

PANTANELLA NEWS

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92 July 2008

DAYTON AF BASE BRACES FOR 781st OCTOBER ONSLAUGHT RECORD TURN OUT EXPECTED TO RE-VISIT 81st MEMORIAL PLAQUE



Anzio Annie

This giant railway gun was used by the German army against Allied troops attempting to break out of the Anzio Beachhead in 1944. Except when firing, this gun was hidden in a tunnel and easily rolled in and out for use.

This weapon, which extracted a very heavy toll in life and equipment, was sabotaged and abandoned by the Germans as the Allies broke out of the beachhead.

ANZIO ANNIE weighs 230 tons, had a 70 foot long barrel and fired 550 pound shells approximately 31 miles.



ATTENTION MEMBERS KEEP IN TOUCH

Notify or contact any or all of
the individuals listed below for any
FW's---Address Changes--News
Or Whatever

PANTANELLA NEWS

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News Stories, FW's and Obits

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PANTANELLA NEWS

Editor: Frank Ambrose

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

May 1944 Mediterranean Theatre Italy

In May of 1944 elements of the
US Army, British and Polish
Corps, Moroccan and Algerian
Divisions were engaging stubborn
German Forces along the Adolph
Hitler and Gustov Line across the
belt of Italy.

Major battles were being fought
at Cassino and at the Beachhead
with heavy German Artillery
wreaking havoc and an enormous
toll on Allied men and equipment.
Especially devastating was the
giant railway gun referred to as
"Axis Annie".

On 3 May 1944, the 465th Bomb
Group prepared to fly it's first
combat mission as a part of the
55th Bombardment Wing (H),
Fifteenth Air Force.

The target to be attacked

was the town of Podgorica,
Yugoslavia. where German troop
concentrations were known to be
located.

Weather canceled this mission
at the last minute and also kept
the planes grounded on the 4th.
However the 5th brought good
weather and the first mission
was flown with the same target,
Podgorica. Yugoslavia, as the
objective.

781st Pilots flying this mission
were:

Maj. Charles F: McKenna, III, Lt.
Lewis M. Roberts, Lt. Philip F:
Schuster, Lt. John R. Dickey, Lt.
Raymond D. Cauble, Lt. Joe M.
Athon, Jr., Lt. Robert J. Smith,
Lt. Ray W Hurd, Lt. Robert L.
Shetterly, and Lt. Charles V
Stennerson.

All Crews returned without
damage or loss. The Group's
results were excellent with severe
damage inflicted.



**465th's First Combat Mission
Bomb Plot Overlay: Target PODGOICA, Italy**

No Rear ... Anzio Was Unique

by Bill Mauldin

It was the only place in Europe which held an entire corps of infantry, a British division, all kinds of artillery and special units, and maintained an immense supply and administration setup without a rear echelon. As a matter of fact, there wasn't any rear; there was no place on the entire beachhead where enemy shells couldn't seek you out.

Sometimes it was worse at the front; sometimes worse at the harbour. Quartermasters buried their dead, and amphibious duck drivers went down with their craft. Infantrymen, dug into the Mussolini Canal, had the canal pushed in on top of them by armour-piercing shells, and Jerry bombers circled as they directed glider bombs onto L.S.T.s and Liberty ships. Wounded men got oak leaf clusters on their Purple Hearts when shell fragments added them as they lay on hospital beds. Nurses died. Planes crash-landed on the single air strip.

Planes went out to seek the 'Anzio Express', that huge gun which made guys in rest areas play softball near slit trenches. The planes would report the Express destroyed and an hour later she

would come in on schedule.

The krauts launched a suicidal attack which almost drove through to the sea. Evacuation was already beginning in the Harbour when a single American battalion broke the point of the attack, then was engulfed and died. Bodies of fanatical young Germans piled up in front of the machine-guns, and when the guns ran out of ammunition the Wehrmacht came through and was stopped only by point-blank artillery. One American artillery battalion of 155s fired eighty thousand rounds of ammunition at Anzio, and there were dozens of these battalions.

You couldn't stand up in the swamps without being cut down, and you couldn't sleep if you sat down. Guys stayed in these swamps for days and weeks. Every hole had to be covered, because the 'popcorn man' came over every night and shovelled hundreds of little butterfly bombs down on your head by the light of flares and exploding ack-ack. You'd wake up in the morning and find your sandbags torn open and spilled on the ground.

The krauts used little remote-control tanks filled with high explosives. You wondered how Jerry could see you and throw a shell at you every time you stuck your head up, until you climbed into the mountains after it was all

over and were able to count every tree and every house in the area we had held. Tiger tanks grouped together and fired at you. Your artillery thought it was a battery and threw a concentration of shells at the tanks, and by the time you shells struck the Tigers had moved away and were firing at you from another place.

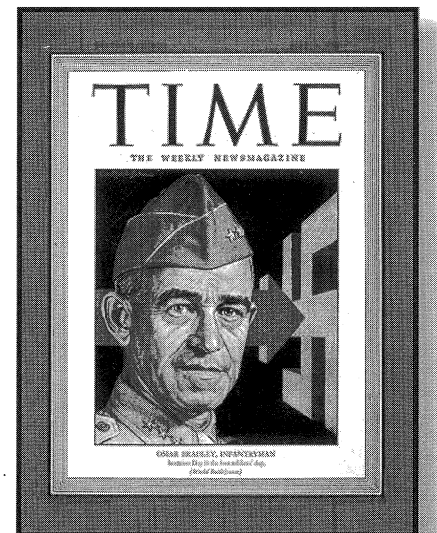
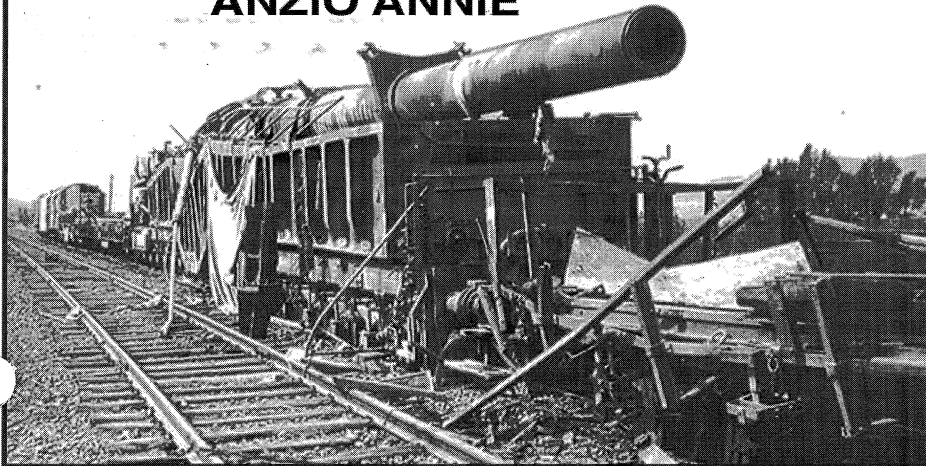
Four American tank destroyers crossed the canal and bounced armour-piercing shells off the turret of a Tiger until it turned its massive gun and disintegrated them with five shells.

