

# NEWS LETTER



**JANUARY, 1957**

## **EDITORIALLY SPEAKING . . .**

We're starting the new year with a new magazine and would certainly like to hear your views. Maybe you could look on this as an advance celebration of our tenth anniversary . . . The Newsletter will be published every month and in February you will read a report from the Chairman of the Memorial Fund, Percy Young, giving the ins and outs of the setup.

Brigadier Elvin S. Ligon, who was guest speaker at the November meeting of the Middle Atlantic Wing will be present in our pages giving highlights of his career.

We will continue to publish the

roster in the back of the book until it is complete and thereafter we will record new members and changes of address, etc.

The annual reunion this year at Hershey, Pa., promises to be a wing-dinger—to quote one of our members—read the details on page 5. In the meantime, let us know if you have any suggestions for a reunion site in 1958—or even 1959!

If you haven't ordered your lapel pin yet—look on the back cover and bring yourself up to date!

Have a good year and . . . we'll see you in Hershey!

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# NEWS LETTER

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EIGHTH AIR FORCE

VOL. 1 No. 1

JANUARY, 1957

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All editorial material to be forwarded to the editor no later than the first of the month. Subscription rates for non-members \$2.00 per year.

## **Message From The President**

Fellow members! This year marks the tenth anniversary of the Second Air Division Association, Eighth Air Force and the fifteenth year of the Second Division.

In the year of its inception we were surpassed in the air by our enemies.

On Sunday afternoon, the "Air Power" show on television shows us the price of a weak air force. Today, the United States Air Force is the strongest in the world.

So long as We are militarily the strongest force, especially in the air, so long will the world have peace.

You are charged to "Pray for Peace," but remember that

### **AIR STRENGTH INSURES PEACE**

## **Look What's Happening!**

The establishment of Wings of the Second Air Division Association throughout the United States is beginning to roll. Walter H. Andrews, 523 Carolina Boulevard, Isle of Palms, S. Carolina is interested in starting one in his area. If you are within 100 miles driving distance, why not drop him a line to see what he has planned?

If you live or happen to be passing through the states of Delaware, Maryland, Pennsylvania, New York, New Jersey or the District of Columbia around February 23 you have a date in Wilmington, Delaware, Hotel Rodney.

The Middle Atlantic Wing covering these states is having its second quarterly meeting and you and your wife are cordially invited to attend. A brief business meeting is scheduled for the afternoon and from there on a cocktail party and dinner is planned.

The entertainment committee is working on something different that should prove interesting to everyone—yes even the wives! The cost—\$5.00 per person or \$10.00 a couple.

Yes, I'll be there! Reserve.....places for me.

Enclosed find check or money order for \$.....

Name .....

Address ..... Bomb Group.....

Make checks payable to: Middle Atlantic Wing

# Oh, Days Of Yore!

by Vincent Palmer, Jr.

*Vincent A. Palmer, Jr., of Webster, New York has recently joined the 2AD and we thought the account of his trip abroad in 1955 was so interesting that we thought you would enjoy reading it too. . . . .*

The Editor

Right now it is December 7th, the unhappy day when in 1943 I raised my right hand. Only today it is snowing, a nice soft slow white fuzz is settling on the fields and trees and the roads are turning to a slippery white.

I've always wanted to go back. I suppose almost everyone has.

On the 27th of June we boarded the small PRINS WILLEM von FRISO at Montreal, steamed to Quebec City then up the Saguinay River and out the beautiful St. Lawrence River past numerous green, cold, white icebergs and over a flat sunny Atlantic to Rouen France.

A lot happened. Time and lack of space prevents me from giving a more detailed account of our travels. Part of the trip was planned so that I could give full play to that old nostalgic twinge and so we took the ferry from Holland to Harwich, England. After we had safely passed through the customs we headed for Norwich, but found it was getting late and so we called a halt at Ipswich.

That afternoon we drove into the old city and she still looks the same. The cathedral, still, tall and with its needle-like spire. There was

a bright blue sky and hot warm sun filtering through the trees in the small park across from the church where I parked the car against a brick wall. We walked around the public market, looked into the windows and stopped for our first taste of English beer.

