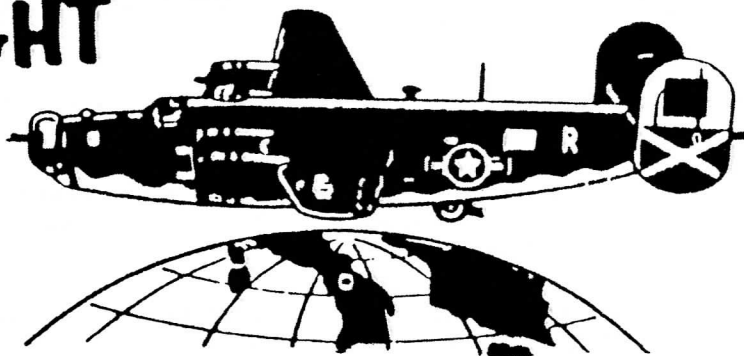




LIGHTWEIGHT TOWER CALLING



No. 34

MARCH 2000

St. Louis To Host **2000** Reunion

The year 2000 485th Bomb Group reunion will be held in St. Louis, Missouri from September 27 to October 1, 2000.

We will be staying at the Radisson Hotel which is located at the intersection of 170 and South Lindberg, and near also near Northwest Plaza Mall with 180 shops and restaurants. Lambert International Airport. Complimentary transportation will be provided from the airport to the hotel.

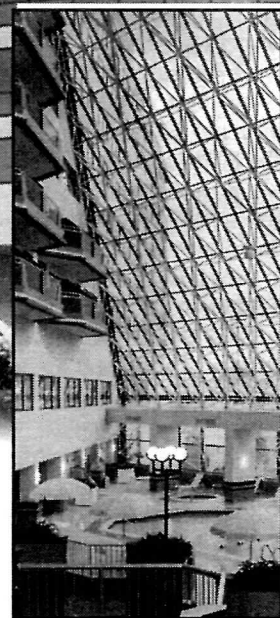
The room rate will be \$70.00 plus tax per night, and this rate will be available three days before and after the primary arrival and departure dates.

By unanimous vote at our general meeting in Denver, it was agreed that we again utilize the professional services of Armed Forces Reunion, Inc. (AFR) for our St. Louis reunion.

Complete details covering this reunion will be furnished in a separate mailing. In the meantime, please block-off September 27 - October 1 on your calendar and plan on attending. You'll be glad you did.



Radisson Hotel / St. Louis Airport



*See you in St. Louis in September.
Bob Benson.*

Denver Reunion **MISSION ACCOMPLISHED**

BY LYNN COTTERMAN

The 35th Annual Reunion for veterans of the 485th Bomb Group was held September 15-19, 1999. It was a highly successful and memorable event. The rally point for the gray eagles was the Marriott Southeast Hotel, Denver, Colorado. This was the first year that the Armed Forces Reunions hosted our reunion. There were a couple of minor hitches, but overall they performed well. They promised to do even better next year now that they understand our requirements better. We are at that time in life when we are willing to let someone else take on the responsibility and pressure of hosting the reunion. Also a change has been made in the way the reunion is reported in this issue of the LWT. To minimize repetition, the lead article which is this column, gives an overall view of the event. Each reporter was assigned an activity to report on in more detail in his column.

The reunion had an enthusiastic take off Wednesday when veterans began arriving. There was a lot of hugging and screaming as they greeted each other in the lobby. The activities commenced with the grand opening of the hospitality room. Friendships were renewed over a glass of spirits (for medicinal purposes). The room filled quickly to overflowing. It was a little cozy, but we managed. It reminded me of past reunions when one of the guest rooms was used for the hospitality room. We were assured that we would have a large room next year. There were no festivities scheduled for Wednesday so we were free to socialize.

Tony Siller held a barbeque Wednesday evening at his home for members of the 828th Squadron. He lives about 15 minutes from the hotel. (Tony was the cook for the 828th squadron in Italy and his wife is a gourmet cook), so needless to say there some great dishes. Tony needed a large group because I don't think he knows how to cook for less than 50 people. Someone called to Tony, "Hey Tony, why didn't you serve meals like this in Italy?" Tony and his wife's generosity was appreciated.

We returned to the hotel and closed the hospitality room. I didn't observe any late parties. It seems that we need more R&R (rest & relaxation) than we used to. I thought the registration on Thursday morning went real smooth. The AF Reunions representative had a trouble

shooter who took care of problems so other vets would not be stuck waiting in line. Then the busses were loaded for a trip to the Park Meadows Shopping Center for lunch and a tour of City of Denver afterwards.

In the last 20 years the population of Denver has grown by leaps and bounds. It seems streets and utilities are always under construction making it slow-going for the traffic. Our bus driver kept in constant communication with other drivers to pick the best routes. We caught a glimpse of Denver's past and present as our guide pointed out the points of interest. Thursday Evening we enjoyed a buffet dinner in the Grand Ball Room with some unusual entertainment. Then we retired to the watering hole to continue catching up with our friends.

SOME OF THE EVENTS OF THE WAR ARE STILL ENGRAVED DEEP ON OUR MEMORY

Friday we were up bright and early, at least early, and boarded buses for Colorado Springs and the Air Force Academy. The Academy is in a beautiful setting with manicured grounds at the foot of the mountains and a picturesque drive meandering through the campus. It is quite a contrast to the pre-flight cadet training facility at Maxwell Field in Montgomery, Alabama where the streets were laid out in a checkerboard fashion. I remember the upper classmen yelling to us from the balcony of the two story barracks as we marched down the street; "Why are you looking up here? Eyes front! We don't want to know you, etc.". A few weeks later we were upper classmen and got to yell to the incoming class. Gosh, we were young! I could have spent more time at the Academy, but time ran out. We boarded the buses for the Flying W Ranch where we had lunch and a fun time. We thank you, Pop Arnold, for arranging this outing.

We returned to the Marriott and had the evening free. Zeke Cotton, my pilot,

and I had dinner with Bill Williams (newcomer, 828th) and his wife. We were always running into them around mealtime and had lunch together several times. Afterwards we got together with Glenn Hess (another newcomer, 831st) and his wife, D.D., and Jo Haden Galbraith and her husband, Madison. Jo is the daughter of Bob Haden (deceased) who was the navigator on Glenn's crew. Glenn's tent was next to ours, but we hadn't heard from him since 1945. Jo is an enthusiastic WWII buff and was collecting information about the 485th Bomb Group from all the vets that she could corral. It is rumored that she has plans to write a book. She is very excited about the group and made many new friends.

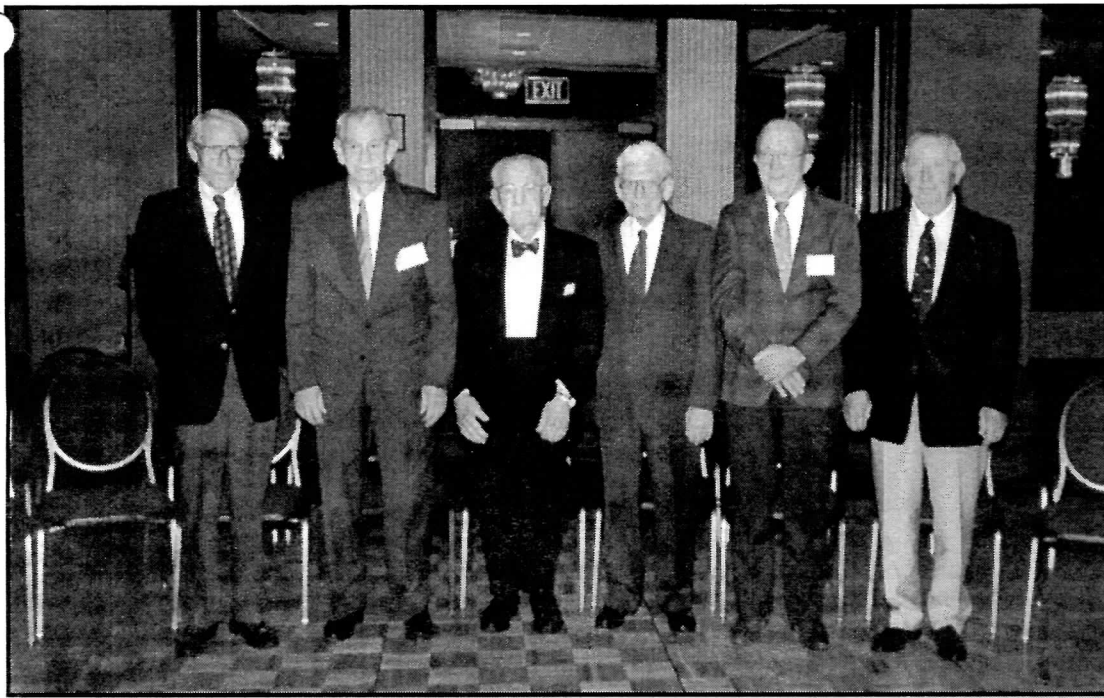
Bob Benson conducted the Group meeting Saturday and announced that there were 143 vets present at the reunion and 312 total attendees. (The minutes of the meeting are printed full elsewhere in this publication.) Bob tried to hold John DiRusso's time to 5 minutes without success. Only kidding, we appreciate John's enthusiasm and dedication in promoting December 7th as a National holiday and encouraging everyone to fly the flag everyday. Roger Monroe said John deserves praise for his efforts. The squadron meetings were held after the group meeting was adjourned.

Saturday evening we met in the main ball room for the historic photo session and the banquet. Bob Benson announced that there were no long speeches scheduled, in fact, no speeches at all. He said to socialize and enjoy the dinner and music.

Some of the events of the war are still engraved deep in our memory. Most of you have seen planes get hit and break up and only a couple of chutes pop out. You can't help from thinking, "But for the Grace of God, there go I". The memorial service Sunday morning honored these heroes who gave their lives along with the heroes that came back and have gone to their rest.

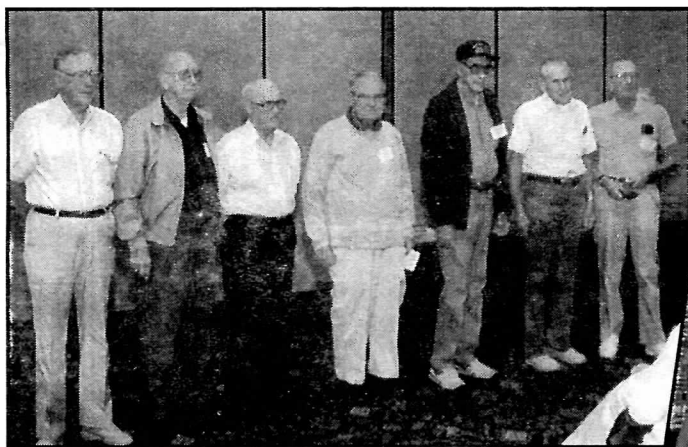
Then it was a scramble to say our "Good Bys" and catch the bus to the airport. One couple who didn't scramble was Hank and Virginia Dolim who relaxed and left Monday. Another successful mission was accomplished and now on to our next target, St. Louis, Missouri in year 2000!

