

## GENTLEMEN OF THE "451ST"

All of us guys, over the last 35 years, has wondered, "HOW COME OUR OLD BOMBER GROUP NEVER GETS TOGETHER?". Well, WONDER no more--- it's about to happen. Plans are being formulated, here in the Chicago area, for a REUNION to take place August 1/2/3, 1980. This will give you almost a full year to put your plans in order so you can attend. And it will give us time to make all the plans and arrangements that would be necessary for a gathering of the size we expect.

But, in return for the effort we will be making in your behalf, we also need your cooperation. First off, we need your commitment if you can and will attend. After we know how many are planning to attend, THEN we can go ahead and commit ourselves to a motel/hotel that would serve our needs. Banquet and Entertainment facilities have to be considered, plus so many minor items that go to make up a REUNION that will be worthy of the "451st". So, PLEASE, fill out the enclosed REUNION QUESTIONNAIRE and return it to this Headquarters. Make us aware that you are planning to attend and our "Chicago Committee" will do its best to host you guys and gals in a manner befitting the honorable and famous "451st".

In case you gentlemen are wondering who makes up the "Chicago Committee" and were in attendance at our first meeting, let me read off the roster: 724TH....FALL IN!!....TENN-HUT!!....DRESS, RIGHT-- --DRESS!!...(LOOK GOOD, MEN, WE'RE ON REVIEW)...Verne Johnson, Roger Johnston, John O'Connor (absent with leave) and myself....; 725TH.. ...LET'S STRAIGHTEN UP THAT LINE!!...Frank McNerney, Joe Petrovic and Ray Puccetti....; 726TH....HMMmmm...only one to fill the ranks.... ..Charles Small....FRONT AND CENTER....; 727TH....COUNT OFF!!.... John Anderson and Charles Conlon....ALL PRESENT OR ACCOUNTED FOR, SIR. We had 2 that may have been on SICK CALL or slightly AWOL and 4 that were on DETACHED SERVICE. All that were in attendance were accompanied by their "Aide-de-Camp" (wives) and the input they offered will do much to upgrade the whole event. Like any good organization, once you get good and dedicated people involved, no mission is to difficult to propose and get good results....RIGHT??. Colonels Eaton, Knapp and Stefonowicz...RIGHT!!

I hope, by now, you've all taken note of the new ROSTER. This type of publication has been in our plans for some time. It was just a case of finding enough time to devote to the research, typing and planning to go into the final product. John Anderson (727th) furnished the cover picture of the Minnesota Mauler. He got it while on a recent trip to Patterson Air Force Base, Dayton, Ohio. He didn't say how he got it---anyone notice a blank spot on the walls at the Base? Comments and ERRORS are my fault, please excuse. As I noted inside the cover, PLEASE, if you have-or-are-planning a change of address, let us know. Third Class Mail, of this type is not forwarded. It is returned to this office at a cost and no hint as to where you have moved to. It is important at this time that we continue unbroken contact.

## RETURN FIRE

In answer to some of the questions I posed in the last newsletter, there were some fast and detailed comments returned. First off, there was the situation that involved Emmanuel "Manny" Brown (724th). The situation where-in S/Sgt Brown's clothing caught afire, due to a defective stove in their tent. Manny's recollection of the incident is very vivid--EXCEPT--who was the guy that put the flying tackle on him and slowed his forward motion so the fire could be snuffed out? Well, the story was hardly off the press when replies were being sent back to relate all the facts. It was Marion 'Dutch' Boyer from over in the Ordnance Section that came to the rescue. 1st/Sgt Palmer Gums, of the 724th, was in the same chow line as Cpl. Boyer and participated to some lesser extent. But 1st/Sgt Gums, without reservation, gives all credit to Cpl. Boyer for a true display of courage and self-sacrifice. S/Sgt Harry Fox (Orderly Room) recalls the incident and the fact that Cpl. Boyer was awarded the Soldiers Medal for his deed. Manny Brown was elated, that after 34 years he could finally put a name to the person that had made it possible for him to finish his missions (after hospitalization) and return to a normal civilian life. Manny spent a couple of bucks on telephone calls, both to Cpl. Boyer and myself to show his appreciation for what was done THEN (by Cpl. Boyer) and by this office (in getting them together). We hope both will be at the REUNION next summer.

