

THE TOWER

464th BOMB
GROUP

"NATIONS LIKE MEN, ARE NEVER SAFE, WHEN THEIR
CHIEF THOUGHT IS THEIR OWN SAFETY."

MERIT RECOGNIZED

Snowed under a deluge of awards ranging from the Legion of Merit through the Air Medal, Brigadier General George R. Acheson, CO of the 55th Wing and Colonel A. L. Schroeder developed severe cases of handsbaker's cramp at the recent field ceremony at the bottom of the hill.

Befitting the largest ceremony of its kind to take place at this base, the hardware dealt out by General Acheson and Colonel Schroeder went to nearly 250 men.

Among those from the 778th so honored was Master Sergeant Harold S. Rand, presented with The Legion of Merit. The highest decoration to be won by a member of this group and the Nation's fourth highest award, Rand's recognition resulted from outstanding performance of duty as a crew chief.

Staff Sergeant Cornell Faniro was awarded the Silver Star. The first enlisted man in his squadron to be so honored, the Nation's fifth highest award was for gallantry in action during a mission over Pardubice, Czechoslovakia.

In addition to the two "firsts", the following officers and enlisted men were presented with the Distinguished Flying Cross: Captain Sharon E. Waggoner, First Lieuts Rolf E. Haller, David R. Eppley and Tech Sgts. Ralph D. Madera, Clarence W. Eudaily and Staff Sgt. John T. Dempsey.

In the 777th Squadron, Silver Stars went to Tech Sgt. Ernest S. Monthey and Staff Sgt. Robert V. King. Engineer and top turret gunner respectively, Monthey and King played vital roles during the mission against the Florisdorf refineries on July 8th, the day the Group earned the Distinguished Unit citation. Separated from the formation after being hammered by flak, their bomber was attacked by fighters. Wounded but remaining at their posts, both men accounted for an enemy fighter apiece before being forced to parachute over the Yugoslavian coast.

Winners of the Distinguished Flying Cross included Captain Elton M. Stinson, First Lieut. Robert S. Plaisance, Tech Sgts. Roland T. Bunker, Merle Moxley; Staff Sgt. Charles Lightcap and Sgt. Seymour Lippmann.

Crew Chief James Stathem received the Bronze Star for expert maintenance over the long haul.

Turning to the 778th, a DFC was presented to Second Lieut. Edsel Bishop who brought his plane back from Vienna with the control surfaces shot away after his first pilot was critically wounded and two other men badly hurt.

Line Chief Master Sgt. Carl Sheck received the Bronze Star for particularly efficient work in the all over repair and maintenance of his squadron's planes. And Corporal James Armstrong received the Soldier's Medal for rushing to the aid of another soldier whose clothes were flaming from an explosion of gas.

The 779th came in for its share of medals when Lieut. Leroy B. Marsh headed a group of men who received the Soldier's medal for action on the night that Black Oboe blew up on her hardstand.

Those receiving medals besides Lieut. Marsh were: Sergeants Clarence Avenius, Ted and Herman Moldenhauer, Richard T. Shores, Earl Caldwell, Lester Hacker, William Spivey, Wayne Marienau and Harry Bruneau who added another ribbon to his copious collection. Bruneau, incidentally, is the only other member of the Group to have received the Legion of Merit. He received it for action on Guadalcanal. The Bronze Star went to Master Sergeant Lester W. Hallonen for his excellent work on "Shoo Shoo Baby" throughout her glorious combat career. DFC's went to pilots Lieutenant Harry F. Heineman and Lieutenant Kenneth Baruka. Heineman's navigator, Lieutenant Tom Prewitt, who finished his tour of duty last Tuesday over Vienna, also received the DFC.

The "standing room only" line of officers and enlisted men who received the Air Medal is too long to mention but Colonel Schroeder let it be known that these men are on their way in combat and wished them nothing but clean takeoffs and smooth landings.

A YEAR AGO

REMEMBER?

Staging area somewhere on the East coast — Steel helmets and gas masks — Practice marches with full field equipment — Final overseas physicals — Lifeboat drills — Tales of returning GI's passing through on the way home from "Overthere" — Passes home for a last few hours with the folks, for a lucky few — The feeling that here, at last was the beginning of the Great Adventure — This was it, final and certain, the culmination of all the months of waiting and training — Soon now, salt water, the heaving decks of a transport heading East through a heavy sea.

The Oxygen Check

There has been a great deal of confusion and a goodly amount of bickering lately concerning an old air-corps institution about which quite a tradition has arisen, namely "the oxygen check".

Because my experience has not been as broad as some I feel compelled to tell you that a large amount of my information has been garnered second-hand, as it were.

