



FOR THE MEN WHO FLY 'EM • FOR THE MEN WHO KEEP 'EM FLYING

ISSUE 18

FALL 1989

OMAHA SELECTED FOR 1990 REUNION

NEBRASKA: *TOUCHSTONE TO OUR PAST*



Red Lion: Host Hotel

Since the close of the Norfolk, Virginia reunion in October 1988, plans have been put in place to make Omaha, Nebraska the site of our 1990 Group reunion.

As discussed at Norfolk, both Omaha and St. Louis, Missouri were in the running for selection. But, with on-site evaluation of both cities, it was Omaha that won out. It was not selected without some feeling of reluctance. St. Louis certainly merits a visit by our Group in the future. But Omaha, and the adjacent areas, brings some of our 451st history into the picture.

Many, if not all, original crews received their final flight training at Fairmont, Nebraska, while many of the later crews picked up their aircraft at Lincoln before departing for overseas.

In retrospect many days of training were spent at Fairmont, Nebraska in making the original ground and air Omaha . . . (Continued Page 2, Column, 1)

REASONS AND EXCUSES TO DONATE

(Offered with "tongue in cheek")

Statement of Charges: Last chance to finish paying off the debt owed on that Jeep, 6 by 6 Truck, or any of those B-24 nose wheels that seemed to have ended up unceremoniously bent in one of the many ditches near the runway areas. Some of these debts may still be charged to your record. We will work to absolve these oversights from your pay record.

Monies you owe: Any outstanding debts that you owed to former 451st members, from the period of 1943 to 1945, may be, with full absolution on your part, sent to the 451st Bomb Group, Ltd.

Paydays Remembered: Any overcompensation of pay or allowances that you deemed excessive, through the direction of the PAYMASTER or 1st SERGEANT (\$50 a day once a month) may be turned back to the 451st Bomb Group, Ltd.

Gambling Debts: Any gambling improprieties that have hung heavily on your conscience from your days in the service. (e.g.) Poker, Pinochle, or Dice (commonly called "Craps"). These monies may be repaid by noting your donation as "gambling reversals;" all for your peace of mind.

Promises - Promises: How many times have I heard, either by phone or mail, "Golly, I sure intended to get some money into the organization sooner - but I just forgot." That or, "How do you stand for funds?" On those two comments I'm leaving humility aside by saying, "A donation sure would sure be appreciated!" More than 90% of you guys think the effort is worthwhile, but less than 20% are taking on the financial responsibility to keep it going.

Passing the Plate: Or, just to make this 451st Bomb Group, Ltd. operational, a contribution or donation would be appreciated. Remember its tax deductible. Make checks payable to: 451st Bomb Group.

Address to: **451st Bomb Group (H), Ltd.**
1032 S. State Street
Marengo, IL 60152

"AD-LIB"

451st Bomb Group, Ltd. Publication

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The publishing of the AD-LIB; seeking of new members; planning reunions; and all efforts towards the preservation of our 451st heritage, is funded by your donations and contributions. Checks should be made out to "451st Bomb Group" and mailed to the above address.

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OMAHA (Con't from Page 1)

crews ready for the rigors that were to be undertaken when we arrived in Italy.

To the latter air crews that picked up their aircraft at Lincoln or Topeka, Kansas, a good number of hours were spent over the plains of Nebraska in familiarizing oneself with the airplane that was to eventually carry you overseas.

All in all, Nebraska has a very nostalgic enticement, that if properly utilized, could make this a most memorable reunion.



Fairmont Army Air Field (Circa 1985)

At this time plans are being considered to visit the "roots" of our 451st history - Fairmont, NE. It is my hope that even though your military experiences did not include Fairmont, you would appreciate seeing, reviewing, and being involved in, some of the Group's earliest history.

The contract has been signed to utilize the "Red Lion Hotel" in downtown Omaha as our base of operation. We have accepted the dates of **September 6 thru 9, 1990**. So, start talking it up among your buddies.

**THE GROUND CREW.....
HAVE WE FORGOTTEN SOME
VERY IMPORTANT PEOPLE?**

By: Frank Tedesco (727th)

As a B-24 pilot with the 451st Bomb Group of the 15th Air Force, it was my job to make certain an aircraft we were to fly on a mission was ready to go. Among one of the many things that had to be done was a "walk-around" inspection of the aircraft. The tires were checked for proper inflation, the landing gear struts were checked for correct height, the turbine wheels on the superchargers were checked for damaged or missing blades, and on and on, until you were satisfied all was in order and the aircraft at least looked safe to fly. Having decided it was ready, you then continued up into the cockpit and on to the take off for another mission.

But, how often did you consider, at that time, how this aircraft, which may have flown a mission the previous day sustaining damage or mechanical problems, how did it show up on the flight line ready to go the next day? This was something I took for granted at the time, due to my pre-occupation with being a pilot, as well as it may have been for other members of the flight crew who were also pre-occupied with their duties. The fact is that preparing these aircraft for flying the next day meant someone had to work on them all night - not in a well lighted, heated hanger, but outside in all kinds of weather. Considering this now, as someone who in the last year has had the rare opportunity to work on the restoration of a (*)B-24J, I feel we may have left some very important people in the shadow of the more highly publicized flight crews. Maybe there has been a feeling of guilt on my part for never having taken the time, on a day when I didn't fly, to go out to the flight line and tell the aircraft mechanics what a great job they were doing. These were the men who were helping to keep me alive by keeping the aircraft safe to fly. It is not a simple matter to try to understand this now, but I hope there were extenuating circumstances and that it was not just the result of callous attitude toward ground personnel on the part of flight crews in general, although the military did seem to foster a caste system in some ways. However, for whatever reasons, these men did not seem to get the recognition they deserved.

As previously mentioned, my recent experience working as a volunteer helping to restore a B-24J has been a real education. I thought I knew quite a bit about this aircraft. Most of the things that I have learned have awakened the realization that, even with all the tools and in a hanger, it is a difficult job and the mechanics who were doing this in the field were some of the unsung heroes of the Air Corps of that time period. I have to wonder now about such things as how did they change and engine; how did they repair flak-damaged skin where old rivets had to be drilled out before the new skin was riveted in

place; how did they replace hundreds of feet of control cables or damaged hydraulic and fuel lines - all of this working at night, sometimes only by flashlight. My limited experience tells me it is virtually impossible to work while wearing gloves, yet the nights did get cold in Italy in the winter and their work continued with, I'm certain, many near-frozen fingers. Yet, when the throttles were advanced and the aircraft started down the runway, there seemed to be little concern that anything would go wrong due to some laxity on the part of the ground crew. There always was a subconscious concern of the possibility of an unpredictable mechanical failure, of course, such as a run-away prop, which was probably one of the most dreaded problems which would arise on take off with a full combat load. These types of problems were mostly unavoidable and not the result of something left undone or not done correctly. I am certain that no ground crew member could bear to see one of his aircraft return to base after having to abort the mission due to mechanical problems. To someone who takes a special pride in his work, it had to be demoralizing and I'm certain they did everything in their power to prevent this from happening.

A number of times I heard talk in our Group that the average life of most of our aircraft was less than six months. However, from personal experience, I know some outlasted this figure by a wide margin. These aircraft were used less often as they became older. Yet despite their age, somehow they were kept flight-worthy by ground crews who refused to see aircraft they had nursed through so many missions set aside to be cannibalized for parts. This kind of dedication paid off when we were called upon to fly a "maximum effort" mission, when we needed everything in the air that could fly. I know this from personal experience, since I had flown under these conditions and despite some minor problems, such as an engine throwing oil, they still performed admirably, all because of the dedication of the ground crews.

Although I probably have pointed most of my discussion toward the mechanic who worked on the engine and air- frame, in no way do I want to detract from all the others who I have grouped in my terminology of "ground crew." All deserve equal credit, from Radio Technicians to Armament Specialists and all others who worked through sometimes long, cold nights to prepare the aircraft for the following day's mission.

Most flight crew members returned with commendations describing their valor under enemy fire and these were certainly well earned. Like myself now, I hope others will take a moment and reflect on what these ground crew members did for us and not forget what a valuable part of our operation they were. So from one pilot who does remember, I salute you.

(*) The restoration of the B-24J is being undertaken by the Collings Foundation, Stowe, Massachusetts. This *Groundcrews* (Continued Page 4, Column 1)

HOW IT ALL BEGAN

A decade has passed since we chartered our 451st organization according to the laws of Illinois. But in the terms of continuous operations, this office has been seeking members more years than that.

It all started in 1977 when Harry Fox (724th) ran a "buddy seeking ad" in the VFW magazine. Peter Massare (727th), William Paddock (725th), and myself (724th) noticed the ad and immediately responded, and in time began a bit of a dialog. From that early initial contact, Peter Massare and I established an ongoing rapport that continues to this date.

Taking the hint from Harry Fox I placed my own ad in several military oriented magazines and with the help of Pete Massare began to locate our buddies that were hungry for the chance to become a part of the Group they once served.

From that modest start, Pete and I began developing what has now become one of the largest postwar 15th Army Air Force Bomber Groups in existence.

