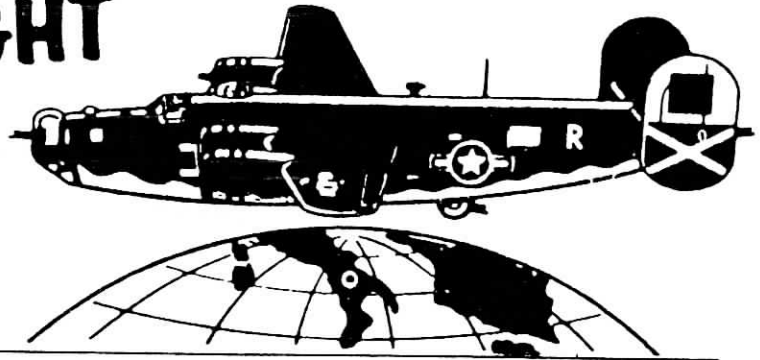




# LIGHTWEIGHT TOWER CALLING



No. 31

February 1997

## Dallas Will Host Reunion



Reunion headquarters — Adams Mark Hotel, Dallas, Texas

## Savannah Reunion Terrific !!!

By Bob Hanson

Just when you think you've "been there --- done that" --- along comes an outstanding host and hostess, C. W. and Ding West, who have set new heights and standards for a 485th reunion!

Savannah is certainly one of the most historic cities that lends itself to everything a reunion could want or need.

Our host had a full schedule planned, and entertainment, dinners, side trips to some military installations, visit and lunch at newly opened

8th AF museum, guided tour to Gulfstream Aerospace plant, and many other trips and items of interest which we'll mention on a daily agenda basis.

Lynda and I arrived Wednesday in early afternoon and found the Memorabilia room and registration going like "60." The Marriott Riverfront hotel was ideal for just such an event and the breathtaking atrium lobby, plus excellent three meeting facilities, made for a nearly perfect setting.

(Continued on page 2)

The 1996 reunion of the 485th bomb group promises to be a real Texas Wingding.

This is the report from Sherrill Burba, host for this year's reunion, and his co-host Marvin Lindsay.

The event will be held from September 4 to 7 at the Adams Mark Hotel in downtown Dallas.

Exact dates for some of the activities have not yet been finalized, according to Burba, but he reports that two things will be on the schedule: a trip to Southfork Ranch and the Mesquite Rodeo.

These two events were the most popular on the survey handed out at Savannah reunion and returned to the host.

Other events being planned may include the Dallas arboretum, a railroad museum, the Biblical Arts museum. A tour to the School Book Depository, where President John Kennedy was assassinated, will be made available, but will not be a scheduled event.

Plans for the Sunday morning memorial breakfast are already nearing completion. Burba reports it will be an ecumenical service. A Jewish cantor will sing the 23rd Psalm and a Catholic bishop will make communion available following the service for Catholics.

The bomb group's own Baptist minister, Don Whitmoyer, and Don Peden, who has established churches in more than 50 countries, will participate.

In addition, others who will participate  
(Continued on Page 13)

## Savannah

(Continued from page one)

Thursday, 9 a.m., found us on Army busses bound for the vast facilities of Fort Stewart where the size is about 30 miles around the outside perimeter. It is monstrous and once inside, you are strictly in military territory.

We were allowed to inspect and crawl into various Army tanks and talk to the personnel. We learned that some of this equipment was being sent back to Saudi Arabia and the Desert Storm area. Everyone was extremely nice and polite and did their best to answer any questions.

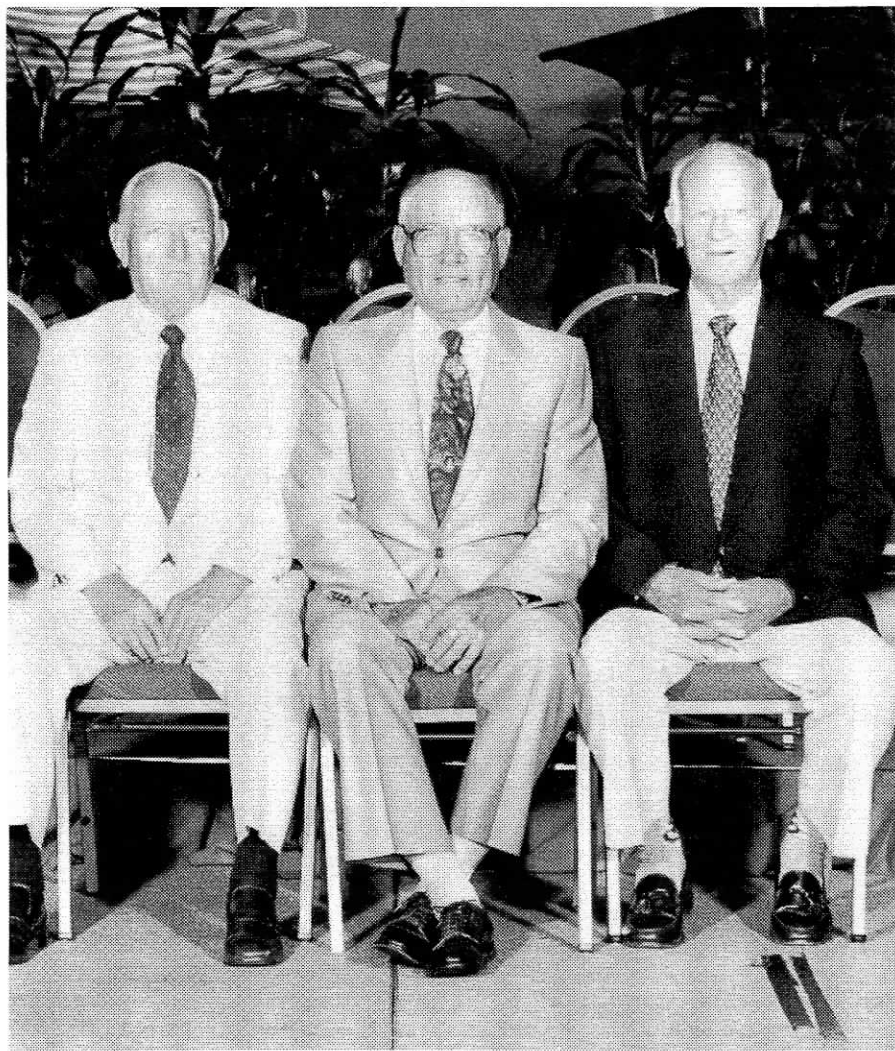
We also were able to be briefly addressed by a Major General Hendrix just before he departed with his staff in a Blackhawk helicopter. This was most thrilling to witness for the graying eagles and their spouses.

That evening we were taken to Fort Jackson for a buffet and reenactment of some Civil War activities. The Captain of the Guard ceremony was witnessed by our group along with the firing of the largest black powder cannon still in use in the entire United States. We also learned that the Fort saw as it's greatest use as the headquarters for the Confederate river defenses during the Civil War. All of us were impressed with this sight and one in which your patriotism made you proud to be an American!

Even though Friday the 13th dawned on the 485th, it was a lucky day for all of us. First, we toured Gulfstream Aerospace and were amazed at the size of the plant and some of the information given to us by tour guides. They only build 4 of these Model V's per month with a price tag in excess of 32 million dollars each. One of the ruling class from Saudi ordered 2 and one with a special snake skin interior which cost an additional 3 million dollars. Must be nice to be able to throw dollars around on something that I am deadly afraid of (snakes). Such is life!

