



## 451<sup>st</sup> Bomb Group Newsletter No. 9 January 2017



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451<sup>st</sup> Bomb Group  
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### DALLAS RENION RECAP

Happy New Year! Greetings to members, family and friends of the 451st BG.

I want to begin this newsletter with an update on the Joint Bombardment Groups Reunion which was held at the Wyndham Garden in North Dallas, Texas on October 13-16. A large shout out of thanks to Dave Blake of the 461st BG who organized this reunion.

Also, warm thanks to our host hotel- they did a wonderful job and were quite proud to host our reunion

There were over 320 attendees from six Bomb Groups- the 376th, 451st, 455th, 461st, 465th, 484th and 485th. There were 42 veterans from these groups present, seven of them being from the 451st.

Veterans from the 451st included Win "Big" Jones, Earl Van Benschoten, Hermilo "Milo" Sanchez, Nathan McKinney, Andy Pendleton, Achilles Kozakis and first time attendee Coy Buford. Your energy and enthusiasm is so remarkable - you truly are the Greatest Generation!

We did miss some of long time attendees who could not attend the Dallas reunion; Bobbi Kelly who had a perfect reunion attendance prior to Dallas. Karen Kelly who had missed only one or two previous Reunions. Three members of the Lou Morris crew, Peter Polmen, Age 98, Alex Kuras and Richard (Gene) Minor, all strong supporters of our 451<sup>st</sup> B.G. Sedgefield Hill, and Ed Longenecker, both 451<sup>st</sup> stalwarts.

We received letters and donations from 451st veterans who were unable to attend, but believe me, you most certainly were with us in spirit.

The bomb groups were proudly greeted by the Mayor of Farmers Branch, as well as performance of the Dallas Christian College choir.

On Friday, the 14th we toured the Cavanaugh Flight Museum. What a terrific display of aircraft there was, and were treated to seeing some of these old planes taking off, headed to an airshow in nearby Fort Worth.

The 451st and 455th BG's had dinner together Friday evening.

Win Jones was presented with an American eagle statue, honoring his leadership of the 451<sup>st</sup> from 2008 - 2015. Wilma Bennett and her family were in attendance, honoring her husband Jack. A few years ago, Wilma had generously donated her husband's leather flight jacket to the 451st BG for placement in a museum. That had not happened, and it was a great honor to return the jacket to Wilma and her family.

Saturday, we toured the Sixth Floor Museum at Dealey Plaza. The museum is dedicated to the assassination and legacy of President John F. Kennedy and his death.

Saturday evening was the all Groups banquet, with outstanding entertainment from the Lady's of Liberty, a trio who performed a show reminiscent of a USO show.

Sunday morning was the Memorial Service. Sunday afternoon we toured the Dallas Holocaust Museum, as well as a driving tour of downtown Dallas. The reunion concluded with a "Farewell Fajita" dinner Sunday evening.

Jonathan Tudor organized and arranged for the Friday and Saturday afternoon lectures/presentations.

It was truly a very special reunion!

### Hospitality Room & Sample Memorabilia Display



## SURVIVOR PICTURE



451<sup>st</sup> B.G. Survivors: 1<sup>st</sup> Row (L to R): 7. Win "Big" Jones, 11. Earl VanBenschoten

2<sup>nd</sup> Row (L to R): 13. Achi Kozakis

3<sup>rd</sup> Row (L to R): 5. Coy Buford, 8. Andy Pendleton

4<sup>th</sup> Row (L to R): 7. Milo Sanchez, 9. Nathan McKinney

## REUNION SPEAKERS

Thank you to all speakers for your contributions in making the Dallas reunion a successful one! The YouTube links below can be used to watch the videos:

### Reunion Speakers

**Speakers:** Ed Clendenin &  
Nanc McLaughlin Marshall

**Topic:** Operation Tidal Wave

#### You Tube Link:

Part 1: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rwVGgViB68Q>  
Part 2: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RAJ7nRdpGql>  
Part 3: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yBeCAqbqgpU>  
Part 4: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n\\_HRhl30oaE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n_HRhl30oaE)



**Speaker:** Alfred Paul Metz

**Topic:** The Search for K.O. Katy

#### You Tube Link:

Part 1: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yn5KQLE0eK8>  
Part 2: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zCYj4HaalU0>



