



PANTANELLA NEWS

Published by 781st Bomb Squadron Association©

84 July 2006

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF THE AIRMEN of 15th AIR FORCE AND THE DEFENDERS OF GERMANY



Several LUFTWAFFE ACES shot down more than 200 Allied airplanes.

One of them, Erich Hartmann, destroyed 352 Russian planes.

They flew, and racked up staggeringly high scores over North Africa, France, the Soviet Union, Great Britain, Poland, and, in the end, Germany itself.

Two hundred aerial victories.

By comparison, the top U.S. aces of World War Two achieved twenty.



SIGN-UP NOW FOR SHREVEPORT REUNION OCTOBER 2-3-4

15th AF Maximum Effort Mission 12/17/44

Target; Oil Refinery Complexes at Odertal, Blechhammer North and South

By John Bybee

The following article was submitted by John Bybee describing the Maximum Effort Mission to Blechhammer December 17, 1944. This was our Groups' 122nd. Mission.

An of the events of that day, both Allies' and Germans', were extensively researched by him and is presented here in an abbreviated form.

John Bybee was not a member of our squadron. During the War Years he was too young to fight. His interest in 15th Air Force History began after buying and building a Mattel B-24 Model Kit.

Inquiring as to which Squadron he was with, I received the following reply.

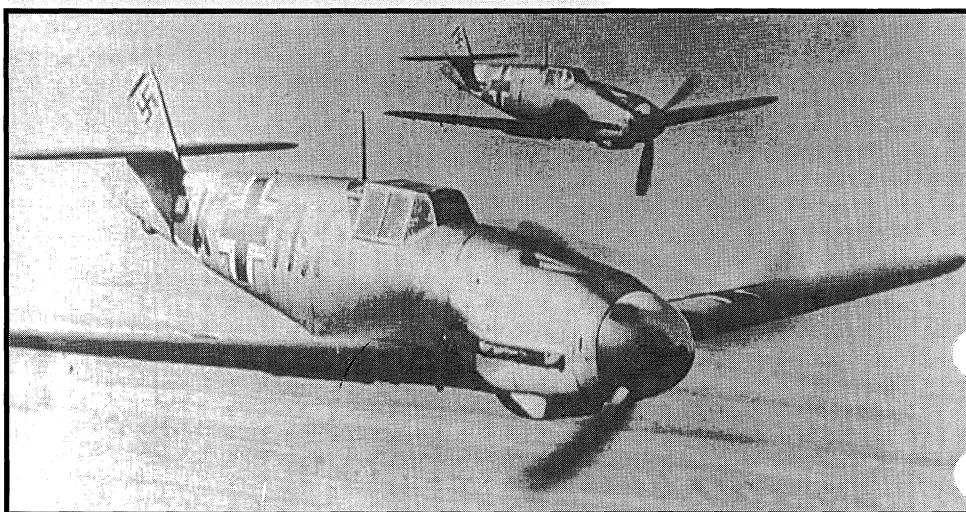
"No, you won't find me on any crew lists--but my heart is with you guys. I'm a baby boomer, I'll be 58 in July. B-24 combat airmen have always been my passion. I first saw a Revel Pre S-kit of a B-24J on top of a then primitive TV in 1953. I was hooked on the graceful Davis airfoil and boxy fuselage."

Saturday Night, 16 December 1944:

The Teletyped field orders from "Nutmeg" (15th Air Force HQ at Bari) summoned the bombers from the airfield complexes on the Foggia plains and the heel of the Italian boot for a morning maximum effort strike against the refinery complexes at Odertal, Blechhammer North and South.

This mission was the fifteenth strike on these targets since August.

Early Sunday morning, December 17, 1944, 191 B-17s from the 5th Bomb Wing (2nd, 97th, 301st Bomb Groups) from Amendola, Celone and Lucera were to bomb Blechhammer



Right Waist Gunners' Eye View of a ME-109

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

Officers

Barney Russell: President
Ken Kill: Treasurer
Secretary: Orren Lee
Chaplain: Daniel Bailey
NEWS Editor: Frank Ambrose

Board of Directors

James C. Althoff, President Emeritis
Frank Ambrose
Chas (Bubba) Braud
Ken Kill
Barney Russell

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

ATTENTION !! ALL MEMBERS AND FAMILIES IMPORTANT ADDRESSES TO REMEMBER

781st. Asso. Pres. Barney Russell
BARNEY RUSSELL
3 Mimosa Circle
Magnolia, AR 71753-2648
870-234-4063

**781st Asso. Sect. Orren Lee:-
Orren Lee:**
2312 Braemar Dr.
Souix Falls, SD 57105
605 339 1297
email: <olee@iw.net>

**781st. Sqd. Tres. Ken Kill:-
KEN KILL**
701 West Circle Drive
Findlay, OH 45840
419-422-4159
email: <knykill@juno.com>

**Newsletter Editor Frank Ambrose:-
FW's, Obits and News Stories:-
FRANK AMBROSE**
44 East Blvd.
Gloversville, NY 12078
email: <frank@frank:ambrose.com:/, >

North at noon. (the 463rd Bomb Group's runways were unserviceable and they stood down.)

