

***Ed & Betty Self***

208 W. Stevens Street  
Smithfield, N.C. 27577

September 6, 2006

Mr. John Hackney  
Wilson, N. C.

Hello John:

It has been many years since we were last in contact. Guess it was when I was working for the USF&G.

I saw your article in the Wilson Daily Times and thought that I would submit my information to you since I am a Veteran from Wilson, having been drafted into the service from Wilson in February 1943.

I went in along with George Hackney, Wiley Forbes, Jake Lamm, Vernon Joyner, and Bruce <sup>Belk ANT</sup> He worked with the bank. We were all put in the Army Air Corp and sent to Keesler Field, Miss for basic training.

I was going to Atlantic Christian College and working ast Belk-Tyler after classes. If you remember, I married Mr. Jeffries daughter Betty. Her brother was Herb Jeffries who became manager of Belk's when their father died. Her sister Bobby married Joe Chesson.

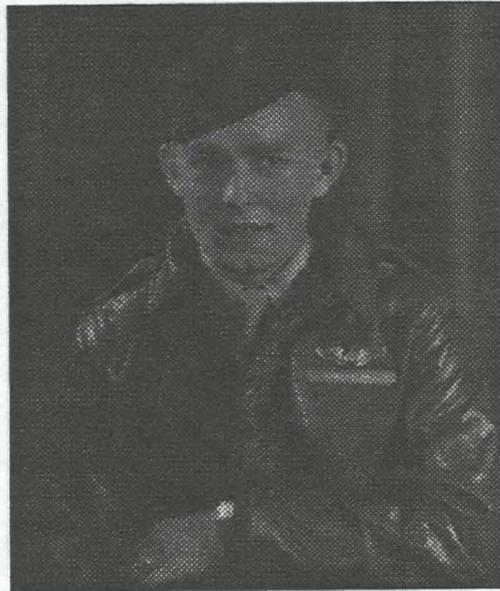
From the enclosed papers, you can see where I have been since that time. We are currently living in Smithfield, N.C. and I am working part time at Johnston Community College

Hope this finds you and yours in good health.,

Sincerely,



Robert E. "Ed" Self  
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**ROBERT EDWARD SELF**

Penn  
CRYTZER

No-CAR  
SELF

TEXAS  
WHETSTONE

OHIO  
KISAPP

OREGON  
STEWART



SWANSON  
CO-PILOT  
WASHINGTON STATE

HUGO  
BOMBARDIER  
OREGON

STEMBERG  
PILOT  
CALIF

O'BRIEN  
NAVIGATOR  
CALIF

CARSWRIGHT - TAIL GUNNER - ABSENT  
WISCONSIN



## **Robert E. "Ed" Self Military Service Records**

I was born June 3, 1924 in Nash County in the Mount Pleasants / Floods Chapel area of Nash County, N.C. This is on N.C. Highway # 581 that runs from Bailey, N.C. To Spring Hope, N.C. Parents were Robert Daniel Self, father and Blanche Vick Self, mother. Lived in Spring Hope, N.C. and graduated from Spring Hope High School April 22, 1942. My family moved to Wilson in 1940 and I stayed in Spring Hope until I graduated from High School. I played on the Basket Ball and Base Ball teams while in High School. After graduation, I attended Atlantic Christian College while working part time at Belk Tyler Co. in Wilson until I was drafted on February 4, 1943

I was drafted into the Military Service on February 4, 1943. I left Wilson, N.C. by bus and reported to Fort Bragg, N.C. for induction. Here I was given a physical examination and a battery of mental aptitude test to determine placement. I was assigned to the U.S. Army Air Corp after several days and then given a week to go back home before reporting back to Fort Bragg for shipment to Keesler Air Force Base in Biloxi, Miss. I left Fort Bragg on February 23, 1943 by train for Keesler Air Force Base and Basic Training.

All the fellows who were inducted at the same time I was, in Wilson were assigned to the U.S. Army Air Corps and sent to Keesler Field, Mississippi along with me for Basic Training. We were Assigned to squadrons and they did not have sufficient housing for us so we ended up in what was called Tent City with eight men to a tent. This was an experience that I had never been exposed to before. February was a rainy season that year and it was really MUD city. It seems that we stayed wet most of the time. I ended up in the hospital with pneumonia and was there for about three weeks, living on sulfa drugs. I finally got out and went back to my squadron and was able to finish my basic training with the group that I started with.

After Basic training we were then assigned to different occupational training schools across the country, Air Plane Mechanic, Radio, & Armory. I was assigned to Air Plane Mechanic School and stayed there at Keesler Field. At this time the demand for airplane mechanics was very great as the war was really heating up. This school ran on a 24 hour, 7 day a week schedule. During this time you drew a school schedule that at one time or another put you so that you ended up on each of the 8 hour schedules. There were 9 mess hall that ran on the 24 hours also. While number 1, 2 & 3 were serving breakfast, 4, 5, & 6 were serving lunch and 7, 8 & 9 were serving supper. Next shift - 1,2 & 3 served lunch, 4, 5 & 6 served supper and 7, 8, & 9 served breakfast. This worked our real good because you could actually take you choice of which meal you wanted to eat at any given time. Not to be left out, we all had to pull our turn on KP [Kitchen Police]. During this time of training, we still had to do other duties in our spare time.

I graduated from AM school in October 1943 and promoted to the rank of PFC. I was then sent to Harlingen Air Force Base, Texas on October 6, 1943 to attend Aerial Gunnery school.

On October 8, 1943 I had to take a Physical Training Test and did 58 sit-ups, 8 chin ups and ran 300 yards in 57 seconds. We also drilled for two hours and afterwards had a G.I. Party in the barracks, which is scrubbing the floors and giving it a complete cleanup in preparation for the Inspection to be held next morning.

October 9, 1943 - Today we went into the pressure chamber up to 30,000 feet and we had to take off our oxygen mask to see how long before we passed out... I passed out twice when I had my mask off for a period of three [3] minutes.

October 12<sup>th</sup> we took our night vision test for the first time, I had score of 25 out of 40 which was good.

October 13<sup>th</sup> had to take early morning run of 2 ½ miles before breakfast. And later had a 4 hour First Aid class.

October 14<sup>th</sup>. Today I went up to 38,000 feet in the pressure chamber. In the afternoon we fired on the BB range and the 22 caliber Range.

October 15<sup>th</sup> we had PT and went into the gas chamber to learn the use of the gas mask and how important it was to you. After that we had a series of lectures.

October 16<sup>th</sup> We had lectures on the school we were attending and what to expect and also on furlough which we would receive when we graduated. We had our pictures taken for publication back home in our local newspapers and received our books.

October 18<sup>th</sup> 1943 we started our first class.

October 19<sup>th</sup> learned the operation of the Sperry Ball Turret .. Today we were moved to the Student area.

October 20<sup>th</sup> - Today went skeet shooting for the first time and here we used the shot gun. I like skeet shooting but I was only able to get 13 out of 25 today.

October 21<sup>st</sup> - Back to the Ball Turret again.

October 22<sup>nd</sup> -Back to the skeet range and today I got 18 out of 25.

October 23<sup>rd</sup> - today we took our first week test and I did O.K.

October 24<sup>th</sup> - went into town to church and later in the afternoon to a movie.

October 25<sup>th</sup> -- today learned that I am to specialize in the Ball Turret and am going to school tonight.

October 30<sup>th</sup> - finished second week of school and passed everything - now only 4 more weeks to go.

November 27<sup>th</sup> - Graduated today and received my wings and promotion to Sgt.

December 1<sup>st</sup> - left Harlingen for Hammer Field, Calif. With a delay in route of 15 days which I am spending at home in Wilson, N.C.

December 4<sup>th</sup> - arrived home at 5:35 A.M. and it is good to be home. The first time since I left on February 11<sup>th</sup> when I was drafted.

#### Comments on time spent at Harlingen Air Force Base, Texas

I had never been in an airplane other than in the school at Keesler. There we were only learning how to repair them. Here at Harlingen we were learning all about the 50 caliber Browning machine gun. This is the gun that was installed in the planes that were flying combat overseas. We started out our flying in the AT-6 training plane. All the pilots were assigned there when they fouled up somewhere and this was punishment for them, to fly the student gunners on their missions. As a student gunner, you were in the rear seat of the AT-6. You had on your seat type parachute and there was an anchor in the floor of the plane with a strap that you hooked thru the leg strap of you parachute. This had some 6 to 8 inches of play in it so that you could stand up, un-hook the machine gun that was mounted so that it was secured and faced to the rear of the plane. When you came up to altitude and the plane towing the target that you were to shoot at arrived,

then ,you had to un-hook the gun, swing it around to the side of the plane and shoot at the target being towed by the other plane Each plane with a student, the guns carried bullets with tips painted a different color in order that when you got back on the ground they could see how many of your bullets went into the target.

The pilots took great delight in that when they saw in their rear view mirror, the last bullet go into the gun, they would pull the nose up, do a 180 degree roll to the left and put the nose directly down toward the Gulf of Mexico. All this time you were hanging from the strap that went through your parachute harness at you leg, while in this position, you had to get the gun swung back to the rear of the plane and locked into position. While this was going on, the horn on the plane was screaming that the plane was at maximum red line speed. The pilot always pulled out of the dive just above the water and they took great pleasure in scaring us half to death with their antics. Other times we flew in twin engine beech craft planes with a top mounted turret and we had to fire at the target from that position. I feel very strongly that at times the pilots had had just a little too much to drink before they took us flying and when they would land, many times it was a very hard landing and you bounced up and down going down the runway before coming to a stop. We had some very good time in the mock-ups that gave you a 360 degree view of the sky and you were shooting at the planes with camera guns. This gave you the feeling that you were flying in the top turret of a bomber. We even had automatic machine gun crafted from BB guns.

Harlingen, Texas is in the very lower part of Texas near the Mexican border. It is in the heart of the citrus country of Texas and we had oranges, grapefruits, tangerines, lemons growing all over the base. I graduated from the gunnery school and was promoted to Buck Sgt and given a 15 day delay in route leave on my way to my next base which was to be Hammer Air Force Base in California.

My leave was up on December 14, 1943 and I asked Betty to Marry me and she said

"yes" but changed her mind to "No" after I got to camp.

December 15<sup>th</sup> - I left Wilson by train to go to Fresno, California, not knowing or realizing that I would not get back home until 19 months later in May 1945. There was a large snow on the ground that day.

I arrived at Hammer on December 19, 1943. At 2:25 Sunday night, got to camp and bed around 5:00 A.M. which was the 20<sup>th</sup>.

December 21<sup>st</sup> - Got fussed out by the C.O. for not getting up for roll call.

December 22<sup>nd</sup> - Had another physical examination and went through classification. Also got a tetanus, typhus and a cholera shot today, tonight I can hardly move either arm.

December 25<sup>th</sup> - we had a very good meal for this Christmas Day and I spent most of the day sleeping.

December 27<sup>th</sup> - Received my first mail direct from home - great to be getting mail again.

January 15, 1944 - left Hammer Field and assigned to March Air Force Base. Arriving on

January 16<sup>th</sup>.. I have never understood why I was sent to Hammer to learn to be a Ball Turret Gunner since my MOS [ Military Occupational Specialty] was 748 Aerial Engineer. The engineer never flew in the Ball Turret. He in most cases as was mine, flew the Top Turret which was on the Cockpit area so that he would be near the Pilot when needed, which was often.

Any way I completed the course and was then transferred to March Air Force Base, leaving Hammer on January 15, 1944 and arriving at March on January 16, 1944.

At March Air Force Base I was assigned to a flight crew consisting of 10 crewmen including myself. I do not remember the names of all the members of this crew. The pilot was Dunlap, then there were the two other Engineers besides myself, one being James Brown from Jackson, Mississippi, the other Bob Givens from Dayton, Ohio

Bob Givens and myself felt that there was not a need for the three engineers so we applied for Aviation Cadets training to get off this crew.

February 8<sup>th</sup> - took and passed the Cadet mental test.

February 9<sup>th</sup> - took and passed the Cadet physical examination - now it is up to the board.

February 13<sup>th</sup> - We went on a gunnery mission and a 1000 mile cross water navigation mission over the Pacific Ocean.

February 15<sup>th</sup> - met with the board and I was asked only a few question and given the OK.

February 23<sup>rd</sup> - today I was removed from the crew and started working in the HBC Headquarters. It is the easiest job I have had since entering the service. Givens and I were assigned to this group and we were the only ones in it. We had a Capt. For the C.O. and he gave us a First Class Pass which let us off the field at any time we were not having other duties for him. Our main job was to just drive him where he wanted to go.

March 12<sup>th</sup> - today I drove a jeep for the first time.

March 13<sup>th</sup> - Went into Hollywood and to the Hollywood Canteen - there I saw Irene

Dunn, James Gleason and several other movie stars working at the Canteen..

May 1<sup>st</sup> - it was learned that the Air Force had all the Cadets that it needed and that they were even transferring some of the ones that had already been called, into the Army. Givens and I decided that we did not want any part of being transferred into the Army so we reapplied for assignment to another crew. We were each given our own crew with only one Engineer on it. This is what we wanted.

My crew was just in the process of being assembled and they were as follows.

Pilot	Howard NMI Steinberg
Co-Pilot	Robert J. Swanson
Navigator	Ryan M. O'Brien
Bombardier -	Richard F. Hugo
Engineer	Robert E. Self [me]
Radio	Robert P. Stewart
Ball Gunner	Homer H. Knapp
Tail Gunner	Anthony L. Cartwright
Nose Gunner	Lynn B. Crytzer
Waist Gunner -	Leonard J. Whetstone - "POP" oldest man on the crew. He had served on submarines in the Navy in the 1930's

From May 1<sup>st</sup> until June 15<sup>th</sup> we did our training - learning the B-24 Heavy Bomber. I

had worked on them back in AM School at Keesler Field, so I knew the workings of the plane. Now we were learning the operation of it in the air. We flew days and nights, short missions and long missions, There were days when all we did was to shoot landings, that is take off, circle the field and land, only you did not stop. As soon as the wheels touched the ground, it was give it the throttle and take off again. This was Really tiring work as the Engineer had to be constantly running from the cockpit to the rear of the plane to check to see that the landing gear was down and locked. At night you had to use a flashlight to see that the locking pin had fallen into place on the landing gear.

There were other days and nights when we would do cross country flights and also do air to ground gunnery practice in the desert of Nevada. There were other days and nights that we would fly out over the Pacific Ocean on navigational training missions where you could not have any kind of land marks to go by, only water and the Navigator and his instruments. This training came in very handily when we left Newfoundland headed for the Azores Island and from there to North Africa. Other days and nights you would put the plane through its paces, doing power on stalls. In this you put the plane into a climb and hold the nose up rather sharply until it stopped climbing and the nose dropped straight down.

