

POOP from Group



791st



790th



789th



788th

Newsletter of the 467th Bomb Group Association

February 2024



OFFICIAL PHOTO DEPICTING the Lt. Edgar P. CASON Crew of the 789th Squadron, an early replacement crew who successfully flew their 35 missions between June and early November 1944. A typical wing crew of the time highlighted by their connection and close association with the original B24H "SCREW BALL" who they flew 20 occasions in combat and affectionately called "OUR" plane. We cover the interesting story of "SCREW BALL" from its initial delivery to Wendover to dramatic final mission in a feature, "THE MANY UP AND DOWNS of a B24 called "SCREW BALL", commencing Page Six.

***** Colorado Springs October Reunion News ***
Adele Gardner reflects on "One Last Look"**

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Col Albert J. Shower

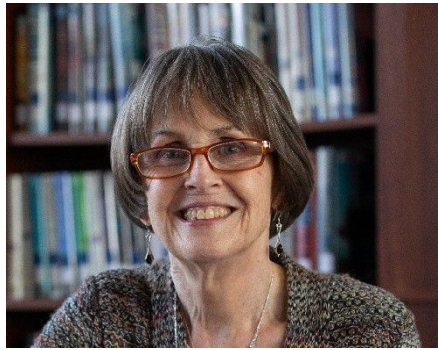
Honorary Vice President (RIP)

Jay Shower



The 467th
Bombardment Group
The Rackheath Aggies

Rackheath Pathfinders
Site#6 (467th USAAF)



President's Message

By Yvonne Caputo

yvonneauthor4@gmail.com

My parents, Mike and Teddy Caputo made sure that at least once a year, there was a family vacation. There was never a lot of money, but the station wagon would be loaded with food and four children. Many times, we were off to visit relatives, but there would always be side trips to experience something we had never seen or done before.

Those simple trips were the beginnings of my love of travel. My first job was teaching, and having the summer off allowed me to go abroad. My husband and I belong to both church and community choirs and our directors have made it possible for us to sing in churches and cathedrals around the world. There is something magical about raising our voices in places a thousand years old.

Reunions with the 467th have given me something uniquely special that sets them apart from all of the other experiences. I have met people from across the United States and Great Britain, and we all have one thing in common. We share a deep love and appreciation for those who served in this particular bomb group during WWII. For the Americans, it's the tie we feel to our fathers and grandfathers. For the British, it is the tie they feel to those who helped them win the war. Being together must be something like the camaraderie that existed among those who came before us. It is an unspoken, yet palpable feeling of belonging to something very exceptional.

We would love to share that experience with all of you. Join us for our reunion in Colorado Springs.



News From Station 145

From David Hastings MBE

A fond farewell message from David

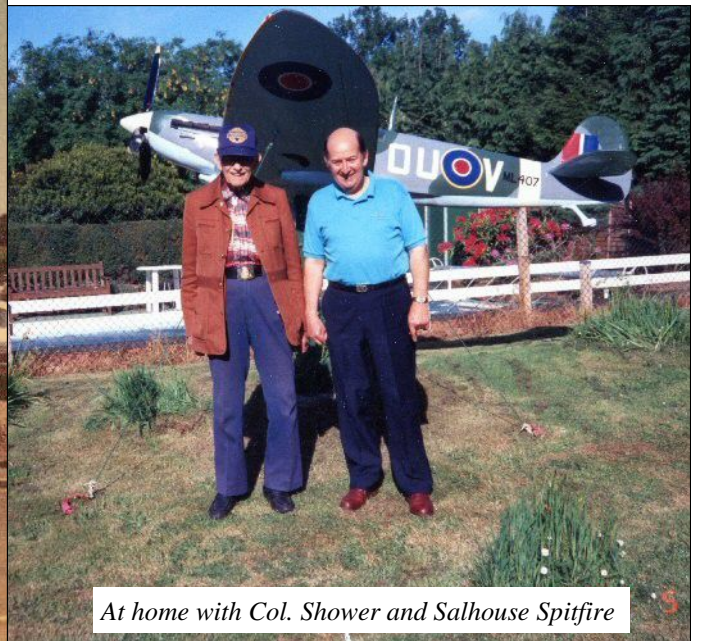
Sadly due to reaching 92 years and in failing health this will be my last "News" and I am hoping that Ivan Barnard will take over from me as a Marker Trustee while my son Roger will remain as a Trustee. It has been a real joy to write these articles having first met the 467th Bomb Group in 1944 and our friendship has lasted a lifetime. It seems a long time now since Colonel Shower threw me off his base after I was caught in one of his B-24s but we became good friends after the war and I was delighted in 1984 to be the first made full Honorary Member of the 467th BG. We can never thank the 2nd Air Division USAAF enough for all their bravery and friendship and they certainly "came as friends, stayed as friends and have remained friends and we will always remember them with pride and affection". Then how can we ever thank Lt. Col James Mahoney enough for his kindness in allowing us to use his superb wartime colour film and his unique commentary in making the film "A Village Remembers" which has been enjoyed by thousands of Norfolk people. We can never forget

that day in 1990 when Colonel Shower unveiled the new Marker at Liberator Close and his son Jay Shower had flown a single-engine Beech Bonanza across the Atlantic in order to fly a low fly-past tribute over the Marker as his father unveiled it. Then that wonderful day when Mrs Shower flew to the UK to open the restored Control Tower at Rackheath and we had responded to Col Shower's plea in 1990 to "save my tower". The 467th will never be forgotten.

