



LIGHTWEIGHT TOWER CALLING



NO. 5

DEC 1970

MISSION NO 6: OKLAHOMA CITY, OKLAHOMA

From every section of the continental United States, 485th veterans traveled by auto, airlines and motor home to Oklahoma City, Okla for the sixth annual group reunion during the weekend of August 15, 1970 at the Ramada Inn. The event was hosted by Bernie and Laura Rempe(829) of Oklahoma City, who directed the event to a highly delightful and entertaining experience for all.

Sunny skies prevailed over the target area with temperatures ranging in the low 90's. Veterans, arriving Friday, were invited to the country home of the Rempe's for a buffet luncheon featuring "Rocky Mountain Oysters", a new experience in eating for many of the guests. "Rocky Mountain Oysters!" What are they? Well, - - - -, as Charley Duecker noted so eloquently in his poem - "The delicious dinner was

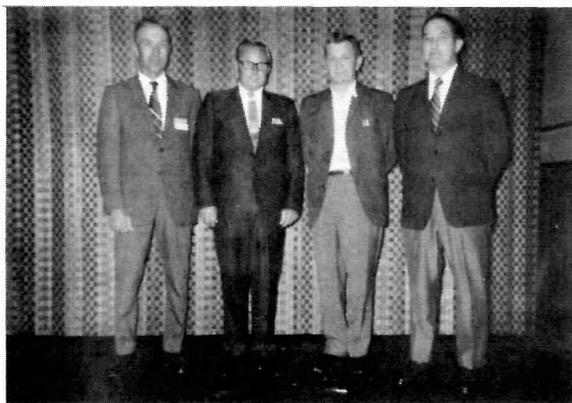


Ralph Compton, Howard Woodyard and Bill Schoultz at the eagle's nest in Oklahoma City.

(Cont page 2)

PRISONER OF WAR

--- EDITOR'S NOTE: Over 75 per cent of the POW's held by the Germans were aircrew members who were shot down over enemy territory. Many attempts to escape were made, but only a few got back to friendly territory. For the majority, freedom did not come until arrival of the Allied armies. In this issue, we begin our POW feature with the following interview of two former 485th POW's at the reunion by the local news media. Stories of 485th POW's will be featured in future newsletters.----



485TH POW'S - L to R: John H Hawk (829th), Marvin H Lindsay (829th), Stanley Turecki (828th) and Lt Col Homer G Hale, Jr, USAF (829th).

DATELINE: OKLAHOMA CITY, OKLAHOMA, Aug 15, 1970
Escaping from a WWII POW camp wasn't as easy as movies make it seem, according to two men who didn't. "That place was tight - no one could've

(Cont page 6)

EAST COAST LOCALE OF 1971 REUNION

The 485th Bomb Group (H) Seventh Annual Reunion will be held August 20 - 22, 1971 on the Boardwalk of Atlantic City, New Jersey. The event will be hosted by Mr and Mrs Stanley Turecki, 23 Ball Ave, Passaic, New Jersey. Tentatively the '72 reunion will be in Houston, Texas and the '73 reunion in Rochester, New York. Complete details will be sent in the near future.

VENOSA AIRDROME - 24 YEARS LATER

VENOSA

There is a wheat field in Venosa
Where the Bombers fly no more;
The tin can houses torn down
Thirty years' work done.

There is a farmer in Venosa
Working in Italy's sun
In the place where as a young man
My father stood.

And there is a calmness in Venosa
That the flyers never knew;
A breeze from the peaceful sea
In the foreign afternoon.

David C Childers

The accompanying poem was sent in by Max Childers (830). It was written by his son, David, a student at the University of North Carolina, after having read the Venosa Airdrome story by Larry Vocino in the previous issue of the newsletter. It is an eloquent epilogue to the final chapter of the Venosa Airdrome.

Jim Dillon, 408th Air Service Sqdn wrote us about the photos accompanying the story and made the following identifications: "Photo 3 and 4 are of buildings occupied by the 408th. We built the building in photo 3 which was used as a photo lab and mail room. The building in photo 4 was the 408th Hqs. It had two small doors and a double door in the center. The door on the far left was the orderly room where 1st Sgt Louis Dunn passed the time of day. Maj McDonald, Sqdn CO, also shared the room. The large doors in the center was the supply room (Sgt Rudy in in charge) and the last door on the right was the Sqdn cocktail bar."

As a member of the advance party to arrive at the airdrome site, Ralph Wakefield, Group Radar Officer noted in his letter that the farm building, which became Group Hq, was the only building on the site. Later, the PX was located in a room of the farm house which was a stable. Ralph's recollection of the building in photo 4 was that it was an existing building near the site and was occupied by communications personnel prior to the construction of their shop near the control tower.

MISSION NO 6 (Cont)

really the nuts". And that's the truth. A wagon train of a dozen horse-less carriages traveled the route to the Rempe's farm, located about nine miles from the Ramada Inn. Two wonderful hours were spent in the cozy atmosphere of the Remoe's home.

