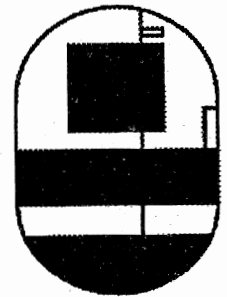




PANTANELLA NEWS

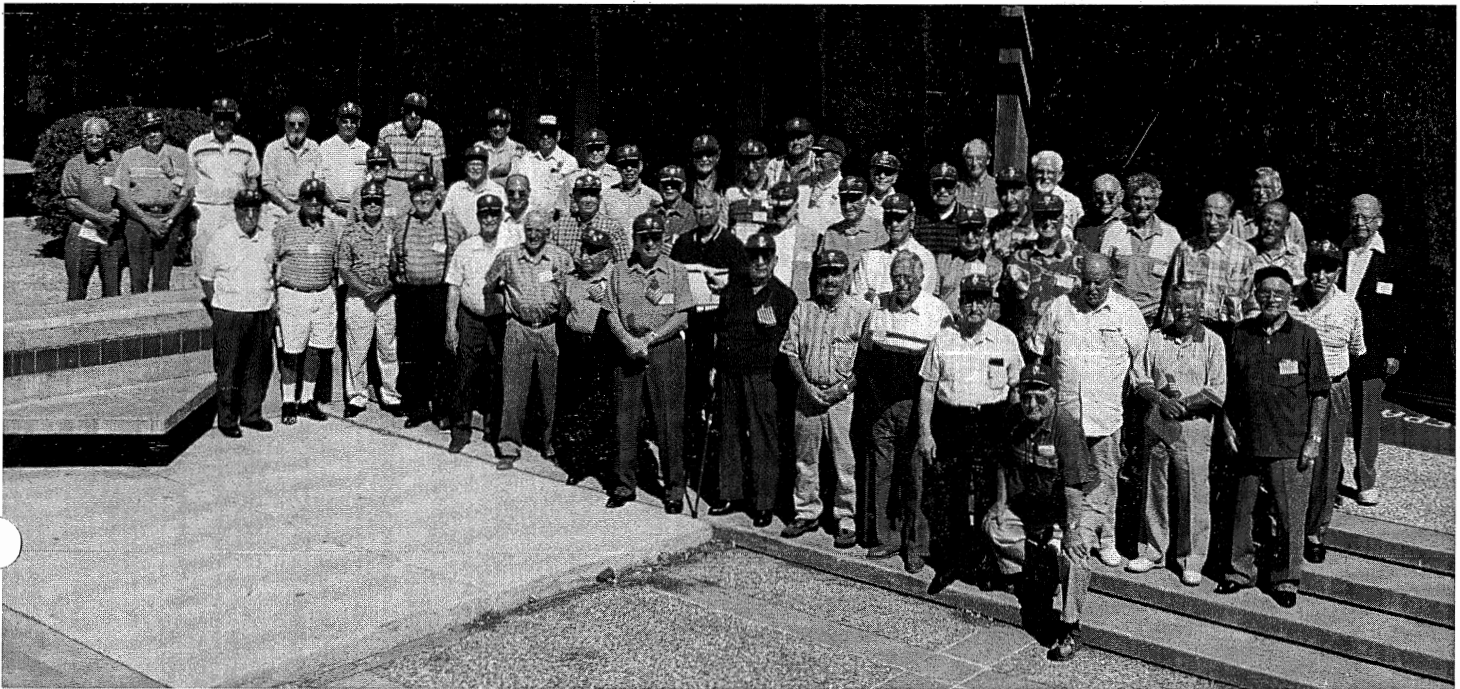


October 2000

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NUMBER 62

FAIRFIELD REUNION ANOTHER SUCCESS



Reunion Attendees — Photo by Frank Ambrose

Reunion 2000 — 781st Bomb Squadron (H) AAF

Our 9th Reunion—celebrating 55 years since leaving Pantanella Army Air Base near Canosa, Italy, the Allied Victory in Europe and, for our Bomb Squadron, the end of WWII.

Tuesday, Sept 12 — A few advance members arrived, including Jim and Agnes Althoff and the silver

bullet they use to haul the many Squadron mementos and themselves around the country for these meetings. Walter and Ann Longacre were there, Walt hobbling on a tripod cane necessitated by problems with one foot—but still eager to get the registration table and dinner assignment procedures established. Harry Carl came in on a late shuttle from the San Francisco airport. And several others, all looking forward to seeing the Reunion get started.

