



# PANTANELLA NEWS

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## 781st.FLYERS RECALLING THE PAST SQUADRON HISTORY CONTINUES IN THIS EDITION

LEARNING TO FLY THE B-24D

SHREVEPORT LA BRACES FOR WWII 781st FLIERS



On an early morning mission from Pantanella, 18 B-24's of the 465th Bomb Group are shown either in the process of taking-off or taxiing to get into position for the take-off. Shown are 2 bombers taking-off from each of Pantanella's runways. Two more aircraft are shown turning to get into position for the take-off and the remaining 12 are seen lined up on the taxi ways.

Empty hardstands of the 780th Bomb Squadron are shown in the upper right and Engineering and Group Parachute Shops are shown in the upper right of the aerial.

# The Squadron History

Continued from Issue #77 Page 5

## June 1944

June opened with no mission scheduled for the first day. It was a welcome day of rest after the very tough missions of the last three days of May. On 2 June the target was the Marshaling Yards at Cluj, Rumania. Good results were achieved and all Crews with Lt. Col. McKenna and Lts. Ashley, Branch, Dickey, Shetterly, and Van Slyke returned safely.

Lt. Rodman's diary; - "Had to get up early for this one, woke at 0130 and briefed at 0215. Breakfast poor as usual. Takeoff and rendezvous were a hair late; Branch ran off the taxi strip and held up the entire formation 10 minutes. Bomb run was 8 minutes long and again we were lucky that flak was light and inaccurate. Never spotted a single enemy fighter all day. We had a good percentage of hits in the target area and everyone relaxed with a fag when we let down and came off oxygen on the way back. Gas was pretty low when we neared the field, constant jockeying in formation with a full bomb and ammo load can chew up the octane. Had three traffic patterns going at once when we came over our base, what a rat race. Branch made a good landing in spite of some crowding."

Also on 2 June, Lt. Col. McKenna received orders transferring him to the 464th Bombardment Group, the other B-24 Group located at Pantanella, as Deputy Group Commander. His loss to the Squadron was keenly felt by every man who served under him. Through his leadership, the Squadron had received numerous commendations and had achieved a record of

which every man could be proud. Though everyone regretted his leaving, it was recognized that he was moving a notch higher in his military career and he departed with the best wishes of the Squadron for a great future.

Retired M/Sgt. Earl Viands, who had been the Crew Chief on Col. McKenna's B-24, reminisced in 1988 about the Bull's Eye Insignia that Col. Mac had painted around the Pilot's window on the plane.

After flying only a couple missions with this painting Col. Mac was requested by Group Headquarters to remove part of it because it would be "Offensive to the enemy". Apparently shooting and bombing the enemy was not. First Lt. Lewis M. Roberts assumed temporary command until, on 4 June, Major Clarence J. Lokker, Assistant Group Operations Officer, relieved him as Commanding Officer of the Squadron.

Major Lokker was a graduate of the U.S. Military Academy at West Point in the Class of 1941. He received his commission in the Field Artillery and subsequently transferred to the Army Air Corps. He received his Pilot's wings at Foster Field, Victoria, Texas in March of 1942. He served as a flying instructor and later as Squadron Operations Officer until March of 1943. He attended 4-engine transition school at Hendricks Field, Florida and then was assigned to Davis-Monthan Field at Tucson, Arizona as a B-24 Instructor. There he joined the 465th Bomb Group Cadre as Assistant Operations Officer when it was formed in August of 1943 and served in that capacity until his transfer to command the 781st Squadron.

The mission scheduled for 3 June was canceled because of bad weather. On 4 June the Marshaling Yards at Turin, Italy was the target. Poor visibility prevented accurate bombing and results were only fair.

Pilots of Crews participating in the raid on Turin included Maj. Lokker and Lts. O'Brien, Roberts, Schuster, Martin, MacFarlane, R.J. Smith, Wheeler, and Hurd. There were no losses or casualties.

The Group's target on 5 June was the Marshaling Yards at Ferrara, Italy. Results were good and there were no casualties. Crews with Lts. Willett, Wheeler Branch,

Ashley, Shetterly, Stenersen, Athon and Van Slyke participated.

Ploesti was the objective on 6 June with the Dacia Romano Oil Refinery the target. The Refinery was completely covered by a dense black smoke screen and it was not possible to determine bombing accuracy. Flak was intense and numerous fighters were encountered. Crews participating were flown by Lts. R.J. Smith, Schuster, Hurd, Roberts, Shetterly, Martin, and MacFarlane, with the latter two failing to return.

S/Sgt. Bennie C. Naticchioni, a gunner on



Lt. Shetterly's Crew was hit by flak over the target and suffered a moderately serious penetrating wound of the right leg.

Lt. Martin's aircraft was caught by a single fighter attack at 0942 hours causing it to burst into flame almost immediately. Five parachutes were seen and one of the chutists appeared to be badly injured. The Martin Crew included Lt. Kenneth M. Martin, Pilot; Lt. Rex L. Struble, Co-Pilot; Lt. Robert L. Williamson, Navigator; Lt. Morris E. Finley, Bombardier; S/Sgt. Donald E. Markel, (Engr. attached to Squadron); S/Sgt. Thomas Scalese, (RIO attached to Squadron); S/Sgt. Gerald J. Simmons, (Gunner attached to Squadron); Sgt. Francis P. Little, (Gunner attached to Squadron); Sgt. Kenneth G. Foden, (Gunner attached to Squadron); and Sgt. Wilburn Vorheier, Gunner. All members of the Crew with Lt. Martin were taken prisoner but were returned safely to the Squadron about three months later, on 2 September following the capture of Ploesti.

On 23 August. Lt. MacFarlane's aircraft was damaged by flak over the target. At

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781st BOMB SQUADRON (H)  
Part of the 465th Bomb Gp. 15th AF  
Italy 1944-1945  
Flew 191 Missions over Southern Europe  
dropping thousands of tons of  
death and destruction to the enemy.  
Shot down 25 enemy aircraft

1048 hours, with two of the plane's engines feathered, seven parachutes were seen leaving. The plane continued to fly gradually falling behind the formation. At 1145 hours MacFarlane called the formation leader and reported that he and the remaining Crew members were bailing out. Crew members were Lt. John F MacFarlane, Pilot; Lt. Robert L. George, Co-Pilot; Lt. Sidney Weiss, Navigator; Lt. Howard L. Sapenoff, Bombardier; T/sgt, Albert P McQuaid, Engr.; TSgt. Thomas R. Jackson, WO; S/Sgt. John R. Duke, Gunner; S/Sgt. Jarmar Jancarik, Gunner; S/Sgt. Ralph C. Finch, Gunner; S/Sgt. Hoyt F Adsit, Gunner; and T/Sgt. Melton F Crawford, Photographer and NCO in charge of the Squadron Photo Section. Four members of this Crew; Lt. MacFarlane, Lt. George, T/Sgt. McQuaid, and S/Sgt. Finch managed to evade the enemy after they were forced to bail out of the aircraft over Yugoslavia and they were brought into the hospital at Bari, Italy on 15 June, six days after they were shot down.

