



451st Bomb Group Newsletter No. 29 September 2026



Published for the preservation of our 451st heritage.

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

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

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

Email: morris225@comcast.net

MANAGER'S MESSAGE

The 451st Newsletter has been continuously mailed for forty-six years, beginning with the resurrection of *Ad Lib*, the newsletter originally published during World War II. *Ad Lib* was continued from 1980 through 2012, followed by the 451st Newsletters beginning in 2013 and continuing to the present.

These publications are much more than newsletters—they are a wonderful and important source of history, preserving the stories, memories, photographs, and connections of the 451st Bomb Group.

You can view the *Ad Lib* archives here: <https://451st.org/ad-lib/>

The 451st Newsletter archives are available here: <https://451st.org/newsletters/>

As the number of our veterans has sadly dwindled over the years, we have continued to send printed newsletters to our members. We have also asked those receiving a paper copy to let us know if an electronic version would be acceptable in order to help reduce mailing and printing costs. In more recent years, many new members have been added to the electronic distribution only, which now numbers more than 300 recipients.

For many years, Marsha has handled the newsletter mailing almost entirely on her own. Since 2022, she has managed the process manually as an additional effort to keep our costs down. We are extremely grateful for all the time and effort she has devoted to making sure the newsletter reached our members. Moving toward a more modern, efficient, and cost-effective approach, we have made the decision that this will be the last printed and mailed edition of the 451st Newsletter.

We will, however, continue publishing and distributing the Newsletter electronically, so that the history and stories of the 451st Bomb Group can continue to be shared and preserved.

If you currently receive a printed newsletter and would like to receive future editions by email, please send your email address to b24xtrajoker@gmail.com so that we can add you to the electronic distribution.

Thank you to everyone who has supported the 451st Bomb Group Association and helped keep its history alive for so many years! We hope to keep it going for many more.

It's interesting to note in the story beginning on page 12, the search for the graves and burial places of those MIA/KIA airmen is led by Marek Michalski. He is a specialist in WWII historical aerial photo analysis, and his work and insights made it possible to locate unknown graves at the POW cemetery and its surroundings in Łambinowice during the archaeological works coordinated by Central Museum of POWs (Opole - Łambinowice). Through his efforts, Italian POW graves were discovered in 2023, mass graves of Soviet soldiers and graves of German pilots two years later. The team of archeologists will be back in Łambinowice next Summer. You can see Marek and his team at work here:

<https://youtu.be/jpMRX7TPGD4?si=EYJDtdM9XpHLGS-U>

Reminder, the 15th Air Force Reunion will be held October 15-18 in New Orleans. Use the link below for all reunion related information:

<https://www.15thaf.org/Reunion/Reunion.html>

I hope you enjoy the newsletter!

Jonathan

WAR EXPERIENCES OF THOMAS E. WALKEY

Note - This article contains excerpts from the war time experiences speech by Major Thomas Edward Walkey at the Grant County Historical Society (Silver City, NM) on January 19th, 1965. You read a full transcript of his speech located [here](#) on the 451st Bomb Group website.

“...The 15th Air Force Headquarters was located in Bari, Italy and its role and purpose as any other Air Force was to wage war and destroy the enemy's capabilities to wage war. Now the 15th Air Force at that time was comprised of what is known then as a heavy bomber group. That was B-24s and B-17s.

In obtaining this objective primarily our targets would be of transportation, manufacturing and supply. Now unfortunately all too often we have to go back to the same targets time and time again because we just missed or we failed to destroy them, the full capabilities of

Thomas E. Walkey



wage and war. To name some of these targets you probably read about there were Ploesti oil fields, there was the Regensburg Aircraft Factory, a most important one the Steyr ball bearing plant because without ball bearings all machinery quits, the Regensburg Aircraft Factory, marshalling yards and depots.

Most of these targets unfortunately for us were located deep into enemy territory and of course they were the ones that were heavily defended with anti-aircraft guns and fighters. And at the beginning of the time that I joined the 15th Air Force most of them, you might say, were suicidal missions because we had no fighter escort.

