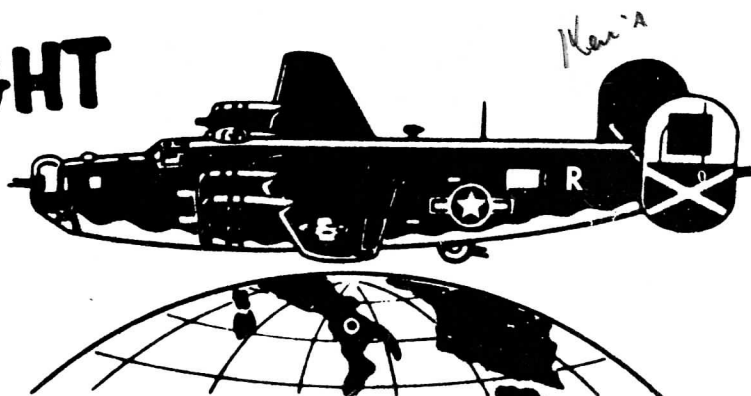




# LIGHTWEIGHT TOWER CALLING



No. 20

January 1986

## Nashville Scene of '86 Reunion



**THE GRAND OLE OPRY** — Minnie Pearl trades jokes with the King of Country Music Roy Acuff on the stage at the world famous Grand Ole Opry in Nashville, the scene of the 1986 485th reunion.

By Joe Cathcart

Nashville's Maxwell House, built prior to the Civil War, used as a POW camp during Nashville Occupation and refurbished and opened as one of the South's premier hotels during the 19th century, has been chosen as the location for the 1986 reunion of the 485th Bomb Group.

Registration for the 1986 reunion opens on Wednesday, September 24, and activities continue through Sunday, September 28.

The Maxwell House, famous for its original blend of coffee now bearing the hotel's name, is not the original structure which burned many years ago. It is a modern Clarion Hotel with all the amenities that the most discriminating guest would require.

Activities already finalized include the usual two meetings, a banquet-dance featuring the excellent cuisine for which the hotel is famous and music by an orchestra befitting "Music City USA" featuring the music of the Forties, but containing maybe one Polka, Cotton-Eyed Joe, Texas Two-Step or a rousing Tennessee Hoe-Down.

Reserved tickets have already been purchased for a Friday night performance of the Grand Ole Opry, the oldest radio show in existence and the piece-de-resistance of a Nashville visit.

Saturday a tour is available which will cover various aspects of the Nashville scene. Members and guests will tour the Hermitage, Andrew Jackson's home which is a museum of the president's life style

(Continued on page 6)

## 15th Air Force Reunion

By Woody Woodyard

Th. July 25, 1985

Checked in at Doubletree Plaza, Seattle, about noon, after an uneventful flight from Toledo (thank goodness!). Arrived to find John and Mary Driscoll (831st) in the lobby to greet us. Nice meeting friends so far away.

Shortly afterwards, Doug and Lillian Cairns. (Hdqtrs.) arrived. Then as we moved around the hotel a little; we found that from the 485th Bob and Jean Brown, Ralph and Helen Raines, Harley Beard (a new name), Dan and Clair Sjodin, and with Woody and Marguerite

Woodyard made the 831st well represented.

Also Art Hurley, Roger Monroe and Jack Whatley (828th) and Kenneth O'Connell (829th) had registered in. Bill Farrell (829th) stopped in to visit with Ken and a few others of us. Bill lives near but was unable to stay long.

Sherrill Burba (828th) visited a short time, because unfortunately his wife had become ill in Canada and had to have an operation there. They were on their way to the reunion, but "the best plans." Everything worked out OK for them,

(Continued on page 8)



**828th Vets At Reunion — 1st Row -** Burba, Rex Stanley, Art Hurley, Ed Nett, Roger Monroe, Ed Orgass, Zack Phillips, Clarence Eckfeld, Bernard Freeland, Jack "Fireball" Bill Fritz, Joe Opalka, George Ick, Gilbert Bell, Bill Conley, Sherrill Whatley; **2nd Row -** Carl Gigowski, Ken Wall.



**829th Vets At Reunion — 1st Row, L to R.:** N. Fessler, Art Karns, Barton Brown, V. Gullo, P. Collucio, A. Peschka; **2nd Row -** R. E. Isaacson, R. Peterson, Al Martin, K. Weyland, J. Cathcart, Al Homan, Al Carlson, M. Kilbury; **3rd Row, L. to R.:** Bob Brown, K. Robison, C. Crane, B. Rempe, B. Ferrell, B. Daniel, M. Fundling, B. Long, M. Lindsay, Bill Beggs, R. Haugen, S. McGhee, E. Bundy.





830th Vets At Reunion — 1st Row, George Dyer, Bill Beggs, Billy Cottingham, Tom Russell, Richard Griffin, Ted Lipinski; 2nd Row - Jim

Hunter, Pete Porter, Ed Muth, Chuck Forester, Chester Konkolewski, Rod Ritchie.



831st Vets At Reunion — 1st Row, John Jackson, Hank Dahlberg, Dan Sjodin, Lloyd Proudlove, Ed Stauverman; 2nd Row, Victor Bone, Warren Meyers, Vernon

Christensen, Frank Chaffin, Guy Snyder, Harold Richards; 3rd Row, Bob Hanson, John Driscoll, Clete Harner, Bill Spence, Ralph Raines, Bob Dietrich, Albert E. Paul; 3rd

Row - Howard Woodyard, Bob Rector, Don Evjen, Leonard Little, Frank Nardi, Leo Gagne, Jack Godfrey, Lamont Parker.



**Commanders At Reunion —** Lloyd Cairns, Dan Sjodin, Ed Nett, Pop Arnold, Richard Griffin. Proudlove, Roger Monroe, Doug



**POWs At Reunion — 1st Row -** Earl Isaacson, Robert Peterson, Lloyd Proudlove, Joe Cathcart, Pop Arnold, Vernon Christensen, Slayton

McGehee, Roy Daniel, Marvin Lindsay, Abe Homan; 2nd Row - Joe Opalka, Ed Muth, David Roth; 3rd Row - Jack Godfrey, Bob Rector,

Don Evjen, Leonard Little, Frank Nardi, Leo Gagne, Chester Konkolewski.



# Minutes of Texas Meetings

**Friday October 11, 1985**

Meeting was opened with host Dan Sjodin, who called "Woody" Woodyard to give a welcome to all. Woody thanked Dan Sjodin and co-host Jack Whatley for a wonderful and busy reunion.

The meeting was then turned over to Earl Bundy. Earl introduced the ever elusive, but always heard from General Walter 'Pop' Arnold, who expressed his delight in finally being able to attend a reunion and promised to attend more of the reunions. 'Pop' Arnold is a very friendly and enjoyable young man, we have all prospered by his attendance. Colonel Doug Cairns was asked for his comments. Sherril Verba read his Air Force prayer. Minutes were read and approved.

