



POOP from GROUP 467

VOL. 4 NO. 4

Station 145 APO 558

October 1, 1985

O F F I C I A L

Group Vice-President

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FROM YOUR VEEP

I again want to express my thanks for the honor of being elected Vice-President of the Group in its relation with the Second Air Division Association. We have had excellent Vice-Presidents of the Group, Ray Betcher, Jim Coffey, Ken Darney, Phillip Day and Vice LaRussa. I will try to do as well.

The 467th Group Vice-President rotated onto the 2 ADA Executive Committee for the next year and I will there, again, do my best for the Group and the 2 ADA.

As Jim Coffey will, later, cover our reunion and mini-reunion activities I will write of the mini-business reunion held on Saturday morning before the 2 ADA business meeting. Over 30 of the Group's 58 veterans attended. Topics of discussion were:

1. Whether to have a 467th Group Reunion in 1987? The 2 ADA will be reuniting in Norwich in May of that year and the same rationale of our Dayton Reunion can be cited, no Group reunion from July, 1986 to mid-late summer, 1988. Phillip Day offered to Chair the requirements at Shreveport, LA - Barksdale Air Force Base, present home of the 8th AF. A decision will be made at 2 ADA Reunion at Pheasant Run, St. Charles, IL, next July.

2. Phillip Day reported the Group had \$1200 in the Treasury. A collection was made at this meeting and \$240 in donations were made to help defray the cost of publishing POOP FROM GROUP mailings. He also reminded all that the 467th Bomb Group had a \$4000 Endowment to the Norwich Memorial Library Room, apart from the 2 ADA Memorial Trust. Interest income from the endowment is used to buy books for the Library, a note on this follows in the POOP.

3. Vince LaRussa reported ten of the Group had agreed to underwrite the cost of a second reprint of Allen Healy's The 467th Bombardment Group, to be repaid from profits anticipated from its sale.

4. LaRussa, for the 2 ADA Executive Committee, stated that the 467th VP would rotate onto the Executive Committee, for the coming year.

5. Joe Dzenowagis reported that his son had suggested the video taping of interviews of 467th veterans for their memories of their wartime activities. Joe was asked to Chair a committee to pursue this project. He is to report back to me. It was suggested that copies of the tapes could be sent to Norwich (Library) or to Rackheath.

6. Jack Stevens suggested that at future reunions each Group be assigned a Day Room for display of memorabilia and as a place to meet and visit. (This suggestion was passed on at the Executive Committee meeting on Sunday and was received favorably, an attempt will be made next year to so provide Group Day Rooms.) Jack also asked for direction as to where questions, materials, stories, etc, should be mailed. It was reported, by Jim Coffey, that in the last two years it had not made any difference, the VP and POOP, had forwarded to each other, as necessary, submittals received by them.

I am now custodian of the gravel, the mounted main runway piece and of the plaque, "Greetings to the 467th Bomb Group from Rackheath". Jeff Gregory has the Group photo album, principally Calvin Horn's donation. Send your photos to Jeff for inclusion in the album. Each of these items will be on display at our future reunions.

Sincerely, Dave

TREASURE'S REPORT

Cash on Hand - 07/01/85	\$ 1,076.88
Disbursements	
USPS - 850 x 22c Stamps	187.00
Printing - 850 POOP FROM GROUP	107.30
Computer Service	42.15
Telephone	12.65
	\$ 727.78

Receipts to 10/15/85	
Donations/Dues	\$ 341.00
McAfee Donation	240.00
Jeff Gregory - Cap Sales	45.00

Cash on Hand - 10/15/85	\$ 1,353.78
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Adam Soccio Memorial Fund

Cash on Hand - 07/01/85	\$ 70.00
Receipts	70.00
Cash on Hand - 10/15/85	\$ 140.00

FROM YOUR EX-VEEP

As my last (un)official act since turning over the Vice-Presidency of the Group, I would give you this report of the Group's Mini-Reunion at McAfee.

Fifty-eight veterans of the 467th and fifty-one family members and friends reunited at the Americana Hotel with the Second Air Division Association for its 38th Annual Reunion on September 5-7, 1985.

