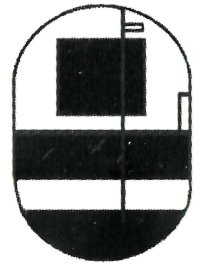




# PANTANELLA NEWS



APRIL 2003

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NUMBER 71

## 31 TRIPS TO HELL AND BACK

A B24 Ball Gunners View of the Air War in Europe Nov 6, 1944 to April 25, 1945

The following is a transcript of a 'Mission by Mission Diary' as was kept by John Zahuranicik as it appears on on the 781st Internet Site at <http://www.frankambrose.com>  
John served as a Ball Gunner on 'Ralph D. Hendrickson's Crew' with the 781st Bomb Sqd.



Hendrickson Crew, L to R

Photo as Appeared in 781st BS History Book

Rear-Raymond R. Prezler, Bombardier, Allan L Aveson, Navigator, Harry Yaroshuk, Co-Pilot, Ralph D. Hendrickson, Pilot  
Front Row:-Eugene M. Young, Tail Gunner, John J. Zahurancik, Ball Gunner, John Wroblewski, Nose Gunner,  
Kenneth T Pulham, R/O, Dominic Zinebile, Engineer, Arron Wolfson, Top Gunner

### Mission #1

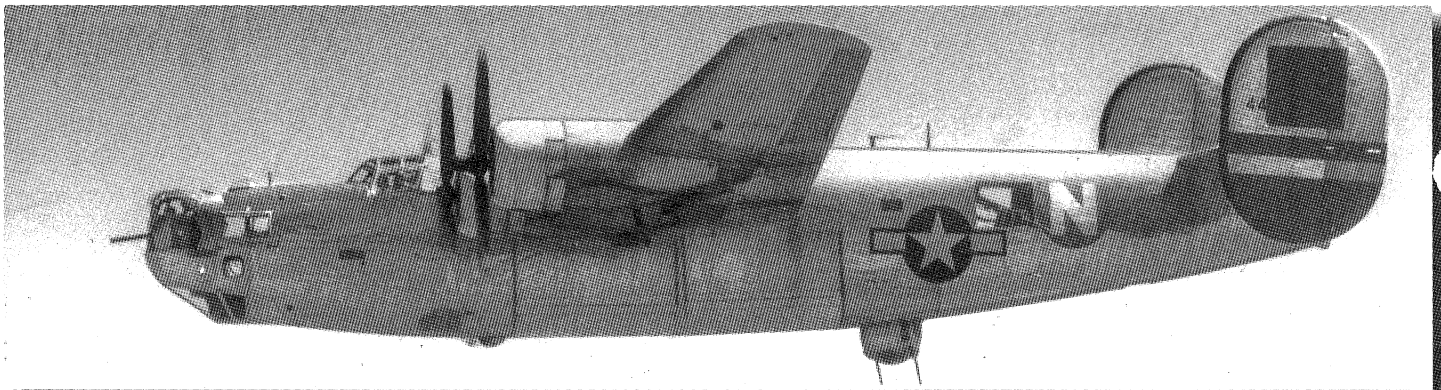
-RDX - 500's 1 neff. Sorti 1 mission  
Nov. 6, 1944 VIENNA AUSTRIA (ordnance plant)  
Flying yellow "R" 24,000 "2 engines over Vienna"  
No. 4 feathered before target Left formation, No.2  
turbo Out over target. Formation Keep passing by,  
cannot Even keep up with 17's Waist & Nose guns,  
ammo & Flak suits dumped to lighten Load. Ship  
unable to Maintain altitude. Crossed 15,000 alps at  
18500 Gas low -35 degrees 0800 -1600 Y-"R"

### Mission #2

6-RDX 500 Boobies 1 sorti 2 missions  
Nov. 16, 1944 MUNICH, GERMANY (Marshal-  
ling yards)  
26,000 Spare ship, fly any position Heavy overcast  
over target, can't see much. Blue "L" just ahead gets  
direct hit by flak, no shutes flak heavy accurate at  
26,000 Blue "K" drops back, no.4 engine feathered.  
Drop bombs, scatter back. Join red form. Over Ven-  
ice, Alps beautiful flak holes in tail, martin & above  
Nav head. No one hit.

Cont. on Pg. 2





### Mission #3

6 RDX 500's 1 Sortie 2 missions  
19 Nov. 1944 Linz, Austria (oil dumps)  
Easy 2 24,000 Heavy overcast over everything except target. Flak heavy but inaccurate. White "K" drops back no. 1 feathered White "O" E.R. engine out. Nice view of target, and got hits on target, oil dumps. Almost had 17's piggy back on return to base. Capt. Blankenship good pilot. No flak holes in ship. -26 degrees 7:15 - 2:36 Y "G"

### Mission #4

6 RDX 500 1 Sortie 2 missions  
22 NOV. 1944 MUNICH, GERMANY (Communication lines)  
Flying Y "R" able 8 28,000 Heavy overcast over route & target bombed P.F.F. Above flak about 4000 flak was at briefed altitude. Unable to open bomb bay doors so Ray drops them through. Most of formation brought bombs & dumped in Adriatic. Passed out when oxygen hose is disconnected without me noticing it. Ken brought me to with oxygen. Wallet & \$85 stolen -7 degrees 7:05 - 2:36 Y "R"

### Mission #7

8 500 RDX 1 Sortie 2 Missions  
DEC. 18, 1944 BLECHHAMMER, GERMANY (Oil Refinery)  
Flying Y "G" Charlie 6 & 3 24,000 Heavy undercast all way to target, openings over Lake Balaton & slight opening over target. Flak heavy as hell. No. 1 Turbo hit, still pulled a little, hits in tail, rudder, astrodome shot away, just missed no. 3 fuel cell & trim tab on left wing, hole aside ball thru both sides, everyone ok -30 degrees 7:35 - 3:15 Y "G"