Finch and McQuaid received slight to moderate injuries but Lt. George was injured seriously when their parachutes carried them into rocky hills. It was necessary to remove Lt. George from Yugoslavia on a stretcher and he was returned to the United States as soon as he was able to leave the hospital.

The seven members of the Crew still unaccounted for were reported by the returning men to have bailed out of the aircraft when someone in the plane (unidentified) gave a bail out signal over the intercom. They were gone before the Pilot could recall them. They rejoined the Squadron on 2 September along with Lt. Martin's Crew following the capture of Ploesti. Lt. Weiss was picked up on the Yugoslavia/Rumania border by a Rumanian 5th Boundary Guard Company, commanded by a Captain Bobei M. Thdor. Capt. (later Major) Thdor took Lt. Weiss, S/Sgt. Jackson, S/Sgt. Crawford, and S/Sgt. Adsit to his home where they stayed for "many days". Capt. Thdor took pictures of himself with his guests.

Also on 6 June the Allied landings in Normandy began. By the end of the month more than a million Allied soldiers were involved at a loss of nine thousand men killed.

On 7 June the scheduled primary target could not be bombed because of adverse

weather conditions and the alternate target, harbor installations at Leghorn, Italy were hit instead. This target was well covered with bombs, as was the Marshaling Yard at Leghorn, and the results were excellent with all crews returning safely. Crews with Maj. Lokker, and Lts. Stenersen, Branch, O'Brien, and Van Slyke participated.

became obscured with clouds and the second unit was forced to bomb the alternate target at Faenza, Italy. Heavy damage was inflicted on the Marshaling Yard there. No losses were incurred. Crews with Capt. Roberts and Lts. Stenersen, Wheeler, Branch, Shetterly, O'Brien, Van Slyke, and Schuster participated.

The Group bombed the Smederovo Oil Refinery east of Belgrade, Yugoslavia on 11 June and a smashing blow was delivered with excellent bombing accuracy. There were no losses or casualties. Participating were Crews with Maj. Lokker, and Lts. Schuster, Ashley, Hurd, Doyle, Smith, Branch, Athon, and Van Slyke. This was the first mission flown by Lt. Doyle as First Pilot. He previously had flown as Co-Pilot on Lt. R.J. Smith's Crew.

No mission was flown on

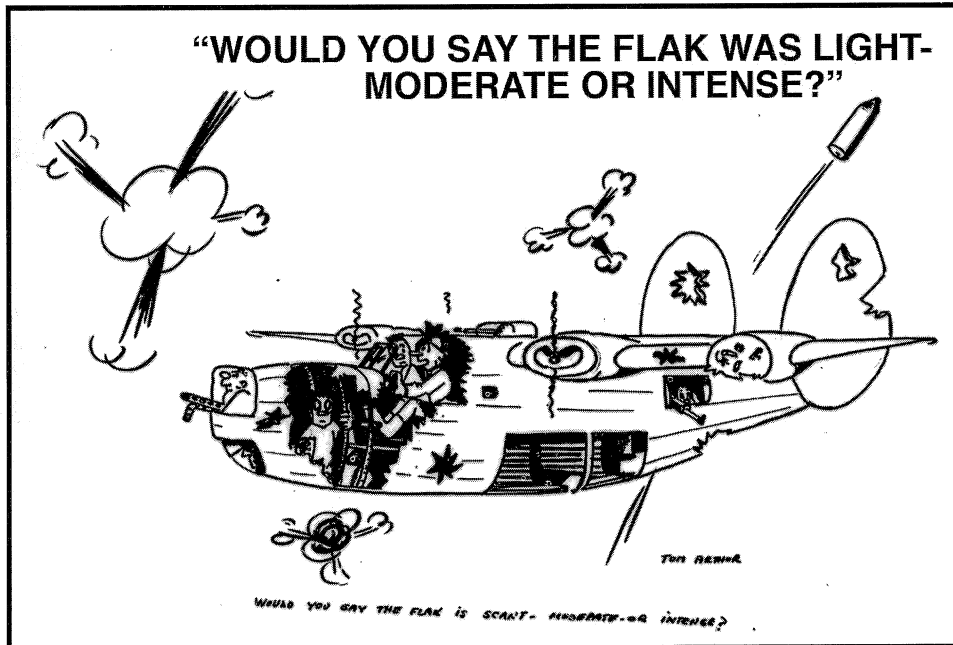
Cartoon by Tom Arthur

12 June but on 13 June the target was the Milbertshofen Ordnance Depot at Munich, Germany. Although the enemy threw up very heavy flak, bombing results were excellent and all crews returned without casualty. Crews with Capt. Dickey, and Lts. Willett, Stenersen, Wheeler, Branch, O'Brien, and Shetterly took part in this raid.

Sgt. Walborn had returned from his hospital stay caused by the broken wrist incurred playing softball and his diary noted about this mission, "Flak heavy, intense, and accurate. No enemy fighters. P-51 and P-38 escort. Forty 100-pound demolition bombs. Scared, but less than expected."

Lt. Rodman reported in his diary, 'Another two'er and we really earned it, that target is pure unadulterated hell. We flew Col. McKenna's old ship 'Chief Jo-Jon', named for his two children. Got up to altitude over the Adriatic and hit the tip of it on time. Ran into some scanty but accurate flak near the Udine area in northern Italy. Some thin and inaccurate flak near the IP and started the bomb run towards a regular wall of barrage flak. Looked as solid as a thunderhead. Luck-ily our target was just on the fringe of most of Italy.

The 460th and 485th Groups preceded us with explosives and we came in and fired



There was no mission scheduled for 8 June and on the preceding evening the Squadron Officers' Club held its formal opening. 'Silver Wings', the 465th Bomb Group dance band was booked for the event.

Lt. Bonnie Rowe was the leader of 'Silver Wings' and starred on the accordion. Other 781st members included Lt. W. Horton Shipley (alto sax), S/Sgt. J. Keith Lancaster (trumpet), and PFC David B. White (tenor sax) Jim Wray doubled on clarinet at the Club opening and Dick Pease (Group Intelligence Officer) helped with the bass fiddle. A troupe of Italian dancers and singers also was brought in as a special feature. It was indeed fortunate that no mission was scheduled for the next day.

The Allach Main Motor Works at Munich, Germany was the scheduled target for 9 June. Adverse weather required bombing by Pathfinder equipment and the Riem Airdrome at Munich was hit instead of the Allach factory. Results were good and all crews returned without loss or casualty. Crews with Lts. Schuster, Ashley, Wheeler, O'Brien, Willett, R.J. Smith, Athon, and Stenersen took part.

On 10 June the Marshaling Yard and Port facilities at Trieste, Italy was the target for two attack units of the Group. The first unit attacked this target with good results. However, the primary target

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**RESTRICTED**

## How to Fly The B-24 AIRPLANE

First and of foremost importance, you are the Pilot; the lives of your crew and successful completion of your mission is in your hands. Use good judgment and common sense. The airplane is a piece of machinery and will react exactly as you direct. It will not fight back nor argue with you, so do not get mad at it, it only affects your own reactions and corresponding ability to fly.

