

Fifteenth Air Force
55th Bombardment Wing
465th Bomb Group

January 1997



783RD LATRINE-O-GRAM

Message from the President-Mike Magazine

783rd Bomb Squadron Reunion

We have finalized the plans and program for our 1997 Reunion in St. Louis on October 9-12. We are enclosing the program with 2 registration forms. One is for the Radisson Hotel and the other for the various activities that include tours, meals, and golf. You need to make your own room reservations by completing the Radisson Hotel registration form or calling their 800 number. Complete the form for the meals, tours, and golf. Make checks payable to and send to Discover St. Louis Tours. Minimum participation for the Casino - St. Charles is \$20, for the tours it's \$30, and the Dinner-Dance Cruise will be \$40. Please make your reservations early. Thanks.

Many amenities are offered by the Radisson:

FREE PARKING and FREQUENT SHUTTLE SERVICE to/from ST. LOUIS LAMBERT AIRPORT. COMPLIMENTARY SHUTTLE SERVICE to/from nearby NORTHWEST PLAZA SHOPPING MALL. SHUTTLE SERVICE to pick up points for METRO-LINK to DOWNTOWN ST. LOUIS. COMPLIMENTARY HORS D'OEUVRES at RADISSON LOBBY BAR-T.G.I.FRIDAYS-EVENINGS.

Make your plans to enjoy another 783rd Reunion, our 8th. We do want to welcome your family to join us and to see the great bond and camaraderie that has been generated from 783rd reunions, and maybe they will get involved to keep our "legacy alive and that we be remembered". I know my wife Sarah and I had a sense of pride in introducing "our kids" to the many friends of the 783rd.

For some of us who were in boot camp at Jefferson Barracks, this will be "St. Louis revisited". Things remembered - March 1941. The "GI" clothing wasn't from GQ. WWI wrappings were used for leggings and my raincoat didn't really fit, it "strafed the ground". Maybe the makings of the character SAD SACK?? And! I lost my first military pay shooting craps - \$13 and change.

BITS and PIECES

Owrie Brown passed away July 14, 1996 from cancer complications, and we do wish to extend our sympathies to his wife Lillian and his family. Owrie and fellow crew member Al Honey were both survivors after their planes went down on Munich and Regensburg missions.

Our sweetie and Vice-President Joe Bastin is recovering from surgery for removal of an aneurysm. Joe wishes to thank all who called or sent get-well cards.

50th Wedding Anniversaries:

Jack and Ruth Meyer will be celebrating their 50th Anniversary on January 6, 1997. Jack is our Treasurer and "Dues Receptor", anytime! !

Ernie and Carley Webb celebrated their anniversary back on June 15, 1996. As Air Force Reserves, Ernie and I served with a Troop Carrier Reserve Wing out of Cleveland and fortunately we didn't get called up for the Korean War.

Glenn and Lois Cunningham celebrated theirs on January 28, 1996. Glenn is doing well after suffering a heart attack. He still continues with his caricature paintings. Glenn served briefly with Dale Reeves and myself under crew-chief Master/Sergeant Pat Spardley maintaining the originals of the B-24 "Perry, and the Pirates" for flying status. I believe it survived 27 missions before it went down. Congratulations are in order for all of them and may they celebrate many more.

Squadron DUES are \$15.00 per year or \$50.00 for Lifetime Membership. Please make checks payable to 783rd Bomb Squadron Association and send to Treasurer Jack Meyer.

Note: Jean and I will be in Albuquerque, N.M. from January 15, 1997 to March 15, 1997. Should you need or want to get in touch with us — you can reach us at our son Steve's home:

Dr. Stephen A. Gregory
12408 Morocco N.E.
Albuquerque NM 87111
Phone: 505/299-3430

Floyd
Floyd



U.S. Air Force photo
Colonel Michael N. Farage

Col. Michael N. Farage, son of Nyme Farage, commander of the 58th Special Operations Wing, has been nominated for promotion to brigadier general.

The commander of Air Education and Training Command's special operations and rescue "schoolhouse" was among 47 colonels nominated by President Clinton to the Senate for promotion.

Farage, a Michigan native, is a 25-year veteran and command pilot with more than 3,600 hours in rotary and fixed-wing aircraft.

He commanded a combat rescue helicopter detachment and technical training group before coming to the 58th SOW, which he has led since September 1994.

We congratulate Michael and his proud Dad Nyme on this great accomplishment.

