



The Ragged Irregular

91st Bombardment Group (H) Newsletter

Vol. 13 No. 3

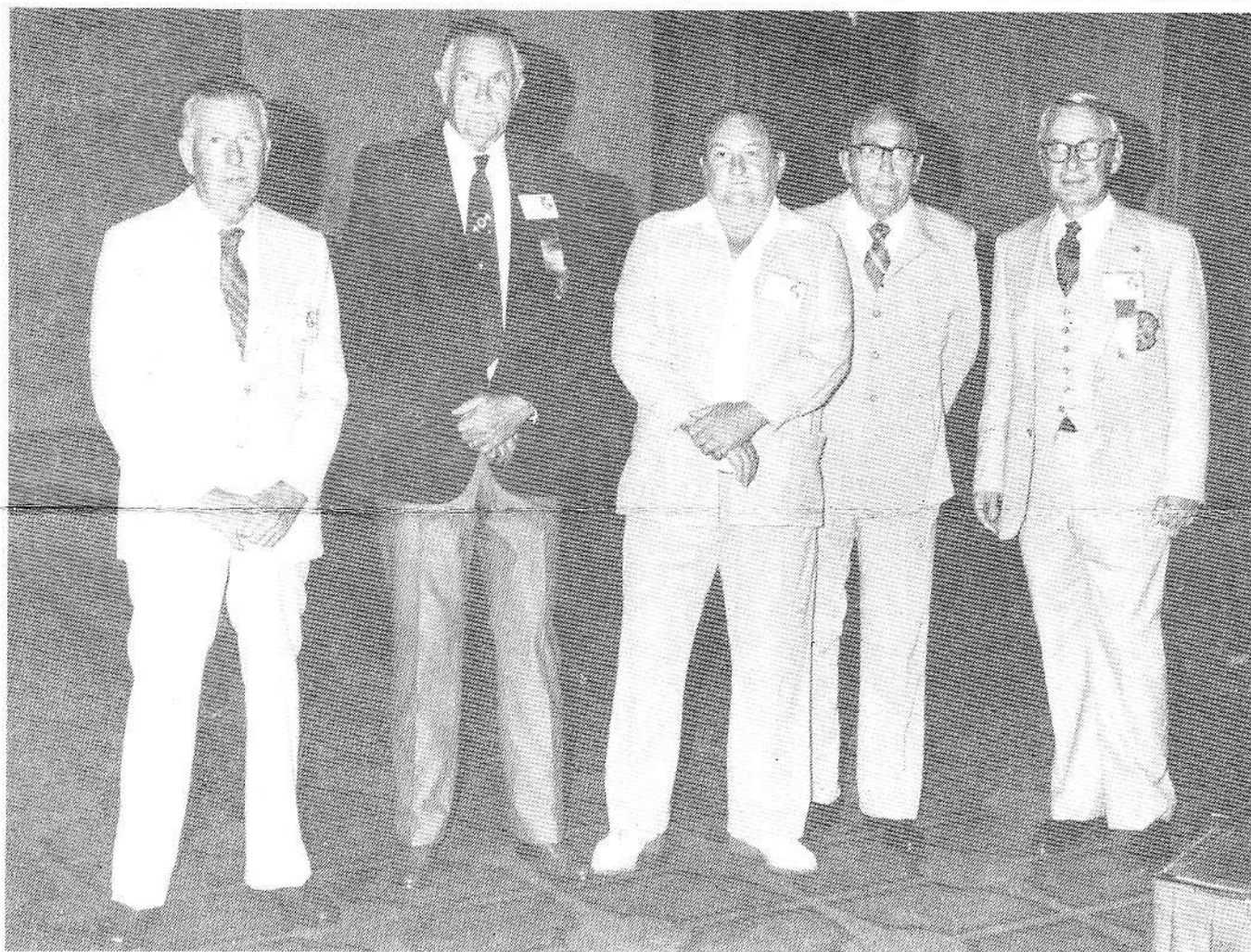
October, 1980

San Diego - Another Great Reunion!

San Diego proved to be a spectacular success as the site of the 91st's National Reunion September 2-7 -- Great sights, great weather, great food, and especially great fellowship! More than 230 members, wives and guests agreed that it was a never-to-be forgotten event.

Activities got under way with a Tuesday night cocktail party following registration. On Wednesday the group visited Sea World and enjoyed the many fine shows and exhibits available there.

On Thursday many took advantage of free shuttle buses from the Town and Country Hotel to visit San Diego's "Old Town" area to see the original buildings of the early Spanish town and to dine in the many fine Mexican restaurants there. In the evening the group enjoyed a cruise through the San Diego harbor area, with a view of the naval



Heading up Memorial Association for the next term are, l to r: Paul C. Burnett, editor-historian; George W. Parks, secretary-treasurer; Sam J. Cipolla, 2nd vice-president; Joe Frankie, Jr., 1st vice-president, Col. Tom Gunn, president.

installations and battle craft, topped by an on-board buffet so good it kept the guests coming back to the table time after time.

