

GROUP



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

WING



SECOND BOMBARDMENT ASSOCIATION

NEWSLETTER

"Second to None"

www.2ndbombgroup.org



Volume 25, No. 2, July 2009

President's Corner

Greetings from Ohio! Those of us who live in the midwest are looking forward to some reasonable spring weather, and maybe a pleasant summer season to follow. After that we can look forward to the reunion in San Antonio, and hope that many of you are thinking the same. In April the Reunion Announcement was mailed, describing the events, and outlining the tours and dinners, etc. In this newsletter we will repeat the details, so review carefully and make your reservations.

For the first time in our reunion history we are using an outside source to assist us in planning the registration, and reunion events. However, we still need oversight and local input, so thanks to Sid Underwood and Loy Dickinson we have that advice and control for San Antonio. We expect to continue to use the Convention and Reunion planning company to assist us in the future reunions in Tucson and Colorado Springs. This takes the burden off of one individual having to handle most of the details, particularly the registration and the tour arrangement particulars, as Richard Radtke and Kemp Martin have done in the past, and Karen Nelson last year.

Lately, there seems to have been a real resurgence in history and personnel inquiries. It is rewarding to be able to assist a relative, or a researcher, with information regarding an airman, or a crew, or a specific aircraft. These inquiries that come through are usually forwarded on to Sid Underwood or Todd Weiler, both of whom have done a terrific job in researching and answering these inquiries. We are grateful for their dedication and expertise. Just recently we received an inquiry from a young Austrian man, who had questions about a crew who were originally with the 2nd Bomb Group, but had been transferred to the 483rd Bomb Group. We were able to identify, by aircraft #, the four missions flown with our group before

the crew went with the 483rd B.G. We have forwarded our response, and the original inquiry, to officers of the 483rd for their review. It was interesting because the young Austrian had information on the crew names, and has parts of the plane he had recovered. We have also received an "information request" from a Mr. Dave Blake, the reunion committee chairman of the 461st Bomb Group, regarding a potential reunion of the 15th Air Force veterans, not to replace the individual group reunions, but to supplement them. I don't know if this idea is a feasible option or not, but Mr. Blake wanted to research the idea. I replied that our group had reunions planned through 2011, and that an additional "get together" might be difficult to sell to our veterans.

By the time you read this, the celebration of Memorial Day will be over. I hope that most of you were able to either participate, or watch, your local parade or ceremonies. I will again be riding on my local Purple Heart Chapter float, in the Springfield, Ohio parade, the largest Memorial Day parade in Ohio - some 2 1/2 to 3 hours long. But this year it will be a real privilege to participate, because members of the Tuskegee Airmen Association will be the first contingent in the Veterans section, with our Purple Heart Chapter following them. I am quite excited to help honor these gentlemen. In regard to honoring our veterans, I am suggesting that all of you consider monetary donations to the "Fisher House", a private organization that provides free lodging to families of service members undergoing treatment at nearby hospitals. This charity is similar to McDonalds House, with which you are all familiar. Fisher House has residences in at least 13 states, some in Europe, and many others are planned in additional locations. These residences are really valuable for families of service personnel who have served in Iraq and

Afghanistan. You can check out the charity via www.FisherHouse.com.

Our Past President, Bonnie Hellums and husband Carel, will soon embark on a trip to Tunisia where Bonnie's Dad is buried. Their plan is to scatter the ashes of Bonnie's mother over her husband's grave. God be with you Bonnie. Several others of our members will be traveling to Europe this summer. Fred Fitzpatrick will be searching for information at the site where his Dad successfully crash landed the B-17 in Hungary on August 29, 1944. Veteran Joe Owsianik and our Historian Todd Weiler (nephew of pilot James Weiler, (KIA) will lead a contingent attending the 65th Commemoration of Mission #263 in the area of Slavcin, Czech Republic. With them will be Mike Meyrick, (nephew of bombardier Russell Meyrick (KIA) and Meyrick's daughter Kelly

Chase and her two Children. Traveling with this group is Donna Conway, our Co-Historian, and daughter of Larry Ashley. Also, the sister of veteran Joe Sallings, Fern and her husband Roy Wagner will be the guests of Vlastimil Hela. Vlastimil's parents were the family that hid Sallings for eight months after he parachuted into Czechoslovakia on Mission #263.

Please enjoy a safe and happy summer. Until we meet again in San Antonio.

Regards,
Lew Waters

THE VIEW FROM THE FARM

This issue of the Newsletter contains a small article about the names applied to some World War Two airplanes. I think the majority of the combat airplanes, fighters and bombers, had names emblazoned on the sides of the noses. The pictures were usually of a female variety, sometimes very revealing.

Those in command seemed to tolerate almost any art and any name. I suppose they reasoned that **THE BOYS** were sticking their necks out, so let them have a little room.

I had the privilege of including an article in the July 2004 newsletter about the naming of **MY BABY** when crew member Lloyd True received a telegram that his son George Henry True was born. Both Lloyd and George are now members and directors of the Association.

Of course, some of the airplane names have become well known and survive today. The famous **MEMPHIS BELL** was named for the pilot's girl friend. **ENOLA GAY** was named for the pilot's mother, and **SWOOSIE** was named for an imaginary bird.

Sadly, the group of veterans in our organization becomes steadily smaller. Of course, that is true of all organizations of WW-II veterans. Remember that the war ended 64 years ago, so most vets are well into their eighties.

We still have a vigorous group of vets, and a great number of next generation youngsters that want to

keep the organization active. Much thanks is due this group of vets and the younger ones too.

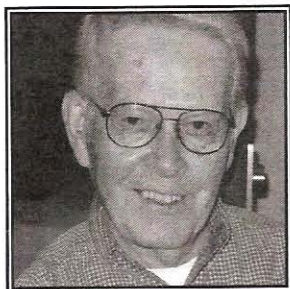
The 2009 reunion of the Second Bombardment Association is scheduled to take place October 15, 16 and 17 at the great Texas city of San Antonio. My hope is that as many as possible of our veterans will be able to attend, and that they will drag along as many members of their families as they can get to come.

San Antonio is a great Texas city with a very long and interesting history. The great heroes of another war are well known for their stand against a much superior Mexican army at the Alamo. The modern central city is especially known for the beauty they have made of the river winding through. This West Texas city also has a long and interesting part in the history of the air services of the United States. Many of the veterans will remember the days when Randolph Field was known as "The West Point of the Air". And as the Army Air Corps and Army Air Forces grew in preparation for the great battles of WW-II, many of us were stationed in the area for a period of our services.

