



POOP from GROUP

467

VOL. 11 NO. 1

STATION 145

RACKHEATH

APO 558

MARCH 1, 1992

FOUR HUNDRED SIXTY-SEVENTH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (HEAVY) ASSOCIATION, LTD.
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FROM THE PREZ

One of the significant things that contributed to the success of Convention 91 at Tucson was that 51 veterans attended as "first timers". Our correspondence following has much praise for the experience and usually some regret that the writer did not attend earlier/other reunions. The 467th Bombardment Group (Heavy) Association, Ltd. Convention 92 will be in conjunction with that of the Second Air Division in Las Vegas, NV in October. I have talked with Evelyn Cohen about attendance by non-2ADA members of the 467th. She says she will accommodate them but advises she will do a hard sell to sign them up for the 2ADA. So why not do this, you who are not 2ADA members and will want to attend the Convention or all of you who are not 2ADA members, send \$15 for a year's membership in the Second Air Division Association to Evelyn Cohen, 06-410 Delaire Landing, Philadelphia, PA 19114. The quarterly Journal is well worth the price of admission, the purposes of the Association, especially the support of the American Memorial Library Room in Norwich, are worthy of the membership of each of us. All of you who read this, attend at least one Group reunion, it is a most rewarding experience.

The Mighty Eighth Air Force Historical Society had a four-day meeting in Savannah, Georgia, January 28-February 1. The Eighth Air Force was activated in that city on January 28, 1942 and this 50th Anniversary meeting was to introduce the Eighth Air Force Heritage Center concept to representatives of Eighth Air Force assigned units. Colonel Shower, Geoff Gregory and I attended as representatives of the 467th. Jeff will have an article on what we learned following.

Also, Jeff reminds us that it is time to make recommendations for the award programs of the 467th and Second Air Division Associations to be presented in Las Vegas. Send to Jeff at 3110 Sheridan Drive, Garland, TX 75041.

Rosy and I visited with Phil Day and Miss Cille on January 8 in their home in Shreveport for a couple of hours on our trip to vacation in Florida. For the entire Group, I wish to thank them for all the work they have done through the years and now in connection with publishing and sending out POOP FROM GROUP, maintaining the Association's current roster of over 1,200 veterans, acting as our Group Treasurer and historian/communicator. We are

indebted to them.

It is the intention of the 467th to plan a Convention in the Southeastern part of the United States in either May or October 1993. Send me your recommendations for the Planning Committee.

FINAL CONVENTION 91 NOTES

From Ralph Elliott in Tucson:

Pardon the delay for a final Tucson reunion report, but Uncle's delivery service couldn't find Phil--said he'd moved and left no forwarding instructions. I KNEW I hadn't sent him THAT much money!

Thanks again to all of you who came and enjoyed the Tucson area with us. Final count was 260, but perhaps a better measure of participation is the zip-code breakdown of reservations that shows 140 reservations from 38 states and Canada; CA-28; TX-11; NY-10; FL-9; MA, PA, AZ-8; MI, IL-5; OH, WA-4; IA-3; 10 states and Canada-2; 16 states-one. We didn't get an accurate count of first-timers other than knowing you exceeded fifty 467th vets plus wives and guests, or nearly one third of the total group. That's a fantastic number.

My apologies if I missed anyone on the reunion name list and especially to Tony Maris where the only explanation for a lost reservation seems to be that the Apaches got the stagecoach out around Yuma.

As those of you who were in Tucson know, the Elliott daughters, Donna Sisley and Becky Price, were keys to the smooth running of the reunion program. Yvonne and I couldn't have made it without them. Their participation actually began early, since both had experience in convention planning and hotel food and beverage operations, and continued on through the reunion. Becky designed and printed the badge names, bus signs, and welcome banners on her computer. They had a wonderful time meeting all of the 467th people, including four members of my own crew they'd heard about ever since they were born but had never met.

In fact, we were pleased to meet all of the sons, daughters, and grandchildren in attendance. It's great to see them taking an interest in what was such a big part of our lives and is so important to us. They added another dimension to the reunion.

Thanks to all of you who contributed to the success of the reunion by helping with registration, as tour guides and bus monitors,

and in many other places. Our appreciation to Col. AI for being such a good sport at his "hanging". It was as much a surprise to him as it was to you.

And one final NOTE: To brighten up your 467th bola tie, use very fine steel-wool. Rub lightly in only one direction. Thanks again for coming.

Ralph and Yvonne Elliott and Donna and Becky.

