

May 2016

GREETINGS TO EVERYONE

Here we are preparing for our next reunion already; this is our 41st Annual Reunion and will be held in Tulsa, Oklahoma. Once again this year, the 344th BG will be joining us and various members from within the 323rd BG have also been invited. We are looking forward to seeing everyone again as we have created a special kindred and solid friendships.

Our Directory has some more changes and additions (see page 9), thank you to everyone with your input. With your assistance we can keep our directory current and we will continue to pass along all up-dates for our directory in the next newsletter. So, if you know of any information, in our current directory that's not correct please contact me preferably by email at kville93@centurylink.net or you can call me at 480-984-3676 and leave a voice message and I will return your call as soon as possible.

Our Mail Bag News

Wow – no correspondence for this newsletter.

454th B.S. 41st Annual Reunion at Tulsa, OK.

Here is the information and facts about our Reunion location, the Hotel we will be staying at this year is the DoubleTree, Warren Place. We will have complimentary shuttle service available to and from the airport. There will also be limited complimentary shuttle service when available.

Schedule of Events

(Register for tours in advance – Tour Reservation Form – Use **Attachment 1**)
Registration is 1st come 1st serve – cut-off date is Aug 29,2016

TOURS and EVENTS – Tulsa, Oklahoma Reunion

City Tour/Air Museum Thursday, September 22nd 1:00pm – 5pm

We leave our hotel for a 30 minute ride to the city of Tulsa, where a step on guide will join us to narrate and show us many special sites of the city, we will tour about with guide, and there will be a short restroom stop. Next we go to the Air Museum, there will be airplanes from various war campaigns, and TV monitors that tell histories of past times and wars involvement, lots of sitting areas, machines with light snack and beverages (Includes Driver, Bus, Tour City Guide, Tour Leader, Museum Docents, Museum Fee, Limited Walking).

Claremore/Rogers/Area Sites Friday, September 23rd Noon - 5:30p

We leave our hotel to Claremore, Oklahoma, a quaint town and short ride away, there you will have about an hour to have lunch on own at one of their city eateries. Our guide joins us at our hotel for trip to Claremore, the guide narrates about history of Claremore on the way. After your lunch, we will tour the town, then on to the city's Roy Rogers Museum, to see a short film and exhibits about this man's marvelous life (there are plenty of sitting areas available). On way back we will see a unique area site, and our guide will points out some Tulsa area sites too, plus we do a stop for soft serve ice cream and a restroom break on way back. This is a most interesting tour to a popular town, a favorite for Tulsans to go to on weekends (Includes, Driver, Bus, Our Tour Guide, Tour Leader, Museum Docents, Museum Fee, Ice Cream, With Limited to Moderate Walking).

Special Dinner/Entertainment Evening Friday, September 23rd 6:30pm – 8:30pm

Tonight you will be attending a special dinner /entertainment event right in our hotel. You will enjoy a pleasant dinner and then the entertainment event. We have enjoyed this special dinner event over the years. It's convenient and sure to be a good time for all. (Dinner, Entertainment, at the Hotel)

Saturday Sep 24 **10:00am** **Annual Business Meeting**
 11:30am **Hospitality Room Opens or after meeting**
 3:00pm **Hospitality Room Closes**
 5:00pm **Cocktail Hour / Cash Bar**
 6:00pm **Farewell Dinner / Entertainment**

Farewell Dinner Evening Saturday, September 24th 5:00pm – 9:00 pm

Tonight we will have our traditional farewell for this reunion; cocktails, a nice dinner, with music in the background. After a relaxing day around our hotel, we have this final event. The cocktail hour will start at 5:00pm, the dinner (3 course, duet entrée meal) will be at 6:00pm. A wonderful event with all your friends, to say a farewell till next year, a night to remember, see you there in your dress ups (Dinner event at hotel).

