



# PANTANELLA NEWS

Published by 781st Bomb Squadron Association©

# 93 Sept. 2008

## US AIRFORCE MUSEUM SET TO HOST 781st VETS and FAMILIES OCTOBER 5-6-7-8



Artillery being landed during the invasion of mainland Italy at Salerno, September 1943.

Troops bringing artillery ashore at Salerno in September 1943. The military policeman (MP) in the foreground is ducking from a near-by German shell hit. The LCVP is from USS James O'Hara (APA-90).

Note the use of chicken wire to stabilize the beach sand.

Official U.S. Navy Photograph, now in the collections of the National Archives.

## MEMBERS KEEP IN TOUCH

Notify or contact any or all of  
the individuals listed below for any  
FW's---Address Changes--News  
Or Whatever

### PANTANELLA NEWS

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News Stories, FW's and Obits

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#### Officers

Orren Lee: President

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PANTANELLA NEWS

Editor: Frank Ambrose

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

## Military Personnel Records

The National Personnel Records Center, Military Personnel Records (NPRC-MPR) is the repository of millions of military personnel, health, and medical records of discharged and deceased veterans of all services during the 20th century.

NPRC (MPR) also stores medical treatment records of retirees from all services, as well as records for dependent and other persons treated at naval medical facilities.

Information from the records is made available upon written request (with signature and date) to the extent allowed by law.

If you are a veteran or next-of-kin of a deceased veteran, you may now use the internet by logging onto:-

<http://www.vetrecs.archives.gov>  
to order a copy of your military records.

For all others, the request is best made using a Standard Form 180. It includes complete instructions for preparing and submitting requests. All requests must be in writing, signed and mailed to the address shown below.

**It's also important to note that on July 12, 1973 fire destroyed**

the major portion of records of Army military personnel for the period 1912 through 1959, and records of Air Force personnel with surnames Hubbard through Z for the period 1947 through 1963. Therefore, the record needed to answer your inquiry would not be in their files.

Fortunately, alternate records sources that often contain information which can be used to reconstruct service record data lost in the fire; however, complete records cannot be reconstructed. Efforts are being made to reconstruct records by mailing inquirers NA Form 13075 (or NA Form 13055) which asks for additional information concerning the veterans' military service. The information will be used by their staff to help reconstruct service record data lost in the fire so they ask to use the form to provide them with as much information as you are able.

The form will be mailed to you within the next 24 hours of your initial inquiry.

**National Personnel Records  
Center**

**Military Personnel Records  
9700 Page Avenue  
St. Louis, MO 63132-5100**

## IMPORTANT NOTICE

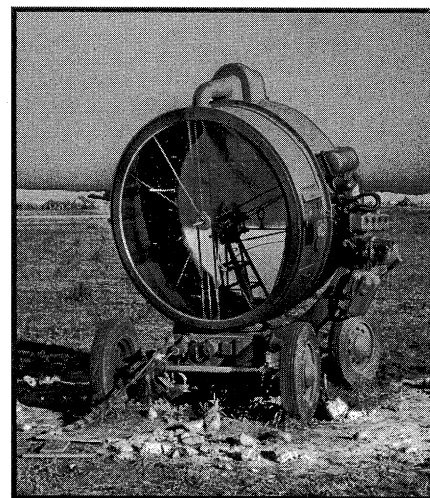
An increasing number of Pantanella News Issues have been returned to me as undeliverable due to insufficient addresses. Be aware the **PO will not forward 'Change of Addresses' forever.**

If you have filed a 'Change of Address' form with the P.O be advised as there is a limitation on the length of time they will honor it. After your 'Forward Time' has expired the PO will return the item to the sender.

In this case back to me.

If you move you must notify us of any changes of your new address or you will no longer receive the Pantanella News.

## MEMORY JOGGER



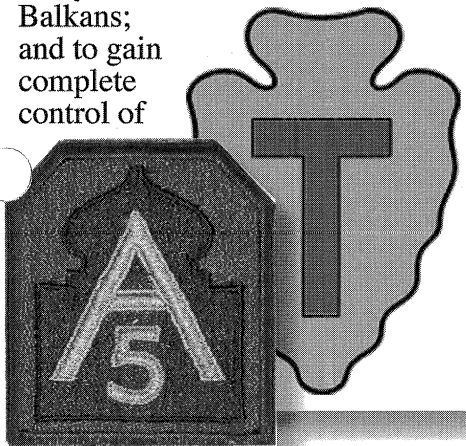
I wonder how many of you guys recall ever seeing this huge 'Search-Lite' standing by in case we were ever attacked by enemy aircraft?  
Write me.....



# The Italian Campaign

The Italian Campaign (September 3, 1943 - May 2, 1945) placed Allied troops on the European mainland for the first time, but it was never intended as a substitute for an attack aimed at Germany by way of the more open and more remunerative route through northern France.

The invasion of Italy had a number of lesser objectives: to capitalize on the collapse of Italian resistance; to make immediate use of ready Allied strength; to engage German forces which might otherwise be used in Russia and northern France; **to secure airfields** from which to intensify the bombing of Germany and the Balkans; and to gain complete control of



the Mediterranean.

Heavy fighting quickly developed at Salerno, where German armored counterattacks jeopardized the entire Allied position. It was six days before the Americans were able to surmount the crisis and secure the beachhead.

As a result of this action valuable territory was acquired allowing for the construction and establishment of many US Airfields which were ultimately used to base the 15th Air Force.

*The following article is a personal accounting by a former US Army enlisted man relating to the events he encountered as a participant in the Invasion of Italy and the resulting consequences.....*

*Editor note...*

*The following account was acquired over the internet and is being reprinted as received with the family's permission. Clive Berard was a member of the 143rd Battalion, 36th Division*

## A POW Story: Reflections of Clive B. Berard World War II

*Please Note: It rare that prisoners of war want to recount their stories. It is even rarer still for them bring those memories to life on pen and paper, documenting such horrific events. In the story below of Clive Berard, his experiences are retold here from his own writing, with his permission. Betty Tabor, Mayfield Historian, graciously asked Mr. Berard's permission and allowed us to retell his extraordinary memories here online.*

My name is Clive B. Berard and this is a little history about myself and my time of service. I was born in Winchenton, Mass., February 14, 1924. Our family moved to Gloversville, N. Y. in 1932, then on to Jackson Summit in 1937.

I went to Jackson Summit School, then to Mayfield Central. I left school in 1942 to join the army.

After basic training I was assigned to the 36th Division, which was based at Camp Edwards, Mass. On April 1st, 1943 we left Staten Island, N. Y., for North Africa. We landed in North Africa 13th of April, and all fighting had ceased, so we spent the next five months there, training for our invasion of Italy.

