

GROUP



\*\*\* We were the 1st, and still serving \*\*\*

WING



## SECOND BOMBARDMENT ASSOCIATION

NEWSLETTER

*"Second to None"*



Volume 21, No. 1

January 2005



### President's Corner

#### Tell Your Story

One of my close friends in Denver has lived with Alzheimers almost four years. His wife and family are thankful that he had the energy, capacity and foresight to sit down and write his WWII memories. His was not an unusual story but it told of a time when ordinary men were doing extraordinary things, a recurring theme in American history. He had no experience as a writer and yet his stories and anecdotes resonate with his humor, self-deprecation and his personality.

Our e-mail sees a constant flow of inquiries from family: brothers, sisters, children, nephews, relatives of our Second Bomb airmen...all wanting to know something about their deceased veteran relative. My take is that there is some distress coming through..."Why don't I (we) know more about Dad (grandpa, uncle). He did not tell us about his war service. Can you help us find his service record? Do you have any photos of him in uniform?"

Where is this going? You and thousands like you, are the repositories of great history, history that is important to your children, grandchildren, siblings and their offspring. Your stories are interesting and meaningful.

Well yes, but how do I do it? A little bit at a time. Take it in small steps. Do you remember signing up or being drafted? Jot down a note or two and put it in a manila folder. Think about all the steps you took and places you were trained, leaves you enjoyed. Boot camp, position training, being integrated into your unit or crew.

Recall how you got to North Africa or to Foggia. What were the living conditions, the food

you ate, bunk arrangements, friendships made, losing a comrade, visiting a USO, goofing on the beach at Manfredonia. Of course, add in the adventures, aerial exploits and anecdotes from combat missions. Finally, that long wonderful trip back to the states to loved ones.

Also, keep in mind that Oral histories are valid and simple to do. This spring we plan to put in place a program to bring this option to you. Regardless, if you want to record your story, you are not alone. Writing it down is the sure way to pass on your legacy. None of us will leave behind anything more valuable.

*Loy Dickinson*

### The View from the Farm

A long difficult national election has occupied the country for most of the year 2004. I expect most, like me, are pleased the campaigns are over.

Some may disagree, but I am pleased with the outcome. We have a strong President, who has surrounded his office with people who know what to do and how to do it.

Most members of the Second Bombardment Association have military service in their backgrounds and are very interested in how the present military forces operate and how they are treated. During some recent times our military personnel have not been well treated by those in high command. My heart is warmed by the treatment of respect the present Commander in Chief shows for them and the respect of the nation for those in the areas of combat and for their loved ones at home.

The membership of the association continues slowly to decline as many members reach the

#### Please retain your issue of the 2nd Bomb Roster

Additions, changes and deletions will be in the form of supplements in the next few newsletters.

Due to dwindling resources, the decision has been made that the next full roster will be published along with the July 2006 Newsletter.



age when the body tells us it has been around long enough. Nevertheless, we also continue to gain new members (seven new for this issue). Some of them are of the younger generations, but others are just finding out about the association. If you know of someone who was in the 2nd, encourage them to join with us.

The 2005 reunion promises to be a great time in the life of the association. Dick Radtke, a tireless worker in the area of reunion planning, has been at it with a strong will. We will gather in St. Louis and have a good time. I hope everyone who can possibly get there, will. If you don't come, you will miss a great time with a great gang. St. Louis is a central location and a great place for a reunion. Warm up the old Leer Jet, camper, bicycle, motorcycle, row boat, river steamer, mini-van or credit card and plan to be there.

**Be Sure to Notice:** In order to save some of your association dollars, the roster will be mailed to you only every other year. You can keep it up to date by referring to the newsletter where all address changes, new members and deaths are listed. The president or news editor will always have current information and may be contacted by e-mail, post office or telephone.

Dave Carlock does an outstanding job keeping the 2nd Bomb Association website up to date with stories and information about the association. Be sure to log onto the website at [www.2ndbomb-group.org](http://www.2ndbomb-group.org).

May 2005 will mark 60 years since the end of "our" war. Do you remember the great gladness and celebration of that time? I will never forget the day, April 29, 1945 when the tanks of the 14th Armored Division rolled up to the POW camp at Mooseberg Germany and we were *free at last*.

Those remaining from the Stalag Luft III "Kriegies" will meet, probably for the last time, in Tucson, AZ on April 29, 2005; 60 years after that wonderful day.

Be sure to keep your thoughts and prayers going to the men and women (and those who wait for them at home) who are in the combat areas of the world protecting our nation, our freedom and our way of life. Remember when we were there and how important it was for us to have the support of our families and our fellow citizens.

Keep those cards and letters coming with your stories and the information about your changes of address or other changes. We want to keep everything up to date.

Thanks for being as good an association as you were a bomb group.

*Earl Martin, editor*

## Edwin S. Hodges



After considerable ill health during the last two years, Ed Hodges died July 20, 2004. He will be missed by members of the 2nd Bomb Association and all who knew him.

Ed joined the 96th Squadron as maintenance officer near the end of the war and served with the squadron until it was returned to the U.S. He remained for some time with the Army of Occupation.

Ed became a member of the 2nd Bomb Association during its early organization days and served as an officer of the association during much of the life of the association. He will be best remembered as the President during 1998-1999.

As President, as in all things he did, Ed handled the job well and brought the organization along with precision.

With Jean, his faithful wife and his family, we will miss Ed. We thank him for the job he did for the organization and for the representative life he lived.

