



PANTANELLA NEWS

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85 September 2006

SHREVEPORT BRACES FOR ONSLAUGHT OF WWII FLYERS RECORD TURNOUT EXPECTED

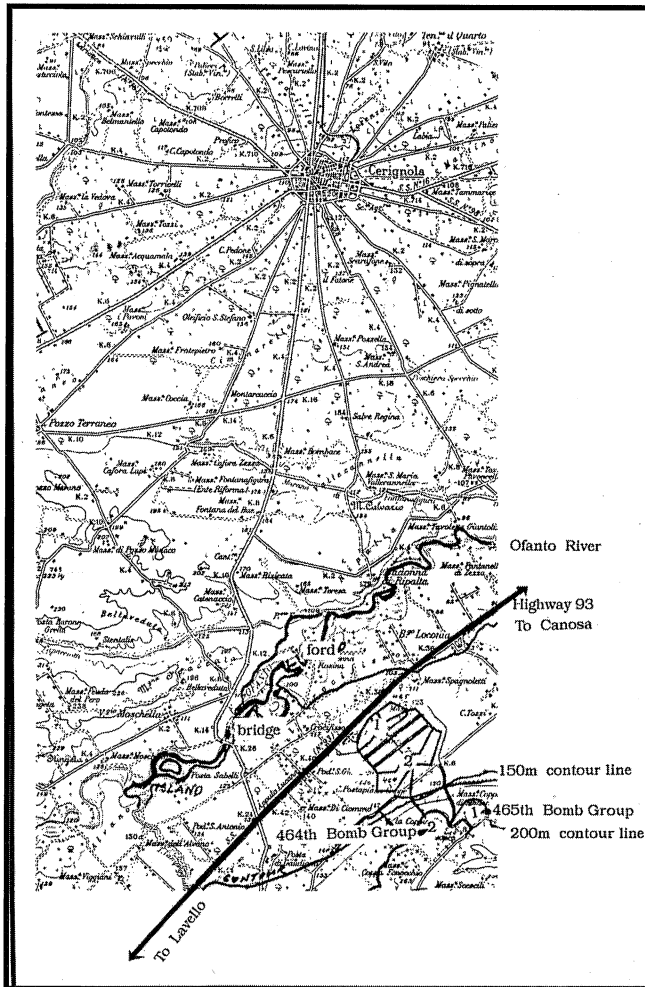


Navy Lt. Ron Candiloro's F/A-18 Hornet creates a shock wave as he broke the sound barrier July 7, 1999. The shock wave is visible as a large cloud of condensation formed by the cooling of the air. A smaller shock wave can be seen forming on top of the canopy.

Design John Gay, photo officer for Fighter Squadron Two (VF 2), shot this image from the 0-10 level weather deck (the uppermost deck on the island) of USS Constellation (CV 64).

IT'S NOT TOO LATE - SIGN-UP NOW FOR SHREVEPORT REUNION OCTOBER 2-3-4

WHERE OR WHERE IS PANTANELLA?



Pantanella Army Air Base was located in south-central Italy in the Ofanto River valley about 18 kilometers (11.25 miles) southwest of Canosa and about 14 kilometers (8.75 miles) northeast of Lavello.

John L. Wilson, Bombardier on Donald Clodfelter's Crew, researched very thoroughly in 1987 the generally accepted story of a wealthy and noble family of that name somewhere in the area and discovered that it was intriguing but completely wrong.

After some time he found in a Detroit library a detailed map which had the name Pantanella on precisely the spot where the base was located.

The Italian Consul at Detroit ultimately referred him to the Italian Cultural Institute in New York City where he was assured by the lady contact that, except for a small suburb of a town remotely north of the air-base, Pantanella as a political entity did not exist.

John wrote that he asked, "if she could think of a derivation of the word. There was a long silence and she said, 'Of course-Pantano!' Pantano means a field almost surrounded by streams of water. I asked if Pantanella would be the diminutive, a small field-and she said, 'you have it!'"

So finally, it was established that Pantanella meant only a small field, no nobility involved. The name likely was simply picked off the map by the Engineers who laid out the Base.

Returning members of the 781st Association visited the site of the Base and found only the farm buildings which were there when the Group arrived in 1944, and the Chapel which the Group had built was being used to store miscellaneous farm machinery.

All signs of a former military base are gone.

781st Bomb Squadron Association
c/o Barney Russell
3 Mimosa Circle
Magnolia, AR 71753-2648

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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

ATTENTION !! ALL MEMBERS AND FAMILIES IMPORTANT ADDRESSES TO REMEMBER

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The Sonic Boom

A sonic boom is the audible component of shock wave in air. The term is commonly used to refer to the air shocks caused by the supersonic flight of military or passenger aircraft such as Concorde (no longer flying) and the Space Shuttle.

Sonic booms generate enormous amounts of sound energy, sounding much like an explosion; typically the shock front may approach 167 megawatts per square meter, and may exceed 200 decibels.