During the first couple of days of Sept. of 1943, we were loaded on to ships and we sailed to Italy.

On Sept. 9, 1943, Italy surrendered and the Italian army was no more. We thought we would have an easy time (not so), but on Sept. 10th, my gun crew and I were in the second wave to hit the beaches

at Salerno. The in-coming fire was very heavy.

As soon as we could get off the beach, we were sent to a pre-arranged area. I was a gunner on an antitank gun. We barely had time to get the guns set-up when all hell broke loose. Mortar fire was coming in. German tanks were advancing in our direction. I fired at a lead tank, I fired 3 or 4 pounds of A. P. ammunition that is armor

piercing, but the shells just bounced off the tank. During this time, several German tanks had exploded, fired upon by heavy American artillery that had been set-up that drove the German tanks and their Infantry back. They gave up on their counter-attack, but we continued to get heavy fire from the German artillery that was entrenched in the surrounding mountains of Salerno Bay. Our navy opened up with their big guns and knocked out the German artillery.

We had one casualty in our gun crew, a Corporal Ryan, who was killed by machine gun fire. I was then moved up to Gun Corporal and Gunner.

We fought on for another 4 days. On Sept. 13th, the 45th Division went through our lines and attacked the German troops. Late that afternoon, the 45th Division withdrew their position as the German tanks and Infantry were pushing in hard. We had dug-in in a defensive position waiting for the oncoming attack.

Their 16 and 26 SS Panzer Division hit us hard - tanks, mortar fire and whatever they had - all our guns were knocked out. So we moved back to a shallow ravine that had a lot of trees.

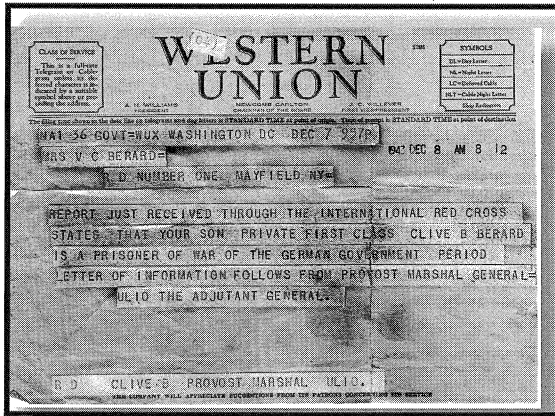
The Germans had positioned several tanks 50 to 75 yards facing the ravine. They fired artillery shells at us - the firing burst and splintered the trees that wounded and killed many of our soldiers. After this heavy barrage of artillery fire, the Germans asked us to surrender -

**"HANS HO COMRADES".**

**That was the last of our freedom for 22 months...**



German SS Panzer Division "Tiger Tank" "Their 16 and 26 SS Panzer Division hit us hard - tanks, mortar fire and whatever they had - all our guns were knocked out. So we moved back to a shallow ravine that had a lot of trees."



War Department Telegram sent to Clive's Mother informing her that the International Red Cross reported that Clive Berard was a Prisoner of the German Government.

The German troops soon rounded us up, placed us in an open area and posted guards around us for the night. We had lost about 30-40 men from H. Q. Company.

The next morning they started to march us away from the front. We had no food that day. The next day, they allowed us to go into a vineyard and fig grove and eat whatever grapes and fruit we could find.

We continued marching several more days up the Italian boot. Then we were put on R. R. boxcars and shipped to Germany. These boxcars were small, they would hold 8 horses or 40 men. There were no sanitary facilities. A bucket was passed around when needed; when it was full it was emptied out a window. I had no idea how many of us were in the boxcar. We were crowded in and we had to take turns standing or sitting. It took several days to reach Germany, to our first P. O. W. camp Stalag 7A. Once there, [we] were given showers and deloused. Our clothing was taken from us and we were given German uniforms.

Our first meal in P. O. W. camp consisted of a watery-barley soup and black bread. It tasted terrible. It took a long time [to] get used to prison food.

From Stalag 7A - eighteen men and myself were shipped to Stalag 2B. We were picked to work on a farm. This took us by R. R. boxcar again to East Prussia, where we stayed for the next 21 months.

Work on the farm was very hard. We raised potatoes, sugar beets,

wheat, oats and barley. There were also cows on the farm that needed tending. In the Fall crops were harvested, thrashing to do and wood to cut and barns to clean. In the Spring it started all over again.

We were housed in the horse barns. In the second year of our captivity six of us decided to make a break for it. When the guard went for supper that night, we gathered up what few possessions we had, kicked a hole in the fence, through a big barn out the back door.

Some young kids swimming in a pond spotted us and went for the guards.

We took off running as we had a good head start and made it to the woods. We were found and captured after several days and placed in a civilian jail, without food or water. We had to await the guards we had escaped from.

On our return trip back to the farm, we were beaten by the guards, each one of us. I was last to receive my punishment. This was in the little town we had escaped from and many of their civilians witnessed



Clive is seen in this photo, along with his fellow prisoners, kneeling in front row fourth from the left.

the beatings. Then returned to our barracks, given black bread and coffee. Our first food in two days.

We were sent right back to work. There was no rest, for many weeks, seven days a week for months.

In December 1944 the Russian Army was advancing and we were evacuated from the farm where we were living.

From that time on till the end of the war, we were constantly on the move, sometimes working on farms or just having to stay in barns. It was extremely cold and we were all suffering from some form of frost bite and the lack of food.

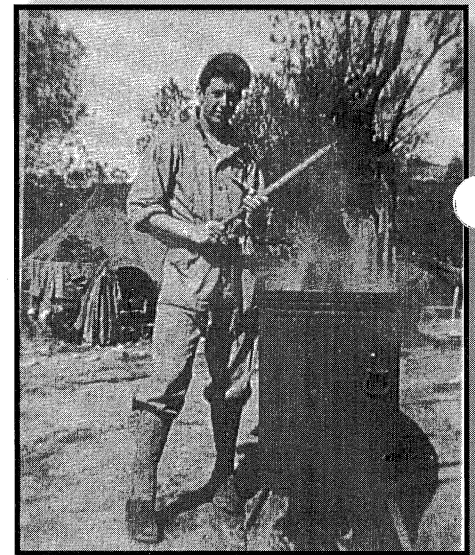
Several weeks before the end of the war, a few of us took off from our guard. At this time the guards were no longer much interested in us. They were looking for a way out themselves, from the Russians.

We were finally liberated by Russian troops. For several days we stayed around. It was then we witnessed the Russians killing German civilians and the raping of the women. In fear for our own safety, we took to the woods and avoided the Russian troops as much as possible. We walked for about another day till we met up with Canadian troops and liberation.

