



THE 457th BOMB GROUP ASSOCIATION



THE 457TH BOMB GROUP ASSOCIATION NEWS

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VETERAN'S DAY NOVEMBER 11

As citizens of the United States, we have many freedoms people of other countries do not have. We have luxuries, both materialistic and untouchable, making our lives and our children's lives so very much better. We have the power to make our own choices, to state our thoughts and ideas, and to move freely within our own country.

We have the right to protest, vote and purchase our own homes.

We can protect our families and ourselves.

However, these luxuries that we sometimes take for granted, did not come without a price. Many U.S. military men and women encountered some of the most gruesome battles, triumphing over some of the biggest nations to maintain the very freedoms we have today. As U.S. men engaged in military service, they left the soil of their own country to save the solid ground we walk on today, forever changing their lives and that of their families.

As U.S. citizens, and because we treasure the peace and freedoms we have, we all owe much gratitude to those who have fought for us and our country. Thank you to each and every U.S. military man and woman, both past and present, for admirably fighting for and maintaining our freedoms. This newsletter is dedicated to our noble United States Veterans, of all branches, to honor you, thank you and show our appreciation for giving up so much of your lives so we can have so much in our own.

Thank You



THE PREZ SEZ...

If you were not able to join us for the Mini-Reunion in Peterborough, you should know that we had a great turn out and a very enjoyable time together.

There is a more detailed report on our trip elsewhere in this issue.

We would all agree that an important factor in reunion attendance is getting the message out --- not only to our active members, but to those who are inactive and in some cases, unaware of our organization. I will admit that personally I have never had any response from publicizing these events in our local newspapers. However, Joe DeLuccia placed the Mini-Reunion announcement in the VFW magazine and I had 7 contacts from 457th men who had never known of our association. One of them joined us in Peterborough. Maybe some of the rest of us could use these kinds of publications to announce our 2003 reunion.

John and Alberta Welch have graciously volunteered to host our 2003 reunion in Rapid City, SD. This is a location that is significant in the history of the 457th and offers many historic and interesting places to visit. We look forward to seeing you there.

Candace, Will Jr. and I thank all of you for your thoughts, prayers and personal messages on our loss of Phyllis. Although she had a wide variety of active interests, she truly enjoyed the people and activities of the 457th.

--Will Fluman

10 January 1945

To Every Member of the Eighth Air Force:

The year 1944 was a significant one for those who have devoted themselves to the cause of freedom and justice throughout the world. In both hemispheres, the forces of tyranny were rolled back and steadily compressed into surrounded bastions from which there can be no escape. Here in the European Theater, the Eighth Air Force fought with distinction. It contributed importantly to the Allied war effort and earned a place in history which time will not erase. As the Commander of that Force, I am responsible not only to my military superiors, but to those who have made the year so memorable--the men and women of the Eighth.

J. H. DOOLITTLE
Lieut. General USA
Commanding

EDITOR'S NOTE: The remainder of this report from General Doolittle is printed in its entirety elsewhere in this newsletter. I cannot find my note that tells me who sent this in. Would that person let me know so I can know who to thank.

We are sad to have to report the death of Phyllis Fluman...loving wife and mother of Will, Will Jr. and Candy. We extend our deepest sympathies to you. Please know that we, too, will miss Phyllis. Her smile and her gentle spirit were a part of her that she shared with all of us.

This page and this issue of the 457th Bomb Group Association News are dedicated to the memory of Phyllis Fluman.

In Loving Memory

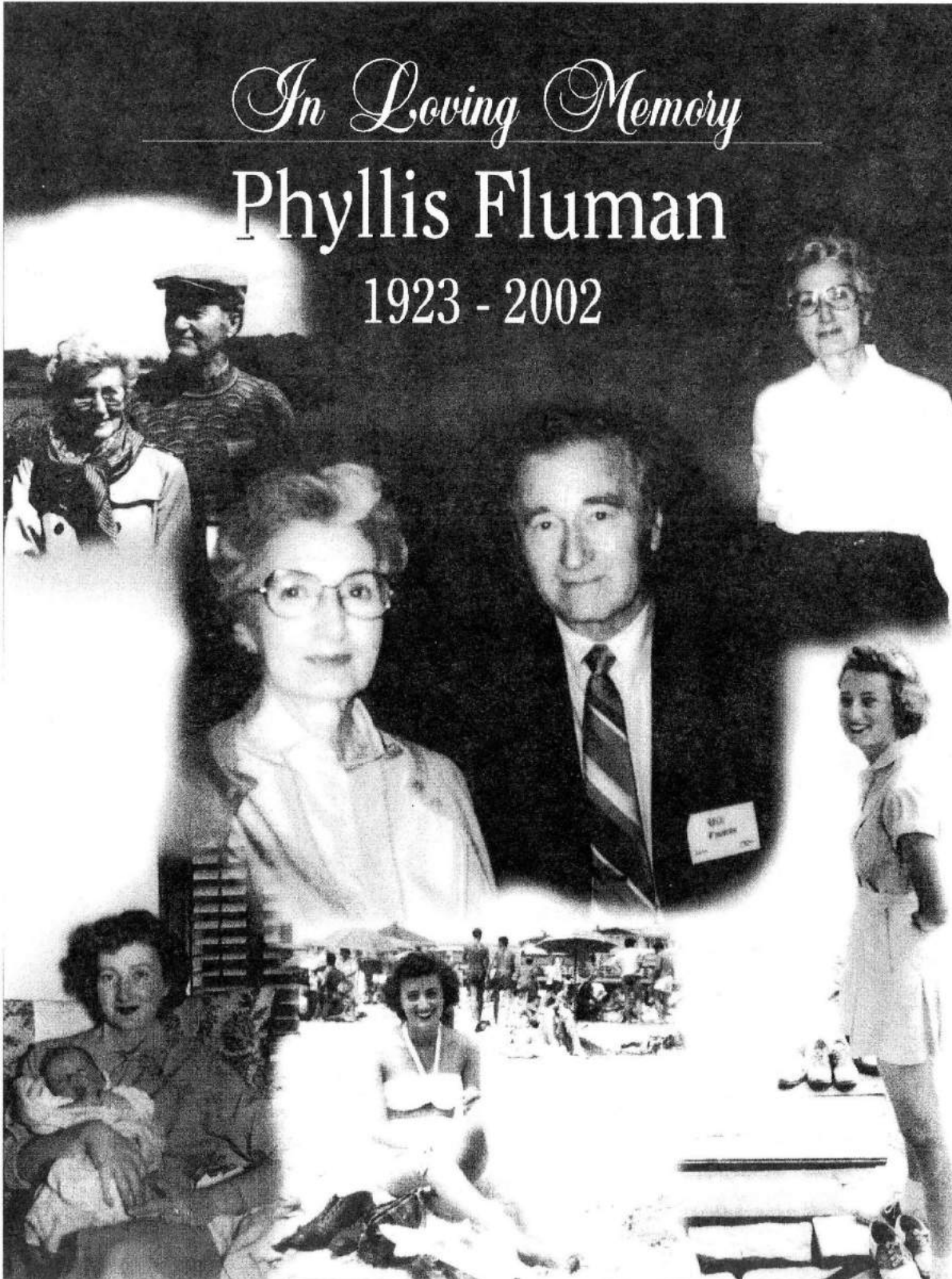
Phyllis Fluman

1923 - 2002

*Day is done
Gone the sun
From the lakes
From the hills
All is well,
Safely rest.
God is nigh*

*Fading light
Dims the sight
And a star
Gems the sky,
Gleaming bright
From afar,
Drawing nigh,
Falls the night.*

*Thanks and praise
For our days
Neath the sun,
Neath the stars
Neath the moon
As we go
This we know
God is nigh.*



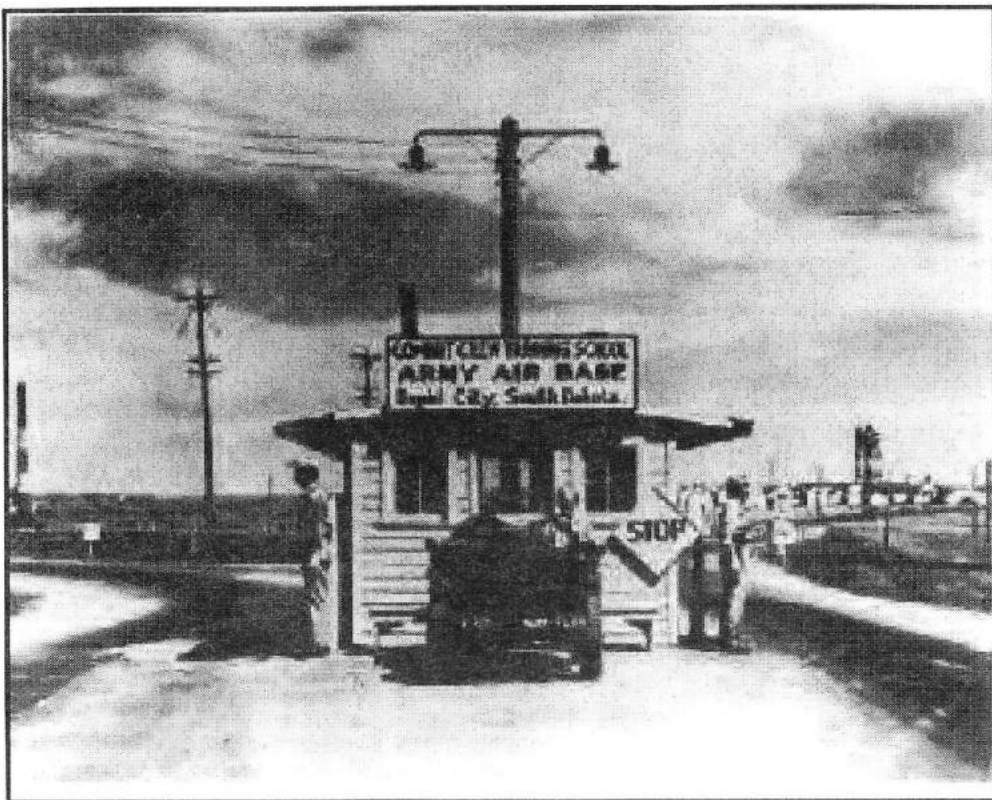
457TH BOMB GROUP 2003 REUNION

TENTATIVE DATES: AUGUST 28 - SEPTEMBER 1, 2003

RAPID CITY, SOUTH DAKOTA

JOHN AND ALBERTA WELCH HAVE GRACIOUSLY VOLUNTEERED
TO HOST THE 2003 REUNION
IN A LOCATION NEAR AND DEAR TO OUR HISTORY.

ON 2 JANUARY 1942, THE U.S. WAR DEPARTMENT ESTABLISHED RAPID CITY ARMY AIR BASE AS A TRAINING LOCATION FOR B-17 FLYING FORTRESS CREWS. FROM SEPTEMBER 1942--WHEN ITS MILITARY RUNWAYS FIRST OPENED--UNTIL MISSION NEEDS CHANGED IN JULY 1945, THE FIELD'S INSTRUCTORS TAUGHT THOUSANDS OF PILOTS, NAVIGATORS, RADIO OPERATORS AND GUNNERS FROM NINE HEAVY BOMBARDMENT GROUPS AND NUMEROUS SMALLER UNITS. ALL TRAINING FOCUSED ON THE ALLIED DRIVE TO OVERTHROW THE AXIS POWERS IN EUROPE.



The base "main" gate in WWII.

This is now the "Bismarck" gate.

SPECIFIC DETAILS WILL BE PROVIDED IN THE NEXT NEWSLETTER..DECEMBER 2002

NEW ENGLISH HISTORIAN NAMED

Our English Historians play a vital role in our association's efforts to honor the memory of the 457th Bomb Group and promote the health of our organization.

This once larger group of dedicated people has diminished in size to the point where we had only Gordon Townsend and John Walker as active, contributing Historians. Gordon is our designated United Kingdom Unit contact.

These two men have done a remarkable job and their arrangements for the last two Mini-Reunions have produced perhaps the best meetings we have ever had over there.

However, we have been concerned about the small size of this working group and decided we would name an additional Historian when the right person became available.

The Board has approved the naming of Ray Pobgee as English Historian for the 457th Bomb Group Association. Ray is the former mayor of Peterborough. He has an active interest in military history and particularly the 457th Bomb Group. We welcome Ray and Enid Pobgee and invite them, along with all our Historians, to join us at our 2003 Reunion in Rapid City.

Will Fluman, President

Ray' response:



23, Eastern Avenue,
PETERBOROUGH
PE1 4PH

Dear Will,

Thank you for your letter of 2nd July. I feel extremely honoured that the Association has seen fit to formally accept me as an English Historian to the Association.

As those of you who visited Peterborough in 2000 and 2002 will know, I am a keen follower and supporter of all associated with the 457th Bomb Group and as you know the painting and Bomber are in a place of honour in the Mayor's Parlour at the Town Hall in Peterborough. The dimensional map of Glatton is not held in the Path-Finder Museum at RAF Wyton.

We have pencilled in the possibility of attending the 2003 re-union in the USA. We await further details of this event.

Best wishes to all our friends your side of the pond.



Ray Pobgee MBE DL

TEL: (01733) 340282

FAX: (01733) 751023

email: Ray Pobgee@AOL.com

2002 MINI-REUNION PETERBOROUGH, ENGLAND

May 25 - 29

by Will Fluman

When we started the preliminary planning for our Tenth Mini-Reunion in Peterborough, we were expecting that this would likely be one of the smaller groups to return to Glatton. You folks really proved us wrong, with one of the largest groups ever to make this trip.

Gordon Townsend and John Walker again handled all the arrangements over there. Their planning, hard work and attention to detail made this a very enjoyable reunion for all of us.

The high point of our Sunday visit to the old Glatton Air Base is our own memorial service at the 457th Monument in the Conington Churchyard. Over the past few years, we have expanded our service by inviting an RAF padre to participate, holding the initial portion of the service inside the church and displaying the Colors at the churchyard part of the service. Gordon was very instrumental in making these revisions. This year, Larry McMahon placed the traditional 457th wreath at the base of our monument.

As we moved on to the Air Base, we stopped at the Klingair terminal. The management always graciously accommodates our visit by closing their operations while we again make that trip down the old main runway.

After an enjoyable pub lunch, we visited Sulgrave Manor, the home of George Washington's ancestors in Northamptonshire. This was a very interesting tour of an impressive home which had some relevance to our history.

On Monday morning, we attended the very formal memorial service at the American Cemetery at Madingley. John Pearson placed the distinctive white triangle U wreath for the 457th at the base of the Wall of the Missing. At the close of the ceremony, it was good to once more enjoy the fly over of the lone B-17, the Sally B. This year it made several passes, so most of us were able to get at least one good picture.

In the afternoon, we visited the Imperial War Museum at Duxford. Although the American Air Museum was partially closed so that the exhibits could be repositioned to accommodate the newly restored B-24, there were many other interesting displays for us to view.

Tuesday was Peterborough Day and we enjoyed the Mayor's reception in Town Hall, followed by the meeting in Council Chambers. The afternoon gave us an opportunity to visit the Cathedral and other interesting places around town.

Again, our closing banquet at the Bull was most enjoyable. The meal was great and you just can't find better company than our 457th people. We had a total of 59 in attendance. There were 50 members and guests along with 9 historians and guests. We had 8 daughters, 4 sons and 2 grandsons. There were 20 men from the old Fireball outfit. There would have been 21, except for the very unfortunate illness of George Cole. His daughters had planned a great trip for George and they did get to Peterborough but George was admitted to the hospital there. Eight men returned to Glatton for the first time since 1945.

We introduced all the VIPs in attendance. We had almost the entire ruling body of the 8th Air Force Historical Society, Craig Harris, Ken Nail, and John Pearson. All three are also either past or present officers in our association. We had past president Bill Siler, director and group contact Joe Toth, and legal advisor, author and historian Jim Bass, as well as our newest English member and former mayor of Peterborough, Ray Pobgee.

We closed out our Tenth Mini-Reunion in Peterborough with best wishes and sincere intentions to meet in Rapid City in 2003.

