

PANTANELLA NEWS



APRIL 2004

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NUMBER 75

ELLSWORTH AF BASE & RAPID CITY, S.D. ON ALERT FOR ONSLAUGHT OF 781st. BOMB SQUADRON REUNION ATTENDEE'S OCTOBER 3rd. TO 7th.

The 2004 781st B.S. Reunion activities will kick off with tour to Deadwood.

Scheduled for Monday evening, the group will be visiting the Legendary "Saloon #10" where Calamity Jane and Wild Bill Hickok hung out. Wild Bill was eventually shot there holding the now famous, "Deadman's Hand".



Wild Bill Hickok had a short, but very exciting life. From plainsman, to army scout, to lawman, he made an impact on the West that will live on in history.

In Deadwood, South Dakota August 2, 1876, Wild Bill sat down for a poker game at Nuttall & Mann's No. 10 saloon. At the table were Carl Mann, owner of the saloon; Captain William R. Massey, a former Missouri River pilot; and Charles Rich, a gambler, gunman, and Wild Bill's friend. For the first time, Wild Bill sat with his back to the door instead of sitting with his back

to a wall. Jack McCall, a 25-year-old drifter, shot Wild Bill in the back of the head.

At the time he died, Wild Bill was holding two black aces, two black eights, and the jack of diamonds, forever called "the deadman's hand."

The first newspaper report of Hickok's death was published in Deadwood's only newspaper, the Black Hills Pioneer, on August 5, 1876.

The text read:

"On Wednesday about 3 o'clock the report stated that J.B. Hickok (Wild Bill) was killed. On repairing to the hall of Nuttall and Mann, it was ascertained that the report was too true. We found the remains of Wild Bill lying on the floor. The murderer, Jack Mc Call, was captured after a lively chase by many of the citizens, and taken to a building at the lower end of the city, and a guard placed over him. As soon as this was accomplished, a coroner's jury was summoned, with C.H. Sheldon as foreman, who after hearing all the evidence, which was the effect that, while Wild Bill and others were at a table playing cards, Jack Mc Call walked in and around directly back of his victim, and when within three feet of him raised his revolver, and exclaiming, "damn you, take that," fired; the ball entering at the back of the head, and coming out at the centre of the right check causing instant death, reached a verdict in accordance with the above facts "

A Cheyenne correspondent of the *World* gives this new account of the killing.

"Fate brought him to the same card table with Jack McCall, a gambling sharper. On the last hand McCall bet \$10 and lost; and when he came to settle, found that he had only \$7.50. Bill, remarking, "You oughten't to overbet your pile; that's no way to play cards," handed him back \$5 to pay for his lodging and breakfast. Next morning Bill was in a saloon, when McCall came behind him noiselessly, placed the muzzle of his revolver to the back of his head, and killed him."

Cont. on Pg. 2

Con't from pg. 1

Clamity Jane nee/Jane Canary

Calamity Jane was born Martha Jane Canary about 1852 in Princeton, Missouri. She became an orphan in 1867.

She was 17 years old when she moved to Wyoming and lived among the rough railroad gangs around Cheyenne. She lived in mining camps in the west, and became known as a sharpshooter and horsewoman.

She had contempt for convention and dressed in men's cloths claiming she was any mans equal. Her nickname is said to have been due to her threats that calamity would befall any man who offended her. She wandered about the West, working as cook, dance-hall girl, camp follower, and bawd and doing whatever necessary to earn a living. In 1870, she met Wild Bill Hickok near Abilene, Texas. They were married later that year.

The marriage vows were written

on a page torn out of a Bible and two Reverends read them.

She always considered the marriage as legal. In 1873 she gave birth to a daughter in Missouri. She named her Jean Hickok. She soon gave the child up for adoption and went on her merry way.

She ended up in Deadwood, South Dakota, site of new gold strikes in the spring of 1876 and became a bullwhacker, hauling goods and machinery to the outlying camps. It was there that she renewed friendship with Wild Bill Hickok (he was shot dead in a saloon soon after). By the late 1870s Calamity Jane had captured the imagination of several magazine-feature writers who covered the colorful early days of Deadwood.

In her later years she toured with Wild West shows throughout the Midwest. In 1901 she appeared at the Pan-American Exposition in Buffalo, New York, but was fired for her erratic behavior and alcoholism. Her last years were marked by poverty, and she died in Terry, near Deadwood, on August 1, 1903. She was buried in Deadwood beside Hickok.



Calamity Jane, Frontier Woman.
Indian Fighter, Army Scout

781st Bomb Squadron Association

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781st BOMB SQUADRON (H)

Part of the 465th Bomb Gp. 15th AF
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



After first herding the sheep off the new runways, the first of the
Air Crews flew from Oudna to Pantanella on 20 April, 1944.
At long last, the Squadron was ready to begin combat operations.

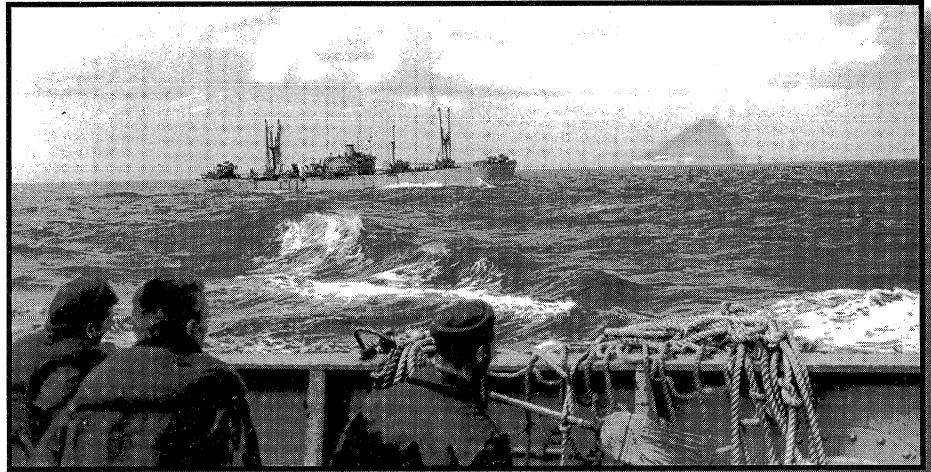
781st Squadron History

Continued from Issue #73

March 1944

On 2 March the convoy carrying the non-flying contingent passed the halfway mark between Virginia and Gibraltar. At 1200 that day 1785 miles had been covered at an average speed of 9.2 knots and 1765 miles remained to Gibraltar. Aerial escort was picked up on 8 March and at 1000 on 10 March the coast of Spain was sighted. The Rock of Gibraltar was passed at 1450 and the convoy was in the Mediterranean Sea. The convoy passed Oran on the 11th and Algiers on the 12th.

