STUFF I SHALL NEVER FORGET
by Joe De Shay

As the men of the 364th Fighter Squadron of the 357th Fighter Group had just about completed their training in the U.S.A., the outfit moved to Ainsworth, Nebraska for a brief stay where we were fed better, issued new clothing and new tools in order to prepare us to ship out to a combat area to do our bit in World War II.

When it was time to move out for the Port of Debarkation, we boarded a troop train with old coaches and not the most comfortable wooden seats. Food was prepared in a railroad car similar to a mail car. Our G.I. portable kitchens were installed. Food was served in a single "chow line" by passing through the kitchen car. It seemed that as one meal was finished, the cooks had to begin the next.

The train trip was a long ride across the country to Albany, NY and then down along the Hudson River to Camp Shanks where we "sweat it out" until time to take another train on down to the dock where the big old Queen Mary was loading up with soldiers. On this long train ride to Camp Shanks I sat with #3 Propellor Man, Elmer Troxell. Since I was an Aircraft and Engine Mechanic, we became friends. Elmer was a little guy with blond curly hair. One who talked out of the "corner of his mouth" as we conversed. Elmer told me of his youth and that he was born and brought up wearing cowboy boots on his parents ranch in Oklahoma. As he was inducted into the service and went through his basic training, he told of suffering considerably when he had to set aside his cowboy high heel boots and change to the G.I. low heel shoes. The marching and close-order drill just about "killed him".

As we continued our train ride, Elmer showed me a picture of his one year old son who was a beautiful child. Said he had married the girl on the next ranch which was five miles away. Elmer was a good Propellor Man and eager to help on all hangar duty where we needed him most. He got along with everyone due to his fine personality.

Time passed. Perhaps a year or so. A change came over Elmer. He was a different guy. Since I had become his Hangar Chief, it became necessary for me to take Elmer aside and have a heart to heart talk with him. Perhaps I could be of help to him with his problem. Elmer revealed his problem. He had received a letter from his wife notifying him that she and his son were leaving him for she had found an older man who could provide her with more financial security. I felt most sorry for Elmer and from that day on, he understood my problems and I understood his. Things improved and we continued with our war effort.

After the war ended and we all went homeward, I lost track of Elmer. Our #1 Prop Man located Elmer in Illinois at the time our 1976 Roster was published. Elmer had never recovered from his "Dear John" letter. He died soon after at too young an age. As I recorded Elmer Troxell's name on the 357th Fighter Group Roll of Honor, there was no doubt in my mind that our war buddy Elmer was a victim of THE UNHEALED WOUNDS OF WAR.

January 27, 1997

Dear Joe;

I have been meaning to write to you concerning the photo in the October 1996 Newsletter concerning Captain Don Bochkay. So here goes! I was not an "original" 363/357th person, therefore not too familiar with Lt. this or Major that, but I did have respect for Captain Bochkay.

In 1944, a brand new P-51 arrived at the 363rd hangar. It had a large banner on the side, proclaiming this P-51 had been bought and paid for by a group of high school students from New Jersey. After the usual checks, inspections etc., a test pilot came to take it up for flight check. When he brought it back, he stated it was rough and needed additional work. Five test pilot flights later, the ship was still not approved for combat.

Apparently Capt. Bochkay heard of the situation and came by to get the full story. Stating that if we wanted to do so, we could remove the fuselage tank, install a passenger seat and the plane could be used for "other purposes". Well, it sat there for about 2 weeks and one morning, a very large wooden box was delivered. What was in the box? A rebuild engine to replace the new factory engine. A couple of days later, we changed the engine, made a ground power check and called for a test pilot. Results of the test flight -- no problem, OK!

It was about noon and as we were gathered around the plane, who should come by but Capt. Bochkay. He inquired of the ship's status and was pleased at our success. "Well, I'm going to take it up myself for a check flight. Who wants to come along?" Nobody moved! "How about you" he said, pointing a finger at me. I was surprised. Hell, he didn't even know me. I said "OK, if you are willing, so am I". We got fitted up with chutes, warmed up, got runway clearance and took off. It was great! He flew us up and over Great Yarmouth. I tapped him on the shoulder and motioned with my hand to roll the plane over on its back. He did. The blood did not rush to my head as I had heard.