**781st Bomb Squadron Association**  
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#### 781st BOMB SQUADRON (H)

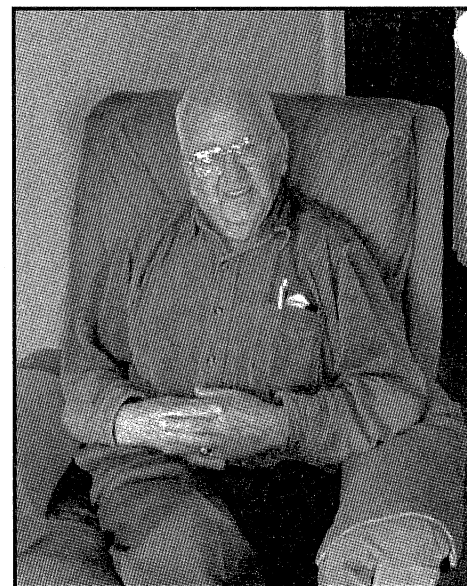
Part of the 465th Bomb Gp. 15th AF in Italy  
1944-1945.  
Flew 191 Missions over Southern Europe  
dropping thousands of tons of  
death and destruction to the enemy.  
Shot down 25 enemy aircraft  
Received Two  
Presidential Unit Citations

### Mission #5

10 Incendiary Clusters 1 Sortie 2 missions  
11 DEC. 1944 VIENNA Austria (South ordnance plant)  
Flying Y "H" dog 3 23,000 Weather gloomy, visibility 10 miles. Flak heavy as hell. Yellow "O" gets controls shot away then makes vertical climb, rolls over & noses down toward ground. They say 10 chutes got out, didn't see any. Flak hits no. 4 oil line, no. 4 feathered just off target, 1 & 2 smoked all the way, 3 & 4 threw gas on way up, 1 & 2 oil on way up. -37 degrees 8:40 - 3:45 Smith, pilot. Y "H"

### Mission #6

6 500 GP 2 500 Boobies 1 Sortie 2 Missions  
15 DEC. 1944 AMSTETTEN, AUSTRIA (Marshalling yards)  
Flying Y "D" Able 5 20,000 Just about made it off cause of heavy undercast which followed us all the way to target and back. Highest peaks of Alps stuck thru undercast. Above cast sky was clear ideal conditions for enemy fighter attack. No flak or fighters seen. Hope for more targets same like this one. 39 degrees 8:15 - 2:40 Y "D"



John Zahuranicik as he appears now, enjoying his re-tirement in Rocky River, Ohio. I bet he couldn't fit in that Ball Turret now! Let alone spend 8 to 10 hours at a crack in it.

**Mission #8**

36 100 GP 1 Sortie 2 Missions  
DEC. 28, 1944 AMSTETTEN,  
AUSTRIA (Marshalling yards)  
Flying Y "B" Able 5 & 3 22,500  
Clear over field, Alps covered  
solid in some places & heavy haze  
in others. Started out to bomb oil  
dumps just below Brux  
Czechoslovakia, but lead  
bombardier F.O.'d so we  
came back to amstetten.  
Red "Y" lost one engine  
& had another start burn-  
ing, made it back ok tho.  
No flak, sighted some  
after target about 5  
miles to left. Beautiful  
escort fighter cover. 40  
degrees 8:05 - 4:30 Y  
"B"

**Mission #9**

8 500 GP 1 Sortie 1 Mis-  
sion  
JAN. 4, 1945 BALZANO,  
ITALY  
(Marshalling yards)  
Flying Y "P" Dog 4 24,000  
Trip uneventful until hit-  
ting target which was in  
Alps. Target was along  
Brenner pass route. Flak  
plenty Ralph hit in eye with  
plexiglass, just slight, ok.  
R "H" had big hole in waist no one hit.  
Dam good fighter coverage above and  
below. Multi bouno 40 degrees 8:35 - 3:  
30 Y "P"

**Mission #10**

16 250 GP 1 Sortie 2 Missions  
FEB. 5, 1945 REGENSBERG,  
GERMANY (Oil storage yards)  
Flying Y "J" Able 5 23,500 Heavy under-  
cast all the way, just like layers of cotton,  
glad to see it. Saw very little flak, seemed  
to burst at box ahead, stop for us, then hit  
box behind. Couldn't drop bombs linkage  
broken on toggle, bombs had to be kicked  
out (by Bombardier) nice run -35 degrees  
8:15 - 4:00 Y "J"

