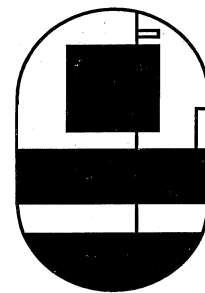




# PANTANELLA NEWS



JUL 1997

Published by 781st Bomb Squadron Association ©

NUMBER 49

## MISSION #56 FRIEDRICHSHAFEN, GERMANY

### Part #1 - Secret Order, Flight Plan, and Flight to the Target

*Editor's Comments: The following is the secret order for the 3 August 1944 mission as it was received by the 465th Bomb Group S-2. It will be typed as close to the original order as possible. Some lengthy weather reports and call signs will not be included.*

#### SECRET

HEADQUARTERS 55TH BOMB WING (H)

APO 520

US ARMY

OPERATIONS ORDER

NUMBER 143

2 August 1944

FRIEDRICHSHAFEN/MANZELL  
A/C WORKS by PFF.

Normal effort of 7 Groups of Fighters provide Window dispensing a/c. Provide penetration, individual Wing Target cover and withdrawal cover for Bombers. Remainder of Force provide offensive high cover for Bomber formation.

Normal effort of 4 Groups of the 55th Wing destroy FRIEDRICHSHAFEN/MANZELL A/C WORKS at

2 Groups of the 47th Wing destroy AVISIO RR BRIDGE. Key Point Time: 0855B.

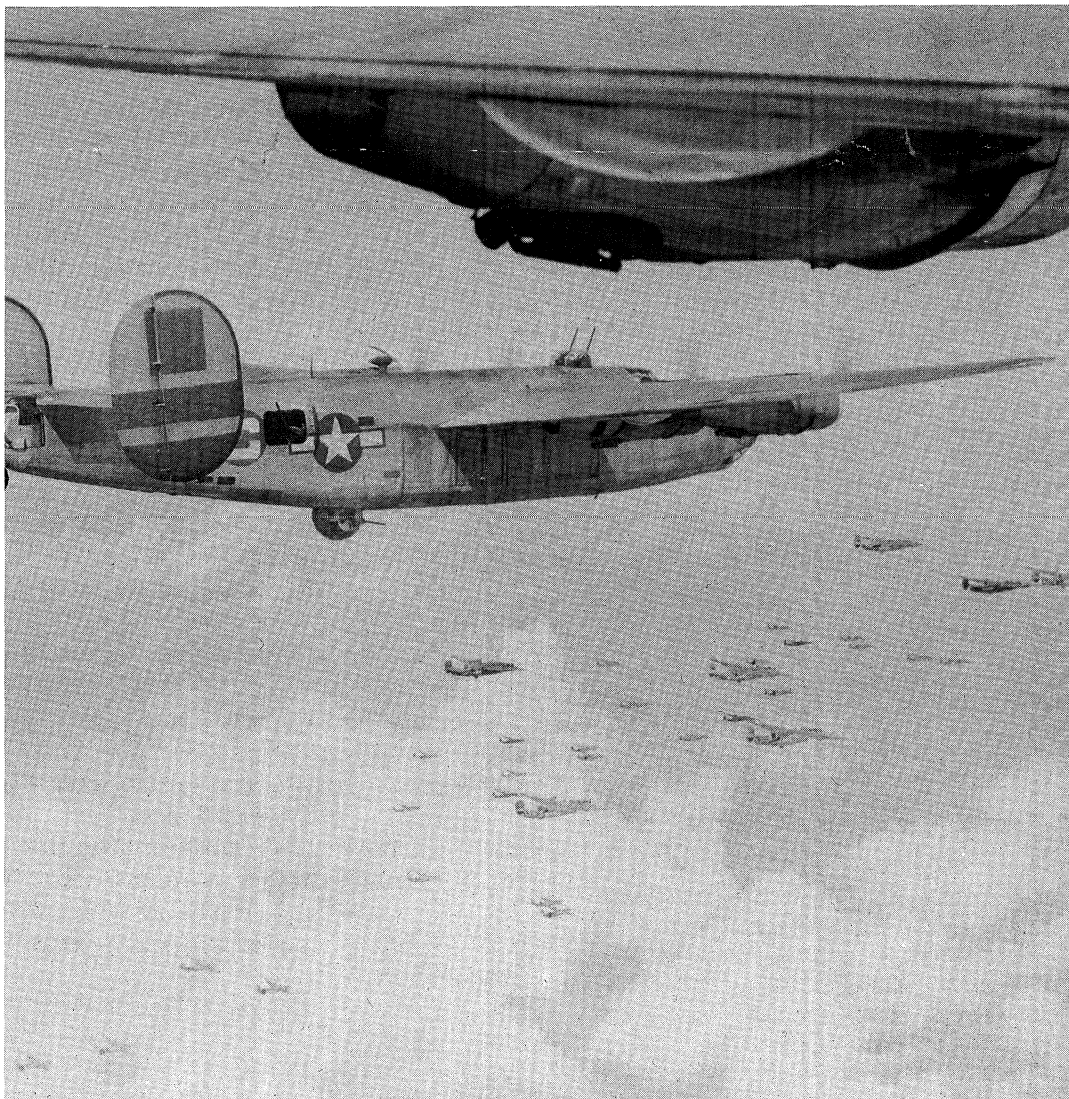
Group of 47th Wing destroy RA RR BRIDGE (4623N, 1118E). Key Point time: 0855B.

1 Group of 47th Wing destroy ST. MICHELE RR BRIDGE (4613N, 1108E). Key Point Time: 0855B. Alternate target of All Groups: Any M/Y, Bridge or section of Track along BRENNER PASS route.

3 Groups of 49th Wing destroy OBER RADERACH CHEMICAL WORKS at 1100B. Key Point Time: 0905B. Alternate target: FRIEDRICHSHAFEN / ZAHNRADFABRIK WORKS.

4 Groups of 304th Wing destroy LOWENTHAL A/C FACTORY and adjacent GEAR WHEEL FACTORY AT 1110B. Key Point Time: 0915B. Alternate target same as 49th Wing.

Groups of 5th Wing destroy OBER RADERACH CHEMICAL WORKS at 1130B. Key Point Time: 0927B. Alternate target:



Rendezvous Above the Clouds

1120B, 3 August 1944. This is Plan ABLE.

FIRST ALTERNATE TARGET: MANZELL WORKS by PFF.

BOMBER RENDEZVOUS: Group Rendezvous: 464th and 465th line rendezvous from ANDRIA to CANOSA at 6000 and 7000 feet. 465th falling in behind 464th in 464th area prior to rendezvous. 464th over ANDRIA at 0743B.

485th and 460th line rendezvous from ALTAMURA to GRAVINA at 8000 and 9000 feet. 485th approaching ALTAMURA from SANTEROMA IN COLLE. 460th approaching ALTAMURA from TORITTO. 485th over ALTAMURA at 0745B.

Wing Rendezvous: 464th lead over SPINAZZOLA on course at 0756B.

FIGHTER BOMBER RENDEZVOUS: To be signalled later.

