



PANTANELLA NEWS

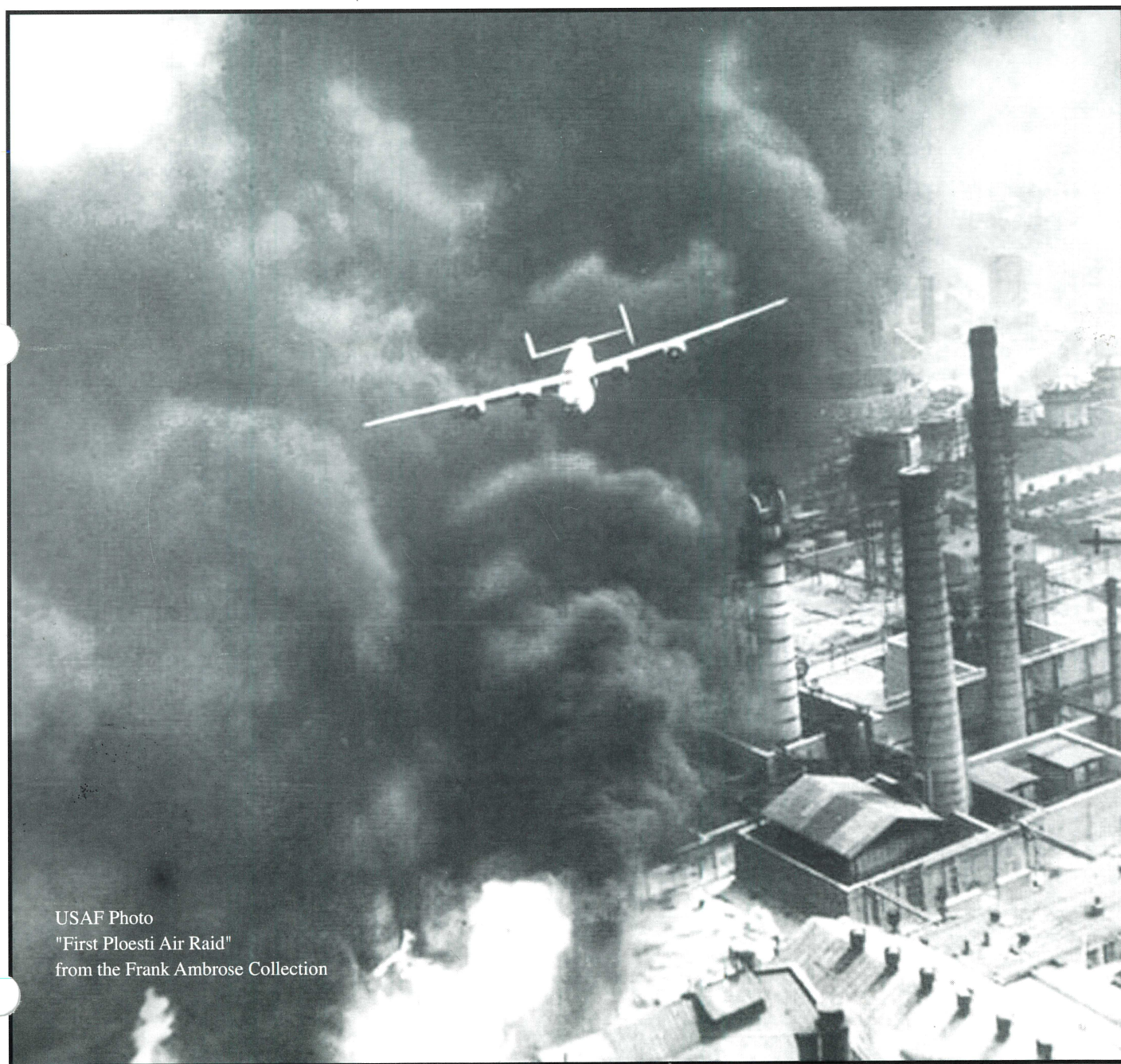
Published by 781st Bomb Squadron Association©

87 April 2007

LOOK OUT BUSH-HERE WE COME!

781st IS GOING TO WASHINGTON IN OCT 7-10

FULL STORY ON PAGE 10



USAF Photo
"First Ploesti Air Raid"
from the Frank Ambrose Collection

Ploesti was located 35 miles north of Bucharest, the capital of Rumania, a massive complex consisting of seven major refineries, storage tanks and related structures covering 19 square miles.

The Comfort Inn Alexandria

Located in the heart of business technology corridor by day and Old Town Alexandria featuring a variety of entertainment by night, the Comfort Inn Alexandria is situated just 7 miles from downtown Washington D.C.



It is conveniently located by inter-states I-95, I-495 and I-395 allowing for quick access to the entire Washington D.C. metropolitan area. Comfort Inn provides the best location of the hotels in Alexandria, Virginia.

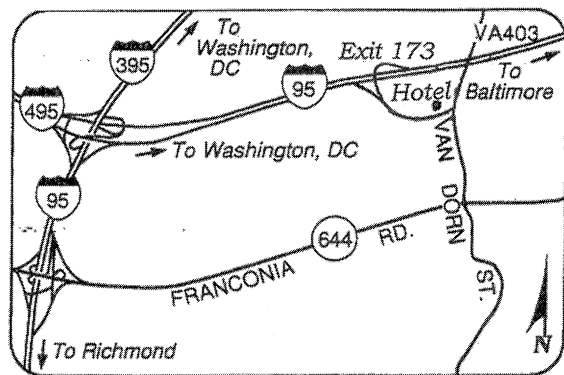
The Inn offers a complimentary deluxe continental breakfast, featuring fresh "Make Your Own" Belgian waffles and a complimentary USA Today (Mon-Fri). Other amenities include;

- Free local calls
- Free shuttle to Van Dorn Metro Station and surrounding businesses.
- Gift Shop on premises
- Fax/copy service
- Fitness Center
- Outdoor seasonal pool
- Laundry facility on premises

- Same day laundry/dry cleaning service (Mon-Fri)
- AAA Official appointment and Noble Roman's Restaurant on premises

For Special Reunion Rates, members are urged to make their reservations as early as possible, directly with the facility before August 30th.

Comfort Inn Alexandria
5716 S. Van Dorn St.
Alexandria, VA 22310
Tel: (703) 922-9200
Fax: (703) 922-0132



Exit 173 (Van Dorn Street) off I-495 Capital Beltway-hotel is on the left.

FLYING TO WASHINGTON

For those flying to our reunion, it is recommended that you fly into the 'Ronald Reagan National Airport' (DCA).

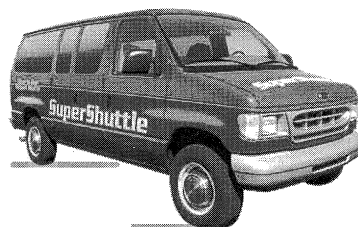
This airport is the closest airport to DC and the hotel in Alexandria that will become our home base.

