

# POOP from Group



791st



790th



789th



788th

Newsletter of the 467th Bomb Group Association

June 2015



**The Forgotten Crew**.....pictured at Wendover, UT, during the 467th's training phase.

Back Row left to right: Lt Earl C. Bonville - Pilot, Lt. Archibald J. Lewis - Copilot, Lt. John T. Lynch - Navigator, Lt. A.M. Klopp - Bombardier, T/Sgt. Leo H. Goodness - Engineer

Front kneeling: S/Sgt. Carl D. Harmon - Radio Oper., Sgt. S.G. Rorden - Gunner, Sgt. Ward C. Flanagan - Gunner, Cpl. Angus A. McKenzie - Nose Gunner, Cpl. William H. Little - Tail Gunner

**Remembering the tragic loss of a crew that time forgot**.....article Page Sixteen

**\*\*\* 2015 Kansas City Reunion Report & Photos \*\*\***

**"Chuck" Bednarik**  
**NFL Hall of Fame Member and 467th Gunner, obit.**  
**"Jerry" Murphy, Co-pilot, Rackheath Photos**  
**It's SEATTLE for our 2016 Reunion**

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### Honorary Board Chairman (RIP)

Col Albert J. Shower



The 467th  
Bombardment Group



# President's Message

By Brian Mahoney

Our gathering in Kansas City, alongside the 492nd Bomb Group Association for the third or fourth time (depending on whether 2012 was 'official') was spectacular! Intermittent rain did not dampen 55 spirits, and close-by attractions for nice meals, craft beers, and provisioning the day room 'coffee house,' made us feel right at home. Traditional fireworks near the WW I Memorial and Union Station, seen from our 16th-floor day room (and simulcast with the Kansas City Symphony on large TVs) capped Sunday dinner and set the tone for a true Memorial Day themed reunion. Tours were educational, first rate, and suited our group perfectly. Our group's half of the reunion planning committee was very strongly represented by Tom Johnson and 'yours truly,' with Norma Felbinger coming in late but proficiently in running the Silent Auction, which was again a great fundraiser for the next reunion. Norma enjoyed it, which is a good thing: the group has asked her to do it again!

We had six spry and vibrant veterans in our party, three of whom had been POW, four of whom were 467th, one who even made the trip 'solo.' Three 'regulars' joined us from England, Andy and Tom Wilkinson, and James Watts, presenting an advance copy of his late father Perry's now available final book, "*The Famous B-24 "Witchcraft"*". We spent more time together visiting and learning from our veterans, and the crowd endorsed 'even more of same' at the next reunion.

Your board managed to combine the annual membership meeting with a Director's meeting. One absent director participating over the internet, joined seven of us present. We thanked outgoing Director Norma Felbinger, whose seat is assumed by newcomer Peter Horne, about whom you will hear a good deal over the next few years! The now-current Directors re-elected the previous officers, and we voted that the marvelous Facebook page launched and administered by Chris Collins is now an official communication organ of the Association, with Andy Wilkinson serving as joint Moderator. The level of interest and quality of research and discussion warrant your attention! (Ask to join the nearly 500 group members at 'The 467th Bombardment Group.')

We are now 4 years into 'second generation management' of the Association, and feel set to go right on, even knowing that our reunions will be profoundly different when 'the kids' are actually the oldsters in the room... and it will be too soon. We will keep being social and endorsing research and collaboration with others who keep our legacy—the wartime service of the Rackheath Aggies—accurate, vibrant and compellingly presented in new ways. We will soon ask you to endorse slightly clarified by-laws, as one of our investments in continuing the mission. (*Proposal to amend 467th current by-laws, See Page 12 - Editor*)

# President's Message Continued

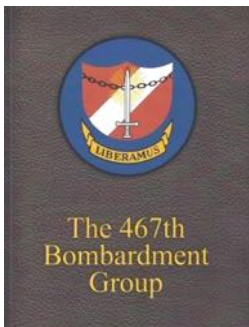
My continuing thanks to all who help with the work of the Association, all who donate to The Mail Fund, and who contribute material to our awesome Editor. Finally, for all of the Directors, I want the vets to know that our service will go on, and we are honored to be stewards of the story of your world-saving service, grateful to know you, and thinking of you every day.

- Brian Mahoney

**BriCamera@mindspring.com**



*Our President, Brian engaged in thoughtful conversation at our Kansas City Reunion.*



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**

## Folded Wings

**Ernest "Andy" Anderson Beasley Jr.** - Co-Pilot 791st POW 2015 May

**Charles "Chuck" P. Bednarik** - Aircrew 788th/791st 2015 March

**Melvin Culross** - Aircrew 492nd/467th 788th 2015 January

**John F. Moffette** - Pilot 789th 2014 December

*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*



# News From Station 145

*From David Hastings MBE*

You are all very much in our thoughts as we celebrate the 70th Anniversary of VE Day and the village enjoyed seeing that unique Dzenowagis film "Parade" which told the story of that tremendous day in 1995 when over 400 2nd Air Division USAAF Veterans took part and gave Norwich the finest VE Day Parade outside London, with Colonel Albert Shower on the City Hall steps with Lord Ironside and the Lord Mayor. We can never thank the Dzenowagis family enough for giving the Memorial Trust that wonderful collection of films so we can relive all those great times we had together. They also give the youngsters of today a greater understanding of just how much you mean to us, as well as your friendship and sacrifice during those dark days in the forties.

