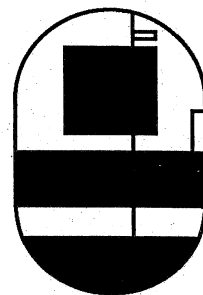




PANTANELLA NEWS



JULY 1988

Published by 781st Bomb Squadron Association

NUMBER 13

FINAL NOTICE FOR REUNION '88

Reservations are being received daily. A list of those registered by June 25 will be found later in the newsletter. Over 135 are registered, plus wives, totals 260, in addition to group men. Additionally all other squadrons will be joining in to make it a 465th Bomb Group reunion - the first since WWII!! So plan on joining us in one of the most memorable times you will ever have. **HOTEL RESERVATIONS AND PARKING** - The hotel will only guarantee rooms through August 14th. If you decide to make reservations after August 14th you can check with the hotel to see if rooms are available. If they have none they will refer you to other hotels in the area. There is plenty of hotel space nearby, but you will likely have to pay a little more. So, why not reserve early to be assured of a room at the Menger. Send in your yellow card to the hotel and the other to me. If you are staying with friends, live in San Antonio, or staying in a RV Park, please send the 781st card in (my address is on card). No need to send in a card if already registered.

Full details on the reunion program and activities later in the newsletter.

THE 465TH BOMB GROUP TOUR - News as exciting as the reunion plans is the report back from the tour to Pantanella. Three couples from the 781st were among the 46 people on the tour; Frank and Dorothy Wassenaar, Walt and Connie Clausen, and O.J. and Esther Cowart, Jr. Following is one of the reports I received;

THE RETURN TO PANTANELLA - by O.J. Cowart, Jr.

William (Bill) Bruce a pilot from the 782nd Bomb Squadron set up our tour with a Canadian agency named Glenn Travel. (COSMOS). Leaving Toronto, Canada on May 5, 1988 we arrived in Frankfurt, Germany and met our tour guide, a young German lady named Bernadette Schafer. I believed we were in trouble when her first words were, *What is Pantanella?* Since I was to be a guide for a Pantanella Tour in

Italy, I started my search to find out what I could about Pantanella. I asked my father, who had been a German soldier, and he had never heard of Pantanella. No one I contacted had ever heard of Pantanella".

Both Bernadette, and Frank Van Hoe, our bus driver from Belgium, spoke perfect English (without an accent) German, Austrian, French and Italian; this really helped to have guides with so many languages. Bernadette's father was a German soldier and recently had surgery for old war wounds. Since some of the local citizens still have unpleasant memories of the war, it was suggested by Bill Bruce that we not wear clothing or caps identifying us as former U.S. Air Force members.

ON OUR WAY!

- **Munich** - The Olympic city was constructed over low land which was built up with all the rubble from bombed out buildings and streets. Woolworth has a store located here.

- **Vienna** - A few flack towers still remain and some residents would like to have them removed, but the city fathers generate income by renting them out for wine storage and to Rock band groups to practice their music in without annoying neighbors.

- **Cerignolia** - Has a large beautiful church; here we took group pictures.

- **Foggia** - We stayed at Foggia in a nice hotel.

- **Paris** - In a large Cabaret, the singing and talking was in French. The last act showed one of the scantily clad girls putting her clothes back on (my first time to ever see this). The MC surprised us by having words of praise for the United States, and closed the show by everyone singing God Bless America.

- **London** - I was standing in the Security line at Heathrow Airport waiting to enter when the Security Person looked up at my hat proudly proclaiming 781st BOMB



465th Bomb Group men joined together in the PX. All squadrons were represented from both air and ground echelons. From the 781st were O. J. Cowart, Jr. (Communications) rear center with 781st cap, Frank Wassenaar (Doss/Bombardier) right in center row and Walter Clausen (J. T. Smith/Tail Gunner) front row center. The organizer of the tour, Bill Bruce, pres. of the 782nd Squadron Assoc., is far left, center row.



Group Headquarters Building in photo above.

SQUADRON. He was polite in asking me if I would remove my hat, and looking inside decided I was not a security risk and I could board the waiting airplane.

- **Food** - there are popular fast food chains such as Burger King, Wendy's, McDonalds, and just like at home, some places where Pepsi Cola has locked out the competition (Coke) so that you can

only purchase Pepsi. Our U.S. money has lost much of its value and we purchased Cokes ranging from \$1.50 to \$2.50 per can.

We were the first tour group to come this far down in southern Italy, and were quite conspicuous in our big tour bus. We received some bewildered stares from local people in some small Italian towns.

We stopped in Loconia (five kilometers from our Airfield) where there is a bronze plaque in Italian saying, "GLI STATI UNITI D'AMERICA PERIPOPOLI LIBERI", which translates, "*Here the United States of America fought for the liberty of the People.*" Some rubbings were made of the plaque with good detail, and pictures were made but are too dark to see the words. One of the Loconia residents volunteered to take us to where he believed Pantanella was located. Upon arriving at the location, there was a sinking feeling because this was definitely not the site of Pantanella. Jim Althoff had provided me with a map made by a British citizen trying to locate all Allied Airfields in Italy and a written document describing the location of Pantanella, so using those directions we proceeded to locate our two hills and arrived at our final destination. The two hills for our living areas, spared us a lot of water and mud enjoyed by the other groups.

When we arrived at Pantanella on May 16, 1988, we were greeted by someone looking like a heavily bearded Rip Van Winkle wearing a WWII leather flying jacket with a P O 'ed Indian painted on it. His first words were "What took you guys so long? I've been waiting here for more than 40 years!!!" (Come to the reunion in San Antonio and look at the pictures and see if you can identify him.)

The first activity upon our arrival at Pantanella was held under three murals in the PX building. A moment of silence and a vermouth toast in Italian and English was offered by

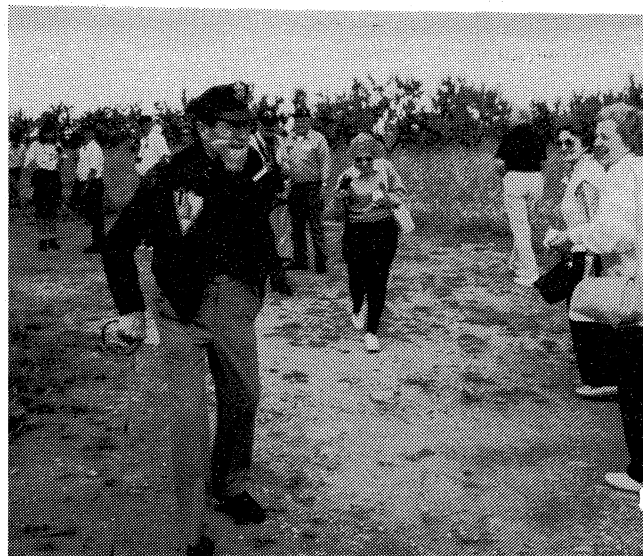
Sarah Magazzino, wife of Mike Magazzino of the 783rd. Her words, "After 43 years, thank God, our men have returned to Pantanella, and with good health, a good trip, and good friends." Art Feldhausen said the words Rev. Blouch said each morning at the briefing in memory of our fallen comrade.

