

POOP from Group



791st



790th



789th



788th

Newsletter of the 467th Bomb Group Association

June 2022



TRUE HEROES OF WENDOVER, one of the last images of the 790th Lt. Edward J. Mosser Crew tragically all lost crashing into the Atlas Mountains, North Africa, 12 March 44, en-route to England. We remember their names and those others of the 467th lost during training and transitioning to England at a dedication ceremony at the historic Wendover Airfield during our Reunion at Salt Lake City in September. Our successful fundraising drive toward a B24 scale replica representing original Group aircraft will be unveiled in honor of those airman from the Group, also remembering the 15,000 Army Air Force who too lost lives whilst undertaking training.

***** Salt Lake City September Reunion Schedule & Registration *****
The BBC Interviews part two

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Jay Shower



The 467th
Bombardment Group
The Rackheath Aggies



President's Message

By Brian Mahoney

researcher@brianhmahoney.com

Between the weekly Facebook updates from Ivan Barnard and his merry crew of dedicated volunteers unearthing Site# 6 of USAAF Station #145, and the ongoing planning for our Wendover Memorial Dedication in September, there is a great deal inspiring our commemoration of the WWII generation and its sacrifices. The precursor to Memorial Day would have been Decoration Day in May of 1944, putting 'our' veterans in mind of their forbears, also young, in uniform, and in harm's way, just two to three generations prior. To them, Appomattox Courthouse was just as long ago as the Doolittle Raid is to us, but also as 'recent' in all the ways that you readers understand.

This is a particularly sad year to reflect on the scourge of war and the need for constant vigilance by all who come to the defence of freedom and justice. It is a bitter pill, this far along in history, to contemplate once again the base and bold bullying of a deluded punk with a fragile ego in that spot where most of us have a conscience. There's something familiar about their wilful unaccountability to their people, or humanity generally. We approach Memorial Day 2022 feeling a little too much like average informed Americans felt in the summer of 1941. Historical parallels are widely noted and day by day, as contemporary events more closely shadow specific precedents in the second decade, then the third and fourth decades of the 20th century.

I hope this finds you well, and grateful if also alarmed as we approach Memorial Day weekend. It will be very nice to see as many of you as possible in Salt Lake City, and we mindfully add an important category of unrecognized heroes to the long list of those who sacrificed all.



News From Station 145

From David Hastings MBE

Here the Marker will shortly have the Spring clean by the Salhouse Scouts so we are ready for the summer. You may have heard there was a very serious fire recently on Liberator Close but the Marker was not affected and nor was Roger's premises thank goodness.

On April 27th we had the 80th Anniversary of the Baedeker Blitz on Norwich with a special feature in the EDP and for those of us who lived through that awful week we have just a very small idea of what the people in Ukraine are suffering in the evil and barbaric war being carried out by Putin. We were lucky in my family that my father who had fought in the Great War had the vision to foresee what was going to happen and in May 1939 had asked his great friend Sidney Gill who was a builder, to construct an air raid shelter in our garden. Our neighbors' said it was a waste of money but three years later they were glad to use it. When the Blitz started we had become complacent and did not leave our beds when our dog started to howl and then the sirens sounded. However when the aircraft started to circle the City father told us to get dressed and down to the shelter. As we opened the back door the sky was turned into day by the German flares and the bombs started to fall. In a brief pause father told us to run and we hurtled down the steps into the shelter and we were quickly joined by our neighbours. The explosions got louder and louder and occasionally father would climb outside to see if our house was still standing. After two hours of bombardment the Germans left us and we then did what was to become a regular feature. Father took me down to the Police box on Colman Road where he knew the "Bobbie" to find out what had happened and we heard that City centre was in ruins. My mother then left us for her duty as a Red Cross nurse at the Casualty Evacuation centre while my father walked down to Pitt Street to see if his business was still standing.

Tuesday was quiet but two of us decided that there could not be any school that day so we went to Eaton Park to collect bomb splinters. Sadly for us on the Wednesday morning when we returned to School we found that this had not closed and we were caned for playing truant ! On Wednesday night it all began again but this time with masses of incendiaries and our Caley chocolate factory was destroyed. Friday was another huge attack and I lost some of my school friends but if you have never experienced the noise, the smell and the fear then it is hard to understand, but luckily that was the end of the Blitz. Not long after they came again and the school was hit and my classroom destroyed. Also that month when we were playing cricket on the School field a German Ju 88 bomber swept out of the low cloud with no warning and machined gunned us. Norfolk was also a favorite target for hit and run raids and the School records showed that in the last fortnight of February we had spent over 18 hours in the shelters under the playground. Another Anniversary is that in 1942 the first members of the US 8th Army Air Force arrived in Norfolk and the start of some lifelong friendships both at Rackheath and Hethel. Hard to believe now that all that happened 80 years ago.

On another anniversary, 30 years since we flew the B-24 "Diamond Lil" to Norwich I am delighted to say that there has been a huge interest and we should have quite a happy week in June. Finally thank goodness we seem to be getting to the end of this awful pandemic and I just hope and pray that we will soon see the end of the tragic war in Ukraine.

Stay well and all our love,

David, Jean and Roger Hastings

467th Base contacts



Notes from the Editor

Please send news/articles for "POOP"
 To : Editor - Andy Wilkinson
andywilkinson467th@btinternet.com

This issue brings you full details, schedule and registration for our forthcoming 2022 Reunion which see us make a welcome first time visit to Salt Lake City, and our first opportunity to be together since Hartford in May 2019. Our Reunion Committee have produced an exciting package allowing you plenty of time to explore SLC and enjoy numerous dining and cultural options from our downtown hotel location. Highlight of the 5 days will be the much anticipated trip out to the historic Wendover Army Airfield to dedicate our unique memorial to those forgotten heroes lost here during training or during transition to England. It is the culmination of our determined and successful fundraising effort when plans to commission a Group B24 scale replica to remember those men was first raised back at Hartford three years ago. Everyone is warmly welcome and do make every effort to come and experience the camaraderie and legacy of the 467th in what promises to be a very memorable occasion. See you all in September!