The following text on flying the B-24 airplane is based on experiences of Consolidated Pilots with many thousands of hours flying time in cooperation with officials of the U. S. Army Air Corps with their wide experience in flight training procedure.

The B-24 airplane is not difficult to fly. It has no vicious characteristics and when the Pilot learns the difference in "feel," due to its size, weight, and speed range, flying it is no more of a problem than flying a trainer. A large bomber is a highly complicated piece of equipment containing many compartments. Learn your airplane; study the functional operations of the several systems and the mystery of imagined complexities will become surprisingly simple. A little time devoted to the fundamentals of what makes it "tick" will pay amazing dividends in psychological reaction and peace of mind.

Master the airplane, don't let it master you, but never lose respect for it.

Inspect your airplane before take-off or be sure competent hands have accomplished the pre-flight check. The importance of following the Pilot's Check-Off List carefully before every flight cannot be overemphasized. This check-off list specifies all the details that must be covered to insure safe flight.

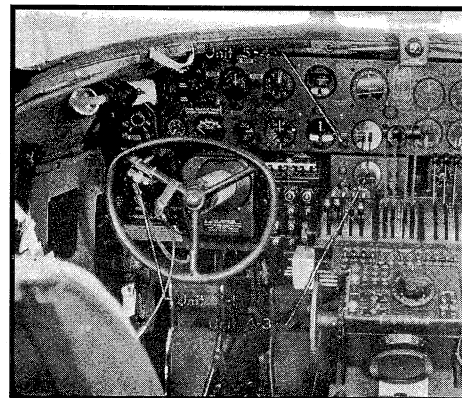
When engines reach the proper operating temperature use discretion in taxiing away from the line. Sharp turns should be avoided. Sharp turns grind off rubber and apply serious stresses to nose and main gear. Use the engines for steering, and save the brakes. Taxi slowly; it is a simple matter to keep full control of the airplane with the engines.

Before take-off, run up engines, check magnetos, propeller control, and set superchargers in accordance with Pilot's Check-Off List. To avoid fouling plugs, idle engines at 800 to 1000 RPM. Close cowl flaps to one-third open. Extend wing flaps one-fourth for best normal average; one-half for shortest take-off. Head into wind, open throttles slowly and full out to stops. Hold brakes on until manifold pressure reaches 25" Hg. Use full power for take-off; it lessens the take-off run and cor-

responding wear and tear on landing gear, tires, and entire airplane. Have Co-Pilot hold throttle against stops and adjust superchargers so as not to exceed manifold pressure operating limits (consult operating chart before take-off to determine this). On take-off, maintain straight course with rudders, Do not use brakes.

As the plane picks up speed, lighten the nose and help it take-off at a safe minimum speed; this is 110 MPH at 45,000 pounds to 130 MPH at full load. Do not hold the airplane on the ground when it is ready to fly. Any idea of picking up extra speed on the ground as a safety margin is quite the reverse. Help your airplane.

Raise landing gear when definitely clear and air borne, and reach 130 MPH airspeed as soon as possible to be in best condition in the event of engine failure. After take-off, maintain airspeed under 150 MPH until flaps are raised. The best average climb is 150 MPH. Consult performance chart for exact figure for spe-



B-24 Pilots Position

cific load conditions. As long as the required minimum airspeed for stall is exceeded, the airplane is fully maneuverable with the flaps in any position. Stalling speed varies with loading, land-ing gear, cowl flaps, and flap setting. Maintain engine head temperature within limits given under "Power Plant

### PILOT'S CHECK-OFF LIST B-24D and B-24E Airplanes

#### BEFORE STARTING ENGINES:

1. Check Form 1 and Loading
2. Pilot Heads- Covers Removed
3. Wheel Chocks in Place
4. Bomb Doors and Cabin Doors- "OPEN"
5. Fuel Tank Valves- "ON"
6. Amount of Fuel:- not less than 1200 U. S. Gallons
7. Main Line and Battery Switches- "ON" (If Battery Cart not used)
8. Generator Switches~ "OFF"
9. Auxiliary Power Unit Started
10. Turn on Electric Auxiliary Hydraulic Pump
11. Adjust Seat and Rudders
12. Parking Brake-"ON"
13. Instrument Power Switch-"ON"
14. Navigation and Cabin Light-"ON" (Night)
15. Supercharger- "OFF"
16. Mixtures- "IDLE CUT OFF"
17. Automatic Pilot- "OFF"
18. Wing and Prop De-Icers- "OFF"
19. Intercooler Shutters-"OPEN"
20. Cowl Flaps- "OPEN"
21. Altimeters Set
22. See that Propellers are Clear and Ground Crew Notified
23. Fire Guard Posted, Pull Propeller through by hand six blades.
24. Propellers High RPM
25. Throttles 1/3 "OPEN"
26. Ignition Switches- "ON" (All Engines)
27. Fuel Pressure--Booster Pump on for Engine to be started
28. Primer (Electric) as required
29. Starter Energizer 30 Seconds, then Mesh~old Type
- 29a. Starter Energizer 12 Seconds, then Mesh while still holding Energizer "ON"
30. Mixture-Automatic Lean (after Engine Fires)  
Do not exceed 1400 RPM in "Auto Lean" on Ground

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Specs", by control of cowl flap opening. The cowl flaps cause buffet-ing between the one-third and two-thirds open position which should, therefore, be avoided.

If anything other than an airport flight is to be made, turn off auxiliary hydraulic master switch.

After reaching cruising altitude, level off, get "ON THE STEP" and pick up speed before power is reduced to cruising requirements. If power is reduced too soon and before the air-plane has picked up full momentum for cruising it would mush along in a high attack, high drag attitude in trying to gain speed under reduced power

plish Pilot's Check-Off List. Allow ample time to slow down to 150 MPH; turn on auxiliary hydraulic power; turn on booster pumps; lower landing gear and check the latches before making the final turn to enter the landing Lane. Turbo superchargers "OFF" as the waste gate closes with reduced exhaust pressure when engines are throttled back. On entering the final landing lane slow to 140 MPH; ex-tend flaps one-half. Ex-tended flaps not only increase lift and drag but change the glide angle and attitude of the airplane in a manner to greatly increase visibility. Speed to be maintained in a glide varies, depending upon load, flap setting, and use of power. Under 45,000 lbs. loading glide

limits for landing.) In case of emergency or of faulty brakes, a nose high landing with tail skid dragging (retractable type only) will enable the Pilot to land on any normal airport without using brakes. Open cowl flaps immediately after landing and raise the wing flaps when convenient, but preferably before taxiing to avoid possibility of rocks or mud being thrown into the tracks.

Again taxi slowly and steer with the engines. Use brakes only when absolutely necessary. Enter parking area carefully. The wingspan is 110 feet. There is no excuse for the carelessness of a collision on the ground or ground crash. Stop the engines with the mixture cut off. Leave cowl flaps open until engines cool. Set landing gear lever in the 'DOWN' position. after No.3 Engine has stopped. Do not set parking brakes until brake drums have cooled.

