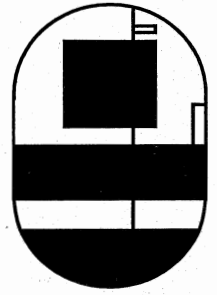




PANTANELLA NEWS



JAN 1995

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NUMBER 39

FROM HAYBARN STORAGE TO 465TH BOMB GROUP S-2 by Ralph DuBois

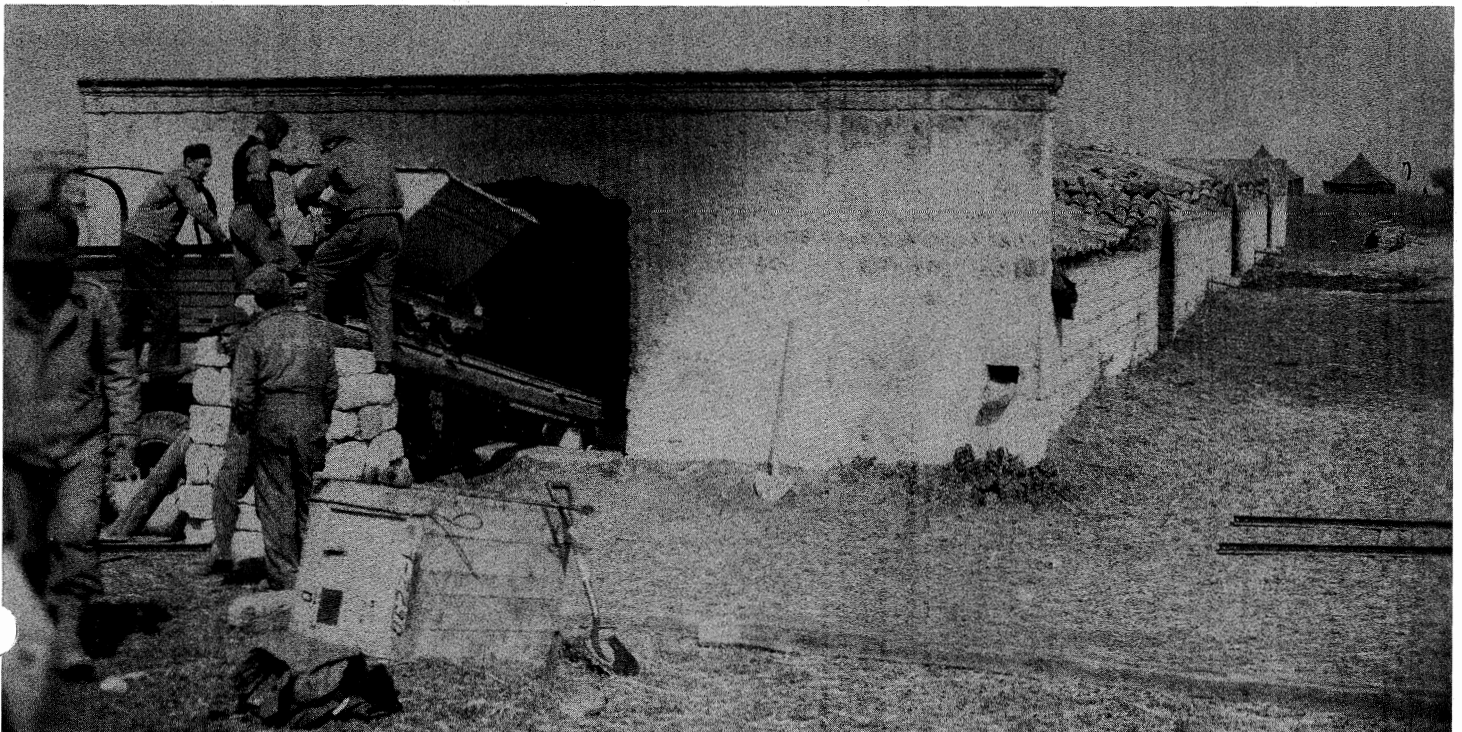
When the 465th Bomb Group arrived at Pantanella, Group Headquarters was assigned to a set of existing farm buildings at the top of the hill. S-2 was assigned to a hay storage building of stone construction. Even the roof was stone with a row of "keystones" laid at the peak which kept the whole roof supported. There was no wood in the construction of the building except the window frames, which speaks so well of the Italians' masonry skills. Dirt was spread over this stone roof, then half tiles were laid on the dirt for drainage.

There was a reasonably good set of steps leading down into the building. I say "down" because the eaves of the roof were at the tops of the windows and the window sills were at ground level. It seemed an ideal building for S-2 as far as security for all the classified materials that were in our files and it gave us complete privacy when we wanted it by monitoring only one staircase.

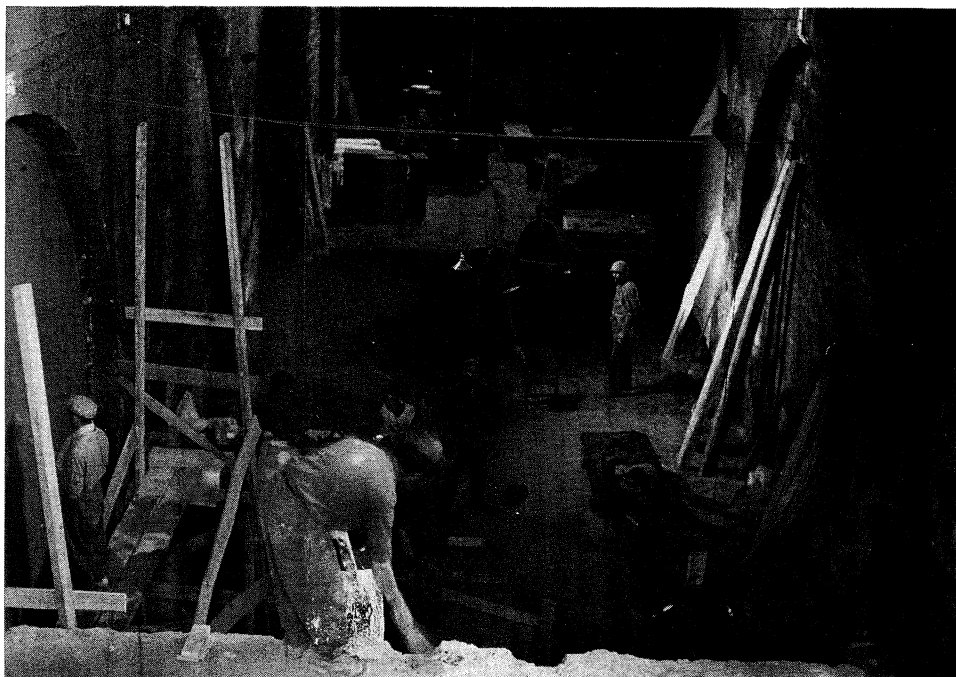
The only thing that made us wonder how we could set up our operation in this "ideal building" was the fact that the floor was probably 30 feet below ground level and 80

feet long; and it was filled to within six feet of the window sills with finely chopped hay! We had to figure a way to remove the hay and set up our office and operational area.