CONVENTION 91 - TUCSON

Final Financial Report

Income	
Reservations	\$ 44,926.00
Less Reimbursed	(2,646.00)
Interest	365.30
Raffle and Misc.	645.00
Association Loan	1,500.00
Gross Income	<u>44,790.30</u>

Expenses	
Meals	23,742.05
Tours	7,010.50
Entertainment	1,720.00
Printing and Postage	171.71
Registration Expenses	3,266.96
Miscellaneous	1,170.30
Repay Loan	1,500.00
Total Expenses	<u>38,581.51</u>

Net Income to Association \$ 6,208.78

PETER E. BOND - ASSOCIATE

REST IN PEACE

It was with extreme sorrow that I learned, and pass on to you, of the sudden death of Peter. I was called by Tony North on December 17 (I believe Tommy Dungar called Bill Dillon that same day) with the sad news. Peter was one of the most loyal associates of the 467th; his inquiries and investigations of the 467th and the Rackheath Air Base continued even when he was incapacitated, up to the time of his death. He corresponded with many of us, he and I generally quarterly. In each letter there was a bit of new information, he and Tommy spent many hours on and about Rackheath. He was a photographer and painter, the Association's memorabilia is richer because he shared these talents with us. Many of you have seen his photo album at our reunions.

I asked Tony to represent the 467th at Peter's burial services and he did, without hesitation. The Association sent a floral arrangement. The Norwich newspaper notices each mentioned the 467th through Tony's and Peter's families' efforts.

Our sincerest thanks to Tony for his love and concern on our behalf.

Peter was my friend, he was a friend to all of us. He will be sorely missed.

Following is a letter from one of Peter's daughters.

LETTER FROM SANDRA JARNON

Dear Sir,

Hello, my name is Sandra Jarnon. I'm Peter Bond's daughter. I thought I would write to you and all of Dad's American friends, to thank you for being a very loyal and special friend to my Dad. Since he started doing research on the Americans at Rackheath during World War II, his life changed and all of you and Rackheath became his life; he was so happy. When he was invited over to American to meet you all and attend your annual reunion, he was so excited; it was his dream come true.

I did speak to you on the phone the other week (Thursday 19 December). It was nice talking to you, but I wish it could have been under different circumstances. If you ever come to England again, I would really like to meet you.

My sister Christine, brother Kevin, and I

have all agreed to get Dad's book published. We know this meant a great deal to Dad and so it would be a lovely tribute to him. I will shortly be contacting Tony North, who in turn will be contacting you for any help we might need in getting this published.

I will keep in touch to let you know about Dad's book. I am also trying to find one of Dad's paintings that I could send over to you, so that it would be hung up at your next reunion. I feel it would be a nice tribute and a little piece of Dad would be with you all.

Thank you for your floral tribute at Dad's funeral. It was really lovely.

I don't know if you know, but Dad was cremated, and we have scattered Dad's ashes at Rackheath, on a strip which was the old runway.

I think this is what he would have wanted.

I will close now. Once again, thank you.

Yours sincerely,

Sandra Jarnon, 13 Chapel Road, Lingwood, Norwich NR13 4NY, England

PETER EDWARD BOND MEMORIAL FUND

Within a few days of the news of Peter's death, I received a contribution from Bill Dillon and Tommy Dungar specified to the above. In our letter to you from The Friends of The 467th in early February, I wrote of Peter's death and of this fund.

If you wish to contribute, send to me, Phillip Day, noted to this fund, and as the fund accumulates, I will send it to the American Memorial Library Room at Norwich so that selected books can be bought and circulated with acknowledgment to this memorial to Peter.

DETECTIVE WORK

Raymond D. Beaulieu and I have corresponded over the past couple of months, trying to help him reconstruct his 791st crew. Ray was an AE and arrived with a replacement crew, he believes the pilot was named Crandell, in late May - early June, 1944. Before his pilot checked out, Ray flew the first D-Day raid (Mission 42) with some crew, was airborne on the third D-Day mission (Mission 44 - no credit for this one). His original crew pilot was not checked out but transferred from 467th. Ray's second mission was Group No. 50 on June 12 and his 35th was Group No. 104 on August 25, maybe not a record for finishing but a damn good average. Adding to the confusion of Ray's tour was his identification with A/C 224, "Lonely Heart", which was flown principally by Rigsbee during that period and although Ray and Rigsbee had several mutual missions, they were not consistent enough to tie him to Rigsbee.

So I plotted all 791st pilots against Ray's missions, using aircraft numbers as indicators and, lo and behold, up jumps Crew 89, Waite, with the best match, 27 out of 29, and A/C 224 for 7 out of the last 9. So Waite was his pilot. But I have no record at hand of the Waite Crew, No. 89 of the 791st. Lyle D. Waite is on our current roster but he was a gunner. David A. Waite is on our 5000 name master roster, but I have no other information on him or any other Waite(s).

On Ray's 34th mission, Group No. 103, to Misberg on August 24, 1944, the Waite crew did not fly. But William A. Johnston, Crew 99, was on its second mission and we had a substitute AE as our original AE had been grounded. Probably, I cannot prove it, Ray and I flew together that day, he on his 34th, I on my 2nd.

Anyone with information about David A. Waite or any other Waite of the 467th, please write me of it.

INFORMATION REQUEST

Max Shepherd, Box 15, Hartsville, IN 47244 (812) 546-4177 would like to hear from anyone

of the 467th who knew his brother Russell Eugene Shepherd, who went MIA on 17 February 1945 while serving as AE on the Leon F. Porter Crew No. 13 of the 788th BS(H).

