

781st BOMB SQUADRON | 465th BOMB GROUP | 15th AIR FORCE



PANTANELLA NEWS

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2014 Reunion DOVER DELAWARE

781st Bomb Squadron
October 1-4, 2014

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PANTANELLA NEWS

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Vice President: Earl Leinart

Treasurer: Carole Lee

Secretary: Debbie Cherry

Chaplin: Joseph Soucy

Board Member: Don Muncie

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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.

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President's Letter



I know our Editor is doing plenty to encourage you to send in your registration for the reunion in Dover, but I just want to add that we have our room reservation and our reunion registration. We received Ray Cauble's middle of June. He was the first! I am looking forward to our reunion in Dover. Hope to see a lot of you there.

The "Diamond Lil," a rare B-24 Liberator bomber flown during WWII, is touring the country giving rides to spectators and

veterans who flew aboard such warplanes. We received a newspaper clipping from Betty Kill showing it in the Findlay Airport where she lives. She and her daughter had the opportunity to tour it. Thanks for sending it, Betty.

I was raised in Abercrombie, ND. When I was drafted into the Army I was sent to radio school in Sioux Falls, SD. A lot of you have never heard of Sioux Falls, but it was very important in the war effort in WWII. The base consisted of more than 1,600 acres donated to the U.S. Army by the City. Nearly 6,000 men were hired to build the radio school. The barracks were pared-down, tar-papered buildings designed for a warmer climate. With one coal stove per barrack and no insulation, the quarters burned through tons of coal. Some soldiers were sickened with coal ash pneumonia. Training first consisted of an 18-week course, but that stretched to 26 weeks with classes running 24 hours a day in rotating shifts. At one point, 27,000 men were on-site learning how to send and receive Morse code, build their own radios and identify aircraft. Ultimately, nearly 50,000 men were schooled here. Experts estimate that nearly half of the radio operator-mechanics in Europe had trained in Sioux Falls.

— Orren Lee

Letter from the Past



Pierre Kennedy sent a copy of a letter written and published by Jim Althoff in 1985. The following is that letter re-typed:

"I became aware of the Liberator Club through Ben Donahue, a club member and a fellow pilot in our squadron during WWII (15th Air Force, 465 BG 781 BS). I have fond memories flying the Liberator

having a total of 634 hours of which were 250 hours of combat. I flew a new Liberator from Topeka, Kansas (B-24 J Ser #51492) to Italy via the Atlantic. After 57 missions and the end of the war, I flew a B-24 L back to the US via Africa and South America. I still have the keys to the new Liberator.

I am trying to locate a couple members of my crew: Sgt. Leonard Goldstein last known in Cincinnati, Ohio and Sgt. Pierre J.J. Kennedy of Haverhill, Massachusetts. They were shot down over Germany and held POWs until the end of the war."

— James C. Althoff

UPCOMING REUNION



Liz and I are eagerly looking forward to the upcoming arrival of our 781st Bomb Squadron reunion attendees. Up until lately we have focused on the logistics of the reunion, the hotel, the bus, tours etc. But now we'd like to focus a little more on the programming side of the house, and offer you a preview of what we are planning.

For our hospitality room in addition to food and drink, I have been collecting books, and memorabilia concerning the 781st, B-24s and Air Force history which I hope to make available to the attendees.



I hope you will do the same if you have items of interest to share with other folks attending.

The first morning we will have a discussion between our veterans and members of the JR ROTC from Dover High School. I have been in touch with their teacher, Major John Murphy (USAF Ret.), and he is very keen to meet our vets. He'd like to also include a history class that is studying World War II as well. The JR ROTC cadets will be providing our color guard at our banquet.

We are working with our Chaplain, Joe Soucy, on a program for our service at the base chapel on Friday, October 3. We hope to have the base honor guard present the colors and provide a bugler for TAPs. We may need a volunteer to play the organ/piano if someone has those skills.

At the Air Mobility Command Museum after our lunch, I would like to present a short program on the history of Dover Air Force Base with special emphasis on the

World War II era. A tour of the museum will follow.

President Orren Lee will conduct the 781st Association business meeting on Saturday morning, October 4.

Those of you who attended the banquet at Charleston last year will remember our program of remembrances by our veterans. Each attending vet was given time to talk and offer some slides of his experience. We'd like to extend that same opportunity to our returning vets, as well as the families of vets who have "folded wings". If you think you'd like to participate in this year's program, please drop me a line and we'll include you in the agenda. Ideally your talk should be about five to ten minutes long. If you have photos or slides, you can forward them to me and I will (or perhaps we have a volunteer?) assemble all the elements into a Powerpoint program for presentation during our banquet.