After several days and many ideas from many people as to how we could accomplish our task it was decided that since the crews were not flying as yet we would get a number of mattress covers from S-4, pass them out to a detail from each squadron. They could haul the hay out up the steps, dump it into a 6x6 truck and haul it out onto a field for fertilizer. This was started at about



One of 12 photos sent in by Ralph DuBois. This photo shows the building with smoke stains on the front center. The cart on the rail is ready to unload on the 6 x 6 truck to its left. Note the stone, tile, and dirt roof.



Working in the black hole after the fire. Two Italians doing plaster work, one in front and one on the left facing wall. Below, Hawley in T shirt, Loberg on his left, DuBois with hands on hips, and McUmbler in helmet.

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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.

one PM and the detail worked until four PM and made very little apparent decrease in the tons of hay that were in the building. Sometime during the night the place mysteriously caught on fire.

The fire burned for about two weeks and when it was cool enough to inspect there were only grotesque mounds of charred, feather-light particles and we were faced with

removing these from the building.

Before the 465th came in the area, masons were at work erecting more stone buildings on the site. Naturally, when word came that AAF was coming, all construction stopped. They even left side dump cars much like ones used in mines, and several lengths of rails to run them on. Our enterprising crew found some 6x6 timbers 20 feet long and ran them down into the "black hole," as it had come to be known by this time. They mounted the rails on the timbers, set the car on the rails and set a 6x6 truck at the front of the building to winch the car up and down on a cable. Now you might say, "who loaded the cars?"

We managed to get six Italian laborers who worked around the base doing construction and repair work, gave each of them a gas mask and they did a marvelous job of cleaning up our "black hole." This took several days, then came the cleanup that follows a fire.

The walls of the barn were constructed entirely of stone with arches built in to strengthen the side walls. They were about 15 feet high by 10 feet wide. These were built about 10 feet apart all the way around the barn. Again we used the Italians. They brushed the walls down, applied plaster (they called it "clach") on the arches so we could



Beginning the finishing touches. Note the entrance stairs in rear.

display maps, charts, and information matter for crews to read. It made the building clean to work in as well as affording light reflection which we badly needed in our "black hole." Electricians came in and installed lighting, but we still had a dirt floor and no furniture, only filing cabinets and folding chairs from AAF.

Someone found a truck load of concrete blocks 12"x18"x2". These were delivered through a window down a wooden chute that was built. The floor was leveled with shovels and rakes and the blocks made our floor. For seats for the crews to sit on during the briefing and interrogations, the metal frames that protect bomb fins during transportation were used very satisfactorily.

Meanwhile, another crew set themselves out to find materials and built necessary desks, cabinets, and racks. At last the mission was completed and we were ready for operation by the time the runways were finished and lights started. We were proud of the job we had done.

I have heard parts of this story, but thanks to Ralph Du Bois we now have the complete story about the S-2 building. Some of you might recall reading about the trip I made to Pantanella in 1988 when I reported finding the building had been filled in and the roof raised. It was the only original Italian building changed since we left in 1945. I was disappointed as I wanted to go down those stairs to the briefing room again. I am sure it was the most remembered building for the flight crews.

Return From Germany on 2 1/2 Engines

by Les Wheeler

We were coming up on target from the I.P. when we were caught right in the middle of one of the four explosion boxes of anti-aircraft fire. Shell fragments from all four explosions hit us and knocked out our #4 engine as well as the supercharger on #3. Co-pilot Kenneth Tedin and I were pretty busy feathering #4, trying to get power out of #3, and both of us were on the rudders to keep away from the plane on our left. Fortunately, a few seconds later, it was bombs away. What a relief! We didn't want to salvo early since we were right on target and didn't want to waste the bombs.

After target we were on our own.

The rest of the formation flew on home and since we couldn't keep up, we were left behind. There were broken clouds in the area, so I flew from cloud to cloud to dodge the fighters. We couldn't maintain altitude, but by increasing power on #1 and #2 we kept our altitude loss to a minimum.

As we approached the Adriatic coast I told everyone to throw out anything that was loose, so out it went - guns, ammunition, everything. As we approached the coast I called our navigator and flight engineer to the front office (flight deck) for a conference. I told the navigator that I wanted to go straight across the Adriatic to give us the shortest time over water. He checked maps and said there was a fighter strip straight across on the other side. I headed for that strip. As we approached it, I called another conference. We checked the re-



Leslie S. Wheeler Crew - L to R, Rear - Leslie S. Wheeler, Pilot; Kenneth L. Tedin, Co-Pilot; Joseph M. Neuman, Navigator; Roland J. Soucy, Bombardier; Charles T. Shoults, Engr. Front - Albert Milner, Tail Gunner; Edward J. Schreiner, Ball Gunner; Manuel Quinones, Jr., R/O; Edward J. Chapin, Nose Gunner; Thea. S. Harris, Top Gunner.

maining fuel and figured the fuel used, then I asked for a heading to an airbase half way between the fighter strip and home. By this time, we were flying at 9,000 to 10,000 feet. #3 engine was starting to help the other two engines quite a bit, so we cut power on #1 and #2 to normal cruise. As we approached this airbase, we had a third conference. Again we checked the remaining fuel and decided we could make it home.

Our flight engineer said the hydraulic system was knocked out. I knew we could lower the flaps and gear and still have one or two brakings on the wheel brakes.

I called the tower for a straight-in approach. On my orders all the crew got back in the waist section to help hold the nose gear off as long as possible. This helped slow the plane. We shot a flare on final because Ed Chapin was wounded with flak in his right shoulder.

One of the men in the waist section popped two chutes, tied the chute harness to the waist gun mounts, then tossed them out the instant we hit the runway. There we were - tail skid shooting sparks everywhere while dragging the runway and chutes billowing out both waist windows. Number 2 engine stopped from fuel starvation. There were enough brakes left to turn off the runway and start taxiing. The brake fluid was gone, so I stopped and shut off the remaining engines. The tower called and ordered me to get the plane off the taxiway. I told them if they wanted it to come on and get it.

A few days later, Lt. Orr of Engineering asked me why I brought the plane back. I told him we didn't want to walk home. About ten days later, he told me they were still trying to find and patch all the holes. He asked me if I had seen the holes through the floor where Tedin's feet had been. I checked and sure enough - holes were there - many of them. The reason Lt. Orr brought this to my attention was the it was common knowledge that Tedin wanted stove lids to sit on to protect his posterior. Four inches closer and he would have been in sad shape.

