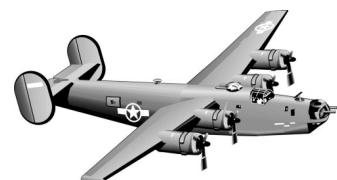




Flightline



Newsletter of the 780th Bombardment Squadron of WWII

December 2020

How well do you know World War II military slang?

Browned Off? Fill Out T.S. Slip and Send to the Chaplain

Perhaps no single time or event in history gave birth to so many new words and phrases than World War II. According to numerous books, articles and studies on American speech thousands of new words and phrases were born during the Big One, reflecting not only changes in war, society and culture but language, education and humor as well.

For example, the headline above means, "Are you annoyed? Tough situation (or another s-word). Stop complaining. Go tell someone who's paid to care." Would this have been said before the war? By someone born at the turn of the century?

News correspondents, some with a military background, began noticing new or revised military slang from previous wars as early as 1941. In *Words of the Fighting Forces*, published in 1942, Clinton A. Sanders and Joseph W. Blackwell Jr. write, "Our fighting men are makers of slang because they are adventurous individuals and they are not restricted by decorum and their taste is unlimited. Their hunting ground for new terms is in their native tongue as well as foreign. ... It must not be forgotten that our fighting men have come from all walks of life, that all sections and divisions of a free social order are represented and each man has brought the peculiar and colorful

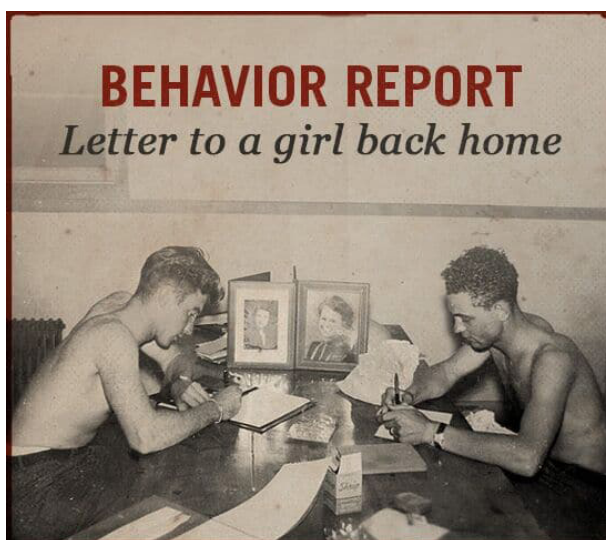
language of his section of the country with him. Ours is a fighting force of a hundred races and as many creeds speaking a language called American."

Pithy and humorous words and phrases were created in order to make it easier to deal with

the fear and gruesomeness that was part of survival, but much of the new vernacular was related to routine military life, too. Apparently there was no shortage of complaining, incompetence, authority or bad food to describe. And then there was the need to talk about women, and the longing for girlfriends and wives back home or, well, longing in general. Many terms were salty and are considered derogatory today,

but helped those fighting in strange lands far from home to cope with isolation, missed loved ones, hard living conditions and death. As the authors of *Words of the Fighting Forces* wrote:

"There are terms that will no doubt 'shock' the clergy, appeaser, isolationist, and puritan. We offer no apology. These terms are part of a picturesque and living language of



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Your News & Letters

Hi Kathy -

Susan Keegan here. My dad was Robert 'Bob' McNannay. I enjoy so much Flightline each month! I did not realize I could receive it by email and would be happy for you to discontinue the snail mail copy and email it to me each month!

I know my dad went to a few reunions so I will take up the challenge to look for any pictures he may have had. I'm certain he went to Bakersfield in 1999, and I think he went to Reno in 1990, but I will do a little digging.

Thank you for all that you do, Kathy!

Best,
Susan Keegan

Editor's note: Thanks for your note and vote of support, Susan. I look forward to any reunion photos you find. If anyone has any group photos from past reunions, please scan and email them to me and I will publish them.