What a wild ride it was in the tail of the plane when it fell off after it stopped climbing, the nose of the plane would drop almost straight down and you would really pick up speed. Then it was pull out of the dive and do it again.

Always before take off it was the duty of the Engineer to do a complete visual check of the plane to be sure that everything was in proper working order. Had to get on top of the plane to be sure that the gas caps were secured with the wire to be sure that they did not come off. If they came off, it only took a short time for all the gas to be drawn out of the opening. This would present a fire hazzard if the gas was being drawn out by

the air passing over the open inlet port.

While stationed at March AF Base, Riverside, Calif. We spent a lot of time visiting in Riverside as there were many interesting sight to see, especially the old, old Mission Inn. This was actually an old Spanish Inn that was still in service and would have been a nice place to stay. We visited Palm Springs, Redding and Banning plus spending most of our off duty time in Hollywood. While there, we always went to the Hollywood Canteen. This was run by the USO for the service men on leave and always there would be several Movie Stars there every time you went. There was always one of the name bands there and plenty to eat. We would go to the Brown Derby Restaurant and the Palace night club. There was a Drug store on the corner of Hollywood and Vine that made great milkshakes and sandwiches. This is the one that Lana Turner was discovered in. Across the street from this drug store was a great Italian Restaurant where they served great spaghetti.

A couple of blocks away on Hollywood was the Grumman Chinese Theater where the STARS put their hand prints and foot prints in new poured cement. This is a custom that is still going on this date as of the time I am writing this [ 6/26/2004 ]].

This area is in the middle of the citrus section of California and we visited the orchards and purchased fruit and sent it back home to North Carolina.

July 21, 1944, after completing our training in preparation for being sent overseas, we were put on a train at 3:00 p.m. and sent to Hamilton Field, San Rafael, California arriving at 6:00 p.m. the next day. Here we stayed several days and were issued all new clothes, flight gear, Mae West, 45 automatic pistol and shoulder holster with ammo. July 23, 1944 We picked up a Brand New B-24J and did a test flight on it to check out the operation of the engines, compass and other parts before boarding for our next flight. One compass was within a couple of degrees on each heading and the other was

off over thirty degrees.

While there, we did have the opportunity to visit in the City of San Francisco. We [the enlisted men of the crew ] spent our last night on the town. We had a crew picture taken in the Crystal Bar. From the picture, it looks as if I am the only one to have had anything to drink, but just the opposite is true, I was the only one on the crew who did not drink [strong drink].

July 25, 1944 - We took off for Amarillo, Texas, in the morning by way of Kingman, Arizona. One of the planes ditched in the San Francisco Bay after take off.

July 26, 1944 - Left Amarillo, Texas for Grenier Field, New Hampshire by way of Saint Louis, Missouri, Pittsburg, Pa and Boston. Arrived late in the afternoon and stayed there four days due to bad weather.

July 30, 1944 - Took off in the morning for Gander, New Foundland, by way of Portland, Banger and Sydney. It was only at this point in time that we were allowed to open our orders to learn what our destination was to be. We were prepared for Alaska since we had been issued only winter clothes. What we were going to need was summer clothes when we got to North Africa.

August 3, 1944 - We were briefed and prepared for take off for the Azores at midnight to fly a great circle route. It was pouring rain, extremely hard and as we were in line waiting to taxi out for take off, one B-17 that was ahead of us crashed on take off and burned. The rest of the departures were canceled. Every plane was loaded with the maximum amount of gasoline they could carry. In our case it was if I remember correctly 2,700 gallons.

August 5, 1944 - At midnight we take off for the Azores. Half the sky was overcast

making it difficult for the Navigator to do his celestial navigation. There was no radio available for navigation as was the case in the States. Flying a great circle route, a correction of about three degrees is made for every two hundred miles. At the end of the first leg we were about 50 mile North of our intended course determined by a celestial fix. The compass was checked with the astro compass and it was determined that the compass we used all the way from California to New Foundland was now off about 30 degree and the compass that was off 30 degrees when we checked the compasses in California was now within a couple of degrees. The Navigator continued to take celestial fixes until sunrise and then took sun shots to check longitude. We flew about 1,000 miles North of Bermuda but could not pick up the Bermuda radio. About 9:00 A.M. the outline of the Azores mountains appeared over the nose of the plane about 200 miles ahead of us.

August 6, 1944 - We arrived in the Azores and flew over a German air-sea rescue base on the approach to the airfield. This was our first time landing on steel mats and it sounded as if the plane was going to fall apart. It is quiet disconcerting after making all your landing on concrete.

August 7, 1944 - We took off in the morning for Marrakech, Morocco. No radio but the Navigator got one noon day fix on the sun by taking a shot at 11:00 a.m., Noon and 1:00 p.m. and advancing the shots to determine the position at noon. We crossed over the coast of Africa near Casablanca and altered course to Marrakech. When we got there we had to let the air speed drop to 50 mph before the plane would finally touch the runway. When we got out of the plane the temperature was about 130 degree and it felt as if the plane was on fire. Remember now, we only had winter clothes and this really put us in a sweat. We were put in the French Foreign Legion barrack at the air field. We were not allowed to leave the field.

August 8, 1944 - We leave Marrakech for Tunis by way of Algiers and North Africa.

August 9, 1944 - We leave Tunis for Gioia, Italy by way of Sicily.

August 11, 1944 - We take off from Gioia for Foggia and then are sent to the 484<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group, nine miles southeast of Cerignolia, Italy. There we are assigned to the 825<sup>th</sup> Bomb Squadron. The Pilot, Co-Pilot, Navigator and Bombardier are assigned to a 16' x 16' tent and the six of us enlisted men are assigned to another tent of the same size.

1<sup>st</sup> MISSION - August 14, 1944 - Mission was 7 hours 15 minutes in length. The PLANE today was # 45 Nose number Serial # 42-52635 No planes lost and no casualties today When scheduled to fly, the crews that are flying are awakened at 5:00 A.M. and have their breakfast before the ones who are not flying as they usually sleep in. Today we were not scheduled to fly and were in the Mess Tent having breakfast when the orderly clerk came rushing in and called my name and the names of my Ball gunner Homer Knapp and Tail gunner Tony Cartwright. When we got out he told us to get moving as we were flying that day and the planes were just about ready to take off. We had no idea who we were flying with nor where we were going. We discovered that we were going to Bomb the St. Topez Gun Installations in France. This was the Invasion of Southern France. There was no opposition at the target. I was not flying my normal position of Engineer, rather I was put in as a waist gunner for this mission. The three of us were fill ins on a crew with Pilot - Capt. A. M. Watts, C.P. was 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. G. D. Darling, Navigator was 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. K. V. Scott, Bombardier was 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. R. J. O'Rielly, Engineer was T/Sgt R. J. Baring, Radio Operator was Cpl. L. L. Usherson, I was the Nose gunner on this trip, Cpl. Tony Cartwright from my crew was the Tail gunner, Cpl Homer Knapp from my crew was the 'Ball gunner, and the Top gunner was S/Sgt. A. O. Lopez.

August 16, 1944 - We were scheduled to fly on this date to the French Coast but the Allies had already taken the target and the mission was called off. We flew a two hour flight around Southern Italy.

2<sup>nd</sup> MISSION - August 17, 1944 - Mission was 7 hours 20 minutes in length. Lost one plane and 10 member crew. The target today was Ploesti, Rumania. When they draw back that curtain to reveal the target for the day and you see Ploesti, your heart sinks to the bottom of your shoes. This is the worst target in the war. We flew to Yugoslavia and over Albania, Bulgaria and into Rumania. No enemy action until we get to the target. We detoured the flack areas. A smoke screen covered Ploesti and about 75 B-24's were about 5 miles ahead of us in the middle of a large black cloud of flak. There was so much flak that it appeared to be one large burst covering the entire 75 planes. From that distant it did not look like any of the planes would come out of that black cloud. The cloud didn't go away, it just stayed there and we knew we had to go through it - knowing what it was. I was in my usual position in the upper turret and had asked the Navigator, Ryan O'Brien to refill the oxygen bottles attached to the bottom of my turret. Someone called fighters and gave the location, without thinking that O'Brien was filling my oxygen bottles, I quickly turned the turret and being attached to the connector hose to the plane oxygen system, broke the system and all the oxygen was lost in short order when the filler hose pulled out of the wall. We had to leave the formation which was at 29,000 feet and get down to 13,000 feet in short order. Above that altitude, you only survive a couple of minutes with out oxygen. About 20 miles from the target, the formation had dropped from 29,000 to 18,000 feet and we stayed under them all the way home. Each plane carried ten [10 ] 500 pound bombs or five [5 ] 1,000 pound bombs.

3<sup>rd</sup> MISSION - AUGUST 18, 1944 - Mission was 6 hours in length. No planes lost and no casualties. The target today was the Folk Wolf 190 Squadron located at Alibunar Airdrome, Yugoslavia, on a field 25 miles east of Belgrade, Rumania. We were to bomb

about 50 fighters on the ground before they took off after the bombers flying another mission to Ploesti. We carried 250 fragmentation bombs in 90 pound clusters.

August 19, 1944 - We flew four [4 ] hours of formation practice around Italy.

4<sup>th</sup> MISSION - AUGUST 20, 1944 - Mission was 6 hours and 30 minutes in length. Lost one plane and 10 crew members. Our target today was Szolnok Airdrome, Hungary.

5<sup>th</sup> MISSION - August 22, 1944 - We flew plane # 34 "What's Up Doc". After the mission, the plane was not in flyable condition again until October 16, 1944. Mission was 7 hours and 30 minutes in length. Lost three planes and 29 crew members. The target was an oil storage depot built underground just off the Danhue River bank about 5 miles southeast of Vienna, Austria. When we were about 60 miles from the target we lost engine # 1 and it was feathered. We could not keep up with the formation so we dropped to 13,000 feet and continued to the target alone. We were just west of Gyor and the formation was to go about 50 miles north of the target and make a 180 degree turn and make the bomb run going south and home. We decided to head for the Danhue about miles east of the target and head west on the Danhue to the target. We did not know that most of the 88 MM guns in the Vienna area were mounted on barges on the Danhue River so they could be pulled to defend the targets. At 13,000 feet we were attacked by about ten ME 109's. Our tail gunner, Tony Cartwright, shot down two. I was in the top turret and saw as ME 109 come out of the sun from the left side of the plane, firing his machine guns and 20 MM shells. He came within three feet of the top side of the plane and his propeller cut the two wire radio antennas leading from the top of the tail rudders to their mount on the forward part of the plane just to the rear of the top turret. I could see his face clearly as he went by. The planes already had lobbed 20 MM shell at us from the rear and had blown a hole in the right wing just back of the # 3 engine about 2 feet in size. The pulled off and got in front of us and were making a head on attack all together. Lynn Crytzer got off a few burst with his twin 50 cal. and his

guns jammed. Just at this time our P-38's arrived and shot down six of them as they were making what they thought was going to be their kill. I do not believe that they saw or were aware of the p-38's at that time. Only one p-38 was shot down in the dog fight that went on. As soon as we entered the flack area over the Danube River, we were safe from the 109's. It was extremely heavy flax at 13,000 feet and we had about three minutes on the bomb run up the Danube. We turned south off the target and we were about two minutes behind one group at 24,000 feet and almost two minutes ahead of our own formation which was also at 24,000 feet. Initially we were going to pick up our group as they came off the target but when we arrived they were nowhere in sight - we were there all alone. We discussed it over the intercom and decided jointly that since we were there by ourselves, we would just go ahead and bomb. We had one advantage and that was that we were flying on three engines and it was difficult to fly straight and level at all time. We were continually being pulled to the right since the dead engine was on the left side. As we pulled away from the target, approximately two minutes later we could see the flax at high altitude as our group bombed from 24,000 feet. Our formation overtook us and passed overhead at Neusiedler Lake. On the way back we saw the 109's still burning on the ground. We carried five 1,000 # g.p., Bombs. Our plane was full of flack and machine gun holes plus two unexploded 20 MM shell in the right gas tank. When the tanks were hit, the hole flamed for a few minutes and then the sealer shut off the gas and the fire went out. The plane was in repair for about two months.

6<sup>th</sup> MISSION - August 24, 1944 - Mission was 5 hours and 15 minutes in length. One plane was lost and one person injured. The target was a bridge in Northern Italy on the Po River. It was as double railroad bridge about three miles North of Ferrar. This railroad was the main supply line for the German line ;on the Eastern front of Northern Italy. We hit the bridge and only lost one plane to flax. They lost two engines and ditched in the Adriatic Sea.

7<sup>th</sup> MISSION - August 26, 1944 - Mission was 7 hours and 45 minutes in length. Had no loses of planes nor men. The target was an airfield about five miles North of Bucharest, Rumania. The Rumanians took over Bucharest yesterday and it was being bombed by the Germans. We were to destroy the field so the Germans could not bring in airborne troop to take the city back. We carried 9 - 500# g.p. bombs.

8<sup>th</sup> MISSION - August 28, 1944 - Mission was 6 hours and 45 minutes in length. Our group lost one plane and the 10 man crew. The target was a bridge on the Tisza River in the town of Szalnok about 35 miles East of Budapest, Hungary. Everything went fine, we hit the target with 5 500 lb bombs.

9<sup>th</sup> -MISSION - August 29, 1944 - Mission was 6 hours and 15 minutes in length. We had no casualties today. The target was a railroad bridge ;on the Tisza River at the town of Szeged in Hungary about 10 miles from the junction of Hungary, Yugoslavia and Rumania. Our formation was to fly North into Hungary without fighter escort and lure the German fighters from Germany and Austria. They would intercept us near Lake Balaton but just as we approached the Southern bank of the lake we turned East to our target. The German fighters had been waiting for us on the North side of the lake and the object was for them to be low on gas when another large formation would follow us and proceed North to targets in Austria and Germany. The formation was one-half hour behind us and by then the fighters were too low on gas to intercept and by the time they landed to refuel the formation dropped their bombs and were on their way home.

August 30, 1944 - We had no mission today and we flew to Rome and spent the day.

10<sup>th</sup> MISSION - September 2, 1944 - Mission was 5 hours and 5 minutes in length. Our group had no casualties today. Target today was a railroad bridge in central Southern Yugoslavia in the town of Mitrovica on the Sitnica River. It was a short and successful mission. We flew over Albania to the target.