This story illustrates the importance of good maintenance. Everything mechanical worked fine except those parts damaged by the enemy action. We were flying on the "edge" all the way home. If there had been any other mechanical failure, we would never have made it.

John Ward, at the last reunion, jumped me when I first came in the motel in Omaha and said, "Wheeler, you got back an hour later from that mission. Where did you find enough fuel to make it?" Where indeed! Joe Neumann was my navigator, Charlie Shoults the flight engineer and Eddie Schreiner the ball turret gunner who, I think, suggested the use of parachutes for brakes. To complete the crew, we all know the Lord God in Heaven was in charge of the fuel.

A GROUND ECHELON IS LOST

Several years ago Byron Thompson related to me that another bomb group enroute to combat on a ship was torpedoed and sunk losing all the ground personnel in one squadron. It happened very close to the time our personnel were being transported to Italy. I have been in contact with the 485 Bomb Group Association and have received the report of the tragedy. The following story is taken from the 485th article "The Day When 154 Men Were Lost," a Time magazine article at the time, and conversation with E. L. Bunday of the 485th Bomb Group.

On 1 April 1944 154 men from the 831st Squadron boarded the *USS Paul Hamilton* to begin their long voyage to Italy. The next morning they joined Convoy UGS-38 which was made up of 85 merchant vessels, and later joined by Task Force 66.

Traveling most of the time in calm sea and under clear skies the crossing of the Atlantic was made without incident. On 18 April the convoy passed Gibraltar and the following day German observation planes were observed.

On 20 April approximately 50 miles east of Algeria the first enemy

aircraft were sighted at 2103 hours. The attack came from ahead, the planes barely skimmed the water and employed the dark shoreline a background to blur their silhouettes and to frustrate the radar. The attack was delivered in three waves.

About a minute later a group of Heinkels 111s swept in on the convoy's port bow. A Heinkel torpedo smashed into the *De Landsdale*, a destroyer escort, which sunk in 17 minutes with the loss of 47 of its crew. Also hit were two merchant vessels which were sunk with the loss of 498 men. It is likely these vessels carried men from another squadron along with its crew.

The *USS Paul Hamilton* carried the 154 men (8 officers and 146 enlisted men) all from the 831st Squadron. The ship exploded and sunk in 30 seconds. The ship's crew were also all lost. The ship was supposed to be hauling lumber, but the hold was full of bombs. Nearby ships received some damage from the explosion.

On 21 March, just a month prior to the loss of the 831st squadronmen, the ground personnel of the 781st Bomb Squadron left from near Bizerte for Italy. This ship, the *Morrison R. Waite*, also carried explosives consisting of 3000 tons of ammunition, chlorine tanks and oxygen tanks. A very explosive situation if attacked by German aircraft. Fortunately the ship arrived at Naples without an encounter with German aircraft.

HISTORY LESSON

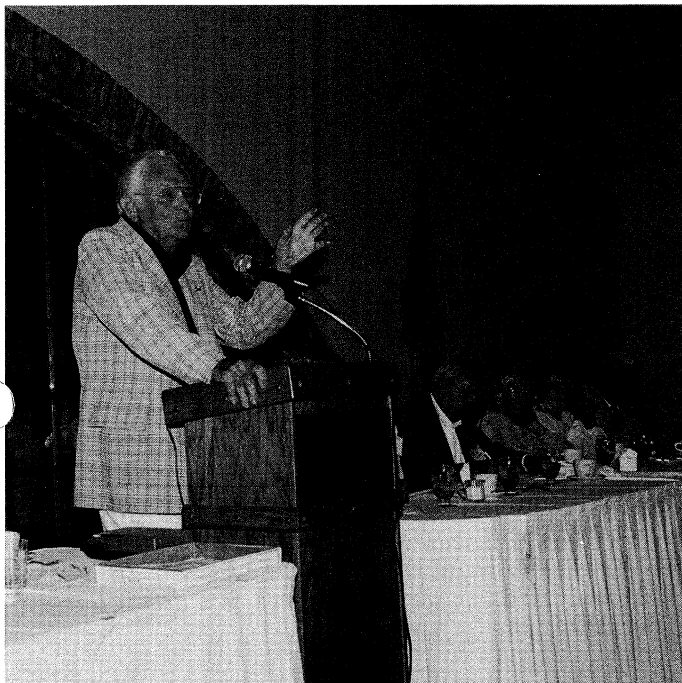
Marshal Ferdinand Foch (Supreme Commander of Allied Forces in WWI) in 1911: "Airplanes are interesting toys, but they have no military value."

Frank Knox, Secretary of the Navy, on December 4, 1941 "Whatever happens, the US Navy is not going to be caught napping."

CHARLES F. MCKENNA III TELLS A SECRET

After Thursday evening's dinner at the reunion Charles McKenna III, our squadron's first CO, was introduced. These are his remarks.

"In March 1943 I was Director of Training at a Bombardier school in Big Spring, Texas. We were very happy, except that on my eleventh request to leave the place to do something a little bit better, they said go. So they sent me to Carswell Field in Fort Worth, Texas to learn to fly B-24s. From there they sent me



by train to Davis-Monthan Army Air Corp Base where they were forming cadres for groups. After being there for about a week someone mentioned they were forming cadres for a new group the next day. So, we all gathered around the bulletin board the following morning and there was the 465th Bomb Group listed and I was the Commander of the 781st Bomb Squadron.

"And that is how it started. There were about 8 or 9 of us in the original cadre. We were all a little bit unsure of ourselves, uncertain, that we were just going through the system.

"They sent us away for three weeks to the Army Air Corp School of Applied Tactics at Orlando, Florida. An absolute waste of time. The only

good part about it was when I rented a house on a lake for two weeks in the middle of the training and my wife came down to live with me. From here they loaded us all on a train and said we were going to get our training in Camp Kearns, Utah. After 2 or 3 days on the train we arrived at Salt Lake City and thence to Camp Kearns. When we arrived there they said they had made a mistake and we were then assigned to McCook Army Air Base, Nebraska.

"We got to McCook, Nebraska and we all started to learn how to form into a unit. A crucial day for me was when we were about 5 or 6 weeks into our training when the weather was very bad. I think the ceiling was about 500 feet and 30,000 feet thick and we couldn't get through it, so group operations called the training off for that day. Someone in the Squadron had a good idea. We took the planes in commission from all the other squadrons and all we did for the entire day was take off and

land. Then changing crews and take off and land. Some began to think it was a waste of time, but at that particular time just our ability to get the plane off the ground and back safely was a tremendous accomplishment. And I felt from that day on we had a unit we could depend on.

"That night about one or two o'clock in the morning we went into the mess hall and I ate 6 soft boiled eggs. I had never eaten so many eggs in my life.

