



# NEWSLETTER



Volume 10, Number 1

SECOND AIR DIVISION ASSOCIATION

January 1972

## HISTORY OF 2<sup>ND</sup> AIR DIVISION ON WAY

Believe it or not another of our enterprising English friends has taken 'bit in teeth' and has set out to write a history of our own 2nd Air Division.

While this will undoubtedly come as a shock to the general public who have been smothered by large tomes detailing the exploits of the B-17 in general and countless B-17 Groups in particular, I feel that all of us who lived with the B-24 will heave a sigh of appreciation to James Hoseason of Lowestoft, England who is authoring this history of the 2nd Air Division.

This is in no way intended to downgrade the efforts of those who were involuntarily assigned to fly the forerunner of the modern house trailer, the B-17. It is simply an expression of delight that at long last the story of the B-24's of the 2nd Air Division will take its proper place in history.

Detailed information is best given by Jim Hoseason himself in a recent letter to our membership secretary Evelyn Cohen.

"I would be delighted if you would be kind enough to keep me regularly posted with the 2nd AD Association's newsheet. I am most interested in recording the history and events of your Division. But let me explain the background:

I first took up civilian flying in 1958. In 1960 I launched a flying group that was to operate from Seething Airfield. We've had a very successful history at Seething and now own one third of the old USAAF Airfield. We have our own hangar and ground installations and fly three light aircraft from the runways.

It fell naturally into sequence that once we were there we wanted to know more about the background of the airfield. This involved investigating the 448th BG; the 20th Combat Wing; and, in turn, the 2nd Air Division's history - and that of the total Eighth Air Force. With the aid of research I've undertaken both in the U.S. and here in Britain I've built up a mosaic of information, and from this I am in the process of writing a book about the 2nd Air Division. I aim to have this finished towards the end of next year. I've covered about 60% of the ground so far. It's been a long slow haul because I hadn't the necessary contacts and had to build these up by advertising in aviation magazines.

The book I am writing is a non-profitmaking operation! After all, it's intended only for a specialized audience. The real reason I want to get some documentary record published in the U.K. of the 2nd AD is that it was a very very significant force in the Eighth, yet there is very little recorded and published material about this particular force... despite the enormous amount of published information about the Fortresses and the First AD. Of course Curtis Le May and all his recorded notes gives a pretty sound background to the 3rd Division. It's the poor old 2nd Division that was not well documented."

I think we can all say 'Amen' to that last line. Elsewhere in these pages you will find a complete rundown of the current status and condition of all the airfields the 2nd AD flew from submitted by Jim. You will note, I'm



sure, that Turkey farming in England has grown in a big way!

One thing that Jim needs desperately is information. Photos and stories. I am asking all our members to take a few minutes and write to Jim detailing any information you might have available or can remember. Keep in mind that he has already spent a great deal of his own time and money in this venture and the least he deserves is the help of all members who can contribute anything. If in doubt as to whether or not what you have might be usable write first and ask questions. His address is James Hoseason, Sunway House Oulton Broad, Lowestoft, Suffolk, England. If your independently wealthy his telephone number is (0502) 62181!

I know you will all join with us in wishing Jim continued success in his efforts and early publication of his book.

## Second Air Division Association Eighth Air Force

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## PRESENT DAY STATE OF 2nd AD AIRFIELDS

Those still actively used for flying . . . .

**HETHEL** — Home of 389th BG. 2nd Combat Wing. Still used as an active airfield by the Lotus Group who have a car-building factory on the airfield boundary, and use the runways for their company's Piper aircraft.

**TIBENHAM** — Home of 445th BG. 96th Combat Wing. Headquarters of the Norfolk Gliding Club.

**SHIPDHAM** — Home of 44th BG. 14th Combat Wing. Now used for aircraft maintenance, flying training, and air taxi service by Arrow Air Services Ltd.

**SEETHING** — Home of 448th BG. 20th Combat Wing. A very busy airfield for light aviation. Flying training. Air taxis. Air displays. Parachute dropping. Limited maintenance. Runway 01/19 has been completely broken up.

