

# PANTANELLA NEWS

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# 86 January 2007

## SHREVEPORT IN MASSIVE CLEAN-UP IN WAKE OF 781st FLYERS REUNION

FULL STORY--Page 2

EXCLUSIVE 'SPY CAM' UNDERCOVER PHOTOS PAGES 6 and 7



By Ground, by Air, in Wheelchairs and Canes they came. Replete with hip and knee replacements, pacemakers, sugar and heart monitors, the 781st. Survivors converged on Shreveport, Louisiana as a horde of hungry Locusts on a field of grain in Kansas or Nebraska.

Composite Photo by Carole Lee and Terry Culhane

## Remembering Shreveport....

### Connie Ogden reminiscing -

781st Reunions have always been very special to me as John enjoyed the reunions so much! Our first reunion was Montgomery, Alabama where much to our surprise there was not a single WWII person attending that John knew. It was rather lonesome. At the banquet Ken Kill graciously invited us to sit with his crew. And so it began. Paul Durkel invited us to breakfast down the street and much to our surprise Bill McBride and his wife from the Rio Grande Valley were there. It wasn't until the Wright Patterson AFB reunion that any of the other "ground grippers" came. Elmer Schoeffel, George Smith, Chuck Speer, Charles Howard, Clarence Hicks and John Ogden had a great time reminiscing and remembering how when you all got to Italy John was the only one who had actually loaded a 500 pound bomb. At Barksdale we learned that it is now done mechanically and one B-52 carries the equivalent bomb load of approximately eighteen B-24s. An awesome machine!

At the General Meeting in Shreveport a lively discussion of the disposition of funds and memorabilia was central. Ron Soucy has been in contact with the National Museum of the United States Air Force located at Wright-Patterson AFB and said they would accept the funds which would go into their general fund. They would store the memorabilia but could not guarantee it would ever see the light of day again. He was going to contact them again for more particulars. Earl Leinart gave a presentation on the SAC Museum in Omaha which had been

mailed to John Ogden. They would use the interest on the funds for scholarships for the Summer Camp Space Program. 781st tee shirts would be available to the participants. They would also have a display periodically of what memorabilia we furnish them with which would be in an air conditioned and humidity controlled environment archival storage area. Also 781st members and their families would have free admission to the Museum! Since Omaha is so centrally located that sounds like a good deal to me. Earl is checking with four or five other museums and Frank Wassenaar is checking with the Yankee Air Force Museum in Detroit, Mi.

At the Memorial Service I was particularly affected as John's name was read as having "folded wings" since the last reunion. Our friend John Dulard was to sing at the Memorial, but in spite of driving all night to be there, he took a wrong turn on the way and did not arrive until too late. How precious and how fleeting are our times with those we love. Cherish each moment.

When our bus from the chapel arrived at the field the bus stopped and Air Force personnel got out and inspected the tires, got back in the bus, drove a few feet to rotate the tires and inspected them again. The reason being those pebbles/rocks can cause significant damage if they get into the intake of a jet. Imagine 3 or 4 little old grey haired ladies scouring the tarmac for pebbles. While we were touring and hearing short talks by Air Force personnel some of the ladies came away with hands full of rocks which they presented to the

presenters. We brought a few home as keepsakes, courtesy of Ann Russell.

The casino. Our bus trip to the casino probably lasted half an hour...the sights of Shreveport, the Red River all duly pointed out. The trip home took perhaps 10 minutes! Food on the buffet was good. Several of us played the slots for a few

Cont. next page



781st Bomb Squadron Association  
c/o Barney Russell  
3 Mimosa Circle  
Magnolia, AR 71753-2648

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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

**ATTENTION !!**  
**ALL MEMBERS AND FAMILIES**  
**IMPORTANT ADDRESSES TO REMEMBER**  
**NOTIFY OR CONTACT ANY OR ALL FOR**  
**FW's-ADDRESS CHANGES or WHATEVER**

#### 781st. Asso. President:- BARNEY RUSSELL

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Magnolia, AR 71753-2648  
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#### 781st. Sqd. Treasurer:- KEN KILL

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**FRANK AMBROSE**  
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minutes but the noise and smoke soon drove us out. Our bus returned several hours early by common agreement.

Jefferson, Texas was a delight. (Says the history nut in me.) Beginning with a boat ride up/down Big Cypress Bayou. Jefferson during the Civil War was the terminus for steamboats coming from New Orleans, up the Red River and into Texas. Supplies for Texans were important as were munitions and food produced in Texas for the Confederacy. I remember \$20,000 (?) was mentioned as the profit for one trip, a lot of money in those days. The Corps of Engineers Caddo Lake, local politics and time have changed Big Cypress Bayou into a small waterway. Our two "boats" carried us for perhaps an hour through cypress, and hardwood trees covered with Spanish moss. We even saw a deer.

Several concrete buildings or their ruins were seen at regular intervals along the banks. During the War Between the States they didn't want any large explosions so placed gun powder/munitions at many locations along the banks while awaiting shipment. For lunch some of us went to the House of Pies which specializes in Jalapeno corn bread sandwiches. You all missed a real treat. Then on to the Excelsior House. For more than 140 years this hotel has served guests including three presidents, Ulysses Grant and Rutherford Hays stayed there and George W. & Laura Bush visited. My recipe book from the Jefferson Garden Club has already provided some memorable surprises. The "tour" of the charming, originally furnished rooms was a real trip back in history. As was the tour of Jay Gould's Railroad car, which was found rotting and rusting in a field nearby some years ago and moved to Jefferson as a historic item. Unfortunately the Historical Museum was closed for repair but is well worth the time. When Jay Gould was expanding his railroad he approached the town fathers of Jefferson with the idea of putting his marshalling yards there as it had been the terminus of River Travel. They refused the offer as railroads were smoky, dirty, and smelly and they loved their quiet, prosperous town. Jay Gould's response was to curse the town and avow he would see "grass growing in the streets of Jefferson". That almost came true ...and that is the reason so many historic houses and structures remain there today including a statue of a proud Confederate Veteran in front of the court house.

At the banquet our singer John Dulard had problems with the audio tape but bravely sang over the music.

JoDee Minter, Director of Sales, at the Holiday Inn did a fantastic job of making sure we all had a wonderful time and that we had everything we needed, when we needed it...

....Connie Ogden

## The Norden Bombsight Vault At McCook AFB

I am sure many of you can still recall the Norden Bombsight Vault at the McCook Air Base when we were training to function as a cohesive combat unit. Now on the Congressional Records as a Historical Site, the 'Vault', with it's 'blood red' painted doors, is still standing at the former Base.

At the time the 'Norden' was a "Top Secret Item", after each mission the bombardier would remove the sight from the aircraft and then he would be escorted under guard to the Vault. Once the "sight" was returned and placed in the vault, the red doors would be closed and locked and 24 hour Guards would take up their posts surrounding the structure.

As time went by during my stay at McCook I became increasing more suspect of the degree and efficiency that Security provided at the base. I vividly recall two instances to substantiate my theory.

On one occasion I recall rushing to a 'Wheels-Up' rather nasty crash scene with my camera in order to document the tragedy. With adrenalin flowing, I spent the first few minutes looking through the view finder taking as many shots around the wreckage as I thought were necessary.