ORDER OF FLIGHT: (Close column of Wings) 47th, 49th, 304th, 55th, (464-465-485-460), 5th.

ROUTE OUT: SPINAZZOLA to (4200N, 1620E) to KP (4340N, 1350E) to S. DONA (4538N, 1234E) to BRESSANONE (4643N, 1139E) to OBERSTDORF (4725N, 1017E)

781st Bomb Squadron Association  
2 Mount Vernon Lane  
Atherton, CA 94027  
(415) 325-8356

#### Officers

James C. Althoff, President, Editor  
Harry Carl, First Vice-President, Historian  
Walter M. Longacre, Vice-President  
O. J. Cowart, Jr., Treasurer  
Ben Donahue, Secretary

#### Board of Directors

James C. Althoff  
Harry S. Carl  
O. J. Cowart, Jr.  
Robert L. Freed  
Jack Van Slyke  
Robert L. Shetterly  
Kenneth E. Sutton  
Charles F. McKenna III, Emeritus

#### Chaplain

Loren W. Foote

#### Treasurer

O. J. Cowart, Jr.  
2634 Beluche.  
Galveston, TX 77551  
(409) 744-2942

#### **781st BOMB SQUADRON**

as part of the 465th Bomb Group, Fifteenth Air Force, flew B-24 Liberators from Pantanella Airfield located near Canosa, Italy, during WWII (1944-45). During it's 191 missions over Southern Europe it dropped thousands of tons of bombs, shot down 23 enemy aircraft (German) and received two Distinguished Unit Citations.

S. DONA to (4200N, 1620E) to Bases.

Bomb Load: All Groups load 10 500# GP fused .1 nose and non-delay tail. Intervalometer settings: All Groups at 50 feet.

Use MPI as shown on attached target charts.

PFF will fly lead, deputy lead and lead of 2nd attack each Group. If only 2 PFF A/C are available, they will fly lead and deputy lead, the 2nd attack wave dropping on the first attack wave.

Do not fly over SWITZERLAND.

Avoid flak areas at VENICE, MESTRE, TREFISO, (4532N, 1244E), BIBERACH (4805N, 0948E) and INNSBRUCK.

Lead crews will receive special briefing as every effort will be made to destroy targets.

Synchronous PFF bombing will be employed if smoke or cloud is encountered. PFF operators will conduct synchronous bombing procedure in all cases. In the event of PFF equipment failure, offset bombing using the Grid System will be employed.

Brief all crews on landing fields and emergency landings in SWITZERLAND.

All Groups, Last Resort Targets: Any point on the INNSBRUCK/VERONA RR which may be bombed visually, preferably a bridge.

Command Radio: Assigned Group Frequency for communications within the Group. VHF Wing Channel "B" for Group to Group within Wing.

Bomber Call Sign: 5th Wing - SEEDCAKE 4.

Fighter Call Sign: BURGLAR

Recall Sign: 5th Wing - WHISTLE

Carpet will be employed by all units so equipped.

Load 3 cartons of Window on aircraft of lead attack unit of each Group only, dispensing 6 units every 20 seconds from 2 minutes before the IP until clear of flak.

WEATHER FORECAST. Base: Sky clear.

Route: Clear over Adriatic as far north as Rimini with patchy altocumulus from Rimini to Alps. Over Alps 5/10 to 7/10 cumulus with main tops to 13,000 to 16,000'.

Target: 6/10 to 7/10 stratocumulus with base at 4000' and tops to 10,000'. 1/10 to 2/10 middle clouds at 12,000'.

Air -Ground visibility 15 miles or better.

Maps: GSGS No. 4072 EUROPE Air (Berne) 1:500,000  
GSGS No. 3982 EUROPE Air (Konstanz) 1:250,000

Target Chart: No. 13-109-NA (FRIEDRICHSHAFEN)  
Target also shown on TC No. 133-30-NA

Illustration No. 3(e) 47/2, 3, 4, 5 FRIEDRICHSHAFEN (MANZELL)

Target Information Sheet: No. GY 4775, 27 March 1944.  
Interpretation Report: No. DB 151, 20 July 1944 Photograph No. 20-083B FRIEDRICHSHAFEN.  
pelled a/c into operation use.

ENEMY SITUATION

FLAK.

FRIEDRICHSHAFEN: E Section Map No. 2083, 24 July

to IP to Target.

Last Point to start climb to Bombing Altitude (4510N, 1252E).

Key Point Time: 0952B at 12000 feet.

INITIAL POINT: B R E G E N Z (4730N, 0944E).

AXIS OF ATTACK: 307 degrees.

TARGET TIME: 1120B.

BOMBING ALTITUDE: 464-24,000 feet; 465-23,000 feet; 485-23,800 feet; 460-22,800 feet;

TARGET ELEVATION: 1335 feet.

RALLY: Right to (4755N, 0930E).

ROUTE BACK: Rally point to BRESSANONE to

1944 (not distributed to Groups) shows 1x4 emplaced and 1x4 railway heavy guns unoccupied and removed. These were formerly in target area. E Section Map No. 1723, 15 June 1944, distributed to Groups, pinpoints battery positions. Intense Intense Flak will be encountered, the accuracy of which may be less due to dispensing chaff by fighter a/c and to the greater amounts of chaff dispensed by bombers.

There is no evidence of smoke screen at the target, but in view of extension of use of smoke screen by enemy, and importance of target, smoke screen may be employed.

It is possible that 20 - 25 enemy fighters based at or near UDINE will intercept in North ADRIATIC area.

Probable scale of enemy effort in target area is 125 - 150 e/a (mostly ME 109 and some FW 190 including 15 - 20 twin engine fighters).

On previous attacks of FRIEDRICHSHAFEN, e/a, especially FW 190 a/c, have been very aggressive.

It is expected that e/a may follow bomber formations 50 - 60 miles from target area.

**SIGNIFICANCE OF TARGET:** Directive of USSTAF gives highest priority in South GERMANY to installations relating to jet propelled and pilotless a/c of which the FRIEDRICHSHAFEN/MANZELL Dornier Werk is one. This target was damaged in previous attacks, and must be totally destroyed to frustrate enemy plan to produce jet propelled a/c in operational use.

#### FRIENDLY SITUATION

5th Wing, 6 Groups, attack OBERRADERACH O/R at FRIEDRICHSHAFEN.  
47th Wing, 2 Groups attack AVISO Viaduct

1 Group attacks ORA RR Bridge.

1 Group attacks ST. MICHELE RR Bridge.

49TH WING, 3 Groups, attacks OBERRADERACH O/R at FRIEDRICHSHAFEN.

304th Wing, 4 Groups attack FRIEDRICHSHAFEN/LOWENTHAL a/c FACTORY.

306th Fighter Wing, 7 Groups, provide escort and chaff dispensing force.

Briefing will stress situation of SWITZERLAND as a friendly neutral nation, with special reference to avoiding violation of neutrality by flying over SWISS territory in view of left rally off target. If SWISS territory is flown over, formation will encounter flak as warning.