Pete and I set up guidelines that we thought appropriate to the goals we wanted to operate by. We went by the mandate that all our members have to have an interest in what we were all about. Thus we developed the "questionnaire." Now we will not accept anybody into the organization until they respond by filling it out to the best



A 1978 Gathering of Early 451st'ers

L. to R.: Bob Karstensen, Peter Massare, Vince DiLella,
Joe Arsenaault, John Anderson

of their ability. (There are some organizations that accept members by addresses only -thereby building an organization by size, not by membership intent)

In the summer of 1978, Pete Massare, enroute to visit his son in Indiana, sidetracked his trip from Rochester, New York to visit Marengo, Illinois. I quickly ran *451st Beginning* . . . (Continued Page 4, Column 1)

451st Beginning (Cont'd from Page 3)
 through our limited roster and invited some nearby 451st'ers to join us for a "Marengo Styled" backyard barbecue. All that were invited showed up - five in total John Anderson, Joe Arsenault, Vince DiLella, Pete and myself. All were accompanied by their wives.

In 1979 our growth became so phenomenal we thought it best that we charter our organization. Thereby we became officially recognized as a non-profit military veterans organization.

Now with a membership of over 1,400, we are not resting on past achievements, but rather pressing ahead to find new members.



Checking Our Limited Bulletin Board

You can now do your part by working on those that are not, as yet, signed in by working the phone company for that comrade in your neighboring town. It's great fun trying to make out like Sherlock Holmes.



Groundcrews Remembered (Con't from Page 3)
 program is being supported by a number of corporations that were originally involved in the production of the B-24 aircraft, such as General Dynamics, General Electric, Pratt & Whitney and many others. Donations from individuals have also played a major part in the program so far. There is much left to accomplish, however, and contributions of any amount may be sent to:

THE COLLINS FOUNDATION
River Hill Farm
Stow, Massachusetts 01775

MOMENTS OF REMEMBRANCES

By: Richard E. Prouty (Pilot-727th BS)

Aerial Hitchhiker

We had just landed at Lyon, France, with a load of bombs and extra gasoline, needed by General Patton, when I was approached by a curious civilian. While the bombs were being toggled off onto the ground and rolled to the side and gasoline was being pumped from the wing tanks to 55 gallon barrels, that young man and I tried to communicate. Using his slowed-down French and my high school French, we established that our plane had come from Italy. Since I was impressed with the beauty of the country there, I told him so and that compared to the part of Italy we were from he was lucky to be there. That remark was definitely not received as a compliment.

It seems he was in France as an unwilling guest of the German army, having been taken there from his native Italy. Now he was liberated. He disappeared for awhile, but reappeared soon, very excited.

One of his friends, in his same situation, had persuaded the pilot of another B-24 there to take him (the friend) back to Italy, but would only take the one person. Would I consider taking him?

I tried to dissuade him, with several points; lack of authorization, lack of extra parachute for him, cold temperature at flight altitude, takeoff in about an hour, and the danger of setting a precedent. He responded that his silence would take care of the first and last points, he would take his chances on the need to bail out and freezing. He could dash into town, grab his few belongings and be back within an hour. So I agreed and he was back in time for takeoff.

The flight back was uneventful. The crew found some blankets to keep our Italian passenger warm. After landing, I stopped on the taxi way to let him off. But first I told him he was now in Italy and hoped he could make it home OK from there. He was not to tell anyone how he got to Italy - and not walk into the props as he left the plane.

The next morning as I stepped out of our tent - there he was! Could he get a written statement of some sort to show authorities if he were stopped? I assured him that was unnecessary. He expressed his happiness to be back in Italy and gratefulness that we had bent some rules. In an effort to repay us, he pleaded with me to let him serve as our unpaid houseboy. However, I told him it was more important to relocate his family who had lived near the Abbey at Casino, I hesitated to tell him how badly that area was destroyed, since he was there, and only hoped he would find the family that was left behind.

Sometimes I wonder if his grandchildren ask him to retell the story of his war experiences and of his unusual trip back to Italy from France in the Fall of 1944.

(Article continued on next page)

Nazi Deception

Sometime in the fall of 1944 one of the 727th Bomb Squadron's B-24s didn't get all the way back to its base from a mission. It did, however, manage to reach a friendly airbase farther up the east coast of Italy. It was reported ready for pickup, so I flew up there with a skeleton crew to bring it back.

There was some delay in getting off for the return flight. It was near dusk at take-off time as the other B-24 taxied out ahead of me. I called him on the radio and said I would get on his wing after take-off and fly formation enroute. All went well for some time until the other plane called me saying he was lost. If he was lost we were both lost, and it was too dark to recognize terrain features. I suggested he get on my wing and I would call BIG FENCE, the military radio direction finding network

covering the area, and get a steer for home.

BIG FENCE responded loud and clear. After a transmission count for a fix I was given a westerly heading to reach Hiccup Tower. After a few minutes on that course I happened to notice the whiteness of snow directly below me, and not very far below at that. I was obviously seeing the foothills of higher snow covered mountains directly ahead. Panic was immediately followed by a hasty 180 degree turn and a call to the wing man that I would get another steer from BIG FENCE.

This second encounter with BIG FENCE resulted in a completely different direction for Hiccup Tower - south-easterly. While on that new course I recalled having been briefed that the enemy was known to intercept calls to BIG FENCE and deliberately steer the "lost sheep" into trouble. They nearly got a double header that night.

FINAL CHAPTER OF "PLOESTI PICTURE"

With the last pieces of the puzzle falling into place, we now offer you the conclusion of, "Who, Where, When," of this famous picture.

I know you've all been subjected to my possessive eccentricities when it comes to our Groups claim to the picture of the B-24s over Ploesti. This I have "run up the flagpole," both in Issue 16 and 17, to get feedback from those that would have knowledge of the incident. The response has been better than for any other question I had posed on varying subjects. Some recall, with memories dimmed by time, what they thought to be the straight facts. To these guys I offer the following facts in challenge to their claims. To those that had facts "more on the money," the following will give substance to their remembrances.

The aircraft we have been concentration on (since the verification by our Group Photo Officer, Bill Dwyer, that this is a 451st photo) has been the plane holding the #4 position. Mike Thorrick (727th Crew Chief) phoned me on 23 February 1988 to tell me that his "charge," CON JOB (#42-78145) was somehow involved on that date. I stored that information and awaited further developments.

Bill Dwyer came up with substantial evidence that



"CON JOB" COMING OFF PLOESTI

(Manned by Hubert E. Anderson's crew)

CON JOB was indeed the aircraft in question, and Mike Hill further confirmed the fact.

CON JOB was the aircraft named by James Park's crew before they came into the 727th Squadron in April of 1944. The way aircraft are named, in itself, is sometimes quite colorful and unusual. In this case when the Park's crew came to Lincoln, Nebraska to pick up their plane in March of '44' it was

noted by Win Cartwright (copilot) that they were getting the last of the "G" models. As Win put it, "I can still picture all the shiny, unpainted 'H' models setting there." "It was Ray Kravetz," Cartwright wrote, "our Brooklyn bombardier that said 'We've been CONNED,' hence the name CON JOB." The demise of CON JOB came when Richard Turnbull was shot down over Vienna on 22 August 1944.

Other questions arose when Jack Thomas, AEG on Cortland Read's crew, said that they, along with Major Clayton Evans, Sqdn CO (flying "right seat") were flying lead and thus the aircraft shown at the extreme right of photo should not have been the SOD BUSTER, (as referenced in Issue 16, by this office) which they
(Continued Page 6) . . . *Ploesti Picture*

Ploesti Picture . . . (Con't from Page 5) normally flew, when in reality it may well have been.

Happily a document surfaced that had been offered by Bill Paddock (Pilot, 725th) that made all speculation and hearsay mute. Bill had sent me his original "flimsy." (A "flimsy" is a one page document that familiarized the pilots as to their position with relevant information necessary for that days mission. It also contains such information as Start Engines (0520), Taxi (0530), Take-off (0540), Depart Base (0640). Further detailed as to Fighter Escort (48 P-38s and 48 P-51s enroute to target; 48, P-38s over target; 48, P-38s on withdrawal); Code Names, and positions of our Wing counterparts (461st and 484th) Groups; Recall Signal (Paper) and various color codes for Flares fired from the lead, or deputy lead, ship.)

Reconstructed Flimsy (pilot's position) offered on Page 7, Column 1.

So, what seems to be the final outcome (after take-off) was that Cortland Read, flying SPECIAL MISSION suffered engine damage and had to leave the formation prior to the target. In the reshuffling of positions, Roland Threadgill (Deputy Lead - #2 slot) took over #1 in the aircraft, PATSY JACK, while CON JOB, piloted by Hubert Anderson, came up and into position as shown in the picture.

Jack Thomas, AEG for Read's crew relates, "Our plane, the plane on the far left, is way back and out of formation - but at the same level as the lead plane which was taking the pictures. (Reference: AD-LIB #17, Page 22) The plane taking the pictures was probably deputy lead that day and had taken over just before the IP, as we had to abort as lead plane. The plane way back and out of formation is almost for sure ours." Jack continues, "When we aborted just before the IP we pulled up and out to head back but saw that there were many "Jerrys" not to far away looking for stragglers, so we immediately turned back to follow the formation thru the target area. With one engine out we lagged behind and finally made it back to base one hour later than the Group."

Further evidence form Bill Dwyer's portfolio, lists Robert N. Hoffman as photographer on PATSY JACK, A/C #445. Others photographers listed, and their aircraft assigned were: Plessner, #229; Trask, #219; Hotchkiss, #757; Lynch, #530.