The murals are in good shape and can be described as (1) A Sad Sack sitting on a tiny island with a girl under a palm tree; (2) Fifteenth Air Force Insignia, and (3) A bulldog looking MP holding Sad Sack by the nap of his neck.

THE WAY IT IS !

- The briefing room (S-2) has been filled in and a small addition added on the front.
- Group C.O. living quarters on the outside appears to be unchanged.
- The Group Dispensary building remains, but we did not go into it.
- The theatre (and used as a chapel) and PX building are intact and is used for storage. (In 1945 a new Chapel was constructed, and Chapel services were moved to it.)
- Olive, almond and filbert trees have replaced tufa huts, mess halls, clubs and tent areas; Grape arbors, wheat, and tomatoe fields have replaced the steel mat runways, tower, and bomb dumps.
- The original Italian farm buildings remain intact with few modifications to them.
- In a way it seemed so sad and lonely without the B-24 Bombers, the outrageous looking tufa huts (or in a few instances just plain rundown looking tents) and the "Good Buddies" that called this rag-tag collection of odd looking places "home".
- **CHAPEL** - We contributed to have a Memorial Chapel constructed and it is now intact except for the Bell Tower. Windows in the chapel have been filled in except for a small arch over each window, and it is currently being used as farm

Who is the "Rip Van Winkle"??



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storage. The inscribed marble pedestal has been broken into maybe ten pieces and was in with the bell tower rubble. Before leaving, I felt it would be appropriate to move the marble pieces over to the ground on the right side where the Cornerstone simply has 1945 carved into it. The inscription on the marble pedestal is in Italian and translated as follows:

**A PERMANENT MEMORIAL TO THE
VALOROUS SOLDIERS OF THE
465th BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H)
U.S. ARMY WHO HAVE OFFERED
THEIR LIVES DURING THE
SECOND WORLD WAR FOR
PEACE AND JUSTICE
1944-1945**

In addition to the memorial that was placed by the Italians the memorial placed at the time of the dedication of the chapel has been removed and broken. It was a column of marble with a B-24 affixed on top which was cast out of spent brass shell casings. Inscribed were the words"

**"IN ETERNAL MEMORY AND
HONOR TO OUR COMRADES OF
THE
465th BOMBARDMENT GROUP
(H), U. S. ARMY, WHO GAVE THEIR
LIVES FOR PEACE AND RIGHT-
EUSNESS IN WORLD WAR II.
1944 - 1945"**

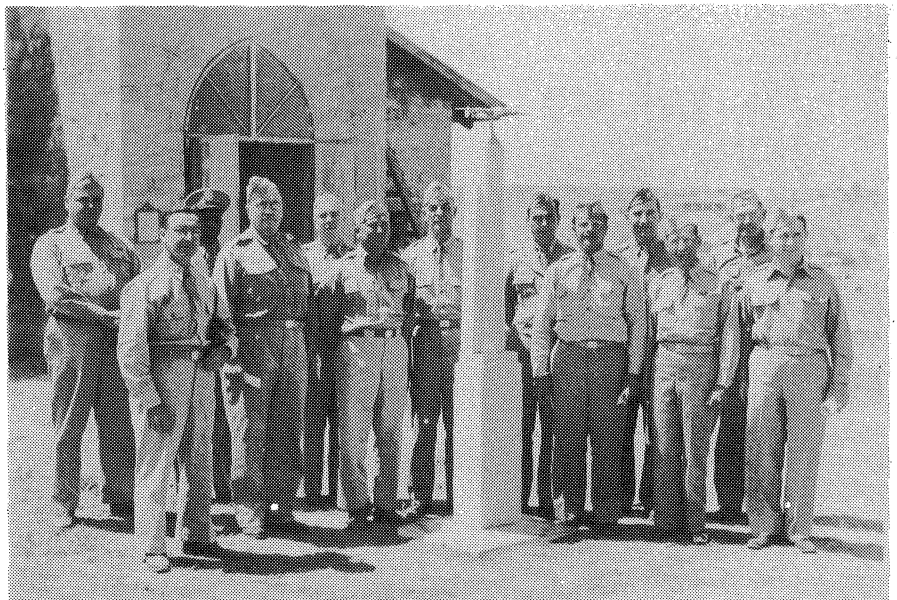
THE WAY IT WAS!

We traveled over 3500 miles by bus and had many discussions of what happened while stationed at Pantanella • Crewmen putting those hard combat chocolate bars under an arm to soften it a little • Taking beer up to cool it • Watching buddies go down in flames • What happened while a POW • Discussing various missions and targets • Interesting things that happened on the Airfield • The 780th, 781st., 782nd, and 783rd Squadrons were represented and I look forward to the group and squadron functions at our reunion in San Antonio.

WHY RETURN TO PANTANELLA?

Human nature often seems to prod a man into returning later in life to the scene of some meaningful event of his youth. Aerial combat is a most frightening experience where you can neither hide nor can you run away. If attacked by fighters you shoot back; if shot at by flack, you plowed through it and either it would get you or it wouldn't. In maturity there seems to be a longing to return to the scene of where it happened. In our youth we called that place "Pantanella".

Thnaks for the report O. J. I wonder why the name of the Rip Van Winkle never appeared on our "not located" files. This mystery, and others, will be solved at the reunion. We'll have more photos and a follow up report in the next newsletter.



The above photo was taken at the Dedicatory Service at the Chapel about two weeks before the end of the war. L to R, Chaplains; Albert Trickett, Camillus Angel, Douglas Ray, Bishop Bromley Oxnam, Chaplain Eugene F. McCahey, Lt. Col Wm. F. Day, Chaplains; Milton Beebe, Philip Oxnam, Herbert Blouch, John Eastwood, George McMurray, Maurice Flaherty, John Richards.

FOLDED WINGS

Rev. Herbert R. Blouch passed away March 31, 1988.

Lewis F. Cato passed away November 3, 1987.

Carl C. Halpern passed away November 3, 1987.

Arthur C. Eaton passed away October 10, 1985.

Rev. Herbert R. Blouch - We were notified of his passing by William Powell, Secretary of the 783rd, and by Gale Graham, group information and education officer. Gale wrote that Herbert "Chappy" Blouch bunked with him and Jack Lee, surgeon, Horace Troy, PX officer, and George Herman, Red Cross field director. He notes that he was always a cheerful guy and a regular Joe.

William Powell's letter to Mrs. Mildred C. Blouch tells the story. I quote, "Reverend Blouch was the 465th Bomb Group's Chaplain during our combat days in Italy during WWII. I remember bowing my head in silent prayer before each combat mission. He gave many of us the intestinal fortitude necessary to carry our fight to the enemy. The moral courage and blessings he bestowed upon us, gave us strength to continue. We lost a true friend with the passing of our Group Chaplain Reverend Blouch. We will miss him."

There is not an air crew member who does not remember hearing Rev. Blouch's consoling words at the end of the briefing.