11<sup>th</sup> MISSION - September 5, 1944 - Mission was 5 hours and 35 minutes in length. Our group had no casualties today. Target today was another railroad bridge on the Sarva River just three miles from where it joins the Danhu River in the city of Belgrade, Yugoslavia. There was a solid overcast and we could not see Belgrade so we went to the alternate target and it was also overcast and we had to return to the base with the bombs

12<sup>th</sup> MISSION - September 6, 1944 - Mission was 5 hours and 15 minutes in length. Our group had no casualties today. Target was the same as yesterday and today the weather was clear. We had good hits on the target and also had plenty of flak holes in the plane. Sounded like shaking peas in the tin can when we were being hit. We had no fighter opposition.

13<sup>th</sup> MISSION - September 11, 1944 - Plane # 41 Nose - Serial # 42-50797 Mission was 9 hours in length. No casualties today. This was not a bombing mission but a supply mission. Patton's army had out run their supplies and we had to ferry gasoline and oil to Lyons, France. Instead of bombs, they put a wooden floor in the bomb bay and 50 gallon drums of gasoline and oil both in the bomb bay and also in the rear compartment of the plane behind the bomb bay. This supply mission lasted through September 22, 1944. Crews took turns on these missions. Would have been great to have flown them all, then we would have gotten our 35 missions in much sooner.

14<sup>th</sup> MISSION - September 15, 1944 - Plane # 39 Nose Serial # 42-50642 . Mission again was 9 hours in length. These two supply mission, the time included landing in France and unloading the gas and oil. In addition to the fuel we carried in the drums, we also siphoned out of our main tanks all that we could spare, just to leave us enough to return to our base in Italy.

15<sup>th</sup> - MISSION - October 11, 1944 - Plane # 32 Nose Serial # 42-52690 Mission was 6 hours and 35 minutes in length. Again our group suffered no casualties. Our target today was the Lavamund Marshaling Yards in Austria.

MISSION - Did not take off - was not counted as a mission. Target was to be Edrsekujvac, Hungary. Scheduled to fly plane # 40 Nose, Serial # 42-51851

16<sup>th</sup> - MISSION - October 16, 1944 - Plane # 48 Nose, Serial # 44-41145. Mission was 7 hours and 25 minutes in length. Our group lost no planes but due to flak, one man was injured. The target was the Bensene Oil depot in Linz, Austria. The target was overcast so we bombed by P.F.F. There was lot of flak and we got hit knocking out the number 3 engine. From that point on, we had only three engines to get us home. Thirty planes took off to bomb the Ordinance Works at Linz, Austria. 60 tons of bombs were dropped long and to the left of the target. Fighters were seen but they did not attack the formation. Heavy flak was encountered and twelve planes in total were moderately damaged.

17<sup>th</sup> MISSION - October 20, 1944 - Plane #48 Nose Serial # 44-41145. Mission was 6 hours and 45 minutes in length. Again our group had no Casualties. Target today was the Milan Romeo Armament Works [ Ordinance Depot and Repair Shops] in Milan, Italy. Target about 40 miles South of Switzerland. There was 50 mile visibility .The target area was well covered with 95% of the bombs in the target area. There was no flak nor fighters

October 29, 1944 - .We flew half way to Munich and had to return to base as all areas were covered with clouds. NO Credit given for this mission.

18<sup>th</sup> MISSION - November 1, 1944 Plane # 48 Nose - Serial # 44-41145. Mission was 7 hours and 15 minutes in length. Our group lost one plane with 10 men and two men in another plane were injured by flak. The target was Oil Installations and Ordinance Dept in Vienna, Austria. There was complete cloud cover and we had to drop two bombs in Yugoslavia to keep up with the formation due to engine trouble. We only got to a point half way between Vienna and Linz and then had to come home alone. The balance of our bombs, we dropped in the Adriatic sea

19<sup>th</sup> MISSION - November 4, 1944 -Plane # 35 Nose Serial # 42-52658. Mission was 8 hours in length. Our group lost one plane and three men were listed as casualties. The target was a marshaling yard at Augsburg, Germany, about 35 miles North West of Munich. The distribution point of vital military traffic on the most important route to the whole southeastern front, was the target for this date. There was a solid cloud cover and we never saw the target and we bombed by P.F.F. We carried incendiaries and 500 lb bombs with 60 to 72 hour delay fuses.

20<sup>th</sup> MISSION - November 5, 1944 - Plane # 35 Nose, Serial # 42-52658. Mission was 7 hours and 20 minutes in length. Our group suffered no casualties today. The target today was Florisdorf Oil Refinery in Vienna, Austria. The entire 15<sup>th</sup> Air Force bombed the same target. The target was completely overcast and we bombed by P.F.F. There was intense flak and fighters after we left the target. We returned with 16 flak holes in the plane.

21<sup>st</sup> MISSION - November 6, 1944 - Mission was 6 hours and 20 minutes in length. Our group suffered no casualties today. The target was the Vosendorf Oil Refinery at Vienna, Austria. We flew at 26,000 feet and carried 3,000 lbs. of bombs. The target was overcast so we bombed the alternate target by P.F.F. The alternate was the Ordinance Depot in the Industrial area of Vienna.

22<sup>nd</sup> MISSION - November 7, 1944 - Plane # 39 Nose, Serial # 42-50642. Mission was 5 hours and 10 minutes in length. No planes were lost today but there was one casualty in our group. The target was the Marshaling Yard at Sarajevo, Yugoslavia. We flew deputy lead ship. 28 planes went over the target and 16 were damaged by flak/. We were briefed that there was a hospital on the North side of the yard with a large red cross on the roof which was to serve as the aiming point for the bombardier. The S2 Officer felt the hospital was fake or at least it should not be placed next to the rail yard. The target was clear and the group bombardier did not get a good run and had the entire formation come around again and make a second run. There was no flak on the first run but there was plenty of flak on the second run. On the second run our Group Navigator flying the Nose turret of the lead ship was hit in the jaw by flak and lost all his lower teeth. The lead ship headed for home and we took over the lead of the formation.

23<sup>rd</sup> MISSION - November 18, 1944. Plane # 40 Nose, Serial # 42-51851. Mission was 6 hours in length. Our group had no casualties today. The target was an airfield just South of Varona in Northern Italy. Because of the increased activity by the Italian Air Force in this area a mounter air mission was necessitated. This group dropped 38 tons of bombs on the airdrome in a very good pattern. The weather was clear over the target and visual bombing was used for a change. We carried fragmentation bombs and hit the runway. The flak was moderate.

24<sup>th</sup> MISSION - November 20, 1944 - Plane # Mission was 8 hours and 45 minuted in length. We bombed from 26,000 feet. Our group lost 2 planes and 21 men on this mission. Usually when there are 11 men on a plane, then one of them is a photographer. The target today was Blechammer Oil Refinery, the first priority target in Europe. It was the longest mission we have flown to date, over 1500 miles round trip. Our Navigator, Ryan O'Brien flew as dead reckoning navigator in the lead plane. We had a fill in navigator on this trip. Blechammer was overcast and the Group was short on gas se we could not go to an alternate target. On the way home we went over a

marshaling yard at Olonanc but the bombs were not dropped and about 25 miles farther, the bombs were dropped on the town of Krameriz about 50 miles Northeast of Vienna, Austria. Everyone was low on gas and a few landed on the Island of Viz in the Adriatic off the coast of Yugoslavia. Some ditched in the Adriatic. One ship in our formation lost two engines and the crew bailed out. The 461<sup>st</sup> group lost a few planes over Blechammer to flak. We landed with only 50 gallons of gasoline left in the plane.

25<sup>th</sup> MISSION - December 3, 1944 -Plane # 301 Nose [Pathfinder Plane] Bombing to be from 26,000 feet. Mission was 5 hours and 50 minutes in length. There were no casualties *since we were the only plane on this mission. A single ship mission.* The target was the Innsbruck Marshaling yard in Austria, at the top of the Brenner Pass. The entire 15<sup>th</sup> Air Force was sent on a mission in a different direction. We flew a single ship mission and were briefed to turn back if the weather cleared up and we became visible from the ground. The interphone went out and we could not bomb by P.F.F. We dropped the bombs 9 miles East of the target on the return route. The bomb load was four 500 lb. Booby trap bombs, two 500 lb. General purpose bombs and one load of leaflets.. I now quote from a book written by Richard Hugo our Bombardier after our return to the states and he became a college professor - author and poet. Title of the book is "The Real Marginal Way" a poet's autobiography by Richard Hugo. Copyrighted in 1986 and published in 1992 by his widow Ripley S, Hugo. **"And in the entire Air Force, against odds of around 1500 to one, we, Lt. Howard [NMI] Steinberg and crew, were selected to run a nuisance raid on Innsbruck while the rest of the Air Force was bombing Vienna, Austria. Not going to Vienna where the Germans had over 300 flak guns was fine. On the other hand, even with Anthony Cartwright, our English immigrant tail gunner who had eight Zeros in the South Pacific and three ME 109's with us to his credit, going it alone over Austria wasn't inviting. *In those days a bomber alone was virtually a sure target for fighters.* Two Navigators were on the flight deck behind the pilots. One, who I think was named Moody, operated a radar set that could scan the earth through the clouds below. The other operated what was called a G-Box,**

a radar set that gave navigational fixes from impulses sent from fixed positions in allied-held territory. Our crew Navigator, Ryan O'Brien was in the nose turret just forward and above me doing the pilotage navigation, taking fixes whenever the clouds parted and he could see recognizable check points.

Once I had pulled the cotter pins from the bomb fuses, usually when we were climbing from 9,000 to 11,000 feet, allowing the bombs to arm as they fell, I had nothing to do until we reached the target. The trip North was as usual, Uneventful. The long ponderous climbing, the boring roar of the engines, the way the earth below gradually lost all vertical contour and flattened out as it wavered and fell back. Sometimes I pretended to sleep, tried to sleep, and often to show others how courageous I was I told them that I slept.

I'll have to explain, I hope clearly and briefly, what happened on a radar mission. The radar navigator could see the town reproduces on the radar scope, though the bombardier could see only the clouds below. The town would appear about the size of a quarter, depending of course on the size of the town, and while we were avowed to be concentrating on a particular strategic target, say the railroad marshaling yards at the South edge of the city, in reality we weren't fooling anybody. The chances of hitting even the town were only fair. Everything was set. I had the bomb bay doors open. My panel lights were on. The voice of the Navigator was clear. I adjusted the stationary index until the moving index was crawling up the dial on the sight at exactly the announced rate of approach.

The first thing that went wrong was my throat mike went out. This happened about two minutes before bombs away, so although I could hear the radar Navigator I couldn't answer him. When the movable index touched the stationary index, the panel lights indicating the bombs in the rack failed to go out, meaning the bombs hadn't fallen. I hit the salvo handle and still the lights burned. I hit it again. Nothing. Meanwhile, the radar

Navigator was saying over and over in my ear, Bombardier, drop the bombs.  
Bombardier, drop the bombs.

There we were, flying through clouds 25,000 feet over Innsbruck with a load of bombs. I couldn't drop the bombs and I couldn't tell anybody that I couldn't drop the bombs. Getting rid of the bombs was the important part of the mission to flyers because, not only did it remove a terrible danger, it meant you had another mission to your credit and were one mission closer to going home, and it made the plane lighter and faster. When bombs fell out you could feel the plane jump like a horse suddenly freed of all weight. And you could peel off, if you were in a flak area, and take advantage of the speed as you went down and out, away from the black bursts that were threatening your life, the plane screaming from speed, the wings vibrating from the strain.

This day there was no flak. Still the urgency of getting the bombs out was there, and by now it seemed like everyone in the plane was yelling at me to drop the bombs. I was so frustrated I beat my gloved fists against the plexiglass bubbled window in the nose. I attacked the salvo handle like a savage. I swore, prayed, swore, begged and swore to no one in particular. The tracks were frozen and the bombs were stuck, and I couldn't tell anyone.

I stood up with my head in the astro dome, one foot on either ammo can that held the ammo for the nose turret guns, and I looked back through the dome and the pilot's windshield at Steinberg. I suppose a case can be made for man's ability to speak with his eyes, though I suspect the whole facial expression is involved in wordless communication. If eyes alone can talk, they can probably say, "I love you" or "You turn me on, let's shack up" or "You're boring me" or "I hate your guts." But try with eyes alone to say, "The bomb racks are frozen and my throat mike has malfunctioned." Steinberg and I stared helplessly at each other over the tops of our oxygen masks through two layers of glass.

I hooked onto a walk-around oxygen bottle, took my parachute and started back through the narrow passageway to the flight deck. Unattached from the electrical heating system, I immediately felt the terrible cold, around -70 degrees F. When I finally reached the pilots, I tore off my mask and yelled explanations at Steinberg over the engine scream.

Steinberg yelled back that the only thing we could do was toggle the bombs out one by one by prying a screwdriver against the release arm of each bomb shackle. We had tried the pilot's emergency bomb release cord and that was frozen too. I took the screwdriver, had Ed Self, the engineer close the bomb bay doors, and walked out on the catwalk to the bomb racks. Then I wedged myself between the racks, rapped a mugger's grip around the left rack with my left arm, and signaled the engineer [ Self ] to open the doors. As the doors rolled open, the blast of air into the bomb bay shocked my eyes. I'd had to leave my parachute behind because the space between the racks was too narrow, and I was standing in the roaring rush of air, one arm tight around the shackle, on about ten inches width of catwalk, five miles above earth.

That sounds brave I suppose. Oddly, I felt no fear of the height or the situation, and I think for several reason. One was simply that I was young and had no real sense of what I was doing. Another is that, while I'm quite frightened of heights, I had no sense of height because five miles without reference ceases to be a distance and becomes a vague void. Then static distance, looking down the side of a skyscraper [I'm always intimidated when I'm in Hew York} is far different than being propelled by engines. In a sense the engines keep you from falling because they are holding you up.

Just as I reached for the first bomb shackle with the screwdriver, the bombs fell out. All this time we had been circling aimlessly through clouds but I suppose more or less in the Innsbruck area. Our Navigator O'Brien had come back from the nose turret and, with more strength than anyone else in the plane, had finally pulled the pilot's bomb release

cord free.

I watched the bombs going down, converging as they seemed to into one mass. Just then the clouds parted and I watched that hunk of component explosives falling farther and farther away toward a bleak, blue black uninhabited region of the Alps. Before the bombs landed, the clouds snapped shut. We had no idea where we were. There's a possibility we were over Switzerland, which is less than 50 miles away from Innsbruck, a meager distance when you are at high altitude, flying. I'm sure of one thing. We had contributed nothing to the war effort. Those bombs fell where there were not towns, no farms, no roads.

