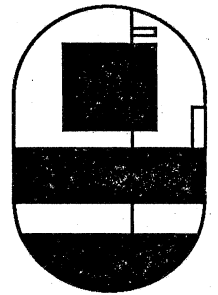




PANTANELLA NEWS



OCTOBER 1988

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NUMBER 14

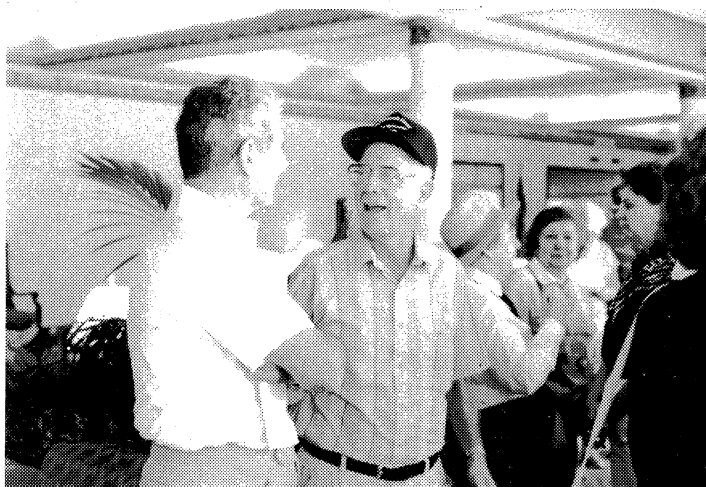
THIRD REUNION HUGE SUCCESS SAN ANTONIO PROVES TO BE GREAT CITY

National news was focused on the hurricane Gilbert, the Presidential race, and the Olympics, but in San Antonio our focus was on the '88 Reunion for the 781st Bomb Squadron and the first reunion for the 465th Bomb Group. And what a time we had. To those attending for the second and third time it was all expected, the outpouring of friendship and camaraderie. But it was a new experience for those attending for the first time and it was such a thrill to see them getting acquainted and emotional after all these years. A real joy to see an old comrade, to share a story or remembrance. As we observed at the second reunion, it took little time to get reacquainted and into the swing of the reunion, but this time it took no time at all to see a familiar face and get involved in a conversation.

So, to begin at the beginning, for me it was on September 9th when I left home in my Airstream loaded with ten boxes of supplies and material for the reunion. I had not traveled by highway in this region of the southwest, so I had decided to drive. After a pleasant journey I arrived in San Antonio on Monday the 12th. I checked the layout of the hotel, etc. and Agnes and I had a relaxing dinner on the River Walk.

Tuesday morning as I was checking with the front desk I saw the first 781st man - it was Paul Durckel (Center photo, left). I recognized him instantly, the first time since I had seen him since March 1945. Paul was navigator on the McDaniel crew and later lead navigator. It was in this position that on March 22, 1945, that he flew his last mission. It was Vienna and he was the last man out of the lead plane and he served the rest of the war as a POW.

Later in the day many more arrived. There were many small gatherings in the lobby and for these men and their ladies the reunion was under way. I covered plans with the hotel in the morning and in the afternoon I met Gale Graham, group I & E officer, who drove me around San Antonio on some errands for the reunion.



By Wednesday morning the pace really picked up. Helpers like Ben Donahue were arranging for the hospitality room. Ben had to sweat out getting the hospitality room open since it was occupied and not scheduled to be available until 1:00. A little pressure on the hotel saved the day for Ben and soon some of the lobby gatherings quickly assembled in the hospitality room. I met Harry and Donna Carl at breakfast and we then met with the hotel to work on our

ing in a day early!

At registration all were pleased to receive a pin with the group tail markings, black background with yellow markings. Richard Swanson had helped arrange for a local lady to sell a popular local item, bandanas, for half the regular price. She sold out, then with the help of her sister, worked most of the night to make more and sold out again very shortly the next day. Ruth Simmons liked them so well that she bought an

meeting rooms and the program.

O. J. Cowart, Jr. arrived in the late morning and began the set up for registration. O. J. and his wife Esther got broken into the registration in a very short time. We always try to open registration before the announced time, but it never seems to be early enough. What a crowd we had with nearly one-half sign-



armful.