ATTENDEES TO 2002 MINI-REUNION

*	BASS,	Jim	Carthage, TN	
*	BURKE,	Rex	San Jose, CA	
	BRANHAM,	Bill		
#	*	COLE,	George	Kinston, NC
		COLE,	Katherine	
		SADDLER,	Rebecca	
		CONNELLY,	Pat	
*	DeCUNZO,	Lou and Roz	Hawthorne, NJ	
*	DeLUCCIA,	Joe	Saddle Brook, NJ	
	DeLUCCIA,	Emil		
*	DOBLER	Champe	Alameda, CA	
*	ELLIOT,	Thomas	Eufaula, AL	
	FLOYD,	David and Cynthia		
*	FLUMAN,	Will	Boiling Springs, PA	
	FLUMAN,	Will Jr.	Dillsburg, PA	
	FLUMAN,	Candace	Dillsburg, PA	
	FURR,	Jack	Hillsboro, TN	
	STREEVAL,	Eric		
	GEARY,	Loretta	Norman, OK	
*	HARRIS,	Craig	Durham, NC	
	MOORE,	Becky		
	HOFFMAN,	Art	Marysville, WA	
	HOFFMAN	Mark		
*	HEIDENREICH,	Vaughn and Mary	Woodstock, IL	
*	KOLLAJA,	Alvin and Clare	Midland, TX	
*	KABINE,	Bill	LaPorte, TX	
	KABINE,	Pamela		
	WALL,	Karan		
	WALL,	J.J.		
	LACEY,	Jay	Youngstown, FL	
	SMITH,	Bill		
*	McMAHON,	Larry	Venice, FL	
	FRANK,	Kurt		
*	MIHALIK,	Peter	Haledon, NJ	
*	MORSE,	Bill and Erika	Lake Ann, MI	
*	NAIL,	Ken and Ethelda	Tupelo, MS	
	BOZEMAN,	Thomas and Susan		
*	PEARSON,	John	Richmond, VA	
*	PETERS,	Elroy and Dorothy	Columbia, MO	
*	SWANSON,	Dwight and Nadine	Geneseo, IL	
*	TOTH,	Joe	Pueblo, CO	
*	SILER,	Bill	Morro Bay, CA	
*	MEN FROM GLATTON	ENGLISH	HISTORIANS	
#	Arrived Peterborough,	BAINS,	Sadie, John and Margo	
	but could not attend.	TOWNSEND,	Gordon and Ros	
		WALKER,	John and Sylvia Kerry	
		POBGEE,	Ray and Enid	

Following, is an article about one of our own...Don Nielsen. This article appeared in his local newspaper, *The Arizona Republic*. It was in a column entitled: *Memories---In Their Own Words*.

Dodging flak over Germany ***by Don Nielsen***

I was a co-pilot and later a pilot of an 8th Air Force B-17 Flying Fortress during World War II, putting in 34 bombing missions out of England over Germany from Dec. 12, 1944, through April 18, 1945.

Our 457th Bomb Group perhaps received the most publicity when our assistant commanding officer, Col. Smith, ran into the Empire State Building in New York City in a B-25 right after the war.

My missions were toward the end of the war, and although we were shot up many times and lost one crew member, our missions were not as rugged as what the fellows faced in 1943 and 1944 when there was much more German fighter plane opposition. The 8th Air Force suffered more casualties, proportionally, than any other group in World War II.

I was married and I wrote to my wife almost daily. I also kept a diary of my missions while in England, and that plus my letters have given me excellent references to jar my memory.

Two combat missions stand out:

On Feb. 3, 1945, our target was Berlin. Our mission was to raise hell with the German civilians and refugees fleeing the Russians, who were only 45 miles away. This mission and a later one to Dresden were requested by Stalin and agreed to by Roosevelt and Churchill at Yalta. Roosevelt was ill at the time, and I like to think that he would have refused this type of mission had he been well and strong.

In the Hollywood movies during the war, when the crews were told the target was Berlin, they all cheered. When they rolled up the curtain to expose the target at our preflight briefing, everyone moaned when we saw it was Berlin. The Germans had many flak guns in place to guard the city, and further, the weather was clear, so they would have a clear shot at us with their 88mm anti-aircraft guns.

There were about 1,400 B-17s sent on this mission from bases all over middle England. We took

off before dawn, and it was a little frightening to assemble and form our group of 36 planes in the dark. There were many close calls. We leveled off at 26,000 feet, and the outside temperature was minus 46 degrees Fahrenheit. Our planes were not pressurized, nor did we have cabin heat, but our flying suits had electric heating elements.

When we started our bomb run, the ball turret oxygen hose was caught in the turret's gears and sheared off. We lost all of our oxygen in the ball turret, waist, one side of the radio room and one side of the tail. The ball turret was useless, and the fellows doubled up on the remaining oxygen outlets.

We were the seventh group in the line of planes that stretched out over 300 miles. Just before we got to the city, I saw a B-17 in the group right in front of us, flying in the same formation position as we were, catch fire and blow up.

I was at the controls when we got over the target, and the flak was very heavy. We were bouncing all over the sky. I thought we were going down when the plane began to lose altitude, and I figured, "This is it!" But the plane responded when I pulled back on the stick, and we rose back into formation. A foot-wide hole in our elevator had caused the drop.

Plenty of problems

When we cleared the target and the flak stopped, we took stock of our situation. We had lost all the gas in one feeder tank and one wingtip tank. Our inverter that controlled the superchargers was shot out, and the alternate did not work, so we began to lose power and dropped down out of formation. Our flaps wouldn't work because the electrical connection to them was shot out.

We dropped our landing gear and visually checked our tires, which looked OK. Our flight engineer kept working on the alternate inverter and finally got it going, giving us the supercharger power that we needed. We had one control cable to the elevator shot out, but the spare held.

We throttled way back to conserve our remaining fuel. The fuel gauge for No. 3 engine showed we still had 120 gallons in the tank feeding that engine, but that was a false reading because the electrical connection to the gauge had been shot out.

So, we ran out of fuel in that engine. Our flight engineer transferred fuel from other tanks and got it going again. On landing back at our base, the flight engineer had to hand-crank down the flaps. He had been a busy fellow that day.

Back on the ground, we found that the plane looked like a sieve. We quit counting the holes after 56. Our waist gunner took off his backpack parachute to stretch, and found a large piece of flak lodged in it. So, his parachute had saved his life, but it would have been a disaster if he had had to bail out.

This was the most rugged of all the missions I flew, although on three others we had to land in friendly territory in France because we were too shot up to get back home.

The other memorable mission was on Feb. 16, 1945, to Gelsenkirchen. This was in the industrialized Ruhr Valley and very heavily defended by the Germans. The guys jokingly called it "Happy Valley."

We were in contrails much of the time on the way to the target, which made flying formation difficult at 27,000 feet. Over the target, we received moderate flak, and the group behind us really caught it.

After dropping our bombs, we did quite a bit of evasive action. A plane just below us to the left exploded. It looked as though someone had thrown a bunch of garbage in the air. We learned later that our original waist gunner was in the plane, and his remains are now in the Ardennes American Cemetery in Belgium.

We started to let down rapidly to get out of the contrails, but we ran into bad weather at the lower altitude and almost collided with a group of B-24s heading into Germany. Our base was fogged in, so we were diverted to an English RAF base at Stratford-on-Avon. Our plane had a few holes, but we were able to fly it back to our base the next morning.

Family connection

But other memorable things about this mission happened after the war.

My wife's brother got a job in Germany and met and married a girl from Gelsenkirchen. She was away from home the day of our raid, and when she got home, she found her house had been destroyed. So, I had a part in destroying my future sister-in-law's

house, but she never held it against me and we are still good friends.

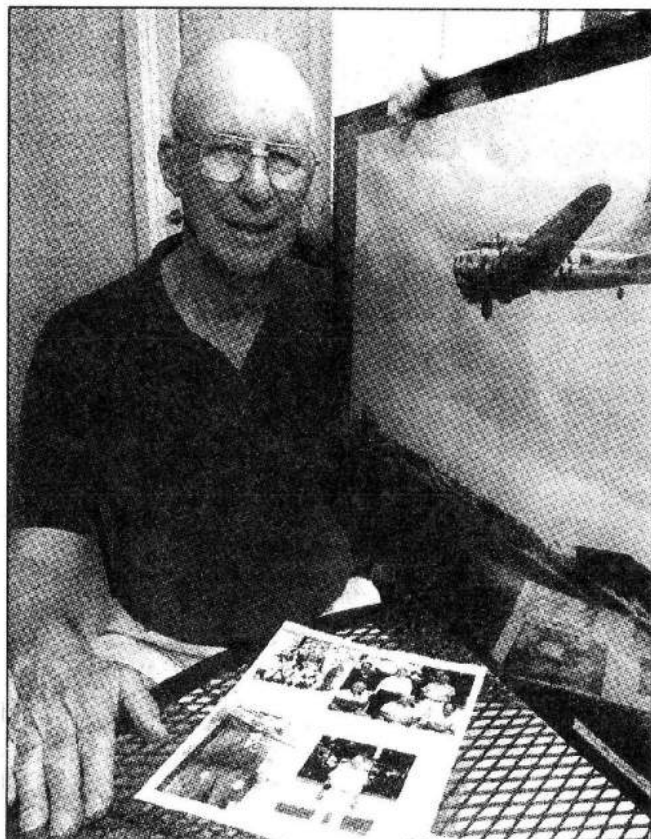
In 1991, I received a letter from a judge in west Texas. It turned out that he had been the co-pilot on the plane that blew up on that mission. He was blown clear of the plane, came to at about 10,000 feet, pulled his parachute rip cord and landed safely. He was a POW the rest of the war. He wanted to know more about our man who had been killed on his plane. Four men of his nine-man crew lived.

Also in 1991, I received a letter from a former gunner who had ridden in the truck to the flight line with our waist gunner who had been killed. He also wanted to know more about our man.

Durable aircraft

Our plane flew 120 combat missions without ever having to turn back, which was a record for our bomb group. I give credit to our ground crew for keeping her patched up. It was shot up so often that they used to joke that repairs resulted in the front half being made by Boeing and the back half by Lockheed.

Even though combat was traumatic at times, we also used to have fun, which allowed us to retain our sanity. Our crew was very close, and there are still six of us alive today who keep in touch.



ALAN'S ANECDOTES

Strength Building for Seniors

For those of us getting along in years, here is a little secret for building your arm and shoulder muscles. You might want to adopt this regimen! Three days a week works well.

Begin by standing outside behind the outhouse, and with a 5-lb. potato sack in each hand, extend your arms straight out to your sides and hold them there as long as you can.

After a few weeks, move up to 10-lb. potato sacks and then 50-lb. potato sacks. Finally get to where you can lift a 100-lb. potato sack in each hand and hold your arms straight out for more than a minute.

Next, start putting a few potatoes in the sacks, but be careful not to overdo at this level!!!

A WWII veteran was telling his neighbor, "I just bought a new hearing aid. It cost me four thousand dollars, but it's state of the art."

"Really," answered the neighbor. "What kind is it?"

"Twelve thirty."

Morris, an 82 year-old WWII vet went to the Doctor to get a physical. A few days later the doctor saw Morris walking down the street with a gorgeous young lady on his arm. A couple of days later the doctor spoke to the man and said, "You're really doing great, aren't you?"

Morris replied, "Just doing what you said, Doc, 'Get a hot mamma and be cheerful.'"

The Doctor said, "I didn't say that. I said you got a heart murmur. Be careful!"

What hair color do they put on the driver's licenses of bald men?

Back in the cowboy days, a westbound wagon train was lost and low on food. No other humans had been seen for days. And then they saw an old Jewish man sitting beneath a tree.

The Wagon Master rushed to him and said, "We're lost and running out of food. Is there someplace ahead where we can get food?"

"Vell," the old Jewish man said, "I wouldn't go up dat hill und down other side. Somevun told me you'll run into a big bacon tree."

"A bacon tree?" asked the wagon train leader.

"Yah, ah bacon tree. Trust me. For nuttin ... vud I lie."

The Wagon Master goes back and tells his people that if nothing else, they might be able to find food on the other side of the next ridge.

"So why did he say not to go there?" some pioneers asked. "Oh, you know Jewish people, they don't eat pork."

So the wagon train goes up the hill and down the other side. Suddenly, Indians attack and massacre everyone except the Wagon Master, who manages to escape back to the old Jewish man.

The near-dead man starts shouting. "What's wrong with you? You sent us to our deaths! We followed your instructions, but there was no bacon tree. Just hundreds of Indians, who killed everyone."

The old Jew holds up his hand and says, "Oy, wait a minute." He then gets out an old English-Yiddish dictionary, and begins thumbing through it.

"Oy, I made myself ah big mistake. It vuz not a bacon tree, it vuz a ham bush!"

What ever happened to
Preparations A thru G?

If 4 out of 5 people SUFFER from diarrhea-
does that mean that number 1 enjoys it?

Editor's Note...Alan Morton is always sending
funnies to me that he receives from friends all over
the country. We hope they will give you a chuckle.

MAIL CALL.....

From Francis G. Spillane...

As a life member of the 457th Bomb Group Association and as a retired thirty-seven year member of the New York City Fire Department, I wish to thank you for your photo of the flag raising by FDNY at the World Trade Center site which appeared on the cover of the last issue. For any organization to lose 343 members at one time is devastating since the largest loss before that was 14 members at 23rd Street collapse where I was at.

It is nice to know that the whole country participated in the great grief that present and former members of FDNY were involved in and it is even better to know that my WWII unit did it so well.

I was a Battalion Chief in the FDNY, retired for 20 years and was a navigator in Lt. Wendell Teague's crew of the 749th Sqd. We flew 35 missions in a plane called "Battle Baby" which is featured in our website.

As I write this letter this week after 57 years, I was finally able to get in touch with our co-pilot, Jack Eske, who lives about 100 miles from me in Santa Rosa, CA, and he is still in good health. We should be able to get together shortly.

As my daughter stated in her letter to UFA, FDNY, with her gift..."If there is anything good that came out of this tragedy, it is that the world now recognizes what we all knew all along, the quiet, unassuming heroism of the FDNY."

Again, thank you for your support.

Frank Spillane
749th Squadron

* * * * *

Letter written by Frank Spillane's daughter to UFA Widows and Children Fund...

Dear Sirs,

I am making this donation as a small way of helping the families that lost firefighters on

September 11. As the daughter of retired Battalion Chief, Francis Gerard Spillane, this was an extremely sad day for me. New York lost its best, bravest and most honorable men and I found this to be the worst part of the tragic events. This donation is in honor of my father who turned eighty last May and whose fondest memories are of the FDNY. He loves to share stories and could not be more proud of his time in the Fire Department. As am I. He is my hero and always has been. I feel very fortunate to have him. So, I really feel the pain of those families whose husbands, fathers, and brothers were just doing their job of putting their lives on the line to save others. It is the risk that they ran every day that they were on duty, as my father did for 35 years. If there is anything good that came out of this tragedy is that the world now recognizes what we all knew all along, the quiet, unassuming heroism of the FDNY.

Sincerely,

Maureen Spillane Capitolo

* * * * *

From Tom Goff...

First, I want to thank you for the article about me in the April issue of the 457th Bomb Group Association newsletter. The article was accurate, but the reaction to it was astounding.

I am getting along fine and have only some reactions. My writing which was bad is now horrible--so please bear with me. I still have some unsteadiness and some dizziness. But, I started driving again about a month ago.

I am writing primarily to thank everyone for their concern. I have received phone calls, letters and get well cards from all over the U.S. I want to take this means of thanking everyone. I have heard from people that I never heard from before and it is a very humbling experience.

I don't stay out very late anymore, but I am now most wary of coming home late at night.

Now, for a new subject. After my incident, my friend, Lillian, took care of me. She drove me and just took care of everything. A true friend. Then on 6 May, she had to go in the hospital for over 8 hours of cancer surgery. She now can't drive for about another week.

Again, my sincerest thanks to all of you for the calls, letters and cards.

A very humble friend,
Tom Goff

MORE MAIL.....

From Ed Reppa...

I have just received the April edition of the 457th Bomb Group Newsletter and I found one article of great interest to me. It was the one by (Hap) Reese concerning the puzzle or mystery of the B-17 that crashed on Dec. 24, 1943. I remember some of the circumstances because I could have been involved in the mid-air collision.

First of all, the incident happened at Wendover Army Air Base, Utah. The 457th was in the final stages of training before going to Grand Island, Nebraska, and then on to England.

At the briefing on the morning of December 24, I was scheduled to fly in the 4th position leading the second element of the squadron formation. However, my copilot, Aaron Ayres, had had a bad cold and Doc Bale, flight surgeon for the 748th squadron, grounded him for the day. Another crew was assigned to take my place.

The squadron was forming at an estimated 2000 feet. Somehow the right wingman from the first element flew into the tail section of the plane that had taken my place, chewing up the elevator controls. The plane went into a loop and crashed into the ground without anyone having a chance to get out. The plane of the wingman had two engines damaged but the pilot managed to land it safely. I believe some of the crew bailed out.

That afternoon I was assigned another copilot and went on a compass recalibration.

The collision happened so long ago I have since forgotten the names of the pilots.

The wife of one of the officers of the crashed airplane was at Wendover for the Christmas holiday. It was a sad and muted crowd at the "O" club that night.

