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O F F I C I A L

Group Vice-President
James G. Coffey
39 Hardscrabble Hill
Chappaqua, NY, 10514
Phone 914-238-4798

Deputy Group Vice-President
Floyd R. Kingsley
25 Dawes Drive
Newark, DE, 19702
Phone 302-737-6486

FROM YOUR VEEP

I hope to see many of you at the Palm Springs reunion of the Second Air Division Association, our 37th. Californians Hank Wedaa and Fred Jansen are organizing a mini-reunion of veterans from their state. Since the '84 reunion will be the first in the West since 1978, there should be an especially good turnout of Westerners as well as a large number of 467th people from the rest of the country.

If you plan to attend but still haven't made your reservation with Evelyn Cohen, you might be out of luck if you don't do so quickly. Walk-ins are strongly discouraged.

At the June regional reunion in Trenton, N.J., 467th participation was good. Your Deputy VP, Floyd "Dick" Kingsley, wrote as follows:

We had a nice area mini reunion at Princeton, N.J. on June 9th, attended by nine 467th people. There were approximately 200 total in attendance. Howard Steffay and wife, first timers, joined J. Wilson Noden and wife, Earl and Aline Page, Tom Stevanko, and wife Eleanor and me. Evelyn Cohen announced that the 2ADA has now over 5000 members and urged everyone who plans to go to Palm Springs to make their reservations as soon as possible.

In the last Poop you were told that the Group had sent monies to the Rackheath Parish Council for the installation of a bench at the Rackheath Village sign, the site of our Group Memorial Plaque in the foreyard of Holy Trinity Church in Rackheath. We also sent over photographs, from the Calvin Horn collection, to be placed in the church entrance hall. Since the last Poop, we found out that RAF NEATISHEAD, a very important installation in NATO, uses a building from Rackheath as its Officers Mess. We sent over a 467th plaque that was merged with a 2ADA plaque and the whole of it presented to the Station Commander by Jordan Uttal on his recent visit to Norwich for the Board of Governors Meeting.

Each of these happenings have been reported to us by David Hastings in several letters in the past months. David lives at Salhouse, he is a member of the Board of Governors of the 2nd Air Division Memorial Trust and a very good friend of the 467th. Here are some excerpts of his latest letter.

"The plaque at RAF NEATISHEAD. This went extremely well, and I hope you approve of the montage which we had made. Jordan was given a tour of the Station on the Thursday, and had lunch in your Mess Building. Then on the Friday evening, the Station Commander, Group Captain Joan Hopkins, gave a special and superb Dinner party in her residence, when Jordan presented the plaque to her and the Station. They were truly delighted and we have a superb link. The plaque now hangs in the place of pride in the Mess, to remind all the young Officers of the debt and the history. Thank you again for making this possible.

The seat at Rackheath. Once again can we thank you all for your great kindness, generosity, and friendship, which means so much to us all. The Sunday of the dedication started wet, but by the evening time the clouds rolled back to give a perfect evening. The village turned out in force. I presented the seat on your behalf and the Rev. Martin Benians made a very moving blessing. Brian Tagg, the Parish Chairman, then expressed his thanks. We then moved into the church to celebrate it's 25th anniversary. At the same time I also presented on your behalf a montage I had made of the photographs you kindly sent, which now hangs in the Church entrance, to explain to the many visitors the meaning of the Liberator on the village sign, the plaque and the seat. Bless you all once again for your kindness and friendship to our village.

As you know, Jim Mahoney has very kindly sent us a copy of his superb film together with a wonderful tape describing the shots. As soon as I can I intend to start the production of this "second film", and hopefully it will be finished by the Convention. "Remember Them" is still in high demand, and is already well booked up for the Autumn & Winter film shows, and I'm sure this new film will also be well used. We owe Jim a great debt for sparing us this copy, it is truly a great record of those days in the "Forties" when you were with us.

There is so much I want to tell you, but time is against me, so I hope you will forgive this short note. By the way, if you can let us have some more photos and a picture or two of "Witchcraft" this would be super. Will contact you both again shortly and also we look forward to seeing you at the Convention."

See you at the Convention.

Jim

BITS AND PIECES

Charles C. Russell reminds us that among many citations received for outstanding accomplishment in all facets of the Group's activities while in England was that presented to the 789th Bombardment Squadron by General Hodges for its achievements between 17 April and 20 June 1944, when the squadron flew 49 missions, 19 of those to Germany, a total of 329 sorties without losing an aircraft or crew member. The string was broken when Lt. Gerald J. Gebauer bent his bird upon landing with battle damage. The citation was given in Second Air Division Special Order No. 123, dated 9 July 1944.