Obituaries

† † † † † † † †

Barbara Jane (Pierce) Coffield age 71 of Durand, Michigan died Friday, Nov. 8, 1996 at her residence. Mrs. Coffield was born in Vernon Township, September 15, 1925, the daughter of Cecil and Mabel (Perry) Pierce. She graduated from Durand High School in 1943. She and Floyd Coffield were married in Durand Feb. 5, 1945.

Survivors include: her husband Floyd, her mother Mabel Pierce of Durand; six children, Joanne and Ken Parker of Grand Rapids, Judy and Dan Blumhagen of Niger, Africa, Tom and Pat Coffield of Webster, Minn., Ted and Marian Coffield of Gains, Dan and Becky Coffield of Grand Blanc, Doug and Vicki Coffield of Traverse City; 14 grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

† † † † † † † †

Owrie Vernon Brown of Littleton, a retired airline pilot, died July 4 at Porter Care Hospice. He was 71.

He was born Sept. 7, 1924, in Verona, Calif. During World War II, he served with the Army Air Corps. He was shot down over Germany and taken as a prisoner of war. On May 12, 1946, he married Lillian F. Casagrande in Yuma, Ariz.

He is survived by his wife: three sons, Robert, Montgomery, Texas; William, Apple Valley, Minn.; and Gerald, Littleton; three brothers; three sisters, and six grandchildren.

† † † † † † † †

Joseph D. Zanolli, 77, of 32 Tamarack Drive, Springfield, Massachusetts a well-known former city athlete, died at home on Monday. He was a 12-year pension service adviser for Massachusetts Mutual Life Insurance Co., and retired in 1981.

He served in the Army Air Forces in World War II, and was a staff sergeant in the 335th Base Unit in 1943-45. He attended the Aerial Gunnery School in Laredo, Texas, and took part in the Po Valley, Apennines, Central Balkans, Rhineland, and Central Europe campaigns. He was awarded the Air Medal with oakleaf cluster, Mediterranean and European theater ribbons, and a Good Conduct Medal. His wife, Sarah (Arslan) Zanolli, died in 1990. He leaves two sons, William J. of Hampden, and Robert A. of Laguna Niguel, Calif.; a daughter, Janet G. Farrell of Wilbraham; a sister, Rita DeNucci of Springfield, and seven grandchildren.

† † † † † † † †

Lawrence D. "Larry", Siegler. Born November 16, 1920 in San Antonio, TX, and passed away December 9, 1996 in Dallas. A decorated WWII Army Air Corps veteran. He will be long and lovingly remembered by many. He is survived by his wife, Phyllis; daughters, Paula Aryanpur and Naomi Siegler; sons, Mitchell and Jared Siegler; five grandsons; two brothers, and one sister. Memorial service 2:00 p.m. Sunday, December 15, 1996.

My Home in Heaven

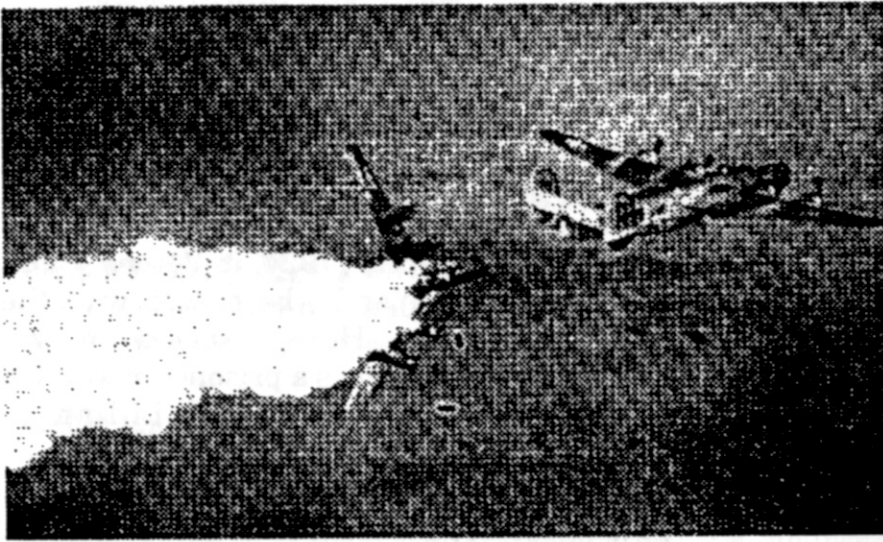
I look to the sky and what do I see,
a place called heaven where someday I want to be.

