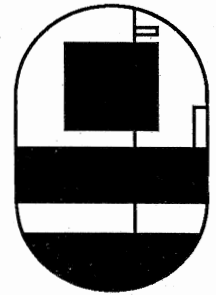




PANTANELLA NEWS



APRIL 1989

Published by 781st Bomb Squadron Association

NUMBER 16

THOMAS G. ARTHUR REPORTS IN

The whereabouts of Tom Arthur was reported in the last newsletter. Tom was the navigator on Joe Athon's crew and the Squadron artist. He designed Chief Jo Jon, painted the nose art on many planes, art on the walls of the officers club, etc.

I did not get a reply to my letter for several weeks, then was surprised to receive a Federal Express package (Tom had been traveling). When I opened it I found some very interesting copies of Tom's work during his days at Pantanella. I immediately copied them and expressed the package to Harry Carl. I knew Harry would be as excited about the material as I was. It didn't

take much discussion to agree to increase the size of the history book from the then 192 pages to 200 pages. Most of the eight page increase will be cartoons from Tom's collection. Instead of keeping a dairy he drew a cartoon of how he wanted to remember the happenings at the time.

We are awaiting more information from Tom and I am sure he will help to fill in some of the gaps. One item that he relayed to me was a request from then Maj. Lokker in North Africa to oversee the painting of the group insignia on group aircraft. And in reviewing the last newsletter he noted he painted the nose art on John Dickey's plane Super Natural. At the request of the pilot Tom painted a number 7 on each of the boobs. Remember we were just boys then.

On the left is Chief JoJon updated by Tom.

THE 781ST HISTORY BOOK HAS GONE TO PRESS!!

We have some very exciting news about our History Book. First, it is at the printers. Second, a bonus for everyone that has ordered one - it is now 200 pages (160 were planned) at no additional cost to you!

If you ever have had any experience with printing you will know that delays are common. For the final computer work Harry Carl needed another program, which arrived two weeks late. Then material that was promised for the book kept coming in late, late changes were made after new material arrived, and Thomas Arthur sent in numerous cartoons from his Pantanella days, and the list goes on. And I know from a visit to the Squadron's historical records headquarters (Harry and Donna Carl's home) that the editing and publishing of the history book was more work than Harry, or Donna, or anyone else could imagine. Still, the delay was minimum when you consider a 25% larger book than planned.

You may wonder how you will receive a 200 page book, instead of the planned 160 pages, without additional cost. Upon reviewing the squadron funds the board of directors approved the additional cost out of the reserve funds. The reserve was built up from the first two reunions as a result of lower than estimated costs. So, we felt it was a very appropriate way to reduce the reserves.

Delivery is expected during May. We urge you to keep us informed of your correct address so that your book will be delivered promptly.

History books can still be ordered. We had to set a deadline so that we could order enough for all who wanted one, yet did not want to purchase additional books that would not be sold. Our commitment was for 300 books, and, with only 120 orders after the October newsletter, you could understand our concern. Now, orders are well over 300. We have ordered additional books, so if you haven't done so place your order promptly. Place orders with the squadron treasurer O. J. Cowart, PO Box 2131, Houston, TX 77001. Make the checks out to the 781st Bomb Squadron. The price is \$35 per copy. Remember - we consider your order firm only after your check is received.

We feel it worth repeating what the history book is all about. It will be a 8 1/2 x 11 book with 200 glossy pages to give the best possible reproduction of photographs, which will make up over 25% of the publication. It will have an imitation leather hard cover with the Squadron insignia and the name embossed in gold.

It details the formation and training from Davis-Monthan AAB, McCook, the movement overseas, and through the time at Pantanella AAB, Italy. It covers day by day every mission flown with all details. Included is a listing of all medals awarded and credits earned by gunners against enemy aircraft.



Photographs will include all air crews, Armament, Communications, Engineering, and Ordnance Sections, plus pictures of individuals from all other units in the Squadron.

It will have an up to date roster of all who served in the 781st and will show in detail where Pantanella was located and what it was like - from the air and on the ground.

Harry Carl has spared no effort to make this History of your Squadron a book that you will be proud to own and show to your friends and pass on to your children.

Having had a chance to review most of the copy during a recent visit with Harry I can tell you that I am extremely excited about the layout and contents of the book. There are photos and a great deal of information that I was never aware of. If you haven't already done so **order now**.

Harry Carl has applied for and received a Library of Congress number 89-90974 and the book will be sent to various appropriate libraries.

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781st BOMB SQUADRON

as part of the 465th Bomb Group, Fifteenth Air Force, flew B-24 Liberators from Pantanella Airfield located near Canosa, Italy, during WW11 (1944-45). During it's 191 missions over Southern Europe it dropped thousands of tons of bombs, shot down 23 enemy aircraft (German) and received two Distinguished Unit Citations.

REUNION 1990 BOSTON AUGUST 23 - 26

**Mark your calendars
now for a reunion you will
not forget. It will be our
biggest and best!!**

Yes, the decision has been made - It's Boston for 1990!

You may have heard of the high prices in Boston. We are pleased to inform you that this isn't necessarily true. Our room rates will not be over \$65 single or double,

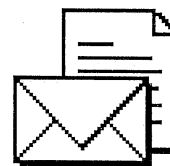
Many more details will be given at a later date. Boston has so much to offer and there is almost unlimited places to go to before or after the reunion. And of course one of the main reasons we are going to Boston is to spend a day with the Collings Foundation restored B-24. It will be nearby at Hanscom Air Force Base.

The board of directors approved the Boston site and it was up to your editor to select the hotel. I called upon Kenneth Sutton, Ordnance Officer during the days of Pantanella, to help with some legwork. Ken and I lived in the same casa during the last five or six months at Pantanella, so we had a good working relationship going for this detail. Ken lives about an hour away from this area on the outskirts of Boston and he made numerous trips to seek out all available hotels that could handle us. Five were selected and he laid the groundwork for my visit so that we could come to an agreement on one hotel. He did his job well and had a real competitive pricing going on between the hotels. You have to realize the going corporate rate for these hotels is \$130 to \$150 today and will be about \$10 higher in 1990.

We will not announce the hotel at this time since we are just finalizing the agreement. I can assure you you will be excited when you hear about it.

So - mark your calendars for August 23 to 26, 1990 for our fourth reunion. And allow some extra time to see this beautiful and historic area.

And from O. J. Cowart - a diddy -
Two Army Air Corp veterans met for the first time in 44 years and discovered that of all things that fly, time is the fastest!



MAIL CALL

A recently located **Burton Sanders** (Joyner/Gunner) writes, "When I received your letter today I almost came out of my shoes. I had no idea that the 781st had been formed. I am very pleased that you found me. How in the world did you do it. The address you listed has not been used in 40 years. I would like to be included in all your mailings."

In a letter from **Roland Frantzen Green** (Engineering) he writes that he was very happy to hear from the 781st. We had been asked to help in locating two men in his state and he reported he had work on one of them. He also noted it was Roland Frantzen, not Roland Frampton as we had. Those old hand written rosters weren't too clear.

Bob Freed corresponded recently and I'll quote one paragraph, "Happy to hear Harry Carl has about finished the history book. Jim, we are most fortunate to have a gentlemen like Harry in our midst. I'm quite sure this was a labor of love for him even though it was extremely time consuming. Will be looking forward to the availability of the history of the 781st."

