



# LIGHTWEIGHT TOWER CALLING



No. 35

MARCH 2001

## The 485th Bomb Group Reunion In **2001**

### Harrisburg, PA

The 485th Bomb Group will hold its annual reunion at the Harrisburg Hilton Towers, located in the downtown area of the Capitol City of Pennsylvania, September 5 to September 9, 2001. The rate will be \$89.00 + tax per night.

From the Hilton, many attractions are easy to find such as casual restaurants and many specialty shops. Or, you may stroll to the Pennsylvania State Museum, tour the Capitol building or walk along Riverfront Park, all within a few blocks from the hotel.

Complete details covering this reunion will be furnished in a separate mailing. In the meantime, please mark your calendar now by blocking off September 5 to 9 with plans to attend. You'll have a wonderful time.

*See you in Harrisburg in September!*

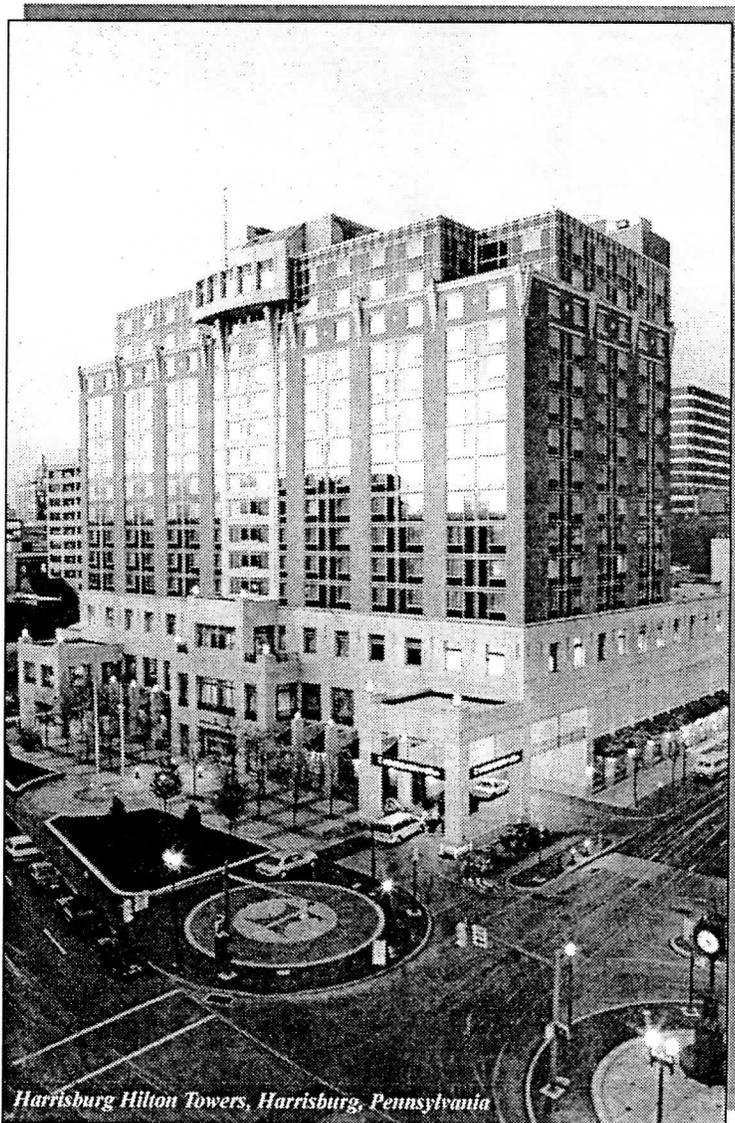
*Bob Benson*

## St. Louis Reunion – Another Winner!

By Lynn Cotterman

The 36th Annual Reunion for the veterans of the 485th Bomb Group was held September 27 to October 1, 2000. It was declared a huge success by those who attended. The gathering place was the Radisson Hotel, St. Louis Airport which has an eight story atrium. Many of the

*Another Winner, continued on Page 2*



*Harrisburg Hilton Towers, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania*

## Another Winner, *continued from front page*

rooms have balconies overlooking the dining area and the indoor pool. The hotel is very conveniently located, just a short hop from the airport via the hotel courtesy shuttle. However, some veterans who came by auto lost their bearings and circled the destination for a couple of hours. Bob Benson, Sherrill Burba and their wives finally hailed a taxi to lead them to the hotel. Bob complained that they were given a bum flight plan and no one could find the hotel following that plan.

The Armed Forces Reunions (AFR) hosted the reunion again this year. Overall they did an excellent job. A representative was always around if something was needed. At the Saturday banquet the hotel ran out of prime rib and served Dan Sjodin And Hank Dahlberg steaks that were inferior. Ted Dey, the president of AFR, was roaming among the tables saw their steaks and corrected the situation.

We are again using the same format as last year in reporting the events. An overall review will be found in this column and each Squadron reporter will report on one event in detail. I arrived Tuesday and the first vet I saw was Frank Nardi and his wife, Kitty, in the TGIF restaurant which is located in the hotel. I joined them for a pleasant dinner. Things started rather slowly Wednesday when the vets started arriving, but enthusiasm started building and before long things were humming in the hospitality room. The room was the right size so we were not crowded. We owe a big "Thank You" to Greg Lahay (828th) and Ray Heskes (831st) for arranging the refreshments and snacks and for hiring bar maids. Greg and Ray live in St. Louis and checked out

the facilities when the reunion was being planned. It was a long day for most who had been traveling and no one complained when the hospitality room closed at 10:30 PM. Maybe we are slowing down a bit. *Nah!*

Thursday we boarded buses for a tour of the city. The highlight of the tour was the visit to the Cathedral Basilica of St. Louis. Then for lunch, we were bused to Union Station which has been con-

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### **"AN OVERALL REVIEW WILL BE FOUND IN THIS COLUMN AND EACH SQUADRON REPORTER WILL REPORT ON ONE EVENT..."**

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verted into restaurants and shops. In 1944 I changed trains there when I was on leave. Seeing the station again brought back memories of how we rushed for trains, pushing and shoving so we could get a seat and wouldn't have to stand. Remember how we were packed in the hot and smoky cars, and some were standing in the aisles and between cars. I can still hear that "clickity click" as the wheels passed over the rails. After lunch we returned to hotel to the watering hole to see if more of our friends had arrived. Thursday evening we had a buffet dinner in the hotel and were entertained by retired professional dancers and what a show!

Friday there was a visit to the

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famous Arch, a symbol of St. Louis' "The Gateway to the West." After that a visit to the floating casino. Actually, I missed the tour because I had been selling Sammy's latest book, "Missions by the Numbers" in the Hospitality room and needed to make a trip to a bank. I boarded the hotel courtesy shuttle which was available for trips to the Shopping Mall that was only a few minutes away. After I visited the bank I had a delicious sandwich at a bread bakery. Friday evening was free of activities and I had dinner at Friday's with Mulligan's crew.

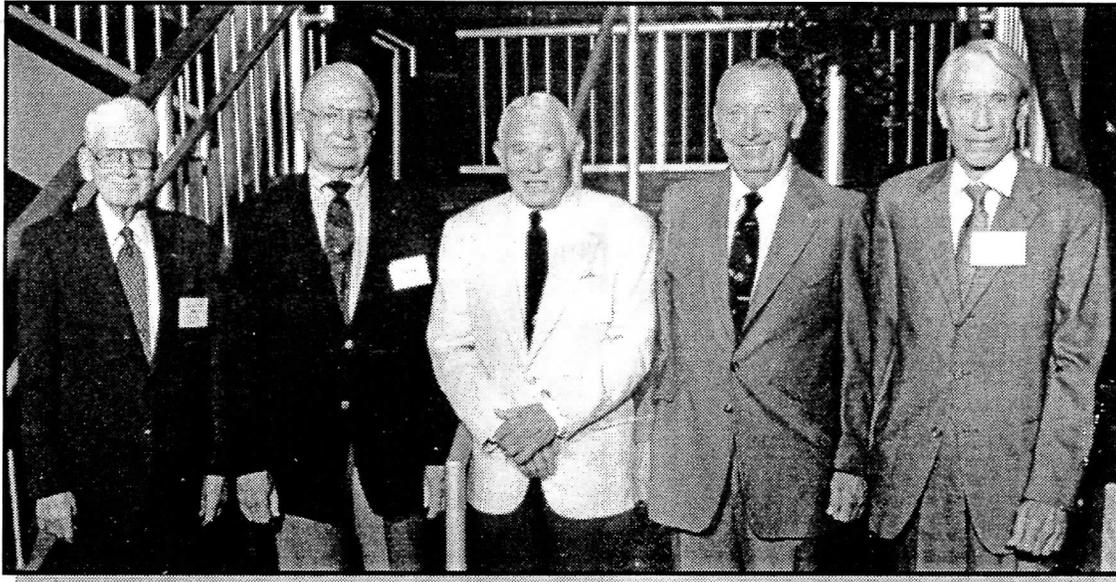
Bob Benson conducted the group meeting Saturday. The minutes of the meeting are printed in full elsewhere in this publication so I won't rehash them. The squadron meetings followed the group meeting. Saturday evening we dressed in our "Sunday best" and had pictures taken on the stairs leading to the lobby. Then the highlight of the social activities; the annual banquet and dance.

Sunday morning we had the prayer breakfast and a memorial service honoring the ones who gave their lives and also for the ones who came back and have gone to their rest.

Another successful reunion was put in the achieves and we are looking forward to meeting again in Harrisburg next year.



