



# LIGHTWEIGHT TOWER CALLING



No. 42

March 2008

## San Antonio, Texas 2008 by Bob Hanson

Our next reunion will be in San Antonio Texas. Dates will be October 8th to October 12th 2008. The room rate will be \$99.00 plus tax. We had a reunion there in 1989, but the city is known for constantly upgrading and changing, so know it will be a fine experience for all. We will be staying at the Doubletree San Antonio Airport hotel and complimentary shuttle service to and from the airport is offered.

There will be two tours offered-one on Thursday and 2nd on Friday. They will include a city tour which all will find interesting and lots of sightseeing from the bus. Those that want to walk in some sections will be able to do so, but those that like to bus it and listen to guides narration can also do that.. They will also have a real Western touch with a Diamond W. Chuckwagon supper and cowboy show. Depending upon what's selected, we will also have a tour on the river walk and a visit to a Mexican restaurant.



All tours and events will be sent out along with hotel reservations by the squadron reporters long before the reunion is scheduled. This event will be geared for the vets and the 2nd and 3rd generations, so EVERYONE will enjoy this reunion. Both South Carolina and Kansas City events were enjoyed by all and I am sure San Antonio will be another winner in TRUE TEXAS STYLE!

## KANSAS CITY "The City of Fountains" by Lynn Cotterman

The 43rd Annual 485th Bomb Group Reunion was held Sept. 19-23, 2007 at the Hilton Kansas City Airport Hotel in Kansas City, Missouri. The city is situated at the intersection of the Missouri & Kansas Rivers. With over 200 fountains the city ranks second in the world only to Rome. It has more boulevards than any city except Paris & is nicknamed the BBQ Capital of the World. That's a little trivia for you.

A little over 150 Veterans, families and friends attended.

Our thanks to Bueford Cooper who made arrangements for us to view the B-2 Bomber up close at the Whiteman Air Base. After being turned down flat the first time he went back and convinced the command at Whiteman Air Force Base to allow us to a "hands on" experience with the B-2 Bomber He also worked with the local media to publicize our reunion.

Several of us arrived Tuesday; however, Ken Brown & family, Kay and Bob Gary & son, Ken

McClain, arrived a couple of days earlier & toured the city. After checking in at the hotel I met Bob Hanson & Jerry Whiting in the lobby. The hotel hostess showed us the hospitality & meeting rooms. The only complaint I had was that the elevators were at the opposite end from the hospitality room. I couldn't really squawk for my doctor says the best parking space at the mall is the one the farthest away from the entrance. We walked down to the lounge & found Bill & JoAnne Brokaw sipping tea. We joined them and the five of us went to dinner.



Registrations began at 1:00 PM Wednesday. Bill Cummings and son, Phil opened the hospitality room. We enjoyed our last "open bar" this year. Many thanks to the generosity of the Estate of Ben Skelton that has sponsored the open bar for several years. Ben was the pilot of original crew #24 and led his crew through 50 missions. It seemed to me that more memorabilia was on display this year than in the past. On one table was information about the two cities that were selected as possible sites for next year's reunion, Branson, MO and San Antonio, TX. This gave the attendees a chance to make a more informed decision on which city they wanted to vote for at the Saturday meeting. A new rule was in effect; anyone who was registered, 18 years old or older and present at the meeting could vote. Voting in the past had been limited to the veterans and their wives and widows.

Late in the morning a reporter and cameraman from a local TV station came into the hospitality room. The reporter said they were looking for a story about our reunion which would be shown on the evening news. They interviewed and filmed for about 30 minutes and left. The segment was cut down to about a minute which was broadcast on the channel 9 evening news. Thanks to Bueford the group received some free publicity.

Thursday morning we boarded a bus for Whiteman Air Base for lunch and to check out the B-2 Stealth Bomber. I sat by one of the B-2 pilots at lunch and learned that the technology was

interesting, but far above me. It was quite a thrill to inspect such a sophisticated aircraft that had so many problems and delays during its development. We walked around the outside of the plane, but the cockpit was closed. After taking photos we boarded the bus for the long ride back to the hotel. I walked down to the hospitality room and saw that Neal Swann had finally arrived. He had flown his plane from California and ran into some rough weather in western Kansas and had to RON (remain over night) in Salinas.

A little later Gerry Weinstein, who is the son of Sy Weinstein, the 485th group photographer, arrived at the hospitality room. He had told Jerry that he was bringing 150 photos that the Group photographers had taken during the war. We were expecting some little 4x6 photos, but there were 8x10's photos! Three more tables were set up to spread out the larger photos. These photos are fantastic and there is nothing like photos to tell the story. We hope to post some photos on the web site, but it will take time to sort and identify them. On a sad note Gerry reported that his father, Sy, who had been ill, passed away a few days after the reunion. At least Sy knows that the photos are being saved for future generations. Thursday evening we entered the ball room and were greeted by Harry & Bess Truman. After a delicious buffet dinner they put on a skit and we called it a day.

Friday Morning we rode a bus to Independence, MO to tour the Truman Museum. After President Roosevelt died most of us wondered if Truman would be up to the job, but we soon found our reservations were unfounded. We learned the details of some of the tough history making decisions he faced during his term. I enjoyed the film about his early years.

He was pretty much of a nerd, but turned out to live the American dream. We returned to the hotel and while we were examining the photos in the hospitality room Burba said he wasn't feeling well and his fibrillator (corrects rhythm disorder) was not working. Michelle Cummings, who is a nurse, took his blood pressure and said it was very low. Burba was rushed to a local hospital and later on to a Texas hospital where a stint was inserted in an artery that was 80% blocked. He is feeling better now and is recovering. There were no activities scheduled for the rest of the day and dinner was on our own.

Saturday the group Meeting was conducted by Chairman Bob Hanson and it went smoothly. It was announced that more of the group positions are being turned over to the younger generation. Steve & Laura Sharpe are the new Lightweight Tower editors. Steve could be seen everywhere filming the activities. Jerry Whiting is the new 831st Reporter and other squadron reporters have selected backup reporters. The meeting finished early than in the past. We miss Col. Dan jumping up and asking, "How many finished 50 missions, stand up". Also absent was John Di Russo who always had a new poem for us. Some time was saved by the new method of selecting the city for the 2008 reunion. Everyone had a chance to learn about each city before the meeting. The individual squadron meetings followed the Group meeting. Then late Saturday afternoon we gathered in the ball room for the historic photo session. After dinner was served we enjoyed listening to the band and danced into the wee hours of the night. (dreamer)



The Sunday morning memorial breakfast and service was conducted without Burba, but everyone pitched in and made it a very memorable tribute to our fallen comrades.

Next year we will meet in San Antonio where we can explore the historic Riverwalk. There are several Riverwalks around the country, but San Antonio, not only has the original, but also the best. It was started in the 1920's. Looking forward to seeing you.



Warren & Joyce Sortomme  
Headquarters



Helen & Ken Wall  
828th



Margie & Wayne Smith  
829<sup>th</sup>



Russell & Alice Arthur  
829<sup>th</sup>



Mickey & Red Kempffer  
830<sup>th</sup>



Clifford & Lei Woodbury  
831<sup>st</sup>



# WHITEMAN AIR FORCE BASE

By Warren Sortomme

Because of his perseverance and know-how, Bueford C. Cooper, 830th squadron, made arrangements with the Commanding Officer of the 509th Bomb Wing and his staff allowing our 485th BG reunion attendees to visit Whiteman Air Force Base Thursday September 20, 2007.

Two busses loaded with anxious 485th veterans, their wives, families and friends made a morning departure from the hotel, going south through Kansas City, while being informed of the many attractions by our capable tour guides and then traveling east past some of the open country in central Missouri. After an hour and a half ride we approached the Air Base but we were detoured to the golf course for security reasons.

Security was tight. Each person on board the buses had to have a photo ID and it was verified by a commissioned officer from the CO's staff. Finding no aliens among our reunionites the buses were assigned an Air Force Officer to guide and inform us while on the base.



Major Joseph DellaVedova

Major DellaVedova, USAF, traveled with us on bus #2 and pointed out some of the highlights of the base. Whiteman AFB was named in honor of 2nd Lieutenant George A.

Whiteman, a native of Sedalia, MO, on December 3, 1955. Lieutenant Whiteman was one of the first American airmen killed in World War II when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, on December 7, 1941.

During the attack of Bellows Air Field, Oahu, Lieutenant Whiteman managed to reach his fighter aircraft. While attempting to take off, enemy fighters attacked his plane. Sadly Lieutenant Whiteman's P-40 crashed, fatally injuring the mid-Missouri native. By the time rescue teams reached the aircraft, Lieutenant Whiteman had died.



Colonel John W. Robinson, Jr.

Our first and welcome stop was the base Officer Club. Each and everyone of our group was greeted and welcomed by Colonel John W. Robinson, Jr., Vice Commander, 509th Bomb Wing and many of the pilots and his staff, as we departed from the bus. Of course the girls and boys rooms were the most popular places, followed by an invitation to the dining hall for lunch and the briefing of Whiteman Air Force Base and the B-2 Spirit Bomber.

Colonel Robinson, his staff and

TV monitors presented a full and complete history of Whiteman AFB and the B-2 Spirit Bomber while we consumed our delicious food.

