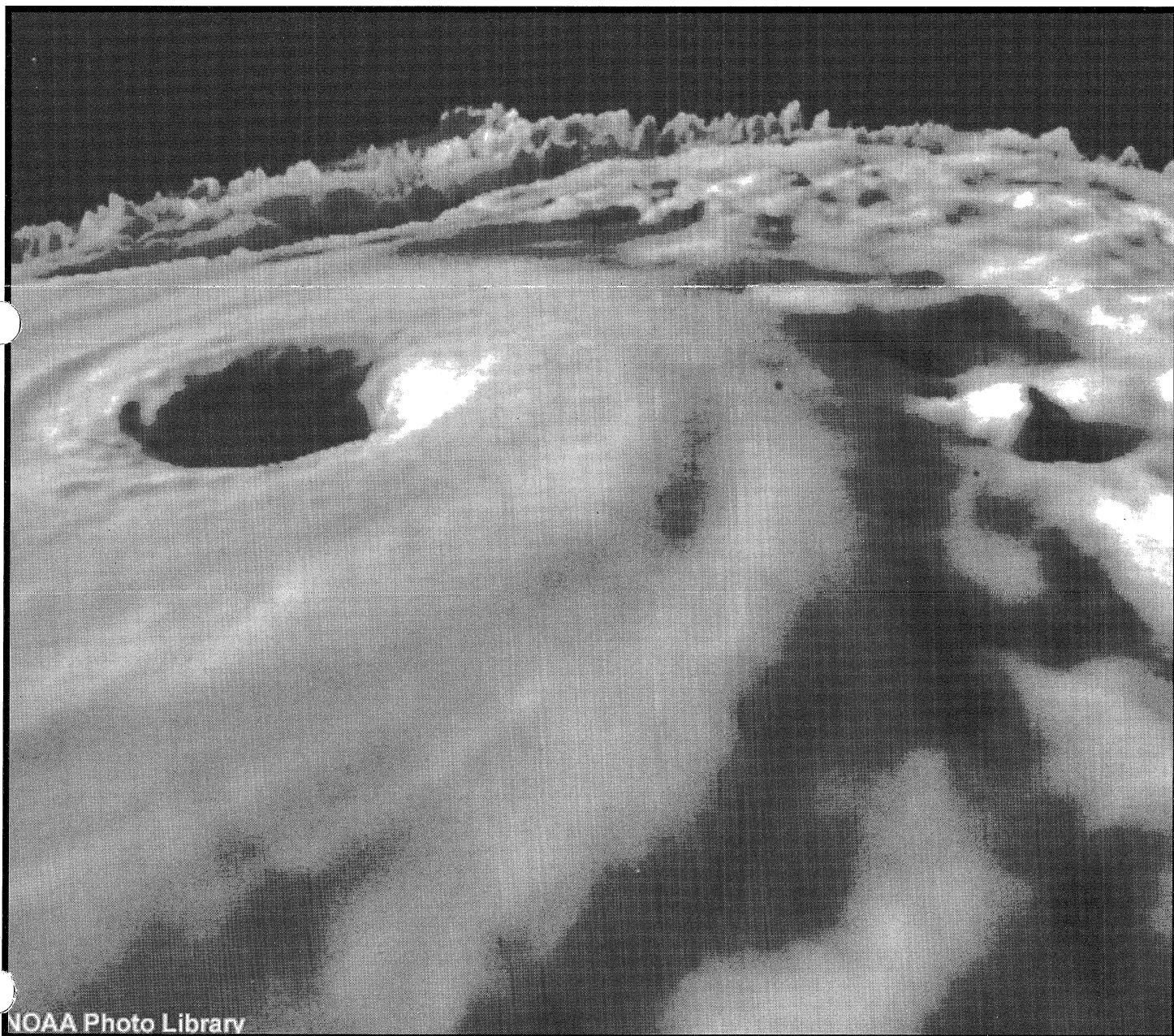


# PANTANELLA NEWS

Published by 781st Bomb Squadron Association©

# 81 October 2005

## 781st BOMB SQUADRON GETS KO'D THE 'JERRIES' COULD NOT DO IT- IT TOOK 'RITA' TO DELIVER THE KNOCKOUT



So Soft!-- So Fluffy!----OH SO WOW!!

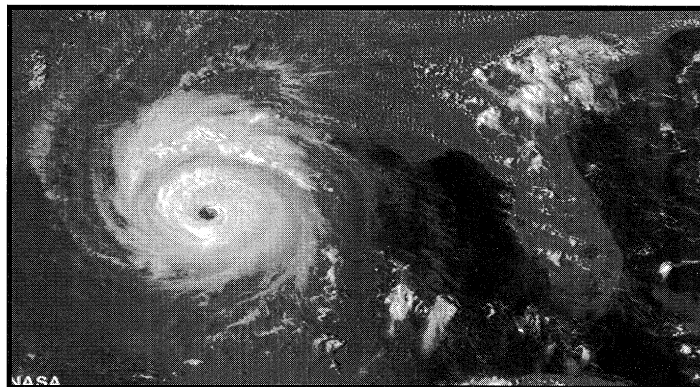
On A Mission Of Havic And Destruction

# The Headlines Of 'RITA'

## Texas Coast Braces For Rita

### 1.1 Million Ordered To Evacuate Homes

**Sept. 21** -- Hurricane Rita, a massive storm packing 165-mph winds and destructive force equal to the might of Hurricane Katrina, tracked through the Gulf of Mexico on Wednesday, prompting evacuation orders for more than 1.1 million Texans and the few remaining holdouts in storm-ravaged New Orleans. After nicking the Florida Keys as a Category 2 storm, Rita intensified to Category 5 status, the highest ranking used by the National Hurricane Center. Authorities in Galveston, Tex., a coastal city of 60,000, ordered mandatory evacuations. By midday, a 20-mile line of cars snaked up Interstate 45 out of Galveston -- scene of the deadliest hurricane in U.S. history when an unnamed storm killed 8,000 to 10,000 people in 1900. Thousands of cars crammed roads around Houston, the nation's fourth-largest city, where authorities also ordered residents in low lying areas to evacuate..