"OH GOD, THOU WHO HAS CREATED THE HEAVENS AND THE EARTH, AND IN THY NATURAL WAY, HAS MADE IT POSSIBLE FOR MAN TO SUSTAIN HIMSELF IN FLIGHT THRU THE AIR, WE ASK AGAIN THY BLESSINGS ON THESE MEN AS THEY GO OUT TO FLY HIGH IN THE SKY, GRANT THEM COURAGE TO DO A GOOD JOB, PROTECT THEM AGAINST THE ASSULTS OF THE ENEMY, AND MAY THEIR FAITH BE UNFALTERING IN THEE. WE PRAY IT SO IN THE NAME OF HIM WHO HAVE GIVEN US POWER OVER ALL THE THINGS OF THE EARTH. THRU JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD. AMEN."
Chaplain H. R. Blouch.

Lewis Cato was navigator on Hyman Newman's crew, was in good health until collapsing and dying of a heart attack. Walt Longacre just recently located his brother Joseph, who lived in Aiken, South Carolina, and learned of Lewis' death. Lewis lived in Clemson, South Carolina and was a specialist in beef cattle. He returned to school after the war and received his masters.

Carl Halpern's death was reported by Bruce Miller.

Arthur C. Eaton's death was reported by Oliver Graham. I had an address for Arthur and sent it to Oliver. I was not certain of it and could not get a reply from the address. Oliver called the Sheriff and received the information that Arthur had died sometime between 1985 and 1988. Later I was able to verify death on October 10, 1985.

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



Group Officers September 1944. Rear L to R. Russell Barnhardt, James Wray, Harold Bullock, William Vaughn, Charles Clark, Joshua Foster, Richard Pease. Next row - Herbert Blouch, George Herman, Daniel Dugan, Henry Morris, William Kantor, Gale Graham, Edgar Moody, Arthur McUmbert, Arthur Askey, Roberts Johnson, Frank Alois, Horace Troy., William Bigelow. Kneeling - Eugene Swartz, John Whirlein, Charles Harding, Stephen Marczynski, John Fisher, Irving Rosenberg (now Roberts), Tormone, Unknown, Carol Mitchell. Sitting - Abraham Mandlovitz, Donald Stratton, Ray Tyler, and John Herd. Four of the above officers (Clark, Pease, Graham and Wray), plus two men (Tucci and Clement) are already registered from group. How about hearing from more of you from group? This is a group reunion and special arrangements have been made to honor our group.

ROBERT C. JONES - This crew was assigned to the 781st on 31 December 1944. As it happened in a number of cases, we did not get to know some crews since they may have been in the squadron only a short period of time before being lost. Also, we often did not know their fate after they went down. The Jones crew was one such crew. The weather was bad in January, so the first mission was scheduled for Jones on January 20th and I was assigned to take the crew on their first mission. It was the coldest (minus 55 degrees C) mission the squadron flew and one that required careful fuel control since we were at high altitude for a long distance due to weather, and five of the group planes did not make it back due to fuel shortage.

Jones was next scheduled on 5 February on the mission to Winterhafen oil storage depot at Regensburg. He was assigned Yellow H, a bit war weary and a typical assignment for a new crew. Bombing was by radar and, although the record does not give the report on flak, it was probably less than normal. After leaving the coast of Yugoslavia the first indication of trouble came when Jones called he had a fuel prob-

lem. After receiving a heading for Ancona no more was heard from Jones. To many of us that was the last information we knew and went home after the war not knowing what had happened.

In our early search for our comrades, or their families, Marcel Snyder located Robert Jones' sister. He received a reply and forwarded it to me. I then contacted his sister to see if she could give me any further information. She wrote that her mother had only received a missing-in-action notice, that the whole crew went down with the plane, and debris was found floating in the sea. She said her mother had died the previous year and did not want to check any further under the circumstances. She also did not want me to search any further for her since there were no other members of the family living, and this was only bringing back the sorrow of losing her brother. She wrote, "I will always love and cherish the memories of my younger brother who was so brave to accomplish his goal of learning to fly. That had been his ambition since the age of eight when he had his first ride. Your reunion in September is for the brave boys who fought with your

squadron."

I wanted to verify the crew and find out more information, so Ben Donahue obtained the Missing Air Crew report for me. In the account was a report by Alfred Mullan and signed by William Ellett, Adjutant. Mullan was monitoring the radio and heard Jones call Able One, but did not get a response. He then called Easy One and reported he had only 270 gallons of fuel left. He indicated he was going to try to make the coast of Italy. Easy One advised Jones to call Big Fence for a heading. Big Fence replied and gave Jones a heading of 165° to Ancona. Jones advised that he did not have very much fuel and wanted to know the weather at Ancona. He was advised it was 100 feet. Jones then advised Easy One and Big Fence that he was heading 165°. No further transmissions were monitored from Yellow H. No one ever saw the aircraft again, and it was assumed that they ditched not long after his last radio message and all men were lost.

Since the crew was in the squadron such a short time, no photos of the crew have been located. If anyone has any photo of any of the crew we would appreciate hearing from you.



The following is from Frank Hylla's home town newspaper the Cold Springs Record (Minnesota) dated November 10, 1987.

SALUTE TO VETERANS - Lest We Forget

In 1919, President Woodrow Wilson proclaimed November 11 as Armistice Day to remind Americans of the tragedies of war. Nineteen years later a law was adopted making it a federal holiday and 16 years later, in 1954, the name was changed to Veteran's Day. During a brief period from 1971 to 1978 the holiday was changed to the fourth Monday in October, but Congress voted to return it to November 11, which coincides with Great Britain and France's observance.

Minnesota has always been in the forefront for sending the best of its young men and women into the armed forces. The monuments in Veteran's Park here attest to the patriotism of this city's young people and their devotion to the principals of this country.

On Wednesday, November 11, once again the stars and stripes will line our main streets and fly from many of our homes and businesses.

Lest we forget, they remind us to honor those, both living and dead, who served to preserve this country and its ideals from the Revolutionary War to the War of 1812, Mexican, and Civil Wars, the Spanish American War to World Wars I and II, through the Korean War and the Vietnam War to today's men and women serving across the world. There are not many families who have not been touched by the service to this country by one of their own.

Taking into account the hardships of basic training, the weeks of specialized in-

doctrination, the long months away from home, family and loved ones, at times the wounds, both physical and emotional, the fear of or actual loss of freedom, and the tragic loss of life are all symbolized for a few hours in these stars and stripes.

You and I may say we love our freedom, that the greatest thing about being born in America is that freedom we all enjoy.

Frank Hylla knows what that word "freedom" means. Unlike many of us, he lost that freedom on June 30, 1944. Co-pilot of a B-24 bomber headed for Blechhammer, Germany, he was shot down over Lake Balaton with first, second, and third degree burns over his head and hands. He was one of eight crew members to survive by parachuting out of the burning plane. Two crew members went down with the bomber.

