



PANTANELLA NEWS

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2020 REUNION ALBUQUERQUE NEW MEXICO



2020 781ST BOMB SQUADRON REUNION

NOTICE

THE REUNION REGISTRATION FORMS ARE ENCLOSED IN THIS NEWSLETTER.

Please note on the very bottom of the form the following:
Registrations must be received by September 3, 2020. No changes may be made after that date.

PANTANELLA NEWS

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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



The city of Sioux Falls, SD has a Military Alliance that is going to become a model for how to create a relationship between veteran's organizations, active military veterans

and the community all in one facility. It is a destination – a military/veterans innovated center unlike any other in the nation. It had to cancel its Grand Opening on March 13, 2020 because of the coronavirus pandemic but it is open and operating under the CDC guidelines.



I have absolute faith in the Alliance. I have dreamed of this for a long time. The Alliance is vital in such trying times. When we pass this virus stage, I know it will take off like a rocket. See pages 3 and 4 for more information on the SD Military Heritage Alliance, Inc.

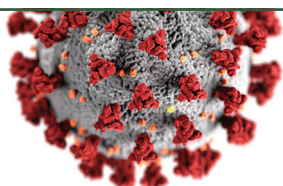
Best wishes to all, stay safe and stay healthy! — Orren Lee

2020 REUNION HOTEL

Room rates are \$118 per night plus tax. Room includes a full, hot breakfast buffet for 2 per room. Eleven ADA accessible rooms are available. If you need to make your reservation by phone, please contact the hotel directly Monday - Friday 8am-5pm at 505-830-5781 MST; you may leave a message outside of business hours and Nichole will return your call. Please mention **Bomb Group Reunion** to receive the group rate. Room rates are good from September 8 - September 16, 2020. Parking is plentiful and complimentary.

Airport to hotel shuttle is available by contacting Roadrunner Shuttle & Charter Co. 24 HR Dispatch: (505) 424-3367 to make arrangements and give them your flight information. To receive discounted reunion pricing, mention Bomb Groups.

COVID-19 REUNION PLAN



The Bomb Groups reunion is coming up in September. With the current Coronavirus pandemic, you may be



The Sheraton Uptown Hotel

2600 Louisiana Blvd NE

Albuquerque, New Mexico 87110

Reservations must be made by August 16, 2020. Reservations after that date are NOT guaranteed at the group rate and are subject to room availability. Please make your reservations before that date and if you need to cancel for any reason, you may do so **WITHOUT PENALTY** no later than 48 hours prior to your day of arrival.

concerned about registering to attend. However, we are hopeful that this will pass and there are no plans to cancel the reunion. Should you register and find that you cannot attend, you can receive a full refund. In addition, your hotel reservation may be cancelled with no penalty up to 48 hours before your arrival date.

MEMBERSHIP DUES:

If your address label doesn't show 2020 your membership renewal is due.

Remit to 781st Bomb Squadron Association and mail to:

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

2020 REUNION TOURS



Friday, September 11, 2020

The New Mexico Veterans Memorial. The bus will drop you off just outside of the Visitor's Center, right next to the World War II section of the grounds. The total memorial grounds are expansive so you can explore and visit as few or as many of the sections as you choose. Seating throughout the park to stop for a break is plentiful. We will also have many wheelchairs on hand for our veterans.



The visitor's center is like a small museum in itself so be sure to allow time to explore inside!

While at the Visitor's Center we will gather in the meeting room for a box lunch with-out the box! From there we will move to the courtyard that is just outside "in back" of the meeting room for our Military Memorial Ceremony conducted by our Reunion Chaplain, Captain Chris Cairns, who is an active duty Army Chaplain whose Grand-

father, Col. Douglas Cairns was the final commanding officer of the 485th BG. Following the tour and Memorial Ceremony we will be treated to an open house on Kirtland Air Force base hosted by active duty members of the 512th Squadron whose lineage takes them back to the 376th BG

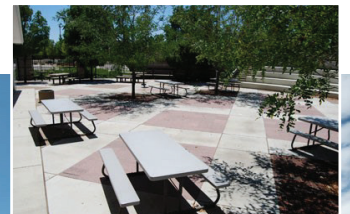


For Our Veterans

Sunday, September 13, 2020

After a stop at Furrs Fresh Buffet for a delicious lunch we will visit the National Nuclear & Science Museum. There we will learn more about the origins of nuclear energy, how "the bomb" was made and delivered. Outside on display are

aircraft to deliver nuclear weapons and a tower like the testing was originally done with. This is a fascinating museum that you will not want to miss.