Late Saturday morning, the regular business meeting was conducted. Locations for future reunions were selected, status of the history project noted and the financial status of the newsletter reviewed (which is now operating in the black). As high noon approached, two chartered buses arrived for the trip to the Western Heritage Center.

No era in the world's history is more glamorized, studied or appreciated than America's movement west. At the Western Heritage Center, one may take a most interesting journey into this era, viewing the many historical exhibits of our western heritage: The art collection containing many works of such famous painters of the old west as Charles M Russel, Frederic Remington, and W R Leigh; life size settings of the old west, such as an Indian camp, chuck wagon, and saloon; National Rodeo Hall of Fame and the Frazier Memorial Studio, housing the west's most famous statue, the 18ft high "The End of The Trail".

On the return trip, a tour of Oklahoma City was made. Like other major cities, Oklahoma City is changing thru urban renewal programs. One unusual sight noted - the oil wells inside the city and on the State Capital grounds.

Following a brief intermission, the guests assembled in the convention room for the reunion dinner which was followed by a presentation to Bernie and Laura Rempe accompanied by the poetry of Charles Duecker, poet laureate; personal introductions, celebration of Garry Mannings birthday (son of Mr and Mrs E Manning) and the viewing of slides of past reunions and the days in sunny Italy.



GP AND 830TH EAGLES - L to R: Lyle Talbott 830th, H Minor Hucceby, Gp Hq and William Best, 830th.



828TH EAGLES - L to R: James McFadden, Edmond Manning, Jack Eden, Henry Freitas, Carl Gigowski, Stanley Turecki, Robert Deeds, Karl Anderson, Joseph Coker, CMSgt Henry Fisher, Clarence Hartman, Arlynn Brown and William Schultz.



Bill Schultz and his motor home



At the Western Heritage Center



831ST EAGLES - L to R: Harold Dundon, Lester Sutter, Victor Bone, Dr R Knight, Geo Cleghorn, Don Hasler, Howard Woodyard, Andre Salazar, Albert Paul and Louis Sikes.



829TH EAGLES - L to R: Bernie Rempe, George Healy, Marvin Lindsay, Sidney Connellee, John Hawk, William Furgueson, Lt Col Homer G Hale, Robert Skelton, Floyd Swanson, Charlie Duecker, Don Wallach, Earl Bundy and Fred Heaton.

MISSION NO 6 (Cont)

Laura and Bernard -- you've really been swell
Just how great you've been -- plain words cannot tell.

We came to your house -- all stuffed our guts
Your delicious dinner was really the nuts.

Your son took some golfing -- and I tied him one round
While you showed the others all over the town.

Everyone here who's had so much fun
Would like to repay you for what you have done.

Here's a small token of gratitude
We hope that your heifers don't think we've been rude.
CHARLES DUECKER, Poet Laureate, 485 BG

Forty-two veterans attended the reunion. Including their wives, youngsters and guests, there were over a 100 participants, making it the largest reunion to date. Group Hqs was represented by Mr and Mrs H. Minor Hucceby, Denver, Colo. From the 830th - Mr Lyle Talbott, Crooksville, Ohio and Mr and Mrs Wm Best, Rochester, N Y.

Veterans from the 828th attending were Mr and Mrs James McFadden, Philadelphia, Penn; Mr and Mrs Robert Deeds, Toledo,

Ohio; Mr and Mrs Stanley Turecki, Passaic, N J; Mr and Mrs Jack Eden, Breckenridge, Texas; Mr and Mrs Joseph Coker, Pine Bluff, Ark; Mr and Mrs Carl Gigowski, Grand Rapids, Mich; CMSgt and Mrs Henry Fisher, Denver, Colo; Mr and Mrs Karl Anderson, Carrollton, Ohio; Mr Henry Freitas, Oakland, Calif; Mr Arlynn Brown, Kingfisher, Okla; Mr Ralph Compton, Troutman, N Carolina; Mr Clarence Hartman, Houston, Texas; Mr and Mrs William Schoultz, Newton Falls, Ohio and Mr and Mrs Edmond Manning, Springboro, Ohio.

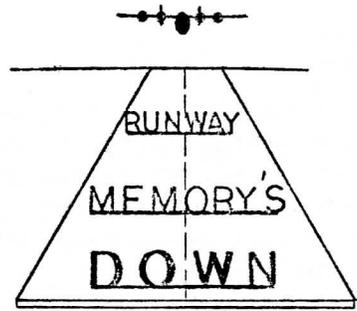
The 829th veterans attending were Mr and Mrs Bernard Rempe and family, Oklahoma City Okla; Mr and Mrs Fred Heaton, Munice, Ind; Mr and Mrs Robert Skelton, Dallas, Texas; Mr and Mrs Charles Duecker, Lincoln, Nebr; Mr and Mrs William Furgueson, Dallas, Texas; Mr and Mrs Lester Sutterby, Iola, Kansas; Mr and Mrs Earl Bundy, Columbus, Ohio; Lt Col and Mrs Homer G Hale, Jr, Robins AFB, Ga; Mr and Mrs George Healy, Columbus, Ohio; Mr and Mrs John Hawk, Garden City, Kansas; Mr Kirk McFadden, Jefferson City, Mo; Mr Donald Wallach, Jr, Midwest City, Okla; Mr and Mrs Floyd Swanson, Wausa, Nebr; Mr and Mrs Marvin Lindsay, El Dorado, Kansas and Mr Stanley Connelle, Oklahoma City, Okla.