A door to door Shuttle Service is available at the airport to take you to the hotel upon arrival and to return you to the airport when you depart.

Advance reservations are not required upon arrival at the Airport.

While at the Baggage Claim in DCA, follow the signs for Ground Transportation to the SuperShuttle boarding area, located curbside at each terminal. A uniformed Guest Service Representative will assist you between 6:30 AM & 11:30 PM.

SuperShuttle
 Transportation Systems



The cost from the airport to the hotel is \$12.00 for the first passenger / \$8.00 for each additional passenger, up to five.

Pay your Driver directly by cash, traveler's check, or major credit card upon arrival at the airport. Try to give the Service a 24 hour advance notice for a pick up from the Hotel to the Airport.

Please have your flight information and number of passengers and departure point when making your reservation.

781st Bomb Squadron Association
 c/o Barney Russell
 3 Mimosa Circle
 Magnolia, AR 71753-2648

Officers

Barney Russell: President
 Vice President: Bernie Badler
 Ken Kill: Treasurer
 Secretary: Orren Lee
 Chaplain: Orren Lee

NEWS Editor: Frank Ambrose

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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

ATTENTION !!
ALL MEMBERS AND FAMILIES
IMPORTANT ADDRESSES TO REMEMBER
NOTIFY OR CONTACT ANY OR ALL FOR
FW's-ADDRESS CHANGES or WHATEVER

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MEMORIES

Earl Leinart Remembers

One of the main attractions for attendees of last year's 781st. 2006 Reunion in Shreveport was a visit to the Barksdale AF base and the Museum located there.

As the group was traversing the many displays and artifacts, Earl Leinart was amazed to come upon a 1943 WWII AF Recruiting Poster which was on display that inspired him, at the age of 17 and a Senior still in High School, to volunteer as a Cadet in the Air Force.

At the time, the Program was a new AF Program targeting High School Seniors under 18 to give them the opportunity to enter the AF as Cadets upon Graduation. Earl was the first teenager in his hometown to sign up for the program and as such became quite a celebrity. The transcript of the news article appears below:-

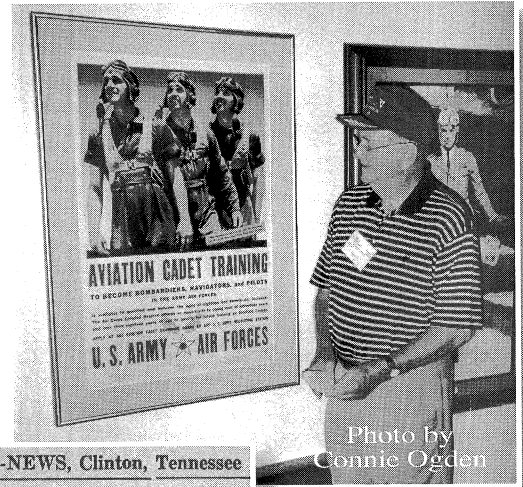
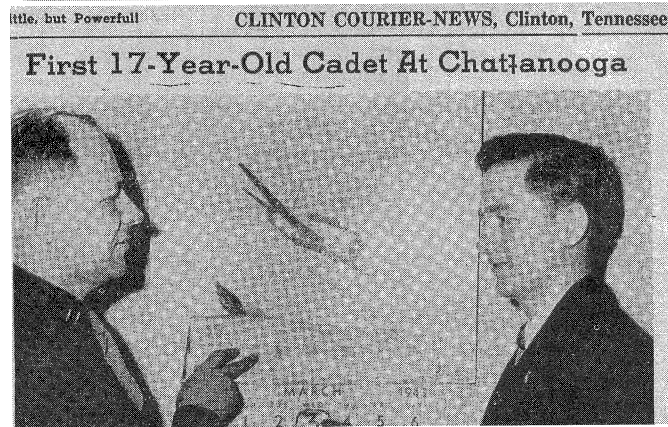


Photo by
Connie Ogden



Top Left: Leinart as an
Air Force Cadet

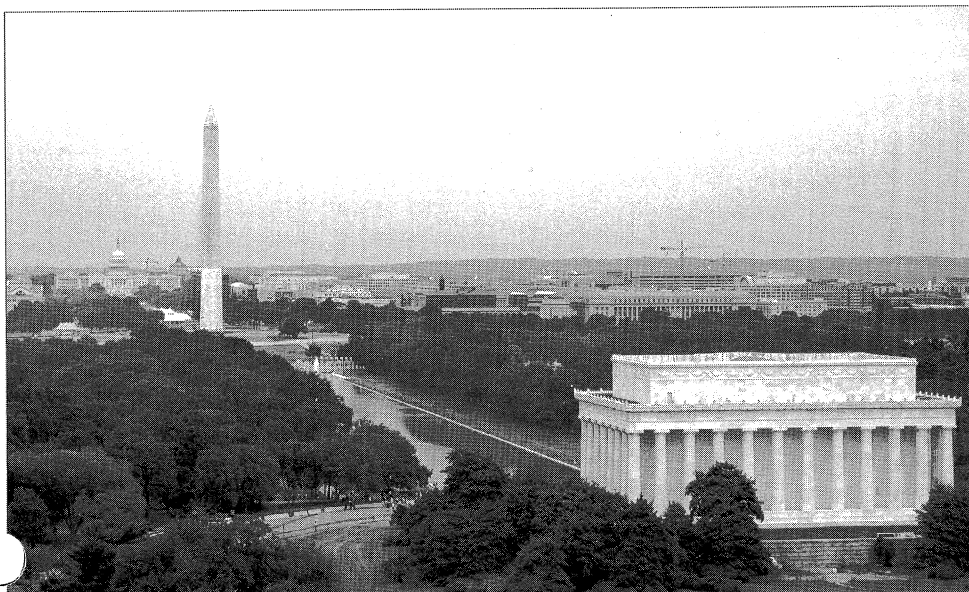
Top Right:
Earl Leinart
with 'Inspiration Poster'

Bottom photo:
Newspaper photo
showing Young Earl
pointing to calendar
indicating his
High School
Graduation Date

CLINTON COURIER NEWS 1943

Earl Ray Leinart, Clinton High School senior, was the first 17-year-old cadet to be enlisted at the Chattanooga Recruiting and induction Station. He is pictured with Capt. Edmund H. Cureton, commanding officer of the station, as they point to the calendar date, March 3-the new cadet's 18th birthday. Had he waited until that date he would have been ineligible-only 17-year-old being allowed to volunteer as aviation cadets under the new army program. He will be permitted to graduate from high school this spring, and will be called to active duty not later than six months after his 18th birthday. Earl was one of the young men selected to attend Boys State at Lebanon last year.

