



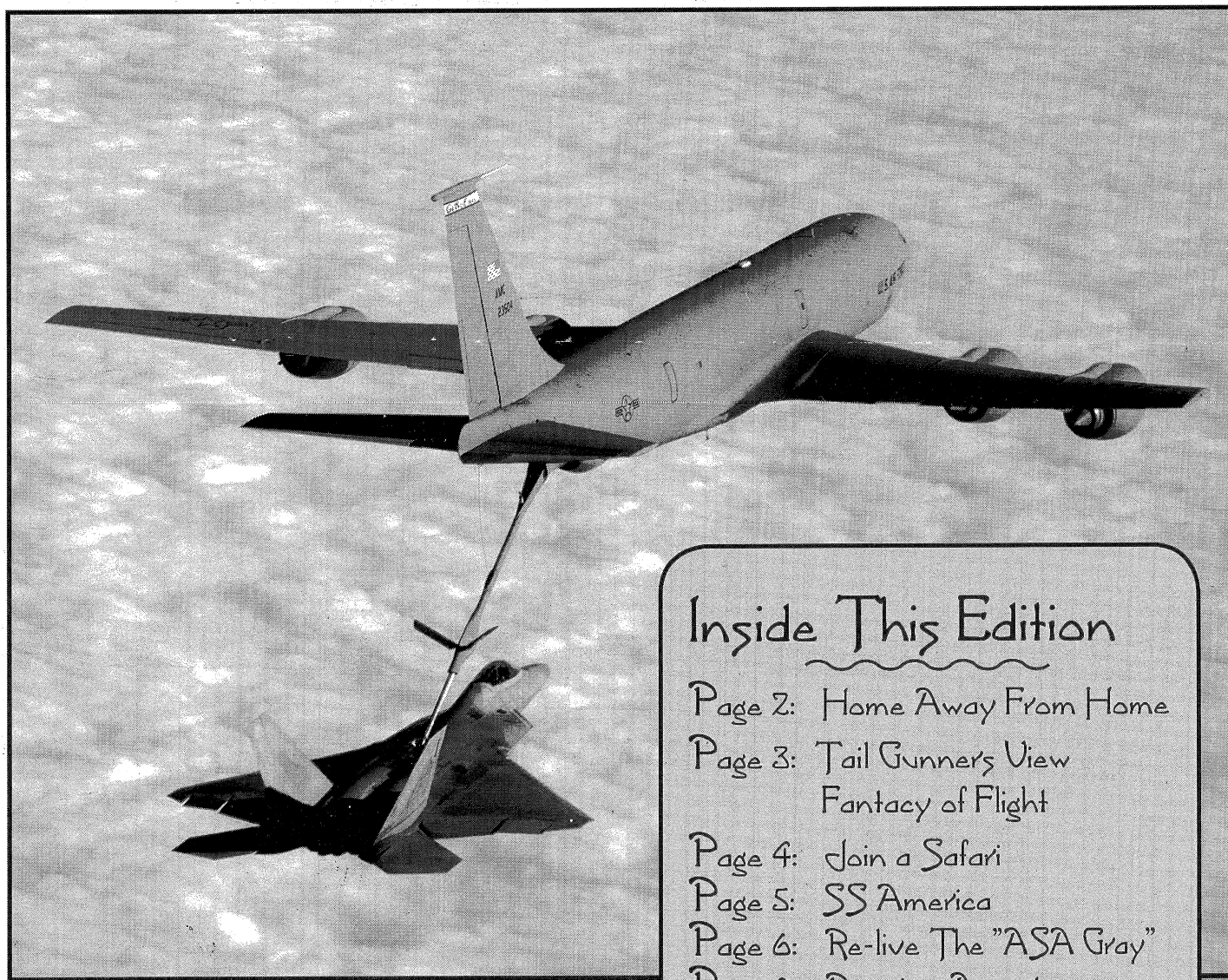
# PANTANELLA NEWS

Published by 781st Bomb Squadron Association©

#99

April 2010

## 781st ORDERED TO TAMPA FOR R&R Large Turnout of Vets and Families Expected



A KC-135 Stratotanker refuels an F-22 Raptor.  
(U.S. Air Force photo/Darin Russell)

Nearly all internal fuel can be pumped through the tanker's flying boom, the KC-135's primary fuel transfer method.

A special shuttlecock-shaped drogue attached to and trailed behind the flying boom is used to refuel aircraft fitted with probes

### Inside This Edition

Page 2: Home Away From Home

Page 3: Tail Gunner's View  
Fantasy of Flight

Page 4: Join a Safari

Page 5: SS America

Page 6: Re-live The "ASA Gray"

Page 8: Reunion Agenda

Page 10: Letters

Page 11: FW's  
The Prez Sez

## MEMBERS KEEP IN TOUCH

Notify or contact any or all of  
the individuals listed below for any  
FW's---Address Changes--News  
Or Whatever

### PANTANELLA NEWS

Editor:- Frank Ambrose:-

News Stories, FW's and Obits

**FRANK AMBROSE**

44 East Blvd.

Gloversville, NY 12078

email: <frank@frankambrose.com>

### 781st. Asso. President:-

**Orren Lee:**

2312 Braemar Dr.

Sioux Falls, SD 57105

605 339 1297

email: <clee75@q.com>

### 781st. Asso. VP:-

**Marilyn Horne**

17933 Bahama Isle

Tampa, FL 33647-2777

email: <marilynkhorne@yahoo.com>

### 781st. Sqd. Treasurer:-

**PATTY KILL**

35 Southfield Ct.

Springboro, OH 45066

email: <pkill@woh.rr.com>

### 781st Asso. Executive Sect:-

**Carole Lee:**

2312 Braemar Dr.

Sioux Falls, SD 57105

605 339 1297

email: <clee75@q.com>

781st Bomb Squadron Association

c/o Orren Lee, Pres.