...I remember one particular mission we were climbing on our way to Romania somewhere at about 12,000 feet and we were over the middle of the Adriatic when the number one engine on one of our planes caught on fire and I'm sure there was panic that dictated what this person did, but the navigator bailed out in the middle of the Adriatic where there was absolutely no possible assistance could be given to him. The fire in number one engine was finally extinguished by the pilot. The plane turned around and landed safely back at the base, and I watched that poor soul float down towards the water in the middle of the ocean.

So, you can never tell what dictates a man's actions during a crisis. One particular bad week we lost about 50 percent of our squadron. I shouldn't say bad week, we lost it in one day, which was not too unusual as a matter of fact, but there was one thing that we were fortunate in.

We were able to get green replacement crews from the United States quickly. But some of these green crews didn't turn out to be quite so green. I remember that as we were again going into Germany we had occasion to, quite often, to come within about 20 miles of Switzerland and as we were still climbing at about 18 or 20,000 feet as we passed Switzerland, a little higher in that town of the Alps, because 21,000, three of these green crews that came down over Switzerland bailed out.

Switzerland became impounded in a neutral country for the duration of the war, and the United States government paid their tuition to attend the University of Geneva. Now how do you account for things like that? You don't. We had to reschedule our mission so that we wouldn't get within 75 miles of Switzerland.

You don't like to hear those things, it's hard to believe, it's hard to prove, but those things do happen in the war. ...Certain missions remain with you, others you forget.

...And it was over Vienna I got shot down. I was leading the 81st wing, I think it was. We had just dropped our bombs, and an 88 millimeter went up to my right wing and knocked a hole in it as big as you could drive a truck through. Knocked out number three and number four engine. We still had control of the aircraft. We lost all our gas.

It's funny, as you look back and retrospect on those things, when something like this happens, you're not worrying about what's going to happen ten minutes from now or half an hour from now. You're worrying what's going to happen in the next 15 seconds from now. And then when you get by those 15 seconds, you worry about the next 15 seconds.

So, you don't project your feelings ahead too far. You can't afford to do that. Our first thing was to clear the Alps.

We were at about 24,000 feet and in front of us the Alps went up to a certain place we were at about 21,000. We were losing altitude at the rate of about 200 feet a minute. We did clear them by about 75 feet and then we got a reprieve because as soon as you cleared the Alps, it dropped down to the Po Valley down to sea level and we just picked ourselves up another 20,000 feet in untold number of minutes.

Well, prior to going on any mission, we always had in there what we call an escape kit. And in this escape kit there were many goodies, a pack of cigarettes and about \$70 American cash and maps and chocolate and chewing gum. I have a good suggestion that the next escape kit they ought to have a toothbrush and some toothpaste.

But along in this escape kit, it gives you, depending on your location, the best chances of survival, where to go. And we knew that we, with the loss of the gas and our number two engine started acting up, it was hit also, that we never could make it across the Adriatic because we were going more or less lengthwise maybe 400 miles over the ocean. So, we headed for Yugoslavia.

Very shortly we lost number two engine, so we had one engine. And we were in radio contact all the way. Nobody in my crew was hurt.

We didn't have any gas. We finally got down to 7,000 feet. Oh, I'm going to amend that, we'll say 10,000 feet. And up in front of us we could see some mountains. We went to about 13,000 feet.

We still only had one engine. We'd gone 150 miles from Vienna. We thought we had done pretty good.

So, we all bailed out. I can tell you for sure that there is no truth in the statement that the Air Force was trained in how to bail out. It's something you don't get trained in.

When it happens, it happens. And it's the first time you have no experience behind it. I had too big a parachute on and about broke my neck when I went out.

I remember reaching for my hat and the little odd things that you do. I had a flying suit on after the first thing, of course, was the chute opening. I watched the chute opening.

And I was glad that was over with. And then sitting up there, my nose began to run. So, I reached down and unzipped a zipper pocket down below my knee and pulled out my handkerchief, blew my nose, put the handkerchief back in, and re-zipped it up.

I can remember that as vividly as possible sitting up there. I could look down on the ground, and I could see the people running around. I didn't know who they were, whether they were Germans or what they were, because Yugoslavia was occupied by the Germans.