After many months of hard labor, hunger, cold and terrible foods, we were finally free.

We were sent by plane to Laharve, France - finally shipped from there back to the U. S. A.

*Note: Mr. Berard was liberated by Russians May, 1945 and was discharged Oct. 1945.*



John Zadrozny sends in this photo of himself taken soon after docking in North Africa in February of 1944.

John and several hundred other invited guests had just completed a 'Thirty Day Sight-Seeing Ocean Cruise' on the Luxury Liner, 'USS Asa Gray' exploring the vast Atlantic.

John is shown 'boiling his underwear.

Everyone knows, "Cleanliness is next to Godliness"!

*John was a member of the Ordnance Section.*



## WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT THE NATIONAL DO NOT CALL REGISTRY

The National Do Not Call Registry gives you a choice about whether to receive telemarketing calls at home.

Most telemarketers should not call your number once it has been on the registry for 31 days. If they do, you can file a complaint at this Website.

You can register your home or mobile phone for free. Your registration will not expire. Telephone numbers placed on the National Do Not Call Registry will remain on it permanently due to the Do-Not-Call Improvement Act of 2007, which became law in February 2008.

Read more about it at:-  
<http://www.ftc.gov/opa/2008/04/dncfyi.shtm>.

### REGISTRATION INSTRUCTIONS

To register, enter up to three phone numbers and your email address and **click Submit**.

For each phone number, enter the area code in the box on the left and the rest of the number in the box on the right.

Enter your email address where indicated. Use the Tab key or your mouse to move from box to box.

**Click Submit.**

You will go to a page that lets you check that your information is correct.

If your information is correct, **click Register** to continue the process.

If it isn't, **click Change** to correct your information.

Important: After you click Register, open your email. You should see a message from Register@donotcall.gov.

**You must open the email and click on the link in it to complete your registration.** Print a copy of your registration confirmation for your records.

If you do not click on the link in the email within 72 hours, your phone number will not be registered.

## GROUP PHOTO OF 1987 REUNION IN DAYTON

Do you recall posing for this photo?

In this Group Photo only the Men attending the Reunion in Dayton in 1987 are shown.

Soon after taking this photo the women joined the men

into one huge group and another photo was taken. If anyone has one of those, I'd love to have a copy.



## 781st BS Association 2008 Reunion

October 5-6-7-8, 2008

Hope Hotel

WPAFB, OH

Tel: 1-937-879-2696

### Tentative Reunion Agenda

#### Sunday, October 5, 2008

3:00 PM to 9:00 PM Registration/Hospitality

#### Monday, October 6, 2008

9:00AM to 5:00 PM Registration/Hospitality

7:00 PM Board of Director's Meeting

Work Study Room #3

#### Tuesday, October 7, 2008

8:30 AM	Bus to WPAFB Chapel II
9:00 AM - 9:30 AM	Memorial Service
9:30 AM - 10:00 AM	Pictures-Chapel Area
10:00 AM - 12:00 PM	Dayton Aviation Tour
12:00 PM - 1:30 PM	Buffet Luncheon/Packy's
1:30 PM - 4:00 PM	Tour of Carillon Park
7:00 PM	Business Meeting - Hospitality Suite

#### Wednesday, October 8, 2008

9:00 - 11:00 AM	Guided Tour of WWII Area & Presidential Hangar Aircraft
11:00- 4:00 PM	Visit Museum or Van available back to Hotel
5:30 PM	Van to National Museum/Gift Shop
6:00 to 7:00 PM	Open Bar - Aircraft Entry of the B-24
7:00 to 8:30 PM	Banquet on the Museum Floor
8:30 to 9:30 PM	Program
9:30 to 10:00 PM	Van back to Hotel

(Times/Events and Places Subject to Change)

# LETTERS

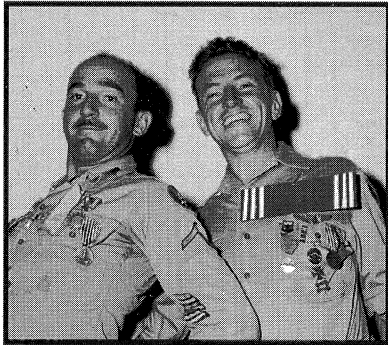
**From:** efenner@yahoo.com  
**Subject:** Answers to the Mystery  
**Date:** June 2, 2008  
**To:** fambrose@frontiernet.net

Hello Frank,

My dad, Paul Mallette, wanted me to email you and let you know the names of the two men on page 10. The man on the right is Curly Kruger and the one on the left is Louie LeHaye. They were on Ray Branch's crew.

He said the Newsletter was great! He so enjoys reading it and please continue the good work.

Thank you, **Joan Fenner**



2 minutes later- she writes.....

Frank,  
 Sorry this wasn't sent with the other email but dad just called and remembered a little more detail about the picture on pg.10.

He said that he was present when this picture was made. It was the night of the first celebration of crews completing their mission. They opened up the mess hall and had a big time.

I hope this helps add to the already great news.

Blessings, **Joan**

**On Jun 8, 2008, at 11:22 PM, Longdog50@aol.com wrote:**

Frank,  
 Please send me correct address for Dale L. Keiser.

Also.....Another Mystery Photo, page 10 of Pantanella News July 2008 -

guy on the left is: Ben "Curly" Kraeger. He was a tailgunner on the Rae Branch Crew.

**Bernie Badler**

**June 13, 2008**  
**89 E. Felton Street**  
**North Tonawanda, New York 14120**

To the Editor:

In the April Pantanella News in the mystery photo on page 10, - can't identify the men, but that is Maj. McKenna's aircraft "Chief Jo Jon".

If you notice the cockpit windows are large bubble windows. Any of the original crews will remember the old white anti-sub patrol plane that we were using at McCook.

After we got our new B24 H's to fly overseas my co-pilot, John Ward and I took those bubble windows off it and installed them on our #422505 Hell's Belle Yellow K.

After our first few missions McKenna noticed them and thought they would be nice on his lead plane and had his ground crew switch them with his plane.

They did give a good view in all directions. I complained to maintenance officer David Orr and he reminded me of the old rule, "R.H.T.P."

Just as well, as Yellow "K" went down with McFarland shortly after that.

**Jack Van Slyke**

**This letter, originally sent to Carole Lee, was forwarded to me via the Internet to be inserted in our Newsletter.**

The Espenlaub Family wants to join the Association. Susan's dad was Dale Keiser, who, as you know passed away February 2nd this year.

