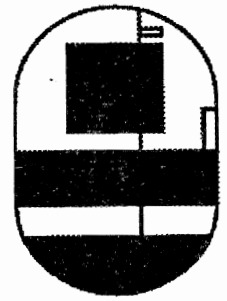




# PANTANELLA NEWS



January 2001

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NUMBER 63



Francis (Frank) Donohue, Jr.; Ball Turret Gunner,  
Robert French Crew

## MY DAD'S PATRIOTIC CHOICE

By Frank M. Donohue III

### My Awakening

**D**uring a particularly turbulent commercial airline flight some years ago while I was on a business trip,

I thought about what it must have been like to be a crewman on a B-24, engaged in actual combat during World War II. Although that turbulent flight did not begin to do the latter experience justice, I at least got some small inkling of what it might have been like due to that turbulence. During the turbulence, which was really very brief though

quite pronounced, I overcame some of my immediate fear by thinking about how my father, and so many others flying bombing missions during WW II, must have felt during these missions.

Although my father told me about his flights when I was a boy and a young man, I was never capable of appreciating the sense of danger and fear that must have accompanied him and others in bomber crews on every mission. He never discussed that aspect of things.

How must it have been, I wondered, to be 30,000 feet above the ground in a plane that not only experienced turbulence in unfamiliar skies but was also

being shot at by enemy airplanes and ground fire. I think that it must have been especially harrowing to be hanging *beneath* the plane, as my father did, in the ball turret, a glass and metal bubble, riding two 50 caliber machine guns, wearing no parachute, and being responsible for defending much of the real-estate of that aircraft that all were so dependent on.

My father was my hero during my growing up years. I count myself fortunate to have felt that way about my father. But, like so many men years after their father is gone, I wish that I had done a better job of listening to my dad. I especially wish that I had listened more closely about his war experiences, particularly the details of his experience in the ball turret. Dad did provide technical details of his experiences in that position, but he never talked about how he felt and what was going through his mind when he was in the turret, and I never asked him.

My dad's stance seems to be typical of so many of the men that returned from hazardous jobs during World War II, he never voiced much about how he felt about things, he basically stuck to discussing what happened. He seemed to assume that we who were never there would understand the dangers and privation. I didn't really have a clue until I began to experience many aspects of life. It didn't occur to me to ask him about how he felt up there, hanging onto two machine guns so high above the ground. And I really didn't listen as closely as I should have when my father spoke about the details of the

various missions that he flew. That includes the mission during which his plane was shot down, his "lucky" 13th. I was just proud that my father served honorably and bravely and lived to tell about it.

As I look at some of the pictures that my father and others took during his time in Europe during the war, I wish I had asked him more about his and others' participation in this unique event in world history. That he and so many others would give of themselves so unselfishly and return home so peacefully and with such modesty after the event, strikes me as something special and fine about Dad and all of his comrades in the war.

## He Didn't Have To Go

What is especially striking to me about my Dad's service is the circumstances under which it began. He didn't have to serve at all—he volunteered. Dad was in a critical job at the outbreak of the war. He had worked his way up to the position of foreman at Kellett Aircraft Corporation and, according to my mother; he had to be released by the company before he could enlist in the service.

During a discussion with my mother one day long after my father had passed away, I asked why he went if he didn't have to. She told me that he simply could not face himself knowing that so many of his family members and friends were going to do their part and he was not among them. His pride, feeling of re-

781st Bomb Squadron Association  
2 Mount Vernon Lane  
Atherton, CA 94027-3037  
(650) 325-8356

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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 WWII (1944-1945). 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.

sponsibility to others, and his patriotism, got the best of him.