It was a mountainous country, not as mountainous as, well, maybe as mountainous as the Black Range or the foothills of the Black Range, halfway between. So, I said, well, I had read stories of them shooting at you, you know, when you're coming down. I said the first thing I'd better do is what we call dump this parachute, and that is pull on one side of the shroud so all the air will come out of it, and you can descend that much quicker.

Well, it began to swing like a pendulum on a clock and immediately became violently airsick. I'm just swinging back and forth. So, I quit that.

I decided to relax for them shooting at me, because I don't want to. Then I looked down again and I said, well, I'm not going down, I'm going up. Well, I failed to recognize at the time that we probably had about a 30-knot wind, and it was blowing me across the peaks and the valley.

And when I happened to look down, I was looking in the valley instead of on top of the peaks. And I, because very shortly I looked down again and I was really coming down. Then I was trying to stop myself from coming down.

So, I did finally get down pretty hard against the side of the cliff. And I awakened at the foot. I wasn't hurt.

Took off my parachute just before I hit, though, there were all these people running up towards me. I still couldn't recognize them. It was very, very brushy and rocky.

I immediately got out of my chute and hit it and stayed behind flush. There was nothing else to do. They were running all around and they finally got, oh, possibly within 50 feet of me.

And they were yelling at each other. I still couldn't recognize them because of the brushy conditions. Finally, one of them got as close as you and me and he still didn't see me.

And I looked at him, he had a red star on his cap, and I decided he wasn't a German, so I just stood up and I scared him to death. And I stood up. And it was, I'd gotten in with Marshal Mihaljevic and his partner.

Of course, at the time they didn't know it well. They led me down to a little shack and this lady went in and got a sheet, put it on the ground, and brought me out black bread and goat's cheese. I sat there and ate it and gave them \$60, \$65, because I had \$70, and \$65 of American money.

The other \$5 I bought myself a mule. And I got on the back of that mule, and we rode a couple of nights, not in the daytime, always in the mountains. It was fantastic.

I just left myself to this one person leading this mule and I guess it was three nights and sometimes we'd sleep in a haystack in the daytime. But at nighttime, he'd knock on the door, and I'd walk in and there would be a place all set for me and the food. I don't know how communications can travel in a land of nothing without telephone, without anything.

They knew I was coming and a meal would be all ready for me. It'd be ready in the morning and at nighttime too. Eventually there were, they round up 70 of us that were shot down that day.

And I ran into a British major who spoke French and I spoke a little French and he had parachuted in with a jeep and radio equipment. And I had, as I mentioned earlier, you'll see how I tie it in, I'd gone to the Command General Staff School, and I had a real close friend in 15th Air Force Headquarters in Bari Italy. And I got on the radio, and I called Nate Abbott and I said, get ahold of my wife, Ava, in

Boston who was at my home and tell her I'm all right.

And he cabled my wife and Ava heard from me from behind enemy lines in Yugoslavia two weeks before the War Department sent her a telegram that I was missing in action. So those are some of the things that have happened. I want to mention the Hermann Goring tank work that went to Austria.

The fat man splurged a little, I don't know if it was because it was named after him. We rotated, there were three groups in our wing and every third mission our group would lead the wing and then we'd get down in the third position. The next mission we'd be in the second position and then the first position.

This particular mission was our position to be in the third position. So, there were 72 planes, roughly 36 planes in each group who were up ahead of me. I watched 14 of them get shot down in a period of less than five minutes and of course they started bailing out and I might say it looked like cumulus clouds below me, the number of parachutes.

And we weren't more than two miles behind them as we came along. Yet we were, these were all by fighters, you know, in the aircraft. And yet we weren't touched.

Our 36 planes came in, and we wiped out the tank work. And I want to show you how lady luck in time and because I could have just as easily been in number two group, that particular mission or the first group. But the fighters had been sitting up there waiting.

They know when you're coming. They'd been sitting up there waiting and they had just enough gasoline to work for about five or ten minutes and then they had to land and refuel. And when they were landing and refueling, that's when my group came along and went through.

So, it was nothing that I did. It was just an act of God that I was particularly in that number three group. That day I had many friends in the group ahead of me.

