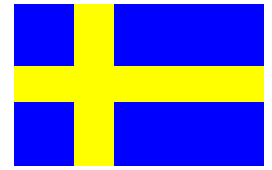


Volume 1, Issue 2

SWEDEN AFTER THE FLAK



Spring 1999

A MISSION TO POLITZ

“On May 29, 1944, one thousand bombers of the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Bomber Divisions were dispatched for visual attacks on aircraft plants and oil installations. Of the eight hundred and eighty-eight bombers which managed to drop their loads on the targets, thirty-four were reported missing after the raid. Six B-24's and two B-17's landed in Sweden.”

One of the six Liberators that made it to Sweden was a B-24H (42-95011) from the 492nd Bomb Group. The plane was hit by flak while on a mission over Politz, Poland. With the fuel tanks leaking and their flight engineer hit in the ankles, they decided to try to make it to Sweden. Their map showed only the southern part of Sweden, with a small airfield in the eastern region. On approach, the crew saw that it was a very small airfield and it had only one landing strip, with a lot of wooden areas surrounding it. Their first thoughts were that the strip was too short. They didn't think there was a chance to stop the plane before they reached the end of the strip.

The nose gunner, Sgt. Warren G. Branch and the ball turret gunner, Sgt. Francis Baker, came up with an idea to slow the plane down. They wanted to use their chest pack chutes. The pilot, 2nd Lt. Gaulke, okayed their idea.

They grabbed their parachutes and tied them to the waist guns' mounting brackets on both sides of the plane. On touch down, they released the chutes. Sgt Baker's chute pulled his gun out of the waist opening, along with his low cut shoes that had been tied to the gun. The plane stopped just before the end of the runway. There was indeed only about 100 feet between the end of the runway and the fence at the end. A large group of town's people had gathered to see this large plane come in for a landing. A jeep, pulling a small water tank on a trailer, arrived to extinguish any fires. The crew

was not sure how effective this would have been had the plane caught fire.

The crewmembers exited the plane and Baker ran down the runway to retrieve his shoes (he was wearing his flight boots) from the waist gun. This took the Swedish guards by surprise. They thought he was trying to escape, but shortly learned that he only wanted to get his shoes.

The Swedish military personnel made the pilot wait before taxiing to the grass so they could get the injured man (S/Sgt. Andrew Fry) off the plane. The crew was afraid that the plane was going to catch on fire (due to the leaking gas) while they were waiting to get S/Sgt. Fry off the plane. S/Sgt. Fry's ankle tendons were injured by flak. He was taken to the hospital in Kristianstad, just a few minutes to the north. He was later moved to the hospital in Malmö. (He was sent to Rattvik for internment after his release from the hospital in July.)

About 30 minutes after their plane landed, the crewmembers were sitting along the fence eating the cheese and crackers that had been brought to them. They looked up and saw another Liberator circling. It too, came in for landing, but did not use any chutes to slow the plane. The only way to avoid hitting the fence, and the crowd of people, was to loop the plane at the end of the runway. This plane was #42-110065 from the 445th BG, 703rd SQ, piloted by 1Lt. Edwin Peterson.

Ed Black, Flight Engineer on the

Peterson crew, remembers “It was a short runway. The sun caused rising air currents. The plane was still in the air at 87 mph. We finally got it down at the middle of the runway. The plane thought it was a glider! We went off the runway at 60. There was not much room at the end of the runway and there were many people around the fence, so the pilot ground looped it. The inside wheel made a 50 ft. circle and was in the dirt to the bottom of the rim. The outside wheel was in to the top of the rim.”

The crew of 42-95011 would later learn that their oil tank had also been hit. Even if they had enough gas to make it further, the engines would have seized due to lack of oil.

They spent the night on straw mattresses, in a barracks style house at the airfield. There was also a Farmhouse near the field that was used as the airfield's headquarters. The next day, they were taken from Rinkaby to the train to go to Loka Brunn

Warren and the other crewmembers were interned in Sweden until the 21st of October, 1944. They returned to the states, from England, on November 24th, 1944.