HEADQUARTERS



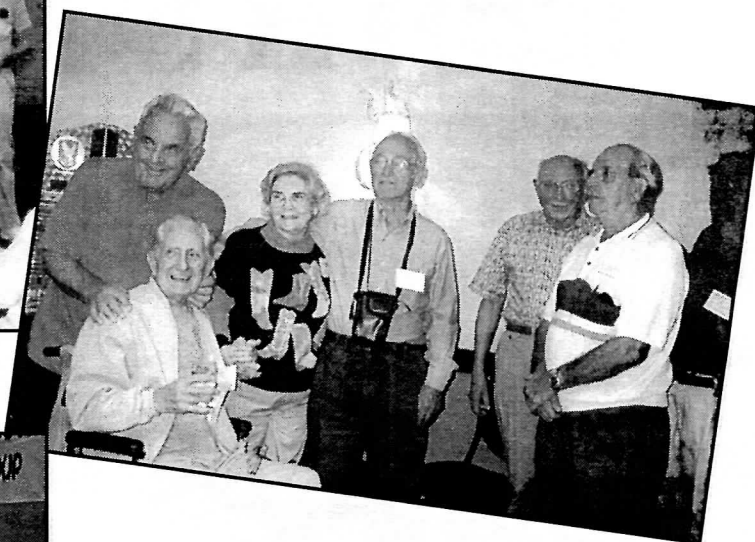
*Loyd Towers
Howard Cherry
Maurice S. Priver, M.D.
Bob Benson
Shirley W. Hancock
Warren D. Sortomme*

*Not Pictured
"POP" Arnold*



TOM MCDOWELLS CREW WON TROPHY WITH 7

From left to right: Bill Lancaster, Ken Wall, Clem Norris, Dean Davis, Leo Paine, Phil Fielder, Tom McDowell



CLARENCE EDEN'S CREW WITH 6

From left to right: Stan Tanka, Sam Schneider, Ruby Eden-Clarence's wife, Clarence Eden, Harold Julin, Joe Morrone, Dick Mattison



JOHN JACKSON'S CREW WITH 5

From left to right: Warren Meyers, Bob Hanson, John Jackson, Bob Halling, John Bremmer

828TH SQUADRON



ROW 1 L-R: Sammy Schneider, John Di Russo, Sherrill Burba, Mike Hails, Lionel Lasseigne, Whit Whitaker, Daniel Ermackovitch, David W. Shannon, Fred Freyermuth, Bill Fritz, Jack Eden, Joseph Morrone, Gordon Sorensen, H.E Choate, Jess Akin, Nicholas Montulli

ROW 2 L-R: R.Mattison, B. Deiss (Joe D. Bole's Gndson) , George Ick, Ambrose Borcetti, G.D.Bell, Gregory Lahay, Harold Julin, Lee Busroe, Clifford Parli, Jack Bersack, Roger Monroe, Jim Roemer, Tom McDowell, Dean Davis, Bill Lancaster, Philip Fielder, Clem Norris, William Reid, Tony Siller, James Rau

Row 3 L-R: Stanley Tanca, Bill Williams, Dean Bassett, Ed Nett, Ken Wall, Leo Paine



829TH SQUADRON



Row 1: L-R: Marvin Linsay, Irwin Wolf, Philip Colluccio, Milton Fundling, Tom Toot, Francis Lashbrook, Arthur Fowler, Alvin Martin, Gerald Behunin, Wythe Napier, Billy Culver, Thomas West, Kenneth Robison, Hank Dolim, Robert Brown

Row 2: L-R: Will Muir, Stephen Berner, William MacLean, Harold Johnson, Don Whiteman, Earl Bundy, Wayne Smith, Russell Arthur, Allen Carlson, Charles Crane

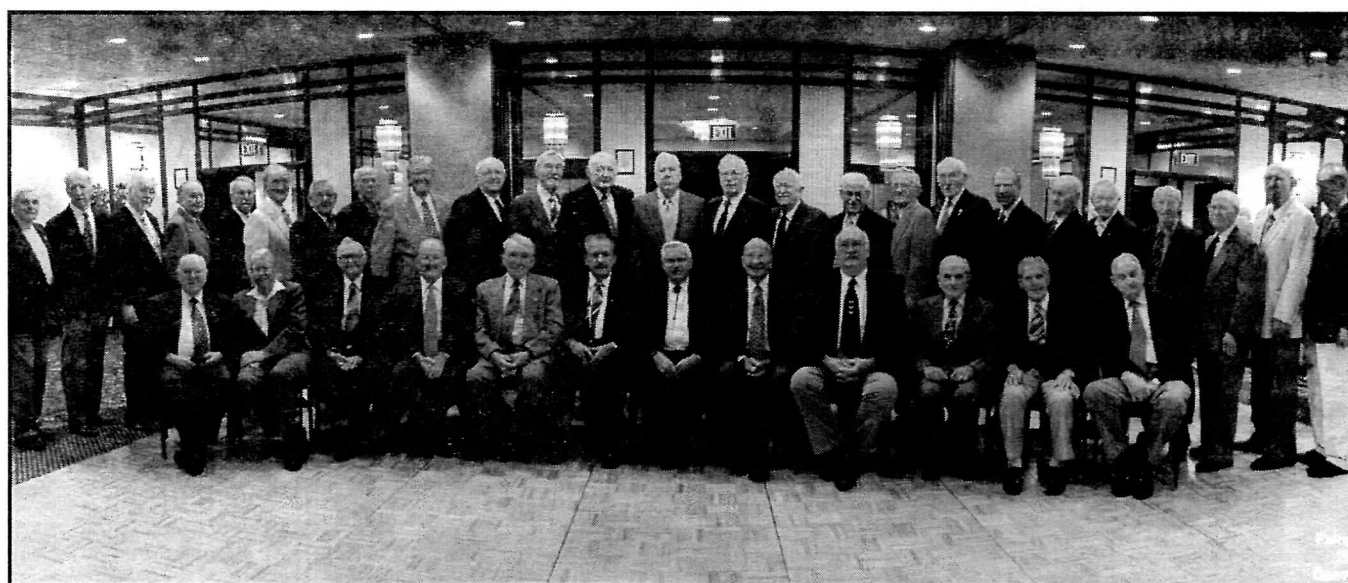
830TH SQUADRON



Row 1: L-R: Robert McAlpine, Robert Plaister, Chuck Heringer, Richard Griffin, Edward Gunn, Isadore Kozatch, Herb Muehlemann, Earnest Perreault, Ted Levin, Larry Matin, Howard Boxley, Warren Irelan
Row 2: L-R: Bob Towne, George Dyer, Pete Peterson, Jim Hunter, W.K.DeVore, Bill Cummings, Clarence Miller, Warren Gorman, J.B.Cundiff, Robert Baldwin



831ST SQUADRON



Row 1: L-R: Dan Sjodin, Hank Dahlberg, Louis Sikes, Ed Siantz, Vern -Christensen, Bob Plocica, Lynn Cotterman, Homer "Zeke" Cotton, Glenn Hess, Howard Woodyard, Jack Nagle, Ned Peirano
Row 2: L-R: J.J."Scotty" Jackman, Steve Mlinaz, Robert Edinger, Warren Meyers, Cliff Woodbury, Jack Bremer, John Jackson, Bob Halling, Bob Hanson, Morgan Browing, Bill Brokaw, Jesse Ledbetter, John Breen, Harold Richards, Robert Lewis, Sam Nenadich, Leo Gagne, John Godfrey, Bob Rector, Leonard Little, Bob Baker, Wayne Whiting, Tom Merrell, Eugene McCarthy, Jim Scheib

WIDOWS



*Mary Karns,
Jeannette Evjen,
Leona Schoultz,
Alvera Peschka,
Lillian Cairns,
Maxine Bulls.*

Leona Schoultz,
widow of
Bill Schoultz,
828th veteran, is
asking all other
widows to

*“please consider
attending this
years reunion.”*

POWS



Row #1:

*William F. Maclean,
Morgan Browning,
Marvin Lindsay,
Irvin N. Wolf,
Warren D. Sortomme,
Shirley W. Hancock,
Billy R. Culver,
Thomas M. West,
Kenneth Robinson,
Howard Cherry*

Row#2:

*Vern Christtensen,
Leonard Little,
John Godfrey,
San Nenadich,
Leo Gagne
Bob Rector.*

Not in picture:
“Pop” Arnold

1ST TIMERS



Left to Right:
Lionel Lasseigne,
Stephan A Berner,
Will Muir,
Bill Williams,
Francis J. Lashbrook,
Glenn Hess,
Sam Nenadich,
Isadore Kozatch,
Warren Irelan,
Tom Toot.

Not in picture
Bert Hammond,
Orville A. Kreifels,
George O'Brien
And "Kilroy"!