After some other slow acrobatics, he put it into a power dive and leveled off at about 50 feet. We were doing 425 MPH and it felt great! When we returned to base, I didn't even feel the wheels touch the runway. He took a few others of the hangar crew up but I was first at something for the first time in my life.

Thanks,
Frank Hartig, 363rd Fighter Squadron

TONOPAH DIARY

7 April 1943 -- Assigned to Engineering Section of my squadron. THIS IS WHEN THE BOOK WORK ENDED AND THE PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE BEGAN! Went to work at once out on the open desert for no hangar. Just a half circle of 8 foot wooden wind breaks. All aircraft P-39 Airacobra Fighters. Pilots new to this FAST HOT THING. Lots for them to learn.

Worked 16 hours straight removing and replacing a broken nose wheel landing gear bracket. Aircraft a tricycle landing gear type.

8 April 1943 -- Worked 12 hours on second aircraft with broken nose wheel bracket. Pilots not use to the tri-cycle landing gear. Had to go on 4 hour guard duty at the operations shack and it was awful cold duty at night.

9 April 1943 -- Worked till 8:00 P.M. and then took a much needed shower and wrote to Ellen getting to bed rather late.

NOW THEY TELL US

On October 1, 1942, the ocean liner Queen Mary rammed and sank the British light cruiser Curacoa off the coast of Ireland? The Curacoa rendezvoused with the Queen about 30 miles northwest of Donegal and almost immediately began to act strangely, cutting so close to the liner that the U. S. troops, composed of the 29th Infantry Division, Air Corps personnel and Medical personnel, first assumed that the cruiser's helmsman was drunk or that the Royal Navy was showing off for American eyes. Actually, the Curacoa was engaged in a skirmish with a German U-Boat.

Unfortunately the cruiser crossed the Queen Mary's path. There was a dull thud and the giant liner sheered the Curacoa cleanly amidships. In accordance with her Admiralty orders, the Queen Mary continued on her way and later that afternoon slowed down for repairs to her bow.

The Curacoa sank immediately with the loss of 338 lives. The editor of this article was aboard the Mary when this incident occurred. Our Recon troop was assigned M.P. duty and the loudspeakers immediately began blaring for all M.P.'s to man the rails and keep all personnel away. I was therefore in a position to see half of the Curacoa, on the port side of the Mary, sink before it reached our stern.

For years the collision was denied by the Allied governments but well after the war, the information was released.

Borrowed from the Florida Chapter, 8th A.F.H.S. N/L
Editor Nelson A. Hillock Jr.

A CO-PILOTS REVELATION

Richard A. Peterson, the 364th Fighter Squadron pilot who flew C5-T "Hurry Home Honey" had as his Crew Chief Earl "Kelly" Lloyd. Their P-51 aircraft was kept at an open hardstand within "D" ground flight and fairly close to the operations shack.

Back home in Minneapolis, Peterson was known as "Bud" but that was changed to "Pete" during the military days. In a recent Christmas letter, "Pete's" Co-pilot Elaine revealed an interesting story. During those days of combat missions out of our English airbase, "Pete" wrote letters home to his father relating his activities as much as he could being under censorship. In those letters, "Pete" praised his Crew Chief "Kelly" to his father saying his aircraft was being well cared for by his aircraft crew.

As a result, the Senior Peterson wrote to "Kelly" Lloyd numerous times at the Leiston airbase and thanked "Kelly" for caring for his sons aircraft so well. Senior Peterson and "Kelly" having become good friends by this time, continued to exchange correspondence even after the war ended. Elaine said that "Pete's" father always felt that the good care "Kelly" Lloyd gave to his son's fighter aircraft had a big bearing on his son being able to return home safely from World War II. We added "Kelly's" name to our Roll of Honor as of May 1992.

RESCUE OVER THE CHANNEL

by Richard A. Peterson

The mission on May 30 1944 was to Leipzig. The group had a good day of 14 victories, according to the records, with no losses except Bob Foy into the Channel. I was shut out, but the 362nd Squadron came up with 8; 363rd got five (Obee O'Brien got two); and my squadron got one shared between Johnny Howell and Bob Shaw.