# HEADQUARTERS

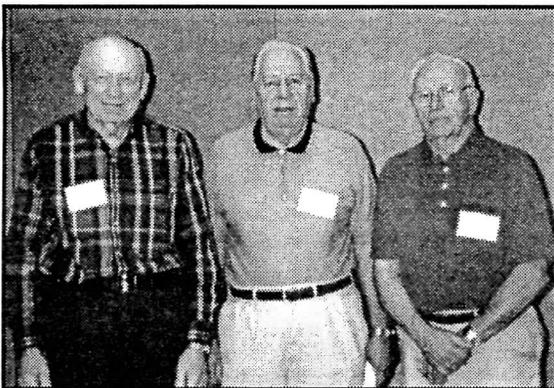


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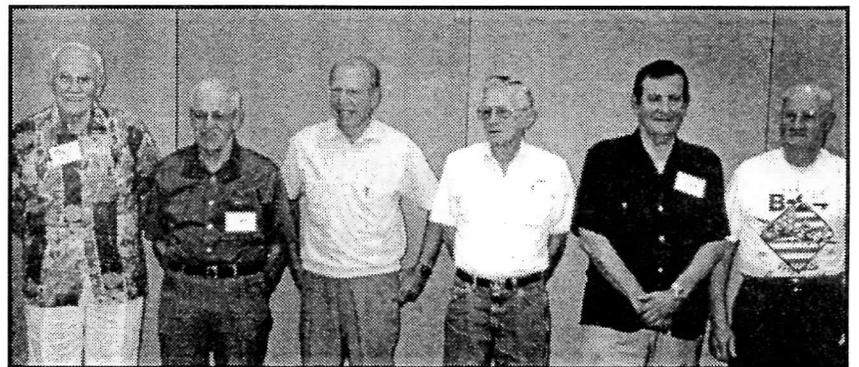
B. Benson,  
B. Herblin,  
W. "Pop" Arnold,  
W. Sortomme  
L. Towers

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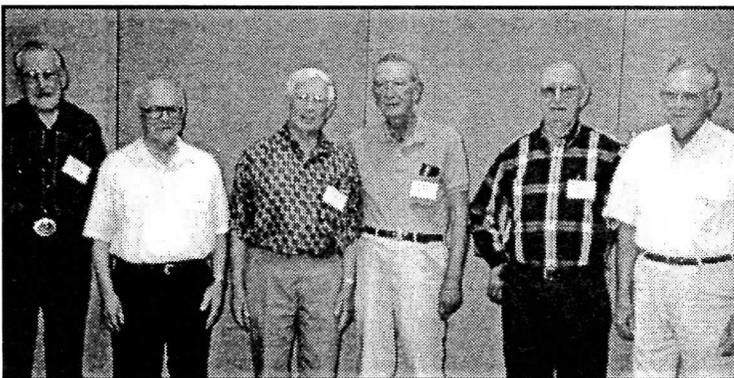
## SOME OF OUR CREWS IN ATTENDANCE IN ST. LOUIS



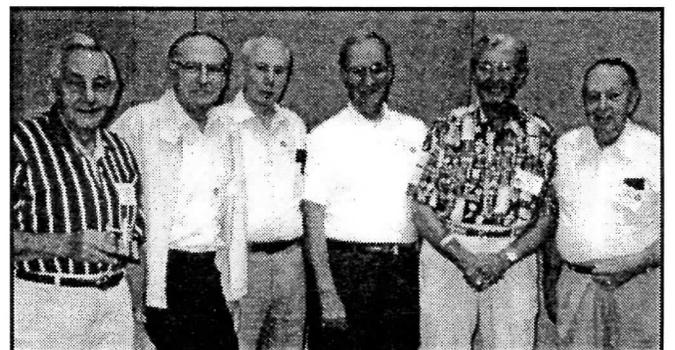
*Left to right:* Jess Ledbetter, John Breen,  
Harold Richards



*Left to right:* Jack Godfrey, Sam Nenadich, Bob Rector,  
Leo Gagne, Frank Nardi, Leonard Little



*Left to right:* Phil Fielder, Clem Norris, Rex Stanley, Tom McDowell,  
Ken Wall, Bill Lancaster



*Left to right:* John Jackson, Glen Bell, Bob Halling,  
Jack Bremer, Bob Hanson, Warren Meyers

# 828TH SQUADRON



*Left to Right:*

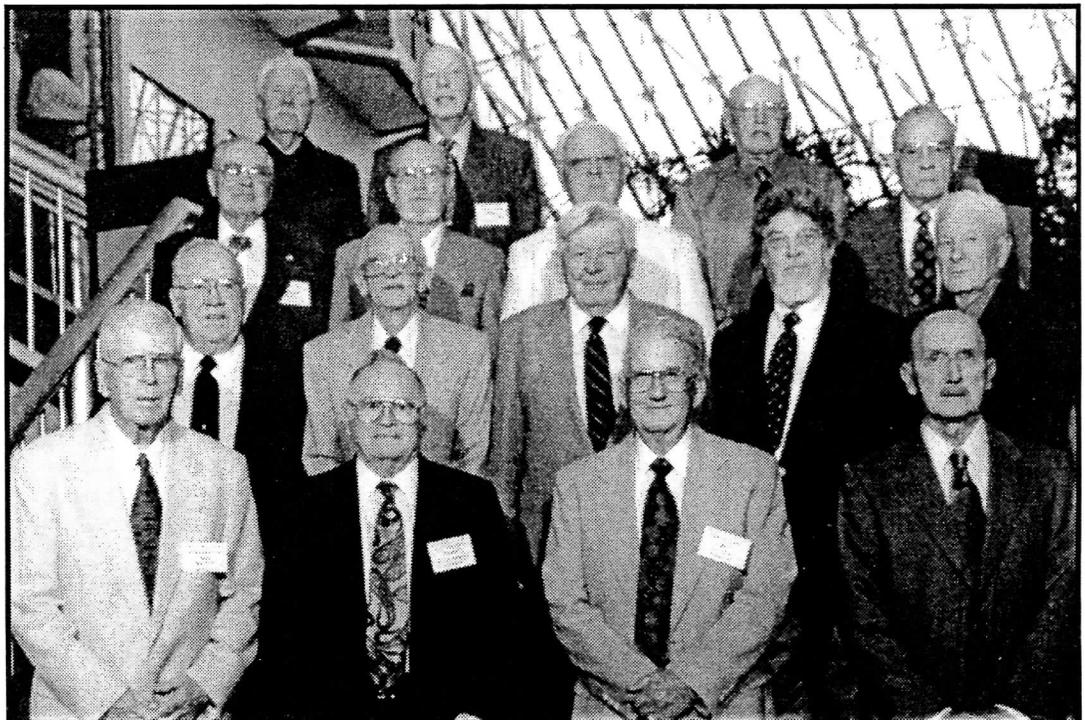
**Row 1:** D. Peden, M. Hails, C. Norris, W. Pascoe, J. Eden, J. DiRusso, S. Tanga, H. Julin  
**Row 2:** A. Hurley, W. Fritz, R. Monroe, F. Freyermath, G. Bell  
**Row 3:** G. Lahay, J. Rau, C. Fite, A. Borgetti, K. Wall  
**Row 4:** L. Sullivan, T. Roemer, L. Busro, E. Nett  
**Row 5:** T. Siller, B. Reid  
**Row 6:** C. Mazzone, C. Bersack  
**Row 7:** B. Williams, M. Sites, S. Burba, D. Ermakovich  
**Row 8:** P. Fielder, W. Whitaker, N. Montulli, G. Tuttle, C. Darnton, W. Lancaster



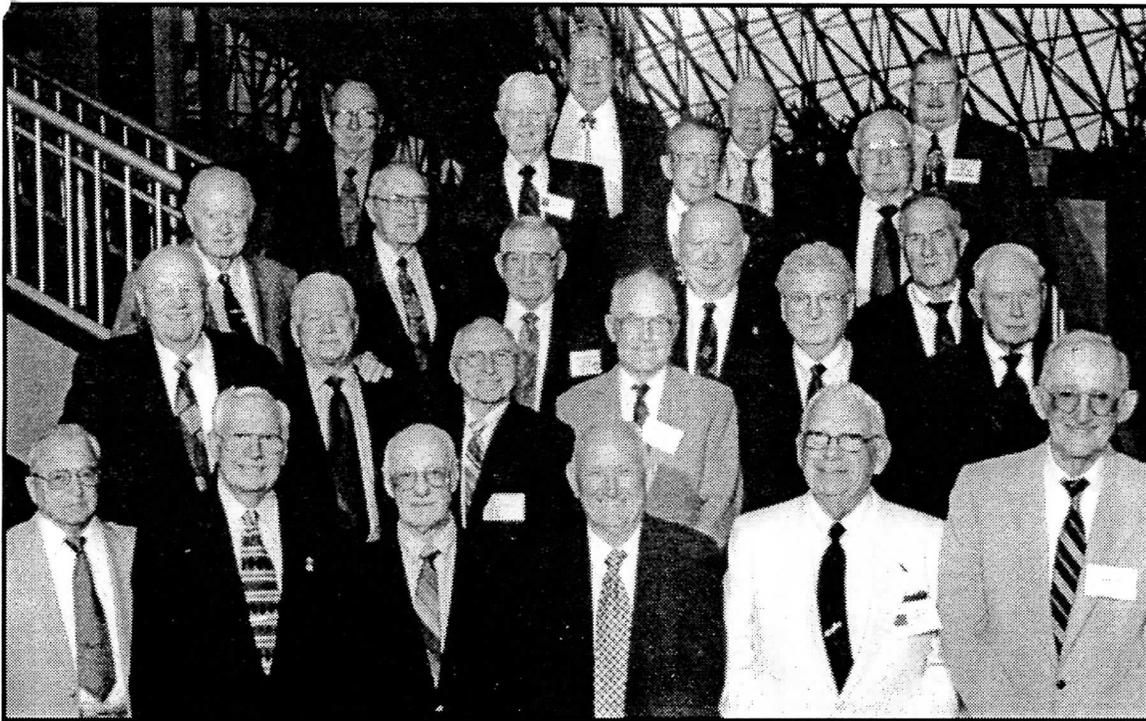
# 829TH SQUADRON

*Left to right:*

**Row 1:** D. Doyle, F. Lashbrook, B. Culver, M. Fundling  
**Row 2:** A. Martin, T. West, T. Toot, R. Arthur, W. Smith  
**Row 3:** B. Brown, R. Brown, A. Carlson, H. Johnson  
**Row 4:** J. Behunin, D. Whiteman, K. Robison