When we returned to the base, the big blowhard was waiting to interrogate us, as the squadron intelligence officer did after each mission. We told him everything in detail. He listened, chewed his cigar and when we were through, said in his course booming voice. "I'll see to it you boys get the DFC for this." Someone, I wish it had been me said, "For what? The mission was all fouled up." "Never you mind." the loud fat man said. A month later, Barudi was back but the blowhard had done his work. A line of flyers two city blocks long stood in a field and received medals from a general flown in for the occasion. I hate to risk a detail sounding this apocryphal, but the General actually took the medals he pinned to our chests from a cigar box held by a Colonel. And so the officers [ *enlisted men were given few citations* ] [ our 6 enlisted men were not given the DFC ] of Lt. Howard [NMI] Steinberg's crew were given the DFC for bombing some remote mountains, maybe in Switzerland.

**The above was put into these records as they were actually published in the autobiography of Richard Hugo. Copy of which is in my collections of books.**

NOTE\* DECEMBER 10, 1944 . We were flying plane # 34 - "What's Up Doc" once

again. Serial # 42-78351. Target today was Brux, Czechoslovakia, the synthetic oil refinery that produced one-half of all the oil within our range. This was to be an all out mission, with everything that could get in the air to go. We drew the plane No. 34 that we had flown on our 5<sup>th</sup> mission when we got shot up and ended up bombing the target, Vienna all by our selves at 13,000 feet and the plane was grounded for over two months being repaired. This plane had been shot up again and this was to be the first time it had flown since. When we got to the hard-stand where the plane was parked, we found that the crew chief and his mechanics were just finishing up their work on it and the bombs had not been loaded, not had the guns been installed nor the ammunition loaded. When a plane was in for lengthy repair, the guns were removed. The bombs were loaded and the guns and ammo brought out and we were told that we could install the guns and ammo after we were air borne. I had the APU [auxiliary power unit] going as was the procedure prior to take off. As customary, I shut it off as we turned onto the runway to line up for take off and took my place standing between the pilot and co-pilot. This was the engineer position on take off and landing to call air speed so that neither the pilot nor co-pilot had to have their attention diverted from handling the plane to watch the air speed.

When loaded, it was the procedure to hold the brakes and reeve the engines, release the brakes and in this manner you gained take off speed faster. There being parallel runways and the plane on the right went and 15 seconds later the plane on the left runway went, then 15 seconds and the one on the right went and they went in this manner until all were off the ground.

We had gotten about 50 feet in the air and at this time there was no stopping, it was go all the way. At this time Whetstone came from the waist of the plane to the flight deck and said "The plane is on Fire". I went to the rear to see what was going on and sure enough, # 2 engine was on fire and the fire was streaming back past the tail of the plane. I immediately went to the flight deck and pulled the fire extinguished on # 2 engine and

the fire went out. The # 2 engine was feathered to cut down drag because we were low and loaded heavily. We were slowly climbing and I do mean slowly. We had gotten to about 300 feet in the air. At this time # 1 engine started burning. We unfeathered # 2 and feathered # 1 after extinguishing the fire, there was no way we could fly on three engines with the load we had and the low altitude that we were at. We were ordered to take the plane out over the Adriatic Sea and drop the bombs but due to the continuing worsening of conditions with the plane, we did not do it. We made the decision to come in for a landing even though all the planes had not taken off. As we went on the down-wind leg preparing to land [ down wind is flying in the same direction that the wind is blowing - you always do this when possible to land into the wind in order to have more control of the plane], I took the kit of flares which contained 24 of all different combinations of colors depicting different situations, and fired them all just as fast as I could load them to certify to the control tower that we were in a desperate situation. The bombs that we were carrying were booby trap bombs meaning that once the pins were pulled it was impossible to defuse them without them exploding. At take off we were carrying 2,700 gallons of aviation gasoline. It had been raining and as we were about one half way down the down wind leg and at about 300 feet altitude, I was standing between the pilot and co-pilot calling out the air speed for them. Everyone had been advised to come to the flight deck or to brace themselves in the waist in preparation for a hard landing or possible crash landing. This accomplished, the Navigator ended up standing on the cat walk leading up to the flight deck and directly under the top turret. At this time, all the other three engines stopped running, the pilot with keen perception of what to do, immediately shoved the stick forward putting the nose of the plane to the ground and immediately both he and the co-pilot pulled the stick hard to their chest. Landing gear had been put down down when we went on the down wind leg. When we hit the right wheel sheared off and rolled about 1/4th mile. The left wheel folded up the wrong way against the fuselage. The arm of the landing gear on the right side dug into the ground and spun the plan around 180 degrees and the fuselage split on the pilot's side and the pilot and co-pilot went out through this hole. The only injury was to the

Navigator whose foot was cut badly when the nose wheel collapsed and the arm of it came through the bottom of the plane and landed on his foot . Lucky for us the field we landed in had recently been plowed and was real soft. The waist of the plane nearly filled up with the soft earth and the men in the rear came out the waist window while those of us in the front went out through the top hatch. The ;bomb bay was also nearly full of dirt and the bombs had broken loose and were lying on the outside of the plane under the # 1 & # 2 engines. When I went out the top, I fell flat on the ground and there beside me was a bomb with the fuse broken off. We ran away from the plane as we were sure that the bombs were going to explode or the plane catch on fire as we had on board 2,700 gallon of gasoline. The Navigator was sent to the hospital and had his leg in a cast for 6 weeks and in this time he got behind on his missions. The plane was left for three days waiting to see if it was going to explode. When it didn't, they set explosives under the wreck and blew up all the bombs, gasoline and the plane.

They sent a truck to pick up us and bring us back to the field. We found that guards had already been put on our tent to prevent anything being taken. Instead of taking us to our tent, they immediately put us in another plane and we had to do a short local flight. This was necessary to keep you from thinking about all that could have happened and keep you in a better mental attitude. After this, we were not scheduled for another mission until December 26<sup>th</sup>, 1944.

26<sup>th</sup> Mission December 17, 1944, Target was Odertal, Germany. This was an oil refiner and the mission was 8 hours and 35 minutes in length. There were two planes lost on this mission with a casualty of 25 men due to the extra photographers and Radar operator on board the planes. Odertal Oil Refinery had been under attack before this date, but was still able to produce 4000 tons of gasoline a month. On this day 36 B-24's attacked it, dropping 52.5 tons of bombs. Results were unobserved. On this mission our group was attacked by fighters. Between 30 and 40 of them attacked the formation just

as our escort left. We didn't lose any planes to them while knocking down 7 of their planes.

27<sup>th</sup> Mission - December 29, 1944 -The last target for the month was Passau Marshaling Yards, a rail center on the most direct route from central Germany to Vienna. It was particularly important at this time because the enemy was trying to avoid using the facilities at Munich. Although the target was cloud covered, 54 tons of bombs were dropped in a good concentration. This was the last mission flown for the year 1944. the mission was 8 hours and 20 minutes in length. There were no planes lost nor any casualties this mission.

28<sup>th</sup> Mission - January 5, 1945 - Target was Zagreb Marshaling Yards Yugoslavia and the mission was 6 hours in length.. 21 aircraft took off to bomb this target visually, but because the sidings were cloud covered, all bombs were returned to base. There were no planes lost nor any casualties this mission.

29<sup>th</sup> Mission - January 19, 1945 - Target was Breaded Road Bridge in Yugoslavia. The mission was 7 hours in length. At this time, Breaded was considered to be the key communications target in Yugoslavia. It was the junction of lines from Zagreb, Belgrade and Sarape. The whole 15<sup>th</sup> Air Force was going into this area. 55 tons of bombs were dropped on the bridge area. The target was believed to be well hit. There were no planes lost nor were there any casualties on this mission.

30<sup>th</sup> Mission - February 1, 1945 - Plane # 30 Nose, Serial # 44-41139. Target was Moosbierbaum, Graz, Austria. The mission was 7 hours in length. There was one plane lost with a casualty of 10 men on this mission. The target was the same as yesterday but we did not get off the ground until some planes were cleared from the runway that got stuck in the mud. We got off one and one-half hours late and had to go to an alternate

target. The Graz marshaling yard in Austria about 50 miles Southwest of Vienna. We bombed P.F.F. with eight 500 lb general purpose bombs and had moderate flack.

31<sup>st</sup> Mission - February 7, 1945 - Target today was Vienna, Austria, The Florisdorf Oil Refinery in the Northern part of the city. The mission was 8 hours and 30 minutes in length. We had clear weather all the way and the entire 15<sup>th</sup> Air Force hit the same target. There was very heavy flack and we got over a dozen holes in the plane. The super chargers were shot out and we had to come home alone. There were two planes lost with a casualty of 20 men.

32<sup>nd</sup> Mission - March 1, 1945 - Plane # 40 Nose, Serial # 44-49396. Target today was Moosbierbaum Oil Refineries, in Austria. The mission was 8 hours in length. There was one plane with 11 men lost when on B-24 went down in flames over the target. The flack was very heavy today. Our navigator, O'Brien flew in the lead ship today as the pilotage navigator for the mission.

33<sup>rd</sup> Mission - March 9, 1945 - Target today was Graz Marshaling Yards, - Bruck, Austria. The mission was 7 hours and 5 minutes in length. There were no planes lost and no casualties. We flew the lead ship on this mission. The target was about 50 miles Southwest of Vienna, Austria. This target could only be bombed if visible. It was overcast so we had to bomb the alternate target, the Gratz marshaling yard about 30 miles South of Bruck.

34<sup>th</sup> Mission - March 14, 1945 - Target today was Bruck Marshaling Yrds. The weather was not clear so we bombed The Weiner Neustadt Marshaling Yards, about 20 miles South of Vienna, Austria. We flew the lead ship of the 2<sup>nd</sup> attack group. The bomb load was 10 - 500 lb bombs. The mission was 7 hours in length. There was one plane lost and 10 men casualties.

35<sup>th</sup> Mission - March 20, 1945 - Plane # 400 Nose, Serial # 44-50567. Target today was the Wels Marshaling Yards in Austria. We led the 2<sup>nd</sup> attack unit. The mission was 7 hours and 30 minutes in length. There were no planes lost and no casualties today. 40 of our aircraft took off to bomb rolling stock in the Wel's Marshalling Yard in Austria. Again enjoying clear weather in route to the target and return, no difficulty was experienced on the bomb run. The target was completely saturated, destroying the round house, trains of cars were left burning and many explosions were seen.

***I HAVE FINISHED ALL 35 OF MY REQUIRED MISSION AND AM NOW ON SCHEDULE TO RETURN TO THE UNITED STATES AND HOME.***

Now comes the wait for reassignment to the United States. We are sent to Naples by plane and stay there until the ship we are to return on is ready to leave. We are there several days and it is while we are in Naples that word arrives that President Franklin D. Roosevelt has died. This is the day that we loaded onto the ship - The S. S. Santa Maria for our ride to the United States. Now that I am going home I finally get issued shoes in the size that fit me. Would you believe it, they issued me Hob Nail shoes, but they fit. The main trouble with them was that you could not wear them on deck of the ship as you could not stand up since the hob nails were metal and the deck of the ship was metal. Talking about being slick, try walking on steel on steel on a ship deck and it moving up and down and sideways with the ocean waves. It took 15 days from Naples, Italy to New York City Harbor. During this time there was not much food on the ship and only 300 air personnel. The ship was the USS Santa Maria a merchant ship with a hold full of rubber. It had been away from home port for six months and supplies were getting thin. This was the name of Columbus's Flag Ship. We were in a convoy part of the way until our ship broke down in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean. We had a Sub attack and the escort ships were racing up and down on both sides of us dropping depth charges. We never did see the Sub. During the night it was the most beautiful moonlight night you have ever experienced and there we were dead still in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean.

Finally we got underway and it was not long until we were in one heck of a storm. Waves were washing completely over the ship from prow to stern.

The best food on the trip was that which we got at night while on guard duty. We would get into the kitchen and get a loaf of fresh made bread, a pound of butter and have a feast on that warm bread. Those who did not get guard duty never knew what they missed.

Arrived early in a morning in the harbor of New York, disembarked and put on a trail to Fort Dix, N.J. There we were processed back into the U.S., given our order for our next duty station of which mine was Santa Monica, Calif. Provided tickets along with our orders and given a 15 day delay - in route to go home. Little did I think, know or realize that in 10 days I would be married.

Arrived home during the night, had not been home since December 1943 and it is now May 1945. Had not seen my family nor my Best Girl in all those months. My first stop was at Belk-Tyler Co. where I was working when I was drafter. My Girl was the daughter of the manager and I saw him and asked if he could tell me where i could find Betty. He said that she was on the second floor. As I started up he asked me to wait while he went up to get her down to the balcony. She thought that I was still in Italy, not standing there in front of her.. Within 10 days we were married in Dillon S.C. and shortly thereafter were on the train headed for California and assignment. The trip took us from Wilson to Chicago and then to Santa Monica, Calif. We were in a nice hotel room there and then were assigned to Langley Air Force Base in Virginia. In August we were home of leave when the war with Japan ended so we went back to camp and I was processed for discharge. We spent a few days in Wilson and then proceeded on to Hickory, N.C. where I enrolled in Lenoir-Rhyne College. I went straight through for 36 months and graduated. While there in Hickory our first two children were born.

I was recalled in August 1951 and served 12 additional months on active duty at Kelly Air Force Base, San Antonio, Texas as chief clerk in the Base Finance Office Received my discharge in June 1953..

This date August 1, 2006

Living in Smithfield, N.C. 27577

R E S T R I C T E D

HEADQUARTERS FIFTEENTH AIR FORCE  
APO 520 US ARMY

GO/EHR/jrb-7

3 April 1945

SUBJECT: Orders.

TO : All Concerned.

1. So much of Ltr O this hq GO/EHR/jrb-1 21 Mar 1945 relieving pers fr asgmt orgn indicated and assigning them to 7th Repl Dep for trans-shipment to US as pertains to 1ST LT CHARLES M BERFIELD 0713096 AC (0142) 449th Bomb Gp (hv) is amended to read "1ST LT CHARLES M BERFIELD 0713096 AC (1038)".

2. Fol named pers reld fr asgmt orgn indicated asgd 7th Repl Dep WP there- to via mil acft govt mtr T and/or rail rptg upon arrival to CO thereat for trans-shipment to US. EM asgd in gr. PCS. TCNT. TDN. 61-000 P 431-02 A 212/50425. EDCMR 10 Apr 1945.

