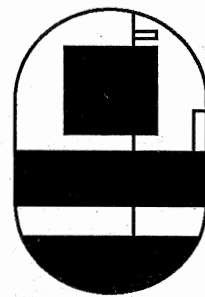




PANTANELLA NEWS



OCTOBER 1990

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NUMBER 22

REUNION '90 A GALA AFFAIR

On Sunday morning when the official part of the reunion was over a number commented, "How can you beat this one?" That seemed to sum up the feeling following a very full and successful reunion. It was two years since our last reunion and everyone seemed to have so much to catch up on. The warmth and camaraderie shown by everyone could not be beat.

From Kay (Byron) Thompson's letter after the reunion, "Undoubtedly, the reunion was the best we have ever had, and I am sure everyone else would agree with the Carls, the Elletts, and the Thompsons in this. Everything was so well planned, the accommodations were splendid and everyone was thrilled to

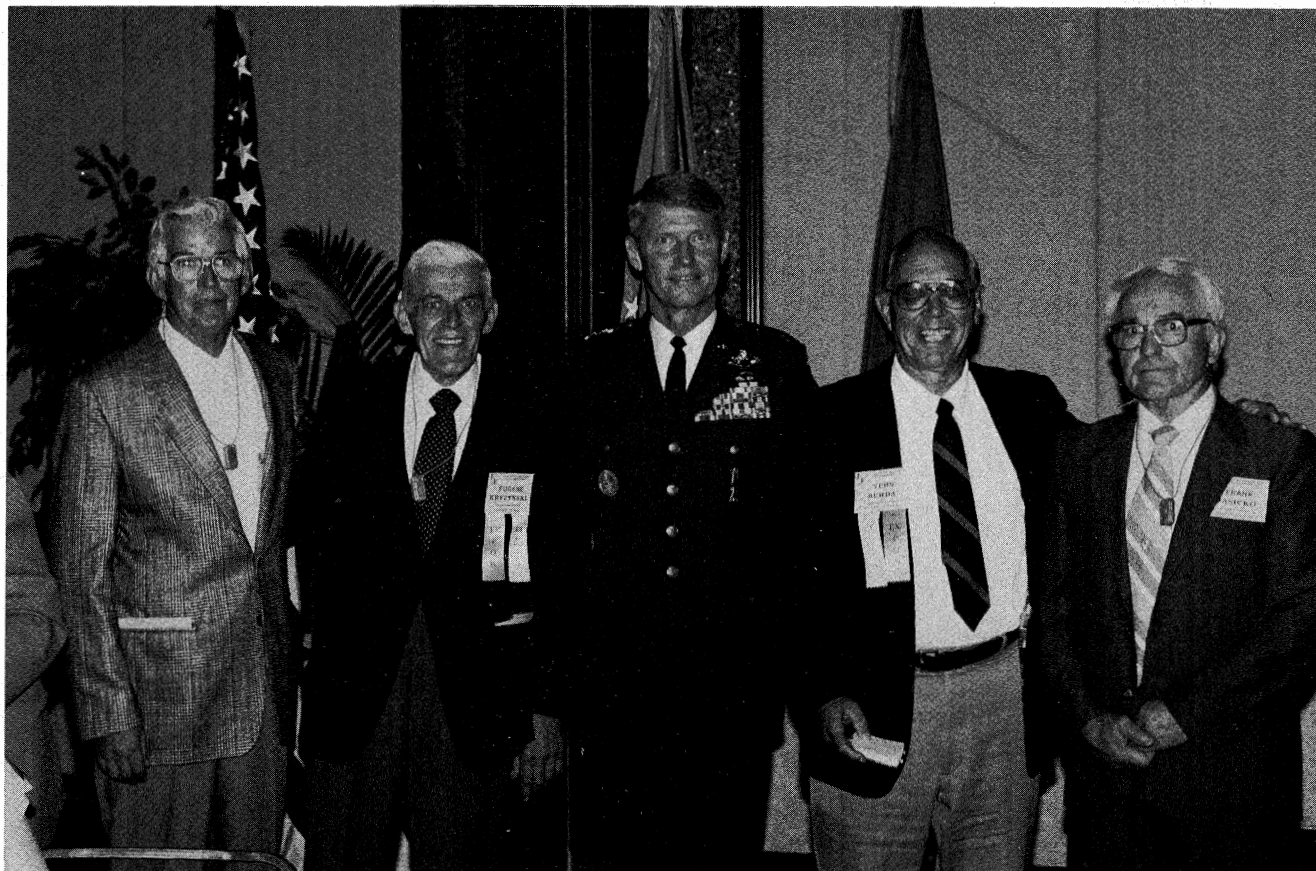
see the restored B-24. Our tour of Boston City was splendid on Sunday, and we saw so many historical spots that we had only read about."

I will report on the reunion as I saw it happen. I arrived on Monday to get a days rest from my three weeks of travel during which I attended family reunions in the Midwest and visited friends along the way. I checked with the hotel regarding squadron reservations and found a number had canceled and I became a bit dubious as to how the reunion would

turn out. I ended up spending the rest of the day with the hotel going over the facilities. Already checked in was Vernon Burda and family, and Paul Durckel, and Harry Carl checked in later in the day.

Tuesday morning Ken Sutton showed up at eight o'clock to take me to Hanscom to show me around and double check our plans there for Friday. We called on six or seven different departments to see that all was set. Ken did a great job with the planning for our day at Hanscom. After a short tour of the local area it was back to the hotel. Upon arrival I was greeted by Frank Quagan, who delivered the squadron banner, and the reunion stationery and envelopes.

Below L to R - Harold Farrar, Eugene Krzyzynski, Lt. Gen. Gordon Fornell, Vern Burda and Frank Jasicko after receiving their long lost dogtags.



Frank designed both items and had them made.

Then, checking with the hotel staff I discovered there had been a number of reservations with the hotel that I did not have. And a number of others were showing up that had no reservations. By then the sun had come out to make it a beautiful day, that with the bright new beautiful hotel, and more showing up I knew then it was going to be a good reunion.

Wednesday began with serious plan-

On the right, top, is Esther and O. J. Cowart working the registration. Center is registration in progress and bottom is Donna Carl arranging the name tags.

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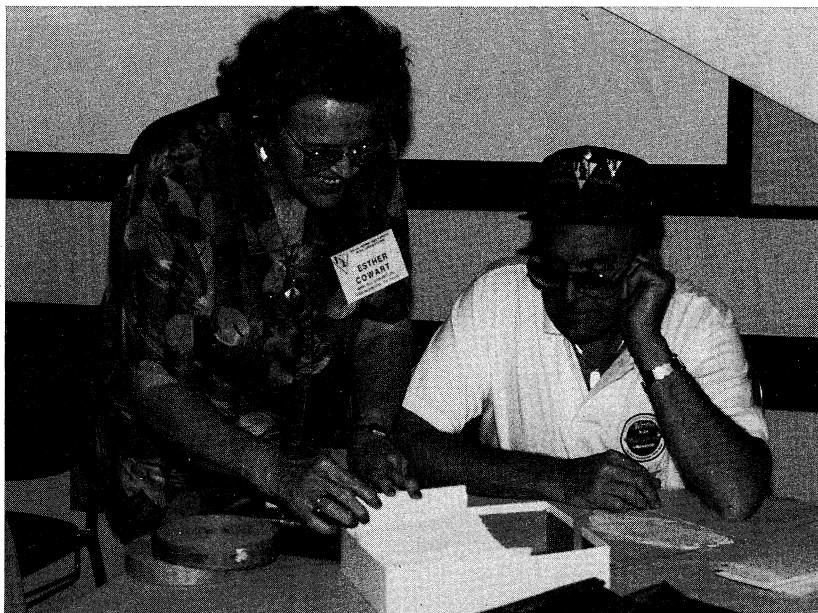
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781st BOMB SQUADRON

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.



ning for registration, hospitality room, and trophy room. O. J. Cowart had his hands full with registration plans which included tours, PX sales, table reservations, donations and a lot of questions. He was not quite ready when the doors opened and registration began. Harry Carl got the trophy room open and Ben Donahue got his liquor supply delivered by Ken Sutton, and hospitality was able to open. From then on Reunion 90 was in full swing.