CRAIG SCHARRSCHMIDT: we received the sad news of Craig's passing from his wife Maggie and pass on our sincere condolences to her and family. For the past 10 years, Craig acted as our "registered agent" in the state of Wisconsin responsible for reminding us annually to file information returns in our state of incorporation. Craig did not hesitate when asked, and undertook this 'small but important' role. Craig's Father was William F. Scharrschmidt, bombardier and pilotage navigator, 791st.

HAPPY 105TH BIRTHDAY JOE! wonderful to see our esteemed and ever youthful Joe Haenn, B24 mechanic on "Wabbit" and "Miss Judy" celebrate his 105th birthday with daughter, Judy, granddaughter, Christine, family and friends at his care home in PA. in April. Joe received many birthday greeting cards from 467th friends and I know he will enjoy seeing his picture as a keen reader of the POOP.

LAUNCH OF THE AMERICAN LIBRARY Memorial to the 2nd Air Division 8th Air Force

United States Army Air Forces: The American Library, based in Norwich's Millennium Library, has undergone a transformation to bring the history of the 2nd Air Division to a new generation. Among those in attendance at the event were **Colonel Charles Metrolis**, US Air Attaché to the UK, and family members of US Veterans from the Heritage League. In addition, three American veterans joined the celebration via Zoom and spoke about their experience during the war and their gratitude for restoration of the American Library.

It was a real privilege to attend the special event on May 18 along with **Ivan Barnard** representing the 467th. So good to see so many familiar faces and friends who have had a long association with the Memorial Library including **Mike Bailey** whose artwork and B24 drawings have long been a feature in the Library and who continues to accept commissions for his prized paintings. Previous visitors may well recall Library staff, **Lesley Fleetwood and Jenny Christian**, both now retired who were always at hand to provide a friendly welcome offering their broad and extensive knowledge of local bases and a true asset for over many years to the Library.



The American Library has undergone a complete redevelopment with new displays that allow visitors to discover what service men and women did on a typical day at a base. The new 'Wall of Honor' features photos of the fallen and sits alongside the 'Roll of Honor' book, providing a permanent memorial to those who lost their lives. The entrance has also been improved to make the library more open and accessible, with a new space created for an education and events programme.

Chairman of the Trust Governors, **Richard Middleton**, opened the evening with a welcome message and outlined the changes under the redevelopment with a short explanation of the history and the intention the “memorial” to fallen comrades be a “living memorial” a place of a daily influence of American thought and ideals to the people of the Norwich community. Real treat of the evening was the introduction via Zoom of the three veterans of the 2nd Air Division.

Colonel Charles E. Metrolis, Unites States Air Force and Air Attaché with the US Embassy said:

“I’m honored to represent the United States at this prestigious opening of the American Library in Norwich. Not only does the library showcase the extraordinary heroism of the Greatest Generation, but its unique location in Norfolk highlights yet another shining example of our special relationship and trans-atlantic friendship. This living memorial housing the treasures within will be cherished by generations to come on both sides of the Atlantic”.

Following speeches from representatives of the US Embassy and local dignitaries, guests were invited to explore the newly restored space. Alongside the new displays, the collection contains over 4,000 books on all aspects of contemporary American life and the American Library runs a series of events and education programmes to help people understand the part the 2nd Air Division played in shaping the landscape and history of East Anglia.

There is also an extensive archive of over 30,000 original photographs, letters, memoirs and other documents about the 2nd Air Division and World War Two in the East of England which you can view online.



Richard Middleton with Col. Charles Metrolis, Air Attache



Former Library staff, Jenny & Lesley

The work to renew the American Library was funded by the Memorial Trust with generous grants and donations from individuals and organisation that include: Heritage League of the 2nd Air Division, various local grant giving bodies, The Walter Hines Page Chapter of the Daughter's of the American Revolution, and a number of veterans and their families.

