

451st Bomb Group Newsletter No. 20 May 2022



Published for the preservation of our 451st heritage.

451st Bomb Group Association Manager
Jonathan Tudor
12605 Goldenrod Avenue
Bradenton, FL 34212

Newsletter Editor
Marsha Morris
225 4th Ave #B205
Kirkland, WA 98033

Cell: 207-730-0465 Email: b24xtrajoker@gmail.com

Email: morris225@comcast.net

451st PILOT APPLICATION FOR LEGION d'HONNEUR PENDING PARIS REVIEW



Harold Thompson is awaiting approval of the Legion d'honneur, France's highest decoration and one of the most famous in the world, for his supply missions flown to Lyon, France on September 10-11, 1944.

Lt. Thompson became interested in learning to fly at 17, and took flying lessons in Ohio. He enlisted, passed the required exams and qualified for pilot training. He completed his basic training in Sherman, TX and then went to Brooks Field in San Antonio for twin-engine training. Finally, in January, 1943 he began B-24 training before completing crew training in Salt Lake City, UT. They were the next crew to have a B-24 assigned to fly to Europe, but no more planes were available at that time. Therefore, Lt. Thompson and his crew made the trip by boat from VA to N. Africa in June and July of 1944. They ultimately arrived at the 451st base in Castelluccia by train as part of the 727th Squadron. They did not have time to erect a tent for their living quarters before attending a mission briefing and flying the next day.

Some of Germany's most heavily defended targets were among his missions completed, including seven trips to Vienna and four to Ploesti. In recounting many of his missions, Harold displays almost total recall of the events. On Friday October 13, 1944, the target was the Ostereichische Motor Works in Munich, Germany. They took a direct hit from flak in the #2 engine, which immediately caused the plane to bank 90 degrees. After regaining control of "Sloppy but Safe", they dropped from the formation and dumped their bombs. However, they had a difficult decision to make. Should we head for Switzerland or attempt to return to base? With only three engines operational and

remarkably no casualties on board, they cleared the Alps and ultimately successfully returned to Castelluccia. If the shell had hit just feet in either direction, the plane would have exploded. Harold received the Distinguished Flying Cross for this mission. On the last flight of "Royal Prod", the plane was not functioning properly and trailed the group both to and from the target. The plane was subsequently retired after this mission. After dropping their bombs to discharge weight, Lt. Thompson maintained a steady 150 feet per minute decent to maintain air speed, again safely returning to base.

Lt. Thompson flew his fiftieth and final mission with the 451st on November 6, 1944 targeting a metal works and gun factory in Bolzano, Italy. He chose this mission, which was flown by the 727th only. He was given the opportunity to opt out of the mission to Vienna the day before (on his birthday) which he gladly accepted. As the WWII veterans say, "Vienna was never a milk run".

After WWII, Harold remained in the military and traveled the world, initially training maintenance personnel in places like Morocco, Libya and Germany. From 1964-1968 he was stationed in Whiteman AFB in Knob Noster, MO. 150 Minuteman II ICBM missile sites existed in MO during the Cold War. The AFB has one of only two remaining control facilities not destroyed after the 1991 intercontinental arms reduction treaty. Visitors can tour the control room, located in an underground vault 45 feet deep. In Vietnam from 1968-69, he was part of the 310th Air Commando Squadron, delivering troops, supplies and ammunition on makeshift runways or via air drops. Harold's military career spanned four decades, from July 24, 1942 to June 1, 1970, and he was promoted to Lt. Colonel before retiring.

After retiring from the military, he continued an active and productive life, working as an auditor for an insurance company, lecturing at San Antonio College, and running a company that built houses. His MBA earned while in the military provided valuable training for these experiences. In addition, he took up woodworking as a hobby.

Harold was married to his wife Jane for seventy years before her passing in 2019. He has two sons, Bob and Tom. He will turn 100 on November 5.

2022 JOINT BOMB GROUP REUNION

When: Thursday, September 15-Sunday September 18

Where: Wichita, KS

For details, please see the Reunion tab on the 451st website:

<https://451st.org/Reunion/Reunion.html>

BACK TO THE STATES – DANA EAGLES

Note - The excerpt below is a chapter from the book about Dana Eagles family history including some of the WWII experiences of his father, David Eagles, Tail Gunner.

“Dad was delighted to be heading home after completing thirty-five combat missions from his base in Castelluccio, Italy. His delight is evidenced by two things, a large number of pictures taken on the day he completed his thirty-fifth mission, and his smile in every picture. He had survived combat and was going home.

Dad standing and smiling outside his tent after his 35th mission – March 12, 1945

Dad would have to wait about a month for a troopship to Naples, Italy with John Bagwell and Harvey Miller, fellow servicemen who had also completed 35 missions. In Naples they visited a place that Dad called Ropel Deppel. He described it as an old racetrack. I was not able to find records of a racetrack going by this name, but I did find that there was a racetrack, just west of Naples, in the suburb of Agnano. This racetrack is called the Agnano Hippodrome. Perhaps this is the place that they visited. At the racetrack Dad said they would watch evening movies and gamble by playing dice.

Gambling among servicemen was a popular pastime in World War II. Dad told me that on one particular occasion at his base in Italy, he had won more than two thousand dollars from his fellow servicemen i.e., his crewmembers and friends. In 2020 dollars, two thousand dollars is equivalent to about thirty thousand dollars. While Dad was thrilled with his big win, he had second thoughts. He knew that he depended upon his crewmembers and friends during combat missions.



He didn't want their decisions in any situation influenced by the fact they had lost money to him while gambling. Dad decided to lose all of his winnings back to his friends before walking away from the gambling session on that day.

In this way his friends would never hold any grudge against him for any reason.

On April 14, 1945 Dad boarded a troopship in Naples for the journey home. The name of this ship was the Santa Maria. The 459 foot long Santa Maria had been built in 1942 as C2 type freighter. Between

February and June of 1943, the ship had been converted into a troopship capable of carrying 1791 passengers. Upon boarding the Santa Maria, Dad looked around the harbor and was taken aback by the large number of sunken vessels. These sunken vessels were largely the result of sabotage operations performed by German troops when they gave up Naples to Allied Forces in October of 1943.

Before setting sail for New York City, the Santa Maria made one more stop in Oran, Algiers to pick up more troops headed home. From Oran the ship spent almost two weeks making the trip across the Atlantic Ocean arriving in New York City on April 28, 1945. Along the way the ship encountered an intense, six-day storm. The waves in this storm measured up to sixty-five feet from trough to peak. Most of the troops on board were seasick and seeking refuge inside the ship. Dad didn't suffer from seasickness, so he went on deck to watch the ship plow through the huge waves. While on deck he met another serviceman by the name of Bill Drew. As they talked, they soon discovered that they had much in common. Bill had flown in a B-24 bomber assigned to the 459th Bomb Group, 758th Squadron located at the Guilia Airfield near Cerignola, Italy. He started out as a ball turret gunner, the gun position on the belly of the plane. In this position he found that the exhaust fumes of plane's engines made him ill, so he requested permission to be reassigned to the nose gunner position. Fortunately for Bill, his request was granted. In 1943 when Bill was drafted, he wanted to be a pilot just like Dad. His dream of piloting a plane was denied, as he was deemed unsuitable due to his age and status of being married. Bill was born in 1917 and was twenty-five years old when drafted. The Army Air Force wanted younger, unmarried men for pilots. Bill and Dad had also discovered that they were neighbors of sorts. Bill lived in Hyannis, Massachusetts. Dad's home was just across Nantucket Sound on Martha's Vineyard.