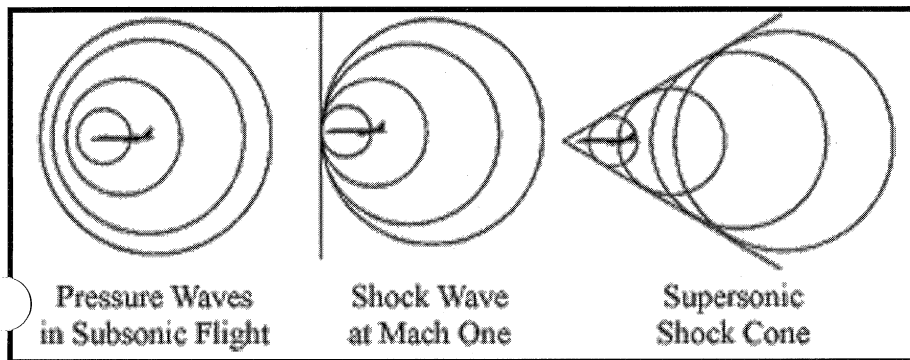
As an object moves through the air, it creates a series of pressure waves in front of it and behind it, similar to the bow and stern waves created by a boat. These waves travel at the speed of sound, and as the speed of the aircraft increases the waves are forced together or 'compressed'

long as the aircraft is supersonic, it traces out a path on the ground following the aircraft's flight path, known as the boom carpet.

A sonic boom or "tunnel boom" can also be caused by high-speed trains in tunnels (such as the Japanese network of high-speed railway lines). In order to reduce the sonic boom effect, a special shape of the traincar and a widened opening of the tunnel entrance is necessary. When a high speed train enters a tunnel, the sonic boom effect occurs at the tunnel exit.

In contrast to the (super)sonic boom of an aircraft, this "tunnel boom" is caused by a rapid change of subsonic flow (from the sudden narrowing of the surrounding space) rather than by a shock wave.

The Sight of Sound



because they cannot "get out of the way" of each other, eventually merging into a single shock wave at the speed of sound.

This critical speed is known as Mach 1 and is approximately 1,225 kilometers per hour (761 mph) at sea level.

In smooth flight, the shock wave starts at the nose of the aircraft and ends at the tail. There is a sudden rise in pressure at the nose, decreasing steadily to a negative pressure at the tail, where it suddenly returns to normal.

The "boom" is experienced when there is a sudden rise in pressure, so the

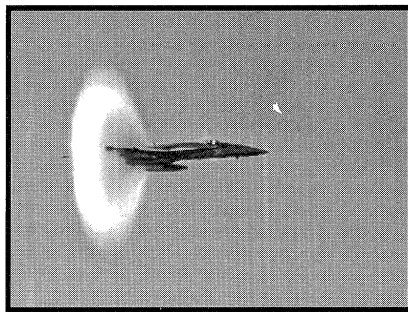
N-wave causes two booms, one when the initial pressure rise from the nose hits, and another when the tail passes and the pressure suddenly returns to normal. This leads to a distinctive "double boom" from supersonic aircraft.

When maneuvering, the pressure distribution changes into different forms, with a characteristic U-wave shape. Since the boom is being generated continually as

Condensation clouds that form around jets as they fly at or near the speed of sound, (often called "going through the sound barrier" or "accelerating past the speed of sound"). Under the right conditions, they sometimes cause a vapor cone effect.

The change in pressure as the plane outruns all of the pressure and sound waves in front of it is heard on the ground as an explosion or sonic boom. The pressure change condenses the water in the air as the jet passes these waves. Altitude, wind speed, humidity,

the shape and trajectory of the plane - all of these affect the breaking of this barrier. The slightest drag or atmospheric pull on the plane shatters the vapor oval like fireworks as the plane passes through. It is possible for a skilled pilot to work the plane's throttle to move the shock wave forward or aft.



THE U.S. AIR FORCE

World War II had been over for two years and the Korean War lay three years ahead when the Air Force ended a 40-year association with the U.S. Army to become a separate service.

The U.S. Air Force thus entered a new era in which airpower became firmly established as a major element of the nation's defense and one of its chief hopes for deterring war.

The Department of the Air Force was created when President Harry S. Truman signed the National Security Act of 1947. It became effective Sept. 18, 1947, when Chief Justice Fred M. Vinson administered the oath of office to the first secretary of the Air Force, W. Stuart Symington, a position filled by presidential appointment.

Under the National Security Act, the functions assigned to the Army Air Force's commanding general transferred to the Department of the Air Force. The act provided for an orderly two-year transfer of these functions as well as property, personnel and records.

Later, under the Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1958, the departments of Army, Navy and Air Force were eliminated from the chain of operational command.

Commanders of unified and specified commands became responsible to the president and the secretary of defense through the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

The act redefined the functions of the military departments to those of essentially organizing, training, equipping and supporting combat forces for the unified and specified commands. Each military department retained resource management of its service.



IT'S NOT TOO LATE--SIGN-UP NOW FOR SHREVEPORT REUNION OCTOBER 2-3-4

The Squadron History It Continues--

Continued from Page 8: Issue #81

No mission was scheduled for the 11th and a new Crew piloted by 2nd Lt. Robert E. Martz was assigned to the Squadron on this date. Also on the 11th, 1st Lt. Ray U. Tyler, Squadron Cryptographic Security Officer, was transferred to Group Headquarters.

The target for 12 September was the Wassersburg Jet Propelled Aircraft Factory near Gunzburg, Germany. Crews piloted by Capt. Athon, and Lts. Van Asperen, W J. Smith, Rice, Hudson, Zalk, and Frazier took part with fair results.

On 13 September the Group attacked the Synthetic Oil Refinery and Rubber Plant at Oswiecim, Poland with unsatisfactory results. Very heavy flak was experienced and Col. Charles A. Clark, Jr., Group Commander and formation leader, was forced to fly his crippled aircraft to the nearest friendly territory in Poland.

His judgment and skill brought the entire Crew to safety and a few days later, he returned to Base in a B-17 which was taking part in a shuttle bombing raid from England to Russia to Italy.

781st Crews taking part without loss were flown by Lts. Van Asperen, Frazier, W J. Smith, Hudson, Lovey, and Gaines.