### B-24D FLYING CHARACTERISTICS

General-Steep banks up to 600 can be made easily and safely. However, it should be borne in mind that in a normal bank of 600 the load factor is "2" and in this position all Loads are twice as severe as in level flight. Turns steeper than normal increase this load factor.

Rough air operation is not critical. However, it is good practice to slow down to 150 MPH (240 KmPH; 130 Knots) when in extremely turbulent air, and extend the landing gear if flying on instruments. Disengage the Automatic Pilot when flying in rough air.

Longitudinal Stability-The longitudinal stability of the airplane is positive over a wide range of center gravity locations. Under normal loadings the airplane will return to normal flight when released from a stall or other abnormal positions. The maximum forward location of the C.G. should not exceed 23% of the mean aerodynamic chord while maximum aft location of the C.G. should not exceed 35% M.A.C. Care should be exercised to operate controls smoothly when flying close to these limits, especially with the C.G. in extreme aft positions, as it is easily possible to develop the limit load factors of the tail assembly with sudden heavy elevator operation.

In the higher speed range, the elevators become heavy." This is desirable inasmuch as it helps to prevent sudden extreme application of the elevators, which might prove damaging to the structure. When maneuvering the airplane, as in a dive, always keep the airplane trimmed by the use of trim tabs. If the Pilot attempts to hold the full stick load, his sudden relaxing can apply a destructive force to the airplane.



and would probably be quite sluggish Approach the cruising condition from the top, both speed and altitude, NEVER FROM BELOW.

The air handling of the airplane is conventional and normal. Stability is excellent and high

maneuverability is possible. Primary instruction in flying has made the Pilot aware of load factors. keep this in mind when banking or maneuvering so as to not exceed the safe limits.

When you have squared away on a mission, check wheels, flaps and cowl flaps. Check the fuel supply frequently lest an unexpected leak or excessive consumption place you in a difficult position.

Two inches of boost gain by use of turbos is recommended as the best operation. (See "Turbo Supercharger Specs.") Too much boost will lean the mixture, evidenced by rise of head temperature. Too little boost will enrich the mixture with resulting loss of power and excessive fuel consumption.

Before entering the airport area, accom-

should be maintained at 120 MPH slowing to 110 MPH with full flaps on level-ing off for landing.

The airplane is fully maneuverable with flaps extended. Maintain sufficient RPM to continue at a rate of descent of 400-600 feet per minute. At any time during the glide (but allowing ample time before crossing boundary of field to adjust to change of attitude before final stage of landing) extend the flaps fully. After crossing the boundary and over runway, close throttles fully and have Co-Pilot hold them to prevent creeping. As the plane begins to settle, hold it off the ground as long as possible. The exception to this is an emergency when it is necessary to use brakes immediately on touching the ground, which, too, is the only excuse for a three-wheel landing. Hold the nose wheel off as long as possible and let the nose of the plane settle slowly and without shock, onto the nose gear. Do not "slap" the nose forward nor allow it to do so and do not apply the brakes with the nose wheel clear of the ground. (Crew aft will facilitate keeping the tail down, but do not exceed allowable C.G.

## 332nd Tuskegee "RED TAIL" Fighter Group NEVER LOST A BOMBER WHILE ON ESCORT TO AND FROM A TARGET

Many of you can recall on those long missions to Germany how comforting it was to look up into the sky above to see all those P-51's riding shotgun for us.

On many of those occasions it was the 332nd Fighter Group that provided the cover.

At the time, most of us were unaware of the color of the skin of the pilots flying those fighters. The only thing we were well aware of was that they were Americans, darn good fliers and on our side. The fact of the matter was that the pilots of the 332nd were made up entirely of African Americans.

Against the bias and bigotry and with a love of their country the "Tuskegee Airmen", as they became known as, set out to prove to the world that they could be as good as or better than the others.

The tails of the 51's they were flying were painted Red so it wasn't long before they were also dubbed "Red-Tailed Angels"

The following article is taken from my WebSite at:-  
<http://www.frankambrose.com>.

### Tuskegee Airmen- A Salute to The "RED TAILS" in Italy in WWII

The 332nd Fighter Group, known as the "The Redtails" the famous All-Black outfit was the only U.S. Fighter Group in WWII that could claim to have never lost a bomber while escorting to and from a target.

President Franklin D. Roosevelt ordered the Army Air Corps to form an all-Negro flying unit in 1940. The Air Corps opened a new training base at the Tuskegee Institute in central Alabama in order to train the Negro pilots needed for the new squadron. As a result, the 99th Pursuit Squadron was created. In the spring of 1941 the first African-American enlisted men began training to become mechanics and the first thirteen candidates entered pilot training.

Captain Benjamin O. Davis, Jr., became the first Negro to solo an aircraft as an U.S. Army Air Corps officer on September 2, 1941. On March 7, 1942 the first contingent of young black pilots were inducted into the U.S. Army Air Corps on Tuskegee's airstrip. Eight days later the 100th Fighter Squad-

ron was established as a part of the 332nd Fighter Group.

Designated the 99th, the Fighter Squadron arrived in Africa May 31, 1943, and attached to the 33rd Fighter Group flying P-40s. The first mission was flown 3 days later by Lt. William A. Campbell, Charles B. Hall, Clarence C. Jamison and James R. Wiley.

On June 9, 1943 six pilots became the first U.S. Negro pilots to engage in aerial combat. Led by Lt. Charles Dryden, Lt. Willie Ashley, Sidney P. Brooks, Lee Rayford, Leon Roberts and Spann Watson, exchanged fire with German fighter planes, with no losses to either side.

On July 4, 1944, the 99th was joined with three other Squadrons: the 100th, 301st and the 302nd to form the 332nd Fighter Group of the 15th Air Force. These were all-Negro squadrons, all trained at Tuskegee. The Group transitioned to Mustangs decorating them with bright red spinners and tails, thus earning their nickname, 'Redtails'.

On March 24, 1945, Col. Davis led the Group on the longest escort mission ever flown by the Fifteenth Air

Force, a 1600-mile round trip to the Daimler-Benz tank works in Berlin. On this mission, Roscoe C. Brown, Jr., Charles Brantly and Earl Lane, each shot down a German Me-262 jet fighter aircraft. As a result of this mission the Group received a Distinguished Unit Citation for their achievements that day.

The combat record of the Tuskegee Airmen

- Over 15,000 combat sorties (Including 6000+ for the 99th prior to July '44)
- 111 German airplanes destroyed in the air
- 150 German aircraft destroyed on the ground
- 950 railcars, trucks, and other motor vehicles destroyed
- 1 destroyer sunk by P-47 machine gun fire
- Sixty-six pilots killed in action or accidents
- Thirty-two pilots downed and captured, POWs
- NO Bombers were ever lost to Enemy Aircraft while being escorted
- 150 Distinguished Flying Crosses earned
- 744 Air Medals
- 8 Purple Hearts
- 14 Bronze Stars

We of the 464th and 465th Bomb Groups As well as all of the other Groups in the 15th AF  
"SALUTE YOU!"