When the Santa Maria arrived in New York City, Dad could not help but notice the burned-out remains of the USS Franklin in the harbor. The USS Franklin was an Essex class aircraft carrier built during World War II. In March of 1945 the USS Franklin was heavily damaged by a Japanese air attack. Upon arrival in New York City, Dad was given a thirty-day leave. Dad made his way back to Massachusetts, but left scant information about specific places and people he visited. His notes tell us that he visited his sister, Jeanne, and "Doc" in Boston. Doc was Jacob Aronson, Jeanne's future husband. He visited his parents on Martha's Vineyard and Mom in Stoughton. He also indicated that he visited Mom in Boston at the Peter Bent Brigham Hospital where she was receiving her training as a nurse.

On May 8, 1945, during Dad's thirty-day leave, the war in Europe came to an end. Dad's return home combined with the victory in Europe gave Dad's family and friends good reason to celebrate during his leave. The devastating war in Europe was over.

When Dad's leave ended, he reported back to military service in Atlantic City, New Jersey. He stayed in the Ambassador Hotel where he once again met up with Bill Drew. Bill had returned from his leave bringing his wife, Rita, with him.

Bill and Rita Drew became lifelong friends of our family. We often visited them at their home in Hyannis and likewise, they often visited us in Eastham. I always looked forward to their visits in the 1960s because they spoiled me. They had learned that I had a healthy appetite. Someone in the family had given me the nickname of “The Vac”, as I would eat anything edible in prodigious amounts.

When Bill and Rita Drew came for a visit in Eastham, they would often bring along a half gallon of chocolate ice cream and a package of Lorna Doone cookies. One might think the ice cream and cookies were to be served as dessert at the end of a meal, but this thinking is incorrect. Instead, the ice cream and cookies were brought for my immediate consumption. Shortly after their arrival, I would sit on the living room floor and consume the half-gallon of ice cream and package of cookies in their entirety. The Drews would watch in amazement and chuckle as the ice cream and cookies methodically disappeared. I showed my teenage appreciation and thanks with a big smile.

From 1985 to 1989 the Collings Foundation of Hudson, Massachusetts restored a B-24 making it the only remaining, airworthy B-24 in the world. Bill Drew, Dad and many other servicemen who had flown in B-24s during World War II, gave time, money and/or materials to help restore the airplane. When the B-24 came for a visit to Hyannis on September 11, 1999, Bill Drew and Dad were there to meet it. They were interviewed by Doug Fraser of the Cape Cod Times for a major article that appeared in the Sunday, September 12, 1999, edition of the newspaper.

In 2007 Bill Drew passed away after a short illness. He was ninety years old at the time. Dad and Mom attended Bill’s memorial service where Dad delivered a heartfelt eulogy recognizing Bill’s service to his family, friends, community and country.

LAST FLYBY

Here are the death notifications since our November 2021 Newsletter:

| 451st Member | Squadron | Duty Position | DOD |
|-----------------------|-------------------|--------------------------------|------------|
| Anderson, John L. | 727 th | Nose Gunner | 01.07.2014 |
| Arndt, Gerald A. | 727 th | Bombardier | 06.25.2010 |
| Athmann, Delore L. | 727 th | Radio Operator – Gunner | 11.14.2021 |
| Barber, Victor Hl | 724 th | Navigator/Bombardier | 12.19.2021 |
| Bowen, Edward H. | 725 th | Squadron Commander | 06.01.2017 |
| Drower, Victor D. | 727 th | Bombardier | 01.10.2021 |
| Ferguson Roy L. | 727 th | Pilot | 11.30.2013 |
| Hipple, William F. | 726 th | Pilot | 11.19.2021 |
| Humphries, William B. | 724 th | Damage Assessment Photographer | 04.11.2014 |

| 451st Member | Squadron | Duty Position | DOD |
|-------------------------|----------|-------------------------------|--------------|
| Kaczmarek, Edward H. | 726th | Radio Operator – Waist Gunner | 12.31.2021 |
| Kuhn, Frederick W. | 724th | Pilot | 01.17.2022 |
| Longenecker, Edward W. | | Radio Operator – Nose Gunner | 12.11.2021 |
| Magliocca, Santo | 727th | Ball Turret Gunner | 10.11.2017 |
| Melanson, Eugene A. | 725th | Ball Turret Gunner | 07.01.2021 |
| March Jr., Christian L. | | | 01.04.2022 |
| Matheson, David | 742nd | 455th B.G, Nose Gunner | 11.26.2021 |
| McWilliams, Harold H. | 727th | Mechanic | 11.26.2021 |
| Ringlehan, John D. | 724th | Radio Operator | 11.04.2021 |
| Sciullo, Charles A. | | Flight Engineer | 09.28.2016 |
| Stargu, John A. | 724th | Flight Engineer-Waist Gunner | 04.07.2018 |
| Suffoletta, Joseph R. | 724th | Navigator | 11.10.2021 |
| Ullrich, Fredrick J. | 727th | Communications Section | 08.01.2012 |
| Wagner, William H. | 724th | Pilot | 09.10.2015 |
| Wengert, Theodore W. | 726th | Navigator | 03.21.2014 |
| Weschler, Joseph W. | 726th | Gunner | 04.26.2021 |
| Wold, Nelson B. | 724th | | 11.____.2015 |

THANK YOU, DONORS!

| Donor | In Tribute To |
|---------------------|---|
| Aschenbrenner, Dean | In memory of Martin Aschenbrenner, Top Turret Gunner |
| Jones, Gene | In memory of Joseph Jones, 725th Squadron, Nose Turret Gunner |
| Pachter, Eve | In memory of Leo Pachter, Aerial Photographer |
| Pendleton, Andrew | In tribute to the 451st Bomb Group |
| Poholski, Valeria | In memory of John Poholski, 726th Squadron |
| Schwartzter, Bruce | In memory of Harry E. Schwartzter, |
| Walkey, Cliff | In memory of Thomas E. Walkey, 726th Squadron Commander |
| Wood, Dorothy Cloud | In memory of Robert Cloud, 455th B.G. 743rd Sq. Radio Operator/Gunner |
| Zimmer, Kathy | In memory of Francies D. Hynes, 724th Squadron, Ball Turret Gunner |

Should you desire to honor a crew mate or family member, please send the full name and duty position of the person being honored. Please send to 451st Bomb Group c/o Jonathan Tudor, 12605 Goldenrod Avenue, Bradenton, FL 34212

CHRISTMAS FOR A POW – E.D. WITHERSPOON

Note – Below is part of article by Jim Smothers that appeared in the Gadsden Times back in 2005. This was brought to our attention by Danny Crownover, who knew the late E.D. Witherspoon for many years at the Etowah Historical Society.