Earl announced the death of Dorothy, wife of Bod Deeds. Our prayers and thoughts go out to Bob and family. Lyle is in bad health and has given his job as reporter for the 830th to Chester Konkolewski.

Dan Sjodin told of some of Jack Whatley's ideas used at the reunion. Jack wrote Hormel Company telling of how well they appreciated all the Spam that was eaten in Italy. Hormel was very generous in sending a can of Spam for each of the attending veterans. Jack also had Bari Bread made and presented to you. Did it bring back old memories? You know Spam, hash and Vienna sausage have never been allowed in our house since the war and I've always wondered why.

At the Air Show, Tennessee Ernie Ford is to introduce the 485th. You should all be wearing your hats to identify the group.

Dan Sjodin told us that General 'Pop' Arnold was the 1st C.O. of the 485th. Dan also acknowledged the men present from headquarters.

Hank Dahlberg made a plaque of the 485th reunions and the hosts. To keep with the theme, the plaque was made of airplane aluminum, rivets and hinges. Hank spoke of the bombing of the ship in the Atlantic on the way to Italy when so many men were lost. The plaque was turned over to Dan and Jack to hold until next year's reunion.

Carl Gigowski, told of his first trip to Texas where he met a Texas Armadilla in Austin. Carl will soon reach the 'old rocking chair' time of life and is looking forward to having fun instead of so much work. He acknowledged the ground crews and was happy to have so many from headquarters. We had 15 new veterans attending this reunion.

Photographers from the Confederate Air Force took group pictures. Buses were to leave at 9 a.m. for the air show Saturday morning. Motion was made to adjourn and watch the beautiful dancers from Matamoras perform the colorful dances of Mexico.

**Sunday October 13, 1985**

We met in the meeting room at 8:30 for a Continental Breakfast and to watch the video of things to be seen in Nashville in 1986.

Joe Opalka gave a talk on the P.O.W. organization. National Headquarters Address: American Ex-Prisoners of War, Inc., 3201 E. Pioneer Parkway, Suite 40, Arlington, Texas 76010, Ph. (817) 649-AXPW. Veterans Administration Hot Line — 1-800-821-8139. Joe told of all the benefits the P.O.W.s were entitled to. Motto is "We exist to help the man who cannot help himself."

Earl opened the meeting. Minutes were read and approved. Laura then gave a report on different tours members had expressed interest in, but with the hostage situation as is, it was decided to forgo trips for a while.

Jack Whatley asked for the names and addresses of the ones who wanted pictures. Each veteran stood to introduce himself, squadron, hometown and wife. The 829th won by one. 826-16; 829-27' 830-12; 831-26; headquarters 2. Total 83. Flight crew John Godfrey - 6; ground crew present - 828-2; 829-8; 830-2; 831-2; total 14. Jack Opalka coming from Alaska travelled the farthest.

It was announced that the 485th was re-activated in 1955 as Air Tactical Missal Wing. It is and has been stationed in Belgium.

Old business: 1986 reunion in

Nashville beginning Wednesday September 24-Sunday 29. Friday is 'Grand Ole Opry' night. Many good thanks were given to Dan and Jack and respective spouses for a job well done. It was announced that donations were needed for the newsletter.

New business: Bob Hansen offered to host the reunion in Florida in 1988. Motion was made and accepted. There was a discussion of how far ahead these reunions should be scheduled. Lloyd Proudlove offered to host the reunion in Phoenix, Arizona in 1987. This was approved.

Chester Konkolewski again offered San Antonio, but was declined. So — Nashville in 1986; Phoenix, Ar. in 1987 and St. Petersburg in 1988.

21 P.O.W.s were present. It was explained that a fellow veteran or any one else could be found by writing an address in San Antonio, Texas. They will check through military records to locate as military or civilian. Sorry, I do not at this time have this address, but if anyone is interested write Earl Bundy who does have the address.

Jack Whatley read a poem about the 'Last Flight'.

Motion was made to adjourn, say our last goodbyes, be on our way home to prepare and look forward to the next reunion.

**Laura Rempe,  
Secretary**

**3324 S. W. 39**

**Oklahoma City, Okla. 73119**

**(405) 685-2364**

**TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:**  
R.Vers coming to the Nashville reunion — I have checked the list of R.V. campgrounds in and around Nashville. I think the best choice is with K.O.A. Nashville. They seem to offer good spaces, senior citizen discount and is close to Maxwell House, Grand Ole Opry and OpryLand. Reservations may be made at your closest K.O.A. with voucher toward your stay at this park or you can call 1-800-833-6995, or write: K.O.A. Nashville, 2626 Music Valley Drive, Nashville, Tenn. 37214.

Reservations should be made as soon as possible. They will accept full refund if you must cancel 48 hours before due date.

**Laura Rempe**

# Nashville Scene of '86 Reunion

(Continued from page 1)

in the early 1800's. You will see the downtown area including the Capitol and a reproduction of the original stockade Fort Nashborough where the founding fathers fought off hostile Indians.

Also, you will see the famous Music Row containing Country Music Hall of Fame, recording studios and more.

In addition, you will see the Parthenon, the only full scale replica of the famous building now in ruins in Athens which many architects consider the most perfectly proportioned building of all times, the Governor's mansion and the homes of some of the country music stars.

Lunch during the tour will be at an unusual buffet offering selections of the many old time southern farm type cooking.

The hotel provides swimming, tennis and a complete health club with spa, sauna and exercising equipment. A municipal golf course is in the immediate complex; provision will be made for guest membership at not too distance private golf and racquet ball facilities if there is a demand for such.

The reunion registration will be open Wednesday, September 24 and group rates are extended through Sunday night, September 28, but if you wish to make an even longer stay, I believe we might be able to negotiate that.

We propose to include only the meetings, dinner dance, hospitality suite and miscellaneous expense in the registration with all other activities optional. This way you can name your own poison, so to speak.

Other group activities under consideration for your options include a bus trip tour and social at Lynchburg, Tennessee, the home of Jack Daniels, the oldest licensed distillery in the U.S.; a showboat cruise on the General Andrew Jackson, a new ten million dollar stern wheeler showboat; a group dinner show in Printer's Alley, the Nashville Strip, possibly Boots Randolph's. By the time Lightweight Tower Calling reaches you, possibly these will have been finalized.

In addition, you may wish to avail yourself of the opportunity to visit Opryland Theme Park, one of the country's most successful, with its myriad of musical shows and rides.

Or the Belle Meade Mansion, an ante-bellum mansion, or Cheekwood, an outstanding art museum situated in a lovely botanical garden, or countless country music attractions too numerous to be listed much less including in the Saturday tour.