2312 Braemar Dr.

Sioux Falls, SD 57105

Email: <clee75@q.com>

#### Officers

Orren Lee: President

Vice President: Marilyn Horne

Patty Kill: Treasurer

Secretary: Connie Ogden

#### Board of Directors

Frank Ambrose

Earl Leinart

Frank Wassenaar

Chaplin: Frank Wassenaar

PANTANELLA NEWS

Editor: Frank Ambrose

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.

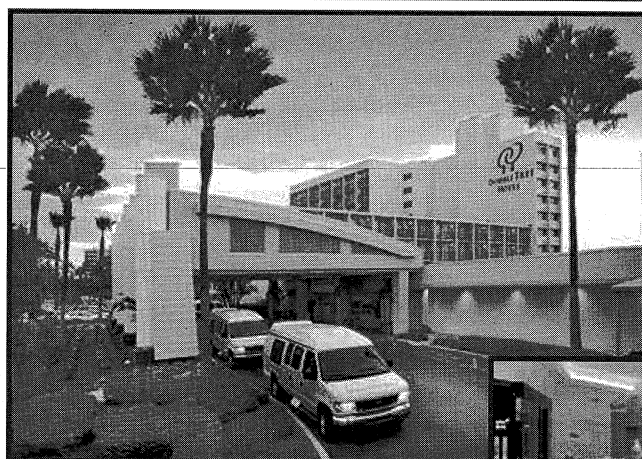
Shot down 25 enemy aircraft

Received Two

Presidential Unit Citations

In Seven Battle Campaigns

## Doubletree Tampa Westshore Airport Home Base for 781st Reunion



The hotel offers complimentary shuttle service to businesses, shopping, dining and entertainment within a 2 mile radius as well as 24-hour airport shuttle service making it easy and affordable to get to enjoy the Tampa experience.

Located in Tampa's Westshore District, Florida's largest business center, the Doubletree Tampa Westshore Airport is an ideal choice for our 2010 781st Reunion.

The facility is close to everything in Tampa Bay! The Doubletree hotel is surrounded by the Bay Area's finest dining, shopping and entertainment.

The hotel is just minutes from Busch Gardens, University of South Florida, Port of Tampa, Downtown Tampa, Tampa Convention Center, University of Tampa, The Florida Aquarium and Historic Ybor City and other area attractions. The Salvador Dali Museum, Tampa Bay Performing Arts Center and Tampa Museum of Art are all a short drive from the hotel and only 5 minutes from Tampa International Airport.



Other amenities include a 24-hour complimentary business center equipped with computers, Internet access, printers, and shipping supplies. Complimentary wireless high-speed Internet service is also available in all public areas as well as in guest rooms.

## CALL NOW TO MAKE YOUR RESERVATIONS Doubletree Hotel Tampa Westshore Airport

[www.tampadoubletree.com](http://www.tampadoubletree.com)

4500 West Cypress Street

Tampa, FL 33607

813 879 4800.

Complimentary Continental Breakfast

The first 17 Veterans making their reservations for  
the reunion will receive a \$9.00 Discount per night



## Recollections of a Tail Gunner

By Pierre J.J. Kennedy

Whenever we dropped bombs on a heavily guarded target, I would look back to observe the other bombers as they poked their noses out of the huge black cloud of flak smoke. On the way home, all crew members watched for stragglers, and we later reported any planes shot down, or parachutes seen in an interrogation session.

On a trip to attack the Osterreiche Saurerwerke-Dieseleng Factory at Vienna, Austria, flying in 'Guardian Angel' with Lt. Jim Althoff and Ernie Van Asperen as pilots, we lost #4 engine as we approached Lake Balaton, Hungary.

That huge lake is about fifty miles long, and the Germans had fighter plane bases there. With a feathered prop and being unable to keep up with the formation, the pilots asked us crewmen should we continue alone or turn around and return to Italy as an early return and a mission not counted? The consensus was to return to Italy. We were deep into enemy territory,

and alone.

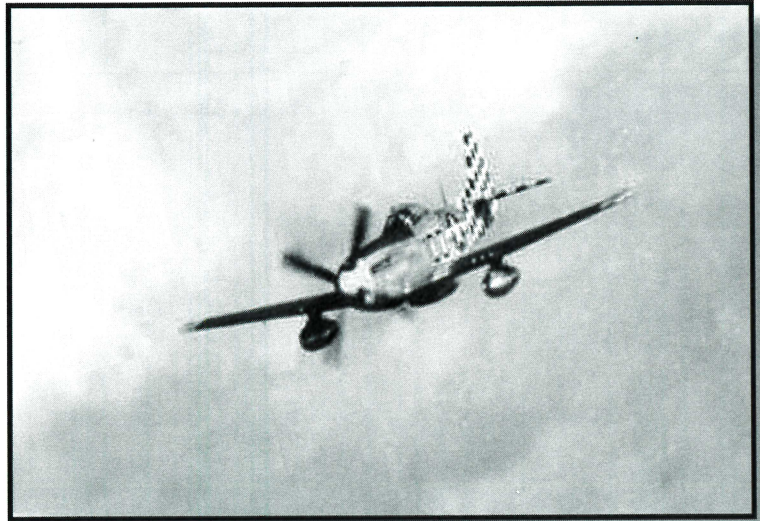
All eyes were on the alert searching for enemy fighters who might see us, and pounce on us for the kill.