Twenty-one minutes later, 105 B-24s of the 55th Bomb Wing (460th, 464th, 465th and 485th Bomb groups) out of Spinnazzola, Pantanella and Venosa would strike Blechhammer South.

—19 B-24s of the 49th Bomb Wing (451st, 461st and 484th Bomb Groups) from Casellucio, Torretto and 142 B-24s of the 304th Bomb Wing (454th, 455th, 456th and 459th Bomb groups from San Giovanni, Stornara and Giulia were to attack Odertal at 1219 and 1234 respectively.

Four groups of B-24s from the 47th Bomb Wing (98th, 376th, 449th and 450th Bomb groups would launch from Lecce, San Pancrazio, Grottaglie and Manduria and constituted the second prong of the coordinated attack. These bombers would divide their offensive attentions on the rail yards at Salzburg East and Wels Main, Austria.

Escort for the 500 plus bombers would consist of over 300 fighters. P-38s would provide penetration cover and P-51s the withdrawal cover.

Meanwhile, also on Sunday December 17, 1944, after a pronounced absence, the decimated but undefeated JG300 Wilde Sau (Wild Boars) rose from four bases within 100 mile radius of Berlin and surged into the winter skies over Czechoslovakia and Southern Poland to deliver the Der Grosse Schlas—the Great Blow against the 15th Air Force

The 781st Bomb Squadron lofted three B-24s on this 17 December 1944 mission. 1st Lt. Alfred William Mullan commanded B-24H-15-FO #42-52494, tactical designation "Red F", nicknamed "Angel of the Sky" and carried the superb nose art of Jack McGrath.

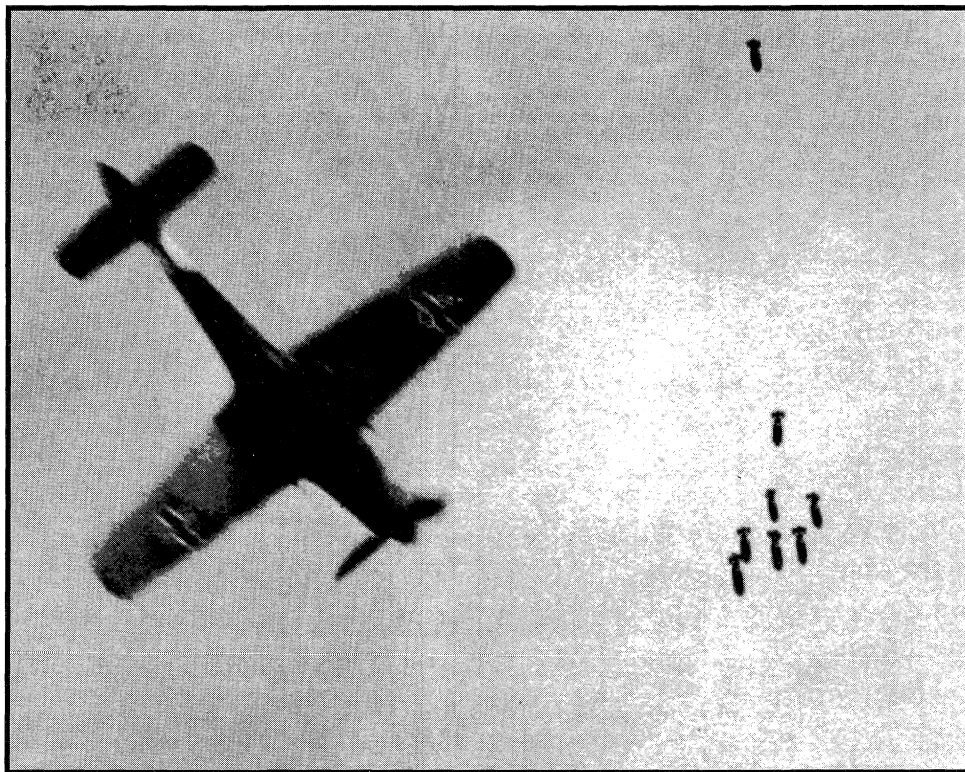
The 55th Bomb Wing's IP was Olbersdorf and target time at Blechhammer South was 1221. Approaching the IP, Mullan's number one engine began heating up and trailing smoke. 'Angel of the Sky' made it to the target and dropped her bombs.

To divide the German defenses, the B-17s of the 5th Bomb Wing after their attack on Blechhammer North continued to Odertal about eight miles to the northwest. The 49th and 304th Bomb Wings would rally off Odertal; the 55th Bomb Wing would rally light. At about 1245, 'Angel of the Sky's number two engine ran away and the prop flew off.

Mullan slowly dropped back and flew alone until about 1300. 'Red F' tried to join the formation be-

...Mullan was unable to catch up. At 1600 hours, Papa, flak bursts barely missed Mullan's left wing. 'Red F' called for fighter escort and got an affirmative reply, but the fighters were unable to find the crippled 'Red F'.