*The above bomb strike photo was taken by the 465th Bomb Group at 12:23 on 3 August 1944 as the bombs were blowing up on the Manzell Aircraft Werks at Friedrichshafen, Germany.*

Escape Intelligence: as cited in Intelligence Annex No. 128, 17 July 1944.

**ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF INFORMATION:** As cited in Intelligence Annex No. 125, 14 July 1944. Inasmuch as no smoke screen is indicated on E Section Maps, it is directed that if smoke screen is employed by enemy careful observation of its location, careful estimate of number and location of generators, and estimate of its effectiveness will be made.

*Editors Comment: Following receipt of the above order Group S-2 worked late into the night until the final plans were completed. Following is the action of the Group.*

*Early on 3 August, after briefing, 34 crews from the*



465th Bomb Group left for their planes. Of these 9 were from the 781st Bomb Squadron. The crew pilots were: Frazier, Leggate, Willett, Roberts, Eaton, Smith, Van Slyke, Ashley, and Athon.

Thirty- two (32) crews took off at 0611 in two attack units to attack the Manzell Aircraft Works at Friedrichshafen, Germany. The first attack unit was led by Maj. Olen C. Cook, and the second attack unit was led by Captain Stanley D. Pace.

The group assembled over Andria at 0730 hours at 5500 feet and made wing rendezvous at 0753 hours over Spinazzola at 6000 feet. An escort of P-51s and P-38s joined the formation at 1050 hours at 47-20N 11-40E, at 20,000 feet, and furnished penetration, target cover, and withdrawal cover to the Adriatic at 1330 hours.

There were four (4) early returns. One (1) early return brought his bombs back to the base; another jettisoned in the Adriatic at 0741 at 41-40N 16-40E, the third jettisoned his bombs at 44-25N 13-18E and the fourth jettisoned his bombs at 45-2-N 12-53E.

Twenty-eight (28) aircraft went over the target at 1112 hours at 23,000 feet. They dropped 69 1/2 tons of 500 pound bombs fused .1 nose and non-delay tail. One aircraft jettisoned two bombs north of Bolzano at 1037 hours to keep up. Radar was used to set up course, and it gave a good course, and angle of attack. Although the bombing run was started with radar, bombing was done visually as it was possible to see the target. A-5 pilot was used. Bomb strike photos show that the first attack unit made some hits in target area with main concentration to left of target. Results of second attack unit are obscured.

Flak at the target was moderate, accurate to inaccurate, heavy. Flak was intense at 14,000 feet. The group left the target with A, B, and D boxes in position and C box trailing D box, at the proper altitude. The leader of C box called in and said he lost an engine, and the leader of the formation slowed down; as a result the other three groups of the wing pulled ahead.

Part #2 in October News will cover the fierce air attack by enemy fighters following the rally from the target.

---

*Checking through my files I find a very old photocopy of a letter from Vincent Beeson to Brig Gen Leon W. Johnson. (Editor)*

22 October 1945

Leon W. Johnson  
Brigadier General, U.S.A.  
Chief, Personal Services Division

Dear Sir:

Yes, I was the engineer on the plane which was shot down on 14th of March. By the act of God I have been the only person who has so far returned to the States.

Sergeant Dworetzky was riding as waist gunner that day and we had an interphone check just before we were hit. He was "O.K." then. What happened after that, happened to the rest of the crew.

Here is how it happened as I saw it. The flak hit us

in the nose section. It came up right by the pilot's seat and caused him very, very severe injury. In fact I would swear that he lost his life at that moment for his leg, side, and arm were torn open by the explosion of the shell. The plane went out of control with the engines running "wild". The interphone was out for I tried it before I left. There was also a great deal of smoke in that section. I left the flight deck and moved back to the cat walk in the front part of the bomb bay. There I saw the bombardier, Lt. Peter P. Renzo, with his parachute on and waving at me to "hit the silk". The plane was falling rather fast and it was no snap getting out. I left the plane although I did not really receive any word to bail out other than the "high" sign from the bombardier.

The people on the ground started to shoot at me on the way down until I got to the ground. While I was coming down I saw the plane in a very steep dive with some smoke coming from it and then it seemed to stop and it was clear then.

The plane then went into clouds and I was unable to see it. I did not see any smoke or fire which indicated that the plane had caught on fire when it crashed. No other parachutes were seen.

While I was a prisoner the officer who interrogated me told me what plane I was on, from what squadron, the lettering on the side and even the numbers on the tail section. How he knew I will never know for I never told him a thing. That is my story and I hope it helps you in finding out some news.

Yours truly,

/s/ Vincent A. Beeson.

At the bottom it noted MACR 12944. A/C 44-49085, date crash - 14 March 1945.

*We all know who Vincent Beeson was. He was the only one who survived from the Martz crew that fateful day, March 14, 1945, over Nove Zamky, Hungary. In a previous article from Vinnie, while he was still alive, was not as explicit as this report regarding the mortal wounding of Martz. Vinnie was fortunate to immediately leave the plane since the bombardier, who was also ready to bailout, evidently hesitated briefly and got caught in the flat spin of the plane and never got out of the plane in time. The Navigator, Lt. Hershey, was also was trying to get out but did not make it in time for his chute to open. His body was found about 100 yards away from the crashed plane in a cornfield hidden from the local citizens who stripped the other bodies. This information was provided by Zoltan Galambos, Pastor of Reformed Church Domarno of Molotov, Czechoslovakia.*

*It is also interesting to note that Brigadier General Leon W. Johnson led the 44th Bomb Group in the 1 August 1943 low level raid to Ploesti. That group came down from England, flew the raid and returned to England to bomb Germany from there with the Eighth Air Force. Evidently after the war Gen Johnson was in charge of the personal services commission to determine the fate of all MIAs in Europe. He is now 92 years old living in a health care facility in Belvoir, Virginia. Dr. Patterson, who was with the 8th Air Force in B-24s, informs me Gen Johnson had two small strokes but is getting along well.*



## "AIR FORCE FIFTY" AND FIFTEENTH AIR REUNION

The Air Force Fifty Celebration and the 15th Air Force Association reunion were held in Las Vegas April 22 to 26. It was a fantastic affair and will long be remembered by the thousands who attended.