Introduction taken from [Making for Sweden Part 2](#) by Bo Widfeldt and Rolph Wegmann. (with permission)

Text edited by Karen Branch Cline from contributions received from Warren Branch, Andy Fry, Vernie Honberger, Ed Black, Hubert Stevens, Floyd Walker and Ingemar Melin.



B-24 H 42-95011
Drawing by Ingemar Melin
Trelleborg, Sweden



My Greatest Achievement

By Dean Spurgeon

8th AF, 44th BG, 68th Sq



On May 29th, 1944, we took off in our B-24 (we named Shack Happy) from Norwich, England heading for our mission of bombing the Politz, Poland oil fields. Part of the mission was flying over Berlin on our way so that Hitler would see the American Bombers and have to alert the Germans to a major war against them. This was only a week before D Day.

We continued on to our target and it was very effective as we saw the fire and smoke rising up to our level as we approached the Baltic Sea. We then headed west and were attacked by many Faulk Wolfs and Messshersmitts. Our pilot, Lt. Frank Leon Foy, (from NC) was seriously wounded from their gunfire. We (the crewmembers) got him bandaged up as he was severely bleeding from his head. We then got him back in the pilot's seat so that he would have his heating suit plugged in and his oxygen mask on! Fortunately for us, he came to, and took over control of our plane and safely landed us at Säve, in Gothenburg, Sweden.

As the "Flight Engineer", I stood behind him calling out our air speed and altitude. He used the full length of the short runway and we spun to a stop as our wing scraped a building. His ability was

proven to be most outstanding because we had one of four engines knocked out during the attack.

After a short stay in Gothenburg, we were sent to Loka Brunn for Internment. The facilities were fine, but way out in the "boondocks" for us Americans. I was lucky because of being the GoalKeeper on the soccer team that was started so the Americans could get involved playing against a lot of the nearby communities. I got to know some of the local Loka Brunn residents very well, and certainly



enjoyed visiting with them and "dating" me! Not only was the taste bad, but Vermouth had to be sent to Sweden from S. American (because of the war), so it was a very expensive wine. So my favorite story of my World War II experiences is "Count Folke Bernadotte, the first President of the United Nations, taught me how to make a Martini!"

Then I was selected to be a Sergeant of the Guard at the American Legation in Stockholm.

After a short time as a Guard, I was assigned to deliver the American Ambassador's "secret mail" to Count Folke Ber-

nadotte. This was a great experience, in that the Ambassador would seal the envelope with wax, then put the imprint of his ring on the wax, and then hand me the envelope to deliver directly to Count Bernadotte. My delivery had to be direct with no one else involved. I would get on my bicycle at the legation, ride to the Ambassador's office or home and hand him the envelope. Usually he would open the envelope while I was there in case he wanted to respond right away.

My greatest achievement from this experience was when Bernadotte invited me to attend an event he had at his home for Internees from several countries. He asked me to help mix and serve the drinks. When I served him the first Vodka Martini from the tray I had fixed, he sipped it, then said, "Dean, come with me".

He took me back downstairs. I had reversed the 3 Vodka to 1 Vermouth recipe he had given me! Not only was the taste bad, but Vermouth had to be sent to Sweden from S. American (because of the war), so it was a very expensive wine. So my favorite story of my World War II experiences is "Count Folke Bernadotte, the first President of the United Nations, taught me how to make a Martini!"

I was finally liberated and sent home. I remember being on the train as we approached Chicago and seeing all the papers and things being tossed out the windows. Then we found out why. The Japanese had surrendered!! World War II had ended!!



B-24 J # 42-73500 was escorted to Säve by Swedish J 22 fighters



Shave & a Hair cut?



