



451st Bomb Group Newsletter No. 21 October 2022



Published for the preservation of our 451st heritage.

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

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

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

Email: morris225@comcast.net

I hope you enjoy this edition of the newsletter, which includes several submitted stories and an article that appeared in the Italian publication Abbruzzolive earlier this year (all starting on page 2).

WWII Rescue Buoys: Secret Floating Hotels of the English Channel

- Although not related to the 451st BG, this is an interesting and little-known story

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9fDnSQoneiE>

2nd Lt. William "Billy" Buchanan Tribute

- This excellent video comes courtesy of Joe Duckworth, who is also a Maiden, NC resident

<https://youtu.be/tHpuV3qmr10>

Reunion Update:

The 2022 15th Air Force Reunion was held September 15-18 in Wichita, KS. 216 attended including 4 veterans.



Jonathan

LIBERATOR INTO THE ADRIATIC – Peter Fazio

Armand Fazio was born in Calabria, Italy, in 1923 and came to America with his parents when he was two years old. He grew up in an Italian neighborhood in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, in what is now the site of Duquesne University. As a teenager, he worked in the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), a program established by FDR to provide work for families during the great depression. They did mostly forestry work and repairs and improvements to national and state parks. Workers made 30 dollars per month, of which 25 were automatically sent home to the family.

When World War II was underway, Armand was drafted into the US Army infantry and completed basic training. When his unit was told they were going to the Aleutian Islands to fight the Japanese, he started thinking of alternatives. He saw a poster in the barracks looking for volunteers for the US Army Air Corps, which sounded much better than slogging through cold trenches in Alaska. He also had excellent eyesight without glasses, and met all the physical requirements. The aptitude test showed that he did not qualify for pilot or navigator positions, but he did qualify as aerial gunner and was accepted. He was sent to Laredo Texas for gunnery training, where he was strapped into a makeshift cradle in the back of a pickup truck and given a shotgun. He was trained to fire at moving clay pigeons while the truck was driven at speed. He finished his training at Mountain Home airbase in Idaho in August 1944 and was assembled with an aircrew to go overseas to the Mediterranean Theatre of Operations in Italy. Before he departed, he got six days' leave to marry his girlfriend, Grace Bonomo. Their thinking was, that in case he didn't make it home, at least she would get widow's benefits. They were married on August 16, 1944. He was 20 years old and she was 18.

He and his crew arrived in Italy by boat in the fall of 1944 and were based at an airfield in Castelluccia, near Bari on the eastern coast. They were part of the 15th Air Force, 451st Heavy Bomb Group, 727th squadron flying B-24 Liberator four engine bombers. As part of the 10-man crew, Armand was assigned to the nose turret, which had two .50 caliber Browning machine guns. On his first mission, he recalled asking the pilot what all the black smoke was up ahead. The pilot replied that the black smoke was Flak, anti-aircraft artillery, over the target, and that's where they were going.

**Armand Fazio –
Infantry Basic Training**



Armand & Grace Fazio



Crew Photo

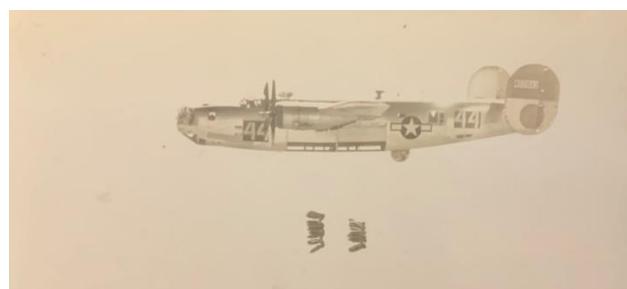


Top row, (left to right): Cpl Shuster, radio operator, Cpl Willard Gill, ball turret gunner, Sgt Robert Caldwell, top turret gunner, Sgt Ray Hughey, flight engineer, Cpl Armand Fazio, nose turret gunner.

Bottom row, (left to right): 2nd Lt. Ed Doherty, Pilot, 2nd Lt. Casperson, Co-pilot, 2nd Lt. Sercombe, Navigator, 2nd Lt. Kennedy, Bombardier.

Tail gunner absent from photo and not identified.

B24's over target:

