



449th Bomb Group Association



"FLYING HORSEMEN"



**SPECIAL ISSUE!
2ND REUNION NOTICE!**

NEWSLETTER DECEMBER 84 449th BOMB GROUP, WW2

2ND REUNION AND 42ND ANNIVERSARY.

Where? ---- Dayton, Ohio. Marriott Hotel.

When? ---- Thurs thru Sunday, Oct. 24-27, 1985.

Who? ---- All WW2 Ex-449ers!

Group Headquarters,
All Four Bomb Squadrons ----
716th, 717th, 718th & 719th.
And the 348th Service Squadron.

MARK ON YOUR CALENDARS.... OCTOBER 24-27th 449th CONVENTION—DAYTON, OHIO

Your 449th Bomb Group Association Cabinet reviewed several places, as nominated at the first reunion in Tucson, of Nov. 1983.....and Dayton, Ohio, was the one most mentioned.....to allow all to visit the United States Air Force Museum (as part of our reunion scheduled tour). Several Hotels and Motels were visited and the MARRIOTT HOTEL was selected.....we will have much more room than we did at the Desert Inn, in Tucson! Our plans are similar to those we used for our first reunion.....*forms for registration at the Hotel, for advance registration with the 449th Association, and pamphlets about the Hotel and the Air Force Museum will be mailed to every member in our 1985 Newsletter mailings!* You will notice that we are including the 348th Service Squadron.....they came with the 449th Bomb Group, were housed at Grottaglie Airfield, and served the full time with the 449th for the entire time.....names and addresses of these members are being sought for our roster...if you know anyone of the 348th, please contact them and have them get in touch with the 449th Association Secretary! This unit were veterans of the North African activity and performed the heavy 3rd echelon maintenance on all of our B-24's (our Engineering Sections performed the 1st and 2nd echelon maintenance).

Announcement of this 2nd Reunion is being made in order for everyone to program their time, make the reunion, and to spread the word to all ex-449ers! Don't miss it!

The Christmases of the 449th....

This Christmas of 1984 marks the fifth Christmas of the activities of the WW2 449th Bomb Group. They were for the years of 1943, 1944, 1945 and the recent years of our Association, 1983 and 1984!

That first Christmas in 1943 found the original members of the 449th as recent and first arrivals at Grottaglie Airfield....they still had some of the crews spread out en route and some of the support personnel also en route! For those at Grottaglie it was really War.....no warmth, open latrines, mud and cold everywhere.....aircraft parts needed.....staff members attempting to organize with the embryonic 15th Air Force Command planners and get the bombers of the 449th into the air! Supplies were being inventoried and found to be in great need.....aircrew and groundcrew began to need medication.....yes, that first Christmas just didn't look too great! Ask those at the Reunion who were there! And also take stock to learn how many of those men became our first casualties and members of various POW Camps in Roumania, Bulgaria, Austria, and Germany! The casualties and POW status came in 44 and 45!

The second Christmas, of 1944, found the 449th as veterans of the 15th Air Force! Members of the original numbers, along with some of the earlier replacements had earned and been awarded two Presidential Unit Citations. And on Christmas Day 1944 the 449th bombed mission number 186, Innsbruck Martialling Yard, Austria.....aircrew, ordinance and groundcrew wrote messages of "Merry Christmas" on many of the bombs for that day....and mixed thoughts and emotions were felt as these were dropped on that target....for even those on the receiving end, as they shot anti-aircraft, also had their mixed emotions regarding that Christmas Day....for they too sang "Silent Night, Holy Night" and carols for the season! Yes, the Grottaglie Airfield was much more comfortable than it was in 1943...but still muddy and cold...and the supplies still staggered in irregularly....and the toll of anti-aircraft kept all three levels of maintenance working around the clock! Only a very few of the original aircraft were remaining....most had been shot down or crash landed...the Sperry and A-5 H-model B-24's were all being replaced by the J-model C-1 autopilot and Norden equipped bombsights....the bombing scores fluctuated with the amount of visibility and sighting times but the 449th had made its mark within the 47th Division, and 15th Air Force acknowledged the 449th as one of the better bombing groups in the 15th Air Force...the record had disclosed this.