9:00pm **Banquet Room Closes**
9:00pm – 12:00am **Hospitality Room Open**

Transportation, Air Fare Rate Opportunities to Tulsa - Hotel Has Complimentary Shuttle! Fly direct from major cities to Tulsa Oklahoma Airport – Our hotel is the DoubleTree, Warren Place you can come early; stay late (3 days either side, at hotel group rate on your Air Reservation) Southwest Airlines 1-800 I FLY SWA (1-800-435-9792), American Airlines (1-800-443-7300) and there are many other carriers – you can just ask your local travel agent).

**Full refund if cancel tour, any reason. All tours require minimum 35 pax to operate (if space available, sales on site). Tour operators are not responsible for damage articles, accidents, death, injury, illness, delay, mechanical or electrical problems, any strike, lockouts, acts of gods, events beyond their control.*

454th – 344th Reunion Registration 2016– Tulsa, OK
Mail to: 8250 E. Obispo Avenue Mesa, AZ 85212
Inquiries, George Cornett (480)-984-3676

Name _____ Group _____ Unit _____
 Address _____ Name Tag Names (if needed) _____
 Phone _____
 Wife's Name _____
 Guest Name(s) _____

Arrival Date _____ Air Museum & City Tour * Thur Sept 22 \$39
 Departure Date _____ Claremore/Rogers/Area Sites * Fri Sept 23 \$43
 Special Entertainment Dinner Fri Sept 23 \$39
 Unit Dinner Banquet Event Sat Sept 24 \$39
 Person Contact, Emergency The Unit Registration Fee \$10
 (Complimentary Hospitality Room)
 Name _____ All included in Register Fee of \$170 each
 Total Enclosed # _____ x \$ _____ = _____
 Phone _____ Make Checks to 454th BSA
 (Full Refunds, if cancel prior reunion)
 See Tour Description Information In Newsletter

Free Airport Shuttle Service (call hotel after land, ask pickup, 918- 495-1000)
 Southwest 1-800 435-9792, American 1-800-443-7300, many others service Tulsa

Hotel Accommodation Reservation – Tulsa, 2016
454th 344th Airforce (Code MAR), 1-800-801-1317, 1, 1, then *
Hotel Reservation Cut Off Date (to secure \$89 rate) is Aug 29, 2016

Main Dates, Sept 21 Wed – Sept 24 Sat Double Tree, Warren Place Hotel
 454th 344th Air Force Reunion (4 nights) 6110 S. Yale Avenue
 Tulsa, OK 74136
 Room Rate Avail, Sept 19 - Sept 26 Hotel Direct 918-495-1000

The following information needed to make a reservation - up 4 in room same rate
 Name _____
 Address _____ # of persons in Room ___ # beds, Rooms ___
 Phone _____ Check in, at 3pm Check Out, Noon
 Name, if shared room _____ Rate \$89 per room + 13.5% taxes
 Arrival Date _____ Depart Date _____ A First Night's Deposit Is Required

Hotel Parking Free of Charge Special Rate Buffet Breakfast \$8.95, Usually \$14.95
 Complimentary Airport Shuttle Hotel Shuttle, nearby Eateries When Available

Can call hotel sales department, 918-497-2183 9/5p M-F, if a special request issue.

Final Flights & Obituaries

It is always a sad time when we loose loved ones. These are some more of our finest that we have the disappointing news to pass along to you. They will not be with us at our future reunions physically, but will be with us in spirit and their special stories they have shared with all of us. **GOD BLESS!**