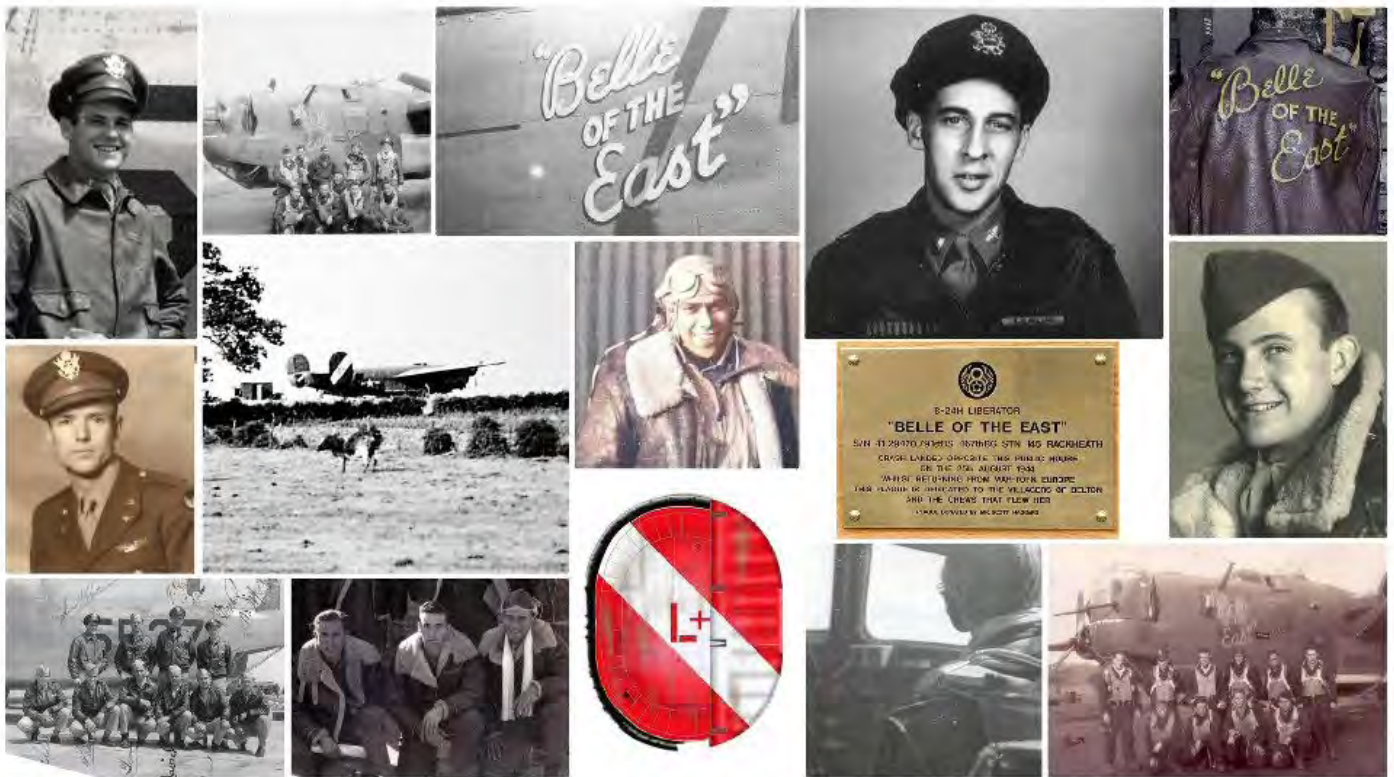
REDEDICATION OF MEMORIAL PLAQUE:

On a glorious Saturday spring day in April, villagers and friends at Belton, Norfolk, once again gathered to remember the dramatic events of August 1944

when a Rackheath B24, “Belle of the East” unexpectedly came to ground close to the village Pub. This event had a happy ending in that most of the crew had previously baled out following engines cutting out, leaving three crew members in the

waist to ride-down with the ship. Local villagers were quickly on the scene and extricated the three who were all fortunate to experience little more than minor cuts and bruises. The pilot was led to believe the engines were fuel-starved after returning from the mission to Lubeck, Germany, that day, but later investigation suggested issues with fuel transfer led to dramatic loss of power.

Local man, **Dick Lindsey** meticulously researched the crash leading to communication with a number of the crew which led to the event to be remembered by a bronze plaque installed at the local pub “The Railway Tavern” on the 50th anniversary of the crash-landing in August 1994. Almost 27 years on, the plaque was rededicated in a 1940’s themed all day event with music of the day, folk in period dress, reenactors, vintage 40s military vehicles, and the local mayor present with Dick to mark the rededication. Among our British 467th friends to attend the festivities were **Ivan Barnard, Chris & Tahlia Collins, James and Gill Watts**, with reports a thoroughly enjoyable day was had by all.



“BELLE OF THE EAST” REDEDICATION OF MEMORIAL PLAQUE APRIL 16TH 2022

IOAM - LATE | 40'S MUSIC | MILITARY VEHICLES | REENACTORS
RAILWAY TAVERN STATION RD, BELTON, NORFOLK, NR31 9AA

DJ
FLYING
FORTRESS

EMAIL AND ADDRESS CHANGES: Remember to report changes to our President, Brian Mahoney, who handles all membership details including notifications of “Folded Wings” and obituaries. researcher@brianhmahoney.com

467th Bombardment Group Association 2022 Reunion & Wendover Memorial dedication, based in Salt Lake City, UT, September 21-25

Everyone welcome!



A warm welcome awaits everyone in Salt Lake City as we gather for the first time in three long years. A great program of activities, visits, and opportunities to spend time with friends and hopefully several of our cherished veterans. Highlight will be a full day out at the historic Wendover Airfield for a dedication of our scale replica B-24 along with family who lost relatives here during training or en-route overseas. We will be unveiling plaques/display-boards honoring the 467th and a wider recognition of the 15,500 young airmen lost to accidents in pursuit of combat readiness. Make your reservation right away to ensure your place at this significant event in Association history. See you all in September!

SHERATON SALT LAKE CITY HOTEL

150 West 500 South, Salt Lake City, Utah

Please make your reservations right away for "BGA 2022 CONVENTION" to ensure our special group rate. Guest Room rates available for extended stay from Sunday September 18 through Wednesday, September 28th. Single (King) or Double (2 Queen size beds) \$129 plus taxes. You can cancel up to 2 days before your arrival at no charge.

Book our special Reunion Room Rate of \$129 (+tax)

[HERE](#) for BGA 2022 CONVENTION

Hotel Notes - [Hotel Website](#)

- Group rate includes complimentary Wi-Fi
- Group room rate available three days before/after. Extend your stay - check availability
- Hotel check-in 3pm. Check-out 12am.
- All the usual top amenities, Starbucks in lobby, onsite Restaurant & Bar, downtown location. wide range of dining options and shopping in walking distance.

SALT LAKE CITY International Airport just 7 miles away and served by most major airlines.