At 1900, 15 March, the 'Asa Gray' sailed into the harbor at Bizerte, Tu-



Convoy passing "The Rock of Gibraltar" March 8, 1944
Appearing like a humungus "PRUDENTIAL INSURANCE" logo

nisia. Sunken ships and bombed buildings were everywhere around

and most of the men had their first chance to see the debris of war. The ship docked at La Percherle, a few miles below Bizerte on Lake Bizerte. Although "docked" was hardly an appropriate way to describe the contact with the shore. The docking pilot who met the ship at Bizerte apparently was drunk and he took it head first into the pier. The bow crushed the concrete pier several feet into the shore and the impact was obvious, even to troops deep down in the interior of the vessel.

The ship was met by a contingent of Air Corps personnel detailed to check that everything was in order. In response to a query as to the whereabouts of the medicinal alcohol loaded at Newport News they were less than happy with Doc Rapoport's response that it had been "consumed for the usual Air Corps purposes".

Troops disembarked at 1130 and were carried by trucks to Staging Area #1 and Area #3, an olive grove about two miles outside of Bizerte. There was no organized activity for the men here so the time was spent sightseeing in the countryside and in Bizerte.

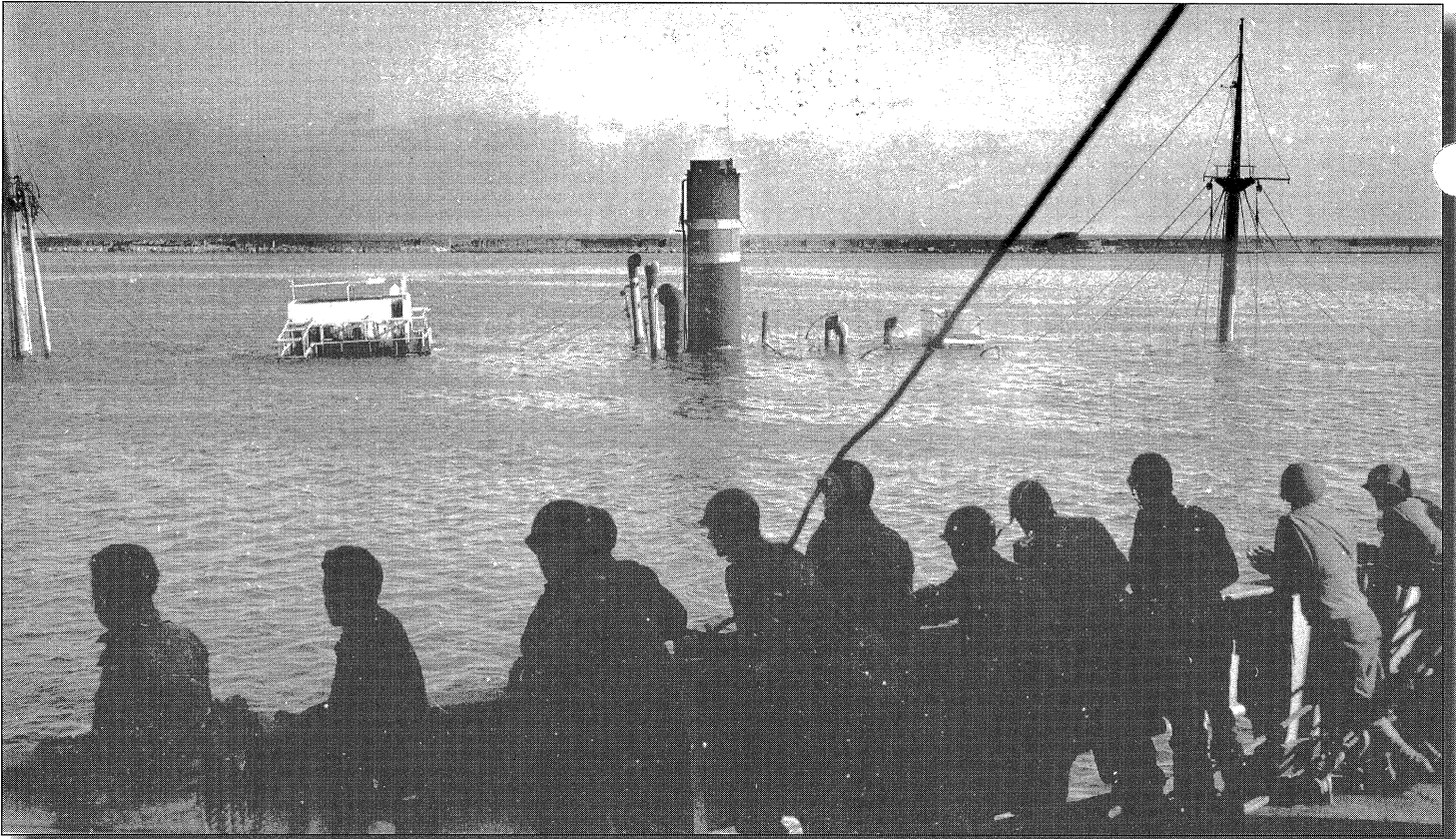
Major McKenna, accompanied by Major Andrus and Lt. Tom O'Brien, made a short call via Jeep on the Ground Echelon while it was at Bizerte to pick up M/Sgt. Leo Lutgring, the Engineering Section Chief,

The flying contingent, having arrived at the Oudna Air Base near Tunis, were undergoing additional training there pending arrival of the non-flying Unit at the ultimate base

con't. on pg. 4



After several grueling weeks at sea, the men of the 781st. eagerly await dis-embarking.



Entering the Port of Naples, members of the 781st. encounter their first glimpse of, and the reality of WAR

Con't. from pg. 3

in Italy and readiness of that base for use by the Group.