Frank Johnson

1923-2016



Frank A. Johnson, of Naperville, IL passed away peacefully on January 5, 2016. Frank was born in Chicago, IL on July 30, 1923 to Albin C. and Minnie Johnson (nee Larson). Frank was a **WWII** veteran of the **Army** Air Corps serving as a 2nd Lieutenant B-26 Pilot in the 323rd Bomb Group 454th Bomb Squadron, where he was stationed in England, France, and Belgium and flew 26 bombing missions over Germany. Following the end of the war, Frank attended Bradley University and went to work for the CAA/FAA Chicago Air Traffic Control, where he retired after 40 years. Frank met the love of his life, Dolores Johnson (nee Gavin) and married on April 21, 1951. They lived in Midlothian, IL for 9 years before moving to Naperville, IL in 1960, where Frank was a founding member of St. Raphael Catholic Church. Frank was a wonderful, caring father who enjoyed spending time with his family and pets, spent many family fun summers in Higgins Lake, MI. He also enjoyed his WWII reunions, where he served 3 terms as President and was Secretary/Treasurer from 2003-2009. Frank's additional hobbies were sailing, cars, fishing, airplanes, travelling, crafting stained glass lamps, building/fixing everything, including boats. One of the best days of his life was going on Honor Flight Chicago in June 2014 to the WWII memorial and being "Welcomed Home" by his family and thousands of Chicagoans thanking him and the other 88 WWII veterans for their service to our country. Over the last few years, Frank received many more "Thanks" for being a true American "Rock Star" from the greatest generation and a B-26 Martin Marauder Bomber Pilot. Frank is survived by his three children, Charlene M. Johnson, Robert E. Johnson (Candice Johnson), and Judith A. Piszczek (Johnson) (Daniel P. Piszczek); the "Hero" and "Papa" to his six grandchildren, Brandon Johnson, Stephanie Johnson, Michelle Johnson, Bradley Johnson, Ryan Piszczek, and Tyler Piszczek; and his sister Carol Bagdon (nee Johnson).

He was preceded in death by his wife Dolores Johnson (nee Gavin), sons, Kenneth F. Johnson and Brian Johnson and his two sisters, Alice Papke (nee Johnson) and Ruth Lough (nee Johnson). Memorials may be made to the St. Raphael Church Attn: Building Fund Donation, 1215 Modaff Rd., Naperville, IL 60540 or the National Air and Space Museum (Martin B-26B-25-MA Marauder "Flak-Bait" restoration project), Office of Advancement, Donation for Martin B-26B-25-MA Marauder "Flak-Bait", PO Box 92192, Washington, DC 20090-2192. Burial will be celebrated on Saturday, January 9 at 10:00 AM at St. Raphael Catholic Church, 1215 Modaff Rd., Naperville, IL. Entombment will follow at Assumption Cemetery Mausoleum, Wheaton.

Sheldon "Shelly" Eichel



EICHEL, SHELDON, "Shelly", passed away unexpectedly on April 28, 2015. Born November 28, 1924 in Brooklyn, NY. He was a US World War II Pilot and pilot for Israel Independence War. He loved story telling was seen in PBS documentary A Wing and a Prayer that aired this month. A true friend who will be greatly missed by all.

Roland P. Laferriere

1925 – 2016



Longtime Wilbraham resident, Roland P. "Lefty" Laferriere, 91, died peacefully on Tuesday, April 26, 2016, at home, surrounded by his family. Born in Chicopee to the late Auguste and Yvonne (Hamel) Laferriere, he was a proud Army Air Force Veteran of World War II, where he earned the Air Medal with three clusters, the French Croix de Guerre, a Presidential unit citation, and the European Theatre ribbon with two campaign stars. A graduate of Boston University, he worked at Mass

Mutual Life Insurance Co. for 35 years, retiring as a Senior Vice President in 1986. A communicant of St. Cecilia's Church in Wilbraham, he belonged to Wilbraham Country

Club and was previously a member of Longmeadow Country Club for many years. He served as Chairman for the United Way, was on the Board of Directors for Stage West and belonged to the Colony Club for many years. An avid Red Sox fan, he enjoyed attending his grandchildren's sporting events, travelling with his wife Doris and spending summers with his family in Ogunquit, ME. He is survived by his beloved wife of 69 years Doris (Gamache) Laferriere, two daughters; Lee Ann Laferriere-Bates and her husband Richard and Suzanne Gougeon and her husband Michael and 4 cherished grandchildren; Gabrielle and Noelle Bates and Maxwell and Noah Gougeon, all of Wilbraham. In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to St. Jude's Children's Research Hospital, P.O. Box 1000, Dept. 142 Memphis, TN 38101-9908.

MAXINE BRANDT DEVLIN



RAYMONDVILLE, TX - Maxine Brandt Devlin, 88 of Raymondville, TX, entered into rest Monday, December 1, 2014 in Retama Manor Nursing Home.

