



HERITAGE HERALD

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Periodical of the Heritage League of the Second Air Division
8th Air Force, United States Army Air Forces (USAAF)

Mark your Calendars
HL Convention 2025
Oct. 2-5, 2025
Dayton, OH



Daylight Precision Bombing

By John T. Correll, *Air Force Magazine*

*A Basic Belief of the Army Air Forces was
Severely Tested in the Skies over Germany*

In the aviation enthusiasm of the 1930s, it was popular to claim that Air Corps bombardiers could drop a bomb into a pickle barrel from high altitude. In 1940, Theodore H. Barth, president of Carl L. Norden Inc., said that "we do not regard a 15-foot square as being very difficult target to hit from an altitude of 30,000 feet," provided the bombardier was using that company's new M-4 bombsight connected to an autopilot.

That was stretching it considerably. In everyday practice in 1940, the average score for an Air Corps bombardier was a circular error of 400 feet, and that was from the relatively forgiving altitude of 15,000 feet instead of 30,000.

Nobody knows for sure where the "pickle bar-

rel" imagery began. The term may have been coined by Norden's Barth, who was among its most energetic popularizers. Norden was not alone in spreading the legend. Some Air Force bombardiers spoke proudly of tossing bombs into a 100-foot circle from four miles up.

The pickle barrel story, often told and widely believed, served to reinforce the theory of daylight precision bombing, developed in the 1930s at the Air Corps Tactical School at Maxwell Field, Alabama. The theory rejected the previously prevailing strategy of bombing broad areas, more or less indiscriminately, and focused on specific targets of military significance. As a side benefit, precision bombing would avoid civilian casualties and limit collateral damage. *(continued on page 3)*

DON'T FORGET HERITAGE LEAGUE CONVENTION and Annual Members Meeting
October 2-5, 2025. Hilton Garden Inn/Austin Landing, Dayton, Ohio
Registration and hotel reservation **deadline is September 8**. See pages 8-12 for details.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE —Christopher D. Clark (489th Halesworth & 44th Shipdam)



Photo: Wendy Dwyer.

I hope everyone has enjoyed their summer. As I finish out my term as your President, I thought I would highlight some of our recent Heritage League activities. First, our collaboration with the Library of Congress (LOC) concerning our "News from The Greatest Generation" project continues. It has been two years since our initial contact with the LOC with the delivery of the first round of bomb group newsletters and papers. On July 18, I received a phone call from Mr. Dwight Powell, the Heritage League's contact at the LOC. Mr. Powell informed me that there have been many changes, and the research team assigned to our project was reassigned elsewhere in the LOC. He then told me that the powers that be really like our project and assigned two others. Mr. Powell said he was very confident in their abilities to assist him. The project is still going forward, THANK GOD! When I know more about the status of when the body of

work will be available for outside researchers, I will be more than happy to let you all know. I am just happy that our project is still being worked on.

Our flower program has been very active and beneficial. Thank you, Beverly Baynes Tomb for all your tireless work for our veteran's remembrance with Heritage League wreaths placed at our 13 overseas American Battle Monuments cemeteries. If you know someone who lives near an overseas cemetery and can help with our 'we won't forget' presence and flower placement (the HL buys the flowers), that would be great. Please contact Beverly for details. Additionally, we have strengthened our "Welcome Home" program by furnishing wreaths and attending recent funerals of our 2nd Air Division veterans who are laid to rest after their positive ID and removal from MIA status. (John Jurczak, you are doing a FANTASTIC JOB with this!!).

On that topic, I was privileged to attend the funeral of former MIA Staff Sergeant Herbert Yearly (453 BG) at Arlington National Cemetery two months ago. I cannot tell you how proud I was of our Welcome Home program and our Heritage League team at that moment. I made two noteworthy connections. The first with Yearly's grandnephew James, whom I introduced to the Heritage League; and with the director of the Defense POW/MIA Program (DPAA) which is the Pentagon agency tasked with the recovery and identification of our and other MIA veterans. Glad to know he had heard about us and was impressed with our program. I have introduced Under Secretary of Defense Mr. Kelly K. McKeague in a separate email to our program team, Beverly and John.

I would also like to remind you that this is an election year for the Heritage League Executive Committee. The officers will be voted on by members at our annual convention in Dayton, Ohio, October 2-5. If you would like to serve on a board position, please let Beverly Tomb or Bob Gedid know as soon as possible (contact information is on the back page of this *Herald*). The date is coming upon us really quick. Please make your reservations if you are planning to attend. Registration information is contained in this *Herald* and on our website at: <https://heritageleague.org/>.

Finally, as I end my two-year term, I am honored to have served your League, proudly commend its accomplishments and graciously thank our board members, protégés, and volunteers who have contributed to the uplifting progress of our League. 🙏



Chris with James Yearly. Family photo.

COVER PAGE ART WORK: Low-level B-24 raid on the Romanian oil refineries on August 1, 1943. This depicts Colonel Johnson's Suzy-Q leading the 44th Bomb Group over the Columbia Aquila Refinery. Bombing accuracy improved with the low-altitude deliveries but mix-ups in the attack deliveries by different formations minimized the attack effectiveness. Aircraft loss rate on this mission approached 30%. Artwork by Robert D. Perry: www.rdperry.com.

Daylight Precision Bombing

(continued from page 1)



Here, Brig. Gen. Ira C. Eaker, Commander Eighth Air Force speaks with members of the media after the first World War II heavy bomber mission over Europe in 1942. AAF photo.

The Army Air Forces was the lone champion of daylight precision bombing. The Navy—for whom the Norden bombsight was originally developed—gave up on it in favor of dive bombing. The British, finding that they could not hit precision targets, relied on area bombing at night. Daylight precision bombing was conducted by various kinds of aircraft in World War II, but the real test of it was the long-range strategic bombing missions in Europe and Asia of AAF B-17s, B-24s, and B-29s.

The first experimental bombsights appeared in 1910, but early bombing techniques were rudimentary. Bombing in World War I was at times spectacular—as when Zeppelin airships and Gotha biplanes dropped bombs on London—but it was of little strategic importance. A U.S. Air Service pamphlet in 1918 spoke of bombs hitting "in the vicinity" of the target.

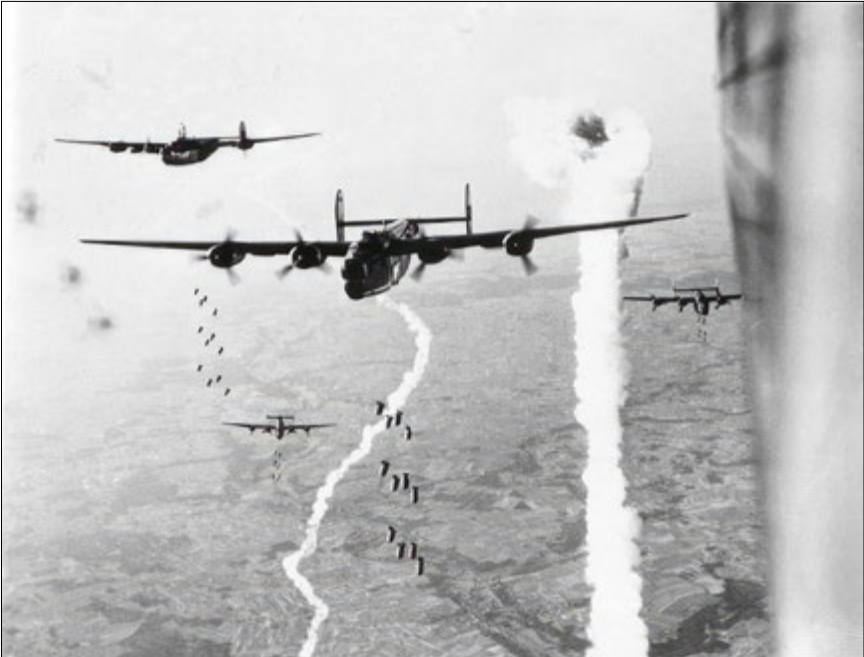
Precision bombing did not come into its own until the 1930s, with the availability of high-quality bombsights from Norden and Sperry and the introduction of faster, longer-ranging bombers. The best Air Corps

bombardiers achieved considerable success in good weather and against clearly marked targets, which were typically huge bull's-eye circles painted on the ground.

Strategic bombardment was not yet an Air Corps mission. Development of long-range bombers had to be justified on the basis of coastal defense. However, the Tactical School theorists did not bother with such pretense. They saw strategic bombardment as the future of warfare. The special mission of the air arm, they said, was to attack the "enemy national structure," especially the "industrial web," which was vulnerable to the air arm but not to either of the other services.

Committed to Precision

Daylight precision bombing became Air Force doctrine, inseparable from the push to obtain four-engine B-17 bombers in appreciable numbers. In 1940, Major General Henry H. "Hap" Arnold, Chief of the Air Corps, declared, "The Air Corps is committed to a strategy of



B-24Js released their 500 lb bombs on the drop smoke marker visible under the lead bomber's left wing. Target was Bremen. Release appears to be from medium altitude as threats near the war's end were reduced. Photo: AAF.

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high-altitude precision bombing of military objectives."

The Air Corps regarded the bomber as its principal weapon. Furthermore, on the basis of very thin evidence—the Air Corps concluded that new bombers such as the B-17 and the B-24 flew too high and too fast for pursuit aircraft to catch them and that bombers could operate over enemy territory without fighter escort.