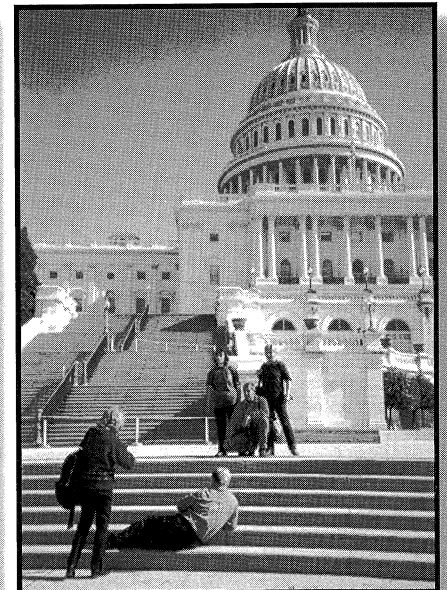
Captain Cureton, formerly of Clinton, was Earl's Scoutmaster



The Capital Building, Washington Monument, Lincoln Memorial and Mall from a helicopter flight over Washington DC

Photo: Anders Brownworth - <http://www.anders.com/>

Helicopter View of
The Capitol Building; Washington Monument; Lincoln Memorial and Mall



This could be you
posing here

PLAN TO ATTEND WASHINGTON REUNION NOW

Target: 'Ploesti'

The following account has been taken from the archives of the National Museum of the USAF. I can recall how overjoyed you all were when, at the briefing, the Operations Officer would announce, "Gentlemen, the target for today is Ploesti". I am reprinting it here for you to relive the past.

'Operation Tidal Wave' The 1st Ploesti Oil Raid

The Ploesti Oil Fields located 35 miles north of Bucharest, the capital of Rumania, Ploesti was a massive complex consisting of seven major refineries, storage tanks and related structures covering 19 square miles. The importance of Ploesti can be judged by the fact that it supplied Germany with 1/3rd of its entire fuel oil needs. It's not too surprising that it was also the first target in Europe bombed by American aircraft.

First Strike June 12, 1942

In May 1942 Colonel Harry A. Halverson led 23 factory-fresh B-24s from Florida on an epic flight that was supposed to finish in China. Known as HALPRO (Halverson project) the unit was going to bomb Tokyo in a follow-up to the Doolittle raid. When HALPRO reached Egypt however, the crews were ordered to stay put and prepare to bomb the oil refineries at Ploesti.

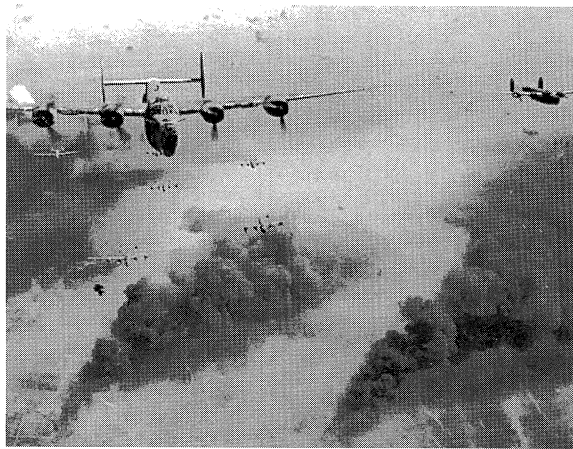
The mission (the first US raid of the European war, top secret at the time and later overshadowed by the disastrous low-level Ploesti raid of 1943) was set for June 12th.

The aircraft took off individually



between 10:30 and 11:00 PM on June 11th, arriving over the target at dawn the following day.

Ten bombers hit the Astra refinery at Ploesti, one B-24 attacked the port area of Constanta, the remaining two B-24s struck unidentified targets. Three ended up interned in Turkey, the rest manage to reach friendly bases in Iraq. Damage turned out to be minimal but the mission was considered a success.



Tidal Wave August 1, 1943
Operation Tidal Wave was designed to be an all-out maximum effort against the Ploesti oil fields. Colonel Jacob E. Smart, a member of the Advisory Council first came up with the idea of striking Ploesti at low-level with heavy bombers. It was a gutsy some felt suicidal plan but it went up the chain of command and got the backing of General 'Hap' Arnold and the president.

Planning was meticulous including two full-scale practice missions against

a replica of Ploesti built in the desert. Since Ploesti was located north of heavily defended Bucharest it forced any attacking force to

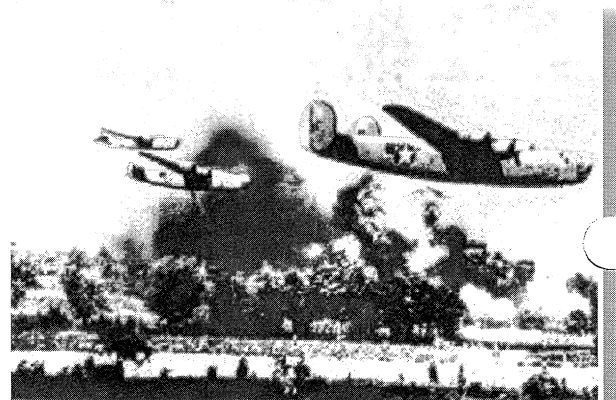
divert around the capital to have any chance of reaching the target unmolested. This was a key feature of Operation Tidal Wave and it called for precision navigation and strict radio silence.

The Plan

376th BG B-24 Ninth AF, 98th BG B-24 Ninth AF, 93rd BG B-24 Eighth AF, 44th BG B-24 Eighth AF, 389th BG B-24 Eighth AF

Concern over the tree-top bombing altitude continued and shortly before the mission date of August 1, 1943 the five group commanders and the head of 9th Bomber Command, Major General Uzal Ent, signed a letter to Brereton asking to be allowed to go in at high altitude. Major General Brereton ordered the low-level bombing attack to take place as planned.

The Ploesti mission was based on 154 participating aircraft. Actually, 177 successfully took off. Each of the 23 spares was loaded with four 500-lb. bombs with 45-second tail delay fuse and four clusters of American-type incendiaries. The spares appear to have been distributed among the seven target forces,



Total Bomb Load Carried (excluding incendiaries): 623,000 lbs
Across the Mediterranean

Despite careful preparation the operation was marred by bad luck from the start, one B-24 crashed on take-off.

