

POOP from Group



791st



790th



789th



788th

Newsletter of the 467th Bomb Group Association

October 2017

The Timeless "Eighth" Together in DC



"The Mighty Eighth" Air Force come together at the 2017 Reunion in DC where our own 467th WWII veterans meet the present day 8th Air Force at the Sunday evening banquet.

Left to right: Major General Thomas A. Bussiere - Commanding General 8th Air Force

Joseph Zbikowski - Pilot 790th BS, Joseph Haenn - Mechanic 789th BS, John "Jack" Weyler - Pilot 789th BS

John "Will" Noden - Navigator 790th BS, Major Krisalyn Vaughn - Weapons Systems Officer & Aide to Thomas Bussiere

Alan Boling - Command Master Sergeant

***** 2018 Reunion to be hosted in TUCSON ***
Photos and more from the DC Reunion**

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Honorary Board Chairman (RIP)

Col Albert J. Shower



The 467th
Bombardment Group
The Rackheath Aggies



President's Message

By Brian Mahoney

To those who wished they could have joined us at the reunion in DC, do know that you were missed, but we had a good enough time to cover for all of the 467th 'family.' We had the great fortune to have four of our WW II vets participate and add to the fun and lead the camaraderie. Weather cooperated when it mattered. Our Day Room, so well filled with displays by Peter Horne (who drove across the country to do this!) was comfortable and popular at all hours. The hotel neighborhood was great for walkable dining and drinking, and a handful of association members in the area added to our numbers for the welcoming reception and the banquet. Jack Weyler's well connected DC friend Diane Morales got word to current day 8th AF leadership about our gathering. As a result, we had both the highest ranking officer and NCO of the Mighty Eighth with us for dinner, and a very memorable after-dinner talk by Major General Tom Bussiere.

Two of the 'youngsters' joined your Board of Directors, re-energizing the old hands with their enthusiasm and energy to keep the association going. The oldest of us youngsters, Jay Shower, was in mind as he deals with health challenges. His late father was proclaimed 'Honorary Board Chairman (RIP)' by our fathers, his men in the association. We have seen fit to now bill Jay as "Honorary Vice President" of the 467th BGA.

I have marveled at how help was always at hand for any loose end or 'crisis' as it arose, and continue to be humbled by the way all of the Directors cheerfully offer their help and resources to make it all look seamless. To a woman or man, each serves as needed, planning and executing reunions, producing newsletters and revamping web pages. None care what new or old title we hang on them at each reunion. For all of us, I will say that we are always and ever inspired by the courage and selflessness of the original Rackheath Aggies, and glad to throw an appropriate party.

We have just gotten word of the passing of one of the vets who was there, and are reminded in a bittersweet way how priceless is the time with have with our remaining veterans. How privileged we are to have known so many of their colleagues. We will soon put out information for our next reunion, but meanwhile, keep the middle weekends of May open for a repeat in Tucson!

Blue skies,
Brian Mahoney

Brian H. Mahoney - Archivist@brianhmahoney.com



News From Station 145

From David Hastings MBE

So glad to hear that all went well at your annual Convention in Washington and we wish we could have been with you all, but sadly our days of long haul flying are over. Still we will have to be content with memories of 26 conventions including that one in Washington when the US Air Force Memorial was unveiled as well as the great one in Shreveport.

Here in the UK the summer has flown by and we have had quite a few visitors to the Marker which has been great. Sadly the Veterans that were helping the Parish Council to care for the site have had problems so Jean has returned to the task of keeping it tidy while a new team is found, while Roger keeps his daily check going.

On a personal level last week we had the great joy of seeing Earl Zimmerman's daughter Roberta with her own daughter Cindy and cousin Kathleen. They visited the Marker and the old base before coming back to our house for supper and then on the next day went to Hethel to see the new Nissen hut named in honour of her father. Certainly a few deeply moving days which brought back so many memories.

Locally the new dual carriageway Norwich Northern Distributor road ploughs its way across the countryside including the huts in Newman Road area of the old base and they hope to open this new road by early 2018. We hear the costs have escalated so we wait with bated breath. As we feared might happen a developer has already put in a bid for another 300 houses on top of the 4,500 already approved for Rackheath ! Thank goodness in 1990 when the Marker was built that we sited it in the established Rackheath Industrial Estate near the Tower and so it is safe from the current housing developers.