Not many of us are left now who took part in that amazing celebration night in the Norwich Market Place. I walked down from Colman Road with the family and it was amazing to see a few street lights on as well as no black-out curtains drawn in the houses after the darkness of those six long years. The scene in the market place was astounding with hundreds of service men and women including the 2nd Air Division all dancing and singing with us as the bands played. Searchlights illuminated the City Hall, the Castle and the Cathedral while B.24s flew overhead firing coloured flares. We just could not believe that the war was over, but sadly many families could not rejoice as our Royal Norfolk Regiment were still prisoners of the Japanese. I know my mother had quite a job to get me to leave the market place.

On the base we are still trying to prevent the airfield being swallowed up by the wretched Ecotown, but these days our elected Councillors pay no regard to the wishes of those who elected them in their rush to satisfy the developers. Still we have not given up yet.

The Marker is being well looked after by the UK Veterans aided by Jean and Roger. Sadly however we have still not resolved the problems with the floodlights but will keep trying.

We have been advised of several visits this year so are looking forward so much to seeing you.

We will never forget you.  
All our love and best wishes  
David and Jean Hastings  
Hon.Member 467th BG Association.



*2nd Air Division veterans participate VE-Day Parade, Norwich 1995*

**James Watt** provided this new “flyer” for his late Father, Perry’s final book on the 467th’s famous B24 “Witchcraft” . Understand the book will be available by July and is available also through Amazon and good book stores in both the U.S. as well as the UK.....we were fortunate to have an advance copy while in Kansas City, highly recommended -*Editor*



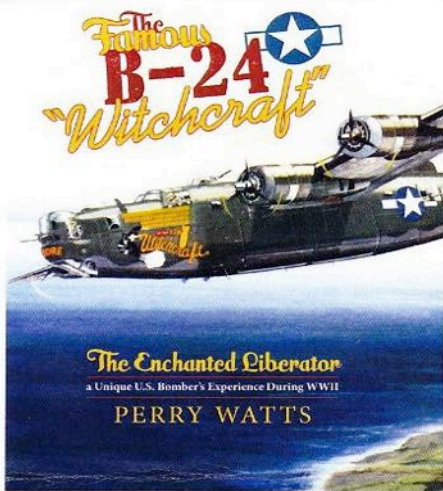
# SPRING/SUMMER 2015

➤ New Release

## The Famous B-24 "Witchcraft"

*The Enchanted Liberator—a Unique U.S. Bomber's Experience During WWII*

Perry Watts



### BOOK SPECS

978-0-7643-4888-4

Size: 8 1/2" x 11"

Illustrations: 215 color & b/w photos

Pages: 168

Binding: hard cover

Price: \$39.99

- A unique B-24 Liberator with the best flying record in the 8th USAAF during WWII
- Served in many key missions of WWII, to D-Day and beyond
- Built in the then-largest factory in the world, in Michigan

### ABOUT THE BOOK

This book captures the story of "Witchcraft," a B-24 Liberator, based in Rackheath, England, toward the end of World War II, that had a unique record in the 8th Army Air Force of flying 130 credited missions without aborting. This is a sequel to author Perry Watts' 2006 book (also published by Schiffer) on the 467th Heavy Bombardment Group, which sets this Liberator in context. In this book, Watts starts with Witchcraft's creation in the then-largest factory in the world in Michigan, then chronicles its transit like many Liberators to the UK via Brazil and Africa. The narrative provides detailed stories of Witchcraft's often hazardous missions with its Group over occupied Europe and during the battle for Germany 1944-5. This is a special testimony to why and how the B-24 played a key role in the World War II liberation of occupied Europe.

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

William Perry Watts as a schoolboy remembered seeing the planes of the 96th Combat Wing (including the 467th Bombardment Group) flying to formation points off the Norfolk Coast. This lifelong memory drove him, after training as an RAF cadet pilot, military policeman, and senior executive to return to exploring the history of the local USAAF airbase in 1944-45. Retired, he painted a range of pictures related to its aircraft, before moving on to capturing the organisational history of the base in his 2006 book "The 467th Bombardment Group (H)". This book is a continuation inasmuch as it focuses on the exemplary story of one - albeit the most famous - of the Liberators that regularly flew from Rackheath at that challenging time.

Also Available from [AMAZON.COM](http://AMAZON.COM)  
-*Editor*

# *Our Kansas City Reunion 24th - 27th May 2015*

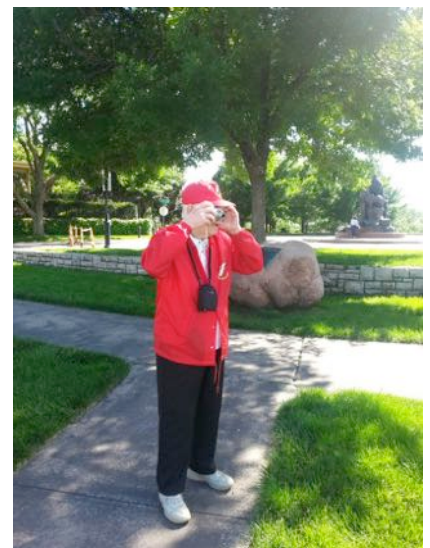


Our third joint reunion with the 492nd found an ideal location downtown at the historic "Aladdin Hotel", a restored Art Deco building offering a great setting and facilities for hosting another successful and memorable event. The hard work and attention to detail of the Reunion Committee culminated in a wonderful four day program striking the perfect balance of relaxation and chat with veterans and the option to explore the City with a number of enticing Tours. Our Day Room occupied the Hotel's entire top-floor expertly organised to provide a relaxing coffee-house theme, plenty of space for memorabilia, auction/raffle items, snacks and drinks for socializing, and the hub of vibrant reunion activity.