If you are motoring in, be sure and arrange for some additional time to visit on the way in and out of our city. From the south there is the Space Museum in Huntsville; to the west is Mud Island in Memphis; just to the north is the Mammoth Cave National Park and to the east is the Smokey Mountain National Park, just to name a few of the attractions you will not want to miss.

One more thing, for those of you who have roots in Tennessee or for those who just wish they did, 1986 has been designated as "Homecoming" in Tennessee with most every town, community, or hamlet planning some kind of special event during the year so as our tourism department says, "Follow Me to Tennessee" in 1986.

## LIGHTWEIGHT TOWER CALLING

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

Editor:

Donald L. Webb  
71 Orchard Lane  
Boyertown, Pa. 19512

Hqts. and Historian:

Carl P. Gigowski  
344 Eola St. SE  
Grand Rapids, Mich. 49507

828th Reporter:

Robert S. Deeds  
4643 286th St.  
Toledo, Ohio 43611

829th Reporter:

Earl L. Bundy  
5773 Middlefield Dr.  
Columbus, Ohio 43220

830th Reporter:

Chester Konkolewski  
7454 Pipers Buff  
San Antonio, Texas 78251

831st Reporter:

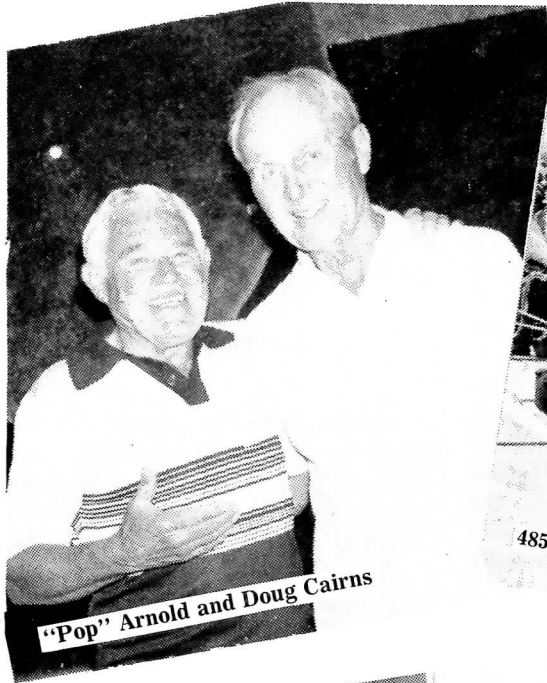
Howard P. Woodyard  
3539 Butternut Dr.  
Lambertville, Mich. 48144



**THE HERMITAGE** — Here is the restored home of Andrew Jackson, the seventh president of the United States. A trip to The Hermitage is on the agenda during the 485th's reunion in Nashville.



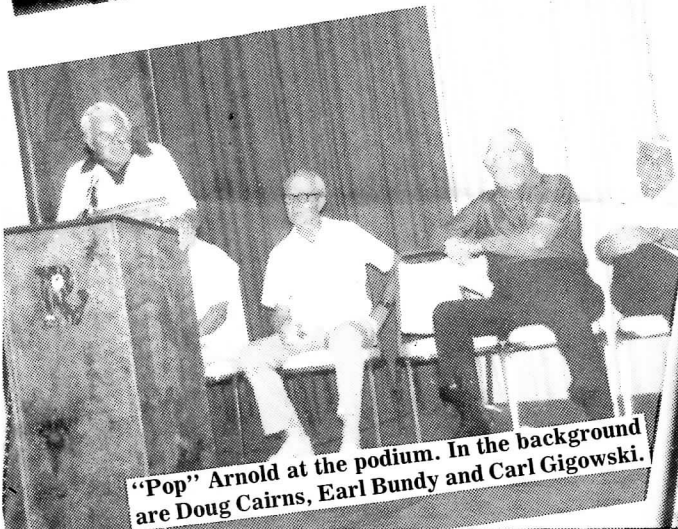
# Scenes at the south Texas Reunion



"Pop" Arnold and Doug Cairns



485th contingent at Confederate Air Force show.



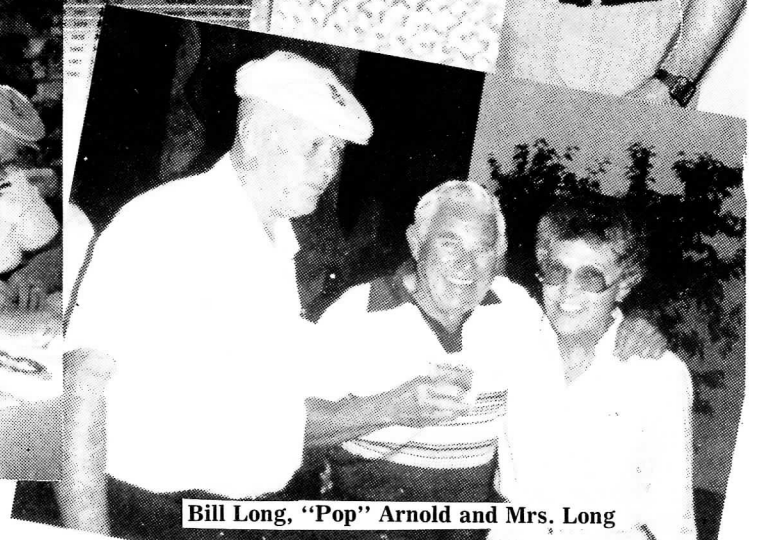
"Pop" Arnold at the podium. In the background are Doug Cairns, Earl Bundy and Carl Gigowski.



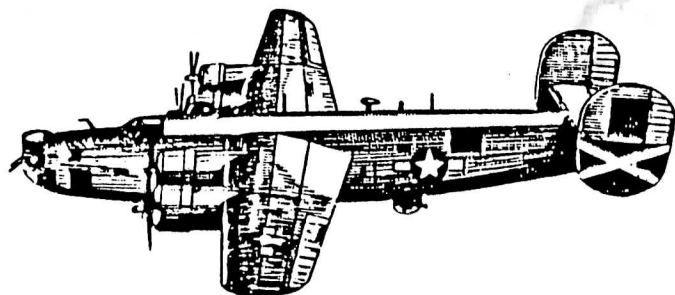
Hank Dalberg poses with the reunion plaque



Taking registrations are, left to right, Alvera Peschka, Martha Bundy and Laura Rempe.



Bill Long, "Pop" Arnold and Mrs. Long



485th Bomb Group Prayer.