**HORSHAM** — Home of 458th BG. 96th Combat Wing. Now Norwich Airport providing internal and international flights for passenger and freight aircraft.

**WATTISHAM** — Home of 479th BG. 65th Fighter Wing. A key RAF fighter station in the present British air defense system with "lightning" fighters — which regularly intercept the Russian "Bear" four-engined giant turbo-prop spy planes that patrol the British North Sea coastal area.

**STANSTEAD** — Stanstead Mount was a stockpile base for 2nd AD B24s (1944-45). Now an international Civil Airport.

## 466th BOMB GROUP ON THE MOVE

After viewing the success their committee had in getting the 44th Bomb Group activated for the 1971 reunion the 466th committee of Woolnough, Herbst, Pellican and Sjolholm resolved to try and reactivate the 466th BG in time for the 1972 reunion in Norwich.

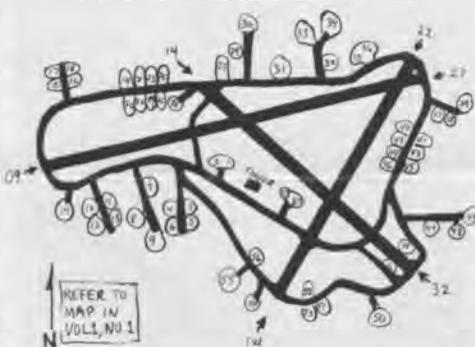
They started by issuing a newsletter (Attlebridge Notes) for distribution to all the 466ers they can find. The newsletter is designed to stir the memory and pique the interest of Group members. They contain a relatively detailed group history, a current map of what is left of the Airfield, a plea for names, addresses and photographs and a collection of one-liners in a "Remember" column.

The next issue will contain more "Remembers", a mission summary (part 1 of 3) and a revetment & A/C Assignment list (part 1 of 3).

To date the response has been more than gratifying. More and more people are turning up, many of them interested in the prospect of a Norwich trip. Some photos (they need more crew and plane photos) and useful data is being received. They ask those 466ers who have not yet checked in to drop them a note (and photos, if possible).

To avoid frustrating the assembly of those who cannot make Norwich in 1972 they are considering a Rear-Echelon Reunion of the Group in June or July Stateside, possibly Dayton, Ohio.

ATTLEBRIDGE REVETMENT MAP



This revetment map will be published in the September issue of "Attlebridge Notes". It is drawn at the same scale as the map published in the August issue of the 466th BG newsletter. From this the Attlebridge visitor should be able to find the revetment he used to fly out of. The 466th Committee is hoping to find an aerial photo or drawing of the whole complex so they can plot the location of

the living areas (i.e. the WAAF site, for which there was no adequate transportation, the mess halls, etc.).

Any and all help will be greatly appreciated by the Committee. But above all send them current names and addresses.

## "LADY LUCK" — THE LUCKY LADY WHO MADE IT BACK



She looks like a ground crews' pin-up, the last remains of a hangar queen . . . but this photograph was taken just a couple of months ago.

The nose panel from *Lady Luck* was rescued from the bomber after the end of WW II by a workman at Davis Monthan Air Force Base in Arizona. Long after the rest of the liberator had been turned into usable scrap, this piece lay in an old barn in Uvalde, Texas. In 1965 it was donated to the Confederate Air Force's Flying Museum, where this picture was taken.

*Lady Luck* flew with the 'Eight Balls', the 44th Bomb Group, and she survived the war with about 25 or 30 missions to her credit.

Little is known about *Lady Luck* other than she is a descendent of an earlier B-24D of the same name, from the 44th Bomb Group, 66th Bomb Squadron. That first *Lady Luck* went down over Ploesti during the August 1943 Low Level Mission. This original *Lady Luck* bore very similar nose art, and was obviously the basis for this piece of art signed by R. Silva.

Newsletter editor Bill Robertie would like to hear from anyone who remembers *Lady Luck*, and we would particularly like to see photos of her when she was all in one piece.

The Confederate Air Force has a large collection of nose pieces from B-24's and is eager to add details of their combat days to their display. Any and all help will be appreciated.

