

Splasher Six

Magazine of The 100th Bomb Group®

FALL 2014

www.100thbg.com

100th Bomb Group Foundation Mission Statement

The 100th Bomb Group Foundation is dedicated to the preservation and dissemination of first-hand historical accounts of the men, missions and machines that fought in the skies over Europe during WWII. The Foundation's extensive website archives, museum exhibits, publications and artifacts associated with this famous B-17 bomber unit provide a worldwide platform to educate generations, keeping alive the bravery and sacrifice which ensure our freedom still today.

2015 REUNION
SAVE THE DATES!

SEPTEMBER 24-27, 2015

During these dates we will gather at the National World War II Museum and at our "base", the Hilton New Orleans Airport Hotel. Details will follow in future issues, on Facebook and our website - we plan to have on-line hotel reservations so you are guaranteed the \$109/night rate through our group. Entrance passes to museum and bus transportation to and from downtown will be included in the package.

On the Covers: This issue's front cover is a collection of items that would be used by the airmen of the 8th Air Force including: a B-3 Flying Jacket, a B-5 Leather Flying Helmet, a Mae West Life Preserver with an A-2 Flying Jacket just behind it, and an A-9 Oxygen Mask. The back cover is a picture of the Memorial Chapel at the 100th Memorial Museum at Thorpe Abbots, England.

*The new 100th Bomb
Group Website will launch
on September 15th!
www.100thbg.com*



SPLASHER SIX is the quarterly newsletter published by the 100th Bomb Group Foundation, a 501(c)(3) non-profit historical organization. All veterans, family, friends and 8thAF history buffs are welcome to join. We partner with museums and historical groups to preserve the history of the 100thBG from World War II. The newsletter's title "Splasher Six" refers to the homing beacon used by all 100thBG B-17 aircraft to locate their home base, Thorpe Abbots, England.

President's Letter

by Dan Rosenthal

The 100thBG Foundation Board of Directors is working hard towards various goals to ensure the preservation of the 100thBG legacy in history. Finalizing an effective Business Plan is a priority of the Executive Committee, and it will be presented to the full Board at its annual meeting October 11. A Business Plan is essential to our very existence, providing goals for the 100thBGF to strive to achieve.

Mike Faley, as always, is a terrific ambassador for the 100th. He visited Thorpe Abbots in June, safely delivering items from 100thBG veterans Robert LaFontaine and W.P. Felch, including uniforms, artifacts and photos. Both men served in the 456th Sub-Depot, and their items are part of a new display at the Tower Museum. Mike reports that on-going updates to the museum's displays are a spectacular tribute to the 100th. This fall Mike plans to make major changes to the Palm Springs Air Museum exhibit, and plans to meet with 390thBG and 95thBG at the Pima Air Museum. It is hoped that someday the 100th will develop a display to join these two groups, bringing the 13th Combat Wing under one roof.

Mike, Nancy Putnam and other 100thBGF members travel to Europe in September, visiting museums at Thorpe Abbots and Kovarska, Czech Republic. They will join Jan Zdiarsky and help commemorate the 70th anniversary of the September 11, 1944 mission to Ruhland. A special artifact will be presented to the 100thBGF as well, and details will be shared in the next SPLASHER issue.

By the time you read this issue, the NEW website will be launched. Mike Faley and Charlie Cole have worked tirelessly for two years to provide accurate, accessible information on this site, so

please check out www.100thbg.com - we hope you like the result. Let us know what you think, and send us any additional information you might have. Big thanks also to Atnetplus in Cleveland, OH, Cindy Goodman, Nancy Putnam and Dave Distelrath. Teamwork!

Mark Copeland and Mike Faley, with their extensive 8thAF contacts, have provided guidance to the National WWII Museum as it develops a 2015 tour to 8thAF sites in England.

These are just highlights of those working behind the scenes on behalf of the 100th. If anyone has thoughts about helping out, we are here to listen and hopefully act. It is my great honor to work for this wonderful Foundation.

Sincerely,

Dan Rosenthal, President

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Crew 76: Impressions of War

Editor's Note: As promised in the Winter 13 issue, here are two more articles from the Frederick Schaffhausen crew of the 418th Squadron. Top Turret Gunner Lewis C. Green and Left Waist Gunner Joseph M. Walters have shared their accounts with us.

Impressions from the Top Turret by Lewis C. Green, Top Turret Engineer

Being from different backgrounds, different life styles, different ages, our crew 76 was composed of ten completely different types of fellows. We all meshed together rather well, each doing to the best of his abilities the duties they were assigned. There was a willingness to help each other with complete cooperation by all. There wasn't anybody assigned to the crew I did not like and I do not recall any animosity between any of the crew members.

Unlike other branches of the service, the relationship between the officers and the enlisted crew was one of mutual respect. I do not recall a single incident where the use of rank by anyone was needed. Everybody on board knew that our success in completing our missions required complete co-operation. Our lives were in each other's hands from take-off, to the target, to getting safely back to the base.

Before our first mission, the combat veterans on the base took a great deal of pleasure in telling us what we could expect. The fighters, the FLAK bursts, the damage the aircraft would sustain – that is if we were lucky enough not to be shot from the skies. They kept reminding us that the group was called the “Bloody 100th” for a reason. I listened to what they had to say, and then decided before I drew any conclusions that I would see for myself.

I flew my first mission on July 18th, 1944. The wakeup call came at 3 AM. Target – some hush-hush laboratory outside Kiel. I did not see any fighters or FLAK bursts. I thought, “Boy what a nice war...we bomb them and they do not shoot back.”

Those thoughts disappeared quickly. On the 19th our target was Schweinfurt – heavily defended with FLAK guns. We sustained serious battle damage to the aircraft,

and Joe Walters was wounded when FLAK penetrated his thighs. From my cat bird's seat in the top turret, just behind the pilot and co-pilot, I thought Schweinfurt, Merseburg (4 times) and Regensburg were our toughest missions.

Next in line were our two missions to Saint Lo on July 24th and 25th. The weather was a nightmare. On the 24th we tried to bomb from 12,000 feet, but we could not see because of the smoke bombs the troops on the ground ignited to let us know where they were. While we were milling around, the Germans kept shooting at us. To avoid dropping our bombs on our own troops, we kept them on board and returned to the base. Ever try landing in an airplane with live fused bombs on board? On the 25th, the weather was still bad, but it cleared over the lines and we dropped our bombs from 21,000 feet. After our bombing, the break through at St. Lo took place. One aircraft in our group was shot from the skies, nine chutes were seen.



I guess the crew's toughest mission was to Merseburg. I say “I guess” since I was AWOL. When I returned to base, the crew had left without me. I had visions of court martial, being reduced to private, and being transferred to the infantry in France. On this mission, the aircraft sustained heavy battle damage with the pilots' windshield being blown out by a FLAK burst.

One of the most vivid memories was looking ahead of the aircraft and seeing this heavy wall of black smoke coming from FLAK bursts. I kept thinking it would be impossible to fly through it without being hit!

I remember the cold fear when we were milling around in the clouds at 200 MPH not knowing what was ahead, behind, or alongside of us. I recall the relief I felt as the bombs were released over the target, making the aircraft lighter and causing it to gain altitude. On reaching the rally point, I had to go back to the bomb bay and check to make certain all the bombs dropped and none were hung up.

On the way back from the target the pilot would put the Armed Forces Radio on the intercom to relax us. After leaving the enemy coast we could look around without worrying about enemy fighters. I gazed out at hundreds of B-17s flying in formation. How beautiful they were. I wondered how they could ever become obsolete, as the WWI aircraft had become. Best of all, once we landed back on base, those lovely Red Cross girls would give us a double shot of bourbon and we would have a wonderful relaxed feeling during debriefing.