PHOTO HIGHLIGHTS

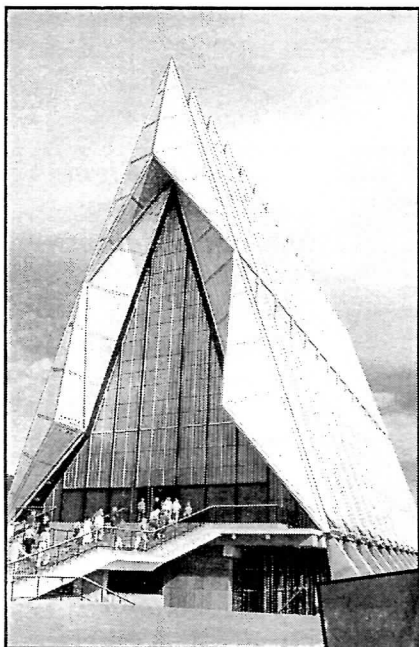
1999



*Flying W. Ranch. The Dyers,
The Fourniers and Betty
Cummings.*

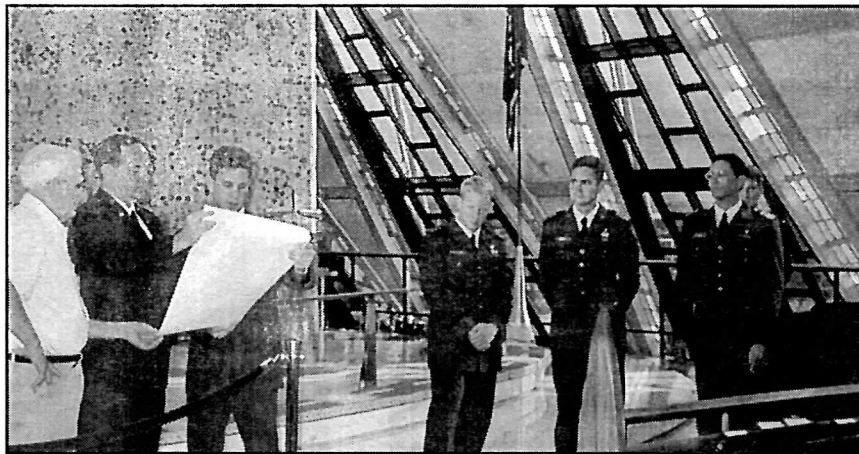


Mavis and Jess Akin

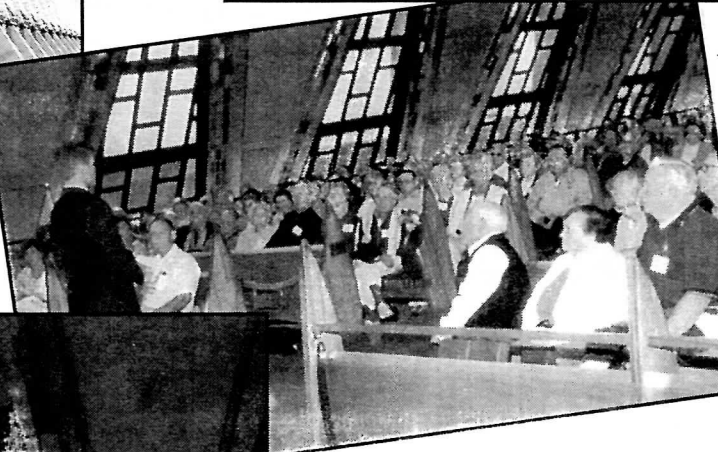


◀ 485th Group entering A.F.A. Chapel

John DiRusso and Gen. Welsh, Cadet
▼ reading John's Proclamation



485th Group being briefed
by Cadet Officer



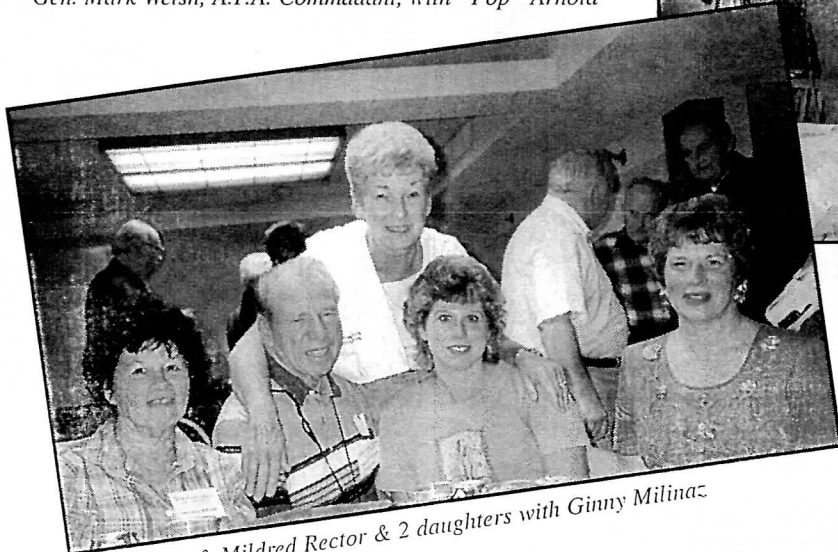
Tony & Gertrude Siller. Hosts
of 828th Bar-B-Que



The Wrangler's band at
▼ Flyng W. Ranch



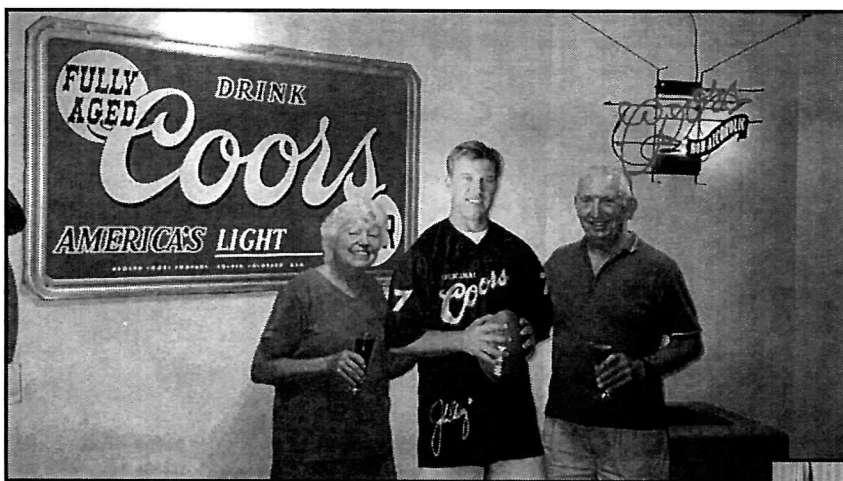
▲ Gen. Mark Welsh, A.F.A. Commandant, with "Pop" Arnold



▲ Robert & Mildred Rector & 2 daughters with Ginny Milinaz
in Hospitality Room

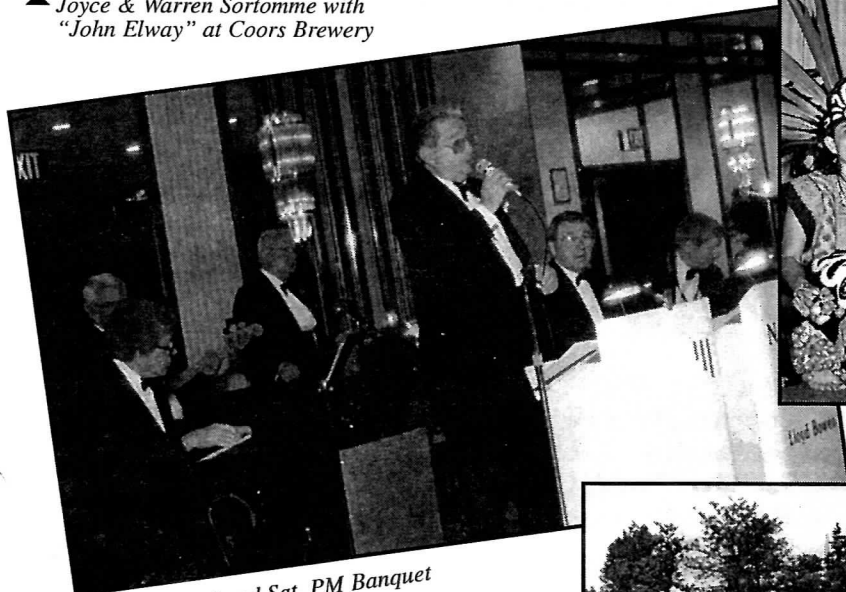
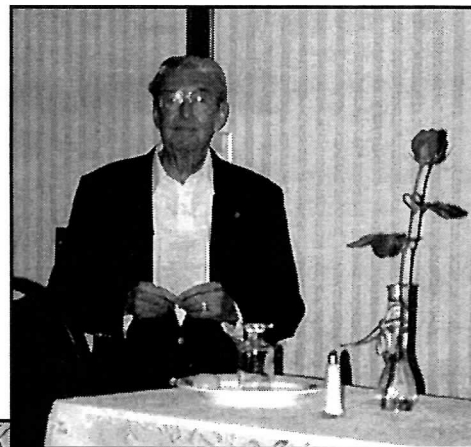
"Happy Birthday" Sammy Schneider
with Jo Haden Galbraith





▲ Joyce & Warren Sortomme with "John Elway" at Coors Brewery

▼ Bob Hanson reading "The Missing Man"



▲ Nostalgia band Sat. PM Banquet



▲ Chicano Mexicano dance group



◀ Sam Schneider at memorial wall USAFA



▲ Our own Rev. Donald R. Whiteman sermon at memorial breakfast service



Sherrill Burba, Al Matin leading singing, memorial service



▲ Dr. Maurice Priver, (flight surgeon) 94 years young

FAIRMOUNT ARMY AIR FIELD REVISITED



The following article is part of an article that appeared in The Omaha World Herald newspaper November 9, 1999. It was written by Susan Kreifels, the Asia Pacific reporter for the Honolulu Star Bulletin and the daughter of Orville Kreifels, veteran of the 831st Squadron. Orville was stationed at Fairmount in 1944 and flew to Italy with the original group. He flew 50 missions with the 831st Squadron between April and August 1944 and was awarded the DFC and Air Metal with 3 oak leaf clusters.

Susan returned to Nebraska last spring to visit her father, Orville. They decided to drive to Fairmount Air Field where Orville was stationed in 1944.

As they are traveling along Interstate 80 between Omaha and Lincoln heading to Fairmount. Susan writes, "Only recently had I learned about My father's occasional stops at the old Fairmount Army Air Field along his way to his winter retreat in Texas. How he would make his way to the end of the airstrip, now cracked with weeds and piled with sand, corn and rolls of fence wire. How he would step on the gas and roar down the runway in his Chrysler Concord with its B-24 license plate, topping 110 mph and yelling "eeeeeah", remembering his days as a 19-year-old in the bubble turret atop a B-24 Liberator. I wanted to fly that Concord with him, feel what he felt in that tiny turret. (Orville reluctantly agreed.)

We pulled off I-80 at the York exchange and down Highway 81, passed McCool Junction, population 372, and Fairmount, about twice that size. Then down a lonely road past Boons Auto Salvage & Sales at the end of a wide abandoned runway. Four hangers filled with corn and soybeans, stood in the distance. "God this place was cold," Dad

remembered about the January 1944 night mission he flew across the Sand Hills, and I shuddered as the cold Nebraska wind whipped us.

Fairmount was one of 11 Army Air Fields in Nebraska during WWII. The field had bar rack space for nearly 6000 airmen who trained on B-24's, B-17's and B-29's. The Bombardment Groups that trained here were 16th, 98th, 451st, 467th, 485th, 489th and the 504th. A 350 bed hospital, where casualties of the European Theater were sent, was the largest in the state.

"I'M NOT GUSTY AS I USED TO BE"

In 1946 the field was declared surplus. Dad remembered that the barracks were used to raise chickens after the war. To day a Fillmore Co Industrial Air Park sign hangs there. One ranch style house stands near the four hangers, all in good condition with red doors and white walls.

Finally we headed for the runway, drove to the end, sat quietly for a moment, hit the gas and took off, racing tumbleweeds and jack rabbits and topping 80 mph.

"Eeeeeeah! " he yelled .

Too quickly we were back at Boons Auto Salvage. "You had the trip;, he said disappointed he didn't top 110 this time. " I'm not quite as gusty as I used to be. "

We headed back to Highway 81 and stopped at the historic marker. While we read, Sarah Reinsch and Rob Roper drove up in their pickup to remind me why I am so thankful for growing up in the Midwest. They gave us a big "Howdy" and offered to take pictures. Roper owned a house where World War II airmen used to

live. He also explained that the old blue car parked by the small runway, still usable, was left by the Fairmount Lions Club for use by Pilots who landed there as long as they "keep it in gas".

The two suggested we stop at the Fairmount Museum, which has a room dedicated to the war. It's usually locked, but no problem stop at West Brothers Hardware, they told us and ask someone to track down Ruth Black, the 87 year old curator. A couple of phone calls and within 15 minutes Ruth met us with key in hand and head wrapped tightly in a bright scarf against the prairie wind.

It was apparent that Ruth loved to tell how the war room came into being. One day on her way to the post office, she saw an Ohio car parked in front of the museum. It belonged to a veteran of the 485th Bombardment Group who was on his way to a reunion. (This would have been the late Bob Deeds, 828th Squadron.) Ruth thought she would never see him again, but a few days later she received \$1000.00 from the 485th veterans and a man's uniform scarf now on exhibit.

There were glorious photos of the B-24's in action: "The Tub" "Big Alice From Dallas", and "Fertile Myrtle" which was lost August 23, 1944. I had hoped to see a photo of Dad's B-24, and like an angel sent from the Red Cross, Ruth pulled out her last copy of "This Is How It Was, The History of the 485th Bomb Group (H)", by Sammy Schneider. Among the many photos of B-24 crews stood Staff Sgt. Kreifels with his buddies in front of the "Valiant Lady".