Steve Birdsall

## PRESENT DAY

(Continued from Page 2)

HONINGTON — Strategic Stores and Repair Centre. 1st Advanced Air Depot. Now an RAF Coastal Command and Strike Command base with "Buccaneer" and "Shackleton" aircraft.

Those airfields occasionally used for flying . . .

METFIELD — Home of 392nd BG and 491st BG. Used for crop spraying from time to time.

BUNGAY — Home of 446th BG. Used for crop spraying from time to time.

Airfields now completely broken up and used for farming . . .

RACKHEATH — Home of 467th BG. Now farmed, and on the perimeter is a factory making fibreglass boats.

STEEPLE MORDEN — Home of 355th FG and 2nd AD 355th Air Scouts. Hardly possible to recognize — even from the air.

BODNEY — Home of 352nd BG. A grass field gone back to farming.

Ghost Airfields . . . Still intact.

OLD BUCKENHAM — Home of 453rd BG. Completely disused.

ATTLEBRIDGE — Home of 466th BG. Turkey farm on the runways.

HALESWORTH — Home of 489th BG. Turkey farm on the runways.

NORTH PICKENHAM — Home of 491st and 492nd BG. An ex "Thor" rocket site. Now a turkey farm.

WATTON — Home of 1 Sqdn. B24 and 2 Sqdn. US-crewed 'Mosquito' photo-recce a/c. Recently vacated by RAF. Soon to become a Penitentiary . . .

WENDLING — Home of 392nd BG. Just a ghost-ridden airfield.

DIVISION HQ at Kettering Hall was a private school for a time, and is now the office of a large Turkey Farm company.

CCRC at Bovingdon is a shut-down reserve RAF airfield.

PULHAM OLD AIRFIELD — a break-up depot for spent and broken aircraft and an old airship depot — is now farmed for sheep rearing.

The big emergency long-and-wide-runway airfields at WOODBRIDGE and MANSTON are still *very* active airfields. WOODBRIDGE with 3rd USAF 'Phantoms' and MANSTON as a civil international airport.

## MEMBERSHIP CONTINUES TO GROW

With the help of those who are digging into their files for names and addresses our membership continues to grow. In this issue we welcome 33 new members.

