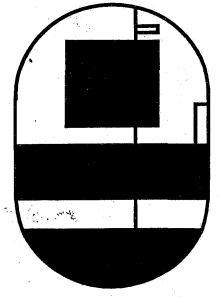




PANTANELLA NEWS



JULY 1996

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NUMBER 45

FINAL NOTICE FOR '96 REUNION Join us At Montgomery, AL Sept. 26 TO 29 ••

The final plans are in for our 7th reunion and another great program is waiting for your enjoyment. The official dates are September 26 to 29, but many of it will begin a day or two earlier. The location we chose is like our others, out of the downtown area so it is easy to get to and with lots of free parking. It is being remodeled and will be finished before our reunion.

The final registration mailing is enclosed. Remove the double-page center-fold, one-half page for your mail-in registration to the hotel and the 781st portion should be mailed to O. J. Cowart for the 781st registration. Checks should be made out to the 781st Bomb Squadron. The oilier page is a map of Montgomery giving you an idea of where the hotel is located and some information you might want to have with you when you arrive in Montgomery.

All registrations that are pre-paid are refunded in full if you have to cancel.

Why attend the reunion? To join with your comrades who served with you in WWII, to remember those who are no longer with us, and to relive those days at Pantanelle and the part of our lives that was very important to all of us. We have a schedule of events to help bring back those memories and to share our thoughts with our comrades

and families.

Tuesday, Sept. 24 - We know Early Birds will be arriving, so check the bulletin board for early arrival and notes. Look up your buddies.

Wednesday Sept. 25 - Registration, hospitality, and trophy rooms open by 1 PM. In the past over half are checked in by Wednesday. A lot of comrades will be getting together to talk over Pantanelle days.

Thursday 26 - Registration will be 9 AM to 5 PM. Hospitality and Trophy Room open the same hours with the hospitality open for awhile after dinner. Don't forget coffee and soft drinks complimentary in hospitality!

Cocktail reception with cash bar 5:30 PM to 7 PM followed by dinner. Our usual program following dinner will include Miss Kelly Mott from the Chamber of Commerce who will welcome us to Montgomery and fill

us in on some of the history of the area. The B: some Association activities before we adjourn to visit old friends in the hospitality room after dinner.

Friday - (Board of directors breakfast meeting 7:30 AM) For others you will have a chance to get in your morning walk and have breakfast before boarding buses at 10 AM for a short tour of the City Center and State House enroute to the Officer's Club for 12:00 lunch. At 1:30 we will go to Chapel II for our Memorial Service and group photo. About 2:30 we will board our buses for a base tour with guides in each bus. Back to our hotel by 5:00 for hospitality and free evening to join friends, crew members or section members for dinner. The hospitality room will be open most of the evening.

Saturday - 9:30 AM Squadron



Entrance to Maxwell Air Force Base. It is the nicest Air Force Base I have ever seen.

business meeting, a simulated briefing of mission #56 to Friedrichshafen, Germany (Manzel Aircraft Work) and other discussions. From noon on you will be free for lunch and an afternoon to visit sights in Montgomery or maybe you will want to revisit Maxwell Field.

Reunion Chairman, Ken Sutton, has made the hospitality room and trophy/PX rooms a very important part of the reunion. They will be all located together in the same area as the meeting and banquet rooms.

Cocktail reception 5:30 to 7:00. followed by our banquet. We will have a ranking Officer from Maxwell as our guest of honor. And as usual we will have a few surprises. We will have Glen Miller era music during cocktails and dinner, and maybe a little dancing after, featuring some of Glen Miller's most famous. It was here where Glen Miller started his

band!

Who Is Coming? - In addition to the list of early registrants we expect the list to grow to between 275 and 300. Although we lost a few to Folded Wings we find more widows and family members who are joining us to be with their husband's or father's comrades. Remember wives and families are invited to all functions. All events are scheduled with this in mind. We don't send them away shopping.

In the past there has been inquiries as to who is coming. Some say they do not want to come unless they know someone who is coming. Be positive - call up your buddy and urge him to attend then both of you can make plans to join at the reunion.

Dress - Normal wear is casual. However, for the Saturday banquet we suggest the ladies wear cocktail dresses or other appropriate dress, and the men wear a jacket, with tie optional.

You may want to bring your WWII jacket or uniform and wear it at any time. Saturday morning is a special time for WWII uniforms and jackets.

Memorabilia - If you have memorabilia you want to display, bring it along to display in the trophy room. If you want to donate memorabilia, bring it along and we will have it on display at all reunions. When the squadron winds down all donated memorabilia will be donated to the 15th Air Force Association at March Air Force Base, CA.

Airlines - Get your reservations in early. Remember seniors get a discount and the senior coupons are another good way to go. Presently four coupons cost \$541 for two round trip fares anywhere in the U.S. Check it out with your travel agent. Airlines serving Montgomery are U.S. Air, Northwest and Delta.

Seeing Montgomery - If you don't have a car just let us know and we will introduce you to someone with a car that will be seeing the sights. A good way to meet other 781st members.

465th Bomb Group - As the Group Headquarters men know we have invited them to our reunions

since they have no association because of the small number of men in group. We also invite any other squadron members who may live in the area. We find some cannot travel far as they would like yet want to attend a reunion.

It looks like we'll have a 465th Bomb Group Association. However, all of our squadrons will remain as they are and we will be attempting to coordinate our meeting locations so that all can meet at the same place and have a one day affair as a group.

MAXWELL FIELD mSTORY

Maxwell Air Force Base history is rich with memories of famous people and events from DeSoto's visit to the space age. Since 1540 when DeSoto visited the Indian town of Towassa on the banks of the Alabama River, the flow of leaders in history to this site has continued.

In 1910, Wilbur Wright came to the Kohn Plantation, the location of Towassa, in search of a suitable site to establish a year-round flying school. With the assistance of local businessmen, land was donated and a wooden hangar built to house the Wright aircraft. On March 26, 1910 the Wright Brothers Flying School began operations with five students and one mechanic. They left four months later.

In 1918, the U. S. Government purchased the flying field for a military depot, and on November 8, 1922, the field was officially named in honor of 2nd Lt. William C. Maxwell, a native of Atmore, AL, who lost his life in an aircraft accident during the First World War.

In 1927 an expansion program began at the field. Construction of the first permanent buildings was completed in May 1928.

The mission of the base changed in 1931 when the Air Corps Tactical School was moved to Maxwell from Langley Field, VA. During World War II, this school was moved to Orlando, FL, and Maxwell became the Eastern Headquarters for flying training. In 1942, the Southeast Army Air Force Training Center was established at Maxwell, making it the largest pre-flight training school

781st Bomb Squadron Association
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781st BOMB SQUADRON

as part of the 465th Bomb Group, Fifteenth Air Force, flew B-24 Liberators from Pantanella Airfield located near Canosa, Italy, during WW11 (1944-45). During its 191 missions over Southern Europe it dropped thousands of tons of bombs, shot down 23 enemy aircraft (German) and received two Distinguished Unit Citations.

in the nation. At this school thousands of American and foreign students learned the fundamentals that helped to achieve victory for the allies.

1-1. In rapid succession, Maxwell Field was used as an Officer Candidate school, an Advanced Flying Training School, A B-24 Transition and Navigation School and a B-29 Transition school. In 1946, the Eastern Flying Training Command was moved to Randolph Field, TX, and on March 12, Maxwell began its current academic environment with the establishment of the Air University with five schools. During the Korean War, the Air Force decided to consolidate all its educational activities at

Maxwell and nearby Gunter (today, Maxwell Air Force Base/Gunter Annex). As a result, in 1954 the construction of the present day academic facilities on Chenault Circle began. Since then Air University has continued to flourish.

