



# PANTANELLA NEWS

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## 2017 REUNION HIT THE STREETS OF NEW ORLEANS

2017 781<sup>ST</sup> BOMB SQUADRON REUNION



## PANTANELLA NEWS

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Georgia McKinnon, Greg Soucy

### PANTANELLA NEWS

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.



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<http://www.facebook.com/781stBombSquadron>

# President's Letter

We appreciate when people send us WWII information. We try to include it in the Pantanella News. Check out the article "Miracle Flight" in this Newsletter.

We have a free paper we can pick up at various business places. Recently I saw an interesting tidbit on WWII spies. – On December 6, 1941, Japan was preparing to mount the devastating attack on Pearl Harbor. A Japanese spy in Pearl Harbor walked right up to the telegraph

office in town and sent a dispatch to his confederates describing where the warships were located. The telegram cost \$6.82 and nobody in the telegraph office thought it was suspicious.

I look forward to seeing friends in New Orleans in September. We are enclosing a registration form in this newsletter. We are thankful for the Reunion Planners putting together a great reunion again.  
— Orren Lee

## Restored B29 Take To The Air... Enjoy!

You may enjoy the video link below that tells the the story of the restoration of a B29 Bomber.



<http://mortefontainevillage.pagesperso-orange.fr/marcbrecy/b29.html>

## REUNION HOTEL

### DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel New Orleans Airport



Room rates are \$99 plus tax and includes breakfast for up to two people per room per day and is good from September 11 - 20, 2017. Onsite parking is plentiful and free for our Reunion. There is a free airport shuttle that runs to and from

Louis Armstrong International Airport 24 hours a day. To reserve a room, it is recommended that you call (800) 222-8733 and mention the booking code BGR. Please reserve your room NO LATER THAN 3:00 PM CST, Aug. 25, 2017.

More details can be found at:

<http://465th.org>

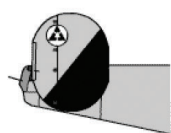
## MEMBERSHIP DUES:

Associate Member dues are \$10.00 per year payable January 1st The Association is intentionally keeping the dues low so as not to place an extra burden on your budget. However, those of you that are able and wish to contribute more may do so. Contributions are listed periodically in the Pantanella News. The last time you paid dues is recorded on your Newsletter label. Remit to 781st Bomb Squadron Association and mail to:

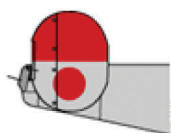
**Carole Lee, Squadron Treasurer, 4700 S. Cliff Ave. #308, Sioux Falls, SD 57103**



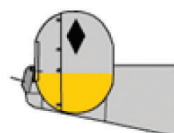
# BOMB GROUPS 2017 REUNION – NEW ORLEANS, LA SEPTEMBER 14-17, 2017



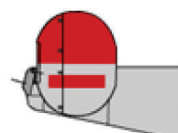
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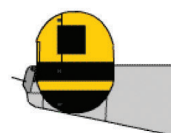
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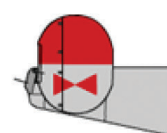
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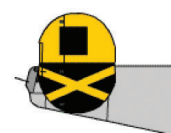
461<sup>st</sup>



465<sup>th</sup>



484<sup>th</sup>



485<sup>th</sup>

## ITINERARY

### Thursday, September 14<sup>th</sup>

Arrival and check in day. The registration desk and Hospitality room is open from Noon – 6:00PM and then again after the meeting (below) for a while.

**6:00 PM** – Italian buffet dinner served in the Jefferson Ballroom followed by an Informational Meeting at 7:00PM. If you did not register for the dinner this evening, please join us at 7:00PM for the Information Meeting. No other activities are scheduled for today.

### Friday, September 15<sup>th</sup>

Day ONE of a TWO day visit to the National WWII Museum. The buses will depart the hotel at 9:00AM for our visit to the Museum. *Please see additional museum transportation for detailed instructions/information sheet in your registration packet.*

**5:30 PM** - Social Hour for Individual Groups Dinner. Cash bar is open from 5:30PM – 7:30PM. (Hospitality room is closed during this time.)

**6:30 PM** - Dinner is served. Individual banquet room assignments will not be made until closer to the event to get a good idea of what size each group will be.

### Saturday, September 16<sup>th</sup>

Day TWO of a TWO day visit to the National WWII Museum. The busses will depart the hotel at 9:00AM for our visit to the Museum. *Please see additional museum transportation for detailed instructions/information sheet in your registration packet.*

**5:30 PM** - Social Hour for Combined Group Banquet. Cash bar is open from 5:30PM-7:30PM. (Hospitality room is closed during this time.)