## Hurricane Rita Lashes Gulf Coast

Hurricane Rita has left a trail of destruction after pounding the US Gulf Coast with driving wind and rains.

The storms caused structural damage but the Federal Emergency Management Agency says it is not as bad as expected.

Fema also said the mass evacuation had worked as there had been no reports of deaths as a result of the storm.

Rita has weakened to a Category One hurricane but fires at power stations have left about one million people in Texas without electricity.



## Texans Flee Colossal Rita

**Category 5 storm is third most intense ever**

**MIAMI, Florida (CNN)** -- As more than 1 million people scurried to get out of the way of Hurricane Rita, the Category 5 hurricane grew more turbulent, becoming the third most intense storm in history, the National Hurricane Center said Wednesday night.

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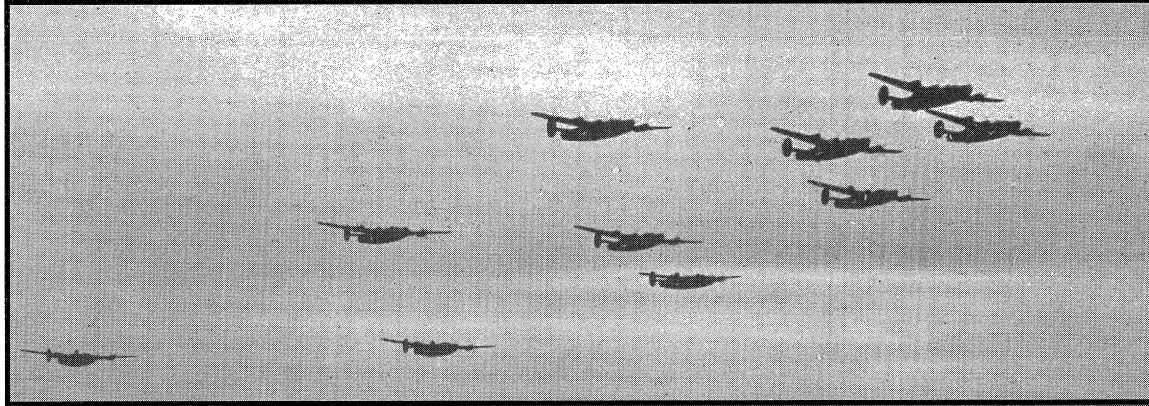
781st BOMB SQUADRON (H)  
Part of the 465th Bomb Gp. 15th AF  
Italy 1944-1945  
Flew 191 Missions over Southern Europe  
dropping thousands of tons of  
death and destruction to the enemy.  
Shot down 25 enemy aircraft  
Received Two  
Presidential Unit Citations



## THE SQUADRON HISTORY CONTINUES.....

From ISSUE # 80, page 8.....

Another Oil Refinery was hit on 28 August when the Szony Refinery near Komorom, Hungary was the target. Crews with Lts. Frazier, Doyle, Hon, Van Slyke, Eaton, Wheeler, and Schuster took part. Lt. Schuster completed the required fifty missions with this effort.....



The Group rendezvoused on 29 August for the tenth consecutive day to attack an Axis target, this time the Marshaling Yard at Moravska-Ostrava, Czechoslovakia. Unsatisfactory weather dictated bombing by Pathfinder and all bombs appeared to land in an open field.

Participating were Crews with Lts. Stenersen, Siefert, Van Slyke, Rice, Wheeler, Gaines, and Branch.

Lt. Branch completed his required fifty missions.

Two new Crews reported to the Squadron on 29 August with Pilots 1st Lt. Jack W Hudson and 2nd Lt. James C. Althoff.

No missions were flown on 30 August nor 31 August. Two more Combat Crews were assigned to the Squadron on the latter date with 2nd Lt. Carl V. Dahl and 2nd Lt. William J. Smith the Pilots. And by this date in August troops commanded by General George Patton had captured Paris.

Capt. John R. Dickey (MIA) was awarded the Silver Star during August as described on Page 39. T/Sgt. Harry M. Smith, Engineer on Lt. Prince's Crew also received the Silver Star.

During this month enemy aircraft opposition was relatively light with the exception of the Friedrichshafen mission on the 3rd, but on that raid,

the 781st gunners kept up their fine record.

The claims for this mission and the only claims for the month were: S/Sgt. William G. Poulos (Lt. Ashley's Crew) one Me-109 destroyed; Sgt. James Balsano (Lt. Eaton's Crew) one Me-109 destroyed; S/Sgt. Romeo Le Bel (Lt. J. T. Smith's Crew) one Me-109 destroyed; S/Sgt. J.J. Jakoby (Lt. J. T. Smith's Crew) one Me-109 destroyed; S/Sgt. Dennis B. Flaherty (Capt. Willett's Crew) one Me-109 destroyed; S/Sgt. Olin R. Morris (Lt. Ashley's Crew) one Me-109 probable; S/Sgt. Leo Seltz (Lt. Van Slyke's Crew) one Me-109 probable; Sgt. Theron R. Robinson (Lt. Frazier's Crew) one FW-190 probable; and S/Sgt. Kenneth Kopp (Lt. J. T. Smith's Crew) one FW-190 damaged.

In addition to the change in the Operations Section in August, Maj. Wallace S. Crouch was relieved on the 8th because of ill health from his assignment as Squadron Executive Officer. Capt. Oscar F J. Adler was assigned to replace him. And, also on the 8th, 2nd. Lt. John P McCleary was attached to the Squadron as the Radar Maintenance Officer.

The 465th Group had received numerous commendations dur-

ing its first three months of combat operations, but on August 20th, the most outstanding one was directed to the Group by Maj. Gen. Nathan F Twining.