# 830TH SQUADRON



*Left to Right:*

**Row 1:** R. Baldwin,  
D. Landrum,  
H. Kempffer, E. Gunn,  
F. Caster, A. Thomson

**Row 2:** G. Dyer,  
B. Cottingham,  
S. Paynic, T. Levin,  
L. Martin, J. Hunter

**Row 3:** K. Muse,  
L. Rich, T. Lipinski,  
B. Cummings,  
B. DeVore

**Row 4:** C. Studaker,  
W. Forester,  
R. Griffin, H. Boxley

**Row 5:** W. Gorman,  
J. Cundiff, M. Bacon



# 831ST SQUADRON

*Left to Right:*

**Row 1:** L. Gagne, L. Cotterman,  
D. Sjodin, S. Nenadich, F. Nardi

**Row 2:** V. Christenson,  
D. Blodgett, B. Hanson,  
C. Woodbury

**Row 3:** R. Rector, H. Dahlberg,  
R. Heskes, B. Plocica,  
B. Edinger

**Row 4:** J. Nagle, L. Little,  
R. Dietrich, B. Brokaw,  
N. Peirano

**Row 5:** D. Conklin,  
H. Richards, J. Ledbetter,  
A. Dusenberry

**Row 6:** L. Sikes, J. Fulford,  
W. Meyers, H. Woodyard,  
A. Salazar, G. Bell

**Row 7:** E. McCarthy,  
J. Godfrey, R. Halling,  
E. Wroblewaski, J. Jackson,  
J. Bremer



# WIDOWS

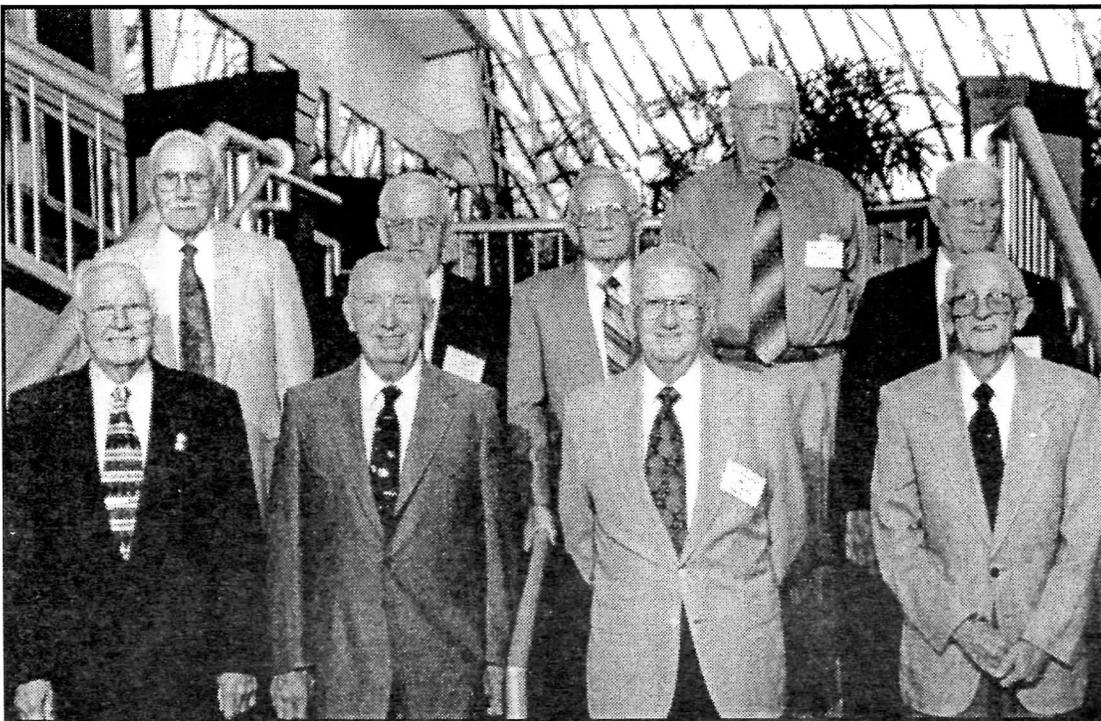
*Left to right:*

N. Bulls,  
M. Mickle,  
J. Evjen,  
M. Karns,  
M. Cathcart,  
L. Schoultz



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# POWs - MIAs



*Left to right:*

*First Row:*

D. Landrum,  
W. Sortomme,  
B. Culver,  
T. West

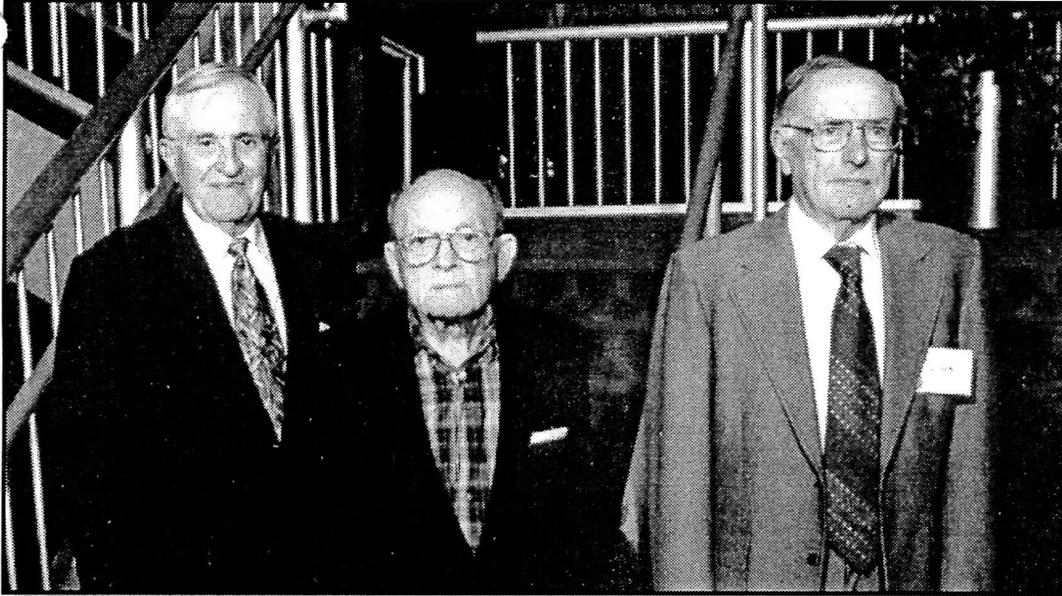
*Second Row:*

J. Godfrey,  
S. Nemarich,  
L. Gagne,  
V. Christensen,  
L. Little

*Third Row:*

F. Nardi,  
D. Blodgett,  
K. Robison

# 1ST TIMERS



*Left to Right:*

D. Blodgett,  
B. Pascoe,  
G. Bell

## REMEMBER THESE MEN A DEDICATION

*Through the history of world aviation, many names have come to the fore.....  
Great deeds of the past in our memory will last, as they're joined by more and more.*

*When man first started his labor in his quest to conquer the sky;  
He was designer, mechanic and pilot, and he built a machine that would fly..  
But somehow the order got twisted, and then in the public eye,  
The only man that could be seen was the man who knew how to fly!*

*The pilot was everyone's hero, he was brave, he was bold, he was grand,  
As he stood by his battered old biplane with his goggles and helmet in hand...  
To be sure, these pilots all earned it, to fly you have to have guts...  
And they blazed their names in the hall of fame, on wings with bailing wire struts...*

*But for each of these flying heroes, there were thousands of little known,  
And these were the men who worked on the planes but kept their feet on the ground...  
We all know Lindbergh, and we've read of his flight to fame  
But think if you can of his maintenance man,  
Can you remember his name?*

*And think of our wartime heroes, Gabreski, Jabara and Scott...  
Can you tell me the names of their crew chiefs? A thousand to one you cannot!*

*Now pilots are highly trained people and their wings are not easily won...  
But without the work of the MAINTENANCE MEN, our pilots would march with a gun...  
So when you see mighty aircraft as they make their way through the air,  
The greased stained man with the wrench in his hand, is the man who put them up there...*

Author Unknown



# PHOTO HIGHLIGHTS



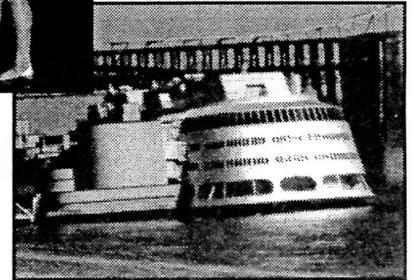
▲ *The Arch in St. Louis – Gateway to the West*



◀ *St. Louis Strutters & Co. – professional dancers ranging in age from 50 to 70 provided the Thursday evening entertainment.*



