

Hell from Heaven Men

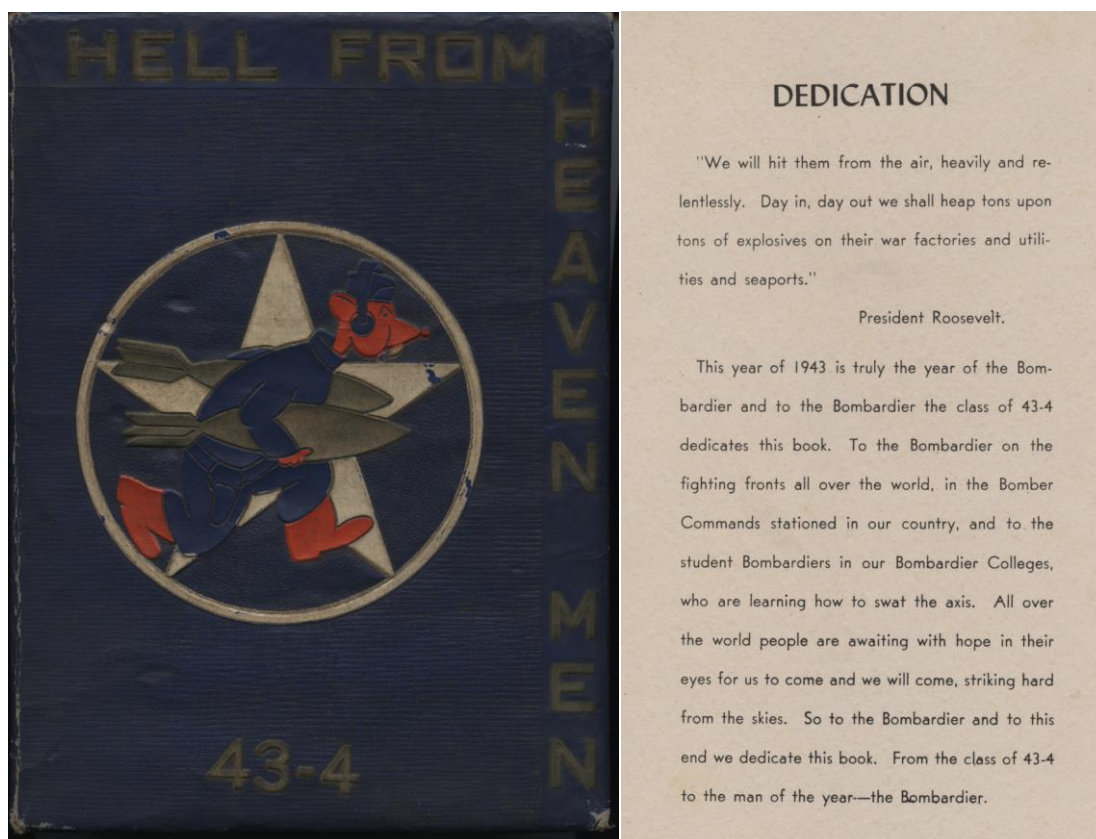
(A mystery solved perhaps?)

Malcolm 'Ozzie' Osborn

Amongst his many research talents, Russ Abbey has a penchant for finding things 398th on both eBay and Footnote. Russ always emails both me and Peter Brooke with his latest finds on eBay, and then I always feel mixed emotions as I use the link to see what is up for grabs this time. But recently Russ struck lucky with a non-398th find, a book entitled 'Hell from Heaven Men', Bombardiers training at the 34th Training Wing, Class 4 of 1943.

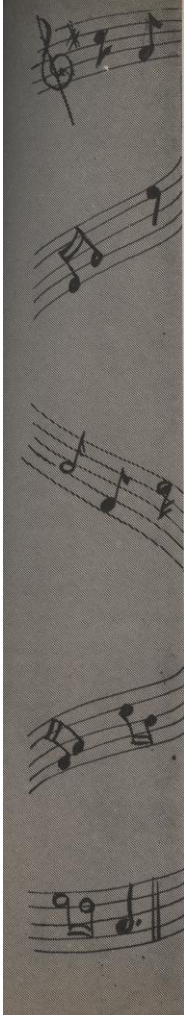
Back in the late 1970s I had come across a Squadron narrative in Col. Earl J Berryhill's material he loaned to me. One line read 'Today, the Hell from Heaven Group bombed Berlin again'. It was one of those 'Eureka' moments, as I had previously wondered what the 398th's Group insignia actually stood for, now I felt I knew. Thus, when I designed the memorial in 1982, I put the legend 'Hell from Heaven' across its top.

Now this eBay find helped explain where the 'Hell from Heaven' almost certainly came from. Our good friend Peter Brooke immediately purchased the book and has kindly loaned it to me for careful scanning of some of the pages. It is a rare find and thanks to Peter and Russ, here are some of its contents;



BOMBARDIER'S OATH

In the presence of Almighty God, I do solemnly swear and affirm that I will accept the sacred trust placed in me by my Commander-in-chief, the President of the United States of America, by whose direction I have been chosen for Bombardier training. I pledge myself to live and act according to the Code of Honor of the Bombardier of the Army Air Forces. I solemnly swear that I will keep inviolate the secrecy of any and all confidential information revealed to me, and in the full knowledge that I am a guardian of one of my country's most priceless military assets, do further swear to protect the secrecy of the American Bombsight, if need be, with life itself. So help me God.



Bombardiers' Song

Said the Bombardier to the Pilot,
"Give us a little ride,"
The Pilot said to the Navigator,
"Won't you slide inside?"
The Navigator he looked around and said to the engineer,
"Your hands are dirty, your pants are dirty,
You're dirty behind the ear,"
Said the Bombardier to the gunner,
"How are we fixed for lead?"
The Pilot said to the Radioman
"How's the weather ahead?"
The weather's fine for flying,
The fog has gone to bed,
There's such good visibility,
You can see victory ahead,
Let's fill the air with bombers,
Let's fill the clouds with men,
And we will see a world that's free
When we fly home again.

Said the Bombardier to the Pilot,
"Give us the pretty crate,
And five degrees to the right will make it,
Just as sure as fate."
The ship belonged to the Bombardier
Who opened his little bay,
He saw the target, the lovely target, and suddenly
"Bombs away,"
Said the Bombardier to the Pilot,
"Call it a day" and then,
The Pilot said the the Radioman,
"Say we've done it again."

The weather's fine for flying,
The fog has gone to bed,
There's such good visibility,
You can see victory ahead,
Let's fill the air with bombers,
Let's fill the clouds with men,
And we will see a world that's free
When we fly home again.

