



LIGHTWEIGHT TOWER CALLING



NO.15

DEC 1980

MISSION NO. 16: GOOD-BY VENOSA, 1945 - HELLO VENOSA, 1980

Editor's Note: In previous newsletters we relived some of the adventures of the 485th veterans, both in the air and on the ground. In GOOD-BY VENOSA, 1945 which appeared in the last issue we relived the last few days of the Group's activity at Venosa Airfield. Two years ago, Laura Rempe announced plans for an European Tour which would take us back to Venosa, Italy and the site of our airfield. With carefully laid plans with the Bentley Hedges Travel Service, it was a dream come true for many of us in 1980. Here is the story of that memorable adventure RETURN TO VENOSA as told by your reporters and Frank Spence, Editor of the Wagoner Record-Democrat, Wagoner, Oklahoma.

HELLO VENOSA 1980

RETURN TO VENOSA BY BUS NO. 1 - Carl Gigowski

Monday, 15 Sept: D-Day (Departure Day) Checking and rechecking our traveling check list, packing and repacking to make sure we have everything. Our daughter Carol provides taxi service to the airport as your editor is too excited to drive. Waiting at the airport are my country cousins, Art and Marilyn Gigowski who will be our traveling companions. On to Detroit Metro where the Littles and Woodyards join us. Arriving at JFK International, Bernie Rempe instructs us to check in with TWA and meet in conference room C where Laura tags us, just in case one forgets their name. Sal LaBollo of the Bronx provided a very delicious Italian pastry and wishes all a happy "bon voyage". Everyone is ready and anxious for the big flight and board the 747 at 1930 for our 8 hour flight. The 747 makes the night the shortest ever experienced as dawn arrives around 0130 EDST.

Tuesday, 16 Sept: The 747 settles on the runway at Heathrow International Airport at 0740 London time. Two hours later we have our luggage, customs checked and meet with our Tour Director Ray Dickinson of Surrey, England. Unknown to Nick and Annette Montulli, their luggage decides to travel to Parris and will join them in a couple of days. At the hotel Ray briefs us on our stay in London. The afternoon is free time and before checking in our rooms at 1300 we enjoy lunch (beef and kidney pie) at the hotel's restaurant. It is raining lightly as the bus leaves for the Elizabethan Banquet at the House of the Company of Trenchmen near the Tower of London. Entering the House Neal Schawalter is knighted as King Henry VIII and a cast of costumed

characters of the 16th century, jesters, conjurors, musicians and serving wenches, greet us. Even in those days they had happy hours and some of us become quite jolly or "sozzled" as Ray would say. The dinner consisted of five "removes" (courses) and as we feasted, King Henry and his court continued to entertain us and the wenches continued to serve old English Mead and wine. With the clashing of swords by the white knight and black knight for the honor of a wench, a wonderful experience ended. Our return trip aboard the famous double-decked bus was a thriller as we all were seated on the top deck to view London by night.

Wednesday, 17 Sept: Today started a routine which would be followed throughout our trip. Wake-up - 0700, Breakfast and luggage ready - 0730 and Departure - 0800, with the times varying slightly. An inside visit of Westminster Abbey was our first stop on the tour of London. Traveled the Mall to Buckingham Palace and witnessed the changing of the guard. On the way to the Embankment our bus passed Piccadilly Circus, Trafalgar Square, Parliament and St. Paul's Cathedral. Traveled on the River Thames for a good view of Big Ben and on to the Tower of London. Here we entered history dating to the 11th century, the reign of King Henry VIII. On returning to the hotel, some of us visited Madame Tussaud's Wax Museum on Marylebone Road. Here you could carry on a one way conversation with the most famous and infamous people in the world. Cousin Marilyn did just that and the teenaged figure came to life with a loud BOO! and walked away smiling. A few minutes later, Marilyn regained her wits. After this ghostly experience we boarded the underground, transferred at Paddington and exited at Hammersmith station. Overcoming some confusion of direction and dodging the rush hour traffic we arrived at the hotel tired.

Thursday, 18 Sept: By 0700 we were traveling easterly thru London and on to Harwick where we boarded the ferryboat for a rather calm 7 hour ride across the English Channel to the Hook of Holland. Here we board-

BACK TO MY OLD KENTUCKY HOME

The Sixteenth Annual Reunion of the 485th Bomb Group (H) will be held July 31 - August 2, 1981 at the Galt House in Louisville, Kentucky. Your host will be Al Martin of the 829th. For particulars, consult the reunion announcement or for additional information write Al Martin, 8901 Ferndale Road, Fern Creek, KY 40291. You all come down to the Blue Grass country of Kentucky.

ed our mobile home with our driver Maro of Rome. Nearing Amsterdam, Maro made the wrong turn and became lost. But with the help of Ray, our Tour Director/Navigator we arrived at the hotel at 2045. Enjoyed a late dinner and wasted no time retiring for a busy tomorrow.

Friday, 19 Sept: Traveling into Amsterdam, traffic became quite heavy as in London but with more bicycles. In the suburbs and nearby countryside there are bicycle roads adjacent to the highways complete with traffic lights. At Van Moppes' Diamond Company we observed the cutting and polishing of diamonds. Toured Amsterdam on the many canals in a glass-roofed excursion boat. Heading north out of Amsterdam for Volendam on the Zuiderzee, a stop was made at a wooden shoe factory. Rough cutting the shoe is done on a wood carving machine in just fifteen minutes. Nearing Volendam a wedding was taking place in a beautiful green pasture. Enjoyed visiting Volendam, a very picturesque fishing village. Stopped at a Edam cheese farm on the way to Markem which once was an island. Strolling thru the village on the way to visit Holland's Mae West, we passed a wedding party. Mae West, a very colorful and pleasant individual in her traditional style of dress, invited us into her home where she described the customs of the local people and had many humorous remarks about all.

Saturday, 20 Sept: We leave Amsterdam at 0815 on our long trek south to Italy, passing thru Arnhem, site of a somewhat disastrous Allied Airborne operation on 17 September 1944. By-passing Dusseldorf our bus stops at Cologne for a visit to the Cologne Cathedral. Across the street which bears heavy traffic because of a local festival, we pass up McDonald's hamburgers for a lunch at a corner outdoor restaurant. Leaving Cologne we cross the Rhine River and travel the west bank thru Bonn, capital of West Germany. On thru Remagan and cross the Rhine again at Coblenz where we enter an area of vineyards and castles. Just south of the legendary Lorelei at Kaub we have our rest stop. Across the road and on a tiny island in the Rhine is the Die Pfalz castle dating back to 1326. Arrive in Heidelberg at 1720 at our 400 year old hotel which nestles against the hills along the River Neckar. Slept cozy under a feather comforter.

Sunday, 21 Sept: Another beautiful day as we visit the old Heidelberg University in the middle of town. Crossing the river and climbing the hill overlooking the city our bus stops at the old Heidelberg castle for a tour. Back on the Autobahn we continue south and leave the highway at Offenburg for Triberg, a very picturesque Bavarian town in the Black Forest and home of the famous cuckoo clocks. Enjoyed a lunch mit dat godt German beer, and with a cuckoo clock ordered we continue on to Switzerland with a stop at the beautiful Rhine Falls. Skirting around Zurich we arrive in beautiful Lucerne. The evening is ours and we cross the River Reuss on the Chapel bridge to the shopping area and try not to spend too much money.

Monday, 22 Sept: Today we are mountain climbers. After a tour of Lucerne the bus tour takes out to Mt. Pilatus which is visible from our hotel. Our mountain climbing is done the easy way, aboard a cog-wheel trolley which takes us thru beautiful scenery to the top of Mt.

Pilatus, 7000 ft. above sea level. The view is breathtaking as one views the valleys and distant mountains which occasionally are obscured by clouds. We descend the mountain on the opposite side in a cable car thru the clouds. About a third of the way down we transfer to a gondola type car with a capacity of four and continue down to our waiting bus. With some free time I went shopping and spent some time finding myself for I became lost. Many of us attended a Swiss Folklore party during the evening and many of us had a jolly good time.

Tuesday, 23 Sept: A light rain is falling as we depart Lucerne for Innsbruck, Austria. Our route took us thru very colorful and beautiful scenery with the chalets nestled on the sloping hills and cloud topped mountain in the background. Traveled thru Liechtenstein and stopped at the capital of Vaduz. Our afternoon stop is at Arlbergpass, 1800m above sea level. We run into a traffic jam for about 45 minutes where the local farmers are moving their cattle down from the mountains, for the winter, on the highway. Arriving in Innsbruck it was raining with very little time for sight-seeing and shopping. During dinner I was paged for a telephone call. I suspected it might be Felix Ramader of Ebergassing (near Vienna) and I was right. I enjoyed conversing with Felix and his daughter and made up my mind I had to make one more trip to Austria. During the evening we enjoyed the Tyrolean Folklore show with my favorite music.

Wednesday, 24 Sept: After today we would spend the rest of our trip touring Italy. The rain stopped but the mountains were still partly obscured by clouds. I wasn't too eager to leave Innsbruck for I certainly like this part of Europe. Crossing the Italian border we proceeded south thru the Brenner Pass and northern Italy. The area was familiar to many of us as we had flown over or to it on missions during the war. At Franzensfeste we left the Pass, heading east thru some of the most rugged mountains we had seen so far. Near Prato Piazza Platzwiese our bus stopped so we could take pictures of a glacier. At Dobbiaco Toblach our course turned south and nearing Cortina we encountered additional excitement as our bus was side-swiped by a German Tourist bus traveling in the opposite direction on a hairpin curve. Fortunately, Ray found the police at a nearby restaurant but the accident still delayed us about an hour and a half. Our afternoon stop was at St. Croce Del Lago and as we passed thru Vitt Veneto we entered the Po valley. After dinner at our hotel in Mestre, we journeyed out to Venice where all us young lovers enjoyed a romantic gondola serenade around Venice.

Thursday, 25 Sept: Before leaving for Florence we rode back to Venice for a very interesting tour of the city. Traveled by water taxi to St. Mark's Square and visited St. Mark's Basilica, Palace of Dogos, crossed the Bridge of Sighs to the ancient prison. Visited a glass factory and observed a craft that has been handed down from generation to generation within one family. Returning to our bus by water taxi the course was set for Florence across the beautiful Po valley. Crossed the Adige and Po rivers which brought back memories of missions to the area. Stopped at Bologna for our afternoon rest where we bought our first liter of mineral water which we would do for the rest of our stay in Italy. Leaving



BUS NO. 1 TRAVELERS - Front, L to R: Bill Angle, Bob McVann, Neal Schawalder, Jab Layhew, Art Hurley, Joe Opalka, Carl Gigowski, Art Gigowski, Nick Montulli, Larry Martin, Don Killen, John Jackson, Ted Brown and Doug Cairns. Rear, L to R: Hilda Angle, Ruth McVann, Ruth Schawalder, Larry Ick, George Ick, Jane Opalka, Florence Gigowski, Jean Layhew, Bentley Hedges, Marilyn Gigowski, Sue Wilson, Annette Montulli, John Wilson, Beth Martin, Mary Louise Killen, Carol Goodson, Rosalie Jackson, Ray Dickenson, Tour Director, Mary Brown and Lillian Cairns.



