

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



PANTANELLA NEWS

Published by 781st Bomb Squadron Association© #127 December 2017



2017 REUNION NEW ORLEANS

2017 781ST BOMB SQUADRON REUNION



BOMBARDMENT GROUPS REUNION

SEPTEMBER 16TH, 2017

- NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA -



PANTANELLA NEWS

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Georgia McKinnon, Greg Soucy

PANTANELLA NEWS

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.

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<http://www.facebook.com/781stBombSquadron>
<http://465th.org>

President's Letter



A very popular part of the Air Force Group Reunions is the Veterans Presentations. My wife volunteered me this year so here I am, doing a presentation.

I remember the 781st Reunion in Tampa, Florida 6 years ago. I met Georgia McKinnon. She was there with her grandfather, Harry Smith. It was her first time going to a Reunion. We visited a long time. I was impressed with her interest in the history of the 781st. And now "the rest of the story"! Georgia is now a Board Member of the Association, her husband, Lance, is the Chaplain and also is the Editor of the Pantanella News and her Mother, Debbie Cherry is our Secretary. When the former editor, Frank Ambrose, joined the Folded Wings, we remembered when Frank had asked for help that Georgia had volunteered her husband to help him with the Newsletter. A call to Georgia and to our good fortune, Lance agreed to be the Editor and the Pantanella News continues.

— Orren Lee

2018 REUNION September 13-16, 2018

The dates and location are set for the 2018 Group AF Reunion. It will be September 13 – 16 at The Crowne Plaza, a downtown hotel in Dayton, Ohio. I feel a great reunion coming on. Our reunion planner has some great ideas that might involve changing things up a bit.



781st Patches For Sale

We have 781st Bomb Squadron patches for sale at \$15.00 each. To order send \$15.00 to Squadron Treasurer, Carole Lee, 4700 S. Cliff Ave. #308, Sioux Falls, SD 57103

MEMBERSHIP DUES:

Associate Member dues are \$10.00 per year. Dues are recorded on your Newsletter label. Remit to 781st Bomb Squadron Association and mail to:

Carole Lee, Squadron Treasurer, 4700 S. Cliff Ave. #308, Sioux Falls, SD 57103



The 2017 Group Bomb Reunion was held in New Orleans, Louisiana September. 14-17. Attendance was 292 with 36 WWII Veterans. One veteran, Al Hintenach, of the 376th Bomb Group was 102 years of age.

9-14: Hospitality room was open from noon until 6:00 pm and was well stocked with food and drinks. An Italian buffet dinner was in the evening.

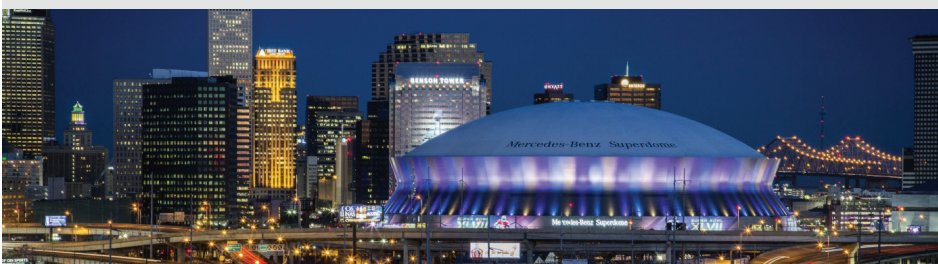
9-15: Four and ½ buses picked us up for our first day at the National WWII Museum. The show 'Beyond All Boundaries' narrated by Tom Hanks was amazing. The Victory Bells at the Stage Door Canteen entertained us with 40's song and dance. Many veterans came away with red lipstick on their cheeks. We located the 781st paver in the Campaigns of Courage with help from a volunteer. That evening was the Individual Groups Dinner. The 465th dinner was in a separate room which gave us a chance to get better acquainted. We encouraged everyone to log in the 465th website. We discussed working as a unit to support the 465th website. You can access it by going to [15thaf.org/55th bomb wing/465th](http://15thaf.org/55th%20bomb%20wing/465th).

9-16: Most of the attendees returned for the second day at the Museum. So much to see, one day was not enough. They have expanded with many new exhibits.

At 3:00 pm were presentations by the Veterans in the hotel. Presenters were Win Jones, 451st BG, Orren Lee, 465th BG, Byfield Gordon, 376th BG, Carl Will, 464th BG, Achi Kozakas, 451st BG and Scott Douglas. Scott, a non-veteran, told of the history he has discovered and connections he has made on the Internet. The LSU Jazz Band entertained at the Banquet. All the food at the reunion was very good and plenty of it, always with scrumptious desserts. The veteran's group photo was taken by Danny Wasserman, a med student. Our webmaster, Hughes Glantzberg, has put it on the 465th website. Just scroll down on the Reunion page to Past Reunions. Above the Proclamation you will see vets and vet mod. Click on them for two pictures.

9-17: A church service Sunday morning was conducted by Rev. Bob Oliver (376th) and assisted by Chaplain/Captain Chris Cairns. Following the church service Chaplain Cairns conducted a very solemn Military Memorial Ceremony. The afternoon was a tour of New Orleans and a farewell dinner in the evening.

