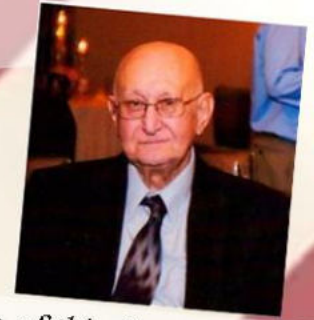


The added noise of the .45s came from some officers who decided that the flares didn't make enough noise. Flight Officer Frank Barilia of the 715th Squadron ended up in the base hospital with a .45 slug penetrating in his hand. Col. Westover was not amused and this unauthorised use of firearms resulted in all officers getting up the next morning at 0500 hours for exercise. *"As soon as he had all the officers lined up in front of the tower he gave the squadron COs orders to make sure we all exercised thoroughly. Lt. Col. Thomas asked one man to give exercise. As soon as Col. Westover was out of sight Lt. Col. Thomas told the one lad he was too energetic, another man was assigned who then gave us simple finger exercise. One man was posted to keep watch out for Col. Westover"* Lt. Donald Ford wrote.



715th Squadron Diary—*"Even though VE Day was 8 May, F/O Berilla of this Sq decided to do a bit of celebrating on the night before. He landed in the hospital with a .45 cal slug through his hand. On the night of 8 May ample fireworks were popping. Numerous flares were fired from the perimeter, and it reminded us of the fourth of July back home or the Belgium Front on 10 Jan 1945, both were about the same. About 0130 on 9 May, our problem child, Pvt. Finn, decided he was tired of walking so he picked up an Ambulance which was in the Motor Pool for repair, but he didn't get very far with that, so he confers with Col. Stroud (getting him out of his sack) and tells him the MPs have accused him of stealing an Ambulance. The Col. tells him to go to bed and all will be whipped out in the morning. Morning came, one jeep was missing, Finn was missing. The Jeep was discovered in Norwich that afternoon, but not our problem child, he is still on the loose."*

On May 8th - VE Day - at 1500 hours all the radios were tuned to Churchill's broadcast *"....we flew the same route and while flying over Düsseldorf we heard Churchill proclaim victory and a Scottish bugler play the cease-fire.....The full implication of the news wouldn't sink in very fast. I kept telling myself the war was over..... Still, the more I thought of it the happier I became. The infantry wouldn't have to fight any more, the folks back home could stop worrying about sons, brothers, and husbands..."* Joe Nathan – navigator



"Yes my love now it's official and even those people back home who have celebrated this occasion 3 or 4 times before can now celebrate with the full assurance that the show in the ETO is finally over, this afternoon we had a special formation at our base at which time a proclamation by our Colonel was read. It consisted of tributes, reminders of the task ahead, a call to unity and assistance in preparing for the defeat of the Japanese War Lords." Waldo H Balzer - Assistant Chaplain wrote to his fiancée.