That evening many took a stroll to the River Walk area and enjoyed dinner along the river. It was a chance to relax and enjoy some of the local area before joining in on all the reunion activities. And after dinner further stories and drinks flowed in the hospitality room.

On Thursday morning I had a knock on the door at 7 AM and it was O. J. Cowart with a computer run on the previous days registration and cash accounting. O. J. had his computer in his room and knocked out the report instead of getting a full nights sleep. Then it was a full house for breakfast and there was no slowing down the rest of the day. In addition to the 781st we saw members of the 780th, some who had been there since Monday, 782nd members, and some from group headquarters.

A line was waiting for registration before O. J. could get open. Many helpers served their time at registration. It was good to see some wives getting their husbands to help out - like Stan and Alice Winkowski,



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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 it's 191 missions over Southern Europe it dropped thousands of tons of bombs, shot down 23 enemy aircraft (German) and received two Distinguished Unit Citations.



know so well. Thanks to all of you for being so friendly. I look forward to the next reunion and seeing all of you again."

JEAN ALLEN WOOD, "I enjoyed the reunion more than I can say - in any words. I know the whole board had to do a lot of work - I express my appreciation to each of you and your wives." *Jean went on to give us a tip on locating William Briggs of the French crew.*

RICHARD PEASE, "Louise and I have not yet come down from Cloud 9. What a thrill to see all you fellows again. I cannot find appropriate ways to tell you how all of us felt about the tremendous labor of love you have expended to make all this possible. Our sincere thanks to you, Carl, Longacre, Maynard, Donahue, Cowart, and all the others that made it possible."

FREDERICK MAUTE, Just a note to say "Thanks" for a great reunion, although I didn't know a single soul there when we arrive, my wife and I had a wonderful time and we now know several nice couples. My only regret was that there was no one else from the radar group attending. I hope they can locate some for the next time. *Fred added some comments for future reunions and suggested the Williamsburg area.*

MANY THANKS to all of you who sent letters and notes of appreciation to me, and the officers and directors for our work in organizing the reunion.

COMMENT - To all of the officers, directors, volunteer helpers, speakers, program participants, and members that went out of their way to help, these are some of the thanks of appreciation for our memorable reunion. As I have said before, from the very start, we planned something more than just another reunion. We had the time to visit, renew acquaintances, tell a few stories, yet had time for a program to bring back some memories of Pantanella and most important, to remember those that are no longer with us. I believe we accomplished what we planned. We can all be proud of our squadron and group, and the unity we have.

FOLDED WINGS

NORMAN B. SMITH, Sept. 7, 1981

JAMES K. JORDAN, 1960

JOHN J. LETOURNEAU, Oct. 25, 1978

EVERETT A. PASSALY, June 6, 1988

Most of the families of these men were only recently located and as a result we learned of their deaths.

Our thoughts and prayers for our fallen comrades and their families.

SICK CALL - Several others had to cancel due to illness. Charles McKenna had left a phone message for me when I arrived at the hotel cancelling due to illness. After return-

ing home I called Charles to find out he had a collapsed lung, but was recovering nicely. I'm sure he is out on the golf course by now hitting a few balls.

SETH HAWKINS notified Harry Carl that he had a heart attack on the way to the reunion, but is recovering nicely and is planning on the next reunion already.

NEW MEMBERS - We're verifying some new addresses before publishing them. They're still out there men! Keep notes coming in on tips on any not located.

SNOW BIRDS - Please let me know if you go south for the winter. Our bulk mailing does not get forwarded. I know some of you have permanent winter homes, but I do not have the dates you leave. So, all let me know what your dates are while you are away and I will keep them for the future. Those of you who haven't given me a winter address, if you have one, please do so.

THE UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE IS FASCINATED by the success of the 781st in locating our lost comrades. We have located one of the families of the three men the post office has been searching for for three years! Full story in next newsletter. B-24 RESTORATION - I am very surprised and happy to see the response to this project. I am amazed at the number of donations being sent in. Once again the 781st and the 465th has come through. I will give a full report on the progress of the restoration in the January newsletter. If you are interested in making a donation through the squadron make the check out to the Collings Foundation and mail to our treasurer, O. J. Cowart. Any amount, \$5 or consider a share for \$24. REUNION '90 - No site has been selected as yet. The board of directors are working on it and we may have a decision for the January news. The results of the questionnaire showed a heavy interest in the eastern section of the U. S.

