

PANTANELLA NEWS

Published by 781st Bomb Squadron Association©

79 April 2005

IN TOUCH WITH THE PRESENT 781st. FLYERS RECALLING THE PAST



'B' Is For BIG!- Really! Really BIG! "B-52"

Air Combat Command's B-52 is a long-range, heavy bomber that can perform a variety of missions. The bomber is capable of flying at high subsonic speeds at altitudes up to 50,000 feet. It can carry nuclear or conventional ordnance with worldwide precision navigation capability.

In a conventional conflict, the B-52 can

perform air interdiction, offensive counter-air and maritime operations. Two B-52s, in two hours, can monitor 140,000 square miles of ocean surface

The use of aerial refueling gives the B-52 a range limited only by crew endurance. It has an un-refueled combat range in excess of 8,800 miles

The aircraft's flexibility was evident during the Vietnam War and, again, in Operation Desert Storm.

B-52s struck wide-area troop concentrations, fixed installations and bunkers, and decimated the morale of Iraq's Republican Guard.

The Gulf War involved the longest strike mission in the history of aerial warfare when B-52s took off from Barksdale Air Force Base,

continued on Pg 2 Col 1

'B' is For BIG!!!

continued from Pg 1

La., and launched conventional air launched cruise missiles and returned to Barksdale -- a 35-hour, non-stop combat mission.

Barksdale AFB, LA and Minot AFB, ND serves as B-52 Main Operating Bases (MOB). Training missions are flown from both

Current B-52H crew size is five. Pilot and co-pilot are side by side on the upper flight deck, along with the electronic warfare officer (EWO), seated behind the pilot facing aft.

Side by side on the lower flight deck are the radar navigator, responsible for weapons delivery, and the navigator, responsible for guiding the aircraft from point

A to point B.

The controls and displays for aircraft systems are distributed among the crew stations on the basis of responsibilities. The Air Force's objective is to employ the latest navigation and communication technology to reduce the crew size to four people, by combining the radar navigator and navigator functions into one position.

781st Bomb Squadron Association
3728 Evergreen Drive
Dickinson, TX 77539-6108
(281) 337-3494
email: johnoco@hal-pc.org

Officers

John W. Ogden, President
Barney Russell, Vice President
John W. Ogden, Sec/Treasurer
Chaplain: Don Bailey
NEWS Editor: Frank Ambrose

Board of Directors

James C. Althoff, President Emeritis
John W. Ogden
Barney Russell
Frank Ambrose
Ken Kill
Chas (Bubba) Braud

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

Back to the Past.. The Squadron History Continues.....

Continued from Issue #78 Page 5

Lt. Hylla and the other surviving crew members spent the remainder of the war in German POW camps. Here Hylla learned to bake cakes and pies using Red Cross packaged crackers and other ingredients called Klim and Condendo. His diary during this period has many entries, showing both high hope and bitter disappointment. Hope that the Allies were near and disappointment when it turned out that they were not. Down days and up days.....

Celebrations with Spam and canned cheese. And rare days when there actually was enough to eat to feel comfortably full. The camp was liberated on 29 April 1945 and evacuated some time thereafter.

Meanwhile, in addition to its losses in combat, the Squadron had suffered several casualties in ground actions during June. None of these involved enemy forces, however. Lt. William J. Magowan nearly severed four fingers of his right hand when he tripped over a tent rope while carrying a machete. After hospitalization and treatment he was returned to the United States.

Two members of Lt. Ray W Hurd's Crew sustained injuries in a command car accident at Naples. Lt. George F Kilby, Co-Pilot, suffered a broken leg and Lt. Salvatore J. Scippa, Bombardier, received lacerations of the head and face. During June, Lt. Leon M. Werblm, Armament Officer, was transferred to another Group and he was re-placed by Lt. Gerard G. Schaefer. Lt. Burton J. Fischley, Personal Equipment Officer, was transferred to the 782nd Squadron as Engineering Officer.

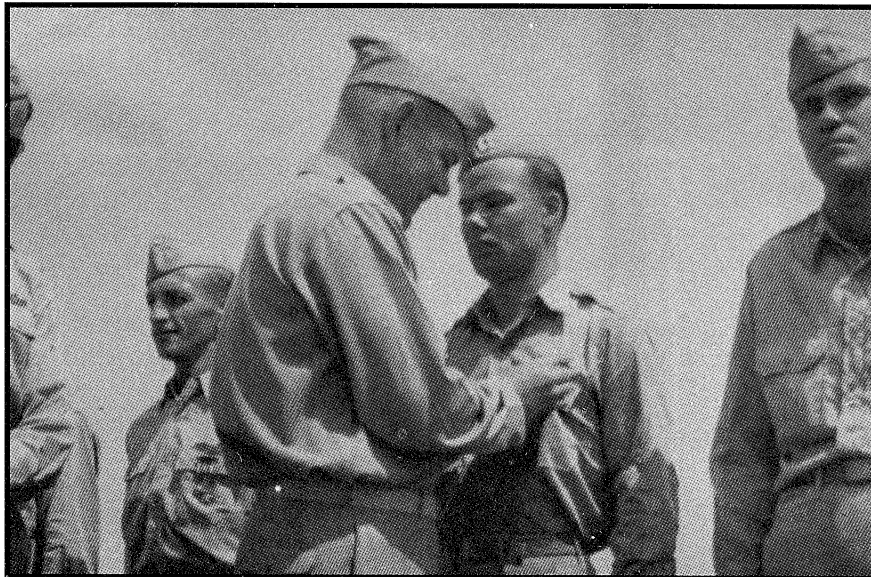
President Franklin Delano Roosevelt died on 30 June but it didn't seem real until the flag at Group Headquarters was seen flying at half-mast. A formation of the entire Group was called for a brief memorial service and the oc-

casation was used to present a number of awards.

Since combat operations began on May 5th, the Squadron Gunners had established a fine record of marksmanship. They defended their planes with accurate machine-gun fire against enemy attack and the following claims had been allowed through June 30:

S/Sgt. John H. Forhan (Shetterly Crew), Gunner, one Me-109 destroyed and one Me-109 damaged; T/Sgt. Hulitt L. Holcombe (Tipton Crew), RIO, one FW-190 destroyed; T/Sgt. Ronald E. Hill (Athon Crew) RIO, one FW-190 destroyed; S/Sgt. William W Strickland (R. J Smith Crew Gunner), one Me-109 destroyed; S/Sgt Oliver E. Graham, Gunner, and T/Sgt. Harold W Gordon, RIO, (Schuster Crew) jointly destroyed one Me-109; S/Sgt. Paul H. Mallette (Shetterly Crew), Gunner, one Me-109 probable, one Me-109 damaged and one Me-410 damaged;

S/Sgt. John Jurdyga (Shetterly Crew), Gunner, also damaged the Me-410 listed above; T/Sgt. Albert P McQuaid, Jr. (MacFarlane Crew), Engineer, one Me-109 probable; S/Sgt. Harry R. Edwards (R. J. Smith Crew), Gunner, one Me-109 probable; T/Sgt. George S. Wilson (Shetterly Crew) RIO, three Me-109's damaged; S/Sgt. R. C. Williams (Athon



Frank Ambrose Photo

In an Awards Ceremony in early July, '44, Brig. Gen. George R. Achenson presents medals to Lt. Col. Clarence J. Lokker, Capt. William P Wood and others as Col. Charles A. Clark, Jr. observes

Crew) Gunner, one JU-88 damaged.

Two destroyed Me-110's were shared by the Crews of Martin, Stenersen, Tipton, Wray and others. One destroyed Me-109 was shared by the Crews of Branch and others. Lt. Hurd's Crew damaged two Me-109's and one FW-190, which were subsequently destroyed by other Crews.

In addition to the claims allowed above many combat Crew members in the Squadron received awards for meritorious service while participating in aerial operations against the enemy.