In 1941, the AAF plan to implement Rainbow 5, the basic Army-Navy war plan, was drafted by four of-

About 220 bombers would be required for 90 percent probability of destroying the target. AWPDI forecast a need for 251 combat groups to carry out the plan.

Bombing was a complicated proposition. Where the bomb hit was a function of the direction and speed of the airplane at the moment of release, the aerodynamics of the projectile, and the wind and atmospheric conditions while the bomb was in flight.

The bombardier looked through the telescope of the bombsight to find the target somewhere ahead, then

made adjustments to compensate for the effects of wind drift and the speed of the airplane. He then fixed the target in the crosshairs and flew the airplane to the automatically calculated release point by the link from his bombsight to the autopilot.

Historian Stephen L. McFarland has explained the geometry of it, using the example of a B-17 flying at 160 mph at 23,000 feet and dropping a 600-pound bomb. The bomb was released at a distance, measured on the ground, of 8,875 feet from the target. It was in flight for 38 seconds. If the speed calculated for the airplane was off by two mph and the altitude wrong by 25 feet, that made a difference of 115 feet in where the bomb would land.

The limited yield of the bombs added to the problem. A 500-pound bomb, standard for precision missions after 1943, had a lethal radius of only 60 to 90 feet. It dug a crater just two feet deep and nine feet wide. With bombing accuracy measured in hundreds of feet, it took a great many bombs to get the job done.

Such high ratios of ordnance expended to results achieved were not unusual in war,

nor were they unique to AAF bombers in World War II. The Army fired 10,000 rounds of small-arms ammunition for each enemy soldier wounded and 50,000 rounds for each enemy killed. It took the Germans an average of 16,000 88-mm flak shells to bring down a single Allied heavy bomber.

Daylight precision bombing got off to a rocky start. When 8th Bomber Command was set up in England in 1942, its methods were at odds with those of the Royal Air Force. Air Chief Marshal Arthur T. Harris, chief of Bomber Command, was the foremost advocate of "city busting," the night area bombing campaign that targeted



Formation of 44BG bombers overflies German target. Note the cluster pattern of the bombs smoke most likely dropped from the formation ahead of them (accuracy is perhaps 2,000 to 3,000 foot diameter). Photo: U.S. Archives.

ficers who had been daylight precision ringleaders at the Tactical School: LTCOL. Harold L. George, LTCOL. Kenneth N. Walker, MAJ. Haywood S. Hansell Jr., and MAJ. Laurence S. Kuter. Air War Plans Division Plan No. 1 (AWPD-I) was straight out of the Maxwell playbook. It prescribed an emphasis on precision bombing against the German national infrastructure, industry—especially the aircraft industry—and the Luftwaffe.

The planners were not misled by pickle barrel assumptions. According to data from training and practice bombing, a heavy bomber at 20,000 feet had a 1.2 percent probability of hitting a 100-foot-square target.

the German population centers and workforce. He was supported in this by Prime Minister Winston Churchill and a national policy of "de-housing" the Germans.

Churchill wanted the Americans to join the British bombing program rather than instigate a different one of their own. He was prepared to put pressure on President Roosevelt to order the AAF to change its strategy but was talked out of it at the Casablanca Conference in January 1943 by Major General Ira C. Eaker, Eighth Air Force commander. Eaker's key point was the value of keeping the Germans under attack both day and night.

Eaker had other problems as well. He could not mount large bomber operations because his aircraft and aircrews were diverted to operations in North Africa and the creation of Fifteenth Air Force in Italy in 1943. More than half of his remaining resources were assigned to attacking German submarine pens—a high priority for the British—even though bombing had little effect on these hardened facilities.

Bombing accuracy was terrible. The average circular error in 1943 was 1,200 feet, meaning that only 16 percent of the bombs fell within 1,000 feet of the aiming point. "Rather than dropping bombs into pickle barrels, Eighth Air Force bombardiers were having trouble hitting the broad side of a barn," said historian McFarland.

The prewar prediction that fighters could not intercept bombers was wrong. The Luftwaffe and ground defenses took a heavy toll on bombers if they ventured without fighter escort deep into hostile territory. As the loss rate spiked to eight percent in early 1943, crews calculated their chances of surviving a 25-mission combat tour. On the Ploesti, Romania, mission in August 1943, losses were 30 percent and against Schweinfurt in October, 28 percent.

The Turning Point

Nobody tackled the accuracy and casualty problems with more initiative than Colonel Curtis E. LeMay, Commander of the 305th Bomb Group at Grafton-Underwood, Britain. He identified the best bombardiers, made them "lead bombardiers" for the formation, and had all the aircraft drop their bombs when the lead bombardier did. LeMay also devised a staggered "combat box" formation, which gave the B-17 guns maximum fields of fire for mutual defensive support.

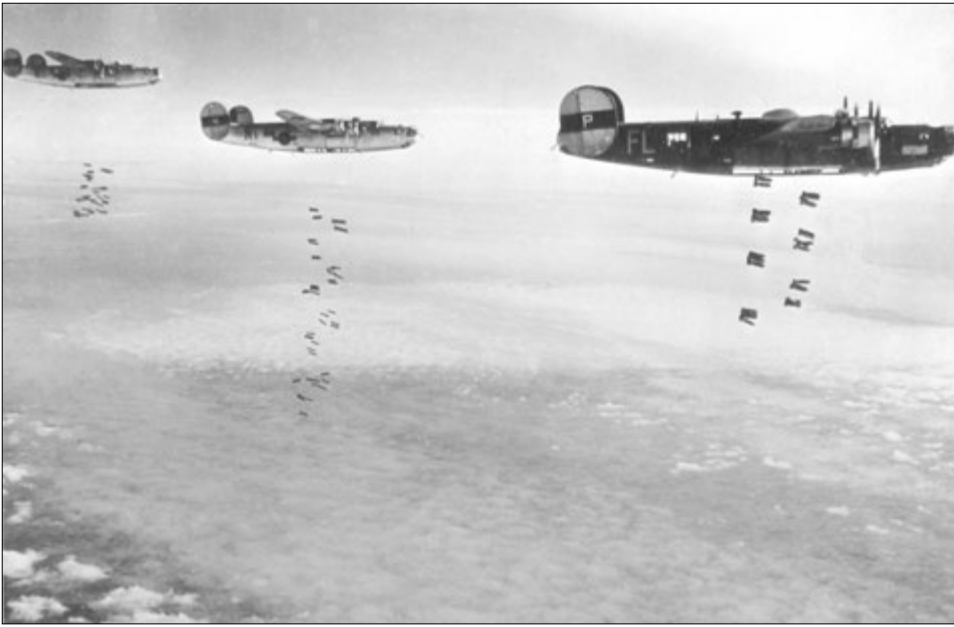
After Schweinfurt, the B-17s did not again fly deep into Germany until long-range P-38 and P-51 fighters were available to escort them. The best of the fighters by far was the P-51, which could escort bombers to their most distant targets. After 1943, all of the fighters, including the older P-47s, took advantage of disposable



Formation of 466BG bombers at bomb release over Germany. Note the trailing smoke from the lead aircraft bombs which marked release point for other bombers in the formation. In late 1944, the 392nd Bomb Group tested and installed a radio bomb release (RBR) system which added more precision to the formation's bomb release and could replace the smoke bomb. Photo: U.S. Archives.

fuel tanks to extend their range.

Eaker did not have much in the way of strategic bombing results to show for his first two years. However, he said, "When our Eighth Air Force had but 200 bombers operating out of England in 1943, there were more than a million Germans standing at the anti-aircraft and fighter defenses on the West Wall to defend against them. And another million Germans were fire wardens or engaged in bomb damage repair."



Formation of 446BG bombers releases (probably 500 pound bombs) over the Rhine River valley, March 1945. Photo: U.S. Archives.

The turning point came in early 1944. By then, Eaker had gone on to be commander in chief of Allied Air Forces in the Mediterranean. Maj. Gen. Jimmy Doolittle replaced him as commander of the Eighth Air Force. Several things changed.

Finally, there were enough bombers to put together large formations. Joint efforts by the Eighth and Fifteenth Air Forces put up a 750-bomber mission in January and a 1,000-bomber mission in February. AAF fighters coursed deep into Germany, and in a matter of months, they had virtually destroyed the Luftwaffe. When the D-Day invasion landed in June, the Germans were able to launch less than 100 sorties in defense of Normandy.

With fighter escorts and suppression of enemy air defenses, the aircrew loss rate declined in 1944 and 1945. For the bomber offensive as a whole, Eighth Air Force lost 4,182 aircraft from a total of 273,841 attacking, a rate of 1.5 percent. RAF's Bomber Command aircraft loss rate for the same period was 2.5 percent. The 250,000 aircrew members who flew bomber missions in the Eighth Air Force in World War II sustained 58,000 casualties—18,000 killed, 6,500 wounded, and 33,500 missing.

AAF bombing accuracy improved. By 1945, the Eighth Air Force was operating at much lower altitudes and was putting up to 60 percent of its bombs within 1,000 feet of the aiming point, almost four times better than in the dark days of 1943. Radar bombing, adopted from the British, was an alternative when conditions did not permit visual delivery, but it was not a preci-

sion technique in any true sense of the word.

RAF Bomber Command continued its night area bombing. From 1942 on, 56 percent of its sorties were against cities. On some occasions, notably the bombing of Dresden in 1945, the AAF joined the British in bombing cities, but overall, less than four percent of U.S. bombs in Europe were aimed at civilians. The main targets for the AAF were marshaling yards (27.4 percent of the bomb tonnage dropped), airfields (11.6 percent), oil installations (9.5 percent), and military installations (8.8 percent).

