wartime operations. You may publish any of the enclosed material as long as you credit "484th Bomb Group Assn. Torretta Flyer."

Enclosed are:

- Crew list of Roger A Martin from National Archives
- Formation Xerox showing ship #38 outlined in yellow
- Page 313 of the Log of the Liberators showing Ford production of ship 42-51835.
- Odertal Mission from issue No 29 Torretta Flyer.

e) Odertal Mission from issue No 30 Torretta Flyer. Last page shows losses of B-24s of the 484th Bomb Group. You'll note Martin's plane crashed at Liebau. Where is that? Kindly describe the piece of the plane you found.

f) Selections from Mission Report 12/17/44.

The above may not be 100% accurate as I have found errors in archived documents and printed reports as well. I would appreciate any corrections and additional information you might have.

Sincerely,
Bud Markel, 484th Bomb Group

From: fofi@vsps-su.cz
Subj:Re: Re Odertal Oil Refinery
Dear Bud,

I just received your materials about Martin's plane, thank you very much. There is a lot new information for me, I would like to use them in an article, where I will write about this action.

I also found information about German pilot who shot down the Martin's plane. It should be pilot of Bf 109G-10 from III./JG 300. His name was Lt.Kraft. A witness of this fight allege that German pilot was shot down a few minutes after the Liberator crashed. Can you confirm this information? The Liberator crashed near Liebau (today Libina). There is forest today in this place where the Liberator crashed and stood there only three small craters today. The crew have a small monument with their names in Libina. I found a few fragments from this Liberator as a plastic oval tablet where is written numerous numbers and inscription "Cal. Air Speed" and "True Alt." Unfortunately, the tablet is not complete, only a piece. I also found a few pieces from some covers and piece of fuselage partition. There were also small pieces, but I don't know what they are.

I also obtained information that near village today called Vaclavov (Wanzeldorf) not far from umperk Do you know today name of Odertal? It is probably town in Poland today.

Awating your reply.
Sincerely,
Ladislav Fojtl

Wojciech Krajewski
Warsaw, Poland
Dear Mr. Krajewski:

Your letter of May 3, 1998 reached me today. I was very pleased to learn of your work. Some years ago while visiting England's East Anglia where the American 8th Air Force was based we found the English citizens digging up old crash sites for artifacts to place in their small museums established at a few of the old airfields, It was very enlightening to learn of this activity in Poland too.

In response to your request for information The 484th Bomb Group attacked Blechhammer on the following dates

6/30/44	Mission No 38
7/7/44	“ “ No.43
8/7/44	“ “ No.63
11/17/44	“ “ No.114
11/20/44	“ “ No.117
12/2/44	“ “ No.121
12/12/44	“ “ No.129
12/18/44	“ “ No.133
12/19/44	“ “ No.134

The Odertal mission was written up in The Torretta Flyer No.19 Winter-Spring 1996 issue. I have enclosed a copy of the story. If you study the Pilots Flimsey on page 27 you can learn much about the mission plan. This in essence is the battle order. Across the top are the aircraft by position and nose number, with the first pilot's name. The letter after the nose number is the radio call letter. The mission is lead by the pilot in Able 11 (Col. Keese) in this case ship 201 a "Mickey Ship." Command passes to Able 12 (Dowd) in ship 700 another "Mickey Ship." There is an error on page 27, Dog and Easy flights should be moved over to the right so that Dog and Easy are directly behind Able and Baker. See the attached copy of the original Pilots Flimsey.

The Parking map on page 28 is a view of Torretta Airfield in Southern Italy showing the hardstands (hard crushed gravel) where each aircraft is to be parked after returning from the mission.

The other missions to Blechhammer have not been written up yet as my information is sparse.

I am enclosing some original documents (Xerox copies) of mission 132 for your interest and also a list of the aircraft that participated. At a later date I will send you a short history of the 15th Air Force.

Do check our web site at:<http://members.aol.com/bud484bg>.
E-Mail bud484bg@aol.com Do let me hear from you again!

Thank you again for your interest in the 484th Bomb Group.
Sincerely,
Bud Markel, 484th Bomb Group Association

Jan Mahr
Czech Republic
Dear Jan:

I was delighted to receive your letter of June 23, 1998. Thank you for your compliments regarding the Torretta Flyer.

Because most of my photographs are originals, I can only send you second generations copies that are not of best quality.

I have had other inquiries regarding the Odertal Mission. The following is copied from a letter to Ladislav Fojtl of the Czech Republic. You may publish any of the enclosed material as long as you credit "484th Bomb Group Assn. Torretta Flyer."

Enclosed are:

- a) Crew list of Roger A Martin from National Archives
- b) Formation Xerox showing ship #38 outlined in yellow
- c) Page 313 of the Log of the Liberators showing Ford production of ship 42-51835.
- d) Odertal Mission from issue No 29 Torretta Flyer.
- e) Odertal Mission from issue No 30 Torretta Flyer. Last page shows losses of B-24s of the 484th Bomb Group. You'll note Martin's plane crashed at Liebau. Where is that? Kindly describe the piece of the plane you found.
- f) Selections from Mission Report 12/17/44.

The above may not be 100% accurate as I have found errors in archived documents and printed reports as well. I would appreciate any corrections and additional information you might have.

Sincerely,
Bud Markel, 484th Bomb Group Association

Karel Novak
Czech Republic
Dear Mr Novak:

Thank you for your letter of December 30, 1997. Please excuse my delay in answering your letter.

I am enclosing a copy of our magazine "The Torretta Flyer" that contains the story of the 17 December, 1944 Mission when Lt Himmler and Martin and their flight crews were shot down. I hope this will fill in some of the blanks.

Sincerely,
Bud Markel, 484th Bomb Group Association

Zymon Serwatka
Swidnica, Poland
Dear Zymon:

Thank you for your E-Mail of yesterday, I am enclosing copies of the article Mission 132, 17 December 1944 taken from the Torretta Flyers No 29, and 30. At the present time I do not have geographical coordinate information on aircraft shot down. This information may be found in the Missing Air Crew Reports obtainable from the National Archives in Washington, DC. I am also enclosing the 461st Bomb Group aircraft lost roster that you might find of interest. Mission Reports 7/7/44, 8/7/44, 11/17/44, 11/20/44, 12/2/44, 12/12/44, 12/17/44, and 12/19/44 are included too.

Please do send me a copy of your writing project when it is finished. I want to thank you for your interest in the 484th Bombardment Group, 49th Bombardment Wing, Italian based 15th Airforce. It's always nice to hear from you again.