Impressions From the Waist

by Joe Walters, Left Waist Gunner

Our crew was sent to McDill Field, in Tampa, Florida to be trained as a combat unit. Shooting at sock targets was fun, but we were also scared we would shoot down the plane dragging the target. Our night flying trips around the southeastern states were interesting, and good experience for the pilots, navigator and bombardier.

We left the Port of New York aboard the troop ship USS Billy Mitchell. The crossing took ten days. Being in a large convoy, hoping that no German Wolf Pack submarine would find us, was nerve racking. Nobody told us about the professional gamblers on board, and I quickly lost \$16.00 in a poker game. It sure cured me of playing poker.

We debarked in Liverpool, England, on June 28, 1944, and were sent to a replacement depot in Stone for assignment to a bomber group. There, we were assigned to the 100th Bomb Group.

It seemed as if we had been in England only a short time before we flew our first combat mission. Number One was to Kiel on July 18th. Number Two was to Schweinfurt on July 19th. This mission is very vivid in my memory. I was the left waist gunner. Going

over the target I crouched over my gun watching the flak bursts and looking for fighters. Suddenly, I felt something hit my legs, knocking me down. Over the intercom I heard someone say that we were hit.

I stood up, put on my chute, walked to the escape door, pulled the door cord and watched the door go off into the wild blue yonder. I looked around to see if [RWG] Johnny Fortner was coming to jump out. He was standing there shaking his head at me not to jump. I walked back to my gun position and fell down. Johnny put my oxygen mask on or I would have died, since we were at 26,000 feet. The boys put me in an electric blanket and my wounds were dressed by flight nurse Johnny. We arrived back at base around 1:30 PM. My legs were as stiff as boards. I was taken to the hospital, where I stayed for about two weeks. My wounds healed, and I was returned to the 100th.



Base Hospital and Ambulance

The flight surgeon scheduled me for a two week recuperation leave at an English manor in western England. I arrived back at base in time to fly a mission with my crew. It was their 20th mission, and as a result, they were granted a FLAK leave. Although I only had three missions because of my injury, the pilot insisted I remain assigned to the crew, so I joined them on FLAK leave in Edinburgh, Scotland.

In addition to the Schweinfurt raid, the one where a piece of FLAK decided to make my legs its home, I recall the Berlin, Bremen, and Aachen raids most vividly. I said goodbye to the ETO on December 10, 1944, sailing to the states on the USS Exchequer.

REVERSE FRIENDLY INVASION:

Brits Invade U.S. in World War II

By Robert M. Drake

Editor's Note: Many of you who attended the Savannah Reunion will remember meeting our friend Bob Drake, from Albany, Georgia, who attended our reunion and made many friends. He was in pilot training when the war ended, but all he ever wanted was to be in the 8th AF. Bob is active with the RAF Albany Committee which has sponsored reunions of the RAF veterans in Georgia.

What's a Royal Air force flag doing atop a flag pole, flying in the breezes of Albany, Georgia, U.S.A.?

Eighth Air Force veterans either participated in, or they are familiar with, the friendly invasion of the British Isles by hundreds of thousands of their compatriots during the Second World War. But few know that several thousand youthful Royal Air Force aviation cadets were sent to the U.S. for pilot training, and many of these youngsters received the silver wings of the U.S. Army Air Forces (USAAF) in this country, and at the same time they were entitled to wear the wings of the Royal Air Force.

In 1940, following the fall of France, the U.K. found itself alone in the battle against the Axis powers. After the RAF victory in the Battle of Britain, there was a desperate shortage of pilots, and some U.S. government officials realized that America would likely face Hitler's hordes alone and would be woefully unprepared unless some way could be found to skirt this country's peacetime neutrality laws by furnishing the Allied cause with substantial help.

USAAF General "Hap" Arnold was one of the far-sighted officials who understood the critical necessity of helping Britain, and largely as a result of his efforts the "Arnold Scheme" came into being, a program allowing the use of American air bases to train RAF pilots. Other programs for training British pilots existed in the southwestern and western U.S., however, the Arnold Scheme was confined to air fields located near eleven cities in the southeastern part of the country – Albany, Macon, Americus, and Valdosta in Georgia; Camden in South Carolina; Selma, Dothan, Montgomery, and Tuscaloosa in Alabama; and Lakeland and Arcadia in

Florida. The British who trained at these locations were known as Arnoldians, and they learned to fly in the USAAF planes, with USAAF markings, and their flight instructors and most of the ground personnel were Americans.



Young Brits walking the streets of Albany, Ga.

When the Arnoldians first came to this country in the spring of 1941, they went directly to Primary Flight Training fields. Shortly thereafter, however, it was realized that something was required to lessen the culture shock of coming from war-torn Britain with severe shortages of everything, along with its blacked-out and burning cities undergoing the Blitz. These very young men arrived quite suddenly in a warm part of the world that still was enjoying the full fruits of peacetime, with no shortages of anything, the cities ablaze at night with lights, and an ambience that seemed to deny the existence of the life and death struggle raging in Europe. Strange local foods and customs added to the confusion, so an orientation period was added lasting several weeks preceding primary training. One orientation program was located at Turner Field near Albany, which was also the site of a primary field, Darr Aero Tech. An Advanced Flight Training center was also located at Turner Field, where many Arnoldians received their wings.

As in the other southeastern U.S. locations, the British cadets were received in Albany with great warmth and affection. Most of them were in their late teens and early twenties and many were mothered and fathered in local homes. All were highly visible, even though prior to Pearl Harbor they were not allowed to wear

their uniforms off base for fear of offending neutrality sensibilities. During their time in America, 1941-43, they became an integral part of the community as they were welcomed in businesses, clubs, churches, homes, and recreational facilities. Communication by mail was continued after their departure and many people were saddened to learn of war deaths and wounds sustained by these young lads.

In 1941-43, however, good natured understanding ruled the day as Brits and Americans adjusted to differences in customs and language. Both sides were sometimes shocked and then highly amused at the use of certain words that had entirely different meanings in British and American English. To the Brits, it was nothing less than sacrilege to ruin tea with ice cubes and then to consume it not only in the heat of summer, but all year round. To Americans, hot tea was used mostly to help when one was feeling puny or when one just wanted to be hoity-toity.

Seven British cadets perished in flight training accidents while based at Darr and Turner. Two of these were 19 years of age, and the remainder in their early 20s. They were buried at a local cemetery, each grave marked at the time with a dignified granite pillow engraved with the names of the deceased, identifying him as a RAF cadet and showing the years of birth and death. In early 1991, several local people became concerned that in the future years no one would know why RAF cadets were buried here and that this unique and colorful period of local history would fade into oblivion. These concerned people formed a group now known as the RAF Albany Committee. By chance, the local committee learned that the former British cadets had formed a group in England called the Arnold Scheme Register, and that a number of them planned an October 1991 visit to various Arnold Scheme locations.

This set into motion plans to coordinate the Arnoldians' visit with the dedication of a monument inscribed with a historical statement to stand vigil by the existing RAF graves. One thing led to another, and great local interest caused the visit to snowball from a simple monument dedication to a nostalgic dinner/dance at Radium Springs Casino, an old RAF haunt, a special church service and luncheon, and a farewell barbecue with literally the whole hog cooking and turning on the barbecue spit.

The generous financial response of over one hundred local people and firms permitted the erection of an eight

foot high granite monument inscribed with the poem "High Flight" on one side and the historical statement on the reverse side. A white wrought iron meditation bench was donated, along with a permanent flag pole, and on special occasions, the RAF flag proudly waves. The monument states that it is erected in honor of all British cadets who trained in America and in special memory of the young men buried here, far from home in "some corner of a foreign field that is forever England."