After chasing a FW-190 that I lost in the clouds, I ended up on the deck on the outskirts of Leipzig. After shooting up locomotives, I climbed back up to about 10,000 feet and headed home. I was alone since my wingman lost track of me in the chase after the '190 and was looking for trouble while heading home parallel with the bomber stream. I was almost to the Zuider Zee when I heard O'Brien call, "Pete, where are you?" I told him my position, generally, and he asked me if I could pick up Foy who had a runaway prop. I called Foy and asked his position. He



Capt. Richard A. "Bud" Peterson stands beside his P-51D, "Hurry Home Honey", in 1944. (USAAF photo)

responded that he was near Leipzig at 11,000 feet with a prop stuck in low pitch. Though I was low on fuel, I headed back to find him.

I spotted this lonesome looking single aircraft barely cruising along at about 1000 mph with a red and yellow checkerboard nose. It was Foy. He appreciated the company as we exchanged greetings, but what he didn't know was that the side of his aircraft was covered with black oil -- obviously from a leaking prop seal. Foy had no prop control and he was stuck with the prop in low pitch. I didn't comment on the fact that he was losing engine oil because I wanted him to relax and stay with the plane at least until the Channel. I kept reassuring him that we would make it home. He said that he was not about to go into the Channel since he had already been there once before. I coaxed him to hang in there and we would make it home as we cruised about four or five miles away and parallel with the bomber stream.

While keeping an eye open for any enemy aircraft, I spotted a formation of four Me-109s that cruised toward the bomber stream and just below us about 1,000 feet. Gawdalmighty, I was so tempted to go after them, but Foy was too vulnerable. I rolled over as if to split-S after them; they scattered like a covey of quail and I completed my roll back to Foy. The day was bright and clear and we were able to stay north of the major flak-trap cities like Hanover.

As we approached the Zuider Zee, I had been giving Foy geography lessons along our trip, so in case he had to bail, he would at least have some idea of some key landmarks. Foy did not have a map accessible to him for some reason. I had a panic thought, which I quickly dismissed, what if Foy had to bail and he ended up in the Zuider Zee -- cold water and still in enemy territory? We crossed out of Holland and over the Channel. I reminded Foy to switch his radio to B channel so we both could be on Air/Sea Rescue. I radioed for a fix so we could be followed something to the effect, "MAYDAY, MAYDAY, MAYDAY -- Green house 30 here with a crippled aircraft." Air Sea Rescue came back loud and clear, "Roger, we have you and we're on our way". You cannot imagine how great a relief it was to hear that reassuring English feminine voice.

Shortly, Foy radioed that it was starting to get hot in the cockpit -- and I tried to reassure him that it looked like he was in good shape. He said, "To hell with this, I smell smoke and I'm getting out." We were at about 10,000 feet and Foy pulled the canopy, rolled the P-51 over and dropped out of it like he had done it before -- which, of course, he had. Halfway down to the water, Foy's plane caught fire and blew!!

Foy's chute popped open and I buzzed him -- so close that I almost dumped his chute. He was frantically trying to light a cigarette before he hit the water and his cigarettes would be wet. He got into his dinghy in record time and I buzzed him and pulled straight up so Air/Sea Rescue could possibly see his location. I could see a launch making waves in our direction and Air/Sea Rescue acknowledged seeing our position. Foy would be picked up in about another 15 or 20 minutes.

I was at about 8,000 to 10,000 feet and headed home. I checked my fuel and found that my gauges all showed empty as I headed down hill with a prop at high pitch and a leaned mixture -- thinking that it would be just my luck to end up in the Channel with Foy. Fortunately, with our base located on the Channel coast, I could now see Lelston and headed straight in for Runway 24. As I landed, my engine cut out and I couldn't taxi to my hardstand. I was out of fuel!!

I took a deep breath and headed for a tall, cool one at the Club. Another day, another dollar.

Nosed up on the runway at England

Early Model "B" aircraft.

Propeller gone.

Engine internally damaged.