Engines three and four were leaking gas and oil. At 1325 Mullan turned towards the Russian lines. Gas gauges dropped to zero. Mullan saw a sugar beet field near Mako, Hungary and made an emergency wheels down landing. 'Red F' rolled to a stop 100 feet short of a line of trees.



B-24 Ball Gunners Eye View of a German FW190

Meanwhile, 464th/776: B-24L-1-FO, #44-49073, "Ritz", "Red X-Ray". LtCols. Charles F. McKenna III and William H. Reddell. Position Able-11. Outbound over Adriatic, number three engine began losing power.

McKenna relinquished lead and dropped back to Able-31 position. About twenty minutes before the IP, 'Red X-Ray' was hit by flak. Engineer/gunner Albert T. Pendersen was wounded by a flak splinter in his left knee and thigh. McKenna banked his damaged B-24 to the left and headed for Italy.

•Feldwebel (Tech Sgt.) Ewald Preiss of II JG300 (Gelbe 1, "Gloria") intercepted the crippled Red X-Ray and shot it down near Komeriz.

Speculation exists that Red X-Ray carried ECM/RCM/ELINT electronic equipment beyond the standard "belly green" equipment carried by "Mickey" ships.

Both McKenna III and Redell survived WWII and became career officers. Redell retired as a Major General and passed away on 27 November 1999.

464th/779: B-24J-1-NT, #42-78671, #23, Call Sign "Black Jigg". 1st Lt. James T. Creekmore. Creekmore was delayed in taking off and did not liftoff until 0855. 779th pilot 2nd Lt. Donald L. Barsen and his copilot 2nd Lt. Frank Schiffel flying "Black Dog" followed Creekmore off the runway.

Unsure of where the formation was, Creekmore and Barsen climbed to 5,000 feet and flew a left-hand pattern. The two ships flew west for about three minutes. Creekmore and Barsen turned southeast on a heading of seventy degrees and flew towards the Adriatic. Barsen and Schiffel saw their group formation off to the right and banked 180 degrees and joined the formation.

Creekmore continued on the seventy degree heading and radioed for the leader to fire some flares. Barsen recounted that he saw the leader fire the flares, but never heard Creekmore acknowledge he had seen the flares. Barsen asked his waist gunner if he had seen anymore of 'Black Jigg' after they had turned away. The gunner replied that he had not.

Creekmore fell in with the 765th Squadron of the 461st Bomb Group. Between Olomouc and Prerov the 461st encountered a snow storm and the formation opened up to prevent midair collisions.

Lt. Gerry Smith commanding #26 "Arsenic and Lace" recounted that when they came out of the snowstorm the 765th was about three miles to the right of the main formation and directly over Olomouc. We poured on the coal and tried to close the gap, but the German fighters began their attacks."

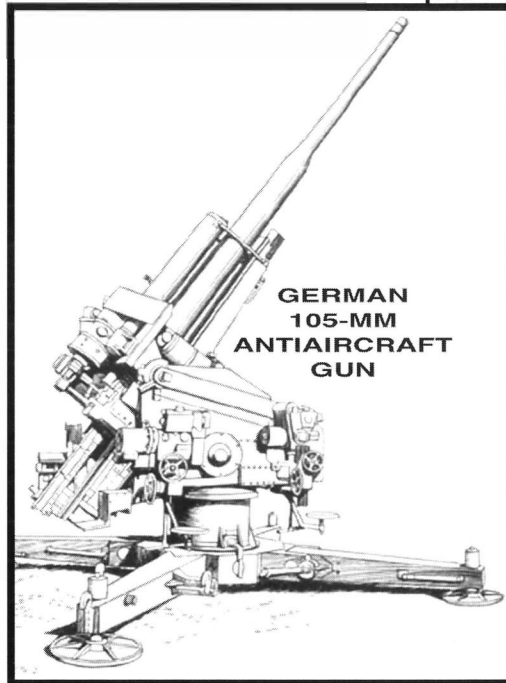
1st. Lt. Eugene P. Ford leading the 765th in the "Tulsamerican" and his deputy leader Captain Robert T. Chalmers in "Judy R" were grievously damaged and dumped their bombs and turned back to Italy.

Phillip J. Crossman in the number three position, Gerry Smith in the number four position, Tom K. West in the number five position and Creekmore in the number six position were all shot down in minutes.

The FW-190s ripped through the 461st's formation, downing 764th Kenneth B. Smith's "TenMenBak", Nick Sidovar and Fred B. Capalbo of the 766th, Robert A. Galvan, Max M. Hailey and Richard V. Lang of the 767th. The 484th lost Roger A. Martin

and Charles A. Himmler. The 451st lost William T. Shelton and Theodore C. King. The 455th lost William V. Richards. The 2nd lost Leo Waldman. The 301st lost Mike Kearns Jr.

Robert T. Chalmers in "Judy R" reached Italy. Ford in "Tulsamerican" with two engines out and leaking fuel tried to reach Vis, but crashed into the Adriatic off Hvar.



From the ground and into the Air, the German 105-MM's provided a foreboding view for everyone to see

Over Hungary, a German voice broke in on the radio and asked the 49th CBW leader Capt. Bill Garrett, "Where is the rest of your formation?" The voice laughed, and then signed off.