### Headquarters

SHEPPARD, Ms. Helen A., 703 W. 5th St., Wapato, Washington

SCHMIDT, Chester, 726 N.W. 92nd St., Apt. 12, Miami Shores, Fla. 33138

### 44th Bomb Group

ALEXANDER, Col. David W., 1801 N. Walnut St., Lumberton, N.C. 28358

BURKE, Richard M., 166 Clintonville Rd., Northford, Conn. 06472

CHANDLER, J. A., 620 N. 11th East, Provo, Utah 84601

CLARK, John N., 701 S. Hayne St., Monroe, N.C. 28110

CLIFT, Reece R., 220 Elmwood, East, Jackson, Tenn. 38301

DIEHL, Col. John H., Jr., 1143 Toas Highway, Santa Fe, New Mexico 87501

ELLISON, Robert L., 3716 16th St., San Francisco, Calif. 94114

GOLDMAN, Hon. Irving, 4 Ridgewood Dr., Plattsburgh, N.Y. 12901

HOERL, Norbert A., P.O. Box 1081, San Diego, Calif. 92112

MUELLER, Allen O., Arlington, Neb. 68002

NERI, Michael J., 5000 Eastchester Circle, Alexandria, Va. 22310

OWENS, James G., 2867 N. 43rd Ave., Phoenix, Arizona 85009

REED, Podge M., 4116 Richmond St., Shreveport, La. 71106

SCHEIDEGGER, Fred, RR 2, Box A1, Blanchardville, Wis. 53516

WARTH, Charles J., 5709 Walkerton Dr., Cincinnati, Ohio 45238

### 96th Combat Wing

DONEY, John J., 226 Widener St., Philadelphia, Pa. 19120

### 389th Bomb Group

PARKS, Robert T., RD 1, McDonald, Pa. 15057

TAMBURO, John A., 222 Bentley Hill Dr., Reistertown, Md. 21136

### 392nd Bomb Group

FINKEL, Elliott W., 424 Frick Bldg., Pittsburg, Pa. 15219

KAMACHO, John A., 321 N.W. 125th St., Seattle, Wash. 98113

PENNINGTON, W. T., 5313 Green Tree Rd., Houston, Texas 77027

### 445th Bomb Group

HALEY, Andrew E., 4307 Willow Rd., Memphis, Tenn. 38111

### 446th Bomb Group

DHORITY, Charles N., 2110 Bally Castle, Dallas, Texas 75228

### 448th Bomb Group

JOHNSON, Herbert M., 751 Marine Ave., Manhattan Beach, Calif. 90266

### 453rd Bomb Group

ALVE, Eino, 311 Ithaca Rd., Spencer, N.Y. 14883

JORDAN, Robert W., 634 E. Bean St., Washington, Pa. 15301

PARKER, C. M., 22595 Cardinal Ave., Colton, Calif. 92324

### 458th Bomb Group

BOLDING, Donald Q., 5829 Marview Lane, Dallas, Texas 75227

CAMPBELL, Duan L., 1827 E. Marshall, Phoenix, Arizona 85016

SCHMITZ, C. J., Rt 1 - Box 74, Eules, Texas 76039

### 466th Bomb Group

DALEY, L/C John F., Ret., c/o General Delivery, Tampa, Florida 33602

HOLLY, Milton H., 1936 Glenwood Rd., Vestal, N.Y. 13850

LITCHFIELD, James A., 26 Brewster St., Cohasset, Mass. 02025

WOODWARD, Warren G., American Air Lines, Dallas Love Field, Dallas, Texas 75235

### 467th Bomb Group

BICKEL, J. Ray, RD 1, Richland, Pa. 17087

COBB, Willis E., Jr., Drawer 66, Pine-tops, N.C. 27864

FRYE, W. K., M.D., 9416 - 17th Ave., N.W., Bradenton, Fla. 33505

LePOER, Bernard A., Jr., Hardwick Rd., Petersham, Mass. 01366

### No Group Affiliation Known

HOFF, Cecil W., M.D., 1293 D. St., San Bernardino, Calif. 92405

### Honorary Member

HOSEASON, James, Sunway House, Oulton Broad, Loestoft, Norfolk, England

BIRDSALL, Steve, 5/53 Wycombe Rd., Neutral Bay 2089, Sydney, Australia

### Change of Address

BERWALDT, Mrs. Rose, 1200 Virginia Ave., Cape May, N.J. 08204

HURTADO, Mrs. Celso, 16331 Bay-shore Lane, Huntington Beach, Calif. 92649

LANE, Luke M. and LANE, Faith M. RT No. 10 Scenic Dr., Maryville, Tenn. 37801

### Necrology

BRADY, Robert, 643 Leigh Terrace, Westwood, N.J. August 8, 1971

**LETTERS —  
WE LOVE THEM**

"Just a brief letter to tell you how much I enjoyed reading the article by Steve Birdsall on Ted's Traveling Circus.

I was a replacement on "Shoot Luke" to the original crew and Vegesack, 3/18/43, was my first mission with her. I joined Capt. Murphy, Capt. Black, Lt. Janick, Lt. Rantala, Sgt. Maybee, Cowan, Slankard, Cressey and Foster.

After the original crew completed their tours I stayed with "Shoot Luke" until I was changed over to the crew of Boomerang, with whom I completed my tour. Now my question is — does anyone know what finally happened to "Shoot Luke"? I would like to hear from any and all former crew members who may have some information."

Sincerely,  
Adam J. Hastak

"Dear Bill:

"I recently returned from spending two very enjoyable weeks in Norwich and in view of the plans for the reunion there next year I thought some members might be interested in a few of the things I observed.

First of all, would you or anyone believe that it didn't rain once while we were there. The BBC said that it was the first time since 1962 that southern England had 20 consecutive days without rain.