A number arrived the day before and quickly settled in exploring the immediate vicinity, renewing friendships from previous years, and eagerly anticipating the days to come. The downtown Kansas City Power and Light District provides a host of bars, restaurants, entertainment, and a variety of shops, not least the highly popular and comprehensively stocked Cosentino's grocery store. Early-bird Peter Horne had driven from Portland, OR., and provided the Day Room with an array of large Monitors hosting a continuous slideshow cycle of WWII images highlighting Rackheath, B24s, and men of the 467th...a great addition to the Day Room. Sunday saw folk arriving throughout the day with a Picnic Supper early evening followed by an opportunity to view the Memorial Day firework display from the 16th floor of the Aladdin Hotel. Rain showers did not spoil the occasion and coverage was also available via the local tv station provided in the Day Room.

Memorial Day was time to reflect and concentrated on socializing in the Day Room with friends and family. We held our annual 467th BG Association Business Meeting late afternoon with all invited to attend with our President Brian Mahoney officiating proceedings. The Directors voted on electing Officers to serve annually with Brian reporting and stating a motion to replace extant bylaws with new bylaws and proposals to set the number of Directors to ten. New proposals and amendment to bylaws are to be put before the members for feedback before presenting conformed and updated bylaws to the Directors for their formal adoption in the fall of 2015. Norma Felbinger stepped down as a Director and was thanked by Brian and others for her support and excellent contributions in the role. Peter Horne was elected replacing Norma, and we look forward to him working with the team and providing a wealth of knowledge and enthusiasm in the year ahead. A motion was raised recognising the positive and highly beneficial step promoting and highlighting the legacy of the 467th by Chris Collins through his excellent 467th Group Facebook Page. The Group has almost 500 members signed up, many second generation 467th. The motion also proposed the Page be officially recognised as the 467th BG Association Facebook Group Page. The motion was carried unanimously and Chris will continue to moderate the Page with your Editor joint moderator.

The Hotel's Martini Loft Lounge on the mezzanine level was proving a popular spot with many and continued to be throughout the reunion. Tuesday morning saw an early start with the first tour and most boarded the bus at 0830 for a guided tour and documentary film to the Harry S. Truman Library and Museum. Following the morning





here, it was back to the hotel for a lunch-box and second tour option of a 3 hour City Guided Sightseeing Bus Tour. Those unfamiliar with the City were keen to take this tour which was enhanced by of our knowledgeable local guide with a keen sense of the history. There was numerous notable stops where folk could stretch their legs, take some pictures, and enjoy what Kansas City has to offer. These included the impressive restored Union Station, the Ewing & Muriel Kauffman Memorial Garden (the Kauffmans were entrepreneurs and philanthropists whose foundation aims to promote economic and cultural well-being in Kansas City), and a stop providing outstanding views

down to a bend in the Missouri River and downtown airport. All too soon we were back at the hotel for the traditional Group Photo staged in our Day Room, once the hotel's 16th floor classic Ballroom. It took a little time to arrange everyone to the photographer's liking but not nearly as long as at some previous reunions.

After our Pasta Buffet Dinner we were introduced to two friends of Sandy Bailey (492nd) who were authentic "Rosie Riveters" on the production-line assembling B-25 Mitchell Bombers during WWII at the Kansas City North American Aviation complex. Both Eleanor Bennett and Mary White shared their fascinating memories and recollections of life and times in the City and their role in the assembly process, often working the long night-shifts. Both were warmly applauded for their talk and contribution to the evening. Next was the Raffle, ably hosted by Brian M., Daisy & Bonnie Scott. Time for that moment where 492nd veteran Howard Heckmann provides an example of his outstanding (and now traditional) "dance".....and Howard did not disappoint! Our hosts insisted all winners provide their own version of Howard's efforts which revealed a talented and sometimes hilarious number of routines.

Wednesday morning saw a short ride to visit the wonderful National World War One Museum, and Tower. A truly impressive building housing many original artefacts from WWI and beautifully presented as you chronologically walk through the unfolding years 1914-17, then 1917-19, preceded by an introductory film offering insight into world events that led to war. Opportunities to explore exhibit halls, portrait walls, theatres, a research center, the 217 foot Tower, and more. Several returned the following day as there was so much to view and experience. The afternoon tour featured a visit to the Country Club Plaza Shopping District, Kansas City's premier retail area with over 150 shops and numerous bars and restaurants....and the warmest day so far.

The 467th and 492nd Joint Group Meeting was open to all and convened to consider the 2016 convention. We continue to keep our family of both Groups together for a forth Joint reunion and two contenders emerged, namely Houston and Seattle. Both locations were discussed and their prospective merits highlighted by those with local knowledge. After the narrowest of votes, it was SEATTLE that was chosen. Pat Scott had completed some preliminary research into the possibility of Seattle hosting our 2016 reunion and it certainly helped win the day.

The Memorial Service opened with Shay Langgood (492nd) welcoming all and calling the Color Guard represented by Lees Summit North High School. A candle was lit to those recent Folded Wings as their individual names were called out, while prominent as ever was The Remembrance Table to reflect on those missing in action. A truly moving service which reminded us why we gather together each year and the sacrifice made by so many 70 years ago.

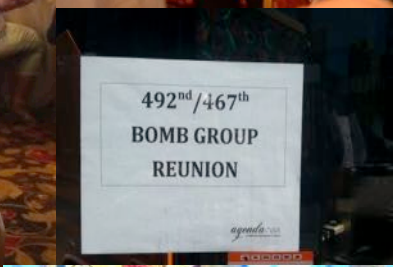
Our Formal Banquet Dinner concluded with hugs, embraces, and fond farewells until next year when we meet in Seattle, dates to be confirmed. A hugely successful and memorable time was had by all and the Reunion Committee cannot be praised highly enough for their hard work delivering a wonderful 2015 reunion in Kansas City.