Too soon we had to leave. I feel so lucky that my father is still here and I was able to fly that Concord with him.

October 7, 1944 ONE MORE TO GO

After a sleepless night, (mostly due to thinking about the last one) we, the NCO's of crew of #45, dressed and headed down to the mess hall at about 4:45 am. Didn't have much of an appetite, what with powered eggs, spam and maybe cold pancakes. The strong black coffee was the highlight of the meal anyway.

From there, directly to briefing and all wondering where the redline would lead us to today. Today, Vienna was the target and we all let out a few groans as we knew it was a rough target, heavily defended and we all knew that our chances had somewhat diminished for making a safe trip. I had been there 4 times before so knew what to expect.

After briefing, boarded our trucks, taken to our plane. We gave our plane #129504 extra attention that morning, making sure we had plenty of ammu-

nition, flak vest, and steel helmets. About this time, our officers arrived, and we all boarded and prepared for takeoff. After an uneventful take-off, performed by our Sqd. C.O. Col. Richard Griffin, who was our pilot today, assisted by Major Francis Tunstall, our regular pilot, who was flying copilot today.. We began assembling in sqd's & groups. I believe it was a maximum effort, as all you could see, right, left, above, below and behind was nothing but B-24's.

After flying for quite some time, we reached our assigned altitude of 23,000'. By this time, we were very close to our I.P. and started our bomb run. All hell broke loose and we immediately lost #3 engine due to flak. We were still leaving the formation when we lost our #2 engine, again due to flak. We had dropped to about 12,000' before Griffin and Tunstall gained complete control of our plane. We were alone

by this time, many miles from home, two engines shot out and not enough altitude to make it back to the base.

Assessing our condition, Griffin decided our best chance was to head for Switzerland. We knew with two engines gone, we could not gain enough altitude to get back over the Alps. Lt. Paul

Rofield, our navigator, gave Griffin a heading for Switzerland. If memory serves me correctly, believe that bombs were salvoed by bombardier Lt. Joe Richmond

Griffin and Tunstall were trying to restart our two dead engines and finally got #3 started and running at about 50% power. Griffin then told us he believed we could make it home.

At this time, spotted six fighters at 7 o'clock level and headed toward us. Luckily, they were our's including 3 P-51's and 3 P-47's. They escorted us all the way to the Adriatic sea.

Arriving at our base, Griffin and Tunstall made a superb landing, considering that we had three flat tires that we were unaware of. Stopping our plane about even with our control tower, we all very hastily got out! Our ball turret gunner Richard Wesley, got a ladder from somewhere and was looking at our #3 engine when he found a piece of flak about 1" by 1/2" with the #504 stamped on this piece of flak. That number, being the last 3 didgets of our B24 serial# must have been designed for us. I tried, with no success, to buy or trade something to Wesley for that piece of flak, but was unsuccessful.

Don't remember each mission individually, but the last one for us to Vienna is forever etched in my mind.

Just one of the boys

George E. Dyer

*Col. Walter "POP" Arnold's 31st birthday.
August 15, 1944, Venosa, Italy. 12 days
before they were shot down.*



WORLD WAR II VET REMEMBERED

TAKEN FROM TAMPA TRIBUNE

BY STEVE OTTO, COLUMNIST

Leonard Little makes model airplanes. I've known him for more than 30 years, although he and his wife were more friends of my parents. He has a room in his south Tampa house with squadrons of plastic and wooden models that would make any 12-year old boy proud.

About a month ago, he said he wanted to make a model plane for my father-in-law, Bob field. My wife's dad had been a navigator in World War II. While flying over Portugal in a C-47, plane developed engine problems and the crew crash-landed. The crew was later put into a prisoner of war camp.

Mr. Little - I have to call him what I've called him since I was a kid - kept calling and asking about the plane and its markings. He wanted it to be exactly like the one my father-in-law had gone down in.

Last Saturday night, everyone came to our house for dinner and for the presentation of the model plane. Mr. Little still has a slight limp. He has one leg. it was when we all sat down in the family room, passing the plane around, that he told us the story. He sat on the sofa next to my father-in-law -two men who had left their homes to fight in that great conflict half century ago.

"It was August 24, 1944," Mr. Little begins. The three Focke-Wulf fighters came at me three abreast" Much later that same day, his parents would get the dreaded telegram that their 22-year-old son was missing.

Sgt. Leonard Little had grown up in Tampa. He'd gone to Hillsborough High and later to the University of Tampa. While at UT he enrolled in the Civilian Pilot Training Program and received his Private Pilots license, even though he realized that he could never be a military pilot due to his color blindness.

Now he found himself on the wrong end of B-24 Liberator bomber, staring at the three German fighters from his tail gunner's seat.

His group, the 485th, had completed a

successful run over oil fields in southern Czechoslovakia and was making its way back to its Italian base.

SUDDENLY THE LATE afternoon sky seemed filled with German fighters. An ME-109 was somewhere below the bomber. Another fighter was coming in from above. And there were those three Focke-Wulfs, roaring straight at the tail gunner. "I started firing at the middle one," says Mr. Little, because he was the one headed straight at me." There was a flash of light, smoke and the middle fighter was gone, downed by the tail gunner's two machine guns.

Mr. Little never saw the explosion. He only felt the impact of being thrown out of his seat, back into the fuselage. He doesn't know how long he was out, only that when he regained consciousness, his former position was now smoking wreckage.

Flak Shak III was the name painted on the now mortally wounded bomber. Its predecessors, Flak Shak and Flak Shak II, had both been shot up so badly they had been turned to scrap.

Now, as the stunned tail gunner looked around, he knew the plane was doomed. "I could see out the window that the No. 1 and 2 engines were burning.

About six feet away, John Godfrey saw" the tail gunner trying to crawl in his direction. Godfrey was the radio operator and waist gunner on the bomber. Today Godfrey lives in Reynoldsburg, Ohio. I talked to him on the phone the next day.

Although Godfrey was still standing, he was dimly aware that both of his legs were bleeding from shrapnel in each leg. He thought it was the No.2 and No.3 engines that were gone. It didn't much matter. They were in desperate trouble.

Godfrey was staring outside at the white chutes plunging below. "I assumed that the rest of the crew was already gone. I didn't realize those chutes were from crew members from other bombers. I think we lost four planes right there. "I knew we had to get out of the plane,

and I tried to bend over and move the cartridges away from the escape hatch. There was a fire going on in the bomb bay, and there was a big brown oxygen bottle and it was burning. The bottle was on top of an elbow line from the fuel transfer system. I figured we were about to blow up."

Meanwhile, Mr. Little tried to stand and collapsed. "At first I thought I had fallen through a hole in the plane," he says. "Then I discovered that I was missing a leg"

He managed to crawl over to the escape hatch where Godfrey was pulling away the cartridges, and rolled out into the blue afternoon.

"It wasn't until I was out of the plane that I realized I still had my flak suit on and that the parachute was underneath. Somehow I was able to unsnap the thing and wiggle out of it while I was tumbling and get the chute open."

As he began to float, he could hear the engines behind him. "I thought it was a fighter coming to finish me off, but it was one of our bombers. It passed maybe 25 yards away and down. I could see inside the cockpit, and it was empty."

Now Mr. Little could see that he was drifting down toward a large lake. Below, he saw other white chutes hit the water and slowly sink into the dark water.

"It was years later that I found out that the lake's name for centuries translates into 'The Lake of Blood,' Now I was making my own contribution as I came down over it."

Godfrey didn't get out of the plane for another two minutes, jumping along with the ball turret gunner. He managed to crawl off into a small wooded area, where he hid out for more than an hour before trying to move.

Godfrey got to the top of a hill, where he heard voices and saw people running in his direction. "I thought they were coming after me, but it was the ball turret gunner, who had landed in a tree, they were after."

It was the next morning, after he tried to get help in a small farm house, that the Germans captured him and hauled him off.

Mr. Little managed to avoid the lake and found himself crawling into the brush as well. "I was kicking myself because I didn't have a knife. I always carry a knife. I thought if I could cut that last tendon holding my leg on, I might be able to stop the bleeding and move a little better."

He realized he needed help fairly quickly or he would bleed to death. As he tried to get his chute off, another crew member came over to help.

Bob Rector, engineer and waist gunner, hid the parachutes and picked up the legs of the wounded tail gunner who then was able to walk on his hands to the bushes at the edge of the forest. Minutes later a squad of German soldiers armed with rifles found the two airmen. The leader shouted commands to his squad and they lined up and knelt on one knee and took aim at the two terrified fliers.

Mr. Little said, "I thought this was it, and I was going to be dead within a few seconds. Thank God! the final command, "fire", never came". One of the German soldiers searched the two prisoners and then marched Rector away, leaving one of their men with the wounded tail gunner. The German soldier took his knife to cut three nylon riser cords from the parachute, and tied them around the

leg wound to stop the bleeding.

A horse drawn hay wagon driven by a young boy and girl came through the forest from the direction of the lake. It had collected parachutes, boots, Mae Wests, flying suits, helmets etc. from the captured American fliers. The German soldier moved Mr. Little from the ground to the back of the wagon where he spent the next three hours wondering if he was going to get any medical aid.

The hot August sun beat down on his bloody flying clothes that gave off the pungent odor of cordite from the exploding shells. When he asked for water the young girl on the wagon seat departed through the forest toward the nearest farm house. She returned shortly, accompanied by another young girl carrying a large glass of water.

Late in the afternoon a German officer arrived in a staff car. He walked over to the wagon to look at the wounded prisoner and then picked him up in his arms to carry him to the car. The young girl from the farm house saw that the shattered leg was pain full when twisted, so she held it in a more comfortable position while she and the officer carried him to the staff car.

Mr. Little talked about the kind German officer. "He placed me on the rear seat of his staff car with both of my legs on the seat. I noticed my leg was bleeding on the seat so I moved it so it would drip on the rubber floor mat. When the officer,

who was riding in the front seat beside his driver, turned around to check on my condition he reached back and put my bloody leg back on the seat. He made me as comfortable as possible on the way to the hospital in a small Czech town".

The hospital wasn't that promising. The doctor in charge said he thought it was best to kill the Americans right off instead of wasting time on them.

IT WAS THREE WEEKS LATER that John Godfrey found himself in a German ambulance parked in the courtyard of the Luftwaffe hospital in Prague. "I heard this 'clump clump' sound coming up behind me. I turned around, and it was Leonard Little on crutches. He had been in two German hospitals".