Whiteman AFB had its beginning on August 6, 1942 as Sedalia Glider Base. November of that same year Sedalia Army Air Field was a name change to welcome the 12th Troop Carrier Command of the Army Air Force for training glider tactics and paratroopers. During the demobilization in the mid 1940's the base was closed. August 1951 brought new life to the base when it became a part of Strategic Air Command, SAC, as Sedalia AFB, and to become home of the 340th Bombardment Wing and B47 Stratojet and KC 97 tanker aircraft on March 1954.

During the 1960's Whiteman AFB hosted the fourth Minuteman ICBM wing which entailed a huge construction project for underground launch facilities and 15 launch control centers. Many changes were made during the 60', 70's and 80's. January 5, 1987 revealed Whiteman AFB would become the home of the B-2 Advanced Technology Bomber. Beginning in 1988 another massive construction project that created new buildings designed for B-2 operations, maintenance and support activities.

Several units were assigned to Whiteman AFB during the construction period of the late 80's and early 90's until July 1, 1993 the 509th Bomb Wing accepted the host responsibilities for the base and on July 20, 1993 flying operations returned after a 30 year hiatus when the first permanently assigned T38 landed at Whiteman.



The 509th Bomb Wing also has a long and colorful history. During September 1944, the late Brig. Gen. Paul Tibbets, then a Colonel in the U.S. Army Air Corps, was told of the most closely held secret of WWII, Scientist were working to harness the power of atomic energy to create a bomb that it could end the war.

He was ordered to find the best pilots, navigators, bombardiers and supporting crewmen and mold them in a unit that would deliver that bomb from a B-29. Tibbets took command of the newly created 509th Composite Group, a unit of 1,800 men who trained at Wendover Field in Utah. In the summer of 1945, he oversaw the unit's transfer for additional training on Tinian in the Northern Marianas. On August 6, 1945, Colonel Tibbets' B-29, ENOLA GAY and a crew of 12 dropped the atomic bomb, Little Boy, on Hiroshima, Japan. Three days latter, an even more powerful atomic bomb, was dropped on Nagasaki, Japan from another B-29 of the 509th. On August 15, 1945 Japan surrendered, bringing WWII to an end.. ~ Then, on December 17, 1993, amid much fanfare, the first operational B-2, The Spirit of Missouri, was welcomed by the 509th at Whiteman Air Force Base. Less than a week later, on December 22, 1993, Whiteman and the 509th again made history as it generated the first B-2 sortie from the base What is a B-2?

The B-2 Spirit Stealth Bomber is a revolution in airpower. Northrop Grumman is the

prime contractor for the US Air Force B-2 Spirit low-observable; strategic, long-range heavy bomber capable of all-altitude attack missions up to 50,000ft, with a range of more than 6,000mn. 69 feet long, 17 feet high, wingspan of 172 feet, gross weight of 350,000 lbs, payload of 40,000 lbs and a crew of 2 (Pilot and Mission Commander), the four embedded F-118-GE 100 engines can carry this Flying Wing any place in the world from Whiteman AFB with refueling capabilities.

The Robust Conventional Payload consists of many guided and direct attack weapons and may be mixed in any combinations. One B-2 Spirit can carry 80 GBU-38-500lb guided bombs and hit 80 separate targets. How is that compared to a B-24?

Northrop Grumman built the first B-2 in 1988 and made its initial test flight in 1989. After building 20 bombers, production was stopped by a Defense Act from Congress in 1994, a total cost of \$44.65 Billion: \$2.2 Billion per B-2.

Off to the flight line and have the privilege to stand next to the "SPIRIT OF SOUTH CAROLINA" - the INVISIBLE DEFENDERS- B-2 Bomber and actually see how awesome this wonderful flying machine is. After talking to the pilots and taking loads of photos, a short walk on the flight line was necessary to check out the Air Force Reserve-442<sup>nd</sup> Fighter Wing's A-10 Thunderbolt II and Missouri Army National Guard-1-135th Aviation First Attack Team's Apache before returning to the buses and our trip back to the hotel.

I have a great sense of gratitude to Major Geoff "Zorro" Billingsley, 509 BW/CC, Deputy Director of Staff, Combat Mission Ready B-2 pilot. We became e-mail buddies for a few weeks and he sent me briefing material, photos and information pertaining to this report. Many thanks to Col. Garrett Harencak, 509th BW/CC, Col. John Robinson,

509th BW/CV, members of their staff, the B-2 pilots of the 509th and all of the men and women assigned to Whiteman Air Force Base for their service to our country and a day we will always remember. Dorothy was picked up by a tornado from her home in Kansas to see the Wizard in the Land of Oz. Members of the 485 took a bus ride from Kansas City to meet many "Wizards" at the "Air Force Base of Azz".



# WHITEMAN AIR FORCE BASE PHOTOS



Kitty & Frank Nardi and Lynn Cotterman  
831<sup>st</sup>



Whiteman Base crew standing in B2 bomb  
bay opening along with Virginia Corbett,  
Peter & Denise Sawyer, Clyde Corbett 830<sup>th</sup>



Whiteman Base crew discussing  
A-10 Thunderbolt II capabilities  
with Bill & Naomi DeVore 830<sup>th</sup>



Blake, Jack & Martha Joan Yates  
828<sup>th</sup>



Ronnie Taylor, Dean Taylor Jr.,  
Charlie Taylor  
828<sup>th</sup>



# KANSAS CITY BUS TOUR SEPT.21, 2007

By Marvin Lindsay aided by sons Steve & Mike

Today's activities included a guided bus tour of downtown Kansas City Mo. and Independence Mo. home of Harry S. Truman presidential Library and museum. Our tour guide Lt Col Anne gave a great description of the downtown buildings and the history behind them ranging from the 1800's through the current Sprint Center soon to be opened, Interesting facts: The only city to have more fountains than Kansas City is Rome Italy, and the only city to have more boulevards is Paris, France.

Our guide Anne had a wealth of historical knowledge ranging from Jesse James and his "Gang" from where he stayed while in town and which banks he had robbed to where all the "hotspots" were during prohibition times including "Folley's Theatre" We learned one of the unique things about the Kansas city area is the Limestone Quarries that have been converted to storage areas for the U. S. Government as well as private companies. The constant year round temp makes for a Natural "climate controlled environment". We took a meandering tour through the downtown area, going by the old airport where Ernest Hemingway scribbled his outline "For Whom the Bells Toll" and where Carol Lombard left from on her fatal flight leaving her fur coat behind. Also went by the jumping off point where many wagon trains were assembled before heading off to "The West".



Saw the Kansas City Star Newspaper facility, where Walt Disney worked briefly as a cartoonist and developed a mouse character originally called Mortimer, later his wife suggested a name change( and now you know).

We made a stop at The Union Station, the 2nd largest RR station in the nation, where over 1/2 of all WWII military personnel passed through, including many

members of the 485th. Union Station sits across from the Liberty Memorial, which has been rededicated as "The WWI National Memorial. One of the attractions there is the Field of Poppies, 9 million to be exact, one for each casualty from the "war to end wars".



We boarded the bus and headed to Independence, Mo. going by the site where Harry Truman had his store with long time friend and WWI veteran also going by the house where President Truman and Bess resided. Had a box lunch and headed to the Presidential Library and museum. Our guide Anne took the group through and pointed many additional facts that were not mentioned on the displays. We then had time to browse through the museum on our own. We headed back to the hotel and from comments we heard a great time was had by all.



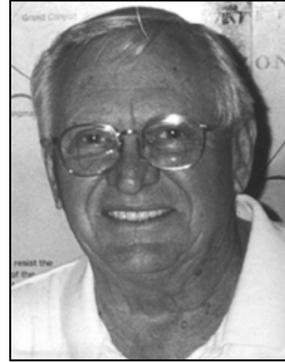
# 485<sup>TH</sup> BOMBARDMENT GROUP



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# HEADQUARTERS



Paul Robinson, Joyce Sortomme & Warren Sortomme

# HEADQUARTERS 2<sup>ND</sup> GENERATION



Gerry Weinstein & Mary Habstritt



## 828<sup>TH</sup> SQUADRON



Front Row: Jack Whatley, James Rau, Jack Eden, Tony Siller, Lee Busroe, Ken Wall  
Back Row: Greg Lahay, Art Hurley, Jack Yates Not Pictured: Charlie Taylor

## 829<sup>TH</sup> SQUADRON



Front Row: Jack Behunin, Milton Fundling, Marvin Lindsay, Wayne Smith, Al Martin, Charles Palmer  
Back Row: Art Fowler, Bob Brown, Russell Arthur, & Tom Duntley  
Not Pictured: Bill McLean



## 830<sup>TH</sup> SQUADRON



Front Row: Harold Kempffer, Howard Boxley, Herb Muehlemann, Bill Cummings, Geroge Dyer, Clyde Corbett, Ted Levin

Back Row: Joe Rippinger, John Sellers, Cliff Studaker, Bill DeVore, Bueford Cooper

## 831<sup>ST</sup> SQUADRON



Front Row: George Estok, Cliff Woodbury, Bob Hanson, Ken Brown, Vern Christensen, Hal Wilder, Frank Nardi

Back Row: Lynn Cotterman, John Jackson, Jess Ledbetter, Glenn Bell, Warren Meyers, Bill Brokaw



## 828<sup>TH</sup> SQUADRON – 2<sup>ND</sup>, 3<sup>RD</sup> & 4<sup>TH</sup> GENERATIONS



Front Row: Mark LaScotte, Kate Sandusky, Harriet Butchko, Maureen Crouchley, Connie Boettcher, Rory Yates

