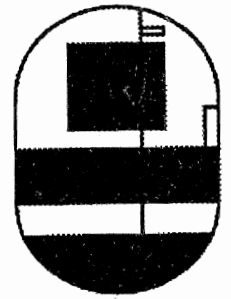




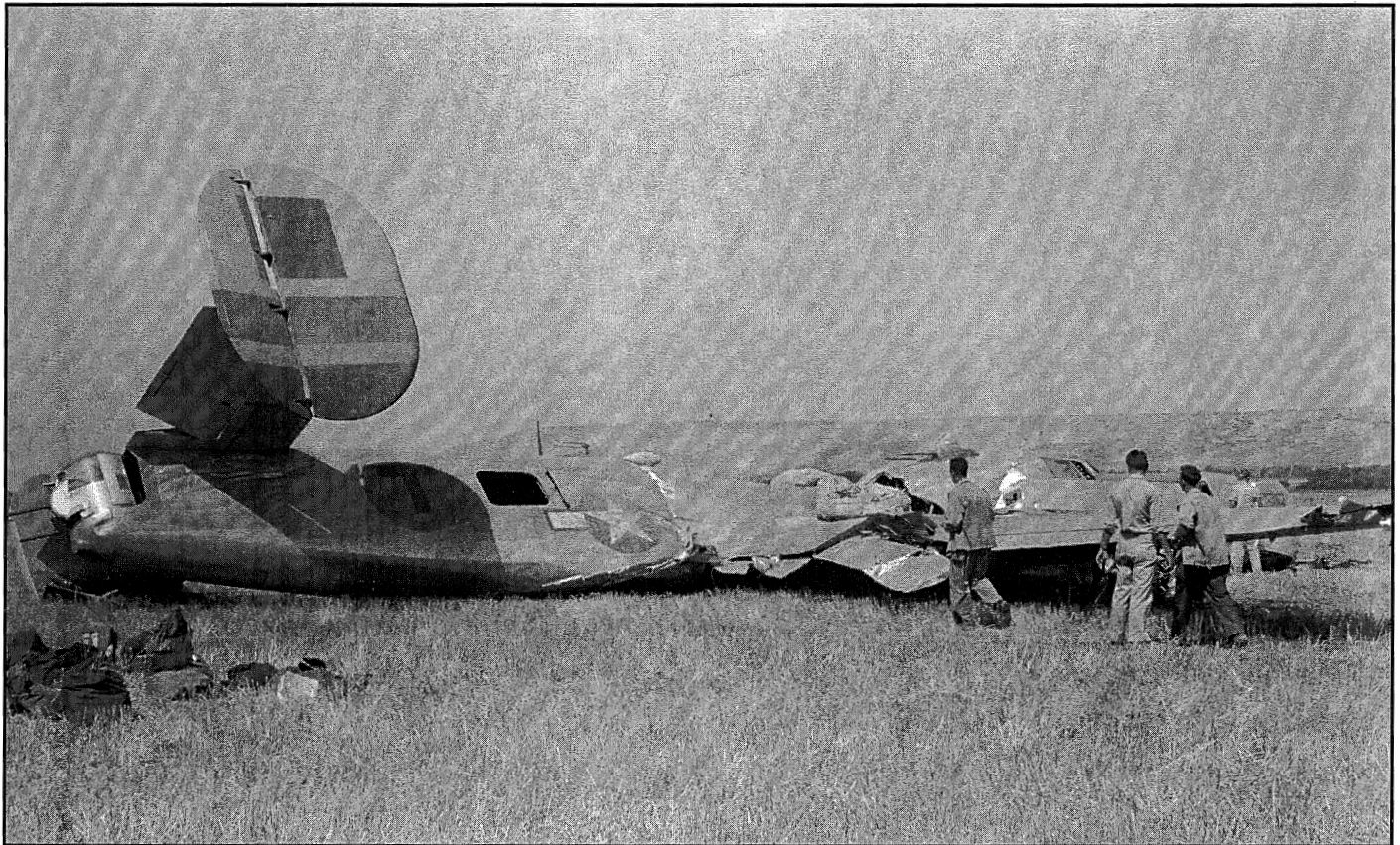
PANTANELLA NEWS



July 2001

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NUMBER 65



Harry Carl took this picture at Pantanella.
Can you identify the plane or the incident?

ENEMY FIGHTER ACTIVITY

By Otis Scott, 782nd Bomb Squadron

MISSION #12: 24 May '44
O/R Vienna Nuestadt. 3

ME 109's attacked from between 6:00, 7:00 and 8:00 o'clock, position, breaking high, one breaking to the right and claimed destroyed, one breaking to the left and also destroyed; third also broke left and did not return. 3 FW 190's approached at 12 o'clock position, one attacking C box and was claimed as destroyed.

MISSION #16: 29 May '44 M/Y Vienna We received attacks by enemy fighters' and our score, unconfirmed, shows two claims against no losses.

MISSION #22: 6 June '44 O/R Ploesti 12 to 18 ME 109's attacked from 6:00, 7:00, and 8:00 o'clock from both high and low, singly, in pairs and in groups of four. Several of these

planes passed under the formation and cut back again from 2:00 and 3:00 o'clock high. 3 FW 190's attacked singly from 6:00 and 7.00 low. All attacks were made at 20,000' to 22,000' in the target area. 3 ME 109's claimed destroyed, 1 FW190, 1 Me 110 claimed destroyed, 4 ME 109's probably destroyed.