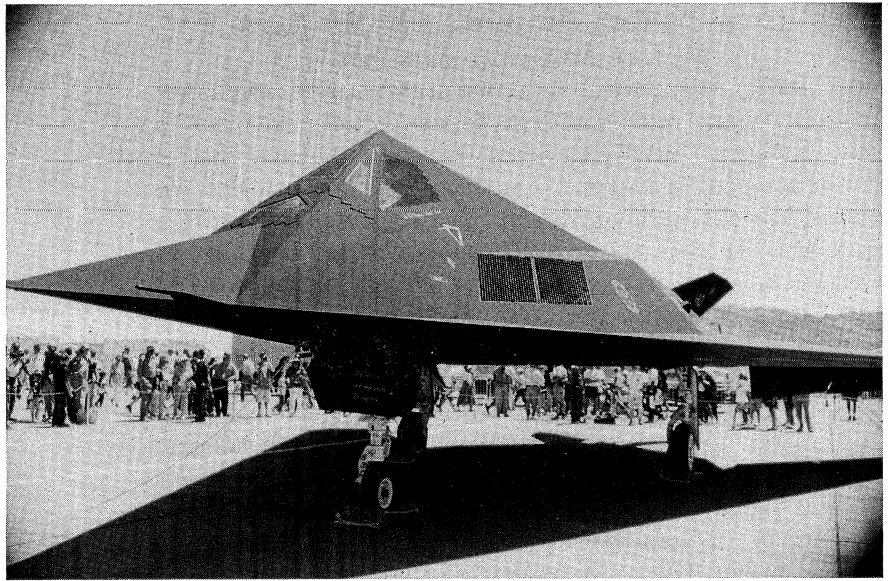
There were over 4 acres of indoor exhibit space in the fabulous center which had exhibits and displays in 600 booths, representing 150 state-of-the art aerospace industry exhibits in addition to 60,000 square feet of USAF displays.

An important part of the display area was called Reunion Alley. Over 150 groups were registered including our own 465th Bomb Group. There were many other affiliated booths like the Liberator Club, etc, etc.

It took some planning to try to see it all. A full day in the Convention Center was not enough. And the Airshow at Nellis AFB, Wow! It wasn't one of those shows you sat and watched. Just too much to see just to sit or stand and watch the airshow, so you walked and watched. There were planes lined up as far as the eye could see. Stealth fighters (upper right) and bombers, WWI and WWII planes, all the latest since then, and privately owned antique, military etc. And it was a pleasure to see our own B-24 *All American* with our group markings. There were 78 foreign countries represented.

The great part about it was that most of the planes were open and you could actually go inside of the transport and look into most others. Most had pilots or aircrew of the planes available to answer questions. I talked to numerous pilots. Some like the acrobatic teams from Japan, New Zealand, and Australia. They flew their squadrons in from these far away countries and had outstanding acrobatic shows all day long.

At the 15th Air Force functions members of each group were assigned the same table. Attending from the

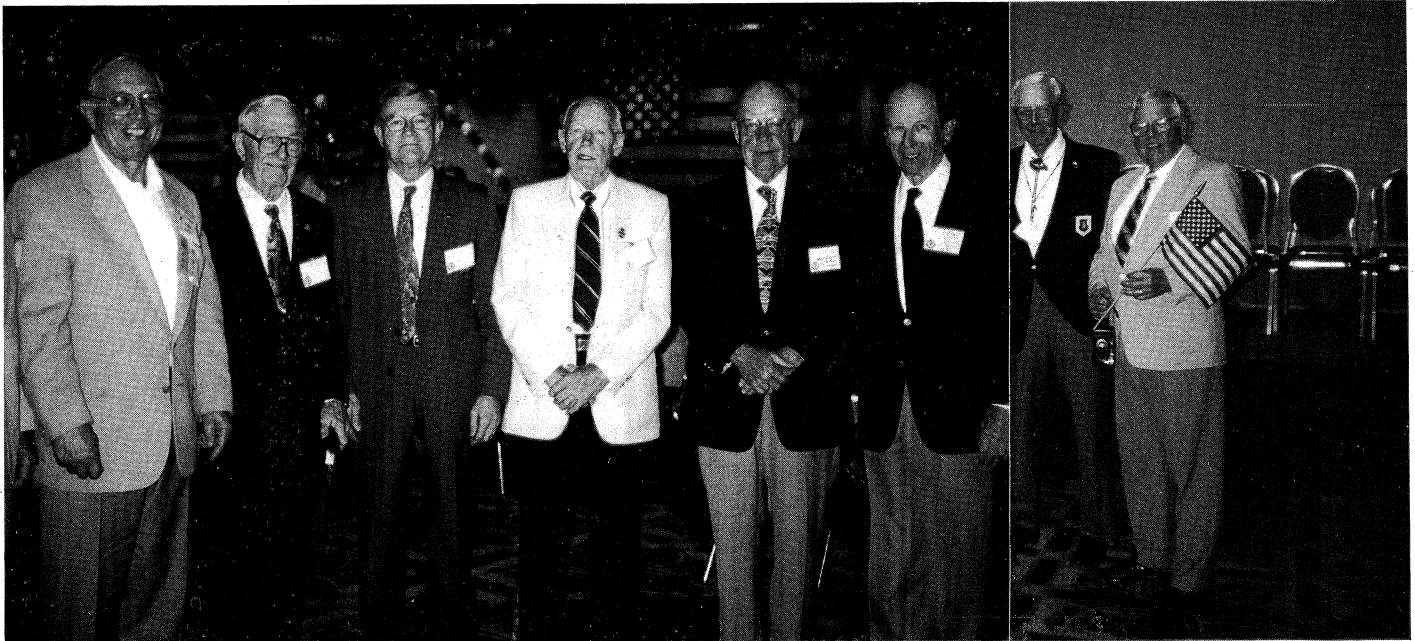


465th Bomb Group were: Bob Bleier, Bernie Jones, and Sky Campbell from the 780th B.S., Walt and Ann Longacre, Jim Althoff, Vern and Pat Burda, George and Veni Hausold, and Bob Shetterly from the 781st. Robert Hegel, James and Marjorie Bauer from the 782nd and Charles and Iris Payne and Col. Burt Andrus from the 783rd.

The 15th Air Force banquet was a real flag waving event. A 90 piece concert band provided the music with many groups marching to some great music.

We were surprised and very pleased to hear announced that the invocation for the banquet was written by Chaplain Blough of the 465th Bomb Group. It brought back some long ago memories of the briefing room at Pantanella when the last words were given by Chaplain Blough before we were to embark on a mission.

The keynote speaker was General Walter Kross, Commander in Chief U.S. Transportation Command. Prior to his present command he was commander of the 15th Air Force. The current 15th Air Force Commander, Lt. Gen. Tony Robertson, also spoke and was on stage for the pass-in-review with representation from all groups.



*L to R Vernon Burda, James Bauer, Robert Hegel, George Hausold, Walt Longacre, Jim Althoff, Burt Andrus and Charles Payne. Not in photo - Bob Bleier, Bob Shetterly, Bernie Jones, and Sky Campbell.*

## How To Get Promoted in 28 days

By Col. McHenry Hamilton

In order to explain the circumstances, it is necessary to go back and review Hitler's growing conquest prior to our entry into WWII. General Marshall realized that if Hitler took all of Europe, England and North Africa we would have to fight him from South, Central and North America. At that time our Intelligence information in Central and South America was woefully lacking. In 1939 the General formed the 27th Recon. Sqdn. based at Langley AFB, Virginia. He took personnel from the 18th Recon. at Mitchel AFB, N.Y., the Ninth Bomb Group at Mitchel and the 2nd. Bomb Group at Langley. We were equipped with B-18A aircraft and K-10 & K-3B cameras. (For those who are unfamiliar with this equipment, the K-10 was hand-held camera used to shoot oblique shots and the K-3B was mounted to shoot straight down for mosaic work). The 27th departed Langley for Puerto Rico to operate out of then Borinquen Field which later was known as Ramey. Our mission was to photograph any and all subjects that could be used in setting up fortifications. Principal subjects being, anchorages, warehouses, rail terminals, suitable areas for air fields, harbors, docks, communication facilities, etc. The geographical area was from the western tip of Cuba to Recife Brazil. The 27th was under the command of the CAIRC (Caribbean Air Command). General Collins was the Commander.