"We completed our training and went to Lincoln, Nebraska to pick up our planes for overseas movement on the coldest day I had ever experienced. It was 30 degrees below zero. When I took off I asked the crew chief if he would put my overcoat over me to keep me warm. I was shaking so

I will never know how that airplane ever got off the ground.

"We landed in West Palm Beach, Florida where the temperature was 80 degrees. Quite a change in 6 hours from the 30 degree below zero weather we left. We continued on our flight to South America, then Africa where we remained a few weeks waiting for our runways to be completed at Pantanella. Our first landing at Pantanella was very exciting as it was the first time we landed on the steel mat runways.

"Then our missions began and you presented yourselves and me with one tremendous accomplishment. The first six or seven missions we had you didn't hurt a person or airplane. No other squadron had such a tremendous accomplishment.

"The rest of the history you know, so now I want to tell you a real story. I am not sure if I ever told my wife this.

"We got a new group commander, Col. Clark, and he put out an order saying that several of us could not fly a mission unless we were in lead position in our group. Well, here was an emotional Irishman that couldn't sit on the ground and count those airplanes and go through that day after day. So I would get dressed up in my uniform, attend the briefing, give a little pep talk, and then at the last minute I would race down to one of the hard stands and throw some flying clothes on and go on the mission. I only did it four or five times. I've been a waist gunner, a co-pilot, a bombardier, but I'll be damned if I would go in one of those turrets. I felt like my knees were in my ears and I just couldn't handle it. After doing this I received a call to report to Col. Clark's office. He sat behind the desk very, very serious. He had a long letter prepared that I was going to be court-martialed for flying unauthorized missions. He talked to me for about ten minutes and then tore up the letter very ceremoniously. And I never heard anything more about it. About three or four weeks later I was transferred to the 464th Bomb Group as deputy Group Commander so I don't think

it ever hurt my career.

"There was a Greek mathematician by the name Archimedes. This is when the earth was considered flat and they only knew of a very small area of the earth. He used to say, "Give me a place to stand on, and I will move the earth!" Well, in a very infinitesimal way I think that we nudged the world just a little bit in the way we wanted it to go."

We were all delighted to have Col. "Mac" with us and to hear some of his secrets while at Pantanella.

The Titan II Intercontinental Ballistic Missile

From the talk by John Kennedy at Thursday's dinner at the reunion.

"Jim, myself, and quite a number of others had the time to visit the newest National Landmark (dedicated Oct. 14, 1994), the Titan II Intercontinental Ballistic Missile (ICBM) launch site.

Prior to retiring in April 1989, I spent my 40 working years in the aerospace industry. From the spring of 1957 to the spring of 1961 I worked for the Martin Aircraft Co. at Denver, in the development and testing of the Titan II ICBM. The Martin Company had both a contract to deliver the missiles, and install the entire weapon system in

underground launch facilities. The Titan II was the largest ICBM and the largest nuclear war head ever built in the United States. There were a total of 54 launch silos, 18 at Tucson AZ, 18 at Wichita, KS and 18 at Little Rock, AR.

"In April 1961 the Martin Company assigned me as the Site Activation Manager for the 18 Silos around Tucson. With offices at Davis-Monthan and an honorary Officers Club membership I felt back home again. It was interesting and challenging being in on the nuclear arms race with the Russians. There were approximately 5000 men at each of the three site locations. Crews worked around the clock.

"By December 1963 all 54 Titan II weapon systems were installed and fully operational. For over 20 years they stood guard 24 hours a day and were a main ingredient in our war deterrent arsenal.

"As a part of the Nuclear Arms Agreement with Russia, the last Titan II was deactivated in December of 1987. All the missiles and war heads have been removed and the underground facilities filled in except one missile silo 25 miles South of Tucson near Highway 19, exit 69.

"As a part of the agreement this one silo with a deactivated missile and warhead could remain as a museum (the only one permitted in the U.S.).

"When you tour the museum, you see a short film, then the underground control center, crew quarters, launch support equipment, and the 134 foot deep launch silo, complete missile, and dummy warhead.

"The missile itself is 10 feet in diameter, 110 feet tall, and weighs 165 tons (about 7 fully loaded B-24s). The two powerful 1st stage engines could push the missile out of the silo and to a height of 250,000 feet in 2 1/2 minutes.

The missile then separates and the 2nd stage engine could deliver the warhead 6,000 miles at 15 to 17,000 miles per hour, hitting the target in approximately 24 minutes (Russia). Once the missiles were launched there was no way to stop them from hitting their target. All were aimed at Russia.

"The Titan II was and is an excellent missile. It was used to launch the 12 Gemini Space Capsules in the 1960's. Remember the Gemini had two astronauts aboard. It is still used to launch heavy payloads into space..

"This is an interesting and worthwhile museum."

From Frank Hylla's Diary

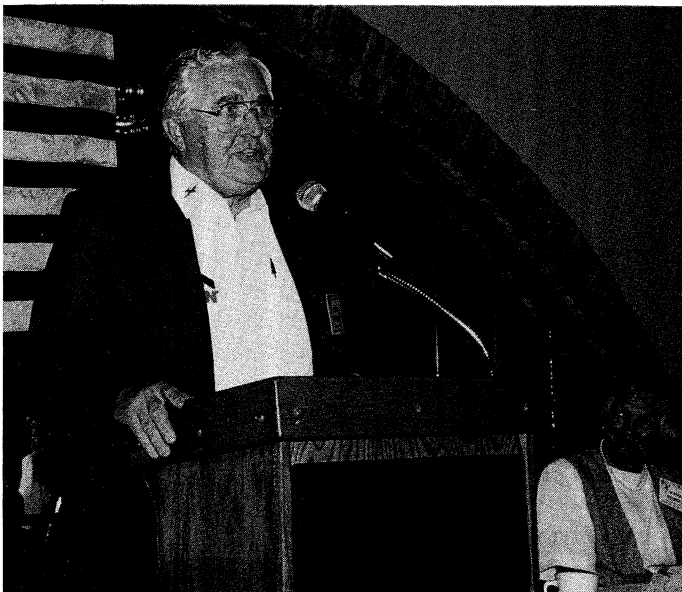
On 30 June 1944 Frank Hylla was flying with his crew, the Cauble crew, as co-pilot on a mission to Blechhammer. The diary was written by Hylla while in POW camp after bailing out on this mission. This is the second half of his diary.

April 5 - Luftwaffe has taken over the camp. Also another air raid, B-24s, P-51s & P-47s. Think they hit Augsburg. Sure must have bombed hell out of it. May looks wonderful, it won't be long now. good meal; potatoes, eggs, and sausage. Raisin condendo pie. D. D. Long is a damn good cook.