In substance, the Group was cited for its record high score in bombing during the first three weeks of August as well as the highest

record in the Air Force for victories over enemy fighters against its own losses to enemy aircraft. It was with a feeling of pride that every man in the Squadron received this hard earned recognition.

The Squadron also received its share of personal awards during the month.

For exceptionally outstanding performance of duty and display of skill and courage, the following men received the Distinguished Flying Cross: Lt. Col. Clarence J. Lokker, Capt. James W Wray, Jr., Capt. Henry L. Willett, Capt. William P Wood, 1st Lt. Thomas J. O'Brien, 1st Lt. Leslie J. Wheeler, 1st Lt. Roland J. Soucy, T/Sgts. Harold C. Butterfield, Earl J. Chase, Albert P McQuald, Samuel P. Shelby, Charles T. Shoults and S/Sgt. Bennie C. Nattichioni.

Two other awards for outstanding skill and courage in the performance of duty were made during the month to S/Sgts. Morris E. Godwin and Kennard R. Wiggins when they received the Soldiers Medal.

For wounds received from enemy action, the following men were awarded the Purple Heart:

1st Lt. Thomas J. O'Brien, 1st Lt. Seth H. Hawkins, 1st Lt. Harold D. Holden and T/Sgt. Harry M. Smith.

To the following men, the second, third and fourth Bronze Oak Leaf clusters to the Air Medal were awarded: T/Sgts. Harold W Gordon, Ronald E. Hill, and James R. Zimmerman and S/Sgts. Norman Hunter, Joe A. Lavender, Bill G. Poulos, Oliver E. Graham and Walter M. Longacre.

HISTORY From pg.3

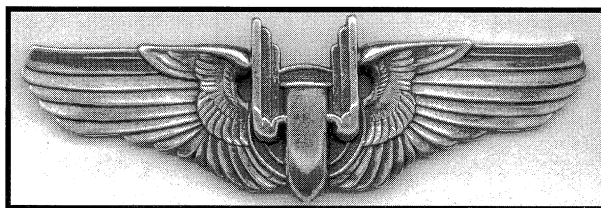
The second and third Bronze Oak Leaf clusters to the Air Medal were awarded the following men: 1st Lts. George R. Ashley, Philip F. Schuster, Robert L. Shetterly, Leo A. Fink, Griscom Bettel, Roland C. Taylor, Thomas G. Arthur, Alfred W. Rodman and Donald E. Fleming; 2nd Lts. John Fondry, Joseph M. Neuman and Billie L. Bickley; and T/Sgts. Earl J. Chase, Joseph L. Kaufman, Louis F. Kurek, Albert P. LeBlanc, Charles T. Shoults, Robert P. McCague, Lawrence H. White, George S. Wilson and S/Sgts. George D. Cocalis, Joseph F. Ferguson, Dennis B. Flaherty; John H. Forhan, Paul E. Gordon, William W. Strickland, Herbert F. Green, John Jurdyga, Paul H. Mallette, Albert Mimer, Olin R. Morris, Gino Pellesehi, Edwin J. Schreiner, Harold A. Straughan, Albert N. Thompson, James V. Wagner, Jerome K. Williams, and John E. Wlodarski.

The first, second and third Bronze Oak Leaf clusters to the Air Medal were awarded to 1st Lt. Ralford L. Crouch and 2nd Lt. Robert H. Matthews.

The second Bronze Oak Leaf cluster to the Air Medal was awarded to the following men: Capt. Henry L. Willett and Capt. Lewis M. Roberts (MIA); 1st Lts. Charles V. Stenersen, Leslie S. Wheeler, Kenneth B. Braley, James B. Doyle, Arthur C. Eaton, Harold A. Givens, Roland J. Soucy, Elliott B. Sweet (MIA); 2nd Lts. Donald A. Barrett (MIA), William A. McBride, Samuel F. Monroe, Alexander A. Stephens; T/Sgts. Aubrey L. Barksdale, Harold C. Butterfield, Clifton C. Flowers, Dowie J. Hymans (MIA), James H. Kienitz, Manuel Quinones, Stavalus Tserigotis, Horace E. Williams, Roy H. Folk, Charles R. Holzhauer, Samuel P. Shelby, Jewell C. Shellnutt; S/Sgts. Quincy F. Adams, Nicholas C. Belik, Melvin L. Derry, David L. Downes, Harry R. Edwards, Arthur N. Franklin, Charles N.

Fry, Melvin R. Fulkerson (MIA), Raymond J. Huch, Benjamin L. Kraeger, Louis L. Le Haye, Milton W. Landsverk, Lewis D. Levang, Stephen J. Mariniak, Kennard R. Wiggins, Robert C. Williams, Calder M. Lamprey, Joseph P. McDevitt, Joseph Ragan and Reyer Swan.

The first and second Bronze Oak Leaf clusters were awarded to the following men: 1st Lts. Rae W. Branch and William A. Gill; T/Sgts. Hulitt L. Holcombe, Darrell E. Kinney, Raymond J. MacDonald,



Harold F. Burchards (MIA), and William G. Iylavsky; and S/Sgts. Leonard H. Emmel (MIA), Willie M. Golden (MIA), Roy L. Duffy, Dean F. Jones, Ones C. Farmer, Kenneth J. Kopp, Clifford M. Grant, Bennie C. Nattichioni and Frederick P. Yost.

The first Bronze Oak Leaf cluster to the Air Medal was awarded to the following men: Capt. James W. Wray and Capt. John R. Dickey (MIA), 1st Lts. James J. Lyons (MIA), Albert W. Myers, Bernard Badler, Robert R. Gaston, Gerald A. Siefert, Dale C. Tipton (MIA); 2nd Lts. William J. West, Vernon L. Burda (MIA), Eugene M. Krzyzynski (MIA), Eugene A. Weiss (MIA), John L. E. Noyer; T/Sgt. Frank R. Jasicko

(MIA); S/Sgts. James J. Balsano, Charles D. Hudson, Theron R. Robinson, George Wingate, Paul B. Brady (MIA), Michael Deironimi (MIA), Harold B. Farrar (MIA), Robert A. Hoover, Albert D. Ralston (MIA); and Sgt. Edward G. Denny.