SECOND PANTANELLA TOUR - has been announced by William Bruce of the 782nd Bomb Squadron. The departure date is set for May 5, 1989, and the tour will be approximately two weeks. On the tour last year three of our members, O. J. Cowart, Jr., Walter Clausen and Frank Wassenaar, and their wives, participated. Any squadron or group members, or their friends are invited. Reports from those on the tour last year were very favorable. For further information contact:

William Bruce
1683 Eggert Road
Buffalo, NY 14226
(717) 834-8144

ADDRESS CORRECTIONS -

Paul Hosier, HCO-3-8443-C
Palmer, AK 99645
John Zartman
18007 129th Dr
Sun City, AZ 85375



HISTORY BOOK

As those of you that attended the reunion know we are going to have one of the best history books ever published. A mock up book was available in the hospitality room and was of great interest to everyone. On the questionnaire during the reunion only one noted that he did not intend to order one. Orders began to be placed starting on Friday, and already over 100 orders are in. The price is \$35 per copy. If you have seen the mock up and are familiar with the cost of a book like this you will know that this is nearly half of the normal price.

This book will be a detailed day by day chronology of squadron activities. We have pictures of every air crew except R. C. Jones and pictures of most of the ground support units, plus many, many other photos of squadron activities, missions and men.

It will be a hard cover 8 1/2 X 11 book of at least 160 glossy finished pages to give the best photo reproduction. It will be published by Taylor Publishing Company, a national organization with lots of experience in printing military books and coffee table type publications. Checks should be made out to the 781st Bomb Squadron Association and mailed to O. J. Cowart, Jr., treasurer. We must have your order by December 15, 1988. The book will go to press in December and will be mailed out approximately February 1989. Do it today so that you and your family will have this lasting record of your war service. Some have ordered books for each of their children, etc. This book is available to anyone, not just association members. Costs for second printings will be prohibitive - this will be the only printing.

As you all know Harry Carl has been working on this book for the last two or three years and it is only through his dedication to the squadron, and men he served with, that we will have this lasting detailed account on the 781st Bomb Squadron. His computer and photography work has made the low price possible.