**MIS
SION #24:**
9 June '44
A/D Munich

Approximately 40 ME 109's and 10 FW 190s Attacked the formation at 23,000'. Attacks were made singly, one after another in groups of fives from 6:00 o'clock level. The fighters started to fire at 600 yards, closed in to 100 yards and broke away down to the right. They continued their attack for from 10 to 15 minutes. Several of these planes were reported to be using a new type gun which had a flak like burst or shotgun effect. 2 ME 109's were claimed destroyed, and 1 FW 190 probably destroyed.

MISSION #29: 16 June '44 O/R Vienna There were approximately 20 encounters, mostly ME 110's, ME 210's, 410's and JU 88's. They attacked singly, in pairs and in three's from all positions of the clock, but mostly from the nose. Attacks were generally nonaggressive in wide sweeping curves around the ships and in to the nose, waist, and tail. Claims were 1 ME 109, 1 JU 88 or ME 210 destroyed, 1 JU 88, 2

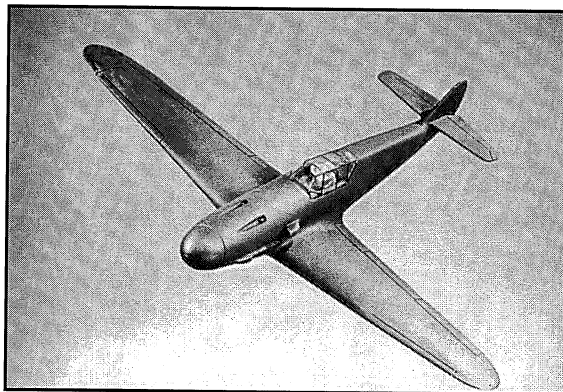
ME 110's and ME 210's damaged.

MISSION #30: 22 June '44 M/Y Bologna, Italy 5 to 8 ME 109's attacked from the tail from 5:00 and 7:00 o'clock in two's and in three's from high and level. Attacks were aggressive and closed within 150 yards 1 MC 202 and 5 ME 109's attacked

"fox box" in formation, diving at terrific speed in what was described as a "combination dive bombing and strafing maneuver". No bombs were actually dropped, but the axis of attack was almost straight down. 2 ME 109's were claimed destroyed, and 3 ME 109's were claimed damaged.

MISSION #33: 26 June '44 O/R Vienna 15 or 20 aircraft were encountered in the target area, mostly ME 109's, JU 88's, some ME 110's and ME 210's. 17 encounters were reported at low, level, and high at 12:00 o'clock in line abreast with the planes breaking to the right and left of the formation with the middle plane diving low and climbing up sharply to attack the bellies of the bombers. 1 ME 109 and 1 ME 110 claimed destroyed, 1 JUN 88 damaged and 1 FW 190 as probable.

MISSION #34: 28 June '44 O/R Bucharest One FW



ME-109

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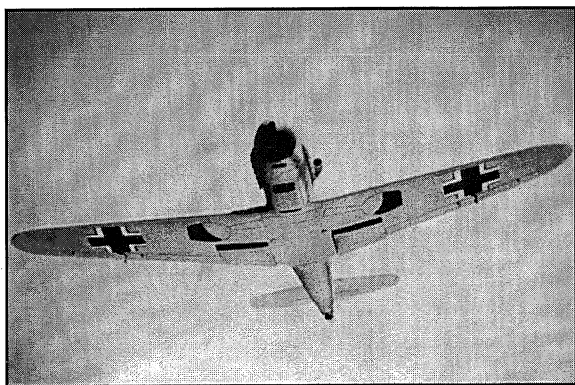
Loren W. Foote

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 WWII (1944-1945). 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.

190 was encountered at the target and made 3 passes from below at 7:00 o'clock. 1 JU 88 made a head on attack, another FW 190 made a pass at 10:00 o'clock level and was claimed destroyed, 1 ME 109 came in at 6:00 o'clock in a steep climb' and was destroyed.

MISSION #36: 2 July '44



FW-190

M/Y Budapest There were two encounters with enemy aircraft over the target. The first as an attack by an ME 109 at 20,000 ft. The attack was made from 7:00 o'clock level with breakaway below. The aircraft passed underneath and then climbed up on the side and made the second pass from above. The second encounter was also by an ME 109. This attack was made from 9:00 o'clock, the aircraft making a large oval and closing to approximately 200 yards. Slight damage to the right wing was sustained by the aircraft attacked.

MISSION #42: 22 July '44 M/Y Nimes, Fr. There were approximately 109 encounters from ME 109's, 13 encounters from FW 190's, and 2 encounters from ME 110's. These encounters took place between 7108 hours and 1720 hours at 21,000

ft. from 20 miles east of Tarascon to Nimes. About 75% of the attacks made by the ME 109's were from 11:00 o'clock high and level singly and in groups of two and three.

The bulk of these attacks were made on the formation leader and it was quite apparent that they were trying to destroy him. When they attacked in pairs the first a/c of the two would generally dive away to the right or left while the second would press his attack then split "S" down under the formation. When three attacked, the first would pass over the top of the formation high as a diversion while the other two pressed home their attack. In a majority of cases, these a/c that dived under able box returned to attack baker box, dog box, or easy box at 6:00 o'clock several of the ME 109's appeared to slow-roll through the formation while others went straight through both attack units from the nose to tail.