Pilot Embarrassed.

Cletrac machine with it's boom, cable and winch to the rescue.

A Winter scene for heavy clothing and side curtains on the cletrac.

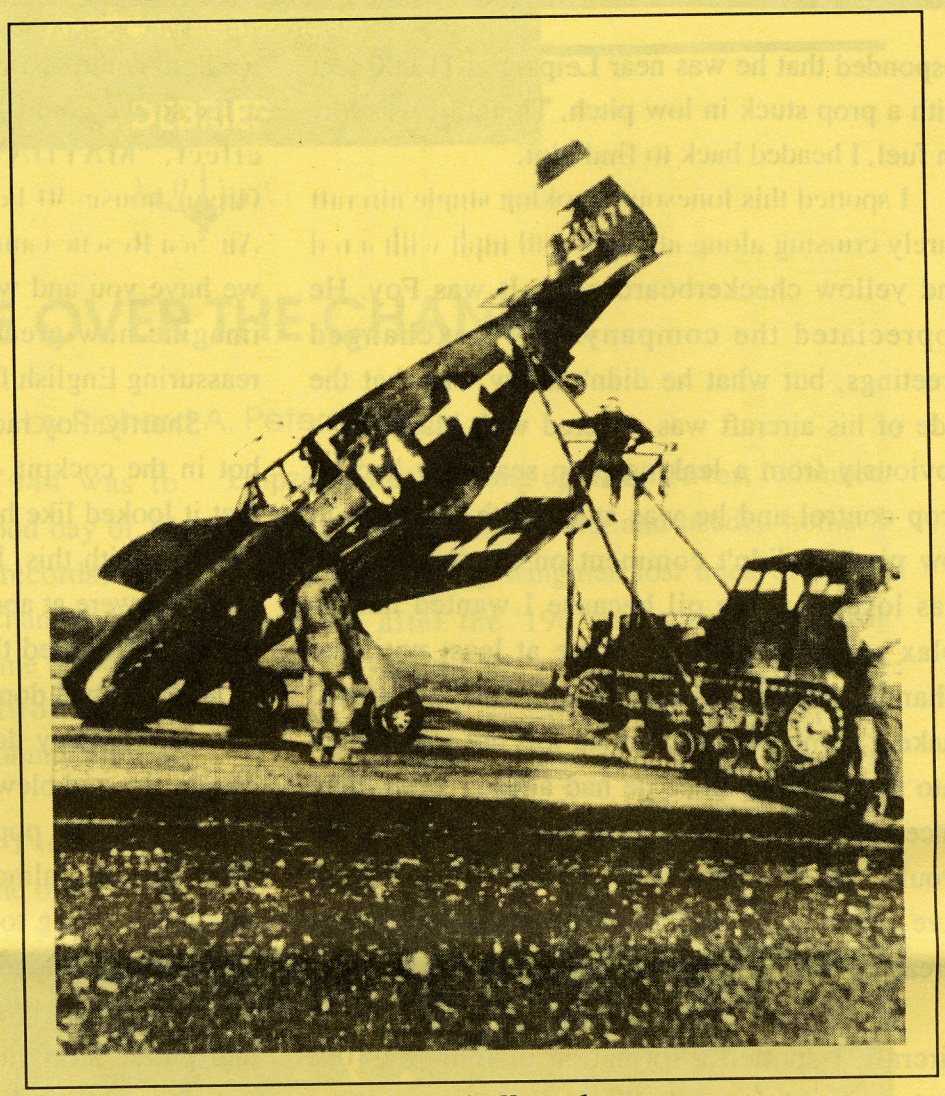
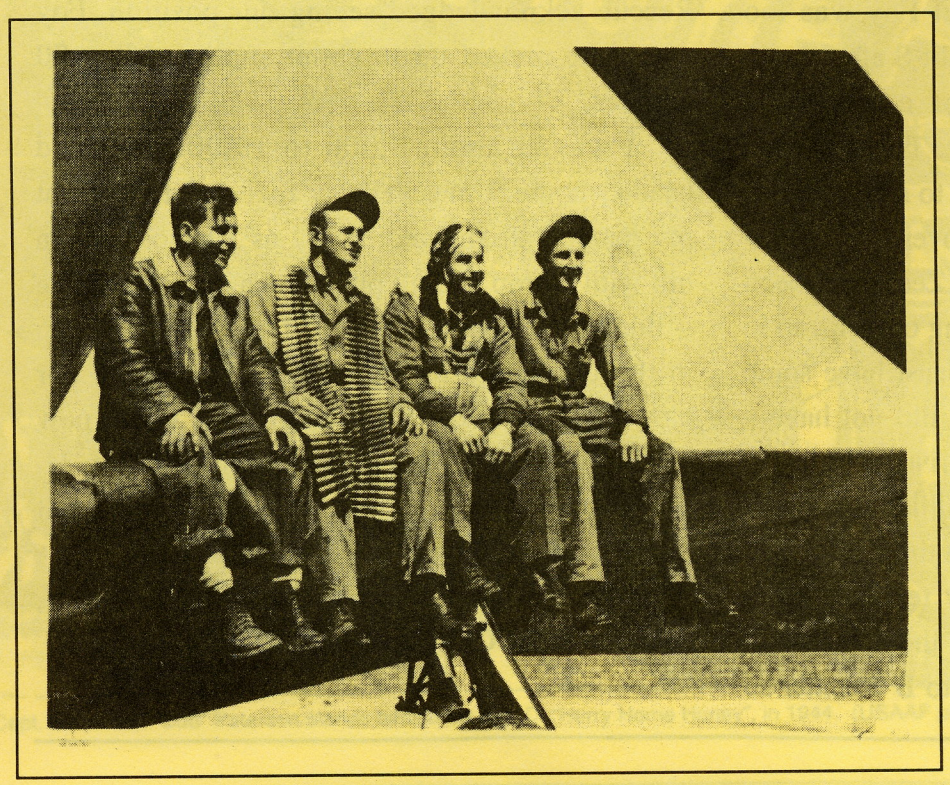