**Speakers:** Georg Hoffmann &  
Nicole Goll

**Topic:** Atrocities Against U.S. Airmen during the last few months of WWII



#### You Tube Links:

Part 1: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qwQlpVY4qJ0>  
Part 2: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UrCngTiFa0s>  
Part 3: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UrCngTiFa0s>

## Reunion Speakers

**Speaker:** Patrick L. Schlichenmeyer,  
Colonel, USAF  
455 AEW Vice Commander

**Topic:** 455th Air Expeditionary Wing in Afghanistan



**You Tube Link:**  
Video of presentation is not available.

**Speakers:** Nathan McKinney      Andrew Pendleton  
Achilles Kozakis      Ryan O'Brien  
Hjalmar Johansson      William Smither

**Moderator:** Jerry Whiting

**Topic:** Panel Discussion: "A Day in the Life..."

**You Tube Link:**  
Part 1: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ANuniAaWbaw>  
Part 2: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mj6\\_2fkidXE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mj6_2fkidXE)

**Speaker:** Lt. Col. Robert J. "Bob" Friend

**Topic:** From Tuskegee to Ramitelli (and on to  
Saturn)



**You Tube Link:**  
Part 1: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7YdxlzZEoE4>  
Part 2: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KFmXUEp5tFE>

## Reunion Speakers

**Speaker:** John Billings

**Topic:** Piloting a B-24 for Bombing and Covert Missions

**You Tube Link:**

Part 1: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kkqge\\_x4b7o](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kkqge_x4b7o)  
Part 2: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TB5XooeWmlo>  
Part 3: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oF6xsZZmhBc>



**Speaker:** Celeste Smither

**Topic:** 2015 Visit to San Pancrazio and Venosa Airbases

**You Tube Link:**

Part 1: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=foVmmQ0J6CE>  
Part 2: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B4MoiVqHf8>  
Part 3: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OL87LdDBI0k>



**Veteran Discussion** - Although not part of the official speakers' program, the impromptu reminiscing by Win Jones, Achilles Kozakis and Nathan McKinney about their WWII experiences at the Friday night banquet is interesting. It can be viewed on You Tube using the link below:

Part 1: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lk6s8RArGh8>  
Part 2: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F\\_jPa8Aeb14](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F_jPa8Aeb14)  
Part 3: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eQcvIAB9tsY>

## 2017 REUNION ANNOUNCEMENT

The best news of all is that dates have been set for the 2017 joint bomb groups' reunion- mark your calendars for Sept. 14-17 in New Orleans, LA. This site was chosen because of the WWII museum, which has high accolades.

Please plan to join us even if this is your first reunion. It's an experience you will truly enjoy!

## DONATIONS

We truly appreciate your generosity and support – without it, we would not be able to provide this newsletter.

Should you desire to honor a crew mate or family member, just make a memorial donation of \$50 or more. Please send this along with the full name and duty position of the person being honored. Please send all donations to:

451<sup>st</sup> B.G.  
c/o Susan Tudor Prince  
14 Reservation Rd,  
Andover, MA 01810

Memorial contributions recently received are as follows:

<u>Donor</u>	<u>In Tribute To</u>
Anonymous	Bob Karstensen (Gunner)
Anonymous	Nate Firestone (navigator)
Dan, Bonnie	Silviu Dan
Fornaicyk, Harry	Mark Robinson's crew
Hill, Sedge	John Smeleski & Stanley F. Muczynski (gunner, radio)
Jones, Winson "Big"	Jack "Little" Jones
Kozakis, Achilles	451st B.G.
Macomber (tail gunner), William	451st B.G.
McElheny (Pilot), James Richard	Milt Boyce (co-pilot, deceased)
Parr, David (son ) & Sandra	Hiram T. Parr (gunner)
Pendleton, Andy	451st B.G.
Prince, Susan Tudor	Sedge Hill & Nate Firestone
Suffoletta, Joseph	All Living & deceased 451st B.G. members
Tedesco Sr., Frank	451st B.G.
Van Benschoten, Earl	451st B.G.
Van Benschoten, Earl	Son, David who passed away April 6th, 2016 (he loved attending the reunions)

## REQUEST FOR CREW PICTURES

We would like to get crew pictures including the plane to add to our web site. The following information is needed: Picture, Name of Crew, Crew member name, duty position & position as they appear in the picture such as left to right and name of the plane. If you don't have all the information, send along what you do have.