Frank was taken to a Hungarian military hospital for three days, along with another crew member, Jerry Jolicouer, who was severely burned. The two were transferred to a civilian hospital. Along the route Frank traded two chocolate bars for a Y.M.C.A. diary with "Wartime Log" on the cover. His entry for July 10, 1944, ten days after being captured, says, "one of the saddest days; Jerry died at 4...10 p.m. from burns received."

The diary also records that Frank transferred back to a military hospital on July 20. On August 8, 1944, Frank was allowed to visit the grave of his comrade.

On August 9, Hylla left for Budapest for interrogation. Although only recorded in

the diary as "solitary confinement" and "second interrogation," Frank was beaten on his bandaged hands and then on his back by SS men. He was held in a second floor room with a small window.

Everyday he saw someone hung in the yard outside

Everyday he saw someone hung in the yard outside. The SS were the Nazi's special police, and, in most areas, a law unto themselves.

The diary notes that on August 22 Hylla left for Stalag Luft 3, and arrived August 26. There he would share rations, jokes, stories, and news from home with barracks-mates. In the next year he would learn to cook cakes and pies, using

Red Cross packaged crackers and ingredients called Klim and Condendo. He and the others would strain to hear the airplanes overhead flying to bombing raids.

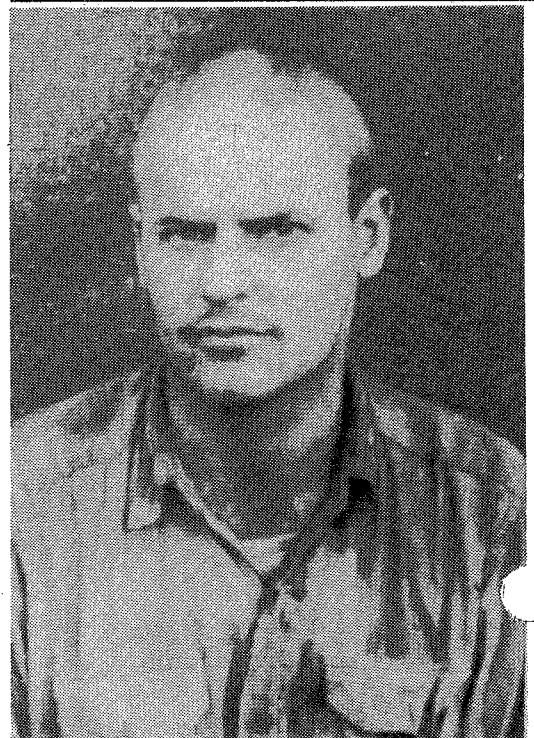
The diary would be the record during the next year, of the disappointment of a wrongly guessed D-day, the evacuation of Stalag Luft 3 from Saigon on 30 minutes notice, when the allies were deemed too close. The pages held entries concerning delousing, the best cook using Red Cross packages, the sightings of airplanes, and the rumors of how the war was going. It notes down days and up days, celebrations with Spam and canned cheese, and rare days when there was enough to eat to actually be getting full.

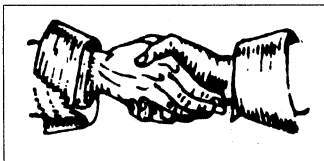
In April of 1945 the tone of the notations contain more hope and controlled optimism, phrases with hopes of spending time with his wife, Florence, to doing such things as going to movies, and helping to prepare a holiday bash.

On April 27, the tiny bunched handwriting takes on a whole new look; it enlarges to three times the size and is almost illegible. It says in part, "so excited can't even write. Thank the Almighty God we'll be out of here soon. . . . Moral 100%. April 29, 1945, 12:45 - I felt so happy I cried when I saw Old Glory. It was the most beautiful sight I've seen. It took my breath away."

The camp was liberated but not evacuated immediately. During the time they were still there, Hylla and barrack-mates decided

In the upper left photo is Frank Hylla during training days before going overseas. The photo below shows Frank in much grimmer days - a POW after bailing out of a flaming B-24. He received serious burns and his hair had not yet grown back.





WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Dwight M. Clark, 106 Reed Ct., Milford Center, Ohio 43045.

Conard D. Croston, PO Box 202, Romney, WV 26757, Phone 304 822-5789.

Phillip Feigenson, 2771 West 7 Mile Rd., Detroit, MI 48221. Phone 313 341-1457.

Lawrence H. White, 4651 Cerise Ave., New Orleans, LA 70127. Phone 504 242-0806.

Robert F. Ledwith, 1030 Sande St., Neenah, WI 54956. Phone (414) 725-9316.

Dwight Clark's address was sent in by James Reed.

Conard Croston was located by Pierre J. J. Kennedy. Pierre ordered a Missing Air Crew Report and located Conard through his WWII address on the report. Croston was engineer on the Poole crew and later transferred to the 782nd. I do not have full particulars, but I do know he went down with the 782nd and was POW. More when we hear from Conard.

Phillip Feigenson's name was sent in by James Reed. He said he would be easy to find as his father owned FAYGO Bottling Co., in Detroit. I called and found Phil had retired, but was able to locate him through the phone company.

Lawrence White (Engineer/Schuster) was located by Walt Longacre through the New Orleans Police Chief. After receiving a letter from Walt the police department called Walt to tell him they had located Lawrence. I don't know what Walt puts in his letter, but he gets results!

Robert F. Ledwith (Navigator/Tryon crew) was located by Pierre J. J. Kennedy. Pierre sent letters to the New York and New Jersey area and one letter was returned with Robert's Wisconsin address.

ADDRESS CORRECTIONS - John Karduck 1513 Jefferson Ave., Portage, PA 15946.

Edward Hansen, 210 145th Place SE, Bellevue, WA 98007.

Melford Baderschneider, 325 Via Promesa, Nipomo, CA 93444.

Michael La Bella, 829 Country Club Dr. SE #1B, Rio Rancho, NM 87124.

Jewell C. Shelnutt, 2506 Mamie Lane, Van Cleave, MS 39564.

Thanks for sending in your address changes.

THE SEARCH GOES ON - Here's one we have a lead on, but it will no doubt take some time to locate him. Richard Grantham has been living in France for the past 20 to 25 years and even his family has lost track of

him. The police chief in Fresno gave Walt Longacre the phone number of Richard's brother. Since it was in California I followed up and found out that Richard returned to college, graduated and stayed on for post graduate work. He worked for a time for Hughes Tool, then some teaching, and then a tragedy in the family disturbed him greatly and he left for France never to return.

He has been a professor in chemistry at a college in Montpellier, France. It is believed that he may have moved to another college in recent years. His daughter visited California eight or ten years ago and had promised to get Richard to correspond with the family, but they have not heard from him. OK who knows French? Maybe Joe Tucci in Monaco can give it a try.



MAIL CALL

Bruce Miller wrote that he had a one month holiday and returned home to find ten letters from his buddies in the armament section. Here's a man who really has sparked the armament section. Now 14 of the section are actively corresponding. Bruce also reported several address changes, the death of Carl Halpern, etc.