THE SOUTH DAKOTA MILITARY HERITAGE ALLIANCE



The following information is from their website:
www.sdmilitaryheritagealliance.com

The purpose of the Alliance is to provide support services, encouragement, camaraderie, entertainment and esprit de corps for military veterans, active duty service members, actively-serving Reserve and National Guard members, their families and all who support them, to preserve South Dakota and American military heritage, and to provide historic and current military educational opportunities to civilians of all ages.

The Alliance consists of three key allies: veterans, active military service members, and the at-large community.

The leadership of the South Dakota Military Heritage Alliance is comprised of passionate, energetic, and focused leaders. The Alliance includes veterans, led by the American Legion and VFW, active military service members and their families, civilians, elected officials, business leaders and other key individuals and resources from our community and around South Dakota.



Entrance to The Alliance



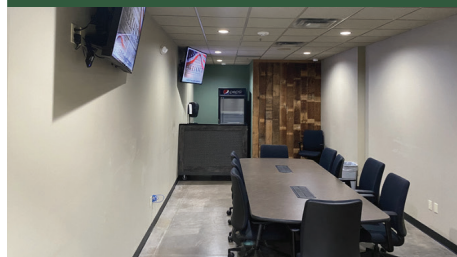
A PLACE TO REMEMBER

Never forget those before us
– those who gave same, and
those who gave all.



A PLACE FOR FREEDOM

Join us in celebrating our
country and freedom;
be who you are; have
fun, express yourself, be
involved as you want to be.



A PLACE FOR ALL

One place for veterans,
active military service
members and our
community to come
together to celebrate, unify,
and support others.



SNEAK PEEK

The following is an excerpt from the 781st History Book.

Overseas Operations June, 1944

Weather canceled the mission scheduled for 29 June and prevailed on 30 June when the target was the Blechhammer Synthetic Oil Refinery near Kosel, Germany. At Lake Balaton, Hungary a solid weather front was encountered and the formation was forced to turn back. In making the turn in broken clouds some boxes became scattered and, during the process of reforming, enemy aircraft came in and attacked aggressively. Pilots of Crews on this mission were Capt. Wray and Dickey, and Lts. Hurd, Schuster, R. J. Smith, Shetterly, Tipton, Lovey, and Tlanenbaum.

The aircraft of Capt. John R. Dickey, Flight Commander, flying with Lt. Cauble's Crew (Lt. Cauble was ill that day), was attacked by three ME-109s and one FW-190 which came in at the tail at 1000 hours and raked the plane with very heavy fire. The aircraft burst into flames and very shortly exploded in midair. Prior to the explosion, six to nine parachutes were seen.

Crew members in addition to Capt. Dickey were: Lt. Frank T. Hylla, Co-Pilot; Lt. Jerome F Joliceur, Navigator; Lt. George W Hausold, Bombardier; T/Sgt. Robert A. Carr, Engr.; T/Sgt. George A. Wilson, R/O; S/Sgt. Robert A. Hoover, Gunner; S/Sgt. Joseph E. Carroll, Gunner; S/Sgt. Richard A. Thill, Gunner; and S/Sgt. Austin C. Davis, Gunner.



George Hausold
and Orren Lee

Another Perspective

from George Hausold,
bombardier on the
ill-fated flight of
June 30, 1944.

The report of our pilot, Ray Cauble, being ill and not with us on this flight is incorrect. He was in the hospital with a hole in his leg from flak on our previous mission. He had a hole going in his leg and a bigger hole coming out the other side. I was his medic. That flight was the worst I had ever been on.

It could have been the June 16th mission. I'm not sure. It was over Vienna that had the big railroad hub. Before we got to the target there was this big black cloud. For many miles we could see the fire flares. A red flare came up into the center of the cloud, then a green flare came up. We could see fighters circling around other fighters in the cloud. The anti-aircraft guns needed to cool down. They had been shooting like crazy. When there was a red flare the fighters knew the guns would start firing and they needed to get out of the cloud. My thoughts are do we have to go through it. Yes, of course, we are flying in formation and we have to go through it. Finally we

Capt. Dickey managed to bail out before the plane exploded and was captured by Hungarian civilians who turned him over to German soldiers. While still a POW, in March of 1945, he was awarded the Silver Star for his actions during and following the fighter attack. The citation accompanying the award reads in part, "Capt. Dickey maneuvered his plane away from close proximity to any other friendly aircraft and maintained his plane in level flight for a sufficient length of time to permit a maximum number of his Crew to escape."