Another interesting visitor was the American author Jerome O'Connor who is writing a massive history of the air war and was given my name as a contact. We spent a whole day visiting 2nd Air Division bases including Rackheath of course, and are now helping him with the final details. He is a great guy and was deeply impressed by the wartime links and friendships that have continued up to the present day.

Back to your history it was nice to see several publications remembering this year the 25th Anniversary of the "Diamond Lil" flight to Norwich as a tribute to your bravery and sacrifice - we will never forget you.

With all our love and best wishes,
David, Jean and Roger Hastings
467th Base Contacts.

A treasured photo from 27 years ago, the inauguration of the 467th Memorial at Rackheath, July 1990. Left, Jay Shower, Col. Al Shower, & David Hastings.



Notes from the Editor



more), with energy, patience, and a good sense of humor throughout. We owe Brian a big debt of gratitude in making the 2017 event a thoughtful and uplifting experience for family and veterans alike. Take a bow, " Prez!"

Director **Peter Horne** should also be highly commended by hauling all the way from Portland, OR., (and back) the extensive 467th Archive including numerous PCs, monitors, DVDs, printers, scanners, books, even uniformed mannequins, offering ample research opportunities and making the Day Room such a great focus and reference for the Reunion. Thanks too for sharing many of the Reunion photos that appear in this issue. Other photo credits to **Martie Fankhauser** and Brian.

There were many highlights but the Friday tour visiting the three principal Memorials, the Air Force Memorial, WWII Memorial, and finally the National Arlington Cemetery, was a rich rewarding experience for everyone. The Air Force Memo-



Our Day Room at the Reunion.

rial with its spectacular arcing stainless steel spires and two granite inscription walls, the north wall bearing the names of Air Force recipients of the Medal of Honor, our first stop. Here we chose to take a Group Photo that can be seen on the following pages. Next to the WWII Memorial, opened in 2004, sitting on the National Mall between the Lincoln Memorial and the Washington Monument. With the imposing 56 pillars, two arches "Atlantic" and "Pacific", surrounding a plaza with a host of fountains, a truly inspiring sight. Our final stop in the afternoon was the National Arlington Cemetery. We made our way to view the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, perpetually guarded to a meticulous routine where we remained to witness the changing of the guard, every half hour at this time of year. Our final act of remembrance was to seek out the resting places of our esteemed 467th veterans and place a single yellow rose at the grave marker of each. It was deeply moving to locate and remember, **Col. Fred E. Holdrege**, (C.O. 790th), **Col. Garnett Bruce Palmer** (C.O. 789th), **Col. James J. Mahoney** (Air Executive) and finally C.O. of the 467th BG(H), **Col. Albert J. Shower**. A truly wonderful day!

As reported on the front page, we were privileged to have the current Eighth Air Force join us for the Sunday evening banquet and deeply honored to have **Major General Thomas Bussiere** provide an emotive address and even take an answer and question session. A real high to end the 2017 Reunion and one which will remain long in the memory.

NEW DIRECTORS: Welcome aboard **Martie Fankhauser & Jane Staedicke** from Tucson & Phoenix who will bring energy, ideas, and skills to forward the aims of the Association. With our strong Arizona representation it didn't take long at our Directors meeting to suggest Tucson be the venue of our 2018 Reunion, and bringing it forward to mid May 2018. This was enthusiastically endorsed by all attending the Business Meeting and full Reunion details will appear in the next POOP.



National Arlington Cemetery

TREASURY NOTES: Valerie Corvino has agreed to take over the Treasurer role and address can be found on Page 2. Thanks to Tom Johnson for his efforts the past year and Tom reports the following have kindly provided donations toward the expenses of continuing to publish a printed POOP newsletter. **David LaRussa, Aaron Oken, James Murphy, Vincent Giglio, Fika Kladnjak & Vildana Kremonic.**

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

<p>Dates for your</p> 	<p><i>The 2018 REUNION TUCSON Mid May Full Details Next POOP</i></p>
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EMAIL FROM JOE APPLEBY: The January issue of Poop From The Group brought back many memories of Rackheath during my service years and from my return trip in 1994. This was a very nostalgic visit for me. **Kevin Clark**, a young, local man, gave us a memorable tour which included the Memorial

Library. Kevin knew the history of the area and was very appreciative of our war effort. I am attaching a few pictures of our trip (at the Memorial Library - my wife **Rose Ann** and I are standing on either side of **Phyllis DuBois**, who gave us a tour of the library).