Bud Markel, 484th Bomb Group Association



Unloading bombs and supplies at Bron, France. Fall, 1944, See letter below

Dear Bud Markel:

I was intrigued with the display of all the mission records at the reunion in Washington D.C. The mission I was looking for, I do not know the date it occurred. The Mission started with the order that all guns are to be removed from all turrets, and the belts of ammunition and cans, or boxes holding them are to be removed also. Then they totally removed the ball turret and placed boards over the hole in floor. They installed fuel cells in the front bomb bay, and in the rear bomb bay on the right hand side they built a wooden floor. On this floor they placed (six) wooden boxes of fifty caliber ammunition, and (six) five gallon cans of aircraft engine oil. On the left side they carried (3) five hundred lb. bombs, and in the rear, in the area of the waist guns, they put (15) empty 55 gallon metal drums.

After the planes were loaded, that evening I was told they decided there should be a ground crew member make the trip, since the planes would be landing at a field away from home base, and if some service should be required to get them back to home base, the ground crew member could make the decision as to what would be required.

I was elected to make the trip, so I went to Group Hdqs. for briefing. They explained the Allied Army had invaded southern France as a diversionary tactic, but after the invasion of France at Normandy on the sixth of June the German army decided to withdraw to the north to make their stand there. This left the Allied Army advancing faster than the supply lines could keep up. The Air Force had a fighter base at Lyon that needed supplies so we would deliver these supplies to them. They were supporting the ground forces in the northern part of France .

First we would not be flying in formation, since there was no reason for a bomb pattern and there was no way to defend each other since there are no defensive guns. This Rhone River valley was known as a flak alley at one time, but it was not challenged recently . The advice was to fly at low altitude as to not attract fighters, and if you were damaged badly the only recourse was to bail out. This was right up Lt. Kenneth Rounds alley, so we flew up the river at an altitude that seemed as though we could look into the upstairs windows of the villas that lined the river.

When we arrived at Lyon, Lt. Rounds put that heavily loaded plane on a concrete paved runway so gently all one could hear was the screech of the tires, but before he could bring it to a stop we came to the end of a short runway. After we helped with the unloading, we decided we could give them another 300 gallons of

Letters To The Editor



gas out of our Tokyo tanks. Then we took off to return to Torretta arriving just before dark.

I don't know how many of this type missions were flown, all I can say is my turn didn't come up again. I think the load we carried would support one fighter for one day.

Regards

Art Aldene 827-124

P.S. In the Fall-Winter 1997 Flyer I was identified as one the members at the dedication of the plaque. Flattery will get you nowhere), I was there, however I was wearing my dark blue B-24 shirt in the picture.



Louisville, KY

Dear Bud:

In the later part of 1997, I was contacted by Dick Olson, the son of my copilot on the mission of June 13, 1944, when we were shot down. He is interested in his dad's crew, and details of the mission. This has resulted in my going back over my records and bringing back events that occurred some 50 years ago, things that I had long forgotten.

Dick has been kind enough to supply me with information and copies of pictures obtained from you. I received a package containing he Torretta Flyer showing a picture of my crew and the aircraft we flew overseas in April 44. Vivacious Lady and the aircraft we were flying that day were one and the same.

The Flyer also included a copy of a narrative of the days John Hassen the engineer, Howland, and I spent together after being shot down. This was written at the request of members of my high school of 1940 for our 50th class reunion in 1990.

I never talked much about my military life around my family and have not shown much interest in reliving the past, certainly not as much as young Dick Olson. In that regard I appreciate very much the interest Dick Olson has shown and your interest by including all of it in the Torretta Flyer.

Bud I have never received any of the medals and decorations due me. Due to the interest of Dick Olson I have decided to obtain my medals and decorations. Can you help we with this request?

Walter Chapman

Dear Walter: Your discharge papers should show all badges, medals, and campaign ribbons awarded prior to discharge. Your discharge papers are all that is needed to obtain your awards. Contact the National Military Record Center at 9700 Page Blvd. in St. Louis, MO. I'm sorry to have missed the 1998 reunion and didn't get a chance to meet you.

Bud, 484th BG Assn.



Lowell, MI
Dear Bud,

As you can see, I am writing this on my new computer. For years I have been telling people that the computer age has passed me by. But every time I say that, I am reminded that my father learned to run one when he was in his late eighties. So I guess I still have time. Last fall I saw in the local paper a notice about a night class in Windows 95, so I signed up for it. The class was three and a half hours once a week for ten weeks. The instructor threw a lot at us. Some stuck, some didn't. The only way to learn, I guess, is to wade right into it. For the first couple of weeks, I was ready to pack the whole thing up and send it back to South Dakota. But I have persevered. The thing that gets me is something comes up on the screen and I don't know where it came from, nor how to get rid of it. The nice thing about it is, it's easy to correct your mistakes without wearing out the eraser. This "spell check" is wonderful. Spelling was never one of my strong suits. Now all I need is a program to correct my grammar and syntax. I am also learning how to type, albeit with one or two fingers.

My main reason for getting a computer, was for the word processing feature. After hours and hours of trial and error, I was able to write my Saga of Toggle Annie. I guess I'm not much of an author; I had the Saga of Toggle Annie all finished and mailed out to my crew when I realized that my name was nowhere on it. I haven't ventured onto the internet as yet. I don't want the whole world to know how stupid I am.

I was the top turret gunner on a B-24 crew in the 826th Squadron, 484th Bomb Group, 15th Air Force in Italy. The 484th flew 208 combat missions between 4-29-44 and 4-27-45. My crew flew 24 missions between 12-27-44 and the end of the war, 19 of them aboard ~Toggle Annie," serial number 42-52705, including the 100th mission, 4-14-45.

I am curious as to whether any B-24 can beat Toggle Annie's record of 107 combat missions in 360 days. Or, for that matter, any time frame. I guess the thing to do is claim the record and wait for someone to prove me wrong.

My research shows that of the sixteen original planes in the 826th Squadron, only Toggle Annie and one other returned to the ZI after the war.

In response to Kenneth Johnson's letter in the Summer 1997 Journal, my crew is one of the few, I'm sure, that can boast of a 100% survival rate after fifty-two years. No canes. No walkers. No wheelchairs. Two and a half years ago I tracked them all down and we have held three annual reunions in Dallas, TX. Eight

showed up in 1995, nine in 1996, and seven this year. Hopefully next year all ten will make it. The Good Lord isn't going to leave us all here much longer. But as long as He does, I'll keep trying.

Out of the ten we have four widowers, which is definitely against the odds. The other six have all been married fifty years or close to it.

Allan Davidson
Lowell, MI



Russ Hawes
Ellicott City, MD
Dear Russ:

Thank you for the copy of the WWII magazine. It is a very interesting magazine.

The painting of "OI 45" on page 43 was commissioned by Bud Pressel of our organization. OI 45 S/N 42-52635 was shot down on February 7, 1945 with Alva Schick at the controls.

Thanks again.
Bud Markel
L-Hawes 6/25/98



Torretta Flyer
Bud Markel

Dear Bud:

I read with particular interest the Guest Editorial headed "The B-24 deserves respect" in Spring-Summer 1998 issue 33.