Contact Me

Contact *Flightline* editor
at address on back,
or call 217-414-1400,
or email:
johnkath5@comcast.net



I received the following email from Eleanor Ball. I asked her if she had any additional information about the 780th collection at the University of Texas - Dallas other than what was published in the September 2020 issue.

Dear Kathy,

I'm doing just fine. Have been working on projects such as hats for cancer patients and quilts to be auction to benefit Alzheimer's.

Then keeping up with the family is full time. Expecting the first great-granddaughter in November. Four grandchildren in college, one working on master's degree and the other three will graduate this spring (I hope). Will send some 780th pictures later.

I went thru most of the information that I've kept and nothing on the 780th collection. The early minutes were lost in San Francisco earthquake. No minutes were turned over from Wanda Dannelly or Frances and I think you have copies of the

Aircraft Factory.
We had a discussion about a 1983 reunion date. It was decided we try for a date within 60 days after labor day. A motion was made by Herman Beeks to compile a history of past meetings and newsletters. Seconded by Mel Ivins. Motion carried.
It was suggested by Ben Donahue to send all records to C. Edward Rice, curator of aviation University of Texas, Dallas. Homer York volunteered to help in this project.
Herman Beeks is trying to get the Bell from the Chapel at Pantenella, he reported that it has been removed and is now in North Africa.
We had a discussion about a permanent home for the Squadron and decided it would be in Dallas Texas.
Bez talked about making our group a non-profit organization. It was decided to let things go on as they are now.
Nomination of Officers. Bez was nominated for President, but declined. Chester Brozek was nominated but he also declined. Don White was

Above is a portion of the minutes from the October 1982 squadron association meeting (see underlined portion) as published in the January 1983 issue of 780th News. It is the only record of the minutes and of the squadron donation to UTD. Eleanor Ball states the original minutes were lost in the 1989 San Francisco earthquake.

rest. I know the Precups went to UTD and had problems finding the collection then. Sorry I can't help but will keep looking.

Eleanor

And here is a follow-up email from Eleanor:

I went through most of Jack's papers and no information regarding the donation. As I recall, Wanda made an announcement at the Dallas Reunion in 1982, that she had made the donation. That would be a good year to check. Sending the program from the first reunion in Chicago in 1963, along with a picture of a few of us. Group pictures were not taken.

Eleanor

Editor's note: Thank you for the information and follow-up, Eleanor. Jim Precup and I both have emailed the UTD archives. It appears the 780th donations from 1982 (Dan-

nelly) and 1998 (Precup) were not accessioned (recorded) properly or completely. I think the best next step is to visit the UTD archives and see what they have. Hopefully when the pandemic is over someone, perhaps even myself, can make a visit.



I had a nice conversation with Jim Long in early October. He reports that he will be 96 this coming February. He said he lives in a cluster of three families - all his close relation - so he's well taken care of. Jim asked how many squadron men are receiving *Flightline*. See chart below of those who are on the mailing list, and a comparison to five years ago.



Editor's note: Sometimes a newsletter is returned as "undeliverable." I always attempt to find an updated address and most times I do, such as when two copies of the Sep-

tember issue came back. Thank you to the following two *Flightline* family members for responding to my plea and for providing additional information about their fathers.

Hello Kathy,

I'm the son of 1st Lt. Ord A. Campbell (AO825783). He was a B-24 pilot in the 465th Bomb Group 780th Squadron out of Pantanella, Italy until 7/31/45. I'm not sure when he arrived there. One of his aircrafts was called the Guardian Angel (Call Letter Red "S"). It was taken down on 11/20/44. His crew bailed out after losing 2 engines & fuel. That was @ 800 ft. Bombardier Lt. Arthur H. Bernstein's chute did not open but the remaining crew members survived. The plane crashed into a mountain fairly close to base.