Today, Air University, a major command, is the primary unit at Maxwell and its Gunter Annex. Through resident and correspondence courses, AU manages the U.S. Air Force educational system. The command provides degree-granting and specialized educational programs and conducts aerospace research. AU also helps develop and test Air Force doctrine, concepts and strategy, conducts

computer-assisted wargaming for the U S A F , counterpart and joint-service organizations and provides advice and assistance to Headquarters Civil Air Patrol-USAFA.

Our reunion calls for a bus tour of this historic base, lunch at the newly restored Officers Club, and our Memorial Service at Chapel II.

Maxwell is also the center for our WWII archives. In 1986 Marcel Snyder obtained the microfilm for the association to help in our early association formation. We hope to show you some of our original WWII records.

MIDAIR COLLISION

by Robert L. Wingfield
464th Bomb Group

The date was May 2, 1944. The target was Parma, Italy and it was the 1st combat mission for the 464th Bomb Group. Capt. William G. Shoemaker, with Col. Marshall Bonner as co-pilot, was flying group lead. Lt. Bob Wingfield, with Lt. Col. Sylvian D. Hand as co-pilot was flying deputy lead.

At 22,000 feet, on the bomb run while following the 465th Bomb Group, Col. Bonner, as I later found out, panicked at the sight of "flak," jerked the controls away from Shoemaker, and turned sharply to the right - almost running into me. At that instant, I determined that Shoemaker was abandoning the lead and I moved to assume the lead position in order to proceed to the target. However, Lt. Sampson, flying on the left of Shoemaker, followed him into the turn and his right rudder slammed into the nose of my airplane. The collision flipped us over on our back and we proceeded straight down to about 5,000 feet before I was able to recover and get the airplane flying straight and level again.

On the way down, I rang the alarm bell for the crew to bail out because at the time I did not know the total extent of the damage. I also looked at Lt. Col. Hand and motioned for him to get out, which he did. While I was trying to control the airplane I was looking for my chest pack, all at the same time. It had been placed on the floor just back of my seat in case I should ever need it, but apparently it had fallen out of the airplane through the open bomb bay doors. I must say here that I do not know whether or not I would have stayed with the airplane if I had found my chute. The bombardier and navigator went out the nose wheel door and the bombardier was captured along with Lt. Col. Hand and they became POWs. The navigator and the top turret gunner were



From Ken Sutton. "This picture was taken about May 1943. I was Base Ordnance Officer and had to live on base. This is the house to which we were assigned. It had five bedrooms, four baths, kitchen, butler's pantry, dining room, living room, two enclosed porches, and a maid's room. We did rattle around a bit. Nancy is on my left and Ruth Sutton on my right. We met this other Sutton couple because our bank accounts had become so what intertwined and we had to meet at the bank to sort it out. It had something to do with the fact that both of us (males that is) had awful handwriting. The other U Sutton was stationed at Gunter."

not captured and remained behind enemy lines until the Germans retreated through Northern Italy.

The remaining crew members came to the cockpit after we had leveled out. Bordak, the nose gunner was in the damaged turret all the way down. It was cold and with all the glass knocked out, he had a cool and exciting ride.

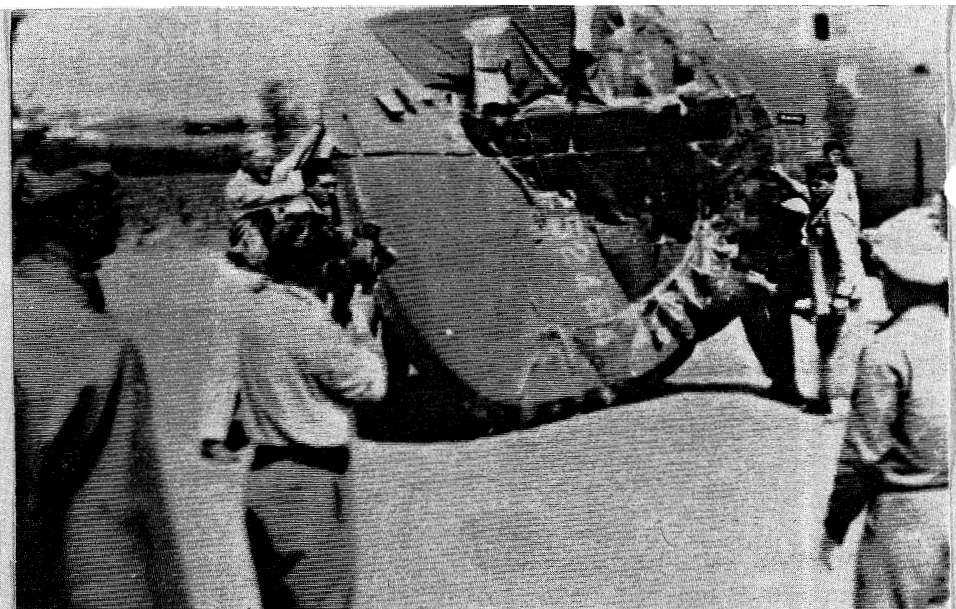
After deciding that the airplane was flyable, I immediately headed for the coast. The second mistake of the day occurred when we released the ten bombs that were still on board with the pins pulled. At that point, we were low and the blast effects really got our attention.

I could not remember whether Corsica was in friendly hands or not but we headed in that direction anyway. It was very hazy at sea and we were flying just above the white-caps. While making a very nervous approach toward the island our luck suddenly improved. We sighted a U.S. fighter base which was located somewhere on the northeast part of Corsica.

The entire rudder of Lt. Sampson's plane had remained stuck on the nose of our airplane like a big barn door until we landed on the fighter strip. The rudder obstructed my view while landing, in addition to the pitot tube (air speed) having been knocked off. Lt. Sampson's plane, without the tail, tumbled and only John Henderson, the navigator, survived after bailing out and he became a prisoner.

It just so happened that the activities of the fighter base on Corsica were being filmed at the same time we were approaching to land. The collision had damaged the nose wheel and we were having great difficulty in trying to get it down. While circling the field with only the main gear down, and the rudder still on our nose, the third mistake of the day occurred. We had forgotten to transfer fuel and the #1 and #2 engines stopped for lack of fuel. Fuel was transferred and shortly thereafter we recovered power on the left side and landed without further damage.

The following morning we inspected the damage and decided



BIG FAT MOMMA' with Sampson's stabilizer and rudder impaled on Bordak's nose turret 50 calibers.

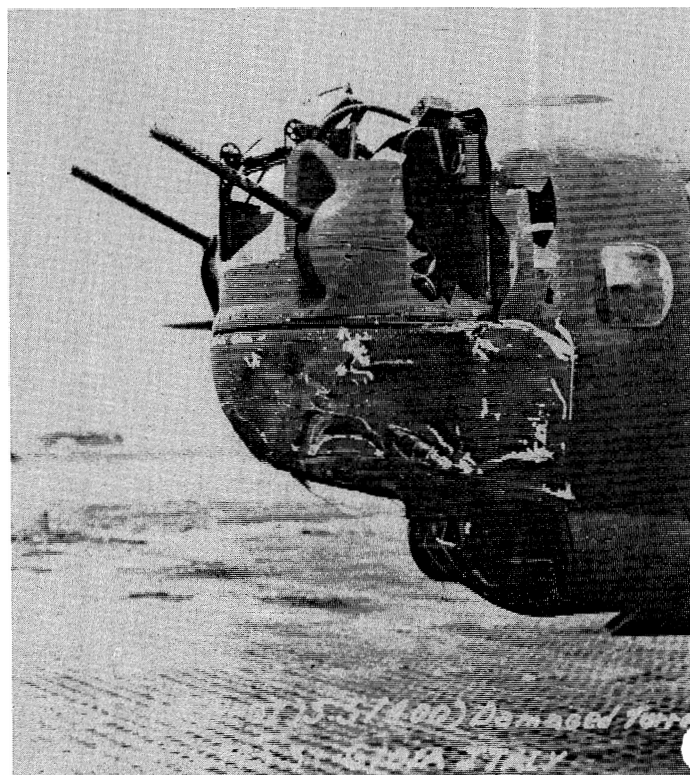
that the airplane was flyable. The remaining crew members and I climbed aboard and headed back to our base. We flew very low because the German lines were still just north of Naples, and we didn't want to attract any German fighters.