German infantry rode their tanks into battle and the dogfaces shot them off like squirrels but they didn't get them all - some came in and bayoneted our guys in their holes.

This wasn't a beachhead that was secured and enlarged until it eventually became a port for supplies coming in to supplement those being expended as the troops pushed inland. Everything was being expended right here. It was a constant hellish nightmare, because when you weren't getting something you were expecting something, and it lasted for five months.

- Bill Mauldin, American war artist
Source: *The Taste of Courage - The War, 1939-1945. Edited by Desmond Flower and James Reeves. Copyright 1960, Cassel & Co. Ltd. Publisher: Harper & Row, New York NY.*

380 mm RAILWAY GUN "ANZIO ANNIE"



'TIME' May '44 Issue

The Frank Wassenaar Story

Bombardier: 781st BS

Dear Frank, Dottie and I were happy and surprised to receive your E-mail message. You asked to know more about myself while at Pantanella, before and after.

So here goes:-

I was born and raised in a small farming community in west Michigan near the Lake Michigan shoreline on a small 40 acre property of very sandy soil not very good for farming but able to grow hay and most vegetables.

My father was a country veterinarian and we had animals aplenty. I became fascinated with airplanes at a very early age and at age twelve or so I had my first ride in an Aeronica D model which on the ground and taxiing was about 6 inches above ground and I was hooked.

After graduating from high school and too young at 17 to get a job, I enrolled in an air frame fabrication class at Beech Craft's school in Wichita Kansas. I turned 18 in February 1942 and got a job with Murray Body Co. in Detroit, making wings for the B17 bomber. Me and several other boys from aircraft school lived at the Detroit YMCA and one of them introduced me to a very charming, vivacious, and lovely girl named Dorothy who I fell in love with at first sight.

In the fall of 1943 after failing to pass my Army Cadet entrance exam because of my light weight I enlisted in the Army Air Corps and was called to active duty in January of 43. I was sent to St. Petersburg Fl. for basic training and then to gunnery school at Harlagen Air base. While there I took the Air Cadet exam again and after the physical the Flight Surgeon said "you are a little light for your highth but Cadet food is pretty good so you passed"

From there I went to Sheperd Field for more Basic training and then on to San Marcos Texas State Teachers College for

three months of schooling. My next stop was San Antonio Classification Center where after the physical I was told that I had a slight stigmatism and should not be a pilot but could be a Navigator or a Bombardier. I chose the Bombardier route and after primary training at Ellington Field at Houston Tx. I entered Bombardier Training at Childress Air Base Tx.

I graduated May 20th 1944 with three days leave and three days travel time and on May 24th Dottie and I were married.

The next day we were on our way to Lincoln Nebraska. I was assigned to a B24 crew and shipped with my crew to Pueblo Colorado for three months of phase training and then overseas to Italy in a Liberty Boat along with 24 other crews. Arriving a Naples we were loaded into a box car overnight and one rainy day to Bari and two days later to Pantanella.

I have lost my journal of my missions in one of my moves but I think we were checked out for combat flying by the middle of September and flew our first mission.

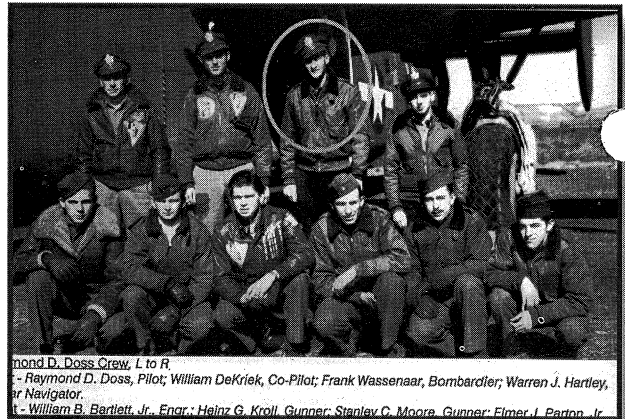
The target was Vienna but for weather problems we diverted to Graz and came back to base without any trouble, we did see some flack for the first time but it was nothing to get excited about.

I flew with Doss as our pilot for something like 14 or 15 missions including three night nuisance missions to keep Jerry awake all night, but that was soon stopped, The last mission with Doss as pilot was a total disaster. We had a new airplane with a stinger in the tail instead of a turret. I don't know if this caused our problem but some people thought it may have been a factor.

We were taking off on the right runway as usual and the 464th was taking off on the left. There was a pretty strong wind that morning directly cross wind to the runways. When our plane reached takeoff speed and was bouncing a bit Doss hit the gear-up handle and almost the same instant we were hit with a air-blast either from the wind or prop-wash from the left runway. The nose of the plane dropped and the pilots could not get the nose back up. The nose sank into the steel matting and ground the nose down so the props were close to the runway. The fuselage cracked almost up to the pilots cabin and the plane went off the end of the runway for at least 100 yards before coming to a stop.

I nearly broke my neck pushing the engineer out the top hatch After getting out and running as fast as I could to get away from the plane because only a couple of weeks before a similar crash happened and when the plane hit a water puddle the plane blew up.