There is nothing more lonely than flying in a disabled aircraft, as a 'sitting duck' over enemy territory.

I stared through the plexi-glass canopy of my turret. The sunlight was blinding, even though I wore sun glasses, so I would blink my eyes then study the sky again.

There it was—a speck in the distance— or was it a piece of dirt on the plexi-glass? When it moved, I called the crew, and got the plane in my gun sight.

The top gunner, Sgt. Henry E. Black, said he had also found the plane. The speck grew larger very fast. Then the



325thFG P-51

plane suddenly banked, and we recognized it as a P-51 Mustang.

It was 'THISIZIT' from the 325th. Fighter Group, the 'Checker-tails'.

The P-51 pilot escorted us back to friendly territory.

We were happy that he had come along.

*Pierre J.J. Kennedy*

## BIG DAY TUESDAY

### Fantasy of Flight

is Florida's premier aircraft and flight attraction. Featuring unique exhibits, behind the scenes tours and "Fun with Flight" - a hands on interactive area for kids of all ages. Visitor's are urged to test your flying skills on virtual reality hang glider and hot-air balloon simulators, or climb aboard a Corsair fighter simulator and challenge other flyers.

Experience the history of aviation at **Fantasy of Flight** from early flight through to World War II, including a walk through on an authentic B-17 bomber.

A collection of over 40 beautifully restored aircraft are on display in two art-deco stroll hangers filled with the world's largest private

## FANTASY OF FLIGHT

*An Attraction On a Higher Plane*



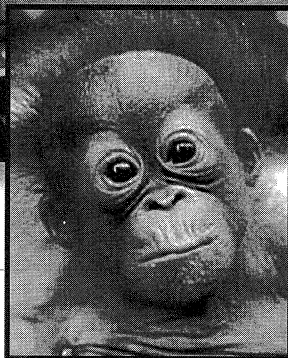
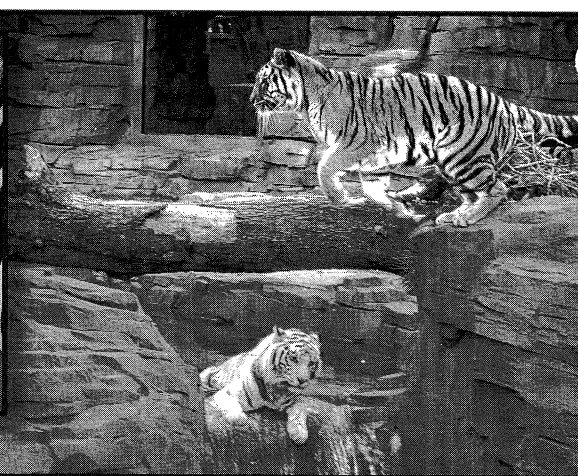
aircraft collection covering the history of aviation including early flight, World War I, World War II and beyond. Multi-sensory sight and sound experiences bring the history to life. Featured in the collection are planes used in the movies Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom, The Great Waldo Pepper and most recently Flyboys.

An aerial demonstration of vintage aircraft is featured daily and offers you the opportunity to learn more about the aircraft from the pilot himself. The Women's Air Force Service Pilots Exhibit is a tribute to the first women fliers who volunteered to fly for the military during World War II.--

**All this on Tuesday...**



## WOW!... GO ON A SAFARI ON THE "OFF-DAY" IN TAMPA



### JUMP INTO THE JUNGLE AT BUSCH GARDENS TAMPA BAY

Just over an hour west of Orlando near Florida's beautiful Gulf Coast, you'll find yourself on the edge of Africa at Busch Gardens in Tampa Bay.

Experience up-close encounters with amazing animals, take an unforgettable safari across the Serengeti Plains,

Set in the Congo area, the 4-acre Jungala attraction invites guests to discover exotic creatures, explore a colorful village hidden deep in the jungle and connect with the inhabitants of the lush landscape through up-close animal interactions, multi-story family play

areas, rides and live entertainment.

At Jungala's center, a vibrant village comes alive with the

sights and sounds of this jungle paradise. Towering trees, cascading waterfalls and elaborate stone structures shape the landscape, transporting guests to a mythical place where the inhabitants – both human and animal – live in complete harmony with nature.

From atop the tallest trees or beneath the jungle floor, guests are completely immersed in the animals' world.

Connect with two of the world's most endangered species – Bengal tigers and orangutans. View orangutans as they maneuver overhead, or watch them rest in rope ham-

mocks through glass platforms in a specially designed tree house.

Subterranean caves and underwater windows offer a clear view of tigers swimming in their plunge pool, while a pop-up dome brings guests face to face with these magnificent predators.

Two signature rides add to the excitement of Jungala: Jungle Flyers is a zip line experience for young adventurers ages 6 to 13 that offers three different flight patterns above the tree tops. Wild Surge launches 14 passengers out of a mountain crater above a towering waterfall for a thrilling view of the village below.

Larger-than-life stilt walkers highlight the beauty and grace of the colorful jungle flora and fauna with elaborate costumes representing birds, frogs and even the trees themselves.

A must see Attraction while in Tampa on the "OFF DAY".

### Pantanelle Nose Art



Can you still recall seeing these at PANTANELLA?