The Air Medal and first Oak Leaf Cluster to it were awarded to S/Sgts. Lowell M. Lunn, Eugene F. Fenner and Francis J. Walborn.

The Air Medal was awarded to the following men: 1st Lts. Frederick L. Drow and John J. Hughes, 2nd Lts. Robert L. Fifield, George A. Leggate, Charles G. Little, William A. McGonigle, Marvin C. Rice; Flight Officers Raymond F. Morse, Donald E. Thomey; S/Sgts. Oscar E. Baumgardner, Jesse C. Edge, Joseph Radzik; and Sgts. Harold W. Grant, Romeo V.

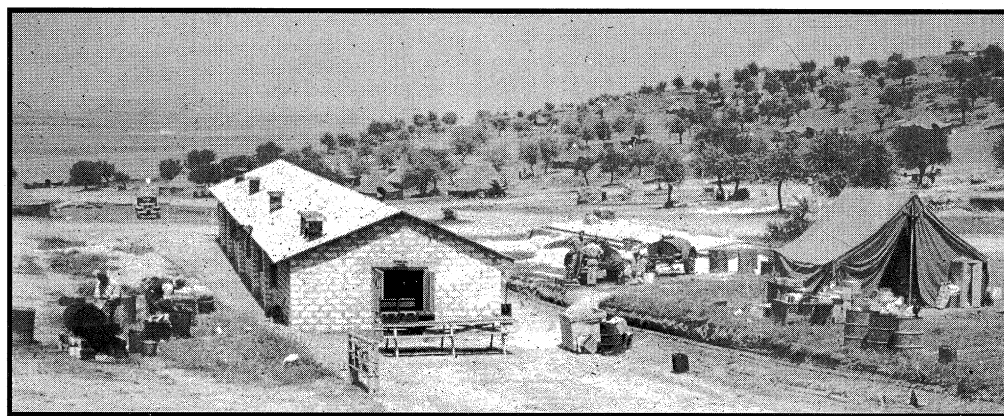
Le Bel, Alvin T. Marchbanks and Otto L. Marcucci.

The personnel strength of the Squadron as of 2400 hours 31 August 1944 was as follows: Officers - 107 assigned, 2 attached; Enlisted Men - 420 assigned, 28 attached.

### September 1944

September opened with a very successful mission on the first day, bombing the Railroad Bridge at Szajol, Hungary. Crews with Lts. Frazier, Van Slyke, Doyle, Siefert, Blakita, Gaines, and Hurd participated.

The Crew of Lt. Hurd finished their required fifty missions on this attack



781st. Enlisted Men's Mess Hall

Frank Ambrose-Photo



and the Crew of Lt. Arthur A. Zalk was assigned to the Squadron on this date.

On 2 September the target was the Marshaling Yards at Nis, Yugoslavia with poor results. Crews with Capt. Willett, and Lts. Athon, Blakita, Gaines, Hudson, Doyle, and Wheeler participated.

The Crews of Lts. Doyle and Wheeler completed their required fifty missions.

Also on this date seventeen Crew members who had been prisoners of war of the Rumanians, until their release in late August, returned to the Squadron. Details of this were covered in the comments of 6 June. No mission was scheduled for 3 September.

On 4 September the target attacked was the Marshaling Yards at Bronzolo, Italy. Participating were Crews with Lt. Col. Lokker, and Lts. Van Slyke, Stenersen, Van Asperen, Gaines, Hudson, and Siefert. Good results were achieved.

The Crew of Lt. Siefert finished their required fifty missions and the Crew of 2nd Lt. John A. Nelson was assigned to the Squadron on this date.

On 5 September bad weather precluded combat operations. This was a day of tragedy for the newly assigned Crew of Lt. Nelson. While the Crew was on a practice mission, the Navigator, F/O Newton S. Goldman, accidentally fell through the nose wheel door of the B-24. He was not wearing a parachute and was killed in the fall to the ground between the Group Hospital and the Squadron Officers living area.

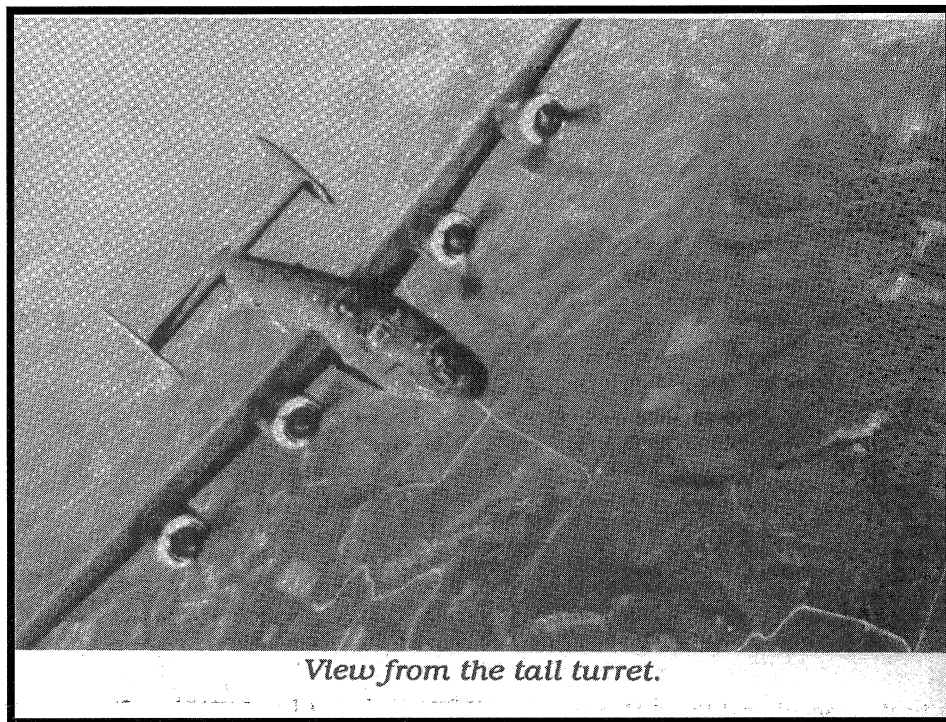
Lt. Ernie Van Asperen was standing just outside his tent and still recalls with vivid horror the experience of watching Lt. Newborg fall.