Next stop on Friday's tour was the Eighth Air Force Heritage Museum. It had recently opened and was a real

## FIRST TIMERS



Left to right: Edward Gunn, Gordon Sorensen and Melvin Bentley.

treat. I'm sure all of the 485th would have enjoyed it even more if it spelled out "15th" on front entrance, instead of "8th" but was exciting to visit. The one section of the simulated bomb run with strobe lights flashing and strong winds blowing with flak exploding had to test the emotions of all of the flight crews!

Lunch was enjoyed by all at this site. I urge all of you that missed the Savannah reunion to try and see this outstanding attraction if ever in this part of the country.

Friday evening early were headquarters and squadron meetings which were followed by a lavish Italian buffet. After dinner, we were entertained by a barbershop quartet followed by "A Tribute to American Veterans" by Jerry Hayes. He and his

wife, Judy, entertained us and the show was outstanding. C. W. West did himself proud in the entertainment department throughout the entire reunion.

Saturday dawned bright and clear with our business meeting starting at 9 a.m. Entertainment by "Savannah Steve" preceded the meeting, as well as the color guard from Georgia Air National Guard presenting the colors, with the playing of the national anthem. During the meeting, Sherill Burba spoke of our 1997 reunion in Dallas and from all information he mentioned, it should be a first class winner!

Early registration at both the hotel and Bomb Group is one of the secrets of a large turnout and a successful  
(Continued on Page 6)



# Squadron Photos

## 828th SQUADRON



First row, left to right: Joe O'Neill, Melvin Bentley, Nick Montulli, Clemmie Norris, Herman Laorno, Sherrill Burba, Mike Hails, Don Peden, Ed Nett, Jess W. Akin, Jr. and Carl Mazzoni. Second row: Leonard Kraus, W. G. Halladay, William Reid, Chester Ballengee, Antonio R. Siller, Jack Eden, Joseph Morrone, Stan Tanca, Harold Ju-

lin and Dean Bassett. Third row: Clifford L. Parli, Ken Wall, Everett L. McDonald, Maynard Sites, Jim Rau, Chesnut Whitaker, Raynold Ebersold, Arthur Hurley, John Waldeyer, Gordon Sorensen, Tom Roemer, John Di Russo, W. H. Lancaster, Tom McDowell and Lee A. Busroe.

## 829th SQUADRON



First row, left to right: Rowland Wesley L. (standing), Martin L. Lydard (standing), Homer Hale, Robert Camden, Gerald E. Behunin, Robert B. Skelton, Alvin L. Martin, Wythe J. Napier, Harold B. Johnson, Forrest L. Yeager, Al C. Peschka, Milton Fundling (standing) and George Kavanaugh (standing). Second row: Tommy

Hough, Bill Knowles, Ryan "Scotty" Scott, Roy E. Daniel, Bob Peterson, Clark Miller, William Y. Sanders, Allen Carlson, Wayne Smith, and Paul Wilson and Joe Cathcart (standing). Third row: Tom Peyton, Dick Doyle, Robert C. Brown, Don Whiteman, Billy R. Culyer, Kenneth Robinson, Clarence W. West, Marvin Lindsay, David Roth, Leon Best, Slayton McGehee and Don Roehn.

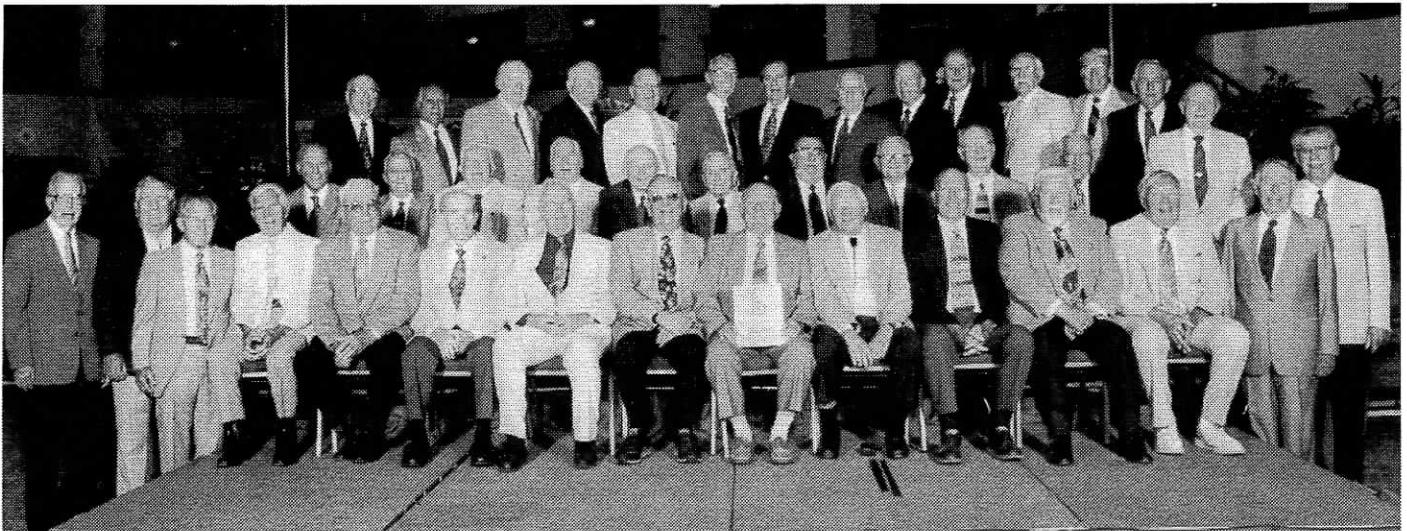
## 830th SQUADRON



First row, left to right: Steve Paynis, John Sehill, Ross Leary, Ralph A. Campbell, Paul J. Grubb, George F. Raidel, Cliff Studaker, Ken Muse, Lloyd Rich and Ted Lipinski. Second row: Henry P. Dolim, (standing), Fred W. Sims, (standing); Earl Bundy, (standing), George E. Dyer, Francis P. Tunstall, Arthur Housden, Robert McAlpine,

Howard Boxley, Don Landrum, Harold Kempffer, Simon Baytala, Jr., Lester deJong, Lawrence Martin and Warren Gorman, (standing). Third row: Richard Griffin, Travis Robinson, Robert E. Plaister, Bill Cummings, Jim Hunter, Bill DeVore, Chuck Forester, Harry Oberholtzer, Chuck Porter, Chet Konkalewski, Edward J. Gunn and Robert Baldwin.