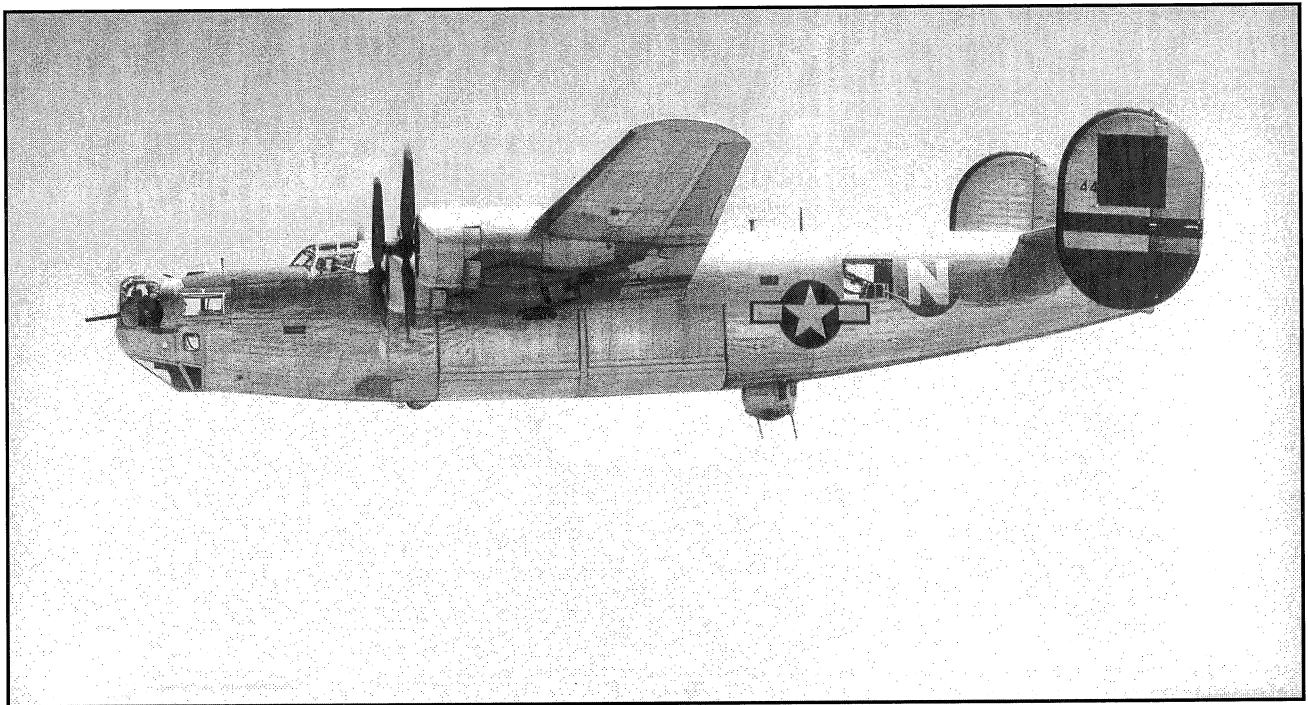
Dad enlisted in the army, got my mother a job as a riveter in his plant (quite a difference for this woman of barely 100 lb who had been a secretary in an insurance company), and went to basic infantry training. After basic training he saw an opportunity to

North Africa in 1944, and was stationed there and at Pantanella Air Force Base in Italy after that. (Chronology uncertain—and irrelevant in any case.)

### Over There

**M**y father served as ball turret gunner in Captain Bob

My father landed in a large tree and was forced to cut his chute straps so he could get down. During his descent from the tree, he broke his ankle. Apparently he was unable to move very far, and a dog that was hostile discovered him. He shot the dog, and was discovered by some villagers who took him to Yugoslav partisans operating in



become a pilot, so he applied to become a cadet and was accepted in flight school.

According to Dad, he and others were singled out of a lineup shortly after their arrival at the school and told that they were going to become gunners. Perhaps Dad was chosen for this position due to his small stature and weight (about 5'7" and perhaps 130 lb). In any case, he went to gunnery school and was stationed variously in Wyoming, Texas, and Florida. He went to

French's crew. The exploits of that crew including the eventful 13th mission (***Lucky 13th***, ***Patanella News***, Number 61, July, 2000) were detailed by Frank Quagan, the tail gunner). Their plane was hit by flak over Linz, Austria on March 22, 1945. Captain French guided the crippled plane over Lake Balaton in western Hungary into territory occupied by the Russians. The crew bailed out over this territory and was scattered.

the area. The partisans took him to Russians who put him in one of their field hospitals.

From his description of the hospital, he was fortunate to survive the rather rough conditions. He described the hospital as being nearly unheated, and he thought that he'd die of exposure during his stay. Nonetheless, he was grateful to the Russians for their treatment of him. Eventually he was returned to our side. I'm uncertain about how he spent the

balance of his time in the service. According to his crew, he rejoined them and finished the war. But he had a broken ankle when he returned from the field hospital.



Francis M. (Frank) Donohue III and Mother, Ella.

### **A Portentous Photograph**

**M**y mother gave me a picture of her holding me when I was a baby. She said that a photographer took the picture, and she had intended to send it to my father overseas. Just a few minutes after the picture was taken, while the photographer was packing up his gear, a telegram was delivered telling her that Dad was missing in action. She didn't find out that he was all right until after the war had ended. She went through her own hell during that period, with no parents to support her and few people around to help her through a very tough time.

My father eventually returned and was discharged in Atlantic City, NJ. Today I marvel at

the sacrifices that both of my parents made during the war, and how they took what they did in stride. It seems typical of their entire generation.

This story is probably different from the ones you've read in the Patanella News. I wrote it to pay a small tribute to my father's memory and to all of you who served with him. As a middle-aged man now, I realize how momentous what all of you did actually was.

After the airline turbulence that I related about in the beginning of my narrative, I began to take a greater interest in what my father did during the war. I began to ask questions of my mother and others regarding his service, but, unfortunately, my father had died (1977) some time before that incident.