The U.S. *Strategic Bombing Survey* found that "Allied airpower was decisive in the war in Western Europe." That conclusion is sometimes challenged, but the bombing had reduced German rail traffic, aviation fuel production, steel production, and other aspects of the war-time infrastructure by 50 to 90 percent. Millions of people were occupied in repairing the damage and replacing the goods destroyed by bombing. Nazi Armaments Minister Albert Speer said that the bombing created a "third front" and that "without this great drain on our manpower, logistics, and weapons, we might well have knocked Russia out of the war before your invasion of France."

Postwar analysis found that accuracy had been about the same in Europe and Asia for day visual and radar precision bombing. The Eighth Air Force in Great Britain put 31.8 percent of its bombs within 1,000 feet of the aim point from an average altitude of 21,000 feet. Fifteenth Air Force in Italy averaged 30.78 percent of its bombs within 1,000 feet from 20,500 feet. In the Asia and the Pacific, Twentieth Air Force—45.5 percent of whose sorties were daylight precision despite the emphasis on area bombing in the last months of the war—put 31 percent of its bombs within 1,000 feet of the aim point, although the bombing altitudes were on average 4,500 feet lower than for Eighth Air Force.

Critics of various persuasions have challenged the value of the strategic bombing. However, postwar occupation authorities found that both the German and Japanese economies and their national infrastructures had been devastated to the point that they barely func-



This classic photo of the Ploesti attack over the Astra Romana refinery has been retouched and colorized by the *Herald* to portray the scene as pilot LT. Robert Sternfels (98th BG) flew it in *Sandman*; raising his right wing to clear the smokestacks. The original B&W AAF photo was taken via a mirrored installed camera depicting an opposite arrangement. Turbulence from delayed action bombs, dropped by the previous wave of B-24s on opposite headings, rocks the aircraft. Some crews received burns from the fireballs. AAF photo.

tioned. Industries that had supported the war were in shambles. That level of destruction and disruption was the result of Allied land, sea, and air action—and air-power had hardly been the least of it.

After the war, "pickle barrel" claims passed out of fashion even though nostalgic bombardiers and the popular press kept the notion alive for years. Despite the advent of nuclear weapons, the quest for precision delivery of bombs continued. The first Strategic Air Command Bombing Competition was held in 1948 at Castle AFB, Calif., with visual and radar releases from 25,000 feet. SAC continued to develop radar bombing techniques and used them effectively in its Arc Light missions in Vietnam.

Precision guided munitions first gained fame in the Vietnam War, but it was in the Gulf War and other conflicts of the 1990s that the Air Force finally achieved pickle barrel accuracy, placing bombs within 10 feet of the aim point. The use of the Global Positioning System and satellite data for aiming had made the issue of day vs. night irrelevant.

Editors note: View a video about the bombsight in *Videos We Like* in this *Herald* pg. 22.

Reprinted by permission of *Air Force Magazine*, October 2008. Edited for space. John Correll was editor in chief of the magazine for 18 years. 🛩️

THE MYSTIQUE OF THE NORDEN BOMBSIGHT



Other companies made bombsights, but the famous name was Norden. Carl L. Norden was a Dutch engineer who immigrated to the United States in 1904 and worked for Sperry Gyroscope before going into business for himself. He lived in the United States for 43 years but never became a citizen.

Norden began his contract work with the U.S. Navy in 1918. He liked the Navy better than the Air Corps, which he considered too flamboyant. He preferred the Navy as a customer, even though the Navy moved away from high-altitude horizontal bombing in the 1930s and took the bombsights out of most of its airplanes in the 1940s. (For no better reason than service parochialism, the Navy held on to its Norden bombsights, which it was not going to use, even though the AAF had a critical need for them.)

Some commanders were said to have required a "bombardier's oath" from their young men. Wording of the oath varied from report to report, but all included the vow to protect the secrecy of the Norden bombsight

"if need be, with my life itself."

Actually, the secret had been blown, several times over. A Norden employee sold drawings to the Germans in 1938. The Russians stole a bombsight in 1940 but could not figure it out. They gave it to their (then) allies, the Germans. The Germans soon had plenty of samples of their own from the wreckage of US bombers shot down. In 1944, the U.S. gave the Russians 100 lend-lease patrol aircraft—complete with Norden bombsights and a training package—in return for allowing U.S. shuttle bombers to land in Soviet-controlled territory.

Heritage League 2025 Convention

Dayton, Ohio and the National Museum of U.S. Air Force

With 93rd Bombardment Group Association, October 2-5, 2025.

The Heritage League will again partner with the 93rd Bomb Group Association for our annual meetings. We share the same interest and enthusiasm in preserving the legacy and memory of the people who took part in the bombing campaigns in Africa and Europe. We are looking forward to making new friends and sharing time together in Dayton.

Our theme this year is “First Flight” and will be a blast!

- We will explore the National Museum of the United States Air Force with a guided tour of the WWII section.
- We will also have a wonderful dinner in the museum with their B-24.
- We will enjoy a lunch/river cruise on the Ohio River from Cincinnati.
- We will have education sessions and our annual business meetings.
- We will have time to relax and enjoy the memorabilia room at the hotel.

We again partner with the 93rd Bomb Group returning to the birthplace of aviation, seeing the Wright brother's airplane, and catching up with bomb groups families— who could ask for anything more?



National Museum of U.S. Air Force. Staff photo.



Strawberry Bitch on display at museum. Our dinner setting on day 2. Staff photo.

As we share the same interests, partnering with the 93rd Bomb Group Association accentuates our veteran common histories. The Heritage League's mission is “educating following generations about the sacrifices of our forebears of the Bomb and Fighter Groups of the Second Air Division in WW II. We honor their service by conserving their records and stories, promoting historical research, and hosting educational and social programs.” The 93rd BG Association is “dedicated to preserving the legacy of the men and woman who served in the 93rd Bombardment Group, 8th Air Force during World War II and to perpetuate the friendships and memories of service in the 93rd.” We look forward to making new friends and spending time together to share our Veterans and their WWII experiences.

REMINDER: The deadline for both hotel reservations and Convention registration is **Monday, September 8th.**

Reunion Registration:

Reunion advance payment for meals, transportation, and entertainment is required by the hotel, bus company, and events. Therefore, **please submit your registration form(s) and payment by September 8th**. Each participant pays \$425 which covers four dinners, bartenders, two lunch meals, a River Cruise, meeting room rental, bus transportation, museum entrances, shipping, Color Guard, and speaker meals, two memorial wreaths, photographer, and other incidental expenses.

Step #1 — Make hotel reservations by **September 8th** to obtain the group rate of \$169.00 per night (the rate is valid between 9/29 and 10/8/2025).

Hotel: Hilton Garden Inn—Austin Landing, 12000 Innovation Drive, Dayton, OH 45342

Reservations: (937)247-5850, or online <https://www.hilton.com/en/attend-my-event/daydsgi-bga-bda6b55263cd-4e3f-af36-e9edcfe0a39d/>

To secure the group rate, be sure to state you are with the 93rd Bomb Group Association – Heritage League Reunion Block.

If you require assistance, our Hotel Coordinator is Brooke Connelly, (937-247-5850).

Room Rate: \$169.00 plus tax of 17% per night (**\$197.73 inclusive**). (Rate good from Monday 9/29 – Wednesday 10/8). Our rate is the same for either King or Queen Suites.

Includes: Breakfast Buffet,
Complimentary Internet Access
Complimentary Parking
Indoor Pool
On-site Laundry Facilities
Fitness Center



Step #2 — **REGISTRATION** - You have the option to register online or by mail.

Online —

Attendees have the option to register online and make payment via credit or debit card. Please note that the registration process must be completed for EACH ATTENDEE. There will be a processing fee of \$13.00 added for each attendee in your group. These instructions can be found on the websites for the Heritage League and the 93rd – <https://heritageleague.org> and 93bg.com, respectively. You need to register **online by September 8th**. Please go to this link to register online:

<https://heritageleague.org/2025-hl-convention/>

By mail —

If you wish to mail your registration form(s) and pay by check, please print, and complete a registration form (below) for each attendee in your group. Make your check payable to the 93rd Bombardment Group. There are no additional processing fees. The completed registration form(s) and check should be **mailed to ensure receipt by September 8th** to:

Kim Whitney
3253 Yorkshire Circle Sanford, NC 27332
(716) 378-0560, stringquartet2013@yahoo.com

Step #3 — Make travel arrangements to arrive at the hotel in time for registration between 2:00 - 5:00 PM on Thursday, October 2nd. The welcome dinner begins at 6 PM.