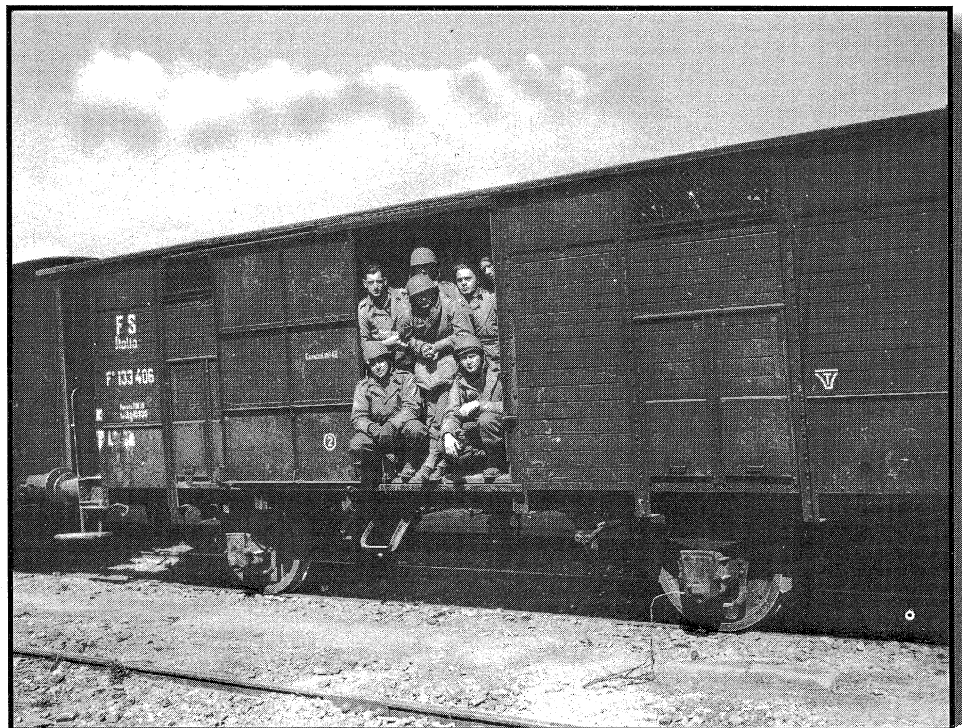
Rumors were rampant here that Col. Rogers had preceded the Group overseas, had flown a combat mission to learn what faced the unit, and had been shot down and seriously wounded or killed. It ultimately was confirmed that Col. Rogers had flown two combat missions with a B-17 Group. He shot down an FW-190 on the first mission and was severely wounded on the second when the aircraft in which he was flying was badly shot up and had to ditch in the Adriatic. Thus he was unable to rejoin the 465th Bomb Group.

Col. Rogers received the Distinguished Flying Cross, the Air Medal, and the Purple Heart for his actions on these missions. When he had recovered sufficiently from his wounds he assumed command of the B-17 Group with which he had flown the above missions. On 13 March Col. Charles A. Clark, Jr. assumed Command of the 465th Bomb Group.

Shipping alert orders came for the Ground Echelon on 19 March and on 20 March the Unit departed on

foot for the dock area at Silo Quay, between Bizerte and La Percherle. The three and one-half mile walk took about one and one-quarter

hours with arrival at 1115. The vessel provided was the 'Morrison R. Waite', a Liberty Ship 4300 tons equipped only for carrying



The First Class train trip across the Girth of Italy, from Naples to Bari lasted two days. Most of the men spent their time looking out the "Observation Window"

cargo. Two holds were left open for the troops and entrance to the holds was gained by means of improvised wooden ladders. The latrines were open wooden troughs constructed on the main deck near the stern on the port side and a very poor substitute for a kitchen was set up in a small area over the boiler room. In addition, the cargo consisted of 3000 tons of ammunition, including grenades, loose powder, and heavy artillery shells plus a large number of bottles of chlorine and oxygen bound for the Anzio Beachhead.

No troops on board a ship could have been less comfortable. Departure was made at 1500 and at 1930, anchor was dropped in the Bay of Tunis where the ship waited to join a convoy

At 0630 the next morning the 'Morrison R. Waite' joined a convoy of six ships headed east, entering the harbor at Augusta, Sicily on 22 March and dropping anchor overnight outside the submarine nets to await yet another convoy.

Here many cigarettes were bartered for fresh oranges and souvenirs from the native Sicilians who came along side in a great variety of small craft. At 0600, on 24 March the new convoy left Augusta and headed north, passing through the Strait of Messina at 1500. The active volcano of Stromboli could be seen at 2200, off the port side.

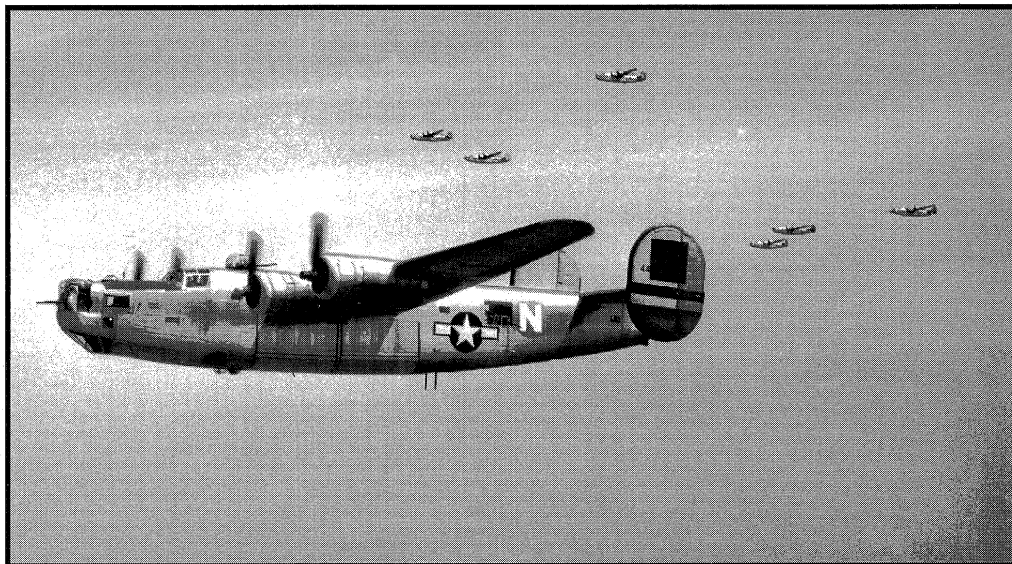
On 25 March the convoy passed the Isle of Capri and, at 1030, entered Naples Bay which was filled with ships of all descriptions and many nationalities. It was a spectacular entrance and with some apprehension. The sky was leaden as if a tremendous storm was developing but there was no wind and no thunder or lightning.