Back Row: Tomas Eden, Greg Butchko, Don Crouchley, Terry Boettcher, Blake Yates

## 829<sup>TH</sup> SQUADRON – 2<sup>ND</sup> & 3<sup>RD</sup> GENERATIONS



Front Row: Mike Lindsay, Anne Johnson, Lynn Gallo, Lee Christelli, Randall Hannum

Back Row: Byron Deal, Glenn Johnson, Steve Lindsay, Bob Palmer, Tom Palmer



## 830<sup>TH</sup> SQUADRON – 2<sup>ND</sup> & 3<sup>RD</sup> GENERATIONS



Front Row: Patrick Kempffer, Scott Studaker, Neil Swann, Whitney Cooper, Brooke Cooper, JoAnna Cooper

Middle Row: Peg Studaker, Denise Sawyer, Michelle Cummings, Marcie Heil, Jolene Stockton, Evaun Swann, Carol McIntire, Kendra Cooper, Ronald Cooper

Back Row: Rob Studaker, Steve Sharpe, Peter Sawyer, Phil Cummings, Andy Studaker, Joe Rippinger III, Mark Swann, Scott McIntire, Randy Cooper, Jeannett Haynes, Alex Haynes

## 831<sup>ST</sup> SQUADRON – 2<sup>ND</sup> & 3<sup>RD</sup> GENERATIONS



Front Row: Marcie Estok, Patty Haley, Donna Hanson, Pam Phillips, Gail Eamon, Kay Brown-Gary, Barbara Nardi Mason

Back Row: Tom Haley, Bob Hanson Jr., Bill Phillips, Jim Eamon, Bob Gary, Ken McLean



## WIVES OF VETERANS



Front Row: Marie Ledbetter, Joyce Sortomme, Joyce Busroe, Frances Fowler, Mickey Kempffer, Icie Martin, Helen Arlene Cooper, Martha Joan Yates, Mary Swann

Back Row: Shirley Boxley, Carol Studaker, Helen Wall, Mary Bell, Alic Arthur, Margie Smith, Frances Fundling, Ann Sellers, Betty Muehlemann, Gertie Siller, Kitty Nardi, Helen Estok, Margaret Duntley

## POWS / MIAs

### WIDOW



Mary Swann



Front Row: Marvin Lindsay, Ken Brown, Vern Christiansen, Frank Nardi  
Back Row: Warren Sortomme, Jack Yates, Charlie Palmer





Mark & Evaun Swann, Carol & Scott McIntire & Mary Swann – 830th



Bob Gary - 831<sup>st</sup>  
Bueford Cooper - 830<sup>th</sup>



Jim & Gail Eamon, Vern Christensen and Barbara Nardi Mason – 831st



Jesse Ledbetter, Patty & Tom Haley and Marie Ledbetter – 831<sup>st</sup>

Thank You  
485<sup>th</sup> Vets!



Ann & John Sellers – 830<sup>th</sup>



Gertie & Tony Siller – 828<sup>th</sup>



# MINUTES OF THE 485TH BOMB GROUP

Business Meeting Saturday, 22 September 2007 Hilton Airport Hotel - Kansas City, Missouri

The 43rd reunion meeting was called to order by Chairman Bob Hanson. A silent prayer was said for those who were lost overseas, members of the 831st Squadron who were lost when the USS Hamilton was sunk on the way overseas, the ones who have joined Journeys End since the last reunion and all those who are too ill and couldn't attend. Sherrill Burba is in the hospital. Jack Whatley said we should appreciate all the young people wearing the flag on their right arms.

Bob Hanson led the group in the pledge of Allegiance.

The Secretary's report of the 2006 reunion in Columbia, SC was read and approved as written. Motion to approve by Bill Cummings and seconded by Jack Whatley.

Lynn Cotterman read the Treasures report. Lynn reported a balance of \$5,791.38. A minimum of 150 is needed to break even, there were 157 registered. Motion to approve by Warren Sortomme and seconded by Hal Wilder.



Jerry Whiting, Group Historian welcomed all new people & told of the 485th Web Site. There is lots of information with about 114 crew photos, reunion information and much more. Jerry thanked Laura Sharpe for all her help. Hank Dahlberg who couldn't make it to the reunion but said hello to all.

Photos by Group Photographer Sy Weinstein, books by Hal Wilder, Bill McLean and Jerry Whiting are available for sale. Jerry's rewrite of the first book is hard bound with an additional 65 photos.

The website for the 485th is [www.485thbg.org](http://www.485thbg.org)

The wreckage of Tomhave and Stockdales planes were found in the Alps. Researchers in Corsica recently found a B-24, which has not been identified at this time.

Jerry Whiting has been named to take over as the 831st Squadron Reporter.

Bob Hanson said the 485th spirit is still very apparent. Replacements are being named as backup for all the Squadron Reporters.

Hank Dahlberg again designed the glasses. A total of 144 glasses is the minimum order, but 180 were received. The overrun was free. Extra glasses may be purchased for \$2.00 each.

Bob introduced Steve & Laura Sharpe as the new editors of LWT. Steve's father was a radio operator in the 830th Squadron & on the original crew of the LIFE.

Cliff Studaker (on Ken Muses' Crew) was introduced. On February 1944 he was sent to Casper, Wyoming as a replacement, then to McCook, Nebraska to train as a Bombardier. He read a letter to Jolene Beal Stockton signed by all of the 3432 Crew. Jolene's father (John Beal) trained as a lead bombardier. Overseas he went with another crew and was hit by flak and lost his life. He died before Joelene

was born. After returning home the crew went to visit Jolene, but in time lost track of her. In 2004 they located her. In Columbia from this crew many of the second-generation persons were present.

Jerry received a letter from Italy regarding the planes. Lynn shared that the Italian's buried one man killed. They are building a monument for the effort the 485th did in the war and for their freedom. Their efforts are not forgotten, and the schools are being taught about the bravery of the men.



Donna Lee from the Armed Forces Reunion was recognized.

Bob thanked Bueford Cooper for all his help in arranging our visit to Whiteman AFB and to get a close up look at the B-2 bomber. He was turned down twice on his efforts. Ours was only one of three groups who were authorized to tour the base this year. Buford also arranged a tour of the Truman Library.

First Timers: Peter Sawyer; Marcie Snyder, Peg Studaker, Charlie Palmer, Donna Hanson, Kate Sandusky, Taylor Sandusky, Harriett Butchko, Mark Crouchley, Don Crouchley, Mrs. William Walker.



A total of 48 veterans were in attendance at the reunion. Those attending the business meeting, including second and third generations are as follows:

Headquarters	3
828th Squadron	22
829th Squadron	22
830th Squadron	35
831st Squadron	25
POWs/MIAs	8
Widows	3

A few of the missing Veterans were Dan Sodjin, Woody Woodyard, Jack Godfrey, Clarence "Deacon" Miller and Leonard Little.

Lynn Cotterman made up a display of the two places for next years reunion. This gave all a chance to review the information and make a decision before the business meeting. The rules for voting on the city for next year is "If you paid a registration fee and are 18 year of age or older, or a widow; you one vote." The two places pick were Branson, Missouri and San Antonio, Texas. The vote was as follows:

Branson, Missouri	27
San Antonio, Texas	35+
	(too many to count)

Next years reunion will be held in San Antonio, Texas in October 2008.

Bob Brown was again thanked for all his efforts in Columbia, SC.

The books and the authors are listed on the 485th Bomb Group website.

**New Business:**

Hal Wilder asked that all addresses be posted on the website and in the Lightweight Tower to increase sale of books. A share of the proceeds could be given to the 485th

treasurer. This will be taken into consideration.

The oldest veteran in attendance was Hal Wilder. He was presented with a cap stating he was the oldest veteran in Kansas City.



Crew with the most members in attendance:

828th	2
829th	2
830th	2
831st	4
HQs	1

The 831st took home the replica of the B-24 bomber. Those at the meeting were: Bob Hanson, Sr., John Jackson, Glenn Bell & Gabby Meyers – shown below:



Herb Muhelmann celebrated his 85th birthday this day.



A memo should be sent to the VFW Headquarters in Kansas City regarding next year's reunion. If more requests are sent in then we will stand a better chance of the notice being in the magazine.

Jack Whatley wanted the story about repair of his plane corrected. He again told the corrected story.

The ground crews were recognized and there were many present at the meeting.

Tony Siller has one more piece of tile work left in the Memorabilia room and will sell it for \$35.00 with \$20.00 going to the 485th Treasury.

Phil and Michelle Cummings took Sherrill Burba to the hospital last night and he was diagnosed with pneumonia. His daughter will come to Kansas City to pick him up.

After the business meeting the Squadrons will meet separately for their meetings.

Pictures will be taken in the Banquet room starting at 5:00 PM, wear your name badge for identification purposes. The pictures will start with the 828th Squadron, and continue in order of Squadron number. The photographs will be done digitally, and can be viewed and purchased right after the picture is taken. Be on time for your group picture.

The band contracted had a death of the leader, so the keyboard singer has taken over the band and it will be the entertainment for dancing. The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted:  
 Frances J. Fowler  
 Secretary



## MAIL ROOM HEADQUARTERS

By Warren Sortomme

Headquarters was well represented at Kansas City by Paul Robinson, Warren & Joyce Sortomme & Gerald Weinstein, son of Sy Weinstein.