I have received over sixty letters since Poop Vol. 3 No. 3 and have tried to answer each requiring an answer. Thanks to each of you for writing, it makes it much easier to get Poop out when I have so much to draw upon. A number of them I would like to publish in their entirety but Poop would get too voluminous. So let me use excerpts from them here in Bits and Pieces.

Hank Wedaa, Bill Eastland and Danny Moore have been to England and to Rackheath. Each of them tells of seeing our Memorial, some recognizable buildings and scenes at the base and especially that each of them could not have enjoyed their visit as they did without our good British friends, especially Tony North and Peter Bond, to show them around. If any of you go to England, I know you will go to Norwich and Rackheath. Write Tony or Peter to tell them when you will be there so they can make plans to help you have the most enjoyable return visit.

A two page letter from Jack Statton concerning his tour as Crew Chief in the 791st BS from its beginning to the last of the 467th in England, he was on the last aircraft to leave Rackheath, a B-24M which Col. Shower flew home with Group Navigator, Capers Holms, showing the way. Jack's first aircraft was "Stinger", originally Wadell Rigsby's plane but crash landed by Lt. Murphy on its 13th mission after which it was scrapped. Then he had "Lonely Heart", 224, which had its nose turret knocked off in a collision with the Group P-47, "Little Pete", flown by LTC Walter Smith. "Lonely Heart" was repaired and transferred to another squadron. Jack's next aircraft was 816 which was also transferred within the Group. He also crewed 220 and a plane from the 392nd BG, "Battling Baby", which had to have a tremendous amount of work, all four engines, all fuel cells, brakes, turbos, etc., changed to make it safe to fly back to the States, which it did without mishap.

Jack was awarded the Bronze Star in recognition of his outstanding achievements as Crew Chief including 138 aircraft missions without any aborts. He will be at Palm Springs, looking forward to reminiscing with all of you there.

From David Hastings letter in Jim Coffey's report you read that Jim Mahoney has sent David a copy of his color film of the 467th, with taped explanation, that many of us have been fortunate enough to see. I know that each of you will join me in thanking Col. Mahoney for this wonderful gift, a perfect complement to David's first film, of the Second Air Division, "Remember Them", and an additional legacy we can leave of the 467th to our friends in Rackheath, Norfolk and all of England.

The pictures sent by David Hastings, Peter Bond and others of the 467th memorial, the bench, the plaque at RAF NEATISHEAD and the picture montage at Holy Trinity Church will be placed in the Groups album for all to see beginning at Palm Springs and all future reunions.

Errata

In the last Poop I inserted into Jim Coffey's "From Your Veep" a statement to the effect that a part of the 2 ADA dues were sent to the Memorial Library Fund to continue the improvement, maintenance and operation of the Library Room. I have been reminded since that support of the Memorial is entirely by voluntary contributions. I urge your individual contributions, to Evelyn Cohen or to me, designated by your letter or check to that purpose.

Ex 492nd People - Aero Publishers, Inc., 329 West Aviation Road, Fallbrook, CA, 92028, has a book, "The Fortunes of War" by Allen C. Blue, detailing the operations of the "old" 492nd BG. This is a quality paper back of interest to all you WW II buffs and especially to us ex492nd people. Only \$7.95 postpaid and well worth the price.

How many were at Rackheath? I've guessed 4500-5000. Two numbers have been found in various official, unofficial records. By date:

31 Aug 1944	533 Officers	2362 Enlisted Men
6 Apr 1945	513 Officers	2462 Enlisted Men

The Personnel Statistical Section reported an average of 500 Officers and 2400 Enlisted Men with a turnover of 100 per month. The Section also reported 100 missions flown in 140 days, 2375 sorties, 27 AC lost, 46 killed, 45 wounded, 182 MIA. In the first 100 missions, 5518 tons of bombs were dropped. At 200 missions, 4782 AC sorties had been flown with 12571 tons of bombs dropped. In the 200 mission period, 48 AC had been lost including 29 MIA. Another 33 AC had been written off in non-operational accidents at 12,200 hours, and over 12½ million gallons of gasoline had been used in the Group. In the first year at Rackheath, 2532 Officers and Enlisted Men reported in with 2133 transferred out.