484TH BOMB GP (HV)

CAPT EVAN H HOUSWORTH JR 0703997AC(1038)	CAPT LEONARD M JORGENSON 0694779 AC (1035)
CAPT HOWARD STEINBERG 0768732 AC (1092)	
1ST LT RICHARD F HUGO 0773390 AC (1035)	1ST LT RYAN M O'BRIEN 0722352 AC(1034)
1ST LT WILLIAM L SCHNEIDER 0824913AC(1092)	1ST LT HOWARD M SEGAL 01540437AC(1034)
1ST LT WILLIAM S WEAVER 0827100 AC(1092)	T Sgt Perry W Lounsbury 17097149 (748)
T Sgt Robert E Self 34666049 (748)	T Sgt Robert P Stewart 20939137 (757)
S Sgt Gaylor Carter 37655802 (612)	S Sgt Philip C Hewitt 11119790 (611)
S Sgt George E Koch 12203921 (611)	S Sgt James E Parks 33746502 (611)
S Sgt William V Parthree 33732944 (611)	S Sgt William M Waskoskie 33510142(611)

52D FTR GP

CAPT DWAIN R FRANKLIN 0815305 AC (1055)  
1ST LT WILLIAM G SHINKO 0714504 AC(1055)  
1ST LT PAUL BRASWELL 01540430 AC (1055)

82D FTR GP

1ST LT ALFRED M WEIGLER 0825029AC(1056)  
1ST LT JACK SIDES 0763011 AC (1056)  
1ST LT AARON C JOSLIN 0708687 AC (1056)

1ST LT WILLIAM A VERFLANCK JR 0753952 AC (1056) 154th Wea Rcn Sq  
1ST LT PAUL F FORSTER 0716089 AC (1056) 14th Ftr Gp  
CAPT CURTIS A WERDEN 0820619 AC (1055) 31st Ftr Gp  
1ST LT VICTOR H AMES 01695523 AC (1055) 325th Ftr Gp

RELD DS THIS HQ AND FR ASGMT 450TH BOMB GP (HV)

1ST LT ARTHUR K MYERS 0709093 AC (1092)

Pers listed hereon are hereby cautioned against the compromise of class-ified information and reminded of the personal penalties for disclosure of any information concerning operation plans troop strength and movement or any other such military information gained while serving in this theater.

R E S T R I C T E D

(Ltr O this Hq GO/EHR/jrb-7 3 Apr 1945 Cont'd.)

AUTH: WD Cir 372 1944 and Par 3 a AAF Reg 35-43 and ltr AAF/MTO 210.  
481 Subj: "Relief of Combat Crew Personnel" 9 Sep 1944.

BY COMMAND OF MAJOR GENERAL TWINING:

*E. H. Read, Jr.*  
E. H. READ, JR.,  
Captain, Air Corps,  
Asst Adjutant General.

SPECIAL ORDERS )  
NUMBER 165 )

HEADQUARTERS FOURTEENTH AIR FORCE  
Robins AFB, Ga 9 Aug 1950

E X T R A C T

33. By direction of the President and under authority contained in Ltr Hq ConAC Mitchel AFB NY file FPM-R 210.455 4 Aug 50 Subj: "Individual Recall of USAF Personnel", each of the following Reserve Airmen is relieved from present assignment and is ordered to extended active duty in his Reserve Grade for a period of one year, unless sooner relieved, effective 19 Aug 50. On the effective date airman will proceed without delay from the place shown after his name to processing station Keesler AFB, Biloxi, Miss, reporting upon arrival to the CO for two (2) days temporary duty for necessary processing, upon completion of which, airman will proceed immediately to duty station indicated, reporting upon arrival to the CO for assignment and duty. Retention on active duty is subject to final type physical examination to be accomplished at first duty station. Dependents will not accompany airman to processing station. WD AGO Form 643A will be completed immediately upon reporting to first duty station. Unless sooner relieved from active duty airman will return to his home address, as shown, from the station where airman has been serving in time to arrive thereat on 18 Aug 51, on which date airman will revert to inactive status. For travel by rail or bus airman may secure a Government Transportation Request and meal tickets at the nearest recruiting, Army or Air Force installation. PCS. TDN. TFA not to exceed rail tvl time. Transportation Officer will furnish necessary meal tickets from Processing Station to Duty Station. TOFNT. 160-080 F531(.3)-02 03 07 5714500 S99-999.

M/Sgt Sam E. Brooks, Jr, AF 7 004 159, 612 Glenview Drive, Tallahassee, Fla, SSN 911, DOCE Jul 50, DOPG Jul 47, YOB 14, Duty Station 3510th Flt Tng Wg, Randolph AFB, Tex (ATC).

T/Sgt Robert E Self, AF 34 666 049, Apt 329, Morris Field, Charlotte, N. C., SSN 747, DOCE May 50, DOPG May 50, YOB 24, Duty Station Hq & Hq Sq SAAMA, Kelly AFB, Tex (AMC).

S/Sgt Jasper L Smith, Jr, AF 14 150 954, 22 Orange Ave, Natches, Miss, SSN 938, DOCE May 48, DOPG May 48, YOB 24, Duty Station 3510th Flt Tng Wg, Randolph AFB, Tex (ATC).

S/Sgt Thomas N Jones, AF 34 664 094, 3103 White Oak Road, Raleigh, N C, SSN 938 DOCE June 49, DOPG June 49, YOB Unk, Duty Station 3510th Flt Tng Wg, Randolph AFB, Tex (ATC).

T/Sgt Lemuel L. Sibley, AF 18 151 974, 953 Main St, Baton Rouge, La, SSN 938, DOCE Apr 49, DOPG Aug 45, YOB 24, Duty Station, 3510th Flt Tng Wg, Randolph AFB, Tex (ATC).

Sgt Jack A Thornton, AF 14 236 437, Route 3, Laurel, Miss, SSN 945, DOCE Jul 50, DOPG Jul 50, YOB 28, Duty Station 3380th Tech Tng Wg, Keesler AFB, Miss (ATC).

**BOMBS AWAY!**  
From my collection.  
I think this shot may get some attention.



Submitted by: [Leo Mercer](#)

[Back to New pictures](#)



## 484th Bomb Group Association

1122 Ysabel Street, Redondo Beach, CA 90277-4453 Phone (310) 316-3330

### The 484th BG Is Born

---

The 484th Bomb Group was trained in Harvard, Nebraska in 1943 with B-24s and deployed to Italy in March 1944. The group arrived in Cerignola, Italy where the gently rolling mounds of the Foggia plain awaited them. In prewar days the Italian Airforce trained near Foggia too. The 484th BG took over farmland where wheat was once grown. Dual North and South runways were laid out and paved with crushed gravel, and later improved with pierced steel planking, a dubious improvement especially when it rained.

The group brought 60 new olive drab B-24s to the airfield at the Torretta crossroads about 12 K southeast of Cerignola, itself 35K south of Foggia. The group started out with about 3 trained crews of 10 men for every B-24. This would vary depending on losses and availability of replacements. In the one year of combat operations over 5000 soldiers and airmen passed through the group. Replacements were brought in to fill in the Table of Organization (TO) due to casualties, illness and to replace flight crews who had finished their combat tours. For a battle area that was expected to offer light resistance tours were set at 50 missions. However resistance was stiff from both fighter aircraft and flak cannons. Credit was shortly reduced to 35 Missions, and modified again by giving double credit to long and arduous missions. Flight crews were given leave to rest camps at the halfway point of 18 sorties. Ground echelon personnel were given leave also when conditions permitted it. One such camp was on the Isle of Capri.

---

### The B-24 Liberator Bomber

The Consolidated B-24 Liberator was designed and built in such great haste such was the need for a heavy bomber in 1939, when Germany invaded Poland. By taking the long Davis Wing and empennage from a twin engined seaplane and installing them on an oval fuselage the B-24 was born. To improve ground handling visibility, the whole assembly was set on tricycle landing gear. The design was both good and bad, Good: The Davis Wing in combination with the supercharged Pratt & Whitney R-1830 engines and the Hamilton Standard hydromatic propellers worked well together. Bad: The nose wheel, built up of welded steel struts was too weak and failed when over stressed due to hard landings, strong cross winds, or rough runways. The fuel quantity indicators were of a simple boiler gauge style that required level flight for accurate reading, except that the aircraft actually flew slightly nose high to get additional lift from the fuselage. (The Lockheed Constellation was purposely designed to obtain fuselage lift). The fuel

selector valves could be set for all engines to feed from the crossfeed manifold which held about 60 gallons. When this was used up all four engines would quit, not handy during the take off roll. The outboard auxiliary or Tokyo tanks of early model B-24s up to the "H" model did not have any fuel quantity gauges at all. When the fuel pressure dropped when feeding from these tanks it was time to transfer back to the mains before the engines quit. Other airmen who had adverse experiences with the B-24 fuel system can transfer their own fuel system horrors to this website.

---

## Primitive Repair Facilities

The numbers of serviceable aircraft for each mission varied too, due to the repairs needed to make the planes air worthy after receiving battle damage. Because of its longer range, the B-24 was needed in many theaters of war, impinging on the number of replacement available to any one group. Squadron maintenance was undertaken by crew chiefs and helpers who worked without shelter, rain or shine. It was the rule rather than the exception in the 484th that most of the aircraft would sustain some damage from the dreaded flak both slight and heavy on each mission. Most engine change tools were hand made or adopted from what was on hand.

Flying in a straight line to maintain formation order, mandated flight routing directly into a flak bursts just ahead or above just prior to and on the bomb run. The steel fragments (shrapnel) would nick the props, punch holes into the pushrod covers causing oil leakage and lacerate the fuselage bottom with holes and rips. Spent shrapnel would bounce off the thin aluminum skin sounding like pebbles falling on a tin roof. All of this required inspection and repair.

---

## Luftwaffe Ju 88s Bomb Bari Harbor

The shortage of supplies and parts for use by the 15th AF came about because of a very effective attack on Allied supply ships lying at anchor in the harbor at Bari, Italy on the Adriatic coast by Luftwaffe Ju-88s in December of 1943, just two months and a half after the establishment of the 15th Airforce itself. Many of the supplies intended for the new Airforce ended up at the bottom of the harbor. They were not easily removed because of the contamination caused by exploding gas shells. Thus the midnight auto supply came into being. Mechanics and armorers had to beg, borrow, or steal from outlying sources. Damaged B-24s uneconomical in time and material to repair were soon cannibalized. It was known that lesser quality stovebolts were sometimes substituted for high strength A&N hardware, and so it goes.

---

## Hung Bombs

Documentation of repair procedures of aircraft and components were distributed through "Tech Orders" in the Army Air Corps, but were not usually transmitted from one command to another. As an example bombs would not always drop when selected to do so. The shackles that secured the bombs to the aircraft would often freeze depending on the severities of the weather encountered at bombing altitudes. It was not unusual to encounter 30 below temperatures. The coldest temperatures were encountered nearest the bomb bay doors so the lowest bombs would freeze and the others above would leave their protective

arming wire and fall sharply in a heap on top of frozen bombs. Thus leaving the upper bombs live when only a slight jar would set them off.

Hung bombs were probably first encountered by the English based 8th Air Force because the 8th AF had been established earlier and had flown many tough missions before the Fifteenth AF became operational. It is not known if a fix was ever found, and if there was, a quick way to pass on this information to other commands was not easy and at best and there was no time to wait for conventional mail. With the satellite not yet invented this is understandable. Without the quick transfer of information to both the 8th AF and the 15th AF, they were to suffer the same problems

Freezing of bombs as can be seen from the foregoing was a very dangerous condition with loss of life and or loss of the aircraft heavily threatened. To face this problem in the heat of combat with flak bursting all around and without tools or prior instruction required quick thinking. The idea of course was to get rid of the damn things in any way one could which meant there was no control as to when the bomb would drop and, because of the delay the assigned target was far away by then. The possibility of other aircraft below was always there. Casualties caused by falling bombs on other aircraft were not unusual. Which all brings the story back to what was said earlier, better know your equipment thoroughly. Comments on hung bombs from other flight crews and armorers are welcomed here too.

---

## The Dreaded Flak Guns

In the Italian based 15th Airforce, anti-aircraft (flak) accounted for more casualties than fighter planes. Bomber crews feared the dreaded 88mms and higher caliber flak cannons with a passion. When flak jackets became available, extra sets were brought on board not only to wear but to sit or stand on. The need for protection from below needs no explanation.

Because the enemy needed to protect the oil refineries and installations, flak cannons were mounted on railway flat cars and were moved about as needed but also to fool our intelligence (S-2). The flak trains were often hid in railway tunnels at night for just this purpose). The next day they would be somewhere else.

Late in the war when the fuel situation was becoming acute for the Axis Powers the more mobile guns such as the versatile 88s were moved from the eastern front and placed aside the oil refineries, such as Brux, Moosbeirbaum, Odertal, and Vienna. The 88 had a high mount that permitted elevation of the gun barrel for use as an flak gun and as well as fire against tanks making it a dual purpose weapon. In the larger cities flak towers were erected so the gunners could have free fields of fire. On the top of the towers, 88s as well as larger caliber guns were installed behind well protected concrete barriers. Some of these steel and concrete structures still stand.

The Luftwaffe was also charged with the responsibility of defending German occupied territory from the ground as well as from the air. In reality the Germans were defending three fronts after June 6, 1944, The Western Front, The Eastern Front and the Air Front overhead. Over 1,000,000 men were assigned to the defense of the Reich. They were aided also by civilians, including high school students. The Allied oil campaign began to have effect on fighter activity in mid 1944, and the capture of Ploesti by the Russians at about the same time fuel production dropped drastically. The fighter attacks on the bomber streams began to weaken sharply. Anti-aircraft fire was more intense than ever. In these desperate times the Luftwaffe also sent its Jet fighters into action against the bomber streams with deadly effect. Fortunately



We have had inquiries from overseas from interested parties who want to know everything about the bombing missions of the American Air Forces. Because of the effect the bombing had on their lives, the memories are forever etched in their minds. They have expressed special interest in the disposition of the flight crews, and the aircraft, serial number, and the aircraft name. Some association members have returned to the spot where they fell. The citizens of friendly and former enemy countries who witnessed a particular crash have invited the Americans back with their families. Members who have returned to Europe have reported that these visits were very enjoyable.

---

## No Tests Given In Training

In training during the war due to the expediency of getting troops into battle quickly, grades were not often given at the end of classes. If one hoped to survive and return home after the war, the soldier had to pay close attention to what was being taught. A flyer had to learn his aircraft and weapons like the back of his own hand. There was no cheating or use of crib sheets in combat, It was best to get the information stuffed between your ears for instant recall, or your butt and those of your aircrew buddies will be put in doubt.