Our gunners could not fire at these e/a for fear of hitting other B-24's in the formation. The aggressiveness of the attacks and the handling of the e/a indicated a very high level of experience, or great recklessness on the part of their pilots. It is believed that there were not more than 20 ME 109's making these attacks. Some were silver with black wing/ some silver with green markings, some blue-grey with red spinners, others were dirty grey and some had black spinners and yellow spinners.

The FW 120's generally attacked in pairs from 10:00 o'clock to 12:00 o'clock high breaking away and down at about 1000 yds without pressing home their attacks. There were approximately 4 FW 190's making these attacks and they were either blue or silver colored with dark fuselages. Two ME 110's with red crosses under their wings made an unaggressive attack on one a/c in the formation. The following claims were made: 8 ME 109's destroyed, 2 ME 109's probably destroyed, and 2 ME 109's damaged.

MISSION #46: 16 July '44 A/C Factory Vienna 40 to 50 enemy aircraft were seen. 40 a/c were encountered between 1012 and 1030 hours between Lake Balaton and the target at 24,000 ft. 25 to 30 were ME 109's and 15 to 20 were FW 190's. Almost all attacks were made from 11 and 12 o'clock high, down through the formation and out at 5 and 6 o'clock. Some leveled off and passed through the formation. Tactics also included attempts from small groups of e/a to decoy the escort away from the formation and when successful, additional fighters would close in and attack from the opposite direction. This tactic was successfully repeated several times and crewmen said that the enemy planes were very aggressive in their attacks on the escort. According to reports, the enemy aircraft did not drop their extra fuel tank when they attacked the bombers.

This information was compiled from monthly summaries for the months of May

and June of 1944, the first two months that the 465th Bomb Group operated out of the Pantanella Army Air Base. Details for the month of July 1944 and subsequent months through April 1945 are from Narrative Mission Reports which were written and submitted to the 55th Bombardment Wing for each mission flown.

Target abbreviations:

O/R - Oil Refinery
M/Y - Marshaling Yard
A/D - Airdrome
A/C - Aircraft factory
- Aircraft works

Editor: The remainder of this article will be printed in a later NEWSLETTER.

PERSONAL WORLD WAR II STORIES

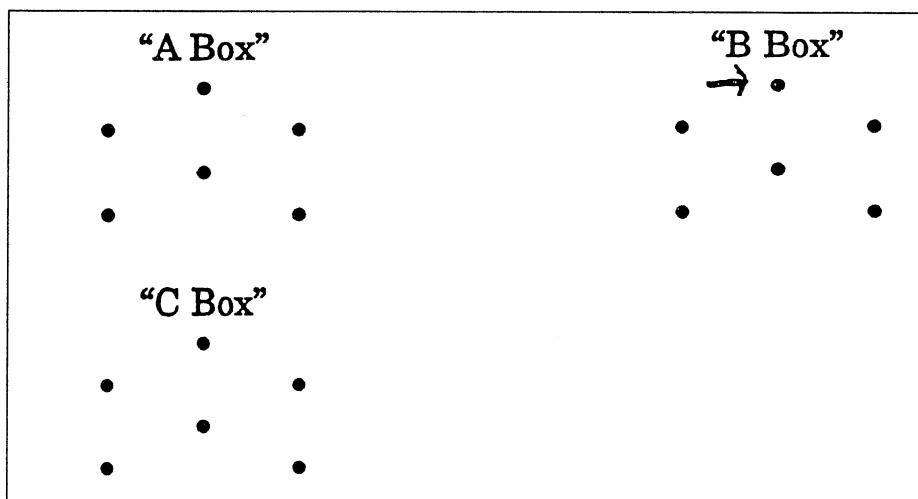
By Milton Levinson

This article is extracted from a book written by Milt , Dahl Crew's Nose Gunner, and printed in 1995, relating some of his wartime experiences. Ed.

December 20, 1944

Today's target was the Brux Oil Refineries located on the border between Czechoslovakia and Germany. Operations forecast was flak: accurate, heavy and intense. This would be no milk run. Takeoff time was 8:00 a.m. The field was shrouded with mist.

Our ship was the new I



Model, named Yellow R There were computing gunsights for the nose, tail and waist gunners. AU we had to do was insert the altitude and speed. When we sighted the guns we put the dot directly on the target and the computer automatically lead the target.

The crew was on edge as we knew it would be a long trip and we should be over enemy territory for an extended period of time. Takeoff was again routine. We formed up at our customary altitude and departed on course. We had a favorable overcast at about 10,000 feet. We were all hoping the overcast would last until we reached the target areas so the bombing would be done by PFF, meaning taking minimal flak.

Our escort of P-51's and P-38's reached us on time. The crucial moment arrived when we started our run on the I.P. We were leading Baker Box, grouped to the right of A Box, with C Box directly behind A (See illustration above).