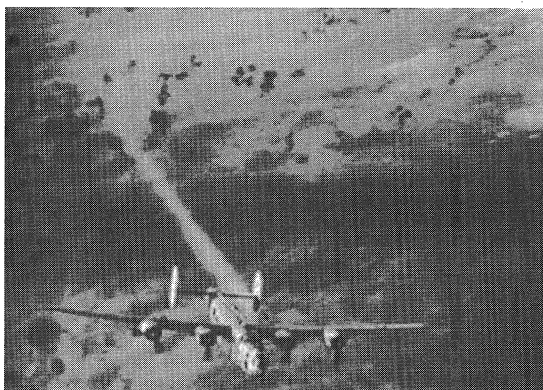
Since the mission was flown in radio silence the bomber groups became somewhat separated on the long flight across the Mediterranean. Then just off Corfu, Greece the lead aircraft carrying the route navigator inexplicably plunged into the water. A second plane of the 376th with the deputy route navigator followed down to see if there were any survivors. Unable to regain formation the bomber turned back to base. This left the lead bomber group without the expert navigators to guide them through the difficult low-level approach to the target.

Thick clouds greeted the incoming bombers as they approached the mountains. While the two lead groups threaded their way through or under the cloud layers the 98th, 44th and 389th crossed at various altitudes. By the time these three bomber groups were formed up and heading for the first IP (Initial Point) they were 29 minutes behind the 376th and the 93rd. Confusion and Bravery at Ploesti

Meanwhile not knowing if the other bomber groups were forced to turn back or not the 376th and 93rd made their turn at the first IP of Pitesti toward the final IP of Floresti.



However, halfway to the real IP the 376th mistook the town of Targoviste for Floresti, an error that wasn't discovered until they were on the outskirts of Bucharest.



At that point Major Gen. Uzal Ent broke radio silence and ordered the two groups to turn north and attack targets of opportunity in the complex of refineries. The carefully worked out bombing plan was foiled as bombers struck the wrong refinery or attacked any target that looked good.

Getting Home

German fighters pursued the bombers as they left bringing down more than a few damaged aircraft. Of the 177 bombers that took part in the mission 54 were lost, a further 53 planes were heavily damaged.

It was a costly victory by any measure. The damage to Ploesti was significant but offset by its spair refining capacity and the fact that a raid like this could not be mounted again for quite some time.

The Medal of Honor presented to Col. John Riley "Killer" Kane (1907-1996) is one of five presented for the mission, the most ever awarded for a single action. Three of the awards were posthumous: 2nd Lt. Lloyd H. Hughes, a native of Alexandria, Louisiana; Lt. Col. Addison Baker; and Maj. John L. Jerstad. The other Medal of Honor presented to a living recipient for that day's battle was to Col. Leon W. Johnson (1904-1997).

Recap of Beginning and End of the Campaign

April / May 1944

April 5, 1944 began. Between April 5 and May 5 the 15th AF attacked the marshalling yards at Ploesti four times, losing 43 heavy bombers shot down and a dozen more in crash landings.

May 18, 1944 - the 15th made its first direct attack on the refineries.

On June 10, 1944, 46 P-38s took off from Vincenzo to attack the Franco-American oil refinery at Ploesti. The 46 P-38s carrying one 1,000 lb bomb apiece, 8 planes soon aborted, the rest pushed on. 36 bombs were dropped successfully and a oil-cracking plant, oil tanks, and other facilities are damaged or destroyed as well as a variety of ground targets that are strafed by the Lightnings. Losses are heavy included 14 1st Fighter group P-38s and eight 82nd Fighter Group P-38s. 33 Axis fighters were downed during this mission.

2nd Lt. Herbert B. Hatch, a P-38 pilot 1st FG 71st Fighter Squadron became an ace-in-a-day by shooting down five and possibly six Romanian Air Force IAR.80 fighters over a Romanian airfield near Ploesti. 1130 hours. 1st Lt. Armour C. Miller, P-38 pilot 1st FG 27th Fighter Squadron achieves ace status when he downs a Bf 109.

Costly Triumph

June 23, 1944, in one of its major strikes, the Fifteenth sent 761 bombers to Romanian oil targets.

July turned out to be the costliest month for the 15th Air Force and the height of its brutal campaign against Ploesti.

August 19, 1944 - Last mission to Ploesti.

August 30, 1944 - Red Army troops capture the burned and twisted wreckage of Ploesti.

Archived from USAF National Museum

The Flip Side of Aerial Combat

My duties as a photographer in the Army Air Force during WWII consisted of performing a myriad of assorted official photographic assignments both on the ground and in the air. Many of the assignments required different modes of transportation to complete the mission, a 4x4, Jeep, Staff Car or whatever.

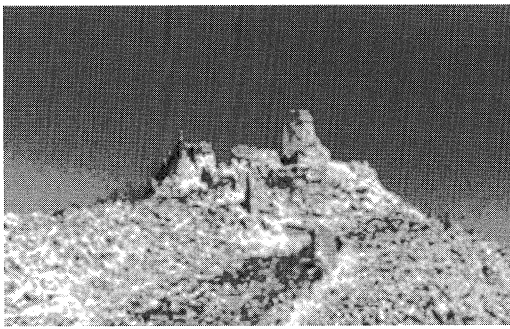
On many occasions an aircraft was required. If any type of ground transportation was required I would simply go to the Motor Pool to see "Sut" (Ken Sutton our Motor Pool Officer) and requisition the necessary vehicle.

And, as everyone knows, an aircraft is as critical in taking Aerial Photos as is the camera. So it wasn't unusual, on so many occasions, for me to requisition a plane and crew for aerial photography.

As our stay in Italy wore on it somehow seemed that my aerial assignments were becoming more frequent each month, generally on the first Stand-Down Day' just after receiving our beer ration.

Although the 'Brits' liked their beer warm, most GI's would prefer the brew cold. And, as enterprising young Americans, it soon became necessary to explore methods of cooling our rations. Thus 'Top Secret' missions were soon implemented.

I would meet with my 'Private Pilot, Hank Willert' and his hand picked crew, most often consisting of Walt Sutton, our Squadron Bombardier, Doc Rappaport, our Flight Surgeon so he could get his flying time in and perhaps one or two others as a crew, cut an order for the 'Mission' and requisition the plane.



Cassino Abby In Ruins

In no time, word would go out through the grape vine that a 'Photo Mission' was in progress. Supprisingly, at the HardStand just before takeoff, an assortment of vehicles laden with several cases of Beer would suddenly arrive, and along with my cameras and film, would proceed to transfer their cargo to the aircraft. Returning from our 'Official Top Secret Photo Mission' hours later, the assortment of vehicles were still 'sweating it out'

surrounding the hardstand awaiting our arrival and precious cargo of 'ice cold beer'.

In one of his letters to me recalling these "Special Missions". Walt Sutton ended his letter with the following notation:-

"Remember the Good Old Days, when you and Hank and I used to go flying to get some pictures you wanted. Especially when he stuck a wing down into Mt Vesuvius while it was still smoking? I sure miss Hank!

As ever Walter Sutton, Major McKenna and Lokker's Bombardier."