Photo--Paul Henslee



crew of C5-N

Asst. crew chief:
Gene Barsalou

Armorer:
Harry Anderson

Pilot:
Tommy Hayes

Crew Chief:
Bob Krull

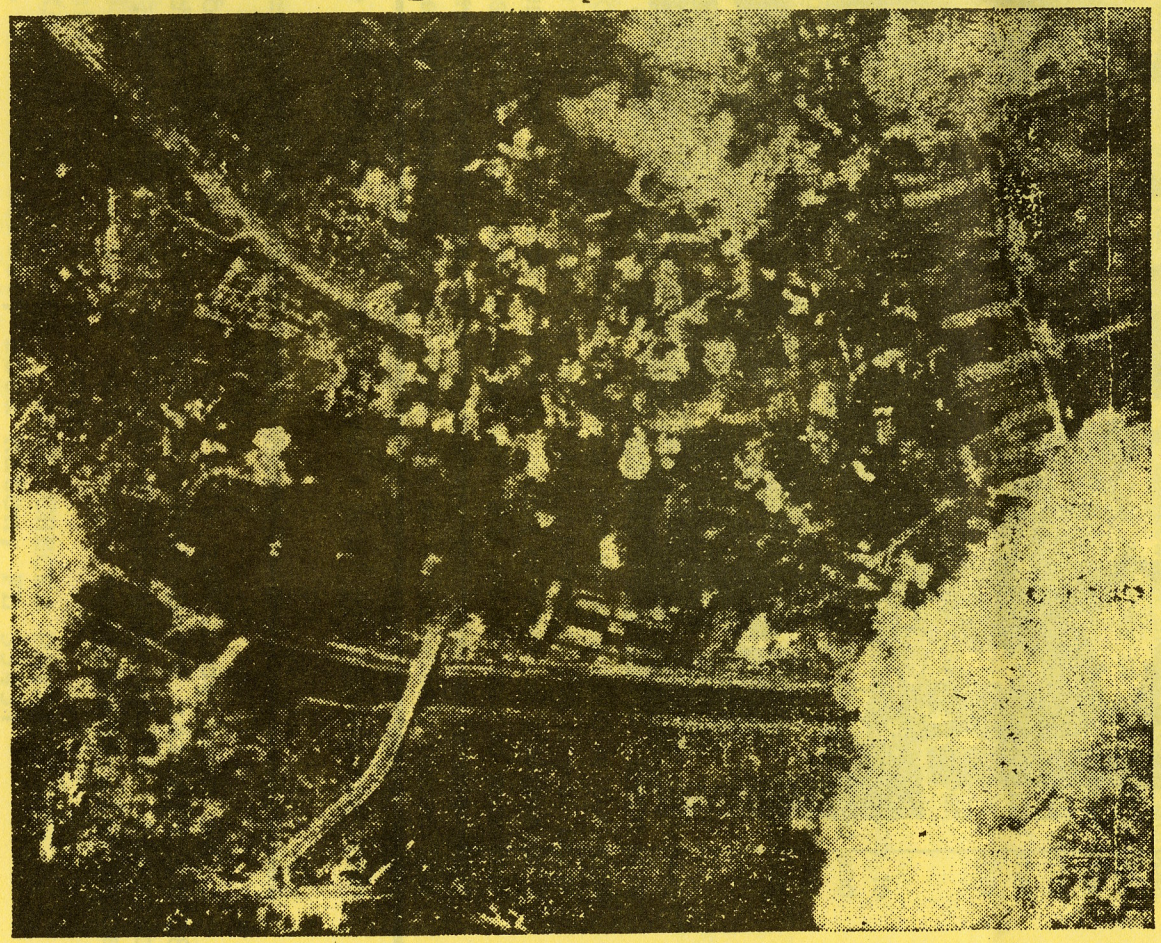
1D THE STARS AND STRIPES 1D

Daily Newspaper of U.S. Armed Forces in the European Theater of Operations

Vol. 4 No. 109 New York, N.Y.—London, England Thursday, March 9, 1944

Heavies Rain 360,000 Bombs on Berlin

U.S. Bombs Strike a Berlin Factory District



Did the American bombs hit their mark in Berlin? This photograph, taken during the Monday raid, gives the answer. The bomb bursts shown are right in the midst of one of the German capital's important factory districts.

Over 850 Forts, Libs Set Capital Aflame In Great Fire Raid

Smoke Visible 100 Miles After Second Major Day Attack; Fierce Air Battles Deepen Gash in the Luftwaffe

Berlin got its second major daylight bombing yesterday. A force of American Flying Fortresses and Liberators estimated at more than 850 strong dropped more than 350,000 incendiary bombs and 10,000 high-explosive bombs on the German capital, and returning airmen said the smoke billowing from the burning ruins could be seen 100 miles away.

Thirty-eight American bombers and 16 fighters were lost in the operations according to an announcement from U.S. Strategic Air Forces headquarter just before midnight. U.S. fighters claimed 83 enemy aircraft destroyed; bombers crews' claims have not tabu'ated.