From the 831st were Mr and Mrs Harold Dundon, New Holland, Ohio; Mr and Mrs Andre Salazar, Houston, Texas; Mr and Mrs Donald Hasler, St Louis, Mo; Mr and Mrs George Cleg-horn, Shrewsbury, Mo; Mr and Mrs Howard Woodyard, Lambertville, Mich and guests, Mr and Mrs Noble Woodyard, Lambertville, Mich; Mr and Mrs Albert Paul, Charlestown, Ill and guests Mr and Mrs H Mahon, Loogootee, Ill; Mr and Mrs Lester Sutter, St Louis, Mo; Mr V Bone, Chicago, Ill; Mr Louis Sikes, Denison, Texas and Dr and Mrs R Knight, Dallas, Texas.

The merrymaking continued long after the magic hour of mid-night. Two of the ol' eagles Stanley Turecki and Bill Best carried out a night intridication mission and were forced to ditch in the swimming pool. They were picked up shortly by air rescue.

Enjoying a buffet breakfast Sunday morning, those who survived the Saturday night frolicking without a 101 type headache, gathered in the conference room to conclude the reunion. And again, it was a difficult task bidding so-long to ol buddies and newly made friends, until next time. For all, the long journey home was made with memories of a wonderful and eventful reunion.

----- The Sixth Group Reunion was another outstanding event in the journey of the 485th veterans. To Bernie and Laura Rempe and their family, we send a most sincere thank you for a job well done. That rare treat - Rocky Mountain Oysters - will never be forgotten. We are pleased with the continual increase in reunion attendance and are grateful to all of you for making the event a great success. In Oklahoma City we met many veterans and their families from the great Southwest. We hope to have the pleasure of seeing you all and the many veterans from the Eastern section at Atlantic City in August. (The Staff)



USAF Photo

January 1945 - Winter at the Venosa Airdrome.

Photo - H Combs

831st men from DOWN ON THE LINE - F, L to R - Cpl Orlie M Stagman, ___ Kirby Stephens, TSgt Harold E Dundon, and Sgt Lester J Sutter. R, L to R - TSgt Harold B Combs, Cpl Clyde Stone, Cpl Howard P Woodyard, and ___ William D Ryder.



Photo - L Hohmann



MUD, MUD and more MUD - Members of the 828th Ordnance Section extracting one of their trucks from the goo. L to R, Lt Henry Hazen, SSgt Eddie Fuks, Sgt Richard Gibson, driving, TSgt Laurel Behnke and Sgt Lawrence Hohmann, sort of directing the operation.

LIBERATORS - 1971

The Liberator was produced in greater numbers and in more versions than any other US aircraft during WWII (18,188 built). Today there are only 4 Liberators in the US. The only B-24D in the US is the STRAWBERRY BITCH, AAF No 42-72843-160-CO at the AF Museum, Wright-Patterson AF Base, Ohio. The Liberator flew fifty-nine missions with the 512th Bomb Sqdn, 376th Bomb Group from Soluch, Libya and later with the 15th AF from San Pancrazio, Italy. In 1946 the Liberator was placed in storage at Davis-Monthan until 1959 when the Lib was restored and flown to the AF Museum where she rests in the same markings she carried during the war.

After 11,000 miles, 15,000 gallons of gas, the PIMA PAISANO touched down on the Davis-Monthan AF Base runway on 27 April 1969 to become the fourth Liberator in the US. PIMA PAISANO, AAF No 44-44175 now stands at Tucson's Davis-Monthan AF Base. It was donated by the Indian Air Force where it was one of 16 WWII B-24 Liberators used in coastal patrol duties for 20 years. The Libs were phased out of the IAF in 1968.

Other Liberators in the US are at Lackland AF Base, Texas and Rebel Field, Harlingen, Texas. The Canadian National Museum in Ontario owns No 44-50154, also acquired from the Indian AF. (Photos of the Libs for the 'letter would be appreciated. - Ed)

PRISONER OF WAR (Cont from page 1)

got out of there," John H Hawk, former POW at Stalag Luft III, said of his "home" during the last days of WWII.

Hawk, now a farmer at Garden City, Kansas and LtCol Homer G Hale, Jr, USAF, Athens, Georgia were in Oklahoma City today for the 6th annual reunion of the 485th Bomb Group. They painted a picture of POW camps that casts doubt on the frolicking wartime camps of television and movies. "It wasn't anything like "Hogan's Heroes", Hawk said. "It was like a big army camp. They had American officers in there, so it was like a camp. I don't think anyone got out," he said.

Lt Col Hale said his camp was surrounded by a double barbed-wire fence with a hundred-foot wide cleared zone between the buildings and the fence. "No one was allowed in that zone, so there was no way to get near the fence," Col Hale said. Guards on towers were to shoot anyone entering the zone, he said.