— Submitted by Carole Lee, 781st Executive Secretary



465th Bomb Group Attendees

(veterans in bold)

781st

Charles 'Bubba' Braud & Mamie,
James & Theresa Braud,
Charles & Janie Braud,
Robert Braud,
Mike & Julie Deslatte,
Jeremy Deslatte,
Phillis & David Krech,
Orren Lee & Carole,
Bud & Libby Russell

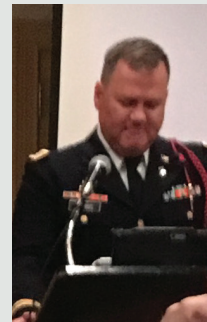
782nd

Harley Bridger & Katy,
Albert Riffle, Scott Riffle

783rd

Connie Maffey & Afra,
Mary Schere,
Ken & Betty McComas,
Nancy Bitterman,
Joan Bitterman Rao,
Gail Bitterman Carey/Paul Carey,
Mary Bitterman Norwood,
Mary Walton,
Kay Huston,
Dan & Carole Dulitz,
Leo J. & Becky Meyer,
Tom & Ann Tennille,
Lynda Marie-Taylor,
Joyce Kulcyk-Urban,
Karen Wnek,
Dan & Katherine Coffield

NEW ORLEANS REUNION



MEMORIAL SERVICE

Chaplain Cairns
conducted a Military
Memorial Ceremony the
last day of the reunion.





Photo of 781st and 782nd combined attendees



Bubba brought a reminder of the 781st 'Last Man Standing' from a former 781st Reunion.



Response to "MIRACLE FLIGHT" Article

Dear Editor,

I would like to thank you for printing the article on the B-17 "All-American" MIRACLE FLIGHT.

My father, Sgt. Ernst F. Knobloch, was a mechanic in the 97th Bomb Group. They were in the 8th AAC in England. Dad was assistant crew chief on the B-17 "KWITURBITCHIN II". The 97th BG was the first American Bomb Group to fly daylight bomb raids over Europe.

At the time of the "All-American" incident the 97th BG would have been at the Biskra Airbase, North Africa. The "All-American" ABSOLUTELY DID NOT CROSS THE CHANNEL BACK TO ENGLAND. The fellow who took the picture may have been on a plane that returned to England. Dad's buddy, James N. Bracewell from Allerton, IA was standing at the runway when the "All-American" returned to base. He and Dad were good friends of Hank Heyland from Peabody, KS, the crew chief of the 'All-American'. Richard Guiman from Altus AFB Oklahoma, a historian for the 97th BG was at one of the last 97th BG reunions. Two of the air crew from the "All-American" were there. The original story said the tail fell off because someone

removed the tail wheel. These two crew men were arguing about it and one said it happened after they opened the fuselage door.

Six weeks after this incident happened the "All-American" was back in the air. This says a lot about the hard work of the ground crews.

After moving to Italy in December 1943 the 97th BG became part of the 15th AAC.

Submitted in Memory of the 97th BG, Lowell Knobloch, Larchwood, IA, 781st Associate member



The article "MIRACLE FLIGHT" can be found in issue #126 of the Pantanella News, June 2017.



French Legion of Honor Medal

Please pass the following information on to European WWII Vets who may be eligible for this medal. I don't know the full criteria but if it says Normandy, Northern France, Ardennes (Battle of the Bulge), or Provence (Southern France) that is part of it.

95% of the information is on the vets discharge papers. For further details call Nancy Toombs at (501) 681-3126. Most Legion or VFW Posts have never heard of this medal.

— Lowell Knobloch

JUST FOR FUN

Have you ever noticed if you put THE and IRS together it is THEIRS?

FOLDED WINGS



SUTTON, WALTER HENRY

**August 14, 1921 -
October 12, 2017.**

Walter Henry Sutton, 96, of Evansville, passed away Thursday, October 12, 2017, at his home. He was born

August 14, 1921, in Evansville, IN.

He graduated from Bosse High School and earned an Associate's Degree from Evansville College. He served in the US Air Force from 1942 to 1945 as a bombardier on a B-24 with the 781st Bomb Squadron, and flew 43 missions out of Italy. During his service he was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross, three Air Medals, two Presidential Awards, and several unit citations. After combat tour, he spent many enjoyable hours instructing Chinese bombardier cadets in Carlsbad, NM. Walter worked 45 years as an outside salesman for Bearings Service Co. before retiring in 1994. He served on the German Township Water Board and on the Board of Directors of Indiana Mining where he was awarded "Leader of the Year" in 1988. Walter donated over five gallons of blood through the Red Cross. He was a member of Evansville Kennel Club and was a volunteer with Junior Achievement. Walter was an avid tennis player from age 12 to 89, and was formerly a member of Advantage Tennis Club. He loved sailing the boat he built, reading and sitting on his deck watching the birds in his backyard.



SMITH, J. WILLIAM

**June 8, 1922 -
September 29, 2016.**

William Smith, age 94 of Bellingham, WA passed away on September 29, 2016 with loving family at his side.

He joined the Army Air Corps in 1943 and proudly served as an Army pilot during WWII. He married Virginia Marks, who predeceased him in 1995. Together they owned and operated the Lummi Island Beach Store for 20 years. Inurnment service with Military Honors were held June 10, 2017, 12:00 noon at Greenwood Cemetery, Lynden, 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.



781st "PANTANELLA NEWS"

Orren Lee, President
4700 S. Cliff Ave, #308
Sioux Falls, SD 57103



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