SCHEDULE

Day 1 – Thursday, October 2

10:00 AM – 5:00 PM	Memorabilia Room Setup – Everyone is welcome!
1:00 – 5:00 PM	Registration
2:00 – 3:00 PM	Board/Officer's Reunion Meeting
5:30 – 6:00 PM	Welcome Dinner – reception
6:00 – 7:00 PM	Welcome Dinner
7:30 – 8:30 PM	Attendee Introductions
8:30 – 11:00 PM	Memorabilia Room open

Day 2 – Friday, October 3

7:30 – 8:45 AM	Breakfast – Hotel
8:45 – 9:15 AM	Travel to National Museum of the United States Air Force Museum
9:15 – 11:15 AM	Visit/Tour Museum – small groups
11:30 – 12:00 PM	Wreath Laying Ceremony at 93 rd Memorial plaque/living tree
12:00 – 1:00 PM	Lunch on your own at NMUSAF
12:00 – 12:30 PM	Bus returns to Hotel <u>OR, you may continue touring museum on your own</u>
5:00 – 5:30 PM	Bus returns from Hotel to NMUSAF
5:30 – 6:00 PM	Dinner reception at NMUSAF – at the B-24 (Strawberry Bitch)
6:00 – 6:30 PM	Group Photos
6:30 – 8:00 PM	Dinner at NMUSAF – at the B-24
8:15 – 8:45 PM	Travel to Hotel
9:00 – 11:00 PM	Memorabilia Room open

Day 3 – Saturday, October 4

7:30 – 9:00 AM	Breakfast - Hotel
9:30 – 10:30 AM	Travel to Cincinnati
11:00 AM – 2:00 PM	River Cruise – Lunch on cruise
2:30 – 3:30 PM	Return Travel

4:00 – 5:00 PM Business Meeting – Heritage League

5:30 – 6:30 PM	Dinner – Hotel
7:00 – 8:00 PM	Educational Session #1 – 93rd BGA Veteran Stories
8:00 – 11:00 PM	Memorabilia Room open - Socialize

Day 4 – Sunday, October 5, (At hotel all day)

7:30 – 9:00 AM	Breakfast – Hotel
9:00 – 10:00 AM	Religious Service (non-denominational)
10:30 AM – 12:00 PM	Business Meeting – 93rd Bomb Group Association
12:00 PM – 1:00 PM	Lunch - Hotel

1:00 – 2:00 PM Educational Session #2 – Heritage League

5:30 – 6:00 PM	Reception
6:00 – 8:00 PM	Memorial Dinner – Hotel
8:30 – 9:00 PM	Reunion/Convention De-Brief
9:00 PM – 11:00 PM	Memorabilia Room Pack-up – Everyone is welcome!

Day 5 – Monday, October 6

7:30 – 9:00 AM	Breakfast – Hotel checkout
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Evening meal with AF. museum's B-24 on day 2.



Day 3. Lunch on Ohio River riverboat in Cincinnati. Staff photo.

Menus

Thursday, October 2, 2025, 6 p.m., Buffet dinner (hotel)

Garden Salad	Au Gratin Potatoes
Petite Sirloin	Green Beans
Chicken Pasta Cordon Bleu	Carrot Cake

Friday, October 3, 6 p.m., Italian Buffet, (National Museum of the US Air Force—Under the Wing)

Italian Buffet	
Classic Caesar Salad	Dinner Rolls
Farmers Vegetable Blend	Fruit
Mini Sweet Treats	

Saturday, October 4, 5:30 p.m., Buffet dinner (Hotel)

Spinach Salad	Scalloped Potatoes
Crispy Dixie Chicken	Normandie Vegetables
Salmon	Assorted Cheesecakes

Sunday, October 5, 12:00 p.m., Boxed Lunch (Hotel)

Sandwiches: Turkey or Ham Vegetarian Taco Salad Chef Salad

Sunday, October 5, 6:00 p.m., Memorial Dinner (Hotel)

Caesar Salad	Beef Medallions
Vegetarian option	California Blend Vegetables
Garlic Smashed Potatoes	



2nd Air Division and 8th Air Force Challenge coins. Don't forget to bring **YOURS to our convention!**

REGISTRATION FORM

One per guest

Please complete form and make payment for the total amount by September 8th. A single payment is encouraged for multiple guests.

Name: _____

Please indicate if attendee is under the age of 12 _____ - Contact Kim Whitney for "adjusted" Registration Fee

Organization (Circle all that apply):

Heritage League 93rd Bomb Group

Other Bomb Group and BG #

Address: _____

(Street)

(City)

(State)

(Zip)

Telephone: _____ Email: _____

Emergency Contact: _____

(Someone not traveling with you)

(Name)

(Phone Number)

When do you plan to arrive/depart? _____

(Arrival Time/Date)

(Departure Time/Date)

If traveling by plane: Airline and Flight#: _____

Are you related to a WWII veteran?

Veteran's Name: _____ Rank: _____

Duty Position: _____ Squadron/Section: _____ Relationship to you: _____

Meal choices: Circle one entrée per meal (Food descriptions follow):

Special Need _____

Please identify your special dietary requirements

Sunday Lunch

1. Ham Sandwich 2. Turkey Sandwich 3. Vegetarian Taco Salad 4. Chef Salad

Sunday Memorial Dinner (Circle your choice):

1. Baked Cod 2. Beef Medallions 3. Vegetarian Option

Basic registration fee: \$425.00

Multiply by Number of registrations _____

The registration fee includes Dinner for 4 evenings, two lunches, Memorabilia room, Color Guard and Guest Speaker dinners, transportation, education sessions, and business meeting.

Calculate your registration fee: (Registration does not include your hotel room) = **Total \$** _____

REUNION REGISTRATION REFUND POLICY

Last minute cancellations can cause significant loss to the Heritage League and the 93rd BGA. This loss occurs because we must guarantee your attendance to the all the relative meals, related activities, and other costs.

When we have no-shows, we still are charged for meals, etc.

We recognize that there will always be unforeseen events beyond your control, and we truly regret your personal inconvenience. However, the convention committee has decided that we must stay with our policy of "pay as you go" for reunion costs.

To keep the convention/reunion fees as low as possible, the convention committee has chosen the deadline date of September 20th.

No refund will be issued after September 20th.



We use this day to remind ourselves to protect the memory and sacrifices of our brave service members who gave their lives in defense of this nation. And with it, the reminder that our freedom is worthy of their sacrifice. As President Abraham Lincoln said at his 2nd inaugural address in 1865, "the nation has a duty to care not only for those who carried arms into battle but for his widow and his orphan."

Heritage League Flower Program—*We Remember Them*

By Beverly Baynes Tomb, 466 BG Attlebridge



Heritage League wreath personally assembled by steadfast Heritage League devotees Colin Mann and Alex Geldard. We can't thank them enough. Photo: C. Mann.

The Heritage League Flower Fund provides floral arrangements for placement at 13 overseas American cemeteries each Memorial Day to honor and remember those in the Second Air Division (2AD) of the USAAF who lost their lives during WWII.

Dedicated local friends of the Heritage League personally place our flowers at four cemeteries: Colin Mann (Cambridge), Luc Dewez (Ardennes), Ari-Jan van Hees (Netherlands), and Vallana Widoff (Florence, Italy). Thanks to the generosity of our donors, we are able to expand our presence at both Netherlands and Florence American Cemeteries with a large standing wreath placed in the Court of the Missing. At the other nine cemeteries, we ask ABMC staff to send us photos of our flowers. This year, they also sent comments.

In The Netherlands, a beautiful tribute garnered attention from King Willem-Alexander and Prime Minister Dick Schoof of the Netherlands, as well as U.S. Chief of Mission to the Netherlands Marcus Micheli, and ABMC's Executive Director for Operations Tom Spoehr at the ceremony. Brig. Gen. Andrew Saslav spoke on behalf of the U.S. armed forces. Saslav and his family were the first to visit his relative's grave since he was buried there after WWII. They also met the family who has visited the grave for at least two generations. Approximately 100 family members of those buried at the cemetery were at the ceremony along with the Dutch families who have adopted their service members' graves.

family members of those buried at the cemetery were at the ceremony along with the Dutch families who have adopted their service members' graves.



Our dedicated volunteer at the Netherlands ABMC, Ari-Jan van Hees places the wreath near the Walls of the Missing. 330 Second Air Division airmen are buried there with 268 listed on the Walls of the Missing. Photo via Jan Van Hees.

The North Africa American Cemetery in Tunisia sent a beautiful message from their Interpretive Guide Maram Mahfoudhi: *On behalf of the American Battle Monuments Commission and our entire team at the North Africa American Cemetery, I extend our heartfelt thanks for the*



Always inspiring, the setting at the North Africa ABMC in Tunisia. 58 Second Air Division airmen are listed on the Wall and 34 are buried there. Photo via ABMC.

beautiful bouquet you sent in honor of Memorial Day. Your meaningful gesture of remembrance honors not only heroes from the 2nd Air Division, but all the service members who rest here. It reflects a profound respect for the sacrifices made and a shared commitment to ensuring that their

legacy endures. Please know that your tribute was placed with great care and deep respect. It touched us deeply, and it continues to resonate with the visitors who come to reflect on the cost of freedom.



Located in the chapel of Sicily-Rome cemetery. The assistant superintendent of the cemetery thanked the Heritage League for our support and added "It is our honor to be the keepers of those who paid the ultimate sacrifice during WWII." Seven airmen are listed on the Wall of Missing and 11 buried there. Photo via ABMC.

At Épinal France American Cemetery, the staff informed us that Heritage League wreath was so big it needed a special stand! Thanks to our flower vendor, La Comédie des Fleurs.

Mariska A. Weaver, Assistant Superintendent at Sicily-Rome American Cemetery sent us a lovely message: *On behalf of the Sicily-Rome American Cemetery and Memorial we want to thank you and your organization for sending the beautiful flower arrangement. They were placed in the chapel for this years ceremony, which was visited by over 500 attendees this year. Thank you for your support! It is our honor to be the keepers of those who paid the ultimate sacrifice during WWII.*

Many thanks to all of you who donate to the Flower Fund, to the cemetery staff who sent us photos and comments and especially to Colin, Luc, Ari-Jan and Vallana who arranged for and physically traveled to place our flowers and honor our fallen heroes.