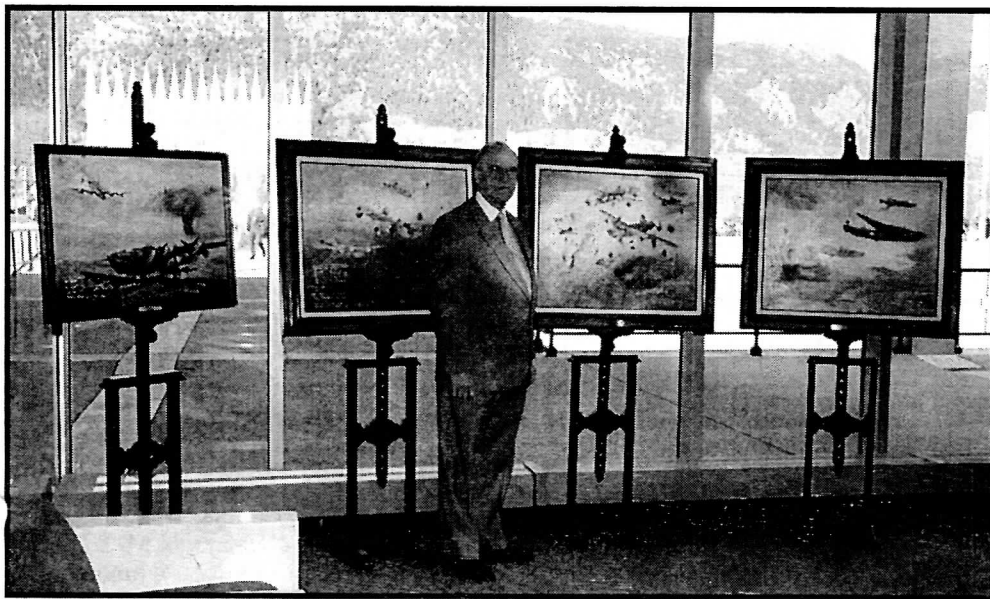
Five months after his first telegram arrived in Tampa, advising his parents that he was missing, a cablegram arrived. This one read, "Love to all at home. Anxiety unnecessary. Hope to see you soon."

That was all 55 years ago. All 10 crew members of Flak Shak bailed out and survived. Eight of them are still alive, and six of them will gather at the bomb wing's reunion next month in Denver.

At our house, the small group sat and stared at Leonard Little, just one member of that magnificent generation now passing into history.



.....

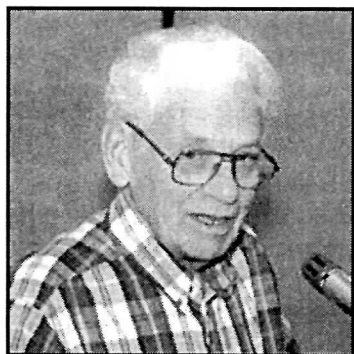


Four paintings by Mavis Akin donated to the U.S. Airforce Academy, with Edward A. Scott, director of academy libraries.

- #1 Skeeter,*
- #2 B24 Junior,*
- #3 Life, Princess Marie and Buzz Job.*
- #4 The Lady.*

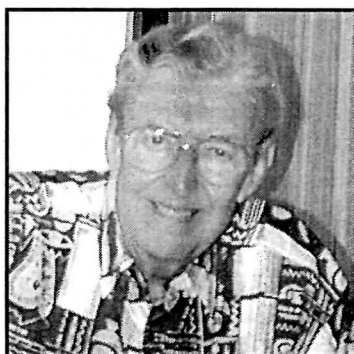
Jess and Mavis Akin also donated three copies of "This is how it was" to the library

485TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP



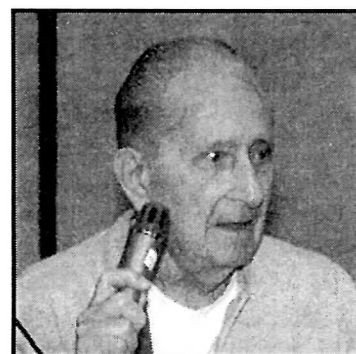
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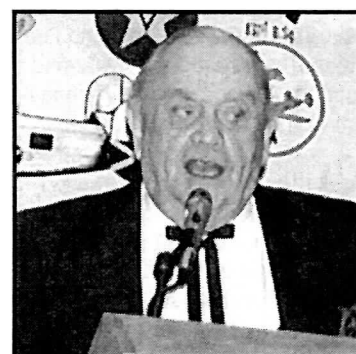
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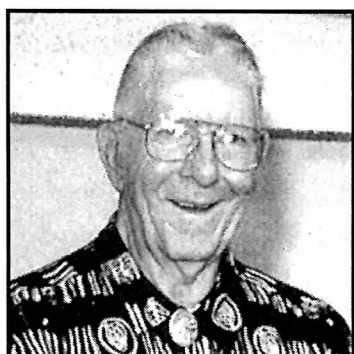
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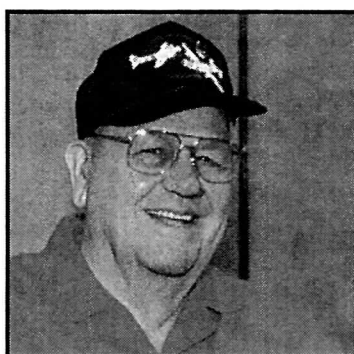
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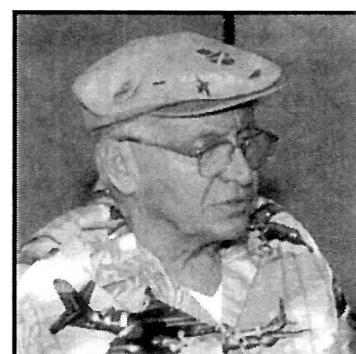
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MAILROOM - HEADQUARTERS

BY WARREN SORTOMME

Our "First Mission" bus tour with Armed Forces Reunions in command was different than most of our past tours, but never the less very successful. To accommodate the tours of Coors Brewery, our groups four buses had separate time schedules for the brewery so we did not travel together.

Lunch on our own at Park Meadows Shopping Resort satisfied any appetite and shopping desires with its 120 specialty shops and restaurants. As Denver Areas newest shopping center, Park Meadows features Nordstrom, Dillard's, Foley's, Lord and Taylor, J.C. Penny and you name it, it's all there.

The "Mile High City" (as a step on the front of the Colorado State's Capitol in downtown Denver is engraved) 5280 feet above sea level. Complete with its old heritage and modern growth, building and road construction in all directions, we saw the U. S. Mint, where over 10 billion coins are stamped each year, Unsinkable Molly Brown's House, State Capitol, Victorian-style mansions, Coors Field-home of the Colorado Rockies baseball team, Historic District, and Mile High Stadium, where the Back to Back Super Bowl Champion Denver Broncos play their home games.

Leaving Denver towards the west on I-70 we experienced the thrill of traveling the foothills of the Rockies (which are higher than most mountains) to our next destination. Lookout Mountain, high above the beautiful city of Golden and site of Buffalo Bill's Grave. After a welcome rest stop, maybe an ice cream cone, and the panoramic view of Denver and Eastern Colorado, down the mountain we go. The Lariat Trail is an experience in its self as it winds down the mountain with barely enough road for the large bus to make hairpin after hairpin curves.

Finally back on flat land, we arrived at Coors Brewery, the largest of its kind in the U. S. and maybe in the

world; it is big! After a 30 minute walking tour of the beer making process, some of our group joined those who found the short way to the hospitality room for some of the several samples of Coors products and time to shop in the gift store.

Arriving back at the hotel by 4:30 PM, thanks and good bys were expressed to the bus driver and knowledgeable tour guide, then the group was off to the hospitality room or getting some rest for the busy evening to follow.

Denver Reunion-1999-was attended by what has become the usual group, about 15 strong and having a good time. Good things come in smaller packages.

As usual, Bob and Dorothy Benson were busy taking care of last minute details and solving all the problems that evolve from an organization such as ours. Even with Armed Forces Reunions running the show, Bob and Dottie were the last ones trying to find a seat for dinner. Thanks for a great job B & D.

Pop Arnold was in and out, driving back and forth between his home in Colorado Springs and Denver. Pop did a bang-up job planning the Air Force Academy and Flying W Ranch events which made a full day and enjoyed by all. We again missed Kathy.

Shirley and Althea Hancock were a welcome sight, this being their first attendance since San Antonio in 1989, and they have not changed a bit. Hank was a member of Pop's crew the day we were shot down, and with a banged up leg he suffered from his jump, he spent the rest of the war in good old Germany. Howard Cherry was in his usual good shape and humor, enjoying telling all of his old friends his old stories of those days and nights in Italy and the Stalags in Germany.

Dr. Maurice and Cecille Priver made all of the trips and events with no complaints, the most outstanding celebration was honoring the doctor's 94th birthday. Loyd and Evelyn Towers had a difficult time adjusting to the difference in altitude between the Virginia Coast and Denver. Even without an oxygen mask they had a wonderful time in the "Mile High City".

Lillian Cairns once again was in good hands with her daughter and son-in-law, Mimi and David Brooks. It's so nice to have them as part of our headquarters' family. Joyce and I had a real great time. We even found time to take a few short walks in the neighborhood by the hotel.

I am sad to report we lost John H. Gold of St. Petersburg Beach, Florida on January 11, 1998, Robert Bimmeler of Hilton, New York on June 8, 1999, and Merlin Baker of San Jose, California informed me his wife Bernadine passed away on March 6, 1999. John Hannan Jr's family of Sacramento, California notified me that John has declined into severe dementia. Dr. William G. Bradley of Rancho Palos Verdes, California suffered a stroke in 1996, but he is 84 and still thinking of us. Seymour Weinstein of New York City, New York has a disability keeping him from the reunions, but still wants to receive The Lightweight Tower.

Now for some good news. Frank J. Drueding, photographer for 485th Public Relation Office in Italy, came across up to 100 4x5 B&W prints taken during bombing missions and various ground shots at the base in Venosa. Hope he can bring them to one of our reunions.

Any financial help towards the operating expenses and the plaque we hope to dedicate on the 15th Air Force Wall at March Field in Riverside, California, honoring our Group, will be greatly appreciated. See you in St. Louis next September and the best of everything in Y2K!!!

MAILROOM 828TH SQUADRON

BY SHERILL BURBA

The new formula for Lightweight Tower is each reporter was assigned to write about one subject and I selected the Air Force Academy and Flying W. Ranch—both occurred on same day and each was something everyone enjoyed.

It was a beautiful Colorado fall day and we were headed to Colorado Springs from our Denver hotel. Upon arriving at the Air Force Academy, we were taken to the chapel. It was designed by Walter A. Netsch, Jr and it was truly a beautiful sight. The 485th was greeted by Brig. Gen Welch, commandant of cadets, who along with 4 outstanding cadets, gave us an excellent briefing on the history, mission and operation of the academy. We felt honored by being the only group in the chapel.

After viewing both floors of the chapel, we then went to the field house PX. Some purchased items to remember this trip, but the lines were too long to pay, so some just locked the trip in their memory.

After that, the buses drove by the north cemetery wall for a drive by

look at the 485th plaque. It was easy to spot as they had put a flag on top of the plaque. Some took pictures and then away to the famous Flying W. Ranch.

There we had a chuckwagon lunch which was excellent and were entertained for over an hour by the cowboy band. By this time, everyone was full, had been entertained and thoroughly enjoyed their day. We thank Pop Arnold for making such excellent arrangements.

