



# LIGHTWEIGHT TOWER CALLING



No. 18

January 1984

## Chicago Reunion Enjoyed By All

### REUNION TID-BITS

By Bob and Dorothy Deeds

I would like to thank Art Hurley for showing us a good time. Art went out of his way to make us all comfortable. There was lots of conversation in the hospitality room with plenty of refreshments. Again, I say thanks Mr. Hurley. If everyone there did not have a good time, it was their fault.

We left for the reunion on Thursday morning, then stopped in Whiting, Ind. to visit with our friends Ambrose and Dolores Borgetti. We spent the day with these good people. Dolores treated us to a lasagna dinner. We spent the evening watching the Cubs play ball and talking over the old days.

On Friday we drove in to the Holiday Inn where the activities had already started on Thursday night. In the lobby we met Woody and Marguerite Woodyard, who already had registration started. We met many of the gang from the 485th. After 38 years, it is hard to remember all the names.

After check-in at the hotel, we had lunch with Nick and Annette Montulli-then it was off to the hospitality room, where there were lots of stories of WWII with our flying gunner, Carl Mazzoni, Herb Little and Chas Panagos. Among the ground crew were George Ick, Andy Anderson, Irv Parker and yours truly.

I must not forget our three pilots who showed up, Joe O'Neil, Jack Eden with his wife, Ruby and Roger Monroe. From Texas was our man who gave us our 485th Prayer, Sherril Burka.

With this gang and the rest of the 485th, the festivities lasted well into the night.

On Saturday there was a short meeting where all members introduced themselves and their wives. Then it was off to see the city of Chicago. First we saw the Science Museum. Then we had our lunch at Sauer's Restaurant. Then to the Sears Building where they took us up to 103rd floor. It is said to be the tallest building in the country. The bus toured the city with our guide pointing out the history of Chicago.

In the evening there was a lot of picture-taking and a cocktail hour and afterwards a prime rib dinner. Jack Eden gave Andy Anderson a Texas Turkey for being the oldest member there. Then all the old boys showed off

their dancing skills. I'm afraid some of us were a little rusty.

On Sunday it was our regular meeting with lots of interest for future reunions. Next year we will meet in Charlotte, N.C. with Dean Bassett as our host. Dean was one of our crew chiefs. He would like to see a lot of his buddies from the ground crew. Along with Dean will be Bill Long of the 829th, helping out with the hosting duties.

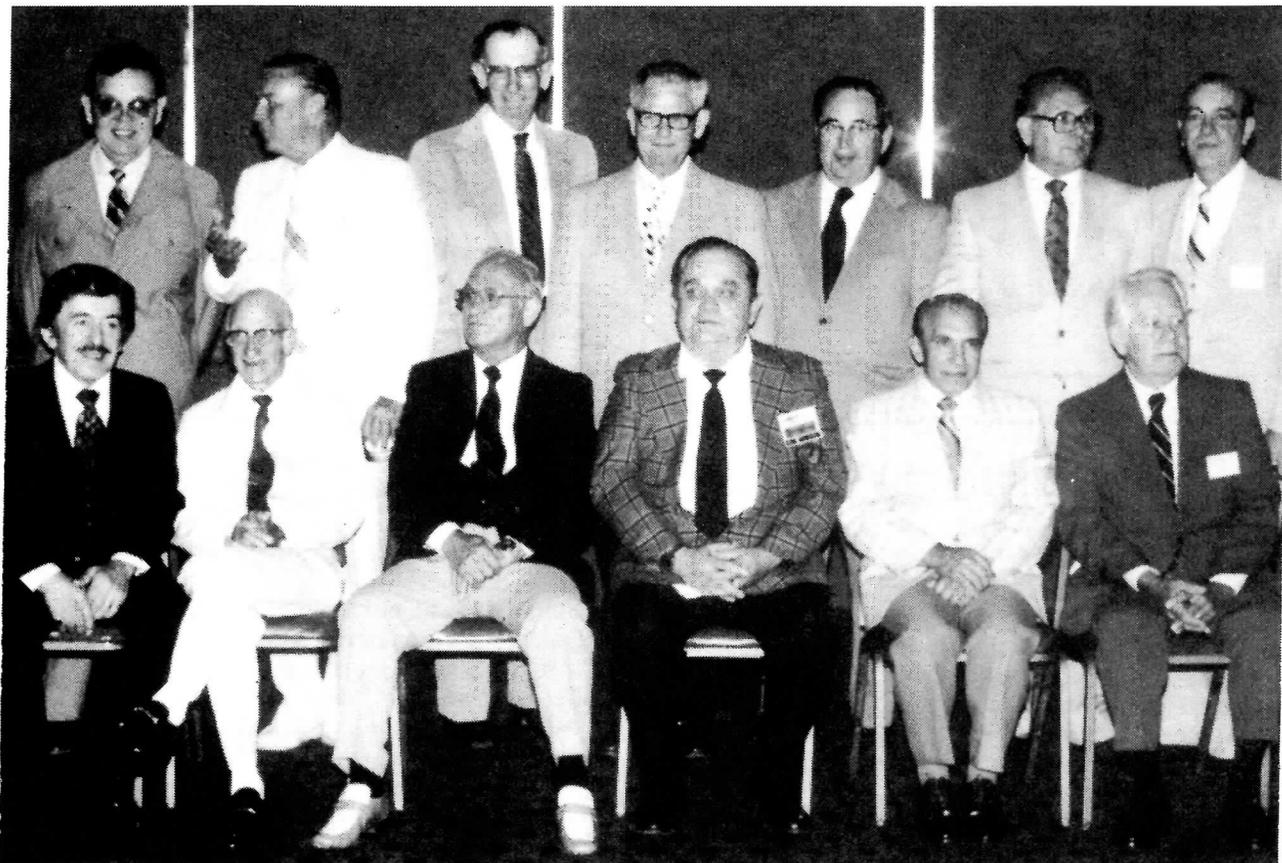
Roger Monroe gave a report on the 15th Air Force reunion at March Air Force Base in California. Col. Carins, our last group C.O., will present a book of our past newsletters to the 15th Air Force.

For the 1985 reunion it will be in Harlingen, Texas. In 1986 it will be in Nashville, Tenn. with Joe Cathcart as your host. Joe promised a trip to Jack Daniels, along with Dolly Parton and Roy Acoff.

I would like to thank all those who have contributed to our newsletter. You are the ones who pay these bills.



John Jackson, of the 831st, receives crew award from Earl Bundy for having most crew members at the reunion.



**828TH SQUADRON**—Back row, left to right: Robert Deeds, Roger Monroe, George Ick, Irv Parker, Joe O'Neill, Ambrose Borgetti, Carl Maz-

zoni. Front row: Charles Panagos, Andy Anderson, C. J. Eden, Sherrill Burba, Nick Montulli and Herbert Little.



**829TH SQUADRON**—Back row, left to right: Arthur Karns, E. L. Bundy, Philip Colluccio, Wm. D. Long, Joe Cathcart, Marion Shelor, Kenneth Robison, Frank Lozier, Wythe Napier, Ray

Carpenter. Front row: Milton Fundling, Wm. Ferrell, Al Peschka, Kearney Weyand, Al Martin, Hovey Ball.

## MINUTES OF MEETINGS IN CHICAGO

Sat., Aug. 6 1983

The meeting was opened at 8 a.m. by Earl Bundy, then Sherrill Burba read the prayer of our group, composed by Sherrill Burba himself.

The minutes of the meeting in August 1982 in Austin, Texas were read and approved.

Earl Bundy advised that after investigation into the 485th forming an association, he found that it involved quite a number of records being kept and government reports to be made. He felt that it would not be worth the extra work involved, and would not be of enough benefit to our members to go further with this idea.

The announcement was made that the tour of Chicago would leave the hotel at 9 AM immediately after the meeting; pictures would be taken at 6 PM before the dinner dance at 7 PM.

It was also suggested by the chairman that all the members make an effort to get some local newspaper and TV coverage of our reunion in an effort to advertise our yearly reunions and perhaps pick up some new names.

It was announced that the 1982 Lightweight Tower was hopefully to be out in August.

There was some further discussion on papers, news bulletins, etc. having notices of our reunions.

The question of changing our reunion date to the fall was again brought up. It was decided to take it up again on Sunday morning.