Approaching Naples, we ran into weather and were forced to climb in order to clear the mountains ahead. While in the clouds, we were looked over by a U.S. P-39 fighter. We both waved to each other and proceeded on. The weather cleared as we approached Gioia del Colle and we landed without further problems. The base had not received our message from Corsica, and our return caused considerable surprise. In fact, Lt. Robert C. Holcomb, my regular co-pilot, was packing my personal effects for shipment home.

Many questions were asked about what happened and as to where had we been. Later, I asked a lot of questions

myself. It was then that Capt. Wm Shoemaker described to me what had happened when Col. Bonner had taken the controls away from him. Needless to say, I was infuriated and promptly proceeded to have a very private talk with the Colonel.

For some reason, Col. Bonner had always flown with me on every group training mission in the U.S. -



Mike Bordak's nose turret after removal of Sampson's stabilizer and rudder.



Cot Charles F. McKenna III, Deputy CO of the 464th Bomb Group on the left with Col. Arnold Schroeder, CO of the 464th Bomb Group. Cot McKenna was CO of the 781st Bomb Squadron and was transferred to the 464th Bomb Group after the loss of Col. Bonner over Vienna on June 26, 1944.

and North Africa. After this fiasco, I made up my mind never ever to set foot in another airplane with him again. Much to my surprise, later the same day, Lt. Col. Goodyear and Capt Wm. Moore told me that I was scheduled to fly with Col. Bonner the very next morning to Craiova, Rumania. I instantly refused in a loud voice and probably very colorful language. However, I lost that argument. I could not understand why Col. Bonner would even want to fly with me again.

The mission to Craiova was uneventful. However, the cylinder head temperatures soon became the topic of conversation between Col. Bonner and myself. He insisted that we return the mixture to "auto rich" and I refused. As time went on Col. Bonner continued to protest the "lean" mixtures with me still refusing to comply. Shortly thereafter, Col. Bonner moved the mixture controls to "auto rich" and it was at this point that I physically knocked his hands off the control pedestal.

1. Later after bombs away, we reduced power, managed our fuel, and returned to base. There was no more conversation between the

Colonel and me on the way home and for several days thereafter.

There was an investigation of the 464th Bomb Group by the 15th AF Headquarters which was initiated by the controversy over the conflicting reports about the mid-air collision. It was rumored that Col. Bonner might be replaced. The group suffered as a result of this controversy and its performance became directly affected.

Lt. Col. Charles F. McKenna III, CO of the 781st Bomb Squadron in the 465th Bomb Group, replaced Lt. Col. Hand as Deputy Group Commander, and the group responded to his leadership and began to shape up. Lt. Col. McKenna was a fine pilot and officer and we became friends. We later flew several missions together.

Col. Bonner was killed-in-action on June 26, 1944 on a mission to Vienna. Our group continued to improve in morale and in its operational capabilities. To our credit, I would like to say that we probably ended up contributing our fair share of damage to the enemy.

The problem with Col. Bonner and the morale problems at the 464th

were lawnmowers to us at the 781st. It was unfortunate that a high ranking Officer caused the morale problem and still remained in command. Fortunately it did not affect the dedication of the fine men in the group to continue to bring the war to the enemy.

This was the first combat mission for the 464th. They were flying out of Gioia del Colle in the heel of Italy before moving to Pantanella.

OTHER MIDAIR COLLISIONS

The 465th Bomb Group spent some time at Oudna, Africa waiting for the runways to be built at Pantanella. During that time training flights were flown to keep the aircrews combat ready. On one of these flights a midair collision occurred. In my research I received the accident report from the micro film from Gene Moxely and a report by Floyd Gregocy, Historian for the 783rd Bomb Squadron. The first paragraph is from Floyd Gregocy.

On 11 March the 465th participated with another group in a practice mission. Lts. Murphy and Melody, from the 782nd squadron, with a total of seventeen men

aboard collided and burned in mid-air. While circling the field at about 500 feet picking up the formation, Lt. Murphy's plane slid over and his right wing damaged Maj. Smith's left rudder. Apparently, Lt. Murphy immediately cut the throttles, which resulted in Lt. Melody's plane ramming Lt. Murphy's plane in the rear. Both planes caught fire and seemed to explode in midair. The largest piece of wreckage found was a section of the nose part of the nose turret of Lt. Melody's plane. A search party was organized in the afternoon and fifteen bodies were found. Most of them were hardly recognizable. The local Arabs got to the crash site first and took everything of value from the bodies. This was the first serious accident experienced by the 465th Bomb Group.

The report on microfilm; During the month of March misfortune struck the squadron. After a training period without accident, two crews collided in midair near Oudna in North Africa, on a routine training mission. On March 11, 1944, Lt Murphy, flying number 3 position in the lead box, lost control of his plane in the prop wash and collided with Lt Melody's ship almost immediately after the initial assembly.

With the exception of two men on each crew not flying, the entire

personnel of both crews were lost in the ensuing crash.

In a phone call Col. Burt Andrus remembered the crash very well. He and Maj. Bullock, group operations officer, went to the scene of the crash. Burt remembers the horrible sight, the first fatalities for the group. Lt Murphy's plane's props cut into #3 aircraft severing the legs of some of the crew members. He remembers there was some question about the ability of Lt. Murphy as a pilot.

I do not know of any other group mid-air collisions except one on March 15 when the group attacked the Main Marshaling Yard at Graz, Austria. Harry Carl's article in our history book describes it very well. "A freak midair collision took place on this mission between the aircrafts of Lts. Hewitt and Tryon. Fortunately, no crew member on either aircraft was injured. And both planes were able to limp back to base. It was recalled that Lts. Hewitt and Tryon discussed the incident at some length after it was over.

"The lead aircraft (Althoff) in the box had to leave the formation because of mechanical problems. 'We were getting ready to move ahead to take the lead position for the bomb run,' explained Sgt. Lawrence S. Lilly, Nose Gunner on the Hewitt

Crew. 'I heard a terrific roar and a ripping sound and I climbed out of my turret in a hurry. The plane in the rear position had moved up to take our spot and somehow, in the maneuvering, an air current had tossed us together. The prop of the plane coming up from behind us was chewing up our bomb bay doors.'

"The propeller of the outboard engine on Tryon's plane cut through the bomb bay doors and catwalk of the plane above. And the propeller spun off the engine and fell away. Six five hundred pound bombs were dislodged from Hewitt's plane, one of which fell onto the wing of the lower plane and slid across the wing, removing all of the antennae. One bomb hung up in the bomb bay but was subsequently dislodged and the other four fell free.