I would also like to add the following to my report: A list of "firsts" for the 828th: 1st to volunteer to fly a "taxi" mission to checkout steel mat runway Denver reunion had 44 828th members present - 2 - 1st timers - Bill Williams and Lionel Lasseigne - 4 Oil paintings by Mrs. Jess (Mavis) Akin on display at library at A/F academy. The 828th started the reunions in 1962 and it blossomed into the 485th reunions - 828th produced & paid for the group banner at a cost of \$500. John DiRusso has written his "Please Remember Me" and it's been published in Congressional Record. Sherrill Burba has written "Fifteenth Air Force Prayer" which was made official prayer of 15th AF association - 828th

contributed 1/3 of cost of plaque at 15th AF Headquarters at March Field, California - 828th had been instrumental in having a plaque and tree planted at Wright Patterson A.F.B. in Dayton, Ohio.

Did not want to forget the wonderful barbeque hosted by Tony and Gertrude Siller in their backyard on Wednesday night - September 15, 1999 - this was in honor of Tony's 75th birthday. Tony was the head cook in 828th squadron and they really did themselves "up proud" in this party! Had LOT'S of 828th and 485th present and food and variety was outstanding. Thank you Tony and Gertie for a fun evening!

Note: A sad note: Upon arriving home Leona/Schoultz was notified by her daughter that her son was in the hospital in Houston with a ruptured aneurism of his brain. He died and was buried near the end of September. We all extend our heartfelt sympathy.

***If you wish to contact Leona, her address:
532 Park avenue
Newton Falls, Ohio 44444
Phone: 330-872-1017**

MAILROOM 829TH SQUADRON

by Earl Bundy - acting reporter for Joe Cathcart who was ill

I was asked to write about the Thursday night buffet and entertainment, as per the new arrangements to avoid duplication in LWT.

We were honored by the Marriott's usual style with a delicious buffet. Following the buffet, we were entertained by a traditional Chicana Mexicano dance group comprised of adults and children. They are committed to preserving, educating and

promoting the culture of the many Aztec Indian tribes controlling a large part of Mexico from A.D. 1300 to 1520.

The "Grupa Tlaloc" was established in the late 1960's and the 1970's and they contributed to the spiritual and physical "Danza Azteca" in the United States. In 1994, the Denver "Mayor's Commission on Art" awarded "Grupa Tlaloc" the Mayor's award for excellence in the performing arts. Their picturesque costumes and excellent

variation of smoke dances connected their Mexican - Indian Heritage.

The outstanding Aztec achievements were in warfare and political organization. In these, the Aztec's were second only to the Incas of Peru. The six foot spray of Pheasant feathers on "Grupo Thaloc" and many colored dresses blended with the various colors of all adults and children to complete a most enjoyable and pleasant evening.

Just a note to let you know that I'm feeling well and both Virginia and I hope to see you all in St. Louis in September.

I have talked to Joe and Martha Cathcart and believe he is doing much better and we'll be glad to see them both in St. Louis.

I have trimmed some names from the 829th that have not responded to asking for any update on addresses and other data.

MAILROOM 830TH SQUADRON

BY GEORGE DYER

First, I must bring you the sad news that Chet Konkolewski passed away Nov. 16, 1999 after a lengthy illness. May he rest in peace. Billy Cottingham, one of my crew, attended the funeral at Fort Sam Houston National Cemetery, representing the 485th B.G. and 830th B.S.

To continue the new idea of having each reporter write of one event at the reunion, I was selected to tell about the Sunday morning memorial breakfast. It began promptly at 8AM and the buffet tables were setup "fit for a king" and we heartily ate our fill. After the invocation, Sherrill Burba introduced our poet laureate, John DeRusso who read "Please Remember Me" which he composed.

Next, George Dyer read the official 15th Air/Force prayer written by Sherrill Burba. George then asked for a silent prayer to remember Mike Frohling, one of his crew and Chet Konkolewski.

Amazing Grace was sung by all and led by Al Martin, and accompanied by Illeta Teague on the piano, which was followed by Zona Williams, wife of one of our first timers, who read the 23rd Psalm.

Al then led us in song "The Battle Hymn of the Republic", after which Helen Wall read from the New Testament, Revelation 21.

Al Martin gave a short personal testimony of his new life, as of 1980, and then led in singing "Then Jesus Came"

Our own Rev. Donald R. Whiteman gave the sermon from John 15 as his

scripture and depicting Christ as pilot and all of us being co-pilots. Don gave his usual stirring homily and each was deeply touched.

Sherrill Burba gave the benediction followed by all singing "American the Beautiful" led by Al Martin. Bob Hanson ended the breakfast by reading the essay "The Missing Man", Followed by the "Taps".

That concluded the memorial breakfast and hugs and goodbye's with "see you next year in St. Louis"
THE GOOD LORD WILLING!

To all 485th bombgroup personnel: I feel that we owe Bob and Dorothy Benson a deep debt of gratitude for the way they handled, along with some help from others, our reunion situation last year. He stuck his neck out a long way for our benefit, not knowing what the outcome would be. I was not sure the decision to go with Armed Forces Reunion, Inc. was a good one. My feeling now is it was a **VERY GOOD ONE!** On a scale of 1 to 10. I would rate them a very respectable 8.75% and hopefully, next years performance will go up to 9 or better.

I remember one time in particular, that Mr. Ted Dey, Armed Forces mgr. was able to change the time for the Memorial breakfast from 9AM to 8AM and the staff at the hotel listened to him and change was immediate. To all 830th squadron personnel: a nominal donation is appreciated and gratefully accepted, to help defray ongoing 830th squadron expenses.

*Hope to see many of
you in St. Louis.*

The Missing Man

Your attention is directed to the small table located in a place of honor on this podium.

It is a way of symbolizing the fact that some of our friends are missing from our midst. They are unable to be with us this morning and so we remember them. The table, set for one, is small- it symbolizes the frailty of us all. The tablecloth is white - symbolic of the purity of their intentions to respond to their country's call to arms. The single rose displayed in a vase reminds us of the families and loved ones of our comrades who will not return. The red ribbon, tied so prominently on the vase, is reminiscent of the red ribbon worn upon the lapel and breast of thousands who bear witness to the tragedy of POWs and MIAs and, with unyielding determination, demand a proper accounting for our missing. A slice of lemon on the plate -to remind us of their bitter fate. 'there is salt upon the plate - symbolic of the tears of families and loved ones. The glass is inverted -they cannot toast with is today. The chair is empty-they are not here. Today we take time to recall those who were our comrades in arms, we depended on them for aid and support. Let us remember all of our missing crew members and ground personnel and honor them as we stand for a moment of silence. This annual reunion will be ended with sounding of taps.

MAILROOM 831ST SQUADRON

BY LYNN COTTERMAN

Everyone dressed up Saturday evening for the Banquet Dinner which was held in the Main Ball Room. After the photo session and social hour we found a table and sat down to enjoy a delicious dinner. First a "Denver Market Salad" salad was served with fresh rolls. This was followed by a choice of Chicken Wellington or a 10 oz cut of Roasted Prime Rib of Beef with au jus and horseradish cream sauce and vegetables. I chose the prime rib which was delicious; thick and tender, but a little short on the Au Jus, but they never serve enough Jus for me. Thinking about it makes my mouth water.

A couple tables away Sammy Schneider was celebrating his 83rd birthday and we sang Happy Birthday to him. While we were being served Raspberry Creme Cake for desert the five piece Nostalgia band led by Lloyd Bowen commenced to play. "Dapper Dan" Sjodin was first on the dance floor with Bob Edinger's wife, Gisela. The band played far into the night, 11:00 PM! It looked to me like everyone was having a good time.

Can you imagine; we have two new members who never heard of the 485th reunions, Glenn Hess and Orville A. Kreifels. Orville was with the original bunch at Fairmount and flew 50 missions on Ed Stauverman's crew. Orville heard about our group from the museum curator at Fairmount. (See article-pg 10)

Glenn Hess and his wife, D.D., attended the reunion. Glenn was a pilot and an instructor. He kept in touch with his navigator, Bob Haden, who passed away in 1994, but neither one had heard about the reunions. Bob's daughter, Jo Haden Galbraith, who was searching for information about her father's WWII outfit, surfed the Internet and found information about 485th Group and eventually got in touch with me. Was I surprised!

Her father and Glenn lived in the tent next to ours and Glenn flew with our crew on our maiden mission to Linz. I was able to fill in some information about her father. Glenn, Jo, and their spouses along with Zeke and I enjoyed reminiscing about the times in Venosa.

There were a couple of more first timers besides Hess, Sam Nenadich and George O'Brien. Sam was on Jim Mulligan's crew that was shot down in August 1944. George O'Brien, who lives in Denver came to the reunion at the urging of his crew member, Cliff "Woody" Woodbury. Like a lot of first timers once he was there he didn't want to leave. He said that he never thought the reunion would be fun. He plans to go to St. Louis next year

Our Saturday Squadron meeting was a lively one. Everyone participated telling little amusing things that happened while we were in Italy. Bill Brokaw summed it up saying that I'm glad to be back, but I'd just as soon let someone else do it the next time".

Some of the vets are moving to the warm climates, but Ken Brown, moved from New Jersey to Calhan, CO which is near Colorado Springs. He lives there with his daughter, Kay, and her husband, Bob Gary. They attend the reunions regularly and Ken thinks Bob and Kay enjoy the reunions more than he does.

Luke Terry's wife wrote about Luke's passing away in October last year. Luke was Co-pilot on crew 68 when his plane was shot down in June 1944 over the Danube River. He bailed out with his right arm broken by shrapnel. He learned later that the ball and tail gunners bailed out together using one chute.

I received a letter from Robin telling of the death of her father, Lew Baker after the reunion last year. Lew was

assigned Co-Pilot on Jesse Ledbetter's crew in Fairmount. He was wounded while Co-piloting for Jack Breen's crew. He recuperated and returned to flying. He was shot down in December 1944, evaded capture by the enemy and returned to the 831st early in 1945. He had attended most of the reunions and was looking forward to Denver.

Ray Heskes told me that Roy Bulls who was a gunner on Ed Sibila's crew, died in October of last year. He and his wife, Maxine, attended the reunions regularly. S.G. "Jerry" Jarrell's daughter wrote me about the death of Jerry this year. For the record John Jackson told me that Ed Stauverman passed away in 1992 and Ed's navigator George Winter died January 1996.

I received the news that Helen Iwanski passed away. She was the wife of Walter Iwanski who passed away in 1985. They had attended the reunions regularly since the early 1970's. She always enjoyed the reunions and continued attending after her husband's death, helping with registration.

John Godfrey's daughter, Pam, told me that John had open heart surgery in October and is recovering nicely. He and his wife Irene are already making plans to party in St. Louis.

I was sorry to hear Capt Robert Brown has been moved to a nursing home. He played the piano regularly in the Officers Club for his own recreation and for those who wanted to gather around the piano and sing (?). David Hansen was a little leery of the Denver altitude and took a pass. Ray Heskes was short of breath most of the time in Denver and he was glad to get to a lower elevation Sunday. I spoke with Don Webb who said that his health is good; however, his wife still needs a lot of care. Several other regulars also

missed the reunion for various reasons. The reunion will be held again in St. Louis. I say again because the 5th Annual reunion was held there in 1969, 30 years ago. Actually it was held about 20 miles northeast of St. Louis at the Holiday Inn in Edwardsville, Illinois with Lester Sutton and his wife hosting.