“Col. E.D. Witherspoon (USAAF retired) was born in Decatur, Ala., grew up in Macon, Ga., and has spent most of his life after World War II in Gadsden.

He served in the 15th U.S. Army Air Force. He was a member of a B-24 (Liberator) heavy bomber crew on a high-altitude bombing raid over oil refineries in Ploesti, Romania, when his plane was shot down.

It was his 29th mission. He and his crew were captured on Aug. 17, 1944. They were liberated on May 2, 1945.

Memories are as much a part of Christmas as the sounds and sights of the season. And just as no two snowflakes are alike, neither are the things that people recall during this time of the year. Nor are the things that may cause some special memories to come alive each December.

For some people the poem about visions of sugar plums dancing in the heads of children may bring back thoughts of childhood on a farm.

The words from Bing Crosby’s famous song, “White Christmas,” may cause some people to remember a special time in their lives from a past December.

For Col. E.D. Witherspoon (U.S. Army Air Force, retired), the Christmas that keeps cropping back into his mind each year wasn’t special. In fact, he would like to forget it, but he can’t. What he and his fellow airmen endured was far worse than he will tell.



Witherspoon, then a staff sergeant, and his fellow crew members on a B-24 (Liberator) heavy bomber spent Christmas 1944 in Stalag Luft IV, a German prison camp in occupied Poland near the Baltic Sea.

"The main thing that brings it all back during every Christmas season is when I hear the song, 'Silent Night,'" Witherspoon said. "That was my favorite song.

"When I was growing up in a musical family, we played it at different events around town every Christmas. My brother, sister and I all played the accordion and we performed at civic clubs in our hometown and at many of the churches around there and on the local radio station. But when I hear that song now. ..."

Tears began rolling down the old airman's cheeks as his mind drifted back.

"Stille Nacht, heilige Nacht,

"Alles schiaft, einsam wacht.

"Nur das traute, hochheilige Paar,

"Schlaf in himmlischer Ruh'!

"Schlaf in himmlischer Ruh'!"

The room was quiet, but Witherspoon was hearing the voices of enemy soldiers singing that beautiful Christmas hymn.

As he removed his glasses and wiped his eyes, he continued his story.

"I remember me and my buddy walking in that snow around our barracks in the compound," Witherspoon said. "It was after dark, and stars glittered in the sky. The ground was covered with six inches of powdered snow. We could see the guard towers in the corners of the compound against the night sky.

"During the walk we heard the Germans singing at a Christmas party for the prison staff on the other side of the stockade fence. They were singing 'Stille Nacht, Heilige Nacht,' which I knew as 'Silent Night, Holy Night.'"

The prisoners were normally locked inside their barracks at 4 p.m. every day, but on that Christmas Eve, the Germans delayed the lockup until 10 p.m.

Several days before Christmas the prisoners in the camp had started saving some of their food items from the Red Cross food parcels so they would be able to celebrate with a little more to eat. On Christmas Day, the Germans also issued more food.

Usually, the prisoners got a little food twice a day; but that Christmas they were given some extra kohlrabi soup, made from crude turnips; some barley soup and the usual boiled potatoes and black bread, which the prisoners thought had more sawdust in it than it should have.

The Red Cross packages contained coffee, sugar, powdered milk, a canned meat of some kind and two packs of cigarettes. The prisoners were supposed to get one parcel a week, but didn't. Witherspoon

said sometimes it would be weeks between parcels, and at times they would have to split one eight ways.

"As Christmas Day approached an effort was made to do a little decorating, using cans and some colored paper we'd saved for that purpose," Witherspoon recalled. "We had a small tree in our living area, but I don't recall where it came from. That was a long time ago, and it was a time in my life that I have been trying to forget.

"I was in a far-away land, a prisoner of war walking around in the compound on that cold, clear Christmas Eve listening to the German guards singing "Silent Night," one of my favorite Christmas songs. It brought tears to my eyes that night, and it does now. Whenever I hear that song, the memories return. I guess they will stay with me forever."

As Christmas Day approached, some of the American prisoners got moody as they started to dwell on memories from home. Witherspoon said he doesn't remember doing that, and he doesn't remember any mood changes in the guards. However, the Germans celebrated and were somewhat considerate of the prisoners' efforts to celebrate the birth of Christ.

In addition to giving the Americans more food, the Germans increased the coal ration. Normally, they were given just enough coal to keep a fire in a pot-bellied stove for half a day. That Christmas, they got enough coal to keep the fire going all day.

The prisoners were housed in barracks divided into large rooms. About 20 to 30 men were quartered in each room that had only eight double bunks. Witherspoon said he slept on the floor the entire time he was in that camp. There were four compounds, each with some 2,500 prisoners.

"Even with the extra coal it wasn't enough to heat that big room, but we were able to boil water for the coffee in the Red Cross parcels," he said.

"Some of the guards were really tough on us," Witherspoon said. "But some of them had been musicians in Germany's military bands, but had been transferred to the regular army when the bands were dismembered. That Christmas they came up with some musical instruments."

Witherspoon saw an accordion, so he got it.

"I recognized right off that the new accordion they brought in was the best that Hohner made. It was the top of the line," he said. "We didn't have any music, but I didn't need any.

"Back home we'd always played all the Christmas carols - "Silent Night," "Joy to the World," "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing," "O Little Town of Bethlehem" and others. I knew those songs and the guys liked to hear them. I don't remember anyone singing, but it made some of them real lonesome. The only music we had in our barracks and in our room was when I played the accordion."

Witherspoon was able to keep the accordion on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day.

On Feb. 6 the camp was closed and the prisoners were moved back toward Germany. But they did not know that it was the beginning of a march across Germany that some of them wouldn't survive.

That forced march during sub-freezing weather to the Western front lasted 86 days and covered 600 miles. It was the German version of the Japanese Bataan Death March. That is where the horror stories began; that is also the three months of his experience as a POW that Witherspoon refuses to talk about.

Christmas had always been special for the Witherspoon family and the first Christmas he was away from home in 1942 was a sad occasion. He was working for the Department of Interior in Washington, D.C.

"I had a little room up there and had Christmas with the landlady," he recalls. "It was a lonesome Christmas because I was the oldest of a large family and we always had lots to eat and lots of Santa Claus. That was a really big comedown from what I had been used to."

A few months later, in March 1943, he was drafted. He spent Christmas that year on a Liberty Ship anchored off the coast of North Africa.

"I remember sitting out on the deck and listening to President Roosevelt's Christmas speech on the radio," he said. "Then the next Christmas, I was in the POW camp."

He was liberated in May and was home by June 1945, was married in July.

"My wife (Nora Donaline) and I celebrated Christmas in Macon, Ga., where we were living," Witherspoon said. "It was my first Christmas back home. I was going to school on the GI bill. We had a small apartment and we had a small Christmas. You couldn't do much with \$90 a month. But I was happy to be home."

