

POOP from Group



791st



790th



789th



788th

Newsletter of the 467th Bomb Group Association

February 2025

Tiger Tales

***Study of the 789th Squadron
B24J "Massillon Tiger"***



WE TAKE A LOOK AT THE B24J KNOWN AS THE "MASSILLON TIGER", its name/artwork and journey to England before finding its way to Rackheath and serving as a reliable workhorse with the 789th Squadron. Memories of those pilots who flew her and the mechanics who enabled the ship to achieve an enviable operational record and safe return to the U.S. at the end of the War in Europe. The tale of the "Tiger" and affection from the men who flew her is featured along with archive images, Page Eight.

***** Savannah 2025 Reunion, Hotel, Dates *****

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The 467th
Bombardment Group
The Rackheath Aggies

Rackheath Pathfinders
Site#6 (467th USAAF)



467bg_assoc



President's Message

By Yvonne Caputo

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Through grade school and high school, I would groan if we were told to take out our history books. I would repeat a word in my head over and over again, and the word was “boring”. I would never say it out loud for fear of making the teacher a little upset with me.

That all changed in my freshman year of college. I was warned not to take a certain professor’s class. He was reputed to be too difficult. However, as luck would have it, I was assigned to it. History, for the first time, came alive. The professor didn’t want us to memorize facts for a test; he wanted us to know what those facts meant. When Dad started to tell me about his experiences, I wanted to know even more.

The reunion coming up in October will give me a chance to learn more. The 467th’s Reunion in Savannah will tour the National Museum of the Mighty Eighth Air Force. It is the only museum in the world dedicated solely to telling the stories of the Eighth. In particular, I want to see the “Mission Experience.” It’s a video series that allows visitors to watch a bombing mission. I know already my heart will be in my throat. I welcome feeling that feeling. It’s a part of the 467th’s mission of keeping the memory of those who fought alive.

The reunion will offer ways to have fun and relax. We are planning a river cruise and a tour of historic Savannah. Within the schedule is plenty of free time to satisfy personal interests.

Please join us, I look forward to seeing old friends and making new ones.

Notes from the Editor



*Please send news/articles to
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2025 ANNUAL REUNION SAVANNAH, GA., DRURY PLAZA HOTEL, POOLER OCTOBER 22 - 25: the Reunion Committee have been busy last few months and finalised a contract with the highly recommended DRURY PLAZA HOTEL, Pooler, who will be hosting our event during the week, October 22 - 25. Its proximity to the National Museum of the Mighty Eighth Air Force, competitive Special Room-Rate, range of attractive amenities, made this an ideal location and base for our Savannah experience. An overview of the Drury Plaza and activities currently being formulated are found within this newsletter.

Couldn't help thinking of the previous time the Group met in Savannah which was back in November 2009. Located one of our traditional end of Banquet Group Photos of the attending veterans showing no less than 19 among us back then. Am only aware of just one of the nineteen heroes pictured who remain with us today. Hoping as many as possible visit Savannah in October in a spirit of remembrance and commemoration of our esteemed vets and the proud achievements and legacy of the 467th and Mighty Eighth. See you all in October!



BRIEF TREASURY UPDATE via TREASURER, KEITH HUGHES: a reminder the Association maintains three distinct accounts; The Wendover Model Fund; Reunion Support Fund; and a General Fund. I am pleased to report that several **generous donations** have increased the overall 467th account to **\$12,071**. Our members amaze me every day with their kindness and generosity!

I am also very excited about the 2025 "silent auction" event during our upcoming reunion in Savannah Georgia. Please consider bringing something along and help boost our Associations funds.

A partial list of items donated to the auction:

- ◆ (4) 9"x11" framed art by Perry Watts circa 1995. (One auto-graphed by Jack Stratton 791st)
- ◆ (2) One troy ounce pure silver coins commemorating the Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum
- ◆ (1) 467th ceramic "1987 Reunion" Wall Art 9&1/2" Round
- ◆ (1) Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum Puzzle (200 Pieces)
- ◆ (1) Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum Sun-catcher (7&1/2" tall)
- ◆ (1) Bottle Dalwhinnie 15 year single malt scotch (750 Ml - Must be 21)
- ◆ (1) Throat microphone used by bomber crews

Plus many more items!



The 467th BG Association is proud to contribute to the maintenance of memorials dedicated to the Group, provide funding to special projects of historical significance and support the continued education and research into the 467th BG activities. Please consider donating through our Paypal account to one of our current endeavors.

Make sure our voice is heard and HELP this continue. You can contribute to our efforts through a deeply appreciated DONATION to our Association Paypal/Cedit-Debit Card account which is tax deductible, [HERE](#). THANK YOU sincerely for supporting our aims and determined endeavors; all donations will be acknowledged personally and in the POOP Newsletter.