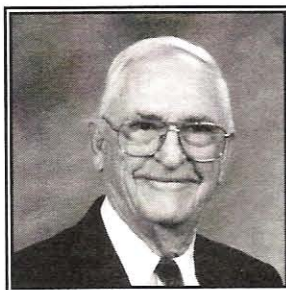
I urge everyone to study the military history of this great place.

Do not wait long to get your reservations in for the October 2009 reunion.

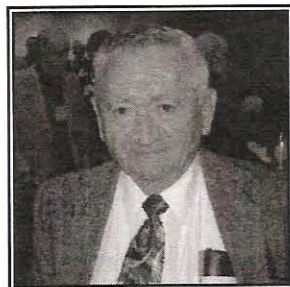
See you in SAN ANTONIO. Earl.

**President**

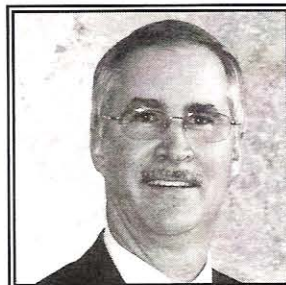
Lew Waters
1909 Wedgewood Cir.
Springfield, OH 45503
(937) 629-0897
enon2212@sbcglobal.net

**Newsletter Editor**

Earl W. Martin
508 Mountain View Rd.
Williamston, SC
29697-9601
(864) 225-4605
ewebmartin@aol.com

**Vice President**

John D. Sisson
The Dam Site Box 242
Mill River, MA 01244-0242
(413) 229-6638
jsisson242@aol.com

**Historian**

Todd Weiler
2761 N 37th St
Milwaukee, WI 53210
(414) 688-6401
tjweil@pobox.com

**Secretary &
Past President 2007-08**

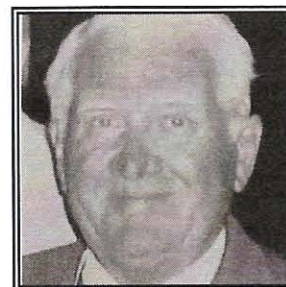
Bonnie Crane Hellums
3030 Eastside St.
Houston, TX 77098
(713) 521-4650 Hm
(713) 397-0360 Cell
bstith@ix.netcom.com

**Co-Historian**

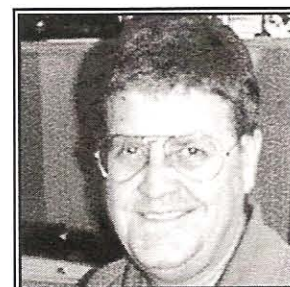
Donna Conway
25 Clearview Rd
Whitehouse Station NJ
08889
(908) 534-4198
daconway51@comcast.net

**Treasurer**

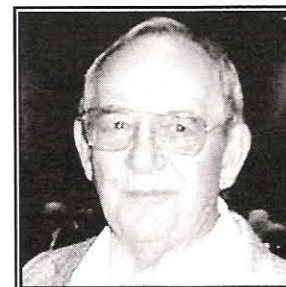
Matt R. Bryner
8386 Fenton Way
Arvada, CO 80003
(303) 412-0030
mrbryner@msn.com

**Past President 2004-06**

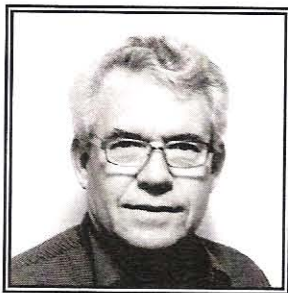
Loy A. Dickinson
16685 Cielo Ct.
Parker, CO 80134-3592
(720) 851-9663 CO
loy@denvertest.com

**Web Master**

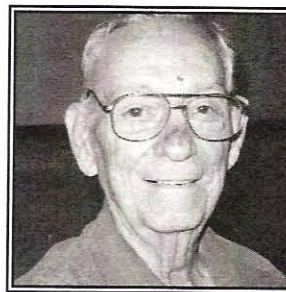
Sid Underwood
7920 Garden North Dr.
Garden Ridge, TX 78266
(210) 651-5666 Hm
sidunderwood@prodigy.net

**Past President 2002-03**

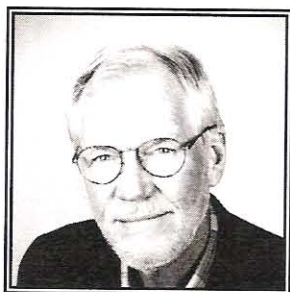
Richard K Radtke
60 Villa Heights Ct
Algoma, WI 54201
(920) 487-3343
ektdar@charter.net



**Agent to California
Secy of State**
Patrick J. Kennelly
1628 N Mountain View Pl.
Fullerton, CA 9283 1
(714) 879-4076
kennelly.patrick@att.net



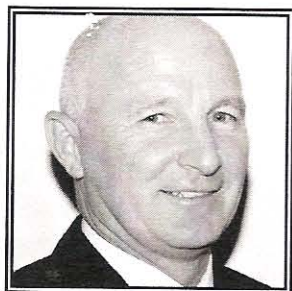
Director at Large
Jack Norwine
575 Elm St.
Calvert City, KY 42029
(270) 395-7359
Polly26@newwavecom.net



Director at Large
John H. Bryner
PO Box 2207
Ames, IA 50010
(515) 388-4550
jbzpvf@yahoo.com



Director at Large
Paul F. Skalny
56340 Copperfield Dr.
Shelby Township, MI
48316-4808
(586) 781-8486
secondhistory@yahoo.com



Director at Large
Fred Fitzpatrick
2334 E. Helen,
Tucson, AZ 85719
(520) 403-7687
Fitz_robles11@msn.com



Director at Large
Burton Thorman
PO Box 4312
Annapolis, MD 21403
(410) 626-1351
BThor@netscape.net



Director at Large
Karen Nelson
1300 Army Navy Dr. # 107
Arlington, VA 22202
(703) 892-5176
karenwnelson@msn.com



Director at Large
George H. True
3518 N Graham Rd.
Madison, IN 47250
(812) 273-3938h
(812) 701-1530c
truegh@hotmail.net

SECOND BOMBARDMENT WEBSITE

Our Web Master, Sid Underwood, has done a masterful job in structuring our site so that it contains great information and is quite user friendly. Even if you have been there go back to www.2ndbombgroup.org and cruise the variety.

DATABASE - Click on this item on the left side of the Home Page and you will be able to search the mission record of every man who had as many as one sortie. And, the crew men he flew with on each mission. Ask one of us if you need help.

VIDEOS - Search out the stories that make up our history.

BOOKS - Defenders of Liberty is available but in short supply.

'The Second Was First' is out of print. Due to the generosity of Jean Richards it is available here for all to read and/or print out.

REUNIONS - down near the bottom - click on 2008 and find 93 photos representing the fine work of Historian Todd Weiler.