Early in the operations it became necessary to expand to get the job done. The 27th was split and the 5th Recon was formed along with the 90th Group Headquarters. At that time I was director of operations for the 90th Group with the rank of 1st Lt.

It was while on a mission to gather information in an area that included Dutch Guiana the rapid promotion came about. In about mid January of 1942 to about the 10th of March we worked out of a Pan American emergency airfield in Dutch Guiana (Now Suriname). On the landing from this mission at Borinquen my commander, Colonel Ivan Palmer, greeted me and started pinning Major leaves on. At first I thought it was a joke. (The Colonel was one of the smoothest jokers around). To say the least it was a most pleasant surprise!!

What actually happened was while I was away a directive came out of Army Air Force Headquarters to all commanders to consider promoting all personnel who were operating in a slot in the manning table that called for advancement. Colonel Palmer initiated a request for my promotion to Captain one day and the next day did the same for Major. Result, I never had to buy Captain's bars. Date of Rank to Captain 1 February and the date of rank to Major 1 March 1942. Since 1942 was not a leap year it was 28 days.

*Editor's Comment. Now Col. Hamilton recalls some of the "good old days."*

Your notice about Zemke (passing away) was interesting to me as I had wondered what had happened to him. Just after the war, when I was stationed in Miami and Zemke was stationed at Tyndal in North Florida along with a classmate of mine, Charles Eisenhart and Del Wilson, some two classes ahead of me. When pheasant

season opened in Nebraska I had a B-25 to pick them up and have a great hunting trip. How things have changed. We would land at an old abandoned field and call ATC and tell them we would call when we got ready to leave. I had no crew chief or copilot!! Ah, the good old days!!

*Editors comment. Col. McHenry Hamilton was sent to the 465th Bomb Group to be CO. Eager to fly his first mission he flew the last mission the group flew to Vienna and went down in the lead plane. See his story "My One-half Mission in Pantanella News #23."*

---

## MEMORIES OF WWII WHILE LIVING IN A SMALL TOWN IN CONNECTICUT

By Rosemary C. Kennedy

I attended a small Catholic women's college (Saint Joseph in West Hartford) from 1941 to 1945. Not coming from an affluent family, I was called a "day hop" — too poor to board. I commuted mostly by bus. Living at home, in my "spare time", I rolled bandages at the local library, knitted khaki vest sweaters for the boys in service with yarn donated by the Red Cross, and served as an airplane spotter with my mother. We used to kid about what would happen if we saw a Japanese plane. We both decided that we would be in big trouble.

While in college, we students used to sing and help out at Bradley Field, Windsor Locks, which was a large camouflaged air base at the time. I remember a big Army truck stopping in the center of my hometown, Windsor, picking me up and my hoping that no one saw me get on the truck.

With the war on, First Aid was a required subject at St. Joseph and I took the class on Wednesdays as usually had no other classes that day. Instead of wearing a skirt, I wore slacks (normally not allowed). Upon finishing that class one day, I stopped at the bursar's office to pay my tuition bill. After making the payment, the bursar who was a nun said, "Rosemay, are you going home on the bus dressed like that, wearing slacks?" I responded, "Yes, Sister." She replied with, "Do you want people to think you are a defense worker?"

Boys were not a big problem for us girls' school, except when it was Prom time. I remember calling one boy and he said, "I'm sorry, but we have no gas." I replied, "If you have the car, I have plenty of gas." This was a courtesy of my Dad who had books of gas ration coupons because he was a salesman of boilers, etc., but since there was not much to sell, he could work at home me.

By my senior year, the local men were all gone, and the nuns allowed us a "tea" dance with the ROTC from Trinity College in Hartford. If you could talk a fellow into going to the Senior Ball, you had a date. I was lucky — I got to go!

From FLIM FLAM;  
ROCHESTER, N.Y. - ANS -Block that German Officer. . . When patrolman, Fred Ludwig, went into a local diner not long ago, he ordered ham and eggs - - and got wheat cakes, too. The counterwoman insisted Ludwig had ordered them. "Wheat cakes, my eye," shouted Ludwig. "I said "Wie gehts."

## 1st LT WILLIAM SMITH'S MISSION DIARY

September 2, 1944. Railroad Center, Nis, Yugoslavia. Alt. 21,000 ft. Flak - S. I. H. Single (mission) *(Flak is described as scant, moderate or intense, then accurate or inaccurate, then light, medium or heavy. The worst was I.A.H. This mission was scant, intense and heavy. Editor).*

September 4. Marshalling Yards, Bronozlo, Italy. Alt 22,000 ft. Milk run. Single.

September 6. M/Y Nieregyhaza, Hungary. Milk run. Single.

September 10. Tank factory, Vienna, Austria. Alt 23,000. I.A.H. Radio man, John H. Coker, hit in right arm, aileron cables cut, hydraulic lead, 150 holes, #3 engine shot out. Double.

September 12. Jet Aircraft Factory (Wasserburg) Lechfield, Germany. I.A.H. Alt 23,000 ft. Hole through pilots windshield. Flak hit suit and wedged between pilot's legs. Very uncomfortable feeling! Double.

September 13. Oil Refinery, Blechhammer, Germany (Oswiecim). Altitude 23,000 ft. I.A.H. Double.

September 17. O/R Budapest, Hungary. Alt 22,000 ft. M.A.H. Single.

September 18. Railroad bridge, Budapest, Hungary. Alt 22,000 ft. Milk run. Single.

September 22. Motor Factory, Munich, Germany. Alt. 22,000 ft. I.A.H. Hole through pilots windshield. Scared hell out of me! Double.

September 24. Submarine pens, Scaramenga, Greece. Alt. 24,000 ft. S.A.H. Single. Swell mission.

October 4. Erskujvar, Hungary. Alt. 22,000 Ft. M.A.H. Double.

Oct 7. Marshalling Yard, Hungary. Alt. 16,000. Milk run. Double. #4 engine feathered, oil leak, #2 engine oil leak, wouldn't feather, almost tore off ship, finally froze. Landed at Isle of Vis, back to Italy by ship. No one injured. We were very fortunate, scared hell out of us. Thought we would have to bail out any minute!

October 12. Warehouse, Bologna, Italy. Alt. 21,000 ft. S.I.L. Very poor bombing. Single.

October 16. M/Y St. Valentine, Austria. Alt. 22,000 ft. Clouds prevented bombing of primary; targets of opportunity were hit instead. Double.

October, 20. Air Drome, Munich, Germany. Alt. 22,000 ft. Scant. Double.

November 16. M/Y Munich, Germany. Alt. 24,000 ft. I.A.H. Double.