Not often the Association Directors find themselves together, or at least six on this occasion. Should have been seven but Keith Hughes (Treasurer) a last minute cancellation due Hurricane Milton affecting Florida. Pictured at the October, Colorado Springs Reunion. (L-R) Peter Horne (VP), Andy Wilkinson (Editor), Jim Zielinski, Yvonne Caputo (President), Ross Rainwater, & Brian Mahoney (Secretary).

BOB & CONNIE GERRINGER: Please spare a thought to our dear friends Bob & Connie who were sadly among the many in Southern California to tragically lose their home in the devastating recent wildfires. Good to report they are both safe and well and we wish them all the best as they recover and take steps to begin rebuilding their lives and hopefully resettle quickly.

INSTAGRAM: a further reminder the 467th BG Association has an Instagram account to increase our social media presence. Early signs the account is growing and attracting a regular and loyal number of followers. Administered by Cindy Stevens, recommend you drop by and catch up with the latest happenings at [467bg_assoc](#) (467bg underscore assoc) and even consider sharing some 467th related content.



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

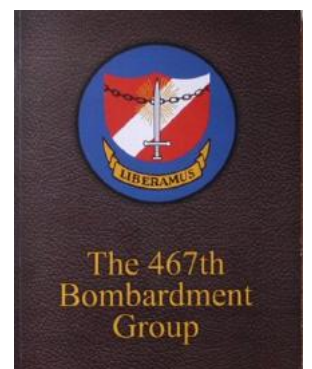
The 467th Bombardment Group History by Allan Healy

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



Savannah Reunion October 22 - 25

Drury Plaza Hotel, Pooler

**Save
the
Date**



We make a welcome return to Savannah, GA., for our October 2025 Reunion and have selected the modern **Drury Plaza Hotel**, Pooler, just a stone-throw from the National Museum of the Eighth Air Force and our base for four exciting days of camaraderie and fun.

The Drury Plaza, Pooler, is located just four miles from Savannah Airport (SAV), taxi or Uber , no hotel shuttle service. We have a choice of **Deluxe King** or **Queen Rooms**, Handicap rooms also available upon request. It provides all amenities expected of a modern new hotel including:

- ◆ FREE Hot breakfast each morning
- ◆ 5:30 Kickback® between 5:30 - 7pm every evening FREE hot food with rotating menu includes wine, beer, and soft drinks.
- ◆ The KITCHEN + BAR, for casual meals or a quick bite to eat, selection of cocktails, wines, spirits, craft beer, open 5pm—12am Mon - Saturday. (5 - 11pm Sunday).
- ◆ DAY ROOM: our own legendary meeting place throughout the Reunion, will include research materials, computers, printer, books, videos, photos, memorabilia, etc.
- ◆ FREE CAR PARKING (for guests)
- ◆ SPECIAL GROUP ROOM-RATE available 3days before/after Reunion, why not extend your stay!

SPECIAL ROOM-RATE for the REUNION of \$159 (+local tax) per night. Reservations can be made by calling the Drury Plaza direct **912-330-0400 Drury Plaza Hotel, 500 East US-80, Pooler, GA. 31322.** Remember to quote the **467 Bomb Group & Group Code 10138989.** On-line Reservations can also be made **HERE:** Ensure you select the correct destination (POOLER, GA.) dates, and all important Special

Rate Code (Dropdown menu and select Group Code) and copy 10138989.

Fully explore the Dury Plaza Hotel, POOLER, and view its rooms, facilities, and menu choices for both the FREE Breakfasts and tempting 5:30 Kickback® options, [HERE:](#)

ACTIVITIES

The Reunion Planning Committee have been working hard to ensure we have something for everyone and a program offering plenty of scope for free time as well as taking advantage to experience the best of Savannah. The nearby National Museum of the Mighty Eighth will feature highly with anticipated 3 day passes for those who wish to return or drop by as it on our hotel doorstep. We plan to have a pub-lunch at the Museum also the possibility of holding our end of reunion traditional



Banquet here too. It is 16 years since we last had a Reunion in Savannah with the wonderful Museum having added many new features and items.

Other options we are looking at is the historic Savannah Old Town [Hop On/ Hop Off Bus Tours](#) which run all day and gives added flexibility to explore at your leisure. There is the ever popular narrated [Savannah River Cruise Lunch](#) aboard one of the large paddle-steamer riverboats. Other spots we are looking at include Betty Bombers WWII themed American Eatery within the city American Legion. Savannah also has an American Prohibition Museum including interactive displays, recreation of the infamous 1920 “Speakeasys”,

and cocktail option.

The FULL schedule including REGISTRATION will be available in the JUNE issue of POOP. Meanwhile we recommend you make your reservation early at the Dury Plaza ensuring you secure your room, cancellation is FREE providing 24 hour notice before arrival. Further details will be posted on our Facebook Page as we firm the itinerary in coming weeks. Everyone is highly excited at the prospect of another memorable gathering at a great location and joining with relatives and friends of the 467th this coming October. Make sure to **MARK THE DATE** or **MAKE THAT RESERVATION!**

Mark
Date





REMEMBERING

The "Massillon Tiger"

Dramatic image of the Massillon Tiger (nearest) and elements of the 789th overhead the airfield of Lechfeld 9 April 1945. Piloted this day by Lt. Robert O. Higgs and crew flying just their second combat mission.