Our Mini-Reunion was held Thursday night following an Association cocktail party. After our dinner, we began with introductions: of David Hastings, our Honoray Member, and wife Jean; of my predecessors Ken Darney and Dot, Phillip Day and "Miss Cille", Vince LaRussa and Gloria; this followed by introduction of Jim and Mary Mahoney, attending their first reunion with us in several years. Then we introduced around the room (tables). There were several crew or unit reunions of two up to six, as in the case of my crew. After giving the plan and details of our trip the following day to West Point Military Academy, for the recognition of Academy graduates who served with the 2 ADA including our Al Shower and Fred Holdrege, and the Memorial Service, we had the following reports.

Vince LaRussa stated that he will have reprinted another 200 copies of Allen Healy's history of the 467th. To underwrite the cost, Vince requested and received ten pledges of \$400 each, from Chuck Bednarik, Arch Boisselle, Bill Carrico, Ken Darney, Roy Dettinger, Jim Johnston, Andy Kapi, Jim Mahoney, Jack Stevens and me. (See PX following.)

Phillip Day reported the Group funds were \$1130, enough for four more issues of POOP FROM GROUP. Also that the Adam Soccio Memorial Fund stood at \$70. (See Treasurers Report following.)

I reported that Andy DeBaisse and Al Muller had sold almost all of the "Witchcraft" color photos. From the profit of these sales, they were able to give David Hastings \$600 for an appropriate gift to Rackheath Village, possibly a bus stop enclosure for the school children and/or others of the village.

I showed a mounted Rackheath main runway piece, a desk ornament, and suggested the sale as a Group fund raiser. Details of it will be found in the PX section of this POOP.

After expressing my gratitude and appreciation for having been able to serve the Group this last two years as Group Vice-President to the 2 ADA, I called for the report of the Nominating Committee for new Group Officers.

Phillip Day, for the committee, placed in nomination J. David Swearingen for Group Vice-President and G. "Jeff" Gregory for Deputy Group Vice-President. There being no further nominations, Dave and Jeff were elected by acclamation.

As my last official act, then, I passed on to Dave the gravel and mounted runway piece, presented to me and the Group, by David Hastings at Palm Springs.

Dave Swearingen expressed his thanks to us for being selected to lead the Group this next year and asked the Group to show their appreciation for Dick Kingsley and myself for our two years of jobs well done. We are both most appreciative for their applause. Dave said he follows VPs that have done outstanding Group and Association duties and will try to do as well.

Dave then introduced Al Shower, reminding him and us that he (Dave) was one of 15 to 20 pilots from the Anti-Submarine Command who were a nucleus of the 467th. Al thanked everyone for coming and said, "You can see why I love to be here with you". (Many in introducing themselves earlier had recounted anecdotes about their wartime Commander Officer.) Also he told of how much he had enjoyed his visit with Chuck and Emma Bednarik prior to the reunion.

Following, David Hastings presented the Group with a plaque of appreciation from Rackheath Village (content following) and showed slides of Rackheath today, including the dedication of Wendover Road in the Industrial Park.

And lastly, at the banquet and dance following, on Saturday, the 1200+ attendees were seated by Groups and Chuck Bednarik, and famed Philadelphia Eagle, was the most sought after "photo opportunity" of the Association.

Again, my sincerest thanks for allowing me to serve the Group as Vice-President these last two years.

Jim

LAST POST

I have received notification of the death of the following:

John R. Healy	Julian Martin
Robert E. Hudock	Ronald D. Taylor
Louis J. Lomana	Philmore S. Zilbert
Clyde C. Mains	

May they go from Strength to Strength in the Life of Perfect Service in God's Heavenly Kingdom.

ROSTER ADDITIONS

Some new, some returned, some associates but each a welcome addition.