"In addition to the bomb bay doors and the catwalk, the hydraulic system on Hewitt's plane was severely damaged. The landing gear had to be cranked down by hand and with no brakes, it was not possible to prevent the plane from running off the runway into the open wheat field at the end."

Tryon made it home with one, prop missing, another bent, and his vertical stabilizer out of line. He was considering Russia, but Navigator Bob Ledwith plotted a course home.

From what I remember I was concerned about a communication problem which could have been a factor. I remember at the morning briefing a new officer from the states was giving part of the briefing and the VHF radio channels were changed. Usually lead aircraft monitors other channels. The change may not have been correct or noticed by all the pilots there. This was confirmed by me upon return when Jim Wray asked why I didn't receive him during rendezvous. Jim Wray in lead wanted to tell me to fly Baker Box lower. This was my first time I was lead in Baker box and I was concerned that the lower planes in my box had enough clearance on assembly turns. Whatever happened all were very fortunate to return to Pantanella - a rare event with no one was even scratched from the midair.



Eighteen inches of catwalk chewed out by a propeller

781st BOMB SQUADRON REUNION RESERVATIONS

Name _____ Name of Wife or Guest attending _____

Address _____ Date _____

Arrival Date _____ Departure Date _____ Will you drive? ____

<u>ACTIVITIES:</u>	<u>No. of People</u>	<u>Meal Price</u>	<u>Total Price</u>
--------------------	----------------------	-------------------	--------------------

Thursday Dinner @ \$18. per person	_____	\$18	\$ ____ _
------------------------------------	-------	------	-----------

Fish Beef

Saturday Banquet @ \$20 per person	_____	\$20	\$ ____ _
------------------------------------	-------	------	-----------

Friday Lunch @ \$6.75 per person (Meal prices include tax and tip)	Ham Seafood _____	\$6.75	\$ _____
---	---------------------------	--------	----------

Registration Fee @ \$15 per person (Includes bus tour to Maxwell Field)	_____	\$15	\$ ____ _
--	-------	------	-----------

Total Enclosed \$ _____
Prepayment means no lines at
Montgomery. 100% guarantee
of refund if you have to cancel
at any time.

Mail this portion of reservation to;

O. J. COWART, JR.
2634 BELUCHE,
GALVESTON, TX 77551

cut ----- cut

GOVERNORS HOUSE RESERVATIONS

781 st Bomb Squadron Assoc. Reunion

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Will Arrive on _____

Date Time

Will Depart on _____
Date

Indicate Room Preference

<u>Standard</u>	<u>Regency</u>
-----------------	----------------

1 King Bed	1 King & Sofa Bed
------------	----------------------

2 Queen Beds	2 Queen Beds & Fridge
-----------------	--------------------------

Non Smoking ____

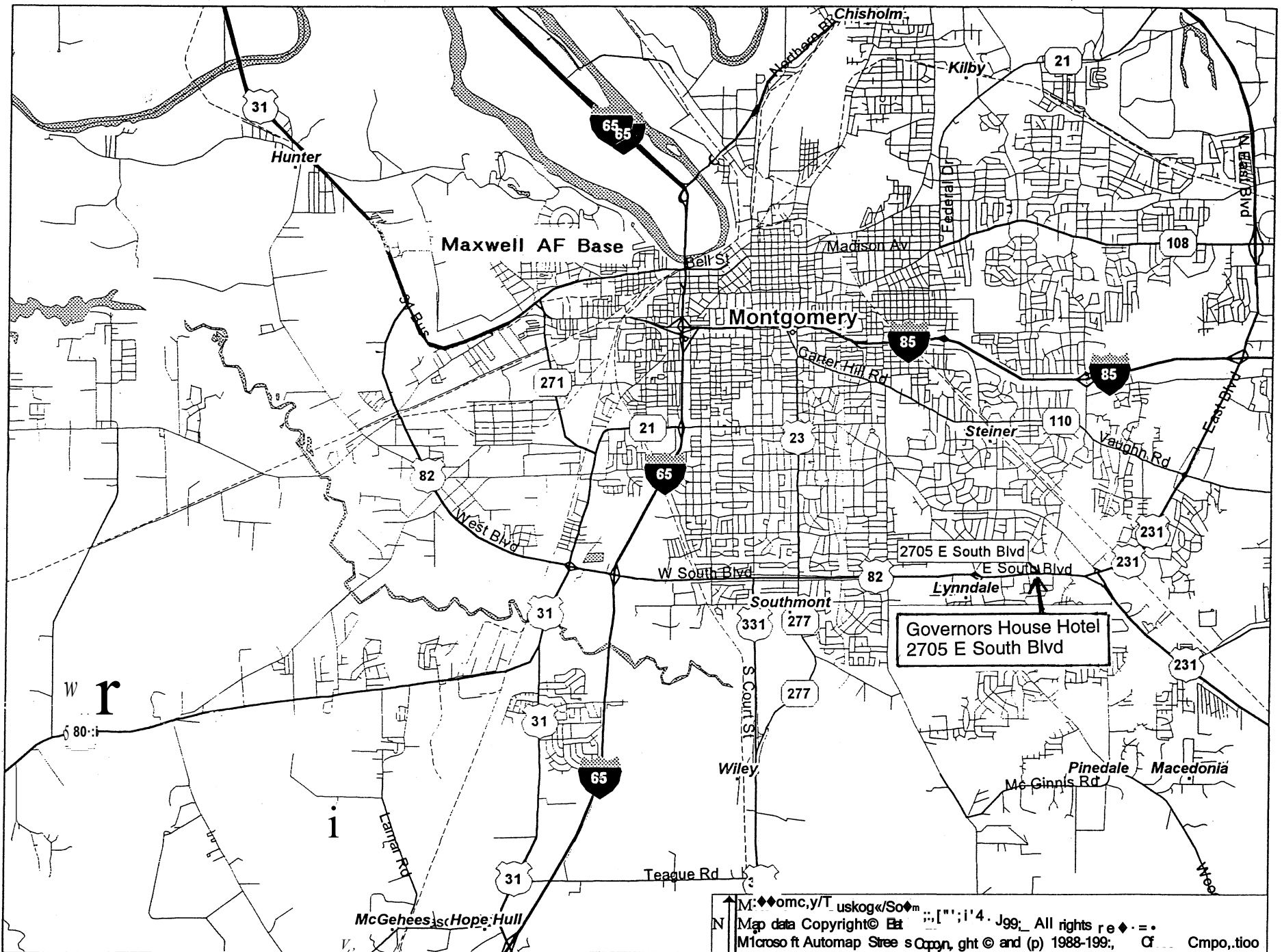
Credit Card _____	Handicap ____
Name Number Exp Date	

Standard room rate is \$54 per night for one to four persons, plus 10% tax. There are some Regency rooms available for \$69 per night for one to four persons plus 10% tax. Reservations will be held only until 6:00 PM, unless accompanied by the first night's deposit by check or major credit card. CHECK IN TIME IS 3:00 PM; CHECK OUT TIME IS 12:00 noon. Reservations must be received by August 25, 1996. Spend more time in Montgomery. These great rates are good between September 22 and October 1. **Governors House Phone 1 800-334-8459.**

MAIL THIS PORTION TO;

GOVERNORS HOUSE HOTEL
2705 EAST, SOUTH BOULEVARD
MONTGOMERY, AL 36116-2575

This page left blank. This four page centerfold is designed to be removed. Use A for registration, if you have not done so. Pages C and D you can bring with you. C gives you an idea of the layout of Montgomery and D lists some attractions and the early registrants.