David Hastings MBE

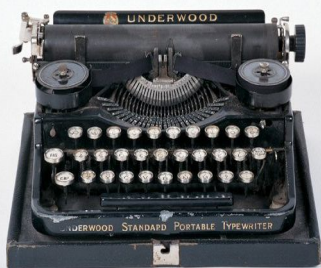


The 1990 Marker dedication flypast with Jay's Bonanza



At home with Col. Shower and Salhouse Spitfire

Notes from the Editor



Please send news/articles for "POOP"
To : Editor - Andy Wilkinson
andywilkinson467th@btinternet.com

ANNUAL MEMBERS and BUSINESS MEETING 12 NOV: Great to have so many participate in our on-line virtual Annual Members Meeting ensuring the Association continues to thrive and evolve to meet challenges in the coming years. The Mission Statement and preservation of the legacy of the Group remains our principle objective and the annual Business Meeting allowed the Board present a slate of Candidates. Five seats were open on the Board, and **Yvonne** and **Ivan** whose terms were expiring agreed to stay on (subject voting), while **Jane Staedicke, Valerie Corvino and Ann Pooch** were standing down. We welcome three new Directors, **Chris Collins, Dan Gehring, and Hattie Hearn**, and delighted all three bring "youth" and renewed sense of purpose to the Board. The Board approved an updated category of "Valued Friend" member and this will be incorporated in the by-laws. The Meeting concluded with a slide-show of the September "One Last Look" Reunion with some light-hearted commentaries provided by **Ivan and Brian Mahoney**.

NEW DIRECTORS: **Chris Collins** set up an independent 467th BG Facebook Page back in 2013. So impressed, the Assoc. asked he make it the official organ of the Group which Chris continues to administer. Living just 10 miles from Rackheath Chris has a keen interest in WWII history, metal-detecting, and the stories behind the discoveries. **Dan Gehring** recently completed a book on his grandfather's service, Joe, a co-pilot with 30 combat missions in the 467th. Dan's researches included extensive conversations with Joe and visit to view original Group records at NARA. He has family



who served in flying roles with the USAF and made a first trip to Rackheath last September. **Hattie Hearn** is Curator of the American Museum at Duxford, IWM, and previously manager at the Air Defence Radar Museum at Neatishead. For her PhD studied the 8th Air Force & social history, a writer, researcher, and lived in Bungay home of the 446th BG. All three stand in good stead with the attributes to benefit the aims of the Association in challenging years ahead.

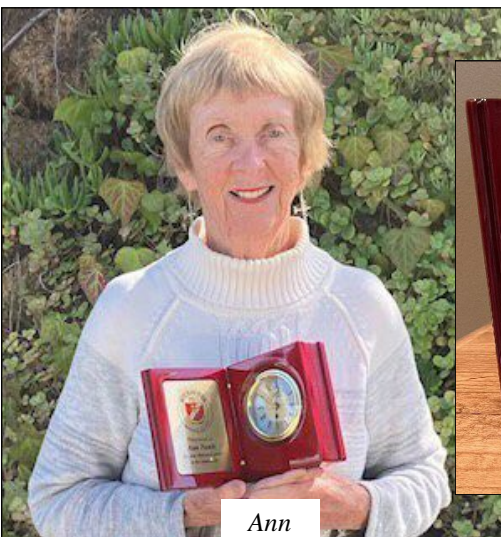
OFFICER ROLE CHANGES: New Board personnel had led to **Brian Mahoney** accepting the new role of Secretary and Membership Data, while incoming Director **Dan Gehring** has taken over Brian's position as Treasurer.

2024 JOINT REUNION/CONVENTION COLORADO SPRINGS: We join with the Heritage League & 93rd BG for the gathering at the Embassy Suites, Colorado Springs, **OCTOBER 17 - 21, with optional extension 21-22 we recommend.** Our special room rate available 3 days before/after the Reunion at \$155 + tax totaling \$174.38 per night. See Page 12 for the official announcement and details for Hotel Reservations direct with Embassy Suites. A Draft Schedule is also provided containing trips to the Air Force Academy, Pueblo and WWII Aviation Museums, opportunities for socializing, Guest Speakers, discussions, with extension days for scenic trips and visiting Colorado Springs. We plan to have our renowned 467th Day Room containing, memorabilia, photos, displays, books, extensive research materials, copying and PC access, as well as a place to meet and relax. The 467th will have opportunity to dinner together, side trips, and possibly a Business Meeting too. The FULL ITINERARY and how to REGISTER for the event will appear in the next (JUNE) issue of the POOP Newsletter. MARK the DATE and make your Hotel reservation **now** in the safe knowledge you can cancel with no penalty 48hours prior.



SUPPORT THE ASSOCIATION: Our Group has been unique in that we have a “NO DUES” policy and members have kindly supported the Group over many years through DONATIONS and support for specific fundraiser projects. We continue to preserve the policy and grateful for a small number regularly providing their time and energies on a voluntary basis. To enable our important on-line presence particularly hosting our dynamic web site using subscription Filemaker, ever expanding databases, also domain registration, we require funding to maintain and safeguard our digital footprint for ALL to access. Maybe you have learned of the history, service record, and so much more of a family member through our RESEARCH SITE. We need to further develop, grow, promote the story and legacy of the 467th for future generations in a crowded digital world. Make sure our voice is heard and HELP this continue. You can contribute to our efforts through a deeply appreciated DONATION to our Association Paypal/Credit-Debit Card account which is tax deductible, [HERE](#). THANK YOU sincerely for supporting our aims and determined endeavors; all donations will be acknowledged.

