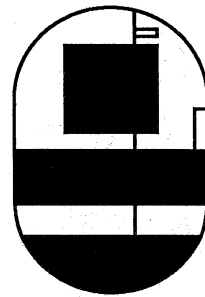




PANTANELLA NEWS



JANUARY 1990

Published by 781st Bomb Squadron Association ©

NUMBER 19

REUNION 90 RESERVATIONS COMMENCE

With our reunion scheduled for **August 23rd to 26th** a flood of registrations are expected in the next several months. The word is out - Everyone is coming to Boston!!

What is a reunion all about? It is a special time - a time to remember - a time to relive our experiences during our days at Pantanelle. It gives us a chance to once-again share with our comrades these events that took place long ago. And this particular reunion has something special - what formed a common bond between us all - the B-24 Liberator "All American."

What is so special about this reunion? It will be the largest assembly of 781st Bomb Squadron

men since May 1945!! I will never again be able to make that statement for future reunions. Why? For this reunion we have more men located than ever before. (I do not expect the roster to ever list a larger number of living members). Also, we have not had a reunion for two years, we have the finest hotel we have ever had, and will have the B-24 "All American" to enjoy. And it will be the 45th Anniversary since the 781st was deactivated!!

Is there anything else to visit while in the Boston area? Boston is a great area for tours and sight-seeing. Since our reunion is full of activities we have arranged for tours on Sunday and Monday following the reunion. Let us know your desires on the enclosed questionnaire so some advance planning can be done. Explanation of the different tours is on the back of the registration form. Tours are usually a half day - you can go on one in the morning and another in the afternoon. Or you can go downtown and spend the day between some famous shopping ar-

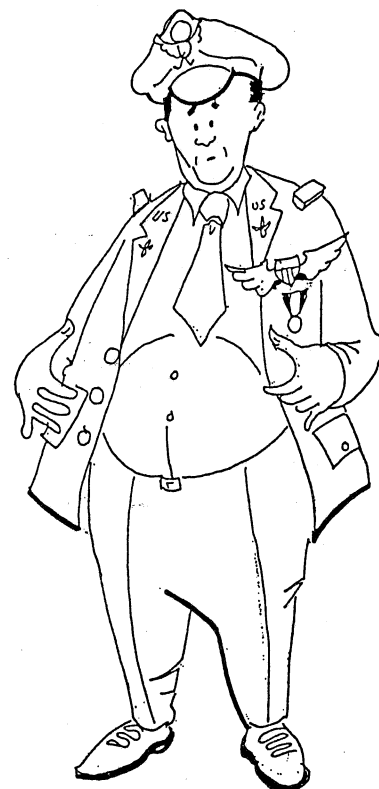
reas and some historical sights. Tour prices will be around \$18 each. Just allow enough time and you will find it a very interesting city. I can assure you this from my personal visits to Boston many times. And remember your room rate remains the same during any extended time!

Why should I register now? It will help in our advance planning and get your name on our roster as attending so that your comrades will know you are coming. Remember you can cancel up to the last day and receive full refund.

What will it cost? The hotel cost is \$65 per day, single or double, plus 9.7% room tax. There are two meals scheduled, \$23 for Thursday night



In the photo is Kenneth Kill sporting his WWII uniform and the cartoon is Thomas Arthur's opinion how an average Pantanelle youth would look at today's reunion. At least in one case he is very close. Tom, we hope to see you at the reunion so you can draw an example of some of the slim ones also!



(including a free cocktail hour) and \$25 for Saturday night. Both nights dinners include tip and tax, and a choice of two items. Registration fee will be \$20 per person. Free parking. The other meals are on your own. Arrangements are being made for Friday lunch at Hanscom Field for about \$5 per person.

Other costs such as air fare and car rentals for those not driving can be reasonable if you plan ahead. Car rentals as low as \$79 per week and air fares as low as \$180 round trip anywhere in the US. More information in the next newsletter, or check with your travel agent in the meantime.

Crew and Section Reunions. In talking to a number of you it seems there is going to be more of an effort

this year to get crew or section reunions. Remember Friday afternoon and evening is set aside for this in particular, plus the other times you can get together by sitting together at our meals, etc. We'll have table reservations and I'll guarantee you we will not have a problem that some of you experienced in San Antonio on Saturday evening.

So go for it! You may never again have such a great opportunity to once again see some old buddies and to relive an important time in your life.

How can I help? Everyone can help by sending in your reservation promptly and keeping us informed in case of any changes. This will help a great deal in our planning.

If you want to help during registration, or other times, drop a note along with your reservation. We'll have a few more committee members to help out than in the past so you will be required to spend only a short time.

ADDRESS CHANGES

Alice Holcombe Reames 576 SE 6th Pl. Canby, OR 97013

John Jurdyga, 1314 Joseph St., Yuba City, CA 95991

Donald E. Fleming, PO Box 245, Wellsville, KS 66092

George Keener, Jr., Rt 2 Box 333, Point Pleasant, WV 25550.

P. W. Kirby, 904 Hawthorne St., Lewiston, ID 83501.

Leonard Larsen, 4900 80th St. NE #16, Marysville, WA 98270.

Wilburn Vorheier, 18963 Resoto Rd., Apple Valley, CA 92307.

Robert French, 9200 Littleton Rd NW # 371.

John R. Banbury, PO Box 11772, Pittsburgh, PA 15228.

Harry Gustin, 2600 Chesterfield Ct. #8, Cincinnati, OH 45239.

William Strickland, 7225 Durban Ave., Cocoa, FL 32927.

Francis Maccani, PO Box 428693, Cincinnati, OH 45242.

Col. Charles A. Clark, One Towers Park Ln #2308, San Antonio, TX 78209.

Joseph Schiffino, 1104 Kea Court, New Bern, NC 28560.

Robert Carr, 222 E. Broadway St

#221, Eugene, OR 97401.

Robert A. Wilson, 27825 Detroit Ave., Apt 201, Westlake, OH 44145

Phone 216 899-1530

James W. Wray, 3902 Perrin Central #1406, San Antonio, TX 78217

Bennie H. Wegener, 606 Sunset St., Ridgecrest CA 93555.

Ronald E. Hill, PO Box 65122, Des Moines, IA 50265.

Leroy Raplee, Jr., RD 1 Box 306, Watkis Glen, NY 14891.

Henry A. Ayres PO Box 43, Goodland, FL 33933.

Benjamin Kraeger, Whitton PL Apt 8, Port Leyden, NY 13433.

Mark Thompson, 10603 Green Trail Dr S, Boynton Beach, FL 33436.

Reyer Swan, 4945 A Coquina Key Dr. SE, St. Petersburg, FL 33705.

James Marcel Snyder, 2339 Westminster Terrace, Oviedo, FL 32765.

Joseph Ferguson, Jr. correct Zip is 19014.

Murray A. Knowles, 3161 Village Ln., Mount Dora, FL 32757.

McHenry Hamilton, Col USAFRes PO Box 685, Highlands, NC 28741. Phone 704 526-5864. (Group CO).

Talk about a mobile society! A lot of changes. If some of these are your winter addresses be sure to let us know in the spring when you return home. These changes came from the "address correction requested" in your recent newsletter. We don't put the correction request on each time since it costs about 90¢ for postage plus the cost of the newsletter for each correction that is returned. They do not return the newsletter and we mail out a new one when the new address is received. So, please be sure to notify us of any address change. Check your current mailing label and if you see any error like wrong zip code, please notify us.