That night we ate downtown and stopped at a pub later for more beer. We stayed on to get involved in a dart game until a well remembered, "time, gentlemen, please!" steered us to bed.

The next morning we started out in the ark once again for the old base. It was another warm blue-skyed day and the countryside smelled fresh and dry. We went back to town and the square near the cathedral. From there we followed the small twisting road out across the short highly arched bridge and a sharp left and right—for my memory was sure we hadn't gone more than five or six miles before we were good and lost. After 40 minutes of confused navigation on small dusty roads, we found Attlebridge. But it didn't look the least familiar. A query at the post office directed us to the base—or what was left of it.

We tried another road in the hopes of finding the old one the

*Continued on Page 11*

*For A Man With His Feet on The  
He's Sure Had*

## A FLIGHTY LI

Lieutenant General William E. Kepner is the Honorary President of the Second Air Division Association, Eighth Air Force. This just a statement and, more than likely, very few of us know much about the man, except, perhaps his name and what he looks like. He stands five feet seven and keeps a trim 160 pounds. He is a bowler, swimmer, golfer, plays tennis and enjoys fishing and shooting. He is interested in forestry, boats and music and devotes a good deal of his free time to literary functions. He is a quiet spoken man with a piercing glance that can twinkle too. His voice is pleasing to the ear and we suspect he is somewhat of a dude too.

Born in Miami, Indiana in 1893, he started a military career at the age of sixteen with four years in the Marine Corps. He joined the National Guard of Indiana as a second lieutenant and served on the Mexican border.

During World War I he commanded a company at Chateau-Thierry, spearhead of his division, in the engagement which started the throw-back of the German armies. He figured in other names made

famous in World War I—Meuse-Argonne—"Farm de Madelaine"—Mt. Faucon—Aisne—St. Mihiel. After the armistice he ended up executive officer of headquarters troops at Coblenz, Germany.

During the years between the two world wars he grounded himself thoroughly in the knowledge then available on airships. He was so thorough that he attended both Army and Navy airship schools! His "lighter-than-air" education began when he was detailed to the Air Force in October, 1920 and assigned to the Balloon School at Ross Air Force Base, Arcadia, California. He graduated in 1921 with a rating of Balloon Observer. About a year later he emerged from the Airship School at Langley AFB, Virginia as a dirigible pilot. While all this was going on he was transferred to the Air Force.

The early days of aviation were exciting and General Kepner was getting his share of it. He flew in four national and international balloon races between 1927 and 1929. He came out first in the National Elimination Balloon Race and the

# LIFE

International Gordon-Bennett Race. In the International race he captured the final leg on the "King Albert of Belgium Trophy" for America.

In 1930 he took up another phase of flying. While in command of the Ninth Bombardment Squadron at March AFB, California, he enrolled in the Primary Flying School. After graduating in 1931 he went on to Kelly AFB, Texas for advanced training and completed his course in 1932.

During 1934 while serving at Rapid City South Dakota, he was pilot and commander of the National Geographic Society—Army Air Corps Stratosphere Flight, "Explorer I." The balloon attained an altitude of 61,000 feet before it ripped open and General Kepner finally parachuted to safety at an altitude of 300 feet.

In June of 1936, he participated in an unusual flight—he escorted Major Ira Eaker when he flew blind in an experimental 2600 mile flight from the Atlantic to the Pacific coast, relying solely on his instruments. This was the first coast-to-coast instrument flight.

World War II brought many



changes and to General Kepner. He was appointed commanding general of the Fourth Air Force at San Francisco, California in 1943 and the following September assumed command of the Eighth Fighter Command in the European theater. In August, 1944 he was named commanding general of the Second Bombardment Division of the Eighth Air Force and in the following year assumed command of the Eighth Air Force. Sound familiar? During his command in World War II he participated in 24 missions over enemy territory—10 with fighters and fourteen with bombers. He is rated a Command Pilot, Combat Observer, Senior Balloon Pilot, Zeppelin Pilot, Semi-Rigid Pilot and Metalclad Airship Pilot.

