

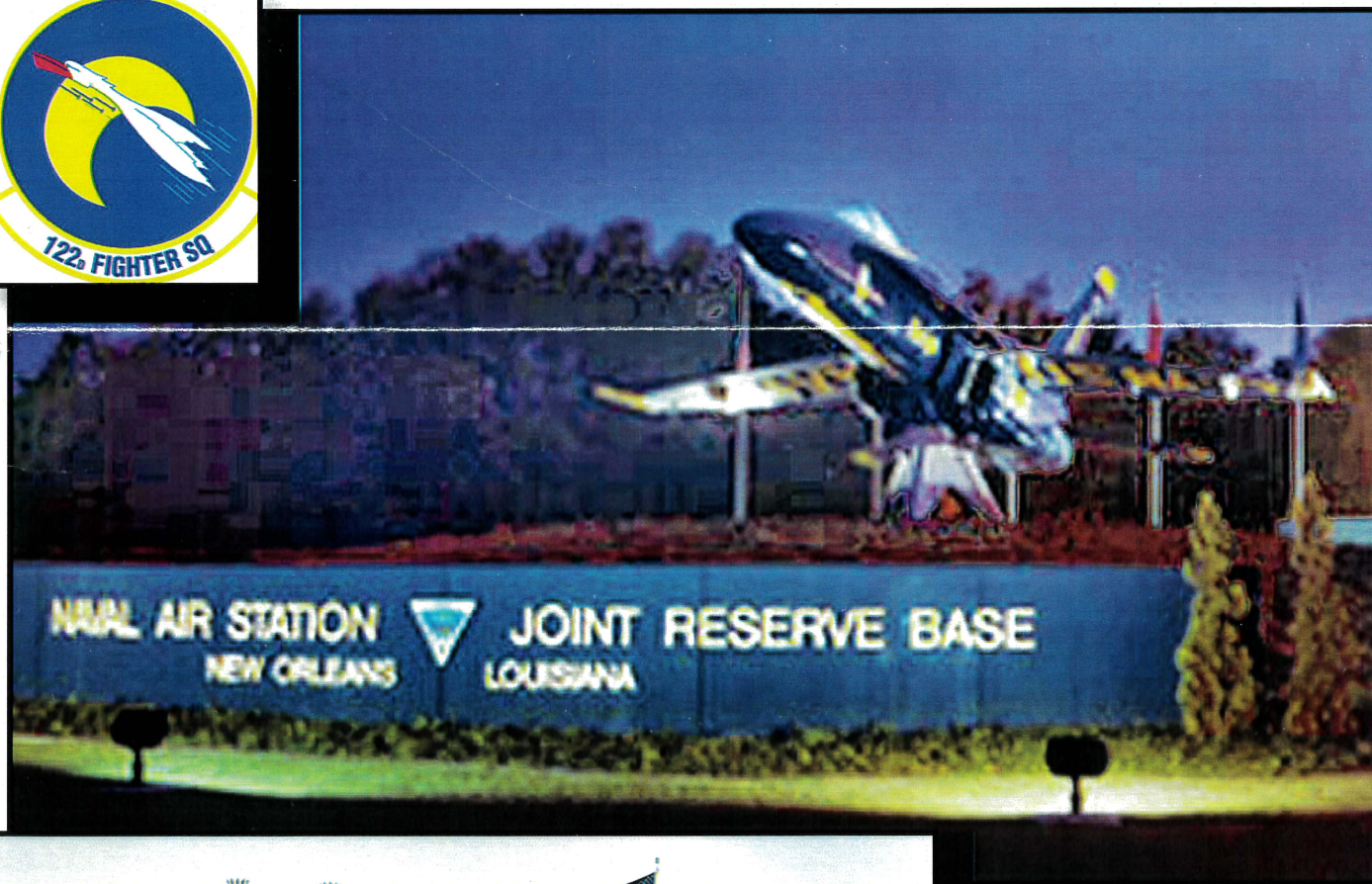


PANTANELLA NEWS

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#104 June 2011

781st Assigned On Detached Service to US Navy Reserve Squadron Ordered to Report Sept. 21st.,2011



The 781st 2011 Reunion is finally set and promises to be 'Great'.

A day with the 159th Naval Air Fighter Wing where the Memorial Service will be held as well as the Final Banquet.