This Association meant so much to Dale and it was so special to share it with him last year and experience the shared pride in what you guys did for us all in this country and the rest of the world.

As his children, their spouses and grandchildren, we want to carry on the tradition of remembering the greatest generation in Dale Keiser's honor.

I hope this is enough to cover our membership fees.

Please let us know how we can help keep the memories alive.

God Bless,

**David and Susan (Keiser) Espenlaub**

**June 6, 2008**  
**Mr. Frank Ambrose:**  
**44 East Blvd.**  
**Gloversville, NY 12078**

Dear Mr. Ambrose:

Thank you for the e-mail regarding Connie Ogden.

Enclosed is a copy of a print that might be of interest to you.(see below)

As to anything exciting during our stay in Pantanella, only one thing that remains in my mind.

As head of the power turret section of Armament, I always made it my responsibility to check the firing of each gun in each power turret on each plane prior to take-off. One night I was in a ball turret, the armament crew was loading bombs, ammo and planes were being filled with gasoline in the area.

I always opened the cover of the guns to see if any shells were in the chamber, but apparently I didn't check that right hand gun in the turret.

I pulled the trigger and WHAM!! There was a shell in the chamber.

Nothing happened, no one was hit, no truck hit, and the Lord only knows where that bullet landed.

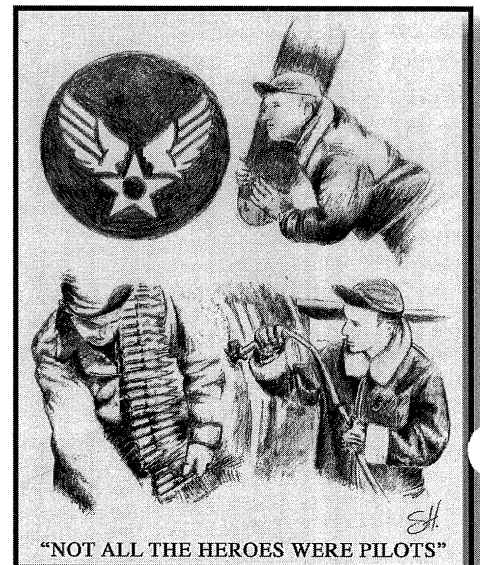
I heard banging on the turret, and someone yelled, ~ what in the hell you doing". I rolled back into the plane and continued my job, and the crew finished theirs.

I will never forget that heart stopping incident.

At that time I was a T/Sgt, I retired as a Captain, Army.

Sincerely,

**Thomas B. Kyle**  
 2045-E Scarborough Way  
 Montrose, CO 81401



Print sent in by Thomas Kyle



**Editors note.....**

*The following e-mail and subsequent news article is typical of the numerous inquiries I have been receiving from families and relatives of fallen comrades. Although the person is seeking information for was not in our Squadron, he was with the 83rd, he was a member of our Group flying on the very same mission when he was shot down. The Mission was the 465th Group 142nd Mission February 16, 1945. The target was the Obertraubling Airdrome, Regensburg Germany*

**From:** edward.sherwood@comcast.net  
**Subject:** 2d LT Leslie Peyton  
**Turner -** 783d BS, 465th BG (H)  
**Date:** June 27, 2008  
**To:** frank@frankambrose.com

Dear Frank:

I very much appreciate the website that you maintain for former members of the 465th Bomber Squadron.

I have spent quite a bit of time going through it. I have been unsuccessful contacting the 783d. Here is my most recent follow-up email. I am trying to find out more information on my uncle Peyton's friends, bomber crew, service, and plane. I did get a copy of the MACR for mission on which he was shot down on a run over Regensburg.

I am also including an OP-ED that I had published in the Washington Times last Memorial Day. You may post it on your site as long as you give TWT credit for the article.

Best regards and thank you for your service,

**Ed Sherwood**

**From:** edward.sherwood@comcast.net  
**Sent:** Friday, June 27, 2008  
**To:** 'poppop783@aol.com'  
**Subject:** FW: Request for Information Concerning 783d

Dear Sir

I am trying to make contact with one or more of the surviving members of the 783d BS that might have known my uncle Leslie Peyton Turner, a navigator on a B-24 killed on 16 Feb 1945 on a bombing mission to Regensburg.

His plane was shot down.

I have his MACR, but this was not his normal crew.

Second Lieutenant, U.S. Army Air Forces  
 Service # 02056325

Entered the Service from: Georgia  
 Died: 16-Feb-45

Buried at: Plot G Row 10 Grave 5  
 Lorraine American Cemetery

St. Avold, France

Awards: Air Medal, Purple Heart

783rd BS, 465th Bomb Group, Heavy

Thank you,

**Ed Sherwood- Peyton's Nephew**

(This article is copyrighted by

The Washington Times)

OP-ED - May 23, 2008

## The Fallen Hero I Never Knew A Memorial Day Memory

By Ed Sherwood

With the approach of Memorial Day, I have been thinking a lot about my uncle who died in World War II. I was born in 1945 and do not remember learning about his death until I was 10 years old.

In my young mind, the war was ancient history. My uncle's death was too painful for my mother to mention, though her big brother lived on in her memories. Learning of his son's death, her father had a heart attack and soon died. We never learned much about our uncle.

Thirty years ago, my brother Tom named his only son "Peyton" in honor of the uncle we never knew. I entered the Army and during a long career, seldom thought of my uncle. I regret that Memorial Days came and went with little remembrance of him.

Two decades after my own military service ended, I have more insight, perspective and appreciation for that "greatest generation." They fought for our freedom with the will to win despite great sacrifice, lasting heartache and the horror of war.

The dedication of the WW II Memorial in Washington on Saturday, May 30, 2004, heightened my awareness of their sacrifice. I saw with my own eyes, tens of thousands of aged, venerable veterans — including my wife's father, Dr. V. Jackson Smith. Each had a story. More than anything else, they talked of their comrades who did not return from far-flung battlefields.

My uncle was there, too — at least in my wakened memory. His story was untold and nearly forgotten. I have proudly spoke of him since, sharing with WWII veterans and others: "My uncle Peyton was a navigator on a B-17 Flying Fortress flying out of England. He was shot down over Germany and is buried in France." I didn't know much more than that — and what I thought I knew was not quite right.

With Memorial Day drawing near, I began an Internet search to rediscover the uncle I never knew. I learned that 2nd Lt. Leslie Peyton Turner was a navigator on a B-24 Liberator with the 783d Bomber Squadron, 465th Bomber Group (Heavy), Fifteenth Air Force.

They flew out of a massive airbase, Pantanella Airfield in Southern Italy, and

made a major contribution to bringing the war to an end.