Announcement of the 15th Air Force Reunion in California on November 9-13 was discussed and it was announced that some of the notices were available for distribution.

There were ten members present who were attending their first reunion. Then all the men present stood and introduced themselves with a short bit of information on themselves and introduced wives.

Earl Bundy then thanked Marguerite Woodyard for her work on getting out the information on the Dayton Memorial and presented her with a gift of appreciation, an attractive double mirror.

There were 89 veterans registered up to that time. The meeting was then adjourned at 9 AM to allow all to go on tour who had made reservations.

Sun., Aug. 7, 1983

The meeting was opened at 8:30 AM by Earl Bundy, followed by a few moments of silent prayer. The chairman thanked Art Hurley for his efforts in making this another of our fine reunions.

The minutes of the Sunday meeting in Austin, August, 1982 were read and approved.

It was announced that there had been too few interested in an Alaskan tour and reunion to make it at reunion time. The suggestion was made that all interested in making such a tour notify Laura Rempe, and she could perhaps arrange such a tour at some time other than reunion date. There were 23 present at the meeting that expressed an interest in such a tour.

The B-24 model for the one traveling the furthest was

won by Roger Monroe, Newport Beach, Calif., taking it away from Bill Farrell by about seven miles.

Ralph Raines had made and donated a small model in its own wooden box with a plaque stating its use to replace the larger model which was a little difficult to transport. This model was so popular that Ralph stated he could take orders for them to order from the Liberator Club. He also volunteered to make up an additional model for the one coming the farthest. The new small model was won by John Jackson for the crew having the most present. Jesse Ledbetter tied for this also, and will receive a model in the mail.

There was some discussion in acknowledgement of the work of the ground crews. Motion made and seconded and carried to accept Ralph Raines offer to make a model for the squadron having the most ground crew present at the reunions. At this meeting there were six ground crew from the 828th, seven present from the 829th, eight present from the 830th, and six present from the 831st.

The total attendance at this reunion was 92 veterans, represented by: 1 from Headquarters; 14 from the 828th; 17 from the 829th; 23 from the 830th and 37 from the 831st.

The next year's reunion will be in Charlotte, N.C., hosted by Dean Bassett and William Long.

Dan Sojdin asked for support for the Museum on Aircraft in Harlingen, Texas. He wanted photos, etc. Ray Carpenter will check into the loss of photos from the war, and there was further discussion.

There was a request for support also of the American Ex-POW organization.

Hank Dahlberg offered to make up a plaque showing all the reunion locations, the host and number attending. There was a motion made, seconded and carried to accept this offer.

After some discussion for future reunions, a vote was taken for the 1985 reunion. Minneapolis, Houston, Reno, Val, and Harlingen, Tex. were offered. Harlingen won, Dan Sojdin hosting.

St. Petersburg, Nashville, Virginia Beach were offered for 1986.

Nashville won with Joe Cathcart hosting.

There was a motion made by John Godfrey to change reunion dates to after Labor Day to end of October, date to be chosen by committee each year. The motion was seconded and carried. Vote of 42 for and 22 against. The date will be chosen later.

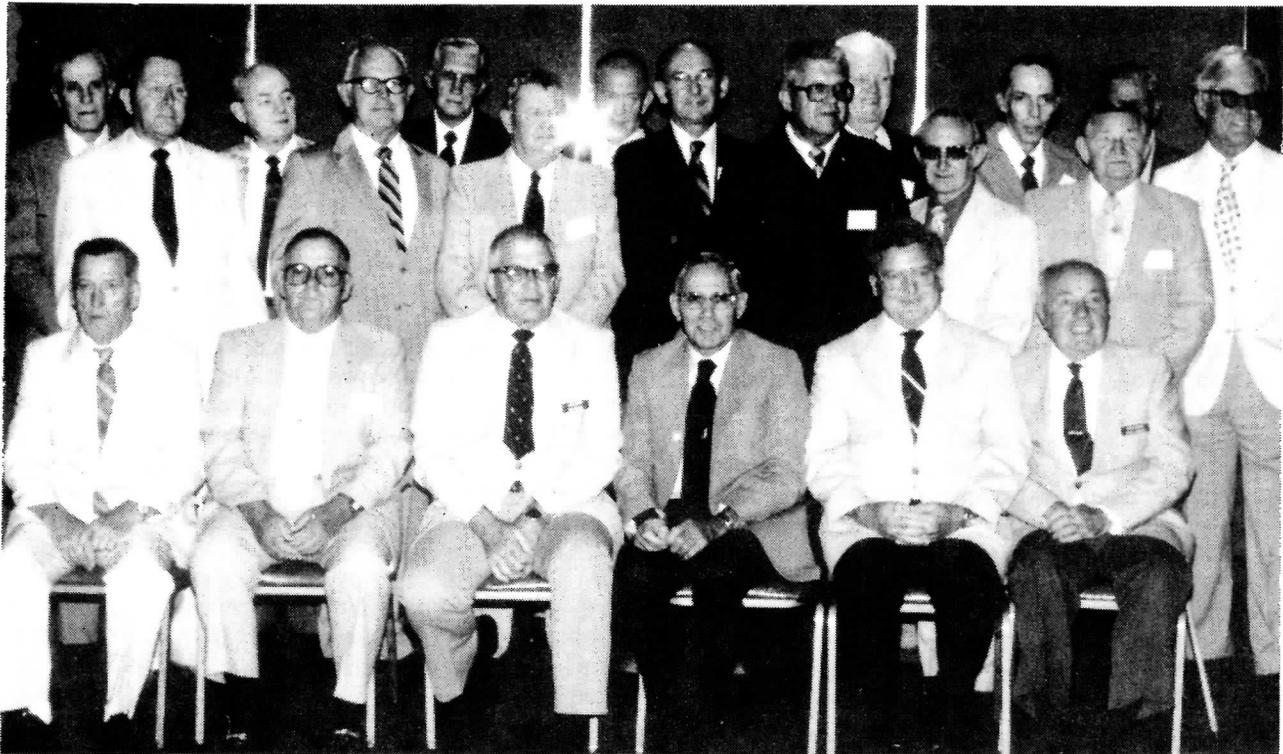
There was some further discussion about the 40th reunion of the 15th Air Force in California. It was announced that we would donate a bound copy of all our Lightweight Towers to the 15th Air Force Assoc. at this reunion in November.

Just a note — At the banquet last evening — Jack Eden presented a Texas Turkey to Karl Anderson as one of the first to start the 485th reunions.

A reminder was made to all to support the mailing costs by sending or giving money to the squadron reporters.

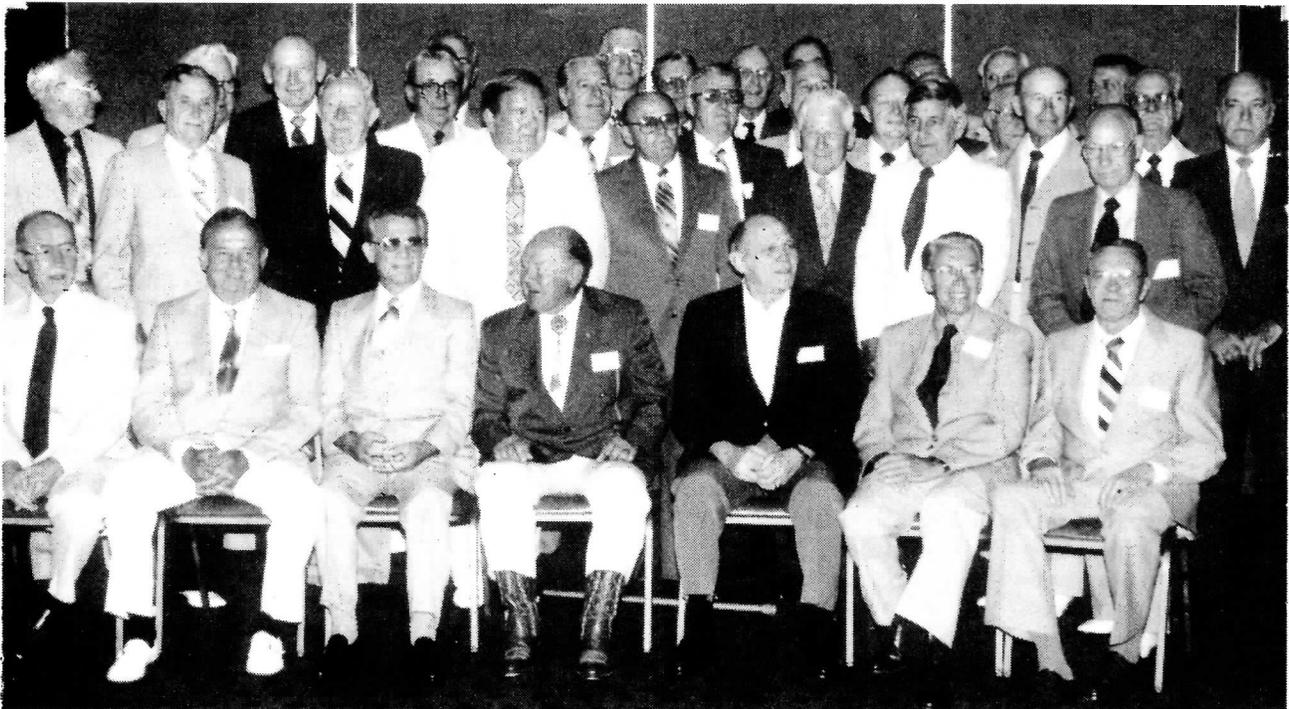
The meeting adjourned at 10:30 AM, and was followed by the showing of a film that Hank Dahlberg had taken at the time they were in Italy during the war.