It has become a constant irritation and some concern that the true facts about items going back to the World War II period and before are not presented properly; mainly because the present history buffs, or the media, do not check. When the true facts are brought to their attention, it is usually ignored; (as Robert Dorr found out).

For example, the U.S. Army Air Corps became the U.S. Army Air Force in the Spring of 1942. I finally gave up trying to write articles and letters and my proper usage of the designation was routinely edited to the pre-1942 term.

Now to back up Mr. Dorr's editorial. After graduating aerial gunner's school in Las Vegas, I was processed via Salt Lake City to the 52nd Squadron in Boise, Idaho where crews were made up for training in heavy bombers. The bomber we used was the Boeing B-17.

The operations officer of the 52nd and one of the flight in-

structors was 1st Lieutenant James Stewart of movie star fame. My crew flew with this officer as instructor on three or four training flights; (all at night for some reason). On one occasion, we reported to "Jimmy" Stewart at the operations office and were introduced to actor Andy Devine who was on the base for a U.S.O. appearance.

Then, when all of the crews became proficient as bomber operators, we were transferred to Pocatello, Idaho and switched to the use of the Consolidated B-24; much to the unhappiness of some die-hard B-17 lovers. This outfit probably ended up in the 445 Bomb Group and, eventually, the 8th Air Force. So, combat-wise, Stewart was not in a B-17!

For the reason I mentioned in a prior correspondence, my crew was split up and assigned, temporarily, to Martin B-26's in Wendover, Utah. We were then reassigned individually to combat squadrons and I ended up in Colorado Springs in the 827th Squadron, 484th Group.

One final misnomer you run across. There persists a habit of explaining that the term "Flying Fortress" as applied to the B-17 was because of the many machine guns she carried; (in the later versions, of course, where she did carry one more than the B-24). However, I believe that the term was a political one used to convince the congress in the isolationist, tight money era of the 1930's that this heavy bomber could defend the coast of the U.S. against foreign navies, long before the shore fortresses could come into action. Hence the name given by the lobbyists representing Boeing, so the money would be allocated to the prototype.

As a bomber, the Consolidated aircraft built in this version was designated as the B-24 in American use and as the "Liberator" by the British. Unlike the B-17, it also became useful in other versions; such as the PB4Y-1 by the U.S. Navy; (the nose turret similar to the Grumman "Avenger"), the C-87 or LB-30 as a transport-cargo version. Winston Churchill, for one, utilized the transport type flown by the R.A.F.

I mention the above because at least one of the former cargo versions, the LB-30, is presently masquerading as a "B-24" in exhibitions around the country. It has MG's fitted here and there, but no turbo-supercharging to its non combat type engines. It would have been handy for me to use the cargo door in the starboard side when I had to bail out!

I guess we can't stop those who persist in assuming facts and not double-checking when they should, but it's worth the try sometimes.

William L. Hogan, 827-49
Millville, NJ 08332-6515



Dear Bud:

I enjoyed your story on the XIX Allied Air TAC Fighter-Bombers in France, July to December 1944. Our connection was of course the Lyon August supply mission following the 15 August Riviera invasion. I'm including some data on the 332nd Fight-

er Group, 15th AF, which flew cover for our missions with the 484th Bomb Group.

Some of us owe our lives to their excellent and dependable escort work. During the war we were not permitted to buy them a drink in the officers club due to race.

After the war I bought copies of their combat film "The Tuskegee Airmen" and sent a copy to a black university in Texas as a means of providing a role model for their ROTC students.

Subsequently, Mary and I set up a scholarship fund to provide financial assistance to ROTC candidates.

Any others who wish to make a tax deductible contribution to this fund may do so at:

332nd Fighter Group Scholarship Fund
Prairie View A & M University
Vice President for Development &
University Relations
Prairie View, TX 77446

The combat activities of the 332nd closely paralleled that of our own bomb group, same targets, same hazards.

The following is excerpted from the Air Force Magazine March 1995:

Out of the Wilderness

By John L. Frisbee

To fight with few allies for a principle opposed by a majority of the people and institutions of one's own country demands spiritual and moral resources that are rare, indeed- a kind of valor for which decorations are seldom given. Flying against the Luftwaffe's best fighters, some of the time with second rate equipment called for a different order of valor. Both battles were fought simultaneously by a tall, erect man of innate dignity. That man is Benjamin O. Davis, Jr., the first black man to graduate from the U.S. Military Academy in the twentieth century, the first to lead an AAF group in combat, and the first black general officer in the Air Force. The principle for which he laid his career and his life on the line many times was racial equality. Success in the air war over Europe was a key to its attainment.

It is difficult for younger Americans to appreciate the depth of racial prejudice that existed in this country fifty years ago. Segregation was enforced rigidly in our military services. Ben Davis knew that when he accepted an appointment to West Point in 1932. His father was one of the Army's few black officers, later its first black general. During young Ben's years at West Point he was "silenced" by his fellow cadets. Despite constant pressure to force him to resign he graduated thirty-fifth in a class of 276 and hoped to enter flying training. But the Air Corps accepted no blacks in any capacity.

In late 1940, President Roosevelt directed the Army Air Corps to establish a flying program for blacks at Tuskegee, Alabama. The field opened in July 1941 with Capt. Ben Davis as leader of the first class which was to form the nucleus of the 99th Pursuit Squadron. Commanded by Davis the squadron completed combat training but for more than a year no theater commander would accept them. Finally they were sent to North Africa outfitted with obsolete P-40s and sent into combat in July 1943 without the customary leavening of experienced pilots from other units. It was, as Davis told his men, their great opportunity for themselves and for all black Americans. The squadron scored its first victory against a FW-190 a month later. Nevertheless, commanders in the

theater and in Washington recommended that it be withdrawn from action and that no more black units be assigned to a combat theater. Davis successfully defended the performance of the 99th before a top-level War Department committee. By war's end, his 332nd Group (which included the 99th), based in Italy and flying P-51s had completed more than 1,500 missions, destroyed at least 250 enemy aircraft in the air and on the ground, and achieved the unique distinction of never losing a bomber to enemy aircraft in some 200 escort missions. Colonel Davis, who insisted that his men respond to indignities with performance rather than protest led more missions than any other of his officers. The 332nd proved not only that its commander but that many other blacks as well could compete successfully with whites in the most technical of the military services.

Despite the record of Davis's group the Army—and its Air Forces—clung to a policy of racial segregation after the war. Both Ben Davis and his father attacked that policy before a board of general officers in 1945. The younger Davis continued to fight for racial integration with an argument that commanders understood—efficiency. Segregation made it impossible to fill shortages by transferring people among operational units that had been decimated by demobilization.