Seymour "Sy" Weinstein was the Aerial Photo Officer & had a library of thousands of photos taken during the 485<sup>th</sup>'s operations in Italy. Gerald displayed lots & lots, & I do mean "LOTS", of the photos & gave them free of charge to the Vets & their families.

We missed Kathleen Arnold at KC. Hope all of our other commitments will not interfere with our reunion in San Antonio so we can all be together again. Weather was great in Montana last August, making a visit to Hank & Althea Hancock possible. We had a great time spotting deer, moose, elk & some long horn sheep & eating plenty of good food.

We forgot SPAM was 70 years old in 2007 & we did not celebrate the fact. I can remember the few times we had the privilege of eating it in POW camp, boy was it ever so good & I still like it.

Hank & Althea are doing great & continue to harvest a wonderful garden of fruit & vegetables but traveling is difficult for them at this time. They send best greetings & hope to make another reunion some year.

Good health to all!!! See you in San Antonio Texas, 2008.

The 485th Bomb Group Association wishes to thank Gerry Weinstein for the wonderful 32-page photo booklets he provided to all the Vets & their families who attended the Kansas City reunion.

The booklet, entitled  
**RECONNAISSANCE & RECOLLECTION**,  
contains photos taken by his father, Sy Weinstein,  
the 485th Bomb Group photographer,  
during the war.

It will be treasured by all who received it.

## MAIL ROOM 828<sup>TH</sup> SQUADRON

Sherrill Burba was unable to attend the 828<sup>th</sup> Squadron meeting due being hospitalized during the reunion. He was diagnosed with pneumonia. Squadron members shared stories. Special thanks to Jack Yates & Ronnie Taylor for your information on this meeting.

## MAIL ROOM 829<sup>TH</sup> SQUADRON

By Marvin Lindsay

The meeting of the 829th Squadron followed the general meeting. Marvin Lindsay called the meeting to order. He announced new names on the Journey's End List. They include James Barnett, Bob Bobier, Darryl Gray & Albert O'Brien.

Marvin recognized 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> generation relatives & friends, calling them our "Pushers". They push the doors open, push wheelchairs & remind us of our reason for being here. Without their efforts, we would be hard pressed to continue these reunions. They are rightfully getting some input in Reunion policies & decisions. Their expertise has given information to others who have not been aware of the 485<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group reunions.

First time attendees for the 829th were: Charlie Palmer & his sons, Bob & Tom Raymond & Dennis Upp, brothers of Fred Upp of the 829th Edward Upp, son of Fred Upp, Philip Wood, nephew of Major Philip Cummings, Squadron Operation Officer. Rod Lasalque, grand-nephew of Major Philip Cummings, & Randall Hannum.

The internet & website have really helped these men find out about the history relating to their relatives & about the reunion.

Under correspondence, Marvin read an article telling of the receipt of a Distinguished Flying Cross by Robert M. (Buster) Bricker, Jr. who was in the crew of Charles Duecker. Marvin also read the obituary of Al O'Brien.

The financial report: after all printing & mailing expenses were paid for the year to date, the bank balance is \$332.34. A complete financial statement is available.

There being no old or new business, the group shared remembrances & asked to hear from our first-timers.

Charlie Palmer introduced his sons, Bob & Tom. Charlie was an S/Sgt. Ball gunner on the crew where Phillips Bobier was pilot. He recalled when his plane lost all four engines.

Philip Wood & Rod Lasalque came to honor Major Phillip Cummings who was killed March 7, 1944. Major Cummings was Squadron Operations Officer uncle of Philip Wood. Rod is the grand-nephew who became interested in the history of Major Cummings & the B-24, especially after hearing a B-24 overhead last



February. He found information on the website. He came from Florida to Philip Wood's home in Hutchinson, KS & they found the 48Sth. We made sure he would touch base with Historian Jerry Whiting.

Fred Upp was a mechanic on the B-24 named "Homeward Angel". His brothers Raymond & Dennis & Fred's son, Edward, came for the first time.

Wayne Smith followed with a response for the Upp family, expressing appreciation for the ground crew members like Fred, without whom the "fly boys" or crews would never have been prepared to get off the ground.

John Duntley recalled that Major Cummings' plane was called "The New Hampshire Belle".

Al Martin told his story of being ill & in sick bay when his crew Pete Peterson the pilot flew without him, Edgar Mack the radio operator from Clark Millers crew flew in Al's place they were shot down July 8, 1944 & were POWs.

We shared information about the health of some of our missing reunion attendees.

Anna & Al Carlson are both battling cancer, Naomi Lindsay is at home with Parkinson's & other related problems, Don & Virginia Whiteman were unable to attend due to health problems. Good wishes for better health are sent to all.

Marvin thanked everyone for coming & hopes to see all in San Antonio

The meeting was concluded

Respectfully submitted

Alice Arthur

Recorder 2007



Milton & Frances Fundling  
829<sup>th</sup>

## MAIL ROOM 830<sup>TH</sup> SQUADRON

By George Dyer

After our Saturday morning group business meeting, the 830th Squadron met for their meeting. I opened the meeting with a hearty welcome to everyone. All were asked to stand. Bueford Cooper said a nice prayer which was followed by our Pledge of Allegiance.

First timers were asked to stand, introduce themselves & give us a little background as to when, where & how they found out about our reunions. We had three first timers to stand. Pete Swayer, Peg Studaker & Marcie Heil.

Our guests were then asked to stand present themselves as the First Timers had done. We then gave ourselves a big hearty handclapping welcome.

I then asked how many were there that went over with the original 72 crews. Bill Cummings & Bill Devore from crew # 41 & I from crew # 45 were all that were there. We had eight that were from replacement crews. We only had one that was from our ground personnel.

Every year I ask someone to relate to us one of the most dangerous missions that they flew. This year Mr. Bill Devore described in great detail, one of their most dangerous missions, on 07-20-44 to Friedrichshafen, Germany. Very heavy flak was encountered. They lost two engines & had one casualty with several others being wounded. With gas & hydraulic fluid spraying everywhere, they were in great danger of going down. Bill & other members of the crew worked frantically to keep their plane flying. Finally they got the # 2 engine re started. The decision was made to try & make it home rather than fly to Switzerland. They were escorted part way by a P-38, but after seeing the severe damage to the B-24, he pulled away. They finally landed at an emergency field with a flat tire & no brakes. They had approximately 40 gallons of gas left in the tanks. They counted over 500 holes due to flak, in the plane. This plane never flew again.

Cliff Studaker & Ted Levin told about seeing two planes take direct hits. Bueford Cooper, after returning from a mission, told about confronting an individual who was in a black buggy, counting our planes & taking their numbers as they landed. When Bueford confronted the person with his pistol, the man swallowed the paper he was writing on. Bueford wanted to shoot the man, but decided not to.



## MAIL ROOM 830<sup>TH</sup> SQUADRON Continued

Mary Swann, wife of 830th First Sergeant Everett Swann, along with 2nd & 3rd generations would like to hear other stories. Next year Herb Muelmann will describe ground personnel's responsibilities.

No old or new business to take care of, the 830th's treasury is in great shape.

Again I stress, if you change address' let me know, otherwise you will not receive any mail.

I'd like to express many thanks to Michelle Cummings for supplying me with some pertinent notes that were very helpful in preparing this report.

We all stood & Mr. Bueford Cooper dismissed us with a prayer.



Phil & Michelle Cummings - 830th

Thanks to



**Tom Strade Photography in  
Bethany, Missouri  
for the group photos.**

**Also, a special thanks to  
Frances Fundling  
& Warren Sortomme  
for sharing their personal photos  
for the newsletter publication.**

*Thank You*



## MAIL ROOM 831<sup>ST</sup> SQUADRON

By Jerry Whiting

When Lynn Cotterman told me he was looking for a replacement as the 831st Squadron Reporter, due to the number of hats he was wearing, I volunteered for the assignment, so now Lynn & I are both wearing two hats. Go figure!!

Several of the hits on the website have been from children, grandchildren & other relatives of 831st Vets. I'm not going to name them, in the interest of space, but some of them will be joining us at the San Antonio reunion. It will be great to be able to meet them.

Lynn asked me to get my feet wet in Kansas City & run the 831st Squadron meeting, so I agreed. One of the first things that occurred at the meeting was that Lynn borrowed Jess Ledbetter's hat & passed it around the group for donations for the 831st fund. The hat came back full & we relieved the hat of its contents before giving it back to Jess. There were introductions of everyone at the meeting & a few stories were told. We got an update on Colonel Dan Sjodin's status. He moved to a facility in Glenwood, Minnesota, & was doing well there. It wasn't a long meeting, but was enjoyable.

I had a great time at the reunion. I was surprised & happy that Bill Nauman & his mother, Mary Lou, attended. Mary Lou is the wife of B.W. Nauman, who was the flight engineer on my dad's crew (Robert R. Baker crew). I hadn't seen them for 20+ years. I also enjoyed meeting George Estok (Ken Wydler's crew). I had been exchanging emails with his daughter for a few months & was pleased that she could also attend with her parents. Of course, it is always nice to see all the "regulars". I always have such a warm feeling at the reunions.

Thanks to all those who have sent stories, photos & other information about the 831st this past year.



John Jackson - 831<sup>st</sup>

# THURSDAY NIGHT BUFFET AND SPECIAL ENTERTAINMENT

By George Dyer

“Cotton Belt” Katy and I started toward the banquet room and upon arriving at the door; we met Mr. Neil Johnson who was representing **Harry Truman** and his partner Claudette who was representing **Bess Truman**.