Thus should end the questions as to "Who, Where, and When - but should enlighten us as to WHY. That

Crew Pictures Relevant to Ploesti Photo



Lt. Hubert Anderson's Crew

Standing: W.R. Glynn, N; H.E. Anderson, P; K.O. Daudermann, CP; L. Trussell, B.
Kneeling: H. Sapien, BG; D.R. Outman, NG; M.A. Cindrich, ROG; H. T. Michael, TG;
H.E. Noskoskie, UG; R.M. Allen, AEG.



J.W.L. Park's Crew

(The crew that brought CON JOB over)

Standing: (Gunners) R. Lokke; C. Johnson; (?) Racinowski; (?) Sanchez; C. Kelsall
Kneeling: J.W.L. Park, P; W.S. Cartwright, CP; J. Piasecki, N; R.E. Kravetz, B.

question seems to have been answered by the tacticians when they eventually took Ploesti off the "Important Target" listing and we were free to concentrate on such targets as Vienna, Linz, Osweicum and the Po Valley German troop concentrations.



ORIGINAL CREW OF PATSY JACK

Standing: J. Kavanaugh, P; P. Malone, CP; R. Cook, N; E. Reitz, B;
Kneeling (Gunners): E. Fare; D. Farless; C. Downes; J. Bennett;
D. Newkirk; G. Budzinski



BOB HOFFMAN

(ON LEFT) RESPONSIBLE FOR PLOESTI PICTURE

Cameraman on a/c PATSY JACK with Roland Threadgill's, 727th crew.

"FLIMSY"

Of major importance is the listing of Pilots and their original positions to be flown. I hereby list them by their positions at take-off, 31 May 1944:

1st ATTACK UNIT

1st Flight

Pilot	A/C#	Name (if named)
C. Read/C. Evans	41-28804	SPECIAL MISSION
R. Threadgill	42-64445	PATSY JACK
T. Prewitt	42-50298	DIRTY GIRTIE
R. Sprowls	44-40196	
D. Wadlund	41-20209	HOP SCOTCH
Pearson	41-29238	SUSAN DIANE

2nd Flight

H. Mahon	41-28254	LITTLE BUTCH 2
H. Sparks	41-29233	SOD BUSTER
Fischer	(No Info)876	
H. Thompson	41-29219	BOOMERANG
W. Paddock	42-28933	FERP FINESCO
F. McQuaid	42-52440	CALAMITY JANE

3rd Flight

L. Morse	42-51090	HEY MOE
B. Brown	42-78227	MY GAL
G. Donahue	42-52588	
W. Freeman	42-99754	
A. Johnson	42-78178	
McKelvy	42-29426	

SPARES

H. Anderson	42-78145	CON JOB
J. Cameron	42-07475	

2nd ATTACK UNIT

1st Flight

D. Miller/J. Anderson	42-78250	GOOSEY LUCY
H. Kelly/D. Kauerauf	42-78208	LUCKY BUCKY
R. Hagen	41-29541	PEACE TERMS
G. Sturman	41-29229	OZARK UPSTART
R. Blair	42-29580	SCREAMIN MEEMIE II
R. Moser	42-52078	BIG MOGUL

2nd Flight

C. Small	42-52429	BIG FAT MAMA
J. Bell	42-52087	READY TEDDY
R. Monsen	42-52082	SCREAMIN MEEMIE
C. McCutchen	41-29530	AMERICAN BEAUTY
C. Haun	41-29256	SAKIN SHACK
A. Pratt	42-52102	

3rd Flight

J. Kearney	42-94808	JESSE JAMES
J. O'Connor	42-78236	GASHOUSE JR
J. Coyle	(No Info)114	
V. Johnson	42-78188	MAIRZY DOATES
R. McCollester	42-78276	AMERICAN MAID
F. Fulton	42-07757	WINDY CITY

SPARES

S. Hornbeak	42-52460	RED RYDER
E. Steinburg	42-52449	

(Aircraft that bore different names while in the 451st, were: PEACE TERMS, a.k.a. ICE COLD KATIE II: -- OZARK UPSTART, a.k.a. OLD TUB II: -- BIG FAT MAMA, a.k.a. SMALL FRY: -- SCREAMIN MEEMIE, a.k.a. "A" TRAIN: -- MAIRZY DOATES, a.k.a. SATIN'S SISTER)

FORT WORTH(B-24) REUNION - BIG TIME EVENT

Actually, the gathering at Ft. Worth went quite well. May 17, 1989 saw about one hundred 451st members making the trek to Texas, or, if they resided there already, make the pilgrimage to join their comrades in celebration of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the B-24.

The 451st host Inn was the Stockyards Hotel located, *where else*, but in the recently restored stockyards area. It was a quaint facility, festooned with turn of the century plumbing (but in proper working order) with small statuary, antique ceiling fans and cowhides adorning the lobby and dining room (affectionately named "Booger Red's").



Allan Harju (724th) and Earl Numrich(725th)

Part of the crowd that checked-out flyable B-24

The whole "50th Anniversary Celebration," headed up by retired Colonel Bob Vickers, was a massive operation. It was estimated that from 8,000 to 10,000 people made their presence known. This made planning and logistics a real nightmare for all concerned.

Our portion, hotel and transportation, came off reasonably well. Although the Stockyards Hotel was not really geared towards our type of Group foray, and this in-house ineptness caused some discord with our people when rooms promised were not there. They were frequently and seriously chastised by the Central Committee, but to late to help us in our hour of need. The bus transportation, to and from the activities, was excellent.

Many highlights were featured within the BIG PROGRAM, as planned by the Anniversary Committee. An auditorium filled with B-24 memorabilia and artifacts could occupy your whole day. Entertainment, presentations, and words of praise to those that flew, worked on, or built the B-24 - was the theme of the event.

Memorial Services on Sunday, 21 May, brought out

a bevy of organizational leaders in a massive presentation of Group Flags. At the culmination of this serious presentation Colonel John O'Connor blew Taps, and a few seconds later the two only flyable B-24s flew formation over our site. It was most impressive.



Top: B-24 & LB-30 fly over in formation
Middle: CommerativeFlowers cover Memorial Site
Bottom: Col. J.A. O'Connor playing "TAPS"

On this same evening the whole event came to glorious conclusion with a commemoration banquet held in Ft. Worth Convention Center. Thousands of people were hosted, dined, entertained and treated to all forms of entertainment. There was even dancing to the music of Tex Beneke.



451st'ers Gather in Lobby of Stockyards Inn

Back at the Stockyards Hotel we (as a unit) managed to get in our own "Bash." On the evening of May 20th, with a "Booger Red's" dining room capacity of barely 75 people, we managed to seat 78. All enjoyed a tastefully prepared Texas Steak, and later endured the oratorical tirade of the organizations president, Bob K. Upon completion of anything substantive, we adjourned to the lobby for photos. The rest of the evening was left to reviewing our 451st legacy, and fortifying some of our old, but glorious, war memories.

As a Post Reunion follow-up the Central Committee, B-24 Fiftieth Anniversary, word has been received by this office regarding a "B-24 Memorial Dedication" to be held at the United States Air Force Museum, Wright-Patterson AFB in Dayton Ohio. This brief formal ceremony will take place on 7 December 1989 at the Memorial Park site grounds of the Museum at 11:00 AM sharp. All those that wish to attend will encounter a short opening program at 10:30 AM within the Museum building theater.

Another brief announcement concerning the B-24 tells of a new - only-one-known-of-its-kind, museum for the B-24. It was dedicated on 15 July 1989 in Pueblo, Colorado at its permanent "home" site and that of Pueblo's Historical Aircraft Museum at the modern Pueblo Memorial Air Terminal - the former WW-II Army Air Base where many B-24 unit combat crews were trained.

(editor's comment . . . Seems that this 50th Anniversary of the B-24 has generated some good vibrations among those that hold this aircraft in high esteem. Let's hope this energy and dedication towards the legacy of our "wartime partner" will maintain, grow, and intensify for the benefit of our descendants.)

Col./Mrs. John (Kay) Hoppock Takes The "Big Apple" With Artistic Showing

This past April 6th thru 25th of 1989 one of our resident watercolor experts had a very successful showing of her artistic creativity in New York City.

Kay Hoppock, (*Honorary Colonel) wife of Lt. Colonel Jack Hoppock (hometown of Wilmette, Illinois) trekked to the "Big Apple" for a one man (person) showing of her noted works.

The show was held at the prestigious "Gallery Henoch;" on Wooster Street between Broadway and Green. It was reported that Kay's art was accepted with much enthusiasm and fanfare, as evidenced by the profusion of flowers that greeted our talented lady artist.

Although this office received an engraved invitation to attend, and I would have looked forward to being there, too many plans were in the works regarding the Fort Worth Bash and our Omaha Reunion that I had to pass this one up.

Kay would be remembered as the "gal" that presented our Group with an original 1944 painting of a B-24 that was the center of, both, Jack and Kay's lives at that point in time. The painting now graces this office, and as promised at the Dayton Reunion (1984), will be turned over to the Air Force Museum when our Group no longer exists.