A cruise on the renowned 'Riverboat Natchez' is also planned as well as a visit to the National WWII War Museum.

Read inside for details

PANTANELLA NEWS

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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

In Seven Battle Campaigns

781st BS Assoc 2011 Reunion

September 18, 19, 20, 21, 2011

Astor Crowne Plaza

739 Canal Street, New Orleans, LA

Telephone 504-962-0513

Tentative Reunion Agenda

Sunday, September 18th

3:00 PM Registration/Hospitality

Monday, September 19th

Registration – Free Time - The French Quarter

Optional Mississippi River Cruise

Tuesday, September 20th

WWII Museum

Wednesday, September 21st

Belle Chasse Naval Air Station

Banquet

Times and additional activities available

National World War II Museum in New Orleans



I GOT MAIL...

From: KWassenaar@rals.com
 Subject: FW: Frank Wassenaar
 Date: May 12, 2011
 To: frank@frankambrose.com,

Dear Mr. Ambrose,

I am writing to let you know that my father, Frank Wassenaar, died quietly and without pain, on May 3, 2011 after a several month battle with lung cancer. Dad loved the men of the 781 bomb squadron and spoke of you and times together during World War II often. His connection with the group was an important and ongoing part of his life and he was always grateful for the times when you could all come together and share the tremendous contribution to our country that you made. Indeed you are "the greatest generation."

I am personally thankful for the times I have been able to join the reunions and my mother and I are going to do our best to be present in New Orleans this fall. I have attached my dad's obituary and photo as well as the warm wishes to you personally from my mother. Please feel free to contact me at any time if I can help or provide information. I have renewed my membership in the 781 st and will continue to be supportive in keeping your memories and contributions alive.

With sincere thanks for your many years of friendship and support. -

The Reunion...

With all of the problems nature has caused by wielding it's ugly forces onto the Mississippi River and everything in it's path, our diligent 'Reunion Committee' plodded on and finally came up with an agenda which appears to become as good a reunion as all of the previous reunions before.

Negotiations along with the Astor Hotel has been completed as well as with the National WWII Museum for an interesting and informative day there.

An alternate experience on the famous "Natchez Paddle Wheel Riverboat" has also been negotiated with.

The highlight of the reunion will be a day spent at a Naval Facility, a departure from previous reunions when we have been guests of Air Force Bases only.

Our group will be spending the day with the 159th. Naval Fighter Wing in New Orleans, the Memorial Service will be held there as well as lunch and final Banquet.

Reunion Chairman Jim Braud, his wife Theresa, along with his brothers, Charlie and Robert, who live in the area, have been constantly coordinating their efforts with Carole Lee in South Dakota.

The Natchez Riverboat

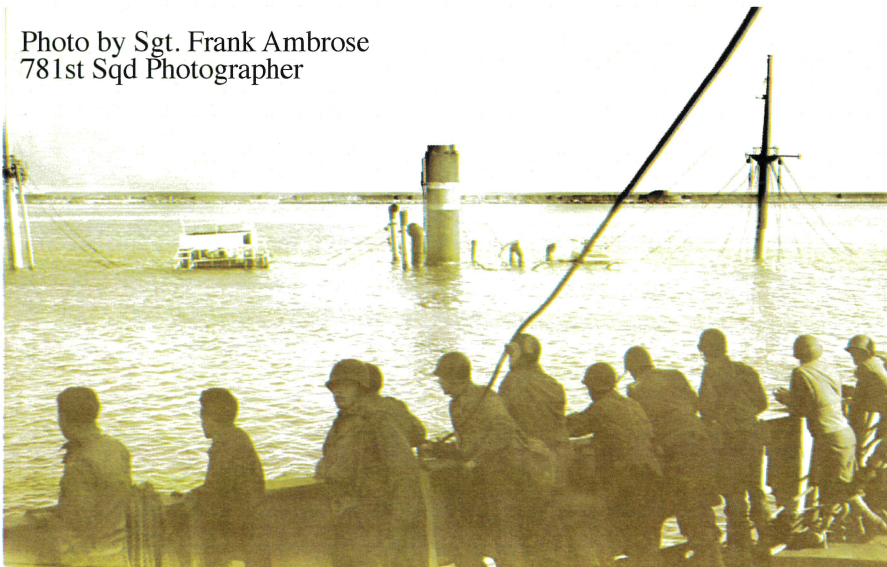
Natchez has been the name of several steamboats, and four naval vessels, each named after the city of Natchez, Mississippi. The current one has been in operation since 1975. The previous Natchez were all operated in the nineteenth century, most by Captain Thomas P. Leathers. Each of the steamboats since Leathers' first had as its ensign a cotton bale between its stacks.