... I could go on with incidents like I've talked to you about for, for hours, as I mentioned earlier, but in retrospect, I think that we accomplished our own purpose, and we probably proved once and for all the value of air power. “

VETERAN MEDALLION FOR HEADSTONE/MARKERS

The cemetery where my father, Win Jones is buried places flags on the grave sites for military members on Memorial Day, Veteran's Day, etc. Unfortunately, our father's grave was often bypassed as mention of his military service was only on one side of his marker. My sister Susie Gordon and her husband, Sandy Gordon, found a solution to add a military emblem to the marker. A picture of Win's marker and the medallion appear below:





The Department of Veterans Affairs provides two types of medallions, by request, to be affixed to an existing, privately purchased headstone or marker to signify the deceased's status as a Veteran or Veteran/Service member who is also a Medal of Honor recipient.

These devices are furnished in lieu of a traditional Government headstone or grave marker for those Veterans who served on or after April 6, 1917, and whose grave in a private cemetery is marked with a privately purchased headstone or marker.

These medallions are durable and can be easily affixed to privately purchased headstones by anyone.

Bronze Medallions: Small, Medium, or Large

The bronze medallion is available in three sizes: **Small** (2"W x 1-1/2"H x 1/3"D), **Medium** (3-3/4"W x 2-7/8"H x 1/4"D), or **Large** (6-3/8"W x 4-3/4"H x 1/2"D). Each medallion is inscribed with the word "VETERAN" across the top and the branch of service at the bottom.



Bronze Medallions

Medal of Honor Medallions: Medium or Large

The Medal of Honor (MOH) Medallion comes in two sizes: **Medium** or **Large**. Each medallion is inscribed with "MEDAL OF HONOR" at the top and the branch of service at the bottom.



Medal of Honor Medallions

To apply for a medallion, fill out the Claim for Government Medallion for Placement in a Private Cemetery (VA Form 40-1330M).

» [Get VA Form 40-1330M to download](#)

Important: This benefit is only applicable if the grave is marked with a privately purchased headstone or marker. In these instances, eligible Veterans are entitled to either a traditional Government-furnished headstone or marker, or the medallion, but not both. If the gravesite of two Veterans is marked with one privately purchased headstone, e.g., two spouses who have both served in the U.S. Military, two medallions can be requested and affixed to the privately purchased headstone if authorized by the local cemetery official.

An authorized applicant, as defined in 38 CFR 38.600 (a)(1), may submit the form to request a medallion. When requesting the MOH Medallion, check "OTHER" in block 11 and specify "MOH."

Once an application for a medallion is received and approved, VA will mail the medallion along with a kit that will allow the family or the staff of a private cemetery to affix the device to a headstone, grave marker, mausoleum or columbarium niche cover.

For more information on eligibility and how to apply click [here](#).

THE LIBERATOR IN THE FOREST: HOW A POLISH HISTORIAN IS RESTORING TEN AMERICAN AIRMEN TO HISTORY – *By Todd DePastino*

(Note – The following article is a reprint of an article posted on the Veteran’s Breakfast Club website. *“The mission of the Veterans Breakfast Club is to create communities of listening around military veterans and their stories to ensure that this living history will never be forgotten. We believe that through our work, people will be connected, educated, healed, and inspired.”*

“On December 17, 1944, hundreds of American bombers crossed Central Europe on a mission against Nazi Germany’s synthetic fuel industry. One of them, a [B-24J Liberator](#) known only by the number painted on its fuselage— “White 47”—never returned.

[The airplane broke apart nearly five miles above Silesia](#) and fell into a snowy forest near the village then called Ringwitz, today [Rzymkowice](#) in southwestern Poland. Ten Americans aboard the bomber were killed. Another American from a second B-24 died after jumping from his damaged airplane.

The crash was witnessed from the ground. Pieces of the airplane remained scattered through the forest. The story survived locally, repeated by people who remembered seeing the flaming bomber fall. But the Americans themselves gradually disappeared from the history. Their names appeared in military reports and on a memorial wall in Belgium, but no marker stood at the place where they died, and no one could say with certainty where their bodies had been buried.