He passed away 5 years ago. I've attached his photo from flight school & a copy of his

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780th Membership as of December 2020

(September 2015 figures in parentheses)

	Mail	Email	Total
Veterans (includ. from other squadrons)	25 (43)	2 (6)	27 (49)
Widows	6 (7)	3 (3)	9 (10)
Children	24 (21)	19 (17)	43 (38)
Grandchildren	3 (2)	2 (3)	5 (5)
Other family	4 (5)	4 (2)	8 (7)
Associations (Eglin AFB, other squadrons)	2 (1)	6 (3)	8 (4)
Unknown connection	5 (6)	2 (2)	7 (8)
TOTAL	69 (85)	37 (36)	107 (121)

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obituary. He was very proud of his service & to me he was a real hero in the service of our country.

I hope some of this info is of value to you.

Regards,
Michael J. Campbell

Editor's note: Thank you for reaching out, Michael. Your father certainly had an excit-

ing war experience. The 20 November 1944 mission is famous for a photograph of a B-24 exploding mid-air over the target of Blechhammer. The photo appeared in *Life* magazine. Your father's obituary appears at bottom.



Jim Smith, son of gunner Jack Smith, called to say his address was correct and then asked if there was any information about his father's crew.

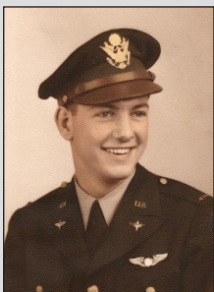
Some other members of the Ralph Humphrey's crew were co-pilot Fred Jordan and gunners Edward Miller of Milwaukee and Jacob Schneider of Ogallah, Kansas. Other possible crewmembers were Alfred Peteraf of Philadelphia (possibly an officer), and gunners Russell Peterson of Varna, Illinois and William Abney of Bethany, Louisiana. If anyone has information about the Humphrey's crew, please notify *Flightline*. Jordan's obituary is below.

TAPS



Maj. Fred Jordan (ret.), passed away in Vacaville, California, on May 13, 2014. He was 91. He was raised on the family's ranch in Nampa, Idaho. He married his high school sweetheart, Bettie Hussey, and then enlisted in the U.S. Army Air Corps. As a pilot he flew many raids in B-24 Liberators before his plane was shot down over Yugoslavia on March 1, 1945. He was rescued by Tito's partisans. Jordan earned the Air Medal with two oak leaf clusters, a Purple Heart, the European-African-Middle Eastern Campaign Medal, the American Campaign Medal, the World War II Victory Medal and the Good Conduct Medal. After the war he continued his love of flying by joining the

Idaho Air National Guard's 124th fighter squadron flying C-47s and C-45s. He retired from both the U.S. Air Force and U.S. Army Reserves, then worked in the Boise automobile industry in management and sales. Jordan was preceded by his wife. He was survived by his sons, Robert (Bev) and Gary (Vana); daughter, Patricia Jordan-Grinslade (William); four grandchildren and nine great-grandchildren.



Ord A. Campbell, formerly of Whippany, New Jersey, passed away on September 22, 2015, in Doylestown, Pennsylvania. He was 91. He proudly served in World War II as a B-24 Liberator pilot with the 780th Bombardment Squadron. He was credited with flying more than 40 missions in Central Europe and the Balkans. He was awarded the Air Medal, the Presidential Unit Citation and the European-African-Middle Eastern Campaign medal with five bronze service stars. During the Korean War, he served as an assistant wing air electronics officer, earning the United Nations Service Medal and the Korean Service Medal. Campbell remained in the Air Force Reserves until 1968, when he retired with the rank of Lt.

Colonel. Throughout his life he enjoyed flying, and built an airplane that he flew to the Experimental Aircraft Museum in Oshkosh, Wisconsin where it remained on display for many years. He was survived by his wife, Audrey; son, Michael (Mary Carol); daughter, Jennifer (Donald) Hiller; four grandsons and five great-grandchildren.

...continued from front page

men who live close to earth and closer to death, words of men who fight the battle of free men for our America and her Allies on remote and distant battlefields, who man our ships in dangerous seas and fight up there on higher."

World War II Slang from the Front

Armored Cow - Canned milk.

Axle Grease - Butter.

Blanket Drill - A nap.

Borrowed Brass - False courage inspired by drugs or drink.

Burn and Turn - Game of blackjack.

Canned Morale - A movie.