The aircraft was a product of the Consolidated aircraft manufacturing plant at Fort Worth, Texas, and rolled off the production line in early May 1944, a brand new shiny all-metal aluminium finish. Records show the aircraft was assigned to the Army Air Force Inventory on the 20th May 1944 and soon after sent to the modification center in Tucson, AZ. It remained here for a number of weeks before handed over to Air Transport Command for ferrying to Lincoln, NE. and further flight trials before departing for Grenier Field, New Hampshire, headquarters of the North Atlantic Division of Air Transport Command. It was assigned overseas on the 14th July 1944 and departed the following day for first stop Dow Field, Bangor, Maine and final destination, England. The ship joining the 8th Air Force to fly combat bombing missions to targets predominantly in Germany.

The pilot responsible for delivering the aircraft to England was (a later circuit judge) Norman Putman from Canton, Ohio. It was He who was responsible for paying for the artwork painted on the nose of the B24 depicting the McKinley High School football mascot "Obie", a cartoon tiger carrying a bomb underneath his arm rather than a football as in the original drawing. Next to "Obie" was the name written in large letters "Massillon Tiger". The artwork was completed before the "Tiger" began the flight to England in July 1944.

It is unclear which of the ATC terminal airfields the ship arrived after crossing the Atlantic but would have been ferried soon after to the giant Burtonwood Depot near Liverpool for standard "Theatre modifications". This enabled the "Tiger" to be equipped for flying combat over mainland Europe. The main visual difference was the addition of a larger blister window on the right-side of the nose to benefit the navigator position.

This modification meant the original artwork lost the letter “N” giving the impression the name given to the ship was now a misleading “MASSILLO TIGER”.

Modifications complete, the aircraft was assigned to the 789th Squadron at Rackheath as a replacement ship under the stewardship of crew chief, M/Sgt. Losse T. Piland and his fellow 789th mechanics. They maintained the “Tiger” and readied the ship for each of its assigned combat missions. One man who recalled seeing the “Tiger” for the first time at Rackheath was S/Sgt James Kennedy, brought up in Canton he was a McKinley graduate. But it had been a year since he left home to serve in the Army. “Obie” and the Massillon Tigers brought back memories. He raced to his barracks for a camera, then back to the plane for a snapshot. The



“Tiger” was to remain exclusively with the 789th Squadron throughout its entire combat history and was ready for its first taste of battle by mid-August when it was assigned for the mission to attack an airfield at Mourmelon, France, 12 August 1944.

It was first crewed by Lt. Kenneth Kjell of the 789th who were flying just their third combat mission and among the 26 to take-off at 0500hrs and attack the airfield bombing visually. All 26 returned safely although results were described as just “fair”. The “Tiger” was to fly combat the following two days with another inexperienced crew, the Lt. Donald Reab Crew#26 who were flying just their fourth and fifth missions. The third mission for the “Tiger” was significant in that the 467th welcomed the return of the reformed 788th Squadron flying their first mission and bringing the squadrons back to full strength.

September was a quiet month for the “Massillon Tiger” with missions on the 9th & 11th without mishap before the entire Group was engaged in what was known as “truckin’ missions”, ferrying fuel to France in order to supply Patton’s army making speedy advances on the continent. The ferrying of fuel was carried out by mainly war-weary ships including those from other groups and precluded those newer and combat-ready older ships.

It was almost a month before the “Tiger” next flew combat which occurred on the 7 October 44 with the Lt. Troy Wild Crew targeting Magdeburg before the Lt. Donald Kessler Crew on 14 October had a tough assignment to Cologne. Intense flak over the target damaged many ships with fellow 789th Lt Donald Hudson Crew forced to abandon “Miss Judy” with loss of the pilot and 9 taken POW. A bombardier in the 791st was also tragically killed by flak over the target.

On the 30 October the “Tiger” completed its 14th combat mission with the Lt. David Nash Crew when they attacked Oil Refineries on the coast at Hamburg with all returning safely.

Lt. Charles Huston with Crew#37 flew the “Tiger” for the first time on 6 November to target a viaduct at Minden, Germany. He recorded the mission in some detail in later memoirs:

Mission#10: Loaded with 4 x 2000lb bombs, we merrily took to the air this morning to remove an aqueduct at the point where the Ems-Wesser canal crosses the River Wesser at a corner of the town of Minden.