The current Natchez is based in New Orleans, Louisiana. . She is operated by the New Orleans Steamboat Company and docks at the Toulouse Street Wharf. Day trips include harbor and dinner cruises along the Mississippi River.

The Natchez IX is modeled after the steamboats Hudson and Virginia. Her steam engines were originally built in 1925 for the steamboat Clairton, from which the steering system also came. The copper bell was made of 250 melted silver dollars. . The Natchez IX also features a steam calliope that can play 32 notes. The wheel is made of white oak and steel, is 25 feet (7.6 m) by 25 feet (7.6 m), and weighs over 26 tons.[2] The whistle came from a ship that sank in 1908 on the Monagabola River.

Photo by Sgt. Frank Ambrose
 781st Sqd Photographer



The 781st. enters Naples Harbor March 25, 1944

Prayer For Our Troops:
 "Lord, Protect and watch over
 our troops as they protect us.
 Hold them
 in your loving hands.
 Bless them and their families
 for the unselfish acts
 they perform for us
 in our time of need.
 Amen."

781st 2011 Reunion - Hotel Astor Crowne Plaza
New Orleans Sept. 18-21st
Register with the Hotel Now!! For Reservations call: 1 888-696-4806



The 781st will be visiting the World War II Museum in New Orleans during their 2011 Reunion. One of the displays will be a WWII Barracks diorama. I wonder how many vets can still recall the days they first entered service.

THE COST of DOING BUSINESS

----- **The staggering cost of war.**

THE PRICE OF VICTORY

(cost of an aircraft in WWII dollars)

B-17	\$204,370	P-40	\$44,892
B-24	\$215,516	P-47	\$85,578
B-25	\$142,194	P-51	\$51,572
B-26	\$192,426	C-47	\$88,574
B-29	\$605,360	PT-17	\$15,052
P-38	\$97,147	AT-6	\$22,952

Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base New Orleans

NAS JRB New Orleans is one of three Joint Reserve Bases in the country that serve and house commands from various branches of the Armed Services. NAS JRB New Orleans currently supports three Naval Air Squadrons, two Marine units, a Coast Guard Air Station, a Louisiana Air National Guard detachment, an Army unit, an Fleet Readiness Center, a Navy Reserve Operational Support Center, and other support units.

Nearly 5,000 military and Department of Defense—civilian employees work at the base daily, and approximately 1,700 family members live in more than 900 housing units.

The 159 Fighter Wing contains one of the Air National Guard's premier F-15 fighter wings with a trained force of more than 1500 men and women.

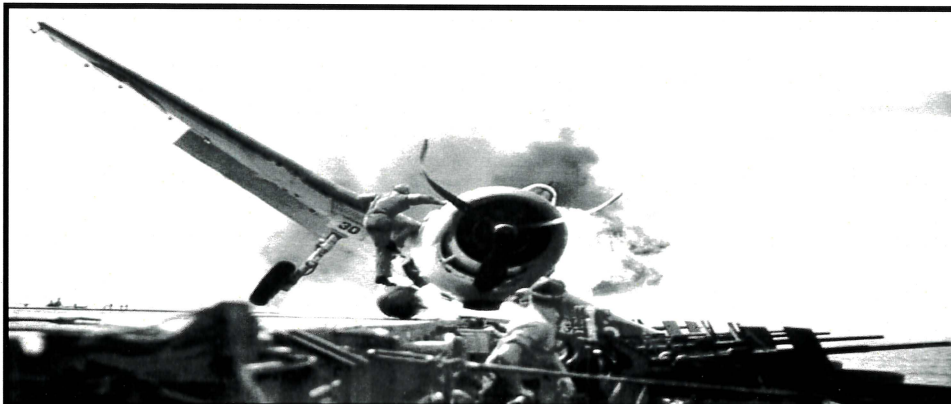
The 159th Fighter Wing, along with its operational flying unit, the 122nd Fighter Squadron (122 FS) is tasked to provide air superiority over Louisiana and the Gulf Coast while supporting USNORTHCOM and NORAD.