She was born on February 1, 1926 in Raymondville, daughter of Carl G. and Alberta (Widman) Brandt.

Maxine is preceded in death by her husband, Tom Devlin and is survived by her sister, Marge

Frankie of Dallas and numerous nieces and nephews.

Visitation will be held on Wednesday and Thursday, December 3 and 4, 2014 at Duddlesten Funeral Home, Raymondville, TX.

Louise Sobczynski



Louise M. Sobczynski, nee Wnek, age 93, beloved wife of the late Jim Sobczynski. Loving mother of Mary Lou (Jim) Arns, Jim (Tina) Sobb, Daniel (Margie) Sobczynski and Judy (Mark) Cyphert. Cherished grandma of Katie, Jimmy, Matt, Michelle, Melanie, Nick, Liz, Ryan and Abbey. Dearest great grandmother Benton and Jeremy. Dear sister of

Florence (the late Mike) Lazowski, Dolores (the late Stanley) Arciszewski and Robert (Toni) Wnek. Fond aunt of many nieces and nephews. Louise earned her BSN and served as a compassionate and devoted nurse. She worked as the school nurse at Fremd High School for 18 years.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to Little Sisters of the Poor, 80 W. Northwest Hwy., Palatine, IL 60067. For information 847-359-8020 or visit Louise's memorial at www.smithcorcoran.com

Additional Notifications without Obituaries received:

Name:	Date Received:	Date of Passing:
Petrosek, Virginia	1-15-16	8-29-15
Harlan, Margaret	1-26-16	12-21-15

Directory Updates:

We have received the following changes since the publishing of our December 2013 Newsletter; please update your directory as follows:

Section 1 page 1 – Replace Old Address

Old

BARTELS, Ida
400 Parkwood Drive Apt. 224
Pierre, SD. 57501-3371

New

Contact George Cornett
or
Roy Bozych for updated
addresses

Section 1 page 4 – Replace Old Address

Old

HYPES, Marie
126 Cherry Hill Lane
Newport, VA. 24128-3900

New

Contact George Cornett or
Roy Bozych for updated
addresses

Section 1 page 5- New Address

Old

LAFERRIERE, Roland & Doris
12 Spruce Drive
Wilbraham, MA. 0195-1783

Missing Members

This is a section where we will list the names and addresses for newsletters mailed out and returned. If you know someone on this list please contact me with an updated address or have them contact me direct if they wish. Their name will only appear in one newsletter after that if they have not been updated then they will be removed from our mailing list.

Ms. Betty Sellier
129 Lombardy Lane
Orinda, CA. 94563-1110
1-26-16

Mr. Arthur Smith
12512 Chronicle Drive
Fairfax, VA. 22030-6505
1-26-16

Financial Report

Here is our financial report to date for 2016. We would like to thank everyone for their past contributions because that's what keeps us going strong with our organization. I'm sure our next report will be much longer because as the year continues so will our contributions and expenses.

Contributions Jan 1, 2016 – May 31, 2016

Name	Amount
Laudie, Charles	\$50.00

If there were contributions from December 26, 2015 to May 30, 2016 sent that are not posted please contact me (George Cornett) at below address or call me at 480-984-3676.

If you wish to make a contribution to the 454th Bomb Squadron Association please send to 454th BSA c/o George Cornett 8250 E. Obispo Ave. Mesa AZ 85212-1618.

The below balance does not include the cost printing for this Newsletter for mailing.