Flower program chair Beverly Baynes Tomb meets with and thanks Florence American Cemetery volunteer Valanna Widoff during a meeting of the Daughters of American Revolution in Washington, D.C. Photo via B. Tomb.



Our wreath placed at Florence Italy ABMC Cemetery by volunteer Valanna Widoff, Regent of the Daughters of American Revolution Charter in Florence. 39 Second Air Division airmen are listed on the Wall of Missing and two are buried there. Photo via Valanna Widoff.



Totally dedicated to this effort, Luc Dwez displays the two large wreaths he personally procured at the Ardennes Belgium ABMC Cemetery. 635 Second Air Division airmen are buried and 59 listed on the Walls of the Missing there. Photo via Luc Dwez.

For those interested in donating to our flower program, please go to <https://heritageleague.org/donate/> and scroll down to the Flower Fund. See the photos and captions that didn't fit into this Herald on our Facebook page - <https://www.facebook.com/HeritageLeague2AD>. For more information on specific cemetery ceremonies go to: www.abmc.gov.

General John Pershing, the WWI commander, who established the American Battle Monuments Commission overseas cemeteries stated: *time will not dim the glory of their deeds.*

ABMC commissioner Michael E. Smith states: *It is our duty to protect the memory of our service members. As the number of WWII veterans dwindle, soon the stones will be all we have left. It is our duty to learn from their lives. Their sacrifice is their legacy. Our freedom is our inheritance. Now it is our turn to carry these values on.*

Memorial Day at Cambridge

By Marjorie Shiers, 489 BG Halesworth



Cambridge American Cemetery at Madingley, England. 2nd Air Division airmen occupy 537 of the 3,812 graves; second only to the 635 buried at Ardennes, Belgium. Photo: M. Shiers.

Our fallen were remembered today, May 26, 2025, at the Memorial Day Service at the Cambridge American Cemetery (Madingley) here in the UK.

The open-air service was conducted by the Master of Ceremonies Suzie Harrison from the Cambridge Cemetery. Following the Invocation given by Chaplain Major Brice W. Ullman, Suzie introduced the speakers in turn: ABMC Director of Cemetery Operations Mr. Dan Hicks, His Majesty's Deputy Lord Lieutenant of Cambridgeshire Mr. Christopher Walkinshaw, Ambassador of the United States Honorable Warren A. Stephens, and Colonel Ryan Garlow from the 100th Air Refueling Wing. The theme of the service was to recognize "The Battle of the Atlantic—U.S. Merchant Marines." All the speakers gave moving and, in some cases, personal accounts in remembrance. One hundred and fourteen floral tributes were placed on The Wall of the Missing after being carried in by a great number of young American airmen and women. We placed tributes for the three groups stationed at Halesworth Airfield during WWII: the 489th Bomb Group, the 56th Fighter Group and the 5th Emergency Rescue Squadron.

Before and following the service, the congregation saw a 'fly over' from a variety of aircraft both modern and historical. This was made possible by the weather! We saw the clouds roll in, but the sun shone and the rain stayed away. A perfect day!

Our fallen were remembered today, and we give our grateful thanks to all who served. We send our best wishes to you all.

Friends of the 489th BG and the volunteers of the Halesworth Airfield Memorial Museum.



U.S. Air Force personnel deliver wreaths to Cambridge's Wall of Missing. 905 Second Air Division airmen are among the 5127 servicemen posted on the Wall. Photo: M. Shiers.

Welcome Home Honors Program

Heritage League Honors Final Burials of Recently Identified Airmen of the Second Air Division

Staff Sergeant Ralph Lavon Mourer, 453rd Bomb Group, Old Buckenham
Oakwood Cemetery, Adrian, Michigan, May 19, 2025

By James Root, 93 BGA Hardwick



SSGT. Mourer of Colorado was a 23-year-old radio operator on *Little Joe*, a B-24 Bomber of the 732nd Bombardment Squadron, 453rd Bombardment Group, at Old Buckenham.

Little Joe had taken off April 8, 1944, from Royal Air Force Station Old Buckenham, England on a bombing mission to Brunswick, Germany.

Somewhere over the Salzwedel, Germany area, *Little Joe* suddenly went missing from formation. The other planes didn't see a hit, crash, or bail out; it just disappeared.

The region between Salzwedel and Wistedt was riddled with downed bombers. After the war, Army investigators from the American Graves Registration Command (AGRC) attempted to find the crash site and recover the remains of the ten crew members. Captured German records noted that one unidentified plane crashed near Wistedt, County Salzwedel, on the same day that the Liberator went missing, however AGRC personnel were unable to successfully locate the site. In 2015, an independent research group, Missing Allied Air Crew Research Team (MAACRT), contacted Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) historians with new information related to a possible crash site near Wistedt, Germany. Interviews with elderly local residents led investigators to a crash site location where they were able to recover various pieces of wreckage, including potential osseous remains. Between 2021 and 2023 DPAA investigators returned to the crash site for continued excavations and recoveries. By the end of September 2023, all evidence had been recovered and sent to the DPAA laboratory. The laboratory analysis and the totality of the circumstantial evidence available established an

association between the remains and SSGT. Mourer.

On June 20, 2024, Staff Sergeant Mourer's status was officially changed to "Accounted For." A rosette indicating this change was placed on Mourer's name inscribed on the Walls of the Missing at Netherlands American Cemetery, Margraten, Netherlands.

On May 19, 2025, SSGT. Mourer was brought home. His parents, siblings, and wife, all long deceased, were buried at various sites in in the U.S. His only child, Victor Lavon Mourer, whom his wife was carrying when SSGT. Mourer was killed, was also long gone, and buried at the same cemetery.

After the public viewing, the long funeral procession to his final resting place was led by hundreds of dignified motorcycle riders of the Freedom Riders, Patriot Guard Riders and American Legion riders/members. The procession passed by four local schools, all with their students outside lining the street to salute SSGT. Mourer with flags, waves, and tributes. He was buried near the son he never got to see. The burial included full military honors and was a beautiful, solemn, and outstanding tribute to another great American hero of World War II.

The family in attendance included SSGT. Mourer's daughter-in-law, Joanne Mourer (wife of Mourer's son Victor), granddaughter Laura Spolsky, and great-grand-



SSGT. Mourer's final journey to Michigan for his service. Photo: J. Root.

children Kailyn and Connor Spolsky. A Michigan state representative was in attendance along with a local news station. American Legion Commander of the Michigan 2nd District, William McMurray paid his respects representing all Legion members. Representing the 2nd Air Division Heritage League were myself, Mary Yamamoto and Anne Pancella from the 93rd Bomb Group Association.

Staff Sargent Ralph Lavon Mourer has returned home after 81 years! Welcome home. Rest in peace.



Elementary School students pay their respects at Mourer's procession. Photo: J. Root.



Mourer High School students pay their respects as Mourer's procession passes by. Photo: J. Root.



Heritage League's wreath at the memorial. Photo: J. Root.



Students solemnly cross their hearts as SSGT Mourer's procession passes by. Photo: J. Root.



Mourer Family keepsake bracelet, worn and passed down from SSGT Mourer, 1943. Photo: J. Root.



Joanne Mourer (wife of SSGT. Mourer's son), granddaughter Laura Spolsky and great-grandchildren Kailyn and Connor at the gravesite. Photo: J. Root.

Second Lieutenant Robert Thomas McCollum, 389th Bomb Group, Hethel Oak Hill Memorial Park, California, May 3, 2025

By Marybeth Dyer, 458 BG, Horsham St Faith



It was a sunny day in San Jose, California, May 3, 2025. As I made my way up a hill at the Oak Hill Memorial Park, I found several groups waiting around the gravesite. They were Vietnam Vets with American Flags. There were several bag pipers and drums. There was an Honor Guard, American

Legion volunteers, an Army Chaplain, and there was his family who never really knew 2LT. McCollum but knew what he stood for and the sacrifice he made. It was a sober celebration of a man who was MIA. His niece, Sandy Bellou, spoke of how her mom missed her brother and that they really did not know what happened to him. Until now....

2LT. Robert McCollum was a B-24 bombardier assigned to the 389th. On June 20, 1944, his plane (no name was determined) on a mission to Politz, Germany never returned, presumed crashed in the Baltic Sea off the coast of Denmark. In 2019, Danish divers alerted the Royal Danish Navy of a WWII era aircraft, and

they identified a machine gun that matched the caliber of those on McCollum's plane. In 2021, the Royal Danish Navy cleared the site of unexploded ordnance. The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency's (DPAA) primary partner Trident Archeologic, with Wessex Archaeology and volunteers from Project Recover with the Royal Danish Navy and Langelands Museum returned to the site to conduct the excavation and recovery operations. In 2023, the same group returned to conduct further operation during which they found further material and possible remains. The evidence was accessed in the DPAA laboratory where they used dental and anthropological analysis with DNA from his niece. LT. Robert McCollum was identified and coming home. McCollum's name is recorded on the Wall of the Missing in Cambridge American Cemetery. A rosette was placed next to his name to indicate he has been accounted for.

It was not a sad day. It was full of pride and relief that after 81 years a young man barely 23 years old came home after all those years. He was recognized, revered and respected. It was an honor for me to be part of his welcome home and final resting.



McCollum's niece and DNA match, Sandy Bellou.
Photo: Marybeth Dyer.



Heritage League Wreath. Photo: Marybeth Dyer.