"We saw a bit of scattered flak en-route, but nothing anywhere close. There was an almost solid undercast far below us (we were only at 17,500 feet) but it was a beautiful day for a raid. Just before the initial point, the lead ship of our squadron failed and was replaced by the deputy lead of the lead squadron. We finally reformed, turned at the I.P. opened the bomb-bays and – wham! – the lead ship dropped. Condry and Kessler dropped with him (Kessler dropped through his doors). We had to salvo and dropped about 10 seconds late. The bombs hit about 40 miles short of the target. The lead, Condry & Kessler hit a railroad, we hit another canal. Empty, we went down on the bomb run so the other ships could drop in the right place. We couldn't close the bomb-bays and had to fly all the way back to England with them open."

The Lt. Frank S. Watson Crew, April 1945



Next mission for the "Tiger" was on the 16 November 44 when the Group was assigned the slightly unusual target of enemy troop concentrations on the front-line at Eschweiler, Germany. The aircraft carried small 20 x 250lb anti-personnel bombs and had to bomb before 1245hrs, when after the Allied offensive would commence. They were to bomb using radio-aids (similar to I.L.S.) to avoid accidental bombing of Allied troops. Assigned to the "Tiger" was the Lt. Frank Watson Crew, first time for them and first of seven times in the next 5 – 6 weeks. Take-off was postponed several times that morning due to heavy persistent fog which finally improved sufficiently for ships to get away. Lt. Dean Johnson, navigator with the Watson crew, recorded in logs this first mission aboard the "Tiger" as follows:

"Heavy ground fog delayed take off. Our ground troops had a 1245 zero hour for their attack on the Ruhr. We finally took off on instruments and headed straight for the target. We were deputy Squadron-lead and took over lead over the channel after the leader aborted. Damn nice mission - everything went well. Bombs Away at 1244hrs. Rackheath base fogged in on return and we diverted to Lindholme RAF base."

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The entire Group ended up landing away from Rackheath due to the continuing fog, most ships landing further north at either RAF Sandtoft or RAF Lindholme. The persistent fog meant crews spent some time enjoying hospitality of the RAF at Lindholme while some of the enlisted men were billeted in hotels at York. Lt. Charles Huston who also flew the mission recorded in his diary (somewhat ironically) "it took two hours to reach the target and three days to get back to Rackheath!"

The Lt. Frank Watson Crew flew the next of their seven consecutive combat missions each time aboard the "Massillon Tiger" and navigator, Lt. Dean Johnson, records the following on each:

29 November Rail Road Viaduct, Bielefeld, Germany: *"A good mission as far as Flak and Fighters - NONE. However, we missed the target. It was GH Bombing. The viaduct is still standing."*

04 December Marshalling Yards, Bebra, Germany: *"Very uneventful and easy. NO FLAK NO FIGHTERS."*

11 December Marshalling Yards, Hanau, Germany: *"Largest force of 8th Air Force Bombers to date. 5 Squadron effort for 467th. 672 planes in 2nd DIV. and 1600 in 8th AF. Good mission - no flak. We were due to parade over Paris on return but scrubbed because of weather."*



Returning aircrew with the Massillon Tiger behind

18 December Coblenz, Germany. Mission recalled due adverse weather when Group reported to be 100 miles from I.P. (No remarks recorded by Lt. Dean Johnson).

24 December Small Marshalling Yards, Gerolstein, Germany: *"Christmas Eve Mission. Bad weather all week and have "stood down". Super all-out effort. 2000 Bombers in attack. 467th put up 63. Even "BIG PETE" flew, with carbines for protection. Each Squadron/Group had a different target. All of them were small marshalling yards at the base of Runstedt's Bulge".*

This turned out a record day for both the 8th Air Force and 467th in terms of aircraft despatched. 61 of the 467th reached the target, all returned.

26 December Marshalling Yards, Niederlahnstein, Germany: *"A good visual day and the results were excellent. The RR Yards "HAIN'T NO MO'." Picked up Flak over the BULGE. Got 6 holes - one in the nose."*

The Frank Watson Crew were recognized as a very able crew and were to be reassigned to the specialist lead 791st squadron in the coming weeks, ending their association with the "Tiger" which continued to remain a steadfast and reliable ship with the 789th.

Pilot, Ed King recalled one particular episode this period, not in combat but one of the many practice missions Col. Shower insisted his men fly.

And was it the "Massillon Tiger" that we took out on that disastrous practice mission one sunny day, when a sudden and vicious winter storm swept in over the British Isles and northern Europe like an express train? The practice mission having been called back, our formation headed out over the North Sea, looking for a way down through the solid cloud mass which was engulfing us. We were in the last squadron to turn and head down through the clouds, partly within a small "canyon" of clear space within that otherwise solid undercast. We broke out of the clouds a few hundred feet above the water, but as we proceeded toward the east coast of England, the cloud ceiling pushed us lower and lower, closer and closer to that icy water.

Laval Beniot, our radio operator (God rest his Soul) was plumbing our height above the water by measuring out the trailing radio antenna until he got a voltage drop! The cloud mass was now right on top of us, and we

we appeared to be no more than 75 feet over the water when I decided that disaster was surely waiting for us just ahead and I opted to peel out of the formation and start climbing up into the cloud mass as we neared London.

