

POOP from Group



791st



790th



789th



788th

Newsletter of the 467th Bomb Group Association

November 2023

*They're Back....the 467th Return for
One Last Look*



MAGICAL MOMENTS captured during the highly successful Norwich Reunion with the party and the Rackheath "Pathfinders" visiting the lovingly restored Blast Shelter located on the former communal Site#6 area of the Rackheath base. One of the many highlights of the week that saw a busy schedule taking in a host of activities and places of interest, all relating to life and times experienced by Fathers, Grand-fathers, Uncles, almost 80 years before. "Walking in the footsteps of hero's", as one so aptly described the comprehensive base tour and Site#6 exploration. **FULL REPORT** on our busy week commencing Page 3.

***Annual Members Meeting Sunday 12 November 1pmET, 6pm UK,
including Reunion/Site#6 Presentation via Zoom, everyone welcome!***

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The 467th
Bombardment Group
The Rackheath Aggies

Rackheath Pathfinders
Site#6 (467th USAAF)



President's Message

By Yvonne Caputo

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The reunion in England was an incredible success. It was moment upon moment for each of us to recall the stories of our fathers, grandfathers, and uncles. We met the now very much older children who ran to the plane that crashed in the field nearby on August 18, 1944. They brought their parents back to the site, and their assistance saved the lives of two men. The daughter of one of those men was with us.

We walked the paths of Site 6, where airmen had walked on their way to the showers, the bomb shelters, and the Officer's Club. Someone noted the short walk from the club to the White House. This was the quarters of the commander of the base, Colonel Albert Shower, and the deputy commander James J. Mahoney. The roofless building remains, and it is surrounded by chain-link fencing. But, oh if its walls could talk.

We had lunch at a pub that was a favorite of some men. They would ride their bicycles to the River Yare, ring the bell, and be ferried across to the pub. On display was a letter written on June 16, 1945. The men wrote that they were ready to go home, but they went on to say, "But underlying the anticipation of seeing our families again, there is a poignant feeling of sadness when we think of leaving our adopted folks."

We stood on the top of the Rackheath control tower and on one of its runways. Looking across the surrounding fields, could any of us envision planes going out and coming back? Could we capture the feeling of what it must have been like to know that the numbers returning were not the same as those that had taken off?

A visit to the Duxford Air Museum gave us the opportunity to see many of the American planes that flew some 80 years ago. Most impressive was the Dugan, a B-24. Parts of its shiny surface were removed to display the interior construction of a wing and from under the wing toward the engine. The plane's display honored both the crews who flew her and the crews that ensured she was flight-worthy.

The final excursion took us to the Cambridge American Cemetery. Across an immaculately mown field was row after row of white crosses and Stars of David gleaming in the sun. Over 3,800 servicemen are buried there and an inscribed wall has the names of 5,800 missing in action. The peacefulness of the sunny day was broken not only by the enormity of the loss but also by the sight and sound of a P-51 flying overhead.

To a person on the trip, each of us said in some way or another, it was something we would never forget.

Andy Wilkinson and Ivan Bernard planned the trip. Saying thank you for all the work seems insufficient.

"One Last Look", Norwich Reunion 2023

The Maids Head Hotel adjacent to the spectacular 900 year old Norwich Cathedral proved the perfect base to explore the vibrant and thriving medieval centre, rich in beautiful historic architecture, and a perfect blend between the past and the present. Just seconds away cobbled streets of the Cathedral quarter host an array of cafes, craft shops, pubs, and minutes to reach the famous open air market, art-deco City Hall and river. The scene was set for return of the 467th for "One Last Look" with the preceding weekend bringing a good number keen to arrive early, acclimatize, and enjoy the best Norwich has to offer before commencement of a busy week. Great to see so many familiar faces making the journey over and heartening to welcome a good number of first time reunion attendees, and several making their very first trip to England. With "Welcome Packs" distributed and majority of the group safely arrived, it was all set to go.

Tuesday 19 September: following breakfast it was time to board the coach at the rear of the Maids Head and be welcomed aboard by our driver "John" who would be our trusted "pilot" for the week. John endeared himself right away with his sense of humor and friendly manner. By the end of the week he was adopted as our honorary member of the 467th with a close affinity as a former veteran of the British Army. And so it was off heading south toward the Waveney Valley and out first stop at the village of Barsham to view a memorial to members the 791st Stalie Reid Crew, one of two 467th crews lost during a night of infamy in the skies over East Anglia. We were met at Barsham by **Bob Collis**, aviation archaeologist/historian, and **Ian McLaghlin**, renowned aviation author and writer of the book "Night of the Intruders", which comprehensively covered the momentous events that evening. The memorial was the realization of the late Denis Sporle who as a young boy witnessed at first hand the Reid Crew B-24 dramatically crash very close to his home at the Old School House. Every year on the anniversary Denis would lay flowers at the crash-site and it was his burning desire to have the crew remembered more permanently in the form of a memorial. Work began in earnest back in the late 90s for fund-raising where Bob Collis played a part with providing talks and organizing other events and particularly research into the 791st Crew and locating the sole survivor after WWII, Mervin Shank a former gunner. It was April 24th 1999, 55th anniversary of the tragic incident Mervin Shank and wife Mary returned to Barsham to dedicate the Memorial to the seven crew members.

Bob was there and spoke of the events that evening and so it was fitting he could be also present 24 years later. Moving into the Old School House, Ian described in greater detail the mission to Hamm marshaling yards, had taken off unusually late with returning 2nd Air Division B24 Groups arriving back in the dark. They were followed back by enemy "intruder" aircraft who took advantage of the unfamiliar night time situation and attacked the formations as they prepared to land at home bases. Mayhem ensued in the skies as many as 14 ships were shot-down some in confusion by over-eager British "friendly-fire". Airfields came under direct attack including Rackheath and Seething with crews disorientated with bases turning off lighting aids in the confusion and chaos. There are many written accounts and memories of that catastrophic evening and Ian's "Night of the Intruders" is a must read understanding the compelling night of horror that unfolded for many of those unsuspecting B-24 crews. Our own Jack Stevens, former 791sr pilot, who landed at Seething whilst the airfield was still under attack described that night as his "scariest mission" by far.