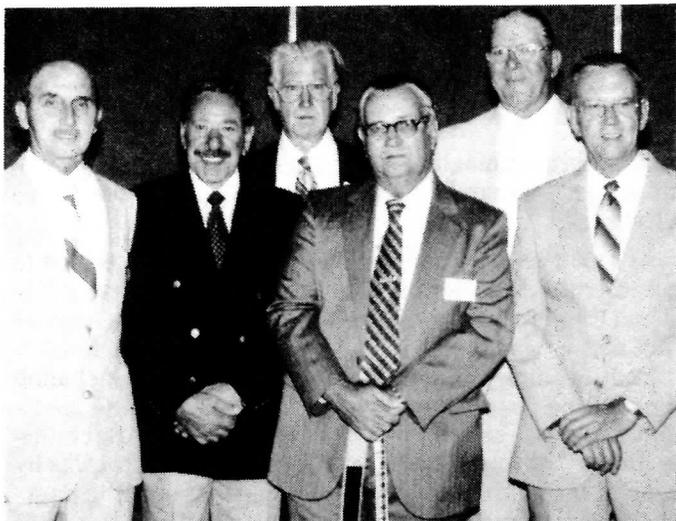
**830TH SQUADRON**—Front row, left to right: Lyle Talbott, Herbert Muehleman, Robert McVann, Joe Tabellion, Lawrence Martin, Howard Sanborn. Back row, left to right: Ralph Skinner, Vito Sakall, Laverne Foran, Howard Boxley, Rhod Ritchie,

Marshall Knight, Hollis Porter, Neal Schawalder, Edward Muth, Charles Forester, Robert Towne, Mike Frohling, Ted Lipinski, James Hunter, Francis Tunstall.

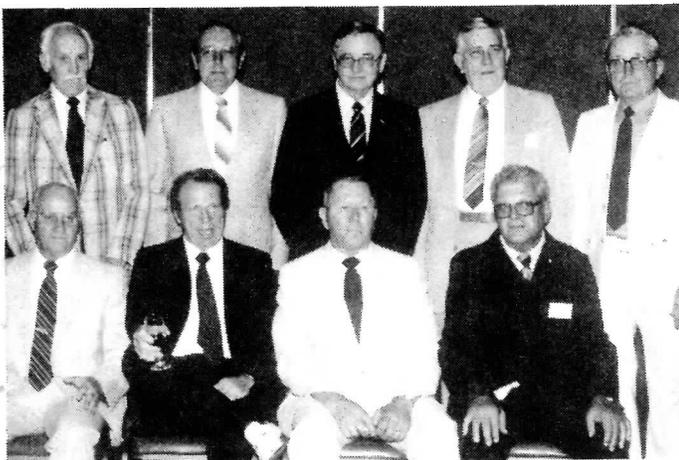


**831ST SQUADRON**—Just too many to identify in photo. Those registered from the 831st include: Bob Halling, Bob Hansen, John Jackson, Dick McLawhorn, Tom Merrell, Warren Meyers, Ralph Raines, Bob Rector, Bill Spence, Don Webb, Albert Paul, Harlan Tinney, LaVern Bock, Mike Lupoli, Vern Christensen, Jesse Ledbetter, Howard

Woodyard, Robert Lewis, John Breen, Frank Chaffin, Harry Stein, Les Sutter, John Godfrey, Donald Evjen, Harold Richards, Leonard Little, Harold Dundon, Bob Monahan, Earl Burdue, Mo Lipman, Ned Pereino, Steve Mlinoz, Walter Iwanski, Bob Brown, Dan Sjudib, Hank Dahlberg and Darold Lee.



**829TH GROUND CREW**—Left to right: Milton Fundling, mechanic; Philip Colluccio, mechanic; Frank Lozier, welder; Wythe Napier, mechanic; Earl Bundy, squadron inspector, and Bill Ferrell, mechanic.



**485TH POWs**—Back row, left to right: John J. Godfrey, Don Evjen, Marion Shelor, Joe Cathcart, Vern Christensen. Front row: Leonard Little, Robert Rector, unidentified and Vito Sakall.



Art Hurley, Chicago host, sitting on a bathroom stool.



Carl Mazzoni, 828th gunner, with flak helmet. Carl was host of the 1963 Springfield, Ill. reunion.

## Do You Remember —

# 485th's Italian Bread

Do you remember the loaves of Italian bread which were served in the 485th mess halls in Venosa? At least one veteran remembered. He is Jack D. Whatley, of McAllen, Texas. And he wanted to know how that particular bread was made.

It was more than a year ago that Jack, now retired from the U. S. Air Force, wrote to the Air Force Times asking for information about the bakery in Bari which supplied the bread and how it was made. "That bread and peanut butter saved my life over in Venosa," he reported. "I couldn't stand to look at Spam and that green powdered eggs stuff."

He said he remembered that the 485th would send a supply truck to Bari and it would bring back rations of Spam, powdered eggs, dehydrated potatoes, other standard items and that bread. "It was the only thing I survived on," he wrote. "It must have had a shelf life of about a week."

He told your editor, in a phone conversation, that he received two answers to his plea. One was from a veteran who supplied him with the recipe and another who told him of relatives in Italy whom he thought would be able to supply the recipe. Jack says he tried the recipe supplied by the first veteran. "It turned out perfectly," he said.

Jack will be happy to give anyone else the recipe. He's planning to be at the Charlotte (N.C.) reunion and you can catch up with him there.

## More 15th AF Reunion Photos



Lillian Cairns, in her kitchen.



Roger Monroe relaxes at the Cairns home (isn't he always relaxed?)

## LIGHTWEIGHT TOWER CALLING

Published annually by and for the veterans of the 485th Bomb Group (H).

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# 15TH AIR FORCE MARKS 40TH ANNIVERSARY

*(Editor's Note — This report of the 15th Air Force Association reunion in November at March Air Force Base, Calif., was prepared by Doug Cairns and Woody Woodyard.*

The first reunion of the 15th Air Force Association, commemorating the 40th anniversary of the founding of the 15th Air Force, was held at March Air Force Base, Riverside, Calif., on November 9-12. Following is a chronology of the 485th veterans' participation:

Nov. 8 (Woody) — Flew to California. We were met by Col. Doug Cairns and his wife, Lillian. Found that Ralph and Helen Raines and John and Mary Driscoll had already checked in. Art Hurley and Roger Monroe showed up later. Dr. Earl Pinnell and his wife attended the banquet only.

Eugene McCarthy attended the Veterans Day memorial service and was seen at the Air Force Base. Joe Morgan and his wife, Fay, attended the buffet at the Cairns and Joe attended the banquet. Doug Cairns, Earl Pinnell, Gene McCarthy, Joe Morgan and Roger Monroe, all live in California. John Driscoll is from Revenna, N.Y.; Art Hurley, from Mokena, Ill.; Woody Woodyard, Lambertville, Mich., and Ralph Raines, Gaston, Ore. We were the house guest of the Cairns and arrived at their home about 8 p.m. and had dinner. Retired rather early as the three-hour time difference made a pretty full day.