We climbed up and agonizingly up and around in that solid overcast until we finally broke out on top at about 22,000 feet! That climb on instruments proved to be the worst ordeal of my short flying career. I had at one point in that long climb suffered a complete loss of orientation, hope, and faith in my instruments, so that I was ready to just let go and let the plane take us into the North Sea (or whatever was under us); but Tom Elsen's (copilot) encouraging voice got through to me and made me take hold again and come back fighting.

Once on top, we flew for hours, up and down the east coast of England - - figuring that if we could not eventually find a clearing to come down for a visual landing, we would fly inland a way when the gas got low, let the crew bail out, and then head the ship out over the North Sea before we hit the silk. Meanwhile, we hoped that our IFF was sending out the right signal so that English ACK ACK would not start trying to bring us down!

We were in radio contact with the base, asking if there was ANY field open ANYWHERE IN EUROPE where we would have a chance of landing: but there was NO place open. That winter storm had socked in all of northwest Europe! So we flew and flew, periodically measuring our gas, and every eye on board straining to find a hole in that cotton mattress beneath us. Finally one of the waist gunners screamed "I see a light on the ground! A light on the ground!", and having found the hole, I upended the "Massillon Tiger" and we spiralled

down through that skinny little chimney until we broke out several hundred feet above the ground, practically on top of RACKHEATH! What a Navigator Ed Gore was! (But we wouldn't have cared if we were over Germany!)

But we still had three significant problems: (1) The windows and windshield had iced up so badly on that trip down the chimney that I could not see through the windshield well enough to be sure I could land; (2) Either our gas was about gone, or the carburetors were iced up so much that the engines were having trouble digesting the gasoline - - splutter, sputter; and (3) Rackheath field had a solid, thick blanket of snow covering everything: there were no runways visible!

(1) I slid open the side window beside my seat and reached out and around the windshield in front of me - - a wrench in my hand - - and chopped a small, 50c piece hole in the ice in front of me, but big enough (and soon enough so that my frozen hand did not drop off!). (2) & (3) We prayed for the engines not to quit, and advised the Tower that we were in serious trouble and had to have the lights turned on so we could find a runway PDQ.



Lt. Edward W. King, pilot and crew commander

3) The Tower operator flicked a switch, and lo and behold we could see ONE, PARTIAL string of runway lights shining mistily through a snow cover, on ONE side of a runway. "Which side of the runway are those lights on?" we asked. "I don't know. They are still out there shovelling and I don't have any contact with them or anyone to find out." "Curses" (or something like that) we said; FIND OUT before we run out of gas!" He said he was leaving the Tower: don't panic; he would go out and find out and call us back.



Lt Roy Flay, bombardier King Crew

A heckuva long time and a few engine coughs later, having lost all human contact with the outside world, I decided that we had better GO FOR IT! I bet our lives that the few runway lights were on the left side of the runway, and we went in. As I neared the depthless white sheet and began to flair out, my 50c hole rose up and looked at the black sky! The lights had passed from view, and the rudders were getting very mushy, and I rode the hell out of them, PRAYING that it would not be a crash landing from 30 feet in the air!

And then softly, gently, the nose came down and we realized that we were ON THE RUNWAY and rolling it out! The softest, smoothest landing I ever made in my life! (A few hours earlier, I wouldn't have bet a nickel on her survival (the "Massillon Tiger") - - or ours!)

The "Tiger" continued to rack up combat with seven consecutive missions in seven days from the 28 December through to 3rd January, before two more missions on the 5th and 7th. Late February saw the "Tiger" complete 9 combat missions over 9 consecutive days with the Ed King Crew completing five of these. Among this sequence the Lt. Charles Huston Crew found themselves assigned the "Tiger" for just their second time for the mission of 22 February to Hildesheim, Germany, which was to prove memorable.

Mission#26 22 February: Today we walked into briefing and looked at the coordinates on the board. We could see the target was somewhere in the Hanover-Brunswick area. Then we noticed that the bombing altitude was 10,000 feet. This was obviously a big mistake and we had a big laugh over heavies going into that area at that altitude. The laugh faded quickly when we found out it was not a mistake at all. Still it was novel to hedge-hop over Germany and we looked forward to it eagerly.