Porter's crew flew its first mission on 24 December 1944, Group No. 146, and I believe was on its ninth mission on 17 February, in a composite 3rd of 4-squadron effort of that day. This mission was recalled due to very adverse weather conditions up to assembly altitude and in the assembly area. The Missing Aircrew Report on the Porter Crew is accompanied by reports of Pilots Harrington (Crew 3), Beatty (Crew 10) and Deblois (Crew 11) of severe icing conditions over the North Sea area and even with excessive power setting their aircraft continued to lose altitude.

The War Department declared the Crew Killed in Action on 18 February 1946, the day following the expiration of twelve months from the disappearance of the crew. The Porter crew names are on the Wall of Missing, Cambridge American Military Cemetery, Coton, Cambridge, England.

THE MIGHTY EIGHTH AIR FORCE HERITAGE CENTER
by Jeff Gregory - January 9, 1992

Well, Phil, I left my gall bladder hanging in a hospital room in Dallas and, as promised, I took off for Savannah to attend the 50th Anniversary party marking the founding of the Mighty-Eighth Air Force. In conjunction with the anniversary, the Executive Committee of the 2nd ADA held a two-day meeting. To tell the truth, it was a blessing in disguise, since I have a tendency to get uptight around so many B-17 Types. I am pleased to report that our President, Bob Sheehan, Col. Shower and J. J. Logan also represented the 467th at some of the activities. I was able to check into various hotels in Savannah with an eye to evaluating this area for a possible re-union in 1993. I'll pass this info on to Ralph Elliott. With respect to the Eighth Air Force Heritage Museum now in the planning stages, I find myself both enthusiastic and also somewhat cautious. Bob Sheehan, Col. Shower and I did some questioning of the Museum staff. The land is there, the location is good. Ground has not as yet been broken pending raising an initial sum of \$3,000,000. The museum will be built in stages. It is vital that contributions start ASAP since it is easier to raise money when steel appears out of the ground than it is when nothing is happening. They are aware this is not a good time to raise monies, but they feel, and rightly so, they can't wait for improvement in the economy. We are getting older.

I get the impression that nothing is set in stone as regards the practices and procedures of the museum. Groups will not get "grouped" (as members of 2nd AD for example), but will be taken in numerical order for display on the walls of the museum. Cubical space has not been finally decided upon at this time. All memorabilia sent to the museum by groups or individuals will be preserved in the correct environment, and fully computerized, so that anyone wishing information on any subject in the computer can have it called up and displayed. It is contemplated that for special occasions such as a group re-union in the area, a floor display of memorabilia would be set up for the group to enjoy.

Any and all donations are welcome, but no special arrangements for groups that have larger treasuries and are able to give more than others. Corporate and individual gifts of \$25,000 or more would command special arrangements. All in all, there are some good concepts, but they desperately need something on top of the ground, and personally I'd like to see B-24 units kept together and not inundated with B-17 groups.

LAST POST

Norman D. Aberts, Jr.
Roland E. Babcock
Richard L. Becker
Peter E. Bond -A
Henry A. Brown
Homer A. Dippold
Alvin J. Eischen
Thomas Goodyear
Louis H. Greiner

Leon L. James
Earl H. Johnson
James C. Kiel
John F. Pollock
David C. Rothchild -A
James Sanders
Thomas Truesdell -A
Allen S. Whitehead
Troy E. Wild

"May they go from Strength to Strength in the Life of Perfect Service in GOD'S Heavenly Kingdom."

ROSTER ADDITIONS

Delbert W. Aldinger
A. G. "Bud" Bartole
Clare F. Cahoon
Charles E. Crouch
Calvan C. Deyermond
Jay O. Flint
Delbert G. Gardner
John R. Gauntt, Jr.
Charles W. Hamp
Mack H. Harvey
Glenn L. Kenagy
Horace R. Mason
James J. Murphy
John H. Nordby
William G. Pallo
Charles A. Pappas
Charles M. Pollock, Jr.
Kenneth M. Robin
Marvin D. Sacks
Benjamin R. Sharkey
Fred R. Sullivan
Charles M. Trout
Rodric L. Villemaire
Gordon Wagoner
Marshall H. Walker

Elkhorn, NE
Lake Havasu City, AZ
Ree Heights, SD
Pittsburgh, PA
Salem, NH
Prattsburg, NY
Newport News, VA
Moses Lake, WA
Easton, MD
Tyler, TX
Albany, OR
Fairfield, CA
Davis, CA
Vernon, CT
Bennington, VT
Manchester, NH
Tucson, AZ
Washington, DC
Mesa, AZ
Medina, OH
Pine Bluff, AR
Westfield, PA
Winooski, VT
Spangle, WA
Hughson, CA

Anyone wanting an address, drop me a card. If they live near you, give them a ring, drop by to see them. Don't let any one of them not be welcomed. And please, each of you reading this, send me the names and addresses of any 467th or 2nd Air Division veterans so we can get them on the Group Roster or in contact with their Group representative. The time is now to do this.