No missions were flown on the 14th, 15th, or 16th.

On the 16th, four new Crews were assigned with First Pilots 1st Lt. Richard

I don't know -the 55th Wing. They say we're in a squadron that the Germans are gunning for. They got 90% of the squadron's planes, so they say."

The target for 17 September was the Shell Oil Refinery at Budapest, Hungary. Results were excellent and Crews with Lts. Van Asperen, Hudson, Rice, W J. Smith, Lovey and Zalk took part without loss.

On 18 September an unsuccessful attack was made on the Railroad Bridge at Szob, Hungary with Crews piloted by Capt. Willett and Lts. Lovey, Zalk, Gaines, Blakita, and W J. Smith participating. A new Crew, piloted by 2nd Lt. Howard R. Wilcox, was assigned on this day.

The mission for 19 September was recalled shortly after take-off because of bad weather and on the 20th, a highly successful mission was flown to Hatvan, Hungary where the Marshaling Yard was attacked. Crews with Capt. R. J. Smith and Lts. Van Asperen, Zalk, Hudson, Martz, Gaines, Lovey and Rice took part without loss.

No mission was flown on the 21st. A day described as "no mission in this book did not mean that there was no mission attempted and therefore it was a day of inactivity for the Air Crews.

Don Dalton's diary on this date reads,

And such a day did not mean inactivity for the Ground Crews either. If a mission was scheduled they spent much of the previous night doing all of the aircraft preparation required. If it was aborted



Gen. Atkinson and Gen. Nate Twinning arrive at Pantanella to present the Unit Citation

before or after takeoff, the ammunition and bombs had to be removed. And the rest of the day likely would be spent catching up with repair work on aircraft that had not been in condition to schedule for that day's mission.

On 22 September the Industrial area of Munich, Germany was attacked by Pathfinder with unknown results. Notwithstanding heavy flak defenses, Crews piloted by Lt. Col. Lokker, Capt. Athon, and Lts. Irazier, W J. Smith, Hudson, McDaniel, Martz and Crutcher returned safely.

Cpl. Dalton wrote of this mission, "Briefing was at 6 o'clock. We were to bomb Munich, Germany We had P-38s and P-51s as escort. We bombed about 12:30 or 1 o'clock PM. I was really scared. The flak was bad but not as bad as they thought it would be. We got two holes in the ship. One in #2 engine cowl-ing and one in the flight deck. Got back at 4:00 PM. Had eight hours in the air. Red Cross gave us do-nuts and coffee."

On 23 September the Group attacked the Railroad Bridge at Casarsa, Italy with fair results considering bad weather conditions. Pilots of Crews taking part were Capt. Stenersen and Lts. Van Asperen, Gaines, Zalk, Dahl, Rice, McDaniel and Blakita.



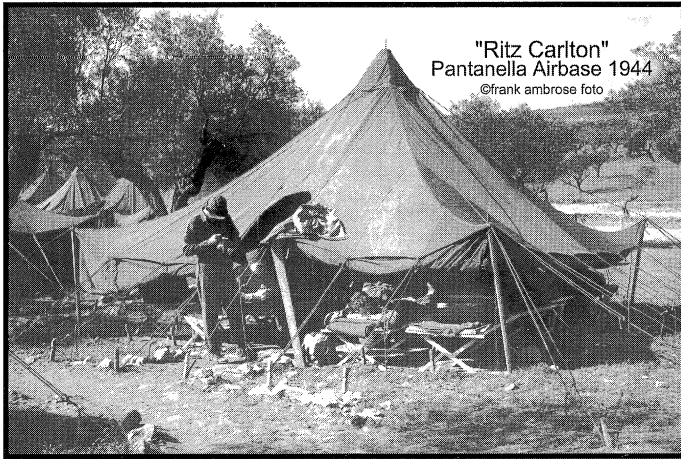
Sweating it out!

L. Crutcher, Jr., 1st Lt. Clayton F McDaniel, 2nd Lt. Grant A. Benson, and 2nd Lt. Alfred W Mullan, Jr.

One member of the Crutcher Crew was Cpl. Donald V Dalton, Radio Operator. At Naples, while en route to join the Squadron, he noted in his diary, "We're waiting to leave by plane today. Where,

"Got up at 4:30 and went to chow. We had briefing at 5:45. We were to go up into Hungary to bomb. We took off and finally got under way but were called back. We got about four hours of flying in." And a lot of adrenalin was expended in the process of preparation and going out, believing that they were heading into combat.

The 24th of September brought the first mission of the Group to Greece where the Pens at Skaramanga were bombed with excellent results. Crews participating were flown by Capt. Athon and Lts. W J. Smith, Benson, Crutcher, Martz, Dahi, and McDaniel as well as Capt. Ashley who flew with a Crew from another Squadron.



"Ritz Carlton"
Pantanella Airbase 1944
©frank ambrose foto

This was the last mission flown during the month of September as inclement weather forced the cancellation of all combat flying operations for the last six days of the month.

September proved to be a month of great instruction activity in the Squadron as the approaching cold, wet weather gave impetus to the building of more permanent quarters and offices.

Prior to this time the only permanent buildings which had been erected in the Squadron area were mess halls and clubs for both the Officers and Enlisted Men.

However, by the end of the month, stone buildings to house the Squadron Dispensary and the Squadron Operations Section had been finished and a roof had been placed on the shower room.

Sgt. Bill Bauer, Engineering Section Technical Supply, recalled that the day the new Enlisted Men's mess hall was opened.

Axis Sally announced the event on the radio. Also, everyone at the opening hit the floor when a P-38, flown by a friend of one of the Squadron Pilots, buzzed the building.