We took-off bound for a marshalling yard at Hildesheim. We each carried 12 x 500lb bombs. We crossed the Dutch coast and swung south. About at Paderborn we cut our power and started to let down. We got down to 8,000feet shortly before we reached Kassel. We circled wide around Kassel and its intense flak, discretion being the better part of valor. The original course was supposedly free of flak. West of Kassel we came up on a small town. I was watching the second squadron ahead of us – an outfit from the 466th. Suddenly four busts of flak appeared in the middle of the squadron – the first shot fired all day. There was a puff of black smoke. The #4 man's left wing came off. He tumbled crazily out of the formation and then went

straight into the ground, spinning slowly. No one got out. We immediately turned left to avoid the flak. The rest of our wing then thought better of it and swung sharply back to the right. Our one squadron continued to the left. Suddenly all hell broke loose for six minutes. We were only 4,000 feet or 5,000 feet off the ground. I saw four explosions under my left wing and the ship rocked violently. Small caliber stuff was exploding all over the sky and tracers were cutting across us everywhere. We turned violently back and forth but it did little good at our altitude. We were never out of that hell for one second of the six or seven minutes we were in it. I have never been so scared in my life. Everyone on board was nearly paralyzed with terror. I had joked with Kessler that morning about meeting him near Cologne. Right then it didn't seem funny. I looked up and saw Kessler get a hit that wrecked his #2 engine. Mills got two engines knocked out. Jacobson got one knocked out. Kessler got a piece of flak through the bottom of the waist, through a flak-suit, took one finger of waist-gunner (Sgt. Achiel Samyn) and mangled two other fingers, and went on out through the top of the ship. Mills had a shell explode right in the waist, blowing the top right off. One chunk came through the nose-turret of our ship, shattering the plexiglass and cutting the face of S/Sgt. Harry Brunner our nose-gunner. Kessler got 106 holes. We didn't get many holes, though we can't understand why.

Forty minutes later we hit the target (excellent results). I still had an unlighted cigarette hanging in my mouth – or rather one that had gone out in the excitement – and I was still scared stiff and couldn't believe I really was alive. All of us got home OK. The 8th Air Force only lost four B-17s and four B-24s on the whole raid, but most didn't get what our squadron got. I'm glad its all over and I don't want no mo'! 5,000 feet and 155mph indicated into a headwind just isn't healthy at all.

Through March 1945 the "Tiger" continued its impressive serviceability with crews often exceeding 8 hours plus flying time as targets assigned were deeper into the shrinking Reich. Berlin and infrastructure supporting the capital were frequently visited. A further 15 missions occurred this month flown by a variety of 789th crews.

Moving into April 45 the targets remained largely deep penetration efforts and the "Tiger" participated in several notable missions. 14 April target was Pointe de Grave, targeting gun emplacements guarding the entrance to the important harbour at Bordeaux. The Group assembled on the continent at Liege, then flew over friendly territory all the way until reaching the target where 24 ships of the Group bombed visually with spectacular results. The "Tiger" again crewed by Ed King and Crew#46 contributed to what became known as the "perfect drop". Setting a record for accuracy for the entire 8th Air Force.

The following day saw the 467th in pretty much the same location but targeting the opposite bank at Royan, location of an entrenched German troop detachment. The "Tiger" was flown by the Lt. Robert Higgs



The "Massillon Tiger" pictured at Rackheath

Crew with ships carrying the unusual ordnance of petroleum jelly in cardboard cannisters, otherwise known as napalm. Only ever occasion this type of ordnance was used by the 8th Air Force. The highly flammable nature of the cannisters dictated skeleton crews were employed with no gunners in the waist, nose, or tail.

The "Tiger" was in the air again the next day and flown by Lt. Maurice Freeman, a brand new replacement crew flying just their second combat mission and the target Landshut, Germany. It was a notable date (16 April 1945) as it was to be the "Tiger's" final combat mission of WWII, but would end less auspiciously. The Freeman crew lost an engine on return from Landshut and opted to make a precautionary landing at Merville airfield, near Calais, France. They were back at Rackheath a few hours later.

Among the 789th Squadron crews who flew the "Tiger" most prolifically was the Lt. Edward W. King crew (Crew#46) twelve times, Lt. Frank S. Watson (crew#44) seven times, and Lt. Donald L. Kessler (Crew#27) six times. All of the 789th Squadron pilots who flew the "Tiger" from Rackheath survived their missions and returned home safely. The ship had racked up an impressive 74 credited combat missions and had served both the 789th and Group with distinction.

