



PANTANELLA NEWS

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781st REUNION REGISTRATION DEADLINE AUGUST 30th



2011 Reunion, New Orleans, LA

DON'T MISS THE BUS TO THIS YEAR'S REUNION

Send your reservations for the 781st Bomb Squadron Association Reunion in Branson, MO today. Our Reunion Planners, Gatherings Plus, have set August 30th as the registration deadline. The Host Hotel, the Grand Plaza, has set August 30th as the deadline to hold our block of rooms. – Carole Lee

PANTANELLA NEWS

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Contact one of the following individuals
for FW's, News, Address Changes, etc.

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Vice President: Earl Leinart
Treasurer: James Braud
Secretary: Debbie Cherry
Chaplin: Joseph Soucy
Board Member: Don Muncie
Board Member: Georgia McKinnon

PANTANELLA NEWS

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 in Seven Battle Campaigns.

President's Letter



I want to thank George Kilby for responding to my message in the last newsletter regarding the 781st History book and sent us a spare copy he had acquired.

We have forwarded it to a family that had requested one. If anyone else has a copy lying around collecting dust and would be willing to sell, the 781st would buy it from you.

The South Dakota Air National Guard celebrated 150 years by hosting an air show in Sioux Falls along with other

local sponsors. It was a two day event, free to all and drew a crowd of over 100,000. The Honor Flight Committee supplied a tent, chairs, tables, water, and VIP treatment to all who had gone on the Honor Flight. We enjoyed a B-25, P-38, P-51, a B-1 and the Blue Angels. We had a great day and a great show.

We are looking forward to the Reunion in Branson and check the Attendee's list daily!

— Orren Lee



REUNION - WHO'S COMING?

FROM THE 781st EXECUTIVE SECRETARY:

Go to the website: www.reunionproregistration.com/781stbombsquadron.htm to check who is coming. Click on attendees and it will direct you to another website. Click on Reunions and scroll to the 781st logo. Click on the logo, it will list those that have registered so far. If your friends aren't listed, call them up! Tell them to send in their reservation - I want to see you there! We will be welcoming members from the other Squadrons too.

If you have any questions, or do not have internet connections, please call me to send you the information you need to register. 605-339-1297. — Carole Lee

INFORMATION WANTED:

The son of John Fahrer is looking for information. The 781st History Book has his father listed as a gunnery instructor. It might be a mistake. He remembers him telling about missions. He went by Mike Fahrer. The 781st received an inheritance from him. If you remember him being on a crew or any other information please contact Carole Lee, 781st Executive Secretary at 605-339-1297.

781st Bomb Squadron Registration Form

September 30-October 4, 2012

(To be printed and mailed in....not to register online)

Name: _____ **Spouse/Guest:** _____

Address: _____

State _____ **zip** _____ **telephone** _____ **email** _____

HOST HOTEL: THE GRAND PLAZA

Room reservations can be made by calling the Grand Plaza at 417-336-6646. Be sure and mention you are with the 781st Bomb Squadron to get the special group rate of \$87.00 per room per night plus tax. That rate will be good 3 days prior and 3 days after the reunion, based on hotel availability. Rooms that are reserved in the group block will be dropped August 30, so be sure and make your reservations prior to 8/30.

Please register me for the following:

Reunion Activity Package: \$215.00 per person

_____ **# of activity packages x \$215.00 per person = \$** _____

TOTAL DUE: \$ _____

Final payment is due by August 30. Refunds after September 24 will be on a case by case basis. This applies to the activity package.

Cancellations must be made by phone and authorized by a representative of Gatherings Plus. All refunds will be processed within 30 days of cancellation.