Nov. 9 (Cairns) — Early registration for Thursday morning tours.

Nov. 10 (Cairns) — Marguerite and Woody Woodyard and Helen and Ralph Raines took the Universal Studios tour. Mary and John Driscoll went on the tour of Disneyland. All said they had a good time. Dr. Earl Pinnell and Art Hurley played in the golf tournament at March. Art said he had a bad round, but still won a prize. In the evening, the Driscolls, Raines, Woodyards, Morgans and Roger Monroe had a buffet supper at Lil and Doug Cairns home in Redlands. The golfers couldn't make the buffet.

(Woody) — Concerning the Universal Studio tour: We had a ball! Ralph and Helen Raines volunteered to play Buck Rogers and his girl friend, Wilma, in making a picture piloting a space ship. We had a great time at the Cairns talking. Joe Morgan is a new name for the 831st. We were glad to meet him.

Nov. 11 (Cairns) — The annual meeting of the association was called to order at 8:30 a.m. Among the items on the agenda was "The Fifteenth Air Force Story," a commemorative book which will present the complete pictorial history of the 15th from its earliest days to the present.

It will include pictures and biographies of all 15th AF members and ex-members who wish to participate. (For more details, write "The Fifteenth Air Force Story," 2370 Riverside Drive, Santa Ana, CA 92706 Tel. (714) 543-7255.

Other agenda items were a proposed 15th Air Force monument at the Air Force Museum on the order of the one erected by the 8th Air Force, a proposal (later adopted at the Saturday evening banquet) to join the 8th

AF in a big reunion in Seattle the latter part of July 1985. Items pertaining to membership, finances, etc. were discussed.

At 1100 there was an impressive memorial service to commemorate Veterans Day at the V.A. Riverside National Cemetery. One of the 485thers present was Eugene McCarthy, who had driven down from Modesto, Calif.

That evening over 500 members and guests, including most of the past commanders of the 15th AF, attended a dinner dance at Raincross Square, Riverside. After a tasty dinner, featuring Cornish game hen and short talks by each of the commanders, the evening was spent in dancing and socializing.

Nov. 12 (Cairns) — An Air Show was held at March from 1000 to 1500. In addition to the aerial demonstrations by B-52s and other types there were static displays of WW2 aircraft, including the B-24, B-17, B-25 and P-51. Also the March Field museum had movies of the 15th in action during WW2 and many interesting exhibits including one depicting the crew briefing for a bombing mission against Germany in WW2.

At 1900 the members and their guests (700 plus) gathered again at Raincross Square for the gala reunion banquet. Following an honors ceremony involving the posting of the colors, an excellent steak dinner was served.

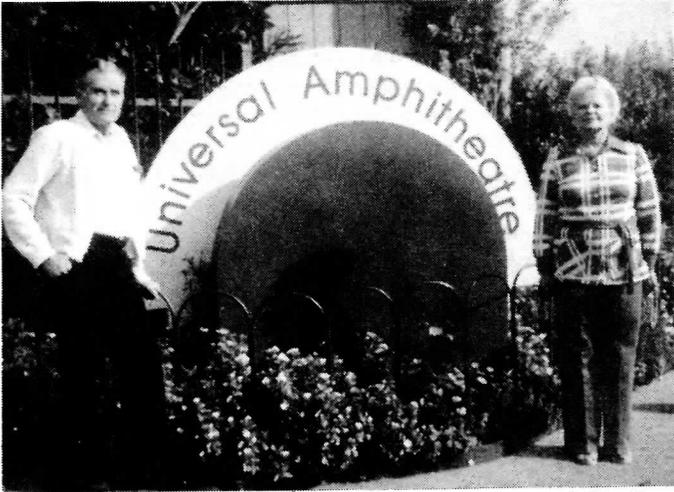
After dinner Doug Cairns, on behalf of the veterans of the 485th Bomb Group, presented a bound volume of the history of the 485th to the president of the 15th AF Association. This history details the bombing missions flown by the 485th, the unit citation, the names of the commanders, the group prayer, the list of reunions held with locations, numbers attending and hosts, and reproduction of the 17 published issues of "Lightweight Tower Calling." It was put together and published by Don Webb, with help from many including Roger Monroe, Carl Gigowski, Woody Woodyard and Earl Bundy. If enough 485th veterans are interested in obtaining copies, it might be reproduced at the reasonable cost. It will be discussed at the Charlotte reunion in September.

During the course of the evening Lt. Col. Ben Franklin, the master of ceremonies, read the 485th Prayer, written by Sherrill Burba. It so touched Gen. Bywater, the president of the association, that he moved that it be adopted as the prayer of the 15th AF Association. His motion was carried by acclamation.

After the keynote address by Gen. James P. Mullins, a past commander of the 15th AF, a truly impressive slide show narrated by an active duty captain with accompanying music by the 15th AF band, portrayed the history of the 15th from its beginning to the present. The evening ended with the feeling that the last three days had been a most enjoyable and uplifting experience. It is recommended that any 485th veteran that is able to do so attend the Seattle reunion in 1985.

Nov. 12 (Woody) — Flew home, leaving at 7 a.m. Pretty early, but our good hosts got up early and got us to the airport in plenty of time.

The 485th Bomb Group (H) was well represented at the 15th Air Force Association Reunion, held November 9-12 at March AF Base, California. The photos below tell a part of the story.



Some of the 485th members toured Universal Studios on Nov 10. Woody and Marguerite Woodyard posed at the amphitheatre entrance.



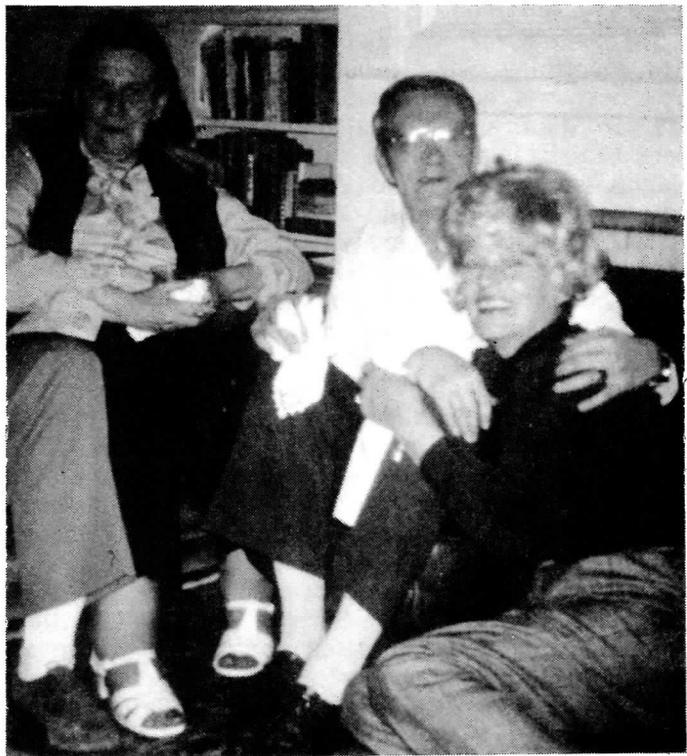
Flags and lake at the cemetery during the memorial service on Nov. 11.



Doug and Lillian Cairns and Marguerite Woodyard (in the foreground) at the March AF cemetery on Nov. 11.



Six veterans attended a dinner at the home of Col. and Mrs. Doug Cairns on Nov. 10. Front row, l. to r.: Ralph Monroe, Joe Morgan, Ralph Raines. Back row: John Driscoll, Woody Woodyard, Doug Cairns.



Mary Driscoll and Ralph and Helen Raines at the Cairns home.

# Former POW Revisits Germany

*(Editor's Note — The following story was written by Chriss Swaney, of the Anchorage (Alaska) Times on Oct. 25, 1983 about Emil F. (Joe) Opalka, 828th veteran and former POW. We think it is well worth reprinting and reading.)*

Should someone, someday undertake to chronicle the wars of the heart, he will have to accord heroic status to men like Joe Opalka.

A former prisoner of war and purple heart recipient, Opalka left his home in Eagle River last month and made a trip that opened old wounds. He visited the prison, town and country that kept him captive for six months during World War II.