I then climbed into the plane to photograph the twisted interior. Entering the heavily damaged Bombardiers' position I noticed that the Bomb Site was still there and intact. By now there were hundreds of on lookers swarming all over the place.

Being well aware of how 'Secret' the 'Sight' was supposed to be I immediately felt that it was my patriotic duty to protect the Bombsight from falling into wrong and deceitful hands.

So I removed the Sight and placed and hid it inside my camera case.

I ran back to my barracks, covered the case with a blanket and shoved it under my cot. Not knowing to whom I was to return it to, the camera case remained hidden under my cot for two antagonizing

and stressful days and nights.

Discussing my dilemma with my bunk mate the decision was made to approach the Base Security Officer, Captain Brady and to let him handle it.

Informing the Captain of all of the details of how I acquired the Sight and assured him it was still safe from unauthorized individuals. He was amazed to hear that I had the Norden in my possession for so long a time and that no one had even reported it missing.

On other occasions in the days shortly before leaving McCook for overseas I often used the 'Vault' to develop my films.

As our Group was forming in McCook we converted 'Johns' into darkrooms and they leaked a lot of light.

The films were generally processed in cumbersome "Dark Bags". Our so-called Darkrooms were located very near the Bombsight Vault and it wasn't long before we discovered the structure did not have windows and it did not leak light.

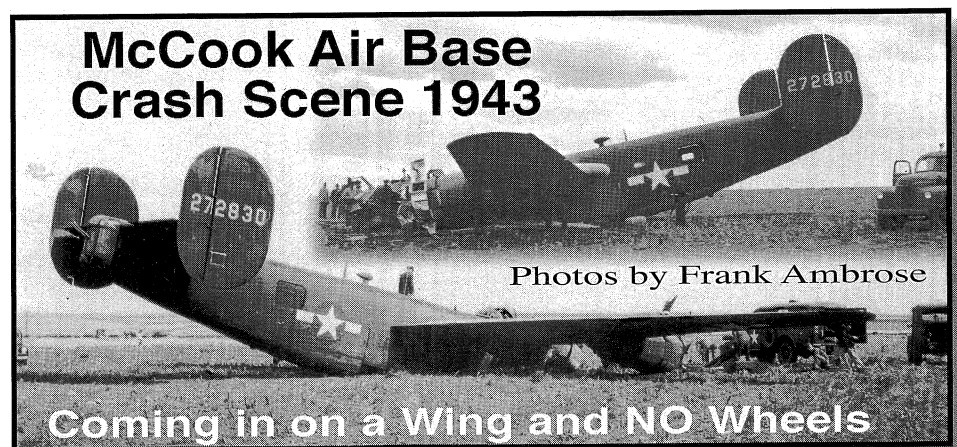
We also soon realized that the "Vault" was often unguarded while all the planes were on training missions. So it wasn't long before we started using the vault as our film darkroom each time the planes were on their practice missions.

Recalling another occasion in my Class A's and in a hurry to go to town I was ordered to process some 4x5's before leaving. I hurriedly set up the trays on the shelves in the Vault, shut the doors and started to process the film. Unknown to me my tie had become un-tucked and the very tip was touching the liquid developer in the tray. In the dark I was not aware that capillary action was taking place on my tie and by the time I was through developing, the tie had sucked the developer almost up to the knot under my chin.

As everyone knows developer stains everything brown and for a very long time I was the owner of a GI Issue two-tone tan tie.

I often wonder if subsequent Bomb Group photographers also used the vault for developing their films.

...Frank Ambrose





## Treasurer's Report

**Ken Kill submits the following breakdown of Expenses and Income relating to the 2006 Reunion in Shreveport:-**

**Expenses:**

Holiday Inn – Banquet	\$1429.60
Hospitality Room	320.99
Casino Buffet	380.96
River Cruise	130.00
Barksdale Lunch	506.93
Pianist – Memorial Service	50.00
Vocalist – Banquet	50.00
Total Expenses	\$2868.48
<b>Registration Income</b>	<b>\$3499.00</b>
Balance	\$630.50

The Treasurer reported that the dues do not meet the expenses of the Association without using funds from the savings account. A motion was made and seconded to request donations to the Operating Account.

Donations to the 781st Bomb Squadron Association should be sent to the treasurer:

**Francis K. Kill,  
707 West Circle Dr.,  
Findlay, OH 45840.**

(Refer to the business meeting minutes.)

**To date the following people  
have made donations**

Cal Crawford, son of Mel Crawford  
Frank & Dorothy Wassenaar  
Earl & Grace Leinart  
George Gaines Jr.  
Orren & Carole Lee  
Ken & Betty Kill  
Connie Ogden  
Bernie Badler  
Pearl Bailey



## Long Awaited Film Depicting 465th BG Finally Released in DVD Format

LongShot Productions has just released their 90-minute documentary project about the 15th air force, titled 'ON THE WING'. The film focuses on the effect that WWII had on members of the 464th and 465th bomb groups during their 18-month tour of duty in 1944/45. 'ON THE WING' was first screened at the 780th squadron reunion in Portsmouth, NH. In attendance were members of the 781st, 782nd and 783rd squadrons. The film is now available on DVD home video. 'ON THE WING' is an emotional look at the 15th air force and one of the shortest and most intensive air battles to occur over central European air space during WWII. On August 3rd 1944 a two-minute air battle in the skies above Ehrwald, Austria involved more than 50 American and German aircraft among them the B-24, the Messerschmitt and the Folke Wolf. The resulting loss totaled 16 aircraft, 8 on each side and more than 30 men. In the course of the picture, we return to what remains of the Pantanella air base in Southern Italy and includes in-depth interviews with the remaining members of these groups, as well as those from the 781st, 782nd and 783rd. Senator George McGovern, who flew with the 455-bomb group, recalls the difficulty of keeping the B-24 aloft as well as his sense of responsibility to the safety of his flight crew and the successful accomplishment of their missions.

Oscar Bosche, a German fighter pilot, responsible for shooting down a number of the B-24's, talks about the Ehrwald dogfight, the effect it had on him as an individual and as a member of the German forces. His comments appear in counter point to those of the late Lee Englehorn, whose plane was shot down by Bosche during the attack. The film then follows Englehorn, to the farmhouse in Strad, Austria where after surviving 16 days alone in the Alps, he surrendered himself to the German SS.

## Reunion Feed-Back

Connie Ogden distributed Questionnaires to attendees soliciting feedback.

This one from Dean Otto.....

**Describe your experiences, of the 2006 Reunion for those who could not be there:-**  
"Another good happening. So glad to be able to be here"

**How it felt to see those old fellow airmen. What the trip to Jefferson meant to you:-**  
"Only thing better would be more time! Was right down our alley! Good history to see and hear. Hadn't known what to expect. Boat was different. I liked it".

**The casino:-** "Didn't go."

**Barksdale A.F.B. Your experiences:-**  
"Fine – Always good to see the B24 again."

**The Memorial Services:-**  
"Always very moving to us all, I feel."

**Trading Italy stories:-**  
"Of course the fellows need this and so glad they do".

**Write why the reunion is significant to you:-**

"At this age each day is special and so good to be with the group of people we see so seldom and special friends. Our heart-felt thanks to the great people who planned and worked so hard for us. You did a top job with all details, Above & beyond"

. Love and thanks. Beth and Dean Otto.