Pilots of the 332nd Fighter Group, "Tuskegee Airmen," the elite, all-African American 332nd Fighter Group at Ramitelli, Italy., from left to right, Lt. Dempsey W. Morgan, Lt. Carroll S. Woods, Lt. Robert H. Nelron, Jr., Capt. Andrew D. Turner, and Lt. Clarence P. Lester. (U.S. Air Force photo)

## SQUADRON HISTORY...

Continued from Page 3...

up the remains with Incendiaries. Couldn't positively spot our hits but Braley says they were in. Flak was bouncing us around a lot and everyone received several hits. Plenty of enemy aircraft about but our escort was keeping 'em busy. Wasted no time in getting the hell out of there. Back over the Adriatic we saw two B-24's ditching but were too far away to see if anyone survived;- they weren't from our group."

On 14 June the target was the Petfurdo Oil Refinery near Vesz Prem, Hungary with excellent results. There were no losses among the Crews with Capts. Roberts and Dickey, and Lts. Schuster, Hurd, Van Slyke, Ashley, R.J. Smith, Tanenbaum, and Poole. This was the first combat mission for Tanenbaum and Poole.

The 15 June mission was canceled because of adverse weather. On 16 June the target was the Lobau Oil Blending plant at Vienna, Austria. Results were generally poor and, as usual for the Vienna area, flak was intense and fighter opposition was heavy. Pilots of Crews on this effort were Lts. Van Slyke, Branch, Willett, Shetterly, Doyle, Ashley, and O'Brien. Maj. Lokker also flew the mission but with a crew of another Squadron. In spite of the intense flak and heavy fighter opposition there were no casualties or losses.

Bad weather prevented combat operations for five days from 17 June through 21 June.

On 22 June the 30th mission of the Group was flown, a raid on the Main Marshaling Yards at Bologna, Italy with Crews piloted by Maj. Lokker, and Lts. O'Brien, Shetterly, Ashley, Tanenbaum, Lovey, Branch, Tipton, Doyle, and Wheeler taking part. Results were fair. This was Lt. Lovey's first combat mission. Flak was moderately heavy en route from the target and a few enemy aircraft also were encountered, but all ships returned to base safely.

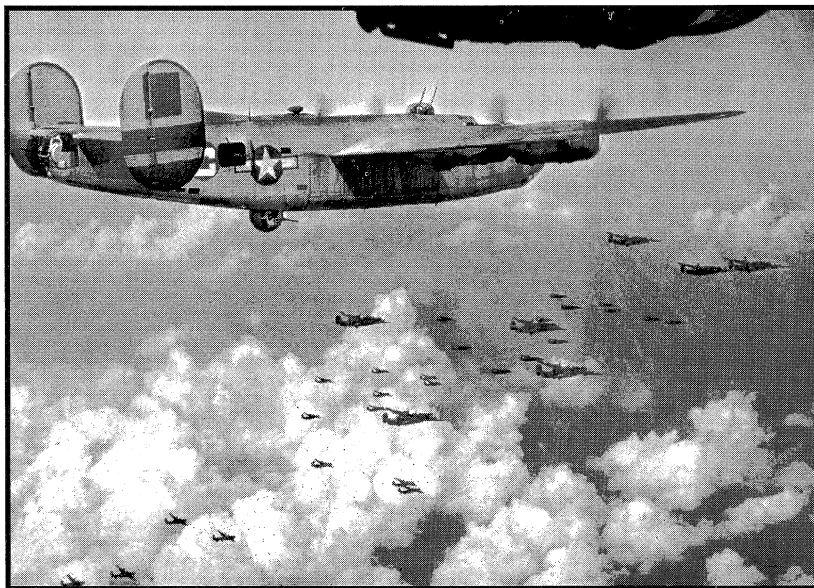
Al Rodman recalled, "Flew back in the Purple Heart section on this one. Encountered some moderate flak which was not too accurate. About three pieces tore through the nose section and one ripped a groove right where I park my ass on the navigation table. I was bent over Braley watching the bombs go away at the turn or I would be needing a new keister. They had a Red cross truck near S-2 serving lemonade and doughnuts (when we got back to base). The lemonade was the powdered variety and the doughnuts were

stale but everyone grabbed some. Hope they make this permanent."

On 23 June a mission was flown to bomb the oil and dock facilities at Giurgiu, Rumania. The incendiary bombing results were good and there were no casualties or losses. Crews with Capts. Dickey and Roberts, and Lts. Schuster, Willett, Van Slyke, O'Brien, Stenersen, Hurd, and Lovey participated.

On 24 June weather again precluded operations.

On 25 June the target was the Oil Refinery and Storage areas at Balarue, France. Results were fair to good and Crews with



Maj. Lokker, Capt. Wray, and Lts. Van Slyke, Ashley, Doyle, R.J. Smith, Stenersen, Shetterly and Wheeler took part with no casualties.

The target on 26 June was the Marshaling Yards at the Florisdorfer Oil Refinery in Vienna, Austria. Results were fair in spite of intense flak and numerous enemy fighter aircraft. Pilots of Crews participating were Lts. Willett, R.J. Smith, Schuster, Stenersen, Branch, Ashley, Wheeler, and Tanenbaum. All Crews returned safely, however, S/Sgt. Edward J.E Chapin, Gunner on Lt Wheeler's Crew, sustained a flak wound, causing laceration of his right shoulder. The wound was moderately serious and required hospitalization.

No mission was flown on 27 June and the Prahova Oil Refinery at Bucharest, Rumania was the target for 28 June. Bombing results were excellent and all Crews returned safely. Pilots of Crews participating were Capts. Dickey and Roberts, and Lts. Ashley, Lovey, Frazier, Doyle, and Branch.

Weather canceled the mission scheduled for 29 June and prevailed on 30 June when the target was the Blechhammer Synthetic Oil Refinery near Kosel, Germany. At Lake Balaton, Hungary a solid weather front was encountered and the formation

was forced to turn back. In making the turn in broken clouds some boxes became scattered and during the process of reforming, enemy aircraft came in and attacked aggressively. Pilots of Crews on this mission were Capts. Wray and Dickey and Lts. Hurd, Schuster, R.J. Smith, Shetterly, Tipton, Lovey, and Tanenbaum.

The aircraft of Capt. John R. Dickey, Flight Commander, flying with Lt. Cauble's Crew (Lt. Cauble was ill that day), was attacked by three ME-109s and one FW-190 which came in at the tail at 1000 hours and raked the plane with very heavy fire. The aircraft burst into flames and very

shortly exploded in midair. Prior to the explosion, six to nine parachutes were seen. Crew members in addition to Capt. Dickey were: Lt. Frank T Hylla, Co-Pilot; Lt. Jerome F Joliceur, Navigator; Lt. George W Hausold, Bombardier; T/Sgt. Robert A. Carr, Engr.; T/Sgt. George A. Wilson, R/O; S/Sgt. Robert A. Hoover, Gunner; S/Sgt. Joseph E. Carroll, Gunner; S/Sgt. Richard A. Thill, Gunner; and S/Sgt. Austin C. Davis, Gunner.