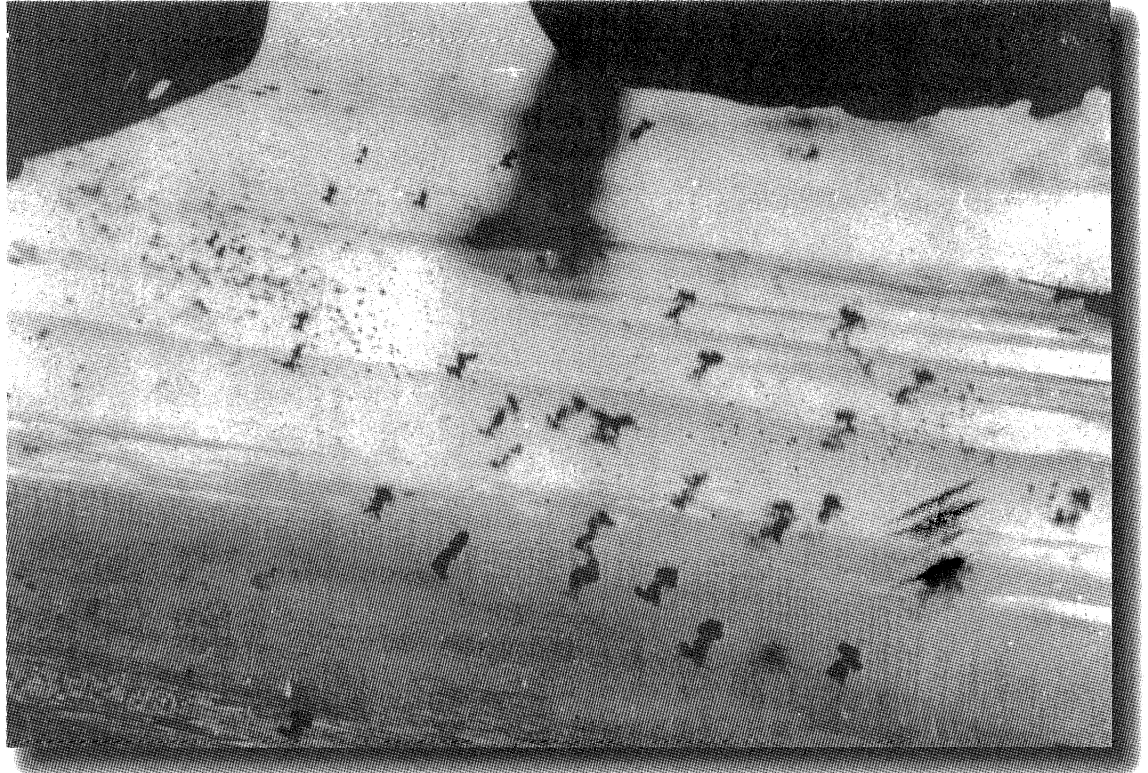
**Mission #11**

8 500 G.P. 1 Sortie 2 Missions  
FEB. 8, 1945 VIENNA, AUSTRIA  
(South Ordnance)  
Flying Y "G" Dog 3 25,000 Overcast  
over most of the route, few breaks  
along the way, expected to see clean  
target. Target had overcast with few

open spaces, flak was light, expected  
to see kitchen sink. Missed us. Hit  
prop wash almost all the way back  
Nav. Almost passed out for lack of  
oxygen 34 degrees  
8:15 - 3:15 Y "G"

**Mission #14**

8 - 5 G.P. 1 Sortie 1 Mission  
FEB. 17, 1945 POLA, ITALY  
(Oil storage)  
Flying Y "G" Charlie 4 20,700 Short  
run. Field socked in waited till 12:00 for

**Mission #12**

8 500 G.P. 1 Sortie 2 Missions  
FEB. 13, 1945 VIENNA AUSTRIA  
(South goods depot)  
Flying Y "G" Dog 5 24,500 Overcast  
over most of the way expected to have a  
P.F.F. run. Target clear as a bell overcast  
opened up couple miles before target.  
Flak heavy as hell, Pappy kept sliding  
left, flak followed to our right. Missed  
us, not one flak hole in "Flak magnet"  
33 degrees 8:40 - 3:15 Y "G"

**Mission #13**

8 500 GP 1 Sortie 2 Missions  
FEB. 15, 1945 WEINERNEUSTADT,  
AUSTRIA (M/V and communications)  
Flying Y "G" Baker 3 22,500 Overcast  
over field most of route clear with few  
clouds. Target was supposed to be hit  
visual, finally hit P.F.F. Bombardier  
screwed up, bombs all over the place.  
Didn't see any flak, buono. No. 4 turbo  
was out for a while just before I.P. No  
flak holes.  
32 degrees 9:05 - 3:30 Y "G"

takeoff Adriatic clear, Yugo had thin lay-  
ers of clouds till IP, clear target, flak was  
multi close. Flak burst everywhere. Flak  
magnet escaped with only one scratch  
close to left front B.B. door.  
No one hit. 28 degrees 12:00 - 4:30 Y  
"G"

**Mission #15**

8 500 G.P. 1neff sortie 1 mission  
FEB. 22, 1945 WEILHEIM, GERMANY  
(Marshalling Yards)  
Flying B "H" Charlie 5 13,000 Sup-  
posed to be visual run over Alps we hit  
hellova big front, couldn't get through,  
Ralph pulls 360 over alps, leaving forma-  
tion. Lost formation in heavy clouds &  
vapor trails, followed another in to field.  
Brought bombs back to field. 43 degrees  
at 25,000 8:15 - 3:00 B "H" No. 15 2-22-  
45 BIG DEAL. Clarion operation Every  
available aircraft to be sent into the blue  
to disrupt communications throughout  
Germany



**Mission #16**

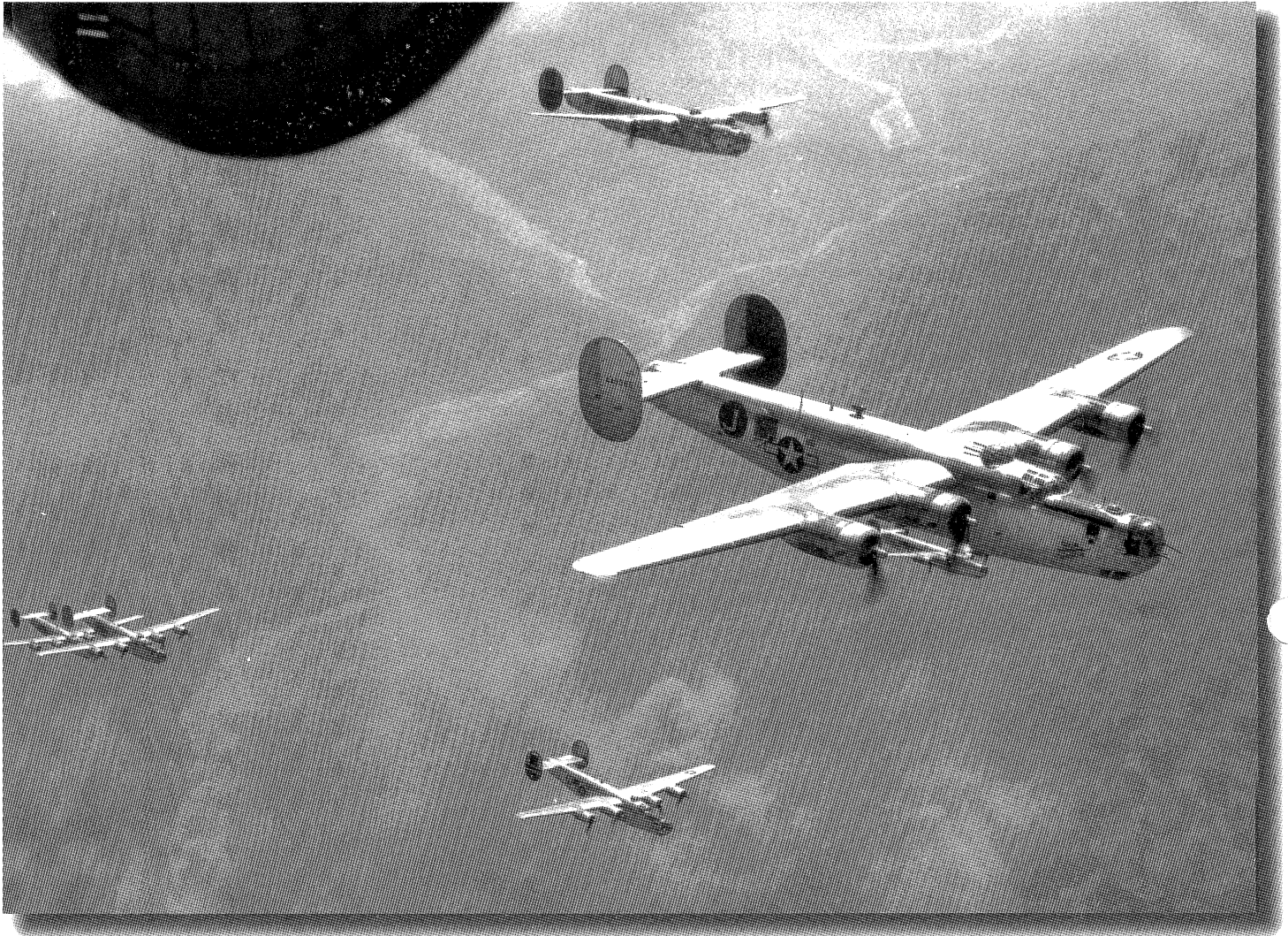
8 500 G.P. 1 Sortie 2 Missions  
FEB. 25, 1945 LINZ, AUSTRIA  
(Ordnance depot)