[Airport Website](#) - Hotel shuttle unavailable. Short taxi journey one-way around \$20 - \$25

Meals and the Day Room We will have our traditional Day Room displaying memorabilia, records, photos and much more. A great place to meet and relax in comfortable surroundings. Open until late evening each day. Our Formal Dinner/Banquet will be held on Sunday Evening (25th), allowing time the other nights to explore locally on your own or with friends at our recommended dining options. Additional information on the nearest restaurant choices and other options will be provided in your welcome packets.

SCHEDULE: (Given times subject to adjustment)

Wednesday, Sept 21 ARRIVALS: Day Room open from 12:00, once checked-in proceed to Day Room to collect Welcome/Information packets and meet & greet with friends once more. Your choice for dinner at hotel or try a nearby option. Day Room open until late.

Thursday, Sept 22 HILL AIR FORCE MUSEUM:

9:30 am Coach departs hotel for Hill Air Force Museum, great collection inside and out including B-24, choice of deli box lunch there. Option for Group Photo.

2:00 pm Board coach to return to hotel mid-afternoon. Day Room open, free time before dinner at hotel or nearby on your own.

Friday Sept 23 WENDOVER ARMY AIRFIELD DEDICATION & TOUR:

9:00 am Coach departs hotel for Historic Wendover Army Airfield (water/juice and snacks provided). Base tour and exploration.

1:30 pm Catered lunch at base (included with registration).

2:45 pm 467th BGA special dedication ceremony: presenting our stunning scale model B-24 Liberator, commemorating our 53 men lost in training or in transit to Rackheath, England

4:00 pm First-ever formal public recognition of all 15,500 USAAF personnel lost in training for WWII. Attending will be surviving family members, representatives of other WWII commemorative organizations, special speakers. Open to interested public, press.

5:45 pm Board coach for return to our Salt Lake City hotel. (Interested parties may instead enjoy gambling and entertainment on their own, right next door in West Wendover, Nevada; return transportation options available.)

7:00 pm (Approx.) Arrive back at hotel; dinner and evening on your own.

Saturday Sept 24 FREE DAY:

Opportunity to explore Salt Lake City or journey further afield. Day Room open. Dinner on your own.

Sunday Sept 25 MEMBERS MEETINGS, PRESENTATION, EVENING BANQUET:

10:15 am 467th BG Association Annual Meeting; officer and committee reports, open Q & A, members (re)elect Directors for three seats.

11:00 am Presentation by Pam Todd, Kearns Historical Society—many of the original 467th passed through Kearns Army Base before Wendover.

11:40 am (Approx.) Brief Directors' Meeting to elect 2022-23 officers, set next Director's meeting

Lunch on your own, afternoon free

5:30 pm Cocktails

6:30 pm Banquet with Guest Speaker

Monday Sept 25 DEPARTURES - "Until we meet again!"

Banquet choices: Grilled Salmon *honey infused jasmine rice, roasted tomato relish*

Herb Roasted Chicken Dinner *garlic smashed potatoes, chicken citrus glaze*

Classic Steak and Potatoes *New York Strip Steak roasted potatoes, cabernet demi glaze*

Vegetable Heirloom Primavera *seasonal vegetables in a white wine butter sauce rigatoni*

All served with either Caesar Salad or Arcadian Field Greens, chef's choice vegetables, herb rolls and butter

Desserts Petit Chocolate Cake, New York Cheesecake or Carrot Cake.

Planning Committee Contact: Any further questions, feel free to call Brian Mahoney (202) 232-1423

467th Bomb Group Association 2022 Reunion Salt Lake City Sept 21-25

Registration and Check, send to Valerie Corvino by 31 August
Registration Fee waived for 467th veteran or widow, their spouse/companion

Item	Per Person	# of People	Sub Total
Registration - covers all common activity fees, Day Room, snacks & drinks, transportation, gratuities, etc. (Veterans and widows, spouse/companion, no fee)	\$300		
Formal Banquet - Sunday 25th			
Salmon	\$39		
Chicken	\$37		
Steak	\$45		
Veg Primavera	\$34		
Total Remittance			\$.....

Special Needs

My party will require (how many)wheelchairs

Other special need we can assist with.....

Badge Information Name	Organisation if not 467th

Add additional sheet for larger party:

CHECKS PAYABLE to 467th BOMB GROUP ASSOCIATION

Your Address:

Your Home Phone.....Cell.....

Your Email.....

Remittance Check payable to 467th Bomb Group Association and mail to:
 Valerie Corvino 242 Molly Drive, McMurray, PA. 15317 **NO LATER THAN 31 AUGUST:**
 Phone 724-941-8973 (Please leave message for response) Email vcorvino467@gmail.com

Approximate time you plan to arrive in SALT LAKE CITY.....

Rackheath Site#6

Progress Report June 2022

Following the completion of the removal of tree stumps and tons of earth from inside the blast shelter that is opposite the White House, our principal efforts have been concentrated on the White House.....(the domestic accommodation of Col. Shower).

Work to improve the appearance and provide the methodology by which the White House can eventually be restored have involved the removal of a dense carpet some eight inches thick of interwoven ivy roots within which other forms of vegetation had taken hold. This has enabled us to walk freely within the building. This was followed by the careful removal of the ivy from the internal brickwork.

Externally the ground levels have been reduced to their former levels in order to give the same perspective that can be seen in the 1944 photograph. This in turn has led to the uncovering of several manhole covers to the underground drainage system.

At the time of writing we have just taken delivery of several truck loads of wood-chip, that has been donated by a local businessman. This has now been used to top up the central woodland wood-chip path.