April 7 - Today is Brown's 2nd and Sim's 6th wedding anniversary, so Long planned a big bash. This was without a doubt one of the happiest days since I've been here. Breakfast; Kreigie crunchers, 3 pieces of bread, dinner, salmon and rice chowder, tuna and carrot salad, apricot condendo pie, and chocolate cake. Boy am I full. D. D. scores again. One week to go on my predictions. Bashed a bar of chocolate.

April 9 - One helluva big flap! We moved to center camp, live in tents, no cooking facilities. Met Dickie Tipton and Burda. God, half of us are here, a beautiful air raid, B-24s, B-17s, P-51s and P-38s.

April 10 - Hell, half parcels again. Poor Kreigies will go hungry again.



April 11 - Big cheer went up after Appell - half parcel rumor was duff. Also the biggest air raid yet. Targets were bombed all around us. We were a flock of scared Kreigies. Beautiful formation of B-17s, P-51s, P-39s. Air raid all night.

April 12 - Air raids again. Fried potatoes, sardines, prune whip with Klim topping. D. D. scores again.

April 13 - Today is Friday the 13th, wonder what will happen. P. M. German announced the death of President Roosevelt.

April 13 - Memorial services for President Roosevelt, it was quite impressive. Big bash day of macaroni & cheese and chocolate pie. Nearly stalled out! Rumors galore, war over in 36 hours. During the night Kreigies tore down the fence and used the posts for wood, including yours truly.

April 15 - My date for the war to end. Looks like it might last a while longer. Seen 12 P-51s cruising around as if they were out for a Sunday drive. Smitty and I planned our own New York visit.

April 16 - Rumors about the war being over. Also the biggest raid I've seen. There were so many planes flying in all directions that you couldn't count them. Truly the best air show yet. Also rumbles in the southwest and west.

April 17 - Still here, big spud bash. Fried spuds, stewed steak and gravy, spam, and dates condendo pie.

April 19 - Seen medium bombers for the first time, also P-47s raid is a daily occurrence.

April 21 - Sweating out the West Camp. Moved to barracks, met George, was more than glad to see him again. Usual air raid.

April 23 - One helluva big flap. Everyone thinks we'll move, few fellows say Sagan, "They can't move us," but they don't believe it them-

selves. Everyone is looking forward to liberation.

April 24 - Still here, weather cleared up. These last few days are days I'll never forget. No rumors, everyone packed and ready to move, expecting hot news, wondering whether we'll be liberated or moved. Repatriation board should come in any day. The Germans announced the Americas were in Regensburg, 60 KM from here (36 miles).

April 25 - Announced that we would not be moved. It's hard to imagine what kind of thoughts run through your mind sweating out our boys who are so close and yet so far. Damn sack broke down, but I'm not fixing it because it won't be long now. Damn! Wish they would hurry. Everyone is getting hard to live with. Honey wagon has a red cross painted on it. No more air raids sounded because it's one continual raid all day long. Watched R.A.F drop on Munich at night. A regular 4th of July. Seen 7 goon (German) 190s. They don't get over 1000 feet now.

April 26 - Goon guards still here, can hear rumbles of fire in distance. Could be artillery fire. It's impossible to describe the tenseness of everyone. I'm getting so I jump at every noise. Steady rumbling all day thinking of things my beloved wife and I are going to do, just plain simple things such as going to movies, munching on popcorn and stuff. Ten men to a loaf of bread - damn I wish I was on my way home. P-51s circled the camp. You'll never hear me bitch about food. Don't expect to be here one week from today. Hope we go through Switzerland so I can pick up some watches.

April 27 - Hot damn, so excited can't even write. Announced that our guard would take over guard of the camp at 3 P.M. So happy I could scream. Thank the Almighty God we'll be out of here soon. Went on a wood walk this morning. Today is the day of days - morale 100%.

April 28 - Sick today.

April 29 - Better today. Boy, what a flap! They're here! P-51s buzzed us. We hear machine gun and rifle fire. Boy, we're on our way home. They seem to be west of us. It sounds like target practice on a range back home. Boy, a few scared Kreigies around here and I am one of them. I also seen rifle fire come from two church steeples. They move south fast. Rumors are coming in that G.I. trucks and tanks are coming in the gate. This is by far the happiest day of my life. Most of the heavy firing has ceased at 12:00 noon. Several Kreigies got wounded. Seen American flag raised over Moosberg. at 12:40. I felt so happy I cried when I seen Old Glory. It was the most beautiful sight I have seen. It took my breath away. Twenty minutes Old Glory went up at the camp gate. American, French, Russian, Greek, Serb flags are up, but none as beautiful as the Stars & Stripes.

Today, I guess, is one of the finest feelings a man can have - liberty - one thing that a person should guard, has been returned to me and I humbly thank God for it.

April 30 - Nothing much of interest today, still sick, hear stories of finding Red Cross parcels in the goon barracks. These American soldiers are the finest looking bunch of boys and they are really tough. Boys that have been outside say the goons have plenty of food and we've been living on practically nothing but rotten potatoes. So, regardless of what happens to the goons I don't feel sorry for them.

May 1 - We're still here, announced we might be here 7 to 9 days. Gen. Patton came in camp today and the Kreigies went wild. He was complete with pearl handled revolvers, and is every inch a man. I also got my first bite of white bread in 10 months. It tasted like cake. I still can't believe we're liberated. It like a dream.

Frank's comments on April 29 entry about feeling so happy seeing Old Glory again reflects the same emotions Vern Burda expressed in his "I Saw One Thousand Men Cry" in Pantanella News number 19.

FORMER POWS TO REVISIT WWII PRISON CAMPS

Vern Burda has arranged through the travel agency he owns, Wilsonville Travel, a tour encompassing Berlin, Prague, Vienna, Salzburg, Munich, and Moosburg. This tour is for former POWs of Stalag Luft III, which was made famous by the movie The Great Escape. The group will visit the site of the prison camp at Zagan, Poland, and visit the museum and memorial for the people shot during the great escape.

On returning to Berlin, the participants will follow the exact route they were forced to march in January of 1945 when the Russians came so close that the German army forced them out and they walked approximately 90 miles in sub-zero weather.

The tour will proceed to Prague where it is indicated that President Vaclav Havel, the Lord Mayor of Prague, and the American Ambassador will have a ceremony where certificates of appreciation will be given to the Citizens of Prague and the Czech Red Cross by the POWs and to the POWs by President Havel.

After proceeding through Vienna, Salzburg, and Munich, the group will have a ceremony on April 29, 1995, at the city center in Moosburg, 30 miles north of Munich, to commemorate their liberation from prison camp by General George Patton's army. This will be the 50th Anniversary of that date.

Vern indicated the tour is completely booked with over 300 in the group. We will wait for a report from Vern after they return.

All American Update

To those of you who are not on the Collings mailing here is a brief update. As those of you who were at the reunion learned that *All American* was going to make a surprise appearance. Instead it ran into difficulties with FAA and a problem with fuel contamination resulting in the cancellation of the 1994 tour in July for both the B-24 and B-17.