As the tour bus rumbled past bleached white wheat fields and pale blue streams, the former POW began remembering. For one brief, dazed moment it all came back again.

In the distance from the bus window, Opalka could see the town of Barth, East Germany, fanning out in all directions, its church spires cutting into the rural patterns like dazzling glass boxes. Yes, it was all nearly the same. A chessboard of rich farm plots outlined the quaint town and a shallow ribbon of road wound lazily through the countryside like tinsel on a Christmas tree.

"It looked just like that when I marched into prison camp nearly 40 years ago. Oh, do I remember those times," he said.

"Those times," as Opalka so gingerly put it, started Nov. 15, 1944, when his B-24 crew was scheduled to drop bombs on the Herman Goehring tank factory near Salzburg, Austria.

The plane never made it. In the frenetic world of the war, everything seemed to happen at hyperspeed. Before Opalka knew it, he was the target. "We were hit hard by anti-aircraft fire, but we all thought we could hobble back to Split Island — a small island off the coast of Yugoslavia where Allied forces controlled an emergency evacuation field," he said.

Poor visibility and engine damage, however, put a damper on aerial escape. So Opalka, the bombardier, bailed out with his fellow crew members and fluttered through the freezing air toward the ground.

Opalka remembered landing in the snow-covered hills of Delnice, Yugoslavia. "The woods and mountains were crawling with partisan troops and I really wasn't sure who could help me," Opalka said.

To avoid capture, the young Opalka hid in mountain caves and heavy underbrush for several days. But when his shrapnel wounds started festering, he realized he would have to make a choice: death or captivity.

He surrendered to partisans who were under the leadership of Mihajlovic, a Serbian nationalist. At the time, there were two partisan groups in Yugoslavia fighting for power — a group led by Josip Broz Tito and the Chetniks, led by Mihajlovic. Although Mihajlovic was loyal to the exiled Yugoslav cabinet in London, some of his top lieutenants, who commanded Chetnik units in various parts of the country, openly collaborated with the Germans.

In essence, Opalka was rescued by the wrong side. After enduring three weeks of interrogation and solitary confinement at a Frankfort detention center, Opalka and several other POWs were shipped to a prison camp in Barth. The camp, which held over 9,000 Air Corps officers, had a reputation for being escape-proof.

A barbed wire world of death and fear, the Barth Stalag I camp was riddled with shortages of food and water. Health conditions were deplorable. Lack of exercise prompted psychotic behavior by some prisoners and an embargo on mail contributed to morale problems.

To help whittle away the lonely, dull hours of captivity, POW commanders created an elaborate labyrinth of escape tunnels and secret codes. "Some of us dug so much that we were dubbed tunnel rats. And when German patrols collapsed our tunnels, we just started digging again, Opalka said.

Even after Hitler sent a directive calling for the death penalty for any attempted prison escapes, Barth POWs continued tunneling. "We never exhausted our passion for freedom in the struggle to get it. We enjoyed intimidating our captors through our strong comradeship," Opalka said.

Perhaps the height of intimidation is best summed up in an annoying jingle Opalka can still recite today. During morning calisthenics, Opalka said the entire camp used to sing "Come on Joe, Come on Joe, We know you can make them go."

Of course, said Opalka, Joe was not GI Joe but Joseph Stalin. "The Germans used to hate this song because they knew the Russians were breathing down their necks."

Even after this seemingly innocuous battle cry became reality, Opalka said liberation by the Russians turned into another blood bath. "We were freed all right but in the interim, Russian troops pillaged all German villages around Barth."

Fearing possible unfair treatment by the Russians, Opalka and several POW roommates hijacked a sailboat. "We had planned to sail to some Scandinavian country but were fired at by both Russian and American troops who mistook us for Germans," Opalka said. Barth is located north of Berlin on the Baltic Sea.

Following a bout with friendly fire, Opalka was shipped home. "It was great. When I walked through the front door it was instant tears and hugs," he said.

A civil servant employee now at Elmendorf Air Force Base, Opalka never forgot his days as a prisoner. "I don't think I'm bitter but I do have some scars," he said.

As a result of captivity, the 61-year-old veteran suffers from back and stomach pain. But he claims his suffering is nothing compared to what he saw behind the Berlin Wall. "I don't envy the people in East Germany. Their lives are a bundle of chronic tension."

Like so many other POWs though, Opalka is quick to put his trip into perspective. "You learn from the past but you don't stay there, you move on," he said.

Opalka said he took the trip to see what things looked like after nearly 40 years of change. He also signed up

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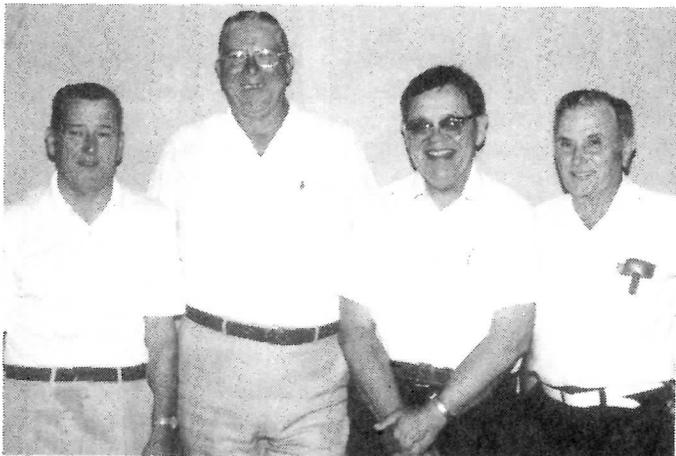
with Gold Coast travel, tour promoters, to see some of his old POW friends. "I loved meeting my bunk mate, George Meuse, again. We shared many tough days together, but that's what helped many of us survive. It was the spirit of others that kept us going," he said.

Another interesting part of the tour for Opalka was meeting 85-year-old Rudolph Lunz, a former Luftwaffe pilot. Lunz acted as a guide for part of the American POW tour.

Opalka and his wife Jane, an active member of the local VFW auxiliary, traveled to Italy a couple years ago to the 35th reunion of the 485th Bomb group of the 15th Air Force. "We try to go to all the reunions, it's educational and rewarding for all involved," said Mrs. Opalka. "I think there's still a lot of pent up emotion from those POW days," she said.

To help other POWs find their roots, Opalka plans to establish a local chapter of the national organization called the American Ex-Prisoners of War. The organization founded April 14, 1942 had been called the Bataan Relief Organization. It serves as a network to reunite POWs.

For additional information on the organization call Opalka at 694-9383.



**YOUR REPORTERS AT CHICAGO**—Lyle Talbott, Earl Bundy, Bob Deeds and Woody Woodyard.



Sherrill Burba, 828th gunner, showing us how lonesome it is in Chicago. Left to right: Barzella Robison, Burba, Francis Fundling and Jean Ferrell.

## Burba's 485th Prayer Adopted by 15th AF

Our own Sherrill Burba received the following letter from Murray A. Bywater, Brig. General, USAF Ret., who is president of the 15th Air Force Association.

It is self explanatory. It reads:

Dear Sherrill:

Once again, I would like to tell you how happy we are that you have become a Life Member of the Fifteenth Air Force Association. We will look forward to seeing you at the next reunion.

As you may know, our Executive Director, Colonel Ben Franklin, read your prayer at the banquet of the 40th Anniversary Celebration. We were so impressed with it that we suggested it be adopted as the official prayer of the Fifteenth Air Force Association. The suggestion met with overwhelming applause of approval.

Therefore, we request your authority to permit us to adopt it as the official prayer of the Fifteenth Air Force Association. It is a beautiful prayer and a great compliment to you. You must, indeed, be a man of great faith to produce such beautiful thoughts.

We all join in sending you our very best wishes.

Cordially

MURRAY A. BYWATER  
Brig. General, USAF Ret.  
President



**PRESENTATION**—Earl Bundy presents Marguerite Woodyard with a mirror, a token of appreciation for all her work over the years and for her efforts in handling the mailing for last year's dedication at Dayton.

### 19TH 485TH REUNION

Registry Inn, Charlotte, N.C.

