

POOP from Group



791st



790th



789th



788th

Newsletter of the 467th Bomb Group Association

April 1, 2014



Norma, Norman, and Brian at the World War II Memorial Washington D.C.

Norman's Honor Flight

On August 7, 2013, I had the honor and privilege of accompanying my dad, Norman Felbinger, and 90 other World War II veterans to Washington DC. This particular Honor Flight was the 50th to leave from Chicago, and it was an amazing day start to finish.

The day started at Midway Airport at 4:30 AM. Each vet was assigned a wheelchair, given a ditty bag and commemorative shirt. They had their ID photos taken and

headed to the gate, or "Deployment". At the gate, they were fed, and entertained by the vocal trio "Legacy Girls," who pay tribute to the famous Andrew Sisters.

Honor Flight Chicago and Southwest Airlines facilitate the trips, with support from the United Service Organizations (USO) of Illinois. Midway Airport Concessions (MAC One) provided breakfast sandwiches, coffee and juice for the veterans before boarding their plane.

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President's Message

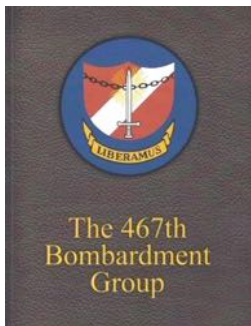
By Brian Mahoney

Thank you to several who have offered to take your subscriptions in electronic form, as a PDF attached to an email. And more thanks to those who have generously answered our appeals for The Mail Fund, which helps offset our traditional largest expense and has allowed the association to be dues-free. As we contemplate continuing another year or more, your board is looking at other ways to return to a positive flow, so we can continue to publish POOP. Even if you are an 'ePOOP' subscriber, please consider subsidizing the printing and mailing which still goes out to hundreds of our veterans, some of whom do not use the computer, and some of whom cannot easily contribute to 'the fund.' Figures in this POOP, and the math done by our Editor in the previous one, make clear that the equation is running in the wrong direction and not sustainable much longer!

Thanks to my colleague Directors, who are producing a very attractive newsletter, helping with the reunion, planning for the future of the organization, paying the bills, updating the website, and keeping us going as a social entity. Thanks to Chris Collins, a young Brit and enthusiast of the group, who has provided an active Facebook page (see the December newsletter). Thanks to David LaRussa, who is marketing the fine recent updated re-release and Appendix of the 1947 Allan Healy "467th Bomb Group," a stunning classic among bomb group mementos and a beautiful record of the time and place shared by all of the 'Rackheath Aggies.'

I do hope that many of you will have enjoyed New Orleans as you read this. Time spent with our vets is ever more precious, and healthy days and good company are great things to be enjoyed, 'in the moment.' Make every one count!

- Brian Mahoney



The 467th BG Association is delighted to offer a Softback limited edition of the original 1947 Allan Healy "467th BG History". This fifth and final edition has text reformatting and photographic restoration by Colin LaRussa, also a fully revised and comprehensive Addendum. Price \$50 + \$5 shipping - payment via check or PayPal

**Available from David LaRussa,
8570 N. Mulberry Dr., TUCSON, AZ 85704
TEL - (520) 322-9827 alarussa7@msn.com**



News From Station 145

From David Hastings MBE

Life has been hectic for the Trustees over the past year as we work to ensure that the beautiful 467th Marker Stone on the Rackheath Airfield is preserved and maintained for posterity.

On July 29th 1990 the 467th Bomb Group Association led by Colonel Albert Shower after much hard work by Geoff Gregory unveiled their new Marker at Liberator Close on the Rackheath Industrial Estate. They appointed Robert Lomax, Roger Hastings and David Hastings to be their UK trustees and this team aided by a small support group have ensured that the Marker, flags, masts, garden and lights are in good condition for the many visitors to enjoy and admire - you will never be forgotten.

However with age catching up on the Trustees advice was taken as to how best to ensure that the Marker lives on and after discussions with the 467th Bomb Group Association in the USA as well as legal advice here in the UK, it was agreed that the best option was to transfer the Marker site and the funds to the Rackheath Parish Council. This will ensure that the site is protected as well as cared for and the Trustees will provide full support to the Parish Council during their lifetime.

I am glad to report the transfer went very smoothly and the Parish Council have been fully briefed on what has to be done and they have worked well. Jean still continues to tend the garden, while I have replaced the flags (of which we are now short), Roger checks on the site each day and Robert keeps the lights going.