LOST SOULS

POOP was returned from the following. Tell us what you know of them, try to locate them if they live in your area.

R. E. Bellgardt
R. Bartlett Eaton, Jr.
Glen Hahn, Jr.
Fredrick W. Roberts

Chicago, IL
Pearce Dale, RI
Paris, TX
Pataskala, OH

TREASURER'S REPORT

Operating Fund:		
Opening Balance 12-01-91	\$	6,404.46
Contributions		685.00
Interest		92.95
Convention 91 - Tucson		6,208.78
Sub-Total		<u>13,391.19</u>

Expenses:		
Secretarial and Roster		188.41
Reproduction, POOP 10-4		242.14
USPS, POOP & General Postage		435.00
USPS, Non-U.S. Postage		30.90
USPS for Friends of the 467th		348.00
Peter E. Bond Funeral		53.00
		<u>1,297.45</u>

Operating Fund 03-01-92 12,093.74

Special Funds:

Rackheath Historical Marker	47.50
Albert Joseph Shower Endowment	746.50
Peter Edward Bond Memorial	70.00
Sub-Total - Special	<u>864.00</u>

Total All Accounts 03-01-92 \$ 12,957.74

Account Receivable:

Friends of the 467th, Loan 11-05-91	750.00
Friends of the 467th, Postage 01-29-92	348.00
Sub-Total - AR	\$ <u>1,098.00</u>

MAIL-MEMORIAL FUND

CONTRIBUTORS - SEP-OCT-NOV '91

Joel L. Abernathy	Dean H. Johnson
James R. Anslow	James B. Johnston
Richard K. Cullen	Charles E. (Chuck) Kagy
Elmer W. Clarey	Andrew Kapi, Jr.
George W. Condry	Alan Last -A
Ralph M. Davis	Delwin F. Maas
Phillip G. Day	William P. McGovern
Roy M. Dettinger	G. Bruce Palmer
William F. Dillon	William J. Person
Thomas Dungar -A	Edgar J. Powell
Howard W. Dye, Jr.	Ronald J. Rambosky
Robert Lee Edwards	Gordon Reynolds
William Elkewicz	Milan Sefca -A
Fred Holdrege	Thomas Steranko
Capers A. Holmes	John E. (Jack) Stevens
Allan J. Welters	

For a total of \$755 -- \$70 to the Peter E. Bond Memorial Fund. We thank each of you very much for your generous support of the Association.

PX

"The History of the 467th" - Allan Healy's 1947 book in its third (and probably final) reprint. 31 bucks from Vince LaRussa, 97 Grayton Rd., Tonawanda, NY 14150. Just a few left.

467th BG(H)/2nd Air Division Window Decal -

3 dollars each from Bob Sheehan, 1828 E. 27th St., Tulsa, OK 74114.

Profits from the above two items are given to the Association.

J. Dzenowagis Military Videohistory Project

4397 South Okemos Road, Okemos, MI 48864.

To preserve the remembrances of 2nd Air Division witnesses to the history of WWII, Eight VHS (only) Videotapes, containing over 200 interviews, have been produced so far. Write Joe for his brochure, order especially The 467th BG Family Reunion Album (\$49.50) which covers the Association convention in Shreveport in 1987.

Proceeds above costs in this project will be donated to the 2ADA for the Memorial Room.

FRIENDS OF THE 467TH

The following 50 veterans and associates will be returning to England, Norwich and Rackheath, in Norwich, May 4, 5 and 6, with May 5 devoted to one last look at Rackheath.

Anthony and Constance Bell
 James and Anna Branton
 John and Joyce Brinson and John III
 Henry and Dorothy Close
 Phillip and Lucille Day
 Hugh and Eileen Donlon
 Thomas and Elizabeth Elsen
 Henry and Catherine Fagan
 Charles Grace and Dolores Schroder
 Charles and Luella Harter
 Allen and Edna Herzberg
 James and Betty Horak
 Frank and Rita Johnson
 B. L. Johnston and Friend
 Clarence and Futina Kurtz
 David LaRussa
 Vincent and Gloria LaRussa
 Mr. and Mrs. James J. Mahoney

Edward and Janet Novak
 Garnet and Mary Palmer
 Ray and Merlina Perkins
 Joe Ramirez
 William and Eileen Sheldrick
 Albert Shower
 Mr. and Mrs. John J. Taylor
 Frank and Etoile Watson

There will be two functions at which we can have invited guests, the lunch at Rackheath on May 5 and the banquet on May 6, evening, at the Maid's Head. If any one of the 467th Association would like to have a special friend in England attend either of these affairs, send me (Phillip Day) their name(s) and address so I can extend the invitation. The Pub Lunch cost will be \$25 per person, the Banquet cost will be \$50 per person. Please send the proper amount along with your name and address information, and do this as soon as practical, no later than April 17, 1992.