November 20. Oil Refinery, Blechhammer, Germany. Alt. 24,000 ft. I.A.H. Double. Our C.O. Col. Lokker went down in flames.

December 2. South O/R Blechhammer, Germany. Alt. 24,000 ft. I.A.H. Double, Ship hit between #2 engine and fuselage, almost tore wing off. Caught the crew in time; most of them were half way out of the ship. Limped back to base O.K. No one injured.

December 6. M/Y Bratislava. Early return due to supercharger trouble. Lucky me! Group was hit by Me 109s and FW 190s. Four ships lost. Ineffective sortie credit.

December 11. S.E. Ordinance Depot, Vienna, Austria. Alt. 23,000 ft. I.A.M. Double. #4 engine knocked out by flak.

December 26. O/R Odertal, Blechhammer, Germany. Alt. 25,000 ft. I.A.H. Double.

January 4, 1945. M/Y Bolzono, Italy. Alt. 25,000 ft. M.A.H. Single - very rough.

January 19. Zagreb, Yugoslavia. Turned back by weather. Ineffective sortie credit.

January 31. O/R Moosebierbaum, Austria. Alt. 25,000 Ft. P.F.F. Flak nil. #1 engine quite on bomb run, electrical system failed, low on gas, headed for Russia. Engineer made repair on electrical system, by stretching gas, managed to make Vis. #4 engine quit over island due to lack of fuel; landing was made O.K. with #2 and #3. Flown back to Italy by C-47. Double.

February 5. O/R Regensburg, Germany. Alt. 24,000 ft. Flak nil. Double. Checked out as box leader.

February 13. M/Y Graz, Germany. Alt. 24,000 ft. Flak S.A.R. Double.

February 16. Regensburg A/D Germany. Alt 24,000 ft. M.A.H. Double, Excellent. Lead my first box.

February 20. Triest Docks, Italy. Alt. 25,000 ft. S.I.H. Single.

March 1. O/R Moosebierbaum, Austria. Alt. 21,500 ft. I.A.H. Double. Hit in #3 and #4 by flak; #4 caught fire, feathered; #3 lost all oil, feathered; #4 unfeathered but not much use. Landed at Pecs, Hungary. Taken to Bucharest, Hungary and returned to Italy March 23.

April 7. Campeditrem, Italy. Alt. 22,000 feet. S.I.H. Single.

April 9. Tactical targets 8th Army, Italy. Alt. 21,000 ft. M.A.H. Single.



April 19. Rosenheim M/Y Germany. Alt. 23,000 ft. N.I.L. Double.

April 23. Padua railroad bridge, Italy. S.A.H. Single.

April 25. Linz Main M/Y Austria. Alt 22,000 ft. I.A.H. Double. Hit by flak in main turbo junction box causing #1 and #2 turbos to oscillate badly. Couldn't fly formation so tagged along behind. Made field.

*Editor's Comments: I had known Bill all through cadets. Since our names were on the opposite end of the alphabet we did not see each other often.*

*I think you can agree he was what we call a cool pilot when confronted with some frightening situations. How many pilots had a hole from a flak burst in their windshield twice, had to make an emergency landing on the Isle of Vis twice, and make an emergency landing in Russian occupied territory?*

*Some time ago I asked Bill Smith to write a story for Pantanella News. He replied that he did not remember anything unusual - he just flew his missions and came home after the war.*

---

## A FOUR DAY PASS TO ROME

About the end of September, 1945 Ernie Van Asperen arranged for a trip to Rome for four of us, Ernie Van Asperen, Hugh Cooper, Barney Russell and Jim Althoff. Ernie had it planned that he and Hugh Cooper, my bombardier, would fly to Rome via the Jeogia Wolf and Barney Russell, my navigator, and I would drive up in a Jeep to provide ground transportation while in Rome.

The Jeep belonged to George Ashley, then a Captain. As I remember, he acquired the jeep by having a salvaged one repaired and added a phoney serial number.

I picked up the Jeep about nine on the morning of departure and Barney and I headed out towards Naples, then up to Rome. We knew it was a full day's drive, so we were speeding along and were constantly having near miss head-ons with donkeys and carts. When it sprinkled rain we held a canvas across the top of the windshield, our only cover.

In the Naples area we found a British gas dump for lunch and tea, refueled, and continued on to Rome. As we approached Rome it was getting

very dark. I turned on the headlights, but only a very dim light shone out ahead. The road was crowded with people and some donkeys and carts. We finally made it into town, but with the black-out it was almost impossible to find our way around. We tried to get directions from Italians without success. I don't know how we ever found our destination, the American Red Cross, but we did. I we drove up in front Ernie and Hugh were about to leave the Red Cross to go to dinner. They had secured quarters for us in a hotel, so we checked in and joined them for dinner.

Later in the evening Barney and I left to go to the hotel as we were tired from driving all day. When we got to the jeep we replaced the distributor we had removed so no one could steal it and headed out. But alas! we did not know the name or address of the hotel, or any map. Nevertheless, we took off and cruised around for several hours. We became completely lost and when we came to the edge of the city we stopped. We knew it was the entrance to the city because it was where the arches that hold the old aqueduct system, built by the Romans, crossed over the street. We finally just parked there and tried to get some rest.

At daybreak we took off again and eventually found our hotel. Again, as we drove up Ernie and Hugh were just heading out for the day as they were giving up on us.

The four of us toured the city for two days. On the fourth day Barney and I started our full days drive back to Pantanella and Ernie and Hugh took a plane ride back. It was good to be away for four days, but not exactly a rest with half the time spent driving in an open jeep.



L to R - Jim Althoff, Barney Russell, the Hostess joining us for a drink, but not happy about a photo, Ernie Van Asperen, and Hugh Cooper. The photographer's folder with the picture had a quote, "In the shadows of an old photograph often a memory emerges and if it is dear, it lifts the heart from human cares."

# MAIL CALL



A letter from **Bill Jostworth**, "Thank you for your continued enthusiastic support in keeping the 'wind beneath the wings' of the 781st association.

"The newsletters and reunions have kept all of us abreast of happenings in each other's lives and in cementing strong relationships.

"A recent example of this esprit 'de corps was the recent Ohio River flood, in and around Cincinnati. We received various notes and phone calls from Charlie Ferich and Jim O'Neal regarding their concern for our situation and welfare during the flooding.

"Gratefully, I could say we were high and dry from the waters in the flood plain. In fact, if any of the readers had ever flown into Cincinnati's old airport, located at the confluence of the Little Miami and Ohio Rivers, you probably flew over our area which overlooks these landmarks, some 4 to 5 hundred feet above the plain.

"So, thanks to everyone who responded, and to you Jim and the directors who help to keep relations going on and on. You're like the "energizer bunny!" With that thought, have a happy and blessed Easter — everybody."

A letter from **Josephine Simon**. "I am the youngest daughter of Joe H. Simon. Dad was receiving the *Pantanello News*. Then he passed away in 1993 and Mom had the mailings switched over to her name. Because of my interest in history, I am in possession of all the *Pantanello News*. However, there are a few issues I am missing and I was wondering if there was any way to get them for my collection.