LONG SERVICE AWARDS: We couldn't let the occasion of Directors, Anne Pooch & Valerie Corvino stepping down after a combined service with the Association of some 31 years without recognition of their dedication over such a long period. Valerie had the distinction of being the very first non-veteran invited to the Board to take up the role as Secretary way back in 2002. Valerie's Father, Vincent Corvino served as aircrew in the 788th, and has been ever present on the Board also serving as Treasurer. Ann has completed 10 years, mostly in the role of Secretary and partner of the late Jay Shower. As a token of our appreciation for their long service the Board were delighted to present both with a special well deserved “467th Clock” memento. Pictured are Ann & Valerie in receipt of their awards with a promise from both to join with us at future Reunions.



Ann



Valerie

EMAIL AND ADDRESS CHANGES: remember to report changes to , Brian Mahoney, who handles all membership details including notifications of “Folded Wings” and obituaries. researcher@brianhmahoney.com

Folded Wings

Anthony A. "Tony" CORRADETTI - Gunner 789th, April 2023

Edward C. GALBREATH - Gunner/POW 789th, January 2023

Annabelle HOWE - Associate, Rackheath Park, December 2023

Paul A. MATLIN - Armorer 788th, October 2021

Carl R. PRATT - Gunner/POW 790th, March 2022

The Many Up & Downs of B-24 "SCREW BALL"



Copyright 467th BG Association

Records suggest the Group had as many as 180 B24s assigned throughout its operational history with a number having outstanding longevity and serviceability. Three ships achieved over 100 combat missions, while many others had a mixed service record and quite a few suffered unexpected misfortune. One of those ships considered typical with an interesting record and story was an original ship with the Group named "SCREW BALL".

The ship emerged from the Consolidated Fort Worth manufacturing plant and following brief time at the B24 modification centre at Birmingham, AL., delivered to the 467th at Wendover, UT., on 12 January 1944 and was assigned to the 788th Squadron bearing the serial 41-29348. The fledgling unit was still undergoing phase training at the desolate salt flats but at the stage crews were accepting brand new B24s in preparation for an unknown destination overseas. It was Group policy for individual crews to be allocated a specific ship to gain familiarity with handling and ultimately fly the same ship overseas. So it was at this time B24H #348 became allocated to the 788th Squadron Lt Samuel Goldsmith crew where the following weeks it adopted the name and nose-art "SCREW BALL" presumably something the crew discussed and agreed together. A simple but striking piece of nose-art depicting a large screw through a ball in the form of the earth displaying north and south American continents with the distinct style name immediately above.

A document dated 7 February 1944 cites the Goldsmith crew flying #348 "SCREW BALL" in a Movement Order to Herington Field, Kansas, along with all the original 467th crews and senior personnel as final preparations were in hand prior to a combat assignment overseas. Herington was a temporary assignment and used as a staging or processing location and used primarily by B24s at this time. Lt Goldsmith and crew aboard "SCREW BALL" departed Wendover 12 February for the 7 hour flight to Herington along with other crews making staggered arrivals over the coming days. A final P.O.M. inspection check was made here for the Group while the processing including physical fitness examination, personal records, clothing and equipment inspection, prisoner of war lectures, and more, extended up to two weeks.

Crews departed Herington on the 26 & 27 February to Morrison Field, West Palm Beach, Florida, en-route to a still unknown final destination. The Aircraft Record Card indicates "SCREW BALL" departed Morrison Field 3 March when sealed orders would have been finally opened disclosing their ultimate destination as Rackheath, England. Along with the other original air echelon the Goldsmith crew undertook the standard Southern Atlantic ferry route with no major mishap arriving Rackheath 12 March in good time.

With the majority of the original crews and ground personnel having settled into their new home at Rackheath, activity on the base would have been intense as the Group readied itself for the long anticipated first combat mission. Not before a period of further schooling in British air procedures, local geography, and more and more practice missions for the eager crews. This meant the Squadron ships were heavily utilized with every crew taking turns to gain familiarity and continue formation flying, navigation, and practice bomb-runs. "SCREW BALL" was among the ships flown during this phase by 788th Squadron crews and our first insight of a significant mishap to the ship is recorded in the diary of radio-operator, Sgt. Kenneth Larsen of the 788th Lt. Roderick Ewart Crew. Kenneth records the following:

3 April 1944: We were supposed to fly today but just as we were taxiing out for a take-off, the nose-wheel COLLAPSED. Navigator banged his head but is OK. No one else was hurt. All were slightly shaken. The ship is a total loss and I doubt if it will ever fly again because the fuselage is all sprung. The name of the ship is "SCREW BALL". We were all very lucky because we were supposed to go on a practice bombing mission and we had four one thousand pound demolition bombs in the bomb bay. If these bombs went off I wouldn't be writing in this diary!

7 April 1944: I flew today. We flew about 5 miles out over the English Channel. We did not drop bombs or have any gunnery. The "SCREW BALL" isn't as bad as it was said to be. It is being repaired and will probably fly in combat.

The temporary "loss" of "SCREW BALL" would have put additional pressure on the 788th Squadron B24 availability while the ship undertook repairs following the nose-wheel collapse. It is thought repair was carried out under the auspices of Group and Squadron mechanics while remaining on the base at Rackheath.