To perform this vital role requires active air defense alert 24 hours a day, 365 days a year at the Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base New Orleans.

A parent unit of the 159th Fighter Wing, the 122nd Fighter Squadron is an active unit and flies the F-15C/D Eagle.



F-15C/D Eagle.



NOTICE-----

Next page is the Reunion Registration Form. Remove the Form from this Newsletter and fill out to register for the 2011 New Orleans Reunion.

REUNION REGISTRATION FORM
The 2011 781st Reunion New Orleans, LA
September 18-19-20-21, 2011

Full Name: _____ Social Security # _____

Address: _____ Phone # _____

_____ Email _____

Guest Name: _____ Social Security # _____

NOTE: If you have more than one guest, please make a copy of the form to register them. Social Security numbers are required to enter the Base. James Braud, 781st Treasurer, will destroy them after the reunion.

	<u>Number</u>	<u>Total</u>
Registration Fee	_____ @ \$25.00 ea	_____

Monday, Sept. 19th Optional Mississippi River Cruise	_____ @ \$30.00 ea	_____
Tour is 1:30 to 4:30 and includes lunch		

Tuesday, Sept. 20th WWII Museum - Rates are as follows:

WWII Veterans	_____	<u>Free</u>
Senior (65+)	_____ @ \$15.00 ea	_____
Students	_____ @ \$10.00 ea	_____
Adult	_____ @ \$20.00 ea	_____

Lunch at the WWII Museum	_____ @ \$15.00 ea	_____
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Wednesday, Sept. 21st Belle Chase Air Base	_____ @ \$22.00ea	_____
9:00 to 4:00 Transportation and lunch		

Cocktail Hour (Cash Bar) 6:00 PM

Banquet: 7:00 PM _____ @ \$60.00 ea _____

Check preference - Almond Crusted Snapper _____ Lafayette Chicken _____

TOTAL ENCLOSED _____

Checks to the Squadron Treasurer must be made by August 18, 2010.
Make check payable to 781st Bomb Squadron Association and forward this form and your check to:

James Braud, 781st Treasurer, 403 Christian Ln, Slidell, LA 70458

Make your room reservations directly with the Astro Crowne Plaza 888-696-4806.
Ask for 781st Bomb Squadron Reunion rates. Hotel reservations must be made by August 18, 2011.

Tear Out This Page and Mail In

TEAR OUT PAGE
REGISTRATION FORM ON OPPOSITE SIDE

Fill In Registration Form on Opposite Side and Mail to

**James Braud
403 Christian Ln,
Slidell, LA 70458
985 290 2021**

781st 2011 Reunion - Hotel Astor Crowne Plaza
New Orleans Sept. 18-21st
Register with the Hotel Now!! For Reservations call: 1 888-696-4806

FOLDED WINGS

Frank Wassenaar:

Bombardier: Doss Crew

Dr. Frank Wassenaar, age 88, passed away May 3, at his home in Alma Michigan, May 21, 2011.

Frank was born on February 23, 1923. He graduated from Coopersville High School in 1940 and went on to enlist in the Army Air Corp in WW II where he served as a first lieutenant bombardier navigator on B-24 Liberators in the 15th Air Force in Italy. Military service was an important part of his life, and most recently he had served as the Military Chaplain and Board member for the 15th Air Force reunion group of the 781 Squadron.



He married Dorothy Miller in 1944 in Royal Oak, Michigan. They would have celebrated their 68th wedding anniversary this month. He graduated from the University of Detroit Dental School in 1951 and started his first practice in Holland, Michigan. In 1952 he moved to Alma and practiced dentistry for 53 years before his retirement in 2005. He was a member of The First Presbyterian Church and served in many leadership roles. He especially loved singing in the Chancel choir.

Frank was very active in the Alma-St. Louis Rotary Club, served as President, and loved his role as a song leader in recent years. He participated in the Rotary student exchange program and he and his family hosted many students over the years. He had a special relationship with exchange daughter Runa Fukaya Yasui of Nagoya, Japan. He was also a member of Pine River Country Club, Otsego Ski Club, Crystal Golf Club and the Alma Masonic Lodge.