"I have just one other request. I would like to know if there are any people out there around my age (30 on May 25th) who had either a father, grandfather, or uncle who might have known my father, or just have an interest in this part of history. If so perhaps we could write occasionally. By the way, I'd also be interested in knowing if any of the men who served with Dad are still around. If so I'd love to hear from them.

"Any help you can give would be greatly appreciated."

Josephine Simon, 631 N. Plum St., Albany, IN 47320-1020. *She also notes she is called Jody by her family and friends. OK, Engineering men, how about giving Jody a surprise by sending her a letter!*

# FOLDED WINGS

**Wayne F. Watson** (Orderly Room) passed away January 23, 1995.

**William P. Wood** (Squadron Navigator) passed away February, 1997.

**Wayne Watson** was located by the efforts of Walt Longacre in 1992 in Stockton, California through the help of the police department. Since I had business in the area I called on Wayne a number of times. I remembered him during the days at Pantanello when he drove the jeep in the early morning hours to wake us up for a mission. The ominous sound of the jeep in the quiet morning hours usually awakened most of us. If we were not on the list he would pass us by and and we went back to sleep.

Wayne was ill with a deteriorating spine since I first called on him in 1992. He was mostly bed ridden.

I thought something might be wrong when he did not send in his dues. In a phone call I received another party and realized his phone number was given to another person. I then sent a letter to Wayne with a note for the resident to please open the envelope. In it was a note requesting info on Wayne and a self-addressed return envelope. I received a reply from his niece giving me the information on Wayne's death.

**William Wood's** mailing address was changed to San Francisco. I could not get a phone number, so I wrote to the address and discovered it was his son who had his father's mail transferred to him since his father had passed away. He said Bill had a stroke and was hospitalized a few days. A week later he had another stroke and passed away.

Our thoughts prayers for our fallen comrades who have found everlasting peace, — you served your country well. We will remember you forever.

## SICK CALL

**Conrad Croston** is in the Veterans Medical Center, Nursing Room 130 B, Martinsburg, WV 25401 with Lou Gherig's disease. He is not well and unable to talk.

Conard was one of the survivors on the 3 August 1944 mission to Friedrichshafen when his plane was shot down. His pilot, Poole, and Tail Gunner, Hill, were KIA.

## THE INTERNET

For anyone who has a (URL), please send it to OJ. When the information is compiled, these addresses can be emailed to everyone who has a URL. In the future, Althoff email address will be sent when set up is complete. Until Althoff is set up, those desiring can email to OJ who will then contact Althoff by FAX.

Of interest is the following internet addresses (URL).

Confederate Air Force <http://av.yahoo.com/bin/query?p=confederate=air=force&hc=1&hs=4>

Collings Foundation <http://av.yahoo.com/bin/query?p=collings=foundation&hc=O&hs=O>

B-24 Veteran's Group <http://www.mach3ww.com/b24/>

War memories <http://swwww.rust.net/~paradis/memory/htm>

Howarts address [ojcowart@aol.com](mailto:ojcowart@aol.com)

Ambrose address [amber@superior.net](mailto:amber@superior.net)

Others interested, Wasenaar, Ken Sutton, William, Smith, Marcel Snyder, Gene Barnett.

## OUR FIRST MISSION

by Ben Donahue

From our first day in Italy all we heard from the old-timers was BLECHHAMMER! We wanted to get in an easy mission before the BIG ONE and were lucky to be scheduled for Maribor marshaling yard. The route to the target was without incident. Lots of aircraft and a lot of contrails to show the way.

Turning on the IP, we opened the bomb bay doors and applied a little extra power to stay in formation. Then all hell broke loose! Number three engine decided to act up, the RPM oscillating from 600 to over 3000. It made it very difficult to stay with the group and finally had to feather the engine. Joe Ormes, our bombardier, dumped the bombs as the formation faded into the distance. We were very much alone all of a sudden. Paul Poulin, Our engineer, replaced the electric gadget in the lower deck and we tried to start number three, but no dice, so we feathered it again.

We decided we had better get down low quick! Calling for cover was unsuccessful. There was a cloud level we could duck into if necessary. We soon had a B-17 up ahead of us and upon slowly passing him the pilot and gave the OK sign.

Approaching the coast of Yugoslavia on the Adriatic Paul and I thought it would be a good idea to try once again to get #3 running. Again it failed. Harold Long, our navigator, called out that we were near Vis. After checking fuel we decided it would be safer to land at Vis rather than try for Pantanella.

Upon approaching Vis, Yugoslavia it looked very small. But we proceeded and managed to touch down and get stopped at the other end of the runway. We taxied next to another B-24 and shut down and thought this was to be our residence for a few days.

The next thirty minutes, watching the action that was taking place right in front of us was an unbelievable circus. A B-24 trying to make a go-around spun into the ground at the edge of the village. Five minutes later a B-17 came in with one engine feathered, then proceeded to ground loop to the left into the small vineyard followed by another B-17 with a feathered engine and he too ground looped to the left just missing the first one. Next was a P-38 with one engine feathered neared the end of the runway and flipped upside down. Then a stripped B-17 landed to pick up crews to transport them to Bari.

Then, running toward the crew and I was Joe Ormes with a big grin on his face and the K10 camera that he had removed from our plane. He told us to hurry up and get our gear, we're going home. We looked at him with amazement. I asked him how in the hell did you do that. You would have to had to know Joe, a consummate "con artist" from the south side of Chicago. With his big grin still planted on his kisser he said, "I just told the B-17 pilot that this camera had special film with photos that had to be in Bari at the AF Headquarters. He said OK and home we went.

Once aboard the B-17 I laid down using my gear bag for a pillow and fell asleep and did not waken until we were on the ground in Bari. We thanked the crew for the lift home and left.

Standing around trying to think of what to do when our "con artist" crewman conned a motor pool dispatcher to give us a driver and a 6 x 6 truck and we were on our way.

We arrived on the hill at Pantanella around 10 P.M., very hungry and tired. We went to the mess where we were greeted with wide eyed wonderment, "What the hell happened to you guys? We were told you went down." "Yeah" I replied, "Down in Vis!" "You mean to say you went to Vis and are home already?" "Yes, if I were to tell you how you wouldn't believe me." I replied.

---

## GOOD BUDDY

By OJ Cowart

My first recollection of the phrase "good buddy" came when I was in the US Army Air Force during WWII. Each soldier had his name on his work clothes. Since so many were new to a group, it was difficult to remember all the names. If a group of soldiers was visible, their name was not always visible. If some one wanted to get the attention of 'one' in a group, he would sing, "Hey, good buddy." The effect was humorous, as all heads bobbed up. Every soldier liked to think of himself as a "good buddy." With this attention grabber, a conversation could begin or help would be available for whatever was called for.

---

## REUNIONS 1997

**780th Bomb Squadron**, September 29 to October 3, 1997 at the Holiday Inn Mountain View Inn, Albuquerque, NM. Contact is Bernie Jones, 2301 Callejon Hermoso, Santa Fe, NM 87505-5204.