Although Col Hale was in Stalag Luft I, north of Berlin on the Baltic, conditions were pretty much the same as those in Stalag Luft III, near Munich, Hawk said. "We were on our way to Munich on a raid from southern Italy," Hawk, a tail gunner in a B-24, said, "About 20 minutes from Munich the fighters shot us up. We turned around for Switzerland, but the flak got us. I bailed out and landed right on top of a mountain in Austria," he said. Next thing he knew, he said, "I was looking right down a gun barrel and they were screaming German at me. I didn't know what they were saying, so I went with them".

Hawk said he was shot down June 9, 1944, and was taken to Stalag Luft III, where he stayed until January 1945, when the Russians liberated the camp. "I worked in a kitchen, so I ate quite well," he said. "Red Cross packages helped a lot since the German food was just potatoes and bread." Hawk said he arrived at Stalag Luft III shortly after the famous 'Great Escape' in which about 70 British airmen tunneled from another compound. The Germans shot 50 of the recaptured officers in reprisal, Hawk said.

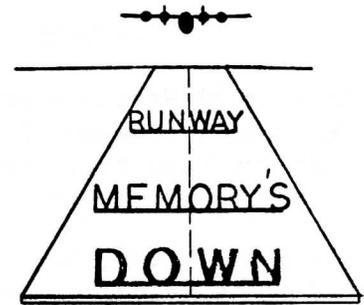
DATELINE: HUNGARY, 1943 - TULSA, OKLAHOMA 1964

EDITOR'S NOTE: In conjunction with our new feature POW, we present a most unique story that you will find most interesting. Prior to the reunion, Laura Rempe received a letter concerning the search for an American flier which Leslie Kovats, a Hungarian youth of 17, helped save from the Nazis in a Hungarian village in 1943. Enclosed was a copy of an



Photo - R Mattison

BOMBS AWAY! 485th Lib 250921



829th Lib 42-50885 piloted by Cpt Vern Bryson, lost power on no. 3, and 4 engine crash-landed at Venosa Airdrome on 23 Sept 1944, shortly after take-off on a mission. No casualties.



Photo - E Kral

829th Replacement Crew:

F, L to R: Lt Edward Y Parsegain, P; Lt Delmar L Brinkman, CP; Lt George Fuccillo, N (KIA); Lt Jack R Fordyce, B.

R, L to R: TSgt Clayton C Boyer, RO; SSgt Luther E Combs, G; SSgt Jack J Bohall, G; TSgt Gilbert E Thompson, E; SSgt Edward A Campbell, G. (Not in photo - Sgt Kenneth V Miller, G.)



Photo - E Parsegain



Photo - F Coltrin
485th Group Hq, Venosa, Italy

article by Mr Kovats describing the events of the day and his unforgettable impressions of the flier. Because of space limitations, a condensed version of the story is presented with the hope that thru a remote chance of luck some assistance in locating the flier might be received.-----

It was a sparkling, beautiful day, in that July 1943. Under the warming sun everything seemed to be quiet and peaceful in this little Hungarian village near the Austrian border, where Kovats was enjoying part of his summer vacation at his brother's home. On this day, sometime about mid-morning, Kovats was occupied in his brother's workshop when he heard the familiar monotone drone. Running outside he saw a formation of American four-engine bombers heading west, presumably, after having bombed a target to the east or north. German anti-aircraft guns opened up, spattering the sky with ugly black puffs.

One of the bombers was hit and trailing smoke started to fall. Then the crew bailed out one after the other. Their parachutes opened in an orderly fashion and drifted earthward like so many little white mushrooms. Realizing that one of the parachuting crew men might land on a nearby farm, Kovats bicycled to the area and was the first to arrive as the flier finally touched down. Using gestures and Hungarian, he tried to explain to him that he was not an enemy, but a prisoner and that he should hand over any weapons he might have. He had none. As Kovats sought a way to communicate with the flier, they folded his parachute which he placed on his shoulder.

Pushing his bike with one hand and holding the arm of the flier with the other, they started out of the field towards the village. In the meantime several people began arriving at the scene and gathered around the pair. From the crowd came threatening remarks and hostile murmuring as there were several German sympathizers amongst the crowd. Slowly the circle closed around them forcing them to stop.

At this moment a man named Hans, one of the leaders of the Nazi party in the village, jumped in front of the pair and threatened the fliers life with a long-handle scythe. Kovats threw his bike between them, grabbed Hans' and held him until others disarmed him. Only the help of the sensible people in the group and the popularity of the Kovats saved the fliers life.

Continuing on to the village Kovats tried again to communicate with the flier, speaking in Hungarian, German, French and Latin, but with out success. Likewise, Kovats was beyond the fliers reach in English. Suddenly, upon reaching the edge of the village, the crowd stopped as they came upon some German officers, in a open command car. Hans, hastened to tell them about the flier and suggested executing the flier on the spot. In the meantime, Kovats brother arrived on the scene. Recognizing the village commandant as one of the German officers, he walked up to the car and explained to the commandant that his brother had captured an American flier, and was taking him to the local trooper station. After a brief discussion amongst themselves, the German officers decided their official business was more important than a prisoner and drove away.