A few years ago I came upon a program on *The History Channel* entitled "**Suicide Missions**". That particular episode was entitled, "**The Ball Turret Gunner**". That show and the movie "**Memphis Belle**" really brought home to me the fact that flying a bomber in WW II combat was a highly dangerous place to be. Contrary to being the glamorous, detached form of combat as it is often portrayed, it is a very frightening and nerve-racking form of combat. More were killed flying bombers in the skies of Europe than were marines killed in all of the assaults of the islands of the Pacific.

My father's choice to serve, when he might have stayed home, to me exemplified what his entire generation represented. Their enthusiasm and patriotism

took them through the Great Depression and on to victory in the world's greatest conflict. Dad's choice would seem perhaps unusual today, but in those times many others did the same. My mother's sacrifice further emphasized that. My thanks to all of you for what you did for all of us in the succeeding generations.

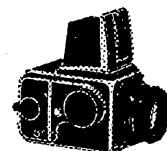
### **Frank P. Ambrose**

**A** photographer for more than 50 years, Frank Ambrose operates a studio in Gloversville, New York specializing in Commercial, Industrial and Portrait photography.

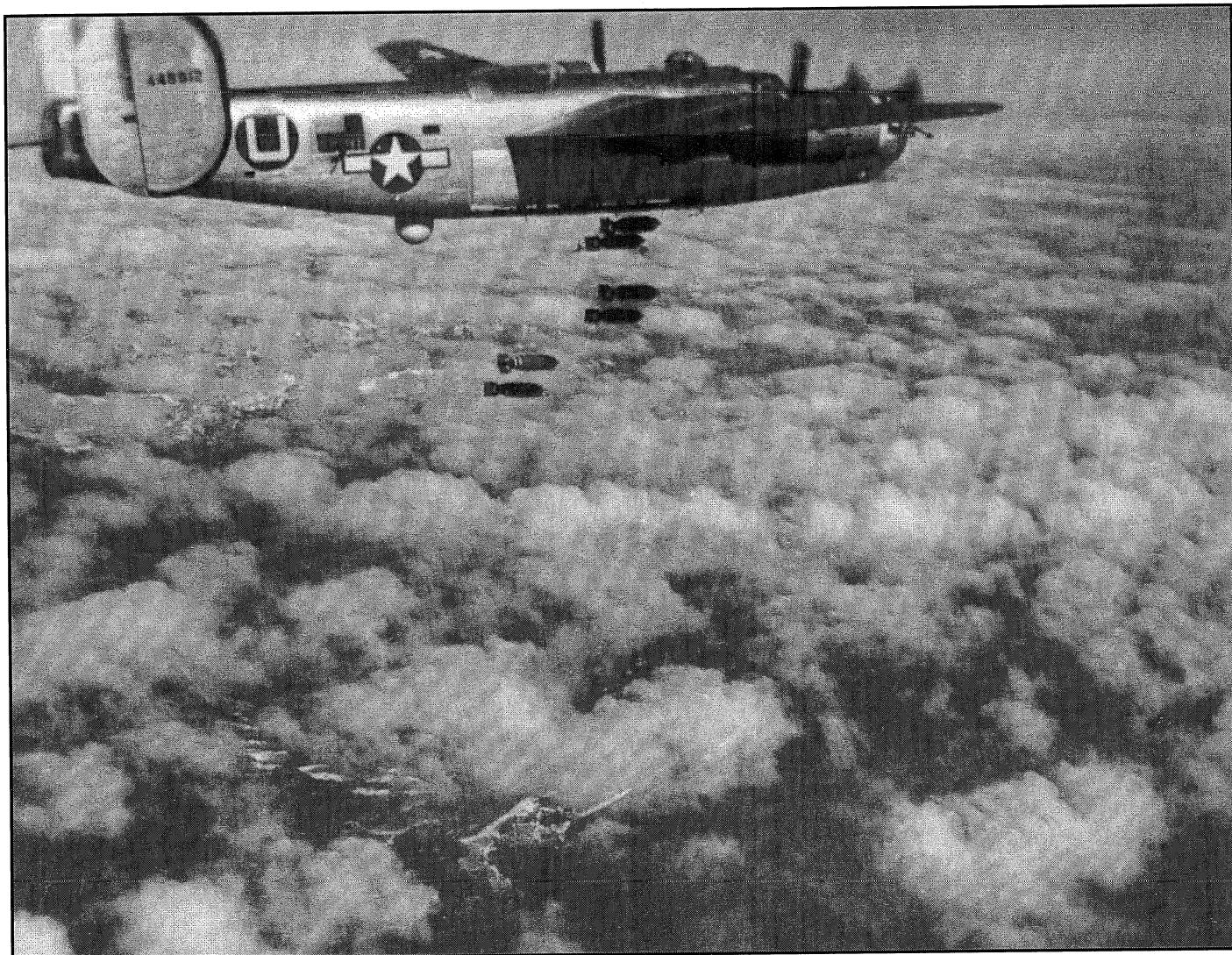
**A PP of A Life Member**, he has lectured at several New England state conventions and has had a number of prints accepted into the PP of A National Loan Collection.