At 7:00 P.M. Bob Hanson, our emcee introduced the entertainers. Claudette was first. Both Neil and Claudette were quality performers who have been doing this type show for many years.

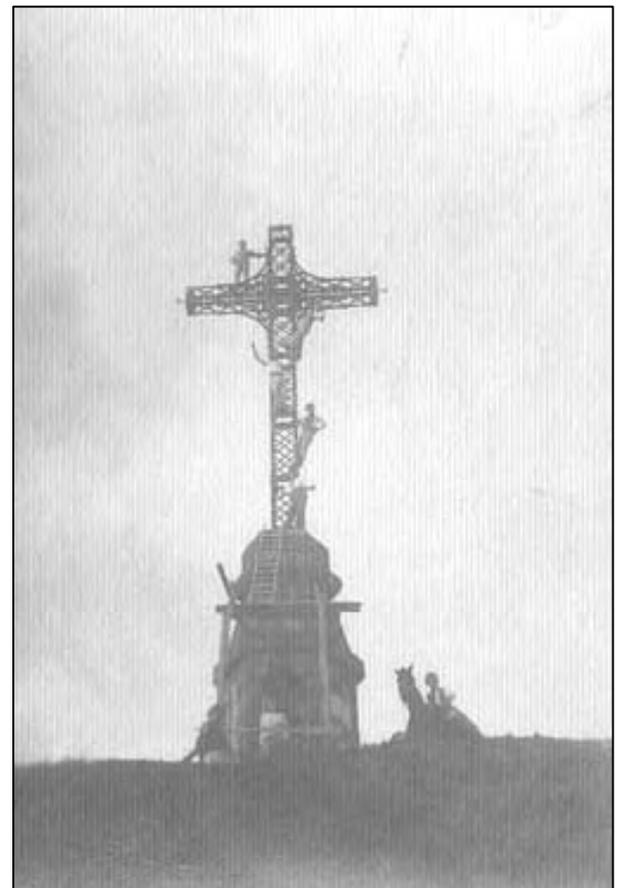


## ARE THE PHOTOS BELOW FAMILIAR TO ANYONE?



Mt. Vulture from a distance

Mount Vulture is an extinct volcano located 56 km north of the city Potenza in the Basilicata region (Italy). As a prominent landmark it gave its name to the Vulture area, the most significant viticultural zone in Basilicata.



Cross on Mt. Vulture



# MY JOURNEY CONTINUES

by:  
Kathleen  
Arnold



After Pop passed away a longtime military friend asked if Dad ever told me about the secret mission he flew with Pan America Airlines before the U.S. entered the war. I was stunned because Dad never mentioned anything about this to anyone in our family. I researched my Dad's records and learned Pan Am gave Pop Arnold valuable pilot training and experience that he would later use as a war-time commander.

Many years ago, in a letter to his old friend Dad wrote, "I have fond memories of Pan Am. When the U.S. was getting into the war, the Air Corps needed pilots for a secret mission, they released us from active duty and lo and behold I was a Pan Am pilot, uniform and all! Then later in the war, I delivered 29, B-17s from Salina, Kansas, all the way to North Africa and then up to England. Coming home from South Africa, I flew a Pan Am Clipper to South America up to Miami. I got to fly some and got in stick time in the Clipper that we all came home in."

I needed to find out more and learned after President Roosevelt signed the Lend Lease Act Pan American Airlines formed subsidiary companies to assist the government with the transport of equipment and personnel overseas. Pan Am Trans-Atlantic

flight crews found they were in the air more than on the ground, and some pilots made 12 crossings in 13 days. Soon, there was a shortage of civilian pilots to handle all the operations, and an obvious solution was to provide military crews to assist Pan Am companies in the ferrying and transport services.

U.S. military commanders believed it was inevitable that America would enter the war in Europe. In planning for this, General Hap Arnold knew the fastest and most economical method of moving combat aircraft to the front some 10-15,000 miles away was to ferry them under their own power. However, military pilots and crews had no training or experience in doing this. The Lend Lease Act and Pan Am's pilot shortage provided General Arnold with multiple strategic opportunities.

Separate contracts were negotiated between General Arnold and Pan Am for the use of military pilots. General Arnold's purpose for assisting Pan Am was to comply with Lend-Lease agreements with the British for delivery of American aircraft, and in doing so American military pilots would acquire useful training in flying the latest types of combat aircraft while gaining valuable experience in flying the Trans-Atlantic routes to Africa and England.

From October through December 1941, General Hap Arnold's Air Corps Ferrying Command, began assisting Pan Am with the delivery of American-built combat aircraft to England and Africa. Pan Am Africa, Ltd., a subsidiary of Pan Am Airlines, was to deliver sixteen B-24 aircraft to British bases in Africa and the Middle

East. These were the first deliveries beyond the continent by military crews of the Ferrying Command and the first combat aircraft to be sent over the southeastern Atlantic route to Africa. There was no alternative to the use of military crews. Pan Am Air Ferries' pilots were trained for the ferrying of two-engine aircraft, not four-engine aircraft, and Air Corps military crews became available under contract agreements, in October 1941.

In Pop's records I found a confidential War Department letter signed by Major General Hap Arnold on November 7, 1941, authorizing Lt. Walter E. Arnold and two other officers, under a 13-day contract agreement to fly with Pan Am Africa. I don't know specifically what Pop's mission was but to do so, he had to be devoid of all association with the U.S. military because if he was detained in a foreign country, he could not be accused of spying since he was legally a civilian airline pilot.

Pop's records also showed he received a radiogram order on December 3, 1941, from the Secretary of War relieving him from active duty from the Air Corps for the "Convenience of the Government." Under the same order, Pop was promoted from Lieutenant to Captain. His official discharge papers, dated December 5, 1941, indicated that his rank at time of separation was Captain, and he was rated "Air Line Pilot" as a related civilian occupation. This verifies the first event Pop mentioned in his letter to his friend.

After his December 5th discharge, there was a 13-day gap in his records. Of course within a few



days, the U.S. would officially be the War Department dated December 18, 1941, ordering him back to active duty and to report to Sacramento Municipal Airport.

I believe Pop flew with Pan Am Africa, Ltd., from December 5-18, 1941, and his secret mission involved the delivery of the first B-24s to the British in Africa.

In doing so he gained valuable military training in combat aircraft, overseas transport routes,

at war. The next document in his and other logistical military intelligence. I also think having this early experience was the reason Lt. Colonel Walter E. Arnold was selected as Commander of the Arnold Provisional Group at Salina, Kansas and delivered the 2nd Air Force's first replacement aircraft and crews when he led 29 B-17s to Africa and England in December 1942. This was the second mission he referred to in his letter above.

file was another radiogram from

When it came time to deploy the 485th Bomb Group to Italy in March '44, their Group Commander had already accumulated many hours of trans-Atlantic flying time in bomber aircraft, and a Pan Am Clipper, when he led the Group to war.

Now you know the story of Pop Arnold, the spy!

## Italians to Write Book About Two 485th Crews

By Jerry Whiting

Enzo Vinci, a retired Italian railroader, contacted us several months ago, requesting information on Colonel Tomhave's crew. As some of you know (and witnessed), Colonel Tomhave's plane collided with Lt. Stockdale's plane after a direct flak hit, on February 16, 1945. The group was returning from Regensburg when they encountered a stationary, recently-placed flak battery in an alpine valley. Four of Stockdale's 9-man crew were killed and five survived as POWs. Colonel Tomhave made it to the ground safely, but was killed several days later when he was being taken by train to Germany as a POW and was strafed by an Allied fighter. Of those on this 11-man crew, four were killed, five survived as POWs, and one (Lewis Matthews) evaded capture.

Until Enzo found us, the exact locations of these crash sites was unknown, but were reported to be near the Austrian/Slovenian/Italian borders. We knew that one survivor, Major Olin Cooper Bryant, survived and spent the rest of the war in a hospital in Tarvisio, Italy.

Enzo Vinci grew up in the village of Chiusaforte, Italy and heard stories of two American B-24 bombers crashing near the summit of Belepit Mountain. Villagers recalled that some American fliers were taken prisoner by the German detachment stationed there. Others helped bury those who perished, with the local priest giving them a Christian burial. In more recent years, Vinci climbed the mountain and found evidence of the crash sites and, through his own research, determined that the pilot of one plane was Colonel John Tomhave of the 485th Bomb Group. Armed with this critical detail, he contacted us, requesting specific details.

Fabio Stergulc, an Italian researcher who has helped the 485th in past searches, joined Enzo in the research. We provided them with all the info we have, as well as photos. Now they plan to write a book (in Italian) about these two crews and what happened to them that fateful day.

An interesting sidelight to this story is that we located Joan Tomhave, Colonel Tomhave's daughter, several months ago. We are also in contact with Walter Fergus, tail gunner from Colonel Tomhave's crew and Earl Beatty, top turret gunner from Lt. Stockdale's crew. It should be an interesting book.



Colonel Tomhave



# 831ST REPLACEMENT CREW FOUND!

By Steve Barnes

(son of Richard Barnes, Radio Operator on Herbert Frels B-24)

The crew picture on my wall showed a bunch of young guys standing and kneeling in front of the gleaming silver fuselage of a B-24 called "The Flak Man". Who were these guys pictured with my Dad? My brother said it was a lost cause, we would never know who they were. But a copy of my Dad's discharge papers were about to lead to a wealth of information about those brave flyers because on that discharge paper was noted, "831 Bomb Squadron 485 Bomb Group". Within hours a friend brought me a slip of paper with the name of Herbert Frels, the pilot who is living in Cuero, Texas. The 485th website had all their names and we even located Chester Cram, the bombardier, who is living in Florida!