I can recall on one very fine "Stand-down" day an occasion when Hank Willert, our Operations Officer, Doc Rappaport, our Flight Surgeon, Walt Sutton, our Squadron Bombardier and I, as we had done so many times before, concocted one of those "Official Photo-Missions".

We thought it would be of great military importance to photograph the devastation of Mount Cassino, the interior of Mt Vesuvius and other subjects and targets of opportunity.

It was suggested that I put in a formal request for the aircraft and crew to be used for the Photographic Mission so that official orders could cut to secure the plane.

Meeting in the Orderly Room Tent with Hank, Sgt. Messmore cut the necessary orders reserving the aircraft, and Hank, being the Operations Officer, approved the request. Doc and Walt were to meet us at the hardstand and Hank and I, and I believe, one more person, possibly Hank's Flight Engineer were to meet there also. By the time Hank and I arrived at the hardstand we noticed Doc and Walt next to the bomb bay arguing with a NCO.

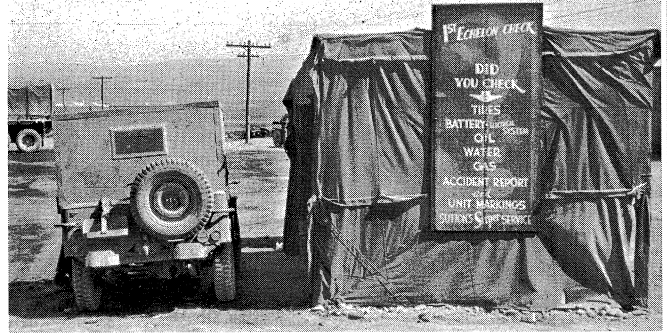
Hopping out of the Jeep, Willert inquired as to what the trouble was. The Sergeant was trying to explain that we could not use that particular B-24 for a Photo Mission because it was

still loaded with the 500 pounders that were to be used for the scratched mission from the day before suggesting we use another plane.

Hank pulled Rank and insisted that he unload the bombs immediately.

Throwing Hank a snappy salute, the Sergeant climbed thru the bomb bay and up to the pilots seat. On

KEN SUTTON'S MOTOR POOL



the Hardstand, Hank, Doc Rappaport, Sutton and I were standing there looking up at him as the Sergeant stuck his head out the pilots window.

Leaning out and looking down at us the Sergeant yelled, "**Bombs Away**" and then proceeded to toggle the bombs.

As he said so, the 500 pounders came tumbling out of the bomb bay onto the hardstand.

A split second of terror came upon us as we watched the 'belly' of that plane regurgitating it's awesome cargo.

An urgent need to seek shelter in order to survive the ensuing explosions came upon us.

The bombs were still tumbling and rolling over the Hardstand as the four of us frantically scrambled in all directions away from the plane, hitting the dirt and using our hands in an attempt to dig deeper into the turf trying to protect ourselves from the impending bursts.

After what seemed an Eon, actually a split second and not hearing an explosion, only the sound of loud laughter emanating from the cockpit, we realized that we had become the victims of a awesome prank.

A few years ago, making idle conversation around the banquet table at one of our reunions and unaware that I was one of the individuals that was the butt of that prank, Loren Foote was describing that incident.



Buzzing The Vatican

PLAN TO ATTEND WASHINGTON REUNION NOW

Upon returning home I wrote to Loren asking him to describe the incident for possible inclusion in our Newsletter.

It appears below:-

Loren W. Foote
416 Jeffries Avenue, #23
Monrovia, California 91016
(626)-446-4700

Dear Frank:

I received the "Pantanella News" yesterday and your letter and your request.

First you are to be congratulated on the editing of the news letter. I was wondering if it would still be published as sick as Jim has been. It appears there are changes going on. That is ok

As for the incident you asked about, I will try to remember what took place.

I was down on the line and I recall a pilot and his copilot coming to the line and wanting to take their plane up but it was loaded with 500's. The pilot said to me that they were in a hurry, how long would it take to unload. I said about 45 minutes. The pilot said again that they were in a hurry and wanted to take off NOW. His words were like, forget the manual- toggle the So and So's.

I couldn't argue with a pilot who had rank on me now could I? I climbed into the cockpit, yelled bombs away and pulled the toggle switch. Dumping the bombs to the ground. Yes we did it in less than 45 minutes, and we had a happy pilot and copilot. If I remember correctly they also ran to the ditch to hide, as Eddie Bakker (my crew member now deceased) and I smiled.

If you remember there were times the transportation drivers in their 6x6 trucks would bring loads of 500's in at night and dump them off by the planes. They would say where do you want them, we would point to a spot near the planes to be loaded. They would back up, hit their brakes and the bombs would slide off the back sometimes with sparks flying

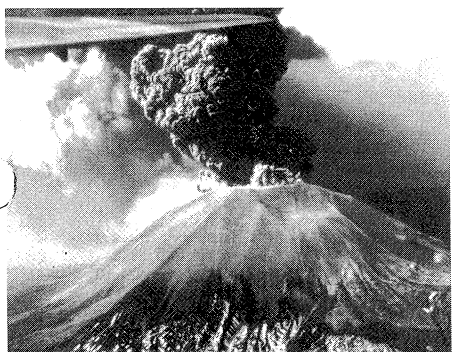
Some of the things we did was the only way to get every crew's plane ready as scheduled.

Hope this is what you were looking for.

Sorry I missed the last re-union. My lack of strength limits me to what I can do.

Wishing you the very best with the Pantanella News and the re-union coming up.

Loren



LETTERS

From: MWJAD@aol.com
Subject: Itinerary for 781st reunion
Date: March 5, 2007
To: frank@frankambrose.com

Dear Frank,

I am the son of Louis J. Deslatte who is a 781st squadron member. I am interested in attending the reunion with my father, if he is able, or on my own. If there is an itinerary available I would appreciate a copy in order to make travel arrangements as early as possible. Mainly the starting times of the check in and when the last event will end.

After my father reads the Pantanella News he passes them on to me. I have enjoyed reading the stories and hearing firsthand of my father's stories of his experiences during the war.

A simple "Thank-you" seems inadequate but I do not have any other words to express my gratitude for your work in giving the families of the men of the squadron the opportunity to read about their fathers during that time.

Sincerely, Michael W. Deslatte
email:MWJAD@aol.com

"Victory at all cost. Victory in spite of all terror. Victory no matter how long and how hard the road may be; for without victory there is no survival"

Winston Churchill May 13, 1940

From: <charm@comcast.net>
To: <fambrose@frontiernet.net>
Subject: Re: Pantanella News
Date: Sat, 30 Dec 2006

Dear Frank,

Was delighted to receive my copy of the Panatella News and the write-up of the Shreveport reunion. Glen told me he had submitted an article for the paper so was interested to read his account of his first experience in combat.

He tells me that he has submitted a reservation for us for the next reunion in Baltimore so will be seeing you then, the good Lord willing.