Friday was a free day for shopping, golf, etc., and many took advantage of a specially chartered tour to Tiajuana, Mexico, for sightseeing, shopping, and an excellent meal.

The Reunion business meeting was held on Saturday morning, with the election of officers and the consideration of the proposed changes in the current by-laws as presented by W.W. Hill being the principal items considered. The proposed changes in the by-laws were turned down by an approximate two-to-one vote in favor of continuing with the current by-laws.

Officers chosen to head the Memorial Association, which will now be operating for the first time as a one-unit organization instead of having Eastern and Western Divisions were: President, Col. Tom Gunn (Ret), Arlington, Texas; 1st Vice-President, Joe Frankie, Jr., Los Fresnos, Texas; 2nd Vice-President, Sam Cipolla, Chicago, IL.; Secretary-Treasurer, M/Sgt. George Parks (Ret), Vallejo, CA.; Editor-Historian, Paul C. Burnett, Auburn AL.

No action was taken as to the site of the 1982 Reunion, though Brownsville, Texas and Chicago were proposed by Joe Frankie and Sam Cipolla respectively. It was felt that additional input from members not present at the business meeting would help in choosing the most popular and convenient spot for the next get-together.

At the banquet Saturday night one highlight was the presentation of a radio show tape on "Shoo Shoo Baby" and the restoration project. The tape, presented by W.W. Hill, who is coordinator of the Shoo Shoo Baby project for the 91st, was prepared by Wesley Bell of the 512 MAW and won a Thomas Jefferson Award for excellence.

Three members were installed as Life Members at the Saturday night affair. They were Roy W. Van Dyke, 324th sqdn., Jefferson, IA.; Joe Frankie, Jr., 323rd sqdn., Los Fresnos, Texas, and Nicholas Bankovsky, 401st sqdn., Little Falls, N.J.

Two persons tied for coming the fatherest distance to attend and each was awarded the traditional pewter mug. They were Vincent J. Garofalo, New Rochelle, N.Y., and John Hamner, Baldwin, N.Y.

Charles Kirkham's crew was recognized for having the most members present - five. They were Kirkham, Emil DeQuardo, Lauri Kivimaki, Joe Frankie, and Cal Perkins.

Attending were: Joseph T. & Adelaide Ashby, Nicholas & Mary Bankovsky, Ike & Kathy Barreto, James O. & Betty Bedwell, Linda Bedwell, John R. & Jennie Bell, Oliver K. & Hazel Birch, Charles D. Booth, William F. & Eileen Borellis, Glenn & Lois Boyce, David & Marnee Bramble, Mary Brooks, Arnold W. & Charlis Brown, Kermit & Thelma Burman, Paul & Lorraine Burnett, Goldie Cahill, Walter R. & Jean Cameron, Richard & Val Capps, Hubert B. & Patsy Carpenter, George & Adeline Ceplecha, Chris H. & Luella Christiansen, Sam J. & Mary Cipolla, Robert H. & Bonnie Clapp, Clarence H. & Irene Cluck.

John C. & Gertrude Conway, Helen Clanton, Neil A. Daniels, Marion J. & Margie Darnell, Rollin L. & Vi Davis, Emil F. & Mary Ann DeQuardo, Frank G. Donofrio, Michael Donovan, Robert L. Dorcy, James E. & Evelyn Dumouchel, Aulden N. & Ramona Dunn, William L. & Alma Eblen, Quentin & Rena Ellis, Clayton F. & Frederica Ferree, Ann Ferstadt, James D. & Ruth Fletcher, Joe Frankie, Roy H. & Lois Fratz, Lawrence E. & Betty Gaddis.

Jack & Jan Gaffney, Vincent J. & Louise Garofalo, Elon M. & Bettie Gaston, Donald S. & Roberta Gauthier, Robert S. & Laura Gerald, Elmer Gettis, Joseph M. & Mary Jane Giambrone, Argo O. & Lillian Giese, Annalee V. Green, Edward C. & Vivian Greene, Tom Gunn, Lloyd & Mildred Guzek, Edward & Mary Haller, John D. & Catherine Hamner, Robert J. & Irene Hanson, Joe & Jenny Harlick, Jim & Cynthia Harris, Dikran Hazirjian, L. Lilly Henry, Gaylord Henryson, Whitmal W. & Jacquelyn Hill, Harry S. & Jane House, Harry E. Hovermill, Andrew & Rose Hrenkevich, Ed F. & Dorothy Jackman, Asay B. & Gloria Johnson, Raymond E. & Mimi Jones, Edward & Ruth Kaiserski, Edward & Ellen Kaminski, Frank S. & Anne Kamykowski, Charles M. & Dorothy Kirkham, Lauri E. & Kerttu Kivimaki.