BUS NO. 2 TRAVELERS - 1st Row, L to R: Alvera Peshka, Al Peshka, Marsie Robinson, Jack Robinson and Guide. 2nd Row, L to R: Kenneth Robinson, Barzella Robinson, Martha Bundy, Earl Bundy, Theresa Cole, Alice Bimmler and Bob Bimmler. 3rd Row, L to R: Mary Evans, Frances Fundling, Milton Fundling, Kay Yarbrough, Louise Douglas, Jimmy Douglas, Martha Cathcart, Jean Farrell and Charlotte Burgstrom. 4th Row, L to R: Charlene Evans, Jewel Hale, Homer Hale, Mike Stewart, Alberta Stewart, L. D. Stewart, Marmie Barron, Joe Barron, Joe Cathcart, Bill Farrell and Persh Burgstrom.



BUS NO. 3 TRAVELERS - Front, L to R: Jack Bagwell, Bob Halling, Kenneth Swanson, Otto Meyers, Marion Shelor, Sid Manson, Bill Spence, Richard McLawhorn, Howard Woodyard, Leonard Little, Ned Peirano, Jack Nagle, Frank Spence, Bob Hanson, Jack Godfrey and Rod Ritchie. Rear, L to R: Gloria, Guide in Rome, Martha Bagwell, Charlotte Swanson, Claire Halling, Marcelyn Meyers, Charlene Shelor, Edith Nagle, Norma Manson, Lucy Spence, Mary Conley, Betty Ellis McLawhorn, Marguerite Woodyard, Grace Little, Patsy Worthington, Evelyn Peirano, Mary Nagle, Mary Spence Smith, Lynda Hanson, Irene Godfrey and Neville Walls, Tour Director. Knelling: Primo, Bus Driver with Stephen Meyers.



485TH VETERANS AT VENOSA AIRFIELD - 1st Row, L to R: Howard Woodyard, John Jackson, Farmer and Friend of Venosa Airfield, Homer Hale, Emanuel Savino, Bob Peterson, Armondo Di Narco, Bernie Rempe, and Carl Gigowski. 2nd Row, L to R: Nick Montulli, Otto Meyers, Milton Fundling, Bill Farrell, Bob Bimmler, Sandy Sanborn and Leonard Little. 3rd Row, L to R: Bill Angle, Ted Brown, Art Hurley, Joe Opalka, Bob Hanson, Neil Peirano, Marion Shelor, Joe Cathcart, Bob McVann, Larry Martin, Jack Nagle and Bill Spence. 4th Row, L to R: Rod Ritchie, Doug Cairns, Al Peschka, George Ick, Sid Manson, Earl Bundy, Kenneth Robinson, Neal Schawalder, Richard McLawhorn, Jack Godfrey and Bob Halling.

Bologna we enter the Appenine mountains which are very impressive but not as rugged as the Alp mountains. Arriving in Florence we went directly to Piazza Santa Croce, spending about 45 minutes with a visit to a leather shop. After dinner some of us strolled along the Arno river before retiring.

Friday, 26 Sept: Another beautiful sunny Italian day as we cross the Arno river and climb the hill to Piazzale Michelangelo which overlooks Florence. Back on the autostrada we continue south to Sorrento. By-passing Rome we pass Mt. Cassino and as we approach Naples, Mt. Vesuvius comes into sight. Outside of Naples we stop at a cameo shop and watch the carving of cameos from sea shells. At Castellammare we leave the autostrada and proceed on a narrow winding road on the side of the hills and follow the coastline to Sorrento. With some free time on hand to visit a wood working shop specializing in inlaid wood work. After dinner we stroll the crowded streets of Sorrento just enjoying the happy and carefree mood that seems to prevail.

Saturday, 27 Sept: Our first stop of the day is Pompei, once a thriving city buried by more than 20 feet of volcanic ash, lava and rock in 79 AD. Walking the cobbled Roman-era streets viewing the ruins of mills, shops, public baths and villas one could get the feeling of being there when catastrophe struck. At Naples harbor we boarded a hydrofoil ship for the half hour ride to the Isle of Capri. A few minutes later we were boarding small motor launches for the trip to the Blue Grotto. The area was crowded with small boats waiting their turn to enter the Grotto. Bouncing on the waves we transferred from the motor launch to small row boats which held four passengers and the oarsman. Entering the Grotto was tricky, and had to be done as the wave ebbed and all of us lying on the bottom of the boat. Inside it was a different world. In the darkness the water was a beautiful shade of blue luminated by outside light entering thru underwater openings in the side of the cave. We exited the same way and returned to Capri harbor. Boarding a cable car which took us to the top of the hill and the small town where we enjoyed a Pizza, shopped around and just plain enjoyed the beautiful scenery below. Returned to Sorrento by ferryboat and had another exciting bus ride with a local driver as we wound our way thru the very narrow streets to our hotel. During the evening many attended a Tarantella Dance performance while others strolled the streets enjoying the live music from the sidewalk cafes.

Sunday, 28 Sept: Our big day for we were returning to Venosa, our home while overseas during WWII. We were back on the cliff hanging road by 0730 and turned on the main highway for Salerno, north to Avellino and then on the highway to Barie. At Candela we left the highway heading in a southerly direction to Venosa. By high noon we were on the outskirts of the town in an area of new apartment buildings. Once inside the town one could not believe it was the same town that we knew during the war. It was beautiful, cheerful and really different. Arriving at the intersection of the street which led to our airfield and the castle I recognized our location. There was much traffic and the sidewalks were filled with strolling people, who undoubtedly were somewhat curious about the strangers visiting their town. Parking

near the main entrance to the castle, the group proceeded down one of the streets to the Municipal building for a meeting with the Mayor. The Mayor's office filled rapidly. I became involved in a conversation with Carmando DiNardo, who as a youngster worked in the 831st area, and Angelo Preite. Angelo's father operated a cafe opposite the main entrance to the castle during the war. As we were looking over a map of the airfield we were joined by Vittoria Polodor and her husband, who were much interested in the airfield. With an aid of an interpreter the Mayor welcomed us to Venosa. Earl Bundy presented the Mayor a gift from the Mayor of Columbus, Ohio. I expressed our happiness in being welcomed back to Venosa. During this time a reunion was taking place between Carmando and Bob Hanson, Warren Meyers and Bob Halling as they remember each other from our days at the airfield. From the Municipal building and down the street a couple of doors away we entered a hall where the Mayor held a reception for us, serving delicious hors d'oeuvres and Italian wine. Most of us gathered on the patio at the rear of the building, conversing with our new friends, viewing the area and guessing in which direction the airfield was located. Continuing down the street towards the busses we stopped at a restaurant where Bentley Hedges had arranged a wonderful dinner for all. While dining it started to rain. After dinner Ray approached me with a gentleman who was looking for Pat Salese, who was a gunner on my crew. It was Pat's cousin from Venosa. I was sorry to inform him that Pat did not make the trip and that during the war I had visited his place with Pat.

As we traveled down the road that many of us had walked to Venosa I recognized some of the prominent landmarks, the Catholic school, the old church with the cemetery across the road and the intersection at the south end of our landing strip. Here the bus stopped and we all took pictures. Woody took a picture of a marker of the end of the runway. Unfortunately we could not see Ol Saw-tooth as it was obscured by low clouds, although it had stopped raining. Continuing on the road which passes the 828th area we came to the dirt road which led to the 829th area and the briefing building. At the area of the briefing building we found the road which led to the farm house which served as Group Headquarters. Here we stopped for more pictures. Further down on the road leading to the farm house the bus stopped approximately where Group Hospital was located. Further from the road were two buildings which we believe to be part of the chapel and theatre or at least built on their locations. Arriving at the farm house the busses parked along side of the farm house at the entrance we used for the PX. We were greeted by the farmer who was happy to see us and showed us around and pointed out the old barber chair that many of us sat on for our beauty treatment. Across the road where the eagle's nest was located was a building that could have been part of the nest or it was reconstructed and used as a barn for sheep. The flag pole was still standing but looked tired as it had a lean to it. From this vantage point one could readily identify the various area and with a little imagination visualize them as they were thirty-five years ago. Stretching one's imagination a wee bit more, the roar of the Liberators could be heard from the distant flight line. In the 828th area were farm buildings and an orchard reaching down

the hill towards the farm house. The rest of the area was cultivated for wheat. Under darkening skies the veterans gathered for a memorial service and with a final hand salute we bid farewell to our fallen comrades and our airfield as they continue to fade into history. Reluctantly we bid good-bye to our Italian friends and board the busses for our trip to Naples. Returning to the main road and turning right we go past the 828th area. All reflected on the events of the day, the warm welcome by the Mayor and citizens of Venosa, meeting and making friends and the visit to our airfield. A memorable experience which will be with us forever.

Monday, 29 Sept: Our last day of traveling as we depart Naples for Rome where we will spend the remaining days of our trip. Shortly after noon we arrive at Cassino and have a thrilling ride up the narrow winding road to the top of Mt. Cassino to the famous Abbey. From here one can understand why the bombing of Abbey is still a very controversial subject. The Abbey is rebuilt on the original site and is a very beautiful place. We arrive in Rome mid-afternoon which gives us plenty of free time to relax. During the evening we enjoyed a Roman dinner and toured Rome, visiting some of the famous Piazzas and stopping at the famous Trevi Fountain.

Tuesday, 30 Sept: Sight-seeing would be local today as we made our way in very heavy traffic to ancient Rome and the ruins of the Roman Forum, Pantheon and Colosseum, just to name a few. At the Vatican, we toured the Sistine Chapel viewing the beautiful artwork of Michealangelo, in particular the Chapel ceiling. Then to St. Peter's Square and inside St. Peter's Basilica. From here it was a northward journey to the village of Tivoli and a tour of Hadrian's Villa, the largest and richest villa of ancient Rome. We feasted at a great Tivoli dinner while entertained by strolling musicians. At dusk we departed for Tivoli Villa D'este and the avenue of the Hundred Fountains. They say there are 500 fountains here and all operate by gravity fed water. Illuminated at night the fountains are beautiful with their cascading water and reflecting pools.