Again, thanks for adding me to the Panatella mailing list.

Carolyn Harman



The faces in this photo, as are so many others, are un-identified. If you are in this photo or you can identify any of the faces shown please email or write to me.

frank@frankambrose.com

**Tentative
781st. BS 2007 Reunion Agenda
October 7-8-9-10
Comfort Inn-Alexandria
Alexandria, VA.**

Sunday, October 7, 2007
Check In 3:00PM
Registration

Monday, October 8, 2007
Registration

Tuesday, October 9, 2007
Bus tour of World War II Memorial,
Air Force Memorial
Air & Space Museum at
the Dulles Airport.
Back to the hotel by 3:00 PM.
Open Hospitality Room

Wednesday, October 10, 2007
Business meeting in the morning.
3:00 PM: Bus to Fort Myer
4:00 PM: Memorial Service
in the Chapel
5:00 PM: Social Hour (Cash Bar)
5:30 PM Banquet at the Officer's
Club

Bus back to Hotel 9:00 PM.

(Times/Events and Places Subject To Change)

Famous Book In 4th Printing

A 'Must Read' book describing the trials and tribulations which faced the Galant Airmen of the now famous Tuskegee Army Airbase in Alabama is now in it's 4th printing.

This book **THE TUSKEGEE AIRMEN** by Charles F Francis is about the men of the 332nd Fighter Squadron who on so many occasions, flying P-51's, baby sat our bombers to and from the targets over Europe.

Originally published in 1955, this edition has been revised, expanded and updated by Branden Books owner/editor, Adolph Caso, to include more names and more stories. The 500 page book contains 100's of photos and an appendix full of documents

The Introduction as it appears on the inside cover is reprinted here:-

THE TUSKEGEE AIRMEN

by Charles F Francis and Edited, Revised and up-dated and enlarged by Adolph Caso

ISBN 0-8283-2077-2 \$24.95

When Charles Francis wrote this important book, he did not think that one day his book would be made into a movie. Neither did he know the impact that it was to have had in telling the story of those Negro officer and enlisted personnel who brought about the effective integration of the combat forces and of the United States. Today's total army concept has gone a long way from the 1948 days when President Truman issued Executive Order 9981 which called for equality of treatment and opportunity in the Armed Forces. Thanks to the Tuskegee Airmen who generated the Civil Rights movement for equality, the United States of America can now boast of individuals as Admiral Samuel L. Gravely, Secretary of the Army Clifford Alexander, Astronauts Bluford, McNair, Gregory and Bolden, and General Cohn L. Powell.

The late Mr. Francis appropriately begins this book with the chapter The Fight for the Right to Fight, bringing the reader to March 7, 1942, in Alabama, at Tuskegee Army Air Field's lone runway where black young pilots stood at attention in a graduation exercise that inducted them into the Army Air Corps. Having won the right to fight, they moved to the European theater. Under LTC Davis, Jr., they had their first taste of combat against the highly fortified Sicilian island of Pantelleria. The successful assault on the island marked another first: air power alone.. completely destroyed all enemy resistance. Having entered Sicily, the Tuskegee airmen participated in the most famous battles of the Italian peninsula: the invasions of Salerno

and Anzio, the battles of Monte Cassino and Rome; and then, in southern France, Greece, the Balkans, and finally Germany all the while fulfilling, with heroic deeds, the goals inherent in their struggle for the right to fight.

Although the hero in the book is General Benjamin O. Davis, Jr. (retired), Mr.



Benjamin O. Davis, Jr

Francis also presents the stories of other soldiers men who lost their lives in that tremendous conflict.

The battles brought the races together, mixing the blood of all men and women their lives on the line. Their achievements? Dead or alive, they consecrated the final goal: the attainment of a complete and lasting integration of the United States Armed Forces specifically and of American society in general. There were many who felt that integration would not work, Mr. Francis observes, but concludes that it advanced beyond the hope of the most optimistic exponents of integration. Negro

Treasurer's Report

In our last newsletter the Treasurer reported that the dues do not meet the expenses of the Association without using funds from the savings account. A motion was made at the last Business Meeting requesting donations be made to the Operating Account.

Several individuals have answered his request and their names were listed in his report.

Since then the the following people have also answered his plea and have made donations.

- James D. Shaffer
- Col. George Gaines Jr. Ret.
- Joe Mnistrelli sent in his check, marking it, "On Behalf of the 781st. Ordnance Gang"

Donations to the
781st Bomb Squadron
Association

should be sent to the treasurer:

Francis K. Kill,
707 West Circle Dr.,
Findlay, OH 45840.

officers and enlisted men were given the same privileges as whites and treated as individuals rather than as a race.

The crowning glory to this attainment can be seen in the many important positions held by Black American men and women in every Service and every Branch. And the Tuskegee airmen, in no small measure, made it all possible.

ADOLPH CASO



World War II Memorial Plaza with view of the
Washington Monument

PLAN TO ATTEND WASHINGTON REUNION NOW

SQUADRON MUSES

Where O' Where??

Earl Leinart, Frank Wassenaar and Ron Soucy, the committee appointed in Shreveport to find a repository for our 781st Bomb Squadron Association memorabilia has been busy.

The Committee will be studying the possibility of donating our WWII memorabilia to a museum that concentrates on B-24 history or WWII aircraft. The Committee hopes that there will be proposals from the 10 or more museums that they have already contacted, in time for them to study and evaluate by mid to late summer.

The Museums contacted:

1. Yankee Air Force Museum
2. Wright Patterson Museum, Dayton, Ohio
3. Wings Over The Rockies, Denver Colorado
4. Smithsonian Institution, National Museum, Washington, D.C.
5. San Diego Air & Space Museum, San Diego, California
6. Intrepid Sea, Air and Space Museum, New York, New York
7. Kansas Cosmosphere & Space Center, Hutchinson, Kansas
8. B-24 Mid-America Museum, Liberal, Kansas
9. Palm Springs Air Museum, Palm Springs, California
10. Strategic Air & Space Museum,

781st Squadron Association Inventory List

VIDEO CASSETTES

781st Bombardment Squadron (H) AAF IN World War II, (2 Copies)
Produced by Harry Carl

Ploesti! B-24 AT WAR Series I,
(1 copy) shared by John W. Ogden
The B-24 Story donated by John W. Ogden

Glenn Miller's Last Flight
shared by John W. Ogden
CD's

Greatest Generation including Interview
with Earl Leinart
shared by John W. Ogden

BOOKS

The Air Battle of Ploesti, Written in the
skies over Roumania by the 15th Air
Force and the 205 Group (RAF) with
Foreword by Major General N.F. Twining
(2 Copies one inscribed "Property of
Calder M. Lampry, S/Sgt. 781st Squadron,
465th Bomb Group, 55th Wing")

Ambrose, Stephen E. The Wild Blue,
The Men and Boys who flew the B-24s
over Germany 1944-45

The History of the U.S. Air Force,
David A. Anderton

Log of the Liberators, Steve Birdsell,
An Illustrated History of the B-24,

Bomber Legends Magazine,

Summer 2004, Vol. 1 No 1

Winter 2005 Vol.1 No. 4

Summer 2005, Vol. 2 No 2 (2)

Spring 2006, Vol.2, No. 1

B-24 Historical Calendar

FLYBOYS by James Bradley,
Little, Brown and Company 2003.

