



780th NEWS

DALLAS, TEXAS

MARCH 1985

MORE HOT NEWS FROM SEATTLE

We have a minor setback on our 42nd reunion plans. The primary target became fogbound before we arrived at IP. So--like the 780th of old it didn't stop us or slow us down too much. We picked the first alternate, changed course slightly and are again on our way.

The Roosevelt Hotel did not get sufficient financing to complete the total renovation plan to their standards and decided to put the project on hold. They may yet finish by September but it was too risky so they called and asked to cancel the contract. They also called my contact at the Seattle Hilton. Within minutes I received a call from Mr. Edwards of the Hilton stating they would be glad to have the 780th gang on board. Since this was our second choice by only a whisker, I had no reservations at all about advising Mr. Edwards that we would use the Hilton as our headquarter hotel. He sent the formal contract for signature and we again underway and cruising toward our September date.

Room rates at the Hilton are slightly higher--\$55.00 a night for a single, \$65.00 a night for a double. The doubles, as usual, contain two double beds so the single rooms with one double bed should be fine for most couples. There is ample parking all around the Hilton at somewhere between \$3.50 and \$6.50 per day. The hotel is built on top of a ten floor parking garage if you want to park on site. The rate here is \$6.50 per day.

We gained an outstanding facility for our Sunday brunch. We'll be at the "TOP OF THE HILTON" restaurant. The view is breathtaking. The hotel also connects to some major shopping and entertainment spots via an underground system of walkways and shops. If the weather turns bad, you can do many interesting fun things without ever going outside.

To see if can't generate a record crowd we are making some organizational changes. Effective immediately Joe Theena has been promoted to General and appointed Chief of Staff for a go get'em crew in the 780th tradition to round up more 780th men for this reunion than we have ever had before. Joe will be Commander of the group and also handle recruiting for the Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Indian and Kentucky areas. His staff, mostly members of his original 780th crew are:

- Colonel J. J. Fitzgerald he will recruit Nebraska, Kansas, Missouri and Oklahoma areas.
- Colonel (semi-retired) J. J. Shinstock for the Mississippi, Louisiana, Arkansas, Tennessee, Alabama and Florida Areas.
- Colonel Ed Reuss will handle southern California, Arizona, New Mexico and Texas.
- Captain E. O. LaBrier will serve with Colonel Reuss due to the large population of 780th personnel in this area.
- Captain Harold Worman will jog the memories of our clan in northern California, Nevada, Utah and Colorado.
- PFC Kuchenbecker will handle Washington and Oregon.
- Lt. Col. Lloyd Luke will direct the campaign in Idaho, Montana, Wyoming, North Dakota and South Dakota.
- Captain Bill "Chicken Ranch" Edwards will round up the troops in North Carolina, South Caroline, East, West and South Virginia and Georgia.
- Captain Gordon Young gets the leftovers as any good Flight engineer should. He will rally the survivors in Michigan, Ohio, Pennsylvania, New York, and the New England States.

I have sent a letter and rooster to each of these galliant airmen so they can begin to assemble the biggest group of the 780th men we have ever had since the "Good Old Days" in Italy. Y'all be expecting something from them to entice you to Seattle, the most enjoyable city, in September. Things are beginning to shape up and it looks like a good variety of good times for all who come.

REMEMBER THE DATES SEPTEMBER 12,13,14,15, 1985.

G. W. Kuchenbecker, President

ARE YOU PLANING ON TAKING THE CRUISE

If you haven't made your reservations for the cruise or received the brochure be sure to get in touch with me. Plans are really under way and we are planning a get time. Won't you consider joining us aboard the Island Princess on 9/4/85 for a week of fun and relaxation.

S.C. WOMACKS

I send my thanks to Bill Morris for caring enough to get in touch with me and put me back on your mailing list. Bill and I were on Bill Zewadski's original crew. Morris as Navigator and myself as "Ball Turret" gunner. Bill Morris was in search of Lester "Shorty" Huffman who was Flight Engineer on the crew. I have located him only 50 miles away from me, at Wichita, Kansas. I have visited with all three of them this past week. It was really great to talk to them again after all these years, on August 16,1944 I flew a mission over Friedrickshafen, Germany with Howard J. Secor's crew. We were hit but managed to make it into Switzerland. After that we were separated and I have never heard of any of them since that time. I was returned to Italy in February 1945 and then back to the U.S..If anyone knows the whereabouts of Secor, I would like to have his address. I have not decided as yet if I can make the reunion but please send me all the information and also on the cruise.

