

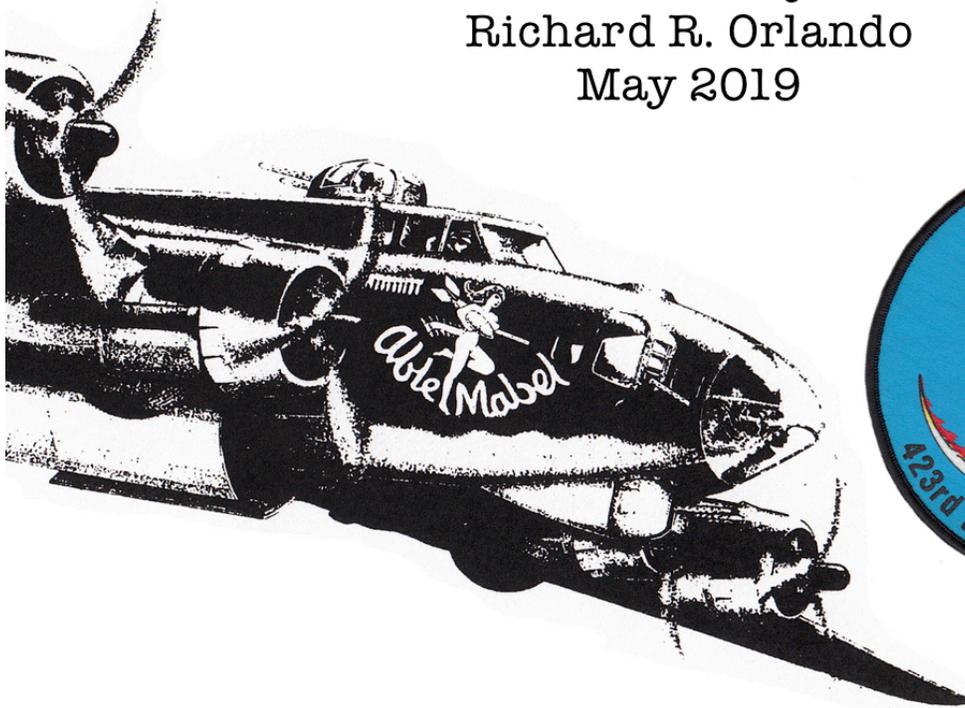
## FROM A BOY TO A MAN



Three Years in the Life of  
Nicholas A. Orlando  
(1943 - 1945)



Written by  
Richard R. Orlando  
May 2019



# *Contents*

Dedication and Acknowledgments	3
Foreword	4
Introduction	5
Time Line	6-9
The Flying Fortress aka “ The Beast”	10-12
In the Belly of “The Beast”	13-16
“A Fateful Farewell for Able Mabel”	17-28
Diary & Journal	29-30
Dates to Remember 1944	31-37
Camp Life & The Reality of the POW Condition	38-40
Song Lyrics	41-42
Dates to Remember 1945	43-46
March Across Austria	46-51
The Book – “How it Started”	52-54
Letters	55-68
Excerpts from Letters (Aug 11 - Sep 21, 1945)	69-84
Stories My Father Told Me	85-87
In His Own Words	88-91
In Their Own Words	92-95
Empire State Building Plane Crash	96-98
Coincidence or Fate?	99
Epilogue And Eulogy	100-104
Honor Roll	105
Nice To Know	106-132
The Movies	133-134
References	135-139
List of Exhibits (see provided link)	140-142

## *Dedication*

For my children and grandchildren, to preserve “Pop’s” legacy.

For my Mom Katherine, in loving memory. (1921-2012)

For my Dad Nicholas, in loving memory. (1922-2010)

&

For Dad’s fellow “Able Mabel” crew members and Stalag 17B kriegies and their families, and for all other relatives and friends who served our country during World War II.

Their loyalty, heroism and sacrifices must not be taken for granted or forgotten. And, their stories must be documented and preserved in order for future generations to have a better understanding of what constitutes the true price of freedom.

## *Acknowledgments*

First of all, I want to thank my dad (aka “Pop”) for sharing his wartime experiences with me, giving me the inspiration to tell his story and for helping me get this project off the ground.

Next, I want to thank my Wife Margaret for her patience, understanding and support over the last few years, enabling me to spend the many hours needed to get the job done.

I also want to thank my Son Rick for his expertise and assistance in preparing the exhibits and cover art.

Last, but not least, I want to thank my family and friends for their interest and encouragement.

## *Foreword*

My dad, Nicholas A. Orlando, was born in Brooklyn, New York in 1922 but spent most of his childhood and adult life, except for his military service, in the “**Five Towns**” area of Nassau County, Long Island. He was a child of the Depression Era who experienced hard times at an early age, working odd jobs and caring for his ailing mother. He never went on a vacation and the only trip he ever embarked on was one by auto to Washington, D.C. when he was a teenager. Up until World War II (WWII), he never flew on an airplane or sailed on a ship at sea and was never out of the United States.

In 1943 however, his life would change forever. Dad, like most of his boyhood buddies, was ordered to report for induction into the U.S. Army. Dad didn't have to go to war because he was employed by the **Republic Aviation Corporation** in Farmingdale assembling P-47 aircraft for the war effort. But, he felt that he needed a change and decided to serve his country in a very different way. The Infantry did not appeal to him so he decided to volunteer for the Army Air Force (AAF). He could have never imagined what was to become his destiny - a Ball Turret Gunner on a B-17 “Flying Fortress” and a prisoner of war (POW) at the infamous **Stalag XVIIB** in Austria.

“From a Boy to a Man” is my attempt at telling Dad's story by providing the details of his life from late 1942 through the fall of 1945 using his diary, journal, letters, documents and photographs, as well as my own research. Once commenting about his military service in a local newspaper interview Dad stated, “I went in as a boy and came back as a man”. It was just one simple observation that summarized how he felt about the overall experience. But, it certainly didn't reflect the magnitude of what he endured during those war years and how it impacted the rest of his life.

## *Introduction*

I never viewed my dad as being a hero or out of the ordinary. Like my uncles, other relatives and fathers of my friends, Dad was just another soldier in WWII who served his country well and returned home, by the grace of God, to work and raise a family. I would become an adult and father myself before finally realizing how special Dad was and truly understanding the sacrifices he made for us and for his country.

Dad was always proud of his military service but never bragged or talked too much about it. It would occasionally come up in conversation but he kept the gory details to himself. Once I graduated from college and enlisted in the National Guard, we became much closer and Dad slowly started to come out of his shell, telling me more stories and sharing his experiences, both the good and bad. In early 1970, Dad finally finished renovating the basement and selected one corner of it for himself. It was turned into a museum of sorts, with some of his WWII memorabilia, books, photos and personal documents on display. On these walls was his story - actual telegrams, newspaper articles, photographs and medals in frames for all to see. It was here that I would later discover his diary, journal and letters, which provided me with the necessary details and inspiration to compile a personal history of Dad's life from 1942 to 1945.

But it wasn't until the spring of 1992 when I took more of an interest in what Dad experienced and realized that he was truly a survivor and hero with a story to tell. He was being honored as "Legionnaire of the Year" by his American Legion Post 339, and I was requested by the Commander to help compile a book for a "This Is Your Life" type presentation at the actual ceremony. I couldn't ask Dad for assistance because it was a surprise. This is when I started to research Dad's personal affects and discovered that I really wanted to know much more. I was able to obtain declassified documents from the National Archives and even contacted former crew members and fellow POWs. It was an emotional experience for all involved.

After reading other similar accounts of WWII experiences in books and on the internet, especially after discovering that there were websites for the Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum, the 306th Bomb Group and Stalag 17B, I decided it was time to find a permanent home for Dad's story. My first attempt was "A Fateful Farewell for Able Mabel", a story about Dad's plane and crew and their final mission on March 22, 1944. With Dad's assistance, it was distributed to friends and family in January 2010, just one month before he died. Dad did get a chance to help me decipher his diary and journal, some portions of which were almost impossible to read after much abuse and deterioration. It was a difficult process however, and he had a tough time remembering the details, some of which rekindled bad memories. Unfortunately, Dad passed away before I had a chance to finish the project but now it's complete and ready to be shared with his family and friends, as well as the rest of the world.

## *Time Line*

This "Time Line" was developed from a one-page hand written document, which my dad was asked to prepare in connection with interviews he had with Veterans Administration personnel when applying for additional benefits relating to his time spent as a POW and subsequent rehabilitation. This was determined to be necessary in order to help re-establish some of his military records that were destroyed in a fire at a major government storage facility several years ago. I used Dad's original document as a framework and just provided more dates and details, developing it into a basic outline which summarizes the contents of this overall document. Anything that appears in **bold print** is described further in the "Nice to Know" section. Refer to the provided link to download and view all Exhibits.

### **1942**

- May 25 - Started working at the **Republic Aviation Corporation**, Farmingdale, Long Island, N.Y. Primary Assembly Department - Mechanic P47 Thunderbolt. (See Exhibit 1)
- Jun 30 - Registered with the Selective Service - Local Board No. 722 Nassau County. (See Exhibit 2)
- Dec 31 - Ordered to report for Induction. (See Exhibit 3)

### **1943**

- Jan 15 - Released from Republic Aviation. (See Exhibit 4)
- Jan 21 - Inducted into the armed forces of the United States, PS No.3 Cedarhurst, N.Y. Marched to LIRR Station and rode train to **Camp Upton**, L.I. Induction Center.
- Jan 30 - Arrived **Atlantic City**, New Jersey - **Claridge Hotel** - Basic Training. Graduated February 28th. (See Exhibit 5). Departed Feb 29th.
- Mar 3 - Arrived **Buckley Field**, Denver, Colorado - Armament School (See Exhibit 6).
- Apr 5 - Arrived **Lowry Field II**, Denver, Colorado. Armament School. Graduated May 29<sup>th</sup> (See Exhibit 6).
- Jun 1 - Arrived **Salt Lake City**, Utah - Replacement Center. Departed Jun 9th.

- Jun 10 - Arrived **Rapid City Army Air Base**, South Dakota. Assigned to 98<sup>th</sup> Airdrome Squadron. Departed by train Jul 17th.
- Jul 21 - Arrived **Ephrata Army Air Base**, Washington. Assigned to a crew Aug 30th. (See Exhibit 7) Departed Aug 31st.
- Sep 3 - Arrived Rapid City Army Air Base, S.D. Assigned to 398th Bomb Group, 600<sup>th</sup> Squadron.(See Exhibit 8)
- Sep 23 - Furlough through Oct 3rd. Departed Rapid City, S.D. Oct 23rd.
- Oct 26 - Arrived **Scott Field**, Illinois - Staging Area. Departed Nov 1st.
- Nov 1 - Arrived **Camp Shanks**, N.Y. Departed Nov 11<sup>th</sup> (See Exhibit 9).
- Nov 11 - Boarded **H.M.S. Andes**. Departs from **Brooklyn Army Base**.
- Nov 20 - Arrived at **Southampton**, England, Port of Embarkation (POE).
- Nov 21 - Arrived **Thurleigh**, England. U.S. Army Air Forces (USAAF) Station 111, Eighth Air Force, **306th Bomb Group**, 423rd Squadron (aka "The Grim Reapers." (See Exhibit 10)

## 1944

- Mar 22 - Bailed out over Osnabruck, Germany while on 15th Mission. (See Exhibit 11)
- Mar 23 - Arrived **Dulag Luft**, Frankfurt, Germany. Departed April 6th.
- Apr 6 - Western Union (WU) Telegram sent to Mary Orlando indicating that her Son Nick has been reported missing in action since the 22nd of March over Germany. (See Exhibit 12)
- Apr 9 - Arrived **Stalag 17B**, Krems, Austria (POW # 106149, Barracks 30B).
- May 18 - WU Telegram sent indicating that a report just received by the International Red Cross states that Nick is a POW of the German government. (See Exhibit 13)
- July 6 - Princess Elizabeth visited the USAAF bomber base at Thurleigh, where she christened a 306th Bomb Group B-17G Flying Fortress named "Rose of York" in her honor and met with the 8th Air Force Commanding General Jimmy Doolittle.

# 1945

- Jan ? - Nick was one of 20 Army Air Force servicemen from New York honored at an Award ceremony held at **Mitchel Field**. His sister Clementina accepted The Air Medal and Two Oak Leaf Clusters on his behalf for the 15 bomber combat missions he made over Europe.
- Apr 8 - Departed Stalag 17B. Forced march to Braunau, Austria.
- Apr 12 - President Franklin D. Roosevelt dies of a cerebral hemorrhage.
- May 3 - Liberated by American Infantry.
- May 8 - **Victory in Europe Day (VE-Day)**.
- May 9 - Departed Ranshofen, Austria by truck to an airfield at Pocking, Germany. Flew by C-47 to Metz, France. Arrived **Le Havre**. GI truck to **Camp Lucky Strike - RAMP** (Recovered Allied Military Personnel) Camp No.1. (See Exhibit 14)
- May 20 - Departed Camp Lucky Strike.
- May 21 - Boarded **U.S.S. Lejeune** , Port of Le Havre, France. (See Exhibit 15)
- May 22 - Departed Le Havre. General Eisenhower visits Camp Lucky Strike.
- May 23 - Holdover at Southampton, England. Departed May 25th.
- May 29 - WU Telegram sent indicating that according to the Secretary of War, Nick has been returned to military control. (See Exhibit 16)
- Jun 2 - WU Telegram sent indicating that according to the Chief of Staff of the Army, Nick is being returned to the U.S. within the near future and will be given an opportunity to communicate upon his arrival. (See Exhibit 17)
- Jun 3 - Arrived Brooklyn Army Base. Nick sends WU telegram to his mom indicating that he has arrived safely and expects to see her soon. But he also advises her not to attempt to contact or write him. (See Exhibit 18)
- Jun 4 - Arrived **Fort Dix**, N.J.
- Jun 6 - Started 60-day furlough. (See Exhibit 19)
- Jul 28 - USAAF B-25 bomber crashes into the Empire State Building (See separate section entitled "Empire State Building Plane Crash").

- Jul 29 - Married Katherine Jareb at Saint Joseph's RC Church, Hewlett, L.I., N.Y. George Rocchio, fellow kriegie from Stalag 17B, was the Best Man.  
(See Exhibit 20)
- Jul 30 - Started honeymoon in New York City at the **Hotel Lexington** home of the famous **Hawaiian Room**. (See Exhibit 21)
- Aug 7 - Departed Penn Station, NYC and arrived Atlantic City, N.J.. Continued honeymoon at the Claridge Hotel.
- Aug 11 - Departed Atlantic City by train to Penn Station, NYC and said goodbye to the new bride.
- Aug 12 - Departed Penn Station on return trip to the **Ambassador Hotel** in Atlantic City, N.J. (See Exhibit 22)
- Aug 13 - Departed Atlantic City, N.J. via train - end destination Denver, Colorado.
- Aug 14 - In transit stop at **Chicago Union Station**. Initial announcement in the U.S. of Japan's surrender. (See Exhibit 23)
- Aug 16 - Arrived AAF Convalescent Hospital, **Fort Logan**, Colorado. (See Exhibit 24).
- Sep 2 - Official U.S. Commemoration of **Victory Over Japan Day** (VJ-Day).
- Sep 4 - Completed application for membership in the **Caterpillar Club**.  
(See Exhibit 25)
- Sep 10 - The makers of TAVOL presented a radio salute to Nicholas Orlando on their program "The Tavoliers" over station WHOM (1480 on the dial) at 8:15 p.m. A "Salute to Heroes" certificate followed in the mail. (See Exhibit 26)
- Sep 23 - Honorably Discharged from AAF Convalescent Hospital, Fort Logan, C.O.  
(See Exhibit 27)

## *The Flying Fortress aka "The Beast"*

The B-17 Flying Fortress, also dubbed "The Queen of the Sky" is the most widely recognized and revered aircraft type of WWII. It is best known for the daylight strategic bombing of German industrial targets. The B-17G flew for the first time on May 21, 1943 and the model began equipping bomb groups in England in September. It had four 1,200 horsepower Pratt & Whitney R1820-97 engines, carried a normal bomb load of 4,000 pounds, flew fully loaded at between 150 and 250 miles per hour at 25,000 feet and had a combat radius of 650 to 800 miles, depending upon the bomb load. Six self-sealing fuel tanks held over 2,800 gallons of gasoline, nearly a quarter of the plane's weight at takeoff. In its later combat-developed form, with up to thirteen .50 caliber Browning machine guns, eight of them mounted in movable turrets, and also equipped with the Norden bombsight and a new automatic pilot system, it was a very formidable and feared aircraft. "The Beast" was the most heavily defended of all of the heavy bombers and a state of the art killing machine. B-17s shot down approximately twenty-three fighters for every one thousand sorties flown.

The most readily noticeable innovation introduced by the B-17G was the power-operated Bendix turret mounted in a chin-type installation underneath the nose. This turret was equipped with two 0.50-inch machine guns. Another feature introduced having the waist guns being permanently enclosed behind windows instead of being mounted behind removable hatches. The cheek nose guns were now staggered so that the left gun was in the forward side window and the right gun was in the middle side window, which reversed the positions used on the late F models. Camouflage - olive drab - paint was deleted from production B-17Gs starting in January of 1944, and unpainted aircraft became USAAF policy after April 1944.

Altogether, 8,680 B-17Gs were built (Boeing 4,035, Douglas 2,395 and Lockheed 2,250). At the peak of B-17 production in June 1944, the Boeing Seattle factory was rolling out 16 Fortresses every 24 hours. The last B-17G rolled off the Lockheed-Vega production line on July 29, 1945, bringing to an end a total production run of 12,677 Flying Fortresses.

### Flight Equipment

The crewmen, officers and sergeants alike, wore inflatable life preservers in case they had to ditch in the water and detachable parachute harnesses. The parachutes themselves were placed near every crew station, although some men did not know how to use them properly and no one aboard had ever jumped out of an airplane – that had not been part of their training. Some men tied an extra pair of GI boots to their belts in case they had to bail out and survive on the ground. The men wore electrically heated flying suits - fleece-lined leather jackets (of the style known to this day as "bomber jackets") and pants, heavy leather flying boots, and lined leather gloves. The gunners wore fleece-lined flight caps and donned flak helmets and body armor when they

entered enemy airspace. With their goggles, and the oxygen masks they wore at high altitude, no skin was exposed to the air. The instinctive reflexes needed by the gunners to shoot at enemy fighters were considerably slowed due to the often bulky clothing.

Every man carried a small emergency escape kit in his pocket including: folding money, first aid, a waterproof silk map, a small compass and some rations. Though not every man carried one on missions, every combat crew member was issued a Colt .45 semiautomatic pistol, along with two clips of ammunition. However, if a downed airman had a firearm when captured, it could be an excuse to kill him on the spot. It was also never clear what a handgun could accomplish under such circumstances.

### Weather and the Elements

Weather in England was notorious for rapid, severe changes and therefore difficult to predict. The moisture was the problem. In the North Atlantic, particularly in winter, the storms came in every eighteen hours on average. England weather was usually bad. Any combination of the elements (fog, rain, drizzle, clouds, snow and ice) would delay or cancel missions, adding to the overall stress and danger of aerial combat.

Throughout the war, poor weather and fog conditions reduced operations by 45%, and 10% of the planes that were sent into combat over Northern Europe aborted or were recalled. Launching a thousand bombers from two dozen airfields, at minimum intervals, as fast as possible, in the dark was problematic and a feat of immense precision. The aircraft had to climb above the clouds before assembling into their formations. And, it was not just the weather over the targets that was worrisome. It was the weather in **East Anglia**, where ground fog was common in the winter months. Because of the short days of winter and the distance to the targets deep inside Germany, the bombers took off and returned in the dark. Adding thick ground fog to the nighttime landings with damaged aircraft was a prescription for disaster.

Flying at high altitudes, vast contrails (the condensation of exhaust) would form. They were terrifying to bomber crews, acting as gigantic pointers whereby the formations had nowhere to hide from enemy defenses. Flak batteries could sight in on them and prepare well in advance to send in barrages. German fighters sometimes hid themselves in the bomber's contrails and then attack from the rear unannounced.

Flying in the withering cold caused windows and gun sights to blur, bomb bay doors to ice over and essential mechanical equipment to freeze and malfunction. Men also froze up and broke down – frostbite doing more damage than the enemy. The electrical suits were notoriously undependable. They shorted out and sent electric shocks through the hands, feet and testicles. And, after a few missions they tended to burn out, usually because the men were not told how to properly maintain them. Prevention was the only adequate treatment for frostbite – placing urine tubes in ball turrets, and issuing thin silk gloves to be worn under the heavier, heated gloves.

## Fear of Flying and Stress

Once the bomb bay doors closed behind them, the B-17 crewmen realized they were prisoners of the plane. Such imprisonment could only have four possible outcomes: serious injury, bail out and subsequent capture, death, or safe return. Chance was the controlling force in an airman's life. It determined the composition and character of his crew, his plane's position in the combat formation, the weather his formation flew into, the intensity of enemy opposition, and ultimately whether he lived or died. Having little or no control over any of these factors contributed to their fear and disabling anxiety. They were sitting targets. Short of being hit by enemy fire, the most frightening experience in the air was the feeling of helplessness over the target – the utter inability to evade danger. All the bomber crews could do was hunker down and take it. Overwhelming fear of death and dismemberment was the leading cause of emotional casualties in the Eighth Air Force.

Bomber gunners had only a microsecond to estimate an attacking fighter's range, speed, path of attack, and bullet ballistics. During such aerial attacks, that lasted merely seconds, the gunner had to make those mental calculations, then align his weapons and sights, while praying that the guns wouldn't jam or the barrels wouldn't melt. It was a matter of survival and extreme combat stress.

Another risk involved the close proximity of airfields and the fact that bomber and fighter groups were taking off and forming up simultaneously all over East Anglia. Departures were carefully orchestrated to lessen the chance of collision. However, in the typical cloud cover of early morning England, collision was a constant danger when there was no notion of where the other planes might be.

Part of the stress was due to living life in a contradictory world tucked away in the peaceful English countryside, which was transformed into an integral cog for the vast war machine and the heart of the aerial assault on Germany. Airmen were commuters living with the standard comforts of home in the safety of rural East Anglia, then suddenly catapulted into hostile punishing skies, to face bleak odds of survival against a faceless enemy who skillfully attacked from above and below. Half-empty barracks, abbreviated chow lines and vacant barstools at the Officer's Club were constant reminders to the crews who made it back to base of the deadly toll the Germans exacted, sometimes 10% or more of the fliers on a single mission.

In addition, high altitude aerial combat subjected bomber crews to physical stresses that human beings had never confronted before. Strange things happened to the human body when it entered the earth's upper air. Men's ears clogged up painfully, their minds and movements slowed down, and their stomachs and intestines expanded inordinately.

# *In the Belly of “The Beast”*

## Ball Turret

The ball turret was a spherical-shaped altazimuth (vertical axis) mount gun turret, fitted to some American-built aircraft during WWII noticeably for ventral defense. The name arose from the turret's spherical housing. It was a locally manned turret, as distinct from locally or remote-controlled turrets and periscopic sighted turrets also in use. Thus, the turret contained the gunner along with two heavy machine guns, ammunition and sights. The Sperry Corporation designed ventral version saw widespread use and became the most common. The design was mainly deployed on the B-17 Flying Fortress and the B-24 Liberator, as well as the US Navy's PB4Y-1 Liberator.

Just forward of the waist gunners was the hydraulic mounting for the ball turret. When the plane was in flight, the Plexiglas ball turret, only 30 inches in diameter, was turned, guns pointing straight down, hatch open, and the gunner slipped into it. He would then put on a safety strap, close and lock the tiny hatch above him. Then he placed his feet in the heel rests and crouched down into a fetal position resting against the contour of the ball, his twin machine guns resting just outside his spread legs. His only angle of sight was between his knees, and the ball was so small that there was no room for his parachute, even though he was usually the smallest member of the crew. The chute had to be kept inside the plane, near the access hatch directly above the turret. However, some did choose to wear chest parachutes.

## The Guns

The Ball Turret gunner (aka “belly gunner”) was responsible for protecting the aircraft from all enemy attacks coming from below, and for providing aerial reconnaissance of targets below and relaying critical information to other crew members. The turret revolved a full 360 degrees, providing an extraordinary vantage point and covering the aircraft against attackers from below. Though some ball turrets were equipped with a very small, 3-inch window, located above the gunner's head, and through which it was possible to see the inside of the plane, many were not.

The gunner would sit with his back and head against the rear wall of the turret, his hips at the bottom, and his legs held in mid-air by two footrests on the front wall. This left him positioned with his eyes roughly level with the pair of light-barrel Browning AN/M2 .50 caliber machine guns which extended through the entire turret, and located on either side of the gunner. The cocking handles were located too close to the gunner to be operated easily, so a cable was attached to the handle through pulleys to a handle near the front of the turret. Small ammunition boxes rested on the top of the turret and the remaining ammunition belts fed the turret by means of an elaborate chute system. A reflector sight was hung from the top of the turret, positioned roughly between the gunner's feet.

## The Controls

The directional control was by two hand control grips incorporated with firing buttons. The left foot controlled the reflector sight range reticule. The right foot operated a push-to-talk intercom. The turret was normally electrically powered in azimuth and altitude. An emergency hand crank could be attached to reposition the turret from inside the aircraft fuselage. In the event of a power failure another crewman would use this to crank the turret into the vertical position to allow the gunner to exit.

The B-17 had a sleek airframe and was quite compact inside. This meant that the ball turret didn't have enough room to be retracted. On the B-17, the A-2 turret was close to the ground, but had enough clearance for takeoff and landing. However, the gunner did not enter the turret until the plane was well into the air, in case of a landing gear failure. During takeoff and landing, the turret had to be positioned with its guns horizontal, pointing aft. As the guns had to be vertical before the gunner could enter or leave the turret, a set of external controls were fitted so the turret could be repositioned while unoccupied.

## The Danger

The Sperry ball turret was very small in order to reduce drag, and was typically operated by the shortest man of the crew. It was operated electrically and by hydraulic pressure. The turret was extremely susceptible to the loss of either of the operating systems. If an engine was hit and needed to be shut down, sometimes it could cause the loss of electrics or hydraulics jamming the turret from movement and preventing a gunner from being extricated in an emergency. Many a gunner was trapped inside when the turret was disabled in combat and had to remain inside while the plane landed in a shot up condition, or maybe even crashed landed.

There were many reported cases of a badly shot up B-17 having to land with its undercarriage stuck in the up position necessitating a belly landing whereby the full weight of the aircraft would rest on the ball turret squashing the poor gunner to death. Many ball turrets had been shot loose from the airplane due to 20 mm cannon fire hitting the support column, cutting the turret loose with the gunner trapped inside without a parachute and no chance of escape, often falling out into the freezing skies over Germany at 21,000 feet to his death.

## The Best or the Worst?

Most Flying Fortress crew members considered the ball turret the worst crew position on the aircraft. The confining sphere fastened to the underside of the plane required an agile occupant immune to claustrophobia and brave enough to be without a parachute close by. Ironically, thought of being the most dangerous position in a B-17, it turned out to be one of the safest as far as suffering battle wounds. The gunner, curled up in a ball in a fetal position with his back against the armor-plated door, had less of his body exposed to enemy fire than that of the other crew members.

Lonely and isolated beneath the plane's belly, the 43-inch diameter steel ball could never be called comfortable, but for some it was the best position of all. The gunner saw a lot of action, knew what was going on and was always busy. Despite the danger, there was one upside to being the ball turret gunner - if the plane caught fire he would know it first and get out quickly, because he could see all four engines. It was a widespread belief that the ball turret was the most vulnerable position of all, and that only someone short could man it, but neither was strictly true. Ironically, post war analysis of B-17 crew fatality records revealed that the ball turret gunner had the safest job on the plane, with the pilot having the most dangerous. The pilot and copilot positions were the most vulnerable of all because enemy fighter pilots knew the best chance of having a bomber out of formation was to kill the pilots in the cockpit.

However, other sources believed that the life expectancy of a B-17 ball turret gunner was less than that of the other aircrew. Some enemy fighters preferred to attack a heavy bomber from below in an attempt to hit the wing fuel tanks or hit the bombs in the bomb bay. This form of attack often resulted in the ball turret gunner being shot to pieces by machine gun fire.

### The Loneliest Position

If the crew considered the plane to be a prison, the ball turret position would be more like solitary confinement. According to one aviation author as described below, the ball turret was unquestionably the loneliest and most uncomfortable position in the B-17:

*"The turret is like some grotesque, swollen eyeball of steel, glass and guns that seems to hang precariously from the belly of the plane. It is a hellish, stinking position in battle; the gunner must hunch up his body, draw up his knees and work himself into a half ball to meet the curving lines of the turret. The guns are to each side of his head, and they stab from the turret eyeball like two even splinters. Jailed in this spherical powerhouse, the ball turret gunner literally aims his own body at enemy fighters, working both hands and feet in deft coordination, spinning and tilting and then depressing switches atop the gun grip handles to fire the two weapons. It is the most unenviable position in a bomber, any bomber, and the man most unlikely to escape from a blazing B-17 is that lonely soul in the ball."*

The ball turret gunner position required physical endurance as well as courage. Once the gunner entered the turret he knew that it would require him to spend at least five to seven hours in it, and sometimes even longer when complications arose. When flying at high altitudes, the temperature inside the turret usually ranged from -40 to -60 degrees Fahrenheit. Since the gunner was seated in a very tight and awkward position, he was not able to move his legs. And, most of the time he would require assistance from another crewman in order to get out of the turret. Gunners who were forced to remain in their turrets for hours over enemy territory would urinate in their electrical suits, sometimes freezing their backs, buttocks and thighs so badly that their muscles and bones were exposed.

## The Joy of Flight

Despite of all the anxiety, danger, fear and physical discomfort associated with flying in the ball turret, there was a pleasurable side described below. Although not in my Dad's own words, he did concur with the details:

*“To the eye there is no visible support. Just sky 360 degrees around you as you view everything through a round, very thick piece of protective plate glass between your feet, about sixteen inches or more in diameter. All you can see of the airplane is the bottom of the engine nacelles with the props spinning and the under surfaces of the wings and fuselage as you turn the turret. Flying in the ball turret is truly an awesome feeling, as though you are up there alone, just hanging in midair”.*

# *“A Fateful Farewell for Able Mabel”*

## The Crew

The story begins at the Army Air Base in Ephrata, Washington during the month of August in 1943, when the ten men listed below were assigned to a B-17 flight crew in preparation for combat overseas:

1st Lt. Ragnar L. Carlson	Pilot
2nd Lt. Kenneth Yass	Co-Pilot
2nd Lt. Salvatore Soscia	Navigator
2nd Lt. Howard E. Newell	Bombardier, Nose Gunner
T/Sgt. William H. Morgan	Engineer, Top Turret Gunner
T/Sgt. Philip Brouman	Radio Operator, Top Hatch Gunner
S/Sgt. Nicholas A. Orlando	Ball Turret Gunner / Assistant Armorer
S/Sgt. Fred C. Blum, Jr.	Right Waist Gunner / Assistant Radio Operator
S/Sgt. Anthony J. Mariani	Left Waist Gunner / Assistant Engineer
S/Sgt. Charles W. Kester	Tail Gunner / Armorer

At the Army Air Base in Rapid City, South Dakota sometime in late September or early October, officer Newell was replaced by S/Sgt. Robert D. Beres. The crew was now complete. (See *Attachment 1*) It was at Rapid City where they trained as a crew and became a skilled team. According to Yass, “They were a fine bunch of kids. As diverse a group as you could find in appearance, personality and philosophy. Yet, kind, sensitive and caring - that made us a family”. Kester was the largest and Orlando the smallest (5'5" tall and 135 lbs.), but strangely enough they were very close “buddies” during the War and went on to become lifelong friends.

*(In bomber warfare, the ability to survive and to fight off fear, depended as much on the character of the crew as on the personality of the individual. The equipment of survival both tightened and symbolized this bond. Ten men were linked to the plane and to one another by hose lines that kept them breathing and wires that kept them warm or in touch with one another. Perhaps at no time in the history of warfare has there been such a relationship among fighting men as existed with the combat crews of heavy bombardment aircraft).*

## The Grim Reapers

The crew was assigned to the 40th Combat Wing, 306th Bombardment Group, 423rd Squadron based at **Thurleigh**, England. The 423rd had a bad time in acquiring a name for itself. Known originally as the “Grim Reapers”, it was advised to change the name as it was too grim and the German propaganda department might take advantage of it. The Squadron resigned itself to the relatively tame “Fiery Phantoms” until some high brass somewhere approved the original name. Usually there were 8 planes to a Squadron, 4 Squadrons to a Group and 3 Groups to a Combat Wing.

*(For the planning and direction of combat operations, the Eighth's Bomber Command was organized into combat wings. Each wing was comprised of three twenty-one-plane bomb groups, which met in the skies over their neighboring bases and flew into battle together. And, they covered an expanse of 3,000 feet of altitude, with each group of the wing in a **combat box** stagger vertical wedge - the ideal battle formation. Four wings joined together to make an air division - the mighty Eighth having three).*

## The Plane

At Thurleigh, England sometime during the month of February in 1944, the crew was assigned to a B-17G which was probably a brand new airplane since it was void of “**nose art**” and mission markings. The actual serial number for the plane was 42-31524. The tail number was 231524 and the letter under the number was “G”. The triangle tail marking denoted the B-17 1st Bombardment Wing. The H inside the triangle denoted 306th Bomb Group, 40th Combat Wing. The horizontal band on the tail, spanning the triangle H, was painted yellow, rather bright for high visibility. The top of the vertical stabilizer was silver. All B-17s of this vintage were silver - unpainted aluminum finish. However, my Dad and Bill Morgan recall the plane being camouflaged - painted olive drab.

Although there was no actual “nose art” on the plane, it did have a name – “Able Mabel”. Mariani insisted that it was named after his Grandmother. And, it wasn't until over thirty years later when nose art finally appeared on “Able Mabel”. A local Michigan City graphic artist named Bob Cooper was commissioned by the two eldest sons of Dusty Kester to make a pen and ink sketch of a B-17G as a gift for their father. A short time later, the sketch appeared on the front page of the Michigan City Indiana News Dispatch. *(See Attachment 2)*

## Missions

The crew arrived at Thurleigh during the month of November in 1943. Most of the crew had approximately fifteen missions to their credit when they started out. *(See Attachment 3)* However, each crew member may not have made the flights in order as listed. For instance, Carlson and Brouman made initial combat flights before the rest of the crew. My Dad had to make his two initial missions (Dec 22, 1943 - the marshaling yards at Osnabruck, and Dec 30th - the port area and oil refinery at Ludwigshafen) with more experienced crews in order to get a better feel for actual combat situations. On Mission #11, Co-Pilot Ken Yass was on special assignment and flew as Tail Gunner in the lead ship. On Mission #15, S/Sgt. Harry R. Shutts filled in for S/Sgt. Robert Beres as Bombardier. My Dad kept single page accounts of each mission, depositing them in a used whiskey bottle in the barracks. Unfortunately, it was misplaced and never recovered.

*(Scrubbed, aborted and turn back missions could be just as disastrous as a completed mission. On the way to the target, an aircraft could very well be shot down by flak or enemy fighters. However, these missions did not “count” in spite of the danger. And, these unwanted reprieves from combat created a festering morale problem because repeating cancellations meant repeating the experience of preflight trauma and tension. Only the completed missions were counted towards the 25 mission combat tour. You were required to reach the target, bomb it and return to get credit for a completed mission. After*

*completing their 25th, airmen would be sent home for reassignment or given ground duties in England. In March 1944 the number increased to 30, and in July 1944, to 35. The chances of completing the new combat tour were only one in five).*

Yass recalled Feb 20, 1944, the beginning of “**Big Week**”, Mission #6 - target Leipzig, Germany: “When the plane got hit we quickly found out we were losing gasoline through a punctured fuel tank. Then we tried transferring fuel out of the punctured tanks to the good tanks. But calculations showed that we might have enough fuel left to reach England. Either we would have to “abandon ship” on the Nazi held continent, or perhaps ditch in the English Channel. The alternative was to break formation and try to make it to neutral Switzerland, where we would be interned for the remainder of the War - if we made it there safely. Carlson called for a vote from each crew member as to their choice. That’s an example of the democratic family we were. The vote was unanimous, to attempt the flight back to England. We sweated that one out, but we made it - with the fuel tanks almost dry when we landed.”

*(American bomber crews learned to fight the air war by experience and experiment, every mission a learning exercise. Once sent into combat, bomber boys could not report back to headquarters with intelligence that might reconfigure the battle plan. And, there were no reinforcements – the men who went in had to fight their way out. Once in the air, the crews were alone and forced to make their own decisions if the mission’s master plan broke down. The weather, the mechanical condition of the planes, the weight of the opposition, the training and mental stability of the airmen and many other variables determined what would be bombed and who would die, on the ground and in the air).*

### Change of Plans

According to Eighth Air Force Strategic Operations on March 22, 1944, Mission 273 (474) B-17s and (214) B-24s were dispatched to bomb aviation industry plants at Oranienburg and Basdorf, Germany. But 8/10 to 10/10 cloud cover prevented an attack. As a result, the bombers were redirected to the secondary target - Berlin. (aka “The Big B”) Another change affected the crew. S/Sgt. Harry R. Shutts was not a regular member of the crew. He was a toggler who replaced Robert Beres the regular bombardier, who flew in the lead ship that day

*(Four different types of cloud cover are defined by fractional components: clear 0-1/10, scattered 1/10 – 5/10, broken 5/10 – 9/10 and overcast 10/10. Berlin was the sixth largest city in the world and the greatest economic and commercial powerhouse on the European continent, with nearly all its industries given over to war production. The German capital was a 1,100 mile round trip from eastern England, leaving the bombers over central Germany for at least five hours. Berlin proved to be the toughest target the Eighth ever attacked, with the Luftwaffe having over 70% of its fighters based within range of the city. March 4, 1944 was the first time the Eighth Air Force bombed Berlin).*

### Bombs Away

The plane took off at 0740 hrs with a bomb load of ten 500 lb HE (High Explosive). One of the planes had to return on account of engine trouble and “Able Mabel” filled in that fateful position. Target time was 1315 hrs and the altitude was 26,000 ft. No enemy aircraft were seen but intense accurate flak was encountered over the city. There was

0/10ths cloud cover at the target. Bombs were dropped using the PFF technique using the Friedrichstrasse Station as the Aiming Point (AP).

*(The critical sweep over the target was called the bomb run. The Initial Point (IP) was where the aircraft turned toward the target, the Aiming Point (AP) was where the bombardier took control of the bomber, and the Median Point of Impact (MPI) was where the bombs were to strike. Straight and level flight for 20 to 50 miles was necessary for accurate delivery. However, enemy anti-aircraft gunners would send up a box barrage of exploding 88 millimeter shells directly over the target. No evasive action could be taken until the bombs were dropped. Standard bomb loads were eight 500 lb high demolition bombs and twenty 100 lb incendiary bombs. Although PFF is an abbreviation for Pathfinder Force, the term was commonly applied during WWII combat to designate a plane with airborne radar used for navigation and bombing).*

As the plane approached the target and the bomb doors opened, the sky was filled with flak and it didn't look particularly inviting. As a matter of fact, Soscia had a premonition and put on his parachute for the first time.