**The Other Capri and All My Sad
Captains** Kelly F. Cook, Tennessee
Valley Publishing, 1992

**Dahl, Carl. V. All Together Now, Flap
Your Arms**, shared by John W. Ogden

Davis, Larry, B-24 Liberator in Action,
Carrollton, TX Squadron/Signal Publica-
tions, Inc. 1987 shared by John W. Ogden

When Hell Was In Session, Senator
Jeremiah A. Denton, Jr., Mobile, Ala-
bama, Reprinted by Traditional Press
The Cottontails, Fagan, Vincent F.
Liberator Pilot: Battle for Oil, Carlsbad,
California: California Aero Press, 1991

**Fifteenth Air Force Association Sortie
Vol. XV, No. 3**, September 2000, March
Air Reserve Base, California

Flight Manual for B-24 Liberator,
Appleton, WI 54912, Aviation Publica-
tions, a Division of Graphic Communica-
tions Center, Inc. 1989

Gregory, Floyd E. Compier, **History of
783rd Bomb Squadron (H) 465th BG**
(1943-1945) Pantanella, Italy 1989

Mauldin, Bill, Bill Mauldin's Army,
Novato, CA, Presidio Press, 1995

**Pima Air Museum, Aircraft of the Pima
Air Museum Tucson, AZ, Pima Air
Museum 1983** shared by John W. Ogden

Pyle, Ernie, Here Is Your War, Chicago,
Consolidated Book Publishers, 1944

Pyle, Ernie, Last Chapter, New York,
Henry Holt and Company 1946

781st BS Asso/ Newsletters No. 1 - 72

**Rust, Kenn C. Fifteenth Air Force
Story** Temple City, CA. Historical
Aviation Album Publication 1976

**Stein, Allan T. Into the Wild Blue
Yonder**, College Station, TX, Texas A &
M University Press shared by John W.
Ogden

Stein, E. P. Flight of the Vin Fiz,
New York: Arbor House 1985

Military Aircraft Boneyards Veronico,
Nicholas A., Grantham, I. Kevin and
Thompson, Scott, Osceola, WI, MBI
Publishing, shared by John W. Ogden

In the Gulf,

Galveston and the U Boats,
Wiggins, Melanie, Torpedoes 1942-1943.
College Station, TX Texas A & M Uni-
versity Press 1995 donated by John W.
Ogden (N.B. John served on Sub Patrol
flying out of Miami in various planes-
settling on B 24's as being most suitable
for this duty.

SLIDE PRESENTATION

781st Bomb Squadron History

by Harry Carl

3 Slide Carousels

3 Cassette Tapes

4 Reel to Reel Tapes

MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS

3 781st Bomb Squadron Cups

Reunion Photo

Reunion Photo

Bomb Site

Goggles

Helmet

Altimeter

"Turn & Bank" donated by

Jack Van Slyke

POW Cap Charles Lagneneank,

"Germany, Italy, Hungary, Austria, Poland, Yugoslavia"

19" Plastic Model B-24

PHOTOS

Reunion Oct. 1998 Veterans Only

Reunion Oct. 1998 Veterans, Spouses and
Guests

Various News Articles and Clippings

Banner of the 781st

Squadron Insignia Painting 28" x 30"

Squadron Insignia Painting 13 1/2" x 13"

Polesti Armed Forces Information Poster

Flak Situation Map March 23, 1945

(Negative)

Painting "Rendezvous" 13' x 16"

shared by Thomas G. Arthur

Proposed Amendment to BY-Laws

The 781st Bomb Squadron Association's
Business Meeting in Shreveport voted to
amend Article IV of the Constitution in
order to change the Membership
Qualifications.

The following Amendment to the Consti-
tution is presented and is being published
to be voted on at the next Association's
Business Meeting.

Article IV of the Constitution: Membership Qualifications

a) All personnel that were members of
the 781st Bomb Squadron (465th Bomb
Group) and served at Pantanella Air
Base, Italy during World War II. Spouses
of all of the above are to be considered
honorary members, not subject to paying
dues.

b) Widows of members can, by payment
of dues, continue as honorary members
(non-voting).

Proposed Amendment to Article IV: Amendment #1

All family members of 781st Bomb
Squadron Veterans or any person
dedicated to preserving the history of the
association are to be considered associates
members upon payment of dues and shall
become a voting member and eligible to
hold office.

To be voted upon at Next Meeting.

Arranging a Reunion is Easy Just Let Someone Else Do It

The easiest part of setting up the reunion this year was deciding on where we would have it.

As you can recall, it was suggested and voted upon to go to Baltimore. We would then attempt to negotiate with one of the many Washington tour bus companies to see the attractions and various hotels to select the venue. We soon discovered while checking for the hotel accommodations and the cost of the bus service that this was going to become the most expensive reunion we have ever had.

With a Reunion Committee of two, (Carole Lee and I) each of us several hundred miles from DC, it was decided we try negotiating with a Professional Reunion Planner.

Planners would organize everything, Hotel, meals Attractions, Memorial Service and Banquet. The first suggestion the planners made us aware of was that the hotels in Baltimore were as costly as the ones in Washington. Since our primary goal was mostly to visit DC they suggested we should look for a hotel in DC as bussing to DC would be expensive.

Communicating between Planners proved interesting, a few turned us down because we were not big enough in numbers and other planners responded by saying, "with our demands of meeting at a base, and with security as it is these days, it would take an Act by the President himself to get us on a base." Others replied promising fantastic accommodations and attractions.

Planners do not charge for this service so Carole and I gave a go-ahead to present us with a proposed agenda and a final cost. Soon after the Xmas Holidays were over the planners emailed their proposal.

The email started out like this:-

"Hi Frank- I am attaching a great reunion and I was able to negotiate a fantastic price".

When I scrolled down to the bottom line to check the cost, my Laptop nearly fell off my lap.

She had proposed a four day reunion at a cost of only \$310. per night per person. Wow! That's per person!!

The question on our minds by this point was, "Should we cancel the reunion?"

The 783rd, at first, had decided to go to Baltimore in 2007. They discovered that it was much too expensive and decided not to go there.

Carole suggested we wait a few more days to see if she might make a connection with someone in DC who might help. When that attempt proved negative she resorted to contacting the Washington Convention and Visitor's Bureau.