Looking forward to seeing you!
— Ken and Liz Wiggins

IMPORTANT Reunion Details

Registration and hotel deadline: September 1

Registration forms were in the June Pantanella News. If you misplaced yours, please contact the Treasurer, Carole Lee, for another one.

Phone: 605-339-1297

Email: clee13@midco.net

**A picture ID will be required
to get on base.**



In the Beginning –



The following background is repeated from the 1986 Reunion Booklet, sent in by Sharon Freed Akana, daughter of veteran Bob Freed, for those who have no copy of that document.

This is the story of the first reunion of the 781st Bombardment Squadron (H) AAF, held at Colorado Springs, Colorado on September 11-15, 1986.

But the story did not begin at Colorado Springs. It began when the 465th Bombardment Group (H), with its four Squadrons, was activated on August 1, 1943, at Alamogordo, New Mexico on General Order Number 78, Second Air Force, dated May 29, 1943.

And more particularly on August 16, 1943, when the first cadre personnel were assigned to the 781st Bombardment Squadron (H) AAF, at Davis-Monthan Field near Tucson, Arizona.

The unit trained at Pinecastle, Florida: Camp Kearns, Utah: McCook, Nebraska: and Tunis, Tunisia prior to beginning combat operations at Pantanella Army Air Base near Canosa in the Ofanto River valley of south central Italy.

The first combat mission of the Squadron was flown to Podgorica, Yugoslavia on May 5, 1944, and the last, number 191, was flown to North Italy on April 26, 1945.

Germany surrendered on May 7. The war in Europe was finished and the Squadron's mission was completed. The air crews flew all of our planes from Pantanella on May 23-24, and a few ground personnel were transferred to other units.

The remaining members left on May 25 en route to Port of Spain, Trinidad where the Squadron was broken up to provide support for the Air Transport command, returning U.S. troops from Europe. As of July 2, 1945, 2 officers and 44 enlisted men remained. The unit was officially inactivated effective of General Order Number 10, Hq. 1107 AAFBU, dated July 29, 1945.

Almost forty years passed and June 6, 1984, marked the 40th anniversary of D Day in Europe. This landmark date generated considerable publicity and started many veterans reminiscing about their wartime associations.

Among these veterans was James C. Althoff, a former pilot in the 781st Squadron. Jim had maintained contact over the years with Ernie Van Asperen and Ben Donahue, also former 781st Bomb Squadron pilots, and he began to wonder about his former crew members and where they might be and what they had been doing.

And he began to telephone and write to their wartime addresses and he searched and he searched and he searched and he finally found two of them, Hugh Cooper, Bombardier and Jim Ousler, Engineer. His success in finding these members from his own crew led him to a decision to broaden his search and to start an organization made up of all the members of the 781st Squadron.

Jim was aware that the 783rd and the 465th Bomb Group already had formed an organization. He knew several of their members and had flown with some of them in Pantanella.

In August of 1985, the 783rd Association had its second reunion, at Dayton, Ohio,

and Jim was invited to attend, which he did - hoping to learn from their experiences. On the second day of the reunion the group went to Wright-Patterson Field to visit the Air Force Museum and one of the attractions was a walk through an old B-24.

As he waited to go through the plane, Jim began chatting with the man standing next in line, exchanging information about wartime assignments. This man turned out to be James Marcel Snyder, a mickey operator (radar navigator) who also had been a member of the 781st Bomb Squadron. And there the 781st Bomb Squadron Association was born.

Jim assumed responsibility for locating members in the western half of the United States and Marcel took on the eastern half.

When he returned home, Jim dug out an old yellowed, dog-eared 1985 roster of 781st officers with wartime addresses and he began telephoning and writing letters. He found an astounding 35% of those he tried to contact and an enormously enthusiastic response.

By October he had located 50 men and he started publishing the Newsletter, which he optimistically and typically labeled, "Number One". And in that Newsletter he already was proposing a 781st Squadron reunion to be held at Colorado Springs in September of 1986 anticipating perhaps something over 100 members plus wives might attend.

Thus was the beginning of the 781st Bomb Squadron Association and its first reunion.

Joint Base Charleston Highlight Vets Visit

(All Photos and Illustrations by U.S. Air Force photo/Senior Airman Tom Brading)

Joint Base Charleston has posted photos and the following descriptions on their website to document the visit of the 781st to the base during the 2013 Reunion held in Charleston. This posting can be viewed at the following link:

www.charleston.af.mil/news/story.asp?id=123371266



Members of the Army Air Corps 781st Bombardment Squadron who served during World War II, have held an annual reunion for more than 30 years. This year the host city was Charleston, S.C. While visiting the city, the veterans were given the opportunity to experience the mission at Joint Base Charleston during a base tour.



