

POOP from Group



791st



790th



789th



788th

Newsletter of the 467th Bomb Group Association

November 2015



Madingley American Cemetery Cambridge, UK WW2 US Military Cemetery

The tranquil and serene setting providing the final resting place of over 3800 service personnel who served primarily based in the UK with over 5100 names recorded on the Wall of the Missing to those lost, buried at sea and unidentified. There are 27 grave-markers of those who served with the 467th BG while a further 37 467th names are detailed on the Wall of the Missing. A visit to Madingley in August with Martie Fankhauser from Tucson, AZ., located the marker of Sgt. John Mikulin who sadly perished alongside fellow crew member and Martie's uncle, Sgt. Arthur D. Price in an aircraft accident returning from the mission to Munich on 11th July 1944.

***** 2016 467th/492nd BG SEATTLE Convention dates *****

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The 467th
Bombardment Group
The Rackheath Aggies



President's Message

By Brian Mahoney

We are set to hold our next joint reunion with the 492nd BG gang in Seattle (see information elsewhere in this 'POOP'). The intent of both organizations was to offer a good chance of attending to those in the quadrant of the country we seem to overlook most when setting convention locations. Taking a cue from Ann Pooch and Jay Shower, we will repeat their excellent, personal outreach effort to find any of our vets in the Pacific Northwest, able to finally attend a meeting in their neighborhood. Given their advanced age, and likely need of support to attend, the reunion committee has decided to make it clear that any 'day tripper' Rackheath Aggies, and their personal escort, will be 'our guest' if they can come to the banquet or one of the other meals. If you are tempted, or are an able-bodied 'second generation' or younger, able to escort a vet to Seattle, please be in touch with Jay and Ann or me, right away! (Our contact info is always available in 'POOP'.)

Some of your Directors are up to important fun: there is a new initiative to coordinate the 'operational data' of all the 40 bomb groups of the Mighty Eighth during WW II into a single database that will allow powerful and compelling presentations of a big picture, such as: which planes, from which groups, were in what exact formation locations, at a critical point during a given mission? Who was in THIS plane, here, and what mission number was it for THAT waist gunner? Did each of these ten named men get through their tour? If not, what were their individual outcomes? Peter Horne and Andy Wilkinson, in our group, have been stewards of data carefully harvested from official sources over the years by veterans and researchers, and most of the other groups have similar treasures, but until now, they have not 'flown in formation.' Going forward, our mission will be more and more about refining, clarifying, interpreting and preserving what we have been privileged to learn directly from the veterans, and pass it to future generations who would otherwise miss out on compelling, timeless lessons of humanity's largest and deadliest conflict. the "Mighty D8a" project is open to volunteers with a variety of skills; let me know if you want to be one of them!. We will periodically report progress... but this effort will take a few years to pay off, not unlike the heroic sacrifices of 1943-45.

We are losing our veterans; only about 6% of the combatants that survived the conflict are still 'vertical', and we need to both enjoy and carefully hear every one of them as long as we can. Your ideas and energies for improving reunions or other social programs, and suitable history projects, are always welcome!

Keep 'em flyin'!

Brian H. Mahoney - Archivist@brianmahoney.com



Martie Fankhauser from Tucson, AZ., enjoying a visit to Rackheath at the home of our base contacts David & Jean Hastings in Salhouse, late August.



The 467th
Bombardment
Group

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

Frank S. Baker - Ordnance Officer 788th April 2015

Tom Brittan - UK Associate B24 Historian June 2015

Edward P. Kenney - Radio-oper. 788th April 2015

Bruce W. Owen - Navigator June 2015

William "Russ" Shanley - Aircrew May 2014

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 Archivist@brianhmahoney.com



News From Station 145

From David Hastings MBE

Once again a Summer has flown by and we have had a good number of visitors to the 467th Marker and what a joy it was to have two parties from the USA. The first was in August when Yvonne Caputo with Kirk and her grandson Wyatt came to see us and it was wonderful to have the opportunity to show them around the old base. We were deeply touched to see how moved Wyatt was when he stood on the same runway that his

Grandfather flew from in 1944 and learnt about the history and events that took place over 70 years ago. So good to also have them back to our home for supper and a long chat, when I was also delighted to hand over to Wyatt two of my 467th items for safe keeping by the next generation in the USA - they belong with him now. What a great family and Mike's model B-24 hanging in the Memorial Library will always remind us of their friendship and kindness.