The air was heavy with what appeared to be dust, some of it settling on the ships and the men, and the atmosphere seemed charged. After a considerable delay, the Unit was told that Mt. Vesuvius, the volcano that had buried Pompeii and Herculaneum, was erupting. It was later learned that Vesuvius was having its most active eruption in over 50 years and was laying a heavy screen of volcanic ash and smoke over the

entire area.

Debarcation took place at 1430 and trucks carried the Squadron through Naples to the Bagnoli staging area, a college constructed just outside the city shortly before the war. Sleeping accommodations consisted of blankets spread on cold, hard marble floors. There was no glass in the windows and there were no lights. It was difficult to decide which was less comfortable, Bagnoli or the steel floors of the holds of the 'Morrison R. Waite'

Movement orders came on 26 March



and the next day the Squadron moved to the Naples railroad station where a train was made up for transfer to the final destination.

Food for the trip was "C" rations and the boxcars provided were unheated, unlighted, and without beds or seats of any type. Departure from Naples was at 1230 and two days later, at 1000 on 28 March, the train pulled into the station at Bari, on the opposite side of Italy, having passed right through Cerignola, the correct destination of the Squadron, at 0400.

Confusion reigned (and Capt. Crouch nearly went out of his mind before an engine was made available at 1500 to return the Unit to Cerignola. The return trip was completed at 2045 and trucks were there to take the Unit to the Group's new base in the Pantanella Valley where it arrived at 2200 on 28 March. Even here, over eighty miles from Mt. Vesuvius, there was a layer of volcanic dust over the entire area.

The few remaining days of March were occupied with defining the

camp layout, digging latrines, pitching tents, and the myriad of other chores associated with establishing an extensive, semi-permanent living area and aircraft maintenance area.

Strength figures for the Squadron as of 2400, 31 March 1944, were 30 Officers, 301 Enlisted Men with 60 Officers and 94 Enlisted Men on detached service (the personnel at Tunis awaiting completion of the field at Pantanella).

While the Base at Pantanella was being made ready for use by aircraft, the Air Crews waited at Oudna, training in formation flying, aerial gunnery, and precision bombing with mock missions over North Africa, Italy, and the Mediterranean area.

Maj. McKenna had conceived, at McCook, the concept of the painting of the pissed-off Indian on his B-24. He named the Indian *Chief Jo-Jon* after his young daughter and son, Jo Ann and Jonathan.

Lt. Thomas G. Arthur (navigator on Lt. Athon's Crew) extrapolated this artwork into the Squadron Insignia which was worn by almost all members of the Squadron.

The first of the Air Crews flew from Oudna to Pantanella on 20 April. All of them had joined the rest of the Squadron by 27 April 1944.

At long last, the Squadron was ready to begin combat operations.

To be Continued in Future Issues

The NORDEN Bombsight OUR WWII SECRET WEAPON

The Norden bombsight was one of the most important U.S. military secrets of WW II. It was so advanced that crewmembers had to take an oath to protect its secrecy with their lives

It was a mechanical analog computer used to determine the exact moment bombs had to be dropped to accurately hit the target.

Made up of gyros, motors, gears, mirrors, levers and a telescope, the bombsight was a complicated 50 pound piece of machinery.

The Norden bombsight provided the technical expertise needed to increase accuracy and make daylight strategic bombing possible.

The bombsight was also an automatic pilot, and it flew the aircraft and released the bombs over the target.

The bombardier's job was to feed the computer the information it needed--air speed, wind speed, wind direction, altitude, and angle of drift. As the aircraft approached the target, the pilot turned the aircraft over to the bombardier and his bombsight.

Crouched in the Plexiglas nose of the aircraft, bombardiers had the worst seat in the house. Breathing pure oxygen in temperatures of 40 below, their ears ringing with thousands of horsepower generated by hundreds of pistons, they had to adjust their bombsights--wearing silk gloves so their fingers wouldn't freeze to the frigid metal--even as their airplanes flew through thick flak and withstood attack from enemy fighters. On their shoulders weighed the responsibility for the success of the entire mission.

When properly aimed, it could place a bomb inside a 100-foot circle from four miles high. In actual combat conditions its accuracy was usually less than that.

Except in the final month of bombing--April 1945--more than half the bombs dropped landed more than 1,000 feet from their targets. All told, less than one-third landed within 1,000 feet of the aiming point.

Realizing precision bombing was seldom achieved, the Army Air Force mustered vast armadas--up to 2,000 B-17 and B-24 bombers per mission--to darken the sky over