Ian McLaghlin, at Barsham

Back on the bus for next stop at the wonderful Seething Control Tower Museum where we were met by curator **Pat Everson** and team of volunteers. Normally only open on the first Sunday of the month during summer it was an honor for the Museum to host our group. Seething Airfield was home of the 448th Bomb Group a sister group in the Second Air Division and the restored Control Tower is a memorial to the American serviceman who served in the Group and a place of education with thousands of collected artifacts, photos, documents and equipment on display, many of the photos from Pat's huge personal collection. Seething remains a small general aviation airfield and had many similarities to Rackheath. Both Class "A" built bomber airfields where the dimension of the runways were identical with the main longest runway 6000ft in length. The 448th like the 467th completed phase training at Wendover before embarking overseas and similarly lost several crews in the transit to England. Arriving in November 1943, their first combat mission was in December completing a total of 262 attributed missions overall with the loss of 350 young airman and over 100 B24 losses. The Control Tower and adjoining Nissan hut are a fine testament and memorial with the Tower restored to close as possible to how it would have looked during 43- 45. The upper floor serves as a place refreshments are available including a small area offering sale items, not forgetting the commanding view over the airfield. Grants have been made available to strengthen the Tower viewing platform which currently has a restriction on a number occupying it at any one time. Everyone was mighty impressed with the collection and set up here and we could not leave without a group picture along with Pat and her volunteer team to mark the occasion.

Pat recommended we take the short walk across the road to Tindall's microbrewery where their best seller is a bottled pale ale, "Liberator Ale". We were welcomed in to the small local brewery where space was limited by the large number of metal kegs awaiting for filling and dispatch. Sales of the "Liberator Ale" proved popular and the group left happy but weighed down with mementos of the visit.

Back on the coach and next destination was Coldham Hall Tavern, established 200 years ago on the south bank of the River Yare and reached through a long narrow lane, a truly beautiful spot. Back in 44/45 it was discovered as a haven and welcome retreat by a good number of senior 467th personnel who would ride their bikes from Rackheath to the opposite bank of the river, ring the ferry bell, and be taken across on a small pontoon. Here they would enjoy a pint, play a game of darts, and enjoy watching the passing boats and tranquil river scene in what was an oasis from the rigors of combat back at base. Behind the bar at Coldham Hall is a prized letter signed by "the Rackheath boys" and dated June 45 thanking the hosts for their generosity and kindness, putting up with their tall stories, celebrating their promotions, and a genuine wish to meet again in future times. Coldham Hall obviously meant a lot and was a special place to visit. The party enjoyed a leisurely buffet lunch here, some with a pint of "Liberator Ale" with plenty of time for photos and relaxation at this pretty idyllic spot on the river.

Our last stop of the day took us to St. Andrews Church, Kirby Bedon, forever associated by the crash of "Broad and High" piloted by Lt. Roger Leister in August 1944 and the subsequent relationship of villagers, "the Kirby kids" in the ensuing years. Roger's daughter, **Joanne** and husband "**Woody**" was among our party and it was an emotional return visit to meet with the "kids" who were on the scene in August 1944 pulling out crew members from the stricken bomber. St. Andrews

Church in October 44 conducted a memorial service to the tragic loss of 4 airman aboard "Broad and High" which was attended by Col. James J. Mahoney formerly C.O. of Roger's 788th Squadron, Roger Leister too recovered from the worst of his injuries. A prominent memorial plaque to the four airman was dedicated and remains today a significant reminder of the day "Broad and High" came down narrowly missing the village.



The Group and 448th Seething Tower Museum volunteers

The format of this Reunion Report does not fully reflect the emotional significance and special relationship built over the years with Kirby Bedon and our afternoon visit. Roger's daughter, Joanne will write extensively of her thoughts and describe the visit to Kirby Bedon at length in the next POOP set for February 2024. We very much look forward to Joanne's article.

Wednesday 20 September: a gentle 15 minute stroll from the Maids Head after breakfast taking us past the iconic City Hall and open air market and we arrived at the impressive Forum. Opened back in 2002 it was built on the site of the former central library burned down in a fire in 1994. The horse-shoe shaped building contains numerous balconies accommodating a host of activities including the BBC, coffee shops, restaurants, and the main Norwich Central Library, of which the "American Library" is to be found. The extensive glass front end provides a large airy atrium that neatly frames the gothic St. Peter Mancroft Church opposite and has created a large public forecourt outside. The main library did not open until 10am which gave the party a few minutes to take in the impressive surroundings. We were warmly welcomed into the "American Library" - Memorial to the 2nd Air Division, Eighth Air Force, United States Army Air Forces, by **Orla Kennelly** (Trust Librarian) and the Library staff and invited to take seats for presentations. Many had visited in the past but few since the refurbishment instigated in 2018 but due the Covid pandemic, not fully realized until restrictions were lifted gradually through 2021/22. Orla provided a comprehensive history of the Memorial Library which was envisaged as a "living memorial" to the nearly 7000 young airman of the Second Air Division who paid the supreme sacrifice. The original Library did not come to being until 1963 due post-war privations in Norwich and bought over a significant group including General W.E. Kepner, Commander 2nd Air Division 1944/45. The Foreword to the latest "American Library" 60 page booklet reflects his words spoken in 1963 at the opening. Among the objectives of the American Library include, increase the knowledge of the 2nd Air Division, USAAF, around the world by collecting, maintaining, preserving, making accessible & promoting physically and digitally, a specialist collection. Create a learning experience for schools, young people & families. Promote community cohesion by telling the stories of the World War II struggle for freedom and decency in Europe. Trust Chairman, **Richard Middleton**, was also present and updated us with the aims and aspirations of the Memorial Library especially in the light of the recent refurbishment. Our own President **Yvonne Caputo** was given the floor to present her "Flying with Dad" presentation, all the more poignant as her Father (Mike Caputo) constructed and gifted the wonderful model B24 "Witchcraft" to the Library which has hung prominently and proudly for many years. We were delighted **Dan Gehring** from our party was present to officially present a copy of his recent book on the training and combat experiences of his grandfather Joe