Ed Reppa, 748th Squadron

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

From Richard Naish...

I write on behalf of the Social Committee of Flying Club Conington. Our club is based at what was Glatton Airfield, but which is now known as Peterborough Business Airfield.

I wanted you to know that we were sorry that the schedule of the recent reunion in May 2002 did not give us an opportunity to extend more hospitality towards the ex-servicemen who attended.

On behalf of the Flying Club, I would however like to extend an open invitation to any ex-aircrew who would like to fly with us from the airfield during your next visit. Our pilots would be delighted to do this at no cost to those who would like to fly once more from Glatton.

Please forward my message to those who would be interested. If anyone is planning a trip, they can contact me via my email address and we will make the necessary arrangements.

rnaish@rnaish.plus.com

Regards, Richard Naish...on behalf of Flying Club Conington Social Committee

Joe Toth, Contact Man, answered on behalf of the Association...

I read with great interest your message on our message board for the group.

We have just returned from our reunion in Peterborough. I wish we had known of your invitation to fly from Glatton once again. I, for one, would certainly have taken you up on it as would many of our other members.

Our experiences at Glatton will always be a part of our lives. I flew 32 missions from Glatton and it still is a thrill for me each time I

come over and visit that runway.

Joe went on to tell Richard about our reunion in South Dakota coming up in 2003 and invited him and any others members of the Flying Club to not only attend the reunion, but to join the Association.

(We are happy to report that Richard Naish has become a member of the 457th Bomb Group Association.)

He sent this note...

Dear Joe,

Thank you for your reply. It's certainly a shame that we didn't have the opportunity to fly during the group's recent reunion. It would be a great pleasure and an honour for our pilots and we look forward to the next reunion in 2004. Thanks also for you kind invitations regarding membership and the next reunion in Rapid City.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

From Frank Bernd...

About 15 years ago, when we were still young, or should I say younger, the Jefferson Jr. High School in Naperville, Illinois, came up with a great idea. The 8th graders studied World War II just before Memorial Day. Why not have veterans from this war give talks on how the war effected them, and on what they did during the war. Through the local paper they were able to assemble about forty or fifty veterans of all the services. Included were people who lived in England, an OSS operator who operated behind the enemy lines, and other people who were somehow connected with WWII. This group has now dwindled down to about eighteen and twenty participants.

Two days are picked in May in which the veterans give their stories and personal experiences. Presentations are for a standard class period of forty minutes and four to five periods are allocated to each speaker. We usually talk to between ten or fifteen students at one time. The students are very attentive. Since the students, with few exceptions, know almost nothing about the Great War, they are amazed that we did the things we did at the tender age we were at that time. I always tell each group that the

time is very near when all the learning will be from books since we will not be here. For the veterans, this is a fantastic opportunity to educate our young students as to what war really is from first hand experiences.

A few days after our presentations we usually receive short letters from a number of the students. These letters make us feel that our message is really being understood. Attached is a letter from a young lady (8th grade) who heard me give my story. This letter says it all. Letters such as this keep us going back year after year. If you can join a group such as ours, please do so. Remember that time has just about run out for us to tell it as we lived it, not as Hollywood thinks it happened.

Courtney's letter:

Dear Mr. Bernd,

I would like to be one to thank you for attending Jefferson Jr. High's WW2 Speakers day. Your were definitely appreciated by all of us! I learned a lot from you about bombardiers, and how many men were counting on your success at shooting a target below. I can hardly imagine the pressure you must have felt while doing your job in the service, and your anticipation to go home to be with your family. You are truly a hero of this country. Without you and many other loyal servicemen, our country would not be what it is today. I will no doubt bring the things you shared with us, away with me. At the end of your presentation, you left my group with this quote: "Since then, I live one day at a time." You said, "It is a gift." I will never forget it.

*Thanks again!
Courtney Cebula*

Giving the talks mentioned, completes my year and I look forward to it all year. The letters from the 8th graders are fun to read. There is no way that they can imagine their 18 or 20 year old relatives doing what we did. Some of these children are super bright and really feel what is being told to them. The attached letter from Courtney may not be always structured in spots, but the feeling is there, and the understanding is there. This young lady graduated at the top of her class.

Come to think of it, nothing of mine is structured right. It's just me!!!

--Frank Bernd

The Crossing

by Lawrence J. Gallaher

It took us two weeks to fly to Europe...(the super-sonic Concord does it today in two hours). We went by the northern route: it was the middle of November '44.

We flew a brand new B-17G first from Lincoln, Nebraska, to Bangor, Maine, where we "rested" for a couple of days. Actually we were waiting for the runways in Goose Bay Labrador to be cleared of snow. When we finally got to Labrador we found they had just had a couple of feet of snow and five foot banks of the stuff plowed up along the sides of the landing strip. Now that we were out of the U.S., we were required to post a 24 hr. guard on our plane. That meant we had to take turns sleeping in the plane each night. On my turn guarding the plane and sleeping in it I had 9 blankets; each of us had been issued a blanket for the trip and the rest of the crew who slept in beds in barracks left them in the plane for the person on guard duty. But with 5 blankets under me, 4 on top of me, and with all the clothes I could put on, I was still cold sleeping on the radio room floor of that B-17. After a couple of days we were finally cleared for the flight to Iceland. The route would take us over the middle of the Greenland ice cap, a real sight to behold. Except that as we approached the coast of Greenland we were instructed, because the weather in Iceland had closed in, to divert to Bluie West 3, an emergency strip on the west coast of Greenland.

There were a series of emergency air fields on the coast of Greenland, for just such purposes. Bluie West 3 was up one of the long fiords and at the base of a huge glacier. The west coast of Greenland is very similar to the west coast of Norway in terms of the long fiords cut there by the last ice age.

We stayed in Greenland several days waiting for the weather. Getting to know some of the personnel permanently stationed there prompted great sympathy for them...they had been there two and a half years by then and could expect to be there till war's end; no leaves, furlough nor rotation. And there was absolutely nothing there except the air strip which was closed in on each side by huge mountains and at one end by the glacier. The native population consisted of exactly one Eskimo family.

While on our Greenland wait, we broke into our survival kit, took the fishing gear and with the plane's ax, went ice fishing. We chopped a hole in the 18 inch thick ice at the foot of the glacier and actually caught something. I think it was a salmon about two feet long and loaded with caviar. We took it to the base kitchen and got the cook there to prepare it for us, tho I don't remember eating any of it.

The flight across the Greenland ice cap was as spectacular as promised. It was clear and sunny, the view of the mountains and the valleys filled with mile thick ice covered with snow was fantastic. Years later I read that a flight of Lockheed P-38s on their way to England went down on the ice cap; some of the pilots were rescued but the planes are still there...except for one. In the 1980s, an expedition was organized to go in and bring one of the P-38s out, now a valuable antique.

We landed in Reykjavik, Iceland in the dark. Just under the Arctic Circle, it was dark there 20 hours a day at that time of the year.

A story was once told to me by a math professor at Ohio U (he was married to a woman from Iceland), concerning the founding or colonization of the island. It seems that a gang of Norwegians in the 9th century whose conduct was so obstreperous and offensive, even to the other Vikings, that they were driven out of their home district. Escaping by ship and pondering their future, they decided to go colonize some place where their reputations would not follow.

One of these "refugees" suggested that he knew a place where there were practically no people and plenty of land for the taking. But someone else pointed out that they had no women with them and setting up a colony or homeland with no women (after all, who was going to do all the work?) was not a practical idea. At that point another of the crew jumped up and volunteered that he knew where they could get lots of women!

So they set sail for Ireland and began raiding the convents along the coast until they had plenty of women, enough for every body. They then sailed for Iceland.

The good nuns had the last word, so to speak; they raised their children to be Christians, and eventually their descendants petitioned the Pope to send them a bishop and a couple of priests, which he did. (I can't really vouch for the authenticity of this story, but that's how he told it to me!)

During the crossing of the North Atlantic we became good friends with another crew ferrying along with us another B-17 to England. This was Lt. Walter Graves' crew. (Graves and our pilot, Will Fluman, had been cadets together in some of the same classes in flight training.) While in Iceland only the officers were allowed to go into the city of Reykjavik and hobnob with the locals. I remember one of Graves' officers went into town wearing a dark blue turtle neck sweater and his '50 mission crush garrison cap (of course he had yet to fly even one mission)... with his blond head he looked for all the world like the movie version of a German submarine captain. Made a big splash with the local girls I'm told.

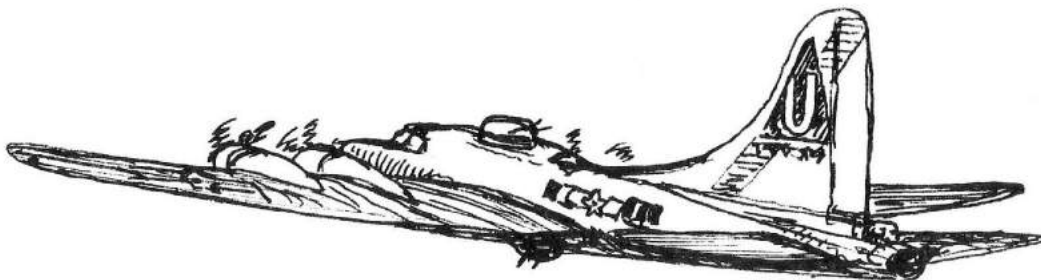
The Icelanders are very proud of their heritage and particularly proud of the "purity" of their genetic heritage...almost all Icelanders can trace their family tree back to the original settlers. They have kept good birth and ancestral records over the last 1000 years and there was little or no immigration into the island after the turn of the first millennium.

In fact, there was a big flap in the U.S. Senate back in the 1960s, at the height of our civil rights movement, about renewing our NATO treaty with Iceland. This treaty specified that the U.S. would not (never?) post Negro troops on the island (lest the island's genetic heritage become "contaminated"). Icelanders are Aryans with a vengeance and their sympathies were clearly with the Germans in WWII.

It's just a 500 mile flight from Reykjavik to Wales where we landed and left our plane, just two weeks after leaving Lincoln, Nebraska. And on being assigned to Glatton (457th BG) we discovered our buddies, Walter Graves and crew, were also assigned to the 457th.

On the 23rd of December '44, Graves' crew, returning from their first mission, but with another more experienced first pilot with Graves as copilot, crashed into a hillside in England in bad weather...there were no survivors.

Ever,
Larry Ballalier



\$1

\$1

\$1

\$1

\$1

THE DOLLAR BILL

Reprint from EX-POW BULLETIN March 2000

Take out a one dollar bill and look at it. The one dollar bill you're looking at first came off the presses in 1957 in its present design. This so-called paper money is in fact a cotton and linen blend, with red and blue minute silk fibers running through it. It is actually material. We've all washed it without it falling apart. A special blend of ink is used, the contents of which we will never know.

It is overprinted with symbols and then it is starched to make it water resistant and pressed to give it that nice crisp look. If you look on the front of the bill, you will see the United States Treasury Seal. On the top you will see the scales for the balance---a balanced budget! In the center you have a carpenter's T-square, a tool used for an even cut. Underneath is the Key to the United States Treasury. That's all pretty easy to figure out, but what is on the back of that dollar bill is something we should all know.

If you turn the bill over, you will see two circles. Both circles, together, comprise the Great Seal of the United States. The first Continental Congress requested that Benjamin Franklin and a group of men come up with a Seal. It took them four years to accomplish this task and another two years to get it approved. If you look at the left hand circle, you will see a Pyramid. Notice the face is lighted and the western side is dark. This country was just beginning. We had not begun to explore the West or decided what we could do for Western civilization. The Pyramid is un-capped, again signifying that we were not even close to being finished. Inside the capstone you have the all-seeing eye, an ancient symbol for divinity. It was Franklin's belief that one man couldn't do it alone, but a group of men, with the help of God, could do anything. "IN GOD WE TRUST" is on this currency. The Latin above the pyramid, ANNUIT COEPTIS, means "God has favored our undertaking." the Latin below the pyramid, NOVUS ORDO SECLORUM, means "a new order has begun." At the base of the pyramid is the Roman numeral for 1776.

If you look at the right-hand circle, and check it carefully, you will learn that it is on every National Cemetery in the United States. It is also on the Parade of Flags Walkway at the Bushnell, Florida National Cemetery and is the

centerpiece of most hero's monuments. Slightly modified, it is the seal of the President of the United States and it is always visible whenever he speaks, yet no one knows what the symbols mean.

The Bald Eagle was selected as a symbol for victory for two reasons: First, he is not afraid of a storm; he is strong and he is smart enough to soar above it. Secondly, he wears no material crown. We had just broken from the King of England. Also, notice the shield is unsupported. This country can now stand on its own. At the top of that shield you have a white bar signifying Congress, a unifying factor. We were coming together as one nation. In the eagle's beak you will read, "E PLURIBUS UNUM", meaning "one nation from many people." Above the Eagle you have thirteen stars representing the thirteen original colonies, and any clouds of misunderstanding rolling away. Again, we were coming together as one. Notice what the Eagle holds in his talons. He holds an olive branch and arrows. This country wants peace, but we will never be afraid to fight to preserve peace. The Eagle always wants to face the olive branch, but in time of war, his gaze turns toward the arrows.

They say that the number 13 is an unlucky number. This is almost a worldwide belief. You will usually never see a room numbered 13, or any hotels or motels with a 13th floor. But think about this: 13 original colonies, 13 signers of the Declaration of Independence, 13 strips on our flag, 13 steps on the Pyramid, 13 letters in the Latin above, 13 letters in "E Pluribus Unum", 13 stars above the Eagle, 13 plumes of feathers on each span of the Eagle's wing, 13 bars on that shield, 13 leaves on the olive branch, 13 fruits, and if you look closely, 13 arrows. And for minorities: the 13th Amendment.

I always ask people, "Why don't you know this?" Your children don't know this and their history teachers don't know this. Too many veterans have given up too much to ever let the meaning fade. Some veterans remember coming home to an America that didn't care. Too many veterans never came home at all.

Pass this along to others--otherwise they may never know.

Following are excerpts from a newspaper article about one of our own...Thomas Elliott...who has just returned from his first reunion in England.

ELLIOT ENJOYS WWII GROUP'S REUNION

**THOMAS J. (JACK)
ELLIOTT...RECENTLY ATTENDED
THE REUNION OF HIS WORLD
WAR II BOMB GROUP IN
PETERBOROUGH, ENGLAND.**

Headquarters for the reunion was the Bull Hotel, located about eight miles from the village of Glatton, which was home to the 457th Bomb Group from January, 1944 through June, 1945.

Glatton was a small, typical English village located just off the Old North Road between Peterborough and Huntingdon. It had a church, school, post office, store and a pub. It was so well camouflaged that from the air it was difficult to tell that a U.S. air base was also there.

A large part of the first day was spent getting reacquainted with old buddies and meeting each other's families. Jack had not seen most of his buddies for 57 years, and there was much talk about the old days and some about the new.

You can bet that the local pubs did a thriving business, Elliot reports. In the evening, two English historians, John and Sylvia Walker, were in the hotel to answer questions.

To celebrate Memorial Day, the group visited the Cambridge American Cemetery in Cambridgeshire, England. In many ways this was the high point of the reunion. The group had many buddies buried there and were touched from the moment the Scots Bagpiper marched in playing his mournful dirge until the "Sally B", now the only air worthy B-17 in the U.K., made four passes over the cemetery. In between, the speeches and prayers were inspirational.

On the final day of the reunion, the group traced the steps the men of the 457th

took in the 1945 VE Day Parade. They made their way to the Peterborough Town Hall and on to the Lord Mayor's Parlor for a civic reception.

During World War II, the 457th Bomb Group won six battle stars and a presidential citation for its accomplishments.

The group was disbanded in September, 1945, and Elliott was discharged Sept. 19, 1945. He had been with the 457th Bomb Group from beginning to end.

Elliott is a life member of Eufaula's Post 5850, Veterans of Foreign Wars.



COURTESY PHOTO

Jack Elliott shakes hands with the Lord Mayor of Peterborough during the laying of the wreath ceremony at Cowington Church in honor of the 457th Bomb Group.

HEADQUARTERS EIGHTH AIR FORCE

Office of the Commanding General

APO 634

I want you to share with me the broader view of the picture--a picture of our major tasks in 1944 and how we accomplished them. You deserve to share that view by virtue of the fact that you dedicated 1944 to your work, to your country, and to the cause of freedom. In spite of physical discomforts caused by mud, and rain, and cold, in spite of losses in battle, in spite of handicaps which seemed insuperable at times, you persevered and succeeded.

The brief outline which follows will fill you with pride and with the realization that each of you contributed to the job some element which was indispensable. I believe it will add to your determination to carry on unstintingly until our goal becomes a reality.