# Kansas City Reunion May 2015







## Notes from the Editor



It was a real pleasure to be among those of the 492nd and 467th for the recent gathering in Kansas City and report our activities in this latest newsletter. Wonderful to have 6 veterans with us and our themed Day Room was very conducive for relaxation and chat and to hear of their experiences. Next issue should provide dates and the chosen hotel for our 2016 reunion in **SEATTLE**. Please make every effort to come and get involved.....opportunities to meet and chat with those

“who were there” diminishes each year. Make sure you never get to regret not making the effort to come and join in the fun and camaraderie. You are warmly welcome! A note of thanks and appreciation to Peter Horne & Brian Mahoney for promptly sharing their Kansas City reunion photos which are featured widely this issue.

**TREASURY NOTES:** Our Treasurer, Kerry Davis, reports the Association has a total operating balance of **\$3,926.90** as of 30 Apr 15. The cost of producing the January 2015 issue of POOP including printing and mailing was **\$710.62**. We continue to look for ways to reduce costs for future issues. Donations since the last issue amounted to **\$240.00** allowing us to continue to provide hard copies of the POOP to those who unable to receive the pdf formatted “ePOOP.” Our grateful appreciation to: **James L. Sherrard, Phyllis M. Ament and Julian S. Ertz**. We deeply appreciate your continuing support and ask donations to enable future issues be sent by check to Kerry Davis (address on page 2) and specify “Mail Fund” or “POOP”.

### 467th BG Association Attendees at our joint 2015 Kansas City Convention

*Beth Brode*  
**Norman Felbinger**  
*Mary & Norma Felbinger*  
*Jim Gummelt*  
*J. Peter Horne*  
*Tom Johnson*  
*Fika Kladnjak*  
*Vildana Kremonic*  
*Brian Mahoney*  
*J. Jeremiah Mahoney*  
*Karen Mayberry*  
**James “Jim” Sherrard**  
*Jamie S. Sherrard*  
*Jay Shower*  
*Ann Pooch*  
*Art Tauchen*  
*James Watt*  
**John “Jack” Weyler**  
*Andy Wilkinson*  
*Tom Wilkinson*  
**Joseph “Joe” Zbikowski**  
*Shirley Lowe*

**Veterans in bold**



*“Jack” Weyler, 789th Sq. Pilot and Crew Commander,  
one of our veterans attending the Kansas City Reunion.*

Received communication from **Stephen Freeman-Pannett**, Secretary of the Norfolk and Norwich Combined Ex-Services Association (NNCEX-SA) with the news they were delighted to have been asked to undertake looking after our 467th BG Memorial Marker located on the light industrial site, Rackheath. On 25th May, American Memorial Day, the NNCEX-SA

## Editor's Notes...continued

were present at the American Military Cemetery, Madingley, Cambridgeshire, to lay a wreath at the *Wall of Missing* in memory of those men of the 467th who made the ultimate sacrifice. Laid by the Chairman, the inscription reads, "They grow not old, as we grow old.....we will remember them".



With this year being the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end WW2 the NNCEXSA thought it would be appropriate for us to honour the Memory of the men and women who served on the RAF Base at Rackheath during that period. So with onset of some good British weather, four merry old souls set to work in sprucing up the Memorial area in readiness for our D-Day commemorations. So a lick of paint and a wash down of the Memorial stone, trim the hedge and get rid of the never ending weeds. By lunch time the job was completed and with flags reset it was time to make our way home.

On the 6<sup>th</sup> of June the NNCEXSA made up part of the parade which took part in the service and wreath laying in the City Centre in Norwich. The afternoon the Chairman, Brian Wilson and the Secretary Steve Freeman – Pannett of the NNCEXSA drove to the Rackheath Memorial and lay a wreath in memory of the 467<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group personal who lost their lives in the conflict.



*Continued next page*



*Brian Wilson taking the salute after laying the wreath*



*Brian Wilson & Steve Freeman-Pannett in silent tribute.*

### **467th BGA, LLC bylaws revision**

Per Board of Directors action on Memorial Day, as allowed in present bylaws, we have made one change, raising the number of Directors from 5 to 10. In the same motion, the Directors unanimously approved having an *ad hoc* committee develop a refined version, incorporating the intent of previous changes by Directors with improved implementation of those intentions, and incorporating other procedural improvements that have been discussed.

The committee comprises Ann Pooch and Brian Mahoney. They will soon have prepared their proposal, which the board hopes to officially adopt at the end of the year, and then publish the new version in the subsequent 'POOP.'

Those interested in seeing the current version, annotated to explain problematic areas, and the proposed revised version, are encouraged to contact either Brian or Ann via email, before November 1st. As the *ad hoc* Bylaws Committee, they will be open to constructive feedback. Thanks!

- Brian Mahoney

***BriCamera@mindspring.com***

## **Obituaries**

### **Ernest "Andy" Anderson Beasley, Jr., Co-pilot 791st & POW**

Andy, age 92, died on May 19, 2015 in Valparaiso, Florida.