Vincent T. Boyle (Radar Mechanic) was surprised to hear from the 781st and was happy to see some names of men he remembered from Pantanella. He was transferred out of the 781st and ended the war with the 485th Bomb Group HQ at Venosa. Vincent practiced architecture in Michigan and moved to Atlanta in 1981. They have seven children and six of them live within a few miles of your editor, so I hope to have a visit from Vincent when he visits his children.

Ronald E. Hill (Athon Radio Operator) returned his questionnaire informing us that he lived in Kansas City for many years and was in the insurance business. The last 30 years he has lived in Des Moines, Iowa and was in the building business. The cold winters are getting to him and he plans on leaving the Midwest. He'll keep us informed of any move.

Jim McCloskey, President of the 783rd Bomb Squadron Association, wrote while on his 90 day vacation in Florida that he was thrilled to see the B-24 being restored. He also noted that another visitor that was very interested in the plane was our own **Raymond J. Trautman**. Sounds like they had a grand time bringing back old memories.



WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

In our last newsletter a list of all those not located was published. A request was made for information you might have on these men and for serial numbers on those without any listed. **Ben Sims** was the first to report on two men. He reported the address on Larry Lasseigne and that Robert D. Nielsen was in *Folded Wings*.

Charles G. Little (Tannenbaum Bombardier) wrote of his experiences and noted that Howard Shively's last known address is not Albany, but Rochester, New York. He visited Charles a few years back and he was a registered C.P.A. at the time. How about checking up on him some of you New Yorkers?

Another letter came from **Jean Wood** (widow of Lehman Wood) informing us of a way to get help from the board of education's School Census Reports in locating our lost souls. She reports that the CIA and the social security offices use this information. We'll give it a try Jean, and hope to have some results for the next newsletter!

Karl K. Brown (Gaines/Radio Operator), 1001 Las Palmas, Sacramento, CA 95818. Phone 916 925-1638. Jack Smith was just located in Ogden, Utah so Walt Longacre wrote to him inquiring if he had any information, or could locate Karl since he also had a WWII address of Ogden. Jack replies, "As to your inquiry of Karl Brown I had not had contact with him since 1946. I knew he had left the state at that time. I had a letter published in the local newspaper with immediate response from Karl. He called me the same day. He will be glad to hear from you guys." That was some response, and Walt Longacre notes in his letter reporting Karl's address, that he wished he had more Jack Smith's.

Lionel "Larry" Lasseigne, PO Box 387, Wells River, VT 05081. Larry (nose gunner) was a late arrival from the 485th Bomb group and his whereabouts was reported by Ben Sims after seeing the list in the newsletter.

James A. Melton, PO Box 524, Crossville, TN 38557, Phone 615 788-2052. Jim was a cook during his days with the 781st. He was

discharged in 1945, then switched and enlisted in the Navy in 1946. In trying to locate him I wondered why the Air Force in San Antonio didn't have anything on him since I had heard he stayed in the service. But there is always another way and a letter finally got to him. In the Navy he started in the underwater demolition, then joined the submarine service for the rest of his 20 years. He is back home now, in Crossville since 1973, and selling real estate.

Rex L. Struble, (Co-pilot/Martin) Box 9 Rivercrest Drive, Sprague River, OR 97639. Phone 503 533-2445. Rex replied to a letter I sent out through the Social Security Administration. We will wait for more information on Rex.

Thomas B. Kyle, (Armament) PO Box 666, Montrose, CO 81402. Phone 303 249-5478. Thomas was chief power turret and gun sight specialist in the squadron until he transferred out in September 1944 to train with a unit going to the South Pacific. Medical reasons kept him stateside until the war was over. In 1949 he joined the Wyoming and Colorado National Guard, applied for a commission and after 18 years retired with the rank of Captain. He is looking forward to the next reunion.

James P. Carroll, (Communications) Veterans Hospital, Bldg. 101, Ward 7, Danville, IL 61832. In a letter to an address I came across I got a reply from his mother. She states that he suffered a brain stem injury 30 years ago in a jeep accident and is in the Veterans Hospital. He would like to hear from old friends.

Ralph E. Bonswor, Bombardier/Brenne-man) 1881 Scott Ave., Ventura, CA 93004. Phone 805 647-5397. Ralph stayed in service and retired in 1967. During his time he served as a crew member on the heavies, spent 10 years as aircraft and electronics engineering officer, and six years at S.A.C 15th AF Headquarters Staff. Welcome back Ralph.

Otto L. Marcucci, (Leggatt/Gunner) 707 East Drive, Sheffield Lake, OH 44054. Walt Longacre wrote to the Buffalo Police department and somehow they tracked down Otto in Sheffield Lake, Ohio. Mrs. Marcucci replied to Walt that Otto's health is not good. He had open heart surgery in 1975. Maybe some of you that know Otto can drop him a note to cheer him up.

Clarence F. Weith (Tail Gunner/Hewitt) PO Box 6023, Lindenhurst, IL 60046. Phone 312 356k-0715. Clarence sent in a questionnaire from a mailing made by the Social Security Administration.

Bernard Robert Samuel Freeman (Co-pilot/Blakita) 61 Bronx River Road, Yonkers, NY 10704. In the days of Pantanella it was Bernard, but now evidently it's Robert for the first name. Either way we are happy to hear from a long lost soul. He responded to a Fifteenth Air Force Association mailing by sending in his application to them and inquiring if the 781st or 465th were preparing a reunion at the Fiftieth Anniversary of the B-24 celebration being held in Fort Worth. The Fifteenth sent him my address. Bernard will be fully informed of our association and I am sure we will be hearing more from him.

FOLDED WINGS

Glen M. Collins (Engineering) passed away December 22, 1989. A letter was received from his wife. She writes, "This is such a hard letter to write, but I wanted to let you know my husband Glen passed away the 22nd of December, 1988. He was one of the men who served with the 781st Bomb Squadron and was very proud of this. He never was able to attend any of the reunions but he really enjoyed getting mail about the outfit.

Glen was also still in the Air Force in the Korean War, Hq. Sq. Sec. 63 Air Group (TAC). He was hand picked for this duty when then Cape Canaveral (Cape Kennedy) was first started and was also in the German Occupation. He didn't talk much about his service, but was very proud of it. He gave a lot of his young life for his country."

Mrs. Collins also wrote about his heart condition that he had to live with for the past eleven years with great pain. They were married for 45 years and she notes that he was a good Christian man and she knows he is now with the Lord and has no more pain.

In the obituary it notes he was awarded the Silver Star, and Distinguished Service Badge.

Robert D. Nielsen reported deceased by Ben Sims.

Our thoughts and prayers are with our fallen comrades and their families

ADDRESS CHANGES

Fred Aboud, 1232 Garvin Place, Louisville, KY 40203

Thomas G. Arthur, 2029 Century Park East, Suite #2730, Los Angeles, CA 90067.

THE UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE HON- ORS THE 781ST BOMB SQUADRON DURING SPE- CIAL CEREMONY IN WASHINGTON D.C.