## Our Business Addresses

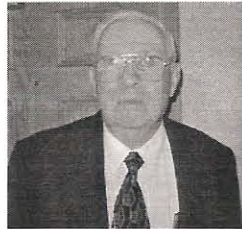
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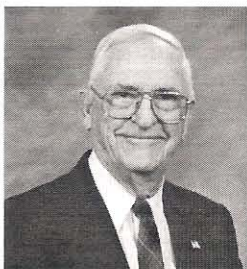


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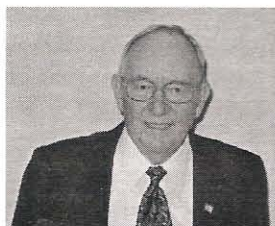
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 USAF .....USAF.com



## In Memorium

John E. Constance, 96th Sq.

March 12, 2004

Arthur R. Gustufson, 20th Sq.

Edwin (Ed) Hodges, 96th Sq.

July 20, 2004

Zebulon Vance Jackson, 429th Sq.

Feb. 10, 2004

David G. Mitchell, 49th Sq.

May 11, 2004

Glen Rimmele

2003

George H. Stuart, 49th Sq.

February 9, 2003

Russell L. Waldron, 49th Sq.

May 11, 2004

## Letters

From Milt Silver:

In the 2004 roster, Herbert Lazarus is not listed. The last time we talked he was in poor health and living in Venice, FL. The 2003 roster showed him in Northville, MI; but no phone number. Can you find him?

He was my navigator, but we never flew together in combat. We lost our pilot, Bohannon, radio man Harrington, ball turret Pullis on mission 346. It was their first. We never flew as a crew.

*Editor's note:* The last information we received on Lazarus was "returned no address." Anyone have further information?

From Audrey Van Ackeren:

I just read the latest 2nd Bombardment newsletter. I am the daughter of John E. Constance, one of your members who served in WWII. John passed away on March 12, 2004. I felt compelled to write not only to inform you so you would not have to continue the newsletter, but also to let you and other association members know that my Dad told numerous stories of his time in Italy and Africa. Serving his country was something he wanted to do. I felt his passion when he would tell of one of our planes that was hit on one of the missions. He would tell everyone that he doesn't know how the plane made it back to base with a huge hole next to the engine. He would end the story with, "I have a

picture of it somewhere." As I was going through his things I found not only the picture of the plane but countless pictures of soldiers in formation, air views and raids, friends and proof of another of his favorite; the day he stood next to Winston Churchill. There it was; a picture of Winston Churchill. I am always amazed that those types of situations just happened back then. I believe that it was a time and place in history that will never be repeated again. He loved reading the newsletter and finding out what happened to old buddies. Stories that took him back to 1942. Reading the newsletter would always bring back a memory and always a story.

My dad never talked much about the horror of war but I always knew that it was a part that made the bond even stronger between men and women who served. Someday his grandchildren and great grandchildren will read it and although I will not have the same passion when I tell them the stories, I hope I can pass along the pride and courage that he gave to me. And one day they will find the picture of the plane, the old friends and yes, even Winston Churchill.

I guess I am writing to make closure with something I know was dear to my dad. And I know he would say thank you to the 2nd Bombardment Association.

*Editor's note:* Thanks, Audrey, for an inspiring letter.

## Tieniber Journal

Benedict Tieniber flew as engineer gunner on the crew of George Verbruggen. He kept a journal of all the 40 missions he flew. In the July issue of the newsletter, we ran his journal concerning the first 20 missions. In this issue, we have the rest of the journal ending with the loss of the crew on the famous Steyr, Austria mission, Feb. 24, 1944.

We have copied from T/Sgt's writing as accurately as possible. Only some of the punctuation has been changed.

We are indebted to Melody Tieniber Sciacca who provided the journal of her father for us.

*Editor's note:* Apparently Benedict numbered the last mission 41 when it should have been numbered 40.

Italy, Foggia

Mission XXI -Target, field, Poggibonsi - M/Y Northern Italy.

Take off 10:20 Landed 15:30. 13:24 bombs away. We went on a separate bomb run on an air field, but bombardier missed it. We got back into formation. Before target we flew directly over an airdrome. Got accurate flak and plenty of it. We got 40 big holes



in ship. One flak hit upper turret I was in. Put 3 deep scratches in the heavy metal. Saw one fighter but he didn't bother us. In air 6 hrs 10 min. Flew 628, Verbruggen. January 15, 1944 Had 1,000 lb bombs, 6 of them.

Italy, Foggia

Mission XXII - Target Vellaorba A/D, Northern Italy  
Take off 13:16. January 16, 1944. 408 Verbruggen. In air 5 hrs, 40 min. Had 500 lb bombs, 12 of them. Got little flak, but way off. One fighter way off. But he didn't bother us.

Italy, Foggia

Mission XXIII - Target Prato, RR yard, Northern Italy near Florence.  
Take off 09:00 landed 14:35. Bombs away 12:38 - 408 Verbruggen. Many flak - only when passing the front line. No fighters. Only a few, but they didn't bother us. P-38s escort and P-47s. January 17, 1944. Time in air 5 hrs 35 min. 500 lb bombs, 12 of them.

Italy, Foggia

Mission XXIV - Target Certaldo - M/yds & Bridge in Northern Italy  
Take off 10:45 landed 16:15. bombs away 13:38. 408 Verbruggen. Had P-38 escort. No flak, no fighters. January 18, 1944. Had 500 lb bombs, 12 of them. Time in air 5 hrs 30 min. Milk run.

Italy, Foggia

Mission XXV, 4th Oak Leaf Cluster - Air Medal  
Target - Ciampino, airdrome, near Rome, Italy  
Take off 09:30 landed 14:25. Bombs away 12:38 - 23,000 feet alt. Had flak, Med. - no fighters. P-38 and P-47 escort. Had frag bombs (144). 408 Verbruggen, January 19, 1944. Time in air 4 hrs 55 min.