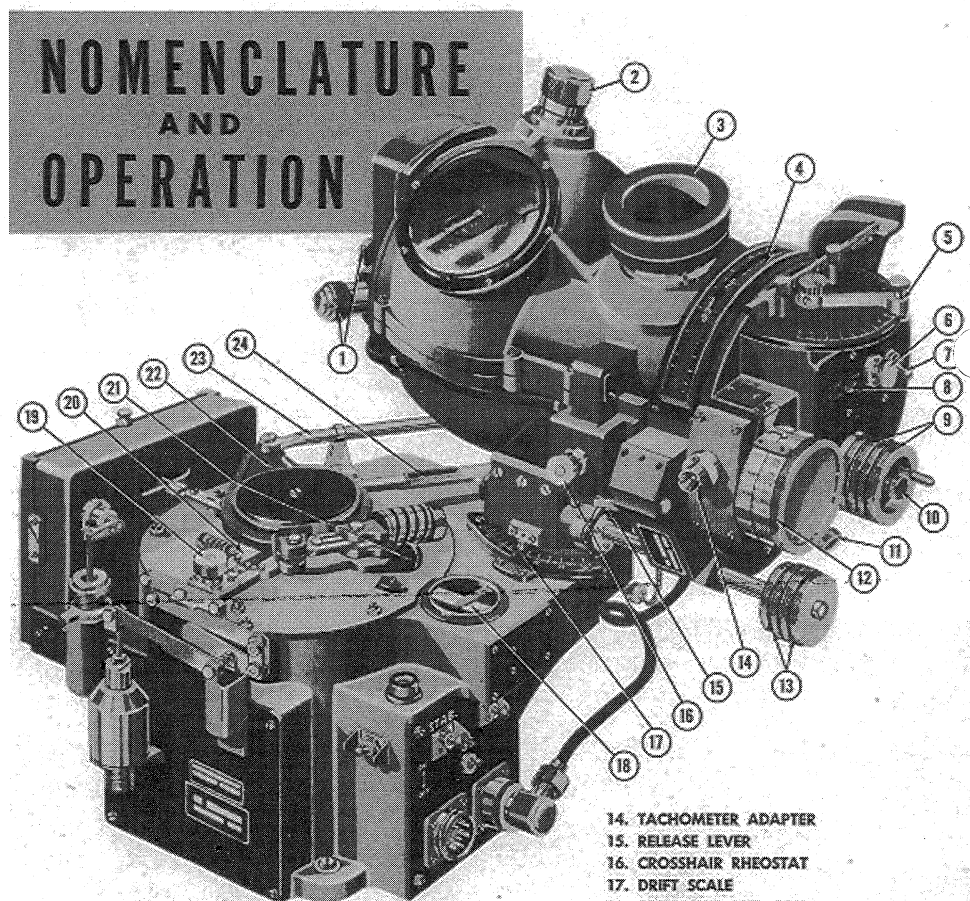
Germany, bludgeoning the enemy by saturating target areas with 500-pound bombs.

Postwar evaluation showed that precision high-altitude bombing was much less effective than believed during the war. Although the visual bombsights worked, the generally poor weather over Europe interfered with their success.

Nonetheless, it gave the American bomber crews the ability to cripple the Nazi war machine.

STRICTLY

MARCH, 1945 BIF 6-1-1



1. LEVELING KNOBS
2. CAGING KNOB
3. EYEPIECE
4. INDEX WINDOW
5. TRAIL ARM AND TRAIL PLATE
6. EXTENDED VISION KNOB
7. RATE MOTOR SWITCH
8. DISC SPEED GEAR SHIFT
9. RATE AND DISPLACEMENT KNOBS
10. MIRROR DRIVE CLUTCH
11. SEARCH KNOB
12. DISC SPEED DRUM
13. TURN AND DRIFT KNOBS

14. TACHOMETER ADAPTER
15. RELEASE LEVER
16. CROSSHAIR RHEOSTAT
17. DRIFT SCALE
18. PDI BRUSH AND COIL
19. AUTOPILOT CLUTCH ENGAGING KNOB
20. AUTOPILOT CLUTCH
21. BOMBSIGHT CLUTCH ENGAGING LEVER
22. BOMBSIGHT CLUTCH
23. BOMBSIGHT CONNECTING ROD
24. AUTOPILOT CONNECTING ROD

The bombsight has 2 main parts, sighthead and stabilizer. The sighthead pivots on the stabilizer and is locked to it by the dovetail locking pin. The sighthead is connected to the directional gyro in the stabilizer through the bombsight connecting rod and the bombsight clutch.

Crunching Stats, Then and Now

Remember way back in WWII when we were strutting around in our "Class A's" with a US Air Force patch on our shoulder and Silver Wings on our chest.

People would approach and ask, "What kind of plane do you fly?"

Beaming with pride, we would almost always boastfully reply,

"Why, we fly the 'Big Ones!'"

Now 60 years later, it might be interesting to define the word "BIG" and compare a few statistics.

In 1944 "The Big One"

B-24 LIBERATOR

Wing Span: 110 ft. 0 in.
Length: 67 ft. 2 in.
Height: 18 ft. 0 in.
Weight: 56,000 lbs.
 design gross weight
Armament: Ten .50-cal. machine guns plus a normal maximum load of 8,000 lbs. of bombs
Engines: Four Pratt & Whitney R-1830-65 supercharged radials of 1,200 hp. each (take-off power)
Crew: Ten
Maximum speed: 290 mph.
Cruising speed: 215 mph.
Range: 3,700 miles (max. ferry range); 2,100 miles w/ 5,000 lbs. bomb load
Service Ceiling: 28,000 ft.
Cost: \$336,000.

In 2004

The "Really-Really Big One"

B-1B LANCER

Primary Function: Long-range, multi-role, heavy bomber
 Carrying the largest payload of both guided and unguided weapons in the Air Force inventory, the multi-mission B-1 is the backbone of America's long-range bomber force.

It can rapidly deliver massive quantities of precision and non-precision weapons against any adversary, anywhere in the world,

at any time.

The B-1B's self-protection electronic jamming equipment, radar warning receiver and expendable countermeasures (chaff and flare) system complements its low-radar cross-section to form an integrated, robust onboard defense system that supports penetration of hostile airspace.

Electronic countermeasures system detects and identifies the full spectrum of adversary threat emitters then applies the appropriate jamming technique either automatically or through operator manual inputs. Chaff and flares are employed against radar and infrared threat systems.

Power plant: Four General Electric F-101-GE-102 turbofan engine with afterburner
Thrust: 30,000-plus pounds with afterburner, per engine
Length: 146 feet
Wingspan: 137 feet extended forward, 79 feet swept aft
Height: 34 feet
Speed: 900-plus mph (Mach 1.2 at sea level)
Range: Intercontinental, un-refueled
Ceiling: More than 30,000 feet

Crew: Four (aircraft commander, copilot, and two weapon systems officers)

Armament: 24 GBU-31 GPS-aided JDAM (both Mk-84 general purpose bombs and BL109 penetrating bombs) or 24 Mk-84 2,000-pound general purpose bombs; 8 Mk-85 naval mines; 84 Mk-82 500-pound general purpose bombs; 84 Mk-62 500-pound naval mines; 30 CBU-87, -89, -97 cluster munitions.

Unit Cost: \$283.1 million (fiscal 98 constant dollars)

Recapping and doing rough math, the cost of building one B1 is roughly the same as building 850 B-24's, give or take a plane or two.