TOMB OF THE UNKNOWN SOLDIERS

During the 2008 reunion, many of the veterans and guests visited the Changing of the Guard ceremony at the Tomb of the Unknowns at Arlington Cemetery. Perhaps a few facts about this National Monument will be of interest.

1. How many steps does the guard take as he marches across the Tomb of the Unknowns and why. 21 steps. This alludes to the 21 gun salute.
2. How long does he hesitate after his about face and why? 21 seconds for the same reason.
3. Why are his gloves wet? His gloves are moistened to prevent losing his grip on the rifle.
4. Does he carry his rifle on the same shoulder? And if not, why? He carries the rifle on the shoulder away from the tomb. After his march across the path, he executes an about face and moves the rifle to the outside shoulder.
5. How often are the guards changed? The guards are changed every thirty minutes.
6. What are the physical traits of the guards limited to? For a person to apply for guard duty at the tomb, he must be between 5'10" and 6'-2" and his waist must not exceed 30". He must commit 2 years of his life to guard the tomb, live in a barracks under the tomb, and cannot drink any alcohol on or off duty for the rest of his life. They cannot swear in public for the rest of their lives and cannot disgrace the uniform or the tomb in any way.

After two years the guard is given a wreath pin which is worn on the lapel to signify they have served as a guard of the tomb. There are only 400 presently worn. The guards must obey the rules for the rest of their lives or give up the wreath pin.

The shoes are specially made with very thick soles to keep the heat and cold from their feet. There are metal heel plates that extend to the top of the shoe in order to make the heel click as they come to a halt.

There are no wrinkles, folds or lint on the uniform. Guards dress for duty in front of a full length mirror.

The first six months of duty, a guard cannot talk to any one nor watch TV. All off duty time is spent

studying the 175 notable people laid to rest in Arlington National Cemetery. A guard must memorize who they are and where they are interred. Among the notables are Joe Louis (the boxer), Metal of Honor winner Audie Murphy, the most decorated soldier in WW-II.

Every guard spends five hours a day getting his uniform ready for duty.

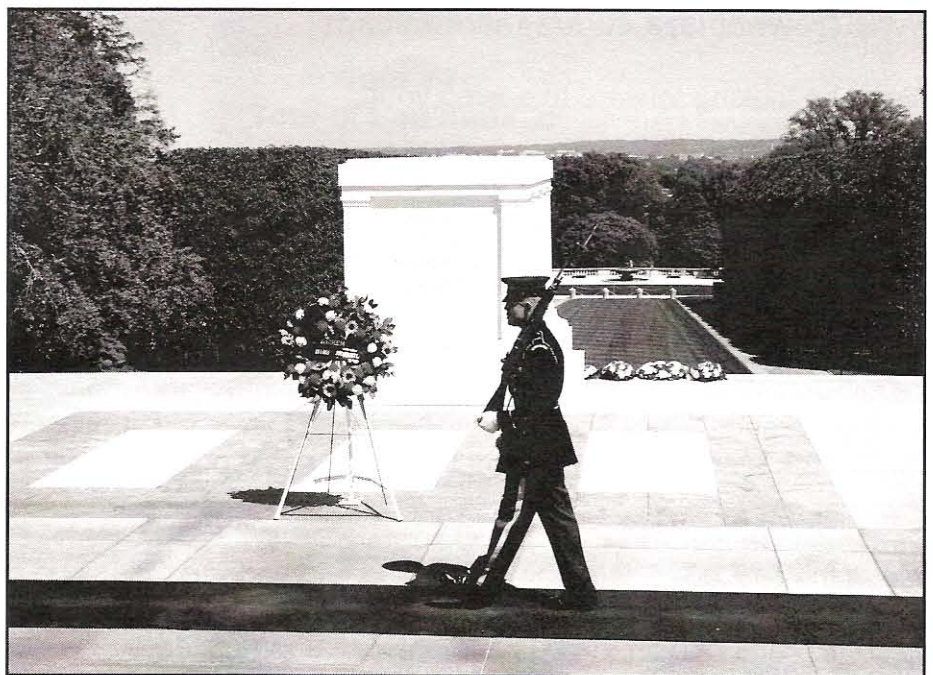
Inscribed on the Tomb:

ETERNAL REST GRANT THEM OH LORD
AND LET PERPETUAL LIGHT SHINE UPON
THEM.

In 2003 as Hurricane Isabelle was approaching Washington D. C., the U. S. Senate took two days off with anticipation of the storm. On the ABC evening news, it was reported that because of the dangers from the hurricane, the military members assigned the duty of guarding the Tomb of the Unknowns were given permission to suspend their assignment. They respectfully declined the offer. "No way Sir".

Soaked to the skin, marching in the pelting rain of the tropical storm, they said that guarding the Tomb was not just an assignment, it was the highest honor that can be afforded a service person. The Tomb has been patrolled continuously 24/7 since 1930.

God Bless and Keep Them





**Second Bombardment
Association Reunion
October 15,16,17, 2009
Crowne Plaza Airport
San Antonio, TX**

Hello!

Welcome to the Second Bombardment Association Reunion. We know you will have a great time renewing "old" friendships and making new ones. You will want to come early and stay late!

Be sure to call the hotel for your reservations and tell them you are with Second Bombardment Association to get the **discounted rate of just \$100.00!** They will honor these rates for **two days** before and after the reunion. The hotel has 24 hour complimentary shuttle service to San Antonio Intl Airport-SAT will also transport you to your destination within a 3 mile radius of the hotel between the hours of 6 AM - midnight.

Check the web:

www.crowneplaza.com/sanantonioapt
for the complete list of amenities.

The hotel address and reservation phone number is:

Crowne Plaza Airport Hotel
1111 North East Loop 410
San Antonio TX 78209
210.828.9031
www.crowneplaza.com/sanantonioapt

We'll be looking forward to seeing you!

Loy Dickinson



Particulars

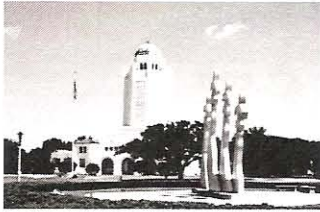
TRANSPORTATION: Air: Several airlines fly into San Antonio such as American, Continental, Northwest and Delta. See the complete list at www.ci.sat.tx.us/aviation/. We recommend that you contact the shuttle from the hotel before you get your baggage.

Cancellation Refund Policy: NO REFUNDS WILL BE GRANTED AFTER SEPTEMBER 15, 2009 minus the \$17.00 registration fee, based on vendor policies and hotel guarantees. All tours must achieve the minimum number in order to complete the tour. Gratuities for the driver are at the discretion of those on the bus and are well appreciated.