At the end of the registration tables the men received a squadron tie pin and a 19 x 22 inch litho from Tom Arthur of one of his paintings. On the back is a record of all the missions the squadron flew. Also a full size free litho in color of the squadron insignia from Ben Donahue. Then there were many brochures and maps of the area arranged for by Frank Guagan.

Across the hall was another similar room, the trophy room. This was our first attempt at this and it was a success. Many photo albums got a lot of attention, some old uniforms, memorabilia, Air Force books, etc. Always someone enjoying a visit with a friend and a look at photos of years gone by.

By 5 o'clock the registration door closed with over one third registered. The hospitality closed for dinner hour and reopened later to find many old friends arriving for some visiting.

I don't know what time hospitality closed Wednesday, but I know Thursday morning came too soon. It was the final day of registration with the hospitality and trophy room open all day. And I might add the spacious lobby was also busy all day with new arrivals.

All rooms closed around 4:30 so that all could be ready for the complimentary cocktail party given by the hotel. Following cocktails we entered the beautiful banquet room for dinner.

Loren Foote gave the invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance, then a delicious meal was served. Following dinner there were introductions. Then our guests for the evening, Bob and Caroline Collings, gave a wonderful talk on "All American." A very interesting story on the great airplane we flew at Pantanella. It is finally getting recognition, being chosen the Grand Champion at the Sun & Fun Airshow in Florida, and also at the largest airshow anywhere, Oshkosh. Our sincere thanks to the vision of Bob and Caroline Collings. We shall always

Top two photos are at registration where friends were meeting. Lower photo is Bob and Caroline Collings.



be grateful for their efforts in completing the B-24 in such beautiful condition.

Following this Ken Sutton was called upon and he went over the plans for Friday at Hanscom Air Force Base.

Then Ken called on John Zadrozny, who presented to me, on behalf of the squadron, a beautiful gold ring. It was designed like the Air Force Association's insignia of the star and wings and a diamond in the center of the star. Also engraved are the words "President 781st Bomb Sqdn." I shall proudly wear this ring and it will always remind me of the friendship and camaraderie of the greatest group of men and ladies I have ever known. I can't tell you how grateful I am to receive such a beautiful remembrance. The surprise left me with few words to say at the time.

The program came to a close and I joined the many who wanted to visit some more in hospitality room before retiring for the evening.

Friday morning's activities began early. It was around 7:30 when Ken Sutton met several "volunteers" to go with him to Hanscom to remove some planes from the hanger where we would have our luncheon and where the Post Office would be set up. Right after this began the departure of carloads of men and their ladies to Hanscom, some seven miles away. It continued on over the next two hours until all arrived there.

When I arrived, All American was being towed in front of the assigned hanger. It had arrived on Tuesday, however, one engine needed repair and was being worked on. It was positioned, as scheduled, in front of the hanger and the crew continued to repair the engine. This did not prevent boarding All American by anyone that wanted to. A small line developed to get aboard, but soon it was just casual getting on and off, giving all plenty of time to relive some of the times they spent flying or repairing similar planes. Wives and children accompanied the men as many of the men and some of their family members climbed in their turrets or other positions and many experiences were told to their family members and friends.

The weather was not the best for flying. We had a planned flyover of a missing man formation by Reese Dill and the New England Escadrille. I was given a hand held radio to make contact so that the formation would flyover at the correct time. With my first contact with the tower at 10:00 it was 750 foot ceiling and broken clouds - no flyover.

As 10:30 approached, the Air Force Band of New England's "Colonial Brass" brass quintet began playing and all were asked to assemble under and in front of the wing of All American for our memorial service. Dr. F. D. Bonvillian was

Top photo - receiving my beautiful ring, next is Bob Collings and Ray Trautman with John (in chair) and Charlotte Zartman. Bottom photo shows the early line to get aboard "All American."



introduced and took charge of the service, being assisted by Rev. Loren Foote. It was time to meditate and think about those who are no longer with us. Loren read the prayer written by James Downs for the Dayton Reunion. There were other prayers, songs, and beautiful words by Dr. Bonvillian. The opening paragraph of his homily entitled Bridges, "We are assembled here today in the very cradle of our nation. We are almost within the shadow of the Old North Church. If we listen attentively, we might hear the tea crates being wrestled into Boston Harbor or the echo of Paul Revere's horse as it thunders across Lexington Bridge. We can hear the first musket shots of the minutemen ring out at Concord's North Bridge. We are here at the genesis of our most treasured traditions that are the product of memory and inspiration. They are the bridges to our past as well as the bridges to our future."

During the service I was able to contact the flight for the fly-over and the weather changed enough to allow the flight. Only two planes were able to make it, a T-6 and a BT-13. They flew over just as taps were playing to end another meaningful service.

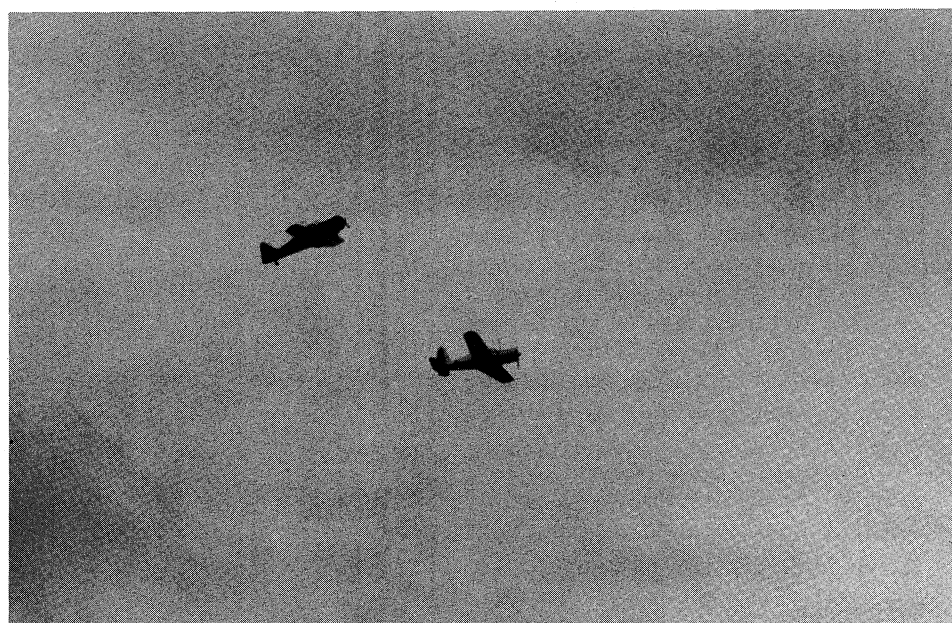
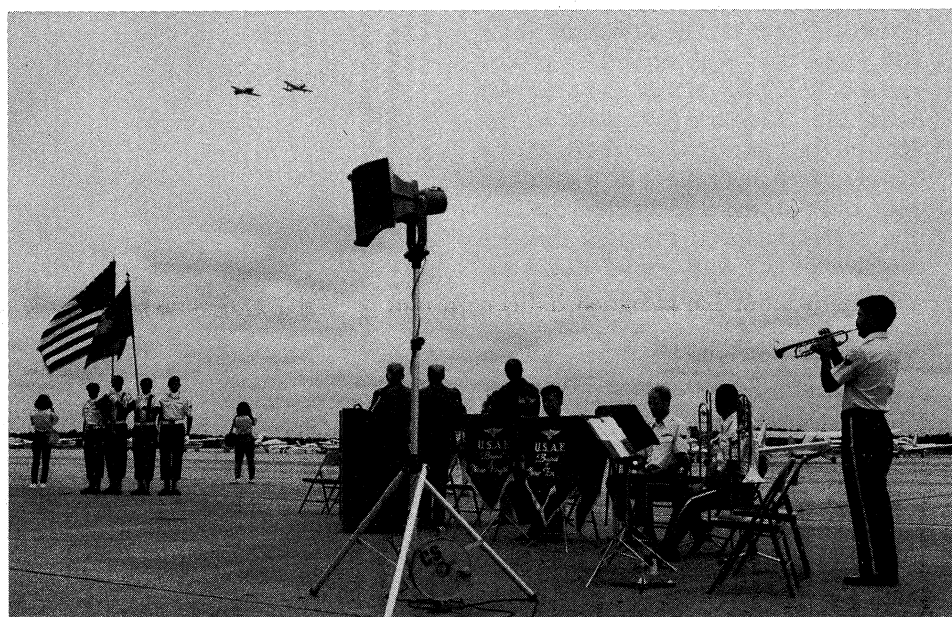
Then it was time for the group photo. The usual lining up gave many a chance to meet an old comrade in case he hadn't up to this time. Flags were handed out during the service so the video man got a chance to get some good copy when all waved the flags.