Wednesday, Sept 13—Early bird registration was scheduled from 1:00 to 5:00 PM but many people had arrived well before this and were impatient to get registered. Agnes Althoff, Ann and Walt Longacre, and Mamie and Bubba Braud stepped in and made sure that this went smoothly. The hospitality/trophy room was scheduled to be open from 1:00 PM until approximately 11:00 PM. However because of some misunder-



Jim and Agnes Althoff

standing with the hotel personnel, there was no BAR available and the celebrations got off to a very dry start. The mementos were set up and it was still possible to meander among them and discuss various items and begin to renew acquaintances.

directors was held about 3:30 PM. (More about that later.) There were no functions scheduled for this day. A cocktail

Thursday, Sept 14—Registration was in full swing well ahead of the 9:00 AM scheduled time and for some time after the planned 4:00 PM closing time. A short meeting of the Board of Di-

others chose tours of the nearby BUDWEISER Brewery. Product samples were provided at each of these locations. The hospitality room was open all day for those who decided to stick around the Hotel.

The evening was open for the usual crew and section get-togethers. Someone in each crew or in a section or whatever made their own arrangements in advance for dinner. Some seating was available at the hotel and there were a number of restaurants nearby. The hotel had van service to take one anywhere in Fairfield. After dinner the hos-



Tour Bound

party was planned for the evening before our 6:30 PM dinner but, again, there was a refreshment BAR.

pitality room was open as usual.

Friday Sept. 15 — There were no official functions on Friday. Everyone was on their own for breakfast. It was a fun day featuring popular bus tours to Sacramento and to San Francisco for all who were interested. Some elected to visit the JELLY BELLY factory to see how jelly beans are made and

Saturday Sept 16 — Breakfast was on our own. At 9:00 AM there was a short, but very important squadron meeting. (More about this later.) The Official Post Office Branch was open about noon to cancel our letters or notes to friends and relatives. The cancellation stamp was made especially for the 781st and

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2 Mount Vernon Lane
Atherton, CA 94027-3037
(650) 325-8356

Officers

James C. Althoff, President, Editor
Harry Carl, First Vice-President, Historian
Walter M. Longacre, Vice-President
Ben Donahue, Secretary

Board of Directors

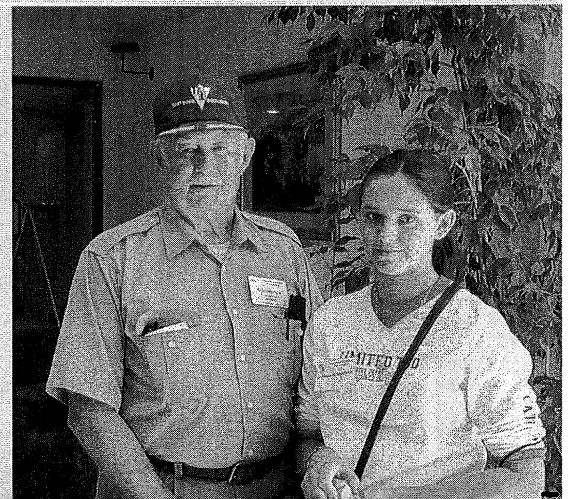
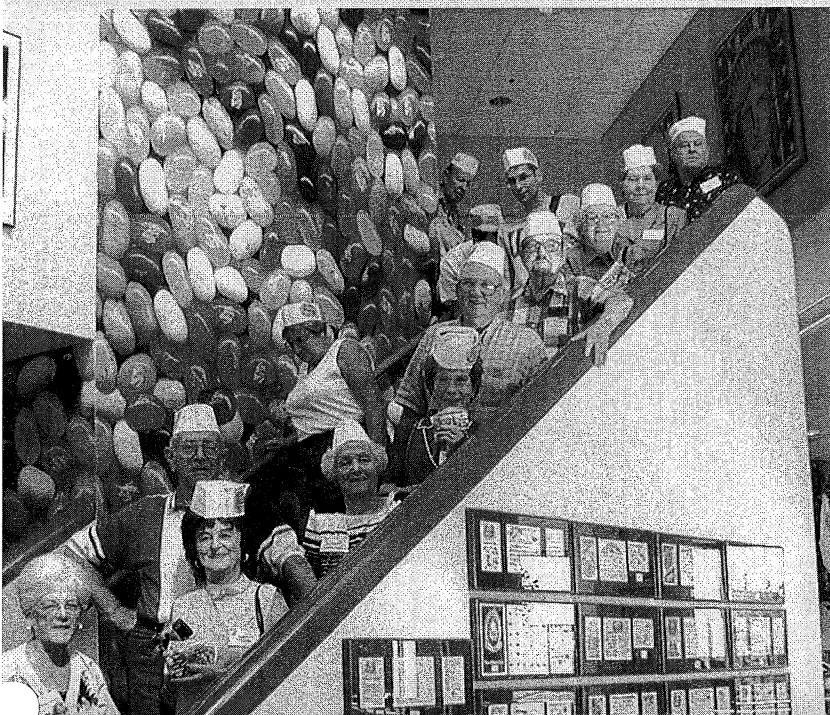
James C. Althoff
Harry S. Carl
Robert L. Freed
Jack Van Slyke
Robert L. Shetterly
Kenneth E. Sutton
Thomas L. Williams, M.D.