Since July both planes have had

major overhaul of the engines, repainting of the aircraft including the nose art, and are working on final approval from FAA. O. J. Cowart, has been working with the Collings Foundation in keeping a current updated check list. O. J. reports the check list is now over 50 pages long. We would have never got off the ground at Pantanella if we had a list that long!

The 1995 tour season is planned to begin in January with 150 stops for the season. If you are interested in helping the Collings Foundation to keep the "bird" flying contact The Collings Foundation, River Hill Farm, Stow, MA 01775. Phone 508 562-9182. You can be a contributor for as little as \$24 as a Crew Member. And they are looking for volunteers to help organize the stops and help with the public at the stops.

Remember, the 781st Bomb Squadron is the largest donor of any WWII squadron. Let's keep it that way. Keep 'em Flying!

DUES

Check your label to see if you are current with your dues. The number to the right of your name is the year you are paid for. It should be 94 or later. **If it has a zero or is blank you are not paid up and may not continue to receive the Pantanella News.** We ask a minimum of \$10 per year. The \$10 per year covers only the actual cost of printing and mailing the Pantanella News.

LIFE MEMBERSHIP

The board of directors decided to offer a Life Membership for a payment of \$100 or more. Recipients receive a beautiful certificate designed by Frank Quagan. If you were lucky to be at the reunion you would have received the certificate framed for hanging.

The certificates are numbered with number one going to Frank Piteo. There was not much of a question that he should be number one since he paid annual dues averaging \$2,000 for each of the past four years. What a guy! Unfortu-

nately he was unable to attend this reunion with us to receive the certificate in person. We are setting aside his extra donations for some special purpose later on. Others have sent in \$100 at a time when they think of it like Bob Wootan does. Below are life members to date.

1. Frank A. Piteo
2. Ernie Van Asperen
3. Robert S. Wootan
4. Leonard J. Goldstein
5. Frank P. Ambrose
6. O. J. Cowart, Jr.
7. Harry S. Carl
8. James C. Althoff
9. Harold A. Straughan
10. Walter Clausen
11. Kenneth Kill
12. Richard J. Bilger
13. David B. Coleman
14. John B. Baum
15. Charles V. Ferich
16. James H. Kienitz
17. Laura J. Tucci
18. Eugene R. Sims
19. Stanley J. Winkowski
20. Nick Schaps
21. Walter Sutton

HISTORY BOOKS

We received five history books at the reunion. One was resold at the reunion and the other four were sent to those previously on a list for a history book. Only one remains on the current list for purchase. If you have one to sell or want one let me know.

SICK CALL

Mrs. Shirley Ingram wrote, "I want to let you know that **Bud (Charles) Ingram** had two surgeries this spring. First a lens implant in his right eye and on May 2nd he had a heart valve replacement. He is recovering nicely and hopes that ends the hospitals for awhile.

William O'Brien (Kennedy Radio Operator) got ill after the reunion, checked into the hospital at Flagstaff, then returned home for a hospital stay and I understand he is back in the all is well column again.

Pat Hendrickson had back surgery since the reunion. She is now on the way to recovery.

FOLDED WINGS

Charles Clark, Jr. Col USAF Ret., former Commander 465th Bomb Group, passed away in early 1994 in San Antonio where he retired from the Air Force. Col. Clark's last assignment was chief of staff of the Air Force Security Service at Kelly AFB.

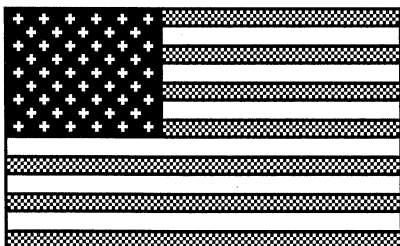
Clifford M. Grant (Ball Gunner/Lovey) passed away September 25, 1993. His wife informed us he had cancer for several years, but was able to attend the three reunions previous to Tucson.

Arthur Marion Pitts (Pilot) passed away November 28, 1994. His wife Beverly called Homer Moeller (Co-pilot/Pitts) who reported it to me. Marion had leukemia for about six months.

James F. Downs (Ball Gunner/Prince) passed away January 4, 1995. James had leukemia, then a stroke several years ago and had been in a wheelchair since. To those of you who attended the Dayton reunion will remember the beautiful prayer he delivered at the dedication of the 781st plaque. It has been repeated at all of our reunions since. He has attended all reunions except the one at San Antonio. Members of the family always joined James and Betty at the reunions.

Thomas Carmody (Newman Nose-gunner) passed away November 27, 1994. His wife, Mrs. Pat Carmody, wrote that he had heart trouble, diabetes and kidney problems. He always wanted to attend the reunion, but was not well enough.

We extend our deepest sympathies to the families and friends of our comrades whom we loved and respected. We give them a final salute.



The following prayer was written by and is being delivered by James Downs at the dedication of our squadron plaque at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, September 18, 1987. The prayer is printed here in his memory and the memory of all those who died during and since WWII.

Eternal and everloving God,

We thank you for the privilege of meeting
on this hallowed day. . . . in this free nation
and under these spacious skies
to honor our Nobel fallen comrades
and to rededicate our lives to thee
and to our country.

We thank you, . . . that we are permitted
to live through days of challenge, for the
hours of testing in our loyalty to our
national heritage and for our devotion
to the high ideals for which our
fellow squadron comrades have
surrendered their lives.

Help us O Heavenly Father, to keep our poise.
save us from our enemies without
and from fear within.

Grant us the power and wisdom to deal
justly and firmly with all who spread
seeds of discontent, hatred and
disloyalty among us.

On this day of sacred memory we ask for
grace and power to live truer lives,
to be better servants of the living God.

Finer fathers and mothers, nobler sons
and daughters and more loyal
citizens of this great country
and of the world.

Lord, grant that we may see the day when war
and the fear of war shall be no
longer,

The day when peace shall have
become our common possession,

The day when thy will shall be done
on earth as it is in Heaven.

Amen.

LEO G. LUTGRING

You were notified of the death of Leo in the July news, but we did not have time nor the information before the news went to press..

Leo G. Lutgring died at his home in Tell City, Indiana. He was a native of the area and lived there all his life except for his military service.

He served with the 781st Bomb Squadron as Chief of the Engineering Section from the time the squadron was formed. He was the recipient of a Bronze Star and was discharged as a master sergeant in 1945.

He was a member of American Legion Post No. 2134 and Perry County Coon Club and a lifetime member of St. Mark Catholic Church.

A retired farmer, he also retired from the Perry County Highway Department as a road superintendent in 1978.

Surviving are his wife, Virginia, three daughters, four sons, nine grandchildren, five sisters and three brothers.