John Ashman	Johnstown, PA.
Jerome E. Baier	Baltimore, MD.
Owen K. Ball	Evergreen, CO.
John A. Balog	Monroe, CT.
Richard Barton	Eden, NY.
Ernest Beaseley	Valparaiso, FL.
Robert Brancato	Rochester, NY.
Carl L. Brown	Turnesville, NJ.
Charles T. Cates	Benton, AR.
Edgar S. Collins	Pawley Island, SC.
Walter G. Colvin	Portland, OR.
Ray Fall	Jackson, MS.
Jacob E. Gair	Kensington, MD.
Don R. Granneman	Waterloo, IA.
Albert Grass	Rocky River, OH.
S. T. Gray, Jr.	New Augusta, MS.
Albert L. Hauson	Woodbridge, NJ.
Irene G. Heacock-A	Amherst, NJ.
Gerald H. Hesselgesser	Gering, NE.
John Howe	Portland, OR.
Charles E. Kagy	Los Angeles, CA.
Col. Arthur R. Kirsis	Dedham, MA.
Kathleen Lanigan-A	Waterloo, IA.
James T. Mitchell	Denver, CO.
Joseph Mulheran	Edina, MN.
Walter J. Mundy	Downey, CA.
Robert Myers	Lancaster, PA.
Jack J. Pilgram	Minneapolis, MN.
Anita Pineapple-A	New York, NY.
Ross A. Rainwater-A	Lawrenceville, GA.
Sidney F. Repa	Racine, WI.
John Repola	Boston, MA.
Ben Rosner	Woodhaven, NY.
Carl Schott	Oakland, CA.
Charles H. Shinn	Englewood, CO.
Charles J. Shy	Jersey City, NJ.
Emmet F. Spencer, Jr.	South Pasadena, CA.
Donna Thompson-A	Newalla, OK.
Virgil Thompson-A	Lima, OH.
Albert W. Titus, Jr.	Morgantown, WV.
Gordon F. Tucker	Ludlow, VT.
A. P. Wheelock	Regina, Sask, Canada

If you correspond with anyone of the 467th, please send me their name(s), we can double the roster with your cooperation. A 14¢ post card and a few minutes of your time. PLEASE!

FOUND SOULS - Gerald T. Stevens - Columbus, OH. Above from Walt Bandlow who has cleared up six Lost Souls in his part of the country. The rest of you, help me with the Lost Souls in this and previous additions of POOP.

LOST SOULS

Marvin Connock	Miami, FL.
Norval V. Cunningham	Kenosha, WI.
William R. Geyer	Detroit, MI.
Edward H. Hagene	Overland, MO.
T. H. Jackson	Los Banos, CA.
John K. Ross	Memphis, TN.
Leonard J. Tormey	Houston, TX.
Joseph T. Vesely	Downers Grove, IL.
B. J. Williamson	Malakoff, TX.
Harry J. Witkowski	Stevens Point, NC.

You who live in or near the above cities and towns, make inquiry of the above and see that they are returned to the roster. Don't put it off, do so as soon as possible. We don't want to lose anyone.

BITS AND PIECES

Mail fell off somewhat after publication of POOP VOL 4, NO. 3, July 1, 1985. I received only 46 letters and cards, I've answered 33 with a letter, card or note on POOP, sent in answer. Have a few more requiring answer, bear with me.

To correct the computerized roster used to record our membership, print our mailing labels took, this quarter, 61 cards, 44 to add new names, 8 to change or correct addresses and unfortunately 9 to remove the deceased and those who have moved without giving me a new address.

Colonel Shower, at McAfee, passed out reproductions of STATION INSTRUCTIONS, dated 15 March 1944. It was very interesting reading. Getting my attention was the statement about the coal and coke ration, 56 lbs per man per week, but only 112 lbs per week for each stove located in billets, 16 lbs per day. No wonder we burned St. Edwards woods, oil, paraffin impregnated anything. Lay the fire at night, leave the "Moon Beam Portable" stove door open, lay in bed in the morning and squirt lighter fluid across the floor and into the open door, light it, viola!, the stove was lighted without getting out of bed.

A letter from Don (Doc) Granneman, Radio Operator in 789 (Lominack's crew). Flew thirty-one in "Homeward Bound" and "Silver Streak". Send me the crew names Doc, I may have them on the roster or at least, a 1945 address starting point to find them.