Italy, Foggia

Mission XXVI - Target Ciampino, airdrome, near Rome, Italy  
Take off 10:15 landed 14:35. bombs away 12:27 - 18,000 alt. Verbruggen - 408 - had 500 lb bombs, 12. January 20, 1944. No flak or fighters - milk run. Time in air 4 hrs 20 min.

Italy, Foggia

Mission XXVII - Target, Portocivitanova M/Y Italy. Verbruggen - 108. Bombing alt. 19,600 Bombs away 12:48. January 21, 1944. No escort. In air 4 hrs. Milk run - 500 lbs bombs. 12.

Italy, Foggia

Mission XXVIII - Target Siena, M/Y  
Take off 09:35 - landed 14:30. Bombs away - 12:38 1/2 - 19,300 alt. 408 Verbruggen. January

23, 1944. Escort P-47s above. In air 4 hrs 55 min. No flak or fighters. 500 lb bombs, 12.

Italy, Foggia

Mission XXIX - Target Soifa, M/Y Bulgaria  
Take off - 9:25 landed 17:05. January 24, 1944 - 408 Verbruggen. In air 7 hrs. 40 min. We had the worst overcast we ever had. We flew over target & 70 miles further out. We came back and circled. We encountered two Me-109. He damaged one ship. We flew on 836 wing - and left formation to cover him up over enemy territory. We had to climb overcast, he couldn't so we left him. He had one #2 prop bent and a large big hole in left wing. It looked almost just about to come off. 645 went in the water out of gas. 2 planes missing yet. We came in by ourselves. When we saw the fighter we salvoed our bombs. Also had to crank up bomb bay doors. Had 30 gals left in each tank.

Italy, Foggia

Mission XXX, 5th Oak Leaf Cluster - Air Medal  
Target Salon de Provence A/D in France.  
Take off 7:40 landed 16:00. Bombs away 12:17. We had plenty of flak and fighters. About 20 of them. We shot one down. Paay Casano & me. But couldn't see it crash. Had 110 on our tail. We shot a few burst and they went around us. Boy, we thought we was going to catch hell. P-38s encountered most of them. The flak was heavy, everywhere you looked. Two pieces hit my turret glass, piece of plexi glass hit my eye and I moved my head quick and bang my right eye. Boy I saw stars. Was a rough day. January 27, 1944. 408 - Verbruggen. We came back alone for gas. The others landed some place to gas up. In air 8 hrs 20 min. 500 lb. bombs, 12.

Italy, Foggia

Mission XXXI - Target Aviano A/D in Northern Italy.  
Take off 8:15 - landed 13:45. Bombs away 11:45 - 408 Verbruggen. January 28, 1944. Had flak and was accurate, but no fighters. Had P-38s escort. Had frag bombs. 144. We were in front today, no. 2 off leader. We wasn't tailed end charlie for once. We also saw Joe E Brown when we landed. In air 5 hrs 30 min.

Italy, Foggia

Mission XXXII - Target Rimini M/Y N. Italy  
Take off 8:20 - landed 13:30. 408 - Verbruggen. January 29, 1944. Bombs away 11:48. 500 lb. bombs - 12. Plenty flak, no fighters. Milk run. In air 5 hrs. 10 min. January 29, 1944.

(continued on next page)



Italy, Foggia

Mission XXXIII - Target Lavariano A/D & L/G, Northern Italy.

Take off 08:55 - landed 14:10. 408 - Verbruggen. Bombs away 11:47. Frangs - 144. In air 5 hrs, 15 min. We were attacked by 25 fighter. One B-17, 395 went down. When out of formation he was attacked by 6 Me-109s. Two other planes damaged. Those 20 MM came awful close today. Had little flak. January 30, 1944.

Italy, Foggia

Mission XXXIV - Target Tolulon, harbor, docks, etc. Southern France

Take off 08:05, landed 15:10. bombs away 13:59. 408-Verbruggen. Had 12 fighters and heavy flak. One fighter got a B-17. It went down. One B-17 exploded in mid air before the target. Just a piece of a wing and an engine. The rest disappeared in thin air. All that was left was a cloud of black smoke. The fighter FW-190 made a pass at us from 11:30 but he peeled off quick. No damage to each other. We were low on gas so we landed at Ghisonaccia in Corsica. We stayed overnight and slept in the plane. Was it cold. We gas up in the morning and took off 11:05 landed at our base 13:10. In air 9 hrs, 15 min. February 4 & 5, 1944.

Italy, Foggia

Mission XXXV, six Oak Leaf Clusters to Air Medal. Target Albano, city, Italy

Take off 06:35 - landed 11:03. Bombs away 9:16 - 12,000 feet. February 10, 1944 - 408 Verbruggen. Had plenty heavy flak from the front line off the Germans. It sure was accurate. Two planes lost. One exploded in air, hit by flak. No one got out. Second one hit by flak and went down. Our Nav. got hit by flak in the leg. Not too bad. We landed in Foggia to drop off Nav. Plenty fighters strafing troops but they didn't bother us. We got ten flak holes in ship. Many ships were hit hard today and many wounded. In air 4 hrs 20 min. (unreadable word) mission 500 lb bombs, 12.

Italy, Foggia

Mission XXXVI - Target Verona M/Y Northern Italy.

Take off 9:26 landed 17:00. 25087 - Verbruggen. February 14, 1944. Had some flak and some fighters but they didn't bother us. The P-47s were dog fighting with them. Our bomb bay doors got stuck. So we had to drop them in the water. Our ship didn't return yet. We turned back an hour before the target. In air 7 hr 34 min. 500 lb bombs, 12.