At the trooper station, a Presbyterian minister, who could speak English, was sent for and at last Kovats had a chance to communicate with the flier. It was learned that the flier was married and worked in a glass factory in the Chicago area. Thru the many questions to the American, Kovats soon learned of life in the US and became greatly impressed for that day he decided that he had to see America with his own eyes.

The American flier spent the night at the trooper station and the next day was taken to a prison camp, accompanied by Kovats best wishes and prayers.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Eventually Mr Kovats came to the US and today is a proud citizen living in Tulsa, hoping that some day he will meet the American flier, shake his hand and without a communication problem, tell him, "My first American, thank you." -----

MAIL ROOM

Once again, you all managed to keep the mail room busy and continued the growth of our mailing roster. We shall continue to keep in touch with all of you through the newsletter and hope that we shall hear from all and in particular, those who have not corresponded with us to date. We are grateful for the many letters and Christmas cards received in 1970 and eagerly look forward to a stuffed mail room in 1971. Again, please keep us posted on any address changes so that we do not lose you.

485TH GROUP HQ

The ol pigeon hole of the 485th Hq was well stuffed with correspondence, including letters from Hq personnel not heard from previously. From the paradise state of Hawaii Col William G Bradley, noted our reunion notice in the Air Force magazine and wrote us. Col Bradley was Group Surgeon when Col Tomhave was Group CO and stayed with the group until it was deactivated at Sioux Falls, South Dakota, where the Group was reorganizing as a B-32 outfit.

Mel Goodson, Phoenix, Arizona, corresponded with us again, sending several addresses of 485th veterans through which we contacted Col Burton Andrus, Gp Deputy CO, Squire Bolton, Red Cross Field Director and Wesley D Colmer, Gp Adjutant. Squire resides in Yucaipa, California and sent several photos which will be added to the album, which is taken to the reunions for all to enjoy. Again, we are quite happy to reunite old buddies - Squire, Ed Kral and John Hannan. Squire was a member of the 485th from start 'till finish.

The Group Executive Officer, Frederic C Coltrin enclosed several photos for the album with his letter. Fred is retired and is taking life easy in Pebble Beach, California. John Hannan, Sacramento, California, wrote that due to personal commitments would be unable to attend the '70 reunion. However, we shall see him at one of the events.

From the rockies, Denver, Colorado, word was received from another of our enthusiastic supporters, H. Minor Huckleby. Minor noted his visit with Hans Lai in Fresno, California. Hans was attached to Group in the Intelligenece unit. It was a pleasant surprise to hear from Col Burton Andrus, also of Denver. Burt is Executive Director of the US Ski Assn in Denver. Through Burt we hope to contact Col John Atkinson, 831st CO.

Roy L Reeve, Sperryville, Va expressed his enjoyment of the newsletter and noted that Col Hale telephoned him from Oklahoma City at the reunion and Roy enjoyed conversing with several of his old friends. I am sure we shall have the pleasure of meeting Roy at one of the reunions. Received a warm letter from Col William L Herblin, Washington, DC, expressing his appreciation of the newsletter and noted that for him it has revived memories long forgotten. In Jackson, Mississippi we contacted Wesley Colmer. Wes noted his acquaintance of Col Bradley in Spinazzola before either joined the Group. Another veteran from Jackson is Major Cooper Bryant a survivor of Col Tomhave's crew of that day in February 1945 when Col Tomhave was shot down. We hope to have his astonishing story of that mission in the next newsletter.

It was good to hear from Ed Kral, New Hyde Park, Long Island and Ralph Wakefield of West Stockholm, New York. Both expressed their enjoyment in reading the newsletter and hope to make one of the reunions. **CARL GIGOWSKI**

828TH BOMB SQDN

First of all, I want to thank Laura and Bernard Rempe. Your hospitality made our visit to Oklahoma City a memorable one. We thank you both for making us feel so welcome.

This past year has been most rewarding to us of the 828th. We have met numerous old buddies and received several letters, pictures and cards. We have added more new members to our mailing list.

MAIL ROOM (Cont)

We received letters from Joe B Green, a new member contacted this year. Joe sent a list of names for us to work on. (Joe was one of the unique gourmets of the Group, who could make a lousy can of spam and powdered eggs taste like fresh ham and eggs. Right? - Ed.) Many thanks to Matthew Gadd and Herb Wren for letters and photos.

Letters were received from Nickolas and Annette Montulli, who hope to make the '71 reunion. A short note from Fred Buzan and Keith Mayhew-most welcome. A letter from Robert Houck who was injured in a fall - Hope you are better by now, Bob. Letter from Richard Bates who has retired from the US Post Office. A letter from Ed Clark, who says he is going to make one of the reunions yet. (Maybe this year as it is closer for you.) Letters from Frank Kallis, John H Wheeler, Bill Brien, Joe Fraci and Gordon Tuttle. They all enjoyed reading the newsletter.