Chaplain

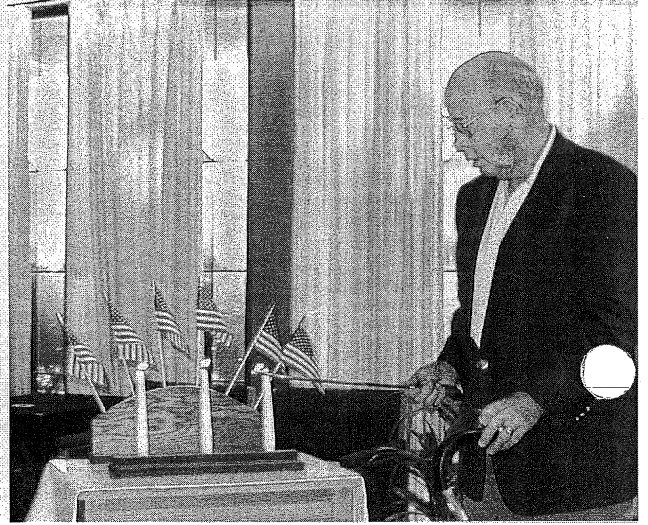
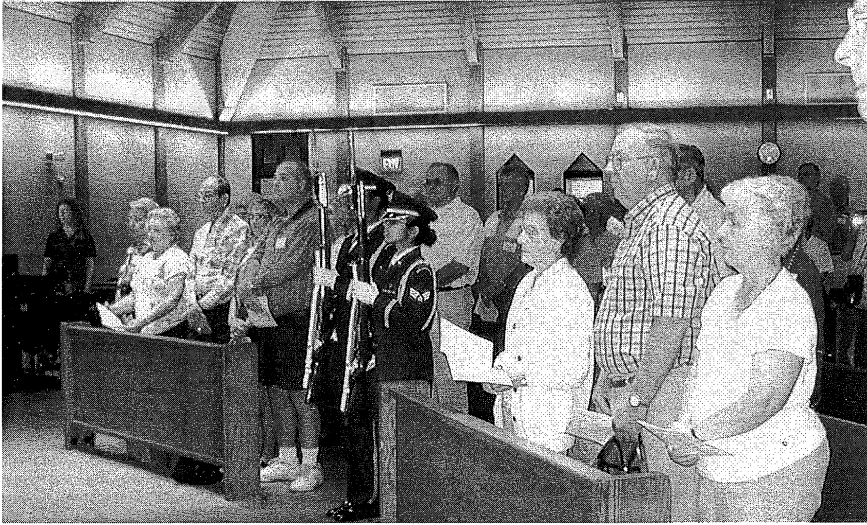
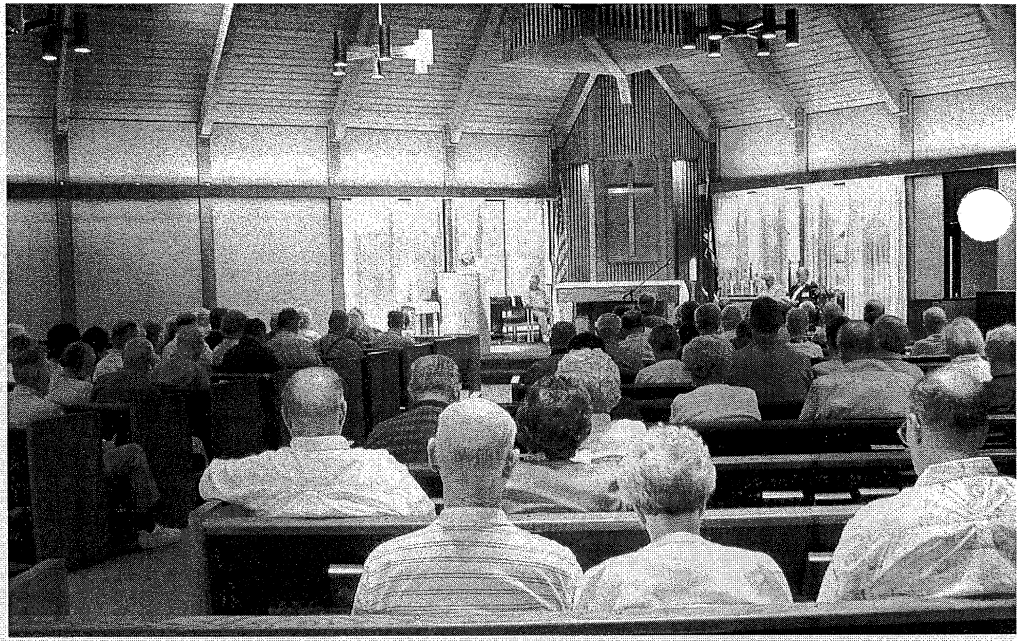
Loren W. Foote

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 WWII (1944-1945). 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.



