



The following is a BRIEF history of S/Sgt. Arthur L. Greenwood's role in World War II flying with the Eighth Air Force in England.

The 492nd Heavy Bomber Group was composed of four squadrons. The 856, 857, 858 and 859th. Our crew was assigned to the 858th. This, of course, was how it was arranged when my crew joined the group.

The former 492 Bomb Group, however, flew daylight raids over Germany along with other American bomb groups until their EXCELLENCE in tight formation flying singled them out to a challenge to the Luftwaffe.

Hermann Goering, displeased with the status quo, decided to concentrate on the total annihilation of this 492 Bomb Group. He sent most of his famous "Yellow-nosed" fighters up to attack the 492nd BG and almost destroyed them. The remainder of the group limped back to England.

The group commander (a colonel) assessing his situation went back to the United States and formed an equally "crack-flying" outfit. Upon his return to England, radio Germany stated: "Welcome back 492nd--we'll be waiting for you!"

Goering made good his threat again. The 492nd had no choice, but to assume a low profile and become a multiphased unit. The loss of planes and crews became too much for the Eighth Air Force to permit to continue.

The OSS (Office of Strategic Services--former CIA) saw an opportunity to use these men and planes in their undercover activities. The 492nd became a tool of the OSS. The planes were painted black; bomb racks removed with static lines in their place; and no more daylight missions.

Harrington Air Force Base in the midlands of England between Liecester and Northampton was one of three such bases used for military undercover missions. Whatever "drop-zones", targets or personnel rescues conducted, we were under the direction of the OSS.

Prior to coming to this base, I started at Fort Meade, Maryland; took basic training at Miami Beach, Florida, from the Essex House Hotel at 10th Collins Blvd; took gunnery training in Harlingen, Texas; then, to Hammer Field in Fresno, California; more training with a full crew at Tonopah, Nevada; back to California to Hamilton Field (near San Francisco) where we thought we would be heading for the South Pacific.

Instead, we were shipped across the United States by steam locomotive through Denver, CO, Chicago, IL, Cleveland, OH, Buffalo, NY and south to Camp Kilmer, NJ. No faster than 40 mph all the way! It seemed like eternity.

From Kilmer, we boarded the Ille de France French liner from WW-1 from the Brooklyn Navy Yard at New York City. After a day or so at sea, we did a 180 back toward New York City to avoid a submarine apparently stalking us as we were NOT in a convoy. This diversion only lengthened our crossing.

Bing Crosby with a USO troupe of entertainers kept our morale high, however, as they took the whole ship groups at a time the whole way over.



Five decks below the waterline were these poor paratroopers from the 82nd and 101st Airborne packed in like sardines. One torpedo and they wouldn't have a chance of survival. I had the good fortune of being on the noncom's deck -- just below the officer's deck -- topside.

We came in to Glasgow, Scotland harbor from which we traveled by train down the east coast to Newcastle, England, where we spent a few days.

Then, for some reason, we stopped at an air base where our pilot and co-pilot had some stick-time on a B-17. Our training had been entirely on B-24's. A little puzzling at the time, but a good idea in hindsight.

Shortly afterward, we were flown by B-17 to Belfast, Ireland, for over-seas training prior to assignment to a permanent air base. Here, they separated the officers and enlisted crew members and sent them to different locations. After training, we boarded a ferry and crossed the Irish sea to Liverpool, England, where we, again, hauled by truck to a destination in the middle of the night which was to be our permanent base.

The next morning, we curiously looked over our new surroundings. Now that it was daylight. We were amazed to find B-24's painted black on the flightline. And in the bombbays contained static lines, straps and canisters instead of bomb shackles.

Not having an immediate assignment, we trained some more night flying by mock-bombing London which was a scary experience. Especially, if the anti-aircraft gunners (mostly women) got trigger-happy. Their radar equipped lights didn't have to search the sky for enemy aircraft, the radar search-light was just turned on and it was on you. You were looking down a blue shaft of light while, in turn, several other search lights coned in on you until you could read a newspaper in the plane. After you were identified, all the search lights would turn off. Amazing experience!

While not training, we were issued passes to go to London or anywhere in the British Isles as long as we weren't AWOL. We had some close calls, but we managed to get back in time. In Ireland, we had the opportunity to meet with the locals and see the countryside also.

While all this was going on, we noticed a lot of activity of British planes and personnel visiting us. Mosquito bombers, Spitfires and ranking British officers. Our curiosity was satisfied one day when we had a briefing at operations for all air crews.

