

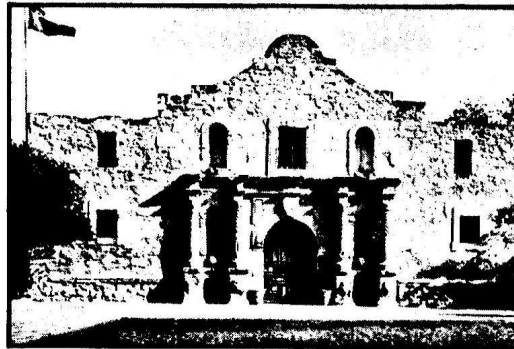
## THE SAN ANTONIO REUNION DRAWS THE LARGEST CROWD Over 700 Attend the 1986 Conclave

The San Antonio Marriott, (Riverwalk) Hotel was bulging with 700 plus happy guests gathered there November 12-16, 1986 for the fifth annual reunion of the 461st & 484th Bomb Groups Association. The room block of two hundred rooms sold out six weeks prior to the reunion. Overflow guests were accommodated at the Hyatt Hotel, until it too filled up, and had to pass guests on to other hotels

While the weather did not cooperate at the beginning of the reunion, by the end of the week it had turned warm allowing members to enjoy the famous riverwalk of downtown San Antonio. All of the scheduled events went smoothly thanks to the hard work of Clark Ecton and Harrison Word, our San Antonio reunion committeemen.

We tried a new banquet seating arrangement where guests choose their own tables from a displayed map, instead of the former system of blocking off sections of the hall by unit. This plan works well when the table places can be adjusted to seat one more couple when only one place remains. The hotel staff made these accommodations speedily and set up additional tables when banquet attendance exceeded the planned meal count.

The Marriott's meeting rooms were filled to capacity on Friday evening for the squadron dinners as extra tables were set, as again the gathering exceeded the meal plan. This is the event that brings out war stories, photo albums, and a lot of teary eyed embraces as old buddies meet for the first time since the war. Richard Behrens 766 Sq who was celebrating his birthday on that night was surprised when a beautiful birthday cake with just one candle was presented to him. This was arranged by his friend and crew mate Joel Fish 766 Sq. The opening ceremony of the ban-



quet was the presentation of the colors by the color guard from Lackland Air Force Base led by Sergeant Sandra Champion. This precision team, dressed smartly in air force blue with white scarves and polished boots, carried the flags proudly into the hall. Many an eye went slightly moist as the colors passed by. In the procession were the flag of the United States, the State of Texas, and the flags of the 461st and 484th Bomb Groups. This is the first time our group flags were included in a formal presentation of the colors. After the pledge of allegiance, the invocation was given by Chaplain Major USAF James R Wilson, Lackland Air Force Base. The roll call of the squadrons was then taken, followed by the toast to our departed comrades given by Ed Goree 764 Sq. He said in part:

*"To all of those who came before us, the wives, the families, and the men, we say:*

*They traveled the road. They fought a good fight, and they kept the faith.*

*We can not repay. We pass on to the new generation some of the verve and devotion that made their lives complete.*

*There must be a purpose in all things. We who are here to carry on may rejoice. It is commended that we live with spirit, contribute with charity, and with a humble nature show love and respect.*

*Recall, it is not the quarry, but*

*the chase. Not the laurel, but the race. Not the hazard, but the play. Make us God , enjoy always"*

Maj/Gen James James B Knapp USAF (Ret) 461st B G and Maj/Gen William B Keese USAF (Ret) 484th B G made the introductory banquet speeches followed by our guest speaker Lt/Col Mike Kenny USAF, the lead instructor pilot B1-B Bomber from Dyess Air Force Base, who presented a combined talk , and slide show, followed by a motion picture on the B1-B training program. Arthur Shak 824 Sq from Hawaii and Richard Durand 764 Sq. from Alaska won the member from the farthest distance prizes. James Love 767 Sq correctly guessed the name of the mystery target photo that was shown on page 2 of Torretta Flyer No 13. It was dubbed a mission assignment of both the 461st and 484th Bomb Groups. It looked like a target identification photo and it was ! Dig out the last issue and look closely. You will see downtown San Antonio. The mission of course was the 1986 reunion. He was given a beautiful framed print of the Ploesti Mission, that was donated by Clark Ecton 825 Sq.

The largest number of members from one crew were from the 824 Squadron and the 765 squadron, both numbering seven. They are:

**824 Sq.** Earl Svela ,pilot; Dexter Schultz, co-pilot; Abe Abramoff, bombardier; Ward Bernhardt, engineer; Arlis Foster, radio operator; and Frank Mendes, upper gunner.

**765 Squadron** Art Hughes, pilot; Bates Boles, bombardier; Robert Scanlon, engineer; Art Bettinger, radio operator; Wayne Boyce, gunner; Joe Bryant, gunner; and Dewey Large, gunner.

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