Our weekly endeavors can visually be followed on our Facebook page. **Rackheath Pathfinders – Site 6 (467th USAAF)**

Ivan A Barnard

Email ivanbarnard999@btinternet.com



Front of the White House with exposed pathway



Protective coating added to the remaining window frames; note the cleared internal floor.



How the building originally appeared from a photo taken in October 1944 and “colorised” from the black and white image of the time. (Via the Rackheath Pathfinders Facebook Page).



Rear of the White House newly cleared



A further view of the front of the building following extensive clearance by the Pathfinders

Save Salhouse Station

James Watts reports on a local group who have sprung up in response to a threat to demolish the iconic platform building of Salhouse Station located on the former east side of Rackheath Airfield. The Station played a prominent role during construction of the base in 1943 and a familiar scene for the personnel of the 467th during 1944/45.

In the parish we've formed a group - the **Save Salhouse Station Group (SSG)** - in

response to a threat from Greater Anglia as rail service operator to demolish the remaining 1894 Victorian station platform and replace it with a plastic bus shelter-type construction similar to that which replaced the other platform demolished in 1966.

Save Britain's Heritage (SBH), a national heritage protection group, took GA to court at the end of last year and secured a reprieve following their salvation of other historic stations in East Anglia (including Brandon's 1845 gem). Unfortunately the subsequent attempt at listing failed, on grounds the building was too young (nearly 130 years - go figure...). Despite architectural historian interest in the rare Japanese-influenced Victorian metalwork. The effort led to formation of an informal coalition including Salhouse Parish Council, local historians and concerned individuals including Chris Dady, head of CPRE Norfolk branch (Campaign to Protect Rural England), together with SBH.

GA threatens to press on with demolition plans, but SSG and Save Britain's Heritage are pushing for talks about SSG funding remedial repairs and finding a new use for the building. This is ongoing.

The 467th would have known the station and its original buildings well, of course, with the first staff arriving by train from Greenock in Scotland on March 11th, 1944 just in time to witness the arrival of the first Liberators by air. I think that's an amazing coincidence, that they might have got off the trains to potentially see that. And of course, they would have been able to use the station when on leave to travel into Norwich and onto London or other destinations local or beyond.

As it is a key part of the 467th's story, I wondered if 467th members or Heritage League members or the organisations themselves would be potentially interested in funding some of the remedial repair work alongside donations from villagers (Mum and I are offering £1,000)? Initial costs estimates are £5,000 including scaffolding. This wouldn't be needed immediately but it would be helpful to know this source could be drawn on once agreement on a schedule is reached with Greater Anglia.

On funding, we have yet to set up a proper account but pledges of interest [email](#) to me, James Watts, would be very welcome.

Updates on this highly worthy campaign will appear in future issues of "POOP"- Editor.



The BBC Interviews: part two



Continuing from the last issue of POOP, a series of interviews conducted by a BBC journalist with members of the 467th at the Grafton Hotel, London, in May 1992. The 467th veterans and family members were visiting Norwich and their base at Rackheath with time also spent in London where these interviews took place.

Phillip G. Day, Co-pilot 791st/789th. (PGD) My name is Phil Day. I'm from Shreveport Louisiana in the southern part of the United States. I was born there and I reside there at this time. I arrived in England on July 12, 1944 as a replacement crew. I was the co-pilot on it. We landed at Liverpool and were immediately put into small English trains which were, to us, quite diminutive. We were then take to Stone, England. We went from there to North Ireland and trained there for some ten days. Then I was assigned to the ill fated 492nd bomb group, but I did not fly any missions with them, though I was there for five days and transferred forthwith from the 492nd into the 467th. I flew my first combat mission on August 18th. From then until March 21, 1945 I flew thirty-five combat missions and we also participated in supplying Patton's army during this time. We flew gasoline in our aircraft to various fields in France. I think I hold the record for doing those at fifteen. Everybody else did seven or eight or something but I did fifteen of 'em. My impression of the English people is not so remembered. I didn't have anything to do with them. In fact I didn't have anything to do with the crews that I was living with. It was kind of a self defence thing. You just didn't want to get too close to people. I would go on the library runs to Norwich, go to the Sampson and Hercules and dance with the ladies and they were nice. Jerry Hoey and his Orchestra played very well. Went on leave. Thirty day passes they were, to London on six occasions and generally just looked at things and tried to find something to eat. Stayed normally in the Red Cross facilities down there. I guess it was around Rainbow Corner.

I was sent on leave, we called it a Flack Shack, after some twenty-five of my thirty-five missions. We went down into the southwest of England to an estate called Knight Hayes. I understand that he had something to do with the Coleman Mustard people, but in any event it was a beautiful seven days down there. Again, I can't tell you that I was acquainted with any of the English because there were American Red Cross ladies there. When I finished my tour the powers that be

be said "Ship him out as soon as possible" and I was. In three days I was back in Stone, in ten days I was on the Ile De France and came home on it. It was a tremendously large ship with only fifteen-hundred of us on it and only seven hundred were ambulatory, so we got to eat in the nice dining rooms on linen and silver service and every meal was marvellous.

BBC: What sort of music would take you back to that time?

PGD: We had a radio in our hut and we would listen to to Armed Forces Radio Network and then when we could we would listen to Radio Berlin because Axis Sally had some good music also. I don't have any particular memories of those days and those songs, I remember a lot of songs from the era, sure do.

BBC: And what of the English People?

PGD: In total I didn't get to know the English people until later. I came over in 1975 and did a seven day tour and then I came back in 1983 for another week and I got to know the people. Mostly those who were interested in the activities of the 8th Air Force and the 467th during wartime, Right now I have English friends that are as dear to me as those of all my life. I'm sorry to be leaving right now because I fear I'll never come back again.