THE EIGHTH AIR FORCE---1944

On December 24, 1944, the Eighth Air Force sent over Germany 2,034 heavy bombers and 936 fighters, the greatest single force of airplanes ever dispatched in history. Well over 21,000 Americans flew in that armada over marshalling yards, vital communications centers and airfields behind the enemy lines. Many times that number worked on the ground to launch those planes, and many more again performed the great varieties of services which have built the Eighth into the deadly weapon it was intended to be.

WHAT WE HAVE DONE....

The past year has seen the Eighth Air Force in full stride. We have hit the enemy with more than 430,000 tons of bombs. During the year, our fliers flew 1,700,000 operational hours, and our planes consumed 522,000,000 gallons of gasoline to release those tons of destruction. Blows were directed in turn at the types of targets which were most vital to the Nazi war effort and which could only be destroyed by precision bombing--the job of the Eighth.

Our first task was to make sure that when the combined Allied ground forces invaded "Fortress Europe", we would have superiority in the air. Our bombers and fighters, had in hand with those of the RAF, and the Ninth, Twelfth and Fifteenth American Air Forces, pounded German air power in the early months of the year, and the Luftwaffe was virtually helpless during the initial phases of the invasion. Aircraft factories, oil plants and supplies, and transportation facilities--these targets showed the effects of our pre-invasion hammering when D-Day came.

Our second great mission was performed during the invasion phase. Although designed for strategic bombing, the Eighth carried through every task of tactical support of the ground forces called for by the Supreme Commander. We helped to cover the Normandy beaches, and later the Dutch airborne landings, with protective air umbrellas. On June 6th, we flew a record-breaking 4,700 sorties. We sealed off the bridgeheads from enemy reserves by cutting the Seine and Loire bridges, and by hammering Nazi communications. Precision bombing blazed the way for the ground forces through enemy strong points. Before D-Day we flew thousands of tons of munitions and equipment to resistance movements on the continent, rushed emergency shipments of food, medical, and other vital supplies to ground forces during the crucial month of August; and cooperated in the development of psychological warfare by dropping almost 900,000,000 leaflets in enemy-controlled territory by night, and additional millions during daylight missions.

In air battles during 1944, fighter pilots and bomber crews destroyed over 6,000 enemy aircraft. Strafing attacks by our fighters accounted for 1,950 more. In precision attacks on enemy airfields and factories, our heavies not only blasted production facilities, but damaged or destroyed an additional 2,630 Nazi aircraft. Fighters also knocked out 3,652 locomotives, 5,702 freight cars, 3,436 trucks, and significant numbers of tank cars,

ammunition dumps and similar ground targets.

Ground crews equalled the fliers in their devotion to duty. Men have frequently worked for 72 hours without rest to put their ships back in the air. There was a steady rise in percentages of aircraft in commission--in spite of growing numbers of sorties monthly and increased battle damage. Just before D-Day, the number of planes to be serviced rose sharply; the job was done with no increase in numbers of ground crews.

Recognition for achievements both in the air and on the ground came to many of you in 1944, in the form of decorations from our Government. Of the five highest and most cherished awards that our country can bestow for valorous conduct, 594 were won by members of the Eighth. Seven of these were Congressional Medals of Honor.

...AS ONE

The story of the Eighth is the story of *all* of you. It belongs neither to any individual nor to any part of us less than the whole. Every member of this Command has contributed some element to it; without all of these contributions, the story would not have been. Ordnance and Chemical workers, for example, during 1944 loaded more than 3,000,000 bombs and incendiaries--most of them during the long hours of the night--and hand-linked, repositioned and loaded 53,000,000 rounds of 50 calibre ammunition in the course of their duties. The sweat of thousands went into the driving, servicing, and repair of the Eighth's 25,000 motor vehicles. At one Headquarters alone, the telephone operators handled 14,000 calls each day. If you are one of these, or if you are one of those who kept up, by all standards, in good health--who in 1944 brought about important reductions in non-effective rates; if you are one of those who built and maintained our air strips and station facilities, or one of those who can proudly say that over 1,000 road convoys were escorted during 1944 without an accident; if you are one of those who performed the unheroic but indispensable functions of guaranteeing our supplies of food, adequate clothing and organizational equipment, or one of those whose attention to administrative assignments contributed so substantially to effectiveness--then you are part of the team.

The past year has seen outstanding technical advances. One of the most important was the development of instruments for bombing through overcast which steadily increased the number of missions flown per month in weather previously prohibitive to operations. Weather and photo-reconnaissance units pioneered many new techniques and rendered remarkable services, not only to the Eighth, but to other air and ground forces.

Other significant developments vital to our growth and success took place in 1944. Payroll and allotment problems were resolved, and personnel showed growing interest in savings by sending home well over \$170,000,000. Each month recorded marked increases in the diversity and quality of opportunities for recreation and leisure-time education. Significant emphasis was placed upon activities which are giving us further understanding of the peoples and problems involved in global war. Each Chaplain conducted an average of 38 services every month; they proved themselves invaluable sources of advice, friendship and spiritual strength. The already firm bonds of kinship and understanding which exist between our British Allies and ourselves were made even stronger. In such ways did 1944 do much to prepare us, both mentally and physically, to face our problems and the task that lies ahead.

...TO WIN

Our story has not yet ended. Together we have become one of the mightiest striking forces of all time. As pioneers of the daylight precision assault, we will continue that assault until final victory is won.

This is your report--written by your deeds, sealed by your devotion. Let us give thanks for what has been accomplished. Let us remember those who have given themselves in the battle. As the New Year dawns, let us resolve to press the attack, and go forward" as one -- to win".

RETURN TO GLATTON

I returned to AAF Station 130, Glatton, England, perhaps for the last time. I joined nineteen other old warriors and thirty-one family members for three days of fellowship, remembrances and respect to those who gave their lives for the cause of Freedom.

I joined the group at the Bull Hotel in Peterborough, then and now the unofficial headquarters for the group. I accompanied the group to former AAF Station 130, only a shell of the bustling installation of more than a half century ago. I went to the cemetery in the church yard. The lilacs were not in bloom. The Stone American was standing, as he has for fifty-seven years, in the corner of the cemetery with eyes lifted toward the sky, awaiting the return of his bombers from another uncertain journey eastward.

A chilling late May rain fell as a memorial service was conducted in the church that dates back to 1500. The skies lightened as we moved to the Stone American to place a memorial wreath at his base. As in life, he never flinched.

I went with the group to the American Military Cemetery at Madingly. The miniature American and British flags, placed at every grave, rippled in the chilly early morning breeze. As time neared for the service the sun shone brightly. The ground service concluded with the playing of Taps. Then with military precision the skies were filled with Air Force F-15 jets streaking across the sky with the missing man suddenly leaving the formation and ascending skyward. An English RAF formation followed and then a familiar figure approached. It was the Flying Fortress lumbering along, making its way over the cemetery. The pilot must have heard the applause that accompanied the flyover. He made a 360 degree turn and came back over for an encore.

I sat in the lobby of the Bull, which seemed an appropriate name to accompany some of the stories. An impartial third person observed the stories seem to get a little more embellished every year. I went back to the base and walked the grown up flight line with second and third generation attendees and attempted to aid them in visualizing a busy air base fifty-eight years earlier.

It came time to leave. I went to the rail station and caught an early morning Royal Scotsman commuter train to London. The morning air was chilly. The platform was crowded (in spots) with commuters reading their papers and drinking their coffee. Queued in an exact spot where the door to the passenger car would open, they could board and quickly find their favorite seat. The train was five minutes late. A voice came over the speaker on the platform advising and apologizing for the five minute delay. Exactly five minutes later the train ground to a halt at the station. The commuters had it figured to the inch. Not wanting possibly to be trampled, I waited until they boarded and entered finding a seat just inside the automatic closing door.

The Royal Scotsman had picked up full speed by the time it passed the old base. In the distance above the tree line the steeple of the church proudly stood as it had for so many years. The Royal Scotsman pulled into Kings Cross Station in fifty-one minutes, eighty-six miles from station to station. The conductor again apologized for the delay and hoped no one had been inconvenienced. Since I was the last one to board at Peterborough I was first out of the car and had to move quickly to escape the fast

RETURN TO GLATTON--(cont)

overtaking commuters. I went inside the station and suddenly it was back in the 21st century. People were scurrying to and fro. Announcements over the speaker system were constant and no one had time to dodge a Yank looking for the exit to board the Airbus to Heathrow.

More of the real world was present at Heathrow. Everyone was going somewhere and in a hurry to get there. I boarded my flight and headed west to Chicago. As I watched the progress of the flight on the television screen I marveled at the speed of the craft and it suddenly dawned on me one could fly from London to Chicago in less time than it took to fly a mission to Berlin.

Flying westward I pondered why I took off over a holiday to spend three and a half days in England when I had been there before. The answer was clear. Honoring the memory of those Valiant Airmen who gave their lives that Freedom Might Prevail remains a sacred responsibility both at home and abroad. If we forget, who will remember?

---James Bass



Reunion Attendees at the Mayor's Reception...Peterborough

The following story is reprinted with permission from *Reader's Digest*, March 1986.

Editor's Note: In order to get permission to reprint the article, I had to agree to reprint it in its entirety in one issue of our newsletter.

SONG OF A VALIANT LADY

by Nathan M. Adams

"Shoo Shoo Baby" was born in a giant aircraft plant in Seattle, Wash., in 1944 and sent to England. A 27-year-old pilot from Michigan, Lt. Paul McDuffee, claimed the B-17 for his own and flew her through deadly flak and fighter attacks to bomb the heart of Nazi Germany. She almost died there--officially listed as missing in action--but survived to fight polar storms and tropical heat. Finally she had nothing more to give, and was abandoned to rot and decay. Yet she lived to fly again.

There is an airfield hidden amid rolling farmlands near France's Picardy. Small copses of trees dot its perimeter. The mound of a bunker--a silent reminder of a war long ended--is barely visible near the runway. Back in 1944 the airfield was the group headquarters of the Luftwaffe's crack Richthofen fighter squadron. Then the early-morning stillness was shattered by the snarling engines of Focke-Wulf 190s taking off to savage the formations of American heavy bombers bound for targets deep in Germany.

Mysteriously, this winter day in 1972, one of these bombers is parked in front of a distant hangar. It is an abandoned Boeing B-17G "Flying Fortress." It bears little resemblance to the pride of America's strategic bomber forces in World War II. The gun turrets are missing; so are all four engines. Inside the fuselage--the cabin door has vanished--there is the sudden flutter of birds nesting where the tail gunner once crouched. A cold wind moans through the plane. The windows in the cockpit are opaque, and there are no instruments in the panel. Loose change, tarnished, has come to rest in nooks and crannies. Swedish, Danish, and French coins betray the nationalities of former crewmen.

Some of them must have noted a faint row of scars on one of the control wheels, now almost healed by the grip of a thousand hands. Cut many years before, the scars are evenly spaced, resembling notches on a gunfighter's pistol butt. But only a few ever read the nearly illegible name scratched inside the metal disc that covered the nut holding the wheel to the control column: "Lt. Paul G. McDuffee, Army Air Corps."

It is McDuffee's B-17, long lost and now found. This is her story:

Twenty-one-year-old Adeline "Tiny" Stefano heaved every ounce of her 87 pounds against the bucking rivet gun as she fastened another sheet of preformed aluminum to the tail section of what would

become a B-17. Only four feet, eleven inches tall, she was one of more than 3000 workers--79 percent of them women--who assembled the bombers at the Boeing Airplane Company's Plant No. 2, within sight of downtown Seattle. Inside the huge building, assembly bays held the gleaming hulls of 50 B-17s, each elevated in its own jig. After two years of war, the factory had reached peak capacity and was turning out an average of 14 B-17s a day--about the same rate that German flak and fighters were shooting them down.

For 62 1/2 cents an hour, ten hours a day, seven days a week, Adeline Stefano riveted tail sections. It would take her crew six hours to complete this section. At 11 they took a half-hour lunch break. After they finished their sandwiches, some of the women composed messages to the men who would ultimately fly the bomber in combat, added their addresses and phone numbers, and hid the notes in the framework of the section.

Tiny Stefano could not bring herself to be quite so bold. Her own message was brief: "Hi, GI Joe. I hope that this tail end stays together. Come home safe!" She folded the paper and wedged it below the slab of armored glass designed to protect the tail gunner. By midafternoon, Tiny had shot home the last rivet. Then she paused to watch as the section disappeared up the assembly line. Along with her note, she sent a prayer.

Near the end of the first week in January 1944, the riveted sections of Line No. 3345 began to resemble an airplane. Electric wiring, heating ducts and oxygen systems were connected; wings and tail fins hoisted into position; steel cables strung inside the length of the fuselage linking the rudder, elevators and trim tabs to flight controls in the cockpit. Gun turrets protruded through the smooth skin of the hull like transparent warts. Each would house deadly twin .50-caliber machine guns.

Now, four Wright Cyclone engines were swung onto the nacelles and attached to fuel lines and pumps. Propellers were added, as well as connections to the pilot's control console so that he could vary the speed and pitch of the blades.

On January 19, 1944, the plane had become a full-fledged B-17--the 334th to be manufactured in Plant No. 2. On this date it was lowered from the final assembly jig and pushed out onto the tarmac of Boeing Field.

A perfect blend of technology and toughness, the "Flying Fortress" was the finest bomber then built--stable as a boulder, reliable and forgiving. It could deliver more than two tons of bombs at distances

(Shoo Shoo Baby...continued next page)

up to 1900 miles. Its average cruising speed at 30,000 feet was 160 to 180 m.p.h., although it was designed to reach speeds as high as 300. They said that it was an aircraft that insurance salesmen and drugstore soda jerks could fly and survive in. Many already had.

Early on the morning of January 24, B-17G, Line No. 3345, was readied by a ground crew for its official acceptance flight. Fuel gurgled into the great wing tanks, which held nearly 3000 gallons of high-octane gas. The propellers were hand-pulled through four revolutions to clear the cylinders. Then, inside the cockpit, two Army Air Corps pilots and a flight engineer moved through the takeoff checklist. The copilot reached for the starter switch.

The propeller of the No. 1 engine, farthest out on the port wing, whined slowly through the first of its turns. Suddenly the engine shuddered, coughed, and a cloud of blue smoke billowed from its exhaust stack. The blades of the propeller blurred and steadied to the throttle, making rapid popping noises as they beat at the cold air.

One at a time, the remaining three engines were started, and the pilot steered the plane onto the runway, where it swung into the wind and paused briefly to await takeoff clearance.

The pilot gripped the bars of the throttles and slowly advanced them. The plane trembled and strained against the brakes, then lurched forward as they were released. At 110 miles per hour, the combined sections of Line No. 3345 broke free from the earth.

For the next hour the crew tested each on-board system, from the hydraulic and electrical equipment to the automatic pilot. Returning to Boeing Field, they tested the guns, firing long bursts that shredded the calm surface of Puget Sound.

"Nice. She's a honey," was all the pilot said as he landed the B-17.

With hurried strokes, he signed acceptance papers on behalf of the U.S. Army Air Corps. The B-17 was pronounced ready to go to war.

McDuffee's Airplane

Dense fog shrouded the air base at Bassingbourn in England's East Anglia--headquarters of the 91st Bomb Group, 1st Bomb Division, U.S. 8th Air Force. This morning, March 5, 1944, the 91st "stood down" after a mission over Germany's Ruhr Valley. Ground crews used the time to patch flak damage.

Finishing a leisurely breakfast, 2nd Lt. Paul G. McDuffee, ex-Sergeant/Pilot Royal Canadian Air Force, waited for the fog to lift. McDuffee had been assigned a spare B-17 and ordered to fly several

skeleton crews to the Burtonwood Air Depot in Cheshire. There, he was to sign for six newly arrived B-17s and lead them back to Bassingbourn.

By midmorning the visibility had improved sufficiently to permit takeoff, and the flight to Burtonwood was uneventful. Selecting one of the new B-17s to fly himself, McDuffee performed the customary "walk-around" of the aircraft, kicking the tires, testing the control surfaces of the wings and tail. All was in order.

No reason lay behind McDuffee's choice of this particular B-17--except perhaps that she had been parked closer to the warmth of Burtonwood's canteen than her companions were. He had already made note of the plane's serial number: 42-32076. McDuffee hauled himself into the cockpit and slid his lean frame into the left-hand pilot's seat of the aircraft.

Airborne ten minutes later, McDuffee settled back and waited for the B-17 to reveal her personality. Despite physical appearances, no two planes of the same make will handle identically. Much has to do with the so-called center of gravity--that exact point on an aircraft where it would be perfectly balanced if placed on a fulcrum. The pilot must constantly "trim" the airplane so that its attitude, or position, remains in harmony with the wind and other weather forces it is moving through. Trim tabs--small control surfaces located in the trailing edges of the rudder, elevators and ailerons--can be set to slightly tilt the plane on its axes, thus correcting imbalance.