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**Annual Events at Montgomery
In September, Men's Class A Slow
Pitch National softball tournament,
Highland Games showcases Scottish
dance amidst a festival of food, arts
and crafts, and music,
Other Montgomery Area Attrac-
tions:**

**Alabama Archives and Histroy
Museum
642 Washington Ave.**

**Alabama Artists Gallery
One Dexter Ave.
Alabama State Capitol
Brainbridge Street and Dexter Ave.**

**Alabama War Memorial
Comer of Jackson and Monroe Sts.
Betsy Ann Riverboat
1286 S Lawrence Street**

**Civil Rights Memorial
400 Washington Avenue
Dexter Avenue King**

**Memorial Baptist Church
454 Dexter Avenue**

**Executive Mansion
1142 S. Perry Street**

**First White House
of the Confederacy
644 Washington Avenue**

**Jasmilie HW Gardents and
Outdoor Museum
U.S. 231 North, Jasmine Hill Rd**

**Maxwell Air Force Base
Bell Street Gate**

**Montgomery Zoo
329 Vandiver Blvd
Off North Blvd**

**Mountasia Gold and Games
5761 Atlanta Highway**

**Old Alabama Town
310 North Hull Street**

**VictoryLand Greyhound
Racing Park
Exit 22 off I-85 between
Montgomery and Tuskegee**

**Registrations near the end of June. According to past records we
expect the list to grow to 275 or more.**

JAMES C. ALTHOFF
FRANK P. AMBROSE
BETTY AMBROSE
BERNARD BADLER
DANIEL E. BAILEY
PEARL BAILEY
DONALD A. BARRETT
JUNE HILL
JOHNS.BAUM
DOROTHY BAUM
NICHOLAS C. BELIK
RUTHBELIK
ARTHUR W. BOVETT, JR
SHIRLEY BOVETT
CHARLES H. BRAUD
MAMIE BRAUD
VERNON G. BURDA
PAT BURDA
HARRY S. CARL, JR
DONNA CARL
GAYTHOR L. CASS
NORMA JEAN CASS
RAYMOND D. CAUBLE
GARNET CAUBLE
DAVID B. COLEMAN
BETTY COLEMAN
O.J. COWART, JR
ESTHER COWART
CORNELIUS V. CULHANE
SUZANNE CULHANE
CARLV. DAHL
WANDA DAHL
EUGENE C. DEAL
MICHAEL J. DEIRONIMI
IDA DEIRONIMI
MELVIN L. DERRY
EVELYN DERRY
BEN L. DONAHUE
LUCILLE DONAHUE
WILLIAM C. ELLETT
LOIS ELLETT
MELANIE ELLETT
LEONARD H. EMMEL
LAVERNE EMMEL
KENNETH G. FODEN
DOTFODEN
LOREN W. FOOTE
MARGE FOOTE
ROBERT L. FREED
ROSEANNA
*BETTY R. FRENCH
SANDRA HACKARD
GEORGE HAUSOLD
VENIHAUSOLD
RAYMOND W. HILL
FRANCES HILL
ROBERT L. JASPER
DARLAI-JASPER
EDWIN W. KAPUSTA
STEPHANIE KAPUSTA

DALE L. KEISER
BETTY KEISER
JOHN B. KENNEDY
WANDA KENNEDY
FRANCIS K. KILL
BETTY KILL
JOHN P. LAYNE
FRANCES LAYNE
ALBERT P. LEBLANC
DOT LEBLANC
BOB LEDWITH
BETTYLEDWITH
ORRENJ.LEE
CAROLE LEE
MILTON LEVINSON
TEDDY LEVINSON
WILLIAM O. MALONEY
LEE MALONEY
EUGENE G. MARTIS
JOSIE MARTIS
WILLIAM A. MCBRIDE
DOROTHY MCBRIDE
HOMER L. MOELLER
INEZ MOELLER
AL "SCOOP" NAGEL
CONNIE OGDEN
JOHN W. OGDEN
KENNETH L. PARKHURST
ELAINE PARKHURST
GINO J. PELLESCI
HELEN PELLESCI
DONALD B. POSTEMA
NANCY POSTEMA
H. FRANK QUAGAN
BETTIE QUAGAN
WILLIAM A. RACHOW
ROGENE RACHOW
CURTIS G. REED
ELAYNE REED
KENNETH B. REHN
LOIS REHN
HARRY REUSS
LYNN REUSS
RUBY J. BROWN
BARNEY G. RUSSELL
ANN RUSSELL
*MRS MARION SCHAPS
TONYSCHAPS
HERBERT L. SCHLOSSIN
SHIRLEY SCHLOSSIN
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MARGIE SHAFFER
ROBERT L. SHETTERLY
DOROTHY SHETTERLY
WALKER H. SHIPLEY
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NANCY SUTTON
ALBERT L. THOMPSON
RUTH THOMPSON
JACK VANSLYKE
VANORMA VANSLYKE
JAMES E. WAGGLE, JR
ETHEL WAGGLE
JOHNE. WARD
FRANK WASSENAAR
DOROTHY WASSENM,R
KURT WASSENAAR
HENRY L. WILLETT, JR
JUDY WILLETT
THOMAS L. WILLIAMS
MARY WILLIAMS
STANLEY J. WINKOWSKI
ALICE WINKOWSKI
*JEAN ALLEN WOOD
WILLIAM P. WOOD
JOHN WROBLEWSKI
JEAN WROBLEWSKI
THOMAS YANCEY
CATHERINE YANCEY
JOHN ZADROZNY
HELEN ZADROZNY

From Albert "Shack" Myers" Diary

and lacerated cheek. Lyons has a broken finger and banged up knee. The other two had minor cuts and bruises. They all are at a hospital about 30 miles East of Toronto.

The round trip was -over 300 miles and I drove a three quarter ton weapons carrier over half the distance, as the driver was green and inexperienced.

That was O'Brien's third crash landings in three days, but you can't keep a guy like him down. He could hardly open his black and swollen eyes enough to see me, but he said, "Helli I'll be up taking off with you in a couple of weeks."

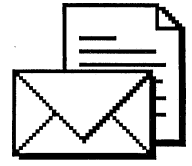
Also, on the 22nd part of Prince's crew returned. Another story of sadness and hardship. Prince and Canyock were killed and buried in Yugoslavia - they never got out of the plane. Two other boys are still in Yugoslavia - one of them too weak to be moved. Septoff (now Stevens) told me about it last night. He looks pretty good considering 50 days of poor food and 100 mile walk in the last four days with the Jerry's on his tail.

July 25, 1994. On the 20th I flew ~~100~~ group lead to Fredrickshafen, Germany and on the 22nd I led the 2nd attack unit over Ploesti, Rumania. On the Ploesti raid O'Brien had to turn back because of engine trouble. On the way back they ran into some unplotted flak that was really rough. They had an engine shot out and their wing tanks were shot up. The ship was pretty badly shot up in general. They headed for Brendise and Big Fence (emergency radio contact) gave them the wrong heading and they ended up at another field getting way low on gas. The tower would not answer their call so they landed anyway and came in down wind. Short field, strong wind, and they landed about halfway down the field at about 170 mph with throttles cut clear off. A C-47 was parked at the end of the field so to miss it O'Brien went to the right and hit a ditch which eliminated the right landing gear and one engine. -- en they met up with three trees }hich took care of the wings, other engines, killed Gruber, radio operator, and put six men in the hospital.

The next day I was headed for Bari to take in "This is the Army" when I learned that the boy's funeral (he was only 18) was to be at 2 PM. Also heard that O'Brien would probably lose a leg and one eye and possibly both eyes, all of which later proved to be false. I went to the funeral which was a very simple grave-side affair, Chaplain Blouch officiating.