BITS AND PIECES

If it is possible to have your mail forwarded when you have a winter address, please do so. Changes in the roster cost \$0.25 each, notification by USPS \$0.30. We had 50 changes prior to publishing Vol. 10 No. 3 of September 1991, and over 100 prior to Vol. 10 No. 4 of December 1, 1991. Not all of those are temporary address changes, of course, but is indicative that a number of our members do have summer/winter addresses. We sent out 1,242 newsletters in September and 1,276 in December. I guess this one will be very close to 1,300.

Ted Wheeler is looking for a formation sheet of Mission 196 to Berlin on March 18, 1945. If you have one, send me a copy for the Association files and I'll send a copy on to him.

A card from Charles M. Pollock thanking me for POOP issues. He has lived in Tucson for 23 years but didn't know of our Convention there until it was over. We need some publicity that will alert residents in Las Vegas of our October convention. William P. Ray, of Las Vegas, can you help us?

Jack Stevens had an accident which resulted in necessity of a hip joint replacement. Jack progresses quite satisfactorily from the operation but continues to have some leg/knee problems, a football injury he reports.

On 9 - 11 November 1991, Col. A. Shower was the guest of THE LINN COUNTY VETERANS ASSOCIATION, Albany, Linn County Oregon. Col. Shower addressed the Association at the Kick-off dinner on the 9th and was honored as an Official Visiting Dignitary throughout the three-day program. Col. Shower also observed the parade from the reviewing stand along with other honored veterans from WW I, WW II, Korean War, Viet Nam War, and the Gulf War. His official host was Arch Johanson.

Alex S. Jekel was also honored to make the principal address at the Veterans Memorial Service on the steps of the County Court House on 11 November. Alex was officially hosted by Tad Davies.

Glenn C. Kenagy of McGivern Crew, 789th, was found at this meeting and is now on Association roster. Col. Shower also visited Hal and Jean Weeks in Seattle and with Al Wallace in Oswego Lake, OR.

Interviewed by the Albany Democrat Herald, the Colonel was caught in a Freudian slip when he intended to say "strategic" bombing and was quoted as saying "scatter" bombing.

Walt Bandlow, 17503 Lakewood Heights,

Lakewood, OH 44107, presses on toward identification of our Association members who were in 470th Sub Depot, later (15 April 44) 812th Air Engineering Squadron of 375th Air Service Group. 470th/812th veterans, please identify yourself to Walt.

Jeff Gregory, you will read had a "button-hole" procedure to remove his gallbladder. Additional surgery at the time, however, was required to repair a perforated intestine and to relieve adhesions. He still recovered rapidly enough to attend the 2ADA Executive Committee Meeting in Savannah, GA on January 28. He drove it by the way, a tough bird! Jeff is the 467th chairman for study of an Association Memorabilia Repository. His report following is toward that study.

Enrolled James J. Murphy, Co-pilot of Russell Scott's crew, via an article printed in Senior Spectrum Weekly, sent to us by George A. Laprath, a member of the Second Air Division Association. Have requested permission of Jerry to reproduce this article, on the 29 December 44 mission, in a future POOP.

I had heard rumor, innuendo, that the International B-24 Memorial Museum at Pueblo, CO, was closed (closing) and its contents were to be shipped to a museum in California. Through John Oder of the 467th, I have received an emphatic, unconditional denial of the rumored closing from Boyd J. Baldauf, Treasurer of the Pueblo Historical Aircraft Society which is Curator of the Museum at this time. He outlines the work presently in progress, plans for expansion and fund raising. This is a unique museum, one dedicated to only one aircraft, the B-24, and to honor all those involved in the design, production and wartime aerial achievements of the aircraft.

The International B-24 Memorial Museum is open daily. Hours of operation and special times can be obtained by calling (719) 948-9219.

Have sent Vince LaRussa an additional 70 - 80 names for the Association's Master Roster, possibly the last we can incorporate before printing and binding the copies to be carried to Rackheath and the American Memorial Library Room by Friends of the 467th in May. Thank you all for your help in making this compilation of over 5,000 names of veterans assigned or attached to the 467th in the period February 44 to July 45.

The next POOP will be sometime in June, 1992, as I will be in England in May. Send any articles, notes, notices to the editor by mid-late May.

OF THE HAMM RAID

Normally we have not printed articles as lengthy as that which follows. Kenneth L. Driscoll was an original Group pilot, Crew 7, of the 788th BS(H) but was transferred with the 788th to the 801st BG(P) after 11 May 1944.

Roger Freeman writes of this mission "The dispatch of this force was delayed due to doubtful weather conditions, so that when the go-ahead was finally given the return to base was scheduled as darkness fell. The Luftwaffe had not seriously attempted attacks on the heavies over England or on their bases...On the 22nd, knowing that the heavies must land at their bases after light had faded, the Luftwaffe put up about 15 Me 410s to follow the Liberators of 2nd Division back to England."

Seven Liberators of 277 dispatch went MIA on this mission, none from 467th, with an additional 14 lost over England or on 2nd Division bases, two from 467th, 788th BS(H).