Flying R "P" Charlie 2 24,500 Field had  
10/10 overcast didn't expect to get off.  
Route most of way up had light haze

came back low on gas, no.2 coughing,  
bone dry. 22 degrees 9:50 - 4:30 Y "A"  
Dom. Almost knocks out no.2 when try-  
ing to feed no. 1, which was low as hell  
**Mission #18**

8 500 GP 1 Sortie 2 Missions  
MAR. 12, 1945 VIENNA, AUSTRIA

flak while scepiting villach Target was  
supposed to be hit visual but target was  
covered 10/10. Saw heavy black  
smoke come up thru overcast, good  
hits. Had trouble with No. 3, kept  
losing oil all the way. 25 degrees 9  
05 - 1615 Y "N" Flew panther ship  
so we had panther operator, Kenny  
flew with another crew



with few scattered clouds. Target was  
supposed to be hit P.F.F., weather man  
F.U., dam thing clear as bell. Flak heavy  
to unbearable, had only two small holes  
in wing. 33 degrees 8:00 - 3:30 R "P"

**Mission #17**

10 500 GP 1 Sortie 1 Mission  
FEB. 28, 1945 VITIPENO, ITALY  
(Marshalling yards)

Flying Y "A" Able 3 21,200 Missed this  
target so we hit one 5 miles north of it.  
Visual run, pulled couple 360's over  
Brenner Pass waiting for dog & baker  
box to return from Germany. No flak over  
target dam bombardiers missed target

(Floresdorf oil refinery)

Flying Y "V" Easy 4 24,000 Flying  
"V" on its first mission, dam good ship.  
Heavy overcast over route except for a  
few holes most of them being over the  
Alps. Bombed P.F.F., flak was heavy but  
very inaccurate. Returned low on gas,  
flew too long at altitude used too dam  
much. No flak holes 26 degrees 9:10  
- 1630 Y "V"

**Mission #19**

8 500 GP 1 Sortie 2 Missions  
MAR. 13, 1945 REGENSBURG,  
GERMANY (Marshalling yard)  
Flying Y "N" Charlie 7 23,500 Heavy  
overcast over most of route, saw little

**Mission #20**

5-1000 GP 1 Sortie 2 Missions  
MAR. 19, 1945 MUHZODORF,  
GERMANY (Marshalling yard)  
Flying Y "P" Charlie 3 19,100 Flew in  
Red Force, clear route most of way, few  
scattered clouds, mostly over the Alps.  
Bombed M/Y visual, NO FLAK, multi  
bono fire & smoke all over the place,  
scragged hell out of target, saw caps of  
oil & gas burst into flame. Panther ship  
with operator. 28 degrees 8:30 - 1510 Y  
"P" Sperry Ball on way back got locked.  
couldn't get out. Hydraulics were out  
Manual crank clutch wouldn't engage.  
Ken & Dom got me out, by disengagin-  
gel. Clutch from the outside



**Mission #21**

40 - 100 GP 1 Sortie 2 Missions  
MAR. 22, 1945 VIENNA, AUSTRIA  
(Marshalling yards)  
Flying Y "Q" Dog 2 24,400 Route all way up 3/10 to 4/10 low clouds, target same, bombed visual, scragged hell out of target. Flak heavy & very accurate, they picked off Able 1 & Easy 1 before bombs away. Y "X" burned no. 3 engine & blew off right wing, 7 shutes got out. Got out ok, not a scratch on ship 38 degrees 8:15 - 1510 Y "Q"

**Mission #22**

216 20# Frags. 1 Sortie 2 Missions  
MAR. 25, 1945 PRAGUE CZECHOSLOVAKIA (Vletrany, Airdrome)  
Flying Y "C" Baker 2 22,000 Route clear all the way up expected fighters. Stuck our heads in lions mouth expected it to snap but didn't. Saw two 109's on the way back, too far off to do any good. Hit target visual had some dam good hits in M.P.I. Target was just outside Prague Czecho. It was smoke covered, screening and oil smoke from oil storage hit today. 25 degrees 8:10 - 4:00 Y "C"

**Mission #23**

18 250 GP 1 Sortie 1 Mission  
MARCH 31, 1945 VILLACH, AUSTRIA (marshalling yards)  
Flying Y "R" Charlie 4 24,300 Heavy undercast over most of route. At head of Adriatic heavy front, flew through it for almost an hour, could just about make out box up ahead. Bombed P.F.F., hope we hit something, didn't see even one burst of flak. Buono flew through front on return trip 36 degrees 8:10 - 2:00 Y "R"

**Mission #24**

10 500 G.P. 1 Sortie 1 Mission  
APRIL 2, 1945 GRAZ, YUGOSLAVIA (Marshalling yard)  
Flying Y "N" Baker 6 & 4 21,200 Clear route all way up with slight haze over Alps. Target clear but partly smoke covered from groups hitting before us. Flak was moderate & inaccurate. No. 3 throwing oil, made it ok though. Mission in support of Russians. 8:30 - 3:45  
25 degrees Y "N"

**Mission #25**

5 1000 GP 1 Sortie 1 Mission  
APRIL 7, 1945 VITIPENO, ITALY (Railroad bridge)  
Flying Y "G" Charlie 5 24,500 Supposed to hit target visual run only.