## ORDER FORM.

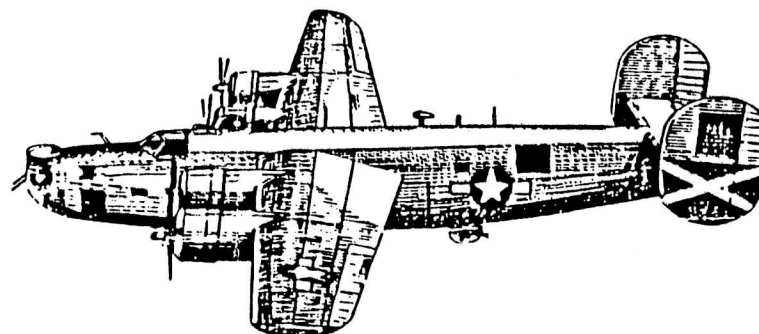
Please cut out the order form. Indicate the quantity desired, total your order in the space provided on this form, and send it, with your payment (check or money order) to: VOGEL & SONS, P.O. BOX 1752, WALDORF, MD 20601

QUANTITY		PRICE	TOTAL
_____	Copper etch of the 15th AF (485th BG) prayer (Size: 12 x 9 inches)	\$25.00	\$ _____
_____	Personalization strip (which can be taken to your local trophy shop for engraving).	3.00	\$ _____
_____	Total cost of item(s) ordered. (Maryland residents add 5% Sales Tax)		\$ _____
	(Postage and Handling Charges Included in Sale Price)		\$ _____
	TOTAL ENCLOSED THIS ORDER		\$ _____

Insure checks are made payable to VOGEL & SONS. Prices are subject to change without notice. Write for special overseas postage rates on this and other items. Please allow 4-6 weeks for delivery. Your purchase helps support projects of the 485th Bomb Group. Thank you very much for your order.

Please complete mailing label below (Print or Type)

Mail to: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_



485th Bomb Group Prayer.

Lord, God Almighty, Pilot of our faith, Co-Pilot on this life's journey, be our ever present Navigator on our mission on Your earth.

Teach us to communicate with our fellow man, to engineer our lives in such way that we shall complete the mission You would have us do in this earthly theatre of operations.

May our guns of virtue be ever primed, "against politics without principle; pleasure without work; knowledge without character, business without morality; science without humanity; freedom without patriotism, and religion without sacrifice"

Lord, when we have finished our mission of life, may the beacon of your heavenly tower be calling us to a safe return to the runway of eternal life where we may find a permanent stand down on that hard stand prepared by the ground crews of heaven, where the flak of life can no longer be seen, and guns of pain, illness and despair are silenced for evermore, and we can reside in our homeland of eternal rest and peace.

Be with our comrades and their families who have already passed through the vapor trail of life.

God, we give Thee thanks for the good things of life, the friendship, the fellowship, the "viva la compagne" of this Group; yes, even life itself.

Peace be unto each of us now and forever more.

Amen



By Sherrill Burba



# Story Brings Memories For One 485th Veteran

*A story in last year's Lightweight Tower Calling recalled memories for at least one 485th veteran. He is Tom Tabor, of Bay City, Mich.*

*The story recounted how it took 38½ years for two crew members to find each other and was written by Jack Whatley, of McAllen, Texas.*

*Here's Tom Tabor's story:*

The story of Jack Whatley in the January newsletter was like a message from the Twilight Zone to me. I was the radio operator who Sgt. Parise traded planes with that day. As a result, he died and I lived.

I kept a diary of my missions (40 missions, 25 sorties). Following is the report word for word from my diary that day.

"Fri., Feb. 23, 1945, flew a mission to Bruck, Austria to bomb a marshalling yard. Sgt. Paris (I spelled it wrong) and I traded planes as he had just been checked out to operate Panther. We went in at 20,000 ft. indicated, actual about 12,000 ft.

The flak guns were in the mountains so they were really close and they shot the hell out of us. Lt. Ware and his crew were flying Red A in the slot and they got a direct hit and burst into flames.

There was a wall of flames from the bomb bay through the tail. It was a terrible sight to watch. We could see two men in the waist on fire from head to toe. We saw only three chutes plus one man leave through the flight deck upper hatch (I presumed this as Parise because he would have been closest to it).

He pulled his rip cord and chute disintegrated in a flash of flame. This was the 13th sortie for Red E, 13th sortie for three of our crew, 13th day in a row the 485th has flown and my radio was S01-13.

We had crashed at Venosa field when we arrived there on Friday the 13th of October, 1944 and we all survived and now that someone took my place today, I will always consider 13 my lucky number."

My name is Tom Tabor and I was the radio operator on Tom Kastello's Crew 3 of the 828th Sqdn. I was the first radio operator to be trained to

operate the three receivers and transmitters which jammed the enemy radar.

Sgt. Parise was operating it for the first time. It was always positioned in the slot of the formation to protect the whole squadron. I never knew Sgt. Parise, but he is an important person in my life. If he had not been eager to become a Panther operator I would not be alive today.

On that fateful day our ship was equipped with a K-20 aerial camera and I took a picture of Lt. Ware's ship at the exact moment the first small glimpse of fire appeared. I continued to take shot after shot until it blew up, but later at the photo lab we discovered that the camera was low on film and I only got a few frames.

Another recollection that I have is that the pilot was slumped over in his seat. The co-pilot got out of his seat, apparently saw there was no way out and sat down and flew the burning plane out of the formation which probably saved further damage to the squadron.

We were so close that we could see his face until suddenly the plane

blew and there was not a trace; only empty sky.

I don't believe I knew anyone in the Ware crew, but if Jack Whatley or Henry Ring would like to contact me I would be happy to communicate with them since I have lost my crew. I would even be glad to become their honorary or substitute radio operator.

My crew had as its crew chief Dean Basset and Gil Bell for "Ole Maude" Red K.

Our crew was as follows: pilot Tom Kastello, co-pilot Ed Deegan, bombardier William Lowe (killed in crash), navigator Rudolph Hess (injured and left us), engineer Fritz Albert, and gunners John White, Jake Barnes, Hugh Barlow, Ray Lamb and myself.

Jake and I have been in touch all these years but we have been unable to locate any of the others.

## Reporter Named

Effective with the printing of this year's Lightweight Tower, Lyle Talbott has resigned as reporter for the 830th squadron.

Please send all inquiries and information for the 830th to the new reporter:

Chester Konkolewski, 7454 Pipers Bluff, San Antonio, Texas 78251.



**THE MAXWELL HOUSE** — Headquarters for the 1986 reunion is this modern luxury hotel bearing a proud name of another century. This convention hotel remains faithful to its prestigious tradition by providing all of the modern amenities in the warmth of the 19th century decor and Southern hospitality of a bygone era.

# Keenan Recalls 1945 Mission

Reading the Lightweight Tower and other references has brought back memories for many veterans. The following incident is typical of some of them.