Col. Jeffrey DeVore, Joint Base Charleston commander, provides a JB Charleston mission brief to veterans of the 781st Bombardment Squadron and their families during their annual reunion Nov. 13, 2013, at JB Charleston, S.C. (With Ray Cauble)



Earl Leinart, 781st Bombardment Squadron veteran, visits the Air Park at Joint Base Charleston, S.C., Nov. 13, 2013.



Debbie Cherry, 781st Bombardment Squadron reunion coordinator, and Earl Leinart, 781st Bombardment Squadron veteran, visit the Air Park at Joint Base Charleston, S.C., Nov. 13.



Earl Leinart, 781st Bombardment Squadron veteran, visits the 1st Combat Camera Squadron, Nov. 13, 2013, at Joint Base Charleston – Air Base, S.C. The veterans volunteered to have their stories documented by Combat Camera for an upcoming project.



Orren Lee, 781st Bombardment Squadron veteran, visits the 1st Combat Camera Squadron, Nov. 13, 2013, at Joint Base Charleston, S.C.

781st Bomb Squadron Reunion Schedule

Dover, Delaware • October 1-4, 2014

WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
 <p>3:00pm Check in at the HILTON GARDEN HOTEL</p> <p>Free parking.</p> <p>1706 N DuPont Highway, Dover, DE 19901 302-747-2984</p> <p>Reserved Reunion room fee is \$90 per night including taxes.</p>  <p>5:00pm Hospitality Room Opens with Deli Buffet</p> <p>5:00pm - 10:00pm Registration Hospitality Room</p>	 <p>9:00am - 11:00am MORNING DISCUSSION Veterans with JR ROTC Members of Dover High School</p> <p>11:30am - 1:00pm CATERED LUNCH in Hotel</p>  <p>1:00pm - 4:30pm BUGGY & BAY TOUR A scenic excursion bus tour of the Amish Country, where horse and buggies are a way of life. Then on to a windshield tour of the National Wildlife Refuge, Bombay Hook. The refuge is a stopping point on the trip of migratory birds and abundant wildlife. <i>Tour Guide - Barbara Rafte</i></p>  <p>5:00pm EXECUTIVE BOARD COMMITTEE MEETING Hilton Garden Inn</p>	 <p>9:00am - 11:30pm TOUR OF DOVER AIR FORCE BASE with welcome by the Commander</p>  <p>MEMORIAL SERVICE at Base Chapel</p>  <p>GROUP PHOTO</p>  <p>12:00 NOON Lunch at the Museum catered by Where Pigs Fly! <i>BBQ Central Delaware Style.</i></p>  <p>1:00pm - 3:30pm TOUR OF THE AIR MOBILITY COMMAND MUSEUM</p>	 <p>9:00am 781st Reunion Association Business Meeting</p> <p>AFTERNOON FREE</p> <p>HOSPITALITY ROOM OPEN ALL DAY</p>  <p>7:00pm (Cash Bar 6:30pm) FINAL EVENING BANQUET Hilton Garden Inn</p>	<p>Depart</p> <p>ACTIVITY PACKAGE: \$140 Per person</p> <p>INCLUDES: Welcome Packet with Name Badges</p> <p>Deli Buffet</p> <p>Daily Continental Breakfast at the Hilton Garden Inn</p> <p>Hotel Luncheon</p> <p>Buggy and Bay Bus Tour</p> <p>Base tour Dover AFB</p> <p>Memorial Service</p> <p>Lunch and Air Mobility Command Museum</p> <p>Final Evening Banquet</p> <p>Bus Transportation</p> <p>Taxes and gratuities</p>

Ken and Liz Wiggins – 781st Bomb Sqdn. Reunion Coordinators 2014
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FOLDED WINGS

WILLIAM K. "BILL" FITZPATRICK

William K. "Bill" Fitzpatrick 91, of Williamston, died Saturday, June 28, 2014. Arrangements by Skinner Funeral Homes, Lansing Chapel. As reported by his wife.

HOYT F. ADSIT

(April 4, 1924 - October 31, 2013)

Hoyt F. Adsit, Sr., 89, of Sherburne passed away Thursday, Oct. 31, 2013 in the Bassett Hospital of Cooperstown.

Hoyt was born in No. Norwich on April 4, 1924, the son of Leland and Marjorie Lucas Adsit. He grew up in the No. Norwich and Sherburne area and was a 1942 graduate of the Sherburne High School. During his high school years, Hoyt played basketball, was a member of the school band where he played the sousaphone and football where he was a member of the 1940 undefeated team. In Jan. of 1942, Hoyt entered the United States Army. He served his country in the Army Air Corps during WWII until his honorable discharge in Oct. of 1945, where he earned the rank of Staff Sergeant. On his 15th mission, on D Day, he was shot down over Romania and was a POW for 92 days. He was the proud recipient of the Purple Heart. Hoyt was very proud of his military service. Over the past few years he shared his military experience with many adults and children.