Following group photos of the men and the ladies the photographer took individual crew and section photos. And many, many individual "photographers" also took their own photos.

Many returned to the hanger to buy stamps and to mail the special reunion letters to friends and to have our special cancellation stamp affixed to an envelope for their scrap book. Yes, we had our own Post Office and letters were cancelled at the 781st Bomb Squadron Station right there in the hanger!

All during the morning there was coffee and cold drinks available, and after the photo session, the deli lunch was available.

One disappointment was that the engine repair prevented All American from flying. It didn't seem to be too important to most, since there was so much to do and see that the day went by quickly. I was offered a flight in the T-6 and O. J. Cowart got in the co-pilot's seat of a C-45, and we took off in a two plane formation. Out of the area I broke away and did my first loop and rolls in some years. A great thrill to fly the T-6 again. We rejoined formation for a low pass



Top photo - Color Guard, center bugler plays taps as missing man formation approaches, and bottom the missing plane leaves formation

by the All American and then it was back on the ground and on to the hotel for a scheduled board meeting.

At the board meeting Ken Sutton was elected to the board of directors. Charles McKenna was elected director emeritus. All others were reelected.

For most it was to the hospitality room and trophy room for the afternoon. Then individual dinner parties until the rooms opened up again for some late visits. Some found the New England lobster quite a treat. Restaurants had specials of two lobster for \$12.95!

Saturday morning saw some early risers and the breakfast area was full of eager beavers that wanted to get to the meeting at 9 on time. It was planned to have a full morning program and have the afternoon off for final hospitality room visiting.

We did get started about 9:10. A variety of items on the program. Russ Ball, from the 780th Squadron talked and showed slides of McCook Army Air Base. Ben Donahue gave some statistics and the history on the B-24. Pierre Kennedy went over the B-24's assigned to us at Pantanella and asked for further information on them so that we can develop the serial number, names and final disposition of our planes.

And, an interesting part of the program was the aircraft identification put on by Harry Carl. Slides of enemy aircraft were shown at a fraction of a second for us to identify. Ben Donahue seemed to lead in the number that could be identified. We hope to see it again. This was just another part of the program to help bring back WWII memories.

Then Byron Thompson took charge of our mock briefing, ably assisted by Walter Sutton, Hank Willett and F. D. Bonvillian. The target selected was the target 46 years ago on this date - the Airdrome at Prostějov, Czechoslovakia. Byron did his usual excellent job on the briefing.

Before the meeting was over I got upstaged by Frank Wassenaar, who did a roast on me. My friend, Jim Adams, who was a guest at the reunion, had written about some of my secret life during the past 35 years that we have been close friends. Some of the things I would just as soon remain secret!

A questionnaire was passed out early in the meeting inquiring when



Top, F. D. Bonvillian during his homily, then a song, and lower, during flag ceremony

and where the next reunion should be held. At the end of the meeting the vote was tallied by some of our ladies and it was clear that in two years we should go to Omaha. If you recall, Omaha was number three at our first reunion. The other two cities were Dayton and San Antonio, so the early interest in Omaha was still there.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:30 and it was lunch and hospitality for most. For the directors it was a short board meeting and then off to join our friends.

The evening cocktail party started at 5:30. Everyone looked so well dressed - especially the ladies. The ladies were presented with a yellow carnation; yellow is always chosen because it is our squadron color.

Not known to most, prior to this time, was the expected arrival of Lt. Gen. Gordon Fornell. He and his wife Bobbie arrived just after 6 to join us at the cocktail party. Just prior to the reunion we had received word that Gen. Fornell would be with us if he could get back on time from his trip to SAC Headquarters in Omaha. Ken Sutton followed up on our invitation and I'm sure it was his repeated visits to Gen. Fornell's aids, and giving them our history, that had a great influence on the decision for Gen. Fornell to attend.

Everyone was having such a good time that it had to be announced to enter the banquet room at 6:30. With table reservations no one had to worry about hurrying in to get a table.

After all were assembled, F. D. Bonvillian gave the prayer and Pledge of Allegiance. When everyone was seated, I called on Ernie Van Asperen to say a few words about his Round Hill Wine, which he furnished at no cost to us for the occasion. Instead, he told of our meeting at Pantanella 46 years ago, flying together, and as a result we became partners in business 44 years ago. We still are friends and business associates.

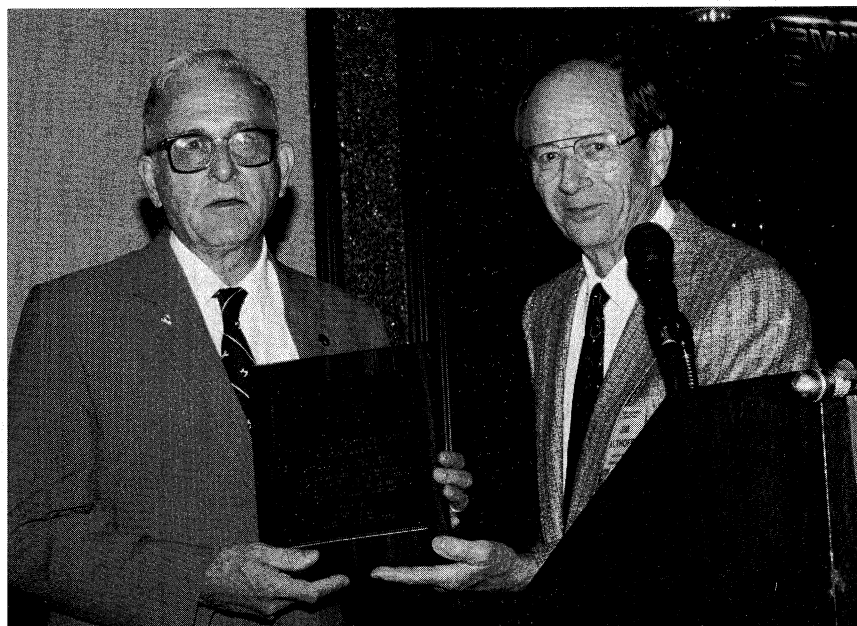
After the banquet I had the honor to present a plaque to Pierre J. J. Kennedy for his dedication to the association. He served as founding director for one year, located over 20 of our members, and obtained all the Missing Air Crew Reports from the Archives. These reports are very helpful in getting aircraft numbers, getting WWII addresses and recently locating the family of Cassel, McHenry Hamilton, etc.