Finnhyattan



Road North out of Loka Brunn



Crew of 42-95011

Top Row: Lt. Robert L. Keehn, Lt. Charles R. Easton, Lt. Frederick D. Gaulke, Sgt. Andrew Fry,
Sgt. George G. Worthington, Sgt. Leon J. Sawyer,
Bottom Row: Sgt. Warren G. Branch, Jr. , Lt. John G. Murdock, S/Sgt. Vernie O. Honberger,
Sgt. Francis X. Baker

Composite photo was created by Sgt. Branch while interned at Loka Brunn



Pay line



The Bath House at Loka Brunn was built in 1889. This building was torn down in the winter of 1955-56 and a new one built. It was here that you could receive the works, which included a mud bath when Loka was an operating spa. You can still get the "works" in the "new" bath house today.

One final
Party
Sept. 1944

Recognize
anyone?





WAR BABY

By Arne Svensson

English translation by Christian & Marianne Bolgen



For more than a year B-17 Flying Fortress and B-24 Liberators from USA's 8th Air Force, based in England, had been doing daylight bombing of enemy targets in Germany and France and among others even in Norway.

On Thursday, November 18, 1943, it was again time for a big raid, this time on a repair depot for aircraft at Kjeller outside Oslo.

Two days earlier Liberators had tried it, but had been forced to return since clouds covered the target. Now, however, the view was perfect and the attack took place from an altitude of 1200 feet and with very good result. On the way home the large group of almost 100 planes had barely seen the coast disappear behind them when the Luftwaffe appeared in the form of a division of ME-109 and some JU-88. During the ensuing air battle, six Liberators were shot down and three others were so damaged that they did not dare try the long return over water, but turned their noses towards neutral Sweden. Some of the returning planes dropped their remaining bombs in the ocean about 25 minutes west of Koster. The Swedish trawler "Bris" was almost hit by one of the bombs, which fell only about a hundred meters away.

One of the three planes that aimed for Sweden later landed in Trollhättan. However, the crew had time to set fire to the plane before the Swedish military reached them.

The other two planes succeeded, almost undisturbed, in getting as far inland as Örebro. Only one of them was shot at by anti-aircraft as it passed over Karlstad. I can tell more about the Örebro planes.

I was, at that time, an aviation-interested schoolboy of 15. I will try to relate the event, partly as I remember it myself, partly from hearsay and from what I have learned 30 years later, with the help of the authorities and others who have researched during the last year.

It was around 12 o'clock and I was home for lunch from school when I heard an unusual and mighty engine sound. I ran to the window to look and high up in the clear blue sky, I saw (very excitedly) a four-engine plane with long, narrow wings. A Liberator. The rest of my lunch break was spent watching the plane, which circled over the town, but unfortunately, school called with more lessons. Later, the rumor reached us that two bombers had landed on the airfield. After the last lessons were over, I rushed, on my bike, out to see the exciting planes, but the military had had time to set up barriers. From the far distance one could only see the planes' large outlines in the evening dusk. But then I met two friends who worked as errand boys and who had been here from the beginning and they could tell!

After having circled a long time over the city and also having circled

over Lake Hjälmaren, just east of Örebro, they dropped some items, among them, an ammunition belt at the edge of the water.