I was saddened to see that our pilot, **John Phillips**, had passed away. But I was pleased to read the well-deserved obituary that commemorated his many lifetime achievements. I have attached a copy of the photo that was published in the article; you will see that all of our crew is identified in the space below the photo. I hope that you might reprint the photo, with names, so that perhaps we crew members might hear from some of our fellow crew members or their families.

The bio of **Col. Fred Holdrege** was very interesting. He used to call me from time to time to chat.

Editor

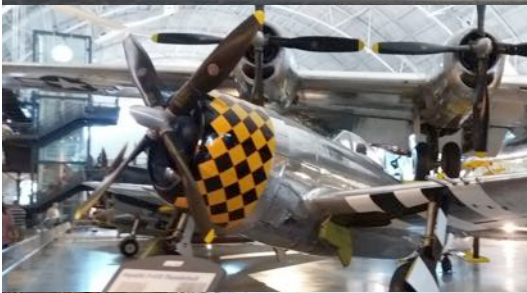
Andy Wilkinson - andywilkinson467th@btinternet.com



Joe Appleby-radio/gun.,(back row from left) Lt. Walker-co-pilot, Lt. John Phillips-pilot, David Swiss-Navig., Ruben Eaton "JC"- Eng.- (bottom row) David Bliss-waist gun., Julius Somma-nose gun., Manuel Alzfán-tail gun., Jose Solorzand - Arm. Gun.

Joe Appleby and wife, Rose Ann, with the late Phyllis DuBois, Memorial Trust Librarian in 1994. It was only a few months later that the original Memorial Library, including the Norwich Central Library was entirely lost in a devastating fire, 1st August 1994.

The 467th In DC 2017





Notes from the Editor...cont.

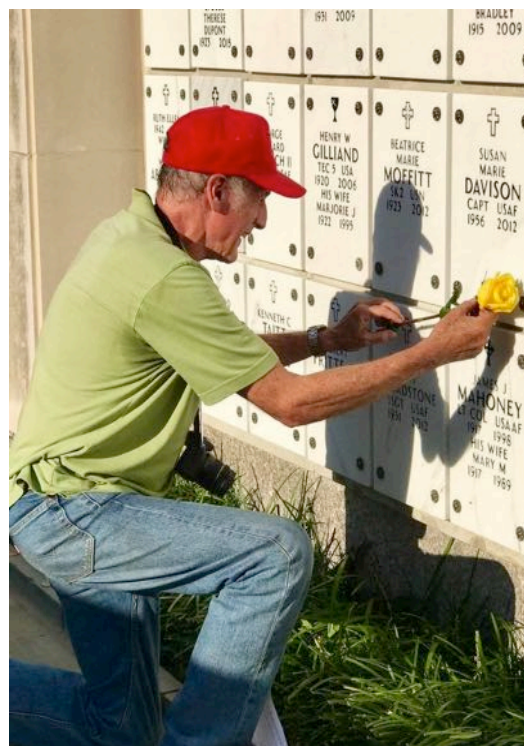
467th BG Association Members at the 2017 Washington DC Reunion

Martie Fankhauser	J. Peter Horne
Jane Staedicke	Judith Herb
Kenneth McCracken Jr.	Joseph Haenn
Robin Lestochi	Jo Ann Seymour
John "Jack" Weyler	Robin Fillebrown
Karin Weyler	Tom Fillebrown
Janice Wheeler	Brian Mahoney
Michael Wheeler	Steve Watson
John Burke	Debby Watson
David LaRussa	Ann Pooch
Will Noden	Valerie Corvino
Geoffrey Noden	Andy Wilkinson
Norma Felbinger	Tom Wilkinson
Mark Holdrege	Claire Bodenham
Jeremiah Mahoney	Joseph Zbikowski
Col. Karen Mayberry	Shirley Lowe

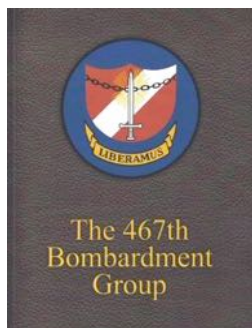
Veterans in bold

Banquet Guests

Maj. Gen. Tom Bussiere
Mrs. Barbara Bussiere
C.Mstr Sgt. Alan Boling
Maj. Krisalyn Vaughn
Jim Glerum
Diane Morales



