

781st BOMB SQUADRON | 465th BOMB GROUP | 15th AIR FORCE



PANTANELLA NEWS

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2018 REUNION DAYTON OHIO



2018 781ST BOMB SQUADRON REUNION



PANTANELLA NEWS

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Board Members: Don Munce

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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.



Visit Us On Facebook

<http://www.facebook.com/781stBombSquadron>
<http://465th.org>

President's Letter



Our Treasurer/Executive Secretary, Carole, has a database of the 781st Bomb Squadron turned over to her from John Ogden. She often is asked how many veterans are left. It is difficult to determine because some families do not notify us of their veterans passing.

Recently she has been researching the names in the database that are not tagged Folded Wings. She is finding quite a few

have passed that family has not notified us. Knowing it would be very difficult to know when only two are left, the Association had a 'Last Man Standing Toast' at the Reunion in Independence, MO in 2009. Fox News was there and it was on the 10:00 News that evening.

We have a very short DVD of that News Broadcast. Veterans present provided a bottle so as not to use the actual bottle that was produced at the first reunion for the 'Last Man Standing Toast'. I recall that bottle being placed on the podium with the announcement it is not to be opened except by the last two veterans still standing to toast their departed comrades. That bottle is with 781st memorabilia at the Strategic Air & Space Museum in Ashland, NE (Omaha). She will continue to research the list but currently she shows about 100 still living.

— Orren Lee

2018 REUNION September 13-16, 2018

NOTE: The Reunion Registration Form is enclosed. Please note the registration for the 781st and all of the 465th will be sent to Dave Blake, the Reunion Planner. He will keep me advised as to who signs up. Also, note the deadline on the Hotel!

— Carole Lee



Editor's Move to Charlotte

Our family moved to Charlotte, NC in April. I have been asked to continue my education to get a Doctor in Ministry and work for the Seminary where I completed my Master's Degree. Georgia has already taking a job with the seminary as its new Registrar. We are excited about this new opportunity. Please take note of our new address if you need to send anything for the Newsletter.

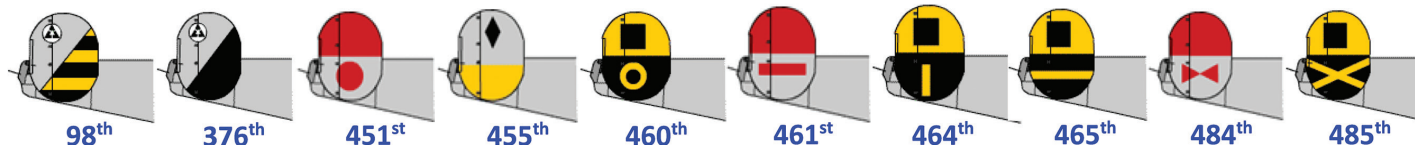
MEMBERSHIP DUES:

Associate Member dues are \$10.00 per year. Dues are 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

2018 BOMB GROUPS JOINT REUNION ITINERARY

BOMBARDMENT GROUPS (H)



ITINERARY

Thursday, September 13th

The hospitality room and registration desk will be open from 10:00AM till 5:00PM and again at 8:00PM until 00:00PM. The Hospitality room will feature the usual heavy hors d'oeuvres and beverages.

- **From 5:00-7:00PM Thursday**, the hotel is hosting a welcome reception that will feature assorted cheeses in addition to fresh fruit and vegetable trays with dip, coffee and fruit punch.
- **At 7:00PM** all groups welcome meeting to go over the schedule of events.

Friday, September 14th

Will feature activities at, and a tour of the National Museum of the United States Air Force.

- **UPON ARRIVAL** we will be allowed some private time with ropes down visiting the B-24 "Strawberry Bitch", an original B-24D assigned to the 376th BG, "Flash" Gordon Byfield, Pilot, one of our participating veterans and bomb groups.
- **At 9:15AM** we will move to the Carney Auditorium for a special presentation of commemorative Presidential Unit Citation medals to each of our veterans by a General officer from Wright-Patterson AFB. We will then have the traditional Military Memorial Ceremony, conducted by Chaplain/Captain Chris Cairns, Grandson of the last CO of the 485th BG and Reunion Chaplain.
- Following that, everyone will be free to tour the museum at will.
- Lunch is on your own.
- Buses will leave the museum at **1:15, 2:30 & 3:45PM** to return to the hotel. Friday evening will feature our Individual Group Banquets.
- Lunch is on your own.
- Social hour will begin at **5:30PM** with a cash bar in the commons area.
- Dinner will be served at **6:30PM**

Saturday, September 15th

Will be a "stay in house" to relax, visit, attend the speaker presentations or do whatever your heart desires. Lunch is on your own.