Wednesday, 1 Oct: Today would be more of a leisure day with trips to the Catacombs of S. Domitilla and the public audience of the Pope. The trip to the Catacombs of S. Domitilla took us south from ancient Rome thru the Porta S. Sebastine and on the Appian Way. Touring the catacombs was a chilling experience for we were in the burial grounds dating back to the days of the Roman Empire. The catacombs consist of four levels of endless tunnels with small crypts carved in the walls as burial sites. It would be a frightening experience to become lost in them. Returning to Rome we pass thru the Porta S. Paolo with the Pyramid of Caius Cestius nearby, and on to our hotel. Mid-afternoon we leave for St. Peter's Square which we find filling up rapidly. At 1600 we are signaled the arrival of the Pope who makes the circuit of the audience in a jeep. Returning to the stage he addresses the people in many languages and with a final blessing from the Pope it is a fitting way to end our wonderful tour of Europe. The evening is ours and we prepared for our flight home.

Thursday, 2 Oct: The weather is beautiful as we leave for Leonardo da Vinci Airport. Arriving at the airport

Ray informs us that our flight will be three hours late as the 747 was three hours late in arrival due to the strike by the Canadian air controllers. So we have plenty of time and enjoy lunch at the airport restaurant and stroll about. Here we bid a fond farewell to our Tour Directors for making the trip so enjoyable and entertaining and to our bus drivers for bringing us to our final destination safely. At 1500, all are aboard and ready for the nine hour flight to New York. The flight is comfortable except for the occasional clear air turbulence encountered. Arriving late at JFK most of us miss our connecting flights and must be rescheduled. Most of us will leave the next day and so spend the night at the Midway Hotel in Flushing.

Friday, 3 Oct: We leave New York from LaGuardia Airport and in a few hours are home. It was a wonderful trip and it was good to be back home again after crossing the Atlantic Ocean twice, the English Channel and traveling 3,240 miles on the continent.

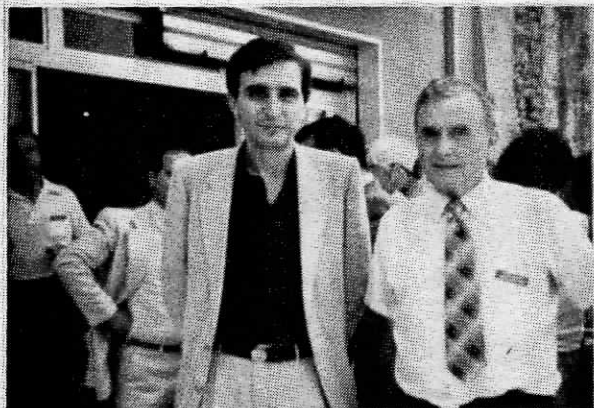
RETURN TO VENOSA BY BUS NO. 2 - Earl Bundy

We started the tour with good weather in Columbus, Ohio. I had invited five friends who wanted to make the tour with us. One couple from Columbus, Ohio, another couple from Boxboro, Massachusetts and their Aunt from Wellesley, Massachusetts. We all arrived in New York and took off for London at 8 P.M. the 15th of September. We got away just ahead of a possible Tower Operator's strike and had a short night seeing day-break about 1:30 A.M. New York time. Arrived at 7:30 A.M. London time, September 16 and had a busy morning doing nothing but going through long customs lines and waiting 'till 1 P.M. for hotel check-in. All our old friends were around so we enjoyed every minute. After a short nap we had the evening to ourselves. Our buses took us on a tour all over London on Wednesday and during a beautiful sunny day we enjoyed the unbelievable history of this ancient city; Westminster Abbey, London Tower and all the jewels of Kings and Queens from many centuries past. There had been Royal Coronations in Westminster Abbey for 900 years. We had a boat ride on the River Thames and saw the House of Parliament, Changing of the Guard at Buckingham Palace, Big Ben and Hyde Park. It was a busy day but wonderful.

Thursday the 18th we went by steamship 105 miles across the English Channel to Amsterdam, Holland. Another clear beautiful day meeting our many friends from Alaska, Hawaii, and all central USA while touring the ship for about seven hours.

Friday the 19th we toured the city on an excursion boat. The city has existed since Napoleon. We also toured a diamond factory and cheese factory as well as much of the most beautiful country side surrounding Amsterdam.

Saturday the 20th we left at 8:30 A.M. with our Italian buses and our guide, Tom for a most enjoyable ride into western Germany. We had lunch at Cologne, Germany. The Cologne Cathedral that took 600 years to build was breathtaking and most beautiful. We were thoroughly in-



Mayor of Venosa and Howard Woodyard



Inside the Mayor's Office



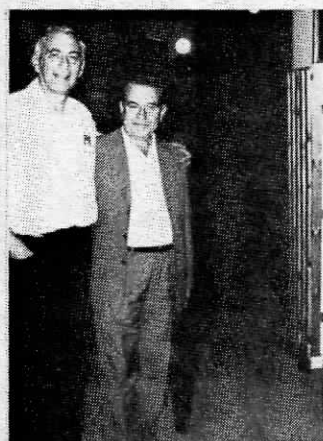
Carl Gigowski conversing with new friends



Meeting of old friends: Otto Meyers, Armondo DiMarco, Emanuel Savino and Bob Hanson



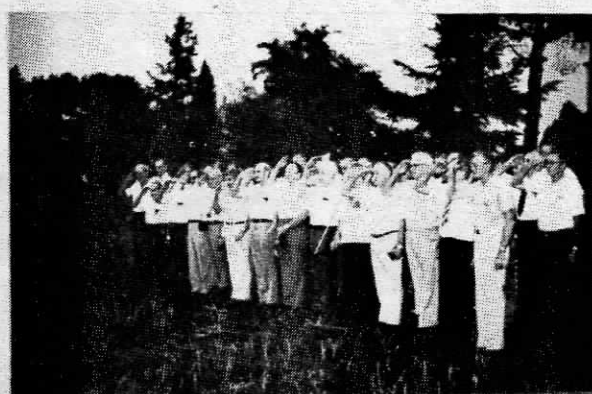
Mayor's Reception. Center - Vittoria Polidoro and husband



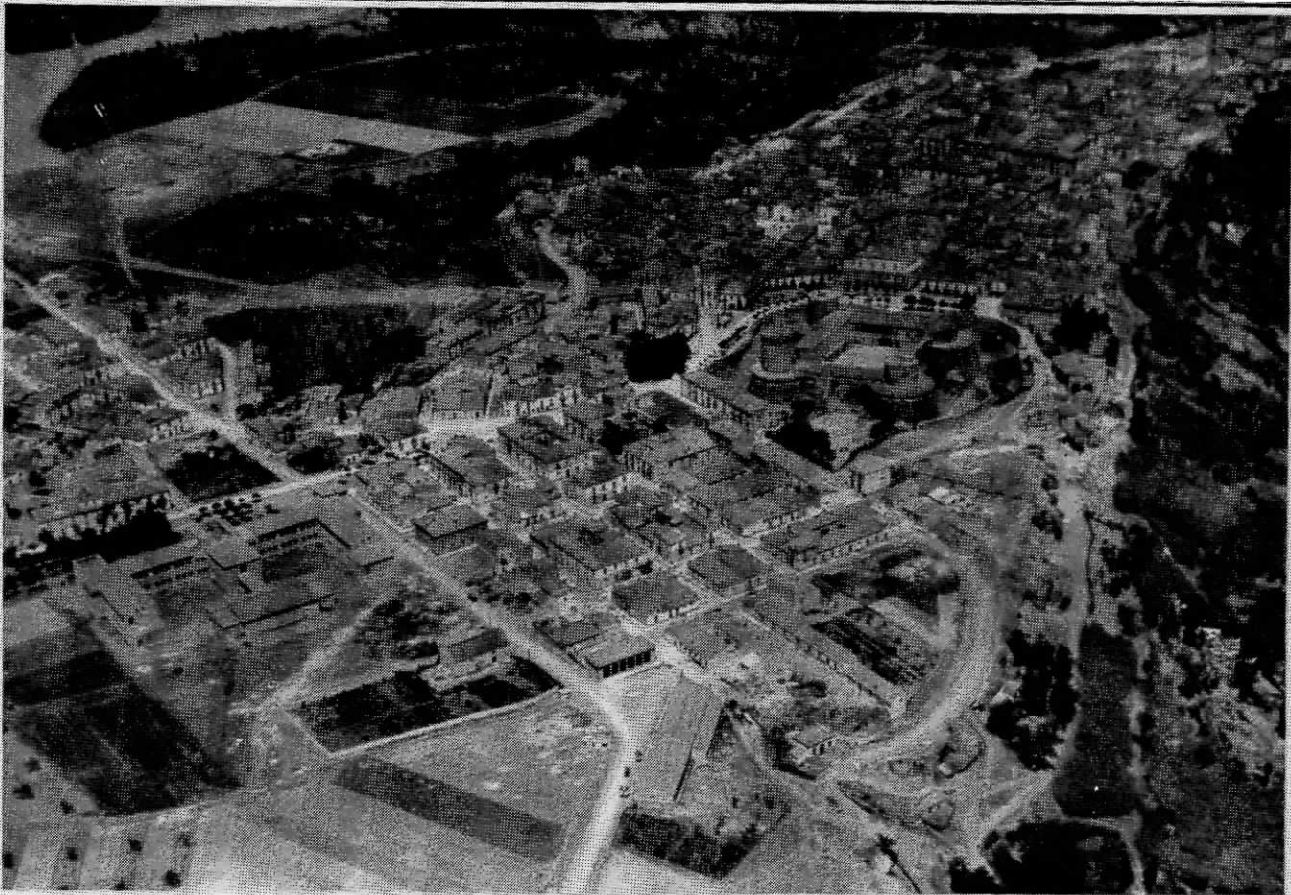
Carl Gigowski and Pasquale Salese meet again



Emanule and Rosa Vurro of Venosa



A final salute to our comrades who did not return home



Venosa, Italy 1944



Venosa Airfield 1944

doctrinated with history and current information of the entire area by our most enjoyable and very sharp 21 year old guide, Tom, from Austria. We continued down the Rhine River which was fabulous all the way to Heidelberg. The hills resemble the Finger Lakes area of New York but are more breathtaking with all the ancient castles and grape fields on the steep slopes.

In romantic Heidelberg the 13th century castle was the most prominent landmark. The colorful Church of the Holy Spirit and Renaissance buildings were breathtaking. En route to Lucerne, Switzerland we traveled through the Black Forest which was most picturesque. The 60 foot falls on the Rhine River were spectacular.

We arrived in Lucerne, Switzerland in time to have a tour of the Swiss Canton Capital. It's located in the heart of the Alps on Lake Lucerne. We enjoyed a night trip on Lake Lucerne then the next morning a trip to the mountain peaks above the valley for a spectacular view and a return on an aerial cable car.