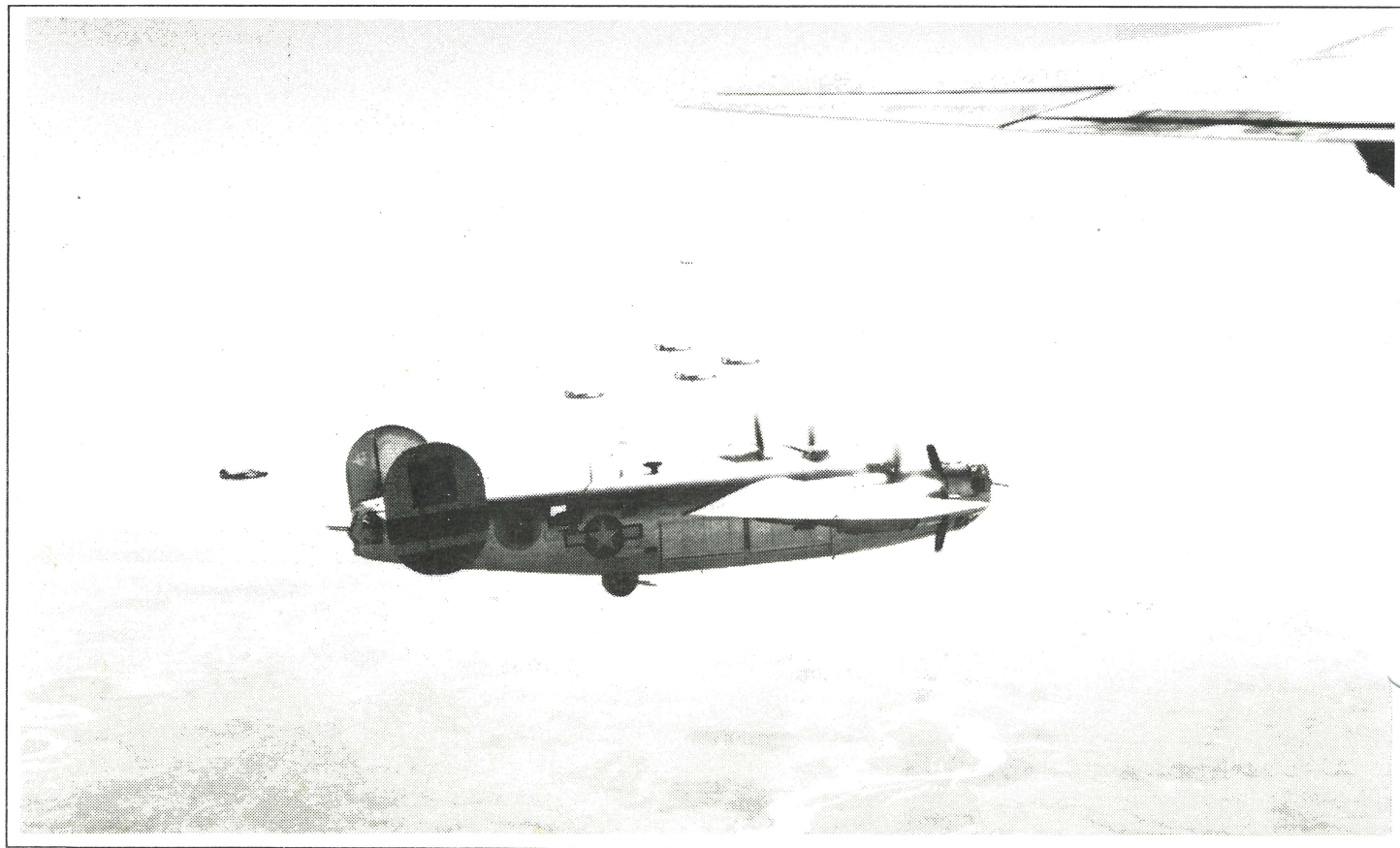
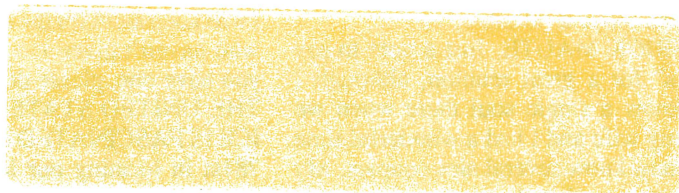
NEW TREASURER - O. J. Cowart, Jr. was elected treasurer at our reunion. O. J. will be handling all the squadron funds and keeping the financial records. Contributions, history book purchases, etc., all should be made out to the 781st Bomb Squadron Association and mailed to O. J. Cowart, PO Box 2131, Houston, TX 77001.

NEXT NEWSLETTER will be out in January - Have a Happy and Healthy Holidays Season and a Great 1989!!!

781st BOMB SQUADRON ASSOC
2 Mt. Vernon Lane, Atherton, CA 94025



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CAPRI - 12 Dec 1944. L to R, Jim Althoff
Arnold Schutzman, Gaythor Cass, Curt Reed,
Richard Crutcher. All are Crutcher's crew
except myself. All have been located, and
going to the reunion except Schutzman.

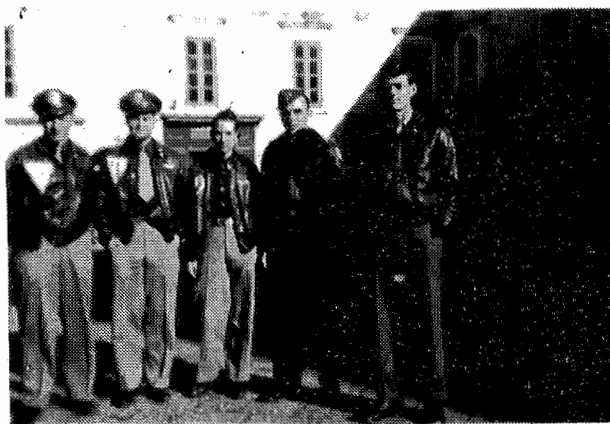
REUNION PROGRAM - In case you are wondering
about the football game, the Air Force
decided to play out of town that week-end.
We'll have a tour instead, and lots of
other plans.