St. Andrews Church, Kirby Bedon,



Orla Kennelly, American Library, Norwich

Gehring, a former copilot with the 467th to the Library. It was a proud moment for Dad, **Mark Gehring**, who endorsed Dan's enthusiasm and research in compiling such a great tribute. Presentations over allowed everyone to take a closer look at the Library especially the unique Roll of Honor individually listing the nearly 7000 airman who never made it home. **Jim Zeilinski** a gold star nephew was profoundly moved to note his great uncle Ed Zielinki's name faithfully recorded. Opportunity to chat with Library staff and admire the depth and breadth of published American works, not forgetting the huge collection of USAAF unit histories. A thoroughly absorbing morning.

John with the coach was waiting outside the Forum to take the 6 mile journey to our next stop the exciting project going on at Site#6, former communal area of the Rackheath base. We were greeted by the “Pathfinders” alongside members of the Norfolk Military Vintage Vehicles Group who had bought along a selection of Willy Jeeps which set the scene nicely. Our pre-packed lunch boxes arrived via the B24 Café before it was time to explore and admire the fantastic work undertaken by the team. The extensive scale of the work was something to behold revealing original mess dining areas, kitchens, shower blocks all linked by cleared pathways and information display boards. The Officers Club, “The Sword & Chain” still retaining both original fire-places and clear traces of the former kitchens and urinals clearly etched into the cleared concrete base. We couldn’t let the occasion pass before Ivan set up a table in the original bar area and we toasted the visitors with “Liberator Ale”, and best gin and scotch. You could literally imagine officers on the same spot doing the same following the mission debrief and an opportunity to unwind. What a great moment! A short walk away is the pristinely restored Blast Shelter No.12 and what



better than the entire group with the Pathfinders for some group photos. One of the few standing buildings on Site#6 is the “White House” former quarters for both Col. Al Shower & Col. James Mahoney. Now cleared of all vegetation room by room, it remains fenced off pending hoped for restoration. The cleared pathway running from the White House direct to the Officers Club would have been very familiar to both. You cannot overstate the wonderful achievements of the Rackheath Pathfinders and the significant local history rediscovered and source of pride for residents of the village. A wonderful place to explore, enjoy the nature and newly planted trees, insect houses, bird boxes, memorial bench, and lovingly maintained pathways. And so much more for the Pathfinders to undertake with plans extending the vegetation clearance to areas across Newman Road, new Blast Shelters to uncover and expose.....the work continues!

We left Site#6 in high spirits and next was a brief stop to drop by the original T2 Hangar located on the Technical Site of the base. Internally the building structure is little changed from 44/45, now used as warehousing by a packaging company. You could imagine mechanics working on a couple of B24s in this cavernous space. From here the party made the short walk to the wonderfully restored Control Tower situated in “Witchcraft Way”. Unlike the Control Tower at Seething, the Rackheath Tower has been converted internally for a modern comfortable work environment and is operated by a commercial company Colleague Software who have occupied the space since the opening in 2007. Must mention **Will Minns and Anthony Seymour** who have graciously accepted visitors to the Tower over the years despite



the fact the building is a commercially run operation. They prepared the lobby area downstairs with numerous photos of the Tower pre-restoration, which bought home the extent and expense of creating how it appears today. Also in the lobby, a specially commissioned **Mike Bailey** painting of “Witchcraft” adorns the wall. We were given free run of the Tower to explore throughout and one is struck what a fantastic workplace the Control Tower must be to work. Most of the activity is conducted upstairs where the panoramic views over the former airfield are magnificent. Here you have access via two doors to the platform area where senior officers would regularly stand watching

the returning B24s from the days’ mission. What a thrill to stand on that same platform and imagine the scene almost 80 years ago. From the platform are stairs giving access to the very top of the Tower where the small glass visual control room occupied, also a neat weather-vane in the guise of “Witchcraft” at one corner. Col. Shower’s desire in later life was to save the Tower for a museum. Although we don’t have that, we have the next best outcome the building continues to exist and can be accessed (with permission) as a glorious monument to the legacy and achievements of the 467th BG.

We were thrilled to be joined at the Tower by **James Watts** and local Rector, **Rev. Darleen Plattin** who was asked to drop by, meet the group and say a few words. Darleen delivered a deeply moving and meaningful reflection of why we remember. Nearly 250 young Americans gave their lives while serving with the 467th, the majority served in the vicinity and the confines of the place we stood. We were all touched by her words and the two minute silence contemplating the service and sacrifice made by so many and so far from home. One of the many genuinely emotional moments encountered throughout the busy week.