Balance as of Jan. 1, 2016	\$12,119.73
Contributions	\$50.00
Reunion Monies Rcvd.	\$0.00
Total Received	\$50.00
Expenses	\$581.93
Balance	\$11,587.80

Our Elected Officials

President_____	Frank Johnson
1 st Vice-President____	Howard Cross
2 nd Vice-President____	Frankie Mancuso
3 rd Vice-President____	Robert “Bob” Johnson
Secretary/Treasurer_	George Cornett
Historian_____	Roy Bozych
Sergeant-at-Arms ____	Merlin McDonald
Previous President __	Brad Urey

George Cornett
8250 E Obispo Avenue
Mesa, AZ 85212-1618
480-984-3676
kville93@centurylink.net



HISTORIAN'S HANGER

Roy Bozych - Squadron Historian



Spring 2016



For a number of years now I have had the honor of recording and preserving not only the history of the 454th Squadron but also all of the 323rd Bomb Group. And in the process I have also become kind of an informal representative for the 323rd Bomb Group. Something of which I have become very proud! Not because of what I have done, but because of what our fathers, grandfathers uncles and Veterans have

done. I do this not only to honor their sacrifices but also to honor their memories because in the years that I got to meet and spend time with them at our reunions not only did they become my friends, but they also became my family.

Unfortunately many of our Veteran family members are no longer with us. Time has taken its toll. I miss them all. Especially the ones who encouraged me to pick up this undertaking, like Elbert Carpenter, John Moench, Frank Johnson, Earl Thompson and many, many more too numerous to name here. So many heroic stories lost not only to us but to history!

It is at this time of the year that we pause to remember our Veterans and all that they have done for us. Later in our newsletter you will hear about a couple of them and of another website to preserve their memories.

I write these few words to encourage all of you to do something now, this Memorial Day Season to chronicle the deeds of your loved Veteran. With all of today's modern gadgets and gizmos it's now easy enough. If you're lucky enough to still have your Veteran take a moment, sit him or her down in a quiet place and have them tell you some of their stories. Then take your smartphone; flip the picture app to video and record. If your Veteran is shy about being on camera, no problems hit your voice memo app and point the input mike toward your Vet. It's that easy folks! Don't forget to save and back up what you recorded. Back it up to the cloud or whatever backup device you have. You can also upload the interviews to You Tube. Just be sure to

include B-26, 323rd BG or 454th Squadron in the description line so everybody can find them when they run a search.

If your Veteran is no longer with us then take a few moments, open up a word doc and make some notes or write a short story about what he told you in the past. Everybody should gotten at least one of two “There I was” stories. If you have documents and pictures, scan and record them. No Scanner, no problem! Again just grab your smart phone and take some pictures. No fuss no muss! Don’t let your Veteran be forgotten to history!

I hope everyone has a great Memorial Day Holiday and oh yeah, now that you have all of those memories recorded, don’t forget to send me a copy for our archive! Happy Memorial Day!

A Momentous Memory



What a remarkable life achievement! This past May 9th, Ken Buffaloe turned 100!!! Ken was one of the original founding members of the 454th Squadron and 323rd Bomb Group joining as a Master Sargent at MacDill Field, Tampa, Florida on September 11th, 1942. He started out as an aircraft mechanic. This was one of the most underappreciated jobs in all the Air Force. No matter what the conditions were,



these guys had to get their job done. If it weren’t for our mechanics and ground crews; there wouldn’t have been any B-26s to fly into combat. How did that saying go? For the want of a nail, the war was lost!

Later he became a crew chief for nine different crews. Obviously with this much experience, Ken was a great asset to the 454th Squadron. His experience and talents were recognized by our leaders and eventually he was made an officer, a brand new 2nd Louie. He went on to become a 1st Lieutenant before the war in Europe ended. As an officer his responsibilities now shifted to Squadron Flight Engineer. It was his duty to certify that all the repairs on the aircraft we done correctly.

Ken’s daughter, Becky, threw a BIG party for him. That’s Ken above standing next to a 1930 Model A Ford that came to pick him up and take him to the party. Ken’s very first car was a 1928 Model A. So the ride had extra meaning for him. Over thirty six friends and neighbors turned out to help Ken celebrate his **BIG 100**. Rumor has it that Ken is a real party animal! Ha-Ha!

For those of you who are on our e-mail list, shortly before Ken's birthday I sent out a notice about Ken's birthday, asking everyone to either send Ken a card or an e-mail. So many of you did! Thanks.