◀ *Busch Stadium – Home of St. Louis Cardinals Baseball Team*



▲ *The Admiral Ship – “Mini Las Vegas”*



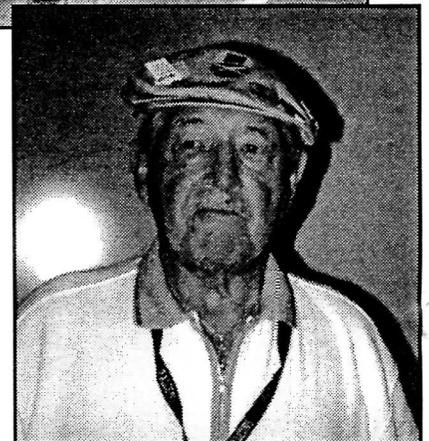
*Our Ace Photographers Milt & Francis Fundling ▲ and Mates ▼ Evelyn & Warren Gorman*



▲ *Tony Siller's Ceramic Cabin*



▶ *Greg Lahey — helped with St. Louis reunion along with Ray Heskes*





▲ Frank & Kitty Nardi



▲ Bob & Donna Plocica  
with Pop Arnold



▲ Glen & Mary Bell  
(1st Timers)



◀ Al & Anna Carlson  
(Al subbed this year for  
Marvin Lindsay 829th)



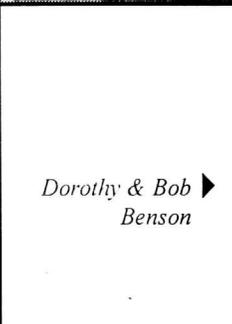
▲ Ken & Barzella Robison



◀ Jack & Irene Godfrey



▼ Evelyn & Ned Peirano



Dorothy & Bob  
Benson ▶



# 485TH GROUP REUNIONS

After the end of World War II some veterans remained in the service, but most of us returned home to continue our careers and raise our families. The experiences during the war were put in the background. After several years we wondered what had happened to all the guys that we knew and were close to in Italy. Well, during the Summer of 1960 a few members of the 828th Squadron and their families got together and held a picnic. They decided to meet each year. Attendance and correspondence from the other squadrons increased and after five years the event was changed to the 485th Group Reunion.

The first Group reunion was held in Newton Falls, Ohio on the weekend of August 14 and 15, 1965 and was hosted by Mr. and Mrs. William Schoultz.

Why has our group hung together after all these years? One explanation is that to complete successful bombing missions we depended on each other to do his job, both on the ground and in the air. We were young and endured many things together. A

## “WE MEET EACH YEAR IN SEPTEMBER...”

great spirit of camaraderie developed and it's hard to explain, but that bond is still with us today.

So there is no misunderstanding, we are not an official representative of the 485th Bomb Group. We are just a group of veterans from the 485th Bomb Group that meet each year. We have a couple of drinks, tell a couple of stories and visit with our old bud

dies. We don't have any axe to grind promote any causes or charities. No fees to join, no membership cards; our group is strictly a social bunch. No wild parties (anymore), just dancing to Big Band 40's music; when music was music.

We meet each year in September in a different city. We are able to get discounted hotel rates and tours are available for our group.

A newsletter is published each year and sent to each veteran on our roster. There are between 900 and 1000 veterans on the roster. This includes the headquarters group and the four squadrons; 828th, 829th, 830th and 831st. About 200 veterans plus spouses and guests (total around 300) attend the reunions.

This will give you an overall picture of our activities.

Lynn Cotterman  
831st Squadron

## MISSIONS BY THE NUMBERS

Edited by Sammy Schneider

### AN ACCOUNT OF THE 187 MISSIONS FLOWN BY THE 485TH BOMB GROUP OVER EUROPE

*Missions By The Numbers* tells the story of the 485th Bomb Group that was stationed in Venosa, Italy and flew combat missions in B-24 Liberator Bombers over Europe during World War II. The debriefing of each mission tells it like it was. Also described is the great amount of planning and teamwork involved in flying a successful combat mission. The mission began in the afternoon when a coded message was received from Wing Headquarters with preliminary information about the next day's mission and ended with the dropping of the payload on the target the next day. The planning and preparation before that first plane was allowed to take off is described in articles written by the men who were

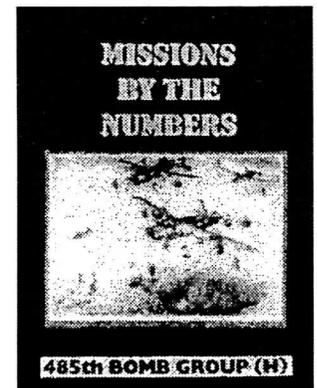
there. Included is a narration of the perfect bomb run, a story of a crewman who bailed out and tried to avoid capture and another story of a harrowing flight through the Brenner Valley (Flak Alley) on two engines.

Over 180 pages of history in a book with a colorful soft cover with strike photos, a map of secret landing strips, the pilot's flimsy (the secret plan of the mission), flak photos, bomb types, photos of damaged planes and much more. It is a story told by the men who lived it and is interesting reading for people of all ages.

#### TO ORDER:

Send your name, address, and a check or money order for \$15.00 + \$4.00 S/H to:

MISSIONS BY THE NUMBERS  
6425 Dorado Beach, NE  
Albuquerque, NM 87111



# A Letter From Armed Forces Reunions, Inc.

When I was at the reunion Mrs. Hanson asked me to write something to be included in the next issue of the newsletter. I started Armed Forces Reunions, Inc. in 1988 and in these past twelve years of planning military reunions I have never once been presented with such a request. But what a good idea, and a thoughtful one really. It is an idea that I will use with other groups in the future; thank you Mrs. Hanson!

When I think of the 485th Bomb Group the word 'thoughtful' often comes to mind. We are accustomed to being approached by the general membership at reunions, usually for one reason: to make known a complaint of some type. Don't get me wrong, we need to know when we, the tour company we've selected, or the hotel are falling short. We can't fix something if we don't know it's bro-



*Ted Dey, President of Armed Forces Reunions, Inc.*

ken. But I was truly amazed at how many of you came to me to say what a good job you thought we were doing and what a good time you were having. This was really refreshing and very much appreciated. I have long noticed that groups, like individuals, have their own personalities. You are a warm and friendly bunch, apparently happy with your lot in life, and a pleasure to be around. Thank you for your kindnesses. Even though we've handled your reunion only twice, your welcoming attitude makes me feel as though I've known you longer.

We planned seventy reunions this year, with fifteen to twenty being Bomb Group reunions. Two weeks after your reunion my wife flew to St. Louis to oversee the 92nd; a week after that I returned to St. Louis to handle the 454th Group, with which we have worked since 1993. They, as you know, were 15th Air Force and had similar experiences to you. The committee and I initially considered five to seven cities for the 2001 reunion; after some discussion the list was narrowed down to Riverside, CA and Harrisburg, PA. The idea of going to Riverside was to focus on a plaque dedication at the March Field Museum, an outstanding facility in every way. Harrisburg was selected as a good choice for the east coast for two primary reasons: one, that hotel rates are reasonable and two, that there are some very attractive tour options there. When groups consider meeting in some of the major cities on the east coast such as Boston, Washington D.C., Philadelphia, and Baltimore hotel rates rarely dip below \$100.

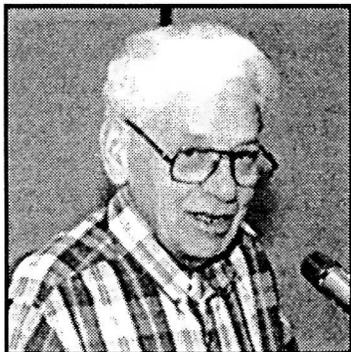
When the vote was taken at the business meeting it quickly became apparent that those present were of no mind to travel to the west coast. As such, we will be seeing you at the Hilton in downtown Harrisburg over the dates of September 5-9, 2001. You can look forward to some really wonderful tours, the highlights of which will include nearby Gettysburg and the Eisenhower Farm, Hershey (chocolate), and a trip into the Amish Country. I like the Hilton downtown as it's attached to a food court, it's very close to the State Capitol building (which is interesting to tour on your own), and there are dining options available to you nearby. By the way, I do hope that everyone appreciated the banquet seating arrangements in St. Louis. Beats a cattle call doesn't it?

If any of you have personal observations or comments to make please feel free to write to me at P.O. Box 11327, Norfolk, VA 23517, or email me at [ted@afri.com](mailto:ted@afri.com). If you have any friends who attend other Bomb Group reunions please don't hesitate to tell them about AFR (only if you have something nice to say though). I hope you all had a wonderful time in St. Louis, may your health be good in the coming year, and I look forward to seeing all of you in Harrisburg.