**A former council member** of the New York State Professional Photographers Society, he's been awarded the coveted New York State Court of Honor Award as well as the Bronze, Silver and Gold Service Medals.

**Ambrose has served** as Instructor of Photographer at Fulton-Montgomery Community College in Johnstown, New York.







## Mission Losses

**By Harold B. Farrar**

The following four pages of charts list the date, target, and all of the 781<sup>st</sup> Bombardment Squadron crews shot down over enemy territory during the war in twenty-one of our 781st Bomb Squadron B-24 Liberator Bombers, plus the target and names of 781st squadron crew members shot down in two Group B-24's. Of the 209 crew members listed on this chart 40 men were KIA, 75 became prisoners of war, 11 were interned in Switzerland. Forty-four were MIA, bailed out

over enemy territory, and returned to the our base in Italy. And 39 were MIA, bailed out over friendly territory and returned to our base.

The location of the prison camps in which our downed crew members were held in Germany were Luft I at Earth, Luft III at Sagan (Zagan), Luft IV at Grosstychow, Stalag VIIA at Nurnburg, Stalag XIB at Fallingbostel, and Stalag XIIIID at Moosburg, and two crews were held as prisoners in Rumania. A further review of the chart data reveals that our first B-24 was shot down on May 30, 1944 and our last B-24 went down on

March 22, 1945. During that 10-month period of the war, there were 6 crews shot down from our 781st Bomb Squadron on missions over Blechhammer, 5 crews over Vienna, 3 crews over Ploesti, 2 crews over Friedrichsafen. 2 crews over Regensburg, and 1 crew each over Neunkirken, Austria; Brux, Czechoslovakia; Marobor, Yugoslavia; Amstetten. Austria; and Nove Zamby, Hungary

*Space constraints limit us to two pages in this issue of PANTANELLA NEWS. The other two pages will be in Issue #64. Ed.*

# **781st Bomb Squadron Crews Shot Down Over Enemy Territory**

Harold B. Farrar 2-13-97 (Revised 3/13/00)

Sheet 1 of 4

<u>DATE</u>	<u>TARGET/CREW</u>	<u>Status</u>	<u>Prison Camp</u>	<u>Remarks</u>
<b><u>5/30/44</u></b>	<b><u>Neunkirken, Austria/Prince Crew</u></b>			
<b># 1</b>	George Prince	P	KIA	
	Harold Holden	C/P	MIA/Evade	Yugo Partisans
	Murray Septoff	B	MIA/Evade	Rescued Crew
	Calvin Canyock	N	KIA	
	John Crowley	E	MIA/Evade	
	Harry Smith	R/O	MIA/Evade	
	Abrams Dubinsky	G	MIA/Evade	
	Jack Williams	G	MIA/Evade	
	James Downs	G	MIA/Evade	
	James Patrick	G	MIA/Evade	
<b><u>5/31/44</u></b>	<b><u>Ploesti/Tipton Crew</u></b>			
<b># 2</b>	Dale Tipton	P	MIA/Evade	
	Jim Wray	P	MIA/Evade	Operation Officer
	Eugene Krzyzynski	B	MIA/Evade	
	Vernon Burda	N	MIA/Evade	Tito's Partisans
	Frank Jasicko	E	MIA/Evade	Rescued All Crew
	Hullit Holcombe	R/O	MIA/Evade	
	Albert Ralston	G	Mia Evade	
	William Soteropoulos	G	MIA/Evade	
	Mike Deironimi	G	MIA/Evade	
	Harold Farrar	G	MIA/Evade	
<b><u>6/6/44</u></b>	<b><u>Ploesti/MacFarlane Crew</u></b>			
<b># 3</b>	John MacFarlane	P	MIA/Evade	Yugo Partisans
	Robert George	C/P	MIA/Evade	Yugo Partisans
	Howard Sapenoff	B	POW	Rumania
	Sidney Weiss	N	POW	Rumania
	Albert Mc Quaid	E	MIA/Evade	Yugo Partisans
	Thomas Jackson	R/O	POW	Rumania
	John Duke	G	POW	Rumania
	Jamar Jancarik	G	POW	Rumania
	Ralph Finch	G	MIA/Evade	Yugo Partisans
	Hoyt Adsit	G	POW	Rumania
	Melton Crawford	Photo	POW	Rumania
<b><u>6/6/44</u></b>	<b><u>Ploesti/Martin Crew</u></b>			
<b># 4</b>	Kenneth Martin	P	POW	Rumania
	Rex Struble	C/P	POW	Rumania
	Morris Finely	B	POW	Rumania
	Robert Williamson	N	POW	Rumania
	Donald Merkel	E	POW	Rumania
	Thomas Scalese	R/O	POW	Rumania
	Gerald Simmons	G	POW	Rumania
	Francis Little	G	POW	Rumania
	Kenneth Foden	G	POW	Rumania
	Wilbur Vorheier	G	POW	Rumania
<b><u>6/30/44</u></b>	<b><u>Blechhammer/Dickey Crew</u></b>			
<b># 5</b>	John Dickey	P	POW	Luft III
	Frank Hylla	C/P	POW	Luft III, VIIA
	George Hausold	B	POW	Luft III
	Jerome Joliceur	N	KIA	
	Robert Carr	E	POW	Luft IV
	George Wilson	R/O	POW	Hungary Hospital
	Robert Hoover	G	KIA	
	Joseph Carroll	G	POW	Luft IV
	Richard Thill	G	POW	Luft IV
	Austin Davis	G	KIA	