Italy, Foggia

Mission XXXVII - Target Mt. Cassino, Italy just a few miles over our lines. We hit the monastery there and was it hit. Take off 7:26 landed 10:55. Verbruggen 859 our new ship. February 15, 1944. Had no flak, no fighters. 500 lbs bombs, 12. In air 3 hr, 34 min. Milk run. Bomb at 14,000 feet.

Italy, Foggia

Mission XXXVIII - Target Campoleno Town, Italy.

Take off 08:15 landed 12:50. Bombs away 10:05 at 17,500 feet. 859 0 Verbruggen. Had plenty flak with accuracy and lost one B-17G - Cooper. A direct hit on #3 & 4 wing buckled and it went down in flames side way vertical. Our ship has 3 flak holes. He was on his 50th mission. February 17, 1944. this place is just a few mile past front line from beach head. The flak was so thick we couldn't see the planes from the other wave going through it. One fighter, believed enemy, was also hit by flak. He went down in flames.

Italy, Foggia

Mission XXXIX - Target Peterhausen, M/Y Germany

Take off 08:41 landed 15:55. bombs away 12:50 - 859 Verbruggen. February 22, 1944. Had plenty flak and fifty nine fighters. They attacked the second wave. They knocked down one B-17 and damaged another. It went to Switzerland we believe. The one went down in flames. He put it out but the fighters were still on his tail. He kept pumping 20 MM into him so the B-17 exploded. We crossed the Alps and got home safe. This counts two missions.

Italy, Foggia

Mission XXXXI

Feb. 24, 1944 859 Verbruggen. Steyr, Austria. Estimated over 200 enemy planes, FW-190, Me-109, Ju-88 Field day for top turret (me). We alone shot down 12 or more fighters. I shot down 4 and damaged two more. Took the head off a German pilot, Bombardier verified it. Two squadrons shot down B-17 enemy lost 130 fighters. Escort was very late. They came after fight was over. Our plane badly hit. 2 engines out, tail almost completely gone. One turret top gun was out (unreadable word) They hit it with 20 milimeters. Had to bail out at 23,000 feet. Landed in Austria base of Alps in trees. Had frozen hands and sprained back. After two hours in forest, finally captured. That's a very, very rough mission. Tail gunner wounded, & waist gunner. No one killed.





*T/Sgt. John Angelosanto*

## More About My Baby

Lloyd True wrote in the July 2004 issue about naming the airplane his crew flew "My Baby." that prompted John Angelosanto, a member of the crew to write about some of his memories. Thanks John.

I was inspired to tell my story after reading the newsletter dated July 2004. Lloyd True, the radio operator of our crew wrote about naming our plane "My Baby." It brought back memories of my days as right waist gunner on our crew.

My mother and father were married in Italy and immigrated to the U.S. in 1920. My three brothers and I were born within 5 years of each other. When I was 11 years old, my mother grew homesick. My father made the decision to move the family back to Italy.

My brothers and I went to school there in a classroom with one teacher who taught the first three grades. the living conditions in San Angelo were quite primitive by our standards. We did not have electricity or running water. Cooking was

done in the fireplace. Water was carried in buckets from the well. The women carried baskets of laundry to the stream to wash.

I recall being with my classmates when one of them asked me if Italy and the U.S. ever went to war with each other, which I would fight for. I tried to be diplomatic, saying it would never happen. Not long after that Mussolini went to war in Ethiopia. My father decided to move the family back to the U.S. in 1935.

I enlisted in 1942. I left the U.S. on my birthday, March 3, 1944. We docked in Africa. Later, on a C-47, we hedge hopped across the desert and landed in Bari, Italy. We went by truck to our base in Amendola.

We were united with the rest of the crew who had come over on our new B-17. Our first mission was the marshalling yard in Verona, Italy. We encountered light flak. It was not what I expected. I had imagined bursts of color and loud noise like a fireworks display. Instead, it was like a black and white movie, without sound. Later missions showed

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how deadly the flak really was.

I had 42 missions as right waist gunner then was asked if I wanted to be a flight engineer on a pick up crew. It would be an increase in rank and pay. We now had P-51s going all the way to the target and back. I thought it over for a while, then accepted the offer.

The rest of the crew were going to bomb a target for the Russians and because there were not enough members to make a full crew, I was given a three day pass. I took the opportunity to head out to the highway and hitch hiked to Casino.

One of the army trucks picked me up as it was headed near there. The driver was Polish and in broken English he asked me if I knew what day it was. When I said no, he told me it was D-Day, June 6, 1944. Although we were expecting it, I was still surprised. When he had to turn off, I got out. The driver didn't think I would have to wait long for a ride. An army lieutenant on a motorcycle picked my up within five minutes. I hopped on the back since he was going to Casino.

When we arrived I couldn't believe my eyes. My family had lived in what might be termed a village, San Angelo. Casino was a larger town where we would go to shop. There was not a stick left of the place. There were three or four tents for American GI's. The only thing I recognized was the foundation of the cable car that was used to get to the monastery.

The lieutenant left me to the hospitality of the GI's. I ate dinner and spent the night with them. After breakfast and a shave I started out for the homestead. On the way I met a civilian who was familiar with the area and he went with me. We arrived at the community at high noon. The residents were sitting in the shade to escape the heat. My companion suggested we play a trick on them. He told them I was looking for contraband. He asked if anybody had contraband, they quickly said no. He asked if they were sure. Again they vehemently denied it.

I told the joker I recognized one of the group. He was my cousin on my mother's side of the family. We walked over to him. My pal asked him if he knew me. He nervously said he couldn't possibly know me. My pal told him my mother was his Aunt Maria. I was his cousin John from the States. He couldn't get over it. We went fishing together as boys.