Tour Groups



Memorial Service at Travis Air Base Chapel

commemoration of Reunion 2000. At 12 :00 lunch was served in the hotel dining room.

Following lunch buses took us to visit Travis Air Force Base. At the Base Chapel there was a very impressive Memorial Service. Participants were: Base Chaplain James D. Rozman; Mark Ottinger (on the organ), 781st Chaplain Loren Foote; Walter Longacre (reading the names of Association Members who have joined FW since our last reunion ; Barbara Evans (a beautiful vocal solo); and the Travis Air Force Base Guard (Opening the service with a pre-

sensation of the Colors, and finishing the service presenting Taps.)

After the Memorial Service we visited the Base Museum where many interesting artifacts were seen in the main building and there were many old planes on display outdoors in the Museum yards. We returned to the hotel in late afternoon for a short break before dressing for the evening program.

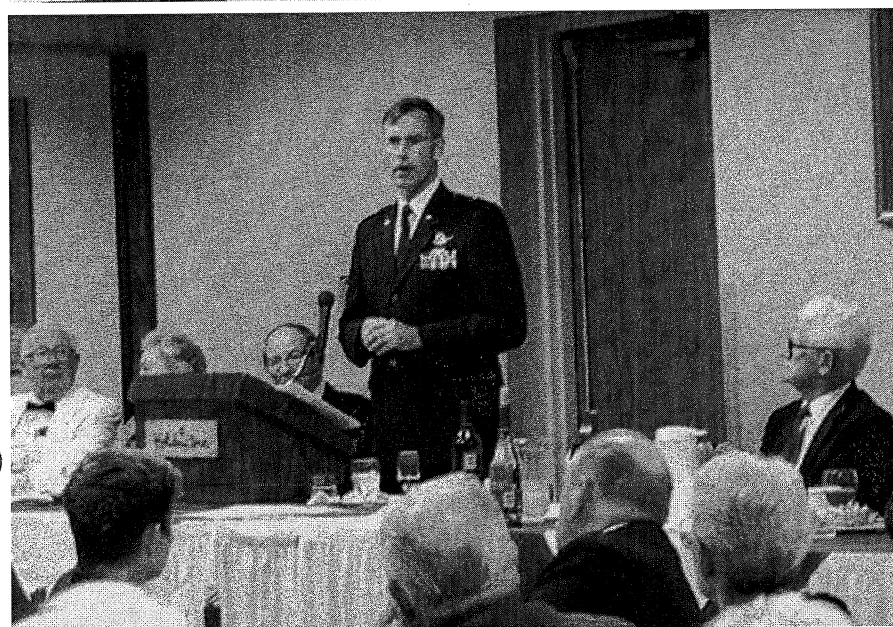
Saturday evenings have always been our dress-up time. There was a cocktail party and BAR starting at 5:30 with seat-



Jim Althoff's granddaughter, Amanda, led us in the Pledge of Allegiance on Saturday evening.

