



NEWSLETTER



Vol. 10, No. 11

SECOND AIR DIVISION ASSOCIATION

April, 1972

ALL SYSTEMS "GO" FOR NORWICH MISSION

Take-off is scheduled for May 17 from Philadelphia and this mission promises to be one that none of the participants will ever forget.

Word filtering in to the newsletter from our many English friends is that the entire city of Norwich will turn out to welcome us back once again and show us that, although the face of the city might have changed a bit, the hospitality we all enjoyed is still the same.

In addition to the TV documentary which will be shown on British TV the night of the banquet many of our friends have offered their cars to take us to our old bases - or what is left of them - and other points of interest on sight seeing tours.

As of this writing there is still room to accommodate 15 more people on the flight and if your making up your mind at the last minute don't call us, call Thomas Garlin of Bartlett Tours Co., Philadelphia. Tel. 215-665-8500. He will have the 'up-to-the-minute' space availability information.

The gala farewell banquet on June 1 in London will be held at the Mayfair Hotel. On the return trip we will appreciate all of you who escape unscathed to help in caring for the walking wounded.

Enjoy yourself, have a ball and stay sober - if you dare!



That English Countryside we got to know so well - on our bikes.

BRITISH MAKING TV FILM OF 2ND AD ACTIVITIES IN NORFOLK

Our old friend Roger Freeman, author of "The Mighty Eighth", recently advised the newsletter that Anglia TV, the commercial television company based at Norwich, is making a documentary film about the 2nd Air Division in wartime East Anglia.

They will not deal with the combat record of the 2nd AD as this was thought to be too extensive. The documentary will touch on the relationships between the Americans and their English cousins and towards this end many of the English who had close dealings with us are in the process of being interviewed.

On the American side Brig. General James Stewart has already agreed to give an interview to be filmed in London in the very near future, and others will be flown to England for the same purpose.

The production is in the hands of one of Anglia's ablest young producers, Ron Olsen, who is currently engaged in a thorough research effort to ensure that the program will be truly authentic. He is being assisted in this endeavor by Roger who has given us his word that he will be very discreet. So all of you who joined me in diving under the bed can come out now.

I know all our members wish Ron and Roger the best of luck in this venture and maybe we will be able to see it on our own TV screens sometime in the near future.

2ND AIR DIVISION PINS AVAILABLE ONE MORE TIME

Ken Darney, past Association President, has informed the newsletter that the distinctive 2nd Air Division pin is available to our members once again.



A limited number were designed and produced many years ago at the re-

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A DINNER INVITATION, IS A DINNER INVITATION, IS A

Back in the dark days of 1943 when nobody thought of the future and few cared to think about the present Bruce Pauly invited his buddy John Hammer to dinner. Being a cautious person Bruce fixed the date for 1970, exactly 27 years in the future.

At this past reunion of the 44th Bomb Group in Williamsburg Bruce proved to be a man of his word. He and his wife Diz took John and his wife Betty to dinner, just 28 years after the invitation was made.

Traffic being what it is these days John was quick to forgive Bruce the extra year it took to fulfill the invitation.

I wonder if John remembers that back in 1942 he invited everybody in the 44th to a round of drinks in 1972? Just kidding John.

Second Air Division Association Eighth Air Force

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"THE ENEMY IS LISTENING"

By Allen Blue

All of us remember the WW2 posters that conveyed a message similar to the above, and there is no doubt that they spoke the truth. The question is, how much did the enemy hear? Well, probably not much if he was hiding behind the bar at the local pub. But if he were sitting across the Channel wearing a set of earphones, the answer is, "Plenty."



On the way.

The Germans attached great importance to the information which they obtained from their Radar and Radio Listening Service. This service performed three distinct functions: the reception and analysis of Allied R/T and W/T transmissions, radar transmissions, and jamming transmissions. The Service was under the command of General Martini, the Director General of G.A.F. Signals, who was responsible for the training and equipment as well as for making the services of the system available. A Listening Station consisted of a group of wooden towers, about 45 feet high, surrounded by small huts in which receivers with D/F aerials were located. The operators passed all information received to a Combat Analysis Station, which in turn passed the

filtered information to a special Listening Section at Jagdivision and then to the Central Listening organization.

The Service was highly efficient, and good use was made of any transmission that could be intercepted. Until the last phase of the war, when listening posts were lost by the advance of the Allies and when the service was no longer able to cope with the enormous number of Allied raids, the Listening Service was generally considered to be the most valuable advance warning and raid evaluation agency that the G.A.F. possessed. Up to that point it had never failed to provide, from the Battle of Britain onwards, a current and exact Order of Battle of the British and later of the U.S.A.A.F. formations, including the numbers of the squadrons operating in each sector and their disposition and strength.