Eugene & Dorothy Letalien, Paul J & Jeanie Limm, Vernie Limm, Howell B. & Irene Loper, Philip G. & Eppie Mack, Rocco J. & Frances Maiorca, Lita Mandes, Pete J. Markowski, John R. McCombs, Richard W. & Margaret McCoy, William J. & Audrey McCrea, William A. & Virginia McGavern, James H. & Virginia McPartlin, Harold N. & Mae Mitchamore, Luther H. Mitchell, John A. & Marjory Moeller, Virgil I. Mott, Oscar J. & Sybil Mouton,

Lauren H. & Dorothy Mummert, John J. & Martha Ondrovic, Rosie Ortega, Jack R. & Norma Paget, George W. & Marian Parks, Bruce V. & Arlene Parsons, Warren L. & Lukey Paschke, James Patton, Jack J. & Helen Paxson, Edward A. & Lenora Peacock, Patricia Peacock.

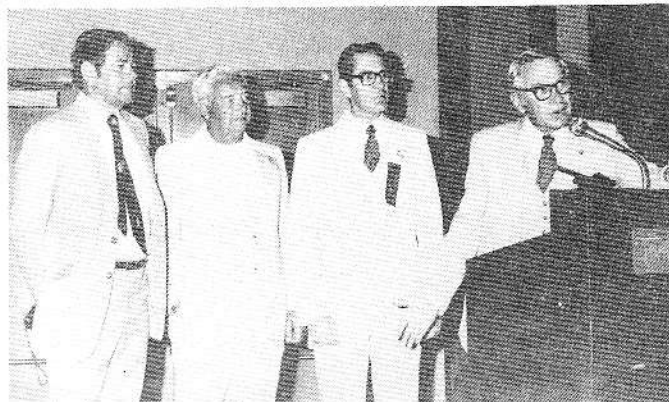
Aubin R. & Jacqueline Pene, Calvin J. Perkins, Clifford O. Pierce, Donita Potts, Robert J. & Alyce Powers, Raymond C. & Jean Ridings, Frank S. & Ruth Ripa, John R. & Ree Simonson, Lewis & Maldarine Simpson, Howard E. & Mary Sisk, Dorothy Sites, Donald R. Smith, William T. & Irene Smith, Herman Smith, Claire Smith, Robert C. & Anita Sponsel, Tony & Jackie Starcer, Erwin R. & Eunice Steele, Roy W. & Barbara Van Dyke, Susan Van Dyke, Emil J. & Mary Ann Viskocil, Jack M. & Ellen Webb, Howard F. & Beverly Weber, Herbert M. & Ilse Weinberger, Emmitt R. & Marian Wilson, Russell W. & Maureen Wilson, Wayne & Melva Wrightman, Chuch W. & Edna Yaroshak.



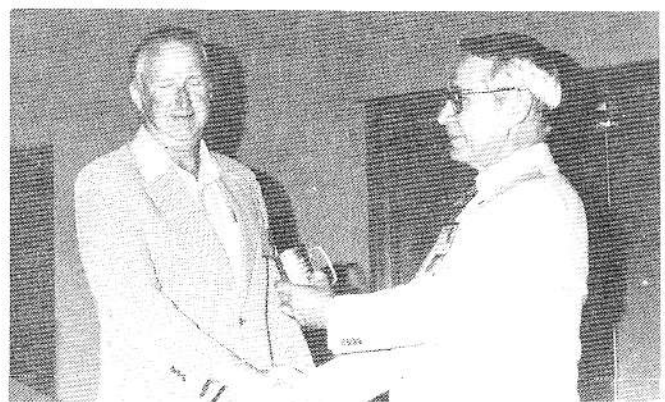
Life members installed at the Reunion were Roy Van Dyke, Joe Frankie, Jr. and Nicholas Bankovsky.



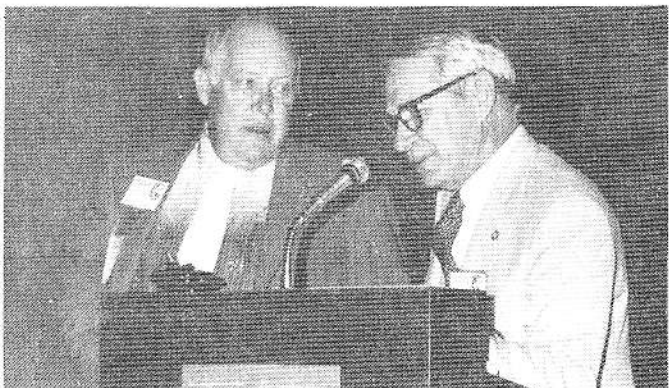
Getting a mug for coming the farthest distance is Vincent Garafalo, of New Rochelle, N.Y.