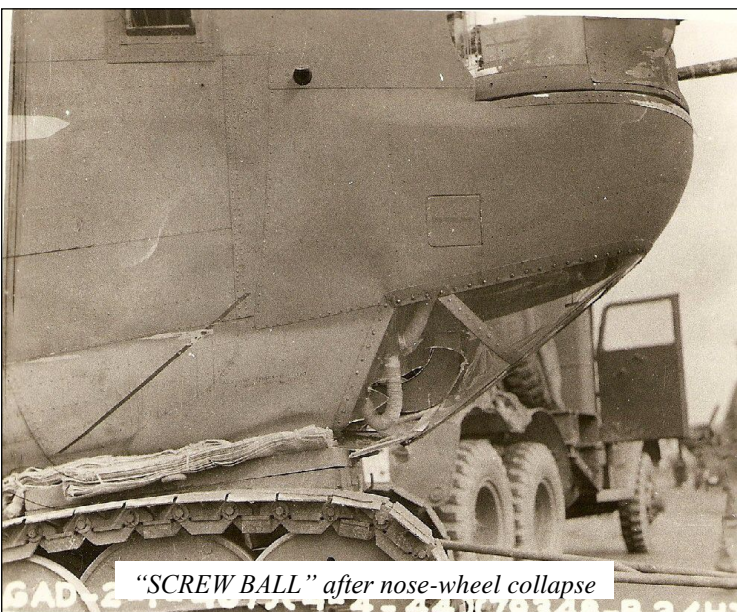
The Group finally commenced combat operations 10 April 44 with no record of "SCREW BALL" available throughout the entire month. In fact "SCREW BALL" was not to fly its first combat mission until two months later in June 44 against

a very different background at Rackheath. The Group were down to 3 operational squadrons, the original 788th having been assigned to the 801st(P) BG "carpetbagger" clandestine night-flying unit with personnel leaving Rackheath on May 11. This meant the newly repaired "SCREW BALL" was reassigned a new squadron and this was the 789th.

Finally ready for combat "SCREW BALL" was commanded by the 789th Lt Dore Stephenson crew on the momentous 6th June D-Day, Group mission#43, to Bocage, France, in support of the landings. Second mission of the day for the 467th and it turned into disappointment with the 12 ships assigned reaching the target but unable to bomb due to 10/10 cloud obscuring the target with all ships returning safely.



Sgt. Kenneth Larsen



"SCREW BALL" after nose-wheel collapse

Second mission for “SCREW BALL” occurred June 11 with the 789th Charles Russell crew among 15 ships making a highly successful attack on a railroad bridge at Blois, France, with the bridge collapsing into the river with numerous spans taking direct “hits”. This daring attack made at altitudes as low as 6000ft showing the importance this target was destroyed emphasized strongly to the 15 crews flying in two squadrons at the very early morning briefing. (*Editor – this mission is worthy of further in-depth study in a future POOP*).

“SCREW BALL” was readied the following day June 12, and significant for both ship and the 789th crew commanding her for the mission to the airfield at Evreux, France, the Groups’ #50th combat mission. It was flown by one of the early replacement crews allocated to the 789th, the Lt Edgar Cason crew, many of the original crews now approaching finishing their tour of 30 missions, especially the non-lead crews who flew more regularly with the 467th reduced to three operational squadrons. For Lt. Edgar Cason and Crew#46 it was their first



The Lt. Edgar Cason Crew with “SCREW BALL”

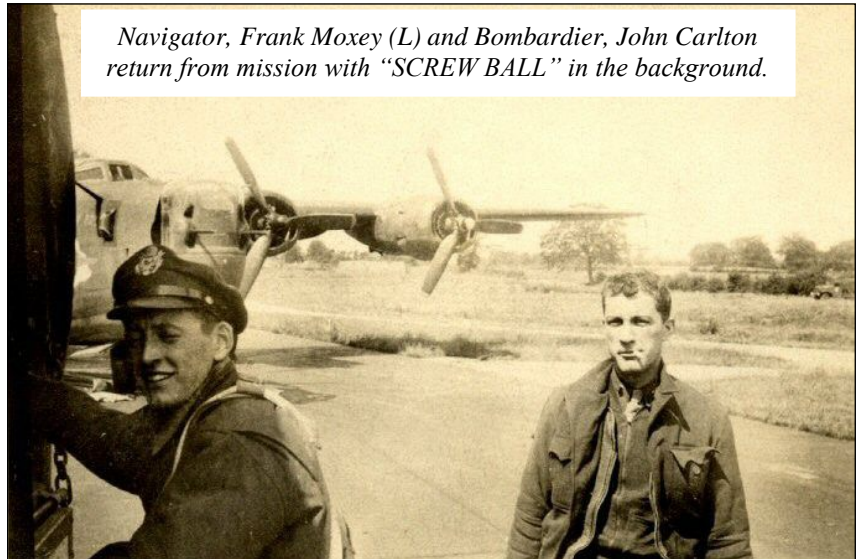
combat mission and what was the beginning of a very regular association with “SCREW BALL” over the coming weeks and months. All 36 ships taking off reached and attacked the airfield target while the 791st Lt Charles Grace crew after losing two engines safely put their ship down on a beach head landing strip, first Allied bomber to do this following D-Day.

June 14 was a repeat performance, mission#4 for “SCREW BALL”, second mission for the Lt Edgar Cason Crew#46 once again aboard to a “NoBall” target at Beauvoir, France. Thirty-nine ships attacked the “NoBall” category target that was against enemy missile launchers (V-1s), bivouac areas, field headquarters, enemy supply/logistic points in support of field operations and concentrated areas of troop and weapon marshalling. These type targets fell more into a tactical bombing attack grouping as opposed to the strategic type comprised of fixed targets in or near major industrial complexes. These were regular targets for the 467th throughout June and usually short flight times located mainly in France and associated with the Allied landings on the continent.