In 1945 a lady's bathing suit covered close to 75 percent of

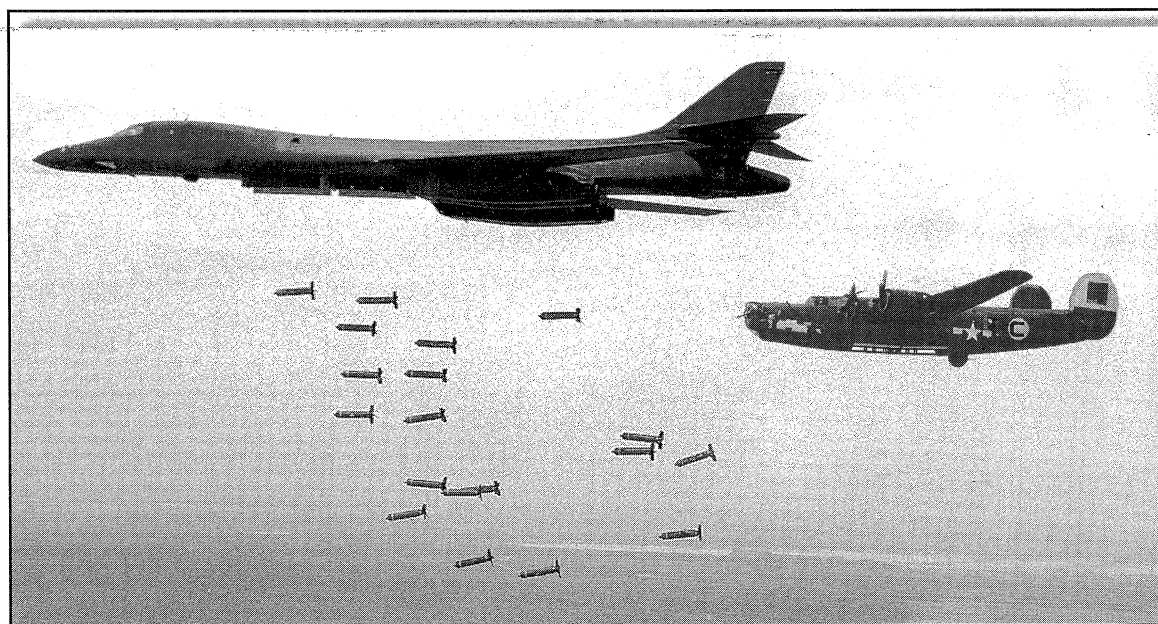
her body. Today, a lady's thong bathing suit covers less than one percent of her body.

Also another interesting statistic:-

Back in 1943 the average GI was able to jog a mile in roughly 10 minutes.

Today that very same GI would take all morning just getting to the starting line, providing the walker didn't break down.

Things are sure a changing!



Composite photograph showing the relative sizes of the B1 Bomber and the B-24 assuming both planes were flying on the same bombing mission today. (further assuming, the B-24 would be able to keep up with the B-1 flying at slow speed)

G.I. Joe's Serial Number

GI Joe's serial number tells you how he entered the Army and approximately where he enlisted or became a selectee.

For instance, take a look at the serial number of the soldier across the street. You notice that his serial number begins with the digit one. Then you know he enlisted in the Army of the United States some time after July 1940. Had he enlisted prior to that time, he would have had a number 6 as the first digit, denoting enlistment in the United States Army -making him what the GI calls "Regular Army".

In case his first number is a 3, he came into the Army of the United States through selective service. If his first number is a 2, he was a member of the National Guard.

If he entered the Army through selective service or enlisted after July 1940, the second digit of his serial number will be the same as the number of the service command in which he was inducted or enlisted. There are nine service commands in the nation.

For example, if GI Joe enlisted in the Army of the United States from the Ninth Service Command, he will have "19" as the first two digits of his serial number.

Another sidelight of the serial num-

ber is the alphabetical letter. An "A" precedes the number of an enlisted member of the Women's Army Corps; "L" precedes the number of the WAC officer; "O" begins the serial number of a male officer; a Warrant Officer prefixes his serial number with a "W"; and the Army nurse has an "N" before her serial number.

In the Army, animals too have serial numbers. Horses and mules have their identifications tattooed on their ears. A similar process is used in marking carrier pigeons of the Signal Corps. Dogs have a prefix "K" and wear their numbers on tags.

Serial numbers of enlisted men in the present army were set up in 1940. The regulation established numbers 11,000,000 to 19,999,999, inclusive, as the serial numbers of the Regular Army.

Numbers of the men in the National Guard were set as 20,100,000 to 20,999,999, and men who entered the service through selective service have numbers from 31,000,000 to 39,999,999, inclusive.

Some men inducted in recent months have serial numbers with 4 as the first digit. These men are from service commands in which the "3" series has been exhausted.

A NOTE FROM YOUR EDITOR

Composing this Newsletter is becoming increasingly more difficult with each succeeding edition. In order for me to produce a Newsletter that will be of interest to most of you, I will need content!

All of you have a story to tell.

About your stint in service or your life and hobbies post war.

I can not print articles or photos that I do not possess. I urge all of you to take some time out to re-count your past or your present, write it down and send it to me.

Letters, articles and general Info to be submitted to this Newsletter has never been easier.

Just E-mail anything you would like to share with others via the internet.

You can also send your photos for inclusion as well.

If you are unsure as to how to send your photos, E-mail me and I will attempt to walk you through it.

Send your items via E-mail to:

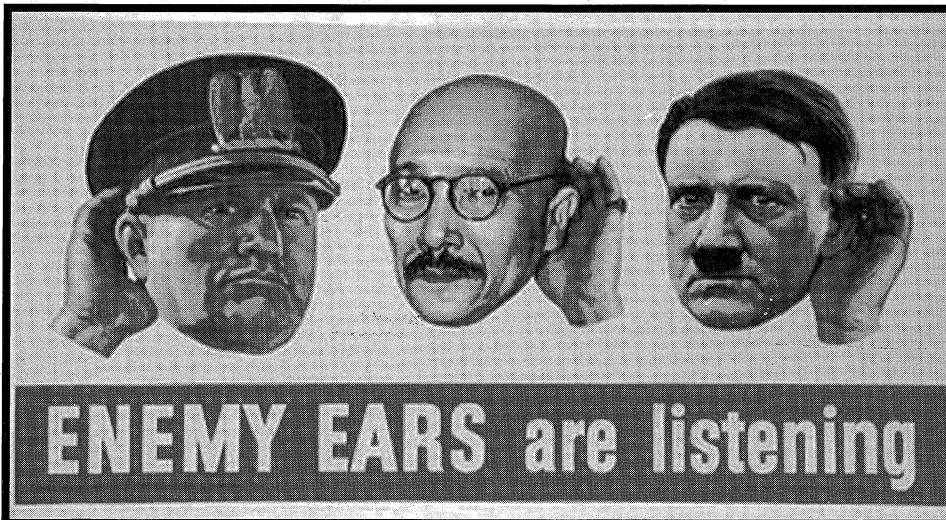
frank@frankambrose.com

Or you could use Snail Mail:-

**Frank Ambrose
46 So. Main Street
Gloversville, NY 12078**

PANTANELLA DAYS

Nothing
can be more confusing
than a group of P-51s
escorting
a group of B-24s
who were being
attacked
by a group of ME 109s
while flying
through a group of B-17s
being escorted
by a group of P-38s
who were being attacked
by a group of Fw-190s
while trying to bomb
the same target
while lost
on a cloudy day
over Europe



LETTERS

Frank: Will you please print this in the next Newsletter?

Thanks,
Richard Seabridge

A Tribute To My Pilot,
Howard R. (Bob) Wilcox
Out of 51 missions, it was my 30th mission that stands out in my mind above all of the rest

It was January 20, 1945 Main Marshaling Yard at Linz, Austria (see history book, pg. 80). Going down the I.P. we took a hit to #2 engine followed by a second engine hit. The aircraft was shaking until the engines got feathered.

The crew decided to stay with the plane. We flew over the target alone, trailing formation. We had considerable flak damage. Everything that wasn't needed was thrown overboard (guns, bombs, etc.). Hydraulic and #3 engine problems forced an emergency landing at Lucera A/D. We had to use the parachutes to help stop the aircraft.

I truly believe that I am here today due to the skill and courage of my pilot, Bob Wilcox. He and engineer Ralph Deacon did an outstanding job that day. I had tried to contact Bob Wilcox but he was not located when the 781st Bomb Squadron Association was formed nor when the 781st History Book was written. So we all missed out on his input to the book. I did finally succeed in my search only to find that he had passed away.

I wish I had had the opportunity to thank him for all he did that day to save the crew. This is my way of thanking him.

Signed:-
Richard S. Seabridge,
Ballgunner, Wilcox Crew

Subject: Pantanella Newsletter
Date: Tuesday, April 20, 2004
From: Carol Lee <olee@iw.net>
To: Frank Ambrose <amber@superior.net>

Frank-
781st Reunion report from Orren and Carole Lee
We were happy the membership voted for Rapid City, SD as one of the reunion locations to check out. We went to work making phone calls to put together a proposal to submit to the 781st Board for their approval. We had competition

from Marcel who was submitting a proposal on a cruise. The other option - North Carolina fizzled. Our proposal for Rapid City was approved! Every contact we made was very willing to work with us.

They are honored to have the 781st Bomb Squadron reunion in the Black Hills of South Dakota. We have chosen the Historical Hotel Alex Johnson for our reunion hotel. They have been great to work with to accommodate our reunion at an affordable price. They were booked in September so the dates of Oct. 3-7 were chosen. Normal temperature at that time in Rapid City is 65-75 degrees, but this is South Dakota, the land of infinite variety. If you don't like the weather, wait, it will change! !

We have a tour to Deadwood scheduled for Monday evening. You can check out the Saloon #10 where Wild Bill Hickok was shot and Calamity Jane's hung out.

Tuesday a bus will take us thru the beautiful Black Hills to

Mount Rushmore and the Crazy Horse Memorials. All four of the Presidents heads on Mt. Rushmore could fit inside the head of Crazy Horse. Wednesday will be a day at Ellsworth Air Force Base. The museum has a display of B-24's over the Ploesti oil fields in WWII.

We will have lunch at the Officer's Club on the base. After lunch will be a briefing prior to proceeding to the flight line for a tour of the B-1 Bomber. Those who choose to do so can go into the cockpit. They will give us a weapon demonstration and then a demonstration from their canine unit. They are very proud of their dogs. They have an award dog. We will proceed to the chapel for a memorial service. The evening will be spent back at the hotel with the banquet.

We are thrilled to have the 781st come to South Dakota. Come - and experience our western hospitality first hand. See you in the hospitality room Oct. 3, 2004.
Carole

**DON'T WAIT
ELLSWORTH AF BASE
PLAN NOW
TO ATTEND
781st. B.S. REUNION
OCT. 3-7, 2004
RAPID CITY, SD
Hotel Alex Johnson
1 800 888 2539**

FOLDED WINGS**Agnes G. Althoff 2003**

Agnes G. Althoff passed away at her home on Sunday morning, January 18, 2004 at the age of 80, after a brief illness. She is survived by her husband of 58 years, James; her daughter Patricia and husband Richard Smith; her son Michael and his wife Sue; 5 grandchildren and 4 great grandchildren; sisters Christine Stroik and Joan Breecher of Wisconsin and nieces and nephews. Her loss is felt by all that knew her.

Donald Clodfelter, Pilot died April 14, 2003. Reported by his wife Wilma.

Ellen Badler Bernie, Badler's wife passed away January 11, 2004. Reported by Bernie Badler

Warren Beeson, Co-pilot on Dahl crew folded his wings on November 12, 2003. Warren had a heart attack while bowling.

James Debevec Sr. Crutcher Engineer died July 26, 2003. Reported by his son, Jim Jr.

Dodie Shallman, Widow of Lt. Jerome F. Jolicoeur, (kia 6/340/44) who attended most of the reunions held by the association. Dodie folded her wings in April 2003. Belatedly reported by her son-in-law on 3/18/20

Leroy Carlisle, Engineering Chief Electrician passed away January 18, 2001. Reported by his son William on 2/20/2004.

Reuben L. Krogh, Donahue Co-pilot succumbed to diabetes after a valiant fight, on January 16, 2004. He is survived by his devoted wife, Verna; his daughter Alison Vandermeulen of Groton, NY; his son Justin, of San Carols, CA; His brother Judson and wife Ann of Greenville, TX; his sister Gretchen and husband Hans Sorensen of Palo Alto, CA; his sister in law, Mae Brown of Sacramento, CA and many nieces and nephews. Reported by his Pilot and life long friend, Ben Donahue..