## MacDill AF Base...

Flying operations at MacDill began in 1941 with the base's first mission including transitional training in the B-17 Flying Fortress. Following the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, MacDill became a major staging area for Army Air Corps flight crews and aircraft.

During the war as many as 15,000 troops were stationed at MacDill at one time. Estimates of the number of crew members trained at the base vary from 50,000 to 120,000.

In 1996 the Air Refueling Wing marked the beginning of a new era for MacDill. The redesignation marked the addition of a KC-135R squadron and mission which expanded in 1997 with the add-on of EC-135 and CT-43 aircraft and missions.

Since the redesignation, MacDill and the 6th Air Refueling Wing, have contributed to military operations around the world at locations including Istres, France; Ramstein AB, Germany; Soto Cano and Tazsar, Hungary; Zagreb, Croatia; Tuzla, Bosnia; Incirlik AB, Turkey; and Al Kharj and Riyadh, Saudia Arabia.



Ronald McDonald marshalls in a KC-135 refueling aircraft returning from deployment Jan. 2, 2010. The 927th Air Refueling Wing was deployed to Guam in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.  
(U.S. Air Force photo/Tech Sgt. Denise Hauser)

## Re-Live Your 'SS Asa Gray' Experience of '44 On the 'Off Day' In Tampa

Victory and Liberty ships were crewed by members of the U.S. Merchant Marine and defended by an all-volunteer group of U.S. Navy sailors called the Navy Armed Guard. The operation of these ships during World War II came at great human cost:

The Merchant Marine suffered more loss of life, by percentage of their ranks, than any other branch of service; the Armed Guard lost thousands. US Merchant Mariners and the Navy Armed Guard are truly the forgotten heroes of WW II.

**The SS American Victory**, a 1945 vintage merchant ship which served during World War II, and the Korean and Vietnam wars as a military cargo, is being transformed into a carrier world-class museum, mariners and memorial and a "ReLive History" cruising ship.

The popular American Victory Restoration Tour allow visitors to view firsthand the on-going work to restore this icon of America's merchant maritime might, a functioning, 1940s-era merchant cargo vessel which served during World War II and the Korean and Vietnam wars.

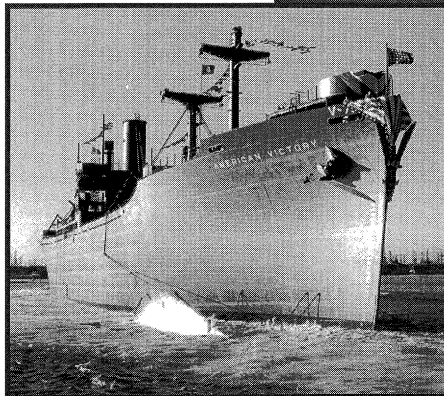
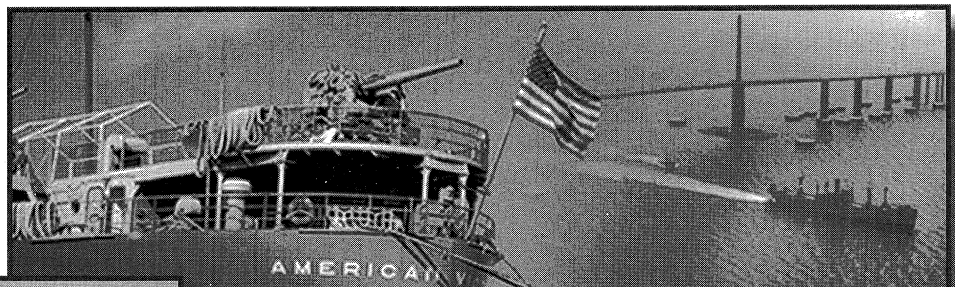
**SS American Victory** was named after American University in Washington, D.C., to honor the school's contributions to war training and weapons research during both WW I and WW II. From June until September 1945, she carried ammunition and other cargo from U.S. West Coast ports to Southeast Asia. She ferried cargo, equipment and troops back to the U.S. after the war ended.

Visitors experience virtually the entire ship, including cavernous three level cargo holds, radio and gyro rooms, hospital, galley,

weaponry, reefers, steering stations, flying bridge, signaling equipment, wheelhouse, officer and crew messes, engine room, crew cabins, chartroom, lifeboats and cargo equipment.

The developing museum contains photographs of the American Victory and other period merchant ships, U.S. Merchant Marine uniforms, medals and documents, personal recollections of life at sea as well as navigational equipment, hands-on displays and weaponry.

**Witness History in the Remaking... Visit The SS American Victory-while in Tampa**





## Page 17 from 781st BS History Book

The two pages reproduced here are from the '781st. BS History Book' illustrating the day by day account of the 21 day voyage to Africa aboard the Liberty Ship, 'SS Asa Gray'.



Left to Right, Top to Bottom

1. Reno Ray, Tom Callahan, Elwood Helfer, et al wave goodbye to the USA.
2. The "ASA GRAY" sleeping facilities were packed.
3. Harmonizing to pass the time.

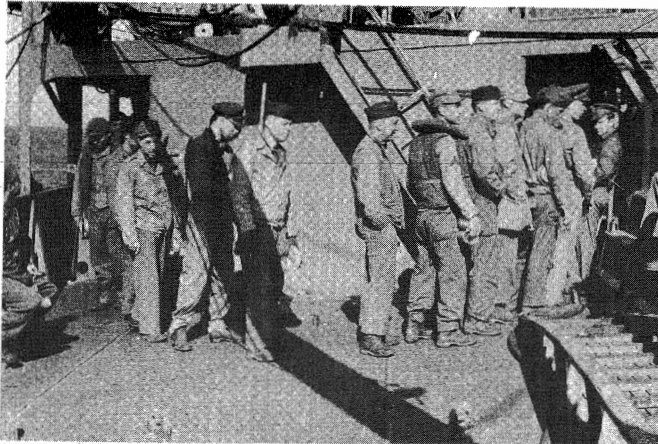
4. Harmonizing to pass the time.
5. Sweating out a submarine alert.
6. Paperbacks also helped to pass time.