Reunion Highlights

All tours include transportation, guide (when applicable) and entrance fees.

Thursday October 15, 2009 10:00 AM – 4:00 PM Registration in Main Lobby
12:00 PM – 10:00 PM Hospitality room open



Tour #1

5:00 PM – 9:00 PM Welcome Tour and Dinner at Randolph Air Force Base

COST: \$37.00

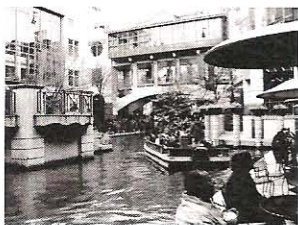
Friday, October 16, 2009



Tour #2

9:00 AM – 4:30 PM **The National Museum of the Pacific War** is the only institution in the continental United States dedicated exclusively to telling the story of the Pacific Theater battles of World War II. Located on a nine-acre site, the Center includes the George Bush Gallery, Admiral Nimitz Museum, Plaza of Presidents, Veterans' Walk of Honor, Japanese Garden of Peace, Pacific Combat Zone, and the Center for Pacific War Studies. Lunch will be on your own in this quaint German town. Check it out! <http://www.nimitz-museum.org/>.

COST: \$31.00



5:30 PM – 9:30 PM

Tour #3

River Walk and Local Dinner Board a barge and float down the world famous waterway. Enjoy the lights, sites and history of the area to eventually delight in a Mexican dinner at the Rio Rio Restaurant.

COST: \$46.00

Saturday, October 17, 2009 9:00 AM – 2:00 PM **Tour #4**
Tour of San Antonio



The guided tour of San Antonio views the historical city, by traveling to the Mission San Jose, touring the Alamo, choosing your own lunch at the River Walk mall, seeing the beautiful San Fernando Cathedral and taking a short break at the Mexican Market. We will even tour the famous San Antonio Shoe factory where someone will win a free pair of shoes!

COST \$25.00

6:00 PM – 10:00 PM

Banquet

Your choice of Pecan Encrusted Chicken Breast or Filet Mignon

COST: \$37.00

Sunday, October 18, 2009 Farewells

Life on Vacation

A weekly look at the second-home market

San Antonio

An urban 'oasis' deep in the heart of Texas



Best for

Small-town charm with big-city amenities, warm weather.

Claim to fame

The Alamo, credited with inspiring Texas' victory of independence from Mexico — and a free attraction today.

Don't miss

Downtown's El Mercado, the largest Mexican market in the USA.

Getting there

Downtown is 10 to 20 minutes from the San Antonio airport.

Tourism information

visitsanantonio.com

By Larry Olmsted
Special for USA TODAY

Everyone remembers the Alamo, but most people forget that San Antonio is the nation's seventh-largest city. Maybe that's because it still feels like a small town, with good weather, rural surroundings and an intimate downtown but with all the sophisticated offerings of a metropolis — plus low real estate prices.

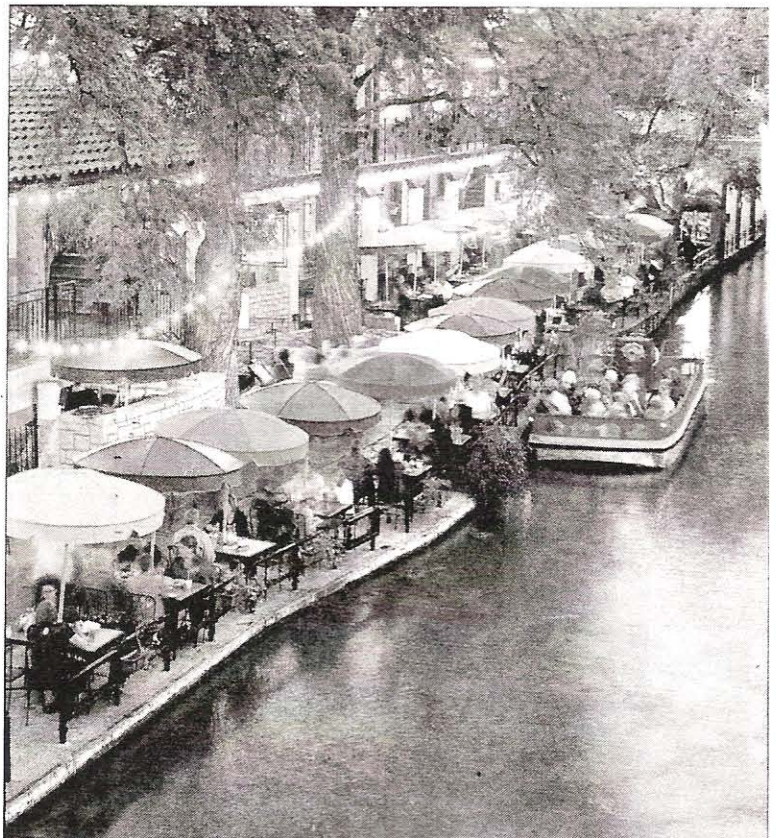
"The expression here is that San Antonio is everybody's second home," says Phil Hardberger, the city's long-time mayor. "It is one of the oldest cities in the United States, very historic, and also an oasis of sort. Texas by and large is quite barren, but not in San Antonio, where a river runs through it."

That means River Walk, the city's No. 1 attraction, and to many its biggest selling point. It's scarcely 50 feet across, but its banks are lined with stores, restaurants and nightclubs. A 1939 WPA project, the River Walk — developed at a time when riverbanks were avoided rather than embraced — became the precursor to urban entertainment zones such as Boston's Faneuil Hall and Baltimore's Inner Harbor. A second 2-mile section has just opened, which brings the total River Walk to 4 miles.

The development has become the best-selling area for second homes, says Judy Dalrymple, a real estate agent with Phyllis Browning Co.: "We've had a huge explosion of activity there." New condos downtown begin at less than \$200,000.

Hardberger notes that San Antonio draws many wealthy Mexican nationals seeking vacation homes. "Our buyers from Mexico worry about security and tend to want gated communities" in country club neighborhoods surrounding the city, Dalrymple says.

Though many owners of second homes are refugees from cold-weather climates, San Antonio is also a popular refuge from much hotter South Texas. Numerous resorts and golf communities in the edges of Hill Country, the city's other popular second-home locale, are within easy access of downtown.



By Stuart Dee, San Antonio CVB

Venerable River Walk: The 4-mile stretch lined with restaurants, clubs and stores is the jewel of the city. Built in 1939, it was a pioneer in urban waterfront development.

True Texas Lady

A very gentle Texas lady was driving across the Pecos High Bridge in Texas one day. As she neared the middle of the bridge, she noticed a young man fixin' to (mean's getting ready to' in Texas) jump.