If you have a digital image of the picture, please email to Jonathan Tudor: [b24xtrajoker@gmail.com](mailto:b24xtrajoker@gmail.com)

If you have a standard picture, you can mail the picture and crew info to Jonathan at;

Jonathan Tudor  
222 Eastern Promenade  
Portland, ME 04101

If you need to have the picture, returned, please let Jonathan know.

We will keep you posted in a future Newsletter how you can access the crew pictures.

## LAST FLYBY

Here are the death notifications received since our November 2015 Newsletter:

451st Member	Squadron	Duty Position	DOD
Baltzer, Leonard A.	725th	Bombardier	04.19.2016
Battistella, Dominic	726th	Pilot	04.12.2016
Cooney, John	725th	Ball Turret Gunner	09.21.2014
Dan, Silviu	725th	Waist Gunner	05.26.2016
Eagles, David H.		Tail Gunner	06.29.2014
Guiness, Herbert A.	726th	Pilot	08.31.2015
Jackson, David H.		Belly Gunner	10.24.2016
Marquart, Leroy Elmer		Ball Turret Gunner	05.18.2015
Minor, Richard (Gene)		Ball Turret Gunner	11.27.2016
Parr, Hiram T.		Gunner	02.13.2016
Reshkin, S. Jerry	727th	Pilot	12.20.2012
Schuman, William H.			04.20.2016

## NEWSLETTER SUBMISSIONS

If you have a write-up of your war time experience, song, poem, letter or diary entry that you or a family member is willing to share for possible inclusion in a future newsletter, we encourage you to send a copy to Susan Tudor Prince, 14 Reservation Road, Andover, MA 01810.

## RECOLLECTIONS FROM WILLIAM W. WALLER, NOSE GUNNER, 726<sup>th</sup> SQ

"I was the nose turret gunner with the R.L Hagan Crew. The crew was formed when the 451<sup>st</sup> was assembled at Wendover Utah. I remember the storm of salt and sand we endured while there. No lasting friendships resulted from our association, lost over the years as deaths occurred word would filter back to me. We ranged from an old 35 waist gunner who smoked a lot of cigarettes to several 18 & 19 year age group. It is a safe assumption that the old gunner is deceased. Donald Houk, co-pilot, Rapid City South Dakota shared a telephone conversation a few years back. The only ones that could join me as possible survivors are Joseph Weschler of Erie PA & George Williams of Roxbury MA. I hope that my sources are in error & the demise of others are exaggerated.

Another experience is worth sharing. We were on a training mission over North Africa in a period of heavy vapor trails which was unusual. I was intent in my observation. A plane in the formation ahead and above blew C #3 engine. An engine cowling was dislodged fell in an erratic pattern to an almost explosive contact with my turret. All plexi glass vanished and there I was. It made me acutely aware of the reason for the firmly attached panel of 4" plexi glass was a part of nose turret construction. Over the years, I have often said we are all here by being lucky. ... I lift my glass to the hardy survivors at the reunion."

## FRANCE LEGION OF HONOR RECIPIENT – COY BUFORD

First time reunion attendee Coy Buford, Nose Gunner, 726<sup>th</sup> SQ. received the Legion of Honor recently.

He was contacted by the French Consulate in Houston, TX to notify him that he was eligible for the award since he had "boots on the ground".

Coy made at least three trips to Southern France to provide supplies (bombs, ammo, oil & rations) assisting in the allied invasion and liberation of France.

Veterans who are interested to see if they are eligible for recognition can research further at

<http://www.consulfrance-boston.org/The-Legion-d-Honneur-for-US-veterans>



## THE BEST DAY OF MY LIFE – HERB GUINNESS, PILOT 726<sup>TH</sup> SQ.

(Note the excerpt below was submitted by Herb and appeared in Win Jones' book on the 451<sup>st</sup> Bomb Group)

"I had just graduated from the final phase of the Army Air Corps cadet training program in August 1943. I was commissioned as a 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. and presented with the coveted pilot's wings to pin proudly on my uniform. Out of our starting class of 430 cadets some 7 months ago, at Randolph Field in San Antonio, Texas, only 240 of us graduated that day.