- Evening will be our all groups Banquet. Social hour at **5:30PM**, dinner at **6:45PM**

Sunday, September 16th

376th (Rev. Bob Oliver) hosted church service at **9:00AM**.

- **At 10:15AM** return to the museum plus an alternative tour to Art Institute & a Market. Lunch is on your own.
- Sunday evening is our Farewell dinner which will be served at **6:45PM**.

ADDITIONAL DETAIL AVAILABLE AT <http://465th.org>

Colourised Photo of B-24

The original image is beautifully captivating for many different reasons! It was taken by USAAF photographer M/Sgt Lew Funk, while with the 34th BG, out of Mendlesham. The B-24H in main shot is quite an intriguing aircraft. Having served with the 486th BG - 833rd BS, it still has it's old 4N-F designation letters on the side, even though its 34th BG tail and new designation letter 'E' have been added.

It would go on to serve with the 34th BG until they transitioned to B-17s later in the summer. This mission, 3rd August '44 saw 36 B-24's the 34th BG attack the Oil & Gas depot in Brussels, dropping 84 tons with no losses. The formation, returning home, are just about to get 'dry feet' and touch the England coast at Jaywick in Essex.



The Lew Funk Family Collection



Colourisation: Nathan Howland - HowdiColour.

Orren Lee Honored at Vikings Halftime Show



The Minnesota Vikings honored veterans during a halftime ceremony at a Sunday's 'Salute to Service' game. Country star Jamey Johnson performed for the show and Orren Lee walked the field as the sole representative for WWII veterans. With the crowd cheering it was a memorable and moving experience. A video of the ceremony can be found at: <https://youtu.be/phVDUsHijLs>

781st Bomb Squadron History DVD

Ray Cauble had given me a copy of a DVD Harry Carl made of his slides. I had a request from a Veteran to have copies made for him. If anyone else is interested in a copy let me know.

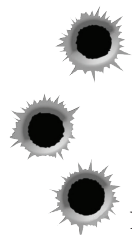


To order send \$20.00 to Squadron Treasurer, Carole Lee, 4700 S. Cliff Ave. #308, Sioux Falls, SD 57103.

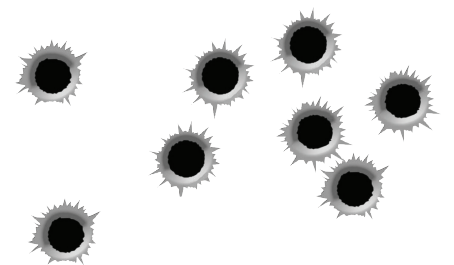
52 HOLES & NOBODY GOT HIT

A World War II Story By Frank Zelenitz

Frank was Orren and Carole Lee's neighbor for 40 years.



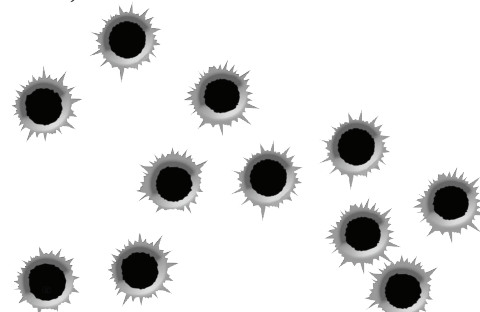
I was on my 4th mission flying as a waist gunner on a B24 out of an English base sometime before D-Day when France was still in the Nazi's hands. Waist gunners were charged with the defense of the Liberator's vulnerable sides through use of single 12.7mm machine guns. As such, these positions aboard Liberators suffered the most casualties by incoming fighters ready to strafe the large profile sides of the bomber. These two positions – left and right – were later staggered to compensate for each gunners firing arc. Unlike other turreted positions in the B-24, spent shell casings at these waist positions were not jettisoned from the aircraft automatically, forcing crewmembers to clear their areas themselves. Since firing from these side-perspective positions required a great deal of hand-to-eye coordination via tracer rounds while taking into account target speed and the Liberator's airspeed itself, waist gunners relied on simple targeting sights in the early years. Only later did they receive assistance in the form of compensating sights to help improve accuracy.