*(In the parlance of American fliers, the word "flak" by itself was used to refer to the shells, the black smoke residue following the explosion of shells or a steel fragment of a shell. Massed around major industrial centers, German flak batteries filled the sky with wing-tearing, fuselage-ripping, pieces of jagged metal – a mesmerizing agent of death. High over strategic targets, flak was a threat to both bombers and fighters, but fighters could avoid flak where bombers could not. Every plane over Berlin was damaged, 14 of them classed as serious. The 306th was in the Berlin flak for seven minutes and the Berlin defense was regarded as the best in Europe)*

## **Flak and Fire**

Just as the bombs dropped over the target, #3 engine was hit by a direct flak burst and half the engine was shot away. The vibration of the engine shook the wheels and flaps down. Both #3 and #4 engines caught on fire. Flak from the same burst entered the plane, pierced the hydraulic brake pressure accumulator, which exploded along with an oxygen bottle in the cockpit. There was a terrific flash and smoke as heat and flame just filled the small space. The initial flash died down almost instantly, but the burning hydraulic fluid covered the floor. The shock knocked Morgan out of his turret to the floor where his clothes ignited from the burning oil and his mask came off his face. The cockpit crew was fully dazed by the fire and blinded by the smoke. The plane was out of control on its way down narrowly missing a couple of other aircraft.

The windshield was black with soot and the crew couldn't see where they were going. Yass' face was burned above his right eye and he thought he was blind. He tried to open his window to let some of the smoke out. Carlson and Yass struggled with the controls while Morgan grabbed an extinguisher and tried to put out the fire. Before the fire was fully out, Morgan collapsed from lack of oxygen. Yass slapped his emergency mask on Morgan's face and when he saw him start to revive, Yass put out the rest of the fire with the extinguisher without leaving his seat.

*(Anoxia, or oxygen deprivation, was always a concern at high altitudes. Without oxygen at 25,000 feet an airman would be unconscious in thirty seconds and dead after two minutes. Throughout a mission, the navigator would call out oxygen checks every few minutes on the plane's interphone. If a crewman failed to answer, another was sent to investigate, and if needed, perform artificial respiration or administer oxygen from a portable walk-around bottle).*

Yass then helped Carlson with the plane again. Carlson was trying to reach the alarm bell near Yass, but when he couldn't he gave up and tried to stop the engines from burning. He managed to get the fire out in the two burning engines by cutting the fuel off and diving the plane at high speed causing the props to windmill.

By the time the cockpit crew recovered a portion of their senses, the plane had fallen from 27,000 to 20,000 feet and the formation was out of sight. The plane was in the number 7 position in the low squadron when it left the formation. Carlson and Yass finally got everything under control and resumed flying homeward hardly believing they could ever make it. Running on only two engines, the disabled bomber was now alone in the sky since it couldn't keep up with the other aircraft. They were also at the mercy of any enemy fighters that might spot them. All of the boys were still with the plane and no one was seriously hurt. Carlson, Yass and Morgan were burned somewhat, but not disabled.

### Still Flying

For a while the crew managed to hold their own. Kester called out and encouraged the boys by saying "We're doing fine as long as we're still flying". To some extent that was true, but they didn't know for how long. The instruments were acting crazy and it was hard to assess the damage. They were still a long way from home. The plane was flying above the clouds so the crew couldn't see the ground to know exactly where they were. They wouldn't give up, even though they were slipping lower and lower, flying very slowly because of the plane's crippled condition. After a while, the plane was flying at a sluggish 115 mph. Carlson tried to make it up to 135 mph, but the aircraft could not withstand the vibrations. Carlson's rudder pedals were shot out and he couldn't help Yass very much with flying, so he turned his attention to babying the engines, transferring fuel and doing what he could to keep the plane in the air.

*(Usual combat air speed was 155/160 mph. Although this was a 300 mph aircraft, the slower air speed was used to enable damaged aircraft to keep up with the formation, but 115 mph was not sufficient)*

### We're Going Down

After a while they spotted a fighter coming their way. A flare was shot and it turned out to be an AAF P-51 (**North American P-51 Mustang**), with the markings of B-3A named "Nazi Nemesis", which stayed with them giving protection against any enemy fighters that might show up. The bomber had started out at 27,000 ft, and unknowingly while in the vicinity of Osnabruk, it was down to 14,000 ft. Suddenly, the aircraft was caught in another concentration of flak. The Germans put up a barrage that had "Able Mabel" at their mercy. Holes were appearing all over the aircraft, the interphone went dead and some of the controls were shot away. Though Carlson and Yass fought hard in attempting to evade the flak, it appeared that the plane would never take all the punishment. Still, no one was hurt and the crew intended to keep on flying. Evasive action was in question due to the stalling air speed. However, Carlson decided to go down, pick up some air speed and "let come what may." He pushed the wheel forward and yelled "We're going down!", putting the plane into a very steep dive going almost

straight down. Anyone not at the controls would have surely thought it was out of control.

*(Usually, when a pilot advised the crew that the plane was “going down” the bomb bay doors were opened and the landing gear lowered. The lowering of the wheels was an International Code that the plane was surrendering in the air, would fight no further and would try to make a landing. Opening the bomb bay was a precaution in case of an explosion and to allow any men to leave the plane via parachute).*

### Boys in the Back

Orlando realized that the plane had been hit and immediately got out of the ball turret. Doing so, he had to hold on to the support frame of the turret because of the plane’s shaking and vibrations. Fire and smoke could be seen coming from the bomb bay. The right side of the plane was covered with oil. The only visibility was from the waist gunner’s windows. Orlando, the two waist gunners, tail gunner and radio operator did not know what to do, waiting in the waist section for some type of orders. None came. A short while later the plane was under control, but still none of crew in the rear knew what was going on in the cockpit. At this time their thoughts were that they were going to get back to England safely. When over Osnabruck, Germany the plane flew into yet another flak barrage. They could hear the flak and shrapnel hitting the plane constantly. At this point the plane started to go into a steep dive and the pressure was so great that they all had to hold on to avoid being tossed around in the plane’s waist section. It was at this point, at 1420 hrs, that they all decided to bail out - Mariani, Blum, Orlando, Brouman and Kester in that order. Each of them jumped out under their own free will, without any orders to do so. With no interphone and the plane in a steep dive, they all thought the aircraft was out of control.

*(This is a good example of a problem often experienced by the crew in combat. With the intercom knocked out, the men in the rear of the plane had no easy means of communicating with the flight deck. Sometimes the certainty of a parachute seemed better than the uncertainty of staying with a badly damaged plane)*

### Return to the Cockpit

Soscia called up to see if Carlson and Yass were OK, but their interphone was out so they couldn’t answer him. They assumed that’s when the boys bailed out, for they had no way of knowing whether the cockpit crew were dead or alive. Soscia and Shutts were on their way out of the nose hatch but decided to take a last look in the cockpit before they bailed out. When they saw that Carlson and Yass were okay and still flying, they returned to their positions. The plane finally pulled out of the dive at 8,000 ft and was clear of the flak. The P-51 returned and flew formation with the plane, urging the crew to keep going.

Carlson and Yass still weren’t sure that the boys were gone until Morgan went back to tell Brouman, the radio operator, to send an S.O.S. in case the aircraft went down in the North Sea even though they were still some distance from the coast coming up on the Zuiderzee. Morgan came back and told Carlson and Yass that nobody was in the

back of the plane. At least they knew the boys were OK and wondered if they would be joining them shortly. Carlson did not observe any parachutes opening, probably because the plane was going down faster than the men who bailed out. By the time they reached the coast of Holland the plane was down to 6,000 ft. While Yass did his best at the controls, Carlson and Morgan were in the back throwing out guns, ammunition, and anything that would lighten the plane including the command set. The crew tried to make a run for it between two enemy-held islands, the last enemy territory before the North Sea, but the shooting started. The Germans put up everything - rifles, pistols, machine guns, 20mm, 40mm, and 88s. The plane was so low that the crew could actually see the Germans running around on the ground below. When the windshield splattered into their laps, they thought it was all over.

### Drop the Ball

Carlson and Yass were working the wheel together, perfect teamwork, twisting and turning the aircraft around every burst. The plane got about four miles into the North Sea and it was down to 2,000 ft when the shooting stopped. Yass did his best at the controls. With only two engines functioning, Carlson went back with Morgan to further lighten the plane, but failed in their attempt to drop Orlando's "beloved" ball turret, breaking a wrench in the process.

*(When a B-17 was hit and ditching was a possibility, all guns, ammunition and armor would be thrown overboard. And, if there was enough time, the ball turret would also be dropped. This was a great help since it significantly added to weight loss and reduced the plane's wind resistance. Instructions detailing how to carry out this procedure were posted near the ball turret hatch in the fuselage. Towards the end of the War, when fighter attacks became rare, there was a plan to remove all ball turrets from B-17s to save weight, 1,200 lbs including the gunner, but this was never initiated)*

### Prepare to Ditch

Once again, the enemy had leveled their guns and started firing. Soon after, they were out of range but down to sea level about eight miles from shore. Only #1 engine was running, and not enough. "Able Mabel" was about to hit the water. Yass yelled for Soccia and Shutts to go back to the radio room for ditching, and yelled for Carlson to get up in his seat and prepare for ditching. Carlson appeared and began trying to get #4 engine started, it being the first one shut down because of the fire. As they were about to go into the water, thinking it was the "end of the road", Carlson managed to get the engine started and pulled the tail of the plane out of the water. With the last remaining engine, it coughed and started, pulling the aircraft out of what would have been a watery grave. The plane was able to climb back to 2,000 feet and continue.

*(If a bomber was in distress over Northern Europe, the crews usually preferred to try to limp back to England, rather than crash-land or parachute into German-occupied territory. Heading across the North Sea, as fog rolled in over their island home, men knew that they could still crash and die after escaping the dangers of combat. Many of the bombers that failed to make it home ditched in the North Sea or in the English Channel).*

## Almost Home

The P-51, their “little friend” and guardian angel who followed the plane all across most of the Channel, now low on fuel and at the end of its range, tipped its wing and waved goodbye. The bomber was now on its own and the problem was no longer enemy fire, but a low fuel supply. The emergency IFF (Identification Friend or Foe) was on for a possible sea rescue.

*(The B-17 and B-24 bomber crews came to appreciate, rely upon and praise the P-38, P47 and P-51 fighter plane escorts. These so-called “little friends” became true guardian angels watching over their “big friends” as they made the perilous trip from England to Europe and back. The flight home was a mirror image of the flight to the target. All of the same hazards, just in reverse order, where some fliers resorted to instinct. The return flights usually brought more enemy fighters, as the route back was different from the route to target. The question was what the weather would be like at the home base and if there would be enough fuel to make it back).*

About an hour later roughly 11 miles from the coast, #4 engine, which was running without fuel pressure or temperature, quit cold. Only #1 engine was running with about 25 inches of mercury. Still flying at 2,000 ft, Yass didn't think they could make it and was worried about mines in the water near the shore. However, Carlson and Yass tried it anyway, flying about 100 feet in the air crossing the coast, barely clearing the tops of a row of trees. With the last remaining engine “Able Mabel” crash landed in a plowed field about 500 feet in from the water near Coltishall, England. The crew cut all the switches and vacated the aircraft in a hurry in case of fire. At about 50 feet from the plane, they fell to the ground flat on their faces, completely exhausted. Burned and tired, they laid there about 15 minutes before feeling their strength returning. Soon after they were picked up by an RAF ambulance and taken to an airfield. From there it was the “old story” of contacting the base. They had been given up for lost since they returned over an hour late. “Able Mabel” was a total wreck - never to fly again. The good news was that upon final check, there weren't any parachutes found in the rear except for those not used by the crew who returned with the plane.

*(Crashes on East Anglian airfields became commonplace. Returning aircraft had often limped along for hundreds of miles after encounters with German defenses. Aircraft bearing wounded and exhausted men approached home airfields, or any other suitable landing spot, on a “wing and a prayer” meaning almost anything could happen at any instant).*

## Aftermath

The crew went to Scotland on “flak leave” the next day for a rest and didn't fly for a month after. Morgan, Yass and Carlson were presented with the Distinguished Flying Cross (DFC), but were in agreement that they'd give it back in a minute if they could have the rest of the boys back with them again.

Yass commented that “Carlson did a wonderful job, and if it weren't for him, he doubted that any of them would have made it back”. Yass also indicated that “There never was an easy mission, nor was there a time that we weren't scared. Yet we were air soldiers and we carried out our tasks as we were trained - as a team”. That was Yass' last

mission with Carlson. After that, he was assigned his own plane and crew. And though he did have a fairly rough time, all of his “boys” finished up and went home.

As for the five crew members who bailed out, four were immediately captured and brought to Stalag Luft, located near Frankfurt, Germany for interrogation and processing. Kester was injured and spent four months in various hospitals before being sent to Stalag Luft IV located near Kiefheide in the Pomerania sector of Germany near the Polish border. Blum, Mariani, and Brouman were initially sent to Stalag Luft VI at Hydekrug, East Prussia, but were later transferred to Stalag Luft IV. Orlando was the only crew member sent to Stalag XVIIIB, located near Krems, Austria. They spent 14 months as POWs until they were liberated by the US Army in May of 1945.

### Legacy

Each bomber that lumbered down the runway heaving its thirty-plus tons off into their final position in formation, and each fighter that lifted smoothly into the sky represented hundreds of man-hours in pre-flight and post-flight operations. Every aircraft put in the air for a mission carried with it the hopes, anxieties, sweat, cursing, patience, integrity and sometimes tears of hundreds of nameless men – the ground crew.

Let’s not forget the aircrews who flew up from the peaceful British countryside, assembled, and in a matter of minutes, found themselves for much of the air war plunged into an inferno of anti-aircraft fire and lethal air combat – some dying or going into captivity; others limping home with dead or wounded aboard; all undergoing traumatic strain carried gracefully or otherwise for the rest of their lives.

On that fateful day, March 22, 1944, according to Eighth Air Force Strategic Operations, 688 bombers were dispatched, 347 were damaged and 12 were lost. Furthermore, 20 men were wounded in action (WIA) and 135 were missing in action (MIA). The flight of “Able Mabel” was only one journey, of one plane, carrying ten men who survived and returned home safely to tell their stories.

Attachment 1

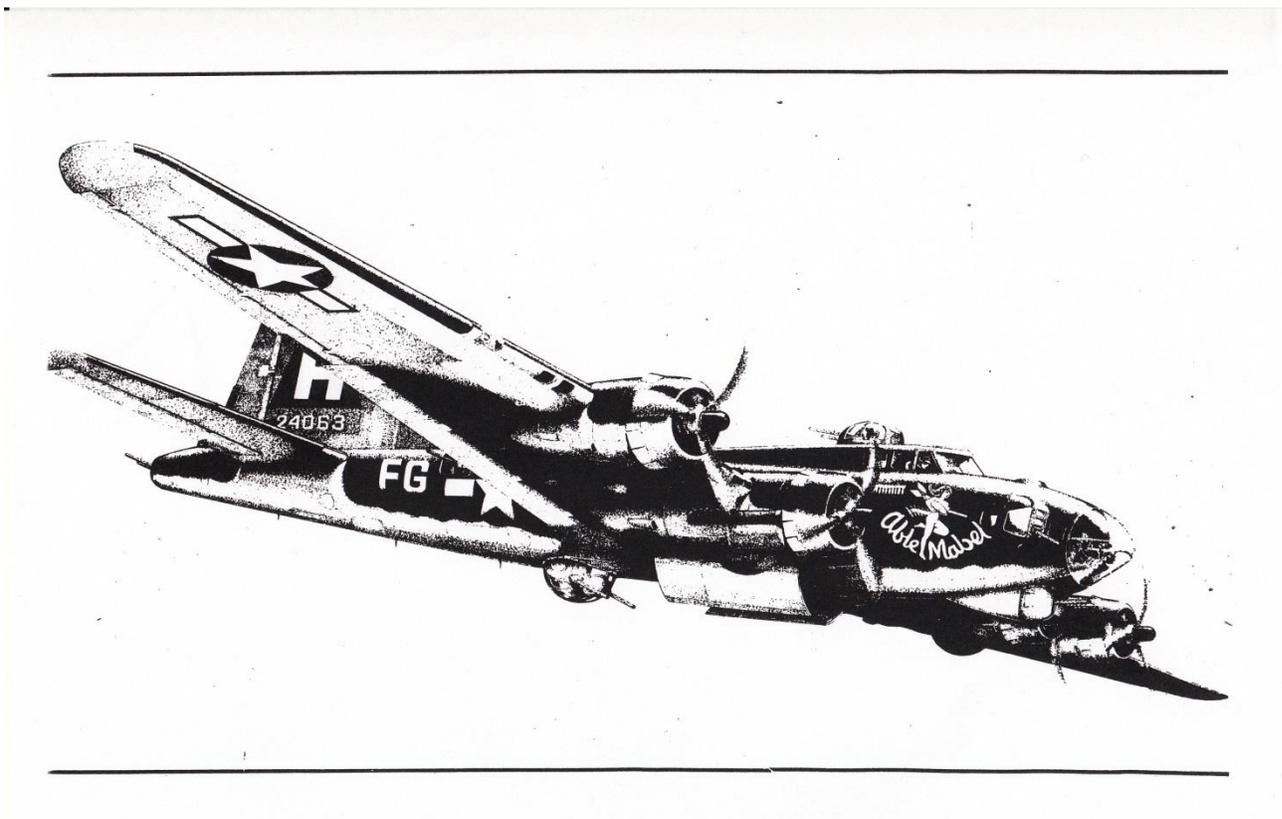


The "Able Mabel" Crew

(top row left to right) S. Soscia, R. Beres, K. Yass, R. Carlson

(bottom row left to right) C. Kester, W. Morgan, N. Orlando, A. Mariani,  
P. Brouman, F. Blum

Attachment 2



### Attachment 3

R.L. Carlson's Combat Crew Missions  
306<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group - 423<sup>rd</sup> Squadron  
Thurleigh, Bedfordshire, England

1<sup>st</sup> - 15<sup>th</sup> Missions listed below extracted from the personal Pilot's Log of Ken Yass

#	Mission Date	Mission Target	Time In Air	Comments
1	Jan 14, 1944	St. Omer, France ( <i>V-Weapon Sites</i> )	4.00 hours	Rocket Coast
2	Jan 21, 1944	St. Pol / Hesdin, France ( <i>V-Weapon Sites</i> )	4.35 hours	Bombs returned to base
---	Jan 24, 1944	Frankfurt, Germany	4.00 hours	Mission recalled ( <i>Bad Weather</i> )
3	Feb 3, 1944	Wilhelmshaven, Germany ( <i>Port Area</i> )	7.40 hours	6,000 lbs - HE Bombs
4	Feb 4, 1944	Frankfurt, Germany ( <i>Industry &amp; Railroad Yards</i> )	6.50 hours	6,000 lbs - HE Bombs
5	Feb 6, 1944	Nancy, France ( <i>Airfields</i> )	6.50 hours	Bombs returned to base
6	Feb 20, 1944	Leipzig, Germany ( <i>Airfield</i> )	9.15 hours	42-100 lb incendiaries
7	Feb 21, 1944	Rheine, Germany (Hopsten airdrome)	7.15 hours	12-500 lb HE
8	Feb 24, 1944	Schweinfurt, Germany ( <i>Ball Bearing Works</i> )	7.50 hours	12-500 lb HE
9	Mar 2, 1944	Frankfurt, Germany ( <i>Marshaling Yard</i> )	7.50 hours	42-100 lb incendiaries
10	Mar 3, 1944	Berlin, Germany ( <i>Industry &amp; Aviation Plants</i> )	6.20 hours	42-100 lb incendiaries recalled
---	Mar 4, 1944	Berlin, Germany	4.00 hours	Abandoned ( <i>Bad Weather</i> )
11	Mar 6, 1944	Berlin, Germany ( <i>Suburban Industrial Areas</i> )	8.25 hours	Co-Pilot as Tail Gunner
12	Mar 9, 1944	Berlin, Germany	9.15 hours	(OFF) 10-500 lb HE
13	Mar 16, 1944	Augsberg, Germany ( <i>Ball Bearing Works</i> )	9.00 hours	10-500 lb HE
14	Mar 18, 1944	Lechfield, Germany ( <i>Air Depots</i> )	8.45 hours	4,560 lbs "Fraggs"
15	Mar 22, 1944	Berlin, Germany	9.00 hours	5 men bailed out Crash landed in UK

## Diary & Journal

Dad's actual diary and journal were documented in four different sources:

(1) Pre-printed numbered pages torn from a **Wartime Log** book. This source was printed not written, very legible and in very good condition considering its age and miles traveled. These pages contain what Dad described as "Dates to Remember" (March 22, 1944 through March 30, 1945). (See Exhibit 28)

Unfortunately, there were a few major gaps in the diary (i.e., Apr 15 - May 29, Jun 6 - 28, Jul 7 - Aug 2, 1944, and Jan 12 - 29, Feb 8 - 21, 1945) and many other individual days that had no entries at all. The majority of the date entries included were one-liners or a few sentences with little detail or explanation. However, it was enough for me to build upon. And, with my own research using the many references available, I was able to uncover an abundance of valuable information which enabled me to enhance Dad's initial effort.

(2) 5½" x 8" lined pages which were probably once part of a bound composition book. This source was written not printed and, for the most part, in very poor condition due to exposure to the elements and abuse. The paper was faded and washed out, almost to the point which it appeared that nothing had ever been written. The writing bled through on several of the pages and some entries were impossible to decipher. These pages contain the details of the last week at Stalag 17B, the 18-day 281 mile "March Across Austria", and encampment in the forest where the POWs were liberated by the American forces (March 31st through May 3rd). It's a miracle that this part of the diary even survived the journey. (See Exhibit 29)

I read several other POW accounts of the march and compared them with Dad's in order to fill in some of the blanks. But, it was difficult to coincide the dates, the distances covered and cities along the route. It became evident that conflicting details were most likely the result of bad weather, terrible living conditions, and dangerous circumstances which added to the confusion as the massive human wave moved across the Austrian countryside.

(3) A few 3½" x 6" lined pages which were probably torn from a note pad. This source was written not printed, very legible and in good condition. These pages contain the details of the few days waiting at Ranshofen, Austria, the trip to Le Havre, France, and time spent at Camp Lucky Strike (May 5th through May 11th). (See Exhibit 30)

Dad remained at Camp Lucky Strike until May 20th, but for some reason it appears that none of this time period was documented in any diary or journal. However, there is always the possibility that it was and the pages were either misplaced or destroyed.

(4) A 6½" x 8" hardcover journal with lined pages. This source was written not printed on one side of each page, very legible and in good condition. This was actually the first phase of the book my dad was planning to write about his time spent in the military. He started it during the first week of May 1945 but for some reason never finished telling his story. The last item noted was his arrival in England on November 20, 1943. This was the "book" my Aunt Clem referred to in her letter to my dad, dated August 17, 1945. (See Exhibit 31)

Sorry to say that Dad's goal to write and complete his book never came to fruition. It's hard to say why he never finished it, but getting married and providing for his family was definitely a distraction. I'm sure with a little literary assistance, he could have authored a book as several of his fellow kriegies did. However, over the years many more stories and details of his wartime experiences were shared. And, that together with his diary, journal and letters enabled me to produce this document which will preserve his story for generations to come.

\*\*\*\*\*

Any information that appears in (*brackets*) was obtained from the many "References" listed at the end of this document. Any items that appear in **bold type** are further explained in the "Nice to Know" section.

“It was on March 22nd that we abandoned our bomber over Germany proper about one hundred miles west of Berlin. It was 2:15 p.m. when I bailed out and was captured shortly after hitting the ground. Thus, I joined the **Caterpillar Club**. Our plane was badly damaged and aside from my other four crew members, it still remains a mystery to me what happened to the other five members remaining and the plane itself. I was captured by civilians and a few young **German Home Guard**. We were then put aboard a train and arrived at **Dulag Luft** on March 23rd at 6:00 p.m. There I was assigned a room 6'x4'x8' and remained there in solitary confinement for thirteen days.”

“Dulag Luft is in Frankfurt, Germany and its there you are sent so they can third degree you for information. Frankfurt itself was in shambles and a mass of wreckage when I went through it. While I was there the American POW camp outside of Frankfurt was badly damaged and luckily only one American killed. My daily food ration was two slices of buttered bread and a bowl of soup a day. Some days I had nothing to eat to bear my mind that they were seeking information.”

“I was interrogated three times and on April 5th at 6:30 p.m. I was released from solitary and taken to a barbed wire inclosure with other airmen to await transportation to prison camp. The food was the same with the exception that if you cared for seconds on lousy soup it was all yours. In addition to this improvement the Russian prisoners who were stationed there permanently, sent us two cigarettes per man a day. They were decidedly inferior to American butts but tasted good after being without them for so long a time.”

“April 9th was eventful because about 4:00 p.m. 100 Americans and yours truly arrived at **Stalag XVIIIB** in Austria after leaving Dulag Luft on April 6th. The trip, three days and three nights, was in a cold box car. Besides the meager Gerry (slang for German soldier) rations, five men shared one 10 lb **Red Cross food parcel**. And I enjoyed my first American butt since March 22nd. At our permanent prison, we were de-loused, had our hair cut off completely and finally given a royal reception by the old **Kriegies** as we had news from the outside world. All of this has truly been an experience, one which I shall never forget.”

### **Dates To Remember 1944**

Mar 22 - Bailed out over Germany on return from Berlin raid.

Mar 23 - Arrived at Dulag Luft (Frankfurt). Remained there in solitary for thirteen days.

*(Treatment was exceedingly harsh, with solitary confinement, little food, rodent infestation, intolerable living conditions and threats of violence. No amount of calculated mental depression, privation and psychological blackmail was considered excessive. Many of the airmen who arrived wounded were denied medical attention, a flagrant violation of the **Geneva Convention**. All POWs were shut up in small cells 8' high x 5' wide x 12' long that had no windows. They were denied cigarettes, toilet articles and Red Cross food parcels. No one came around, day or night, except for a guard with food, which was generally very poor. Bad living conditions were specifically designed to lower morale and cause mental depression. Usually the period of confinement lasted 4 to 5 days, but it could have been as long as 30 days as permitted by the Geneva Convention. Most POWs successfully withstood the harsh treatment and yielded no important military information other than name, rank and serial number).*

*(On April 6th, Dad was put on a truck and taken down to the railroad yard at Frankfurt. It was there that he was put in a filthy boxcar, over crowded with at least 50 other fellow POWs, the same type that the Nazis were using to transport Jewish political prisoners and refugees to labor and death camps. He was officially on his way to the infamous Stalag 17B. It was at this time when he actually witnessed the Jews being sent to, what he later found out to be, their "final destination").*

Apr 9 - Easter Sunday. Arrived at Stalag 17B Krems, Austria.

*(The foothills of Austrian Alps were a beautiful landscape with vineyards and farms everywhere. Across the Danube River on top of some hill stood an old castle where Richard the Lion Hearted was supposed to have been imprisoned. And, a small village just west of Gneixendorf was said to have been the birthplace of Beethoven. Here also in the middle of the this countryside of rolling hills and thick forest, stood a bleak outpost and ugly place - the sprawling eyesore and den of misery known as Stalag 17B, Nazi Germany's third largest and most notorious POW camp. To free-spirited airmen accustomed to seeing only the pastoral outlines of the German landscape or the tops of cities, the ominous, tightly-pressed surroundings were troubling and dangerous. When Dad arrived he was quickly processed - deloused, shaved, "mug shots" taken, assigned prisoner number 106149, dog tags issued - and released into a wide compound where he found a bed in barracks 30B, which was to be his home for the next 12 months).*

Apr 15 - Wrote home first time since being shot down.

*(No letters or cards could be written unless the required letter form or postal card that the Germans issued periodically were used. The number of mail forms and postcards issued to each prisoner varied at different times - from 2 mail forms and 2 postcards, to 4 mail forms and 3 postcards. Anything else that was used was destroyed, as were the required forms if the writing was illegible or went beyond the printed lines. Airmail letters from the camp to the U.S.A. were not permitted until July 1944).*

May 29 - RAF (Royal Air Force) bombed a nearby airfield. Trench invasion by GIs.

*(At first prisoners were not allowed out of the barracks during an air raid. But as time went on, the guards did let them go to the trenches. This particular attack involved an airdrome east of the camp. The exploding bombs, flak guns flashing, shells exploding and the flares lighting up the night sky provided exciting entertainment for the boys for the moment. Several planes were shot down, one coming close to the camp. It was later discovered that three days prior to the attack the British Pathfinder had laid out the camp and at the last minute realized the mistake and signaled the approaching bombers to return home. After that the boys sweated out the night air raids. There were at least 21 air raids in the vicinity from December 1943 through March 1945).*

Jun 6 - RAF bombed local targets.

Jun 28 - Daylight raid by American bombers. A good sight for sore eyes.

*(The daylight raids by the Americans were bittersweet. The boys would cheer as the bombers crushed the rail yards at Krems or flew overhead toward the military industrial targets outside Vienna, but often were reminded that many of the guards had families nearby and that retribution might come at POW expense).*

Jun 29 - Night raid by RAF. It was quite close. Cannon and machine gun fire were right overhead. There were flares galore. A 20 mm link was found on a boxing ring along side of our barracks.

Jul 3 - Local bombing by American bombers and RAF.

Jul 4 - Many sports activities took place. All-star softball game. North-South softball game. Ten boxing bouts. Sorry no fireworks.

*(The boys were allowed to put on a real Fourth of July celebration and nearly everyone turned out for it. The morning began with a single roll call which was the only one that day. A musical program by the "Day Dreamers" followed and something was going on the rest of the day. Boys from northern and southern states made up teams of the camp's best ball players and they played baseball. Afterward, the camp leader gave a stirring patriotic speech during a program which ended the day's events).*

Jul 7 - "Hellzapopin" play presented by GIs. It was really good.

*(The theater was called the "Cardboard Playhouse" It was constructed mostly from the cardboard cartons the Red Cross food parcels came in. The stage productions were made possible by the concerted efforts of artists, writers, actors, singers, dancers, musicians and comedians. Those who could not entertain worked as stage hands, carpenters, electricians, painters, etc.).*

Aug 2 - Raid by American bombers.

Aug 10 - "Birth of Boogie Woogie" play.

Aug 15 - Southern France invaded.

Aug 22 - Raid by American bombers.

Aug 24 - Raid by RAF

Sep 4 - Labor Day. Fourth of July repeater.

Sep 11 - Raid by American bombers.

Sep 13 - "Charlies Aunt" play.

Sep 15 - American POW killed by German guard. Received military funeral.

*(Prisoner interaction with German overseers was generally limited to twice-daily roll calls and an occasional barracks sweep searching for what they considered to be contraband - crystal sets, unpunctured Red Cross food cans, etc. Guards were very hateful, sometimes even brutal, and the shadow of death lingered over the camp. One night, quick-trigger guards shot an unbalanced POW who ran screaming across the compound. His body laid sprawled across the fence until the following morning as a warning to his fellow kriegies. However, any prisoner killed while attempting to escape did not receive a military funeral).*

Sep 19 - Received my first letter from home. Was sure glad to find out everyone was alright.

*(Nothing did more to raise or lower prisoner morale than mail call. Although the amount of incoming mail was not restricted, it was very irregular and considered to be unsatisfactory. Since all of the mail had to be processed through Stalag Luft 3, censorship often delayed it 4 to 5 weeks. Regular mail to the camp averaged 3 months in transit from the U.S.A. and airmail 2 months. However, because of censorship and processing, incoming mail often took 4 months for delivery. This erratic German delivery system led some*

*POWs to suspect, incorrectly, that the enemy was torturing them by withholding letters from home. Outgoing mail had similar problems. Prisoners were permitted to send three letters and four postcards a month. However, after passing the censors, each communique took three to four months to reach its addressee. The delay was caused by its having to pass through both the prisoners' own and the German censors. The job of the kriegie censors was to make sure that no POW inadvertently disclosed escape plans or clandestine operations within the compounds).*

Sep 25 - Received letters from home again and one from Cousin Carmella.

Oct 5 - My good buddy Lou Beske arrived in camp today. It's been a year since we last seen each other.

Oct 11 - American fighter plane belly tanks land in camp.

Oct 13 - American bombers bombed targets nearby in Vienna.

Oct 15 - GI play "You Can't Take it With You".

Oct 22 - American-English soccer games in morning and afternoon. Bombers bomb locally again.

Oct 25 - Received personal parcel from home. Have now received a total of twenty letters from home. Food situation is getting serious.

*(Personal parcels were permitted every 60 days with a government permit under the Geneva Convention, but most parcels were lost in transit or stolen. As per regulations, parcels from home could not weigh over 11 lbs and could not be over 18" long or over 42" in length and girth combined. Parcels often arrived in 2 months but the average time in transit was 3 to 5 months. When parcels were delivered to the camp, a list of recipients was posted in the barracks. These men were required to line up outside of the delivery room. Before the POW could take possession of his parcel, the German guards would open the parcel, take everything out and puncture holes in any canned foods).*

Nov 3 - Big night raid by RAF. It was the closest yet. Scared us all a little.

Nov 5 - Daylight raid by Americans. Five P-38s (**Lockheed P-38 Lightning**) came down to low level. Sure felt like old times.

Nov 6 - Big day raid. Plenty of airplanes fly overhead. They came in force and did a good job of bombing.

Nov 7 - Bombings are so frequent nowadays that our boys are now building air raid ditches. We're preparing for a rough winter.

*(Austria was facing its worst winter in decades).*

Nov 8 - Seen snow for the first time here. It's getting colder all the time. Took my second hot shower in eight months. That was my second opportunity.

Nov 9 - Received cigarettes from home. Just a year ago today I was home.

Nov 10 - Received my last Red Cross parcel today. Don't know when I'll receive one again. Camp is out of them.

*("Pay Day" was the day that the Red Cross parcels were issued. It was usually on a Friday, regardless of when they actually came in. The parcels, depending on just how many the Germans allowed the boys to have, were divided up as equally as possible by the Americans in charge. This came out to about 2 and sometimes 3 men to a parcel. However, when things really got tight, it came down to 5 to 7 men to a parcel. Even though they were really meant for just one man for one weeks ration. The Germans would puncture all of the canned goods with their bayonets. Every week or so they had searches and any cans found not punctured were confiscated. The cans were punctured to ensure that the contents were used as soon as possible, thus preventing the hoarding of items which could be utilized by escapees on the run. The German POW camps were expected to stock enough of the parcels to provide one week of sustenance for each American. In reality, many Red Cross crates disappeared en route).*

Nov 11 - One year overseas. Very cold and snowing again. Camp observed **Armistice Day** by saluting and standing at attention while taps was being blown.

Nov 12 - GI play "Piccadilly Madness". Best play I've seen yet. American-English cast.

Nov 14 - Received one GI blanket. God knows that many of us needed them.

Nov 17 - Big day raid by American heavies (B-17 and B-24 bombers).

Nov 30 - Thanksgiving Day. Nine GIs arrested but were but were released after one day in the boob. Lack of evidence. Horse meat today.

*(POWs who caused a ruckus were put in the "boob" for a few days or more until they cooled down. The boob was the very confining little hut used for solitary confinement in any kind of weather for those considered to be rule breakers. Tunnel digging was a favorite pastime of a number of kriegies. But once a tunnel was discovered it was smashed in and closed, and those involved were immediately sent to the boob for 30 days or more).*

Dec 2 - Received my first Red Cross parcel today. It was very well received believe me. We are sure of getting one next week. Thank God for that.

*(German rations were supplemented by more nutritious food that arrived in Red Cross parcels. Each kriegie usually received one parcel a week. The Allied armed forces paid for and packaged these parcels, which were shipped into Germany by the Swiss Red Cross. In addition to cigarettes and Army-issue chocolate bars, each parcel contained about ten pounds of canned food which usually included the following items: raisins, tuna, liver pate, corned beef, sugar, jam, Spam, prunes, crackers, powdered coffee and condensed milk. Such parcels saved thousands of kriegies from debilitating dietary disorders, and even death from malnutrition.)*

Dec 3 - Raid by American bombers on targets nearby and at Vienna.

Dec 5 - Won a GI blanket. A few were issued to every barrack and I was lucky enough to draw a winning card. It was very well received believe me. GI play "You've Had It". Good show.

Dec 8 - Found out about Frank Santora. His name was in the OK and he is at "II B".

*(Stalag IIB was a German POW camp which was situated 1½ miles or 2.4 km west of the village of Hammerstein, now the Polish town of Czarne, Pomeranian Voivodeship on the north side of the railway line).*

Dec 10 - Raid by American heavies.

Dec 11 - Another raid. New German order today. To receive parcel now a can has to be returned for every one received.

*(All empty cans were turned in and anyone who did not throw more than two or three cans in the bin had to go back and get more or the guards would not allow them back in the parcel line).*

Dec 13 - Started Christmas duty - confession.

Dec 15 - Snowed previous night to cover ground very well. Christmas decorations being put up in barracks.

Dec 16 - My 22nd birthday. No celebration.

Dec 17 - GI play "Man Who Came To Dinner".

Dec 18 - Gestapo inspected camp.

*(The Gestapo, from the German "Geheime Staatspolizei", was the secret state police force of Nazi Germany. Gestapo officials investigated a variety of domestic crimes and they were empowered to imprison people, send individuals to concentration camps, torture prisoners, and engage in a wide variety of other activities which were designed to protect the German state. It became infamous for its ruthlessness and cruelty, leading to the use of "Gestapo" as a slang term for any brutal police force, and it was dissolved after Germany's defeat in the war).*

Dec 20 - One Russian killed and one wounded by crossing the "warning wire" after American cigarettes. They were trading.

*(Double barbed wire metal fences, charged with electricity, about eight feet high and about ten feet apart, with endless coils of barbed wire in between, completely surrounded the camp, separating the compounds from each other and from the road as well. Three-story wooden guard towers, so-called "goon boxes", were at each corner and other towers placed at strategic points in between. Each tower had a 24-hour guard with a mounted machine gun and searchlight. At night street lights were also used to illuminate the entire area. Every night at ten o'clock, the German guards shuttered the windows and barricaded the barracks doors with heavy wooden bars. Sentries with Schmeisser machine pistols slung around their necks and accompanied by vicious attack dogs patrolled the camp the entire night).*

*The Germans piled tin cans at the base of the inside fence to alert guards to kriegies inside the "warning wire". It was a single strand of barbed wire supported by stakes about two feet high. It ran around the entire inside perimeter of the camp, about 25 feet from the outer fence, and was clearly marked at intervals. Any POW touching or crossing the warning wire during the daytime would be fired upon immediately. The tower guards had orders to shoot and kill anyone seen somewhere they weren't supposed to be. In addition, POWs were not allowed to be outside their barracks during the night unless the air raid siren sounded and they were ordered to hit the trenches).*

Dec 25 - Christmas Day. Eve night was swell. Attended midnight mass. Little party last night. Coffee and pudding served. Initial start of PA system. Good show put on. Had a few fireworks given to us by Germans. Boys' spirits were high. It wasn't too bad except I was a little homesick.

*(In November, the Germans let the boys have a loud speaker system that had come in from Switzerland. After much haggling, they were allowed to put it up a few hours each day. Some barracks with good hook-ups listened to good old American recordings. On Christmas Eve and New Years Eve they listened to programs put on by the boys that the folks at home would have enjoyed).*

Dec 26 - Received Christmas parcel.

Dec 27 - Raid by AAF (U.S. Army Air Forces).

Dec 28 - Raid by AAF in nearby vicinity.

Dec 29 - One Russian buried.

*(The Americans and the French had the best funerals, with military salutes and flagged draped wooden coffins. But the Russians and the Italians were simply wrapped in heavy paper, put on a stretcher and carried off by two comrades accompanied by one or two German guards, about three quarters of a mile to a densely populated graveyard. The Russian POWs suffered beyond comprehension - they were detested, feared and treated worse than animals. The Germans ignored sickness and starvation, and as a result they died in droves. Everyone in the Russian compound would be dead in about two months. There were burials every day. They carried out 15 to 20 bodies in the morning, and 3 to 5 bodies in the afternoon. Then a new group of prisoners would be sent in. The Russians had not signed the **1929 Geneva Convention** agreement, which on paper guaranteed humane treatment of POWs).*

Dec 30 - One Russian buried.

Dec 31 - New Years Eve. Hoped to have celebrated this one at home. Will have to make up for it someday.

## Camp Life

“This is the story of life in our prisoner of war camp here in Stalag XVIIIB at Krems, Austria. In my little story I will try to explain, as simple as possible, our life here during the war. The camp here is located about 30 miles due west of Vienna. And situated in a valley with numerous mountains surrounding. The grounds are fairly well vegetated and there are quite a few rainfalls during the year.”