The city has undergone many changes and all of them serve to make Norwich one of the more attractive cities in England. There is much evidence of tasteful planning so that the old flavor is not lost. London St. is now a pedestrian mall with a few sidewalk cafes. The new Hotel Nelson is located just across the bridge from Thorpe Station and is deluxe by any standard.

Prince of Wales Road now boasts a few Chinese and one Indian restaurant plus a Col. Saunders Kentucky Fried Chicken franchise. I didn't sample the English version of Kentucky Fried Chicken so can't comment on it but the natives seemed to take to it because the place was crowded every time I passed.

I visited the new Norwich City Library and saw the 2nd Air Division room and the fountain in the patio.

I'm not ashamed to say that I experienced a small feeling of pride as I browsed around and took photos. I regret to say that many of the stones sent by the various states to form the centers of stars on the floor of the fountain have been removed.

The very colorful market place, still located in front of the City Hall, carries an assortment of items that run the gamut from clothing to fish and chips. The latter are still as delicious as ever but the price has gone up. One piece of fish with chips now costs .50 instead of the few pence many of us remember from the war years.

Sincerely,

Robert A. Jacobs, Col. Ret.  
*(ed. note — Many thanks Colonel for this information which will be of great help to those seeing England again for the first time in 26 years. We now have some idea of what to expect. But 20 consecutive days without rain we won't look for. 20 hours maybe.)*

"Dear Bill:

On visiting a small village church a few years ago I came across this memorial situated at Carlton Rode just south of Norwich.

I was given the story that the two B-24's from the 389th B.G. Hethel were forming up with the group when the accident occurred.

Each year a contingent of U.S. Air Force personnel take part in a simple ceremony in honour of the men. This takes place on our Memorial Day November 11th.

Sincerely,  
John W. Archer  
27 Station Rd.  
Earsham, Bungay  
Suffolk, England



*(ed. note — Many thanks for the photo and information John and I'm sure our members from the 389th will appreciate this. Sorry to say that our Memorial Day has been eliminated by Government Edict and nobody is quite sure exactly when it will be from one year to the next.)*

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Dear Miss Cohen:

Mother, John and I request that you extend our deepest thanks and appreciation to those members of the 2nd Air Division and their friends present at the Williamsburg reunion who contributed funds toward a set of books to be donated to the Memorial Library in Norwich, England, in memory of our late husband and daddy, John (Gus) Karoly.

I'll never forget the pride and satisfaction with which Dad surveyed the scene at the library after the dedication ceremony. We were sitting at the base of the fountain and after a long look around, Dad turned to me and said quite simply, "You see, Pudie, old mistakes can be levelled and made aright." Such faith in good will is the legacy Gus Karoly left his children.

I can think of no nicer gesture than placing, in Father's name, tools of learning and of good will for the use of successive generations. I am sure he would have felt deeply honored.

Mother is well and pretty as ever, nursing at Mercy Hospital, and still residing in New Florence. She sends her best to you, Miss Cohen, and asks to be kept informed of the Eighth's activities. The Association is very special to us all.

With thanks and best wishes,  
Sincerely,  
Naida L. Karoly

*(ed. note — Your Father was very special to us, Naida, and it is doubtful that there would have been a 2nd AD Asso. without his efforts.)*

Dear Evelyn:

On my September trip to Ireland, Scotland and England I visited Rackheath to look over the old airbase. As you probably know practically nothing remains except a few concrete roads with much growth on both sides, a small portion of the tower with junk cars surrounding it and the front gate. I took this picture of the front gate and thought that possibly I should be in it, especially since the word 'Antiques' was used.

I took the time to explore the Norwich Library and the 8th Air Force Memorial Room. I believe those people of the 8th would enjoy this addition. It is difficult to believe that over 6,000

## LETTERS WE LOVE THEM.

(Continued from Page 4)

airmen lost their lives as the Memorial states.

Some of the old troops may be interested to know that the old pub 'Bachs' was closed and has been for over 6 months. This Pub was very close to the market place and had many different drinking rooms. Nostalgia is still rampant.