Time for reflection with Rev Darleen Plattin, at the Tower

We concluded the evening at the nearby Sprowston Country Manor an historic 3 storey red brick building extensively rebuilt in the 1870s sitting among 170 acres of parkland adjacent Rackheath and now a golf course. Here we enjoyed pre-dinner drinks at the bar and our own elegant wood-paneled room for a delicious hot buffet. It was great the entire group enjoy dinner together and opportunity for some after-dinner remarks. We had the company of Darleen also the majority of the Rackheath Pathfinders along with us. **Ivan** spoke of the camaraderie and bonds developed by the Rackheath volunteers who met regularly Saturdays throughout the year busy excavating and uncovering the remnants of long lost structures at Site#6. As Project leader it was he who bestowed the name "Pathfinders" for the group, the title having prominent WWII connotations. It was back in summer the "Pathfinders" presented Ivan as their de facto "leader" a beautifully wood-mounted metal silhouette outline of B24 Witchcraft with appropriate inscription which Ivan was keen to share with us.....incidentally the original metal silhouette was discovered during excavations at Site#6! And now Ivan in return wanted to give the Pathfinders a token of his/our gratitude in recognition of their unstinting toils and fantastic achievements. Courtesy of **Kirk Walters**, each Pathfinder in turn was presented a special 467th Challenge Coin, not any Challenge Coin, but referred to by Ivan as a "Medal Of Honor". A spontaneous richly deserved standing ovation followed. It was a double celebration in a surprise announcement. **Catherine** and her Mother **Coral** with us visiting from Northern Ireland were keen to learn of their grandfather who they discovered was **Theron Winfield**, an airman engineer, in the 789th Squadron. Their journey of discovery bought them over in summer to Site#6 where Ivan showed them around and assisted greatly in their quest. Catherine announced Ivan was to be her new "adopted" uncle!! So very touching in which Ivan in return presented a "Medal of Honor" for Catherine too. Following a humorous explanation and practicalities of the Challenge Coin, and how to avoid losing a "challenge" presented by **Brian Mahoney**, we departed Sprowston Manor in a tired but happy mood after a long fulfilling day.

Thursday 21 September: BASE DAY. Arrived Trinity Church, Rackheath, to find a wonderfully restored "Plymouth" Army Staff Car setting the scene, along with a host of local villagers to welcome the return of the 467th. There are so many reminders of the 467th in and around the church like the Coffey Crew Gates and plaque, Memorial Bench, the



Pathfinders with their much deserved "Medal of Honor" award, Sprowston Country Manor

village sign containing the B24, the 467th Room with a host of photos, not forgetting the prominently displayed Roll of Honor. Rev. Darleen Plattin welcomed all to Trinity Church and was followed by a representative from the Parish Council, also James Watts talked of his Dad's links with the former veterans and the resulting definitive history and "Witchcraft" publications. Yvonne Caputo graciously responded highlighting the special links and endearing affection for the villages and people of Rackheath & Salhouse. It was great to see such a good turnout to welcome the visitors and many engrossed in friendly conversations.

Soon it was back on the coach and first stop was to slowly drive around the last surviving airfield hardstands that originally accommodated parked B24s on spectacle-shaped concrete. This particular hardstand linked to one of the two aviation fuel dispensers where tankers would load then deliver to the individual B24s but the original brick structure was in a dilapidated state, but still there. Next stop was one of the most significant and permanent reminder of the past history, the remaining and extensive remains of the former main runway 03/21. Turning off Muck Lane access to the main runway reveals the original full width of 150ft where you can imagine B24s laboring with a full bomb-load and fuel during their staggered departures. Our coach driver John did us proud by slowly driving the entire length of the narrower section of the existing runway until we reached the far northern end. Here we were met by **Trevor Hewitt**, owner and curator of the nearby New Farm Aviation Heritage Group Museum and collection whose knowledge and experience of the airfield is second to none. Trevor and his team have conducted numerous archaeological excavations of the airfield and more planned shortly following the fields harvested. What they have found over the years is an extensive collection of all sorts of items and are on display in the Rackheath Room at the museum. Trevor bought along a huge aerial photo of the airfield taken in 1946 showing almost every feature and structure that existed. He had us spellbound by his descriptions of previous incidents occurring on the airfield and the general geography and layout. Several of the party took the opportunity to walk the entire length of the remaining runway in quiet contemplation. Truly an emotional impact to set foot on the place where it all happened back in 44/45.

Next, to the former Technical Site to visit the 467th Memorial Marker dedicated back in 1990. Pleased to report the marker had had recent attention to improve the polished black granite details particularly on the top of the marker which had faded in recent years. Carried out by the same father and son team who installed it originally in 1990. Opportunity for plenty of photos and appreciation to the local scouts and Pathfinders who proudly tidy and maintain the small garden site. A boxed lunch was collected from the B24 Café before we proceeded toward Rackheath Hall, next stop. A short pause at the famous “Golden Gates” former entrance to this part of the base to admire the partially restored elegant ironworks and Lodge cottages at the top of the narrow winding road leading to the Hall. We were met by **Nicola Kerr** and several of the other residents of the condominiums that Rackheath Hall was converted during the mid 90s. The conversion was quite some project as the Hall had fallen into severe disrepair and neglect. Now looking resplendent it offers a haven of peace and tranquility among the many acres of surrounding parkland. Nicola had taken the role as historian and after admiring the exterior and adjoining ornamental lake and bridge, invited us inside. The impressive oak-paneled lobby area complete with fire-place led to a wide winding stairs to the upper floor illuminated by a stunning large stained-glass window. Nicola spoke of what she knew of the rich history of the building before we were invited for tea/coffee and biscuits served by residents in the lobby, a very kind and generous gesture. The biggest surprise, Nicola invited all to view her private apartment that was once the Hall Ballroom. An incredibly well appointed and beautiful home that made you realize how desirable these condominiums remain within the old Hall.