“The American POWs total here is about 4,200 with an estimated 4,000 of other nationalities nearby. All the Americans are non-commissioned officers therefore it eliminates their working or going on **Kommando** for the Germans. That doesn't apply when at the point of a Gerry's bayonet which, incidentally, happens quite a few times.”

“Now to get down to the actual camp life. We have eighteen barracks in all but only fourteen are inhabited. The barracks is divided into halves, A and B respectively. A total of 300 men is in a barracks, 150 in each half. There's a washroom in the middle of the barracks and two stoves furnish heat. We have one stove to cook on and by alternating, everyone manages to cook something daily. Lights and water are only on for short periods of time. Roll Call ranges anywhere from two to five a day and the first is seven a.m.”

“Our camp is run by one of our own men who is elected into office. In our case, S.Sgt. Kenneth Kurtenbach has been camp leader since its first election. Other men get different positions by the same method. The five officers here, 1 major and 4 captains, do not have very much to say in running the camp. Of the five, one is the chaplain and the other four medical men.”

“The food given to us by the Germans isn't very good. The parcel we receive weekly from the Red Cross is really our well being. Without it many of us would never have survived this far.”

“Incidentally, two American men have been killed here up to now which isn't a bad omen. One was shot trying to escape and the other because he went crazy. Clothing is issued as much as possible but controlled by the Germans. They issue us each an equal amount and everyone is in good shape. The theater here is quite the thing. It has produced some good plays. Once in a great while we see an American movie.”

“Luckily we have plentiful sports equipment. Every sport imaginable took place at one time or another here in camp. Baseball, football, basketball and boxing were the most popular respectively.”

## The Reality of the POW Condition

Dad was too kind with depiction of life at Stalag 17B. Conditions were deplorable, and the kriegies faced many hardships and health hazards:

*(The camp cookhouse supplied only one cooked ration a day. The food provided was primarily barley, rutabaga or potato soup that had the consistency of glue (more often fish heads or other assorted discards), with little white cabbage worms floating in it and moldy black hardtack bread, so-called "goon bread", that was full of black insects and rumored to contain sawdust. Spuds, salmon, corned beef, horsemeat, cooked barley, prunes and raisins were served a few times a month. The Germans also dispersed uncooked rations for the krieges to prepare in their makeshift kitchens: worm-infested potatoes, margarine that looked like axle grease, and blutwurst, a sausage made from onions and congealed animal blood. However, kriegie ingenuity produced a daily diet that barely sustained life. Hot water was provided on a regular basis, to be used for making coffee and soup as well as shaving. Needless to say, the food was substandard and rations were skimpy - malnutrition and near starvation would better describe the situation.*

*Dysentery and diarrhea were commonplace. All of the kriegies suffered from the infestation of lice and fleas and rats ran rampant around the compound. The barracks were cold, dark and damp with no heat. There was a single stove and scant fuel - only 54 lbs of coal per week for the entire barracks. Most of the kriegies developed chilblains due to the constant cold, causing their feet to swell and crack. At night, the fleas and lice would feed in these cracks. Kriegies shared straw-filled flea-ridden mattresses in triple-decked bunks. They also shared washbasins into which cold water ran only a few hours each day and a single indoor latrine for use after dark. The large daytime pit latrines, which were located between the barracks, overflowed regularly filling the air around the living areas with a deplorable stench. Hot water and showers were rare, contributing to poor hygiene making life at the camp precarious. Medical services were scandalous; the equipment was antiquated and the number of trained personnel inadequate.*

*Historians have made much of the Germans' general adherence to the Geneva codes and the low death rate in the stalags, approximately 5 deaths per 1,000 prisoners, but the Germans provided neither food nor clothing that met the standards of the Geneva agreements. Treatment was never considered good, and the guards were very hateful. There were times when things even became brutal. Even the camp's officers showed very little consideration for the kriegies well-being often ignoring the terms of the Geneva Convention).*

**American Red Cross POW Food Parcel No.10  
(10" square, 4" high)**

CONTENTS

1 can milk	1 can Spam
1 can coffee	1 can corned beef
½ lb sugar	1 can salmon
1 can jam	1 box "C" rations
2 D-bars	½ lb cheese
1 can liver paste	1 lb butter
5 packs cigarettes	

*(Bartering between POWs and even guards was serious business, sometimes a matter of survival. The D-bar quickly became the "monetary unit" for all trading of other commodities. In addition, cigarettes and coffee were also popular items used for bribing guards and trading with the other nationalities).*

**Kriegsgefangen Kelly**

*Kelly get your barracks bag,  
the shipping list is here.  
We're sailing on the first tide  
for home and yesteryear.*

*But Kelly stirred no muscle,  
to join the homing flock.  
He was parked before his stove  
beside a Red Cross Box.*

*Kelly we're a sailing  
the bitter war is done.  
It's off to the States, boy  
to sweethearts and to fun.*

*But Kelly turned a deaf ear  
his stubbornness uncleft  
I should sail for anywhere  
with all these groceries left !*

*It's a sad tale they tell these days  
along the bowery streets  
of Kriegsgefangen Kelly  
with the parcel full of eats.*

*Now some love adventure  
and some love girls in frocks.  
But Kriegsgefangen Kelly  
loved his faithful Red Cross Box.*

## *Song Lyrics*

The following song lyrics are not the actual words as originally written or recorded. But, they are the words as remembered by Dad when he decided to write them down on the pages of his diary. Only portions of the lyrics were noted. I have no idea why these particular songs were included and what significance they had for Dad at that time other than the fact that they were popular songs of the era. However, it seemed appropriate to include these song lyrics in this document exactly the way Dad presented them.

"I'll Never Smile Again" is a popular song written by Ruth Lowe in 1939, which was recorded and made famous by Tommy Dorsey and his Orchestra. The best-known version of the song is the recording by the Tommy Dorsey Orchestra featuring Frank Sinatra. This version stayed at Number 1 on Billboard for 12 weeks, from July 27 to October 12, 1940, and was inducted into the Grammy Hall of Fame in 1982. Glen Miller and his Orchestra also recorded a version of the song in 1940. In 1961, the Platters brought the song back to the Top 40. It has been recorded by many other artists since becoming a standard.

*I'll never smile again, until I smile at you  
I'll never laugh again, what good would it do  
Tears would fill my eyes, my heart would realize  
that our romance is through*

*I'll never love again, I'm so in love with you,  
Within my heart, I know I will never start  
to smile again, until I smile at you*

"Only Forever" is a song popularized in 1940 by Bing Crosby. On October 19th of that year it reached Number 1 on Billboard. It was written by James V. Monaco and Johnny Burke for the 1940 film "Rhythm on the River". The song was also recorded by Nat King Cole.

*Do I want to be with you as the years come and go,  
only forever, if you care to know.*

*How long it would take me to be near if you beckon  
Off hand I would figure less than a second*

*Would I grant all your wishes and be proud of the task,  
only forever, if you care to ask.*

"Why Don't You Do Right?" is an American blues and jazz influenced popular song, now a standard, written in 1936 by Kansas Joe McCoy. It was a twelve-bar song written in a minor key, and is considered a classic "woman's blues" song. It first appeared in 1936 as "The Weed Smoker's Dream" composed by McCoy and recorded by his band,

The Harlem Hamfats. The song was subtitled "Why Don't You Do Now" on the original release. McCoy later rewrote the song, refining the composition and changing the lyrics entirely. The new tune carried the current title and was recorded by Lil Green in 1941, with guitar by Big Bill Broonzy. One of the best-known versions of the song is Peggy Lee's, which was recorded on July 27, 1942 in New York with Benny Goodman. It sold over one million copies and brought her to nationwide attention. It reached Number 4 on Billboard.

*You had plenty of money back in 22  
You let other women make a fool of you  
I fell for your diamond and I took you in  
Now all you've got to offer is a drink of gin  
You sit around wondering what it's all about  
If you don't get some money  
landlord will put you out.*

"Stardust", one of the most recorded American songs of all time, was written by Hoagy Carmichael in 1927, an American composer, pianist, singer, actor and bandleader. It was originally recorded by Carmichael on October 31, 1927, as a mid-tempo jazz instrumental. Lyrics by Mitchell Parish were added in 1929. It was then covered by almost every prominent band of that era. Young baritone sensation Bing Crosby released a version in 1931. And the following year over two dozen bands had recorded it. On May 16, 1930, bandleader Isham Jones recorded it as a sentimental ballad. It became an American standard and is considered to be one of the most recorded songs of the 20th Century with over 1,500 total recordings. In 2004, Carmichael's original 1927 recording of the song was one of the 50 recordings chosen by the Library of Congress to be added to the National Recording Registry.

*Sometimes I wonder why I spent  
the lonely night, dreaming of a song,  
the melody, haunts my reverie.  
And I am once again with you.  
When our love was new  
and each kiss an inspiration  
Oh that was long ago, and now my consolation  
is in the stardust of a song*

*And beside the garden wall, when stars are bright  
and you are in my arms  
The nightingale tells its fairy tale  
of paradise where roses bloom  
Though I dream in vain  
in my heart it always will remain my stardust melody,  
a memory of love refrain*

## Dates To Remember 1945

Jan 1 - New Years Day. Rough War. FW-190 (**Focke-Wulf Fw 190**, German fighter) crashed near camp. No one bailed out.

Jan 2 - AAF raid. Pamphlets were dropped, many of them landing near big hospital. Hank and I started sleeping together.

*(During the winter months men slept two to a bunk, with their overcoats and caps on, in order to keep warm by sharing blankets as well as body heat. This buddy system was just one way in which men would look out for each other. Many of the boys formed "combines" of two to five men, pooling all their foodstuffs received from home and Red Cross parcels).*

Jan 7 - GI play "Parade of Stars".

*(In addition to the plays put on by the boys, sometime during the month of January, the Germans let the boys see a couple of old American films and a few French and German movies).*

Jan 10 - Hot bath.

Jan 11 - Four inches of snow. Very cold.

Jan 12 - Snowed again. Very hard to keep warm.

Jan 29 - One US Infantryman died of wounds received on Western front.

Jan 30 - Bill "Dub" Purser received p. parcel from home.

Feb 2 - Warm day for a change.

Feb 3 - Shake down. Nothing found by Gerry.

Feb 7 - Big air raid AAF. Nearby **flak** battery shot one ship down and hit seven others. No one bailed out. A string of bombs hit the valley. We hit the trenches.

Feb 8 - Another raid. Bombs hit pretty close. Couldn't see what Air Force did bombing because of thick overcast.

Feb 14 - Received mail from home telling me about Bill Morgan and Rags Carlson being safely home.

*(1st Lt. Ragnar L. Carlson, Pilot and T/Sgt. William H. Morgan, Engineer were part of crew which crash landed the B-17G "Able Mabel" on the English coast ending its 15th Mission on March 22, 1944).*

Feb 21 - Evacuees in covered wagons on road. Rumored their from East Prussia.

Feb 22 - Covered wagons on road.

Feb 23 - Covered wagons on road.

Feb 24 - Covered wagons on road.

Feb 25 - Received cigarettes from home (6 ctn).

Feb 26 - Covered wagons on road.

Feb 27 - Covered wagons on road.

Feb 28 - "Dub" received cigarettes from home. Covered wagons on road again. There was an air raid almost every day in February. I imagine there will be a lot more activity in this vicinity soon.

Mar 1 - It came in like a lion. About 9:00 a.m. a bunch of P-38s came over camp. They **strafed** a train over at Krems. It was an oil train and the smoke really flew. When they pulled up they came right over camp. Good show. Later heavies came over and dropped a bunch of bombs over the hill. Shook the barracks.

*(Heavies were American bombers B-17s and B-24s, or British Lancasters and Halifaxes)*

Mar 2 - AAF raid in vicinity.

Mar 4 - Snow, windy and cold.

Mar 5 - AAF raid in vicinity.

Mar 8 - Manny returned from hospital.

Mar 9 - AAF raid in vicinity.

Mar 10 - Mail call. No luck.

Mar 12 - AAF raid. New German CO (Commanding Officer).

Mar 13 - AAF raid in vicinity.

Mar 14 - AAF raid. One bomb fell nearby.

Mar 15 - AAF raid. Couldn't see them but they flew right over camp. **Chaff** mail.

Mar 16 - AAF raid. Clear day. One P-51 came past camp. Strafed valley. Pilot of chaff plane that went down on Feb 7 got out safely.

Mar 18 - Three shots fired in camp.

Mar 20 - Two shots fired. Hot bath. Air raid.

Mar 21 - Big AAF raid in vicinity.

Mar 22 - One year a POW for Bill Aney and me. AAF raid.

Mar 23 thru 25 - AAF raids. St. Polten hit.

Mar 26 - P-51 and P-38 strafed nearby.

*(This time joined with Russian fighter planes).*

Mar 30 - One year for Pap, Jim, Gibbs, Ognan. Boys tell me it can't last. Rumors galore.

Mar 31 - One Russian killed in next compound.

Apr 1 - Easter Sunday. AAF raid in vicinity.

*(Two or three P-38s buzzed the camp as they were making their turn strafing Krems, about two miles below the camp).*

Apr 2 - AAF hit St. Polten and Krems. Bombers came right over camp. They released their bombs right over camp. You could see them leave ship. The whine and explosion were terrific. Later in the day P-38 strafed in vicinity. You could see six big fires going on from camp.

*(Bombs dropping close by, the shaking of the barracks, the assault of rumor and anticipation all took a toll on the boys physical and mental well being - wearing them down and creating even more anxiety about their future).*

Apr 3 - Heard about Soscia visiting my folks in letter received today. Russian planes in vicinity. Soldiers and mechanized units on the road.

*(2nd Lt. Salvatore Soscia, Navigator, was a part of the crew which crash landed the B-17G "Able Mabel" on the English coast ending its 15th Mission on March 22, 1944).*

Apr 4 - Rumored strongly that we are going to move in a few days.

*(The Americans of Stalag 17B could tell something was happening. Russian armies from the east and American armies from the west were crushing the remnants of the Nazi war machine between them. American planes appeared overhead almost daily, while thunderous flashes of light to the east confirmed the approach of the Russian Army seeking vengeance for the atrocities the Germans had committed on them earlier in the war. Across eastern Germany the Nazis had already begun "death marches", herding thousands of suffering political prisoners and Allied captives west toward approaching American forces, from whom the Germans expected better treatment than from the dreaded Red Army.*

*(No diary entry for April 5th, but according to other accounts, a new German captain arrived in camp and ordered the POWs to gather their meager possessions and be prepared to evacuate the next morning. The American camp leader ordered the boys to be ready, but to refuse to leave unless the Germans threatened them with death. Bonfires raged all day and that night, trading was something fierce over the fence. The Russians were rumored to be 30 km from Krems driving on St. Polten, located across the Danube about 12 miles east of the camp).*

Apr 6 - Ordered to pack and get ready to leave tomorrow. Raining and cold. Will be a rough trip.

*(The Germans told the kriegies to pack only what they could carry. They were also warned not to attempt to escape during the march as any who did would be shot. And, the same fate would be met by anyone keeping a journal. The boys selected their partners for the upcoming march, recognizing that in the days ahead it would help to have a teammate. They understood the buddy system and knew that it would help by having two sets of eyes looking for opportunity and avoiding trouble. Dad paired up with "Dub" Purser).*

Apr 7 - Didn't move. Rain and cold. Unmentioned incidents happened which I shall never forget. Ridiculous is the word for many of them.

### **March Across Austria**

I was unable to read the diary entries for April 8 thru 10, but according to other accounts the marchers probably covered 15 to 20 km per day and slept outdoors. I was able to decipher the towns of Ludendorf and Freistitz where the POWs probably spent the night.

*(On April 8th the last roll call was different - horse-drawn wagons were loaded, German soldiers carried heavy packs, officers were dressed and many were outside the gates. The boys were excited, impatient and even the danger was appealing. The gates of the American compounds at Stalag 17B swung open and 4,000 filthy, scrawny and hungry American airmen were evacuated from the camp. The marching column was divided into eight groups of 500, with about 15-20 minute intervals between groups. Each group had an American leader in charge and 20 German guards and two dogs. However, about 200 kriegies stayed behind because they were too sick or couldn't walk. And others had bribed the guards so they could stay. However, this was a bad move because they spent most of April in the air raid trenches, but they were eventually liberated by the Russians in May.*

*The POWs that stumbled out onto the road heading west may have been relieved to be out of their compound, but they quickly discovered that life on the march was no better or safer. They knew there was more danger on the road than back in camp, but they also knew that it was much safer being together rather than going it alone. Soon out of camp they were led onto backcountry roads in order to facilitate the large number of marchers. The narrow roads were scenic and wound across forest floor and hilltop vistas alike. But, as they hit main roads they were shocked at their first glimpse of the world outside - the chaos and traffic, the military vehicles, horse-drawn wagons, soldiers marching, prisoners herded and refugees everywhere).*

*(During the march, the six-man-wide column walked about 50 minutes and rested for ten, averaging 20 km per day. At the end of the day, the marchers were forced to bivouac outdoors regardless of the weather under the guard of machine guns. Days passed slowly as the men struggled along - hesitant to stop to drink from a nearby stream or even to relieve themselves for fear of the guards' rifle butts and bayonets. Feet crammed into worn-out leather boots or camp-issued wooden clogs swelled, bled and blistered. The boys knew that they had to keep moving and it was fast becoming a chore. Most kriegies were not fit for marching at such a pace for such a distance, and before long some had to be carried or placed in wagons when available. Most were sick and suffering from malnutrition. They focused on fighting the fatigue and the fear. Only the nearness of freedom drove many on. When it didn't rain or snow, nighttime brought some relief from pain, as the men lay their tired bodies down to sleep in the woods and fields along the winding country roads.*

*Initial roll calls indicated that dozens of prisoners took off, many of whom were never seen or heard of again. It was believed that some returned to Stalag 17B, rather than die from the effects of the "death march" or being killed by the German guards or irate civilians. As for the guards themselves, each day fewer and fewer took to the roads. Most of them were older men of the Wehrmacht [the armed services of the German Third Reich from 1935-1945] who had trouble keeping up with the kriegies. They suffered along with the POWs and a few even died during the march. They had to sleep outdoors in shelter-halves, got very little food, and had the fear of knowing they would eventually be prisoners of the Americans if the Russians didn't kill them first. They were slipping off during the night, knowing that their odds of survival were waning, as the kriegies bettered with every step. Those who stayed most likely had nothing to gain by leaving. They were the farthest from home and were not likely to survive heading east back with the Russian advance).*

Apr 11 - Covered 14 km today. Warm and sunny day. Slept outdoors for the fourth night in a row. Received one slice of bread a days ration. We have received very little food from the Germans and if we hadn't had some of our own food many of us wouldn't have gotten too far. Poggstall

*(Rations were in short supply along the way. The Germans did this on purpose to prevent the marchers from saving up food which could help them in attempting to escape from the group. The Red Cross parcels issued to each man at the onset of the march were soon exhausted. Food remained scarce. Guards provided little more than a few uncooked potatoes, some barley soup and bread. At night, healthier prisoners prowled nearby fields and farms for anything edible. The Germans fed the boys once every second or third day and had nothing unless it was confiscated from civilians along the way. The boys lived off the farms commandeered by the guards. The farmers grieved at the scourge of hungry prisoners foraging for food and treated them with grudging indifference).*

Apr 12 - Made 21 km in 4 hours. Rained all day long. All our blankets and clothes completely wet. Slept in a lumber barn. Very cold night. One bowl of soup today from Gerry. Isperdorf

*(The boys got word that President Roosevelt had died. Outrageous stories circulated that foretold a terrible chaos. All kinds of negative rumors were started regarding the outcome of the war and their immediate future, just adding more anxiety and uncertainty to an already desperate situation).*

Apr 13 - 6th day. Covered 20 km along Danube. Rain all day. Everyone tired and wet. Received German Army K- rations at town of Klamm where we slept over night. People very nice. Traded for bread, beans and potatoes. Stayed 24 hours in town of Klamm.

Apr 14 - Spent the day and night at Klamm. For first time we were fed pretty good. People very sociable. Weather fair and cloudy. Lot of refugees also here.

Apr 15 - Covered 17 km. Good walking. Warm and sunny. Slept in barn. Traded cigarettes for bread. Strong **Hitler Youth** organization here. Ate. Naarn

*(The Hitler Youth Organization was rotten to the core and just as fanatic, barbaric and bloodthirsty as the Nazi SS [from the German "SchutzStaffel" translated as Protection Squadron]. They were known to carry assault rifles, grenades and even bazookas. They were encouraged to capture or kill shot-down Allied airmen who parachuted into Germany).*

Apr 16 - Covered 23 km. Only 10 km from **Linz**. Vast numbers of POWs being moved all over Austria. Unbelievable incidents happened. Weather warm and sunny. You really know a war is going on here. Steyregg

*(Back on the road early each morning, the columns dodged increasing numbers of rumbling German vehicles, and the wide-eyed POWs stared in horror as they passed living skeletons in striped pajamas with yellow stars on them. It was their first encounter with Nazi Germany's tormented mostly Jewish political prisoners. Walking through the town of Mauthausen, which is located near a concentration camp, they experienced up close the atrocities the German soldiers inflicted upon the refugees. On the road, the Nazis would shoot anyone who could not go on and would have their bodies thrown into horse-drawn wagons. In the work and death camps kriegies saw slave laborers beaten to death and piles of dead bodies).*

Apr 17 - 24 hours rest. Warm and sunny day. Slept outside for second night in a row. Received bread and soup. Lot of activity nearby all day and night long. Feet giving me a little trouble.

*(When approaching the outskirts of Linz, the kriegies saw many bomb craters, unexploded bombs, radar chaff, and parts of planes strewn everywhere).*

Apr 18 - Covered 21 km by 12:00 pm. Rested and got bread and soup again. Air raids going on all the time here. Supposedly we are halfway to our destination. Don't know how I got this far already. Feet have been giving me a lot of trouble. Went through Linz. P-47 (**Republic P-47 Thunderbolt**) strafed in Linz. Crossed Danube River. Wilhecing

*(The Luftwaffe selected a bridge that led directly into the city in order to expedite the column's movement. Linz was an industrial city of some importance. It had rail yards, river docks, factories and a number of roads running through it. The Allies had targeted it for destruction and bombed it around the clock. It was a city of hollowed buildings and rubble-strewn streets that seemed impassable).*

Apr 19 - Covered 21 km by 12:00 pm. Slept in barn. Received bread and butter, sugar and meat for first time in 12 days. Covered 179 km to date. Cloudy and windy. Food situation is starting to get critical. Eferding

*(Near Eferding, the marchers passed a large airdrome manned by Hungarians. They saw mostly ME-109, ME-110 and JU-88 fighter planes).*

Apr 20 - Covered 25 km. Warm and windy. Slept in barn. It is rumored that we will arrive at our destination in four days. Received potatoes and sugar beets from people on farm here. Covered 204 km to date. All told am the proud owner of twelve blisters. Received soup from Germans. Kallham

Apr 21 - Rested today. Fair and cloudy. Saw US heavies for first time. Supposed to receive **Red Cross parcel** today. All my buddies are doing fine.

Apr 22 - Covered 20 km. Weather cold and snowed a little. Very hilly roads. Slept in barn. Rained all night. Received bread and soup. Aurolzmunster

Apr 23 - Traveled 20 km. Very cold, windy and rain. Slept in barn. Received bread and soup. Altheim

Apr 24 - 24 hours rest. Weather cloudy and fair. Received soup and bread.

Apr 25 - Traveled 23 km to our supposedly final destination but were shocked as the place here is nothing but a barbed wire forest with no water or barracks. Received a French POW parcel. Weather warm and fair. Traveled 286 km to date. Slept out quite cold. Received nothing from Germans.

*(The German guards halted the four-mile long column and ordered the Americans to make camp in a forest - an immense forest filled with ancient, stately pines, spruce and hemlock trees. The Weilhart Forest, located at the fork of the Inn and Salzach Rivers, is 11km southeast of Braunau, Austria, Hitler's birthplace. Braunau is divided by the Inn River - the other half of the city is located in Germany. There, in hastily improvised shelters, the men shivered waiting for deliverance. Roaming German guards patrolled the campsite and the woods surrounding the area, but no escape attempts were made because it was apparent that the liberation forces were in the immediate vicinity).*

Apr 26 - Weather fair and warm. Started to build a cabin made of logs, pine boughs and bark. Tried to make ourselves at home. Collected firewood. Water supply is from the Inn river about a mile away. Received bread and potatoes from Germans.

*(At the start, the boys set up **combines** whereby small groups of men slept together and provided for their basic needs. A collaborative system was set up - some gathered wood, some carried water from the Inn River, some put together or improved upon their shelters, and others took turns getting warm and dry by the massive bonfires. There were huts, log cabins, lean-to's and even wigwams. The most popular and simplest to make was the moss covered pine boughs. However, the roof of any structure leaked, no matter how well it was made. Even after the rain stopped, the water would continue dripping for days).*

Apr 27 - Warm and fair. Received 1/18 loaf of bread and a little barley. Started raining at night.

Apr 28 - Rain all day. Received potatoes. Stood up all night. Miserable night.

Apr 29 - Weather fair and windy. Received 3/4 parcel. Feel a lot better after drying clothes out and eating. Received a little barley from Germans. No bread for five days now. All the boys are doing OK.

Apr 30 - Weather fair and warm. According to the news we could be free pretty soon. Can hear artillery barrages all day long. Lot of 47s and 51s strafing in Braunau.

*(It's somewhat ironic that only three years earlier Dad was working at Republic Aviation as a mechanic in the primary assembly department building P-47 aircraft).*

May 1 - Rain and cloudy

*(As General S. George Patton's Third Army smashed its way across Germany toward Austria, it began liberating thousands of German captives - mostly Jewish political prisoners and captured Allied soldiers and airmen. As May dawned, elements of Patton's 13th Armored Division blasted their way into Austria. They found several groups of chilled, starving, ashen-faced Americans in the woods near Braunau. They were refugees, sergeants of the U.S. Army Air Forces, from the infamous Stalag 17B near Krems, 280 miles to the east. The gaunt prisoners felt lucky to see the men known as the "Black Cats" realizing that their long ordeal was almost over.*

*In the morning of May 2nd, an American spearhead took Braunau, which is only 10 km from the camp. Soon after, an American tank arrived just outside the camp under truce. An Army captain with a big forty-five hand gun climbed out and walked over to meet with the occupants of a Nazi staff car - two officers, one German and one American. He then strode into the camp amid wildly cheering GI prisoners and announced that they were no longer POWs, but American soldiers. The boys were told that the German officers and guards had surrendered but they would have to wait at least one more day for the troops to takeover. Most of the guards had already taken off, but the boys were advised not to hurt those who were waiting to surrender).*

May 3 - Rain and snow. American infantry took over and liberated us. Received bread. Supposed to leave in a day or two.

*(Four jeeps full of U.S. soldiers, led by a tall colonel rounded up and disarmed the remaining German guards, numbering over 200, around the camp and marched them off. Unfortunately, some of the GIs and POWs with "unfinished business" took this opportunity to rough-up the guards. It was rumored that a few were killed. Within a few hours, the woods was a mad house. Horses, cows, pigs, chickens were everywhere. The boys had saddle ponies, automobiles, buses, bicycles and some were dressed in outlandish get-ups. They were truly free men, having the time of their lives).*

May 5 - Moved from forest to an aluminum airplane factory (at Ranshofen). It was raining and we walked ten kilometers to the plant. It is in good shape and had plenty of war material in it. Am receiving **K rations** from soldiers who are taking care of us. Got a good nights sleep for a change. We are supposed to be on our way home in less than five days.

May 6 - Factory here is two miles outside Braunau. The weather was swell today. Took a good hot bath and ate fairly well. Incidentally, we were liberated by the 80<sup>th</sup> Infantry Battalion of the Third Army and the 13th Infantry Division of the Seventh Army. Those boys were in wonderful shape and their word is law among the people here. With their help have accumulated a few souvenirs. All told have been on the road twenty-nine days and covered over 300 kilometers.

May 7 - Weather was beautiful. It's been swell here. Just like an Army base back home. Movies, Red Cross shows, doughnut wagons, radios and such. Receiving plenty to eat. Some of the boys are already on their way home. We're supposed to leave tomorrow. Wrote a **V-Mail** letter home.

May 8 - Another beautiful day. Supposed to leave at 1 o'clock in the morning. Didn't though. Left at four and rode (by truck) for an hour to an airfield (near Pocking, Germany). Slept there for the night. Received a good meal from the Infantry boys.

May 9 - 18 months overseas today. Am on my way home. Took off in a C-47 at 10:30 a.m. and landed at Metz, France two hours later for gas. We are going to Le Havre, France Reached Le Havre at 3:00 p.m. Taken (via GI truck) 30 miles to a camp (Lucky Strike). Here we are to be clothed and fed and sent home. I ate like a pig. Spaghetti was the first thing they fed me.

*(Douglas C-47 Skytrain or Dakota, developed from the DC-3 airliner).*

May 10 - Beautiful day. Had three big square meals today and a shower. Did nothing but rest all day. It's really nice here. Just like an American camp back home.

May 11 - Received clean clothes. Took another shower. Seen movies and **USO** show. Ate very good. Twice a day between meals - egg yokes, malted milks, tomato juice and sandwiches are given out. Received PX (Post Exchange) supplies. Wrote letter home. Splendid weather.

**(End of Diary)**

## **“How It Started”**

“That title may well mean any number of things but in this particular case it deals with the Army career of one Staff-Sergeant Nicholas Orlando of Long Island, New York. This book was started a few days after the liberation of four thousand American prisoners of war by the American Third and Seventh Armies. Nicholas Orlando, or yours truly, was one of these prisoners. It was the happiest day of my life when I was made a free man again on May 2nd 1945. By the time I reach the United States again (two to four weeks) this book should be fairly well finished with a very happy ending. Hope you find it as interesting reading as I had in writing it.”

Nicholas Orlando

May 1945

### **Induction**

“It was on January 21, 1943 when I came into the Armed Forces of the United States. It was a very cold and cloudy day as I remember it now. Two hours after I left home I reported to Camp Upton on Long Island. There I was processed and nine days later, January 30th I was shipped out to a basic training center at Atlantic City, New Jersey. Most of the time while at Camp Upton I worked in the Processing Building, processing fellows, where only a few days before I had gone through the same thing. I called up every other night by telephone to let you know everything was going well with me. A lot of my hometown buddies were with me most of the time I was there. The train ride to Atlantic City took eight hours.”

### **Basic Training**

“Arrived at Atlantic City, New Jersey on January 30, 1943 for my basic training. Quartered in a very good hotel, namely the Claridge. It was a lot better than I expected and I knew it couldn't be too bad. We were quarantined for seven days to get us into the swing of things before we were allowed out of the hotel. The training was not too bad. I enjoyed it and graduated on February 28th. We stood an inspection after our training and the platoon I was in got an excellent superior rating, the best there is. We also took pictures. My sister and several of the girls back home visited some of my buddies who were also there. Did some sightseeing and took some pictures. Also telephoned home quite frequently.”

### **Armament School (March 3, 1943)**

“The day after I graduated from my basic training I was shipped out to Armament School at Buckley Field, Denver, Colorado. I rode on a troop train for three days and three nights. To me then, home was a long way off and I had no idea when I would get there again. For the first light day there I had KP (Kitchen Police). It was a pretty good racket after you got to know a few tricks. At Buckley I studied fifty caliber, thirty caliber machine guns chiefly, with a little of electricity mixed in. We were allowed to town every night and received one day off a week. Jack Martilotta and Jim Iannarone were still with

me. We completed half our schooling there and shipped out to Lowry Field II just a few miles away. Weather was beautiful the last two weeks in March.”

“Arrived at Lowry Field II (April 5, 1943) a few hours after shipping out from Buckley. There I studied 37 mm and 20 mm and the whole business of bombs, that is types, sizes, charge, loading and releasing. It was a very interesting course. Jack and Jim still with me. Took pictures which turned out very good. Oh yes, we had eight more days of KP. The weather kept on being good and we were all brown as potatoes. Visited Denver quite frequently and to me it rates with New York City. It has everything. It was there I received the news of Fred Mazzeo and August Olivieri being killed in North Africa. A chance to get home was on my mind throughout my schooling. Graduated on the 29th of May and received diploma. Jack and Jim still with me.”

### **Replacement Center**

“Arrived at Salt Lake City, Utah on June 1st, 1943. It was there you are placed with some kind of an outfit that needed you. Went through another processing and received overseas equipment. There for ten days. Seen Mickey Rooney. Visited Salt Lake City and seen the Flats. Stood in tights most of the time and really tanned up. Jim and Jack still with me. Looks like we’re going to be separated though. Expect a furlough at next base. Shipped out on the 9th of June. Jack, Jim and myself went on different routes after being together for five months. Shipped out of Salt Lake on June 9th and arrived at Rapid City Army Base on the 10th of June.”

### **Air Base (June 12, 1943)**

“At Rapid City, South Dakota, I was put in an outfit called an Airdrome Squadron (98th). It was a hot outfit and they were ready for overseas duty. I was alone but not for long. Twenty four hours later I met Tony Politano who happened to be in the same outfit as I. We had good times until we were separated. I was an armorer and they weren’t needed so I was left behind when they shipped out on July 1, 1943. I was alone again and decided to go to gunnery school. I passed the test and shipped out on July 17th. On the train I got chummy with Louis Beske, who later became a very good friend of mine. He was in charge of the fellows who were also going to gunnery school. We rode Pullmans and ate very good. Arrived at Ephrata, Washington Air Base on July 21, 1943. It looked like hell and was. Hot sun and dust storms everyday.”

“At Ephrata we went through a gunnery course which lasted almost ten days. It was sufficient for the job we had to do. It was very hot and dusty through the months of July and August. Aside from going to school there for ten days, we did absolutely nothing but eat, sleep, shower daily and play baseball. Took some pictures with my new buddy Louis Beske. We visited Spokane and the Grand Coulee Dam where we also took pictures. It was more or less like a vacation. Really got a tan there too. Didn’t do any flying there lucky for me. One fellow fell out of a plane and another plane hit a mountain. I was assigned to a crew on August 30, 1943 and shipped out for further training the next day. I didn’t have very much time to get acquainted with my crew members. That was only temporary though.”

“Arrived back at Rapid City Army Air Base on September 3rd to take overseas training. It was my second time on this base. Training here lasted until October 20, 1943. Assigned to B-17 as a ball turret operator. I had a swell bunch of boys on my crew. Received an eleven day furlough from September 23 to October 3, 1943. Made a Sergeant before my furlough (Sept 15th). Training went along smooth as scheduled. Had a good look at Mt. Rushmore, Minneapolis, Minnesota and Des Moines from the air. Found out that we were going to Europe by boat. Met John Bergen from home who had just completed the training I was about to take. Shipped out on October 23, 1943 to Scott Field, Illinois which was an Air Camp staging area.”

### **Staging Area**

“Arrived at Scott Field on the 26th of October, 1943. Here we were to be checked to see that we had everything we needed before we go overseas. Complete physical and mental exams had to be taken. Got a pass to St. Louis. Took some pictures of crew members and myself. Ate very good and had a wonderful time while there. Shipped out ten days later to POE at NY.”

### **Port of Embarkation**

“Arrived in New York (Camp Shanks) POE on November 1, 1943. Again we were checked and given anything we needed or wanted. I was all set and managed to get home twice. Seen Joe Giraldi there. Got on boat November 11, 1943, exactly 25 years after the first war was over. The boat was a British middle class luxury liner named “H.M.S. Andes” Arrived Southampton, England on November 20, 1943.”

**(End of Journal)**

## *Letters*

This section contains a sampling of letters written by my dad and a few others between November 24, 1943 and May 13, 1945. I decided to re-type the originals and add some of my own remarks in order to give the reader more of an appreciation for and a better understanding of what actually transpired during the war years.

---

V-Mail

November 24, 1943

Sgt Nicholas A. Orlando  
APO 12514 - Flight JA5  
C/O Post NY NY

Miss Katherine Jareb  
1104 West Broadway  
Hewlett, Long Island, New York

Dear Kate,

I guess you know very well that I'm somewhere overseas just by glancing at this page. I am in the best of health and hope this letter finds you likewise. As yet I haven't seen or done much and that together with the **censors** limits me to write short letters. I won't be able to tell you anything concerning my work while I'm here but I can tell you that I'm in England. Before I forget, I'd like you to send me your cousin Joe's address. If it is possible I'm going to try to contact him and arrange so that we can meet somewhere. It would also help out Kay if you sent my address to Tony and have him write to me first. I have already written to Tommy Christoppolus, he is in England too.

So far as what I have seen of England it is just the same as in the movies. The people I have come in contact with already have been swell to me. They have given me some helpful hints and I'm sure I'll get along swell here. Their money system is quite different than ours so that means I'll have to get down and study their coinage and bills so as not to get hooked. I received your last letter and papers just before I left the States. It would be swell to have you continue sending them. How is everyone and everything back home? Tell Pete and Joey I didn't forget about them and I'll write soon. I'm going to close my letter here Kay hoping to hear from you real soon. My regards to everyone and "Keep 'em Flying". Dusty also says hello.

Nick

---

*(On November 21, 1943, Dad arrived at Thurleigh, England, USAAF Station 111 and was assigned to the 306th Bomb Group, 423rd Squadron [the "Grim Reapers"]. This was a V-Mail Letter which was a standard form with a section for the Censor's stamp. Joe Velotti is Mom's first cousin. Tony is Mom's older brother who was stationed in Guadalcanal. Joey is Mom's younger brother who was stationed in Okinawa. "Dusty" is S/Sgt. Charles W. Kester, Tail Gunner of "Able Mabel" who also bailed out on the 15th mission and was captured by the Germans. Once settled, the natural instinct was to write home and tell your family where you were stationed. However, in an effort to thwart the enemy's excellent intelligence network, no one was allowed to specify an assigned location beyond writing "from somewhere in England." Refer to the "Nice to Know" section of this document for more information on V-Mail and Postal Censorship. Refer to the "In Their Own Words" section for Dusty's story).*

(See Exhibit 38)

Lt. R.L. Carlson 0-804610  
423 Sqdn. - 306 Bomb Gp.  
APO 557 c/o P.M.  
New York, New York

Mrs Mary Orlando  
31 Lawrence Ave  
Inwood, Long Island.  
New York U.S.A.

A.P.O. 557  
4/5/44

Dear Mrs. Orlando,

I am sorry that I have not written to you folks sooner as no doubt you have had an official notification of Nick being Missing In Action.

Dates and details must be withheld but to my estimation I believe he is well and no doubt you will hear from him in due time.

I would like to talk to you and then I could tell you all that has happened but since that is impossible for many reasons I wish to give you my sincere assurance that you will be notified of his well being at the earliest moment.

I would appreciate hearing from you if you receive any additional word from Nick.

Sincerely,

R.L. Carlson

---

*(1st Lt. Ragnar L. Carlson was the pilot of Dad's plane "Able Mabel" which crash-landed on the English coast ending the 15th mission on March 22, 1944. In this letter to my Grandmother, he refers to the Western Union Telegram dated April 6th which indicates that my Dad was reported Missing In Action since the 22nd of March over Germany. Refer to the "Nice to Know" section of this document for information on Postal Censorship).*

Mrs. Mary Orlando  
Inwood, L.I., New York  
31 Lawrence Ave  
Nassau County  
U.S. America

May 15, 1944

Dear Folks,

Dropping you my usual few lines to let you know I'm well and in the best of health. Hope you aren't worrying because there is no reason for it. Food is good and I got quite a bit of wearing apparel. Please make it plain to Mom that I'm perfectly alright. I know you'll understand Babe and I'm quite sure I can rely on you to take care of everything. Don't forget to send those packages. You can send me sweets and cigarettes but consult the Red Cross before packing it. I really haven't anything else to write. Give my regards to all my good friends and answer all letters that you might get from friends of mine. Going to close now folks, don't worry and take good care of yourselves. God bless you and I love you all.