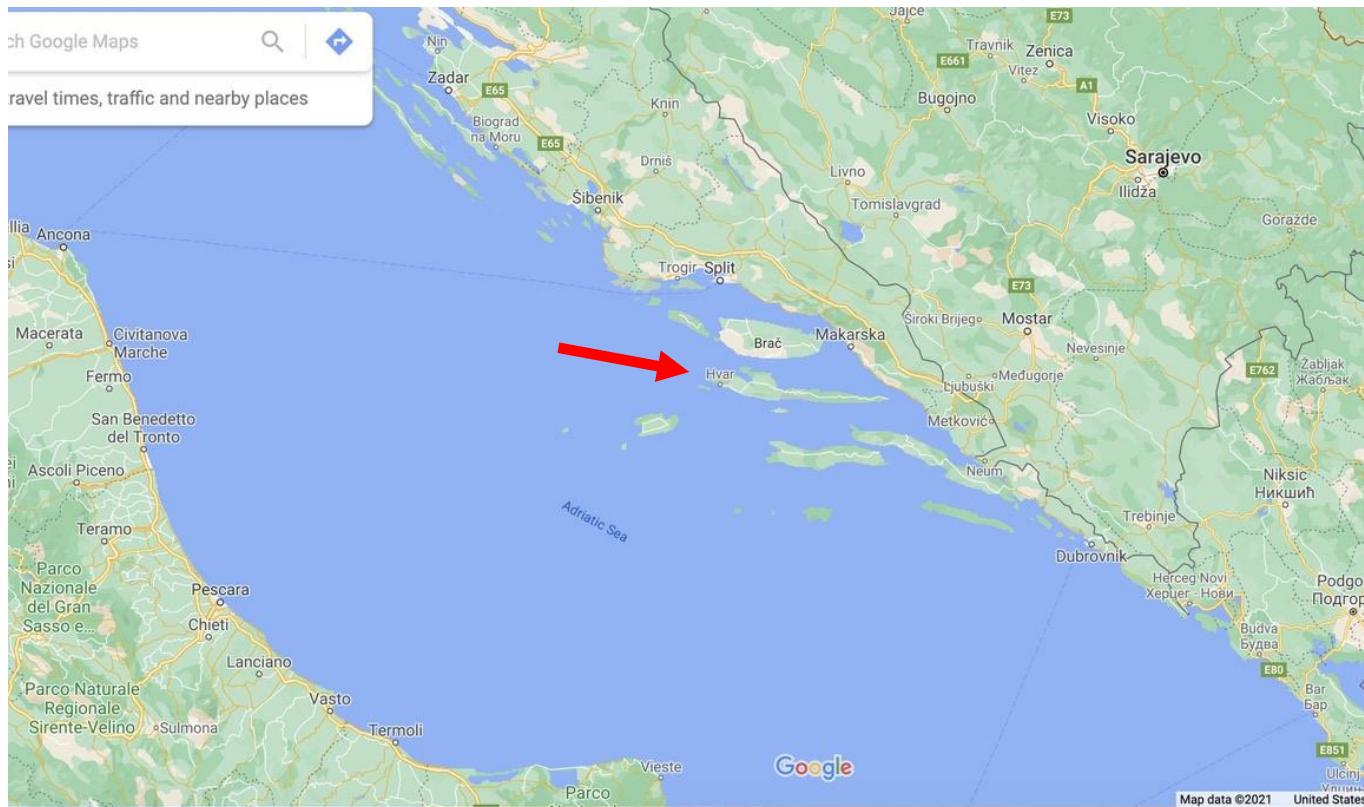


They dropped their bombs on target, but were hit by Flak, estimated to be 105-millimeter shells based on the size of the bursts. The plane did not catch fire, but started to lose fuel from large holes in the wing tanks. The pilot, Ed Doherty, quickly realized that they would not have sufficient fuel to make it back to base. Approaching the coast of the Adriatic Sea, he ordered the crew to bail out, as they came over the island of Hvar, just off the coast of Yugoslavia. As the others began bailing out, Armand put on his chest chute, and removed his boots and tied the laces together, then hung them around his neck, expecting that he might land in the water. At the same time, one of the crew members, Ray Hughey, found his chute had been torn open by shrapnel and was not useable. Doherty was forced to ditch the plane in the water with Hughey after everyone else had bailed out safely. Armand jumped out through the open bomb bay, and when his chute opened his boot straps broke and he watched his boots disappear into the Adriatic. He landed in the water and was spotted and picked up by a patrol boat of Yugoslavian partisans, loyal to the allies, who had seen the plane descending. This was a stroke of good luck as he could have quickly died of hypothermia in the cold waters of late November. Doherty made a successful ditching, which was no easy feat in a B-24, and he and Hughey were also picked up by the partisans.

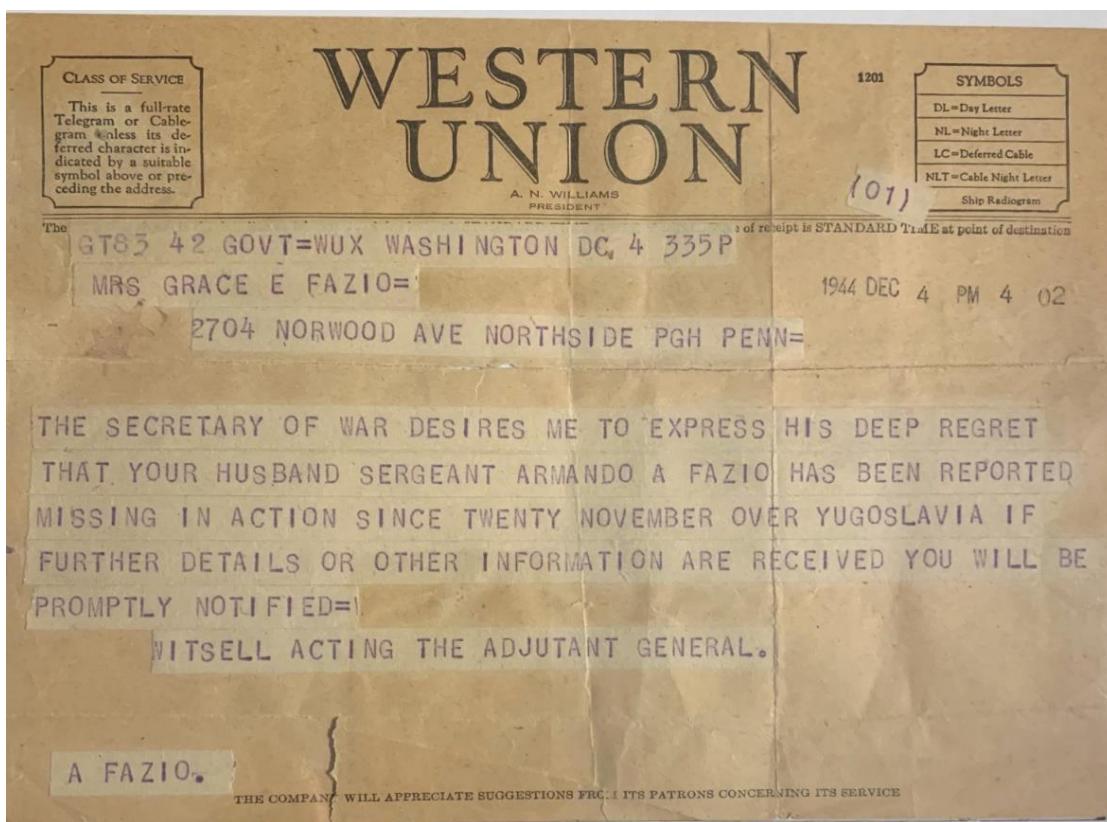
The crew was reunited on Hvar Island and kept hidden from sight, as there was still some German activity in the area. Aside from some cuts and bruises, no one was injured. Armand was given a pair of old boots by a partisan who also had a very large dog. Later during the night, Armand had to urinate, but the dog would growl and not let him leave the building. So, he had to relieve himself out the window.