This newsletter was ready to go to the printers when news was received that **M/Sgt Joseph A. Tucci** passed away September 12, 1989 at Monaco, France. He was buried there in the family burial site. He died of a cerebral hemorrhage. Tucci was Group Sergeant Major for the 465th Bomb Group. More info later.

781st Bomb Squadron Association
2 Mount Vernon Lane
Atherton, CA 94027
(415) 325-8356

Officers

James C. Althoff, President
Harry S. Carl, Vice-President
Walter M. Longacre, Vice-President
O. J. Cowart, Jr., Treasurer
Ben Donahue, Secretary

Board of Directors

James C. Althoff
Harry S. Carl
O.J. Cowart, Jr.
Charles F. McKenna III
Jack Van Slyke
Stanley J. Winkowski
John Zadrozny

Chaplain

Roy N. Byrd

Editor

James C. Althoff
2 Mount Vernon Lane
Atherton, CA 94027
(415) 325-8356

Historian

Harry S. Carl
550 Creek Road
Chadds Ford, PA 19317
(215) 388-2562

781st BOMB SQUADRON

as part of the 465th Bomb Group, Fifteenth Air Force, flew B-24 Liberators from Pantanella Airfield located near Canosa, Italy, during WW11 (1944-45). During it's 191 missions over Southern Europe it dropped thousands of tons of bombs, shot down 23 enemy aircraft (German) and received two Distinguished Unit Citations.

ALL AMERICAN

By the flood of mail and newspaper clippings I know that many of you have seen the restored B-24J. Some very excited individuals from the tone of the letters. Now you can see why I had the early interest and thought you would like to be a part of this wonderful project. Doesn't the 465th Bomb Group markings on the tail look great? And of course many of you have described how great the plane looks, so clean and so well restored, that it is just like a new one off the assembly line.

Frank Clark (Benson/Navigator) sent in a newspaper clipping of "All American" and writes, "Thought you might like to know that news of the 'All American' even reached South Dakota. All of your efforts on behalf of this restoration project has really paid off. Certainly hope I get to see it someday."

The same from **C. E. "Bud" Ingram** (Engineering), "Thought you might like to see how our 'Big Bird' was received and the newspaper write-up as it settled down for it's visit in 'Cincy'. Although the weather didn't co-operate, she still had a lot of visitors. I talked to several members of other groups and we exchanged a lot of memories. Hope and pray that all are well and intend to see you in Boston if all goes as planned now."

Bill Jostworth (Engineering) sent in a clipping about All American flying into Lunken Airport just a few miles from his home. Bill said he will see us at Boston.

Fred Boud called, then wrote about the All American's visit nearby. Fred wanted

some B-24 information for a newspaper interview. Fred was Barnett's Bombardier.

Ben Koenig (Bilger/Bombardier) wrote after I had called him regarding the B-24 being in Burlington, Iowa. He writes, "Thanks for your call of the 12th regarding the B-24 landing in Burlington. Your call came as we were leaving for my wife's eye surgery at an Omaha hospital."

"I did contact some area people that evening and the following morning. Keith Murphy from Davenport said he would be able to visit Burlington and offered to call five people. Frank Coats wife in Lincoln NE said Frank would call some NE people. Spoke to several others, left messages, several no answers. Also asked Angelo Guercia in St. Louis, MO to pass the word. That area is probably closer than ours in Western Iowa."

"I have no idea how many did go, but there is a net-work out there. Just letting you know, that is my main reason for writing."

"The Des Moines, IA and local newspapers did not carry the story so hope we didn't miss someone who really wanted to go."

Thanks, Ben, for spreading the

Below - **HAPPINESS IS BEING ABOARD A B-24.** Photo taken while I was aboard All American during its visit to San Diego.

word. We hope you wife's surgery came out OK. Now you'll have to come to Boston to see the B-24.

Joe McDevitt (Hurd/Gunner) wrote to say he was sorry he missed the B-24 when it was in San Diego - he said he will now have to wait until the Boston reunion to see it.

"He also noted that he attended the 15th Air Force reunion in Las Vegas, but "you and your assistants make our reunions quite superior to the 15th affair."

Harold Straughan (McKenna/Tail Gunner) writes, "The 21st of October was a red letter day for me. I flew in the B-24J All American."

"Bob Collings called me on the 17th and said the B-24J would be at Spirit of St. Louis Airport in Chesterfield, Missouri on the 20th, but because of engine trouble it did not show until the 21st. I was there when it landed at approximately 3 PM."

"We took a flight over St. Louis, the Arch, Bush Stadium, etc. It was the first time I had been in a 24 since I finished my missions 10 September 1944. They (The Collings Foundation) have really done a super job. It is truly War Ready."

"The thing I noticed most was the smell. It seems to me the 24 had a certain smell. It was clean as a pin and everything was perfect. The 465th and 781st squadron are really represented on the aircraft."

"I am enclosing a clipping out a local paper. I didn't know if you were aware of this or not. Keep up the good work."

Thanks Harold, I know what a thrill the ride must have been. The clipping Harold sent is about a B-24 located in Canada in 1987 by



a mapping crew. It was a B-24 that had flown a tour out of England and was on its way to the Pacific when they ran out of fuel and bailed out. It landed on a fairly level course, slid up a gentle slope and came to rest. It is in apparently fairly good condition and is expected to be restored.

Harry Reuss (Nelson/Gunner) wrote how excited he was to see and board the B-24 again. It paid a visit to Indianapolis, so he got a chance to board it for the first time in 45 years.

While we are on the B-24, in case some of you don't know, there were 50% more B-24's produced than B-17's. Since there were various modifications and some question as to the exact number of B-24's it is known there were over 18,000 and some records show over 19,000 produced. At war's end there were thousands more on order, but cancelled when the war ended. There were 12,677 B-17's produced.

No other aircraft was produced in the quantities as those of the B-24. Less than 10,000 B-25's and the numbers are less for all others.

PING PONG PHOTO! Recently I had to travel to Minneapolis for a business meeting. I took along the names of some of the members in the area so that when I had some free time I could give them a call. One I called was Homer Moeller. Homer, who was Pitts co-pilot, then later Dahl's, and had also flown with me a time or two. We had a nice visit and then we discussed the Newsletter.

After discussing the photo of the ping-pong game Homer informed me that he had a copy of the photo and had carried it around in his wallet for years. He had full identification - here it is: **L to R, Harry Yaroshuk, John Zitis, Allen Arvenson, Keith Murphy, Kenneth Clemmer, Edward Rocap, Ruben Krough, John Fountain, John Zartman, Homer Moeller, Gathor Cass, and Edward Fairbrother.**

After I returned home I found a letter from **Kenneth Clemmer**, who also recognized himself in the photo.

And Gaythor Cass wrote in his identification. He noted that they spent many hours playing and recalls one period when they couldn't play because they ran out of balls.

MYSTERY PHOTO SOLVED

The mystery photo has been solved by **Ken Parkhurst**. It is the French Crew, less two of the men. The men are: **Top L to R, Dave Bowman, Navigator - Robert French, Pilot - Kenneth Parkhurst, Co-pilot - Bottom L to R, William Briggs, Engineer - Denny Horton, Nose Turret - Fred Wagner, Radio Op - Harold Guagan, Top Gun. Missing are Nick Schaps, Bombardier and Frank Donahue, Bottom Turret.** Thanks Ken for the speedy response.