Love,

Nick

S/Sgt N. A. Orlando  
Prisoner Number 106149  
Luft 3

---

*(Dad arrived at Stalag 17B, near Krems, Austria, on Easter April 9th. "Babe" is Dad's Sister Clem. This letter was written using the standard form provided by the Germans. As you can determine from the wording, most of what Dad conveys is very far from the truth, knowing full well that anything else would not pass censorship by the German authorities. See my comments on "Camp Life" in Dad's diary for a better understanding of what the actual conditions were. See October 25, 1944 diary entry for more information on personal parcels. See April 15, 1944 diary entry for more information on German mail forms and postcards).*

(See Exhibit 32)

Mrs. Mary Orlando  
Inwood, L.I., New York  
31 Lawrence Ave  
Nassau County  
U.S. America

May 25, 1944

Dear Folks,

A few words again to let you know I'm in the best of health and hope this card finds you all the same. Don't worry about me and take good care of yourselves. Give my regards to everyone and don't forget the package.

Love,

Nick

S/Sgt N. A. Orlando  
Prisoner Number 106149  
Luft 3

---

*(This letter was written using the standard form provided by the Germans. As you can determine from the wording, most of what Dad conveys is very far from the truth, knowing full well that anything else would not pass censorship by the German authorities. See my comments on "Camp Life" in Dad's diary for a better understanding of what the actual conditions were. See October 25, 1944 diary entry for more information on personal parcels. See April 15, 1944 diary entry for more information on German mail forms and postcards).*

(See Exhibit 33)

Capt. R.L. Carlson 0-804610  
803 Bomb Sq.  
A.P.O. 639  
c/o P.M. N.Y., N.Y.

Miss Clementina Orlando  
17 Rhinehart Place  
Inwood, Long Island  
New York

A.P.O. 639  
7/2/44

Dear Miss Orlando,

I received your letter of June 11 telling me of Nick. I'm sorry this had to happen to anyone but you will never know how glad I am to hear that he is OK.

I have his billfold and it had 14 pounds in it so I have written to my wife to send you the money and if I have the good fortune of getting home I would like to deliver the rest personally.

I would like to have his address but I would like to have you not mention my outfit and if you do just write as I was one of the family.

I have finished my missions and maybe I will get back to the states some of these days.

Please excuse this short note but hope it is welcome.

Regards,

Capt. R.L. Carlson

---

*(1st Lt. Ragnar L. Carlson was the pilot of Dad's plane "Able Mabel" which crash-landed on the English coast ending the 15th mission on March 22, 1944. In this letter to my Aunt Clem, he refers to the Western Union Telegram dated May 18th which indicates that according to a report received by the International Red Cross, my Dad is a Prisoner of War of the German Government. Refer to the "Nice to Know" section of this document for information on Postal Censorship).*

Prisoner of War Mail

S/Sgt. Nicholas A. Orlando  
United States Prisoner of War 106149  
Stalag 17-B, Luft III, Germany  
Via - New York, New York, USA

Miss Clementina Orlando  
17 Rhinehart Pl  
Inwood, L.I., New York

July 2, 1944

Dear Nicky,

When you receive this letter we all hope you are in the best of health. As for us back home we're all fine. Yesterday I went to the City with the girls at the factory. We had a swell time. First we went on a visit to the Saint Lucy Shrine, it's a beautiful place. We took pictures there, if they turn out alright I'll send you a set. After that, we went and had something to eat. Afterwards, took in two shows. First we went to the **Paramount** where we saw "Going My Way" with Bing Crosby, and on stage, the Charlie Spivak Orchestra. Then we went to the **Capitol** where we saw "Two Girls and a Sailor", and on stage, the Sammy Kaye Orchestra. He had a swell stage show. You know that when you come back, you and I are going to do that some time. Remember you always promised me you'd take me, and also take me to see your baseball team play. By the way, they're in third place now. So long Nicky.

Love,

Babe

---

*(See September 19, 1944 diary entry for more information on incoming POW mail. Refer to the "Nice to Know" section of this document for more information on the Paramount and Capitol Theaters).*

Mrs. Mary Orlando  
Inwood, L.I., New York  
31 Lawrence Ave  
Nassau County  
U.S. America

August 4, 1944

Dear Folks,

Just a few lines again to let you know that I'm doing fine and am in the best of health, and hope this letter finds you all likewise back home. There is very little to write about and no need for you to worry because I'm being treated fine and getting along swell. I'm still playing a lot of sports and keeping myself in good ship shape. I get plenty of fresh air and plenty of sunshine. You can very well see that I'm as good as ever.

That's all from here folks. So please don't worry about me and take good care of yourselves. My regards to the neighbors, cousins Gloria and Carmella, and everyone else back home.

Love,

Nick

S/Sgt N. A. Orlando  
Prisoner Number 106149  
Luft 3

---

*(This letter was written using the standard form provided by the Germans. As you can determine from the wording, most of what Dad conveys is very far from the truth, knowing full well that anything else would not pass censorship by the German authorities. See my comments on "Camp Life" in Dad's diary for a better understanding of what the actual conditions were. See April 15, 1944 diary entry for more information on German mail forms and postcards).*

(See Exhibit 34)

Mrs. Mary Orlando  
Inwood, L.I., New York  
31 Lawrence Ave  
Nassau County  
U.S. America

Sept 18, 1944

Dear Folks,

Just a few lines again to let you know everything is fine with me and hope everything is likewise with you all back home. There is very little to write except for you not to worry. I'm in good physical shape and am being treated fine. Under the conditions everything is going satisfactorily so please don't worry. I've been doing a lot of reading lately, so most of my time is being wasted. I get sufficient exercise by playing football and basketball pretty near every day. That's all for now, so I'll close with all my love to you all. My regards to everyone else back home.

Love,

Nick

S/Sgt N. A. Orlando  
Prisoner Number 106149  
Luft 3

---

*(This letter was written using the standard form provided by the Germans. As you can determine from the wording, most of what Dad conveys is very far from the truth, knowing full well that anything else would not pass censorship by the German authorities. See my comments on "Camp Life" in Dad's diary for a better understanding of what the actual conditions were. See April 15, 1944 diary entry for more information on German mail forms and postcards).*

(See Exhibit 35)

Mrs. Mary Orlando,  
Inwood, L.I., New York  
17 Rhinehart Pl  
Nassau County  
U.S. America

Oct 5, 1944

Dear Folks,

A few lines to let you know I received your letters and am happy to read you are all fine. As for me I'm fine and getting along swell. Very little to write, but it is very interesting. A good friend of ours, Louis Beske joined up with us the other day. It was sure a surprise believe me. We were both glad to see each other after such a long time. He is in good health and looking fine so there's no need to worry. Yours truly is likewise. That's about all for now. Also received a letter from Carmella.

Love,

Nick

A few lines to say hello and let you know I will take care of Nick and bring him home safe. Sorry I haven't written sooner but you can see how things are. Bye now.

Louis

S/Sgt N. A. Orlando  
Prisoner Number 106149  
Luft 3

---

*(This letter was written using the standard form provided by the Germans. As you can determine from the wording, most of what Dad conveys is very far from the truth, knowing full well that anything else would not pass censorship by the German authorities. See my comments on "Camp Life" in Dad's diary for a better understanding of what the actual conditions were. See April 15, 1944 diary entry for more information on German mail forms and postcards. Refer to the "In His Own Words" section of this document for Dad's description of Lou Beske. It was almost a miracle that Lou and my Dad got reacquainted at Stalag 17B in October 1944).*

(See Exhibit 36)

Mrs. Mary Orlando,  
Inwood, L.I., New York  
17 Rhinehart Pl  
Nassau County  
U.S. America

Nov 8, 1944

Dearest Folks,

I am writing to you again to let you know I am thinking of you all the time and hope this letter finds you all in the best of health. As for yours truly, I am in the best of health and getting along swell. I am receiving your mail quite regularly now and have also received cigarette and personal parcels from you. Everything has been gratefully received and I love you for what you are doing for me.

Your letters have contained a lot of surprises and I can imagine that things are changing quite a bit back home. Never the less they seem to be all for the good. I haven't anything else to write, try to understand the position I'm in. So I'll close here. Give everyone my regards and remember I love you all always. Here's wishing you all a Merry Xmas and a Happy New Year.

Love,

Nick

S/Sgt Nicholas Orlando  
Prisoner Number 106149  
Luft 3

---

*(This letter was written using the standard form provided by the Germans. As you can determine from the wording, most of what Dad conveys is very far from the truth, knowing full well that anything else would not pass censorship by the German authorities. See my comments on "Camp Life" in Dad's diary for a better understanding of what the actual conditions were. See October 25, 1944 diary entry for more information on personal parcels. See September 19, 1944 diary entry for more information on incoming POW mail)*

(See Exhibit 37)

Sqdn. H - Box 684 A  
W.A.A.F.  
Waco, Texas

Lt Kenneth Yass 0-751786  
USAAF  
Minter Field  
Bakersfield, California

April 20, 1945

Dear Miss Orlando,

Just received your letter although my folks sent it to me some time ago, but I have been moving around so much, it took this long to catch up with me.

I was very much intent on speaking to you and still quite apprehensive as to how you would receive me. To me, it seemed almost a crime to have been on the same ship and for me to come home while some of the other boys weren't as lucky. My mother made me realize that it was a war and those things happen beyond our control. It's hard to describe an experience such as ours in a letter and would much rather tell you in person, but I don't know when I'll again be in New York, so I'll do my best.

First, I'm the co-pilot on Capt. Carlson's crew, and Lt. Soscia is the navigator. Lt. Soscia arrived home about three weeks before me and he wrote me that he had been to LI but missed seeing you. I don't know who else could have been there. We really had a fine crew - happy and co-operative. The boys were all swell and we spent lots of time together. It was only a couple of nights before our last raid that we spent three hours in our **nissen huts** talking. Nick told me all about himself and family - his job at Republic, his family, and girl. We talked like that quite often. I think his best friend was "Dusty" Kester our tail gunner. They liked each other very much, the smallest and biggest boys on the crew.

Along about the first of March, Nick gave his wallet and pay to Carlson to hold for safety as Carlson had a foot locker to keep it in. I understand he had the money sent to you and gave me the wallet to return in person since I lived in New York.

Most of us had approximately fifteen missions to our credit when we started out on March 22 for Berlin.

*(Yass goes on to provide a detailed description of what happened as noted earlier in "A Fateful Farewell for Able Mabel")*

There isn't much after that. The ship was a total wreck and we went on leave the next day for a rest. Morgan, I and Carlson were presented with the D.F.C. for that. I, least of all, deserve it, and I'm sure we'd give it back in a minute if we could have the boys back with us again.

I really cannot blame the boys for getting out even though they weren't ordered, but I wish we could have come back together. Then again, I wonder if we would have made it back if they hadn't gone out - for the difference in weight might have meant the difference to us. That was my last mission with Carlson. After that, I got my own ship and crew. And though I did have a fairly rough time all of my boys finished up and went home.

It was against regulations to notify anyone before the War Department did, so we had to wait, but as soon as possible we wrote to the parents of all the boys reassuring them. As it so happens they are OK, thank God, and hope it won't be long before they come home.

I hope you are able to conceive somewhat of a picture from what I've written, but I find it very hard to put into words an experience such as that. There is lots of red tape for us to write to a P.W., so next time you write will you please enclose my best wishes without using my rank or any part of this story except to say I'm well. As long as the war in Europe is going on, this story is restricted to newspapers or enemy ears, so use careful judgment in whom you show it to.

(Capt. Carlson is at Chanute Field, Section P., Chicago, Ill. Lt. Soscia is at Branch 4, Box 653, AAFNIS, Ellington Field, Texas. Lt. Beres (bombardier) General Delivery, HALF Hobbs, N.M. Bill Morgan (engineer) Sqdn. E, Ardmore AAF, Oklahoma)

I'm down here for six weeks attending Instructors school and will leave here in May to some field to instruct cadets to fly.

Glad I got this off my chest. Hope the happy day comes soon.

Very Sincerely,

Lt. Kenneth Yass 1st Lt. SC

P.S. - I would appreciate any late news from the boys.

---

*(This letter from Ken Yass, Co-Pilot of Dad's crew, was written to my Aunt Clem describing in great detail what actually transpired onboard "Able Mabel" during that fateful mission to Berlin, Germany which took place over a year earlier on March 22, 1944).*

V-Mail

May 13, 1945

To:

Miss Katherine Jareb  
1104 West Broadway  
Hewlett, Long Island, New York

From:

Sgt Nicholas A. Orlando  
APO 12514 - Flight JA5  
C/O Post NY, NY  
ASN 32717953

Dear Kate,

A few words to let you know I'm doing fine and hope this letter reaches you and the family in the best of health. I'm in France now waiting to be sent home and it won't be long before I see you all. After being liberated I've been doing very good. Uncle Sam is feeding me now and it sure is good to be under his care again. There is a lot I would like to write but would take me days to write it. Just wanted you all to know I haven't forgotten about you and hope to see you soon. Might telephone you when I arrive in the States. So look out for me. Going to close now with my best regards to you always.

As ever,

Nick

---

*(Another V-Mail letter. Dad arrived in Le Havre, France on May 9th. He was at Camp Lucky Strike [RAMP Camp No. 1] going through departure processing. He left France on May 22nd. Refer to the "Nice to Know" section of this document for more information on V-Mail, Postal Censorship, RAMP, Camp Lucky Strike, Cigarette Camps, and Le Havre, France).*

(See Exhibit 38)

# *Excerpts from Letters*

*(August 11th to September 21st, 1945)*

The following date entries contain excerpts from letters exchanged between my dad (Nick) and my mom (Kate) few other close family members during the time period involving his convalescence at Fort Logan, Denver, Colorado. The details provided reflect typical family events, world news and movies of the day, as it happened toward the end of the summer of 1945 - a simpler time before television, when the printed word, radio, cinema and live stage shows were the primary sources of news and entertainment.

Clem – Nick's sister

Joe – Kate's younger brother

Tony – Kate's older brother

Nettie – Kate's cousin

Mary – Kate's cousin

Rose – Nick's cousin

Aug 11th (Tony Jareb, Guadalcanal)

I am OK. It is very hot out here in the daytime. It gets cool in the evenings and mornings. I work in the cargo section. I am the chief clerk, it's a nice job. Do you think you'll have to come out to the Pacific? Nice to hear some of the boys were home on furlough. We have a show every night. We see some of the latest shows. After the movies we usually go over to the club for a beer or a coke.

Aug 13th (Kate)

After we left you at the railroad station, Nettie and I went to see "Junior Miss", it was good. After the movies we went to eat at **Jack Dempsey's** and had a delicious meal. When coming home we couldn't walk the streets as they were so crowded. They had gotten a false rumor about the War being over. We went to the show and saw "Till We Meet Again", it was very good. And we saw "Rainbow Island", it was fair.

Aug 13th (Nick) - Ambassador Hotel, Atlantic City

I arrived here at twelve o'clock last night. I'm glad you weren't with me because it was a slow, dirty and miserable ride. Both Mike and I were all dirty with soot when we got off the train. I'm going to ship out at twelve today and it will take 2½ days to get there. Please don't worry sweetheart, I'll write as soon as possible.

Aug 13th (Joe Jareb, Okinawa)

It looks like it won't be long before we all get home Nicky. If things keep up the way they are, I know it won't be long. Oh, I forgot to mention that I am in the vicinity of the Ryukyu Islands, so I guess that's all I can say of my whereabouts. We have a few air raids now and then. Boy am I glad its now and then because when we first arrived it was always and was the sh-- flying. One morning you could of swore I was superman the way I got out of that sack and into the fox hole. Brother, I didn't think of pants or shoes that morning. There were five planes, we shot all of them down, they didn't do too much damage. I see that our friend "**Tokyo Rose**" don't feel so good after all.

Aug 14th (Nick) - Postcard from Chicago Union Station

A few words to let you know I'm all right and miss you. Called up Dusty Kester who is now a poor civilian again. Give my regards to Mom, Pop and everyone. Will try to write a soon as possible.

Aug 14th (Kate)

Mom woke me up as the War is over but President Truman will announce it at 9 o'clock. The people in New York are going wild. I guess everybody will be going crazy when 9 o'clock gets here. I wish you and my brothers and cousins were here to celebrate this wonderful day. It is certainly a day for celebration and prayer to thank God for this whole mess being over. Everybody will be off today. I could just picture Republic this morning. I bet they are going wild.

Aug 15th (Nick)

I have to hurry and write this letter as I only have a half hour stay here. I'm in Denver right now waiting for transportation to Fort Logan. Well, the War is over now but I didn't celebrate it because I was on the train. I'm hoping and praying to get out of this mess in a few weeks.

Aug 15th (Clem)

The War is over, gosh, it's so hard to believe. I guess you were on the train when you heard about it. I was in New York City yesterday afternoon. Boy was it crowded. At Times Square soldiers and sailors were punch drunk and kissing every girl in sight. We walked from 34th to 50th Street. We went to the **Capitol** and saw "Anchors Aweigh" with Frank Sinatra, it was swell, don't miss it. On stage we saw Paul Whiteman's Orchestra. The train was just pulling out of Penn Station when the War was officially declared over.

Aug 15th (Kate)

I received your letter yesterday, was happy to learn that you arrived safe and that you didn't have to pull out as early in the morning. Last night when we were at supper at Lee's house and the flash came over that the War was over, I didn't know what to do. I couldn't cry or laugh, I was just stunned and so happy. The horns of cars and the fire house and church bells were ringing practically all night. The people were absolutely wild. Coming home through Hempstead it took us one hour, the people and cars were something I had never seen before. The soldiers in Hempstead were wild, kissing everybody and everything. Main and Fulton Streets looked like Times Square. The people in Hewlett were just as wild. I don't blame them as this is one holiday they really celebrated in a long time. Today and tomorrow are legal holidays. We all went to church this morning and it was packed. I guess all the boys will be coming home soon.

Aug 16th (Nick)

Well sweetheart, I got here early last night and I don't like it here. It's a nice base as far as that goes and there's a lot to do. I'm staying in a barracks now and have no idea what's going to happen next. A lot of fellows are getting discharged here and I hope I can work it out as to get out myself. For the first time in my life I am really homesick. I don't see why they don't send us home now that the War is over.

Aug 16th (Kate)

Cousin Mary was over and we went to the movies. We went to the Gem and saw "Pillow to Post" with Ida Lupino, which was pretty good and "Escape in the Desert" with Philip Dorn that was very good.

Aug 17th (Nick)

Since arriving here I have done nothing but sit on my ass. Today for nine hours I waited around to see a medical doctor who spoke to me for five minutes. Tomorrow I get assigned to a hospital ward and have a personal physician. I went to the movies tonight and saw "The Hidden Eye" with Ed Arnold. It was a good picture. Keep me posted on Tony and Joe and their whereabouts and what they are doing. Tomorrow is your birthday sweetheart and I want to wish you a Happy Birthday. I couldn't get any cards out here so to make up for it I'm going to call you up tomorrow night. Gee sweets, I hope you'll be at home.

Aug 17th (Kate)

When I get through writing this letter I am going down to make some ice cream as tomorrow is my birthday and Mom and Clem are coming over. You received a letter from my brother Tony today.

Aug 17th (Clem)

Received your card this morning written from Chicago. Oh, you know that book you started to write on your experiences in the Army, well, I showed it to Kate, she thought it was swell. She wanted it so I gave it to her. What you have written so far is wonderful. You should have taken it with you and finished it. It would make interesting reading. I bet you could even sell it, no fooling. I guess you'll never get around to finish it.

Aug 18th (Kate)

Thanks for the telephone call it was wonderful hearing you voice. That was the best birthday present I have ever received.

Aug 19th (Nick)

It sure was swell to hear your voice last night. It took me four hours to get that call through but it was well worth it. Since arriving here I've only done one days' work and have been here for three days. It gets so hot out here during the day that I can't stay out long without getting a headache. At night it isn't bad because I go to shows and write letters. Yesterday and today I went picnicing and sightseeing in the mountains to pass the days away. It was very cool up there and I had a swell time. Saw two good movies the last two nights, "Irish Eyes are Smiling" and "You Came Along". Don't miss them.

Aug 19th (Kate)

Mom and I went to the movies, we saw "Frenchman's Creek" and "National Barn Dance". They were both nice pictures.

Aug 19th (Clem)

Had some banana ice cream made by Kate it was really good. With a little practice she'll make a good cook. Do we agree?

Aug 20th (Nick)

Let me tell you a little more about this place. This morning I attended a lecture and found out a few things. This base has a swell educational system and there are 40 different fields of work or trades that you can take up. It's a swell opportunity and I'm going to attend some of the classes. Here's the athletics we can take part in if we want: softball, basketball, swimming, golf, horseback riding, gym, tennis and probably everything else. Their idea is to make us forget about combat and try to make us feel at home. It's swell but I want to get out of this Army and come home to you where I belong. I also had my picture taken for a pass to get in and out of Camp. We're allowed passes at 4 o'clock everyday to 8 o'clock the next morning. We are free every Saturday and Sunday to do anything we want. And, this is supposed to be a Convalescent Hospital, how about that!

Aug 20th (Kate)

Honey, I went to Ida Mays for a job and I am going back at fifty cents per hour. It is near home and I don't have to travel so that means no carfare and the hours are nice. Gil got a telegram from Republic not to go back. She'll have to go job hunting too. Boy! Plenty of people are going to be jobless soon. Mom received a letter from Joe today, he is in the best of health but he still wishes he was home.

Aug 20th (Clem)

I'm enclosing cousin Tony's (Fusco) address which you asked for. Still don't know when he's coming home. Anyway it's over now, so at least he's out of danger. Don't forget now to drop him a line. I know he'll want to hear from you.

Aug 21st (Kate)

I am going to start to work tomorrow. It is going to be funny going back to work after being a lady of leisure for awhile. I have to do something otherwise I'll go crazy staying home. Honey, it seems so long since you're gone. It seems like years and it is only a few days.

Aug 22nd (Kate)

Your letters are wonderful, so neat and interesting to read. I received a letter from you and Joe this morning. I am mailing Joe's letter to you.

Aug 23rd (Nick)

Today, I pitched some horseshoes and took a shower. Later I went to the movies and saw "Johnny Angel" with George Raft and saw a **USO** show. The weather out here is hot as hell during the day and at night it's so cold I have to use both of my blankets to keep warm. How I wish you were here now, your love would keep me warm, "Hubba Hubba". That's what all the GIs are saying nowadays every time they see some gal they would like to be with.

Aug 23rd (Kate)

I am writing a few words for Mom, she doesn't seem to get time to write to anyone. She is even slowing up on the boys mail. She received a nice letter from Joey and he is fine and sends you his regards. Dad is still doing gardener work but he is slowing up now. I think he'll go to the boats this fall.

Aug 23rd (Nettie)

Well kid some good news. The War is over, still can't believe it. Kay and I were at George's (Rocchio) house we were just having supper when they said "the War is over". That was seven o'clock. Hearing those bells ringing and horns blowing, gave you some feeling. Hempstead was a mad house. The soldiers sure were kissing those gals. The paper was sure stacked high. It took almost an hour to get off Main and Front Street.

Aug 24th (Nick)

We've got a Philco cabinet radio in our barracks and it's quite a job to write a letter with it going full blast. If they were to drop an atomic bomb next to me I still wouldn't have any trouble writing to the one I love. I went to USO show last night and it was swell. There's plenty of entertainment here believe me. A lot of fellows here are getting discharged but they have been wounded. You know hon, it makes me feel so happy and proud to have a wife like you. I always knew you were the one for me.

Aug 24th (Kate)

Honey, if you decide to call please write a few days ahead, as I received the letter telling me you were going to call two days after you called.

Aug 24th (Rose)

I received your postcard and was glad to hear from you. The good news that the War ended, will give you a chance to stay here in the States and if you play it smart, you can get a discharge fast. Cousin Jimmy (Mammolito) was discharged from the service and he is living with his Mother.

Aug 25th (Nick)

Today was another day of doing nothing. It was very hot and I passed the afternoon quietly by sleeping. This morning I was issued a gym suit and sneakers. Monday I start going to school and take part in athletics. I'm going to take up leather craft, metal smith and photography. They make swell things here. I just came back from the movies, saw an old picture "Jimmy Steps Out" with Jimmy Stewart and Paulette Goddard. I'm writing this letter from the Service Club and they are playing some swell numbers. Numbers like "Sentimental Journey" and "Candy", sounds swell to me and makes me homesick as they remind me of moments with you.

Aug 25th (Kate)

I received a letter from my brother Tony today, he is fine and he was asking for you. I received a letter from the War Department telling me that you are in a Convalescent Hospital and gave me the address. Gloria and I just went out for some ice cream, but they were all out of the brick so we had to buy dixie cups.

Aug 26th (Kate)

Nettie and I went to the movies. We saw "Salome Where She Danced" with Yvonne De Carlo, Rod Cameron and David Bruce. It was a pretty good picture. And "Within These Walls" with Thomas Mitchell and Mary Anderson, that was also a good picture, something different for a change. Dad is downstairs reading the paper. He built a chicken coop in the back of the garage. I think Mom is going to get a few chickens for herself. I'm going to the movies tonight with Mom to see "Bring on the Girls."

Aug 26th (Nick)

By the time you receive this letter you will probably be working at your new job. Let me know how you like it. It's a beautiful hot day out here and it reminds me so much of the Sunday afternoons we used to go swimming at the beach. The only thing to do today is to go to the show which I am going to do tonight.

Aug 26th (Mary)

Arthur is home. They stopped the training so he might get home for good or go across. His brother Pete is home for good. Do you think there is any chance for you to get out?

Aug 27th (Kate)

Joe asked me for some film, do you think you can get some out there? Either of these will do - 127, 616, 120 or 620. Mom got five chickens today. Joe said he may be in the States soon. Isn't that good news? By the map you sent home, Fort Logan is certainly a large place. My brother Tony sent Edith a picture of himself and he looks swell.

Aug 27th (Nick)

It makes me very happy honey to read how often you go over to see my Mom. I know that it makes her very happy as well. I want to thank you from the bottom of my heart and someday soon when I get back home I'm going to make you the happiest gal in the whole wide world. This afternoon I slept from one to four. It gets so hot out here during the afternoon that all I feel like doing is sleeping. The fellow we met in Penn Station when we were going to Atlantic City is here and sleeps next to me. Boy is he nuts, but a good guy. Our doctor says we will be here from three to six weeks at the most. He also said that due to our past experiences it will take six months to a year to get our bodies in good working order.

Aug 28th (Nick)

I went to the movies tonight and afterwards went to see a Hillbilly Band that was broadcasting from the Post Gym. It was pretty good.

Aug 28th (Kate)

Cousin Henry (Perkofsky) is discharged from the Army. He is out job hunting and he looks swell. Mom got a letter from Joey today and he received the pictures and thinks they are swell. He said he might be home for Christmas, if not before. I hope he's right.

Aug 29th (Kate)

First of all, I want to wish you a Happy Anniversary, it is a month today that we have been married. I received two lovely letters from you today. You have some fancy writing paper there. Denver must be a beautiful place. Mom's bottling some tomatoes tonight. You know Ray, the girl that use to ride with us when we worked in Republic? Well she is getting married to some fellow from Cedarhurst. So many people are getting married as a lot of fellows are coming home.

Aug 29th (Nick)

I receive mail from you every day and it makes me so happy to receive it. I only hope my letters to you are as comforting as yours are to me. Things are looking brighter and I'm quite sure it won't be long before I'll be home for good.

Aug 30th (Kate)

Nettie and I went to the movies, we saw "A Thrill of a Romance" with Van Johnson and Esther Williams. It was very good, it was really something different, nothing about the War.

Aug 30th (Nick)

Today my doctor asked me to help him out. I make out forms and schedule appointments for other fellows. The only reason I accepted the job is to keep an eye on my records and find out if I'm going to get out. It's not bad and at the same time I can brush up on my typing. I go bowling now and then when I don't go to the movies. As for baseball, I'm catching up on the big leagues but play very little of it out here. Today I started leather craft school and it's a nice trade school here but only for beginners. They do sell film here but only on certain days. I'll try to get as much as I can and I'll send it as soon as I can. Glad to hear that Joey may soon be in the States again. He will sure appreciate the US when he gets back, believe me.

Aug 31st (Nick)

Glad to read Joey may be home before Christmas. I'm pretty sure of being a civilian before Christmas myself and wouldn't it be swell if Tony could come home to. There wasn't much that happened out here today. I was kept busy all morning in the office and found quite interesting work. I also got paid twenty bucks but only after waiting four hours this afternoon. Tonight I went to a show and saw "I Love a Bandleader", it was pretty good. Later on, I went visiting a buddy of mine. He dug out a pint and we had a few drinks.

Sep 1st (Kate)

I received a letter from my brother Tony today, he is fine and he sends his regards. Well today was pay day for me. I got \$17.62 and I was off a half day, the money is almost all gone already. I bought three records. I can't think of the names right now. Tomorrow I am going to see if I can get Joe some film. It is so hard to get. I'm going to that place in Cedarhurst they say gets film every Saturday morning so I'm going to try.

Sep 1st (Nick)

I went to the movies tonight and saw "The Carribean Mystery" with James Dunn. Don't miss it, a good mystery thriller. Incidentally Kate, my doctor was at Guadalcanal for a year. I'm going to ask some questions about the place when I see him tomorrow. Honestly sweetheart, I miss you an awful lot and if it were not for your letters I'd probably go nuts. It will be agony waiting another six weeks here before I get discharged. The peace agreement was signed as I was writing this letter. I'm so glad hon, now most of the boys will be coming home.

Sep 2nd (Kate)

I went to NYC with my cousins and had a very nice time. We went to see "Love Letters" with Joseph Cotton and Jennifer Jones, it was very good. Then we went to another movie and saw "Pride of the Marines" with Jack Garfield and Eleanor Parker, that was nice too. Then we went to **Chin Lee's** for supper. We missed the last train to Far Rockaway so we went to Lynbrook and took a taxi home.

Sep 2nd (Clem)

I just got back from the movies. I saw "A Thrill of a Romance", it was wonderful. Boy you should have seen the crowd waiting to get in to see it. Last week we had to wait an hour to get a seat. Helen got a letter from Charlie last week, it was dated August 12th. He didn't say anything about coming home. Almost all he did say was that they were listening to the radio to hear if Japan would take our surrender terms. I guess he'll be stuck out there for a while now.

Sep 3rd (Kate)

Nettie and I are listening to the radio. They are playing recordings of Bing Crosby, they sound so good. Nettie, Minnie, Francis and I went to **Radio City** today. It was the first time I've ever been there. I think it is the best movie house I have ever seen. Their stage shows are beautiful, something different than other movies. We saw "Over 21", it was swell. Irene Dunne played in it. I don't remember the fellows name. Gee, cousin Minnie hasn't heard from Joe (Velotti) in a long time. Do you think that he would be coming home?

Sep 4th (Nick)

On **VJ Day** all I did was to go to the movies. Yesterday, Labor Day, I went into town for the first time and had a little fun. In the afternoon, a few of the fellows and myself went out to an amusement park, something like **Rockaway Beach**. After dinner we played a game of hockey in the barracks. We used a football as a puck and brooms as hockey sticks. It was the most fun I had in any a day, believe me, and I'll never forget it for a long time. Went to the movies tonight and saw a double feature. A good mystery and a good cowboy picture were on. Pretty good shows.

Sep 4th (Tony Jareb, Guadalcanal)

Boy you surely got the **points** kid. I only have 58. It will be a good 6 to 12 months before I get out. I hope they ship us back to the States. I now have 20 months overseas time. It seems like 20 years. It is very hot out here during the day. The evenings and mornings are quite cool. I am a cargo clerk. I take care of all incoming and outgoing shipments and do most of the paperwork. I have every Sunday off. On my day off, or spare time, I may do either or all of the following: wash clothes, write letters, go to the service club for ice cream, or get some sack time. We have a movie every night. Last night we saw a USO Show, it was very good. Hey brother, if you can get me a nice flying suit, how about getting it for me. You can either send it here or take it home with you.

Sep 4th (Kate)

Honey it will be swell when you get home. I won't have to ride the old buses. Nickie Santora is coming home in a couple of weeks, he is going to be discharged. He has 91 points, isn't that swell? I only wish that Tony and Joe can get out too and also cousin Joe (Velotti), then we will be one happy family again.

Sep 5th (Nick)

No sweetheart, I have never been to Radio City. I'll be more than glad to have you take me out there when I get back. Funny thing how I saw the picture "Over 21" on the same day you did and it was probably at about the same time. I came back from the movies a little while ago. I saw "Tender Grapes Grow on the Vine" with Ed Robinson and Margaret O'Brien. I'm not sure of that title but it was a swell picture. Well, I went horseback riding for the first time today. It was pretty good but I'm awfully sore in a spot that's not to be talked about. There has been some rumors going around the Camp here lately. This Camp is supposed to close up by December 1st for one thing. Twenty-five men a day or eight hundred men a month are going to be discharged. Most of the school is closing.

Sep 5th (Kate)

I made two packages for Joe. I got a few things and Mom too. The woman across the street gave Mom a can of spaghetti which she canned herself, to send to Joe. I bet he will enjoy that. Gosh, you can't put anything in those five pound boxes. I had to leave out a few things. Honey, before you come home, please try to get me a pillow for me, this time one with "To My Wife" on it.

Sep 6th (Kate)

Cousin Minnie got a letter from Joe (Velotti) today. He doesn't know when he is coming home as he is back in Germany again. The summer is over and all of the city people went back to NY but the movies are crowded. The noise in the movies tonight was terrible. You know there is always a click from Inwood in the movies. I got my allotment check today, it was \$50. I received a letter from Joey today, he is fine and sends his regards.

Sep 6th (Nick)

Every night before I start writing to you I go over to the Hospitality House and have homemade cake and coffee. It's run by the Chaplain and Women's Organizations from Denver. It's really swell and I enjoy going there.

Sep 7th (Kate)

Edith got a letter from Tony and he said he hasn't any idea when he will get a furlough.

Sep 7th (Nick)

An MP (Military Policeman) got killed in town last night by a soldier from the Base here. We were all lined up early this morning and were looked over by a couple of witnesses who saw the fight. They really are looking for the guy who did it and I sure pity him if he is caught. Here's something interesting. A girl friend of one of my buddies here is a dancer at the Casa Seville.

Sep 8th (Nick)

We didn't do too good with our telephone call tonight, did we? Everything went wrong and believe me I'm really mad. It took three hours to get the call thru and in the bargain we were cut in. I could hear everyone as plain as day but every time we would try to talk to each other something would happen. Just to hear your voice was well worth more than the trouble we had. Honestly sweetheart, it will be the happiest day of my life when I get off that train in Hewlett a free man again to be with you always. I do a lot of eating at the Post Restaurant. The mess is fairly good but I like the food in the restaurant. Borrah Minevitch and his Harmonica Rascals will be here in person next week. I'll bet it will be a good show.

Sep 8th (Kate)

Edith, Mom and I are listening to "Request Time" on WHOX a Jersey station. Edith requested "If I Love You" for Tony and they played it. I requested "Please Don't Say No" but their time was up so they will play it tomorrow I guess.

Sep 9th (Nick)

After calling and writing you a letter last night. I played some sociable bridge with the boys until 2 in the morning. I slept until one today and fooled around until six o'clock show time. I saw Shirley Temple in "Kiss and Tell". It was a swell picture and I would advise you not to miss it. After show time, I played some pool for a couple of hours.

Sep 9th (Kate)

We went to the Gem and saw two old pictures, "Riding High" with Dick Powell and Dorothy Lamour, it was alright. And "Dr. Cyclops", it was alright too.

Sep 9th (Clem)

Just as soon as I finish this letter, Mom and I are going to the movies to see "The Affair of Susan". I hope it's as good as they say.

Sep 10th (Nick)

Didn't do anything out here today. It was swell again but the nights get very cold out here, in the 40s. I slept this afternoon and played a little football. Just got back from the **USO** show and boy was it swell. That Borrah Minevitch is sure a riot and he played some beautiful numbers with those harmonicas. I'll probably be home around or before the first of next month.

Sep 10th (Kate)

I showed Mrs. Ciamillo the wedding album, she liked it very much. She said you look like, ok hold your breath, Errol Flynn. You wolf. That's what he is. Mom, Clem and I are certainly on pins a needles thinking someday soon we will be getting a telegram that you are on your way home for good.

Sep 11th (Nick)

I practically fell in love with "**Till the End of Time**" so please buy it especially for me when you get the chance. I had another easy day. Played a little football and laid around reading papers and magazines all day long. Tonight I went to the movies and saw a double feature. One picture had the Dead End Kids in it and you know how crazy they are.

Sep 11th (Kate)

Mom is downstairs making jelly and Gloria is listening to the radio. There is a house a few doors away from us for sale. So your mother told me to find out how much they wanted. It is a very large house. \$9,000 that is a lot of money isn't it? I think Dad is going back on the boats next week as there is nothing doing in the gardener business now. I hope he gets something near home as that longshoreman's job is dangerous.

Sep 12th (Nick)

I had another talk with my doctor and everything is in order for my discharge. In a couple of days, I'll move from my present barracks to a discharge barracks. All told, it will be about ten days before I'm discharged and about two weeks before I get home. Gee it sure was cold out here today. Too cold for me and I can't wait to get the heck out of here.

Sep 12th (Kate)

I saw the Harmonica Rascals in person a few times. I think they are swell. They certainly put on a great show, especially the little one, I get a kick out of him. They certainly push him around. They are giving Nettie's cousin Francis a shower at **Child's** in NY, the one downstairs near the **Paramount Theater**. My sister-in-law Edith is still working in Republic. I guess she'll be there for a while. I hope Tony gets to come home soon. About those pillows, I don't mean regular pillowcases. I mean the kind you buy for keepsakes such as to "My Wife" and then a little saying on it, like the one we bought Clem in Atlantic City.

Sep 13th (Kate)

Nettie, Antoinette and I went to the movies. We saw "Nob Hill" with George Raft, Joan Bennett, Vivian Blaine and Peggy Ann Garner, it was very good. I enjoyed it very much. And also "Don Juan Quilligan" with William Bendix and Joan Blondell. It was terrible and we walked out on the picture. I heard your song tonight. I have it by Carmen Cavella. It is only piano. I'll get the vocal one tomorrow if they have it.

Sep 13th (Clem)

Today is a month you left for Colorado but only now it seems so long ago. Received a letter from you today saying you would be home by Oct 1st. That's the best news so far. I guess to you it does seem like a dream, after what you've been through. Have you any idea what you're going to do when you get back to being a civilian? Cousin Alfred (Orlando) is leaving for the Marines on the 25th of this month, he got his notice last week. Until he has to report he's going back to school. His last year too, to bad he couldn't graduate.

Sep 13th (Nick)

The story on my discharge today is the same as yesterday. Did nothing but sleep all afternoon. Didn't go to the show tonight as I have a lot of letter writing to do.

Sep 14th (Nick)

The weather was swell today. The heating system is now in operation in all the barracks. Went into town this afternoon and saw "Incendiary Blonde" again. They have closed up all the schools so there isn't much to do other than sleep and take it easy. I go to the PX (Post Exchange) every day to try and buy the things you asked for, but no luck. I have heard from Tony but not from Joe. My service record shows me with 80 discharge points, so you see I can't go wrong and will be home before you know it.

Sep 14th (Kate)

Clem and I went to the movies and saw "The Valley of Decision" with Greer Garson and Gregory Peck, it was a wonderful picture. Mom is downstairs in the kitchen as usual. She is bottling tomatoes and jelly. Mom works so hard and doesn't get any thanks for it. Dad is in bed as usual and never loses any sleep.

Sep 14th (Clem)

Carmella got herself a job in Rockaway in a meat packing firm. She's getting twenty-five dollars a week doing office work.