She stopped her car, rolled down the window and said, "Please don't jump, think of your dear mother and father."

He replied, "Mom and Dad are both dead; I'm going to jump."

She said, "Well, think of your wife and children."

He replied, "I'm not married and I don't have any kids."

She said, "Well, Remember the Alamo."

He replied, "What's the Alamo?"

She replied, "Well, bless your heart, just go ahead and jump, you damn Yankee

Letters

Vistimil Hela to Loy Dickinson:

I have just bought the DVD with a very old movie called Aerial Gunner. It is a story from WW-II. Ronald Reagan played one of the gunners.

There is a sentence in the story about Tail End Charlie, like the name of the B-17 No. 159 (your plane). Do you know what this really means or has it any special meaning or saying beside the name for the last plane at the end of the formation. Let me, please know your opinion. Why was this used like the name of one of the bombers? Who gave the name to plane? Crew? Or someone else?

LOY'S ANSWER:

I am very happy to pass along a little of the slang.

I believe that "Tail End Charlie" may have first been used in the UK to designate the last man up in a cricket match. But during WW-II it was widely used to describe the "tail gunner" on a bomber, whether American or British.

When Bill Tune and crew were flying 159, I don't think any of us knew the name of the aircraft unless we had flown on it before. In any case, I don't remember paying too much attention to what the name was. Also, it was dark when we boarded it.

"Tail End Charlie" has come to mean almost anything or anybody who is bringing up the rear. I do not recall being in any discussion about the name of an airplane. When my original crew (Bill Garland) arrived at Amendola with a brand new B-17G, it was quickly assigned to an experienced crew and we never saw it again. We arrived at the 2nd BG on July 7, 1944 and each of the crew was assigned to fly his first few missions with an experienced crew. After the pilot (Bill Garland) had flown three or four missions as a co-pilot, his original crew began flying together as a regular crew.

Most bombers ended up with names emblazoned on the front along sometimes with art work. The art was sometimes pretty good.

Among the nine planes that were shot down on mission #263, there were seven that had names. Two that I did not name in the little book were because I did not know that they had names. I found out from the plaque, the photo that Susil sent me a few days ago, 048's name was "Mary" and 885 was "Lovely Ladies".

One of our airplanes was named to honor Lloyd

True, whom you may have met at the reunion. His son, George, (also at the reunion) was born about the time the crew had the opportunity to name the plane. Without consulting Lloyd, they decided that its name should be "My Baby" You can say, that is a "True" Story. It was written up in one of our newsletters a few years ago.

Another airplane was named SNAFUPERMAN, which Garland piloted on #263. It was named by its original pilot Charlie Beecham (also at the reunion). This was a marriage of the acronym, "Snafu" (situation normal, all fouled up) and the word "Superman". Hope to see you and your son in San Antonio.

AND EARL PUTS IN A WORD:

As Loy has indicated that his crew picked up a brand new airplane to take across to report to the 2nd at Amendola, my crew also picked up a brand new B-17G at Hunter Field and took it across expecting we would have it to fly our missions. We made no attempt to name it. Of course, when we landed at Amendola, we were told by the Line Chief, "Get your stuff out of the airplane, we need to get it ready for a mission tomorrow." We never saw it again.

The airplane we flew on our first several missions, 42-38066, did have a name. It was named "Marishka" I have no idea why it had that name or where or when it was named. I do know it was a really beat up airplane. Of course, we were the new guys and expected nothing better.

By the time we were shot down, April 13, 1944, we had earned a better airplane and took off in a shiny, almost new one. It was 42-97346 and had no name on the side.

42-38006 flew 98 missions, was later transferred to the 301st Group and was finally salvaged overseas in August, 1945.

My crew and I flew 42-97346 on its second and last mission. It became a heap of junk in a pasture in Yugoslavia.

FROM PHILLIP A. HILL:

I just discovered your web site dedicated to the Second Bombardment Group of the 15th Air Force and think it is a great tribute. My father, George S. Hill was a B-17 Tail Gunner in the 429th Squadron on the 2nd Bombardment Group based at Foggia, Italy. He flew 35 missions from Oct. 1944 to April 1945

Letters

On a number of occasions he told me about his experiences during the war while stationed in Italy and showed me his scrapbook of photographs and memorabilia from that time as well as a small notepad where he had written details about each mission that he flew.

I'm sorry to say that my father died on November 26, 2007 in the city of Carson, California at the age of 85 and I miss him greatly. I hope you will add his name to your In Memoriam list. His name is listed as Hill, George S. in your database.

I was sorry to see that his friend, in the 429th, William E. Gross had passed away in January, 2009 and is the last listing on your in Memoriam list.

I sincerely hope that the sacrifices and accomplishments of the Second Bombardment Group as well as all the veterans of World War II will never be forgotten.

Thank you Sincerely, Phillip A. Hill.

FROM JIM OLIVERI:

The following is submitted by Association member James Oliveri. Thanks, Jim.

Staff Sergeant Thomas Ford was a B-17 Tail Gunner in the 15th Air Force, 96th Bomb Squadron, 2nd Bomb Group. He flew missions from March 15, 1944 to July 20, 1944. Those missions included Cassino, Ploesti, Munich, Memmingen, Debrecen, and many more. Some of his aircraft were named "Catherine The Great", "Dark Eyes", "Old Bird", and "Silver Streak". Thomas Ford was my Grandfather.

I was born 23 years after the end of WW-II, but I was fortunate enough to hear first person accounts from Pop on a regular basis. I can not remember a single time when I was in his presence that he did not speak of his beloved B-17 or those 50 caliber machine guns. It amazes me when I think about this when I had heard stories about him having a rough time after his service. I know he spent some time in Veterans Hospital due to what today would be called "Post Traumatic Stress Syndrome". There are stories of him waking up crying some nights flicking the light switch on and off in his sleep as if dropping the bombs. Somehow, he turned the corner and was able to speak proudly about WW-II. And speak he did.

Pop made the local paper during the war in an article that read "25 from Long Island made historic mission from Italy to Russia". This was the first shuttle

bombing raid over Nazi Europe utilizing an air base in Russia. He saved the clipping all those years and we found it in a drawer after he passed.

Pop passed away on October 26, 1996. Just 2 months prior to his death he was awarded the Commemorative Medal, "The 50th Anniversary of the Great Patriotic War" (World War II). This was issued by Russian President, Boris Yeltsin. I can remember that time and how excited he was. He was invited to Russia to accept the award in person, as I am sure many other airmen were. Unfortunately, Pop was unable to attend as he did not have a passport and could not have one issued in time.