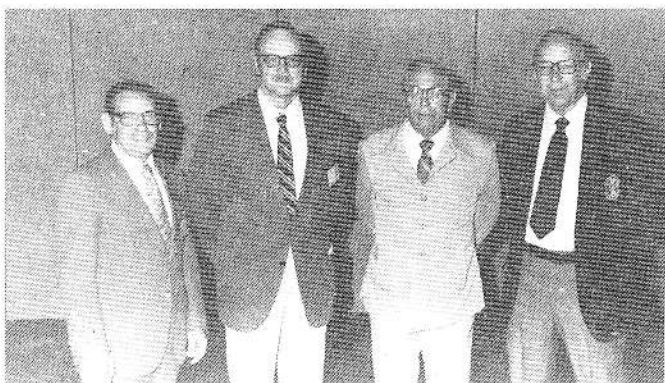
Outgoing officers W.W. Hill, John McCombs and Glenn Boyce are thanked for their service by Col. Tom Gunn.



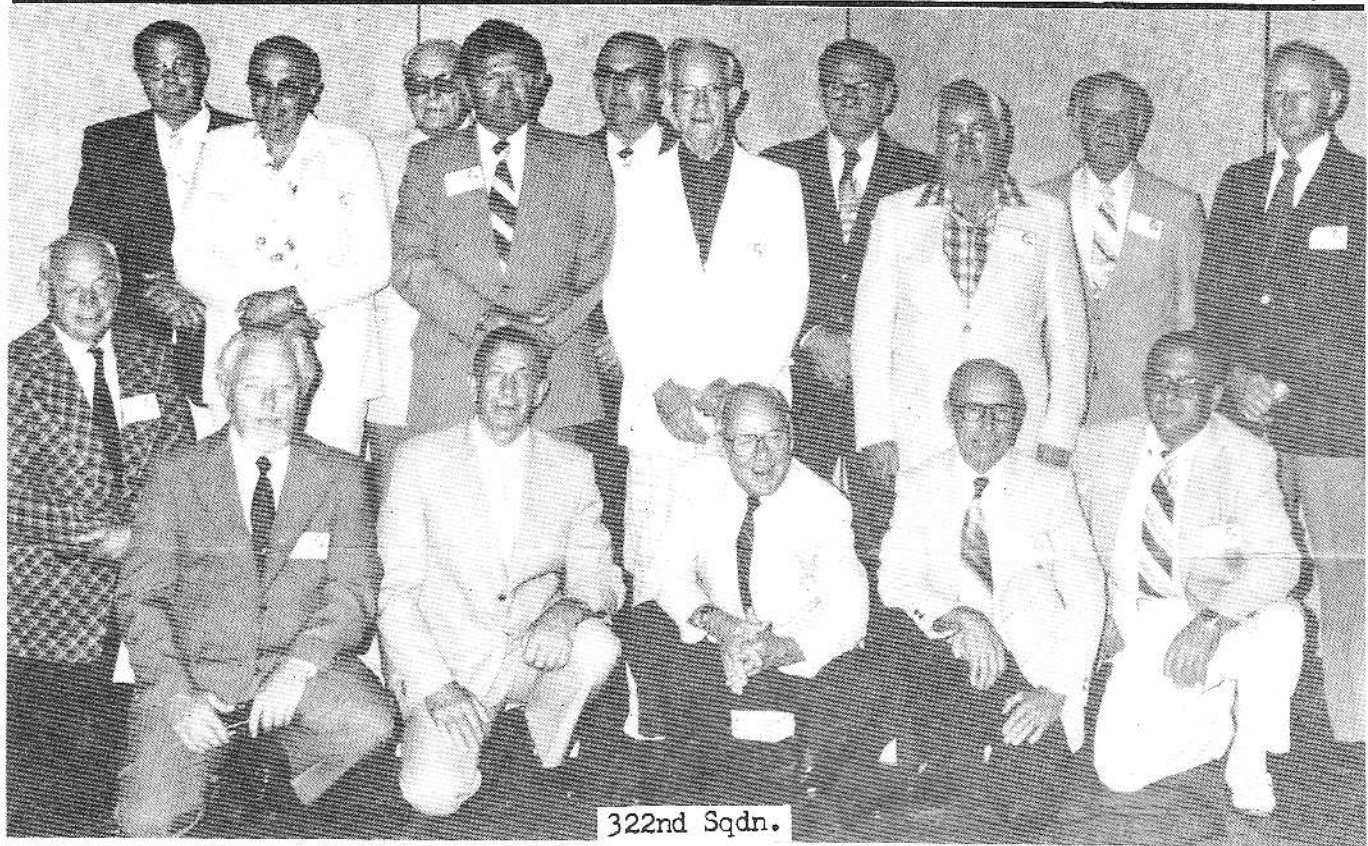
Also receiving a mug for coming the farthest distance is John Hamner, of Baldwin, N.Y.