The German side: The four staffeln of JG300 dispersed at Borheide (I/JG300), Lobnitz (II/JG300), Juttrbog/Darmm (III/JG300) and Reinsdorf (IV/JG300) had been on emergency alert since 0900.

Former Unteofizier Ernst Schroder (Blue 13) recalled that at 1000 a single red rocket burst over Lobnitz and signaled the start of the interception. The heavily armored and armed (five-tons, two 30mm and two 20mm cannons plus two 13mm machine guns) FW-190A-8 Sturmjagers meet their high cover of ME-109s over Wittenberg am Elbe at 13,000 feet.

The navigation center at Doberitz (near Berlin) ordered the 100 plus fighters to turn southeast. The Americans were over southern Austria and headed north towards Blechhammer and Odertal.

Over Silesia at 18,000 feet, Schroder remembered that the produced contrails for a short time. Reports flooded in that disclosed the bombers heading and altitude of 26,000 feet. Schroder suddenly saw silver flashes at his altitude of 24,600 feet. The "fat cars" (B-24s) crossed our course from left to right.

We pickled our drop tanks and turned left to parallel the B-24s, but on the opposite heading. We culled the bomber stream for weak formations. We bypassed the

first and second groups of B-24s (484th and 451st). The third group (461st) had a squadron-sized opening in its formation. A cell of six B-24s was racing to close the gap. We turned right 180 degrees and approached the six lone bombers from the 6 o'clock position. A few P-38s are above but they did not attack.

They appeared to be waiting for reinforcements. The 190s closed to 1,000 feet and blasted a dozen B-24s apart before the P-38s and P-51s attacked.

Schroder closed in on a B-24 and attempted to fire. His guns remained silent. Schroder cursed and attempted to clear his guns, but to avail.

The Allied fighter counterattack is deadly. At least twenty-three German fighters are downed from the combination of bomber gunners and fighters.

Two additional fighters crash as a result of flight accidents, eight suffer mechanical failures.

Seventeen pilots are dead, eight wounded. The survivors refuel

at Liegnitz at about 1230 and return to Lobnitz at 1430.

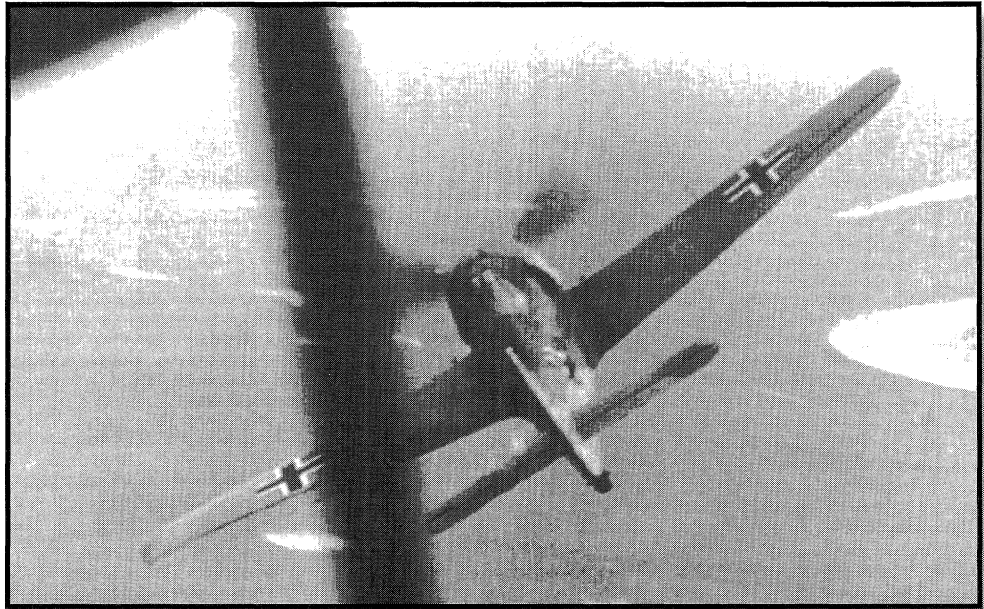
At Lobnitz, Schroder is almost court-martialed and shot for cowardice. A line chief has reported that Schroder's FW-190 is still full of ammunition. A sheepskin mechanic saves Schroder's life when he mentions that Schroder was flying Major Walther Dahl's (currently under house arrest per Goring's orders) FW-190A-8. Dahl's fighter has an extra trigger safety.

The mechanic confesses that he never informed Schroder of the plane's double safety switch.

The 15th Air Force calculates it has lost two

B-17s, nineteen B-24s, four P-38s, two P-51Cs and their crews. The dead and missing personnel are replaced, the bombers and fighters are repaired or replaced. The following day the 15th Air Force smothers the same targets again.

The extreme peak of courage displayed by young



B-24 Nose Gunners' Eye View of a German FW 190

airmen of the 15th Air Force was not singular to the USAAF, but was representative of a generation of unselfish men and women tempered by the hardships of Depression-era childhoods whom persevered as young adults in winning the world's greatest war against tyranny.