**Capt. Harry S. Carl 1944**

Harry S. Carl Jr. Communications Officer, who also served as President, First Vice President, Pantanella News Editor for many years and the Historian for the 781st Bomb Squadron Association. Harry folded his wings on February 28, 2004. He will be remembered by all members particularly, those who are trying to fill his shoes. A formidable task. Reported by Kaye Thompson, widow of Byron Thompson, and friend of both Harry and Donna Carl

Robert R. Leasure passed away on 12/21/03. Reported by his wife.

TREASURER'S CORNER

Report for April 2004

During the first weeks of the year, changes were made in the banking arrangement with Wells-Fargo Bank in order to achieve a higher rate of interest than we had been receiving on our banked savings. This involved changing from small business accounts to what is known as a Portfolio Management Account (PMA). The 781st Checking account remains open to receive checks for dues from members. It will also be used to receive fees for reunion activity. The treasurer will move funds among the new and old accounts to the advantage of the organization

As of April 1, 2004, these accounts contain the following amounts:

781st Bomb Squadron Association Checking	\$4812.71
Reunion Checking	00.00
PMA Checking	100.00
PMA Savings Account	34,700.46
Total	\$39,613.17

There are no outstanding obligations against any of these accounts.

J.W. Ogden, Treasurer
781st Bomb Squadron Association

Our thoughts
and prayers
are with all
our fallen comrades
who have found
everlasting peace.
You have served
your country well.
We will remember
you
forever.

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

They say that trouble comes in bunches, like bananas! I certainly hope that is not the case for the 781st Bomb Squadron Association, however I must report bad news from two of the organization founders.

First, there is a report on Jim Althoff. Jim has been placed in a rest home, suffering from Alzheimer's disease. According to his son, Mike, he is still physically active, but he is not always cogent. He was placed in the home shortly after the death of Agnes, his wife, and he is not expected to return home. Jim Althoff has indicated to his daughter Pat that he would welcome cards and letters from the association members. If you should be interested in corresponding, His address follows:

Mr. Jim Althoff
1301 Ralston Ave.,
Room #107 Bay
Belmont, CA 94002-1904

We have included an obit on Agnes in the folded wings section of the paper. This is a new departure for the paper, but since both Jim and Agnes gave so unstintingly of themselves for the welfare of our organization, we thought that it was fitting to include her in the FW section. Both of these folks will be greatly missed!

Second, is the report of the death of

Harry Carl? He was already in great difficulty with severe Vertigo, when, the quality of life decreased very rapidly. In just the last 6 months he was put in a care facility for Alzheimer's. As you are aware, Vertigo affects the individual's balance. Harry was unable to support himself without assistance. Because of this condition, Harry suffered repeated falls. He broke his hip, toward the end, but his suffering was relatively short. As you know, Harry served as the Vice President, Editor of the Pantanella News and the organizations Historian. His efforts will always be a great part of our organization.

Donna Carl has graciously donated Harry's slide pictures and the vocal tape that makes up a history presentation on the 781st, plus his collection of Pantanella News, to the organization. We will endeavor to keep it all together with the idea of putting it all in one place, when the time comes. We can talk about it at Rapid City. All suggestions are welcome. Any funds remaining in our treasury, after our final roll call, should probably be part of this organizational bequest.

On to other things. In early February, I wrote and distributed a letter to the LIFE members of our association. Many of these members have not been heard from in some time. My concern was hearing that they were alive and well, and that their address was accurate in our records. I requested that each of them respond rapidly

with all pertinent information. As of this of this writing, I have had positive response from 71 of our 106 LIFEers.

Where are the other 35? If a response is not received soon, I will place the non communicators on the inactive list, thereby saving considerable postage on newsletter distribution. That will not help the size of the organization, but it will assure that the LIFE members that are active will continue to receive the paper.

Those of you who chose to pay dues annually, and who are not up to date, have been slow in responding also. There are many of our members that have not responded to repeated calls. They too can look forward to becoming inactive after the April issue of the paper.

Our problem with the estate of John E. Fahrner has been resolved. The 5th amendment to the trust does include the 781st, although a smaller piece than the 6th amendment. Since the cost of fighting for the 6th amendment was extremely high, it has been decided to accept the lower figure. We will not know what that amount is until the estate has been distributed, but something is much better than entering an expensive fight that we might not win, and that could easily cost more than the value we would obtain.

Respectfully,
 John W. Ogden, President

LETTERS

Subject: Pantanella newsletter
 January 2004

Date: Tuesday, January 20,
 2004 1:20 PM

From: Robert Freed
 <RLF1@peoplepc.com>

To: Frank Ambrose
 <amber@superior.net>

Frank:

See page 4 newsletter January issue. In case your memory needs jogging the GI is Loren Foote(former chaplain of the 781st). The dogs are Angeline & Jessica both owned by Morris Cohen of our Ordnance Section. Morris made no secret of the fact he was going to try to get both dogs overseas. Morris talked me into

carrying one of the dogs in my duffle bag and he would carry the other in his.

Well after a few trials to keep the dogs from moving around in the top of the duffle bags and particularly to avoid the eyes of the MP's who were at dock side, we made it thru without any problems. How Morris manage to get enough food to feed them I'll never know but he did make a go of it. Both dogs were wonderful companions Angie I believe, stayed with us the entire time at Pantanella and was lost to an MP when we boarded the US Admiral Eberle for our Trinidad trip. Jessica was lost while at Pantanella.

I think this to be correct as she couldn't be found on our return trip to Naples. If you hear from Morris Cohen I'm certain he can fill you in.

Bob Freed





Our convoy entered Naples Bay on March 25 which was filled with ships of all descriptions and from many nationalities

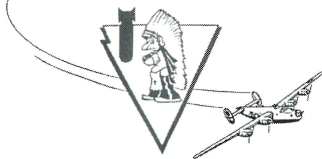
It was a spectacular entrance, the sky was leaden as if a tremendous storm was developing but there was no wind and no thunder or lightning.

The air was heavy with what appeared to be dust settling on the ships and the men

After a considerable delay, the Unit was told that Mt. Vesuvius, the volcano that had buried Pompeii and Herculaneum, was erupting.

It was later learned that Vesuvius was having its most active eruption in over 50 years.

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



1/1/2005
ORREN J. LEE
2312 BRAEMAR DR.
SOUX FALLS, SD 57105

Return Service Requested