Route all way up about 7/10 cloud cover, target had 10/10 so we didn't drop bombs saw beautiful vapor trails Y "N" feathered No. 3 "E.R." Saw flak from one gun at head of adriatic, burst or two came dam close, no damage 38 degrees 11:30 - 5:10 Y "G" 26 thru 30

**Mission #26**

40 100 G.P. 1 Sortie 1 Mission  
April 9, 1945 LUGO ITALY (Frontline supplies)  
Flying Y "N" Charlie 4 20,200 Route out pretty cloudy target clear. Bombed supplies just 1 mile from our front lines. 8 minutes after bombs away British troops were to have started their push toward northern Italy. Saw 25's - 51's - 47's low level bomb and strafe the area after we bombed it. Multi smoke all over the place. 42 degrees 11:40 4:45 Y "N"

**Mission #27**

10 500 GP 1 Sortie 1 Mission  
April 12, 1945 UDINE ITALY (Gdena Mezzocorona Bridge)  
Flying Y "R" Able 5 19,200 Over base was clear, enroute over Adriatic we hit weather soup, didn't expect to get through. Flew through soup so thick that wing man was out of sight for short period. Hit in smoke covered target area, bridge no mo. Saw only one flak burst Multi buono 20 degrees 8:05  
2:20 Y "R"

**Mission #28**

18 250 G.P. 1 Sortie 1 Mission  
April 16, 1945 BOLOGNA ITALY (troop & gun concentration)  
Flying Y "N" Charlie 4 22,000 Flew most of route over land hit Mediterranean above Rome. Most of route up covered with light haze clouds thick as hell over immediate target cloud covered. Front lines / are lined with our flak at 15,000 No flak, sweated out gat on return, only had couple hundred gals. Left. 20 degrees Y "N"

**Mission #29**

10 500 GP 1 Sortie 2 Missions  
APRIL 19, 1945 ROSENHEIM, AUSTRIA (Marshalling yards)  
Flying Y "E" Baker 2 22,000 Didn't expect to get off cause nose wheel collapsed, changed P.D.Q. Didn't hit primary target cause it was cloud covered so we went to Rosenheim.

No flak, not one burst all day. Nice ship, nice day, nice run, want 6 more same. 21 degrees 7:30 - 2:30 Y "E"

**Mission #30**

5 1000 GP 1 Sortie 1 Mission  
APRIL 23, 1945 PADUA, ITALY (Road bridge)  
Flying Y "A" Charlie 6 21,200 Started on Y "N" took off & had cowl flap blow from piece of piston. Hit weather over Yugo, solid undercast. Hit bridge visual, but missed it, left & short. Very little flak, No. 3 and 4 throwing multie oil, feathered No. 4 on way back expected to have no. 3. Feathered too, but didn't. 27 degrees 8:10 - 3:00 Y "A"

**Mission #31**

10 500 G.P. 1 Sortie 2 Missions  
APRIL 25 1945 LINZ AUSTRIA (Marshalling yards)  
Flying Y "V" Baker 6 23,300 Dam near filed my britches when I heard target. Clear as hell too. Clear all way to target, had heavy smoke screen over target. Flak thick as hell though sure as hell we'd get scragged, Harry sure coached us through O.K. Just had two holes one in eng. Cowl & one in leading edge 26 degrees 8:45 - 1540 Y "V" Wouldn't be here if Harry hadn't coached us. He yells "up, up", Pappy racks her up couple hundred feet and then 3 bursts bust right under us. On rally Pappy stood her up on her ear. Hot pups Watched one ship get hit fire in bomb bay but kept level flight long time, crew bailed out, ship crashed in mountains.

**Going Home 23 May 1945**

Left Pantanella, Italy -0845 Circled field one last time landed at Manduria May 23, 1945 at 1010