Achenbach, O'Brien's bombardier, had a truck and was taking the crew's shaving equipment, etc., to them, so I went along. None of the boys were in as bad shape as rumors had them. O'Brien had a broken leg, broken finger and his nose was pretty badly smashed and cuts on his forehead. All were pretty badly shaken up for that matter. Saul got off the easiest of them all - just badly bruised. A miracle considering he as thrown thru the instrument panel and landed outside the plane. Hawkins has a broken cheek bone

MAIL CALL



Mail Call for the past few months has resulted in an unusual number of responses regarding the request for your memories of WWII. Surprises from men like Bob Shetterly and his crew, Pierre Kennedy and Harold Farrar on POWs, Col. McHenry Hamilton with some of his WWII experiences, Russ Maynard and his aviation career, etc. Also, some phone calls and reports on the bomb explosions on take-off. Not enough hard facts on this story as yet. You will be reading these articles in the near future. A sincere thanks to you men who take the time to record our history.

EUGENE F. FENNER, (top gunner on Rice crew) "I am enclosing my dues, will tell about the planes exploding, and give recognition to a pilot for being a good pilot.

"When I received the last news I was in the midst of having a knee replacement. Now I have had both knees replaced and doing fine.

"About the planes exploding, it was in a unit that had a runway east of ours if I remember right. The explosions were wired to the gear switch that made it possible to operate the gear control. There were a few explosions and it seemed a mystery. Then one morning 2 or 3 planes in a row exploded and in examining other planes for take-off the explosives were found. Somebody was being paid for the destruction. The person responsible was found at once. I don't remember what became of him but they nearly had a riot with the whole unit - they wanted him put before the firing squad. This was in early summer 1944.

"Lt. Rice's crew was, I think, the first replacement crew, to get us started and teach us to live. Rice was made co-pilot on Capt. Smith's crew. We received his co-pilot F. O. Doyle. I believe Doyle finished his tour with us, teaching and he did a good job. Smith showed Rice how to fly a B-24 and when he came back to us we were one of the most able crews in Italy.

A page from the Archives . . . COMBAT CREW LOSSES FOR 465TB BOMB GROUP AFTER 6 MONTHS IN COMBAT

A study of combat crew losses for the first six months in combat, that is, any combat personnel dropped from the Group for any reason, reveals that 40S men completed their tour of duty and were returned to the United States. Toe figure is 42.9% of the total men in the group between 5 May and 5 November, 951 officers and enlisted men. The net casualties in action (killed, seriously wounded in action or missing in action (POW) and not returned to duty) totaled 492 men or 51.8 per cent of all losses. There were 18 casualties not in action, 7 transfers and 26 miscellaneous losses.

Total crew strength increased over the period from 71 crews on 5 May to 87 crews on 5 November, 1944.

"In more than forty years of flying I have seen 6 or 8 pilots who were real aircraft commanders and Doyle was one of them. I didn't know it at the time, but I have since come to realize it. A lot of people get off the ground and back OK, but to do a professional job there are a few that are beyond O.K."

From William Coonan (Engineering). "What a pleasure to send this \$10 in dues for all the fine effort you put into the *Pantanella News*."

"Since there is so much good and giving left in us why not have a column named 'For the Good of My Neighbors.?' Let the guys write in about the volunteer jobs they do every day. Have the widows write in about their husbands good deeds."

"I liked the History of Italy very much."

Good idea William, we'll get "The Good of My Neighbors" started with our next newsletter.

Art Bovet (Bombardier on W. J. Smith crew). "After reading about Black Nan in the *Pantanella News* I remember a mission where our lead plane dropped bombs early on a tactical mission in Italy and they landed on Australian troops. Fortunately no other plane dropped on the lead's release. Needless to say we were not popular with the Ausies. Looking forward to Montgomery."

Glen Haywood (Pilot) remembers checking the wheel wells for sausage bombs.

"But I can't remember if it was a result of briefing or rumors. I do recall a plane blowing up on take-off after someone checked the runway. About all that was left was a landing gear. It was to be their last mission I believe. We always wondered."

Ray Hope. "I appreciate all the articles in the *Pantanella News*, but I hate to see the increasing number of Folded Wings."

"Lola Maxine and I just celebrated our 50th Anniversary. I was discharged from McCook Army Air Base Feb. 6, 1946 and we were married April 11, 1946. We then lived in McCook until 1962. We will be moving to Covenant Village of Colorado on June 1st."

AIR FORCE 50th ANNIVERSARY REUNION

There will be an Air Force Association's Celebration of the 50th Anniversary of the Air Force in Las Vegas, Nevada, April 22-26, 1997. In conjunction with the celebration the AFA has made arrangements with Turner Publishing Company to publish a desktop book honoring the people and events that have made this anniversary celebration possible.

The book will include Air Force history, stories and photos of the event in Las Vegas and a history of groups. They are asking for our group history and photos to be included in this book. Since the deadline was June 30th I asked Harry Carl to prepare a 465th Bomb Group history along with group photos. I have contacted the other squadrons in our group for approval.

It will be a huge affair with seminars, an opportunity to meet leading aerospace companies, aerial demonstration teams from around the world at Nellis AFB, WWII war birds, static displays, reception and dinner with Air Force and government dignitaries.

The Fifteenth Air Force Association is planning their 1997 reunion around the Air Force Associations convention commemorating the 50th Anniversary of the Air Force. They will take advantage of the price breaks and have requested meeting space and rooms at the Riviera Hotel. There will be time allocated for taking part in the Fifteenth's program which will include a banquet, the 15th Air Force Band, a patriotic program and 15th Air Force Memorial Service during this five day celebration. More details in future newsletters.

The book which will be published after the reunion will be a 9 x 12 inch coffee-table edition, deluxe hard bound color cover, high gloss paper and superior photo reproduction. It will sell for \$49.95. However, we can place an advance order for a price of \$39.95. This is the kind of book you will want next to your squadron's book. Please let me know if you want to be on the list to

receive one so that we can come up with a reasonable number to order.

If you are interested in attending contact the Air Force Association at P.O. Box 9129, Silver Spring, MD 20916-9129 for early registration form. Early registration (Before Feb. 15, 1997), has a considerable discount. More details will be given at our reunion. In the event a number plan to attend we could select a hotel, or possibly have a 465th common hotel so we could meet other 465th comrades.

FOLDED WINGS

Garvin Goyne (Orderly Room Clerk) passed away February 5, 1996.

Ralph J. Deacon (Engineer on Wilcox crew) passed away Jan. 11, 1994. Reported by his wife, Gloria. Also reported by Chris Murphy, (Top Gunner on Wilcox crew).

George R. Racz (Radar Maintenance) passed away May, 1996.

Orville "Swede" Quail (Gunner on Zalk crew) passed away Dec. 3, 1995.

Stanley E. Tryon (Pilot) passed away June 7, 1996.

Col. E. C. "Ned" Humphreys, Jr. passed away April 22, 1996.

Ned was a bombardier/ navigator/ radar officer in the Air Force for 31 years. He was founder and Executive Director of Bombardiers, Inc.. He had planned to dissolve the Bombardiers at the end of 1996. Some of our bombardiers belonged to the association.

A letter from Mrs. Ruth Goyne to O. J. Cowart, "On July 14, 1995 we learned that Garvin had myeloid leukemia. After getting blood transfusions every 2 to 4 weeks and making part of the deer hunt '95, he succumbed to leukemia. He would have been 74 on March 30th and our 37th wedding anniversary was February 7, the day we buried him in sight of the home we built near Monticello, Arkansas soon after we married.