DVD copies of the film are available for veterans at the special rate of \$25.00 plus \$3.50 shipping and handling. A total of \$28.50.

To order simply send a check to:

**LongShot Films  
P.O. Box 122**

**Portsmouth, NH 03802**

For further information be sure to visit:-  
[www.bbtfilms.com](http://www.bbtfilms.com) or email  
[Brad@longshotfilms.net](mailto:Brad@longshotfilms.net)

2006 781st BG Reunion Banquet Hotel, Shreveport, La.





## LETTERS

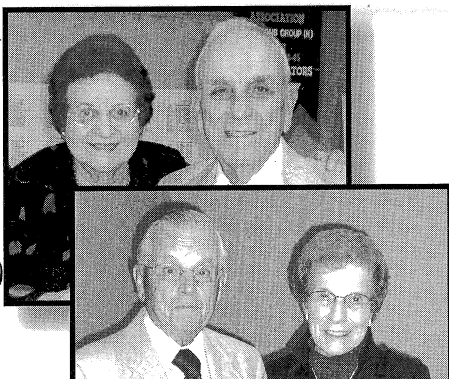
**This letter to Orren Lee from William Maloney, Ball Gunner on Tryon Crew Bill lives in New Orleans**

11/9/06

Dear Orren,  
My wife (Lee) and I are back in our home. We came back five months after the 'Katrina Disaster'. We had three feet of water for days in our first floor, roof damage, lost many of our World War II memorabilia- uniforms, medals (Air Medal, Good Conduct, European Theatre) personal letters, books, etc. Our first floor has been emptied and gutted. We are living on our second floor doing the best we can. We lost our central Air Conditioning, major appliances and using electric space heaters and window units. Our '66 Mustang needs complete redoing, our health is not so good, but we are grateful to be together and to have our whole family all alive and healthy. of our eight children, three had devastating damage, one wiped out completely of all possessions-  
Keep up your good work!  
Thanks,  
Bill

From: Diane Henke  
To: Orren Lee  
Sent: Sunday, September 24, 2006  
Subject: Parents are with the Lord

Hi, Just received the Pantanella News from the 781st Bomb Squadron Association. It was something both of our parents, Harry and Lynn Reuss, enjoyed reading. Dad had served in WWII as part of the 781st; their B-24 was shot down over Vienna, Austria on September 10th. Dad was in Stallog Luft IV as a POW. Our parents showed the fine example of loving commitment to each other in marriage for over 57 years and for this wonderful country of the United States of America. Dad died in July 2005 and Mom died, 8 months later, March 2006. Just wanted to let you know.  
God bless you all,  
The family of Harry and Lynn Reuss



Mamie & Bubba Braud, Top  
Ken & Betty Kill, Bottom Foto

**This Concerning the Reunion-**

Date: Wed, 11 Oct 2006  
From: Pearl Bailey <p.bailey1@verizon.net>  
Subject: REUNION  
To: frank ambrose <fambrose@frontiernet.net>  
Frank,  
Jeanne and I had a great time in Shreveport at the 781st reunion. I was a little apprehensive before we went and it was no fun flying with all the restrictions and security, but still glad I went. I had three different changes and securities to go thru going each way, but I survived. The reunion was very nice. The memorial service was the highlight for us. We knew that Dan would have wanted us to attend. We were treated very well and had only good things to say about the entire event. The boat ride on the Bayou was very interesting and fun. We hope you continue the reunions as long as the vets want to do so. Only time will tell, if I could attend another or not. At least it would be so much closer next two years, that I could attend without flying.  
Keep up the good work as long as they are fellows left that want to do so. Your next two years choices are excellent. I will send a monetary contribution to Ken Kill to help with your endeavors, whatever they might be.  
Sincerely,  
Pearl (widow of Dan Bailey)

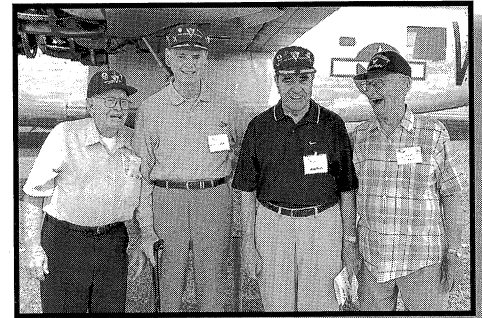
From: scotttrudeau@stx.rr.com  
Subject: Folded Wings  
Date: December 8, 2006  
To: frank@frankambrose.com  
Cc: knykill@juno.com, olee@iw.net  
Dear Frank Ambrose,

My grandfather, Floyd H. Trudeau, passed away December 6th, 2006, he was 84. One week prior to his death he found out that he had leukemia. He was rushed to the hospital and told that MD Anderson (Houston, Texas) would be the best place to treat his cancer, and that the local hospital could not do anymore to help. He replied..."shit happens." So he returned home Thursday evening. He kept saying that he did not feel sick, but was somewhat tired. The family gathered at his home over the weekend and joked, visited, ate, and drank wine. Sunday afternoon my uncle and aunt took him north to Houston and at the time grandpa looked fine. His health quickly deteriorated over the next two days and he died peacefully Wednesday morning with one of his son's by his side.

I was sorting through his office and stumbled upon the Pantanella News, #82. I know my grandfather loved attending the 781st reunions but could not attend any recent events do to my grandmother's health.

I respect and honor every man that serves in the service and strongly believe that every man that served in WWII made this country great. With that said, my grandfather was my hero.

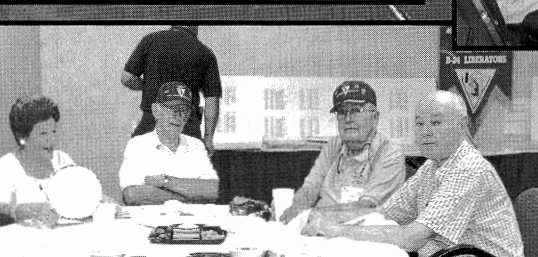
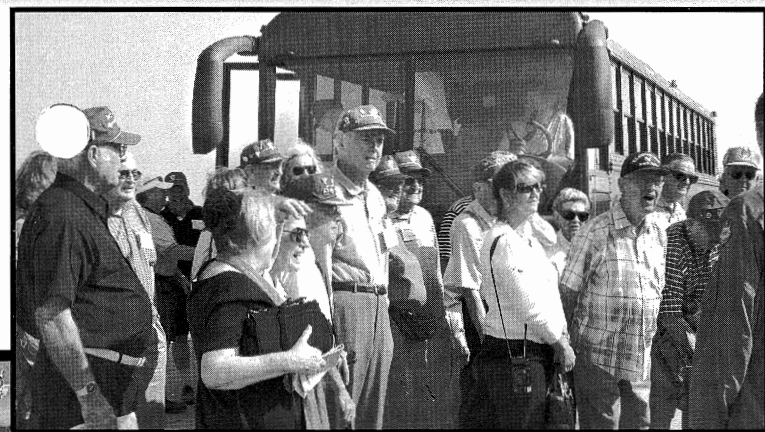
Grandpa will not be needing the Pantanella News anymore but I sure would