FLYING BOMBERS IN EUROPE DURING 1944 – by Cliff Walkey

My father, Thomas E. Walkey flew his first mission with the 451st Bombardment Group on March 3, 1944 and flew his last mission on November 5, 1944.

His Army Separation Qualification Record, dated October 17, 1945 states:

Directed a heavy bombardment Group Operations, planned and briefed group on missions, issued field orders and acted as Senior Staff Officer. Commanded a heavy bomber squadron in combat. Supervised training of heavy bomber crews, including Commanding Officer of Chinese Group. Spent one year on sub-patrol in Ecuador, South America. Acted 8 months at Commandant of Troops over 5000 men. Was shot down over Vienna and evaded capture. Got back in approximately ten days; took 48 missions, 26 Group Leads

and 8 Wing Leads; Received seven battle stars, silver star, Distinguished Flying Cross, Purple Heart, Air Medal with three oak leaf clusters, campaign ribbons, 3 unit citations and four personal recommendations.

Thomas E. Walkey



Since I can remember, I was so proud that my Dad was a famous combat pilot just like those I saw in the movies such as *Twelve O'Clock High* (1949). I wasn't alone. I remember when a visiting French student was staying with our family enroute back home following a stint as a foreign exchange tour during the 1960s. At dinner that evening I remember that he seemed disinterested in the conversation until he noticed Dad's Croix de Guerre displayed on the wall. Suddenly, he was enamored with everything Dad had to say, especially related to his war-time experience.

Later in my life, I learned more about the details of his experiences, which culminated during 1944 with the *Fight'n 451st*, and the air-war over Europe.

In order to elaborate on Dad's combat leadership roles with the 451st, I have included excerpts from his personal notes related to publication of *The Fight'n 451st* (1990):

When I reported to the 15th Air Force Headquarters in Bari, Italy, they said for me to pick a Wing of my choice. (I was late in reporting as enroute to Italy in a C-47, we had to land in a pasture in Southern Italy due to the weather. Mud up to my knees, in full dress uniform, I walked). I picked the 49th Wing as it was new. They said "Pick out a group." I picked the 451st as the CO was a Colonel, Robert E. L. Eaton, who was a meteorological expert and a West Point graduate. I thought he would appreciate my background. His first response to me was "I didn't ask for you. Who sent you to me? How much time do you have in B-24s?" When I told him about 1200 hours, he was obvious angry. Because of my flying time and the fact I outranked the present Group Operations Officer, I was immediately appointed to that job and Captain Leland Younkin, who was the Group Operations Officer, became my Assistant. Younkin was on his second combat tour, had recently been appointed Group Operations Officer, was an experienced combat leader and Colonel Eaton was obviously, and in retrospect, rightly so, much more loyal to Younkin than he was to me, a newcomer.

My duties as Group Operation Officer was to get the target and information from the Wing and to plan (with staff) the mission for the next day. It was my duty to be the main briefing Officer to the Group early every A.M (usually about 5:00). It had some advantages in that I could pick to some degree (not all) those missions I would fly. I did not have a crew and was not allowed to fly everyday, as they save some of us to be Group and Wing leader. Depending on the severity of the missions, they gave you sorties (to equalize those flown in other theatres) one for a routine mission and two for a tough, long one.



Sometime around the middle of May Younkin was promoted to Major thus he outranked me. Younkin then again became Group Operation Officer and I became his Assistant. This was a very low time for me. I requested a transfer, but Colonel Eaton denied it.

In Budapest Or Bust—I Got Busted (Fight'n 451st), Charles Haltom, Squadron Commander—726th, describes how he was shot down along with Dick Long and crew on a mission July 14, 1944. They were flying LUCKY BUCKY, a brand new and shiny B-24G. They bailed out and were captured by Croatian Guardsmen, so for them "the war was over ". They spent the remainder of the war as POWs. Haltom literally tore up the German call-signs for fighter bases after bailing out, and his crew (Dick Long, et.al.) included a German-speaking radio operator. He told Dad many years later at a 451st Group

reunion that after his capture that day and subsequent interrogation by German officers: *"You might as well come clean and tell us what we want to know. We will tell you that we know that Captain Walkey has taken over your squadron."* On July 6, 1944, Dad was promoted to Major, and because Haltom, et.al. were MIA, he assumed Squadron Command of the 726th that same day. He drove down to the 726th, and posted a notice he had typewritten on the bulletin board announcing his command. After the past 4 months, three of them as GOO, and having been unsuccessful in requesting a transfer, he was glad to be leaving HQs. Colonel Eaton, for his part, had filled an important vacancy, which he needed badly.

A retrospective of the 451st Bombardment Group experience has been historically documented, in part, through first-hand accounts of 451st combat veterans themselves as published in the book *The Fight'n 451st* (1990). A balanced view of Dad's military story, especially his combat tour with the 451st is that like many servicemen and servicewomen, he was doing the best he could with given circumstances.

His early entrance into the Army Air Corp (ACC) and the significant flying time he gained in the B-24 over the ensuing three years prepared him to assume important combat leadership roles at a pivotal time and place. He attributes his survival to the discipline and training he had gained prior to experiencing combat. Discipline was necessary in order to achieve military objectives and was of fundamental importance to Colonel Eaton's command because it was an imperative for effective combat command. First, there was a job to do, and many were killed or wounded doing it; the 726th had 71 KIA, and the 451st had 400 KIA when it was finally over. Eaton had established the first, and arguably, the finest Command in the 451st Bombardment Group. Under his command, missions for which all three Presidential Unit Citations were established were flown. At the ripe-old age of 26, Dad told me that he considered himself a *"Man among boys"*, given the fact that many, if not most, of the replacement servicemen were under 20 years old. When I talked with him about the prevalent problem of low morale, especially of mission crews on the mornings of mission briefings, he stated: *"They were somber and reconciled to their fate"*. After being shot down on October 13, 1944 in *Leading Lady* over Vienna, bailing out, and evading capture in Yugoslavia (I Only Bailed Out Once – *The Fight'n 451st*). Once there, Dad bailed out along with everyone else on the navigator's command, but managed one last radio transmission: *"I'm going to Take it to the Hun; leave my things (whiskey) alone; I'll be back in 11 days"*. He was evidently unaware that he was leading the Wing the day he was shot down; he just thought he was leading his Group. John Anderson's *50 Day Diary (Fight'n 451st)* indicates that Walkey returned on October 25th, a day in which he describes: *"Stand down – Walkey is back without missing his ETA by much. However, he is being sent Home."* This diary entry alludes to his earlier entry: *"Tom Walkey of the 726th is MIA. He had to bail out while still over Yugoslavia on the return, but passed along instructions not to dispose of his liquor or pack up his clothes as he would be back in ten days. We shall see..."* Dad flew 3 additional missions after being rescued and returning, specifically to *"set an example"*. Had he been captured as a result, he could have been executed.

Apparently, this fact really *ticked-off* my Mom (Ava) when she learned about it later.