The ceremony in Washington on February 22nd with Postmaster General Anthony Frank delivering a letter to Norman Smith, completed the delivery of 233 forty-five year old letters. The 781st became involved after being contacted by the U. S. Postal Service last May with a request for help in locating the last three servicemen, or their families, who had written letters aboard the troop ship Caleb Strong enroute to Africa in 1944, but were never delivered. They were discovered in an attic in 1986 and the search began for the 92 servicemen or their families.

The report on how the first one of the three was located was reported in the last newsletter. The remaining two were given to Walt Longacre and Pierre Kennedy to try to locate.

This is a report by Walt on some of his work in locating the second one. "I began by writing to the Division of Vital Statistics of

Columbus, Ohio for the death certificate on John J. Thomas. After receiving the death certificate I wrote to Zeis Funeral Home of Lakewood, Ohio, which was listed as the funeral home on the death certificate, for an obituary report. They replied with one for Mr. Thomas who passed away March 6, 1974, and also one for his wife Pearl, who passed away two days later on March 8, 1974.

No one listed on the obituary and death certificate of John Thomas could be located. Mrs. Thomas's obituary revealed a brother, Richard Teeters, of Londonville, Ohio as surviving. I was able to get his phone number and, in visiting with him, I found that he was a brother of Thomas's second wife. This information was referred to the Postal Service

and they will deliver the letters to Richard Teeters.

Another 1944 letter written by John Thomas was to Mrs. Pearl Kohler of Lyndhurst, Ohio. I wrote to the Police Chief in S. Euclid, Ohio since the address referred to the S. Euclid Post Office, for assistance and they in turn sent it to the Lyndhurst Department for assistance.

There Police Lt. Anthony Adinolfi, who was very cooperative, found that Mrs. Kohler had moved from the area some time ago. She settled in the Aurora and could be the owner of a company called Brady Tractor. Upon checking he found the company no longer in existence, but an elderly lady owned the building and maintained an office there. Could this be Mrs. Kohler, he wondered?

Lt. Adinolfi had an officer from the Aurora Police Department stop by, but the elderly lady, Mrs. Adrion was not in, so he

of the long lost letter."

Walt did a super job in tracking down these people for the Postal Service. A request was made by the recipients that there be no publicity on the delivery of the letters, therefore, there were no press releases.

During this time Pierre Kennedy was trying to track down Clarence F. Smith. His report, "The man I was asked to find was Sgt. Clarence F. Smith. He had written letters to Philadelphia and Darby, Pennsylvania. We knew he was not with the 781st, but did not know what unit he was with.

The Postal Service had learned that Smith trained at Ardmore, Oklahoma on a combat crew. This knowledge led us to believe that he was on a bomber crew with the 15th Air Force. We did not know if he was dead or alive.

During the past several years I have obtained Missing Air Crew Reports (MACR's) of the 781st Bomb Squadron crew members shot down, from the National Archives in Washington, D.C. MACRs are on micro-fiche and contain all the records of a plane and crew's last mission.

I sent Smith's name and service number to the Archives, and in July 1988 a reply stated that his

name was on MACR #6376. I ordered it and when it arrived I took it to the local library to read and it gave a tragic account.

S/Sgt. Clarence Smith served with the 429th Bomb Squadron, 2nd Bomb Group, in Italy. He was a tail gunner on a B-17 on a mission July 6, 1944, to bomb the marshalling yards at Verona, Italy. Smith's aircraft was attacked by German fighters after leaving the target. Smith was wounded, the B-17 was shot down and exploded. After the explosion three parachutes were seen, one on fire, by the men in the other planes in formation. The chute on fire was probably Smith's since he was found dead on the ground by the only two survivors.



Postmaster General Anthony Frank has just awarded certificates of appreciation to Pierre J. Kennedy, Walter Longacre (absent) and James Althoff for their help in locating the three servicemen. Speaking is Mr. Frank, seated left is Mr. & Mrs. Norman Smith, who received the last letter, Althoff, Kennedy, and two others who helped in the initial search.

left a note for Mrs. Adrion to call Lt. Adinolfi. When Mrs. Adrion returned she called Lt. Adinolfi and it was then that Lt. Adinolfi learned it was the Mrs. Pearl Kohler he was looking for. She is 82 years old, still very active and anxiously awaiting delivery of the 45 year old letter.

Another 1944 letter was written to Dorothy Seckler of Garfield Heights, Ohio. Many efforts to locate Mrs. Seckler were to no avail. Finally I decided to place a notice in the local newspaper. A friend of Dorothy Seckler noticed the ad and called her. Dorothy Seckler then called me and first wanted to make sure it was not some kind of a hoax. I informed her it was not and now she is anxiously awaiting the delivery

Smith's next of kin was his mother, Mrs. Ethel M. Pein, of Philadelphia. I noted the WWII address of the two survivors, the navigator and radio operator, and I located them in September 1988. Fortunately the navigator still had letters written by Mrs. Pein to his parents when he was a prisoner of war. He gave me the information that Clarence had a younger brother (no name found), who entered service in December 1944.

It was now October, 1988 and we knew only that Clarence Smith had been KIA in 1944, his mother's name was Pein (she had remarried), and she lived in Philadelphia, and she had another son, name unknown. What I did not know was if Mrs. Pein was alive. It was time to get help in the Philadelphia area.

For some years I have researched my own family and have subscribed to a genealogical magazine. I contacted a researcher whose name appeared in it. She helped by checking old Philadelphia telephone directories and found Mrs. Pein's 1973 address. The researcher also talked to neighbors of Mrs. Pein.

I learned that Mrs. Pein had died about five years ago and that she had been living with a son, Fred Pein, (a half-brother to Clarence Smith) who now was believed to live in Delaware. I searched the phone books and found a Pein with a different first name, so I wrote him a letter. It turned out to be Fred Pein, Clarence Smith's half-brother.

From Fred Pein I learned there was a full brother to Clarence Smith. Further investigation uncovered Clarence Smith's full brother in Maryland."

Pierre has been assisting in locating some 781st men, (19 to date) and did a great job on locating Norman T. Smith. If you consider the common name Smith, his mother's name Pein, and the letter writer Clarence Smith being killed right after writing the letter you know it wasn't an easy job. Frankly, I never thought Clarence Smith's family would ever be found. But there is always a different angle and in this case it was getting help from a genealogy researcher.

Shortly after the Postal Service received the information on the last family to be located, Walter Longacre, Pierre J. J. Kennedy and I were invited to attend a special ceremony in Washington D.C. for the delivery of the last letter by Postmaster General Anthony Frank to Norman T. Smith. Walt was not able to attend, but Pierre and I did attend. We received a beautiful Certificate of Appreciation from

the Postmaster General Anthony Frank.

Pierre did a great job representing the 781st. He was interviewed for over an hour by TV crews and newspaper reporters. No doubt many of you have already seen covering in the news. The full story on all the letters will be in the Special Report magazine, owned by Time, that currently is only distributed to doctors offices and the like.

GENE KRZYZYNSKI- Gene's letter tells his story. "I was assigned to Tipton's crew at Davis-Monthan Field, Arizona, in November 1943. We flew for a month and then went to McCook, Nebraska for the final two months of training. We then went to Lincoln, Nebraska, after which we flew to West Palm Beach, Florida.