After that Doss was transferred to a P-38



mond D. Doss Crew, L to R
t- Raymond D. Doss, Pilot; William DeKriek, Co-Pilot; Frank Wassenaar, Bombardier; Warren J. Hartley, Navigator.
t- William B. Bartlett, Jr., Engr.; Heinz G. Kroll, Gunner; Stanley C. Moore, Gunner; Elmer J. Patton, Jr.

photo unit. I understand he crashed and died most unfortunately. I never flew with my original crew again. Trudeau was assigned the pilot.

I flew 22 sorties with different crews and flew the last mission of the squadron to Linz Austria just before the war ended.

When the field was dis-banded we went to Gioia to prepare to fly home. I became ill with dysentery and was taken to Bari hospital where I spent three weeks recovering. I flew home with a crew of two pilot Lieutenants, three Majors, two Captains, an engineer and radio operator, and yours truly.

We lost an engine over the Atlantic about 4 hours out and then returned to Dakar for four days to replace the engine. We landed in Charleston, South Carolina and then in a C-47 back to Illinois and from there back to Michigan for a month of relaxation. Dottie and I spent the month at her brothers cottage at East Tawas on the Lake Huron Shore.

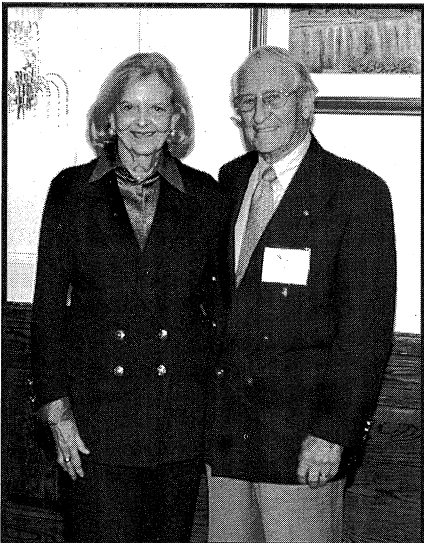
We reported to McDill Field in Tampa and stayed there until the war in Japan ended. I was offered a opportunity to remain in the Air Corps as a Master Sergeant in charge of a mess hall. I said no thanks and called the University of Detroit and enrolled in the pre-med program for two intensive years and then was accepted into the Dental School for four years and graduated in June 1951.

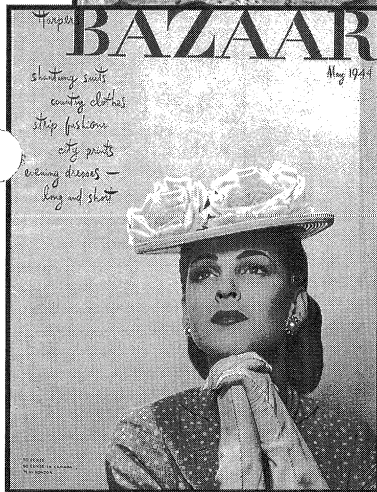
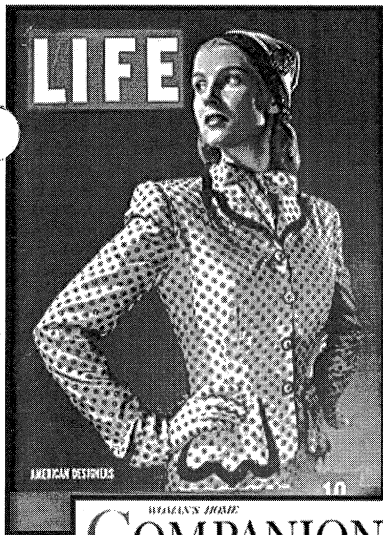
After graduation I practiced ten months in Holland Mi. and then moved to Alma Michigan where I practiced for 53 years. My oldest daughter Sara and her husband Richard, both dentists, now own and operate a very successful practice. Our oldest child, son Kurt, is a very fine architect with an office in Charlottesville Va. Our youngest daughter Mona is the president of a company in New York selling high end table accessories like linens, napkins, etc.

All are very exceptional and successful and make us proud. Dottie and I have celebrated 63 years of happy marriage and Frank, that probably accounts for that "best looking couple look".

I hope this answers who I am.

Frank Wassenaar





The HOME FRONT MAY 1944

The 465th BG began its first Combat Mission in May of 1944 out of the Pantanella Air Base in Italy. At the same time in '44, people back home in the States were reading the May 8th., 1944 issue of 'Life Magazine', the May 1944 issue of the 'Ladies Home Companion' and the May 1944 issue of 'Harpers Bazaar' and an assortment of others.

At that same time, for those fortunate enough to own a car with still good tires and able to accumulate enough 'Gas Ration

RE-CAP... THE ANZIO CAMPAIGN

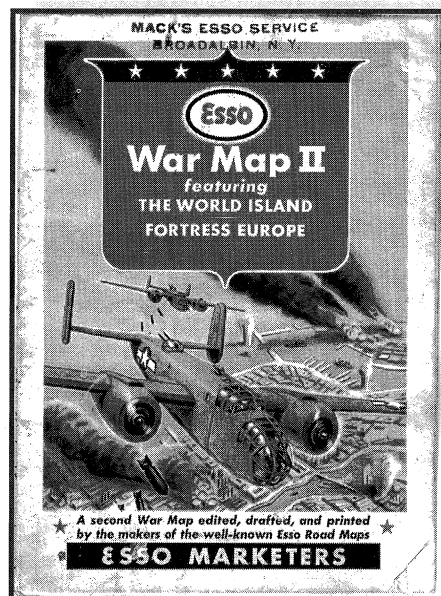
During the four months of the Anzio Campaign the Allied VI Corps suffered over 29,200 combat casualties (4,400 killed, 18,000 wounded, 6,800 prisoners or missing) and 37,000 noncombat casualties.

Two-thirds of these losses, amounting to 17 percent of VI Corps' effective strength, were inflicted between the initial landings and the end of the German counteroffensive on 4 March.

Of the combat casualties, 16,200 were Americans (2,800 killed, 11,000 wounded, 2,400 prisoners or missing) as were 26,000 of the Allied noncombat casualties.

German combat losses, suffered wholly by the Fourteenth Army, were estimated at 27,500 (5,500 killed, 17,500 wounded, and 4,500 prisoners or missing)—figures very similar to Allied losses.