From the 726th, we received a letter from 1st Lt. Charles B. Morfit (now Lt. Col. 'Retired') relating to the "Three Feathers" incident. Lt. Morfit had the dubious honor to be flying as co-pilot on that memorable day when three engines had to be shut down, one after another. Lt. Morfit's comments and description of the event leaves nothing to your imagination. His recounting, of those perilous and tense moments, put you right up on the flight deck, watching as pilot (Capt. Sidney Winski) and co-pilot (Lt. Morfit) worked in unison as they shut down engine after engine. If you have never seen pilot and co-pilot work under emergency conditions, you can never appreciate coordination in its true form. Life or death hinge on those split-seconds that it takes for the execution of these emergency procedures. The punching of prop feathering buttons---the change of throttle and mixture settings for the remaining engines---the absolute shut down of the faulty engine---plus the compensating overcontrol, necessary to maintain level and stable flight. All these (and more) take place in the span of a few seconds as the pilot and co-pilot wrestle with the situation at hand. Thus, the aircraft "Three Feathers" managed to avoid becoming a casualty, while enroute overseas, due in main part to the men that controlled the situation with coolness and efficiency. This is not the way, word for word, that Major Haltom (also aboard, Sqdn. C.O.) and Lt. Morfit described the events. This is what I read into their non-emotional description of what happened aboard. Both men, without reservation, listed Capt. Winski as a superb pilot, whose ability could match the emergency. We would like to see all those involved with the "Three Feathers" incident at the upcoming 1980 REUNION.

1st Lt. Paul L. Schriebmaier (now Lt. Col. 'Retired') of the 725th gives a report of a more tragic note. This was in regards to a rumor that we had heard, about an aircraft that had flown into the cliffs on the Isle of Capri. Paul verified the rumor as fact. In a recent letter he related these facts. It happened late in 1944 that Lts. Ken Fish (pilot) and Oscar Fry (co-pilot) (thats right, FISH & FRY) were sent to Naples in a stripped down "knock around" B-24 to pick up returning 451st men from R & R at Capri. Lt. Fish was noted as being a bit 'buzz happy' and apparently couldn't resist giving the 14 or 15 passengers aboard a closer look at Capri. He swept into the area between

Capri and Ana Capri, which forms a sort of saddle effect. There is no shore line in this area, rather it has sheer cliffs that rise from the waterline to a height of some hundreds of feet. Apparently, and this has to be speculation since no one can know for sure, Ken Fish came in low so as to clear the top of the cliffs at an altitude that would impress his passengers. Well, the outcome was immediate and total. The aircraft slammed into the cliff, exploding on contact and disintegrating into minute pieces, the largest being one of the tail fins. Total loss of life is not known at this writing, but as was the 'norm', back then, a lot of passengers were loaded aboard (not necessarily 451st men, only) for a 'hop' back to near their own bases. Paul's theory, and I'm sure others will concur, was that with an overloaded aircraft and FAST as a stripped down Model 'D' could be; given the facts that there is air turbulence around the peak of the cliffs and the pilots desire to make this a buzz job to end all buzz jobs; there-in lies the error. Caught in a down-draft---too overloaded to make correction---and just too damn fast to compensate the mistake. True, this seems to be logical conclusion, based on Lt. Fish's mania to 'lay down a good buzz job, now and then' But there could have been engine malfunction. Whatever the reason, it was a tragedy of WAR. A point of interest that Ed Benguiat (725th) called to our attention in regards to this air tragedy. The picture that we published in one of our previous newsletters, showing the Enlisted Men of the 726th (submitted by Harold Moore) pictures at least one of the victims of the crash. If you will check out the picture you will note the man furthest to the right, seated on a wooden box. This would be Robert Burley of Zanesville, Ohio. Would anyone be able to add further comments to to this tragic incident?

Throughout the lifespan of this organization, that Peter Massare and I have started, we have been fortunate to receive funds to keep it going. Although Pete and I started by using our own monies, we were glad to do so for the interest of our comrades and friends. We are still contributing from our own pockets, but to a much lesser degree, in the way of phone calls and other expenses. Now, after the expense of the new roster and what will be the cost for this mailing, we need to put out an appeal for MORE FUNDS. We appeal to those, who up to this point, haven't as yet responded in any form since the original questionnaire. We would like to hear from those in particular--but from everyone in general. How's about it, is what your getting worth its continuation?

Just to whet your interest, it is our intention to continue to put out photographs such as we are doing now and have in the past. Seeking out new members and continuing to harass those that don't answer is the way our roster will be enlarged. Your cooperation in this area would be much appreciated. "Hound" these guys that you know haven't responded. Pete and I have tried to make contact with all the names that you have offered. Whatever the reason for not answering, we leave it up to you to find out. As new names are received they will be enrolled and when enough are gathered we will put out another supplemental issue to the current roster. We have been working, along with our regular duties, to put together the 'History of the 451st'. This will be based on information that comes from some of the governmental agencies in Washington D.C. and elsewhere in the U.S.

So, if you will go along with us in our long term goals....Enlarged roster....More pictures....Topics from the past....REUNION in 1980.... History of the 451st  
THEN GIVE US YOUR MORAL AND FINANCIAL SUPPORT.

THANKS