McDuffee had set the trim at his cruising altitude. Now he watched for the air speed to fall--clues that would tell him to reset the trim. But the B-17 rumbled steadily on. McDuffee flew through moderate chop, which caused the B-17 to shudder. Surely now he would have to retrim. But there was still no change.

He started a wide turn. The B-17 responded effortlessly and without any assistance from her rudder. McDuffee found to his delight that he could perform the maneuver with ailerons alone, simply turning the control yoke as though it were the steering wheel of a car.

Such a plane was a freak of production--a symphony of balance and design. Not a rivet was out of place. He had piloted as many as a hundred aircraft without encountering one of these unique planes. McDuffee meant to have this beauty for himself.

Ten minutes after landing at Bassingbourn, he was asking his group commander, Col. Claude E. Putnam, that the B-17 listed as No. 42-32076 be assigned to him. He was careful not to elaborate on

her performance. Instead, he stressed that he had not received a permanent B-17 since his arrival at the base five months before. As a veteran pilot, he felt entitled to one.

Having won his way with Putnam, he raced across the runway to break the news to the chief of the ground crew that had been detailed to No. 42-32076, now of the 401st Squadron, 91st Bomb Group; now of McDuffee. He found Tech. Sgt. Hank Cordes, a tall, bespectacled Californian, already inspecting the B-17 at her dispersal site. It was Cordes's job to prepare her for missions, to dress her wounds when she returned, to tune the cough of her engines into sweet song. McDuffee could entrust his secret to Cordes. "Sergeant, I don't want anybody near this airplane without our permission, okay?"

Cordes nodded. He knew how it was between a pilot and his plane. He shared the same emotion. "Can I name her, Mac?"

McDuffee agreed, and Cordes thought it over. " 'Shoo Shoo Baby,' " he said at last. It was a hit song helped to popularity by the Andrews Sisters, one of his wife's favorites.

"Sounds fine," McDuffee said. "Get it painted on."

Later they would also have a Vargas-calendar pinup painted on the nose, but in McDuffee's mind No. 42-32076 had already become Shoo Shoo Baby. As such, she would join other B-17s of the 91st like the veterans "Chow Hound" and "Pist'I Packin' Mama."

That night, McDuffee bicycled back to his airplane in a misting rain. Once more he climbed into the cockpit. He sat there silently for several minutes. *She still smells of the factory*, he thought, *like a new car*. Soon this would be replaced by the pungent odors of hydraulic fluid, leather and sweat. And, of course, the stink of fear.

McDuffee knew. He had been there and back, more often than most.

He was born in Grand Rapids, Mich. In 1937 at 21 years of age, he enlisted in the Army Air Corps. After four attempts, he passed the entrance examination for flight school--then promptly "washed out." He had no feel for an airplane, they told him.

Briefly he returned to civilian life, puttering at odd jobs. He knew war was coming, and he was still determined to fly. In February 1941, ten months before the attack on Pearl Harbor, he hitchhiked to Windsor, Ontario, and enlisted in the Royal Canadian Air Force.

Nine months later he arrived in an embattled England, an RCAF pilot's wings sewn on his tunic. By July 1942 he was dodging flak and night fighters over the Ruhr in a twin-engined Wellington bomber. More

than one-third of the crews would never complete the required 30 missions.

McDuffee had seen firsthand the bodies of an air crew charred by heat. Arms and legs were bent, fists clenched as though the crewmen were boxers still sparring with the flames that had consumed them.

Such were the terrors awaiting McDuffee and his airplane in the skies over Germany. Still, he had survived thus far. Transferred to the U.S. Air Corps in July 1943, he had endured the bloodbath of Schweinfurt, when 60 American bombers were hacked down. The survivors had not needed a compass to guide them back. They simply followed the funeral pyres of B-17s until they reached the North Sea.

The Real Thing

At 3 A.M. on March 24, 1944, McDuffee is shaken awake for his first mission on Shoo Shoo Baby. Two days before, he had been to Berlin in another aircraft, checking out an inexperienced copilot. Twelve B-17s failed to return. Once again, McDuffee had survived.

After breakfast, McDuffee joins the group's pilots, navigators and bombardiers in the briefing hut. They all stand to attention as Putnam enters and strides to the end of the room where there is a small stage and a large map covered by a blanket. Beneath the blanket, the course to the target has been charted by a length of red yarn.

As Putnam draws aside the blanket, the yarn can be seen leading deep into Germany--to Schweinfurt again. The disclosure of a target was customarily greeted by catcalls and wisecracks. This morning there is only silence.

The group's intelligence officer takes over the briefing. He tells where to expect the worst concentrations of flak and enemy fighters. The pilots are given their assembly points over England, their headings over the North Sea, then south to the Reich. A meteorologist provides the latest weather forecast. Putnam rises again and orders a time "hack," the synchronizing of watches, and dismisses the briefing with a pep talk.

At the dispersal site, Cordes supervises the arming and fueling of Shoo Shoo Baby like a mother hen watching over her chick's first steps. Five 1000-pound demolition bombs have been winched into the bomb bay, nearly 6000 rounds of .50-caliber ammunition stowed on board and the belts fed into metal chutes leading to the 13 guns. The engines have been warmed up; Cordes has personally checked their pressures and temperatures.

(Shoo Shoo Baby...continued next page)

Shortly after 5 a.m., a jeep delivers McDuffee and his crew to the aircraft. His copilot today is 1st Lt. John La Fontin. He outranks McDuffee on the ground. But not in the air. La Fontin has drawn escape kits for the crew in the event they are shot down. They include emergency rations, road maps printed on silk, and Reichsmarks.

By 5:30 McDuffee and his crew are at their positions. The ball-turret gunner will not enter his cramped quarters until they near the European coast, but the tail gunner is already crouched in his compartment. (It is not known if he discovered Tiny Stefano's message.)

A flare rises lazily from the control tower, the signal to start the engines. McDuffee sets the fuel-mixture controls to "automatic rich" and then begins reading out the checklist: "Start One."

Shoo Shoo Baby shakes as her engines cough to life.

Another flare arches from the tower--the order to taxi. Cordes pulls the chocks from the wheels jumps back and beckons the B-17 toward him, guiding her with flashlights. She is heavily laden with bombs and fuel, but as McDuffee increases power she finally moves, waddling slowly onto the taxiway to take her place in the long line of B-17s.

At 6:15 she is poised at the end of the runway. An Aldis lamp winks green from a tower window, and McDuffee advances the throttles. He keeps her glued to the runway until the last second, then eases back on the yoke. They clear the boundary fence by feet.

"Gear up," McDuffee orders.

"Coming up," echoes La Fontin.

Engines laboring, Shoo Shoo Baby gains altitude. She rocks and jumps across the prop-wash wakes left by a half-dozen other B-17s that have taken off at 30-second intervals before her. McDuffee feels his way up through the clouds, keeping a look out for the looming shadow of another bomber. At last they break clear.

Far below, B-17s sparkle in the first rays of the sun as they emerge from the cloud deck. Near Bassingbourn, they rally above a radio-marker beacon and begin to build their "combat box." If it is tight enough, this formation can provide a devastating curtain of machine gun fire and defeat most efforts by the Luftwaffe to split it up.

Still climbing, the formations bank toward the North Sea. They will cross Belgium, then turn south to Schweinfurt. At 12,000 feet McDuffee orders his crew to go on oxygen. Throughout the plane, the crewmen plug their electrically heated suits into outlets. At their final altitude of 21,000 feet, they can expect temperatures to fall as low as minus-50 degrees Fahrenheit. It will be so cold that gun barrels

can burst in the sudden heat of firing. Bare hands will freeze to metal. There are only two ways to free them: urinate on them or tear them loose, flesh and all.

"Test the guns," McDuffee announces over the intercom.

Shoo Shoo Baby trembles as the gunners fire short bursts. The noise of the twin .50s in the top turret, their muzzles inches above McDuffee's head, is deafening. Traces curve across the sky, and spent cases cascade onto the aluminum floor.

The bombardier threads his way to the bomb-bay catwalk where he arms the nose fuses of the bombs. On the dull flank of one he chalks: "Adolf, this one will just kill you!"

McDuffee reaches altitude. Now the formation is beginning to make vapor trails in the deep blue of the sky--a dead giveaway to enemy fighters. From the nose, seated at his desk behind the bombardier, the navigator informs McDuffee that they are crossing the coast of Europe, and then dons a steel infantryman's helmet and pulls his chest-pack parachute closer to hand.

"Watch for fighters," McDuffee orders over his throat mike. "Tail gunner, stay awake back there."

McDuffee spots the first bursts of flak ahead. They are black with silver centers. The smoke from exploding shells dissipates in the wind. The flak is sporadic, inaccurate. Later, on the run into the target, it will be much worse. Radar-directed batteries of anti-aircraft guns will throw up barrages so thick that hardly one plane will emerge totally unscathed. Some will not emerge at all.

Black Carpet of Flak

At 9:56 A.M., the formation is nearing the point from which it will begin the final bomb run on Schweinfurt. There are no fighters to be seen, but a solid deck of thick cumulus hides the target. At the last minute, the 91st makes a steep 180-degree turn away from Schweinfurt. It has been ordered to bomb the secondary target at Frankfurt instead.

For some, the maneuver comes too late. A solid wall of flak appears as if from nowhere. A B-17 from another group takes a direct hit. Stricken, it veers into another bomber and explodes. Debris and bodies litter the sky.

Over Frankfurt the flak is even more intense. Shoo Shoo Baby bounces with each burst. Shrapnel pings through the fuselage, making small clouds of pulverized aluminum.

McDuffee holds the B-17 steady, absorbing the hammer blows of the flak. Despite the sub-zero

(Shoo Shoo Baby...continued next page)

temperature, sweat trickles down his neck. He turns his head to see if his goodluck charm is still in place—a pair of doeskin gloves tucked into an epaulet on his flying jacket.

Sixteen planes in the group have been hit, more than half of their number. Some have feathered props. Trailing smoke, they struggle to stay in formation.

As they enter the bomb run, the flak is even heavier. Unable to change course or altitude, they are sitting ducks for the gun crews and their radar sets below. They will not be using their Norden bombsights. Instead, they will take their cue from the group's leader. When he bombs, they bomb. Their tight formations will ensure a dense pattern on the ground.

Two minutes into the run, the bombardier informs McDuffee that he is opening the bomb-bay doors. The flak is so thick that it looks like a carpet of black wool. McDuffee has the sensation that he could actually land on it.

"Bombs away!"

Rid of 2 1/2 tons, Shoo Shoo Baby surges upward. McDuffee fights the controls, retrims. Beyond the target the group makes a gentle turn. Flak barrages claw at them until they are out of range. In the distance, McDuffee can see Focke-Wulf 190s and Messerschmitt 109s looping through the clouds. Suddenly one peels off to pursue a straggler from another bomber formation. There is nothing they can do to help. Once away from the protective fire of the box, a B-17 is on its own.

"Don't relax," McDuffee warns.

But the Luftwaffe's air circus suddenly vanishes, and the only fighters above them are their own. Had it not been for their escort, McDuffee knows that it would have been a different story.

At exactly 1:25 p.m., Shoo Shoo Baby screeches onto the runway at Basingbourn. Minutes later, McDuffee heaves his kit bag through the nose hatch and lowers himself to the ground. His knees are weak, and his entire body aches from the eight hours he has spent in the cockpit. Now the crew will be debriefed. Except for the two shots of whiskey he will be given, McDuffee could do without the meeting. He is exhausted.

A worried Hank Cordes examines Shoo Shoo Baby. Flak has peppered her tail and fuselage. He'll replace a sheet of aluminum here, patch a hole there. The repairs will take a few hours at most. Meanwhile, he orders a single bomb symbol painted on the nose.

Shoo Shoo Baby has been blooded.

"Re-Form! Re-Form!"

By April 10, Shoo Shoo Baby had completed six missions. That evening, the red-alert light was on behind the bar at the officers club. The next morning, McDuffee was wakened at five o'clock. He dressed quickly and bicycled through the darkness to the mess hall.

As McDuffee syruped his pancakes at Basingbourn, another Pilot was eating a boiled egg 900 miles away at a Luftwaffe airstrip near the small Bavarian town of Bad Worishofen. He was 28-year-old Maj. Walther Dahl, *Gruppenkommandeur* of the veteran "Udet" fighter squadron. Neither man knew it, but they were destined to meet that day at 15,000 feet.

Oddly, both men shared similar interests and temperaments. Authority held no awe for them. Indeed, Dahl had come to despise the strutting Nazis whom he referred to, contemptuously, as "Party men." His behavior infuriated superiors. Once, when Dahl refused to risk inexperienced pilots in terrible weather conditions, Luftwaffe chief Hermann Goring ordered him shot. But, because of Dahl's record, Goring withdrew the order.

Dahl wore the coveted Knight's Cross—Germany's highest decoration for valor. And the hashmarks of his victories covered the tail of his Focke-Wulf 190, many of them American four-engined bombers.

That morning, Dahl was playing cards in the ready room when the wall speaker announced that U.S. bombers were again assembling over England. Long-range radar estimated their numbers to be as great as 900.

There were periodic updates on the formation as it moved closer to Germany. Shortly before 10 a.m., Dahl received the order to "scramble" his *Gruppe*. He sprinted to the Focke-Wulf 190 lettered with the distinctive "Blue 13." There were 30 fighters in the *Gruppe*. As they gained altitude, they formed themselves into two echelons, Dahl leading the first. Dahl's code name was: *Negus Eins*.

"*Negus Eins an alle kleinen Bruder!*" (Negus One to all little brothers!) Dahl said over his throat mike. He ordered them to arm their guns, then flipped up his safety lever on the handle of his control stick and pressed the triggers underneath. The two 20-mm. cannons, one in each wing, thudded, their recoil jarring the fighter.

They climbed through 20,000 feet, heading northwest, passing high over the medieval town of Hamelin. Dahl craned his neck, scanning for vapor trails. At first the sky was empty. Then he caught

sight of B-17s flashing silver as they caught the sun. Quickly overtaking them, Dahl was careful to keep well out of range of their defensive fire. But he was close enough to see the black triangles of the First Bomb Division on the tail fins. Some had a white letter "A" in the center--the 91st Bomb Group. Dahl knew their insignia by heart. He had met them before.

Dahl would make a frontal attack. But the angle had to be just so. If not, the *Gruppe* risked the full force of the bombers' firepower. A mile in front of the B-17s, he led his 30 fighters into a sweeping turn that would bring them into the first formation head-on.

Now was the time for Dahl to stiffen the will of his young pilots. It would take nerves of steel to fly through the tightly packed B-17s at a closing speed of more than 600 m.p.h. He touched his throat button: "*Negus Eins an alle kleinen Bruder!*" Remember your women and children, he told them, the ones who are under the bombs. Then he shoved the throttle as far forward as it could go. The sudden acceleration forced him back against the seat.

"*Ra-ba-za-nella!*" Dahl shouted into the oxygen mask--his personal battle cry. He picked the lead B-17, watching it fill the gunsight with frightening speed. Ignoring the blur of tracers as the bomber's chin turret opened fire, he aimed at the B-17s wing root and pressed the gun buttons on the stick. The flashes of exploding cannon shells danced along the wing, and pieces of aluminum flew off into the slipstream. Then Dahl flashed past, his cannons still firing.

Two B-17s away, McDuffee flinched as the Focke-Wulf whipped by beneath him, close enough for a fleeting glimpse of its pilot. He "porpoised" Shoo Shoo Baby--an evasive up-and-down maneuver designed to throw off the aim of attacking fighters. Shoo Shoo Baby's airframe shivered from nose to tail as her guns fired at the fighters rolling through the formation. The cabin filled with the acrid fumes of gunpowder.

McDuffee could see that a nearby formation from another group was taking the full brunt of the German attack. Over the radio he could hear frantic calls: "Re-form! Re-Form!" But the formation had already begun to break up as nearly 100 fighters worried at them like wolves after sheep, splitting them off one after another. McDuffee tried to count the number of parachutes, then gave up. There were so many that it looked like an airborne invasion.

It was a turkey shoot. By noon the 1st Bomb Division had lost 19 aircraft. Worse, the primary target, a factory complex in Cottbus, was shrouded by clouds. They were ordered to proceed to their secondary objective, industrial targets in Stettin,

120 miles to the north. They would have to run a double gauntlet of flak and fighters.

By the time the bombing run was completed and the formations were leaving enemy airspace over the North Sea, a total of 64 bombers had gone down in flames or limped to crash landings in German-occupied territory.