The following men received the Air Medal during June: Maj. Clarence J. Lokker, Capt. William P Wood, Capt. James W Wray, Jr., Capt. Lewis M. Roberts, Capt. John R. Dickey (MIA), 1st Lt. Philip F Schuster, 1st Lt. Joe M. Athon, Jr., 1st Lt. Ray W. Hurd, 1st Lt. Robert J. Smith, 1st Lt. Charles V Stenersen, 1st Lt. Dale C. Tipton, 1st Lt. George R Ashley, 1st Lt. Thomas J. O'Brien, 1st Lt. Robert L. Shetterly, 1st Lt. George A. Prince (MIA), 1st Lt. Raymond D. Cauble, 1st Lt. John F MacFarlane, 1st Lt. Jack Van Slyke, 1st Lt. Kenneth M Martin (MIA), 1st Lt. Leslie S. Wheeler, 1st Lt. Jerome F Joliceur (MIA), 1st Lt. Donald E. Fleming, 1st Lt. George W Hausold (MIA), 1st Lt. James J. Lyons, 1st Lt. Albert W Myers, 2nd Lt. Thomas G. Arthur, 2nd Lt. Billy L. Bickley, 1st Lt. John Fandrey, 2nd Lt. Robert R. Gaston, 1st Lt. William A. Gill, 2nd Lt. Harold A. Givens, 2nd Lt. Robert H. Matthews, 2nd Lt. Ernest Van Asperen, 2nd Lt. Donald A. Barrett, 2nd Lt. John T Benson, 2nd Lt. Griscom Bettie, Jr., 2nd Lt. James B. Doyle, 2nd Lt. Leo A. Fink, 2nd Lt. William A. McBride, 2nd Lt. Samuel F Monroe, 2nd Lt. Kenneth B. Braley, 2nd Lt. Vernon L. Burda, 2nd Lt. Calvin J. Canyock (MIA), 2nd Lt. George F Kilby, 2nd Lt. William J. Magowan, 2nd Lt. Salvatore J. Scippa, 2nd Lt. Murray Septoff (MIA), 2nd Lt. Harold F Achenback, 2nd Lt. Bernard Badler, 2nd Lt. Seth H. Hawkins, 2nd Lt. Alfred W Rodman, 2nd Lt. Roland C. Taylor, 2nd Lt. Harold D. Holden (MIA), 2nd Lt. Ralford L. Crouch, 2nd Lt. Arthur C. Eaton, 2nd Lt. Robert L. George, 2nd Lt. Frank T. Hylla (MIA), 2nd Lt. Eugene M. Krzyzynski, 2nd Lt. Joseph M. Neuman, 2nd Lt. John L. E. Noyer, 2nd Lt. Howard L. Sapenoff (MIA), 2nd Lt. Joseph H. Saul, Jr., 2nd Lt. Gerald A. Siefert, 2nd Lt. Roland J. Soucy, 2nd Lt. Alexander H. Stephens, 2nd Lt. Barbour C. Stokes, Jr., 2nd Lt. Rex L. Struble (MIA), 2nd Lt. Elliot B. Sweet, 2nd Lt. Kenneth L. Tedln, 2nd Lt. Eugene A. Weiss, 2nd Lt. Sidney Weiss (MIA), 2nd Lt. John E. Ward, 2nd Lt. Robert L. Williamson (MIA), T/Sgts. Earl J. Chase, Harold W Gordon, Ronald E. Hill, Thomas R. Jackson, Louis F. Kurek, Charles T. Shoults, Lawrence H. White, Albert P. McQuaid, Jr., Harold C. Butterfield, James H. Kienitz, Samuel P. Shelby, Jewel C. Shelnutt, James E. Waggle, John L. Crowley (MIA), Dowle J. Hymans, Harry M. Smith (MIA), William G. Tylavsky

Clinton P. Flowers, Carl W. Gruber, Albert P. LeBlanc, Robert P. McCague, Horace E. Williams, James R. Zimmerman, Joseph L. Kaufman, Benjamin L. Kraeger, George A. Wilson

(MIA), Aubrey L. Barksdale, Harold F. Burchards, Robert H. Carr (MIA), Hulitt L. Holcombe, Frank R. Jasicko, Manuel Quinones, Jr., S/Sgts. Oliver E. Graham, Joseph Ragan, Edward J. E. Chapin, Herbert F. Green, Thea S. Harris, Louis D. Levang, Albert Mimer, Edward J. Schreiner, Jerome K. Williams, John E. Wlodarski, Nicholas C. Belik, Ralph C. Finch, Stephen J. Mariniak, Charles N. Fry, Charles R. Holzhauer, Louis L. La Haye, Harold A. Straughan, William W. Strickland, James V. P. Wagner, Robert C. Williams, Dean R. Winans, Melvin L. Derry, Harry R. Edwards, Dennis B. Flaherty, Milton W. Landsverk, Roy H. Fblk, Joseph P. McDevitt, James F. Downs (MIA), Abraham Dubinsky (MIA), Melvin R. Fulkerson, Dean F. Jones, James R. Phillips, Jack C. Williams (MIA), Joseph F. Fergusson, Jr. (MIA), John H. Forhan, Joseph A. Lavender, Walter N. Longacre, Paul H. Mallette, Albert I. Thompson, Quincy F. Adams, Paul E. Gordon, Jr., Raymond J. Huch, John Jurdyga, Olin R. Morris, Bennie C. Naticchioni, Bill J. Poulos, Kennard R. Wiggins, Hoyt F. Adsit (MIA), Paul B. Brady, Joseph E. Carroll (MIA), David L. Downs, William M. Golden, Norman Hunter, Jr., Albert D. Ralston, Jr., Reyer Swan, Stavalius Tserigotis, George D. Cocalis, Edward G. Denny, John R. Duke (MIA), Leonard H. Emmel, Harold B. Farrar, Arthur N. Franklin, Robert H. Hoover (MIA), Jarmar Jancarik (MIA), William G. Soteropoulos, Richard A. Thill (MIA), Frederick P. Yost, Sgts. Calder M. Lamprey, Jimmy Patrick (MIA), Morris G. Godwin.

The following men received the Purple Heart Medal:

1st Lt. Raymond D. Cauble, 1st Lt. John Fandrey, 1st Lt. William A. Gill, 1st Lt. Jerome K. Joliceur, 2nd Lt. Robert L. George, T/Sgt. Albert P. McQuaid, S/Sgt. Bennie C. Naticchioni, S/Sgt. Ralph C. Finch.

Personnel strength as of 2400 hours, 30 June stood at: Officers: 83 assigned, 15 attached; Enlisted Men: 394 assigned, 28 attached.

July 1944...

July began with a day of rest for the air Crews as weather canceled the scheduled mission. On 1 July Lt. Rodman returned from rest camp (automatic after 25 missions) and he had this to say: "Did I have a time at that rest camp! It was located at a place called Villaggio Mancuso. Boy, I'll remember that place for awhile."

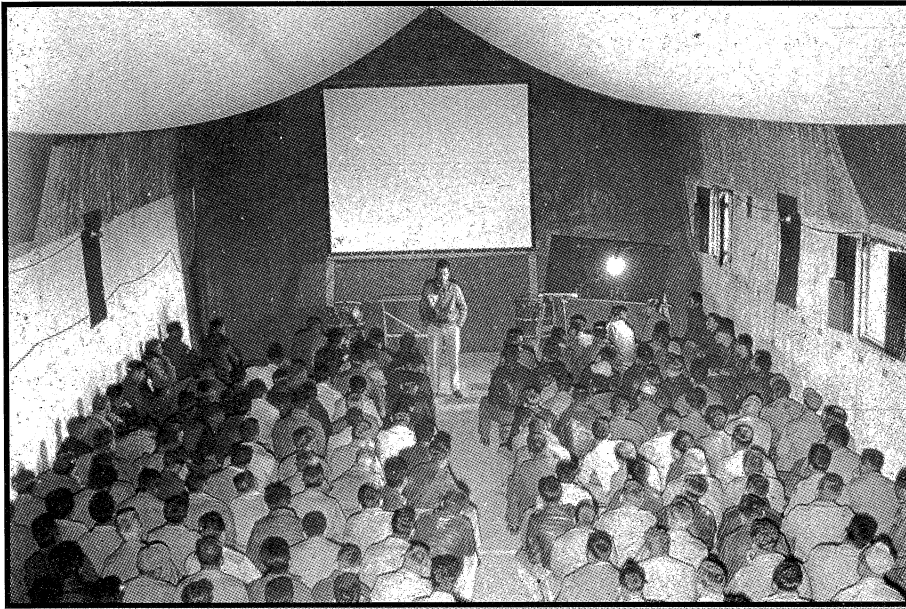
On 2 July the target was the Rakos Marshaling Yards at Budapest, Hungary. Results were good and all Crews returned safely. Participating Crews were flown by Capt. Roberts, and Lts. Shetterly, Tipton, Doyle, Frazier, R.J. Smith, and MacFarlane.