Warm regards,

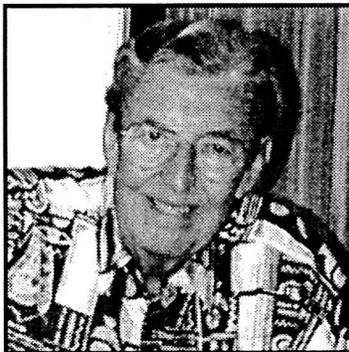
Ted Dey, President

# 485TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP



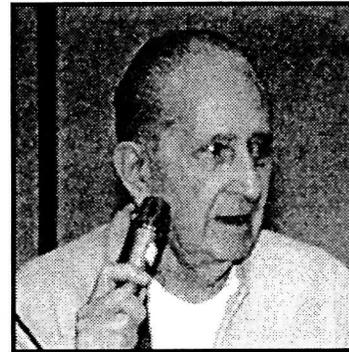
## CHAIRMAN

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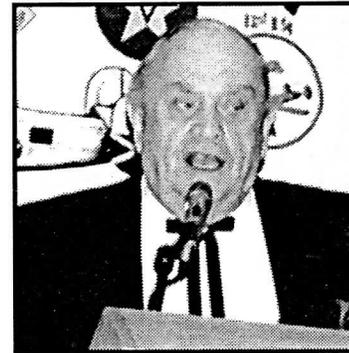
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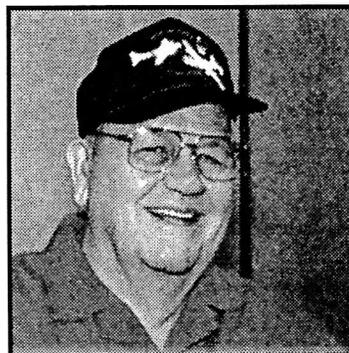
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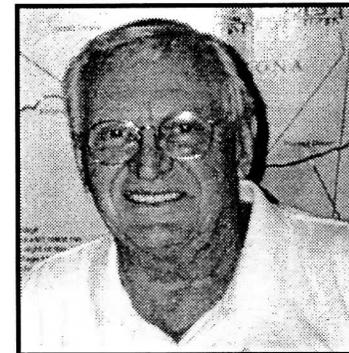
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(505) 823-2283

# MAILROOM - HEADQUARTERS

BY WARREN SORTOMME

Our numbers were few but our spirits were high, we all had a good time in St. Louis. As usual, Bob Benson and Armed Forces Reunions did a super job, enabling all of the veterans, ladies and guests to enjoy themselves.

Pop Arnold, Bob and Dorothy Benson, William and Kathryn Herblin, Warren and Joyce Sortomme and Loyd and Evelyn Towers made the trip to St. Louis as did Donald and Richard Huckeby, sons of Hadley M. Huckeby, who was the group photo intelligence officer.

Don, the younger of the two, lives in Eckert, CO and has had an interest in the 485th since his father Hadley passed away in 1973. Richard lives in Charleston, SC, a USAF veteran of the Korean War, and has his father's photo album and other memorabilia. Don and Richard would like to share this information with the 485th, via website, videotape or photos. I am sure we will hear more about this in the near future and it's sure nice to have Don and Richard joining our headquarters family.

Ben F. Cook, member of Pop Arnold's crew, and shot down with Pop, Bill Killian, Hank Hancock and me over Bleckhammer, came to his Journeys End last August. We will really miss ol' Ben, love for him will never end, and we extend our heartfelt sympathy to his family.

Bill Angle informed me of his wife's death on March 17, 2000. Bill still resides in the same apartment in the Piedmont Retirement Home, 209 Hedrick Dr., Thomasville, NC 27360. Our deepest sympathy to Bill, his daughter Patricia, his sons William Jr. and James, and the five grandchildren.

Joyce and I had a short but pleasant visit with Hank and Althea Hancock on our trip following most of the Lewis and Clark Trail from the mouth of the Columbia River to St. Louis. Most of the forest fires were contained by the time we arrived in Montana, Hank said they were bad-bad. He and Althea were sorry to miss the reunion, with their health problems, it's best to stay near home. Maybe this year.

I received a short note and help for

our expenses from Merlin W. Baker, Sydney P. Harrison, Carl Lange, Harold E. Sheppard, and Robert G. Schroeder. They all regret not being able to attend the reunion, but send their best wishes to the "ol' gang".

Dr. Maurice S. Priver, with his usual help for expenses, sent his regrets for being absent because the Jewish High Holidays started September 28. That problem will be corrected this year.

Lillian Cairns sends her greetings. Family obligations made it difficult to make it to St. Louis. We sure missed Lil and her children.

I will keep you informed about our plaque to be placed on the 15th AF Wall at March Field in Riverside, CA and an individual tile you may purchase that can be laid in front of the wall. If you want an application for a tile or more info- write to me - 3490 Turquoise Lane-Oceanside, CA 92056-4866.

Until we meet in Harrisburg or next years LWT, stay healthy and remember your help for keeping our group in good financial shape is always appreciated.

## *Jefferson National Expansion Memorial - Gateway Arch and President Casino*

Pierre LaCledé founded the village of St. Louis in 1764, intending it to be a trading center with the Missouri river vital to tap the wealth of the West.

In 1803, Lewis and Clark started their exploration of the Louisiana Purchase from St. Louis, returning after three years with information of the fabulous land they had explored, which made St. Louis the "Gate Way to the West."

Traveling down the interstate highway from the Radisson Hotel in our tour bus, we saw the busy Lambert St. Louis Airport, some of the city suburbs, the city skyline and then the glisten of the sun reflecting from the stainless steel of a giant arch on the bank of the Mississippi River in downtown St. Louis. This was our destination, the Gateway Arch.

Jefferson National Expansion Memorial was created on December 21, 1935 to commemorate the westward expansion of the U.S., and named

after President Thomas Jefferson, who foresaw and encouraged the continental destiny of our country. Forty square blocks of the St. Louis river front were cleared for this project, and after a national competition in 1947-48, Architect Eero Saarinen's design of a gigantic stainless steel arch was the winning monument to be built on this site. Engineers, designers and construction workers met the challenge between 1963-65, and completed "Fitting the Final Piece."

After departing from the bus, we walked a short distance on a path beneath the forest of green trees that covers a large portion of the memorial. As we came to the clearing we stood under a magnificent 630 foot arch, it appeared as though it grew out of the ground. It is the mightiest freestanding arch ever built, loftier than any symbolic monument except the 984 foot Eiffel Tower.

Beneath this structure is a vast chamber

containing the Museum of Westward Expansion, the Arch Tucker Theater, showing "Monument to the Dream," Odyssey Theatre, showing "Mark Twain's America" and the Arch Trams.

Viewing *Monument to the Dream*, about constructing the arch, was a learning experience as was the museum with a statue of Thomas Jefferson, a complete story of the Lewis and Clark exploration, interesting artifacts and talking animated mannequins. Time permitting, going up the tram to view St. Louis from the top of the arch is an experience never to be forgotten.

Back on the bus or a short walk to the President Casino, on board the Admiral, one of the most celebrated riverboats and docked directly below the Gateway Arch. Lunch in the President's Buffet was Las Vegas style, very good, and gave us the strength to play the slots. Not needing bus fare, we made it back to the Radisson after a wonderful day in St. Louis.

# MAILROOM 828TH SQUADRON

BY SHERILL BURBA

I was asked to write about the Sunday morning memorial breakfast for this years Lightweight Tower and this was our 14th annual breakfast honoring our deceased. We had 206 of the 243 in attendance. The hotel had prepared a wonderful buffet breakfast and everyone enjoyed it.

My duty was primarily that of master of ceremonies, and Al Martin did his usual excellent job of leading the singing and his rendition of a solo was enjoyed by all.

Rev. Donald R. Whitemen, who is a Baptist minister, and was a pilot in the 485th, delivered a meaningful message that I believed touched everyone. I also appreciated having Don Pedan, a Church of Christ Evangelist, for saying the 485th /15th Air Force prayer. I was the tailgunner on Don's crew.

John DiRusso read his "Remember Me" that he had written many years ago and was impressive with his sincerity in promoting Pearl Harbor as a national holiday.

Tony Siler, the cook of the 828th presented the folded flag, a symbol of a deceased veteran, which added to our

memorial services.

Thanks to Zela Williams, and to Jane Darnton for reading the Holy Scriptures. Jane is the wife of Clarence Darnton, a first timer, who sincerely enjoyed the reunion.

Our thanks to Bob Hanson who did the "The Missing Man" at the end of the breakfast. It has a tremendous amount of meaning in it and you are able to express it so well.

Down through the years, many people have expressed their appreciation for having a Sunday morning service. There have been few changes in the format which was adopted from a similar service for the 15th Air Force Association.

The service was adjourned with the sounding of TAPS.

I would also like to add the following to my report: The 828th again had the largest members present at the reunion.

We had one new member, Clarence Darnton and wife Jane and he enjoyed meeting old friends and comrades for the 1st time since 1945.

I need to apologize to Karl Bay, who

in error was reported as deceased. Karl assured me that he was alive and well. I know that I have missed some of our men in the squadron, so if you know of anyone not on the list, please let me know their name and address. Also, please send me any names for "Journeys End", the list of deceased members and year they passed away.

Jesse 'Hap' and Mavis Akin, and Andy Anderson could not attend due to health problems and I also received a letter from our former First Sgt. Bailey Jenkins, expressing his regrets about being physically unable to attend the reunion.

We were fortunate to have two squadron commanders present at the reunion - Ed Nett and Calvin Fite.

I was reelected squadron reporter and will continue to do my best to do a good job. During the year, I received over \$300.00 in the mail from men of the 828th and received \$181.00 in St. Louis. I thank you all and keep up the good work.

May you enjoy good health and join your comrades in Harrisburg, Pa. in 2001.

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# MAILROOM 829TH SQUADRON

BY ALLEN W. CARLSON, SUBSTITUTING FOR MARVIN LINDSAY, WHO WAS ILL AND UNABLE TO ATTEND THE ST. LOUIS REUNION.

After breakfast in the Clouds Restaurant, the Vets and their guests, gathered in the lobby for the City of St. Louis tour. The busses loaded at 9:00 a.m. and promptly departed for a guided tour of St. Louis. Our tour guide was Ginny who is very familiar with the history dating back to before the Revolutionary War and the Louisiana Purchase during President Thomas Jefferson's administration. The area was originally settled by the French and its design resembles typical French architecture. It still has some cobblestone streets.