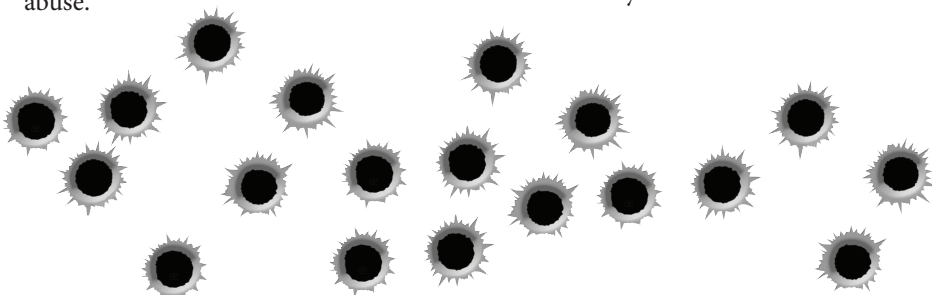
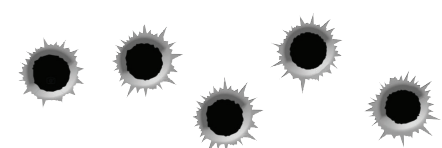
I was a Staff Sergeant flying with a crew of 8. The lead plane had a crew of 9 which included a Bombardier. At this stage of the war, all the other planes had to watch the lead plane drop his load of bombs and then we followed suit over the same coordinates that the lead plane had used.

We just got one of our men back into our crew that we went through training with. His twin brother was killed in a training accident and he was able to go home for the funeral. We were worried that we would have to go with a new member of

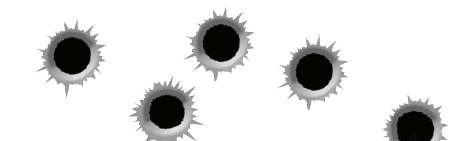
our crew on our flights. It was better to know your other crew-mates intimately because you counted on each other for survival. If you trained with them in the States, there was more of a closeness.



This particular mission had us flying on another bombing run over some munitions plant in Germany. When we got close to our target, the flack was so heavy that we couldn't complete the mission. We were flying at 31,000 feet and the AA batteries on the ground looked like they had us zeroed in. We were getting pounded and getting hit from all sides. Suddenly we found us in a very steep dive with one engine hit and on fire. As a waist gunner, we had no seat belts to keep us in one place and were just standing there with our guns. I found myself hugging the roof of the plane as we dove. At 10,000 feet we were able to level out and regain control somewhat. We headed for home and some safe place to drop our bombs. Somewhere over France, we dropped our un-fused bombs where nobody would get hurt. We couldn't land since France was still occupied. If we couldn't make it back to England, we undoubtedly would end up as POW's and would sit out the rest of the War which didn't seem like a very appetizing option. We discussed bailing out, but our good old B24 was built to take some massive abuse.

We finally reached the English Channel and spotted the White Cliffs of Dover. We knew there was an air base on top of the cliffs. We were too shot up and were down to just two engines by now so we had to go straight in without allowing for landing against the wind currents. We barely cleared the cliffs. Our landing went as smooth as it could under the circumstances. Imagine my surprise when the first person I saw was Ken Forsyth from my old neighborhood. He was a mechanic at the base where we landed. Ken told me later, "Boy, talk about luck. I counted 52 holes in your plane and nobody got hit. I can't believe that! There was a basketball size hole right where you normally stand. Lucky that you were hugging the ceiling when that hit."



Since the two engines were shot and we had so much damage to the plane, that B24 never flew again. We flew back to our base on a transport plane and found our barracks almost cleaned out because the Brass didn't think we made it back. We were one of only four of the nine planes to make it back. They found another plane for us to fly another mission the very next day. In all, I flew 36 missions but only got credit for 16 since a mission was only counted if you dropped your bombs on your assigned target. I was one of the lucky ones who survived.