Thanks to Clemmie Norris, we now have the new address of William Copeland. Also that of Lt Col Harold S Julin - thanks to Karl Anderson. Joe Faraci sent John Raffaele address. Lawrence Hohmann has retired and sent in his new address, as well as George Healy. Robert Beamish requested addresses of his fellow crew members. Henry Fisher noted that he has retired and is building a home in Denver, Colo. Laurel L Behnke wrote that he enjoys hearing from all of you thru the newsletter. And finally, the many inter-office notes from Carl Gigowski, Bob Deeds, Howard Woodyard, Earl Bundy and Karl Anderson.

I now have 134 names on the 828th mailing list. You will all receive the newsletter and I sincerely hope you all will write a few lines. Let us know how we can improve the newsletter. Better yet, you all come to the '71 reunion. **BILL SCHOULTZ**

EDITORS NOTE: Received a nice letter from Maynard Nelson of Carmichael, California. Maynard was the co-pilot on Lt Col Calvin Fite's crew, the first replacement crew to join the 828th in August 1944. Col Fite, later, became Sqdn Operations Officer and Maynard took over the crew which went on to complete their 35 missions. Active in local politics Maynard made an unsuccessful bid for the California Legislature in November.

829TH BOMB SQDN

"Lightweight Tower" is really calling around the world. I was most happy to receive a long letter this year from Hugh B. White, pilot, from the fabulous state of Alaska. I flew overseas with him and had not heard from him since he was shot down and taken POW. He told of flying jets in the Korean War and then finished his service in the States. He is one of the few men who experienced a flame-out on take-off and lived to walk'way from it - the jet a total loss. After service it was to law school and is now an attorney in Anchorage, Alaska.

Hugh gave me the address of another member of his crew, John Hawk of Garden City, Kansas. We were all very happy to see John at the reunion. He had been in the POW camp with Hugh White. I received several letters from Lt Col Homer Hale, who is still in the service, and located at Robins AF Base in Georgia. Col Hale made the reunion and we enjoyed catching up on the news of many friends.

R. B. "Ben" Skelton, pilot of "Big Alice From Dallas" wrote and made the reunion. He is living in Dallas, Texas, employed by Sears Roebuck. His Bombardier, Bill Ferguson, also lives in Dallas and attended the reunion. I was real happy to hear from Charlie Duecker several times as he was responsible for contacting a number of veterans and getting them to the reunion.

I received letters from Joe De Mauro, Al O'Brien, Delmar Brinkman, Jim Rideout, and Sal LoBello who were all anxious to make the reunion, but was not possible this year. Floyd Swanson sent regards and was able to make the reunion again this year.

MAIL ROOM (Cont)

I was pleased to see Donald M Wallach again at the reunion. He had been a Prop Specialist in the 829th in Italy. He heard of the reunion, and surprised everyone as he lives in Oklahoma City now. He had retired from the Air Force and is now working for the Oklahoma State Law Enforcement Department. Fred Heaton, Squadron Welder, who kept the 829th warm during the winter of 1944 has helped me contact a good many veterans and I was very happy to see him and his wife at the reunion.

Roy L Reeve sent his best wishes to everyone. He was the 829th CO for a short period. I was glad to find that he well remembered a rough flight and landing to Naples, through heavy soup and dangerously low on gas - one day long ago. We made it okay, and I am certain I shall never forget the flight. I heard from Ebe Reynolds, Jim Gelette, Ed Pargesian, and Merle Sutterby. Merle was the only one of this group to make the reunion. Also heard from Alex Malkoski, William Wolin, Harvey Roffman, Stanley Lis, Clyde Harrell, and John Thorne. Hope they can make the next reunion.

I appreciate all the news and information furnished by all of the Squadron members. Everyone at the reunion enjoyed reading your letters. We came up with many new addresses this year and I know next year will bring a bigger reunion. Our Honored 829th member this year was Bernard Rempe. Bernie and his wife Laura, proved to be an exceptional Host and Hostess for the reunion. On Friday evening they invited everyone to their home for dinner of Mountain Oysters with all of the trimmings. I wish to thank everyone for their support with contributions so we can maintain "Lightweight Tower Is Calling".

****EARL BUNDY****

EDITORS NOTE: Several letters from 829th veterans were received by your editor, including a very informative letter from Chalmie Duecker, Lincoln, Nebraska. Charlie was the pilot of one of the five original 829th crews to survive their combat tour intact. His bomber was LITTLE EMMA. Ben Skelton, pilot of original 829th crew 24, another crew that completed their 50 missions, sent news about his crew. His bomber BIG ALICE FROM DALLAS was washed out upon landing, 12 October 1944.

In Seigman, Arizona, Lt Col Harold Cline, USAF Ret, was contacted. Col Cline served as Sqdn Operations Officer, and later as Assistant Group Operations Officer. Lt Col David L Underwood, AFRes, Topeka, Kansas, noted our reunion notice in the AIR FORCE magazine, and inquired about our activities. Col Underwood was the Bombardier on Lt Col C R Cadenhead's (USAF) crew which joined the 829th in December 1944. After the war Col Underwood completed USAF pilot training, and has been flying continuously with the AFRes, as a Command Pilot and Instructor Pilot. His present assignment is with the 442nd MAW, Richards-Bebaur AF Base, Mo as Group Plans Officer.