Trevor Hewlitt on the Rackheath runway



Rackheath Hall

Our last stop took us around Rackheath Hall following the original small road and into a wooded area formerly living quarters for 788th personnel where a lone original water tower still remains once part of the Sgt's ablutions block. The land has been bought by a group who work with disadvantaged and autistic children with emphasis on a "green" back to nature environment to both develop the natural site and improve the wellbeing of individuals. Much work has already been achieved and they were acutely aware of the past history of the site and wanted to work with what remains. They had created a fire-pit and wooden lodge building serving as a kitchen with pizza oven

along with soft drinks and beer they invited us to share. We shall watch with interest how this group prospers on the site and how it develops.

It was back to the Maids Head but not quite the end of the day. Trevor Hewlitt and his team at New Farm Aviation Heritage Group Museum had kindly offered shuttle transport to visit the collection for those interested in the "Rackheath Room" and collection of items found on the former airfield. Pleased to say numerous folk took up the offer and were astounded at the variety of items and scope of aviation history to be found here. It was a free evening and opportunity to further explore various Norwich restaurants and pubs.

Friday 22 September: Early departure for the 75 mile drive to first stop at the Imperial War Museum Duxford Airfield. Duxford is a busy airfield and home to many "warbirds" based here and the good weather ensured there was plenty of flying going on with several impromptu displays to enjoy. At the western end of the airfield is the modern designed American Museum which explores Anglo-American collaboration in conflict and its impact on people's lives since the First World War. A stunning collection of types from the old to latest technology can be found, with a strong emphasis on Army Air Forces during WWII and the newer types reflecting "The Cold War" years. The giant B-52 Bomber dominates, but the group made for the B-24M "Dugan", a terrific restoration in an all "silver" finish as most of the later B24s arriving in England appeared. Although nothing compared in size to the later B-52, you have to admire its overall dimensions and remember it was termed a "heavy" bomber at the time. Above and to the rear of the B-24 was installed former assembly section from the famous Ford Willow Run B24 Production Line which was a neat acquisition for Duxford. We learned the American War Museum is home to the largest collection of American military aircraft on public display outside the United States. There is also on display uniforms, keepsakes, personal stories, photographs, and side rooms with smaller exhibitions making the museum an overall very impressive facility. Duxford hosts a whole range of other buildings featuring restoration projects (some long term), Battle of Britain Operations Block, Air & Sea featuring Navy aviation from the First World War, not forgetting the Airspace building housing Concorde, Lancaster, Avro Vulcan, Sunderland flying boat, and much more. You could spend the entire day at Duxford and still not see everything.

We boarded the coach at 2pm amidst the threat of a heavy shower for the 10 mile journey to our last stop of the week and Reunion, the American Military Cemetery at Madingley, Cambridge. Just moments after we left the coach and entered Madingley, a lone P-51 (presumably from nearby Duxford Airfield) soared overhead in a seemingly respectful "salute" to the fallen. So very fitting and poignant! The scene and backdrop is one of serenity, peacefulness, and very sobering to view the grave-markers of so many arced neatly and facing the flagpole platform near the entrance. Along the south side are the Walls of the Missing, and at the far end is the memorial with a chapel, two huge military maps, stained glass windows bearing the state seals and military decorations, and a mosaic ceiling memorial honoring the dead of the air forces. 64 of the 467th are laid to rest or recorded on the Walls of Missing. Our Director, Ross Rainwater particularly wanted to pay respects to a fellow crew member of his father, Roy, named "Frenchie" Perreault, tragically killed by flak on the occasion of his 23rd birthday. Truly a very moving and powerful experience and recommend all with an interest in the 8th Air Force, indeed American military who served in Britain, to drop by this very special location.

A visitor center was opened in May 2014 incorporating interactive displays, films, photographs, personal stories, that gives a better understanding of the critical campaign contributing to the Allied victory in Europe during World War II. John our coach driver produced the flags of the United States and Great Britain for a photo reflecting the strong ties binding our two countries as we re-boarded the coach, in a sober yet thankful mood in the return journey to the Maids Head.

We concluded both the day and the week of the Reunion with our traditional Banquet in the cosy confines of the Oak Room and adjacent Yard Bar at the Maids Head. Joining us we were delighted to have **Mike & Maureen Bailey**, Mike witnessed the Second Air Division “Libs” at firsthand as a young boy and since a renowned artist and author. Mike has done dozens of B24 commissions for many in the 467th and continues to paint B24s to this day. Also guests were **Richard and Orla** from the American Library, **James Watts**, also **Chris and Tahlia Collins**, who runs the official 467th Facebook Page, a real professional and maintained Page in keeping with what our veterans would have desired. Friends of Yvonne, **Ian and son Mark Denny** were also able to join with us. After dinner speeches were kindly provided by Richard Middleton “Memorial Trust Governor” who spoke eloquently of the Library’s continuing relevance and importance in telling the story of the 2 AD and the firm enduring links between the people of Britain and America so evident throughout this Reunion. President Yvonne Caputo welcomed guests and made special mention of **David & Jean Hastings** who sadly due David’s age and health could not join with us this evening. However, David had provided Yvonne a message to convey speaking at length of the many memories created during the War and since with the frequent return of veterans throughout the years, not forgetting the dedication of the wonderful Marker back in 1990. David & Jean have been loyal supporters of the 467th and their presence was sorely missed. We raised a glass in recognition of the staff and chef of the Maids Head who helped make the evening such a success and we cherished the opportunity we have to meet as friends, remain as friends, and share the special camaraderie of being family of the 467th. It was fond farewells to those leaving in the morning and all were in unison, “One Last Look” 2023 had been a great success likely to remain long in the memory.