BILL ZEWADSKI

It was good to hear from you Friday night even tho you did wake me up in front of the TV. You Prompted me to call Bill Morris for news and to thank him for our big B24 belt buckle. It would be good to get to the reunion in Seattle. I would get to see Crawford who lives in Port Angeles. He was a friend of my Great Aunt. That's so far across the country that I might have to wait for the next reunion, hopefully in Atlanta, before I get to see all of you. It would be wonderful if we could get in touch with Elmer Shea, Shorty Huffman, Joseph Duran, Regis Lantzy, Hobart Paige and Max Bittner, the first crew that trained in McCook, Nebraska. I have a photograph of the old Five Grand, the plane that we landed in the Isle of Vis, Yougoslavia. I really want to hear more of the details of your "captivity" in Switzerland with Harold Secor's crew. As I told you on the phone, I loaned someone my 780th Memoirs which was prepared by Charlie Davis back before our First Reunion and I'm having a little difficulty recalling all of the details of our trips to Ploeste and other exciting ventures. I was always hoping that Wanda Dannelly and Bernie Bezinover would get a reproduction of the 780th Memoirs, but somehow it must have gotten sidetracked or was too expensive. It was fun talking to Bill, getting up-to-date on each other's families and comparing notes on our operations. I must say that Wanda Dannelly does a good job of editing our 780th News and almost makes us feel like we are back in the saddle again. SC,I'm mad at you for not telling me that you were having your 65th birthday. We are all getting up there. I'll have my 71st birthday before the reunion (if I make it), and if I don't, I'll be 72 before I get to the one in Atlanta. I certainly don't intend to miss that one, if I do miss the one this summer. I hope you'll bring that brilliant son of yours so that we can talk to him about the old Minneapolis Honeywell bomb sight that Bittner was such an expert with. This was a letter to

NOTE THE SQUADRON HISTORY BOOK WAS REPRODUCED IN 1983 AND THERE ARE NO PLANS TO PRINT ANY MORE COPIES AT THE CURRENT TIME

FROM THE 783RD LATRINE-O-GRAM

CAN YOU BELIEVE THESE APPLES? Are you guys going to believe what your eyes see on the right--(copy of the 780th's article about being challenged) are what the 'Ole F/O' will lay on you next? On their best day the 780th couldn't keep up with the 783rd flying, dropping bombs, gunnery, drinking booze, telling lies, chasing girls, playing Hop Scotch, Jacks, Marbles, Tiddly Winks-or-turning out the largest number for a reunion. For them to entertain the fantasy they can compete with the 783rd is like entering a shetland pony in the Kentucky Derby and thinking they have a chance to win. OK you "Misfits" now that I have let my big mouth over load my behind turn to and get me out of this trap. MAKE YOUR PLANS FOR DAYTON TODAY! Let's show those "TAIL END CHARLIES" how the "Big boys" do things. All the way to Dayton in 85! If you guys let me down I can just see Mrs. Dannelly serving me a big plate of crow to eat.

ADVANCE PRESS RELEASE FOR THE APRIL ISSUE OF THE 783RD LATRINE-O-GRAM

WAR DECLARED! Evidently our December LOG article on the 780th precipitated a feud. And the article in our February issue again making reference to the 780th's feeble reunion efforts struck such a nerve center those "Flat Landers" have declared war on the 783rd "Snob Hillers". On the evening of February 20th after receiving the latest issue of our LOG Mrs. Dannelly called. To say she was spitting fire would be the under statement of the century. She not only had her hackles up but her feathers were more ruffled than an old setting hen with a pole cat messing with her baby chicks. The blast she fired into my ear necessitated a visit to the nearest Emergency Treatment Center. Without listing all the threats will enumerate on her most serious promise. If we don't double their St. Louis efforts she is going to sit on top of me and not cram a single serving down my throat but an entire pen full of crows that she is fattening guts, feathers, A holes and all! Fellas' after what 'Pop' Flemings SOS did to my nervous gut there is no way the "Ole F/O" could digest such punishment. You PROCRASTINATORS get me out of this trap. Make you reservations for Dayton today. Let's sho that 780th we can fill the better part of the Hilton up and drown their accusation that we couldn't muster enough turn out to fill a \$2 Cat House.