The threat of violent death in the air could not vanquish their courage, anymore than death could conquer their souls. Deep with the vein of our sorrows over the losses of sixty-two years ago, we know the legacies of those whom "slow-rolled" into eternity are still alive.

Roy Byrd

PO Box 6 Toyahvale, TX 79786

Dear Frank,

Time and again over the years, I have had the impulse to write the following story.

Your appeal in LAST ISSUE did it! It pushed me over into the must-write zone.

Why was Col. Lokker flying 'Blue I' to Blechhammer on that fateful day in November 1944?

He was assigned to fly 'Yellow Q' not 'Blue I' for that mission. I was on the crew roster for that mission and was assigned as squadron bombardier of the 781st in that position, along with other crew,

After briefing, we took the jeep to the hardstand to 'Yellow Q.' JW Frank, I'm not sure it was 'Q', but I am sure that it was 'Yellow'.

During pre-flight inspection, Col. Lokker discovered a serious malfunction in the airplane, so serious that he called the tower

for another bomber.

He was given 'Blue I'. He then told us to get ready to be moved to 'Blue I'. I knew 'Blue I' was equipped with a 'Sperry Bomb sight'.

I informed Col. Lokker of this and told him that I knew nothing about a 'Sperry', not even how to turn it on.

I had graduated from bombing school at Kirtland Field, Albuquerque and was trained on the 'Norden'. Up until I got to Pantanella, I had never seen a 'Sperry'.

This raised a question about the make up of the crew, who would then make the mission. "Okay, Okay", He said, "I'll take my navigators and complete the crew with 'Blue I' members. The rest of you stay here and the jeep will return you to quarters'.

And so I have survived and am able to report this account.

If you can use it, great. If no value, forget it.

I appreciate your work and know how hard you have to beat the bushes to get material. Best regards, Roy

781st Bomb Squadron Crews Shot Down Over Enemy Territory

The following chart was prepared and submitted by Harold B. Farrar who was a Gunner on the 'Tipton Crew'.

On the 50th Anniversary of WWII Harold wrote a book describing his experiences. "World War II As I Remember It"

Date	TARGET/CREW		Status	Prison Camp	Remarks
5/30/1944	Neunkirken,Aus/Prince Crew				
# 1	George Prince	p	KIA		
	Harold Holden	C/P	MIA/Evade		Yugo Partisans
	Mtmay Septoff	B	MIA/Evade		Rescued Crew
	Calvin Canyock	N	KIA		
	John Crowley	E	MIA/Evade		
	Harry Smith	RIO	MIA/Evade		
	Abrams Dubinsky	G	MIA/Evade		
	Jack Williams	G	MIA/Evade		
	James Down	G	MIA/Evade		
	James Patrick	G	MIA/Evade		
5/31/1944	Ploesti/Tipton Crew				
# 2	Dale Tipton	p	MIA/Evade		
	Jim Wray	C/P	MIA/Evade		Operations Officer
	Eugene Krzyzynski	B	MIA/Evade		
	Vernon Burda	N	MIA/Evade		Tito's Partisans
	Frank Jasicko	E	MIA/Evade		Rescued All Crew
	Hullit Holcombe	RIO	MIA/Evade		
	Albert Ralston	G	MIA/Evade		
	William Soteropoulos	G	MIA/Evade		
	Mike Deironirni	G	MIA/Evade		
	Harold B.Farrar	G	MIA/Evade		
6/6/1944	Ploesti/MacFarlane Crew				
#3	John MacFarlane	p	MIA/Evade	Rescued By	Yugo Partisans
	Robert George	C/P	MIA/Evade		Yugo Partisans
	Howard Sapenoff	B	POW	Rumania	
	Sidney Weiss	N	POW	Rumania	
	Albert McQuaid	E	MIA/Evade		Yugo Partisans
	Thomas Jackson	RIO	POW	Rumania	
	John Duke	G	POW	Rumania	
	Jamar Jancarik	G	POW	Rumania	
	Ralph Finch	G	MIA/Evade		Yugo Partisans
	Hoyt Adsit	G	POW	Rurnania	
	Melton Crawford	Photo	POW	Rumania	Photo Chief
6/6/1944	Ploesti/Martin Crew				
#4	Kenneth Martin	p	POW	Rumania	
	Rex Struble	C/P	POW	Rumania	
	Morris Finely	B	POW	Rumania	
	Robert Williamson	N	POW	Rumania	
	Donald Markel	E	POW	Rumania	Tanenbaum Crew
	Thomas Scalese	RIO	POW	Rumania	Tanenbaum
	Gerald Simmons	G	POW	Rumania	Poole Crew