The next day the crew was interrogated by a strange man with a beard who spoke excellent English. He was apparently satisfied with their answers, and they were taken undercover to a British held airfield and flown by C-47 transport back to their base. The whole event took five days. Back in Pittsburgh, Grace received a telegram stating that Armand was missing in action over Yugoslavia. By the time she received it, he was already safely back to his base.

Hvar Island, Yugoslavia:



Telegram – Missing in Action:



The crew later learned that the bearded man was an OSS (Office of the Secret Service) agent who was interrogating downed flyers because the Germans had been trying to infiltrate the allied lines. They were posing as downed flyers, dressed as Americans, speaking good English. The bearded man had cleared them quickly in a strange coincidence, because he recognized Hughey's wife from his wallet photo. Hughey's wife was from the agent's same home town of Alton, Illinois, and the agent had known her before the war.

After a few days rest and recuperation on the Isle of Capri, the crew was back in action. The remaining missions were uneventful, and Armand had accumulated 26 missions when the war ended in May 1945. They flew a brand-new B-24 back to the states. When he was discharged from the service, Armand had two .45 caliber Colt pistols. He had been issued the second one after his bailout mission, presuming that he had lost his original one. But, he had carried it the whole time. He could have easily kept one as a souvenir, but was so eager to get home, he turned in both guns to prevent any questions or delays.

R&R Isle of Capri, 1944. Armand on the left:



After the war, Armand became an ironworker with union Local No. 3 in Pittsburgh and, with his wife Grace, raised a family of four children. They retired to Florida in the mid-80s to be near their oldest son. They enjoyed the beach, the dog track, some travel, and spending time with their grandchildren. They attended the 451st Bomb Group reunion in Chicago in 1980. Armand died in 2001 at 77 years old, of congestive heart failure complicated by diabetes. Grace died in 2017 at 91 years of age, of lung cancer. Like many of their generation, they were typical Americans who endured the great depression and, when called upon, did what they had to do.



Postscript: the plane they bailed out of that day in November 1944 was Le Petit Fleur (the little flower) B-24 S/N 42-51874, which was one of thousands built at the Willow Run Plant by Ford Motor Company. The plane rests in about 150 feet of water, and is a frequent attraction for scuba divers. You can see it by Google.

TRIBUTE TO GEORGE CRUM 455th B.G & THE GREATEST GENERATION – Norm Crum

“As one of the largest Chevron marketers on the West Coast, I was asked to throw out the first pitch at ‘Chevron Fireworks Night’ in SBC Park in San Francisco on Tuesday, July 19, 2005. After my dad’s passing on July 11, the funeral on the 16th, and all the events and emotions surrounding such a time, it was nice to get away and do something fun and distracting. Little did I know that a few of my employees had gotten in touch with Chevron and the Giants regarding my dad’s passing and had cooked-up a special tribute in his honor.

My wife and I, my two sons, my daughter-in-law, a cousin and a few key employees arrived the ballpark nice and early on a beautiful, cool San Francisco evening. We had dinner on the club level and were then escorted down to the field. We stood along the fence between home plate and the Giants’ dugout for about 15 minutes while the infield was prepped, the national anthem was sung, and the crowd was welcomed by the public address announcer.

Then “Lou Seal”, the Giants’ mascot, came over and escorted me to the mound. The Atlanta Braves were the evening’s opponents and a full house of 43,000 fans was expected. Everyone had told me that whatever else happened, I must NOT bounce the ball on its way to home plate. If I did, I’d probably get booed by the crowd. I’d warmed up a few times in the previous days with my younger son and was feeling pretty confident; the old left arm still seemed to have some pop in it. As Lou Seal comically accompanied me out to the mound, I nervously asked him, ‘Any last-minute advice?’ From deep inside the mascot’s head came the words, ‘Just don’t bounce it.’ Oh, thanks: like I hadn’t heard THAT before!

I walked up the pitcher’s mound, turned to face home plate and caught the full effect of standing in that special place in front of a sold-out stadium. People were still filing-in, but with just a few minutes until gametime, it was already getting pretty packed and noisy.

I took a deep breath. Everything was ready for the first pitch. Then I heard the announcer proclaim, “And now, in honor of a true American hero, Captain George Crum, a World War Two bomber pilot who passed away last week, his son Norman will throw out the first pitch!”



George Crum (above) circa 1943

Norm Crum



Here's the pitch....



I was astonished. Looking at my family, I saw them all motioning urgently to the center field scoreboard. I turned around and there it was: a jumbo-sized picture of my dad, circa 1944, with him standing resolutely in front of his B-24.