Kay Hoppock: 1984 Presentation (Dayton, OH)

* *Kay Hoppock* (as related in the Issue 13) received an honorary Colonel rank from the Air Force for the purpose of free military air transportation when traveling between Chicago and Washington, DC. Kay has been accepted into the circle of prestigious artists that do art work for the U.S. Government, and in that respect visits Washington frequently. Jack, only (repeat only) a retired Lt. Colonel, does not get the priority status that Kay has when it comes to preferential aircraft boarding. Thus, on occasion, Jack stewes and sweats at the boarding gate while his lovely Kay waves her delicately perfumed hanky in his general direction from the loading ramp.

KARL EICHHORN'S 726th JOURNAL

(We Continue with the Second Installment of Karl's Memoirs)

ASSIGNMENT: 451st BOMB GROUP (H)

The following morning I learned that I was assigned to the 726th Squadron and since I had no duty that day I spent my time organizing my gear and looking around the field. Wendover was a desolate place - located in the desert close to the Utah/Nevada state line. There were several large hangers on the field, some support buildings and the usual PX, Service Club, and base theater. There were barracks for the officers but all enlisted men lived in pyramidal tents. I had my first close look at a B-24 on the line that day. I was mildly disappointed to be assigned to a Heavy Bombardment Group, as I had always wanted to be in a Fighter

Group. And if it had to be bombers, I would have preferred B-17s at that point in time. B-24s were not especially glamorous in appearance and looked a bit awkward on the ground - they just didn't have the aura of a "Flying Fortress." But, like pelicans, though looking clumsy on the ground, B-24s were a thing of beauty in the air and I very quickly came to love them.

Our first duty was to construct frames and erect tents for our armament shop and equipment storage and to build work benches and storage racks. I quickly became a fair carpenter, if not a cabinet maker. We also constructed firing ranges for pistol and submachine gun use. It was very hot and dry at Wendover with wind-blown sand which seeped into everything.

Strangely, though, we had a real gully-washer rain on 6 August which flooded all the tents and soaked most of our gear that had been left on the ground.

We were on a two-shift work schedule and I was assigned to "B" shift, from 1600 to 2400. Our planes were D and E models, with manually operated flexible nose guns (no turret), designated for training. Usually they were parked in a row on the ramp where we worked on them in the open. When the weather was very bad, or when major work, such as engine changes or structural repair, was necessary, a plane would be moved into one of the huge hangers, where two aircraft could be serviced at one time. I was intrigued by a strange design feature of

these hangars. In addition to the two great sliding doors which were opened to admit aircraft, there were two other smaller sliding doors in the top center of the hangar which extended from the top of the regular doors almost to the roof line. This would make a larger opening like an inverted T, the purpose of which puzzled me. I thought the extra doors might be to clear the vertical tail fin of a very large plane, but there was no plane that large - or so I thought at the time. About a year later I realized that my guess had been correct, after all. Wendover Field had been planned especially as a training base for B-29 Groups, and those extra hangar doors were to clear the tail fins of B-29s. It was at Wendover Field that

the 509th Composite Group, which dropped the two nuclear bombs on Japan, had completed its secret training prior to its fateful assignment at Tinian. Apparently the 451st Bomb Group had been sent there to make use of the facility before the B-29s arrived.

While at Wendover I spent a week in Driver's School, learning to drive heavy vehicles and afterwards was licensed to drive anything from a Jeep to heavy 6 X 6 Cargo Trucks. Since I had driven a lot at home, it came rather easily to me, except for learning to double clutch the non-synchronized transmissions of the heavy vehicles. In one exercise we mired a heavy truck to its axles in a salt marsh and then extricated it with powered winches.

Most of our armament work consisted of cleaning and adjusting machine guns for aerial gunnery practice and load-

ing "Blue Screammers" for bombing practice. Blue Screammers were practice bombs made of light weight sheet metal and filled with sand to weigh about 100 pounds. A small black powder charge was placed in the nose to make it easier to observe and score hits on the desert target range. The air crews flew almost every day on some sort of practice mission and we were kept busy keeping all the guns and bombing gear in order.

In addition to our regular work periods, we also had drills, took calisthenics, did detail work and received overseas shots for typhus and cholera.



Karl Eichhorn (Circa 1944)

On 10 August our Armament Officer, Lt. Luhrs, called us together to tell us he had orders to start sending everyone on short furloughs, prior to our expected overseas duty. My name was on the first list of eight to go and I left for home the next day, via bus to Salt Lake City. There, on the morning of the 12th, I left for the east via the train. At first I was on a very nice air conditioned car, "The Challenger," but was later transferred to an old dirty day coach. By the time I arrived in Chicago, the morning of the 14th, I was so tired of the train that I went to the airport and caught a United Airlines DC-3 for Cleveland. I called home to let Mother and Dad know where I was and they met me at Bedford where I stopped over with my Aunt and Uncle.

The short furlough passed swiftly. I visited relatives and friends; went on picnics and did some fishing in Piedmont Lake. But all too soon it was time to return to duty. On 21 August I caught the train at Flushing for Cleveland, where I spent the night at my Aunt's house. My plane left at 0245 the next morning and I had to catch the limousine to the airport about midnight. My flight route was via Chicago, Des Moines, Omaha and Cheyenne to Salt Lake City where I caught a bus for Wendover, arriving at 2030 on the 22nd. My Squadron had in the meantime moved to a new area and I had a long way to walk after drawing my gear from Supply.

I found that we were now working three shifts a day and as luck would have it, I ended up on "C" shift; 2000 to 0800. Shortly after I returned I developed a very painful spot on my chin and went on sick call on the 27th to have the Doc check it. He took one look and immediately assigned me to the hospital where they put me on sulfathiazol tablets. They also gave a series of three X-ray treatments for reasons I never understood. It was apparently a serious local infection, possibly caused by an ingrown hair or a shaving nick - the Doctor really didn't know for sure. For a few days it was so painful that I could hardly eat. After it started to drain it began to feel better, but it was slow to heal. I was to be in the hospital for two weeks. While I was there I had to attend a "school," along with every other ambulatory patient. It was incredibly silly - one day they actually had a lecture on how to add numbers. Another Army fiasco which defied all logic and reason!

In early September I began to hear rumors that our Group was about to move to a new base. On the 6th and 7th I received day passes from the hospital and returned to my Squadron to get my gear organized and partially packed. I was so glad to get out of the hospital that I actually volunteered to work on the line a few hours on the 7th. On 10 September I was released from the hospital and that same night we loaded some of our gear and equipment on trucks. The following day we loaded up the rest of our gear, changed to dress uniforms and entrained on Pullmans at 1945. Enroute each man was required to sign his Last Will and Testament - apparently the Army

meant business! We arrived at Fairmont, Nebraska at 1330 on 13 September, where a truck convoy took us to Fairmont Air Field, about six miles away. Upon arrival we drew Bedding, a comforter and footlocker, were assigned to a barracks, and then some of us returned to the R.R. Station to load the remaining bags and equipment on trucks.

This base was brand new - we were the first Group to arrive for training and all the facilities were in fine shape. Our barracks were the usual wood framed, tar paper covered single story structures, but so clean and new that we did not have to go through the usual clean-up and scrub-down detail. On the line our Armament Section shared a hangar with the 727th Squadron and there was lots of room. We started off with two nine hour shifts and again I got the "B" shift; from 1600 to 0100. The work remained about the same for a while; loading guns, loading Blue Screammers, doing required hardware modifications, etc. I spent a lot of time reading technical orders (T.O.s) on the power turrets so I would be able to do much of my own turret repair and maintenance work. It was a lot more challenging than just working on machine guns. On the night shift we also had the job of painting the tips of target ammunition different colors for each aircraft. This was so that after a gunnery mission, in which the gunners fired at a target sleeve towed by another plane, the gunners' scores could be tallied up more easily.

Increasingly, we also had the job of cleaning small arms, such as the Caliber 45 automatic pistols and Browning automatic shotguns, which were used on training ranges by the aircrews. And there were the inevitable lectures and training films on all sorts of subjects, primarily related to overseas duty. Our Squadron Commander, Captain Charles Haltom, spoke to us on several occasions.

Once every ten days or so we would receive a 24 hour pass. I usually spent my passes on the base getting caught up with personal things, going to Service Club and Base Theater, or just reading in the barracks. On two occasions, however, I did take a pass off base. On 20 September I hitched a ride into Lincoln where I went to a very nice U.S.O., and from there phoned home after waiting about three hours to get a line. I caught a bus back to base, but for some reason it was very late and I had to wait five hours at the station. It finally left at 0300 and then dropped me off on the highway at a point from which I had to walk six miles to the base. I was afraid I might end up A.W.O.L., but I finally got to my barracks at 0700 and hit the sack. Two hours later I was awakened to fall out for a gas drill and a demonstration of the incendiary grenades and smoke pots. Some Pass!

Again on the 28th I took a pass, this time to Omaha via bus. I arrived in the late afternoon and was unable to get a line for a call home. Because of the shift I was on, my pass was actually for about thirty hours, so I got a (Continued Page 12, Column 1) *Eichhorn*

Eichhorn: (Con't from Page 11)

room in a pleasant downtown hotel for all of \$2.00! It was a nice change to have a comfortable room all to myself without the constant noise and congestion of an army barracks. I went to a couple movies and returned to the base the next morning by bus.