The points which we must discuss if we are to arrive at a sensible conclusion (or conclusions, if you prefer) about this business are several:

- 1 — Manner of conducting oxygen check
- 2 — Answers given, repartee
- 3 — Opinions expressed
- 4 — Why have oxygen checks at all?

As to the first, most oxygen checks are instigated by the pilot. Surprised? We know very well the bombardier has been assigned this task and why he doesn't perform it is too lengthy a discussion to go into here. I believe it has something to do with a bombardiers' union but that is just a guess. The pilot, having maneuvered the aircraft to a height at which the eyes of every member of the crew go out of focus and the skin of all has assumed a greenish pallor (not unlike the symptoms of anoxia) decides that it is high time everyone went on oxygen and being a not very original fellow screams simply, "oxygen check!"

Everyone is frightfully alarmed at his outburst and concludes that he must have given the order an hour ago and they just didn't hear him. The tail gunner, a sickly chap, is by now quite unconscious and so is unable to begin the check and the whole thing sort of fizzles out for lack of enthusiasm.

Point number two (answers given, repartee) is a ticklish one. About it has arisen the bulk of the controversy. We shall assume that the unconscious tail-gunner has been revived by this time (if he isn't, poor fellow!) and is no. 1 to check in. Now we come to the meat of this little discussion. First, should the tail-gunner give a simple uncolored reply such as "oxygen check, O.K." (a very common rejoinder) or shall he inject

THE TOWER

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HOWARD WALKER

into it a shred of personality? There are several schools of thought on this particular issue. Personally, I say to the devil with the simple reply as it shows a distressing lack of forethought and originality. Just how many non-original members do we have on this crew anyhow? We must be careful not to resort to the other extreme which goes something like this, "Tail-gunner, multi-bono" or some such rot. This type of answer shows the native influence and is not to be encouraged. If I might make a suggestion why not, "Tail turret, tip top, la da de da". This shows poetic possibilities and makes excellent listening for those crew members who are musically inclined. Repartee is frowned upon as it is bound to encourage laughter which at altitude can be extremely wasteful of oxygen.

We now come to the interesting thought as to whether or not opinions, varied or pertaining to the question at hand, be allowed free expression

while oxygen checks are in progress. Many feel that this sort of thing should not be tolerated. I for one am burned up to think that a spirit of intolerance, such as is clearly shown here, is being fostered among the men of our democratic army! Are we becoming peons? Mind you, I do not advise anything at all lengthy such as an opinion centered upon the state of the nation, etc., etc. However, I say, let us have more opinions! It is absurd to suggest that an enemy fighter may be closing with you at the instant an opinion is being expressed. I have never heard of anything so silly as that.

In closing we ask ourselves, "Why have oxygen checks at all?" A neat question and very timely. A quick reference to the opening passages of this essay will result in the discovery that the tail-gunner lapsed into unconsciousness just as the first oxygen check commenced. I ask you, does this not prove the futility of the thing? Let us consider for a moment. Had we allowed him to remain unconscious he would have been entirely unaware of those harrowing few minutes which constitute the bomb run, which seems to me an enviable state of mind to be in at that time. Why not dispense with the thing entirely?

TSgt James R. Doherty, 776th Sq.

Due to censorship regulations this paper may not be sent home.

ONE OUT OF 365

There used to be a friend of mine who liked to celebrate Wednesday, because he liked it better than Saturday night. That was his only reason, and it was good enough for me. This week I celebrated Tuesday.

Perhaps you wouldn't call my Tuesday a celebration. But I noticed lots of others doing the same things that I was enjoying. The day was one for living. It dawned bright and clear, almost windless. As the sun rose toward noon the temperature advanced as well until after lunch the thermometer showed seventy in the sun. Spring was in the air. One of my acquaintances began to quote poetry after dinner, a sure sign of the season of hearts and flowers.

Somewhat, the whole day felt good. I found myself basking in the sun, soaking it up hungrily, and I believe the old Earth was doing the same. It was a relief to see some of the mud puddles disappear, and the grass honestly looked greener for nine or ten hours of unadulterated sunshine. Looking out across the area I could see insects swarming in the noonday warmth, living their whole life cycle in a day.

I took a short walk for a couple of hours in the afternoon. Going across a ploughed field and kicking the clods ahead somehow felt good to me. I had the thought that were I back home it would be a day to putter around the yard, to see how the flower gardens had come through the winter. Had I been home I'd probably have ended up washing the windows.

A kind of nostalgia, a homesickness without the usual regrets, made me think of a lot of little things, of the smell of burning leaves which ends autumn and begins spring, of the kids back home hauling out a new ball and catchers mitt, of the fun my father would have poring over his fishing tackle on such a day. I could picture the lovely Saturday afternoon strolls my wife and I took in the spring of the year.