Carole informed the Center as to what our plans were, further stipulating that we were looking for lodging for under \$100.00 a night. The Bureau soon informed us they were unable to help us with the \$100.00 limit on lodging. They did alert several DC Tour Bus Companies as to our needs and as many as a dozen responded with their quotes.

With our backs to the wall in our attempt to keep costs within reach, Carole and I were almost ready to throw the towel in.

As long shot I sent an urgent SOS to our own Marcel Snyder to plead with him to use all of his DC connections to get a viable reunion together.

The email:-

To: "Marcel Snyder" <jsnyder17@cfl.rr.com>

Sent: Thursday, November 16, 2006

Subject: HELP 781st HELP

Marcel-

You must be aware that the Asso. will be

meeting in DC.

Can you pull some strings so that we could visit some base around there.

Carole and I are hitting a stone wall- I wonder if it's because I did not vote for Bush.

Frank

His return email re-kindled our candle giving us a new glimmer of hope.

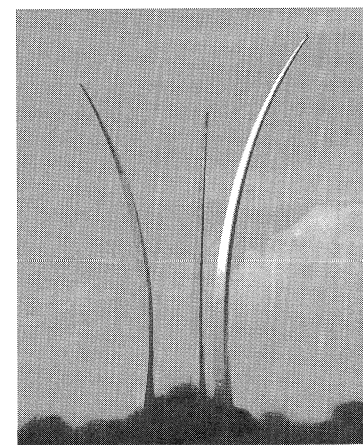
Not promising anything, he did consent to look into the matter on his next visit to Washington.

Marcel soon came back with a hotel for \$89.00 per night and an arrangement with the Fort Myer Army Base.

Immediately by acclamation (Carole and I) both declared Marcel Snyder our official 'Reunion Meeting Planner'.

Leaving all of the arrangements to Carole and Marcel I relegated myself to only chronicling the events.

Between the two of them a great reunion is planned with a Memorial Service and Banquet at the Base and exciting tours to several of the DC Sites.



Air Force Memorial
Washington, DC

The 465th Remembered by Gene Moxley

In the year of Nineteen Forty-Three,
A new Group, was soon to be.
This group was numbered, Four Six Five,
To achieve perfection, each number did strive.

They formed four Squadron's,
Of brave young men.
Some would never see,
Their loved one's ever again.

The Squadron's were numbered from,
Seven Eighty, through Seven Eighty Three.
An outstanding Bomb Group,
They were destined to be.

They flew the famous B-24,
A heavy bomber, just right for the chore.
Loaded with bombs, and bristling with gun's,
This was the one, that put the Hun on the run.

They were based in Pantanella,
A town in Sunny Italy.
Where they flew, their many mission's,
To keep, all of us free.

So let us, say a prayer,
Of thanks, to all of these men.
For, without their gallant effort,
Who knows, what might have been.

We will never forget you,
Though many year's. have past.
You left with us, an impression,
That will forever last.

So here's to the men, of the Four Sixty Fifth,
God Bless you, one and all,
Your job was, tough and deadly,
But you courageously, answered the call.

'With Reverence, Respect and Admiration'
Gene Moxley 3/5/92

BOOK YOUR ROOM RESERVATION NOW

FOLDED WINGS

Eugene F. Fenner:-
Top Gunner:Rice Crew

Eugene F. Fenner, 83, died Dec. 6, 2006, at Wilmington Nursing and Rehabilitation Residence, Ohio. He is survived by his wife, Geneva Pauline Salyer Fenner. Mr. Fenner was born May 18, 1923, in New Antioch.

While in high school, he ran the movie projector at the Murphy Theatre. After World War II, he managed the Sohio Service stations in Wilmington and Sabina. He also sold life insurance and worked for NCR in Dayton before working for and eventually retiring from American Tool in Wilmington. In addition, he retired from the Ohio Air National Guard after 20 years of service. He graduated from Wilmington High School.

He was a veteran of the U.S. Army Air Force during World War II. and served as a gunner and mechanic He flew on a B-24 Liberator and was on 52 missions over Europe and Africa. He received the Distinguished Flying Cross.

Lawrence Brenneman;
Pilot: Brenneman Crew

Lawrence Brenneman died January 17, 2007.

Reported by Kenneth Clemmer,
Brennanan Crew Navigator.

From: <rlf1@peoplepc.com>
To: <fambrose@frontiernet.net>
Subject: death of ordnance man 2006
Date: Wed, 20 Dec 2006
Hi Frank,
Frank Shonk, Ordnance, died within 6 mos. of his wife. Unfortunately I have no dates to give you. John Zadrozny & myself found out about this when his daughter returned a Xmas card telling us that Shonk died within 6 mos of his wife but no further information.
Bob Freed

Herbert L. Schlossin;

Communication Section
Herbert Schlossin died February 16, 2007. Condolences on behalf of the 781st.Squadron were extended to his wife Shirley by Jack Van Slyke.

Reported by Jack VanSlyke

Think You Got Troubles?

I've sure gotten old!

I've had two bypass surgeries, a hip replacement, new knees and fought prostate cancer and diabetes.

I'm half blind, can't hear anything quieter than a jet engine, take 40 different medications that make me dizzy, winded, and subject to blackouts.

I have bouts with dementia. Have poor circulation; hardly feel my hands and feet anymore. Can't remember if I'm 85 or 92. Have lost all my friends.

But, thank God, I still have my driver's license.

So-- I'll meet you in
Washington!!

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.



"LONG JOHN SILVER" Ground Crew

Can anyone recognize the faces in this photo? If so Please email or write to me.

frank@frankambrose.com

RESERVE THE HOTEL AND SEND IN YOUR REGISTRATION NOW



USAF PHOTO from the Frank Ambrose Collection

'Operation Tidal Wave' Target:-PLOES'

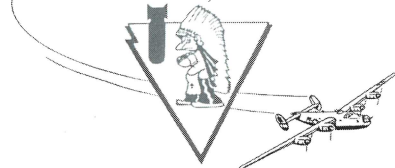
Despite intense defense fire from the ground and from the Axis planes, the USAAF pressed the attack.

In the confusion of battle some B-24s made bombing runs through heavy smoke over targets that had already been attacked and were caught in the bursts of delayed action bombs dropped several minutes previous.

Although overall damage to the target was heavy the cost was high.

Of the 177 planes and 1,726 men who took off on the mission, 54 planes and 532 men failed to return.

781st "PANTANELLA NEWS"
c/o Frank Ambrose, Editor
44 East Blvd.
Gloversville, NY 12078



**2007 781st REUNION
IT'S
OUR NATION'S CAPITAL
--WASHINGTON--
RESERVE
OCTOBER 7 to 10**



**ORREN LEE
2312 BRAEMAR DR.
SOUX FALLS, SD 57105**