**Note: In the Pantanella News Aug 89 issue , Leo Lutgring wrote that there were 47 B24 , Liberator Bombers, assigned to the 781st Bomb Squadron during the war. Of these 21 B24's were shot down, 7 B24's crashed and /or were salvaged, and 19 B24's were flown back to the U.S.A.**

# 781st Bomb Squadron Crews Shot Down Over Enemy Territory

Harold B. Farrar 2-13-97 (Revised 3/13/00)

Sheet 2 of 4

<u>Date</u>	<u>TARGET/CREW</u>		<u>Status</u>	<u>Prison Camp</u>	<u>Remarks</u>
<b><u>7/16/44</u></b>	<b><u>Vienna/Tipton Crew</u></b>				
<b># 6</b>	Dale Tipton	P	POW	Luft III, VIIA	Crew captured
	Eugene Weiss	C/P	POW	Luft III,XIIID,VIIA	by Croatsians
	Eugene Krzyzynski	B	POW	Luft III,XIIID,VIIA	& turned over
	Vernon Burda	N	POW	Luft III, VIIA	to Germans
	Frank Jasicko	E	POW	Luft IV, XIB	
	Hulitt Holcombe	R/O	POW	Luft IV, XIB	
	Albert Ralston	G	POW	Luft IV, XIB	
	Paul Brady	G	POW	Luft IV, Luft I	Cauble Crew
	Mike Deironimi	G	POW	Luft IV, XIB	
	Harold Farrar	G	POW	Luft IV, XIB	
<b><u>8/3/44</u></b>	<b><u>Friedrichsafen/Poole</u></b>				
<b># 7</b>	Theodore Poole	P	KIA		Flying with
	Conard Croston	E	POW	Luft IV	782nd B.S.
<b><u>8/16/44</u></b>	<b><u>Friedrichsafen/Roberts Crew</u></b>				
<b># 8</b>	Lewis Roberts	P	Intern Switz.		
	John Noyer	C/P	Intern Switz.		Dickey Crew
	James Lyons	B	Intern Switz.		
	Elliott Sweet	N	Intern Switz.		
	Donald Barrett	N	Intern Switz.		Smith Crew
	Richard Burgin	R/N	Intern Switz.		From Group
	Harold Burchards	E	Intern Switz.		
	Dowie Hymans	R/O	Intern Switz.		
	Willie Golden	G	Intern Switz.		
	Leonard Emmel	G	Intern Switz.		
	Melvin Fulkerson	G	Intern Switz.		
<b><u>9/10/44</u></b>	<b><u>Vienna/Dahl Crew</u></b>				
<b># 9</b>	Carl Dahl	P	MIA/Evade		Yugo Partisans
	Warren Beeson	C/P	MIA/Evade		Rescue all Crew
	William Rachow	B	MIA/Evade		
	Cornelius Culhane	N	MIA/Evade		
	Franklin Martinez	E	MIA/Evade		
	Howard Percy	R/O	MIA/Evade		
	John Layne	G	MIA/Evade		
	Richard Perkins	G	MIA/Evade		
	Jack Pettigrew	G	MIA/Evade		
	Adrain Martin	G	MIA/Evade		
<b><u>9/10/44</u></b>	<b><u>Vienna/Leggate Crew</u></b>				
<b># 10</b>	George Leggate	P	POW	Luft III, VIIA	
	John Nelson	P	POW	Luft III, VIIA	Nelson Crew
	Valmore Schillenman	C/P	POW	Luft III	Nelson Crew
	Lewis Gordon	B	POW	Luft III,VIIA,XIIID	Nelson Crew
	Paul Fisher	E	POW	Luft IV	Nelson Crew
	Sam Ippolito	R/O	POW	Luft IV	Nelson Crew
	Ray Davis	G	POW	Vienna Hosptal	Nelson Crew
	Harry Reuss	G	POW	Luft IV	Nelson Crew
	Roger Niemann	G	POW	Luft IV	Nelson Crew
	Lyle Hermanson	G	POW	Luft IV	Nelson Crew
<b><u>10/13/44</u></b>	<b><u>Blechhammer/Lovey Crew</u></b>				
<b># 11</b>	Alexander Lovey	P	KIA		
	Raymond Morse	C/P	KIA		
	Donald Toomey	N	POW	Luft III	
	Lowell Lunn	E	POW	Luft IV	
	Leonard Goldstein	R/O	POW	Luft IV, XIB	Althoff Crew
	Charles Hudson	G	POW	Luft IV	
	Walter Clausen	G	POW	Luft IV, Luft I	
	Pierre J.J. Kennedy	G	POW	Luft IV, XIB	Althoff Crew
	Harold Grant	G	POW	Luft IV	Leggate Crew

KIA - Denotes Killed in Action, MIA - Denotes Missing in Action, POW - Denotes Prisoner of War.