In the village of Rackheath we are all still fighting hard against the building of the wretched Eco-town, a politicians pet scheme which if it ever goes ahead will see 4,500 houses built on valuable farmland and which will totally destroy the character of Rackheath Village. Still rest assured we will fight on to the end. This was another

reason why the Marker was transferred to the Parish Council as the developers cannot build on public land.

At the end of last year in conjunction with Joe Dzenowagis Jnr we produced a UK version in DVD format of their outstanding film "Homecoming". We have now shown this on quite a few public occasions and each time the audience has expressed their deep thanks to the Dzenowagis family for giving us this outstanding and very moving film record of the 2nd Air Division Association and all their Conventions in the USA and the UK. The DVD runs for two hours and brings back so many memories of your friendship, bravery and sacrifice which will help future generations to understand the debt that we all owe to you.

With love and best wishes to you all from all of us in the UK - You will not be forgotten.

Yours,
David.





Norman's Honor Flight Continued.

Upon landing and being greeted by cheers and applause in Washington DC, additional guardians joined the group of Chicago guardians, medical staff and other helpers, and headed for the first, and probably most important, stop of the day - the World War II Memorial.

As we pulled up to the memorial, Dad spotted his surprise - Brian Mahoney, who came to meet us and photograph the visit. Again, the vets were greeted by cheers and applause. A group of students there from the Battlefield Marching Band handed out handwritten notes to each vet. The veterans had plenty of time to explore the memorial, then were gathered for an honor ceremony.

The veterans toured the city, visited the Vietnam Korea and Lincoln Memorials, as well as the Smithsonian Air and Space Museum. At each place, groups of people and individuals shook their hands, thanked them for their service, applauded. And at each airport landing, they were honored by the police and firefighters, as well. A couple of my favorites, besides the awesome "Welcome Home" celebration at Midway: I observed a mother send



Norman and the "Legacy Girls"



The veterans were warmly greeted by appreciative crowds throughout the day.

her small child over to shake hands with a few vets, and at the Korean memorial, a man accompanying a group of junior high/high school aged students would shout "Vet coming!" each time a vet would exit, and would all cheer and applaud.

"Welcome Home" at Midway airport was not to be believed! It included bagpipes, a band, an honor guard, a biker honor guard, bunting, signs, salutes - and lots of tears (happy).

There were a number of other surprises throughout the day that I won't detail, so I don't spoil it for others who might go on a future Honor Flight. I hope every veteran has an opportunity to take an Honor Flight. It's an experience that won't be forgotten! And make plans to "Welcome Home" an Honor Flight at your nearby airport - it is an incredible experience!

Many states are offering Honor Flights. Sign up for one today!

*- By Norma Felbinger
Daughter of 467th Bomber pilot, Norman Felbinger*

Notes from the Editor



The April issue of your newsletter reaches you two weeks before another highly anticipated gathering together with our friends from the 492nd BG at the Hampton Inn, New Orleans. Fran Gramberg and her reunion team have painstakingly prepared a program featuring a range of options and activities that looks set to provide another occasion to remember, not least the presence of a number of our esteemed veterans. This is the reason we continue to gather and are humbled the young men of 1944/45

make the time and effort to be among comrades and family 70 years later. We look forward to joining with them and we will bring you a full report of our activities in the August issue of POOP.

Treasurer **Kerry Davis** reports the Association has a total operating balance of **\$3,094.61** as of 1st March with the cost of producing the December issue of POOP including printing and mailing, **\$806.20**. The POOP costs are higher than previous due to POOP running to 16 pages with the new layout but we anticipate this to become standard for future issues. Donations since the last issue have amounted to **\$460** ensuring we continue to provide hard copies of POOP to those who don't have computers to take an electronic version in a pdf format "ePOOP". Our grateful appreciation to:

Joe Abernathy, Phyllis Ament, the sons of Walter Bohnenstiehl, Paula Corley, Steven & Camille Daudelin, Julien Ertz, Virgil Miller, Richard Muffolletto, James Murphy and Kirby Stafford.

We deeply appreciate your continuing support and ask donations to enable future issues be sent by check to Kerry (address on page 2) and specify "Mail Fund" or "POOP".