One week later, the Cason Crew again find themselves aboard “SCREW BALL” and the daunting prospect of a mission to the German capital, Berlin, to attack workshops at Genshagen to the south. Col. Shower led the 467th, the 96th Combat Wing and the Second Air Division to be first over Berlin. Of the 34 ships taking off, 27 attacked the target with flak described as moderate to very intense. Two 467th ships, the 789th Lt Helton crew was damaged and failed to return, while the 790th Lt Rudowski crew also badly flak- damaged over the target but staggered across the Baltic Sea and crash-landed at Bultofta airfield, Malmo, Sweden, all uninjured but subsequently interned in this neutral country. “SCREW BALL” and the Cason crew made it home safely to Rackheath. The month of June saw “SCREW BALL” fly 12 combat missions, 5 flown by the Cason Crew aboard in their first experience of operational combat.

First day of July saw the Cason Crew once again allocated “SCREW BALL” among the 24 ships assigned to attack another “NoBall” target in France. All 24 ships reached Splasher#5 on the Norfolk coast before the mission was recalled and no mission credits awarded. Rest of the month proceeded more successfully with “SCREW BALL” completing 14 more missions, 12 of which flown by Lt Edgar Cason and crew aboard, truly cementing the idea this was “their” ship. Moving into August 44, Group missions continued on each day, the 15th of the month the Group achieving the 100th

combat mission with a long sortie to Vechta Airfield, Germany, all returning safely. Oddly, "SCREW BALL" was the allocated spare ship that day despite the Cason crew assigned the mission and this time flying B24H "SACKTIME". It wasn't to miss out and found itself flown in a last minute change with the 790th Lt. Charles Deardorf crew. First occasion "SCREW BALL" had flown combat other than with a 789th Squadron crew. The Group was stood down on 19 August for celebrations and big party for everyone marking the 100th combat mission, achieved in a Division record time of just 140 days.



Navigator, Frank Moxey (L) and Bombardier, John Carlton return from mission with "SCREW BALL" in the background.

Combat missions re-continued on the 24 August for the 467th and records show "SCREW BALL" to be a most reliable and trusted ship, free from significant technical issues, and completing almost all combat missions assigned. A true testament to the skill and care of those 789th mechanics tasked to look after her. However, as we moved in to the month of September her luck would eventually run out.

After flying combat on the 1st, 8th, 9th, last mission with the 789th and Group occurred on the 11 September attacking synthetic oil installations at Magdeburg, Germany, and flown by the Lt Troy Wild crew. 32 ships attacked the last resort target of Stendal via PFF and results were later judged as poor. All got back safely with no losses. The following day the group along with the others of the 96th Combat Wing were assigned the task of hauling much needed gas to General Patton's fast advancing troops on the continent. Known as "truckin'" or ferry missions the ships were to undertake this task right through the remainder of September and early days of October. These were not classed as combat as the defined routes to the two forward bases in France were deemed to be under Allied control although the skeleton crews had to exercise caution with low level navigation. A number of extra B24s from other groups arrived at Rackheath to supplement the task but for "SCREW BALL" it was a role reversal. On the 16 September it was loaned out to the 491st Bomb Group, 14th CBW, at North Pickenham, to undertake a very different task.

All groups of the 14CBW & 20CBW were assigned the job of re-supply of U.S. airborne Forces in the Nijmegen-Eindhoven area flying at very low altitude, each aircraft to carry 20 bundles of supplies. The 491st BG had been stood down four days before the proposed mission on the 18 September to enable crews to practice low level supply at maximum speed and had utilized The Wash and other training areas to try and hone skills for this unusual mission. The 8th AF mission plan called for 28 squadrons of Liberators (252 aircraft) to drop supplies to the 82nd and 101st Airborne Divisions which had been airlifted behind the German lines the previous day. The drop zones were designated "A", "N", and "W". The 491st would split, with part of the Group leading the 14th Wing to Area "W", and the remaining 491st Libs providing a separate force for the Area "A" drop. The 20th Wing, consisting of the 93rd, 446th, 448th and 489th Groups, provided the Area "N" force. The 20th and 479th Fighter Groups were to provide close support all the way, the 78th and 56th Fighter Groups would operate on anti-flak patrols, while 4 P-51 Groups would provide area coverage over the drop zones.

Briefing was carried out at 0930 on the 18 Sept. and "SCREW BALL" still retaining the proud markings of the 789th, 467th BG, was to be flown by Lt Eugene D. Scamahorn and crew of the 853rd Squadron, 491st BG. Just prior to take off a change was received in the withdrawal route altitude – aircraft were to climb to the base of low clouds instead of coming out on the deck. The wisdom of this change was not apparent to many of the element leaders who took the suggestion under advisement. Early afternoon, 41 ships had departed North Pickenham each loaded with 20 bundles to be delivered by parachute and free-fall through the bomb-bays and ball-turret wells. This meant an extra crew member for each ship, a

specialized dropmaster to supervise the operation from the Airborne units. Lead crews left the English coast at an altitude of 1500ft crossing the coast of continental Europe at 1100ft close to the optimum range of the German ground fire. The Squadrons, flying in trail at 30 second intervals, dropped to 600ft at the IP and 250ft or less over the target.