James P. Reed took a while to reply, but finally filled us in on his time in the 781st. He was a radar mechanic and got a ride over on the T. G. Poole crew. After six months with the 781st he transferred to the 782nd. He remembers when B-24 number 5,000 was assigned and when the new NCO club was opened. He writes, "I was at the south end of the runway when one of the planes blew up on take-off just about 30 feet off the ground. I had checked out equipment one night about mid-night, then drove to the mess hall for a late snack when the plane that I had just left blew up. It had two 2000 pound bombs on it. If I remember correctly, Lt. John Hughes was the main radar navigator. On one mission, on the return, the group ran into very severe weather. The Group Commander called Hughes to lead them home. He hit the base right on the nose using radar. Later he was called to group headquarters for a commendation." After the war James went to work for the Post Office, stayed there 32 years, the last five as Postmaster.

Jack Van Slyke wrote a note and sent a photo of the B-24 being restored. His photo is of the wing section being restored at Kissimmee, Florida, where the entire plane will be assembled later this year.

Pierre J. J. Kennedy is the first to report he has received his POW medal. He sent

in his application to St. Louis on April 25th and received it from Randolph AFB, Texas, on June 6th. How about bringing it to the reunion, Pierre, so we can all see what it looks like

THE UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE HAS REQUESTED HELP FROM THE 781st BOMB SQUADRON!

I received a letter from the Postal Service asking to help locate three "missing" WWII veterans, or their families, whose mail they are trying to return.

The request is the result of a discovery of a bag of mail never sent by a sailor who had promised to send them for the men who were on the Liberty ship bound for North Africa. Some of the men went to the 15th Air Force near Foggia. The story is in the January Readers Digest. Three men, Morris A. Johnson, Clarence F. Smith and John J. Thomas have not yet been located. I will be in touch with Walt Longacre, chief sleuth, and we'll see what we can do. In the meantime Walt, and you men who helped out in our squadron search, you can pop a few buttons. Somehow the word got out that we did a pretty good job on our search!

USTACHI FOLLOW UP - Ben Donahue recalls a story about a 464th crew that he knew that trained where he did in Tonapah. He writes, "During a mission over occupied territory the Robert Hough crew (Kenneth Hunt co-pilot) made forced landing in Northern Yugoslavia. They had a P-38 escort as they made the landing. The pilot of the P-38 made a low pass to see that they landed OK, but he got shot up by ground fire. He also was forced to land on the field and was taken prisoner along with the B-24 crew.

Upon landing they did not know of the hidden troops nearby. They turned out to be the dreaded Ustachi. Briefing always emphasized the inhumanity of the Ustachi, so the crew and the P-38 pilot were a bit worried when the rag tag group identified themselves as Ustachi.

Surprisingly, the crew and P-38 pilot were treated well. Their opinion was that the Ustachi were attempting to make a favorable impression upon the Allies in spite of their horrible past record.

While being held captive they noticed an old beat up Junkers tri-motor on a nearby abandoned airfield. One day they attempted an escape by trying to start the three engines. Either the engines were just worn out, or there was a fuel problem, or a problem with the German language. They failed in the escape attempt, but eventually were freed by the advancing Russian Army and returned to the 464th."

to celebrate with a "special supper." Frank's duty was to ice the cake. He was stirring the dubious concoction when a pair of Patton boots came into his view. Frank was on his feet, icing bowl in hand, by the time his gaze got to the pearl handled revolvers. As he saluted, General Patton reached over with an index finger swiping a taste of the icing, which he immediately spit out, asking, "Is this the slop you've been eating, soldier?"

Freedom means different things to different people. Certainly, Frank Hylla has his own understanding. Maybe one of Frank's prison-mates summed it well for many: "Today, I guess, is one of the finest feelings a man can have. Liberty, one thing that a person should guard, has been returned to me, and I humbly thank God for it." R. M. Smith.

B-24J RESTORATION REPORT - In reply to the request for someone near Stow, Massachusetts to "check out" this project I received a reply from Pierre J.J. Kennedy. He then went to Stow to take pictures and filed the following report. "Bob Collings and about 10 other men were working in a large barn on the instrument panel, associated cockpit parts, gun turrets, plus other plane parts. Some men were cleaning bomb bay structure parts that were removed from the fuselage, and others were working on motors and hydraulic parts. The larger parts are disassembled, cleaned, repainted or coated, and any deteriorated valves, washers, seals or bearings are replaced.

I learned that a big problem is obtaining B-24 parts. A worker told me that some of the cockpit parts just can't be had anywhere. He mentioned a part next to the pilot's four throttles.

Collings and his co-workers work Saturdays and Tuesday nights. Some, like Collings, are there more often. They belong to the New England Escadrille, which has members all over. They have participated in

the restoring of a B-17 and a B-25. These planes are flyable and are flown around for exhibits and air shows. The men are about our age and some are airmen from the 15th Air Force.

They are really working hard on this project. From the barn, Dick Warren had us follow him by car, about six miles, to Collings' huge new hanger. Inside was the B-24 fuselage - just the body itself. Also in the hanger was a PT17 Stearman biplane. Also a restored F-80.

The fuselage will be shipped to Florida in June where the final assembly will take place. The wings, tail surfaces, engines and props are in Florida now. The assembly will be done at Vintage Aircraft in Kissimmee, Florida, near Orlando."

Thanks for the report Pierre. More photos will be available at the reunion. We'll also have a discussion about participation in this project.

Since receiving Pierre's report I received a letter from the Collings Foundation updating their work. Bob Collings reports support from the Paul Revere Chapter of the Air Force Association, the 2nd Air Div. of the 8th Air Force and the Liberator Club.

Major corporations that built or supplied equipment for the B-24 were contacted, but none to date have contributed any funds toward the estimated cost of \$600,000 needed for restoration.

The overall project is now 50% complete (last report if you remember was 33%) so it's moving along nicely.

The funds available at the start of this project are now exhausted and the Foundation is trying to get the word out to all interested B-24 fans and friends since they lack the support of the corporations. They are asking all fans and friends to make at least a \$24 contribution towards general restoration, or they have various items you can contribute towards - Radios \$75, Oxygen

Bottles \$50, Guns \$350, Turret Overhaul \$10,000, Dedicated Crew Position \$5000 (two already reserved), etc.

I have many photos and a great deal more information that will be available at the reunion. In the meantime tax deductible donations can be mailed to:

The Collings Foundation
137 Barton Road
River Hill Farm
Stow, MA 01775
Phone 617-568-8924.