All Fotos by Frank Ambrose

Page 17



## Page 18 from 781st BS History Book

Left to Right, Top to Bottom

1. Chow line on the "ASA GRAY".
2. First Sgt. John Messmore reads daily duty assignments.
3. Sgt. O.J. Cowart monitors the checker game below him.
- 4.
5. Capt. (Doc) Rapoport and Lt. Kenny Sutton at the railing.
6. Lts. Bill Weaver, Calvin Canyock, Len Williamson, Seth Hawkins, Harold Achenback, Ken Tedin, Dave Orr.
7. Pfc. Conrad Tylenda gets a haircut.



All Fotos By Frank Ambrose



**781st BS Assoc. 2010 Reunion**  
**October 4-5-6-7,**  
**Doubletree Hotel Tampa Westshore Airport**  
 4500 West Cypress Street, Tampa, Florida,  
**Tel: 1- 813 879 4800**

### **Tentative Reunion Agenda**

#### **Complimentary Continental Breakfast every Morning**

**Monday, Oct. 4:**

3:00 PM Registration/Hospitality

**Tuesday, Oct. 5:**

8:00 AM Bus to Fantasy of Flight

**Wednesday, Oct. 6:**

Free Day

Nearby shopping amusement parks as well as the Liberty ship located at Channel side in Tampa next to the Tampa Aquarium. Busch Gardens and many, many more other Attractions

**Thursday, Oct. 7:**

8:00 AM: bus ride to MacDill AFB for the Memorial Service at the base chapel

12:00 PM: lunch at the Officers Club.

1:30 PM: Static display of the KC-135 and a windshield tour of the base.

**3:30 PM: Bus back to Hotel**

**7:00 PM: Banquet at the Doubletree**

## **My Grandfather- Albert Nagel**

by Kristin Nagel

Why is it that people always share stories of loved ones once they have passed?

We tell of trials and tribulations of the deceased; long gone and never forgotten, but yet did they know how we felt or how proud we were to have had them in our lives?

Well this is no mortuary, nor is it of a man who had once lived. It is of my grandfather, Albert Nagel who I am fortunate enough to still have in my life today and even more fortunate to hopefully have read this story I have written just for him. My grandfather, or as I proudly called him "Aúgrandpa, À" in front of many without the slight feeling of embarrassment, even at my age has become a true hero.

This last year, I not only had the honor

to accompanied him to the 781st Bomb Squadron reunion, but to share his stories and the many stories and lives of many who fought and served our country back in the WWII era. It definitely gave me a sense of pride to know the history of our country not from a book, but from the mouths of many men who saw things that I or your could never imagine and yet walked away from it and be here stand-

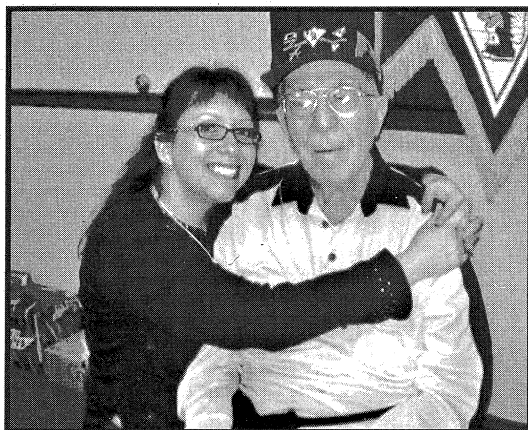
ing today. For those who died fighting for our country I salute you!

I write this story to remind everyone to be grateful for what they have today and to always remember your loved ones. Don't wait until they have passed to tell

them how remarkable they are, call them up and tell them how much they mean to you, because in life we never know when our journey will end.

I love you grandpa!

*Kristin*



## **PLANNING REUNIONS**

Since Orren and I convinced the 781<sup>st</sup> Bomb Squadron Association that Rapid City, SD would be a good place



to hold our reunion, we have been involved with the planning. We have a 781<sup>st</sup> member on the committee as a helper and mentor. John Ogden in Rapid City, SD, Barney Russell in Shreveport, LA, Marcel Snyder in Washington DC, Ron Soucy in Dayton, OH and Earl Leinart in Independence, MO.

Reunion planning involves the following: Selecting a hotel site, arranging the agenda, a local interest tour, an airbase tour, bus transportation, lunch, memorial service, memorial program, color guards, chaplain, pianist, a banquet, food, speaker, entertainment, scheduling the Board of Director's Meeting, Business Meeting, hospitality room with supplies.

Each one involves phone calls, emails, letters, and contracts. Some things have to come together before a date can be selected. The registration fee and cost have to be determined before the registration forms can be created.

I have to end this report with a special thank you to Ron and Marilyn Horn for volunteering to plan our 2010 Reunion. We know the planning is in very capable hands. Our registrations will be in the mail to our Treasurer, Patty Kill, as soon as we receive the registration forms.

How about you?