**2006 Reunion Attendees**

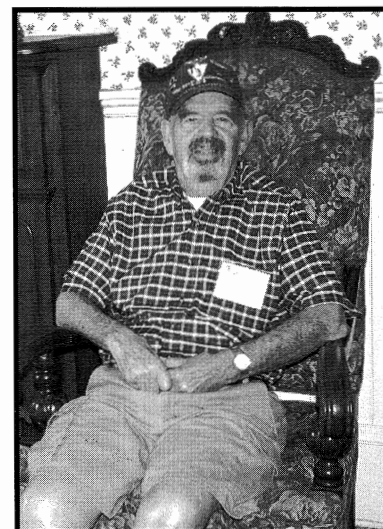
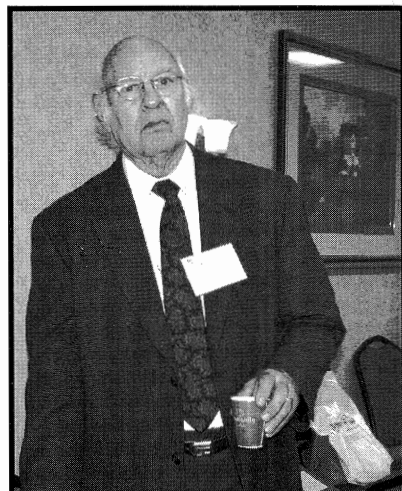
The following individuals enjoyed the 2006 Reunion in Shreveport:-

Bernard Badler – Branch Co-Pilot  
Pearl Bailey, widow of Dan Bailey–  
Joyner Tail Gun and daughter,  
Jeanne Deiger  
Charles "Bubba" Braud and wife Mamie-  
Ordnance  
Ray Cauble – Cauble Pilot  
David Coleman and wife Betty –  
Pitts Navigator  
Calvert Crawford and wife Elizabeth–  
Brenneman Co-Pilot  
Neil Culhane and son Terry –  
Dahl Navigator  
Carl Dahl-Pilot and guest Tammie Veriato  
John Dulard, guest vocalist  
John Fandrey – Dickey Navigator  
George Hausold and wife Veni –  
Cauble Bombardier  
Glen Haywood and guest Carolyn Harinan–  
Ellison Co-Pilot  
Dale Keiser and wife Betty –  
Joyner Nose Gunner  
Francis "Ken" Kill and wife Betty – Smith,  
Norman B. Bombardier  
John Layne, Sr. and son John Layne, Jr.–  
Dahl Ball Gunner  
Orren Lee and wife Carole – Becker Radio  
Earl Leinart and wife Grace –  
Barnett Co-Pilot  
Paul Mallette and daughter Joan Fenner–  
Shetterly Gunner  
Homer Moeller and wife Lois –  
Pitts Co-Pilot  
Constance Ogden, widow of John Ogden -  
Armament and daughter, Candace Tannery  
Dean Otto and wife Mary "Beth" –  
Pitts Nose Gunner  
Bonnie Rowe and guest Owana Humber–  
Martz Navigator  
Barney Russell, wife Ann and son  
Barney Russell, Jr. (Bud) –  
Althoff Navigator  
Roland Soucy – Wheeler Bombardier  
and sons Roger and Gregory  
Frank Wassenaar and wife Dottie –  
Doss Bombardier

like to receive them at my house. Can I subscribe and can you add him to the Folded Wings section.  
Appreciate all that you do,  
Scott Trudeau

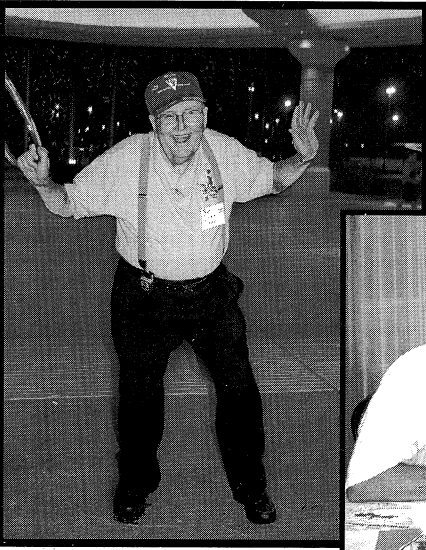
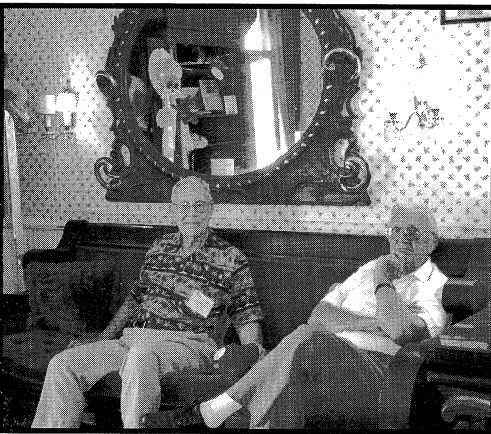
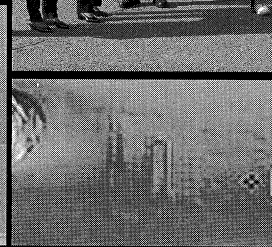
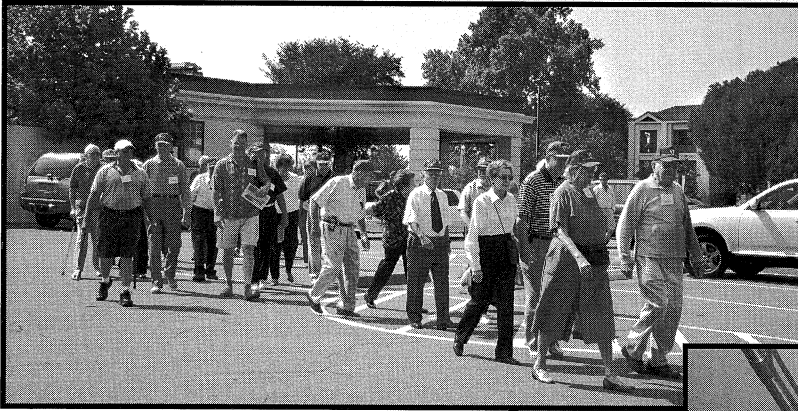


## reveport, La-2006



Lg Grp Foto by Terry Culhane all others by Carole Lee







## THE LINK TRAINER

In 1928, Edwin C. Link left his father's organ building business to begin work on a "pilot trainer." Link had learned to fly and was thrilled to try his hand in the aviation business. As his knowledge of flying began to grow, he envisioned a device that would allow pilots to take their preliminary flight instruction while safely on the ground. With his organ building experience, he designed the trainer using suction through fabric bellows to cause motion in pitch and roll. The amount of suction is proportionate by the amount of movement of the control yoke. The trainer had authentic control yoke, pedals and trim wheels. One entered the trainer through a side door and sliding canopy. Once seated you would be totally enclosed, separating you from the outside world, enhancing realism and the feeling of being in flight..

Crude pilot training aids had been designed even before WWI, but none had any significant training value. Edwin A. Link provided a giant step forward when in 1931 he received a patent on his "pilot maker" training device. He had perfected his design in the basement of his father's piano and organ factory in Binghamton, NY.