Upwards of 150 people from Britain and the British Commonwealth nations, in addition to many local people, attended the impressive dedication service for the monument, which featured various RAF and local speakers along with the band from the U.S. Marine Corps Logistics Base in Albany. At least one of the visitors, Margaret Abbott of Exeter, England, was very special. Ms. Abbott's father was among the British cadets who trained at Albany. He was later shot down and killed over Europe in 1944, six months before she was born. As she retraced his steps, she remarked that she felt very close to him by treading on the soil where he walked so many years ago.

A few British cadets married local girls. Many went on to distinguished war records and post-war accomplishments. Cyril Joe Barton, a Darr graduate, was posthumously awarded the Victoria Cross, Britain's highest military decoration for valor. His three daughters attended the reunion in Albany in 1996. The last reunion of the British cadets in the Arnold Scheme was held in Albany in 2000. The RAF Ensign Flag flies on a permanent basis now at the Albany site.



BEHIND THE SCENE OF THE NEW ORLEANS REUNION PLANNING

by Jeanne Carey

I have been a member of the 100th Bomb Group Foundation since 2001 when my Mother, Irene Carey, found the 100th via the Mighty Eighth website. While scrolling through the thumbnail photos she came across one of my Dad and Buck Cleven. Dad was identified as “unknown airman”. Mom emailed Mike Faley and advised him, the unknown airman was her late husband Richard A. Carey, Pilot, first Operations Officer for the 350th, and POW. She then proceeded to enroll each of her nine children in the 100th. Through the years I have had the pleasure of attending multiple reunions. They provide an amazing opportunity to meet veterans, their families, have history brought to life and connect with a part of my Father’s life.

In March, I got a behind the scenes peek into the planning and preparation of these events which we all love, and want to share this experience with our members. I flew into New Orleans’ Louis Armstrong Airport, and headed over to the nearby hotel where I would join Dan Rosenthal, Mike Faley, Nancy Putnam, Mark Copeland, Scott Urice, Joe Urice and Cindy and Dean Goodman.

Because reunions last several days and are well-attended, the work of reunion planning began right after the Savannah reunion wrapped up.... What improvements or changes are needed? What locations are of interest to our members? What are travel and cost considerations? First and foremost was the selection of a location from several recommended and researched by members. The 2015 reunion will be in New Orleans with the world class National World War II Museum as its centerpiece.

New Orleans is a great destination all by itself, and narrowing down hotel choices was in order. Months were spent talking with and researching hotel options. They are evaluated for location, room price, accessibility, conference services and space, and on-site amenities. Should the reunion location be convenient to the airport or downtown? Costs for downtown hotels in New Orleans are 50-90% higher than airport locations, when room rate, transportation and parking are factored in.... And we do not want to

lose attendees because of price. Once the selection process has been narrowed, in-person evaluations begin. As anyone who has traveled knows, the pictures on the hotel website do NOT tell the whole story!

My personal evaluation began as soon as I walked through the lobby doors of the Hilton New Orleans Airport Hotel to check in. I ran the Savannah registration tables and have volunteered to do so again in New Orleans, so I knew what would be desirable. I started picturing the reunion in progress as I looked around. “Oh, the lobby is big enough for people to be milling around... Oh, look, a restaurant and bar... Ohhhh, a large outdoor patio off the lobby, too!” Is the staff helpful and friendly? And of course, the room: are the beds comfortable? Are the rooms clean? Is there good water pressure in the shower, etc.

There was another hotel in the area we planned to visit, but when we saw that its location is literally in the shadow of a highway overpass, we removed it from consideration. One of those little details that you cannot get off a website!

We met with hotel staff and were given a tour of the conference facilities. The Savannah reunion hotel was wonderful, but when our attendance exceeded expectations, the meeting and dining space proved to be limited. So for this next reunion we focused on increasing space available to the group, while still offering the 100th a chance to ‘take over’ its own area of the hotel. I was impressed with the conference space, and with the really nice lobby area outside the meeting rooms... perfect for the registration desk! Following the tour, it was off to the Boardroom to discuss details and ask questions.

And there are an astonishing number of details to be decided upon... How many guest rooms in the contract? At what nightly rate? How many with one king bed or two double beds? What can be packaged into the room rate? Wheelchair accessibility? How to book rooms within our group block? How many square feet of conference room space to

reserve? What is room availability? Which rooms can be divided? Tables and table coverings and electrical outlets? Audio visual equipment, WiFi and Internet connectivity? Can the 100th hang its banner? Meals and food service at the hotel: restaurant capacity? Food selections? Banquet menus? What are required deadlines and deposits? And THAT was just the hotel!

A day was spent at the National World War II Museum - more meetings and decisions to be made there as well. Dan Rosenthal has spoken of these meetings in his Splasher Six columns, but my observations focused on numerous details like how many museum admissions days will be needed for our attendees? Do we want to offer tours? Lunch? What can be served at lunch, at what cost? In which museum restaurant? Can the room fit everyone or will there be two seatings? Transportation between hotel and museum is another big detail to nail down... Additional activities? And always, always, the cost is on the Board members' mind.

Watching our Board members discussing and negotiating these details with both hotel and museum staff fascinated me. The process was as much, if not more, about relationship-building as it was about negotiation. The 100th BGF Board has established a reputation as a good group to work with, while getting the best price possible. This means showing the hotel and museum why hosting the 100th is beneficial to them as well. Fortunately for us, the Board members are quite skilled.

This peek has given me a tremendous feeling of admiration for the 100thBGF Board members who volunteer to serve and all the hard work they do. They are why the 100th is a world class organization.

I look forward to seeing everyone in New Orleans for the 2015 Reunion. It is going to be amazing!

We Need Your Help!

We still need information, photos, stories, and memorabilia to enhance our history. Please contact Michael Faley at 818-749-7790 or mail items to:

Michael Faley
1240 Ventura Blvd. #113
Studio City, CA 91604
Email: MPFaley@aol.com

The 100th Bomb Group Foundation gratefully acknowledges the following Memorials and Donations Memorials

In Memory of
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In Memory of
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22127 Lewes-Georgetown Hwy
Georgetown, DE 19947

The View From the Ground

Special Supplies

by William Carleton, 351st Group Engineering Officer

Aircrews flew their new planes to England. The ground forces went by ship. As we were getting ready to leave New York on one of the initial crossings of the Queen Elizabeth, Master Sergeant Robert Spangler pulled me aside to tell me that about fifty of the men would be carrying extra supplies for the B-17 engines in their duffel bags. He explained that Washington had a mistaken goal as to the replacements that would be needed for combat that lasted eight or nine hours. He said that to off-set that mistaken notion, they had a midnight requisition and fifty of our ground personnel put ten or fifteen pounds of parts in their duffel bags. I wasn't certain as to what all this meant, but it was evident that we were going to be well supplied.

We kept our secret extra parts in a large four-wheel trailer behind our Tech Supply. All went well until we received a call that a special supply had passed the Group Inspector on the way in. This close call meant we needed to have a better home for our secret source of parts. I immediately went to my friend, farmer Draper, who owned much of the land where we were based. He readily agreed that we could keep our special supplies in the south end of the long brick barn. (The north end was where the plane HANG THE EXPENSE had crashed and killed the bull.) We sealed the agreement with a beef steak dinner, which the base provided.

Sergeant Spangler proved to be 100% correct, and the 100th Bomb Group relied on the additional parts we carried with us. After several months the supply from Washington was increased and we no longer needed our special source. Our Colonels' worry about being court marshaled was unfounded. We received letters of commendation and our group was recognized for the shortest amount of down time between flights.