## 831st SQUADRON

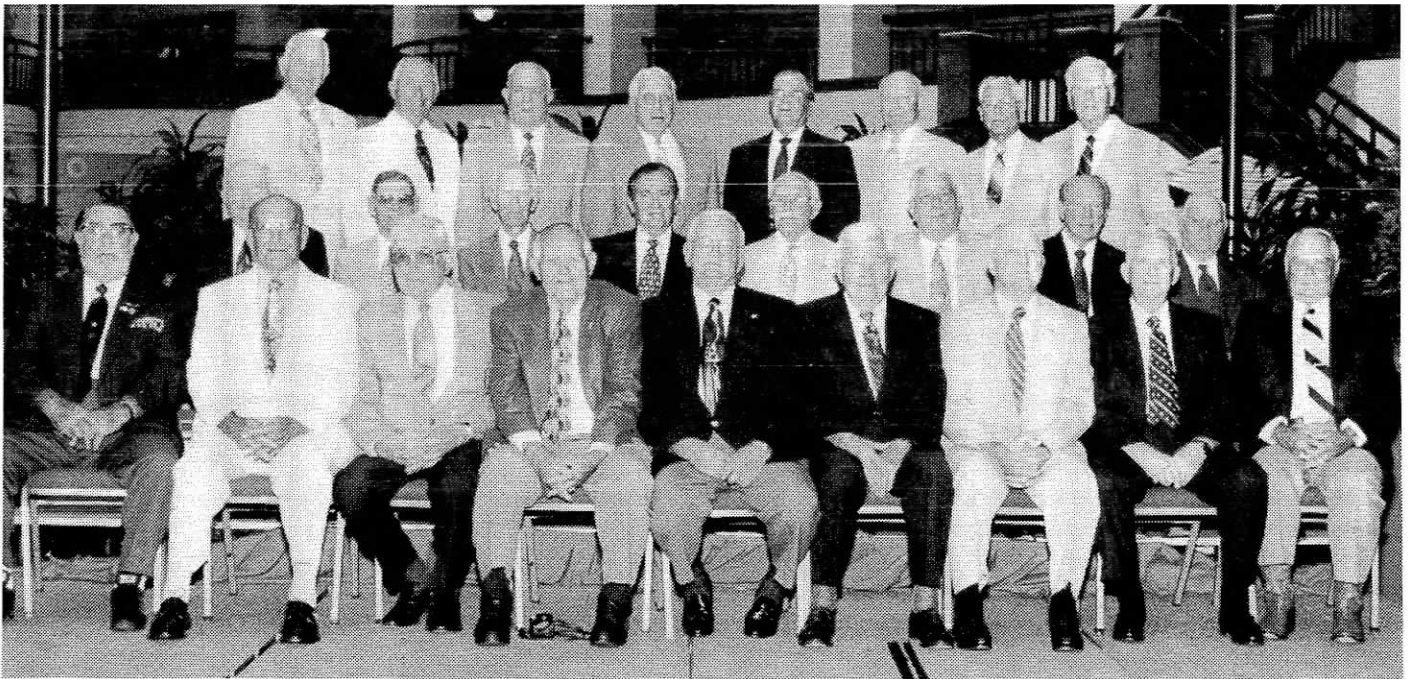


First row, left to right: Robert Swift, Bob Monahan, Jack Nagel, Leo Prince, Vernon Christensen, Lewis Baker, Harold Richards, Frank Chaffin, Dan Sjodin, Lynn Cotterman, Homer Cotton, Richard D. Kingsbury, Robert Dietrich, Cliff Woodbury and Ed Wroblewski. Second row: Rod Hufstader, Louis W. Sikes, Robert H. Lewis, John J. Breen, Jess Ledbetter, Howard Woodyard, Jim

Bright, Lee Craig, David T. Hansen, William V. Highbee, Warren Meyers and John S. Jackson. Third row: Thomas R. Fry, A. A. Salazar, George Byrd, Morgan Browning, Edward Siantz, Bill Brokaw, Frank Nardi, Leonard Little, Bob Rector, Ned Peirano, John J. Godfrey and Bob Hanson, Sr.



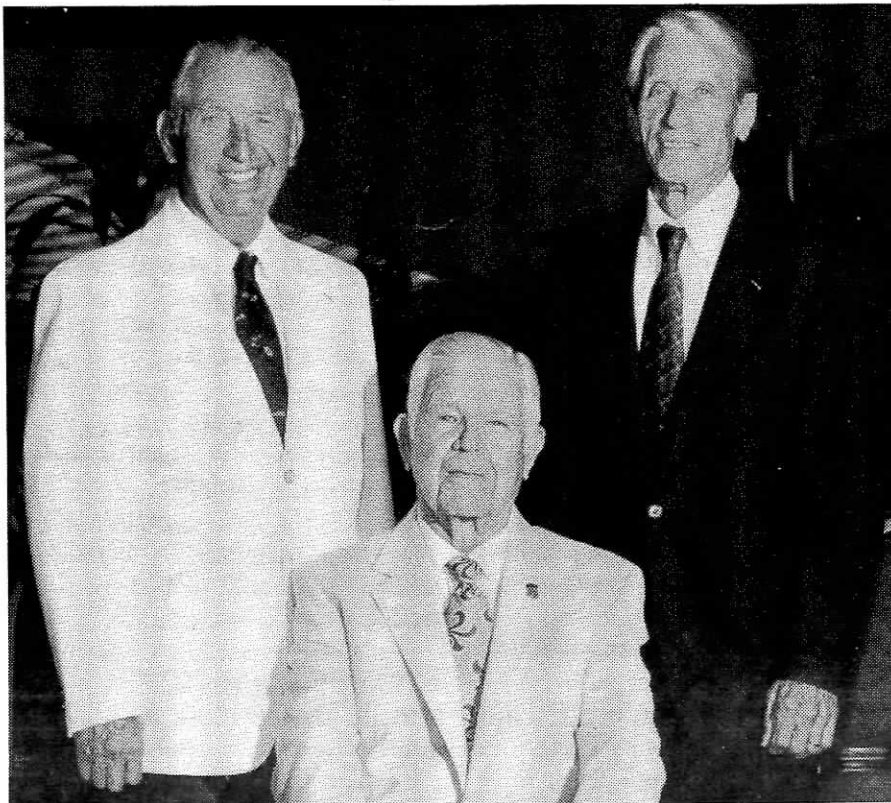
## PRISONERS OF WAR



First row, left to right: Jim Bright, George R. Raidel, Vernon Christensen, Chet Konkolewski, Harry Oberholzer, Slayton McGehee, Homer Hale, Billy R. Culver and Marvin Lindsay. Second row: Morgan Browning, Leon Best, Don Roehn, Frank Nardi, John Godfrey, Joe Cath-

cart, Bob Rector and Leonard Little. Third row: John B. Comet, Warren D. Sortomme, Ryan "Scotty" Scott, Bob Peterson, William Y. Sanders, Roy Daniel, David Roth and Dick Doyle.

## HEADQUARTERS



Left to right: Warren D. Sortomme, John B. Cornett and Loyd F. Towers.

## Target Ploesti To Be Re-issued

In last year's issue of *Lightweight Tower*, it was noted that Leroy Newby's book, "Target Ploesti: View from a Bombsight," was about to be re-issued.

This should be of special interest to the 485th as Newby flew with the 460th, based at Spinazzola - very close on the ground and in the air as well. It's been out of print for quite some time.

Although **Target Ploesti** is the selection of the Military Book Club to represent the air war of WWII in its five-volume **Battle Classics** series, arrangements have been made for non-members of the club to purchase just that one book.

To do so, phone (800)321-7323, explain that such arrangements have been made, and place an order. The book costs \$17.95 plus \$2.95 for handling, a total of \$20.90.

## Savannah

(Continued from Page 2)

reunion. 1998 site has not been selected, as yet, as no volunteers came forward.

Traditionally, this location will be east of the Mississippi. This will be a prime item on the agenda of the 1997 business meeting. The remainder of the day until 4 p.m. was "at your leisure" giving most folks time in the hospitality and memorabilia room to relive war stories and renew old friendships.

The photo session in the atrium went smoothly and snacks and drinks were enjoyed by all. The local TV station, channel 11 (CBS) had a cameraman and reporter interviewing various one in the 485th, but I didn't talk to anyone who had seen it on the tube later that night. Mini celebrities in our midst!

The dinner was fabulous as was the entertainment and entire evening. We were honored by having members of the color guard, their spouses or girlfriends as our guests for the dinner and activities. The Gene Fox 13 piece band, with a wonderful female vocalist, played the 40's type music and everyone felt like they were in their 20's once again.

Our gracious host, C. W. West, arranged for an unexpected female guest to appear on the scene and enticed (or rather ordered) Al Peschka and Hank Dolin front and center. After a lot of good natured ribbing by "Maude: who appeared to be a reject from a Jenny Craig exercise class, they were led back to their tables.

Helen Wall and our hostess sister, Babe Brown, were then asked to come forward and these two gals performed as dancers with "Maude" and everyone had a time keeping up with her.