Our President, Brian Mahoney places a yellow rose at the final resting place of Lt. Col. James J. Mahoney, Father and former Air Executive of the 467th during the Group visit to Arlington National Cemetery



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

Morton Deutsch - Lead Navigator 791st March 2017

Raymond McDowell - Gunnery Instructor 789th November 2016

Clement V. Plaskiewicz - Bombardier 790th March 2017

Robert L. Samuel - Radio-operator 790th June 2017

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

Obituaries



Clement V. Plaskiewicz, Bombardier 790th

Clement V. Plaskiewicz, 93, passed away Monday March 20th in Waterbury Hospital after a brief illness. He was born in Scranton, PA on Nov. 18th, 1923, to Rose & Alexander Plaskiewicz & lived most of his life in Torrington. In Dec. 1944, while stationed in England as a Flight Officer & Bombardier, his plane crashed in exceptionally foggy weather. Clem was 1 of 4 survivors. The original plane he was supposed to be on with all his crew that he trained, also crashed, with no survivors. He was awarded the Purple Heart & discharged in Nov. 1945.

In 1950, he married his hometown sweetheart the former Rose Galgano & they moved to Tulsa OK where he'd gotten a job for American Airlines. They returned to Torrington 2 years later & Clem was employed by Pratt & Whitney, then took over Galgano Appliances for several years. Later he worked for Ducci Appliance, Dick Cooper Appliance, & after retirement he took a part time job at Wolcott Hall, spending the rest of his time perfecting his craft of hand-tooled leather work for which he won Best in Show Ribbons at area craft fairs. He learned his craft originally, as rehab therapy during his months in the English hospital after the plane crash. He also loved creating, building & fixing things in his basement workshop & later taught his young grandchildren to say 'Papa can fix anything except a broken heart & the crack of dawn'. Which is only partly true, because he always could fix a broken heart. He was also a member of the Knights of Columbus & the Torrington Elks Club.

He loved traveling, taking a cherished, rare vacation with just his wife & 2 of their friends to Hawaii for their 25th anniversary. But the rest of the trips were with his wife & daughters, on daytrips, weekend trips & longer, including a family trip to Hawaii, always exploring someplace new & having endless patience doing whatever his wife & girls wanted to do. Clem was the best kind of husband & father, always putting his family first & never complaining.



Robert "Bob" Samuel Sr., Radio-operator 790th

Robert Lee (Bob) Samuel, Sr., 95, of Sterling, Virginia passed away on June 17 in Leesburg, VA. Bob was born in Petersburg, VA to Stanley M. and Ina Caudle Samuel on November 8, 1921. Bob graduated from Petersburg High School in 1942. A member of the "greatest generation," Bob was a radio operator in World War II, serving the Army Air Corp as a Technical Sergeant in the 467th Bombardment Group (Heavy) in Europe. He earned 3 Bronze Stars and an Air Medal with 3 Bronze Clusters, as well as a Good Conduct Medal. Bob received a diploma in Television Engineering from United Television Laboratories in Louisville, Kentucky. After leaving Louisville, Bob and his wife, Kitty, made Richmond, VA their home. In Richmond, Bob worked for Altec Corporation as a service tech, transferring with the company to Northern Virginia in 1966. He later worked for Circle Theatres in Washington, DC as the Sound Department Director until his retirement. Bob was a resident of Morningside House in Leesburg, VA from 2011 to 2017 where he enjoyed his senior life with his assisted living family.

Bob loved sports, especially football, and enjoyed many a Redskins game at RFK Stadium and later Fed Ex Field. He loved hot weather, the beach and loved to walk. He also enjoyed attending annual reunions with his WWII bomb group at different locations throughout the US and also in England.

Obituaries *Cont.*

Obituaries



Morton Deutsch, Lead Navigator, 791st

Morton Deutsch, who founded the International Center for Cooperation and Conflict Resolution at Columbia University (now renamed for him) died on March 13 in New York City. He was 97.

Mr. Deutsch was known worldwide as an expert on conflict resolution and his extensive research was known around the world, providing a framework for several Cold War negotiations, assisting in the peaceful transfer of power in Poland in 1989, helping to overturn racial segregation in the United States, and training teachers on Long Island and in New Jersey to deal with inter-student and gang violence in low-income communities.