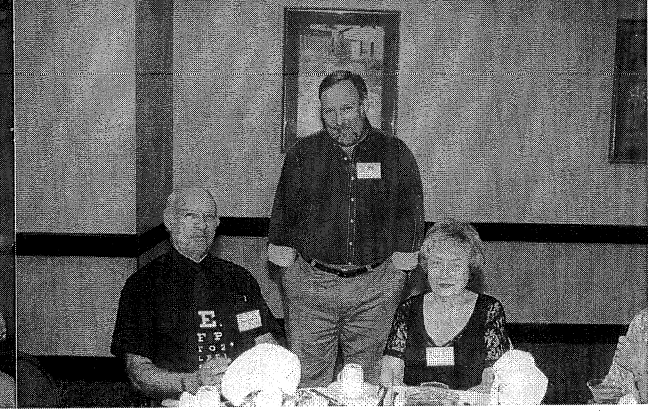
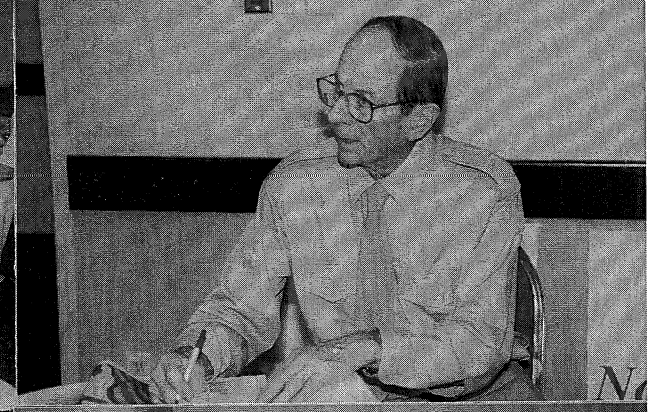
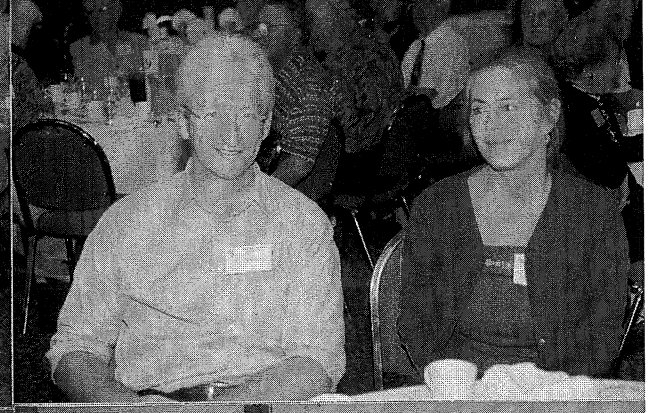
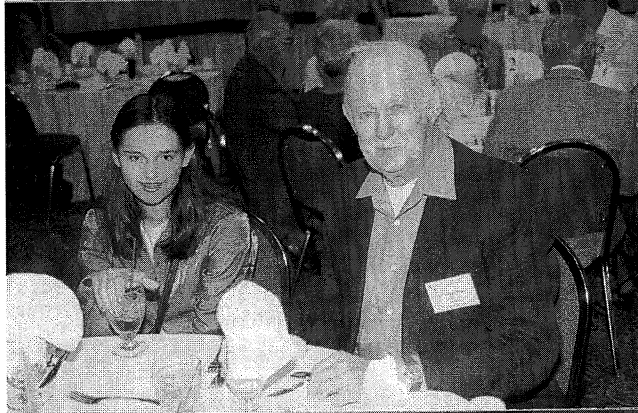
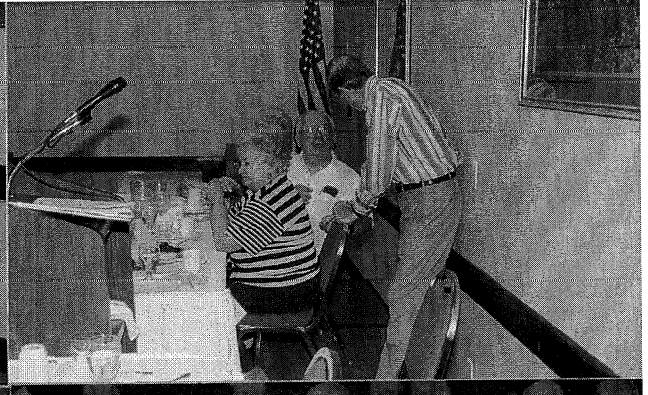


ing for the banquet at 6:30. The highlight of the evening was the outstanding speech by Brigadier General Thomas P. Kane, USAF (easily one of the best we have had at any of our reunions.) General Kane's talk dealt with the status of the Air Force as it now is but largely he praised the veterans of WWII and specifically our unit.



**Thomas P. Kane
Brigadier General, USAF
Commander, 60th Air
Mobility Wing
Travis AFB, CA**





Reunion 2000 Attendees

ADSIT, Hoyt F,
 ADSIT, Nancy
 ALTHOFF, James C,
 ALTHOFF, Agnes
 ALTHOFF, Amanda (Daughter)
 ALTHOFF, Michael
 ALTHOFF, Patricia (Daughter)
 ALTHOFF, Richard (Son-in-law)
 ALTHOFF, Susan (Daughter-in-Law)
 AMBROSE, Betty Mae
 AMBROSE, Frank P,
 BADLER, Bernard
 BADLER, Helen
 BAILEY, Daniel E,
 BAILEY, Pearl
 BARTLETT, Anna
 BARTLETT, Guest
 BARTLETT, Guest
 BARTLETT, William B,
 BOWMAN, David L,
 BOWMAN, Ruth
 BRAUD, Charles H,
 BRAUD, Mamie
 CARL, Harry S,
 CASS, Gaythor L,
 CASS, Norma J,
 CLAUSEN, Constance
 CLAUSEN, Walter
 CRAWFORD, Calvert
 CRAWFORD, Elizabeth
 DAHL, Carl V.
 DAHL, Clifford
 DAHL, M. Zeigler
 DAHL, Wanda
 DONAHUE, Ben L,
 DONAHUE, Lucille
 DURCKEL, Jackie
 DURCKEL, Paul H,
 EMMEL, Leonard H,
 FARRAR, Barbara
 FARRAR, Harold B,
 FOOTE, Loren W,
 FOOTE, Marge
 FREED, Robert L,
 FREED, Roseanna
 GOLDSTEIN, Leonard L,
 HANSON, Doris
 HANSON, Selmer E,
 HAUSOLD, Betty
 HAUSOLD, George W,
 HAYWOOD, Glen H,
 HAYWOOD, Pat
 HENDRICKSON, Pat
 HENDRICKSON, Ralph D,
 HENDRICKSON, Ron
 HOLCOMBE, Ron (Son of Hewlitt)
 HOLCOMBE, Vanessa