**6:30 PM** - Dinner is served in the Jefferson Ballroom. Entertainment to follow dinner.

### Sunday, September 17<sup>th</sup>

**8:30 AM** – Memorial Service in Bayou room.

**NOON** – City Tour of New Orleans. A tour of the city's significant sights with stops at an above ground cemetery and the Morning Call Coffee Shop & Café.

**6:00 PM** – Informal "Farewell Fajita" dinner

**This dinner concludes our 2017 reunion.**

# MIRACLE FLIGHT

These are photos of a badly damaged B-17 received from Wilton E. 'Sandy' Carter Jr. a 781st Associate Member, son of FW's Wilton E. Carter. Navigator on the Blakita Crew. He couldn't identify it but I have a May 2013 464th Newsletter Veteran Bob Freed of the FW had sent me. It has the same pictures and the story. The following is the unbelievable story:

A mid-air collision on February 1, 1943 between a B-17 and a German fighter over the Tunis dock area became the subject of one of the most famous photographs of WWII. An enemy fighter attacking a 97th Bomb Group formation went out of control, probably with a wounded pilot, then continued its crashing descent into the rear of the fuselage of a Fortress named All American, piloted by Lt. Kendrick R. Bragg, of the 414th Bomb Squadron.

When it struck, the fighter broke apart, but left some pieces in the B-17. The left horizontal stabilizer of the Fortress and left elevator were completely torn away. The two right engines were out and one on the left had a serious oil pump leak. The vertical fin and the rudder had been damaged, the fuselage had been cut almost completely through – connected only at two small parts of the frame – and the radios, electrical and oxygen systems were damaged. There was also a hole in the top that was over 16 feet long and 4 feet wide at its widest and the split in the fuselage went all the way to the top gunner's turret. Although the tail actually bounced and swayed in the wind and twisted when the plane turned and all the



control cables were severed, except one single elevator cable still worked, and the aircraft still flew...miraculously! The tail gunner was trapped because there was no floor connecting the tail to the rest of the plane. The waist and tail gunners used parts of the German fighter and their own parachute harnesses in an attempt to keep the tail from ripping off and the two sides of the fuselage from splitting apart.

While the crew was trying to keep the bomber from coming apart, the pilot

continued on his bomb run and released his bombs over the target.

When the bomb bay doors were opened, the wind turbulence was so great that it blew one of the waist gunners into the broken tail section. It took several minutes and four crew members to pass him ropes from parachutes and haul him back into the forward part of the plane. When they tried to do the same for the tail gunner, the tail began flapping so hard that it began to break off. The weight





of the gunner was adding some stability to the tail section, so he went back to his position.

The turn back toward England had to be very slow to keep the tail from twisting off. They actually covered almost 70 miles to make the turn home. The bomber was so badly damaged that it was losing altitude and speed and was soon alone in the sky. For a brief time, two more Me109 German fighters attacked the All American. Despite the extensive damage, all of the machine gunners were able to respond to these attacks and soon drove off the fighters. The two waist gunners stood up with their heads sticking out through the hole in the top of the fuselage to aim and fire their machine guns. The tail gunner had to shoot in short bursts because the recoil was actually causing the plane to turn.

Allied P51 fighters intercepted the All American as it crossed over the Channel and took one of the pictures. They also radioed to the base describing the empennage was waving like a fish tail and that the plane would not make it and to send out boats to rescue the crew when they bailed out. The fighters stayed with the Fortress taking hand signals from Lt. Bragg and relaying them to the base. Lt. Bragg signaled that five parachutes and the spare had been "used" so five of the crew could not bail out. He made the decision that if they could not bail out safely, then he would stay with the plane and land it.

Two and a half hours after being hit, the aircraft made its final turn to line up with the runway while it was still over 40 miles away.

It descended into an emergency landing and a normal roll-out on its landing gear. When the ambulance pulled alongside, it was waved off because not a single member of the crew had been injured. No one could believe that the aircraft could still fly in such a condition. The Fortress sat placidly until the crew all exited through the door in the fuselage and the tail gunner had climbed down a ladder, at which time the entire rear section of the aircraft collapsed onto the ground. The rugged old bird had done its job.

— Courtesy 98th Bomb Group

CENSOR

Should there be some law, rule, or regulation against sending the picture below to my wife, please seal the flap above and return — it is an unduplicatable shot and one I should hate to lose.

Yours  
H. C. Huesle  
1st Lt., A.C.

DAMAGE COURTESY OF  
WILLIE MESSERSCHMITZ  
X His Mark R.I.P.