In 1948, the Air Force, assured by the achievements of Davis's fighter group and spurred on by the urgency of rebuilding a shattered combat force, announced an end to segregation. Three months later, President Truman directed equal opportunity, though not racial integration in the services. The other services moved slowly in the same direction as the Air Force and the country as a whole quickened its long painful march toward racial equality

Discrimination within the services did not end with integration. Until his retirement in 1970 as a lieutenant general, Ben Davis worked toward truly equal opportunity for all races based on ability and performance. On those criteria, he selected his subordinates in the integrated Air Force.

No man deserves more credit for narrowing the gap between a professed ideal and an imperfect reality than Benjamin O. Davis Jr. With dignity, intelligence, and measured judgment, he waged a courageous often lonely, campaign that helped change the character of America.

Thanks to Col. Alan Gropman for sharing this short biography of General Davis, Air Force Times March 1985

Best Regards,
San Hutchins 824 Sq.



Mr. Bud Markel, Editor
The Torretta Flyer

Dear Bud,

I just received the Fall-Winter '97 issue of the Flyer. All members of the 484th appreciate your continued efforts on behalf

of our organization.

It occurred to me that some of the members may remember the bombardier of our crew, Richard Hugo. I had not seen or heard from him since 1945 and about one year ago, a short note in the 15th Air Force magazine asked if anyone had any information on Richard Hugo. The request came from L. A. Murillo, a retired English Professor from the University of California, who was a gunner on the B17's in Foggia. He informed me that Richard Hugo became a famous poet and author and wanted to learn more about Hugo's tour in the 15th Air Force.

I ordered several of his books and the attached are excerpts from a book published ten years after his death by his wife and two of his former students. The essay Catch 22, Addendum recalls our 25th Mission on December 3, 1944, to Innsbruck. Also attached is a page from my diary on this 25th Mission.

Regards,
Ryan O'Brien 825th Sq.

Editors Note: Because " Catch 22 Addendum" is more of an essay than a letter, it appears in the story section of this Flyer, see page 15.



Clarksboro, NJ
Dear Bud:

I'm glad somebody finally located me after all these years. I immediately joined the Association in December of 1996. I made my first reunion in September of 1997. It was great to see the guys of the 484th after fifty plus years. I sent for all the back issues of the Torretta Flyer and thoroughly enjoyed reading them. I read with keen interest the accounts of the flight crews on their bombing missions. Those guys were truly heroes in my book.

I was a member of the ground crew mechanics assigned to aircraft #62, Vivacious Lady, which was shot down on a mission to Innsbruck on June 13th, 1944.

I came to the 484th by way of Stockton Field, Cal, Salt Lake City, Utah, Davis Monthan Field, AZ., Pocatello, Idaho, Mountain Home, Idaho, Harvard, NE., and finally to Camp Patrick Henry, VA. We shipped out of Newport News Naval Base in March, 1944. We sailed across the Atlantic on Liberty ship, USS Lucretia Mott. We spent twenty eight days on the old tub which did about eleven knots an hour when the screw was in the water. When the sea got rough the bow would go down and the stern would come out of the water and the prop would churn the air instead of the water.

The voyage was mostly uneventful except for an air attack on our convoy in the Mediterranean Sea by the German Luftwaffe. The next day the BBC reported that the Germans claimed they wiped out most of the convoy. The truth was that they did little or no damage. It was no more than a nuisance raid.

We landed in Brindisi, Italy the day before Easter. We were loaded on freight cars which looked like cattle cars. We were jammed in about 50 to each car and made the long bumpy ride to Cerignola. (Yes, it's true- Italian trains have square wheels.) We then made the final leg of the journey by truck to Torretta. We

slept in Pup tents that night on the cold ground. Easter morning we had K Rations for breakfast and wonder of wonders we had an unexpected Easter Service. Our camp was located on a farm which consisted of several masonry buildings including a Chapel. A local Padre from Cerignola was visiting the farm people for Easter and he consented to conduct an Easter Service for us. About a hundred GI's crowded into the Chapel which had a capacity of about thirty.

In addition to my duties as a mechanic, I was called on to be a plumber. After bathing and shaving in our helmets for a couple of months, Headquarters decided that we needed an indoor shower complete with hot and cold running water. So the Italians built a masonry structure and we utilized an abandoned German water tank for our water supply. It was raised on stilts for gravity feed. We made use of a gasoline fired hot water decontamination tank for our hot water supply. Piping was hard to come by, so we used bits and parts of aircraft tubing. Pipe fittings were non existing so we just bent and welded tubes together. Now we had one problem- we didn't have any shower heads. Through the grapevine we heard that the 461st had shower heads. That night a moonlight requisition was successfully completed and the next day our bath house was equipped with shower heads and all enjoyed a nice hot shower for the first time since leaving the States.

I'll always remember all of the guys of the 484th and the job we did to help bring peace and freedom to the world. I think we were all part of history at that point in time.

Jim Revelas, 826 Sq.



Port Ludlow, WA
Mr. Bud Markel

Dear Mr. Markel:

Thanks very much for the material you sent me regarding crew Able 22 of the 827th and their last sortie over Munich on 23 October 1944.

To see the actual documents for mission planning was very interesting; in particular was the loading list, signed by my cousin, the last time he ever wrote his name, coming as a shock. I am very grateful for your efforts and think it is probably best to let the matter rest at that point.

I majored in history in college, but have only recently, since retirement in 1992, started devoting some time to it. My field was modern Europe which of course encompassed World Wars I and II. To me it is the most interesting part of human history and I certainly applaud your efforts in creating and maintaining the 484th Bomb Group Association while it is still possible to get some first-person stories of how it was. I have some idea of how difficult it is to bring that kind of association into being having worked on my squadron reunion several years ago. During my last tour in the Navy we all agreed that we would have only one reunion, ten years after we were released from Active Duty. We managed that, had a party and agreed never to meet again. Through membership

in Tailhook and a couple of other organizations I do hear about old friends from time to time, mostly "making the last trap."

Thanks again for your kindness. Best wishes for a good reunion at Tucson next November.

Sincerely, Ted Wright

Ted Wright
Port Ludlow, WA 98365

Dear Mr Wright:

Thank you for your letter postmarked February 6, 1998. Please excuse my delay in answering your letter.

On October 23, 1944, the Rhein crew (Able 22) went MIA on a mission to Munich Germany in ship (Nose No 72c) 42-52667. A photographer was scheduled as the 11th crew member, but it is not known if he boarded ship before take off. The crew is listed below:

Rank	ASN	Name	Duty
Cpl	34717630	James C Anderson	G
Sgt	35709802	Howard E Fugate	G
2/Lt	0772852	Albert Jorgensen	B
Cpl	19069755	Mitchell M Lindstrom	R/O
Sgt	35791964	Charles W Loudon	G
Cpl	34729768	Walter E McClellan	E
2/Lt	0723665	Morris J Padia	N
2/Lt	0768669	Charles R Rhein	P
2/Lt	0772545	Paul A Smith	C/P
Cpl	14109543	Albert R Thomas	G

Only Albert Jorgensen was a member of our organization back in 1991, and last lived at 1341 W Hiway 83 Box 44, Alamo, TX, 78516. Phone 512/781/2170. He was cited for action on October 13, 1944 for strafing an oil train, and received a purple heart. I am not sure when he received the Purple Heart. Rhein's crew was assigned to fly on October 13, 1944.