Jack Paget, who headed up the Reunion, receives the thanks of the Group from Col. Tom Gunn.



The crew with the most members on hand were Emil DeQuardo, Lauri Kivimaki, Joe Frankie & Chuck Kirkham.



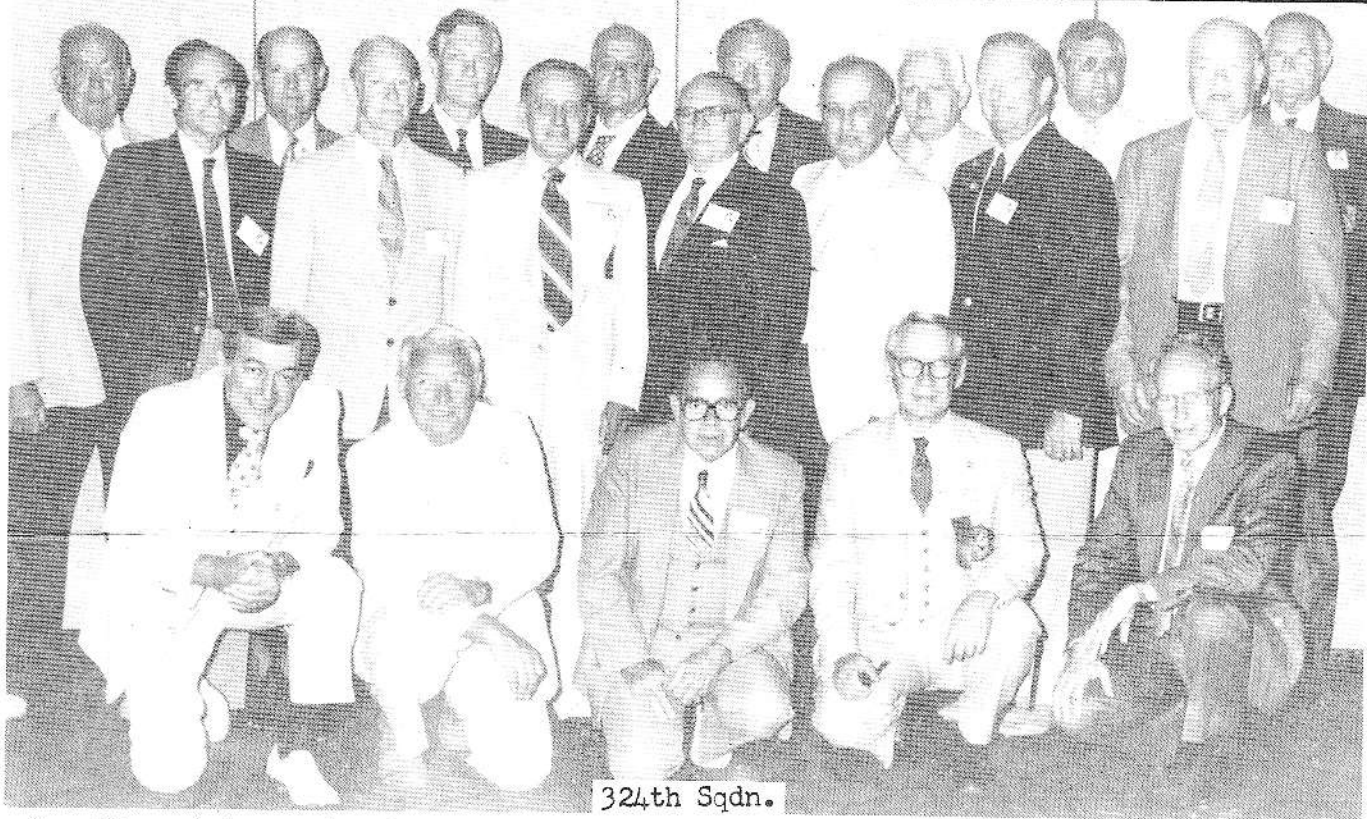
322nd Sqdn.

Kneeling, 1 to r: Ken Birch, John Moeller, Argo Geise, John McCrea, Jack Paxson, Oscar Mouton. Second row: Rudy Steele, Robert Sponsel, Howard Sisk, Luther Mitchell. Back row: Gaylord Henryson, Chris Christiansen, Arnold Brown, Bob Clapp, Frank Kamykowski, Bob Gerald.