WIVES - I keep getting asked if wives are
welcome, and, if there is a program for them.
Yes, they are not only welcome, but expected to be a part of all the functions.
Outside of a short business session, all programs are designed to be interesting
to the ladies as well. And, we may ask a few of you ladies to help at regist-
ration. Dolly Snyder will head up the working ladies. And we may have a fashion
show.

COMING UP IN NEXT ISSUE - A list of all those planning to attend the reunion,
Larry Tiehen's story about his six weeks evading the Germans, and much more.

VACATION - After this mailing, and an IRS audit, I'm leaving the country.
Going to Berlin, and then wander along the northern part of Europe, and end up
at Omaha Beach. Then, back to Frankfurt and home. (May 14 to June 5). Your
reservations will be processed while I'm away, so keep them coming. The next
newsletter should be out about mid-July. The last one before the historic
reunion of the Fighting 781st.

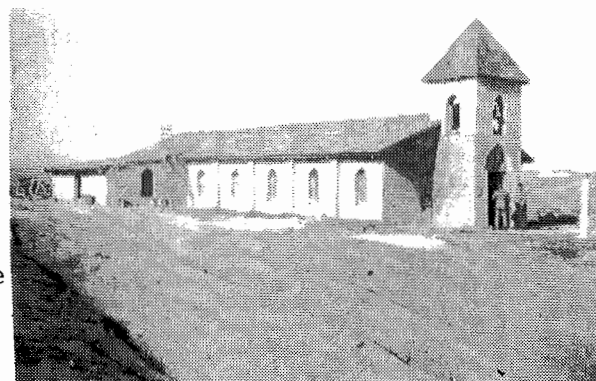
CLOSING REPORT - In a recent letter a new member wrote, "It looks like you got
the troops excited." I don't know what I or the directors could do to cause all
the excitement. It's just the old gang doing what was done at Pantanella -
cooperating to get a job done. In such a short time we have had a great success
in finding old buddies, the reunion plans finalized, and the history book under-
way. It still astonishes me to see the response. And what is satisfying to know
is that we have a team to complete our purpose; Marcel doing a terrific job in
East, and invaluable work on the reunion, Jack Cowart's computer keeping the
rosters in order, Harry Carl assembling the history, and all the directors
working along with those terrific state chairman rounding up the members. And
many of you individuals helping out on membership. Your pride in the 781st is
justified. Arrivederci



Jim Althoff

On the right is a photo of the chapel at
Pantanella, April 1945. I am in contact
with an organization that is searching
for the bell. It is believed to be in the
United States, brought here by some Air
Force personell. I will update the
report as I get the information.

Grow old along with me!
The best is yet to be
The last of life, for which the first was made
Our times are in his hand.
Rabbi Ben Ezra, Stanza 1
Robert Browning



REUNION AND RESERVATION INFORMATION

DATES - 11 to 15 September 1986

PLACE - Sheraton Inn, I-25 and North Academy Boulevard, Colorado Springs, CO 80918. The Inn is located one mile from the Air Force Academy's south gate and ten miles north of Colorado Springs on Highway I-25. If you drive, you will find an abundance of free, safe parking. Large empty lot next door for motor homes but no hook-ups. If you fly to Denver you might want to rent a car; it's just an hour's drive. If you fly to Colorado Springs there is free transportation from the airport to the Inn. The Inn has just completed a remodeling and addition, and the rooms are in excellent condition. It offers a spectacular, panoramic view of the Rockies including a view of Pikes Peak. There are many other attractions in case you want to come early or stay over, as the weather is beautiful at that time of the year.

COSTS The Sheraton Inn is giving us special rates which are approximately 25% off their normal rates. Singles are \$45, and doubles are \$55 per day. The rates are guaranteed for three days before and three days after if you want an extended stay. And you get a full breakfast FREE! Meal prices are reasonable in general, both at the Inn and in the area. Our group meals will be about \$11 per person for Thursday and Sunday and the banquet will be \$18. No group lunches so you can select whatever you want for lunches. The registration fee of approximately \$25 covers the hospitality room, supplies, name tags, flowers, equipment rental and all incidentals need for the reunion including the cost of buses for the Academy tour. The above quoted meal prices include the 20% for tax and tip.