The third Christmas, 1945, found the Group returned from Italy....most of the members sent to separation centers...for the 2nd World War had ended. The 449th had been retained as an active Bomb Group, one of the charter Bomb Groups of the Strategic Air Command, but destined for deactivation in 1946. But for Christmas 1945 the 449th was at Grand Island AAFld, Nebr. under the command of Col. R.M.Montgomery...and on Aug 4th, 1946 deactivated.

The fourth Christmas for the 449th Bomb Group, WW2 members, occurred several years later....and followed the meeting of the survivors of those first three Christmases! For the First Reunion had just been held in Tucson, Nov 3-6, 1983...it was also the 40th Anniversary of the 449th, from the date of its origin at Davis-Monthan AAFld 1 May 1943! And the memory of the reunion was strong in the minds and hearts of those who attended that First Reunion....such were the memories for the fourth Christmas of the 449th!

And now come the fifth Christmas of the 449th...this present 25th Dec 1984! and this newsletter brings the news about the plans of the 2nd Reunion! It revives the memory of the first tour...it also brings to mind the many Christmases that the men and families had between 1945 and 1983!...and for those of the 449th who spent that Christmas in hospitals or POW Camps in 1944, some unique and personal memories that only each individual can know! There aren't too many more Christmas's left for the Flying Horsemen of the 449th...but those first four were special ones...so here's to this Christmas of 1984...with many memories of all the past 42 years of the 449th era...and for all of us, all members, to each of us, everyone...a truly Merry Christmas and a very Happy New Year. Let's make the 2nd Reunion part of that Happy portion of the New Year of 1985!

Frustrations of War!

THE FRUSTRATIONS OF WAR: Between Dec 43 and the return of the 449th in mid-45, many of the men endured the frustrations of the enemy....the support personnel had to be content with their assigned tasks and to invict their angers of frustration against varied and sundry subjects, of every type! Some of the Group and Squadron staff took it upon themselves to board a B-24 and participate in the bombing mission in order to vent their pent up wrath (some decided that once was enough...a few others got in several more)...for the bomb crews did have an outlet for their angers...and that was with the firing of their turrets, hand held guns, and dropping the bombs on targets! But there was one crew member who, because of his job-description and specific task, just didn't get that chance (unless he changed crew positions during the combat run of that mission)....so this one page is dedicated to that man, one of many throughout all theaters of the war of WW2; (the credits for this poem are listed at its bottom);

OH PITY THE POOR CO-PILOT!

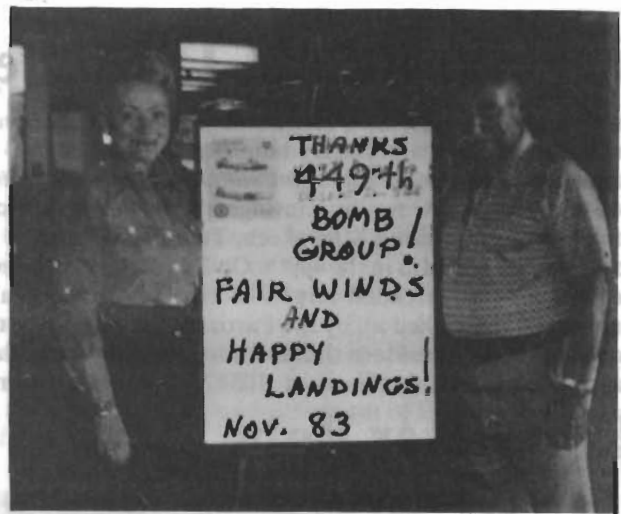
(or... "Sweating It Out!")

1. With Focke Wulfes high at six o'clock
with Messerschmitts at ten;
with Focke Wulfes diving thru the top
to climb and dive again.
Another boring in at twelve
with neon leading edge;
Nine men can be oblivious
but one of ten must hedge!

2. On pity the poor co-pilot,
his wavering glance belied;
he gazes at the instruments
with fighters in his eyes!
Altho it looks like July 4th
the pilot never shirks;
his eyes are on the leading ship
not on the fireworks!