Another response came from **Frank Guagan**, who was a member of the crew and also identified the men. "Easy to solve the Mystery Photo from your last Newsletter. This is part of the French crew which I was part of. Straining my memory, I believe the reason some are miss-

ing is this photo must have been taken after returning from our MIA trip. Nick Schaps is missing from photo and was not on that flight. Frank Donahue and Lehman Wood, I believe were hospitalized in Hungary with minor injuries and had not returned as of that time. The photo shows the returning members.

I think the mystery insignia over the squadron insignia was the "Flying Boot" for those that bailed out and walked."

Frank was talking about the "trip" to Linz, Austria 2 March 1945. They got shot up over the target and went down in Russian held territory. All eventually returned to Pantanella.

In honor of which American woman have the most statues been erected? **Sacajawea**. By Far.

We are survivors!!!

Consider the changes we have witnessed:

We were before television, before penicillin, before polio shots, frozen foods, xerox, contact lenses, frisbees and the pill.

We were before radar, credit cards, split atoms, laser beams and ballpoint pens; before pantyhose, dishwashers, clothes dryers, electric blankets, air conditioners, drip-dry clothes - and before man walked on the moon.

We got married first and then lived together. How quaint can you be?

In our time, closets were for clothes, not for "coming out of." Bunnies were small rabbits and rabbits were not Volkswagens. Designer Jeans were scheming girls name Jean or Jeanne, and having a meaningful relationship meant getting along well with our cousins.

We thought fast food was what you ate during Lent, and Outer Space was back of the Riviera Theatre.

We were before house-husbands, gay rights, computer dating, dual careers and commuter marriages. We were before day-care centers, group therapy and nursing homes. We never heard of FM radio, tape

decks, electric typewriters, artificial hearts, word processors, yogurt, and guys wearing earrings. For us time-sharing meant togetherness - not computers or condominiums; a "chip" meant a piece of wood; hardware meant hardware; and software wasn't even a word!

In 1940 "made in Japan" meant junk and the term "making out" referred to how you did on an exam. Pizzas, "MacDonalds" and instant coffee were unheard of.

We hit the scene when there were 5 and 10¢ stores where you bought things for five and ten cents. Sanders or Wilsons sold ice cream cones for a nickel or a dime. For one nickel you could ride a street car, make a phone call, buy a Pepsi or enough stamps to mail one letter and two post cards. You could buy a new Chevy Coupe for \$600 but who could afford one: a pity too, because gas was only 11¢ a gallon!

In our day, cigarette smoking was fashionable, GRASS was mowed, COKE was a cold drink and POT was something you cooked in. ROCK MUSIC was a Grandma's lullaby and AIDS were helpers in the Principal's office.

No wonder we are so confused and there is such a generation gap today!

MAIL CALL

In February a letter from **Milt Levinson**; "Teddy and I just returned from Palm Springs, CA, where I had a business meeting. While there I called Jack W. Smith of Ogden Utah. You had his name and phone number listed for the first time. Jack was a gunner like myself and was in the shipment of replacement gunners sent from the 8th AF to the 15th and arrived about September 25th, 1944.

"When I spoke to Jack he remembered me immediately and it was a great emotional experience to talk to him after all these years. Jack was scheduled to fly that day in March (when Martz crew went down) and due to illness stood down. Dworetsky took his place and was shot down. This was the second time that this had happened to Jack. In our conversation Jack told me that he had just retired after working for the Air Force for 42 years at a local airbase. He has a pilot's license and flies a Cessna 172."

Then a letter on May 30th Milt writes, "I received some material from Jack Smith who lives in Ogden City, Utah. My wife and I were in Las Vegas recently and I made arrangements to meet Jack and his wife. It was a very memorable time for both of us who hadn't seen each other since '45.

"I sent all the information on Beeson to him and until that day he was under the impression that all had gone down with the ship!

"Jack W. Smith was Top Gunner on Gaines crew but did not fly when they went down 13 Oct. 44 after a raid on Blechhammer. Then again it was Blechhammer on 14 March 45 when Smith did not fly and the Marts crew went down."

Roy Byrd (McDaniel/Bombardier) wrote, "Just wanted to respond to the latest Pantanella News.

"The report on the B-24J restoration was very interesting. And the picture impressed upon me once again the size of the Liberator.

"I liked Ship's account of the Zalk crew, he did some good work with the article, helped us recall some of our own crew life.

"And this letter would fail if I did not join those who have good things to say about the history book. The narrative and the pictures put history back together again. My mind is clearer as result - about some of the events and the people."

Kenneth Clemmer writes, "I recently received my Pantanella News for October '89, and always look forward to each paper.

"I arrived at Pantanella on March 23, 1945, with Brennenman Crew as navigator. I was not in Pantanella long enough to get to know very many of the group, but was there long enough to fly on 8 missions, 4 were ineffective. I was navigator with other crews, but do not remember who they were.

"After V.E. Day the Brennenman Crew was sent to Genoa to check out a war-weary plane, with 200+ patches, for a few days, then left for the Azores. We lost one engine and lost most all the oil out of another. When we arrived at the Azores, we had approximately 30 minutes of fuel left. We overhauled one engine and replaced one. After that the trip home was fine. I received my separation papers at Ellington Field, Houston, Texas, on October 28, 1945. I guess we were sent to Italy to finish the conflict! Ha, ha!

"On page 6 of the latest paper, the picture at the Ping-pong table was very familiar. I am the fifth man from the left. Sorry, I do not know who the other two unknowns are.

"Give my thanks to all of the hard workers for the great history book of the 781st Bombardment Squadron."

From **Jim Wray**, "An excellent newsletter, again. The article on the B-24 was especially interesting.

"In the KIA column, McHenry Hamilton is mentioned. He flew only that one mission, had to bail out, and was a POW for the remainder of the war. I ran into him again ('49) in New Orleans. We were on a tanker out of there. He was bound for Peru to be Air Attache. I was headed for Chile and our Air Mission. And since our headquarters were at Albrook, C.Z., a two day flight in a C-47, I stopped at Lima coming and going and always stayed with Mac. Also,

Maurine and I went to Miami to a Superbowl and spent some time with him.

"I liked the history so well that I sent a copy to my daughter in Phoenix. She liked it so well that she said she was going to order a copy for each of her four kids. Also I've just ordered a copy for my sister, whose son is a commander in the navy."

Maurine added a note to say they have a new grandson weighing in at two and one-half pounds. He is expected to be full strength by the time he's a year and a half old.

Morris Cohen wrote to say he was very pleased with the article and photos of Angie. He has some more photos which will be in the newsletter later on. And an order for the history book and a promise to make the next reunion.

Doc Rapoport wrote O. J. Cowart, "Just received the newest edition of Pantanella News - It's a super job as usual. I've shown everyone the 781st Squadron History Book - everyone is just amazed at the magnificent professional appearance of the book. Looking forward to Boston in 1990. Best wishes for a happy and healthy Christmas and New Year."

A letter from **Mrs. Helen Hall** who had recently lost her husband, "I certainly would like to continue receiving the Newsletter. Although many years have gone by, Kellard had some fond memories of his squadron.

I would like to attend the next reunion. God has blessed me in many ways when Kellard and I met. It will be a pleasure for me to meet the group. I would do so in Kellard's loving memory. We both enjoyed the history book."