Along with our usual American squadron commanders, we had a host of RAF top-brass along with them. When we learned what our mission was to be, you could have heard a pin drop! We were to fly diversion in conjunction with the Royal Air Force.

While we were preparing to initiate this plan, we bombed pill boxes containing German Wehrmacht in France that the advancing Allied Forces had passed up; hauled gasoline to General Patton's tanks in Lille and St. Quentin, France; dropped French Maquis underground personnel, supplies and French invasion force's to the Allied Forces. And, eventually, did the same thing for Denmark and Norway.



When we flew diversion for the Royal Air Force, the 492nd Bomb Group would precede on a course toward a designated target, throwing aluminum foil (strips) to attract German radar. Later on, the main RAF Bomb Groups would follow in our path, but at a specific time divert to their INTENDED target. For example: Cologne, Dusseldorf, etc.

By the time the Luftwaffe discovered the ruse, the RAF had dropped their bombs and were heading home without losing a plane. This worked only for two or three raids, but was effective.

British bombers were made up of Lancasters and Halifaxes. The Lancaster carrying the 10-ton "Blockbuster". This bomb was so large that the planes couldn't close their bombbay doors. It was quite a treat to witness them following us over the white cliffs of Dover in the setting sun.

When we started supplying the Danish and Norwegian underground with their needs, we had to be fully armed as we had no fighter escort. Our black colored planes were almost undetectable in the night skies, but this didn't make us invisible.

On one flight to Denmark, we got the correct code signal from the Danes in the drop zone, but we noticed an exchange of gunfire on the ground and decided not to drop. Instead, we headed back to England. We crossed a railroad track while just a few hundred feet off the ground and we were fired upon by German soldiers riding on a railroad flatcar. Being taken by surprise, my gunsight light was not on. However, I was able train my guns on the attackers and getting enough hits through watching the tracers and armor-piercing incendiaries exploding on contact. Just like spraying with a water hose!

On a flight over Denmark while flying too low for a Danish farmer, he shot at us with a shotgun. You heard this "whomp" and the B-B shot hitting our fuselage. Ha!

We didn't get off scott-free, as the German ambush on the railroad flatcar hit our no. 1 engine and we had to feather it. Flying across the channel on three engines with a full load gave us some thought as to what our landing back at the base held in store. Our pilot having experienced one other crash back in Tonopah, Nevada, gave him the confidence through experience he needed and we landed safely.

In Tonopah, Nevada, while flying takeoffs and landings as part of our training, we had a landing gear collapse on the tarmac. Thank God, we were taxiing at the time!

We had made several successful air drops to Norway before we were hit by a German nightfighter (Messerschmidt 110). We had taken off from Harrington the evening of April 19, 1945, and just approached the coast of Norway when we were attacked by the nightfighter.

The pilot flew an evasive tactic after being hit, but we had been crippled with #1 engine on fire and the ground batteries zeroing in on us for the kill.



Our pilot attempted to gain altitude after the encounter. Hoping to get high enough to bail out. At first, we thought about ditching in the sea, but we were too badly damaged for that. Aside from #1 engine being on fire; #2 was feathered; #3 was losing fuel profusely, and #4 was the only reliable engine that we had.

To add insult to injury, the intercom system wasn't working. I was fortunate enough to hear the co-pilot say to go on (wireless) command. Other members of the crew did not hear this, so I had to keep the ones informed of what the pilot planned to do. Which was to bail out! I got a very worried expression from the two waist gunners, but they prepared themselves.

As I stood with my parachute in place, straddling the open hatch, waiting for the jump signal; ground antiaircraft fire opened up and I just put my feet together and dropped. Needless to say, I couldn't wait for a signal.

I came down in a meadow with a small stream running through it. Naturally, I hit my left leg -- full impact -- on the bank of this stream. Breaking my leg. Not knowing how badly, I started yelling for help.

This is about 2 a.m. in the morning. Looking over my right shoulder, I noticed a group of people silhouetted against the moonlit sky on the other side of a barbed wire fence. (about 100' away) They were studying me and unsure as to their next move.

I broke the silence by saying; "help! Amerikanske!"

I heard a dress rip as they (women) gathered around me like a long-lost friend just found. I said; "Leg" followed by signing with my hands indicating "broken". One of the girls placed her hand on my arm and said; "doctor".