Also on 5 September, 1st Lt. George A. Leggate formerly a First Pilot in the Squadron was reassigned to the Unit from the 783rd Squadron.

The target on 6 September was the Marshaling Yards at Nyireghaza, Hungary. Excellent results were

achieved and Crews with Lts. Athon, Van Slyke, W J. Smith, Van Asperen, Hudson, and Dahi took part.

On the return, Lt. Dahi was forced by mechanical failure in his aircraft to make an emergency landing in a wheat field just short of Pantanella.



*View from the tail turret.*

The landing was expertly accomplished and no Crew members were injured.

No missions were flown during the next three days but on 10 September the Group attacked the Osterreichische Saurerwerke-Dieseleng Factory at Vienna, Austria.

Adverse weather dictated bombing by Pathfinder and results could not be observed. Crews with Lts. Stenersen, Van Slyke, W J. Smith, Gaines, Dahi, and Leggate participated, with the latter two failing to return.

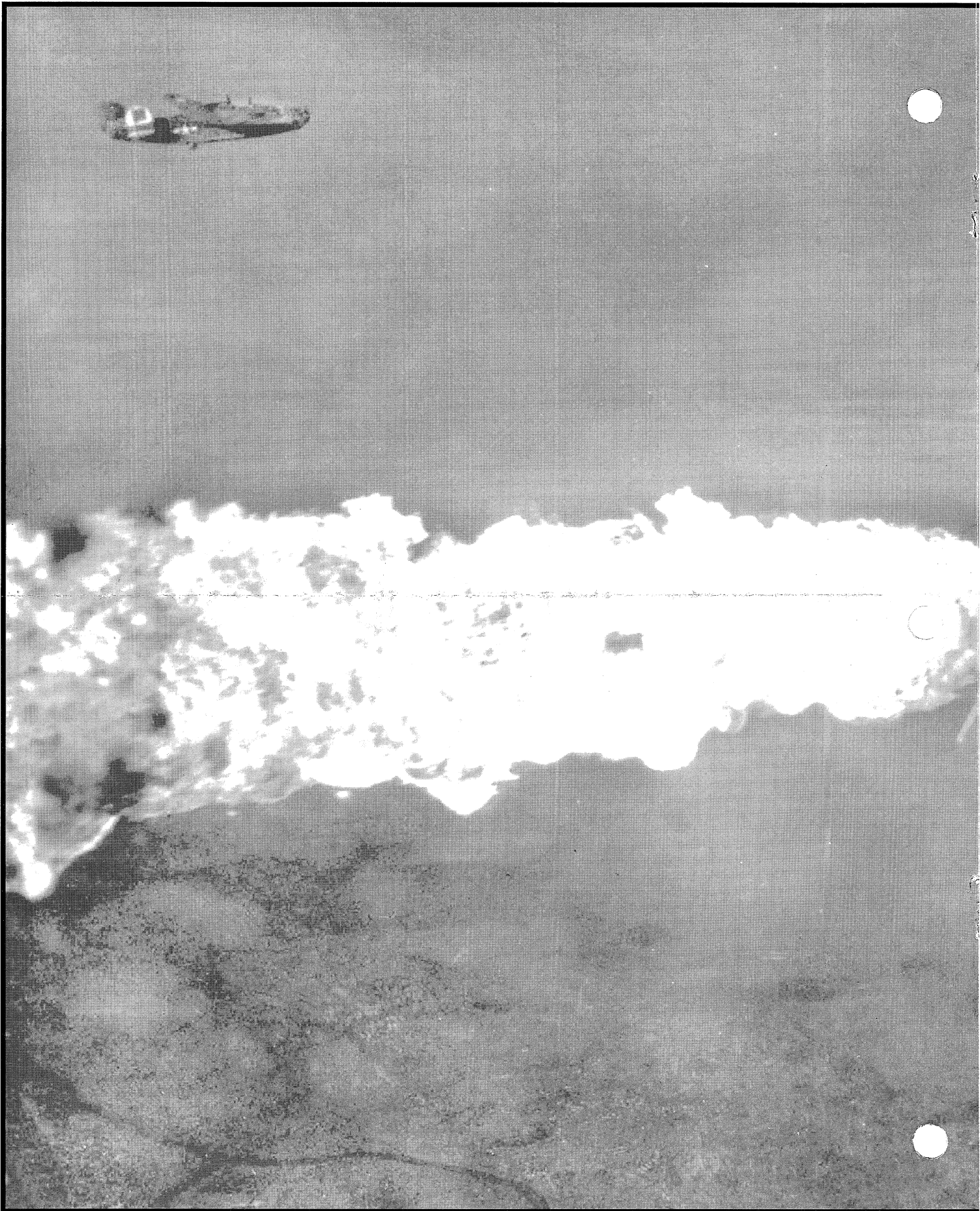
Lt. Leggate's plane was shot down by antiaircraft fire over the target area. The Crew with Lt. Leggate consisted of: 1st Lt. George A. Leggate, Pilot; 2nd Lt. John A. Nelson, Co-Pilot; 2nd Lt. Valmore A. Schilleman, Co-Pilot; 2nd Lt. Lewis C. Gordon, Bombardier; Sgt. Paul S. Fischer, Engineer; Sgt. Sam J. Ippolito, R/O; Sgt. Ray E. Davis, Gunner; Sgt. Harry Reuss, Gunner; Sgt. Roger E. Neimann, Gunner, and Sgt. Lyle A. Hermanson, Gunner.