On May 27, 2006, I took a flight in Pops honor on the B-17 Yankee Lady at the American Air Power Museum. In my pockets I carried a photo of him and one of his crew, his Air Medal, a bomb safety pin and one of his dog tags. It was an incredible experience and left me wishing he was there with me. I guess, in a way he was there with me. You see, my wife and I both have brown eyes but our daughter, Grace, has blue eyes. For her to have blue eyes, it had to be on both sides of the family. Pop was the only one on my side with blue eyes. Grace was only 3 months old at the time of my flight, but she was at the AAM watching it through those bright blue eyes. Maybe, just maybe, he was watching through them too.

I welcome correspondence from anyone who knew Thomas R. Ford from New York.

James A. Oliveri, Jr.

onenyyankeefan@yahoo.com

FROM JOSEPH ROSS

ED: This letter is from Joseph Ross whose uncle, James Ross was waist gunner on the crew of pilot Alcot Stover, 429th Squadron on mission 390, April first, 1945 Thanks Joseph for a very informative and descriptive bit of 2nd Bomb history.

I have been corresponding with N.E. Wells, who was the tail gunner with my uncle James Ross on mission 390. My uncle was the left waist gunner. The pilot Alcot Stover is still alive, and confirmed the story my uncle had told me in 1996.

If you look up mission 390, you will see that 4 squadrons went out that day to bomb the rail bridge in Maribor. It was Easter Sunday and also April Fool's

Letters

day. Wells has great information about wind speed and direction, cloud cover, etc. The orders were for visual bombing only. The Germans had moved the flak guns into the mountains so they would be closer to the incoming American planes.

The cloud cover kept the togaliers from getting a fix on the target. Copes plane was damaged by flak and landed at Yu. They made a slow 360 hoping the clouds would clear. The target was still covered although the clouds were clear downwind. "Noisemaker Shuffle" was called and 3 squadrons peeled off to find targets of opportunity. The 429th lead called that they would make a quick 180 and come in from the area with clear skies. But there were only 6 planes since Cope had been shot down.

The flak was horrible. Wells says he has photos showing the bombs walking across the bridge. Good bombing. Right after bombs away, they took several bursts of flak. Wells says the 105 and 88 flak guns were operated by German women. The six planes were catching "Wholly Hell". As Wells explained it "It was all over us". Lt. Andrews had a piece through his hand. An 88 came through the plexiglass nose between Well's knees and out the top to explode above them. Wells had a little hole in his throat and powdered glass gave it a deep sandpaper look. Another went off just above the pilots window. Copilot Wood was in the pilots seat as he and Stover had switched seats before taking off. Stover told me it was so Wood would not have to look across the cockpit to keep track of the other planes in the formation. A big hunk of hot steel caught Lt. Wood in the top of his left shoulder and came out just above his right hip, literally sawing him in two, long ways.

Stover called out for Wells to come up to help Wood as he was hit bad. Stover was slightly wounded and Sam Dudely (top turret) was unconscious. "Get on walk around bottles, we are out of oxygen. Tanks all full of holes". Wells helped Andrews. Got him on a walk around bottle. Ross came forward to help. My uncle had told me that he helped lift Wood from the pilots seat and drop him down to the navigators position. He said the cabin and controls were covered in blood.

Wells helped Andrews and painted a body "M" on his forehead after giving him a morphine shot. Wood was forward on the controls and Wells pulled him back in the seat off the controls. Stover touched Wells

and said Wood is gone, help Sam. As he was working with Sam he felt the 17 fall out from under him. **Now** Stover was slumped on the controls. He had passed out from lack of oxygen. That was when the boys from the back got forward and Uncle Jim helped get Wood out of his seat.

Wells held the controls to keep the plane 'going anywhere but down' until Stover was back on oxygen and conscious. Stover told them to get Woods body out and in Wells letter he told me he thought Sam took the seat, but I wrote him back and told him my Uncle Jim said he helped fly the crippled plane home

Wells didn't know these boys real well. This was his first of 2 missions with them. He later said it was Jim who took the controls. Stover confirmed that and told me by phone that he had Jim follow him on the controls.

The number 3 engine was shot out and also the hydraulics for the right landing gear. Before landing Stover said he had Jim crank the right landing gear down manually. He was very informative and told me of training and flying from the U.S. To North Africa, and the stops along the way. He told me something I had not read in "Bloody Skies" about the water traps they made in the tents for the rats. His letters were very informative. My uncle had told me that the crew was very close as I am sure most crews were. He had gotten some time on the stick in Italy when they slow timed new engines. That was why Stover had him help with the controls. My uncle told me they wanted to put him in for a DFC after that mission. but he refused.

I won't keep you much longer but I will tell you something else he said. He always prayed before and after each mission. The prayer afterward was for forgiveness. He said what he hated most was when they dropped incendiary bombs. He knew that some of the bombs they dropped were on people who had nothing to do with the war.

That is most of what I know about mission 390. I took notes when I talked with Stover and have all the letters Wells has sent me. Stover told me quite a lot that is not in this story, but it was mostly about other missions or everyday stuff that is still very interesting.

Joseph Ross

Mission Report

Ploesti, Romania, Mission No. 238, July 28, 1944:

The target for this date was the Roman-American Oil Refinery, Ploesti, Romania. Twenty-seven aircraft took off at 0700 hours and twenty-three (23) aircraft attacked the target at 1107-1109 hours from an altitude of 23,000 to 24,400 feet. 69 tons of 1000 lb. General Purpose bombs were dropped by PFF.

(PATHFINDER)

A very effective smoke screen was used. Bombs were dropped into the smoke area believed over the target. Flak was heavy, slight to moderate and accurate resulting in the minor damage to 11 aircraft and severe damage to 1. No enemy fighters were encountered.

B-17G 42-31452 from the 20th Squadron is missing. This aircraft turned off just before the I. P. at 44/11N-26/05E. Bombs were salvoed at 1049 hours at 23,000 feet.

2nd Lt. F. M. Rosemore, 0-723172, Nav. 96th Squadron was slightly injured by flak.

S/Sgt. William D. Brown, 14196417, Right Waist Gunner, 20th Squadron was slightly injured by flak.

Three B-17s from other groups were observed to go down. The first one going into the target at 1106 hours, went down in flames, four chutes: second one at 1109 hours after bombs away, disappeared into clouds still apparently under control: six chutes: third one at 1130 hours at 45/21N- 25/32E, spiraled to left and exploded before hitting ground. Observed from 24,000 feet. Phoned into Wing A-2 as flash news.

Missing Air Crew Report: A/C #42-31452 -"Fifty Packin' Mama" 20th Squadron.

EDITORS NOTE: This airplane is pictured on page 234 in *Defenders of Liberty* as the lead aircraft for the Russian Shuttle missions.