## How did V MAIL get Started?

By William Noyer

The date was Oct 2, 1943; the leaves were beginning to fall and a mother was writing to her son in the Army overseas. She reflected for a moment, then added a few lines about home, the girl next door, the family dog, and father raking leaves.

It wasn't a very important letter as letters go, but a couple of weeks later it did wonders for the morale of a young airman in a tent in Italy. Anyone who has served in the armed forces will tell you that there is nothing more important than mail.

During these early days of WWII mail sacks had to wait their turn at the dock along with food, munitions and medical supplies. By the time letters arrived, they were often months old. To improve this situation, the Army ordered Col. William Rose, Army Postal Director, and his staff to develop a microfilm mail system.

In their research, Rose and his colleagues learned that a system called microphotography had been invented by the French to get mail in and out of besieged Paris and Metz during the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-71. The French had placed film in a quill attached by a waxed silk thread to a carrier pigeon. Each quill contained about 30,000 messages. As many as 35 pigeons carried the same messages to ensure delivery and winter and snipers' bullets took a heavy toll. When a

pigeon arrived safely in Paris, the films were projected on a screen, copied by clerks and mailed to the addressees.

Working closely with the Navy and the U.S. Post Office, Rose and his staff developed a plan that would deliver the mail to and from the Army and Navy overseas post offices (APOs and FPOs) in New York and San Francisco. The Army Signal Corps would be responsible for the microfilming and developing processes and for establishing photographic mail stations.

Originally, processing stations were to be operated by the Signal Corps. But after all possibilities had been explored, and where conditions permitted, stations were put under contract to Eastman Kodak Company in the U.S. or with Kodak, Ltd in Great Britain. The Signal Corps would supply the service in war zones and in other civilian-restricted areas.

On June 15, 1942, the program was ready, except for a title. Rose and his staff didn't like the current name "ARMY MICROGRAPHIC MAIL SERVICE" and the name "V-Mail" was selected—derived from the popular symbol "V" for "Victory" used during World War II.

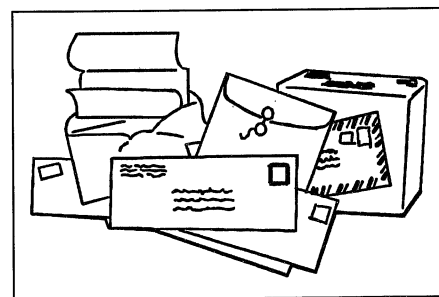
Members of the armed forces overseas were allowed free transmissions of personal letters under an Act of Congress on March 27, 1944 and could send V-Mail letters without postage to their friends and relatives back home. They were required to write "Free" in the upper right corner of the envelope and their

name, rank (or rating) and military branch with the return address in the upper left hand corner. Civilians could send a V-Mail letter for three cents by surface transmission or six cents by air to the domestic V-Mail stations.

V-mail stations were set up in New York City, San Francisco, Chicago in the U.S. and in various locations overseas. At these stations, letters were opened by machines and filmed mechanically at a rate of 2,000 to 2,500 an hour. Roughly 1,600 letters could be filmed on one roll, reducing them to approximately three percent of their original weight and volume. A 1,000-pound sack of ordinary letters could be reduced to 30 pounds of V-Mail.

The original rolls of V-Mail films were not destroyed until it had been ascertained that the letters had reached their destinations. If a letter had not reached the addressee, it was re-printed and forwarded.

Over a billion letters were sent and received from armed forces overseas by November 1, 1945 when the service was discontinued.



## SEND IN A STORY

By Pierre J.J. Kennedy

What experiences did YOU have while in the 781st that you will share with your friends? YOUR story is wanted for the Pantanella News. Write it up, and send your article to Jim Althoff, the Editor.

We would all like to know what YOU observed while in Italy. Your story in print will get other members to write their experiences. We need stories from every section of the squadron: Armament, Supply, Communications, Engineering, Medical, Ordnance, Radar, Personnel Intelligence, Operations, the Air Crews, and anyone else. Also stories and information about our planes, their names, their nose art, and their serial numbers.

Some people start out a story by constructing a meticulous outline of the subject matter, in terms of importance, something like this:

- I. Really Important Heading
  - A. Important Heading
  - B. " "
  - C. " "
  - 1. Important Detail
  - 2.
- II. Really Important Heading (continued)

And, believe it or not, they are able to stick to this outline, with perhaps a minor change now and then, to keep the story and outline in agreement. I admire such people. They are well organized which is why I have never been able to use this method.