Andy was born on March 18, 1923 in Lynchburg, Virginia to parents Alma Stribling Beasley and Ernest Anderson Beasley, Sr. He served as a pilot of B-24 bombers stationed in England and was shot down over the Baltic where he was captured and held as a prisoner of war in Germany for a year. After being freed by General Patton, he returned home to Greensboro, NC, where he was an information officer and he met the love of his life, Violet. He was transferred to Miami with the ROTC and began studying at the University of Miami. It was there he married Violet Yokeley on April 13, 1946. He graduated from the University of Miami in 1955 with a Master's of Science degree and taught business and ROTC there for a year before being recalled as a reserve to the Air Force to serve as a public relations specialist at St. John's, Newfoundland. He served in this capacity for over 25 years. He and his immediate family lived in Frankfurt, Germany, Colorado Springs, Colorado, and Newburg, New York, before settling in Valparaiso, Florida under this tour of duty. After retiring from the military, he taught Economics and Statistics at Okaloosa Junior Teacher's College for another 25 years.

Andy was known for his wit, intellect, humor and kindness. He was loved by his family, friends, colleagues, students and neighbors and his beautiful hazel eyes, smile and stories will be missed. He adored his lifetime companion and mentor, Violet.

# Obituaries

## Charles "Chuck" P. Bednarik, Gunner 788th & 791st Sq. 467th BG

### & NFL Pro Footballer with the Philadelphia Eagles



The Philadelphia Eagles are saddened to learn of the passing of one of their all-time greats, Pro Football Hall of Fame linebacker and center Chuck Bednarik.

Bednarik died early this morning following a brief illness at an assisted living facility in Richland, PA. He was 89.

A Philadelphia legend, Bednarik played a franchise-record 14 seasons with the Eagles from 1949-1962 and was part of two NFL Championship squads, in both 1949 and in 1960. One of the last two-way players in the NFL, Bednarik delivered a legendary performance in the

1960 NFL Championship Game, playing nearly every minute at both linebacker and center against the Green Bay Packers. With seconds remaining in the contest and Packers running back Jim Taylor headed for the end zone, Bednarik made a game-saving tackle and bear-hugged him to the ground as time ran out, preserving a 17-13 Eagles victory.

Jeffrey Lurie: "With the passing of Chuck Bednarik, the Eagles and our fans have lost a legend. Philadelphia fans grow up expecting toughness, all-out effort and a workmanlike attitude from this team and so much of that image has its roots in the way Chuck played the game. He was a Hall of Famer, a champion and an all-time Eagle. Our thoughts are with his family and loved ones during this time."

Don Smolenski: "So many of the timeless moments in Eagles history are associated with Chuck Bednarik. He played his entire career in Philadelphia, college and pro, and he lived his entire life here and in the Lehigh Valley. He was a proud competitor and a dedicated and devout family man who loved Eagles fans as much as they loved him. He left his mark on this team and will forever be a legend within this organization."

Chip Kelly: "I have had the opportunity to spend time with Chuck Bednarik, who is truly one of the most unique players that this game has ever seen. The foundation of this organization and this league is built on the backs of past greats, with Chuck at the forefront. The way he played the game with an endless passion and tenacity helped establish the standard of excellence that this organization stands for; one that we strive to achieve each and every day."

Known as one of the most devastating tacklers and toughest players in the NFL, Bednarik earned the nickname "Concrete Charlie" from his offseason job as a concrete salesman for the Warner Company. He garnered a team record eight Pro Bowl nominations, eight All-Pro nods and was inducted into the Pro Football Hall of Fame in 1967, his first year of eligibility. His No. 60 jersey is one of nine numbers to be retired by the Eagles. He played in 169 career games, notching 20 interceptions on defense, including one returned for a touchdown.



"Chuck", kneeling first left, Gunner with the Lt. Bernard Jones Crew

### *“Chuck” Bednarik Continued.*

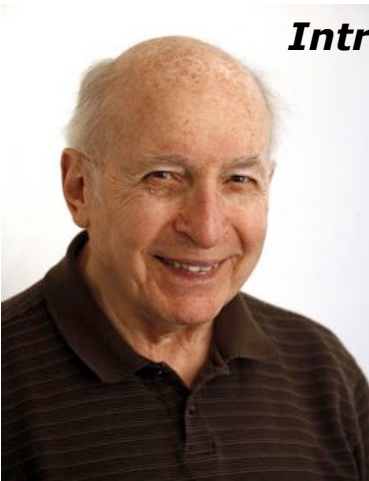
Born on May 1, 1925, in Bethlehem, PA, Bednarik played football at the University of Pennsylvania after serving in World War II, where he flew 30 missions as a B-24 waist gunner and was awarded the Air Medal. Bednarik went on to earn All-America honors in his final two seasons at Penn and was selected by the Eagles with the first overall choice in the 1949 NFL draft. Since 1995, the Maxwell Football Club annually gives out the “Chuck Bednarik Award” to college football’s best defensive player. *(Obituary from the official Philadelphia Eagles web site posted 21st March 2015 - Editor).*

### **John F. Moffette, Pilot 789th Sq.**

John F. Moffette, 93, of Longmeadow passed away peacefully on Saturday morning, December 20, 2014 at the Jewish Nursing Home. John, a son of the late James E. and Catherine A. (Ryan) Moffette was born in Waltham, MA on December 5, 1921. Raised in Waltham he graduated from Waltham High School and Western New England College. John was employed as an engineer at CF&I Steel in Palmer and then at Wire Rope of America in St. Joseph Missouri. He resided in St. Joseph, Missouri for 18 years, in Springfield and East Longmeadow, in Longmeadow for the past 24 years and was a communicant of St. Marys Church, Longmeadow. John served his country during WWII with the Army Air Corp, 789 Bombardment Squadron and the 467 Bombardment Group, as 1st pilot in a B-24 Liberator and flew 35 combat missions in Northern France and the Rhineland. He attained the rank of 1st Lieutenant and received the Air Medal with a Silver Cluster, a second Air Medal with Five Oak Leaf Clusters and the European African Middle Eastern Service Medal. He was also a member of the Caterpillar Club for having to make an emergency parachute jump.