Dad became superstitious (triskaidekaphobia?) about Friday-the-Thirteenth(s) because that was the day Lucky Lady was shot down. In contrast, Colonel Robert E. L. Eaton who “*won hands down a challenge to Damn Superstition*” (Fight’n 451st: *Mission One-Hundred*, pg.76), after Lt. Col. Ellis Eno described an uncanny, or perhaps magical, association of Eaton’s career with the number 13. Colonel Eaton passed it off as pure coincidence, but vowed that 13 would be his lucky number from then on. By comparison, I remember Dad wearing all black clothes to commemorate this date. In reality, this date was a very lucky one for Dad and his crew as well because they not only survived, but avoided capture!

When *The Fight’n 451st* was published (1990), Dad read it enthusiastically and provided hand-written annotations, especially for mission accounts he had participated in directly or were otherwise notable. I have included the following personal perspective he had about this published history:

For some time my two sons have wanted me to write my history of combat tour. The publication of this book requires that I add my recollections and I have done so. The Editor has done what he could, but a (sic) this late date, could not accurately tell the whole story. Nor can I. My notes will account for a good part of my tour. They will not reflect many incidents, some with questionable humor, most of them are sad. This book has brought back many memories that I had put on the back shelf of my mind, and it has dusted those memories off so I could relive them again. For that I am sorry for they were unhappy times.

How can one be in the right place at the right time, or sadly in the wrong place at the wrong time? We do not have a choice. Luck, fate and your destiny is in someone else’s hands. How can someone explain such stories?

Friend or Adversary – each had its equal rank, skills and talents. In retrospect I think we won out only because of superior quantity of everything, which eventually overwhelmed Germany. Tragically, I blame the German people for not stopping Hitler, and others had to do it. I am not bitter, but hundred of thousands of others have a right to be so. I have a complex and indescribable feeling to this day when I see a disfigured or a disabled veteran. Each of them represents a story that should be told and should not be forgotten.

Some may dispute my final comment, but not those who are in the book. Our declared victories were hollow. There were no winners. Only Survivors!

Ed Walkey (1990)

Walkey Mission Diary Highlighted (from Group Mission Diary)

(Fight'n 451st, page 185)