The attack, third by American forces on Berlin in four days, was probably the biggest daylight incendiary raid in history, far surpassing the German attempt to set London afire on Sept. 15, 1940, at the start of the London blitz.

A preliminary report from headquarters shortly before midnight said that the ball bearing plant at Erkner, 15 miles southeast of the heart of the city, was heavily hit and that "other targets in the area also were bombed successfully."

The Erkner plant produces half the minimum requirements in ball bearings needed by the Luftwaffe. It is second in importance only to Schweinfurt and Stuttgart, both heavily damaged by the USSTAF and RAF.

Furious air battles, possibly matching those of the Monday raid on the capital, raged across Germany from the time the bombers passed Hanover, 150 miles from the capital, shortly after noon until they emerged on the homeward flight.

Mustang pilots returning early in the afternoon said that Berlin's defenses were just as fierce and determined as in the first major assault on the city. The Monday operation cost the American forces 68 bombers and 11 fighters and the Luftwaffe 176 fighters, according to official figures at U.S. headquarters.

LEISTON CONSTABLES AND 1260th M.P. COMPANY

Front Row:
1. Robert Callahan
2.
3. Glenn Pelton, Capt.
4.
5. Paul Kempter
6.
7. James Staton

Back Row:
1.
2. Melvin Simmons
3. Walter Feret
4.
5. Lester Whitmore
6.
7. Alfred Smith
8. Ralph Winder
9.