From the Memoir of Eugene D. Scamahorn: **We flew into the drop area at the lowest possible altitude to prevent the Jerries using the deadly 88s to any extent. We had to pull up to make the drop and then immediately drop back down to deck level to come out. Our plane was hit by machine gun fire from the ground troops and we were in a bad shape for a while. The slugs took out the entire hydraulic system and nearly severed the rudder and elevator cables. What a War, the Dutch waving to us on one side and the Germans shooting at us from the other and we can't shoot back (orders) for fear of hitting the Dutch. We had to leave the formation as we were having considerable difficulty and couldn't keep up with the others. When we got to home field we found we could not get the landing gear down and had no brakes or flaps. We were also afraid the rudder and elevator controls might go out at any time as there were only a few strands holding the cables together. Home field sent us away as they didn't want any**

wreckage blocking the runway so that other planes could not land. We went to Woodbridge, a special field designed for the landing of damaged aircraft. The runway is about 2 miles long and several hundred feet wide. Capt. Bridges had about the same trouble as we did and had landed his plane just before our arrival. He and his crew managed to get out safely but the plane was burning in the center of the runway and we were told to circle the field and wait for clearance. After about one hour we received clearance to land and it was a good thing as we were running low on gasoline. Sgt. Armstrong, our engineer, had been working on the landing gear manually. He managed to get the nose wheel and the right main down and locked but couldn't do anything with the left main gear. We had to land as the fuel tanks were showing empty. The left main gear was hanging down limply, not in place or locked. As we touched down, I applied a little more power to no. 1 engine in hopes it would help hold the left wing up as we lost speed, that didn't do much good. The left gear folded almost immediately and allowed the no. 1 prop to hit the runway turning at a high rate of speed. As soon as the prop hit the asphalt, it snapped the



Dramatic outcome following forced-landing Woodbridge emergency airfield

crankshaft and bounced about 20ft in the air spinning rapidly and flying forward parallel to our aircraft. The drag of the left wing on the pavement caused our plane to veer sharply to the left and this turned us directly into the path of the rapidly spinning prop which was moving at our same rate of speed. I could see the spinning prop out of the corner of my eye and much more clearly as it sliced through the nose section like a buzz saw just inches in front of my feet.

As the plane skidded along on its belly, the hydraulic fluid and probably some gasoline from broken lines caught fire. Sgt. Dzik, one of the waist-gunners, saw the flames and jumped out the rear escape hatch. We must have been going close to fifty miles an hour at the time he jumped. He had rolled end over end for quite a way and he looked like a native American had practiced scalping on his head. He was cut up and badly bruised when the ambulance delivered him to the rest of us. He had disobeyed instructions so he didn't get much sympathy from me. He could have easily been killed. All of the other crewman escaped any injury. I had given orders that no one was to leave from their braced positions until the plane had come to a complete stop. The plane was totally destroyed. We were shortly picked up by an army 2 ½ half ton truck and on our way back to North Pickenham. The ride was very cold so we popped open some parachutes that we had salvaged and wrapped up in the nylon.



"SCREW BALL" at Woodbridge awaiting salvage

Following day the ship "SCREW BALL" was inspected at the Woodbridge emergency landing field and deemed uneconomical to repair and subsequently salvaged. In little over 3 months of combat readiness the ship had made 49 missions, 48 assigned to the 467th where after the early mishap proved a reliable and constant fixture with the 789th Squadron right up until the fateful low-level daring enterprise with the 491st BG. Perhaps never gaining the fame and history of "Witchcraft", nevertheless B24H "SCREW BALL" played its part like so many others in the hostile skies conducted in the Air War over Europe during WWII.

**93rd Bombardment Group Association
Heritage League of the 2nd Air Division
467th Bombardment Group Association
Annual Joint Reunion/Convention**

**Colorado Springs, CO
October 17 – 21, 2024**

With Optional Extension on October 21 & 22



This year we will gather in Colorado Springs, Colorado in Mid-October. Our hotel is the Embassy Suites Colorado Springs located about 3 miles from the United States Air Force Academy. Two airports are available: Colorado Springs Airport (COS) located 18 miles away with taxi and uber service; and Denver International Airport (DEN) located 80 miles away. Complimentary shuttles are not available from either airport. The Embassy Suites is an all-suite hotel with both queen and king rooms.

Our rate for either type is \$155.00 plus tax totaling \$174.38 per night with made-to-order breakfast included as well as a 7-day per week complimentary evening reception.

Reservations can be made by calling the hotel directly at **719-599-9100**. Ask for the 93rd Bomb Group Association Reunion block. Our Point of Contact is Sheri Neely. Ask for her assistance if you encounter any difficulty. The negotiated rate is available three days before and after the reunion. Please make your reservations as soon as you can. The rate will be available until September 23rd. Reservations can be cancelled without penalty up to 48 hours prior. If you are considering attending, make your reservations **now**. You can cancel without penalty if your plans change.

DRAFT SCHEDULE

DAY -1 Thursday: Memorabilia Room set-up, Registration, Welcome Dinner, Guest Speaker.

DAY -2 Friday: Visit Air Force Academy, Visitor Center, Planetarium, Bronze B-24, Wreath-laying, Lunch
Return Hotel, 467th BG Business Meeting, Local Restaurant (on your own), evening social activities.

DAY -3 Saturday: 467th BG Side trip to Pueblo Air Museum, Lunch, Return Hotel, Group Photo, Guest Speakers,
Reception, Memorial Dinner.

DAY -4 Sunday: Religious Service (non- Denominational), National Museum of WWII Aviation, Lunch, Garden of the Gods,
Dinner Hotel, After-Action Discussion, evening social activities.

DAY -5 Monday: Explore Colorado Springs, Pikes Cog Railway, Lunch, Tour Seven Falls, Hotel on your own.

DAY -6 Tuesday: Royal Gorge Route Railroad, travel Colorado Springs, Olympic/Paralympic Museum, Hotel on your own.



"One Last Look"

through The Eyes of an Aircraft Armorer's Offspring

by Adele Gardner

Finally getting to see Rackheath, with all these sites of such great significance to the 467th Bomb Group in September 2023, was so deeply touching. I grew up hearing stories about Dad's time in Rackheath. My father, Delbert R. Gardner, was an aircraft armorer with the 790th Bomb Squadron. His job with the 467th included loading bombs and cleaning and repairing machine guns on the B-24s.