B24H 41-29270 "MY WILD IRISH ROSE"

David Morton emailed asking if any photos exist of B24 "MY WILD IRISH ROSE" that his father, **Joe H. Morton**, an air mechanic with the 790th Sq. worked on at Rackheath. An original B24 with the 790th it was flown over to England by the Bob Sheehan crew and apparently named by Bob after his wife. Records show the B24 was with the Group until August 1944, but despite 6 months at Rackheath very few photos are known to exist. If anyone has an image particularly showing name or artwork, please contact the Editor.

FREAK TAXIING ACCIDENT

David further mentioned in email his father Joe serviced "PROWLER" also "RHEINMACHEN" with crew chiefs Dewey Dunbar and John Thieke. "This story was told to me

on numerous occasions by my father, and always with a laugh. The way he explained this "freak accident" was that some of the mechanics decided to create a "home brew" in their quarters. They saved up potato peels, raisins, and anything else they could ferment in a barrel. Dad said it bubbled for days, and had a rather noxious smell. After the concoction had reached maturity, the creators of this experiment had a party which was interrupted by the need to service their plane. Having a job to do, they set to work in a condition which was not at all suitable for the occasion. Since it was cold and the planes would form ice or frost on their wind screens, they were covered with a canvas tarp. As a part of the service on their plane, they were required to perform a "run up" of the engines. In addition to not removing the tarps, they also forgot to chock the wheels on the bomber. Therefore, when the engines were revved, the B-24 crawled across the hardstand and made contact with the other B-24, effectively destroying both planes. Thankfully my father was an innocent bystander! I would be interested to know what punishments might have been meted out for this "accident".



CHRIS COLLIN'S

467th BOMBARDMENT GROUP

FACEBOOK GROUP

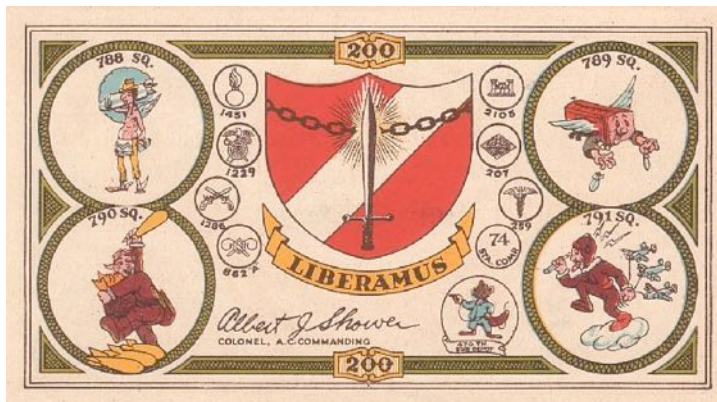
The December issue highlighted the existence of this relatively new venture and was introduced by Chris himself. The Group continues to grow and attract new members with numbers signed up now registering 300. An interesting forum where folk can provide photos, discussion, and engage in all things 467th. There is a growing archive of photos worth viewing including plenty the former Rackheath Airfield and Base looks like today. If you haven't already done so, do take a look and join in with the interaction. May be found on facebook by searching:

"The 467th BOMBARDMENT GROUP"

Editor's Notes...continued

James "Jerry" Murphy Co-pilot with the Scott crew 789th/791st, has offered high quality scans of his personal Rackheath Photo Collection and I will be delighted to share these with you in a future issue of the newsletter.

Harry Tanzer Radio-operator with Norman Felbinger's 788th crew sent a memento of the Groups' 200 mission party celebrations. Example below.



Received word from **Bob & Connie Gerringer** they are planning an England trip and this will include a visit to Rackheath during May. Bob's Dad was "Ted" Gerringer, 791st Bombardier Officer. It was 10 years ago Bob and Mom, Ruth Gerringer, and Connie's Mom, Lorraine, last visited the locality accompanied by Perry Watts and myself. Look forward to joining with them once again, retracing steps and taking in the Rackheath and Norwich sights.

Fellow Director, **Cindy Stevens**, is currently engaged on updating our official web site and planning some new features and improvements. This is likely to be an ongoing project due to the size of the current site and we will bring you further updates and news in due course.

Many thanks to those that have contributed some great articles and photos for this issue. It is particularly pleasing

Folded Wings

Richard B. Hirsch

Jane Holdrege

Jack Merritt Jr.