Capt. Dickey managed to bail out before the plane exploded and was captured by Hungarian civilians who turned him over to German soldiers. While still a POW in March of 1945, he was

awarded the Silver Star for his actions during and following the fighter attack. The citation accompanying the award reads in part, "Capt. Dickey maneuvered his plane away from close proximity to any other friendly aircraft and maintained his plane in level flight for a sufficient length of time to permit a maximum number of his Crew to escape."

In March of 1988, Dickey described the mission as follows: "First of all, I never for a minute thought I did anything on June 30, 1944 to deserve such an award. It was presented to my father while I was POW and I knew nothing about it until June 1945. Lt. Jerry Joliceur was really the one deserving a medal. He could have gotten out safely, but he came through our bomb-bay fire to tell us on the flight deck that our situation was hopeless and that we'd better get out. Doing so, he received burns that caused his death on the ground ten days later.

"We ran into heavy weather over Hungary. When I came out of dense clouds alone, we were soon joined by three Me-109s, one FW-190, and one not positively identified. They took turns shooting us to pieces for several minutes. I was able to do some neat evasive action since they mistakenly used tracers. At least three bursts hit the

Continued on Pg 8



## SQUADRON HISTORY...

Continued from Page 7....

armor plate behind my seat. I was able to dodge most enemy fire. Since the Group turned into our side, we were able to rejoin it, leading our swarm of fighters. (I heard later that the Group tail gunners got three of them).

When Joliceur came up and told us our situation, I could not leave a burning airplane. (common sense) in the middle of the Group, so I worked it out in the clear. Hylla hit the bail-out button, and we got out. I remember quite clearly how quiet and peaceful the open air felt after leaving the burning B-24. I got a squirt of burning gas in my right ear as I went through the bomb-bay and watched Cauble's B-24 separate in all directions, and finally remembered to pull my ripcord. I felt really good when my chute opened until I discovered my left sleeve on fire. The fire had not reached my chute so I landed in an 80 acre wheat field just in time to see our P-51 escort go over."

"Two Crew members, S/Sgt. Austin C. Davis and S/Sgt. Robert A. Hoover went down with the plane. Ten days later, 10 July, Lt. Jolicouer died of his burns. Lt. Hylla spent several days in the hospital because of first, second, and third degree burns over his head and hands.

In 1988, describing events following this mission, Lt. Hylla said that on 9 August 1944 he was moved to Budapest where he was interrogated by German SS men and, in the process, was beaten on his back and on his bandaged hands. He was held in a second floor room with a small window through which, every day, he saw someone being hung in the yard outside. Lt. Hylla and the other surviving crew members spent the remainder of the war in German POW camps. Here Hylla learned to bake cakes and pies using Red Cross packaged crackers and other ingredients called Klim and Condendo.

His diary during this period has many entries, showing both high hope and bitter disappointment. Hope that the Allies were near and disappointment when it turned out that they were not. Down days and up days.....

To be continued in Next Issue.

**IT'S  
SHREVEPORT  
IN 2005  
C U  
THERE**

## PANORAMA of ITALY 1944

## Panorama of Italy

If I were an artist with nothing to do,  
I'd paint a picture, a composite view;  
Of Historic Old Italy, in which I would show

Visions of contrast, the high and the low.

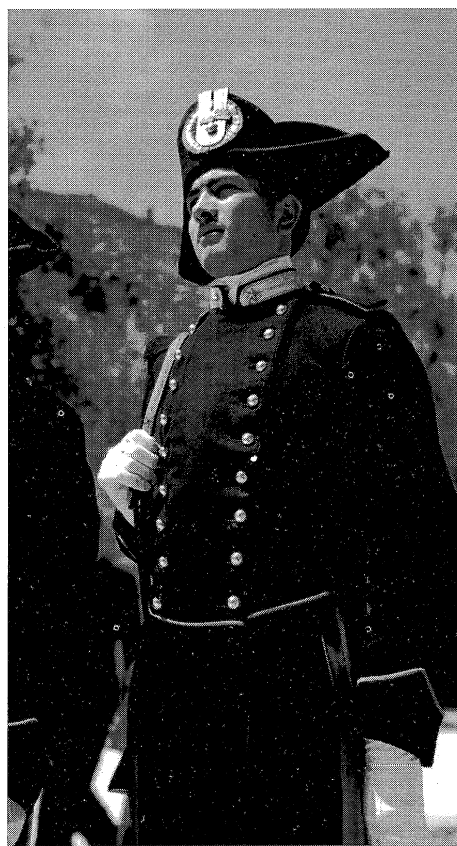
There would be towering mountains and a deep blue sea.

Filthy young children yelling "CAREMELL" at me.

High plumed horses and colorful carts  
And two-toned tresses of hustling tarts.

I'd show Napoleonic Cops, the Carabinieri.  
Dejected old women with too much to carry.

A dignified gent with a Balboa beard  
And bare bottomed babies, both ends smeared.



Castles and Palaces and opera houses too,  
Hotel on a mountain with a marvelous view.

Homes made of weeds, bricks and of mud,  
People covered with scabs, scurvy and crud.

Chapels and churches, great to behold,  
Worth a king's ransom in glittering gold.  
Poverty and want, people craving for food,  
Picking through garbage, practically nude.

Stately cathedrals with high-toned bells.  
Recovery shelters with horrible smells.  
Molding catacombs, a place for the dead,  
Noisy civilians, all clamoring for bread.

Palatial villas with palm trees tall.  
Stinking hovel, mere holes in the wall,  
Tree fringed lawns, swept by a breeze,  
And little tykes in filth to their knees.

Revealing statues, all details complete,  
A sensual lass with sores on her feet.  
Big-breasted damsels, but never a bra,  
Bumping against you, there should be a law!

Creeping boulevards, a spangled team,  
Streets and alleys wind like a dope fiend's dream.

Flowers blooming on the side of a hill,  
And a sidewalk latrine with privacy nil.

Two by four shops with shelving all bare,  
Gesturing merchants, arms flailing the air.  
Narrow gauge sidewalks, more like a shelf,

Butt-puffing street urchin, scratching himself.

Lumbering carts hogging the road,  
Nondescript trucks, frequently towed.  
Diminutive donkeys, loaded for bear,  
And horse drawn taxis seeking a fare.

Elegant caskets, carved out by hand,  
Odorous factories where leather is tanned.  
A shoemaker's shop, a black market store,  
Crawling with vermin, no screens on the door.

Determined pedestrians, courting disaster,  
Walking in gutters where movement is faster.

Italian drivers, all accident bound,  
Twisting and weaving to cover the ground.

Home made brooms, weeds tied to a stick,  
Used on the street to clean off the brick.  
Bicycles and pushcarts blocking your path,  
And street corner politicians, needing a bath

Barbers galore with manners quite mild,  
Prolific women all heavy with child.  
Il Duce's secret weapon, kids by the score,  
Caused by his bonus, which is no more.