Library of Congress Archives



Stamps' to buy the gas, the station attendant would offer them a free 'Map of the World' which depicted B-24's on a bomb run on the cover. Maps of the World were very popular so that people on the 'Home Front' would be able to keep track of the various other 'Fronts' their troops or loved ones were involved in.



Uncle Willie?

In this 'Stars and Stripes' Mauldin cartoon, 10 year Regular Army veteran 'Private GI Joe, alias 'Willie', meets his very young nephew, a US Air Force '90 Day Wonder-Full Bird Colonel'.

How true it was!!

From: The Editor To: 'Our AF Die-Hard Flyers' and Readers

I suppose by now you may have noticed in this issue that several of the photos and articles have nothing to do with the Air Force or other activities the 15th in Italy was involved with.

Our Group first entered combat in May of 1944. And at that same time in May of '44, the US Foot Soldiers and other Allied Soldiers were already engaged in bloody campaigns.

In that same timeline the battle of Cassino and the Anzio Beachhead were scenes of great devastation of both men and equipment.

So it is, that in this issue I have departed from writing and printing stories solely about our guys and the "Pantanella" experience, but instead, I've researched and written about the other events and activities that were occurring in the 'War Zone' in May of '44 at the same time as we were.

Regardless of what we have been telling our kids, in reality, we really didn't win the war in 24's all by ourselves did we?

We had help! We were all into it together, weren't we?

Frank Ambrose, Editor

More Email to The Editor

From: recarlso@comcast.net
Subject: 781/465th Information
Date: April 4, 2008
To: frank@frankambrose.com

Mr. Ambrose, notwithstanding being a fan of yours from your book, Wild Blue, my Dad, Richard O. Carlson, SN 16188168, was also a member of the 781st.

He flew in Lt. Griffith's crew and was shot down 19 Dec 1944 and subsequently held prisoner in Stalag VIIa. I took him back to visit Moosburg in 1980.

While my Dad won't talk much about his time in service, just recently I came across some unbelievable information about him and his crew.

A researcher found his POW interrogation picture in a file box in the Archives and traced him back to me through your site (thanks) by

Dad's service number. Dad had not seen the picture before and that started the ball rolling.

Now, I am in contact with two researchers in the Lake Balaton, Hungary area that know what happened to his plane and the crew that did not bail out.

Four bodies were recovered and two still listed as MIA. The DPMO is going back to Hungary this summer to continue their search. And my new Hungarian friend will be part of this process.

I mention all of this to you because it is your site that started to line up the pieces.

And I noted that you have a 781st newsletter. Could I get included on that mailing, please? I will pass it onto my Dad. I am interested in seeing if any of Dad's crew is still alive.

His tail number was 44-41106, no nickname.

Thanks for all you have done for these fine men.

Regards,

Dick Carlson
Warrenton, VA

From: papafrank3410@bresnan.net
Subject: Reunion 2008
Date: February 3, 2008
To: frank@frankambrose.com

My name is Louis Miller. My brother George M. Miller was with the 465th Bomg Gp, 782nd Bomb Sqd in Italy.

His Sqd is not having any reunions as far as I can find out.

I think that is due to the shortage of members remaining.

My question is this, Would there be any way to get the whole 465th Gp into one big reunion?

Thanks for your time.

Lou

papafrank3410@bresnan.net
3410 Green Ct
Cheyenne WY 82009-5417
307 634-3138

Just in case you need a laugh:

Remember it takes a college degree to fly a plane, but only a high school diploma to fix one.

Reassurance for those of you who fly routinely in your jobs.

From: alpca3230@hotmail.com
Subject: Something of Interest
Date: April 30, 2008
To: frank@frankambrose.com

Hi Frank,

I wrote to you a while back telling you of my father's passing.

His name was Robert H. Matthews and he was a bombardier in the Shuster crew.

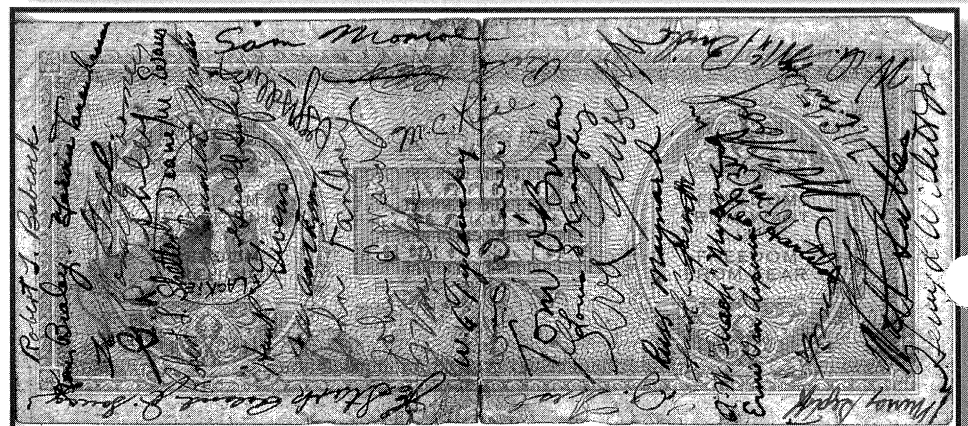
While cleaning out the house I found a 1000 Lire note which had been signed with many signatures.

I'm assuming that it was something that my father had members of his squadron sign. I scanned both sides and am sending copies along. Maybe you will be able to decipher some of the signatures.

Since I wrote you last, I've subscribed to the Pantanella News and noticed that it contained the notice about my father's death.

Thanks for including it.

Alan Matthews
Nottingham, N.H.



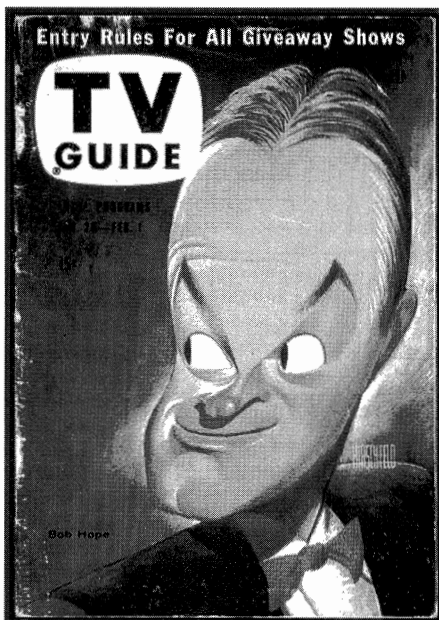
'08 REUNION NEWS**The HOPE HOTEL
781st BS Reunion Hdqts.
October 5-6-7-8**

The HOPE HOTEL's proximity to the best of Dayton's aviation heritage sites makes it the perfect location for an inspiring meeting, great vacation or memorable gathering.