**Carole Lee**

Executive Secretary of the 781<sup>st</sup> Bomb Squadron Association

**WOW!!!**  
**IT'S TAMPA IN OCTOBER**  
**IT'S GONNA BE BIG**



## Rules of the Air

1. Every take-off is optimal. Every landing is mandatory.
2. If you push the stick forward the houses get bigger.  
If you pull the stick back they get smaller.  
That is if you keep pulling the stick all the way back, then the houses get big again. only faster.
3. Flying is not dangerous. Crashing is what's dangerous.
4. The only time you have too much fuel is when you are fire.
5. The propeller is just a big fan in front of the plane used to keep the pilot cool.  
When it stops, you can actually watch the pilot start to sweat.
6. When in doubt, hold on to your altitude.  
No one ever collided with the sky.
7. A good landing is one from which you can walk away from.  
A great landing is one after which they can use the plane again.
8. Learn from the mistakes of others. You won't live long enough to make your own mistakes.
9. You know you've landed with the wheels up if it takes full power to taxi to the ramp.
10. Always keep the number of landings equal to the number of take-offs you've made.
11. There are three simple rules for making a smooth landing.  
Unfortunately no one knows what they are.
12. Remember, Gravity is not just a good idea, it's the LAW, and it's subject to Repeal.
13. Just forget Rule 13.
14. Keep looking around, there might be something out there you've missed.

**Keep 'Em Flying**

## From Sqd Yearbook

Page 83 Feb 4, 1945

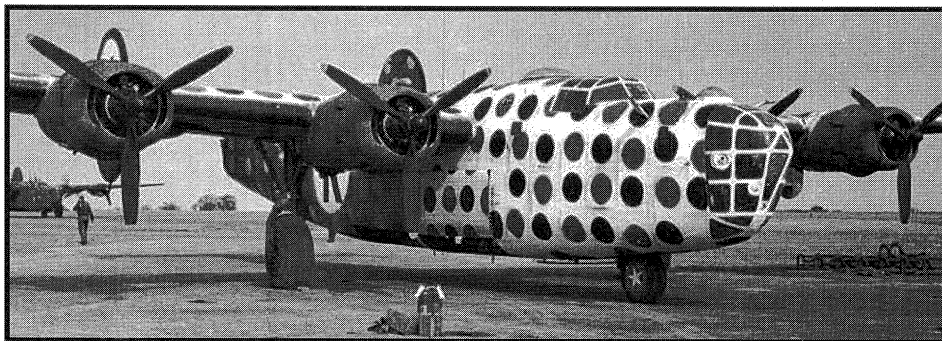
The target for 5 February was the Winterhafen Oil Storage Depot at Regensburg, Germany.

Pathfinder methods of bombing were used and poor results were achieved. Crews piloted by Lts. McDaniel, Hudson, Wilcox, Mullan, Barnett, Hewitt, Hendrickson and Jones took part with the latter failing to return.

Lt. Jones's aircraft (Yellow H) was last seen falling behind the formation as it left the coast of Italy en route over the Adriatic Sea to Base. The plane did not appear to be in any trouble.

Members of the missing Crew were: 2nd Lt. Robert C. Jones, Pilot; 2nd Lt. William I. Dobbs, Co-Pilot; 2nd Lt. Arthur Silver, Navigator; 2nd Lt. Joseph E. Ormes, Bombardier; Cpl. Howard M. Fox, Engineer; Cpl. Charles H. Duffield, RIO; Cpl. Roscoe E. Fee, Gunner; Cpl. Carrol E. Elmore, Gunner; Cpl. Bernard J. Reardon, Gunner; and Cpl. Vernon M. Ellsworth, Gunner.

On the return leg of the mission and after leaving the coast of Yugoslavia Jones was heard to call Able One but he did not get a response. He then called Easy One and reported that he had only 270 gallons of fuel left. He indicated that he was going to try to make the coast of Italy and Easy One advised Jones to call Big Fence for a heading. Big Fence replied and gave Jones a heading of 165 degrees to Ancona. Jones advised Big Fence that he did not have very much fuel and wanted to know the weather at Ancona. He was told that it was 100 feet. Jones then advised Big Fence that he was heading 165 degrees. No further transmissions were heard from Jones and no one reported seeing the aircraft again. It was assumed that they ditched not long after the last radio message and that all men were lost.



"First Sergeant" was a war-weary Consolidated B-24D used to assemble large formations. Once the formation was formed up, this aircraft would return to base  
USAAF photograph

## News From Other Squadrons...

780th Reunion

The reunion will be September 14th-16th, at the Isle Casino Hotel in Biloxi, MS

Contact: Kathy Le Comte  
<johnkath5@comcast.net>

783rd is going to San Antonio  
October 7th to 11th, 2010

Contact: -Becky Meyer  
317-535-8444  
<becky@iscasting.com>

**MAKE YOUR HOTEL RESERVATIONS NOW FIRST 17 WILL RECEIVE A \$9.00 DISCOUNT PER NITE**



## ARE YOU AWARE OF HOW MUCH OF WHAT YOU DONATE HELPS

The American Institute of Philanthropy, a leading charity watchdog, issued a report card this month for 29 veterans and military charities. Letter grades were based largely on the charities' fundraising costs and the percentage of money raised that was spent on charitable activities.