We stopped overnight at Borinquen Field, Puerto Rico, then to Georgetown, British Guiana, Belem, and Fortaleza, Brazil. We crossed the Atlantic to Dakar. From there we had to lay over at Tindouf in the desert because of bad weather over the Atlas mountains. After spending about ten days at Marrakech we flew to Tunis. We spent time at Tunis until our field was constructed in Italy. We flew to Bari, Italy, in April 1944 and then to Pantanella.

On 31 May, 1944 we sustained flak damage over Ploesti (#1 & #2 engines) and finally had to bail out over Yugoslavia. I believe we were the second crew lost by the 781st. With the help of the Partisans we evaded capture and were flown back to Italy in about ten days. After a week on Capri we resumed flying.

Luck ran out again on 16 July 1944 over Vienna. Our #2 engine ran out of oil before reaching the target. I dropped the bombs and Tipton kept in formation until we turned away from the target. We sustained fighter damage to #3 engine and proceeded to lose altitude until we were in the vicinity of Zagreb, Yugoslavia. A fighter looked us over, and, being in no condition to fight back, we bailed out and were taken into custody by Ustachi troops and handed over to the Germans. We spent several days in Zagreb for interrogation, then we were taken by train to Budapest, Hungary.

After about a week in a civilian prison we entrained for Stalag Luft III, Sagan, Germany. We saw some of the results of our bombing during our train ride and it was a little uncomfortable to be in the railyards of Vienna and Breslau about the time we would be bombing those areas.

We arrived in Sagan and met Brig. Gen.

Vanaman whose story of how he got captured sounded pretty fishy. Tipton and Burda were sent to the center compound and Weiss and I to the west compound. I never saw our enlisted men after that.

We left Sagan 27 January 1945, because of the Russian advance, and made our way to Nuremburg on 4 February 1945. From there we had to leave in early April because of the American and British advance. We marched to Moosberg and were liberated by the Third Army (good ol' Patton) on Sunday, 29 April 1945. I met Tipton and Burda at Moosberg for the first time since we were separated at Sagan.

Within a few days C47's were flown in and we were taken to Camp Lucky Strike, near LeHarve, France. We saw much destruction during this flight through the Saar. We stepped from behind barbed wire into heaven - showers, clean clothes, and food. After a sixteen day boat ride we docked in New York in June 1945.

I applied for discharge and on 22 November 1945 married my childhood sweetheart. We have two fine sons and a lovely daughter. I began working for my wife's father as a baker and made a career out of it. In 1967 my wife had to undergo neurosurgery and as a result was rendered quite helpless and confined to a wheelchair for thirteen years. For me it was the most difficult time of my life. She passed away December 1979.

I retired several years ago, but still work part time decorating wedding cakes, etc.

Just last February I was contacted by a former roommate at Sagan and went to visit him in New Jersey. We're in the process of organizing a reunion too. So far we've located eight of the twelve men.

Hope to see many of our former squadron mates at the reunion."

Gene was bombardier on the Tipton crew.

A special thanks to all who have contributed to the newsletter. Tom Arthur for the cartoons, William Coonan, Conard Croston, Gene Krzyzynski, Pierre Kennedy and Walt Longacre for helping the Postal Service and getting honors for the 781st, and the many more that wrote in information and helped in keeping us informed about yourselves or your comrades of the 781st. Keep it up and we will keep the Newsletter coming.

OUR B-24 LIBERATORS

DID YOU EVER WONDER HOW MANY AIRCRAFT WERE ASSIGNED TO THE 781ST? Leo Lutring, Line Chief, furnished our Historian, Harry Carl, with some of his records from Pantanella. According to those records we were assigned a total of 47 aircraft. Of these 21 were shot down in combat, 7 crashed on landing or were scrapped (usually due to damage from enemy action) and 19 were flown back to the U.S. after the war.

We have been contacted by John R. Beitling, who is a B-24 Historian, and would like to have the serial numbers of all our aircraft and what happened to them if you know. He has records on over 12,000 already. For those of you flying aircraft overseas the number was usually on those orders. We have some, but would like to get them all. Also we would like to confirm the names of the aircraft and find out if there are any names that we do not have.

Previously I was contacted by Beitling and gave him a few numbers I had then. One of the numbers was the aircraft I flew over to Pantanella in August, 1944. When I landed at Pantanella two pilots were waiting to fly the aircraft to another unit. I never did know where it went or what happened to it. Beitling informs me it went to the 460th Bomb Group and was damaged extensively in a crash landing on April 28, 1945. He is developing some good records.

Here are the names and numbers we have;

- 42-52505 Hell's Belle, Jack Van Slyke
- _____ Dragon Ass, Arthur Zalk
- _____ Crescent of the Half Moon, Dale Tipton
- _____ Paper Doll, Charles Stenerson
- 41-52558 Sacajawea, Robert Shetterly
- _____ Custer's Folly, Phillip Schuster
- 41-29357 Pleasure Bent, Lewis Roberts
- 41-29414 Chief Jo Jon, Charles McKenna
- _____ Lovie's Dovies, Alexander Lovey
- 41-29376 Guardian Angel, Ray Hurd
- _____ Easy Maid, Jack Hudson
- 42-51894 Princess Pat, Ralph Hendrickson
- _____ Flamin' Mamie, Jack Frazier
- 42-52470 Super Natural, John Dickey
- 42-52503 Belle Ringer, Ray Cauble
- 41-28756 Long John Silver, Rae Branch

42-52321 Joegia Wolf, Joe Athon
42-52449 Patches, George Ashley
_____ Nite Mare, James Althoff

Let us know if you know what happened to your crew's aircraft. If it went down we would like to know the pilot, date, and target. If it was returned to the U. S. we would like to know the pilot and where it was left.

B-24 RESTORATION

The response from the 781st continues to grow. The last report I received has the 781st the second largest squadron contributor. This also makes our group number two.

During my recent trip to Boston and Washington I was able to make a side trip to spend an afternoon at Kissimmee, Florida to check up on the progress of the restoration. It is



beginning to look like an airplane again. **Restoration is now more than 80% complete!** and all four engines have been overhauled and installed (See photo above). The hydraulic work and stringing of cables was well underway. Plans are to have it ready in May for the Fiftieth Anniversary of the B-24 Celebration being held at Fort Worth, Texas. Hopefully it will get airborne by then and be the star of the show.

We are proud of the number of crews that have donated a Crew Memorial Membership and others that have joined the Century Club. A few have sponsored crews that are no longer with us and we feel that they in particular should be remembered. I believe we are the leading squadron in honor crews. I know there are a number of you working on getting

your crew listed as an honor crew and we will publish a list later one. We encourage you to complete your crew memorial, or whatever type of donation you feel like making, as soon as you can to keep our squadron and group in the lead.

Since we have done an outstanding job in supporting this project, and there has been support from the other squadrons, there is a chance that the 465th Bomb Group insignia will be painted on the tail surface on one side. **Wouldn't it be great to see that 465th Group insignia again!!**

For \$24 you get a restoration bond, \$100 for the century club, \$240 for a crew memorial, and there are many more. For further information write to: The Collings Foundation, River Hill Farm, Stow, MA 01775. 580-562-9182.

If you make a donation we would like to have the check made out to the Collings Foundation, but mailed to our Treasure, O.J.

Cowart, PO Box 2131, Houston, TX 77001.