From the National Park that begins at their doorstep to shopping, dining and entertainment, the Hope Hotel is the hub of regional fun.

- One mile from Huffman Prairie Flying Field (Wright Bros Museum)
- Four miles from the National Museum of the U.S. Air Force/National Aviation Hall of Fame,
- Eight miles from Downtown Dayton
- Fifteen Miles from the Dayton International Airport.

The "Hope Hotel" is aptly named



for Bob Hope as a tribute for all of his unending support for Service Men.

The 'Pack man' would travel to every corner of the world as an ambassador of Hope. Few would forget the joy and laughter that he brought to their town. Most would

remember that they felt good and were touched with a little magic from home.

Located within the Hope Hotel's Complex is 'Packy's Sports Bar and Grill'.

'Packy's', the Grill's name, was derived from Bob Hope's early days when he boxed for a short time under the name 'Packy East' -- "I was on more canvases than Picasso", he quipped.

Driving Instructions to the Hope Hotel & Conference Center

From I-675

1. At Exit-20, turn left on Dayton Yellow Springs Road and follow to Ohio 444.
2. Turn left on Ohio 444.
3. At the next light, turn right. (As if to go through Gate 12A)
4. As you make the turn, bear right and turn into the entrance of the Hope Hotel.

Shuttle service, to and from the Airport, is also available

**Dayton, Ohio...
What to See and Do
At The Crossroads of America**

DAYTON, OHIO—Dayton, a city literally at the crossroads of America, offers unique recreational and educational opportunities around every corner.

World-famous museums, dozens of unique attractions, professional arts organizations, miles of riverfront, acres of parkland, and a rich and colorful history draw hundreds of thousands visitors to Dayton each year.

Conveniently located at the "Crossroads of America" at the intersection of Interstate 70 and Interstate 75, Dayton is also accessible by nearly 30 daily non-stop jet service flights to Dayton International Airport.

Dayton is one of the nation's top ten "90-minute land and air markets," which means that more than 5.6 million people can reach the city by land or air within just 90 minutes.

Famous as the birthplace of Orville and Wilbur Wright, Dayton superlatives go far beyond aeronautics. World-class museums, historic sites, an impressive array of arts organizations and numerous recreational settings—including everything from forests to prairies to wetlands—have made Dayton one of America's most appealing cities.

Orville and Wilbur Wright's fascination with flight began with an 1878 toy whirligig given to them by their father. That gift ultimately led the Dayton-born brothers to give the world the gift of flight, and the city continues to be home of innovators who have created everything from the stepladder to cellophane tape to space food. Many artists, athletes, actors and authors have called Dayton home, including poet laureate Paul Laurence Dunbar, actor

Martin Sheen, cartoonist Cathy Guisewite, comedian Jonathan Winters, authors John Jakes and Erma Bombeck, talk show host Phil Donahue, Olympic track star Edwin C. Moses, and basketball star Jim Paxson.

According to repeated nationwide surveys,

More Doctors Smoke CAMELS than any other cigarette!

Doctors in every branch of medicine were asked, "What cigarette do you smoke?" The brand named most was Camel!

You'll know it's a good choice for the same reason we know doctors smoke Camels. Camels have a smooth, rich, mellow taste that's just what a doctor needs. Make this choice your choice every time. You'll know it's a good choice for the same reason we know doctors smoke Camels. Camels have a smooth, rich, mellow taste that's just what a doctor needs. You'll know it's a good choice for the same reason we know doctors smoke Camels. Camels have a smooth, rich, mellow taste that's just what a doctor needs.

THE DOCTORS' CHOICE IS AMERICA'S CHOICE!

For 30 days, test Camels in your "T-Zone" (T for Throat, T for Taste).

www.StrangeCosmos.com

781st 2008 REUNION DAYTON AF BASE OCT. 5-6-7-8

INVASION OF CONTINENTAL ITALY 1943-1944

Forces of the British Eighth Army landed in the 'toe' of Italy on September 3, 1943. The Italian government surrendered on September 8, but the German forces continued to defend without their assistance.

On 9 September forces of the U.S. Fifth Army landed against heavy German resistance at Salerno and additional British forces at Taranto which was almost unopposed. There had been hopes that with the surrender of the Italian government, the Germans would withdraw to the north. However this was not to be, although Eighth Army were able to make relatively easy progress for a while up the eastern coast capturing the port of Bari and the important airfields around Foggia.

The German Tenth Army came close to repelling the Salerno landing, however reserves were not available from the north and efforts failed. The main Allied thrust in the west initially centered on the port of Naples. Naples was selected because it was the northernmost port

city that could be taken with the aid of Allied fighter aircraft cover operating from Sicily.

As the Allies advanced north, increasingly difficult terrain (characterised by a succession of fast flowing rivers and intervening ridges running at right angles to the line of advance) prevented fast movement and proved ideal for defense. In early October 1943 Adolf Hitler was persuaded by his Army Group Commander in south Italy, Field Marshal Kesselring that the defense of Italy should be conducted as far away from Germany as possible. This would make the most of the natural defensive geography of Central Italy while denying the Allies the easy capture of a succession of airfields each one being ever closer to Germany. Hitler was also convinced that yielding southern Italy would provide the

the Allied advance to buy time to prepare the most formidable defensive positions which formed the Winter Line.

The Winter Line proved a major obstacle to the Allies at the end of 1943, halting their advance on the Fifth Army's front, the western side of Italy. Although the Gustav Line was penetrated on the Eighth Army's Adriatic front and Ortona taken, blizzards, drifting snow and zero visibility at the end of December caused the advance to grind to a halt.