Work had also been started on the Orderly Room and most of the offices and maintenance buildings on the flight line were under construction by September 30th.

Several comfortable stone barracks were completed and occupied by Enlisted Men while those Officers and Enlisted Men

still living in tents were either building or planning to build houses of wood and tufa block of various sizes and designs.

What was once a tent-covered hillside had begun to look like a small town of white houses in the making.

In his diary on 29 September, Cpl. Don Dalton wrote, "They woke us up at 5:30 this morning. After breakfast the mission was cancelled. I think we were to go to Vienna again. Worked on the foundation of our new house last night and this morning.

It's hard work but will be worth it when winter comes. Got two letters at mail call. One from home and one from Lorraine. Another mission tomorrow, guess it will be Vienna again".

September was also a month with many meetings and lectures directed toward curbing the rising Venereal Disease rate in the Group. However, the 781st Squadron had developed no VD cases for two months prior to the beginning of the campaign so the increased attention to

this problem was primarily aimed at the other units of the Group.

In fact, because of the Squadron's good record, the quota of men permitted to attend the Rest Camp at Rome was doubled at the expense of another Squadron which had the highest venereal disease rate.

Numerous awards and decorations were received by men in the Squadron during September. s (posthumously), Albert I. Thompson,

Sgt. Howard wrote In 1988, "Regarding the citation for the Bronze Star, I do not have it nor do I recall ever having it or even seeing it'. As I remember, the presentation of the medal took place in an open area near the group headquarters. It was for service above and beyond the call of duty in support of combat operations or words to that effect. At the time I was in charge of the bombsight and auto-pilot maintenance in the 781st. The Squadron and Group had for a time led the 15th Air Force in bombing accuracy. I always thought that may have had something to do with my receiving the honor."

The fourth Bronze Oak Leaf CluDuring the month, 1st Lt. John P McCleary was assigned as Radar Officer. Lt. McCleary had been on attached duty with the Squadron in this capacity since 8 August. The personnel strength of the Squadron as of 2400 hours, 30 September 1944 was as follows: Officers -110 assigned; Enlisted men - 405 assigned, 19 attached.



Soon after 'Raiding' a nearby Melon Patch we drove to a secluded spot to enjoy the 'fruits' of our labor. Standing Left;- Frank Ambrose, kneeling Right;- Ellwod Helfer. Our Private Limo can be seen in the rear.

IT'S NOT TOO LATE--SIGN-UP NOW FOR SHREVEPORT REUNION OCTOBER 2-3-4

OCTOBER 1944

The bad weather of late September continued into October and no combat missions could be flown on the first three days of the month. The month's first mission was flown on the 4th with the target being the Main Marshaling Yard at Munich, Germany. Results were good and Crews with the following Pilots took part without loss: Capts. Ashley and R. J. Smith, and Lts. Hudson, Lovey, Dahl, Mullan, Van Asperen, W J. Smith, Crutcher, McDaniel and Fifield.

Sgt. Walborn noted, "Flying lead ship. Anti-aircraft fire hit #2 plane. All we saw go down was an engine and a piece of tail section. Our hydraulic system was shot out so pilot dug tail to get plane stopped when we landed. Many holes in fuselage and #3 gas tank destroyed. Ran out of fuel while taxiing to parking place."

Sgt. Dalton's diary read, "Took off about 7:45 this morning. Went over Munich again. It was really rough. I got a scare because of flak tore a piece of my flak suit off. Flak was really bad. I fly with the Colonel tomorrow. Hope we don't go".

No missions were flown on the 5th or 6th. On 7 October the Group attacked the Marshaling Yard at Ersekujvar (Nove Zamky), Hungary. Results were very good with Crews piloted by Capt. Stenersen, and Lts. Frazier, Dahl, Hudson, Fifield, WJ. Smith, Blakita, Rice, Mullan, McDaniel, Lovey and Wilcox participating.

Weather precluded missions on 8 and 9 October and an ineffective sortie was flown on 10 October against the S. Dona di Piave Highway Bridge in Northern Italy.

Weather prevented a successful attack by Crews with Capt. Stenersen, and Lts. Hudson, Wilcox, Gaines, Benson, Crutcher, Fifield, and Lovey, all of whom returned without dropping their bombs. Also on 10 October, Capt. Ollie J.

Blankenship was assigned to the Squadron as a First Pilot but without a Crew.

The target for 11 October was the Sauerwerke or Diesel Plant at Vienna, Austria. Bombing was accomplished by means of Pathfinder equipment and only one Crew, with Lt. Col. Lokker who was the Group Leader on this mission, took part from the Squadron.

On 12 October, the Stores Depot near Bologna, Italy was attacked but the results were rather poor. Crews with Capt. Stenersen, and Lts. Rice, McDaniel, WJ. Smith, Blakita, Dahi, Gaines and Althoff took part.

The target attacked on 13 October was the Blechhammer South Synthetic Oil Re-

finery near Kosel, Germany. Fair results were achieved under difficult weather and smoke conditions. Crews with Capt. Willett and Lts. Zalk, Wilcox, Hudson, Althoff, Crutcher, Gaines and Lovey participated, with the latter two failing to return from the mission.

Sgt. Walborn's comments on this mission were cryptic, "We came home on three engines, had gas leak, many planes went down. This was my last mission."

Sgt. Dalton noted, "Got up really early. Took off about 6:50. Went to Blechhammer, Germany. It's the worst target yet. Only the Lord brought us through. Lost some of the boys. They really messed up the formations. Boy, I'm tired! They say we fly again tomorrow".