Leiston Longshop Museum Photo
from Frank Aldridge

Identification Tony Stirpe



A MESSAGE FROM YOUR EDITORS CO-PILOT

We need your War Stories! We have completed 55 Newsletters for the 357th Fighter Group Association and are getting to the bottom of our barrel! HELP! Men from the 362nd, 363rd and Supporting Units must have some Tall Tales.

OOPS!--MISTAKEN IDENTITY

From Don Kocher, 364th Sqdn. pilot

On one of our missions at the time of the Battle of the Bulge, we and most of the entire 8th Air Force met such a high head wind on our return, that most of us were forced to look for emergency refueling. Some pilots had left the squadron when I decided I had better refuel too. I called my flight leader for permission which was granted and I was joined by two pilots of the 364th, Lt. George Kouris and Lt. David Williams. We were vectored to an emergency field which turned out to be an RAF base at Antwerp, Belgium. We were well received and refueled without question, But, they would not clear us to leave for home. They had word of very bad weather between Antwerp and Leiston and insisted we wait till morning to try for home. They put us up in a hotel in downtown Antwerp which was fine except for the incoming V-2 rockets at the rate of 6 to 8 a minute. The Germans were trying to knock out the port of Antwerp and cut off the supplies for the Allied Armies. Those rockets were falling all over the place with some even hitting the port now and then. We were in a very nice room on the 8th floor, felt like it was right in the line of fire.

We went exploring in the city and found a bar in a cellar where the action seemed to be. There were lots of young people there and plenty of beer which we proceeded to sample. When the bartender found out we were pilots and had been flying that day, he couldn't understand how two german aircraft had bombed the city while we were in the air. We didn't exactly speak the same language and couldn't make him see that there is a lot of room in the sky over Europe. While in the bar, several rockets had landed and sent clouds of dust and bits of plaster from the ceiling down on us. We looked around but the only reaction from the natives was to cover their glasses and pay no attention to the explosions. From there, we went on a little farther and came upon a theater with the side blown off and the balcony hanging at an angle. We were told that some people in that balcony had been killed by the concussion and only some removed. With that we went back to our hotel and retired for the night, sleeping well as far as I can remember.

The next morning we were given breakfast in the hotel and taken back to the air field only to find ground fog preventing any flying for a while. There was an ME 109 parked on the field and we were on the wings looking at it when the earth suddenly erupted a few hundred feet from us. The crater was some 30 feet in diameter and 20 deep at least, I have a small chunk of the rocket still.

Finally The visibility cleared enough for the control tower to clear us to leave. The others elected me to lead home and at the edge of the runway I was checking the mags and glanced at a small building on the other side of the air field when the building went up in a cloud of dust and pieces. That made my engine run just fine and with no further ado, I turned on the runway under full throtle and both my friends were close behind. After a couple of hours on instruments, I called Earlduke for landing instructions. Capt. Boty answered with "Boy are we glad to hear your voice Welcome back" and gave the proper instructions for landing. This made me wonder what was going on because no one had greeted me on my return quite so enthusiastically before. That night when I met Capt. Boty at the Club, he told me that he thought I was Col. Dregne, that I sounded just like him on the radio and he hadn't returned yet. I never got that welcome again either.

FOR SALE AT THE DE SHAY PX

White Caps - 357th Fighter Group Logo - $12.50 each
(Price increase due to cap cost, packaging and postage)
Emblems ---- 362nd, 363rd, 364th - $4.00 each (Grp. emblems sold out)
Lapel Pins - 357th Fighter Group - $4.00 each
ALL PRICES INCLUDE PACKAGING AND POSTAGE. MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO:
Joe De Shay, 465 N. E. 34th Street, Boca Raton, FL 33431

18 May 1945 -- G. I. Orders for the first group of enlisted men of the 357th F.G. to depart from Leiston Airbase for home to be discharged from the service using the point system.