Space does not permit printing all of each letter, but more replies were received from the following:

Ed Hansen (Radar Mechanic)
Hugh Cooper (Althoff/Bombardier)
Frank Jasicko (Tipton/Engineer)
Frank Maccani (Pilot)

And I'm sure I missed some.

Mail call has been the highest ever. We appreciate your response to inquiries and pleased to know you have additional information to share with your 'old buddies.'

GROUP REPORT

Group Headquarters publication was call GROUP DROUL by the Ghoul. Here's one - date unknown.

T/Sgt. Robert Pennock (Casualty Reporter), who is fondly referred to as "Ma" by his friends, is in much better humor these days. His new "choppers" FINALLY arrived. For a while, the boys thought he would never have a molar to call his own, but they came and in a plain wrapper, too. Ma Pennock was only able to master pudding and milk, but after having the teeth for only two days, he was able to dispense with the milk. Now that things are clicking we suggest that Mother P refrain from bringing Joe Millers joke book to chow with him.

Bumped into Ralph Du Bwah (DuBois) (Intelligence Chief) the other night. I would be more correct if I said I tripped over him. What a sight! He was clad in G.I. joggers and down on all four. I asked him if he was experimenting with the back to Mother Earth theory. Ralph, at the time, was using words of only one syllable, and those not very well, consequently the manner I got terminated by inquirer. It seems Ralph, having missed Alderman Joe Orave with a flying tackle, landed on/near a mole hole. The mole, quite indignant, retaliated by sticking his tongue out at our hero. So Ralph, when I came upon him, was trying to catch the litter critter. Life goes on.

The Medics are looking up these days.....to see if Maj. Lee (Surgeon) is around.

Congratulations to Ziggy Ziegler. Ziggy was awarded the Air Medal Saturday as you all well know. Shoot, for the Birds on my left may not consider this very sensational, but Ziggy, until a few days prior, was Hq.'s only enlisted combat man and so naturally he's our pride and joy. Here's wishing you luck and a milky 35.

The self elected group of critics are trying to find out who is responsible for hiring the artist (ugh) to desecrate the hallowed walls of the mess hall. It wouldn't be good if he

did it for nothing which is highly improbable. Why didn't we call upon our own talent in the form of smiling, comical, guffawing, master of mirth L. L Lingermann???

No road signs now adorn ye ole hill. What a gag! Certainly there are no roads here. How about a sign pointing one out???

The group roster does not show a Ziggy Ziegler. Does anyone in group have any information on him?

GROUP MAIL CALL

A letter from **Robert Leasure**, "I have been meaning to write to you and tell you what a great job Harry Carl did on the 781st Squadron history. When I ordered it I had no idea it would be such an excellent book. Once I opened it I could not put it down. Even though I was in Group Operations and not in the 781st Squadron, I related to all of the text and pictures of familiar faces and planes. Thanks to everyone who contributed to this book.

I was shocked to read of the death on September 5, 1989 of Wanda Dannelly, who published the 780th Squadron Newsletter. I have received and enjoyed both publications and have kept a running file since 1984. Both newsletters improved through the years due to the dedication of yourself and Wanda. It is a lot of work and you both have done more than anyone expected. We will all miss Wanda's personal comments in her newsletters, particularly on those issues where she did not receive much in the way of news from her readers. It is sad that she died just before the 780th reunion in Washington, D.C., September 13-17th. It must have put a damper on the activities. We lost a dedicated worker. I certainly appreciate all the news she sent my way of my old friends from McCook and Pantanella.

The pictures of the Collings Foundation B-24J on the cover of the latest issue of the Pantanella News were great. Keep up the good work."

Bob, it is ironic, but if you recall Wanda took over the 780th work some 20 years ago after her hus-

band, who was reunion chairman, died the week before the reunion, the same as Wanda.

James E. Summers (Group Engineering) wrote to inform me Delvi I. Smith of Group was killed in a military vehicle accident on one of the roads while on an errand for the base. He recalled going to Bari on a funeral detail for him and that Smith was buried there. On one of the earlier rosters I had Smith not located.

Summers thought Foster B. Balser's correct name was Bosler. Can anyone from Group help out?

Summers offered some bomb strike photos and suggested a 465th Bomb Group bumper sticker or license plate holder so that comrades might locate each other along the highways. We will take that under consideration.

Robert Pennock (Group Casualty Reporter) called to see how I made out during the earthquake. Bob lives about 50 miles north of me and of course also experienced the quake. He jokingly commented that as Group Casualty Reporter he was just "checking in" to see if everything was "OK!"

For this newsletter I had decided to cover another of our KIA's, Ernest Alden. I began by calling surviving crew members which were listed on the MACR I received from Pierre Kennedy. One crewmember, a **Lt. Col. McHenry Hamilton** was on that plane as an observer, but I had no knowledge of his whereabouts. I had remembered Jim Wray commenting that they became good friends after the war.

Col. Hamilton was being assigned to group headquarters as Group CO. He insisted on flying immediately and went down on his first mission at group. We found no orders covering his arrival, so he has not been listed in our history book.

With some information from Jim Wray I finally located Col. Hamilton. He was delighted to hear about our association and something about his old group. I am sure we will be hearing from Col. Hamilton and that he will fill us in on his experiences at Pantanella and as a POW.

About Our KIA's

Lt. Ernest Alden was a radar navigator in the 781st. Since the 781st provided radar navigators for all squadrons in the 465th Bomb Group it was normal duty to fly with all the other squadrons as well as the 781st. On 22 March 1945 Alden was flying with the crew of Capt. Richardson from the 782nd Bomb Squadron in Yellow "X" on a mission to Vienna to destroy the Helingenstadt Marshalling Yard. This was Capt. Richardson first mission on his second tour.

Seconds after bombs away, the pilot started the rally off the target, then the plane took several direct hits, burst into flames and made a gentle diving turn to the right. Seven chutes were observed leaving the plane before losing sight of it near the ground. All chutes were seen to open.

Lt. Paul Durckel states that he landed and was being approached by some angry civilians and he kept them at bay with his leveled 45 until about five German soldier came across the field and took him in captivity.

Durckel, flying as group navigator on this mission, stated that during his interrogation, or some time after capture, the Austrian Guard indicated Alden was hung by civilians. When he asked about Alfred Maas the guard indicated he had received the same treatment as Alden. The guard told Durckel that "those things just happen."

T/Sgt. Wendell Galbraith, radio operator from the 782nd, recalls

or had stated in his debriefing at the end of the war, that Capt. Richardson bailed out of the co-pilot window, Lt. Funk, out of the pilots window, Lt. Durckel, Lt. Osborn, Lt. Atherly, bailed out of the nose wheel door. T/Sgt Geibel, S/Sgt Jorgensen, and S/Sgt Edgell bailed out of the escape hatch in the waist. Galbraith bailed out of the bomb bay and Alden and Maas were still in the plane when Galbraith bailed out.

While still in the plane Galbraith stated that he saw Alden get up from his seat, then sit back down. That is the last he saw of him. Also he stated that Lt. Col. Hamilton was helped out of one of the pilots windows.

The command pilot Capt. Richardson believes that Maas was killed by flak. He said Maas remained in his turret and didn't move. He said there was a lot of confusion since they had just received a direct hit and the bomb bays were on fire.

There were 11 men on the flight since it was group lead and Lt. Col. Hamilton (pilot) was along as observer. He had just arrived at group and was assigned as group CO of the 465th Bomb Group.