**24 May 1945**

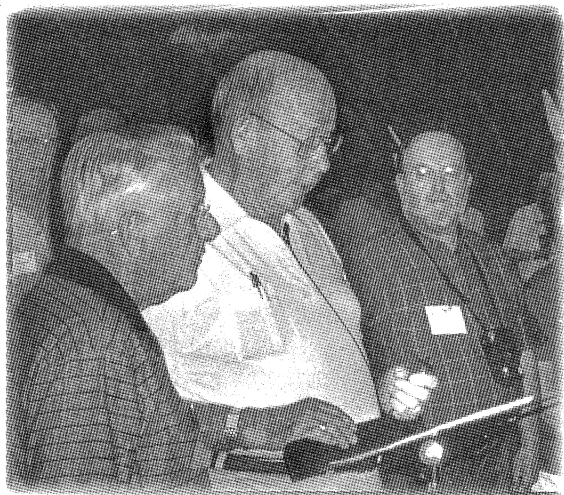
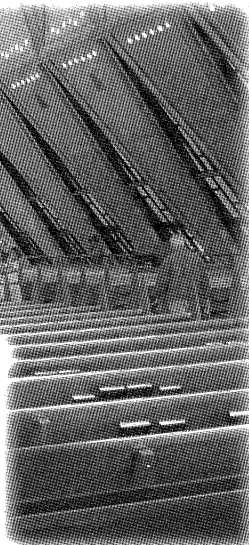
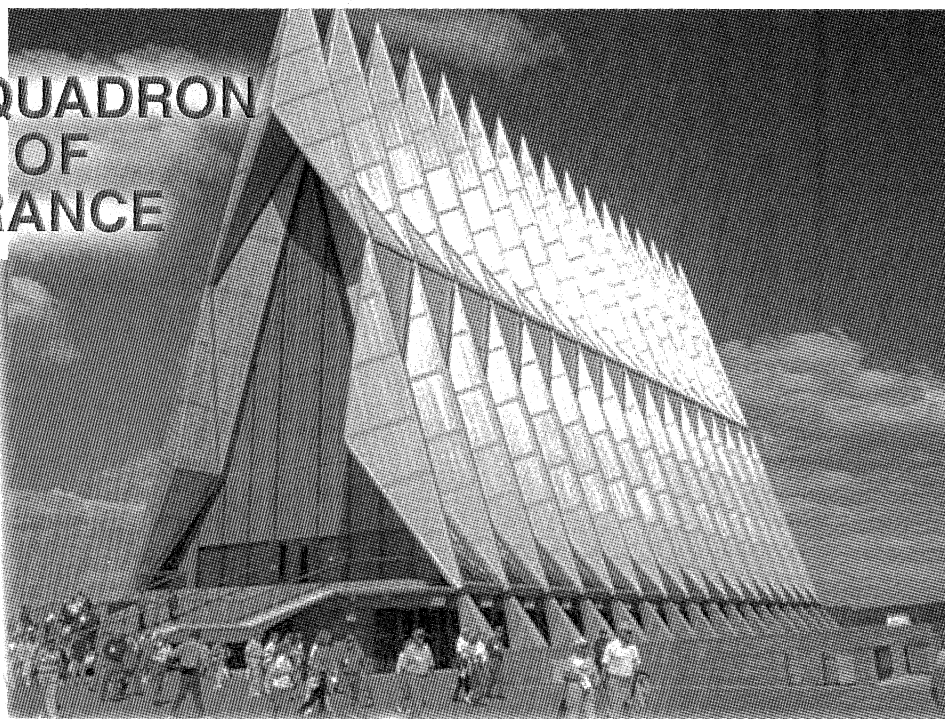
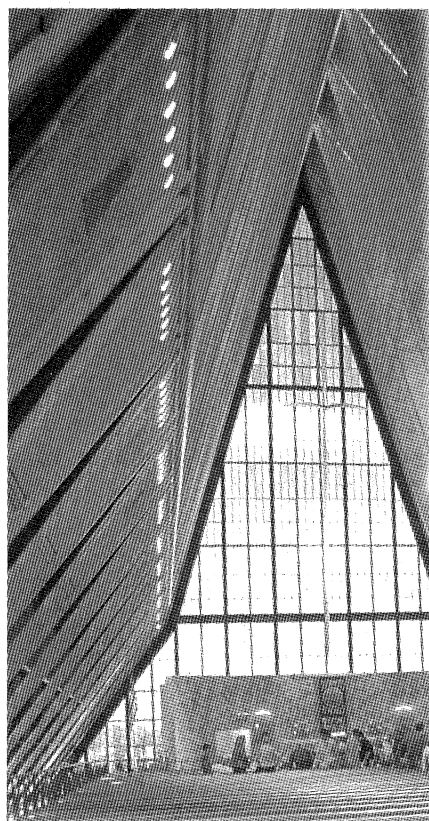
Had little excitement today when Y "N" jumped chocks and smashed into crew stand knocking hell out of it with prop. 3&4 props bent engineer got front teeth knocked out with flying pipe.  
We had 6 ft. piece of pipe

**NOTE:**

This article and other items of interest relating to the 465th BG can be seen on the Internet.  
The 781st Bomb Sqd. Site is at:  
<http://www.frankambrose.com>

## COLORADO SPRINGS REUNION 2002

# 781st BOMB SQUADRON SERVICE OF REMEMBERANCE



## CADET CHAPEL USAF ACADEMY 17 SEPT, 2002

©frank ambrose foto

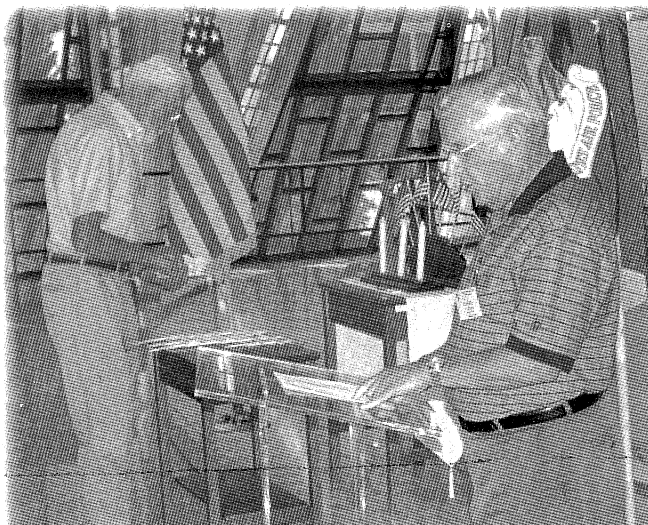






Photo by Frank Ambrose

How many of you are still able to remember the 'Leisurely Atlantic Ocean Cruise' we took aboard the "Love Boat" (ASA GREY) ? These passengers, relaxing on the 'Lido Deck', are enjoying the afternoon by sunning themselves and engaging in idle chatter.

## **2003 REUNION IN THE WORKS**

### **FOR HOUSTON**

**FOR SEPTEMBER 14 TO 17th, 2003**

**OR**

**SEPT. 11th. to 14th**

**(DEPENDING ON BEST HOTEL RATES)**

**NASA SPACE CENTER & AIR MUSEUM GALVESTON**

**CONTACT JOHN OGDEN**

**(Our Treasurer)**

email <[johnoco@hal-pc.org](mailto:johnoco@hal-pc.org)>

Snail Mail and Ma Bell works, too!

## PILOT'S WINGS CLASSIFICATIONS

By Jim Althoff

I have been asked what I had done to receive my Senior Pilot and Command Pilot Wings. It was a long and twisted course I embarked on to fly. Originally I chose the Marine Corps to get flying training, but was turned down because a Navy Doctor giving the exam thought I had flat feet. I was turned away at the Navy and Air Force when asked if any branch of service had for physical reasons turned me down. That automatically eliminated me.