Morris Padia and Albert Jorgensen were normally assigned to the nose section of the aircraft along with the Nose Gunner, but in a controlled crash situation the crew members not essential to flight would have been assigned to the bulkhead just behind the aft bomb bay if there was time.

You should seek out the Missing Air Crew Records presumably from the National Archives, College Park, Maryland for any more information. I'm enclosing a few of the sheets of the Mission report for October 23, 1944. The others are not pertinent. Sorry I can't be of more service to you.

Bud Markel, 484th Bomb Group Association



Dear Bud

We did not attend the D.C. reunion but hope to be at Tucson. My wife has a placard allowing us to park in handicap spots. She cannot walk for long distances or stand for long periods which

would have been required at Arlington. With that out of the way, here is more grist for the Flyer.

Being one of those members of the group who was there from its beginning in the summer of 1943 in Harvard, Nebraska till the break-up in the summer of 1945 in Casablanca, Morocco. You published my account of the 484th trip by train from Harvard across the country to Newport News and the convoy across the Atlantic past Gibraltar to Italy. I gave you stories of the bomb dump fire, the not so great landings of some planes and the 24s blown up on their hardstands, probably by Italians

I realize that many members of the Association came over to Torretta as replacement crews. I gave refresher - courses to many of the operators. These people completed their required number of missions and went stateside. Therefore they were not privy to many of the events that occurred at the field. With the war in Europe winding down and our planes pretty much idle, we were told we might be going to Africa to join the transport command. We assumed that we would remain a unit, servicing cargo planes instead of bombers. We packed and crated equipment to be sent on ahead and never saw it again.

We were flown to Casablanca and were soon given an orientation speech by an Air Transport Command officer. Many ground personnel would be scattered to the ATC facilities from Dakar, Senegal, across North Africa to the Persian Gulf and India.

Above the moaning and groaning, a voice from the rear of the hall asked the Major for directions to the nearest Pro Station as he thought he had just been (insert the F word here) without a rubber. A sentiment shared by everyone in the hall. Some pilots, flight engineers and radio operators would also be sent to ATC stations. My original MOS had been for Radio Operator, high speed. I now had my fourth, which was for flight Radio operators/Mechanic. I understood that flight engineers and radio operators could wear crew member wings but most opted for the gunners wings. They were sexier. I made a few trips in C-54s, flying fifth army troops home from Casablanca to Dakar and Natal, Brazil where the ferry command took over.

The ATC tried to make us remove our 15th Air Corps patches and wear the Army Air Corps only. Maybe they were envious. We were not in favor of that and our senior officers raised a ruckus and a compromise was reached.

January 24 1998. We could wear the fifteenth patch on the right shoulder and the regular Army Air Corps on the left. I have a B-15 jacket with the patches which I wear during these chilly New England winters.

In Casablanca, I read a piece in the Stars and Stripes about the French having awarded the 484th a decoration which allowed the wearing of a certain shoulder braid. I never heard or read any more about that. I was transferred from Morocco to the hell hole of the world, Abadan, Iran. It was said to be the second hottest place in the world. I wont argue with that.

Having helped fly ground forces home earlier in the year, didn't get there till mid

November of 45, traveling from Cairo, Egypt by boat. C'est la vie.

In Abadan we flew cargo to Karachi, India in the Pregnant Whales, C-46s. I was also part time engineer, I had to check the wing tanks before take-off.

The End

The above got separated from its envelope, will the member who submitted this letter please identify himself, the Editor



L to R -George Venslove, Edward Gauthier, William Knapp, and John Saganovich in Cerignola



The David Sheddon Crew See Obit on page 37. Back Row L to R : Del H Doblle-B, Jack Scott-C/P, David Sheddon-P, Pat Kinkade-N, Botton row L to R: S Cross B/G, Emil W Wright-N/G, Charles Parr-W/G, R G Greaves-E, D G Fore-R/O, Ralph Hansen-T/G. Emil Wright Photo



The Last Mission



John D. Jacobs, 827 Sq.

John D. Jacobs, 73 of Cheektowaga, New York died Sunday, April 5, 1998 in Sisters Hospital. Born in Buffalo, April 9, 1924, he attended Mount St. Joseph Academy, Kensington High School, Bryant and Stratton Business Institute and the University of Buffalo where he received a degree in accounting in 1947. He enlisted in the Army Air Forces in 1942 and was in the 827 Squadron as an Airplane Engine Mech 747 with the rank of Sgt.



John and Grace Jacobs

John worked as a sales representative for General Mills in its flour division for 29 years. He joined Hickman, Coward & Wattles, which later became Sorrento Foods, working for 18 years before retiring in 1994.

He was one of the founders of St. Barnabas Boy Scout Troops 554. He was active with the Catholic Youth Organization as athletic league director and received the Pro Deo et Juventute Award for his work with youth.

John and his wife, Grace attended reunions in 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 95, and 97. He enjoyed friendships with Joe Malloy, Kyle Holley, Art Aldene, Bill DeLanzo, and Ed Whalen, all buddies from the 827 Sq.

Roy (Bud) J Marchalk, 826 Sq

Mr. Bud Markel, President
484th Bomb Group Association

Thank you for your kind letter addressed to my mother regarding the death of my father Roy Marschalk. I am sorry to say that my mother passed away a year ago, on May 28, 1997.

Bud, I would like you to know that both my father and mother truly enjoyed their membership in the 484th Bomb Group Association. They enjoyed getting together with the other members of the flight crew and their spouses. They also enjoyed traveling to the many interesting locations you chose for the reunions. It was a real disappointment to both of them when they could not go to the reunions due to failing health. Even after my mother's passing, and with his own failing health, my father still looked forward to the possibility of attending the next reunion.

Thank you for your offer to include an obituary for my father in The Torretta Flyer, I know he would be quite honored. I can give you some basic information about his life. Enclosed are photo copies of some of the "secret" and "restricted" documents he had in his collection dealing with his period in the war. They may be useful to add some information about the war years. There is no need to return the photo copies. We really would appreciate receiving the copy of the magazine as you indicated.

Roy "Bud" Marschalk was born on June 10, 1923 and passed away on May, 30, 1998. He grew up in Maywood, Illinois and entered the service in 1944. [War years] After the war he worked for an advertising display manufacturer in Chicago. Bud married Margaret "Peg" Klemp in September, 1947. They had two children. Later in his career he became an independent representative for manufacturers of advertising displays. He retired in 1985 and lived in Naperville, Illinois.

Once again Bud, thank you for your kind letter, and all the work the organization does for the many fine men who served in the 484th Bomb Group.

Sincerely,
Bob Marchalk, Son.