PROGRAM - A change due to the fact the Air Force changed the football schedule so that the Saturday game will not be at the Academy. Therefore, the following is our schedule;

Thursday - Registration, hospitality room, with evening cocktail party and buffet at the Inn, followed by a short program.

Friday - Tour of the Academy. Lunch at the Academy or in Colorado Springs. Afternoon tour of the Valley of the Gods and return to hotel by Four o'clock. Hospitality room and open evening for crew or section reunions.

Saturday - Morning business session followed by programs and hanger flying the rest of the day. Lunch break for lunch at the hotel. Program to include a typical mission briefing, a professionally done slide presentation of the days at Pantanella, WWII combat movies, exchange photos and much, much more. Cocktails and banquet at the new, beautiful Cheyenne Mountain Inn.

Sunday - Academy Sunday Services are at 9:00 o'clock and 11:00 o'clock for Catholic and Protestant. Protestant in the main chapel and Catholic on the lower level. After that, many places, including the hotel, offer Sunday Brunches. Afternoon program at the hotel at 2:00 o'clock. Evening cocktails and going away dinner at the NCO club at the Academy. Monday morning is breakfast and check out.

DRESS - Daytime; Casual. Evening: Men, coat and tie; ladies, cocktail dress. No formal attire.

RESERVATIONS - Fill out enclosed forms and send one to the hotel with your check and the other to me, or you can send both to me and I will forward.

Downtown Map



HOW TO GET TO THE MENDER HOTEL

I-10 FROM EL PASO - After passing first interchange on outskirts of city move to left lane. Take exit that reads "Downtown, Left Lane." Continue 1 long block to Houston St. (hospital buildings on right). Turn left and continue through business section to Alamo street, staying in right lane. Cross Alamo street, and continue 1 block to Bonham street. Turn right and continue 1 block to Menger Motor Inn (fountain on right).

I-35 FROM DALLAS/AUSTIN - When nearing downtown take "Laredo/Corpus Christi exit and proceed to Commerce Street exit. At Commerce turn right, moving to right lane. Proceed about 3 blocks to Alamo street (Dillards Dept. store on right corner). Turn right and go 1 block (at end of Dillard's) to Blum street. Pass in front of Menger, turn right and enter Menger Motor Inn.

I-10 FROM HOUSTON - When nearing downtown move to right lane. Turn right where I-10 merges with I-37 and State 281. Proceed to Commerce street exit. Turn left under the overpass and move to right lane. Proceed about 3 blocks to Alamo street (Dillard's Dept. Store on right corner). Turn right and go 1 block (at end of Dillards building) to Blum street. Pass in front of Menger, turn right and enter Menger Motor Inn.

ABOUT THE WEATHER - In September the weather in San Antonio is hot with the temperature ranging from 90 to 100. Visitors should do their sightseeing before 2 p.m. or early in the evening. A walk along the river, 20 feet below street level, is not only much cooler than one along the streets, but is scenic and can be done leisurely. There are exit/entrance stairs from every street that crosses the river. Visitors susceptible to sunburn should wear head coverings and long sleeve shirts or blouses.

AIRPORT TRANSPORTATION - Limousine service runs every half hour and costs \$6 per person (about a 45 minute ride due to stops at other hotels). Cab is about \$15 (total for cab for one or more persons) and takes 15 minutes.

GETTING AROUND - An ideal way to travel in downtown San Antonio is by streetcar, authentic motorized reproductions of trolleys of more than 50 years ago. There are five different routes that travel the downtown and near downtown areas. The fare is 10 cents and the stops are at almost every street corner.

The route probably most used by visitors is the Alamo Plaza/El Mercado line, boarded southbound on Alamo Plaza, across the street from the Menger. The streetcar will circle Fiesta Plaza and make a long stop at El Mercado*. From there to City Hall and San Fernando Cathedral, to St. Paul's Square and back to Alamo Plaza.

*The El Mercado is patterned after the colorful market places of Mexico. A paradise for the astute shopper. Everything from pottery and jewelry to clothing. Several cafes and boutiques line the walkways.