James F. Keenan, of 53 Roseleaf Drive, Pittsburgh, Pa. reports on the February 16, 1945 mission on which group commander Col. John P. Tomhave and more than a dozen other airmen were lost.

Keenan was top turret gunner on the crew commanded by Lt. Robert F. O'Rourke, of the 829th squadron. Their plane was positioned number 2 in the lead box that day, just to the rear of Col. Tomhave's plane. Lt. Carl D. Stockdale's plane was in the number three position. Keenan's notes from that day relates the details:

"We were still in relatively tight formation when the flak hit. Integrity of the boxes for fire power had been drilled into us, and O'Rourke held to it.

"When the flak started, Col. Tomhave turned to the right. O'Rourke reduced power to stay inside the turn. Then The Colonel levelled momentarily, then turned abruptly to the left. O'Rourke added power, and we skidded out of position.

"Lt. Stockdale never had the opportunity to complete the left turn he had started. Flak took his plane amidships, low, and Col. Tomhave's ship aft, and, as my diary notes say, "both ships splattered."

"Then they got us. We took hits in the body, but the most disturbing was a hit that set the trim tab on the left vertical stabilizer to vibrating. The vibrations rattled the whole plane. There were some other structural hits, but nothing we couldn't handle.

"We couldn't maintain speed with the group so we lagged behind. By maintaining barely, flight speed, O'Rourke got us back. We were a little over due."

Charley Papp, crew chier of the ship didn't know whether to yell at us or not for getting his aircraft messed up. I'll have to call him in Dayton, Ohio sometime to find out.

## How To Find a Lost Friend

Do you have an old Air Force buddy you've not heard from — don't know where he is?

According to Roger Monroe, 485th veteran and former executive officer and pilot, 13th Bomb Sq., 1950-51, there is a 50-50 chance you can locate the buddy.

You must follow the three steps listed below. It will cost only 66 cents.

The Air Force maintains correspondence addresses of all AF retirees and air reserve forces personnel as well as the military organization addresses of all active members.

To contact someone you knew but don't know their current address you or your surviving spouse should follow these instructions:

1. Place your letter in an envelope, seal and place a stamp on it showing your return address and your friend's name only.

2. Place the envelope addressed to your friend in another envelope along with identifying information about yourself (full name, grade, SSN and address) plus a separate sheet of paper showing known data about your friend such as grade,

SSN or serial/service number, date of birth, former duty station, dates known to be at the last base etc.

3. Mail your letter to HQ AFM-PC/MPCD003, Northeast Office Place, 9504 IH 35 North, San Antonio TX 78233-6636. Be sure to affix sufficient overseas postage if you have reason to believe your friend does not reside in the United States.

Earl Bundy, of the 829th, submitted two other locator services you may want to try. One is: United States Air Force, c/o (A.F.P.M.R.C.), Randolph AFB, Texas 78148.

Write a letter to the person you wish to contact. Enclose it in a stamped envelope with his name on it.

In your letter to AFPMRC, give his name, rank, serial number and last location he served, plus any address you have.

A third locator service is offered by the Air Force Times, published at Springfield, Va. 22159. It offers a free listing in the publication.

Merely send them the name, rank and last known address of your buddy; also your full name, full address, including zip code, and telephone number (if desired).



**15th AIR FORCE PRESENTATION** — This photograph is not recent, but we felt it was important enough to include in this year's newsletter. It was taken on Nov. 12, 1983 at the Fifteenth Air Force's 40th anniversary banquet at Riverside, Calif. The photo shows Col. Cairns (at podium) presenting a copy of the 485th Bombardment Group book of Lightweight Towers to retired Brig. Gen. Murray A. Bywater (standing left, president of the Fifteenth Air Force Association. Also identifiable in the photo are (left to right): L. Gen. William K. Martin, USAF, Ret., former 15AF commander; lady unidentified; General Bywater (standing); General Leon Johnson, USAF, Ret., former commander of Fifteenth Air Force who is wearing his Medal of Honor from World War II for Ploesti raid action; Colonel Cairns (at podium); Lt. Gen. James E. Light, Jr., (standing), current commander of 15AF; and Lt. Gen Archie J. Old, Jr., USAF, Ret., (seated) former commander of 15AF.



# The Saga of 'Big Alice From Dallas'

*(Editor's Note — Reprinted below is a copy of a letter written recently to R. B. Skelton, of Dallas, Texas, from Howard Boxley, of Doraville, Ga. The letter is self-explanatory and, we think, interesting to many of our readers.)*

I recently ran across your name and picture in the "Lightweight Calling" newsletter dated Dec. 1974, showing you beside your plane "Big Alice From Dallas". I thought perhaps you might like to know what happened to your plane after you left Venosa.

Incidentally on the same page is a picture of our ship dropping our bomb load. It is "White T" from the 830th. Photo 7. Pilot was Laverne Foran and co-pilot was Howard Boxley. This was our second White T. The crew chief was Don Stevens.

Having gone to Vienna on Oct. 11th (1944), our ship was "indisposed" with a few unintended vent holes in the skin that needed patching and likewise an engine that didn't run with holes in it.

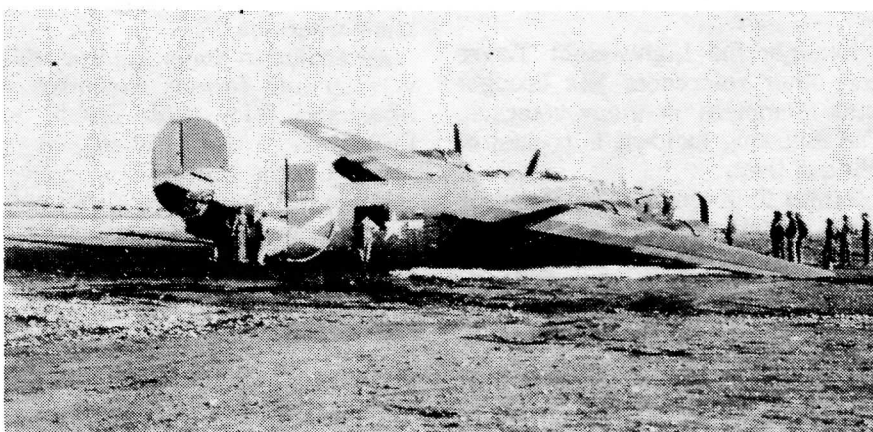
Oct. 12th was scheduled for a maximum effort over the Bologna area. The 830th was short of planes and the 829th had a spare to loan so they gave us "Big Alice From Dallas" for the mission.

The mission to Bologna was planned to hit all the targets in and around Bologna all on the same day and knock out all the military targets in one day, eliminating it as a military target.