We went on to the homestead. Most of the residents had gone south, away from the war zone. My father's mother, two of his brothers and one of his sisters had been allowed to stay to take care of the family belongings. It was a wonderful reunion.

I didn't get the opportunity to return to Italy until 1996. I was delighted to see Casino and the monastery rebuilt as if the war never happened. The

modern world had finally arrived at the homestead. The homes now had electricity, running water, even satellite dishes.

*T/Sgt. John Angelosanto*

## Two Famous Airplanes

On Mission 263. An interesting bit of information.

Two airplanes lost on mission 263 when all of 20th Squadron airplanes were shot down, have an interesting history.

"My Baby," B-17 number 473, the story of which is in this and the previous issue of the newsletter, was flown by Robert McCloskey and his crew.

"Snafuperman," B-17 number 118 was flown by Bill Garland and his crew. This airplane had been flown by Charlie Beecham and his crew through their 50 missions and was the subject of his painting that graces the cover of our Group/Wing history, "Defenders of Liberty."



*Loy Dickinson*

*A Sad POW*

## An American Field in Rudice

"Michael says they call this place America," explained our friend and translator, Jana Turchinkova. We were standing in an expansive high meadow on the edge of the White Carpathian Mountains in the southeastern corner of the Czech Republic near the town of Rudice (pronounced Roo-dee-chee). Michael Zitnik, a local amateur historian, led us to the forest bordering the field and pointed to a tree with a metal plaque. The plaque was inscribed with the words:

29 August 1944  
2LT Russell Meyrick  
Bombardier  
B17 Flying Fortress  
"Tail End Charlie"

15th U.S. Army Air Force

Thus began an emotional and enlightening two days where I was to witness both profound gratitude for sacrifices made over 60 years ago and time-defying bonds of friendship that have endured both distance and two tyrannical governments. I would also come to appreciate a bond between this



seemingly far-away place and my hometown of Florence, Alabama.

By the late summer of 1944, the allies were experiencing progress on every front in the war against Germany. In the West, the invasion of Normandy was complete and Paris was liberated. In the East, the Red Army was well into Poland and poised to cross into the territory of Germany. Although there was much hard fighting to be done, it was clear the tide had turned.

In the air war, British and American strategic bombers continued a non-stop day and night assault on Germany's industry, transportation and cities. The 15th U.S. Army Air Force flew missions into southern central Europe from bases in Italy against heavily defended targets such as Ploesti, Blechhammer and Vienna. The once powerful German fighter divisions were becoming depleted. Yet, on occasion, the German Fighter Command could concentrate its strength and wreak havoc with the bombers. It did just that on 29 August 1944.

The targets for the 15th Air Force on 29 August were the Privoser Oil Refinery and the Marshalling Yards of Morava Ostrava where some 1500 rail cars were being assembled for movement to the eastern front. The 15th Air Force sent 599 bombers and 294 fighter escorts against Ostrava on what was its 263rd mission of the war for the 2nd Bomb Group. The 2nd was the last group of the large formation that day and the last squadron of seven planes was the 20th Squadron, filling the unenviable position of "Tail End Charlie," the most dangerous and exposed position in the long stream of bombers. The lead pilot of the 20th Squadron that day was Lt. Bill Tune, a resident of Florence, Alabama.

The German Daylight Fighter Command had both excellent intelligence and excellent instincts that day. With a band of radar, informants, radio intercepts, picket ships in the Adriatic and sure knowledge of the value of the target in Ostrava, the German commander gambled on the destination of the bombers. Fighters were launched from airfields as far north as Berlin. After refueling in Dresden, the fighters flew to rendezvous points in Czechoslovakia and awaited their prey. German spotter aircraft flew parallel to the U.S. bomber stream, identified the trailing bombers and confirmed that U.S. fighter escorts had flown to the front of the long formation.

At approximately 10:40 am between 80 and 90 German FW 190 and Me 109 fighters flew into the tight formation of the 20th Squadron. The fighters approached in repeated waves from the rear and sides firing machine guns and 20 mm cannon into the formation of bombers. In a space of 15 minutes, it was over. Ten American bombers including all seven planes of the 20th Squadron

were mortally damaged. Each bomber had ten crew members who managed to parachute jump into an unknown future. Many were severely wounded. Some would be captured immediately and sent to German prisoner of war camps, others such as Bill Tune would spend months in hospital before joining fellow crew members in prisoner of war camps. For a few, freedom would come soon because of brave Czech and Slovak partisans who hid them and later evacuated them to Italy.

This air battle was witnessed on the ground by hundreds of Czechs and Slovaks. Many of them quickly came to the rescue of the downed airmen, providing medical attention, food and water, and in some cases refuge. Lt. Bill Tune and his co-pilot Francis Flynn were both rendered unconscious after a shell exploded in their cockpit. They were tossed through the bomb doors by other crew members and regained consciousness while plunging to earth from 25,000 feet. When Bill landed, he found he had a multi-fractured left leg and shrapnel wounds to his left side. Bill was discovered and treated by young Czechs near the town of Rudice. He was taken to the local hospital in the larger town of Slavacin and treated there by a young medical student and his father.

Bill's navigator, Lt. Loy Dickinson parachuted after shoving Bill and Francis from the burning plane. He landed easily in a soft field near the village of Rudimov. He was quickly discovered by a young man named Mojmir Baca who managed to communicate with Loy and convince him to hide in the woods until darkness. After sunset, Mojmir returned and brought Loy to the Baca farm where he was hidden and fed. The Baca family was known to assist the partisans and other allied personnel and word quickly spread that an American flyer was being hidden at their farm. A relative on the local police force called to warn Baca to get the young American flyer away from the farm. The Germans would soon be notified and that would mean a swift execution of the Baca family. Therefore, it was that Lt. Dickinson left the Baca farm in the early morning of 30 August and headed in a southerly direction toward the Slovakian border. As he approached the outskirts of the town of Slavacin, he was approached by two men, a police officer and a young doctor. The police officer took Lt. Dickinson to the local police station where he was detained until a German patrol arrived to take him into custody.