*Celebrating The End of the War*



Bud Markel  
Founder and President  
484th Bomb Group Association  
(310)316-3330  
BUD484BG@aol.com

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## LIFE DURING THE WAR YEARS

The twentieth century was torn apart by three major wars that effected the lives of millions of people. Some historians will say that WWII was the most traumatic event of the century. This was certainly true of the period from 1933 to 1948. The WWII Generation was thrust into war at the time when the country was least prepared to fight with a standing army of only 110,000 men. The country was isolationist and wanted nothing to do with the war that was brewing in Europe. The huge Atlantic ocean that separated the new world from the old was soon to shrink, as thousands of bomber crews would deliver their own aircraft to the battle front over the ocean.

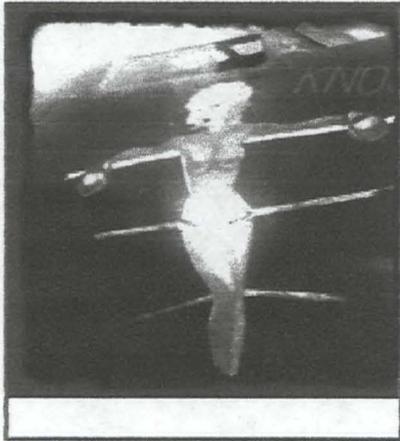
The enemies of peace were already planning to unleash the most brutal war of all time, and millions of lives would be wasted on the whim of the German military and its political leaders. A total war was necessary to bring this unchained evil to heel. It called on the youth of America, the high school and college students, to defend the country and defeat the enemy. These fuzzy cheeked kids were asked to save the world for humanity, which they were ill prepared to do. But no matter, the attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941 emptied the classrooms of young men anyway. They were soon to learn how to fight, and with a big stick.

This came at a time when the main interest of young men was the opposite sex, love had to be postponed while a war was fought. Bomber and fighter crews of the United States Army Air Forces however did the next best thing, they decorated the bombers and fighters of the Eighth and 15th Airforces with paintings of scantily clad ladies. In essence, it was the fair sex we were fighting for.

The men of WWII were a proud generation who experienced a quick transition from the serene life of young manhood, model planes and chopped model A Fords. Thrown into the jaws of war the men-boys were not prepared for the quick life and death decisions that war demands. Our values of good and bad were threatened from what we saw and what we had to do. You learned not to make permanent friendships. These new friends would just disappear in a bright flash in the sky followed immediately with black smoke. They were here today and gone tomorrow, happenings that were never quite accepted by the schoolboys inside them. The memories of buddies missing in action (MIAs) and killed in action (KIAs) were irritating, because it was time to forget and get back to finishing the war. At unwanted times their dreams would be contaminated with flash backs of those would be friends.

The effect of absorbing all of the excitement of lifetime in one sudden rush changed plans for daring stunts after the war. A 75 MM cannon equipped B-25 Pilot swore that when the former field piece went off he could hear the rivets pop. Handling the controls tenderly afterwards, he did not know if he could bring the wounded mass of metal back to base. A quiet 9 to 5 office job seemed ideal at the time.

But they were not fatalists, they knew the power would soon pass into their own hands and had to survive to keep traditional values safe. The people back home were depending on them. What depressed all airmen was the appearance of the Me-262 jet powered fighter. With determined vigor the jets were tearing huge holes in USAF bomber formations, Luckily the Luftwffe squadrons were small and the losses could be tolerated. But! But! Why hadn't the guys back home come up with something better? The airmen were determined then and there to do something about this outrage when if and when they returned home. Today's precision Airforce is proof of this. This retired generation of Pearl Harbor, its job now almost complete wants to sit back and write its memoirs, Can you the readers can help?



[Click here for the](#)

[Home Page](#)

[About the 484th](#)

[Reunion Information](#)

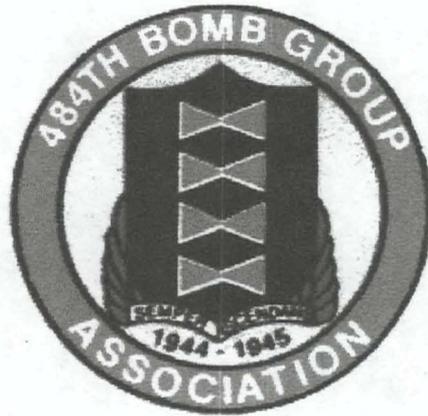
[Membership Information](#)

[15th Air Force Page](#)

[The Toretta Flyer](#)

[484th Insignia Page](#)

[Go To The Top of This Page](#)



## 484th BOMB GROUP INSIGNIA

As stated in another part of this web site, the 484th combat color was insignia red painted on the upper half of the rudder. The group insignia was a red bowtie painted on the lower half of the rudder. The insignia was originally an hourglass but had to be turned on its side to fit on the bottom of the rudder. The original hourglass signified that time was running out for the Axis Powers. Some cowl rings were painted in primary colors but the practice was not maintained. There were four squadrons assigned to the 484th BG, they are; 824, 825, 826 and, 827. Squadron identification was by a two digit code painted at the nose and rear waist section. on olive drab painted aircraft the ID code was painted in white, and red on neutral silver airplanes. Numbers from I to 99 were divided into four parts, 1 to 24 were assigned to the 824 squadron, 26 to 49 to the 825 squadron, 50 to 72 to the 826 squadron and 73 to 99 to the 827 squadron. This arrangement was generally true for many 15th Air Force Bomb Groups.

[Click here for the](#)

[Home Page](#)

[About the 484th](#)

[Reunion Information](#)

[Membership Information](#)

[15th Air Force Page](#)

[The Toretta Flyer](#)

[Go To The Top of This Page](#)



*Vernal Packard installing a fuse in the nose of a 500 lb bomb*

## THE TORETTA FLYER

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Many historians consider the events of World War Two as the most single important event of the twentieth century. The concept of total war where civilians were brought into peril took on new meaning in the art of warfare. Great aerial armadas took to the skies for the first time on such a grand scale. Both the Axis and the Allied powers used huge air forces to influence the conflict. The RAF took the measure of the Luftwaffe during the Battle of Britain. The huge armadas of the RAF and the US Army Air Forces grew stronger as the Luftwaffe weakened. There is no doubt that the huge air fleets of a thousand or more, attacking relentlessly, bombing oil refineries, war industries, and transportation did shorten the war. Eye witnesses on the ground tell of how the skies were streaked with contrails, long fingers of clouds following the planes. They tell of the noise of thousands of engines, and of the slap of the propellers as the formations reached for the targets. They tell of how the sun's reflections on the bare aluminum skin caught their eyes, and how the ground shook as the bombs exploded. It is a fact that any airman or soldier who donned an oxygen mask to flying a USAF military aircraft during the war is listed in the National Archives as a crew member. Thus these airmen and soldiers are a part of history. That is why it is important that bombing mission stories and reports contain the list of personnel who participated in each mission. The Torretta Flyer lists all who were known soldiers and airmen. The Torretta Flyer is sent to all current members. Stories are sent in by members, and interested parties. Material mostly comes from government archives. In recent issues one particular bombing mission is featured with the names of all participants listed. If you are not sure what missions your dad or other

# United States Army



## Army Air Forces Technical Training Command

*Be it known that*

Private First Class Robert E. Self, 34666049,  
Air Corps Unassigned  
*has satisfactorily completed the course for*

## Airplane Mechanics

*as prescribed by the Army Air Forces Technical Training Command  
In testimony whereof and by virtue of vested authority I do confer upon him this*

## Diploma

*Given at Keesler Field, Miss. on this* 22nd *day*  
4 September *in the year of our Lord one thousand nine hundred and forty three*

*Roll Ell Coalm*  
Commanding Officer

Air Forces Technical School

# United States Army



## Army Air Forces Technical Training Command

*Be it known that*

Private First Class Robert E. Self, 34666149,  
Air Corps Unassigned  
*has satisfactorily completed the course for*

## Airplane Mechanics

*as prescribed by the Army Air Forces Technical Training Command  
In testimony whereof and by virtue of vested authority I do confer upon him this*

## Diploma

*Given at Keesler Field, Miss. on this 22nd day  
4 September in the year of our Lord one thousand nine hundred and forty three*

*Roll E. Palmer*  
Commanding Officer  
Air Forces Technical School



### Honorable Discharge

*This is to certify that*

51

ROBERT E SELF 34 666 049 TECHNICAL SERGEANT  
825TH BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON

**Army of the United States**

*is hereby Honorably Discharged from the military  
service of the United States of America.*

*This certificate is awarded as a testimonial of Honest  
and Faithful Service to this country.*

*Given at* SEPARATION CENTER  
FORT BRAGG NORTH CAROLINA

*Date* 9 SEPTEMBER 1945

NORTH CAROLINA  
WILSON COUNTY

FILED FOR REGISTRATION  
AT WILSON COUNTY P.M. 10 DAY OF  
September 1945 AND RECORDED  
IN BOOK Discharge PAGE 101

James H. Collins  
REGISTER OF DEEDS

F. B. Martin  
F. B. MARTIN  
MAJOR AGD

# Honorable Discharge



from the Armed Forces of the United States of America

*This is to certify that*

T SGT ROBERT E SELF AF 34 666 049 United States Air Force Reserve, who enlisted 14th May 1947

*was Honorably Discharged from the*

## Army of the United States

*on the* 13th *day of* May 1950

*This certificate is awarded*

*as a testimonial of Honest and Faithful Service*

*Samuel E Barger*

SAMUEL E BARGER  
Major USAF  
Asst Air Adj Gen

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SAMUEL E BARGER  
Major USAF  
Asst Air Adj Gen

# ENLISTMENT RECORD

OF

**Self** (Last name)      **Robert** (First name)      **E.** (Middle initial)      **34666029** (Army Serial No.)      **T/Sgt** (Grade)

Enlisted **29 Sept**, 19 **47**, at **Wokery, NC**

~~At the request of the United States, under contract for training, from~~ \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_

Serving in **NCNG for (1) yr** \_\_\_\_\_ enlistment period at date of discharge.

Prior service: † **US Air Corp fr 4 Feb 43 to 9 Sept 45, Enl Reserve Corp fr 14 May 47 to 29 Sept 47**

Noncommissioned officer: **T/Sgt**

Qualification in arms: † **None**

Horsemanship: **None**

Attendance at: **None**  
(Name of noncommissioned officers' or special service school)

Battles, engagements, skirmishes, expeditions: **None**

Decorations, service medals, citations: **None**

Knowledge of any vocation: **None**

Wounds received in service: **None**

Date and result of smallpox vaccination: **19 Jan 48 Neg**

Date of completion of all typhoid-paratyphoid vaccinations: **19 Jan 48**

Date and result of diphtheria immunity test (Schick): **None**

Date of other vaccinations (specify vaccine used): **Tetanus 16 Feb 48**

Physical condition when discharged: **Excellent**      Married or single: **Married**

Character: **Excellent**

Remarks: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of soldier: \_\_\_\_\_

*William H. Vanderlinden, Jr.*

**WILLIAM H. VANDERLINDEN, JR.**  
 Captain, Co. H, 120th Infantry, NCNG

Commanding \_\_\_\_\_

\* Strike out line if the soldier was not in the Federal service during this enlistment.  
 † Give company and regiment or corps or department, with inclusive dates of service in each enlistment.  
 ‡ Give date of qualification or rating and number, date, and source of order announcing same.

# National Guard of the United States



AND OF THE STATE OF North Carolina

To all whom it may concern:

This is to Certify, That Robert E. Self  
\* CO. H, 120TH INFANTRY, N.C.N.G.

† \_\_\_\_\_ as a TESTIMONIAL OF HONEST AND FAITHFUL  
SERVICE, is hereby HONORABLY DISCHARGED from the NATIONAL GUARD of the  
UNITED STATES and of the State of N.C. by reason of

‡ Par 68 ETS, 28 Sept 48, SO 998, AGD NG, 4 Nov 48

Said Robert E. Self was born  
in Nash County, in the State of N.C.

When enlisted he was 23 years of age and by occupation a \_\_\_\_\_  
He had Blue eyes, Blonde hair, Fair complexion, and  
was 5 feet 8 1/2 inches in height.

Given under my hand at Hickory, N.C. this  
28 day of Sept, one thousand nine hundred and 48

*Peyton McSwain*

PEYTON McSWAIN  
Col., 120th Inf., NCNG

*Commanding.*

# ENLISTMENT RECORD

OF

Self                      Robert                      E.                      34666089                      T/Sgt  
(Last name)                      (First name)                      (Middle initial)                      (Army Serial No.)                      (Grade)

Enlisted 29 Sept, 19 47, at Wickery, NC

~~Place of birth of the United States, and date of the enlistment:~~ \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_

Serving in NCNG for (1) yr \_\_\_\_\_ enlistment period at date of discharge.

Prior service: † US Air Corp fr 4 Feb 43 to 9 Sept 45, Enl Reserve Corp fr 14 May 47 to 29 Sept 47

Noncommissioned officer: T/Sgt

Qualification in arms: † None

Horsemanship: None

Attendance at: None  
(Name of noncommissioned officers' or special service school)

Battles, engagements, skirmishes, expeditions: None

Decorations, service medals, citations: None

Knowledge of any vocation: None

Wounds received in service: None

Date and result of smallpox vaccination: 19 Jan 48 Neg

Date of completion of all typhoid-paratyphoid vaccinations: 19 Jan 48

Date and result of diphtheria immunity test (Schick): None

Date of other vaccinations (specify vaccine used): Tetanus 16 Feb 48

Physical condition when discharged: Excellent                      Married or single: Married

Character: Excellent

Remarks: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of soldier: \_\_\_\_\_

*William H. Vanderlinden, Jr.*

WILLIAM H. VANDERLINDEN, JR.  
 Captain, Co. H, 120th Infantry, NCNG

\_\_\_\_\_ Commanding \_\_\_\_\_

\* Strike out line if the soldier was not in the Federal service during this enlistment.  
 † Give company and regiment or corps or department, with inclusive dates of service in each enlistment.  
 ‡ Give date of qualification or rating and number, date, and source of order announcing same.