“The Handbook of Conflict Resolution: Theory and Practice,” which he edited with Peter T. Coleman and Eric C. Marcus, became a standard manual for labor, commercial, international, and marital disputes.

Morton Deutsch was born on Feb. 4, 1920, in the Bronx, to Charles and Ida Deutsch, Jewish immigrants from Poland. By the age of 10, he was reading Karl Marx, and by 15, he was enrolled at City College of New York. After dissecting a guinea pig in a biology class, he switched his major from psychiatry to psychology and received a bachelor of science degree in 1939. Continuing his education, he received a master’s degree in 1940 from the University of Pennsylvania and a Ph.D. in 1948 from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. It was there that he studied under Kurt Lewin, a German-American psychologist known as one of the modern pioneers of social, organizational, and applied psychology.

It was also at M.I.T. that he met his wife, Lydia Shapiro, when he was assigned to supervise a paper she had written for Mr. Lewin. They married on June 1, 1947, and remained together for almost seven decades. Marriage also prompted a book titled “Preventing World War III,” which he co-wrote.

Growing up in New York City during the early part of the last century, Mr. Deutsch experienced blatant prejudice against Jews and observed “gross acts of injustice being suffered by blacks,” according to an essay in his book “Reflections on 100 Years of Experimental Social Psychology.”

Over the years, Mr. Deutsch contributed money to the Spanish Loyalists in the 1930s, protested against high school cafeteria food, and took part in a strike by fellow waiters at a summer resort. After Pearl Harbor, he enlisted in the Army Air Force and flew 30 missions over Nazi-occupied Europe.

Mr. Deutsch began teaching in the Research Center for Human Relations at New York University, and in 1951, together with a co-worker, Mary Evans Collins, produced a study comparing racially integrated housing in New York with racially segregated housing in Newark. Their research ultimately led to a reversal of policy in publicly funded developments.

In 1963, he made his final professorial move, joining the faculty at Teachers College, Columbia University, after being invited to found a social psychology doctoral program there. It became the International Center for Cooperation and Conflict Resolution. Two major works during this period include what is considered his opus, “The Resolution of Conflict,” published in 1973.

Mr. Deutsch officially retired from teaching in 1990 and became professor emeritus of psychology and education at Columbia University. He also wrote more than 50 papers or book chapters between his retirement and recent years.

A Journey to the Past

The 788th Lt. Truxes Crew & Family Tragedy

By John M. Burke

Shortly after I met and married my wife Marie almost 50 years ago, I began to hear about her Aunt Marie, for whom she had been named. I soon came to understand that Aunt Marie's adult life had been one tinged with great sorrow.

Marie Krakowski had been raised in a Polish-American family in Evanston, Illinois, and she was a beauty! She grew up to become a Coty Girl, the very essence of style and glamour in those days. In the early 1940s, Marie met and married a young man from Akron, Ohio by the name of Stan Koly (the name had originally been Kolodjiczak, but had been shortened by some members of the family). Stan joined the Army Air Corps, and, after training as a Martin Turret Gunner, was assigned to the 788th Bomb Squadron, 467th Heavy Bomb Group of the Eighth Air Force, based at Rackheath, England. On Christmas Day 1944, just months before the end of the war, Stan's B-24-H Liberator was shot down over Belgium.



*Standing left to right: Roland L. Morehouse (KIA), Alek Onischuk (KIA), Stanley P. Koly (KIA), John N. Ellefson (KIA), Peter Hardick Jr. (KIA), Walter Walinski (KIA).
Sitting: Charles A. Fiedler (KIA), David J. Countey (KIA), William W. Truxes Jr. (POW), John E. Sullivan (POW).*

As a veteran myself (though from some twenty years later), I was intrigued with the ironies and the circumstances surrounding Stan's wartime death, and I set out to do some research on his service. I learned that the Department of Defense still maintains "Missing Air Crew Reports" from World War II, and I wrote away to request a copy of the report dealing with Stan's mission. Just a few weeks later I received the entire 23-page M.A.C.R. in the mail.