The young doctor that day was named Turcinek. As the years unfolded, the young doctor's son would marry one of the daughters of Mojmir Baca. Their daughter, Mojmir's granddaughter, was Jana, our translator. Loy has maintained a 60 year friendship with the Baca and Turcinek families.

As the living were captured, pursued, or



rescued, the villagers began the process of collecting the dead. Forty-one young men died that day. Twenty-eight were buried by the Germans in a mass grave in Slavcin. Two members of Bill Tune's crew were buried in the Church cemetery in Rudice. The others were buried in small villages surrounding Slavcin and just across the border in Slovakia. All were exhumed by the U.S. Army in 1946 and buried in American cemeteries in France.

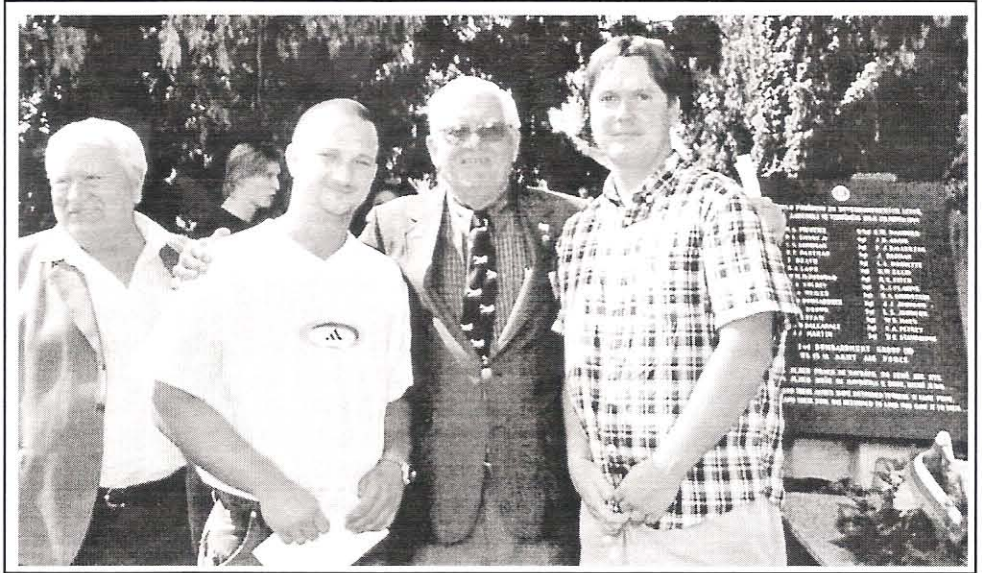
August 29, 2004 was the 60th anniversary of the battle. While the Czechs and Slovaks hold a mass each year for the fallen airmen, the ten-year anniversaries are special. In 1994, 50 years after the battle, several members of the 20th Squadron travelled to Slavcin to attend the memorial services. Bill Tune and his wife Fran attended the ceremonies in 1994. I was invited by Loy Dickinson to accompany him for the 60th this past August.

The ceremony began in the City Hall of Slavcin where some 300 people gathered. Following welcoming remarks, the crowd moved up the hill to the Catholic Church where a mass was held. As the Mass concluded, the congregation moved reverently to the adjacent cemetery where a Czech military band and honor guard attended to the laying of wreaths in memory of the 41 airmen who died on Mission 263. Following the laying of wreaths, a trumpeter played the traditional American taps. The band then played the national anthems of the United States, the Czech Republic and Slovakia.

For the next two days, this solemn ceremony was repeated at each crash site where American airmen were found. Villages such as Sanov, Bojkovice, Rudice, Vyskovec, Nova Bosaca and Nemsovo, largely unknown to the outside world yet firmly linked in the memory of our young airmen. At each ceremony between 150 and 400 people attended. These commemorations are now into the third generation.

Today it is common for Americans to wonder if anyone really cares about the sacrifices that we believe we have made on behalf of others. I bear witness that the people of a small corner of the Czech Republic and Slovakia do. As I witnessed the ceremonies, I thought of the mothers of these 40 young men. They too are long in their graves. I cannot fathom the pain they endured upon losing their sons. I found myself wishing they could somehow see these good people in their hundreds

*A happy Loy Dickinson with Czech friends.  
Mojmir Baca, left*



honoring their sons' memories and sacrifice after 60 years in this American field in Rudice.

*Jim Noles, B/G U.S. Army R,  
good friend of Bill Tune*

This trip actually began in 1944 when I was shot down over Czechoslovakia. Mojmir Baca found me near a forest and took me to his family's home where they sheltered me overnight at great risk to themselves. The friendship with Mojmir Baca, his wife Elishka, his children and grandchildren have meant a great deal to me.

Marcella Turcinkova is one of Baca's four daughters. Her husband, Jenda Turcinek, is the son of Dr. Turcinek, the doctor who met me when I was taken into custody at Slavcin the day following the battle.

*Loy Dickinson*

## 12th to 15th Air Force

When the 2nd Bomb Group arrived in North Africa, April 1943, it was assigned to NASAF (North African Strategic Air Force). It, along with the newly assigned 99 bomb group, was part of a reshuffling of heavy groups among England, North Africa and the Middle East.