In March of 1988, Dickey described the mission as follows: "First of all, I never for a minute thought I did anything on June 30, 1944, to deserve such an award. It was presented to my father while I was POW and I knew nothing about it until June 1945. Lt. Jerry Joliceur was really the one deserving a medal. He could have gotten out safely, but he came through our bomb-bay fire to tell us on the flight deck that our situation was hopeless and that we'd better get out. Doing so, he received burns that caused his death on the ground ten days later.

"We ran into heavy weather over Hungary. When I came out of dense clouds alone, we were soon joined by three Me-109s, one FW-190, and one not positively identified. They took turns shooting us to pieces for several minutes. I was able to do some neat evasive action since they mistakenly used tracers. At least three bursts hit the armor plate behind my seat. I was able to dodge most enemy fire.

"Since the Group turned into our side, we were able to rejoin it, leading our swarm of fighters. (I heard

are over the target, I dropped the bombs. I got a call I was needed on the flight deck. I grabbed a portable oxygen tank and went through the tunnel up to the flight deck. I grabbed a first aid kit which was clipped under the navigators table. They already had his pants off. The right half of his calf had a hole going in and a hole about 5 times its size coming out on the other side. Shrapnel is very ragged. I grabbed a compress. There was two in the kit. When I opened one a piece of flak fell out. I don't know how long it had been in there. It had to have come into the plane and thru the side of the kit and lodged there. I put the other compress on and wrapped it up tight. I bandaged it out the best I could.

Jerry Joliceur was hit too. Not as bad but it must have been very painful. He was hit in the leg. A small piece of bone and some skin had come out of his shin. I bandaged that up and I was starting to feel pretty woozy. The portable oxygen holds about 10 minutes. I was right under the top turret, Bob Carr, the engineer, saw what was going on and gave me another oxygen tank. I went back down and I believe I slept. Frank Hylla, co-pilot brought the plane in. We dropped a red flare and an ambulance met us. The first person to meet us was the Flight Surgeon, Doc Rapoport. He gave a double shot of scotch or bourbon after a flight as a tranquilizer but some didn't

later that the Group tail gunners got three of them).

"When Joliceur came up and told us our situation, I could not leave a burning airplane (common sense) in the middle of the Group, so I worked it out in the clear. Hylla hit the bail-out button, and we got out. I remember quite clearly how quiet and peaceful the open air felt after leaving the burning B-24. I got a squirt of burning gas in my right ear as I went through the bomb-bay and watched Cauble's B-24 separate in all directions, and finally remembered to pull my ripcord. I felt really good when my chute opened until I discovered my left sleeve on fire. The fire had not reached my chute so I landed in an 80-acre wheat field just in time to see our P-51 escort go over."

Two Crew members, S/Sgt. Austin C. Davis and S/Sgt. Robert A. Hoover went down with the plane. Ten days later, 10 July, Lt. Joliceur died of his burns. Lt. Hylla spent several days in the hospital because of first, second, and third degree burns over his head and hands.

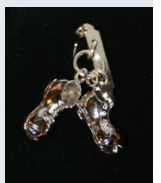


Flak over Vienna

want it and then we went to the de-briefing. They gave the 6 enlisted men a bottle of whiskey to take with them on R & R. The officers, Jerry Joliceur, Frank Hylla and myself got a bottle of whiskey for just the 3 of us. We got a week in Capri. Ray Cauble would have enjoyed the whisky and gone with us except that he went to the hospital.

I was medic for Joliceur on the ground after we went down on the next flight too. He was burned really badly. I gave him morphine. As you will read in the story above he died 10 days later.

Here's where the story of the boots comes in. When the next mission was called. (The ill-fated June 30th mission to Blechhammer Synthetic Oil Refinery reported above.) I couldn't find my boots. I took Ray's thinking he wasn't going to use them, he was in the hospital. Our plane went down. I was captured and spent the remainder of the war in German POW camps. I guess that last trip wasn't my worst one. We were liberated from Stalag 7A on April 29, 1945. I never had a chance to give his boots back so 70 years later at the 781st Bomb Squadron reunion in Dover, DE I presented him with a pair of boots. They were tiny silver boots dangling on a chain.



FOLDED WINGS

CALVERT CRAWFORD

Co-Pilot on the Brennenman Crew joined the Folded Wings 10-29-2018.

ALVIN HELLMAN

of Pompton Plains, New Jersey, passed away February 21, 2019. Mr. Hellman was 96 years old. He served with the 781st Bomb Squadron in WWII. He was a ball gunner on the Marion A. Pitts Crew.