Editors Note: We looked up Roy Marchalk's mission record and selected the mission of October 23, 1944 as illustration. His crew on that day is shown below: The formation was on that day split into two forces "Red" and "Blue." Grose's crew was assigned to "Red Force," Position C-21, ship No 51, A/c No 42-51882

P	2/LT	(1092)	Charles B Grose JR	0705938
CP	F/O	(1051)	BLair P Browne	T-62621
N	2/LT	(1034)	William T Schwartz	0465157
B	2/LT	(1035)	CHarles W Lindsley	0772983
E	Sgt	(748)	Leonard T Patrick	33022681
R	S/Sgt	(757)	Robert L Evans	38463540
AG	Cpl	(612)	Frank J Valdoz	19179231
CG	Cpl	(748)	Roy (Bud) J Marchalk	16140968
CG	Cpl	(611)	Chester R Evans	37368393
CG	Cpl	(611)	Adrian F Segarra	12215571

Red Force of 24 aircraft was lead by Maj Lyle to Munich, Germany, to bomb the Allach BMW works. 19 a/c returned on schedule, 3 returned early because of mechanical problems, and two failed to return. Lt Rhein in ship 72 went MIA, and Lt Dunsmore in ship 21 landed at the 301st airfield. This was a long mission and earned double credit for all crews participating. Bombing was done by PFF (Radar-Pathfinder), no hits were observed. Bombing altitude was 26,000 feet, using 6 ea 500 pound GP (general purpose) bombs, with fuses set at nose with .1 second and .01 second tail. 50 P-38s provided fighter cover.



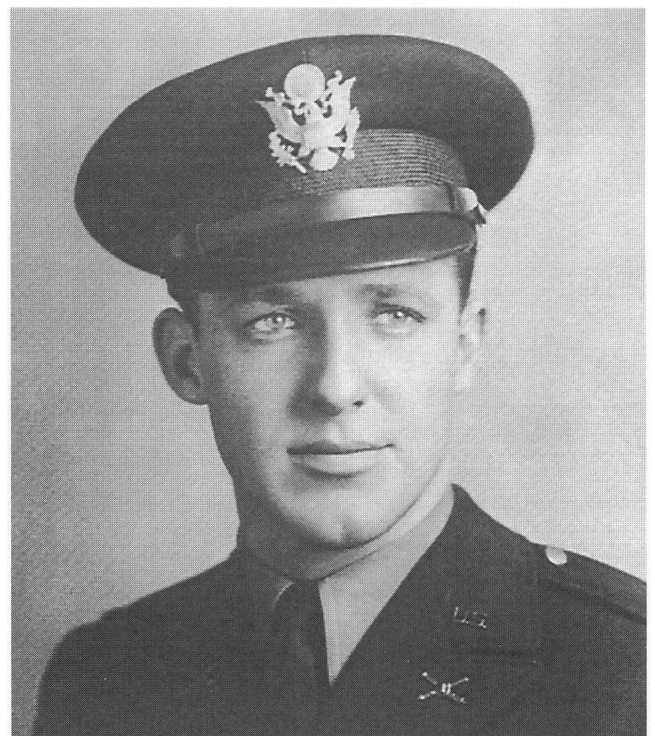
Photo Bud Marchalk shown in the right seat

Dwight R Pelton 825 Sq

Dwight R Pelton, 75, Navigator on Thomas J Bolt's crew, 825 Sq, has passed away. He was a retired advertising executive. Survivors include his wife Jeanne, four sons, Douglas, Scott, Thomas, and Rand, a daughter, Terri Segal, a sister, Doris, and five grandchildren.

On March 1, 1944, Dwight and his crew were assigned to a planned bombing mission to the dreaded oil refinery at Moosebierbaum, dreaded because of the number of flak cannons defending this important target due to the heavy attacks on the German Oil industry by the 15th Air Force. Today the 484th was to carry out the attack in two forces, red & blue. The Bolt crew of blue force was assigned to Charlie 23 (tail end Charlie) on aircraft 41-229519 as follows:

- 2/Lt Thomas J Bolt-P,
- 2/Lt Amons, V G-C/P
- 2/Lt Dwight R Pelton-N,
- 2/Lt E Bogdan-B
- T/Sgt W Zapka-E,
- Cpl Vern C Janke-RO
- Cpl F W Suddarth-NG,
- Cpl H W Clark-TG
- Cpl R D White-BG,
- Cpl W B Kester-UG



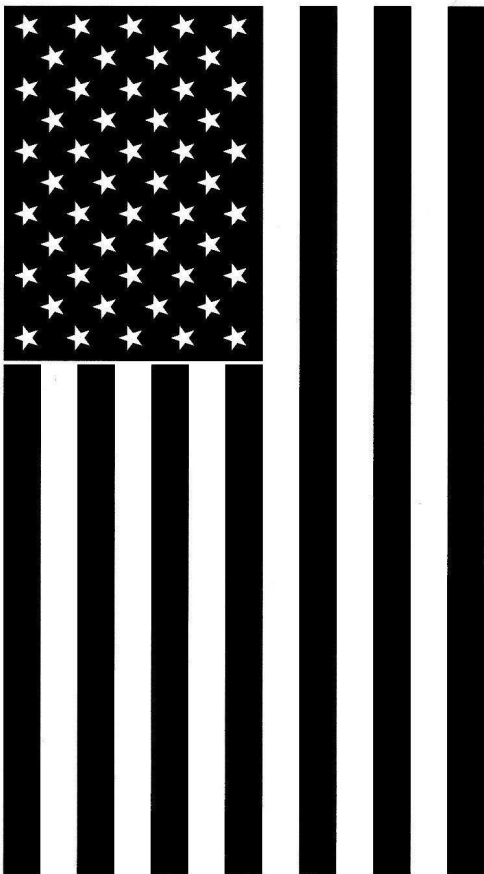
Dwight R Pelton

Sgt James W Reonas, 826 Sq

Sgt James William Reonas, 826 Sq. James William Reonas, Sr. was born February 10, 1923 in LaFayette, Georgia, the son of the late William Mack Reonas, Sr. and the late Charlsie Bernice Tinney Reonas. The family moved to the Mississippi Delta near Cleveland, Mississippi, when James was about 6 years old. He lived there until he joined the Army Air Force when he was 17 years old in 1940. He stayed in the service all through WWII serving as a Crew Chief on a B-24. He married Katie Mae Green in Mississippi on July 20, 1942. After the war they moved to Rome, GA where they lived until their deaths. Katie died on May 20, 1980. They are survived by three sons, SMSgt. Ronald Gene Reonas (Ret.) of Cocoa, FL, James William Reonas, Jr. of Riverdale, GA and Larry Douglas Reonas of Riverdale, GA. He also has 5 grandchildren and 2 great-grandchildren. In the early 1980's he married Charlotte Mewborn of Rome, GA and they adopted two children. Charlotte preceded James in death in January, 1997.