*Editor – thanks to **Paul Thorogood** our official photographer and the many others sharing photos used in the report. Head to our 467th Facebook Page for much more content and photos of “One Last Look”.*



Most of the Group at the Cambridge American Military Cemetery





Notes from the Editor

Please send news/articles for "POOP"
To : Editor - Andy Wilkinson
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ANNUAL MEMBERS and BUSINESS MEETING 12 NOV: See how we operate! Would you like to sit in on our 2023 Member Meeting, on Zoom, Sunday afternoon, November 12, 1pm EST? Members will be emailed the Zoom link during the week before, others who wish to sit in, request the link at info@467bg.com. Members will have a brief election of Directors for open seats, then approve the minutes of last year's Annual Member Meeting. Then the highlight: a 'slide show' presentation of the highly successful reunion at Rackheath/Norwich, "One Last Look"

The 467th BG ASSOCIATION
2023 Virtual Annual Meeting with special presentation via ZOOM
SUNDAY 12 NOVEMBER, 1pm EST/6pm UK
All members of the 467th welcome, please join in and add your voice

2024 REUNION/CONVENTION: Due the energies expended on this years Norwich "One Last Look" Reunion, the Board decided for 2024 to make arrangement to join with the Heritage League & 93rd BG for the gathering in October next year at the Embassy Suites, Colorado Springs. The beautiful location hosts the famed Air Force Academy where the 467th were the principle fundraisers through the 2nd Air Division Association for the impressive B24 Bronze displayed. The wooden relief that was created to make the mold was paid for by the association and now hangs at the 8th AF Museum in Pooler, Savannah. Our Group will be looking to have our renowned "Day Room" also opportunity to enjoy dinner together as a Group, as well as time for our own members meeting. FULL details and the itinerary planned for October will be published in the February 24, POOP.

SURVEY: Lookout in the next few weeks to receiving a Survey asking what are the reasons and motivations for attending future 467th Association Reunions. We aim to evaluate and appraise responses with a view to tailor future gatherings to what most members would want. This could be increased free time, specific location, locations with museums or other facilities, organized trips, joining with other Groups, and so on. We will share the responses with you and focus on the most popular motivations which will determine where we plan to hold the 2025 Reunion and hopefully maximise turnout. Thanking all for your participation in this important survey.

ATTENDEES "ONE LAST LOOK" NORWICH " 2023:

Ivan BARNARD
 Elaine BEITENHAUS
 Michael BEITENHAUS
 Coral BRADLEY
 Catherine BRADLEY
 Yvonne CAPUTO
 Kirk P. WALTERS
 Collette COTY
 Don COLLINS
 John EDWARDS
 Ginny STROUD
 Norma FELBINGER
 Adele GARDNER
 Dan GEHRING
 Mark GEHRING

Bob GERRINGER
 Connie GERRINGER
 Cindy HANNAN
 Peter HORNE
 Keith HUGHES
 Laura HUGHES
 MaryBeth INGRAM
 Brian MAHONEY
 Jerry MAHONEY
 Karen MAYBERRY
 Andrew NIX
 Tony OAKDEN
 Ann POOCH
 Richard ALLEN
 Ross RAINWATER

Suzanne RAINWATER
 Paul RODELL
 Andy WILKINSON
 Joanne WOODFILL
 Mark WOODFILL
 Jim ZIELINSKI
 Banquet Guests:
 Mike & Maureen BAILEY
 Chris & Tahlia COLLINS
 Ian & Mark DENNY
 Orla KENNELLY
 Richard MIDDLETON
 Paul THOROGOOD
 James WATTS

EMAIL FROM SEETHING TOWER MEMORIAL MUSEUM: I write to thank you on behalf of the 448th BG for the extremely generous donation you made on the occasion of your recent visit to the control tower museum at Seething. It was truly appreciated, and will be put to good use to further the work and upkeep of the museum.

It was a real pleasure and honour to welcome family members and volunteers of the 467th BG to Seething on the 19th September, to exchange stories and memories of the personnel who served at our two bases during World War 2. Please come again as and when you can, you will always be made most welcome.

As the new committee at Seething it is our desire to work together with other groups of the 2nd Air Division for the good of all, to share experiences and help each other where we can, forging links in the memory of the personnel who served and those who made the supreme sacrifice for our freedom.

Once again many thanks for your kind generosity. Ken Woodgate 448th BG volunteer and committee member.

LETTER FROM MIKE & MAUREEN BAILEY: I felt I had to drop you a few lines to say how much Maureen and I enjoyed the Banquet at the Maids Head Hotel. It was so good to get together with yourself and the 467th BG Association members - what a nice bunch of people they are! Everybody I spoke to commented upon the wonderful week they had experienced, so it was obviously a great success.

I had Tony Oakden ring me last Saturday - he said he had been with the party during your visit to Rackheath and he wanted to know if I had any prints of the "Witchcraft" painting in the Control Tower. Several other people asked the same thing! Unfortunately no prints were made of it, in fact, I didn't care much for the painting after I did it!

You are doing a wonderful job in keeping the memory of the 467th alive - keep up the good work.

All our Best Wishes, Mike & Maureen.

Pictured right, is the painting of "Witchcraft" completed by Mike Bailey upon the dedication and restoration of the Control Tower in 2007. It hangs proudly in the lobby area of the Tower entrance despite Mike not overly keen on his efforts with the painting. Apologies for the camera flash reflection caught in the glass frame which I hope does not detract from Mike's endeavor.



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

Folded Wings

Milton P. BIBKO - Navigator 789th, August 2021

Vernon O. MASON - Co-pilot 789th, March 2023

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

"Forgotten Crew" Crash Site Located

By Scott Patterson



For the February 2022 issue of this newsletter, I had the opportunity to write about 2nd Lt. John Thomas Lynch who was lost during formation training near the Wendover, Utah base on February 7, 1944. Jack Lynch served as navigator on a Consolidated B-24 with tail number 41-29396. He had married my aunt exactly two weeks before the crash and, from what I can tell, he had just returned from a honeymoon leave and rejoined his crew on that fateful February morning.