Later the B-17 and B-24 groups were assigned to the 12th Air Force.

They remained in the 12th until the 15th Air Force was organized in Dec. 1943 and moved to Italy. The four B-17 groups and two B-24 groups, making up the 5th Wing, were moved to the 15th. The B-24 groups were then moved to other wings and the 5th Wing was composed of the four groups of B-17s. Two more B-17 groups were later added to the 5th Wing.





*Surviving seven of original twenty-eight officers of the 20th Sq., Nov. 11, 1918.*

*Left to right: 1st Lt. J Y Stokes, observer; 1st Lt. W S Holt, observer; 1st Lt. Sidney Howard, pilot; Capt. Cecil G. Sellers, pilot/copilot; 1st Lt. Donald McWhirter, pilot; 1st Lt. L P Keopsgeed, pilot; 1st Lt. Gardner Fiske, observer. Stokes and Sellers were awarded DFC for extraordinary heroism.*

## 1918 Combat Losses

From the WWII history of the Second Bomb Group, we know about the disastrous losses the group suffered on certain missions. Mission 150 on Feb. 24, 1944 comes to mind when the group lost 14 crews including all of the 49th Squadron. Mission 263, August 29, 1944 saw the loss of nine airplanes and crews and the entire 20th Squadron.

Many association members were among those valiant men who were shot down on those two missions. Many crew members were killed, but many of them still live and remember those trying times. Association president Loy Dickinson was one who survived, spending the rest of the war in Stalag Luft One.

Readers may be interested to know that during the First World War, the Second Bomb Group, (then known as 1st Day Bombardment Group) had similar losses in air battles with the very competent German pursuit pilots.

Three squadrons were then members of the

group, 11th, 20th and 96th. They flew French made Breguets and deHaviland DH 4s. Both were the state of the art bombers of the day, single engine two place airplanes capable of carrying about 400 pounds of bombs.

On the 18th of September, 1918 the 11th and 20th Squadrons set out to bomb a target at La Chaussee. Seventeen DH 4s took off, but one crashed. Ten did not reach the objective. Six Liberty DHs of the 11th Squadron ran into a similar combat situation and out of seven squadron airplanes that flew the mission only two returned, one of them badly shot up. The two man crews of the rest were either KIA or POWs.

So you see, our comrades of the previous generation, when aerial combat was new, had some of the same difficulties we faced. Their combat opponents of that day were very experienced and competent, as were the ones we faced in the European skies in the 1940s. Nevertheless, the group crews of those days were never turned back because of enemy action, just as we were never turned back because of the opposition.



## Did You Know?

1. That the first DFC issued was to Charles Lindberg for his trans-Atlantic flight in 1927?
2. That 2 B-17s of the 100th Bomb Group collided at 22,000 feet over Germany? They locked together one on top of the other until they crashed. Amazingly, 12 men of the two crews survived. (B-17 Flying Fortress Assoc.)
3. That Capt. John J. Voll of the 31st Fighter Group was the highest scoring fighter Ace of the 15th Air Force? During 1944 he scored 21 confirmed kills with three probables and four damaged.
4. That Dwight Eisenhower was a certified pilot? He took pilot training while stationed in the Philippines.
5. That in January 1929 five airmen completed a record breaking endurance flight of 151 hours? The commander of the mission was Major Tooley Spaatz and second in command, Capt. Ira Eaker.
6. That 2,770 Liberty Ships were built during WWII? How many of us rode one to or from our war?

### Ace of Aces



*Capt. Voll in the cockpit of "American Beauty"*

### Flash:

The Second Bomb Group Internet Domain name is changed. It is now

**[www.2ndbombgroup.org](http://www.2ndbombgroup.org)**

Be sure to log on to this bright new instrument which is done so well  
by Dave Carlock.

## Italian Tours

The Pelham, New York, Post 50 of the American Legion is organizing ceremonies and tours of the Sicily-Rome American Cemetery and Memorial in Nettuno, Italy and the Florence American Cemetery and memorial near Florence, Italy during the first week of May 2005.

The purpose of the tours is to honor the veterans of the United States and its Allies who liberated Italy in the campaigns of 1943 through 1945 and to commemorate the Sixtieth (60th) Anniversary of the final liberation of Italy in May 1945.

The tours will be open to anyone interested in attending. The tours are tentatively scheduled to depart the U.S. on Friday, April 29, 2005 and return to the U.S. on Saturday May 7, 2005. Contact:

Frank A. Barbieri  
Pelham Post 50 American Legion  
55 Oak Lane Pelham Manor, NY 10803-3434  
fbarbieri@187realty.com Fax: 718-367-4190  
Home: 914-738-2284 Office: 718-562-1000  
Cell: 646-533-0187

## Highest Group Loss

On the mission to bomb Kassell, Germany, Sept. 27, 1944, the 445th Bomb Group (8th AF) lost 30 of their 35 B-24 crews and airplanes. The Luftwaffe lost 29 fighters in the air battle.

This is felt to be the greatest one mission loss of any heavy bomber group during WWII.

## Allied Air Crew Casualty Rates

### ETO World War II

Casualty rates KIA / MIA

Heavy Bombers (30 missions)	71%
Medium bombers (50 missions)	48%
Fighters (300 combat hours)	24%

From: "Dirty little secrets of WWII"

## A True Member

Hey, you old vets. Lloyd True has enrolled his two sons and two grandsons as members of the association.

How is that for extending the legacy of "The Greatest Generation."

Does Lloyd's plan give y'all any ideas? Give it some thought!



## Harry's Homilies

It is not how hard we fall; but it is how straight we walk when we get up.