Sixty-three years later, Pantanella, Italy, is once again a peaceful, rural river valley with little evidence or memory of its important war-time role.

Uncle Peyton died on Feb. 16, 1945, just a few months before the war ended. He was 28 years old. Enlisted in 1943, having finished four years of college, he received training and a commission as a navigator in the Army Air Corps before joining his bomber squadron. When killed in action, he had completed his full quota of combat missions.

He was eligible to return to America and to pursue his dream of entering law school.

That fateful day, he volunteered to fly in a bomber crew that was short a navigator. Every plane was needed to destroy an aerodrome near Regensburg, Germany. German fighters from the base had wreaked havoc on earlier bombing missions. He was willing to go. Duty and honor required it. His buddies needed him.

Uncle Peyton, I learned, is buried in Lorraine American Cemetery, Row 10, Plot G, Grave 5 in St. Avold, France.

He is there along with thousands of other nearly forgotten or hardly known heroes. I want to know more about Uncle Peyton and am continuing my search.

In the Old Testament book of Deuteronomy, Moses gave Joshua and the Israelites a warning. After they had fought and settled in the Promised Land living in prosperity, drinking from wells they had not dug, eating from vineyards they had not planted, and living in cities they had not built. Moses said they must not forget the Lord their God whose blessings had prospered them.

With World War II a distant memory and our nation living in prosperity unequalled in world history, we, too, are in danger of forgetting God's providential blessings so evident during World War II and still at work. We are a forgetful people.

This Memorial Day, let's pass on to our children why we remember and honor men and women who saw their duty to fight — and if need be die — to preserve our nation's freedom, heritage and blessings.

I will be remembering my Uncle Peyton, the fallen hero I wish I had known.

**Ed Sherwood**

*Ed Sherwood served with the 101st Airborne Division in 1969 as an infantry platoon leader during the Vietnam War and was wounded in action.*



## AND LETTERS...

From: bev.jim@att.net  
 Subject: Pantanella  
 Date: June 2, 2008  
 To: frank@frankambrose.com

Just a word to let you know how much I enjoyed your web site "My Return to Pantanella".

Please accept my thanks and appreciation for your work.

I was stationed at Bari with the 420th Signal Company (Avn) and later with the 20th Bomb Sq, 2nd Bomb Gp (do not recall the geographic location).

My last assignment in Italy was with Hq 2nd Bomb Gp in Foggia.

Jim Ferguson, bev.jim@att.net.

Mr Charles Payne  
 1341 Clotfelter Rd.  
 Bogart, Ga 30622  
 June 3rd, '08

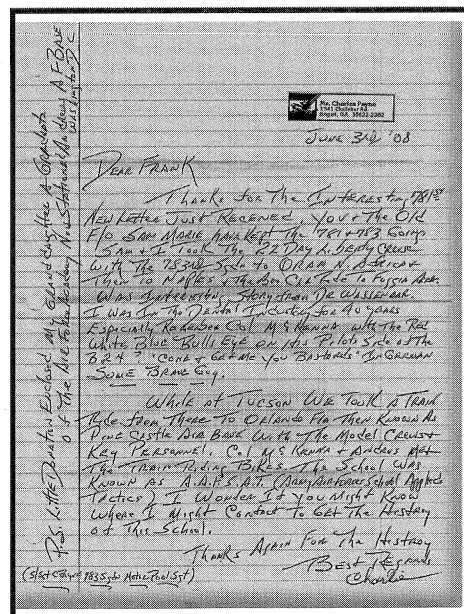
Dear Frank;

Thanks for the interesting 781st News Letter just recieved.

You and the Old F/O Sam Marie have kept the 781st and 783rd going.

Sam and I took the 22 Day Liberty Ship Cruise in '44 with the 783rd to Oran, N. Africa and then to Naples and the Box Car ride to the Foggia Area.

Was an interesting story from Dr. Wassenaar. I was in the Dental Industry for 40 years.



## '08 REUNION NEWS

## LT. GEN. JOHN L. "JACK" HUDSON SLATED AS KEYNOTE SPEAKER AT 781st REUNION BANQUET

Ron Soucy, once again, scored another major coup engaging a top Air Force General to give the major 'Address' at our Association Banquet.

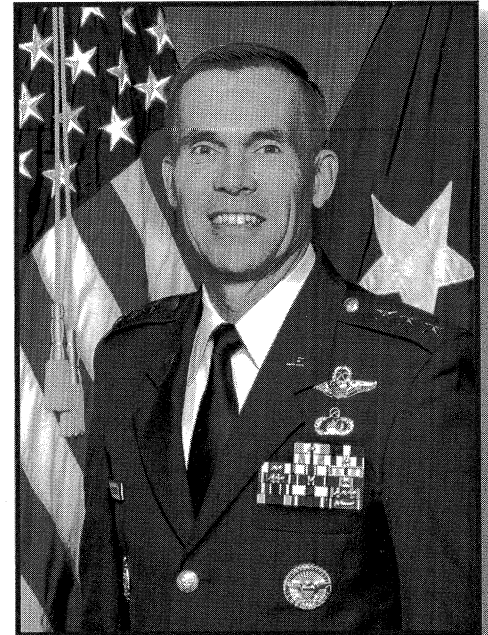
Gen. John L. "Jack" Hudson has graciously consented to attend our affair and speak.

General Hudson is Commander, Aeronautical Systems Center, Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio.

The center is responsible for the management of more than 420 Air Force, joint and international programs, executes an annual budget of \$19 billion, and employs a work force of approximately 11,000 people located at Wright-Patterson AFB and 38 other locations worldwide.

General Hudson was born in New York state. He was commissioned in 1973 as a distinguished graduate of the U.S. Air Force Academy. He has served as a T-38 instructor pilot; an A-10 pilot, instructor pilot and flight examiner; and as a test pilot at Edwards AFB, Calif.

The general has served on the Air Staff and as the director of several Air Force and joint system program offices, as the senior military assistant to the Under Secretary for Defense for Acquisition and Technology, and as Program Executive Officer and Program Director, Joint Strike Fighter Program, Office of the Assistant



Gen. John L. "Jack" Hudson

Secretary of the Navy for Research, Development and Acquisition.

Prior to his current position, he was Assistant Deputy Under Secretary of the Air Force for International Affairs.

General Hudson is a command pilot with more than 3,500 flying hours in the A-10, A-7, T-38 and 42 other types of aircraft.

I especially remember Col. McKenna with the Red, White and Blue Bulls Eye on his pilots side of the B-24?

"Come and Get Me You Bastards" in German--

SOME BRAVE GUY!!