*John, kneeling second from right, with Crew#38. The crew baled out after difficulties departing in fog during the infamous mission of 29 Dec. 44.*



### **Introducing “Jerry” Murphy, Co-pilot 788th & 791st**

A member of the Russell E. Scott crew, James J. “Jerry” Murphy arrived Rackheath in late 1944 and assigned as Crew#28 with the 789th Squadron. The crew commenced flying combat in December 44 and among those crews alerted and briefed to fly on the early morning of 29th December 44, when a prevailing thick fog blanketed the Rackheath airfield. Conditions were so bad, crews fully expected the mission to be cancelled but the order never came and planes continued pre-flight checks with lead B24s edging gingerly to prepare for departure in visibility estimated to be no more than 50 feet. What happened next to the Scott crew can be read in Jerry’s wonderful illuminating account and published in numerous periodicals and online here <http://www.davisenterprise.com/local-news/miracles-thicker-than-fog-on-flight-of-no-10607/>

Jerry kindly provided “POOP from Group” a CD-R containing examples of his personal Rackheath photo-album and we are delighted to share some of these photos on the opposite page. Captions describing photos 1-8 as follows:

1. Crew Photo: Top L-R, Sgt. Emile Boutin, Lt. Charles Shamburg, Lt. James “Jerry” Murphy, Sgt. Robert Charms, Sgt. Bernard Scales Bottom L-R, Sgt. Floyd Barthel, Sgt. Charles Cox, Sgt. Harold Rubendall, Lt. Russell Scott, Lt. Lawrence Ueble
2. “Jerry” Murphy in the Co-pilot seat. 3. L-R F/O James P. Flynn (navigator) & Lt. Cornelius R. McGowan (co-pilot) 4. Engine maintenance, Rackheath 5. Passing over Spalding, England 6. Helen Wilber, American Red Cross outside the ARC Aero Club at Rackheath 7. Officers of the Crew L-R Charles Shamburg, Russell Scott, “Jerry” Murphy, kneeling Lawrence Ueble 8. “Jerry” in relaxed mode, Rackheath



# The Forgotten Crew of Wendover



*Members of the Lt. Earl Bonville crew prepare for a formation training mission out of Wendover, Utah, winter 43/44.*

Entering into the final phases before the imminent departure of the 467th to enter combat overseas, an 18 ship training formation readied itself for a standard take-off in the chilly February morning air, with aircrews in high anticipation of finally leaving the desolate Wendover Base for new challenges ahead. Tenth to depart was the 1st Lt. Earl C. Bonville ship who carried a nine-man crew for this training flight aboard a brand new "H" model B24 with just 40 hours recorded flight time. Visibility was generally good, estimated at 5 miles with an 8000ft cloud ceiling although a low stratus deck was observed over the Wendover salt flats to the northeast. The ship immediately behind the Lt. Bonville crew B24 noticed nothing abnormal concerning the subsequent take-off as it climbed clear on runway heading before disappearing into the stratus layer which had moved closer to the field and estimated to be 300ft thick. The plane following made a normal departure and upon breaking clear of the layer could not locate the Lt. Bonville ship. Turning on his downwind leg noticed black smoke rising from a point 8 to 10 miles northeast of the field. Another pilot reported observing a flash then black smoke rising and immediately reported a possible crash to the Tower. The Lt. Bonville ship had impacted into a projection of the Desert mountains lying directly northeast of the field. Rescue parties were despatched immediately but sadly little was left as the remains of the ship burned fiercely with no prospect of survival.

Several days later, the entire 467th Bomb Group departed Wendover with 59 planes and crews, the ground personnel boarding trains in the next phase before commencing travel overseas. Investigation teams made their way to the remote desert mountains to begin their analysis and apart from immediate family, the Lt Earl C. Bonville crew faded into memory and until recently, a forgotten crew.

During January of this year, a sepia tinged crew photo emerged on Chris Collins' 467th Facebook Page, uploaded by Tom Wakeling who stated his great uncle Cpl. William "Bill" H. Little, a tail-gunner, was killed during exercises out of Wendover Base, 7th February 1944. Fortunately, Tom was able to provide names of the crew who were pictured and revealed his eldest surviving uncle owned a photo album belonging to tail-gunner William Little while serving at Wendover and was happy to share more of those precious images. The family was aware William was lost in a plane crash but knew little more.....they initially believed his loss occurred flying a B-17. William Little was originally from Wilmington, Delaware, and many family members still reside in the state.



## Crash of Wendover Bomber Kills Nine Crew Members

WENDOVER FIELD—Nine crew members of a heavy bomber were killed late Monday when the plane, based at Wendover field, crashed approximately eight miles northeast of the field while on a combat training flight; it was announced Tuesday by Colonel W. G. Carter, commanding officer of the base.

A board of inquiry to investigate the cause of the crash was appointed by base officials.

Those killed were: First Lieut-

enant Earl C. Bonville, Cedar River, Mich.; Second Lieutenant Archibald J. Lewis, Westfield, N. J.; Second Lieutenant John T. Lynch, Meding, N. Y.; Technical Sergeant Leo H. Goodness, Brewer, Me.; Staff Sergeant Carl D. Harmon, Honaker, Va.; Sergeant Robert Nicholas, Toledo, Ohio; Corporal Angus G. McKenzie, Detroit, Mich.; Sergeant Ward C. Flanagan, Bridgeport, Conn., and Corporal William H. Little, Wilmington, Del.