A wonderful time was had by all and the crowd enjoyed the extra activities. Marie Ledbetter won the \$100 cash drawing and the \$500 drawing went unclaimed so reverted back to 485th treasury.

The Sunday morning Memorial breakfast was very inspirational with Sherrill Burba in charge and Al Martin leading us in singing. Sherill had

## What Is a Mission?

The Winston Dictionary states one of a number of meanings — as the sending or state of being sent with certain powers to do some special service.

And so the Mission of which we speak was in essence a Mission of War, ordered by the higher echelon to go to a place (one or more) they select; and to devastate it with a torrential rain of high explosives namely bombs of many types.

We must also remember the terminology Friend or Foe because this was a time of War.

The Grim Reaper is always present as you approach the selected Target for the Day. Havoc is all around you and the Grim Reaper is in the form of Enemy Fighters or Anti-aircraft Guns firing flak whose purpose is to stop you before you can rain bombs on the target.

It's touch and go, never knowing when the Reaper will reach out and pick you as you fly through the flak, observe planes exploding, on fire, crew members bailing out if they were lucky, to become prisoners of war, or your time to die.

A Mission is foreboding from the time you are awakened in the early morning hours from your warm cot and going through the morning ritual of a latrine stop, washing up, go to the mess hall, and on to the briefing room for instructions regarding weather, our fighter planes, P-47's, P-51's or P-38's escorting us to and from the target, the number of anti aircraft guns we could expect and the number of enemy fighters in that area. Then the lowering of the drape showing the

wall map pointing to the target for the day.

Then it's on to the equipment shack to pick up the necessary gear you will require for as much safety for your sole being, like a parachute, flak jacket, flak helmet, oxygen mask, heated flying suit, and head for the revetment area where your plane is preflighted by our ever-so-needed ground crew. They see that all is ready for today's Mission, with sufficient gas, oil, oxygen, tire pressures, and of course the deadly target bombs and ammunition for all the caliber 50 machine guns.

Next we just wait for the flare which tells us we are ready to go for our Mission trip to that target for today. With our crew on board, with the plane engines purring, every 30 seconds a plane from our Bomb Group is airborne, heading to rendezvous with other Bomb Groups of our 55th Bomb Wing, and we are on our way to the target we have to bomb.

A Mission is usually from three or four hours to ten hours round trip, but each Mission can be that one where havoc is waiting to do damage to part or all of your plane and the crew aboard.

Finally, those who were lucky that day, have flown through the flak and avoided enemy fighters via the help of our fighter escort, P-47's, P-51's or P-38's, rally together and head for home base to be briefed as to what we observed during the time over the target. "Mission completed." Tomorrow and the next day and the next etc., we start all over again, to fly and challenge the "Grim Reaper."

two friends who were musicians accompany him to Savannah and their piano and violin selections were a professional touch to a perfect reunion. The inspiring message by Rev. Don Whiteman was the spiritual way to end a wonderful event.

Mrs. Peg Steinhauser, the daughter of the late John Hanson, a pilot in the 831st, talked about what this gathering had meant to her and her mother and thanked everyone for

a wonderful tribute to all those with us in spirit only. For an emotional ending to our Memorial breakfast, each table joined hands and sang — Let There Be Peace On Earth.

There are just a few of the highlights of our Savannah visit — for those of you that attended, I am sure you'll remember certain specific's not included in above but memories don't remain as clear as they did 50 years ago.



# 831st Boasts Only Sergeant/Navigator

An Oregon veteran of the 831st bomb squadron and the 485th bomb group can boast of a story unique in the group and probably in the 15th Air Force.

S/Sgt. Ralph W. Raines served nine missions as a navigator and for one mission was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross. As a rule, navigators were commissioned officers.

This unique veteran, Raines, resides in Gaston, Ore., owns approximately 2,000 acres of timber and timberland, and is a successful logger.

Raines, a pre-Pearl Harbor infantryman, soon after Pearl Harbor enlisted in the Air Force and was assigned to navigation school, class of 43-12. He completed 16 weeks and was in the celestial phase when he became seriously ill and could not complete the prescribed course.

He was then assigned to armor school, then air gunnery and advanced gunnery school. Completing these schools successfully, he was assigned to Gowan Field, Idaho, as a gunnery instructor.

After a short time as gunnery instructor, he was transferred to a combat crew as ball gunner early in 1944 (Lt. Robert Brown was the pilot.)

In mid-1944 the Brown crew was sent to England, but before being assigned to a group, was transferred to the 15th Air Force. The Brown crew arrived in Venosa late in August and was assigned to the 831st squadron.

Raines, along with the rest of the Brown crew, flew missions through the fall and winter months.

Early in 1945 there was quite a turnover of navigators in the 831st because of several casualties and rotations. At the request of Capt. Kenneth Savee, squadron navigator, Raines went through several days of retraining.

Raines was then examined by squadron and group navigators and pronounced ready to fly combat as a navigator. He flew nine missions as a combat navigator. Capt. Savee commented that Raines' "efficiency as a navigator was equal to and exceeded some navigators in this squadron."

On March 25, Raines was assigned as navigator to Lt. Donald Webb, pilot (Blue Mike). The mission was to Brati-



Ralph W. Raines

... then

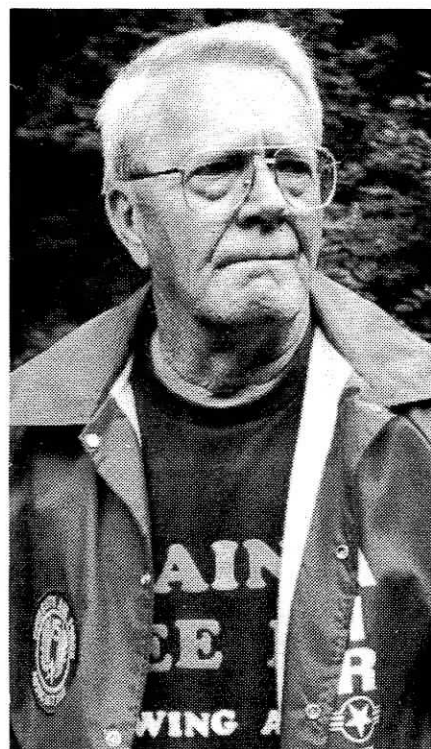
slavia, Czechoslovakia. This was close to what was then the German-Russian front line of the war.

There was a taxi accident that morning and Lt. Webb's plane was the last to take off. The delay was approximately 45 minutes. Lt. Webb relates that "with not a plane in sight and no fighter escort, I elected to try to catch up."

He continued: "I had high confidence in my crew. Raines gave me a course to the initial point of the bomb run. I was climbing at a high rate of speed and passed by several plotted flak position without incident.

"We caught up with the final friendly formation as it was turning onto the bomb run. The flak was fairly heavy and we made the bomb drop and rallied off target."

Because of flak damage, the plane was forced to leave the formation. Russian air field coordinates had been given at the morning briefing and Raines had a ready heading for the plane should an early landing be necessary. However, the crew was able to return to Venosa without further incident.



... and now

Lt. Webb made a recommendation for a D.F.C. for Sgt. Raines. However, the war was beginning to wind down and it was apparently lost in the rush of closing down the 15th Air Force in Italy.

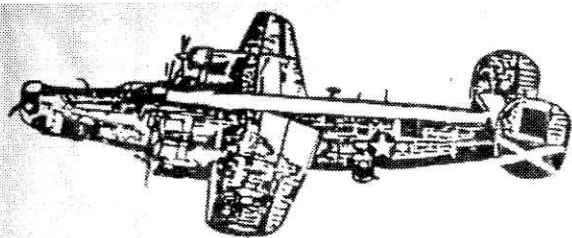
At the 1980 reunion Webb discovered that Raines had never received the award. After a few telephone calls and letters, Raines received the D.F.C. award 37 years late at a ceremony in Portland, Ore.