According the LWT they "took in" the sites in St. Louis. Howard Woodyard wrote in the LWT, "The 831st had twelve members present more than any other squadron". (37 vets in all) Those in attendance that are still on the 831st roster are: Warren Meyers, Albert Paul, Ray Heskes, Harold Richards, Lester

Sutton (Reunion Host) and Howard Woodyard (831st Reporter). I hear the hotel in St. Louis is in a great location, close to the Airport and close to a shopping mall. Get your reservations in early; I am looking forward to seeing you there.



HISTORIAN LETTER

TO THE 485TH

1999 and heading for the Millennium 2000 - St. Louis, MO. is the Target, Mission Reunion # 37. From all corners of the Globe we rendezvous to meet again like we have done in the past. To meet Buddies, the Old & the New with families and friends. To reminisce about your experiences & adventures as you remember it.

Attending the Denver Reunion, I had quite a wing ding affair and I could see the electricity (John DiRusso's word in a letter to me) sparking everywhere, telling me it's been a great reunion. Personally, I felt bad that I was not able to mingle and meet many that I knew, indirectly from writing about them. Also, new comers. & many buddies, as I always seemed to get in a corner.

At the meeting I asked if you wanted another book. It seemed unanimous. What I hope to complete should be an easier one. **MISSIONS BY THE NUMBERS**, would be the title. All our missions (187) from May 10th, 1944 to April 25., 1945 are listed in *This Is How It Was & The History Of The 485th BG*. However, they are not all narrated. I was given a 6-month deadline for the History* it was impossible to do so. The Story part

was done prior to me succeeding Carl Gigowski as Historian. Carl made Journey's End In 1993 - The work that I will do will actually be Carl's work as he narrated all the 187 missions, which are from 1/3rd a page to 2 pages.

I do have many new stories sent in to me by flying personnel but would like to have stories from our ground crew also. So ground crew - make some notes from time to time and come up with a story. We know there are many good stories waiting to be read. Jess Aikin sent me a real good one and Tony Siller, one of the 828th Cooks promised me one. The stories I have now are also voice recorded on 3 cassettes and could be the start of a 3d book. Or they could be sold for the benefit of the 485th & I will pursue that angle.

My computer has helped me make friends with many 485th personnel & for relatives who never knew about the 485th. With a little bit of research, I have given information to these people that made them happy. As a result we have newcomers to our fold whether it be our Veterans who never knew that the 485th had been together for so many years or their relations.

You may not know this but I was given another assignment some while back by Roger Monroe to send a list of all Journey's End personnel to Col. Ben Franklin, Director of the 15th AF Association. This was done with the help of all our reporters. Col. Franklin complimented our list as the best of all the Groups.

Being in attendance at the reunion, There were many segments that bear recognition. The Air Force Academy Chapels were breathtaking, A few others should be highlighted Brig. Gen. Mark Welsh and his 4 Cadet Aides giving a 485th briefing Pastor-Don Whiteman, former 829th Pilot and his sermon, - Al Martin's singing & his accompanying piano player, Bob Hanson & his rendition of the Last Mission and Tony Siller, who put together the stage props for the Last Mission. Please excuse not mentioning so many others that deserve praise. And lastly, thanks to those who took the time and effort to bring various items to the Memorabilia Room. This is my story for today and as I usually say best wishes always with

**GOOD HEALTH
TOPPING THE LIST**
SAM SCHNEIDER

!!reay saw "Kilroy" was here!!

MINUTES OF 485TH BOMB GROUP

Business meeting-Saturday, Sept. 9, 1999 at 9 A.M. at Denver Southeast Marriott Hotel

Chairman Bob Benson called the meeting to order and asked for a moment of silent prayer for our deceased members.

He announced that several members were ill and could not attend. Joe Cathcart, the 829 squadron leader was also ill and unable to attend and that Earl Bundy would report for him this year.

Secretary, Lynda Hanson, gave the report from Louisville, Ky meeting for year 1998. Al Martin corrected minutes, reporting that Henry Cresham was in attendance at the Saturday night banquet. He is the regional director for the Department of Veteran's affairs in Louisville. The minutes were then approved as read.

Lynn Cotterman, who is treasurer of the 485th bomb group, reported \$2901.00 in treasury.

Chairman, Bob Benson, announced that there were 143 veterans present at reunion, and counting spouses and guests, there were 312 in attendance.

There were 12 first timers at meeting. Their names will be taken this evening at photo session. One first timer, George O'Brien of the 831st squadron said he could not attend dinner tonight.

After a count, it was determined that the 828th squadron had the most members.

There were 16 POW's and MIA's in attendance and 7 widows.

Tom McDowell (828th squadron) had most flight members present with 7 and won the trophy for the year.

John DiRusso thanked all the "Kids" who brought their fathers and grand-fathers to the reunion.

Bob Benson showed a plaque to be given to Don Webb in appreciation of

his many years of service publishing Lightweight Tower for 485th Bomb Group. John DeRusso will deliver same to him as he lives in the area.

Ted Dey, President of the A F R company spoke. He told that they had 63 military reunions in past year, having run the 454th Bomb Group for nine years. This Co. has been in business since 1988.

Helen Wall said that this was the first reunion in 8 years that they have been able to really enjoy, as both she and husband, Ken, have manned the registration desk for many years.

Woody Woodyard said that we should keep this as a family affair & hold until money report from A.F.R. Co. Warren Gorman spoke of time restrictions on tours; and that several had not seen the 485th plaque at Air Force Academy wall.

Bob Benson said that A.F.R. Co. can work with hotels and tour groups as to good prices for activities and rates. It was also suggested that we either hire bartenders or hotel to manage hospitality room. And suggestion was made to have a larger room. Sherrill Burba made a motion to vote on A.F.R. Co. to handle 2000 reunion. Bill Cummings seconded and it was decided by unanimous vote to do so.

St. Louis, Missouri was suggested as a possible site for 2000 reunion. Bob Benson said that there was a veteran there that would possibly work with A.F. R. Co. Sherrill Burba made a motion to vote for St. Louis. Don Whiteman seconded. Motion passed with a show of hands. Date reunion and information will be in LWT.

It was decided that the Memorial breakfast time would be changed to 8 A.M.. Mr. Dey spoke to the hotel caterer to arrange it. This will accommodate those who have to leave earlier to make airline connections. Roger Monroe suggested

that hometowns be included on name tags.

Sherrill Burba announced that the 828th had given him \$500.00 for the 485th plaque at March Field. He said that in war and peace, the 828th was always the leader! Lynn Cotterman reported that we now have \$800.00 in the treasury toward plaque, with \$1000.00 needed for total toward plaque.

John DiRusso made a report of Pearl Harbor Day becoming a national holiday. He had put forms on each chair at meeting and asked that we each make 10 copies and mail to friends to be sent to: U.S. Senator Arlan Specter of Penn. and to Congressman Jack Quinn of New York who has proposed Bill H.R. 965 designating December 7th as a federal holiday. DiRusso concluded by reading his "Destiny". Roger Monroe declared that DiRusso deserves praise for his efforts of this "Day of Infamy"

Bob Benson thanked many who had helped during the year. Joe Morrone, who lives in Denver had checked out Marriott hotel and other things before reunion. Earl and Virginia Bundy and all others who helped in hospitality room. Also the reunion souvenir glasses that Earl had made for the reunion. Sam Schneider, for his work as historian-Pop Arnold for arranging to have the Commandant of Cadets speak to us at the Chapel at Air Force Academy and setting up the luncheon and entertainment at the "Flying W. Ranch". All committee men for their work during the year. Bob & Lynda Hanson for publishing LWT this past year. Mike Kilbury for address labels for LWT, and squadron leaders.

Sam Schneider thanked everyone for all their kindness at his first reunion since 1988 and also told that he is putting together another book, as he has stories of 187 additional missions. This will be a 3 ring binder type and narrated tape.

Bob Hanson said that John Weir of Abbey Printing, who published LWT this past year, was moving to California. Warren Sortomme will look into locating a new publishing Co. There will be a new innovation in squadron reports this year. Each

will write of just one activity of reunion, thus eliminating repetitions. They will also add their address, phone number and E-mail address, if applicable, for your information. Bob Benson announced that squadron meetings would follow immediately

after this business meeting. He also suggested that we read about **OURSELVES** in Tom Brokow's book "*The Greatest Generation*". There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11 AM. Lynda Hanson, 485th Secretary

SALUTE TO OUR HEROES

You don't hear much about the fellows down on the line; theirs is a job that calls more for steady, day after day, consistency, unmarred by the spectacular or the unusual. Yet every time a ship takes off, every time a victory is scored in the air, it is because of those selfsame men, because of the hours they have spent "sweating it out," seeing to it that the engines are running smoothly, that the electrical, hydraulic, and oxygen systems are functioning as they should, that the radios and bombsights are 100 percent on the beam, that the bombs are installed properly, that every minute, yet all-important, detail is attended to, so that when Joe Combat takes off, he'll know that he is the best equipped flyer in the world, and that every provision possible for his safety has been made.

One cannot say enough in praise of these men - to the maintenance crews, the radio and radar men, the welders and sheet metal men, the air inspectors, the fellows in tech supply and engineering, personal equipment, and bombsight, armament and ordinance, communications, the flight chiefs and mechanics, the refueling operators, the instrument, electrical and propeller specialists - to these men and more, we can only tip our hats in salute and say, "Thanks - for a job well done" With the following observations noted, we have picked out one to spotlight as an example of these devoted men:

After a wait of 37 years, Cpl. George F. Terrell, a 485th Bomb Group

veteran* 831st squadron was awarded the Soldier's Medal during ceremonies at Keyser (W. Va.) High School on November 11, 1982. The award, the highest Army decoration that may be awarded for non-combat heroism, was given to Terrell for action taken shortly before the end of World War II. Terrell, the owner of George's Tune-up in Keyser, was stationed at Venosa, Italy, with the 831st Bombardment Squadron. The story of his act of heroism and how he finally received his medal - 37 years late - is reported as it appeared in a West Virginia newspaper:

On March 20, 1945 in Italy, a 4,000 gallon trailer burst into flames after being filled with 100-octane gasoline. The trailer's tractor would not start, so Terrell "quickly obtained an oil truck and cable, and with the aid of Sgt. Walter H. Spencer, towed the blazing trailer out from under the refueling point and to a position at the taxi strip where there was the least danger to nearby planes.

According to Terrell's commanding officer, Capt. Henry W. Dahlberg, "At great personal risk, he then endured fierce heat to crank down the trailer's parking wheels, incurring a leg burn as he did so. He then released the latch that made it possible to pull the tractor from under the fuel trailer. The trailer was completely destroyed." Dahlberg, considering the actions taken by Terrell, recommended him for the Bronze Star at the time, saying in his recommendation, "In view of the fact that by his actions and bravery, he saved government

equipment valued at \$14,000 from serious damage or destruction, and in so doing, set a magnificent example of courage above and beyond the call of duty at the risk of his life, Cpl. Terrell is believed worthy of the Bronze Star."