The mission for 3 July was the Marshaling Yards at Timisoara, Rumania. It was led by Capt. Wray flying a crew with Lt. Walter H. Sutton as his Bombardier and a new Group record was set for bomb strikes within 1,000 feet of target. In addition to Capt. Wray, Crews with Lts. Steersen, Hurd, Tanenbaum, Branch, Lovey, Wheeler, Schuster, and MacFarlane took part and returned without mishap.

No mission was scheduled for 4 July but on 5 July the target was the Submarine Pens at Toulon, France. Intense flak was encountered but good results were achieved without casualty. Taking part



Rear: Lt. James J. Lyons, Bombardier; Lt. Seth H. Hawkins, Jr., Navigator; Lt. Joseph H. Saul, Jr., Co-Pilot; Thomas J. O'Brien, Pilot; T/Sgt. Horace E. Williams, Engr.; S/Sgt. Morris G. Goodwin, Top Gunner
Kneeling: S/Sgt. Quincy F. Adams, Tail Gunner; S/Sgt. Kennard R. Wiggins, Ball Gunner; T/Sgt. Carl W. Gruber, R/O; S/Sgt. Paul E. Gordon, Jr., Nose Gunner



"Gentlemen, The Target For Today is Ploesti!" Frank Ambrose Photo

were Crews with Maj. Lokker, Capt. Roberts and Lts. Wheeler, Van Slyke, Frazier, Doyle, and O'Brien. On this mission Lt. William T. Newborg, formerly Co-Pilot for Lt. Poole, was killed as a result of enemy action. He was flying with a 464th Bomb Group Crew.

Lt. Rodman's diary reports, "Flew with Roberts in the deputy group leader's ship, #2 In Able box. At briefing we were told the air opposition would be light and of inferior quality. What a lie that turned out to be. We hit the French coast and the IP okay and turned on the bomb run. Jerry had a very thin smoke up with some intense and accurate flak; saw a ship behind us go down in flames. Bomb pattern was good and target was covered completely.

"As soon as we turned off the target a flock of enemy fighters hit us head on, only good pilots attempt that maneuver. I got in several bursts with the nose guns but couldn't see any results. After a couple passes at us the Heinies picked on the group behind us. I couldn't see that we lost anyone and shortly afterwards we were over the Mediterranean again on the way home."

S/Sgt. Francis J. Walborn, Top Gunner on Capt. Dickey's Crew noted in his diary on that date, "Flak heavy inaccurate. P-38 escort. Ten 500 lb. bombs. Flak knocked out #3 engine. Couldn't keep up with formation but P-38 escorted us home."

On 6 July the target was the Oil Storage area at Porto Marghera, Italy. Fair results were achieved with all Crews returning safely. Participating Crews were flown by Capt. Wray, and Lts. Shetterly, Schuster, Willett, Stenersen, MacFarlane, Eaton, and Siefert. This was the first mission as First Pilot for Lts. Eaton (formerly Co-Pilot for Lt. Schuster) and Siefert (formerly Co-Pilot for Capt. Roberts). Eaton was assigned as Pilot of Lt. Lovey's Crew and Siefert was assigned as Pilot of Lt. Tanenbaum's Crew.

The target on 7 July was the Blechham-

mer Syn-thetic Oil Plant near Kosel, Germany. A very effective smoke screen completely covered the target and, although it was believed that good results were achieved, the actual bomb strikes could not be seen. Crews flown by Capt. Roberts and Lts. Shetterly, Branch, Ashley, Doyle, and Tipton participated.

On 8 July one of the outstanding missions of the Group was flown to the Florisdorfer Oil Refinery and Marshaling Yards at Vienna, Austria. Intense flak was encountered as well as a great many enemy aircraft. Notwithstanding the heavy defense thrown up by the enemy, bombing results were excellent. The Group lost one Crew but the four 781st Squadron Crews, piloted by Lts. Ashley, Branch, Van Slyke, and Stenersen, returned safely.

Extremely bad weather forced cancellation of missions scheduled for 9 July, 10 July, and 11 July. The target on 12 July was the Marshaling Yards at Nimes, France. This was the Group's second raid on this facility and bombing results were excellent. A number of enemy fighters attacked just before bombs were released and the Group lost one aircraft. However, all 781st Squadron Crews returned without harm. Pilots of Crews participating were Maj. Lokker, and Lts. R.J. Smith, Doyle, Shetterly, Eaton, MacFarlane, Wheeler, Van Slyke, Tipton, and Siefert.

On 13 July Capt. Wray, flying a Crew with Lt. Albert W (Shack) Myers as his Bombardier, led the Group to another record of bomb strikes within 1000 ft. of the target. This target was the Oil Storage area at Porto Marghera, Italy, the second raid on this facility during the month. Other Pilots of Crews taking part in this achievement were Lts. O'Brien, Shetterly, Leggate, and Ashley. This was Lt. Leggate's first mission since his assignment to the Squadron earlier in July.

Sgt. Walborn noted, "Cocalis, our radio operator, was flying with another crew. Piece of shrapnel came up through the bottom of the plane, scraped the skin off

the back of his neck peeled the ear flap off his flak helmet and continued through the top of the plane."

The Porta Marghera Oil Storage facilities were the target for the second day in a row on 14 July but adverse weather made it impossible to attack the primary or the alternate target. Flying on this ineffective sortie were Crews with Lts. Van Slyke, Wheeler, Tipton, Eaton, and Siefert.

On 15 July the mission objective was the Unirea Sperantza Oil Refinery at Ploesti, Rumania. Smoke from previous bombings and an effective smoke screen laid down by the enemy precluded determination of the results of the attack. Flak was intense and enemy fighters attacked the Group but all Crews returned to base safely. Taking part were Crews with Capt. Roberts, and Lts. Shetterly, Schuster, Ashley, Hurd, R.J. Smith, and O'Brien.

The Squadron lost its sixth aircraft to enemy action on 16 July in an attack on the Weiner Neudorf Engine Works near Vienna, Austria. Results of the mission could not be determined because of bad weather conditions over the target. Flak was very heavy and enemy aircraft attacks were numerous.

Pilots of Crews on this mission were: Lts. Doyle, Willett, Stenersen, Frazier, and Tipton, with the latter Crew failing to return to Base. Lt. Tipton had just been appointed a Flight Commander replacing Capt. Dickey, missing in action since 30 June.

This was the second time that Lt. Tipton and Crew had been forced to abandon ship because of enemy action. The first was on 31 May because of flak damage during a raid on the Ploesti, Rumania oil facilities. The #2 engine on Lt. Tipton's aircraft ran out of oil before reaching the target. Tipton managed to hold position in the formation during the bombing run and until they turned away from the target.

The plane was hit by ME-109's at 1015 hours causing damage to no. 3 engine and making it impossible to keep up with the formation. The plane was losing altitude and, in the vicinity of Zagreb, Yugoslavia, a German fighter appeared.

The B-24 was in no condition to defend against the fighter so the Crew bailed out and were taken into custody by Ustachi troops who turned them over to German soldiers.

They spent two days in Zagreb being interrogated and then were taken by train to Budapest, Hungary. After about a week at Budapest they were entrained for Salzgitter, Germany, where they remained until 27 January 1945. They then were moved to Nuremberg because of the Russian advance and in early April, to Moosburg because of the American and British advance, where they were finally liberated by the Third Army under General George Patton.

Members of the missing Crew were: Lt. Dale C. Tipton, Pilot; Lt. Eugene A. Weiss, Co-Pilot; Lt. Vernon IJ. Burda, Navigator; Lt. Eugene W. Krzyzynski, Bombardier; T/Sgt. Frank R. Jasicko, Engr.; T/Sgt. Hulitt L. Holcombe, RIO; S/Sgt. Harold B. Farrar, Gunner; S/Sgt. Albert D. Ralston, Jr., Gunner; S/Sgt. Paul B. Brady, Gunner;

and S/Sgt. Michael J. Deironimi, Gunner.

No mission was scheduled on 17 July and weather aborted the mission on 18 July, scheduled for the Oder Radarach Synthetic Fuel Plant at Friedrichshafen, Germany. The Group was unable to assemble and returned to Base shortly after takeoff.

On 19 July the Group attacked the Marshaling Yards at Munich, Germany with fair results in spite of heavy flak at the target. Crews with Maj. Lokker, and Lts. O'Brien, Schuster, Leggate, Siefert, Ashley, MacFarlane, and Hurd participated and all returned safely. However, Lt. O'Brien and Crew were forced by flak damage to crash land just west of Pantanella Air Base en route back from this mission. The aircraft's rudder controls were inoperative but, in spite of this, Lt. O'Brien was able to bring the crippled ship to a safe landing without injury to any Crewmember or serious additional damage to the aircraft.