MEMORIES OF THE 8TH AIR FORCE "SURPRISE" ATTACK ON HAMM, GERMANY, 22 APRIL 1944

Why am I writing this article 48 years after the events happened? Here is why:

A couple of years ago I heard about the 467th and 801st/492nd Bomb Group Associations. During 1944 I had flown five daylight B-24 bombing missions with the 467th Bomb Group and 30 secret night missions with the 801st/492nd Bomb Group dropping spies and supplies to support the French underground forces.

I joined both Associations; have gone to their reunions; have received their Quarterly News Letters and bought and read the two books written that best describe the history of both groups (1) "The 467th Bombardment Group, September 1943-June 1945"; (2) "The Carpet-baggers, America's Secret War in Europe" by Ben Parnell, which describes the secret night missions of the 801st/492nd Group.

Because of my renewed interest in both Groups, I have recently been reminiscing about the various missions that I flew from April through August 1944.

One mission in particular stands out above the other thirty-four: the 467th Bomb Group mission to Hamm, Germany on 22 April 1944. That was my crew's 3rd Combat Mission.

HQ. 8th Air Force decided to pull a "surprise" attack on Germany. Our target was the railroad marshaling yards at Hamm, Germany.

The "surprise" was that the 8th Air Force was to hit the target about an hour before dark and catch the Germans unprepared to retaliate with anti-aircraft guns (flak) and fighters.

After bombing the target, we were to fly in formation back to the coastline. Upon reaching the North Sea coastline, darkness would be setting in.

At our afternoon briefing, our instructions were that when it got dark, we were to break formation, turn on our running lights and each crew was on its' own to return to base.

The group aircraft took off as scheduled late in the afternoon/early evening. My squadron, the 788th, was not leading the group. My crew was flying number 2 position (deputy lead) in the squadron formation. I do not recall who our squadron lead pilot was.

The group got into formation at about 24,000 feet altitude at the assigned radio beacon north of our base, Rackheath. At the designated time, the group turned east and joined other groups flying in formation at the division assembly line. When we crossed the North Sea, our altitude was approximately 27,000 feet.

After landfall, we saw some flak bursts in the distance but no enemy fighters. About 10 minutes prior to reaching the I.P. (a point above the ground from which a straight bomb run was made to the target) our plane got hit by flak which disabled the number 2 engine. I dropped back out of formation, lost some air speed but was able to hold altitude. We dropped back about 200 yards from the formation before we had number 2 prop feathered (the front edge of the propeller blades pointed forward to reduce drag), mixture controls full rich, propellers in maximum RPM and the throttles full forward. We were too far over enemy territory to turn back. A single B-24, with one engine out, flying alone, would be an inviting and easy target for enemy fighter aircraft.

Luckily, I had been able to maintain altitude. With full power on the three good engines, I was able to catch up to and rejoin the formation. Another aircraft had pulled into my vacated position and I pulled into the open spot at the back of the 788th formation. With the extra power on the three engines, I did not have any trouble staying in formation.

Within a couple of minutes, we got to the I.P. and the various flights got in trail position for the bomb run.

After dropping the bombs, the flights turned right off the target and reformed into the normal group formation configuration for the return flight.

The flight to the coast was routine with the exception of having to keep extra power on the three good engines to enable us to keep in formation.

Just prior to reaching the coast in semi-darkness, enemy anti-aircraft guns shot up some tracer shells at us. They resembled the bright white Roman candles used at 4th of July celebrations. There were 10 or 15 of them. I saw them passing nearby to the right of us. They were going straight up. Because my field of vision was cut-off at the top of the copilot's window, I could not follow them up. I had never seen anything like that before.

Shortly thereafter, we crossed the coastline and headed back across the North Sea. When we were out over the water about 15 miles, darkness was becoming a reality.

I decided to break out of the formation a little early due to the fact that I had been pulling excessive power on the three good engines while in formation, and did not want to risk losing another one at night over the North Sea (I wasn't sure how far a B-24 would fly on two engines and I did not want to find out).

Shortly after dropping back out of formation, we turned on our running lights and started a very slow descent. This allowed me to reduce the power and take the strain off the three good engines.

When full darkness came, I started to fly by instruments which was normal procedure on night flights over water. The navigator, Lt. Harold Pantis, kept getting electronic fixes. He kept us all informed, over the intercom, as to when we would make landfall near Great Yarmouth, and the estimated time of arrival (ETA) over our base at Rackheath. We did not see the lights of other aircraft. The formation had pulled ahead and disbursed in front of us. They were flying faster than we were.

The navigator, who was superior at his work, gave me a few small corrections as we kept our slow letdown to the English coast.

There was radio silence.

Just about when our ETA over the coast was up, the navigator called and said we were then crossing the coastline. The night was very dark and there was a 100% blackout on the ground. We could not see the coastline or anything on land. He gave me the heading to the base and an ETA which was only minutes away. I told the crew to get into their normal positions for landing (ball turret up, tail gunner out, waist guns secured, etc.). The navigator was to stay in place in the front of the aircraft until the base was in sight.