We enjoyed the beautiful country side going to Innsbruck, Austria the next day. It was lovely weather and we enjoyed seeing the indoor and outdoor sports center of many Olympic Games. The ski ramps are just above the city in these most beautiful Tyrolean Alps.

Today, Wednesday, September, 24th we traveled through the Brenner Pass in the Swiss Alps into northern Italy, then to Venice on the seashore. The next morning we took a boat through Venice which was built in the shallow water of the sea. After all the canals and food markets we enjoyed a walking tour of St. Marks Square, The Bridge of Sighs and St. Mark Basilica. Much of this area was built in the 3rd century B.C. All of the area was built on wood pilings in the bay and it was all unbelievable. The Bridge of Sighs was completed in 1600 and is still used. The St. Marks Square is normally a foot or two above sea level. During the flood of 1966 it was all under about five feet of water. In the afternoon we drove to Florence which was most beautiful before sunset.

On Friday the 26th we drove to Sorrento, Italy and found ourselves overlooking Sorrento Bay from cliffs hundreds of feet above the sea. We toured Pompeii (buried in 79AD) on Saturday morning then to the Isle of Capri on a Hydrofoil. The sky blue water with all the sheer cliffs are indescribable and the city was most interesting.

We left Sorrento on Sunday morning for Venosa. We arrived in Venosa at 12 Noon and the town was alive with people everywhere. They had been to church and all dressed up as you would see in an American city. We had to locate the Mayor and when we found him, he received us in his office and gave us a Heros' Welcome as soon as he found an interpreter. We found several men who had worked on our base. The Mayor took us to a reception hall where he served wine and Hord d'oeuvres out of this world.

Our tour manager had arranged a dinner for us as his treat following the reception. It was a seven course dinner and the Chef had made a cake about 30 inches in diameter with a 485th welcome on the top that was

beautiful. The dinner was delicious and we left Venosa for the Air Base about 3:30 P.M. The interpreter and her husband who spoke English were to spend the rest of the trip with us. The base was just a plowed wheat field as we expected. The headquarters building was still standing and the tenant farmer was living in it. We were pleased our flag pole was still standing near the headquarters even though it was leaning somewhat.

We left at dark for the three hour drive to Naples and near Naples we found 16 lanes of traffic waiting to get off the turnpike. More traffic than you can find in Los Angeles.

We spent the nights of the 29th, 30th and October 1st in Rome at Hotel Agip. It was very nice and had a pool. We enjoyed all of Rome's Historical Churches and buildings and ruins such as the Colosseum. Enjoyed a Roman dinner one night followed by a dance. Another night it was the beautiful gardens at Tivoli and an Italian dinner.

We left the hotel at 9:15 A.M. on October 2nd. for home. En route to the airport Tom gave us the bad news. Our 747 was three hours late leaving from the U.S., so we would be three hours late leaving Rome for New York. We had a delicious dinner on TWA due to the three hours delay. We were supposed to leave at 12:15 P.M. However, we left at 3:15 P.M. and turned our watches back five hours to 10:15. It was to be 8 hours and 50 minutes of flying time. The flight was real nice other than tiring since we were weary from traveling. Everyone walked around quite a bit. Each row across the 747 had 10 seats with two aisles and total of around 400 passengers. They had a good movie on from 4 to 6 P.M. which helped pass the time.

Arrived in New York at 7:30 P.M. October 2nd and had to wait in the customs line, baggage line and the reservation line for arranging a new flight home due to the three hour delay. Most were given meals and a hotel room by TWA if they couldn't catch a flight out during the evening. We had breakfast of toast and coffee and Bill and Gene Ferrel from Tacoma, Washington at 5:30 A.M. the next morning, as the cook wasn't up yet to fix the regular breakfast. They left at 6:15 at which time we were able to have bacon and eggs, which we missed so much for the past 18 days. We were lucky and given seating in the first class section of the 727 to Columbus. Another treat we couldn't refuse was a second breakfast of omelet and ham at 10 A.M. Arrived at Columbus at 10:30 extremely happy to have such a wonderful trip with so many happy memories with all our friends. Then too, glad to be home again to enjoy the wonderful life of a U.S. citizen with so many conveniences our Europeans have never seen.

RETURN TO VENOSA BY BUS NO. 3 **— Woody Woodyard**

The 485th veterans completed another mission with the target being the old airfield site at Venosa, Italy. This time they took wives, family, and friends to help the balding and greying eagles enjoy their memorable mission. A total of 35 veterans and 70 friends and relatives made up the passenger list. Of course, instead of the B-

24, they flew in a 747 jet from the United States to London, England, the starting point of a great adventure. On the continent of Europe it was a tour from Amsterdam, Holland to Rome, Italy aboard three Mercedes-Benz buses with thirty-five passengers on each plus the driver and tour director.

We left Detroit Metro Airport on September 15th for Kennedy Airport, New York. Boarding a TWA 747 at 8 PM we arrived in London at 7:30 AM September 16th. Considerable time was spent collecting our luggage and checking with customs. At 1:30 PM we were able to check in our rooms. During the group's stay in London, Marguerite and I spent the time visiting with her cousin in Beaconsfield near London. We arrived back in London late Wednesday night for the early start for the continent Thursday morning.

Crossing the Channel took about eight hours. This gave us a chance to acquaint ourselves with others in the group. In Amsterdam we met our driver and tour director. Our driver was a very personable young Italian man named Primo. Above the rear view was a sign which read "Caution - Primo Powered". Primo was an excellent driver and the sign was made for him as he made bus no. 3 the leader most of the way. Our Tour Director, Neville, was a likeable chap. We toured Amsterdam and ended up at our hotel for an excellent dinner. We left a number of our group downtown for a later pick-up by bus. However, the bus broke down and they had to make their way back to the hotel by cab.

Leaving Amsterdam we traveled on to Cologne where we had a quick meal at McDonalds, just like in the states. On ward along the Rhine River valley, to Heidelberg, arriving a little late. Touring Heidelberg, which was beautiful, we visited cuckoo clock stores and the University. It was here in Heidelberg that the Nagles and the McLawhorns met relatives and enjoyed a nice visit with them. Continuing along the Rhine River valley the next day to Lucerne, Switzerland, we saw many castles.

We loved Lucerne. Here we spent more time, allowing us to do some shopping, enjoy a night cruise on Lake Lucerne, Climb Mt. Pilatus by cog-wheel train and descend by cable car, and visited the Transit Museum. Our lodging at the hotel was a bit unusual. We had two rooms in the annex with four beds, a balcony with a beautiful view of Mt. Pilatus. However, the bath room was across the hall. We had three keys, one for the front door, the elevator and our room door. The room number was P 1 which led to a lot of kidding about our luxurious "penthouse". It was great.

Leaving Lucerne we were on our way to Innsbruck, Austria. The mountainous scenery is very beautiful. Nearing Innsbruck we ran into a traffic jam. After several miles we came upon the trouble spot created by the local farmers moving their cattle down from the mountains. As the highway as only two lanes it took quite some time for the traffic to get around them.

After spending the night in Innsbruck we were up early for the trip through the Brenner Pass in northern Italy to Venice on the seashore. Rain clouds were hanging low

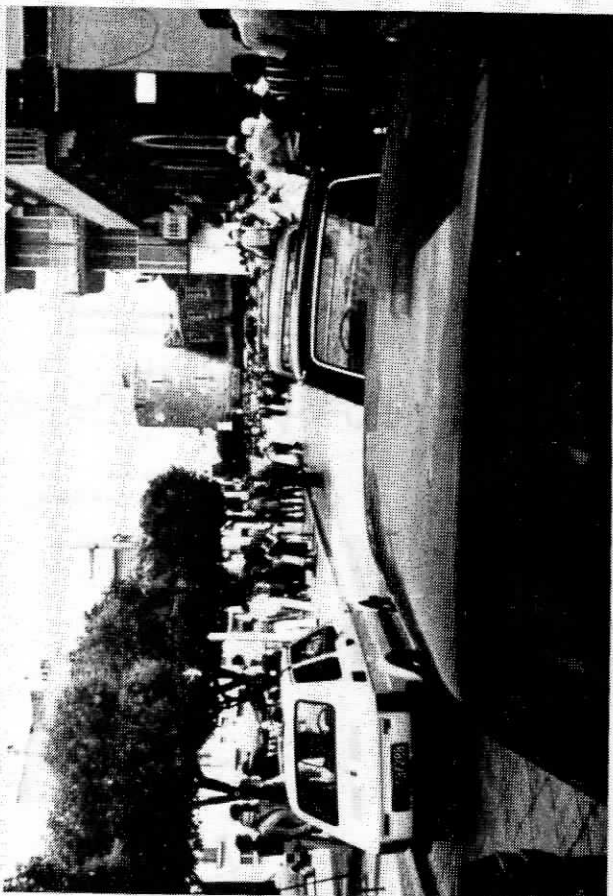
over the mountains. Venice is beautiful with many interesting sights to see. During the evening we enjoyed a gondola ride complete with music. Next it was on to Florence, where we had a few hours to tour the city and spend the night. Early the next morning we left on the long trip to Sorrento.

Sorrento! Here we had an exciting experience. Arriving in time for dinner, we checked into the hotel and then on to our room. Along with Bob and Lynda Hanson, Dick and Betty McLawhorn, Ken and Charlotte Swanson, Marguerite and I got stuck in the lift between floors. Panic time. This would be bad enough at home but in an Italian hotel some what upset us. About fifteen minutes later we reached the second floor where we got off. Never again did we use the lift even with our rooms on the fourth floor. We did reach our room before our luggage which arrived after dinner. We enjoyed the balcony and being able to stay two nights in one place. From here we toured Pompeii and traveled to the Isle of Capri by Hydrofoil where we visited the beautiful Blue Grotto.

