

WAITING TO BE DELIVERED

Written by Erling Selvesen, a NORSO "Joe".

"The article in the June 2002 - 88th Issue of the Carpetbagger newsletter titled 'Now They Know About Their Uncle Charlie', was especially interesting to me because the B-24 that crashed in the Orkney Islands on the 24th of March 1945 was the one that had attempted to drop 6 NORSO men north of Trondheim, Norway.

Over 30 men from the NORSO Group, myself included, were still waiting at the Dalnaglar Castle in Perth, Scotland for our turn to be sent to Norway, so we were able to attend the funeral when the bodies were returned from the Orkney Islands. I heard that one of the crew had survived the crash and the article confirmed it. It gave his name as Lt. Pete Pulrang. We were told at the time that the B-24 had run out of fuel. It had undoubtedly spent too much time looking for the drop zone.

As a result of that B-24 crash and the one that hit the Plukatjernfjell, a mountain in the Snares area north of Trondheim, Norway, that further drops were suspended and an alternate method was being considered.

One day not too long after, a group of men arrived from London. They had us try on civilian jackets and they measured us for pants. Passport pictures were taken and we were required to supply a name and a city in Norway that we could remember to be used on the passport. We found out afterwards that we were to have been flown as civilians to Stockholm, Sweden, and transported to a safe house where we could change into military clothes and cross over into Norway to join the others. This never came about because on 8 May 1945 the Germans surrendered in Norway and the 30 of us were put on three B-24s and flown to Norway.



REUNION FRIENDS
L-R: Erling Selvesen, Charles Deano and Col. Robert Fish.
photo-Pete Patrenko



REUNION FRIENDS
L-R: Lloyd Pittman and Bill Orban
photo-Bill Orban

The B-24 I was on was late in leaving because we waited for Lt. Col. Seabo, a Norwegian officer who was Section Chief, NORSO. He was being driven up from London. Before we reached the coast of Bergen, Norway, 2 engines had to be shut down and we jettisoned much of our supplies to maintain altitude. When I informed the pilot, Lt. Lloyd Pittman, that a third engine was throwing smoke (one of the crew had given me an intercom mike to put on) he said that we could jump but

we were over water. He then told me that they had found an abandoned German fighter field on the island of Herdla, not far from Bergen and he headed right for it and made a great landing. Before landing he told me to have the men move to the tail of the B-24 as soon as the plane touched down in order to put weight on the tail skid. The landing field was in bad shape and the tail skid broke off and we went flying around in the back of the plane. When the B-24 came to a halt and I came to, the third engine had seized and one wing was sticking out over the bulkhead. The next day a Canadian minesweeper arrived and took us to Bergen where we all spent a few days celebrating the end of the war in Norway. Lt. Lloyd Pittman and his crew then went back to London. The NORSO men went with the minesweeper to Trondheim to join the rest of the group.

When the Crown Prince Olav arrived in Trondheim, the NORSO Group and the British Marines were his Honor Guard. Later we joined the parade in his honor.

At the Three Swans Hotel in Market Harborough, England, during the '95 NORSO reunion, that Alida, my wife, overheard Bill Orban say that he had located Lloyd Pittman, the B-24 pilot who crash landed on the island of Herdla? She told Bill that my husband was on that plane. Lloyd was attending the reunion with his brother and that was how I got to meet Lloyd after 50 years."



CARPETBAGGER SUMMARY 1st Lt. EDGAR J. BETHART (continued from page 7)

cally, not only declined, but iterated strongly, that we as American officers in uniform would not only refuse to participate in any such execution, but would not allow it to occur in our presence. The celebration continued without further incident. Interestingly, our plane load of downed airmen was rapelle with individuals who had only one, two or three stations.

I finally departed the European Theater of Operations in late December 1944. I was sent to a Replacement Depot in England together with several hundred other crew members also awaiting home by ship.

Because Havana, Cuba was my home of record when I entered the Army Air Corps, I was singled out to return to the United States by plane and got to avoid a dreared sea trip home."



NORSO GROUP
Operation Christopher

Erling Selvesen, 3rd from left, and part of the group ready to board the B-24, Maurice Jacobson, pilot in the 856th BS

Harrington photo-
Carl Barrtram