On 2 September, the entire Crew with Lt. O'Brien was awarded Distinguished Flying Crosses for their actions on this mission. It was the second DFC awarded to Lt. O'Brien. The citation accompanying the awards reads:

"For extraordinary achievement in aerial flight as crew of a B-24 type aircraft. On 19 July 1944, this gallant crew participated in bombing mission against vital strategic enemy installations in Germany. Despite serious mechanical difficulties encountered en route which threatened to preclude the successful completion of the mission, displaying outstanding professional skill and determination, they brought their aircraft directly to the target. Despite intense, heavy and accurate barrages of anti-aircraft fire, together with the crippled condition of their aircraft, they skillfully maneuvered it through the enemy fire for a highly successful bombing run.

The bombs from their ship were concentrated in the immediate target area, inflicting grave damage to vital installations. Turning from the target, their aircraft was further damaged by enemy flak. However despite the almost un-airworthy condition of their ship, with outstanding resourcefulness and courage, they brought their ship through for a successful crash landing at home base.

By their outstanding professional skill, determination and devotion to duty, as evidenced throughout thirty (30) successful missions against the enemy; these men have reflected great credit upon themselves and the Armed Forces of the United States of America."

Sgt. Walborn flew this mission as part of another Crew and reported, 'Anti-aircraft fire (so far) has generally been just so many puffs of black smoke that appears around you or hits other aircraft. Today, I heard it. Wings and fuselage had many holes. Number 4 engines knocked out of commission. Had gas leak until fuel was transferred from leaking tank to good one.'

On 20 July the target attacked was the Luftschiffbau Zeppelin Works at Friedrichshafen, Germany. In terms of military



This was the second time that Lt. Tipton and Crew had been forced to abandon ship because of enemy action.

damage inflicted, this was one of the most successful missions flown by the Group to date. Almost total destruction of the briefed target was achieved. Pilots of Crews Involved were Capt. Wray and Lts. Stenersen, Eaton, Shetterly, Wheeler, Leggate, and Frazier.

Lt. Frazier's Crew returned early because of engine problems. Also, S/Sgt. Albert B. Copeland, Nose Gunner on Lt. Tanenbaum's Crew, but flying with Lt. Frazier's Crew on this mission, received a serious flak wound penetrating into the brain tissue on the right side of his head.

No mission was scheduled on 21 July. On 22 July the target was the Romana Americana Oil Refinery at Ploesti, Rumania. Severe weather plus a heavy smoke screen prevented successful bombing. Lts. Van Slyke, Willett, Wheeler, Athon, and Hurd participated without casualty.

However, Lt. O'Brien encountered engine problems forcing him to turn back before reaching the target. Flak was encountered on the return route which wounded Lt. O'Brien in the leg and damaged the aircraft sufficiently to require an emergency landing at Brindisi, Italy. In this landing the aircraft crashed into a ditch when O'Brien was forced to swerve off the runway in order to avoid another airplane.

This accident caused a number of serious injuries. T/Sgt. Carl W. Gruber, R/O, was killed by a crushing injury of the skull. Lt. Thomas J. O'Brien, Pilot, suffered severe lacerations over the right eye and a compound fracture of the right fibula complicated by the earlier flak wound. Lt. Seth H. Hawkins, Jr., Navigator, received a fracture of the right upper jaw and multiple bruises. S/Sgt. Paul E. Gordon, Jr., Gunner, had severe lacerations of the right scalp. Lt. Joseph H. Saul, Jr., Co-Pilot; Lt. James E. Lyons, Bombardier; T/Sgt. Horace E. Williams, Engr., S/Sgt. Quincy E. Adams, Gunner;

S/Sgt. Kenneth R. Wiggins, Gunner; and S/Sgt. Morris R. Godwin, Gunner, all suffered multiple cuts and bruises.

As noted earlier, five members of Lt. George Prince's Crew returned to Italy on this date and a sixth member, S/Sgt. John L. Crowley, who had been seriously injured in the fighter attack on 30 May had escaped to Italy earlier in July.

No mission was scheduled for 23 July. On 24 July the target was La Tresorerie Landing Ground near Valence, France. This was the fiftieth combat mission for the Group but the first mission on which fragmentation bombs were carried. Results were considered marginal because of bad weather over the target. However, one enemy aircraft was thought to be destroyed on the ground. All Crews returned safely. Participating were Crews with Lts. R.J. Smith, Doyle, Shetterly, Ashley, Frazier, Schuster, and J.T. Smith. The latter was flying his first combat mission with the Squadron.

Another very successful mission was flown on 25 July to the Herman Goering Tank Works at Linz, Austria. Great destruction was accomplished on this newly constructed plant. Pilots of Crews taking part were Lts. Athon, Branch, J.T. Smith, and Shetterly. All Crews returned safely although S/Sgt. John H. Forhan, Engr. on Lt. Shetterly's Crew, received a flak wound of the right leg above the ankle complicated by a compound fracture of the right fibula.

The next day, 26 July, saw another fragmentation bombing raid to the Zwolfaxing Airdrome near Vienna. An error in identification resulted in bombing of the Bad Voslau Airdrome instead. However, results were fair with the destruction of three enemy aircraft on the ground. Only

three Squadron Crews took part in this mission, flown by Lts. Athon, Frazier, and Doyle.

No mission was flown on 27 July. The target on 28 July was the Astro-Romano Oil Refinery at Ploesti, Rumania. A very effective smoke screen precluded accurate evaluation of the raid but results were not thought to be very good. All Crews returned without casualty. Those taking part were piloted by Capt. Wray and Lts. R.J. Smith, Eaton, Stenersen, Branch, and Siefert.

There was no mission scheduled on 29 July. The target on 30 July was the Duna Aircraft Factory at Budapest, Hungary. Weather conditions were very poor and bombing results were believed to be poor. All Crews returned safely. Those participating were flown by Maj. Lokker and Lts. Willett, Frazier, Ashley, Doyle, J.T. Smith, and Leggate.

This was the 54th mission for the Group and the last one scheduled in July.

Lt. John B. Zitis was transferred to the Squadron on 22 July and assumed the position of Personal Equipment Officer in the Operations Section. This position had been vacant since the transfer of Lt. Burton J. Fischley to the 782nd Squadron.

During July, the 781st gunners kept up their accurate machine gun fire and added to the claims of German aircraft knocked



down during May and June. The claims allowed by higher headquarters were: S/ Sgt. Walter M. Longacre, Gunner (Ashley Crew) one Me-109 destroyed; S/ Sgt. Bill G. Poulos, Gunner (Ashley Crew) one Me-109 destroyed; S/ Sgt. Joc Lavender, Gunner (Branch Crew) one Me-109 destroyed; T/ Sgt. James Zimmerman, Engineer (Branch Crew) one Me-109 destroyed; S/ Sgt. Paul E. Gordon, Gunner (O'Brien Crew) one Me-109 destroyed; S/ Sgt. Kennard R. Wiggins and S/ Sgt. Morris E. Godwin, Gunners (O'Brien Crew) one Me-109 jointly destroyed; Siefert's Crew one Me-109 destroyed; S/ Sgt. Norman Hunter, Gunner (Frazier Crew), one FW-190 destroyed; and S/ Sgt. Benjamin L. Kraeger, Gunner (Branch Crew) two Me-109's damaged.

The month of July saw many more awards granted to men of the Squadron for meritorious service while participating in aerial operations against the enemy.

For exceptionally outstanding performance of duty and display of skill and courage, 1st Lt. Robert L. Shetterly, Pilot, 1st Lt. Roland C. Taylor, Bombardier, and T/ Sgt. Horace E. Williams, Engineer, received the Distinguished Flying Cross.

To the following men Air Medals were awarded: 2nd Lt. Morris E. Finley (MIA), 2nd Lt. Rex O. Blacker, 2nd Lt. Glenn A. Danner, 2nd Lt. Jack G. Frazier, 2nd Lt. Alexander Lovey, 2nd Lt. John E. Stark, 2nd Lt. Marvin Tanenbaum, 2nd Lt. William J. West, T/ Sgt. Melton L. Crawford (MIA), and S/ Sgts. Austin C. Davis, George Wingate, James S. Balsano, and Sgts. Roy L. Duffy, Ones C. Farmer, Clifford M. Grant, Charles D. Hudson, Kenneth J. Kopp, and Theron R. Robinson.