3. Navigator and bombardier
 are wont to view the fight
 as do the eager crewmen six
 thru a machine gun sight!
 Oh God, pity the poor co-pilot,
 his forehead dripping wet;
 nine men are working for their lives
 while he for ten must sweat!

(printed in the 2nd Air, Division, 8th A.F. March 82 issue;
 the poem was found in some Kriege diary, Block 128, South
 Compound, Stalag Luft III, Sept. 43.)



WARM WELCOME

In our next edition of our 449th bulletin, Bob Bird will tell of his adventures on his return to Austria to attend a reunion of J G 27, our opponents of World War II.

Bob and his crew were shot down on February 25, 1944 over Regensburg. Bob will tell of his conversations with the German pilot who shot him down and the warm reception from officers of the Luftwaffe and the towns people.

Bob will also supply us with photos.

A fond remembrance of the 449th's First Reunion and its 40th Anniversary....this photo was taken the Sunday afternoon of Nov. 6th, 1983, as various members of the 449th were clearing the Desert Inn and departing Tucson, Arizona. The Inn had placed a tri-pod in lobby and bade everyone a fond farewell; (per the re-lettered sign in photo).

This is our Bomb Group Commander, 1944-45: Col. Jack L. Randolph, USAF Retired and Mrs. Randolph (Nellie)....Col. Randolph served as the 449th Assoc. Vice Pres. and Reunion Treasurer for the first reunion. He was voted, unanimously, as the Association Honorary President, to serve with voting powers on each succeeding board for the Association. He is also active in researching the unit history, personnel locator and the continued promotion of 449th Bomb Group (WW2) memorabilia and reunion activity. His residence is: 6220 Geneva St., Ventura, Calif. 93003. Col. and Mrs. Randolph extend their greetings for a Merry Christmas and best wishes in 1985....and God willing, will see you all at the 2nd Reunion in Dayton, this Oct. 24-27, 1985!

PHOTO ALBUM PLANS FOR THE 2ND REUNION! Remember the initial and follow-up announcements regarding the photo album for the First Reunion! To get your order in ahead of time....and if you were unable to attend the procedure to still get your photo in the album? And the extra effort and expenditure of the Association to order additional copies just for some who would want one....who had passed up the first offers, neglected to order, or (in some cases) just hadn't heard about the reunion and the photo album?

This reunion album will benefit by our experience with the first.....our only complaint was that the pictures of the couples were too small! And naturally one just doesn't hear all the compliments on its good side!

We will have another album....as coordinated by the Association Treasurer, Jim Miller, of Simpsonville, SC.....full particulars about this 2nd Reunion Photo Album will also be in the 1985 Newsletters! The best way to get in the photos of the Reunion, is to "be there"! Order in advance, take some photos yourself, submit them to the album committee (with full captions and identifications) and this will be a part of the 2nd Reunion Album!.....



REMEMBER THE SHEEP LINED JACKETS! They always looked great...but how bulky the pants! And just not enough warmth for the -50 deg. air over the Alps! Here is: **KURY'S CREW...717th BOMB SQDN.**

Standing, L to R: P-Jake Kury. CP-Frank Cooper. N-Jim Caldwell. B-George Butler.

In front, sit eng. Leo Gibbo, Mid-row: G-Fin Pfland, G-Gordon Moore. R/O-Jim Lindley. TG-Wes Butts and G-Robert Young. Five of these men were reported KIA; Kury, Caldwell, Butler, Pfland & Gibbo. Two, reported as POW's; Butts & Young. The aircraft assigned to them was "LURCHIN" URCHIN"...flown by Group C.O. Col. Darr Alkire, and knocked down over Aviano A/D, N. Italy, 31 Jan. 44. (A second, follow-on a/c, was also named "Lurchin" Urchin, nr 2"...its fate is unknown.)

Original B-24's, H Models...

The original aircraft of the 449th Bomb Group were all H models.....painted green and with Consolidated aircraft nose turrets, with A-5 autopilots and Sperry bombsights!