*To all who shall see these presents, greeting:*

*Know Ye, that reposing special trust and confidence in the fidelity and abilities*  
of STAFF SERGEANT ROBERT E. SELF AF 34666049 *, I do*  
*appoint* him TECHNICAL SERGEANT UNITED STATES AIR FORCE *in the*

## Air Force of the United States

*to rank as such from the* TWENTIETH *day of* DECEMBER *, nineteen*  
*hundred and* FORTY EIGHT

*This appointee will therefore carefully and diligently discharge the duties of the grade to which appointed by doing and performing all manner of things thereunto pertaining. And I do strictly charge and require all personnel of lesser grade to render obedience to appropriate orders. And this appointee is to observe and follow such orders and directions as may be given from time to time by Superiors acting according to the rules and articles governing the discipline of the*  
**Armed Forces of the United States of America**

*Given under my hand at* KELLY AIR FORCE BASE, TEXAS  
*this* FOURTEENTH *day of* MARCH *, in the year of our Lord nineteen*  
*hundred and* FIFTY ONE

*Waldo J. Bither*

---

WALDO J. BITHER  
MAJOR, USAF  
Hq & Hq Sq, SAAMA  
COMMANDING

---

CHARACTER OF DEPARTION		REPORT OF SEPARATION FROM THE ARMED FORCES OF THE UNITED STATES			DEPARTMENT	
RELEASE FROM ACTIVE DUTY					AIR FORCE	
1. LAST NAME - FIRST NAME - MIDDLE NAME		2. SERVICE NUMBER		3. GRADE - RATE - RANK AND DATE OF APPOINTMENT		4. COMPONENT AND BRANCH OR CLASS
SALE, ROBERT E.		AF 34 626 019		T/SGT 20 DEC 1951		USAFR
5. QUALIFICATION		6. EFFECTIVE DATE OF SEPARATION		7. TYPE OF SEPARATION		
C1270		18 AUGUST 51		RELEASE FROM AD		
8. REASON AND AUTHORITY FOR SEPARATION		9. PLACE OF SEPARATION				
PAR 40 AFL 39-12		KELLY AIR FORCE BASE, TEXAS				
10. DATE OF BIRTH		11. PLACE OF BIRTH		12. DESCRIPTION		
3 JUNE 21		NASH CO., NORTH CAROLINA		MALE CAUCASIAN BLONDE BLUE		
13. REGISTERED		14. SELECTIVE SERVICE NUMBER		15. SELECTIVE SERVICE LOCAL BOARD NUMBER		
X		31182-331				
16. IS ENLISTED		17. COMPONENT AND BRANCH OF CLASS		18. COMMAND DISTRICT OR AREA COMMAND		
X		USAFR		HQ, 14TH AIR FORCE, ROBINS AFB, GEORGIA		
19. MEANS OF ENTRY OTHER THAN BY INDUCTION		20. GRADE, RATE OR RANK AT TIME OF ENTRY INTO ACTIVE SERVICE		21. GRADE, RATE OR RANK AT TIME OF ENTRY INTO ACTIVE SERVICE		
<input type="checkbox"/> ENLISTED <input type="checkbox"/> REENLISTED <input type="checkbox"/> COMMISSIONED <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> CALLED FROM INACTIVE DUTY				TECHNICAL SERGEANT		
22. DATE AND PLACE OF ENTRY INTO ACTIVE SERVICE		23. HOME ADDRESS AT TIME OF ENTRY INTO ACTIVE SERVICE				
19 AUGUST 50		50 BIRNLY AIR FORCE BASE TRX ART 329, MOB IS FIELD, CHARLOTTE, N.C.				
24. STATEMENT OF SERVICE FOR PAY PURPOSES		25. NET SERVICE COMPLETED FOR PAY PURPOSES (THIS PERIOD)		26. NET SERVICE COMPLETED FOR PAY PURPOSES (PERIOD)		
		1 0 0		NOT APPLICABLE		
27. OTHER SERVICE (Act of 10 June 1942 as amended) COMPLETED FOR PAY PURPOSES		8 10 6		NOT APPLICABLE		
28. TOTAL NET SERVICE COMPLETED FOR PAY PURPOSES		6 10 6		NOT APPLICABLE		
29. DECORATIONS MEDALS BADGES, COMMENDATIONS CITATIONS AND CAMPAIGN RIBBONS AWARDED OR AUTHORIZED		NONE				
30. MOST SIGNIFICANT DUTY ASSIGNMENT		31. WOUNDS RECEIVED AS A RESULT OF ACTION WITH ENEMY FORCES		32. WOUNDS RECEIVED AS A RESULT OF ACTION WITH ENEMY FORCES		
2940TH OPER SQUAD, 2940TH DEPOT TRAINING WING, KELLY AIR FORCE BASE, TEXAS		NONE		NONE		
33. SERVICE SCHOOLS OR COLLEGES COLLECTED FOR PAY PURPOSES		34. SERVICE SCHOOLS OR COLLEGES COLLECTED FOR PAY PURPOSES		35. SERVICE SCHOOLS OR COLLEGES COLLECTED FOR PAY PURPOSES		
NONE		NONE		NONE		
36. GOVERNMENT INSURANCE INFORMATION		37. KIND OF INSURANCE		38. MONTH ALLOTMENT DISCONTINUED		39. MONTH NEXT PREMIUM DUE
NONE		USGII		JULY 51		AUGUST 51
40. TOTAL PAYMENT UPON SEPARATION		41. TRAVEL OR MILITARY ALLOWANCE INCLUDED IN TOTAL PAYMENT		42. INSURING OFFICER'S NAME AND STAMPEd NUMBER		43. SIGNATURE OF OFFICER ADJUDICATING CLAIM
\$10,000 - \$6.50		\$70.02		H. C. SPENCER		Dewey Lee
44. UNIFORMS (List below on reverse)		45. V.A. BENEFITS PREVIOUSLY APPLIED FOR		46. SIGNATURE OF PERSON BEING SEPARATED		
NO TIME LOST UNDER SECTION 6A, ARTICLE 140, MCM 1951		NONE		ROBERT E. SALE		
BLOOD TYPE		47. DATES OF LAST CIVILIAN EMPLOYMENT		48. NAME AND ADDRESS OF LAST CIVILIAN EMPLOYER		
CASH LET (LEMENT FOR THIRTY (30) DAYS UNUSED LEAVE MADE		SEP 45 - AUG 50		SALESMAN, BELKS DEPARTMENT STORES, CHARLOTTE, N.C.		
49. UNITED STATES CITIZEN		50. MARITAL STATUS		51. NON-SERVICE EDUCATION		52. MAJOR COURSE OR FIELD
X YES		MARRIED		7 4 4 BA		ADMINISTRATION
53. PERMANENT ADDRESS FOR MAILING PURPOSES AFTER SEPARATION		54. SIGNATURE OF PERSON BEING SEPARATED				
314 LAFAYETTE DRIVE, WILSON, NORTH CAROLINA		Robert E. Sale				

# Honorable Discharge



from the Armed Forces of the United States of America

*This is to certify that*

ROBERT EDWARD SELF, AF 34666049, Technical Sergeant, AF Reserve

*was Honorably Discharged from the*

## Air Force of the United States

*on the* 16th *day of* June 1953 *This certificate is awarded*

*as a testimonial of Honest and Faithful Service*

*G. K. Hollingworth*

G. K. HOLLINGWORTH, Capt., USAF

Date of Enlistment 17 May 1950 PAFS 81270

Prior Active Military Service 3 Yrs 6 Mos 29 Days

Total Service Completed for Pay Purposes:

8 Yrs 8 Mos 6 Days

Reason and Authority for Discharge: Expiration of Term of

Enlistment. Par 20a, AFR 35-6.

Recommended for Reenlistment Yes

*G. K. Hollingworth*  
G. K. HOLLINGWORTH, Capt., USAF

825TH BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON (H)  
Office of the Operations Officer  
APO 520 U S Army

C E R T I F I C A T E

"I certify that T/Sgt. ROBERT E. SELF, 34666049, Aerial Engineer has completed the following missions:

DATE	TIME	TARGET
14 August 1944	7:15	Tropez Gun Installations, France
17 August 1944	7:20	Ploesti Oil Refineries, Rumania
18 August 1944	6:00	Alibunar Airdrome, Yugoslavia
20 August 1944	6:30	Szolnok Airdrome, Hungary
22 August 1944	7:30	Vienna Oil Installations, Austria
24 August 1944	5:15	Ferrara Rail Road Bridge, Italy
26 August 1944	7:45	Otopeni Airdrome, Rumania
28 August 1944	6:45	Szolnok Rail Road, Hungary
29 August 1944	6:15	Szeged Rail Road Bridge, Hungary
2 Sept. 1944	5:05	Mitrovica Rail Road Bridge, Yugoslavia
5 Sept. 1944	5:35	Beograd Railroad Bridge, Yugoslavia
6 Sept. 1944	5:15	Beograd Railroad Bridge, Yugoslavia
11 Sept. 1944	9:00	Ferried Supplies to Lyons, France
15 Sept. 1944	9:00	Ferried Supplies to Lyons, France
11 Oct. 1944	6:35	Lavamund Marshalling Yards, Austria
16 Oct. 1944	7:25	Linz Benzol Plant, Austria
20 Oct. 1944	6:45	Milan Romeo Armament Works, Italy
1 Nov. 1944	7:15	Vienna Oil Installations, Austria
4 Nov. 1944	8:00	Augsburg Marshaaling Yards, Germany
5 Nov. 1944	7:20	Vienna Oil Installations, Austria
6 Nov. 1944	6:20	Vienna Oil Installations, Austria
7 Nov. 1944	5:10	Sarajevo Marshalling Yards, Yugoslavia
18 Nov. 1944	6:00	Villa Franca Marshalling Yards, Italy
20 Nov. 1944	8:45	Prerov Marshalling Yards, Czechoslovakia
3 Dec. 1944	5:50	Innsbruck Marshalling Yards, Austria -
17 Dec. 1944	8:35	Odertal Oil Refinery, Germany
29 Dec. 1944	8:20	Passeau Marshalling Yards, Germany
5 Jan. 1945	6:00	Zagreb Marshalling Yards, Yugoslavia
19 Jan. 1945	7:00	Brod Road Bridge, Yugoslavia
1 Feb. 1945	7:00	Graz Industrial Area, Austria
7 Feb. 1945	8:30	Florisdorf Oil Refinery, Vienna, Austria
1 March 1945	8:00	Moosebierbaum Oil Refineries, Austria
9 March 1945	7:05	Graz Marshalling Yards, Austria
14 March 1945	7:00	Wiener Neustadt Marshalling Yards, Austria
20 March 1945	7:30	Wels Marshalling Yards, Austria

TOTAL COMBAT HOURS : 244:05

TOTAL COMBAT MISSIONS\*\*--35 Complete

*William E. McCoy*  
WILLIAM E. MCCOY  
Captain, Air Corps  
Operations Officers

## NARRATIVE STATEMENT

2nd Lt. Howard (NMI) Steinberg, Co-Pilot, 2nd Lt. Ryan M. O'Brien, Navigator, 2nd Lt. Richard F. Hugo, Bombardier, Sergeant Robert E. Self, Engineer, Cpl. Robert P. Stewart, Radio Operator, Cpl. Homer H. Knap, Ball Turret Gunner, Cpl. Lynn B. Crytzer, Nose Gunner, Cpl. Leonard J. Whetstone, Top Turret Gunner, 825th Bombardment Squadron (Pathfinder), 484th Bombardment Group (Pathfinder), U. S. Army, were crew members of a B-24 type aircraft flying in the 484th Group formation which bombed oil storage facilities vitally important to the enemy at Vienna, Austria, 22 August 1944. When approximately one hour from the target, #1 engine was rendered inoperative due to supercharger and propeller malfunction, and immediately the plane began losing altitude. The Wing Formation of which this aircraft was a part, had been routed considerably around to the east and north of the target in order to avoid crossing extremely heavy flak positions. It was immediately apparent to the crew that they could not hope to keep up with the formation which, by following the briefed route, had yet 94 miles to go before reaching Vienna. The crew conversed over interphone and realized they would either have to jettison bombs and by so lightening the load attempt to remain with the formation or jettison bombs and return to base, or go over the target via short route (leaving the formation), and try to catch the formation as it left the target. The latter choice necessitated subjection to enemy fighters and going in at 13,000 feet over extremely dangerous flak - the danger from either of both being multiplied by the fact that their ship would be the sole target - but without exception they expressed their determination to do so. As the ship left the formation it was aggressively attacked by from 15 to 20 Me 109's. A running battle ensued for 20 minutes, during which one Me 109 was destroyed, another probably destroyed, and accurate fire from all guns dissuaded many enemy fighters from pressing the advantage of their superior numbers. In spite of the 20 minute running battle with the fighters and devastatingly intense and accurate fire from both medium and heavy anti-aircraft artillery, this aircraft dropped its bombs squarely on the target and proceeded in a seriously damaged condition to base entirely alone through the long stretch of enemy territory infested with fighters. It was only through the extraordinary cooperative efforts of all members of this crew and superior performance of duty by each man that this aircraft was able to assist in striking this crippling blow to the enemy and then return safely to base even though very severely damaged.

choice but to start # 2 back. Got # 3 put out and in a short time # 2 was back on fire so we cut out # 2 and started # 3 back. We were told we could not land until all aircraft were off the runway for the mission. We decided we were going to land anyway and we started on the down wind leg and I was firing flares – any flare I could put in the pistol. In fact I shot the entire contents of the flare kit. We were about half way down the down wind leg and still about 300 ft. and flying on three engines with a full load of fuel and loaded with booby trap 500 pounders. At this point the three running engines quit – I was standing between the pilot and co-pilot as usual on landing to call air speed. When the engines quit, the pilot shoved the nose straight down and then he and the co-pilot pulled the control straight back and we were lucky in that the field had just been plowed and raining. We hit and one wheel sheared off and the plane turned and went down the field backwards, filling the rear compartment with mud and there were bombs laying around the plane with broke off fuses. Only the Navigator got hurt, his foot was cut when the strut of the nose wheel broke back and landed on his foot. He was standing on the catwalk directly under the top turret, which did not fall from its mounting ring, for whatever reason. The plane was finally blown up where it lay after sufficient time to give the bombs a chance to explode if they were going to.

Robert E. Self, T/Sgt

Engineer on the Howard Steinberg Crew

We completed our 35 missions

# Ed Self

208 W. Stevens St.  
Smithfield, N. C, 27577  
November 17, 2000

Dear Bud:

In Vol # 12 that you just sent to me, on page 30 is the article "What's Up Doc", The continuation of the story by one M/Sgt Harold C. Jacob, M/Sgt 825 Squadron.

Sgt Jacobs is living in a fantasy world and not facing the fact of the morning of December 10, 1944. He said that he wished to tell the maintenance story.