With Vince LaRussa

Vincent D. LaRussa, Instrument Mechanic

789th. (VLR) My name is Vincent La Russa. I enlisted in the US Army Air Force in 1942 in Rochester New York. I arrived in England with the US Frederick Lykes with the rest of the ground crew. We arrived up the river Clyde. I recall vividly the workers stopping what they were doing as we cruised up the the river. They would yell "Hidey Hi" and of course we would respond with "Hidey Ho" and that happened all the way up along the river until we finally docked.

BBC: What were your first impressions of Britain?

VLR: I had been following the people in the

battle of Britain and when I came here I was enthralled with how well they had endured extreme difficulties, and I was pleased to have gotten here.

BBC: Any particular piece of music you recall from that time?

VLR: Yes I do remember two. Vera Lynn "White Cliffs of Dover" because I had heard it in the States and we had Armed forces Network and they would play that song and I also remember "I'll walk alone".

BBC: How did you get along with the people?

I fell in love with them immediately. I felt that I was among friends. The difficulty was at the beginning. I couldn't understand the Norfolk accent, but as we acclimated and they got used to my peculiar accent we got along famously.

BBC: And the food?

VLR: It depends on which food you're talking about. When we first arrived the food was a horrible mess. We weren't combat activated at that point, we were short on rations. Coming in to town, after D-day, we could get a few meals. We had Bangers and Mash with peas. I don't think the Bangers had any meat in them and the peas were like stones but that was the best they could do and they were gracious to share their food.

BBC: What of the social life?

VLR: Well the social life was very meager. On the base there was none. The only thing you could do on the base was the occasional movie, and every once in a while local artists would come on base and put on shows for us and entertain us and they were always well received. Coming in to town I wasn't one to go to the Muscle Club, the Samson and Hercules bar, which is just near where the Maids Head hotel is located. I went in for other activities, mainly looking for the perfect pint

of ale. I looked for it all over Norwich and I never did find it and I didn't find it this time either. I kept looking... (laughs)

BBC: Tell me about this reunion.

VLR: Oh, this has been one of the highlights of my life! Coming back I felt that I was coming back to meet old friends and neighbors. We were so graciously received by everyone. It's a heart warming experience.

BBC: What was your feeling when you left?

VLR: We left in June of 1945. I was selected as part of the ground crew that was going to accompany the air crew back. We flew home via Valley Wales, the Azores up into Gander Bay and then down to Bradley Field Connecticut, and then we finally dispersed home on a thirty days R & R. It was a heart tugging situation because I'd made friends with these people and it was like leaving them and knowing that it would be a long time, if ever, that I would be able to return and renew these friendships.

BBC: And is this the last reunion?

VLR: Oh no, there will be others. This is not something that you stop at this point.

Major John J. Taylor, 788th Squadron Commanding Officer. (JJT) I'm John Taylor from Waukesha Wisconsin. I was Squadron Commander of the 788th at Rackheath.

BBC: What were your first impressions of Britain when you arrived?

JJT: Well, we came in with what turned out to be an ill fated unit. We lost three of our four squadrons very early. The activity at the base pretty well controlled our personal activities for quite a while. But eventually we picked up the remnants of the 492nd group and moved to Rackheath to join the 467th and things smoothed out. Our losses were minimized and it did give us time then to get to Rackheath, occasionally Norwich and even occasionally London. One of my favorite memories was the buzz bomb times. You could pick out the British from the Americans when the buzz bombs came over. The British went down in the cellar and we went outside to see where the bombs were going. They had a little more sense than we did. I think I know that I gained a tremendous sense of respect for the British people. They were awakened most nights to take shelter from the bombings. Got up every morning to go do their work and never complained. I have since added to that feeling of respect a real feeling of affection. The local people at Rackheath brought us in like long lost relatives.

BBC: What takes you back to that time?

JJT: Well, we continue to have reunions in the US. We don't have to come this far to see each other. You have to understand, the bond among the men who fought together is very close. So I see some of these men every year. So why come to England? Well, you add the fact that we were able to walk around the old base, scratch some emotions that I thought were buried but aren't. We get to see much of Great Britain that we did not have time to see back then.

BBC: Any piece of music that takes you back to those days?

JJT: Oh I wish I could remember. There were a couple of good numbers that I heard played over and over and over again while I sat in the hospital and I frankly don't remember right now what they were, but yes there some and when I hear them they take me immediately back to that time. Of course there what "White Cliffs of Dover," we loved the music of Glenn Miller. I still have many of those records. "Praise the Lord and Pass the Ammunition" was flying around at that time and I still have many of those records and I do play them. Oh yes, the song "I'll Be Seeing You" was played constantly while I was lying in the hospital and I still listen to that.

Edward R. Novak, S-2 Intelligence, Staff Officer. (ERN) My name is Ed Novak, I'm from the Chicago area.

BBC: When did you first come to Britain?

ERN: I came along with the original group. I was along with all of the ground crew which were known as paddlefeet and of course the flying personnel went over by plane and we went over by the esteemed flagship the Frederick Lykes, didn't we, and we got to Britain early March, but we came down here via the Clyde because that's where the ship docked.

BBC: You couldn't have been very old at the time...

ERN: At the time I was twenty-seven years old.

BBC: What particular memories do you have of the time?

ERN: I was too busy. I was wearing a number of hats as they say today and because I was so totally involved there were many memories that I had, however I'll never forget how difficult it was for us to accept our first loss. The pilot and his crew. Their first mission on the tenth of April, and on the eleventh of April they went down after visiting the continent. Came back, missed the airfield and crashed and they were all killed. That took a lot out of us because it was the first one. We lost many friends after that and became quite inured to having friends of ours not come home again. That was very indelible. I was an S2 officer, I was a paddlefoot, I was not a pilot nor a bombardier nor a gunner nor a whatever. I was in intelligence and we used to plan and brief missions and interrogate the crews after they returned from missions and we'd write up the reports.