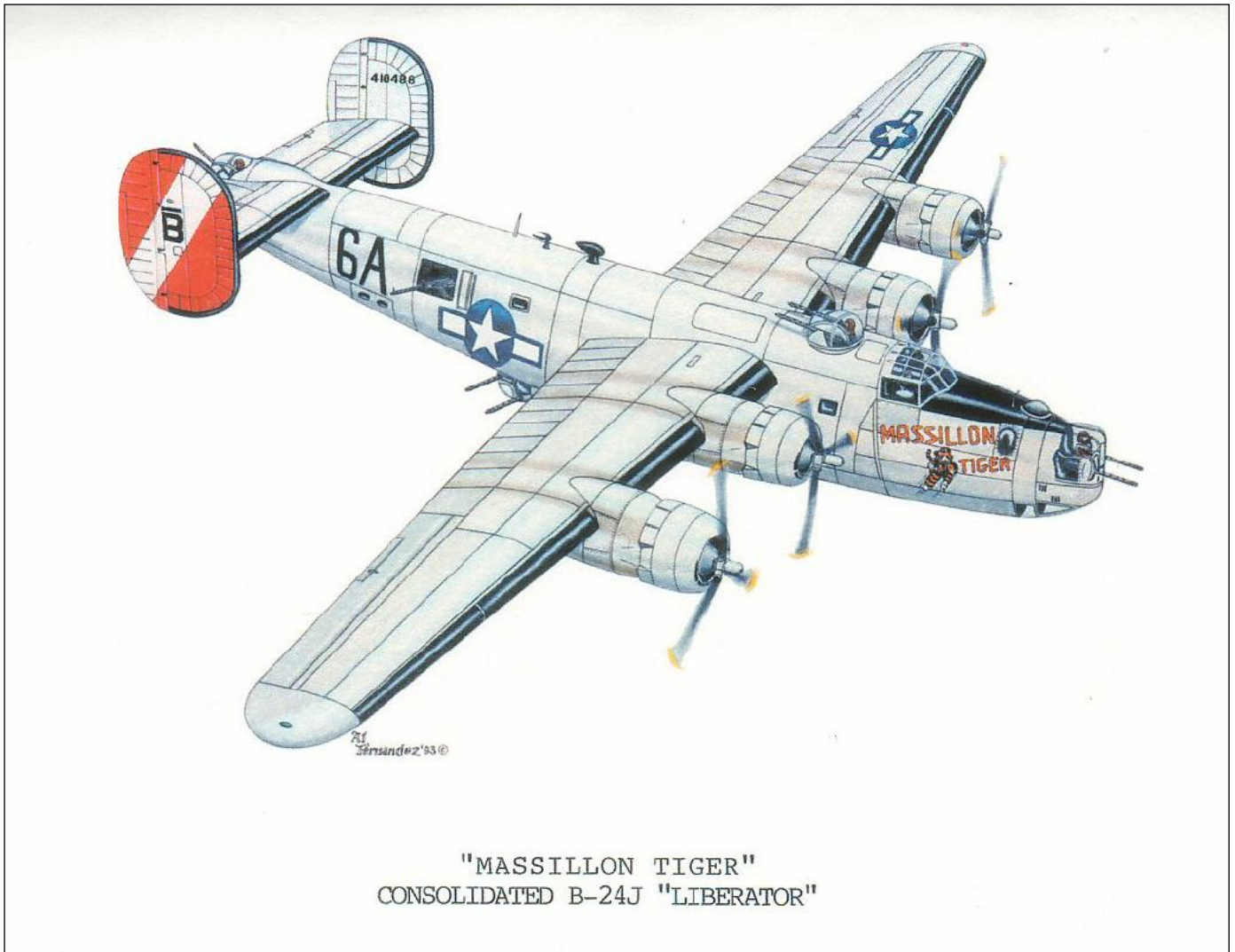
At the end of hostilities, Movement Orders were drawn up to bring the aircrews, aircraft, and ground personnel back to the U.S. in Operation "Home Run". The "Tiger" was among the 19 789th Squadron ships selected to carry crew and 10 passengers including the ship's Crew Chief, M/Sgt. Losse T. Piland, and other ground personnel for the journey home. The pilot was Lt. Edward W. King and Crew#46 and they departed Rackheath for the very last time on 10th June 1945 for final destination, Bradley Field, Connecticut. The journey took them via the ATC terminal at Valley Airfield, Wales, then onto Keflavik, Iceland, where the crew were delayed three days due to poor weather over the Atlantic. Next was on to Goose Bay Labrador and finally Bradley Field almost a week after leaving Rackheath.

Pilot Ed King recalls leaving the "Massillon Tiger" at Bradley Field but a month or so later last seeing the ship in a hangar at Smyrna, Tennessee. Records have the final disposition of the "Tiger" at the mammoth Reconstruction Finance Corp. (RFC) at Walnut Ridge, Arkansas, ferried here in November 45. This was a storage, scrapping and sales center for the Army Air Force and other branches of the military for returning aircraft at the end of WW2. Reported over 10,000 aircraft ended up here, many straight from the production assembly-lines. Majority of the aircraft were smelted down into huge ingots for shipping – this was the fate recorded on the 21 December 45 of the once proud warbird the "Massillon Tiger".



The memory of the "Massillon Tiger" never faded and it was clear the plane had special meaning for those who flew or worked on it during the war. Crew Chief, Losse T. Piland mailed a photo of the ship to the Mayor of Massillon shortly after the war, praising its service. Meanwhile, Dean Johnson former navigator with the Watson Crew, talked about it so much, a friend as a birthday idea commissioned artist Al Fernandez of Pacheco, CA, to paint the plane. But Fernandez needed something to work with so

contacted the Wright-Patterson Museum who in turn advised of the existence of the 467th BG Association. Several phone-calls later and Losse Piland was able to bring others connected to the plane together including James F. Kennedy from Canton who had taken the snapshot of the "Tiger" back at Rackheath and Ed King, former pilot. When Ed King learned of the project he was keen to get copies to present to his former crew. Frank Watson too desired copies leading to both sponsoring a limited print edition that was donated to places like the Ohio Military Museum at Massillon (now incorporated into MAPS Air Museum, North Canton), the American Library in Norwich, and elsewhere.