Now you know why the flak was so thick, so accurate and so on time.

The Germans were able to recognize Allied preparations for a major mission, not so much through pilot talk as by observation of small details in point-to-point traffic. The slightest carelessness in procedure between two ground stations, for instance, might suffice to reveal which networks were active. Then, even though the code traffic itself remained unbroken, time and time again it became possible to draw definite (and correct) conclusions concerning the operations involved by the comparison of traffic occurring in similar form on previous occasions. Other factors that enabled the Listening Service to determine that a raid was imminent were:

1. The British, by turning on the "Jay Beams", announced impending operations.
2. Again, the British, by the use of Oboe and Gee, gave information whereby the target could be determined some 30 to 40 minutes before a bomb was dropped.
3. Occasionally, in France, the AAF transmitted open warnings by W/T of expected British night flying. After the loss of G.A.F. bases in

France these messages became of the utmost importance to the German Fighter Command.

Weather conditions over England were established by noting the amount of local flying carried out at Bomber Command Stations, the amount of O.T.U. flying, and by monitoring weather transmissions made to transatlantic aircraft from stations in England. The Germans also were able to hear weather data from bomber aircraft using the training bomber code (which was almost always deciphered), from instructions transmitted to U.A.A.A.F. aircraft, and from transmissions made by RAF Coastal Command.

Operators engaged in monitoring listened for special voice peculiarities, and through continuous observation it was possible to differentiate between the speakers. Consequently, it was possible to identify individual groups and squadrons and establish their movement.



Ready or not!

Owing to the intensive jamming experienced during the closing stages of the war, the Listening Service often became the most reliable and useful source of raid tracking information. This was done by plotting H2S, H2X, I.F.F., and jamming transmissions put out by Allied aircraft. By ascertaining which units composed the raid, the Service was able to determine the number of bombers and fighters involved in a raid. Still further, it was possible to distinguish fighters from bombers by listening to H2S and H2X transmissions. It was possible to determine, by ascertaining the scanning rate of the radiations received, whether the transmissions emanated from U.S. or R.A.F. heavy bombers, from Mosquito bombers, or from A.I. (aircraft interception) aircraft.



BINGO! HAMBURG - August 6, 1944

PROFILE

Col. John H. Diehl, Jr. (Ret.)

You could say that John H. Diehl came out of the west. He did. From Carlsbad, New Mexico to be exact. You could also say that John Diehl and the B-24 were made for each other. They were. Few ever handled the Liberator with greater confidence or precision. You could go on and say that John Diehl and his equally capable crew drew first blood for the 44th BG by sinking a German Submarine off the Louisiana Coast in June of 1942. And you would be completely correct. You could continue and say that John Diehl took his plane "Black Jack" out of formation to go to the assistance of crippled planes while on missions over German targets — a no no at the time. He would plead guilty. You could say a great many good things about John Diehl and his crew and never be in danger of repeating yourself.



"Black Jack and her Crew"

One day over Abbeville then Capt. Diehl saw one of his friends in trouble and beginning to lag behind the formation. He made a mental note that as soon as his bombs were salvoed he would go back to help. On that occasion he was too late as the crippled ship had blown up. From then on he made a point of watching out for stragglers limping behind from flak or fighter wounds.

First to benefit from John's determination to cheat the German Fighters whenever he could was Capt. Jim O'Brien. On the Wilhelmshaven raid of January 27, 1943 Capt. O'Brien's ship was attacked by FW-190's and ME-109's. One put a cannon shell through the nose of his ship killing the bombardier and seriously wounding the navigator. Other hits set his Liberator afire and killed the assistant radioman. Capt. O'Brien was forced to drop out of formation and became a 'sitting duck' for other attacking German Fighters.

Jim's plight did not go unnoticed and immediately following the bomb run Capt. Diehl swung out of the tight

formation dropping his ship alongside the crippled Liberator and both crews held off the attacking fighters with some devastating shooting. With the pressure off Capt. O'Brien was able to get his ship back under control, and calling on every bit of skill he owned he managed to land at his home base, shepherded along all the while by the ever watchful Capt. Diehl.

Just a few days later returning from a raid on Dunkirk the Group ran into severe fighter opposition approaching the channel. Two Liberators were badly hit and began to fall behind. John Diehl spotted them losing altitude and promptly peeled out of formation (more a no no now than before) to go to their assistance.

One Liberator exploded and crashed into the sea before Capt. Diehl's gunners could get the range. Two of the gunners in the doomed ship were still firing when their plane slipped beneath the waves.

in the remaining Liberator Capt. Tom Cramer was fighting the controls to keep his plane from going into a spin. He was losing altitude rapidly but Johnny Diehl and his crew came diving in behind to add their guns to the fight. No less than eight German fighters were giving Capt. Cramer a good working over and his situation was anything but inviting.