Questions? Call us at 417-338-4048

GATHERINGS PLUS

P.O. Box 1023, Branson West, MO 65737

TEAR OUT PAGE

REGISTRATION FORM ON OPPOSITE SIDE

Fill In Registration Form on Opposite Side and Mail to

GATHERINGS PLUS

P.O. Box 1023, Branson West, MO 65737

781st Bomb Squadron Reunion

Branson, Missouri • September 30-October 4, 2012

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY
<p>Check in at THE GRAND PLAZA HOTEL \$87.00 per room per night plus tax</p>  <p>1200 Hospitality Room Open...Light Snacks Provided</p> <p>1500 - 2100 Registration Hospitality Room</p>  <p>1730 "WELCOME ABOARD" Deli Buffet In Hospitality Room</p>	<p>700 - 1000 Hot Buffet Breakfast</p> <p>Morning Free</p> <p>Hospitality Room Open</p>  <p>1430 MEMORIAL SERVICE And THE SHOWBOAT BRANSON BELLE DINNER, SHOW AND CRUISE</p> <p>Hospitality Room Open</p>	<p>700 - 1000 Hot Buffet Breakfast</p>  <p>915 BUS TO THE CLAY COOPER SHOW and LUNCH at McFarlain's Followed by: VETERANS MUSEUM</p>  <p>1700 BOARD MEETING</p> <p>Hospitality Room Open & Evening Free</p>	<p>700 - 1000 Hot Buffet Breakfast</p> <p>900 BUSINESS MEETING</p>  <p>Hospitality Room Open All Day</p> <p>Afternoon Free</p>  <p>1800 GROUP PHOTO (not part of package price)</p> <p>1830 Social - Cash Bar</p>  <p>1900 FINAL EVENING BANQUET At Hotel with Entertainment</p>	<p>700 - 1000 Hot Buffet Breakfast</p> <p>Depart</p> <hr/> <p>ACTIVITY PACKAGE: \$215.00 Per person</p> <p>INCLUDES: Welcome Packet with Name Badges</p> <p>Deli Buffet</p> <p>Clay Cooper Show and Lunch at McFarlain's</p> <p>Veterans Museum</p> <p>Memorial Service</p> <p>Showboat Branson Belle Dinner, Show & Cruise</p> <p>Final Evening Banquet with Entertainment</p> <p>All Taxes and Most Gratuities Transportation to Group Activities Reunion Website</p> <p>\$16.00 goes back to association</p>

The reunion website is up and running. Check it out at:
www.reunionproregistration.com/781stbombsquadron.htm

FRANCIS CLARK AND THE FIRST 781ST REUNION



Left to right: Lou Deslatte, Ed Chapin, Larry Tiehen, Francis Clark.

Earlier this year former Governor of South Dakota and Congressman, Bill Janklow, died. The TV station was running a story on his life. One clip showed him speaking at the dedication of the World War II Memorial in Pierre, SD. In the crowd I spotted a 781st cap. Immediately I started a research in our database and found Francis Clark of Buffalo, SD. He was listed as FW in 2005. I searched in obituaries and found it printed in the Rapid City Journal. The following is portions that peeked my interest:

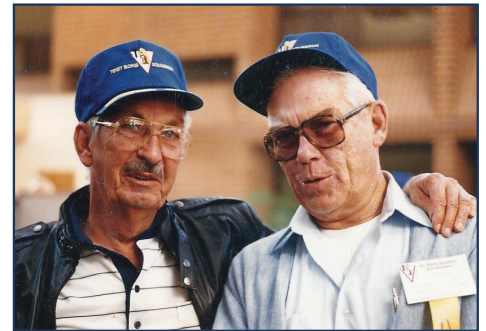
BUFFALO - Francis (Frank) R. Clark, 83, Buffalo, South Dakota died Monday, April 18. He entered the military service in May 1942 as an Aviation Cadet in the Army Air Corps. He received training as a Navigator and was assigned to a bomber crew, flying B-24 Liberators on combat missions out of Pantanella Air Base in Italy. His bomber was shot down over Germany in October 1944 and he spent approximately six months as a prisoner of war. His camp was liberated by the Russian Army. He was separated from the Air Corps in 1945 and remained in the Air Corps Reserve. he was recalled to active duty by the Air Force.

Frank was sent to Korea and flew fifty missions in a B-26 bomber. Frank stayed in the Air Force Reserve until May 1981, when he was retired from the Air Force with the rank of Captain. He was proud of his association with the Air Force and attended reunions of his World War II squadron and kept in touch with his old crew members and other friends. — *Published in Rapid City Journal on April 21, 2005*

I found family members from the obituary. I learned he had written his story and it was published in the 781st History Book. I found it beginning on page 62, last paragraph. I read that 781st Association Members, Murray Knowles and Lewis Deslatte, were part of the crew that was shot down. In the story I saw the name Tiehen and recognized it from a name on the 781st mailing list. I have since communicated with Terri Tiehen, a daughter of Larry Tiehen and also Lou Deslatte. Terri knew these gentlemen and has pictures of them at the first Reunion in Colorado Springs 1986. She has sent them to me and we are including them in this newsletter.

— Carole Lee

Photos from the First 781st Reunion Colorado Springs, 1986



Left to right: Larry Tiehen, Francis Clark.



Marcel Snyder, Jim Althoff



Marcel Snyder

FOLDED WINGS



LEO A. CHECKAI

89, of Watertown passed away on Saturday, June 16, 2012.

Leo was born on June 28, 1922, in Watertown, the son of Frank G. &

Anna (Brusenbach) Checkai. He was a 1940 graduate of Watertown High School. He served his country in WWII in the Army Air Corps in the 465th Bomb Group at Pantanella Air Field in Italy. Leo worked as a meat cutter and meat department manager at A&P; he later worked at Royal Meats and Tom's Royal Market. Leo was a life-long member of St. Bernard's Catholic Church, where he served as head usher for 12 years and, in his retirement, served as an acolyte for many years. Leo also served as president of the parish cemetery association for 12 years. He was a charter member of the AMVETS Post 35. Leo also was a member of the Catholic Knights.

Survivors include: four children, Leo Checkai Jr. of Neenah, Ron (Anne) Checkai of Bel Air, MD, Gary Checkai of LaCrosse, and Linda (Doug) Smith of Milwaukee and Delores Prah of Wyoming. He is preceded in death by his loving wife of sixty years Helen.



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.



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Sioux Falls, SD 57105



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