I must make a comment on Master Sergeant Spangler and the hundred and seventy men he lead as the ground force. Master Sergeant Spangler was an intelligent leader and the men became master mechanics, caring for our aircraft in the most adverse conditions. We were

in England for thirty months, with all the limitations that this entailed, and never experienced any problems despite the close quarters and twenty four hour demands. Most of the preparation of the aircraft for combat was accomplished between midnight and six AM, which was then when we received the alert, the aircraft involved, the bomb load, and the personnel required. Take-off started at six and the return could be from two PM or later. Most of their work was done at night. We did not have any quarters for the men to stay on the flight line. Often they would pitch a tent near their plane, out of sight of the slip stream. Some of them went to sleep in their barracks, but many slept by their planes. It was the type of situation that could create conflict among people, but not with this group. If an airplane was shot down and the crew didn't have one to work on, they immediately joined another crew. A lot of them were farm boys who were drafted and were good mechanics to start with. You couldn't say enough for their ability to solve problems efficiently and without a word about it. It was a show of a dedicated force committed to victory.



100th Group Engineering Officers. Seated center is "Butch" Rovegno the Group Engineering Officer, others include (L to R) Bill Carleton of the 351st, John Healily of the 349th, William Clift of the 418th, and Don J. Blazer of the 350th. This is a very early photo and could have been shot in the States.

MEMBERSHIP AND DONATION FORM

YES! I Support The Preservation of 100th BG History and the Legacies of Those Who Bravely Served!

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Please complete form and mail to:

Cindy Goodman

13 Ettington Lane

Bella Vista, AR 72714

You can also go to www.100thbg.com if you prefer to join or donate online.

ROBERT LANTZ DIARY

351st Squadron Pilot

Editor's Note: Pilot Robert Lantz and his crew were part of the 351st Squadron and were flying at the end of hostilities. Mr. Lantz passed away this year, and his obituary notice is in this issue's TAPS section.

We pulled into the 100th about 9:50 P.M. on March 3rd, 1945. They fixed us up with some chow and some temporary bunks, and we hit the hay. Before going to bed I sat around awhile and talked to some of the fellows in my barracks. They were veterans, most having over twenty missions. Being new to combat it amazed me to see these boys sitting around and calmly talking about the ship lost that day. It had been a lead ship and was knocked down by a couple of ME-262s, Germany's newest jet job. One of the boys on board, the Co-Pilot, had just received the purple heart the day before and the rest of the boys were kidding him about it because he had received only a scratch on the arm. The thing that gave him the scratch on the arm though was a big piece of steel thrown up by Jerry flak guns. A few inches closer and it would have torn through his entire body.

The next day our program was laid out for us. We were to go to an extensive period of ground school for about eight days and then fly a couple of practice missions in order to check the Pilot and Co-pilot out on the new procedures and let the Navigator get the lay of the land. The Radio Operator had one of the biggest jobs and upon him would often depend whether or not you got back or not. After we had a couple of practice missions we were put on operations and thereafter would be sent on our first combat mission.

On my first combat mission we went with Lt Hughes (T. C. Hughes) from Columbus, Ohio. He had completed thirty-five missions and finished his tour, but was taking three more missions to make Captain. The mission was what we called a "milk run." We saw no fighters and very little flak, and what flak we saw was in the distance and a good bit below. Our main target was Rouen, but it was overcast and they made a run on the secondary target of Plauen. As I was flying co-pilot on this mission, there wasn't any room for Johnnie (Co-Pilot John W. Greenlee), but he didn't want to be left behind and flew as a waist gunner.

My second mission was quite a bit different and here seems like a good place to tell what a mission is all about from beginning to end. A runner came in about 3:00 A.M. on Sunday March 18th, and told us briefing was at 4:30 A.M. We had been alerted for the mission the night before and I was to fly in the low flight of the low squadron, best known as "Purple Heart Corner". We had our breakfast of eggs, hotcakes and coffee, went to the briefing room, and drew our equipment. At briefing the first thing everyone was anxious to know was what the target was. We didn't have long to wait, when the curtain was drawn aside, our target was outlined on the large wall map. There were whistles and sighs and many other responses when we saw that today we were to bomb "Big B" Berlin. Our main target was a marshaling yard on the outskirts of Berlin. We were flying 805 [A/C 46805 FLAMIN MAMIE] today. A truck took us and our equipment out to the hardstand where 805 was parked. We entered the shack and the boys started getting their guns ready and putting them in the ship. We had almost two hours until start engines, so Johnnie (John W. Greenlee) and I just sat around and kidded the boys and ourselves by saying, "this don't mean a thing". Seven-thirty was start engines and at seven-twenty we were sitting in the cockpit. At seven-thirty, the number one engine turned over. "Brakes off, tail wheel unlocked", we were on our way. We were the next to last ship to take off and assembled over Buncher 28. Once the Group was formed we went over to rendezvous with Wing, and from there to rendezvous with Division.

We crossed the Dutch Coast at 20,000 feet and you could see the Ball and Upper Turrets begin their watchful scan of the enemy sky. We had to use 2350 RPM and 40 inches (A power setting for piston engines denoting twenty three hundred and fifty revolutions per minute at forty inches of Mercury engine manifold pressure for the B-17's Wright engines) to keep in the formation as we continued climbing to the bombing altitude of 25,000 feet. About twenty minutes before the IP (initial point or starting point of a bombing run over a target) I asked for an oxygen check and made sure everyone had their flak suits on. I had sat my flak

helmet on the floor under the seat and as I reached for it I knocked it down between the seats. I got out of my seat momentarily to retrieve it and just as I started to get back in all the guns in the ship started to chatter and someone yelled “fighters” over the inter phone. Then began the mad chase. We put on 2500 RPM and 46 inches (an engine power setting) and shoved everything but the seats forward, but we were still falling behind. We were being attacked by about four jet jobs, ME-262s, Johnnie Greenlee and I both struggled with the controls to try and get the last bit of power out of the engines to keep up with the formation. We knew once we fell out of formation we were lost. Meanwhile the boys were very busy. A jet attacked from 4 o’clock and came up under our nose, and the chin turret went to work on him. We saw our tracers hitting him but he kept on going. A jet came diving down on us with a P-51 on his tail and the B-17 gunners were shooting at both planes, unable to distinguish them at that speed. The ship in the diamond position had been unable to keep up. Its number two engine (closest to fuselage on left wing) was on fire, and it was on its way down. A ship above us blew up and the parts came floating back. The flak was intense, but not too accurate. “Bombs Away” and we made a sharp turn to the left off the target. Now the lead ship really poured on the coal and we tried in vain to keep in formation. Luckily there was another formation right back of us and a little above. We hung on to it until we were safe from fighters for the moment, all the while taking all kinds of evasive action as the flak was following us and getting pretty close. We started to lose a little altitude and pick up some airspeed so we rejoined our old formation and came back with them.



Seeing the English Coast was like seeing home again. None of us could deny that he had not been scared to death and I know I was praying every minute and thinking how much I wanted to live. I just couldn’t go now that I had Eileen and we were going to have a baby. Life was just beginning to take on meaning. Back over the field we peeled off from the formation and came in to land. There was a good cross wind and I didn’t make the best landing, but we were on the ground and came to a screeching halt as they say. Back at the hardstand the ground crew gave us the high sign and big smiles. Those boys really sweat a mission like that out. We had lost four ships today, all from the 351st, my Squadron.

When I went back to my barracks I discovered that three of my roommates had been in the planes shot down that day. They had only four more missions to go to finish. Yes, Berlin was still a rough target.