Then it was the turn to greet Martie Fankhauser when Andy Wilkinson kindly drove her up to Rackheath. What a joy it was to meet Martie so we could thank her in person for all her kindness and generosity with flags for the Marker which are deeply appreciated. Also so good to have them back for supper and a chance to talk about history. The new flags are now proudly flying and they look great - Bless you Martie.

The Parish Council are still working on trying to find a new way of floodlighting the Marker after the new owners of the Office want a fortune to restore the original lighting. Will let you know what happens. Also the Veterans are continuing to work so hard on keeping the Marker site in good order.

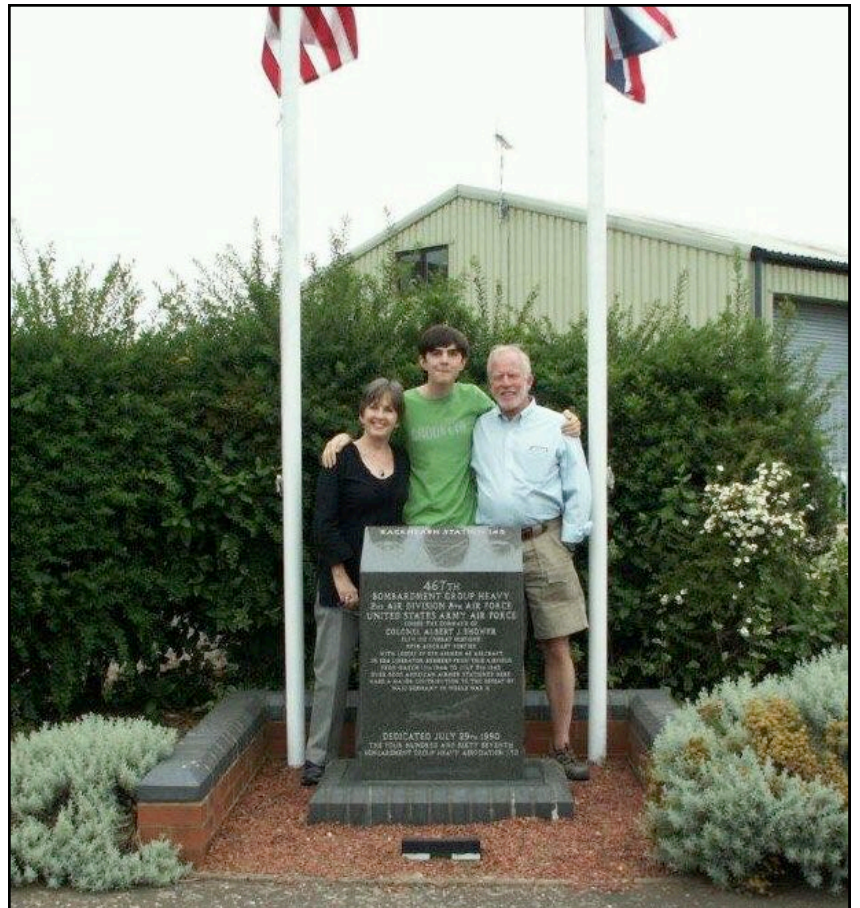
We also attended the Memorial Library at the end of August to say a sad farewell to Lesley Fleetwood who is retiring after 25 years as a Trust Librarian. We will miss her greatly as she has achieved so much and served the 2nd Air Division USAAF so well.

Another piece of sad news was the death of Tom Brittan, another huge supporter of the 2nd Air Division. Tom and I were in the same form at Norwich School during the war and became close friends with our shared interest in the USAAF. A friendship that continued for the rest of our lives.