JASICKO, Fran
 JASICKO, Frank R,
 KEISER, Betty
 KEISER, Dale L,
 KENNEDY, John B,
 KENNEDY, Wanda
 KILL, Betty
 KILL, Francis Kenneth
 LAYNE, Frances
 LAYNE, John P,
 LEBLANC, Albert P,
 LEBLANC, Dorothy
 LEE, Orren J,
 LEINART, Earl R,
 LEINART, Grace
 LEVINSON, Milton
 LEVINSON, Thelma
 LONGACRE, Ann
 LONGACRE, Walter M,
 MYERS, Novella
 NAGEL, Albert
 OGDEN, Constance
 OGDEN, John W,
 QUAGAN, Betty
 QUAGAN, Harold Francis
 RACHOW, William A,
 RAPOPORT, Blanche
 RAPOPORT, Morris R,
 REAMS, Alice
 REED, Curtis G,
 REED, (Son of Curtis)
 REHN, Kenneth B,
 REHN, Lois
 ROWE, Bonnie G,
 RUSSELL, Ann
 RUSSELL, Barney G,
 RUSSELL, Bud
 SAMUELSON, Dale L,
 SAMUELSON, Zibbie
 SANTIGIAN, Massis Marty
 SAPENOFF, Joel
 SCHAPS, Marion
 SCHAPS, Tony
 SCHLOSSIN, Herbert L,
 SCHLOSSIN, Shirley
 SCHREINER, Edward J,
 SCHREINER, J. Melcor (Ed's Granddaughter)
 SHETTERLY, Robert L,
 SNYDER, Dollie
 SNYDER, James Marcel
 STORM, Patricia
 STORM, Richard J,
 STRUBLE, Dianna Kyzer
 STRUBLE, Pat
 STRUBLE, Rex L,
 THOMPSON, Albert I.
 THOMPSON, Ruth

TIEHEN, Terri
 VAN ASPEREN, Ernest
 WASSENAAR, A, Hirgon (Daughter)
 WASSENAAR, Dorothy
 WASSENAAR, Frank
 WASSENAAR, Kurt
 WILLIAMS, Lucille
 WILLIAMS, Thomas L,
 WILMETH, J, Hinkle
 WILMETH, Jack
 ZARTMAN, Charlotte
 ZWERKO, Charles R.
 ZWERKO, Billie

There were many cancellations

Pierre Kennedy's wife, Rosemary, was unable to travel so they had to cancel.

Jack Van Slyke had a conflict develop.

Ray Tyler was not up to traveling.

Ken Sutton was too ill to travel.

Ken Kopp had a heart attack and by-pass surgery in July and had to cancel after making reservations.

Dean and Beth Otto had to cancel late.

Dodie Shallman had to cancel because of illness in her family.

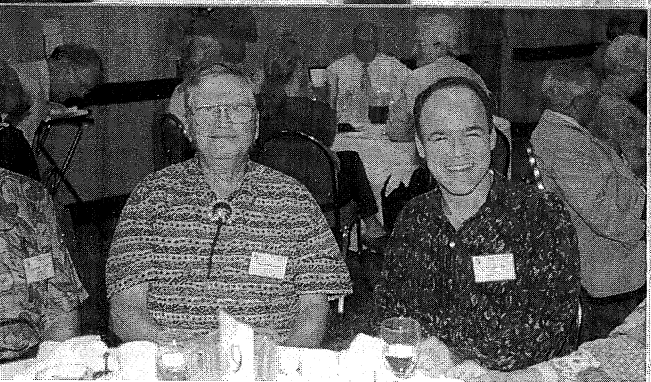
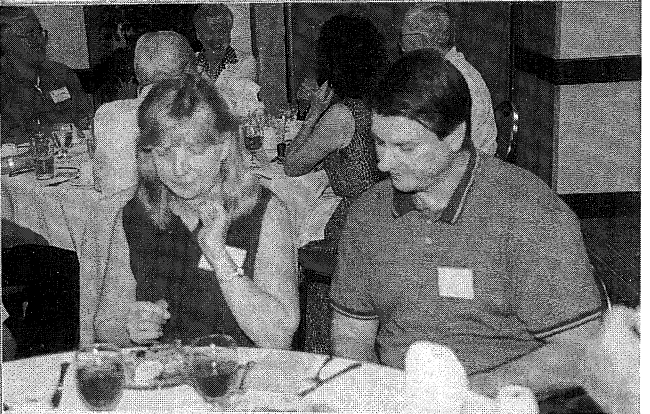
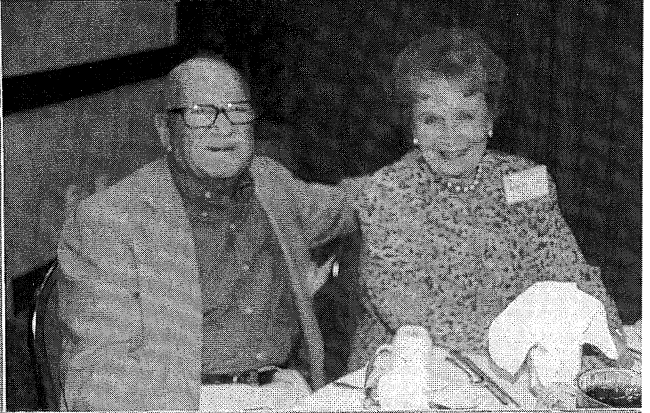
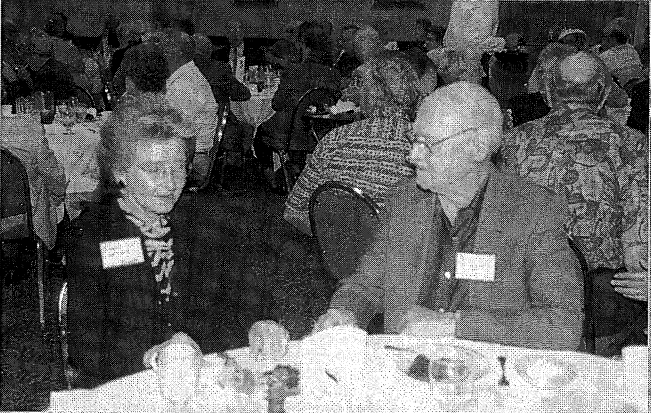
Mavis and Leo Fink could hardly wait for the reunion but Leo had back and hip surgery and died from the procedures.