EXCERPTS FROM LETTERS RECEIVED FROM EDITOR, SAM MARIE OF THE 783RD

Congratulations on the great job you are going with the 780ths News Bulletin. Please don't take any offense at any of ramblings in the LOG regarding the 780th. They are all meant in a constructive spirit. Hope you agree.

We have now received notices from over 100 they will be attending our reunion in Dayton. This figure does not includes wives. With so many of the procratinators that you are familiar with still out on the track we will easily hit our 125 goal, with luck 150 may be achieved. Unlike you I'm not a sucker for continued punishment. On Sat. 8/24/85 with election of new officers will throw the keys for this thing down and flee for my life while still ahead of the same.

Your great call of yesterday evening was both enjoyed and appreciated. You are my kind of person. Unfortunately, you made the mistake of getting "hooked" up with a guy from the 780th rather than one from the 783rd which you are more deserving of. Why don't you resign from that bunch of 'Drafted Recruits' and transfer over to a good outfit where your talents will be appreciated?

All of the detailed historical events of the 780th you mentioned being turned over to the library at the University of Texas at Dallas library has stirred my curiosity. On my next visit with daughter will allow for an afternoon reviewing them. 40 years has erased so many memories that I feel it would be very benificial. Just wish someone in our outfit had exhibited a fore thought your exec did. Enclosed find a page from our history book. the names of my crew are marked in red. Also, find a shot taken this last summer when I visited with a fellow 783rd 'Toggle Jockey" in Michigan. Those Yankees got their noses out of joint when the Texican came up there and caught the first Salmon.

ROLLAND COHEN

Thank you very much for the 780th News. Just thought I'd like to get this note off to you about the mystery crew in the paper. This is a photograph of crew 244 taken at McCook Army Air Base, Nebraska. It was taken during our first phase of training as complete original crews before we went overseas to Italy. This picture of the mystery crew is shown on page 66 of the original squadron scrapbook. Dahir flew as a member of our crew out of Italy. James Hefferman was our Pilot. Meecham has since died. Bowyer was killed on one of our sqadron's missions. Our Sqadron Crew was 3-N-233.

R. W. "BUD" JOHNSON

Sure do enjoy reading your newsletter. Will send you my dues along this time. In you last letter you have a mystery crew. Well that is not a mystery any more, because I was on that crew. The crew was one of the original crews that formed in Tuscon, Arizona sometime in October 1943. We left there for McCook in February 1944. The crew was disbanded. Philip Meecham, Don Wake and myself was the only ones to my knowledge that joined other crews for overseas. Phil was with Capt. Browden's crew - I was with Lt. Graham E. Duncan's crew. I do not remember who Don was with. The crew's number was #228, Lt. Duncan was the Pilot, by the way he was from you home state of Texas. The crew of Duncan completed 50 missions and left Italy in September 1944 for home. Joe Maze was the Crew Chief on our Red N plane in Italy or "BUGS".

MYSTERY CREW

Standing left to right: Philip E. Meecham, Ira Eckstein, Wm. B. Bowyer, Chas. H. Bennett, R. W. "Bud" Johnson, Stanley Dahir.
Kneeling left to right: Cornolius A. Broderick, Henry V. Heiner, Donald K. Wake, Virgil D. Wiebelhaus.

Well, 3 of you, Johnson, Cohen and White all named the Mystery Crew, even you didn't agree on when the photo was taken. I think that is just great.