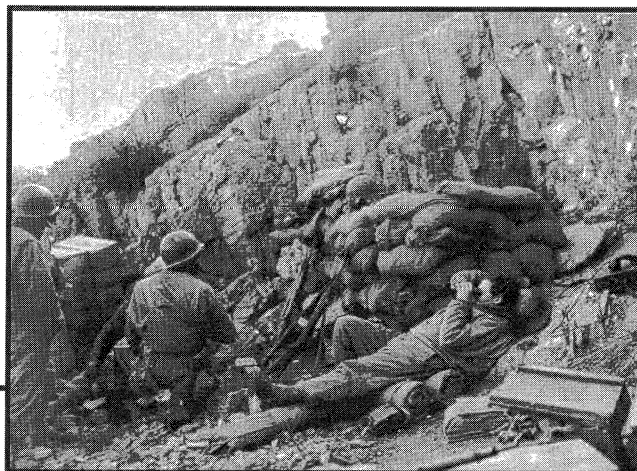
The Allies focus then turned to the western front where an attack through the Liri valley was considered to have the best chance of a breakthrough towards Rome. Landings at Anzio behind the line were intended to destabilise the German Gustav line defenses, but the hoped for early thrust inland to cut the

German defenses off did not occur and the Anzio forces became bottled up in their beach head.

It took four major offensives between January and May 1944 before the line was eventually broken by a combined assault of the Fifth and Eighth Armies (including British, US, French, Polish, and Canadian Corps) concentrated along a twenty mile front between Monte Cassino and the western seaboard. At the same time the forces at

Anzio broke out of their beachhead but an opportunity to cut off and destroy a large part of the German Tenth Army retreating from the Gustav Line was lost when, on the brink of success, the Anzio forces changed their direction of attack to move parallel with the coast to capture Rome.

Rome was declared an open city by the German army and the US forces took possession on June 4, 1944.

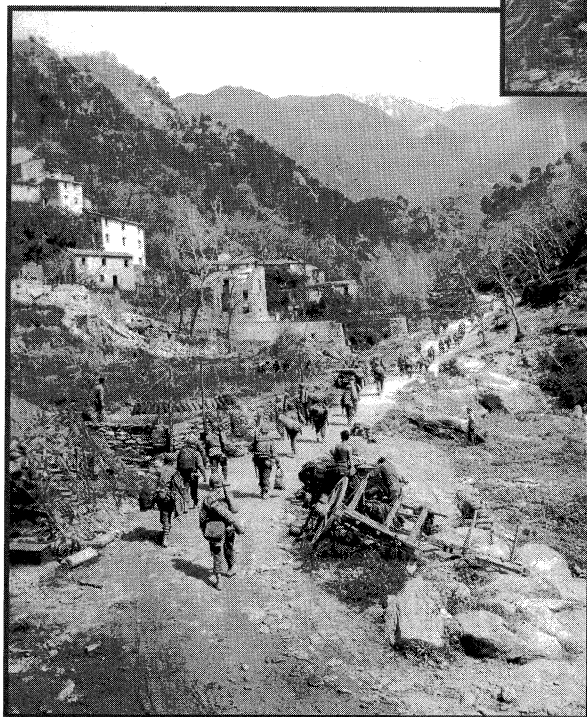


Forward Observers on Mount Porchia, south of Cassino.

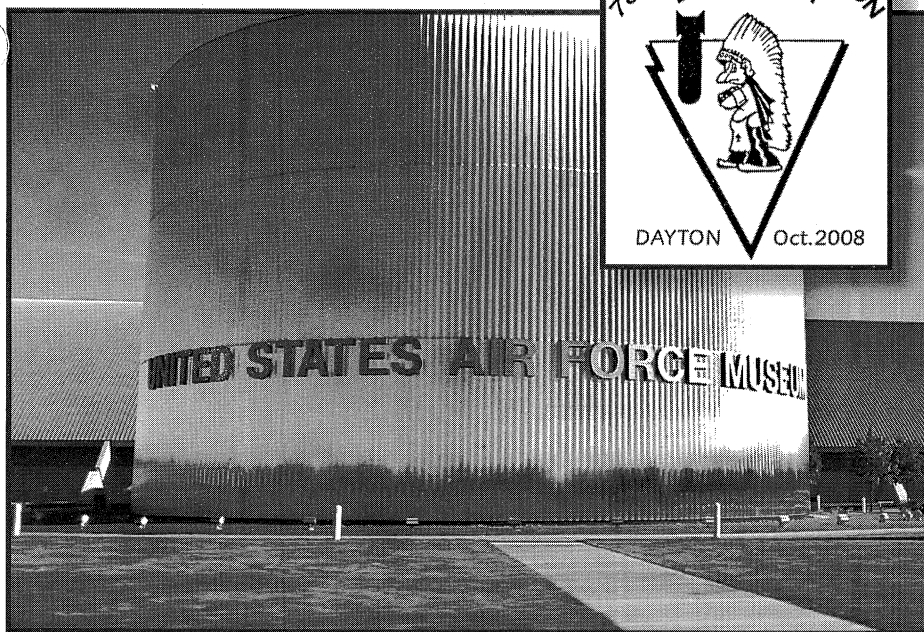
Note field phone to the right and sandbagged observation post.

Allies with a springboard for an invasion of the Balkans with its vital resources of oil. Kesselring was given command of the whole of Italy and immediately ordered the preparation of a series of defensive lines across Italy south of Rome.

Two lines, the Volturno Line and the Barbara Line, were used to delay



MORE REUNION '08



UNITED STATES AIR FORCE MUSEUM Memorial Park

The museum's Memorial Park honors Air Force associated units and people for their courageous service and sacrifice in the cause of freedom.

In October 1972, the museum dedicated the first memorial with a commemorative tree and plaque recognizing Americans held as Prisoners of War by the North Vietnamese and those missing in action during the Southeast Asia Conflict.

Memorial Park has grown significantly since that first dedication, with more than 500 memorials, including statuary memorials, plaques, trees and benches.

The next reunion at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in Dayton, Ohio will bring back many nostalgic memories for many of our surviving 781st Veterans.

It was there, at the US Air Force Museum, that a Commemorative Bronze Plaque, embedded in granite was dedicated in the Memorial Park during our 2nd Reunion there, September 18, 1986.