More than eighty years later, [Polish historian Daniel Podobiński](#) and a small circle of researchers are trying to recover the stories of the men of “White 47.”

Daniel lives in Wierzbie, only a few miles from the crash site. Until 1945, the village was known as Weidengut and contained a German Luftwaffe airfield. The wreckage of the American bomber—and at least some of the dead—was brought there after the crash.

In 2025, Daniel published a 67-page illustrated study, [The Crash of the Liberator Near Rzymkowie](#), coauthored by Jadwiga Wójciak. It reconstructs the mission, follows decades of attempts to locate the crash and burial sites, and, most importantly, gives life to the crew members who died there.

“I know they were young men,” Daniel wrote when he first contacted the Veterans Breakfast Club. “It would be great to get to know them as people, as sons, brothers, not just as servants in the army.”

The Mission to Odertal

White 47’s December 17, 1944 mission began far away in southern Italy.

The Fifteenth Air Force operated from airfields around Foggia and struck targets across southern and Central Europe. By the summer of 1944, oil refineries and synthetic fuel plants had become a high priority. Germany had little domestic petroleum, and its ability to continue the war depended heavily upon facilities that converted coal into aviation fuel and gasoline.

Among the targets were the vast industrial complexes at Blechhammer, Heydebreck, and Odertal in Silesia.

The December 17 mission involved at least 550 American bombers attacking fuel plants, railroads, and other targets across the region. Twenty-eight B-24s from the 451st Bomb Group were assigned to Odertal, divided into four seven-aircraft formations called Able, Baker, Fox, and Dog Flights.

White 47, serial number 42-51941, flew in Baker Flight. Its pilot was First Lieutenant Theodore C. King. Near him was the flight’s lead airplane, number 42-52045, piloted by Lieutenant William T. Shelton.

The bombers took off from Castelluccio airfield south of Foggia shortly after 8:00 a.m. Their route carried them north over the Adriatic and through the eastern Sudetenland before they entered Silesia. After nearly four hours in the air, the formations approached the Odertal synthetic fuel works.

The ground was covered with snow, and visibility was good. That was helpful for bombing, but it also meant the American formation could be clearly seen by German defenders.

After dropping their bombs sometime between 12:15 and 1:04 p.m., the B-24s began a broad turn for home. German fighters and antiaircraft guns attacked as the formation maneuvered. Ball turret gunner Santo Magliocca, [whose story was told by Bob Podurgiel](#) in the [VBC Magazine](#), remembered Messerschmitts and Focke-Wulfs charging through the bomber formations at close range, their cannon and machine-gun fire tearing into the airplanes.

It was a bad day in the air. One veteran of another bomb group later called it “Black Sunday.”

But the destruction of White 47 appears to have come not directly from an enemy shell or fighter, but from the confusion created by the attack.

Shelton’s lead B-24 suffered an electrical failure and began losing speed. He dropped below the formation in a sharp diving turn. King’s airplane apparently moved into the lead position. When Shelton attempted to return to formation, the propeller of his left outboard engine struck White 47 at approximately 25,000 feet.

The propeller cut into the fuselage near the waist gun positions and severed the tail.

From another B-24, Staff Sergeant Henry Chepulis saw the pieces fall past his waist window. He recorded the moment in his diary:

“One [plane] chewed off the tail of another ship. The ship with the tail knocked off went down like a rock. The tail section flew right by my waist window. Saw a chute open from the remains of that tail.”

The parachute may have belonged to [Corporal William Dean Fry](#), the tail gunner. He escaped the severed section but did not survive.

The remaining fuselage went into a spin and fell toward the forest near Rzymkowice, striking the ground nose-first and burning. Joseph Weisler, a photographer flying as an extra crew member that day, managed to get out. He later said that he pushed two men from the waist section before leaving the airplane himself, although he did not know their names. A German soldier captured him after he landed and told him the others were dead.

Weisler was the only survivor from White 47.

Shelton’s B-24 remained in the air despite losing an engine and suffering damage to its tail. Three men in its nose section bailed out immediately. Two survived and were taken prisoner.