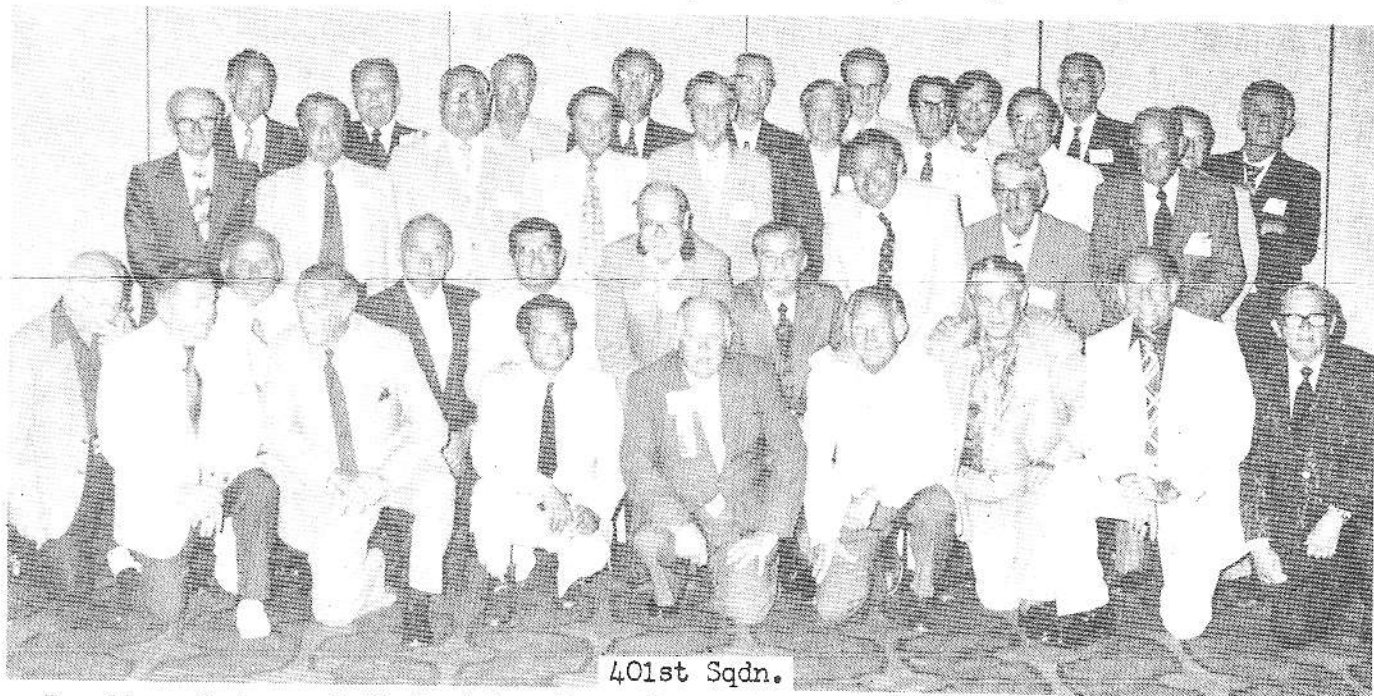
323rd Sqdn.

Kneeling, 1 to r: W.W. Hill, David Bramble, Quentin Ellis, Emmett Wilson, W.T. Smith, B.J. Kajewski, Clayton Ferree, Clarence Cluck, Sam Cipolla. Second row: Phil Mack, Ray Ridings, Harold Mitchimore, Ed Jackman, Aulden Dunn, Vincent Garafalo, Emil DeQuardo, Joe Frankie, John Bell. Back row: Chuck Kirkham, Richard McCoy, Lewis Simpson, Rollin Davis, Wayne Wrightsman, Howell Loper, James Dumouchel, Bill Eblin, Ed Greene, Henry Lilley, William McGavern.



324th Sqdn.

Kneeling, 1 to r: Joe Giambrone, John McCombs, Roy Van Dyke, Tom Gunn, Joe Harlick. Second row: Walt Cameron, Lauren Mummert, Elmer Gettis, Clarence Cluck, Herk Hazirjain, Bruce Parsons, Jack Webb. Back row: Andrew Hrenkevich, Hubert Carpenter, Russell Wilson, Robert Hanson, Warren Paschke, Lloyd Guzek, Ace Johnson, George Parks.



401st Sqdn.

Kneeling, 1 to r: Neil Daniels, James McPartlin, Paul Limm, Jack Paget, James Fletcher, Gene Letalien, Jack Gaffney, Howard Weber. Second row: Robert Powers, Emil Viskocil, Donald Smith, Raymond Jones, Virgil Mott, Frank Ripa, Nicholas Bankovsky, Rocco Maiorca, Edward Haller. Third row: John Conway, Herb Weinberg, Don Gauthier, Harry House, Kermit Burman, Clifford Pierce, Glenn Boyce, Roy Fratz, Joseph Ashby. Back row: John Ondrovic, Elmer Gaston, John Hamner, Michael Donovan, Harry Hovermill, Charles Booth, John Simonson, George Parks, Aubin Pene.