Ken would also like to thank everyone who wished him a Happy Birthday. He received a whole avalanche of good wishes. He even received one very nice card from someone in France thanking him for helping to liberate France. They even asked him for an autograph. It looks like we have a star amongst us! All kidding aside, Ken, thanks for your service and all that you did for our country. Happy 100th Birthday and many, many more!

Unsung Heroes



He was a quiet, soft spoken good-looking man. Not real tall. He never married and had no children. He had no family. His younger sister had died earlier in his life. He came to the 454th Squadron late in the war and flew 18 combat missions before the war ended and he left to resume his life. For a while he was on our "Missing Veterans" list. To look at him you would never know that he had participated in so much history!

On Friday, April 29th I received an e-mail from Jeannette and Benjamin Dranoff that their good friend Sheldon Eichel had died earlier, almost a year earlier on April 28, 2015. You probably read Sheldon's Obit in the first part of this newsletter. It wasn't much of an Obit. Especially for a man who had lived so much history. Sheldon, Jeannette and Benjamin had

been good friends for fifty years! They knew that he had flown with the 454th Squadron during WWII and wanted to let us know what happened to him. I had a nice phone conversation with Jeannette and she promised to send his memorabilia and personal effects on to me so that they could be included in the 323rd BG Marauder archives.

A few days later a rather unassuming box arrived at my door delivered by UPS. It was 20 inches by 12 by 8. Not much to show for an entire man's life. But oh, the stories it held! I very carefully cut it open and started to unpack it. To my surprise it was loaded with articles, awards, letters of commendation and letters of appreciation, all from the

state of Israel. It turns out that Sheldon Eichel was one of the founding members of the Israeli Air Force. In 1948 he played a pivotal role in the fight to create the country of Israel. His story and that of other WWII pilots who participated in this struggle are told in a PBS film called "A Wing and A Prayer" which currently can be found on You Tube. Sheldon's story appears about 16 minutes and 30 seconds into the film. You can either do a search for the film on the You Tube website or you can use the link below to find it; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TY4OZRbdoRc>

In addition, at the end of the newsletter is a reprint of an article out of the Miami Herald that tells about just one of Shelly's experiences

Shelly's is just one of thousands of stories in the 323rd Bomb Group alone. How sad it would have been to lose such an extraordinary story like this to history! A BIG thanks goes out to Jeannette and Benjamin Dranoff for contacting me to ensure their friend's legacy and memories would be preserved.

American Air Museum in BritianWebsite



A year ago last Spring I told you about a new website that I had found called the Ameican Air Museun in Britian. It was loaded with tons of B-26 pictures both in black and white and also in color. As it turns out this website will also allow you to add information. Their purpose is to record the stories of the men and

women of the United States Army Air Force who served in the UK during WWII. You can upload your own pictures, stories and records. Here is another excellent way to ensure you're your Veterans stores and memories are not forgotten. The website address is: <http://www.americanairmuseum.com/>

Use of the site is free. However if you wish to upload stories and pictures you will need to regiser. But no worries, that is also free. It has a very easy to use search engine. Plus there is an educational/help page that will explain how to do all of this. You will need to create an entry for your Veteran and then also an individual entry for each picture you want to upload. Each entry gets a unique id number. The trick to the whole process is to besure to tag the pictures back to your Veteran.

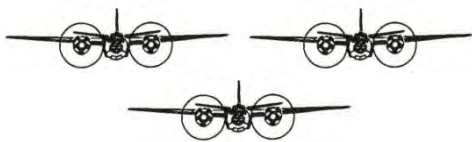
The 323rd BG and its four Squadrons are already listed on the site. Here is the link <http://www.americanairmuseum.com/unit/274>

You can do a people search on Wilson Wood, John Moench, or Walter Foster to get some kind of idea on what you might want to and to your own Veterans site. Sheldon Eichel's Miami Herald Story is to the left.

Sheldon Eichel's Miami Herald Story is to the right.

Until next Time...