Ralph Raines has quite a colorful military record. He served approximately 3½ years active reserve and 1½ years active duty in the infantry prior to Pearl Harbor. He served approximately 4 years in the Air Force during World War 2.

From 1947-1950 he served again in the infantry. In 1950 he retired from the military service to devote full time to his logging business.

Looking back over 50 years, Raines should be quite proud of his military service and his success in the forest industry.

Said Pilot Webb: "I had great confidence in his ability as my navigator. If I were to do it again, I would make no changes."



Welcome banner near hospitality room

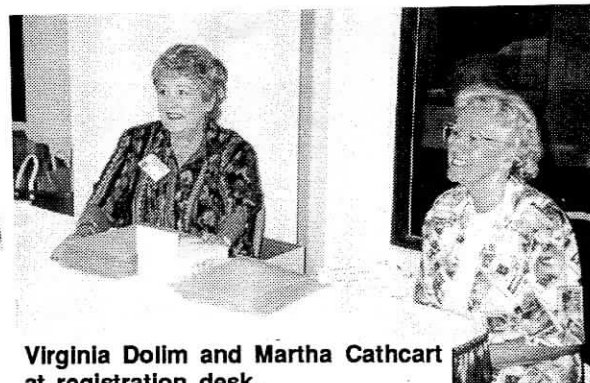
# Welcome 485TH Bomb Group



Laying of the wreath at Fort Jackson. Fred Sims (left) and Lynn Cotterman.



Visit to Fort Stewart



Virginia Dollim and Martha Cathcart at registration desk.



Barbershop quartet group at Italian Buffet.



Enjoying barbershop quartet in lobby after buffet.



Color guard at memorial service



# Snapshots at Savannah



Dancers enjoying band.



Al Pescha being entertained at annual banquet.



Sherrill Burba conducting memorial service.



Jerry Hayes, patriotic entertainer, presenting John DiRusso's poem, "Please Remember Me."



Earl Bundy presenting award to Joe Cathcart for having most crew members at meeting.



C. W. West and Earl Bundy at business meeting.



Mayor of Savannah presenting proclamation to C. W. West at Italian Buffet.



Donald Whiteman giving sermon at memorial service

Photographs courtesy of  
Frances Fundling

## Minutes of Group Business Meeting

Minutes of 485th Bomb Group business meeting — September 14, 1996 at 9 a.m. in the Marriott Riverfront Hotel in Savannah, Georgia. Entertainment by "Savannah Steve" preceded the meeting.

The color guard from the 3rd Infantry Division from Ft. Steward, Georgia presented the colors, with the playing of the National Anthem. Earl Bundy called the meeting to order. He asked for a moment of silent prayer for our departed comrades.

Minutes were read from the 1995 reunion in Scottsdale, Arizona. Minutes were approved. Howard "Woody" Woodyard, treasurer, gave the financial report. At present, we have in account: \$6,316.00 in Certificates of Deposit; \$4,000.00 in checking account. The reserve over the years is to cover cost of Lightweight Tower and bequests to members and families who have passed way. Also increased cost of Lightweight Tower as it had cost \$2,300.00 to print and mail this past year.

Earl thanked C. W. West for a great reunion. C. W. spoke about the banquet this evening — pictures will be taken at 4:45 with coat and ties but no name tags. He thanked all who sent in their registration early. There were 300 plus who had done so, and he mentioned that this is a great help for the host. C. W. also announced that the ads for Souvenir books took in \$3,500.00. The T-shirts and miscellaneous items in welcome bags had all been donated. He thanked everyone for all their help and stated that total attendance at reunion is 345. He also announced that all branches of the services, in uniform, would be our guests this evening, along with their spouses. He received a standing ovation from all present!

Earl asked for a count: POW'S, 18; MIA'S, 6; 1st Timers, 4; Widows, 5; Hdquarters, 3; 828th, 43; 829th, 47; 830th, 38; 831st, 49.

Flight crews were counted. Joe Cathcart won again with 5 members

## *They Walk Down the Aisle*



**Virginia and Earl Bundy**

During the 1995 Scottsdale reunion, Earl Bundy was honored by being asked to be best man for a buddy since high school days.

At the same time he met the maid of honor who was from their hometown of Chanute, Kansas.

Says Earl: "I enjoyed walking down the aisle so well ahead of the bride and bridegroom, I decided a

few months later to ask them (the newlyweds) to lead us down the aisle.

Thus, on June 5, 1996, the former maid of honor and the best man became Virginia and Earl Bundy, wife and husband.

Earl moved from his former home in Columbus, Ohio and has taken up residence with his bride in Chanute, KS.

in attendance.

Ground crews numbered: 828th, 5; 829th, 5; 830th, 2; 831st, 3. Rod Hufstader from Bend, Oregon had traveled the farthest.

Carl Mazzoni told that Sam Schneider, who had written the book on 485th history, and was the group historian, had made and donated the squadron doormats to be raffled. Carl had one left and had a drawing for it. He asked Earl Bundy to draw a name from the hat. Guess who won? Earl Bundy! He also told that one could contact Sam Schneider if they wanted to order a doormat, or to give him any information or stories for his

second book of the 485th history, that he is in the process of writing. Sam Schneider's address is: 20110 Ventura Ave., Port Charlotte, Florida 33952 and his telephone number is 813-629-2935.

John DeRusso thanked all who had placed his poem "Please Remember Me" in various places. He also asked for a show of hands of those who had observed that the flag was not flying at half mast on December 7th, Pearl Harbor Day. He asked us to contact our Congressmen, Mayors etc. one month ahead of December 7th to request that flags be flown at half mast

(Continued on Page 11)



# Minutes

(Continued from Page 10)

to honor those who had died on that day.

Dan Sjodin asked for men to stand who had completed 50 missions in Italy. Francis Tunstall of the 830th, led a rousing "Hip, Hip, Horray" for Walter "Pop" Arnold who was absent from this reunion, but had promised to come next year.

Chet Konkolewski told of the 15th Air Force reunion to be held in Las Vegas on April 22nd thru 26th, 1997. He also had 15th AF patches available for \$3.00 each with \$1.00 going to 485th treasury. Earl announced that he had files of Carl Gigowski's with old copies of Lightweight Towers — numbers 1 through 24. He would compile books at \$5.00 each for anyone interested. Earl's new address is: P.O. Box 492, Chanute, Ks. 66720 and phone number is 316-431-9315.

Col. John Cornett asked to honor Col. Tomhave who was group commander prior to Col. Douglas Cairns.

Sherrill Burba gave information on the reunion to be held in Dallas, Texas — September 4th through 9th, 1997, at the Harvey Hotel in downtown Dallas, at the rate of \$68.00 per night. He asked that all fill out questionnaires, give them to him at registration in Savannah, or mail them to him so he can make the final decisions on what events etc. will be set up for the '97 reunion. There will be some new innovations at this reunion, ie: pictures of couples, plus squadron pictures, reusable name tags, and ecumenical service on Sunday with a Rabbi, Catholic Priest and Protestant Minister officiating. Marvin and Naomi Lindsay will co-host the reunion.

Earl asked for a host for the 1998 reunion to be held East of the Mississippi. There were no volunteers.

Dan Sjodin spoke of the visit of the 8th Air Force Museum on Friday here in Savannah. He thought it was interesting, but remembered that the B-17's had flown at 29,000', while the B-24's were at 24,000': thus we caught the brunt of the flak!