Bill Clancy, 492nd VP and 467th veteran, is requesting 2 ADA to have the 492nd to reunion with us in the future. The 492nd ties are much closer than where they have been "joined" to another Group at reunions in the past.

From Jack Stevens' letter, I believe we have found a couple of Rufas Stevens' crew, Ernest Beaseley, CoPilot and Walter H. Mitchell, Bombardier. Jack writes of him as Steve and says "I think Steve had a requirement that everyone on his crew had to be from Georgia". Now Rufas' AC, 791st, was "Lil Peach", for his wife Lil, and Georgia peach I assume. My crew flew our first 11 missions in "Lil Peach" until transferred to the 789th. "Lil Peach" finished the war, I thought she had been returned to the ZI but recent information from England has her broken up over there on June 12, 1945. Does anyone know who her crew chief was? Well remembered was (is) the fact that "Lil Peach" was used to test a theory of extended engine time. When we flew her in Aug-Oct, '44, she had her four original engines, well worn, loose as a goose. They rattled and clattered but had all the power needed and very good gas consumption. I have a 24" x 36" oil painting of "Lil Peach" hanging in my office. It brings many comments. Walter, Jack, if you were of Rufas' crew, I will be glad to send you a color photo of the picture.

PX

GOOD NEWS - Allen Healy's The 467th Bombardment Group is being reprinted. Vince LaRussa, 97 Grayton Rd., Tonawanda, NY, 14150, has arranged for 300 additional copies to be available for delivery about November 15. Send him \$30, which covers cost of book and mailing, for your personal copy of this informative and most interesting recount of the 467th from Wendover to the Group's return to the ZI.

Mounted Main Runway Pieces - Jim Coffey, 39 Hardscrabble Hill, Chappaqua, NY, 10514, has concrete pieces of the Rackheath main runway mounted on a 4 1/2" x 7" piece of chamfered, tung oil finished black walnut. Room for your ribbons, wings, other mementoes. Send him a \$25 donation for post paid delivery, a nice Christmas present to yourself. Money back guarantee, with profits going to the Group Treasury.

Vince LaRussa wrote "I have shown the mounted piece of N/S runway to everyone in sight and it never fails to elicit awe from one and all, and I'm sure it will continue to amaze everyone that it is possible to have a "solid" piece of a part of my life. People who see it are pleased that I have a link with the past". Jim also has high quality color reproductions of the 200 Mission Party souvenir that he will send those who write him for them. Send a donation to cover cost of reproduction and mailing.

Liberator Album - Volume 3 featuring the 96th Combat Wing, the 458th, 466th and 467th Bombardment Groups, by Tony North, is available for \$10 from Jack Stevens, 3526 Larga Circle, San Diego, CA. 92110. An interesting, informative addition to your memorabilia.

Patches and Plaques - are still available from Phillip Day. Just state when you send in dues/donations to the POOP FROM GROUP whether you would like to have either or both.

SECOND AIR DIVISION MEMBERSHIP - We can't seem to get off of our 400-425 number in the 2 ADA. Please send your \$10 to join or rejoin to Evelyn Cohen, 06-410 Delair Landing Road, Philadelphia, PA, 19114. We need you - You will find it well worthwhile.

REUNION ATTENDEES

Attendees at the Second Air Division Reunion at McAfee from the 467th Bomb Group are listed below, an excellent turnout. We missed you who were not there, you missed a good reunion, a great Group Mini-Reunion. I hope I have included everyone's name who was there, if not, my apologies and send me a note so I can include it in the next POOP.