BEN DONAHUE

Sorry to be late with dues. Completely and totally forgot. After arriving home in Sept. with Rubeun, things became a little unravelled. My mother was ill then passed away. We were planning on the boat trip, but will have to forego it this time. Have a tremendous time with all of the gang. But! We will be there to see you on Wednesday early gathering. Looking forward to the Seattle Bash. Lucille and I were up there in '78 for a convention. Had a fun time. Spoke to Rube this past eve - he may be a passenger with us on the way up and back. Nothing firm as yet. He intends in being there one way or another. I have enjoyed your latest newsletter. A very fine job. I have already sent a letter with 4 - 782nd names to the guy in Corpus Christi. Would be nice if they would just join us. Oh Yes! don't know if I mentioned it in the past. The "Honcho" of the 783rd lives just a short mile or two from me. I have talked to him on several occasions. He seems to be very aggressive and a go getter. Money too. They go hand in hand. But like George says in your newsletter. We can do darned good this year. We have the longevity goin' for us. I say us even if I was a 781'er. See you in Seattle.

ALBERT D. RIFFLE

Although I was a member of the 782 squadron, I enjoy reading the newsletters. The picture in the November letter brought back memories, as I was a Ball Gunner in Captain Keile's crew, and I saw the plane go down. When I was at Fort Meade in 1945 I was on my way home and saw one of the crew of the plane. He told me ten had survived but can't recall his name or his crew. Maybe someone in the crew will respond with an article.

MAILED RETURNED

Ray Allen
John Dolman

JOHN FLEISHER

Just must keep my promise to write. Hope you are well. See by the weather news that Texas has been quite nasty. Most of the bad weather missed us here in Rolla, Mo., we did have some cold days but no ice and little snow. I had a heart attack this past December, there was some damage. I'm around and going again. The doctor said, no trip to Florida this winter and no more construction contracting like I've done last summer. I guess I'll take it easy until May before I go to Florida. HaeSuk and Mira are fine, she talks up a storm in both English and Korean (Mira). Sometimes she forgets and talks to me in Korean then pauses and repeats in English. I watch the TV more now and last week I saw a wonderful fishing/wildlife show and yes, you guessed it-Jim Bagley was in the boat and catching fish just as large as he used to tell about, so you can quote me, "he wasn't bragging", when he told about the fish his lures catch.

We are looking forward to meeting in Seattle, I used to live in Tacomas and have friends in the area. Ashby Nelson and Robert Davis and wives have told me in their last letters that we will get together there again. This time we plan to travel with Mira and stop at spots along the way. In three years HaeSuk has seen more of the good ole U.S.A. than most people born here. I love to travel and plan to as long as possible. So it looks like she will see yet more when we travel thru the northwest. Do drive carefully on those icy Texas roads. Looking forward to seeing you in Seattle. I just know it will be the greatest yet.

EDITOR'S MESSAGE

Did you think a Newsletter would go to press without a comment from me? Impossible - just have to put my two cents in. I am really getting excited about the reunion in Seattle and know we will have the largest group ever to attend a meeting.

Now, what do you think about the 783rd? Will I be serving crow to Sam Marie or will I have to eat some? Do you really think I am in the wrong squadron? Who says we were the 'Tail End Charlie's'? Weren't we way ahead of the 783rd - organizing and starting our reunions back in 1963. Where were they? Why did it take them 20 years later to get their reunions to going?

Sitting around listening to members at the reunions I know no one can tell more lies, drink more and enjoy being together more than the 780th. WE ARE THE BEST AND LET'S PROVE IT TO THE 783RD BY BEING AT THE SEATTLE REUNION.

I will meet with Fred Boling and B. G. Rowe on March 22nd in Atlanta and we will start the ball rolling for our 1986 reunion. So if another city wants to put their bid in for 1986 now is the time to do so.....

I plan on being in Dallas all summer so keep your letters coming for the next couple of newsletters. Remember I need your help.

Oh, yes, we now have 95 paid memberships.. With 300 Newsletters being mailed. Have you paid your dues?



Which Will I
Be in SEPT. '85
you come

WE ARE
The
BEST
Who EATS
CROW?



How young they looked in Rome, Italy?
Sgt. Robt Beck, 1st Sgt. Brozek and Sgt. Norman.
Our thanks to Robert Beck for letting use the pictures and maybe someday in the future you and your wife, Hazel, will be able to attend a reunion.