Argene Barnett had to cancel.

Ken and Elaine Parkhurst cancelled.

Norman Stenerson cancelled because of eye problems.

McHenry and Patricia Hamilton had to cancel.



Following is a letter written to Jim Althoff by Harry Carl for discussion by The Board of Directors at the Fairfield Reunion. It has been amended to reflect the reaction of the Board.

July 27, 2000
Jim Althoff

For the Board of Directors, 781st Bomb Squadron Association

Eight score and five months ago, in August of 1985, our great leader, James C. (Jim) Althoff, and his associate, James Marcel Snyder, established on this continent the 781st Bomb Squadron Association, conceived in memories of their old comrades, and dedicated to the proposition that perseverance would locate enough old comrades in arms to produce a viable and vibrant organization steeped in recollections of their experiences together during the major upheavals of 1943 and 1944.

Spawned in World War II and incubated for more than 40 years, our leader and his helpers managed to identify 1206 individuals who had been assigned to the 781st Bombardment Squadron (H) AAF at one time or other. By 1992, they had located more than 1000 men, 600 living and 420 deceased. Many who were located have participated in eight wonderful and fulfilling reunions at which old acquaintances were renewed, recollections of the War years shared, and many new comradeships developed.

Time, however, has taken its toll of our organization. The Great Reaper has now claimed more than 500 of our members. Failing health and financial hardships (the latter largely due to worldwide inflation since the war) have burdened many others such that they are no longer able to participate actively in the Squadron Reunions. And this downward trend in Reunion participation can only continue.

Now we are facing three serious questions:

(1) The continuing viability of the 781st Bomb Squadron Association as a tax-free entity. The latter requires paper work which undoubtedly is not worth the small tax advantage to any one of our members.

(2) Publication of the PANTANELLA NEWS. This uses almost all of the Association income and is expected to exceed that very soon. Partly caused by increased printing costs and partly because it has been necessary to move to first class mail instead of bulk rate (because of sorting changes in Postal System requirements.) The Postal Service's already announced postage increase will also add to our costs. The major part of the Association income is expended on the publication of PANTANELLA NEWS. And the current income is not adequate to support it. We have been depleting the Association treasury, including LIFE membership money, to continue publishing and mailing the PANTANELLA NEWS.

(3) Our large national reunions. Attendance of members at these reunions has fallen, from 350 in 1987 (179 members, 5 widows, and 340 spouses and associates) to as few as 120 expected this year (60 members, 35 spouses, 6 widows, and 19 associates.) This probably will increase to a total of about 122. It is extremely difficult to plan and implement these reunions with the great drop in attendance.

The Association Officers recommended to the Board of Directors the following:

(1) Continue the Squadron Association but not as a tax-free entity. This will eliminate the need to file a special tax report to the IRS each year. We (Jim Althoff and Harry Carl) will continue to maintain the Squadron Roster as in the past and print any changes in PANTANELLA

NEWS. [This action was considered to be of questionable necessity at this time and the Board agreed not to do this.]

(2) Increase the Association dues (PANTANELLA NEWS subscription) from the present \$10.00 per year to \$15.00 per year [While something like this will be necessary before long, the Board decided to defer action until the Treasury is significantly more depleted.]

Terminate extension of LIFE memberships to widows of members, effective six months (two issues of the NEWSLETTER) after the death of the husband. They could continue to receive the PANTANELLA NEWS beyond that time, of course, if they choose to pay the annual dues—(essentially the publication cost). [The Board decided to implement this action following publication of this copy of the NEWSLETTER.]