Members of the Crew with 1st Lt. Alexander Lovey were: ; 2nd Lt. Raymond F Morse, Co-Pilot; 2nd Lt. Donald E. Toomey, Navigator; T/Sgt. Lowell M.

the burst which hit the plane. He became aware that there was a problem because the other B-24's in the formation appeared to be flying away at a crazy angle and then he realized that in fact the others were in level flight and his ship was going down.

There was no abandon ship order from the Pilot but when Kennedy turned and looked back into the waist section he saw the Crewmen there hurriedly strapping on their parachutes and he knew that he had to get out. He managed to exit his tail turret and crawl forward to the camera hatch in the waist floor in spite of the fact that the fire was extending beyond the waist windows and the plane was vibrating wildly and out of control. He was the last person out of the waist section.

He did not know what was going on in the forward part of the plane until after he was captured by the Germans at which

time he learned from others on the Crew that both Pilots were killed but that the rest of the Crew had gotten out safely.

After his capture he was sent to Stalag #4 at Gross Tychow, Pomerania near the Baltic Sea. On 6 February 1945 the Germans evacuated this camp as the Russians approached and thus began an 86-day 500 mile forced march during which there were starvation diets, bitterly cold weather, and no medical attention.

He eventually was liberated by the

British 2nd Army on 2 May 1945 near Buchen.

Members of the Crew with 1st Lt. George Gaines were: F/O Murray A. Knowles, Co-Pilot; 2nd Lt. Francis R. Clark, Navigator; Sgt. Lewis J. Deslatte, Engineer; Sgt. Karl Brown, RIO; S/Sgt. Charles R. Murray, Gunner; Sgt. Jack W Smith, Gunner; Sgt. Lawrence J. Tiehen, Gunner; Sgt. Thomas R. C. McNew, Gunner; and S/Sgt. Edward J. Chapin, Gunner.

Reports about the Crew were meager at the time although it was believed possible that they might have headed for friendly Russian territory. The plane was last observed in the target area with one engine out of operation.....

To be Continued in Future Issues

SEE YA IN SHREVEPORT!!



Most all of the young Italian children living in Canosa came out to pose for a Group Photo

Lunn, Engineer; Sgt. Leonard J. Goldstein, RIO; S/Sgt. C. D. Hudson, Gunner; S/Sgt. Walter Clausen, Gunner; Sgt. Pierre J. J. Kennedy, Gunner; and Sgt. Harold W. Grant, Gunner.

Lt. Lovey's aircraft was reported to have been hit by flak directly over the target and was seen to go down with one engine on fire. Three parachutes were seen and more men were believed to have jumped from the plane.

Pierre J.J Kennedy, a member of Lt. Althoff's Crew substituted for another Gunner on Lovey's Crew that day, Friday, 13 October, flying his 13th sortie.

In 1985 he described what happened. Kennedy recalled that all went well that morning until turning off the IP with a full bomb load and just beginning the bomb run when Yellow L took a direct hit in the gas tanks in the right wing. The plane immediately became a flaming fireball.

In his tail turret Kennedy hardly noticed

SEND THIS FORM IN NOW TO KEN KILL

The 2006 781st Reunion Reservations

Holiday Inn Financial Plaza-Shreveport. Shreveport, Louisiana
October 2-3-4, 2006

Name: _____ Phone # _____

Name of Spouse/Guest Attending: _____

Address: _____

Will You be Driving? _____

Total Number Attending _____

Registration Fee: Per Person : \$15.00 _____**Monday, October 2, 2006**

Bus to Casino Per Person; \$5.00 _____

Casino Buffet Per Person: \$10.00 _____

Tuesday October 3, 2006

Bus to Jefferson: Per Person \$15.00 _____

Jefferson Activity

Business Meeting 5:00 to 6:00

Wednesday , October 4, 2006

Bus to Barksdale AFB Per Person \$5.00 _____

Lunch at Officers Club Per Person \$10.00 _____

Banquet Cocktail Hour (Open Bar) 6:00 to 7:00

Banquet 7:00.....till....

Banquet Choices:

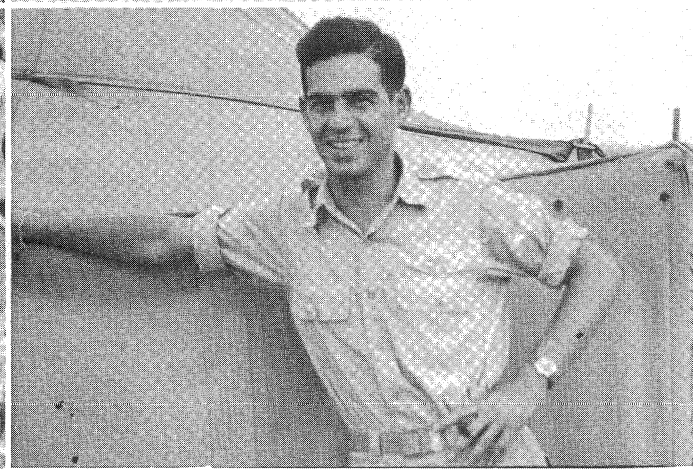
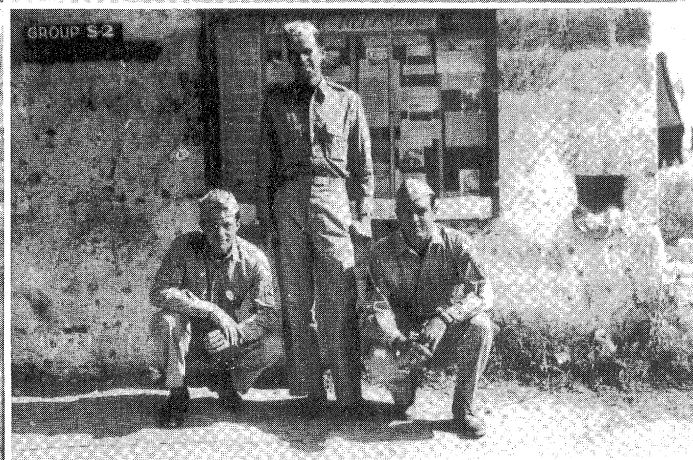
Prime Rib \$23.00 _____