The target that day was a rail junction in Musch, Germany, just east of the point where the borders of Belgium, Luxembourg and Germany convene. The Report lists a crew of ten and the names and addresses of their next of kin. They include:

- 1st Lieutenant William W. Truxes, Jr., Pilot – His wife Mildred was then in Chadron, Nebraska
- 2nd Lieutenant John E. Sullivan, Co-Pilot – Cousin Marion Moran of Chicago
- 1st Officer David J. Countey, Navigator – Father Edward of Bronx, New York
- Staff Sergeant John W. Ellefsen, Radio Operator – Wife Muriel of Big Rapids, Michigan
- Staff Sergeant Peter Hardick, Jr., Engineer – Mother Anna of Phillipsburg, New Jersey
- Sergeant Alek Onischuk, Tail Gunner – Mother Anna of Bridgeport, Connecticut
- Sergeant Roland L. Morehouse, Gunner – Mother Irene of Jackson, Michigan
- Sergeant Walter Walinski, Gunner – Wife Elizabeth of Norwich, New York
- Staff Sergeant Burton Hurwitz, Radioman, - Father Joseph of Mount Union, Pennsylvania
- Sergeant Stanley P. Koly, Gunner, - Wife Marie of Akron, Ohio

Lt. Truxes Crew Story *Continues*.....

At about noon, the squadron of bombers was attacked near St. Vith, Belgium by as many as eleven enemy aircraft. An observer in another plane watched as Stan Koly's B-24 was fired on by a Focke-Wolfe 190 and went down in flames. Lieutenants Truxes and Sullivan and Sergeant Hurwitz managed to parachute out of the crippled bomber and survive the incident. They were captured by the Germans and held in a prisoner of war camp until the end of the war. All the rest of the crew were killed. Later inquiries suggest that some of them might have died in on-board explosions, or were blown out of the plane by those explosions, or were trapped by flames. All of the dead were buried by local people in a cemetery in Rettigny, Belgium, near Bastogne. After the war, the graves were moved to the Henri-Chapelle American Cemetery east of Liege. Three of the crew lie there still, and the remaining four were subsequently returned to the U.S. and re-buried in their home towns. Close to eight thousand American service personnel who lost their lives in the Battle of the Bulge and other World War II actions in Europe are buried in Henri Chapelle.

The first hand-written Western Union telegram arrived at the Koly house at 298 Turner Street about two weeks later.

"The Secretary of War desires me to express his deep regret that your husband Sergeant Stanley P. Koly has been reported missing in action since Twenty Five December over Germany. If further details or other information are received, you will be promptly notified."

(signed) Dunlop – Acting - The Adjutant General.

Major General J. A. Ulio was the Adjutant General. How this sad duty fell to him, or just how many more telegrams like the next one he had to sign and send to other young widows like Marie, or to bereaved parents, I don't know. That second telegram, machine printed this time, was dated 3 April 1945, almost three months later! In it, General Ulio confirms that Stan, "...who was previously reported missing in action was killed in action One January over Germany. The Secretary of War asks that I express his deep sympathy in your loss and his regret that unavoidable circumstances made necessary the unusual lapse of time in reporting your husband's death to you. Confirming letter follows". Just how Marie and Stan's mother had endured that long three-month nightmare of not knowing his fate, is beyond my understanding.

The "confirming letter" was dated 25 April 1945. It was on the letterhead of The War Department – The Adjutant General's Office – Washington 25, D.C. The letter reported that, "...A corrected report has been received that he was killed in action on 25 December 1944, the date on which he became missing in action. The report contained no additional information." General Ulio signed it in a big florid hand.

As I became increasingly curious about the life and death of Stan Koly, I got to wondering if any of the three survivors of that fateful mission might still be alive. I knew that it was doubtful – they would have to be in their mid- to late-80s at least. The pilot's name had been William Truxes. The M.A.C.R. listed his year of birth as 1918. "Truxes" was a fairly uncommon name – one that I might have some luck Googling. So I did – and, lo and behold – former First Lieutenant William Truxes, Jr. was alive and well and living in nearby Oswego, Illinois. I got up early on a Saturday morning in August 2003 and drove down to Oswego. The house sits on a cul-de-sac along with a few others. As I walked up the front sidewalk, a woman stepped out of an adjacent house and asked if she could help me. I introduced myself and told her my story. She began to smile and said, "Yes", her father William Truxes did live in that house, but that he and his wife were probably still asleep. She would tell her dad of my visit, and she was sure that he would contact me. I headed home and, as I walked in the door, the phone was ringing. It was William Truxes. He was 85 years of age, but he was sharp as a tack! He told me that he remembered Stan Koly well. He had cross-trained Stan as an engineer. He recalled that, after Stan had completed his training at Westover Air Base in Massachusetts, he really did not want to go to Europe. He had just married this gorgeous woman, and he was afraid that if anything happened to him, some other guy would get his beautiful Marie. We chatted on for a while, and then Truxes asked me if I had a photograph of the crew. When I said that I didn't, he said that he would email me one!