Lt. Funk (pilot) reported that

there were direct hits in #3 and #4 engine and in the bomb bay.

There are two reports by crew members, their names were not on the report, that Germans had told them that both Maas and Alden had burned up in the plane.

According to Mrs. Nora McNinch, Ernie Alden's widow, a Colonel wrote to her after the war and said he had helped Alden get out of the plane and had seen his parachute open.

Just recently I located Col. McHenry Hamilton (with help from Jim Wray) and he will be writing his remembrances of that day.

What he did state was that he was certain Alden got out of the plane through the top hatch and he saw his chute open. He was the one that wrote to Alden's wife stating that he knew Alden had gotten out of the plane.

Also, Col. Hamilton was captured in Vienna by the Weirmacht and was put against a wall and about to be shot when a Luftwafe Officer happened by and stopped the execution.

As it often happens in war time there are confusing reports and the records available do not clearly indicate exactly what happened. If you look in the history book, Historian

Harry Carl notes that intelligence reports show Maas was killed by flak or in the crash and Alden was killed by civilians. And that appears to be what happened.

Ernie Alden is remembered as a very friendly and happy man. He is seen in the photo second from right kneeling, after his first mission to Ploesti, Rumania. The crew he is with was not from the 781st.

Our KIA's are remembered on the plaque at Wright-Patterson, which is dedicated to them.



FOLDED WINGS

Morris E. Finley (Bombardier/Martin) passed away June 5, 1988. The death was reported by Ken Foden.

Mrs. Helen Hall wrote a note, "One of your own has passed away, **Kellard Hall** (Communications). Went to rest November 2, 1989.

Samuel F. Monroe, Jr. (Stener-son/Navigator) passed away September 16, 1989.

We were informed by Thomas Thomas III, President of the 464th Bomb Group, that "two of their best men folded their wings this past year." They are;

"**Col**" **Bill Fryfogle**, their Treasurer, who died on January 6, 1989.

"**Gen**" **H. Robert Anderson**, their Secretary, died on October 9, 1989

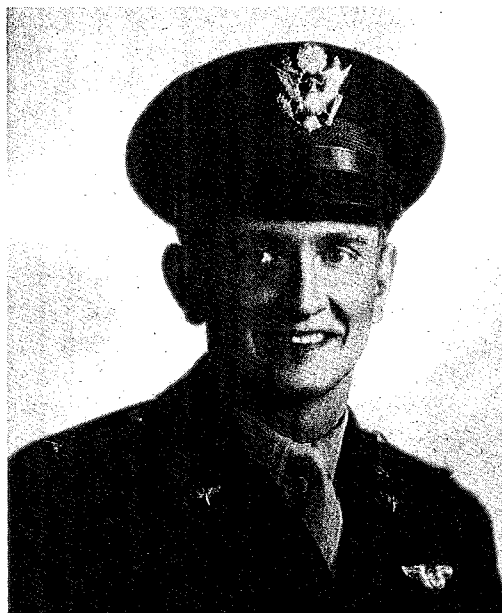
Our thoughts and prayers are with our fallen comrades and their families.

The following notice was received from Sam Monroe's son.

SAMUEL F. MNROE, JR.

During the holiday season thoughts turn to loved ones and friends. For this reason, you of the 781st Bombardment Squadron (H) AAF, 465th Bombardment Group (H) might like to know that one of your crew members has gone to join the grandest squadron of all. On September 16, 1989 Captain Samuel F. Monroe Jr. died suddenly from a heart attack, at the age of 70.

Sam's military career was an important part of his life, probably contributing to his successful professional career as a Mechanical Engineer in the Aerospace Defense Industry. He often spoke of his experiences in the Air Corps, always with a twinkle in his eye or a grin on his face. His three and a half years in the Army Air Corps gave him experiences and friendships he would never forget. From his induction in 1942 until his separation from the Armed Forces in 1946, his



Lt. Samuel F. Monroe, Jr. in 1944, just after graduation from Navigation School.

life was influenced by such things as navigation training at Hondo and Ellington Navigation Schools in Texas and Aerial Gunnery school at Wendover Field, Utah; not to mention the 51 missions and 245 combat flying hours over Italy, North Africa and the rest of the European African Middle Eastern Theater.

Even though Dad spoke of his experiences, he never mentioned, nor talked about, his achievements or accomplishments. These were things that I am sure many of you accepted as just "part of the job." It was not until we, his surviving children, began going through old military records that we found he had earned the Distinguished Flying Cross, the Air Medal with three oak leaf clusters, the American Campaign Medal, the European African Middle Eastern Campaign Medal with five stars, the Distinguished Unit Badge with one oak leaf cluster and the Battle Star for the Italian Campaign. Again, I am sure many of you share the same honors; another reason you remain part of each others lives.

Dad had a real interest in the alumni and activities of the 781st Bomb Squadron. The only thing which kept him from attending the 1986 and 1988 reunions was the physical condition of his wife, Lee, who is now a resident of a nursing home. I know he corresponded with

some of you in recent years, by phone and mail.

Captain Sam F. Monroe, Jr. separated from the Army Air Force on February 26, 1946 at Fort Dix, New Jersey. He was a member of the 781st Bombardment Squadron (H) AAF 465th Bombardment Group (H). He is survived by his wife, seven children, eleven grandchildren and many friends.

THE DOG BLECHHAMMER

Blechhammer was a local black male Italian dog. No one seems to have a tale to tell about this dog. I have had rumors that he may have returned with a crew after the war. If any of you can refresh your memories about this dog let's have them.

I can recall an instance when Blechhammer made himself know. A meeting was called by Major Blankenship to be held in front of the orderly room. I don't recall the purpose of the meeting, but we all assembled to listen to Blankenship. Along came Blechhammer, sniffing like dogs do. Since there was no fire plug nearby Blechhammer decided Blankenship's leg would do. It didn't take long for Blankenship to turn his attention to what was going on. . . Then we all got a good laugh.





Recently I received the above photo from **Frank Maccani**. It is a photo of our bronze and marble plaque and tree dedicated to those Killed In Action. It was dedicated at Wright Patterson during our 1987 reunion. We are happy to see the tree growing nicely and the plaque still in excellent shape.

Gaythor Cass wrote that he and Norma Jeanne also visited the memorial plaque in October. He said it brought back some sad as well as some happy memories.

BITS & PIECES

PANTANELLA AND EUROPEAN TOUR. Ralph Hendrickson has had some interest in the tour and is requesting that anyone else interested in the tour should contact him as soon as possible. He has to know how many are interested in going before he can complete the planned tour. Contact Ralph at 7410 Venetian Way, W. Palm Beach, FL 33406, or call 407 582-6463.

Marcel Snyder has recently returned from his third trip to Ethiopia. He has a contract to develop an accounting system to account for the utilization of funds obtained by the Ethiopian Government under a World Bank Credit agreement. He is developing the system, installing it and has to train the Ethiopians in its operation. Unfortunately, he says, the Ethiopians want Marcel to do all the work. Marcel notes that he will see us in Boston.

With his order for a history book **Ken Braley** notes that according to the Bombardier's Association he was the oldest commissioned bombardier in WWII.

In a note from **Thomas Thomas III** President of the 464th Bomb Group Association he informed me that their are holding their reunion at the Menger Hotel in San Antonio May 3rd to 6th, 1990. We wish them success on their reunion.

Bombardiers, Inc. will hold their next reunion May 16 to 20, 1990 in Houston Texas.