Our third mission was back to Plauen. The primary was again Rouen, but it was to be bombed only visual and that day was overcast at about six thousand feet, so we again hit the tank factory at Plauen. Going in over the target we hit some bad “prop wash” (vortexes generated by disturbance of air from the passage of other planes, usually thought to be from the propeller but in most cases wing tip generated turbulence) caused by the 1st Division going in ahead of us, but we were in tight formation when “bombs away” came. It was about ten minutes after the target when the jets hit us. They came in at about 5 o’clock with their guns blazing away, and I could see a fiery stream eating its way up the tail of a ship below and beside us in another squadron. A P-51 was right on the jet’s tail and his guns were blazing away. I didn’t see what happened to the jet but some of the boys said they saw him explode. I didn’t think the P-51 got him, but he might have. Those jets have a terrific speed and a ‘51 hasn’t a chance to get him when he starts away straight and level. When making his attack the Me-262 turns off the jet and glides in, but even at this he is doing over 500 MPH. We lost two ships that day.

The next day, Thursday March 22nd, we had a mission that we all liked. Today we were bombing from 18,000 feet and our target was a jet airfield in Northern Germany. The day before the RAF and other divisions of the 8th Air Force and knocked out seven of the nine

jet fields in Northern Germany and today we were to get one of the remaining two. After what the jets had done to us at Berlin and Plauen, the trip was going to be a pleasure. It turned out to be a milk run. It was a short six hour mission and we encountered no flak or fighters, and as I said later, if it wasn't for the prop wash I could enjoy this war. Our MPI (Main Point of Impact) was where two runways crossed. Another Group's MPI was the gasoline storage area and they were warned by the S2 (intelligence) Officer who said with a twinkle in his eye, "You want to be careful boys, as the barracks are right down here and it would be a shame if some of the bombs dribbled over into that area." We hit our MPI dead center and it was a good piece of bombing.

My fifth mission was Friday March 23rd, and is very memorable to me as it was there I earned my Purple Heart, the one decoration I would have gladly done without. We were briefed at 4:00 A.M. and our target was to be a railway center in the Rhur, better known as "Happy Valley" because of the numerous accurate flak batteries there. This was the day before Monty's [Field Marshal Bernard Montgomery, Chief of British Forces] big push across the Rhine. As we crossed it at 25,000 feet, we could see his sixty mile smoke screen far below, and we were glad we weren't down there where all hell was about to break loose. Those boys down on the ground have the toughest job of all in my opinion and I know most of my friends hold with me.

We were trying out a new formation today using four squadrons to a Group instead of three, and with nine or ten ships in each squadron. We had practiced it before but never used it in combat. With my luck still as usual I was in the low element of the low squadron. It really proved to be the purple heart corner for me that day. Our target was a small railway yard not far across the Rhine, but as we turned into the IP with our bomb bay doors open we saw that the preceding Groups had left the target obscured by smoke. The lead Bombardier was unable to see the MPI, so our Squadron turned off to hit a secondary target. We hit this one dead center and the bomb bay doors slowly closed. We wracked our ship into a steep bank as the formation turned sharply off the target. There's always a sigh of relief when bombs are away, as if some great weight has been lifted from our stomachs, and all we wanted to do was get the hell out of there. We started a slow decent to 20,000 feet picking up airspeed all the way. All of the boys were on the alert

as we had been warned there were about seventy-five ME-109s and FW-190s in the area. We saw no fighters, however, and were just about to call this another milk run when suddenly little black puffs of flak appeared right at our altitude.



The next few minutes happened so fast I didn't have time to think about what was happening. The number six ship, which was to the left and above the element leader, suddenly went out of control and came turning down into Lazzari (Lawrence J. Lazzari), my element lead. Lazzari tried desperately to get out of his way but was unable to do so. The horizontal stabilizer of Guardino's (Alfonso C. Guardino) [A/C 43-37812 PATRIOTIC PATTY] ship hit the left wing of Lazzari's aircraft. Guardino immediately went off into a spin from which my ball turret gunner reported he recovered once and then went into another spin from which he never recovered. It is my guess that the pilot (Guardino) and co-pilot (William E. Davis) were killed instantly by the first burst of flak, but then a lot can happen in 20,000 feet and they may have recovered and made friendly territory as so many did. [All ten men were KIA.] In the meantime Lazzari had started down to the left with eight foot of his left wing crinkled. At the time I did not know whether he recovered or not as it was when I was hit, but later I learned he made a miraculous recovery and by pure skill and strength brought the crippled ship home to a safe landing. All this happened in perhaps five seconds and just as Guardino's plane went out of control I felt my left leg go suddenly numb with a kind of dull ache. There was no searing pain and being hit felt more like a great compression hitting my leg than what I had always thought being wounded would be like. The only way I knew I had been struck was by the numbness and seeing the blood coming out onto the seat. I called Greenlee on inter phone and said, "I've been hit, John." He immediately took over and said: "Don't worry Jim, I'll get us out of here." Meserve (Francis W. Meserve)

in the top turret had heard me call John. He came out of the turret to help me out of my seat and got me to lie down on the catwalk between the flight deck and the nose. He got a couple of oxygen bottles and attached one to my oxygen hose. I kicked the Navigator (Otto P. Bueren) with my good leg, and when he looked around pointed to my bad leg. He immediately got a knife and started ripping off the clothes around the wounded leg. When he came to my \$15 green pants he was a little hesitant, but then sliced them up to my waist. I later told him he could have at least cut along the seam. From the start I hadn't looked at my leg, imagining all along there was probably a hole in it big enough to stick my hand in. Otto (Otto P. Bueren) took a quick look and quickly opened a first aid kit. He poured sulfa powder on the open wound, put a tight compress on it to stop the bleeding, and covered me with A-10 jackets to protect me from cold and shock. All this time Greenlee had been staying in formation. Paul Sottler had come up from the waist to man the top turret and Ladd [not a regular member of the crew] was sitting in the pilot's seat helping John as much as he could. Laying there in the passageway I was in no great pain. I hadn't taken any Morphine, as the Pilot should never take any unless absolutely necessary.

I tried not to think of how those two planes looked crashing together or what our chances were of getting back. I kept thinking of Eileen, the folks, and the baby who was coming. I thought of how terribly much I loved Eileen and all I wanted to do was get back to her someday and spend the rest of my life making her happy. When I heard the top turret firing, I thought we had been attacked by fighters and had had it, but Sottler had accidentally tripped the switch, which was off safety. About an hour later Meserve told me we were within sight of England. He helped me back in the pilot's seat and I called the formation leader for permission to leave and go in for an immediate landing. Permission was granted and John Greenlee brought us in over the field where we fell in behind the lead squadron just peeling off. With John helping me on the controls we came in for a safe landing and turned off the runway where an ambulance was waiting. We cut the inboard engines and I crawled out the Bombardier's escape hatch and was helped to the ambulance by a Captain who said, "Old Purple Heart Lantz." They took me to the station hospital and the doctor cut out the flak, which luckily hadn't penetrated the bone. After sewing me up they

put me in the ward and said I would be flying in a week or ten days.

Now that it was all over I thanked God for the comfort and faith He had given me and for a crew who, in an emergency, knew what to do and did it. I was really proud of those boys. Not one of them lost his head or got excited. They did all that could be done for me and then stayed at their posts until we were safely home. To live with or die for a bunch of fellows like that is as great an honor as any man can ask, and it's that kind of spirit that makes all of us know that Hitler and Germany as well as Japan don't have a chance.