Casper Fesano, Ordnance Section Chief of the Sqdn was contacted by Karl Anderson, after reading Casper's notice in the VFW magazine. Casper sent us Allen Richie's address. Allen, who hails from Praire Home, Missouri was with Casper in the Ordnance section. Both expressed their sincere appreciation of being in contact with the ol 485th. ----

830TH BOMB SQDN

It was most gratifying to clean out the ol 830th pigeon hole for again it contained correspondence from several 830th veterans, previously not heard from. From the Bahamas Islands we received a most welcome letter from Major Jacob S Disston III, who succeeded Major John Stoddart as the 830th Operations Officer. Major Disston has been in Nassau, Bahama for the past ten years. If anyone of the group should visit Nassau, Major Disston can be found at the H G Christie Real Estate office.

On the east coast, we contacted Major John B Stoddart, who joined the 830th at Gowen Field. John is with the Prudential Insurance Company of America. It was through John that we contacted Major Disston.

MAIL ROOM (Cont)

In the town of Boulder, located in the remote Canyonlands of southern Utah, we contacted Col Richard V Griffin, 830th CO. The Col continued to serve with the Air Force after the war, retiring in 1960 and now is a cattle rancher. Griff sent along his best wishes to all and several photos for our use.

It was a pleasant surprise hearing from Julian Kokenge, Cincinnati, Ohio, for along with his correspondence were several pieces of artwork, one which appears as the new 'letter masthead. Julian is a commercial artist and was a Radio Operator on Lt Tolsma's crew 54, an original 830th crew. He has graciously offered his valuable services in support of our projects.

Received a nice letter from Fred Schneder, Elmhurst, New York, who joined the 830th as an Orderly Room Clerk in November 1943 at Gowen Field, and remained with the Group until July 1945. It was good to hear from Max L Childers of Mount Holly, North Carolina. We were very happy to receive word from Louis Wolff, Sheldon, Iowa, our man who did the tremendous job of entertaining at the '69 reunion. Louis inquired about the success of the '70 reunion and we certainly believe and hope to see him at future reunions.

Claude Sheline, undoubtedly the youngest member of the Group, visited with Bill Schoultz in February, and indicated he would be present at the '71 reunion. Rumor has it Claude was a young teenager when he joined the 485th. (How about it, Claude? - Ed.) Matti Syrjanen, Maynard, Mass sent a note to the "Venosa Villians" at the reunion, wishing all a good time and to watch out for the flak. He hopes to make one of the future reunions - enjoys the newsletter. We are proud to announce that Lyle Talbott, Crooksville, Ohio has kindly accepted the post of 830th Reporter, which completes our staff. Lyle was a gunner of crew 52, an original 830th crew. We know you all will extend your excellent cooperation to him, and in turn he will keep you informed of the 830th veterans and continue to locate more of the 830th veterans. ****CARL GIGOWSKI****

831ST BOMB SQDN

Well, we didn't make top attendance this year at the reunion in Oklahoma City. I believe we took third place. We'll try again next year. We all had a wonderful time, and our hosts certainly, out did themselves. I was happy to have my brother Noble and his wife as my guests. Perhaps, some of you remember Noble as he was in Italy with a P-51 Fighter Group which frequently escorted our bombers on their missions. He had visited me in camp at Venosa.

We have heard from the following 831st veterans - some new ones - some old friends whom we have heard from often: Don Hasler, Hugo Cross, Michael Swedryk, Chuck Reynolds, O. L. Young, Harold Thompson, E.J. McCarthy, Russ Howard, Don Stahl, Albert Paul, Burl Jackson, Victor Bone, Kenneth Brown, Ed Stauverman, Ed Francis and Jim Dillon.

While visiting a cousin in Detroit last June, I contacted Louis Schoeneman and had an interesting conversation. Sorry Louis, you were unable to make the reunion - Maybe we'll see you in New Jersey in '71.

We sincerely appreciate your interest and support. Keep the letters coming and we hope to see you all at the next reunion. ****HOWARD WOODYARD****

EDITORS NOTE: Correspondence from several 831st veterans arrived at the ol editor's desk including a most interesting one from Leonard Little, Tampa, Florida. Included with the letter was the story of his experience on August 24, 1944 when his crew was shot down on the mission to Pardubice, Czech. Leonard noted that a Mr Rajniece of Czechsloviakia is in contact with him. Mr Rajniece is collecting material for a book about the 15th Air Force over Czechosloviakia.

MAIL ROOM (Cont)

Further noted in his letter was a Liberator that crashed and burned on or near the field on August 24th as the bombers were taking off for the mission. His crew were scheduled as a spare, and observing the burning Lib, they joined the Group formation and flew the mission. (In the material reviewed at Maxwell no record was made of this incident. Any info concerning this Lib will be appreciated. - Ed.) Leonard's crew were flying "FLAK SHAK III", Crew Chief Stacey Hayes.

Another informative letter was received from Bob Barrett of Fayetteville, New York who will be sending material for our projects. Frank Chaffin, Corona, California was contacted by his pilot, Homer Cotton, Victor, New York, about our activities, and in turn wrote us. His crew joined the 831st in January 1945. It was good to hear from Andre Salazar, Houston, Texas; Burl Jackson, Lima, Ohio; Hy Greenwald, Brooklyn, New York and Don Stahl, Milton, Pa.