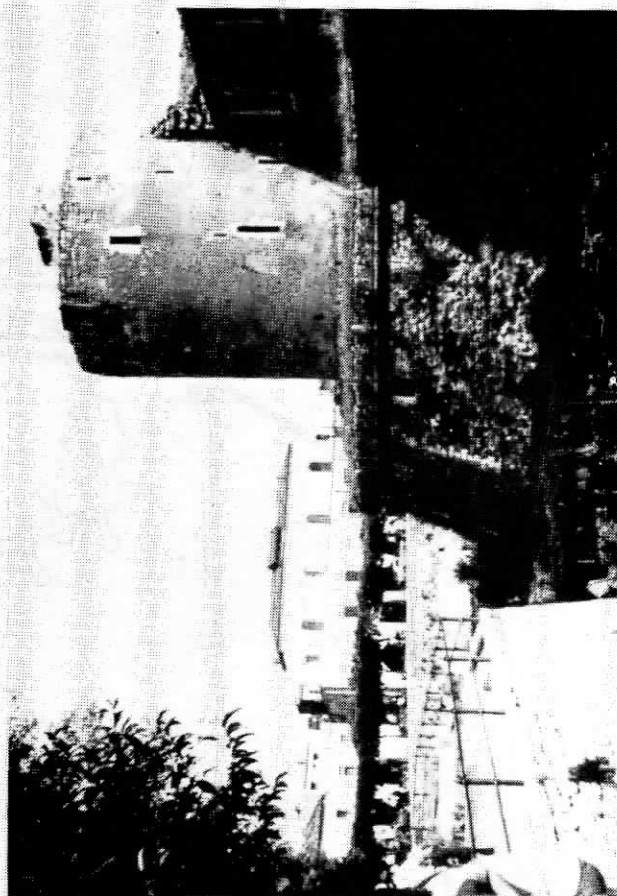
The next day we were on our way to Venosa. Little did we know that much of the area we traveled through would be in the news. The earthquake damage in this area being so extensive must have effected much that we saw. In Venosa the people and officials treated us to a wonderful day. A small official car was making the rounds of the main part of the town with a loud speaker, telling the people that the visitors were members of the army group stationed at Venosa Airfield 35 years ago. We were received by the mayor in his office followed by a reception near by. With the passing of so many years Warren Meyers and Bob Hanson were recognized by Carmando Di Nardo and Angelo Preite of Venosa, who as youngster worked on the airfield. It was a thrilling experience. We found the ol airfield plowed again for planting of wheat. The old farm house which served as Group Hq was still being used and the flag pole was still standing but with a slight leaning posture. We left at dark for Naples. The time spent in Venosa and at the old airfield site were very memorable.

From Naples it was on to Rome where we spent three nights at the Hotel Agip. It was great to be able to stay in one place for more than just one night. Toured many historical sights in Rome. Eventually one of our members were relieved of his billfold. (Later, Bill Spence received his identification and credit cards from the American Embassy. But no money or travellers checks.) As the tour came to an end one could only reflect on the many, many wonderful sights we saw and things we did. Our guide in Rome, Gloria, was super.

The sight of fully armed guards at the Rome airport gave one an uneasy feeling. Our plane left Rome three hours late which caused us to miss our Detroit Connection. TWA lodged us for the night and we continue on homeward the next day arriving home at 2:30 PM. Home! There is no other place like it. Or there is no other place like the good ol USA. The trip was wonderful and now it is fun looking back on our travels and experiences.



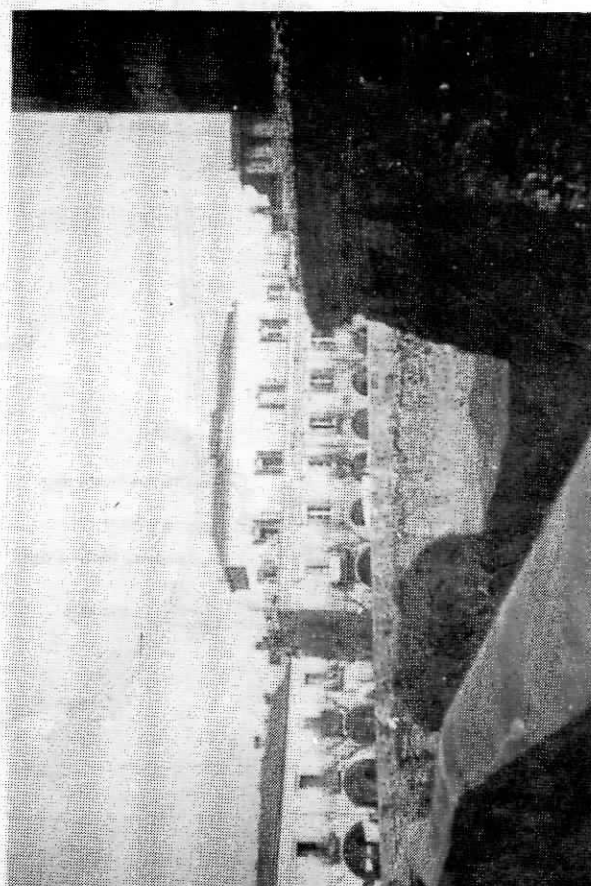
Venosa, Italy 1980



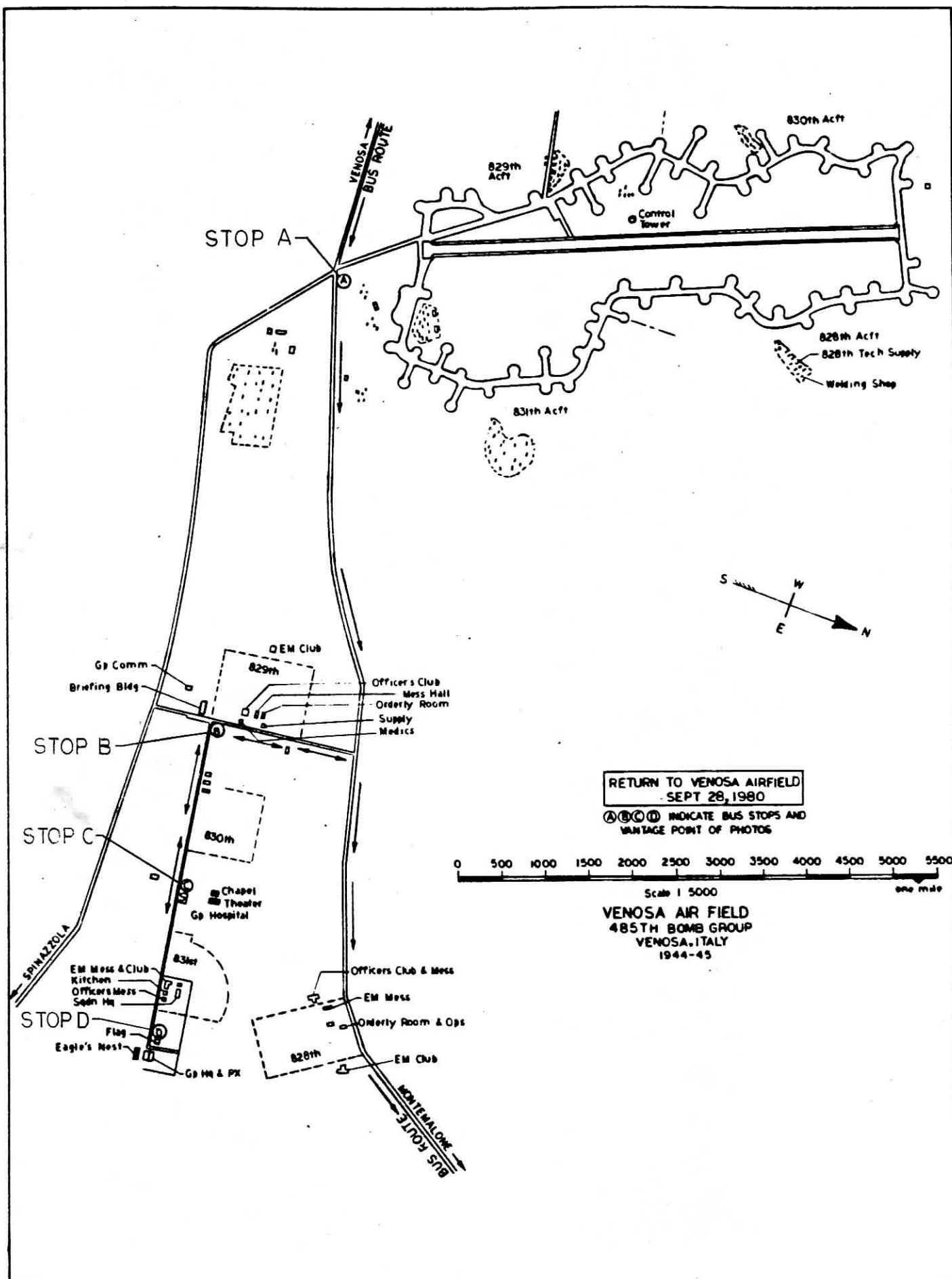
Venosa, Italy 1980



Venosa, Italy 1944



Venosa, Italy 1944



EUROPEAN WHIRL-WIND TOUR — Frank Spence

The applause started from 106 weary but happy travelers as the big jumbo jet set down at John F. Kennedy Airport in New York City.

The group had just completed a "Return to Venosa" trip that brought back many memories to the 485th Bomb Group members who were stationed at the edge of this little Italian community during World War II. Their mission was to bomb strategic targets in the heart of Germany.

We had heard about some of the reunions of the group because Bill, my brother has been talking about the get-together for many years. This time they decided to have a reunion to remember by going to London, Amsterdam, Heidelberg, Germany, Innsbruck, Austria, and winding up with these days in Italy: Venice, Florence, Sorrento, Naples and Rome.

You come back with a lot of memories after 18 days of wake up calls at 6:30 when a foreign voice let's you know it is time to go down and enjoy a hard roll for breakfast. We also had a soft one to go with the coffee or tea.

We also have memories of trying to figure out the money in the different countries; trying to find out where they put the light switches in rooms as you stumble in; we will also have vivid memories of searching for American newspapers. The last morning we didn't need to search — a Californian let us know that our Sooners had been soundly drubbed by Stanford. We immediately wired Barry Switzer to tell him we are still with him — win or tie.

We know the women will remember dropping the coins in the plate as they entered the powder room. We saw no one protesting.

We also remember the lectures we had from the English guide about watching out for pickpockets. Brother Bill flunked the test because he was approached by three gypsies who had their paws out for a donation. A couple of minutes later Bill started to buy something and discovered his billfold was missing.

Gloria, our guide at the Colliseum, said the gypsies come in from all over the world to pick up a little easy money. They take a post graduate course in slipping your wallet out as they accidentally bump into you.

The other thing to watch for is the gangs on motor bikes that whiz by and grab the purse off the arms of the ladies taking in the sights.

Brother Bill afterwards spent most of his time looking for gypsies instead of appreciating the views in the Sistine Chapel or St. Peter's Basilica.

We'll agree with the critics who say that St. Peter's Basilica is the largest and most awe-inspiring church in Christendom. It was begun in 1452 on the site of a church built by Constantine in the 4th century.

For the next 200 years, Renaissance and Baroque masters, including Bramante, Michelangelo, Raphael, Della Porta and Bernini worked on its design. The enormous interior, which has standing room for 100,000, is richly adorned with art.