The Engraved Inscription reads:--

Plaque dedicated
18 September 1987
at US Air Force Museum,
Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio

**IN ETERNAL MEMORY
AND HONOR
TO OUR COMRADES OF
THE 781st BOMBARDMENT
SQUADRON (H)
U.S.S ARMY AIR FORCE.
WHO
FLYING
B-24 LIBERATORS,
GAVE THEIR LIVES
FOR PEACE
AND RIGHTEOUSNESS
IN THE AIR BATTLES OVER
SOUTHERN EUROPE
DURING WORLD WAR II,
1944-45**

DEDICATED 18 SEPTEMBER 1987



TWO MORE LETTERS....

To: knykill@juno.com ; olee@iw.net
Sent: Monday, March 03, 2008
Subject: Good evening
Good afternoon,

This is going to seem like an odd request, but one that I'm compelled to ask about.

About a year ago I moved into the Norwood section of the Bronx in NYC, and often explore the vast nearby Woodlawn Cemetery. Woodlawn Cemetery is well known for being the final resting spot for many well known people such as Duke Ellington, Miles Davis and Fiorello LaGuardia.

Recently, I came across a pair of markers that stood out, and I can't help but be curious about them. The headstones are busts of a pair of WWII airmen that were killed in action on the same day, November 16, 1944. They have been laid to rest one behind the other, and the busts capture them in uniform.

On the markers are the following inscriptions:

Pasquale Gialo
15 th Air Force
465 AAF bomb group
Nov 16 1944

Natale A Greco
S Sgt 465 AAF Bomb Group
Nov 16 1944

I was wondering if you would be able to shed any light on either of them for me. The busts on the markers are quite prominent, and have frozen them in time.

As I said, this might seem like a strange request, but I can't help but be curious as to what may have happened and any history that may be documented about them. Thank you for your time!

Best regards,

Dave DiBiase

SOC Duty Manager/North American Airlines
(347)-803-0091 (cell) - (718)-907-2138 (office)
ddibiase@flynaa.com

This via "Snail Mail"
From Robert Arnold; Engineering Section

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

Dear Sir:

On April 09, 2008 I completed an Application Form to Renew my 2008 membership and mailed money order to Ken Kedd, 707 West Circle Dr., Findley, OH. 45040. As today not heard from him. Does 465th BS 781st B.S. have any membership card, as I would be proud to hold one. If you do to decide same, I've would be proud to always carry one.

Thank you,

I would appreciate any news of our outfit.

Sincerely,

RFA

PO Box 2342

E-town, K 42701

P.S. A proud WWII Veteran

781st 2008 REUNION DAYTON AF BASE OCT. 5-6-7-8

'08 REUNION NEWS

The Reunion Committee reports that the activities for Tuesday and Wednesday are pretty well finalized.

If all goes as planned, we will be leaving the hotel at 8:30 Tuesday morning for a 9:00 Memorial Service.

Following the memorial service we will re-board the bus to go to the Wright Brothers Memorial /Patterson Field Overlook. A 30 minute film on the history of the Wright brothers and their work at the Huffman Prairie will be shown there.

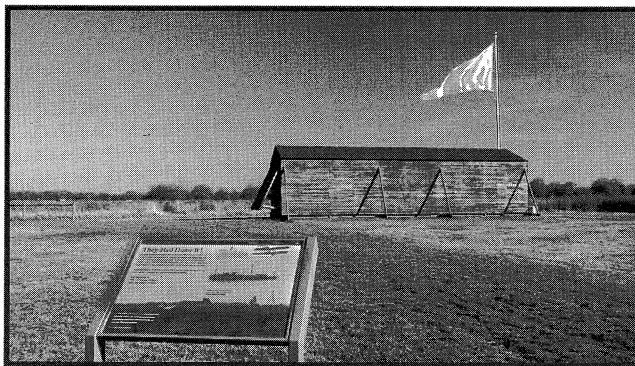
Following the movie, a bus tour to Wright Huffman Prairie Field, Hangar and Launch Platform. While on the bus, a Park Ranger will give a program about the Wright brothers' use of the 84 acre Huffman Prairie and its legacy today for WPAFB.

Arrangements have been made for lunch back at the Hope Hotel which is only

about a mile, time will be allowed for people to return briefly to their room. After lunch we will board the bus once more for a tour to Carillon Park including the Wright Brothers Aviation Center, Wright Flyer III, etc.

On Wednesday a guided tour of the WWII area and Presidential Hangar Aircraft at the USAF Museum from 9:00 to 11:00 is also planned.

Two 15 passenger vans will be available to transport people back and forth as the wish to go from the hotel to the museum that day. Some may want to stay until late afternoon, there is so much to see and do there.



Over this 84-acre patch of rough pasture outside Dayton, now known as Huffman Prairie Flying Field, the Wrights undertook the difficult and sometimes dangerous task of creating a dependable, fully controllable

PANTANELLA NEWS WILL BE PRESERVED FOR HISTORY IN AIR MUSEUMS

Our roving ambassador, Earl Leinart, has been traversing the country visiting various Air Museums and expounding upon the history of the 781st.

Armed with a large accumulation of back issues of the paper, Earl has made contact with museum curators and presented each of them with excess copies.

In each case, the curators were extremely grateful, assuring Earl that the 'Pantanelle News' would be preserved in binders and placed in their archives to be used as a resource for visitors and historians. Letters of 'Thanks' acknowledging the receipt of the memorabilia has been received from the Strategic Air & Space Museum in Ashland, Nebraska, the Mid-America Air Museum in Liberal, Kansas and the Palm Springs Air Museum in Palm Springs, California. Good job, Earl!

TREASURER'S REPORT

Ken, our Treasurer, and his very able Auditing Staff report that a number of 'Vets' family members and friends are continuing to join our Association as Associates Members.

He also reports that yearly dues from the regulars are continuing to slowly trickling in.

Since the last report the following individuals have made donations beyond their dues..