Yes, it was a good day for a celebration. Winter may not have been completely over, but the promise of Spring was in the air. It was a good day to be alive.

G. H. MERRIAM

Chaplain's Flimsy

As I walked past old Doc Russell's torture chamber this morning I saw he was calling the boys in for an inspection. Through the open door I could see him working away with his light and probe. Doc doesn't trust us to examine our own teeth. Last summer he found a rotten spot in one of mine and when I showed signs of doubt he proved it with the x-ray. How that man likes to grind out the rotten spots.

This morning as I walked on leaving Capt. Russell searching for cavities, I began thinking of what I might find if I could call the men in and use a light and probe on their inner life. I wonder if some who appear sound to the casual observer wouldn't have decay under the surface? If an x-ray revealed every deed of every day I wonder if a good many habits wouldn't have to be jerked out, down to the very roots? Many a man would likely have to have rotten spots chiseled out of his character and some metal hammered in. Others might require no more than a cleaning job which would remove the stain and corrosion of their past.

There is One who sees more clearly than any x-ray; One who is more searching than any dentist's probe. You can keep no secrets from Him, soldier; nor will He tolerate any rotteness. Some day He's going to call you in for a final check up. In preparation for that day you had better keep the inner—man in constant repair. You need teeth that are sound and clean for tomorrow, but you need to be sound and clean not only for tomorrow but for eternity.

Chaplain EASTWOOD

HOBNOBBING WITH HEADQUARTERS

What with these balmy days we've had this last week the old ball fever is beginning to spread through camp. Already Cozenzo is going to work on the boys trying to organize a Headquarters ball team. Let's hope the results are better than last year when very few of us had time (ambition might be more appropriate) to play ball.

Once again dear hunters have an open season in the Rome area. The first man to reap the benefits of this good fortune is Marantz. Of course he got plenty of tips from veterans who made the trip last summer. Randolph must have spent a half hour briefing him on the points of interest around the town. Randy's the man who should know too, believe me he is!

It's good to see you back Mr. Ebner. Did you find it hard to tear yourself away from the comforts of the hospital?

Natwick's at the 26th General now as you may have heard. His seems to be a rather baffling ailment but we do wish him the best of luck and a speedy recovery.

At long last! The much talked of group hospital is actually under construction. They've even gone so far as to transfer medics to Headquarters to run the place. You lucky pillpushers! There's no place like H—headquarters! Welcome to our peaceful fold.

Do you suppose Capt. Kieling knew what was brewing when he wrote his last week's article? Whether or no it sure rung the bell. No sooner does it go into circulation than up he comes with orders to the states. No doubt he'll really miss the old 464th and will be plenty eager to get back. We certainly don't begrudge you the trip captain but the least you could have done would've been to take us back with you.

H. WALKER

KRIEGSGEFANGENE

F/O David W. Crosby
 F/O Francis R. Mutton
 2nd Lt. Ralph B. Routon
 2nd Lt. John E. Fuhrman Jr.
 2nd Lt. Marlin S. Fuller
 S/Sgt Arthur E. Godbold
 S/Sgt Lured D. Jones
 S/Sgt Raymond Landman
 2nd Lt. Billy H. LaCoss
 2nd Lt. Luke McLaurine

NOTICE

Tuesday, February 27th, marks the festival of "PURIM". This holy day is in commemoration of the cruelties the Israelites were subjected to, due to the arch-traitor Haman. It is, however, a joyful holiday; one of feasting, song, and dance in honor of the good Queen Esther, who caused Haman's downfall and delivered her people. Services for this occasion will be held in our chapel on Monday night, February 26th. Men of the 465th are cordially invited. All wishing to attend a Passover Seder in one of the nearby towns will please attend Sabbath Services on Friday night, Febr. 23 at 7.00 P.M. in our chapel.