While at Tuson we took a train ride from there to Orlando, Fla. Then know as 'Pine Castle Air Base' with the 'Model Crews' and Key Personnel.

Col. McKenna and Andrews met the train riding bikes. The school was known as A.A.F.S.A.T.

(Army Air Force School Applied Tactics)

I wonder if you might know where I might contact to get the History of the school.

Thanks Again For The History,

Best Regards- Charlie

(S/Sgt. C. Payne:783rd BS Motor Pool Sgt)

P.S. Little Donation Enclosed. My Grand Daughter a Graduate of the Air Force Academy now stationed at Andrews AF Base in Washington, DC

## SISTER MARY ANN'S GASOLINE

Sister Mary Ann, who worked for a home health agency, was out making her rounds visiting homebound patients when she ran out of gas. As luck would have it, a Texaco Gasoline station was just a block away.

She walked to the station to borrow a gas can and buy some gas. The attendant told her that the only gas can he owned had been loaned out, but she could wait until it was returned. Since Sister Mary Ann was on the way to see a patient, she decided not to wait and walked back to her car.

She looked for something in her car that she could fill with gas and spotted the bedpan she was taking to the patient.

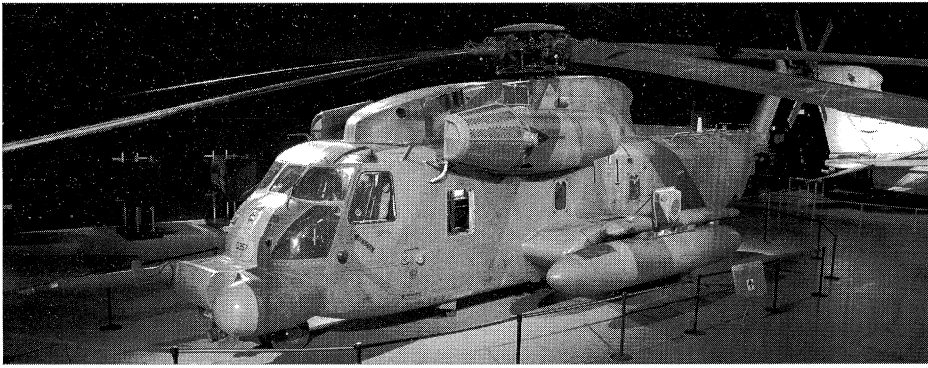
Always resourceful, Sister Mary Ann carried the bedpan to the station, filled it with gasoline, and carried the full bedpan back to her car.

As she was pouring the gas into her tank, two Baptists watched from across the street. One of them turned to the other and said, 'If it starts, I'm turning Catholic.'



## WHAT TO SEE AT THE REUNION

### New MH-53M helicopter exhibit opens at the National Museum of the U.S. Air Force in Dayton



DAYTON, Ohio - Sikorsky MH-53M Pave Low IV on display in the Cold War Gallery at the National Museum of the U.S. Air Force. (U.S. Air Force photo)

#### New MH-53M helicopter exhibit opens at the National Museum of the U.S. Air Force

Sikorsky MH-53M Pave Low IV  
DAYTON, Ohio - Sikorsky MH-53M Pave Low IV on display in the Cold War Gallery at the National Museum of the U.S. Air Force. (U.S. Air Force photo)

Air Force special operations forces used the Sikorsky MH-53M to covertly enter enemy territory. Capable of operating day or night or in bad weather, these helicopters conducted long-range, low-level missions to insert, extract, and resupply special operations forces.

The museum's MH-53M Pave Low IV helicopter, serial number 68-10357, carried the command element during the mission to rescue American prisoners of war from the Son Tay prison camp near Hanoi, North Vietnam in 1970.

After Vietnam, it flew in many more

combat engagements including Operation DESERT STORM and Operation IRAQI FREEDOM. After 38 years of service, its final flight was a combat mission in Iraq on March 28, 2008.

From Iraq, the aircraft was transported to the National Museum of the U.S. Air Force in Dayton, Ohio.

"It's fitting that this aircraft's last mission was flown in combat before it was placed on permanent display at the museum," said Lt. Gen. Donald C. Wurster, commander of Air Force Special Operations Command and an MH-53 pilot. "These machines are born to combat and have proven themselves time and time again."

Flown in nearly every contingency since the Vietnam War, the MH-53 has proved to be extremely durable and highly decorated.

"We checked the records and found that this fleet of only 72 aircraft has racked up a combat record of 140 Silver Stars; an average of two Silver Stars per airframe over their lifetime," said Lt. Gen. Wurster. "It is hard to believe that any other aircraft in Air Force history could have such a remarkable and compelling story of heroism."

National Museum of the U.S. Air Force visitors will be able to learn more about the MH-53M's heroic story now that the aircraft is on permanent display in the museum's Eugene W. Kettering Cold War Gallery.

According to museum director Maj. Gen. (Ret.) Charles D. Metcalf, it is only appropriate that the MH-53M have an honored place within the museum.

"The MH-53M stands as a representative of not only its own rich history, but also as a record copy off which we will launch countless stories of the men and women who have built, flown, crewed and maintained these aircraft," said Metcalf. "We are honored and privileged to have this responsibility."

In September 2008, the remaining MH-53s in the Air Force inventory will be retired, completing this helicopter's long and distinguished Air Force career.

### BOB HOPE EXHIBIT "50 YEARS OF HOPE"

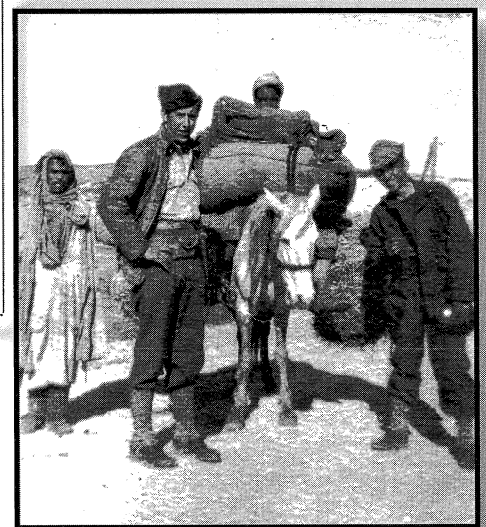
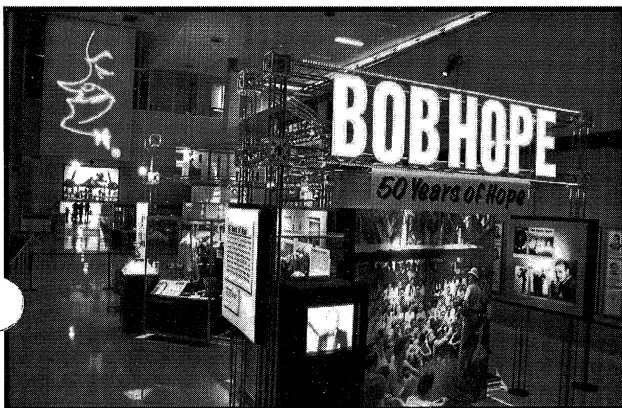
A special exhibit honoring Bob Hope is on display in the museum's Kettering Hall. Constructed in

2002, this tribute to Bob Hope includes several artifacts given to the entertainer from members of the Armed Forces.