Collision Mats - Pancakes or waffles.

Crumb Up - To get a haircut, shoeshine, freshly pressed shirt, etc., in preparation for an inspection.

Devil's Voice - A bugle call.

Dog Show - Foot inspection.

Eagle Day - Payday; also known as "the day the eagle shits." A reference to the American eagle that appears on some coins.

File 13 - Wastebasket.

Grandma Gear - Low gear.

Ham That Didn't Pass Its Physical - Spam.

Hangar Queen - An aircraft with a bad maintenance record. An aircraft spending a great deal of time being repaired or maintained.

Below is a small sampling of the slang I found interesting personally or that I believe an air squadron would have been most familiar with (as opposed to sailors, for example). I also tried to avoid familiar jargon (beat your gums, flak, million dollar wound, snafu) hoping readers will find words and phrases they've never seen before.

Hangar Warrior - An airplane mechanic who boasts about what he would do if he were a pilot.

Jeepable - Impassable, rough road except by a Jeep.

Khaki-Whacky - A woman overly fond of men in uniform.

Landing gear - Legs.

Nut Buster - Mechanic.

Paragraph Trooper - A member of the "Chair-Borne Infantry" (desk worker).

Penguin - Air Force service member who doesn't fly.

Pep Tire - A doughnut.

Prang - To smash or bomb a target.

Pucker Factor - A term applied to describe the tenseness or danger level of a situation.

Put That in Your Mess Kit! - Think it over.

"Roll up your flaps" - "Stop talking."

Shack Man - Married man.

Sugar Report - A letter from a girl.

T.N.T. - Today, not tomorrow.

Kathy Le Comte
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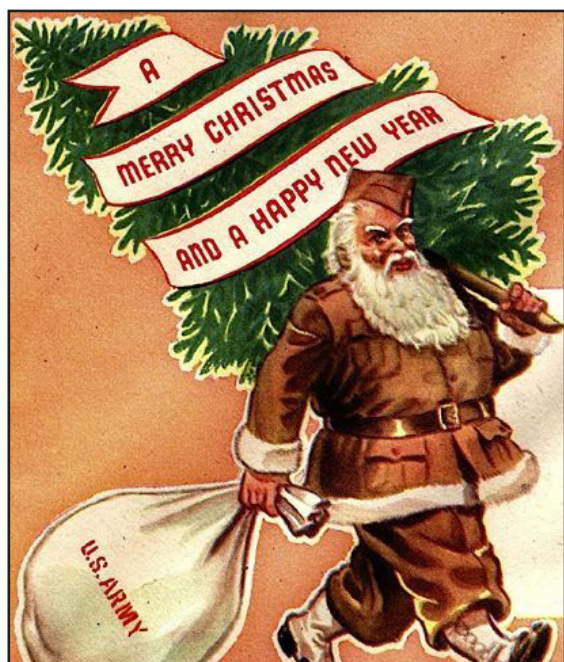
Flightline

War-time Christmas Tree Facts

In 1941, a five-foot Christmas tree cost 75 cents.

During World War II Christmas trees were in short supply because of a lack of manpower to cut down trees and a shortage of railroad space to ship them to market. Americans rushed to buy American-made Visca artificial trees.

A shortage in aluminum and tin used to produce ornaments led many to make their own ornaments at home. Magazines contained patterns for ornaments made out of non-priority war materials such as paper and string, and natural objects like pinecones and nuts.



To give their Christmas tree a snow-covered look, decorators mixed a box of Lux soap powder with two cups of water and brushed the concoction on the tree's branches.

Fewer men at home meant fewer men were available to dress up as Santa Claus. Women served as substitute Santas at Saks Fifth Avenue in New York City and other department stores throughout the United States.

Many Americans threw away their German blown-glass ornaments and exotic Japanese ornaments as soon as the war began. Shortly after the war, Corning Glass Company in New York began massproducing Christmas tree balls using machines designed to produce light bulbs. Corning could make more ornaments in a minute than a German cottage glass blower could make in a day. (credit: National World War II Museum)