Earl Bundy spoke of the reunion in



**Second Reunion** — In 1961 the 828th Squadron held its second reunion, prior to the first reunion for the entire 485th group. The 1961 event was held at the home of Robert Deeds. The banner was brought to Toledo by a group of squadron veterans from North Carolina.

Fairmont, Nebraska in June, 1996, with approximately 12,000 in attendance. He said that there were copies of the program in the memorabilia room. There was an air show, a tour of the city and a new museum. Seven groups had trained there, including the 15th and 20th Air Forces.

Ed Nett told all "computer buffs" of a way to locate lost friends on C.D. Rom. All telephone numbers in the United States are listed. If the name you're looking for isn't too common ie John Smith, you may be able to find that person.

For those interest in ordering the history of the 485th, "This is how it was" — the address of the publisher is: Southern Heritage Press, P.O. Box 10937, St. Petersburg, FL 33733, (813) 823-1938 or (800) 282-2823. The price is \$39.95 plus \$3.95 S/M — Total \$43.90 — Florida residents only, add 7% sales tax.

Bob Hanson told of "Fantasy of Flight" museum near Lakeland, FL and had brochures for any one interested and going in that direction. He then read "The Fighting Men of the 485th" poem to close the meeting.

The color guard returned the Colors. Meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted  
Lynda L. Hanson — Secretary  
485th Bomb Group

## Ex-Gunners Being Sought

Ex-gunners are eligible for membership in the Air Force Gunners Association.

Formed in 1986, the association membership is open to any veteran who flew on any type of bomber aircraft as a gunner, including radio operators and flight engineers.

The group has biennial reunions, alternating from east, central and western sections of the country.

Annual dues is \$15. Address for the association is 453 Plaza Circle, Bossier City, LA 71111-4811.

## Proper Address

One of the increasing costs of publishing the Lightweight Tower is the postal service charges for publications being misssent.

Veterans are asked to make sure their particular squadron reporter is aware of your proper address at the time the Lightweight Tower is to be mailed.

Fewer wrong addresses will mean less expense and we urge everyone to assist us in this undertaking.

# A Tail Gunner's Plight

By Charles R. Fournier

After a very tense and stressful briefing, the crew of Captain Tompkins listened as he spoke the words, intense heavy and accurate. With these words ringing in their heads, the crew loaded their gear on the truck and jumped aboard. On reaching the ramp with the ship, still not fully lighted as it was 5:00 a.m., nobody was talking.

Going to Munich, Germany did not set well so the crew wasn't in the best of moods. "Load up" came all too soon. Each one took his paraphernalia, consisting of flak helmet, flak suit, heated gloves, parachute and oxygen mask, and placed it near his

station.

Not long after take-off and formation of the bomb group, each airman went over his equipment. At this point the tail gunner discovered his oxygen mask was missing. Panic set in and he ran about the ship to see if anyone had an extra. None was found, now what to do?

The tail gunner got into his turret and when the pilot said "go on oxygen," he came up with a plan. Putting a hankiechief over the oxygen hose he was able to breathe.

Just before entering the target area the ME 109 fighters hit like flies on a garbage can. The tail gunner became active in firing his guns and forgot

the oxygen hose, dropping it.

In a few minutes his hands began to shake. His thoughts were "man, I've got to control my fright." Then he remembered his training in the pressure tank of what lack of oxygen causes. He put the hose back in his mouth and turned on the emergency knob.

After the mission, and when the gunner set foot on terra firma, he could hardly stand or walk to his ride back to camp. I'll have to say that I never forgot my oxygen mask again.

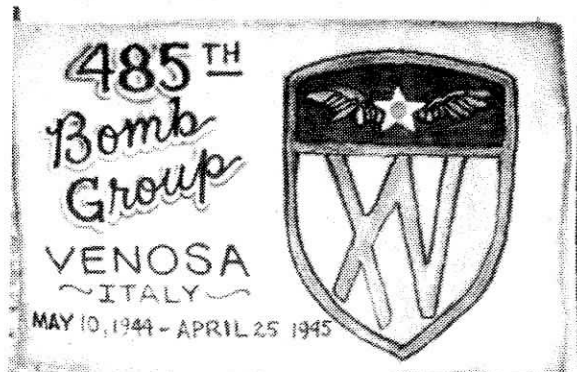
S/Sgt. Charles R. Fournier  
485th B.G., Sqdn 830  
Original Crew #46

## Door Mats for Sale

The door mats shown above were displayed for the first time at the Savannah reunion.

They are being offered for sale at \$10 each and are hand painted.

You may order them by contacting John Spurlock, 4089 Rose Arbor Circle, Port Charlotte, Fla. 33948.





## Dallas

(Continued from Page 1)

Participants include Al Martin, our Wesleyan song leader, Lee and Mable Craig, our Presbyterian musicians, and Burba, a Presbyterian deacon.

According to Burba, entertainment for the Saturday night dinner is not yet completed, but he assures all that it will have a "Texas theme" to show the diversity of the population of Dallas and Texas.

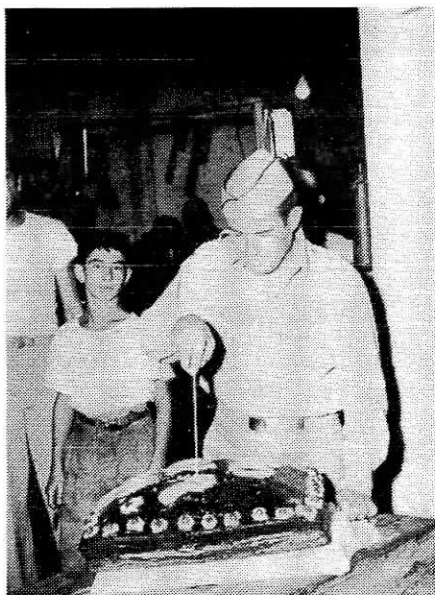
## Help in Finding Former Buddy

Are you trying to contact a long-lost crew member, or a pal from the engineering shack whom you have not seen in 50 years?

Well, Sherrill Burba may be able to help you. He reports that his computer has on file 90 million residential telephones. He is willing to try to help you locate your buddy.

He needs the name and as much information you can give him — at least, his home state.

You may write Sherrill at his home: 11314 Hillcrest, Dallas, TX 75230.



**Happy Birthday —** The then Col. Walter E. Arnold is shown cutting his birthday cake (No. 31) at Venosa, Italy in 1944. The now Gen. Arnold was the 485th's first commander.

## JOURNEY'S END

Curtis Abbot, 831st	1996
George Albrecht, 829th	
Donald Evjen, 831st	1996
John D. Hansen, 831st	1996
Art Karns, 829th	Apr. 1, 1996
Harry L. McGaw, 831st	1996
Sherman Peters, Hgts.	July 1995

## LIGHTWEIGHT TOWER CALLING

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

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## An Open Letter from Our Historian

What can I say to you from my home in Port Charlotte, Florida? Perusing the thought, my immediate statement is "I wish I had been there in Savannah with you to enjoy our reunion to the fullest."

Meeting some of my old buddies as well as meeting the new, and reminiscing "This Is How It Was Stories," and trying to catch up on 50 years plus what has happened to us. Stories about our families, children, grandchildren and friends.

Unfortunately my physical problems say: "Sammy, you cannot go, so just hang in there and keep playing the shots and look forward to another year."

The mission you assigned "Writing the History of my 485th," I completed within the six months deadline. In my estimation, the book was published with flying colors. Hopefully to the satisfaction of the majority who purchased the book. I know there will be some who are not satisfied and rightfully so. Names and rank missing etc., but six months was not sufficient time to do an A-1 job in my estimation. It took the publisher six months to have the book printed.