Earlier this year, I was contacted by the family of T/Sgt. Leo Goodness who served as the engineer on the flight and also died with the rest of the crew. I learned that the wreckage of plane had been found on a steep hillside about 8 miles northeast of Wendover. In June, Jim Petersen, director of the Historic Wendover Airfield, Landon Wilkey, the museum curator, and I went to the crash site on an uncommonly cool summer evening.

The wreckage is located in mountains on the edge of the Bonneville Salt Flats. An aerial view shows how the plane took off on a now-abandoned diagonal runway and maintained the same bearing. It cleared one range of mountains but then lost altitude shortly after. The 1944 official accident report was not conclusive as to the cause of the crash but "material failure" was suspected.

There are two-track roads leading to the site but the climb is steep and depending on the condition of the roads it may require a hike to reach what is left of the B-24. I was told that the larger sections of the plane were removed decades ago because of the demand for aluminum. Smaller pieces of the aircraft are scattered at the site with most at the base of the hillside where the plane crashed. Many are damaged by the impact, including the rusted bomb release mechanism I held.

Fortunately, a group with the Aviation Archaeological Investigation and Research (AAIR) organization was at the crash location at the same time the Goodness family visited. The AAIR surveyed and documented the site and it was members of the AAIR group who placed the American flag shown in the photo.

My interest in the loss of John Lynch has taken me on a decades-long journey. My aunt gave me his sterling silver uniform wings when I was far too young to fully appreciate the sacrifice made by him and his fellow crew members. Visiting the crash site was another stop on that journey of understanding and gratitude that may be nearing an end. It was made possible by Jim and Landon and I truly appreciate their assistance.



I need to correct a couple errors in my article in the February 2022 newsletter. I stated that the plane had number 43-29396 when it was actually 41-29396. I also wrote that John Lynch's only sibling, James, had died having never married. I have since discovered that Jim did marry a little later in his life and had three daughters. I have had very pleasant correspondence with Jim's granddaughter. She said the family has only known that John had died in a plane crash. Providing the details and information on the memorial in Wendover has been very rewarding.

(Editor – appreciation to Scott for reporting on this important discovery and making the trip to investigate what remnants still remain on the mountain-side. The full story of the 789th Lt. Earl Bonneville Crew, known as “The Forgotten Crew”, can be found in the June 2015 POOP Newsletter.



Scott with the rusted bomb release mechanism found at the site.



Scattered remnants still remaining



Landon, Scott & Jim at the mountain site

Obituaries



Vernon O. MASON, Copilot, 789th

Vernon O. Mason, father, grandfather, great grandfather and great-great grandfather, passed away March 10th 2023, at the venerable age of 99 years.

He was born in Stecker, no more than a milk stop on the railroad line running through the new state of Oklahoma. His father, just home from World War I, originally was a farmer; but this was during the “dust bowl” and after difficult times he gravitated toward construction. Further lean times, due to the Great Depression, forced a move to Texas where steady employment finally provided stability to the family.

When a senior in High School, Vernon entered a three state Civil Service competition and got third place which won him an apprenticeship in Aircraft Engine Overhauling at Corpus Christi Naval Air Station. This placed him on a reliable path he would follow the rest of his life.

When World War II broke out, as soon as he was old enough, he volunteered to serve. His aptitude test pointed him toward flying and off he went to flight school. After graduating he was sent to England, in 1944, and ended up in the 467th Bomb Group, 2nd Division of the 8th Air Force. He was a member of the “pickle barrel” group of the Rackheath Aggies stationed in Norwich, England. He flew B-24 Liberators and survived 31 combat missions dropping bombs on Nazi Germany.

After Germany surrendered, he was in transit to school, stateside, to get a crash course in flying light bombers, when Japan surrendered.

Soon after he was part of the post-war occupation force in Japan. It was just before this that he married his first wife, Dorothy “Corky” Bettis, March 30, 1946.

His career took a slight directional change when the Air Force had too many pilots and wanted him decommissioned. He wanted to stay in, though, so he headed up Aircraft maintenance divisions the rest of his military career, retiring in '63. This was about the same time that his first wife died of cancer.