T Sgt. M.I. APSEL

A MISSION

PART II

We flew around o'er Italy, in skies of azure blue
 Each knowing 'bout the target, and thinking of getting thru.
 The R.O. checked his transmitter, the engineer his gas,
 The pilot flew serenely on-following the flying mass.
 The gunners to their turrets crawled, and waited to test their guns,
 For if enemy fighters should appear, the gunners would halt the Huns.
 The trip up to the goal was long, and cold, and drear,
 And often we'd check our equipment, and test for a frostbit ear.
 The Adriatic we flew past, and over the Udine too.
 The land looked dried and dusty, the water cold and blue.
 We crossed on over the Italian Alps, the Austrian Alps as well.
 We were now quite deep in Germany, and ready to give them Hell.
 The enemy's towns passed by below, the crew was alert for flak.
 The Bombardier prepared the bombs, for when they should leave the rack.
 We turned upon the I.P., The bomb run now had started.
 The target lay before us, and the bomb bay doors had parted.
 The moment was upon us. The time of action here.
 The Bombardier had pulled the switch, the bombs were in the clear.
 They fell down to the target, in their long, curved, graceful flight.
 Nothing their aim could alter, so the target felt their might.
 But while we did our duty, the enemy was busy too.
 His ack-ack guns were firing as they tried to get our crew.
 The flak burst all around us, it scared us I'll admit.
 For while it burst around us, several other ships got hit.
 The wings of one tore off completely, another burst in flame.
 A third went spiraling quickly down, the crew soon left the plane.
 Their parachutes showed quite plainly, against the billowing smoke.
 Their future lives in a prison camp were the subject for a joke.
 Our ship got hit quite badly too, one engine smoked a bit.
 We shut it off and flew on three, and soon we'd feathered it.
 We struggled homeward all alone, the formation couldn't wait.
 But home we flew and all intact, right past the Pearly Gate.
 Now we our vigil could relax and say a silent prayer.
 For God had carried us thru Hell, by a margin of a hair.
 We circled the field and prepared to land. The Engineer shot a flare.
 We glided down the landing strip, a bounce and we'd left the air.
 We taxied to the hard stand, and climbed out of the ship.
 And then we counted flak holes, while we all shot off our lip.
 We soon removed our combat clothes and climbed into a truck.
 It carried us on up the hill, to interrogate our luck.
 They questioned us on all we'd seen, and then they let us go.
 We ate some Red Cross doughnuts, and drank their coffee slow.
 The mission now was over, the tension was going fast.
 We then had a great bull session, and talked about the past.
 The war will soon be o'er, I hope, and then I will go home.
 I'll settle down quite peacefully, I guess, and never more will roam.

FINE E T O T/Sgt. H. A. PLAYER

THE 778th SPOTLIGHT

It's only two miles from the top of the Hill to the 778th Engineering Area but it took the American Red Cross Doughnut Girls six months to make the trip. Engineering, Armament, Ordinance and Communication personnel really enjoyed the visit of these girls and hope they will find their way down this way ere another four months pass. (Incidentally, the doughnuts and coffee were excellent.)—The Russians are five miles from Dresden and the Local Italians building the latrines are now five feet from Hell. We would advise you to use it only when sober. — Harmony, or could it be "John Barleycorn", reigned at the last Group Inspectors Meeting. To help you decide we offer you as evidence the solemn faced S.Sgt DeBoever who managed to stumble over the doorstep with a vacuous grin on his face and the remark, "How long has this been going on?" — After a bit of coaxing they finally managed to persuade Sgt Sylvester to wear shoes again. — Is it unrequited love that is driving M.Sgt Kleinschmidt to drink or is he merely keeping Cpl Carr company? — Wonder if Sgt Hack has a wooden leg because there is a dog on the line that thinks so. Ask him for the particulars. — The Engineering Section put out the "Welcome Home" sign for Sgt Cohen who just returned from a stay at the 4th Field Hospital. — The Squadron regrets losing Cpl Olson, known to most for the efficient way he handled the payroll, and who is returning to the States where the Army is making use of his accounting abilities. — Congratulations M.Sgt Sheck upon being awarded the Bronze Star. We can assure you that the entire Squadron joins us in saying, "Nice going Pappy they pinned the medal on the right guy this time." — Sgts Briggs, Johnson and Bailey as well as Pfc Dew are attempting to foster a Poker Association to insure a guarantee on their income. — Another Russian invasion takes place. Cpl Pawlak takes over the PX on the line. His terms too are unconditional. — The Stand By Inspection the other day presented a problem that we hadn't appreciated till that time. We refer to the present arrangement for handling Dry Cleaning for the Enlisted Men. Cleaning is turned in on alternate Thursdays to be returned within seven days but due to complications arising this period is usually lengthened to ten to fourteen days. A number of the boys were caught short last week at this inspection without a clean pair of trousers. —

This is your reporter combination of T/Sgt A. J. Orlek and S/Sgt W. J. Clarke saying CHEERIO till next week.

Movie Schedule

15th & 16th Feb. - "CASANOVA BROWN" - Gary Cooper & Teresa Wright
 17th & 18th Feb. - "TWO GIRLS AND A SAILOR" - Jimmy Durante & Gloria DeHaven - ALSO: "TAMPICO" - Edward G. Robinson
 19th & 20th Feb. - "BABES ON SWING STREET"