The third, bombardier Second Lieutenant John L. Sullivan Jr., died near Rzymkowice. Shelton and the remaining crew continued south until reaching Yugoslavia, where they finally abandoned the airplane and were rescued by partisans.

Eleven Americans had died in the collision and its aftermath: ten from King's bomber and Sullivan from Shelton's.

Who Were the Men of "White 47"?

The pilot, [Theodore King](#), was 25 years old, from Niagara County, New York. Before entering the Army Air Forces, he attended college and worked as a paymaster.

His copilot, [Bernard Schams](#) of La Crosse, Wisconsin, had married Wanda Reahart on May 30, 1944, shortly before going overseas. He died less than a month after his twenty-second birthday.

Navigator [Sidney Grapey](#) had been an outstanding student at Northwestern University, where he served as secretary of the Phi Eta Sigma honor society. He later worked as an actor.

Bombardier [William Navins](#), also 22, had attended college and worked as an actor before joining the Army Air Forces.

The gunners came from different corners of the United States and different kinds of civilian lives. [Linn Arbogast](#) had driven a taxi. [Frank Anderson](#) was married. Nose gunner [Howard Miller](#) left behind a wife, Gertrude. [James Wood](#) had worked in civilian life before taking his place inside one of the most exposed positions aboard a heavy bomber—the retractable ball turret beneath the airplane.

The youngest was William Dean Fry.

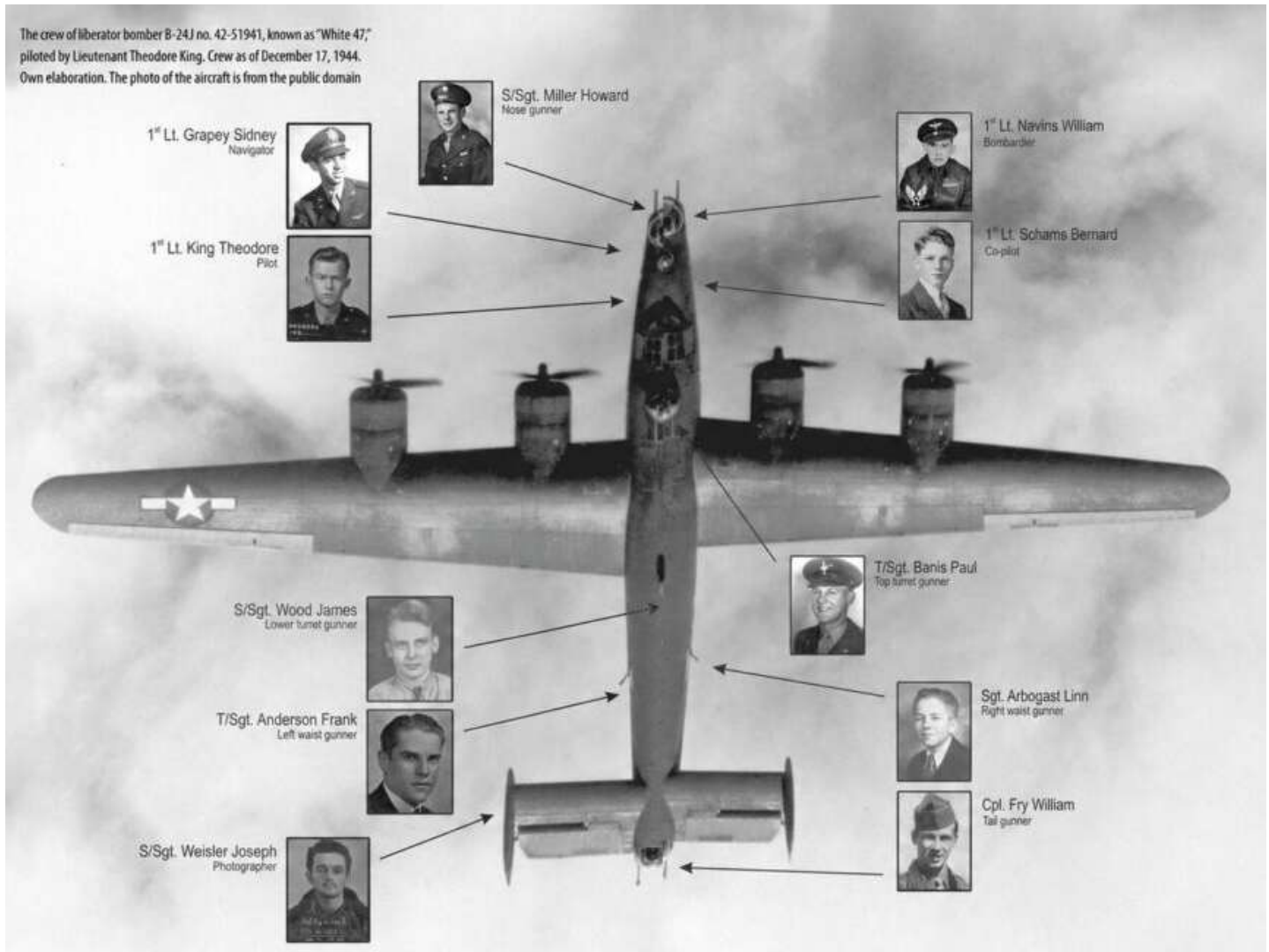
Fry came from Pennsylvania and had worked as a chauffeur. He joined the Army in January 1944. According to his brother Marvin, "Dean," as the family called him, was not even a regular member of King's crew. Their assigned tail gunner was sick on December 17, and Fry was sent as a replacement.