A year later, after WWII began two friends invited me to join them for dinner one evening as they were celebrating enlistment to take place the next day in the Air Force Aviation Cadet program. During the dinner I became and decided to join them. The next day I enlisted as a private in the Air Force Program and was accepted since I did not report my previous try at enlisting. I felt I did not have to respond to that since my civilian doctor examined me and said I did not have flat feet. Finally the Air Force passed me on the physical and I completed the enlistment and was assigned to go to a college on the Air Force program for a year or so as I had not gone to college. I ended up with only two weeks of classes and was on my way to Aviation Cadet training then to Pilot at Maxwell Field, Alabama. Class 44B.

I graduated from there and was issued my First Pilot Wings.

Years later and thousands of hours of flying time as an Air Force Pilot and many years of service I was surprised to be awarded Senior Pilot Wings as shown in #2. Several years later on orders from a Lt. General I received orders for Command Pilot Wings, which are the wings with a star and

wreath as in #3. I was surprised again and finally found out how the awards were given.

I found out recently the two main reasons for the awards were the hours of flying time and years of service. I had accumulated so many hours because of my love of the Air Corps and flying. During my 15 years of service I did not keep a record of my flying time because in every military plane we had to fill out a Form #5 which listed the hours the plane flew and it would then be on my record which the Air Force kept. During my service in WWII however I had additional duties flying which built up more total time and would be on my record also. For example at Pantanella, airplanes that had been repaired required a pilot to check them out to see if they were qualified to fly a mission. I would volunteer to do it. If not on a mission, I would also fly a load of men to rest camp or would pick them up after rest camp, or retrieve an aircraft that went down before making it back to Pantanella and was repaired for a flight back. Operations knew they could send Sgt. Miserlis to my tent, or later, casa to get me to fly a plane if it wasn't on a mission. Also, after I had flown most of my missions, I volunteered to continue flying combat until the end of the war. Fifty-six missions later I was flying deputy lead for the 781st Bomb Squadron on their last mission. At the start of the bomb run the lead plane left formation due to engine failure and I had the honor to take over as lead for the Squadron's last mission.

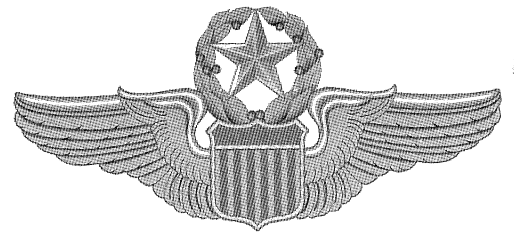
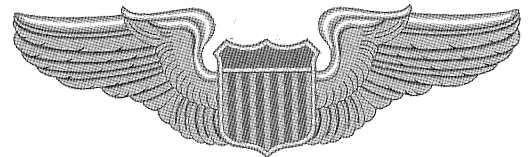
This was my 57th and last mission. The 781st flying time and years of active duty now qualified me to wear Senior Pilot Wings. The war ended and I was assigned a B-24, which I could fly

to my home. For me it was to Chicago, which was near my home.

I received my original Pilots Air Force wings knowing I would receive them when I graduated from the Aviation Cadet program. However, I had no knowledge of any other wings, which could be awarded. I will give you my experience in flying recorded by the Air Force, which

was the basis for issuing wings.

After WWII I stayed



in the reserves attending a school in Minneapolis and I remained in the Active Reserves attending meetings and ground school near wherever I lived and trained Pilots to fly various military planes. One of the first was at Montgomery, Alabama training Cadets.

Then Hamilton Field, CA and others. These Air Force bases served to have reserve pilots learn to fly the various planes if they were called to active duty.

When I was called to serve during the Korean conflict it was no longer B-24 time. I was sent to several Instructor schools flying as Instructor pilot for Aviation Cadets. And then other Airfields where I trained pilots



to fly first prop planes then Jets. On 5 Feb. '531 transferred from Webb AFB, Big Spring, Texas to 3560~ Pilot Tng. Sqdn. I checked out in single engine jet, then became Instructor pilot in Air Fields with types of aircraft for instance at Hamilton Field. CA. I was instructor pilot in the TO. T28. B-24, F80, B-25, T33, AT10. and AT11. As I said in the beginning, some had asked how I was awarded Command Pilot Wings and I hope I have shed some light on the subject. The awards were a surprise to me since I did not keep accurate records myself.

Below are the main requirements for Senior and Command Pilot Awards.

There are some other minor requirements, which you can find out by checking in with the Air Force.

### Requirement for Senior Pilot Wings

Graduate of pilot training program.

At least seven years rated service as a pilot. And at least 2000 total Pilot hours. Or 1300 hours any combination of primary, Instructor and/or evaluator time for 72 months and some Medical qualified Class II. And at least 8000 total pilot hours or some combination of flying and instructor hours.

There some other ways to figure flight time, medical requirements, etc. Contact an Air Force office for specific details if you think you may be qualified. In my case I never made a contact and received the information from the Air Force Office. They must review some of the records. In my case, I had many hours of flying time, which

I believe is why they contacted me. In each case they sent me a letter announcing that I was awarded the wings.

Requirements for Comand Pilot are: At least 15 years rated service as Pilot and at least 3000 total Pilot hours.

Marcel Snyder sent in the above Information on the requirements. He had contact with the local air Force Office. There are awards for other positions like Navigators, Observers, and Flight Surgeons.

Also, if you have a computer. there is a lot of information on the AirForce's web sites;

AF11-402, Ch 2.

**KEEP 'EM  
FLYING**

Here is an enigma.

This plane was photographed at Pantanella back in 1945.

Can anyone recall or remember seeing, working on, or flying this Aircraft while at the base?

If you think you know or have information about this aircraft or photo please send a letter to or email to:-  
frank@frankambrose.com



**FOLDED WINGS****Frank A. Piteo**

Frank A. Piteo, 84, died December 12, 2002 at Hollywood, CA. He was born February 25, 1918 in the Bronx, New York City.