All the groups went west to the Mediterranean and went single file up the coast. Each turned at the same point and headed east to Bologna five minutes apart. Our target was an ammo dump east of Bologna and located in the southeast corner of a large field.

We apparently had some inexperienced personnel from Wing HQ in the lead plane. We reached the target and made the bomb run but didn't drop.

The Lead Bombardier decided he was aiming at the wrong field and we had passed the correct field. So, our leader took us in a 360-degree turn, losing a thousand feet altitude



"Big Alice From Dallas" after crash landing

and it brought us under the next group. Fortunately they had a different target so they didn't rain on us.

We dropped on the first field. Later, drop photos showed that the first field was the correct one. We did their fall plowing for the winter wheat crop.

We were due to continue to the Adriatic and head for home. We were briefed that there was flack at Ravenna and Rimini on the coast and we were to fly between.

I suppose anyone that couldn't find the target couldn't find two cities on the coast. We flew right over Ravenna and at less than 20,000 ft. as we were descending on our way home.

When the flack hit, we got a burst right under the right wing. We immediately lost No. 3 engine and feathered the engine. Without further mishap we came home down the Adriatic.

We knew when we lost No. 3 that we had lost our hydraulics. There was no pressure for the landing gear or brakes. We tried pumping up the brake system with the hand pump, but there was no fluid and it wouldn't hold any pressure.

When nearing the field we called the tower and told them we would land last as we had no brakes. Our engineer, Herman Martin, cranked the landing gear down by hand. I asked the rear gunners, Lloyd Brinkman and Warren Ireland, to check the gear. They reported a cut on a tire so I went back to take a look

from the rear window.

It didn't look too bad, but we thought we might have a flat tire. Knowing we didn't have brakes, we had the two gunners in the rear tie a parachute in each rear window to use for brakes.

The landing approach was normal for three engines. After touching down we slowed normally for a while, then the plane started to pull to the right. We hollered for the gunner to pull the left chute. As this slowed us more the right wing started to drop and we hollered for the other chute.

The plane rolled off the runway to the right and the wingtip touched the ground. Between the chutes and the wing digging in we quickly stopped almost in front of the tower.

Upon inspection we could see the drag strut had been shot two-thirds through. When the weight of the plane came down on it, the strut gave way.

No one was even shaken up. The plane had very little damage due to ending up in the soft dirt. A new wingtip, No. 4 prop, No. 3 engine and a new right gear and it would have been able to go again. However, with the increased number of replacement planes available, it was not prudent to spend the time repairing the plane.

Thus, an untimely end for "Big Alice From Dallas."





**First Timers At Reunion — 1st Row - Bill Fritz, Barton Brown, Pop Arnold, Slayton McGehee, Clete**

**Harner, Zack Philips; 2nd Row - David Roth, Richard Griffin, Bernard Freeland, Lamont Parker.**

## The Great Fish Story

Two of the 485th's adventurous types went "a-feeshin" after the 15th Air Force convention/reunion in Seattle last August.

Roger Monroe flew his Bonanza from Newport Beach, Calif., meeting Art Hurley. They went off on the great salmon-halibut hunt.

The two landed at Vancouver, British Columbia and was met by a bush float plane. They wet their lines at a fish



**CATCH OF THE DAY — Roger Monroe displays a fish he caught in British Columbia after the Seattle reunion. In the background is the other veteran, Art Hurley, who participated in "the great fish story."**

camp on the west coast of Vancouver Island in the Pacific.

They admit the best part of the trip of five days was the plentiful gourmet food — served and eaten, not caught. Each averaged an increase in weight of two pounds per day.

The eating schedule: a mini-breakfast at 0500 hours; full one at 0800; lunch at noon; hors d'oeuvres at 1700 hours; dinner at 1800, and snacks at 2130. Between these times, fishing covered 13 hours each day; sleeping covered six hours.

The catch? Roger easily landed the first salmon, but released it 'til next year — a baby. Art caught the largest, a 12-pound silver (while others around them were catching 30-and 40-pound kings). There was a 29-pound ling cod caught and boated, but both fishermen claimed it. Neither claimed a halibut keeper.

All in all, they both reported a great experience and plan to do it again next summer in Alaska with Joe Opalka. If anyone is interested, contact Roger Monroe, 1210 Park Newport, apt. 215, Newport Beach, Calif. 92660. (714) 759-0111.

### JOURNEY'S END

Ray Butler (831st)	May 17, 1978
Ed Francis (831st)	Aug. 16, 1983
George Vroszak (831st)	Dec. 28, 1984
Stuart E. Gansel (830th)	Feb. 24, 1985
Robert F. O'Rourke (829th)	May 31, 1985
Len Heckert (830th)	Aug. 3, 1985
T. D. O'Brien (829th)	Nov. 15, 1985
Leo Michalec (831st)	Dec. 13, 1985
Henry E. Freitas (828th)	
Chas. J. McGinn (828th)	
Robert E. Beamish (828th)	



## MAIL ROOM

### 485TH BOMB GROUP HQ —

Carl Gigowski



A year ago when I reached that youthful age of 60, I was hoping to taper off on my activities, including work, so as to assume a more leisurely pace of life. Prior to age 60, work received top priority and play last. Upon reaching 60 I tried to change my priorities where work and play received equal status.

Well, it hasn't worked that way and most likely will not until I retire at age 62. Then I plan to change my priorities again — play will receive top priority and work, well I hope to forget the meaning of the word. You must admit it is nice to dream.

For 1985, my employee Lear-Seigler had the best year in it's history which for me meant working overtime more than I care to. As a hobby I have a Polka Band — The Polka Majors — and we had our best year to date, playing about three week-ends a month. For this year I have restricted the activity to two engagements a month.

I still do a little flying from the right seat of a homebuilt Glassair that my friend built. We have been flying together since our days in the AF Reserves starting way back in 1949. Now '86 is shaping up to another big year which means I shall have to retire at the end of the year to fulfill my dreams of retirement.

So much for '85. Not quite. I must say a word or two about our reunion and the Confederate Air Force great air show. It was a great pleasure to see my old friends again and to chat with a couple of them that I flew missions with from the 828th, Jack Whatley and William Fritz.

And we were all very happy to meet General "Pop" Arnold. The air show — well I sent shivers up my spine to see the great warbirds flying again and the mass formation of AT-6s (about 20 of them) really brought back memories of the large formation of bombers on the way to the target.

I am grateful for the great response that we continue to receive for our newsletter. This year marks the 20th anniversary of the letter. I had another hundred copies printed of which 50 copies were sold in book form. Fortunately, I saved the masters and the plates although some of the plates had to be reproduced.