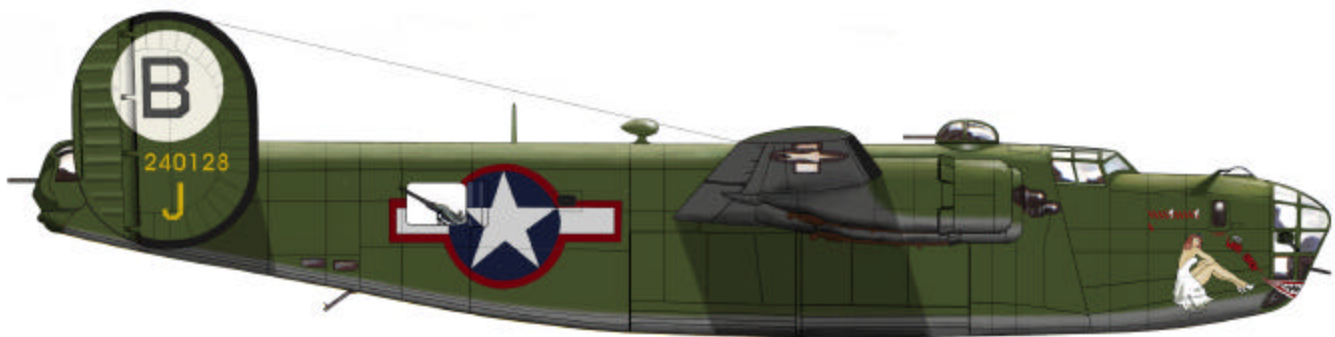
The first Liberator, a B-24H - 42-7502 from the 392nd Bomb Group, landed at 13:10

The errand boys, who early on, suspected that the plane was going to land stayed and waited until it rolled towards them and stopped only 30-40 meters from a railroad track near the northeastern corner of the field. They went over to the plane just as the crew (among them, Lts. Fogerty and Walker) jumped out holding pistols. The boys who spoke a little English asked the fliers "English?"

"No, USA," they answered and they asked "Sweden?"

"Yes," was the boys unanimous answer. Then the fliers (who thought they were in Norway) were exuberant. They laughed and shook hands and hugged the boys and offered them cigarettes (Lucky Strikes). Most of the crew were young boys around 22 years old. After a while, more people came, later police and the military.

By now the other Liberator, "War Baby", B-24D - 42-40128 from the 93rd Bomb Group, had appeared, and after a loop around the town's outskirts, during which time this plane also threw down an ammunition belt. This plane landed at 13:25 on the opposite side, that is, the southwestern part of the field.



War Baby

Drawing by Ingemar Melin
Trelleborg, Sweden

The crew (among them, Lts. Kilcheski and Hill) tried to set fire to the plane with the help of fuel containers and signal pistols. However, a guard who had hurried over on his bicycle and the police succeeded in putting an end to it. The last plane to land had the nickname "War Baby" and a scantily clad pin-up girl as "war paint" on the nose. A number of bomb symbols showed that the plane had taken part in 11 earlier raids. The 12th was their last, but still ended happily.

In one of the planes, the top secret "Norden" bombsight remained, but it was missing from the other plane (probably the one that circled over the lake). The radio apparatus was destroyed in both planes while the bomb bay controls were undamaged. The crews, which consisted of 10 men each, were later taken to the police station for interrogation. There the police arranged for food from a restaurant and the police meeting room was made into a bunkroom and the fliers had a chance for a hot bath. A doctor took care of a few smaller frostbites (frozen cheeks and feet) which had affected several of the crewmembers. The next day (Friday, Nov 19 at 11:15), the fliers were picked up by the military for transport, by taxicab, for internment in Dalarna at the hotel Bäckebergen. As a curiosity, one can mention that one of the cabdrivers was nicknamed "Chicago", since he had visited the USA in his younger years and thus

he was particularly suitable as an English speaking "guide".

According to experts it was somewhat of a sensation that the planes could land on Örebro's airfield near Gustavsvik, which was a grass field about 200 x 900 m. It was considered definitely impossible to fly them out from there. Some Swedish fliers from Västerås had tried the day after the emergency landings to start the planes, but the field was too soft and they thought the only way out was to dismantle the planes. So they waited for cold weather and frozen ground. In the meantime, the Swedish military put wooden pallets under the planes so they would not sink into the clay. Furthermore, they had to build a temporary bridge, with timbers, stone and gravel, over a creek that crossed the eastern end of the field in order to lengthen the runway.

One month later, Thursday, Dec 16, a start was made to move the planes that had made emergency landings. The planes were flown by their original American pilots, but with Swedish Air Force personnel

alongside as control. There was only enough gasoline for the flight to Västerås. They started without any problems and the "Yanks" didn't even use the bridge with the extended runway. They turned around in front of it and the start thus took place on the normal part of the field.