Keep 'em Flying



Roy R. Bozych
49 E Lucas Dr.
Palos Hills, IL 60465-3100
708-870-6605
Historian@323bg.org
<http://www.323bg.org>

EICHEL

A crash landing, and a frantic escape from flames

By **NEIL REISNER**
Herald Staff Writer

It was an inauspicious beginning to Sheldon Eichel's career with the Air Transport Command, which ferried materiel from Europe to the soldiers fighting for the young Jewish state's existence.

The C-46 transport he co-piloted from the secret Israeli air base in Zatec, Czechoslovakia, crashed on approach to the Ekron airfield south of Tel Aviv. It was carrying a Vultee BT-13 Valiant, a single-engine trainer that was to be used as an observation plane.

The crash was just one of a number of setbacks the underground arms effort faced in the early days of the war.

It was late May 1948, barely two weeks after David Ben-Gurion proclaimed Israel's independence, when the third flight of C-46s left Zatec, code-named "Zebra," carrying crates of equipment and dismantled fighter planes in their packed cargo holds.

Machal volunteers constituted the entire crew. Eichel was co-pilot to pilot Norm Moonitz. Moe Rosenbaum, who had given navigation refreshers to the volunteers in Panama, navigated. Ed Styrak, a non-Jewish volunteer who had previously crewed Haganah refugee ships trying to run the British blockade, was radio operator.

Eichel, now 73 and living in Hollywood, never dreamed at the end of World War II that he would spend time fighting for Israel. A bomber pilot, he found himself in Cairo at the war's end. From there, he flew supplies to American bases throughout the Middle East. In Cairo, he came to know a Jewish flier who ended up recruiting American volunteers for the Haganah.

On returning to his native Brooklyn, Eichel was powerfully affected by news of the Holocaust.

He thought: "If ever a group of Jews gets together that has any guts, I'm going to fight with them." That's when the Haganah recruiters called.

Contacted by the flier he met in Cairo, Eichel signed on with LAPSA, the Panamanian airline front that brought planes from the United States to Czechoslovakia for deployment in Israel.

The C-46s flew at night and in complete radio silence, landing in Corsica to refuel, then taking to the air again. Approaching the coast, they homed in on a radio beacon activated at the landing field. It was a foggy night when Eichel's plane arrived. A second C-46 found a hole in the clouds and landed successfully.

"When we got there, the airport was socked in. We were circling," Eichel recalls. Arab soldiers were firing at the aircraft. "Do you know what it is like to be up in the clouds and to see tracer bullets coming at you?"

They spotted the runway briefly, but the clouds closed up again. Low on fuel, the crew attempted a landing based on a best guess of where the runway was. Then, with the altimeter reading 450 feet, the plane's wing caught the ground. It had hit a small hill jutting out of the landscape near the runway.

"We were on fire. I could smell the hair burning in my nose," Eichel says. "I remembered from my training to stop breathing."

Moe Rosenbaum was killed instantly, crushed when the cargo tore loose and rocketed down the fuselage toward his place in the navigator's seat. Eichel and Moonitz scrambled out of the plane, only to hear Styrak, whose leg was broken, cry for help. Suffering from burns, and burning their hands even more with the effort, Moonitz and Eichel hauled Styrak's 200-pound, 6-foot-4-inch frame through a window.

Rosenbaum, Eichel says, was the first American volunteer to lose his life on Israeli soil.

After several weeks in the hospital, Eichel resumed flying arms from Czechoslovakia. Later, he helped train Israeli pilots and flew in an airlift resupplying an Israeli force that was surrounded by the Egyptian army.



Pin



Patch

454th Squadron Order Form

Pins are 1 inch in diameter

Patches are 4 1/2 inches in diameter
and have an iron on backing

Prices include shipping

**Make Checks Payable
to
454th BSA**

Number of pins _____ x \$5 = \$ _____

Number of patches _____ x \$15 = \$ _____

Total \$ _____

Name _____

Street Address _____ **apt #** _____

City _____ **State** _____ **Zip Code** _____

Phone _____ **e-mail** _____

mail to: Roy Bozych
454th Squadron Historian
49 E Lucas Dr.
Palos Hills, IL 60465-3100

Phone: 708-870-6605

e-mail address historian@323bg.org