Remember, of the 19,256 produced, there are only 10 or 12 B-24s in existence today. The B-24 dropped more bombs, completed more missions, and involved more people than any aircraft in our history. Remember this will be the **ONLY B-24J** in the world that will be completely restored and **FLYING!!**

465th BOMB GROUP REUNION EXPECTED TO BE ANNOUNCED ON NATIONAL TELEVISION

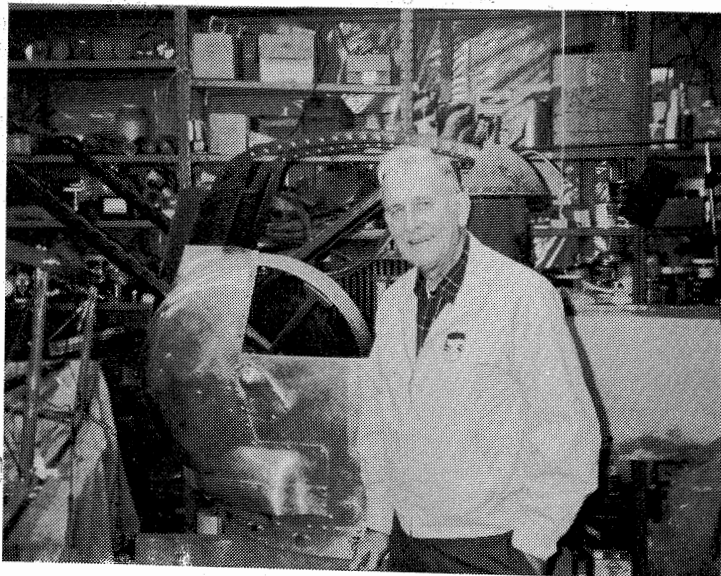
Keep tuned to your NBC TV station for the "Today Show" on September 14th or 15th. Willard Scott should be announcing our reunion (465th Bomb Group).

HISTORY BOOK - I happen to have some idea of the amount of work that Harry is putting into this book. He leaves no stones unturned. If you have been asked to send in a photo or story, please do so promptly or it will not get included. Harry expects to have a lay-out at the reunion. We will be taking orders and printing will start shortly after the reunion. Price has not been determined, but it will be well below similar books due to the preparation detail being done by Harry with his computer and photo lab.

REUNION BOOKLET AND PINS - Those of you who are attending the reunion will be able to purchase the booklets there if you have not already ordered one. If you are not attending you can send \$15 to Russ Maynard and it will be sent to you. We have sufficient squadron and group pins ordered and will have them available to those not attending the reunion. Information on pins in the next newsletter.

B-24 Liberator Reunion '89 - 50th Anniversary. It will be held May 19-21, 1989 at Fort Worth, Texas, and another bash will be held later in the year in San Diego. The 781st is fully registered, there will be photos of our planes, etc. More details at our reunion and in later newsletters.

Donations/Dues - The board of directors voted to continue voluntary contributions and not assess dues. If you can afford a \$10 or \$20 bill please send to Russ Maynard, Treasurer. If you are coming to the reunion you will have an opportunity to contribute there.



HOW TO GET AWAY FROM IT ALL -

As reported in the last newsletter Paul "Hoot" Hosier was located in far away Alaska. Paul was an orderly room clerk at Pantanella, then, after three months, decided he wanted something more exciting and was transferred to the armament section where he loaded bombs and ammo. Paul writes the following letter;

"I returned to my job as a brakeman on a narrow gauge lumber train in 1946. It was a nine months a year job, so in the winter I worked for the State of California plowing snow on Highway 50 near Lake Tahoe. After eleven years of that I ran a cat in the woods skidding logs until November, 1958, when I went to work for Aerojet General as a rocket test technician, which was setting up rocket motors (solid) for just about every rocket motor in use at the time. After a little over ten years there I was laid off due to lack of work. Then I tended bar in a dining house for five years, then liquor store clerk for two years, and back to skidding logs until 1981. All the jobs were within 20 miles of Placerville, California. In 1981 I sold everything I owned and moved to Anchorage, Alaska. In 1982 I went commercial fishing with a guy and I made \$2200, received \$800 of that, then the guy died. So I made \$800 that year. Then I was off work until December, 1982 when I went back to tending bar on skid row in Anchorage. I did that until June, 1983 when I quit. I was off work until October, 1983 at which time I went to work for the Salvation Army as a home maintenance for senior citizens. I did that until 1985 at which time I inherited a couple of bucks. I was 61 at the time. I did nothing until July, 1986 when I built this cabin out here in the boon-docks (bush), and have been living here ever since. My nearest neighbor is seven miles away, by snowmachine in the winter, and in the summer the only way out is by float plane. There is a large population of moose and black bear here - like living in a zoo.

This place where I live is a mountain top about seven miles long by two miles wide with an 800 foot drop on three sides of about an 80% grade to the Matanuska Glacier. There are creeks on three sides and the Matanuska River on the other side. All of the water comes off of the glaciers into the streams, so I guess the temperature of the water is one degree above freezing. Too cold to swim in. I'm pretty isolated here so the moose and black bear don't get hunted. Last summer, from my cabin, I saw nine bear, three of them cubs from one sow. Last August it had showered for three days and during the nite the rain stopped and it cleared off. There is a two by three foot bridge from my back door to the bank where it is dug out for the foundation. I got up about 10 A.M. and stepped out on this bridge. I was stand-

ing there admiring the day and started looking towards the lake and was panning around when I looked over my left shoulder - there was a big black bear about 15 feet away admiring his next meal from a fat old man. I slapped the side of the cabin twice to scare it away, but it didn't move, so I decided to go in the cabin to get my gun and camera and take some pictures. When I came out the bear was going over the hill. That sure gives the old heart a rush when you first see a wild bear that close.

For three days after that I carried a .44 when I went to the little house on the hill.

In the winter of '86 my snowmachine quit and I had to walk home. As long as I stayed on the snowmachine trail it was pretty good walking, but off the trail the snow was about two feet deep and soft. This lake I'm on is 3000 by 1000 feet and the trail was about 200 feet from the shoreline and trees. By the time I got to the lake it was 7 P.M. and had been dark for three hours. I started walking out on the lake and pretty soon a moose started snorting at me. The moose was on the far side of the lake. I knew if the moose charged I wouldn't see it until it was too late to make it to the trees and maybe safety, so I kept walking and the moose didn't charge, but I didn't linger on the lake. The temperature was about five below zero but when I got in the cabin I was wet with sweat.

I probably won't make it to the reunion, as much as I would like to, but it is still too early in the year to give a definitive answer. Here are \$20 dues to send to Russ Maynard.

Yes, I saw and heard the Good Morning America deal. I was not watching and heard "781st Bomb Squadron Reunion." I looked up and it went off the screen then. I wrote a letter to G.M.A. to see what I could find out, but didn't have G.M.A.'s address, so I still had my letter when I received a letter from Bill Barrie, Bill George, and Bruce Miller.