Organ bellows and a motor provided the means for the trainer, mounted on a pedestal, to pitch, roll, dive and climb as the student "flew" it.

Ironically, most of his first sales were to amusement parks. The U.S. Military services saw the need for the "pilot maker" but lacked the money to buy them.

In February 1934, the U.S. Army Air Corps was ordered to fly the airmail in the United States. Army pilots lacked experience in flying "on instruments" at night or in inclement weather. Five pilots were killed in the first few days of flying the mail.

The Army quickly began a search for solutions and arranged for Link to visit

the Newark Airport in New Jersey to demonstrate his trainer. On the day of the demonstration the weather turned stormy, but Link arrived safely and succeeded in convincing the Army that instrument flight was practical and could be taught in his trainer.

WW II era brought orders for thousands of Link trainers from the U.S. and many foreign countries.

Although Army Air Forces aviation cadets flew various trainer aircraft, virtually all took blind-flying instruction in the Link.

Movement of the trainer is accomplished by vacuum operated bellows, controlled by valves connected to the control wheel (or stick) and rudder pedals. An instructor sat at the desk and transmitted radio messages which the student in the Link heard through his earphones.

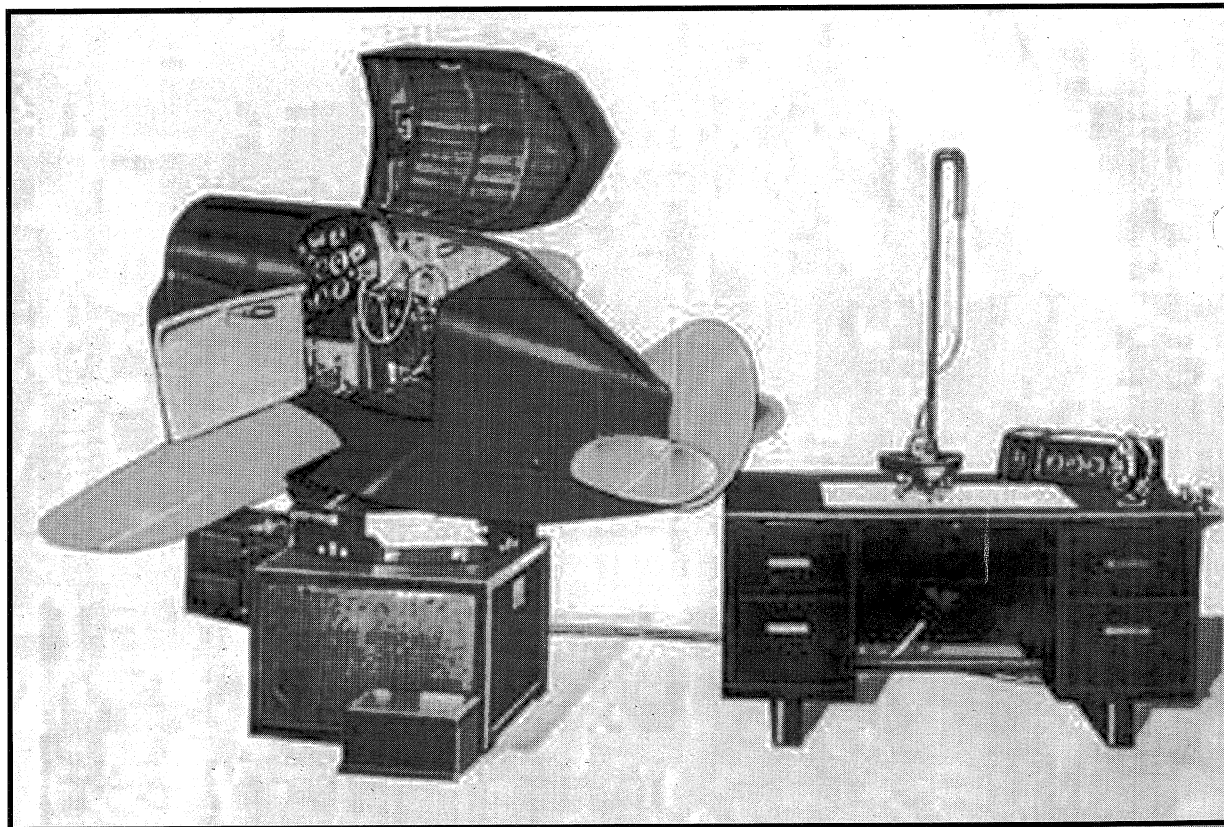
Inside the "cockpit", the student relied on his instruments to "fly" the Link through various maneuvers while his navigational "course" was traced on a map on the desk

by the three-wheeled "crab". Slip stream simulators gave the controls the feeling of air passing over control surfaces and a rough air generator added additional realism during the "flight".

Link's trainer was used for instrument flight training for almost all US and Allied pilots during World War II. Upon entering the war, the armed forces contracted for Link's entire production. The company built 6,271 trainers for the Army and 1,045 for the Navy.

In 1945, an AT-6 Texan training airplane cost \$10 per hour to operate while a Link Trainer cost 40 cents an hour. More important, no pilot was ever injured in the "crash" of a Link Trainer - although folk-legend has it that one trainee pilot had become so absorbed in his sequence, that when told over the "radio" that his fuel had ran out, he broke his ankle in his haste to escape before the Link hit the ground.

---Researched by Frank Ambrose



The link trainer pictured is a model C-3, which is the type used during WW II for teaching all pilots proper procedures of instrument flight. The Link was mounted on a base which permitted the trainer to turn, tilt and bounce as the instructor (who sat at a desk outside the trainer) created rough air and put the pilot through simulated flight conditions. An operator sat at the desk and transmitted radio signals, which the "pilot" in the link heard through his ear phones. The pilot "flew" the link through various turns, climbs and descents, and the link's "course" was traced in red ink by the remote "bug" on a map on the table. After a flight was completed, the pilot could study the redline course to determine what he might have done incorrectly.

There was no AIR CONDITIONING in these trainers...and on a hot west Texas day, it got pretty hot inside this box'. Many a young trainee almost crashed and burned--not from lack of flying skills, but from the heat!

## 781st Bomb Squadron Asso. Business Meeting Minutes October 3, 2006

The 2006 meeting of the 781st Bomb Squadron Association was held in the Holiday Inn Financial Plaza in Shreveport, Louisiana October 3, 2006. The meeting was called to order at 17:00 hours by President Barney Russell.

1. Announcement was made of Boards unanimous decision to continue reunions. Motion to continue reunions by Earl Leinart, Dale Keiser seconded. Motion carried.

2. Frank Ambrose emailed the report that the 783rd is meeting in Baltimore next year with a tour to the WWII Memorial. Motion to investigate joining them by David Coleman. Cal Crawford seconded. Motion carried. Frank Ambrose said he would investigate. Bernie Badler will get in touch with some other groups. Motion to investigate holding the reunion in Dayton, Ohio in 2008 by Ron Soucy. Charles 'Bubba' Braud seconded. Motion carried. Ron Soucy will check it out.