For more than 50 years, Bob Hope entertained men and women of the U.S. Air Force and the other services at home and overseas, in peace and in war.

At least 10,000,000 G.I.s benefited from his efforts, and the United States Air Force thanks Bob Hope for those 50 years of memories.

**"Bob Hope:  
50 Years of Hope"**



Another photo sent in by John Zadrozny taken February of 1944. This photo shows John on the Left and Harold (Peanuts) Bakner on the right.

The Donkey in the center seems to be quite un-happy due to the heavy load.

Most likely the donkey was laden with all that underwear John was wearing for 30 days on that Luxury Cruise in took to Africa in '44.

**IT'S NOT TOO LATE---781st 2008 REUNION DAYTON AF BASE OCT. 5-6-7-8**

## TREASURER'S REPORT

Ken, our Treasurer, reports that a number of Vet's family members and friends are continuing to join our Group as Associate Members.

He also reports that a few individuals are sending Memorial Contributions in memory of fallen comrades and still others are contributing honoring an individual or event. The following Memorial Contributions and Donations Honoring Individuals have been received this quarter:-

- From Bernie Badler-
  - A Memorial in Memory of Vanorma Van Slyke, wife of Jack Van Slyke, 781st Pilot.
  - A Memorial in Memory of Dale L, Keiser, Nose Gunner.
  - A contribution in Honor of the birth of First Great Grandchild, Alison Ann Badler.
  - And from Charles Payne, a member of the 783rd Bomb Squadron:-
    - A contribution honoring his Grand Daughter a Graduate of the Air Force Academy stationed at Andrews AF Base in Washington, DC

Memorial Contributions and Donations to the 781st Bomb Squadron Association honoring the memory of our fallen comrades and family can be sent to:

**781st Bomb Squadron Association**  
**c/o Ken Kill**  
**707 West Circle Dr.,**  
**Findlay, OH 45840**

Please make checks out to the

**IT'S NOT TOO LATE**  
**SEND IN YOUR**  
**REGISTRATION FORM**  
**RIGHT NOW!!**

## US AIR FORCE NCO STATUS

The Air Force is the only one of the five branches of the United States military where NCO status is only achieved at the grade of E-5. In all other branches NCO status can be achieved at the grade of E-4 (a Corporal in the Army and Marine Corps, Petty Officer Third Class in the Navy and Coast Guard). However, E-4s in the Army with the rank of Specialist are not NCOs.

The Air Force mirrored the Army from 1976 to 1991 with an E-4 being either a Senior Airman wearing three stripes without a star or a Sergeant (referred to as "Buck Sergeant") which was noted by the presence of the central star and considered an NCO. Despite not being an NCO, a Senior Airman who has completed Airman Leadership School can be a supervisor.

### Evolution of the Chevrons

Although the Air Force became an independent service with the National Security Act of 1947, it retained the Army Air Force rank structure and corresponding insignia of years past.

This rank structure provided for seven enlisted ranks: Private, Private First Class, Corporal/Technician Fifth Grade, Sergeant/Technician Fourth Grade, Staff Sergeant/Technician Third Grade, Technical Sergeant and Master Sergeant/First Sergeant.

Additionally, Air Force personnel were still referred to as soldiers.

Changes to the rank structure were proposed almost immediately but did not start occurring until the next year. Sometime during late 1947 and early 1948, new chevron designs were tested at Bolling Air Force Base. The style preferred was the one used today, the inverted chevron.

Air Force Chief of Staff General Hoyt Vandenberg approved the new chevron on 9 March 1948.



## Scuttle Butt... From other Squadrons

According to the 780th's newsletter, "FLIGHT LINE", their squadron will be holding their 2008 Reunion at the Double Tree Hotel in Bloomfield, Illinois, September 24th to the 27th. This reunion will be the thirty-eighth time the 80th has met together.

They will be visiting, among other things, the "Parieland Museum, a Tea Room and a Winery.

The 783rd "Latrine O Gram" reports that they will be meeting at the Millennium Hotel in Buffalo, New York on the same days as we are, October 5th to the 8th.

One of the interesting events they will be doing is a ride on the 'Maid of the Mist', sailing into the dense mist and spray and roar of the water inside the curve of Niagara's Horseshoe Falls.

A 'Real Life' enactment is also scheduled at Old Fort Niagara"

As for the 782nd, no one seems to know what ever happened to the 782nd.

It's as if they were never there.

I am almost positive I saw some of their planes flying in our same formation on the way to and from the target.

Remember the 782nd? They were the guys flying in the B-24's with the big White letters painted on the sides of the fuselage!

**WANTED**  
**YOUR MEMORIES**  
**YOUR STORIES**  
**YOUR PHOTOS**  
**TO BE USED IN THIS**  
**PUBLICATION**

Send to  
**Frank Ambrose, Editor**  
**44 East Blvd**  
**Gloversville, NY 12068**  
 or Email:-  
**frank@frankambrose.com**



**FOLDED WINGS****Michael Steven Horvath**

Communications Section

**From:** muzikken@aol.com**Subject:** Re: Pantanella News**Date:** June 2, 2008**To:** fambrose@frontiernet.net

Dear Mr. Ambrose,

This is to inform you that **Michael Steven Horvath** passed away on April 2, 2008 at the age of 93.

He was buried on April 7th at the Ohio Western Reserve National Cemetery.

Since he is gone now, you can delete any further emails and/or regular mail to save your organization time and expense.

My best to all of the surviving members of your organization.

**Edwin K Koch,***nephew of Michael S Horvath***VaNorma R. Van Slyke:**

Wife of Jack Van Slyke, 781st Pilot memorial Service was held June 20, 2008 at the 'Third Presbyterian Church in North Tonawanda, New York. for **VaNorma R. Van Slyke** wife of Jack Van Slyke, 781st Pilot, who died June 5, 2008.

VaNorma enjoyed attending the 781st Reunions and will be missed by the many friends she made.