RESTRICTED

HEADQUARTERS AAF STATION F-
APO 559
18 May 1945

SPECIAL ORDERS
NO 137

EXTRACT

1. Fol EM are trfd in gr & WP fr orgn indicated to CP, 70th Reinforcement Depot (AAF), EDCMR - 19 May 45. EM will report to CO at AAF Sta 594 not later t 18 May 45 to await T to Z of I for separation from the service. FD will reimburs EM for subs & qrs while traveling on dy in the UK only where govt billets & messi facilities are not available in accordance w/Cir 63, European TO USA, '44, as ame EM will have clothing and equipment as listed in Sec II, WD Cir 72, 1945, before departure. All baggage will accompany EM upon c of sta. USSTAF Reg #80-10, 1945, amended, will be complied with. S/R, allied papers and check list required by USSTA Reg #80-10, 1945 will accompany EM. WD AGO Forms 24, 20, 32, 33 & 81 will be completely posted and accompany EM. WD AGC Form 163 will be completed prior to shipmen Unit Commanders will insure that each EM has at least two (2) cys of this order immediately available upon arrival at new sta. TDN. TCNT. 60-136 P 431-02 A 212/504

NAME	GRADE	ASN	MOS	ORGN
Dean E. Jump	M Sgt	6990279	542	Hq 357th Ftr Gp
Vincent (NMI) Marcello	S Sgt	6949864	750	do
John (NMI) Krymski	M Sgt	6949874	750	362nd Ftr Sq
Lewis M. Moye	T Sgt	6973680	750	do
Luigi (NMI) Volpe	S Sgt	6977211	824	do
Labon C. Donahue	Sgt	7001916	060	do
Samuel W. Miller (IC)	M Sgt	6978417	750	363rd Ftr Sq
Frank A. Waseca	M Sgt	6587266	747	do
Max (NMI) Eldredge	T Sgt	6554640	911	do
Robert W. Lewis Jr	T Sgt	6956839	502	do
Andrew D. Wyatt	T Sgt	6956550	750	do
Charles H. Hammel	S Sgt	32159310	014	do
James J. Jennings	Cpl	7004878	911	do
Harry (NMI) Mann	T Sgt	12006174	750	364th Ftr Sq
Carl (NMI) Drechsler	T Sgt	6934744	555	do
Harry L. Hafner	Sgt	6993938	060	do

AUTH: TWX Eighth AF D-67224, 16 May 45; TWX 3 AD M862C, 17 May 45; Cir 113, Europea TO USA, 22 Nov 44.

* * *

BY ORDER OF COLONEL DREGNE:

OFFICIAL:

David I. Kramer

DAVID I. KRAMER
Major, Air Corps
Adjutant

DAVID I. KRAMER
Major, Air Corps
Adjutant

RESTRICTED

BETTER LATE THAN NEVER

When the men of the 357th Fighter Group returned from the "Shuttle Mission" to Russia and Italy, the thirty-five ground personel were very promptly awarded the Air Medal for their participation in the mission. Being transported in the B-17 Bomber aircraft for them was no "milk run". Two men had not returned. M/Sgt. George Metcalf and Crew Chief S/Sgt. Richard Eagan had not been accounted for.

Several days later, Dick Eagan checked in at the 364th F.S. Orderly Room. The B-17 which was providing transportation for he and Metcalf had been delayed in departing from Russia. After heading for Italy, the B-17 developed engine problems and they landed at Cairo, Egypt being delayed several days for an engine change. Eventually the B-17 of the 95th Bombardment Group returned to it's base at Horham about 25 miles NW of Leiston. Eagan hitch-hiked on to Leiston.

Fifty two years later and this past August, Eagan decided to try to claim his right to an Air Medal. With the help of Col. C.E. Anderson, M/Sgt Olmsted, M/Sgt Ferguson, Bill Hood and Joe De Shay and Eagan's Congressman, he finally received his Air Medal. Also a full set of all the medals previously awarded. The letter accompanying the medals from Randolph Field authorized Eagan to have his medal presented to him by a dignitary of his choice. As a result, we have one very happy WW II Veteran of the 357th Fighter Group.

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Oswego, New York 13126

Forwarding and Address Correction Requested.

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