Must have been about half-an-hour when I heard male voices approaching. They formed a circle around me and the one who appeared to be the leader said; "Well, youngman, you seem to be in a pretty bad fix."

"Oh, you speak English", I said. "What part of Sweden am I in?"

"You are in the better part of Norway," he said.

"Oh, my God! As long as I get picked up by the military, that'll be fine. Civilian police or Gestapo will be tragic!", I said.

All of the men were well-armed and serious about their mission. The women tried to converse with me, but little was understood along with a few giggles.

They put a splint on my leg and loaded me on to a door that they brought with them. (Didn't have time for a stretcher?) They carried me through the town of Stavern--down alleys, back streets and whispered conversations. Smiles came over their faces when I inquired; "Don't you have a truck?"

At this little country hospital outside of Stavern, Dr. Welding xrayed my leg and was preparing to set and put a cast on my leg. His nurse approached



him while in the middle of a preparation and said; "Telefon." Dr. Welding left; but when he returned he said; "That was the Wehrmacht and they want me to put a travelling cast on your leg. However, you are free to leave if you so desire. We won't stop you."

Realizing the gravity of the situation, I told the doctor to do just as they wish as they are the German Military and they must abide by the rules of the Geneva Treaty. He thanked me and said; "Thank you! I have a wife and three children."

He apologized that one member of the underground was a "Quisling" informant and therefore, the problem.

Shortly after that, headlights flashed in the window behind me along with squealing brakes and four doors slamming. I heard the clomp-clomp of military boots coming in and fully-armed German soldiers with fixed bayonets (5 all together) and a no nonsense attitude.

For the rest of the morning, the officer in charge assigned two of his men to guard me. Being a little thirsty, I decided to use what little German I knew by asking; "Ich mersta vasser." After they complied, their attitude seemed to change and even smiled.

Hospital personnel and patients were peering into my room to see the "Amerikanske fluver". There were faces everywhere. I found it amusing, but of a serious nature.

I was pushed into another room where I was served breakfast. Not much, but filling.

After they loaded me into the vehicle that was to transport me to my next, stop, I was amazed at how many people turned out for my departure. They peered from every window and lined both sides of the driveway. A nurse, with tears in her eyes, placed a cloth napkin (tied at the top) in my lap and squeezed my arm as if to say goodbye. In the napkin was a Swedish tea ring with cookies in the middle. What a memorable gesture!

Larvik was our next stop. She has a sister city in the north: Narvik. Larvik, a coastal city on a fjorde looked like a future vacation spot after the war.

They took me to large house, probably the home of the last mayor, which overlooked the fjorde, high on a bluff. I was placed on the second floor in a ward-like large room with about twelve German convalescent patients with all types of wounds and maladies.

My position in the room was the first bed on the left as you enter the room with the bathroom across the hall. Handy! Then, I began to think whether my roommates had any ill-feelings toward Americans. I might be awakened by someone's hands around my neck. However, the guy in the bunk next to me was a Lithuanian Christian who befriended me at the outset. He established that fact by showing me a drawing of Christ with a crown of thorns.

Each time I would struggle to go to the bathroom, he would put my arm around his neck, steady me there and when finished, see that I got back.



Whenever the medical staff would appear, they were very strict about military courtesy. "Achtung schtillastance!" And the patients, regardless of their conditons, sprang to a quivering brace at attention. When they (the staff) noticed that I was still lying in bed upon their entry, an officer said; "Vas iss los?" He was promptly informed by a staff member that I was American. At this, his only statement was; "Oh, ja!" And they continued with their rounds.

An SS officer interrogated me with the promise of cigarettes, toiletries, and contact with a Red Cross near by if I would fill out a customary form which asked who my outfit was; the commanding officer; where our base was; my home address; etc. I put my name, rank and serial number on it and handed it back to him.

He took one look at it--balled it up and threw it in the trash can. "I see that you don't want any help!" he said. Never saw him again. He sure looked sharp though in black with a skull and crossbones on his tunic.

That evening, I got the feeling of what it is like to be in the presense of your enemy and lie helplessly in bed and listen to the sound of enemy guns on the ground blasting away at our planes overhead. A little unnerving.

A cute German nurse, while taking my pulse said; "Comrade" gesturing toward the next room. Hungh, I thought. Probably a Russian. Then she said; "Deveen". Hey! Could she mean Devine? Our navigator? Then I was anxious as to when we could get together. It wasn't to be at that point in time, however.