First Lieutenant Joe A. DeJarnette, 453 BG Old Buckenham

Forest Lawn Memorial Park Erlanger, Kentucky, April 26, 2025

From DPAA and public press releases



First Lieutenant DeJarnette from Kentucky was the 24-year-old pilot on Little Joe on the same 453rd Bomb Group mission to Brunswick, Germany as was SSGT. Mourner. To date, DPAA (assisted by MAACRT) has identified eight of the 10-man *Little Joe* crew. The *Heritage Herald* has reported the final resting of six of the crew to

date. We provide a photo of the aircraft in our Nose Art feature in this *Herald*.

He was a member of the 1938 graduating class at Highlands High School in Fort Thomas, Kentucky. 1LT. DeJarnette then attended Transylvania College in Lexington in 1940 and 1941 where he was a member of the football team and a member of Phi Kappa Tau Fraternity. He Enlisted on April 7, 1941.

Ms. Virginia Justice (niece) was the family member at the funeral, and she remembers her uncle. Representing Heritage League at the funeral were Mitchell Magee (389 BG, Hethel) and Scott and Angela Koester (489 BG, Halesworth). The procession from the funeral home to the cemetery followed a service by Reverend Eden. LT. DeJarnette's cremated remains were buried in his father's grave at Forest Lawn Cemetery, Erlanger, Kentucky.

First Lieutenant DeJarnette is memorialized on the Walls of the Missing at the American Cemetery, Margraten, Netherlands. A rosette indicating his "accounted for" status was placed on his name inscribed on the Walls of the Missing.

Now his family can authoritatively say when Lieutenant Joe A. DeJarnette, 24, of Fort Thomas, KY, passed away. It was April 8, 1944, in Westedt, Salzwedel, Germany. Rest in peace Joe.



Honor guard at LT. DeJarnette funeral at the ready. Photo: M. Magee.

Editors' Note: The Heritage League has attended six of eight final ceremonies of the ten *Little Joe* crew to date. Two of the crews' ceremonies have yet to be scheduled as DPAA is still attempting to locate their families for final arrangements.



At the DeJarnette's memorial service with his cremated remains and uniform. Wreath from Heritage League is at left. Photo: M. Magee.

Happy Birthday VETS!

The Heritage League is pleased to acknowledge our Veterans' birthdays who have recently, or are about to celebrate their 'special day.'

HELP! We have been able to get photos of some, but not all of our Veterans who served in the 2nd Air Division. We strive to highlight more Veteran birthdays as a regular feature, but we need your help as we do not have photos of all. If you have a fairly recent photo of your Vet, please email it with '2AD VET Birthday' in the subject line to: ddovey@hotmail.com.

Our country is filled with much promise for tomorrow's generation, all because it was shaped by legends like you who risked your lives defending our nation. **HAPPY BIRTHDAY!** We honor you and thank you for our freedoms today.



Ed Berthond marks 106 years this November and is the most senior of this birthday group. A 445BG Tibenham pilot, Ed received a special visit to his home on his birthday in 2022 by the U.S. Senator from Illinois Tammy Duckworth. Photo Janelle Walker.



93rd Bomb Group, Hardwick veteran Harl Burnell Evans reaches the 103 year mark this September. Photo Mary Evans.



Will Noden, lead navigator from 467BG Rackheath, will mark 101 years this September. Family photo.

Whatever you guys are doing — keep it up!

Annual Reunion of the 8th Air Force Historical Society

Unfortunately, its reunion is being held on same days as our convention.

8th AFHS will conduct its 51st Annual Reunion at Colorado Springs Colorado, October 1-5, 2025.

Host hotel is at Hilton Double Tree, Colorado Springs. October 1-5, 2025.

Details and registration instructions are located at: <https://portal.8thafhs.org/events/>.



Videos We Like

By Lisa Niehoff

Where were you on Victory in Europe Day? 2nd Air Division Veterans to parade 50 years later.

Enjoy flashback scenes of our nation's celebration on 1945 V-E Day. Then forward 50 years later as many of our Vets returned to Norwich in 1995 for the 50th V-E Day reunion and parade. The video culminates with an interview of LT. Ralph Elliot, B-24 pilot with the 467th Bomb Group as he comments on his missions. He flew the last mission of the war on April 25, 1945, to Traunstein, Germany.

BW& Color/6:05 Mins. https://youtu.be/DIYiPu_8tTw?si=qIjX23QkFlWxxHgD.

Editors note: Joe Dzenowagis has cataloged and provided to YouTube 18 videos in connection with the 80th anniversary of V-E Day to be included with American Library's upcoming 'Silver Wings' celebration this September. The Heritage League appreciates and thanks Joe for his efforts with this. We will review one of his videos in each future *Herald*.

Norden Bombsight

With references to the Norden Bombsight, featured in two informative articles within this Herald, I have included two short videos on how it was operated and the special vaults they were stored in (colorized, only one minute each). "How the Norden Bombsight worked." <https://youtube.com/shorts/UXBUOE4BYSY?feature=shared>. "Norden Bombsight" at the Historic Wendover Airforce Museum in Utah. <https://youtube.com/shorts/dIAKAx1zQrM?feature=shared>.

Fighter Pilot Podcast on flying the B-24

This is an audio podcast, hosted by F-16 pilot Trevor Boswell who covers the fascinating world of air combat featuring the B-24 Liberator. Trevor's guest was Jim Harley, who worked at the Collings Foundation. He has extensive experience flying the B-17, B-25 and 1,400 hours in the B-24 Liberator, as well as many hours in many other types. He delves into an introduction of how and where the Liberator got its start. Jim compares the two heavy bombers, B-24 and 17. When asked which bomber he would prefer to go to combat with, he stated it was the B-24.

This is the longest YouTube we've featured, a little over an hour but well worth listening to. The nice thing is you can pause, go get your drink and snacks, then come back with fresh ears.

1:11:50 Mins. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NbySjwjQ6OU>.

The Ditching of a B-24

I found this to be interesting and extremely telling to watch the incredible water ditching of a B-24. Unfortunately, there wasn't much feedback on this particular video, receiving only 2 likes, including mine. However, don't let this discourage you from watching it, which is only a few minutes long. A song describing the ditching was added to the Army Air Force training video by 'A Zero Budget Filmmaker'.

To safely ditch a B-24 Liberator in water during WWII, pilots would aim for a controlled descent into the wind, preferably parallel to the waves, with the nose slightly up and the tail down to minimize impact speed. Full flaps were used to reduce speed, and the crew would prepare to abandon the aircraft immediately after touchdown, prioritizing the command deck as the driest area.

B&W/5:42 Mins. https://youtu.be/yXRdauwgmRM?si=1OFdEZe_fV2LsKX-.



—By Pete O'Tube,
Expert

Dear Pete,

We hope you can shed some light on a debate I am having with my siblings. Our grandfather was a bombardier on a Liberator in England, and I swear he told me that there were times he flew the plane, but my brothers and sisters are skeptical. If you can tell us whether that ever happened, I might be in a position to buy you a pint!

Shirley Untermeyer Geste

Dear Shirley U. Geste,

You heard right! Part of the method of using the legendary Norden bombsight (when conditions allowed visual bombing) entailed a long, straight, level approach to the target—the bomb run. It took time to enter several variables into the analog computer, and if the altitude, direction, and ground speed of the plane were all held constant for the 5-plus minutes needed to dial-in drift angle, factors for crosswinds at the intervening altitudes and the aerodynamic characteristics of the particular bombs being dropped, they stood a far better chance of concentrating their eggs on or near the target.

There were two ways that the bombardier could fly the plane during this mission-critical phase. There was a way, from his location forward and below the flight deck, for the bombardier to direct the pilots, by adjusting a remote indicator from his compartment, on very fine course corrections needed. Or he could do that himself by remote control while the altitude and air-speed were precisely maintained by the autopilot. Either way, control went back to the pilots upon bomb release.

Practice in the Eighth Air Force evolved so that not every plane's bombardier had to do the bomb aiming; within their local part of the formation, a squadron lead ship, or group lead ship, might also have their respective

lead pilots, navigators and bombardiers onboard. Most planes were followers, and close enough to their 'lead ship' in course, speed and altitude, that they could 'drop on lead.' That is, when they saw the leader's bomb bay doors open, they opened theirs. Then they put a twitchy finger on the toggle switch that would start their release the instant they saw the leader's bombs away. But they also had to be ready at all times to do it independently in case their lead ship was taken out or the formation broke up. If circumstances prevented a drop on the primary target, individual navigators and bombardiers had to be ready to make a quick change for good 'drop' on a briefed secondary target, or a 'target of opportunity.' Neither of these key men were unnecessary, and at times their 'lead' was needed for quick input if equipment became unreliable. They practiced their specialty on every mission to stay sharp.

Please keep in mind that Pete will not be influenced in his answers by bribes from someone in a wager, so readers are asked to refrain. What's on tap?

Aiming to please, *Pete*



The Norden Bombsight has two main components: sight-head and stabilizer. The sight-head pivots on the stabilizer which has a directional gyro in it. Note the buttons associated with the aircraft auto pilot (numbers 19 and 20). Public domain photo.

Nose Art *Edited by Lisa Niehoff*

Nose art boosted crew morale, fostering camaraderie and a sense of identity within the unit.

Little Joe, 453 BG



Courtesy: American Air Museum.

Editor's note: To date, all *Little Joe* crew have been identified with eight laid to final rest. Heritage League representatives have attended six funerals. That leaves two remains awaiting funeral dates with DPAA trying to locate relatives. The funerals of two of *Little Joe's* crew, LT. DeJarnette and SSGT. Mourer, are featured in this *Herald* (pages 17-20).