...After the graduation ceremonies, which took place at our advanced twin engine training school in the little town of Ada, Oklahoma, we all rushed over to the bulletin board outside the headquarters building to locate our names and our next duty assignments. About 20% of the class were to be posted to the Training Command as instructor pilots for upcoming cadet classes. Most of us felt that this was the worst duty—we all wanted to go overseas and get into combat right away! The propaganda in WW2 was so intense that we were instilled with the urge to fight the enemy and avenge Pearl Harbor.

I whooped with joy when I saw my name assigning me to the flight transition training class for the B-24 Liberator planes at Tarrant Field in Fort Worth, Texas. After 5 weeks of intensive flight and ground school training...I was transferred to the Air Corps Base in Casper, Wyoming for crew assignment....

My crew was then ordered to proceed to Liberal Kansas to pick up a new B-24 bomber and fly it overseas to the European theater of operations. When we arrived at the air base in Liberal, I was called in the flight assignment building, I was directed to an office labeled "Aircraft Allocations". I was handed an Army supply form (in 6 copies), and asked to sign it after I read it. It turned over to me as the pilot 1 B-24 model E airplane, built by the Convair Corp in San Diego CA, complete with 4 Pratt & Whitney R1800 turbofan engines. The U.S. Army cost was listed at a base price of \$283,000 plus an additional sum for listed 50 caliber machine guns and other equipment for a total of \$319,000. This seem to be to an enormous amount of money, since I grew up in the years of the Great Depression. I willingly signed the forms {6 copies} and was given the log book and engineering documents for the plane.

...As I walked down the flight line searching for my new plane, I felt like I was 10 feet tall, especially with that pistol strapped to my shoulder. I was so proud 10% more for flight pay. I think I would have flown that bird for free, I was that enamored with flying! Finally I spotted that brand new shiny aluminum plane ahead of me. I knew than that this was the best day of my life.

The next day we received our orders to proceed to the 15<sup>th</sup> Air Force crew replacement depot in Tunis, Tunisia in North Africa. Via the Southern Atlantic route. We all climbed into our shiny new plane and headed for our first stop in West Palm Beach, Florida. This was the staging base for all flights on the south Atlantic route. After landing and re-fueling, we were issued maps, radio call signs and lo and behold to my great amusement the Signal Corps Officer issued us 1 each carrier homing pigeon, with G.I. cage. Naturally, I had to sign the 6

copies confirming the receipt. I told the boys in the crew to handle that pigeon with great care, as I was responsible for it. The officer told us to release the pigeon if we were forced down in the South American jungle or in the Atlantic Ocean on the trip to North Africa.

The next stop heading south was for re-fueling in Trinidad, then on to the jumping off port of Fortaleza Brazil. Looking at the route map, I saw that this was the closest point of the land facing the Atlantic Ocean towards North Africa. Fortaleza bordered the Amazon jungle, and when we landed there we were told that all ocean flights were scheduled at night so navigators could shoot star sights for position fixing.

The next day, one of the ground crew soldiers at the base asked me if I wanted him to paint a name on the plane, as it was common practice for planes going into combat to have creative artwork on the nose of the planes. He said he was an accomplished artist and had decorated most of the B-24's passing through. I had a brilliant idea and said "how about a picture of Uncle Sam with a bare behind and Hitler kissing his ass"?



He thought this was a great idea and he really did a masterful painting on the nose of my plane. After I saw this completed masterpiece, I thought "my god, what if a Nazi fighter pilot flew close enough to see it –he would no doubt try to shoot us down". We title it "PEACE TERMS".

...we were given our orders to fly to southern Italy to join the 451<sup>st</sup> Bomb Group, 726<sup>th</sup> Squadron as their first replacement crew. We landed near the small town of San Pancrazio close to the bottom boot of Italy. It was raining heavily and the paths to the headquarters tent and mess tent were ankle deep in mud—no sidewalks here!! I report to the squadron commanders' tent as instructed. Major Bolton welcomed us to the group, and sadly for me, told us he was taking over my brand new airplane for his own use.

He told me we would be assigned to an older B-24 curiously named "Lonesome Polecat", probably because no other crew wanted it. So began our first experience with a combat bomber group on the 30<sup>th</sup> day of December, 1943".

Susan Tudor Prince  
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