The names of the crew presented an immediate problem as being unfamiliar and not recognised as 467th personnel which required extensive searches through the official Group documents and archives for further clarification. Meanwhile Chris had identified two Accident Reports were available (to purchase on-line) for pilot Lt. Earl C. Bonville dated 6th and 7th February 1944, both occurring at Wendover. At this stage we had no idea which Squadron the crew were assigned or even if they were 467th BG personnel! Frustratingly, the official microfilm records were highly detailed for the month of December 1943 highlighting the individual names of an horrendous mid-air collision during training which claimed the lives of 25 crew and passengers, further loss of 6 crew are named in another accident in January 44, but no mention of the Lt. Earl C. Bonville crew. A newspaper-cutting of the 8th February 44 reported the loss of nine crew in a plane-crash northeast of the Wendover base and listed names and the state they were from but the Group history records were proving unhelpful. Some success....a Group document listing the Officers assigned to the 467th BG at Wendover, 31st January 44, reveals the Officer names appearing in both the press-cutting and Tom's crew photo are assigned to the 789th Squadron. This is the only reference found and (to date) no details relating to the enlisted men of the crew.



*Early photo of the enlisted men of the crew: L-R above "Bill" Little, Angus McKenzie, W.L. Goodwin, below T.L. Viet, Leo Goodness, J.W. Choate. Three of the above were not involved in the accident at Wendover.*

The crucial omission of the loss or specifically identifying this 789th Sq. crew in official records is something of a mystery. It's not clear if the Crew were late replacements from Salt Lake City hence the absence of more detail, or the impending major occurrence of the entire Group in the process of transition out of Wendover may have overshadowed the tragic event. This significant oversight more or less led to record of the crew expunged from 467th history. Our wonderful Allan Healy History book on the 467th BG (originally published in 1947) in "Training on the Salt Flats" describes losses to accidents, but no specific mention by name of the 789th Sq. Lt. Bonville crew. Later editions of the History included an Addendum where the Group Casualty Roster was updated and revised and even included a new section, Casualty Roster - Training Phase....once again the details of the Bonville crew were overlooked. Perry Watts comprehensive history of the 467th BG did not record any details or information about the crew either. The failure to properly record and document the 789th Squadron, Lt. Earl C. Bonville crew, inevitably led to where they unwittingly became **the forgotten crew**.

In receipt of the official Accident Report for the nine-man Lt. Bonville crew, 7th February 1944, we were able to learn they were indeed assigned to the 789th Sq. at Wendover including the crew position of each member.

*"The Forgotten Crew" Continued on the following Page*

Members of the Crew listed in the Official Accident Report recording the incident of 7th February 1944.

1st Lt. Earl C. Bonville - Pilot  
 2nd Lt. Archibald J. Lewis - Copilot  
 2nd Lt. John T. Lynch - Navigator  
 T/Sgt. Leo H. Goodness - Engineer  
 S/Sgt. Carl D. Harmon - Radio-Operator  
 Sgt. Robert E. Nicholas - Gunner  
 Cpl. Angus A. McKenzie - Nose-Gunner  
 Sgt. Ward C. Flanagan - Ball-Turret Gunner  
 Cpl. William H. Little - Tail-Gunner



The findings of the accident board described the cause as "undetermined" but the opinion of the board that the probable cause was material failure. Lt. Bonville was highly recommended in his squadron and an experienced and satisfactory instrument pilot. Negotiating the flight through the stratus layer was not thought to be a difficulty as Lt. Bonville had more experience than the majority of the other 17 planes which successfully emerged through it. Most probable cause was loss of power from #1 or #2 engines due to engine failure or other malfunction. Also possibility of a sudden unexpected surge of power from #3 or #4 engine due to a runaway prop or turbo may have caused plane to veer to the left striking the mountain side while the pilot was on instruments through the stratus layer. Responsibility was not apportioned and cannot be determined as the cause was not determined.