A home that I want with no burdens there,
a home to live in where I have no care.

Where angels will fly and streets of gold,
a healthy body, which I was told

With no pain I will feel, with no angry thought,
a home that I've earned, not one that I've bought.

Iris DeLucia



Picture of Col. Lokker's Plane provided by Golden Jones.

The fierce air war, being fought high in the skies over Germany in 1944, is vividly shown on the above photo, which appeared in Time, Life, and many other publications. The B-24 has just taken a direct hit, the wing is beginning to break off, and the plane has rolled onto its back.

On November 20, 1944 a mission was scheduled to Blechhammer South Oil Refinery, one of the most heavily defended targets, and, a long way from Pantanella. The 783rd was scheduled to lead in Able Box; the 781st in Baker Box; the 780th leading second attack unit in Charlie Box; and the 782nd in Dog Box. Col. Lokker had to change planes on the line and make some crew changes just before take-off. With changes complete, this was the crew and plane; Blue "I" with Col. Lokker - pilot and Wing Commander, Capt. Milton Duckworth - co-pilot, Lt. Joseph Kutger - wing navigator, Lt. Joseph Whalen - Mickey operator, Lt. Robert Hockman - bombardier, Lt. Grosvenor Rice - navigator, Sgt James Bourne - waist gunner, Sgt. Jack Rabkin - top turret gunner, Sgt. Paul Elynn - tail gunner, Sgt. Edmund Miosky - radio operator, and Sgt. Lee Billings - engineer. Col. Lokker, Whalen, and Rice were from the 781st and the other crew members were from the 783rd.

The formation took off at 0742 hours with 23 of the scheduled 27 aircraft. After take-off the group assembled in the usual area at 5000 feet, and wing assembly was accomplished over Spinazzola at 6000 feet before setting course at 0841 hours. Clouds obscured the ground all the way to the target area. At 1100 hours over Lake Ballaton, an escort of P-38's joined the formation and provided escort, with the second escort of P-51's arriving 10 minutes behind schedule at 1210 hours in the I.P. area. One aircraft returned due to illness of the nose gunner.

On the bomb run, and seconds before bombs away, Col. Lokker's plane took a direct hit between number two engine and the fuselage. The wing began breaking off and the plane immediately burst into flames. Col. Lokker realized he had to give up his fight to save the stricken plane and headed for the top hatch and bailed out successfully. Rabkin, in the top turret, released his seat and was dropping out of the turret, but the plane rolled over and he fell back in. He evidently never got out of the turret before the explosion, and fire engulfed him. Duckworth tried to get out of the side window but could not because of the spin of the plane. He then went for the top hatch and pulled himself out by grabbing the gun barrels from the top turret sticking out over the hatch. As he left the plane he could see Hockman and Rice still in the nose. Hockman got on his chute and went out of the nose wheel door. Rice, in the nose turret doing navigation without a chute on, was trapped. Probable loss of electricity prevented him from lining up the turret door to get out, or time did not permit him to get his chute on. Gunners Bourne, Billings, and Miosky were back in the waist. Miosky was last seen standing over the escape hatch with his chute on. The explosion evidently blew him away from the hatch and he got trapped in the fireball that followed. The explosion blew out both Bourne and Billings. They did not remember bailing out, but recov-

ered from the explosion enough on the way down to open their chutes just before hitting the ground. Both suffered extensive burns and injuries, and Borne lost an eye. Back in the tail turret, Flynn was trapped without his chute on and failed to get out.