We took an abbreviated tour of the zoo which is a beautiful place, with lots of animals in a wooded setting among loads of flowers and other foliage. It is truly a zoo the people of St. Louis can be proud of.

The first stop was at the Cathedral Basilica of Saint Louis, which was started by Archbishop John Glennon in 1907. The mosaic collection, the largest in the world, was built from 1912 and completed in 1988. The work was done by 20 different artists covering 83,000 square feet, it contains 41.5 million pieces of glass tes-

sare of 7,000 colors. It is truly magnificent and beautiful beyond words. After an hour or so at the cathedral we boarded the busses for more of the city. We drove by urban renewal and some half houses (buildings that are cut in half from the roof to the ground). We saw old government buildings that are still in use. The Busch Stadium and the famous Arch that signifies the gate to the westward movement and also where the Louis and Clark Expedition set out.

We finally arrived at the train station, which was the

*Continued next page*

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Central Station for the different railroads that served St. Louis and connecting to other parts of the country. The station is now converted to a shopping mall with dozens of fast food outlets and real fancy sitdown restaurants. The station is now a very inter-

esting place to see. There is a variety of shopping and entertainment going on. I'm sure it is an asset rather than a blight to the city. After a couple hours and lunch in the station we headed back to the hotel. We did more sight-seeing on the way. After an enjoyable time by all we arrived back at the hotel

before 3:00 p.m.

Note — *Earl Bundy has had a stroke and is in a nursing home. For those who would like to send cards to Earl, please send them to his home address:*

Earl Bundy  
103 N. Tennessee  
Chanute, KS 66720

## MAILROOM 830TH SQUADRON

BY GEORGE DYER

**M**y writeup was to be about our entertainment and dinner Thursday evening at the hotel but first, I would like to tell you briefly about our train ride from Little Rock, Ark. After leaving 5 hours late, naturally arrived in St. Louis 5 hours late. Hailed an old cab with a one armed driver to take us to the hotel. We were misinformed in regard to location and were dropped off at wrong hotel—After getting that straightened up, finally arrived at our destination—hot with St. Louis heat and no a/c in cab and a driver that would qualify for any racetrack in the U.S.

The Thursday evening dinner and entertainment was outstanding. First, the buffet dinner was scrumptious—very delicious and plentiful. The service and seating was outstanding. The entertainment was terrific and tuned into our age bracket. The St. Louis Strutters and Co. were dancers and entertainers, that were up in years, but

you would not know it by their performance. It was outstanding! These ladies dance for charitable events and donate all monies collected to charity. They have danced in a number of foreign countries including Australia, Russia and many others. Their patriotic songs and dances, most geared to World War II, were not only appreciated by our group but the talent was **JUST GREAT!**

St. Louis was a very fine city to visit—Thursday morning bus trip and city tour was well done and the stop at the New Cathedral was an event to remember forever. The Union Station tour and lunch-stop was something to behold. You could feast on nearly every nation's type food as well as good old American fastfoods and it seemed as if everyone enjoyed touring and eating at the station.

Friday's bus trip to the Arch and Admiral riverboat left nothing to be desired. The view from the Arch was breathtaking and the movie about

building the Arch was impressive. The casino onboard the Admiral was filled with 485th people and some with smiles from winning a few bucks and some not so lucky.

Our annual Saturday morning business meeting was well attended and went fine, even through John DiRusso was not heard too well above the talking and discord that prevailed during his short talk. Patience and courtesy have always been the 485th way of conducting themselves, so let's keep that in mind for each person that has an input.

It seems as if it gets harder each year to say goodbye but we hope to see you all in Harrisburg, Pa. next September, and to all 830th veterans, send me any data on deceased members or any pertinent info that you find interesting during our time spend in sunny Italy. Thanks for your continued donations to help me keep the squadron operations going for postage, phone calls etc.

*Just one of the boys, George Dyer*

### 15<sup>th</sup> Air Force Wall 485<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group Plaque - Your Tribute In Tile

In the near future our plaque of the 485th Bomb Group will be placed on the 15th Air Force Wall at March Field in Riverside, CA.

A 12" x 12" Marble Tile with the 485th Bomb Group Insignia will be set in front of the wall, which is part of the Heritage Courtyard /Plaza, of the new March Field Museum.

You can become a legend with your own 6" x 6" tile, blue in color as the supply last, and set near your "Buddies" and 485th Tile. Cost for a personal tile is \$35.00 for 20 spaces on one line and \$50.00 for two lines of 20 spaces each.

If you are interested, print in upper case block letters, noting that blank spaces between words are part of the 20 spaces available per line (2 lines max). Mail a check, payable to March Field Museum Foundation, with your printed request to,

Warren D. Sortomme  
3490 Turquoise Lane, Oceanside, CA 92056-4866

so I may record it and send it to the museum. If you prefer a printed application you may request it from the same address.

# MAILROOM 831ST SQUADRON

BY LYNN COTTERMAN

Saturday evening after our photos were taken for posterity we entered the Ballroom for the annual banquet and sat down to an enjoyable dinner. We had a choice of Prime Rib or Chicken Marsala with veggies, green salad and dessert. On my left at dinner was Bob Geyer whose father, Bill Geyer, was co-pilot on Chris Schaefer's crew. They lost their navigator and I filled in on one mission with them. Bob is a WWII buff and is constantly collecting information. It's nice to see more young people attending each year and taking an interest in the group.

I ate my meal in a hurry because I was helping Tony Siller sell raffle tickets for the beautiful ceramic cottage that he made and for a free night at the hotel which was donated by Air Force Reunions. The daughters of the vets dominated the raffle drawing. Linda, daughter of Bill and Zola Williams (828th Sqd) drew the numbers. The ceramic cottage was won by Sandra Burkhardt, daughter of Carl and Mary Mazzone (828th Sqd). Jayne St. Marie, daughter of James and Wilma Fulford (831st Sqd) had the winning ticket for one free night at the hotel. After dinner Eddie Erbs and his dance band played all the old tunes. I believe Dan Sjodin has logged more hours on the dance floor than he has in the air. He thoroughly enjoys dancing. The ball ended at a reasonable hour.

We have two new members that had never heard of the 485th reunions, Glenn Bell and Tom Tamraz. Glenn was on John Jackson's crew and had dropped out of sight after the war. Jackson was surfing the net looking for a clue of Glenn's whereabouts. He came across the E-mail addresses of three Missouri State Representatives. Glenn's hometown was in Joplin, MO. John E-mailed all three representatives with the information that he had about Glenn. A few days later a legislator's aide called and apologizing for not being able to help. They discussed using the drivers license as a means. She said, "Let me try that". Minutes later she called back with an address.

John was able to track down his long lost tail gunner. Glenn attended the reunion and was our only first timer.

Chuck Stanley, son of Charles Stanley, has been collecting information about the hike that his father and 17 other men made across Yugoslavia after bailing out when returning from a mission to Blechhammer. Chuck's father was with the 464th Bomb Group. Chuck contacted Sammy Schneider and found that half of David Blood's Crew (831st Sqd) were also on the hike. Seeking more information he found Tom Tamraz who was a gunner on Blood's crew. It was a long way around, but this is how Tom Tamraz, a new member of the 831st Squadron, learned about the 485th reunions.

Colleen Jolly E-mailed me about the death of her husband, Willis Jolly. Willis was an Engineer/Gunner on Brady's crew and completed 50 missions. I received a letter from Virginia Siantz with the news that Ed Siantz had lost his battle with cancer. More unexpected news was the death of Morgan Browning. His wife, Peg, said he passed away in August. He was a bombardier on Erhardt's crew and was shot down on a mission to Blechhammer. He and Ed and their wives attended the reunions regularly. I received an E-mail from Allyson Edwards, daughter of Arthur Schlagel, stating that Arthur passed away in 1996. He was on the "Stardust" which lost two engines on a mission to bomb the Padua Road Bridge. The crew was forced to bail out over Yugoslavia April 23, 1945. Bob Geyer said that his father Bill Geyer passed away April 1985.

We had one casualty at the reunion. Bob Edinger was having trouble breathing, but wanted to wait until he returned home to see a doctor. His doctor said that he had had a heart attack. He was in the hospital for several weeks and was sent home. Complications set in and Bob passed away January 9th. He was a bombardier and flew 50 missions. He and his wife, Gisela, attended the reunions faithfully.

Although there were fewer vets and their wives at the reunion this year, there were more family members and friends. We hope that this number will continue to grow.

The reunion next year will be held in Harrisburg, PA from September 6th to 9th. There are many places of interest in the area, Gettysburg, Hershey Chocolate Factory, The Eisenhower Farm, etc. Hope see you and your families there. Don't forget to send me a change of address if you move.

## This Is How It Was

### THE ICE CREAM MISSIONS:

"While in Venosa," related Col. Roger "Easy" Monroe of the 828th, "You may recall, that the Army produced ice cream at Bari. We were authorized a given amount periodically, if we'd pick it up. Of course, the Liberator was the transportation used. A speedy trip to Bari with a rapid turn-around and a faster return flight was required to get the ice cream to the evening meal on schedule. On one desert run I made, Lightweight Tower was out, so I had arranged to "buzz" the 828th mess hall to advise the troops of my return with the hopefully still solid glaze. Apparently, I had the props set at the proper rpm or was a little to low - or both - for the thin white wash used for paint in its flaky state, descended in fine particles covering the tables, food and diners. Along with most everyone else, my meal that evening, consisted primarily of crackers, jam, peanut butter, and ice cream, along with a few hostile stares. Another gourmet meal was enjoyed by all!"