Sep 15th (Nick)

Nothing new on my discharge and if anything does come up you'll be the first to know about it. The only thing good about today was the weather as it was swell. I'm ready to go back to civilian life. Fit as a fiddle believe me. Went to the movies tonight and saw a fair show.

Sep 15th (Kate)

I went to Far Rockaway to buy curtains. Boy they want an arm and a leg for them. I had to buy them as I need them for the bedroom. I had to pay \$8.00 a pair, the only ones that were decent. Thank God I have only two windows in our room.

Sep 15th (Clem)

We went to the Columbia, saw "The Valley of Decision" with Greer Garson, it was wonderful. A letter came here yesterday for you, it was from the YMCA. It was an invitation to go to the YMCA in Brooklyn on Sept 19th to be their guest for a swim and a luncheon, and a Dodger - Giant ball game. We also got a card Monday from the "Salute to Heroes" asking us to listen to the program when they give you a salute. But we couldn't listen to it, darn radio doesn't get that station.

Sep 16th (Nick)

The weather out here was very cold and windy today, and it even hailed for a few minutes. It is crazy country out here and hope I leave it soon. Went to show in town this afternoon. And afterwards, ate dinner and had a few drinks. Saw "Home in Indiana" and "Destination Tokyo". They were two pretty good pictures too. Taking it easy this evening, staying in and listening to the radio. When I'm finished writing to you, I'm going to play some ping-pong. Nobody works on Sunday here so there is nothing new on my discharge.

Sep 16th (Kate)

1:00 pm - My sister-in-law Edith was telling me that Air Corps men getting discharged go to **Mitchel Field** now instead of **Atlantic City**. Maybe we will go to the fortuneteller's this afternoon to see what she has to say. I get a kick out of it, sometimes she hits things pretty close. I am still waiting for the \$1,700 she told me I was going to get.

9:30 pm - Nettie and I just got home from the movies. We went to the big show in Lynbrook. We saw "The Corn is Green" with Bette Davis and two new stars, John Doll and Joan Lorrington. The picture was very good and we also saw "Hitchhike to Happiness", I don't know who played in it that but it was a nice picture. I just heard your song "Till the End of Time", let's call it our song because I'm in love with it too. I think it is a beautiful number.

Sep 17th (Nick)

The weather was swell out here today so I played a little football. It's good to exercise and it's something to do. Aside from that, I did nothing but lay around waiting for developments on my discharge. Nobody works on Sunday here so there's nothing new on my discharge.

Sep 17th (Kate)

George (Rocchio) called tonight and told me he is stationed at Mitchel Field. He needs one more point to get out. The weather is terrible, it is so cold like winter. They are expecting a hurricane to hit New York sometime tonight. I hope it passes over and goes out to sea. Mom was busy as usual bottling tomatoes, she never takes a rest. Mom has a few chickens and she waits for a black one to lay her eggs. She gets a kick out of it. Saturday she brought in five eggs and they were still warm. Tony doesn't know when he'll get home. Mom didn't receive any mail from Joey in awhile and she is worried about him. I hope he is alright.

Sep 17th (Clem)

Say, how did you get 80 points? That's just how much a soldier needs to get out of the Army. Looks like they were trying to gyp you out of points, good thing you didn't need them to get out.

Sep 18th (Nick)

I expect to be very busy in the next two days filling out records and having them cleared. I went to the movies tonight a saw "Isle of the Dead" with Boris Karloff. That was the spookiest movie I have ever seen. In about seven days I'll be a poor old little civilian again. It's been cold out here all day long and snow is expected tonight. All of the mountains nearby have ten inches of snow on them.

Sep 19th (Nick)

I went before a board of high Army officers today and came out alright. Later on I moved over into this barracks to await my discharge. I will finally be discharged on Monday the 24th of this month.

Sep 19th (Kate)

Cousin Minnie got some letters returned today so I guess Joey (Velotti) is on his way home. We haven't heard from Joe. Do you think he's on his way home, it's almost two weeks now

Sep 19th (Clem)

Mom saw Edith on the bus the other night. She was telling Mom that George (Rocchio) called Kate up and said he was going to be stationed at Mitchel Field.

Sep 20th (Nick)

George should be getting home soon as the points will be lowered by October 1st to 70 points. I'll be out of this Army definitely by the 24th of this month. I'm clear of everything on the base and only have to hang around for last minute instructions. You are quite lucky though sweets now that meat is no longer **rationed**. Also received a letter from Clem today which had that "Salute to Heroes" card in it. And, looking at it I pretty near laughed myself to death. I wonder what's next.

Sep 20th (Kate)

I haven't received mail from you in days. You had me thinking that you were on your way home. But I received three lovely letters from you today and I was very happy to hear from you. Tomorrow is Mom and Dad's 26th wedding anniversary. Boy! That's a long time to be married to one man. We've got to go plenty to catch up to them. Mom still hasn't heard from Joe, she is so worried about him.

Sep 21st (Kate)

I received a letter from Tony and he is fine and don't know when he'll get home. We haven't from Joe. The woman down the street Son came home, they haven't seen him for five years. They are having a gathering tonight. There will be a lot of parties now as a lot of GIs are coming home. I guess in a few weeks, with all these fellows coming home, the town will liven up a little.

Sep 21st (Nick)

I like the records you bought me very much hon. All good numbers if you ask me. Things are running smooth out here and in three days I'll be on my way home. Everything concerning my records are in tip-top shape. Saw a USO show tonight and was it rough. It's the rawest one I have ever seen on any Army post. Weather has been pretty nice out here the last couple of days. Tonight a full moon is out and it's beautiful outdoors. That sounds pretty good about cousin Joe. He is either coming home or being transferred. I hope he comes home. The lowering of points sure makes it possible now for everyone to be home this year. I sure hope all the boys will be home as we will sure have one heck of a good time.

---

*(George Rocchio, a fellow kriegie from barracks 30B in Stalag 17B, is mentioned in letters on pages 65, 74 and 75. He was Dad's Best Man on July 29th and eventually became my Godfather in 1948).*

*(The term "Republic" which appears in letters on pages 62, 65, 67 and 72 refers to Republic Aviation located in Farmingdale, New York. My mom Kate worked there a short period during the War as a real "**Rosie the Riveter**" assembling canopies for P-47 aircraft).*

*(See Exhibit 1, Republic Aviation Employee Handbook page 35 – Kate appears at the center of the photo while seeking first aid).*

## *Stories My Father Told Me*

My dad believed that he had a job to do and tried not to think about the reality of combat and the possibility that he could be shot down or captured by the enemy. He was amazed by the vast number of planes that went up each day and was always deeply saddened by how many that didn't make it back. He believed in fate and the will of God which always was the determining factor for him. When returning from a mission, the greatest sight in the world for him was flying over the English Channel and seeing the White Cliffs of Dover, knowing that he was close to the base and out of harm's way.

When questioned about flying in combat, Dad would describe what it was like to be confined to such a small space on the actual belly of the aircraft with a birds-eye view of the action. He could see the bomb bay doors open, the bombs drop and the targets destroyed on the ground. He would be awestruck by the number of planes flying in the lower formations. But it was always "high anxiety" when the ship was avoiding flak from the ground artillery or being buzzed by the German FW-190 (**Focke-Wulf Fw 190**) and ME-109 (**Messerschmitt Bf 109**) fighter planes.

During his time in England, Dad often visited London. He mentioned some of the sights that he had seen and the good times he shared with his buddies. But, he also experienced the fear and uncertainty the British civilians encountered in their daily lives. He actually got caught up in several air raids and witnessed some of the death and destruction caused by the German **V-1 and V-2 missile** attacks.

Dad never feared the actual bail out procedure itself because he had sufficient training. However, he was very concerned about being shot by enemy fighter planes on his way down or gunfire from soldiers and civilians waiting on the ground. He also feared getting stuck in a tree, drowning in a body of water, sustaining physical injury upon impact and being captured and abused by the enemy. As luck would have it, Dad jumped out without incident, landed safely on an enemy airfield and was captured immediately. He told us how angry he was to have been captured and especially upset on having to hand over his chocolate bars, chewing gum and cigarettes.

After his capture, Dad and his fellow POWs were transported via train in small crowded boxcars in order to get to Dulag Luft near Frankfurt, Germany and later on to Stalag 17B near Krems, Austria. It was during these trips that he witnessed firsthand the plight of the Jewish people. He always remarked that he could never forget the horrified looks on their faces as they were being transported to concentration camps. Little did he know that a year later he would be witnessing the actual atrocities as he passed by German labor and death camps during the forced march through Austria after leaving POW camp early in April 1945.

As a child, I could never understand why anyone would want to eat liverwurst for lunch or liver for dinner. I once questioned my dad why he enjoyed eating these things and he responded by telling me that he acquired a taste for liver during the war. He explained

that the Red Cross parcels he received in POW camp usually included a can of liver paste which proved to be a much better alternative than the so-called food the Germans were providing.

Dad loved baseball and he played the game throughout his school years into early adulthood. He was a life-long Yankee fan and spent many hours watching them on television. He also managed Little League teams for a few seasons. Dad often said that playing baseball enabled him to keep his sanity during those long months when he was confined to the compound at POW camp.

During my early childhood, I remember our family having only one black & white television set. It truly became the focal point of our indoor leisure time spent together. It was always a special event when a documentary about WWII, or movie about B-17s (i.e., "Twelve O'Clock High" and "The Memphis Belle") or German POW camps (i.e., "The Great Escape", "Hogan's Heroes" and especially "Stalag 17") came on. Dad had no problem providing expert commentary on what was presented on TV and how it compared to his real life experiences as a Ball Turret Gunner and POW.

The only time I remember Dad getting upset was at the dinner table when my brother Dennis and I complained about our meal. That was a definite sore spot for him. He always reverted back to his own childhood growing up during the Depression when money was limited and food scarce. But, it was the time spent as a POW that brought back bad memories. He would describe how little food he had and how bad it was. Most of his daily food intake consisted of "bread and soup" but not as we know it. The bread was black in color and very hard. The soup usually consisted of potato peels and hot water. The only real meat available was horsemeat but he just couldn't get himself to eat it. Dad would try to explain how he had to eat what the Germans provided just to stop his hunger pains. He truly believed that the Red Cross parcels saved his life. He reminded us that we were very fortunate to have an abundance of good food to eat and a mom who did such a good job preparing it for us.

The winter season, with its cold blustery winds and snow, usually made for family conversations about how bad the weather was in POW camp. Stalag 17B was located in the Austrian Alps which is approximately the same latitude as the northern tip of Maine. Therefore, one can conclude that the winter months there were even harder to deal with especially due to the lack of sufficient heat and adequate cold weather clothing. Dad often reminded us how unbearable it was for him and his fellow kriegies. He told us about how he had to wrap his feet in blankets to prevent frostbite and share a bunk with his "combine" buddy to keep from freezing to death. Having two blankets and double body heat was still a far cry from being comfortable.

I remember asking Dad if he had ever considered trying to escape from POW camp if there would have been an opportunity to do so. He responded without hesitation indicating that being a "dead hero" did not appeal to him. Dad knew full well that prior to his arrival at the camp there were failed escape attempts that resulted in terrible consequences. He had no desire to be shot at the warning wire. Dad had the will to

accept his situation and was determined to survive no matter what obstacles he had to face.

Once it was rumored that the Germans were planning to evacuate the camp in fear of the approaching Russian Army, my dad and his combine buddy "Dub" Purser started accumulating bars of soap and cigarettes to be used as barter on the forced march. Dad explained how he would be marching on one side of the formation and his buddy on the other side looking to trade their stash with the farmers and civilians along the route for food, especially bread, cheese, milk and eggs. The only thing that kept him going was the fear of being left behind or even worse being shot if he became sick or had difficulty keeping up with his group.

Like many of his fellow marchers, Dad suffered from the effects of dysentery. He explained how the men could not stop to defecate in the woods because the guards would not allow it. So, they had to squat on the side of the road and relieve themselves in full view of the other POWs as they filed by. It was humiliating but necessary.

He often indicated that one of the best days of his life was when he and his fellow kriegies were liberated by American soldiers in the Weilhart Forest in Austria. The boys went completely nuts - shooting off guns, recklessly driving vehicles, irritating captured German guards and gathering souvenirs. Dad did manage to bring home a few German Army items including a bayonet, a knapsack with real horsehair flap, and a mess kit. Except for the bayonet, we would often use these items when playing combat with our friends.

Dad always had a fear of the water and that was probably the reason why he never even considered serving in the Navy. At the beach he would either sit at the water's edge or wade out until the water level was waist high. He explained that he had two bad experiences when he was young that he would never forget. One time, when swimming with friends in Jamaica Bay, a boy drowned after diving into shallow water. Another time, he was in a small boat with his stepfather and they had become stranded on a sand bar late in the day and had to wait for the tide to come in to free them. With that said, one could understand why he would be somewhat apprehensive to board a troop ship heading across the North Atlantic on his way to war. It proved to be a terrible voyage. The ship was overcrowded and the seas rough. Dad got seasick but someone was kind enough to let him sleep it off under a bunk in the Officers' Quarters. However, after liberation his return trip was quite a different experience since the troop ship was a converted captured German luxury ocean liner. Dad was amazed at how nice ocean travel could be, especially considering how huge the ship was and the amenities provided.

## *In His Own Words*

Over the years Dad was interviewed several times by local newspapers, usually in connection with Memorial Day and Veterans Day observances, for comments pertaining to his wartime experiences, especially those regarding to his time spent as a POW.

### Bailing Out:

“It was March 22, 1944. We had just completed our run over Berlin when we got hit. We were shot up pretty bad but we managed to hold on for about an hour. Then we were shot up again. The pilot went into a steep dive. Those of us in the rear had no idea what was going on. There was no communication. It was do or die. After I bailed out, it was like being in heaven, floating through the sky. It was so terrifically quiet, there was no noise. I parachuted into a German airfield and was immediately captured. I knew the game was over when I saw the Germans approaching. But, I was happy to have landed safely.”

### The POW Camp:

“As non-commissioned officers, we were not required to work. We kept active playing sports. We were allowed to write and receive one letter a month.”

### The Food:

“My biggest complaint about the POW camp was the lack of beef and food in general. The food was skimpy. The Germans rationed our meals right down to the number of raisins we were allotted. We had hot water for breakfast, soup for lunch and a potato or a rutabaga for dinner. Believe me, the food tasted even worse than it sounds. The weekly Red Cross packages stretched over the seven days kept us going.”

### The Movie - Stalag 17:

“Most of the characters were composites of several real people. William Holden was actually about three guys. The infiltration that the movie showed was done by certain guards who acted nice to get information. There were also no escapes. Two men tried before I got there and were shot.”

### Forced March Across Austria:

“The Germans were deathly afraid of being captured by the Russians, so they made us march 281 miles in 28 days towards the Western front to the American lines where the Nazis surrendered. We were sleeping outdoors and gathered any food we could outside.”

### Survival:

“I never gave up hope during this ordeal. Once I was with my fellow Americans I took it in stride. I knew we could beat these people.”

### Being Liberated:

“A Captain in a jeep and two armed American soldiers drove up a told us we were free men. It was great. But I always had confidence in the American soldiers that they would rescue us some day. I thought it would end all wars. But I guess it just didn’t work out that way.”

### Military Service:

“My time in the service taught me how to value life. I went in as a boy and came back as a man. The experiences were plentiful and my perspective on life changed. You never know when you’ll be asked to give of yourself. My advice to people is to pay a little more attention to what’s going on in the world and respect other people’s way of life because the choices are not always theirs. They may have to move along, go to war, or help someone. I also feel regrets looking back on my time served. It took three years of my prime life and I now realize what I missed. That was the one thing that’s always been on my mind. However, I thank God for giving me a good life - I could have been gone a long time ago.”

### The Future:

“I thought it was a bit strange that my past should come back after over 60 years. I just put it behind me. I had a family to raise and a business to attend to. I put it on the back shelf. I worried about the future. I never spoke about it with my family except when the kids wouldn’t eat. I would ask them how it would be to have no supper. As veterans are dying off, the new generation has no concept of what war soldiers are.”

\*\*\*\*\*

The following narrative was prepared by my dad in response to a request from Ken Yass, his co-pilot, for an eyewitness account of what happened in the rear of the ship on that fateful date in March 1944. It was to be combined with other crew members accounts and was supposed to be a follow-up article to supplement Ken’s original entitled “The Long Road from Berlin” which appeared in the October 1995 issue of the 306th Echoes Newsletter:

“When approaching the target over Berlin, the air was saturated with flak. I realized that we had been hit and immediately got out of the turret. Doing so, I had to hold on to the support frame of the turret because of the planes shaking and vibrations. I could see fire and smoke coming from the bomb bay. The right side of the plane was

covered with oil. Our only visibility was the waist gunner's windows. The 2 waist gunners, tail gunner, myself and radio operator did not know what to do, waiting in the waist section for some type of orders. None came. A short while later, the plane was under control but still none of us knew what was going on in the cockpit. All I can say is that Pilot Carlson and Co-Pilot Yass did some hell of a job bringing that aircraft under control. At this time our thoughts were that we were going to get back to England safely. When over Osnabruck, Germany we ran into another flak barrage. You could hear the flak and shrapnel hitting the plane constantly. At this point the plane started to go into a steep dive and the pressure was so great that we all had to hold on from being tossed around in the plane's waist section. It was at this point that we all decided to bail out. Each of us jumped out under our own free will without any orders to do so. With no interphone and the plane in a steep dive we all thought that the plane was out of control. We were all captured immediately and brought to an airfield. That was the last time I saw any of the other four crew members."

\*\*\*\*\*

The following "Emergency Jump Story" appeared in my dad's "Application for Membership in the **Caterpillar Club**" which was signed and dated September 4, 1945. I don't know if it was ever formally submitted to the parachute manufacturer, nor do I have any proof such as a certificate or pin. However, I do think he earned the recognition:

"Just after dropping our bombs on Berlin on March 22, 1944, we were hit by enemy ack ack in the bomb bay and in numbers three and four engines. Our bomb bays were on fire and both engines were useless. The plane was going down out of control. The abandon ship signal was given. We all parachuted to safety."

\*\*\*\*\*

From the Casualty Questionnaire of Nick Orlando:

"It was March 22, 1944. The Mission was Berlin and the target was an industrial center. The plane was flying at 26,000 feet and it was 1:15 pm. We were No. 7 in the Low Squadron when we left the formation. The tail gunner, right and left waist gunners, radio operator and myself bailed out over Osnabruck, Germany. The plane was on fire at the time and in a dive. We could not communicate with the pilot so we bailed out. I later found out that the plane made a crash landing on the English coast."

.....

The following narrative is an excerpt from a letter dated June 25, 1994, written by my dad to Charlotte Beske in memory of her late husband Lou:

“Lou was my best Army buddy and friend. When I was in the Service for only 4 months, going through basic training and attending two armament schools I ended up in Rapid City, South Dakota. I was alone, scared, lost and depressed, that’s when Lou came into the picture. Lou was in charge of about twenty of us and his orders were to bring us down to the airplane hangers every morning, which he did. This went on for about a week and during this time Lou would disappear after dropping us off. So, I decided to follow this big quiet “rebel” Sergeant which I did. I caught up with him in the PX and proceeded to sit down next to him. I told him that I was following him and asked if I could tag along with him. His first word was “yes” and further stated that with his Sergeant stripes we would not be hassled. That was the moment we just clicked. We were a great team and those days we palled around together will always be in my memory. He took me under his wing and guided me and molded me into a soldier and a man. I will never forget what this big guy did for me. He was and always will be my big brother which I never had.”

## *In Their Own Words*

The following story was taken from a letter Charles "Dusty" Kester, fellow crew member who bailed out on the ill-fated 15th mission, wrote to my dad on February 10, 1967, detailing his experience:

"I landed in the motor pool on that Jerry airfield and broke everything in my right leg up to my knee. After four months in various British PW staffed hospitals, I was sent to Stalag Luft 4 at a place called Kiefheide. Blum came down backwards, bounced his feet off of the hanger roof and landed flat on his back on the runway. Fifteen Dutchmen chased him for 4,000 feet with fixed bayonets until his chute caught on the fence surrounding the field. He cracked two ribs so he was pretty fortunate. We both got a bust in the ear for speaking to each other in the guard room. They picked Fitz up some distance from the field and brought him into the base in the side car of a motorcycle! Craziest looking sight you ever saw! At that time, I didn't know where or what happened to you and Tony. By the time I got to Frankfurt, some of the fellows knew that you were the only one of our crew sent to Stalag 17B. The rest of the crew went to Stalag Luft 6 at Hydekrug. When things got sticky, they brought a large group of POWs into our camp from Luft #6. After seven or eight days in the hold of a coal boat, you can imagine what they looked like! On top of that, the German marines had bayoneted and turned dogs on them when they slowed down on the way into camp from the train. I saw Fitz, Freddie and Tony at that time and only briefly as they were assigned to another compound. We wondered why you were sent to #17 then, and I'm still wondering! By the way, I saw the stage play and the movie but it wasn't so funny going through the experience."

\*\*\*\*\*

The following story was taken from a letter Bill Morgan, the Engineer of Dad's plane which crash landed on the English coast on March 22, 1944, wrote to my dad in February 2010, commenting on "A Fateful Farewell for Able Mabel."

"On that fateful day, and after we had left the flak in Berlin, Carlson told me to go back and check on the supercharger controls under the floorboards of the radio room and to check on you guys. I talked with Phil a little and saw your turret in motion and all others were ok. I went back up and gave a thumbs up for you guys. Then after we came out of the dive at Osnabruck, Yass asked me to check once more. What I saw, or didn't see, will never be forgotten. No guys, no parachutes and no side door. And, I have seen it a thousand times since. When I told Yass he turned pale and all he could say was "don't say anything to Carlson yet." I flew a lot of hours after that and with a lot of different people, but I never allowed myself to get close to anyone again. Losing you guys was more than enough for one lifetime. Learning that all of you had landed and were at least alive, relieved some of the agony, but we also realized it could easily have been different."

From the Casualty Questionnaire of Charles Kester:

“Mariani, Blum, Orlando, Brouman and myself bailed out in that order. Each jumped under their own free will without orders to do so. Our ship was in a steep dive and, as our interphone was gone, two engines burning, and a good hot fire in the bomb bay, we all figured we were out of control so we left. Each of us were captured immediately and brought to the airfield. I landed ok and was interrogated briefly. I saw all of the others, with the exception of Orlando, in a prison camp (Stalag Luft IV) and was later liberated with Brouman.”

\*\*\*\*\*

My Dad received several letters from his fellow crew members congratulating him on being honored as “Legionnaire of the Year” by his American Legion Post 339 in 1992 and remembering some of their time spent together:

Ken Yass, Co-Pilot:

“I remember you, Nick, as the smallest guy in the crew. I always felt that the U.S. Government used you as their model in designing the ball turret for the B-17. I never mentioned my admiration of you in carrying out your duties in that “fish bowl” when the sky around us was black with flak or enemy fighter aircraft pumping 20mm shells in your direction. You couldn’t have ducked your head even if you wanted to. In my eyes, you had to be the most courageous guy in the crew.”

“Dusty” Kester, Tail Gunner:

“I recall one mission when you said you didn’t like the ball turret so we changed places. It didn’t take long for you to discover that you liked the tail position less. I never told you, but I was not too crazy about the ball. I always worried about how we were going to get you out if anything ever happened. But, you took care of that when the time came. I can’t get over the fact that none of us were hit by flak on March 22. You guys in the waist must have had your guardian angels working overtime that day!” And in a letter to me, he commented that “Nick had to be the most lonesome man on the crew. When you stop and think about how isolated he was, it took a lot of guts to fly that position.”

Phil Brouman, Radio Operator:

“I recall toward the end of one mission, as we were headed for home and it was time for Nick to come out of his ball turret. Unfortunately, he was unable to do so. It seems that some fifty caliber spent casings had wedged in the ball turret, jamming the turret track mechanism. As you can imagine, the last place you want to be during a landing in a B-17 following a mission, is in the ball at the belly of the plane. We teased Nick on the intercom and then fortunately got it open. Nick emerged from the turret with a few choice words for our teasing”.

Robert Beres, Bombardier:

“I did not fly with the crew on that ill-fated 15th Mission to Berlin. I had flown with another crew that day. I did not envy Nick in his position as ball turret gunner”.

Lila G. Carlson, wife of Pilot Carlson:

“My late husband, ‘Jack’, really felt close to his crew and thought of them often.”

\*\*\*\*\*

Ken Yass, in a letter to Russell A. Strong, Secretary/Historian of the 306th Bombardment Group Association, dated March 11, 1995, reflects on the outcome of the last flight of “Able Mabel”:

“As I look back on that flight, as I have so many times, I must humbly confess that my life, and all the crew’s lives, may have been saved by the unplanned bailout of the five men that day. When we were almost down to the surface of the water, everything of any weight had been thrown out of the aircraft, including guns and ammunition, to lighten the plane as much as possible. Those five men, maybe 800 pounds less in the plane, could very well meant a watery grave for all of us had they remained aboard. How does one justify their sacrifice? Their battle days were over, but a year of POW hardship lay ahead. We were saved to return to the rigors of fighting in the sky for fifteen more missions, including returns to Berlin. Thank God, we all survived and were able to sit around and re-fight the War, time and time again. Amen!”

Charles “Dusty” Kester, in a letter written forty years after the War, summed up the crews’ feelings for Carlson and Yass:

“The Boss Man was not an authoritarian, but he taught us many lessons about life which were never forgotten. He never gave us any orders or told us what to do. He simply told us what the mission was and expected us to do the job we were trained to do. We busted our butts to do the best we knew how because we knew that there wasn’t anything we could do that he couldn’t. Pilot Carlson and Co-Pilot Ken Yass had, and will always have, our undying respect, loyalty and admiration. If ever two men were destined to work together, they were. As far apart in likes and dislikes, as they were, they ran an air combat operation like no other men we have ever met. On the ground, they treated everyone with respect and sensitivity, and got plenty back.”

Ken Yass, in a letter reflecting on the outcome of the last flight of “Able Mabel” states:

“When the realization that we had lost half our crew sunk in, I felt as if I was shot. It was the most depressing feeling of my life. I shall never forget it. I really cannot blame the boys for getting out even though they weren’t ordered, but I wish we could have come back together. Then again, I wonder if we would have made it back if they hadn’t gone out - for the difference in weight might have meant the difference to us. I can only conjecture what the ultimate outcome might have been. Eventually, my prayers were answered when I learned that rest of our boys survived as POWs and returned home safely after V.E. Day. Although we’ve gone our separate ways, we never have forgotten each other, for the bond is unbreakable”.

# *Empire State Building Plane Crash*

Monday, July 29, 2019, would have been my parents 74th Wedding Anniversary. And, on July 28<sup>th</sup> it was also the 74th anniversary of one of the most unusual accidents to ever occur in aircraft and elevator history - a tragic event which happened in New York City the day before my parents were married. An event my dad would usually refer to in connection with his wedding day back in the summer of 1945. Dad's generation was very familiar with this tragic incident one which many people today are totally unaware - the day a U.S. Army Air Corps B-25 "Billy Mitchell" bomber, lost in fog crashed into the Empire State Building, a 102-story structure, which at that time was the world's tallest building. Fewer still, remember the miraculous survival of Betty Lou Oliver, the woman who fell 75 stories (over 1,000 feet from the 75th floor to the sub-basement) when the cables to her elevator were severed, which still stands in the Guinness Book of Records as the longest survived elevator fall ever recorded.

## The Pilot

Lieutenant Colonel William F. Smith, Jr., a 27 year old West Point graduate was piloting the plane at the time of the incident. He was a combat veteran and had flown for two years over the skies of Europe. During his time in the European Theater of Operations (ETO) he had amassed over a thousand hours of flying time for which he was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross, Air Medal and the Croix de Guerre.

## The Flight

The flight originated from Lt. Col. Smith's home in New Bedford, Massachusetts going to Newark, New Jersey to pick up his Commanding Officer, before returning to home base (457th Bombardment Group) in South Dakota. However, the flight plan was modified by the air traffic controller directing Smith to land the plane at LaGuardia Airport in Queens because of a dense fog over Manhattan. The tower told Smith that the ceiling was near zero, visibility forward would be limited to three miles and that the top of the skyscraper was not visible. However, Smith, believing that he could maneuver safely through the fog, requested and received permission from the military to continue on to Newark. The War Department, now a section of the Defense Department, later determined that the pilot erred in judgment when electing to fly over Manhattan in the weather conditions that prevailed at the time. Smith should have never been cleared to proceed on to Newark. Disoriented by the dense fog, he apparently believed he was on the west side of Manhattan.

## Fatal Error

Confronted with dense fog, Smith dropped the plane low to regain visibility, where he found himself in the middle of Manhattan, surrounded by skyscrapers. At first, the plane was headed directly for the New York Central Building but at the last minute he was able to bank west and miss it. Eyewitness accounts on the street indicated that the plane was flying about 500 feet when it nearly missed Rockefeller Center then banked

sharply up, disappearing into the fog. Smith's final blunder came when he passed the Chrysler Building. Had he kicked the left rudder, he would have been safe. Instead, went right rudder and directly on a path to the Empire State Building. At 225 mph, the ten-ton bomber screamed down over 42nd Street and banked south over 5th Avenue. Within seconds the plane was closing rapidly on the skyscraper when Smith attempted to veer away from the structure but his proximity to the building would not allow such an evasive maneuver. He tried desperately to climb, but it was too late.

### The Crash

On Saturday, July 28, 1945, at 9:49 a.m., the unarmed trainer bomber crashed into the north side of the Empire State Building on the 79th floor, as workers went about their business in the offices of the War Relief Services and the National Catholic Welfare Council. The odds against such an incident ever happening were computed as being 10,000 to 1. But weather flying conditions at the time were a contributing factor. Luckily, the accident occurred on a weekend, with only about 1,500 people in the building - compared with the 10 to 15 thousand on an average workday. WWII had caused many to shift to a six-day workweek, and there were many more people working on Saturday. The impact was heard as far as two miles away. Flames and dense smoke obscured the top of the structure. Many people who were in the street at the time saw flames shooting from the point of impact which was at the 913 foot level.

### Damage

Damage to the building and the surrounding area was extensive. The crash caused extensive damage to the masonry exterior and the interior steel structure of the building. The majority of the plane hit the 79th floor, tearing off the bomber's wings and creating a hole in the building 18' wide and 20' high. Part of the plane slid down the outside of the building on the 34th Street side, landing on the opposite side of the 5th floor. Some boys picked up the plane parts and sold them to souvenir hunters. Later on a wing was found on Madison Avenue, one block away. The plane's high-octane fuel exploded engulfing the 79th floor, hurtling flames down the side of the building and inside through hallways and stairwells all the way down to the 75th floor. One of the engines hurtled across the 79th floor, through wall partitions and two fire walls and out the south wall's windows to fall onto a twelve-story building across 33rd Street (owned by Hotel Magnate Vincent Astor), crashing through a skylight and starting a fire that destroyed a penthouse damaging the studio of sculpture Henry Hering. The other engine and part of the landing gear plummeted down an elevator shaft and landed on an elevator car, and ignited a fire in the basement. Some debris from the crash fell to the streets below, ending pedestrians scurrying for cover, but most fell onto the buildings setbacks at the fifth floor. However, a bulk of the wreckage remained stuck in the side of the building. After the flames were extinguished and the remains of the victims removed, the rest of the wreckage was removed through the building.

## Casualties

The fuselage of the plane disintegrated into the 78th and 79th floor killing all four onboard the B-25, as well as killing some or injuring others working in the War Relief Services and National Catholic Welfare Council offices. Eleven of the office workers were burned to death, some still sitting at their desks, others while trying to escape the flames and flying debris. And, at least 26 others suffered severe wounds. One body was found on a 72nd story ledge, but was burned beyond recognition. If the plane had been a fully armed bomber instead of a trainer, the destruction and devastation could have been catastrophic.

## Aftermath

It took the FDNY four alarms to bring the horrific situation under control. Despite the damage and the loss of life, the building was open for business on many floors the following Monday. The building shook with the initial impact, according to witnesses, but the integrity of the 102-story structure was not affected. Within three months, the damage was repaired at a cost over \$1 million. The Army had to pay for all damage done by the bomber, but the First Insurance Company paid for the damage by fire. Eight months after the crash, the U.S. government offered money to families of the victims. Some accepted, but others initiated a lawsuit that resulted in landmark legislation. The Federal Tort Claims Act of 1946, for the first time, gave American citizens the right to sue the federal government.

## Interesting Facts

The Empire State Building was constructed to take the impact of a 10-ton aircraft. This event was the first high-rise building catastrophe to wreak havoc on elevator and escalator equipment. Damage was estimated at \$500,000, the Army paid up when the negotiations were lowered to \$288,901. The New York Telephone Company estimated that they lost approximately \$1,869.67 of equipment as a result of the crash for which they were immediately reimbursed. At the 200 Fifth Avenue location of Childs Restaurant, a plate glass window was broken which the Army paid \$365 to replace. As for Henry Hering and his claim that his life's work valued at \$137,000 had been destroyed - the Army offered him only \$25,000.

## *Coincidence or Fate?*

After the War, Dad managed to keep in touch with some of his crew members and fellow POWs. But as time passed, only a few close relationships continued, most of which involved exchanging greeting cards, writing letters and making the occasional phone call. Face-to-face visits were few and far between.

Sometimes, even those who were closest to you during the worst of times eventually become strangers, and never get the chance to celebrate the best of times. Such was the case with fellow kriegie Tom Florio. Despite the fact that for over a year they lived in the same barracks at Stalag 17B and shared their love of playing baseball, they drifted apart once they returned home from the war, even though they lived only a thirty minute drive from each other in Nassau County.

However, by fate and not mere coincidence, they were reunited almost 40 years later, strangely enough in the parking lot of what was once Saint Albans Naval Hospital in Queens, NY. At the time, both Dad and Tom unknowingly, were going to the same VA Healthcare Center on a regular basis to get dental work. The dental assistant got to know a lot about their lives and shared the “war stories” they were so eager to tell. It didn’t take long for her to realize that their experiences were very similar and there was a chance that they might even know each other. She decided to schedule their dental appointments on the same day back-to-back and the rest is history. (See Exhibit 39)

During the mid-80’s, Dad learned that Tom and his wife Ann were avid hockey fans and active members of the NY Islanders Booster Club. As fate would have it, during this time my wife Margaret and I were also members and we attended the same meetings, hockey games and bus trips as Tom and Ann did, not knowing that we were already connected by “six degrees of separation.”

Dad and Tom became close friends and finally, along with their wives, got to share some of the “best of times.” They were present at each other’s 50th Wedding Anniversaries. In April of 1992, Dad was honored as “Legionnaire of the Year” by his American Legion Post and Tom and his wife Ann were in attendance. In May of 1999, with a little persuasion from Tom, Dad attended his first and only Stalag 17B Reunion which was held in Valley Forge, PA.

Sadly, Tom died on March 6, 2005. I am very grateful that we had the opportunity to meet and share some of the good times.

## *Epilogue*

Dad served his country proudly during WWII and for his meritorious efforts he was awarded the following: Air Medal with two bronze Oak Leaf Clusters, Purple Heart, Prisoner of War Medal, Good Conduct Medal, World War II Victory Medal, American Campaign Medal, Three Overseas Service Bars, European-African-Middle Eastern Campaign Medal with one bronze Battle Star, and Air Crew Member Badge. (See Exhibit 40)

After Dad was honorably discharged from military service in September of 1945, he returned home to the “Five Towns” to live, work, and raise a family. Sadly, on August 4, 1946, Mom and Dad lost their firstborn son who lived less than one day. Later in life, Dad lost a kidney, had a mild heart attack and suffered a severe brain injury. However, this did not deter him from living his life and enjoying his retirement. Dad retired from the U.S. Postal Service (Lawrence, NY) after 33 years of dedicated service.

After the war, it took almost 20 years for Dad to fly again. This time as a passenger, on commercial flights to Florida and Georgia, without flak hitting the plane or enemy fighters buzzing by. Dad never got the urge to take another ocean voyage but did manage to take a few ferries and sightseeing cruises. Dad preferred to travel by car or train, and for many years made annual trips to Florida with Mom via the Amtrak Auto Train.

Dad was not a political person but he was religious and patriotic. He never took a back seat when it came to defending God and country. Being a resident of the Village of Cedarhurst since 1951, Dad was dedicated to the Church of Saint Joachim as a longtime parishioner and usher. He was a registered member of the Inwood VFW and an active member of the Lawrence-Cedarhurst American Legion Post 339, proudly serving as Adjutant until his death in 2010. Dad fabricated a homemade flagpole, installed it in the center of the front lawn and proudly flew the “Stars and Stripes” whenever he thought it was necessary. He marched or rode in most of the local Memorial Day parades, usually took part in wreath laying ceremonies and often led the Pledge of Allegiance in Cedarhurst Park.

One of Dad’s proudest moments and my Son’s fondest memories was his visit to East Lake Elementary School in Massapequa Park, N.Y. in April of 1983. At the request of his Grandson Richie, age eleven, he gave a “show and tell” presentation to the class, describing some of his wartime experiences. He brought along a plastic model of a B-17G, which he meticulously assembled and a shadow box displaying his medals. All of the children, including my Son, sent letters of thanks indicating what they enjoyed most about his visit. The teacher, in her thank you note, indicated that the children learned a lot more from him than they would have from just reading a book.

On April 12, 1992, Dad was honored as “Legionnaire of the Year” by his Post where he was a member for over 40 years. Citations were presented by State Senator Dean Skelos, Nassau County Executive Thomas Gulotta, Congressman Ray McGrath,

Assemblyman Harvey Weisenberg and Cedarhurst Mayor Nicholas Farina. The official American Legion Award was presented by Post Commander Dr. George Elkowitz. The high point of the ceremony was the emotional reunion with fellow crew member Tony Mariani and fellow POW Tom Florio. Their wives Mary and Ann were also in attendance. Dad received several letters from his fellow crew members congratulating him on this occasion and remembering some of their time spent together during the war. (See Exhibit 41)

On Saturday July 29, 1995, Ken Yass, the Co-Pilot of Dad's plane "Able Mabel" attended a surprise 50th Wedding Anniversary reception for my mom and dad which was held at Savini's Crystalbrook in East Meadow, NY. Fellow POW Tom Florio and his wife Ann were also in attendance. (See Exhibit 42)

On February 3, 1998 I officially became a Charter Member of the World War II Memorial Society and enrolled Dad as an Honoree in the Registry of Remembrances. (See Exhibit 43) Dad was a lifelong member of the 306<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group Association and the Stalag VII-B American Former Prisoners of War. And, in May of 1999, Dad attended his first and only Stalag 17B Reunion, which was held in Valley Forge, PA. (See Exhibit 44)

On April 16, 2010 the first edition of "A Fateful Farewell for Able Mabel" was formally included in the 306<sup>th</sup> Archives of the Mighty 8<sup>th</sup> Air Force Museum located in Savannah, GA. (See Exhibit 45) In December of 2010, my mom received a Presidential Memorial Certificate honoring Dad for his military service. (See Exhibit 46)

In November of 2011, my Dad was enrolled in the National Purple Heart Hall of Honor located in Vails Gate, NY. (See Exhibit 47) On July 7, 2013, I donated a color lithograph of a Republic P-47 and a copy of "A Fateful Farewell for Able Mabel (Jan 2010)" to the American Airpower Museum. (See Exhibit 48)

During the month of July 2018, my wife Margaret and I vacationed in Colorado and South Dakota. It gave us an opportunity to visit some of the military installations where Dad was stationed during the war: Buckley Field (USAF Buckley AFB), Lowry Field (Lowry Technical Training Center Historic District and Wings Over The Rockies Air & Space Museum), Fort Logan (Colorado Department of Human Services and Mental Health Institute), and Rapid City Army Air Base (USAF Ellsworth AFB and the South Dakota Air & Space Museum). (See Exhibit 60)

My Dad always spoke highly of his fellow crew members; their heroism, their dedication to duty and their camaraderie. Over the years since the end of the war, mainly through the efforts of Ken Yass who took on the role of "Crew Historian", they managed to keep in touch via letters, telephone calls and visits. Those who are no longer with us today are remembered fondly and will never be forgotten.