**Sept. 28-30, 1984**

Make your plans now  
to join us in Charlotte

**Dean Bassett and Bill Long, Co-Hosts**

# Diary of 485th's Ocean Voyage

*(Editor's note: Below is a copy of a diary kept during the April 1944 crossing of the Atlantic Ocean and Mediterranean Sea by the 485th Bomb Group, as a portion of a large convoy. It was penned by Sam Schneider, of 828th squadron. We think you will find it interesting.)*

April 2

We got up at 4 a.m. today; left CPH at 8 a.m. by troop train. We went to Newport, boarded a ferry to Norfolk where we boarded a Liberty ship, the "James Hoban." This is the beginning of my trip overseas. The J.H. left the dock at 2:15, went out to open waters and anchored with the convoy (one of the largest to leave America, good old USA). This evening the sea got rough; a few got sick (already).

April 3

The convoy raised anchor and started its big trip. The sea is still rough. There are new additions to the Sea Sick Club. This morning was the last we saw land. There are ships all over, as far as the eye can see. It's getting rougher; it's cloudy and looks like rain. Rained at times this evening. Lots are sick; so far, I'm lucky.

April 4

Last evening we had quite a scare. The sea was rough and still is. During the night the ship rocked like hell, causing mess kits, helmets, rifles, etc. to fall down from bunks, walls, rafters. It caused quite a racket in the darkness.

Some were real scared and yelled "torpedo." Nothing bad resulted — a little more talk, joking and sleep again.

Today is cloudy and still raining. Most of the time I spent below decks, near my bunk. The NY subway has nothing on us — it's crowded, plenty. Read a mystery story.

April 5

Today is clear and the sun is shining; still rough though. Red Cross kits were handed out — contents: gum, candy, soap and dish, sewing kit, paper and pencil, shoestrings, cigarettes and a book. Saw patrol bomber fly by — sea rough, as usual. Some of the boys got wet from waves coming over the side. Can't walk too good yet.

April 6

Today was another clear day. A Navy plane, PBV, flew around the convoy a few times. I hear we are going to Italy (just a rumor).

April 7

Forgot to mention, we have a PX on board ship. It's quite a life saver for things are getting monotonous — eat, read, water and water, sleep. A little candy helps — Coca Cola, too.

It's getting warmer. Sea is calm. I read most of the day.

April 8

It's beautiful out. Never saw water so blue. Today they tested the ship's guns. I saw what flak looked like for

the first time (expect to see lots more before long). From the decks, we gunners didn't like the looks of it too well.

Slept late (usually do, anyway). Sea was calm, very warm. Seated out the usual chow and wash lines. Read another mystery. Readers Digest magazines are very scarce.

Big crap games and card games going on — have to do something. Money is beginning to have no value to the fellows (me included).

The night was swell — moon and everything that goes with scenery (but where's the girl). Rumor there's a boatload of nurses/WACs close by. So what?

We sang songs on deck. A couple of the boys played guitars.

EASTER — April 9

They say we're about half way there?? We average about 200 miles per day. Today the sun is still shining — getting hotter. Maybe it's Italy after all.

Religious services were held on deck. Important — forgot to mention it — had Pasach on board ship Friday; had wine (Maneshewitz) and Matzohs. Hadn't felt better in a long time. Said Kodosh for Papa.

April 10

The same old stuff today — more water. Heard gun fire in the distance. We had boxing matches. They started news reports; we look forward to them eagerly. The first we heard in a long time; no radios, you know. It was the same old stuff — war. Saw some porpoise.

April 11

Today is rough out. The boys are over their seasickness. All goes well with me too. Am beginning to feel like a sailor. I know NOW what side to spit out at (tain't funny, McGee). Ask the boys who were sick; they'll agree with me.

Some gunners (me, too) were called to a meeting this morning. We were given some instruction on the 20 MM gun. It seems we are going to have to man one of these anti-aircraft guns when we get in the danger zone.

April 12

Still nice weather. Was assigned to a gun station. More instruction by the Navy crews about the guns.

Expect to go on watch regularly from tomorrow on.

Some of the boys got showers on deck with the fire hose (salt water). I got a break. One of the Navy gunners took me to his quarters; let me use their showers — distilled water. Felt good. Was able to get a lather from the soap. Got the dirt off, at last.

More singing and guitar playing.

April 13

Nothing new today. Sea getting rough, like the first few days out. Haven't been seasick yet (knock wood).

April 14

Started gun watch today, 3 hours on, 6 hours off; started at 4 a.m., ending at 10 p.m. Rough sea today. Had 7 to 10 p.m. Liked it a lot. Learning the positions of the ship.

April 15

Today it's rough sea, again. Sighted some planes (ours) Catalinas. We must be nearing land. Had the 4 a.m. watch. Saw lights on the water off port beam. Investigated; found to be hospital ship going back. More boxing matches, damn good ones, too. Forgot to mention: have a phonograph on board; helps break the monotony.

April 16

Had afternoon watch. Saw more planes (ours), B-24s and PBYS.

Excitement during the night. Heard depth charges. The gun watches said it was a sub. Our escort got it. Birds were seen today.

April 17

Rained today; little squalls, so to say. Felt cold on watch. Saw more planes. Convoy seems to be closing in. They say we'll see land tomorrow.

More boxing matches, the finals, too. Too much slugging, as if I didn't like it.

Had a soldier show at 5 p.m., singing, gags, even a strip tease. It stole the show; a captain did it, too. What fun.

April 18

Today was the big day. I'll never forget it for we sighted land. We approached it during my time on watch; saw the sight well. Words can't describe it. You'd never think there's a war going on. Calm sea — blue as can be and the demarcation of beautiful green near the land. Looks like there was a line to divide it.

We're heading for the Rock of Gibraltar. Saw the coast of Spain on one side and Africa on the other. As we passed by, saw and excursion boat named Cuedad de Cueta (City of Cueto), also Tangiers' Cady, along French Morocco.

High mountains, beautiful countryside of green and beautiful cities along the coast. We were quite close. Saw the Rock, too. I never thought I'd ever see sights like this.

Looks like we're going to Sicily — no one knows for sure.

Saw three subs (Brekst) surface; stayed with us. More planes (American), also quite close and low. It won't be long now that I'll be up in the air again.

Looking forward to it. Getting tired of this trip.

April 19

The Mediterranean is blue as can be; smooth as glass, too. Lots of fish can be seen from the gun deck: Portugal Men of War, eels, squid. They all seem lit up.

Close to ship we saw lots of porpoise — clear too for their phosphorous in the water. Can't explain it now. Will, in words, some day (I hope). Saw a Dutch destroyer come close by.

More land sighted. Going close by at 6 p.m., we saw Oran from field glasses. I saw it quite well — very modern. More mountains.

Wind blowing up; water getting choppy, very choppy.

April 20

Had morning watch, 4-7. Very damp and chilly, wind blowing, sea was rough and choppy. Nothing new. No

sunrise, was disappointed. After breakfast, slept until noon, in time for mess kit inspection (the major woke me up).

Went on 1-4 p.m. watch. Excitement plenty. Spotted a number of planes (too distant to recognize). Had air drill, nevertheless — no trouble. Third day now in the Mediterranean. Saw more planes, one right over us, but too high to recognize. Saw vapor trails.

Still hugging the coast. Algiers next city to see. Hit Algiers about 4:30 p.m., quite a place. Saw very modern apartment houses. Mate says they have air conditioning. Saw two mosques high above the city. There's a Dutch destroyer, The Netherlands, helping as an escort. It's right behind our ship.

Little pamphlets were given out: "Occupation of Enemy Territory" — all about Italy. That early rumor was right, after all. Places they think we're going to: Augusta, Sicily, or Bari, Italy.

Next stop, they say, is Bizerte, Tunis. Our convoy is diminishing. They went to Oran and Casablanca.

Heard report that we were to be attacked sometime tonight (bombing and submarine.) Decided to be on deck when it happened, if it would — very ironic. On pretense, I went to my gun station to borrow a book from one of the boys: "What to do aboard a transport." Just received the book when it happened; perfect timing, so it seemed. The sound of a plane, dusk, and then all hell broke loose. The sky was full of tracers, red, white. Flak, then thud, sppft. I dropped to the deck, scared like hell and swearing. Got up and saw a big cloud of black smoke soaring high above the ship. Felt as if it were raining, drops hitting my face. Then a plane shot by our port beam — more firing, and the show was over. Then, on port beam flashed a red light (distress signal). I couldn't believe it could happen so fast, but I know now.