I have a question - the B-24 you guys were standing in front of, was that the one with all the signatures on it that was Willow Run's 5000th? If not, do you know

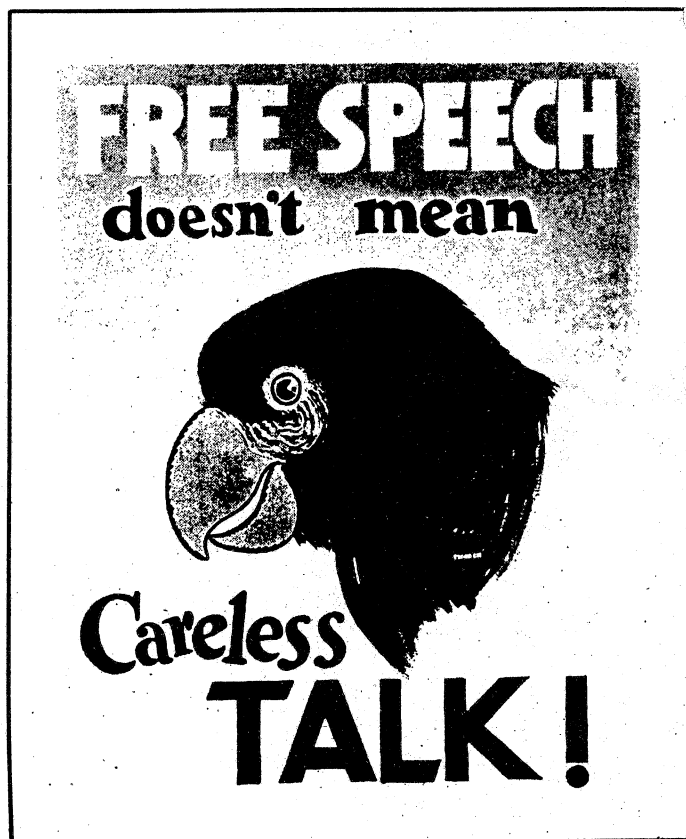
what happened to it?

Well Jim, If I get this mailed before the ice goes off the river, this will probably be the last letter I'll send or receive until the river freezes next winter. It was December fourth before the ice was thick enough to cross this past winter." *It was signed Paul "Hoot" Hosier. Wouldn't you like to spend a few days with Hoot.?*

SHORT STORIES - There are a lot more out there. Just everyday happenings. Here's one I remember. My crew related an experience to me one day. It was a new way to turn out the light at night. As you know the tents had a single bulb hanging in the center of the tent. My crew had worked out a deal for each to take turns on turning it out each night. This certain night was Joe Cox's turn. You had to know Joe - he played the edges and like to be tested. The last man to show up, etc. When Joe was reminded it was his turn to turn lights out he casually reached over, pulled out his .45 and fired off a round. Then all was dark and quite. A few moments later the MP's were around asking if they heard a shot. The word was mum and finally all was peaceful again.

Joe made it through the war. He would smoke his cigar in the ball turret when on oxygen. He showed up one morning for a mission still not over his partying from the

Below - A World War II Poster



night before and I'm sure the crew could tell more stories on him. He got killed a year after the war in a car accident. No doubt trying the limits of the car or road.

THE ROSTER now stands at 595 located and 360 in Folded Wings. In addition there are 43 Honorary (Family members of deceased) and 30 Group personnel. No finer squadron or group ever flew!

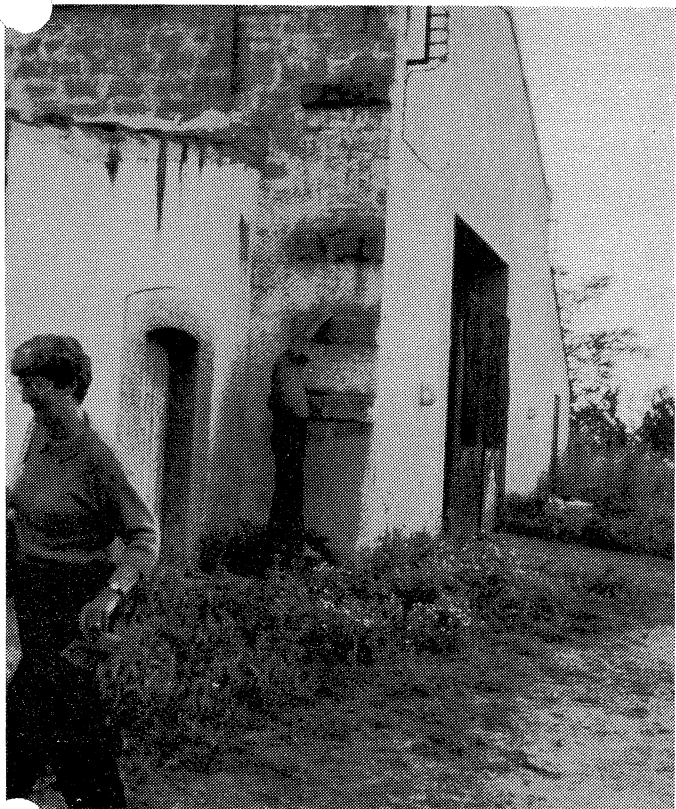
TEXAS ALWAYS DOES THINGS IN A BIG WAY - Since our reunion is in Texas we expect 100% turnout (Sam Monroe excused)! We'll have to court martial those who don't hit the line. Judge Byron Thompson will officiate. Some of you men like Clayton McDaniel, Melvin Blye, John Messmore, and others. Let's hear from you!

NEWSLETTER CONTRIBUTIONS include photos from Walter Clausen and O.J. Cowart on the Pantanella tour and Pierre J.J. Kennedy on the B-24 restoration. Help in identification from Jim Wray, Gale Graham and Harry Carl on the old photos. And the many stories and information from many of you to help make the newsletter worth while and refreshes many memories. Thank you one and all.



WING AND GROUP LEADERS - With rank at the time the men are; standing L to R, Lt. Col. Charles F. McKenna, Deputy Group CO 464th BG (formerly 781st Squadron Commander), Col. William Redding, Squadron CO of one of the 464th squadrons (Later a Maj. Gen.), Seated L to R, Col. Schroeder, 464th BG Commanding Officer, B. Gen. George Acheson, 55th Wing Commander, and Col. Charles A. Clark, 465th BG Commanding Officer.

Below are two photos of the theatre and PX. The one on the left was taken by the recent tour and shows one of the men replacing the key to the front door on the second rock ledge. The photo on the right is from Gale Graham (Group I & E Officer). It appears as though the front door was modified to accommodate the farm equipment now stored in the theatre. In the photo on the left what appears to be a very narrow door on the far right of the building is the PX door. Inside here is where the tour photo on the front page was taken. Many more photos are promised to be at the reunion and more will appear in the next newsletter.



REUNION
781ST BOMB
SQD.
 (465 BOMB GP)
 San Antonio, TEXAS
 SEPT. 15-18
 (415) 325-8356
 WW II H-24

REUNION INFORMATION

WHAT TO BRING - Saturday, or any time you feel like it, those having WWII uniforms, caps, jackets, etc., will be wearing them, so bring yours along if you have any. Also photos, escape maps, or other items that may be of interest to your comrade in arms.

Please bring CASH to pay for the meals and registration. It makes it easier for the treasurer to settle with the hotel.

There will not be any formal affairs - normal dress requirements. Remember that the daily average minimum is 69 degrees and maximum is 89.8 degrees! And the rainfall average is 3.71 inches for September.

SINGLE MEN do you want to share a room? If you do please drop me a note and I'll inform you of others who desire to do the same.

HELPERS NEEDED - Some of you have already volunteered, so check in at registration to find out where you can help.

OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS are elected at each reunion. If you would like to serve submit your name to the association secretary, Ben Donahue. Election and other association business will be taken up at the Saturday morning business session.