"The man who has nothing for which he is willing to fight, nothing he cares about more than his own personal safety, is a miserable creature who has no chance of being free unless his freedom is supported and maintained by the efforts of better men than he."

*Harry B. Harris, in the Association of Former Prisoners of War in Romania, Newsletter*

## Secretary of State Contact:

Our association is organized in California and must have a California resident member as contact to the Secretary of State Office.

Ed Hodges has been that contact for many years. Since Ed's death member Patrick J. Kennelly has agreed to fulfill that position.

Pat's father was a pilot in the 429th Squadron. He passed away about 30 years ago.

Due to an error, Pat was left out of the July 2004 roster. His address is 1628 N Mountain View Pl., Fullerton, CA 92831-1226. Spouse - Laurie, e-mail: patkennelly@adelphia.net

## The Meaning of Prisoner of War

A prisoner of war is a person who has served his country in an ultra high risk category. Due to the fact that he took the fight for freedom to the enemy, he was caught behind enemy lines. There he is, a man without a country and at the complete mercy of a deadly enemy. He waits under extremely adverse conditions to be able to return to his home and loved ones. What more can be asked of him?

*From: Association of Former Prisoners of War in Romania newsletter*

## Defenders of Liberty

Good News!! The supply of "Defenders of Liberty" held by the association ran out.

The *good news* is that an order has been placed. Turner Publishing Company has printed another issue and a supply is on hand.

More good news!! The Board of Directors has determined that the books will cost just \$45, including shipping. This will be the same price as "The Second Was First." Find a revised order blank in this issue.

## New Book

"Shot At and Missed" by association member Jack R. Myers, Bombardier in the 20th Squadron. It will bring back many memories.

University of Oklahoma Press, Contact Caroline Dwyer (701) 746-6954 cdwyer@ou.edu

## For you former POWs of Stalag Luft III

A good novel, "Maybe I'm Dead" by Joe Klaas. Long out of print, but available from Barnes and Noble.

## Sayings

If everything seems to be going well, you probably don't know what the Hell is going on.

The race is not always to the swift nor the battle to the strong, but that is the way to bet.

Self starters will not.

If you try to please everybody, nobody will like it.

Never play leap frog with a unicorn.

And; a Smith and Wesson beats four Aces.

## A Secret Friend

Treasurer, Bill Parsons writes that new member, Marty Childress is a secret friend. The story goes like this.

"Childress is a secret friend of mine from mission 263. I was reloading my gun from a box of ammo kept in the radio room when I looked up and saw a B-17 flying in a sea of flame on auto pilot. The plane appeared to be abandoned, but then I saw that the tail gunner was still firing at the enemy. I presumed he was wounded and would not get out. In any case, the guy was going to be lost when the bomber exploded. The guy was Childress, who waited longer before parachuting to safety. I had to return to firing and did not get to see the fate of the flaming bomber. In any event, I admire the guts of childress."

*Editor's note:* Thanks Bill for a great little combat story.



# 2nd Bombardment Association



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## STATUS REPORT 10/1/04 Through 10/31/04

11/6/04

Page 1

Date	Num	Description	Memo	Category	Amount
BALANCE 9/30/04					10,249.61
10/16/04	1509	Postmaster	Stamps	Postage-Ship	-14.80
10/22/04	1510	Carlock Dave	Replace Check 1452	Web Site	0.00
10/22/04	1511	Carlock Dave	payment	Web Site	-24.95
10/28/04	4385	Schultz W Dale	Code 107	Dues	25.00
			DOL	Hbook Sls	54.75
10/29/04		US Bank Deposit		Interest	0.39
TOTAL 10/1/04 - 10/31/04					40.39
BALANCE 10/31/04					10,290.00
TOTAL INFLOWS					80.14
TOTAL OUTFLOWS					-39.75
NET TOTAL					40.39



**THE FOLLOWING ADDENDUM ARE ALL CORRECTIONS TO THE ROSTER**  
**Part 1 - Minor Changes    Part 2 - Changes of address.    Part 3 - Listing of New Members.**

**Part 1 - Minor Changes**

John F. Boyle    21 Boyd St., Apt. 1301  
 Lt. Gen. Kelly Burke, Commander. CDR  
 Rolland Kelly    Phone: (281) 480-1880    e-mail: rodilikel@earthlink.net

**Part 2 - Change of Address**

Unit	Name	Street Address	City, State, Zip Code	Phone
	Thomas R. COCHRAN	6100 W Friendly Ave.	Greensboro, NC 27410-4085	tcochra7@bellsouth.net
	Philip J. JASKIEWICZ	106 Forest Run	Dale, TX 78616-2300	(512) 243-0006

**Part 3 - New Members**

Unit	Name	Spouse	Street Address	City, State, Zip Code	Phone
49	M. L. CHILDRESS	Maurine	903 North Main #82	San Angelo, TX 76903-4083	(325) 655-4944
20	Richard E. DeNEUT	Donna	721 Locust St.	La Porte City, IA 50651-1231	(319) 342-3377
	Jeffrey A. KNOEBEL	Susan	1405 Rosewood Dr. #22	Charlestown, IN 47111-1642	
429	William D. SCHULTZ	Alice	9515 East 580 Road	Catoosa, OK 74015-5734	(918) 266-2154
	George H. TRUE	Peggy	3518 N Graham Rd.	Madison, TN 47250-8450	
	Richard L. TRUE	Linda	2004 Tunnel Mill Rd.	Charlestown, IN 47111-9272	
	Audrey VAN ACKEREN	Edward	5412 S 106th St.	Omaha, NE 68127-2913	(402) 339-4012





# 2nd Bomb Group

Second Bombardment Association  
A Veterans Organization of the  
2nd Bomb Group & Bomb Wing

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