FOLDED WINGS



DANIEL, A. DENNIS

**September 21, 1923 -
October 11, 2017.**

Mr. Dennis Ausburn Daniel, Jr., 94, of Thomaston, GA died Wednesday, October 11, 2017 at Pine Pointe

Hospice in Macon. Mr. Daniel was born in Thomaston on September 21, 1923, a son of the late Dennis A. and Thelma Eubanks Daniel, Sr. He served his country during World War II in the Army Air Corps. He was a nose gunner in a B-24 in Italy and flew over 20 missions during the war. Mr. Daniel was a retired machinist for the Keenan Auto Parts store in Thomaston. He was a member of the Flint River Primitive Baptist Church and had served the church as a Deacon. Mr. Daniel is survived by his wife, Betty Minter Daniel; his son, Larry (Rhonda) Daniel of Clarkesville; and several nieces and nephews.



FIKE, D. HARRY

March 19, 2018.

We are listing Harry Fike in our Folded Wings because he was instrumental in bringing the 783rd into the Group

AF Reunion. The 783rd sent him as a scout to the Kansas City Reunion in 2015, the year the 781st first joined the Group Reunion.

Harry Dale Fike, 95, passed away December 19, 2017, in Davenport, Iowa. He was born in Lincoln, Nebraska; and was married to Lola Marie Doctor in 1944, in Liberal, Kansas. She preceded him in death in 2013. During World War II, Harry served as a B-24 pilot in the 783rd Bombardment Squadron, 465th Bombardment Group. After the war, he and Lola lived in Lincoln, Nebraska, while Harry earned his degree in business administration at the University of Nebraska. Harry's career was in civilian personnel administration for the Department of the Army at various installations throughout the United States, last serving as a program analyst in the Headquarters, Army Armament Material Readiness Command on Arsenal Island.

Harry was active in the 783rd Bomb Squadron Association where he served as president for six years. Harry is survived by his daughter, Cheri (Roger Amhof); son, Randy Fike; six grandchildren; and nine great-grandchildren.



KYLE, THOMAS

March 19, 2018.

WWII veteran Tom Kyle passed away March 19, 2018, at the age of 96. He was preceded in death by his wife Jean, whom he spent 64 years with. Early years found Tom serving his country in the Army and the Army Air Corp. He enlisted and joined the 2nd Calvary at Ft. Riley (yes-there were horses) then Tom transferred to the Army Air Corp. in St. Louis, Missouri. From there he signed up for armament school in Denver followed up with a power turret school. Later orders sent him to Arizona. To form a new 465th Bomb Group with the 781st Bomb Squadron to be shipped to Italy. The men serviced power turrets on planes after the bombing runs. He retired as a captain and was in the National Guard Reserves. As a civilian Tom worked as an engineer for a telephone company then trained as a draftsman and a landman for an oil company. After this he moved to Montrose in 1965, sold insurance, owned the White Motel and became a real estate broker and home inspector for 33 years. His busy life took him to 48 states and 11 countries. Tom was a member of Rotary (past district governor); Elks; VFW; Chamber; and past president of Chipeta Girl Scout Council. Interests included reading, woodworking, cribbage, bridge, photography, Bronco fan and his caring friends. After retiring (more than once) volunteer endeavors included helping at the Montrose Regional Library and Montrose Memorial Hospital.



JOSTWORTH, BILL

Bill Jostworth grew up in Norwood, Ohio. After graduating from High School, Bill entered into the US Army Aircorp and proudly served in WWII. Born near the Fourth of July, this forever patriot ironically spent his first

date with his future wife Mary Edith, at a Fourth of July picnic. Bill and Mary Edith were married 65 years. The Jostworth family was one of the first to build in Turpin Hills circa 1956. He convinced the developer to donate a parcel of land that became the Turpin Hills Swim Club. A natural born leader, he became the founder and President of the swim club in 1960. Professionally Bill was employed by Cincinnati Bell for over 37 years in sales and marketing and received many awards and honors for his work and contributions to the City of Cincinnati. Always helping others, Bill and Mary were regular volunteers for the Brown County Shelter for many years. Bill was a lector, usher and participated in various other ministries within the church. Bill was a wonderful role model to his family, including his sons and daughter-in-laws, eight grandchildren and three great-grandsons. Bill's optimism, words of encouragement, laugh and booming voice were favorite among his family and friends. Bill's favorite expression, as noted below, ended every conversation...