Continue the present LIFE memberships for members but require a yearly payment equal to incremental increases in dues. LIFE members would, therefore, pay \$5.00 for 2001 dues (\$5.00 incremental increase) if the Board finds it necessary to increase dues to \$15.00 at the start of that year. In any event, it is felt by the Board that it will be necessary to increase our dues in the near future.

Use the current treasury balance as necessary to cover LIFE membership commitments, expenses exceeding income for the 2000 reunion at Fairfield, CA, and for publishing the PANTANELLA NEWS. [The Board concurred with this proposal.]

(3) Discontinue the national reunions in the light of the sharply falling participation.. Recommend that individual units schedule their own more limited reunions and send material (photos, attendance, activities, etc.) as they wish for publication in PANTANELLA NEWS. [The Board concurred with this proposal.]

Harry S. Carl

The essence of the above was presented to the Association members at the Saturday business meeting and there was no conflict except on termination of the national reunions. Charlotte Zartman (Widow of John Zartman, Co-Pilot on the Wilcox Crew) volunteered to ramrod a Reunion to be held at Phoenix, AZ in 2200.

This is subject to approval by the Association Board of Directors and that is being surveyed as of the time this Newsletter goes to press.

Editors Corner

Reunion Photos

Anyone wanting a color print of the two group photos shown on pages one and twelve and taken by Frank Ambrose at the Reunion (Printed together on one 8"X10" paper) may order them from Frank, post-paid. Send a check for \$10.00 to: Frank Ambrose; 46 S. Main St.; Gloversville, NY 12078. *Be sure to include your return address.* Many thanks to Frank Ambrose and Harry Carl for the fine job of photography during the reunion. I know many of you keep all the Newsletters. This gives you a remembrance of the wonderful times you had during our reunions from these photos. An important item you all can help us with is to keep current with your address and phone number. Please drop us a line when they change. We expect to put out a current list of all active members very soon, so get us current if you are not. Another newsletter item you can help with is submitting stories from your Pantanella days or other interesting items for your comrades. We'll have more in our next newsletter about e-mail, etc. I find more of you want to communicate with each other in this method so we will publish all the e-mail address, etc. And don't forget your crew or section comrades. Check up on them and let me know if any have address changes. The Holiday Season is upon us, so a little advance Greetings since the next newsletter will not be out until next year! January 2001,

MAIL CALL



From Harold B. Farrar: Alice (Holcombe) Reames, widow of Hullitt Holcombe, Tipton Crew Radio Operator, and their son and daughter-in-law, Ron and Vanessa Holcombe, attended the Saturday sessions of our Reunion. This was their first reunion since Colorado Springs in 1986. *(You may remember Alice's daughter, Patti Thompson, sang several songs for us at the Honors Banquet at that reunion.)*

From Frank Quagan;

Jim -- just a short note - Congratulations on another great reunion! Everyone I talked to had a great time. We all thank you for all the work you put into these plans...Everything seemed to work out very smoothly, which is to your credit.

I'm sorry you have enough stationery left over to paper a few rooms, but all I can say is we tried... And that will be the last of the stationery routine.

From Novella Myers, Widow of Lowell Myers, who was on Ellison's Crew.

I do want you to know what a great time I had at the reunion. Certainly, the majority of the thanks goes to you. You and your efforts are truly appreciated by many.

I enjoyed the train ride, however, I did get wrong information (from here) but it all worked out fine. It was one of the most pleasant trips I have

Novella Myers, Contd.

The aspens were in their full glory - interspersed through the deep green of the pines.

The location was most comfortable and it was great to see everyone. I was hesitant to go as Lowell's Widow, but it only added more happy memories to the life we shared.

Folded Wings

Leo Fink; Mar 20, 2000

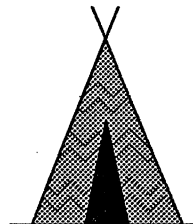
Walker H. Shipley; June 9, 2000

Charles F. Mustachi; May 2000

John Nelson; Dec, 1999

Charles T. Shoalts; July 16, 2000

Address Changes



Helen MacFarlane—407 7th St., S.E.; Jasper, FL 32052.

Donald Toomey—9015 City Rd. 116; Corcoran, MN 55430 or Hamael, MN 55430.

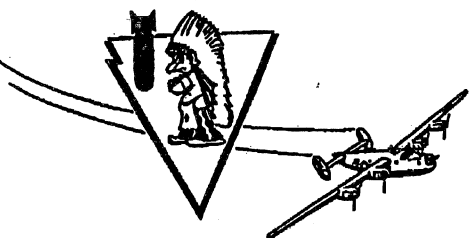
Leonard Emmel I— New Zip code; 60467

Gino Pellwschi—111 Cleveland Lane; Rockaway Township, NJ 07866

Loren Foote—New phone number; 626-446-4700.



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