Wayne G. "Beef" Mountford

Ruth Mundy

George E. Tormoen

Priscilla Wheeler

Curtis C. Williams

Roy V. Winden

Please send news of "Folded Wings" also Obituaries to 467th BG veterans or prominent Associates where we will be honored to record names in the newsletter. Details to our President and Membership/Data Manager

- Brian Mahoney BriCamera@mindspring.com

a number of these have been provided by second generation folk including a proud grand-daughter, all recognising the importance of preserving the legacy of the 467th BG(H) for future generations. I encourage all to take a look of what you may have to share with readers and I'd be delighted to continue to receive your emails, scans, and "news" for the pages of your newsletter.

During our highly anticipated reunion/convention in New Orleans the Directors aim to conduct a Business Meeting and bring in others via Skype who can't be with us. One of the highlights of the agenda is discussing where we plan to hold the 2015 convention and early indications have identified 4 or 5 potential locations. If anyone has a burning desire for one specific location where we can be assured of attracting as many as possible, please contact our President, Brian Mahoney with your thoughts. Otherwise, news of the 2015 convention location will be revealed in the August issue of "POOP from Group. Look forward to seeing many of you in New Orleans shortly!

-Editor Andy Wilkinson

Contact andywilkinson467th@btinternet.com

Obituaries

Jack Merritt Jr.



.Lt. Col. (USAF ret.) Jack Merritt, Jr., went home to His Savior and Lord on Wednesday, July 17, 2013, at his home in Oklahoma City. He was born on October 6, 1923, near Maysville, OK, to Pierce Latimer and Reta Erwin Merritt. He graduated from Maysville High School in

1941 and the University of Oklahoma in 1959 with a degree in aeronautical engineering. Jack was a member of the Greatest Generation, serving his country during World War II as a B-24 bombardier-navigator with the 467th BG, 790th Sq. of the Mighty 8th Air Force, stationed at Rackheath, England. He completed 35 successful missions, including two on D-Day. Following his wartime service, Jack joined the newly formed United States Air Force and graduated from pilot training class 49B at Williams AFB, AZ. He served as a command pilot, pilot instructor, and logistics officer in the USAF, retiring after more than 27 years of service in Korea, the Philippines, Arizona, Oklahoma, New Mexico, Ohio, and many TDYs around the world. Jack married the love of his life, Martha Paulene Morgan, on March 7, 1951, at Shaw AFB in Sumter, SC, and they enjoyed almost 57 years together; she predeceased him in 2008. He is survived by a daughter, Paula Corley, and son, Jack Merritt, of OKC and three grandchildren.



The Howard Johnson crew which Jack was assigned pictured at Wendover UT., prior to departing for Rackheath, England.

Roy V. Winden

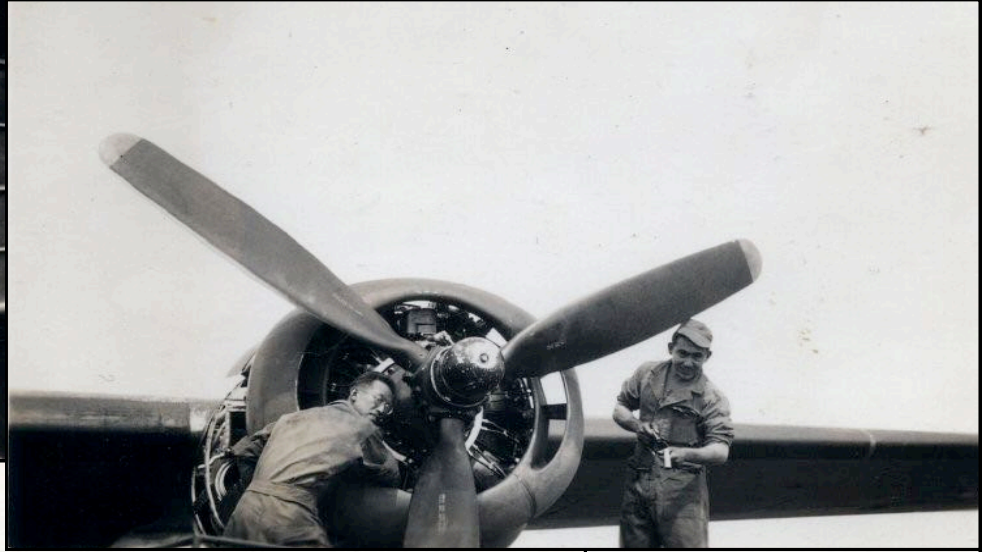
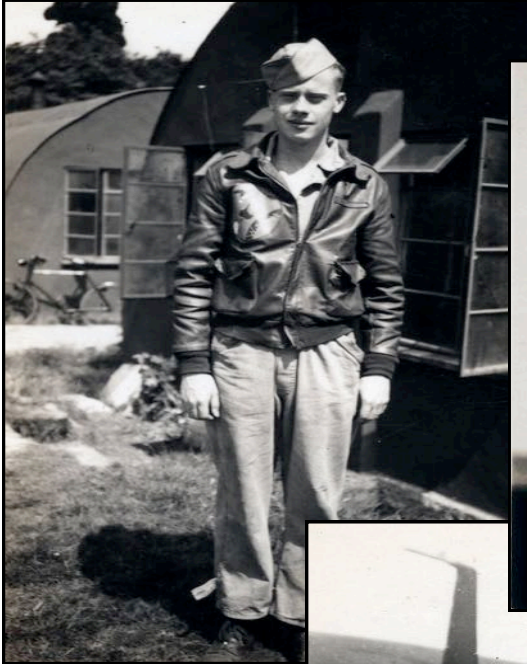