In April 1944, the first all-aluminum, silver metalled, aircraft arrived at Grottaglie Airfield. It was picked up at Hamilton AAFld, Calif., and flown by Kinsingers' crew via Amarillo, Dyersburg, W. Palm Beach, Trinidad, Belem (Brazil), Portaleza (Brazil), Dakar (Africa), Marrakech, Tunis, to Grottaglie Afd. It was assigned to the 716th Bomb Sqdn and flown by many crews of various Sqdns in the 449th. On Dec 11th, 1944 it received heavy flak damage over Moosbierbaum, Austria, (one of the heaviest ack-ack defended targets of the War), with Marrone's crew aboard. The crew managed to bail out safely over Yugoslavia and picked up by the Partisans; later to be returned to Italy on Jan 5, 45. The aircraft, "SILVER BABE", serial number 44-40331, was seen to crash into one of the Yugoslavian mountains. The MACR (missing aircrew report) number for Marrone's crew & this aircraft is: 10387, and on microfilm frames 1389 and 1109.

The Silver Babe....



Here is the original "SILVER BABE" and the crew of the 716th that brought her to the 449th Bomb Group, Grottaglie AAFld, dates of photos are June 1944.

JUNE 1944: Bombardier and Navigator talking things over after mission to Southern France (Steinkamp and Miller). KINSINGER'S CREW....716th BOMB SQDN. (crew lineup...standing L to R: Ken Kinsinger, pilot. John Murphy, co-pilot, John Miller, nav., Stan Steinkamp, bombdr., George Wingard, flt. engineer. Front lower row, L to R: Gordon Adams, ball turret, Dean Bebee, armorer gunner. Harold Singleton, nose gunner. George Drude, tail gunner. Isadore Seigel, Rad. Op. (the crew trained at Mt. Home, Idaho and Tonapah, Nevada, prior to combat)....Kinsinger, Miller, Wingard and Bebee are present members of the 449th Assoc. the others are "somewhere out there, locations unknown"....co-pilot John Murphy, while flying with another crew became a POW of the Yugoslavians, escaped and was returned to Italy.

Our Service Squadron, Where Are You?....

348th SERVICE SQUADRON VETERANS, 449th BOMB GROUP (WW2)

WHERE ARE YOU? LET US HEAR FROM YOU! YOU PUT MANY OF OUR AIRCRAFT "BACK TOGETHER AGAIN"....LET'S PUT ALL OF US "BACK TOGETHER AGAIN" ALSO....

IT TOOK FOUR BOMB SQUADRONS AND THE SUPPORT OF EVERY SECTIONS OF THE GROUP TO MAKE THE 449th BOMB GROUP THE "FAMOUS FLYING HORSEMEN".....AND THE 348th SERVICE SQUADRON WAS A PART OF THAT WW2 GROUP.....YOU BROUGHT YOUR EXPERIENCE FROM THE NORTH AFRICAN AIR BASES TO GROTTAGLIE AND BECAME AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE 449th....follow on newsletters will attempt to fill our present membership with more details regarding the history of the 348th...BUT FOR THE PRESENT! all members of the 449th are requested to search their records and writing materials for names and addresses of former 348th Squadron personnel! Several lines of investigation are being pursued...but it takes help from many to do the job....look for all ex-348th Service Squadron (WW2) men....forward these contacts to the Secy. for their information & newsletters, also!

449th History Book Report...

In 1950-54, Capt. Damon Turner, the Intelligence Officer of the 449th Group Headquarters, and Group historian gathered his notes and wrote a 250 page manuscript of the history of the 449th Bomb Group and with a group of other former 449ers attempted to have it published. Their efforts were thwarted by two factors; the cost of its printing and the lack of interest for its funding and distribution (the men of the 449th dispersed quite thoroughly and none had compiled any roster of size). The manuscript was retained by Capt. Turner. When the 449th Bomb Group Association began to form, the names were compiled. Col. Jack Randolph reminded the men of the first cabinet of this original writing. In his search for names for the 449th Association, Dick Downey traced the found the address of Mrs. D. Turner, and learned of the death of Damon Turner (the 40th Anniversary Newsletter Edition, distributed at the First Reunion in Nov 83, Tucson carried his photo and report), we also learned that this manuscript was available. Our Assoc. historian, Don Lapham, made arrangements for its receipt, received the permission of Mrs. Turner to copy it for the history of the 449th, and the safe return of the original copy to her. Additional requests for stories and anecdotes were requested by Don Lapham, the announcement and agreement of the membership for printing of the history made at the first reunion business meeting, and that the funding would come from individual purchase of the books and the supporting donations of the membership.