When the ETA at the base was up, the navigator called over the intercom and said that the base was directly below us. I banked the aircraft to the left and looked down. I could see absolutely no base lights or runway lights--everything was blacked out.

The City of Norwich was located about 8 miles southwest of the air base. At Norwich, barrage balloons were up to protect the city from low flying German bombers. We had to avoid flying over the blacked out city or risk being off course and having a cable from a balloon knock us down; or being fired upon by the anti-aircraft guns protecting the city.

While circling around near the base, some other aircraft were also flying around with running lights on. No aircraft had an assigned altitude. We were on our own.

Horsham St. Faith, another B-24 base in our Wing and Division, was located about 8 miles to

the west of our base. We could not see any lights at that base either.

We did not have an alternate airport assigned during the briefing.

There was still radio silence. The control tower did not send out any instructions. I do not remember if I, or any other pilots flying around, broke radio silence. If one of us did, the tower did not respond.

With headings supplied by the navigator, I made about 6 passes across the blacked out base. The entire countryside was very dark with no lights or landmarks visible.

I then told the navigator that we would fly northeast for 5 minutes and then make a 180 degree turn and head back to the base. I thought that by flying straight and level for that period of time, the navigator would be able to better reconfirm our exact position in relation to the base.

After making the 180-degree turn, he gave me the heading and ETA back to Rackheath. When the ETA was up, he again stated that the base was below us. I then began to circle to the left again but the base was still not in sight.

By this time, I was getting quite concerned. We had been flying for about three hours with an engine out; Norwich, with its' barrage balloons and anti-aircraft guns was close by; other aircraft were milling around in the darkness; no alternate airport to go to; no radio contact with the tower and no lights on the ground to indicate our base and runway. The whole countryside was still blacked out.

Luckily, fuel was not yet a problem. We had taken off with a full load of gas and the flight to Hamm was not a long one.

After circling about three more times, all of a sudden the runway lights were turned on. I immediately entered a normal traffic pattern. As usual, landing lights were turned on during the final approach. The tower still maintained radio silence.

We landed and rolled to near the end of the runway, turned right on to a taxiway, turned off our landing lights and started to taxi back to our parking area. Periodically, the landing lights were turned on for a very short time to assist me in taxiing the aircraft in. These lights were not designed for full-time ground operation and would burn out quickly with prolonged use.

When we got about halfway down to our parking area, military personnel in a jeep flagged us down and I stopped the aircraft. We were then informed that German fighters and fighter bombers were in the area and had hit the base. The German planes had intermingled in the darkness with the 8th AF planes coming back across the North Sea and were not detected when crossing the English coast.

We shut off all lights, and due to the extreme darkness proceeded slowly to our parking area. Needless to say, after shutting down the three engines, we evacuated the plane in a hurry.

We were told later at the debriefing, that German aircraft had come across the base, strafed it and dropped two bombs. One enlisted man, who had been visiting friends at the base, was killed, and five aircraft had not yet returned. It was not known at that time if they had been shot down by the intruding German aircraft or had landed at some other 8th AF base in East Anglica. Each aircraft had a 10-man crew.

Early the next morning, I went down to the Squadron Operations Building to get clued in as to what had happened the night before and to find out the status of the 5 missing planes. I was told that three had landed safely at other bases and two were shot down close by with no survivors. One was shot down northwest of the base by a German fighter and the other shot

down by anti-aircraft fire near the base.

Just by chance, both First Pilots on each aircraft (Lts. Jack Skinner and James Roden) had been close friends of mine from our early days of training at Wendover, Utah. In my opinion, Lt. Roden was the best formation flying pilot that I had ever known. I felt a great personal loss upon hearing of both their deaths.

I never received an explanation why the tower did not break radio silence and instruct us to turn off our lights, scatter in a northerly direction and return in a half hour or so. It is possible that the first few returning aircraft were advised of the situation. At that time, I estimated that we were about 8-10 minutes away and 20-25 miles out from the base. With VHF radios, we should have been able to pick up tower transmissions at that distance.

The German fighters probably did not try to shoot down any of our aircraft while intermingled with us coming in over the North Sea. That action would have been detected and their surprise attack ruined. Our incoming aircraft would have been alerted and appropriate disbursement information given to us. The ground bases and anti-aircraft gun sites would also have been alerted earlier.

We had no fighter protection while flying over the North Sea. Our normal excellent fighter escort was provided by P-38, P-47 and P-51 day fighter type aircraft while flying over the Continent. We did not have any night fighters since the 8th AF had always flown during the daytime and there was no apparent requirement for them.

There were about 1000 B-17's and B-24's crossing the coastline en route to about 30-35 8th AF bases in East Anglica.

If the German fighter type aircraft had enough fuel and ammunition, all their pilots could have returned to Germany as Aces or Double Aces. This was a fighter pilot's dream--to be undetected among hundreds of enemy bombers flying at night with their running lights on and their guns secured (unmanned for landing).