REUNION - TO GO OR NOT TO GO - I'm sure some of you have given some thought and cannot make a decision about attending. You may think you will know very few, not much in common with each

other, too many drinkers, won't have much to do and get bored, embarrassed to be using a cane, etc. Then there is the image that the American Legion used to have when the men were young - a "raise hell" type of get-together. You can be assured that none of these reasons exist. Just call someone who has attended or look at the number who have who have attended for the second and third time. The facts are that most, if physically and financially able, have attended or are registered for succeeding reunions. Of those registered 89% have attended a previous reunion and 5% of those attending for the first time were not located in time to attend another reunion. So, 94% are returning to join old comrades in arms. Those attending bring their wives, who enjoy it as much as the men. Family members of deceased men are attending and returning again. Another example is Robert Gaston, totally blind and now registered for his third reunion. This year will be more important to all because it is a group affair, with many group men attending, and other squadrons will be there also. In addition to that the next reunion will be two years later - in 1990. Remember the tall man with the white beard and scythe - time is not in our favor.

So, plan on attending and expect to have a good time - you will not be disappointed.

OLD PERSONAL PHOTOS - It was Ralph Hendrickson, I believe, who suggested we wear a WWII photo to show how we looked then. If you want to do that

we will have extra name tag holders to put them in (2 1/2 tall by 4 inches wide).

REUNION PROGRAM

Wednesday - Hospitality open at noon and will remain open the rest of the day. Registration 2 to 5. No official association functions.

Thursday - Registration 10 to 5. Hospitality 10 to 4:30. Cocktails 5:30, dinner at 7:00, followed by program. This is our 781st squadron night.

Friday - Late registrations check in at Hospitality for registration. Hospitality open 10 until 10. The day is free except for those going to Lakeland Air Force Base. A chance to see beautiful San Antonio.

Saturday - 9:00 photo session in front of the Alamo a block away. Then 9:30 services at St. Joseph's Church two blocks away. Business session following until noon. About 1:30 an afternoon program with a briefing, slides, stories, etc. This will be a group affair. Evening cocktails 5:30, dinner at 7:00, followed by a short program. During cocktails and after dinner will be dancing to a band with that big band sound of music of our era. This officially ends the reunion. Sunday - Check-out and sad farewells for most.

Editors note - Time and space ran out again. Many more stories and information will have to wait for the reunion and future newsletters. This should be a great reunion - I hope you don't miss it!

Listed below are those registered by June 25th. Registration from group headquarters include Col. Charles Clark, Richard Pease, Gale Graham, Joe Tucci and Leslie Clement.

JAMES C. ALTHOFF
FRANK P. AMBROSE
HENRY A. AYRES
BERNARD BADLER
DANIEL E. BAILEY
JOHN R. BAKER, JR.
WILLIAM B. BARTLETT, JR.
JOHN B. BAUM
VINCENT A. BEESON
ARTHUR W. BOVETT, JR.
CHARLES H. BRAUD
VERNON G. BURDA
ROY N. BYRD, JR.
WARREN G. CARDEN
HARRY S. CARL, JR.
GAYTHOR L. CASS
RAYMOND D. CAUBLE
CHESTER L. CHILES
FRANCIS R. CLARK
DONALD E. CLODFELTER
DAVID B. COLEMAN
HUGH E. COOPER
O.J. COWART, JR.
CAROLYN CRABBE
RICHARD L. CRUTCHER, JR.
CARL V. DAHL
* LORRAINE DALTON
* MARK DALTON
* MRS. DOROTHY DE KRIEK
EUGENE C. DEAL
MICHAEL J. DEIRONIMI
MELVIN L. DERRY
LOUIS J. DESLATTE
JOHN R. DICKEY

BEN L. DONAHUE
JAMES F. DOWNS
WALTER W. DUDLEY
PAUL N. DURCKEL
HARRY R. EDWARDS
WILLIAM C. ELLETT
ROBERT W. ELLIOTT
LEONARD H. EMMEL
JOHN W. ERTEL
JOHN FANDREY
CHARLES V. FERICH
LEO A. FINK
DENNIS B. FLAHERTY
KENNETH G. FODEN
LOREN W. FOOTE
ROBERT R. GASTON
TILEO P. GIAMMARCO
OLIVER E. GRAHAM
FRANCIS D. GRIFFEN
WAYNE N. GRUBAUGH
GEORGE HAUSOLD
CHARLES R. HEMPHILL
RALPH D. HENDRICKSON
RAYMOND W. HILL
JACK W. HUDSON
FRANK T. HYLLA
DEAN F. JONES
WILLIAM H. JOSTWORTH
JOHN B. KENNEDY
PIERRE J.J. KENNEDY
GEORGE F. KILBY
FRANCIS K. KILL
CLARENCE A. KNOX
KENNETH A. KOCH

REUBEN L. KROGH
* PETER B. LAUGHNER
JOHN P. LAYNE
ALBERT P. LEBLANC
EARL R. LEINART
MILTON LEVINSON
LAWRENCE S. LILLY
WALTER M. LONGACRE
JAMES J. LYONS
ADRIAN A. MARTIN
FREDERICK C. MAUTE
RUSS T. MAYNARD
WILLIAM A. MCBRIDE
JOSEPH P. MC DEVITT
CHARLES F. MCKENNA III
HOMER L. MOELLER
ROBERT MOLDENHAUER
* NANCY MUSKOVIN
DON MYERS
ALBERT NAGEL
DEAN T. OTTO
GINO J. PELLESCI
KENNETH T. PULHAM
WILLIAM A. RACHOW
MORRIS R. RAPOPORT
CURTIS G. REED
KENNETH B. REHN
HARRY REUSS
DALE L. SAMUELSON
HERBERT L. SCHLOSSIN
ELMER L. SCHOEFFEL
EDWARD J. SCHREINER
HAROLD G. SCHUSTER
JAMES D. SHAFFER

* L. SHEILBY
WALKER H. SHIPLEY
MALLORY H. SIMMONS
GEORGE W. SINNER
CHARLES W. SPEER
DONALD D. STERN
BERTEL E. STIGBERG
WALTER H. SUTTON
KENNETH E. SUTTON, JR.
RICHARD L. SWANSON
ALBERT I. THOMPSON
BYRON W. THOMPSON
CHARLES I. TITTL, JR.
DONALD E. TOOMEY
RAY TRAUTMAN
FLOYD N. TRUDEAU
WILLIAM S. TYLAVSKY
JACK VAN SLYKE
JAMES E. WAGGLE, JR.
FRANK WASSENAAR
HOWARD G. WEISTLING
HENRY L. WILLET, JR.
ROYAL A. WILSON
STANLEY J. WINKOWSKI
ROBERT S. WOOTAN
JAMES W. WRAY, JR.
JOHN WROBLEWSKI
WILLIAM YUREK
JOHN ZADROZNY
JOHN C. ZARTMAN
CHARLES R. ZWERKO
BILLY BICKLEY
ROBERT MATHEWS