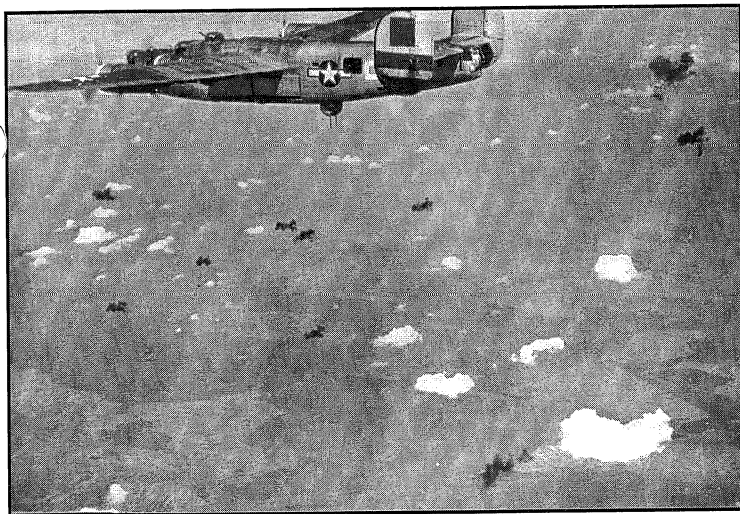
Flak suits had been donned, flak helmets put on, switches off, my 50 caliber guns

were pointing down and the rear turret doors were open to facilitate swift exit in case of a bailout. On cue, the flak appeared, breaking very close to our left, directly in front and then above us.

About this time I had opened my communications line with the Fellow Upstairs again. The interphone interrupted my thoughts when I heard the bombardier say Milt, let me know when bombs are away on the lead ship."

Silently, I cursed him for making me observe the deadly flak curtain appearing in front of us. I put my personal feelings aside and concentrated my attention on the lead ship. I saw the bombs drop from the lead ship and quickly called back to the bombardier, "Bombs Away."

I could see the end of the flak barrage directly ahead. The Germans had our speed and altitude and were reaching up into our area so that escape seemed to be impossible if we continued our present course. Suddenly our ship banked very sharply to the left, clearing flak



alley in the wink of an eye.

The entire crew felt the instant joyful elation that comes with the realization that we had a new lease on life. The bombardier announced joyously that in the excitement, he had broken off the toggle switch for the bomb release. Our troubles seemed over for today.

Later, during our return flight I felt the flow of oxygen from my hose start to diminish and I had difficulty breathing properly. I disconnected my oxygen hose and crumbled the flexible section to crack the ice that had formed inside and was blocking my oxygen supply. I then reconnected my hose to the oxygen supply but was still unable to bring any appreciable oxygen into my mask. I called the pilot over the interphone to advise him of my problem. Rocky, the bombardier, handed me a walk-around battle of oxygen. I attached it to my mask, but it wouldn't draw.

The mask was completely frozen inside the passageway. Rocky saw my predicament, snatched off his mask, handing it

to me saying, "Hell, you need it more than me. I'll suck on an oxygen hose connection" I felt a deep feeling of relief and gratitude towards this man. Here is what we call a Dependable

Joe. An act

like this deserves a medal, in my opinion, but the brass are never aware of these acts of bravery. It was 41 years later that I remembered and sent a letter of thanks to Rocky!

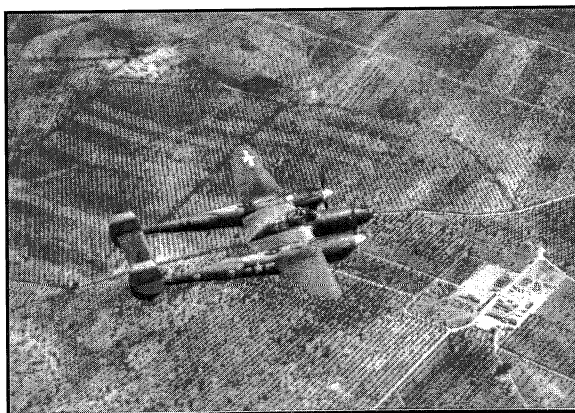
Our escorts of P-38's wove a safety pattern over our group. We droned on hour after hour, over plains, snow covered Alps, and then finally saw the Adriatic. Dark storm clouds lay in our course.

Our ship lost altitude gradually as the pilot tried to fly under the thick ceiling. Suddenly we had a small break in the cloud cover and could see Barletta, a small Italian seaport town we used for a checkpoint to reach home base. We were now down to 3000 feet with 5 other ships in our box.

Another break in the over-

cast enabled me to see mountains rising up on both sides of us. In another instant we were swallowed up by the solid cloud cover. It was raining, and the water was leaking down my neck from an opening in the nose turret. I started to panic as I knew the lack of visibility would result in our hitting a mountain and none of us would survive. Suddenly I saw a break in the overcast. The pilot and I evidently saw the mountains at the same time. He banked the ship sharply, heading out to sea again.

I crawled out of my turret, airsick from the sudden fright and the very bumpy air. I made my way to the flight deck where I hunched in a corner and puked into my flak helmet. This time our pilot picked up the seacoast town again, skirted the coastline for a few more miles, then turned inland through a break in the overcast.



This time we made it to our field and landed safely. We had been in the air for eight hours and forty minutes. I was quite

sick and trying to wrench on an empty stomach. I went to bed after that mission and stayed there for two days. I now had 11 sorties completed—24 to finish. Time: 8 hours and 15 minutes. Nothing seems to be getting any easier for Milt Levinson.