Our thoughts prayers to our fallen comrades who have found everlasting peace, — you served your country well. We will remember you forever.

Air Crews Radium Concem

A recent Associated Press release had the following information;

Patients sick with cancer, dental or hormonal problems that they blame on radioactive pellets stuck up their noses decades ago asked the government to try to prove the treatment's danger and then warn affected Americans.

Nasal radium was a medical treatment commonly used in the 1940s, '50s and '60s, as a cure for such afflictions as colds, despite warnings as early as 1949 that it might be dangerous. The military also gave it to divers and flight crews to prevent inner ear problems resulting from drastic changes in pressure.

The radium, which was encased in capsules and inserted into the nostrils at the end of long sticks, was intended to shrink tissues near the eustachian tubes.

Some experts believe that hundreds of thousands of people were treated before the practice fell out of use because of heightened concern about the health effects of radiation and better availability of antibiotics.

Now, thousands of recipients of nasal radium want the government to do an epidemiological study to prove whether the treatment did cause problems from cancer to miscarriage.

Johns Hopkins issued a public service bulletin 17 years ago warning former patients to seek check-ups.

The Department of Veterans Affairs is reviewing the matter and is expected to decide on a study.

I remember after returning to the U.S. after Pantanella I was stationed for several months at Drew or Drane Field in Florida and received the treatment. They treated everyone that returned from overseas whether we wanted it or not.

A few years ago when I had a sinus problem I went to my doctor. He knew about the treatments and said it is very doubtful that there would be any health problems after so many years.

Address Changes

Russ Maynard's new phone 540 891-0663.

Richard Grantham
25 rue de l'Oratoire
69300 CALUIRE, France

Alvin Marchbanks, 120 Rivermist Dr.
Panagbum, AR 72121-9499.

Robert Gibbs, 58502 Pleasant View Ct, Three Rivers, MI 49093.

Donald S. Rymal, 23458 Haynes St, Farmington, MI 48336.

Sidney Rothman, 296 Heather Dr, Monroeville, PA 15416.

R. F. Ledwith, 5419 Moraine Hills Dr W, West Bend, WI 53095. Phone 414 306-0271.

Ray Hope, 9153 Yarow St., Apt 1302, Westminster, CO 80021-4501. Phone 303 403-2255.

William B. Bartlet, Jr., 12 E 900 N Rupert, ID 83350.

NOTICE: How about hearing from all of you regarding address changes. I had a bundle of returns in April. It cost 50¢ to notify us that you moved or are away. Also lost is the cost of mailing and cost of the newsletter, which is over \$2, since the Post Office throws it away - no forwarding on bulk mailing. You will notice near the address I have added "forwarding and return postage guaranteed." This may take care of the forwarding or will get the newsletter returned for a small cost.

For Snowbirds it is a good idea to be specific when you go and return from Florida, etc. The newsletter takes weeks to deliver and I will mail first class if you expect to be enroute at delivery time.

HELP! We have lost contact with the follow-

ing: George Kurkowski (Zalk crew) last known at 246-15 Van Zant Ave., Little Neck, NY 11362. And Joseph Del Grecio (Communications). He was found by the phone list on the computer in 1994, he paid dues in 1995, but mail is returned now which reports no such address. The last address was 10 Glen Ridge Pky, Bloomfield, NY 07003.

Also, Charles J. Kremer, (Ellison crew), 6852 Hubart St., Chicago IL. This could be an error on my roster. I had listed as FW, but was same date as Charles Kramer who is FW. Now listed as NL. He never had a Zip code, so I doubt if Kremer was ever was located?

Robert H. Carr (Cauble Engineer) is missing. Last known at 35878 Knollview Ct. SE 311A, Grand Rapids MI 49506. Also winters at 3406 E Marttana, St Pete, FL 33706. A strange thing happened - we found another Robert H. Carr in Oregon, then later found out he was not our missing man.

How about some help from crew members or section buddies. •

Recently I received a letter and detail of all members of the Anna-ment Section from Bruce Miller. This is the kind of help that is really appreciated. There were some address corrections, new area phone codes, etc. The Ordnance Section has been doing the same since the Association was started with help from John Zadrozny, Robert Freed and others.

SALUTE TO OUR UNSUNG HEROS

Pilots are highly trained men
And wings are not easily won.
But without the support team
Our pilots would march with a gun.
So when you see mighty aircraft
Streaking their way through the air,
Remember the grease-stained ones
with wrench in hand

For they are the heroes who put them there.

The air echelon in the 781st has recognized our heroes from the ground echelon from the days of McCook. That's why we have such great reunions - our "team" was every man in the squadron.

Group Officers as of May 31, 1945

Comanding Officer 465 BG Lt Col William F. Day
 Deputy Commanding Office Lt Col John D. Bridges
 Executive Officer Lt Col Raymond Landsberger
 S-1 Officer Major William H. Bigelow
 S-2 Officer Capt Gale R. Graham
 S-3 Officer Major William J. Kaiser
 S-4 Officer Capt John P. Fischer

CO 780th Bomb Sq Major David L. Jones
 CO 781st Bomb Sq Lt Col James W. Wray
 CO 782nd Bomb Sq Major George R. Ashley
 CO 783rd Bomb Sq Major Edward B. Hinchliff

I thought this would be interesting to many of the air crews that were at PantaneUa at the beginning, and either completed and returned home, or were POW. The Group CO was deputy for a short time and officially was CO April 20th. Ashley and Wray were with the original crews arriving at Pantanella with the 781st Bomb Sqdn.

Why I want to be a Pilot

Fifth Grader Envisions Pilot's Life as a Good Deal
 by Tommy Tyler, fifth grade, Jefferson School,
 Beaufort SC.

When I grow up I want to be a pilot because it's a fun job and easy to do. That's why there are so many pilots flying around these days. Pilots don't need much school; they just have to learn to read numbers so they can read their instruments. I guess they should be able to read road maps, too, so they can find their way if they get lost.

Pilots should be brave so they won't get scared if it's foggy and they can't see, or if a wing or motor falls off they should stay calm so they'll know what to do.

Pilots have to have good eyes to see through clouds, and they can't be afraid of thunder and lightning because they are so much closer to them than we are.

The salary pilots make is another thing I like. They make more money than they now what to do with. This is because most people think that plane flying is dangerous, except pilots don't because they know how easy it is.

I hope I don't get air-sick, because I get car-sick and if I get air-sick, I couldn't be a pilot, and then I would have to go to work.

LIFE MEMBERS

A badge of honor

- 77. Herbert Schlossin
- 78. Kenneth J. Kopp
- 79. Tello Giammarco
- 80. George F. Kilby
- 81. Arthur W. Bovett
- 82. Reuben L. Krogh
- 65. Roland Pharis
- 83. Eugene C. Deal
- 84. Dale L. Keiser
- 85. Charles H. Braud
- 86. Frank Wassenaar
- 87. Raymond D. Cauble

Life Membership is \$100.



March calendar at Pantanella from
 Barney Russell's collection.

AS FLAK GOES BY

by Harold Straughan

Sung to the tune of "As Time Goes By"

You must remember this
 The flak can't always miss
 And someone gets to die
 The odds are always too dammed high
 As flak goes by.

And when the fighters come
 you hope your not the one
 To tumble from the sky
 You'll wish you had a quart of Rye
 As flak goes by.