1st. Lt. Norman D. Austin, 0-811309 Pilot POW
2nd. Lt. John M. Holt, 0-822441 Co-pilot POW
2nd. Lt. George N. Mullen 0-713212 Navigator POW
FO Frederick C. Decker T-125065 Bombardier POW
T/Sgt. Doyle C. Carson. 34504800 U/T POW
Sgt. KennethP. Baldwin 35874291 L/T POW
Sgt. Alfred T. Pinter 6269354 R/W POW
Sgt. Ray F. Wylie 35583129 L/W POW
Sgt. Hubert R. Cagle 34084707 T/G POW
T/Sgt. Carl C. Jones, Jr. 15057267 R/O KIA

The following statement was taken from a returning crewman at interrogation, after the mission. Sgt. Howard Ryder, Right Waist Gunner on B-17 no. 8006, 20th Squadron, which was flying in the First Wave, Third Squadron, Second Element, Second Plane.

"I noticed B-17 452 as it passed directly under our tail. They were having trouble with their number two engine. It finally passed out of my line of sight and that is the last I saw of it. It was flying under complete control and I saw no chutes leave it. This was about 1049 at approximately 44/30N-26/30E."

The following statements were taken from some crew members after liberation.

Frederick C. Decker, Bombardier. "We left the formation about 20 miles from the target. I was able to bail out, and to the best of my knowledge, all others bailed out also. Lt. Holt was the first out through the bomb bay. Lt. Mullen went out the nose hatch head first. I was the last out through the bomb bay. The rest of the crew bailed out the waist door, all about the same time. I have no knowledge of where the plane crashed."

1st Lt. John M. Holt, Co-pilot: "We left the formation approximately 40 miles S.W. Of the target. All crew members bailed out, more or less simultaneously. Altitude at that time was 12,000. The aircraft exploded in the air at about 10,000 feet. There was no one in the aircraft when it struck the ground. Is it possible that some records have been mislaid? The only member of our crew who was killed was T/Sgt. Carl C. Jones, Jr. 15057267, Radio Operator Gunner, and was definitely identified by other members of the crew.

"He bailed out when all did and, according to other crew member, he was not injured prior to bail out and he acknowledged the signal to bail out. This information came from other crew members. I did not see him myself. According to them, Sgt. Jones was found dead in a field close to where the other crew members landed. His chute was not opened. Whether this was due to faulty operation or to the chute itself, or misjudgment of altitude on th part of Sgt. Jones, no one could decide. I'm inclined to believe the later. We were all well briefed in the technique of delaying pulling the ripcord. In his excitement, Sgt. Jones could conceivably have misjudged his altitude and waited too long to pull the ripcord.

Mission Report

"Of the fact that Sgt. Jone's body was found, I am sure, because other members of the crew identified it. A member assured me. At least, he said that Sgt. Jones would receive a proper burial. He did not specify the exact location of the proposed grave."

T/Sgt. Doyle C. Carson. "All members parachuted safely with the exception of T/Sgt Jones. He was found in a field, dead, and from the condition of the body, suffered a bad fall. From all indications, his chute had only partially opened, or not at all. His identification tags were seen by Sgt. Cagle. From description of wounds, I believe he was injured by gunfire just as he left the ship, but that is only supposition."

MORE ON MISSION 263 Eye Witness accounts.

Through correspondence with his Czech contacts, Todd Weiler has received more First hand information about mission 263. The following is given to us by Frantisek Bartos.

In August, 1944, Mr. Bartos was 10 1/2 years old. As usual, upon sighting the first bombers, school was dismissed about 10AM. (The nearby town of Bojkovice, which had a German Mauser factory had been serially bombed. I believe that the concussion from the blasts caused the board that his father had nailed over the windows to come loose. They fell on his cat, killing her.) The idea was that if Pitin was bombed, or if a plane crashed in the vicinity, if it was to fall on the school, all the children would be killed. If school was dismissed, the kids would be scattered around the town and more were likely to survive. Mr. Bartos calls this time the "most important of the war" because he got out of school early for quite a long time. As he said, not having to go to school is what you appreciate when you are 10 years old and not so much the reason why.

On August 29, 1944, school had been let out as usual, and he had gone home. He was sitting under a tree in the garden (yard) of his house which was on the main road in Pitin close to the church. He heard the bombers, and because it was a cloudy day he could not see them as clearly as usual. Then he saw the planes peeking in and out of the clouds, and he realized it was a dog fight. Because he was sitting under a tree, he moved a little distance so he could see more. He also heard shooting.

At some point, he believes he saw one or two planes. The one he is sure about was the one headed

more or less north. It was on fire and plummeting to the ground and passing west of the village church. (St. Stanislav sits on a hill in Pitin). That would, most likely, have been your uncle's plane. He said he believes either one or both of the planes wings had broken off. From what Roman believes, this was Tune's ship that crashed near Rudice.

He also believes he saw the one that crashed near Krhov. He remembers one plane "tumbling" and spiraling and just one parachute came out. He remembers very clearly the loud explosion from the direction of Krhov and believes it was the bomb payload exploding.

A few days later, (he can't remember how soon afterward) he and some friends (all boys about his age) went to the crash scene. He remembered a very large impact crater there.

He went to Sanov with his mother to visit relatives. They saw bombs sticking out of the ground. He remembers one was "cracked". He realizes now how dangerous that was, but as a child, did not appreciate the danger. Sometime later the Germans sent some people in to remove them.

He did not see Irving Thompson, who according to Roman, was the only survivor of the Queen and traveled through Pitin, but he heard about an American brought to Pitin on a motorcycle on three wheels (i.e. Sidecar). He told me in Czech that they changed the tire there. Apparently there was a young man present in Pitin who had learned English in Prague, who spoke to Thompson. He said he could not remember who they said that young man was.

The village boys went to the various crash sites after all the fliers were either captured or buried and picked up the ball bearings. Apparently the Czech kids had their own version of soap box derby cars and the bearings made the cars go faster. People also picked up the casings for the 50 caliber shells for the brass.

Many times he saw what he called "aluminum foil" falling to the ground over Putin from the bombers. He didn't know the English word "chaff" but said he figured now that they were dropping it because they thought the Germans were monitoring them on radar.

He did not realize there were so many planes downed that day. He only knew about the ones in Sanov, Krhov, and Rudice.