	Francis Little	G	POW	Rumania	Poole Crew
	Kenneth Foden	G	POW	Rumania	Tanenbaum Crew
	Wilbur Vorheier	G	POW	Rumania	Lovey Crew
5/30/1944	Blehammer/Dickey Crew				
# 5	John Dickey	p	POW	Luft III	
	Frank Hylla	C/P	POW	Luft III, VIIA	Cauble Crew
	George Hausold	B	POW	Luft III	Cauble Crew
	Jerome Joliceur	N	KIA		Cauble Crew
	Robert Carr	E	POW	Luft IV	Cauble Crew
	George Wilson	<i>RIO</i>	POW	Hungary Hospital	Cauble Crew
	Robert Hoover	G	KIA		Cauble Crew
	Joseph Carroll	G	POW	Luft IV	Cauble Crew
	Richard Thill	G	POW	Luft IV	Cauble Crew
	Austin Davis	G	KIA		Frazier Crew
7/16/1944	Vienna AustJ Tipton Crew				
# 6	Dale Tipton	p	POW	Luft III, VIIA	Crew Captured
	Eugens Weiss	C/P	POW	Luft III, XIID, VIIA	By Croatsians
	Eugene Krzyzynski	B	POW	Luft III, XIID, VIIA	& Turned Over
	Vernon Burda	N	POW	Luft III, VIIA	To Germans
	Frank Jasicko	E	POW	Luft VI. XIE	
	Hullit Holcombe	<i>RIO</i>	POW	LuftIV, XIB	
	Albert Ralston	G	POW	LuftIV, XIB	
	Paul Brady	G	POW	Luft IV, Luft I	Cauble Crew
	Milce Deironimi	G	POW	LuftIV, XIB	
	Harold Farrar	G	POW	LuftIV, XIB	
8/3/1944	Friedrichsafen/Poole				
# 7	Theodore Poole	p	KIA		Flying with 782nd
	Conard Croston	E	POW	Luft IV	Bomb Squadron
8/16/1944	Friedrichsafen/Roberts Crew				
# 8	Lewis Roberts	p	Interned in	Switzerland	
	John Moyer	C/P	Interned in	Switzerland	Dickey Crew
	James Lyon	B	Interned in	Switzerland	
	Elliott Sweet	N	Interned in	Switzerland	
	Donald Barrett	N	Interned in	Switzerland	Smith Crew
	Richard Burgin	R/N	Interned in	Switzerland	From Group
	Harold Burchards	E	Interned in	Switzerland	
	Dowie Hymans	<i>RIO</i>	Interned in	Switzerland	
	Willie Golden	G	Interned in	Switzerland	
	Leonard Emmel	G	Interned in	Switzerland	
	Melvin Fullcerson	G	Interned in	Switzerland	
9/10/1944	Vienna, Aust./Dahl Crew				
# 9	Carl Dahl	p	MIA/Evade		Yugo Partisans
	Warren Beeson	C/P	MIA/Evade		Rescued All Crew
	William Rachow	B	MIA/Evade		
	Cornelius Culhane	N	MIA/Evade		
	Franklin Martinez	E	MIA/Evade		
	Howard Percy	<i>RIO</i>	MIA/Evade		
	John Layne	G	MIA/Evade		

	Donald Stern	G	POW	Luft I	
Date	TARGET/CREW		Status	Prison Camp	Remarks
12/17/1944	Blechhammer/Mullan Crew				
# 15	Alfred Mullan	p	MIA	Land on Field	Under Russian
	Hyman Newman	C/P	MIA	Control, Then To	Rumania, Then
	Richard Heaney	B	MIA	Return To Italy	
	Lester Hersey	N	MIA		
	John Hogan	E	MIA		Baklita Crew
	Melvin Gilliam	RIO	MIA		
	Deverett Allen	G	MIA		
	Earl Culpepper	G	MIA		
	Crawford Barnhart	G	MIA		
	Chester Mijal	G	MIA		Newman Crew
12/18/1944	Blechhammer/Clodfelter Crew				
# 16	Donald Clodfelter	p	MIA/Evade	Helped By	Hungarian
	Virgil Christian	C/p	MIA/Evade	Partisians and	Russians To
	John Wilson	B	MIA/Evade	Save All Crew	
	Turner Atkins	N	MIA/Evade		
	Robert Elliott	E	MIA/Evade		Bigler Crew
	Joseph Joublanc	RIO	MIA/Evade		
	Robert Munson	G	MIA/Evade		
	Charles Hemphill	G	Mia/Evade		
	Walter Leitgeb	G	MIA/Evade		
	Royal Wilson	G	MIA/Evade		
12/19/1944	Marlbor, YugoJGriffith Crew				
# 17	James Griffith	p	KIA		
	Bmce Cosper	C/P	KIA		
	James Burns	B	POW	Luft I	
	Ray Laughner	N	POW	Luft!	
	John Hart	E	KIA		
	William Russell	RIO	KIA		
	Attilio Benvenuto	G	KIA		
	Richard Carlson	G	POW	Hospital	Prison Camp ??
	Dempsey Brett	G	POW	Stalag XIIID, VIIA	
	Lee Stutzman	G	KIA		
2/5/1945	Regensburg/Jones Crew				
# 18	Robert Jones	p	KIA		
	William Dobbs	C/P	KIA		
	Joseph Ormes	B	KIA		Donahue Crew
	Arthur Silver	N	KIA		
	Howard Fox	E	KIA		
	Charles Duffield	RIO	KIA		
	Roscoe Fee	G	KIA		
	Carrol Elmore	G	KIA		
	Bernard Reardon	G	KIA		
	Vernon Ellsworth	G	KIA		
2/16/1945	Regensburg/Newman Crew				
# 19	Hyman Newman	p	MIA	Bailed Out Over	Friendly Italian