THIS IS HOW IT WAS

EDITOR'S NOTE: The following item, which appeared in one of the overseas publications, was contributed by Howard Woodyard. It is a story of Sgt York and his Liberator, "THE CHARACTER". We would like more info on Sgt York and his Lib. Can you help us? ----

Each morning before his plane takes off, Master Sergeant Lester York, a crew chief in a Liberator Group of the 15th AAF, leads the crew of his bomber in prayer. Ever since the first mission almost a year ago, the sergeant, whose bomber, "THE CHARACTER", always seems to return like a boomerang, has made the morning prayer a part of the take-off preparations.

Sergeant York has a practical approach toward religion and combat flying. The men, he found, have come to look forward to his morning prayer, and fly into combat with a greater peace of mind because of it.

York's bomber, "THE CHARACTER", seems to be flying in a charmed circle, with more than 88 missions to its credit. Its career has been more, that of a boomerang, than an airplane. On many missions the bomber formations have been triangled by deadly enemy flak and the air has been tossed with spraying fragments of steel. With many of its vital parts hit, York's bomber has continued to come home, to be repaired and fly again. One of the oldest bombers in the group, "THE CHARACTER" is constantly threatening to take the group's lead from the few other old planes remaining.

The Character's phenomenal record and the ability of the crew to continue flying without being hit is attributed by Sergeant York and the men of his Squadron to the early morning prayer. The crew wouldn't consider flying without it more than they would taking off with just one engine.

"I like to read to them from the Bible," York smiles, "and I think they like to hear it. Somehow I think that the bomber will always come back when I do. And one of these days, I hope not too far away, I'll be able to read to them the last time, because after that, there won't have to be any more missions, or any more bombing."

GROUP HISTORY PROJECT

Snowed under with historical material, your part-time writer is proceeding forward with the history project. Presently, the text is being prepared, and the first rough draft should be completed within the year. There are a few areas appearing which require additional details to complete the story.

Thanks to the many contributors, an excellent collection of photos has been received for

illustrating the story. As the text preparation progresses, several of you will be contacted for personal recollections of certain events. Again, please do not hesitate to send in any photos or other material which can be used in the project or newsletter.

I am most grateful to the following contributors: Ben Skelton, Charlie Duecker, John Disston III, Leonard L Little, Frederic Coltrin, Julian Kokenge, Richard V Griffin, Sid Connelle, Ralph Wakefield, Frank Chaffin, Joe Coker, Othmar Young, Louis Sikes, Marvin Lindsay, Squire Bolton, Joe Tabellion, Jack Eden, Edward Nett, John Raffaele and Matt Gadd.

FROM THE TOWER OPERATORS

Another progressive year has been enjoyed by the tower operators. As, we reflect on the progress made, we find that our mailing list has grown, correspondence has increased, reunion attendance has continued to enlarge and

LIGHTWEIGHT TOWER CALLING

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JOURNEYS END

Members Deceased Since The End Of WWII

BARRETT, Sam	830	
BARQUIST, Ernie	828	1967
BLACKWELL, Earl	828	1959
BOYER, Henry	828	1964
BRODRICK, Gerald A	828	1968
CHAPMAN, Russel	828	
COREY, Russel	828	
DI MATTEO, Gene	828	1969
ENTWHISTLE, Jack	828	1959
GIBSON, Richard O	828	1962
GILLESPIE, Kenneth	Gp Hq	
GRASS, Alfred W	828	
HARRISON, Wallace	Gp Hq	1945
JENSEN, Willard	828	1962
JOHNSON, Ralph	829	1966
KETCHAM, Frank D	828	1968
OBERLE, Robert	828	1970
O'DELL, Rex	828	1948
PRATZ, William S	Gp Hq	
REUTER, Clarence W	Gp Hq	
ROE, John	Gp Hq	
SHINDIEDECKER, Freeman	828	1965
SOLLINGER, Edward	828	1968
STAGMAN, Orlie M	831	
THOMAS, Homer	831	

your unprecedented support has continued. From the many complementary letters received, we believe we are on the right course, in providing a informative 'letter with a historical background, worthy of your support. Never-the-less, we sincerely welcome your suggestions for improvement.

A big thank you to Julian Kokenge, for providing the new masthead, which appears on this letter. It came at a most appropriate time, for we were contemplating a change. We shall see more of his work. We are most grateful to the many contributors who placed the operation of the letter in the black. Because of this, we have added another page.

We have several stories in the making which will appear in the letter as soon as details are complete. Larry Vocino is working on a history of Venosa. We hope to have Major Cooper Bryant's story of his uncredible survival of that fateful day in February 1945. And as we go to press a letter was received from Mr Juraj Rajnec of Trencin, Czech. Mr Rajnec is a Czechoslovak air historian and requested info for his study of 15th AF ops over his country. It is hoped that information can be exchanged. We are confident of your continue support. Thank you all and our best wishes for 1971.