It was his first combat mission.

It was also his last.

The crew included top turret gunner [Paul Banis](#), as well as Weisler, the photographer who survived. King's regular bomber crew numbered ten, but eleven men were aboard that day because of the photographic assignment.

The full study includes portraits of nearly all of them arranged around an image of a B-24, with arrows pointing toward the stations where each man worked.



A Crash Remembered, and Misremembered

The people living near Rzymkowice did not forget the falling Liberator. They remembered the wreckage, the bodies, the German soldiers and the pieces of aircraft removed from the forest. But memory changed as witnesses died and nature reclaimed the crash site.

A Warsaw Uprising veteran named [Andrzej Smoleński](#), then a prisoner at the enormous Lamsdorf prisoner-of-war complex, recorded on December 17, 1944, that he had seen an

airplane go down toward the camp. Decades later, that brief note helped lead historian Ludwik Uryga of the Central Museum of Prisoners of War into a larger investigation.

Czech aviation historian Miloš Podzimek visited the area in 1991 and again in 1993, interviewing residents and walking the ground. He had long been haunted by a photograph of a B-24 falling without its tail, not yet knowing precisely where the image had been taken or who was aboard the airplane. When he stood in the forest near Rzymkowice in 1991, he was still unsure whether the crash was the one in the photograph. His later research confirmed the connection.

American researchers also made attempts to locate the bodies. Graves Registration teams gathered witness accounts in 1947 and 1948, but the advent of the Cold War closed the area to further American investigation. The suspected burial ground lay within a Polish military training area, and the documentary record remained scattered among American, German and Polish archives.

The crew members are listed on the [Wall of the Missing at Henri-Chapelle American Cemetery](#) in Belgium. Sullivan is memorialized at Epinal American Cemetery in France. But a name on a wall is not the same as a known grave.

German records indicate that the bodies of King, Anderson, Miller, Sullivan and two unidentified men were brought to the Wierzbie airfield. One unidentified body was apparently recognized by Weisler as Bernard Schams. The fate of the remaining men is less certain. Researchers believe the Americans were probably buried at the Old Prisoner of War Cemetery at Łambinowice, once part of the Lamsdorf camp system, but the exact location has never been confirmed.

Even the precise crash site became uncertain. Witnesses led earlier researchers to one area, while pieces of the aircraft were later found approximately 700 meters farther west. The forest itself had changed. Trees grew, and roads and property lines shifted.

At a local museum, Daniel found part of a small metal identification bracelet or clasp bearing the name “Howard Miller” and Miller’s military service number. It had reportedly come from the crash area.



The object had crossed the distance between a young American airman and a Polish historian eighty years later. Miller was no longer only a name in a report. Something he had carried had survived him.