We have heard of the beauty of the Sistine Chapel for many years, but you can hardly believe it when you see the beautiful paintings on the ceiling. Michaelangelo was lying on his back for years to do this great work of art that brings people from all over the world. The scenes on

one side shows scenes from the Old Testament while the other side has scenes from the New Testament.

One of the outstanding pictures, "The Last Judgment" shows people ascending to heaven while others are going the other way with a pained look on their faces.

Our guide in Rome could not speak to us when we entered the Sistine Chapel. Gloria held her little flag up to help us spot her in the big crowd as we stopped at the various places around Vatican City.

Millions come to the famous city and never see the Pope. We were fortunate that we were in Rome on a Wednesday when the Pope was going to make an appearance at St. Peter's Square.

We arrived more than an hour early to find thousands already seated and droves of people coming from every direction. An air of excitement was in the air as the eager people waited to get a look at the Pope. He arrived in a small car and was driven around for several minutes so that he could wave to the crowd.

He was seated on a small platform while delivering his address in five different languages. His address in English only took a few minutes.

You could see the expression of joy on the faces of people who had travelled thousands of miles in hopes of seeing their leader. A girl two rows in front of us was from County Cork in Ireland. It brought back memories of our days on the Emerald Isle when we heard her accent.

We could tell from the comments and expressions that the people approved the selection of the first Polish Pope.

Back of the platform we could see the chimney of the Sistine Chapel. When the College of Cardinals are meeting to elect a new Pope, the smoke coming from the chimney means that they have made a decision on the new Pope.

We enjoyed the many beautiful sights in Rome but we also enjoyed other beautiful Italian cities. We were impressed by St. Mark's Square in Venice, a place we had seen on television in several programs. St. Mark's Basilica was begun as a tomb for St. Mark. It is incredibly rich in rare marbles, mosaics, gold and priceless works of art. Mark, one of the authors of the four gospels, was whisked away from Egypt and buried in this hallowed spot.

I told someone we had better leave Venice because the streets were flooded. The early day people who decided to build Venice built along the sea for protection from invaders.

It is hard to imagine how people hundreds of years ago could pound millions of timbers into the ground to support such a city. We wouldn't be able to guess how many millions of pounds the pilings would have to support.

We rode in a gondola at night with our group as the gondolier in the next boat sang. The next morning we took a boat ride along the canal to visit the Doge's Palace, an imposing construction in Venetian-Gothic style that was built in the 14th century and was for nearly 1,000 years the seat of government of the Republic and the home of the Doges, or figureheads who supposedly ruled.

You sit and wonder how workers could reach such heights when they were building such beautiful structures over 1,000 years ago.

As you drive around Rome, you also wonder how Julius Caesar's construction experts could build bridges that

are still being used.

Florence was another beautiful city famous for leather works, jewelry, straw products. Michaelangelo and Dante are built in one of the beautiful churches here.

We thought the view from our hotel at Sorrento was the most beautiful of the whole trip. We looked down on the Mediterranean from our balcony at the Continental Hotel while listening to the music from a club below where a singer was giving his rendition of some beautiful Italian songs.

The tour buses with the picture windows gave us the opportunity to get a good view of the country side as we made our way from the different countries.

The dinner at the hotel each evening was much better than we expected. At noon we were on our own, and it was a hassle when we stopped at the cafeterias on the highway. The Italians have a new way to order — first you go pay for your coffee and doughnut . . . then you give the ticket to the girl and get what you purchased. If you are going through the cafeteria line, you get all your chow, then pay at the end of the line.

The main mission of the tour of the 485th Bomb Group recently was to go back to Venosa, Italy, the headquarters of the bomb group during World War II.

We have had the same desire to return to some of the places where we were stationed during World War II. We wondered how the little town of Kilkeel, Northern Ireland has prospered since we Yanks left.

We knew the town of Chelmsford in the southern part of England managed to survive after the Yanks left.

The men of the 485th started looking for familiar signs as the plush Mercedes bus pulled into Venosa. New condominiums were being built at the edge of town.

As we pulled into town, we noticed that the people had been alerted. A little Italian car was going around blaring something about the Americans. We saw the smiles on the faces of the people, so we guess that the announcement gave us a good introduction.

The square was full of people. People were waving from windows of the old buildings that must have been built by the Romans. One of the English speaking Italians said the castle in the town was there in the days of Christ.

Rain was starting to spatter as one of the friendly natives started leading us down to the Municipal building where the American visitors would give a plaque to the mayor of Venosa. The mayor in return gave the American some mementoes.

The group then had a little get-together down the street before going on to the hotel for a 5-course dinner provided by the tour company. We had to learn to like pasta during the eight days in Italy. Veal was one of the frequent dishes. The pastry was always good.

The big surprise at the dinner was a big birthday cake served with ice cream.

The final step on "The Return to Venosa" was to find the old air base. The three big buses rolled out of town with an Italian school marm leading the way. She now owns the land where the 485th spent so much time in World War II.

A few familiar spots were found — the old headquarters building in a little building where the barber did his daily clipping. The runway once used by bombers had been turned into a wheat field.

These former airmen held a ceremony in honor of their

former comrades who did not return. Their return to Venosa had its good moments and sad moments.

The mayor told them at the meeting he was glad they had come on a peace mission this time. The mayor was invited to come to the reunion of the 485th next year at Louisville.

As the bus headed out of Venosa and toward Naples, the men of the 485th talked about their adventures at Venosa 35 years ago. They noted that the little town has shown a lot of growth since those days.

The English guide on the bus warned the group that our arrival in Naples would be late, and the hotel would insist on us eating upon arrival. We were whisked to the 30th floor of the hotel where the waiters soon had plates covered with mashed potatoes, veal, green beans and the usual hard rolls. After the big meals at noon, we all swore we would not be eating again until the next day.

We have seen traffic jams, but the one in Naples will never be forgotten. The line of Fiats trying to get through the toll gates made some of the traffic jams in New York City look small.

Tour members had one of the highlights in the visit to Monte Cassino.

This was a day for the tour members to find out if they were in good shape. The Monastery of Monte Cassino, the mother house of the Benedictines, was founded by St. Benedict in 529. In the 11th century under Abbot Didier the abbey was considered to be the richest in the world. The library still contains numerous volumes in spite of repeated pillage and destruction.

The sad chapter in history came during World War II when American forces bombed Monte Cassino. American Officers argued that the Cassino was being used by the Germans. Historians will be debating the issue for many years. The beautiful structure on the mountain has been restored.

We have seen cameos for many years, but we never saw one made until we entered the city of Florence where we saw some of the artisans at work. The Apa family has been in the cameo business ever since 1800 when Ferdinand IV of the House of Bourbon, then King of Naples, signally honored a young artisan named Francisco by appointing him Master Carver of the Royal School of art. Twenty-five years later, with royal sponsorship, Francisco started his own workshop, turned out his exquisite pieces for the collections of rich and princely families, who at the time were the only ones able to afford such precious possessions.

The Apa family has continued at the trade down through the years. The Giovanni Apa factory is now at the foot of Mt. Vesuvius in the little town of Torre Del Greco.

While waiting outside at the bus, we were accosted by one of the natives who wanted to sell us an expensive gold bracelet for a bargain price. It probably was a hot bargain, but we passed.

THE OLD MAN'S MUTTERINGS — Don Webb

It's been nearly 30 years since I stumbled along the barren, dirt paths of Southern Italy — a member of the proud 485th Bomb Group of the 15th Air Force. Even though history will never record it as such we know that it was our group that really won the war for the Allies in Europe.



Stop A: Intersection near south end of runway



Stop A: Viewing towards the flight line



South end of runway 1944



Stop A: Marker indicating the south end of the runway



Stop B: On dirt road from Group Breifing hut to Gp Hq. Briefing Hut stood behind large tree.



Stop C: Further down the road at Gp Hospital site. 830th area and 829th area (row of trees) on right side



Group Chapel and Theater 1944



Stop C: Group Chapel and Theater area 1980

It was our pinpoint bombing after we fearlessly penetrated into enemy air space that did the trick — just ask any of us.

And for a quarter of a century I had this idea that sometime I wanted to go back to see that place we called home in 1944 and 1945. It was near a small village at the foothills of the Southern Appinnines called Venosa.

But in the past year or so I've come to realize that the dream of going back to Venosa is just that — a dream. And anyway, I really don't want to go back there; I just want to think about it.

The first reason for not going is the most practical — my wife, Helen, simply won't go along. She says she's waiting 'til they build the bridge to Europe — then, and only then, will she even consider it.

The second reason for not going to Italy is just as realistic — it won't be the same and I won't know a soul there. The airfield with its "uphill" runaway will be gone.

Even the 10-year-old boy who came to our tent every morning to start the fire and clean the place a little won't be there. By now he's probably signed up with the barber's union and is cutting hair in Naples. Or he joined a bedding company and is selling some of those blankets he swiped out of the supply building.

Even Lt. Ludwig will be missing. This lieutenant had a habit of constantly blinking his eyes. When he and his crew finished their last mission, I and a supply sergeant were standing in the middle of the squadron area watching him buzz the field, an indication that his missions were over.

It was a beautiful buzz job and the sergeant looked in awe and exclaimed: "Oh, lieutenant, don't blink now."

None of the guys in my crew will be there either. There were young men from California, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Ohio, West Virginia, Michigan, Oregon and New York. We were bound together by two goals — (1) we wanted to inflict destruction upon the enemy and (2) we wanted to get back in one piece 35 times and get home as fast as possible.

Even that beautiful B-24 Liberator I flew has long since been destroyed. It was an old "D" model, but to us it was the best four-engine job in the air.

When our crew inherited this plane, called "The Character," we also inherited its ground crew chief, a sergeant who had been a pre-ministerial student before the war.

It was his custom, just before "his" crew took off on a bombing mission, to read from his Testament and to offer a prayer for their safe return. When "The Character" was grounded for repairs and we flew in a different airplane, it was my job to substitute for the sergeant in reading from the Bible and offering the prayer.

All 10 of the members of our crew completed 35 missions and there was not even a Purple Heart among us — meaning none of us had a combat-connected injury during the entire 35 missions. We were told by our Group headquarters that, as far as they knew, ours was the only crew in the whole 15th Air Force that completed its

missions without a single injury or death.

You can argue all you want that the "no injury record" and the Testament reading and prayer were purely coincidence. I'll show you 10 healthy men who won't believe you.

MOLTE GRAZIE — Carl Gigowski

In preparing the newsletter I have relived our European trip several times while reviewing the reports, notes and the many picture cards and photographs I have acquired. Each time it has been exciting and interesting as the day of the actual experience. Yes, the memory of this great adventure will be with us forever.