Dad is my hero. He was a true "survivor." Dad did not have to go to war. Rather than continue working in a Defense Plant, he opted to serve his country in the USAAF and even volunteered to fly in combat. He parachuted out of a burning B-17 and was a POW for 14 months in Stalag 17B, one of the worst prison camps in Europe. Dad was able to

document some of these details, both good and bad, and by the grace of God, was fortunate enough to return home to tell his story and live his life. I was lucky to have him as my father. And, I'm glad to have this opportunity to share his story with others, and by doing so, preserve his legacy for future generations.

## *Eulogy*

The best way to describe Pop is just to list some of his admirable qualities: honest, hard working, meticulous, soft spoken, quiet and reserved, seldom complains, easy to get along with, good natured, generous, well mannered, strict but fair, religious, appreciates the simple things in life, intelligent, dedicated, always there when you need him, ready to assume the role of mediator, always uses common sense, avoids confusion and confrontation, optimistic with a positive attitude.

Nick was born in Brooklyn on December 16, 1922. His birth name was Antonio Mammolito. His father Rocco Mammolito and his mother Maria Italiano emigrated from Italy. His father died when he was an infant and his mother Mary married Emilio Orlando, who served in the U.S. Army Infantry during WWI. They had a daughter named Clementina. Eventually Pop assumed the surname of his step-father and from his early childhood was known to be Nicholas Anthony Orlando. Unfortunately, his stepfather died a few years later and he had to assume more of a parental role and endured the hardships of the Depression. Nick and his sister Clem took care of their ailing mother and moved on with their lives. Later in life, after coming home from the war, Nick married Katherine Jareb and started a family. On August 4, 1946, they had a Son named Nicholas, Jr. but unfortunately he lived less than a day.

Pop always regretted that he never had the opportunity to attend college and taught me the value of getting an education. He devoted himself to providing for his family and giving them a better life than he experienced as a child. Raising his children and caring for aging family members were his number one priority in life. Pop gave me guidance, good advice based on real experience, having my best interests in mind. He really wanted to spare me from the hardships and misfortunes he encountered earlier in his life. Pop was religious and gave me an appreciation for God, which is at the core of my being.

Once my wife Margaret came into my life, Pop opened his arms to an extended family. More Grandchildren and Great-Grandchildren. No problem for Pop, just more love to go around. Pop was very proud of his family and was always eager to tell others about their accomplishments and experiences.

Pop is my hero. He was a true "survivor." Pop did not have to go to War. Rather than continue working in a Defense Plant he opted to serve his country in the Armed Forces and even volunteered to fly. He parachuted out of a burning B-17 and was a POW for 14 months in Stalag 17B – one of the worst Camps in Europe. Later in life he lost a kidney, had a mild heart attack and suffered a severe brain injury. However, this did not deter him from living his life to the fullest and being the wonderful person we have all come to know and love.

Pop's philosophy of life was simple: Treat others in the manner you wish to be treated; Give of yourself without expecting in return; Always look on the bright side; Do everything in moderation; Be honest, it's always easier to remember the truth; Finish what you start and always give it your best shot; and most importantly, Have faith in God and family.

Pop loved baseball and he played the game throughout his school years into early adulthood. He was a lifelong Yankee fan. And, he also managed Little League teams for a few seasons. Pop often said that playing baseball enabled him to keep his sanity during those long months when he was a POW. Pop also enjoyed playing golf but he spent more time watching professional matches on television. Pop also enjoyed doing crossword puzzles and watching game shows and classic movies on TV. He wasn't into music or the arts, but he did enjoy going to the occasional local theater production or Broadway show. Pop worked two jobs during the summer months for several years, so he didn't have much leisure time to do a lot of fun things like vacation. But, we always got a chance to go to the beach or local amusement park. And, he enjoyed Sunday drives and visiting with family and friends.

Pop had a reputation of being a handyman and "Mr. Fix It". Pop also liked to build things. He built a fallout shelter in the basement just before the Cuban Missile Crisis unfolded. For the kids, with the help of my Uncle Fudie, he built a complete model train layout. On a smaller scale, he built a dollhouse, especially for his Granddaughter Renee, from scratch complete with furniture. Pop wasn't much for new technology, but with help from his Grandson Rick he learned to use the computer, which came in handy for his American Legion work.

Pop was not a political person and he always tried to avoid confrontations of any sort. But, he always stood up for what is right and would never take a back seat when it came to God and country. Pop was dedicated to his church, a well-known parishioner and Usher. And, to his American Legion Post #339 – a member for over 40 years and proudly serving as Adjutant. Being a resident of Cedarhurst for over 60 years, Pop had no problem telling people that he was the "Patriarch of the Neighborhood" or the "Unofficial Mayor of Cedarhurst". Pop always went for his daily morning walks greeting people along the way and observing what was going on in his community.

Pop had a good sense of humor and had a great smile. I will always remember how he would laugh at the comedy of Abbott & Costello or listening to "Pepino the Italian Mouse". One thing we must never forget is that my mom Kate was always there by Pop's side to provide support and inspiration. Mom was his life partner and soul mate.

Since JFK airport was close to home, for many years Pop was the official taxi driver for family and friends alike. My fondest memory will always be Thursday, February 18, 2010, when Pop made his last run and dropped me off at JFK. This was the last time I saw him.

I will never be the man Pop was or be able to accomplish what he did over the course of his life. But, I will follow in his footsteps and be the Husband, Father and Grandfather he

taught me to be. The only regret I have is that more of my phone calls and handshakes could have been hugs and kisses.

There are many chairs that will now be empty and caps will remain on their hooks, but Pop will always be here in spirit. Pop, you will be sorely missed but your legacy will live on through your family, friends and others who were lucky enough to have been touched by your presence here on earth.

My Love Always,

Your Son, Richard

(See Exhibit 59)

# *Honor Roll*

## Fellow Kriegies Stalag 17B

Barracks 30B

Daniel S. Abeles	Leland N. Gibbs Jr.	John J. Cipriano (19A)
Howard Allen	James P. Hankins Jr.	Henderson H. Head (32B)
William C. Aney	Edgar M. Johnson	Harold T. Lambert (36A)
Max H. Bergen	Marion E. Jones	Walter Ognan (37B)
Rinaldo Cavaliere	Manas Manasian	Francis Parsley (32A)
Michael R. Ciano	Harold M. Maron	Louis Beske
James E. Clark	Eugene V. Mitchell	Arthur Kasino (32A)
James V. Clemente	Matthew G. Moore	Henry R. Petroski (38B)
Beryl Coffman	James H. Parker	Emery H. Tipton (29B)
Clarence M. Coveney	William F. Powers	Horace Huron (31B)
Raymond R. Decker	William R. Purser	
Delzon I. Dennison	George F. Rocchio	
Conrad N. Desmarais	Alfred A. Scelza	
Thomas G. Florio	Herman C. Schmidt	
Allen H. Garrison	Luther D. Victory	
Charles H. Gast	Henry F. Wojciechowski	
Gerald Gerber	Louis E. Langston	

## In Memoriam Crew of "Able Mabel"

Ragnar L Carlson	Pilot	April 21, 1984
Kenneth Yass	Co-Pilot	Sept 5, 2006
Salvatore Soscia	Navigator	June 10, 1982
Robert D. Beres	Bombardier, Nose Gunner	Feb 23, 2010
William H. Morgan	Engineer, Top Turret Gunner	May 19, 2016
Philip Brouman	Radio Operator, Top Hatch Gunner	April 24, 2000
Nicholas A. Orlando	Ball Turret Gunner, Asst. Armorer	Feb 27, 2010
Fred C. Blum Jr.	Right Waist Gunner, Asst. Radio Operator	May 3, 2001
Anthony J. Mariani	Left Waist Gunner, Asst. Engineer	Nov 26, 2003
Charles W. Kester	Tail Gunner, Armorer	Feb 1, 1993

### Relatives

Thomas Ferro	Vincent J. Mammolito
Anthony Fusco	Fudie Mazzeo
Arthur Gentile	Alfred Orlando
Peter Gentile	Henry Perkofsky
Anthony Jareb	Joseph Velotti
Joseph Jareb	John Rocchio
Edgar Levine	Anthony Petrillo
Louis Levine	Joseph Beviano
Fred Mazzeo	Patsy Petrillo
August Ruff	Joseph Petrillo
William Coveny	James Landi

### Friends

Thomas Antonucci	John Bergen
John Besemer	August Olivieri
Tom Christoppolus	Andrew Parise
Charles M. Comstock	Tony Politano
Joe Giraldi	Frank Santora
Jim Iannarone	Nick Santora
Jack Martilotta	J.V. Posten
James Agostino	Michael Ferraro
Michael Deironimi	Albert Occhiuzzo
Dominick Carroccia	W.T. Schaefer Jr.

# *Nice to Know*

## **Ambassador Hotel**

The Ambassador Hotel built in 1919 was the largest on the Boardwalk in Atlantic City. Here Enrico Caruso, President Warren Harding and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle vacationed. The \$4 million hotel, 14 stories high with 400 rooms, and its fashionable guest cottages stood at Brighton Avenue on the Boardwalk in the Chelsea district. It was later enlarged doubling its original capacity. In May 1929, mob kingpins from around the country, including Lansky, Lucky Luciano, Dutch Schultz and Al Capone, gathered at the Ambassador for a three-day national convention. During the casino era of the 1980s, the old hotel was extensively renovated, using the steel frame but removing the distinctive brick facade and replacing it with a more modern one. Today, the hotel, now known as the Tropicana Casino and Resort, is one of the largest in New Jersey.

## **American Red Cross**

To members of the Eighth Air Force, the American Red Cross (ARC) was more than just doughnuts and coffee. Its work was intertwined in Eighth Air Force life – on station through Aeroclubs and clubmobiles, and off station through combat rest homes, commonly known as “flak farms,” and in service clubs that served as hotels, like the Rainbow Club and Eagle Club in London. If a pass to London with accommodations at an ARC club was the best time to be had, the precise opposite had to be bailing out of a stricken airplane at 20,000 feet and parachuting into enemy territory. For those captured and thrown into a prison camp, perhaps the singular thread connecting POWs to a sane, civilized world was a parcel with a Red Cross stencil. The ARC served as an instrument of the government for assisting captured Americans. Mail and cablegrams were sent via the International Red Cross Committee. Funded by the US Army, eleven-pound Red Cross food packages were sent weekly to downed Eighth Air Force fliers. Other parcels included medical, dental and garden supplies.

## **Atlantic City**

In 1942, Atlantic City's hotels (47 of them in all on the Boardwalk and the side streets) had been drafted by the U.S. Army Air Force (USAAF). Atlantic City, with its broad beach and huge hotels was a ready made encampment. Basic Training Center (BTC) No. 7 dubbed “Camp Boardwalk” became the USAAF's largest training site in the country. Recruits engaged in battle exercises on the beach and calisthenics on the floor of Convention Hall where the Army maintained its seashore headquarters. The facility offered a 400-car garage, a basement power plant, hundreds of meeting rooms and copious storage. Trainees were schooled in chemical warfare in **Quonset huts** on Albany Avenue, and bivouacked on Brigantine beach, where they manned a rifle range and fired on ocean targets.

BTC No. 7 completed its mission by early 1945, then shifted gears to rehabilitating veterans returning from action overseas. The new operation was named AAF Rehabilitation Station No. 1 and its focal point became Thomas M. England General Hospital, which had been wrought from Haddon Hall and treated patients from all of the Armed Services. The Traymore functioned as a convalescent center offering rehabilitation equipment and an outdoor deck. The medical detachment stayed largely at Dennis, while the Army refurbished most of the other major hotels and returned them to civilian hands. The hospital complex, which had treated over 150,000 patients in three years, closed in June 1946.

## **Big Week**

Big Week was a six-day-long campaign that was fought all over Western Europe, from the North Sea to the Danube, from Paris to Poland. It was an all-out assault on the German Air Force, aimed at destroying it in the air and reducing its capability to refit and replace its lost and damaged aircraft. After it was over, however, it did not finish the Luftwaffe, but it caused serious supply, maintenance and eventually training problems. Between February 20 and 25, 1944, the US Army Air Forces began running massive raids

against the economic heart of Hitler's Germany. It was a battle of epic proportions on a three-dimensional battlefield. In six days, the Eighth Air Force bombers based in England flew more than 3,300 missions and the Fifteenth Air Force based in Italy more than 500. Together they dropped roughly 10,000 tons of bombs on targets that accounted for 90% of German aircraft production. And, the British RAF Bomber Command flew more than 2,350 nighttime missions against the same targets. Big Week was a watershed moment in WWII, and in the military history of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. It was the point after which nothing would be as it had been before. After a long and difficult gestation, it marked the birth of strategic airpower as a means of affecting the outcome of military action. Airpower could now be used, not just as a tactical weapon near the battlefield, but as a strategic weapon that could profoundly and decisively affect the outcome of a war. Big Week would come to be recognized as the significant crossroads on the highway to victory in WWII.

### **Braunau**

Braunau am Inn is a city in the Innviertel region of Upper Austria, the northwestern state of Austria. It lies about 90 km west of Linz and about 60 km north of Salzburg, on the border with the German state of Bavaria. A port of entry, it is connected by bridges over the Inn River with its Bavarian counterpart, Simbach am Inn. It is well known as the birthplace of Adolf Hitler. In 1938, Ranshofen, which at that time had one of Austria's largest aluminum plants, was annexed to Braunau. In 1989, a memorial stone commemorating the victims of WWII was placed in front of the building in which Hitler was born. The granite stone was taken from the quarry at the Mauthausen concentration camp. The stone, reminding future generations to remember the past, is inscribed with the following: "For peace, freedom and democracy; millions of dead urge; never again fascism."

### **Brooklyn Army Base**

The Brooklyn Army Base, which was also known as the "U.S. Army Military Ocean Terminal" served as the largest military supply base in the U.S. through WWII and became the Army's main POE for personnel and equipment going overseas. It was a large complex consisting of piers, docks, warehouses, cranes, railroad sidings and cargo loading equipment. It processed nearly 80% of the U.S. supplies and troops for the war effort. The base was most heavily trafficked during WWII when over 3 million troops and 37 million tons of military supplies passed through the facility. During that time, over 46,000 military and 10,000 civilians were employed there. It was renamed Brooklyn Army Terminal (BAT) in 1955. Arguably, the most famous soldier to deploy from BAT was Elvis Presley when he shipped off to Germany in September 1958. In the 1980s, BAT was converted by the City of New York to a rental facility for industrial and commercial use. BAT is located along the Upper New York Bay about 5 miles south of Manhattan in a neighborhood known as Sunset Park. The complex spans from 58th Street to 63rd Street and from 2nd Avenue to the waterfront. Today, BAT is a fully functioning commercial and industrial complex that houses over 70 corporate tenants in a wide array of businesses, which employ over 2,500 people.

### **Buckley Field**

During the early years of WWII the City of Denver purchased a 5,740 acre parcel of land (now Aurora) which was several miles east of the city and donated it to the Department of the Army. The site was named Buckley Field after 1st Lt John Harold Buckley, a Longmont, Colorado native who was killed while on a combat mission behind enemy lines in France on September 17, 1918. Under the command of the 336th AAF Base Unit, construction on the air base began in early 1942, resulting in over 700 buildings. On July 1, 1942, the U.S. Army Air Corps (USAAC) Technical Training School opened there. It consisted of bombardier and armorer training for aircrewmembers on the B-17 Flying Fortress and B-24 Liberator bombers. During WWII, Buckley Field also trained over 50,000 airmen in initial basic training. Today, the host wing of Buckley Air Force Base (AFB) is the 460th Space Wing, a unit of the U.S. Air Force (USAF) Space Command.

## **Camp Lucky Strike**

Camp Lucky Strike was located in Janville, France, five miles northeast of Cany-Barville. The camp was situated in the town of Saint-Sylvian, 5 km from Saint-Valery-en Caux. Its location was not selected by chance, but rather because the occupying German troops had constructed an airfield there in 1940. This airfield was one of the defensive elements of the "Atlantic Wall" (surveillance and coastal defenses, and a perfect starting point for attacks on southwest England). It was heavily bombed by the British, but in 1944, the U.S. Engineer Corps took control of the area, repairing the landing strips and constructing the camp. The camp extended over 1,500 acres and included several satellite camps in the neighboring countryside. And, it could accommodate 58,000 troops. The camp, a veritable American city for 18 months, became the most important military camp in Europe. It was the principal "transit" camp (meaning that the troops never stayed for long) used for repatriated soldiers and liberated POWs, and a reception station for soldiers on leave. It was a staging area for the Pacific Theater and for the invasion of Japan. The camp remained active until the end of 1945, and was officially closed in 1946.

## **Camp Shanks**

Camp Shanks was a U.S. Army installation in and around Orangeburg, New York. Situated near the junction of the Erie Railroad and the Hudson River, it served as a POE for troops departing overseas during WWII. Dubbed "Last Stop USA" the camp was the largest WWII Army embarkation camp, processing 1.3 million service personnel including 75% of those participating in the D-Day invasion. One of the primary functions as a staging area was to ensure each soldier left the U.S. fully equipped before crossing the Atlantic. The final field inspection at the camp identified any problems, made any necessary repairs, and replaced anything that could not be repaired. Between April 1945 and July 1946, Camp Shanks housed Italian and German POWs. The camp closed in July 1946.

## **Camp Upton**

The U.S. Army's Camp Upton was located in Yaphank, New York in the area of Suffolk County, which is presently occupied by Brookhaven National Laboratory. The camp, named after Major General Emery Upton who served during the Civil War, was one of 16 cantonments erected across the country early in the First World War (WWI) for the purpose of training inductees in almost every aspect of infantry combat. It was active from 1917 until 1920, but was deactivated and dismantled, and for almost 20 years the site remained quiet as Upton National Forest. However, in 1940 the war in Europe and in the Pacific gave rise to a drive for military preparation and the U.S. government decided to rebuild the camp. It was active from 1940 until 1946. During WWII it was used primarily as an induction center for draftees. The Army was later to use the site as a convalescent and rehabilitation hospital for returning wounded. In January 1947 the camp was converted into a research center for the peaceful uses of atomic energy.

## **Capitol Theater**

The Capitol Theater opened on October 24, 1919 at 1645 Broadway in New York City (NYC). It was located where the Paramount Plaza stands today, directly across from the Winter Garden Theater. The Capitol, designed by Thomas Lamb, was one of the most important theaters in the entire history of movie palaces. The lush auditorium seated 5,300, it was the largest in the U.S.A. and probably the world, remaining so until the 1927 debut of NYC's Roxy, which exceeded it by only 700 seats. The central feature of the Capitol's expansive entrance was a white marble staircase which connected the mahogany paneled lobby to the mezzanine and 16 dazzling rock crystal chandeliers that were salvaged from the legendary Sherry's Fifth Avenue Restaurant before its demolition. This along with the elaborate gold ceilings created the illusion that was indeed a palace. In 1924, the Capitol was taken over by Loews and became the flagship movie palace for MGM films. The Capitol hosted World Premieres of many now classic films. The theater presented movies and stage shows except from 1935 to 1943 when no stage shows were included in the program due to the impact of the Great Depression. The Capitol Theater resumed stage shows in 1943, with the boom in theater attendance during WWII, this time hiring the biggest names in entertainment in order to compete with similar presentations at the Roxy, Paramount and Strand, as well as vaudeville at the Loews State and the in-house extravaganzas at Radio City Music

Hall. The Capitol continued with the stage show format until 1952 when their popularity expired due to similar fare that could be seen free on television. In order to be more competitive in film presentation, a larger 25'x60' wide screen was installed for the June 1953 engagement of "Never Let Me Go" starring Clark Gable. In 1959, the Capitol was modernized and reopened as the Loews Capitol Theater. The movie palace became a Cinerama (3 projectors using 70mm film) showplace. The Capitol was never twinned or subdivided into smaller theaters. At the conclusion of the roadshow engagement of "2001: A Space Odyssey" in 1968, the Loews Capitol Theater was closed and later demolished.

### **Caterpillar Club**

The Caterpillar Club is an informal association of people who have successfully used a parachute to bail out of a disabled aircraft. After authentication by the parachute maker, applicants receive a membership certificate and a distinctive lapel pin. The name was suggested because the parachute canopy was made of silk and caterpillars have to climb out of their cocoons and fly away. The club's motto is "life depends on a silken thread." In 1919, Leslie Irvin developed a parachute that the pilot could deploy at will from a backpack using a rip cord. He went on to form the Irvin Airchute Company of Canada in 1922. It later became Irvin Aerospace and the brand is now part of Airborne Systems. The club has no annual fees, meetings, officers, or formal organization, but the requirements for membership are rigid. Members must have saved their lives by jumping with a parachute. Only approved members are eligible to get a pin and a membership card. Prospective members must send documentation of the incident to Irvin Aerospace, which then conducts its own research. About 100,000 people saved by Irvin parachutes have become members of the club, more than a third of them during WWII. Some famous members include General James Doolittle, Charles Lindbergh and John Glenn. Parachutes saved Lindbergh's life four times in a span of two years. Two of those bailouts occurred while he was flying the St. Louis-Chicago mail route. The exact number of living members is unknown, but it is estimated at 4,000. In the early 21st century, only about 10 people qualify each year, including military pilots who eject. Other parachute manufacturers (Pioneer in Skokie, Illinois and Switlik of Trenton, New Jersey) also had honors for those saved by their products.

### **Chaff**

Chaff was an ingenious defensive tactic employed by the British, code named "Window." And, called "duppel" by the WWII era German Luftwaffe (from the Berlin suburb near where it first discovered). It was a radar countermeasure in which aircraft or other targets spread a cloud of aluminum foil strips (resembling Christmas tree tinsel), or small thin pieces of metallic glass fibers or plastic, which either appeared as a cluster of secondary targets on radar screens or swamped the screen with multiple returns. When hit by radar, chaff resonate and re-radiate the signal. Opposing air and ground (flak batteries) defenders would find it almost impossible to pick out the real aircraft from the echoes from the chaff. Chaff was also used to signal distress by an aircraft when communications were not functional. This had the same effect as an SOS, and could be picked up on radar. In 1943, the Eighth Air Force, who first used narrow strips of aluminum foil on October 8<sup>th</sup>, called it "Carpet." An unopened package of chaff was about the size and shape of a carton of cigarettes.

### **Chicago Union Station**

During WWII, the Chicago Union Station housed a Servicemen's Canteen and the world's largest patriotic display ever built. The Servicemen's Canteen offered food and refreshments to men and women of the Armed Forces at special prices - all food items were only a nickel. The canteen was operated by the Chicago Union Station Company for the four railroads serving the busy terminal - Pennsylvania Railroad, Burlington Route, the Milwaukee Road and Alton Railroad. Fred Harvey provided the service. The display was comprised of an endless swarm of 4,500 actual scale model airplanes with wing spreads up to five feet, symbolizing the thousands of airplanes the government built to win the war. In addition, twelve mammoth mural paintings were also part of the historic display, which was built by the Chicago Building Trades Council to help in the sale of war bonds and stamps. More than 50,000 travelers per day viewed the inspiring panorama.

## **Childs Restaurants**

Childs Restaurants was one of the first national dining chains in the US and Canada, having peaked in the 1920s and 1930s, with about 125 locations in dozens of markets, serving over 50 million meals a year, with over \$37 million in assets at the time. Childs was a pioneer in a number of areas, including design, service, sanitation and labor relations. It was a contemporary of Horn & Hardart, and a predecessor of companies such as McDonalds. The first Childs Restaurant was launched in 1889 by brothers Samuel S. Childs and William Childs, on the ground level of the Merchants Hotel at 41 Cortlandt Street, between Broadway and Church Street, in Manhattan, New York. They are credited as the inventors of the “tray line” self-service cafeteria format. During the 1940s a popular midtown location was 1501 Broadway at 43rd Street below the Paramount Theater. In 1943, the company filed for bankruptcy reorganization. Childs emerged from bankruptcy in 1947 and continued to operate through the 1950s. However, the company had shrunk to only 53 locations and was losing money. In 1961, substantially all of the remaining Childs Restaurant operations were sold to the Riese Organization. Today, the company operates numerous restaurants throughout NYC, including franchised units of Dunkin’ Donuts, KFC, Pizza Hut, TGI Fridays and Houlihan’s. A number of Riese properties are former Childs Restaurants.

## **Chin Lee’s Restaurant**

In 1924, Mr. Chin Lee opened a Chinese restaurant at Broadway and W. 49th Street in NYC. It was a huge establishment, occupying the 2nd and 3rd floors at 1604 Broadway, seating nearly a thousand people. There were two entrances for patrons, one on Broadway with a big marquee, another on 49th St with a smaller marquee, plus a delivery entrance on 7th Avenue. When the restaurant opened, Mayor Jimmy Walker publicly congratulated Chin Lee for lighting up the area north of Times Square. Movies of that period sometimes show the Broadway marquee. In 1928, he opened another equally large restaurant named Chin’s, at Broadway and W. 44th Street. At both places, patrons could dance to a live band and watch a floor show. Over the years, because it provided food and entertainment at reasonable prices, Chin Lee became a household name and was known as the “king of restaurant businessmen” among the Chinese. Incredible as it may seem today, at that time, Chin Lee’s establishments represented a kind of center of Chinese culture to many New Yorkers. During and after WWII, establishments featuring live music were required to collect a 30% federal amusement tax from customers. Sadly, both restaurants were closed down in 1949 by the federal government for non-payment of taxes. The demise of Chin Lee foreshadowed the decline of Times Square as the center of popular entertainment, where ordinary folk congregated on Wednesday and Saturday nights to go to the movies and hear the big bands at the Rivoli, Capitol, Paramount and Radio City Music Hall, preceded or followed by chop suey and chow mein at Chin Lee’s. By the 1970s, the main business in the area were adult movies and bookshops.

## **Cigarette Camps**

After the Allies secured the French harbor of Le Havre (on the eastern side of the Bay of Seine and opposite Cherbourg) the Americans began ringing the city with camps that served as staging areas for new troops arriving in the European Theater of Operations (ETO). Most of the camps were located between Le Havre and Rouen on the Normandy coast. They also constructed other camps around the city of Reims, which served as assembly areas for units about to enter combat. The staging area camps were named after various brands of American cigarettes, and the assembly area camps were named after U.S. cities. These types of names were chosen for obvious security and more subtle psychological reasons. By the end of WWII, all of the camps were devoted to departing troops. Many processed liberated American POWs and some even held German POWs for a while.

## **Claridge Hotel**

The Claridge, located between Park Place and Indiana Avenue, is different from most Atlantic City resorts, since it did not grow out of a modest boarding house. It was the idea of Philadelphia architect John McShain who designed the 24-story 400-room hotel. The Claridge’s design was patterned after NYC’s Empire State Building. Opened in 1930 during the Great Depression, the Claridge became the last of the great hotels built in Atlantic City near the Boardwalk. The hotel, crowned by a distinctive dome-like

cupola, overlooks Brighton Park and its historic "Fountain of Light", which was provided by General Electric to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the invention of the light bulb by Thomas Edison. Initially, the Marlborough Hotel was at left and the Brighton Hotel to the right. Due to the hotel's tall, slick and slender appearance it gained the nickname "The Skyscraper By The Sea". The Claridge was a successful hotel during the 1930s - 1950s. Despite Atlantic City's downturn as a premiere resort in the 1960s, the hotel continued to operate and survived into the casino era. In 1981, the Claridge became one of three historic hotels that were incorporated into a modern casino. The Claridge Casino Hotel was once a stand-alone gaming hall before it was folded into Bally's Atlantic City complex as a hotel tower in 2002 after a change in ownership. In 2011, the historic hotel underwent a \$20 million facelift, including room renovations and improvements to the red-brick facade.

### **Combat Box**

The combat box was an aerial tactic used to frustrate enemy fighter attacks. It was designed especially to help protect vulnerable bomber formations on deep-penetration, unescorted raids. The combat box configuration organized bombers into a wedge-shaped labyrinth to get maximum defensive firepower from their many guns. It stacked and staggered the aircraft of a bomb group's three squadrons, each consisting of six or seven aircraft. A bomb group actually consisted of four squadrons, but typically they rotated position in the combat box: high, low, lead and the fourth squadron was allowed to "stand down" for the mission. At the point of the lead squadron was a bomber manned by a highly qualified "lead" crew. Tight combat box formations not only helped in defense against fighter attack, it concentrated bombs in tighter patterns on a target. Turbulence made it difficult to maintain position within the tight confines in the combat box designed to protect them. Danger of collision was constant.

### **Combines**

POW life was resolutely communal. Men formed themselves into so-called "combines" – groups of four to a dozen kriegies who lived together in cramped rooms sharing virtually everything. Combines were allocated stove-time in the barracks kitchen to cook hot meals from the rations they received from the Germans and the Red Cross. The combines split up the contents of the Red Cross parcels, so-called "cardboard suitcases", equally, except for cigarettes and chocolate bars which became the mediums of exchange in a highly regulated barter system.

### **Jack Dempsey's**

Jack "Manassa Mauler" Dempsey was an American boxer who held the world heavyweight title from 1919-1926. His aggressive style and his punching power made him one of the most popular boxers in history. Many of his fights set financial and attendance records. He is listed Number 7 in Ring Magazine's list of the 100 greatest boxers of all time. Jack Dempsey's Broadway Restaurant, popularly known as Jack Dempsey's, originally opened for business in 1935 on the site of the old car barn on Eighth Avenue and W. 50th Street in Manhattan, New York, directly across from the first Madison Square Garden (MSG). It later re-located to 1619 Broadway, between W. 49th and W. 50th Streets near Times Square. Owned by Jack Dempsey, it was considered by many as an American institution. Most nights for nearly forty years, one would find the famous proprietor on hand to greet guests, sign autographs, pose for pictures and hold court with the rich and famous, as well as people from all walks of life. The exterior of the restaurant appeared briefly in the movie "The Godfather" (1972). It closed in 1974.

### **Dulag Luft**

Dulag Luft was the abbreviated name given to POW transit camps for Air Force prisoners captured by Germany during WWII. Their main purpose was to act as collection and interrogation centers for newly captured aircrew, before being transferred in batches to permanent camps. Dulag Luft derives from the German "durchgangslager der Luftwaffe" meaning transit camp - Air Force. Dulag Luft, through practically all Air Force personnel captured in German occupied Europe passed, was comprised of three installations: (1) the main interrogation center at Oberursel, (2) the hospital at Hohemark, and (3) the transit camp at Wetzlar. Several camps were set up throughout Germany and the occupied countries.

However, the main center used throughout the WWII was at Oberursel Auswertestelle West near Frankfurt. A satellite camp at Wetzlar, about 30 miles north of Frankfurt, was set up later in the war to help cope with the large number of aircrews, mainly USAAF personnel, captured as the bombing campaign intensified against Germany. Allegations of interrogation under torture were made by numerous POWs who passed through the camps.

### **East Anglia**

East Anglia is a history-haunted region of ancient farms, curving rivers, and low flat marshland. It stretches northward from Cambridge, to Norwich, and eastward to Great Yarmouth an industrial port on the North Sea. It is an imprecisely defined region north of the Thames River and south of The Wash. There were more than 120 USAAF airfields located in East Anglia. Smaller in square miles than the island of Hawaii, the area became the hyperactive origination place for the Eighth Air Force strikes against the Third Reich due to its landscape and strategic location – flatlands well suited for runways and closeness to Continental Europe. Throughout the war all the heavy bomb groups were concentrated in the English counties of Huntingdonshire, Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire, as well as parts of Norfolk and Suffolk. Germany never made a serious effort to attack East Anglian airfields. However, East Anglia presented a convenient target for France-based enemy aircraft and V-Weapons. Great Britain became a giant aircraft off the shores of Fortress Europe.

### **Ephrata Army Air Base**

During WWII, the USAAF established numerous airfields in the State of Washington for training pilots and aircrews of fighters and bombers. The Ephrata Army Air Base was established in 1939. It was used initially as a support airfield for bombing and gunnery ranges in the area (Seven Mile Gunnery School). In 1940, it was transferred to the Fourth Air Force as a group training airfield for B-17 Flying Fortress heavy bombardment units, with new aircraft being obtained from Boeing near Seattle. Later on it was reassigned to the Second Air Force when heavy bombardment group training was reassigned to that command. It was also used by the Air Technical Service Command as an aircraft maintenance and supply depot. The base was closed in 1945 and turned over to the War Assets Administration for disposal. In the late 1940s, it was transferred to Grant County and developed into a commercial airport. The Ephrata Municipal Airport covers 2,300 acres and has two runways.

### **Five Towns**

The Five Towns is an informal grouping of villages and hamlets in Nassau County, New York on the South Shore of western Long Island adjoining the border with Queens County in the City of New York. Despite the name, none of the communities are towns. The Five Towns is usually said to comprise the villages of Lawrence and Cedarhurst, the hamlets of Woodmere and Inwood, and “The Hewletts”, which consist of the villages of Hewlett Bay Park, Hewlett Harbor, Hewlett Neck and the hamlet of Hewlett, along with Woodsburgh, North Woodmere and Atlantic Beach, all of which are located in the southwest corner of the Town of Hempstead. This unique area, which once had enormous mansions and former plantations dating back to the time of the Revolutionary War, resembles the North Shore’s “Gold Coast” making it one of the most affluent communities outside the Hamptons and in all of New York State. The name “Five Towns” dates back to 1931, when individual Community Chest groups in the area banded together to form the Five Towns Community Chest, consisting of Inwood, Lawrence, Cedarhurst, Woodmere and Hewlett. Each of these communities has a consecutive stop on the Far Rockaway Branch of the Long Island Rail Road (LIRR). Woodmere is the largest and most populous, while the commercial and cultural hub is usually considered to be Cedarhurst, with its shopping area along Central Avenue and nearby Cedarhurst Park. Each of the Five Towns, with the exception of Inwood which is predominantly Christian, has a large Orthodox Jewish community, with many Jewish day schools, yeshivas, synagogues, kosher restaurants and Judaica stores serving the needs of the surrounding community.

## **Flak**

Flak, from the German “FLiegerAbwehrKanone” (translated as Aircraft Defense Cannon) was an aircrews’ major problem on missions - much more so than any fighters were. Bombers were always at the mercy of the German flak batteries, who could fire at will, knowing that the Americans would not take evasive action until they dropped their bombs. Flak batteries located near major targets were so many in number and so concentrated that they could fill the entire sky with a dirty black layer of bursting 88mm shells, coincidentally described by bomber crews as a “carpet” so thick that you could “walk on it” or “land on it”. Often the flak was so intense the men could smell it through their oxygen masks, and the concentrated barrages exploded with such force that the concussions would have driven the pilots through the roofs of their planes had they not been strapped in. When they became “flak happy” combat crewmen were sent on “flak leave” to the “flak house” or the “flak shack”. And, they even named their bombers with flak connotations like “Flak Eater”.

Flak was a grossly inefficient defensive measure. On average it took 8,500 rounds from the newest version of 88mm guns to down a single bomber. Yet it was a devastatingly effective psychological weapon, deigned to unnerve the aircrews and impair bombing accuracy. Flak was insidious; it reduced men to a state of complete helplessness-passive stress. Planes hit by flak had a better chance of making it back to base than ones roughed up by fighters, but the carnage was closer to home, increasing crew anxiety. Some bombers landed with 200 to 300 holes in them with crew members in worse shape than their planes. While flak was responsible for 40% of the wounds suffered by the Eighth Force fliers during the first year of the air war, it accounted for 71% of the wounds over the entire period of the war. In 1944, flak destroyed over 3,500 American planes. And, by the end of the war, German flak gunners would take down over 5,400 total.

## **Flak Farms**

Beginning in 1942, the Air Force had begun to establish retreats, so-called “flak farms”, for war- weary fliers. Airmen sent there by their squadron flight surgeons were suffering from a mild form of combat exhaustion, were at the midpoint of their tours of duty, or had recently had a mind-shaking experience in the sky. Most of the flak farms were manor houses donated by their owners to the RAF, who in turn, leased them to the Eighth Air Force. By the end of the war there were 15 of them. Air Force medical officers visited the rest houses regularly, but responsibility for running them was gradually turned over to the women of the American Red Cross (ARC). The aim was to make them as un-military as possible to foster relaxation and recuperation.

## **Flak Suits**

Casualties from flak and cannon fire were reduced by the introduction of body armor or so-called “flak suits”. The combat body vest was made of overlapping 20 gauge manganese steel plates sewed into a canvas covering. An apron of the same material hooked onto the vest, protecting the groin and upper thighs. The complete suit weighed 22 ½ pounds, and though uncomfortable and cumbersome, could be shed quickly in an emergency by the pull of a chord. Worn with a steel helmet, they were effective against machine gun fire, flak fragments and shell splinters. On some planes, men sat on armor plate to protect their genitals. Helpless in the flak field, all they could do was sit and take it. Records show that 80% of combat wounds were caused by low-velocity missiles – flak splinters or fragments of cannon and machine gun shells. Crews with body armor suffered 58% fewer casualties than those without it. But, men still died instantaneously when hit straight on by cannon fire or exploding flak, or were badly mangled when hit in areas of the body that their armor failed to shield.

## **Focke-Wulf Fw 190**

The Focke-Wulf Fw 190 Wurger was a German single-seat, single-engine fighter aircraft designed by Kurt Tank in the late 1930s and widely used during WWII. Along with its well-known counterpart, the Messerschmitt Bf 109, the Fw 190 became the backbone of the Luftwaffe’s Jagdwaffe (Fighter Force). The twin-row BMW 801 radial engine that powered most operational versions enabled the Fw 190 to lift

larger loads than the Bf 109, allowing its use as a day-fighter, ground-attack aircraft and, to a lesser degree, night fighter. The Fw 190A started flying operational over France in August 1941, and quickly proved superior in all but turn radius to the RAF's main front-line fighter, the Spitfire Mk V, especially at low land medium altitudes. It maintained superiority over Allied fighters until the introduction of the improved Spitfire Mk IX. However, its performance decreased when flying above 20,000 feet which reduced its effectiveness as a high-altitude interceptor. Turbochargers were used on subsequent models but were problematic. The Fw 190F lost two of the A model's four wing-mounted 20mm cannons, which were replaced by a belly rack for a bomb load of 11,000 lbs. And, the 190F-2 introduced the blown canopy to give the pilots a better view their ground targets. In November 1942, the Fw 190 made its air combat debut on the Eastern Front, finding much success in fighter wings and specialized ground attack units from October 1943 onwards. In the opinion of German pilots who flew both the Bf 109 and the Fw 190, the latter provided increased firepower and, at low to medium altitude, better maneuverability. Some of the Luftwaffe's most successful fighter aces claimed a great many of their kills while flying them.

### **Fort Dix**

Fort Dix is a U.S. Army installation located in part of New Hanover Township, Pemberton Township, and Springfield Township in Burlington County, New Jersey. Fort Dix is named for Major General John Adams Dix, a veteran of the War of 1812 and the Civil War. Construction began in June 1917. Camp Dix, as it was known at that time, was a training and staging ground for units during WWI. The camp became a demobilization center after the war. Between World Wars, Camp Dix was a reception, training and discharge center for the Civilian Conservation Corps. Camp Dix became Fort Dix on March 8, 1939, and the installation became a permanent Army Post. During WWII the fort served as training and staging ground and after the war it became a demobilization center. On July 15, 1947, Fort Dix became BTC and the home of the 9th Infantry Division. In 1954, the 9th moved out and the 69th Infantry Division made the fort home until it was deactivated on March 16, 1956. During the Vietnam War rapid expansion took place. Afterwards, Fort Dix sent soldiers to Operation Desert Shield, Desert Storm, Bosnia, Afghanistan and Iraq. Fort Dix was an early casualty of the first Base Realignment and Closure process in the early 1990s, losing its basic training mission. However, the fort is still a training reservation for the Army Reserve and since September 11, 2001, it has been a major mobilization point for Army Reserve and National Guard troops. In 2005, Fort Dix merged with two neighboring military bases (McGuire AFB and Naval Air Engineering Station Lakehurst) establishing Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, the first base of its kind in the U.S. Today, the Atlantic Strike Team (AST) of the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG), which is part of the Department of Homeland Security, is based at Fort Dix. The post is also home to the Fort Dix Federal Correctional Institution, the largest single federal prison in America. It is a low security installation for male inmates located within the military.