Next it was a plaque for a very popular man, Ben "Kitty Kitty" Donahue. Well known as our Secretary from the beginning and the man in charge of the hospitality room. Ben was surprised and grateful for the recognition.

Ben remained at the podium and called up and introduced the elected Directors and Officers of the Association. While they remained he also asked Donna Carl to join Harry. Ben then

(continued on page 10)

Top photo shows audience for the Saturday morning program. Then Arrival of Gen. Fornell with Ken Sutton, and Pierre Kennedy receiving a plaque.



The men were separated into two groups for the photo on the right. It was done this way so that the photo would not be too condensed - you should be able to recognize individuals. It took awhile to get assembled. Everyone was having such a grand time visiting with each other and enjoying remembering similar scenes with a runway, airplanes flying, the hanger and the B-24 many years ago. This will certainly be a time for those present to remember.

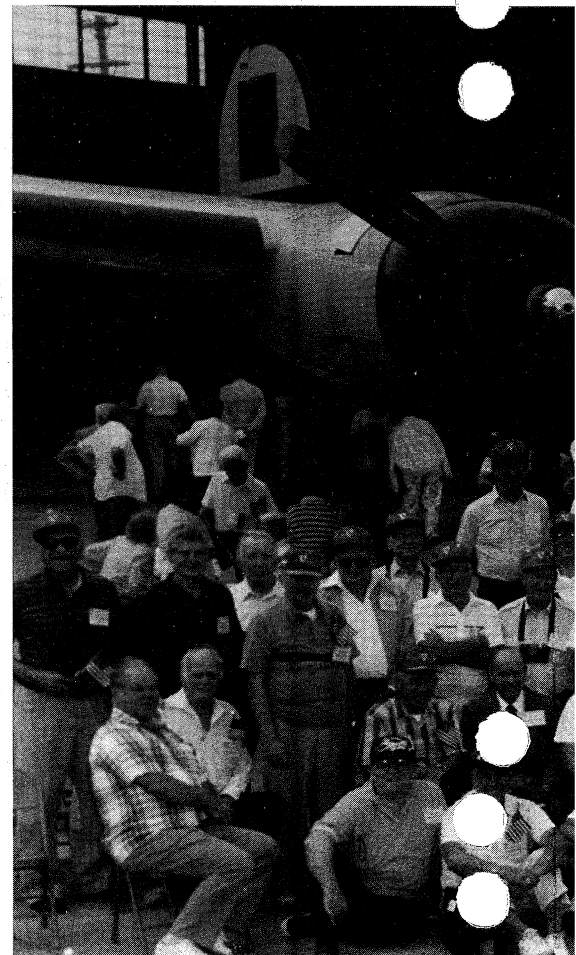
Color copies of the two photos are available from **RICHERS PHOTO SERVICE, 11 Hazen Avenue, PO Box 429, Hathorne, MA 01937.** Send \$6 to receive the two 8 x 10's. The same price for the ladies photos.

Below is a list of registrants including a few guests and honorary members. See how many names you can put to the faces!

James Adams
James Althoff
Frank P. Ambrose
Bernard Badler
Daniel E. Bailey
Richard C. Baker
David Baker
Russ Ball
Argene Barnett
Harry Barrett
William B. Bartlett, Jr.
Robert L. Bassinette
John B. Baum
Aurelius A. Becnal
Warren Beeson
Vincent A. Beeson
Nicholas C. Belik
F. D. Bonvillain
Arthur Bovett, Jr.
Fred Bradley
Charles Bradley
Paul Brady, Jr.
Paul Brady, Sr.
Vernon Burda
Harold Butterfield
Harry S. Carl, Jr.
Joe Casaderall
Gaythor L. Cass
Julia Cato
Raymond D. Cauble
Edwin J. Chapin
G. Steve Chirigotis
Bernard J. Chubet
Walter Clausen
David B. Coleman
O. J. Cowart, Jr.
R. Leon Crouch
John Crowley
Ricard L. Crutcher
Cornelius Culhane
Carl V. Dahl
Loraine Dalton
Mark Dalton
Dennis A. Daniels, Jr.
Larry Daniels
Eugene C. Deal
Michael J. Deironimi
Melvin L. Derry
Andrew F. Dobek
Ben L. Donahue
Joseph Downs
James F. Downs
Walter W. Dudley
Daniel R. Dugan
Paul N. Durckel

Harry Edwards
William C. Ellett
Robert W. Elliott
John Fandrey
Harold B. Farrar
Charles V. Ferich
Leo A. Fink
dennis B. Flaherty
Loren W. Foote
John T. Fountain
Robert L. Freed
Robert B. Freeman
George Gaines, Jr.
Telio P. Giammarco
Leonard J. Goldstein
Oliver Graham
Clifford M. Grant
Francis Griffen
Wayne N. Grubaugh
Helen Hall
Richard Hall
McHenry Hamilton
George Hausold
Alvin Hellman
Ralph Hendrickson
Owanan Humber
Frank R. Jasicko
William H. Jostworth
Edwin E. Kapusta
Dale L. Keiser
Pierre J.J. Kennedy
Francis Kill
Eugene Krzyzynski
Paul Krzyzynski
George Kurkouski
Peter B. Laughner
John P. Layne
Albert P. LeBlanc
Orren J. Lee
Milton Levinson
Charles G. Little
Walter N. Longacre
Francis Maccani
Ralph E. Maguire
Adrian A. Martin
Eugene G. Martis
Russ T. Maynard
Clayton F. McDaniel
Homer L. Moeller
Albert Nagel
Steve Onysko
Gidno J. Pelleschi
Roland Pharis
Donald B. Postema
Harold F. Quagan

William Rachow
George R. Racz
Morris R. Rapoport
Curtis G. Reed
Kenneth B. Rehn
Harry Reuss
Irving Roberts
Theron R. Robinson
Joseph Rogers
Barney G. Rowe
Barney G. Russell,
Burton Sanders
Nicholas V. Schaps
Herbert Schlossin
Edward Schreiner
Harold Schuster
Harold Seitz
James D. Shaffer
Doddie Shallman
Tom Shanley
Eugene R. Sims
George W. Sinner
Marcel Snyder
George Soroka
Rolan J. Soucy
Bertel E. Stigberg
Barbour Stokes, Jr.
Richard J. Storm
Harold A. Straughan
Walter H. Sutton
Kenneth Sutton, Jr.
Reyer Swan
Byron W. Thompson
Thomas Thomas III
Charles Tittl, Jr.
Ray Trautman
Floyd Trudeau
Ernie Van Asperen
Jack Van Slyke
James E. Waggle
John E. Ward
Frank Wassenaar
Leslie S. Wheeler
Joseph W. Will
Henry L. Willett, Jr.
Thomas L. Thomas
Stanley Winkowski
Jean Allen Wood
William P. Wood
John Wroblewski
Eugene M. Young
John Zadrozny
John C. Zartman
Charles R. Zwerko





presented Harry and Donna with a beautiful Steuben glass bowl engraved "Harry and Donna Carl." The bowl had a wood base with a silver band engraved, "For a Super Job as History Book Editor and Historian." All were pleased to know Harry and Donna received such a nice gift to remember this special evening and the 781st Bomb Squadron. In a thank you note from Harry he notes, "I can't express my feelings about what you guys did for Donna and me at Waltham, and particularly for including her as you did. As I told you, it couldn't have been done better if I had planned it myself. We thank you from the bottom of our hearts."

Our next presentation was not on the program. We had a presentation to be made to three men in the squadron and I had asked Gen. Fornell to make the presentation and he was delighted to do so. Gen. Fornell is Commander of the Electronics Systems Division at Hanscom AFB.