You may send it directly to Collings, but be sure to note our squadron. **Thanks to everyone for the support. Keep 'em Flying!!**



FIFTEENTH AIR FORCE ASSOCIATION REUNION

It will be held at the Riviera Hotel in Las Vegas August 13 to 17, 1989. They have a full program and loads of entertainment in this fun city. I will keep a list of those planning to attend, so be sure I am notified so 781st men can get together there. More details in the next newsletter or write to: Fifteenth Air Force Association, PO Box 6325, March Air Force Base, CA 92518.

**FROM THE LAST FLIM FLAM
PUBLISHED BY THE 465TH
BOMB GROUP.
THE CHAPLAIN SPEAKS, By
Chaplain H. R. Blouch**

There is a song that says, "Count your blessings, name them one by one: Count your many blessings, see what God hath done." After a year of combat, this is what we may gratefully do, feeling certain that He has done exceedingly better for us than we have deserved.

After completing our training at McCook, we thought we were fortunate, leaving the States with a clean record - no crashes during all that time. Over here, it was different, yet, let us think what did take place.

There was no attack of the enemy, although we were told that "Berlin Sal" had promised us. How different it must have been only a short time before when the Luftwaffe blasted the bases in Africa.

Our losses on the field were very light in comparison with many of the Groups around about us. Somehow, those things didn't happen to us. How well we remember "sweating them out" early in the morning and in the late afternoon take-offs of the days prior to the invasion of Southern France and seeing fires burning on fields elsewhere.

As for the combat losses, we should still be breathing prayers in our sighs of relief. Although Colonel Rogers was lost to the Group because of injury over Anzio, he is still with us. Now the good news has been verified that Lt. Col. Lokker is P.O.W. Who would have thought it after seeing the pictures of his ship going down? The same is true of Major Clark, one of our first S-3 losses, and good news is everywhere concerning the rest.

I can't think of anyone that went through more than Major Zewadski. A brave man who put his faith in God and let his influence be felt by all. He wasn't ashamed to come to church regularly.

We can't help but like these men who are with us and pray for them the same blessings that came to those who preceeded them. Brave men, they were, who didn't dodge flak, nor did they carry extra flak suits. And instead of dropping the bombs in the fields, they made second runs on the same target time and again.

Yes, there were many Purple Hearts given and some of them have not been heard of, yet, fifty percent, and more, went home. I know they were grateful and we should return many thanks to God, now that it seems to be all over.

We have done a good job, but God has done far better.

Wing had assumed Lt. Col. Lokker was killed, but held the information back as they



did with other bad news that could affect morale. We went home believing Col. Lokker was still alive. Some of the recently located men still had not learned the fate of Col. Lokker.

GATHERING OF THE LIBERATORS

is the 50th Anniversary of the B-24 Liberator. It will be held May 17 through 21, 1989 in Fort Worth, Texas. More than 10,000 people are expected to meet to celebrate the first flight of this magnificent aircraft.

There will be exhibits, theaters, an air show, and many other functions to keep you busy. As of early January seven were registered from the 465th Bomb Group. A notice will be sent out to anyone registered to let you know who else will be there from our squadron or group. Our squadron is registered and will have photos, etc. on display.

If the Collings Foundation B-24 being restored is finished on time it will be there.

For hotel reservation and registration contact Reunion Project Office B-24 50th Anniv., 6224 Torreon Dr. N.E., Albuquerque, NM 87109. Since time is short and I may not get notice from the Project Office if you register late, it is advisable to notify me and I will notify others from the 465th of your attendance.

When registering be sure to give your squadron name so we will be staying in the same hotel. The first to register (yours truly) was assigned to the Days Inn in Downtown Fort Worth.



The happy Ordnance men at San Antonio. L to R John Zadrozny, Edwin Kapusta, Harold Schuster, Kenneth Sutton, Bill Tylavsky, Hurd Engineer, Charles "Bubba" Braud, and Loren Foote.

WHO KNOWS THE HISTORY OF THIS DOG? Someone smuggled this dog over on the ship in their duffle bag. It was a tan and white terrier type dog name "Angie." She hung around the planes most of the time. Photo and article sent in by William Coonan from Engineering. Can anyone add to the story??Next newsletter will tell about another dog (black) called Blechhammer.

NOSE ART

An Air Force directive went out during the war to discontinue any names that were war-like.

According to information received a B-17 out of England, called Murder, Inc., lost an engine and dropped out of formation. When the fighters came in for the kill the B-17 dropped it's gear as a sign that they had given up and would not fight back. As the fighters came in close the B-17 opened fire. The name of the plane became an issue as the top brass considered it "offensive."

In our Squadron some nose art was changed, probably due to this directive. I quote from our History Book, "Retired M/ Sgt. Earl Viands, who had been the Crew Chief on Col. McKenna's B-24, reminisced in 1986 about the Bull's Eye insignia that Col. Mac had painted around the Pilot's window on the plane. After flying only a couple missions with this painting Col. Mac was requested by Group Headquarters to remove part of it because it would be, "Offensive to the enemy." Apparently shooting and bombing the enemy was not."

DISASTER AT BARI is the title of a book by Glenn Infield that I recently heard about and decided to check it out. Is is a story about the bombing of Bari Harbor on December 2, 1943, by the Luftwaffe, which was just five months before our bombers landed at Pantanella. Seventeen ships were sunk, including one with 100 tons of Mustard Gas. Over one thousand people were killed including 617 military personnel. It was

It was the worst shipping disaster for the allies since Pearl Harbor

the worst shipping disaster for the Allies since Pearl Harbor. And it was the best kept secret of WWII. Following is a very condensed report on the book written in 1970.

The author traveled to Italy to visit survivors, to Germany to talk to Luftwaffe pilots, to England to speak with British medical and military personnel, and to Washington to the Surgeon General, National Archives, and the military branches. All were very cooperative except the British.

Bari was an important port for support of the British Eight Army moving up the eastern side of Italy during this time. After the front lines were moved north the heavy bomber bases began construction and many supplies were coming in through Bari for their construction.

The Fifteenth Air Force had just been formed and Tokyo Raider Gen. Jimmy Doolittle was moving his office from Africa to Bari. Large tankers would arrive in Bari and unload onto smaller tankers that could get into Manfredonia harbor, 75 miles north of Bari, where the 100 octane gas was pumped through the pipelines. Eventually 160,000 gallons would be pumped each week to the bomber bases. Many other types of cargo arrived at Bari including bombs, ammunition, troops, medical supplies, air-crews for the 98th Bomb Group, etc.

The reason there were so many casualties was the fact that a ship, the John Harvey, had a top secret cargo of mustard and only a few aboard the ship knew about it. When the harbor was bombed all personnel on the ship were killed and there was no one left to report the danger to others in the harbor.

When the John Harvey arrived five days before the bombing the captain wanted to get it unloaded right away, but he could not

inform the British what his cargo was. There were long delays in unloading which accounted for the thirty ships in the harbor on December 2.

During this time Field Marshall Albert Kesselring, Commander of the German Troops in Italy, had been looking at Bari as a target to hit to delay the British Eight Army moving up the east coast of Italy. For a week prior to the bombing the Luftwaffe sent over a lone reconnaissance pilot in an Me-210. The pilot had exciting news to report back to his base in the Udine area - the Bari Harbor was full of Allied ships. The British took no action against this high flying plane.