Master Sergeant Leo Lutgring on the line at Pantanella.

COLONEL CHARLES A. CLARK

After Colonel Elmer Rogers was shot down and hospitalized for recovery from wounds Colonel Charles A. Clark, Jr. was given command of the 465th Bombardment Group.

Colonel Clark, a senior pilot, was born 24 August 1910, at Vandalia, Illinois. He entered active service on 10 June 1932, in the regular army, Washington, D.C. after having completed a four year course at the U. S. Military Academy, West Point. On 20 March, 1935, he was transferred from Field Artillery to the Army Air Force, and underwent the following training: ACPFS, Randolph Field, ACIFS, Kelly Field, AAFSAT, Orlando, Florida, B-24 School FWAA, Ft. Worth, Texas.

Weather was Hitler's weather during the month of September, 1944. Grounded for over half the month, the group was able to reach primary strategic objectives in Germany but three times. As one by one the Balkans crumbled, transportation facilities in the country became more important and we were able to attack several marshalling yards in support of the Russians and Partisans in Yugoslavia. For the first time Greece was attacked by this group when on 24 September the group successfully bombed the Scranange submarine docks, destroying a submarine and two merchant vessels.

On one of the attacks against the Reich's dwindling oil supplies at Oswiecim, Col. Clark, who was leading the group, ran into intense flak over the target, and with his aircraft badly damaged was forced to land near Dwow, Poland. The Colonel

maintained the cool head so well known to the members of his command, and encouraged the crew enabling them to arrive safely at a Russian air base, despite fires in the craft and loss of two engines. Rather than return by air transport, the crew returned to base via another mission, this time in a B-17. An Air Force Fortress was available in Russia and with Lt. Duckworth's experience as a former 17 pilot, the crew took off with a group of the Air Force flying a shuttle run to Italy, arriving safely in Italy. Colonel Clark's handling of his crippled Liberator earned him the oak leaf cluster to the DFC

When Col. Clark left the 465th he transferred to 55th Wing Headquarters on 1 December 1944 as Executive Officer. Later he served as deputy commander of the 55th Wing.

PX ITEMS FOR SALE

Everyone seemed to want more PX items than we had at the reunion. New members attending, a lot of requests for items for grandchildren, and worn out caps was the reason. We'll see about getting a larger stock of 781st Bomb Squadron related items. For the present time we have in stock the following:

781st Bomb Squadron leather jacket patch of the Pissed-off Indian\$10.
781st cloth shoulder patch.....\$2.
781st cap, solid blue twill with squadron insignia and name stitched in color plus gold scrambled eggs.....\$7.
781st 50th Anniversary beautiful stationery and envelopes. Only a few packets left - 10 stationery and 10 envelopes per pack.....\$3.

Prices plus packing and shipping for caps is \$1.50. No charge for additional items if ordered with caps. If items other than caps ordered alone 75¢ for postage. Make check to the 781st Bomb Squadron and send to 2 Mt. Vernon Lane, Atherton, CA 94027.

Listed below are the members and guests of the 781st Bomb Squadron at the Tucson reunion in October 1994.

JAMES C. ALTHOFF
FRANK P. AMBROSE
BERNARD BADLER
DANIEL E. BAILEY
JOHN R. BAKER, JR.
ARGENE BARNETT
DONALD A. BARRETT
HARRY J. BARRETT
WILLIAM B. BARTLETT, JR.
ROBERT L. BASSINETTE
HAROLD BAUGHMAN
JOHN B. BAUM
WARREN L. BEESON
NICHOLAS C. BELIK
BILLY L. BICKLEY
RICHARD J. BILGER
MELVIN BLYE
ARTHUR W. BOVETT, JR.
DAVID L. BOWMAN
CHARLES H. BRAUD
VERNON G. BURDA
WARREN G. CARDEN
HARRY S. CARL, JR.
WILTON E. CARTER
GAYTHOR L. CASS
* JULIA CATO
RAYMOND D. CAUBLE
G. STEVE CHIRIGOTIS
FRANCIS R. CLARK
WALTER CLAUSEN
MORRIS COHEN
DAVID B. COLEMAN
O.J. COWART, JR.
CALVERT CRAWFORD
RICHARD L. CRUTCHER, JR.
CORNELIUS V. CULHANE
CARL V. DAHL
RAY E. DAVIS
* MRS. DOROTHY DE KRIEK
JAMES DEBEVEC
MICHAEL J. DEIRONIMI
MELVIN L. DERRY
BEN L. DONAHUE
JAMES F. DOWNS
WALTER W. DUDLEY
DANIEL R. DUGAN
PAUL N. DURCKEL
WILLIAM C. ELLETT
HAROLD ERICKSON, JR.
HAROLD B. FARRAR
CHARLES V. FERICH
DENNIS B. FLAHERTY
LOREN W. FOOTE
ROBERT L. FREED

MORRIS R. RAPOPORT
KENNETH B. REHN
HARRY REUSS
BONNIE G. ROWE
BARNEY G. RUSSELL
JOHN T. RUSSELL
NICHOLAS V. SCHAPS
HERBERT L. SCHLOSSIN
BETTY SCHUSTER
HAROLD SEITZ
JAMES D. SHAFFER
* DODIE SHALLMAN
ROBERT L. SHETTERLY
WALKER H. SHIPLEY
CHARLES T. SHOULTS
EUGENE R. SIMS
JAMES MARCEL SNYDER
GEORGE A. SOROKA
ROLAND J. SOUCY
LEROY J. STARK
BERTEL E. STIGBERG
BARBOUR C. STOKES, JR.
RICHARD J. STORM
HAROLD A. STRAUGHAN
KENNETH E. SUTTON, JR.
WALTER H. SUTTON
REYER SWAN
RICHARD L. SWANSON
ALBERT I. THOMPSON
BYRON W. THOMPSON
DENLY J. THOMPSON
*JEAN TIPTON
CHARLES I. TITTL, JR.
DONALD E. TOOMEY
FLOYD H. TRUDEAU
STANLEY E. TRYON
JACK VAN SLYKE
JAMES E. WAGGLE, JR.
FRANK WASSENAAR
WAYNE WEBER
LESLIE S. WHEELER
HOWARD R. WILCOX
HENRY L. WILLETT, JR.
THOMAS L. WILLIAMS
STANLEY J. WINKOWSKI
*JEAN ALLEN WOOD
WILLIAM P. WOOD
ROBERT S. WOOTAN
JOHN WROBLEWSKI
T. A. YANCEY
JOHN ZADROZNY
JOHN C. ZARTMAN
CHARLES R. ZWERKO