"PHOTO BY  
"Cliff" B. Outforth

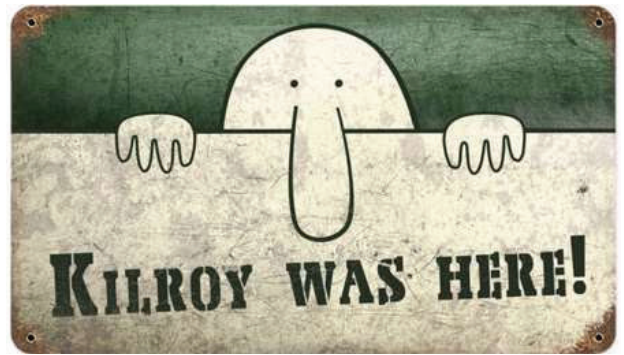
OLD "ALL-AMERICAN" "SOMEWHERE OVER NORTH AFRICA"  
FEBRUARY 1, 1943

#### THE CREW:

PILOT — Ken Bragg Jr.  
COPILOT — A. J. J.  
NAVIGATOR — Harry C. Huesle  
BOMBARDIER — Ralph Burlbridge  
ENGINEER — J. C. James  
RADIO OPERATOR — Paul A. Gallaway  
BALL TURRET GUNNER — Elton Conda  
WAIST GUNNER — Michael Zuk  
TAIL GUNNER — Sam J. Sarpolus  
GROUND CREW CHIEF — Frank Heyland



# How Could We Forget Kilroy?



He is engraved in stone in the National War Memorial in Washington, DC- back in a small alcove where very few people have seen it. For the WWII generation, this will bring back memories. For you younger folks, it's a bit of trivia that is a part of our American history. Anyone born in 1913 to about 1950 is familiar with Kilroy. No one knew why he was so well known but everybody seemed to get into it.

So who was Kilroy?



In 1946 the American Transit Association, through its radio program, "Speak to America," sponsored a nationwide contest to find the real Kilroy, offering a prize of a real trolley car to the person who could prove himself to be the genuine article. Almost 40 men stepped forward to make that claim, but only James Kilroy from Halifax, Massachusetts, had evidence of his identity.

'Kilroy' was a 46-year old shipyard worker during the war who worked as a checker at the Fore River Shipyard in Quincy. His job was to go around and check on the number of rivets completed. Riveters were on piecework and got paid by the rivet. He would count a block of rivets and put a check mark in semi-waxed lumber chalk, so the rivets wouldn't be counted twice. When Kilroy went off duty, the riveters would erase the mark.

Later on, an off-shift inspector would come through and count the rivets a

second time, resulting in double pay for the riveters.

One day Kilroy's boss called him into his office. The foreman was upset about all the wages being paid to riveters and asked him to investigate. It was then he realized what had been going on. The tight spaces he had to crawl in to check the rivets didn't lend themselves to lugging around a paint can and brush, so Kilroy decided to stick with the waxy chalk. He continued to put his check mark on each job he inspected, but added 'KILROY WAS HERE' in king-sized letters next to the check, and eventually added the sketch of the chap with the long nose peering over the fence and that became part of the Kilroy message.

Once he did that, the riveters stopped trying to wipe away his marks. Ordinarily the rivets and chalk marks would have been covered up with paint. With the war on, however, ships were leaving the Quincy Yard so fast that there wasn't time to paint them. As a result, Kilroy's inspection "trademark" was seen by thousands of servicemen who boarded the troopships the yard produced.

His message apparently rang a bell with the servicemen, because they picked it up and spread it all over Europe and the South Pacific.



Before war's end, "Kilroy" had been here, there, and everywhere on the long hauls to Berlin and Tokyo. To the troops outbound in those ships, however, he was a complete mystery; all they knew for sure was that someone named Kilroy had "been there

first." As a joke, U.S. servicemen began placing the graffiti wherever they landed, claiming it was already there when they arrived.

Kilroy became the U.S. super-GI who had always "already been" wherever GIs went. It became a challenge to place the logo in the most unlikely places imaginable (it is said to be atop Mt. Everest, the Statue of Liberty, the underside of the Arc de Triomphe, and even scrawled in the dust on the moon.



As the war went on, the legend grew. Underwater demolition teams routinely sneaked ashore on Japanese-held islands in the Pacific to map the terrain for coming invasions by U.S. troops (and thus, presumably, were the first GIs there). On one occasion, however, they reported seeing enemy troops painting over the Kilroy logo!