781st Bomb Squadron Crews Shot Down Over Enemy Territory

Harold B. Farrar 2-13-97 (Revised 3/13/00)

Sheet 3 of 4

<u>Date</u>	<u>TARGET/CREW</u>	<u>Status</u>	<u>Prison Camp</u>	<u>Remarks</u>
<u>10/13/44</u> # 12	<u>Blechhammer/Gaines Crew</u> George Gaines Murray Knowles Francis Clark Lewis Deslatte Karl Brown Charles Murray Lawrence Tiehen Thomas McNew Edward Chapin	P C/P N E R/O G G G G	MIA/Evade POW POW POW MIA/Evade POW POW POW POW	Polish Civilians Luft III Prison Hospital Luft IV Polish Civilians Luft IV Luft IV Luft IV Prison Hospital
<u>11/20/44</u> # 13	<u>Blechhammer/Lokker</u> Lt. Col. Clarence Lokker Grosvenor Rice Joseph Whelan	P N Radr	KIA KIA KIA	Flying with Group, Squadron C.O. Smith Crew
<u>12/16/44</u> # 14	<u>Bruce, Czech./Blakita Crew</u> Michael Blakita Marion Pitts William Cassel David Coleman Howard Weistling Truman Leath Alvin Hellman Ralph Leach Dean Otto Donald Stern	P C/P B N E R/O G G G G G	POW POW POW POW POW POW POW POW POW POW POW	Luft I Luft I Luft I Luft I Luft I Luft I Luft I Luft I Luft I Luft I Luft I
<u>12/17/44</u> # 15	<u>Blechhammer/Mullan Crew</u> Alfred Mullan Hyman Newman Richard Heaney Lester Hershey John Hogan Melvin Gilliam Deverett Allen Earl Culpepper Crawford Barnhart Chester Mijal	P C/P B N E R/O G G G G G	MIA MIA MIA MIA MIA MIA MIA MIA MIA MIA MIA	Land in field under Russian control, then to Rumania, and return to Italy. Bakita Crew Newman Crew
<u>12/18/44</u> # 16	<u>Blechhammer/Clodfelter Crew</u> Donald Clodfelter Virgil Christian John Wilson Turner Atkins Robert Elliott Joseph Joubanc Robert Munson Charles Hemphill Walter Leitgeb Royal Wilson	P C/P B N E R/O G G G G G	MIA/Evade MIA/ Evade MIA/Evade MIA/Evade MIA/Evade MIA/Evade MIA/Evade MIA/Evade MIA/Evade MIA/Evade MIA/Evade	Help by Hungarian Partisans/ Russians All Crew Bigler Crew
<u>12/19/44</u> # 17	<u>Marlbor, Yugo./Griffith Crew</u> James Griffith Bruce Cosper James Burns Ray Laughner John Hart William Russell Attilio Benvenuto Richard Carlson Dempsey Brett Lee Stutzman	P C/P B N E R/O G G G G G	KIA KIA POW POW KIA KIA KIA KIA POW POW KIA	Luft I Luft I Hospital Stalag XIIID, VIIA PW Camp ??

Note: Stalag's VIIA, XIB, & XIIID Multi-National Forces - 100,000+ POW's each Camp. Luft I & Luft III Air Force Officers Camp, & Luft IV Air Force Enlisted Mens Camp - 10,000 POW's each Camp.

781st Bomb Squadron Crews Shot Down Over Enemy Territory

Harold B. Farrar 2-13-97 (Revised 3/13/00)

Sheet 4 of 4

<u>Date</u>	<u>TARGET/CREW</u>	<u>Status</u>	<u>Prison Camp</u>	<u>Remarks</u>
<u>2/5/45</u> # 18	<u>Regensburg/Jones Crew</u> Robert Jones William Dobbs Joseph Ormes Arthur Silver Howard Fox Charles Duffield Roscoe Fee Carrol Elmore Bernard Reardon Vernon Ellsworth	P C/P B N E R/O G G G G	KIA KIA KIA KIA KIA KIA KIA KIA KIA KIA	Donahue Crew
<u>2/16/45</u> # 19	<u>Regensburg/Newman Crew</u> Hyman Newman Roy Rice Lewis Cato Chester Mijal George Painter Thomas Carmody Kieth Lancaster Charles Bradley Monore Beebe	P C/P N E R/O G G G G	MIA MIA MIA MIA MIA MIA MIA MIA MIA	Bailed out over friendly Italian Territory
<u>3/1/45</u> # 20	<u>Vienna/Smith Crew</u> William J. Smith Stanley Winkowski Arthur Bovett Gaythor Cass Richard Bigler Charles Thein Paul Ihde Robert Cohlma Arnold McElwain Donald Postema James Hinton	P C/P B N Radr E R/O G G G G	MIA MIA MIA MIA MIA MIA MIA MIA MIA MIA MIA	Land on airfield in Hungary under Russian control Crutcher Crew
<u>3/2/45</u> # 21	<u>Amstetten, Austria/French Crew</u> Robert French Kenneth Parkhurst David Bowman William Briggs Frederick Wagner Francis Donohue Harold Quagan Denny Horton Lehman Wood	P C/P N E R/O G G G G	MIA MIA MIA MIA MIA MIA MIA MIA MIA	Bail out in friendly Hungarian Territory under Russian Control
<u>3/14/45</u> # 22	<u>Nove Zamby, Hungary/Martz Crew</u> Robert Martz William Bradley Peter Renzo Lester Hershey Harold Long Herbert Volle Vincent Beeson George Smith William Brannon Willis DeForest Edward Dworetzky Joseph Gallelli	P C/P B N N Radr E R/O G G G G	KIA KIA KIA KIA KIA KIA POW KIA KIA KIA KIA KIA	Mullan Crew Donahue Crew Stalag VIIA
<u>3/22/45</u> # 23	<u>Vienna/Group Aircraft</u> Ernest Alden Alfred Maas Paul Durckel	Radr E N	KIA KIA POW	Stalag VIIA McDaniel Crew

INTERLUDES AND VISIONS

The die is cast, the bell has rung,
the parade has ended, its finale sung.
The engines have "shut down" one by one.
The cockpit is empty, its job now done.