Finally my Jean had a nasty accident when working at the Marker recently when she fell from the cab of one of Rogers trucks where she had gone to fetch a screwdriver. We rushed her to the N&N hospital and they were superb. Luckily after six hours and very thorough complete examination she was discharged home with nothing broken but just badly shaken and I am glad to say that she is now fully recovered.

So as always all our love, thank you for all your kindness and friendship and you will never be forgotten.

David, Jean and Roger - Base Contacts




Yvonne and Kirk Caputo with grandson, Wyatt, at the 467th BG Memorial Marker, August 2015.

Notes from the Editor



Following our highly successful reunion in Kansas City back in May, am delighted to announce the dates of our eagerly anticipated 2016 gathering, again with the 492nd BG, is **27-30 April in SEATTLE**. Contracts have been signed with the **DoubleTree Hotel, Seattle Airport - Southcenter**, and the reunion committee is hard at work making sure we have a program of activities and schedule to suit everyone. To my knowledge, the first time the reunion has been held in the northwest and

promises to be an opportunity not to be missed. I urge as many of you as possible to mark your diary and make every effort to join with us in April 2016. Another great reunion is planned.....**we want to see you there!!**

<p>Dates for your DIARY</p> 	<p>2016 Reunion/Convention 27th - 30th April 2016 SEATTLE, WA. Full details and program in the next POOP Newsletter</p>
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late 80's while researching the 467th BG. Our regular exchange of data and ideas was especially fruitful tracing B24 serials and name, nose-art conundrums. Had the pleasure of visiting Tom and Monique at their beautiful home in France. A terrific loss to the B24 community. Our base contact, **David Hastings**, was a friend of Tom and had these special words: "Tom

was a great friend and a true gentleman and we first met in 1940 when we both joined the same form at Norwich School as part of a group of four who lived close to each other. Tom's parents ran the Chemist and Pharmacy on Unthank Road and we soon found that we had a mutual interest in aeroplanes. Tom was also a great model maker and each year won the Cup in the School Model Club for his superb model buses. When the 2nd Air Division USAAF arrived we both made for the bases, I went for Rackheath and then Hethel while Tom spent hours at Old Buckenham. We both kept notebooks to collect the Tail markings, Squadron and aircraft codes of all the B-24s that we had seen which was great fun. After the war we remained close friends and kept in touch through the School Old Norvicensian Club. Then Tom married Monique and moved to live in France but we still kept in close touch especially with our links to the 2nd Air Division Association. People like Tom are rare these days and he will be sorely missed. Our thoughts and prayers go out to Monique and the family".

Lesley Fleetwood, Trust Librarian in the 2nd AD Memorial Library, Norwich, retired after 25 plus years wonderful service to veterans, researchers, and the community in general. We wish Lesley a long and very happy retirement and sincerely thank her for her support of the 467th and ever welcoming presence in the Library.

I learned of the sad passing of UK Associate, **Tom Brittan**, in June. Tom was a young Norfolk schoolboy during 43-45 and a first-hand visitor to the many 2nd Air Division bases across the county. An impression that never left him. I hooked up with Tom in the

*** POM Tom**



Tom Brittan.



Lesley Fleetwood, Memorial Trust Librarian celebrating her retirement. (via Colin Mann)

Editor's Notes...continued

Regular contributor and a son of 790th Sq. radio-operator, **Ross Rainwater**, has provided a number of photos depicting the inauspicious arrival at Rackheath from the U.S. of the Lt. Elroy Beaney crew and B24, 20th March 1944. The downwind landing on the short runway resulted in a nose-wheel collapse and severe damage to the nose of the brand new B24. Fortunately no serious injury or casualties from this mishap. It was subsequently salvaged and written-off making it technically the first Group aircraft lost in the European Theater of Operations (ETO).



At the time of publication, I don't have the financial figures to report since our summer newsletter of June. However, judging by previous reports the cost of printing and mailing hard copies of the newsletter is in the vicinity of \$700. We rely on your generous donations to maintain producing the POOP newsletter for those unable to receive the electronic (pdf file) version or "ePOOP" as coined by our President. If you are in a position to receive the electronic or ePOOP version and thus save the Organisation expense, please advise our President and Data Manager, Brian Mahoney. We sincerely appreciate your continuing support and ask donations to enable future issues be sent by check to our Treasurer, **Kerry Davis** (address on Page2) and specify "POOP" or Mail Fund.