**Air Force Aid Society (A+)**  
**Armed Services YMCA of the USA (A-)**  
**Army Emergency Relief (A+)**  
**Fisher House Foundation (A+)**  
**Intrepid Fallen Heroes Fund (A+)**  
**National Military Family Association (A)**  
**Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society (A+)**

**USO (United Service Organization) (C+)**  
**Veterans of Foreign Wars and Foundation (C-)**

**American Ex-Prisoners of War Service Foundation (F)**  
**American Veterans Coalition (F)**  
**American Veterans Relief Foundation (F)**  
**AMVETS National Service Foundation (F)**  
**Disabled Veterans Association (F)**  
**Freedom Alliance (F)**  
**Help Hospitalized Veterans/Coalition to Salute America's Heroes (F)**  
**Military Order of the Purple Heart Service Foundation (F)**  
**National Veterans Services Fund (F)**  
**NCOA National Defense Foundation (F)**  
**Paralyzed Veterans of America (F)**  
**VietNow National Headquarters (F)**

**Blinded Veterans Association (D)**  
**Disabled American Veterans (D)**  
**National Vietnam Veterans Committee (D)**  
**Soldiers' Angels (D)**  
**United Spinal Association's Wounded Warrior Project (D)**  
**Veterans of the Vietnam War & the Veterans Coalition (D)**  
**Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund (D)**  
**World War II Veterans Committee (D)**

## The IRS is Watching...

Father O'Malley answers the phone.

'Hello, is this Father O'Malley?'

'It is!'

'This is the IRS, Can you help us?'

'I can!'

'Do you know a Ted Houlihan?'

'I do!'

'Is he a member of your congregation?'

'He is!'

'Did he donate \$10,000 to the church?'

'He will.'

## Son of 783rd Navigator Publishes His Fathers' Exploits in New Book

A new book, "Destination Vienna", written about a 783rd Navigator, has just been published.

Kevin W. Edwards, the son of the late William W. Edwards, a former 2nd Lieutenant/Navigator who served in World War II with the 783rd Squadron of the 465th Bomb Group, has written a book about the 15th Army Air Corp. centering on his father's experience as a Navigator with the 783rd.

"Destination Vienna" retraces a mission, in his father's own words of the events he and his crew experienced on a single day in March 1945 when their plane was hit and the subsequent events that followed. The subject of the book was the 465th Bomb Group's 166th mission in Italy.

The narrative is cleverly interspersed with history and the events that evolved leading up to this particular 'Vienna' mission.

The book is available through "Authorhouse"

<[www.authorhouse.com](http://www.authorhouse.com)>

## LETTERS

*Hello from Texas,*

*Enclosed check for 2010 dues - I am the widow of Donald Hamilton, nose gunner on the Ellison crew.*

*I hear from crew members Glen Haywood, Telio Giammarco and*

*Ray Hall during the holidays. Gosh are we all getting old, years are flying by -*

*Hope the extra \$ will help with mailing the news.*

*Sincerely,*

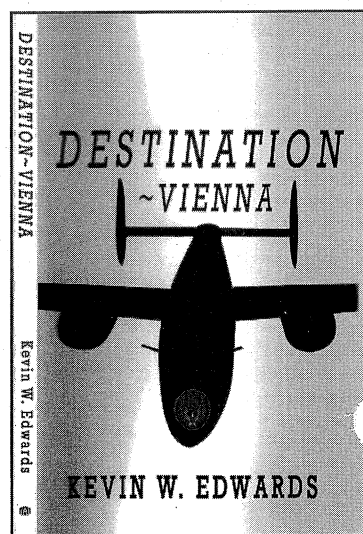
**Connie Hamilton**

Kathy Le Comte  
 Editor, The Flightline  
 780th Bomb Squadron

The 780th reunion will next meet in Biloxi, Mississippi. No dates determined yet but likely September. For now I would post it as being in "September 2010 - more details coming."

**Kathy Le Comte**

**PLAN ON TAMPA**  
**OCT 4-5-6-7**  
**CALL HOTEL**  
**NOW**  
**1-813-879-4800**





**FOLDED WINGS****Charles I. Tittl: Pilot**

From: ctittl@comcast.net  
 Subject: Folded Wings  
 Date: January 1, 2010  
 To: frank@frankambrose.com

With great sorrow I wanted to inform you of the loss of my father, **LTC Charles I Tittl USAF Ret.** age 87 of 17140 Beechwood, Beverly Hills MI. 48025

He joined the ranks of the Folded Wings quietly at home on 31 December 2009 following a short but severe illness. He will be interred at Great Lakes National Cemetery, Holly MI at 1330hrs on 5 January 2010.

He was a very proud member of the 465th Bomb Group, 781st Bomb Squadron stationed at Pantanella Airfield, he was one the un-assigned co-pilots that crewed in many of the 781st's B-24's. The one he often specifically spoke about often was the Guardian Angel, which finally went down in the Adriatic, but according to him refused to sink for days after...

I will never being forget regaled as a child of all of the 781st's exploits, most specifically cruising around the base when the unit was in North Africa in captured German armored vehicles and motorbikes. "requisitioned" from the brits by trading some of their "firewater" ration, and of the numerous missions over the Ploesti Oilfields.

I want to thank you for doing your part to immortalize these men of the "Greatest Generation"!

Please continue to send the newsletters! One day soon I hope to shake the hands of those that served with my father!

**SGT Charles E. Tittl USA Ret.**

**Francis Macoini: Pilot**

John C Header  
 75 N. Ridge St  
 Monroville, Ohio  
 44847

Dear Mr Ambrose

I want to report the death of **Francis Macoini- Pilot** on my crew on or about November 2009.

He was pilot on my crew and an extremely capable pilot. he finished his missions in April 1945.

He made a landing on the island of Vis in the Adriatic Sea. We lost power on the approach in to the runway. He never received credit for this.

the crew felt he should credit for this in some way by the top brass.