Thanks to all who have contributed to the Newsletter. Blechhammer photo was sent in by Fred Aboud and Ernie Alden's photo by Marcel Snyder.

CHURCH CALL

In a recent conversation with Pierre J. J. Kennedy he informed me that he had a copy of the 465th Bomb Group Church Call for Sunday September 24, 1944. He noted the back page was interesting, therefore, I will share it with you.

Isaiah to the Church of 1944

"Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee."

Someone has predicted that the present period in history will be known to later generations as the Second Dark Ages.

Absurd? Perhaps, but only as we think in terms of human enlightenment through education, through scientific research and inventive discovery. These fail to dispel the

"gross darkness" which covers the people. That darkness is spiritual, and cannot be dispelled by the light of man.

Through an era of history sometimes designated the "Age of Man" a persistent effort has been made by the ablest minds in many lands to dispel this darkness. Still today spiritual darkness covers the earth.

The war with its fearful brutalities, its utter destruction of everything that obstructs the progress of force, the total disregard for human life and the rights of man overwhelm peace loving countries like the black fog of the North Sea when it rolls in and covers the fair hills and cities of Scotland.

Cause of greater dismay is the fact that to date only one of the world's great leaders is on record as believing that Christ alone is the Light and Hope of the world, capable of dispelling the darkness.

Undisturbed by the rise and fall of nations, unperturbed by the shifting fortunes of war, unaffected by the fears, the hopes and the propaganda of men, the call of the Lord to His Church to "arise, shine" rings out clear and confident at the beginning of the New Year.

Uncertain of its message, doubtful of its power skeptical of its destiny the Church has all too often failed to send forth into the darkness of this world the light supernal.

To a faltering, timid, uncertain Church comes the reassuring promise, "The Lord shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon these."

As Christ, the Son of God, the Savior of the world, is exalted in the message from our pulpits, the "glory of the Lord" is seen upon His Church. Through it shines out the Light of the word. Darkness is dispelled. Men walk in Light.



A Note from your Editor. . . .

When each newsletter deadline approaches I begin to wonder how it will come out and where will I get stories and information that will be interesting to all of us - to have something for us to think about and relive some of the moments we had some 45 years ago. Each time it seems that some persistence pays off and many of you recall events, write letters or most important

will write a story of a particular happening that you recall.

Last November I was particularly pleased to receive Lee Billings story. I believe it was about two years ago when I located Lee and suggested he tell us about the final moments on Col. Lokkers plane before going down and how he was able to survive. He promised to do so, but illness and other things got in the way. Along the way I would write and talk to Lee and he always said it was coming along. So, it was a real surprise to receive it in the mail one day last November. A little persistence by Lee (and myself) and his story in a future Newsletter will fill in some more gaps.

So, how about some others that promised - I have a list of ten names who promised stories. Remember the newsletter is only as good as you make it. If you have a contribution let's hear from you!



The photo above is from Robert Pennock's photo album. It is noted as a stable, including living quarters and toilet at the side of the building. It was cleaned out and used as a theater and briefing. Attached buildings were barber shop, mail room, communications, Special Services, and S-4. The photo no doubt was taken as the Group was moving in at Pantanella.

NEWS AND VIEWS

The files produced only a bit of one of the News and Views while the squadron was at McCook.

An "AD" is like a woman: It may be pretty or plain, but it isn't a success unless it attracts!

NUPTIALS: Congrats to everybody's friend, T/Sgt. Gibbs and Spouse. . . and Cpl. Scangarello plus his new Mrs.

GLAMOUR AND ITS BOYS OF THE WEEK: M/Sgt. Lutgring: He's a fellow who doesn't spend too much time minding the other fellow's biz - but knows a lot about his own.

FLIM FLAM - The following article came under the heading "781st Bits". Parts were left out.

The Engineering Softballers do a very good job when the Ordnance Section plays for 'em.

"Twas on the Isle of Capri that Poulin ran himself ragged trying to keep up with Elsie's speed.

Not only do the Radar boys call the Communications men LOW FREQUENCY - they add injury to insult by whacking their fanny at softball.

Doesn't Papa Zalk look pretty in his new double bars.

Parties at the BAMBOOZE ROOM - Quote the Colonel, "Never More."

It sounds like some celebrating was going on knowing victory was in sight. It appears as though the date was 4 May, 1944.



CHA CHA CHA. On 16 January 1945 there was a stag party dedicated to the opening of a new addition to the Officers Club. The Italian beauty in the photo was among the American and Italian performers. The donor of this photo prefers to remain anonymous!!

I SAW TEN THOUSAND MEN CRY

by Vernon L. Burda

It was about January 16, 1945, when the Russians started their long-awaited winter offensive, as the temperature hit a new low for the winter. The Kriegies (Prisoners of War) watched breathlessly as the Russians broke the back of German resistance and took Warsaw and Kracow and advanced on Posen and Breslau. Speculation was rife on whether we would be moving or not and betting odds were slightly in favor of not moving.

I had a hunch we would be forced to walk, so I made overshoes out of a pair of wool socks with Klim (milk cans) tin soles, which I could tie over my shoes. I made heavy mittens by stuffing German toilet paper between layers of cloth and insulating my blankets with layers of toilet paper. A backpack was made by sewing one stocking on the top of a bag and one on the bottom and putting a belt as a strap between them.

On Saturday, January 27, 1945 the Russians were knocking at the doors of Breslau and Steinau. Then, like a bolt of lightening, at about nine P.M. the order came:

"FALL OUT FOR A FORCED MARCH AT 11:00 o'clock" - in two hours. And the big flap started. Men rushed about making packs, bashing food, throwing away useless articles and preparing to move. Joe Doherty ran to the kitchen and started making a huge batch of fudge - it really seemed funny at the time.

Everyone's bowels moved about three or four times in the first hour. Boy, what excitement!!

At the last moment, I decided to make a sled and Schauer and I took our bedboards - used two as runners and two for the platform and put tin on the runners.

On January 28, about 3:00 A.M. we fell out. It was about 20° below zero out and dark. We lined up, drew a Red Cross parcel per man and left

Stalag Luft III. The column of men was terrifically long and we moved very slowly.

Along the highway (Highway 99), we met the once mighty WEIRMA-CHT SKI TROOPERS, all in white - and these "Supermen" were begging cigarettes from us as we passed. They were either about 40 or 50 years old or young kids - headed for the front.

At two in the afternoon, we reached Halbau, which we found contained mostly French forced-laborers. The weather was freezing and several of us already had frost-bitten feet and hands. We were finally put up - about 2,000 of us - in



Photo by Vern Burda of two Kriegies (POW's) with three Klim (milk spelled backwards since they held powdered milk) cans and the type of burner which all Kriegies made from those cans.

a church, whose capacity was about 500. It was so crowded we all had to sleep in shifts, and it was very, very cold. We ate a late meal of cold meat and crackers.

We left Halbau at dawn, cold and stiff and hungry. We walked past Freiweldau. It had a long hill in town and we were all so weak we had trouble making it. From there on, we hit flat farmland and the wind and

cold blew right through us. We finally came to a small village where we put up in one-story barns, about 500 men to one barn. The only reason we got this stop was the fact that we had General Vanaman along with us.

It was so crowded that all of us could not sleep at the same time, so some would walk around while others slept. Still there was bitter cold and no German food. We were eating Red Cross food, cold, and it gave a lot of the fellows loose bowels.