	Donald Stern	G	POW	Luft I	
Date	TARGET/CREW		Status	Prison Camp	Remarks
12/17/1944	Blechhammer/Mullan Crew				
# 15	Alfred Mullan	p	MIA	Land on Field	Under Russian
	Hyman Newman	C/P	MIA	Control, Then To	Rumania, Then
	Richard Heaney	B	MIA	Return To Italy	
	Lester Hersey	N	MIA		
	John Hogan	E	MIA		Baklita Crew
	Melvin Gilliam	R/O	MIA		
	Deverett Allen	G	MIA		
	Earl Culpepper	G	MIA		
	Crawford Barnhart	G	MIA		
	Chester Mijal	G	MIA		Newman Crew
12/18/1944	Blechhammer/Clodfelter Crew				
# 16	Donald Clodfelter	p	MIA/Evade	Helped By	Hungarian
	Virgil Christian	C/p	MIA/Evade	Partisians and	Russians To
	John Wilson	B	MIA/Evade	Save All Crew	
	Turner Atkins	N	MIA/Evade		
	Robert Elliott	E	MIA/Evade		Bigler Crew
	Joseph Joubanc	R/O	MIA/Evade		
	Robert Munson	G	MIA/Evade		
	Charles Hemphill	G	Mia/Evade		
	Walter Leitgeb	G	MIA/Evade		
	Royal Wilson	G	MIA/Evade		
12/19/1944	Marlbor, YugoJGriffith Crew				
# 17	James Griffith	p	KIA		
	Bruce Cospers	C/P	KIA		
	James Burns	B	POW	Luft I	
	Ray Laughner	N	POW	Luft I	
	John Hart	E	KIA		
	William Russell	R/O	KIA		
	Attilio Benvenuto	G	KIA		
	Richard Carlson	G	POW	Hospital	Prison Camp ? ?
	Dempsey Brett	G	POW	Stalag XIIIID, VIIA	
	Lee Stutzman	G	KIA		
2/5/1945	Regensburg/Jones Crew				
# 18	Robert Jones	p	KIA		
	William Dobbs	C/P	KIA		
	Joseph Ormes	B	KIA		Donahue Crew
	Arthur Silver	N	KIA		
	Howard Fox	E	KIA		
	Charles Dnffield	R/O	KIA		
	Roscoe Fee	G	KIA		
	Carrol Elmore	G	KIA		
	Bernard Reardon	G	KIA		
	Vernon Ellsworth	G	KIA		
2/16/1945	Regensburg/Newman Crew				
# 19	Hyman Newman	p	MIA	Bailed Out Over	Friendly Italian

	Roy Rice	CIP	MIA	Territory	
	Lewis Cato	N	MIA		
	Chester Mijal	E	MIA		
	George Painter	RIO	MIA		
	Thomas Carmody	G	MIA		
	Kieth Lancaster	G	MIA		
	Charles Bradley	G	MIA		
	Monore Beebe	G	MIA		
3/1/1945	Vienna, Anst./Smith Crew				
#20	William Smith	p	MIA	Landed On	Airfield in Hungary
	Stanley Winkowski	CIP	MIA	Under Russian	Control
	Arthur Bovett	B	MIA		
	Gaythor Cass	N	MIA		Crutcher Crew
	Richard Bigler	Radar	MIA		
	Charles Thein	E	MIA		
	Paul Ihde	RIO	MIA		Blakita Crew
	Robert Cohlma	G	MIA		
	Arnold McElwain	G	MIA		
	Donald Postema	G	MIA		
	James Hinton	G	MIA		
3/2/1945	Amstetten, Aust./French Crew				
#21	Robert French	p	MIA	Bailed Out In	Friendly Hungarian
	Kenneth Parkhurst	CIP	MIA	Territory Under	Russian Control
	David Bowman	N	MIA		
	William Briggs	E	MIA		
	Frederick Wagner	RIO	MIA		
	Francis Donohue	G	MIA		
	Harold Quagan	G	MIA		
	Denny Horton	G	MIA		
	Lehman Wood	G	MIA		
3/14/1945	Nove Zamby, Hung/Martz Crew				
#22	Robert Martz	p	KIA		
	William Bradley	CIP	KIA		
	Peter Renzo	B	KIA		
	Lester Hersey	N	KIA		Mullan Crew
	Harold Long	N	KIA		Donahue CREW
	Herbert Volle	Radar	KIA		
	Vincent Beeson	E	POW	Stalag VIIA	
	George Smith	RIO	KIA		
	William Brannon	G	KIA		
	Willis DeForest	G	KIA		
	Edward Dworetzky	G	KIA		
	Joseph Galleli	G	KIA		
3/22/1945	Vienna, Aust./Group Aircraft				
#23	Ernest Alden	Radar	KIA		
	Alfred Maas	E	KIA		
	Paul Druckel	N	POW	Stalag VIIA	McDaniel Crew

SIGN-UP NOW FOR SHREVEPORT REUNION OCTOBER 2-3-4

FOLDED WINGS



JOHN PERSHING McCLEARY

JOHN PERSHING McCLEARY, Colonel, U.S.A.F., Retired, passed away July 31, 2004, he was 85. A memorial service was held at Myer Chapel followed by urnment with military honors •-at Arlington National Cemetery.