We are glad to report that its progress in its printing has begun...final assembly of photos, layout, and the book will be completed in early 1985 (some of the manuscript has already been set into type) and the distribution made at the 2nd Reunion in Dayton. *Funding is now needed.....* we do request that you write your checks to "the 449th Bomb Group Association", mark it as a donation, for *we are Fedl. Tax Exempt* under #36 002 4203 Internal Revenue Code Sect. 501(c) (19)...and mail it immediately for your tax deduction for 1984 income. More about the book in following newsletters!

Co-pilot Returns to Grottaglie to Warm Welcome

By Don Lapham

(This is a continued story of our visit to the 449th base at Grottaglie. Now a Naval Helicopter base, they had greeted us with great courtesy. I presented a bottle of Scotch and beeswax candles to the commanding officer. They had responded with a bronze plaque for the 449th association. We were running well behind schedule for we had to meet our tour group in Sorrento, some 350 miles away. It was now almost noon).

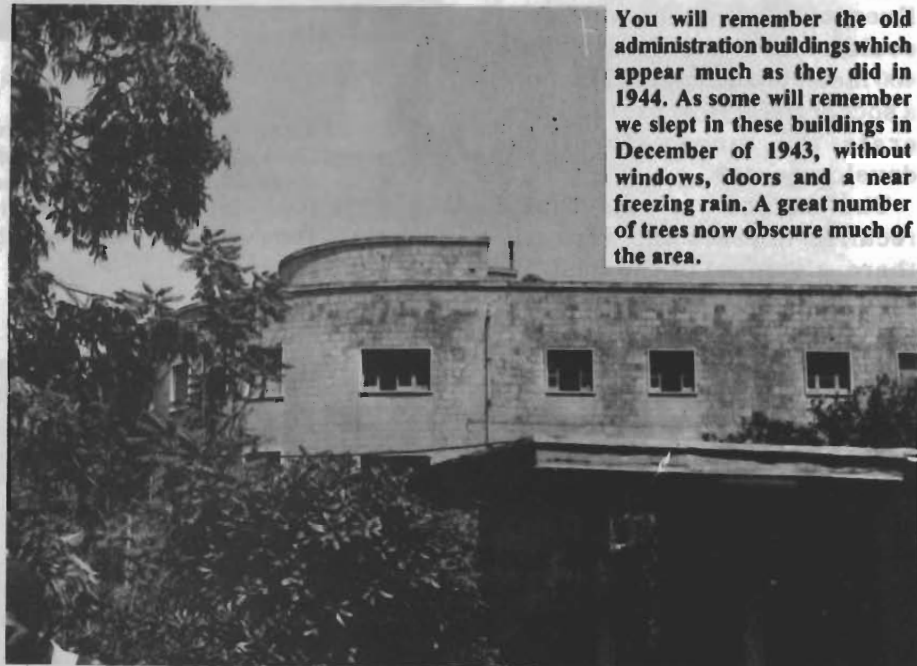
For me it was an emotional experience. Just as we were about to leave the base, we paused for a moment. I looked at the old administrative building.

I thought of the names of people, some of whom I had not thought of in four decades—Zimmerman, Council, Polink, Garrison, Theime, Kendall, Frones, Woltkamp, Woodle, McCormick, Olson, Phillips, and the replacements Heibuck, and Armstrong.

All pilots and their crews who were either shot down or lost in a short span of six months.

They were all from the 719th, all young men, the finest our nation had to offer.

"It would be a nice gesture if your Group were to erect a memorial on this field to those who served in the 449th," remarked my wife.



You will remember the old administration buildings which appear much as they did in 1944. As some will remember we slept in these buildings in December of 1943, without windows, doors and a near freezing rain. A great number of trees now obscure much of the area.

We were running so late, I did not have time to tour the base. Some other 449er will do this, I know.