Capt. Diehl and his co-pilot Roland Houston jockeyed their ship about in incredible positions in order to bring as many guns as possible into action.

Two German fighters exploded and fell into bits. Another German pilot suddenly slumped forward as his plane went out of control and disappeared in a cloud of black smoke. A fourth gave up the battle and scurried back into France. The remaining four climbed just out of range and hung on, tagging along until the English Coast was reached.

In the words of Sgt. Carlton from Capt. Diehl's crew: "We got our breath then and looked around to see how the other ship was doing — and she wasn't doing too well. We could see she'd fall short of the beach and crash into the sea if she kept on losing altitude. Her No. 2 engine was feathered and completely useless. Her No. 1 was windmilling. The other two were pulling but smoke was coming out. Then we saw three men jump out in parachutes and go into the sea. The ship continued its downward plunge, bounced once on the water and then

landed smack on the beach."

Capt. Diehl circled to make certain the survivors were safe, dipped his wings and flew back to his base to face another 'mild' chewing out for once again leaving formation.

Of this original crew Col. John H. Diehl, Jr. Ret., and Sgt. Joe Ward, also retired, have recently become members of the Association. We welcome them back and only hope that they don't take it into their heads to leave formation once again.

If anyone thinks that John Diehl's only talent was flying a B-24 take another look.



A sample of John Diehl's work

John has gained world-wide fame as an artist of vision and innovation. Working with wire and nails, as well as oils, he produces art that fires the imagination.

John's most recent exhibition at the Basildon Art Center, Essex, England brought international plaudits for his works. He presently has a studio in Santa Fe, New Mexico and if your in the area stop by. You will be enthralled with his creations.

PIN (Continued from Page 1)

quest of members who desired a unique emblem to wear on their lapel. As the result of numerous requests at the past two reunions Ken undertook to have another limited number manufactured.

These new pins have a dual purpose in that they can be worn as a lapel pin or used as a tie tack.

All members wishing to purchase one should send a check in the amount of \$2.00 (covers cost and mailing) to Kenneth A. Darney, 5410 Ridge Rd., Baltimore, Maryland 21236 — and please make the check out to Ken as he is handling the entire transaction.

Better hurry as the supply is definitely limited.

SEE YOU IN NORWICH

TIME TO REMEMBER: THE 448th AT SEETHING

By Steve Birdsall

Colonel James M. Thompson's 448th Bomb Group arrived in England late in 1943, and flew their first mission on December 22.



A sight the years can never erase... German jets caught the 448th on April 4, 1945. This was one of three losses to the group. There were no parachutes.

They had arrived in time to move into high gear to participate in the February 1944 Big Week operations, and over the long months that followed they hit targets in the whole strategic range, from Cologne's marshaling yards to Politz oil installations to Berlin.

As a lead up to the invasion of Europe the 448th bombed V-weapon sites, airbases and transportation, and after D-Day they supported the ground troops at Caen and St. Lo.



The 712th Squadron's *Fat Stuff II*, driving back to her hardstand after the Berlin mission on March 22, 1944.

Then it was back to business as usual for planes like *Fat Stuff II*, *The Menace*, *Hello Natural*, *Crud Wagon*, *Maid of Tin*, *Consolidated Mess*... at

least until September, when the 448th was called upon to add its weight to efforts to supply paratroops fighting for a foothold near Nijmegen in Holland. After practice missions the B-24s were loaded with containers during the night of September 17, and a drop-master from Ninth Troop Carrier Command was put in each plane to direct the dropping of the supplies through the now-empty ball turret openings and the rear hatch. The plan called for an altitude of fifteen hundred feet to the Initial Point, three hundred feet from the actual drop, then a climbing turn back to fifteen hundred or more on the way out. The aircraft would fly over at thirty-second intervals at one hundred and fifty miles per hour.



Fearsomely painted, this B-24 took part in the low-level supply mission to airborne troops battling east of the Rhine.

A foulup resulted in the two Combat Wings involved receiving the wrong briefing documents, the 14th Wing getting the 20th's, and vice versa. Pilots and navigators had to catch up with the final details on the way to the target.

After an unscheduled turn by the leading 20th Wing Liberators, the 448th lost sight of the rest and proceeded alone. At the Initial Point there was more trouble when the radio location beacon for the 20th Wing proved to be inoperative, and visual markers were hard to spot. The 448th dropped five miles short, and the groundfire was savage as the lumbering B-24s dawdled over the target area. For the crews who flew this later low-level mission it was almost a relief to get back to the icy skies they knew so well.



Everyone was in agreement that this was too low for man or beast.

The 448th bombed tactical targets during the Battle of the Bulge, and dropped supplies during the March 1945 airborne assault across the Rhine. A marshaling yard at Salzburg on April 25 was the 448th's last job.