But wait, . . . is that cockpit really still?
Don't you hear the cadence of a check-list drill?
Can't you hear the starter begin its whine;
can't you see the props, cut an arc so fine?

Does your body recoil at the noise you hear,
as those four big engines charge the air?
Can you sense the power that's the pilots' tool
when he "walls" the throttles to "pour on" the fuel?

Do you feel the tension, or has it dimmed by time,
when you sat by the runway, all revved and prime;
and to know the pilot, on the early roll,
is lining er' up, with his rudder control?

Can you feel the drama, as you lift and climb,
n' search for your leader; fighting the time?
Can you see the earth slip away 'neath our wings,
and not remember just some of these things?

Does the tone of those voices, spoke in haste, not in dread,
give an uneasy feeling of what lies ahead?
Could that knot in your stomach return once again,
to the words, "I see fighters . . . keep an eye on 'em men!"

Would the smell of raw cordite, in that high atmosphere,
give you feelings of anger, or tremors of fear?
Could you forget the numbness of sub-freezing cold,
would your blood run hot, from these visions retold?

Would you still feel compassion, for the ship and its men,
who are drifting away, trailing smoke without end?
Do your thoughts still evoke those pleas turned to shouts.
"Tom's ship really had it. . . why don't they bail out?"

Do you still count the chutes, as you did way back then?
". . . that's seven and eight . . . ,com' on nine and ten!"
Does your mind still consider, "If that had been me,
would my comrades remember, would my folks pray for me?"
So a look in the cockpit that is empty and still,
brings back shadows of comrades, dangers, and thrills.
Tho we close down the hatch, turn away engines' roar,

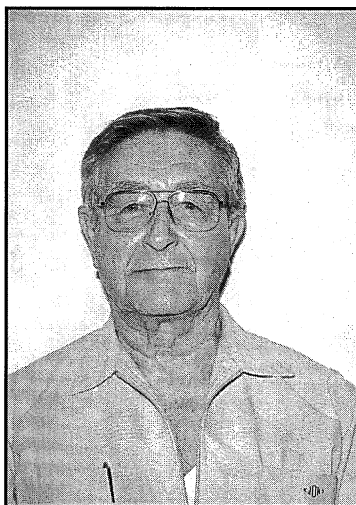
Sent in by Les Wheeler noting it was a reprint from 451st Bomb Group. Les notes, "Enclosed find a poem that every air crew member will understand. Tears came into my eyes when I read it. The feelings this poem brought back will never pass away as long as we live. Ed.

The following article was prepared by John Ogden at our Editor's request to acquaint more of us with the background of our new Squadron Treasurer.

I was born in Binghamton, NY, on May 25, 1924, the son of a school teacher and an Army Officer. There was nothing particularly outstanding in my childhood through High School, except moving around a bit in pursuit of Dad's career. I have lived in Ohio, Illinois and Texas, most of the time. High School graduation found me at Lamar Senior High School, Houston, TX in 1942. Being a gung ho army brat, there was nothing for me to do at that time, but volunteer for service, which I did on June 25, 1942. I moved first to Camp Bullis, TX. Thence to Sheperd Field TX, where I took basic training. The only place in the world where you can stand in mud above your ankles, and have dust blowing in your face!

From there, I matriculated to Armament School at Buckley Field, CO. Somehow along that path, I succeeded in establishing that I was not physically qualified for flight duty, mostly eye problems as far as I know, although there is nothing severely wrong with them. I graduated as an Aircraft Armorer in December of that year.

My first assignment was with the 9th Anti-Submarine Command stationed at 36th street Army Air Base, in Miami, FL. The unusual part of that assignment was that it was a regular army unit. Prior to the war it had been the 80th Bombard-



John W. Ogden
Treasurer

ment Squadron, stationed at Dover, DE and flying B-18's. The B-18 was excellent for sub patrol work because it was slow. In case you don't know what one looked like, (Highly probable), it was a two-engine light bomber; a small look alike to the B-17. The 9th was stationed in Miami for about 18 months. Since the B-18 was already obsolete, it was necessary to replace it with something more modern.

The crews of these aircraft were all enlisted men, with sergeant pilots, navigators and bombardiers. They were good, too. The 9th developed an enviable record of German wolf pack submarines sunk and/or beached in their patrol area, which included a large hunk of the Atlantic Coast and about a third of the Caribbean. The sub patrol continued while the organization matriculated through the A-20(not enough range), the B-26(too hot to handle on take-off and landing and too fast for anti-sub work), the B-25(slower on landing and takeoff but still

too fast for anti-sub use), to the B-24. The crews found that, by feathering a couple of engines, they were pretty good replacements for the old B-18. We used 500 pound bombs with a hunk of concrete on the nose (to make them sink!) as a weapon.

The Navy took over the Anti-sub work early in 1944 and the ninth was transferred to Davis-Monthan Field, in Tucson, to become a cadre for a B-24 Bomb Group. One problem with being in a regular army outfit was that there was no advancement. I arrived at Davis-Monthan as a pfc, after almost two years of service. I thought that I was in a spot to make up for lost time, but no such luck! The 465th needed armorers and they had a higher priority than the 9th. As the low man on the totem pole, I was transferred. I joined the 781st at McCook. The squadron CO took pity on me, and found another stripe for me. I finished my WW II service as a corporal. I never have thought that was great, especially for a man who had teethed on a Springfield '03.