Roy V. Winden, 89, of Williston, ND, formerly of Alexander, ND and more recently of the North Eastern Montana Veteran's Home in Glendive, MT, died Friday, January 10, 2014 at the Veteran's Home. Roy Vernon Winden was born on February 26, 1924 at

Northwood, North Dakota, the son of Gilman and Hattie (Hansen) Winden. He was raised and received his education in Alexander, ND. After graduating from high school in 1942, he went into the US Army Air Force during World War II. After training as a tail gunner in the B-24 Liberator bomber, he was sent overseas and was based in England with the 492nd and 467th bomb group of the 8th Air Force. He flew 30 missions over Germany and was awarded the air medal with 4 oak leaf clusters. He was honorably discharged from the Air Force on October 11, 1945. He was a lifetime member of the American Legion of Alexander Post No. 94 and Alexander Lions Club. After the war he returned to Alexander and went into the trucking business. He purchased the Alexander Hall, which soon became a popular place for roller skating, movies and dances. On October 26, 1949, he married Vivian Leier of Esmond, ND, who was working as a registered nurse in Williston. They had six children. He received the job of rural mail carrier in Alexander in 1955. He began a floor sanding business and continued with his grain hauling business for farmers in McKenzie County. Roy carried mail in the Alexander area until 1977. Vivian and Roy then moved to Williston when he was transferred as a mail carrier to routes in Fortuna, Epping, Springbrook and Williston. He retired as a postal employee in 1984. Roy was a devoted father who enjoyed taking his family fishing, boating, and camping. He spent a lot of time making the Winden family home in Alexander a place where all the neighbor children gathered to play basketball, volleyball, and other games.

The S/Sgt Henry Kubacek Collection — gunner from the original "Witchcraft" crew

Photos scanned and kindly provided by grand-daughter, Carolyn Holt



Oak Leaf Cluster To Air Medal Given S-Sgt. H. W. Kubacek

Award of the Oak Leaf Cluster to the Air Medal for exceptionally meritorious achievement while on combat missions over Germany and enemy occupied Europe to S-Sgt. Henry W. Kubacek of Ennis, was announced recently somewhere in England by Major General James P. Hodges, Commanding General of a Liberator Bomb Division.

Sgt. Kubacek is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Frank J. Kubacek of Ennis. He graduated from Ennis High School in 1940, and was before he enlisted Nov. 5,





Bomber Jacket Folk Art in the 467th BG(H):

Featuring Lt Curtis C. Skidmore,
Bombardier/Navigator, 789th Squadron

By Clarence A. Skidmore (son)

Lt Curtis Skidmore painted the artwork on his A2 Bomber Jacket to commemorate his Combat Mission Record with the 467th Bomb Group (Heavy), 789th Squadron at Station 145 Rackheath, Norfolk, England.

Curtis was one of the original members of the 467th "Liberamus" Bomb Group who trained at Wendover, UT in 1943; he was assigned as Bombardier on Lt Elwood L. Bragdon's Crew Y-165 in the 791st Squadron. As the 467th BG began deploying to Rackheath, Lt Bragdon's crew departed Wendover AFB on 10 Feb 44 for Topeka AAF KS to obtain a plane to fly overseas; on 12 Feb they were transferred into the 789th Squadron.