Arrogant wretches, picking up snipes,  
Miniature Fiats of various types,  
Young street singer, band organ tunes,  
Shoeshine boys and a sidewalk saloon.

A beauteous maiden, a smile on her face,  
With a breath of garlic fouling the place.  
Native coffee, God what a mixture.  
Tiled bathrooms with one extra fixture.

Families dining from one common bowl,  
Next to a fish store, a horrible hole.  
Italian zoot-suiters, flashily dressed,  
Bare footed beggars, looking depressed.

Mud smeared children clustering about,  
Filling their jugs from the community spout.  
A dutiful mother with a look of despair,  
Picking the lice from her infant daughter's hair.

Capable craftsmen skilled in their art,  
Decrepit old shacks falling apart.  
Intricate needle work out on display,  
Surrounded by filth, rot and decay.

I've tried to describe the things I've seen,  
Panorama of Italy, the brown and the green,  
I've neglected the war scars, visible yet,  
But these are the things we want to forget.

Author Unknown  
1944/1945

## 781st PILOT RECALLS WAR YEARS IN NEW BOOK

Carl Dahl, one of our 781<sup>st</sup>. Crew Pilots has penned a new book describing his experiences. The 295 page book, titled "ALL TOGETHER NOW, FLAP YOUR ARMS" is divided into 33 chapters which includes battle plans and photos.

Describing his experiences, Dahl takes the reader through the almost day-by-day chronology of his experiences. His life before the war, through basic flight instruction and final transition to heavy bombers. His combat experiences until his retirement from active duty are masterfully eluded to.



L to R.  
Rear Carl V Dahl, Pilot; Warren L. Beeson, Co-Pilot; William A. Rachow, Bombardier; Cornelius V. Culhane Navigator.  
Front Howard J Percy, Jr., RIO; Franklin B. Martinez, Engr.; John P. Layne, Ball Gunner; Richard F. Perkins, Nose Gunner; Jack C. Pettigrew, Top Gunner; Adrian A. Martin, Tail Gunner.

In one of his chapters, Dahl describes the events he and his crew experienced while flying from the States to Italy.

It goes on:-

'Weather closed in at Cander Bay and we were forced to "lay-over" there for a week and then dispatched to the Azores Islands. One of the 5 B24's making this journey crashed on take-off, killing all 10 on board, crashing and burning. We then hopped from Isabella Island to the Azores to Marrakech in N. Africa.

Of the 4 remaining B24's, one

ignored landing instructions and hit a land mine destroying the plane and killing 10 more men. The war was real to us now and we weren't even there yet! 2 days at Marrakech bunked up in old barracks built by the French Foreign Legion was all we could stand. Then it was on to the city of Tunis in Tunisia.

As we crossed the desert, we could see the carnage of war spread out below us and at the airfield, a pile of wrecked airplanes that was probably 40 feet tall and included both allied and German.

I was checked out as an airplane commander in the next 3 days and my crew was assigned to tents that had been vacated by crewmen recently lost or killed. The missions started immediately and my crew and I were shot down over the ball-bearing factory in India.

In 2 days we were back in Italy and my co-pilot had been sent back to the states with a broken ankle. I had a 2nd co-pilot assigned to my crew, and we continued flying and at the same time, began building a winter hut to live in. We had arrived in Italy at the last of August.

Missions came and went and bomber crews, likewise, came and went. Attrition during WWII was higher into the bomber commands than any other branch of service.

Exciting events continued to happen in our lives. We crash landed a dead-stick landing at an airfield outside of Foggia, where



Carl Dahl at 2004 Reunion at Rapid City, SD

General Twining was reviewing the troops. He could see everything from the reviewing stand and subsequently awarded me a commendation.

Several times we came back on 2 or 3 engines with the others shot out. But the war was beginning to turn around and with the allied landing on the coast of France, our jobs didn't get any easier, but the incentive was now in our favor.

Every mission had its comedy and its tragedy and the flight surgeon of my squadron finally sent me to the group flight surgeon in Bari Italy for evaluation. He cut orders to send me back to the States while I was in his office and I was furious and he paid no attention to anything I said, but instructed me to deliver to the flight surgeon copies of his orders. It was then only a short time until I was booked on a hospital ship from Naples, Italy bound for the US.

Carl reports there are less than 50 copies remaining after it's first printing of 200.

"ALL TOGETHER NOW, FLAP YOUR ARMS"-

On a Bookshelf near you!



OCT  
6th-8th  
2005

## LETTERS

From: "BBTFilms" <BBTFilms@comcast.net>  
 To: <Frank@frankambrose.com>  
 Subject: From Brad Branch  
 Date: Thu, 28 Oct 2004  
 Frank:

I just wanted to drop you a short note to fill you in on our documentary project. We hope you'll pass this information on to the other members of the 781st.

When completed, the documentary will be one to one and a half hours in length. It is our hope that it will stand as the first installment of a series of projects focusing on the 15th Air Force. This film concentrates on the heavy bomber groups of the 15th and most specifically, the 465th and the 464th, which were based at Pantanella, Italy.

We have just completed a 27 minute, rough-cut of the project, which outlines the tone of the finished film. I have placed a DVD copy of this rough-cut in the mail to you just today. And while not complete or nuanced, it shows great promise and uses portions of our interviews with Jim Althoff and Bernie Badler, among others of the 465th.

The pictures and film supplied by members of the 781st have helped enhance the project tremendously. I would like to say at this time that both Jim Althoff and Harry Karl were most helpful along with all the others that we have interviewed. We thank you all for your contribution.

On another note, we will be are hosting the 2006 reunion for the 780th in Portsmouth, NH and are hoping that the other squadrons may join us. We feel we can provide good entertainment, including a viewing of the documentary. Early October is also the height of the foliage season, so we felt it would be an enjoyable location. Please let us know if you might be interested in attending so that we can look in to accommodations for all who are interested.

Thank you again Frank, for your help and insight on this project. We look forward to your critique of our rough-cut. Please feel free to call me any time with questions or comments.

All the best,, Brad Branch

From: "Robert Freed" <RLF1@peoplepc.com>  
 To: "Frank Ambrose" <amber@superior.net>  
 Subject: Pantanella Newsletter  
 Date: Mon, 6 Dec 2004 19:31  
 Frank:

John & Helen Zadrozny were here the other day and gave me an update on the condition of Eugene Martis who once flew with Ben Donahue. I believe as a radio operator or navigator. I've forgotten which position it actually was. However you'll remember that some months back I wrote that he was in a serious condition and might just not make it. I'm happy to report tht Eugene is doing better but every once in awhile has some ups and downs. for instance, he has been training on a walker on a daily basis and often walks about 50 or 60 feet w/o help then----he poops out for a couple of days before he feels strong enough to continue. He now recognizes most of us and the therapists feels that these are good signs and are making sure that he stays on the recovery road to what extent no one knows. You might want to put a note in the upcoming newsletter as I feel his flying associates would like to hear about his present status.