**John Hender**

Pardon the bad writing by this 90 yr. old radio operator

**Kenneth J. Kopp:**

Ball Turret Gunner: Rice Crew

From: jkopp3@wi.rr.com  
 Subject: Pvt. Ken "El Koppo" Kopp  
 Date: March 4, 2010  
 To: frank@frankambrose.com

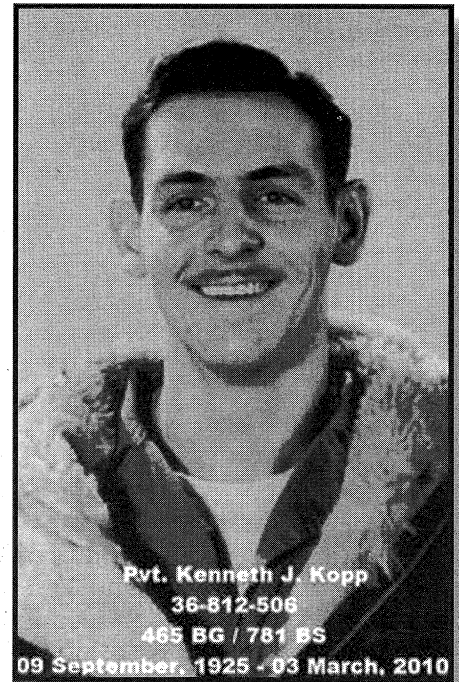
To the remaining members of the 15th AF / 465th BG / 781st BS:

It is with deepest regret that Mrs. Jeanne Kopp and myself inform you that your fellow squadron mate, **Pvt. Kenneth J. Kopp**, 36-812-506, Airplane Amorer-Gunner 612, Ball Turret Gunner of the Guardian Angel, departed this life at approximately 16:00 hours, 03 March, 2010 at Milwaukee, Wisconsin - St. Josephs Hospital Hospice Center.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Jeanne Kopp (wife)  
 1906 W Eggert Pl  
 Milwaukee, WI 53209  
 (414) 228-8245

Jeffrey Kopp (son)  
 333 Edward St  
 Burlington, WI 53105  
 (262) 767-0679  
 (262) 989-2079

**Kenneth J. Kopp:**

Ball Turret Gunner: Rice Crew

**James Shaffer: Co Pilot**

NB Smith Crew

**James Shaffer**, CoPilot on NB Smith Crew, passed away in February 2010.

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

**Charles R. Zwerko:**

McDaniel Bombardier

Died 9-05

**Robert S. Wootan:**

Barnett Engineer

Died 4-3-09

**Herbert E. Wieland:**

Communications

Died 1-14-10

**Jack Levin:**

Radar Mechanic

Died 3-4-09

**President's Corner****781st Friends...**

Winter is here in South Dakota! As I write this President's message I just came in from shoveling snow - again! We have been having pretty mild winters but this one is one for the record books. We have had record snow fall and it is only the beginning of February.

All the snow provides some beautiful scenery. It also causes the Interstates closings, the secondary roads to be impassable at times, power outages, school closings, snow removal and horrific wind chills. You would think we would wonder why we live in South Dakota. I drive for a pharmaceutical company delivering scripts to nursing homes. I do about 1,200 miles a week at night. I do enjoy it except once when I hit a deer. That was a quick stop. And when in a blizzard I got stuck in a snow drift, caught a ride into town and

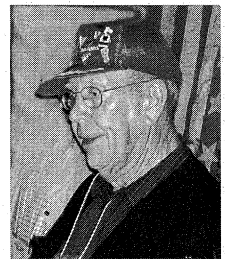
spent the night in a motel. Still, we love South Dakota!!!

Enough talk about the weather. Let's talk 781st Reunion. Ron and Marilyn Horne are busy planning a great reunion for us. To get you excited about visiting Tampa, Florida go to the website <www.fantasyofflight.com>. We did and now look forward to spending some time there.

I was at what was called the Tampa Army Air Base. My crew had been deactivated From Tampa, I was assigned to Barksdale Air Base in Shreveport, LA and then discharged from there because the war was over. I'm excited about going back to Tampa for our reunion. I encourage you to get your reservation in early.

Plan ahead!

**Orren Lee**



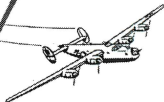
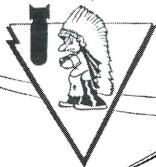
781st BOMB SQUADRON / 465th BOMB GROUP / 15th AIR FORCE

# PANTANELLA NEWS

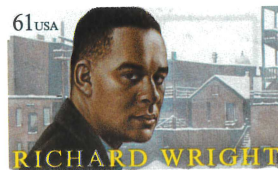
Apr. 2010

## 781st "PANTANELLA NEWS"

c/o Frank Ambrose, Editor  
44 East Blvd.  
Gloversville, NY 12078



61USA



## 781st Reunion

TAMPA

Oct 4th - 7th  
2010

ASSOC 2010

CAROLE J. LEE

2312 BRAEMAR DR.

SIOUX FALLS, SD 57105-4126



77th Fighter Squadron F-16 Fighting Falcons receive fuel from a KC-135 Stratotanker near Shaw Air Force Base, S.C. during Exercise Iron Thunder, a multi-service, multi-national large force exercise with more than 100 aircraft participating. The stratotanker is from the Air Force Reserve's 916th Air Refueling Wing.

(U.S. Air Force photo/Staff Sgt Suzanne Day)