Received a wonderful DVD from **Henry "Hank" Wedaa**, (bombardier, 791st Lt. William Graf crew) simply titled "WWII Experiences of Hank Wedaa", a professionally recorded chronicle of life, times, anecdotes, and experiences at Rackheath as told by Hank, and an updated version of the original production video. Unsure if this is a private initiative as a family history or designed for wider public consumption. Will update you.

Continue to send email and news you feel would benefit the newsletter and I would be delighted to share with members, particularly those prized Rackheath photos of personnel, scenes, and B24s. All material warmly welcome.

Andy Wilkinson - Editor andywilkinson467th@btinternet.com

Sweden - a haven of refuge



The scene at Bulltofta Airfield, Malmo, minutes after the unexpected arrival of the 467th BG Lt. Edward Rudowske B24H "Six Bits" following battle-damage encountered on the mission to Berlin on the morning of 21st June 1944. (Swedish Aviation Historical Society)

During WW2 the Neutral status of the Scandinavian country Sweden and its relative close proximity to northern Germany across the short Baltic Sea made it an increasing option for stricken Allied aircraft unable to return safely to England, a place of opportunity to land. The risk of ditching in the cold and hostile North Sea was considered extremely hazardous and the safer alternative of reaching Sweden and subsequent internment led to rising numbers of heavy bombers reaching Sweden and refuge. One hundred and thirty-one B24s and B17s are known to have landed or crashed in neutral Sweden between July 1943 and May 1945, with the airfield at Bulltofta, Malmö, in the south of Sweden the preferred alternative for many.

Bulltofta airfield essentially a large grass area with no tarmac runways reached a peak for Allied "arrivals" on the 20th and 21st June 1944 when following large bombing raids to Pölitz and targets in the Berlin area, no fewer than 24 B24s and B17s force-landed. It was on the morning of the 21st June the 467th's B24H "Six Bits" piloted by Lt. Edward Rudowske of the 789th Squadron and his nine-man crew took the decision to attempt to reach Malmö.

Briefing commenced early at Rackheath for the 34 crews tasked to target workshops at Genshagen, a suburb of Berlin. Col. Shower was to lead both the 96th Combat Wing and also the 2nd Air Division. The Lt. Edward Rudowske crew of the 789th Sq. were an early replacement crew having only arrived at Rackheath the previous month in May and were one of 10 crews selected to fly the mission from the 789th. The Lead crews commenced take-off at 0443 for the long journey to the German Capital but three ships returned early with varying technical issues. Lt. Jasper "Jack" Robinson, navigator aboard the Rudowske crew takes up the story:

"We lost our superchargers on the bomb-run and immediately salvoed our bombs (10 x 500 lb GPs) as we were losing altitude rapidly. Just as we released our bombs we took a hit in our (over the) bomb bay (tanks) and fuel began pouring out. Our Engineer Sgt. Richard "Dick" Ford was able to slow the leaks somewhat and transfer fuel to the (outer) wing tanks."

The official Missing Air Crew Report (MACR) reports the crew were last heard on VHF radio at approximately 1020 hours indicating the gas tanks were punctured and they would try to make Sweden on the 200 to 300 gallons remaining. "Jack" Robinson: **"Group Lead gave us co-ordinates for Malmö, Sweden. We went in on a sod field with the fuel gauges on empty. Swedish fighters made us come in high over tall buildings rather than let us land from the opposite direction. Ed Rudowske (pilot) had to brake hard at touchdown and this collapsed the nose-wheel which we initially believed caused considerable damage.**



Unidentified B24 accompanied by a J20 Swedish fighter arrives at Malmö during the summer of 1944. (The Swedish Air Force Museum.)