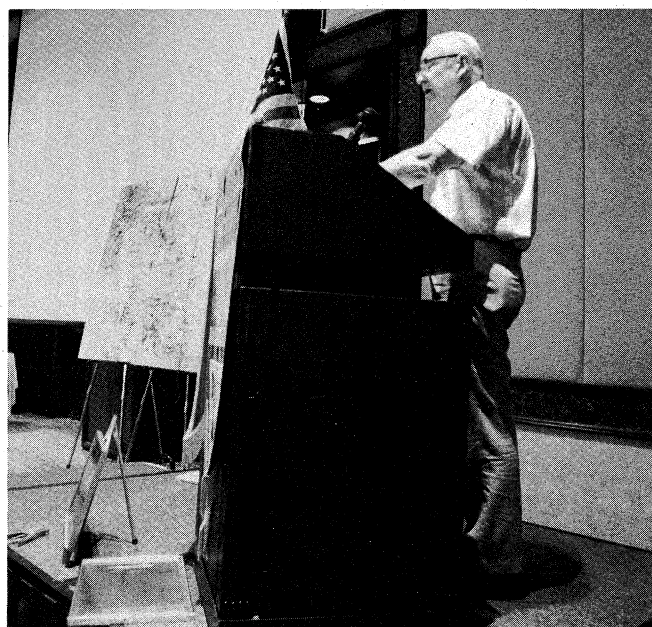
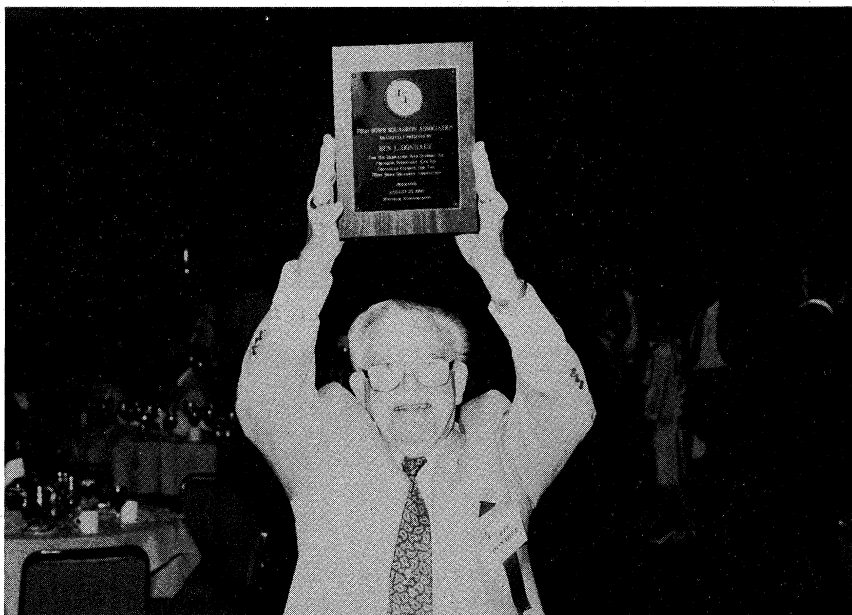
After introducing Gen. Fornell he gave a brief interesting talk, then spoke about the presentation he was about to make. He reviewed the mission in July, 1944 to Weiner Neudorf Engine works near Vienna when a crew got shot down and their dogtags were taken from them. (The full history of the dogtags is explained on page 13) Gen. Fornell stepped down in front of the flags and presented each with his dogtags which had been turned in a year ago to the Military Attache at the U. S. Embassy in Budapest. The men receiving them were from the Dale Tipton crew. They were Harold Farrar, Frank Jasicko and Gene Kryzyzynski. Vern Burda accepted the dogtags for Hullitt Holcomb's widow, who lives in Vern's neighborhood.

The two others that were found were Dale Tipton (deceased) and Eugene Weiss, to whom I will present the dogtags at a later date. It was a very emotional time for the recipients, bringing back memories of the second time they were shot down. This time they were captured by the Ustachi troops and turned over to the German SS. As Bill Jostworth writes, "The Tipton crew's dogtag recovery performance was so emotional that it didn't leave a dry eye at the banquet. Truly a happy ending to a long and sad story. Incredible!"

We were so honored to have Gen. Fornell with us and return the dogtags. His presentation was outstanding. It certainly was an event that will not soon be forgotten by those attending.

Other members of the crew attending, that did not have their dogtags located were Paul Brady and Michael Deironimi.

Ken Sutton then introduced Louis Sideris from the National Park Service. He did an outstanding job talking about "The First Day of the First Battle of the Revolution", which oc-



Top photo - Harry & Donna receiving Steuben bowl, Ben holding his plaque after receiving it earlier, and Byron Thompson during Saturday mock briefing.

curred at nearby Concord. Slides were shown along with his talk.

Then a few closing comments and another wonderful reunion formally ended. There was an informal gathering in the hospitality room. The extra "spirits" were auctioned off and it was time for all to retire.

Sunday morning continued to be a busy time. Some going to church and other assembling for the tours. Agnes and I went to church in Waltham and were joined by a number of others.

After breakfast it was loading up memorabilia, banner, supplies, and records in my motor home and finally departing by noon. It was hard to realize it was all over. I spent a few days on the Cape with friends, then the trek back to California - a round trip of over 7,300 miles.

So, my friends, those were my observations of the reunion. It was a very full reunion. Always something to do. One of the reasons this reunion will stand out is the great hospitality room. In our requests for what you wanted most at the reunions there was always a response that you would like a place to sit down and talk with an old friend, to see other friends as they came and went and possibly have a refreshment. This became a priority in our planning and we had a beautiful room with one side open to a beautiful view. And it was always full, many lingering on for an hour or more at a time.

Then of course the B-24, All American, gave many the opportunity to be aboard for the first time since WWII. We had excellent speakers, a beautiful hotel, great weather, and the camaraderie of all will make this one hard to beat. However, I can tell you that already plans are being made for the next one. More are becoming involved and you can be assured we'll always have a great time!

The directors, officers, Ken Sutton co-chairman, and myself are pleased with your comments on the reunion. We, along with other helpers at the reunion, had a goal to make this a worthwhile reunion, one of friendship and lasting memories - to add some joy to our lives. I believe this reunion accomplished that goal.

For those not attending we have a few program brochures and memorial service programs left. Drop a note if you would like one.

BITS ABOUT ATTENDEES

In addition to our members and honorary members a number of guests attended. From the 780th, **Russ Ball** drove from Minnesota to be with us and talk about McCook Army Air Base. The president of the 782nd, **Bill Bruce** came to enjoy a visit with some old friends. The president of the 464th Bomb Group, **Thomas Thomas III**, spent two days with us. A very active man who is involved with the Escape and Evasion Society, the Air Force Association, and the Caterpillar club. **Steve Onysko**, flew with the 5th Bomb Group during WWII, joined us for a day. Steve, who has a newly restored L-6, intended to fly on Friday to Hanscom, but the weather didn't cooperate. Steve is a member of the dedicated crew on "All American." From the 783rd **Joseph Casadevall** attended and told us some of his experiences on the Saturday program.

Wasn't it great to see so many of our Squadron Leaders from the Pantanella days and some other members that missed one or two of the last reunions. Section officers; **Harry Carl**, Communications Officer, **Ken Sutton**, Ordnance Officer, **Byron Thompson**, Intelligence Officer, **Bill Ellett**, Squadron Adjutant, **Hank Willett**, Operations Officer, **Doc Rapoport**, Squadron Flight Surgeon, and **F. D. Bonvillian**, Supply Officer.

Jim Wray had made reservation, but cancelled due to a graduation he had to attend. **Charles McKenna** could not make it due to health. A call to him after the reunion found him in good spirits and very much interested in everyone and how the reunion went.

Attending from Group Headquarters: **Col. McHenry Hamilton**, Group CO, **Irving Roberts**, Group Intelligence, and **Daniel Dugan**, Group Bombardier.

Frank Ambrose performed his usual task of squadron photographer. Almost all the photos in the newsletter are Franks.