We are most grateful and extend a heartfelt thank you to: Bernie and Laura Rempe for directing the project so successfully; Bently and Alice Hedges for the outstanding planning of our trip and the wonderful dinner at Venosa; Bob and Lynda Hanson for arranging the audience with the Pope; our Tour Directors, who made the trip so very interesting and entertaining; our Bus Drivers, who piloted the busses thru the narrow and crowded streets and the narrow winding mountain roads so safely; the Mayor and citizens of Venosa, Italy who gave us a most sincere and warm welcome and all the travelers for the wonderful companionship throughout the trip.

EARTHQUAKE POSTSCRIPT — Carl Gigowski

On Sunday, November 23, 1980, a series of devastating earthquakes battered Southern Italy killing at least 773, injuring more than a 1000 and destroying hundreds of buildings. Areas hit by the quake were the provinces of Avellino, Benevento, Caserta, Naples and Salerno. Major cities affected were Naples, Salerno, Avellino and Potenza.

Two months earlier on Sunday September 21 our group left Sorrento for Venosa, travelling to Salerno, north thru Avellino and returning to Naples where we stayed for the night. Knowing that Potenza is a short distance south of Venosa, I am sure that all are anxious for news of Venosa. Neal Schawalter received a report issued by the Italian Interior Ministry on the earthquake and the city of Venosa was not listed.

The good news arrived on March 3rd in a letter Earl Bundy received from Rosa Vurro, an English teacher in the Elementary School system in Venosa. Many of us had the pleasure of meeting Rosa and her husband Emanuele during our visit. Here are her remarks.

"We were very frightened when the earthquake happened but thank God, Venosa was not destroyed. There are a few houses that are cracked or damaged. But nothing has crumbled. There is a church that has been closed now because it is dangerous. Other than that Venosa is fine and so are we.

There are three hundred people in Venosa from other small towns that have been completely destroyed. They now have their own houses and City Hall is paying for food, clothing, etc."

All of us are happy to hear this news about our town in Italy, Venosa.

MAIL ROOM 485TH BOMB GROUP HQ — Carl Gigowski

Another year has passed into history and I must say it has been another good year. For me the highlight of the year was returning to Venosa, Italy. And it was inspiring to hear from so many of you from Group Headquarters. I was very pleased to hear from Walter Ladner of Green-



wood, Mississippi as you may remember was our Intelligence Officer. Several years ago Walter experienced a stroke which affected his right arm and hand. Reflecting on the great adventure, Walter noted that during the night the Group embarked at Naples, word was received that our lead Bombardier had been shot down and landed head first in a large snow bank, survived and was captured. It is believed that he was from Collins or Taylorsville, Miss. If anyone recalls the event and the name of the Bombardier please write us about it. Remember the late Sgt. William Wulf of Group Intelligence? Walter assigned Wulf the duty of writing the account of all our bombing missions for which he received a letter of commendation from the Wing Commander. These particular records Walter has been unable to locate. I hope we have the pleasure of meeting Walter in Louisville in '81.

From Carmel, California, a wonderful letter was received from Hugh Bayless, Sr. Citizen Ret. Even with this rank, Hugh is busy as ever but having more fun. Part of the time he is involved in consulting work in Mexico City, starting a publishing company and writing a couple of books for do-it-yourselfers. For the foreseeable future his base operations will be in Carmel. Hugh ran into Sidney Harrison of Hq 485th who is a stock broker in San Francisco, and enjoyed a nice long visit at his home and of course they reminisced over the war years. Hugh included a couple of humorous stories which will be in the next newsletter.

Gen "Pop" Arnold, Colorado Spgs., CO included a nice note with his Christmas card stating that just maybe one of these days he will surprise us and join us at a reunion. I must say this "Pop", I know I can't pull my wings on you, or my rank, or my age but just maybe we will pull the right string (or rope) to get you to one of our reunions as we all would love to see you again or in my case to meet you as I did not have the pleasure of serving under your command. I did have the pleasure of hearing from Tony Annie, Hurricane West Virginia, noting that he really enjoys our newsletter. Tony was a Gunner on "Pop" Arnold's crew which was downed by flak over Blechhammer, Germany on 27 August 1944.

Col. William Bradley, Ranchos Palos Verdes, CA, continues on as manager of Medical Services with Hugh Aircraft Company. Bill expressed his appreciation of the newsletter and extends a sincere thank you to all that help make the newsletter possible. Have corresponded with Sy Weinstein, Croton On Hudson, NY and received some interesting bits of information. Sy noted that the name of the Liberty ship that went down in the Mediterranean Sea on April 20, 1944 with many of the 831st personnel was the Paul Hamilton. The destroyer-escort lost

was the Lansdale. Chaplain Bill Golder had a large plaque with all the names of the lost dedicated at our chapel on Venosa Airfield. Sy lost two men on the Hamilton, Jerome Green and Bernard Winer and a very close buddy Stan Snitow, a flight surgeon. And I received a nice note from our good friend Suire Bolton, Yucaipa, CA, and Larry Vocino, NJ., and John Hannan, Sacramento, CA.

On the Return To Venosa trip I had the pleasure of meeting Bill and Hilda Angle and our last Group Commander Col Doug Cairns and his boss Lillian. I sincerely hope we get together again at one of the reunions.

Our host for the '81 reunion in Louisville, KY called and informed me that arrangements for the biggest reunion ever are just about completed. I can assure you all it will be another event in our lives to be remembered forever. I hope you all will come. I wish to thank you all for your donations to the newsletter which are truly appreciated and will keep the newsletter coming your way for a long time. Also thank you for the many Christmas cards and letters. As soon as I have the newsletter completed I shall be writing you all.

828TH BOMB SQDN — Bob Deeds

We were unable to make the Return To Venosa trip. Mail received from those who made the trip indicated they certainly had a great time. However, we did travel out west and visited with Henry and Ernestine Fisher in Colorado.



Traveled thru parts of the state that we missed when we attended the reunion in Vail in 1976. The scenery was beautiful with the Aspen trees changing color and the mountains capped with snow. One of the most exciting views as of the town of Jefferson from an elevated vantage point which we visited numerous times. Had luck fishing and Ernie prepared a wonderful Rainbow Trout dinner for us.

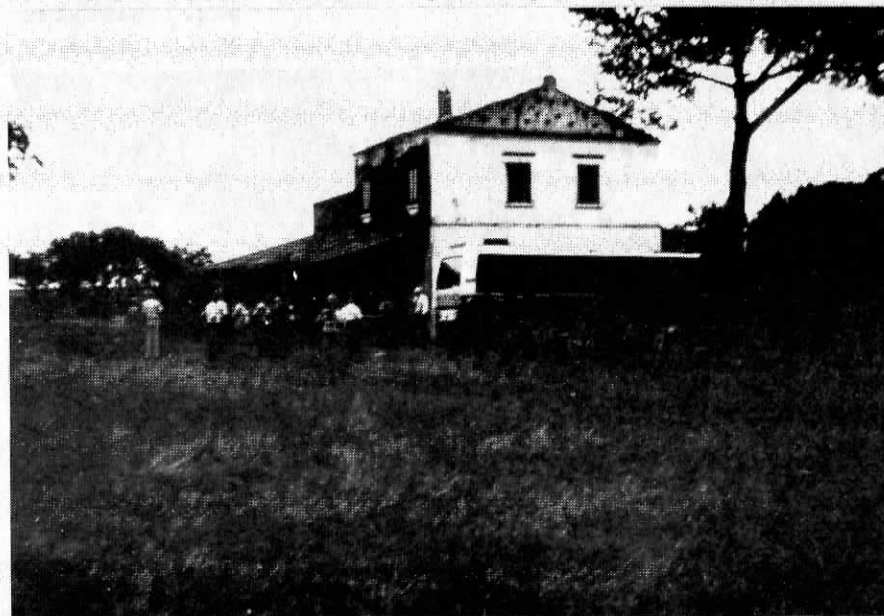
Mail this year has been light. However we did locate an old buddy, Jack D. Whatley, LCol. USAF Ret. Jack lives in McAllen, Texas and is an active member of the Confederate Air Force at Harlingen, Texas. He plans on attending the reunion in Louisville.

Received correspondence from George Ick, Arthur Hurley and Nick Montulli who made the Return To Venosa trip and really enjoyed the venture. At Christmas time we hear from many of our buddies. Irv Parker stated the old veterans around Minneapolis staged a mini-reunion after the European trip. Sorry to report that some of the veterans encountered medical problems. John Waldeyer experienced a heart attack. Karl Anderson was ill and is now improving.

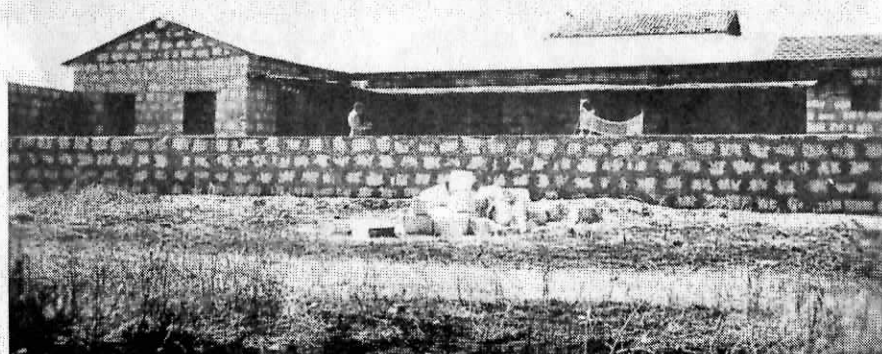
Mail was received from several veterans who are frequent correspondents: Clemmie Norris, John Calhoun, Paul Alexander, Walter Schmeuer, Larry Hohmann, Ed Clark, "Pappy" DeVane, Ambrose Borgetti, Bob Kuns, Jim Miller, August Horvath, Joe Coker, Fred Freyer-muth, Stanley Turecki, Col Calvin Fite, Bailey Jenkins, Paul Beckley, John Raffale, Charles Robert, William Brien, Bob Beamish and of course, our girl "Friday". Leona Schoultz. ON TO LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY.