Frank was a waist gunner on Gene Biliger's Crew with which he joined the 781st Bomb Squadron at Pantanella, Italy on 28 October

1944. Frank flew 48 successful missions, surviving being shot down in Russia controlled territory. He was a life member of the 781st Bomb Squadron Association and a sponsor of the Collings Foundation which is committed to keeping the last B-24 airplane restored and flying.

Frank and his partner, Robert Schutrum owned and operated one of the largest and more successful theatrical prop houses in Los Angeles for 36 years. Because of their good fortune and generous spirit they chose to assist their fellow men. This is what Frank Piteo will most be remembered for.

In 1986 Robert and Frank founded The Schutrum-Piteo Foundation, an organization dedicated to caring for seniors who are alone and in need. During that time Frank donated 2.5 to 3 million dollars of his money. Among the many organizations he supported were the Canine Companions, The Actor's Fund, Providence Saint Joseph Medical Center, Valley Community Clinic, Professional Dancer's Society, and he donated

one Miniature horse and two Arabian horses to the "Rising Stars of Equestrian Therapy" to increase the quality of life for disabled adults and children.

Frank is survived by his sister Marie Piteo of Studio City, Sister-in-law Doris Piteo of Alabama, and nieces and nephews.

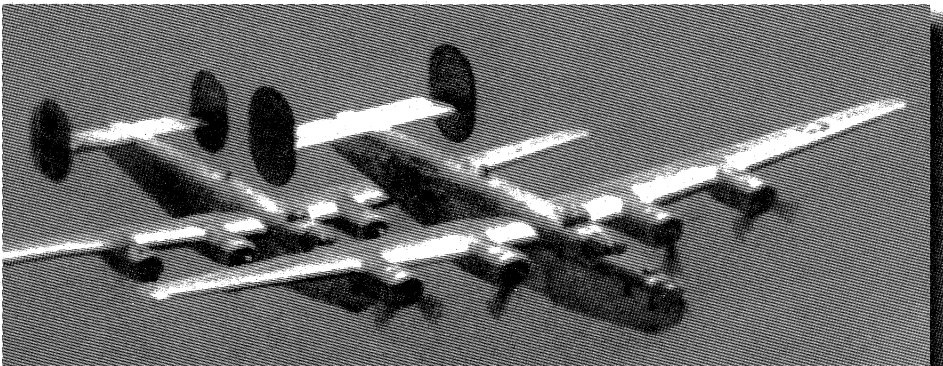
His generosity and gifts to others and to those in the community where he has helped so many will always be remembered. He will be greatly missed in the hearts of those whose lives he has touched. In spite of his failing health, Frank attended several of the 781 Bomb Squadron Association Reunions between the first Reunion in 1986 and the final one in 2002. During this time he donated several thousand dollars to the Squadron Association to support refreshments and miscellaneous expenses. He will be greatly missed by his fellow Squadron Association members.

Donald B. Postema,  
Nose Gunner  
on the W.J. Smith crew,  
passed away on May 2, 2003  
in Musegan, MI

Henry (Hank) L. Willett  
781st Operations Officer  
4711 Lildale Dr.  
Hamburg, NY 14075  
passed away May 10, 2003

**ADDRESS CHANGES**

HARRY CARL:-  
Change 550B Creek Road, Chadds  
Ford, Pa to:- 1875 Creek Road,  
Chadds Ford, Pa.



Talk About A Tight Formation!



**LETTERS**

From: Carole Lee  
 <olee@iw.net>  
 Date: Sun, 04 May 2003  
 To: <johnco@hal-pc.org>  
 Subject: 781st Reunion  
 We are interested. We will plan to attend. Thanks for your effort. We just returned from Rapid City, SD for a NAWIC convention. I belong to the National Association of Women in Construction. Orren had a tour of the B1 Bomber. He actually got in the cockpit. He will bring pictures. We are willing to help you with what we can even though we do not live in the area there may be something we can do.  
 Carole and Orren Lee

Dear Frank,  
 Thanks for all the good info. What do I think about the proposed reunion in Houston? I'm all for it. I still can't understand why some of our members want the best association in our group to be the first one to throw in the towel!!! I do have a problem with a reunion this year. I'm breaking in a new knee, and, unless I set a record for recovering from this surgery, I won't be able to make Houston this year. I'll certainly do everything that I can, however, to make this a successful reunion. Perhaps next year we can go to Dayton, Ohio.  
 As ever,  
 Marcel Snyder

**PRESIDENT'S CORNER**

Tues. April 30, 2003

TO: Board of Directors Of The 781<sup>st</sup>  
 Bomb Squadron Association.

Gentlemen:

After many years of serving as President of the 781<sup>st</sup> I hereby resign effective July 1, 2003. I will remain on a short time to help a new president if needed. Feel free to call if you have any questions.

I am forced to resign after being diagnosed for cancer and have been spending almost my full time with radiation treatments and trying to rest up. My business is for sale and I expect to retire from all activities within a month. I wish you all success and hope to meet you along the way as my health improves and allows me some travel.

This letter is being sent to all Officers who are also all the Directors. Namely: Harry Carl, Walter Longacre John Ogden, Ben Donahue, Robert Freed, Jack Van Slyke and Loren Foote.

It has been an honor to be President and work with the men of the 781st.

SS//  
 James C. Althoff  
 President

**TREASURER'S CORNER****Report as of May 5, 2003.**

The association consists of 256 active members.

The 781st Bomb Squadron Association Treasury as of May 5, 2003 has the following funds:

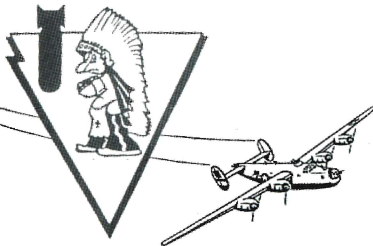
Association Checking:	\$7015.00
Association Savings:	34,954.91
Reunion checking:	75.00
Total:	\$41,344.91

Respectively Submitted: John Ogden, Treas.



**"V GRAND"**  
©frank ambrose foto

**781st BOMB SQUADRON ASSOCIATION**  
3728 Evergreen Drive  
Dickinson, TX 77539-6108



**Return Service Requested**



January 01, 2004  
ORREN J. LEE  
2312 BRAEMAR DR.  
SOUIX FALLS, SD 57105