CAMPGROUND INFORMATION - Mission RV Park is now Yogi Bears Jellystone Park, 2617 Roosevelt Ave., San Antonio, TX 78214. Phone 1-800-558-2954 or 512 532-8310. A group rate has been negotiated by Wanda Dannelley (782nd BS). If you identify with the 465th Bomb Group, or your squadron, the rate will be \$12 per day instead of \$16. You should reserve early. They will put all the 465th in one common area in the park. They suggest not to follow their directions to find the park as Interstate 35 has some major work in the area. The easiest way is to drive to the southern leg of Interstate Loop 410 until the junction with US 281 has been reached. This is Roosevelt Avenue. Turn north on US 281 and drive to Southcross Blvd. The park then is located on the NW corner of junction US 281 and Southcross Blvd. (Next to an Airstream Travel Trailer Sales).

A SHORT WALK FROM THE MENDER

ALAMO, the crucible of Texas liberty, is across the street from the Menger. A visitor can spend a great amount of time in the building so it is a good idea to get a capsulized bit of information about the shrine beforehand. Admission is free.

RIVERCENTER - Take the walkway between the Menger and Dillards and in a few minutes you will emerge on one of the most scenic shopping malls in the nation. The river level (three levels in all) is the most unique. If you want to take a peaceful walk along the river to the Rivercenter, walk across Alamo Plaza and take the stairs leading through the lobby of the Hyatt-Regency and to the river. Directions are posted.

HERTZBERG CIRCUS COLLECTION - A collection of circus memorabilia, including a Tom Thumb collection and a miniature circus complete with big top tents. Located at 210 Market street, two blocks down the hill from Alamo street.

IF YOU'RE DRIVING OR BUS RIDING

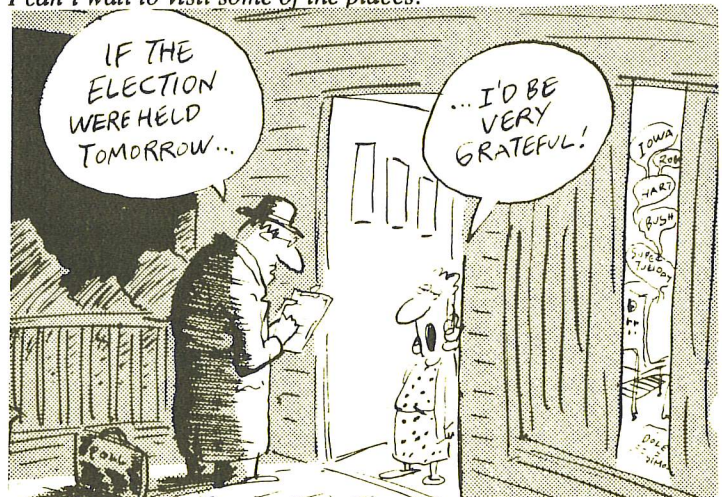
SEA WORLD, world's largest marine park, is 16 miles west of San Antonio. Admission is \$15.95, plus tax., for those 55 and older, and \$18.95, plus tax, for the younger folks. Direct buses leave regularly from Sea World Center on Alamo Plaza, across from the Menger. Fare is \$1.90 and the ride takes about 45 minutes. Plan to spend a full day and prepare to walk a lot.

BUCKHORN HALL OF HORNS, is located on the grounds of the Lone Star Brewery, 600 Lone Star street. Garden-like grounds, large display of Texas wildlife as well as taxidermy of animals and marine life from all over the world. Free Beer! Admission is \$1.25.

FT. SAM HOUSTON - Entrance on Grayson street and New Braunfels avenue. It is the oldest military post west of the Mississippi. First military flight took off and landed on parade grounds. Original fort, known as The Quadrangle, is located on Grayson street, and deer and peacock roam at will on the parade grounds.

EATING PLACES - Alamo street is literally lined with eating places, mostly of the fast food variety. The San Antonio River Walk has many outdoor cafes and restaurants. Prices vary from moderate to expensive, but most establishments have menus posted along the walk. For Mexican cuisine the Casa Rio on the river is popular with the locals as is Mi Tierra in El Mercado. German food can be had at Schilko's Delicatessen, 424 E. Commerce street, a block from Alamo Plaza.

A special thanks to Gale Graham for furnishing this information. I can't wait to visit some of the places.



BRING THIS PAGE WITH YOU TO THE REUNION

Called on
8/13/88