3. Suggestions for memorials are the following:

- a. Air Force Memorial in Washington, DC
- b. Strategic Air & Space Museum in Omaha, NE
- c. Individual members to local associations

d. McCook, NE added to the list by John Fandrey

Earl Leinart presented a proposal of \$30,000.00 to SAC Museum in Omaha to establish a scholarship fund in the 781st name. They would accept our memo-

rabilia, catalog it and store it in climate controlled archival storage area. Regularly the Museum rotates artifacts for public display. Motion to accept by Earl Leinart, seconded by Orren Lee. After a lengthy discussion with no consensus a motion to table the motion until the end of the business meeting by Cal Crawford. Motion carried.

4. Honorarium for Publisher. Motion to give the publisher of the Pantanella News a \$200.00 stipend each time he publishes the Pantanella News by Cal Crawford, Charles Braud seconded it. Motion to amend the motion to \$300.00 made by Bonnie Rowe, seconded and carried. Original motion as amended carried.

5. Ken Kill gave the Treasurers report: Savings account balance is \$38,566.34. Operating account balance is \$3,118.02. Reunion report: 48 registered, 22 veterans.

6. Motion to put article in Pantanella News regarding making donations to the operating fund by Bernie Badler, seconded by Earl Leinart. Motion passed.

7. Motion to consider changing the by-laws (corrected to read Constitution) to increase eligibility to any member of a family of the 781st Bomb Squadron that served at Pantanella Air Base in Italy or any person dedicated to preserving the history of the association by paying dues become a voting member and eligible to hold office was made by Cal Crawford, Glen Haywood seconded. Motion carried.

8. Motion to have an Executive Secretary made by Cal Crawford, Ron Soucy seconded. Motion carried. President Barney Russell appointed Carole Lee to

the position. Carole declined a salary and funds other than expenses such as postage, shipping, and phone to be reimbursed upon submittal of expenses.

9. Election of Officers and Directors:

Orren Lee nominated Barney Russell for President. No other nominations elected by acclamation.

Bonnie Rowe nominated Bernard Badler for Vice President. No other nominations elected by acclamation.

John Fandrey nominated Ken Kill for Treasurer. No other nominations elected by acclamation.

John Fandrey nominated Orren Lee for Secretary.

No other nominations elected by acclamation.

John Fandrey nominated Orren Lee for Chaplain. No other nominations elected by acclamation.

Orren Lee nominated Earl Leinart, Frank Wassenaar, and Frank Ambrose Directors. No other nominations elected by acclamation.

Carl Dahl requested any further vote taken be by a show of hands.

The tabled motion to give \$30,000.00 to the SAC Museum to create a scholarship fund was brought back to the floor. Motion to table the motion until the next business meeting by Charles Braud. Motion carried. Memorabilia went back with Bernie Badler and Connie Ogden. Motion to adjourn by Paul Mallette, seconded by Charles Braud. Meeting adjourned at 18:45 hours.

Respectfully,  
Orren Lee, Secretary.

## Our Contributing Correspondent, Bonnie Rowe, submits the following recollections way back then:-

February 7, 1945 the group's 135th Bombing mission was to Vienna. I was flying as Navigator on the Martz Crew. Turning on the IP, I called over the intercom to the crew to be aware that we didn't get to our brief altitude and were about to head into intense and very heavy flak at the same altitude as the group ahead of us.

The flak was as intense as I had ever seen. I thought for sure we would be shot, down but we did get through.

During the rally off the target Martz called a crew check.

Everyone answered except the nose gunner who was hit by a piece of flak in the jugular vein. The nose gunner was S/Sgt James D. Kelley. Rush-

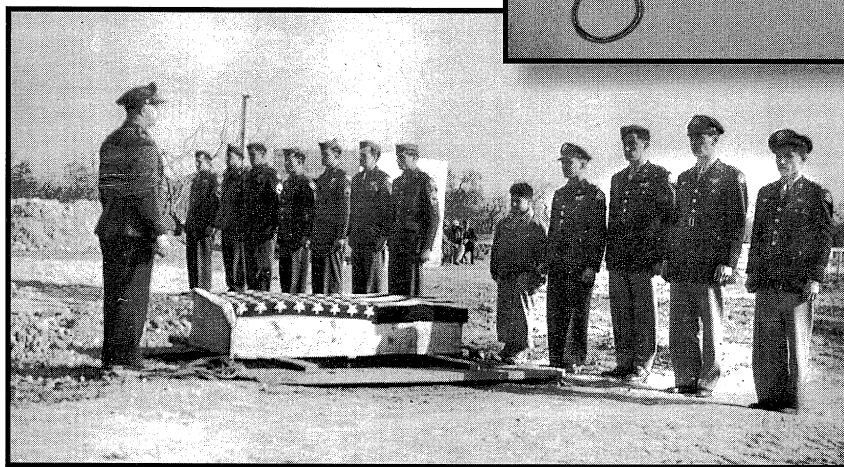
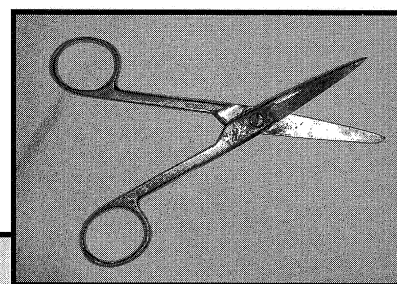
ing to his aid, I opened the nose turret doors and all I was able to do was to patch his neck.

I removed the clot of blood which was frozen and threw it into the wheelwell.

I still have the scissors I used. The enclosed picture is of S/Sgt Kelley's funeral at Pantanella.

Lt. Martz's crew was a wonderful group of young men, they were shot down with a replacement Navigator March 14, 1945. while I was attending Lead School.

---Bonnie Rowe



The 465th. Group Chaplain officiates over S/Sgt Kelley's body in Italy. Kelly was killed over Vienna, Austria, February 7, 1945. Shown in the photo, in addition to the Chaplain and members of his crew, is the little 'Arab Boy' who frequented the Base running assorted errands in return for food and odd change.

**Glen Haywood, Ellison's Co-Pilot, submits the following account of his first experience in combat:**

### **BREAKING IN- 'JUST LITTLE PUFFS OF SMOKE'**

The story in the April Pantanella News brings to mind an interesting experience I had concerning Col. Lokker shortly before he was shot down.

My first combat mission was a bombing trip to an airfield at Udine, Italy. It was supposed to be an easy mission and a good place to break in a green crew, but in our case it was not!

Shortly before the IP the oil pressure started to drop on one of the engines, however we managed to hold off the featherings until coming off the target.

This was my first exposure to flak, I wondered what all the furor was over those seemingly distant black puffs of smoke. That was until I heard some strange hail like sounds, seemigly bouncing off the side of the plane, that's when I got clued in!

Anyway, shortly off the target the oil pressure started dropping on another engine and soon, that too, had to be feathered.

It was a lonely feeling seeing the formation slowly pulling away. Our next pressing business was to lighten the plane so that everything that wasn't nailed down went overboard. When asking the Navigator for our position we were somewhat taken aback to find that in the midst of lightening our load someone had thrown all of his charts out along with the flak jackets, machine guns and ammo.

Contacting the wonderful British service, "Big Fence", and after giving them a radio long count they were able to triangulate our position through a master and slave stations along the Adriatic coast. They

then gave us a heading and distance to the nearest allied field which turned out to be Ancona, Italy.