Sky's full of tracers knocking at the gate
 110's and 210's looking for some bait
 Bombs not away, salvo don't be late
 The targets passing by
 As flak goes by.

It's still the same old story
 A tale that's much too gory
 For someone's got to die
 The odds are always too dammed high
 As flak goes by.

Harold Straughan was tail gunner on
 McKenna's crew. was the first flying enlisted
 man in the 781st, and wrote the above song.

H A I I U

Pars Pantanella
A vingt trois ans, je reviens
cinquante plus tard!

Left Pantanella
at twenty-three, I return
fifty years later!

Ayant tout tenté
je n'ai qu'A devenir
un simple poète

Tried everything
only thing left is become
a simple poet

L'avion chutait
tout fusil et bombe largués
touche Pantanellal

The plane was falling
we threw out all the loose stuff
made Pantanellal

U-haut je vois
trois grues rasant les nuages
triangle volant

Up there I see
three cranes skimmin's the clouds
flying triangle

Oiseaux semblables
volent ensemble mais jamais
dans la stratosphère

Birds of a feather
fly together but never
in the stratosphere

Je chevauche le vent
je saute rivières et cimes
des satellites suivent

I'm flying the wind
leaping rivers and treetops
satellites follow

Vol A Seattle
bière et crustacés au quai
triste au décollage

Flew to Seattle
drank beer and ate on the pier
hated to take off

J'ai respiré
l'ozone stratosphérique
ma piqué le nez

I inhaled some
stratospheric ozone
stinging my nose

Bombes tombant autour
nous nous enfouis bas
pas mal de poussière

Bombs falling on us
we dug in below surface
lot of dust around

Je rentre d'une sortie
vols dépôt de bombes sauté
Pantanella morte

Back from a mission
see that the bomb dump blew up
Pantanella dead

Dick Grantham

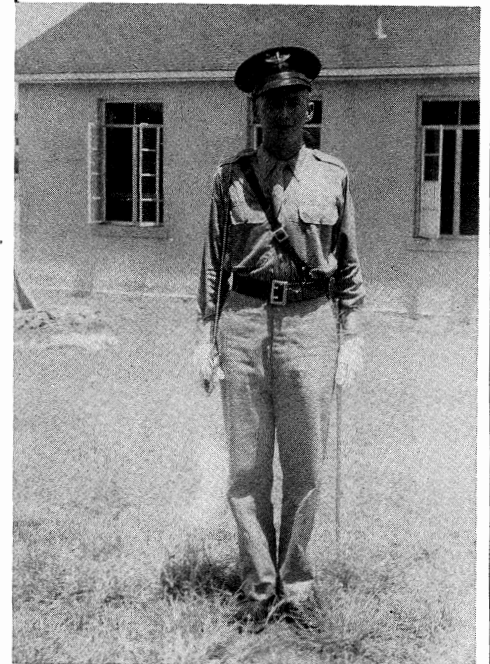


On the left is Richard Grantham's poetry in French and English. Dick, how about joining us at our reunion?

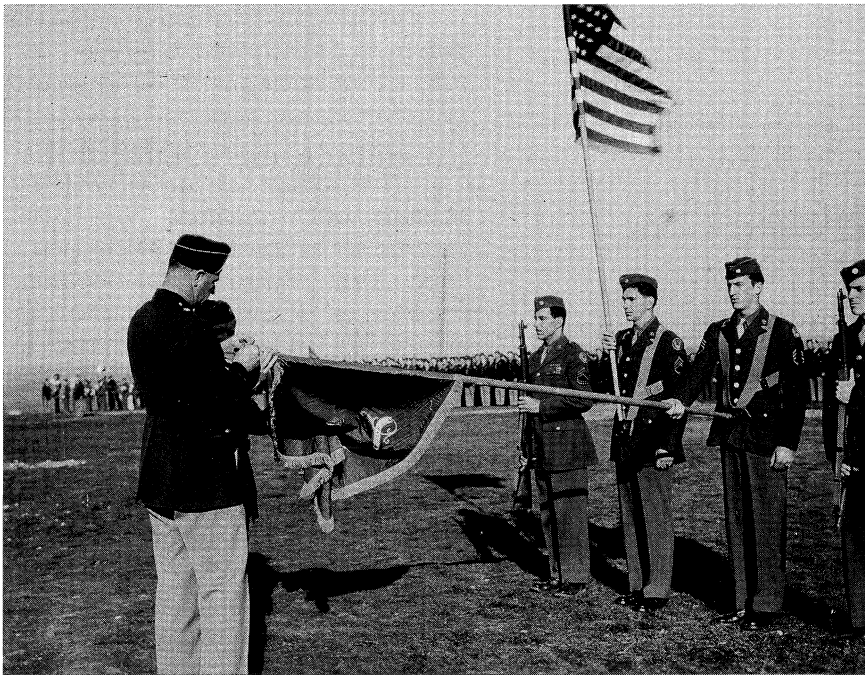
EDITORS CORNER

This will be the last newsletter before our reunion. We have planned a reunion you will remember. Ken Sutton and helpers started early and have all plans in place. We hope you can attend to enjoy the friendship that has developed over the years.

I will be away on a vacation in August. My son, Michael, is joining me on an African Safari. We have been there together before (my fourth) with our wives, but this time just the two of us are going. We will be flying by private plane between camps (Cessna 421) after we arrive in Johannesburg. It's a 13 1/2 hour flight from New York! At the various camps we will have drives in a Land Rover, and hikes and canoeing in the safer areas. We will visit Botswana, Zambia, Zimbabwe and South Africa. I'll save the animals for others to see - I only shoot with a camera. And I will be back in time to load my Airstream with the reunion goodies and see ya 'all in Montgomery.



Yours truly as an Aviation Cadet at Maxwell Field, Montgomery, AL, July 1943. Seven months later I returned here as a 2nd Lt. to check out in a B-24.



(Left) On December 5, 1944 Brig. Gen. Charles F. Born, Deputy Commander, Fifteenth Air Force, presenting Distinguished Unit Citation to the 465th Bomb Group for the combat mission flown to the Florisdorf Marshaling Yard and Oil Refinery at Vienna, Austria on July 8th, 1944. In addition to the Group Citation, many individual awards were bestowed upon group members.

The group made a highly successful bomb run on the target and maintain a tight formation when they were attacked by 25 enemy fighters. The group shot down 7 enemy aircraft and damaged 3 with the loss of only one B-24 bomber.

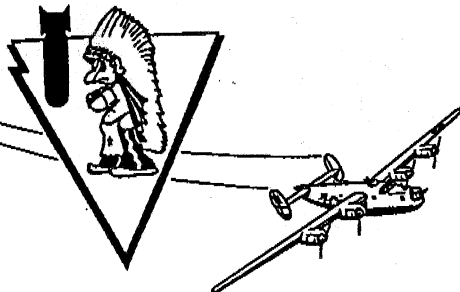
This mission will be briefed on Saturday morning at the reunion by the man who briefed the mission 52 years ago - our Intelligence Officer Byron Thompson.

465th Bomb Group Headquarters personnel. L to R Rear - M/Sergeant Ralph DuBois, Col. Charles Clark, Lt. Col. William Vaughn, Maj. William Bigelow, Mess Sergeant Foster Balser, M/ Sgt. Kenneth Vanmeter, M/Sgt. Blair Hutchison, Sergeant Major Joseph Tucci. Front row not identified.



465th Bomb Group
Squadron Reunions in 1996
780th Sept 13-17, Las Vegas, NV
781st Sept 26-29, Montgomery, AL
782nd Sept 2-4, Reno NV
783rd off year.

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