"Keep Going Don't Stop"



REYNOLDS, VANN

1922 - 2018.

COLCHESTER- Vann Reynolds, 95, died on Wednesday, May 9, 2018 at Vitas Healthcare

in Waterbury. Vann was a very kind and gentle soul; he was a loving husband and an extraordinary father who will be sorely missed. Vann graduated from Haare High School in NYC in 1941 and he proudly served his country as a member of the 781st Bombardment Squadron as a navigator with the B-24 Liberator during WWII while in the Army-Airforce. He married Barbara J. Skowronek on June 26, 1948 who predeceased him and raised their family in Colchester. Vann studied aviation in college and worked as a parts control clerk at Pratt & Whitney, from where he retired.

SHAW, WESLEY

December 3, 1925 - September 18, 2016



SNYDER, M. JAMES
March 17, 1920 - May 9, 2017.

A 781st Founder, James Marcel Snyder has joined the Folded Wings.

J. Marcel Snyder, 97, formerly of Oviedo, FL, Bethesda and Hagerstown, MD, expired quietly on Tuesday, May 9, 2017, at Huntington Place nursing facility in Rockledge, FL. He was born on March 17, 1920, in Hagerstown, MD, to the late Albert and Pauline Snyder. Survivors include his wife of 68 years, Dollie, and their sons, James Jr., his wife Gloria, and their daughter, Kimberly and her four children, Keeley, Malia, Carter, and Marley; son Daniel; and two sisters, Myra Ruth Clipp, Williamsport, MD, and Mildred Snyder, Frederick, MD. Both sons live in Alexandria, VA.

In 1940, he was graduated from Strayer College in Washington, D.C., where he obtained a Bachelor of Commercial Science degree. The morning after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor he stood in line outside the Army Recruiting Office for more than two hours waiting to enlist in the Army Air Force. During WW II, he served in both the Asiatic/Pacific and European Theaters. After flight training, he was assigned to the 781st Bomb Squadron (a B24 unit) stationed in Italy. At that time, he was a Navigator/Radar Bombardier in which capacity he completed approximately 70 combat missions against targets in Germany, Czechoslovakia, Austria, Northern Italy, and Yugoslavia. He retired from the Air Force Reserve as a Lieutenant Colonel (LTC).

Following the war, he graduated from the University of Maryland with a BS degree and worked in public accounting at which time he passed the CPA exam. After Korean War service in the Pentagon, he began a new career in federal government accounting with the General Accounting Office, the Army Audit Agency, and the State Department Audit Office. Subsequently, he was engaged by Irving Burton & Associates and the Ethiopian Government Bureau of Mines as a financial management systems consultant. These positions have resulted in his working on every continent except Antarctica.

On March 27, 2007, at the request of the Grand Lodge of Oregon, Harbor City Lodge No. 318 F. & A. M., Melbourne, awarded LTC Snyder a 50-year pin denoting 50 years of service as a Master Mason. He was also a Rotarian for more than 25 years.

One example of his many overseas experiences involved the 1972 May Day Parade in Moscow, USSR. The parade route for one of the groups of marchers came very close to the Snyder residence, so they decided to join it. At one point, their group stopped to permit another group to enter the parade route ahead of them. A member of their group took out a violin and began to play Russian dance music. Immediately the marchers became dancers, and they entertained the crowd watching the parade for about 20 minutes. The continuation of the parade went fine until they reached the bridge over the Moscow River by the Kremlin. There Soviet Police invited the Snyders to depart the parade as only Soviet Citizens could march through Red Square that day. Not wanting to create an international incident, the Snyders accepted the invitation graciously. It was fun.

LTC Snyder was a longtime member of the Faith Viera Lutheran Church where a memorial service was held at 11:00 A.M., Saturday, August 12, 2017. Interment was at Arlington National Cemetery.

In lieu of flowers, contributions were made to the Shriners' Hospital for Children, 2900 Rocky Point Road, Tampa, FL 33607.

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



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