**782nd Bomb Squadron**. Statehouse Inn (Best Western) Montgomery, AL., September 9 to 12.

**783rd Bomb Squadron**. October 9 to 12. Radisson Airport Hotel St. Louis, MO.

## REUNIONS 1998

**465th Bomb Group**. October 10, 1998. Wright-Patterson AFB, Dayton, OH. Group Headquarters personnel have been invited to join with the 781st Bomb Squadron as they have in the past, or with any of the other squadrons if you so desire. You may reserve with the 781st for their events beginning on October 7. The formal 465th day will be held on October 10th when all squadrons will gather together for daytime meetings, etc. and a banquet in the evening. More information on this when the squadrons agree on a program.

**781st Bomb Squadron**, Hope Hotel, Wright-Patterson AFB, Dayton, OH, October 7 to 11, 1998. The only Air Force Base to have a hotel! The room rates are \$50 plus tax! Our Thursday night dinner will be catered at the Air Force Museum! The Museum will be reserved exclusively for our squadron that evening. We don't expect any comments, "I didn't see any planes!" Just don't pick a seat sitting under a leaky engine!

The other three squadrons will announce their 1998 reunions after holding their 1997 reunions.





*Ed Chavey from Ordnance. Photo by Peter Ministrelli. Peter's hometown is two miles from Ed's in Michigan.*

Of Current Interest, from OJ Cowart.

The squadron First Sergeant, **John Messmore** and his wife Dora will celebrate their 50th Wedding Anniversary on July 4th, 1997. With all the 'sojers' running around creating/solving problems for John, it is inconceivable that at Pantanella John would have been concerned about marrying, much less celebrating his 50th. Congratulations to John and Dora.

#### LIFE MEMBERS SINCE LAST NEWSLETTER

- 108. Richard C. Hall
- 109. Eugene A. Weiss
- 110. Steve G. Chirigotis
- 111. William J. Smith
- 112. Pete B. DeRitis
- 113. George M. Leggate
- 114. Robert B. Freeman

#### Wright-Patterson Plaque

In a recent conversation with Roland Soucy he reported the Memorial Garden where our plaque and tree for the 781st/465th Bomb Group is located is now completely filled and has been closed for some time to any further memorial trees and plaques. We were fortunate to have ours located there when we did. Roland reports the tree and plaque are in excellent condition. We'll get a chance to see it at our next reunion.

#### PX ITEMS FOR SALE

Ladies and Mens watches. Beautiful gold with black leather band and the 781st insignia in color on the face. \$25 including shipping! Squadron caps \$7 plus shipping, total \$9. Order from our PX Officer, Carney Russell, 1014 Washington St., Magnolia, AR 71753.

#### Address Changes;

**Elwood K. Helfer** 108 Manorshire Dr., Apt #2, Fairport, NY 14450.

**Louis Deslate**, 4121 Lexington Ave., Port Arthur, TX 77642-4237. Phone 409 962-5009.

#### DUES

Regular dues are \$10 per year payable in advance, or a little more if you can to help out those who cannot afford it. Your label, should have 97 to be current. Don't miss future newsletters. Send your check to O. J. Cowart, Treasurer.

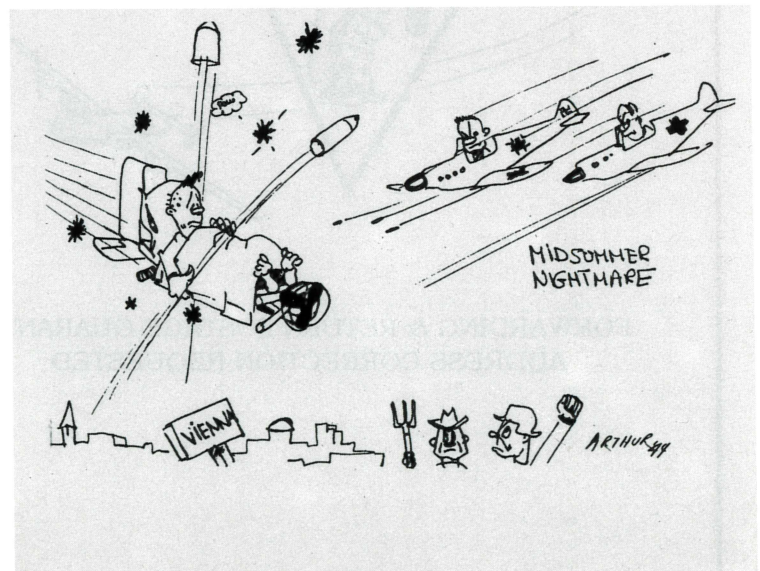
#### EDITORS CORNER

Thanks to everyone who participated in the newsletter by sending in articles and about the well-being of some of our members. Thanks to Robert Hegel and George Hausold for photos of the 15th Air Force Association reunion in Las Vegas. And thanks to the Longacre taxi service in Las Vegas. I had the pleasure of many trips to the events with Walt and Ann.

It is encouraging to see more of you helping out with keeping contact with your comrades. We know how well the Ordnance has kept in touch with each other. Recently John Ogden has contacted Armament Section members and has given a report to me on the individual members. We seem to lack an organized attempt by other sections and many of the crews. In a large section like Engineering it could be broken down in sub-sections or by states. I would like to hear from anyone interested in helping out on this project. There are many who become ill and do not feel like participating. These are the ones we can help out by keeping in contact with them.

Crew members in quite a few of the crews could improve contact with other crew members. These personal contacts just cannot be done by anyone else.

I'm sorry about the mix-up on the roster. "The printers" got a couple of pages switched around. Makes it interesting!



*One of Tom Arthur's cartoons depicting the action over Vienna. It shows the flack bursting, the German fighters attacking and the risk of the civilians if you had to bail out.*

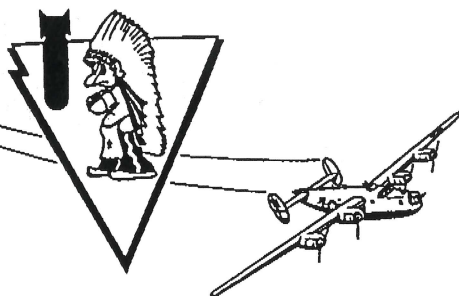




The photo on the left is from the original booklet "Proposed Citation" containing photos and information on the preparation for the mission and report on the results of the mission to Friedrichshafen. The photo shown is an unusual photo of our formation over the Alps. Most of the planes are not easily seen due to the snow on portions of the Alps. How many B-24s can you see?

The next newsletter will cover the story how an error in judgement attracted a flight of enemy fighters to attack our group causing a great loss of men and planes. Some crew members had to bail out over the Alps.

781 St BOMB SQUADRON ASSOC  
2 Mt. Vernon Lane, Atherton, CA 94027



FORWARDING & RETURN POSTAGE GUARANTEED  
ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

NONPROFIT ORG  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
MENLO PARK, CA  
PERMIT NO. 998

ORREN J. LEE  
2312 BRAEMAR DR  
SIOUX FALLS, SD 57105

97