Due to battle or demobilization, however, Capt. Dahlberg's paperwork was evidently lost, and Terrell did not learn until 1981 that he had been recommended for the award. While vacationing in Massachusetts, Terrell and his wife, Guelda, attempted to contact the Sgt. Walter Spencer cited in Dahlberg's recommendation, but found he had died. Terrell did speak with Spencer's widow, however, and found out that his accomplice had been awarded the Service Medal in April, 1946 for his part in the incident. Mrs. Spencer told Terrell she had found a copy of his (Terrell's) recommendation attached to her husband's recommendation, and an attempt to locate Terrell had been made. She hadn't known, however, where in West Virginia Terrell was from. That summer, Terrell met a retired lieutenant colonel at his business in Keyser and they began to talk. During the course of the conversation, Terrell explained his situation and the man, Lt. Col. Boyd H. Arnold of Bayard, made copies of Terrell's documents and wrote to the Secretary of the Army in September, 1981. He then became instrumental in Terrell receiving the Soldier's Medal. Terrell received the Soldier's Medal rather than the Bronze Star since the act was not combat related.

JOURNEY'S END

Ralph Alley Jr	828th	Mike Frohling	99 830th	Howard Keech	828th	William Rucker	99 829th
Charles Backer	95 829th	Bill Gammon	98 829th	Paul Knoll	98 831st	Donald Ruffer	99 829th
Fred Baggare	99 ?	Sam P. Giano	98 829th	Chet Konkolewski	99 830th	Charles Sandall	99 829th
Charles Bimmler	99 Hdqrs	John H. Gold	98 Hdqrs	Clyde McCarty	829th	Bernard Signor	99 829th
Lewis Baker	98 831st	Oliver Haden	94 831st	Dan McGillicuddy	98 831st	Gordon Simpson	98 828th
Roy Bulls	98 831st	Ralein Hansen	98 831st	Zoe McGown	98	Fred Sims	99 829th
Mickey Baczewski	99 831st	Donald Henselin	97 828th	Clarence Moore	99 829th	Lawrence Slotsky	98 829th
Karl A. Bay	828th	Russell A. Howard	98 831st	Artie Poulos	98 831st	Gordon Simpson	98 828th
Herbert Burgess	98 829th	Thomas Bough	99 829th	George Raidel	00 830th	Fred Sims	99 829th
H.C. Burgess	97 829th	Jerry Jarrell	99 831st	Don Ratanda	829th	Ed Stauverman	92 831st
Joe Coker	99 ?	Carrol Johnson	99 829th	Wesley Rowland	99 829th	Lawrence Slotsky	98 829th
Casper Fassara	95 829th	John S. Johnson	829th	Bert Roswold	98 831st	*****	

REUNION, 1995

BY DOROTHY J. IRVING, WIFE OF FREDERICK IRVING. 831ST SQUADRON

There is a deep bond with someone who has been by your side as you face death. Last year I went with my husband to a reunion of his bomb group, the 485th of the U.S. Army Air Force. In World War II this group had flown out of Italy to destroy the oil fields at Blecheimer, Germany, and Ploesti, Rumania, Oil so important to Hitler's supply line that the Nazis repeatedly built decoy fields to confuse the American flyers.

My husband's squadron lived, when not flying, in tents in Venosa, Italy. At Reunion, an Air Force photo shows canvas tents along a "street" of mud, the kind that is ankle deep in wet weather. Two and three times a week, the crews of the B24 's left the mud and the tents to fly missions nine and ten hours long. Each night the men waiting in camp counted the number of planes returning to camp. One picture in the Reunion room shows the U.S. planes flying through skies filled with bursts of enemy anti-aircraft flak.

Next to it is a photograph of a B24 going down in flames, its 3 engines shot out. "That's how ours looked," said one of my husband's crew members.

"On August seventh", said another, "I think of it every year". Six of his

crew members had hoped to make this reunion. Four, plus the son of a fifth came. For those four it was the first meeting in 50 years.

They talked about Italy, about the mud around the tents, the open air toilets, the bags of nuts they kept in their tent. They remembered the 9 - 10 hour flights every other day, the enemy anti-aircraft flak. The ones who had been prisoners compared the lasting effects of prison camps.

"I decided I'd never be hungry again", the largest declared as he put bananas in two pockets after the large multi-course breakfast buffet served by the hotel.

"My Dad won't sleep in a room with a bare light bulb." This from the son representing his ill father. "We took out all the ceiling fixtures in our house."

"I do all the grocery shopping. We always have a six months supply of canned food in the house."

"For me, it's wet feet. After those prison camp marches when our feet froze in our shoes, I have to change my socks right away if they're wet-or even damp."

None complained of the stomach problems they all still had after those

months of less than 700 calories a day. None complained of nightmares. There were many jokes -about burning the bed slats to keep warm and then rearranging the slats so their guards wouldn't notice; about startling the German guard doing night inspection by sitting up in bed in the dark looking at an open book -the key was to appear interrupted as the flashlight shone on your face. They even joked about food on the long marches.

-- the only time I had fresh food. If you tickle a hen the right way she will drop an egg. The farmer's wife sure yelled at me for that one."

"I loved those cabbages they grew for the cattle. Tasted damn good when you're starving."

"When I got pneumonia (dumb me, taking an outside shower in winter to get rid of the lice) the prison camp doc gave me ten aspirins. He said that was it, and he didn't care if I lived or died. I think I lived to thwart him."

The emotions were expressed in banter, but each man remembered every detail of those prison camp days.

Some scenes from the reunion are etched on my mind forever. The first day my husband went to a lobby

phone to call a crew mate expected to arrive soon. Another man approaching the phone, offered, "No, after you. Please, go ahead". When they were close enough to read name tags, they spoke at the same time, "I was coming to call you."

A tall and a short man entered the registration room together. They glanced at each other, then looked again.

"Gibby?" "Bill?" The 50 years disappeared. Both of them gunners on my husband's plane, one of these two had cared so much about a 3rd gunner, that after the war he had gone to Belgium to see the boy's grave. That third gunner had gone down with the plane that August. He was 19 and fresh out of the mountains of North Carolina. His friend arranged to have his name painted on the roster of the one remaining B24. Others in the crew wrote to the boy's family.

One crew member, temporarily grounded by a wound, missed flying the mission on August 7th. When the planes returned to camp that evening, his plane was not among them. He asked the same questions asked every night:

"Did you see it go down? How many parachutes did you see? How many opened?" As he described the evening, 50 years later, he spoke slowly and softly. "That was a sad day".

Later, in December, he, too, was in a plane that was shot down. They bailed out over Yugoslavia. "Ten minutes more and we could have ditched in the Adriatic". Led by Yugoslav partisans they walked 32 days through the January snow of the Yugoslav mountains, finally reaching the sea where they could be evacuated by boat. He was eighteen.

The reuniting men had gathered in twos and threes and groups, greeting old compatriots with firm handshakes, a hug, and a blink or two. At the Friday banquet, they melded into a united group. Our entertainment that night was a cowboy jazz band, playing

lighthearted music of the west. After the first set of songs the band paused. Then, without announcement, they played the first three notes of the Air Force hymn, the notes that sing, "Off we go... ..Before the musicians could play the notes for "...into the wild blue yonder ..." every man in the room was on his feet erect and silent. standing at attention. Even the two spines in wheel chairs were suddenly stretched higher. Canes, hearing aids, thicker waistlines faded away. Memory and pride were heavy in the room.

Here reuniting stood the young men who had willingly gone to war against Hitler's Germany. Fifty years ago in their teens and early twenties they had gone into the last war that truly united our country. America knew of the concentration camps and of the locked boxcars leading to them. We knew of the yellow star of David the Nazis required every Jew to wear, and that in Holland Queen Wilhemina had pinned one on her coat the day of the pronouncement. We knew of the nightly bombings of

"WE WERE YOUNG WE WERE INVINCIBLE"

Britain. Each night "from the rooftops of London " Ed Morrow broadcast reports of the day's damage, stories of people sleeping in the shelters, the evacuation of London's children, and the courage and humor of its citizens enduring months of night attacks. On the "home front", we rationed gas, food and clothing. We bought War Bonds and prayed. Nightly we listened to the radio news; and we sent letters to these young men. Here in the large banquet room, I looked past the canes and saw around me the young men of 1945, those young men, slim and proud in their new Air Force tans.

Saturday night at dinner we shared

another moving experience. We were entertained by a typical USO show with songs of "our" time, songs whose words all of us knew by heart, "Don't Sit Under the Apple Tree with Anyone Else But Me", "I'll walk Alone, Until I Walk With You", "There'll be Bluebirds Over the White Cliffs of Dover tomorrow when the world is free." We didn't think we were 18 or 20 again, but we remembered clearly what it had been like. Before the show started, our Commander stood to welcome us, our entertainers and our "Special Guests".

"Friends", he said, "another group of World War II veterans are reuniting here in Scottsdale this weekend. I have invited them to join us for the evening. Ladies and Gentlemen of the 485th Bomb Group, please help me welcome the Marines of Iwo Jima". With watered eyes we stood.

The next morning was the day of farewells. After a large Sunday breakfast, a memorial service was held in the hotel's dining room. A scheduling change meant one of our gunners had to leave before the service ended. He grasped each hand around the table. "It's too long", he said softly. "50 years is too long". The last hand he grasped was Gibbie's and again the names were repeated, this time a promise, not a question: "Gibbie". "Bill".

When I thought of what these men had endured and the spirit with which they had done it, I asked one, "How could you do it?"

A former newspaper editor, accustomed to choosing his words carefully, he thought a minute before answering.

"We were young. We were invincible."

Today, three years after the reunion we receive word that the boy who walked across Yugoslavia that winter is dying. Hospice and his son are with him. The son phoned to say his father asked him to say goodbye to the crew and to thank them for being his friends.

IT IS A DEEP BOND.

GERMANY EDITION
Volume 1, No. 28
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THE STARS AND STRIPES

Daily Newspaper of U.S. Armed Forces
in the European Theater of Operations

KAPUTT

HITLER DEAD

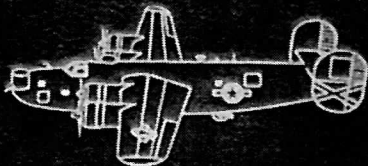
485TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H)



828TH 829TH 830TH 831ST
BOMB SQUADRONS



IN RECOGNITION OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS
OF ALL THOSE WHO SERVED WITH THE
485TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H)



B-24—LIBERATOR

GOWEN FIELD—FAIRMONT, NEBR.—N AFRICA—SO. ITALY

DEDICATED TO THE MEMORY OF OUR COMRADES
WHO GAVE THEIR LIVES FOR THEIR COUNTRY
SEPT. 1987

THE 485TH BOMB GROUP

Group plaque on the memorial wall
at United States Airforce academy,
Colorado Springs, Colorado.
Dedicated in Sept. 1987



TO HONOR

THE 485TH BOMB GROUP

The 485th Bomb Group (H), 15th Air Force, in a formation of 36 B-24 aircraft flew a mission to Vienna, Austria on 26 June 1944 to attack the Florisdorf Oil Refinery. The Group inflicted grave and massive damage to the refinery despite heavy flak and intense fighter opposition, and crippled the enemy's vital fuel production during a crucial period of WWII. The 485th Group was awarded a Unit Citation for this successfully completed mission.

"A PERFORMANCE ABOVE AND BEYOND EXPECTATIONS"

By: Veterans of the 485th Group and Walter E. "Pop" Arnold USAF (Ret.), Commander

General "Pop" Arnold sponsored this certificate for the 485th to be placed in the memorial book at the Air Force Academy Library