The phone in Cuero, Texas was ringing and I wondered if anyone would answer. When Helen Frels answered I told her she didn't know me but my Dad, Richard Barnes, was

the radio operator on Herbert's B-24 Bomber the day they were shot down over Germany. She yelled for Herbert to pick up the phone that Steve Barnes was calling. When Herbert said hello that began a loving friendship with the man who saved my Dad's life more than 60 years ago on June 13, 1944! Herbert said he had tried to locate my Dad five years earlier but couldn't locate him (my Dad passed away in 1997).

After the phone call to Herbert I immediately began planning a trip to Cuero, Texas, 87 miles South East of San Antonio, to meet this brave man.

On Saturday, June 16, 2007 I walked to the front door of Herbert's home in Cuero, Texas and there in the doorway stood a tall man in a white shirt; he called my name as we shook hands and gently hugged. He said I looked like my Dad except I was older than the 21 year old he remembered and we sat in Herbert's front room and shared many stories of their adventures together in the States and also on that eventful day in 1944.



It was mission number 25 for the 485th and the target was an Ordnance Depot near Munich, Germany. On their way out of Munich, they were in the tail position of the formation and were attacked by two German fighters and after being hit Herbert gave the command to bail out. It was approximately 11:00 AM and they were 20 miles east of Munich. Herbert left the cockpit to bail out but when he saw my Dad in the belly of the plane helping an injured crew member with his parachute, he returned to the pilot's seat and made the decision to

stabilize the plane and allow my Dad to bail out with the other crew member and then crash land the plane. He saw my Dad bail out at about 1,000' and then crash landed the plane in a field near Freising, Germany. Herbert was knocked unconscious in the crash and awoke to find his clothes on fire. Adrenaline flowing he crawled through a cockpit window and rolled on the ground to put out the fire and was then captured by the local authorities and taken to a small town.

He said my Dad returned the favor by saving his life in town. A Nazi officer began beating Herbert who had already suffered burns on his face, a punctured lung and three broken vertebrae between his shoulder blades. Herbert said my Dad told the guards to stop beating him. Couldn't they see he was already injured?

They stopped beating Herbert and "beat the hell" out of Richard instead. Herbert knew that they would have beaten him to death if it wasn't for my Dad's intervention. That was the last time Herbert would ever see my Dad. Herbert was loaded into an ambulance and taken to the Freising hospital where he would stay for two months before going to a POW camp.

There were many good memories, especially of my folks' wedding in Colorado Springs, Colorado on March 18, 1944. Herbert and the



flight crew were invited guests at the wedding and reception. Herbert told us a story never heard before. When my Mom stood at the reception, she said she thought she had married Richard Barnes, but it looks like she married the entire flight crew!!



Richard Barnes

Herbert told of their flight from Topeka, Kansas to Florida, Trinidad,

Brazil, Africa and then to Venosa, Italy in the B-24 known as "The Flak Man". The shiny new B-24 was given to a veteran crew and Herbert's crew was given "The Gawgia Peach" which he was flying when they were shot down. Before being shot down Herbert and his crew completed several missions with one to the infamous Ploesti Oil Fields in Romania and Herbert said, "The flak was so thick out there that you could almost walk on it."

After the war Herbert returned to his hometown of Cuero, Texas, married his wife Helen and had two sons and a daughter and owned an Exxon distributorship. In 1999 Herbert received the Distinguished Flying Cross for heroism from then Governor George W. Bush. My Dad returned to California, graduated from U.C. Berkley in Electrical Engineering and worked in

Phoenix, Arizona and Pasadena, California. Throughout his life he spoke very little about his war experiences. I have two brothers and a sister and today I thank God for that crew picture sitting on my book shelf and the Blessings it has revealed through those brave men.



Herbert Frels

## 485TH BOMB GROUP ASSOCIATION INVITED TO VISIT POLISH MUSEUM

By Jerry Whiting

Recently we received a personal invitation (see below) to visit the museum honoring the 15th Air Force at Blechhammer. This is a private museum, maintained with private funding. The museum has recently grown in size, with more exhibits and artifacts. Several 485th members have donated items, including crew and bomb photos, squadron and group patches, and a gunner's dress

blouse. All these are displayed with pride. In addition, there is a large display honoring Lt. Lindell's 828th Sqdn crew, lost over Blechhammer on December 26, 1944. If you or any family or friends travel to southwestern Poland, the museum staff would be honored to give you a private tour of this museum. Contact Jerry Whiting for additional details.

The historical group "Blackhammer" invites you to visit the Memorial Room dedicated to the 15<sup>th</sup> U.S.A.A.F., the prisoners of war and force labor workers employed at building refineries in the Kedzierzyn-Kozle are during WWII.

Our collection consists of:

- Parts of American, German and Russian planes which had been shot down
  - Air Force and flak equipment, fragments of uniforms
  - Unique documents and photographs from American, English, German and Polish archives and private collections
  - Accounts of witnesses, prisoners and veterans participating in the battles
- The memorial room is located in the community centre "Lech" in Kedzierzyn - Kozle (Blachownia district) , ul. Wyzwolenia 7b.

Visitors are welcome on Thursdays between 5-8 PM, admission free.

Accommodation address: Waldemar Ociepski, ul. Reymonta 11/6, 47-225 Kedzierzyn- Kozle POLAND

e-mail: [wociepski@o2.pl](mailto:wociepski@o2.pl)

[www.k-k.pl/fotki/ociepki/ociepki.htm](http://www.k-k.pl/fotki/ociepki/ociepki.htm)



# Notes from the Historian

By Jerry Whiting

Another busy year has passed. I'll review some highlights. I find it fascinating that new information continues to surface about the 485th Bomb Group, the details which are of interest to many of our members.

I can't emphasize enough the importance of our website at [www.485thbg.org](http://www.485thbg.org). Just answering the inquiries at the website keeps me busy. It's not uncommon to receive several inquiries per week. Many 485th Vets and/or their families are finding us through the website. If they're interested (and most are), we add them to our roster to receive our newsletter and invite them to join us at our reunions.

Many inquires are from Europe. One example is a recent request from Corsica. Franck Allegrini contacted me through the website, inquiring about any 485th aircraft lost on the July 5, 1944 mission to Toulon, France. Allegrini, who lives on the island of Corsica, found wreckage on the beach several years ago and located local witnesses who gave the date. Witnesses saw the plane, a B-24, ditch near the beach. Our records confirmed that William Vaessen and his crew ditched at Corsica, after receiving severe flak damage over the target, with the loss of six crewmen, including Vaessen. David Korkuc, the tail gunner, survived and was decorated for his lifesaving efforts that day. All information matched, so I put Allegrini in touch with David Korkuc's family.

A few contacts concern minor corrections and/or omissions to the website. When Lynn Cotterman and I compiled the list of all personnel who served in the 485th, we knew some names were missing, particularly those of ground personnel. Lynn and I compiled the records from microfilmed personnel orders, with assistance from members of the group. There were more available records for flight personnel, so these records are more complete. The list on the website is a work in progress. As Vets or their families find us and report omissions, we add the names to the site. We know the ranks of the members on the site are often not the highest ranks achieved, and changing ranks is not a priority, since there are more than 3300 names listed, but our goal is to list everyone who served in the 485th.

In the past several months, I've added approximately 120 crew photos and crew summaries to the site. There is more work to be done and I have more crew photos to add. I also must add photos of non-flying personnel to the site.

I would very much like to have group photos of different units of ground personnel for the site. We want everyone to be represented. If you haven't looked at the photos on the website, take a look at them and their crew summaries which accompany them.

I have recently been in touch a group from the Department of Defense, the DPMO (Defense Prisoner/Missing Office), who continue to search for MIA's in Europe. Representatives from their group contacted me regarding men from three different 485th crews who were lost on combat missions. This is a working group and they have asked me not to share specific names of crewmen. When they're successful, families are the first to be notified. They do not want to raise false hopes or inadvertently misinform a family, simply because they are examining a case. Suffice it to say that whenever they make a request, they get complete cooperation. This includes providing them with reports and existing stories from surviving airmen, putting them in touch with known survivors, and providing them with records from my own personal research.

We should all feel good that our government is still searching for these men. If any of you guys went down, lost a crewman who is still listed as MIA and have specific information about the crash location, a possible burial site, or other helpful information, please contact me. I will make certain the info will be passed on to the right people. Sometimes debriefing information of returning airmen was not retained or has been lost, so we can't assume our military has all the pertinent information to research these cases.

Several of you have contacted me personally, inquiring about getting a copy of Missions by the Numbers. This book, compiled and edited by Sammy Schneider, has been out of print for several years. Lynn Cotterman and I discussed this topic at length. We decided to finance a reprint of a limited number (300) of the book. Make no mistake; this is not a revision, but a reprint. It has a new cover and a few lost photos were replaced, but it's the same book, compiled originally by Carl Gigowski and edited by Sammy Schneider. Falcon Books has done a wonderful job of reproducing the book. If you don't have a copy, it's certainly a piece of 485th history. (See ad on page 31.)