The crew of *Little Joe* probably named their plane after a cartoon character from a dice game they played during the war. The picture of two dice showing a total count of four, often referred to as a 'Little Joe score,' was a lucky outcome in some dice games. Or...could the *Little Joe* refer to the short height of the bomber's pilot, 1LT. Joe DeJarnette? (Joe is the pilot in the middle of the picture.) But sources do not confirm this. Unfortunately, the crew lost its luck as the bomber was shot down with all lost during a mission to Brunswick, Germany, on April 8, 1944. The art was painted by SSGT. Sarkis E. Bartigian, who is referred to later in this article.

Hot Box, 466 BG



Hot Box probably describes a space that gets uncomfortably hot, particularly in confined aircraft areas. It may have referred to the high temperatures encountered while training in the U.S. desert areas before leaving for England. Or a sarcastic reference to the inadequacy of the crew's heating suits used for Europe's high-altitude missions in the extreme cold. The art character is possibly 'hammering' Hitler's forces. The artist was SSGT. Bartigian who also painted *Little Joe*.

Hot Box encountered a tragic fate on August 9, 1944. It departed Attlebridge, Norfolk, for a bombing mission to Saarbrücken, Germany. When entering the target area, German fighters attacked the plane. Three of *Hot Box's* engines were damaged, preventing it from keeping pace with the main bomber formation. The crew successfully fought off a subsequent attack by Messerschmitt Bf 109 fighters. Later escorted by two P-38 fighters, they attempted to return to base. Due to se-

vere problems, the pilot decided to turn back over the North Sea and ordered the crew to abandon the plane over the mainland. The co-pilot and navigator chose to remain on board to assist the pilot in an attempt to make an emergency landing on the island of Rozenburg, Netherlands. The emergency landing failed, resulting in the pilot's death. The co-pilot survived the crash but sustained severe head injuries and died shortly after being transported to a hospital in The Hague. Only the navigator of the three who remained on board survived the crash. All other crew members were listed as Prisoners of War having presumably abandoned the aircraft as ordered.

Credit: American Air Museum.

Special Delivery, 489 BG



Special Delivery was involved in missions over Munster, Germany. The fable of storks delivering special babies now transitions to delivering another special (bomb) to Hitler. In later years, aviation artist Mike Bailey was inspired to portray *Special Delivery* in one of his paintings. Bailey was an accomplished illustrator, historian and author from Norwich who extensively covered the 2nd Air Division airmen and operations. As a youth, he would sneak onto the airbase at Horsham St Faith where he was welcomed by American airmen who let him climb over the B-24s and observe operations up close. Sadly, he passed away earlier this year.

Credit: American Air Museum.

The Latrine Rumor, 93 BG

The meaning of *Latrine Rumor* typically refers to unverified or baseless information. This is likely due to a humorous reference where airmen would gather and share information and rumors. The *Latrine Rumor* was painted by SGT. Duane Bryers at Sheppard Field, Texas. He completed this before the overseas deployment of the Bomb Group.

Credit: American Air Museum, Reddit/Waldo--Pepper.



A Special Tribute

Referred to in the *Little Joe* and *Hot Box* stories, SSGT. Sarkis Bartigian has been described by some as the 'greatest painter of nose art of all time' and by others as 'the Michelangelo of WWII aviation art.' His imagination and skill with paint was certainly exceptional and he was perhaps unique in seeing the side, indeed the whole, of a B-24 as his potential 'canvas.' He had joined the USAAF at the age of 36 or 37 having studied at the Rhode Island School of Design and subsequently worked as a commercial artist painting murals for restaurants and movie theatre marquees. Shortly after entering the service, he married Mabel who became the subject of another of his impressive works of art, i.e., Mabel's Labels. A portrait of his beautiful bride adorned one the 43rd Bomb Group's B-24s together with several nudes and sets of strategically positioned red lips. Sadly, having survived the war and returning home to Mabel, Sarkis Bartigian was killed in a motor accident in 1955, only 49. A sad loss indeed.

Credit: USAA Nose Art Research Project.

**We appreciate gifts from members inspired by
an individual to whom we are all connected. We wish to thank
members who have contributed to the Heritage League**

IN MEMORY OF... *Donors*

MAJ. Alfred Brunner (489th)	Patricia Bodic
Charles Gabrus (489th)	Gayle Metzger
Burton Madison (453rd)	Deborah Simms-Watson
LT. Francisco Mercado (491th)	David Mercado
Milo I. Noble (466th)	Blythe Schaller
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David (445th) and Joan Patterson	Irene Hurner
LTCOL. John E. Stevens (467th)	Judi Palmer
Wilbur Stites (453rd)	Jeane Stites

—Folded Wings—

Charles Gabrus	1/7/25	489 BG
James Lorenz	5/25/25	466 BG

Folded Wings Report

Please report the death of a member or spouse and provide a copy of the newspaper obituary if possible.

Name of deceased _____ Unit/Sqdn. _____

Address _____ City _____ State/Zip _____

Date of death _____ Survivors _____

Reported by _____

Address _____ City _____ State/Zip _____

Please return to: Marybeth Dyer, 6410 Valley Oak Plaza, Martinez, CA 94553

or Email to: smbdyer@sbcglobal.net.



Heritage Herald Staff

Published three times a year, the *Heritage Herald* is the official publication of the Heritage League of the Second Air Division (USAAF). The mission is to educate future generations about the sacrifices of our forebearers of the bomb and fighter groups of the 2nd AD in WWII. Membership is open to all those who follow this ideal.

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Please renew your membership for 2025

Note: We have a student rate

Membership Application/Renewal for Heritage League

Please RENEW and pay ONLINE. It is a safe and secure way for you to pay your membership and contributions. LOG ON to

<https://heritageleague.org/membership/> OR

Return this page with your check, payable to the Heritage League Membership, 6410 Valley Oak Plaza, Martinez, CA 94553. If you have questions, please email:

smbdyer@sbcglobal.net.

VOLUNTEER YOUR TIME AND TALENT. We are very appreciative of the strong financial support you have shown for The League and related entities. Would you also be able to share your time and talent with us? You can fill out a form at: <https://heritageleague.org/volunteer/> that lets our expanded Volunteer Program pair you with work supporting our mission!

NAME _____ SPOUSE _____

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CITY, STATE _____ ZIP _____

E-MAIL _____ @ _____

(If you receive the newsletter by email, please make sure you provide your email address)

NAME of related 2nd Air Division Veteran _____ VET Birthday Date: _____

VET's Bomb Group or Unit No. _____ Their relationship to you _____

Dues for students, friends and relatives of 2nd Air Division Veterans (check one):

_____ PDF Newsletter via Email—provide email address above—**\$25** \$ _____

_____ Students (up to age 25), PDF Newsletter via Email only—**\$20** \$ _____

_____ Printed Newsletter sent by US mail—**\$35** \$ _____

2nd Air Division Veterans are eligible to be an Honorary Lifetime Member (check one).

_____ PDF Newsletter, via Email—provide email address above—**\$0 (free)**

_____ Printed Newsletter sent by US mail—**\$30** \$ _____

(If the cost of the printed newsletter causes a hardship, please let us know)

ADDITIONAL CONTRIBUTIONS (*We are a tax deductible 501(c)3 organization*)

Contribution to the Heritage League operations \$ _____

Contribution to American Library 2nd Air Division (Norwich, UK) \$ _____

Contribution to Flower Fund for Overseas Cemeteries and Welcome Home Tributes \$ _____

If you like, we would be pleased to note your contribution as...

In Memory of (deceased) _____

OR

In Honor of (living person) _____

TOTAL ENCLOSED \$ _____

Summer/Fall 2025 Heritage Calendar

and Historic Events of note

July

1944—GEN William E. Kepner assumes command of the 2nd Bomb Division. July 1.

August

1943—Operation Tidal Wave, first raid on Ploesti oil refineries is conducted by B-24s. Losses were high, approximately 30%. August 1.

1943—First Missions to Schweinfurt/Regensburg. Heavy losses. August 17.

September

1943—2nd Bomb Division established. Sept. 13.

1944—Operation Market Garden begins with Allied airborne forces landing in the Netherlands, September 17.

American Library Silver Wings Project: "The U.S. Army Air Forces in WWII Norfolk Exhibition." The Norwich forum presents collections of the 2nd Air Division archive in a ten-day exhibition and series of talk. September 12 to 21. www.theforumnorwich.co.uk/festivals-projects/silverwings.

U.S. Air Force's Convention, 78th birthday, September 20-21, Air Force Association Convention, Gaylord Resort and Convention Center, National Harbor, MD. (Washington, DC.). Info at: <https://www.afa.org/national-convention/>.

National Museum of U.S. Air Force. Plane Talks—Air Force Birthday. September 18. Info at: www.nationalmuseum.af.mil/upcoming/events/.

October

1942—First missions of B-24s as they are part of 100 bombers attacking France.

1943 —High losses suffered (approximately 29%) from the mission to Schweinfurt, resulted in sharply reduced bomber operations.

Heritage League and 93rd BG Associations Reunions. Dayton Hilton Garden Inn Austin Landing. Oct 2-5. Info at: www.heritageleague.org.

8th Air Force Historical Society Reunion. Hilton Double Tree, Colorado Springs. October 1-5, 2025. Details at: www.8thAFHS.org.

392nd BG Association Reunion. To be held in conjunction with the 8th AFHS. Info at: <https://www.b24.net/>.