Yes, this was a few words about the episode with Örebro's 2 Liberator planes. There is probably more to add. For instance, the question of whether they lost their orientation or deliberately flew directly to an airfield that had been marked on their map. Some people will assert that the latter was what had happened, but I don't believe it.

Added by the author of this article:

I originally wrote this article for a Swedish historic aviation magazine in 1975. Several years later, in 1984, I had contact by letter from two members of the War Baby crew. Robert A. Hill (copilot) and Robert D. Bryce (waist gunner). Both of the "Bobs" have been in Sweden, joining reunions in 1987 and 1990.



War Baby comes in for a landing at Örebro



Unidentified personnel in front of War Baby



The crew of War Baby leaves for Dalarna and the Hotel Bäckebergen note the gengas-aggregat (gas-producer) on the back of the car. This made it possible to get the wood-gas from the burning wood

Lady Katherine

By H. Munro "Mo" Githens

We were on a mission to Pennemondé Germany after V-2 launching pads when we were hit by flak in target area just after bombs were dropped. The flak blew a large hole in left wing and knocked out # 2 engine. Our plane fell from 25,000 ft to 10,000 ft above the Baltic Sea. The ball turret gunner was very seriously injured* and I was wounded in left hand and foot by small pieces of Flak. As radio operator on a B-17, I was in the camera well to start the camera for the bomb strike. It probably saved me because the radio room was in shambles and my seat was full of holes. Nineteen planes were lost on the Aug. 25, 1944 mission. The story of the mission is told in the book "Flak Dodger", by Roland Byers, Lt. Col. USAF (Retired). Lib. of Congress # 85-60155.

The plane was very hard to navigate because several cables had been severed by flak. The plane headed toward Sweden. By luck, we were greeted by the Swedish Air Force. They flew close and told us, by hand signals, to turn away. We signaled back "NO CAN DO".

The Co-Pilot came back and told us we had to "Join the Birds" since the plane was too damaged to land. The crew put a rip cord on the ball turret operator and threw him out the waist door and I followed him.

I landed in a field near a small stream.

Two Swedish soldiers picked us up in a rowboat and took me to a bridge where other soldiers on bikes took me to a small Army (Homeguard) camp. I was joined by two other crewmembers. We spent the night in a barn with hay for a bed. We actually hit the hay that night.

The camp used an old farmhouse for the barracks. We were given breakfast in the kitchen and then to the Railroad station for the train ride to Kristianstad (as a Railroad buff, I loved it).

We joined the rest of the crew (except for the ball turret gunner who was in the hospital) at the Mayor's house for lunch and a grand welcome. There was a big crowd out front for autographs.

From there, a fantastic train ride to Falun and then to Rättvik, located on a big lake. We stayed in a large wooden vacation type hotel. I was in Rättvik until September 1944.

After the short stay, I was sent to Malmö to work at the airbase where our planes landed when in trouble. (Also some German) Several crashed landed while others had wounded or dead on board.

I received the full T/Sgt. pay, overseas pay and living expenses. I lived with a Swedish family (Lantz) in a very nice home.

Lt. Col. Filkins was sent from England to command the Malmö airport operation. He built a B-17 from spare parts taken from crashed planes. We called it "Filkins Folly". It was later flown from Malmö to North Sweden to join other stored aircraft.

We were held in Sweden longer than most because of our work at the airport in Malmö. We were sent back to England in April of 1945.

* Editors Note- Ingemar Melin has contacted Lars-Erik Ohlsson, one of the Swedish Fighter Pilots that escorted *Lady Katherine*. Lars-Erik remembers the day very well. He circled the injured Ball Turret gunner and made sure he landed safely.