As a side-note, our recent Reunion in Colorado Springs took a number of us down to the Pueblo Air Museum south of CS where numerous 467th crews had trained before making the journey overseas. It was rumored a print copy of the "Massillon Tiger" resided here at the museum but after making tentative enquiries, no picture was able to be located. However, four months later I received a surprise email from Jeannie Sandidge, President of the Pueblo Historical Aircraft Society, with the news they had located the print of the "Tiger" during an inventory of donated artefacts. She was also able to provide a photo of the rear containing more details showing the print was donated by Frank Watson honoring his crew and dated June 1995. They thanked us for bringing this one to their attention and enabling a better understanding of the scope of wonderful artefacts they have at the museum. The memory of the "Massillon Tiger" lives on.



Letter from Rackheath

By Ivan A. Barnard Ivanbarnard999@btinternet.com

This year we'll see the 80th anniversary of VE Day and many other prestigious events and occasions. In celebration and remembrance of the men and women of the Second Air Division USAAF, in September the American Library in collaboration with the Forum will jointly host a major heritage event called "Silver Wings". This ambitious project has been boosted by the award of substantial National Lottery funding enabling a large scale exhibition planned for the spacious lobby area of the Norwich City Forum building.

This link ["Silver Wings"](#) will explain the concept and some of the objectives behind this remarkable heritage event. I am delighted to tell you that I have already been asked for some idea's and concepts for some of the exhibits and displays together with the participation of the Site#6 Pathfinders.

Quartermasters Dodge Command Car

Through these pages we have reported news on the restoration project of the former Rackheath Dodge Command Car belonging to the 1229 QM Co. and driven by C.O. Capt. Al Touchette. Following the meticulous three year restoration undertaken at Maurice Hammond's Hardwick facility it has now moved from the workshop and undergoing road trials. The following images are a reminder of the car in 1944/45, start of the restoration, subsequent progress, and video snippet of the restored car "in action."



Upon visiting the workshop last year, it was noticed the initial J.C.H. were inscribed on the steering-wheel. It is firmly believed they represent or belong to an individual assigned to the 470 Sub-Depot at Rackheath, John Charles Haarhues, whose military occupation speciality is listed as a light truck driver. Take a look at the culmination of the restoration in this short [video](#).

New Site#6 YouTube video

October last year saw the upload of a new Site#6 video called Post Card from Rackheath part 2. You can view the 17 minute video [here](#). Don't forget to follow the weekly endeavors of The Pathfinders by following their highly recommended Facebook Page, Rackheath Pathfinders Site#6 (467th USAAF).

448th BG Control Tower Christmas party at Seething village hall

December 15, I was invited to attend the 448th Control Tower Christmas party at Seething village hall. I have to say that it was a very nostalgic and atmospheric occasion. The music, period dress, land army girls, it could just have been 1944.



Site#6 Visit

January 18, we hosted a conducted tour of Site 6 on behalf of Orla Kennelly and her staff from the American Library. Also attending was Katie Ellis, the event producer for the "Silver Wings" heritage project. This was followed by a light lunch at the B24 Café, Rackheath.



The 467th Post Exchange

*Items Available in
support of the
Assoc.*



RED 467th LIBERAMUS INSIGNIA BALL CAP:

Universal fit.....\$10.00 ea plus package and mail.

SQUADRON PATCHES FEATURING SQUADRON LOGO, 788th, 789th, 790th, 791st:

Embroidered Patches 4" Dia.....\$3.00 ea plus package and mail.

467th LIBERAMUS SHIELD GROUP PATCH:

Red Embroidered Patch 3"x3"\$3.00 ea plus package and mail.

SQUADRON PINS FEATURING SQUADRON LOGO, 788th, 789th, 791st:

Pins 1" Dia. (790th Squadron currently unavailable).....\$3.00 ea plus package and mail.

CAR/REFRIGERATOR MAGNET:

467th Shield/2AD/8th Air Force Round. 4" Dia.....\$2.00 ea plus package and mail.

WHITE POLO SHIRT WITH GROUP PATCH:

Liberamus 467th BG/2 AD - 8 AF. ONLY avail sizes, XL & XXL.....\$15.00 plus package and mail.

CHALLENGE COIN in plastic envelope:

467th Liberamus/Happy Warrior Squadron, Tucson 2018 Reunion.....\$15.00 ea plus 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, Keith Hughes, 150 Holly Circle, Ormond Beach, FL. 32176**