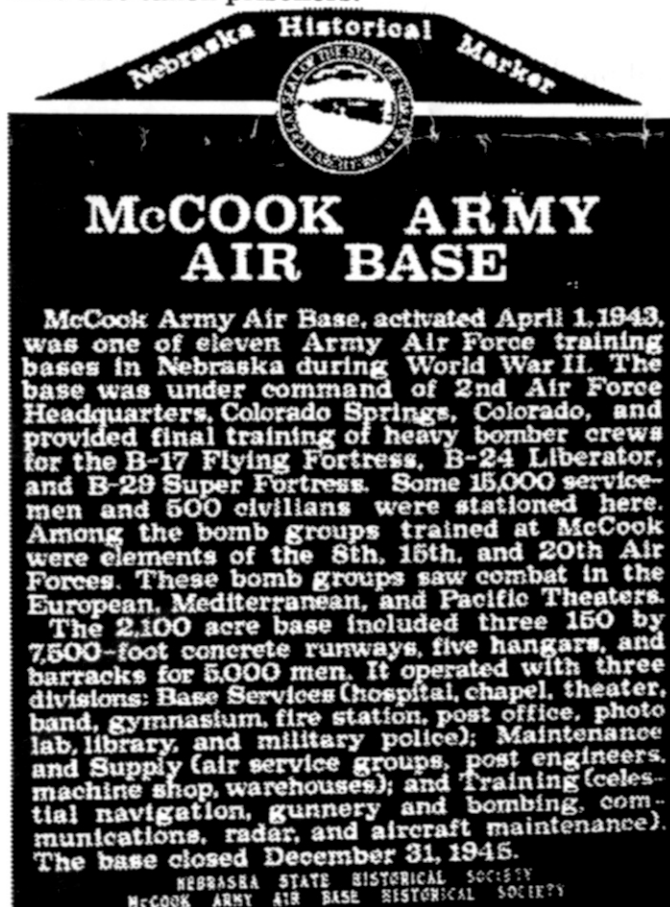
Immediately upon hitting the ground Col. Lokker and Duckworth were captured by a German farmer near a flak gun installation. The farmer took them to his farm and stationed his wife to guard them while he looked for more airmen. About one in the afternoon the farmers wife permitted them to escape. They immediately headed toward the Oder River in hopes of making it to Poland and received help from the Polish underground. About six that afternoon they ran into a patrol of German soldiers who immediately pursued them, firing their rifles. Duckworth was hit in the leg, fell and remained fallen until captured. Col. Lokker was farther ahead, and the last Duckworth saw of him, he was running into a thick clump of underbrush with two Germans chasing him. Hockman, Kutger, Billings and Bourne were also taken prisoners.

FIFTEENTH BOMBER MISSIONS TO PLOESTI

Date 1944	Aircraft Attacking	Bomb Tonnage	Aircraft Lost
5 Apr	230	587	13
15 Apr	137	316	3
24 Apr	290	793	8
5 May	485	1257	19
6 May	135	329	6
18 May	206	493	14
31 May	481	1116	16
6 Jun	310	698	4
23 Jun	139	283	6
24 Jun	135	329	14
9 Jul	222	605	6
15 Jul	607	1526	20
22 Jul	495	1334	24
28 Jul	349	913	20
31 Jul	154	435	2
10 Aug	414	952	16
17 Aug	248	534	15
18 Aug	377	825	7
19 Aug	65	144	0
TOTALS	5479	13469	223

The three mid-August bombing raids on Ploesti were ably assisted by lightly armed, unescorted P-38s of the 154th Weather Recon Squadron. The pilots preceded the bombers to Ploesti and, in spite of the strong defenses, crossed and recrossed the area to procure target defense data. After the initial transmission of the detailed data, the weather plane pilots continued to traverse the area, maintaining a flow of much information to the incoming waves of bombers, and photographing the progress and results of attacks. Their work, as it so often did in straight weather advising, allowed the bombers to carry out highly successful missions.

The Ploesti attack of the 19th was the twentieth (nineteen by heavies and one by P-38s) and last mission to Ploesti by the Fifteenth Air Force. As a result of the twenty attacks, fuel production at the Ploesti complex had been cut to one fifth its potential capacity, with less than 150,000 metric tons of crude being handled per month.



The photos of McCook plaques were supplied by Charlie Payne

783RD BOMB SQUADRON ASSOCIATION

**FLOYD E. GREGORY
2014 SOUTH ANDERSON
URBANA, ILLINOIS 61801**

Forwarding and Address
Correction Requested



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**THIS PLAQUE IS DEDICATED IN HONOR
OF ALL OUR COMRADES OF THE 485TH
BOMB GROUP WHO SERVED AND TO THOSE
WHO LOST THEIR LIVES IN DEFENSE OF
OUR COUNTRY DURING WW II**

**BOMB SQUADRONS
780TH, 781ST, 782ND, 783RD
DEDICATED SEPT. 28, 1996**

783rd Bomb Squadron Assoc. Board of Directors

B. C. Andrus, Jr.	Francis A. Goplen
Charles D. Kimball	James W. McCloskey
Paul J. Smith	Robert S. Anderson
Donald P. Kay	E. Burk Huber
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