So, at 7:25 PM on December 2, 1943 the stage was set for a disaster. An attack group of Ju-88s began by dropping flares to light up the harbor as dusk was settling in. Some also dropped aluminum chaff to jam the radar. Then they came in at mast level under the British radar screen. They had come down over the Adriatic to the east, so the attack came in from the open sea to the west for a full surprise and no opposition until over the land. The results were disastrous. Hardly a bomb went astray.

To make things worse a British searchlight had been left on to light up the harbor. Navy men reported later that they had never seen a wartime harbor lit up like Bari was that night. And some of the British guns, firing at the Ju-88s, hit some of the ships in the harbor with their unstable or misdirected guns.

Among the first ships to get hit and blow up were an ammunition ship and a tanker.

Among the first ships to get hit and blow up were an ammunition ship and a tanker. After that the John Harvey got hit, then sunk several hours later, the mustard mixed with the oil from other ships in the harbor. As men abandoned their burning ships, or were blown off of them, they came in contact with the mustard and oil on the surface of the water. Men's eyes burned and had difficult breathing. It was days later before anyone knew about the mustard.

Casualties taken to hospitals confused the doctors. They would suddenly die. The doctors did not know about the mustard and

were unable to diagnose the illness.

Several days later word went out to Eisenhower's staff in North Africa for help and Col. Anderson, from Chemical Warfare Medicine Division, arrived. He had strong suspicion of mustard, but could not find the origin. The Allies did not know if the Germans had dropped it. The British at the port office did know about it, but would not give the information out. There was very poor cooperation between the U. S. Military Officers and the British.

Finally a 100 pound bomb from the harbor floor was recovered and it was determined to be Allied Bombs.

When the British were informed of the mustard they refused to believe there were casualties due to mustard. Ten days after the disaster their hospitals still refused to concede that mustard was the cause of illness of their patients. Churchill agreed with the British Officers and had any reference to mustard stricken from their medical records. One of the reasons was the concern that the Germans would learn of the mustard.

The bombing destroyed buildings along the waterfront and many Italians evacuated the city. For many of the Italian children there was concern that Santa Claus got bombed. Saint Nicholas, known as Santa Claus, is buried in the crypt at Basilica of San Nicola, which was built between 1089 and 1197.

It had far reaching effects. It slowed down the British Eight Army, the building of the bomber bases and even affected the Anzio beachhead. The harbor was closed for two weeks before reopening.

Two JU-88s went down, but not one Allied plane attacked the formation. Another Bari disaster occurred on April 9, 1945. Many at Pantanella saw the smoke rising from an ammunition ship that blew up. Some were in Bari that day and saw some of the results. And air crews rendezvousing nearby saw the smoke up to 8,000 feet in the air. If you have any information on this disaster we would like to hear from you.

Dues/donations

At the recent reunion in San Antonio the board of directors decided to continue our voluntary dues/contributions. We suggest \$10 or \$20, whatever you feel you can afford should be sent annually to our Treasurer, O. J. Cowart. Most of those attending the last reunion made their contribution then. Those that have not may want to do so at this time.



Some smiling faces from men serving in Group Headquarters. The picture has been sent to several group men, but we have not been able to come up with many identifications. How about some help? Here is what we have to date - L Charles Harding, Armament - third from L Maj. Frank? - Sixth from L Maj. Harold Bullock, Operations Officer - ninth from L Lt. Col. William Vaughn, and is the one on the right M/Sgt Joe Tucci? We also wonder what the event was. The first landing at Pantanella as suggested by Harold Bullock? Note the motorcycle.

PRISONER OF WAR EXPERIENCES

by Conard D. Croston.

Conard was an engineer (T/Sgt) on the Theodore Poole crew and was assigned to the 781st squadron on 31 May 1944. It was the first radar crew assigned to the group and later, after a number of missions with the 781st, they flew with other squadrons in the group. On 3 August 1944, flying with his pilot Theodore Poole, Conard was shot down after hitting the target at Friedrichshafen and he spent the rest of the war as POW #4036 at Stalag Luft #4. This is his story.

On 3 August 1944 at 0640 hours after briefing we took off from Pantanella Air Base to bomb Manzell-Dornier works at Friedrichshafen, Germany, a real high priority target. They were making parts for a new jet propelled and pilotless aircraft which they were using successfully against London and other English towns. We flew rough and over heavy clouds on our way to the target, but dropped our load of 500 pound bombs at 1111 hours at an altitude of 23,000 feet while encountering moderate to heavy flak. We were hit by flak, lost an engine, and along with some other crippled bombers

headed for home.

We hadn't gone far, flying over the clouds, when approximately 20 ME 109s and about the same number of FW 190s came up out of the clouds. The gunners didn't see them until they were hitting us, probably with 20 MM cannons, some exploding I think on contact and some timed. We were soon burning from one and possibly more direct hits, one was under the flight deck. I was in the top turret over the flight deck. I immediately dropped from the turret and opened the bomb bay doors. My pilot, Theodore G. Poole, motioned for me to leave. I snapped on my chest pack chute to the hooks on the harness I was wearing, unhooked my oxygen tube from the main system, and dove out through the open bomb bay doors head first.

I didn't open my parachute until I had gone through the first layer of clouds, and away from the German fighters, who were still firing at some of the bombers and possibly in a dog fight with some of our fighter escort. The parachute opened with quite a jerk and looked very small up over me. I threw the chute release handle and oxygen mask away and waited for the jolt I expected when I hit the ground, but I was over the Alps mountains and they were shrouded with fog. So I hit pretty unexpectedly on the ice, well above the vegetation or timber line. It was

approximately 1200 hours when I hit the ice. I of course was so scared and almost out of breath, so I lay still for a few minutes while getting some deep breaths and to decide if I was still OK.

I then got out of my chute and started looking for a way to get off the mountain. By dark I still hadn't found a way off the mountain as I couldn't see very well because of the fog. So I went back to my chute, cut the shroud lines and rolled up in it as it was pretty cold and the fog was almost like rain.

The chute kept me fairly warm, but that night sleep wouldn't come to me as I was thinking of a way off that mountain. There just had to be a way. I did a lot of praying and thinking for about ten hours.

The next day, 4 August, the fog had cleared some and I finally got down off the ice with the help of the shroud lines. I tied them together as needed to put around rock ledges or clumps of ice so I could slide down from where I landed. Some places I couldn't have made it without the shroud lines and I may still be there. Then I made pretty good time down to the timber line and on down to flat land. I could see fields of corn and vegetables in the valley and thought I had a chance to make the Swiss border by sleeping during the day and traveling by night. I was going to try, but I learned later it would have been hopeless.

I walked within two or three miles of a fair sized village which I think was Imst, Austria. I was tired, worried, hungry and sleepy, as it was warm down where I was then. Before I lay down to sleep I could hear some pounding over the hill from me, so I picked up some pretty thick branches and laid down. Soon I was sleeping. I had only been asleep about an hour when I was awakened by some one running in the leaves. It was a woman headed toward the village.