I do not know how many bombers the 8th AF lost that night. I do know that our Group lost two and that there were probably about 30 to 35 Groups flying.

To the best of my knowledge, the 8th AF never made any more of these "surprise" early evening missions over the Continent.

Major Kenneth L. Driscoll, U.S. Air Force--Retired.

OK FOR THE UK? by ROGER FREEMAN

Reproduced from ZADA Journal

This year sees the 50th anniversary of the formation of the 8th Air Force, its coming to England and entry into combat. But 1942 also saw the start of another significant occurrence. Before World War II few people could afford to cross the oceans so when, between 1942 and 1945, more than two million young Americans passed through the UK it was the first mass coming together of the ordinary people of our two nations.

To celebrate this anniversary an extensive programme of events has been arranged in those areas where the USAAF was stationed, and many veterans will undoubtedly be attracted to return to the haunts of their youth. After all, a flight across the Atlantic from Boston is not much longer than a flight from Boston to LA. If you are thinking about coming back, the following comments may prove helpful.

For anyone bringing an organized party the easiest course is to approach one of the operators who specialize in veterans' tours. While price will be important, do not base your selection on this alone. Get more than one quotation and go over every detail with the

operator. Your best bet is to choose someone who has had plenty of experience bringing air force veterans' tours to the UK, although this is no guarantee you will get what you want. Remember, while the tour operator will want to please, he or she is also there to make a profit. If you do not take the trouble to state what you want and go over the details, you cannot blame the tour operator for making decisions that suit his/her pocket. Ask other veterans' associations on the best people to use and you will soon get to know the outfits that give really good value. When planning the programme remember not to cram in too much journeying; you are not as young as you were.

Some unit associations make their own travel associations, do a good job, and probably save their members a little money. But it requires a lot of work, contacts in the UK, if not a pre-tour visit by whoever is setting up the trip. It is a tough number for a senior citizen--and remember, if you get it wrong you will be the fall guy. Also, tour operators usually know how to get special rates from airlines and hotels, so you may not save by doing it all yourself.

If you and your wife are coming on your own, no problem. First thing, book all accommodation, whether Bed and Breakfast or hotels, before you leave the States. UK accommodation gets taken up very quickly in the holiday season and if you want the best value, you must make reservations. If you do not know where to stay, write to the East Anglia Tourist Board of like organizations, who will be pleased to supply details of approved accommodation in their area, or tell you where to obtain it. UK prices for both accommodation and meals are high by US standards, but you do not have to spend a fortune. The inexpensive accommodation is B&B which can be well under half hotel prices and frequently of a much higher standard. However, make sure it has some form of standard approval; there are some yuk places around. Next in the value for money rating come motels and guest houses. Some of the former give a room with facilities that would cost nearly double in a good hotel, but they do not usually like long-stay visitors. Wherever you decide to stay, do write or phone for a reservation before you fly.

When it comes to eating out, public houses usually give the best value, particularly those outside the normal tourist areas. Pubs have changed a lot since WWII. Most now serve "bar snacks" or meals and many have restaurants. And you do not have to drink beer; they are just as eager to serve you coke or coffee. It is possible for two people to feed at a cost of \$20 a day. With B&B accommodation a budget of \$100 a day is sensible, although you should be able to get by with no more than \$70-\$80 for both meals and B&B.

If you intend to use a hired car, reserve this from the States. Rates vary considerably and here again impartial advice can be obtained from tourist organizations in the UK. If you do not want to drive on the wrong side of the road, Britain has a good rail network with frequent trains. There are discounts for senior citizens and once again, it is best to write for details before you start your trip. Bus services are not so good, but most of the major villages are served once or twice a day. Taxis, however, are expensive due to running costs. Gasoline is four times the price it is in the States.

Whatever way you choose to come, there are a few other things worth remembering. Britain's weather is unpredictable. Even so, in spite of what you might think, it does not always rain; in fact south-east England is in its third year of drought. Last year summer temperatures touched 80 degrees F on many days and here and

there 90 degree F. But snow is not unknown in June. More often than not it can be chilly, especially in the first half of the year. So bring warm clothes and a raincoat. That said, travel as light as you can. Do you really need to lug the whole wardrobe around? No, you don't. Who is going to worry if you wear the same suit or dress every day? Only you. Many people cross the Atlantic with only a carry-on case and still go clean and tidy every day.

Try and sleep on the plane going over. It will make a great difference if you are the type who gets hit by jet lag. The return trip is not so bad as it is just like a long day. And make sure the first day in the UK is one of

rest. Don't let them rush you around as soon as you arrive. There's no hurry.

Yes, like anywhere in the world, you can get ripped off in the main tourist areas. So keep a tight grip on your dollars and only spend when you see value. The natives are friendly, particularly so if you make it known you were "over here" when Hitler's gang was giving everyone a hard time. Don't be timid about asking advice; the folk will be pleased to help you. And don't think you are too long in the tooth to make the trip. There are 90-year-olds who regularly jump the pond and think no more of it than a drive to a downtown store.

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