Winter was rapidly coming to Nebraska. By the later part of September the nights were particularly cold and often windy. The wool blankets and heavy comforter felt good in our bunks. On the morning of 1 October I must have been covered over my ears because I never heard the whistle at reveille (the Air Force used whistles, not bugles) and I completely missed the early morning formation. I was, for the first time in the Army, properly chewed out by the First Sergeant. That evening the entire Squadron was confined to barracks for more overseas processing. We signed our Power of Attorney, were issued some new clothing and were supposed to have all our gear stenciled with our last name initial, plus last four digits of our serial number for identification purposes. My stencil was E-2859, but I was unable to get it all done because I had to pull K.P. that night for being late that morning. I served on K.P. from 2000 to 0400. There was no heat in the mess hall that night and it was VERY cold. Afterwards I dove into my warm bunk at 0430 but was roused out at 0800 to go to work on the line. I worked all that day on just three hours of sleep and got to bet at 2300 that night. Sure enough, the very next morning I once again overslept reveille and missed the first formation. That day I was in charge of the .45 pistol range in the morning and the skeet range in the afternoon, processing flight crews, who had to qualify on both ranges before going overseas. That evening, as punishment for oversleeping, I had to clean up the offices of the C.O. and the Squadron Adjutant. That turned out to be a rather easy detail which I finished in about an hour. It was the last time I overslept reveille!

The armorers, because of their training, were responsible for operation of the pistol, skeet, submachine gun and carbine firing ranges on a rotation basis. For the next several days that was my assignment. It was not bad work and I had the opportunity to do a lot of firing myself. I had already qualified as Sharpshooter with pistol, rifle and Thompson submachine gun, and as Expert with the carbine. The skeet range, however, got the better of me. Although it appeared easy, I never became a good shot at skeet, much to my dismay.

We also had a special skeet range where a Martin upper turret had been mounted with two Browning automatic shotguns installed for gunnery practice. That one was really tough -very few gunners fired well with that outfit. In general, I enjoyed working at the firing ranges, except for one bad experience. By the time most of the air crews had qualified on the pistol range, I still had one first pilot who just couldn't make it. I had already flunked him at least five times and he was getting pretty

upset about it. Finally, when he came within eight points of qualifying, he tried to "pull rank" on me by directing me to sign his papers. I bluntly refused to do so and I don't think he ever qualified before going overseas.

By the first week of October our Squadron had eight planes, of which two were what we called "fly-aways." These were "H" model B-24s, which would be our first actual combat aircraft. They had the new Emerson nose turrets installed, which were so new that we had not heard of, or studied them, in armament school. Thus I spent a lot of time learning all I could about this new equipment. Our first "H" model was #102 (we designated individual planes by the last three digits of their serial, or tail, numbers) which would later be named "Cannon Fodder" and was destined to crash on takeoff in Italy the following summer.

We worked very hard at Fairmont Air Field, as the planes flew on training missions everyday, weather permitting. There was, of course, the periodic guard duty, detail, and K.P. which all enlisted men, under the rand of Sergeant, had to put up with. About the middle of October one plane from the Group (not our Squadron) exploded in mid-air for some unknown reason and all on board were killed. The weather continued to get worse - colder and with frequent rain. Our base, being new and without any grass cover, turned into a sea of mud, especially around the barracks and mess areas. We were constantly cleaning our boots, clothing and living quarters. It was particularly cold and miserable working on the line at night. We were issued wool caps and fleece-lined pants and jackets, which were very welcome.

Preparations for overseas duty continued. Each man was issued a steel helmet, firearm, dog-tag chain, cartridge belt and ammo clips. I was issued a Thompson submachine gun at first, but quickly exchanged it for a carbine, because I didn't want to lug all that weight! We were given clothing check lists and from the heavy winter equipment we were being issued, we thought it likely that we would be going to Britain. We had a number of physical fitness tests, including chinning, push-ups, and 300 yard dashes. At a "show-down inspection" in late October, all of our gear was checked for proper size and condition. Anything that was even slightly worn was turned in for salvage and replaced with new items. Dog tags, shot records and pay records were all carefully checked. We stood retreat in full equipment, with packs and steel helmets, and were lectured on personal security and censorship. Time was moving quickly.

The weather had become so bad that I no longer took a pass into town. In my spare time I went to the Base Theater, Service Club, or P.X. I wrote at least one letter everyday either home or to relatives. In return, Mother wrote to me everyday without fail. She also sent a package of either cupcakes or cookies once a week. I am sure I received more letters and packages than anyone else in my group. We had a Day Room where we could

relax and read, and sometimes I played nickel, dime, quarter poker with the guys. Some played for much higher stakes, but I never did, nor did I ever play craps, which was probably the most popular gambling game.

By the end of October we had received all of our "fly-away" planes; fifteen in all. Whenever a new plane arrived it meant a great deal of work for the mechanics and armorers. Every gun had to be removed, cleaned, lubricated, checked for proper headspace and timing, and then reinstalled. Turrets had to be thoroughly checked out, as well as the gunsights and bomb racks. In addition, some of the planes left the factory in very poor shape. We often found faulty circuits, missing parts, and systems which simply did not operate properly. Quality control was particularly poor on those planes which were constructed at the Ford Willow Run Plant, whereas planes manufactured by Consolidated and Douglas generally arrived in good shape. Auto manufacturers have never really understood quality control. Then there were the inevitable modifications which had not been incorporated at the factory and had to be done in the field. Every ship had to be carefully inspected to make sure all the latest Tech Orders had been complied with.

The first week of December we had a real blizzard with heavy windblown snow and very cold temperatures. We drew sweaters, gloves, fleece-lined flying helmets and boots, coveralls, and thick wool mackinaws from Air Force Technical Supply. The later organization was set up to issue only special clothing for Air Force applications, whereas our regular uniforms and other equipment were issued by the normal Army Supply organization. From the latter we now received our overseas duffel bag to replace one of our barracks bags (we kept our second barracks bag for extra clothing which would be shipped as ship's cargo), three sets of new khakis, chapsticks and weapon cleaning kits and oil.

I had asked my aunt Essie to try to locate a Kodak folding roll-film camera for me in Cleveland for use overseas, as I did not want to take my Argus, and thought I could obtain ordinary roll-film easier. I knew it would be hard to find one, as cameras were no longer being made during the war. Happily, on the fifth of November I received from her a Kodak Vigilant 620 with a roll of film and a Sunbeam electric shaver. I was really delighted with both. I took one roll of pictures during my last week at Fairmont Air Field.

We had our final pre-overseas inspection on 16 November and on the 19th started packing our shop equipment, spare parts and guns for shipment. We also had to check all equipment aboard the planes to be certain that they were ready to go. All guns on the planes were given a heavy protective coating of oil. Also, on the 19th, all passes were cancelled and we were restricted to Base.

On 20 November we went to the range and each fired 50 rounds from our new carbines to check them and

sight them in. We received our last fly-away plane, a brand new "J" model and on the 21st, but since all our equipment had been packed there was little we could do to check it out other than operate the turrets and oil the guns.

At this time, 21 November, we went to a standard one-shift day and most of our duty time was for lectures, drill, and full dress - full equipment formations. On the 24th we went on a seven mile hike with steel helmets and full field packs, during which Groups of six men practiced erecting pyramidal tents in a field.

The 25th of November was Thanksgiving and we received orders to be ready to move on short notice. I had waited till the last minute, almost, to send my radio home and now it was nearly too late. Our mail room was closed, so all I could do was to wrap it up and leave it with a lady who was a hostess in the E.M. Service Club. She promised to mail it for me the next day. We had a really fine Thanksgiving Dinner with turkey and all the usual side dishes. It was to be our last truly great meal for a long while. That evening we packed our musette bags and loaded a bunch of equipment on cargo trucks.

We finished packing the next morning, made up our horseshoe shaped blanket rolls (shades of 1918), scrubbed our barracks and policed our area. After a final roll call at 1500 we boarded trucks for the trip into Fairmont. There the local ladies, bless their hearts, came to the station and gave us coffee and home-made cakes and cookies. I will never forget that. This was not an organized or formal group, like the Red Cross or Service Club, but just a bunch of local housewives trying to their bit. We boarded our train -daycoaches - and left Fairmont, waving till those kind women passed from our view. During that night I had to stand guard over prisoners from our Guardhouse who would be going overseas under arrest for some infraction.

We welcomed our change to Pullman cars in Chicago and I recorded that we had good meals, in spite of having a "cattle car" kitchen. Perhaps it was because by now I had become used to Army cooking! We passed through Columbus, Ohio the night of 27/28 November and, assuming we were on the B & O track, we may well have passed right through Barnesville somewhat later. Late that evening we arrived at Camp Patrick Henry in Virginia and were assigned to barracks.

On the 29th November we were issued new, light-weight gas masks, gas protective ointment, protective covers (simply a large plastic bag to put over oneself in the event of a mist-type gas attack), dust masks, eye shields and sulfa tablets for wounds. From the latter items I immediately decided we would be going to North Africa instead of England. It seemed logical - Naples had fallen to the Fifth Army on 1 October and that would make available the airfields of the Foggia area. We had more clothing checks, a censorship lecture, and a final oppor-

(Continued Page 14, Column 1) *Eichhorn*

Eichhorn (Con't from previous page)

tunity to salvage items. We ate in a very large mess hall, using our mess kits, instead of the usual Army serving trays. Incredibly, early the next morning, at 0200, we were awakened to sign the payroll!