Then began the sweat job of playing altitude, against distance, against air speed, against fuel consumption, against what you think the remaining two engines could withstand.

After what seemed like eternity, the field finally came into view and we started our approach. With no radio contact from the tower we got a red biscuit light telling us not to land. On the ground there was a flight of Spitfires lines up for take off,

However, one does not go around on two engines, so we fired off a double red flare and kept going in. The ground crews scrambled to clear the runway and we got down safely.

Inspecting the plane after landing, I discovered three new evenly spaced holes leading up to my Co-pilot seat. A fourth would have hit me in the part of my anatomy I seem to use the most often. Lesson #2 regarding flak!!

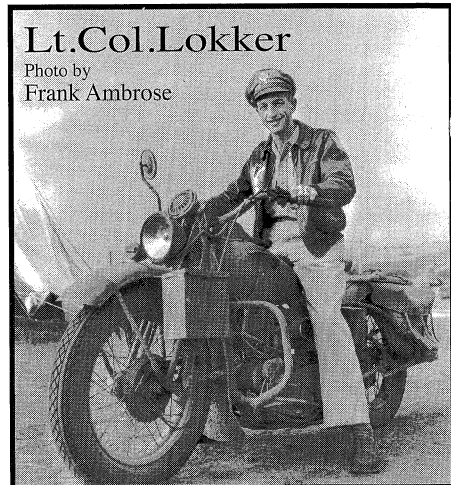
After sending a message to home base we spent the night and most of the next day waiting for someone to come to pick us up to return us to our base.

It turned out that it was Col. Lokker who came to pick us up and to see about his "lost sheep". That he would do such a thing was to me, the mark of the man. Col. Lokker had to park his 24 on a narrow steel plank spot. Shortly thereafter a brand new radar equipped B-24 from some other group flew in to pick one of the other hapless crew. They pulled in and parked behind Lokker's. The mat was only slightly wider than the wheel spread of the planes so we tried to wrestle the new arrival around 180 degrees so that it would allow us to taxi out and leave.

We finally managed to get one wheel out of the mud but had to call for a crawler tug to come help. Well, the Sergeant

### **Lt.Col.Lokker**

Photo by  
Frank Ambrose



operating the tug possessed a complete lack of skill and being a farm boy with lots of experience with tractors I started to suggest I take over the task. Then my Army training kicked in and that dictates, "don't volunteer for nothing".

It wasn't long before the guy had managed to punch a gaping hole in the vertical stabilizer of that new B-24.

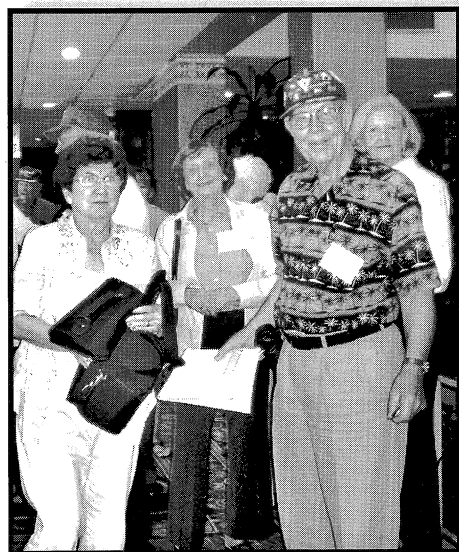
It was getting dark and cold while struggling with the planes and I suggested to Col. Lokker that we spend the night there and then get it all sorted out and leave the next morning. He was quick to point out that he had to get back as he was scheduled to lead the 55th Bomb Wing on the next days mission and nothing was going to stop him from doing that. Another measure of the man!

We became free at last and flew back to our base where our humble tent looked mighty good.

I can only wish we had failed to extricate our plane that day so that a outstanding leader and all around good guy might have missed his appointment with fate.

Respectfully,

Glen Haywood, Ellison Co-Pilot



### **Army Air Force Airman Wings**

The first version of the Aircrew Badge was issued by the Army Air Forces during the Second World War.

The badge was similar in design to the Aviator Badge, however, and displayed an emblem denoting enlisted status on its circular shield, or escutcheon, centered between two wings. The emblem featured the arms of the United States of America, in clear relief generally against a horizontally lined background, on a disk with a raised rim.

Anyone trained in flight operations was authorized to wear this badge, including pilots, bombardiers, navigators, gunners,



aerial photographers and miscellaneous air crew personnel.

The badge was also awarded to certain ground personnel at the discretion of their commanding officer.

Non-crewmembers eligible for the badge were individuals with flying status such as aircraft maintenance supervisors and technical inspectors.

For example, aircrew badges were issued to Automatic Flight Control Equipment (A.F.C.E.) and Bombsight Shop maintenance personnel and others essential to "keep 'em flying" who flew in maintenance flights but who did not actually take part in combat missions during WW II.



## FOLDED WINGS

### Stanley Joseph Winkowski:

Co-Pilot William Smith Crew

**Stanley Joseph Winkowski** died

Sept 1, 2005 at the age of 84.

Born in North Tonawanda, NY., Stan served as pilot of the B-24 Liberator with the 465th Bomb Group, 15th. Army Air Force on strategic and tactical bombing missions over occupied Europe. He flew 49 combat missions and was shot down twice.

Stanley was awarded the Air Medal with two clusters and the European Theatre Ribbon with eight battle stars. After active duty, Stan served in the Reserves until 1952.

Stan worked for Bell Aircraft in Niagara Falls, NY and later moved to California working for North American Rockwell where he lead a team responsible for building and managing the command module for the first moon landing.

Stan and Alice changed careers in mid-life, and went into hotel management retiring in 1987.

Submitted by Richard Jones, Son in law

### Eugene Matthew Young:

Hendrickson Tail Gunner

With deep regret I inform you that your fellow comrade has passed away. His name is **Eugene M. Young**, he was 80 years old and left us on October 14, 2006 for his last mission. He served his country with great pride and dignity with the 781st Bomb Squadron. He left his wife, five children, nine grandchildren and three great grandchildren. He goes on to re-unite with his grandson Joseph, parents, son-in-law and his beloved brother John Joseph Young who gave his life in WWII.

My father in law shared many memories with his family, but with his passing we have found so much fascinating information and articles including his bomb mission log books, his bomber jacket and many heart wrenching photos and so much more. We are overwhelmed and so proud to be the family of a VETERAN OF WAR.

His passing was honored by full military honors and also included a Bagpiper which he loved dearly.

He really enjoyed the reunions and we know he'll be there in spirit. With our deep sadness please cease the mailing of the newsletter. Thank you for your time and also your dedication.