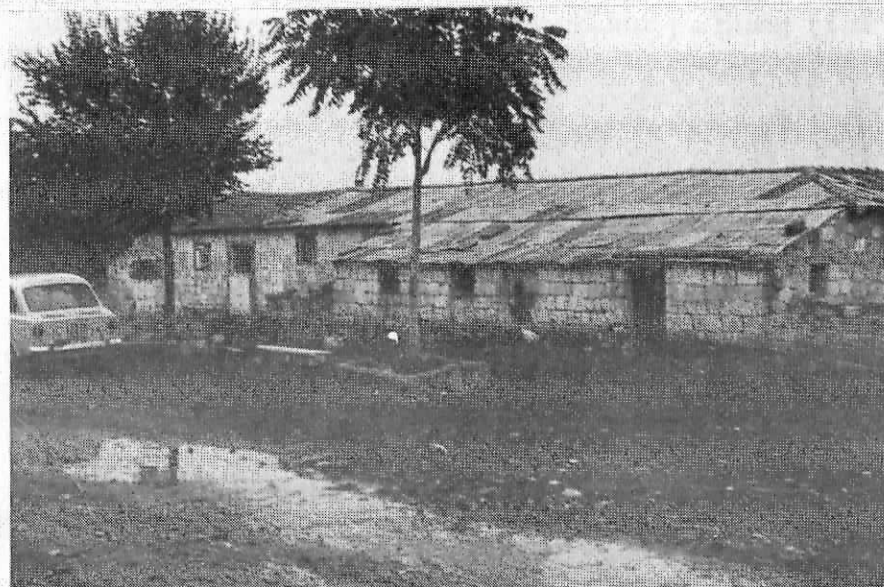
Group Headquarters 1944



Stop D: Group Headquarters 1980



Eagle's Nest 1944



Stop D: Eagle's Nest 1980



Stop A: Viewed south of intersection



Stop D: 828th area on hill (background) viewed from Gp Hq backyard



Stop D: 831st area viewed from Gp Hq backyard. Buildings (right) are on Chapel and Theater site.



Stop D: Chapel and Theater area viewed along Gp Hq backyard fence.

829TH BOMB SQDN — Earl Bundy



We were blessed with a most wonderful reunion in 1980 with our "Return To Venosa". I wish every member of the group could have experienced the education, scenery, fellowship and all the fun we enjoyed during the trip. I want to give a five star commendation to Laura and Bernard Rempe for coming up with the suggestion of the "Return To Venosa" two years ago. It was really an honor for me to be Chairman of our Squadron's Reporters and help Laura Rempe in completing all the details that culminated into such a wonderful reunion.

I enjoyed every minute of the trip except one bathroom and one bed. The bath tub was so small I could not stand up without hitting my head on the shower and could not sit down without hitting my knees on the wall. The one bed was so short I had to put my feet through the bottom and on a chair for support. I can't complain though as I didn't have a chair to support my feet when I slept on my Army cot during the war.

It was a thrill to find Venosa the same as we had left it thirty years ago. There are a lot of new apartments, a motel and modern buildings. But they are all outside of the old town. The mayor gave us a hero's welcome through his interpreter and then took us to a reception hall where he served hors d'oeuvres and wine which was out of this world. Our Tour Manager, Bentley Hedges, arranged a fabulous seven course dinner following the Mayor's reception, as his treat. We were so happy that Bentley and his wife, Alice, enjoyed the entire trip with us.

I was pleased to get three new members located in the 829th this year. One of these, Marion Shelar contacted me about three weeks before we left and he and his wife, Charlene were able to make the trip to Venosa with us. Also, I obtained five new corrected addresses and a good many donations to keep the "Lightweight Tower" in the black. Let me hear from you with dollars to keep it coming your way. We were all thankful for our trip but since the earthquake we are praying Venosa did not suffer the devastation of so many cities 50 miles to the west of Venosa.

830TH BOMB SQDN — Lyle Talbott



Greetings, fellow 830th veterans. I had to cancel my plans to go to Venosa. Thus, I shall only note the 830th veterans who made the trip as our editor will present a detailed account of the trip. Squadron veterans who returned to Venosa were Bob and Ruth McVann, Neal and Ruth

Schwalder, Larry and Beth Martin, Howard and Mary Sanborn and "Lonesome" Rod Ritchie.

I have received communications from the following: Charles Fournier, Curtis Sloan, Charley Onley, Rod Ritchie, Robert Esary, Robert Samuels, Bill Anderson, Edward Pope, George Williams, Robert Lewis, Robert

McVann, Elliot Seagrave, and my faithful Correspondent Clarence Miller. Clarence and I have exchanged much information of our time in the 485th and after our return to the States. I must say his material far exceeds mine.

Bob Esary sent a clipping from the Los Angeles Times dated Dec. 26, 1979 about the last Liberator in flying condition in the USA. For the benefit of you veterans not from the west coast, I will relay part of the information. The B-24 is named "Delectable Doris". It was built in 1944 and delivered to the Royal Air Force in Southeast Asia. After the war it was transferred to the Indian government for coastal patrol where it served until 1969. A Los Angeles businessman, David Tallichet, obtained the plane from an airfield at Poona, India and had it returned to the states. It was flown to San Diego for a week's display commemorating 40 years since the first B-24 was flown on December 29, 1939. 18,000 B-24's were built during the war years and "Delectable Doris" is the only one in the US that is operational. Mr. Tallichet states he only flies it on special occasions as the scarcity of parts and excessive fuel consumption makes it too costly for pleasure flying. Bill went to see the Liberator and noted that most of the personnel associated with the Liberator are former pilots, crew members and airplane enthusiasts.

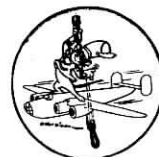
Charles Fournier has traded the tropical weather of Miami Beach, Florida for the scenic setting of Colorado Springs. They live on the edge of the city with a beautiful view and are very happy in their new home. Many happy days to the Fourniers. Charles was a crew member of George Thompkins' crew. Things were not that bright for another crew member. With sadness I must report that Col. LeRoy J. Hanson passed away on June 13, 1980. Let's all extend our condolences to his widow, Evelyn and their family. Jay attended the 1978 reunion at Newport Beach and really enjoyed seeing old friends again after many years.

I received a letter from Al Martin, who will host the 1981 reunion in Louisville, Kentucky. The news is good. Most details are completed. Let's all try to meet in Louisville for another good time and a great reunion.

In conclusion I would like to thank the veterans who contributed to the newsletter fund and all of my friends from the other Squadrons for the letters and Christmas cards. The mail room report is being written a week prior to Christmas. Thus if you mailed a Christmas card received after completion of the report I didn't intentionally omit your name. SEE YOU ALL IN LOUISVILLE!

831ST BOMB SQDN — Woody Woodyard

As you all know instead of the regular reunion for the 485th Group in August, we took a trip back to Venosa. It was a wonderful trip and I am so glad to have made it. My wife had never been up in a plane before and she acted like a veteran. (I am glad that we went to Italy in September and not in November for we traveled through



the earthquake area.) I am sorry that all could not have gone along. Special thanks are extended to Laura and Bernard Rempe for all their time and effort getting the trip set up for us and making it such a magnificent success. Thanks, also, to Bentley and Alice Hedges, our travel agent, for their excellent job. Really enjoyed their accompanying us. All those who traveled with us did their bit to make it an unforgettable event. Twelve 831st veterans made the trip. on bus no. 3 were Jack and Irene Godfrey; Bob and Claire Halling; Bob and Lynda Hanson; Leonard and Grace Little; Sid and Norma Manson; Warren, Marcelyn and Stephen Meyers with their guests Jack and Martha Bagwell and Kenneth and Charlotte Swanson; Richard and Betty McLawhorn; Jack and Edith Nagle with their guests Mary Conley and Mary Nagle; Ned and Evelyn Peirano; Bill and Lucy Spence with guests Mary Spence Smith and Frank Spence; and Woody and Marguerite Woodyard. On bus no. 1 were John and Rosalie Jackson.

What a wonderful day we had in Venosa. That's what the trip was all about. If the newsletter does not cover the details we will give you more at Louisville, Kentucky during August 1981 with Al Martin, 829th, hosting the affair.

We received a card from Col. Dan Sjodin giving his new winter address: 188 Palmetto Dr., Harlingen, Texas 78550. They still plan on spending their summers in Minnesota. Bob Brown has moved to 4299 S. River Road, St. Clair, Michigan 48079 for the summer months. They haven't decided where they will spent their winters. What a life the old eagles live now. Bill Spence was going to do something similar but now he can't afford to since his encounter with the gypsies in Rome. (Seen any more burlesque shows recently, Bill?)

Your reporter along with his wife and Earl Bundy, 829th, traveled to Boyertown, Pennsylvania for a visit with Donald Webb, 831st. Don and Helen were very gracious hosts for a lovely dinner at our motel and a visit at their home. We persuaded both to "volunteer" their help in

getting the newsletter out. As a publisher, Don has access to equipment which will prove very helpful to our editor, Carl. We are sure this will enable Carl to get the newsletter to you earlier.

So nice hearing and being in contact with so many of you. Thanks for all the pictures, articles and information you all furnished which helps to make our letter a great success. And thanks to all that sent in a donation. Like everything else today, costs continue to increase and money is a most necessary item.

Received a letter from Ralph Raines who lives near Mount St. Helen saying he has had several scaring times with the effects from the eruptions. Ash and water has been disastrous for his logging business. However, his home was spared. Sorry for their adversity and thankful they surred no more than they did.

James Fliss, son of Frank Fliss, Eureka Springs, Arkansas, informed us of his father's passing on July 3, 1980 of a heart attack thirty-five years to the day of his discharge from service. Lucille Cleghorn wrote of the passing of George after a lingering illness. And Vince Lewis wrote that his wife passed away this year. We will miss all and extend our sympathy to the families.

In addition to those mentioned previously we received letters, Christmas cards and phone calls from the following 831st veterans: Kenneth Brown, Hank Dahlberg, Joe Farinetti, Gerald Gardy, Bob Halling, Bob Hanson, Rod Hufstader, Burl Jackson, Rollie Palmer, Bill Spence, Ed Stauverman, Luke Terry, Frank Chaffin and Bob Monahein. From the other Squadrons we heard from the Rempes, McFaddens, O'Briens, Deeds, Bundys, Fishers, Gigowkis, Lyle Talbott and Karl Anderson.

As we are preparing this report prior to Christmas, we may have left off someone that we will be hearing from before the first of the year. Looking forward to seeing many of you in Louisville. Be there.

LIGHTWEIGHT TOWER CALLING

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

Editor: 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
Lyle Talbott
310 Mohican Dr
Crooksville, Ohio 43731

831st Reporter:
Howard P Woodyard
3539 Butternut Dr
Lambertville, Mich 48144

FROM YOUR EDITOR

I have made the newsletter a special issue commemorating our return to Venosa, Italy. Although the stories cover the entire trip the photo section covers only our return to Venosa. In the next issue we shall reminisce about some of the impressive sights we saw. I apologize for the quality of the photos of our visit to the airfield site. As you can see I am not a good photographer. If anyone has good pictures of the airfield please send them in for use in the next letter.

If you would like to write our friends in Venosa I can provide their addresses.

Thanks to Don Webb we have remodeled our newsletter. It has reduced my typing and allows more material per page. Your comments will be appreciated.

Again, thank you all for your continued support of the newsletter. See you all in Louisville.