Soon I heard some rifle shots; German soldiers were coming up toward the mountain shooting in heavy clumps of bushes, but I had hid well in a hole full of leaves where a large tree had blown over. After the four or five soldiers had gone on up in the foot hills I thought I best get my 48 gold seal dollar bills out and turn myself into whoever was doing the pounding in the distance. So I hurried over and found an old man and boy six or seven years old, working on a little one room cabin. I went up to them with my hands up thinking perhaps the man would take my money and hide me out. He said in broken English - "Americana, are you ill." I shook my head, no, and sat down on the ground watching him. He said a few words to the boy as I gave him my money.

The boy took off running, and in a short while he was back with some milk, a little piece of dark bread and some fat raw pork side. I ate the bread and drank the milk, but wasn't hungry enough for raw fat meat as I had had breakfast the day before. I put the meat in my pocket, I thought for later use.

Then the old man picked up his tools and marched me down to the village to a little stone house, opened the door, and motioned me in. There was a large picture of Hitler on the wall and two German officers who spoke to me in pretty good English. One of them was holding a Luger, I think, in one hand by his side, and he said, "Sergeant, the war is over for you." Then I was really scared as I figured he was going to use that Luger on me. They asked me a lot of questions to which I answered, "Sorry sir, name, rank, and serial number."

I still had my heavy flying suit on, fur boots, and all, and was about to roast. So I took my jacket off, but still had my flight coveralls, heavy fur lined pants, a suit of khakis, heavy underwear and shorts and undershirt on. They let me take my fur lined pants off and made me walk up through the

main street and back, carrying my heavy boots, jacket, and pants. Then they were on the phone for quite some time. By now it was getting nearly dark. The two officers put me in a little Opel automobile and took me to Tilfe, Austria where they met two soldiers. The soldiers took me to a civilian house, probably belonging to some of their family. They gave me some white cheese, dark bread and milk, then put me in a small room with no window and locked a very heavy door. There was a cot or couch in there and I didn't sleep much again that night. They gave me a bucket in case I had to go to the bathroom.

The next morning when they let me out



Conard while on leave after his return to the U. S.

of the room it was about 0800. They had two other crew members from our group whom I didn't know. Soon a truck came and took the three of us to Innsbruck. There they had four more flyers they had captured, making it seven in all. There they put us on a train to Munich. We had six guards and I was very thankful for them when we went into the railroad station in Munich. The civilians tried to get to us, but the guards kept them away by treating some pretty rough. I flew on the mission when we had bombed Munich a few days before and there were buildings still burning and water every where. The station had been a nice one, but it was a shambles now.

They brought some more POWs to the

station. We waited a couple hours and were put in a box car, then through Frankfurt to Oberursel, where we were interrogated for a few days. Then shipped to Wetslar for a few more days. A few days later we were moved to St. Wendel. Everywhere we were shipped the crowd of POWs became larger. After four days there we were taken to the train station where we had all our shoes taken away, put in burlap sacks, and then put in another box car. The guards crowded us in each end of the box cars and then put barbed wired across the door way so we were fenced in. They had bales of straw in the doorway to ride on. We had the bare wood floors with two or three buckets for bath rooms.

We had a few days riding and laying over for repairs to the tracks and went through several little towns, but had no idea where we were going. As we were nearing Stargard the guards told us we would soon be in a permanent camp. When we arrived at the station of Keifheide the guards poured our shoes out along the track and became pretty impatient that we were having trouble finding our own shoes.

The guards were met there by more guards from the camp along with lots of dogs. Once we found all our shoes they hustled us up the road to the new camp. The camp was Stalag Luft 4, a large camp at Grosstychow. I was first sent in Lager A and then moved to Lager C.

There were approximately 10,000 Americans and English POWs at all times plus the Russians who did the dirty work. We weren't far from the Baltic Sea and had lots of snow beginning December 12th. The German rations were slim - potatoes boiled in vats with dirt and skins, barley soup, some carrots, and small rations of dark bread with some oleomargarine for the bread. The bread had 8% pine saw dust in it as a filler and at times I think more than 8%. On occasion we got a Red Cross parcel. We had some news passed around through the barracks received, I think, by the English and passed to the Americans. Most of our guards were old and could speak English fairly well and during the battle of the bulge they would bring their newspaper in the barracks and read the bad news to us, and tell us we would be kept in Germany after they won the war to help repair the damage we had done to their country.

The barracks were built up off the ground on posts, so all the wind would blow under and make the floor cold. We had

shutters for the windows that had to be put on at night as we could have lights until 2100 hours. We would take the shutters and scrape snow up against the barracks, so the wind could not get under the floor. They would chase us out of the barracks, usually twice daily, to count us. They were pretty poor at counting after we were lined up, so we stood in the snow sometimes for very long periods. For Christmas we had Red Cross parcels and the Germans gave us cocoa, barley soup, and some of our own C rations.

About the middle of January there were rumors that the Russians would be coming in before long and we would be moved, so we made back packs out of any material we could find. We had lots of needles and thread. Some were made of shirt or coat material sent in by the English and American Red Cross. So we were ready to carry our necessities in a pack on our back. We all had a "Klim Can", a powdered milk can to do some cooking in and many items we could use when we were gathered together. Around the first of February the Germans told us if we moved out they would keep us in factories and houses at night, so on the morning of the 6th of February C Lager was evacuated. As we passed a warehouse outside of the camp we were each given a Red Cross parcel. We began the march with our packs and our two blankets rolled in a roll and tied so we could carry these over our shoulders around our neck. There was approximately 2500 of us in C Lager and, after a day or so, we were split up. The group I was with took a south westerly direction.

We all had lost lots of weight, had dysentery and plenty of body lice. We slept in snow or rain more than in barns or factories. In some of the barns we would find wheat and dried shredded sugar beets for cattle feed. The wheat was pretty good tasting and I am sure healthy for us. One night we found some chickens, which we ate

Some men died in the barns or fields at night with pneumonia

raw. It was hard to chew and not very tasty.

Some men died in the barns or fields at night with pneumonia. Some became too weak to walk and fell out along the road for the civilians to take care of, which I'm sure wasn't good.

We met a lot of German refugees traveling over the country looking for a place to go after their homes had been destroyed. They were old men, old women, and small children traveling mostly in covered wagons pulled by horses or oxen. I felt sorry for

them although I was going through much worse treatment. One night we were staying in barns on a large farm that had some Polish forced labor. One of the women traded me a loaf of bread for my high school class ring. About the time that loaf of bread was gone we were staying where they had forced labor again, and this time I traded a good watch for five loaves of bread and about a pound of fat pork side which I scraped off with my knife and spread on my bread as we would butter. This way it lasted quite awhile, but got very dirty in my pocket. When we stayed in barns I dug a hole in the hay or straw so I could sleep over my bread to keep my buddies from taking it. I wrapped part of it in my blanket to carry it. It lasted me quite awhile as I rationed myself to about 2 1/2 inches off a loaf each day, and by the time it was all gone it had gotten so dirty that I was eating almost as much dirt as bread. We marched 53 days and some say about 700 miles. On

We marched 53 days and some say 700 miles

the eve of 30 March we marched into an old camp, Stalag 11-A at Altengrabow, near the Elbe river and near Magdeburg. In this camp they sent POWs out on farms or bombed out railroads if you didn't have much rank and had to work of course. They worked all the Russians as they didn't belong to the Geneva convention. In this camp they had old Italian officers and other nationalities also. They put us in a large circus tent to sleep on the ground and had to sleep with your shoes on or some other nationality would slip through to the tent at night and remove them. About the middle of April food was getting very scarce. Rumors were that we would have food soon or be liberated. The front lines were close enough we could hear some heavy guns faintly; just a rumble. On May first word came that we would get food soon, or be liberated under a truce agreement.