An American Crew Lands In Sweden

Translated by John Anderson

At approximately 13 o'clock yesterday, an American Fortress crashed at Övad, Sweden, about four kilometers southeast of Klippan. The damaged plane had flown in from the west coast of Skåne and had gone over the South-ridge-Söderåsen. All the crew members jumped safely before the plane crashed and burned. The Americans were scattered from Starby to Ljungbyhed.

The ship cut a wide swath through a patch of woods before it crashed at Övad. It stopped about fifty meters in the woods after also ripping through a stone fence. The wreckage caught fire and threatened to ignite the woods but this danger was successfully warded off. After burning for an hour, only a skeleton remained.

It was about 13:00 when the people in Klippan saw the plane go over, it came from the direction of Söderåsen. At once, they were sure that it was an American plane. It seemed out of control

and had an escort of Swedish fighters. Between Klippan and Ljungbyhed, the Fortress went into a dive and in a moment, dense clouds of oil smoke told the people what had happened.

When Helsingborg's Dagblads' reporter arrived soon after the crash, there were still clouds of smoke coming from the wreckage. The diving plane that had come from the west had hit the tops of the trees about seventy meters from the edge of the woods and cut a path through them to the clearing. There were parts of the plane scattered all around, some in the woods, the rest in the clearing around the large hole the ship had dug when it hit the ground. The ship was powered by four, nine cylinder radial engines, one of them was thrown fifty meters from the wreckage.

On the scene of the crash, the reporter heard that the plane, along with a number of others had made a raid on the northern part of Germany. After

dropping their bombs, the ship was damaged and became very hard to control due to a large section of the wing being shot away. The pilot had to come to Sweden. The plane became so unmanageable after coming over Swedish soil that the crew had to jump. The pilot, a First Lieutenant, was the last one to jump. He landed at Klöva Hallar, where men from the Cadet School at Ljungbyhed took care of him. The Commanding Officer at Ljungbyhed had gotten the report of the plane. He sent some fighters to meet it and also reported the positions of the men as they jumped. The pilot was not injured, for the Cadet School ambulance returned empty.

Men from the Cadet School and from nearby rushed to the scene of the crash to put out the fire and clean away the wreck. They had a very hard job. The ambulance was there but was not needed. The wood fire brigade from Kollebarga was on the spot shortly after-

wards and stopped the fire from causing too much damage. Under the circumstances, very little damage was done. The site of the crash was right on the border of the Risebarga and Vedby communities.

One of the men landed, in good condition, near the farm owned by Algot Dahlqvist. The farmer's son, Allan, was the first to welcome the guest who is a 19 year old farmer boy from Oklahoma. He could have had a very bad accident because his parachute carried him just five meters from a 25,000 volt power line. However, this five meters separated him from danger. The young man, who was invited for food, ate with a good appetite and told Mr. Nelson that he had made twenty missions over Germany and expressed his happiness over coming down in Sweden in good condition after the adventure. He wanted to leave his parachute with Mrs. Nelson as a gift, but of course, the police did not allow him to do that. The boy did confirm that the crew consisted of nine men.

Another man, the bombardier*, a 23 year old man from New Haven, Connecticut, landed unhurt close to Einar Nilsson's farm in Goentorp, Kvidinge. He freed himself from his parachute and was in the best humor in spite of the perilous jump. He was next to the last one to leave the plane and reported that all the parachutes of the rest of the men opened properly.

According to last night's report from Kvidings, the pilot landed on the farm of Mr. Hillman, a chicken farmer. Mr. Hillman and his wife had lived in America for several years and gave the American a hearty welcome to Sweden. Lt. Donald Goss, the pilot, is a 22 year old man from Kansas City, Missouri. He was taken to the Cadet School at Ljungbyhed, where he was given food and cared for. He said he enjoyed his first Swedish steam bath. He remained at Ljungbyhed until he received the report that his crew had all been picked up and were safe.