| MISSION DIARY 1944-45 | | | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------------|---------|---------|--|----------|
| MISSION | TARGET | DATE | MISSION | TARGET | DATE |
| 1 | Fier Radar Station, Albania | 1-30-44 | 77 | Blechhammer Oil Refinery, Germany | 7-07-44 |
| 2 | Durazio Radar Station, Albania | 2-02-44 | 78 | Vienna Oil Refinery, Austria | 7-08-44 |
| 3 | Arrezo M/Y, Italy | 2-03-44 | 79 | Toulon Sub Pens, France | 7-11-44 |
| 4 | Piombino M/Y & Steel Mills, Italy | 2-08-44 | 80 | Nimes M/Y, France | 7-12-44 |
| 5 | Velletri Troop Support, Italy | 2-10-44 | 81 | Petfurdo Oil Refinery, Hungary | 7-14-44 |
| 6 | Anzio Troop Support, Italy | 2-12-44 | 82 | Creditul Oil Refinery, Rumania | 7-15-44 |
| 7 | Siena M/Y, Italy | 2-16-44 | 83 | Wiener-Neustadt A/C Factory, Austria | 7-16-44 |
| 8 | Regensburg A/C Factory, Germany | 2-22-44 | 84 | Arles Railroad Bridge, France | 7-17-44 |
| 9 | Steyr A/C Factory, Austria | 2-23-44 | 85 | Manzell A/C Factory, Germany | 7-18-44 |
| *10 | Regensburg A/C Factory, Germany | 2-25-44 | 86 | Scheissheim Airdrome, Germany | 7-19-44 |
| 11 | Pontessieve M/Y, Italy | 3-07-44 | 87 | Brux Oil Refinery, Czechoslovakia | 7-21-44 |
| 12 | Toulon Sub Pens, France | 3-11-44 | 88 | Ploesti Oil Refinery, Rumania | 7-22-44 |
| 13 | Cassino Troop Support, Italy | 3-15-44 | 89 | Linz H Goering Tank Fcty, Austria | 7-25-44 |
| 14 | Vienna, Austria | 3-17-44 | 90 | Beret Oil Refinery, Albania | 7-26-44 |
| 15 | Lavariano, Italy | 3-18-44 | 91 | Budapest Arms Factory, Hungary | 7-27-44 |
| 16 | Klagenfurt, Austria | 3-19-44 | 92 | Ploesti Oil Refinery, Rumania | 7-28-44 |
| 17 | Steyr Ball Bearing Plant, Austria | 3-24-44 | 93 | Budapest A/C Factory, Hungary | 7-30-44 |
| 18 | Mestre M/Y, Italy | 3-28-44 | 94 | Bucharest Oil Refinery, Rumania | 7-31-44 |
| 19 | Bolzano M/Y, Italy | 3-29-44 | 95 | Le Pontet Oil Storage, France | 8-02-44 |
| 20 | Sofia M/Y, Bulgaria | 3-30-44 | 96 | Vipiteno, Germany | 8-03-44 |
| 21 | Steyr, Austria | 4-02-44 | 97 | Miramas M/Y, France | 8-06-44 |
| 22 | Budapest M/Y Hungary | 4-03-44 | 98 | Blechhammer Oil Refinery, Germany | 8-07-44 |
| 23 | Bucharest M/Y, Rumania | 4-04-44 | 99 | Almasfuzito Oil Refinery, Hungary | 8-09-44 |
| *24 | Ploesti Oil Refineries, Rumania | 4-05-44 | 100 | Ploesti Oil Refinery, Rumania | 8-10-44 |
| 25 | Zagreb M/Y, Yugoslavia | 4-12-44 | 101 | Genoa Gun Positions, Italy | 8-12-44 |
| 26 | Budapest Airfield, Hungary | 4-13-44 | 102 | Genoa Gun Positions, Italy | 8-13-44 |
| 27 | Bucharest M/Y, Rumania | 4-15-44 | 103 | Toulon Gun Positions, France | 8-14-44 |
| 28 | Brazov Airdrome, Rumania | 4-16-44 | 104 | Frejus Beach Area, France | 8-15-44 |
| 29 | Belgrade Zemun Airdrome | 4-17-44 | 105 | Ploesti Oil Refineries, Rumania | 8-17-44 |
| 30 | Ferrara M/Y, Italy | 4-20-44 | 106 | Alibunar Airdrome, Yugoslavia | 8-18-44 |
| 31 | Bucharest, Rumania | 4-21-44 | 107 | Szolnok/Rakoczifala Airdrome, Hungary | 8-20-44 |
| 32 | Bad Voslau Airdrome, Austria | 4-23-44 | 108 | Vienna Oil Storage, Austria | 8-22-44 |
| 33 | Bucharest M/Y, Rumania | 4-24-44 | *109 | Markersdorf Airdrome, Austria | 8-23-44 |
| 34 | Orbetello Seaplane Base, Italy | 4-28-44 | 110 | Ferrara Railroad Bridge, Italy | 8-24-44 |
| 35 | Toulon Sub Pens, France | 4-29-44 | 111 | Otopeni Airdrome, Rumania | 8-26-44 |
| 36 | Alessandria M/Y, Italy | 4-30-44 | 112 | Venzona Viaduct, Italy | 8-27-44 |
| 37 | Orbetello Seaplane Base, Italy | 5-02-44 | 113 | Szolnok Railroad Bridge, Hungary | 8-28-44 |
| 38 | Ploesti Oil Refineries, Rumania | 5-05-44 | 114 | Szeged M/Y, Hungary | 8-29-44 |
| 39 | Pitești M/Y, Rumania | 5-06-44 | 115 | Ferrara Railroad Bridge, Italy | 9-01-44 |
| 40 | Bucharest M/Y, Rumania | 5-07-44 | 116 | Mitrovica Railroad Bridge, Yugoslavia | 9-02-44 |
| 41 | Weiner-Neustadt Airdrome, Austria | 5-10-44 | 117 | Sava East R.R. Bridge, Belgrade Yugoslavia | 9-05-44 |
| 42 | Piombino Troop Support, Italy | 5-12-44 | 118 | Sava East R.R. Bridge, Belgrade Yugoslavia | 9-06-44 |
| 43 | Faenza, M/Y, Italy | 5-13-44 | 119 | Bron Airdrome Lyons France (Supply) | 9-10-44 |
| 44 | Padua M/Y Italy | 5-14-44 | 120 | Bron Airdrome Lyons France (Supply) | 9-11-44 |
| 45 | Porto Ferrajo Harbor Area, Italy | 5-17-44 | 121 | Bron Airdrome Lyons France (Supply) | 9-12-44 |
| 46 | Ploesti Oil Refineries, Rumania | 5-18-44 | 122 | Bron Airdrome Lyons France (Supply) | 9-13-44 |
| 47 | Recco Viaduct, Italy | 5-19-44 | 123 | Bron Airdrome Lyons France (Supply) | 9-15-44 |
| 48 | Marina De Carrara, Italy | 5-22-44 | 124 | Bron Airdrome Lyons France (Supply) | 9-16-44 |
| 49 | Subiaco Troop Support, Italy | 5-23-44 | 125 | Bron Airdrome Lyons France (Supply) | 9-17-44 |
| 50 | Wollersdorf Airdrome, Austria | 5-24-44 | 126 | Bron Airdrome Lyons France (Supply) | 9-22-44 |
| 51 | Carnoules M/Y, France | 5-25-44 | 127 | Athens/Eleusis Airdrome, Greece | 9-24-44 |
| 52 | Lyons, France | 5-26-44 | 128 | Athens Area Subpens, Greece | 9-25-44 |
| 53 | Salon De Provence Airdrome, France | 5-27-44 | 129 | Munich West M/Y Germany (Able) | 10-4-44 |
| 54 | Weiner-Neustadt A/C Factory, Austria | 5-29-44 | 130 | Latisana Railroad Bridge, Italy (Baker) | 10-4-44 |
| 55 | Wels A/C Factory, Austria | 5-30-44 | | Vienna Oil Refinery, Austria (Red) | 10-7-44 |
| 56 | Ploesti Oil Refineries, Rumania | 5-31-44 | | Komarno M/Y, Hungary (Blue) | 10-7-44 |
| 57 | Szolnok M/Y, Hungary | 6-02-44 | 131 | Castelfranco M/Y, Italy | 10-10-44 |
| 58 | Gad Railroad Bridge, Italy | 6-04-44 | 132 | Graz Area, Austria | 10-11-44 |
| 59 | Rimini Bridge, Italy | 6-05-44 | 133 | Bologna (Target #97), Italy | 10-12-44 |
| 60 | Ploesti Oil Refineries Rumania | 6-06-44 | 134 | Ostereichische Motor Wks & M/Y, Austria | 10-13-44 |
| 61 | Antheor Viaduct, France | 6-07-44 | 135 | Ordertal Oil Refinery, Germany | 10-14-44 |
| 62 | Porto Marghero Oil Refinery, Italy | 6-09-44 | 136 | Linz H. Goering Benzol Plant, Austria | 10-16-44 |
| 63 | Porto Marghero Oil Refinery, Italy | 6-10-44 | 137 | Vienna/Vosendorf Oil Refinery, Austria | 10-17-44 |
| 64 | Giurgiu Oil Storages, Rumania | 6-11-44 | 138 | Milan Breda Works, Italy | 10-20-44 |
| 65 | Neuauing, Munich Area, Germany | 6-13-44 | 139 | Munich Allach A/C Factory, Germany (Red) | 10-23-44 |
| 66 | Szony Oil Refinery, Hungary | 6-14-44 | | Milan Breda Works, Italy | 10-23-44 |
| 67 | Rimini M/Y & Bridge, Italy | 6-22-44 | 140 | Regensburg Oil Refinery, Germany | 10-29-44 |
| 68 | Giurgiu, Rumania | 6-23-44 | 141 | Podgorica Troop Concentrations, Yugo | 10-31-44 |
| 69 | Le Pont Telephone Bldg, France | 6-25-44 | 142 | Vienna Ordnance Depot, Austria | 11-01-44 |
| 70 | Vienna Oil Refinery, Austria | 6-26-44 | 143 | Klagenfurt A/C Factory, Germany | 11-03-44 |
| 71 | Chitila M/Y, Rumania | 6-28-44 | 144 | Kufstien M/Y, Germany | 11-04-44 |
| 72 | Blechhammer, Germany (Early Return) | 6-30-44 | 145 | Vienna Oil Refinery, Austria (Baker) | 11-05-44 |
| 73 | Budapest Locomotive Depot, Hungary | 7-02-44 | 146 | Sarajevo M/Y, Yugoslavia (Charlie) | 11-05-44 |
| 74 | Bucharest Oil Storage, Rumania | 7-03-44 | | Vienna Ordnance Depot, Austria (Able) | 11-06-44 |
| 75 | Regensburg M/Y, Germany | | | | |

Combat Missions for Thomas E. Walkey

7th BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON (B)
INDIVIDUAL RECORD COMBAT CREW MISSIONS
OFFICIAL TIME, MISSIONS, SORTIES