Some of us try to write by first

jotting down ideas as we think of them. The proper grammar and spelling can come later. A page of such notes usually ends up as a mess with most of the jottings crossed out and only a few words retained. However, we stick to it, it does take time to revise and re-write to set our ideas in words on paper.

And we are continually thinking about that story we want to write, about our days with the squadron- what happened that time so long ago? What did I see? How did I feel what do I remember? Do I have any old record of that important event in my life-a diary or a paper on which I had scribbled some notes-or a PHOTO?

I adjust my trifocals, and reach down into the wastebasket to find a discarded note that was thrown away when I was ready to give up on the story. I reread the words, and begin to feel a little confidence. The thought that the note conveys should fit nicely right there. Now to use the right words.

Somehow the story starts to write itself. Pen strokes steadily fill the blank paper as new ideas join those already written. I see the germ of a story in my first rough draft. Later, the typewriter hums along as the 5th, and final rewrite is made, and the story is mailed to Jim.

YOUR article will be welcome. Write it in whatever way you feel comfortable. You'll be proud to see your story in print.

# MAIL CALL



From

Ken Foden: "Glad to receive my copy of the Pantanella News. The status report on B-24s got my attention with two familiar aircraft. 42-52449, Yellow E, "Patches." I was ball gunner on Lt. Martin's crew on June 6, 1944. (Page 35 & 36 in the History Book.) I was a member of Lt. Tanenbaum's crew which flew the first radar B-24 to the squadron. We flew from Florida— island hopping to Trinidad; to Belem, Brazil; to Natal, Brazil and across the Atlantic to Dakar, North Africa; (new experience landing on metal matting) to Marrakech, North Africa; into Tunis, Tunisia (Engine Work) and finally to the 781st at Pantanella, Italy.

"In Dec, 1943 our crew was split up. Lts Tannenbaum and Fifield and Sgts Don Markel, engineer, Tom Scalese radio operator, and Ken Foden, Armor, remained at Langley to fly "Mickey" B-24s to train radar operators. We flew up and down the East coast (day and night missions) until early May, 1944 when we left for Italy. Lts. George Harteloo, radar operator, was on the flight over. The remainder of the crew were Lts Charles



# MAIL CALL



Little, bombardier, Richard Shivery, navigator, and Sgts Alvin Marchbanks, Romeo Lebel, and Albert Gopeland were sent overseas by ship. We never flew as a complete crew as sgts Marker, Scales and Foden were shot down June 6, 1944 on a raid to Ploesti. all parachuted safely and became POWs in Bucharest. We were released at the end of August 1944 and returned to Italy on the "Ploesti Freedom Airlift. (Congressional Record of Rescue). We were eventually all returned to the USA during September, 1944. Most POWs I know of were put through AAF Tech Schools and assigned near their homes where possible. I still have contact with Tom Scalese, Lt. Fifield. Markel, Cope-land, and Lebel are deceased. The remainder of the crew I have lost contact with and have no address for them.

"I am planning on being in Fairfield next September 2000. I also have a POW reunion in Tucson the same month, so it will be a busy time for me. I enjoy the Pantanella News.

JCA: Let's see if you can help Ken find some of his old crew members. The last we have is: Alvin Marchbanks (FW 05/1995) and two never located; Howard Shivery, Accountant in Rochester, NY, and Marvin Tanenbaum, Ohio. His name is believed to have been changed to Tanner.

Also, I would like to add that I flew Lt. Tanenbaum's first radar equipped plane in the squadron back to the U. S. When orders came down at wars end to have our airworthy planes flown back to the U.S. Jim Wray dropped at our casa (he lived next door at Pantanella) to let me know I could have the pick of the 781st planes to fly back to the US. My reason for choosing the radar plane was due to the fact that I spent nearly the entire flight over in my new 8-24 from Newfoundland to the Azores in a violent Atlantic storm and did not see land until I dove down through a hole in the clouds just a few miles from the Azores. I wanted to have a radar plane on return so that in case of bad weather I could find land to fly over and bail out if in weather and out of fuel.

The carefree attitude flying over had changed. My crew had completed their missions, so I assembled a crew with Tom Hamond as co-pilot, Capt. Talon, Navigator, Maj. John Knaus, Bombardier, and six enlisted men. Tom Hammond suggest we name the plane Night Mare because of the night missions it had flown. He was an artist and painted the nose art as we waited departure from Pantanella..

I might add that we had a beautiful flight home from Pantanella with clear weather all the way and a couple of nice layovers in Brazil, South America and Puerto Rico.

**From Ken Pulham:** I appreciate you putting up with my delinquency in paying my dues. I have always intended to pay them every time I received the News, but kept putting it off. They say the road to Hell is paved with good intentions, so I guess I'm on the road to Hell.