Unlike most crews of the 467th, Pilot Lt Bragdon was not assigned a combat ready B-24 bomber to transport his crew to England; he was tasked to ferry a brand new B-24J-130-CO 42-110064 assigned to the Air Transport Command (ATC) from Topeka to England. According to entries on the Individual Aircraft Record Card the plane received some initial modification performed in Tucson AZ, before arriving in Topeka on 29 Feb. The crew subsequently departed for Morrison Field, FL on 10 Mar and then departed the United States on 12 Mar with orders like their fellow 467th BG B-24 crews before them to fly the Southern Route to England. At present, our research indicates this crew was the last original crew of the 467th BG to depart the US.

Unfortunately, Lt Bragdon's crew was one of two original crews that did not arrive intact at Rackheath. The B-24J crashed about 3 miles north of the N-S runway shortly after instrument takeoff from Eknes Field, Dakar, Senegal in North Africa at about 0445hrs on 25 March 1944 under dark and foggy conditions; the following four crew members were killed in the accident attributed to co-pilot error.

F/O Alvin N. Rubin, Co-pilot

Sgt. David E. Bertch, Ball-turret Gunner

Sgt. Ernest M. Ritchey, Radio Operator

Sgt. Earl J. Willingham, Armorer/Waist Gunner

Of the six surviving crew members, contents of a personal letter by Curtis dated 26 April revealed that Lt Bragdon and Sgt John C. Steinhagen (Gunner) had recently returned to the United States in April 1944; Lt Bragdon lost his left eye in the crash, but the type of injuries Sgt Steinhagen sustained are unknown. At present, we do not know the type of injuries sustained by Sgt Sam Pullaro (Tail Gunner) or Sgt Sam H. Clasbey (Engineer) nor anything more about their military service after the crash. Lt Curtis Skidmore (Bombardier) suffered injuries to his back, chest, and head, which kept him in Senegal into early May; he arrived for duty at Rackheath about 13 May.

After Lt Skidmore and Lt Robert B. Johnson (Navigator) arrived at Rackheath they were assigned to Lt James McGiverin's Crew #27 of the 789th Squadron; the two new arrivals flew their first Group Combat Mission with Lt McGiverin on 19 May. They continued flying as members of Crew #27 until about end of July 1944 when most of Lt McGiverin's original crew members completed their tour. Like many other combat bomber crew members, as his tour gained momentum Curtis began adorning his A-2 bomber jacket with bomb silhouettes to indicate number of combat missions flown; in the photo (on the following page) the bombs surround a skull and crossbones at the circle's center.

Before completing his tour, Curtis expanded his bomber jacket folk art work to include a tribute to the B-24 assigned to Lt McGiverin's crew and the 789th and 790th squadrons; before departing Rackheath, he completely revised this front side image representation of his combat mission record.

Continued Page 11



Early illustration on the front of the A-2 Jacket

applied after modification at Birmingham AL following a common practice of the day. So far, we are unable to ascertain if there was any other art work other than a name painted onto this B-24.

It was assigned to the 789th Squadron and given the squadron aircraft call letter 'T'. Apparently it replaced the 'Piccadilly Lillie' for Lt McGiverin's Crew #27 as they subsequently flew it quite regularly beginning with Group Combat Mission #31 on 23 May and on into late July. They also flew this plane on the first and third D-Day Missions on 6 June 44. For Curtis, 15 of his 32 combat missions were flown in 'Sack Time'.

Let's pause again to inform or remind the reader that almost one year later on 07 April 1945 this same B-24H called 'Sack Time' was rammed by a German Luftwaffe Messerschmitt Bf 109 during Group Combat Mission #210 to Krummel, Germany. The Bf 109 German pilot flew his plane into the tail section of 'Sack Time' shearing off the top half of the starboard rudder and vertical stabilizer. Pilot Lt Robert Winger and Co-pilot Lt Jeff Nard of Crew #31 struggled to maintain control for almost an hour until the crew could abandon the aircraft behind Allied lines in Belgium where 'Sack Time' finally crashed to the ground. All nine crew members safely made it back to Rackheath within a week.