441st Sub Depot, Hdqs. Sqdn.

Kneeling, Charles Yaroshak, Frank Donofrio. Back row: James Bedwell, W.W. Hill, Tony Starcer, Goldie Cahill, Frank Kamykowski.

Royal Flush - IV - Free At Last!

Editor's Note: In the first three installments of the Royal Flush saga Maury Herman related the story of the shooting down of the aircraft over Germany, his attempt to escape to Belgium, and the capture of the crew. In the last issue he related his escape during a transfer from P.O.W. camp and the first days following his escape. In this final episode he tells of his successful escape back to U.S. forces.

Our third encounter with German soldiers occurred in another small town where all the buildings were located along the single road running through it. This road made a 90-degree bend part way through the town. We had turned the corner before we could see the road block and its two guards. They had seen us, so I told Charlie to just keep walking like nothing was wrong and to follow my lead. When we got to the barricade one of the guards asked to see our papers. I started to rave in a mixture of German and French that "I was sick and tired of being asked for my papers." Charlie, who spoke French quite well, got the gist of my ploy and he started to bawl out the guard also. In German, I explained to the guards that we were French Arbeit Kommandos (forced labor) who had been bombed out at our work camp, and who had been instructed to report to another work camp which happened to be down the road, on the other side of the barricade. (We had seen the name of this camp on a road sign just before coming into that town. I also told the guards that I demanded we be taken to their command post and issued new identification papers. To our surprise, one of the guards complied.

The Command Post was a bee-hive of activity. It was evident they were getting ready to pull out. The captain, who appeared to be in charge, said he had no time to fool around providing ID papers to French Arbeit Kommandos. There were stacks of bread and blocks of margarine near the door. We asked for some. They gave us each a loaf and a block of margarine. It pays to be bold!

The following night we asked for shelter at an isolated German farmhouse. The people were most hospitable, fed us a good meal, and put us up in the barn. The next morning they informed us they had heard on the radio that President Roosevelt had died. They asked us for a chit as evidence they had helped American POW's to escape. How they ever knew, we'll never know.

A few days later we arrived at another road block. But we saw this one in ample time. There was a railroad trestle across the stream and valley. We decided to wait until dark and cross over it. We were almost all of the way across when we were ordered, in German, to "Halt, who goes there?" We could not see our adversary, only gage his position by his voice. We made a run for it, to the end of the trestle and down the right-of-way embankment. The guard fired at us and began to shout. We ran, stumbled, fell, and ran some more in almost pitch black darkness. Once more, we had gotten away.

More people were on the roads now. Troops and convoys heading west, refugees heading east. We acquired a rake and a hoe and whenever we felt we might be suspicious we raked and hoed our way west field by field.

Charlie and I were heading for Neufeld, a pretty good sized town in Bavaria, when one of the numerous convoys passed us. As convoys do, this one started and stopped frequently as trucks tried to maintain their separation and avoid hitting pedestrians and on-coming traffic. A kindly German soldier in the back of one truck asked us if we wanted a ride. We accepted and hopped in. We made more miles that day than we had in a week previously. Our cover was still the same -- arbeit kommandos. We hopped off the truck when we got to the Arbeit Kommando in Neufeld. It had one German soldier in charge of the twenty-eight French POW's. They were all low-ranking EM. They knew immediately that neither Charlie nor I was French, but did not give us away. After the guard locked us in for the night and departed, we all introduced ourselves. I was the only officer. Charlie was the only non-com. We had a command!

We spent the first night in Neufeld getting an Intelligence briefing from our French hosts. We received a tour of the town from them during the next two days and an introduction to ardent anti-Nazis who wanted to help us liberate Neufeld. We formed our organization and made our plans. On our fourth day in Neufeld we could hear the cannon fire from the attacking American forces and the return fire of the retreating German forces. We observed the German garrison in Neufeld mining the bridges over the river circling the town and taking measures to withdraw. We counted and categorized their troops and equipment. Whenever the opportunity arose we removed the rotor from the distributor of their motorized vehicles. On the sixth day American shells began to fall on Neufeld. We (Americans, French, and many Germans) holed up in the cooling cellars of the local brewery. It was the only major building in the town that our cannoneers did not destroy. (If you have to be shelled, being in the midst of 12% beer, free for the taking, is not a bad palce to be!).

The next day the Germans began to withdraw. Our force: two Americans, twenty-eight Frenchmen and six anti-Nazi Germans (including the Police Chief) captured the German rear guard contingent without a casualty. We also disabled the mines under the bridges before they could be detonated. We were in command of Neufeld.