NAME THOMAS E. WALKEY ASN 0-432973
RANK Major POSITION Commanding Officer ORGANIZATION 726th Bombardment Squadron

| DATE | TARGET | MISSION | HOURS | SORTIES | TOTAL HOURS |
|----------|-----------------------|---------|-------|---------|-------------|
| 3-17-44 | Vienna, Austria | 1 | 7:40 | 2 | 7:40 |
| 3-19-44 | Klagenfurt, Germany | 2 | 8:00 | 3 | 15:40 |
| 3-29-44 | Bolzano, Italy | 3 | 6:00 | 4 | 21:40 |
| 4-2-44 | Stayer, Germany | 4 | 8:40 | 6 | 30:20 |
| 4-13-44 | Budapest, Hungary | 5 | 6:45 | 8 | 37:05 |
| 4-17-44 | Belgrade, Yugoslavia | 6 | 6:30 | 9 | 43:35 |
| 4-20-44 | Trieste, Italy | 7 | 5:30 | 10 | 49:05 |
| 4-23-44 | Pod-Voslow, Austria | 8 | 7:30 | 12 | 56:35 |
| 4-28-44 | Orbotella, Italy | 9 | 5:30 | 13 | 62:05 |
| 4-30-44 | Allesandria, Italy | 10 | 7:00 | 14 | 69:05 |
| 5-6-44 | Piteste, Rumania | 11 | 7:30 | 16 | 76:35 |
| 5-13-44 | Faenza, Italy | 12 | 6:30 | 17 | 83:05 |
| 5-19-44 | Genoa, Italy | 13 | 7:00 | 18 | 90:05 |
| 5-25-44 | Carnoules, France | 14 | 7:00 | 19 | 97:05 |
| 5-30-44 | Wells, Austria | 15 | 7:00 | 21 | 104:05 |
| 6-4-44 | Gad, Italy | 16 | 7:30 | 22 | 111:35 |
| 6-10-44 | Westre, Italy | 17 | 5:00 | 23 | 116:35 |
| 6-28-44 | Bucharest, Rumania | 18 | 8:00 | 25 | 124:35 |
| 7-3-44 | Bucharest Rumania | 19 | 8:00 | 27 | 132:35 |
| 7-25-44 | Linz, Austria | 20 | 7:00 | 29 | 140:35 |
| 7-26-44 | Baret, Albania | 21 | 4:30 | 30 | 144:05 |
| 8-2-44 | Le Pontet, France | 22 | 7:30 | 31 | 151:35 |
| 8-6-44 | Miramas M/Y, France | 23 | 8:30 | 32 | 160:05 |
| 8-15-44 | Frejus A/D, France | 24 | 6:30 | 33 | 166:35 |
| 8-16-44 | Ploesti, Rumania | 25 | 8:00 | 34 | 174:35 |
| 8-23-44 | Markersdorf, Austria | 26 | 7:00 | 36 | 181:35 |
| 8-27-44 | Venezia, Italy | 27 | 5:30 | 37 | 187:05 |
| 9-5-44 | Belgrade, Yugoslavia | 28 | 6:00 | 38 | 193:05 |
| 9-11-44 | Lyon, France (ferry) | 29 | 8:30 | 39 | 201:35 |
| 9-13-44 | Lyon, France (ferry) | 30 | 8:30 | 40 | 210:05 |
| 9-16-44 | Lyon, France (ferry) | 31 | 8:30 | 41 | 218:35 |
| 10-4-44 | Casarsa, Italy | 32 | 6:30 | 42 | 225:05 |
| 10-13-44 | Vienna, Austria | 33 | 7:30 | 44 | 232:35 |
| 10-31-44 | Podgorcia, Yugoslavia | 34 | 5:30 | 45 | 238:05 |
| 11-4-44 | Augsburg, Germany | 35 | 8:00 | 47 | 246:05 |
| 11-5-44 | Sarajevo, Yugoslavia | 36 | 4:00 | 48 | 250:05 |

CERTIFIED CORRECT:
Henry B. Ford
HENRY B. FORD, 1st Lt., AC.
Operations Officer

Marching in Review – Presidential Unit Citation

Walkey leading

Top left photo, page 226 Fight'n 451st

See also bottom right photo page 38 Fight'n 451st



The Group marching in review.

Taking It to The Hun



Dad has vivid memories of specific combat missions and has personal anecdotes related to several missions, which are not elaborated here. Generally however, he recounts:

For the air war 1944 was the year of critical and violent action in this area (Italy and Europe). Prior to that time, the action was in North Africa and it was only after the invasion of Sicily and southern Italy that we were able to establish bases in Italy and reach the targets in France, Austria, Germany, and Romania with any degree of consistency and effectiveness. As a matter of fact, for the first part of 1944 we did not have any fighter escort. Not only was there a shortage of fighters, but also the distance was too great to the targets for the fighters without wing tanks, which eventually they got. As the German's perimeter of defense was pushed back they took with them all their anti-aircraft guns and fighters. Therefore we were subjected to violent, intense anti-aircraft fire and fighter attacks.

Each day and each mission was a chapter in one's life. Each day and each mission contained errors, mistakes, comedy, heroes and tragedies. To pick any one day or mission over any other does not necessarily make it any more successful, outstanding or deserving.

As Major General Eaton stated in a submittal to correct the record (Ad-LIB # 10) for the Markersdorf Air Raid (8-23-44); specifically as regards my Dad: *"Just to have been there constituted bona fide qualification as a hero"* (September 16, 1983). Just as I supposed all those years ago when I was too young to understand anything about valor in combat including its portrayal in movies. In fact, that would be impossible for anyone to do so unless they had *been there to experience, or witness it*. Let us *forever* remember and honor all those who lost their lives in the endeavor to defeat Germany including those who survived this campaign, but were never the same afterward.

In Memory and Tribute to the Fight'n 451st
Cliff Walkey

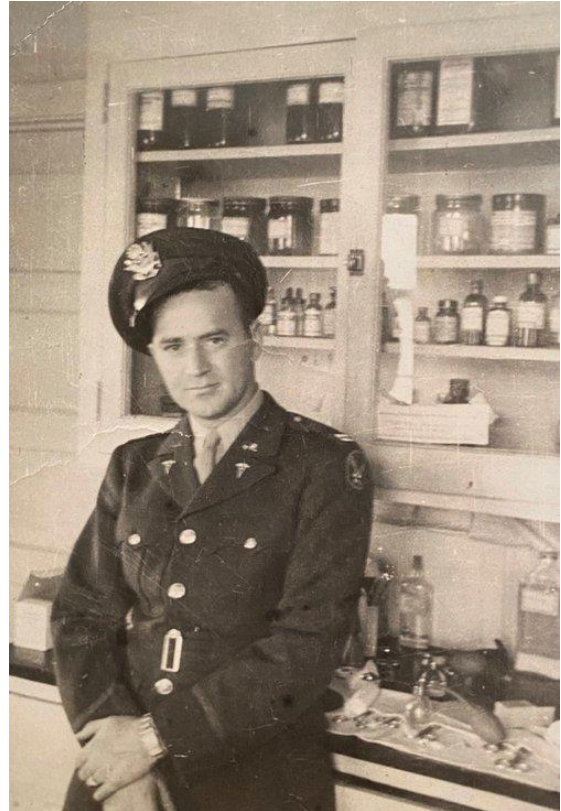
DEAREST BABE, LETTERS FROM A WWII FLIGHT SURGEON – Katherine Mazade

My mom, Kelly Farris Mazade, has been researching the history of our family for several years. During the pandemic, I joined her as a research assistant and writing partner to help tell our family story—primarily centered around the wartime stories of her grandfather, Capt. Joe W. King, M.C.

