down

landing and after

‘44 – ‘45

# down time

# Bob Kopp – Navigator - 490th BG (Heavy) USAAF

After a mission and debriefing, we were typically too exhausted to do more than eat and go to bed.  Breathing oxygen at high altitude for hours, causes much fatigue.  If we were scheduled for another flight the next day, it meant only a few hours before they rolled us out about 1 or 2 am the next morning.  That scenario occurred very often.  My first 8 missions occurred in 9 successive days due to 490th heavy personnel losses.  We became veterans in short order hence the stress buildup

An interesting side note was that just before the mission debriefing, the Red Cross gals were there to offer each of us **one** shot of whisky if we wanted it.  I guess it was intended to try to settle our nerves. After our crew sweated through those first 9 days, our pilot went to the higher powers and demanded a day off.  He told them his crew were like walking zombies from fatigue.  It worked. We got a day off.

Most often we spent our break days writing letters home or catching up on chores.  There was a post library, a theater, a church, sick bay and a relax building but we didn't have much time to spend in any of those.

(Note. It is interesting to note the difference in the reality of life and the story the media presented not just then but even now of the American Airmen, Soldiers and Sailors – music, dancing, free spending, men out on the town and so on - JA)