Several were in wheel chairs, **John Zartman**, always with a smile, got around fine with the help of Charlotte, and **James Downs** attended with three of his brothers and sisters along with their spouses. And there were a few canes and a limp here and there, but the discomfort was forgotten when an old friend was sighted.

It was good to see **Marcel and Dollie Snyder** again. Marcel missed San Antonio due to his trips to Ethiopia working for the U. S. Government A.I.D. program. Marcel was co-founder of the 781st and served as a director and vice president for two years. How about a story on your experiences in Ethiopia, Marcel?

There were a number of men who attended their first reunion. They are; **Richard Baker**, Benson Ball Gunner - **Robert Bassinette**, Blakita Bombardier - **F. D. Bonvillian**, Supply Officer - **Bernard Chubet**, Radar Navigator - **Leon Crouch**, Ashley Co-pilot - **Andrew Dobek**, McDaniel Engineer - **John Fountain**, Radar Navigator - **Robert Freeman**, Blakita Co-pilot - **McHenry Hamilton**, Group CO - **Alvin Hellman**, Pitts Ball Gunner - **Oren Lee**, Becker Radio Operator - **Ralph Maguire**, Engineering - **George Racz**, Radar Maintenance - **Irving Roberts**, Group Intelligence - **Burton Sanders**, Joyner Gunner - **George Sinner**, Kennedy Navigator - and **Reyer Swan**, Van Slyke Gunner.

The **Carl Dahl** crew showed up again with seven members, the most of any. **Charles McKenna's** crew almost made it. Six showed up, but **Charles Fry** started out but didn't make it to the reunion. **Jack Van Slyke** had six of his crew, **R. J. Smith** also five, and **Ordnance** had it's usual good percentage attending.

Many of our deceased men's widows attended and enjoyed being a part of the reunion. **Lorraine Dalton** and her son **Mark** has attended all four reunions. Two more of the family were along. **Julia Cato** attended for the second time, **Helen Hall** for the first time, **Mrs. Ken Shallman** (Jolicœur) for the first time, and **Jean Wood** for the second time. Also **Peter Laughner**, son of Ray Laughner attended his third reunion.

Russ Ball (780th Bomb Squadron) informed me that three of the men attending the reunion married McCook ladies. They are **Al LeBlanc**, **Frank Ambrose** and **Russ Ball**.

I hope I didn't miss anyone. This reunion had many more changes than prior reunions. Eighteen men cancelled at the last minute, mostly due to health. There were many late registrations and a number appeared at the hotel without any reservations that we knew of.

Those cancelling included **Leonard Emmel** (he tangled with a golf cart and broke his ankle. **Charles "Bubba" Braud**, I believe had eye surgery, started for the reunion, but had to turn back. **Charles Fry** was expected, but did not make it as far as Waltham. Most of the other cancellations were due to health of the member or his wife; **Joseph McDevitt**, **Lewis "Jocko" Roberts**, **Warren Carden**, **Hugh Cooper**, **Louis Deslatte**, **Harold Erickson**, **Charles Ingram**, **Vann Reynolds**, **Donald Barrett**, **Robert Joyner**, **Ken Koch**, **Roland Pharis**, and **Margaret Myers**.

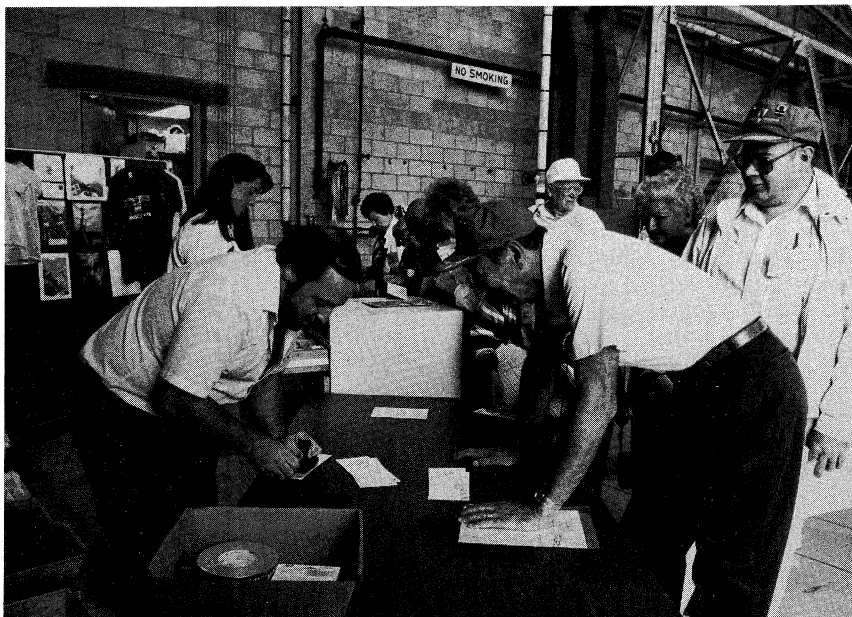
SQUADRON VIDEO. We engaged a professional video cameraman to take video of all the major events. Also, several of our members sent in their video and we have borrowed some from Bob Collings showing "All American" flying. It is all being edited into a first class video of all the major events at the reunion. Priced at \$29, delivered. It will be a lasting memento of our reunion.

SQUADRON STATIONERY. We had stationery and envelopes printed to commemorate our reunion and the Forty-Fifth Anniversary of Victory in Europe. This was designed by Frank Quagan. It turned out beautiful - some silver embossing on blue-grey paper and matching envelopes. You should have one or more packs to mail to friends and to keep for your scrap book.

P X ITEMS FOR SALE

781st Cap (summer weight)	7.00
465th Bomb Gp Cap	7.00
781st Shoulder Patch	2.00
781st Tie Pin 3/4 "	3.00
781st Tie Pin w/chain	3.00
781st Pin, 1 3/4"	3.00
465th Bomb Gp Pin 1 3/4"	3.00
History Book	35.00
Reunion stationery & envelopes	
Pack of 5 each	1.50
Cancelled envelope with 781st cancellation and stamp	1.00
1990 Reunion Video	29.00
Plus shipping charges - For one or more caps \$1.50, for one or more of any of the other items, 50¢. No shipping charges on the video.	

Photos - Top, the Snyders, Wassenaars, and Bill Bartlett. Center, the Tipton crew in force. Bottom, Bedford Postmaster stamping the 781st cancellation stamp on letters going out.



HOW THE DOGTAGS WERE LOCATED

A brief background - Over the past five years our association has been listed in all the military newsletter, magazines, and periodicals that we were aware of. We wanted to be sure to be known so that any of our members could contact us. This brought a lot of mail, some of no interest, but some proved to be interesting requests. I responded whenever I thought there would be something of value to the association or our men.

Several inquiries were received from Hungarian civilians inquiring if any of our men were shot down over Hungary. They wanted to be reunited with the men they saved. With my reply I always sent one of our newsletters.

In October, 1989 I received a letter from Col. Ruth Anderson, Defense and Air Attache, American Embassy, Budapest. She noted that a recent request sent to me from Mr. Cossaboom, a Hungarian citizen, was on her behalf. And here is a part of her letter, "In mid-August a Hungarian citizen offered me documentary evidence" of 150 WWII Prisoners of War in Budapest. What he delivered was a string of 150 dogtags of 126 individuals who had apparently been processed through some center in the castle district of Budapest. He had found them in a yard behind this building (now his home) and finally felt he could bring them to light.

The dogtags were forwarded to U. S. Army Personnel Command to ensure that there were no unresolved cases in their files; they assured us that there were none, and according to their files 41 of the 126 men listed did not survive the war.

While weeding through some old files here, we found a missing aircraft report containing the names of Lt. Tipton's crew. The dogtags of six members of that crew are on our string, and your April newsletter carried Gene Krzyzynski's story of that mission."