At first, Dad's WWII stories were mostly things a child would understand, like the hedgehog who became the mascot of his barracks, or the care packages his mother sent with things like her homemade cookies that he shared with his friends (making him rather popular; she was an excellent cook). I don't remember a time when I *didn't* know Dad had served in World War II or that he'd been stationed in England.

I was the oldest, and Dad would sing to me in a rocking chair every night before bed. (He loved singing and would sing throughout the day, as well, but this was a special time.) The songs included many folksongs he'd grown up with, like "I've Been Working on the Railroad," as well as some he brought home from his time in England, such as "I've Got Sixpence" and "Gee, Mom, I Want to Go Home."

As we got older (and Dad switched from calling us "children" to "offspring"), he shared many more details about his time during World War II. One that always stuck with me was how Dad volunteered to serve; anxious to help, he, along with his brother Don and buddy Gene, went to sign up the moment war was declared. But when we called him a hero, he made a point to tell us that the heroes were those who gave their lives, and those who flew and experienced danger directly. That while his job had its dangers (see "A Rose for Doc Munger" in the Nov. 2022 issue of *POOP from Group*), he was relatively safe and there were so many who faced much worse. He called them the heroes, and described watching the B-24s flying out and coming home, and how hard he prayed that everyone would return safely. He was, like so many WWII veterans, very humble about his role. Nor did he share *all* his stories (he had a shoebox with mementos, including photos and letters, and though I asked, he would get too emotional to share everything). Indeed, I should mention that from my earliest recollections, Mom was the one who told us proudly of Dad's service and encouraged him to talk to us about it.

This trip to Rackheath meant a lot to all of us, and it was an added bonus to find so many things that personally related to the job Dad did, especially since he was humble about his role. Yet it was an important one.

The chance to experience as much as possible of the Rackheath Air Base and surrounds, and experience the outpouring of love and appreciation from so many Norwich residents, really means everything to me. I'm in

awe of the amazing work and care of all those who are preserving the story of the 467th Bomb Group—I'm just so deeply touched and grateful.

Though I only started coming late in the game, the reunions have meant so much, especially Wendover and Rackheath—providing the chance to stand in a place where Dad stood, see some of the things he saw, and imagine what life was like for him—adding to his stories with the knowledge shared by members of this group and many tour guides and volunteers. And the chance to meet all of you has been wonderful. Indeed, I think of the 467th reunion group as family now.

I loved every moment, every site, every experience in Norwich. Hearing other attendees and guests share their stories, passed on by their loved ones or experienced by themselves; seeing the tributes they made (monuments, models, excavations, restorations, museums, books, and so much more)—both British and American—it all fills my heart, so much. Make no mistake, everything 467th is deeply meaningful to me.

But for now, I'm going to focus on just a few things that made me feel connected to my dad—because I have so many feelings about this entire trip, and there's too much to say; and because this is how I can share part of what makes the reunions so important for me personally.

On Tuesday, Sept. 19, at the Seething Control Tower Museum, I found myself face to face with a display of the outfit of an aircraft armorer: Cpl. Ben Everett, 448th Bomb Group (H), 715th Bomb Squadron. Like my dad, he loaded bombs and was a weapons mechanic. He donated his HBT overalls, belt, apron, and more to the museum. Seeing the life-like display really moved me; I felt like I was meeting my young dad. Upstairs, I found a display case with things Ben made in his spare time: rings and bracelets from English coins, and lighters and trinkets made from shell casings and Plexiglass scraps and the like. I really loved this chance to glimpse the life of someone who did the same job as Dad. I'm so grateful to Ben and to curator Pat Everson and all she has done for the museum.

On Wed., Sept. 20, at Site#6, Andy Wilkinson pointed out what was probably the foundation of the quartermaster's office, where Dad would most likely come to collect his pay each week. I spent a few minutes walking up the steps and across the slab, trying to imagine that. Thank you so much to the Pathfinders for all their amazing work on Site#6!

Then, on Thursday, Sept. 21, as we stood on the runway and listened to Trevor Hewitt describe some of the things they've found—I again felt that rush of personal connection as Trevor told us how one of the most frequent things they find is toothbrushes, property of the U.S. Army, used not for teeth but for cleaning the machine guns on B-24s. *This was something Dad did.* Since it seemed the toothbrushes are plentiful, I asked if it might be possible to get one—and Trevor said yes.

From the runway, Andy and others pointed out where the 790th hard stands would have been, where Dad would have loaded the bombs on the planes. (Dad told us stories about doing this by day and night, in heat and