Everyone in the stadium rose to their feet and applauded. What a moment. Forgetting my fear and nervousness, I reared-back and chucked the ball squarely over the plate. As I ran off the field, the catcher caught up to me, placed the ball in my hand and said, *"Congratulations. You must be very proud."* I was, indeed.

In spite of his accomplishments, my dad was a very humble guy. He never, ever called attention to himself and, if he was somehow able to look down on the scene in San Francisco that day, I'm sure he would have been thoroughly embarrassed.

However, this was not only a tribute to him, but to all the veterans of WWII and the other members of *"The Greatest Generation."* I'm so thankful to my employees, Chevron and the Giants for making this special occasion possible."

LAST FLYBY

Here are the death notifications since our May 2022 Newsletter:

451st Member	Squadron	Duty Position	DOD
Hayman, Bennie C.	724th	Nose Turret Gunner	08.28.2022
Kaczmarek, Edward H.	726th	Radio Operator-Waist Gunner	12.31.2021
Kovar, Leonard J.	727th	Bombardier/Navigator	07.16.2022
Kuhn, Fred W.		Pilot	01.17.2022
Melanson, Eugene A.	725th	Ball Turret Gunner	07.01.2021
Taylor Jr., Harry E.	725th	Bombardier	05.31.2018

THANK YOU, DONORS!

Donor	In Tribute To
Cary, Peter	In memory of Ronald V. Cary, 724 th Squadron, Pilot
Crum, Norman	In memory of Capt. George W. Crum 742nd Squadron, 455 th B.G.
Jones, Gene Joseph	In memory of Joseph Jones, 725 th Squadron, Nose Turret Gunner
Kaczmarek, Michele	In memory of Edward H. Kaczmarek 726 th Squadron, Radio Operator-Waist Gunner
McWilliams, David	In memory of Harold McWilliams, 727 th Squadron, Mechanic
McWilliams Family	In memory of Harold McWilliams, 727 th Squadron, Mechanic
Winters, Elliot	In memory of Orris A Winters, 725 th Squadron, Nose 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

FINAL MISSION OF THE 727th SQUADRON B24 BOMBER 42-95239, 'APE'

The following is a reprint of an article that appeared in the Italian newspaper Abbruzzolive on February 2nd, 2022 written by Francesco Prola.



"The "mother mountain" of Abruzzo reveals ***another unprecedented war story, which still sees an American bomber as the protagonist.*** After the story of the B-17G crashed into the stony ground under the Three Doors on November 2, 1944 , the Macr research team - again in collaboration with the "Archaeologists of the Air" Association - also came to the head of ***another mystery of the Maiella.*** The American B-24H "Liberator" was identified, the remains of which were reported scattered among the rocky blocks of the upper Valle del Forcone, in the presence of Cima Murelle: ***the aircraft had the serial number 42-95239, he belonged to the 727th Bomber Squadron (451st Bomber Group "Heavy") and was nicknamed "Ape" ("monkey").***

This bomber ***crashed into the impressive north face of Monte Acquaviva on November 4, 1944*** - just two days after the tragic impact of the B-17G - while returning from mission no. 144 on the Kufstein railway marshalling yard in Austria. At the controls of the B-24H was Second Lieutenant William R. Young and with him on board were 10 other crew members, aged between 20 and 29 (complete file at the end of the article), all deceased and later honored with the Air Medal and Purple Heart honors. Seven of these unfortunate aviators - including the pilot Young - were ***buried in Italy in the American Cemetery in Florence.*** The same place where the pilot and the navigator of the B-17G also

rest, who fell 48 hours earlier under the Three Doors. The members of the Maiella Air Crash Research group - Lorenzo Grassi, Lucio Le Donne, Luciano Schiazza, Enrico Siena and Maria Luisa Tricca - together with the engineer Gianluca Mazzanti of the "Archaeologists of the Air" Association. The latter, analyzing the wreckage documented by the Macr team in the Valle del Forcone, around 2,000 meters above sea level, identified the aircraft with certainty, linking it to the historical archive documentation.

Thus came a story bordering on the unbelievable. The B-24H "Ape", in fact, on 4 November 1944 had left from the base of Castelluccio dei Sauri in Puglia, where it should have returned together with the other bombers at the end of the raid in Austria. Instead he was last seen while flying over the Adriatic off the coast of Rimini. ***In the archives are the statements of the only witness, Lt. Raymond K. Henley,*** which was aboard another aircraft of the same flock: Henley reports that "Ape", at around 2 pm on November 4, 1944, "broke away from the formation for no apparent reason". The bomber - which had not been hit by any anti-aircraft or attacked by German fighters - began to head alone towards the coast, soon disappearing from the sight of the witness, very surprised by this anomalous behavior. ***The most credible explanation - explains Gianluca Mazzanti - could be that of a sudden malfunction*** of the central oxygen supply system, which in a short time would ***have knocked out all the crew at the same time, ended up in hypoxia due to altitude..*** Otherwise there is no excuse for the absence of any reaction: no correction of the flight path, no radio communications and no parachute jumps. The B-24H continued inert, on automatic pilot, until the crash on the Maiella ". American scholars Michael D. Hill and John R. Beiting, authors of the book "B-24 Liberators of the 15th Air Force / 49th Bomb Wing in World War II", ***speculated that "Ape" may have had a mechanical problem*** . "But this version contrasts with what was stated by Lieutenant Henley and recorded in the official documentation - underlines Mazzanti - from which it emerges that the aircraft was in a state of apparent efficiency. However, it is difficult to know for sure what really happened that afternoon in early November 1944". ***Certainly it is chilling to think of the great "Liberator" bomber that leaves the expanse of the sea and flies for hundreds of kilometers up to the natural barrier of the Maiella, without government and with the crew "asleep", traveling inexorably towards its tragic destiny.***