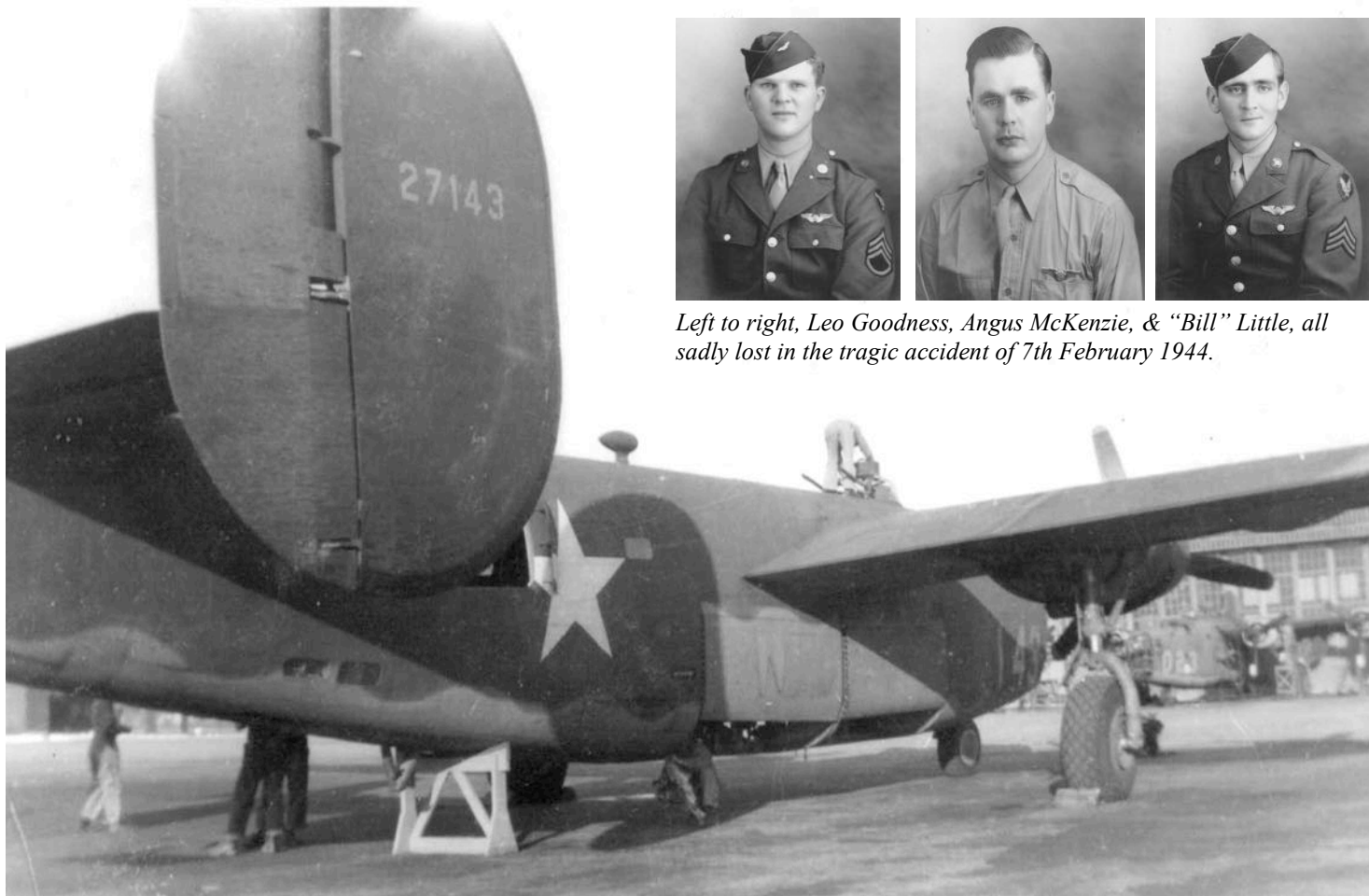
Remarkably, a second official Accident Report for Lt. Bonville and dated the previous day, 6th February 44, reveals a further accident less than 24 hours before the fatal accident of the 7th. Eight of the same crew participated in a further formation training flight, part of an 18 ship formation with the Lt. Bonville crew 6th aircraft to depart. On this occasion moments after the nose lifted off the runway the pilot retracted the nose gear only for the nose to drop back to the runway before braking hard and skidding off the end of the runway, nose over. No injuries to any of the crew and relatively minor damage to the new B24H which was assessed as repairable with nose area damage and tires blown as a result of heavy braking and skidding. Cause of this accident was 100% pilot error, retracting the gear before properly airborne.



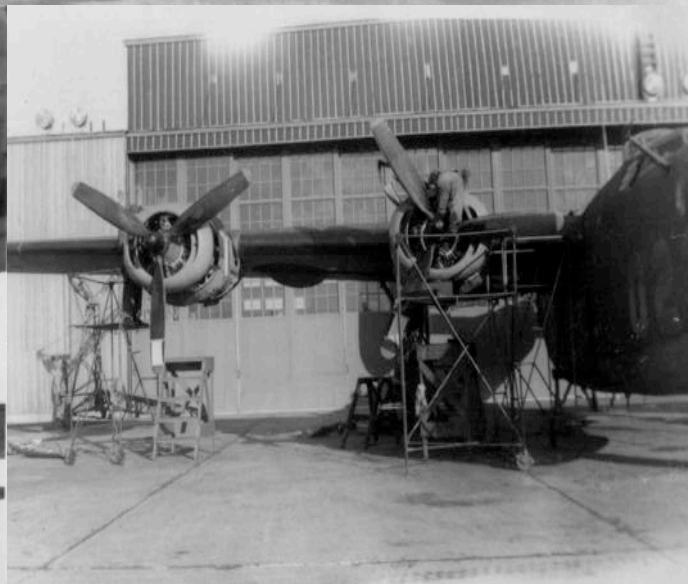
*The Lt. Bonville B24 following the retracted nose-gear accident on 6th Feb. 44*

The photo album of William Little suggests the crew may have commenced training as a B17 crew before their arrival at Wendover and subsequent association with the B24 and 467th BG. The album also shows some of the enlisted crew in uniform at odds with the rank described in the Accident Report.

Grateful appreciation to Tom Wakeling for providing all photos and sharing details of the brief and tragic experiences that befell his great uncle and fellow crew at Wendover, 7th February 44. We can at last reflect and shine a light on the efforts and endeavors of a young crew whose deserved recognition we are proud to highlight and remember 71 years later.....no longer are they "the forgotten crew".



*Left to right, Leo Goodness, Angus McKenzie, & "Bill" Little, all sadly lost in the tragic accident of 7th February 1944.*



*General scenes at Wendover and one last crew photo, all images from tail-gunner "Bill" Little's photo album 1943/44.*

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*Our wonderful veterans who attended the Kansas City May 2015 467th/492nd BG Reunion.  
L-R "Jim" Sherrard, "Joe" Zbikowski, "Jack" Weyler , (467th ) Howard Heckmann, John Harper ,(492nd) Norman Felbinger (467th)*