BBC: On a happier note, is there any piece of music that takes you back?

ERN: The song I remember most of all is a song titled "I Walk Alone" because we were alone, even though we had thousands of buddies around. We were alone and far away from home. I was married at the time, my wife was pregnant and that song caused me to reminisce quite seriously.

Larry P. Kurtz, Aircraft Mechanic, 788th. (LPK)

My name is Larry Kurtz. I was born and raised in Philadelphia and I'm presently living in the state of New Jersey.

BBC: What were your first impressions when You arrived in Britain?

LPK.: I got over here in December 1943, It was cold. Our first base was in Old Buckingham with the 453rd. They called it the mud-hole and we had very poor living quarters. We had trouble getting food. I did a lot of hunting in the States and I was trapping rabbits and cooking them in the barracks, That's how bad the food was. I stayed there for four months and then I was transferred to

North Pickenham with the 492nd. There were planes coming over, we helped set up the base. My specialty was aircraft mechanics and I was with the ground crew with the guys. Of course the 492nd was the ill fated squadron that after three months they lost fifty-three planes, three hundred fifty seven men were killed. It was a trying time during that time. You would get acquainted with the flight crews, see them leave in the morning and not come back at night. We were then transferred to Rackheath with the 467th and I stayed there until July of 1945.

BBC: How did you get on with the people?

LPK: I enjoyed it, the few times I was able to get to town. I really enjoyed the people. We worked an average of twenty hours a day out on the hardstands in all kinds of weather and there were many times where I never got back to the barracks to go to sleep. We'd sleep in the engine crates out there. I got one furlough in Scotland and I think I made London one time but the rest of the time, if I could get off I'd go to the local town and the pubs and we enjoyed the company of the English people. They had a hard time. They had very little food and what food we could bring them, we did that.

BBC: Is there any piece of music that takes you back to that time?

LPK: I know the famous song they used to sing in the pubs was "Roll Me Over In the Clover" (laughs) we used to get a lot of records from the States through the American Red Cross. You could borrow a mechanical turntable and I recall hearing a lot of famous bands. The Glen Miller Band, the Benny Goodman band. You could borrow them for one or two nights and then bring them back and the next barracks would borrow the music.



Joe R. Ramirez, Master Sergeant Crew Chief.

790th: (JRR) My name is Joe Ramirez from Whittier California where I have resided all my life. My parents are of Mexican descent but I was raised in the United States. I joined the service, in fact I enlisted in 1942 and I went from there to the infantry. In the infantry I took a test to the Air Corp, Army Air Corp then, and they accepted me because I passed very high in mechanical abilities. Consequently I went to basic trainer base and I crewed airplanes there and I went to Luke Field trainer base in Arizona. From Arizona I went to Wendover,



that's where we formed, and I became a Crew Chief on a B24, which incidentally, this B24, I had it from its inception when it was brand new, and flew it all the way back even though it was all patched up. It had thirteen engine changes due to flak and bombing and worn out engines. She completed one-hundred and thirty combat missions without an abort. An abort means it never turned back due to mechanical failure.

One thing I had in my favor is that the combat crews that we had were of the best quality, best trained by our Commander Colonel Shower. He demanded strict tight formations and when he said it he meant it. That in turn became the best record in the E.T.O.

So going back to the "Witchcraft," we were fortunate that not one person was ever injured, scratched or otherwise. One mission in particular, the Witch came back with one-hundred twenty-six holes. Big ones, little ones, and half of the empennage in the back torn off and a flat tire to boot. But they managed to land her and in about a week time we had her all patched up and ready for service again.

I've had the honor to be able to participate with a bunch of wonderful fellows, in the air and on the ground, because it took the ground men to keep those birds flying. Incidentally, when we were here during the war, the BBC interviewed me and my crew. We were dubbed "The International Crew", the League of Nations because of myself being of Mexican descent, my assistant crew chief was Chinese and the other fellows, one was Dutch the other was German and I had one good old American boy. It was quite a combination. You could see the fun we had.

We didn't have any trouble communication. I'd talk in Spanish and Dong talked in Chinese, but we had fun, although like I said, the Witch flew one-hundred and thirty combat missions and by the end of the year we stripped the plane down and put rubber belly tanks in there and flew gasoline to Patton. In fact I had the privilege to see him at the front. We were just real close to the front where we gave them gas and he came by in his Jeep and I said "What are you doing General?" and he said "I'm going to kill ak ak ak Blam Blam Germans!" I said "Bye," he was just that type of fellow.

Folded Wings

Craig Scharrschmidt December 2021

Please send news of "Folded Wings" also Obituaries to 467th BG veterans or prominent Associates
to - Brian Mahoney researcher@brianhmahoney.com

Capt. Donald C. Tibbetts: Recollections



The Capt. Donald C. Tibbetts Crew pictured in late October 1944 shortly after transferring to the lead crew 791st from the 789th Squadron

Back Row, left to right: "Jack" Abolafia (Navigator), Donald C. Tibbetts (Pilot), Edward H. Soltau (Pilotage Navigator), J.C. Schade (Bombardier), Edward F. Jenkins (Copilot), George J. Kouchoukus (Mickey Operator)
Kneeling: Harold J. Roll (Gunner), Robert W. Peterson (Gunner), Clarence A. Diebel (Radio-Operator), Vincent D. LaRose (Engineer), Robert L. Elliot (Gunner), Adolph Bronstein (Gunner)

Susan Rogers (daughter of lead pilot, Capt Donald C. Tibbetts) wrote earlier this year to convey a number of vivid recollections her Father was keen to share of experiences relating to his young crew as they made their journey across the Atlantic, arriving at Rackheath as an early replacement crew. They established a distinguished combat record of 31 missions, the majority as a specialist lead or deputy lead crew. Susan points out, 20 of those missions were completed before her Father had reached his 21st Birthday in November 44. Donald is currently 98 years young, in good health and a keen reader of the POOP.