Well, I want to set the record straight on TRUTH.

I was the engineer on the Howard Steinberg crew and we "lucked up" and drew the # 34 "What's Up Doc" for what was to be an all out maximum mission. Anything that could get in the air that day was suppose to fly. When we got to the pad of # 34, the plane was not ready to fly. They were still working on it. The bombs had not been loaded, the guns had not been put in the turrets nor was there any ammunition loaded on the plane. Ordinance brought the bombs and ammo out along with the guns. They loaded the bombs and just tossed the guns and ammo into the plane and told us to install and load after we were airborne.

He states in his article that a new crew was flying that day. He tries to lay the blame for the engines catching fire on inexperience of a new crew. Jacobs, what is your idea of a new crew?

I don't think he could have any reason to call a crew that was taking off on their 25<sup>th</sup> mission a new crew. We knew about engines, mixtures etc. His statements were made by Saturday arm chair quarterback – he was not in the plane and any thoughts of his were just that – thoughts. Before he made the statements and wrote the article that he

did it was as if he were the last word on what happened. He should have checked his facts. I don't remember ever having been contacted by him – ever.

As we were in line waiting to take off, the pilot said to the co-pilot and myself that "This plane was born to groundloop" You see, we had flown this plane other times, one being on August 22, 1944 to Vienna, Austria. That day we had engine trouble and lost # 2 as we approached Austria. We could not keep up with the formation, being heavily loaded and losing altitude. It was discussed among the crew and we had the choice of turning back or going on and picking up the formation as they came off the target. The group was to come in from the North East over the target headed home. When the formation left us, we were hit by Me-109's and FW-190's. There were about 15 of them and they gave us a going over but we got two and the fighter escort that came to our rescue took out many more of them. It is documented that a 109 came out of the sun and I along with our navigator looked him directly in the face as he cut our radio antenna with his wing. One of them hit us on the right wing just behind the # 3 engine and left a hole about a foot across. One of the 20mm shells went into the #2 engine from the rear and blew out one of the cylinders.

**We** got to the target and the formation was not insight as they were to bomb from 26,000 ft. We were at this time flying at only 13,000 feet. Pilot told the Bombardier to line up on the target as we were going in. We [ one single B-24 Bomber ] bombed Vienna, Austria with only three engines operating and from 13,000 feet. With one engine dead we could **no** hold it perfectly straight and I think this is what saved us. They threw everything but **the** kitchen sink at us and as we pulled away from the target, we could see at high altitude the group getting ready to bomb. They passed us and beat us home. For some reason that only the good Lord knows, the fighters did not attack us again on the return from the target. We finally landed at home base and the plane was filled with unexploded 20mm in the gas tanks. The tires were O.K. but the rims were gouged where shrapnel had cut them. This plane was on the ground in repair for over 6 weeks.

**Now** back to the Dec 10 crash. We had gotten about 50-75 feet off the ground when one of the crew came from the waist to tell me the engine was on fire. I sent back to the waist to see it and the fire was extended past the tail. I got it cut off and feathered and we were just maintaining an altitude of about 300 – 400 feet. No 3 caught fire so we had not

# WHAT'S UP DOC, THE CONTINUATION OF THE STORY

By M/SGT HAROLD C. JACOBS, 825 SQUADRON

Referring to the story on "What's Up Doc" by one of its flight crew that appeared in Issue #11 of the Torretta Flyer, I wish to tell the maintenance story.

I started out with the 825 Squadron in Harvard Nebraska and ended up with the Green Project in North Africa after the 484th BG and the 825 Sq broke up when the war in Europe ended.

A recent tape I made for Bombardier Isaac Smoke of Porter's crew giving details of what went on in the outfit after they were shot down over Vienna, has through channels been made a part of Training Activities at the Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs.

Ship #34 was my airplane, and it was the airplane that won the Bronze Star for me. She had a record of 55 continuous missions, 2 fighters to its credit and was headed for greater glory. Maintenance was performed throughout the night under the most primitive conditions, so that it would always be ready the next morning for a mission.

The morning of December 10, 1944, a new crew was flying #34. As the ship took off it was reported that the engines were on fire and engines were feathered and fuel shut off. All this happened very quickly during the takeoff. In reality what was reported as fire from the waist window was only torching from a rich mixture and only appeared to be on fire. As a result of the feathering and unfeathering of the engines and manipulating the fuel selector valves the running engines were starved of fuel. As a result the plane lost power and crash landed in the field south of the runway. Had the crew been aware that on occasion a rich mixture can cause a torching effect, and had they leaned out the mixture during climb out, the accident would not have happened.

(See Editors note following the story)

The plane was carrying Booby Trap Bombs. It lay for three days before we went to examine it.

The left landing gear was down and locked. The right landing gear strut and all was sheared off. The nose wheel crumpled into the fuselage on impact.

After the time had expired for the booby trap bombs to go off we entered the ship. The arming wires were still in place making the bombs quite safe. The ordnance crew under Sgt. Matranga removed the bombs as shown in the accompanying photograph

We inspected the engines for fire damage and found none. The inside of the waist gate showed deposits of carbon due to the richness of the mixture.

On impact the windshield was partially torn away enabling the pilot and co-pilot to merely step out of their seats walking out on the top of the fuselage and then jumping down to the ground. The fuselage never split apart as the photos show.

No #34 saw service earlier in France when part of the 825th was at Avignon hauling supplies of fuel, 50 Cal. ammo and 500 lb bombs for General Patton's army. These supplies were lifted to Lyon and later North to Dijon as the Germans moved out.

As a crew chief on ships #34 and #31 I had the good feeling of sending many aircrews back to the states when they completed their tour of duty. This was a wonderful feeling. However when all of the ships had returned to the revetments after a mission and yours was empty that was a sadness that only someone who has had this experience can understand. Many times a crew chief cried when his ship did not return.

Stud Hoss (see photo elsewhere by John Grimm) was crewed by M/Sgt Leonard Suiter. Some of your flight crews might remember how you fought to get just one mission on this ship. I believe it was the only original ship in our squadron to survive the war and return home. I understand also there was an effort to scrap it but enough pilots thwarted that idea. With it's old camouflage paint it stuck out in a formation of newer aircraft.

On page 14 of Torretta Flyer No 11, reader comment requested. Ship #41 that crashed was not flown by Crew # 41 or Porters crew. Crew 41 had gone down previously on a raid to Vienna.

Crew numbers and ship numbers had nothing in common. As I recall M/Sgt. Lepley was crew chief of #41.

Enjoyed a reunion with Isaac Smoke, bombardier, and John Chaffe Jr. radio operator on Porter's crew that was shot down over Vienna. I had often wondered what happened to the ship Big Dick on that day and after almost 41 years I found out.

It was at Lyon where I viewed the atrocities of Klaus Barbie, the butcher of Lyon. In one hangar where I went looking for souvenirs we found row upon row of dead women and children massacred by the Germans. The Germans upon capturing the airfield had rosters of French Jews, the addresses taken from the men who worked at the airfield. They went to the homes dragging back the women and children to the field where they were lined up at the edges of bomb craters, to be machine gunned and pushed into the craters then covered up. As they were dug up the French laid them upon the hangar floor for identification.

I was crew chief of the following:

"BIG DICK" #31. Porter's crew, lost Vienna June 26, 1944

"WHAT'S UP DOC" #34. Crashed end of runway

"BONA VENTURE" #31. Shot up, went to Russia, confiscated

"SNUFFIES PUBING MISSION" #31. Shot up, went to Russia, Yugoslavia.

I would like to hear from anyone who knows of any other original B-24, besides "STUD HOSS" that survived the war and returned to the States.

THE END



## EDITORIAL PAGE



*Bud Markel is kneeling third from the left with goggles and scarf. Topeka, Kansas.*

I have taken a stand on the proposed W.W. 2 memorial, I have suggested that the memorial should be abandoned in favor of a Memorial Library, and has been sent out to major newspapers.

October 13, 1997  
Editor World War memorial Newsletter  
Courthouse Plaza II Suite 501  
2300 Clarendon Blvd.  
Arlington, VA 22201

Dear sir:

The Fall 1997 issue of your newsletter finally reached me and I was appalled at the starkness of the proposed W.W.II memorial. The outcry of critics who lambasted the earlier proposals for the memorial are justified. You have to ask yourself? Does the present design remind you of World War Two? Or is it just an arrangement of stones in a bare ellipse with stylized pillars supporting nothing, not even the plain grassy ramps, It does however remind one of ancient Roman ruins.

There is nothing anywhere in this memorial symbolic of the World War Two, not even a Sherman tank or the white uniform of a Navy Wave.

The events of World War Two at mid century were gigantic in scope, affecting the lives of millions of people for good, or evil. Nowhere on the blank walls of the proposed memorial are the depictions of wartime events. Nowhere does one find information on turning points (Battle of Midway), nor do we see maps, (Battle of the Bulge) photographs (Hiroshima), letters, (Einstein's letter to Roosevelt about the possibility of an atomic bomb) and documents giving the visitor a historical telling of what the war was all about (documents from the National Archives) and the changes that took place as a result of the war (GI Bill) and the British loss of empire.

The war was too vast involving millions of people at home and overseas, 12,000,000 million servicemen under arms in the United States alone. How can one look at a waterfall, a pleasant view if you will, and be reminded of the sacrifice of the common soldier. There is no reminder of the tragedy of Pearl Harbor, or the slaughter at Iwo Jima. There is no reminder of the invasion of Europe (D Day ), or Air Corps bombers falling out of the sky,( Ploesti & Schweinefurt) and nothing at all of the atomic bomb.

Where are the battle flags of the combat units?

How many people know that the automobile factories (Willow Run Bomber Plant, Chrysler built tanks) Packard engines) production of war materials of all types backstopped basic industry by increasing production to numbers that the Germans did not even believe possible as they rolled recklessly across Europe unknowing of what was to fall on them. The English based 8th and the Italian based/5th Air Forces darkened the skies with automobile company built bombers (Ford) and engines (Buick), guns (Oldsmobile) that shook the earth and put fear in the hearts of the enemy.

The Veterans of the War need to have an anchor where their children, and grandchildren, and those who will follow can visit a place to learn of the experience of their own mid century soldiers who offered their lives as forfeit to do battle with an unspeakable evil. For many the reward was injury or death.

How does this cold stone and silent memorial tell of all this? It does not.

Conventional war of global proportions with its huge battle fleets on the land, sea, and air is just about obsolete because of the atomic bomb. The history of World War II has drawn great interest from the general population and children and grandchildren of W.W.II veterans. A Library would be more appropriate in that it would address the problems as described above. It could be a place of research, of study where one can feel the experiences of those who fought the war and those who lived and died as well.

Thus the memorial becomes a living memorial in that it is alive inside, a place to contemplate, and a place to study and learn. This is in keeping with the trend set by the Holocaust Museum in Washington. It is a place to study and learn about the biggest mistake of mankind. One can put on the Holocaust and wear it like a piece of clothing and walk in the shoes of those citizens who were politically unwanted.

I propose a World War II Library modeled loosely after a presidential library. The exterior architecture is not important, the contents inside are what matters. It may not be necessary then to beautify the exterior with stone architecture, or a waterfall.

Sincerely,

Bud Markel  
President and Founder  
484th Bomb Group Association  
[E-Mail] bud484bg@aol.com  
L-W.W.II Memorial 10/2/97  
CC Los Angeles Times, Washington Post, Wall Street Journal

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honor the deeds of members of the group who did not return from the war. The program was made a living memorial by giving scholarship awards to students completing high school.

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## Save Those WWII Documents

The World II War generation that Tom Brokaw talks about in his new book, are passing on at a faster rate now. These men of the heavy bomb groups now in their mid seventies need to tell their stories while still alive.. They need to make copies of: Their personal history, documents, books, pamphlets, manuals, tech orders, maps photographs, artwork, memorabilia, uniforms, artifacts of WWII. Also important is the recording of the veterans personal history and war experiences, via oral tapes while still can. I say this because the internet has renewed interest of younger generations, some offspring of veterans, some grandchildren, and from the general public not only in the USA, but also from Europe. All of this material can be held in a WWII Library for use by all interested parties. See my proposal below.

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## Help Sponsor a WWII Library

Instead of another war memorial or monument the 484th would like to see the creation of a WWII Library to house and store the history of WWII that is in private hands, meaning collectors, veterans, industry, and interested parties. Then veterans would have a place to store and display their, histories, documents, photographs, maps, memorabilia etc. If the nation can create and preserve the battlefield at Gettysburg, then it could also do comparable justice to the history of WWII, and its veterans. The proposed library could be ideally located within a newly closed military installation to eliminate land cost.

The objection of this editor to monuments is that they are static constructions, cold and indifferent, hiding under a green patina, ignoring any human presence. Cold stones just don't cut it. A library is alive with humanity, of all ages. The patrons of a library come and go, stop to read a book, or pick up paper. They attend lectures and listen to music, and readings. It's a place of social interchange, and where knowledge transfer and learning occurs. This creates a pleasant experience. If you support the idea of a WWII Library, E-mail me.

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## EDITORIAL PAGE



*Bud Markel is kneeling third from the left with goggles and scarf. Topeka, Kansas.*

I have taken a stand on the proposed W.W. 2 memorial, I have suggested that the memorial should be abandoned in favor of a Memorial Library, and has been sent out to major newspapers.

October 13, 1997  
Editor World War memorial Newsletter  
Courthouse Plaza II Suite 501  
2300 Clarendon Blvd.  
Arlington, VA 22201

Dear sir:

The Fall 1997 issue of your newsletter finally reached me and I was appalled at the starkness of the proposed W.W.II memorial. The outcry of critics who lambasted the earlier proposals for the memorial are justified. You have to ask yourself? Does the present design remind you of World War Two? Or is it just an arrangement of stones in a bare ellipse with stylized pillars supporting nothing, not even the plain grassy ramps, It does however remind one of ancient Roman ruins.

There is nothing anywhere in this memorial symbolic of the World War Two, not even a Sherman tank or the white uniform of a Navy Wave.

The events of World War Two at mid century were gigantic in scope, affecting the lives of millions of people for good, or evil. Nowhere on the blank walls of the proposed memorial are the depictions of wartime events. Nowhere does one find information on turning points (Battle of Midway), nor do we see maps, (Battle of the Bulge) photographs (Hiroshima), letters, (Einstein's letter to Roosevelt about the possibility of an atomic bomb) and documents giving the visitor a historical telling of what the war was all about (documents from the National Archives) and the changes that took place as a result of the war (GI Bill) and the British loss of empire.