How the Story Reached Pittsburgh

The connection to the Veterans Breakfast Club began with [Santo Magliocca](#), the ball turret gunner who witnessed the attack from another B-24.

Bob Podurgiel's article about Magliocca in the *VBC Magazine* and mentioned the collision. Daniel found the story from Poland and contacted us in February 2025. He explained that he lived near the crash site and was trying to learn more about the Americans.

We connected Daniel with [Marvin Fry](#), William Dean Fry's surviving brother, and Marvin's son Doug. The Fry family shared military reports, photographs, a crew picture and a moving 1946 letter written by Gertrude Miller, Howard Miller's widow.

Daniel wrote that he opened their email "with a beating heart" and spent hours reading the documents.

Another connection followed when Miloš Podzimek contacted VBC after seeing the same story. Suddenly, people in Poland, the Czech Republic and the United States—local historians, aviation researchers, journalists and relatives of the dead—were exchanging records and trying to fit the pieces together.

Daniel and Jadwiga brought these fragments together in their study, but the work has not ended.

In September 2025, local residents traveled a 30-kilometer “King’s Route” connecting the crash site, the former Weidengut airfield where the wreckage and bodies were taken, and the cemetery at Lamsdorf where the men may have been buried. Daniel hopes to make the journey an annual commemoration.

The local Forest District, which manages the crash area, has expressed interest in placing a small memorial there. American authorities have also sought permission to conduct archaeological work, while researchers continue trying to identify the crew’s burial place.

Daniel recently wrote that the King’s Route will be organized again and that work on both the memorial and burial question continues.

A Place in the Forest

[Near the end of his study](#), Daniel considers whether the forest itself can serve as a memorial. In one sense, it already does. It holds the last physical traces of the airplane and fragments that have not yet been found. But an unmarked forest covers up its past. Unless someone tells the story, it remains buried with tree roots.

Daniel argues that this is why oral histories, archaeological work, family records and a permanent marker matter.

Joseph Weisler’s daughter, Carol, expressed what the work means to the families:

“You can only imagine how much all of what you are doing means to me. . . . I am honored that you are honoring these good men, more than you will ever know.”

The history of White 47 remains unfinished. We still do not know with certainty where the dead were buried. A permanent memorial has been discussed but not completed.

Still, the men are no longer quite as lost as they were. Daniel Podobiński’s work has been to gather those stories again, one document, photograph, object and family connection at a time.

Here are the death notifications since our October 2025 Newsletter:

451st Member	Squadron	Duty Position	DOD
Duncan, Kenneth S.		Ball Turret Gunner	08.08.2015
Leek, George R.	726 th	Nose Gunner	05.24.2018

THANK YOU, DONORS!

Donor	In Tribute To
Falkis, Ruth	In memory of Alexander Kuras, Navigator & the crew of "Patches"
Beam, Brian	In memory of Paul Edward Beam, 725 th Squadron, Tail Turret Gunner
Anonymous	In memory of George Tudor, 725 th Squadron, Pilot
Jones, Gene Joseph	In memory of Joseph Jones, 725 th Squadron, Nose Turret Gunner

Should you desire to honor a crew mate or family member, please send the full name and duty position of the person being honored. Please send to:

451st Bomb Group
c/o Jonathan Tudor
12605 Goldenrod Avenue
Bradenton, FL 34212

OR

Zelle® to 207-730-0465

OR

Venmo to <https://account.venmo.com/u/jontudor>

FINANCIAL REPORT

The 451st Bomb Group Association does not charge annual dues. Your generous contributions help cover expenses for printing/mailling the newsletter, and for maintaining the website, <https://451st.org/>.

451st BG Association Financial Report

Beginning Balance March, 2026	\$10,132.86
<u>Income</u>	
Donations	\$600.00
Interest	<u>\$179.35</u>
Total Income	\$779.35
<u>Expenses</u>	
451st.org domain renewal	\$46.38
Pressable website hosting	\$250.00
October Newsletter	<u>\$352.70</u>
Total Expenses	\$649.08
 Ending Balance September, 2026	 \$10,263.13