When he returned to Scott AFB, he was assigned to the Air Force headquarters for duty as chief of the Atomic Energy Division in the office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Research and Development. Along with related duties he served

*Continued on Page 11*

# See You In Hershey!

The tenth annual reunion in Hershey, Pennsylvania, promises to be action packed as you can see from the tentative schedule set up below. The powers that be in Hershey have advised that other conventions have been booked at the same time and so make sure that your hotel reservation is made well in advance. A reservation blank will be printed in the February issue—be sure to ask for confirmation—then you won't be disappointed or run into any last minute confusion. Here's what you'll be doing August 16 and 17!

Friday, August 16—Registration—Community Inn

Friday evening—Cocktail party—Patio, Hotel Hershey

Saturday morning—August 17—

Breakfast 9:00 A.M.—Briefing 10:00 A.M.

Business meeting—Community Inn

All day Saturday—the following projects are under consideration

Beauty Contest—Mrs. 2AD

Golf Tournament—Softball Game

Swimming

Picnic and beer party

Saturday evening—Cocktail Party and Banquet—Park View Golf Club

Reunion Executive Board—Howard Baum, Chairman

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## A Flighty Life

*Continued from Page 7*

as Deputy Commander and Air Force Commander with the J.C.S. atomic bombing task force "Sandstone" at Eniwetok, Marshall Islands in the Pacific during the summer of 1948 and organized the testing division for detection of world atomic explosions.

In 1950 he assumed duty as Commander-in-Chief Alaskan Command at Ft. Richardson, Alaska. He retired a Lieutenant General, USAF, February 28, 1953.

During his experiences he has been given many awards: Distinguished Service Cross, Purple Heart, Distinguished Flying Cross, Legion of Merit with two Clusters, Distinguished Service Medal with one Oak Leaf Cluster, Bronze Star Medal, Air Medal and USMC Good Conduct Medal . . . ahem!

His foreign decorations make a glittering array: British Military Order of Commander of the Bath;

Belgium Order of Crown, with gold palm; Polish Restitute; Commander of French Legion of Honor; "Chevalier," French Legion of Honor; two French Croix de Guerre with palm; Chinese Special Necklas, Paoting; Belgium Croix de Guerre with palm; received the Individual Freedom of the City of Norwich, England, as the first foreigner to get this; received for the entire English Air Force the Freedom of the Borough of Cambridge, England; made life member of American Legion at Kokomo, Indiana and made Citizen of Clarksville, Tennessee.

He is still a busy man, even though he is supposed to be retired. He is Chairman of the Board of Directors, Radiation, Inc., with offices in Orlando and Melbourne, Florida. He is also Military Advisor to the Bell Aircraft Corporation.

He's just a quiet man, but he sure is a busy one!

## Oh, Days of Yore!

*Continued from Page 5*

buses used. In our travels we met and talked to some farmers mowing hay near the old radio operators hut. It seems the base is now being used for the storage of old USAF ammunition. The small road was now overgrown like a jungle but the Rover managed to scratch her way through to the old fallen down barracks, and tall rusting water towers. There was the old coal pile we used to rob to keep warm during the winter.

But all that was left of our fine old home was a pile of rubble strewn over the slab of concrete floor. I walked over and stood where Hosmer and I had bunked and my bed used to stand and/or lean. It was sort of a funny feeling. . . .

There is a lot I wish I had time to add. But in lieu of the usual New Year greeting and handwritten note, accept my best wishes for the best of cheer for the rest of the year to you all!



Maj. M. F. Snyder  
~~66th Air Base Dgdn.~~  
 APO 65, New York, N.Y.

*Recd  
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 Gold filled ..... 3.70 10K gold Heavy ..... 9.00

Please supply me with.....lapel pins (specify type of catch) for which I enclose \$..... In addition please send the following.

\_\_\_\_\_ Total \$.....

*All of the above are subject to 10% Federal Excise Tax*

Name .....  
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Send orders to: M. T. KELLEY, 70 Randolph Road, White Plains, New York