The General talked the Germans into letting us stay here for one extra day, in order to dry out socks and shoes and rest up. We would dry out our socks by putting them next to our bodies while we slept. We fixed our shoes, packs and mittens here. We also did a little trading with the German civilians for onions, hot water and brew, in exchange for cigarettes and soap.

On January 31, it was a long, long day. We walked and walked and walked. 29 kilometers to Muskau. What made it so bad was the fact that the country was very hilly and the weather was so uncertain - at times, it would snow one minute and then it would rain the next minute - we even had hail. Sled was still working okay, although it was tough pulling it up some of these hills. The fellows were trading cigarettes and soap for bread and spuds and hot water all along the way - especially in Muskau while waiting for quarters.

We were finally quartered in a brick factory - really swell. It was dry and warm and had lights and best of all, we got German black bread and marge. We were too tired to do much but eat - and then we slept on the concrete floor.

On February 1, General Vanaman again talked the Germans into letting us spend the day here. It was like Heaven! We washed and shaved and slept, and ate very little. Guys from West Camp and Balaria came to the factory. . . . their feet were frozen and blue and green and yellow. They really looked terrible. They walked all the way with no stops! Some of them were really in

bad shape. One knew the bombardier and co-pilot from my crew, Krzyzynski and Weiss, and they were okay the last time he saw them.

On February 2, we rested.

On February 3, we got up at 4:30 A.M. - raining out and thawing, so broke up the sled. I was really loaded down now, but I was determined not to throw away any of my blankets or food or clothes. We waked 18 kilometers to Braustein. We were bedded down in a barn, with straw on the floor - not bad. With the barnyard and all, it looked exactly like the pictures we had seen of troops in World War 1 in France, in the barns. We slept fairly good, as we bundled two or three of us together for warmth.

It is now February 4, and we are up at dawn and marched 7 kilometers to Spremburg - biggest town so far. We went into a permanent camp that had good brick buildings and it was really nice. We stayed in the garages and got some hot soup. Towards evening, we marched through the town to the marshalling yards. We saw plenty of signs that reminded us of home - Shell, Standard, Esso, Mobiloil, Agfa and others. The town looked as if it were in fairly good shape.

The Germans crowded us into old French 40 and 8, WWI rail cars, (Hommes 40, Chaveau 8) and I do mean crowded. There were 55 men and a guard in our car. They also brought in a Red Cross parcel for each man, which was very welcome. But it was so crowded. We finally allocated space to each man, but as soon as they would go to sleep, the men would try to stretch out. I lay on the floor and several times woke up with four men laying zig zag across me, so that I couldn't even move. All in all, it was a pretty lousy night. We only made 30 or 40 kilometers that night. We heard we were to go to Nurenburg, but we have got to the point where we don't care where we go, as long as we get there. The Germans gave us no water and that is not fun. Most of the guys have loose bowels and are throwing up.

February 5th - didn't make much progress all day, but towards evening, we made good time. In Dres-

den about midnight, and there were a lot of German troops going to the Russian front near Berlin. It seems like they are moving a lot of the troops from the West front to the Russian front. One Jerry kidded with us - said he had fought at Moscow and Paris, and now to Berlin. He would catch the girls nearby and kiss them - he seemed happy and slightly drunk. We didn't blame him.

In Chemnitz, we almost were in the middle of an air raid. They locked us up in the boxcar when the sirens blew. Luckily, the train took off like a bat and we left.

February 6th - we arrived at Zwickau at dawn and finally got something to drink - German coffee. Boy, was it lousy. The guys all were



Vern's good friend, Rudy Froeschle, heating water on his klim burner inside camp just before liberation.

sick by now and they were having bowel movements all over the place. The civilians were sure peeved and the screamed to high Heaven.

We made better time after Zwickau - heard the West camp went to Nurenburg and that we were going there too. The cars were still awfully crowded and the Germans would not give us any water. We went through another air raid in the afternoon - we saw forts and libs this time.

On February 7th, soon after dawn, we were in Augsburg. Still we were not given any water and we were thirsty as the Devil. Finally we hit Munich, and we were put in a

railroad yard - the place was really bombed out. We saw American P.O.W.'s fixing it up. We got so thirsty that Downey got a Trinkwasser of steam water out of the locomotive.

In the afternoon, we traveled to Moosburg and we got off at Stalag 7 A. We went over to the North Lager, which we called the "Snake Pit". They put 600 of us in a shack with nothing for beds or fuel or anything. We were all sick by this time - cold, damp and everyone was covered with fleas and lice. Morale was really low. There was not enough room to have everyone lay down at once, and many did not sleep. There was no heat and no hot food.

On February 8th, 9th, 10th, we stayed in the "Snake Pit". I used a blanket and slung a hammock and got some sleep - everyone was really sick.

On February 11th, after supper, we went through a search, which was a farce. We've got saws, hammers, maps, nails, wrenches and everything else we had picked up along the way - especially at the brick factory at Muskau. We were de-loused, and we took a shower. Then we were taken to the East Lager and we were put into barracks - and what a hole!

We were put in tiers of 12 men - 3 bunks high, with 6 bedboards per bed. The beds had straw palliases and were full of lice, fleas and bedbugs. And our life in Moosburg started - and what a miserable life it was.

The weather was very cold and damp. The Germans did not give us any fuel for heat, so we would have to say in bed all day. There were no facilities to do anything, even if we did get up. The lighting was so poor some of the fellows never did see what their sack looked like. We were so crowded that the only way we had of keeping personal stuff was by hanging it from the ceiling.

As I had the top bunk, after hanging my stuff up, I barely had room to lie horizontal. Sitting up in any of the bunks was out of the question.

The German food ration consisted of one-half cup of warm water for breakfast, one cup of thin, watery

soup for dinner and a little black bread for supper, with extra issues of cheese, marge or blood sausage. For a while we had no Red Cross parcels and the fellows were really thin. We then received issues of parcels - one parcel to last two weeks. At first, we were issued British parcels, which contain food that must be cooked, but the Germans would not give us any fuel. We made burners and blowers out of tin cans, using the barbs from the wire as nails. For fuel, we first burned our bedboards and slung our sacks by nailing the burlap palliase to the sides of the bed. When the bedboards gave out, we did a little more sabotage work and we tore the inner floor out of the barracks. We also swiped sticks from the slit trenches.

The Germans refused to clean out the outdoor latrines - one latrine for about 2,000 men. It finally filled up and overflowed. As everyone was still sick with the "runs", you can imagine the mess it created. We were practically wading in human excrete. It overflowed into the parade ground, so when the Germans told us to fall out for appell - to be counted - we refused to go. Finally, after several hours of tension, they promised to clean the latrine out, so we fell in.

The fleas, lice and bedbugs were really bad here. It was not unusual to find one hundred or more bedbugs in one bed. Gould became so infected with flea bites, he had bloodpoisoning. Several fellows had their whole bodies covered with bites - the bites weren't so bad, but they itched so, that one could hardly keep from scratching them. As soon as the bites were opened, infection readily set in. For some reason, I wasn't bothered too much. I could feel the little devils running over my belly and my legs, but they rarely bit me. As Tipton said, it was probably because we were so filthy. A lot of the fellows had not had their clothes off in four to six weeks, and hadn't washed in just as long. We only had the clothes we wore and no facilities for laundry, and it was too cold to keep out of your clothes.