In Memorium

A. E. "Ed" Smith, 20th Squadron March 20, 2009

Wm Dale Schultz, 429th Squadron March 25, 2009

Wm Daryl "Jack" Stuckey, 429th Squadron April 30, 2009

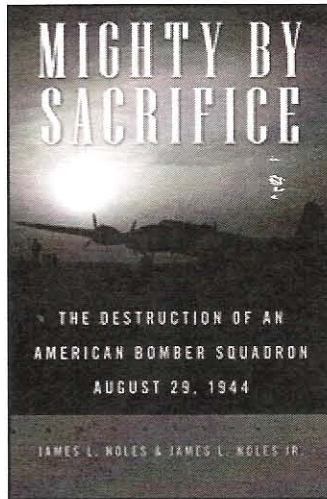
Duane B. Seaman, 429th Squadron May 11, 2009

James J. Miceli, 20th Squadron 2009

Mighty by Sacrifice

"Mighty by Sacrifice" is the story of the Group's ill-fated mission to bomb an oil refinery and railroad marshalling yard in Ostrava, Czechoslovakia, in 1944. The 20th Squadron, 2nd Bombardment Group, dispatched seven bombers to participate in the raid. All seven, however, were shot down by German fighters, as were two other B-17's. Interviewed for the book were the late Bill Garland, Joe Owsianik, the late Willard Netzley, Jim Martin, the late Bill Tune and Loy Dickinson, Leo Zupan, the late Ed Smith and Paul Sumner and the late Duane Seaman. Families of other veterans and casualties of the mission were also interviewed.

Mighty by Sacrifice: The destruction of an American Bomber Squadron, August 29, 1944, is slated to arrive in book stores in late July. It is currently available for advance purchase from University of Alabama Press at 800-621-2736 or on line at www.amazon.com (on Amazon, type in, james l noles - then scroll down to Mighty by Sacrifice.



The book is authored by James L Noles, Jr and his father James L Noles. Noles Jr is a graduate of the United States Military Academy at West Point and is an attorney in Birmingham, Alabama. Noles co-author and father is a retired Army officer who resides in Florence, Alabama.

The title, Noles explains, comes from a line in Rudyard Kipling's poem 'The Islanders', which reads in part, "Cleansed of servile panic, slow to dread or despise. Humble because of knowledge, mighty by sacrifice." Both authors credit the gracious assistance they received in researching this book from the mission's veterans and their families. "It simply would have been impossible to write this book without them," they said, "and we certainly hope that we honored their and their loved ones' legacy and sacrifice with our work. Frankly, that was our main goal."

Saturday Banquet

We are fortunate to have Colonel Steven L Basham as our speaker this evening. Col Basham is Commandant of the 2nd Bombardment Wing at Barksdale AFB, Louisiana. He is 1987 Electrical Engineering graduate of Western Kentucky University. Col Basham has held numerous staff and flying assignments to include commanding the 393rd Bomb Squadron Whiteman AFB, MO and later director of staff for the 509th Bomb Wing at Whiteman AFB. He flew the first B-2 mission from Missouri to Serbia and back during Operation ALLIED FORCE. Basham was director of operations for the first combat deployment of the B-2 during Operation IRAQI FREEDOM.



THE "SECOND BOMB" IN AFRICA

During World War II, most of the combat crews flew their missions from the base at Amendola, Italy. Some perhaps did not realize that the group began operations from Africa and flew 106 missions from three bases there before moving to the Amendola Landing Ground.

After training in Washington and Montana, the group was moved to North Africa under the command of Col. Ford J. Lauer.

It began combat operations with mission number one on April 28, 1943, under the command of Lt. Col. Joseph H. Thomas.

The base was at Chateaudun-du Rhumel, Algeria. The next base was at Ain M'Lila, Algeria from where

they began operations on June 17, 1943.

On August first, 1943 the group had made another move to Massicault, Tunisia, from where they flew missions until moving to Amendola for mission number 107, on December 14, 1943. The rest of the 412 missions the group flew in World War II were based at Amendola, so most of us were at that base during our tours of duty.

After December, 1943, the Second was part of the 2nd Wing, 15th Air Force. The 15th was organized by Maj. Gen. Doolittle. After moving to Italy it was commanded by Maj. Gen. Nathan F. Twining until the end of the war.

DID YOU KNOW?

1. That the Second Bomb Group transitioned to B-29s in 1947. The B-17 era had passed.
2. That Ronald Reagan, (Captain) signed Major Clark Gable's discharge papers at Culver City, CA in June, 1944.
3. That "Rosie The Riveter" was based on the real life aircraft riveter, Rosina B. Bonaavita.
4. That "Operation Flying Elephant" was the Japanese attempt to bomb the U. S. Northwest with balloons.
5. That a U. S. Navy blimp, K-74, was shot down by a German submarine during WW-II.
6. That boxer, Rocky Maraciano was drafted in 1943 and served with the 150 Combat Engineers in Wales.

THE HEAVIES

During WW-II, the Second Bomb Group flew Boeing B-17s in combat in the European Theater of operations. The group was one of 6 groups in the 15th Air Force equipped with B-17s. Fifteen groups of B-24s also flew in the 15th Air Force based in Italy.

The B-17s and B-24s were known as "The Heavies". They were the heavy bombers of WW-II. Sometimes you may see the group listed as 2nd Bomb Group-H.

One might rightfully say "Well, there were bigger airplanes in combat during the war. Of course we know that B-29s were operational in the war against Japan and we know they were much bigger and "heavier" than the "Heavies" Regardless, the B-17s and the B-24s were the "Heavies" of WW-II.

The B-17 was built by the Boeing Company and first flew in July, 1935. 12,731 were built and the cost per airplane was \$238,329. They were called Flying Fortresses. The B-24 was built by the Consolidated Aircraft Company. It first flew in 1939. 18,482 B-24s were built and the cost was \$297,627 each. They

were nicknamed Liberators. During the war, the various airplane manufacturers built both B-17s and B-24s at plants in various parts of the nation. That was a security measure.

More than 5 thousand Heavies were lost in combat, but they carried the heavy bombs to the targets and left the enemies in shambles.



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

Prsrt Std
US Postage
PAID
Permit 479
Denver CO

Earl Martin
Editor
508 Mountain View Rd.
Williamston, SC 29697-9601

Forwarding and Return
Postage Guaranteed
Address Correction Requested



2*10 *****ALL FOR ADC 78099
SID UNDERWOOD
7920 GARDEN NORTH DR
GARDEN RIDGE TX 78266-2713

Second Bombardment Association
www.2ndbombgroup.org
MEMBER APPLICATION

Name _____ Date _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ 9 Digit Zip _____ - _____

Phone Number _____ e-Mail _____

MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

Dues — \$25.00 per 2 years

If WWII — Tell us Squadron No. _____

Make checks payable to:

SECOND BOMBARDMENT ASSN.

Mail to: Second Bombardment Assn.

c/o Matt Bryner

8386 Fenton Way

Arvada, CO 80003

Membership — 2 years — \$25.00 \$ _____