Sixteen Notches

Walther Dahl was satisfied. His *Gruppe* had exacted a terrible toll. Briefly he thought about the lost air crews. He had uncles and aunts in Chicago and Milwaukee; he was concerned that one of his own cousins might have been on board a doomed B-17. *Still*, he thought, *it is war. Another victory symbol will be added to the tail of "Blue 13."* On the way home, he puffed at a cigar, using the ashtray that his ground crew had installed in the cockpit for him.

As for McDuffee, his agony did not end until 6:22 p.m., when he landed Shoo Shoo Baby back at Bassingbourn. The mission had taken nearly 11 hours to complete, and there was more flak damage for Cordes to repair. But no one aboard had been wounded. Before he left the cockpit, McDuffee carefully added the seventh notch to those that he had already carved into the handles of the control yoke. When he finally reached his quarters after a grim debriefing, he collapsed on his bunk, not even bothering to remove his flight boots.

Five weeks later, McDuffee was to encounter Dahl again. This time the target was Berlin itself. And the cost was 16 B-17s missing, 289 damaged--including Shoo Shoo Baby, whose plexiglass nose was scorched by the explosion of a firebomb dropped on the formation by a Junkers 88. But once again McDuffee and his airplane returned to base.

By May 22, 1944, the row of notches on Shoo Shoo Baby's control yoke had grown to 15, more than half of them representing missions deep into Germany. She was a battle-scarred veteran now. And she had yet to lose one of her crew. For McDuffee, the 16th notch would be his last. Having flown and survived 30 missions, he would never have to fly another--that is, if he got to Kiel, Putnam's target for the day, and made it back.

Five B-17s were lost to heavy flak, but Shoo Shoo Baby was not among them. As if protecting McDuffee to the last, she did not suffer a scratch. At 4:25 that afternoon she was over Bassingbourn. As a parting gesture, McDuffee buzzed the field, roaring across the runway at only 20 feet, scattering Putnam and his staff from the balcony of the control tower. When Shoo Shoo Baby landed, Cordes found

leaves and a strand of fence wire tangled in her tail wheel.

That night, McDuffee again sat alone in the cockpit, his hands on the controls, smelling the oil and the leather, remembering when she was new--McDuffee's airplane. He knew he would never fly another like her; he thanked her for saving his life 16 times and said good-bye. For the last time he swung out through the hatch and admired the blond pinup sprawled across her nose. Then he climbed on his bicycle and pedaled away. He did not look back.

Later, in his quarters, he entered his final mission into his log book. After noting the hours and the target, he was moved to add:

"So very much could be written about these three years; comedy, tragedy, joy and sorrow. But perhaps it is better forgotten, or at least kept secret. To all the boys who went down in flames, or who blew up--to each and every one of them a toast.

"May God have mercy upon their souls, and may they rest in everlasting peace from man's puny wars."

Then McDuffee went to the officers club and got very drunk.

Crash Landing

While he could not put his finger on it, 1st Lt. Robert J. Guenther had a premonition. It was May 29--only a week since McDuffee's departure for the States--and the 91st was scheduled to raid a Focke-Wulf assembly plant near Posen in Poland. Before he swung aboard the B-17, Guenther asked his navigator if he was familiar with alternate courses to neutral Sweden. He was. Posen lay at the very limit of their range. If they had to make a forced landing, Guenther preferred internment in nearby Sweden to a German POW camp.

Shoo Shoo Baby (sometime after McDuffee's departure, a third "Shoo" had been added to the B-17's nose, perhaps to satisfy a new pilot) was not Guenther's airplane. He and his crew had been assigned to her for a few missions only. But he knew she was considered a "lucky" airplane. On all her missions, only two of her crew had been wounded, and neither injury was serious. Those who had left her for another bomber were not as fortunate. La Fontin, for example, was shot down over Germany on his first mission in a different plane.

On May 29, however, it began to look as though her luck had run out. Trouble began right after takeoff when the supercharger on one of Shoo Shoo Baby's engines overheated. Guenther struggled to keep up with the formation as it doglegged around the flak defenses at Berlin, then crossed into Poland. The troublesome engine now began to overheat

dangerously, so Guenther ordered it shut down.

At Posen, radar-directed 88-mm. guns quickly found their altitude. Shoo Shoo Baby was rocked by a tremendous burst. Immediately, her No. 2 engine gushed oil, spattering the cockpit's side windows.

"Feathering Two!" Guenther yelled, punching the button and cutting off the fuel and booster pumps.

Despite the damage, he held the B-17 level until her bombs could be dropped on the target. Turning away, however, Shoo Shoo Baby quickly lost altitude. The strain was too great for the remaining two engines. A third engine began to labor as well.

They had now fallen well behind the formation, and at such extreme range they couldn't make it back to England. "Navigator, you got that course to Sweden?" Guenther asked.

He turned gingerly onto the new heading. At the rate they were losing altitude, Guenther knew that they would never make the German coast. He ordered the crew to jettison every piece of equipment that could be removed: radios, guns ammunition, oxygen bottles, flak vests. Gradually, Shoo Shoo Baby leveled off. But they had several hundred miles to go. And now they were defenseless.

Guenther's stomach twisted as several dark specks on the horizon became the sleek silhouettes of Focke-Wulf 190s. They drew closer, paralleling Shoo Shoo Baby, but did not attack. After several minutes they banked sharply and inexplicably disappeared. *Perhaps they were out of ammunition*, he told himself.

Far ahead, they could make out the dim line of the coast. Beyond lay the icy waters of the Baltic Sea. Guenther worried about his two remaining engines. How long could they operate under such stress? Mile by mile he nursed Shoo Shoo Baby closer to Sweden's nearest airfield at Malmo.

On they flew, barely 1000 feet above the waves. Far ahead, they finally caught sight of the tip of Sweden. An aging Seversky fighter appeared off the starboard wing. Its pilot waggled his wings and pointed down, the signal to land. In the cockpit, Guenther saluted. He was happy to oblige. He ordered the crew to take positions for a crash landing. The approach would have to be perfect; there would not be a second chance.

Guenther fought for control as the landing gear came down, and the B-17 wallowed from the increased drag. She was only a few knots above stalling speed. Now, at the most critical moment, the third engine failed completely. Shoo Shoo Baby's single engine howled as Guenther squeezed out maximum power.

(Shoo Shoo Baby...continued next page)

Yawing, skidding, they skimmed over the fence at Malmo's Bulltofta Airport. Guenther chopped power, and the B-17 met the runway gently, as light as a feather. It was the best landing he had ever made. Behind him, the crew whistled and applauded.

Armed Swedish soldiers quickly took Guenther and his crew into custody. The last they saw of Shoo Shoo Baby was an oil-streaked hulk sitting forlornly on the tarmac. Mechanics were already attaching a tractor to tow her away. It seemed a dishonorable end for an airplane that had just saved their lives.

So much for McDuffee's airplane. Like thousands before her, she had become a casualty of war. Ordinarily, her wreckage would have been turned into scrap metal, perhaps destined to become a part of someone's aluminum kitchenware in the years ahead. But, while Guenther and his crew languished in an internment camp near Ludvika, Shoo Shoo Baby's future was about to be settled in a different way.

In the spring of 1944, Sweden recognized that the tide of war had shifted in favor of the Allies. With the landings in Normandy less than a month away, it quietly laid plans to rebuild its prewar air-transport system. The obvious nucleus for an airline lay at their fingertips--the dozens of American, British and German long-range aircraft interned on Swedish soil.

That summer, as Allied armies rolled toward Paris, Swedish aviation authorities opened negotiations with U.S. representatives in Stockholm for the purchase of ten salvageable B-17s. Shoo Shoo Baby, untouched since her landing at Malmo months before, was among those selected. The deal: for a symbolic payment of \$1 per B-17, Sweden would agree secretly to repatriate an equal number of interned American crews, providing they were prohibited from flying combat missions for the remainder of the war.

On October 29, 1944, 1st Lt. Robert Guenther and his crew were bundled aboard a B-24 "Liberator" and flown from Stockholm to an air base in northern Scotland. They would soon be back in the United States.

Guenther had not given Shoo Shoo Baby a second thought. Having saved his life, then guaranteed his freedom, she was quickly forgotten. A tool of war, her usefulness had come to an apparent end.

Only McDuffee--he was then at a base near Tampa, Fla., editing flight manuals for B-29 pilots bound for the Pacific Theater--pondered her fate, the tense hours they had spent together, the flak and the fighters they had survived. He could not get her out of his mind.

"Everybody Out!"

Capt. Emil Damm, with 22 passengers and crew on board, turned the converted B-17G into the wind at the head of the runway, ran up the engines, then paused to await his takeoff clearance from the tower. It was exactly 9:50 a.m. on November 28, 1945. Danish Airlines (DDL) Flight 1750, nonstop service from Copenhagen to England was right on schedule.

Moments later, they were airborne. At their assigned cruising altitude of 9000 feet, Damm leveled off and turned the controls over to his co-pilot.

Since the aircraft had been delivered to Denmark by Sweden on November 6, Damm had flown her on several occasions to England. He would have preferred a more nimble plane. The B-17 was stable, but slow to maneuver. Still, with Europe's shattered economy, no airline could be choosy.

Damm knew little of the airplane's wartime service, only that she had sought sanctuary in Sweden in 1944. Since then, her log revealed her conversion into a passenger configuration several months after the German surrender on May 8, 1945. All her armament and gun turrets had been removed. Insulation and 14 plush passenger seats had been added. Windows were cut into the hull, a galley was constructed, and the bomb bay was converted to cargo space. Finally a sleek red stripe was applied to her fuselage--her interior was decorated in royal blue. Then Denmark's first postwar, long-range airliner was christened "Stig Viking."

Damm could find few reminders of the war. There was an old serial number plaque in the cockpit: 42-32076. Otherwise, Stig Viking might have come right off the assembly line.

Damm had a bellyful of war. He had spent most of it flying Danish transports from Copenhagen to Berlin, Munich and Vienna under the watchful eyes of Nazi occupation authorities. Whenever he could get assigned a flight to central Sweden, he reported all that he knew to a British agent, whom he would meet secretly in a Malmo cinema. Detected, he had managed to escape to Sweden only a step ahead of the Gestapo.

Damm caught himself wondering how many times the B-17 had made this return trip to England during the war, holed by flak, spewing oil, the wounded on board freezing at high altitude. And death? He shook off the specter as the chalky cliffs of England appeared ahead.

Forty minutes later, Stig Viking began her approach to Blackbushe, an RAF base now serving commercial air traffic. As they turned into the landing pattern, Damm ordered: "Gear down."

"Coming down and locked," the co-pilot responded. "No. Wait a minute!"

Damm's eyes flicked to the landing-gear indicator lights on the panel. Only one was lighted. The left main gear had failed to drop. He ordered the flight engineer to check the fuse box to determine if the panel circuits were functioning properly. They were.

"Crank it down," Damm snapped.

The engineer wrestled with the handle that lowered the gear manually in case of a power failure. It would not budge. Suddenly Damm knew that Stig Viking was in serious trouble.

Damm warned the tower, then tried to "bounce" the gear down by porpoising the B-17. It remained stuck fast. There was no alternative. They would have to attempt a wheels-up landing. Damm ordered the right main gear raised, then prepared to dump fuel to avoid exploding on impact. He planned to leave just enough in the tanks for one go-around in the event his first approach had to be aborted.

As they began dumping 2000 liters of high-octane aviation gas through vents in the wing tanks, Damm ordered the passengers and crew to crash positions. Then he flew a test run over the field. He would aim for the grass strip separating the runways, cut the two inboard engines and rely on the outer two for last-second maneuvering.

Now Damm made his final turn and centered the nose on the grass median. He kept one hand on the throttles, the other on the controls. With a feather touch, he corrected for crosswinds and coaxed Stig Viking over the perimeter fence. They were committed.

Damm locked his eyes on the strip until the blurring grass filled the cockpit windows. He lifted the nose, then his right hand shot out to the fuel cut-off, master and battery switches. He felt a gentle nudge, and another. Suddenly, he was thrown against his shoulder straps by a thunderous impact. There was the screech of tearing metal, and sheets of sparks flew out from under the wings and the fuselage.

Both hands gripping the control yoke, Damm rode the B-17 as if it were a plunging stallion. The props tore up huge chunks of sod, then bent double as though the blades were made of soft plastic. An engine shook loose from its mounting and fell away. Finally, Stig Viking slued to a stop. In the sudden silence Damm could hear the drip-drip of hydraulic fluid and fuel.

"Out!" he shouted. "Everybody out!"

Damm hoisted himself through the escape hatch, and fell to the ground. He counted the passengers and crewmen as they emerged from a door in the rear of the fuselage. They were badly shaken,

but not one had suffered as much as a scratch. Once more, Shoo Shoo Baby had protected her own.

Fire trucks circled the wreckage and Damm took stock. Two engines hung askew, all the propellers were twisted beyond repair, and there was no telling how much damage Shoo Shoo Baby's airframe had suffered. It looked to Damm as though they would have to write her off.

But just like Lt. Robert Guenther, Chief Pilot Emil was wrong.

Wind, Sand and Snow

Six months later, on May 23, 1946, Stig Viking was back in service. Patched, her hydraulics and fuel lines replaced, and with four new Wright-Cyclone engines, she seemed to fly better than ever. On June 14, she inaugurated Denmark's first scheduled airline service to Greenland. Another occasional destination: Moscow. And on September 30, Stig Viking pioneered one of Europe's first postwar routes to Africa, from Copenhagen to Nairobi, Kenya. Once again, DDL's Chief Pilot Emil Damm was at the controls.

Crew and passengers stayed overnight in Cairo at the end of the first day's flight. The next morning, they took off for Khartoum, pausing to refuel in Wadi Halfa on the banks of the Nile. Then it was on to Nairobi, seven hard flying hours away. Because no oxygen equipment had been installed in the cabin, Damm could not climb above 12,000 feet to avoid sandstorms and rough air. He looked down at the empty scrub wastes of the Sudan, baking under 120-degree heat, and shuddered to think of being forced down amid such desolation. Damm kept an ear tuned for the slightest change in the engines. But they droned on in their throaty singsong, hour after hour. Damm had never listened to sweeter music.

On October 6, Stig Viking landed back at Kastrup airport, having completed the 10,000-mile journey without serious incident. And by February 1947, DDL had extended the new route all the way from Nairobi to Johannesburg, South Africa.

On her flights to Africa, Stig Viking stopped over in cities like Marseille, and on her way to Moscow, she landed in East Berlin. Ironically, she frequently crossed paths with McDuffee, who had returned to Europe to fly C-54 "Skymasters" in the Berlin airlift, his doeskin gloves still tucked securely in a shoulder strap. But he failed to recognize her parked outside European passenger terminals, so radically had she changed. And even now, his airplane was about to adopt another disguise.

On October 24, 1947, Stig Viking completed her last trip for DDL. Not that she was unable to continue delivering her passengers and cargo safely. Quite simply, commercial aviation had modernized. To keep pace, the airline had acquired Douglas DC-4s. They could carry more passengers, were cheaper to maintain and operate, and could fly just as far without refueling.

In Sweden, not one of the B-17s that had once sold for a dollar had escaped the scrap heap. Shoo Shoo Baby would have joined them, were it not for the responsibilities of the Royal Danish army and navy in Greenland. A Danish possession, Greenland had not been surveyed since the 1930s. Near the polar icecap, vast reaches were not even accurately mapped.

By the end of 1947, Denmark's Geodetic Institute began making plans to mount an air-photo-survey expedition to Greenland. One of the main bases was to be Bluie West One, a remote airstrip on the south tip of Greenland's mountainous coast. The photo mapping was to be done in some of the worst weather conditions on earth. Thus, it required a stable four-engine aircraft capable of operating for as long as 12 hours at altitudes up to 30,000 feet. The plane would also have to be rugged enough to withstand howling gales and severe icing. Most of the aircraft tested for the project had been rejected. Finally, the sturdy B-17 was selected.

By May 1948, Shoo Shoo Baby had been modified for her Arctic mission. Cameras were placed in plexiglass blisters and a long-range fuel tank in the old bomb bay. Thick "ice shields" were riveted to her fuselage opposite the inboard engines to protect her aluminum skin against chunks of ice hurled from the propellers. On her nose, where once a Vargas pinup had posed, a giant Viking armed with a club and a camera appeared. They called her "Store Bjorn" ("Great Bear").

She would be entrusted to one of Scandinavia's most famous aviators, 45-year-old Capt. Michael Hansen, who made his first flight in 1927. He would need all his skill if he and Store Bjorn were to survive in the years ahead. Hansen and his crew faced polar blizzards and grinding hours on oxygen, their eyes aching from the dazzle of the polar icecap. They were so close to the magnetic North Pole that the rules of air navigation were turned upside down. One botched heading and they would be preserved in ice forever.