MAY 1944. B-24 FLIGHT ACROSS THE ATLANTIC FROM MITCHEL FIELD, LONG ISLAND TO NUTTS CORNER, NORTHERN IRELAND.

Captain Donald C. Tibbetts and a crew of nine reported to Mitchel Field, Long Island after training at Westover Air Force Base, Chicopee, MA. With a new B-24 and bomb racks in the bomb bay of the aircraft our instructions were to fly to Dow Air Force base in Bangor, ME. After the necessary refueling and maintenance at each stop our crew was on the way to Goose Bay, Labrador. Next stop, Bluie West One Air base built on a glacial moraine near the southern tip of Greenland. The somewhat challenging landing was because of the steep, rocky sides of this relatively short runway with the ocean directly ahead. While our crew waited for refueling we ventured up the steep rocky side to view the massive glaciers. It was midnight and still very light out but the swarms of mosquitoes quickly drove us back to base.

On to Reykjavik, Iceland. Just a very brown, rocky, barren terrain.

Nutts Corner, Northern Ireland. As we approached the runway our navigator Jacob (Jack) Abolafia set sight on what he thought was our intended destination until flares shot at our aircraft told us otherwise. We ascended from the British base and finally landed at Nutts Corner, Northern, Ireland. We turned over the B-24 and bomb racks to the US Army Air Corp authorities. Our crew went to a base where we stayed about 10 days for training on local customs and currencies. We then flew across the Irish Sea to the 467th Bombardment Group in Rackheath, England. I would like to thank Jack Abolafia and crew wherever they may be.

“Buzzing my parents house in the B-24 and dropping a letter to them out the Bomb bay doors!” When Dad left Mitchel Field, Long Island, with crew on their way to Dow Field, Bangor, Maine he carefully buzzed his folks house in Maine just over the New Hampshire border. Many tall brick chimneys on shoe factories had to be skilfully navigated thanks to Jack Abolafia. The engineer opened the Bombay doors to drop the letter. The “airmailed” letter was never received!

“Col. Mahoney - Air Executive”. Dad flew 31 bombing missions during 1944-1945. His last mission flown was on January 31, 1945. As a lead crew, Dad always flew with a flight commander in the co-pilots seat which was either a Major or a Colonel. Flight commanders held the authority and responsibility to act and to lead their units to accomplish the mission. On one mission the cloud cover was too thick over the primary target and the flight commander redirected the flight to another target. On two of Dad’s 30 bombing missions the flight commander was Colonel Mahoney. Dad always remembered Col Mahoney’s quiet competence and calm demeanor which greatly reduced tensions during the missions.

In later years, after Dad’s service, during the early 1950’s, while shopping with his wife and 3 year old daughter (Dad had 3 daughters, I am daughter #2) at Jordan Marsh in Framingham, Col Mahoney recognized Dad. The two men briefly reminisced about their time in Rackheath and where Col Showers (who was in charge of the 467th) present assignment was in Washington state.

“Last Mission Flown on January 31, 1945.”

Shortly after takeoff we noticed the air speed meter had malfunctioned and we had no way to tell how fast we were flying. The command pilot made the decision to have the deputy lead take over after radio contact to explain the situation. Now with the deputy leading we were flying over Germany. This bombing mission resulted in several planes being hit by flak. During this time we received notice that all English air landing bases were completely fogged in and shut down and we were instructed to abort mission and return. An emergency runway was set up with large spotlight beacons to guide our crews. Our navigator, Jack Abolafia, after being given the coordinates for the emergency field, located the airstrip and was able to faintly see the light beacons from below. The formation of planes had to split and come in separately on to the extra long emergency runway.

A tense situation, no air speed meter, completely fogged in runway, a full load of bombs and a full tank of gas! We made touch-down, using most of that extra long runway due to the weight of the bombs and gas. *(Editor - crews landed at RAF Dalton, Yorkshire, following this mission).*

What an ending to my last mission! Our crew was later transported to a British facility for a meal. Because the British were on such strict rations it made the food we received at the 467th seem like a banquet.



The Donald C. Tibbetts Crew at Westover Field, MA. April 1944

The 467th Post Exchange



1.



2.



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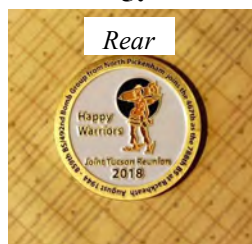


5.



Coin - Front

7.



Rear



6.

The 467th Post Exchange

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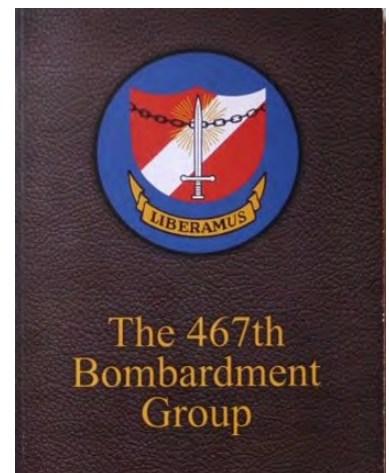
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