She goes on to state where the tags are located if we wanted them. She also was interested in a copy of our history book, for which she enclosed a check. She had read about it in our Newsletter.

I contacted the Army Personnel Command and requested the dogtags to be sent to me and that I would have them presented to the men at an appropriate time.

Col. Anderson also would like to know if we had any "Jackie", "Fred", or

"Bill" and would like to get in touch with them.

If you recall the Tipton crew was written up in the Newsletter. On the second time they were shot down their capture and interrogation was initially by the SS in Budapest. The normal major interrogation centers run by the German Army did not treat prisoners nearly as bad as the SS. If you recall Frank Hylla's story while he was in the hospital at Budapest, he would see a hanging in the courtyard virtually every day by the SS.

Of the six men, three attended the reunion and received their dogtags from Gen. Fornell. They were Harold B. Far-rar, Frank R. Jasicko, and Eugene M. Krzyzynski.

Hulitt L. Holcombe is deceased and his tags were given to Vernon Burda to return to his widow, who lives near Vernon. Eugene Weiss's will be returned at a special luncheon in Sacramento and will be reported in the next newsletter. Dale Tipton is deceased and I have just located his widow and will return Dale's dogtags to her.

Sick Call

In a recent phone call **Warren Carden** (Engineering, Crew Chief Yellow J) informed me his wife, **Jessie**, is very ill. Warren had made reservation for the reunion, but her illness prevented them from coming. I'm sure Warren and Jessie would like to hear from friends that attended the reunion.

Just prior to the reunion **Leonard Emmel** (Roberts tail gunner) left a message to cancel his reunion reservations because he had broken his ankle. He tangled with a golf cart and lost. We hope it's healing fine Leonard, so that you can get back on the golf course.

Mrs. Charles Ingram reported that **Bud Ingram** had a hospital stay and is now recovering.

"**Jocko**" **Roberts** had major surgery shortly before the reunion and was under doctors orders not to travel. In a recent phone call to him he states he is felling great. He is now back on "flying status."



ADDRESS CHANGES

Bill G. Poulos, 721 Mill St., Snohomish, WA 98290.

Rae Branch, 14261 E. Marina Drive, Aurora, CO 80014.

Robert Wilson, 4720 Shearwater Lane, Naples, FL 33999. Phone 813 591-4588 (September until Spring). Summer 27825 Detroit Ave. Apt 201, Westlake, OH 44145. Phone 216 899 1530.

William J. Smith, 4743 B Village Drive, Bellingham, WA 982266.

Clayton F. McDaniel, Remero De Ter-reros, 8 Mexico 12 D.S. 03100. Phone 523 1754.

Charles Tittl, Phone 313 644 0375.

A new roster is expected to be out next month.

A PLEA FOR SUPPORT

The 781st Bomb Squadron Association has now held four highly successful reunions attended by as many as 180 men, many with wives for a total of over 375 attendees. We have produced a 200-page hard-bound history of the squadron and we publish the quarterly newsletter, *Pantanelle News*, which has been distributed to every new member from the time he was first located.

All of these activities cost money. The reunions have been self supporting. The History book was paid for by the subscriptions. The search activities and the newsletter have been financed by donations from members of the Association, many of which have been very generous.

The latter activities cost the Association approximately \$3500 per year, of which \$2900 is the newsletter. It has been the policy of the Association not to establish dues to cover these costs but to rely on donations and we continue to believe that this is a good practice.

Unfortunately, over the past year such donations have not been adequate to cover our costs and your board feels compelled to bring this to the attention of the members. We are confident that many men simply do not think of sending contributions as they might if dues were assessed.

We do not wish to assess dues except as a last resort to keep the organization economically viable. So we ask each member to review his own situation and, if possible, send a donation to Treasurer O. J. Cowart at the address on page two.



MAIL CALL

A letter from **Frank (Harold) Quagan**, "I want to add my congratulations to the many others, for the splendid job you did on our recent fourth reunion. Everything was just great! The trip to see the B-24 was impressive and everyone seemed to enjoy it so very much. The whole ceremony at Hanscom was so interesting.

"As I mentioned to you some time ago, **Nick Schaps** and his wife came back with us for almost a week, and we had a great time touring Newport and parts of the Cape. Then we left them there for a few days on their own at my sister-in-laws place at Cedarville (the Plymouth area). She has a beautiful Chalet overlooking the ocean and the view is super. Then they came back on Friday for a lobster cook out, which ended their visit. We had a good time and they had a chance to try out a lot of sea food dishes that were new to them.

"As we left the Kennedy Compound area in Hyannisport, heading back to Hyannis, we looked up as we were coming near the airport and lo and behold, there was the "All American" right in front of our car, banking and circling, coming in for a landing. We couldn't believe it. We had forgot that it was going to be at the Hyannis airport. I figured it was a once-in-a-billion chance that we would be at that spot coincidentally as it arrived.

"The arrangements at the banquet were impressive. The General was great and the Ranger with his Lexington story was very good. We later took advantage of the Bell Captain at the Vista and had a tour with him in his Volkswagen bus, around the Lexington and Concord area and Boston.

"I was a pleasure to see you again, Jim, and I wish you the very best in the coming years and hope you reap the rewards of all your efforts in bringing this large group together again. My best wishes to Mrs. Althoff, your great companion."

Prior to the reunion a letter to Harry Carl from **Leo Lutgring's** daughter, "I am Mr. Lutgring's daughter. Leo has been in the hospital and is too weak to write. June 28, 1990 he was operated on for an aneurysm below the heart. After 10 hours in surgery, 2 weeks in intensive

care, 33 days in the hospital, losing 37 pounds, he is now home recuperating but very, very weak. I'm as disappointed as he is that he will not be attending the reunion.

"He wanted me to extend his regrets that he was not able to identify more faces on the picture. He has studied it many times but this was all he could come up with. He is also very sorry it has taken him so long to return it to you.

"I'm sure you and your wife have spent many hours towards planning this reunion. Dad sure enjoyed the reunion in Ohio and wishes he could attend another one close to home. My brother had planned to bring him this year, but wishes you would tell everyone in the 781st Bomb Squadron a big HELLO from him. I'd like to ask you to send him some photos from the reunion, if possible. He reminisces often about those days and would love to see everyone again." Rosemary (Lutgring) Flamion.

A fax received at the hotel from **John Kennedy**, "It is with great disappointment that I must cancel all plans to attend the reunion this year.

"While on vacation in Illinois in July my wife, Wanda, became critically ill with "Legionnaires Disease." After 17 days in the hospital and another 14 days in a rest home, we were able to fly back to California. She is recovering, but slowly, at home.

"Please extend our best wishes to our friends in the 781st.

"All of your plans for the reunion are as interesting and exciting as ever. We all deeply appreciate the untiring and dedicated efforts of you and the entire staff.

"God Bless our Country, our veterans, our Fallen, and our Servicemen facing the dangers today."

From **McHenry Hamilton, Jr.**, "Pat and I wish to thank you for such a happy and memorable Reunion. Without the energies you put into the planning and the execution, it would have been just another get-together.

"The entire group was very upbeat for the entire time. More so than you find at most Reunions. They are truly a great bunch of people. I am only sorry that this was my first time spent with them.

"Since returning home, I have met several people who knew about the B-24 and one had actually gone to see it. The idea and the effort to restore our Liberator will forever be remembered.

"Tell Ernie that I checked on Round Hill wine in our local store and they have it on the shelf.

"Pat joins me in saying how nice it was to meet you and your lovely wife. If you are ever in this vicinity give us a call."

It was a pleasure to meet Mac and Pat. Watch for his story "ONE-HALF A MISSION" in the next newsletter. He was assigned to replace Col. Foster as Group Commander, however, he was shot down over Vienna within a week of his arrival - so he only got in one-half of a mission!