### **Fort Logan**

Fort Logan was once an Army post located in Denver, Colorado. It was established in response to concerns of Denver citizens that the city was too isolated and in need of protection. The first troops officially occupied the military reservation on October 31, 1887. The fort was named after John Alexander Logan who was a Major General in the Union Army during the Civil War. On December 9, 1940 the fort became a sub-post of Lowry Field. The USAAC used the facility for training clerks, and later activated the medical facilities as a convalescent hospital. A portion of the grounds also served as a War Department Processing Center, for induction into and separation from military service. Many buildings were erected, with as many as 5,500 persons stationed at the post during the 1940s. Fort Logan was closed in May 1946, with the Veterans Administration (VA) utilizing the building until a new VA hospital in Denver was completed in 1951. Fort Logan National Cemetery was created in 1949 from 214 acres on the western edge of the post. Three hundred acres were deeded to the State of Colorado in 1960 to establish a state hospital - Fort Logan Mental Health Center, as a new era for the military post began. The name was changed in 1991 to the Colorado Mental Health Institute at Fort Logan.

## **Geneva Convention (1929)**

The official name of this Convention is the “Convention Relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War, Geneva July 27, 1929.” It was adopted on this date but wasn’t effective until June 19, 1931. This version of the Geneva Conventions defined humanitarian protections for POWs during WWII. It was significantly revised and replaced by the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949. The 53 countries that ratified the Convention are called State Parties. However, not all countries that later were involved in the war signed (e.g., Russia). The nine countries that signed but did not ratify the Convention (e.g., Japan) are known as state signatories. In 1921, the International Red Cross (IRC) Conference held at Geneva expressed the wish that a special convention on the treatment of POWs be adopted. The IRC Committee drew up a draft convention which was submitted to the Diplomatic Conference convened at Geneva in 1929. The Convention does not replace but only completes the provisions of the Hague Regulations of 1899 and 1907. The most important innovations consisted in the prohibition of reprisals and collective penalties, the organization of prisoners’ work, the designation, by the prisoners, of representatives and the control exercised by Protecting Powers. Specific provisions also apply to the capture, captivity and termination of captivity of POWs.

## **German Home Guard**

The German Home Guard, aka “Volkssturm” (translated as the folk storm or people’s assault) was a German National Militia of the last months of WWII. It existed on paper since 1925, but didn’t become a reality until October 18, 1944, when Adolf Hitler issued orders establishing a plan of action. It was a plan to form a National Militia in eastern Germany as a last resort to boost fighting strength because the Wehrmacht was lacking manpower to stop the Soviet advance. It conscripted males between the ages of 16 to 60 years who were not already serving in some domestic military capacity. The basic unit was a battalion of 642 men. Units were mostly comprised of members of the **Hitler Youth**, men in jobs not deemed necessary, invalids, the elderly or men who had previously been considered unfit for military service.

## **Hawaiian Room**

The story of the Hawaiian Room dates from 1937. The management of the Hotel Lexington, completed six months before the market crash of 1929 and costing \$5 million, found itself with a large and useless basement dining room. In 1932, it had opened as the Silver Grill, featuring bandleaders Ozzie Nelson, Little Jack Little, Artie Shaw and Carl Ravel. In 1937, with its popularity waned, the manager Charlie Rochester decided to experiment for a few months with all-Hawaiian entertainment in a café decorated with South Seas motif and featuring Polynesian food and the best in Hawaiian music. It opened with bandleader Andy Iona and Ray Kinney as featured singer. In 1938, Kinney returned to Hawaii and brought back with him a trio of lovely hula dancers and a singing comedienne called Hilo Hattie. The show was an instantaneous success and the pattern varied little over the next two decades. Aside from playing to packed houses, the band broadcast live, first over radio then television. The Hawaiian Room billed itself as the “Eastern Outpost of Hawaii”. The back of their post card summed it all up: “The Famous Hawaiian Room - A romantic atmosphere for Dining and Dancing, an authentic setting complete even to a tropical rain storm - Entertainment - Hawaiian Music - Songs and Dances - Native Hawaiian Dishes and Beverages, also the famed Lexington cuisine”. Sometime after 1964, it closed.

## **H.M.S. Andes**

The H.M.S. (His or Her Majesty’s Ship) Andes, built in 1939, was one of 45 British mercantile vessels converted temporarily between 1942 and 1944 to Landing Ships Infantry (LSI). From the beginning of 1945 she was employed carrying men (wartime capacity of 1,800) and equipment to the Pacific theater. The Andes reverted to her merchant marine status of RMS (Royal Mail Ship) Andes after her use as an LSI but continued to be used in the role of a troop ship into 1946. The ship was owned and operated post war by the Royal Mail Line (London).

## Hitler Youth

The Hitler Youth (HY), aka "Hitlerjugend" was founded in 1922 as part of the Nazi Party movement, a kind of Party auxiliary and paramilitary organization for youths aged 14 to 18. Beginning in 1929, it also came to include an organization for girls aged 14 to 18 called the League of German Maidens. In 1931, the age range was extended downward through the German Young People, for boys between 10 and 14, and the Young Maidens for girls of the same ages. The range was extended upward through an organization called Faith and Beauty, for young women aged 18 to 21. In 1933, HY became an official organization of the state, and membership became compulsory in 1940. At the age of 18, young men customarily left the HY for six months with the State Labor Service, followed by service in the German military. By the time of WWII, the organization had become closely associated with the Nazi SS (German for "SchutzStaffel" translated as Protection Squadron), whose combat arm, the Waffen-SS, had a special Youth Division.

The HY was a means of indoctrinating German youths into the Nazi way of life generally and, more particularly, to prepare and toughen up boys and young men for military service. The organization was regarded as central to the Nazi program and to German patriotism. It was seen as so indispensable to the continuation of the Nazi regime that branches of the HY were quickly established in all countries occupied by Germany during WWII. In 1940, German children were made members of a Hitler Youth Patrol Service, a junior version of the Security Police. They were encouraged to spy on adults, including their parents, and to report any apparent subversive or unorthodox activity they might detect. At the age of 12, boys were trained in the use of military rifles and even machine guns. And, at 14 they attended a month of military training camp. The HY participated in civil defense and some police work, becoming active in German fire brigades and assisting with recovery efforts to German cities affected from Allied bombing. It also assisted in such organizations as the Reich Postal and Radio Services. In 1943, Nazi leaders began turning the HY into a military reserve to draw manpower which had been depleted due to tremendous military losses. Boys, 15 to 17 years of age, were pressed into service manning anti-aircraft artillery defenses throughout Germany. They were encouraged to capture or kill shot-down Allied airmen who parachuted into Germany. As WWII in Europe drew to a close, Adolf Hitler inducted underage men and underage boys into service in the **Home Guard**, whereby HY members were committed to front-line combat.

## Hotel Lexington

The Roaring 20s was a grand era for excess, travel and hotel construction in NYC. Among the elegant new skyscrapers added to NYC's skyline were the Hotel Pierre, the Lexington, the Sherry-Netherland, the Park Lane and the Waldorf-Astoria, all of which were designed by Schultze & Weaver. The Hotel Lexington was built in the Grand Central Terminal area, on the southeast corner of Lexington Avenue and E. 48th Street. It was commissioned by the American Hotels Corporation and constructed by the Turner Construction Company. It opened to the public on October 15, 1929. The hotel's brick and terra-cotta trim had a combination of Romanesque and Gothic details. But its modernity was expressed in its height of 300 feet with 24 stories above a two-story base. Deep setbacks at the top of the building created open courts that provided all rooms with good ventilation and light as well as views of NYC's magnificent skyscrapers. The hotel had 801 rooms available. Amenities included a barbershop, beauty salon and large telephone booths fitted with comfortable swivel chairs and French-style telephones (a late 1920s innovation in which the handset contained both a transmitter and receiver). Public rooms were limited to the two-story lobby, mezzanine gallery, two lounges, a dining room and a grill room. Both the two-level dining room off the main lobby and the grill room on the lower level were modern in appearance. The grill room featured a sunken dance floor where the house orchestra entertained guests. The Lexington is currently operated as a Radisson Hotel.

## Kommando

Kommando is a generic German word meaning Unit or Command. During WWII, it was also the basic unit of organization of slave laborers in German concentration camps. The Geneva Convention rules for treatment of POWs permit captors to use enlisted prisoners on work details called "commandos". Most enlisted American "kriegies" were assigned to kommandos at some time in their imprisonment. However,

these same rules forbade using commissioned officers to do labor. The distinction had its good and bad effects. Kommandos offered the opportunity to leave prison camp sometimes and usually involved supplementing one's diet by trading or other means.

## **K-ration**

The K-ration was an individual daily combat food ration which was introduced by the U.S. Army during WWII. It was originally intended as an individually packaged daily ration for issue to airborne troops, tank corps, motorcycle couriers, and other mobile forces for short durations. Though the K-ration was designed to be an emergency ration (maximum use of 15 meals), Quartermaster Corps officials insisted that it satisfied all requirements for a lightweight complete field ration for all front-line troops at a scale of one K-ration per man per day.

The K-ration was provided in three units - Breakfast, Dinner and Supper.

Breakfast Unit - canned entree (chopped ham and eggs, veal loaf), biscuits, a dried fruit bar or cereal bar, Halazone water purification tablets, a 4-pack of cigarettes, chewing gum, instant coffee, and sugar (granulated, cubed, or compressed).

Dinner Unit - canned entree (processed cheese, ham, or ham and cheese), biscuits, 15 malted milk tablets or 5 caramels, sugar (granulated, cubed, or compressed), salt packet, a 4-pack of cigarettes and a box of matches, chewing gum, and a powdered beverage packet (lemon, orange or grape flavor).

Supper Unit - canned meat (chicken pate or pork luncheon meat with carrot and apple, beef and pork loaf, or sausages), biscuits; a 2-ounce D-ration emergency chocolate bar, Tropical bar, or commercial sweet chocolate bar; a packet of toilet paper tissues, a 4-pack of cigarettes, chewing gum, and a bouillon soup cube or powder packet.

The ration's intended use as a short-term assault ration fell by the wayside once U.S. forces entered combat. While fighting in the ETO, the U.S. Army discovered that the daily caloric intake provided was insufficient to meet the physical needs of active soldiers. In addition, troops quickly got tired of the ration, some being forced to eat it for months on end. By the end of WWII, millions of K-rations had been produced, but the Army had lost interest in them. Postwar Army supply plans for field rations relied solely on heavier canned wet rations primarily to save additional cost of procurement and storage. In 1948, after introduction of improvements in the C-ration, the K-ration was declared obsolete. Most existing K-ration stock was declared surplus and distributed to civilian feeding programs overseas.

## **Kriegie**

The word "kriegie" is military slang for the German word "Kriegsgefangener" meaning war prisoner. The actual definition now pertains to an Allied POW in a WWII German internment camp. Former POW Paul Gordon of Reading, Pennsylvania, claims to be the man who coined the term. He was captured by the Germans after the B-17 in which he was a ball turret gunner was shot down over France on October 9, 1942. He spent the remainder of the war as a detainee in Stalag 17B near Krems, Austria. Early in his captivity he was with a group of fellow POWs who were pondering what to call themselves, since the German word was too cumbersome. According to Paul, he said "Heck, we'll just be krieges", and the name stuck.

## **Le Havre**

Le Havre, which simply means the harbor or the port, is a city in the Seine - Maritime department of the Haute - Normandie region in France. It is situated in the northwestern France, on the right bank of the mouth of the Seine River on the English Channel. It is the second largest port in the country. In 1944, while under German occupation, the city was devastated during the Battle of Normandy - 5,000 people

were killed and 12,000 homes destroyed, mainly by Allied air attacks. Despite this, Le Havre became the location of one of the biggest Replacement Depots in the ETO in WWII. Le Havre was the only liberated port on the western coast that could accommodate large ships. Thousands of American replacement troops poured through the city before being deployed to combat operations. It is estimated that nearly three million American troops either entered or left Europe through Le Havre, which led to it becoming known as the "Gateway to America" in 1945 and 1946.

## **Linz**

Linz is located in the north center of Austria, approximately 30 km south of the Czech border on both sides of the Danube River. Shortly before and during World War II, Hitler initiated a major industrialization of Linz. Many factories were dismantled in the newly acquired Czechoslovakia and then reassembled in Linz. In addition to an ordnance depot, Linz had a benzol oil plant which was bombed during the Oil Campaign on October 16, 1944. The Mauthausen-Gusen, located near Linz, were the last Nazi concentration camps to be liberated by the Allies. While in operation, they were the source of quarrying stone for Hitler's prestige projects across the Reich. The main camp in Mauthausen was just 25 km (16 miles) from Linz.

## **Lockheed P-38 Lightning**

The P-38 was a WWII American propeller-driven fighter aircraft. Developed to a USAAC requirement, the P-38 had distinctive twin booms and a single, central nacelle containing the cockpit and armament. It was the first USAAF fighter to reach Britain, and the first fighter ever to be delivered across the Atlantic under its own power. And, it was the only American fighter aircraft in production throughout the U.S. involvement in the war, from Pearl Harbor to Victory over Japan Day. The P-38 was used in a number of roles, including interception, dive and level bombing, ground attack, night fighting, photo reconnaissance, radar and visual pathfinding for bombers, evacuation missions, and extensively as long-range escorts when equipped with under-wing drop tanks. The P-38 was a formidable fighter, interceptor and attack aircraft. Its greatest virtues were long range, heavy payload, high speed, fast climb and concentrated firepower. Because of its distinctive shape, it was less prone to cases of mistaken identity and friendly fire. And, having two engines enabled many pilots to return to base safely after having an engine failure during combat or on the way home. However, the P-38 was known to be unreliable at extreme altitudes, where the paralyzing cold hampered engine performance. But, they were fast and fearsome war machines, with slightly greater range than the P-47s, a matter of life and death to the bomber crews. A little-known role of the P-38 in the ETO was that of fighter-bomber during the invasion of Normandy and in the Allied advance across France into Germany. By September of 1944, all but one of the Lightning groups in the Eighth Air Force had converted to the P-51 Mustang.

## **Lowry Field**

In 1934, the USAAC decided to consolidate all of its Air Service Technical training schools and selected the City of Denver, Colorado. The Army also formed a new branch of armament and photography training in Denver, and in October 1937 the Works Progress Administration (WPA) began work to convert the grounds of the former Agnes Memorial Sanatorium into a modern airfield. In March 1938, the new field was named Lowry Field in honor of 2nd Lt. Francis Lowry whose plane, in which he flew as a forward artillery observer, was shot down by German anti-aircraft fire in WWI. In January 1942, the War Department assigned Lowry Field to the AAF Flying Training Command, and tasked Lowry with annually training 57,000 men. By the end of 1945, Lowry was processing an average of 300 discharges a day. In July 1946, Lowry was assigned to the AAF new Air Training Command, which it would be a part of for almost the next 50 years. In June 1948, Lowry Field was renamed Lowry AFB as a result of the USAAF becoming a separate branch of the Armed Forces. During the 1950s, Lowry functioned as President Eisenhower's Summer White House from 1952-1955. And from 1954-1958 it was the interim home for the USAF Academy until the construction was completed in Colorado Springs. In April 1962, Lowry became the first operational base for Titan I ICBMs, with the 451st Strategic Missile Wing. In the 1960s, Lowry flight operations were shifted to Buckley AFB. All flying activities ceased completely in June 1966, and in September 1994, the base was officially closed.

## **Messerschmitt Bf 109**

Commonly called the Me 109, it was a German WWII fighter aircraft designed by Willy Messerschmitt and Robert Lusser during the early to mid-1930s. The Bf 109 designation was issued by the German ministry of aviation and represents the developing company Bayerische Flugzeugwerke (Bavarian Aircraft Works). It was one of the most advanced fighters of the era, including such features as all-metal monocoque construction, a closed canopy, and a retractable landing gear. It was powered by a liquid-cooled, inverted-V12 aero engine. The Bf 109 first saw operational service during the Spanish Civil War and was still in use at the dawn of the jet age at the end of WWII, during which time it was the backbone of the Luftwaffe's fighter force. The Bf 109 was flown by the three top-scoring fighter aces of the war, who claimed 928 victories among them while flying with Jagdgeschwader 52, mainly on the Eastern Front. From the end of 1941, the Bf 109 was steadily being supplemented by the superior Focke-Wulf Fw 190.

Originally conceived as an interceptor, later models were developed to fulfill multiple tasks, serving as bomber escort, fighter-bomber, day/night/all-weather fighter, ground-attack aircraft, and as reconnaissance aircraft. It was supplied to and operated by several states during WWII, and served with several countries for many years after the war. The Bf 109 was the most produced fighter aircraft in history, with a total of 33,984 airframes produced from 1936 up to April 1945. It accounted for 57% of all German fighter types produced. Through constant development, it remained competitive with the latest Allied fighter aircraft until the end of the war. The K-4, one of the final versions, had a pressurized cockpit, one 30mm and one 15mm cannon. It was used in attacks against Allied airfields on January 1, 1945, an operation that constituted the Luftwaffe's last concentrated offensive of the war.

## **Mitchel Field (See Exhibit 49)**

Mitchel AFB also known as Mitchel Field was a USAF base located on the Hempstead Plains of Long Island, N.Y. It was established in 1918 as Hazelhurst Aviation Field No.2. The facility was renamed as Mitchel Field in honor of former NYC mayor John Purroy Mitchel who was killed while training for the Air Service in Louisiana. In 1940, it was the location of the Air Defense Command which was charged with the mission to develop the air defense for cities, vital industrial areas, continental bases, and military facilities in the U.S. (aka "Zone of the Interior"). In 1943, Mitchel Army Airfield became a staging area for B-24 Liberators and crews before being sent overseas. Mitchel Field was a major source of supply in initial garrisoning and defense of North Atlantic air bases in Newfoundland, Greenland and Iceland. In 1942, anti-submarine patrol missions along the Atlantic coast were carried out by AAF aircraft based at Mitchel.

During WWII, Mitchel Army Airfield became a command and control base for both the First Fighter and First Bomber Commands. Tactical fighter groups and squadrons were formed at Mitchel to be trained at AAF Training Command bases, mostly in the East and Southeast, before being deployed to various overseas wartime theaters. In addition, thousands of AAF personnel were processed through the base for overseas combat duty. With the end of WWII, returning GIs were processed for separation at Mitchel. In 1946, Mitchel was designated as the location for the headquarters of the newly formed Air Defense Command. And, with the establishment of the USAF as a separate service in 1947, Mitchel Army Airfield was redesignated as Mitchel AFB.

In April 1961, the urban creep around Mitchel led to the decision to curtail flying at the base. And, the Air Force Reserve's 514th Troop Carrier Wing was reassigned to McGuire AFB in New Jersey. On June 25, 1961, Mitchel was closed and the property was turned over to Nassau County for development. The facility still has military housing, a commissary and exchange facilities to support military families and activities in the area. The Garden City-Mitchel Field Secondary, a remnant of the LIRR's Central Branch from Garden City to Bethpage, ends in the northern part of Mitchel Field, providing sporadic freight service. Today, the area is a multi-use complex currently home to Museum Row (Cradle of Aviation Museum, LI Children's Museum, Firefighter's Museum and Nunley's Carousel) Nassau Veterans Memorial Coliseum, Mitchel Athletic Complex, Nassau Community College, Hofstra University, and the Marriott Hotel.

## **Nissen Huts**

A Nissen Hut is a prefabricated steel structure, made from a half-cylindrical skin of corrugated steel. It was originally designed in the Spring of 1916 by mining engineer and inventor Major Peter Norman Nissen of the 29<sup>th</sup> Company Royal Engineers of the British Army. Two factors influenced the design: (1) the building had to be economical in its use of materials, especially considering wartime shortages of building material, and (2) the building had to be portable due to the shortages of shipping space. This led to a simple form that was prefabricated for ease of erection and removal. After the third prototype, the design was approved and the Nissen hut was put into production in August 1916. At least 100,000 were produced during WWI, but he did not receive royalties until sales made after the conflict. Production of Nissen huts waned between the wars, but was revived in 1939. Nissen Buildings Ltd. waived its patent rights for wartime production during WWII until 1945. Similar shaped hut types were developed as well, notably the Rommey hut in the UK and the **Quonset hut** in the U.S.. There was no standard model of Nissen huts, as the design was never static but changed according to demand. The huts came in a variety of sizes and configurations – often joined together, depending on their uses. They were all-purpose structures serving a wide range of functions: living quarters, headquarters, dispensaries, bomb stores, churches, etc. Many post-war huts were used by governments to provide cheap, ready-made family housing. In the UK, many were converted to agricultural or other functions, but most of which have since been demolished.

In East Anglia, the bomber crew living quarters were standard Nissen huts. The huts were scattered in small clusters, called sites, organized by squadron. Each officer's hut housed eight men, the officers of two bomber crews, each man having his own cot. Sergeant gunners slept on bunk beds in larger huts capable of handling up to three dozen men. Accounts of life in the hut generally were not positive since they were frequently seen as cold and drafty. The floors were concrete slabs and they were heated by small coal stoves, with flue pipes extending up through the roofs. A few low-watt light bulbs hung from each ceiling. None of the huts had plumbing. There was a building with latrines and washbasins in each squadron living area, but the ones for the mechanics had no hot water. The weather was the biggest factor not only for missions and the ground crews' preparation for missions, but for living conditions. For most of the year in England's damp, cool climate, it took extraordinary measures to stay warm in the thinly insulated Nissens. The accommodations, combined with a perpetual shortage of any type of heating fuel and the great distances between essential facilities like latrines, made for less than convenient living conditions.

## **North American P-51 Mustang**

The P-51 Mustang was an American long-range, single-seat fighter and fighter-bomber used during WWII, the Korean War and other conflicts. It was designed in 1940 by North American Aviation in response to a requirement of the British Purchasing Commission for license-built Curtiss P-40 fighters. In early 1943, the USAAF decided that the P-47 Thunderbolt and the P-51B Mustang be considered for the role of smaller escort fighters. The P-51B was a solution to the clear need for an effective bomber escort. It was at least as simple as other aircraft of its era. It proved itself indispensable during Big Week. With its range, plus its speed and high altitude maneuverability, the P-51 had not only quickly dominated the aerial battlefield, it gave the Eighth Air Force leadership the confidence to plan missions to even the most heavily defended targets in Germany. The P-51B used a common reliable engine (Rolls-Royce Merlin 66 two-stage two-speed supercharged engine) and had internal space for a huge fuel load (184 gallons). They also carried 75-gallon drop tanks, one tank under each wing. The total fuel load would provide for four hours 45 minutes of flying time whereby escorts could accompany the bombers all the way to Germany and back. From late 1943, P-51Bs (supplemented by the P51Ds from mid-1944) were used the USAAF's Eighth Air Force to escort bombers in raids over Germany, while the RAF's 2 TAF and the USAAF's Ninth Air Force used the Merlin-powered (Rolls-Royce Merlin 66 two-stage two-speed supercharged engine) Mustangs as fighter-bombers which helped ensure Allied air superiority in 1944. The P-51 also excelled on strafing missions. However, losses were much higher on strafing missions than air-to-air combat, partially because the Mustang's engines liquid cooling system could easily be punctured by small arms fire. The Mustang also proved useful against V-1s launched toward London. P51B/Cs using 150 octane fuel were fast enough to catch the V-1.

Early in 1944, bomber defense was initially layered, using the shorter range P-38s and P-47s to escort the bombers during the initial stages of the raid and then handing over to the P-51s when they turned for home. RAF Spitfires gave shallow cover to the bombers on departure and arrival, Thunderbolts and Lightnings took them across the Rhine, and Mustangs ferried them to and from distant targets like Berlin and Munich. This provided continuous coverage during the entire raid. By the end of 1944, the USAAF consolidated much of its wartime combat force and selected the P-51 as a standard piston-engine fighter, while the P-47s and P-38s were withdrawn or given substantially reduced roles. They were transferred to tactical units that would soon begin bombing bridges, airfields and supply trains in northern France in preparation for the invasion. And, after the invasion, they would provide battlefield support for Allied infantry. Modified P-38s, minus armaments, continued to be used for high-altitude photo reconnaissance.

## **Nose Art**

Nose Art is a decorative painting or design on the fuselage of an aircraft, usually up on the front, and is a form of aircraft graffiti. While begun for practical reasons of identifying friendly units, the practice evolved to express the individuality often constrained by the uniformity of the military, to evoke memories of home and peacetime life, and as a kind of psychological protection against the stress of war and the probability of death. It was a way for the airmen to hold on to their individuality, or sense of humor, in a war that was overwhelmingly vast, mechanized and brutal. The appeal, in part, came from the practice not being officially approved, even when the regulations against it were not enforced. Bomber crews which suffered high casualty rates during WWII, often developed strong bonds with their planes and affectionately decorated them with nose art believing that it could bring them good luck. Following the tradition of knights who carried decorated shields into battle, combat airmen took comfort and confidence in facing death with the luck given by their own personal aircraft.

True nose art appeared during WWII, which is considered by many observers to be the golden age of the genre, with both Axis and Allied pilots taking part. The artwork was done by talented amateur servicemen who relied on materials immediately available, as well as professional civilian artists. Some of it was crude and monochrome, yet others were beautifully executed in full, glorious color, reflecting the talent of the artist and his ability to scrounge paints and brushes in wartime at remote airfields. At the height of the war, nose-artists were in very high demand in the USAAF and were paid quite well for their services. AAF commanders tolerated the practice in an effort to boost aircrew morale. However, the USN and USMC prohibited nose art but permitted simply lettered names. Nose art was uncommon in the RAF and RCAF. The favorite subjects of the amateur nose cone artists were voluptuous sexy girls in pinup poses popularized by the work of commercial artists George Petty, Gil Elvgren and Alberto Vargas. Coyly seductive and impossibly beautiful, they were more than idealized versions of girls back home. The racy dames and femme fatales were brazen symbols of life on a war front where death was on everyone's mind.

Source material for American nose art was varied, ranging from cartoon icons to patriotic characters and fictional heroes. Lucky symbols such as dice and playing cards also inspired the artwork, along with references to mortality such as the Grim Reaper. Other artwork included outrageous animals and creatures, simple nicknames, hometowns, elaborate murals, names of actresses, and titles of famous songs and movies of the day. Some carried the likenesses of wives and sweethearts, were commemorative or intended to honor certain people or events. Some of the art even became famous symbols of the time such as the Memphis Belle. The colorful, slogans and metaphors expressed feelings for things dear and things not so dear. Some artwork imposed contempt to the enemy, especially to their leaders. The father the planes and crew were from headquarters or from the public eye, the racier the artwork tended to be. Due to changes in military policies and changing attitudes toward the representation of women, the amount of nose art declined after the Korean War.

## **Paramount Theater**

The Paramount Theater was a noted movie palace located at Broadway and W. 43rd Street in the Times Square district of Manhattan. Opened in 1926, it was the premiere showcase for Paramount Pictures. Originally a film only venue, the theater was the site of numerous movie premieres but was not

particularly profitable until it began hosting live music as the Swing Era got underway. During the 1930s and 1940s the Paramount became the leading big band house in the U.S. During the 1950s it was the site of live Rock-n-Roll shows presented by promoter Alan Freed. It was also the site of the world premier of "Love Me Tender" Elvis Presley's first movie. On August 4, 1964, the Paramount closed for good. The theater was gutted and turned into retail space and office space for The New York Times. The entrance arch was closed in and the marquee removed. There was no trace of the theater remaining. But in 2000, a large section of the Broadway office building was leased by the World Wrestling Federation (WWF) which recreated the famous arch and marquee (with the Paramount logo restored) and developed the space into WWF New York a theme club and restaurant. However, the WWF operation closed a few years later. The location is now home to the Hard Rock Café, which relocated from its previous home on E. 57th Street. Today, the Paramount Building is known for its large four-faced clock near the top of the pyramid like structure and the ornamental globe at the very top of the building. In 1988, the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission designated it as an official landmark.

### **Point System**

At the core of the U.S. Army Demobilization Plan was the so-called "Point System". Points were awarded for years of service overseas, medals and other commendations received, campaign battle stars earned, as well as other factors. The magic point total for being sent home was 85. Many men had more points, and those that had the most were slated to be sent home first.

Following is a typical, but not complete, point system computation table:

Number of months in the armed services	1 point per month
Number of months overseas	1 point per month
Number of children	12 points per child
Number of Battle Stars earned by unit	5 points per star
Purple Heart winner	5 points per award
Soldier's Medal winner	5 points per award
Bronze Star winner	5 points per award
Presidential Unit Citation winner	5 points per award

GIs were constantly badgering company clerks to get errors corrected and adjustments made to their point totals, which were recorded on their Adjusted Service Rating Cards. Those men with the magic number of 85 points, or more, were to return to the U.S., while those with fewer points were transferred out to make room for high point men from other organizations. Those with 80 to 84 points were sent to other units in the ETO and some of those with even fewer points were sent home on furlough and then went on to retraining for duty in the Pacific. The latter were perhaps the most fortunate of all, since the war in the Pacific soon ended and many of them were discharged before the higher-point men in the ETO got home.

### **Postal Censorship (See Exhibit 50)**

Postal Censorship is the inspection or examination of mail, most often by governments, that can include opening, reading or marking of covers, postcards, parcels and other postal packets. Primarily, it takes place during wartime or periods of unrest, civil disorder or a state of emergency. Its objectives may encompass economic warfare, security and intelligence. During WWII, the main protagonists, both Allies and Axis, all instituted postal censorship of civilian mail. The largest organizations were those of the U.K. and the U.S., who each employed about 10,000 censor staff. The U.S. censor staff count rose to 14,462 by February 1943.

POW and Internee mail is also subject to censorship under Articles 70 and 71 of the Third Geneva Convention (1929-1949). It is frequently subjected to both military and civil scrutiny because it passes through both postal systems. Military mail is not always censored by opening or reading the mail, but can include mail during wartime or during military campaigns. It is most often distributed by a totally military controlled postal service separate from that of civilian mail. Military intelligence has different requirements

than civilian intelligence gathering. During time of war, mail from the front is often opened and offending parts blanked or cut out. Military mail was subjected to censorship when it was the primary means for deployed servicemen to communicate with their families.

### **Quonset Hut**

A Quonset hut is a lightweight prefabricated structure of corrugated galvanized steel having a semicircular cross-section. Developed in the U.S., the design was based on the **Nissen hut** introduced by the British during WWI. The name comes from their site of first manufacture, Quonset Point, at the Davisville Naval Construction Battalion Center, located within the town of North Kingstown, Rhode Island. They were manufactured by a wide range of independent contractors in countries around the world but the first were manufactured in 1941, when the U.S. Navy needed an all-purpose, lightweight building that could be shipped anywhere and assembled without skilled labor. The most common design created a standard size of 20ft x 48ft with a 10ft radius, allowing 720 square feet of usable floor space, with optional four-foot overhangs at each end for protection of entrances from the weather. The flexible interior space was open, allowing for use as barracks, latrines, offices, medical and dental offices, isolation wards, housing, churches and bakeries. And, larger sizes were developed for warehousing. Between 150,000 and 170,000 Quonset huts were manufactured during WWII. After the war, in the U.S., the military sold its surplus of huts to the public. Some were used around the country for temporary postwar housing. Many remain standing throughout the U.S. today. Some are still in use at active U.S. military facilities. Besides those that remain in use as outbuildings, they are often seen at military museums and other places featuring WWII memorabilia.

### **Radio City Music Hall**

The Radio City Music Hall (RCMH) is an entertainment venue located at Rockefeller Center in Manhattan. Its nickname is the "Showplace of the Nation" and it was for a time the leading tourist destination in NYC. Its interior was declared a City Landmark in 1978. The RCMH opened to the public on December 27, 1932 with a lavish stage show. The opening was meant to be a return to high-class variety entertainment but the new format was not a success. On July 11, 1933, the RCMH converted to the familiar format of a feature film with a spectacular stage which was perfected at the Roxy Theater. It became the premiere showcase for films from the RKO Radio Studio. The format continued with four complete performances presented every day.

By the 1970s, changes in film distribution made it difficult for the RCMH to secure exclusive bookings of many films. Furthermore, the theater preferred to show G-Rated movies, which became increasingly less common as the decade wore on. Regular film showings at the RCMH ended in 1979. Plans were made to convert the theater into office space but a combination of preservation and commercial interests resulted in the saving of the RCMH and in 1980, after a renovation it reopened to the public. The RCMH has 5,933 seats for spectators and was the largest movie theater in the world at the time of its opening. The "Great Stage" measuring 66 feet deep and 144 feet wide resembles a setting sun. Its systems of elevators was so advanced that the U.S. Navy incorporated identical hydraulics in constructing WWII aircraft carriers. And, the "Mighty Wurlitzer" pipe organ is the largest theater pipe organ built for a movie theater.

The RCMH is currently leased and managed by MSG Inc.. Movie premieres and feature runs have occasionally taken place there but the focus of the theater is now on concerts and live stage shows. The Radio City Christmas Spectacular is an annual holiday stage musical produced by MSG Entertainment which features the Rockettes, a NYC tradition since 1933. The RCMH has presented most of the leading pop and rock performers over the last 30 years, as well as, televised events including the Grammy Awards, the Tony Awards and the MTV Music Awards.

## **RAMP**

The term RAMP (Recovered Allied Military Personnel) was the name given to the program designed to account for members of the Allied armed forces who were released in one way or another from enemy prisons in Europe. Each nation at war with Germany accepted the responsibility to liberate, recover and repatriate the prisoners of all Allied nations. At the end of March 1945, four reception camps (also known as “buffer camps”) for Allied POWs from western countries were set up at: Epinal and Sedan, France; Namur, Belgium; and Borghorst, Germany. The Sedan camp was closed after another camp at Reims, France was opened. These camps fed into the staging area at Le Havre, which came to be known as Camp Lucky Strike or RAMP Camp No. 1.

## **Rapid City Army Air Base**

On January 2, 1942, the U.S. War Department established the Rapid City Army Air Base as a training location for B-17 Flying Fortress crews. From September of 1942 - when its military runways first opened - until mission needs changed in July of 1945, the field’s instructors taught thousands of pilots, navigators, radio operators and gunners from nine heavy bombardment groups and numerous smaller units. All training focused on the Allied drive to overthrow the Axis powers in Europe. Early in 1948, the base was declared a permanent installation. In 1953, after several name changes, the base, which is located approximately 10 miles northeast of Rapid City, South Dakota, was named Ellsworth AFB in honor of Brigadier General Richard E. Ellsworth, who was killed when his RB-36 Peacemaker aircraft crashed near Nut Grove, Newfoundland during a training flight. During the Cold War, Ellsworth AFB was known as “The Showplace of the Strategic Air Command”. Today, the host unit at Ellsworth AFB is the 28th Bomb Wing assigned to the Air Combat Command Twelfth Air Force. Their mission is to deliver decisive combat power for global response. The South Dakota Air & Space Museum is located adjacent to the AFB.

## **Rationing (See Exhibit 51)**

With the onset of WWII, numerous challenges confronted the American people. The government found it necessary to ration food, gas and even clothing during that time. Americans were asked to conserve on everything. With not a single person unaffected by the war, rationing meant sacrifices for all. In the spring of 1942, the Food Rationing Program was set in motion. Rationing would deeply affect the American way of life for most. The federal government needed to control supply and demand. Rationing was introduced to avoid public anger with shortages and not to allow only the wealthy to purchase commodities. In May of 1942, the U.S. Office of Price Administration (OPA) froze prices on practically all everyday goods. Consumer goods now took a back seat to military production as nationwide rationing began almost immediately. Across the country 8,000 rationing boards were created to administer these restrictions.

There were four basic types of rationing:

- 1). Uniform Coupon Rationing provided equal shares of a single commodity to all consumers.
- 2). Point Rationing provided equivalent shares of commodities by coupons issued for points, which could be spent for any combination of items in the group.
- 3). Differential Coupon Rationing provided shares of a single product according to varying needs.
- 4). Certificate Rationing allowed individuals products only after an application demonstrated need.

“Red Stamp” rationing covered all meats, butter, fat and oils, and with some exceptions, cheese. Each person was allowed a certain amount of points weekly with expiration dates to consider “Blue Stamp” rationing covered canned, bottled and frozen fruits and vegetables, plus juices and dried beans, and such processed foods as soups, baby food and catsup. Ration stamps became a kind of currency with each family being issued a War Ration Book. Each stamp authorized a purchase of rationed goods in the quantity and time designated, and the book guaranteed each family its fair share of goods made scarce,

thanks to the war. In addition to food, rationing encompassed clothing, shoes, coffee, gasoline, tires and fuel oil. With each coupon book came specifications and deadlines. After 3 years of rationing, WWII came to a welcome end. Rationing however, did not end until 1946.

### **Red Cross Parcel**

Red Cross Parcel usually refers to packages containing mostly food, tobacco and personal hygiene items sent by the International Association of the Red Cross to POWs during WWI and WWII, as well as at other times. It can also refer to medical parcels and so-called "release parcels" provided to some Allied POWs upon their initial release from enemy captivity. The Red Cross arranged them in accordance with the provisions of the Third Geneva Convention of 1929. During WWII these packages augmented the often meager and deficient diets in the POW camps, contributing greatly to POW survival and an increase in morale. Items of clothing and blankets were also provided for American POWs through the American Red Cross (ARC). Modern Red Cross food parcels provide basic food and sanitary needs for persons affected by natural disasters, wars, political upheavals or similar events. Red Cross food parcels during WWII were mostly provided from Great Britain, the United States (after 1941) and Canada. Allied POWs might receive any of these packages at any one given time, regardless of their own nationality. This was because all such packages were sent from their country of origin to central collection points, where they were subsequently distributed to Axis POW camps by the International Committee of the Red Cross.

A typical food parcel received by an American airman held in a German POW camp usually included the following items:

- One pound can of powdered milk
- One pound can of oleo margarine
- Half-pound package of cube sugar
- Half-pound package of Kraft cheese
- Six-ounce package of K-ration biscuits
- Four-ounce can of coffee
- Two D-ration chocolate bars
- Six-ounce can of jam or peanut butter
- Twelve-ounce can of salmon or tuna
- One-pound can of Spam or corned beef
- One-pound package of raisins or prunes
- Five packages of cigarettes
- Seven Vitamin-C tablets
- Two bars of soap
- Twelve ounces of C-ration vegetable soup concentrate

### **Republic Aviation Corporation**

The Republic Aviation Corporation, originally known as the Seversky Aircraft Company, was an American aircraft manufacturer based in Farmingdale, Long Island, New York. It was founded in 1931 by Alexander de Seversky, a Russian expatriate and veteran WWI pilot. In January 1935, Seversky Aircraft moved from College Point in Queens to the Fairchild Flying Field in East Farmingdale. The company was later reorganized as Republic Aviation in September 1939. Republic was responsible for the design and production of many military aircraft, including the P-47 Thunderbolt, RC-3 Seabee, F-105 Thunderchief, and the F-84 family. In 1942, the Army placed an order for P-47Bs that required Republic to quadruple the size of their factory and build three new runways. During WWII, they expanded Republic Field, erected three new hangars and a control tower, and lengthened and hardened the runways. In September 1965, the company became the Republic Aviation Division of Fairchild Hiller and ceased to exist as an independent company. Fairchild went out of business in 1987, and much of its historic factory complex was sold and developed as the Airport Plaza shopping mall. The former site also houses The American Airpower Museum and Republic Airport, a state owned public use airport servicing corporate and light general aviation customers

## **Republic P-47 Thunderbolt**

The barrel-nosed P-47, built from 1941-1945, was one of the main USAAF fighters of WWII. Republic could not produce the planes fast enough at its Farmingdale plant on Long Island, so a new plant was built at Evansville, Indiana. It was one of the largest and heaviest fighter aircraft in history to be powered by a single 4-stroke internal combustion engine. It was armed with eight .50-caliber machine guns, four per wing. When fully loaded, the plane weighed up to eight tons, and in the fighter-bomber ground attack role could carry five-inch rockets or a bomb load of 2,500 pounds. And, it was the fastest diving American aircraft of the war, reaching speeds of 550 mph. It proved to be a formidable fighter-bomber due to its impressive armament, bomb load and ability to survive enemy fire. However, even with jettisonable auxiliary fuel tanks, the P-47 could only accompany bombers to targets no farther than 475 miles from their bases, but they could land to refuel and cover them on their way out or for the last leg of the trip back home. The Thunderbolt was very effective as a short-to-medium range escort fighter in high altitude air-to-air combat, but it was also adept at ground attack. Eventually the P-51 Mustang replaced the P-47 in the long-range escort role in Europe. By the end of the war, the 56<sup>th</sup> Fighter Group was the only Eighth Air Force unit still flying the P-47, by preference, instead of the P-51.