Radio Berlin is a daily radio program directed to Great Britain from the Continent. It is in English and its purpose, of course, is propaganda. The type of propaganda varies with the progress of the war, but the programs are similar. A lot of American music is played. Good old American swing with recordings by Tommy Dorsey, Artie Shaw and others. Some programs are strictly trying to imitate our style of music with some Fraulein giving her rendition of "Always and Always" and doing pretty well except she hasn't totally eliminated her guttural German accent. A second part of nearly every program is a reading of letters from our prisoners the Germans are holding. They are all rather stereotyped and in a typical one a German with a perfect English accent will say; "Our next letter is from Gerald Langley #161962, a POW in Germany. Jerry's letter is to his Mother who resides at 210 Darby Place, Lancashire. He says, ' Hello Momma, I am well and being treated fine. Hope to see you soon. Your loving Gerald'." This is an attempt on the part of the Nazis to show they are, in truth, simple home loving people who hate war. Another speaker with soft British accent that almost brings tears to your eyes says: "Hello Tommy this is Hans." Then he goes on to remind him that the German people are not the fanatical cruel people that they are made out to be and in a pleading voice reminding them that, "It's love that makes the world go around."

Berlin Sally was quite popular for some time, but has been off the air for a while. She would try and startle us and often did with the great knowledge the German intelligence had of our every movement. For instance in the 100th Bomb Group we had an unusually bad day at Hamburg on Dec 31, 1944 and lost around twelve B-17s. When we got back to the base there was Sally

on the radio with all the news about our losses, etc. The story is told of one Bomb Group where a bunch of the fellows were sitting around the radio and listening to Sally one night when she directed a talk to that particular Group and said, "If the members of the Bomb Group will look at the clock in their Officers Club they will find it one minute fast." The boys looked and it was.

There were some strictly news announcements which spoke of us as the enemy and said the Americans had made certain advances but the brave German soldiers were fighting valiantly against overwhelming odds and would, in the end, win a thorough victory.

There were, of course, propaganda programs which spoke sarcastically of Roosevelt the great emancipator and abolitionist. Yes he was emancipating the German people from their land and homes and abolishing their cities with his air force. There were also attempts to split the Allies by saying that Stalin was just using the others to attain his own ends and conquer the world for communism, and then pleaded with the US and Britain to turn on Russia, its real enemy, before it was too late.

My first mission after I got out of the hospital was to the docks at Kiel. Our Group had just bombed it the day before and we were going back again to make it a real job. We hit our objective and the flak was only moderate. On the way back we passed to the right of Helgoland, which is one of Germany's most heavily defended bases. We were too far off to get any flak.

My seventh mission was to Nurnburg, and was undoubtedly the roughest we ever had. We were after the rail targets in the center of the city. Weather was our main difficulty. There was a ceiling of 300 feet and about 500 yards visibility at take-off. We were told that the clouds were only about 10,000 feet high and we were to assemble over France. However after take-off we didn't reach the top of the overcast until we were deep in France and at 25,000 feet. Our airspeed kept dropping off on the way up and we did all we could to prevent ice, but still gathered some clear ice on our wings. The assembly was a rare thing too. We were in the low squadron and the lead kept us in the clouds all during assembly. Flying in the clouds and prop wash was no fun. We finally got together and were on our way. When we reached the target and started on the bomb run, it was fourteen minutes long and seemed like an hour. The flak was intense and they were tracking

us. The little puffs were blossoming at our altitude just off our left wing. They weren't fifteen feet off my left wing and I thought that the next burst would have us for sure. It didn't though, and we made a sharp right turn off the target. We thought we'd seen the worst of it and had already considered this a rough mission, but we didn't know what was in store for us. The leaders saw some breaks in the clouds layers and started letting down between them. Finally we were between two cloud layers about a thousand feet apart and ran into a blank wall. The Squadron above us started breaking up and B-17s were going every which way. I expected one to come diving down into the middle of us at any minute. Our Squadron stuck together some way. All we could see was a faint outline of a wing beside us and we just stuck on that. Our Squadron lead did what I thought was a smart thing when he turned 30 degrees to the right and flew for five minutes and then returned to course. In this way we got out of the way of some of the Squadrons that were breaking up. We continued to let down to three hundred feet before breaking into rain, but at least we could see the ground. As we flew over Holland and Belgium, I thought we had seen the worst of it. However just as we were crossing the coast line at an altitude of five hundred feet, we were fired on by flak and 20mm cannon. I thought we had had it for sure. One plane had its tail lifted up by flak and just as its nose started down another burst caught it and pushed it back up. I told the boys to start strafing the shore with our 50s and you could see tracers making their path towards the shore. They were still tracking but didn't score any hits. A little later Ray Blohm was coming back alone over the same spot. They shot his ship all up and tore a tire to shreds, but he brought it in OK. We finally got back ourselves and I could have kissed that good old Mother Earth. Johnnie Greenlee did most of the flying coming back as we were flying left wing. He did a wonderful job, really worked.

Bill Baldwin went down the other day. He was checked out as first pilot and was on his second mission as such. He called in on the return and said he was low on gas and turned back. There was a thunderstorm between him and England and they don't know whether he tried to go through and went down or ditched. (It later developed that he had turned back and was going over the Dutch Coast at a low altitude when his plane was shot down by anti-aircraft guns. The ship landed in the Zuider Zee. One of the crew got back and told the story.)

On April 6 we went to Leipzig and hit railway traffic centers. It was PFF (Pathfinder ship using radar for navigation and bombing leading), but we expected heavy flak. Much to our surprise there was no flak or fighters. Coming back we let down through the overcast in formation through rain and in poor visibility. Otto (Otto P. Bueren, Navigator) took us directly into the field by using the G (Navigation system using radio bearings) and pilotage. There were hundreds of B-17s and B-24s all over the place and we were keeping our heads on a pivot to keep from running into one. We squeezed into the traffic pattern and had to go around on our first approach. The second time around we were too close to the plane in front. I slowed down to about 110 MPH and let down full flaps. We were about one hundred feet off the ground when prop wash caught us and brought our airspeed down to 90 MPH and flipped us up on a wing. Why we didn't go in then I'll never know, somehow we righted it and got on the ground and made a quick stop.



Mission number nine, the next day, was to Buchen in Northern Germany. We were bombing oil tanks. There were only about three bursts of flak, but they were very accurate and right in our middle. We hit the target and had started home when bandits were reported in the area. About fifteen minutes later we got our first attack by five ME-109s. We were in the lead Squadron and the first ME-109 pulled right in front of us. He must have been inexperienced because he pulled into a partial stall right in front of our entire Squadron and every top turret gun in the Squadron was blazing away at him. I think the pilot must have been killed instantly because the plane dove right past our nose and crashed head on into a plane in the Squadron below me. They both blew up. The next plane attacked from 5 o'clock and dove under us. Becker (Harvey L. Becker) in the ball turret got a good shot at him and knocked him down. On the way down, however, the ME-109 chewed part of the tail off

another B-17. This one however, along with another B-17 whose tail had been shot off by flak, got home and landed safely. All this time the P-51s were really in there and if they hadn't knocked down a lot more '109s we would have gotten them. The fighters knocked down 63 planes and the bombers got another 40, making a grand total of 103 for the day. Once more the flaming air war, rekindled by the Luftwaffe, was extinguished.

Mission number ten, on April 8, was to Eger where we bombed ammunition storage. It was a milk run. No flak no fighters.

Number eleven, on April 9, was a jet airfield around Munich. We went part way past Munich and flew alongside the Alps, approaching the target from the South. We really creamed the target and flak was light. However a B-17 in the Group after us blew up from direct hit. ...Fighter Groups gave us fighter support that day, and it was the best we'd ever had. There were three or four jets up there waiting to come in on us, but the P-51s boxed them in and they never hit us.

On April 10, I had a five day pass. Saw Mac and went to London. Mac has 27 missions. Also saw Ted Thomas; he has 17 missions.

April 14th, 1945. We got word of President Roosevelt's death today. The Post flag was lowered to half-mast, and we observed a five minute period of silence in his memory. Tonight a special issue of Yank commemorated him.