From *Lightweight Tower Calling* - Dec. 1974

# MINUTES OF 485TH BOMB GROUP

Business meeting - Saturday, Sept. 30, 2000 at the Radisson Hotel, St. Louis

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

He then announced that there were 129 veterans in attendance with a total of 262.

The count of squadrons is as follows:

828th	85	Hdquarters	5
829th	39	POWs—MIA's	14
830th	47	Widows	6
831st	69	1st Timers	5

The minutes from Denver reunion was read by Secretary, Lynda Hanson and approved as read.

Lynn Cotterman, who is treasurer of the 485th bomb group, reported that \$3870.00 in treasury at present time.

Chairman Bob Benson thanked Ray Heskes and Greg Lahey for securing snacks and for all they did for hospitality room plus transportation services. Greg Lahey gave a report of \$300.00 profit from bar receipts and also reported that Anheuser Busch had donated the beer. The liquor was purchased through the American Legion at their cost and bartenders were secured also through the American Legion.

Bob Benson also thanked Sherril Burba and Al Martin for arranging the Sunday morning memorial service.

He also thanked Lynda and Bob Hanson for editing and finalizing the publication of *Lightweight Tower* and thanked the squadron reporters for their good work. Al Carlson of the 829th filled in for Marvin Lindsay, who was ill and unable to attend. He also made mention that Earl Bundy was unable to attend due to sickness but that Earl had ordered and designed the souvenir glasses for the reunion.

Bob Hanson spoke in regard to the new book "Missions by the Numbers" that was available at the reunion. This book originated from the late Carl Gigowski and was assembled by group historian, Sam Schneider. A special thank you for Jo Haden Gailbreath and Lynn Cotterman, who made numerous trips from Albuquerque to Sam Schneider's in Colorado to assist in

finalization of book. He urged everyone to purchase a book at cost of \$15.00 with no s/h if purchased at reunion. (Information to order book elsewhere in *Lightweight Tower*) Hanson also said that he and Lynda would edit LWT for another year. He thanked Francis Fundling, Warren Gorman and all others for the photos they sent and asked that anyone who sends photos to please include names on rear. He asked that anyone who had articles, pictures, etc. to send them for possible use in next LWT in 2001.

Lynn Cotterman showed two plaques to be sent to Mike Kilbury and Sam Schneider. To Mike, in appreciation of his work on address labels for all of 485th mailings and to Sam, for his work on both books "This is How it WAS" and "Missions by the Numbers" Warren Gorman had laid out the cover and back for "Missions" using Mavis Akins great picture of 'THE LADY' that she had painted.

Warren Sortomme, headquarters reporter, spoke about our plaque of the 485th Bomb Group to be placed on 15th AF wall at March Field in Riverside, CA. A 12" x 12" Marble Tile with the 485th Bomb Group insignia will be set in front of the wall, which is part of the Heritage Courtyard Plaza, of the new March Field Museum. (More on this in another part of this issue of LWT)

A count of flight crews showed John Jackson and Tom McDowell had 6 members present resulting in a coin toss, won by Jackson, for the award B24. Jackson then presented it to his tailgunner, Glen Bell, who was attending reunion for the first time. Jackson told of how he finally located Bell from Joplin, Mo through a legislator in Missouri—and help from the drivers license bureau.

There were 5 widows in attendance. Martha Cathcart thanked all for the many calls, cards, & donations for a memorial for her late husband, Joe.

Dan Sjodin said he wished more of the widows would attend the reunions, especially the ones that like to dance!

First timers were asked to stand. There

were 5 with one son of Bob Dyer (831st) attending.

Hank Dahlberg told that he would be showing a video tape at 1:30 today. It has 56 color and black and white slides from Italy in 1944, with music by Glen Miller. He will take orders to mail same for \$8.00.

Ted Dey, president of A.F.R. Co. spoke of next years reunion.

Harrisburg, Pa. was voted on and the dates being September 5th to 9th 2001. There will be a full schedule of activities planned. Bob Dietrick talked about "The Gap" a training facility at the University about 30 minutes from hotel.

Benson thanked Ted Day and Donna of A.F.R. Co. for all of their help in making this a great reunion.

Tony Siller told of a ceramic cabin he had spend three months making and which is being raffled off Sat. night with 75% of proceeds going to the 485th.

John DiRusso read his 'Destiny' and again asked to fly the flag at halfmast on December 7th each year.

Pop Arnold said that he was happy that he could come to the reunion and that each time, he had gotten to know so many more.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11 a.m.

*Submitted Respectfully,  
Lynda Hanson - 485th Secretary*



*Hank Dahlberg  
talking about video*

*Editors Note:*

I enjoyed viewing the video and believe those that did not purchase one in St. Louis will enjoy having one to bring back remembrances of sunny Italy in 1944 and 1945. The total price (including shipping and handling) is \$8.00 and may be sent to:

**Henry W. Dahlberg  
6191 S. Southwood Drive  
Littleton, CO 80121**

# JOURNEY'S END – MAY THEY REST IN PEACE

Homer Hale	2000	829th	Ben F. Cook	2000	Hdq.	Lloyd Hapgood Jr	1992	830th	G.H. Teubner	1998	828th
John Murphy	2000	829th	Merton W. Baker	2000	829th	Howard Keech	1999	828th	Hugh White	1998	831st
Fred Baggan	1999	828th	Earl Miner	1999	830th	Howard Borgan	1998	828th	Russell Young		829th
Jack Bersack	1999	828th	Edward Pawlicki	2000	830th	Harold Burns	2000	829th	Walter Huebner	1998	828th
Ivan Billet	1999	828th	Ralph Skinner	2000	830th	Olen Jones	2000	829th	Luke Terry	1998	831st
Harold Boigan	1998	828th	Lester DeJone		830th	Arlynn Brown	1999	828th	Rex Merrell		829th
Norman Lynch	1999	828th	Thomas Fraser		830th	Marion Shelor	1999	829th	Dean Basset	2000	828th
James Naylor	1999	828th	Donald Small	2000	830th	Joe Cathcart	1999	829th	Edward Siantz	2000	831st
Jerry Halliday	1998	828th	George Nakis	2000	830th	Joseph Gill	1999	828th	Leon Best		831st
Morgan Browning	2000	831st	Edward Muth	2000	830th	Thomas Hough	1999	829th	Lanier Jolly	2000	831st
Arthur Schlagel	1996	831st	Robert E. Baker	1994	830th	Frederick Schneider	1999	829th	Bob Edinger	2001	831st
Bill Geyer	1985	831st	Gale Rowland	2000	830th	Ben Skelton	1998	829th	Earl Schiffmacher	2000	830th

## P.O.W.

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

This morning my husband left home carrying a large aluminum tablespoon, a 5-inch strip of barbed wire, a photograph and a map. In the photograph an angry 23-year old man glares directly into the camera. He is wearing a stained sweat-shirt. The map, pencil drawn on paper, is folded into fourths to fit into a pocket. It has been folded for 51 years. It is a map of how to escape from prison camp. It is drawn on paper that would be easy to chew and swallow.

Today my husband will speak to the eighth graders at our grandson's school. They are studying World War Two and the Holocaust. They want to know what it was like "back then" to fight and to be a prisoner of war in Germany. It is to make the experience more real to this generation that my husband carries these pieces of his past.

When he arrived in prison camp the summer of 1944 the Germans gave each prisoner a fork and a spoon (no knife) for eating the sketchy meals to come. A day's food consisted of hot water and a piece of bread for breakfast, two ounces of powdered milk, more water and a potato for lunch, and a cup of watery soup for dinner. Today we have packed a small box of food to show the students what this daily ration looked like. We have not included the worms or black bugs often found in the soup, but we did choose a half rotten potato for realism. We have added the shares of Red Cross food parcels: two tea bags and four

ounces of canned corned beef per man per week. The aluminum spoon which scooped up the watery soup was also strong enough to spoon dirt out of the escape tunnel. It is the mental picture of his grandfather digging out the tunnel with a spoon that our grandson wants his classmates to see.

The prisoners ate slightly better on their forced marches, when they were moved from northern to southern Germany, a mass of men trudging across the Polish Plains. On the march they could occasionally find a cabbage, pull up some carrots or stroke a hen to lay an egg. Any extra food was welcome but it didn't make up for the difficulties of walking in that European winter of record breaking cold. My husband remembers he couldn't feel his feet for days, and he knew he could not take off his boots at night, for his feet would swell so badly the shoes would never go back on. For one transfer, the prisoners were moved by box car, crammed in so tightly that no one could sit down. After that smelly 36 hour trip, my husband wanted a shower so badly, he undressed in the cold air, stood outside under a cold shower, its walls long since taken for firewood by cold prisoners. When pneumonia developed and he insisted on seeing the camp doctor he was given 10 aspirins. "That's all you're going to get. It makes no difference to me what you do with them. I don't care whether you live or die"

"In that case, I'll live just to show

you", was the answer. He nibbled the aspirin, grain by grain for three days and he lived. Defiance is not a useless trait in a prisoner.

There is defiance and anger in the photograph he carries this morning - the identification picture taken in Hungary the day after his plane went down. No wonder the young man in it is angry. He has been through a lot. Last man out of a burning plane, he delayed his own jump to pull out a panicked 18 year old gunner, to press the parachute release into the boy's hand and push him out. When he followed the gunner, his own parachute would not open - he had to pull it apart by hand. On land he was greeted by angry farmers with pitch forks (it was August and haying season). They made two attempts to hang him. Twice they had the noose around his neck, and twice he pulled it loose. The third time they remembered to tie his hands first and were stringing up the noose when German soldiers arrived and claimed him as their prisoner. With three of his crew he was locked in a small guarded hut on the edge of the farm. Overnight they planned their answers to any interrogation. They would say it was their 5th mission, not their 37th, and that they knew nothing else. And overnight the four of them ate an address book - one the youngest gunner had carried - strictly against regulations. The flyers divided the pages, chewed them up in small enough

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pieces to swallow. The next morning against the wall of the hut the defiant photograph was taken.