There were two limos parked outside this mansion house in Larvik. I was placed in the lead car and while waiting, I looked out the back window to see Jack Devine being put in the car following me.

When Jack saw me, he lit up like a kid at Christmas. He waved and smiled and we were off to Oslo. I didn't know this until we arrived.

Jack Devine and I were held prisoners in a make-shift prison room in a newly constructed high school that had been converted into a German hospital. We were guarded by German patients from all branches of the German Reich: Wehrmacht, Luftwaffe, Griegsmarine -- our interpreter, Hans Kattenbusch, was on a submarine and lost a portion of his leg in an accident -- Waffen SS. And our cell was scrubbed up by Russian prisoners.

The door to our cell was of thick oak and about eyelevel was a hole (about 2"-dia.) for whomever was guarding us to look in on us at their will. There was a piece of glass inside the hole to prevent too much access.

Most of the guards, regardless of military branch, would somehow take it upon themselves to come into our cell -- give us a tall story in broken English-- and end up with; "Do you have Amerikanske cigaretten? The poor guys must have really been addicted!

A German Luftwaffe major who tried to get additional information from us (with little success) made a grand entrance to our cell in a full-length leather coat, lined with mink pelts. He had 70 missions over Britain.

He was very friendly and asked if we needed anything. He was surprised when we told him that we needed toiletries. I guess he figured that we should



be better prepared if we should be shot down. Ha! Before he left, he gave us some funds in Norwegian Krona to get us what we needed. But not without an official receipt. Very efficient! I kept the receipt for a souvenir.

Anyway, the German major also gave us a package of "Oversholtz" German cigarettes. When I offered them to the guards, I was given a polite; "Nix" followed by a half-smile as if I had committed an unpardonable sin. Ha!

After Germany agreed to surrender, Jack and I were removed from our cell and placed in a semi-private room with all the amenities of hospital routine -- including a radio.

Allied planes were now landing and taking off at the Oslo airport which meant that there would be an opportunity for us to be flown back to England. Devine, being that he could be transported was flown back to England. I, with having a contraption attached to my leg (weights) had to stay there until a local hospital could take on the responsibility.

Captain Aarness from SHAEF Mission to Norway took the necessary action to do JUST THAT by aggressively shaking up the hospital staff --he spoke German, Norwegian and several other languages -- and took me to Riks Hospitalet in Oslo. I was in Kirurgs B on the second floor in a semi-private room shared with a Norwegian sailor, Edvin Jensen.

Edvin Jensen had been celebrating the end of the war in London, England, and broke his jaw on a lamp post while disembarking from a bus. He had to converse through clenched teeth and fed through a straw. We managed, however.

On may 17th (Norway's Independence Day) I was taken in a rented touring car in their parade celebration with an American flag on one side of the car and a Norwegian flag on the other. I was accompanied, however, by the driver, Peter A. Johannesen, Haakon Simmensen, Edvin Jensen and another patient.

Each time we would pass a crowd, Simmensen would point to me say; "Amerikanske flyver!" I was BOTH embarrassed and proud.

When King Haakon returned to Norway, my friends wanted me to go with them to a rally at their city hall. It was raining at the time and I feared that my cast wouldn't survive. On hindsight, that begging off, no matter how justified, didn't sit too well with my friends. Their displeasure at my refusal showed in they're faces and I'll never forget it. It took a while for them to forgive their American friend -- However, they did.

When the people of Stavern, Norway, heard that I was at Riks Hospital in Oslo, they sent this woman with a rhubarb pie with a Norwegian and an American flag on top (Each about 2x3"). I was overwhelmed by the gesture. My friend, Johannesen, obliged by taking a picture of the two of us.

The card that came with the pie was written in English saying that they wished that they could have tended to my wound there, and glad to hear that I was doing so well and signed "Wenche".

I was out on the deck from my room, sunning myself with my friends, when I heard polite laughter as this Scottish Major McDonald approached me. The



reason that they were laughing was because he was wearing a kilt. A beautiful scotch-plaid (red). Normally, this would be ceremonial dress, but for some reason, he thought it appropriate.

He brought a tin of full of candy (2x12x8"). I was the envy of the whole deck! Of course, I shared some with my friends.

Captain Aarness stopped by one time and Johannessen got his picture too.

Eventually, the American field hospital just outside Oslo took me from Riks Hospital and temporarily took care of me until they put me aboard the Norwegian ship Bergen's Fjorde setting sail for Glasgow, Scotland.