Ralph & Mary Jane Anderson	Fred & Jane Holdrege
Chuck & Emma Bednarik	Jim & Audrey Johnston
Ray, Lucy & Jonathon Bickel	Andy & Anna Kapi
Archie & Helen Boisselle	Sid & Beatrice Katz
Bill & Emily Carrico	Floyd & Eleanor Kingsley
George & Katherine Church	Vince & Gloria LaRussa
Rose & Jim, Jr. Ciancitto	Kay Lanigan
Jim & Joan Coffey	Ben LePour
George & May Condry	Joe Long
Art Corn	Jim & Mary Mahoney
Ken & Dot Darney	Al & Teresa Muller
Phillip & Cille Day	Robert Myers
Tony & JoAnn DeBiasse	Will & Cecily Noden
Roy Dettinger	Earle & Aline Page
Bill & Vernice Dillon	L. T. & Ruth Piland
Les, Josephine & Jane Dining	Floyd & Anne Pugh
Howard & Anne Dye	Fred & Audrey Sammetinger
Joe & Helen Dzenowagis	Fred & Margerite Segalla
Charlie Finn	Charlie & Ruth Serwitz
Leonard & Alice Fox	Carl & Mildred Shaut
Jeff & Terry Gregory	Al Shower
Welden & Helen Gruver	Oliver & Dorothy Simmons
Joe & Florence Haenn	Bill & Shirley Smith
Dale & Eileen Hamilton	Jack & Lucille Stevens
Duffy & Frances Hannafey	Jack & Anna Stratton
Craig & Susan Harrington	Dave & Jackie Swearingen
David & Jean Hastings	Allan Tucci
Bill & Alice Hayes	Art & Ada Wicks
John & Elsie Hilton	Forrest & Jeanne Wilson

ORDER YOUR COPIES OF ALLEN HEALY'S "THE 467TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP SEPTEMBER 1943-JUNE 1945" FROM VINCE LARUSSA AT \$30 EACH. DELIVERY MID-NOVEMBER 1 97 GRAYTON ROAD, TONAWANDA, NY 14150

ATTENTION BOMBARDIERS

Not many people realize that World War II gave birth to a flying profession that today is practically non-existent. Bombardiering, or bomb aiming as some choose to refer to this combat crew function, exists only weakly today as a deep-hidden additional duty of the navigator in the USAF's highly trained bomber force. Even with a concession that "bombs are dropped" from today's aircraft, there is little or no visual sighting used in the process. Rader pulses and electronic wizardry poke unseen holes in the sky or compute and execute weapon release miles from a target, whereas the success of the bomb drop in the 1940s depended primarily upon the eye-to-hand coordination and skill of the bombardier over the target!

During WWII there were some 20,000 young men trained as bombardiers at fourteen Army Air Fields scattered primarily throughout the southwest and south.

Today there is an association of bomb-aimers of WWII, known as BOMBARDIERS, INC., who seek to unite those who performed bombardiering. Nearly 1,800 have been contacted.

Notwithstanding heavy attrition of the force in WWII and later combat, these remains a considerable number of non-contacted bombardiers who are being sought.

Bombardiers, Inc., held its first reunion in April, 1985, at Midland, Texas, where once operated the largest bombardier training school of the '40s. The next reunion is planned for March 26-29, 1987, in San Antonio, Texas, at the Riverwalk Marriott Hotel.

All bombardiers are urged to contact the organization at Box 254, Eagle Harbor, MI 49951, or by calling 601/289-4440. Veterans of WWII combat crews are asked to contact their crew bombardier and pass on this contact information.

ATTENTION - FLYING CONTROL PERSONNEL

Lou Dubrow (446th Beachball), 1189 Galesmoore Court, Westlake Village, CA, 91361 is starting "The Flying Control Historical Group" and would appreciate hearing from any 467th - Decktray Flying Control Personnel. His telephone number is 805-497-1964.

THE RACKHEATH GREETINGS PLAQUE

David Hastings brought Greetings From Rackheath to the Group Mini-Reunion at McAfee. We have been unable to procure a picture of it suitable for reproduction in POOP but I will describe it here and we will continue to try to find a way to reproduce it for POOP.

On a gold colored background, matted and framed are the following:

In the upper left hand corner is a Liberator in silver on a blue background. In the upper right corner is a globe like map with the 8th AF symbol centered over England. Between these two is printed -

Greetings To The 467th Bomb Group

Below this is a B-24, silver (NMF), Buzz No. 573, Fuselage Code 6A (789th BS), tail letter L with a bar above it, on the white diagonal of the red tail surface.