Lt. Dahl's plane was so badly shot up that the Crew was forced to bail out over Yugoslavia en route back to Pantanella. Crew members on this plane were: Lt. Carl V Dahl, Pilot; Lt. Warren L. Beeson, Co-Pilot; Lt. William A.

Rachow, Bombardier; Lt. Cornelius V Culhane, Navigator; Sgt. Franklin B. Martinez, Engr.; Sgt. Howard J. Percy, Jr., R/O; Sgt. John P Layne, Gunner; Sgt. Richard E. Perkins, Gunner; Sgt. Jack C. Pettigrew, Gunner; and Sgt. Adrian A. Martin, Gunner.

During the briefing for this mission Intelligence had warned that the concentration of antiaircraft at the target was the heaviest in all of Europe.

Lt. Dahl wrote in his notes afterward that, "flak was so thick over the target run it looked like one could walk on the black and gray smoke from the shell bursts. Bursting shell fragments 'thunked' as they pierced the skin of the plane and rattled off like hailstones. Then suddenly, from the waist, came the shout, 'We're hit' over the intercom. Oil was pouring from the left outboard engine in a cloud of smoke and fire. An instant later a huge hole appeared with a loud 'clunk' just







Lt. Col. Lokker's Plane  
Hit By Flak Over  
Blechhammer

20 Nov. 44



History from pg 5

in front of the Pilot as a German 88mm shell went right through the ship entering the bottom and going out the top without exploding! It passed cleanly between Rocky, the Bombardier, and Cuihane, the Navigator, without touching either of them.

"Finally 'Bombs away' was heard and the Squadron began a right turn off the target. Then, another shout over the intercom from the waist, 'We're hit again' and #3 engine was streaming flames and smoke. Fire extinguishers took care of the fires in both engines but with two feathered props it was no longer possible to keep up with the formation and the decision was made to try for the island of Vis. But a large

must have seemed a sitting duck with our two feathered props as the fighters made pass after pass at us, exchanging gunfire with our waist and turret 50 millimeters. Our gunners claimed three kills before the remaining fighters broke off, apparently deciding that they had finished us off. We had taken numerous hits and now #2 engine began to lose power and soon froze up with a terrible vibration. The prop could not be feathered, creating additional drag on the one remaining engine.

We no longer had any hope of reaching Vis and the only choice left to us was to bail out, and quickly in spite of the fact that we were over heavily wooded mountains in Yugoslavian Partisan territory"

Lt. Beeson, however, was severely injured during his parachute landing and was returned to the United States without rejoining the Squadron. Lt. Rachow and Sgt. Martinez, were separated from the others and returned to the Squadron on 19 September. They had spent the first day after bailout in the hands of Yugoslavian Partisans and then with a British military unit waiting for the weather to clear so that a C-47 could land to return them to Italy. They rejoined the Squadron on 19 September.

In 1988, Jim Wray recalled the situation facing Crews who were forced to bail out over Yugoslavia, "The Yuso-slavs had three 'Political Parties', each dedicated to 'own' the country, Tito's Partisans were friendly to and supplied by the

U.S., however they were dominated in many areas by the Germans and in those areas they were forced to turn us over to them.

Mehilavic's Chetnicks were a strong faction backed all the way by Germans. When Mehilavic was killed by the Partisans the Chetnick party pretty much fell apart. The Ustashi hated the other two parties and the Germans and the U.S. Supposedly backed by Russia, they killed everyone. Fortunately, they were a small minority.



"Yankee Ingenuity" "RIPLIN RYTHM"

Frank Ambrose-Photo

concentration of enemy fighters had been reported to be located between us and Vis. And our fighter escort had been forced to leave because they were running out of fuel.

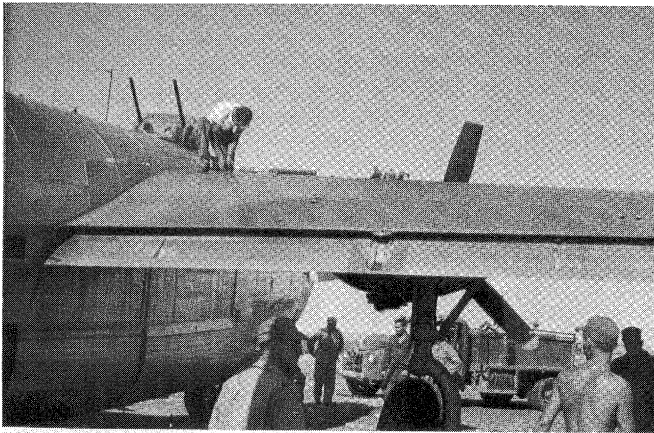
'As we skirted the Lake Balaton area several German fighters dropped out of the sky on us and we were in a real dogfight. We

The Crew was fortunate to get help immediately upon landing and eight members of the Crew, all except Lt. Rachow and Sgt. Martinez, returned to Bari, Italy within twelve hours after bailing out. Seven of them rejoined the Squadron at Pantanella two days later and resumed flying.

Our escape maps showed the small Partisan strongholds and, when we were forced to bail out, and we were fortunate if we were able to jump into one of those....."

The "Squadron History" will continue in the next Issue





Left to Right, Top to Bottom

1. Flak damage.
2. Cpl. George Soroka and Sgt. Charles Ferich dig a foundation for their casa.
3. Cpl. James Gingrich, S/Sgt. Ralph Deacon, Lt. John Zartman, Cpl. Harold Rogers, and (front) Cpl. Richard Seabridge.
4. Lts. "Spec" Christian, T.J. Atkins, John Wilson, and "Gus" Clodfelter.
5. No Identification.
6. Lt. Cols. McKenna and Lokker (on table) help celebrate fifty missions completed by S/Sgt. Olin Morris, the first man in the Squadron to do so. It also celebrated return to the Squadron of five men from Lt. George Prince's Crew, see page 32.