The fellows below decks acted wonderfully and later were complimented by the major (considering it was the first time and no panic at all).

It sure was a close one for us for we found the ship ahead was blown to bits and learned that the bombs dropped all around our ship. 535 men died; 830th squadron?

There's plenty more to the story, but no sense to continue for it's just one of those things in time of war. (I, for one, and many others now aboard the "Hoban" know NOW that there IS a war going on. By the way, our ship was credited with one plane downed. A swastika will fly on it's stack.

April 21

Sea is choppy today, cloudy. We all keep our sense about us, especially when we go on watch. Had 10-1 and 7-10 watches; nothing happened. Got soaking wet.

April 22

Char's birthday. Expect to write a letter to her today. Felt funny about it; couldn't send a card (birthday). Rain again. Had 7-10 a.m. watch. Got soaked again.

Passed Bizerte. Saw eight large transports going back; 6 three-stackers. Later had submarine scare. Depth charges were dropped. Sighted a small island today.

Expect to sight Sicily tonight or tomorrow. Just finished my 4-7 watch. Wrote Char a letter, wished I could have told her more. Sea was calm. Rained most of the day; got soaked. Passed Cape Bon. Latest news — we

will, or may, reach Sicily by Sunday night or Monday morning (that's what our news broadcaster told us). Heard that Bari, Italy was our ship's destination.

April 23

Quite windy today. Had 4-7 morning watch. Last night we passed Pantelleria; thought of Sid, at the time. Today we passed Malta and expect to reach Augusta, Sicily. Spotted a couple of planes, P-51s. Rumor that JU-88 passed by.

Part of our convoy split up and went to points east. Our course is northeast now, but they keep changing.

April 24

Sea very rough today — cloudy. Slept late. When I awoke for my 10-1 watch, we already had been outside of Augusta. Sailed up and down coast. Saw city of Syracuse, not well, for it was cloudy — Mt. Etna, too.

Entered Augusta harbor. There were quite a few ships there of all nationalities. The coast looked beautiful, green grass, trees, building (2 or 3 stories). No more watches.

Until we leave for Bari we all feel a little at ease now (for a while anyway).

April 25

Cloudy today; still in Augusta harbor. Everything is the same, except for the beautiful land surroundings. Saw a train go by. Heard machine gun fire in the hills — probably practicing. The sun came out this afternoon and lit up the countryside and made it look like picture postcards. There's a quarter moon tonight. Heard rumor to the effect we're to leave in the morning at 0800.

A small boat pulled along side from which a naval officer boarded our ship. The Italian crew asked for cigarettes. Some were thrown to them and they seemed to go after them like wild monkeys. I begin to see now how little of anything the people have.

Convoy to Bari turned back to Brindisi.

Arrived Brindisi April 28. By box car, arrived Venosa afternoon of April 29.



**ALWAYS ON THE JOB**—Martha Bundy and Marguerite Woodyard at the registration desk in Chicago.

## MAIL ROOM

### 485TH BOMB GROUP HQ — Carl Gigowski

The year 1983 will go down as one of the most hectic I have experienced in many years. And yet in many ways it has been another good one. First, it is another year closer to retirement. With this in mind I have taken up that nutty game of chasing the little white ball — called golf.



And to keep abreast of the modern way of life I became involved with computers. Because the computer is so darn smart, it has received a low priority. However, the more important item that makes the year a good one is receiving your letters and notes.

The letters certainly arrive from the ol' west. Received several messages from Roger "Easy" Monroe as he proposed and got me moving on providing copies of the newsletter to be bound for the 15th Air Force library. We now have a copy of the newsletters as an historical document. For the Squadron Reporters and me, this is a great reward for the time and effort put in to publishing the newsletter. Roger, I will be in contact with you.

Still very active is Doctor Maurice Priver. He noted that he was unable to attend the reunion as he was moving his office to a new location at reunion time. Col. Doug Cairns dropped a line noting he would make the reunion. Included with his note was an application for membership in the 15th AF Association which I was happy to join. Also, I really enjoyed a couple telephone conversations with the colonel.

Received word from Syd Harrison and the California colonel, John Hannan. However, there is sad news as noted in a letter from Mrs. Roy Reeve. It was a losing battle with cancer for Roy which ended on February 2, 1983. Who could ever forget Roy? I had the pleasure of meeting him at one of the reunions and I must say he left a lasting memory.

During the last week of May the Confederate Air Force B-24 and B-29 visited Grand Rapids. I guess I went out to the airport at least a half dozen times to admire the great bird. The big thrill was sitting in the pilot's seat again. But this time my grandson was in the co-pilot's seat. The B-24 Squadron Operations Officer is Col. Jack Whatley, an 828th pilot I knew and flew with during our great adventure in Italy.

With Don Webb, of the 831st, as editor of the newsletter, I can now devote time to the Group history and correspondence. I shall continue as Group Reporter and I hope you all continue to write. My sincere thanks for your generous support.

### 828TH BOMB SQDN — Bob Deeds

It was good to hear from you. I found three new men — Perry C. Updike who sent me Roy T. Peck's address. Also Bob Donnan, who was a co-pilot with Fred Livengood's Crew; heard from H.E. Daniels, who flew with Crew 6.



Received a letter from Emil Opalka. Emil lives in Eagle River, Alaska, Bill Murphy, Fred Freyermuth and Bob Kuns. John Thull wrote to say he could not attend this year's reunion. Heard from San Schneider. Sam is living in Port Charlotte, Florida. He

sent along his diary of our trip overseas. Also received a letter from Stan Turecki and Alice. Both are doing fine. Had a letter from E. J. "Pappy" Devane. He is retired, living in Temple Terrace, Florida. Heard from Cal Fite, our squadron commander. he sent along an address list of all the fellows who came back on the West Point.

Dorothy and I, along with Andy Anderson and wife, Grace, went to Newton Falls, Ohio, to see Leona Schoultz last daughter get married.

Had phone calls from Ted Manning, our cook, and Jim McFadden, who was visiting his old friend, Henry Fisher. Ed Nett called and said he could not make this year's reunion due to back problems. Ed was our first commander. He helped out with our memorial at Dayton Air Force Museum.

I received many Christmas cards from all of you. I would like to say thanks for these. This was how our reunion started back in 1961. Also thanks for your contributions to our newsletter.

### 829th BOMB SQDN. — Earl Bundy



Your 829th reporter has had a busy year since our reunion in Austin last year. I was shocked to find my friend Merle Suterby (crew chief and flight chief in 829th) had passed away the day following our reunion when I stopped to see him on my way home.

It was also sad news to hear of the following men that had passed away during the past year: Allen B. Corbin, George Glonek, Clyde Harrell, Ralph Kreyer, Carroll B. Strait and Floyd Swanson.

During the year I receive more contacts than usual from members of the 485th B.Gp. as a result of reunion notices in various magazines. I had the two books on the history of Venosa translated into English. The Mayor gave them to us when we were there two years ago. Our 829th pilot, J.C. Carlin, copied them and put them into book form. I sent out 200 copies and received many compliments on the booklet.

Among the new contacts this year I was able to find our last Commanding Officer, Thomas D. O'Brien, in Springfield, Ill. He was sorry to learn that our first commanding officer, Robert T. Marland, had recently undergone surgery at Ft. Meyers, Fla. We wish him a speedy recovery.

During the year I had a couple of letters from our First Sgt., Arthur Dunlap, who lives in Hagerman, Ida. He has retired from the Air Force and is in fair health. He wanted to come to the reunion but said he just wasn't in good enough health. I also heard from Marion Shelor, who has turned up several new members of the 829th. I was very happy to make contact this year with crew chief, Minard Kilbury, in California and he was able to give us more names. Bill Trafford from Pennsylvania sent his regrets that he couldn't make that reunion. Kirk L. McFadden from Jefferson City, Mo., was anxious to make the reunion but later his wife had vision problems and he had to cancel. Orest Zorena, member of crew No. 44, wrote that he was one of the first crews to land at Venosa Air Base and what a hectic time they had getting their tents up their first night.

I really appreciate the donations each of you send in during the year. I will be happy to hear from all

members in order to maintain "Lightweight Tower" and its mailing.

During the year I also heard from Snake Haugen, George Buttel, Wythe Napier, Major Gen'l Merton Baker, J.H. Duffield, Norman Fessler and Bill Ellis.