Lewis Coghill let us know he was well, but other commitments kept him from coming to the reunion. He has been very interested in receiving the *Pantarella News* and reading about what went on that he did not know about.

From **Milt Levinson**, "We finally got back home after our great reunion, Our crew, all 7 of us, went to Falmouth where our navigator **Neal Culhane** lives. We had a lobster dinner at his home and the next day we had a tour arranged for us at Hanscom Air Base where the F-15's fly patrol up the coast. It was very interesting. We saw your motor home pass through Woods Hole looking for a parking spot. It was really wall to wall cars and people.

Our crew again was the best represented by having 7 of the original crew present. Our tail gunner, **Adrian Martin**, had his daughter as a guest. She was so fascinated by the entire proceedings that when we visited the B-24, she crawled into the tail turret so that she could experience what her Father had gone through 45 years earlier. Quite a gal.

I'm going to Italy in November and you said you could give me the exact directions to our former base. I would appreciate it."

Milt, I was lost when I was in Woods Hole. Good luck on your trip to Italy.

ROUND HILL WINE

Since Ernie Van Asperen was so kind to donate the wine for the banquet I thought it appropriate to give his wines a "plug."

As some of you know I was "checked out" on my first combat mission by Ernie, then was invited to move into his tent, and we became friends. In 1946, I joined Ernie in business in California and we are business associates to this day. For many years we developed a

wine and liquor chain (84 stores) and I got to know Ernie's philosophy - give a good quality product at a reasonable price.

Ernie started in the wine business in 1938 by selling wine from a barrel in his first store. He had an interest in making wine and later bought a home in Napa Valley, surrounded by vineyards. He finally decided to do his own thing - to start a winery. His wines were an instant success. He did not advertise - the wine was high quality, priced very reasonable and it sold itself.

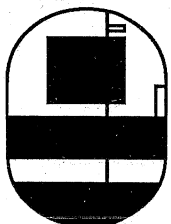
Now, quite a few years later, he has a long list of high awards. Just recently he received an award which I think really tells the whole story. The Wine Spectator, a leading wine publication, selected ten wines in the world for "Unbeatable Value." Listed under "The Top 10 Best Buys"....In the World, was Round Hill California House Chardonnay. This is the white wine served at our banquet along with the equally popular cabernet. Round Hill is found in 45 states.

Ernie, thanks again for adding to our enjoyment at the banquet with our fine wine. And remember Gen. Fornell offered to be a member of the board of directors.

GOOD NEWS

I just received a call from **Bob Collings**, who congratulated the 781st Bomb Squadron for again being leading contributors to the B-24J "All American." As a result the 465th Bomb Group tail marking will remain for another year!

We can all feel mighty proud to be a part of the 781st and we want to thank those of you who have made such generous donations. The next time you see "All American" check for the names on the side of the plane - see how the 781st leads!



REUNION '92 TO BE HELD AT OMAHA, NE

Sept. 10-13, 1992

By membership vote Omaha was chosen for the 1992 site. After a review of the hotels the Marriott was chosen and approved by the board of directors. The beautiful Marriott will be a perfect hotel for us. I know you will be pleased when you see it. So, mark you dates and we will fill you in more in the future *Pantanella News*.

HISTORY BOOK

This may be the last opportunity to purchase one of the 781st Bomb Squadron History Books. It will be a lasting record of your "outfit" during WWII. Words cannot describe the beautiful book with many, many photos and a history of the squadron. A book you can be proud of and your children will enjoy having as a record. Recently at the reunion it was shown to some of the current Air Force personnel at Hanscom AFB and they were amazed at the detailed record and how all the photos and information could have been put together after so many years.

A letter from Gilbert Carter of the 780th notes, "I obtained a copy of the 781st Squadron Book, which I find amazing. The fact that your Squadron, with Harry Carl, could put this together so many years after the war is unbelievable."

Send \$35 to O. J. Cowart, Treasurer for one of these fine books.

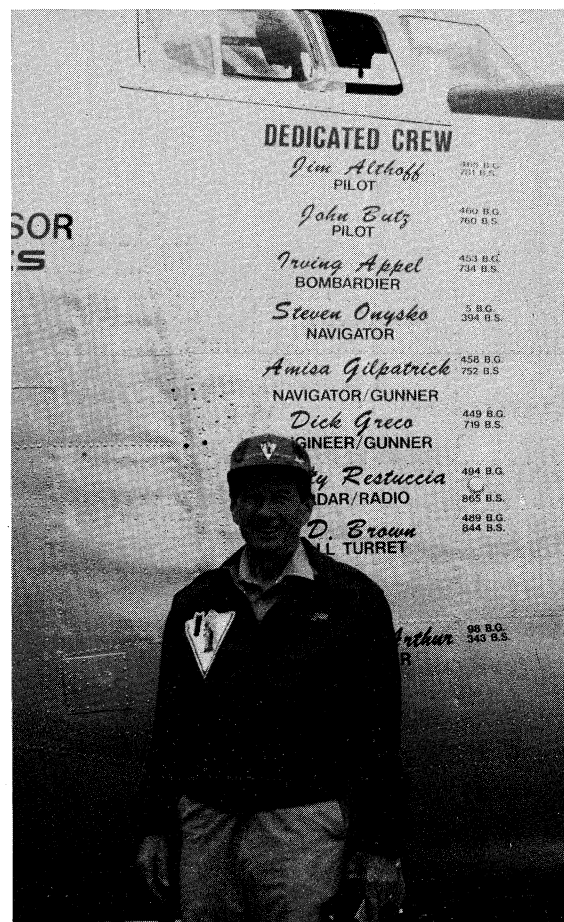
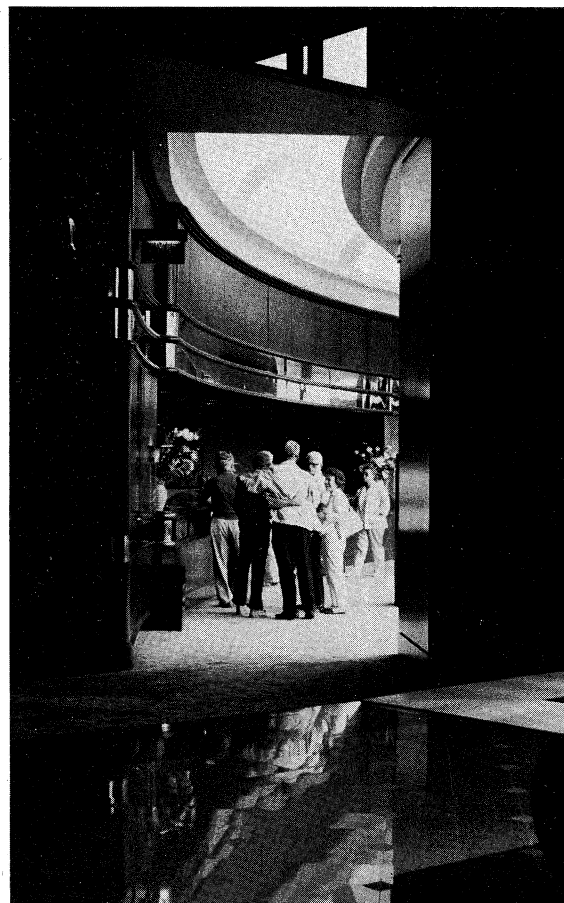
WHY IS THE NEWS-LETTER LATE ??

Modern technology that's what did it. Color printing has become so refined that black & white processors are rare. In our pursuit for better reproduction for the newsletter we used black & white. So... we had to wait.

I have many more photos. More will appear in future *Pantanella News*.

The top photo is the hotel lobby, bottom is your editor.

Have a happy and healthy Holiday Season.





781st BOMB SQUADRON ASSOC
2 Mt Vernon Lane, Atherton, CA 94027



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