A Page From The  
781st Bombardment Squadron History Book  
(Page 60)

## LETTERS

**From:** "Robert Freed"  
**To:** "Frank Ambrose"  
**Subject:** b-24 Liberators  
**Date:** Wed, 7 Sep 2005  
**Frank:**

A long time ago I believe I wrote to you about a magazine that I get at the beginning of each quarter of the year --this is called Historic Aviation and is available to anyone provided they send a note to their headquarters asking them to insert your name on their mailing agenda.. This magazine is nothing more than illustrations of various models, books, art & videos including up-to-date planes that people might be interested in. On the computer you can pick them up thus [www.HistoricAviation.com](http://www.HistoricAviation.com)---Fax is 651-635-0700 --- phone toll free 800-225-5575 --- I just rec'd my 3rd quarter free magazine and noted the company will once again have available a calendar for the year 2006. (This calendar is usually black & white and 12" x 9") and I've had one starting with 2003, 2004, 2005 and the cost has remained steady @ \$9.95.) If your interested well I've given you herein all the information you need. This is not a push on my part as the next info will show. The magazine carries a 224 page book (illustrated) entitled the 464th Bomb Group in action over the third Reich. Primarily devoted to raids over Ploesti. I don't understand how the folks of the 464th can get away with this as you and I both know they weren't any good and had a multitude of losses until Col. McKenna was transferred over to the other hill. The 465th and primarily the 781st had a much better record. Who these guys know in Hollywood must be pretty high up with connections to rate the 464th over us. Anyway I just thought you'd like to know that this group must have some high influence that we do not. This hard cover cover book is featured as item 6332C @ \$59.95. Maybe Ogden would permit your purchase. Up to you what you want to do.  
 Bob Freed

## How Our Government Works

Once upon a time the government had a vast scrap yard in the middle of a desert. Congress said, "Someone may steal from it at night." So they created a night watchman position and hired a person at \$18,000.00 a year for the job.

Then Congress said, "How does the watchman do his job without instruction?" So they created a planning department and hired two people, one person to write the instructions for \$22,000.00, and one person to do time studies for an additional \$22,000.00 per year.

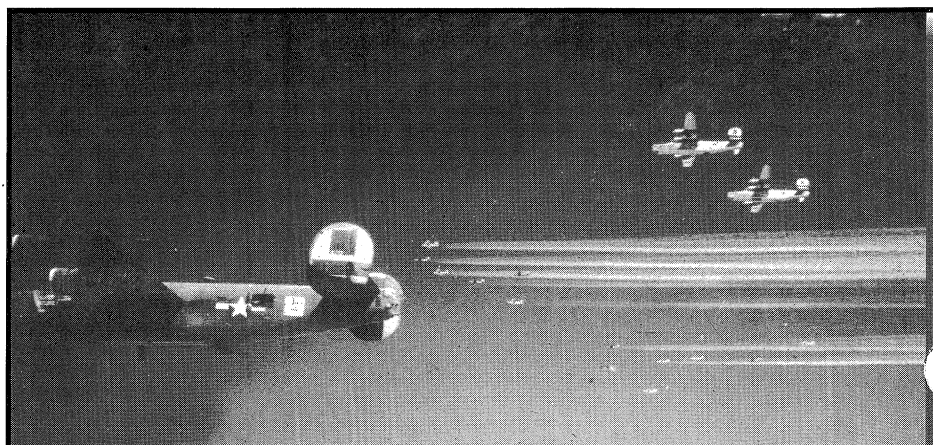
Then Congress said, "How will we know the night watchman is doing the tasks correctly?" So they created a Quality Control department and hired two people. One to do the studies for \$31,000.00 and one to write the reports for an additional \$31,000.00 per year.

Then Congress said, "How are these people going to get paid?" So they created the following positions, a time keeper for \$35,000.00 annual salary, and a payroll officer for an additional \$35,000.00, then hired two people.

Then Congress said, "Who will be accountable for all of these people?" So they created an administrative section and hired three people, an Administrative Officer at \$155,000.00 per year, Assistant Administrative Officer \$125,000.00, and a Legal Secretary for an additional \$100,000.00 per year.

Then Congress said, "We have had this operating for one year with a budget cost of \$574,000.00 and we are \$18,000 over budget. We must cutback overall cost." So they laid off the night watchman.

It makes sense to me!





**FOLDED WINGS**

**Albert I. Thompson Ashley**, top gunner. Passed away June 1, 2005. He had been ill for the past year and succumbed to bile duct or pancreatic cancer.

**George A. Soraoka** 87, folded his wings May 18, 2005 after a courageous battle with cancer. Reported by his daughter, Kim Cherry.

**Frank Miller**, Engineering, passed away April 5, 2005.

**Andrew F. Dobek**, McDaniel Engineer, folded his wings 31 January 2005. Reported by his wife Helen.

**McHenry Hamilton**, Goup CO, died June 2, 2005. He was assigned as Deputy CO on 20 March 1945. He was shot down over Vienna on 22 March 1945. He was released from POW camp by Gen. Patton. Reported by his wife Pat Hamilton.

**Wayne Grubaugh**, Joyner Bombardier, folded his wings 17 March 2005. Reported by his wife Micki.

**Dick G. Krekel**, Brennenman Tail Gunner, folded his wings June 11, 2005. Reported by Ken Clemmer, Brennaman Navigator.

Our thoughts  
and prayers  
are with all  
our fallen comrades  
who have found  
everlasting peace.

You have served  
your country well.  
We will remember  
you forever.

**PRESIDENTS CORNER**

Well, this time, your President (or is it Secretary?) has a complaint about the roster records that are being maintained(!)

When it became apparent that the 2005 reunion could not be held as scheduled in Shreveport, LA October 6-8, 2005, It was necessary to contact each attendee, asking some questions that would have been answered, at our annual Business Meeting. Out of the 25 attendees, there were 7 whose phone numbers were incorrect in the Roster. (Often just a changed area code) Please, would each of you inform me of your correct telephone number, and E-mail address, if you have one. I think that it is very important to keep the telephone list up to date so that when contact is required, it can be accomplished.