The fact that the last sighting of the B-24H took place on the sea, has for a long time sidetracked the attempts of identification. The crash on the mountain, however, did not go unnoticed among the inhabitants of the villages at the foot of the valley, in particular in Palombaro. Several ventured so bravely up to the wreck that, as happened in many other cases during the first post-war period, it became a source of precious materials to be reused in those times of hardship and extreme poverty. The Valle del Forcone was then reached by an official American expedition, which also left Palombaro, to proceed with extreme confidentiality to the sad operation of recovering what remained of the bodies of the 11 aviators. ***Later on the story fell a thick veil of oblivion and the memory was completely lost.*** Yet, every spring, the glaciers of the valley brought back to sight those enigmatic debris eaten by rust. However, no one knew which aircraft they belonged to. Curiosity and study have now returned to this story the value it deserves.

The B-24H crew list. This is the complete list of the crew who died in the impact against the north face of Monte Acquaviva on November 4, 1944. The youngest aboard the B-24H was the 20-year-old machine gunner Dubuisson, the oldest the 29-year-old photographer Gurunian. Among the saddest

coincidences that of the machine gunner Price, who would have turned 23 two days after the crash. Pilot Second Lieutenant William R. Young, originally from Ohio (Florence American Cemetery) - Co-pilot Second Lieutenant James F. Mark, originally from Kentucky (Florence American Cemetery) - Navigator 29-year-old Flight Officer JW Morris, originally from Illinois was born on November 1st 1915 and therefore at the time of the accident he had turned three days (Florence American Cemetery) - Bomber Flight Officer 21 year old Jerold Dwight Smith,



APE 42-95239



CONFIDENTIAL

MISSING AIR CREW REPORT

9677

RESTRICTED

by E. J. BRADY, Lt. Col., USA
by F. M. CURTIS, Captain, USA
Date: 2. SPECIFY: Place of departure Castelluccio, Italy
Target Eufenstein, Germany

Command or Air Force 15th Air Force
Squadron 727th Bombardment Sq (E)

3. WEATHER CONDITIONS AND VISIBILITY AT TIME OF CRASH OR WHEN LAST REPORTED: Good visibility, 15 miles

4. GIVE: (a) Date 4 November 1944 Time 1400 Last known position 41° 15' N 13° 00' E
(b) Specify whether: () Last sighted, () Forced down, () Seen to crash, () Last contacted by radio, () No information.

5. AIRCRAFT (LOST) (BELIEVED LOST) AS A RESULT OF: (Check one or more)
() Enemy aircraft, () Enemy anti-aircraft, () Other Unknown

6. AIRCRAFT: Type, model & series B-24-H AAF Serial Number 42-95039

7. NICKNAME OF AIRCRAFT None

8. ENGINES: Type, model & series R-1830-43 AAF Serial Number (a) CP-312036
(b) CP-313555 (c) 42-95764 (d) 42-95503

9. INSTALLED WEAPONS: (Mark, type and serial number)
(a) Browning Cal 50 1187346 (e) Browning Cal 50 1187631 (i) Browning Cal 50 1187018
(b) " " 1187382 (f) " " 1186545 (j) " " 1187142
(c) " " 1183985 (g) " " 1187995 (k) " " 1187140
(d) " " 1188046 (h) " " 11881419 (l) " " 11881419

10. PERSONNEL LISTED BELOW REPORTED AS: () Battle Casualty, () Non-Battle Casualty

11. NUMBER OF PERSONS ABOARD AIRCRAFT: Crew 11; Passengers 0; Total 11
(If more than 12 persons aboard aircraft, use separate sheet)

Category	Full Name (Last, first, initial)	Current Status	Next of Kin, Relationship and Address
(1) Pilot	Young, William R., <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> USA MIA	Robert L. Young, Father, Box 267	
	2nd Lt., O-685300	New Lebanon, Ohio	
(2) Co-Pilot	Mark, James F., <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> USA MIA	John F. Mark, Father, Route #3, Mt. Sterling, Kentucky	
	2nd Lt., O-2057352		
(3) Navigator	Morris, J. W., <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> USA MIA	Pauline Margaret Morris, Wife, 6237 Ingleside Ave., Chicago, Ill.	
	F/O, 2-126809		
(4) Bombardier	Smith, Jerold D., <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> USA MIA	Mary Alice Smith, Mother, B.D., So. Houston, Texas	
	F/O, 2-3857		
(5) Upper Tur.	Bousquet, Gerald J., <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> USA MIA	Olive R. Bousquet, Wife, Box 1120, Chickasaw, Alabama	
	Sgt., 11096538		
(6) Lower Tur.	Ferguson, Robert E., <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> USA MIA	Kathleen Ferguson, Mother, Bo. 2, Chelbourn, Wisconsin	
	Sgt., 3656394		
(7) Right Waist	Wahn, Charles A., <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> USA MIA	Josephine K. Wahn, Mother, 18404 Woodbine, Detroit, Michigan	
	Sgt., 3656395		
(8) Left Waist	Dubuisson, Thomas E., <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> USA MIA	Mary E. Dubuisson, Mother, 309 E. Romana St., Pensacola, Florida	
	Sgt., 37654738		
(9) Tail Gun.	Shields, Henry E., <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> USA MIA	With Mae Shields, Mother, 420 W. Main St., Washington, Iowa	
	Sgt., 3765514		
(10) Nose Gun.	Price, William J., <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> USA MIA	William H. Price, Father, 40 W. Sprague St., Winston Salem, N. C.	
	Sgt., 3102495		
(11) Photographer	Gurunian, George A., <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> USA MIA	Alice Gurunian, Mother, 144 LaBelle St., Highland Park, Michigan	
	Sgt., 1510843		
(12)			