Hoyt started farming on his grandparents 20 cow, 80 acre farm, which, along with his brother Rodger, grew into a 600 acre farm which they operated for over 40 plus years retiring in 1990. Along with the farm, they also operated Adsits Maple Syrup. Not quite ready to give up farming, Hoyt began selling for Pioneer Seed. His other jobs included delivering flowers for Pires Flower Basket and the manager of Park House Apts. in Norwich. His most recent job was manager of Handsome Brook Trailer Court in Sherburne.

Always interested and active in the political arena, Hoyt had served on the Sherburne School Board of Education, as Assessor for the Town of Sherburne and as Town of North Norwich Justice.

Hoyt had a quick wit and a friendly personality. He was always ready and willing to tell entertaining stories and was a very kind and generous man to family and friends. He created a bucket list of places to travel which included meeting former President George Bush Sr. and a visit to Romania to meet and visit with the Princess of Romania and see his POW camp. His most recent adventures were traveling to Boston, MA and Iceland in 2013. He enjoyed weekly meals with his friends of the Norwich Widow and Widowers as well as Hospice and Palliative Care of Chenango County.

Hoyt is survived by his children: Robert (Jennifer) Adsit of Sherburne, Louise (Karl) Breckan of Palantine, Ill, Hoyt Frederick Adsit Jr., of Norwich and David Adsit of Sherburne, step-son Richard Adsit, his sister Janette Nigolian of Sherburne and sister-in-law Diane (Thomas) Gordon. Also surviving are grandchildren, great grandchildren, nieces, nephews and friends. Hoyt was predeceased by his first wife, Clara Knapp Adsit, who passed away in 1973, his second wife, Nancy Carson Adsit, who passed away in 2011, his brother, Rodger Adsit, and sister, Eileen Tremper.



JOHN PARKER LAYNE, SR
(March 7, 1925 - July 2, 2014)

John Parker Layne, Sr., 89 a lifelong resident of South Pittsburg, TN, died Wednesday, July 2nd in a local nursing home.

The son of the late Patrick Martin and Bonnie Parker Layne, he was the President of JI Brown Tree Company where he worked for 45 years until his retirement in 2001. He was a World War II Army Air Corps veteran and a member of the TN National Guard. Mr. Layne was also a member of South Pittsburg First Baptist Church, Marion Lodge #515 where he was the Past Master, the Scottish Rite Bodies and the Alhambra Shrine. In addition to his parents, Parker was preceded in death by his wife, Frances Layne, grandson, Matt Layne and brother, Pat Layne, Jr.

Mr. Layne is survived by his son, John P. (Helen) Layne, Jr., of Signal Mtn.;

grandchildren, Bonnie Layne (Chris) McKinney of Rossville, GA, Paul (Andrea) Mayo of Ooltewah, TN, and Kristi (Todd) McAllister of Flintstone, GA; five great-grandchildren and several nieces and nephews.



ALBERT PHILIP LEBLANC
(May 26, 1918 - July 28, 2014)

Albert Philip LeBlanc went to his heavenly home on July 28, 2014, at the age of 96. He was a graduate of Loyola University of New Orleans, a life member of the Knights of Columbus and a veteran of World War II, participating in 51 combat missions as the flight engineer and top turret gunner of a B-24 Liberator bomber in the European Theater. He is preceded in death by his parents, Albert LeBlanc and Laura Jumonville LeBlanc, sisters Alberta Farrell, Beverly Tarantolo, brothers Alvin LeBlanc, Donald LeBlanc, Merrill LeBlanc and Lynwood LeBlanc.

Albert is survived by his beloved wife of 68 years, Doris Gillen LeBlanc, his dear children Sharon Barthes (Mick), Sandra Ryan (Lou), Debbie Long (Matt), Jeanne Nell Procell (Ronnie), Ronnie Kay Smith, Marilyn Horne (Ron), Marcella Rachal (Chad) and Philip LeBlanc (Belynda). He is also survived by his brother Tommy LeBlanc (Diana), sister Lita Faye Johnson (Homer), sister-in-law Virginia Hein (Don), 21 grandchildren and 22 great-grandchildren, each bringing him much joy.

Albert was laid to rest with military honors at St. Charles Borromeo Cemetery, Destrehan, La. The family prefers memorials of masses, flowers or donations to the National World War II Museum, New Orleans.



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.

781st "PANTANELLA NEWS"

Orren Lee, President
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Sioux Falls, SD 57103



PANTANELLA NEWS