Colonel Gerry L. Mason, commander of the 448th during its hardest days. Often he would end a briefing with, "Do a good job today boys, it's my birthday". Older crews remember him having several birthdays in a rather short period of time.

Colonel Gerry L. Mason had taken over the 448th in April 1944, until Colonel Charles B. Westover took his place in November. Westover stayed until late in May 1945, when Colonel Lester F. Miller assumed command.

In all the 448th flew 262 combat missions, dropped over fifteen thousand tons of bombs, and lost one hundred and one Liberators in action.



These two aircraft are from the 715th Squadron, identified by the diamond device on the tails... the ship in the foreground brought back over 400 holes from the mission of February 21, 1944. The flak and fighters wounded two of her crew, and a third bailed out, but *Bag O'Bolts* managed to find her way home.

Note: The Time to Remember series is based largely on USAF official summaries of group histories. It is brief, and incomplete, and meant to prompt anecdotes and comment, or pictures, from veterans of these groups. Please send letters to the editor.

BROKEN ANKLE LEADS TO REUNION

409th BS, 93rd BG

Fracturing ones ankle in order to generate a reunion is not the recommended method, but that is exactly what happened to Edward Valentine of Parma, Ohio.

With plenty of time on his hands while recuperating Ed decided to read the book "Ploesti" by Duncan and became so involved in the contents plus the photos of the 93rd in action that he stayed up for three nights to read every word. Upon finishing he decided that a reunion was in order.



L to R - Tom Helker, Art Ferwerda, Col. Howard Bolton, Francis Loring and George Bianco.

Using the list of names contained in the back of this book, and another old list he had in his possession, he started the arduous task of telephoning. Expensive too.

While every call was not a success story he did make contact, and along the way picked up others with lists who in their turn began telephoning.

The net result was a reunion of the 409th Bomb Squadron, 93rd Bomb Group which will long be remembered. In addition to a gala banquet they showed movie films and slides of their old base, Hardwick, and awarded plaques to those with the most children, grandchildren, the furthest traveled by air and by car etc. The plaque for the most children, 11 in all, went to Jimmy Crimando.

Ed has informed us that he urged all those who attended to join up with the 2nd AD Association and for this we want to thank him and his able assistant in this venture Bob Trapp.



L to R - Bob Trapp, Mrs. Trapp, Mrs. Valentine and Ed Valentine.

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LETTERS

Dear Bill

At the convention last July in Williamsburg I showed movies of the B-24 in action and at the time some members asked me if I could provide copies of this film for home use.

I have decided to share my collection with Association members and towards this end I have just finished editing a reel of black and white film. It is now in the process of being reduced to Super 8 size so it can be shown on a standard Super 8 projector.

In the editing I have retained the best of the scenes showing take-off, as-

sembly, formation to and from target, bomb runs, flak, fighter attacks and the return to base. In the landing sequences I have included many of the planes which make it back just barely. For those who said, and still say, it was impossible I have included the scene showing a B-24 landing on one wheel.

The film is on a 200' reel and runs for approximately 18 minutes. Any member can rent a copy for \$5.00 and keep it for 10 days, with an extra charge of \$1.00 per day for each day over the 10 day period. The reel can also be purchased outright for \$25.00. The rental fee can be applied to the purchase price if the member wishes to preview the film before buying.

Sincerely,

U. P. Harvell, L/C Ret.
No. 2 Palm Ave.
Hi-Way Shores
Ellenton, Florida 33532

Dear Sir:

Does anyone know the "whereabouts" of Hugh Bowen, Lt. U.S.A.A.C. Bombardier stationed in or around Norwich in 1944. Later went to L.A. after the war and married. He was originally from Marshalltown, Iowa. Trained on B-24's at Alamogordo AFB leaving from Lincoln, Nebraska 12-17-43.

If still in the L.A. area I would like to say hello to an old friend.

Mr. Svea S. Sherwood
628 S. First St., Apt. 9
Covina, California 91723

To the President:

I shall be grateful if you will convey the following message to the gathering at your reunion:-

Last year I was the recipient of much kindness and hospitality at your Cincinnati reunion. It was an occasion I shall always look back on with some emotion because I saw that the spirit of those wartime days has not passed. Your Association is not - as we British say - an excuse for an annual "booze-up", but a live, vital entity with as much esprit de corps as that for which the 2nd Air Division and Eighth Air Force were justly famous. Perhaps this stems from your obvious pride in the Norwich Memorial Library, and rightly so, for it must be the envy of other veterans' organizations.

To all of you I send heart-felt good wishes for a successful reunion - as it cannot fail to be. May the next be in Norwich. A great welcome awaits you.

Cheers,
Roger Freeman