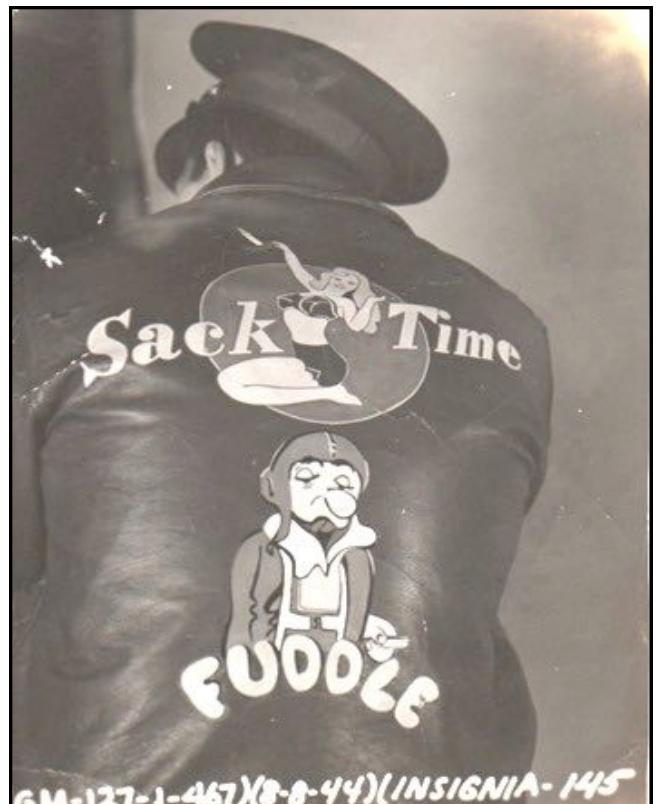
A few years ago the History Channel made a documentary entitled Dogfights: Kamikaze and Luftwaffe's Deadliest Mission wherein Robert Winger and the German Bf 109 pilot Heinrich Henkel recall the ramming incident; the scene is depicted with high resolution computer graphic simulation.

Although we have not found any pictures or documentation of the nose art for 931 'Sack Time', in the summer of 1944 Lt Curtis Skidmore painted a cartoon logo for 'Sack Time' on his A-2 bomber jacket that seems inspired by the Alberto Vargas gatefold for April 1944 Esquire magazine known as "Patriotic Gal".

An interesting short history of the B-24 assigned to Lt McGiverin's Crew #27 to which Curtis' artwork pays tribute seems in order before presenting images of his completed bomber jacket art work.

Before departing Wendover AFB UT to deploy to the European Theater of Operations (ETO), Lt McGiverin was assigned B-24H 41-28731 and his crew named it 'Piccadilly Lillie' and they flew it to Rackheath; Lt McGiverin's Crew #27 flew 'Piccadilly Lillie' on the Group's first Combat Mission 10 Apr 44 and another six missions until 13 May when the plane was transferred to the 392nd BG at Wendling, Norfolk.

About the same time 'Piccadilly Lillie' was transferred out, a newer B-24H-20-FO 42-94931 was transferred into the 467th BG from the 445th BG at Tibenham, Norfolk; historical records of the 445th BG indicate this plane had the nose art name of 'Sack Time', which presumably was



Rear of the A-2 Photographed in August 44.



Alberto Vargas "Patriotic Gal"

While at Rackheath Lt Curtis Skidmore underwent Navigator training in August and completed his 32nd Combat Mission in early September. He stayed on at Rackheath into November performing duties as Squadron Gunnery Officer and Assistant Squadron Bombardier.

By early November 1944 Curtis completed painting his bomber jacket by adding his rendition of the Squadron emblems for 789th and 790th to the backside and revised the front side image of his combat mission record and added the 467th BG emblem and motto "Liberamus" as seen in these photos dated 05 Nov 44 that were also taken by the Base Photo Section.

On the front side is a cartoon of a B-24 as an outhouse with 467th BG tail markings dropping 32 bombs accounting for his 32 combat missions, two of which were flown on D-Day; added to the wearer's left side is the 467th BG emblem and motto "Liberamus".



Lt. Curtis Skidmore's highly illustrated A-2 Jacket certainly caught the eye that they were subject to the Rackheath Base Photo Section documenting the Jacket in a series of official photos. Originally photographed in August 44, they returned to feature the A-2 Jacket again during early November 44 as featured in the two photographs above.

Continued on Page 13

Lt. Curtis Skidmore A-2 Jacket story Continued.



Here are color photos of the Jacket as it exists today. (Apologies to those readers who have the printed greyscale version of "POOP - *Editor*"). Sometime after returning



stateside Curtis removed his nametag and in its place signed his artwork with his nickname "Skid", which was his common practice with his drawings.



Tragic scene at Dakar following the crash of the Rackheath bound Lt. Bragdon crew during the early hours of 25th March 1944. Sadly, 4 crew killed in the accident while other crew injuries delayed their arrival in England with pilot Lt. Bragdon returned to the U.S. to recover.