Someone in the Public Relations Office, Robert C. Triplett's group. There is a paragraph in "The 467th, A Year at Rackheath" that says "Religious services, dedicating a carved stone tablet to the memory of four fallen American Airman of the 467th Bombardment Group and held at nearby Kirby Bedon Church were among the events covered by this office in the year 1944". I asked Peter Bond to help me with this and he sent a slide of the Memorial. It reads:

"TO THE MEMORY OF FOUR GALLANT AMERICAN AIRMEN OF THE 8th AIR FORCE - 2nd LT. WILLIAM M. SHER-RIL, TENNESSEE; T/SGT. DALTON W. PONTIUS, KANSAS; T/SGT. GEORGE LIFSCHITZ, NEW YORK; S/SGT. PHILIP A. SNYDER, PENNSYLVANIA: WHO LOST THEIR LIVES WHEN A LIBERATOR BOMBER RETURNING FROM A RAID ON GERMANY CRASHED NEAR THIS CHURCH ON THE 18th AUGUST 1944. THIS MEMORIAL WAS PLACED HERE BY THE PARISHONERS OF KIRBY BEDON."

"LET US HAVE FAITH THAT RIGHT MAKES MIGHT, AND IN THAT FAITH LET US TO THAT END, DARE TO DO OUR DUTY."

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

Any of you having anything more on this, please send it to me for inclusion in a future Poop.

Every available name has been put into the computer and printed out alphabetically. Next, obvious duplicates were deleted and the total is now ready to go to Rackheath. Since there are only 3800 names on the roster, there has to be a thousand more or less still out there. SEND ME NAMES OF 467th PEOPLE - WE NEED TO FINISH THIS UP.

THE CASE OF THE PINK JACKET - by Charles C. Russell

Designing ones own uniform in the military service in World War II was frowned upon unless one was a Mac Arthur or Eisenhower. However, I know two second Lts. that did just that. One of them I know real well. They did not set out to change the uniform regulations or to deliberately violate them, it just sort of happened one winter day in 1943 while on a twenty-four hour pass to Salt Lake City.

Getting a twenty-four hour pass, more or less every three weeks, was something to look forward to for we were training at the worst of stations and the best of stations. That was Wendover, Field, Utah where our group, the 467th Bombardment Group was undergoing training for overseas. It was the worst of stations for the living conditions were pretty grim. The quarters were cold and miserable, coal smoke hung over the place to where it was hard to breath at times and there was nothing to do but work. It was the best of stations from an intensive training standpoint for there was no competition from other interests. Training here, in my opinion, contributed to the successful record of the group in combat.

The twenty-four hour passes started at 07:00 or 08:00 hours in the morning. So that no training time was lost the pilot and navigator were usually scheduled for the celestial trainer from 18:00 to midnight or midnight to 06:00, the night before the pass was to start. The celestial trainer gave the navigator practice in navigating over long distances by taking his position from "stars" projected upon a hemisphere to represent the heavens and the pilot got instrument flying practice by flying and maintaining the compass headings, airspeed, and altitude as requested by the navigator. A map representing the earth moved under the trainer for checking the accuracy of the celestial navigation. Keeping the trainer on a constant heading, airspeed and altitude was like setting on a large beach ball and trying to maintain your balance. The slightest movement by the pilot or navigator caused the thing to want to go into a spin. I hated that trainer with a passion and tried to lock it into the straps several times but that set off an alarm that woke up the instructor down stairs and he would start yelling.

The trip to Salt Lake City was four to five hours by bus. The first order of business upon arriving was to find a hotel room, which usually wasn't hard. The next order of business was to hit the liquor ration board for another ration card. It did not matter that you already had two in your pocket. The next stop was the line in the state store before it closed.

On one pass the bombardier and I went looking for some uniforms. We found a store that sold military clothing and that is where our trouble began. The store had on display a jacket made from the pink material that military trousers were made from. The cut did resemble the "Ike" jacket that some returnees from the Eight Airforce in 1943 brought back with them. This jacket was straight cut, no epauletts, two slash pockets and no brass buttons. We liked it and it felt good. The tailor said he could put on epaulettes, embroidery insignia and we would have a very sporty jacket. Needless to say we contracted for one apiece for \$35.00 each. The next trip to town we picked them up and we thought we were the hottest thing around.

There wasn't much chance to wear them at Wendover for we were hardly ever out of flying clothes. I'm sure the Group Commander never saw us wearing them at Wendover. At Rackheath we wore them to the Club and around the base. I don't believe we ever wore them off base. The Group Commander was a stickler for spit and polish and proper dress but when he saw us at the bar in the Officers Club he did not say anything. It was not hard to see that he was not pleased.

Somewhere in the archives of the 467th group is a directive that forever banished our prized jackets to the bottom of the duffle bag. The directive reminded everyone that the proper military uniform will be worn at all times. Added to that reminder was the line: "unauthorized articles of clothing will not be tolerated, especially pink jackets".

Phillip G. Day
237 Pennsylvania
Shreveport, LA. 71105



467th
Bomb Group



FRANK S WATSON
7208 AZTEC RD NE
ALBUQUERQUE NM

87110 **

FIRST CLASS MAIL