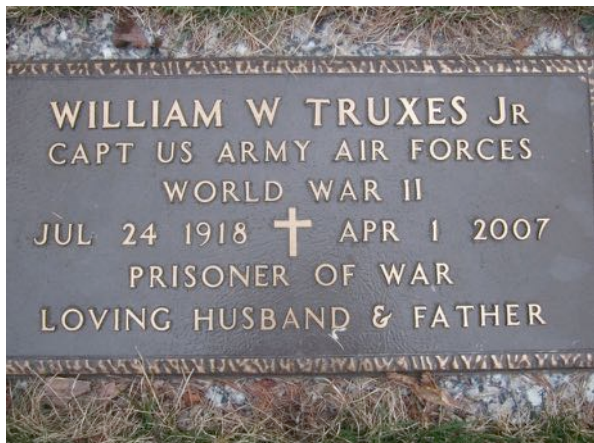
Lt. Truxes Crew Story *Continues*.....

The email arrived the next day. It was the quintessential World War II photo of a bomber crew: the four officers sitting on chairs in front - the enlisted men standing in the back row. Stan Koly stands smiling head and shoulders above the rest of his crewmates. And there was something about Lieutenant Truxes' appearance that struck me. He had to have been all of 25 or 26 years of age when that photo had been taken. But there was a calm maturity in his face and posture that belied his youth. I think that, had I been a young airman at that time, I would have had no hesitation about putting my life in the hands of that pilot.

Some four years later, I picked up my morning Chicago Tribune and found there an obituary for William W. Truxes, Jr. The story confirmed my impression that Truxes was an exemplar of that "greatest generation". He had survived the injuries he had suffered in the plane crash and six months in a German stalag. After the war, he put all that behind him and returned home to get about the business of rearing a family and running a business. I knew that I had to go to his wake.

As I walked into the funeral home, his daughter recognized me from my earlier visit. She said that she wanted to introduce me to her mother. Mildred Truxes was standing next to her husband's casket where First Lieutenant William Truxes, Jr. was lying, dressed in his World War II Army Air Forces uniform. On the wall above the casket was that same iconic crew photo. I chatted for a few minutes with Mrs. Truxes and was then introduced to her two grandsons. They were both serving in the military at the time, so they took a special interest in my connection (albeit indirect) to their grandpa and to one of his crew on that tragic Christmas Day some 63 years earlier and a world away. Mrs. Truxes, an accomplished woman in her own right, passed away in 2016 at age 97.

One year later, while doing some on-line research re. the final mission of B-24 #42-95220, I learned that the sacrifices of the ten members of that crew had never been forgotten by the people of Rettigny, the little Belgian village where that aircraft had crashed to earth that day in 1944. In the immediate aftermath of that incident, the people of that village had respectfully buried the recovered remains of the crew in their local church cemetery. Some current residents of the village who still remember the incident recall that some German military personnel at the time were not at all happy with the respect rendered to the American dead, saying, "When an Allied military is concerned, you are always present to help, but when a German is concerned, we see nobody".



Grave of Sgt. Stanley P. Koly at the American Military Cemetery Henri Chapelle, in Belgium

In October 2011, on a day some sixty-five years after seven young American airmen died over Belgium, the people of Rettigny gathered near the site of the deaths of those young men to unveil a monument to their memory. The son-in-law and grand-daughter of the pilot Lieutenant William Truxes attended the ceremony. To this day, the people of Rettigny have never forgotten the sacrifice of these and so many other young soldiers, sailors and airmen from throughout the free world who died to restore freedom to their country. I'm sure that they regard the word "Liberator" as an apt description of the aircraft that fell from the skies near their village so many years ago.

Continued.....



Memorial at Rettigny, Belgium, pictured shortly after the dedication ceremony in April 2012. Designed and erected by local people to the memory of the seven crew members of the 788th Lt. William Truxes who perished during the Christmas Day Mission of 1944 when their B24 was shot-down close to the village.