Southern Fried Catfish \$18.00 _____

Chicken Roma \$18.00 _____

TOTAL: _____

Checks to the Squadron Treasurer must be made by September 1, 2006.**Make check out to 781st. Sqd. Asso. and Forward this form and your check to:****781st Bomb Sqd Asso.****c/o Ken Kill****707 West Circle Drive****Findlay, Ohio 45-4159****Make your room reservations directly with the Holiday Inn****(318-688-3000).****Be sure to mention our group number #BOM****All hotel reservations must be made by September 1, 2006.****IT'S NOT TOO LATE--SIGN-UP NOW FOR SHREVEPORT REUNION OCTOBER 2-3-4**

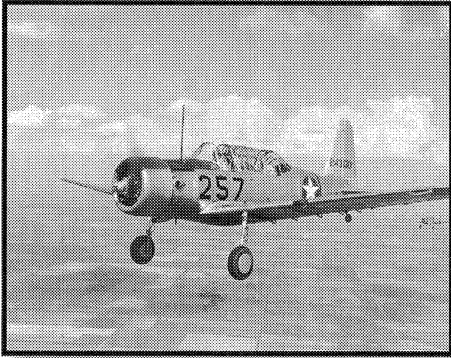


Left to Right, Top to Bottom

1. Emplaning.
2. S/Sgt. Al McQuaid with parrot mascot Jose Carlota and gun.
3. Rear: Cunningham, T/Sgts. Lowell Myers and Tello Glammarco, Cpl. Fred DeWitt. Front: Cpl. Don Hamilton, S/Sgt. Charles Kremer, and Cpl. Ray Hall.
4. Lt. Bill Weaver (standing).
5. Motor Pool party.
6. Lt. Bernie Badler strikes a pose.
7. Maj. Ollie Blankenship enjoys a dish at the opening of the expanded Officers' Club.

The Vultee BT-13 "VIBRATOR"

The Vultee BT-13 was the basic trainer flown by most pilots during WWII. It was the second phase of the three phase training program for pilots. After primary training, the student pilot moved to the more complex Vultee.



The BT-13 had a more powerful engine and was faster and heavier than the primary trainer. It required the student pilot to use two way radio communications with the ground and to operate landing flaps and a two-position variable pitch propeller.

With retractable landing gear and a powerful engine, the Vultee V-54 basic combat trainer was too lavish for the cash-strapped United States Army Air Corps of 1938. So Vultee redesigned the aircraft and made it less complicated.

The first order for 300 new BT-13 Valiants was placed in September of 1939, and it would become the most widely-used American training aircraft of WWII.

The Vultee BT-13 had a continuous canopy with its crew of two sitting in tandem behind dual controls. It was also equipped with blind flying instruments to teach new pilots the basics of flying at night or in foul weather.

Although the 'official' name of the BT-13 is the "Valiant", it was commonly referred to as the "Vibrator".

The origin of the "Vibrator" nickname is unclear, with several different stories being credited:-

When approaching a stall, the airplane shudders or vibrates noticeably;-

During more "adventurous" maneuvers, the canopy rattles or vibrates;-

The powerful radial engine and fixed-pitch prop caused all the windows on the base to vibrate whenever the BT-13 took off.

RIPPLIN RHYTHM

by George Housold

During one of our off days in North Africa, Ray Cauble, Frank Hylla, Jerry Jolicoeur and I were roaming around a military junkyard with the thought in mind that maybe we could find an old clunker to ride in while we were waiting for the base to be built in Italy.

We couldn't find anything even remotely drivable but we did find a great deal of the parts of a various German VW's. The parts that we salvaged were the frame, an engine and the wheels with a set of sand tires on them. Incidentally, this junkyard was loaded with all kinds of Allied and German vehicles and planes plus lots of live ammunition. I can't remember exactly how we got this pile of junk back to base but I have to believe that a GI truck was involved.

When we got back with our treasure and started to assemble it we realized that we didn't have a gas tank or a mount for the gas tank. Searching for a tank was becoming quite a problem.

One day while off base with a group of fellow gentlemen from the 781st. (luckily with a truck) we came upon a fully operational VW at a British military installation. We all gathered around the vehicle oohing and ahing about this marvelous machine.

When we finally departed the area to and behold the liberated gas tank somehow departed with us. I often wondered how long it took the Brits to figure out why the their VW would no longer run.

The mount for the tank was easily fabricated from part of a bomb casing and thanks to the machine shop we also got a new firewall and a shortened steering column. A little iron work and two old bucket seats plus a piece of plywood completed the job and we were ready to roll.

A slight inconvenience was the problem of the starter. We had no starter! I seem to recall that we always tried to park our prize facing downhill (hard to do in

Africa) unless there was a crowd around to help push start us.

While in Africa, we didn't do too much riding around due to rather busy training schedule and our impending departure to our permanent base at Pantanella.

When the time came to leave we decided to dismantle the bug and take it with us. It was a bit of a job but with many helping hands we managed to load it into two

planes, one of which of course was ours.