He retired from General Electric in February of 1987 after having worked there for 33 years as an inspector of transformers. He also got his private pilot's license around the age of 50 and was very involved in the Civil Air Patrol in Rome, GA, and worked with young recruits in the CAP. He passed away on April 8, 1998. Cause of death was cardiopulmonary arrest due to gastrointestinal bleeding and myocardial infarction.

Sincerely
Sandra M Reonas



A Boy Meets God

From: RJA Tarheel via the Internet

This poem was found on the body of a nineteen-year-old American soldier in Vietnam.

Look God: I have never spoken to You,
But now I want to say, "How do You do."

You see God, they told me You did not exist;
And, like a fool, I believed all of this.

Last night from a shell hole I saw Your sky;
I figured right then they had told me a lie.

Had I taken the time to see the things You made,
I would know they weren't calling a spade a spade.

I wonder, God, if You would shake my hand;
Somehow, t feel that You will understand.

Strange, I had to come to come to this hellish place.
Before I had time to see Your face.

Well, I guess there isn't much more to say,
But I am sure glad, God, I met You today.

I guess the zero hour will soon be here,
But I am not afraid since I know You are near.

The signal - well, God, I will have to go;
I love you lots, this I want you to know.

Looks like this will be a horrible fight;
Who knows, I may come to your house tonight.

Though I wasn't friendly with you before, I wonder,
God, if you would wait at the door.

Look, I am crying, me shedding tears!
I wish I had known you these many years.

Well, I will have to go now, God.
Goodbye - Strange, since I met you,

I am not afraid to die.

Lt David W Sheddon-P, 825 Sq

David W Sheddon, 73 has died of cancer, he was born in Cleveland, OH, spent most of his adolescent years in Atlanta, Georgia, where he attended Georgia Tech. While in college he was drafted into service, where he received flight training and was shipped overseas to the 484th Bomb Group.

He is survived by his wife, Miriam, a daughter Alice in Sacramento, and a son Mark in Encinitas.

Editor's Notes:

He first started flying on October 16, 1944 and flew his last mission on December 20, 1944. On that day his flight crew was as follows:

2/Lt P Sheddon, David W
1/Lt C/P Kerr, C W
2/Lt N Kincade, K P
2/Lt B Doblle, D H
T/Sgt E Graves, R G
T/Sgt RO Fore, D G
S/Sgt NG Wright, E W
S/Sgt TG Hansen, R E
Sgt BG Gross, S
S/Sgt UG Parr, C A
Pvt f Goodlett, W C

See assigned crew photo on page 33

The crew was assigned to ship#44-41136 Nose#33, Position Able 22. The target was the Brux Sythentic Oil Plant.

Of the 23 planes that took off, three returned early, three failed to return, Zemantz landed at the 454th BG (just north of the 484th). Gaskill landed at Triola, and arrived back at 0958 the next morning. Sheddon landed at Vis, 5 crew members bailed out before landing.

The plan was to bomb by PFF, but weather conditions (a huge thunderstorm) en route caused an alternative target, Linz, Austria to be chosen, otherwise the meeting with the fighter escort would have been missed. (20 P-38s, and 17 P-51s) Bombing altitude was 24,000 ft at 160 MPH, with the bomb Load of 7 ea 500 pound RDX bombs. RDX explosive was supposed to be stronger than GP bombs.



1/Lt Arthur J Scholl, C/P 825



1/Lt Arthur J Scholl, C/P 825 Sq.

Arthur thoroughly enjoyed his participation and interaction with members of the 484th Bomb Group Association at the reunions. He looked forward to the Torretta Flyers and read the contents with great interest.

After he completed his 35 Missions he was returned to the U. S. for reassignment to the Air Transport Command based in Delaware. Speaking for Art and myself I want you to know that your initiative in founding the group and your hard work that you and your wife do to support the organization is greatly appreciated. Sincerely, Rosemary Scholl

Ed's note: Art and his wife, Rosemary, attended reunions in 1990, 1992, 1993, and 1995. He started flying missions on July 27, 1944, with one to the Manfred Weiss Armament Works, Budapest, Hungary, and ended February 19, 1945 with a mission to the Graz Austria Marshaling yards. On 27 July, Art Scholl flew as co-pilot on Billy B Neel's crew, 825 Squadron, in Ship 42-94742 Nose #36, Their crew that day was as follows:

P	Billie B Neel	1/Lt
C/P	Arthur Scholl	1/Lt
N	Charles M Cossey	2/Lt
B	Sorkin, Jack L	2/Lt
E	Danielson, Harry G	Sgt
RO	Stamper, William H	Sgt
NG	Montemerlo, Guido D	Cpl
TG	Valdez, Juan	Cpl
BG	George Setser	Cpl
UG	Drake, William R	Cpl

Of the 40 aircraft that took off that day, five returned early, due to mechanical problems. Ship #36 took off at 0601 and returned to base 1214.



1/Lt Earl Svela 824 Sq

Earl Svela, 80, a first Pilot has died. He was born June 24, 1918 in Canada, one of eight children. The family moved to Crosby ND, where he continued his schooling, graduating from high school in 1936. He moved to Port Angeles, WA in 1937, where he became a United States Citizen. He joined Montgomery Ward as a window displayman and clothing salesman. He courted and married Helen Pool of Port Angeles in 1942. Earl enlisted in the Army Air Force, graduating as a multi-engine B-24 pilot.

He is survived by his wife Helen, sons Earl Jr, and Bruce, brothers: Norman and Raymond, a sister, Esther, and four grandchildren.

He completed 35 missions with the 824 Sq. On March 1, 1945 his crew was as follows:

- 1/Lt Earl Svela-P
- 2/Lt Dexter C Shultz-C/P
- 1/Lt Abraham Abramoff-N
- 1/Lt Harry Gamauf-B
- T/Sgt Warde H Bernhardt-E
- T/Sgt Arlis Foster-RO
- S/Sgt Douglas D Morse-G
- S/Sgt Norman K Hartman-NG
- S/Sgt Frank R Mendes-UG
- S/Sgt Howard T Hoffman

Position: Baker 11, Ship 403 Nose No 28



To All My Loved Ones

Do not stand at my grave and weep.
I am not there; I do not sleep.

I am a thousand winds that blow
I am the diamond glints on snow.

I am the sunlight on ripened grain,
I am the soft, sweet, autumn rain.

When you awake in the morning's hush
I am the sweet uplifting rush of silent
birds in circled flight.

I am the soft stars that shine at night
Do not stand at my grave and cry.
I am not there. I did not die.

Submitted on the Internet by John Tracey

Editors Note: This poem was E-Mailed by member Al Kline, who searches the internet for interesting material that we might consider for the Flyer. You can e-mail him at drkline@earthlink.net

S/Sgt Hermand J. White 824 Sq.