Joe W. King

From 1942 to 1945, Joe wrote over 450 letters to his wife Babe, detailing his daily life while serving as an Army Air Corps flight surgeon. Now—almost eighty years later—we are delighted to present our first book [*Dearest Babe, Letters from a World War II Flight Surgeon*](#).

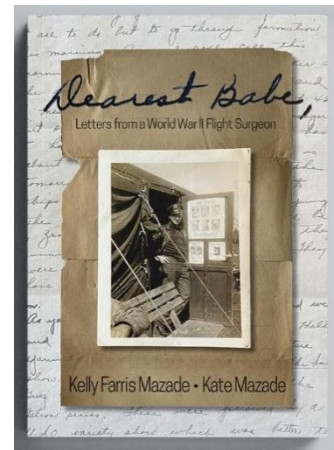
This book has been a true labor of love, filled with long nights at the kitchen table pouring over letters, photographs, research articles, and many, many sticky notes. We are thrilled to share Joe and Babe's story with you and hope that you find the history, adventure, and love as inspiring as we do.



In medical dispensary tent at Wendover Field Utah 1943

Dearest Babe is available for purchase through [Barnes & Noble](#), [Amazon](#), and [Walmart](#)—and the ebook is coming soon! We hope you enjoy it, and we would love to hear your feedback directly or by leaving a review on one of the retailer sites.

We are so grateful to the Former Members of the 451st and the Facebook group for sharing their stories with us. We hope we have done Joe's story, and that of the other veterans, justice.



Book Excerpt:

Joe's Journal*March 9, 1944*

Did it pour down last night? Wind blew and it rained. Ack-Ack guns started shooting away at night. Everyone grabbed helmets. Don't know what was up yet — probably nothing. Rained all in my tent. Today I built part of the floor for the dispensary. No flying — weather too bad. Wheeler and Curtis came over for long visits tonight.

Mission Report

Mission #12: 11 March 1944

Target: Toulon submarine pens etc, France.

Results: Target hit, severe damage to installations. Some vital spots untouched. 1 ship (724th Crew #1 and Maj. Willhite) seen explode, killing crew. 1 726th ship missing.

Joe's Journal*March 11, 1944*

Up early and to briefing. Briefed to bomb the submarine dry-docks at Toulon, France. Planes take off without mishaps. I take off in my ambulance and ride around this part of the country in an effort to find motorcycle parts for one I am putting together. Ride over almost to Brindisi. McAllister goes along just for a ride. Return to base about noon. Planes return about three. Vail and his crew, including the new operations officer who took Quillens place, shot down just off the southern coast of France. Their plane exploded in mid air when attacked by ME109, and went down in flames. No apparent escapees. Vail was in the first crew in this outfit away back at Dyersburg. Another plane of 724th missing. My bunch escaped injury again. Tonight I boxed up and labeled three boxes to send home to my honey.

From Joe in San Pancrazio to Babe in Memphis

March 11, 1944

My dearest Honey,

I cheated on you last night — I skipped writing, so consequently I didn't get a letter off to you today. Last night I spent my time bathing part by part. You should have seen the water when I got through. Here I am just as dirty tonight, but I'm too all in to bathe again. I'll just have to be dirty.

For about the last three hours, I have been packing, waterproofing, and printing addresses on three boxes to you. I will send the chest later — after it's finished. Had to make more than one package because of duty regulations. Two of these boxes contain your anniversary and birthday presents. I have previously told you about everything that is within them but these two articles. I hope you like them, and I hope they reach you in time. I will try to get them off to you tomorrow if I have time to run into town.

It hasn't rained yet today here. Apparently it isn't going to for tonight is beautiful but cold. The moon is out in its full glory. It's so light outside that you don't need a flashlight to make it around.

These nights have been rarities since I have been in Italy. It would be a nice night to spend with you, but so would any night, or better still, all nights.

This morning after “take-off” I took the ambulance and drove around the country-side with McAllister. Enjoyed talking to him. He is a nice guy.

Next day about 4 p.m.

Hi! Just received the letter from you containing pictures of you, Kay, the house and the snow. All that I can see about them is beautiful. For some unknown reason, the letter got wet on the way over. I could read the letter O.K., but the pictures were stuck tightly together. The one of Kay in her “shand-pile” is not distinguishable.

I have been chasing down another battery for my ambulance. I finally accomplished this feat about half an hour ago. To get something of that sort over here is like pulling some one’s eye teeth. So upon sending the boxes to you and getting a battery for my ambulance I feel like I have put in a very successful day.

I haven’t received any packages from you as yet, honey, but don’t worry about it ‘cause it takes quite a spell for packages to come over. I’ll bet it will take two months for these boxes to get to you. I suggest if you send food that you send fruitcake because of the length of time it takes to get here. A few cans of sardines are good too. Just anything. Don’t worry about sending more batteries. What you have sent is plenty. I think frequent pictures of you, Kay, Carol, and the house would do more to give me a lift than anything. However, I realize how hard it is to get film. In fact, for all I know you probably can’t get any at all now.

You asked if we ever got the “news?” Yes there is an army publication printed over here called the “Stars and Stripes.” Somehow I am never able to see one though. As far as news is concerned, our “best news” comes from a propaganda broadcast from Germany on a program called “To the Enemy; From the Enemy.” It’s pretty good. I think we enjoy it more than any other program — it’s screwy. Usually is the German version of what’s going on — and of course what they wish us to believe. It’s done by a fellow called “George” and a woman named “Sally.” There are quite a bit of rather good recordings, but old (American) thrown in for good measure. Since I don’t possess a radio, I only hear them occasionally.

Something interrupts me all the time. This is a lousy disconnected letter. It is now 10 p.m. so I think I’ll finish this off. I will see if I can do a better job tomorrow. It is now raining down fishes for it’s pouring.

I love you,
Joe.

GUNNER'S POEM – Author Unknown

No rings for their fingers, no bell for their toes,
But trussed up in position, with an oxygen hose.

While cords that are countless, bring heat to their suits,
Thru gloves plugged into sockets, and prongs into boots.

Cords for the gun switch, for flak they've steel vests,
And God, given time, there's chutes for their chests.

Masks for their faces, and phones for their ears,
But nothing at all, for their hopes and their fears.

FINANCIAL REPORT

The 451st Bomb Group Association does not charge annual dues. Your generous contributions help cover expenses for printing/mailling the newsletter, and for maintaining the website, www.451st.org. Please let us know if an electronic version of the newsletter is acceptable in lieu of a paper copy, as that helps lower costs.

451st BG Association Financial Report

Beginning Balance October, 2021 \$8,260.11

Income

| | |
|---------------------|-------------------|
| Donations | \$1,030.00 |
| Interest | \$2.41 |
| Total Income | \$1,032.41 |

Expenses

| | |
|------------------------------------|-------------------|
| Nov Newsletter Printing & Supplies | \$257.31 |
| Nov Newsletter Postage | 382.56 |
| Website (2 years) | \$448.08 |
| Gmail 100 GB | \$11.94 |
| Total Expenses | \$1,099.89 |

Ending Balance April, 2022 \$8,192.63