To this day I don't remember which crew manned the second B-24. Thanks guys! After an uneventful trip across the Mediterranean we landed at Pantanella and unloaded the mess.

But we were sure, that like the 'Phoenix', it would rise again in all its glory.

And it did!

Frank decided that we needed a suitable name for this "thing". After much thought, about five minutes or so, he came up with a very apt name, "Ripplin Rhythm".

Let me explain, 'Ripplin Rhythm' had no muffler, and when the engine was idling it made sort of a bubbling sound and it may have reminded him of Lawrence Welk and his champagne music.

Quite a stretch you say? Well, you'd really have to know Frank. Although 'Ripplin Rhythm' seemed like a pussycat when it was idling it became a very different animal when you tromped on the gas.

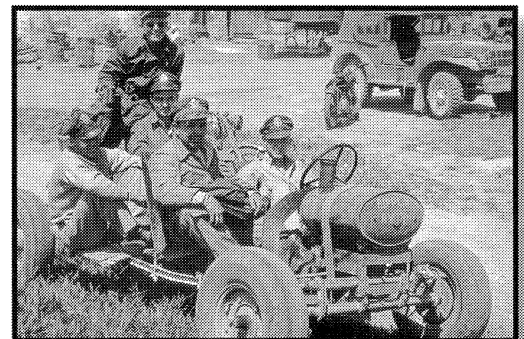
Aside from running back and forth to the flight-line or the showers, we would occasionally go into town and annoy the hell out of the natives,

The trick was to roll into a street;- I'm sure you can remember how narrow the streets were. We would just quietly idle our way part way through it and at this point we would mash down on the gas pedal and go roaring away.

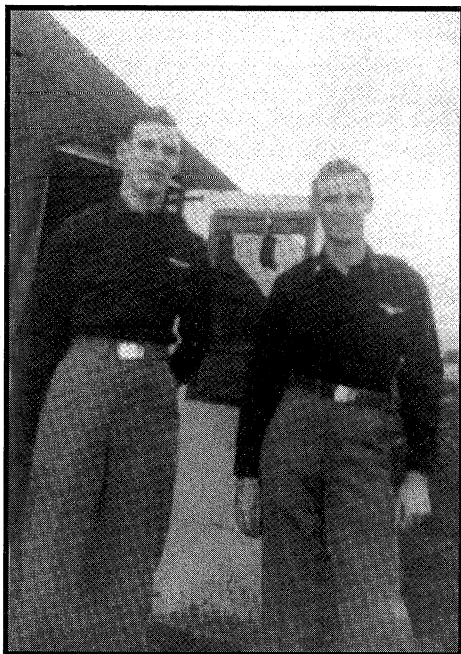
Quite a few Italian mamas became upset in the wee hours of the morning. Oh well, kids will be kids.

I wonder whatever happened to 'Ripplin Rhythm'. I'd like to think that other crews had found it as useful and fun as we did after we left Pantanella. Maybe someone out there can write a sequel to this little saga and let us all know what finally became of it.

George Rausold



Left to right- Lt. Jerry Canyock(Prince's crew), T/sgt Louis Kureck(Dickey's crew), Lt. John Fandrey(Dickey's crew), Lt. Albert "Shack" Myers(Dickey's crew) and Lt. George Hausold(Cauble's crew).



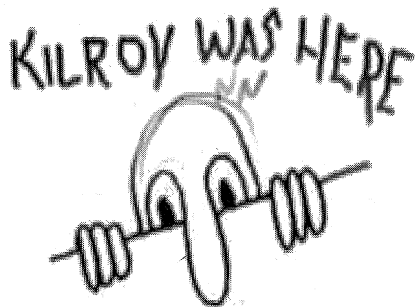
This snapshot was submitted by Barney Russell, our esteemed President.

He writes that it was taken at a P-38 Base north of Pantanella.

It shows Barney on the left and the P-38 Fighter Pilot, Johnny Gaughan, on the right.



"Pleasure Bent" Ground Crew



Kilroy will be looking for you at the reunion in Shreveport

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Easter Sunday
1945
Sunrise Service
was planned to
take place on
this site at
Pantanella
Air Base



This Poster
(**Vliegende FORTEN-**
Vliegende DOODKITEN!)
(*Flying FORTRESS-*
Flying COFFINS!)

was printed in Dutch and posted in the Nazi Occupied Netherlands. The Lithographed image depicts the American bombers' fuselage as coffins. The posters were used for propaganda to tout the great efficiency of German anti-aircraft guns to successfully down American Bombers thereby making coffins for their occupants.

IT'S NOT TOO LATE--SIGN-UP NOW FOR SHREVEPORT REUNION OCTOBER 2-3-4

FOLDED WINGS

William Coohan /Engineering
July /21/2006

Regret to inform you of the death of my father William Coohan, 7 Colonial Dr, Ashville NC 28804. Dad always enjoyed the Pantanella News and shared many a story of the 781st Bomb Squadron and his part in it. Best wishes to all.
William Coonan

Thomas Arthur; Athon Navigator/
Squadron Cartoonist
'Dodger Dog' creator, Thomas Gregory Arthur, the baseball stadium concessionaire whose foot big Nathan's knockoff came up short and became the beloved 'Dodger Dog', has died. He was 84.
Arthur died of a heart attack June 8 in St Louis, his son Steve Arthur said. The former New Yorker came up with a foot long hot dog- borrowed from his

favorite 'Nathan's Dogs' - to put excitement into the ballpark menu when the team moved from the Coliseum to Dodger Stadium in 1962.