On May third we were liberated. The English and Americans were taken out first. I was taken to an air base at Hildesheim, Germany, where we had a cold shower, dusted with DDT powder for the lice and given a clean uniform. They had lots of good food here, but our stomachs had shrunk so much that we couldn't eat much at a time, therefore, hungry again in an hour or so, but we could go back for egg nog between meals. On the eight of May the day, the war was officially over, I was flown by C-47 to La Harve, France and taken to Camp Lucky Strike by truck. At Camp Lucky Strike we had lots of good food also. On May 10 & 11th I was processed to ship out, but was found to have a temperature with a slight

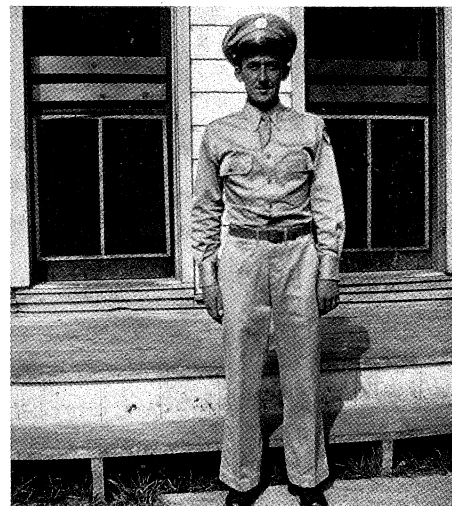
attack of pneumonia and sent to the 77th Field Hospital. On the 13th I was moved to the 179th General Hospital at Rouen, France. I took a lot of penicillin to clear me up. On the 17th I was moved to the 217th General Hospital in Paris. After a few days I was moved to Cherbourg to await for a ship home. On May 31st I left Cherbourg in my pajamas to board a hospital ship named after the first American nurse killed in WWII, "Aleda E. Lutz." It was a converted French luxury liner, and arrived in Charleston, South Carolina. There I was taken to Fort Jackson and issued a new uniform, ribbons, wings, and all. I received a \$500 partial payment and a pass to town. I had my mustache, which I had started in PW camp, trimmed and waxed. In a couple days I was asked what hospital I wanted to be checked through. I asked for Walter Reed in Washington, D. C. They flew me up there, checked me over for a week and gave me my 75 day furlough.

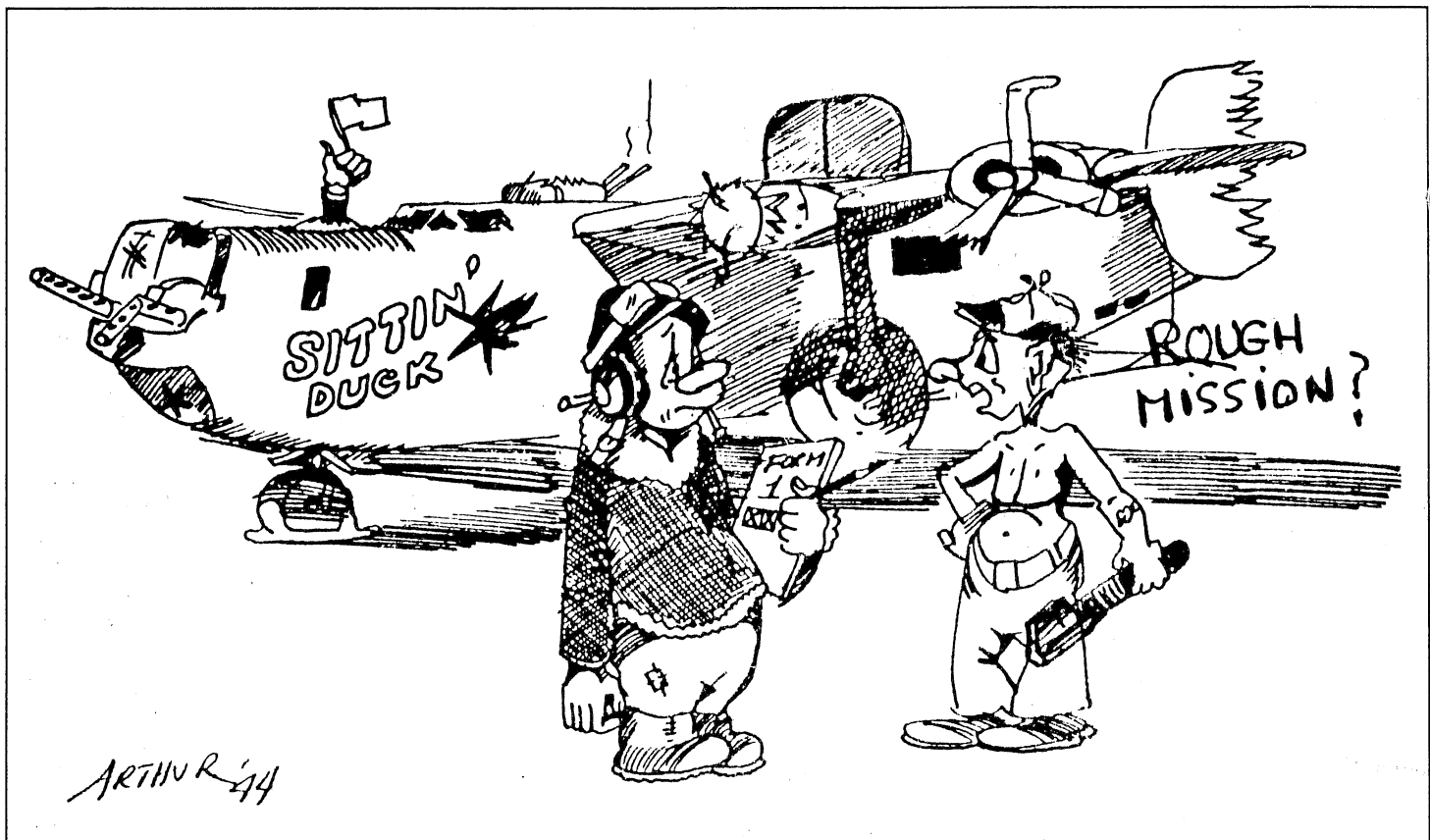
At Stalag 4 Conard learned from a crew member of another crew that his pilot, Theodore Poole got killed because his chute didn't open. Conard believes he was blown out of the plane when it exploded and was either killed then or knocked unconscious and unable to open his chute.

The MACR reveals that some Austrians and a German soldier told a crew member that Poole's chute did not open and was found dead near the plane crash. Another crew member, T/Sgt Albert S. Hill, tail gunner, was believed to have bailed out, but another reported he was killed or wounded and remained in his turret. Since Hill was not taken POW, or heard of again it is most likely the later occurred.

From reports of another plane going down in the same area (Innsbruck, Austria) one crew member bailed out and was not found. In letters to the family after the war his body was still not found and believed to be on top of an Alps mountain.

Below is Conard before his POW experiences.





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