White flags and American flags began to appear and were flown from many windows in the buildings still standing. Where or when the people of Neufeld got their American flags I'll never know. When one of our scouts reported the appearance of an American armored patrol visible from his hilltop observation post I got on the rear seat of a motorcycle driven by the mayor, and sporting a white flag and an American flag lashed to the handlebars. We drove out of town to meet the armored patrol. It was comprised of one tank, two half-tracks and two jeeps equipped with 37 mm cannon.

When we reached hailing distance we were commanded to halt, dismount and state our business. I responded that I was Maury Herman, 2nd Lt. in the U.S. Army Air Force and that I wanted to talk to the officer in charge. The man in the tank turret said he was the ranking PFC, he was in charge. With some difficulty I was able to convince him this was no joke: I was really an American whose sole business at the moment was to surrender Neufeld to him. The convincer in my argument was my statement as to the condition of the brewery and the quality of its beer. That got the rest of the guys in his patrol on my side.

One of the jeeps drove me to the rear where I was turned over to the commander of the artillery battalion which had been shelling Neufeld. Col. Dawson, the C.O., thought enough of what I knew about German forces in the area to drive me back to Division Headquarters (86th Infantry Division, formerly National Guard from Southern California.) There, I was debriefed by Generals Pope and Milosky, the Division Commander and his Deputy, and their Intelligence Staff. On completion they asked what they could do for me? My response was: "See to it that I get back home as soon as possible." General Pope informed me that the fastest way to do that was to make my way as far to the rear (westward) as I could without letting anyone know that I was a RAMP (Recovered Allied Military Person). I informed the General that I knew where I could find an Opel sedan in Neufeld; could I requisition it? He in turn asked me if I knew how to use either the Luger or the P-38 stuck in my belt? I nodded affirmatively and the General said "In that case, Lieutenant, you can have any goddamned thing in this country you want."

My return to Neufeld was a triumphant one -- at the head of a United States Infantry Division! The date: 27 April 1945, twenty-three days after T/Sgt. Charlie Featherstone and I had escaped the POW march column; twenty-two months and five days after I had bailed out of the Royal Flush, a 91st Bomb Group B-17F.

EPILOG

Charlie Featherstone and I parted company in Neufeld. I never saw or heard from him again. I drove my Opel from Neufeld to Inglostadt, on the Danube, where I left it with the MP's directing traffic -- all one way, heading east, over the recently erected pontoon bridge. The next day I hitched a ride on a supply truck headed for the former German airfield at Roth. Our engineers had just completed filling the bomb craters in the runway. The first resupply Gooney-birds were on the way. I hopped a ride back to Rheims on the first one to land, off-load and take-off. After my debriefing the Intelligence Officer who was my host served me about an inch of White Horse (which he got from a nurse friend who got it from medicinal stock) in a canteen cup. I slept very weel for the next twelve hours.

I arrived in Paris on the third day since my departure from Neufeld. There I was debriefed again at Comm Z Headquarters, was outfitted in new USAAF uniforms, signed a chit for 4,000 francs, and was once again told - fastest way to get home- don't tell anyone your status, i.e. escaped P.O.W. I lined up a flight stateside on a C-54 out of Le Bourget, but got bumped by a two-star. The next time I got bumped I got the message, so caught a train for Camp Lucky Stike. Two days later I was aboard the U.S.S. Herm-itage, out of Le Harve, bound for New York via South Hampton. One day out of New York the Hermitage pulled out of our 23-ship convoy and headed for Boston. I had cabled my wife Betty to meet me in New York before I had left Paris. I now called her from Boston to meet me at Fort Devens. I had been assigned as a troop commander for a 200-man detachment of wounded, liberated, and guard house prisoners and had them to process before I was free to go. Betty and I embraced on the train platform at South Station in Boston at 2000 on 3 May 1945. We had last seen each other at about 0800 hours on 27 February 1943, when I climbed aboard our B-17, overseas bound, from Smokey Hill AAF, Kansas. We began to get reacquainted -- and are still in the process.

Because of the extensive coverage needed for our Reunion Issue a number of regular features and articles that would have usuall appeared have had to be omitted from this issue. We will carry additional picture coverage of the Reunion in the January issue, and expand the Editor's Desk section to update the membership on Group activities as much as possible.

Any members with items of interest to the Group should please send them along to the editor: Paul C. Burnett, P. O. Box 909, Auburn, AL. 36830.

Funds for the restoration of Shoo Shoo Baby are still being raised through the sale of T-Shirts. To date 237 T-Shirts have been sold. However less than 2% of the Association Membership have yet participated. Shirt sizes are available for adults and children, and the shirt will make an excellent Christmas or birthday gift. For every \$10 contributed and your shirt size (small, medium, large, extra large) you will receive the unique B-17 T-Shirt. Contributions should go to W.W. Hill, 4002 Braddock Rd., Alexandria, Va. 22312.