"He called it the foot-long dog, but it was actually only 10 inches. It was before truth in advertising, but he decided to call them "Dodger Dogs," his son said.

It meant big business for 'Arthur Food Services', stadium concessionaire for 29 years until 1991. Along with beer, popcorn, peanuts and Cracker Jacks, some 50,000 'Dodger Dogs' were sold each game day.

"It was our staple," his son said, adding, "100 percent of the people who came to the ballpark had a 'Dodger Dog'. It was pretty popular. Vincent Price was a big baseball fan and he put it in his cookbook back then.

"It's one of the best dogs in the country. It's not the meat. The secret is the spices."

Dodgers team historian Mark Langill agreed, saying: "Besides peanuts and Cracker Jacks, its probably the most famous delicacy in baseball."

Arthur was born in Los Angeles but grew up in New York City. His father

owned theaters, including the Roxy in New York City.

After serving as a B-24 navigator during World War II, Arthur returned to Los Angeles to become a cartoonist or illustrator.

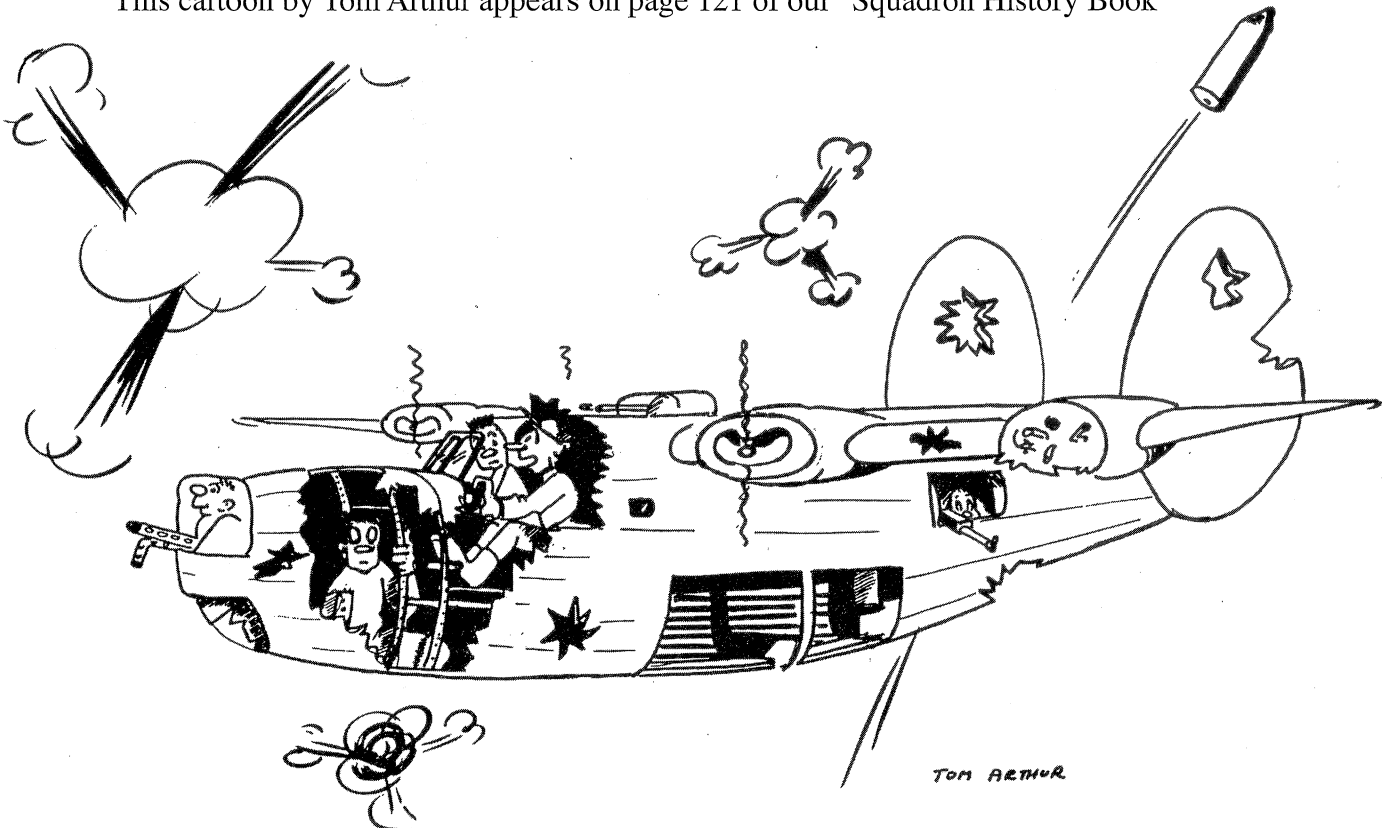
He later gave up on art and concentrated on business.

In 1955, he won a Coliseum contract, which he served until 1976.

-Associated Press-

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.

This cartoon by Tom Arthur appears on page 121 of our "Squadron History Book"



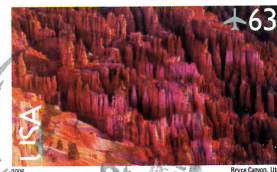
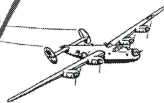
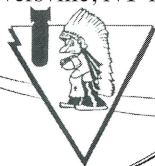
WOULD YOU SAY THE FLAK IS SCANT- MODERATE-OR INTENSE?

Would you say the Flak is Scant- Moderate or Intence?

Although the 'official' name of the BT-13 is the "Valiant", it was commonly referred to as the "Vibrator".



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Bryce Canyon, Utah

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