One of the goals that I set for myself at the time was to get it on Talking Books for the Blind and the Handicapped. I'd like to report that this came about in August, and is now available through libraries and the Library of Congress Chapter in Deltona, Florida. A special cassette player is needed for the many kinds of talking books that are available and is free. The receipt and return of cassettes have free postage. From this effort, the 485th will receive added publicity via National Coverage.

An application with instructions may be gotten from your local library. Have it completed and signed by their doctor, then return it free to: The Bureau of Braille and Talking Book Library Services, Daytona Beach, Florida 32198-0001. A short wait, and you will receive the cassette player, a catalog and your choice of audios to listen to.

In closing may I say give it full throttle on another mission. Only milk runs this time for easy, enjoyable living in our golden years. Best wishes to all, always, and That Is My Story For Today.

Sam Schneider  
485th Bomb Group Historian

## MAIL ROOM

### 485TH BOMB GROUP HQ —

**Bob Benson**  
(with help from  
Warren Sortomme)



Due to the fact that Dorothy and I were unable to attend the Savannah reunion, Warren Sortomme was able to provide me with sufficient information to write this article. Thank you, Warren.

The comments that I have received from the men who attended the reunion and that I have talked with have been highly complimentary. It was a wonderful reunion, and C. W. and Ding West and their family members are to be congratulated. A big "thank-you" to all of you for a great time.

Group headquarters was not too well represented, I'm sorry to say. John "Beau" Cornett, Loyd Towers and Warren Sortomme were the only three men from headquarters, but I'm sure there will be more in attendance next year at Dallas. There were 180 veterans attending and, when considering the wives and guests, the total came to 345.

All of the meals that were served were excellent, and the service provided at the hotel was outstanding. The show and dinner at Fort Jackson were very enjoyable — even for the mosquitos that attended and kept coming back for more. The entertainment and the Big Band Sound at the Saturday night banquet were wonderful.

It is with regret that I inform you of another loss from group headquarters. Sherman Peters passed-on in July, 1995. Our deepest sympathy is extended to his widow, Shirley. Sherman was in group operations.

Our next reunion will be at Dallas, Texas. As you can see elsewhere in this publication, it will be held in September, 1997 at the Harvey Hotel in downtown Dallas. Further information is also included in this publication, and you will be receiving a schedule of events and hotel information along about May or June of this year.

We're looking forward to this being another reunion to be remembered. We are all getting up there in years and, if you have never attended one of our reunions, you will benefit a lot being with us in Dallas later this year.

Once again, I ask for your financial support in meeting my expenses. The cost of printing, postage, phone calls, mailing supplies, etc. keep going up, so I ask for your help. My appreciation is extended to those of you who do send a donation annually — thank you.

We will see you in Dallas in September — God be willing.

### 828TH BOMB SQDN —

**Carl Mazzoni**



Let me begin this report of our 32nd reunion with a crescendo of heartfelt "thank you, thank you, thank you:" for our hosts, C. W. and Ding West. Their limitless congenial-

ity and generosity pervaded and prevailed throughout the entire time and functions of our reunion. These superb qualities were also extended to us by C. W.'s family and friends who gave much time and effort to us all. To all of you, our sincere gratitude.

The facilities offered were most spacious and there was much time socializing in the hospitality rooms and the beautiful atrium overlooking the Savannah River.

Wednesday was spent checking in and saying hello to old and new friends. Also, Mary and I arranged a raffle for five door mats, artfully painted with the insignia of all four squadrons and headquarters. These mats were donated by Sam Schneider, our group historian. We raised \$80 which was given to the 485th group. Thanks, Sam, from all of us.

These mats were really a piece of work. They are hand painted and cost only \$10 plus shipping and handling. Order them by contacting Mr. John Spurlock, 4089 Rose Arbor Circle, Port Charlotte, FL 313948. The winner of the 828th drawing was Herman Laorno of Phoenix, Ariz.

Thursday we took a tour of Fort Stewart, home of the 24th Infantry. It was very interesting to get to meet our modern soldiers and get an introduction to modern weapons systems. Buck Rogers and the 25th Century had nothing on these guys! And the mess halls! Would you believe air conditioning and individual dishes for the food serving of your choice from a menu that went from soup to nuts. The old Consolidated Mess Hall will never come back — thank goodness. And NO KP! Unbelievable!

I don't have a report about the golf outing since I don't golf and judging by the reputation of duffers in general, I'll let them tell their tall tales in person when you see them again.

In the evening we visited and had a typical Southern dinner at Old Fort Jackson. It was very interesting to learn of the old military traditions and customs of the early Georgia Militia. It was a great show.

On Friday we toured the Gulfstream plant where they manufacture a beautiful, state of the art executive jet transport. Of course, the cost of the planes are also fantastic. I made an offer on one, but they said "no," although they did say I could have three (3) rivets if I paid cash. (Maybe when the market is down.) The personnel were very friendly and informative and the lunch was delicious. We had a good time.

The dinners were all excellent and Saturday night the dancing and entertainment were great. Once more may I say thank you, C.W. and Ding.

The 828th meeting was held Friday at 5:15 p.m. We had 43 members in attendance. We had two first timers, Leonard Kraus, of Mission Viejo, Calif., and Henry L. Miller of Savannah, Ga., our host city.

Ed Nett welcomed all the men of the 828th, said how proud he was of us and the pride he feels to have served with us. Thank you, Ed, we value and hold dearly your sentiments.

First timer, Henry Miller, pointed out the fact that he never knew about the 485th Group reunions until he read about this one in his local paper. We had a lively discus-



sion on the matter and some good ideas were suggested. Think about the problem of how to let more people know about the reunions and let me know your ideas. I hope to have more in our news letter.

Sherill Burba said he is getting a new computer that will have a nationwide listing of names and telephone numbers. Maybe we could put this to use in finding many lost members of the group. More on this advertising problem later.

The 33rd annual reunion will be in Dallas, Texas, hosted by Sherill Burba and his lovely wife, Geraldine. From the looks of plans they have for us, I would say — **DON'T MISS THIS ONE!**

33rd Annual Reunion  
September 3-7, 1997  
485th Bomb Group Reunion  
Harvey Hotel — Downtown Dallas  
Dallas, Texas

Hope to see you all there.

Carl and Mary Mazzoni

**829th BOMB SQDN. —**

Joe Cathcart, Jr.



As this is my first time being fully responsible for the 829th mail room, please bear with me. At least I have left plenty of room for improvement.

C. W. West and Ding sponsored a wonderful reunion at Savannah. Of course it was great, C. W. was from the 829th, worked in the orderly room, made up payrolls, issued passes and kept Fred Sims out of trouble.

With his hosting duties he was not able to keep Fred from joining Earl Bundy and Hank Dolim in the 830th picture. Another first for the 829th, the only squadron with past Commander, Executive Officer and reporter pictured with the wrong squadron. Come on back, fellows, we love you anyhow.

On the count of attendees in the official minutes the 831st nosed us out 49 to 47, but at one point we had the most standing. We are giving them a run for their money. Next year in Dallas we will take 'em. Sounds like the fan of a losing football team, doesn't it.

Mary Karns reported that Art passed away April 1, 1996. He has attended many of our reunions and will be sorely missed. Also mail sent to George Albrecht has been returned marked deceased. These will be forwarded to the 15th Air Force. I apologize for any omissions but with the change of reporters we may not be receiving all of the mail yet.

I received notes from Charles Crane and James Rideout explaining why they could not make Savannah. They are excused this year, but we hope to see them in Dallas.

Congratulations are in order for Earl Bundy and Barton Brown who both were married this year. Earl's lovely

bride, Virginia, was in attendance and we are looking forward to meeting Barton's wife at a future reunion.