467th Bombardment Group(H) Association

Tribute to Perry Watts *By Tom Johnson, Director, 467th BG (H) Association*



Presentation of Photo Collage to Jill and Jim Watt in recognition of Perry's unstinting support given to the 467th BG in many roles over many years in characteristic selfless endeavor.

On Sunday, November 24, 2013, Jill and Jim Watts were presented with two framed pieces, collages of photos taken of Perry at past reunions over the years by various 467th members. These gifts were an affectionate testimonial expressing the gratitude of each member for the dedication and achievements of Perry Watts as a long-time Distinguished Member, 467th BG Historian and Rackheath Base Contact.

Fellow Director and POOP Editor Andy Wilkinson and I drove up from London to Salhouse that morning for the formal presentation. Perry's wife Jill and son Jim greeted us warmly at the door and invited us in. Andy and I, having been to their home many times previously, felt Perry's absence immediately, he being such a dynamic and vibrant person during each visit. We all met in the front living room during the presentation. Andy, Jim and I took photos to commemorate the occasion.

Later, the four of us drove over to the Priscilla Bacon Lodge Hospice where Perry spent his remaining days. We were escorted to a meeting room full of other families to

participate in a warm and friendly commemoration service which was conducted by husband and wife vicars to honor the memories of those who had recently passed on. Hymns were sung, scriptures read and prayer candles lit by all who attended. It was a very moving and poignant remembrance program.

After the ceremony, we drove out to St. Mary's Church in Sisland, Norfolk where Perry was laid to rest. According to Jim Watts, "*St. Mary's is a medieval foundation which was destroyed by lightning during divine service one afternoon in July 1761. The church was rebuilt in the prevailing 18th century Gothic style. It still boasts a 15th century font, damaged by Cromwell's forces during the English Revolution in the 1650s, and outside, evidence has been found of alchemy, practiced by a chantry priest in the 15th century!*"

This uniquely remote location in the middle of the Norfolk countryside, accessible only by a narrow, muddy dirt lane, was remarkably beautiful in a desolate, majestic sort of way, away from crowds, housing and vehicles. His

grave site had a wooden cross denoting his name, awaiting a permanent stone marker to be placed there. Jim placed a small red and green Christmas wreath on his father's plot while silent prayers were made.

Andy and I met Jill's sister, Jennifer Burgess, and her son, Peter, who, we discovered, were the long-time caretakers of St. Mary's and responsible for the upkeep of the church and surrounding grounds. We found out the Burgess family had lived in the area for over 40 years. Upon leaving, Andy and I felt good in knowing that Perry wouldn't be alone in this isolated setting with family living across the road.

The following morning, Andy and I paid a visit to the 467th Memorial Marker and Control Tower. We also stopped by the newly built B-24 Café and Business Lounge where we met owner Nick Hovey, Managing Director of Tilia Properties which owns the recently refurbished Rackheath Control Tower. We found the café to be a comfortable and inexpensive eatery/meeting place, ideal to relax in when visiting the 467th BG Memorial Marker, Rackheath Tower and other extant buildings used by our vets during World War II.

Our last stop before heading back to London was a visit to Mike and Maureen Bailey in Norwich. Mike, as most 467th BG members know, is a world-famous aviation artist who has many published paintings and continues to be commissioned for his artwork, of which Andy and I are proud owners of his work.

Mike was happily surprised to see us when he opened his door. Maureen was out and about when we arrived but returned shortly before we left. Tea was made for all and, when asked about Perry's last few days, Mike informed us that he and Maureen had visited Perry the day before he passed on. Both told us that Perry was "his old self", enjoying their company, requesting tea from the hospice staff and entertaining them in the general meeting room. Mike told us that it was truly a shock to find out that Perry had died the following day.

All in all, it was a wonderful and well-spent trip. Personally for us, it was a memorable one as well, enjoyable yet bitter-sweet. As I've stated before, Perry was an extraordinary man, one of many talents, and will be missed by all who knew him.



St. Mary's Church, Sisland, Norfolk - remote and first built back in Medieval times.



Jennifer, Andy, Jim & Jill at St. Mary's Sisland on a chilly November day.

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Another photo from the S/Sgt Henry Kubacek Collection featured on pages 8 & 9. Summer 1944 at Rackheath depicting 790th enlisted men from the Reed, Ford and later Shaughnessy and Zbikowski crews. All safely completed their tour of missions.