Frank was a member of the Crystal Sailing Club, sailing Flying Dutchman and Flying Scots for many years. He also enjoyed making jewelry, gardening and making mats and picture frames for his wife Dottie. He was often affectionately known as "Frank the Framer."

Surviving Frank are his wife Dottie, his son, Kurt Wassenaar of Charlottesville, Virginia; his two daughters, Sara Wassenaar (Rich Frutiger) of Alma and Mona (Miles) Hirson of Rye, New York; his four grandchildren, John Frutiger, Miles and Reid Hirson, and Kia Wassenaar.

Morris R. "Doc" Rapoport:

781st Sq. Flight Surgeon

It is with great sadness that we report the loss of our father, Squadron Flight Surgeon, **Capt.. Morris R. "Doc" Rapoport**, of Scarsdale, New York.

He joined the ranks of the Folded Wings squadron on March 5, 2011, passing quietly and peacefully at home after a short illness, with his beloved wife of 66 years, Blanche, by his side. He was three weeks shy of 97 years old.

"Doc" was born in the Bronx, New York in 1914, the son of Rose and Max Rapoport. He graduated from New York University and the University of Glasgow Medical College. He began his internship at the Bronx Hospital in 1939, and enlisted immediately after Pearl Harbor, in January 1942. His brother, the late Carl, served in the Pacific theatre and his brother Bernard was in the intelligence service in the European theatre.

He began his AAF career in Panama City, Florida and ultimately was assigned to the 781st Bombardment Squadron in 1943. We have attached "Doc's" story of the 781st in his own words.

We grew up with stories of the 781st. He told us of the heroics of the pilots and the flight crews and the land crews. He regaled us with stories of his ambulance "Heaven Can Wait," how he and his ambulance anxiously waited on the tarmac for the return of his planes after their mission. He delighted us with stories of his dispensing of the whiskey and of pilots and co-pilots who felt, as he said, closer to each other than most husbands and wives.

He told us of the 781st with such joy and pride that we grew up feeling as if we were members of the squadron. He would laugh and smile and recount with great detail the names and places and missions. It was a source of great pride for our father that he flew missions with his pilots, that he shared their terror and thrills; Dad felt he had to experience air combat so that he could better care for the pilots and crews.

After the war he practiced general medicine in the Bronx, New York, specializing in allergy, and caring for generations of families, school children, and delivering countless babies, and their babies. He was on the staffs of Montefiore Hospital and Columbia-Presbyterian Medical Center. Doc retired after 46 years of practice and was beloved by his patients and their families alike.

In retirement Doc and Blanche divided their time between Palm Beach and Scarsdale, always including in their travels visits to the 781st reunions and friends. Our mother always told us how welcomed she was at the Panatella

Presidents Corner

781st Friends –

New Orleans! You'll want to be there. You'll also want to stay longer. There are a lot of things to do and see. Some years ago, my wife, Carole had a convention in New Orleans and I went along. I was a tourist for one whole week. I went on a boat in the bayou and saw a lot of wild life, alligators etc. I took a bus to the golf of Mississippi to a casino boat. I went through the super bowl. It was built in the 70's for \$150,000,000.00. Today's value maybe is a billion. All of this besides spending time in the French Quarter off and on. I have a souvenir Pat O'Brien's glass which contained his signature Hurricane Drink. I remember a flaming fountain and a crowd you could barely squeeze through.

I am looking forward to visiting again with my comrades of the 781st in the Hospitality Room, touring the base, visiting the WWII Museum and taking in all the activities the Braud Family has planned for us.

Orren Lee

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

reunions, how gracious the 781st squadron was that she a member of the 781st family as well.

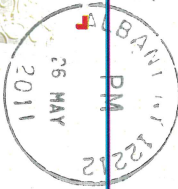
He leaves behind his loving wife Blanche, his sons Fred and wife Esta, and Lloyd and wife Ann, and adoring grandchildren Mimi, Ian and his wife Leah, Jake, Josh and Cara. His son Mitchell died of a brain tumor about ten years ago.

PANTANELLA NEWS June 2011



781st "PANTANELLA NEWS"

c/o Frank Ambrose, Editor
44 East Blvd
Gloversville, NY 12078



*It's The Big Easy
Sept 18-21
Crowne Plaza Hotel
For Reservations:
1 888 696-4806*

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