Several people have helped me with research this year. A few names which come to mind are Mark LaScotte, Scott Studaker and Gerry Weinstein. Mark (son of Eugene LaScotte, continues to provide valuable information about POWs in Bulgaria. Scott (grandson of Cliff Studaker) helps me find “lost” people. Gerry Weinstein (son of Sy Weinstein) has done extensive work to identify planes from

his father’s photo collection. Gerry’s father was the group photographer and collected hundreds of photos of the 485th.

Thanks to all of you who have sent photos, stories and other documentation about the 485th. Hope to see you at the reunion.

## Austrian Historian Visits U.S.

By Jerry Whiting

Dr. Jakob Mayer, an Austrian Historian and friend of the 485th, was a guest at the home of Jerry and Ann Whiting in late October. Jakob lives in Innsbruck. A few years ago he located and identified the crash site of Hugh White’s 829th Sqdn plane, shot down by flak near Innsbruck on June 9, 1944. White’s plane was damaged over Munich and they were trying to make their way to Switzerland when they went down. The crew survived as POWs.

Jakob also assisted in finding the crash sites of two 485th planes involved in a mid-air collision over Austria on March 2, 1945. These involved the crews of 829th Sqdn pilots Carl Langley and Earl Pooley. Most of the men from both crews were killed. Jakob was a driving force in getting a memorial plaque placed at or near the crash site of White’s plane, and having dedication ceremonies at the sites to honor these crews. (Another Austrian Historian, Roland Domanig, arranged for a plaque near the location Pooley’s and Langley’s planes fell and a dedication ceremony was held at this site, attended by Don Magness, brother of John Magness, one of the crew who perished.)

Jakob prefers to investigate the stories of planes that went down near his home, for obvious reasons. He has not only done this for the 485th Bomb Group, but for planes from other bomb groups that were shot down in his region. About three years ago we asked him to investigate another crew and plane that went down. This was the crew of

Robert Ware, 828th Sqdn, shot down near Bruck, Austria on February 23, 1945. Jakob accepted the task, even though the location was more than 200 miles from his home.

Jakob obtained preliminary information, tentatively identifying the crash site. Five of the crew were killed and five survived as POWs. One of the survivors was Bill Ryan, the copilot. Ryan, from another crew, filled in that day for Jack Whatley, who had an eye injury. Another survivor was Jack Yates, the tail gunner. Information was collected from interviews with these two men and sent to Jakob to aid in his research. Soon Jakob tentatively identified one man, now deceased, who helped save Ryan’s life by taking the badly wounded airman down a mountain in a horse-driven cart.

During his visit to California, Jakob met Bill Ryan (and Bill’s wife June) and obtained Bill’s account of what happened that fateful day. Jakob wasn’t able to meet with Jack Yates, who lives in Florida, but had an extended phone conversation with him. Jakob had specific questions for these two men and feels confident he will be able to find more witnesses in Austria and develop a more complete accounting of what happened to the crew that day. Stay tuned next year for the results of this search.

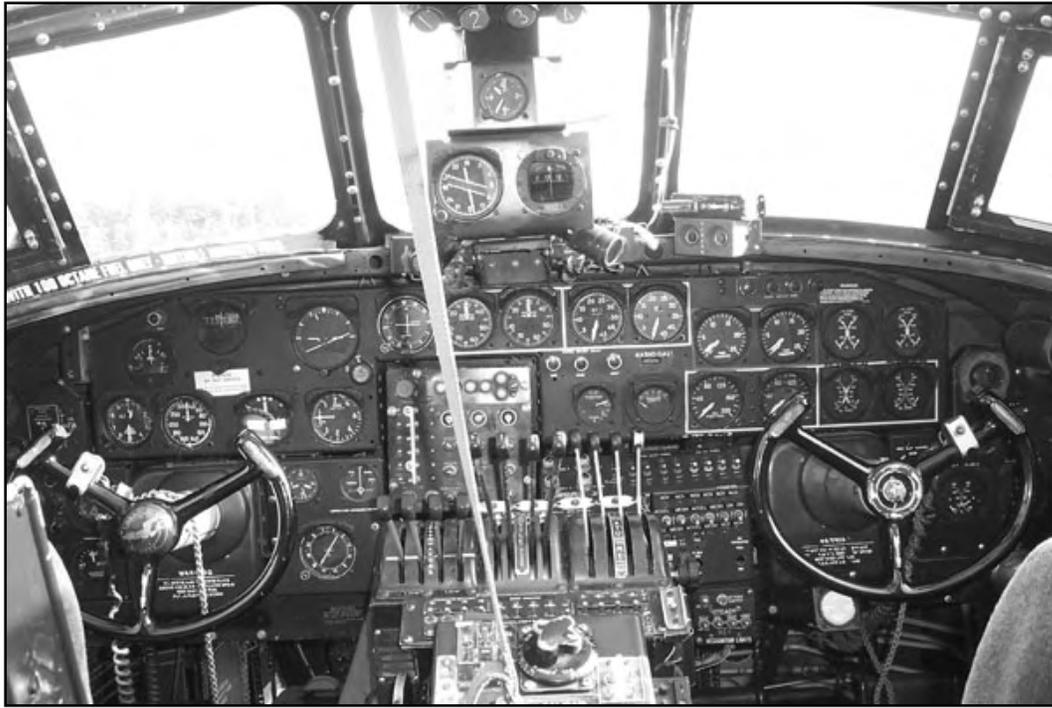


Jakob Mayer listens as Bill Ryan relates his story



Pooley/Langley monument - Don Magness (on left), brother of John Magness, at dedication ceremony for his brother's crew





## INTERLUDES AND VISIONS

By Bob Karstensen  
15<sup>th</sup> AAF

The die is cast, the bell has rung,  
the parade has ended, his finale sung,  
The engines have “shut down” one by one  
The cockpit is empty, his job now done

But wait... is that cockpit really still?  
Don't you hear the cadence of a check list drill?  
Can't you hear the starter begin its whine  
can't you see the props, cut an arc so fine?

Does your body recoil at the noise you hear  
as those four big engines charge the air?  
Can you sense the power that's the pilots' tool  
when he “walls” the throttles to “pour on” the fuel?

Do you feel the tension or has it dimmed by time,  
when you sat by the runway, all revved and prime,  
and to know the pilot, on the early roll,  
Is lining er' up, with his rudder control?

Can you feel the drama as you lift and climb,  
n' search for your leader, fight log the time?  
Can you see the earth slip away 'neath our wings,  
and not remember just some of these things?

Does the tone of those voices, spoke in haste, not in dread,  
give an uneasy feeling of what lies ahead?  
Could that knot in your stomach return once again,  
to the works “I see fighters...keep and eye on 'em men!”

Would the smell of raw cordite, in that high atmosphere,  
give you feelings of anger, or tremors of fear?  
Could you forget the numbness of the subfreezing cold,  
would your blood run hot, from these visions retold?

Would you still feel compassion, for the ship and its men,  
who are drifting away, trailing smoke without end?  
Do your thoughts still evoke those pleas turned to shouts  
“Tom's ship really had it! ...Why don't they bail out?”

Do you still count the chutes as you did way back then?  
“...that's seven and eight....come on nine and ten!”  
Does your mind still consider, “If that had been me,  
would my comrades remember, would my folks pray for me?”

So a look at the cockpit that is empty and still,  
Brings back shadows of comrades, dangers and thrills,  
Tho we close down the hatch, turn away engines roar,  
but forget what has happened? I can guess, nevermore

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# JOURNEY'S END - MAY THEY REST IN PEACE

Dr. Richard S.	Clark	829th			Perry	Monroe	828th	1975
Col. John B.	Cornett	HQS	2007		Albert	O'Brien	829th	2007
Henry W.	Dahlberg	831st	2007		Charles	Olney	830th	
James H.	Favre	831st	2005		Robert	Oppenheim	831st	1986
Harvey	Fifield	830th	2007		Edwin	Orgass	828th	
Henry	Fisher	828th	2007		Richard H.	Peath	829th	2001
Bob	Hanna	831st	2008		Louis P.	Randall	828th	
John	Jackson	831st	2007		Joe	Raymond	829	2007
Robert	Kolvet	831st	1970		Robert G.	Schroeder	HQS	
Mack A.	Lundy, Jr.	829th	2007		Murray	Sheriden	831st	2007
Tom	Mahon	829th	2008		Robert W.	Sigg	HQS	2006
Lawrence	McGilvarey	830th			Sy	Weinstein	HQS	2007
Roy	Mehrkens	829th						

## MEMORIAL BRUNCH

Sunday, 23 September 2007

By Frances J. Fowler

Bob Hanson gave the blessing before we started a wonderful breakfast buffet.

A reading from Jack Whately written by Bob Karstensen, 15th AAF "Interludes and Visions" will be given to each family as they leave the room.

Sherrill Burba was taken to the hospital on Friday night and the programs for the Memorial Brunch, as well as his keyboard, have been lost in the mail. With no printed program available we just are winging it.

Al Martin read a letter from the Rev. Don Whiteman. Don's letter stated it was a time to meet and reunite. He stated that his sincere desire was that all the 485th would meet in heaven for the last reunion. Due to health reason, Don and his wife are unable to attend the reunion.



George Dyer read Sherrill Burba's 485th prayer. This poem has been adopted as the official Fifteenth Air Force Prayer.



Marvin Lindsay read the Flag folding ceremony, with Mike Lindsay, Byron Deal, Randy Hannum and Mark Swann presenting the folds. Each fold of the flag has a very special meaning.