In addition to necessary contacts such as the one RITA caused, there is a need to have a central location where this information is available to all members of the Association. Just send a card with the updated info on it to me, I will take care of the Roster.

As far as RITA is concerned, I have no news from any of the members to pass along. KATRINA is another matter. Charles (Bubba) and Mamie Braud reported that a branch from a tree in their yard came through the roof of their den. No one was injured and only minor leakage resulted.. They were lucky and so were all the association members along the Gulf Coast!

The use of "our" motel rooms by the U.S. Government in Shreveport is for an indeterminate period, so we have no knowledge of whether we could reschedule before the end of the year, or not. It has been decided, in view of this situation, to cancel the reunion completely for 2005. We may decide to go to Shreveport in 2006 however. Our plans for 2005 were complete. It would be fairly simple to just change the dates into 2006.

Refund checks from the 781st Association Treasury have been issued to all of the members that had signed up for activities in Shreveport. We would wish that all Airlines were as cooperative with those who purchased non-refundable tickets for travel to Shreveport. The arrival of RITA and the loss of "our" motel rooms can in no way be assigned to the traveler. If you are having difficulty getting a refund from your airline, please have them verify this statement with Jo Dee Minter, Director of Sales, at the Holiday Inn, Financial Plaza, in Shreveport. She can be reached, during normal business hours at 318-688-3000.

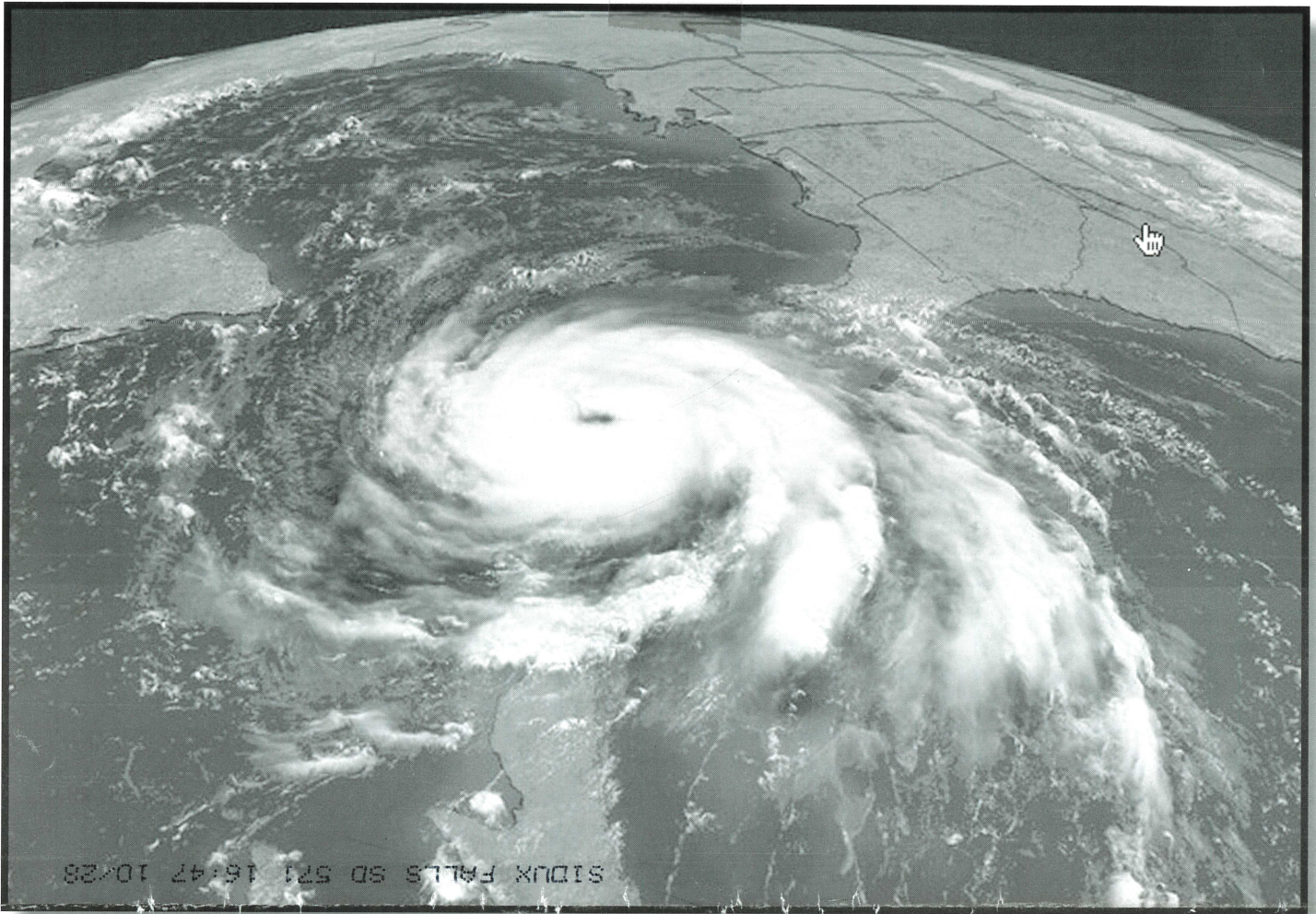
Unlike Bill O'Reilly, your President does not bloviate as part of his job description. We do need input from all of you out there so that the paper can continue to be published.

**TREASURER'S REPORT**

Wells Fargo Bank reports the following account status  
As of the close of business on Sept. 30, 2005

781st. Bomb Squadron Business Checkin.....	\$1,954.30
PMA checking (Reunion).....	\$702.25
PMA Savings.....	\$37,722.00
Total.....	\$40,786.61

There are no outstanding obligations on any of these accounts



Bird's Eye View of 'Rita' as it passes over Florida

1/1/2006  
ORREN LEE  
2312 BRAEMAR DR.  
SOUIX FALLS, SD 57105