Day by day, month by month, Hansen and his crew painstakingly helped to complete the most detailed air survey of Greenland to date. Often, disaster was seconds away.

In October 1948, when the Danish cutter "Alken" vanished, Hansen and Store Bjorn are

ordered to Iceland to lead the search. For five agonizing days, on flights lasting up to ten hours, they skim above the ice pack, dodging towering bergs. but the cutter has disappeared without a trace.

On September 16, 1950, the Icelandair DC-4 "Geyser" goes down on an Icelandic glacier with her crew. Again, Store Bjorn is ordered to lead the search. Geyser is found intact, and her crew is returned to Reykjavik.

On January 24, 1951, Hansen and Store Bjorn fly a miner who has lost both legs and an eye in a mine explosion to a hospital in Copenhagen. The 12-hour flight is the most vicious Hansen has ever made. Unable to fly higher than 9000 feet because the patient's mangled face will not support an oxygen mask, they encounter murderous turbulence. Hansen nearly loses control of Store Bjorn on several occasions. Ice, thrown against the fuselage by the props, slams the plane with sledgehammer blows. But the miner reaches surgery safely, and a year later he will thank Hansen for saving his life. The miner should also have thanked Store Bjorn.

On May 18, 1951, Michael Hansen completes his last flight in the B-17. He leaves her reluctantly. Turning her over to his replacement, Hansen says she is the finest airplane that he has ever flown. Then, like McDuffee, Guenther and Damm, Hansen turns and walks away.

Doomed

On September 7, 1953, Store Bjorn returned to Copenhagen from Bluie West One for the last time. Her photographic-survey mission to Greenland was complete. More than four years of arctic flying had aged her. There were nagging problems common to older aircraft. A mechanic, carrying spare parts--increasingly hard to find--had become a permanent member of the crew.

On October 1, she was put up for sale. Michael Hansen often saw her parked near a little-used taxiway at Denmark's Vaerlose Air Base and was saddened. If a buyer was not found, she would be scrapped. She remained in the open that winter, exposed to wind, rain and sleet.

On February 2, 1955, a firm bid was at last received. The buyer was the Babb Company of New York, a dealer in used aircraft. Babb resold her to one of its clients, France's Institut Geographique National (IGN), a state-owned aerial-survey agency. IGN needed the B-17 to operate at sustained altitudes of 35,000 feet in order to photograph the boundaries of colonies and former colonies in Africa and South America.

(Shoo Shoo Baby...continued next page)

In April the B-17 was ferried by a Danish crew to IGN's airfield at Creil, France, an airport built by the Luftwaffe in 1941 as a fighter base. One of Shoo Shoo Baby's first pilots at IGN would be 34-year-old Louis Fabre, a former ensign in the French Naval Air Force. Fabre took great pleasure in flying the plane, and his enthusiasm grew with every mission. She was dependable and comfortable. With an understanding hand at her controls, Shoo Shoo Baby's troublesome supercharges performed without a hitch. She regained her touch of trim. One IGN official noted that the aircraft was so stable that "she could have flown into the eye of a cyclone."

In the spring of 1956 Fabre and Shoo Shoo Baby mapped Lebanon together. Other IGN crews took her to Madagascar, Algeria, Niger, Chad, Cameroon, and even across the Atlantic to Martinique and Guyana. In 1960, Fabre and Shoo Shoo Baby got together again to survey Gabon and the French Congo.

In early 1961 one of her former Greenland-expedition pilots was astounded when he stumbled across Shoo Shoo Baby at Cairo's International Airport. He recognized her when he spotted a jury-rigged frame above the cabin door that he himself had installed nearly ten years before. When he heard the news, Hansen was overjoyed. He had assumed that she no longer existed.

Shoo Shoo Baby had by now logged 5500 flying hours. At a cruising speed of 165 m.p.h., this meant she had flown a distance well in excess of that to the moon and back. It seemed as if she might fly forever. In fact, her days were finally numbered. Vibration, metal fatigue, Greenland's storms and the corroding humidity of the jungle had weighed heavily. Her fuel consumption and maintenance costs had soared.

Fabre was powerless to prevent what happened next. After a final mission on June 15, 1961--it was a French travelogue shot from the air--Shoo Shoo Baby was retired once and for all. Shamelessly, she was stripped for parts. Her engines and mountings were removed, exposing the bare fire walls of the nacelles. Piece by piece, they nibbled her to the bone. By 1968, seven years later, all that remained was a skeleton--wings, a tail, fuselage.

Wrens had pulled the stuffing from her seats to build nests in airframe corners. Air leaked from her tires, and she sagged slowly on her gear without dignity. Only the children who came to play at war within her emptiness, firing imaginary bursts through the grimy plexiglass hood of the tailgunner's compartment, seemed still to love her.

Finally there was nothing more that could be taken from her; nothing more that she could give. What Focke-Wulf 190s and Walther Dahl could not do, time had accomplished: McDuffee's airplane lay

abandoned doomed.

One Last Song

Paul G. McDuffee, ex-Army Air Corps, ex-RCAF, ex-USAF, sat at his work desk in his home in Tampa, Fla. Long retired from the Air Force, he had become an insurance broker. But the years had not been kind to him. Stricken with diabetes, he was confined to a wheelchair. At times, the pain in his legs was nearly unbearable.

Then late on a July afternoon in 1968, McDuffee, napping, was jarred awake by the ringing of the telephone.

"Am I speaking with Lieutenant McDuffee?"

The voice was accented, garbled by long distance. Indeed, the call had been placed from Sydney, Australia, by a Steve Birdsall, who now wanted to know if McDuffee had been the pilot of a B-17G, Serial No. 42-32076, called Shoo Shoo Baby.

"What about it?" McDuffee asked cautiously. He was in no mood for a practical joke.

"Well, I've found your airplane," Birdsall announced.

"You what?" McDuffee shouted.

It had taken years of research, Birdsall explained. At first it had only been a hobby--tracing the whereabouts of B-17 bombers that had survived the war and escaped scrapping. But his investigation quickly became an obsession. Soon he learned that France's Institut Geographique National owned several of the former bombers. Perhaps one was the airplane he sought--a B-17 that had flown in the war and survived. He acquired the planes' serial numbers from IGN, and then painstakingly began to assemble their records by writing to U.S. Air Force historians for their combat records. And No. 42-32076, he discovered, was indeed the last of her kind. Did McDuffee think that there would be any Air Force interest in getting her back?

McDuffee spent the rest of the day on the phone to Air Force officials and retired 8th Air Force brass. The most helpful proved to be Maj. Gen. Stanley T. Wray, USAF retired, the first commander of the 91st Bomb Group, who was then living in Alexandria, Va. In the months ahead, Wray got the support of veterans' organizations and led the fight at the Pentagon to save Shoo Shoo Baby. The campaign to bring the B-17 home continued into early 1970. Finally, the persistence of McDuffee and Wray untangled red tape, and the Air Force opened negotiations with the French government for the possible return of Shoo Shoo Baby.

(Shoo Shoo Baby...continued next page)

In late 1971 the terms were concluded between the U.S. air attache in Paris and French officials. Shoo Shoo Baby--or what remained of her--would be donated to the United States for the symbolic price of one franc (about 20 cents). This compared favorably with the \$1 received from Sweden for the B-17G No. 42-32076 in 1944. Shoo Shoo Baby had earned Uncle Sam a profit of 80 cents.

On January 23, 1972, under a dark and lowering sky, a team of USAF mechanics arrived at Creil from their base in Wiesbaden, West Germany, to prepare the aircraft for transport to the United States. It would take them over ten days to disassemble her, removing the wings and tail section, dividing the fuselage into several parts.

Packed into 27 huge crates, the mortal remains of Shoo Shoo Baby were transported on flatbed trucks to the U.S. Air Base at Rhein-Main near Frankfurt--the city she had bombed 28 years earlier on her very first mission.

On June 14, four months later, she was loaded into the cavernous cargo hold of a USAF C-5A "Galaxy." Twelve hours later, she was home. McDuffee was on hand to greet her, as were General Wray and other Air Force brass. When her fuselage emerged from the C-5A, McDuffee was hoisted into the cockpit, and he struggled into the left-hand seat. *Did it ever happen?* he asked himself. *Perhaps to another man, he thought, in a different place, in a distant time.*

Suddenly the years rolled back. Through a mist of tears he could once again see the carpet of flak rising to meet him, hear the explosions nearby, feel the clammy staleness of the oxygen mask. Then he gripped the control yoke in both hands. He was young again, McDuffee in his airplane.

From somewhere below an Air Force publicity officer called up to him: "Colonel, how do you know that's really Shoo Shoo Baby?"

McDuffee leaned his head out of the window and grinned broadly. "How?" he replied. "Son, I *smell* me in her, that's how!"

Restoration finally got under way in 1978 at Dover Air force Base in Delaware. The return of Shoo Shoo Baby would reunite her wartime crew, men who had not seen or heard from one another since the war. From his farm in Alabama came one of McDuffee's old co-pilots, Robert Langford; from Arizona, pilot Robert Guenther. Wartime navigator Larry Sylvester visited her. And from California came Tony Starcer to re-create the pinup on her nose that he had first painted in Bassingbourn so long ago.

And Shoo Shoo Baby?

The restoration by Air Force Reserve mechanics is being financed through private and

public funding. When the work is finished, they will have donated over 50,000 hours of their own time. Year after year, the work has progressed, parts scrounged from the carcasses of junked B-17s across the country.

Sometime during the fall of 1987, Shoo Shoo Baby is expected to make one more flight--a journey from Dover to Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in Ohio, where she is to become a permanent monument at the U.S. Air Force Museum. They have reserved McDuffee a seat up front. For one final time, Shoo Shoo Baby's engines will be primed and awakened. And she will turn again into the wind, toward the sky.

McDuffee's airplane, singing her last song.

Old Friends

Like Shoo Shoo Baby herself, many of those whose lives she touched have survived against odds.

- Incredibly, Walther Dahl, who tried to destroy her, outlived the war despite being shot down three times and hit twice. He flew 600 combat missions--several of them in a Messerschmitt 262, the world's first jet fighter. With 128 victories, 36 of them against B-17s, he was one of the leading aces of World War II. On November 25, 1985 Dahl passed away quietly in Heidelberg West Germany. Hearing the news, McDuffee--this story had brought the two former foes together--cabled Dahl's survivors: "There are no lasting enemies in the brotherhood of the skies."
- Emil Damm, Shoo Shoo Baby's first postwar pilot, was to rise to the position of chief pilot and then deputy general manager (Denmark) of the Scandinavian Airlines System. He oversaw the introduction of SAS's first jet passenger aircraft over their far-flung routes.
- Michael Hansen, who spent more hours at the controls of Shoo Shoo Baby than any other pilot, was to become a lieutenant colonel in the Royal Danish Air Force. He remains a permanent chapter in his nation's aviation history.
- Louis Fabre became chief pilot for France's IGN, retiring in 1973. Today, he nurses warm memories of Shoo Shoo Baby in his villa on the Cote d'Azur.
- Adeline "Tiny" Stefano (now Struble), who helped to build Shoo Shoo Baby, still works for the Boeing Commercial Airplane Company in Seattle. She and her former co-workers were honored last July on the 50th anniversary of the first flight of the B-17 "Flying Fortress."

NOTE: "OLD FRIENDS" IS CURRENT AS OF MARCH 1986.

457TH BOMB GROUP ASSOCIATION

MEMBERSHIP & SUBSCRIPTION INFORMATION

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Fireballer? ☐ or Relative? ☐ relationship _____ Other ☐ _____

Name _____ Nickname _____ Spouse _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip+4 _____

Phone _____ Squadron # _____ Rank _____

Dates Assigned _____ Duties _____

Plane Names and # _____ Pilot's Name _____

POW?/Evadee?...Date of capture/escape/release: _____

Retired? _____ Rank? _____ Birthdate _____

DUES INFORMATION:

Annual Dues: \$25 for 2 years

-or-

<u>Life Dues:</u>	Under 60 years of age:	\$110.00
	61-65 years of age:	\$90.00
	66-70 years of age:	\$75.00
	71 + years of age:	\$60.00

Make checks payable to: 457th BG Association

Mail top of this form and check to:

John Pearson, Treasurer
457th Bomb Group Association
11308 Blendon Lane
Richmond, VA 23233

Your canceled check is your receipt.



Your Website on the Internet: The 457th Bomb Group Association

<http://www.457thbombgroup.org>

It's time for an update on your Association's Website. We have been very busy with communications these past few months and because the email load was more than I could comfortably handle, I solicited help from some of our members. I'm happy to say that I quickly selected the first of several volunteers, Ken Blakebrough. Ken is author of the book "The Fireball Outfit" and is as knowledgeable as anyone about the 457th. He will be known as our "web associate" and will be primarily responding to inquiries on our "Message Board" and "Guestbook". I'm thankful for Ken's generous contribution at a time when the website was becoming a little more than I was able to handle. Welcome Ken.

We have added a few new items on the home page under the "What's New" category. There is now a page of vintage aircraft that visited Glatton during the war. The planes are mostly US fighters and RAF bombers. We hope to be adding to this collection in the coming months. Thought you might be interested in seeing photos of planes other than B-17's.

In the April issue of the 457th Bomb Group Assoc. Newsletter, I posed a question to anyone who might have information that could lead to solving a mystery concerning the loss of B-17 s/n 42-31541. Many of us knew that the plane had crashed near Wendover, UT during training exercises but there seemed to be no records of what happened nor what crews were involved.

Last month we received an email response from James "Carey" Jones who was flying in one of the planes in the formation in which this mid air collision occurred. From the information that Carey Jones gave us, and with confirming evidence received from the Air Force Military Aircraft Accident Records, we feel we now have the complete story. Carey Jones's account follows as we received it with some minor editing.

"My name is James Carey Jones of Anderson, South Carolina crew member of Roger W. Birkman, 748th BS, 457th BG, trained 1st phase in Ephrata, Washington, later moved to Rapid city, SD, then on to Wendover Field Utah.

I remember that on December 23, 1943, the 457th flew a 54 ship practice formation out of Wendover to camera bomb Omaha, Neb. We had fighter escorts to the target and then the fighters were to act as enemy attack planes on the return trip to Wendover Field. The mission was a success and when we landed back at Wendover the visiting high ranking officer wanted to see another take off and forming up of a six plane squadron. The 748th squadron was chosen to make the flight. I can name three of the pilots in this six plane formation. They were Roger W. Birkman, Kenneth W. Burkhart, and Paul W. Chapman.

What led to this terrible accident is as the following:

The first three planes of the lead element were already in place. The #4 plane, flown by Lt. William Snow, was forming a three plane element with the #5 plane, flown by Lt. Birkman, and the #6 plane flown by Lt. Burkhart. The three planes were racing to catch up with the lead element and came on too fast. It was obvious to Lt. Birkman (#5) and Lt. Burkhart (#6) that Snow (#4), flying element lead, was overshooting. Each peeled off to the right and left. All this was happening at about 1500 feet. Lt.

Snow (#4) did in fact overshoot and pulled his tail up into Lt. Paul Chapman's plane (#3). Chapman's #1 and #2 engines immediately cut-off the tail of Snow's (#4) plane. Chapman's Navigator or Bombardier bailed out with no injuries and Lt. Chapman was able to land his badly damaged plane. Snow's plane crashed before anyone could bail out.

Birkman (#5) and Burkhart (#6) crews were not able to land until they got Lt. Chapman's damaged plane off the runway. (Which was a good while). When we were able to land we had chow and went to the movies only to be called out to the flight line for another flight of two hours.

The tail gunner of Snow's plane asked to be excused from the six plane flight so as to use the bathroom (GI's). This airman had the grim task, later that day, to go meet the train that was bringing one of his dead crew member's mother to Wendover to spend Christmas with her son. This was a sad time for all of us at Wendover Field."

Carey

[printed herein with the permission of James Carey Jones]

(Webmaster's comment):

We have determined that the plane and crew that crashed was that of Lt. William R. Snow, flying 42-31541 and the damaged plane involved in this collision was 42-38065, flown by Lt. Paul V. Chapman. [42-38065 was badly damaged, but was repaired and flew again....it never got overseas.] All aboard Snow's aircraft were killed but all in Chapman's plane survived.

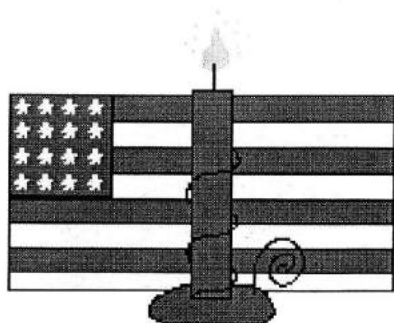
I've updated our website page on this plane. Check out:

<http://www.457thbombgroup.org/Fate/RLF007.HTML>

The story of this accident deserves to be preserved together with the many stories of war heroism that the 457th Bomb Group experienced. This is really an outstanding resolution to a long-standing mystery.