## **Rockaway Beach**

Rockaways' Playland was an amusement park located in the Rockaway Beach section (once known as Seaside) of the borough of Queens, in the City of New York. It was situated between Beach 97th and Beach 98th Streets and extended from Rockaway Beach Boulevard to the boardwalk adjoining the beachfront on the Atlantic Ocean. Originally known as Thompson's Amusement Park, named after LeMarcus A. Thompson its original owner and builder, it opened in 1902. Thompson was the inventor of the modern day roller coaster, which debuted in nearby Coney Island, Brooklyn. His family ran the park until selling it 1928 to the Geist family who renamed it Playland. The new owners added a large swimming pool, which was used for Olympic tryouts in the 1930s. The wooden roller coaster, known as the "Atom Smasher" which also dated from the late 1930s, was prominently featured in the 1950's film "This is Cinerama". Playland's area was greatly truncated in the late 1930s by the construction of the Shore Front Parkway at the behest of Robert Moses. Playland became known as a shorefront carnival, a jumble of fantasy, food and thrills dominated by a landmark roller coaster. Working class families from throughout New York rented bungalows in the area for the summer, perpetuating a resort tradition on the Rockaway Peninsula that began in the 19th century with the wealthy.

By the 1970's, although the amusement park was still crowded on holidays, it otherwise was attended sporadically. Compared with more modern parks such as Great Adventure in New Jersey, Playland was small and obsolete. The Rockaways declined as a recreation area generally. People were drawn to other vacation spots, summer rentals in the Rockaways declined, many of the vacation homes became dilapidated year-round housing for the poor and Playland had to depend more on the visitors to the local beaches. Rising bridge tolls and other transportation policies cut the number of visitors and the widespread razing of summer bungalows in an area east of Playland in the 1960s for the Arverne urban renewal project, which was stalled for many years, left vast barren stretches of land with little new construction. In 1986, Playland succumbed to changing tastes, rising insurance costs and the decline of the Rockaways as a summer resort. The site was sold to a development group and in 1987 Playland was torn down to make way for a condominium apartment complex. Playland's demise left Astroland and other Coney Island operations as NYC's only major amusement parks.

## **Rosie the Riveter**

A cultural icon of the United States, representing the American women who worked in factories and shipyards during World War II, many of whom produced munitions and war supplies. Massive conscription of men led to a shortage of available workers and therefore a demand for labor, which could only be fully filled by employing women. These women sometimes took entirely new jobs replacing the male workers who were in the military. Images of women war workers were widespread in the media as posters and commercial advertising was heavily used by the government to encourage women to

volunteer for wartime service on the assembly lines and to keep production up by boosting morale. Today, such images are more commonly used as a symbol of feminism and women's empowerment.

### **Salt Lake City**

During WWII, the USAAF established numerous airfields in Utah for training pilots and aircrews of fighters and bombers. Most of these airfields were under the command of the Second Air Force or the AAF Training Command. However, the other USAAF support commands were also involved. One such facility under the direction of the Air Technical Service Command was the Salt Lake City AAB/APT, which served as a Replacement Center. Today, this location is the home of the Salt Lake City International Airport.

### **Scott Field**

During WWI, 624 acres of land in St. Clair County, Illinois, near Belleville (part of the St. Louis metro area) became a new airfield. On July 20, 1917, it was named Scott Field after Corporal Frank S. Scott who was the first enlisted person to be killed in an aviation crash. On June 2, 1938, the field was designated as the new home of the general headquarters of the USAAF. And, on June 1, 1939, it was designated as the Scott Field branch of the USAAC. Technical Schools and the basic section of the school, which was located at Chanute Field, Rantoul, Illinois, was transferred to Scott Field. In August 1941, with the designation of Scott as the communications training center of the AAF, construction began on new buildings to provide more housing for students. And, a short time later, the Army built an induction center across the Southern Railroad tracks. During 1943, it was used as an USAAC staging area. Today, Scott AFB is the home of the Air Mobility Command and the Mid-America St. Louis Airport.

### **Southampton**

Southampton is the largest city in the County of Hampshire on the south coast of England. It is situated 62 miles southwest of London and 19 miles northwest of Portsmouth. Southampton was designated No. 1 military POE during WWII and became a major center for treating the returning wounded and POWs. It was also central to the preparations for the Invasion of Europe in 1944. WWII hit the city particularly hard because of its strategic importance as a major commercial port and industrial area. After D-Day, Southampton docks handled military cargo to help keep the Allied forces supplied, making it a key target of the Luftwaffe bombing raids until late 1944.

### **Stalag XVIIIB**

The name Stalag XVIIIB was derived from the German "Stammlager Luft" (prison camp for airmen) with 17B designating the second prison camp in the German 17th military district. Stalag 17B, one of the most notorious German POW camps, was situated 100 meters northwest of Gneixendorf, a village which is 6 km northwest of Krems-on-the-Danube, which is 85 km northwest of Vienna, Austria. The surrounding area was populated mostly by peasants who raised cattle and did truck farming. The camp itself was in use as a concentration camp from 1938 until 1940 when it began receiving French and Poles as the first POWs. On October 13, 1943, 1,350 non-commissioned officers (NCOs) of the Air Forces were transferred from Stalag 7A to Stalag 17B, which already contained POWs from France, Italy, Russia, Yugoslavia and various smaller nations. At the time of the first Protecting Power (Swiss Legation in Berlin) visit on January 12, 1944, the strength had increased to 2,667. From then until the last days of WWII, a constant stream of NCOs arrived from Dulag Luft and strength reached 4,237, in spite of protests to the Detaining Power (Geneva Convention terminology, in this case Germany) about the over-crowding conditions. The entire camp contained 29,794 POWs of various nationalities. On April 8, 1945, 4,000 of the POWs at Stalag 17B began an 18-day march of 281 miles to Braunau, Austria (the destination was a Russian prison camp located 4 km north of Braunau). The remaining 200 men were too ill to make the march and were left behind in the hospital, and eventually liberated by the Russians on May 9th. On May 3, 1945, the marchers were liberated by the 13th Armored Division. And, on May 9th, the POWs were evacuated by C-47 to France.

## **Strafing**

Strafing (from the German word Strafen, meaning to punish) is the practice of attacking ground targets from low-flying aircraft. The term is usually applied to attacks with aircraft-mounted automatic weapons (usually machine guns), but may be applied to attacks with bombs, though not at high-level bomb delivery. Flying as low as ten feet above the ground, at speeds up to 450 mph, fighter pilots flying so-called "beat up" missions had to contend with trees, houses, barns and high-tension wires before flying through a fusillade of fire from anti-aircraft batteries and flak towers. Hitting "targets of opportunity" (an Air Force euphemism for anyplace that could be conveniently destroyed), usually airfields and marshaling yards, on the way back from escort duty soon evolved into tactical independent fighter sweeps. Such air-to-ground operations were very effective in destroying parked enemy aircraft. WWII saw the advent of the ground-attack aircraft specifically designed for the task of strafing.

Strafing took more nerve than skill and statistically, was five times as dangerous as escort duty. It was a particularly hazardous activity that claimed the lives of many fighter pilots. Strafing airfields, usually defended by light flak weapons, resulted in heavier losses to fighters than escort duties, because it surrendered most of the advantages of being airborne. Strafing railroads was a very effective means of disrupting vital enemy supply lines. But, the Germans concealed formidable defenses – "flak cars" disguised like ordinary boxcars. Low level strafing meant close-range return fire from any direction.

## **306th Bombardment Group**

The 306th Bombardment Wing was activated on March 1, 1942, at Gowen Field, Boise, Idaho as the 306th Bombardment Group. It trained for combat with B-17s in the western US. It was assigned to the 8th Air Force and deployed to England on September 7, 1942, from Wendover AAF, Utah. The 306th, nicknamed "The Reich Wreckers", was assigned to the 40th Combat Wing at Thurleigh. The group tail code was a "Triangle H". Its operational squadrons were: 367th (Clay Pigeons), 368th (Eager Beavers), 369th (Fightin' Bitin'), and the 423rd (Grim Reapers). The group flew the B-17 aircraft on missions against strategic targets, including railroad marshaling yards, locomotive works, submarine pens, shipbuilding yards, ball bearing works, aircraft assembly plants, foundries, oil plants, chemical installations and V-Weapon factories and launching sites. It flew the first penetration into Germany by 8th Air Force heavy bombers on January 27, 1943. In addition, it helped prepare for the invasion of Normandy by striking airfields and marshaling yards in France, Belgium and Germany. Furthermore, the 306th covered the airborne invasion of Holland, participated in the Battle of the Bulge and the assault on the Rhine in March of 1945. The 306th flew its 342nd and final mission on April 19, 1945, the most of any Eighth Air Force B-17 unit except for the 303rd BG. It completed 9,614 sorties, dropped 22,575 tons of bombs, and had 171 B-17s fail to return from missions. It remained at Thurleigh until December 1, 1945, which was the longest tenure of any USAAF air group at a UK base. The 306th was inactivated in Germany on December 25, 1946.

## **Thurleigh**

The Royal Air Force (RAF) Thurleigh station was built for the RAF Bomber Command in 1940 by W&C French Ltd. It was constructed on a plateau one mile north of the village of Thurleigh on farmland between the farms of Buryfields, Bletsoe Park, Manor, and Whitwickgreen. And, five miles north of the county town of Bedford, Bedfordshire, England. Its first use was by RAF Squadron No. 160 forming on January 16, 1942 as a ground echelon then deployed to the China-Burma-India Theater at Drigh Road on June 4, 1942. The airfield was also used by the RAF Operational Training Unit No. 18. Thurleigh was one of 28 fields listed for use by the US 8th Air Force on June 4, 1942, tentatively designated Station B-4, and was allocated on August 10, 1942. The RAF had found that the initial construction of Thurleigh was inadequate for the combat weight of B-24 bombers. Eventually, after they departed, Thurleigh was modified to Air Ministry Class A airfield specifications – the runways were lengthened and increased in thickness, and additional hardstands constructed so it could accommodate USAAF heavy bomber groups. It was unique among bomber bases in having four T2 type metal hangers where most bases only had two.

With the essential construction completed, the 306th Bombardment Group (Heavy) deployed to Thurleigh on September 7, 1942 from Wendover AAF base Utah and assigned to the 40th Combat Wing. Thurleigh was transferred to the U.S. Army 8th Air Force on December 9, 1942, designated as USAAF Station 111. The 306th flew the Boeing B-17 Flying Fortress aircraft and operated primarily against strategic targets initially in occupied France and the Low Countries, then later in Germany (over 340 bombing missions). The group struck locomotive works at Lille, railway yards at Rouen, submarine pens at Bordeaux and Wilhelmshaven, shipbuilding yards at Vegesack, ball-bearing works at Schweinfurt, oil plants at Merseburg, marshalling yards at Stuttgart, a foundry at Hanonver, a chemical plant at Ludwigshafen, aircraft factories at Leipzig and numerous other targets on the European Continent. Thurleigh served as headquarters for the 40th Combat Bombardment Wing of the 1st Bomb Division from September 16, 1943 through June 25, 1945. The airfield was decommissioned in February 1994 and closed in 1997.

### **“Till The End Of Time”**

This pop ballad was Perry Como's first million seller and was the one that started it all. It launched his career as a major solo artist. He went on to become the first artist to have ten records sell more than one million copies. The music and lyrics were written by Buddy Kaye and Ted Mossman. The melody was adapted from Chopin's Polonaise No. 6 in A Flat Major. The song was recorded on July 3, 1945 at Lottos Club, New York City. Russell Case conducted the orchestra and it was produced by Herb Hendler. The recording made its Chart debut on August 18th and it held the No. 1 U.S. Chart position for ten weeks.

During a career spanning more than half a century, Perry recorded exclusively for the RCA Victor label after signing with it in 1943. “Mr. C”, as he was nicknamed, sold millions of records for RCA and pioneered a weekly musical variety television show, which set the standards for the genre and proved to be one of the most successful in television history. His combined success on television and popular recording was not matched by any other artist of the time.

### **Tokyo Rose**

Tokyo Rose was a generic name given by Allied forces in the South Pacific during WWII to any of approximately a dozen English-speaking female broadcasters of Japanese propaganda. The intent of these broadcasts was to disrupt the morale of the troops. American servicemen often listened to these radio broadcasts to get a sense, by reading between the lines, of the effect of their military actions. Stories circulated that Tokyo Rose could be unnerving by accurately naming units and even individual servicemen, though such stories have never been substantiated by documents such as scripts or actual recordings.

### **United Services Organizations, Inc. (USO)**

The USO is a private non-profit organization that provides morale, social and recreational services to members of the U.S. military, with programs in 140 centers worldwide. Since 1941, it has worked in partnership with the Department of Defense (DOD) and has provided support and entertainment to the U.S. Armed forces, relying heavily on private contributions and on funds, goods and services from the DOD. Although chartered by Congress, it is not a government agency. After being formed in 1941 in response to WWII, centers were established quickly - in churches, barns, railroad cars, museums, castles, beach clubs and log cabins. Most centers offered social events and recreational activities, such as holding dances and showing movies. And, they became well known for free coffee and doughnuts. Some USO bases provided a haven for spending a quiet moment alone or writing a letter home, while others offered spiritual guidance and made childcare available for military wives.

During WWII, the USO became the GI's “home away from home” and began a tradition of entertaining the troops that continues today. Involvement in the USO was one of the many ways in which the nation had come together to support the war effort, with nearly 1.5 million Americans having volunteered their services in some way. But the organization became mostly known for its live performances called “Camp Shows” through which the Hollywood and the entertainment industry helped boost the morale of its servicemen and women. USO shows were designed in their export to remind soldiers of home. They did

this by nurturing in troops a sense of patriotic identification with America through popular entertainment. Hollywood in general was eager to show its patriotism, and lots of big names, most famously Bob Hope, joined the ranks of USO entertainers. They entertained in military bases both at home and overseas, often placing their own lives in danger by traveling or performing under hazardous conditions. At its high point in 1944, the USO had more than 3,000 clubs and curtains were rising on USO shows 700 times a day. The USO also did shows in military hospitals, eventually entertaining more than 3 million wounded soldiers and sailors in 192 different hospitals. From 1941 to 1947, the USO presented more than 400,000 performances.

### **U.S.S. Lejeune**

The U.S.S. (United States Ship) Lejeune was a troop transport that served the U.S. Navy (USN) during WWII. Prior to its Navy service, the ship operated as a German ocean liner, SS Windhuk. The ship was in a Brazilian port in August 1942 when Brazil broke ties with Germany and interned the vessel. Before being imprisoned, the crew managed to sabotage most of the ship's machinery. Windhuk remained in Santos until January 1943 when the ship was towed to Rio de Janeiro for repairs. But, the ship was purchased by the U.S. government and two hundred USN personnel were dispatched to Brazil to fit it with a new diesel engine. The work was not completed until March and then the ship made a 30-day voyage to Norfolk, Virginia for further work and conversion to a troopship. While at Norfolk, the ship was named U.S.S. Lejeune (AP-74), after USMC General John Archer Lejeune. The ship was fully commissioned in May 1944 and in June it began wartime service in its new role as a USN troop transport. The U.S.S. Lejeune made a total of 10 round-trip transatlantic crossings before the end of the war. During the course of its career, the ship transported over 100,000 troops. It was decommissioned in February 1948, struck and damaged in July 1957, and scrapped at Portland, Oregon in August 1966.

### **Veterans Day**

Veterans Day is an annual U.S. holiday honoring military veterans. A federal holiday, it is observed on November 11th. It is also celebrated as **Armistice Day** or Remembrance Day in other parts of the world, falling on Nov 11th, the anniversary of the signing of the Armistice that ended WWI. Major hostilities of WWI were formally ended at the 11th hour on the 11th day of the 11th month of 1918 with the German signing of the Armistice. U.S. President Woodrow Wilson first proclaimed an Armistice Day for Nov 11, 1919. The U.S. Congress passed a concurrent resolution on June 4, 1926, requesting the President issue another proclamation to observe Nov 11th with appropriate ceremonies. An Act approved May 13, 1938, made the 11th of November in each year a legal holiday. In 1953, a bill was introduced to expand Armistice Day to celebrate all veterans, not just those who served in WWI. President Dwight Eisenhower signed it into law on May 26, 1954. And, Congress amended this Act on June 1, 1954, replacing Armistice with Veterans, and it has been known as Veterans Day since.

### **Victory in Europe Day**

Victory in Europe Day (V-E Day or VE Day) was on May 8, 1945, the date when the WWII Allies formally accepted the unconditional surrender of the armed forces of Nazi Germany and the end of Adolf Hitler's Third Reich. The formal surrender of the occupying German forces in the Channel Islands was not until May 9th. On April 30th, Hitler committed suicide during the Battle of Berlin, and so the surrender of Germany was authorized by his replacement, President of Germany Karl Donitz. This administration was known as the Flensburg government. The Act of Military Surrender was signed on May 7th in Reims, France, and ratified on May 8th in Berlin, Germany. In the United States, President Harry Truman, who turned 61 that day, dedicated the victory to the memory of Franklin D. Roosevelt, who had died of a cerebral hemorrhage less than a month earlier, on April 12, 1945.

## **Victory over Japan Day**

Victory over Japan Day (also known as Victory in the Pacific, V-J Day, or V-P Day) is a name chosen for the day on which the Surrender of Japan occurred, effectively ending WWII, and subsequent anniversaries of that event. The term has been applied to both the day on which the initial announcement of Japan's surrender was made in the afternoon of August 15, 1945 in Japan, and because of time zone differences, to August 14th (when it was announced in the United States, Western Europe, the Americas, the Pacific Islands and Australia), as well as to September 2, 1945 when the signing of the surrender document occurred aboard the battleship U.S.S. Missouri in Tokyo Bay. Since the European Axis powers had surrendered three months earlier (V-E Day), V-J Day would be the official end of WWII. President Truman declared September 2, 1945 to be the official U.S. commemoration of V-J Day.

## **V-Mail**

During WWII, mail and morale were one and the same, and early in 1942 the military devised a simple method to deliver millions of pieces of very important news from home to the servicemen serving in the ETO. It was called V-Mail, with V meaning "victory". During the war cargo space and weight on ships was at a premium and the hundreds of sacks of mail weighing tons took up too much valuable space. Mail was often held up in favor of food, fuel, ammunition and supplies. To overcome the demoralizing effect of not getting the mail delivered, the Post Office came up with a standardized size combination letter/envelope known as the V-Mail form. It was comprised of a two-sided single sheet of paper (8½" x 11"). One side had the From and To sections, a place for postage if necessary, followed by instructions. The other side had the space for the Censor's Stamp next to the To and From sections at the top quarter of the form followed by the actual writing section. After folding, the actual size of the completed form was 4¼" x 5 ½". Letters were written and after they were cleared by a censor, microfilmed. The microfilm was then flown or shipped to a processing center in the addressee's general location where copies of the letters were printed on black and white photographic paper (4"x5"), folded slipped into envelopes and dropped into mailbags for delivery. V-Mail allowed thousands of letters to fly from America to France in the place of only a few hundred bits of regular mail. During WWII over 1.5 billion V-Mail letters were processed. From June 1942 through November 1945, V-Mail carried the thoughts and dreams of privates and generals to those back home, and brought comfort to those at the front. It is an important part of postal history and a remembrance of the 20th century's pivotal years.

## **V-Weapons**

The V-1 (V for Vergeltungswaffe, meaning Vengeance Weapons) was a missile which looked like a small pilotless airplane: a cylindrical steel fuselage with short stubby wings, jet-propelled, controlled by an automatic gyro-pilot, and carrying a one-ton payload. Launched from a ski-ramp, a V-1 flew toward its target and crashed a ton of explosives when its engine stopped. While the V-1s were not precision weapons, they created havoc in London, causing thousands of injuries and fatalities. Traveling at a speed of 400 miles per hour and arriving in droves, often in cloudy weather, the pilotless bombs were, at first, difficult to shoot down, flying too low for the high guns stationed around the city and too high for the low guns. However, once the British improved their defenses, they were able to destroy over half of these so-called "buzz bombs" that reached southern England during the Nazi rocket assaults. And, they were slow enough that the Allied fighters often could intercept and shoot them down in the Channel.

The V-2 was a different matter - it was a thirteen-ton rocket with great speed. They were supersonic guided missiles, carrying one-ton warheads, with vastly greater range and destructive power than the V-1s. Like the V-1, the V-2 was wildly inaccurate, killing indiscriminately. In all, 2,700 Britons died and another 6,500 were badly mangled. And, similar numbers of fatalities and injuries were experienced in Antwerp, Brussels and Paris. But unlike the V-1, neither early warning nor interception of the V-2 was possible. From small, difficult-to-detect launching pads in occupied Holland, these twelve-ton supersonic rockets climbed 70 miles into the stratosphere and hurled silently to earth at speeds of up to 4,000 mph – too fast to be seen. This made them greatly more frightening than the noisier, slower-moving V-1 flying bombs.

The real fear was that such projectiles could be armed with biological or even atomic weapons in the near future. In 1943, the Germans began constructing fixed launched facilities in for V-1 cruise missiles as well as V-2 ballistic missiles in northern France. The Germans also constructed secret underground factories in the Harz Mountains near Nordhausen, where they used slave labor to manufacture these missiles. The problem was that V-1 sites were protected by thick reinforced concrete and attacking such sites proved ineffective. And, most V-2s were launched from mobile, heavily camouflaged sites, which were almost impossible to locate.

### **Wartime Log**

In 1939, the World's Committee of the Young Mens' Christian Association (YMCA), which was headquartered in Geneva, established the War Prisoners Aid in order to meet the recreational, educational and spiritual needs of all POWs. The YMCA, through the International Red Cross Committee, sent thousands of blank hardbound journals, entitled "A Wartime Log - A remembrance from home through the American YMCA" to American POWs in German prison camps. Inside the book was a sheet of closely typed paper suggesting how the books could be utilized. A few colored pencils were sometimes provided along with the books. After letting POWs have these books for a few months, the German guards would confiscate all the books they could locate and inspect them for possible intelligence information. Of the books that weren't confiscated, less than one out of five made it back to the USA.

## The Movies

(Listed by US release date)

"Dr. Cyclops" - Frank Reicher, Janice Logan, Albert Dekker - Sci-Fi, Horror (April 1940) Paramount Pictures (Paramount)

"Jimmy Steps Out" - (aka "Pot o' Gold") - Jimmy Stewart, Paulette Goddard, Horace Heidt - Musical Comedy (April 1941) James Roosevelt Productions, United Artists - retitled by Astor Pictures Corporation

"Riding High" - Dorothy Lamour, Dick Powell - Musical Western (1943) Paramount

"Destination Tokyo" - Cary Grant, John Garfield, Alan Hale - War (December 1943) Warner Brothers Pictures (WB)

"Going My Way" - Bing Crosby, Barry Fitzgerald, Frank McHugh - Musical Comedy (May 1944) Paramount

"Two Girls and a Sailor" - Van Johnson, June Allyson, Gloria DeHaven - Musical Comedy (June 1944) Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer (MGM)

"Home in Indiana" - Walter Brenan, Jeanne Crain, Charlotte Greenwood - Drama (July 1944) 20th Century Fox Film Corporation (Fox)

"Till We Meet Again" - Ray Milland, Barbara Britton, Walter Slezak - War Drama (August, 1944) Paramount

"Rainbow Island" - Dorothy Lamour, Eddie Bracken, Gil Lamb, Anne Revere - Musical (September 1944) Paramount

"Frenchman's Creek" - Joan Fontaine, Basil Rathbone, Arturo De Cordova - Adventure Drama (September 1944) Paramount

"National Barn Dance" - Jean Heather, Charles Quigley, Robert Benchley - Musical (September 1944) Paramount

"Irish Eyes are Smiling" - Dick Haynes, Monty Wolley, June Haver, Anthony Quinn - Musical (October 1944) Fox

"Bring on the Girls" - Veronica Lake, Sonny Tufts, Eddie Bracken - Musical - (March 1945) Paramount

"The Affairs of Susan" - Joan Fontaine, Walter Abel, Thomas Coley, George Brent, Dennis O' Keefe - Comedy (March 1945) Paramount

"Salome Where She Danced" - Yvonne DeCarlo, Rod Cameron, Walter Slezak - Western Drama (April 1945) Universal Pictures

"A Thrill of a Romance" - Van Johnson, Esther Williams, Frances Gifford - Musical (May 1945) MGM

"Escape in the Desert" - Jean Sullivan, Philip Dorn, Irene Manning, Helmut Dantine - Drama (May 1945) WB

"The Caribbean Mystery" - Robert Shaw, James Dunn, Sheila Ryan, Edward Ryan - Crime Mystery (June 1945) Fox

"Nob Hill" - George Raft, Joan Bennett, Vivian Blaine, Byron Barr - Musical Drama - (June 1945) Fox

"Don Juan Quilligan" - William Bendix, Joan Blondell, Phil Silvers, Anne Revere, Mary Treen, B.S. Pully - Comedy (June 1945) Fox

"Junior Miss" - Peggy Ann Garner, Stephen Dunne, Allyn Joslyn - Comedy - (June 1945) Fox

"Pillow to Post" - Ida Lupino, Sydney Greenstreet, Stuart Irwin, William Prince - Comedy (June 1945) WB

"The Valley of Decision" - Greer Garson, Gregory Peck, Lionel Barrymore - Drama (June 1945) MGM

"Within These Walls" - Thomas Mitchell, Mary Anderson, Edward Ryan, Mark Stevens, B.S. Pully - Prison Drama (July 1945) Fox

"Anchors Aweigh" - Frank Sinatra, Kathryn Grayson, Gene Kelly - Musical Comedy (July 1945) MGM

"You Came Along" - Robert Cummings, Lizabeth Scott, Kim Hunter, Don DeFore - Romance Drama (July 1945) Paramount

"The Corn is Green" - Bette Davis, John Doll, Joan Larring, Nigel Bruce - Drama (July 1945) WB

"Hitchhike to Happiness" - Dale Evans, Al Pearce, Stanley Brown - Musical (July 1945) Republic Pictures

"Pride of the Marines" - John Garfield, Dane Clark, Eleanor Parker, Anthony Caruso - War Drama (August 1945) WB

"Over 21" - Irene Dunne, Charles Coburn, Alexander Knox - Comedy (August 1945) Columbia Pictures Corporation (Columbia)

"Incendiary Blonde" - Betty Hutton, Charles Ruggles, Barry Fitzgerald, Arturo De Cordova - Musical Romance (August 1945) Paramount

"The Hidden Eye" - Edward Arnold, Frances Rafferty, Ray Collins - Mystery (August 1945) MGM

"Our Vines Have Tender Grapes" - Edward G. Robinson, Margaret O'Brien, Agnes Moorehead - Drama (September 1945) MGM

"Isle of the Dead" - Boris Karloff, Ellen Drew - Horror (September 1945) RKO Radio Pictures (RKO)

"I Love a Bandleader" - Phil Harris, Eddie "Rochester" Anderson, Leslie Brooks - Comedy (September 1945) Columbia

"Johnny Angel" - George Raft, Claire Trevor, Mack Gray, Signe Hasso - Crime Drama, Film Noir (October 1945) RKO

"Love Letters" - Jennifer Jones, Joseph Cotton, Ann Richards, Anita Louise - Drama Mystery Romance (October 1945) Paramount

"Kiss and Tell" - Shirley Temple, Walter Abel, Darryl Hickman - Comedy - (October 1945) Columbia

# *References*

About.com - 20th Century History – “The Plane that Crashed into the Empire State Building”, by Jennifer Rosenberg

“A Chronicle of Stalag XVIIIB - Krems / Gneixendorf, Austria”, by Luther Victory - August 1991

Airbase Arizona/Commemorative Air Force, Inc. - B-17G Crew Position: Ball Turret Gunner

AirSpaceMag.com - How to Become a Ball Turret Gunner, May 2015

Allwords.com

America in the Air War, by Edward Jablonski, Time Life Books

America in WWII Magazine, February 2006 issue. Article “Stalag 17B”, by Eric Ethier.

“A Tail Gunner’s Tale”, by Gerald E. McDowell, Vantage Press, 1991

American Prisoners of War In Germany - Prepared by the Military Intelligence Service, War Department, July 15, 1944 - Stalag 17B and Dulag Luft

American Public University – “World War II Rationing, Wars and Battles, The Home Front”

“Before there could be a D-Day, there had to be the Berlin bombing” by Carol Hart, Roanoke Times, June 19, 2000

“Big Week”, by Bill Yenne, The Berkley Publishing Group, 2013

“B-17 Combat Missions” by Martin Bowman, Elephant Book Company, 2007

“B-17 Flying Fortress Nose Art Gallery”, by John M. And Donna Campbell, Motorbooks International, 1993

Brookhaven National Laboratory - Brookhaven History - Camp Upton

Casualty Questionnaire - Kester, Orlando

CDHS.state.co.us - CMHI (Colorado Mental Health Institute) at Fort Logan

CinemaTreasures.org

Control Towers.co.uk, Thurleigh (RAE Bedford)

Dictionary.com

Eighth Air Force Historical Society

306th Bombardment Group

WWII 8<sup>th</sup> AAF Combat Chronology

US European War Strategic Bombing Survey Summary Report

Eighth Air Force Strategic Operations, March 22, 1944, Mission 273, WAR Department, Headquarters, Army Air Forces, Washington, Missing Air Crew Report, April 11, 1944

Elevator World - March 10, 1996 - July 28, 1945 – “Plane Hits Building - Woman Survives 75 Story Fall”, by William Roberts

“First Over Germany” - A History of the 306<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Group, by Russell A. Strong, Hunter Publishing Company, 1982

“First Over Germany” - 306<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Group in World War II, by Arthur P. Bove, The Battery Press

“From Somewhere in England,” - by D.A. Lande, Motorbooks International, 1991

Grand Hotels of the Jazz Age - The Architecture of Schultze & Weaver

Headquarters 306<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Group (H), Office of the Commanding Officer United States Air Forces, March 30, 1944 - Pilot Eye Witness Account

hjangvolksturm.devhub.com - Hitler Youth

IMBD.com (Internet Movie Database)

Interrogation Form - 3/22/44 (as deciphered by Ken Yass)

(JOM) Journal - News and Update - Special Coverage: 9-11-01 - “Empire State Building Withstood Airplane Impact” - JOM 53 (12) (2001) pp. 4-7

“Kriegie Memories”, by Ben H. Phelper - Boulevard Press, Inc., Los Angeles, CA 1946

“Living for a Change”, an autobiography by Grace Lee Boggs, 1998, University of Minnesota Press

Lyrics007.com

“Masters of the Air”, by Donald L. Miller – Simon and Schuster Paperbacks, 2006

Monopolycity.com

NewYorkology - A NY Travel Guide, June 10, 2006 - New York’s Golden Hotel Era Architects: Schultze & Weaver

New York Times - April 24, 1987 - “After 86 Years, Rockaways’ Playland to be Razed for 300 Condominiums”, by Joseph P. Fried

Press ofAtlanticCity.com - May 17, 2010 - "Atlantic City's Claridge Hotel to receive \$20 million extreme makeover", by Donald Wittkowski

R.L. Carson's Combat Crew Missions, 306<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group - 423<sup>rd</sup> Squadron 1<sup>st</sup> - 15<sup>th</sup> Missions - Extracted from the personal Pilot's log of Ken Yass

Rootsweb.com - World War II Archives - HMS Andes

Skylighters.org - The Cigarette Camps - US Army Camps in the LeHavre Area  
Camp Lucky Strike

Songfacts.com

Squadron Diary – 423<sup>rd</sup> Bombardment Squadron (H) - March 22, 1944

Tennessee Virtual Archives - A Wartime Log

"The Flame Keepers", by Ned Handy and Kemp Battle, St. Martin's Paperbacks, 2004

The Gatefold Book of World War II Warplanes, Barnes & Noble Inc., NY 1995

"The Long Road from Berlin" by Ken Yass - 306<sup>th</sup> Echoes, October 1995, Vol. 20, No.4

"The Victory Era in Color ", by Jeffrey I. Ethell, Reminisce Books, 1994

Tikiroom.com, Hawaiian Room, Review from 1958

US History.com - American Historical Society - WWII Rationing

Wapedia - Atlantic City, NJ

Wikinut - A Ball Turret Gunner not a job I would want, by Lord Banks, June 25, 2010

Wikipedia:

- Ambassador Hotel
- Atlantic City - Basic Training Center
- Ball Turret
- Big Week
- Braunau am Inn
- Brooklyn Army Base
- Buckley Air Force Base
- Camp Shanks
- Caterpillar Club
- Chaff (Countermeasure)
- Childs Restaurants
- Claridge Hotel
- Perry Como
- Jack Dempsey's Broadway Restaurant
- Dulag Luft
- Ellsworth Air Force Base

Wikipedia: (continued)

Empire State Building  
Ephrata Municipal Airport  
Five Towns  
Focke-Wulf Fw 190  
Fort Dix  
Geneva Convention (1929)  
German Home Guard (Volksstrum)  
HMS Andes  
Hitler Youth  
"I'll Never Smile Again"  
K-ration  
Le Havre, France  
Linz  
Lockheed P-38 Lightning  
Lowry Air Force Base  
Messerschmitt Bf 109  
Mitchel Air Force Base  
Nissen Huts  
North American P-51 Mustang  
Nose Art  
"Only Forever"  
Paramount Theater (NYC)  
Postal Censorship  
Quonset Huts  
RAF Thurleigh  
Radio City Music Hall  
Rapid City Army Base  
Red Cross Parcel  
Republic Airport  
Republic Aviation  
Republic P-47 Thunderbolt  
Rockaway's Playland  
Rosie the Riveter  
Scott Air Force Base  
Southampton, England  
Stalag 17B  
"Stardust" (song)  
Strafing  
"Till The End Of Time" (song)  
Tokyo Rose  
Thurleigh, England  
Tropicana Casino and Resort AC  
USAAF Bombardment Group  
USAAF Unit Identification Aircraft Markings  
USS Lejeune (AP-74)  
Utah World War II Army Airfields

Wikipedia: (continued)

- Veterans Day
- Victory In Europe Day
- Victory Over Japan Day
- V-Mail
- V-Weapons
- Washington World War II Army Airfields
- "Why Don't You Do Right?"

Wiktionary - Kriegie

WisegEEK.com - Gestapo

With The Command - The Emergency Services Information Site Historical Perspective: "Plane Strikes the Empire State Building", by Thomas M. Cunningham, January 2002

Writerquake - Old Postcard - September 16, 2009

# *Exhibits*

1. Original color lithograph P-47 Thunderbolt  
Patriotic Service Award  
Republic Aviation Employee Handbook  
Historical Marker
2. Selective Service Correspondence Postal Card  
Registration Certificate
3. Order to Report for Induction
4. Letter of Release from Republic Aviation Corporation
5. Photo - USAAF Basic Training Class and graduation  
Atlantic City, New Jersey
6. USAAF Technical School Diploma  
The Rev-Meter April & May 1943  
Sketch from Spiral Notebook  
Photos - Armament School Barracks  
Lowry Field II, Denver, Colorado
7. Photos - Tents, Flight Suits  
Photos - Grand Coulee Dam  
Ephrata, Washington  
Altitude Training Unit Certificate  
AAF Pilot and Crew Member Physical Record Card
8. Photos - Crew Sep & Oct 1943  
Rapid City, South Dakota
9. Photos - Crew  
Camp Shanks, New York
10. Commemorative Plate  
Squadron Patches  
Grim Reaper Patch  
306<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group Restaurant Sarasota, Florida  
Ceramic Plaque  
Photos - Crew  
Photos - Picadilly Circus  
Photos - Nick & Cousin Jim 1943
11. Newspaper Article - March 22, 1944
12. Western Union Telegram - April 6, 1944
13. Western Union Telegram - May 18, 1944
14. ID Card for Ex-POW
15. ID Tag & Meal Ticket

16. Western Union Telegram - May 29, 1945
17. Western Union Telegram - June 2, 1945
18. Western Union Telegram - June 3, 1945
19. Nassau Daily Review Star article & full page - June 23, 1945  
"Former German Prisoners Meet In Inwood"
20. Photos - Wedding  
Newspaper Clippings
21. Postcards - Hotel Lexington, New York, NY (exterior), Hawaiian Room & Revere Room
22. Postcard - Hotel Ambassador, Atlantic City, NJ (exterior)
23. Postcard - Servicemen's Canteen, Chicago Union Station, Chicago, IL, 8-14-45
24. G.I. View of Fort Logan Colorado  
Postcards  
Photos - Denver area  
Letter 8-25-45 Souvenir Stationery  
Awards Entitlement  
Convalescent Pass  
General Information for Patient Registration
25. Application for Membership - Caterpillar Club
26. Taval Salute to Heroes Announcement Postcard & Certificate
27. US Army Honorable Discharge  
US Army Separation Qualification Record
28. Original Diary - Wartime Log
29. Original Diary - Composition Book
30. Original Diary - Note Pad
31. "The Book" - Hardcover Journal
32. POW Letter 5-15-44
33. POW Postcard 5-25-44
34. POW Letter 8-4-44
35. POW Letter 9-18-44
36. POW Letter 10-5-44
37. POW Letter 11-8-44
38. V-Mail Letter (copy from microfilm) 11-24-43  
V-Mail Letter 5-13-45

39. Photos - VA Dental Clinic, St. Albans, NY
40. Shadow Box Display of Medals Awarded  
General Orders / Restricted Extract for Air Medal Citation  
Air Medal Award 2-15-44  
Memorandum for Recipients of the POW Medal  
Secretary of War Decoration Card
41. Legionnaire of the Year 4-12-92  
Photos, Letters and Newspaper Article
42. 50<sup>th</sup> Wedding Anniversary 7-29-95  
Photos
43. WWII Memorial Honoree  
Certificate of Appreciation
44. American Former POW Reunion
45. Letter - Mighty 8<sup>th</sup> Air Force Museum
46. Presidential Memorial Certificate
47. Letter - National Purple Heart Hall of Honor
48. American Airpower Museum, Republic Airport
49. Mitchel Field, Cradle of Aviation Museum
50. Army and Navy Postal Censor Stamped Envelopes
51. War Ration Books  
Newspaper Article 8-7-45
52. War Claims Commission Letter  
Delay and Referral Notice  
Personal Effects Letter
53. Local Newspaper Articles 1990 - 2007
54. Photos of Family Members in Uniform During WWII
55. Newspaper Articles During the War
56. Photos of Crew Members Postwar
57. Photos at 482 Oakland Avenue, Cedarhurst, NY
58. Memorial Day Photos
59. In Memoriam
60. July 2018 Photos - Colorado and South Dakota