How much more defiance would he have shown later - after two days in solitary confinement in a below-ground cell; after being driven through the streets of Budapest standing in the back of a pickup truck hands tied, while the truck's loudspeaker blared, "Death to the American gangster", and watchers hurled stones; after being hit with sticks and fists by gangs of Hitler youth who pursued the marching prisoners. How defiance would have grown when, after a second spell of solitary confinement, a fake prisoner was put into his cell - an overly friendly prisoner who spoke perfect English, who described his own plane and asked many questions about the B24 my husband had been in. If the persistent questions hadn't given the man away, his clothing would have. Most crews flew with comfortable or

warm clothes under their flak suits. This spy was pushed into the prison cell looking like a U.S. Air Force recruitment poster: leather jacket, long white scarf, jaunty cap.

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### **"defiance and anger in the photograph... taken in Hungary the day after his plane went down."**

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Neither the spy nor the official military interrogators gained any information beyond name, rank and serial number. But it was disconcerting to learn that the Nazis knew all the answers before they asked the questions. They even knew where each flyer had gone to high school or college and the dates of their graduations. "You Americans are so boastful. You put everything in your newspapers.

We file everything, and we know all about you before you get here."

Their filing system helped my husband find his ID photo and card, the one he carries this morning. When the Allied Forces freed the prison camp, the POWs broke into the guards' warehouse. They found stacks of undelivered letters, mounds of packages from home, piles of Red Cross parcels never given out. On one shelf, filed alphabetically, were their ID cards.

The last item my husband carries to school this morning is the piece of barbed wire he clipped from the compound the day the allies arrived. Miles of similar wire encircled camps throughout Germany, camps where Jews and other enemies of the Third Reich were herded and put to death. To be outside that wire meant freedom, and to hold a piece in your hand meant regaining control of your own life. For 51 years my husband's piece has hung on his study wall.

Editors Note: Knowing that this was not an article about the 485th, but another B-24 group in Italy, believed it was still applicable to our group and hope that everyone will get a laugh out of it as we did in proofreading for this years edition of Lightweight Tower—

## **A Tail-Gunner's Tale**

William C. "Andy" Anderson lives in Fairfield, Calif., with Dortha, his long-suffering redhead, and a belligerent goldfish named Jaws. As editor of this new feature, Andy kicks it off with one of his favorite true war stories to demonstrate how easy it is to knock off 500 words on one's favorite uniformed services anecdote. We will be looking forward to yours.

As any bomber crew that flew in World War II knows, the tail gunner was one of the most important members of the team. Ours was no exception, Nick being a slender, scarcely-dry-behind-the-ears firebrand of Italian extraction who was well-liked by the crew members.

We were assigned to the 15th Air Force in Italy, and our 451st Bomb Group had just rallied off the bomb run after targeting a ball-bearing plant in Austria. As commander of the aircraft, I asked for a battle damage report over the intercom. Happily, the damage assessment was minimal, considering the heavy concentration of flak guns in the area.

After the crew members checked in from all positions, our tail gunner suddenly broke in. "Skipper, I got a problem."

"What is it, Nick?"

"It's a little embarrassing. I was using the relief tube when we hit that turbulence back

there. Now an important part of my anatomy is stuck to the barrel of my gun."

It took a bit of doing to sort this all out. The B-24 Liberator, being unpressurized, was colder'n a witch's heart at 26,000 feet. Anything damp would stick to the frozen metal in a death grip. "You have to warm up that gun barrel, Nick. You know what to do."

There was a moment of silence as Nick noodled this. Then, "Lieutenant, you gotta be kidding!"

"I'm not kidding. You have to fire your guns."

There was a loud exclamation, then, "Lieutenant, you know the recoil on these twin 50s ..."

"I know. But you're going to be stuck for the duration until you get that gun barrel heated. Now fire off a few rounds. The rest of our formation would be beholden if you didn't shoot any of them down."

There were further muffled exclamations over the intercom, followed by the vibration of the tail guns being fired. After a long period of silence came a loud oath followed by a long sigh of relief. "Mission accomplished, skipper. My manhood and I are once again as one. Bloody but unbowed."

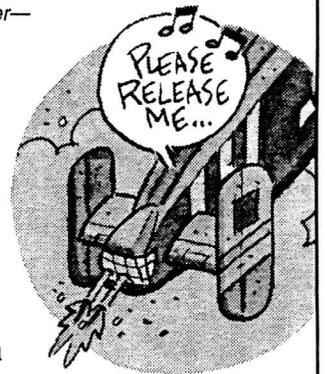
"There's some sulfa in the medicine kit. You want the waist gunner to come back and put a bandage ..."

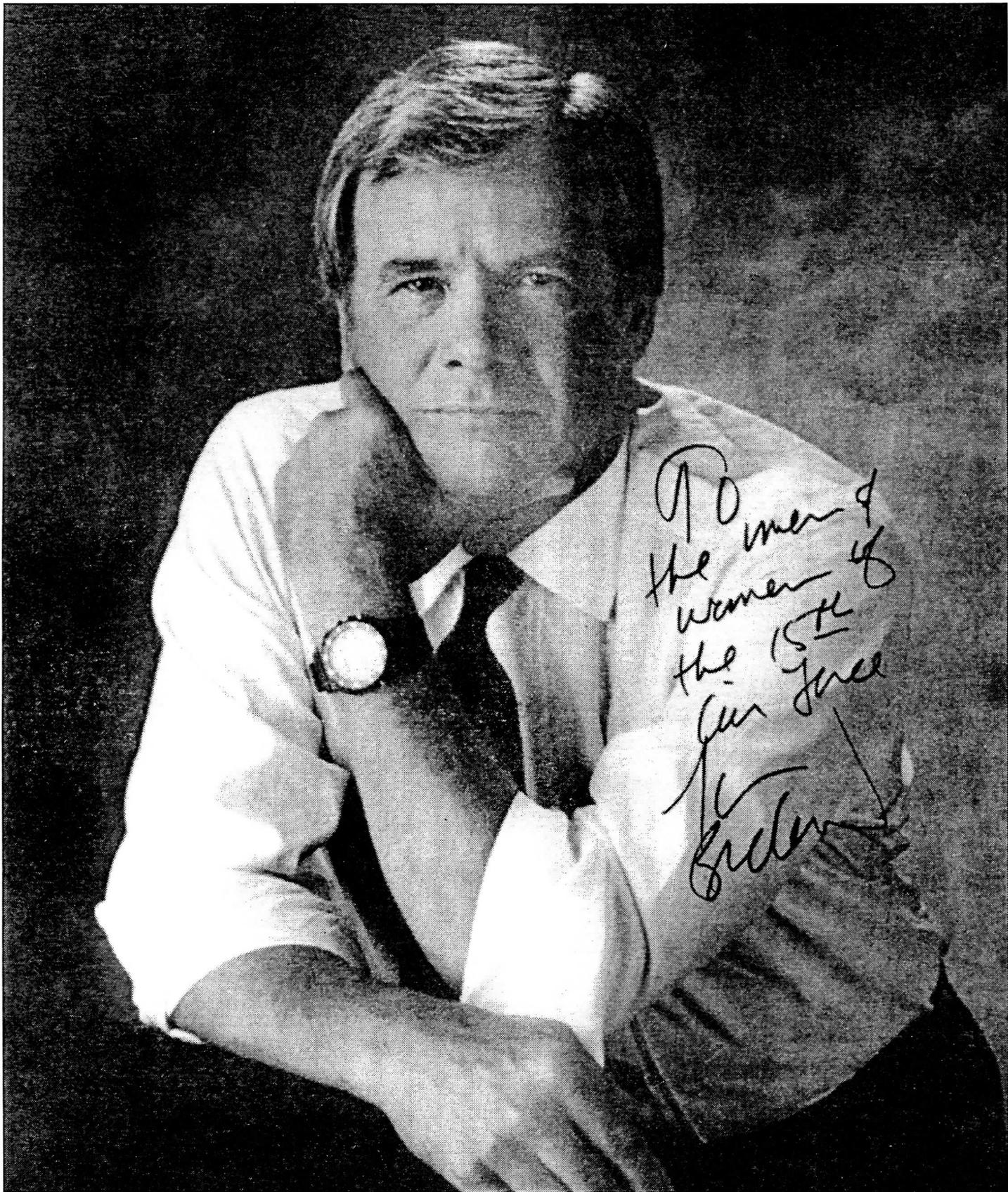
"Not on your life, lieutenant. Some things are sacred!"

Not long after that, the war ended in Europe. I had been blessed with top-drawer bomber crew, and it was my good fortune to bring them home mostly in one piece. All were covered with medals and distinction.

Combat seems to be a crucible in which lifetime relationships are formed, and our crew was no different. In the years following military discharge, we kept in close touch. At our reunions, no subject or war story was taboo—except for one. No one, but no one, ever discussed how Nick, our tail gunner, was wounded.

To this day, not even Nick's offspring know where their father had been injured to be awarded the Purple Heart. And it is highly doubtful they ever will know. As Nick so poetically put it, "Some things are sacred."





To the men &  
women of  
the 15<sup>th</sup>  
Air Force  
Tom Brokaw

**THE GREATEST GENERATION**  
**A Tribute to World War II Veterans**  
*By Tom Brokaw*