Below this is printed:

Presented By Jean and David Hastings

At the 38th Annual Convention of the 2nd Air Division Association McAfee, New Jersey, September, 1985

WE WILL ALWAYS REMEMBER YOU

Centered below the above is the famous picture of the Golden Gates (1944). To the left of this is photo of The Rackheath Village Sign (1985) and to the right is a photo of the 467th Memorial Plaque at the base of the Village Sign with the Memorial Bench in the background (1985). Finishing out all of the above, the Second Air Division Association symbol is placed in each lower corner.

This is a very handsome plaque, well balanced in presentation, incorporating the past and the present, a most welcome addition to our Group Memorabilia. We sincerely thank Jean and David and all of our friends at Rackheath for this beautiful gift.

ORDNANCE RECOGNITION

Ordnance personnel, bomb loaders, anyone who had anything to do with getting the 467ths bombs loaded in the bomb dump, or onto trailers or whatever for transporting to and loading the aircraft, you have been recognized and honored by a plaque, conceived and constructed by Peter E. Bond and Charles Thomas Dungar of Norwich and Rackheath.

The 467th bomb dump was north of the center of the field, west of the N-S runway flight path and north of the 789th hardstands along the perimeter track. (Having worked in the ordnance industry for a few years when the oil patch had gone to hell and Vietnam was at its height, I believe the USAAF directives for distances, radii, blast walls, separation, etc, must have been much less stringent than those I had to comply with.) In any event, surrounding our Rackheath bomb dump hardstandings were brick walls, 3, 4, 5 feet high, backed up by earth mounds as blast walls, and evenly spaced along these walls were large metal retaining rings forged into an "eye" that was anchored in the retaining walls. It is assumed these rings served as one anchor point for a system designed to keep stacked ordnance from collapsing, although in the few pictures I have seen of bomb dumps, such a system is not in evidence.

Peter and Tommy salvaged one of the ring-eye combinations from the bomb dump and used it as the central focus point of a handsome plaque which I have just received.

On a shield shaped, chamfered, stained wood piece, 10 inches high by 8 inches wide, they have mounted the eye slightly above center with the ring hanging down, anchored in that position by an inconspicuous support. There are four brass engraved plates and three painted symbols on the plaque, placed so.

467TH BOMB CROUP (H)

Station 145
The "Aggies"

Rackheath
England

EYE

White on Red
Tail Fin

White Block P
on Black Circle

RING

Liberamus Shield

Centered behind

The Ring

Genuine Retaining Ring

From The Bomb Dump

Peter, as I have written you before, is probably the most knowledgeable person about Rackheath that you will find. He has over the last several years thoroughly studied the drawings associated with construction of the base, has spent innumerable hours walking over the area, identifying sites, buildings, foundations and photographing all that he finds. He has read all available of the 467th at Rackheath and has talked to, and continues to talk to, anyone of the area who remember us there, who can add anything to his continuing study of the area. All this will lead to, soon I hope, publication of a book concerning the area, the base and the 467ths use of it. And wholly behind his endeavor is his wife, Marlene, completely and unstintingly supportive of his work.

I do not know too much of Tommy, I met him in Norwich in 83 and know him to be knowledgeable of Rackheath, in fact he has escorted a few of you around the base area.

Their addresses are:

Peter E. Bond
1 Markham Tower
Bowers Ave.
Norwich NR3 2PX England

Thomas Dungar
7 Sir Edward Stracy Rd.
Rackheath NR 13 6PP
Norfolk, England

Write them if you plan to visit Rackheath. They can give you a tour of the area that will make your visit so much more enjoyable and fulfilling.

Thanks so much, Tommy and Peter, for this attractive memento. We will have it at our reunions for all to see.

NAME: _____
Last First Middle
SQD(s): _____ DATES: _____ TO _____
Mo-Yr Mo-Yr
ADDRESS: _____
CITY: _____ ST: _____ ZIP: _____
SPOUSE: _____
DUTY: _____
REMARKS: _____

Please type or print info requested on 3" x 5" form to left. Trim to line and mail to POOP for locator card up date. Glue to post card if desired.