The monument in Rettigny and the publicity and photographs attendant to its unveiling are primarily due to the efforts of Paul Remy, a local man and Guy Demain. Andy Wilkinson, a Director of the 467th Bomb Group Association and Editor of its newsletter has been of immeasurable help in the creation of this story. Since learning of the unveiling of that monument at Rettigny, I have resolved to try, if possible, to locate descendants of the crew of that B-24 and share with them what I know of the sacrifices of their loved ones on that Christmas Day, and how they are forever preserved and honored by the people of a little village in Belgium. Thus far, I've been to Jackson, Michigan where I visited the grave of Roland Morehouse; and to Big Rapids, Michigan, the childhood home of John Ellefson. John lies in the Henri Chapelle military cemetery in Belgium, but his name is inscribed on the veterans memorial outside the Big Rapids City Hall. Everywhere I went In Jackson and Big Rapids, people were captivated by the story and offered help. Suzanne Whitehead in the City Clerk's office in Jackson searched burial records for Woodland Cemetery to help me locate Roland Morehouse's grave. Staff at the Big Rapids Library helped me find a microfilm copy of the January 16, 1945 issue of the *Big Rapids Pioneer* reporting that "T/Sgt. John Norman Ellefson of North Fourth Avenue has been reported missing in action as of December 25". Maureen Doyle Nelson, President of the Mecosta County Genealogical Society in Big Rapids searched her files and located a copy of a later article in the April 6, 1945 issue of that newspaper, reporting that Sgt. Ellefson's wife "received word from the War Department this morning that her husband ... was killed in action over Germany on December 25."

Not surprisingly, considering that almost seventy-five years have passed since this incident, attempts to identify and locate family members of these two men has proven difficult. I visited the former "North Fourth Avenue" address for John Ellefson. The home has a new owner who could provide no information regarding the Ellefson family. I did develop a few promising leads, so I'll have to go back.

Continued.....

I don't know if Stan Koly knew it during his final moments aboard that stricken B-24, but his Marie was pregnant with their first child. Like too many women during too many wars, Marie then got those telegrams. To compound her tragedy, sometime later, her infant son Raymond died of disease and was buried in Akron. She never remarried, and died some thirty-seven years later at age 69.

I know that this story is but one of many similar stories of men and women lost before their time to war, and of the people they leave behind. It's important that we remember them and their sacrifices for us.

(Editor ~ Sincere thanks to John Burke for providing his story and journey into the past. Also to Guy Demail of Rettigny who was one of those instrumental in the installation of the Memorial and kindly shared photographs including those from the Henri Chapelle American Military Cemetery .



Closer depiction of the Memorial at Rettigny showing both the casualties and survivors from the Lt. Truxes Crew.

Obituaries



Raymond McDowell, Gunnery Instructor, 789th

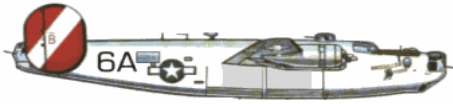
Raymond Clifford McDowell, 93, of Davenport, IA passed away peacefully in his home Friday, November 25th, 2016.

Mr. McDowell was born Jan. 22, 1923 in Letterbox, KY to Bert and Fairy (nee Reynolds) McDowell. As a child in the Great Depression, Raymond grew up in a loving family, the son of a postmaster and general store owner who often showed great kindness to those families less fortunate than theirs.

Ray attended Tyner High School in Tyner, KY before continuing his education at the University of Kentucky and the University of Louisville in the late 1940's. Ray was a veteran of WW II. In 1942 Ray enlisted in the US Army Air Corps. After completing basic training in Miami Beach, FL Ray was assigned as Group Aerial Gunnery Instructor for the 467th Heavy Bombardment Group (789th Squadron) 8th Air Force Europe (Rackheath, UK) where he flew multiple missions over Germany until the end of the war. Upon the end of the war, Ray continued his career as a civil servant for the US government as a Quality Assurance Specialist Ammunition Specialist (QASAS), spending some of his time at the Rock Island Arsenal. He retired in 1988, rendering over 40 years of service to the US Government.

On May 1st, 1965 he was united in marriage with Sanghae (Lee) McDowell in Walla Walla, WA. They had a loving relationship of over 50 years. He was a very kind and caring person who always placed family over every other concern and showed much patience regardless of the situation. He was by nature a wise man.

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McMURRAY, PA 15317**



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Director, Ann Pooch, at the Memorial and Grave of Col. Albert J. Shower during the Group visit to Arlington National Cemetery