Somehow, on the Lancia auto, I had flipped a switch which accuated the emergency blinking lights...I couldn't find the switch to turn them off. Pedestrians were yelling at us, motorists were honking. I stopped at a car wash. A young Italian boy put his soapy finger on the *hidden* button after looking at me like I was stupid.

Just a block off the road with the wrought iron fence was the city hall. My mastery of the

Italian language is zip. I handed my letter of introduction to a young city official. He immediately recognized the Flying Horse logo and returned with Downey's correspondence. I was soon surrounded by several city officials. A young lady spoke passable English. I was saved. I made my little speech and presented the bottle and candles to a city official.

"THERE'S THE MAYOR"

"Ah, there is the mayor" said the interpreter. A tall man wearing a sport shirt approached me. He greeted me with enthu-

(Continued from Page 5)

siasm. I had left Mary in the car, she was asked to join our group immediately.

The mayor wanted to take us on a tour of Grottaglie in his Diesel. First we had to tour the city offices. The city engineer, a frail but enthusiastic man, displayed pictures of Grottaglie, their new hospital, swimming pool, track and I believe, tennis courts.

Did he remember the 449th? The mayor clasped his hands to his ears — boom, boom, boom.

Yes, he was there.

The mayor insisted that we stop in a small bar for a drink. Everyone knew the mayor. I could not relate to Grottaglie, a 400 meter track, swimming pool, a soccer field! How did they generate the money for these developments?

The narrow streets that I recalled 40 years ago were still there, a symbol of the past. We then visited a pottery shop which the mayor may have owned, I am not sure. He insisted on giving my wife an attractive oil and vinegar set, a set of mugs and a pitcher. We then received a platter with a picture of a Tuffa hut on it which has been earmarked for Col. Randolph. They were working on the pottery wheels and the kiln was full of their pottery.

On the mugs was the hand-painted *Bird of Grottaglie*, a cock with a large blue tail. Would it be possible to have mugs with the 449th emblem on them? This did not appear to be a problem. A flying horse on one side and a cock on the other?

I looked at my watch. We had to take the freeway to Bari, cut across the Italian boot to within 70 miles of Naples, go south to Salerno and then join our group at Sorrento that evening.

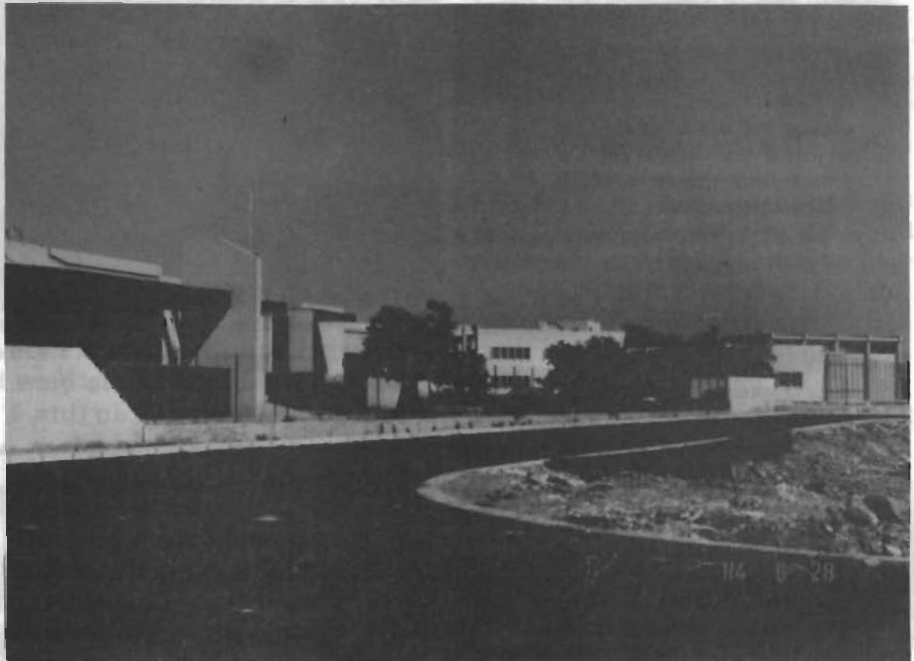
INVITED TO LUNCH

"The mayor would like to have the pleasure of our company for lunch. "Then began a seven

(Continued on Page 7)



This is the airfield looking eastward toward the 'miserable hill'. I could see the white-washed building of town on the southernly part of the hill. The airport was closed about four months ago as a jet airport for Taranto. Apparently this was for economic reasons. There were grape vineyards both to the east, west and north of the airfield.