In 1945, an outhouse was built for the exclusive use of Roosevelt, Stalin, and Churchill at the Potsdam conference. Its first occupant was Stalin, who emerged and asked his aide (in Russian), "Who is Kilroy?"

To help prove his authenticity in 1946, James Kilroy brought along officials from the shipyard and some of the riveters. He won the trolley car, which he gave to his nine children as a Christmas gift and set it up as a playhouse in the Kilroy yard in Halifax, Massachusetts.

— Kilroy was here!

## FOLDED WINGS

### BARTLETT JR., WILLIAM BERNIE, **April 11, 1924 - March 23, 2017.**

William Bernie Bartlett Jr., 92, died March 23, 2017, at his Yuma home. Born April 11, 1924, in Leverett, Mass., he was a truck driver and veteran of the U.S. Air Force. Yuma Mortuary and Crematory handled the arrangements. Here's a note from his wife Jean Bartlett:

I am very sorry to advise you of the death of William (Bill) Bartlett on 3-23-17 in Yuma, AZ. He was out working in our "gravel yard", God called – he slipped to the ground and was gone. A very kind way for death to happen but a big shock to me. I had lots to do to close up a home and move everything back to Burley where we had just bought a mobile home last December. We had 7-1/2 years together, and our trip to Tampa Bay was the hi-light of our life!! I am so glad we did that. Good luck to the remaining few. Love, Jean Bartlett.

### BYRD, ROY,

Roy Byrd, Hudson and Squadron Bombardier, joined the Folded Wings on August 17, 2013.



### SOUCY, ROLAND JOSEPH

**February 2, 1922 -  
December 24, 2016.**

Roland Joseph Soucy, Lt. Col. USAF (Ret) age 94 of Beavercreek passed away Saturday, December 24, 2016 at Hospice of

Dayton. He was preceded in death by his beloved wife, Grace (Dukeman) Soucy in 2004 and daughter, Rolanda M.A. Soucy in 2012; He is survived by two sons, Rodger T. Soucy and wife Cheryl of Springtown, TX and Gregory J. Soucy of Beavercreek, OH; three grandchildren, Amber D. Larrick and her children, Alex, Tamara and Camden; Matthew B. Larrick and Aaron J. Larrick. Roland was born in Montréal, Canada and raised in Fall River, MA and NYC. He entered the Army-Air Force in 1943 serving in Europe during WW II as a Bombardier in B-24's for a total of 52 missions. Roland re-enlisted in the Air Force and continued his military and government service for 46 years retiring in 1986 from Foreign Technology Division. Roland and Grace were active in Our Lady

Queen of Peace Parish at Wright Patterson, AFB along with a number of charitable organizations in the Miami Valley. He was a wonderful, loving husband to his Gracie and a great, loving father to his children and grand-children providing examples of love and care for them throughout his life. Last, but not least, Ron was blessed with a great group of friends. Mass of Christian Burial was held at 10:00 AM Saturday, December 31 at Wright-Patterson AFB Prairies Chapel, #3. Interment was at Byron Cemetery. In lieu of flowers the family requested that donations be made to St. Vincent DePaul, Dayton and Hospice of Dayton Ohio.

### TABORY, STEPHEN,

**November 2, 1921 - September 9, 2016.**

Stephen Tabory, 94, of Sarasota, Florida, born in and formerly from Fairfield, Connecticut, passed away peacefully at his home on September 9, 2016. Stephen had a remarkable and full life. He served in WWII in the Army Air force stationed in Bari, Italy with the 15th Air force and flew 33 missions over Germany, Hungary and northern Italy. Upon his honorable discharge from the Army Air force, he became a successful construction contractor in the Fairfield County area. Upon his retirement he moved to Sarasota, where he and his wife lived for 23 years. He was an active member of his community in which he was the Chairman of the Architectural Review Committee and also an active member of his church. Stephen is survived by his wife of 69 years, Shirley Tabory; two daughters, Lynda Dillon and Joyce Phillips; his granddaughter, Brittany Phillips and several mieces and nephews.

Graveside services were private with military honors held at Sarasota National Cemetery. Memorial Services were held on Saturday, September 17th at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church at 5659 Honore Avenue at 10:30 AM followed by a luncheon at the church hall. In lieu of flowers, donations were made to the Good Shepherd Lutheran Church.

Stephen will be remembered as a loving, honest and compassionate husband, father and grandfather.

Guestbook: [www.wiegandbrothers.com](http://www.wiegandbrothers.com)

**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.**





## 781st "PANTANELLA NEWS"

Orren Lee, President  
4700 S. Cliff Ave, #308  
Sioux Falls, SD 57103



# PANTANELLA NEWS