Use two letter state abbreviation.

If associate, not veteran, show name of veteran here.

Give crew pilot, crew chief or other identity following duty assignment. Any info you wish to send along that will help the Group community or communications.

3" x 5" Trim Line

467th ENDOWMENT FUND

An Endowment of \$4000 was established by the Group at our Dayton Reunion, to be administered by the Memorial Library Trust, the interest from the endowment fund to be used to purchase books. Mr. Colin Sleath, Deputy Divisional Librarian reports that fourteen books for the library have been purchased for the year 1985/86. Authors and titles ranged from Stephen Brook, Travels Through Texas to William Saroyan, The New Saroyan Reader.

This endowment is our Group's permanent legacy to Norfolk County and we each can be extremely proud that we are able to provide, in perpetuity, our thanks to our allies and friends of those years 40 years ago, of the present and of the future.

The Story of The Lonesome Chicken -

Jeff Gregory - 467th Bomb Group

Occasionally, because we both live in the Dallas area, I have lunch with Jordan Uttal. He always asks me to write an article for the Journal. Despite my protestations that nothing exciting happened to me worthy of an article, he persists. So Jordan, here is the story of the "Lonesome Chicken".

After months of training and practice as a bombardier, I had acquired a reputation as a lover and drinker, but never had I dropped bombs of my own. I was approaching the end of my tour and the end of the war in a state of frustration. I had flown deputy lead many times but never had been called on to assume the lead.

Thus when we took off one morning for Hitzacker, Germany, again as deputy lead, I felt time was running out. It was nearly my last mission.

Then out of the blue, the cards fell into place. Flying with Bob Myers, pilot, and Fincher Neal, copilot, we received a call reporting a malfunction on the lead ship. We promptly chugged up to the lead position. Oh Boy! At Last!

To set the scene, the target, Hitzacker, was on the north bank of the Elbe River just S. E. of Hamburg. The aiming point was in the center of a wooded area on the bank of the river. As luck would have it, we were hampered by a 7/10 - 8/10 cloud cover. As we turned toward the target area, I caught a glimpse of an unusual bend in the Elbe which I judged to be adjacent to the target (which at this point I couldn't see). I rapidly "killed" my course and rate on the river bend and prayed for a break in the clouds.

Suddenly my concentration was broken by a call from Myers. "Gregory - do you know where you're going?" "Certainly I know where I'm going - Why?" "Because the rest of the formations are heading off to the left at about 450 from our course" came the reply. There was a deafening silence. "Oh My God" - I looked and sure enough - what appeared to be the whole 8th Air Force was heading off to the left. Frantically I clawed at my maps and target photos. My head felt like it was on a swivel. Was I right or terribly wrong? There was that damned bend in the river again. One final look at the photos. "Bob, I'm staying on course, I think I'm right." "You'd better be," came the apprehensive reply. I checked the rest of the formation again. They hadn't altered course and neither had I.

The next few minutes were absolutely the loneliest of my life. Ever!! I sat there for endless minutes with my heart in my mouth.

Then the prayed for break in the clouds - and there it was - the cotton picking target in all its glory. The most beautiful patch of woods I've ever seen.

I can remember laughing like an idiot as I placed my eye to the sight. It was then I turned Chicken. I had the target dead to rights. I couldn't miss! I looked at the target, and then at the river. And then the river again. If I'm short I'll hit the water. No way was I going to drop my only bombs of the war into the Elbe. At the last possible moment I moved my rate hair (line) a tad over the aiming point. Bombs away - white knuckle time.

Well, to make a long story short, I hit exactly where I aimed. If I had only had faith, but no, I chickened out and lost a perfect strike.

However, these bombs were mine - all mine. I settled back for the ride home to Rackheath with a satisfied grin on my face, which remained there until Col. Shower's debriefing. But that's another story.

A Tom Swint Letter

From Tom Swint, 1316 NE 63 Street, Seattle, WA, 98115. Lots of humor, I enjoyed it, I hope you will also. Tom before retirement, wrote for a Seattle newspaper.