On 30 November we were issued additional clothing, impregnated long underwear for protection against gas (by now I was sure the Army had some sort of phobia about poison gas), mosquito head-netting, gloves and bar for sleeping, and four more ammunition clips. The mosquito equipment convinced me that we were headed for Italy, since malaria had always been a problem there. In moving around the camp we noted lots of Italian and German prisoners in the stockade, probably from North Africa. I wondered if they knew how lucky they were! That night I managed to get a call home to Mother and Dad to let them know we were about to leave. We packed our barracks "B" bags, which would go as ship's cargo, as well as our duffel bags, which we could carry, and made up our blanket rolls that night, expecting to leave the next morning. Instead, they roused us out at 0400 and we spent the next day, 1 December on K.P.! Good old Army!

On 2 December I gave my camera and two rolls of film to Lt. Luhrs to put in his "B" bag, as the enlisted men had been told they would not be able to take any cameras with them. Officers, naturally, were exempt from such rules. That day I was issued a second pair of G.I. glasses and a special pair of glasses to be used inside the gas mask. After lunch we were ordered to dress in boots, socks and overcoats, ONLY, (i.e. we had nothing at all on under our coats) and we were then marched to a large hall for our final physical examination. On the way we had a riotous experience. Our heavy G.I. overcoats came well below the knees but they had a slit up the back, almost to the waist, which was normally buttoned closed. I guess this was intended to be opened for freedom of motion when needed. Our First Sergeant, whose name was Wright, was a big, tall and rather heavy man and he was leading our march to the examination building. As we went along we passed a number of WAACs and a couple Army Nurses. When we passed them they started laughing and whistling. We couldn't figure out why at first, but noticed that they kept looking back over their shoulders at the head of our column. Then we saw! First Sergeant Wright's overcoat opening was completely unbuttoned and his coat was flapping open in the high wind. And, of course, his rear end was being exposed for all the world, including WAACs and nurses, to see and enjoy. He never knew and I doubt anyone ever told him! That night we had a final lecture on shipping details and an abandon ship drill.

On 3 December we were up at 0400 again, but this time not for K.P. After cleaning the barracks, we loaded our bags on trucks and then marched to the train station. There we received a lunch bag with two cookies, two sandwiches and an orange, we then boarded the train.

After a trip of about 40 minutes we arrived at Newport News and detrain onto a long pier. There Red Cross ladies gave us hot coffee and an Army Band was present to play us off.

Each of us was carrying our fully loaded musette bag, our large duffel bag, weapon, steel helmet and blanket roll wrapped around the pack. We carried the duffel bags on one shoulder, which made for a high and rather unstable load. As we walked towards the gangplank one of the men in the front lost his balance on the way up the gangplank and almost fell into the water. He did drop his duffel bag into the water and was saved by the quick action of a seaman who grabbed him as he almost went through the rope. That made all of us pretty nervous!

We were now about to embark on our mission overseas.
(Continued Next Issue)

Medicare 6, 7, 8 or 9 Tours West Coast

I can't think of anything more rewarding than to find out that some of you guys got together in an impromptu manner. - and to feel that this office is responsible.

Last March (1989) I found out that John O'Connor (our resident trumpeter) was doing a "Gig" with the band members of the "Medicare 7, 8, or 9 - Depending On How Many Show" all the way down the West Coast, from Seattle to San Diego. (Many of you first Chicago Reunion attendees will remember this group as the ones that performed at that "kick-off" party.)

I sent letters to all our members that lived along the route alerting them of this chance to attend and enjoy some good old "Dixieland Music."



IN ATTENDANCE

Joseph Younger, 725th; John A. O'Connor, and Thomas Flower, 724th

A lot of our guys and gals took me up on this invitation and made an appearance. I understand there came a time in all performances that the band leader would scan the audience and ask, "Are there any of O'Connor's 451st Bomb Group here?" It seemed that at almost every stop there were some of our guys there. I got a lot of "good vibes" from those that attended. It's pretty hard to beat good "Dixieland Band," especially these guys.

ORGANIZATIONS OF VARYING INTERESTS

What can I say; we've been organized for more than 10 years and I've accumulate a pile of membership applications and promo's to various organizations that I would like to share with you. Some of the organizations are "top notch" and would encompass all of us in one form or other. Others, still top notch, are aimed at specific groups. I even get a few that are "off the wall," and I won't bother you with them, except for one exception. (Note **) These are not listed by preference, but rather by category and memberships size.

*AIR FORCE ASSOCIATION,

1501 Lee Highway, Arlington, VA 22209. Subscription cost \$21. (comment: A 451st combat gunner, Meryll Frost (726th), was one of the founding members when the association was formed.)

*15th AIR FORCE ASSOCIATION,

P.O. Box 6325, March Air Force Base, CA 92518. Membership \$15. (comment: a viable and stable organization dedicated the heritage of the 15th AAF/AF.)

*LIBERATOR CLUB,

P.O. Box 15-2424, San Diego, CA 92115. Membership \$10, Renewal \$5. (comment: Another good outlet for us B-24 types)

*BOMBARDIERS,

Star Rt. #1, Box 254, Eagle Harbor, MI 49951. Membership fee unknown (comment: Association vented towards the diminishing ranks of Bomb-Aimers. Annual reunions conducted.)

*AVIATION CADET ALUMNI ASSOCIATION,

Robert C. White, 54 Seton Trail, Ormond Beach, FL 32074. No dues. (comment: You must be a graduate pilot from one of the various U.S. Flying Schools to qualify. Purpose is to link together, and maintain contact with your cadet pals.)

*CLASS 44-E,

Jacob L. Grimm, 209 S. Market St, Ligonier, PA 15658. No dues mentioned. (comment: To a lesser degree, similar to the above Alumni Assoc., J.L. Grimm has located more than 200 classmates and wants to share newsletters and info with you.)

*FRIENDS OF THE U.S. AIR FORCE MUSEUM,

Air Force Museum Foundation, Inc., P.O. Box 1903, Wright-Patterson AFB, OH 45433. Membership \$15 (comment: Fine publication aimed at historical documentation, and what's now going on at the AF Museum.)

*MARCH FIELD MUSEUM FOUNDATION,

March Air Force Base, CA 92518. Membership \$15 (comment: Building is their KEY theme. Working to preserve the heritage of the 15th AAF/AF for the future.)

*LIBERAL AIR MUSEUM,

2000 W. 2nd St., P.O. Box 2585, Liberal, KS 67905. Membership (Senior Citizens) \$10. (comments: An active

organization dedicated towards the preservation of the wartime link with the B-24 Transitional Training School that was once located there.

*McCOOKAIR BASE HISTORICAL SOCIETY,

Box B-29, McCook, NE 69001. Membership \$10. (comment: Although our Group was not based at McCook, there may have been some of you that have a link with its past. It appears to be a viable and forward looking association.)

*COSTA MESA HISTORICAL SOCIETY,

P.O. Box 1764, Costa Mesa, CA 92628. Membership \$5. (comment: The title is a fooler: this is really the Santa Ana Army Air Base. A lot of cadets trained there, as well as a lot of transients, from our Group, passed through for other assignments.)

*LOWRY HERITAGE MUSEUM FOUNDATION,

P.O. Box 30035, Lowry AFB 80230-5000. Membership \$15. (comment: Here's the chance for all the guys that want to keep abreast of the happenings at Lowry since you served a stint in the various specialty training programs.)

*AIR FORCE ESCAPE AND EVASION SOCIETY,

P.O. Box 844, Beaufort, SC 29901. Membership \$10. (comment: An organization solely dedicated to those that managed escape from enemy forces. Factual evidence of your escape or evasion needed to become a member.)

*CATERPILLAR CLUB,

% Irving Industries Canada, Ltd., Mrs. Eva Wagner, Secretary, P.O. Box 280, Fort Erie, Ontario, Canada L2ATM9. Membership fee unknown. (comment: For those that "hit the silk (parachuted)" this organization is for you. First you must furnish the Secretary all particulars on your incident for her verification, then the doors to this prestigious fraternity will be open to you.)

*AIR FORCE GUNNERS ASSOCIATION,

P.O. Box 568102, Orlando, FL 32865. Membership \$12. (comment: I don't know how to figure this one. Very little communication for the \$12 investment. They do conduct biennial reunions.)

*EX-POWs, STALAGLUFT 4 & 6.

% Leonard Rose, 8103 E. 50th St., Indianapolis, IN 46226. Membership fee unknown. (comment: An organization of rare longevity under the leadership of Leonard Rose.)

*EX-POWs, STALAGLUFT 3,

% Bob Weinberg, 2229 Rock Creek Dr., Kerrville, TX 78028. Membership fee unknown. (comment: Other than for those involved, this is a specialty organization. I'm glad I wasn't involved!)

*ROMANIAN EX-POWs,

% Roy B. Meyer, 1077-B Blackshear Dr., Decatur, GA (Continued, Page16, Column1) Associations

Associations, (Con't from previous page)

30033. Membership \$5, Spouse \$3. (*comment: An organization - long standing, including quite a few of our 451st'ers.*)

***OHIO SOCIETY OF MILITARY HISTORY, INC.,**
316 Lincoln Way East, Massillon, OH 44646. Info wanted, only. (*comment: An organization interested in preserving the war stories of Ohio Veterans. They are building a collection of questionnaires, oral histories, accumulations of uniforms, unit histories, personal belongings (photo's, diaries, letters and other items). For those nearby, it would be worth a "look see."*) Contact: Timothy Rhodes, Executive Curator.

***DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE,**
Headquarters USAF-Europe, APO New York 09094-5001. Attn: Robert T. Cossaboom, Command Historian. Info wanted, only. (*comment: A number of Hungarians have asked help in locating Americans that were shot down over Hungary during WW-II. This seems to be a new-found field of endeavor in the research area. If your credentials are in order, offer them a hand.*)

***ENOLA GAY RESTORATION,**
Attn: Frank B. Stewart, 11004 E. 40 Highway, Independence, MO 64055. Donations wanted. (*comment: An effort, sanctioned by the National Air and Space Museum, for restoring this renowned aircraft to serve as a reminder to all, of our entry into the Atomic Era.*)

*** *DAVID G. BANNISTER,**
31, Flaxen Walk, Warboys, Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire, PE17 2TR, England. Research Project. (*comment: I could use a little "Elephant Walk" music for this one. David states: "I am carrying out research for the purpose of writing a book on paranormal events and experiences, ghost stories if you prefer, that are connected with aviation in general and with World War II in particular. If anyone has heard of, knows of, or has actually experienced anything relevant to my work, I would be most grateful to hear from them at the address above. If any contributor wishes to remain anonymous I shall, of course, respect their confidence and would ask that these who contact me let me know their wishes in that respect."*)

EXCUSES, EXCUSES

It had become apparent, as I continued to work on this issue of AD-LIB, that the treasury contains barely enough funds to cover the cost of publishing and mailing what stories I have amassed. And, too, time is running short in getting this operation done. (*I am not fully retired and, on occasion, need to spend time with my valued customers*). Therefore I am having to forgo the next four pages of our Group History, and shorten the newsletter by some eight pages. Hopefully your donations will help. (Size of the AD-LIB is predicated on how much information I have to share: and I still have a wealth of stories currently at hand in my office.)

YOUR 451ST BOOK SOON READY
(Planning on Christmas Sales)

Word now in from the compilers of our Group book, Sedge and Mike Hill, say that the manuscript is currently in the hands of the publishers, Turner Publishing. Sedge is pushing for a publishing date of 1 November 1989, but finding some updating and refinements may delay it's coming off the presses till 1 December. We all want to see it made available by Christmas for "that special gift."

Many of you have contributed stories and photos to this tome and are eagerly awaiting the results. Others who bypassed this chance for recognition may also wish to see what stories your buddies have made to its final outcome. Then there are those that came in too late to take part. This will be their chance to dip into the nostalgic, illustrious Group past, through the eyes and stories of their peers.

Those that wish the Limited Deluxe Hardbound Edition (first off the press and recorded by "issuance number") can remit \$39.95 to:

Sedge Hill

*2414 Jefferson Road/Beaver Lake
Plattsmouth, NE 68048*

This is an inducement to get "prior to publication" commitments. After the book is "off the press" the cost will be \$49.95 and may not necessarily be catalogued by serial number. Any remaining books, of this limited printing, will be sold at the 1990 Omaha Reunion.

As stated in all prior references; profits, above cost of publication, will be redirected to the 451st Bomb Group (H), Ltd. in order to maintain its objective:

"KEEPING OUR GROUP TOGETHER"





Bombardiers Work Area
Artist: Jerry Little

THE LAST OF THE BOMBARDIERS (451st Bomb Group's Version)

The night was cold and dreary
The rain was a solid sheet.
Around Jake's stove, the boys had thronged
Each shoving and pushing for heat.
We were reminiscing and cracking jokes
And having a helluva' binge
When there came a tap on the tavern door
And it opened with a creaking hinge.
With the force of Satan's blowers
The gale beat in the room
Steering before its leaping fury
A figure of dismal gloom ...
A hunched and shriveled apparition
Straining to close the oaken door.
Then, turning about with a maniacal glare,
He crossed the tavern floor.
The boys were still and silent
For the silence no sound would mar
And even the tempest fury sank
As he clutched the tavern bar.
His clothes hung down in ribbons,
Perhaps were forest green.
Beneath his cap, at a rakish tip,
His matted hair was seen.
Upon his mud encrusted feet
A pair of strapless shoes were spied.
While here and there on his sodden clothes
Gleamed brass of tarnished pride.
But as he turned from the tavern bar
Above his heart was seen
A pair of polished silver wings
Reflecting the light serene.
He cast his wild and glooming stare
Around the crowded room.
Then raising the green stuff in his glass
He croaked these words of doom:

"Raise your glasses high boys,
Drink to your visitors tears
For you see before you
The last of the Bombardiers!"

We drank to him; this solid toast
To the fears of a ghastly show.
Then, slowly sinking into our seats
He continued his tale of woe.

"Once I was proud and eager
Laughing and loving all day,
Eager to join the Air Corps;
Longing to shout 'Bombs Away'.
Then came preflight and torture
My day of training began.
Up each morning at daylight,
In bed each night at ten.

The came long days a Childress
But at last I was up in the sky!
Oh Joy! Oh Rapture! Oh how thrilling,
But why do I have to fly?"

"My brain was loaded with figures.
My stomach was loaded with gas.
My hands were covered with bombsight.
Tortures for brave men to pass.
Then came the day when we dropped 'em;
My God! Could it be true?

A shack in the middle of the desert
Demolished by bombs from the blue?"

"Then came the day that I finished.
How proud of my wings and my bar.
Little I knew what awaited me
Across the sea so far.

Soon the phases were conquered,
The wine and the women behind
As across the oceans we sped
To the land of 'Watch On the Rhine!'

"Eagerly I started my missions.
Thirty-five they told me was all.
Over Ploesti, Regensberg, and Vienna
My God, how the flak did fall!
Then came the fighters of Goering
Blazing a trail of flame,
Trying to break our formation,
Paying the price for their fame."

"At last my missions were over.
At last the war did end
And I went back to my country
Back to the hearts of men.
At last my glory ended;
Like a star in morn it died.
I dropped like a bum in the gutter,
Down from my tragic pride."

"By the world I was soon forgotten,
No one mourned for me.
As over the world I've wandered
Across the boundless sea.
So drink to me again, boys,
Through the midst of crocodile tears
For when I'm gone no will mourn
For the last of the Bombardiers!"

Now with these words he cast his glass
To the dust of the tavern floor.
And mustered a gleam of self respect,
He stalked to the tavern door.
As he opened it, he glanced around
With half a disdainful sneer
And twisted lips proclaimed these words:
"I'm The Last of The Bombardiers."

(Actual author unknown)

OUR THINNING RANKS

FRIENDS

To be remembered for their friendship, compassion, dedication, ability and wit.

Orrin G. Feiertag (727th): Died, 29 April 1989

Charles E. Gwinnup (724th): Died, 30 April 1989

Charles E. Jackson (724th): Died, 17 February 1989

Perry R. Jones (727th): Died, 16 November 1988

Dan W. Kauerauf (726th): Died, 13 December 1988

William G. Kirkendall (726th): Died, 24 December 1987

Kenneth D. Nowling (725th): Died in 1988

James N. Plarenos (724th): Died, 29 October 1988

Marshall O. Robbins (724th): Died, 4 January 1989

Howard C. Sparks (727th): Died, 15 August 1989

Abraham Stolzenberg (727th): Date of Death Unknown

Albert F. Striano (724th): Died, 25 January 1889

Darrell D. Thibault (725th): Died, 11 March 1988

Walter L. Thomas (724th): Died, 7 August 1983

Clifford F. Tiedel (726th): Died, 24 May 1989

Ralph W. Zerbe (724th): Died, 15 November 1988

Special recognition to the memory of Orrin G. Feiertag and Darrell D. Thibault sent in by Sedge Hill .



WORDS FROM THE FLIGHT DECK

Bob Karstensen

OF A POLITICAL NATURE

THE CATASTROPHIC HEALTH CARE BILL

It has been the policy of this office not to become involved in controversial political issues apart from our 451st heritage. But several comments have come into this headquarters that warrant special consideration. Two are directly concerned with us and will certainly involve us as we near (by age and health) their possible application.

George Tudor (725th Pilot), pointed out this first one. It has to do with the erosion of the Medicare benefits. This, George points out, comes in the form of the added costs that will be written into the CATASTROPHIC HEALTH CARE ACT OF 1988. This law, in its present form would put a large financial burden on those of us that would soon be eligible to fall under its protection. George wants each of us to study the ramifications of this Bill, and if you feel that you are being encroached upon, get word to your Senator or Congressperson and make known your desire to have it repealed, or amended. At the time of this writing the present bill is in such a fluid state that it would behoove you to read up on it and find out its status as you make your evaluation.

George Tudor, in his initial correspondence, wrote: "I'm not sure if you would consider sending a letter to our membership. I would guess that every single member

we have will be in on paying higher taxes because of this bill."

Tudor continues, "I have hesitated suggesting this to you since it obviously comes under the heading of "a cause." If you underwrite one cause, others will be after you to promote their cause. However I finally decided to put the question to you. This is not a cause involving a particular belief or debate, such as abortion. This, to me, is simply a matter of saving our members what could be sizeable amounts of money."

To George Tudor I can only say that I am totally sympathetic with his concern and will give our membership the chance to become equally concerned. As I said before, things are in such a flux with this legislation that perhaps more input from those of us that are at that critical age is needed. Lend your voice: you 451st'ers.