I was pleased that a goodly number of our original first pilots were in attendance: Roy Daniels after several years absence, Bob Skelton, Don Whiteman, Bob Peterson, Clark Miller and myself — almost enough for a maximum effort mission.

On a personal note, Martha and I celebrated our 50th wedding anniversary on Wednesday before the reunion was in full swing. Don (my bombardier) and Mary Roehn celebrated their 49th on the same day. We were joined by the rest of our crew in attendance in Savannah. Slayton and Jo McGehee, Marvin and Naomi Lindsay and Leon and Betty Best ate a delightful dinner at a restaurant C.W. and Ding has recommended.

In closing I quote the Nashvillians I grew up with who used to say on the radio "keep them cards and letters coming in" and if they include a little contributions to cover expenses, that wouldn't hurt either. Thanks to those of you who have been most generous.

My new address is 510 Old Hickory Blvd., Apartment 304, Nashville, TN 37209. Y'all come to Big "D" for the 1997 event.

**830TH BOMB SQDN —**

Chester Konkolewski



We all are another year older, some with canes and infirmities, but yet, we come to join our friends in the quaint and beautiful city of Savannah, Georgia in September to sit down and swap some stories, share a few jokes and have fun.

This successful reunion owes itself to the efforts of C. W. West, his wife Ding, and several of their friends. Everything was wonderful and seemed to flow like clockwork. Congratulations!

It was a very nice turn out by the 830th veterans, their spouses and relatives. By my count I believe we registered 43. However, three of those were unable to attend due to personal concerns. During the roll call taken at the general meeting, 38 members were counted as present.

Our Squadron meeting had an excellent turn out and resulted in a very good informational exchange. Unfortunately, yours truly failed to have members sign in. I guess it happens to some of us youngsters, hey!! We did pass the hat around and collected a tidy sum of money towards our newsletter fund. Thank you one and all! I also received some donations from Ralph B. Helm, Leroy Sanders, Bob Samuels since then; thanks guys.

Present at the reunion were: Simon & Elaine Baytala, Howard & Shirley Boxley, the Baldwins, Bill & Betty Cummings, Les DeJong, Bill & Naomi DeVore, George & Kathie Dyer, Chuck Forester, Paul & Beverly Grubb, the Ed Gunns (first timers), Warren & Evelyn Gorman, our CO Richard & Marilyn Griffin, Art Housden, Jim & Violet Hunter, Harold & Mickey Kempffer, the Norman Kings,

Don & Carline Landrum, the Learys, Ted & Rose Lipinski, Larry & Lila-Beth Martin, Bob Plaister, Chuck Porter, Steve & Jean Paynic, John & Anne McCarthy, George & Janet Raidel, Harry & Jane Oberholtzer, John & Dell Schill, Cliff Studaker, Howard & Mary Sanborn, Fran Tunstall & Son, and finally, Ken Muse.

There may be some that I missed, forgive me, my mind just does not cooperate some times. By the way, sorry that Sandy Sanborn and John McCarthy missed the photo session.

Thank you one and all for your lovely Christmas greetings!: Ted & Rose Lipinski and their donation; Bob & Linda Hansen; the Herb Kohlhorsts; Harold & Theo Engle; Bob & Dorothy Benson; Bob & Lucy Esarey; Earl & Virginia Bundy; Nick Nicholson; Oscar Knight; Joe & Fay Morgan; Leroy Sanders and their donation; Ray & Irene Foster w/pictures; John & Dell Schill; George & Janet Raidel; Sam Schneider; Warren & Evelyn Gorman; Ev & Melba Banker (my pilot); Guy & Ina Botard; Ralph & Wilma Skinner; John & Mickey Strang; Dick Bizzozero w/donation; Bill & Betty Cummings; Paul & Beverly Grubb; Mrs. Florence Laughtlin; Howard & Shirley Boxley; Harold & Mickey Kempffer; Chuck Porter; Bob Lewis; Jim & Pat Roach; Steve & Jean Paynic w/letter; Bob & Ruth McVann; Pat & Pat Russo; Aldo Grandoni (my tailgunner); Ralph & Irene Campbell; Art Housden; Don & Mickey Kogas; Bob & Donna Samuels w/donation; Clarence (Deacon) & Ruth Miller; John & Jean Forst w/letter; Paul & Jean Lovejoy; and Dick Fedell w/letter. Best wishes to all of you! Hope you received my Christmas letter!

FYI! In October, one month after the reunion I was involved in a major car accident as I was returning home one evening. As I proceeded through the main intersection into my housing development I was broadsided by a city police vehicle; the officer even admitted his car ran the light.

Anyway, my Suburban was destroyed and I wound up in the hospital, severely bruised (luckily I had my seat belt on). The next 30 days I spent in my house without transportation and just trying to heal my sore body.

So there you have it! I am doing well and, in closing, I do wish you the very best in the coming year. With the grace of God I am hoping to see all of you at our next reunion in Dallas, Texas.

God Bless!

**831ST BOMB SQDN —**

Lynn Cotterman



Another great reunion! Seems like they get better every year. Since I'm "Tail End Charlie" I won't rehash the reunion, but I would like to mention a couple of things. First I want to add our thanks to the hosts, C.W. and Ding West, who did a super job and they deserved the standing ovation that they received at the group meeting Saturday. They

saw to every detail, even handing out insect repellent at the Old Fort Jackson. Also being a reformed smoker I think the smoking room is a great idea and hope it becomes a tradition. Their's will be a hard act to follow.

Besides the good stuff at the reunion there was about one mile of shops and restaurants along the River Front, just a short work from the hotel. Since I live in the middle of New Mexico I really enjoyed the fresh sea food. Also the women could shop until they dropped or run out of money.

Those who visited the old town of Savannah found it to be an interesting city loaded with history. The city was spared during the Civil War and many of the old homes and historic landmarks have been cared for so they can still be enjoyed by visitors. This is another reason I enjoy the reunions. Not only do we enjoy seeing our friends and the entertainment, but also we have the opportunity to visit the city and see its points of interest.

Seven of our gang reached "Journey's End" this past year. I received a letter from Harry McGaw's wife saying Harry died in January from a heart attack. John Hansen's daughter called to say John had passed away in the Spring after a bout with cancer. Bill Brokaw called and said Curtis Abbott passed away in October. William Todd died in July and Robert Barrett and Charles Nordstrom passed away in November 1995. Also I learned at the reunion that Donald Evjen, passed away.

We were glad to see Don's wife, Jeanette, attend the reunion as did John Hansen's wife, Dolly, and his daughter, Peggie Steinhauer. We are always glad to see the widows at the reunion as they are still a part of the gang. Helen Iwanski can tell you that; she hasn't missed one for several years.

There were no first timers this year, but I heard from a couple of old timers who planned to come but didn't make it. I talked with the Proudloves, last year's hosts. June sounds good but she is not able to travel yet so she and Lloyd canceled. Jim "Doc" Johnson, our Flight surgeon and his wife, Judy, caught a bug while touring Ireland with Bill and Jo Anne Brokaw and were unable to attend. More bad luck for Jim, he was diagnosed as having acute Leukemia in October and has spent most of the time in the hospital since then.

Now for some good news and gossip. Woody, our retired 831st reporter, attended his high school reunion last Fall in Arkansas and ran into an old flame. I understand the relationship is heating up. Colonel Dan who is a bachelor again bought a winter home in Texas and is dancing the time away with the widows there. A big thanks to Frank and Lucille Chaffin who help with the stuffing and mailing of the information to you guys. They discovered what a nice place Albuquerque is and now live down the road a piece. Frank was the nose gunner on our crew.

Make your reservations for the reunion next year in Dallas. After seeing the list of tours and entertainment available I know that we are in for another great time. I am looking forward to seeing the regulars and hope to see some new faces in Dallas.