Bob Hanson read the verse regarding the table for the Missing Man.

All joined in singing "Let There Be Peace". The memorial brunch ended with all say farewells and we'll see you next year.



# 485<sup>TH</sup> BOMB GROUP BOOKS

## I'M OFF TO WAR, MOTHER, BUT I'LL BE BACK

By Jerry Whiting and Wayne Whiting

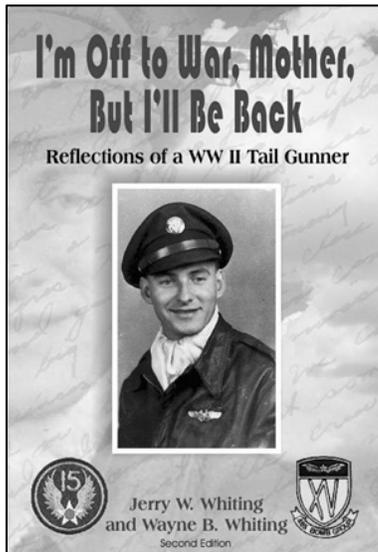
This newly revised edition, released in June 2007, is now a hardcover book. This expanded; collector's edition 250+ page book has nearly 100 photos. This is the true story of a 485th BG tail gunner, enhanced by excerpts of more than 200 letters he wrote home. It includes:

The survival tale of an 831st Squadron airman and his buddies who were shot down over enemy territory, but eluded capture and returned to Italy six weeks later. The story of the 485th Bomb Group's unique relationship with the Tuskegee Airmen.

The saga of one of the last bomber crews shot down over Europe on the final mission flown by the 485th, and their "capture" by the Russians.

The capture of a Messerschmitt pilot and his fighter by two pilots and a navigator from the 830th Squadron.

The miraculous account of a navigator's survival after he was blown out of his bomber and fell 10,000 feet without a parachute.



The continuing search today for a 9-man crew lost over Blechhammer.

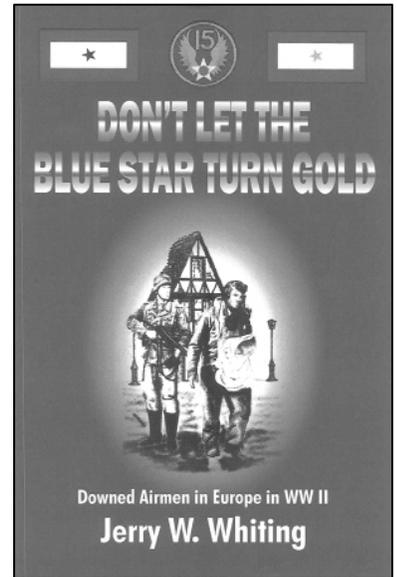
JUNE 2007 REVISED HARDCOVER COLLECTOR'S EDITION!

## DON'T LET THE BLUE STAR TURN GOLD

By Jerry Whiting

These are true stories of 485th Bomb Group airmen who didn't return from bombing missions. The 250-page hardcover book has 65 photos. The stories are about the struggle to survive, so that blue star proudly hanging in the window at home wouldn't be replaced by a gold one.

There are accounts of love, duty and courage. Included are stories of the families at home and their efforts to cope, after receiving that dreaded telegram advising them their loved one was Missing In Action. There are accounts from Europeans who witnessed the bombers falling, including recent stories from some who aided the airmen. Each story is placed in the context of what was happening elsewhere in the world. The author shares background history of how each story came to be, often with surprising revelations. This is a book about captures, escapes, evasions and....sometimes death. Painstakingly researched and inspirational, it's a must read for anyone interested in WWII history, particularly for those interested in the 485th Bomb Group.



BOOK ORDER FORM			
Book	Price	# of books	Total
<i>Don't Let the Blue Star Turn Gold</i>	\$ 20.00	_____	\$ _____
<i>I'm Off to War, Mother, But I'll Be Back</i>	\$ 20.00	_____	\$ _____
<i>Mission By By The Numbers</i> Edited by Sammy Schneider	\$ 20.00	_____	\$ _____
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BROKAW	ABBOTT	WHITEMAN	HALL	MORGAN	SCHLICHTER
HANSEN	HICKMAN				

### PERSONAL TILES

15th Air Force Wall - March Field, California

Personal Tiles can still be made and be set at our 485th plaque on the 15th AF Wall. The cost is \$50.00 for one line of 20 spaces and \$75.00 for two lines of 20 spaces. Here are two examples of tiles that have been set on our island

MGEN WALTER E ARNOLD CPT ROBERT B SKELTON  
 CMD 485 BOMB GP POW PILOT CREW 24 829 SQ

To order a tile, send the lettering to me with no more than 20 spaces for each line.

Warren D. Sortomme, 3490 Turquoise Lane, Oceanside, CA 92056-4866, (760) 945-8439, Sortomme@dslextre.com

Check made out to: The March Field Museum Foundation  
 485th Vets Tiles - January 1, 2004

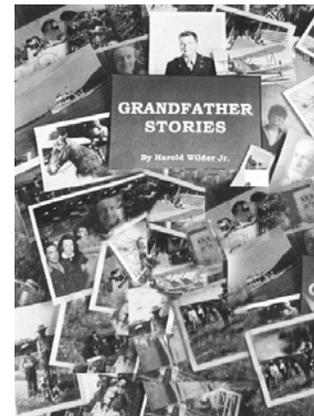
Headquarters - Walter E. Arnold, Robert M. Benson, Douglas M. Cairns, Ben B. Cook, John B. Cornett, S.W. Hancock, Hadley M. Huckey, Warren Sortomme and Loyd F. Towers.

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829th SQD - Big Alice from Dallas - Jay T. Baker, Gerald Behunin, Earl L. Bundy, Robert J. Camden, Allen W. Carlson, Kenneth L. Carter, Joseph W. Cathcart, Arthur J. Fowler, Milton Funding, William G. Furgueson, Harvey H. Huber, San A. Keele, Michael I. Kopcha, Marvin H. Lindsay, William G. Long, Slayton M. McGehee, Donald P. Roen, Marion E. Shelor, Robert B. Skelton, Donald R. Whiteman, Wallace Williams and Irvin N. Wolf.

830th SQD - Robert E. Baker, Bill Cottingham, George Dyer, M. Greenwood, Chuck Heringer, Joseph H. Morgan, Bill Oliver, Joe Richmond, Paul Rofield, W. Schlichter, Everet H. Swann, Bob Towne, Fran Tunstall and R. Wesley.

831st SQD - C.A. Abbott, William Brokaw, Lynn Cotterman, William Geyer, R. Oliver Haden, Earl A. Hall, David T. Hansen, Robert W. Hickman, Dan Sjodin and Howard P. Woodyard.



### GRANDFATHER STORIES

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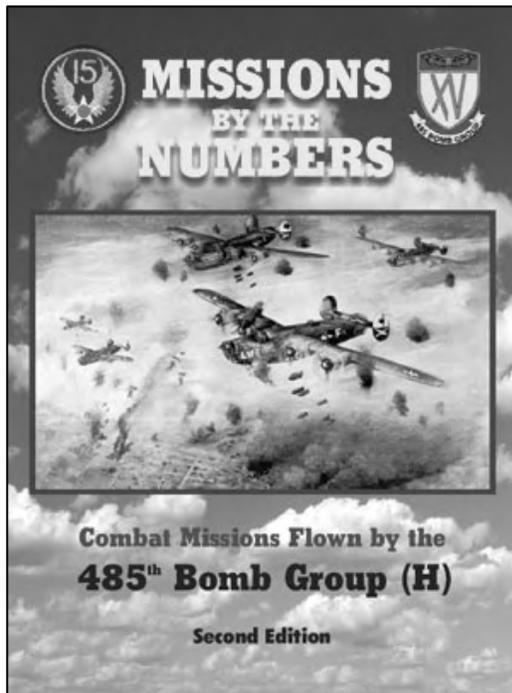
email: WILDER495@RoadRunner.com

### MISSIONS BY THE NUMBERS

Edited by Sammy Schneider

This book includes mission summaries of 187 combat missions flown by the 485th Bomb Group. Included are stories written by several members of the group that tell the complete story of a mission, from the minute the coded message was received until the mission was completed. Also included is the story of a gunner who was shot down and captured and the story of a crew that struggled to make it safely through the Brenner Valley, also known as "flak alley", with severe battle damage.

There are 20+ photos in this 190-page, quality paperback book, including several photos of bomb strikes, damaged B-24s, escort fighters and reconnaissance photos, as well as maps and charts. There is also reference information on group losses and bomb types, a sample of a pilot's "flimsy" (secret plan for the mission) and much, much more. This is a book about the 485th Bomb Group, told by the men who lived it. This is a very limited edition.



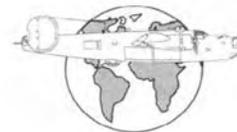
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\$20+ shipping. See order form on page 30

### WWII B-24's IN ITALY

#### "A Unique VIDEO"

by Capt. Henry "Hank" Dahlberg



831st Bomb Squadron  
 Engineering Officer  
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 15th Air Force

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**AERIAL PHOTO OF VENOSA ITALY PRESENT DAY  
NOTE THE OUTLINE OF THE 485<sup>TH</sup> AIR FIELD IS STILL VISIBLE**



**IN THE PHOTO BELOW AN OVERLAY OF THE AIR FIELD IS SHOWN**