Mission number twelve. We got quite a surprise when our target was disclosed to us today. It was about three gun emplacements at Roi Anns near Bordeaux in Southern France. 1100 bombs hit the gun emplacement and really creamed it. There were no fighters or flak and we had no fighter escort. Coming over the French Coast we could see the results of D-Day and the terrible bombings and shelling the enemy took. There were thousands of shell holes with Me-109s and JU-88s blasted all over at one place.

April 15th. Mission number thirteen. Again we went to Roi Anns for another milk run. We carried a new type of bomb for the first time in the ETO (European Theater of Operations). It was a congealed jelly fire bomb. This time we were dropping them on installations in conjunction with the French ground forces who were going to try and take the place today. On the way down

we passed over Paris and the Eiffel Tower. After bombs away we could see the French artillery open up on the ground below. The way back brought us over Reims and we saw the famous cathedral. Tonight Bazin's (Lawrence L. Bazin) engineer (Roens W. Shearwood) came back. He was the only one to get back and he bailed out through a hole in the ship made by a 20 mm. No one else got out of the ship and it went all to pieces. He landed in Germany and hid and ran for two nights until he ran into our advancing tanks. The Jerries shot at him on the way down and he saw several bodies of Allied airmen who had been riddled by the Germans.



April 16th. Mission number fourteen. Gun emplacements at Roi Anns again. Another milk-run, flew a brand new ship, number 424 [A/C 43-39424 THE SUPER GOOSE] on only its second mission. We hit marshaling yards at Ausig. Take-off at 10:00 A.M. and formed at three thousand feet over Buncher 28. We bombed from 20,000 feet in a heavy fog and clouds. Just before the IP some flak from Bruks was off to our left at our altitude. It was intense but not accurate. Our fighters escort was the 357th and one fighter got a direct hit and blew up with a burst of orange flame. The boys saw another P-51 and a B-17 go down. Because of the heavy mist we made three runs on the target. I was flying in the number nine position, and the number six position aircraft, flown by a new crew, kept on top of me, giving me a rough time all day.

Ernie Pyle wrote in "Fighting Hearts" as he watched 1800 Bombers fly overhead giving support to ground forces in their breakthrough in France that "The flight across the sky was slow and studied; I've never known a storm or a machine, or any resolve of man that had about it the aura of such a ghostly relentlessness. I had the feeling that even had God appeared beseechingly

before them in the sky, with palms outstretched to persuade them back, they would not have had within them the power to turn from their irresistible course."

Today, Saturday April 17, 1945, we were scheduled to bomb Amsterdam, Holland, but with a far different load than usual. This was to be a mission of mercy and not of death. Our bomb bays were stacked high with 4500 pounds of food for the starving people of occupied Holland. All depends upon whether the Germans would permit us to drop our precious load at an altitude of under 500 feet in order to successfully and safely drop the food. It was necessary that a truce be arranged so that we would not be fired upon. To have gone otherwise would have been suicide. The Germans, however, would not agree to such terms, so we did not go. They wanted the supplies brought in by boat or land and thus they would have full control and undoubtedly use them for their own benefit. It has been said the people of Holland are now receiving about one hundred fifty calories a week. Our normal supply is thirty-five hundred a day. It snowed today, then it rained, and finally the sun shown.

Tuesday, May 8, 1945. Today was VE Day. Truman, Churchill and Stalin simultaneously announced the unconditional surrender of Germany. The surrender was signed early yesterday morning in a school house at Reims, France, by Gen. Walter B. Smith, Eisenhower's Chief of Staff, Russian General I andvan A. Suslapatov, and French General Francois Sevez. Today at 3:00 P.M. Churchill spoke and at 9:00 the King. Both thanked God for deliverance. On the post we had church services in front of the flag pole at 3.30 P.M. Last night there were flares of all color everywhere in the sky and British and American flags flying from every cottage. Churchill ended his speech with "God Bless you All". Piccadilly Circus was wild with joy last night. Bells were ringing all over the country and in the hearts of everyone was a sincere thanksgiving. The bells as they rang seemed to say over and over again the silent pray of everyone, "Thank you God, Thank you God". Tonight also Gen. Ike talked on the radio. I spent VE Day in the barracks. No one here got too excited because we knew that the war is not yet over for us, but I think everyone is deeply thankful in their hearts.

Wednesday May 16th. Flew a POW mission today and it was one of the most interesting we had. Got off at 4:50 P.M. and flew at 1000 feet over France, Germany and Czechoslovakia, where we landed at Horsching.

Along the way we could see the remains of quite a few B-17s that had been shot down. The German airfield where we landed was quite good with smooth runways and huge hangers. Drottar [Joseph A. Drottar] landing just before us collapsed a landing gear so we had to go around a couple of times. As we landed a rough looking German woman cut directly in front of our ship and we missed hitting her by inches. We parked the ship and got out and there were thirty French POWs waiting for us. I asked if anyone spoke English and one fellow in civilian clothes came forward, saluted, and said he could talk and understand if I spoke slowly. I asked him how long they had been POWs, and he said, "Five years". They were all deeply suntanned but looked fairly healthy, and they certainly had enough de-lousing powder on them. Their clothes were everything from civilian to French and German Army issue. We loaded them into the plane and I put the English speaking fellow up with me. We took off and all the way back I kept pointing out places to the POWs. We passed over Nurnburg and I could see now with my own eyes what a really devastating effect allied bombing had on Germany. The rail yards, which had once been our target, was a mass of twisted track and cars. I tuned in a French station and let them listen. When we came upon the Ziegfield line, I pointed it out and told them they were now in France. My destination was Chartres, but we went a little out of our way to fly over Paris and let them get a glimpse of the Eiffel Tower. We landed at Chartres and they were hurried out into waiting trucks and home. The English speaking fellow's home was Bordeaux and I told him we had bombed around there. These men were all joyous coming home, but it wasn't a wild shouting kind of joy. Rather it was the kind of joy that comes after five years of living hell, five years of frustration, five years of learning patience. No, they didn't shout but you couldn't hide the grin on their faces and you knew there was a bigger smile in their hearts. They were home.



PALM SPRINGS MINI-REUNION

February 7, 2015

Robert Wolff, Organizer

Palm Springs Air Museum will host the 100th BG Foundation's annual event on Saturday February 7, 2015. Every year in SPLASHER SIX you read about the wonderful mid-winter weekend gathering of 100th veterans, families and friends. Event details are being finalized regarding which historical aircraft will fly that day, and for the afternoon speaker, but we promise beautiful weather and enjoyable time for all! The museum constantly revises its displays so there's always something new to see and learn about.

HOTEL

We are fortunate to have an on-going relationship with THE IVY PALM RESORT, 2000 Palm Canyon Dr., Palm Springs, CA 92262. Phone is 760-320-0555. Call for reservations early as our room block sold out last year! Be sure to mention 100TH BOMB GROUP when calling to get the guaranteed \$70/night rate which includes continental breakfast (request king or 2 double beds). Group rate applies from Wednesday Feb. 4 through Sunday Feb 8. As always, the hotel's Hospitality Room is ours for the weekend to gather and enjoy each other's company.

AS SOON AS YOU MAKE HOTEL RESERVATION, PLEASE CALL BOB WOLFF 805-985-0445 - I MUST TRACK THOSE ATTENDING!

SATURDAY - COCKTAILS AT 5PM, DINNER AT 6PM

The AMERICAN LEGION HALL in Palm Springs provides wonderful buffet-style food, drinks, and great service at affordable prices! Meal choices are roast beef, grilled salmon or roasted chicken and includes salad, rolls, vegetables, soft drink OR coffee and dessert. Price per person is \$28 which must be PREPAID BY CHECK to 100th BGF - SEND to Bob Wolff, 2051 Greencastle Way, Oxnard, CA 93035-2903. The American Legion is not set up to process payments on site.

