









# 483RD BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H) ASSOCIATION

(1943) Ephrata, WA - MacDill Field, Tampa, FL - Steparone, San Severo-Pisa, Italy (1945)

VOLUME 37 March 2014 NUMBER 1

# President's Message



Wow, it's March already which means that its about 6 months until we convene the 36th 483rd Bombardment Group Association Reunion in New Orleans. Please note that the reunion is going to be September 9 - 13, a little earlier than normal this year. This choice was

made to keep the prices down for the reunion. The high season for New Orleans begins in October and prices go up considerably. Dennis, Laurie and Kathy have been hard at work creating all of the details for our reunion this year and it looks like we will have another great reunion - full of fun and fellowship. A big "thank you" to the three of you!

I'm looking forward to going through the WWII Museum, being in the French Quarter, visiting the Garden District and seeing the Pitot House - just to name a few. It has been many years since I visited New Orleans.

On another note, Mr. Dick Roberts sent an email to board members in December sharing some news that a B-17 that was available. I will not include the entire email here but rather summarize its contents. According to Mr. Roberts, the B-17 had been on display at Grissom AFB Museum but became available because the museum at Grissom AFB was closed due to Air Force budget cuts. He further shared that the plane was claimed by Warner Robins and they are in the process of going through the red tape to get it moved. Warner Robins estimates that the renovation cost would be \$63,000. Mr. Roberts said that the Warner Robins Museum Foundation has already begun to raise funds for this purpose. It was also his suggestion that the 483rd members be

contacted to see if individual members would like to donate to this cause. Mr. Roberts said he would do all that he could to be sure that the B-17 was restored with 483rd markings. He also thought it would be great to have the 483rd Bombardment Group choose the nose art. If you would like to talk directly with Mr. Roberts, you may call him at 404-558-0155. If you choose to make a contribution towards the renovation, you can send your donation to:

Museum of Aviation Foundation, Inc. Restoration of B-17 Post Office Box 2469 Warner Robins, GA 31088

Phone Number is 478-926-6870 in case you want to call the Museum.

Can't wait to see you in New Orleans! Sandee

## Correction - San Antonio Reunion Pictures

The last newsletter had incorrect information for ordering pictures of the San Antonio Reunion. The correct information is: James Warwick, a second generation friend, took pictures throughout the reunion and captured some great informal shots. He compiled the pictures on a CD and will make them available for anyone who would like one for a low cost of \$5, which covers cost of the disk, mailer and postage. You can contact James directly either by email at jhwarwick@msn.com, or by phone 505-722-4972 to order your copy.



TAPS - Deceased Members Not Previously Reported in Newsletter							
Name	Squad	Date	Reported By				
BERARDI, DANIEL J	816	09-06-13	MICHAEL BERARDI				
BLACK, NORMAN A	817	00-00-00	KATHY HETRICK				
DAVIS, BONNARD L	817	02-10-14	GUY VENIER (OBIT)				
DEEDE, GERALD D	840	02-17-14	GUY VENIER (OBIT)				
GAGANIS, MICHAEL J	840	12-18-13	JEAN GAGANIS				
GREENE, RUPERT D JR	816	03-21-12	GUY VENIER (OBIT)				
HOFF, ARTHUR R	817	09-24-13	SANDY MOLLER				
JOHNSON, HOWARD B	815	01-21-14	GUY VENIER (OBIT)				
JOY, JOHN W	817	02-23-14	ELSIE JOY				
KENDALL, HAYMOND P	840	01-12-99	GUY VENIER (OBIT)				
MILLER, DARRELL L	566	06-09-02	GUY VENIER (OBIT)				
PHALAN, WILLIAM A	483	03-21-12	GUY VENIER (OBIT)				
ROBINSON, GEORGE D JR	840	01-28-14	J. D. COOGLER, JR.				
RAVER, CLINTON E	840	12-15-13	GUY VENIER (OBIT)				
STINGER, CHARLES J	817	02-19-14	GUY VENIER (OBIT)				
SZELIGA, WALTER S	840	04-15-04	GUY VENIER (OBIT)				
WARREN, JIM D	817	00-00-00	POST OFFICE				

# Membership News

Dear Comrades:

This is the result of of our Association asking for donations to help keep us afloat: It appears that out of 346 Life Members, only 21 donated to our plea for donations. The members who pay yearly dues also donated and joined the 21 Life Members and together brought in a total of \$2,470. I might add that those that donated \$100 are eligible for a copy of of "Heroes of the 483rd" from George Stovall. It is not too late to join that category, to donate and receive a copy for you and your friends to enjoy. It is also not to early to think about New Orleans which is our next reunion site.