Dear Phil,

Sometime in February, this year, Al Ostrom, a former B-17 tailgunner and retired sports writer, called me and asked my help in organizing a super B-17 group reunion in Seattle, July 20-27, to celebrate the 50th anniversary of Boeing rollout in 1935. I explained that I had flown in the OTHER bomber, the Bee-two-four. From time to time Al would call back all revved up (pulling 40 inches of memory). I would un-huh along and comiserate, wishing he wouldn't interrupt my cable-TV movie.

As the time drew closer, Boeing got into the act in connection with dedication of its Museum of Flight. Boeing agreed to spring for lunch if 1,000 of Al's old fly boys showed up. Al said he had promises from 22 B-17 BG's. He expected maybe 3,000 guys and wives would show up. Two months from R-Day and he expected maybe 6,000. Yeah, Al. Would I be guest speaker to his 398th at the Sheraton - maybe 400 guy and gals. He wanted to hear the saga of Montefeldt's old 525 from Wendover to Herrington, KS, to West Palm, to losing an engine near Belem, Brazil, another engine at Forteleza, leaving the radio bird out and hanging up on the mat at Dakar, French West Africa, late start from Marakech, Morocco, and being shot down over France with crash landing at Exeter RAF station.

B-17 crews love to hear about B-24 misfortunes.

On July 20, Al and I had lunch and ran thru his schedule. I was to speak July 25 to 398th at Sheraton Hotel. Al was estatic. He now projected 18 BG's and 10,000 fly boys in Seattle. Two old B-17s were in town and a couple of fighter planes. I bailed out of Al's euphoria Saturday morning and nervously tried to recall Co-pilot Jessup's first name. I really dreaded facing 500 tipsy crew members of the celebrated grenade carriers.

On Thursday night, July 25, I mingled with Al's old bomb group. Two stiff screwdrivers didn't calm me down. As we filed into the main ballroom, Al said 22 BG's were holding reunions in Greater Seattle. Boeing hit the panic button, their offer of luncheon for 1,000 at the flight museum had now stretched to box lunches for 10,000 with Boeing renting all buses in town to get the guys and their wives from downtown Seattle to Boeing Field and the Museum of Flight. I declined a free lunch because the mob scene would delay me and I had to attend funeral of a close friend same afternoon.

I was as nervous as a whore in church but the speech went OK. Afterwards a former B-17 pilot told me he always welcomed the sight of B-24s because the Luftwaffe preferred to pounce on B-24s. There were about 1,000 wives and guys at the 398th reunion banquet and the filet mignon dinner was a lot better than bull beef, orange marmalade and powdered eggs, of ETO fame.

Some random thoughts: Al Ostrom is a human dynamo and his conn job got Boeing to get behind the reunion of 8th Air Force crews. Personally I dislike Boeing and its management for what they have done to Seattle. They used to tell us at the paper that they cared less about local newspaper coverage because all our subscribers worked at Boeing; they courted newspapers read by airline exec's. But Al knew the B-17 anniversary was a corporate natural.

I showed Al a copy of "Poop From Group" and he was impressed. He took a copy to the 398th business meeting and Col. Bill Comstock of 398th Assoc. said he wished they had a newspaper half as good.

My wife has heard all my "flat of my back at 20,000 ft." stories so many times she elected to stay home and I went solo to 398th banquet. They did a singalong of "Wild Blue Yonder" clean version, "Elmers Tune", "White Cliffs Of Dover" and "Tennessee Waltz". I reminded the pianist (A former USO gal whose guy bought it at Schweinfurt) that Tennessee Waltz was 1950s not WWII. She said it was for Col. Comstock's wife from Memphis. She and I sat together and she cried when I told her Capt. Monefeldt died flying weather P-47s out of Ipswich.

Not a one of my three kids ever asked what I did in the big war. My younger daughter (30 year old nurse) was surprised that I was guest speaker. "I never knew you flew in a B-17. I thought you were in Patton's Third Army." I was but that's another yarn.

Regards, Tom

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