It was a little after 13 o'clock when the residents of Starby saw the Fortress fly over with its escort of Swedish fighters. After one had heard the roar of the engines, he could see six men jumping from the plane and their parachutes opening. Two of the men landed on the Starby side of Rönne å, a creek, they landed close to the Starby Elementary School. One of the parachutes landed in the water but the man freed himself and swam to the Össjö side of the creek where three of his fellows had landed. Homeguards from Starby and Össjö hurried to the place and took immediate care of the flyers. One that had landed on the Össjö side of the creek was wounded in both hands and one leg†. He was sent to the hospital in Ängelholm where the doctors reported that his life was in no danger. He received the wounds from German anti-aircraft fire.

"I had just come from the school building when I saw the parachutes slowly falling to the earth," said the teacher, Erik Nilsson, who was the first to talk with the men that landed near the Starby School. "I had just finished my last class for the day." Continued Mr. Nilsson, "when I saw the men land. I ran to them at once. One was a tall dark boy, who I later learned was of Mexican ancestry.‡ His parachute had stuck in a fence and he looked at me suspiciously. But after I had wished him welcome to Sweden, he boked more cheerful and was willing to speak to me." He was immediately examined, but he had only an empty pistol case, the pistol was lost when he jumped.

Mr. Nilssons' fifteen year old son, Ebbe, had run to the other flyer who came down almost in the water. The flyer was so glad to be in Sweden that he clapped the boy on the back and gave him candy and chewing gum as proof of his happiness.

* Gerhardt Hoelzel

† Henry Munro "Mo" Githens

‡ Ruben "Herky" Hernandez



Mo Githens at Bulltofta in Malmö



Unidentified P-51 Pilot, Lt. Donald Goss (pilot of Lady Katherine) and Lt. Gerhard Hoelzel (Bombardier)



Githens and Pals

Salvage crew at Malmö, Sweden.
Back Row: (not all are identified) Am. Legation Rep. Bing Gregory, Ray Long, Bailey Kelly, Kenneth Helstrom, Bill Quimby, Am. Major and Swedish Reps. Front Row: Derry Wedin, Joe Silva, Bob Shorts

All Photos are courtesy of Mo Githens



Sweden
After the Flak

Karen Branch Cline
813 E. Cawson Street
Hopewell, VA 23860
USA



Address Service Requested



If you wish to send me anything via
E-mail:
kbc56@compuserve.com

You may send information by Fax to:
413-643-5565

Making for Sweden Vol. 2
by Widfeldt/Wegmann
Now available in English
List price will be \$42.95
This book is about the American
planes and their crews that landed
in Sweden during W.W.II.

US Distributor
Specialty Press
11481 Lost Dam Road
North Branch, MN 55056
1-651-583-3239 or
1-800-895-4585
Fax: 1-651-583-2023

Dear Friends,

I would like to thank all of you who have supported the newsletter in so many ways. Some have sent monetary contributions, some have supplied stories and photos, while others have supplied the support and encouragement to keep going. Please keep your letters and photos coming!!



Warren & Lee Branch
Floyd & Eric Cline
Bill & Norma Beasley
Russel Harriman
Larry & Barbara Confer
Robert Schauseil
Andy Gall
Dean Spurgeon
Kent Dickson
Len Moyer
Donald Petrecca
Lyman Cranston
Hubert Meggs
Harold Ferrara
George McIntosh
Vernie & Quilva Honberger
Charles Bastien
Christian & Marianne Bolgen
Warren Roseborough
Evelyn Cohen for the 2nd ADA
Sherman & Barbara Gillespie
Wiley Noble for the 3D Strategic Air Depot Association

Mo Githens
Hubert Stevens
Floyd Walker
Andy Fry
Joe Sirotnak
James Coman
Charlie Huntoon
Harold Gillespie
Arno Hansen
Herbert Grant
Ed Black
Roy Weber
Torbjörn Olausson
Ray Pytel
Sabastian Corriere
Arne Svensson
Pär Henningsson
Ingemar Melin
Bo Widfeldt
Bob Dorr
Wally Foreman
Ed Williams