I really enjoy the Pantanella News and it brings back some very wonderful memories. Circumstances have been such that I wasn't able to attend any reunion, but in the future we plan to be there. My health this past year has kept me down. I have diabetic neuropathy which affects my legs and I can't walk without a walker or wheel chair.

Keep up the great work, you're the greatest. We appreciate all you do for the squadron. In gratitude for you.

Ken Pulham was Radio Operator on Ralph Hendrickson's Crew. Ed.

## Address Changes

Kenneth G. Foden: 4421 Blarney Lane; Brooksville, FL 34601-8391.

Homer Moeller: 251 LaTrobe Ave; Northfield, IL 6.

## Folded Wings

**Francis D. Griffen** (Arma-ment) passed away October 24. Reported by his son. Our thoughts and prayers for our fallen comrades who have found everlasting peace—you served your country well. We will remember you forever.

## AND THE STORY BEGINS — By Frank Hylla

And so it came to pass that there dwelleth in the lands of the Saxons a group of strange men who flitteth here and there in the sky and made like the birds, for such was their business to bring success and protection to their brethern who runneth about on more unwieldly wing, and they were call Birdmen.

And it came to pass that one morning as the sun first shineth on the hut of the Birdmen, one calleth the C.Q. enterith therein and he sayeth, "Arise, for the time of briefing is at hand." And he departed all in haste, for he knoweth and was wise in the way of the Birdmen.

And lo, with much cursing and mumbling, they arose and appeaseth their tender bellies on fishheads and rice. For alas such was the way of their quartermaster who walketh about on paddlefeet.

Wherefore the Birdmen wenteth their way to the briefing hut wherein they beheld strange markings on the walls - many and numerous were the red spots on the plan of the enemy's stronghold. And their gaze fell upon the handwriting on the wall - for such it was - and they sayeth one onto the other, "No, this cannot be," and there was much weeping and much wailing and much gnashing of teeth. And the sound of the morning suddenly ceased as the first gray owl entereth the room and he spoke onto them saying, "Yea, verily wing upon wing of our big friends must go forth this day and assail the enemy and let us not laggeth be-

hind, for he who strayeth is lost."

And then there was one amongst them called S-2, who claimeth to know the way of the enemy, but he goeth not. And the Birdmen believeth him not and they spoketh one onto the other saying, "Wherefore he speaketh thus, for he knoweth not the odds by which we all reapeth in the end?"

And still another spoke onto them of the winds and the clouds, but he spoketh in riddles and confuseth them and they heedeth him not.

As they leaveth the briefing place, some entereth the little houses in great haste and still others entereth the big house in greater haste. Thus they departed to the winged steeds wherein they entangled each of them with many strange hooks and straps after a confusing manner. And each was known unto the other by various numbers and colors that they may know their places.

And in this matter, each after the other, breaketh the bonds of the earth. And one among them runneth fast, but lifteth not for his RPM runneth not. An the others wondereth at his good fortune. And still another returneth for his temperature riseth so he waketh cold.

And so they cometh to the apointed place, their big friends are gone before them and the Birdmen are troubled. For lo! Their fuel dribbleth fast.

And so they drew nigh onto the target and behold numerous flashes amongst them and they weaveth and sweepeth to escape the flak - for so it was called.

And Red #1 calleth the Great Grey Owl and sayeth, "Whither shall he turn, canst

thou lead us out?

"Oh! Thee of little faith, why dost thou murmur against me?"

And at this time great multitudes of the enemy Birdmen descendeth on the big friends and the "Libs" were clobbered - for such was the custom in those days. And they calleth for the Birdmen to come forth and give them succor and they all came forth, save one who came fifth for he spoketh of having a Focke Wolfe on his tail whereupon the Birdmen turneth this way and that way and were lost onto one another and great confusion reigneth.

And Red #1 called Red #2 and sayeth, "Wherefore art thou?" and Red #2 answered say, "Lo! and behold I spinneth out and am lost onto thee."

Then they sayeth one onto the other, "Hitteth the silk!" And white parosols fluttered earthward.

Thus they cometh to the land of the Hun.

### EDITORS CORNER

#### New Treasurer Announced

John W. Ogden has been selected as the Treasurer for the 781st Bomb Squadron.

At the last reunion John could see I needed some help and volunteered for the Treasurer's position.

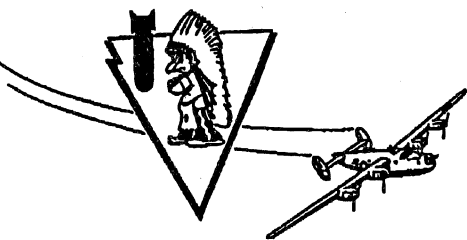
John and his wife, Connie's experience make them ideal for this position. In the future, send your subscription payments for the Pantanella News to John W. Ogden, 3728 Evergreen Dr., Dickinson, TX 77539.

John served at Pantanella in the Armament Section. More about John and the Armament Section in a future Pantanella News.



465th Bomb Group — Theatre, PX, Dust  
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