I could not relate to this part of Grottaglie. Both the mayor and his staff were extremely proud of Grottaglie, including projected housing for the poor and their very fine athletic facilities.

(Continued from Page 6)

course sea-food luncheon. Mussels, clams, squid and octopus. This food I dearly love, however, this really isn't Mary's bag. She deserved an air medal for her smiling efforts.

About the time that I thought we were finished, the waiter brought out the entree, uncooked for our inspection. In the middle of the platter was a large sculpin (a delicacy) and other small fish. The fish was excellent. Pitchers of wine were also on the table, a very excellent wine.

"YOU WEASLED OUT"

The interpreter then asked, "The Mayor would like to know if you were in a command position with the 449th?"

I was afraid of this little question. I replied, "I was a flyer and a newspaper man most of my life."

The mayor said, "Ah, a journalist, that is very interesting."

My wife leaned over and whispered, "You weasled out of that one, didn't you?" A good question for Randolph, Tope, Nugent, Sass, Jordan, Parker, Swan and others...but not for a co-pilot sweating it out in the trenches.

"The mayor," said our interpreter, "would like to have you make one more small visit." This little visit almost *did me in*. We arrived at the Grottaglie Wine Distribution Company, owned, I believe, by the mayor. In the warehouse were large oak casks. He reached under a vat and handed me two bottles of unlabeled red wine — judged by a tour to be the finest red wine they had ever tasted.

He insisted we taste some of his finer wines...and they were excellent. They were being sold for 50 to 80 cents a liter.

It was a spontaneous act of generosity both by the Italian Naval officers and the city officials of Grottaglie.

And perhaps we should return to Grottaglie — a memorial should be a consideration by the 449th Association.



My wife Mary, stands with Grottaglie Mayor Antonio Cavallo and his secretary. You will recognize the church in the background, which was near the center of the old Grottaglie during World War II. The Italian hospitality was overwhelming.



These vineyards are immediately to the west of administration buildings. In 1943 they were wrecked German and Italian airplanes here including cement bombs—something that you can all recall.

SPECIAL BOOK OFFER MADE AVAILABLE TO THE 449th BOMB GROUP ASSOC:

(this has 2nd priority in our book program offers,....number one priority is our own history book...as explained in this Newsletter)....but here is a book, on the public market; Title "TARGET PLOESTI View from a Bombsight"...it is by a 15th AF bombardier of the 460th Bomb Group...it has received high praise and endorsements from many military notables...the authors name is Leroy W. Newby (Ted)....and after written communication and telephone contacts by Dick Downey, he has offered this book to each of our members for \$12.95, and after the 449er makes known his 449th Assoc. membership, he will refund \$2.00 per book to our association. It contains a good story, photos of the Norden and Sperry bombsights, specific details of the Ploesti area with documents of that area layout. Ted Newby will autograph each book with an inscription of yours, do the mailing, and refund the \$2.00 to our Treasury.....for those remembering the Ploesti missions, for those who would add a true story of the 15th Air Force for those missions, this book is recommended by the Assoc. Secy...I do have one and bring this to your attention....the book is on the Military Book Club distribution list also, for those members....don't forget to mention that your request for a book is thru the 449th Bomb Group Association. Newby's address is: 810 North Terrace Dr., Webster City, Iowa 50595.

**Can hardly wait for
the 2nd Reunion!
Dayton — Oct. 85**

**449th
Bomb Group Assoc.
"Flying Horsemen"**

**Pilot to Nav!
Give me that heading
for Dayton**



**449th Bomb Group Assoc.
716-717-718-719th Bomb Sqdns
& 348 th Service Sqdn.
15th Air Force (WW2)
Richard F. Downey, Secy.
4859 Stanhope Drive
St. Louis, MO 63128**

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