Any questions? Call me 805-985-0445. See you in sunny Palm Springs!

Letter to the Editor

Dear Cindy,

I am Clarence Cherry, and flew with the 100th Bomb Group on ROGERS' RAIDERS in 1944. We were flying back from a Berlin mission when we were attacked by German fighters over Denmark. We were shot down and landed in the North Sea, where we floated for 41 hours before we were pulled from the sea.

I am the only member of my crew left, and I wanted to tell you that I just received, from the French Consul General in Chicago, the Knight of the Legion of Honor. What an honor for my family, Cindy! I received notification of this award on April 27th, which was my 71st wedding anniversary, and I received the medal on May 19, which was the date we were shot down. Boy, what a day for this old vet!

I was 90 years old on August 9th of this year. At 19, I was the youngest member of my crew.

Love to all, Clarence Cherry

Editor's Note: Since Clarence has mentioned his Berlin mission, I thought you would like to hear "the rest of the story" in his own words.

NORTH SEA RESCUE

It was our eleventh and most memorable mission. The date was May 19, 1944, and the target was Berlin. It was a rough mission from the get go. We had flak and ME-109s to contend with, but we came away with little damage to our airplane.

We were on the way home, flying over the Kiel area off the coast of Denmark when an ME-109 was spotted. We were in "Purple Heart Corner", the last plane in the low squadron. The '109 made three frontal passes on our plane. The first attack knocked out our two right engines. The second attack was to be the knock-out punch, but Julian [Pilot Julian P. Rogeres] gave hard rudder to the B-17 and the '109 missed the fuselage and hit our engines.

We knew we could not make it back to our base at Thorpe Abbotts. I had been wounded while at the left waist position, and they removed me to the radio room. Our navigator, Fred Mead, had been told by Julian to go to the rear of the plane to tell us to decide what we wanted to do - bail out or stay with the ship. We knew

our pilot's skills and we trusted him, so we stayed with the ship.

We ditched in the North Sea. The ship buckled and sank in about 45 seconds. One of our rubber rafts was shot full of holes. Fiorie [Tail Gunner Alfonso Fiorie] was wounded and in the arm, and was slow attempting to exit the aircraft. It was holding up all of us who were behind him. At this point, Julian reached down through the radio room hatch and, with all of his strength, lifted the wounded gunner out so that the rest of us could exit.

There we were, six men in one raft and four in another. We could hear the small tug boats near the Danish coast and Julian observed, "Fellows, we have a long way to go to get home." There was little we could do about it but drift with the current and the high waves, which we did all night.

The next day Co-Pilot Robert Lawler remarked, "Boy, would a cheeseburger go down good right now." The members of the crew who smoked were having nicotine fits because their cigarettes had gotten wet, but they solved the problem by drying their tobacco and using gum wrappers as cigarette paper. In this way they were able to calm their tobacco cravings.

The following morning we saw a British Lockheed Bomber with a boat attached to the bottom of the airplane. They got a fix on us, dropped flares for wind direction, and dropped the boat.

Three parachutes were attached to the boat, and it floated down to us as pretty as you please. We got in and found that this little wooden boat had some food and two outboard 5 hp motors. Julian and Dick Kendall, our top turret engineer, started the engines, and we headed for England. Some Allied fighters flew protection over us and directed us to two Danish fishing boats. They took us on board their larger boat, but when they started towards Denmark to make us German prisoners of war, one of the fighters shot up the deck of the boat and told them to hold position or they would be sunk.

A high speed launch from Air-Sea Rescue, stationed at Great Yarmouth, came to get us. It was late in the day when they arrived at the fishing boat. What a great relief it was to see them. Our little wooden boat was sunk with machine gun fire by the fighters.

Our crew was saved and went back to flying. We finished our tour of 29 mission and returned to the states. I am very proud of the crew of ROGERS RAIDERS.

TAPS

Richard Christovich, 351st Squadron, Aug 12, 2014
Richard was a Navigator who flew missions with several crews, including the Everett Kennedy, Paul Kohler, and Luther Bennett crews. He completed 35 combat missions.
Jack O'Leary

James P. Dock, 349th Squadron, August 1, 2014
James was the Co-Pilot on the Julius Geller crew that joined the 100th on 17 JUL 44. He completed his tour on the 29 NOV 44 Hamm mission. James flew 34 missions, including two trips to Berlin.
Jack O'Leary

Edward A. George, 418th Squadron, March 2, 2014
Edward was the Ball Turret Gunner on the James Bovenzi crew that joined the 100th on 18 FEB 45. He was flying at the end of hostilities.
Jack O'Leary

Clinton E. Green, 350th Squadron, June 5, 2014
Clinton was the Tail Gunner on the Calvin Guhse crew that joined the 100th on 30 MAR 45. He flew three Combat missions, one Chowhound, and one Ferry mission.
Jack O'Leary

John R. Jenista, 351st Squadron, August 2, 2014
John was a Radar Navigator that flew on a lead crew with 351st C.O. Harry Cruver. After the war John stayed in the service, retiring from the U. S. Air Force as a Colonel after 27 years of service.
Connie Jenista

Robert B. Landino, 351st Squadron, Feb 6, 2014
Robert was a Navigator on the Edward P. Gwen crew that joined the 100th on 5 OCT 44. On Robert's 31st mission, to Berlin on 8 MAR 45, A/C 43-38861 SWEET NANCY II was shot down by an ME-262. Robert became a POW. After the war, Robert stayed in the service, and retired from the Air Force after 30 years.
Jack O'Leary

James Lantz, 351st Squadron, June 19, 2014
Pilot James Lantz joined the 100th on 4 MAR 45. He and his crew flew 14 missions and one Chowhound mission. They were flying at the end of hostilities.
Jack O'Leary

Mark Lovvorn, 418th Squadron, April 8, 1954
Mark was the Toggler on the Owen K. Griffith crew that joined the 100th on 18 FEB 45. He flew nine missions.
Tom McCarley, Great Nephew

Elwood G. Mattiza, 351st Squadron, June 16, 2014
Elwood was the Tail Gunner on the Herman Striech crew that joined the 100th on 9 SEP 44. His crew was flying A/C 42-38047 FEVER BEAVER on its 100th mission. Elwood completed his tour on the 17 FEB 45 Frankfurt & Glissen mission.
Jack O'Leary

Nelson Pardee, 350th Squadron, June 1, 2014
Nelson was the Ball Turret Gunner on the Francis Malooly crew that joined the 100th on 21 FEB 44. Nelson became a POW on his 26th mission, to Berlin on 24 MAY 44.
Jack O'Leary

William M. Read, 349th Squadron, January 4, 2012
William was the Navigator on the Philip B. Kirsch crew. This crew arrived at Thorpe Abbots too late to fly combat missions, but performed humanitarian Chowhound missions over Holland.
Jack O'Leary

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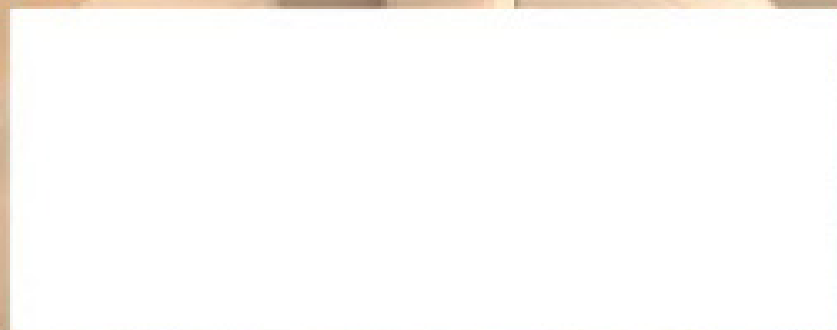
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