At this time, Bulltofta airfield was home to the Swedish Air Force Fighter Wing F10. The pilots were chiefly engaged flying reconnaissance and patrols along the coastline of southern Sweden and increasingly flying escort to the Allied heavy bombers seeking refuge and unable to reach England. Back in 1943, the first bomber crews to arrive in Sweden attempted to destroy their aircraft upon arrival leaving wrecks occupying landing fields for several days. An agreement was made in early 1944 to stop the destruction in exchange for information and details on which airfields were suitable for forced landings.....Bulltofta, Malmö, was selected as one of those suitable airfields. F10 was equipped with the poorly regarded Italian built fighter the Reggiane RE2000 Falco designated as "J20" by the Swedish Air Force but plagued by mechanical difficulties. These "J20" fighters based at Bulltofta frequently escorted the bombers into southern Sweden and particularly toward the coastal airfield of Bulltofta, Malmö.

Sgt. Richard "Dick" Ford, Engineer on the Lt. Rudowske crew takes up the story: **I remember ripping out some of the head liner insulation from the ceiling of the flight deck (after we were hit) and stuffing it up in the holes in the bottom of the center section tanks to slow down the rate of leakage. I recall I switched #2 and #3 engines to tank engine crossfeed, then #1 and #4 to engine crossfeed. The transfer pump was out and I wanted to consume as much of the**

leaking fuel as possible. After about 10-15 minutes, the fuel pressure gauges wiggled so I switched #1 and #4 to tank engine crossfeed and #2 and #3 to engine crossfeed. Might have saved us from ditching in the Baltic because when we cleared the coast of Sweden, I could see no more than 1/8" in the bottom of the sight glass gauges.

On pre-landing inspection I discovered a flat nose wheel tire. Ed Rudowske decided to bring her in "tail dragger" style, He held her back on the main gear until about 50 mph, then the nose wheel came down and on contact began shimmying and vibrating, then the nose gear collapsed



Two 448th BG B24s on the left witness the arrival of another addition to the growing number of American "heavies" reaching Sweden. (John Spadone 458th BG collection).

with a hell of a bang and screeching of metal, actually very little damage occurred to the nose section we discovered upon later inspection.

Ed Rudowske brought us all in without a scratch. God bless him! About the time the dust settled, the Swedes picked us up and took us in for the name, rank, and serial number session, where we were given fresh milk and pastries. That evening we traveled north, under escort, in clean comfortable rail cars, arriving next morning at Falun. First thing was a complete scrub down in the public bath house. We then met local officials who arranged for our billeting which turned out to be similar to a large boarding house. In a day or two we received a supplemental payment, in Swedish currency, four Kroners equal to one dollar, which covered our civilian clothing purchases and other items we required.



Italian built fighter Reggiane Re.2000 Falco designated "J20" operated by the Swedish Air Force at Malmo



Stads Hotel, Vasteras, where numerous personnel were billeted .

So there we were, safe and sound, in a beautiful country surrounded by friendly people. When would we leave? All in good time we were told. The U.S. and Germany had agreed to a repatriation exchange. This turned into a six month paid vacation! We were finally to be repatriated in late November 1944. As we, the crew, were clearing customs at the U.S. Legation, I was told by the Air Attaché Officer that I had been placed on detached service and received special orders transferring me to the city of Västerås, located about 60 miles west of Stockholm.

Meanwhile the other 8 members of the Lt. Rudowske crew were bound for return to the UK. "Jack" Robinson: "The Swedes kept us until November 44, then let us go. We were flown out of Stockholm in stripped down B24s, painted black without insignia. As I recall, "Dick" Ford and other Engineers had to remain behind to repair the downed planes so they could be flown out when the war was over." These repatriation flights were carried out in the guise of an "Airline" organised by Col. Bernt Balchen and flown by military personnel wearing civilian clothing. The operation took "passengers" (and in return supplies) between Stockholm and RAF Leuchars in Scotland.

"Dick" Ford: At Västerås, I lived in the Stora Hotel (believed to be the Stads Hotel, Stora torget....Editor) sharing a room with a view with S/Sgt Edinger, complete with maid service. I met with our local Officer In Charge and traveled by city bus to the outskirts of town. After passing through a military gate we arrived at a Swedish Air Force Base called Hasslo F-1. We passed modern hangars and shops and I thought this is a first class facility to repair our B24 and B17 aircraft. We passed the last of the permanent facilities, rounded a bend in the road and there in a 20 acre snow covered pea patch sat our weary bomber fleet. I counted about 40 B24s and B17s. My guide pointed out a 10' x 10' tar paper covered shack and said that it

Interment sites of Allied airman.