VETERANS' MEDICAL BENEFITS BEING ERODED

From the Disabled American Veterans Magazine (February 1989, Page 26) came this letter from a disgruntled 451st member.

"As a totally disabled WW-II combat veteran, I am concerned over the way Congress continues to eat away at veterans' entitlements, programs and services. The more I read about it the more upset I become and, like most other veterans, just accept their actions. It is no longer a question of maintaining benefits. We must stop the movement to reduce and in some cases eliminate veterans' benefits. I am not convinced that this process will not continue now that the VA has achieved cabinet level status. The Rochester area, in the past, enjoyed the services of a first class comprehensive clinic. The clinic is now a shadow of what it once was. I have been advised that there are no plans to close the clinic at this time, but it certainly seems headed in that direction. It is sad to see

how the federal budget deficit is used as an excuse to reduce or eliminate aid to veterans which was mandated by law and overwhelming approval by the American public. The majority of veterans never seek aid from the VA and are not informed of the problems now being confronted. The public is unaware of the erosion because, in general, individual vets like myself are not activists and expect veteran organizations to handle our concerns. Many of us are totally dependant on the VA for our needs and can't help but feel anxious as we watch the direction of events concerning our benefits."

(signed) Peter A. Massare (727th Pilot)
Webster, NY (Now: Honeoye Falls, NY)

POLITICS: 451st STYLE

To add a note of concern about the continued success with this (*your*) organization, I'd like to challenge you guys to keep me updated on some information that seems to evade me. In most cases I've tried hard to rectify these problems from this office, but in the finality of my effort I'm going to have to rely on you.

LOST MEMBERS: Over a period of time we've lost some members through the event of them moving and not leaving/ giving a forwarding address. In some cases the Post Office (depending on their policy) have made serious efforts in getting our mailings (bulk), and some of our 1st Class, through. The Post Office seems to have a "forwarding time limitation" (1 year) in their manual and those P.O.'s that want to adhere to it make it difficult for us to keep abreast of our comrade's move.

I've got a list of 10 members that seem to have vanished from their last addresses. Perhaps you have had been writing, or exchanging Christmas cards with these members, or in some way or other know where they are now. It may be that they have passed away, and there too, you can help with whatever info you have.

The names, and last city or residency I have are: Nick Arleo, Annadale, VA; Neal E. Byrd, Auburn, CA; Leon L. Dupont, Norwich, CT; Henry B. Ford, Coleman, TX; Francis M. Hunt, Clermont, FL; Everett L. Kipp, Daly City, CA; David C. Matthews, Alexandria, VA; William R. McCarthy, Pasadena, CA; Lee Packard, Sun City, AZ; and William C. Slater, Bellevue, WA.

PERSONAL INFO: With our new and revised "Membership Questionnaire" (circa 1985) I have been able to gather a lot of information about you and your past affiliation with the Group. Questions that we didn't stress while the organization was in its infancy. What I am lacking, and this pertains to our earlier members, is your phone number and spouses name. Whenever you do make contact I check the computer and add whatever information is lacking. Some of this info comes off your letterheads, while in some cases your donation check helps fill in the voids.

As you know we are stressing your anonymity from being placed on undesired mailing lists when we offer

copies of Squadron Rosters to those bona fide members that request them. In lieu of street addresses we feel that if a buddy really want to contact you (and this makes his effort more meaningful) we list your phone number. If it is your desire not to have it listed, please note the fact and I will make a notation in that column. So, my friend, if you will consider offering this info in your next communication, it would be appreciated.



Norbert J. Mach, 726th; ... While vacationing in Florida I was stopped by a former member of the 451st. He saw the bumper sticker on my car and asked me to pull over. We chatted for a short time and I told him about the reunions and the heart warming pleasures to meet old friends from years gone by. He seemed interested so I told him I'd send his name to the 451st when I got home. (*editor ... My hat goes off to you, Norbert, in your devotion to find our former members. His application for membership went out on the same day I received it from you. I hope "Blackie" Bradford (724th) will come in out of the cold and do some "trolling" on his own when he becomes a bona fide member. Florida is fertile territory and there must be a lot of our people retired down there. But to hasten a new guy's response, all you have to tell him is to address his query to 451st Bomb Group, Marengo, IL. Only "Marengo IL" has to be ingrained to memory; the post office can come up with 60152. I've got friends in the local Post Office ... that's clout.*)

Harvey A. Brown, 725th; ... "All men who have been in combat comprise a very special club in which there is no other way to gain membership ... They recognize one of their kind instinctively." I ran across this quote from George Gay's book, "Sole Survivor," Page 152/152. This is, I think, applicable to the 451st. (*editor ... Thanks Harvey for getting yourself deeper into the intricacies of wartime quotes than I have time for. It seems to fit our Group profile.*)

John P. Hollis, Jr, 725th; ... "To Bob Karstensen who has made the Air Crops experience meaningful for most of us." (*editor ... Taken from an autographed copy of John's recent book, "Belonging" - subtitled; "Everything you always wanted to know about existentialism but didn't know who to ask."*)

Bob Rushing, Complimentary Membership: ... Thank you once again for your help to us in putting together the pieces of the puzzle about my uncle, Lawrence Rushing, and if any of your readers, in looking through some of their old photo's, find a picture that includes Lawrence (Continued on Page 20) *Shortbursts*

Shortbursts (Con't from previous page)
 Rushing, I would appreciate hearing from them. (editor ... As a result of our last AD-LIB, I was glad to hear that T/Sgt Larry Stauth (AEG for Lt. Hooks, 727th BS) was able to enlighten you about happenings aboard "Hop Scotch" after the original crew, Lt. McAllister's, (who went down in "Craven Raven") and then Hooks took over; and M/Sgt Joe Garde (ground crew chief) who was able to fill you in on the final disposition of the aircraft. It is very fulfilling, Bob, to be the conduit in which the younger generations can get a sense of what WW-II was all about, and the part their family may have played in its outcome. P.S. -Bob, your generous donation in your Uncle's name is happily accepted.)



Collings B-24 Update Photos

Karl Eichhorn, 726th: ... I made another trip to Kissimmee yesterday to see the Collins B-24, so thought I would bring you up to date. (note photos) Since my last letter, the fourth prop has been installed, as have the nose, tail and top power turrets. Since the ball turret is from a B-17 (They tell me it was the last Sperry turret in existence anywhere!!) they are having to make some modifications to the mounting ring in the airframe. The entire plane has been painted silver and looks great! (editor ... Thanks Karl for the July 1989 updating. It's encouraging to note the progress of the B-24 that we have been promoting since we first heard of it.)

Allen Harju, 724th: ... The reunion (Ft. Worth) was far better than I thought it would be. Another two days would have been to my liking. ... All in all it was great meeting people from that era of our lives. (editor ... Your first encounter with a 451st guy, Archie Piirainen (727th), was neat. You slicker'd him out of a quick \$100 to cover your registration costs (since they didn't accept

credit cards) and then spent all your spare time running around till you could come up with cash to pay him back. You folks of Finnish ancestry are sure trusting people.)

Harold A. Ginsberg, 726th ... Thanks for the AD-LIBs and History of the 451st. I enjoyed reading them. In the History of the 451st, page 22, the two "Unidentified Revelers" are (L to R) Patterson and Thurman. The head at the lower left is Seidletz (a Mickey Navigator), all of the 726th. (editor ... Thanks, Harold, for identifying the two (nay, three) party revelers in the history section. I was hoping they were 451st'ers and not a couple wild Turks brought in to liven up the party. The 726th was already renowned in that area.)

J. Dean Eckersley, 725th; ... It has been quite some time since I have received any mailings from you. I hope nothing is wrong and that you are continuing to enjoy good health, Enclosed is a check as my membership contribution for 1989. I presume that checks are always welcome. (editor ... Health and energy is running high, as is this effort to keep abreast of all the correspondence I get. Now if each envelope contained as generous a donation as you offered, we'd be in "high gear.")

Robert W. Strang, 725th ... The enclosed caricature of a B-24 was created shortly after WW-II by an obviously talented friend, a former B-24 bombardier, in response to my somewhat irreverent references to the 24 as a "whistlin' shy house." Perhaps you will appreciate the quality of the art work as well as the depth of reference. (editor ... Thanks Bob. Check page 17. I tried to bridge it together with some other things relevant to them loveable -always reading a paperback to the target - bombardiers.)

John A. Stargu, 726th ... On behalf of Bob Blair's crew we want to thank you a million times over for leading such a nice reunion. Anyone who didn't attend will never know what they've missed. We were very impressed. ... I hope you'll enjoy the photo album. I enjoyed making it. (editor ... What can I say, John and Mary. The photos you put into the album binder were a perfect reminder of what we enjoyed at Norfolk. My deepest thanks to the two of you.)

John A. Foster, 725th ... Thanks very much for the material which you've been good enough to send. Thanks, also for the handwritten list of my crew. I had lost my copy of orders that had full names ... My only contact recently is Charles R. Marshall of La Verne, CA. (editor ... With the new name (C.R. Marshall) I tried to involve him .. no luck. Do you want me to, or would you rather, pull rank on him.)

Merle Larson, 727th ... I know that compliments probably don't come around as often as the tears and complaints. Consider the "silence" as a compliment! (editor ... Your casting around the words "compliments and complaints" got these dim old eyes spelling out every character in you letter. I hope I got it straight.)