The first Oak Leaf Cluster (Bronze) was awarded to the following men who had previously received the Air Medal: Capt. William P. Wood; 1st Lts. Henry L. Willett, Jr., Robert J. Smith, George R. Ashley; Ray W. Hurd, Thomas J. O'Brien, Philip E. Schuster, Robert L. Shetterly, Charles V. Stenersen, Jack Van Slyke, Leslie S. Wileeler, Donald E. Fleming, Elliott B. Sweet, Alfred W. Rodman, Walter H. Sutton, Kenneth B. Braley, Roland C. Thylor, Leo A. Fink; 2nd Lts. Griscom Bettie, Billy L. Bickley, James B. Doyle, John E. Ward, Joseph H. Saul, Jr., Thomas G. Arthur, Donald A. Barrett, Barbour C. Stokes, Jr., Seth H. Hawkins, Samuel E. Monroe, Joseph M. Neuman, Harold A. Givens, William A. McBride, Roland J. Soucy, and Alexander H. Stephens; T/ Sgts. Earl J. Chase, Clifton T. Flowers, Carl W. Gruber (Killed in Action), Manuel Qulnones, Lawrence H. White, Horace E. Williams, James R. Zimmerman, Aubrey E. Barksdale, Harold C. Butterfield, Charles R. Holzhauer, Joseph L. Kaufman, James H. Kienitz, Albert P. LeBlanc, Robert P. McCague, Samuel P. Shelby, Harold W. Gordon, Ronald E. Hill, Jewell C. Shelnutt, Charles T. Shoults, and James E. Waggle; S/ Sgts. Quincy E. Adams, Joseph Ferguson, Jr., Dennis B. Flaherty, Herbert E. Green, Benjamin L. Kraeger, Joe A. Lavender, Lewis D. Levang, Gino J. Pelleschi, Bill G. Poulos, Joseph Ragan, William W. Strickland, Kennard R. Wiggins, Jerome K. Williams, Morris G. Godwin, Melvin L. Derry, David L. Downes, Harry R. Edwards, John H. Forhan, Charles N. Fry, Raymond J. Huch, Louis L. LeHaye, Milton W. Landsverk, Walter M. Longacre, Paul H. Mallette, Stephen J. Marinak, Joseph P. McDevitt, Olin R. Morris, James R. Phillips (Deceased), Reyer Swan, Albert I. Thompson, Stavalus Tserigotis, Dean R. Winans, Calder M. Lamprey, Nicholas C. Belik, Edward J. F. Chapin, Paul E. Gordon, Jr., Thea S. Harris, Albert Milner, Edward J. Schrelnier, Harold A. Straughan, James V. P. Wagner, and Robert C. Williams.

For wounds received from enemy action, the following men were awarded the Purple Heart Medal: T/ Sgt. Horace E. Williams, T/ Sgt. John L. Crowley, T/ Sgt. Carl W. Gruber (Killed in Action); S/ Sgt. Paul E. Gordon, Jr., S/ Sgt. Albert B. Copeland, and S/ Sgt. John H. Fbrhan.

Personnel strength of the Squadron as of 2400 hours, 31 July 1944 was: Officers 93 Assigned, 2 Attached; Enlisted Men 402 Assigned, 23 Attached.....

The Squadron History will Continue in the Next Issue.....

Jealous Rival Bites Returning Flyer's Wife

Don Fleming, Navigator on the Ashley Crew, submits this interesting account of his experiences during WWII with an unusual ending.

When I was growing up, from pre-kindergarten to college, I always had a dog, large or small, black or white, mutt or thoroughbred, it made no difference. So when our B-24 crew got ready to go overseas it was just natural for me to want to take a dog with me.

On February 3, 1944 we flew from Lincoln, Nebraska to West Palm Beach, Florida (Morrison Field) for a week of going to briefings and getting our B-24 ready to go overseas. During that time I bribed a girl from the PX into getting a pup for me. As luck would have it, the day before we were to leave, she brought in a black and white rat terrier pup, about six inches long. The pup couldn't have been more than two weeks old because her eyes were still blue. She was really too young to be weaned from her mother. As young as she was, I figured she should have baby food, so in the grocery department of the PX I got two or three boxes of Pablum, the solid baby food of that time, along with several cans of condensed milk. I was afraid she might not like the milk but she took right to it.

About this time, there was a show on the radio that had a female character in it by the name of "Baby Snooks". So I named the pup "Snooks" after that character. Snooks stayed in a big box whenever I was gone. When we were flying I put her in my coveralls. She seemed to like it there and because she was so small she didn't bother me at all.

We left West Palm Beach on February 14th. Snooks gathered quite a bit of flying time between West

Palm and Puerto Rico, Trinidad, Belem and Forteleza, Brazil, most of it asleep inside my coveralls. We left Forteleza February 1st. at 9:00 am for the big hop across the Atlantic to Dakar, Africa. The first thing I saw as we walked through the gate from the plane was a big four foot sign that said "ALL PETS MUST BE DESTROYED IMMEDIATELY". Snooks was in my coveralls, probably asleep, so we got through to the barracks with no problem.

From Dakar, we ended up at Oudna, Tunisia, near Tunis. From February 22nd. to April 26th. we sat around watching it rain and cussing the mud. During this time, Snooks grew to be an almost full-grown dog and was quite well adapted to army life. Most of our crew enjoyed her and played with her a lot, except for Ashley, our pilot, who never cared for her. Ashley was quite a ladies man and whenever he could wangle a pass, which wasn't very often, he would dress up in his best clothes and head for town. One such time, as he sat down to put on his shoes he couldn't believe what he saw. Snooks had backed up to his shoe and crapped right on top of it. I never saw anyone as mad as Ashley was. To make matters worse, it had dried hard and when he knocked it off it took some of the leather with it, leaving a big round white spot. It took Ashley a long time to get over that. I can't say as I blame him.

On April 26th. our squadron moved to Pantanella. For the next four months, while we were flying, Snooks was growing up and spent the time roaming the camp and chasing anyone who wasn't in uniform. She hated all Italians, male or female, and she could spot them a hundred yards away. When she caught up with them she would circle around them, all the time barking, growling and snapping like she was going to eat them. I don't think she ever bit anyone, but the Italians were sure worried. Some time during the summer she was romanced by an Italian mutt. I guess for a time she got over her hatred of Italians because by late August, when we finished our missions, it was pretty evident that she was pregnant.

Early in September everyone who had finished their missions were loaded onto trucks and taken to Naples where we boarded an Italian merchant ship headed for New York. Any place where I thought Snooks might be a problem, I put

her in a half filled barracks bag. It seemed like she knew what was going on because she never made any sound or fuss. The ship we were on was manned by Italian sailors who immediately took a liking to Snooks and fixed a bed for her in any empty room below deck. About halfway to New York, Snooks gave birth to just one pup, but it was born dead. The ship intercom announced that the mother had delivered and was doing well.

We spent a couple of days in New York with the usual barracks bag operation and then went by train to Fort Leavenworth for R&R. My wife and parents met me at the Fort's gate. Carol, my wife, immediately reached out to pet Snooks, and Snooks promptly bit her. She still didn't like anyone not in uniform. It didn't take long for her to get used to civilian life. She lived with my parents until I was discharged a year later.

Don Fleming
4782 Hwy. K. 33
Wellsville, KS 6609785-883-4650



Rear: George H. Ashley, Pilot; Ralford L. Crouch, Co-Pilot; Donald E. Fleming, Navigator; William A. Gill, Bombardier; Robert P. McCague, Engr.
Front: William G. Poulos, Ball Gunner; Joseph L. Kaufman, R/O; Olin R. Morris, Gunner; Albert T. Thompson, Top Gunner; Camera Shy Mascot, Snook's and Walter M. Longacre, Nose Gunner

SIGN-UP NOW FOR SHREVEPORT REUNION OCTOBER 6-7-8-9

The United States Air Force Heavy Bombers

The Way We Were- The Way We Are-

Rockwell B-1A "Lancer"

The B-1 is a "swing-wing" strategic bomber of blended wing-body design intended for high-speed low-altitude penetration missions. The B-1 uses shorter runways than the B-52, can carry twice the payload, and has a smaller radar profile than the B-52's, making it harder for the enemy to detect.

SPECIFICATIONS

Span: 136 ft. 8 1/2 in. fully spread;
78 ft. 2 1/2 in. fully swept

Crew: Four

PERFORMANCE

Maximum speed: 1,390 mph.