Luckily, while settling in my berth below deck along with about thirty Scottish medics, through a door on the bulkhead came an entourage of top brass -- King Haakon escorted by the Captain of the ship and a group of security people...I'm sure.

After a short conversation with the Captain, the King extended his hand to me and said; " I hope you will have a pleasant trip back to your people but do come back and visit us sometime when we can be more hospitable. Good bye!" What an unexpected treat!

Oslo harbor, aside from just being a good harbor, has many small islands that you have to cruise around and one more picturesque than the other. The Captain realizing this sent his binoculars down to me so that I could view all this splendor as we passed.

It appeared that everybody had a sailboat! Everywhere I looked, there was another boat! Fantastic!

When we arrived in Glasgow harbor, it was like deja vu. This is where I came in on the Ille de France.

After the medics, crew and passengers left for shore, I was startled to the reality that I was alone. Did they forget me? Then I heard voices coming toward me. Not only voices; but recognized AMERICAN voices.

"Where's the wounded?" they asked. I held up my hand. "You're the only one?" "Cripes, we brought out a barge with ambulances waiting on the shore!" They put me on a litter and carried out on the barge. The barge operator did not see the humor in this.

Being the ONLY patient in the ambulance, I decided to climb up front with the driver as she was an attractive Scottish lass. We stopped a couple of times so she could get her tea. We had a good conversation all the way to Edinburgh.

This was a very large complex with wounded from North Africa, Italy, France, Germany, et al. When I told them that I was from Norway, they asked; "Norway? What were you doing up there?" Apparently, I was the only patient that they had from Norway. Each time a different hospital would interrogate me from here on, would have to adjust to the fact that I really came from Norway.

While there at Edinburgh, I had the good fortune to catch the Scottish



Black Watch marching band: Bagpipes, kilts, leopard skins -- all of the regalia!

We were also entertained by smaller groups -- organized under the banner of the USO -- they entertained us right in the wards. And those who could walk, there were theatres and dance halls.

The International Red Cross would supply you with whatever arts and crafts material that you needed to do anything you would like.

A full-blooded American Indian liked to make rugs. He had two huge piles of multi-colored woven rugs. I asked him; "Hey, chief! Are you going to line your teepee back home with all those rugs?"

He said; "Go to hell! You chicken shit Staff Sergeant!" Ha!

Eventually, I was taken to Prestwick, Scotland, where I boarded a C-54 Skymaster to Iceland (Reykjavik); to Newfoundland; and landed at Mitchell Field, New York.

From Mitchell Field we were taken into New York City to the Le Cafe Arnold restaurant for anything on the menu; to a Broadway show "Married Alive" ; and to the Waldorf Astoria to finish the evening.

We were provided an escort for the evening at the Waldorf. A volunteer secretary from New Jersey was my girl for the evening. This event was the norm and not the exception. The Masonic Order of NYC sponsored the events.

My flight to Washington, DC was cancelled again due to weather conditions, but I was rescued by the American Legion and taken to huge party in West Hampstead, NY. I was entertained by a group of young ladies, but ended up with the American Legion Commander's daughter, Ruth Ultenberg. Her brother, who played the accordian, serenaded us with Laura and other popular songs of that time. I promised to return after discharge, but we know how that goes.

The weather finally cleared and I was admitted to Walter Reed Hospital in Washington, D.C. Dad and Mother came to see me from Joppa, Md. The last time that they saw me, was when I left to go into the Army Air Force.

Patients were, more or less, confined to your ward or room at Walter Reed. I was told, in order to get more freedom, request a transfer to Forest Glen. Aside from having more privileges, it was located in the Maryland countryside (Outside Silver Spring, Md.) with buildings built to reflect architecture of the world ie: Swiss chalet, Chinese pagoda, mountain lodge, etc. There was a small stream with a swinging bridge and a wonderful chance to commute with nature. It was formerly a girl's school, I was told.

From there, I got passes to go home or any place within reason. Dinner at the McLean mansion where we were shown the Hope Diamond; Evening at the White House with Margaret Truman as hostess; A speach by Eleanor Roosevelt at the Forest Glen recital hall; and a command performance for Harry Truman at a D.C. theatre, starring Spencer Tracy in "The Rugged Path". These were only the events that I attended, there were more too numerous to mention.

November 20, 1945, I was issued a Certified Disability Discharge (CDD).