Col. "Doc" Bradley, from out California way, expressed his enjoyment of LTC and hopes to make a reunion. He noted that he and his wife traveled the Blue Danube River last fall (1984) starting at the Black Sea and traveled upstream to Vienna, Austria with stops in Bulgaria, Romania, Yugoslavia, Hungary, Czechoslovakia and Austria. Unable to attend the 85 reunion, Dr. Maurice Priver was attending the international meeting of the OB-GYN International Federation. The doctor sends his best regards to the headquarters personnel and especially to General Arnold.

Again it was a pleasure to hear from John Hannan, who is planning on attending the reunion in Nashville, which just happens to be John's birth place. Fully retired now, John and Virginia enjoy traveling about the western

states. Don Colmer, our group adjutant for three of our Group Commanders, Col. Tomhave, Col. Cornett, and Col. Cairns, enjoys the newsletter and like the rest of us, find it helpful in reminiscing about those historical days in Italy.

Col. Doug Cairns sent word and we had the pleasure of seeing him and his wife, Lilian, at the reunion deep in the bottom of Texas. (Boy, that's a long way down there.) Ralph Wakefield noted that he retired in 1976 as dean of music and after two years was called back to the college and has stayed on. Ralph is always interested about his buddies of Venosa days, John Hannan, Hugh Bayless and Squire Bolton. Bill Angle and Tony Annie send their best regards to all the 485th veterans and hopefully we will see them in Nashville.

Yes, I hope to see you all in Nashville this year and enjoy the Grand Ol Opry and that great Southern hospitality. My best regards and thanks to all.

### 828TH BOMB SQDN —

Bob Deeds



Its been a long year for this reporter and probably the worst one of my life. In January, Dorothy got sick, and lost her stomach. It was malignant.

Then on July 19th I was involved in an automobile accident. I had cracked ribs and a bad knee out of that, also lost my car.

I did not go to the reunion this year. It was just to emotional at this time. We got many good reports from fellows that did attend for the first time.

Plans are turning out real good for the Nashville reunion. Accommodations are good for guys and their gals, or guest. This should be our best ever.

I received mail from an air force historian who informed us that the 485th is back in action. It is a low flying missile wing that can reach into Russia. They are interested in keeping contact with our historian. They have already won some awards and are interested in our accomplishments. The group is stationed at Florennes AB, Belgium.

If any of you are in this area, write the base ahead of time and they will give you the V.I.P. treatment. At present, they have a young lady for a historian. "Things have changed since we were there."

I've had request to check on fellows that did not get their medals. When you write, please give me name, rank and serial number and all the information about the incident. The war department claims they are flooded with these requests.

See you in Nashville.

### 829th BOMB SQDN. —

Earl Bundy



Many veterans of the 829th called or wrote during the past year. I had a record number of new contacts. About every first timer brings in addresses for other new contacts.

Old members, as well as new ones, have received the

"Lightweight Tower" very well.

I have sold 96 of the 100 complete sets of Lightweight Tower I had printed for \$20 each. The book reminded many to send extra money for mailing costs.

I arrived Wednesday, October 9 for the Texas reunion and all the gang was there, or arriving later that afternoon. Dan Sjodin and Jack Whatley had the hospitality house open. Rancho Viejo was beautiful. We started registering Thursday. A few played golf Thursday and Friday. Saturday the air show was very impressive.

Art Karns had open heart surgery one and a half months before the reunion, but he and his wife made the reunion and he is doing fine. We really missed our regular, Wythe Napier, this year, as he was sick. I am sorry to tell you that our 829th commanding officer, T. D. O'Brien, passed away in November 1985 in Springfield, Ill. I had talked to him in 1983, but he didn't feel up to making a reunion.

I had a letter with lots of pictures this fall from our 1st sergeant, Arthur Dunlap. A week before reunion time he thought he would make the reunion, but then he couldn't. He has written since and is going to do his best to make the Nashville reunion in 1986.

I am counting on a lot of our 829th ground crew members in the East to make the Nashville reunion. They can help us keep the B-24 I turned over to Bill Ferrell this year for the most members of the ground crew present. The 829th had it the last two years.

I also want to see a lot of our gang who have never made a reunion before. You don't know what you have been missing.

**830TH BOMB SQDN —**

**Lyle Talbott**



I'm happy to report I have been in contact with squadron members whom I have neither seen nor communicated with since Venosa 1944. Leroy Sanders and Oscar Knight were crew members and it was very good to be in touch again. Knight is retired and Sanders will retire in February 1986.

Also Dale Grosnitz, former tech supply sgt. Dale splits his time living in Florida and Illinois in respective seasons. Elliott Seagraves reports his son's wedding conflicts with the reunion and will be unable to attend.

Charles Shackleford also had a conflict but will try to make the Nashville reunion. Wayne Prosser, one of the survivors of the Jernigan crew, will try to make the '86 reunion.

Francis Tunstall wrote a very interesting letter relating his views and observations of Italy 1985. He made a very extensive tour of Italy including the old air base and Venosa as well as Yugoslavia and other European countries.

Fran: "I was unprepared to find not one piece of evidence that 4,000 Americans with 72 B-24's had ever been near the place; the only buildings standing are GHQ and Eagles Nest." Part of Fran's transportation was via military aircraft; the trip from Dover, Del. to Ramstein AB via C-141 with his son, Francis, as aircraft commander. Bob Samuels went to Hawaii this summer and had a very

pleasant time.

All news was not pleasant. I regret to report the death of Stuart W. Gansel on Feb. 24, 1985. Stuart was a member of LIFE, whose pilot was Lt. Glenn Jones who is also deceased. He and Clarence Miller were fellow crew members and also friends. They maintained this friendship to Stuart's death. I think this is the exception to the rule most military friendships or buddies terminate with transfers and reassignments. I really envied them.

I did not attend the reunion and asked my friend, Chester Konkolewski, to report the reunion activities; I thought it interesting enough to report its entirety and it will follow this item.

After I mail the newsletter in February I will step down as the 830th reporter and your new reporter will be: Chester E. Konkolewski, 7454 Pipers Bluff, San Antonio, TX 78251.

Chester is well qualified. He is a former state president of the Texas POW's and edits a newsletter for the San Antonio Chapter of POW's.

I want to thank the veterans who contributed news items, photos, and monetary contributions to the newsletter. It was a pleasure to serve with you, but remember future contributions should be mailed to Chester at the above address. He will serve you well.

Another gathering of the gray eagles, the 21st reunion, was held at the Rancho Viejo Resort, located between Brownsville and Harlingen, Texas, October 10-13, 1985, with approximately 85 veterans in attendance.

Upon checking in on Thursday, checked with the registration folks and the sign showed that only five other 830th veterans were checked in. The hotel registration desk further revealed that they had booked the Polish Mafia into one villa: Ted Lipinski already here, Chester Konkolewski, and Carl Gigowski, sorta coincidental I would say.