Aircraft armorer display, Seething

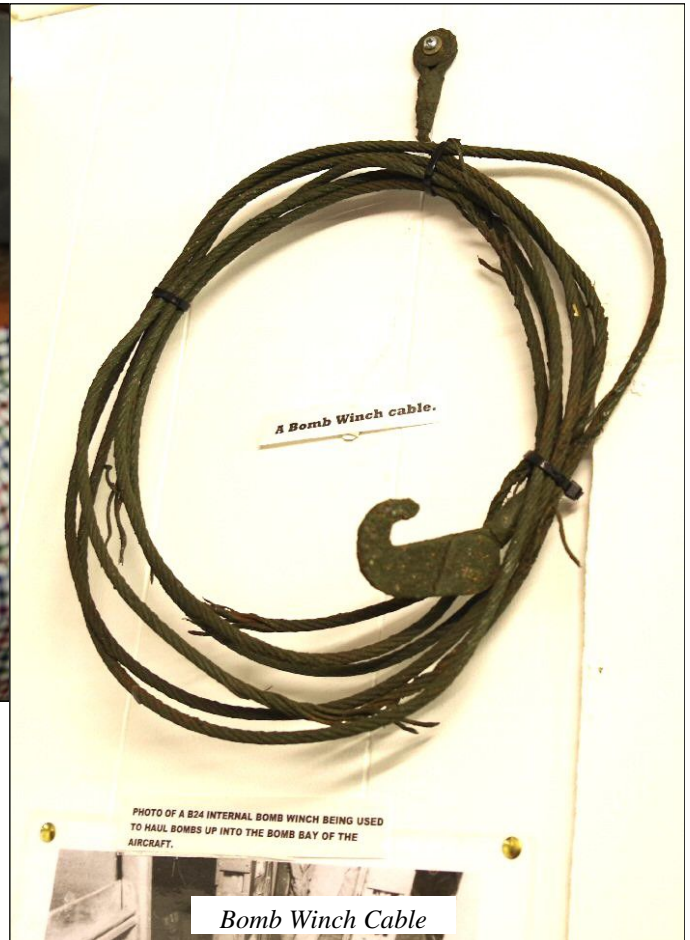
and cold. All the bombs under 500 lbs. had to be lifted just by two men with no equipment. Dad worried a lot about dropping one!)

Then I walked around the runway, following the map, and Peter Horne helped me locate the former Bomb Store (now as a grove of trees).

I just want to mention that Sept. 21 was the anniversary of Dad's death (my first reunion with the group in 2019 at Hartford took place over Dad's birthday on May 6). I appreciated being able to share some photos with my family that day, especially of the 467th Memorial Marker on the former Technical Site of the Rackheath base.

Later that night, Trevor took us on a tour of his wonderful New Farm Aviation Heritage Group Museum, focusing on the Rackheath Room. There, he was so kind as to give me two of these toothbrushes—one for me, one for Mom. So many emotions!

Trevor also took time out to show me how the bomb shackles worked, answering my questions and explaining a number of things about the bombs. He pointed out some of the other artifacts related to the bombs and Dad's job. I can't thank him enough. He's done such a marvelous job with this museum. I'm so grateful for all the loving hard work that went into the excavations and the museum—and for his dedication to preserving these stories. And—those toothbrushes.



On Fri., Sept. 22, at the Imperial War Museum Duxford, American Air Museum, in addition to the B-24 and other amazing exhibits, I got a good look at a halftrack towing bombs.

On my way out, I stopped at the Battle of Britain hanger. While I was looking at the exhibit of V-1 and V-2 flying bombs, I overheard a local couple discussing the destruction the buzz bombs wreaked. Since Dad talked about how scary it was to hear them go by overhead, I decided to ask them more about it. I learned the man had been a child during the war and seen the destruction firsthand. He and his wife asked what inspired my visit, so I mentioned my father. The man expressed so much gratitude. This was just one example of the deep connection between the 467th and the local residents that seemed to come up again and again—which I found so very touching. (I know others will be writing about some of those moving experiences as well.)

I appreciate beyond words the kindness and generosity of the volunteers in Norwich and the U.K. who are putting so much heart into preserving artifacts and places. It means everything that so many are working so hard to preserve the history of the Eighth Air Force and especially the 467th Bomb Group—through finding artifacts, restoring sites and buildings, preserving things and telling the story in museums and libraries; the reverence shared at Kirby Bedon and the American Cemetery; and so much more. People who are opening their hearts and homes and sharing their time and lives in amazing ways.

And that has always included for me our editor, Andy Wilkinson, who with Ivan Bernard planned this trip for us. I just can't thank them both enough. It was wonderful beyond all expectations. And thank you so much to everyone else who was involved in making this reunion so special, and to all those who help the 467th Bomb Group Association continue. I appreciate you all more than words can say.

Editor - thanks to Adele for much appreciated contribution and warm words. Ivan and I were delighted at how many were able to come over in September and experience the former base, history, sights, and preservation efforts made possible by so many in "ONE LAST LOOK".



Duxford display

Dodge WC56 Restoration Project

We bought news in the June 2019 POOP Newsletter of a restoration project to a Dodge WC56 Command Car firmly believed to have belonged to the 1229th Quartermaster Company Service Group, Avn, at Rackheath and most likely utilised by the C.O. Capt. Albert L. Touchette or Adjutant, Lt John H. Hicks. The restoration is now in the hands of war-bird owner, engineer, Maurice Hammond, at his private hangar facility located at Hardwick Airfield who kindly provided several images of the restoration progress. We briefly dropped by at the Hardwick facility during the September Reunion to view the project and look forward to following progress in the coming months.



Awaiting restoration



Side-panels cut and prepared



Engine newly dropped and secured into Dodge chassis

The 467th Post Exchange



1.



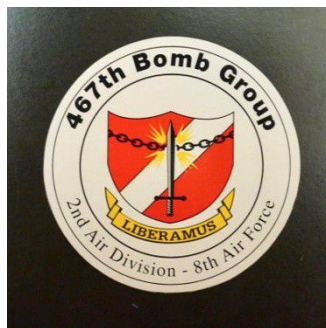
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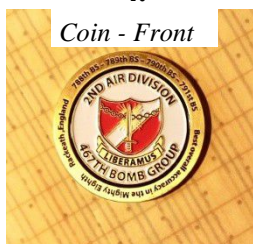
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5.



6.



Coin - Front

7.



Rear

The 467th Post Exchange

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ORDERS AND ENQUIRIES TO STEVE WATSON fswat49@icloud.com

Steve will advise shipping costs and availability

PAYMENT: Credit card/Paypal [HERE](#): or via check to "The 467th BG Association"
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ALSO AVAILABLE: The 467th Bombardment Group History by Allan Healy

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