PIERRE JEAN JACQUECS KENNEDY

96, formerly of West Hartford and Rockville, CT, died October 15, 2019. He was born February 20, 1923 in Persan, Seine et Oise, France.

During World War II, he was sergeant and tail gunner on B-24 Liberator heavy bombers with the 15th Army Air Force, 465th Bomb Group, 781st Bomb Squadron based at Pantanella, Italy. On October 13, 1944 he was shot down on a mission to bomb the Blechhammer Oil Refineries in eastern Germany. Two weeks later, his parents in Haverhill, MA received a Missing in Action telegram from the War Department. Sgt Kennedy parachuted, and was captured upon landing. German police took his two dog tags which contained his identification. This later led to his being threatened with execution for having no identification, and being a possible spy or saboteur. Later on, he was given back one dog tag and two crudely stamped German metal pieces with his POW number 4113. He was sent to Stalag Luft 4, a prison camp for some 9,000 captured Allied airmen, located at Gross Tychow, Pomerania, and now Poland. That German prison camp was evacuated February 6, 1945 when Russian armies advanced into Eastern Germany. Sgt. Kennedy took part in the 86 day forced march to the West, endured by the captured airmen from Luft 4. In later years, when giving a talk to a school group, he would summarize this experience by saying "We were always cold and always hungry. We had to leave men sitting in the snow, exhausted, with German guards threatening to shoot them if they did not re-join our column. It was

very difficult to survive. I don't know what happened to those men." Sgt. Kennedy was liberated from German control on May 2, 1945 by the tanks of British General Miles Dempsey's 2nd Army, 94th Armored Division near Hamburg. He was very proud of his military service.

Pierre was Adjutant for the Connecticut Chapter, American Ex-Prisoners of War. He attended Northeastern University and M.I.T. and was a member of Merrimack Lodge, A&FM, Haverhill, MA. He enjoyed writing and published a book about his family's genealogy. He was a contributor to the editorial section of the Hartford Courant.



RALPH E. BONSWOR

was born on October 22nd, 1924 in Cleveland, Ohio and passed away on December 28, 2019 in Palm Desert, CA.

Ralph served in the United State Air Force for 23 years, from 1944 (465 Bomb Group, 781st Sq.) until 1967 covering WW II, Korea and Viet Nam wars. He was a bombardier, navigator and instructor, radar operator and instructor; he was also a staff officer for the 15th Air Force Strategic Air Command until his retirement at the rank of Major.

Once retired from the military he went to work at Litton Guidance and Control Systems continuing to work with the various military services, supplying them with navigational systems.

Ralph volunteered for the Ventura Police Department and was recognized as 'volunteer of the year'.



DAVID L. BOWMAN

the last surviving member of the Robert E. French crew of the 781st Bomb Squadron, 465th Group, 15th AF passed away June 12, 2019.

During WWII, Dave served as a navigator aboard a B24 and flew a total of 26 missions. On his 13th mission, Dave and his crew were shot down over Linz, Austria, and declared missing in action.

After three weeks behind enemy lines, where they were hidden and cared for by Hungarian locals, Dave and his crew were finally able to escape and quickly repatriated with their squadron. One week of R&R and it was back in the air again for another thirteen missions until the end of the war.

BUT HIS CONNECTION TO HIS PLANE AND HIS CREW CONTINUED.

David returned to civilian life and worked as a manufacturer's rep selling carpet and flooring through the southwestern United States. Throughout the years, there were various reunions with his crew, but he never imagined he would hear anything more about the plane. Then, twenty years after the war, Dave was in New Mexico visiting with a client whose wife was from an area in Hungary where Dave believed his plane would have crashed. He asked if she had ever seen any action during the war, and she said, "Not much," she was from a small town in Kisberzsény, Hungary, "except one day this B24 belly-flopped in our cornfield." That wouldn't be the last time Dave would hear about his plane. After the end of the Cold War, Dave received word from the DOD that a young man living in Hungary had sent photos of a B24 that had landed in a cornfield not far from his grandmother's home. The plane was remarkably intact, and he included the tail number of the plane and wanted to thank the crew aboard for their fearless help in the war. Dave later received a package from the young man. It included a photo of the plane, a piece of the plane's skin he had cut from the wing, and a letter of thanks. Ironically, at the end of Dave's life, his caretaker was from Timisoara, Romania, the same town where Dave and his crew were taken in and cared for by the locals who help secure their safe passage back to Italy.

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