466th BG Association Reunion. To be held in conjunction with 8th AFHS reunion in Colorado Springs. October 1-5. Info at: www.466thBGA.com.

467th BG Association Reunion. Savannah, Georgia, Drury Plaza Hotel. October 22-25. <http://www.467bg.com/>.

November—December

1939—B-24 first flight. December 29.

1942—Rationing of gasoline in the U.S. went into effect. Major General Ira Eaker takes command of 8th Bomber Command. December.

1944—Largest bomber mission to date—2,055 attack targets in the Ardennes, Battle of the Bulge. December 16-January 16.

Norwich England events around Veterans Day. Remembrance Sunday Nov. 9. (the Sunday over there before our Nov. 11 Veterans Day). See: www.visitnorwich.co.uk/ for details.

2nd Air Division Trust Governor's meeting, Norwich, England Nov. 10.

January-March

1941—President Roosevelt signed the Lend-Lease Bill, providing war supplies to countries fighting the Axis. March 11.

1942—President Roosevelt calls for production of 60,000 planes in State of Union address. Jan 6.

1944—Big Week. Maximum effort missions, also known as 'Operation Argument,' to suppress German air superiority in preparation for the future land invasion. February 20-25.

1945—2nd Bomb Division becomes 2nd Air Division. Jan 1.

General 2025 activities

American Library Silver Wings Project: "The U.S. Army Air Forces in WWII Norfolk." In partnership with the Norwich UK Library Forum honoring the influence of the USAAF. The project will draw on the collections of the 2nd Air Division archive and will culminate in a ten-day exhibition and series of talks at the Forum, presented Friday September 12 to 21 September 2025 as part of Norfolk Heritage Open Days. Keep up to date with the project on: www.theforumnorwich.co.uk/festivals-projects/silverwings. If you have any project questions or queries, or stories you want to share, please email at: americanlibrary@norfolk.gov.uk.

American Library. Monthly web coffee. The Norwich U.K. Library hosts a regular web-based activity 'Coffee Afternoon' the second Saturday of every month on Zoom at 11 AM U.S. Eastern time [16:00 British time]. Hosted by library assistants Jane Appleton and Linda Sheppard; it is an opportunity for 2nd Air Division families and friends on both sides of the Atlantic to get together. Email for an invite at: americanlibrary@norfolk.gov.uk. Additional

library presentations can be found at: www.americanlibrary.uk.

93 BG Hardwick Museum opens for the season on the 3rd Sunday of each month from May through October. Info at: USAAF 93rd Bomb Group Museum, Station 104, Hardwick, Norfolk, UK.

Norfolk and Suffolk Aviation Museum.

Featuring artifacts from Bungay Airfield plus a lot more. Open Wednesdays, Saturdays and Sundays. Info at: <https://www.aviationmuseum.net/>.

448 BG Seething Control Tower Museum.

Home of the Seething Airfield Control Tower Museum opens the first Sunday of each month from May to October. Info at: <https://www.448bombgroup.co.uk>.

453rd Bombardment Group Museum & 8th AF Heritage Gallery, Old Bucken-

ham. Open all year Friday, Saturday and Sunday and by request other days. Contact: James Clarey, Museum Curator, Email: curator@453museum.com. Tel from US: 011 44 1366386119. Info at: www.453museum.com.

Mighty 8th Air Force Museum, Pooler GA, weekly webcasts. 'Target for Today' lecture series digging into the history of the Eighth Air Force. It broadcasts each Thursday at noon ET via 'Mighty 8th Video' or 'Mighty 8th Facebook.' More info at: www.mightyeighth.org.

National Museum of U.S. Air Force, Dayton OH. Plane Talks at museum—78th Anniversary of the Air Force, Sept. 18. Plane Talks programs occur throughout the year in conjunction with significant Air Force or military event. Info at: <https://www.nationalmuseum.af.mil/Upcoming/Events/>.

Military Aviation Museum, Virginia Beach VA, USA. Home to one of the world's largest collections of flying vintage military aircraft. Includes over 50 aircraft from World War I and II. The museum is also home to a rebuilt control tower from RAF Goxhill. Info at: <https://www.militaryaviationmuseum.org>.

Freedom Museum, Manassas Virginia. The museum has an exhibit on the WWII air war which contains the recently donated B-24 navigator compass. Open Thursdays (March 15-Jan 1) plus Friday, Saturday and Sundays. Info at: <https://www.freedommuseum.org/visit>.

Jimmy Stewart Museum. Indiana, Pennsylvania. The movie star and command pilot held many command positions in the 2nd Air Division reaching the rank of Colonel as chief of staff of the 2nd Combat Wing. In later years, he attained the rank of Brigadier General in the Air Force reserve. Jimmy's legacy is alive and well in Indiana and worth a visit to his quaint hometown. More info at: <https://jimmy.org/museum-events/>.

General Carl Spaatz National USAAF Museum, Boyertown Pennsylvania. Fly its B-17 simulator plus visit five other interactive displays of WWII base operations. In January 1944 after command of 15th Air Force in Italy, General Spaatz assumed command the U.S. Strategic Air Forces in Europe, which he headed throughout the pre-invasion period and the ensuing campaign which culminated with the defeat of Germany. He was later named the first Chief of Staff of the new U.S. Air Force in 1947. Museum Hours are Thursday through Sunday 10 AM to 4 PM. Info at: <https://www.spaatzmuseum.org/>.

2025 notable occasions

83rd anniversary of American forces arrival for European campaign.

80th anniversary of V-E Day

78th anniversary of United States Air Force.

28th anniversary of American Air Museum, Duxford UK.

Also, check the following websites for more information:

<https://www.americanlibrary.uk>.

<http://www.mightyeighth.org>.

<https://www.nationalmuseum.af.mil/Upcoming/Calendar/>.

www.8thafhs.org.

<https://www.abmc.gov/>.



Second Air Division Bomber/Fighter Units Contact Listings

Here is a list of our 2nd Air Division contacts for those who desire information about the units listed below. You will notice several 'unavailables' as we are still compiling this listing. Many of the units use their website as the contact address. We will print this in the *Herald* from time to time.

2nd Air Division Headquarters	Unavailable
44th Bomb Group	https://44thbombgroup.omeka.net/contact or Email: Maratruslow@gmail.com
93rd Bomb Group	https://www.93bg.com/
389th Bomb Group	https://389thbg.com/connect.html
392nd Bomb Group	Contact Us at the 392nd Bomb Group Memorial Association (b24.net)
445th Bomb Group	Mike Simpson. Email: 445th.bombgroup@gmail.com
446th Bomb Group	Harold Jansen. https://446thbombgroup.com Email: haroldjansen@gmail.com
448th Bomb Group	Via Seething Museum. Email: info@448bombgroup.co.uk
453rd Bomb Group	Jim Clarey (UK). Email: Curator@453museum.com
458th Bomb Group	CONTACT 458th Bombardment Group (H) (458bg.com)
466th Bomb Group	www.466thBGA.com (www.466thbga.com)
467th Bomb Group	467th Bombardment Group - Contributors (467bg.com)
489th Bomb Group	Marjorie Shiers (UK). Email: marjorieshiers@yahoo.co.uk
491st Bomb Group	Ric Parsonson (UK). Email: Researcher.492@gmail.com
492nd Bomb Group	Ric Parsonson (UK). Email: Researcher.492@gmail.com
65th Fighter Wing Headquarters	Unavailable
4th Fighter Group	http://www.4thfightergroupassociation.org/contact-us.html
56th Fighter Group	nigeljulian@hotmail.com (Webmaster) or jgmccamish@darientel.net or http://www.56thfightergroup.co.uk/
355th Fighter Group	Email: DavidCrow355thUK@gmail.com
361th Fighter Group	Unavailable
479th Fighter Group	Unavailable

OTHER RESEARCH SOURCES

Heritage League Website for links to Bomb Group Websites and past copies of *Heritage Herald* and 2nd Air Division Association newsletters. [History and Research – Heritage League of the Second Air Division](#)

American Library Norwich U.K., Memorial to 2nd Air Division, 8th Air Force, United States Army Air Forces, WWII. 2nd Air Division Digital Archive. More than 30,000 images of original photographs, letters, memoirs, and others. <https://www.americanlibrary.uk/article/1936/Archive-collections>

Norfolk U.K. Record Office. 2nd Air Division Archive at the Norfolk Record Office. [NRO's catalogue NROCAT](#). They have indexed and digitized online 30,000 2ndAD bomb & fighter group records. The Evelyn Cohen and Jordan Uttal Memorial Catalogue, the published catalogue (main reference MC 371) is available via:

<https://americanlibraryuk.wordpress.com/2011/11/18/launch-of-the-2nd-air-division-archive-catalogue/>.

American Air Museum. [Home | American Air Museum](#)

General info on visiting Airbases in UK. Mr. Colin Mann - **Email:** colinjmenn64@gmail.com

Heritage League of
the Second Air Division (USAAF)
Marybeth Dyer (458th BG)
6410 Valley Oak Plaza
Martinez, CA 94553

www.heritageleague.org/

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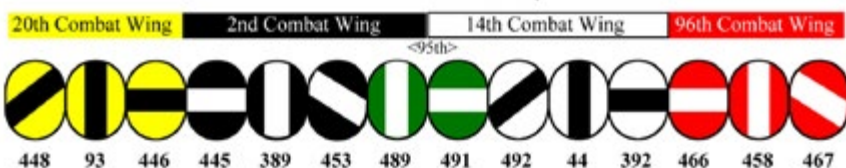
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