12. IDENTIFY BELOW THOSE PERSONS WHO ARE BELIEVED TO HAVE LAST KNOWLEDGE OF AIRCRAFT AND CHECK APPROPRIATE (one only) COLUMN TO INDICATE BASIS FOR SAME: SAW CONTACTED LAST BY RADIO SIGHTED CRASH LANDING

Name in Full	Rank	Serial No.	SAW	CONTACTED LAST	BY RADIO	SIGHTED	CRASH	LANDING
(1) Raymond E. Lenley	1st Lt., O-707484						X	
(2)								
(3)								

13. IF PERSONNEL ARE BELIEVED TO HAVE SURVIVED, CHECK ONE OF THE FOLLOWING:
() Parachutes were used. () Persons were seen walking away from the scene of the crash. Unknown 911

14. ATTACH PHOTOGRAPH, MAP OR SKETCH SHOWING LAST KNOWN LOCATION OF AIRCRAFT.

15. ATTACH EYEWITNESS DESCRIPTIONS OF CRASH, FORCED LANDING, OR OTHER CIRCUMSTANCES.

16. ATTACH A DESCRIPTION OF EXTENT OF SEARCH, IF ANY, AND GIVE NAME, RANK AND SERIAL NUMBER OF OFFICER IN CHARGE OF SEARCH HERE. None

2. Inclosures.
Incl 1 - Statement. Date 8 November 1944 *George R. Curtis*
Lt. Kenley Signature of preparing officer
Incl 2 - Sketch. COMMENDABLE
George R. Curtis
Captain, Air Corp.,
Adjutant.

The story of Giuseppe Di Simone, one of the inhabitants of Palombaro who climbed to altitude immediately after the tragedy, recalls that a month after the crash of the B-24H, there were still corpses scattered on the ground, not far from the plane. The bomber appeared relatively intact, with

the left wing appearing to have hit the wall and thrown further away. Even inside the wing, and this impressed him a lot, there was a body left. In his book "50 and more stories to remember, 50 and more stories to tell" Giuseppe Di Simone wrote: "From the day after the first exploration on Monte Acquaviva, I began to beg my father to give me permission to return there a second time in order to be able to take that rubber that I had seen in the kerosene drum to be able to use it to rebuild the bottom of the shoes. It was rumored that the ladies of the time sewed themselves blouses with the silk fabric of parachutes. After a short time my father gave me permission to go back to the plane, just to get the rubber I needed. As soon as I received the permission, I asked a third cousin, Carmine Di Simone, if he wanted to come with me. He was 22 and engaged. He, taken by curiosity, did not hesitate to accept. Having never set foot in the mountains, my cousin asked me if I knew the way. I assured him that I had been there a few days before ". "In a short time I got the few things I needed: chisel, hammer and some screwdrivers. Once the equipment was ready - continues the story of Giuseppe Di Simone - I made the program: at a certain time my brother would have to go to the foot of the mountain with his mare and cut some branches to hide the rubber. With my cousin we fixed the day and time of departure. He told me that he would return from the Limiti district, where his fiancée lived, around midnight and that was the time we would have to leave. We took everything we could need besides the equipment (water and sandwiches) and started the journey. Eight hours of travel awaited us, but by the time the sun rose we had already climbed two peaks: Morgione and Fontanella. Before reaching the place in question, we still had to climb the top of Maciarinella, Cima del Capraro and Cima del Forcone where, from the latter, the wreckage of the four-engine could be discovered. The last three peaks were covered with mountain pine, a type of tree that grows not in height but stretches along the rocks and is impenetrable. This caused us many inconveniences, so often we had to go back to find the path. Arrived at the last peak and seeing the wreck, we stopped for a break of about an hour, then we set off again towards the face of Monte Acquaviva. We had even brought some perfume-soaked handkerchiefs to avoid exposing ourselves to that unbreathable air, but they weren't enough. So we thought of taking the barrel, moving it away from that place and starting to pick up the rubber with a chisel and hammer ". ***"After three hours of work, we managed to free the tire, split it in half and, taken on the shoulders, we resumed the journey back.*** For the return we chose a shorter route, without ups and downs - Giuseppe Di Simone still remembers - so as not to load the weight of the tire on our shoulders but to be able to drag it too. After a few hours of walking we found ourselves in the valley between Palombaro and Pennapiedimonte where my brother was waiting for us, we loaded the tire and returned home. As soon as we arrived, seeing that we had brought back what we wanted so much, my father called a shoemaker friend of his named Giuseppe D'Angelo, nicknamed Barone, to repair all the shoes that we could no longer use. He stayed for two days ".