WENDELL GALBRAITH
TELIO P. GIAMMARCO
LEONARD J. GOLDSTEIN
OLIVER E. GRAHAM
WAYNE N. GRUBAUGH
CHARLES H. HAFEY, JR.
COL. MCHENRY HAMILTON
GEORGE HAUSOLD
GLEN HAYWOOD
ALVIN HELLMAN
RALPH D. HENDRICKSON
MICHAEL S. HORVATH
WILLIAM H. HUGUS
ROBERT L. JASPER
WILLIAM H. JOSTWORTH
EDWIN W. KAPUSTA
DALE L. KEISER
JOHN B. KENNEDY
PIERRE J.J. KENNEDY
JAMES H. KIENITZ
FRANCIS K. KILL
CLARENCE A. KNOX
KENNETH J. KOPP
GEORGE KURKOWSKI
CHARLES M. LAGNEAUX
CALDER M. LAMPREY
* PETER B. LAUGHNER
JOHN P. LAYNE
ALBERT P. LEBLANC
R. F. LEDWITH
ORREN J. LEE
WALTER N. LONGACRE
FRANCIS M. MACCANI
WILLIAM O. MALONEY
ALVIN T. MARCHBANKS
ADRIAN A. MARTIN
EUGENE G. MARTIS
ROBERT H. MATTHEWS
CLAYTON F. MCDANIEL
CHARLES F. MCKENNA III
J. PETER MINISTRELLI
HOMER L. MOELLER
DONALD H. MYERS
LOWELL E. MYERS
AL "SCOOP" NAGEL
JOSEPH M. NEUMAN
WM F. O'BRIEN
DEAN T. OTTO
KENNETH L. PARKHURST
GINO J. PELLESCI
WILLIAM M. PRUITT, JR.
KENNETH T. PULHAM
FRANK QUAGAN
WILLIAM A. RACHOW

HISTORY SLIDE PROGRAM

In response to many, many requests, Harry Carl has managed to get a satisfactory transfer to video tape of the Squadron History slide program he has shown now at four of our six reunions. And he is willing to make it available to those who wish to purchase copies.

He has located a company which will make duplicates from his original for \$16.00 each, including packaging and shipping. If you wish to purchase this program send a check payable to Harry S. Carl for \$16.00 for each copy you want. Duplicates will be made after receipt of your order. Use the following format in your order;

To: HARRY S. CARL
550 Creek Road
Chadds Ford, PA 19317

Enclosed is my check in the amount of \$____ for __ copies of the 781st Squadron History Slide Program.
Please mail to:

Bomb Group regarding the bomb dump explosion. If you have any information at this I would like to hear from you. For example, where were you when the bomb dump blew up? I understand casualties from our squadron were averted due at least some of the Ordnance men attending a "meeting" in the theatre?

I had planned an article on "50 Years Ago," but did not have the time. You can recall this period of time by referring to the history book to recall the missions or your work on the line if you were still at Pantanella.

Selection of the 1996 reunion sight should be announced in the April Newsletter.

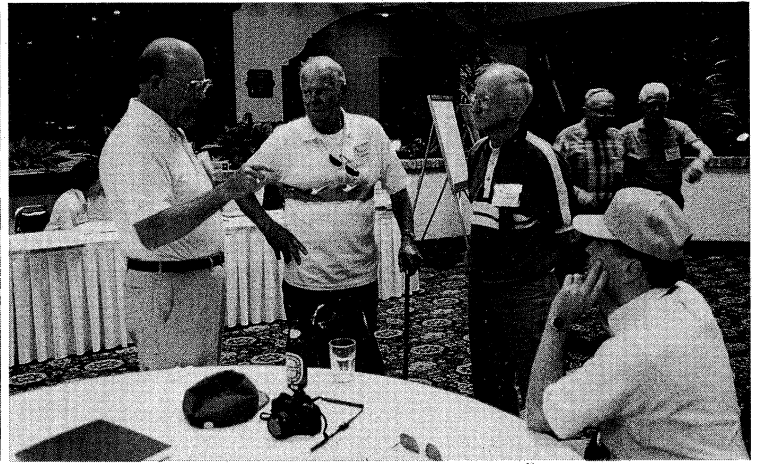
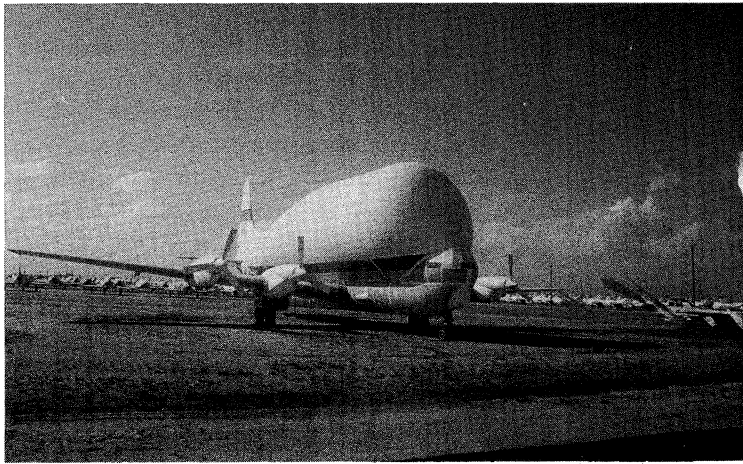
Editors Corner

The April Pantanella News should be out on time. I was surprised I did not receive more calls regarding the very late October issue.

Thanks to those of you have been very prompt in your dues payments for '95.

We have a number of articles in research and being worked on by some members of the squadron and group. One article will cover the S-2 section, another on the history of the region of Italy in the Pantanella Army Air Base area. Also expected are articles and photos promised by members at the reunion.

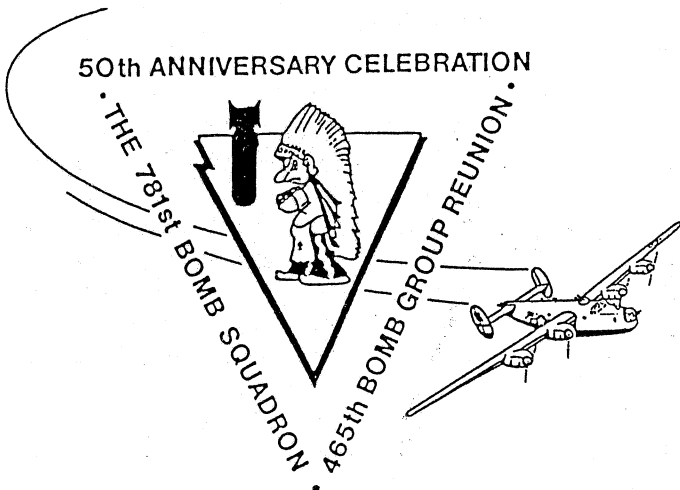
I have contacted the 464th



Clockwise from upper Left - Our gals getting ready for the photo session; Hank Willet during the briefing; Activity in the lobby; and the Guppy.

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