Cruising speed: 647 mph.

Range: 6,100 miles

Service Ceiling: 60,000 ft.

Northrop Grumman B-2 Spirit

merged the high aerodynamic efficiency of the "flying wing" design with composite materials, special coatings, and classified stealth technologies. As a result, the B-2 became virtually invisible to even the most sophisticated air defense radar systems.

TECHNICAL NOTES

Speed: High subsonic

Ceiling: 50,000 feet

Range: Intercontinental, unrefueled

Crew: 2

Wingspan: 172 ft

Length: 69 ft

Boeing B-52 'Stratofortress'

Since it became operational in 1955, the B-52 has been the main long-range heavy bomber of the Strategic Air Command.

Nearly 750 B-52s were built when production ended in Oct. 1963, On Jan. 18, 1957, three B-52Bs completed the world's first non-stop round-the-world flight by jet aircraft, lasting 45 hours and 19 minutes with only three aerial refuelings en route.

SPECIFICATIONS

Span: 185 ft.

Length: 156 ft. 6 in.

Crew: 5

PERFORMANCE

Maximum speed: 638 mph.

Cruising speed: 526 mph.

Range: 8,338 miles unrefueled

"Stratojet" B-47

The Boeing B-47, the world's first swept-wing bomber, made its initial flight on Dec. 17, 1947. When production ended in 1957, more than 1,200 Stratojets were serving with the Strategic Air Command at

USAF bases throughout the world. By the late 1960s, the B-47 was obsolete and was removed from operational service.

The B-47 normally carried a crew of three--pilot, copilot (who operated the tail turret by remote control), and an observer who also served as navigator, bombardier and radar operator.

SPECIFICATIONS

Span: 116 ft.

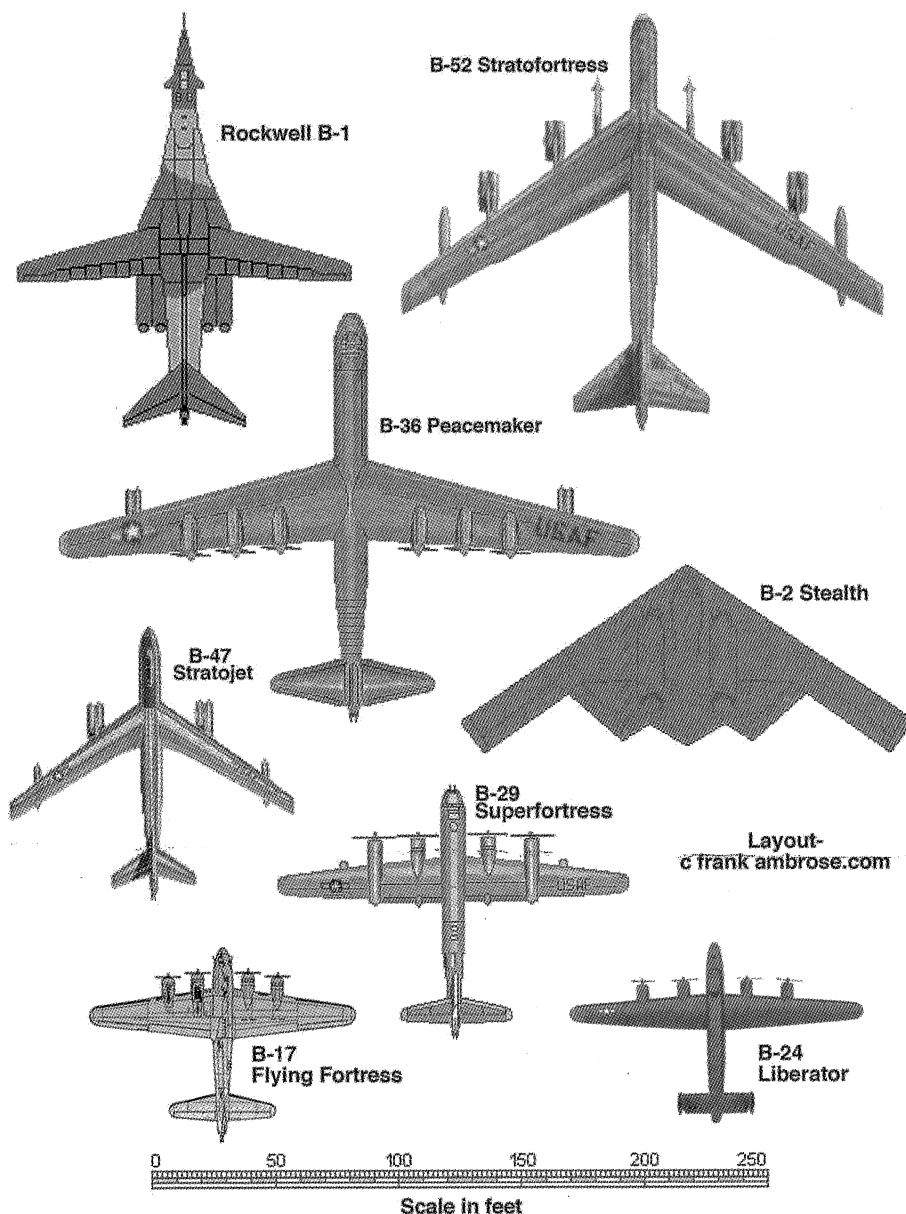
Crew: 3

Maximum speed: 610 mph.

Cruising speed: 560 mph.

Range: 3,500 miles

REALATIVE SIZES OF PRESENT DAY HEAVY BOMBERS TO WWII HEAVY BOMBERS



Peacemaker B-36

The Peacemaker was the first true intercontinental bomber.

The B-36 was the largest bomber in physical size that has ever gone into service with the USAF.

The B-36, an intercontinental bomber, was designed during WW II. The airplane made its maiden flight on August 8, 1946. During the years it was in service, the airplane was one of America's major deterrents to aggression by a potential enemy. The fact that the B-36 was never used in combat was indicative of its value in "keeping the peace."

SPECIFICATIONS

Span: 230 ft.

Length: 162 ft. 1 in.

Height: 46 ft. 9 in.

Crew: 15

PERFORMANCE

Maximum speed: 435 mph.

Cruising speed: 230 mph.

Range: 10,000 miles

"Superfortress" B-29

The Boeing B-29 was designed in 1940. The first one built made its

maiden flight on September 21, 1942. In December 1943 it was decided not to use the B-29 in the European Theater, thereby permitting the airplane to be sent to the Pacific area where its great range made it particularly suited for the long over-water flight required to attack the Japanese homeland from bases in China.

SPECIFICATIONS

Span: 141 ft. 3 in.

Length: 99 ft. 0 in.

Crew: 10

PERFORMANCE

Maximum speed: 357 mph.

Cruising speed: 220 mph.

Range: 3,700 miles

"Liberator" B-24

The B-24 was employed in operations in every combat theater during World War II. Because of its great range, it was particularly suited for such missions as the famous raid from North Africa against the oil industry at Ploesti, Rumania on August 1, 1943. More than 18,000 Liberators were produced.

The B-24 was produced in even greater numbers than the B-17 Fly-

ing Fortress. Liberators are recorded to having dropped over 630,000 tons of bombs.

SPECIFICATIONS

Span: 110 ft. 0 in.

Length: 67 ft. 42 in.

Crew: 10

PERFORMANCE

Maximum speed: 303 mph.

Cruising speed: 175 mph.

Range: 2,850 miles

"Flying Fortress" B-17

The Flying Fortress is one of the most famous airplanes ever built. The B-17 prototype first flew on July 28, 1935. Few B-17s were in service on December 7, 1941, but production quickly accelerated.

The aircraft served in every WW II combat zone, but is best known for daylight strategic bombing of German industrial targets..

SPECIFICATIONS

Span: 103 ft. 10 in.

Length: 74 ft. 4 in.

Crew: 10

PERFORMANCE

Maximum speed: 300 mph.

Cruising speed: 170 mph.

Range: 1,850 miles

ONE MORE BOOK....

THE GREATEST GENERATION OF SILVER WINGS...

A new book by Don Ward, author of two previous books, has released his latest edition "The Greatest Generation of Silver Wings"

When the United States was attacked by the Japanese more than 62 years ago the lives of many young men were about to be changed forever. Little did they know that within one or two years, they too would be flying high above Europe. Risking their lives on a daily basis, some would die and some would have become prisoners of the Germans after being shot down.