Hermand J. White of York died of natural causes at 5:37 p.m. March 11 at Manor Care Health Services, Dallastown. He was 74.

Mr. White retired in 1991 as an illustrator for the Army Corps of Engineers from the New Cumberland Army Depot.

He was a member of St. Joseph Catholic Church. He was a staff sergeant in the Army during World War II. He was a member of Shiloh American Legion Post No. 791. He was a 1951 graduate of Kutztown University. Born in Bloomsburg, Columbia, Lancaster County, Feb. 20, 1924, he was a son of the late Herman and Matilda Bush White.

He leaves his wife, Arlene L. Blass White, three daughters, Joan White of York, Anne Kubeldis of Freeport, Armstrong County, and Maria White of Glendale, AZ; four sons, Robert J. White of Dallas, Joseph R. White of York Haven and Christopher V. White and Michael H. White, both of York; 14 grandchildren; and a brother, John E. White of Las Vegas, NV.

Burial was in Holy Saviour Cemetery with military rites by York County Veterans Honor Guard.

Deceased Personnel 484th Bomb Group and affiliated units

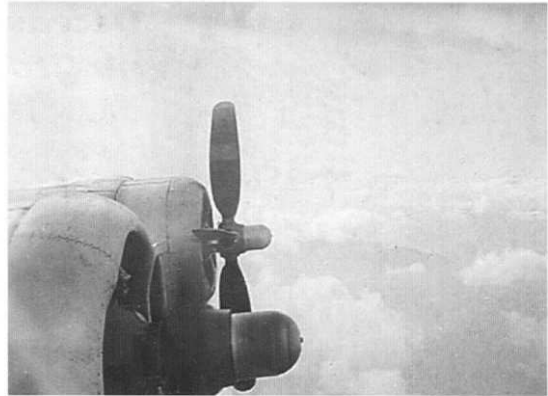
The personnel listed on this page have been reported deceased since the last Torretta Flyer
(No. 33) and the 1998 memorial booklet was released at the 1998 reunion.



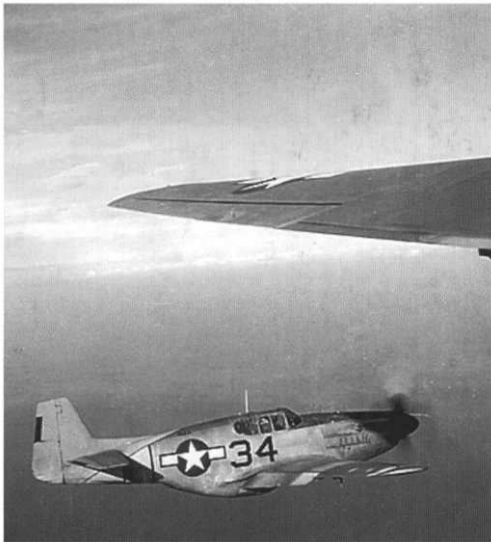
S/Sg	Jasper D	Allgood	G	824	35709974	3/31/98
Cpl	Rodman C.	Burr	T/O	825	11094229	11/30/98
2/Lt	Vernon E	Compton (KIA)	P	825	0826046	12/9/44
Sgt	J W	Delk	T/G	826	38426556	1/12/98
1/Lt	Willie G	Fairchild	P	826	0659285	10/95
	Angelo L	Ferrara	B/G	767		4/16/98
Cpl	Emil E	Fincher (KIA)	G	825	39922366	12/9/44
	Frank	Hahn	B/G	824		Unk
2/Lt	Richard J	Helbert (KIA)	C/P	825	0829207	12/9/44
	John D	Jacobs		827	32831200	4/5/98
1/Lt	Neil E	Kahler	B	824	0769047	6/98
S/Sg	Charles W	Killen	N/G	825	37347433	6/97
S/Sg	Warren D	Lough (KIA)	E	825	35404828	12/9/44
S/Sg	Roy J	Marschalk	G	826	16140968	5/30/98
Capt	Charles A	Marshallk	P	825	0797570	2/3/98
Cpl	Robert J	Meyers (KIA)	G	825	16117147	12/9/44
S/Sg	John J	Mobley	E	824	15071242	Unk
Cpl	Harvey L	Moore Jr (KIA)	R/O	825	13134142	12/9/44
1/Lt	James O	Nostdal	1038	826	0708936	Unk
Sgt	James W	Reonas	C/C	826	14054235	4/8/98
2/Lt	Arthur R	Sullivan	C/P	824		1992
1/Lt	Earl	Svela	P	824	0699785	
2/Lt	Alfred J	Tomchik (KIA)	B	825	0777507	12/9/44
T/Sg	Hall G	Van Vlack	R/O	826	12080566	6/25/78
Cpl	Jacques	Vandenberg	G	824	12098011	Unk
Cpl	Thomas L.	Vandergrift		484	35757388	Unk
1/Lt	Ben H.	Varner	C/P	826	0806752	5/22/96
Sgt	Fred	Varner Jr	B/G	825	34685253	9/27/73
Sgt	Edmund A	Venella	T/G	824	32755302	5/26/89
2/Lt	William H.	Venn	C/P	826	0821117	4/20/79
Cpl	Carol S.	Walker		824	39696610	4/14/70
Cpl	Howard T	Walker	G	827	32950239	7/15/93
Cpl	Jackson W	Walker	Ord	824	37523017	5/19/78
S/Sg	Elbert J	Wallace	G	827	17099250	2/17/70
Cpl	Ronald C	Walrath	HQ	826	39040134	6/8/98
	Claude	Walters	Ord	824		2/20/80
S/Sg	W B	Walters	G	826	38106099	11/28/80
Cpl	Nicholas	Walyko		826	33677804	8/23/92
M/Sg	Thomas H.	Ward		825	14033040	7/28/86
Sgt	Fred	Warner		825	34685253	8/27/73
Cpl	Bernard M.	Warnick		825	33690062	6/17/93
Sgt	Thomas R.	Warrington		827	32952700	1/12/72
Sgt	William M.	Waskoskie	G	824	33510142	8/31/97
S/Sgt	Hermand J	White	T/G	824		3/11/98
Sgt	John L	Woods (KIA)	E	825	39114787	12/9/44
2/Lt	Galen L	Wornock (KIA)	N	825	02061087	12/9/44
Cpl	John F	Wurth (KIA)	G	825	17149055	12/9/44
Sgt	John J.	Zuest	E	827	16132776	12/9/44



A Link trainer in operation at Torretta, Fall 1944.



No. #1 Feathered, a dangerous condition on a bombing mission .



One of our "Little Friends" from the 332nd Fighter Group (Tuskegee Airmen) tucked in close flying under the shadow of the bombers wing.



484th Bomb Group Headquarters area near the north end of the runways at Torretta, The 825 Squadron area was also located near here.

The 484th Bomb Group Association
1122 Ysabel St.
Redondo Beach, CA 90277-4453

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