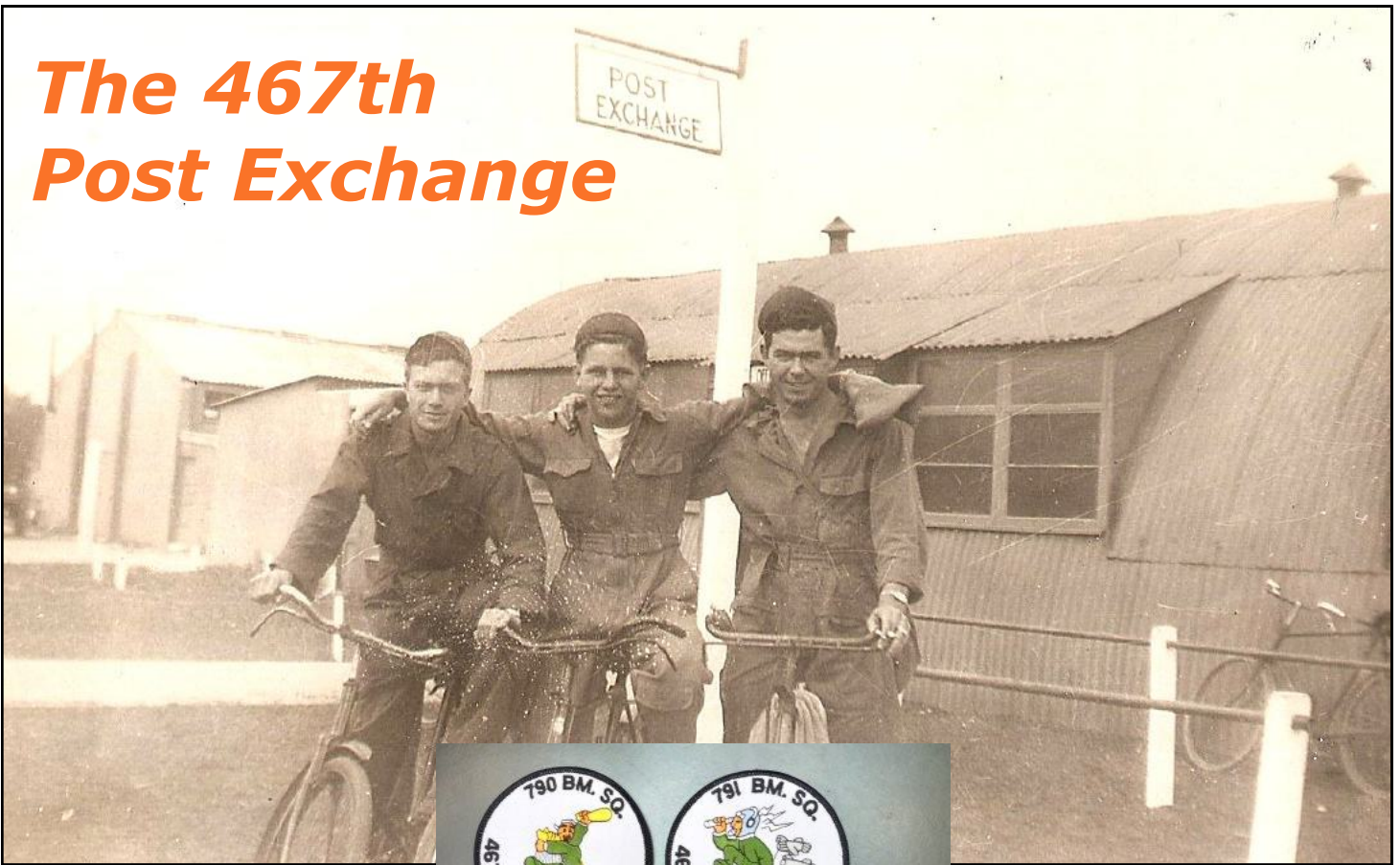
His transition to civilian life was a smooth one as his mechanical skills were in great demand in the private sector.

He was a bachelor for the next 10 years, or so, when he met Genevieve. They were married (Mar 1st, 1974) for 49 years, residing in the same house, until her death 2 years ago.

When the two of them retired around 1987, Vern embraced the Computer Age, learning not only how to build them but also how to program them. The two of them spent the next 25 years in close collaboration with St. Frances Parish taking care of all their computer needs and tithing records.

During his life he was an avid hunter and fisherman; he was a lifelong member of Ducks Unlimited as well as the NRA. He was also a Heritage Foundation Member post war.

The 467th Post Exchange



1.



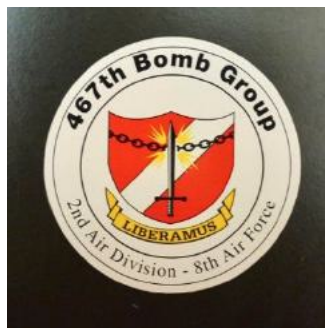
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3.



4.



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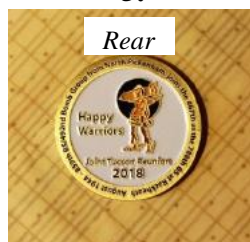


6.



Coin - Front

7.



Rear

The 467th Post Exchange

Items Available to Order in support of the 467th BG Association

1. **RED 467th LIBERAMUS INSIGNIA BALL CAP:**
Universal fit.....\$10.00 ea plus package and mail.
2. **SQUADRON PATCHES FEATURING SQUADRON LOGO, 788th, 789th, 790th, 791st:**
Embroidered Patches 4" Dia.....\$3.00 ea plus package and mail.
3. **467th LIBERAMUS SHIELD GROUP PATCH:**
Red Embroidered Patch 3"x3".....\$3.00 ea plus package and mail.
4. **SQUADRON PINS FEATURING SQUADRON LOGO, 788th, 789th, 791st:**
Pins 1" Dia. (790th Squadron currently unavailable).....\$3.00 ea plus package and mail.
5. **CAR/REFRIGERATOR MAGNET:**
467th Shield/2AD/8th Air Force Round. 4" Dia.....\$2.00 ea plus package and mail.
6. **WHITE POLO SHIRT WITH GROUP PATCH:**
Liberamus 467th BG/2 AD - 8 AF. ONLY avail sizes, XL & XXL.....\$15.00 plus package and mail
7. **CHALLENGE COIN in plastic envelope:**
467th Liberamus/Happy Warrior Squadron, Tucson 2018 Reunion.....\$15.00 ea plus package and mail.

ORDERS AND ENQUIRIES TO STEVE WATSON fswat49@icloud.com

Steve will advise shipping costs and availability

PAYMENT: Credit card/Paypal [HERE](#): or via check to "The 467th BG Association"
to TREASURER, Brian Mahoney, 223 Whitelock St., Baltimore, MD. 21217

ALSO AVAILABLE: The 467th Bombardment Group History by Allan Healy

The 467th BG Association is delighted to offer a softback limited edition of the original 1947 Allan Healy "467th BG History". This fifth and final edition has text reformatting and photographic restoration by Colin LaRussa, also a fully revised and comprehensive Addendum.

Price \$50 + \$5 shipping - payment via check or PayPal

Available from David LaRussa, 8570 N. Mulberry Dr., TUCSON, AZ 85704
TEL - (520) 322-9827 alarussa7@msn.com