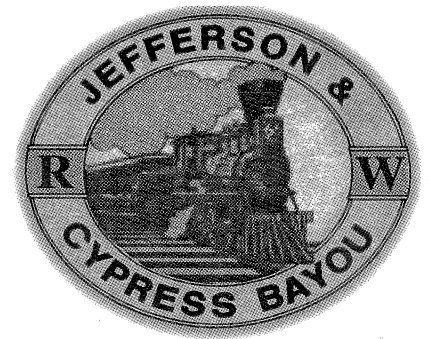
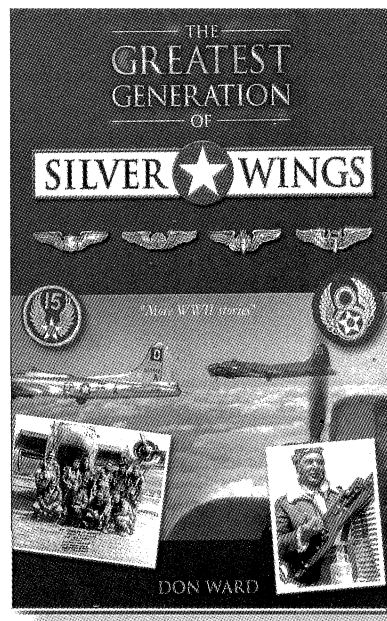
The book contains interviews with 33 of those cross section of men who are now in their seventies and eighties. Some stories are long and some short, each giving a glimpse into the caliber of young patriotic American men that grew up during the Depression years.

For several years, Mr. Ward shared weekly lunches with 8th and 15th Air Force men who flew B-17's, B-24's, and P-51 's in World War II.

After hearing many of their personal stories, he decided to record their experiences in a book called, "The Greatest Generation of Silver Wings".

Many books have already been written about the men of World War II, and this collection just adds more to their historical record.

The book is available on line at:
www.mpress.addr.com/s~wings.html



TAKE A RIDE TO THE 19TH CENTURY

In addition to the many other attractions the Reunion Committee has been working on, a trip to Historic Jefferson Texas is also being considered.

Jefferson is the 5th oldest town in Texas. Home of the romantic Jefferson & Cypress Bayou RR, a live steam, narrow gauge railway. It's authentic 1800's depot waits to sweep you back in time. Passengers view the only remaining civil war era Confederate powder magazine, the first artificial gas plant in the state, as well as many other historic sites.

LETTERS

Following is an interesting little story about some American propaganda leaflets I acquired while on assignment with the Armament Section of the 781st Squadron in Pantanella. They had been hidden in an album of mine with some photos of my parent's favorite war hero. They date from circa 1944.



Recently, my wife and I have been reviewing dozens of albums we've accumulated over the 56 years of our marriage. We were trying to decide which of our children would get what albums. To my surprise, one of the albums gave up the leaflets and after all these years the question still remained 'what was it we were saying to the Germans via the leaflets?'

When my Armament crew chief, Sal Scangarello, showed up with hands full of leaflets every one wanted a share. He said he had gotten them from someone in Ordinance. Ostensibly, they were retrieved from a damaged container that was to be part of a mission load. The crew on duty that night thought they were something to treasure.

My plan was to find someone who could translate German into English. No one with whom I worked at the base could help with that so after a short while the idea went out of mind 'till I returned home after discharge. Then for a while, maybe a year, I made a few weak stabs at finding a translator but I was too preoccupied adjusting to civilian life to solve that translation problem. The leaflets disappeared from my mind and into an album my mom had been working with.

My wife and I are now living in Chandler, Arizona where a friend to whom I showed the leaflets suggested a ready solution. She volun-

teered the services of her brother, a retired college professor who was a master of languages. As luck had it, he was shortly to visit her. What a great idea! I'm 81 years old and suspected that if I didn't get that translation now it's probable it never would happen.

The gentleman showed up as planned and about a week later I had the translation in my hands. And it only took 61 years to acquire %&*%\$!

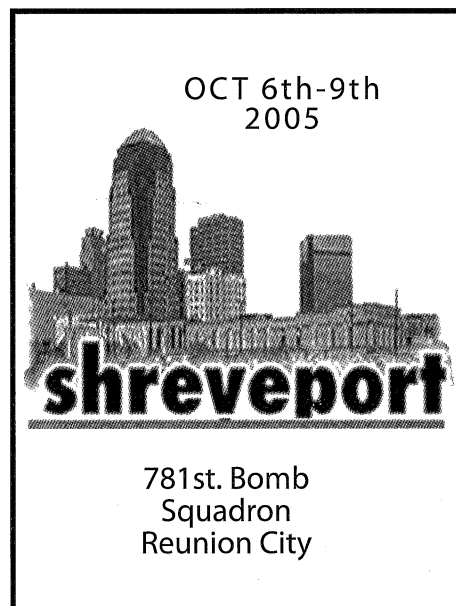
The Translation appears below, followed by a separate sheet with a copy of the original leaflet.

ATTENTION ! MORTAL DANGER!

- 1) Today, some of the high explosive bombs that total war forces us to drop on important military targets do not explode right away.
- 2) This is intentional; these bombs are provided with fuses that cause the bombs to explode at different times.
- 3) Trying to remove such bombs is very dangerous, since no one knows when they will go off.
- 4) Our purpose in this is to keep the workers in industry and transportation, who are important for the German war effort, away from their jobs as long as possible.
- 5) If such a bomb falls on your house or in your neighborhood, that is not our intention. But you have been warned that it may be hours or even days before they explode. You should leave the area at once!
- 6) As long as the people are willing to fight and work for Hitler and the Nazi Party, we will be forced to use these and other new weapons.
- 7) But as soon as the people decide to make an end to Hitler and his war, then and only then can the destruction stop and the rebuilding of the true Germany and the true Austria begin.

THE PEOPLE MUST DECIDE U.S.A.A.F

END OF TRANSLATION
Cpl, Michael C. LaBella ASN; Ret



From: MACDONNALL@aol.com
Date: Wednesday, Dec.29, 2004 11:24 PM
To: frank@frankambrose.com
Subject: QUESTION ON THE "HIMES" CREW
My friend, Adam Fabel, narrated some of his WWII experience flying out of Pantanella with the 465th Bombardment Gp. He gave me this list of the crew:

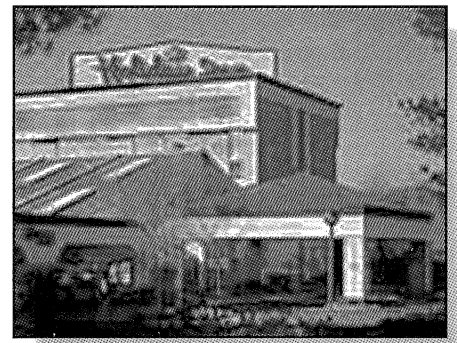
Himes, pilot; Wilkinson, co-pilot; Diedrichs, bombardier; Fabel, navigator; Schlacter, crew chief; Skrovanek, nose gunner; Coggan, tail gunner; Strickland, R/O; Payne, top turret; Mattice, bottom turret.

Adam stated they were assigned to the 781st B.S. from Sept 30, '44 to the end of the war.

In your pictures of the crews of the 781st, the Himes crew is not listed. Do we have the wrong bomb squadron? What can you tell me about that crew?

Thanks..

781st 2005 REUNION



Holiday Inn
FINANCIAL PLAZA-
SHREVEPORT, LA 71129
Tel: 1-318-6883000
Email: sphigm@shanerhotels.com

The 2005 781st Reunion will be held in Shreveport Louisiana October 6-7-8-9 at the Holiday Inn Financial Plaza-Shreveport. The beautiful hotel is nestled on eight acres of land in a natural pine setting with easy access on and off the main highway and inter city loop. All of the rooms and suites include a TV, coffee maker, hair dryer, complimentary high speed internet access, ironing board and iron. A heated indoor/outdoor swimming pool and hot tub are also available for your pleasure and relaxation.

MAKE YOUR RESERVATIONS NOW!

FOLDED WINGS



William C. Ellett

William C. Ellett, 781st. Squadron Adjutant, died February 27, 2005 at Saint Vincent Health Center, he was 83.

Survivors include his wife, Lois H. Ellett; a son, Bruce G. Ellett and two daughters, Kristie E. Shaffer, and Melanie G. Ellett and four grandsons.

Garnet D Cauble, wife of Raymond D. Cauble (Pilot Cauble Crew), passed away on Nov 2, 2004. Anyone wishing to contact him may do so by calling:- 901-386-2321.