Art Hurley, our host in Chicago this year, worked very hard and provided us with an excellent reunion. The dinner was delicious and the crowd stayed all evening to enjoy the band and dancing. We had a lively and lengthy discussion on Sunday morning. After much discussion, we voted to change our reunion date to Charlotte, N.C. on Sept. 28, 29, 30th 1984. We approved the 1985 reunion to be in Harlingen, Tex. with Dan Sojdin as host. The 1986 reunion was approved to be in Nashville, Tenn. with Joe Cathcart as host.

### 830TH BOMB SQDN — Lyle Talbott

The 1983 reunion, held in Chicago, is now fond memories for the 21 veterans of the 830th. Thanks to the host Art Hurley and others for again making another joyous reunion possible. Five were first timers: Laverne Foran, Howard Boxley (pilot and co-pilot of Foran's crew), Edward Muth (flight engineer and one of the three survivors of Capt. William Jernigan's crew), James Hunter (flight engineer of Buzz Boling's crew), and Herbert Muelman (welder) who probably helped keep the equipment together.



The other veterans attending were: Robert McVann, Vito Sakall, Joseph Tabellion, Lawrence Martin, Howard Sanborn, Ralph Skinner, Rhod Ritchie, Marshall Knight, Hollis Pete Porter, Neal Schawalder, Ted Lipinski, Charles Forester, Francis Tunstall and crew members Robert Towne and Mike Frohling and myself.

I really enjoyed seeing Hunter and Muth, as I had flown with them and it had been the summer of 1944 since I had seen them. It was a delight to see Muth and Forester reunited; Chuck was the co-pilot on Jernigan's crew, but did not fly the day of the fatal mission to Friedrichshafen, Germany, 20 July 1944. Muth was injured seriously and a POW returning to the States as a litter patient; Hunter was also wounded, requiring three weeks hospitalization.

Col. Griffin writes he enjoys the newsletter and thinks of us each reunion, but it's a very busy time for him. He will attempt to make a future reunion and renew old acquaintances. Thomas Russell was with us in Austin, but states he would be unable to attend this year. Vince J. Barison and Robert Esary, California residents, stated they would pass the Chicago reunion and attend the 15th AF reunion at Edwards in November. From conversation at the reunion, I believe a representation of ten veterans from the group will be in attendance. Speaking of Barison, I read in Sortie he had become a life member in the 15th AF Assn.

Charles Bartram moved from Cleveland, OH to Cocoa, FL in July; any of you veterans in the area give Charles a call. You may have some good stories to exchange. Bud Foran and Howard Boxley were very helpful supplying information about Jack Biles; thanks for the splendid cooperation. Charles Heringer (bombardier on Lt. Tolsma crew) is living in Billings, MT. He is anxious to

get in touch with some of his former friends.

Chester A. Martin, originally in the 830th and transferred to wing, has supplied our editor and historian with some very interesting material and expressed interest in attending a future reunion. I was very pleased to hear from William R. Boling, the first commander of "Buzz Job." He sent a very accurate and detailed account of the mission to Friedrichshafen, on the problems his crew encountered as well as observing the direct hit on Jernigan. Boling will be with us in '84 to see his friends and meet new ones.

James Roach will retire in the middle of '84 and will be able to attend more reunions — looking forward to seeing you again, Jim. Letters from Francis Tunstall and Charles Forester stating they enjoyed the reunion and the true importance of old friends getting together again, especially when this was the era when we were in the prime of our lives. Elliott Seagraves continued to send his newsy letters. Inquiries from: Clayton Jackson, William Salter, Lester Poulich, Arthur G. Thompson, Fred Mattox, Robert Wade, LeRoy Danies and Charles B. Schackleford.

I would like to stress a point to all of the veterans — if you do enjoy reading and receiving the newsletter, advise your reporter of any changes in your mailing address. It is disgusting to have them returned by the post office endorsed "Unable to deliver." This covers a multitude of options from expired forwarding orders to death, so be a little more considerate. If the newsletter is not interesting and you couldn't care less about receiving it, please send a post card requesting your name be removed from the mailing list — no explanation required.

I would like to thank the veterans who contributed. Without their donations and support this could not continue and also remind all the reunion date for 1984 has been changed. It will be held in Charlotte, NC Sept. 28, 29, 30. Will see you then.

### 831ST BOMB SQDN — Woody Woodyard

The 831st had 38 persons attending the 19th reunion in Chicago this year.

Because of a mix-up over the photographer, we did not have a formal group picture. The picture taken by Frances Fundling is good, but there were just too many in the picture to see all our members. Hope you can find yourself. As usual, the reunion was great. Thank you to Art Hurley for a good job done.



We very much appreciate all of the letters, notes and Christmas cards received from so many of you. Hope we have answered all of you — keep them coming. In the card we received from Burl Jackson last year, he enclosed a notice of their 50th wedding anniversary on October 30, 1982. Congratulations Burl and Bertha.

New names added to our mailing list: George Chaplin, Warren, R.I.; Harry Stein, Randallstown, Md; Wm. Hedgpeth, Ft. Worth, Tex.; George Terrell, Keyser, W.Va.; James Bright, Cowarts, Ala.; Edward Burke, Rochester, N.Y.; Earl Burdue, Dodge City, Kan.; Robert Hanna, No. Kingston, R.I.; Joe Morgan, Rivereside, Calif., and Travis Robinson, Asheville, N.C. Welcome to

all of you.

We had a wonderful time at the 40th anniversary celebration of the 15th Air Force in California in November. Wish more of our group could have attended. Maybe we can make a better showing in late July of 1985 at Seattle, along with the 8th AF.

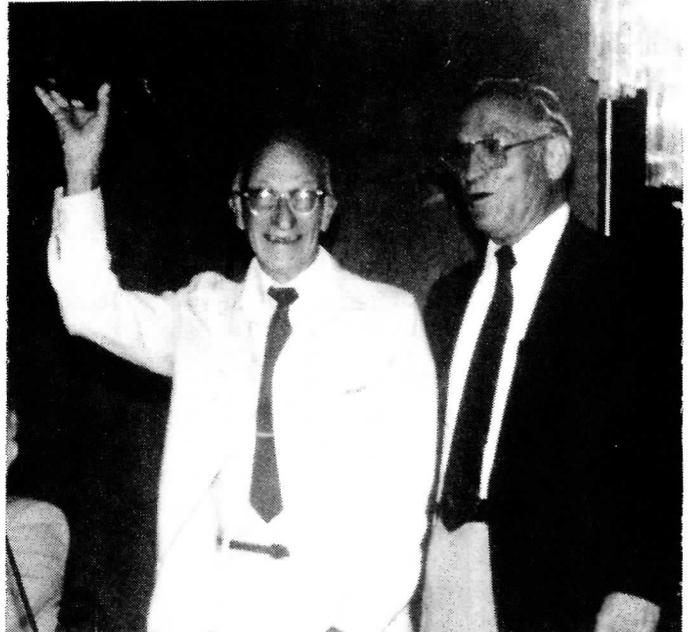
Your reporter was saddened to hear of the death of Harold B. Combs, who died last April 17 at his home in Missouri. Harold and ol' Woody were good friends from the days in Fairmont, Neb. We were both in radio and radar and shared a tent all through Italy. We all will miss Harold.

Again, thank you for your financial support. It has been excellent, as usual.

Due to a suggestion of Roger Monroe, we got a hard-bound book together with some of the history of the 485th, and included all of our Lightweight Tower newsletters. Thanks to our new editor, it was ready in time to present to the 15th AF Association at the banquet in California.

If you have any news items you want printed in future newsletters, be sure to send them to Don Webb. He will work them in, if possible.

Hope you can attend next year's reunion in Charlotte, N.C. Sept. 27-30 at the Regency Inn. See you there.



Jack Eden, of the 828th, presents Andy Anderson crew chief of 828th, with a Texas armadillo as an award for his assistance in developing the 485th reunions.

### JOURNEY'S END

Richard Brown (828th)	1978
Harold B. Combs (831st)	April 17, 1983
Allen B. Corbin (829th)	
George Glonek (829th)	
Clyde Harrell (829th)	
Ralph Kreyer (829th)	
John L. Light (830th)	1981
Carroll B. Strait (829th)	
Merle Sutton (829th)	August 1983
Floyd Swanson (829th)	