Sincerely,

Jack H. Viets

(ed. note - Ah yes, Jack. We knew every one of those drinking rooms - intimately!)



## WELCOME LITTLE FRIEND!

by Roger Freeman

A former member of the 448th BG, Ben C. Isgrig, Jr. of Little Rock wondered for many years who was the US fighter Pilot who came to his rescue when he was swinging in his 'chute high over France in June 1944.

His B-24 had been shot down by enemy fighters near Rennes, and as Isgrig floated down one of the Messerschmitts dived towards him in what Isgrig believes was an attempt to spray him with bullets.

At this crucial moment a Mustang interjected himself into the game and promptly shot the German pilot down. Recently Ben Isgrig found a reference to this incident in a book (Roger's "The Mighty Eighth") and this prompted him to write to the USAF. From information received there is no doubt that the pilot of that P-51 was none other than George Preddy, the highest scoring P-51 ace in Europe, who was tragically killed by US 'flak' on Christmas day 1944.

## ONE OF THOSE WHO MADE IT ALL POSSIBLE T/SGT. HOWARD 'TAFFY' HILLS

Behind every aircraft which made history in WW II was a crew that excelled in their job. Behind every aircraft and crew was a dedicated, talented individual who masterminded a band of equally dedicated and talented men - the seldom written about crew chief.

More often than not the crew chief and his men worked through the night, usually under impossible weather conditions, to make certain that their plane would be in 'letter perfect' condition for a mission the following day. One slip, one overlooked faulty nut or bolt and the ten men flying the ship would be in deep trouble well inside enemy territory.

While all crew chiefs and ground crews did their level best, certain men and crews stood out in their ability to put a thoroughly sound ship in the air time after time after time.

One such crew chief was Howard 'Taffy' Hills of the 752nd Squadron, 458th Bomb Group who had in his care the venerable old "Final Approach". When "Final Approach" received her mortal wound in the closing days of the war (April 9, 1945) she had logged 113 missions and had been flown by numerous crews who are alive today because they were flying a ship that was always thoroughly sound. More often than not her crew brought "Final Approach" back from raids badly scarred and with engines barely putting out. But it never failed to happen that when the next mission was scheduled "Final Approach" would be leading the pack down the runway grabbing for sky.

Taking care of this old bird, however, was not without its light moments. After 80 straight missions without an abort word began to get around that "Final Approach" was the plane to fly in if you wanted to complete your missions before becoming guests of the German Government. Her reputation for always being in 'mint' condition for any and all missions was a tribute to 'Taffy' and his crew. Such a tribute that it began to attract the 'Brass' like flies.

Whenever any high rank from headquarters elected to fly with the 458th they invariably chose to fly with the crew of "Final Approach". Not only did she



have a reputation for being in sound condition at all times but she had the more important reputation of always returning.

There was a distinct advantage in having the 'Brass' fly in his ship that 'Taffy' was quick to take advantage of. Whenever they went on a mission they always left their command car parked at the hardstand. 'Taffy', being a very enterprising person and always willing to make the best of anything that might come his way, was not above appropriating these vehicles for quick trips to local pubs. He was a firm believer in the theory that hard working men deserved a two listed reward. For some unknown reason the Officers whose cars 'Taffy' appropriated never seemed to check the speedometer on their return. Or if they did they never said anything. In any event 'Taffy' and his crew survived to send their bird on mission after mission until that final one on April 9, 1945.



'Taffy's' work did not go unnoticed and one day with the entire Group in formation he was awarded the Bronze Star by his Commander, then Col. later General, James H. Isbell.



This recounting, more than anything, is a salute to all crew chiefs and their men for a job well done, however belatedly.

Howard 'Taffy' Hills, at this writing, operates a Men's Clothing Store in Ipswich, Mass. in company with his brother and, according to all reports from his employees, he runs it with the same iron hand he used to keep "Final Approach" in the air for so many missions. He has, however, given up appropriating Command Cars - I think!