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

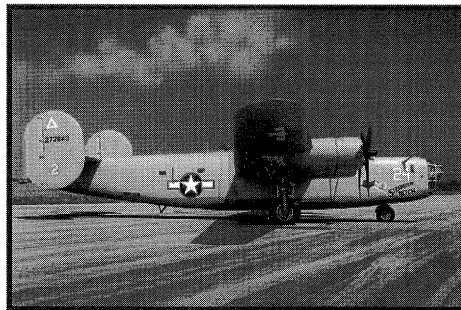
**Last Minute Reunion Information from Ron and Carole Lee....**

The museum has wheelchairs and scooters...but they are available on a first come/first served basis.

Carole also reports:-

We have some business cards from the Salon at Wright Patterson AFB. They will be available at the Hospitality Room. If ladies will want an appointment, the Salon telephone number is:- (937) 879-5281

To assure an appointment a call in advance is advised. The courtesy van will be available for transportation if needed.



Ron also reports that he has been successful making arrangements to have the B-24 the Museum has in their assets to be made available for our members to visit and enter.

The B-24D on display at the US AirForce Museum in Dayton flew combat missions from North Africa in 1943-1944 with the 512th Bomb Squadron.

It was flown to the museum in May 1959.

It is the same type airplane as the "Lady Be Good," the world-famous B-24D that disappeared on a mission from North Africa in April 1943 and was found in the Libyan Desert in May 1959.

**IT'S NOT TOO LATE  
SEND OR CALL IN  
YOUR  
RESERVATION**

**President's Corner**

781st Friends -

We are excited to be holding our 2008 Reunion in Dayton, Ohio, the 'Birthplace of Aviation'. If you have been to Dayton before, don't worry, there are many new things to see and what you have seen before is well worth seeing again.

We will be holding an election of officers in the business meeting on Tuesday evening. I have appointed a Nominating Committee.

If you are willing to hold an office or if you have a suggestion for them, I'm sure they would like to hear from you.

They are:

Barney Russell 870-234-4063,  
Ron Soucy 937-426-6314 and  
John Fandrey 651-698-2565.

I have included their telephone numbers for you to call.

Time is a fleeting. Get your registrations in the mail to our Treasurer.

If you need a registration blank, please contact me, the Treasurer, Ken Kill or the Pantanella News Editor Frank Ambrose.

We need the registrations before we can finalize plans.

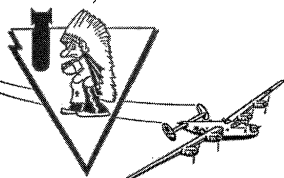
Looking forward to seeing you in Dayton!

Orren

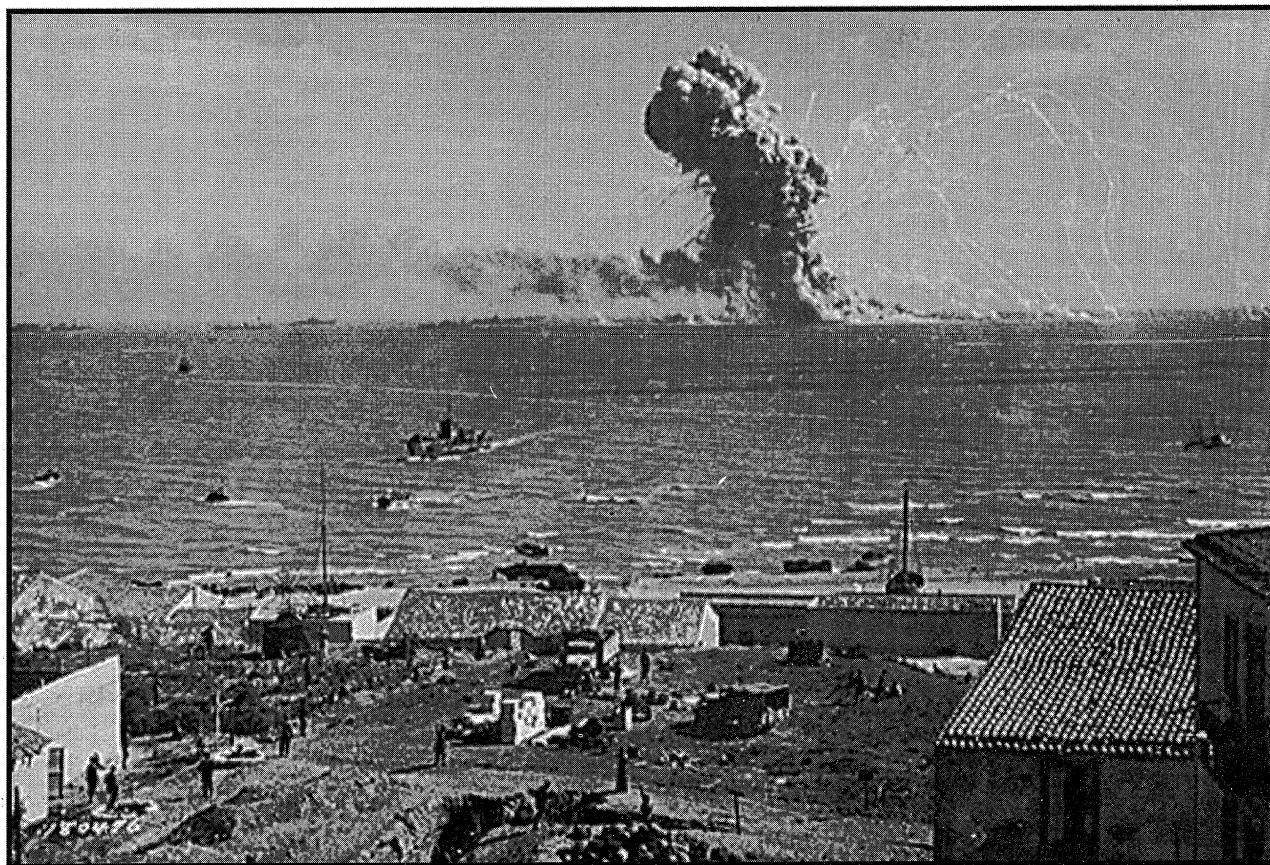


**Coming Right Up!**

781st "PANTANELLA NEWS"  
c/o Frank Ambrose, Editor  
44 East Blvd.  
Gloversville, NY 12078



781st 2008  
REUNION  
WRIGHT PATTERSON  
AF BASE  
DAYTON, OHIO  
OCT. 5-6-7-8  
Hope Hotel  
It's Not Too Late  
Send in Reservation  
NOW!!



During the Invasion of Sicily, an American cargo ship is hit by a bomb from a German plane and its cargo of munitions explodes off Gela, Sicily, July 1943. (Photo credit: US National Archives)