Reported by his grandson, Phillip Cauble. <prcauble@yahoo.com>

Novella Myers, widow of Lowell Myers, passed away at her home in Loveland Colorado Feb 16th. Lowell proceeded her in death. He was Radio operator on the Elision crew. Many will remember them as great supporters of our organization who attended many of our reunions.

Reported by Glen Haywood

Aaron Wolfson, Top Gunner, Erickson Crew, passed away December 21, 2004. He was 80. Reported by his daughter Nancy Wolfson Roche

Charles H. Bradley Sr., Newman Ball Gunner, passed away January 18, 2005, in, the loving arms of his family. He was so proud to be a part of the 465th bomb group (H) of the 781st Bomb Squadron. We were so proud of our dad as well of all you men from the bomb squadron, we were so lucky as his family to meet a lot of his comrades at the reunions we were able to go to, what a honor it was to meet so many of you thank you again from all of us of the Bradley family.
Reported by his son.

Bob Joyner, Joyner Crew Pilot, died in October 2004 succumbing to cancer. Reported by Pearl Bailey.

Walter Gates, Engineering, folded his wings April 7, 1994. Mrs. Betty Gates reported this in response to inquiry.

Betty Schuster, widow of Harold Schuster, Ordnance, folded her wings January 5, 2001. Reported by her daughter-in law, Monna Schuster.

Earl Chase, Athon Engineer, folded his wings June 25, 2001, from pneumonia, belatedly reported by his widow, Bonnie.

Grace Sousy, Ron Sousy's wife, passed away December 27, 2004. Reported by Ron.

Charles R. Hemphill, Clodfelter Top Gunner, folded his wings July 8, 2003. Belatedly reported by his daughter, Karol Hemphill Leatherwood.

Robert R. Leasure, Group Operations, passed on December 21, 2003. Belatedly reported by his widow.

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.

PRESIDENTS CORNER

I have a question. When Chief JoJon was first painted on Col. McKenna's aircraft, he was a benign little character, as befits the naming after his two kids. I guess that was done at McCook... There, he was you might say, a grunted Indian. Sometime during our war experience, Chief JoJon became very disgruntled and the depiction of him as nose art changed considerably. Does anyone know how that change occurred? And why? It is certainly not that I disagree with the change, I think that his angry mein befits the squadron function during that time much better. Just curious.

Earlier this year I wrote a letter to 75 members of our organization who had permitted their dues to lapse. Most of the responses that I received thanked me for giving them an extra reminder. My thanks to each of you for your prompt and enthusiastic replies and for your checks too. We all forget sometimes.

Lets begin to make plans to attend the 2005 reunion of the 781st Bomb Squadron Association, to be held October 6,7,&8 at Shreveport, La. We always have a good time at our reunions, and this one will not be an exception. We are working on a day trip to Barksdale AFB. We are arranging a familiarization with a B-52. A trip to Jefferson, TX is also being prepared. This town is like no other that you have ever seen. It literally died (although there is an active population), shortly after the Civil War, and has remained much the same ever since. That will be an interesting trip. There are many other things in and around Shreveport that, given the time, would make memorable experience. Each of you might plan to take advantage of the hotel rates and spend a few days looking around. The forms for reservations for the reunion will be made available as soon as the schedule has solidified.

This period has produced some articles that will definitely be used in the Newsletter. Witness the letter from Mike LaBella in this issue. Thanks, Mike!. And to all the rest of you that have memories fit for print. Keep them coming! We need all of the input that we can get.

Never forget! We are the 781st Bomb Squadron Association. We do things better than nearly anyone else of our generation that are trying to keep in touch.

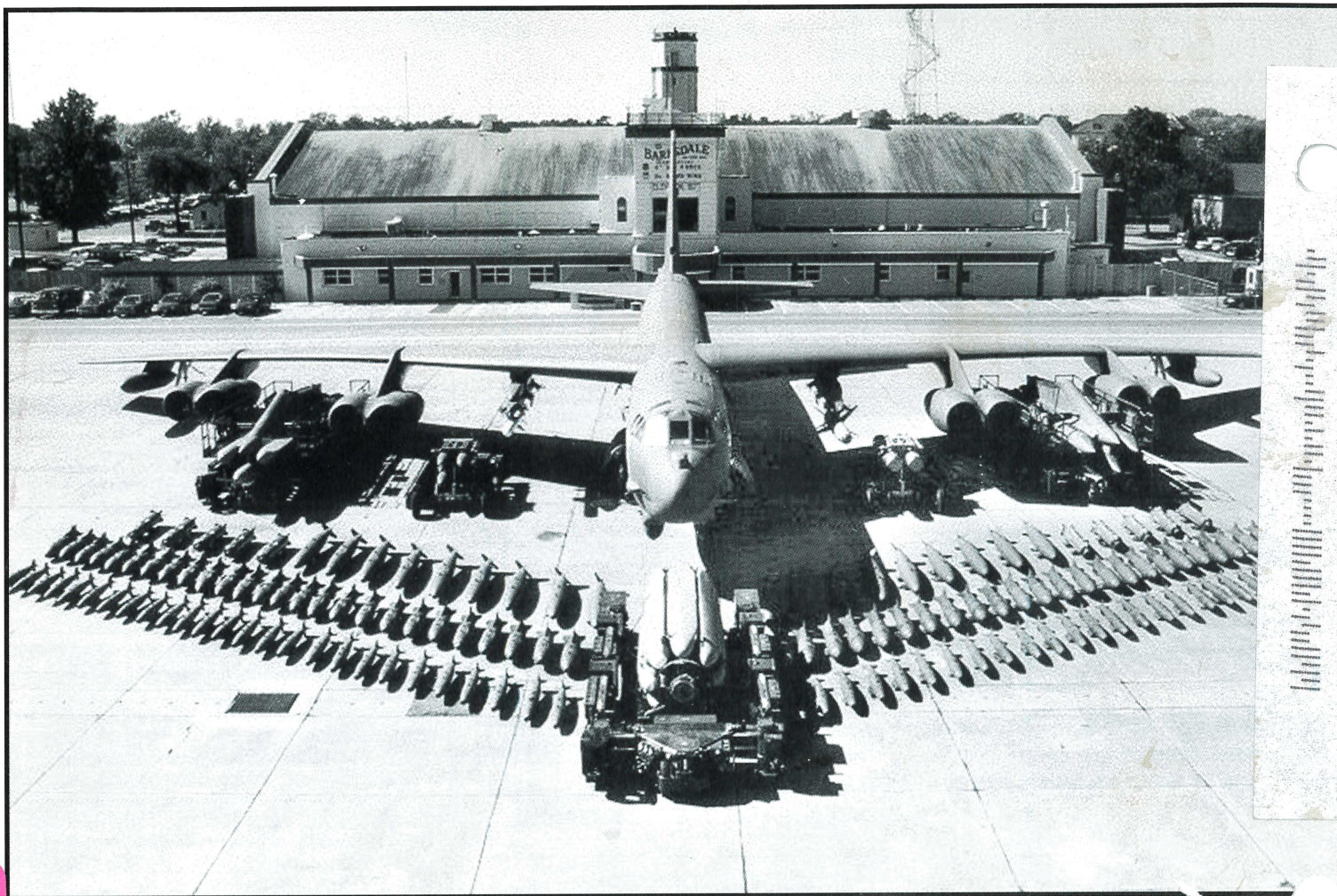
-John

TREASURER'S REPORT

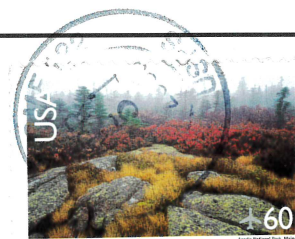
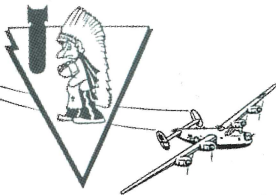
As of the close of business on March 19, 2005, Wells Fargo Bank reports the following account status:

781st Bomb Squadron Business	
Checking	\$2,966.91
PMA checking (Reunion)	\$ 701.90
PMA Savings	\$27,977.66
TOTAL	\$40,944.57

There are no outstanding obligations on any of these accounts



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



**REUNION
OCTOBER
6TH TO 9TH
HOLIDAY INN
SHREVEPORT, LA
MAKE A DATE NOW
HOLIDAY INN
FINANCIAL PLAZA-
SHREVEPORT**

1/1/2006
ORREN LEE
2312 BRAEMAR DR.
SOUIX FALLS SD 57105