## TIME TO REMEMBER: THE BUNGAY BUCKEROOS

by Steve Birdsall

Equipped with brand new, Ford-built B-24s, the 446th Bomb Group was one of the mainstream organizations in the Eighth Air Force. The early groups, the 93rd, 44th, 389th, and to a lesser extent, the 392nd, had paved the way over the preceding fourteen months, and the training and equipment of groups like the 446th reflected what had been learned.

Colonel Jacob J. Brogger took his group into combat for the first time on December 16, 1943, to Bremen, and into the following year they flew the long, hard missions into Germany. The group went to Gotha in February, Berlin in March, Brunswick in April,



Early birds from the 446th, most of which did not survive very long. The foremost aircraft is Old Faithful, Spirit of 77 flies beneath her, and Lazy Lou is at the top right corner.

But it was on June 6, 1944 that the 446th had its greatest moment. The group was chosen to lead the D-Day bombings, and at Flixton the B-24s were moved out onto the runways and lined up to avert any accidents which could delay the big show. The Liberators had every available light on, and *Fearless Freddie*, the golden orange group assembly ship, was first off. Colonel Brogger flew with Charlie Ryan in the 704th Bomb Squadron's *Red Ass*, (which the press chose to call "The Buckeroo"). *Red Ass* reached the target area shortly before 0600, and although the overcast conditions detracted something from the great moment, the 446th was buoyant.

Colonel Brogger was wounded in September 1944, and Colonel Troy Crawford assumed command of the group. During that month the 446th participated in the supply dropping missions to Allied troops near Nijmegen



A brace of 706 Squadron aircraft dump their loads on an airdrome at Orleans, France, June 1944.

in Holland, and flew tactical missions during the Battle of the Bulge.

On April 4, 1945, Colonel Crawford was shepherding his group in a British Mosquito. Unfortunately he turned in toward a nervous gunner, who mistook the twin-engined fighter for a Messerschmitt 262. He opened fire, and as Crawford fled from the area, others joined in. Crawford managed to bail out, was captured, and taken to an airfield near Stendahl for interrogation. It was an uncomfortable situation, because Crawford knew that the 446th would be attacking Stendahl within a week. Before his Liberators got another crack at him he made a deal with some realistic Germans who wanted to make a good impression on the approaching Allied forces. Crawford talked quickly and he and about forty other prisoners lit out for the tall timber, meeting American armor shortly after. Crawford was back at Bungay on April 25, in time to see his group return from their last mission.



Colonel William Schmidt was the third commander of the group, taking over at the close of the war after Colonel Crawford was lost. The aircraft behind him is *Red Ass*, which led the 8th's bombers on D-Day.

In all, the 446th flew 273 missions to drop nearly 17,000 tons of bombs. The cost was fifty-eight Liberators.

The Bungay Buckeroots had another B-24 which deserves a mention here,



The B-24 could stand punishment... she had to. This gaping hole in *Wistful Vista*, from the 706th Squadron, didn't stop her getting home. One waist gunner was killed, another wounded.

The aircraft's name was *Ronnie*, in honor of Sergeant Ronald Gannon, who had died while the group was in training in Denver. *Ronnie* came over with the group, and after some trouble on her first few missions, she racked up an enviable score... she became the first Liberator in the Eighth Air Force to fly one hundred missions. Her crew chief was Sergeant Michael P. Zyne, from Alabama, who took her over after four aborts in January 1944. *Ronnie* became the first Liberator to break the record of missions set by two Travelling Circus aircraft, *Duchess* and *Boomerang*, which flew fifty-four and fifty-three missions respectively.



This is the 704th Squadron's *Ronnie*, first B-24 in the Eighth Air Force to fly one hundred missions.

(Note: Thanks are due to Barney Hutain, Austin Boyle and Steve Cajan for material used in this article.)

Returning from a raid on Wiener Neustadt in Austria Maj. McAtee from the 44th BG landed at Palermo with a rapidly disintegrating tail section. Hot on his heels came Capt. Kahl with a wing tank on fire. Having landed safely both crews transferred the tail from Capt. Kahl's plane to Maj. McAtee's and flew back to their base in North Africa. This is probably the only instance in the war where the nose of a B-24 had more missions than its tail!