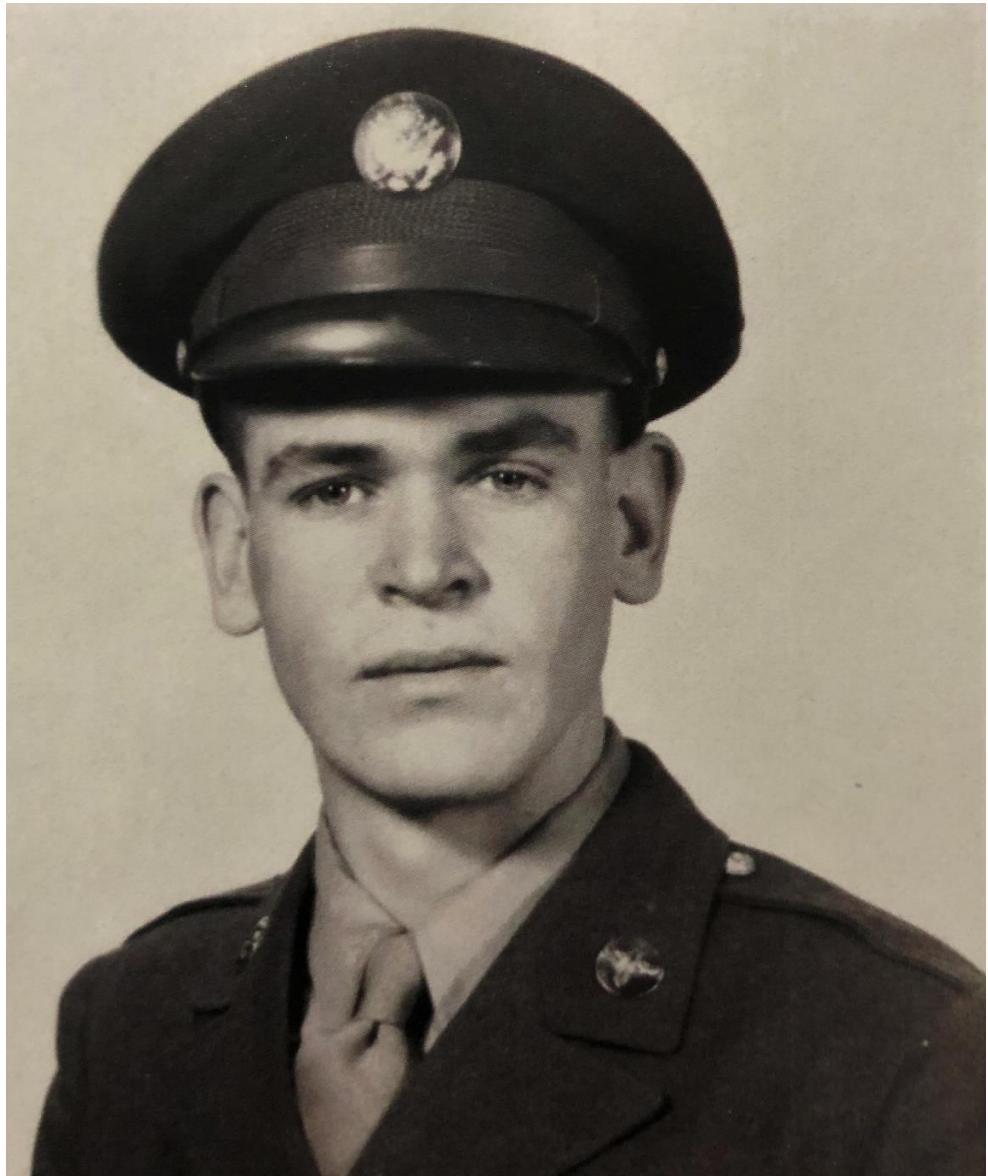
For an Air Museum. There are now a dozen sites of aircraft crashes (of different nationalities) that occurred during the Second World War that have been studied, identified and documented in recent years by the Maiella Air Crash Research group. The researchers again launch an appeal to all possible witnesses of these tragic episodes or to those who have heard and handed down stories about it. Reports of memories of fallen planes or wrecks found in the area of the Maiella National Park and the Highlands of Abruzzo can be sent by email to: macr.maiella@gmail.com. "The importance and consistency of these tangible memories of the past - underlines Lorenzo Grassi, member of the Macr team - prompted us to suggest both the Maiella National Park and local institutions to consider the

creation of an Air Museum or, in any case, of exhibitions in the area that can host and illustrate the finds collected in the mountains and perhaps also the objects reused in the villages, bringing them together and reconstructing the stories of these aircraft and their crews. An operation of scientific dissemination and enhancement at the same time.”

Note – the original article can be viewed online at https://abruzzolive-it.translate.goog/ricostruita-la-storia-del-b-24h-il-bombardiere-usa-precipitato-sulla-maiella-con-lintero-equipaggio-addormentato-foto-e-video/?x_tr_sl=it&x_tr_tl=en&x_tr_hl=en&x_tr_pto=wapp

A TRIBUTE to SSgt ORRIS ANTHONY WINTERS by ELLIOT WINTERS

Orris Anthony Winters, my grandfather, was born October 2, 1925 in Fountain Green, Utah - a rural farming community made up of mostly Mormon Scandinavian immigrants. He was the only boy along with 3 younger sisters born to Anthony Rudolph and Gladys (Hansen) Winters. At the age of 11, he was helping his father plow a field and watched a storm suddenly roll into the valley. He sat only a few feet away when his father was struck by lightning and fell from the plow, still entangled in the rigging. His father was then dragged a quarter of a mile by the horses who had been spooked by the lightning. My Great-Grandfather Anthony Rudolph Winters died that day, June 9th, 1937 at the age of 35 due to sudden cardiac arrest from that

**Orris Anthony Winters**

lightning strike. As you can imagine, this was a profound event in Orris' life and he said once in an interview, "I felt very close to my father, and his death was a great loss to me. I have missed him continually since that day." Orris, now the sole male in his household, looked to extended family and community leaders for guidance and direction. Two of those positive influences were brothers named Conard and Arvard Aagard. The brothers were several years older than Orris and were also distantly related. The Aagard brothers had similarly lost their father when they were very young

albeit to cancer. Orris describes these cousins as his heroes growing up. They both encouraged Orris' love for the outdoors and his interest in airplanes and his dream of being a pilot one day.