Interment sites of Allied airman.

was the B-24 maintenance HQ. Smoke was pouring out of the shack and at that time the door burst open and a wild-eyed dude ran out, grabbed a CO2 extinguisher, re-entered the shack and got the home made heater under control. After things calmed down I was introduced to my fellow mechanics. These guys were my constant companions for the next seven months. Turned out to be a great bunch, mostly from farm backgrounds, could literally repair everything with the tools at hand and out in the wind, sleet, rain, snow, using homemade "A" frames and work stands. We managed to change engines, replace damaged fuel cells, repair and replace control surfaces. I did some control rigging. Special tools were flown into Stockholm via (Col. Bernt) Balchen's boys from RAF Leuchars, Scotland. Sweden supplied some spark plugs and hand tools. We had about fifty men on this work, half from B-24s and the other half from B-17s. A few were spark chasers and a few had some sheet metal experience.

We had weekends off and were paid base pay, overseas pay, combat pay and five dollars a day per diem. Remembering the 4 to 1 exchange rate, we made out alright. Every weekend we received dinner invitations, to go sailing, spend the weekend in a summer cottage on the lake, the list is endless. And the war wore down. We survived the V.E. Day blowout at a local hotel. Then it was work as usual at the base, final preparations, pre-flights, cleaning bird nests out of the engine air ducts, test flights, then one by one the planes we had repaired left for England. So ended a most interesting and unusual thirteen months in Sweden".

The 467th BG B24H "Six Bits" 42-52525 was among those repaired and returned to England. The nine-man crew interned in Sweden following the mission of 21st June 1944 were:

Lt. Edward F. Rudowske - Pilot
 Lt. Richard W. Johnson - Co-pilot
 Lt. Jasper Robinson - Navigator
 Lt. Victor J. Hudak - Bombardier
 Sgt. Richard W. Ford - Engineer
 Sgt. Harwell K. North - Radio Operator
 Sgt. Fred Brucciana - Waist Gunner
 Sgt. Duane T. Rood - Waist Gunner
 Sgt. James M. Anderson - Tail Gunner



Researching this article, it was discovered among official 467th BG records, that Sgt. Richard W. Ford received a DFC for meritorious actions in respect of securing the damaged fuel system on the mission to Berlin, 21st June 1944.

Contributors assisting in the preparation and resources for this piece include, Karen Cline of "American Internees in WW2 Sweden" Face Book Group, also "After the Flak" newsletter produced by Karen; Swedish Air Force Museum, Linköping; Swedish Aviation Historical Society; John Spadone 458th BG; George Worthington 492nd BG; MACR#6234; Roger Freeman Collection; Mission Report 21st June44; "POOP" newsletter Dec 82 & March 83; Microfilm History #B0621 (Editor.)



*Rare color photo of the 467th BG "Six Bits" in Sweden. Note the removal of the national insignia.
(The Roger Freeman Collection).*

Remember the Yanks

Roger A. Freeman

By the summer of 1944 the Yanks had become an accepted part of life in East Anglia and the East Midlands. The sky rarely failed to hold one of their aircraft and hundreds were not uncommon. The throb of aero engines seemed incessant. The familiar "OD" uniforms were rarely absent from our towns and villages where a Yank leaning against a wall watching the world go by, or pedalling his bike down the middle of the road, was a familiar sight. They were to leave a considerable impression on those who knew them, which did not easily fade when they departed. In the immediate post-war years a flock of home-going rooks might for an instant be mistaken for a formation of returning Fortresses; a tractor starting in a winter's dawn could momentarily be the life-burst of an unsilenced aero engine on the nearby airfield. But even now there are times when the far off burble of young voices raises the ghosts of North American laughter floating through the leafy English lanes as of long ago.

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Next POOP Newsletter early in the new year**