Finally, spring came and the

renewed offensive of the Allies started pushing the Germans back. One day in the later part of April, we saw our fighter planes scouting our camp and on April 29th, we were ordered inside the barracks, as we could hear the big guns, rifles and machine guns. By peering through cracks in the wall, we could see Allied infantrymen advancing through the fields, and push toward the town of Moosburg. Almost immediately thereafter, we all heard the most pleasant sound we had heard for almost a year - the rumble of American tanks. And when those tanks rolled into the prison compound, they looked as big as battle-ships.

The Kriegies spilled out of the barracks, unmindful of the live bul-



Photo taken as they were being liberated by Gen. Patton's army with fires in the barracks.

lets still whistling through the air, and cheered the troops and gobbled the K-rations which the American soldiers threw us - just as though those K-rations were candy.

Then, suddenly for no apparent reason, a hush fell over the compound, and all eyes turned toward the town in which stood two high church steeples. Over 20,000 eyes saw machine gun bullets splatter against the steeples - a period of quiet - and then it occurred. A scene, the happening of which brought tears streaming down the face of every single American prisoner-of-war there, and a sob from every throat. We saw the greatest sight - the most emotional minute that we would probably ever witness - raised before our eyes and flying defiantly above one of the church steeples, was the symbol of our beloved land. **THE AMERICAN FLAG!**

As one great mass, all felt emotion that one who has not been deprived of freedom, who has not suffered behind barbed wire for months without adequate food, clothes, heat or word of loved ones and of home, could not possibly feel.

Tears flowed from over ten thousand faces that day

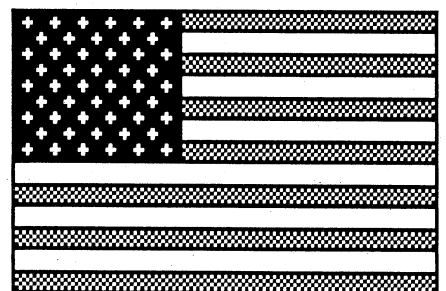
Yes, the tears flowed from over ten thousand faces that day - over ten thousand unashamed faces, as that Flag shocked us back with the memories of the place we all held most dear - **OUR BELOVED LAND, OUR HOME.**

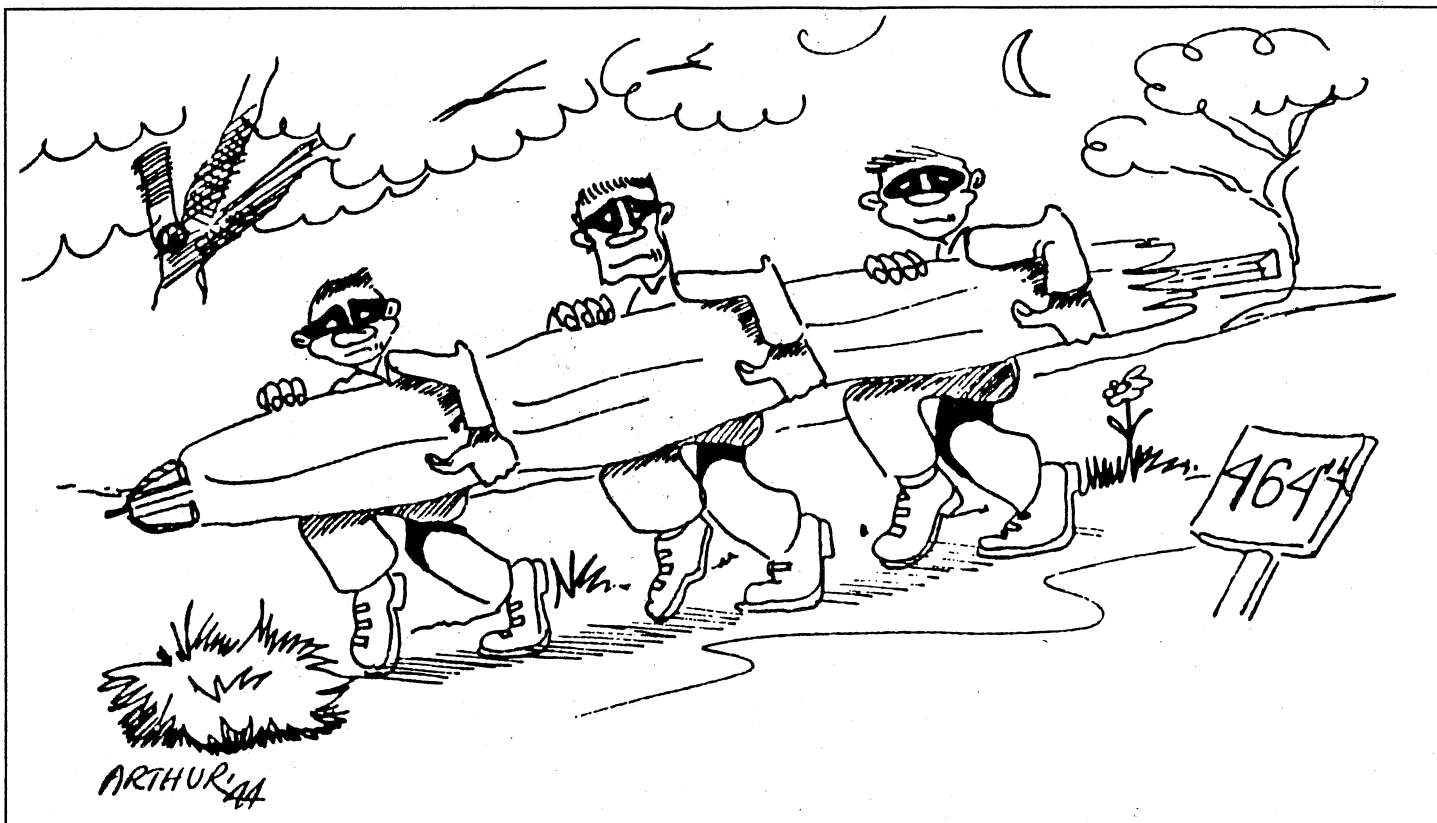
Vernon Burda was navigator on the Tipton crew. The Tipton crew was shot down on 16 July 1944 after developing engine trouble near the target, Weiner Neudorf Engine Works near Vienna, then an air battle with some ME109s knocked out another engine and forced them to bail out near Zagreb.

This was the second time the Tipton crew bailed out. On 31 May, after a raid on Ploesti, they received flak damage and were forced to bail out. They fell into the hands of Tito's troops and were helped to evade the enemy and made it back to Pantanella ten days later. Full story on that mission in a later newsletter.

A note on Stalag Luft III - it was the POW camp where the "Great Escape" took place. Over fifty POW's were caught and executed. In recent years a movie was made about that escape. The camp held over 10,000 Allied flying officers.

Thanks, Vern, for a very interesting story about life in a POW camp.





MIDNIGHT REQUISITION. One of the early sketches Tom Arthur made shows the first night at Pantanella. When they arrived there was a shortage of tents. So, the Athon crew took matters in their own hands - shown here is Joe Athon, Harold Givens, and Ernie Van Asperen acquiring a much needed tent from the adjoining hill in 464th Bomb Group territory.

781st BOMB SQUADRON ASSOC
2 Mt Vernon Lane, Atherton, CA 94027



NONPROFIT ORG
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
MENLO PARK, CA
PERMIT NO. 998

ORREN J. LEE
2312 BRAEMER
SIOUX FALLS, SD 57