Service in the American Theater did become valuable at the end. I left the 781st at Pantanella on points in May, 1945, served a brief stint at Foggia, where the aircraft were being accumulated, then on to Naples for the boat ride home. I was on the first troop ship to arrive in Boston after VJ day in Japan. That was some welcome! After that I was routed for my discharge to Aurora, IL where, on September 4, 1945, I found my piece of paper.

John W. Ogden, contd.

My service did not end there. I joined the 37th infantry Division, NG, and saw service in the Korean Police Action. After that I loudly proclaimed "enough already" and started earning my BS in Mechanical Engineering. It took a while, my diploma is dated 1955!

My professional career began with 3 years at Monsanto, helping to develop a 40,000 psi polyethylene process, then on to a term with Thiokol Chemical Company, engaged in the manufacture of rocket motors for various types of Ordnance, then to 20 years with NASA at Clear lake, Texas as a test engineer and supervisor, and finally 10 years with Parsons Engineering doing project work in the design and construction of various chemical plant additions/modifications. I retired in 1989. Since that time, I have been content working on family genealogy, puttering and getting in my wife's way. Oh yes, we have also found time to do a little stateside traveling and study of the Civil War (very uncivil!)

MAIL
CALL



A letter to me along with a dues check from Mel Crawford, Jr., son of Melton Crawford (Intelligence/Photo.)

It was very nice to meet you in September at the reunion. I can't begin to tell you how much it meant to me to meet men who

Folded Wings

Clarence A. Knox, age 85, died March 8, 2001 at his home in Fostoria, Ohio. He was a telephone linesman in the Communications Section of the 781st Squadron from the original cadre until the Squadron was deactivated.

He was born at Fostoria and lived his entire life there. He retired in 1980 from Atlas Crankshaft and had also worked as a carpenter. He is survived by a daughter, Mrs. Richard (Sherry) McClellan; a sister, Mrs. Clayton (Augusta) Wolf; and two grandsons. He was preceded in death by his parents, six brothers, and four sisters.

He was a member of Wendelin Catholic Church and several service organizations. Burial was in St. Wendelin Parish Cemetery, with graveside rites performed by United Veterans of Fostoria.

had known my father, and flown with him. I was particularly fortunate to meet his very good friend, Frank Ambrose. And on the last day I met Harold Farrar, who gave me a great deal of information about POWs and kindly gave me a copy of his memoirs.

I left Fairfield with a profoundly re-newed sense of what you, your colleagues in the 781st, and truly your generation did for the world. I am not over-stating the matter when I tell you that the reunion (my first) was a life-changing experience. Thank you.

Gen. Elmer E. Rodgers, by Jim Althoff

About once a year I phone our for leaders to see how they are doing. Recently called Lt. Gen. Elmer Rodgers. He answered the phone as he always does. When I told him I was from the 781st he immediately responded about receiving the video tape of the 781st Bomb Sq. from Harry Carl.

General Rodgers then related his experience of being shot down in a B-17, being wounded and recovering. He was the Commander of the 465th Bomb Group which was in North Africa at the time waiting to go to Italy for combat over Germany. Gen. Rodgers was anxious to get some experience and went to the B-17 unit that had started flying combat. He went along as a gunner and experienced getting shot down. Once he recovered he transferred to a B-17 group and became its Commander.

I asked him if he was 100 years old yet. He replied NO, he was 98 1/2. When he asked how old I was I told him 20 years younger. We talked about our reunions and he explained he is in a wheel chair now and does not travel. Always an experience to talk to Gen. Rodgers.

Battle Participation Credit

Following (on page 11) is a form letter used by James K. Jordan, the last Adjutant of the 781st Squadron(H). As the unit was breaking up at Trinidad he sent this letter along with other transfer papers to the new command so that individuals would have on their official records the necessary information to get battle stars to which they were entitled. Obviously, personnel who were with the 781st from 22 Jan 1944 through 9 May 1945 are entitled to seven stars. Those with shorter assignment or attachment to the unit are entitled to fewer stars.

781ST BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON (H)
465TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H)
APO 695 Miami, Fla.

24 June 1945

SUBJECT: Individual Entitled to Battle Participation Credit

TO:

1. Request that entries indicated below, where applicable, be made on the Classification Record (WD AGO Form 66-2) of officer or Service Record (WD AGO Form 24) of enlisted man named below:

a: The 781st Bomb Sq, 465th Bomb Gp (H), was awarded battle participation credit in the campaigns listed below. Providing the records of the above named individual indicates that he was assigned or attached to the 781st Bomb Sq during those periods, request the following permanent entry be made:

- (1) Atzd Bz Star for Campaign "Rome-Arno" during period fr 22 Jan 44 to 9 Sep 44 per Ltr Hq NATOUSA dd 18 Oct 44.
- (2) Atzd Bz Sv Star for Campaign "Southern France" during period fr 15 Aug 44 to 14 Sep 44 per Ltr Hq MTOUSA dd 10 Nov 44.
- (3) Atzd Bz Sv Star for Campaign "Germany" during period fr 15 Sep 44 to 12 May 45 per Ltr Hq ETOUSA dd 14 Apr 45.
- (4) Atzd Bz Sv Star for Campaign "Air Combat Balkans" during Period fr 28 Mar 44 to 31 Dec 44 per Ltr Hq MTOUSA dd 19 Apr 45.
- (5) Atzd Bz Sv Star for Campaign "Northern France" during Period fr 25 Jul 44 to 14 Sep 44 per Ltr Hq ETOUSA dd 21 Apr 45.
- (6) Atzd Bz Sv Star for Campaign "Northern Appenine" during period fr 10 Sep 44 to 4 Apr 45 per Ltr Hq MTOUSA dd 9 May 45.
- (7) Atzd Bz Sv Star for Campaign "Po Valley" during period fr 5 Apr 45 to 8 May 45 per Ltr Hq MTOUSA dd 9 May 45.

b. The 781st Bomb Sq, 465th Bomb Gp (H) was awarded the Distinguished Unit Badge and the First Oak Leaf Cluster to the Distinguished Unit Badge. Providing the records of the above named individual indicate that he was assigned or attached to the 781st Bomb Sq on the date indicated, request the following permanent entry be made:

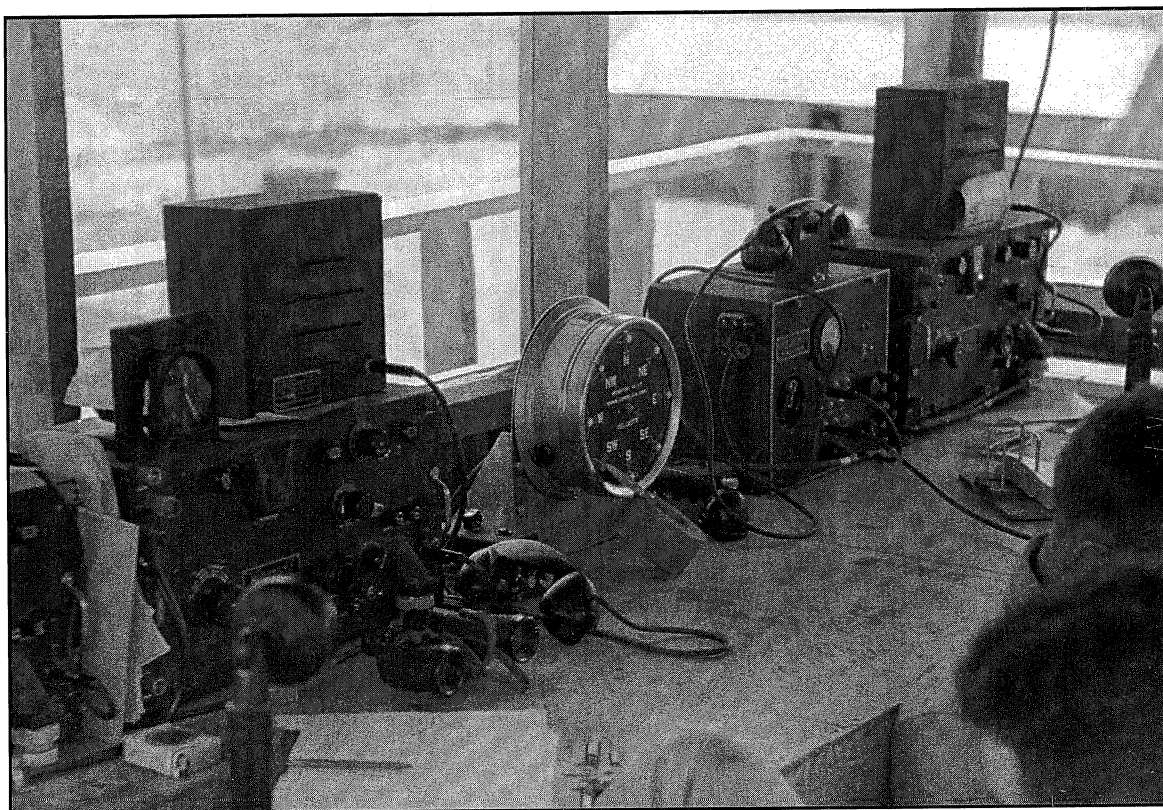
- (1) 8 July 1944 - Atzd Dist Unit Bdg per GO #4186, Hq 15th AF, dd 26 Oct 44 as confirmed by GO #1, WD, dd 4 Jan 45.
- (2) 3 August 1944 - Atzd Dist Unit Bdg (or First Oak Leaf cluster to Dist Unit Bdg) per GO #2137, Hq 15th AF, dd 7 Apr 45.

2. This individual was transferred to your command per

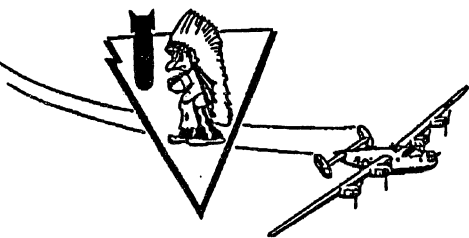
FOR THE COMMANDING OFFICER:

JAMES K. JORDAN
Captain, Air Corps
Adjutant

Racecard Tower Interior
Can You Identify the Equipment?



781 St BOMB SQUADRON ASSOC
2 Mt. Vernon Lane, Atherton, CA 94027



First Class Mail
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Menlo Park, CA
Permit # 998

January 01, 2002
MR. ORREN J. LEE
2312 BRAEMAR DR.
SOUIX FALLS, SD 57105

Address Service Requested