Eugene is now in another hospital -- Here is the address: "Health South, 2380 McGinley Rd., Monroeville, Pa. 15146 which is just a suburb of Pittsburgh.

I've got a few other things I want to speak to you about but not now. I am waiting for John to return my booklet on the 15th Air Force which he will do this week. This contains pictures and stories of all the 15th groups and squadrons with many many pictures in color of their nose art and tail markings. The 464th is very prominent therein with the 781st having only a black & white of Col. Lokkers burning plane over Blechhammer.

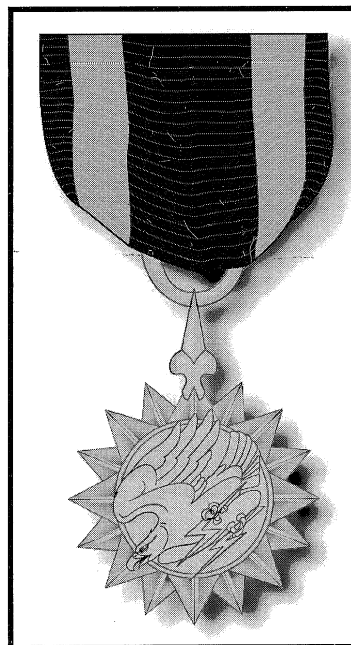
Why the 464th is so prominent I don't know as the 781st was head and shoulders better than them. I am tempted to write the author as well as the publishing firm about what I call an oversight but on second thought You might want to light a fire under some of our guys and have them protest as well.

This is the gang that I wote to you about in the early spring and which you told you couldn't get in touch with by phone or FAX. Well when John comes over this week I'll give you the addresses and FAX info. and you can take it from there if you think it would get us somewhere and next year when they put out their B-24's calendar for 2006 we could have some pictures of our squadron and our group included. Calendar for 2005 is out but nothing there in of any our squadrons or group.  
 Bob Freed

### The AIR MEDAL

This decoration is awarded to U.S. and civilian personnel for single acts of heroism or meritorious achievements while participating in aerial flight and foreign military personnel in actual combat in support of operations. It is not awarded for peace time sustained operational activities and flights.

The medal is a bronze compass rose of sixteen points that is surrounded by a fleur-de-lis design in the top point.



On the obverse, in the center, is an American Eagle, swooping downward (attacking) and clutching a lightning bolt in each talon. The reverse has a raised disk on the compass rose, left blank for the recipient's name and rank.

The ribbon has a broad stripe of ultramarine blue in the center flanked on either side by a wide stripe of golden orange, and with a narrow stripe of ultramarine blue at the edge.

The original colors of the Army Air Corps.



**FOLDED WINGS****Scippa, Salvatore J.**

died on Monday, May 17, 2004  
 He was the Bombardier on the  
 Hurd Crew. He flew 51 combat  
 missions with the 781st Bomb  
 Squadron, later becoming a P-51  
 Fighter pilot. He was awarded  
 the Distinguished Flying Cross in  
 1945.

Reported by his brother  
 Carmen Scippa of Lady Lake, FL

**Jones, Dean F.**

Nose Gunner, Hurd Crew folded  
 his wings on November 6, 2004  
 in Bedford, TX.

Reported by his son Steve.

Our thoughts  
 and prayers  
 are with all  
 our fallen comrades  
 who have found  
 everlasting peace.

You have served  
 your country well.  
 We will remember  
 you forever.

**TREASURER'S CORNER**

781st Bomb Squadron Association  
 Accounts as of December 17, 2004

Association Checking	\$2951.34
Reunion Checking	\$701.81
Savings Account	\$37,159.37
Total	\$40,812.52

There are no outstanding obligations  
 against any of these accounts.

J.W. Ogden, Treasurer  
 781st Bomb Squadron Association

**PRESIDENT'S CORNER**

We have closed another year! The first thing that I want to do is send out a very strong Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to all of you! Thank you for the numerous cards and letters and I appreciate every one! I am sure that you all will understand when I say that individual answers to each of you is beyond my capability.

The next thing is the information that plans are progressing on our next reunion. It appears that we will meet in Shreveport, LA, October 6-8, 2005. Barney Russell is working toward a definitive contract with the Holiday Inn, with some interesting side trips that should please everyone. Shreveport is in an interesting corner of the world!

The third thing to mention is the fact that Frank Ambrose's cupboard is bare. You have been told this before, and as a result there has been a trickle of response but the paper needs more! Most of you, if you will take the time, can provide Frank with interesting stories and anecdotes that all of our membership would find interesting. You do not need a writing award to put a few thoughts down on paper. It would be most unfortunate to stop publishing the paper because there was no information to publish.

We really need your help.

Come on guys!

We are the 781st Bomb Squadron Association!

JO

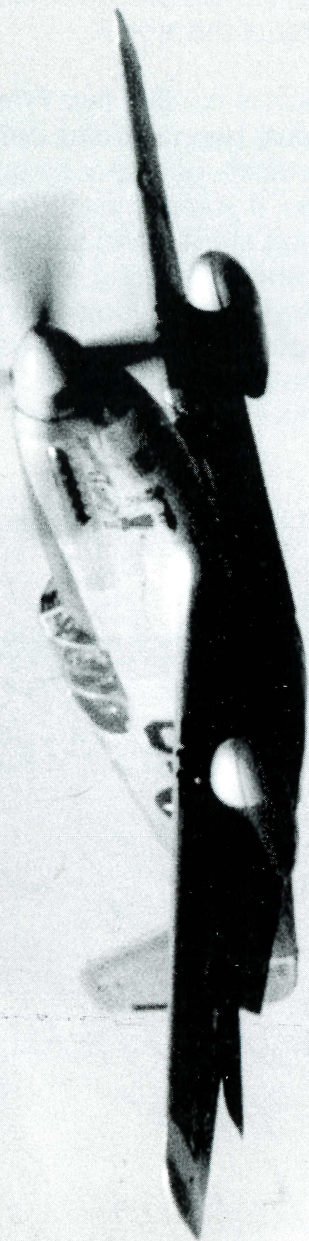
To All Our Comrades And Friends

*Season's Greetings  
 and*

*Best Wishes  
 for a*

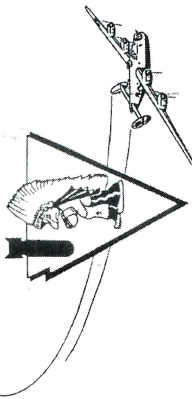
*Healthy, Happy and Prosperous  
 New Year 2005*

"Tuskegee Airmen" refers to all who were involved in the so-called "Tuskegee Experiment," the Army Air Corps program to train African Americans to fly and maintain combat aircraft. The Tuskegee Airmen included pilots, navigators, bombardiers, maintenance and support staff, instructors, and all the personnel who kept the planes in the air.



**332nd Fighter Group "Tuskegee RedTails"**  
©frank ambrose foto

781st BOMB SQUADRON  
ASSOCIATION  
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