See you all in the next Newsletter.

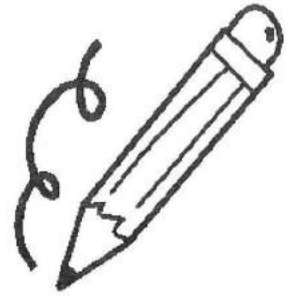
Hap



America stands strong
and united.
Together we stand!



Sleuth at Work



One happy result of the Colorado Springs Reunion was the appearance of one of my father's crew members, Elroy Peters, the navigator, who had never been to a reunion before. We got some interesting information about the makeup of the crew and why we were unclear on one guy that wasn't in the crew picture taken at Pyote.

The reason this was important was because as a junior historian of WWII as I was growing up, I had seen all those references to nose art on B-17s, and just once, I wanted to see what was on Dad's plane. I remember asking him a few times what name was on the airplane, and he had said, "Jill," the name of Ralph Evans' (pilot) wife at the time. But I had never been able to find any reference to "Jill" in any database anywhere.

Another guy I met was the line chief for the airplane my father flew in. Knowing that the list of aircraft serial numbers was posted on the 457th website, I asked him if he recalled the number of Dad's plane. He told me "535." Of course I was hoping for all 7 digits, but this was a start. When we got back home I looked through all of Dad's pictures but really couldn't see much except one, which clearly showed "535" on the nose. Ah-ha. Now we're getting somewhere.

And when I was home and had time to play around, I did a search on the 457th website for "535" and lo and behold, up came 42-97535! But it was listed as "Bouncing Betty II." That sure didn't seem right. I did look at the pictures because Bouncing Betty II had been damaged in a wheels up landing on the return from a mission to Orianeburg in April, 1945. There were several pictures of the damage. But there wasn't any reference to earlier missions by another crew.

My parent's had kept in very close touch with Evans over the years, and we even visited him once in Marietta, GA, on our way down to Florida. I was probably 10 years old at the time, so I don't have that vivid a memory of it. But with this information I called my mother and asked her if she had Ralph's phone number. She didn't, but she did have his address. I did a search on the web and came up with a listing that matched and made a phone call.

I identified myself and we had a very nice chat. He was aware that my father had passed away, and he was interested to hear that Peters had come to the reunion. We talked about our visit some 45 years ago, and his career flying C130s around the world for Lockheed, and mine controlling a lot of them. I asked him about the serial number and he said, yes, that sounded right. He would check his log book. I mentioned the website and told him about the name of the aircraft, but he doesn't have web access. He thought it wouldn't be unusual for an aircraft to be renamed after one crew finished its tour and the aircraft got reassigned to another crew.

I decided I would print out a couple of pictures from the website and send them to Ralph. When I pulled the first one off the printer I looked at it and, Boom!, like a thunderbolt, you could see the name "Jill" just below the pilot's window. I had found it indeed! I don't know why I didn't see it when I was looking at the picture on the monitor, because when I went back to the web picture again, it seemed fairly clear.

Then I took another look at Dad's picture of the nose. There below the pilot's window was "Jill." How did I miss that all of those years?

So, a little detective work, but most importantly the chance to network with those who were there, netted a nice little solution to a puzzle that had bothered me for years. There was no nose art on this aircraft. Just a loving reference to the wife of the pilot. And it stayed on the plane even after he rotated back home.

--ROD PETERSON

*In light the recent Appeals Court ruling in California,
this seems appropriate!*

'THE PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE' - SENATOR JOHN McCain

From a speech made by Capt. John S. McCain, US, (ret) who represents Arizona in the U.S. Senate:

"As you may know, I spent five and one half years as a prisoner of war during the Vietnam War. In the early years of our imprisonment, the NVA kept us in solitary confinement or two or three to a cell. In 1971 the NVA moved us from these conditions of isolation into large rooms with as many as 30 to 40 to a room. This was, as you can imagine, a wonderful change and was a direct result of the efforts of millions of Americans on behalf of a few hundred POWs 10,000 miles from home.

"One of the men who moved into my room was a young man named Mike Christian. Mike came from a small town near Selma, Alabama. He didn't wear a pair of shoes until he was 13 years old. At 17, he enlisted in the US Navy. He later became a Naval Flight Officer and was shot down and captured in 1967. Mike had a keen and deep appreciation of the opportunities this country and our military provide for people who want to work and want to succeed.

"As part of the change in treatment, the Vietnamese allowed some prisoners to receive packages from home. In some of these packages were handkerchiefs, scarves and other items of clothing. Mike got himself a bamboo needle. Over a period of a couple of months, he created an American flag and sewed it on the inside of his shirt. Every afternoon, before we had a bowl of soup, we would hang Mike's shirt on the wall of the cell and say the Pledge of Allegiance. I know the Pledge of Allegiance may not seem the most important part of our day now, but I can assure you that in that stark cell it was indeed the most important and meaningful event.

"One day the Vietnamese searched our cell, as they did periodically, and discovered Mike's shirt with the flag sewn inside, and removed it. That evening they returned, opened the door of the cell, and for the benefit of all of us, beat Mike Christian severely for the next couple of hours. Then, they opened the door of the cell and threw him in.

"We cleaned him up as well as we could. The cell in which we lived had a concrete slab in the middle on which we slept. Four naked light bulbs hung in each corner of the room. As I said, we tried to clean up Mike as well as we could. After the excitement died down, I looked in the corner of the room, and sitting there beneath that dim light bulb with a piece of red cloth, another shirt and his bamboo needle, was my friend, Mike Christian. He was sitting there with his eyes almost shut from the beating he had received, making another American flag.

"He was not making the flag because it made Mike Christian feel better. He was making that flag because he knew how important it was to us to be able to Pledge our allegiance to our flag and country.

"So the next time you say the Pledge of Allegiance, you must never forget the sacrifice and courage that thousands of Americans have made to build our nation and promote freedom around the world. You must remember our duty, our honor, and our country."

*"I pledge allegiance to the flag
of the United States of America
and to the republic
for which it stands,
one nation under God,
indivisible,
with liberty and justice for all."*





Secretary's Station 130

WANTED: A picture of the American Red Cross Rest Home in Southport, England. Send to Joe Toth, 449 Sunset Lane, Pueblo, CO 81005

* * *

Thank you to all who sent articles for the newsletter. If your article does not appear in this edition, it will be in the next newsletter...DECEMBER 2002.

* * *

PLEASE KEEP THOSE ARTICLES COMING...THE NEWSLETTER IS SO MUCH BETTER WHEN IT INCLUDES YOUR STORIES.

* * *

The difficult we do immediately; the impossible takes a little longer.

--U.S. Army Slogan

* * *

Sadly, since our last newsletter, some of our members have passed away. We also have found (or they found us) several new members. A complete update will be in the next newsletter.

* * *

* * * E-MAIL LISTINGS

Beginning in the next issue of our newsletter, we would like to start a page of Member's Email Addresses.

This will provide a way of reaching old friends on the information super-highway!!!

If you would like your name and Email address included in this listing, send an email to Nancy...
mylittldarlings@aol.com

* * *

In July 1942, America's magazine publishers joined together to inspire the nation by featuring the American flag on their covers.

Be Inspired.

Visit the 60th Anniversary exhibition of WWII magazine covers.

THROUGH OCTOBER 27, 2002

SMITHSONIAN'S NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AMERICAN HISTORY
WASHINGTON, DC

www.americanhistory.si.edu/1942

* * *

Work continues on the roster...look for ordering information in the next issue of the newsletter.

* * *

THE EDITOR'S PLIGHT

The typographical error is a slippery thing and sly; you can hunt it 'til you're dizzy, but it somehow will get by. 'Til the pages are off the press, it is strange how still it sleeps; it shrinks down in a corner, and it never stirs or peeps.

That typographical error is too small for human eyes, 'til the ink is on the paper, when it grows to mountain size.

..PX.....PX.....PX.....PX.....PX.....PX.....PX.....PX.....PX.....PX.....PX..

ALL PATCHES ARE BACK IN STOCK

ITEMS						PRICE	QUANTITY	TOTAL AMT.
Cloisonné	Enamel	457	BG	Tac	Pin	.....	\$5.50 ea	_____
457th	Group	Patch	.....	.....	.....	.....	\$5.50 ea	_____
748th	Squadron	Patch.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	\$5.50 ea	_____
749th	Squadron	Patch.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	\$5.50 ea	_____
750th	Squadron	Patch.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	\$5.50 ea	_____
751st	Squadron	Patch.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	\$5.50 ea	_____
ANY 5 or more pins or patches.....						\$4.50 ea	_____	_____
Return to	Glatton	Button..1998	Peterborough,	England....	.....	\$1.50 ea	_____	_____
NEW	HATS...Royal	Blue.....	.....	.....	.....	\$12.00ea	_____	_____
PENCILS...imprinted	with	"457th	BG".....	.....	.....	5 for \$1.00	_____	_____

TOTAL COST OF ITEMS ORDERED: ** _____ **

**** PLEASE INCLUDE A MINIMAL AMOUNT TO COVER POSTAGE**
(A CLOSE GUESS WILL DO!!!)

Mail order to...457th BG...449 Sunset Lane....Pueblo, CO 81005 OR CALL JOE (719)566-1714

Mail to: Your Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____

2 NEW ITEMS...JUST IN!!!

**PENS...AIR FORCE BLUE WITH GOLD TRIM , BLACK INK ...
BLACK GRIPPER FOR COMFORT...VERY HIGH QUALITY**

\$3.00 ea

IMPRINTED IN GOLD AS FOLLOWS...

457TH BOMB GROUP ASSOCIATION
FAIT ACCOMPLI

A NEW PATCH...GUNNER WINGS IN SILVER ON A BLUE BACKGROUND.

\$5.00 ea

GET 'EM WHILE THEY LAST!!!

THE 457TH BOMB GROUP -- VITAL STATISTICS 2001-2001 OFFICERS & APPOINTMENTS

<u>PRESIDENT</u>	WILL FLUMAN	122 S RIDGE RD - BOILING SPRINGS, PA 17001-9712 TEL: 717-258-3090 FAX: 717-258-0560 - email: OakGrove@aol.com
<u>VICE PRESIDENT</u>	DONALD NIELSEN	9142 WEST KERRY LANE - PEORIA, AZ 85382-4623 TEL: 623-561-2644
<u>SECRETARY</u>	NANCY HENRICH	453 SUNSET LANE - PUEBLO, CO 81005-1140 TEL: 719-564-8599 FAX: 719-564-6458 - email: mylittldarlings@aol.com
<u>TREASURER</u>	JOHN PEARSON	11308 BLENDON LANE - RICHMOND, VA 23233 TEL: 804-740-2635 FAX: 804-740-7403 - email: jonpearson@worldnet.att.net
<u>RECORDING SEC</u>	JAMES BASS	P.O. BOX 500 - CARTHAGE, TN 37030 TEL: 615-735-1122 - FAX: 615-735-3149
<u>DIRECTOR (2 YR)</u>	FRANK MARTIN	3724 GERSHWIN LANE - OAKDALE, MN 55128 TEL: 651-779-9110
<u>DIRECTOR (4 YR)</u>	JOE TOTH	449 SUNSET LANE - PUEBLO, CO 81005-1140 TEL: 719-566-1714 FAX: 719-564-6458 - email: joetoth457bombgroup@juno.com
<u>DIRECTOR (6 YR)</u>	RICHARD GIBBS	301 W. 5TH ST. - VERMILLION, KS 66544-8635 TEL: 785-382-6835 email: winter - barbndic@pocketmail.com summer - barbndic@bluevalley.com
<u>I. PAST PRES</u>	CRAIG HARRIS	2701 PICKETT ROAD, #2035 - DURHAM, NC 27705-5649 TEL: 919-489-5685 FAX: 919-419-1705 - email: charris4@nc.rr.com
<u>NEWSLETTER ED.</u>	NANCY HENRICH	(see SECRETARY above)
<u>LEGAL ADVISOR</u>	JAMES BASS	(see RECORDING SECRETARY above)
<u>GROUP ROSTER</u>	JOE TOTH	(see DIRECTOR 4 YR above)
<u>UNIT CONTACT</u>	JOE TOTH	(see DIRECTOR 4 YR above)
<u>WEBMASTER</u>	WILLARD (HAP) REESE	11 FLETCHER CT. - PALM COAST, FL 32137 TEL: 904-445-5773 email: areese@bestnetpc.com
<u>WEBMASTER ASST</u>	DIANE REESE	email: dreese@us.ibm.com
<u>SEC/TREAS/NEWSLETTER ED.</u>	(ret)...MICKEY BRIGGS	- 811 NW "B" STREET - BENTONVILLE, AR 72712 TEL: 479-273-3908 - FAX: 479-271-9147
<u>CO-FOUNDER</u>	HOMER BRIGGS (Deceased)	

457TH B.G. ENGLISH HISTORIANS AND/OR F.O.T.E. MEMBERS

GORDON TOWNSEND - "QUAKERS REST" - MAIN STREET, KINGS RIPTON HUNTINGDON CAMBS PE17 2NW - ENGLAND
TEL: 44 1487 773493

JOHN WALKER - 29 CHANCERY LANE - EYE, PETERBOROUGH PE6 7YF - ENGLAND TEL: 44 1733 222994

RAY POBGEE - 23, EASTERN AVENUE, PETERBOROUGH PE1 4PH - ENGLAND TEL: (01733) 340282

ERIC BRUMBY - 82 BLUE BELL AVE - PETERBOROUGH UK PE1 3XH - TEL: 01733-709811

MIKE JACKSON, HISTORIAN - 11 WHISTON GRANGE - MOORGATE - ROTHERHAM S60 3BG - ENGLAND TEL: 44 1709 371547

PAST PRESIDENTS

1973-75 -- WILLIAM WILBORN.....OK
1976 -- HOWARD LARSEN (D)...KS
1977-79 -- WILLIAM SILER.....NM
1980-81 -- EDWARD REPPA.....AZ
1982-83 -- DANIEL GRAHAM.....IN

1984 -- WILLIAM GOOD.....KS
1985 -- DAVE SUMMERVILLE.....CA
1986-87 -- CLAYTON BEJOT.....NE
1988-89 -- DONALD SELLON.....CO
1990-91 -- JOHN WELCH.....SD

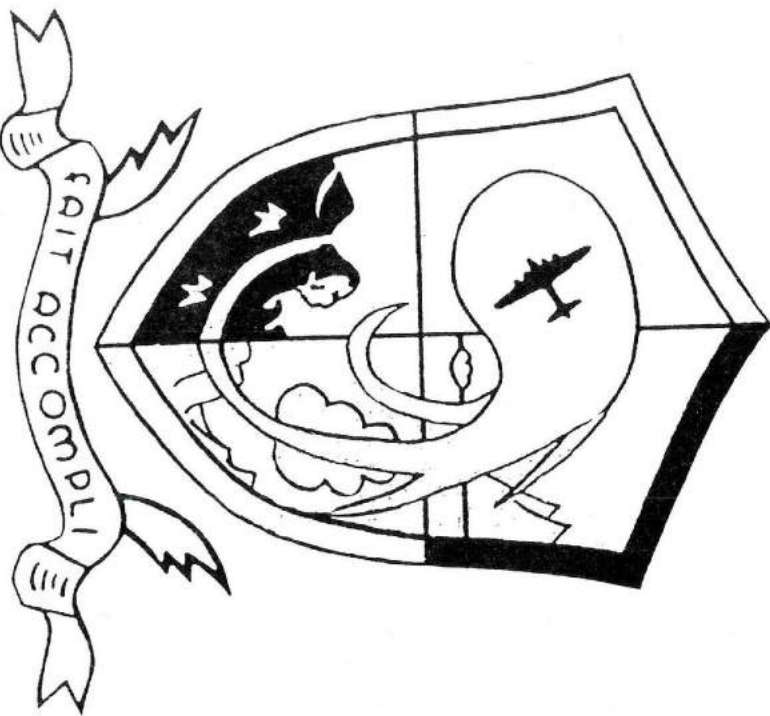
1992-93 -- ROLAND BYERS.....ID
1993-97 -- BILLY HIGHTOWER.....TX
1997-99 -- LEON ZIMMERMAN.....MI
1999-01 -- CRAIG HARRIS.....NC

*"The secret of staying young is to live honestly, eat slowly,
and lie about your age."*

Lucille Ball

457th Bomb Group Association
453 Sunset Lane
Pueblo, CO 81005-1140

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