When war broke out in 1941, Orris was only 16 years old and he still dreamed of being a pilot. When the time came for him to be drafted in 1943, he opted to enlist in the Army Air Corps. The Army at the time wasn't training new pilots but he still desperately wanted to be in an airplane and he figured enlisting in the Air Corps gave him the best shot. He spent the bulk of that winter in Basic Training in Amarillo, TX and Gunnery School in Tyndall Field, FL. After Gunnery School he was sent to Springfield, MA where he was assigned to a crew. They were Pilot - 2LT Clayton M. Lyon, Bombardier F/O Virgil Carson, Navigator F/O Paul Jacobs, Engineer/Gunner (top turret) – Cpl Bernard Bernstein, Radioman/Gunner (waist) – Cpl Leonard Kaplan, Gunner (waist) – Cpl Henry St. Clair Wurthmann, Gunner (nose) – Cpl Orris Winters, Gunner (ball turret) – Cpl William McCrary, Gunner (tail) – Cpl Francis Hunt.



This crew was assigned to the 15th Air Force, 451st BG, 725th Sq. and arrived in the European theater on January 4th, 1945. They were stationed at Castelluccio Airfield, part of the Foggia Airfield Complex near the Adriatic Coast of Italy. As readers of this newsletter well know, the 451st specialized in long range strategic bombing of Nazi industrial compounds in central and eastern Europe using B-24

Liberators. In the surrounding airfields were other bombing groups – some B-17, other B-24's, as well as supporting/escorting aircraft including squadrons of P-51 "Mustangs" and P-38 "Lightnings".

After the war, Orris used the GI Bill to attend flight school and eventually qualify for a commercial pilot's license. Orris sadly passed away March 5, 2001 at his home in Seattle, WA after fulfilling his dream and serving a long career as a United Airlines pilot. Since growing to adulthood, my brother Jay and I have felt a strong desire to learn more about Orris' war service. Thus started a painstaking process to scour records, forums and research endeavoring to learn more about his time in Italy.

Orris always told his children that he flew on 18 missions as a nose gunner in the B-24. The problem was, after a fire in 1973 at the National Personnel Records Center, most of the Army's "Loading Lists" were lost and it was impossible to verify his exact missions. My brother Jay developed an interesting and roundabout method for figuring out Orris' missions with some degree of certainty that I think would benefit the readers of this newsletter. (It needs to be said here that the 451st Bombardment Group website's efforts to digitize and put online all of these primary source records was INVALUABLE in our research and deserves to be commended. THANK YOU!)

Jay's starting point was a couple of interviews Orris did with family members before he died in which he talked about his life and war service. He spoke about several important details in those interviews including the names of his fellow crewmen and most importantly, his pilot, Clayton Lyon. Orris said he flew all 18 missions with Lyon and he talked frequently about him in his personal history. Also importantly, the 451st website uploaded the Mission briefing notes (sometimes called "Flimsies") which contained specific mission information on plane assignments, formations, flying altitudes, call signs, targets, etc. and these flight assignments were listed by pilots. By going through the flimsies and assuming Orris was the nose gunner for Lyon, we could reasonably assume that Orris flew on those missions in which Lyon was listed as a pilot. The flimsies also listed the Aircraft A/C number assigned to each pilot. Using that A/C number (unique within a BG), we were able to match it up to the B-24 Serial number on the Daily Engineer Report (also on the 451st website). From there, we looked at the 451st aircraft inventory spreadsheet to find the names and dispositions of these aircraft. We now not only know the missions Orris almost certainly flew on, we know the ACTUAL B-24 he was flying in during that mission. For example, on April 1st, 1945, he flew on "Gemini" (S/N 41-29490) on a bombing mission to Austria in the number 7 formation position. Utilizing this method, we were able to confirm via primary source documents 15 of his 18 missions. The only 3 we couldn't confirm were because no flimsies were available for those missions.

We were also able to find primary sources related to his being shot down on February 7th, 1945 after a bombing mission to Vienna. (On only his 3rd mission!) Heavy flak over Austria destroyed the plane's fuel lines and after dropping their payload over the target, Lyon limped the struggling B-24 as close to Italy as possible before ordering the crew to bailout over Yugoslavia. The whole crew survived the jump. He and his crew met up on the ground and were smuggled back to base by Yugoslavian partisans. This is a story we had already heard countless times growing up but we were able to find the Missing Air Crew Report (MACR 12084) and through a professional researcher, we were able to acquire the Declassified "Escape - Evasion – Repatriation" report (E&E) for this event as well. They provided many important additional details.

There are now more than a hundred of us who can call Orris, "Dad", "Papa", or "Great-Grandpa" (even a few "Great-Great Grandpa's"). If there was one value he was sure to pass on it was his patriotism. There's no question after this experience my brother and I have a deeper love and appreciation for him and his willingness to sacrifice for our country. My brother is now in the process of compiling a booklet for Orris' descendants which chronicles his service with the 451st as well as his love of airplanes. We hope this work provides the same for our other cousins and their kids as it did for us – valuable insights into their heritage and the man to whom we owe so much. It's imperative that future generations remember what people like Orris and his generation sacrificed in order to preserve liberty, and to always remember that there are causes worth dying for.



Captain O.A. "Tony" Winters - October 2, 1925 –
March 5, 2001



Papa and I celebrating my first birthday, August
1987

FINANCIAL REPORT

The 451st Bomb Group Association does not charge annual dues. Your generous contributions help cover expenses for printing/mailing 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 May, 2022 \$8,192.63

Income

Donations	\$1,220.10
Interest	<u>\$55.80</u>
Total Income	\$1,275.90

Expenses

May Newsletter	\$561.14
Website Security (2 years)	
451 st .org	<u>\$143.76</u>
Total Expenses	\$704.90

Ending Balance September, 2022 \$8,763.63