Following his commissioning via the Aviation Cadet Program and training, he joined the 465th Bomb Group, Fifteenth Air Force, in Italy, Serving as a Group Radar Officer and Intelligence Officer until 1945. He returned to active duty in 1950, shortly after the outbreak of the Korean War. In 1952, he and Gudrun Audry Stack were married at the Bolling Air Force Base, Washington, D.C. He was assigned in 1953 to Headquarters U.S. Air Force in Washington, D.C., in the fields of Intelligence and Inter-American affairs and as Aide to the Air Force Vice Chief of Staff. He was assigned to the Joint U.S. Military Group in Madrid, Spain in 1955 until 1959. He attended the Air War College at Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama. He served at Headquarters U.S. Air Force and in the Office of the Secretary of Defense in various capacities and was Chief of the Negotiations Division at the Joint U.S. Military Group in Madrid, working on base rights matters. Colonel McCleary was awarded the Legion of Merit and the Bronze Star Medal.

GEORGE A. SOROKA

I'm writing to let you know that my father, GEORGE A. SOROKA, died May 18, 2005 after a 3 year battle with cancer.

He was 87 years young at the time and proud of his service with the 781st Bomb Squadron during WWII.

His obituary can still be read at www.Buranichfuneralhome.com

In the obituary section type in Soroka and you will be able to access the obituary.

Dad was an airplane mechanic with the 781st and a fine mechanic all of his life. He was a wonderful man and I'm glad he was my Dad.

Kirn NS Cherry

Our thoughts
and prayers
are with all
our fallen comrades
who have found
everlasting peace.
You have served
your country well.
We will remember you forever.

Dear Frank, I hate to see you give up being the editor of the Pantanella news for lack of information or stories because if you attend the reunion, there are thousands of them, but getting them down on paper is another matter.

Include me in the reluctant category. My wife Dottie says, "Right now, get on that computer and write a story for Frank". So here goes I'm calling this one-"He **Should of Gotten a Medal**"

I don't remember the date of this mission since I've lost my little blue book of my log of missions, but it was a cold winter day and we were bombing Bleckhamrner South. We were flying deputy lead that day so I was on the bornbsight on the bomb run. The flak as usual was very intense and Jarnie Hartley our navigator would tap me on the back and point out the window at the colored flak. That was the least of my concern at the moment as I was intent on correcting the dropping angle on the bomb run. Just as we approached that rrioment, I saw a huge flash in the bornbsight telescope. and then BOMBS AWAY!

My crew tells me I kept repeating, "**bombs away, bombs away**", several times. The next memory I have of that incident was Jamie had me bent over the bombsight and I had a sharp pain in my right side.

My immediate thought was "Oh my God, I've been hit" No such thing, I had gotten a cramp from my a bad position from Jamie replacing my lygen Mask which had iced up and I had passed out.

I could never thank him enough for his quick perception of my trouble and the remedy that quickly saved my life. Like I said before, "He should 'Ve gotten a medal. "

dst another war story Frank, but that was it.. Frank Wassenauer

Attention!!

All members of the 781st BS

Orren Lee, our secretary has suggested that we all send in your next of kin address or phone number in the event your newsletter comes back as undeliverable so that we would have a way to check up on you.

Orren, or his assistant, would make a point to call them. If someone has moved to a nursing facility or something we could report that along with their new address in the following Newsletter.

Orren Lee's address and phone number is:-

2312 Braernar Dr. Sioux Falls, SD 57105

Phone 605-339-1297.

Email: olee@iw.net

---REUNION---

Make your room reservations directly with the Holiday Inn (318-688-3000).

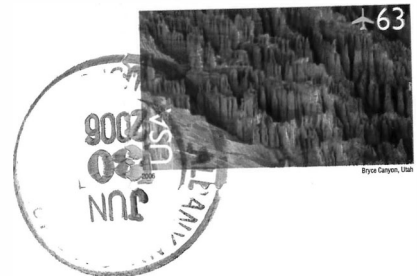
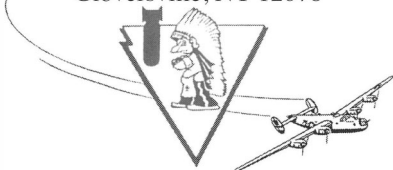
Be sure to mention our group number BOM

All hotel reservations must be made by September 1, 2006.



At 15th AF Headquarters, Bari Italy, General 'Nate' Twining, 15th. Air Force Commander and his Wing Commanders meet to plan the next Strategic Strike against Germany

781st "PANTANELLA NEWS"
c/o Frank Ambrose, Editor
44 East Blvd.
Gloversville, NY 12078



ORREN LEE
2312 BRAEMAR DR.
SOUX FALLS, SD 57105