In attendance for the reunion from the 830th Squadron were: Richard V. Griffin, former squadron commander in Venosa, the Ted Lipinskis, Hollis Proters, Charles Foresters, Billy Cottinghams, Ed Muths, Joe Tabellion, George Dyer, Rod Ritchie, Chester Konkolewskis, Tom Russell and James Hunter.

Everyone in attendance enjoyed themselves and had a good time with a tour into Matamoros, Mexico, and then a tour of the Confederate aircraft on display, and finally a gathering of veterans at the Air-Sho. At the Air-Sho, the Group had front center seating in front of the VIP stands, where the aircraft would taxi-up and pay everyone in attendance a wave of the American Flag as well as the Airlines that were either taking off or taxing in. Ernie Ford was the MC and gave the group a very nice introduction, with our little blue caps with the group insignia on it. We all felt very proud.

Jack Whatley, one of our hosts, and his son scrouged a large squad tent, similar to what we lived in while at Venosa AB. Jack even built a stove and pipe out of cardboard and painted it a dull black which was an exact replica of the real thing. He also set up eight folding cots in this tent — most ingenious. The tent was set up at the back of the villa which was also the hospitality center.

The host's wives set out some snacks and plenty of



booze. Stella Konkolewski set out a good serving of breakfast tortillas, a mixture of sausage, diced spuds, onions and bacon, then warmed with a serving of Picante sauce, plus a wonderful dish of Swedish meatballs. These items were brought in from San Antone.

The banquet on Saturday evening was well attended and everyone seemed to enjoy the soothing music. Pop Arnold certainly seemed to be enjoying that evening because he sure tripped the light fantastic with quite a few of the ladies.

At the mini-meeting that was held, the reunion dates were voted on and after Nashville, it was Phoenix, Ariz. in 1987, and Florida in 1988. Joe Cathcart also presented a VCR preview of Nashville. Picture taking sessions were then performed.

On Sunday morning it was a very short session since most of the business was accomplished at the Saturday session. Sherill Burba made an announcement that the Greek government was awarding a medal to the 485th for their activities during the war, and to get this Medal, contact was to be made through the Greek Embassy in New York, Emil or Joe Opalka give a pitch of former prisoners of war, etc.

There being no further business, meeting adjourned and everyone said their goodbye's until we see each other next year.

Chester Konkolewski

## 831ST BOMB SQDN —

Woody Woodyard



We received Christmas cards, notes, checks and interesting little stories from about 75 of our squadron. This represents about half of our mailing list. Thanks to all of you! It makes my job most satisfying!

I run late often in acknowledging your correspondence, but I hope I finally get it done. Don't forget, if you have an interesting story to tell, be sure to send it to me. I'll send it on to Don Webb. He's always looking for stories and articles to print. If you just want to send an outline, he'll write it up for the newsletter or print it about as you send it to him, whatever.

A total of 81 vets attended the reunion in Harlingen; two from headquarters, 16 from the 828th, 28 from the 829th, 11 from the 830th, and 26 from the 831st. Sorry guys we slipped out of first place, but we'll make it back again, maybe in Nashville.

Dan Sjodin and Jack Whatley did a bang-up job in arranging this affair and a good time was had by all! There were many members attending for the first time — two from the 831st; Cletus Harner, and Lamont Parker. It's always so nice to meet new friends.

Sure missed all you "old timers" at the reunion and hope you attend the upcoming one so we will be in first place again. The 831st did have the most members of a flight crew attending. They were Leonard Little, Frank Nardi, Lee Gogne, Jolen Godfrey, Don Evjen, and Robert Reetar of Jim Mulligan's crew. The award was given to Leonard Little to take home for the year and return it in Nashville for the 1986 winner.

You missed a good reunion, a very unique one, because we lived in double villas. The golf course ran right up to our back doors and the C.A.F. Air Show was just spectacular. Sure good to see all those propeller driven planes flying again. The flying personnel would have given anything to have been able to fly in the B24.

The following 831st vets attended the reunion at Harlingen: Victor Bone, Frank Chaffin, Vern Christenson, Robert Dietrich, John Driscoll, Donald Evjen, Leo Gagne, John Godfrey, Bob Hanson, Cletus Harner, John S. Jackson, Leonard Little, Warren Meyers, Frank Nardi, Lamont Parker, Albert Paul, Lloyd Proudlove, Ralph Raines, Robert Rector, Harold Richards, Dan Sjodin, Guy Snyder, William Spence, Ed Stauverman and yours truly, Howard Woodyard.

We picked up seven new names this year — Harvey Altman, Harley Beard, Willis Bloomquist, Dale Grosnitz, E.V. Lee, Ernest Miller and Lamont Parker.

Congratulations, Jesse Ledbetter, on your re-election to a four-year term as county commissioner.

It is with regret that we have just recently received the report of two of our squadron members deaths. Ed Francis passed away on August 16, 1983, and Ray Butler on May 17, 1978.

We also were so sorry about the death of Dorothy Deeds last May. Bob Deeds is the reporter for the 828th squadron and was one of the first men to get the 485th reunions started. Dorothy helped in registration at reunions, and was a great help to Bob in keeping up with his work involved with the group. We will miss her greatly. As Bob and Dorothy were neighbors of ours, we have been friends for many years. Our sympathy goes out to Bob and his family.

Sorry Wythe Napier, of the 829th, could not attend the last reunion, due to many health complications. We missed him, as he usually attended the reunions and he might have been able to help me recruit a couple of "Texas armadillo" so the 831st could have won first place.

Just received a card and letter from Wythe, and he is hoping to make the Nashville reunion. Neither Bob Deeds or Lyle Talbott were able to attend the reunion. Lyle will be missed as 830th reporter. He served well for a long time, but he feels that he has to give it up.

We finally did get "Pop" Arnold, our first Group Commander at Venosa, to attend the Harlingen reunion, thanks to the efforts of Dan Sjodin. Hope he enjoyed the reunion enough to continue coming to them. "Pop" wants to get a memorial placed at the Air Force Academy, Colorado Springs, for the 485th group. I hope to help him get it rolling.

I need more pictures of the squadron planes, crews, ground personnel, for our newsletter. Also Ben Franklin, editor of the 15th Air Force Sortie, wants me to get pictures of the flying crews from all the group to publish in the 15th AF Newsletter. They need more members too.

We had a wonderful reunion of the 15th in Seattle, the 485th had 19 attending it. Boeing Air Craft Co. sure helped to make it a big success. Their B17 was almost as good as our B24s. Our Bomb Group, the 463rd, had their reunion at the same time and had over 400 attending. Wonder if we could do that and make it as big as they did?

We have documented proof that the 485th Group is in action again as a missile group located at Florennes, Belgium. M/Sgt. Karen Rossler will take your application to rejoin; "line forms on the right."