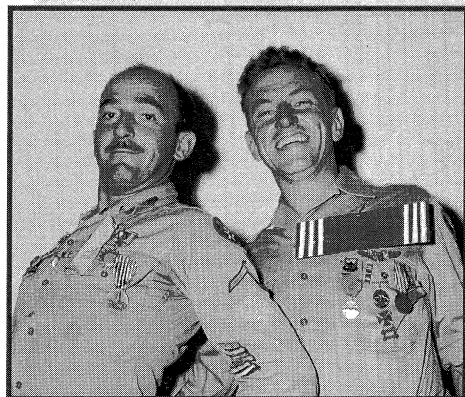
- Bernard Badler
- William J. Barrie
- Wilton "Sandy" Carter, Jr.
- David and Susan Espenlaub
- Joe Ministrelli
- Constance Ogden
- Kenneth Rehn

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

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

**WANTED
YOUR MEMORIES
YOUR STORIES
YOUR PHOTOS
TO BE USED IN THIS
PUBLICATION**

Send to
**Frank Ambrose, Editor
44 East Blvd
Gloversville, NY 12068
or Email:-
frank@frankambrose.com**



ANOTHER MYSTERY PHOTO....

Once more, I reached into the bottom of my Barracks Bag and found one more photo. It seems that someone was having a celebration on receiving a GOOD CONDUCT Medal. If any of you can still remember that far back and can identify these men, send me an email or write me a letter...

frank@frankambrose.com

FOLDED WINGS**Dale Keiser:**

Nose Gunner: Joyner Crew

DALE L. KEISER, 83, of Fort Wayne, died Saturday, Feb. 2, 2008. Born in Columbia City, he was the Owner/President of Sunrise Express, Inc., retiring in 1995. He had previously worked for Transport Motor Express, Inc. The Columbia City High School graduate was a U.S. Air Force

veteran, having served with the 781st Bomb Squadron in Pantanella, Italy during World War II. He was a member of South Wayne United Methodist Church, and American Legion Post 330, New Haven.

He loved his family and was an avid golfer and Chicago Cubs fan. He was a devoted husband for 60 years to Betty L. (Young) Keiser, whom he married on Jan. 1, 1948, in Logansport, Ind.; she survives in Fort Wayne. Also surviving are his daughters, Susan (David) Espenlaub of Dallas, Texas and Patricia (David) Childers of Fort Wayne; two sisters, Arla Fennig and Bethalean Srouf, both of Fort Wayne; five grandchildren; and five great-grandchildren. He was preceded in death by his parents, Herbert L. and Freda (Hursey) Keiser; two brothers; and two sisters. Burial in Forest Home Cemetery, Hicksville, Ohio.

LESLIE S. WHEELER:

Aircraft Commander
Wheeler Crew

Leslie S. Wheeler passed away on March, 21, 2008 at the hospital in Harlingen, Texas of coronary failure.

He is survived by his wife Geneva, three sons and two daughters. In recent years, Les spent winters in La Feria, Texas and his summers in Westfield, Indiana.

Les continued his interest in flying until the end taming ultralight aircraft.

As an aircraft commander, Les was incomparable, intrepid and the best in the business. Our crew's accolade for our boss was always: "CHIEF"...

Les on several occasions brought us back to Pantanella on a "Wing and a Prayer". God Bless Him!

Reported by his last surviving crew member, Ron Soucy,

Ralph Dubois:

465th GP S-2 Chief

Ralph Dubois died April 16, 2008. Ralph attended one-room schools and graduated from Hersher High School in 1936.

Ralph Dubois was buried with full military honors at the Mound Grove Cemetery in Kankakee. Reported by his wife,
Margaret Dubois

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

President's Corner

Greetings – First of all I would like to take this opportunity to thank the members of the 781st Ordnance Section for their generous donation in funding the expenses associated with producing the 'PANTANELLA NEWS'.

I am well aware of how many of you enjoy and look forward to receiving it each quarter.

The Ordnance Section is providing the funding for this and the next two issues until January of 2009...

A big 'Thank You', Ordnance Section!

The 781st Association means a lot to me.

Reminiscing a bit – I got a call one day many years ago from Walt Longacre. I had no idea what he was talking about – a 781st Association?

But I joined and went to my first reunion in Boston. I didn't know anybody but I got acquainted with two or three.

The All American B-24 was there. The highlight for me was touring the B-24. I think there were about 350 people at that reunion. I was hooked. I haven't missed a reunion since.

Dan Bailey invited Carole and me to join his crew, the Joyner crew. I guess I looked pretty lonesome. I had no crew there.

Through the years I became good friends with Wayne Grubaugh, Dale Keiser and Daniel Bailey, all the Joyner crew.

Each year I looked forward to the reunion and these special friends. Dan passed away after the reunion in Rapid City. Wayne too. Now Dale died in February.

I have learned to know most of the guys who are still able to come to our reunions and enjoy meeting their families. I know with the help of our families and friends the Association can last many more years.

The Dayton Reunion is shaping up and I'll be surprised if we don't exceed our numbers of last year.

A reminder – We need input for news and articles for the Pantanella News and we also need input for the 2009 reunion site.

Orren

Memorabilia Committee Report

Earl Leinart reports that interest generated from the 781st Memorial Fund at the SAAC Museum was not enough to send interested youngsters to any of their 'Flight Camps'. In order to jump start the fund Earl has decided to personally donate the funds necessary for a young lad to attend a 'Week-end Flight Camp' in 2008. Contributions may be forwarded to- SAAC Museum,
Attn: Mac McLean, 28210 Park West Hwy.
Ashland, Nebraska, 68003.

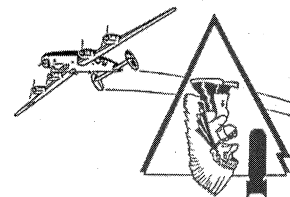
**SEND IN YOUR
REGISTRATION FORM
RIGHT NOW!!**



A 240 mm
Howitzer
of Battery B
from the
U.S. 697th Field
Artillery
Battalion
prepares to fire
into German held
territory near
Cassino, Italy.
January 1944

Photo credit:
U.S. National Archives

781st 2008
REUNION
WRIGHT PATTERSON
AF BASE
DAYTON, OHIO
OCT. 5-6-7-8
Hope Hotel
Send in Reservation
NOW!!



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c/o Frank Ambrose, Editor
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Gloversville, NY 12078