Sincerely, Linda G. Young and Family

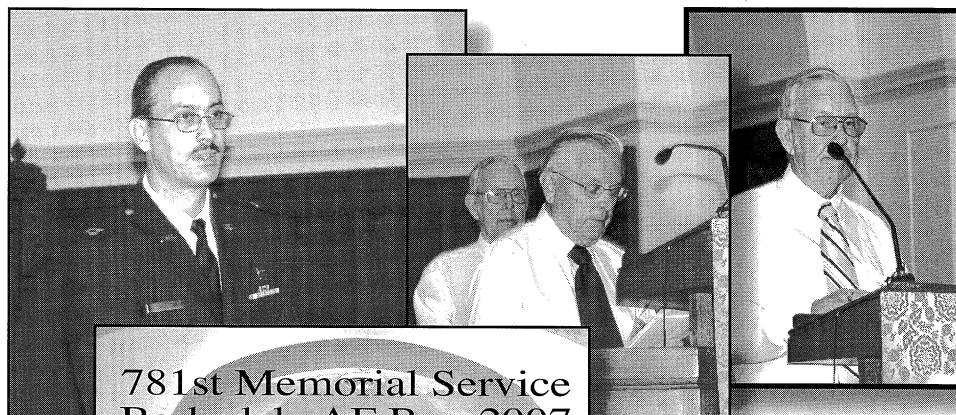
### Floyd H. Trudeau :

Zalk Co-Pilot

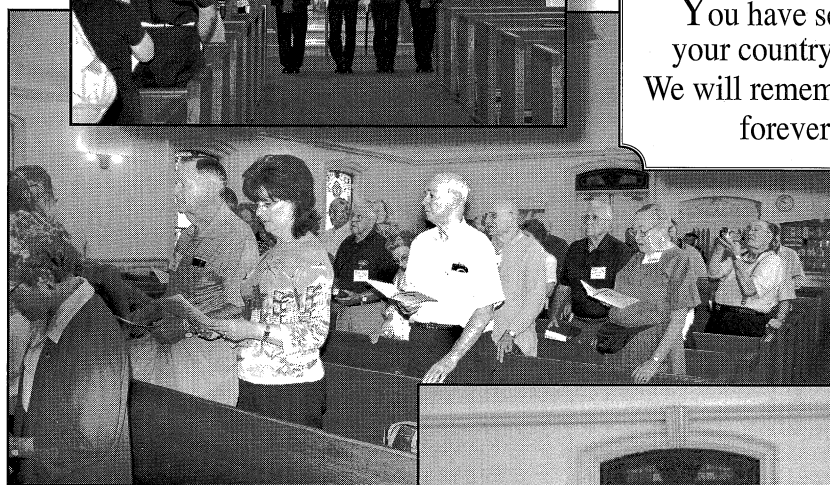
**Floyd H. Trudeau**, passed away

December 6th, 2006, he was 84.

Story: page 5



781st Memorial Service  
Barksdale AF Base 2007



### Harry and Lynn Reuss:

Nelson Gunner

From: Diane Henke

To: Orren Lee

Sent: Sunday, September 24, 2006

Subject: Parents are with the Lord

Hi, Just received the Pantanella News from the 781st Bomb Squadron Association. It was something both of our parents, **Harry and Lynn Reuss**, enjoyed reading. Dad had served in WWII as part of the 781st; their B-24 was shot down over Vienna, Austria on September 10th. Dad was in Stallog Luft IV as a POW. Our parents showed the fine example of loving commitment to each other in marriage for over 57 years and for this wonderful country of the United States of America.

Dad died in July 2005 and Mom died, 8 months later, March 2006.

Just wanted to let you know.

God bless you all,

The family of Harry and Lynn Reuss



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.

## 2007 Reunion Up-Date

As of Press Time, the Reunion Committee is still working diligently researching possible attractions and hotel accommodations for next year's affair.

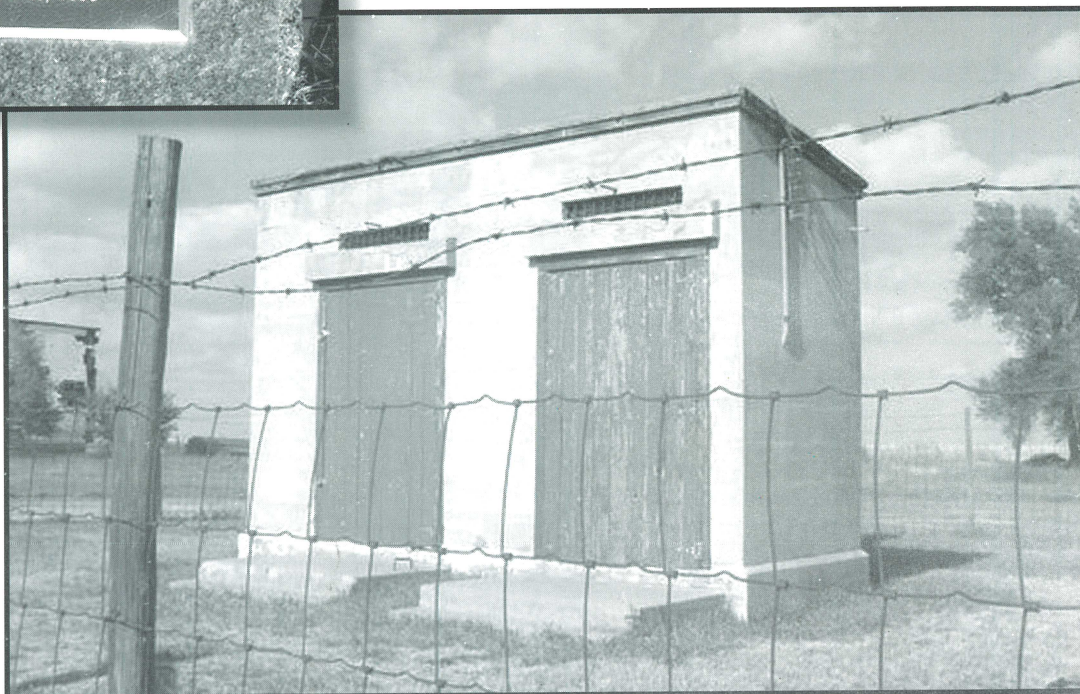
Attempting to coordinate a reunion during the Holiday Season and from so far away without a local contact has been, to say the least, a major hurdle.

Further details will be forth coming in the next issue of the Pantanella News.





465th Bomb Group  
Memorial Plaque  
Honoring the  
780th-781st,  
782nd and 783rd  
Squadrons  
was placed and  
Dedicated  
September 28, 1996  
in  
The Veterans Memorial  
Garden  
at the  
McCook Air Base Museum  
In McCook, Nebraska



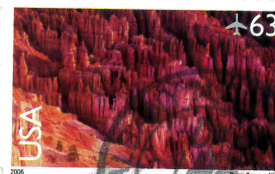
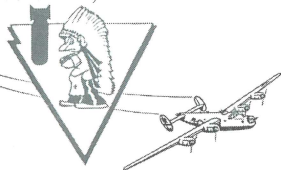
### THE NORDEN BOMBSIGHT VAULT AT MCCOOK AIR BASE

The Norden Bombsight Vault with it's 'blood red' painted doors, is still standing at the former McCook Air Base. The structure has been declared a Historical Site, and has now been recorded on the National Register of Historic Places as such.

Back then the 'Norden' was a "Top Secret Item". After each mission the bombardier would remove the sight from the aircraft and then he and the Bomb Sight would be escorted under guard to the Vault.

Once the "sight" was returned and placed in the vault, the red doors would be closed and locked and 24 hour Guards would take up their posts surrounding the structure.

781st "PANTANELLA NEWS"  
c/o Frank Ambrose, Editor  
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Gloversville, NY 12078



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