

## Mail Call

The following was extracted from a letter Bob Kelliher wrote to one of his grandsons.

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After I finished flying training in the southern U.S. in early 1944, I was sent to Lincoln, Nebraska, to be assigned a crew. Then with hundreds of other crews, we were sent to Mountain Home (in the desert!) in Idaho, near Boise, for about two months of combat training, consisting of practicing flying in big formations, cross-country navigation, aerial gunnery, and accurate bombing using Norden bomb sights. And most important of all, rapid evasive action, after "bombs away" to get out of flak alley! After that we were sent to Topeka, Kansas, where some got new B-24 Liberators from the factory to fly overseas. My crew, and most others, were sent to Newport News, Virginia, and sailed on Liberty ships in a big convoy of 50 ships that took the whole month of October to cross the Atlantic.

I was in the 765th Squadron of the 461st Bomb Group of the 15th Air Force in Italy, near Cerignola, and got in only 18 of the 25 missions of a "tour" (we were "tourists", but didn't know it!) before the war ended in May 1945.

As a possibly interesting aside, on May 6, 1945, to celebrate the end of the war in Europe, this entire 15th Air Force, maybe nearly a thousand heavy bombers, was sent aloft to fly in formation in a victory parade over headquarters in Caserta, near Rome. This was to benefit General Hap Arnold, not us air crew members. We were at low altitude for us, only 10,000 feet at most, it was a very hot day, making the air very turbulent, and holding position very difficult, so we were working hard and sweating and cussing all the way, including cussing Hap Arnold. To add insult to injury, the P-51 and P-38 fighter planes that came along and provided "escort" and "target cover" kept criss-crossing through and in front of our formations, getting us bounced around by their prop wash. They even did it in the "target"

area. Over a real target, where hellzapoppin with flak, they would be discreetly absent.

Robert M. Kelliher  
765th Squadron

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1945 the Air Command sent over only half of the trained bombardiers. I was one of those left. I had heard that my old crew was shot down over Vienna in March. Today, 2005, I was scanning your website and WOW there was some of my old crew listed. I couldn't find my co-pilot, navigator, armorment gunner, or waist gunner:

Robert W Jennings 0-836486  
Richard Ming Navigator  
Raymond J Nelson 17181224  
Everette E Bradfield 34989251

Any word would be good.

Thank you.

Will Johnson  
0-2073386  
Will2Johnson@aol.com

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We received a very nice letter from the Embassy of Greece, Washington, D. C., which I am copying for your information:

Dear Mr. Willliam Meincke:

In response to your letter dated January 14, 2005 we are pleased to inform you and Mr. Louis Henley that concerning the awarding of commemorative medals to the Veterans of World War II the Greek Government issued the Presidential Degree #493, on December 28, 1983.

*(Continued on page 14)*