PS: If you want some snow, let me know

Take care, Guy



## Did You Know?

This section contains reprints of selected stories and other interesting information from newsletters published during the past 35 years and other 483rd BG publications.

## How Not to Dig a Garbage Hole

From Vol 2, No. 3, August 1, 1982, Page 3:

Merle Cleveland (HQ) writes, "Lt. Colonel Carmichael, Group Exec., wanted a garbage hole dug just west of HQ villa. So he went to Ordinance and got a 100 lb. bomb, and had it set off. The hole was only about 1 ft. deep, so he went back and got a larger bomb. This one shook HQ real good, but the hole was only about 2 ft. deep. He was after a 500 pounder when Colonel Barton said 'enough'."

# Marsden Matting

(Commonly known as Marston mats or PSP)

Marsden Matting is standardized, perforated, steel matting material originally developed by the United States at the Waterways Experiment Station shortly before World War II. It is also known as "Perforated Steel Planking ("PSP") and used for the rapid construction of temporary airfields in all theaters of operation during WWII. It was also known as "Marston mat", named for the North Carolina town adjacent to Camp Mackall airfield where it was first manufactured and used in November 1941.

Marsden matting consisted of steel strips with holes punched through it in rows and a formation of U-shaped channels between the holes. Hooks were formed along one long edge and slots along the other long edge so that they could be connected to each other. The interlocking mats were laid in a staggered pattern.

A single piece of Marsden matting (M8) weighed about 66 pounds and was 10 feet long by 15 inches wide. Each sheet has 3 holes wide by 29 holes long for a total of 87 holes in each mat. Therefore, the 6,000 foot by 150 foot runway at the 483rd Bomb Group had approximately 72,000 pieces of mat weighing a total of approximately 2,376 tons.

## FRIENDLY FIRE AT 27,000 FT

By Fred Hicks

This is a story about the 483rd Bomb Group's first radar bomb sight mission. The target was Ploesti, Rumania, locale of the enemy's source of crude oil and co-located refineries. Ploesti, like some of the targets we were assigned to bomb, had the ability to hide under a cloud of smoke from hundreds of smudge pots. In order to successfully strike the target, the radar bomb sight had the ability to see through clouds or smoke.

Also to understand the near disaster that unfolded, it is necessary to understand the positioning of the planes in the group formation. We flew 28 B-17s with 7 planes in each of 4 "boxes". The front 7 were the lead box, the second 7 on the lead ships right wing, a little higher and slightly to the rear; the third 7 (the one we were in) was at a little lower altitude and a little behind the lead ship; and the final box was just behind the lead ship at a little lower altitude. The complete formation resembled a tilted diamond.

The method to be followed during the radar bomb run was when the lead aircraft dropped its bombs, all of the other planes were to salvo their bomb load. Each plane carried 12 - 500 pound bombs to create a pattern of destruction aimed by the radar sight in the lead ship.

About the bombs – they each had a small propeller in the nose. When the dropped bomb entered the air flow, the propeller spun, and after enough turns, the system ejected the arming device which rendered the bomb fully armed for detonation. These devices were about an inch in diameter and about a foot long.

Now for the friendly fire punch line! When the leader dropped his bombs, the lead box, low box and trailing box followed the plan and dropped their bomb load. The lead plane then began a sharp right turn to get the formation out of the field of anti-aircraft fire. Unfortunately this put the 817th Sqdn's low box right under the high box when they decided a little late to drop their bomb load. Imagine 84 - 500 pound bombs dropping through a close formation of seven B-17s! These bombs were fully armed and some of the ejected propeller arming devices came through our nose compartment. If any one of those bombs had hit a plane, it may have exploded and destroyed several aircraft.

It was an exciting moment! As the bombs dropped beside us, Mike Rickey, our pilot, and Gene Hoss, the co-pilot, were both trying to get us out of the bombing pattern. We could hear their frantic voices on the intercom. Mike cranked the control yoke right as bombs dropped past his left window, and Gene cranked left to avoid bombs dropping past his right window. The errant bombs straddled us!

Although we had escaped the disaster which might have been, we had a follow on problem. One of the foot long arming devices crashed through the plastic nose of our ship, barely missing our bombardier, John Galt, and myself, the navigator. It crashed into our oxygen supply tanks, rendering them useless. The B-17 was not pressurized and all crew members wore masks tethered to an oxygen supply. We could not exist very long in the rarified air at 27,000 feet altitude. Without breathing oxygen an individual would soon lapse into unconsciousness. I climbed up under the pilot compartment and reported to Mike that our oxygen was gone and we should get down to 11,000 feet or so, pronto! This put us alone in enemy airspace, since the fighter escorts stayed with the bomber stream. We spent several harrowing hours watching to see if the Luftwaffe fighters found us. We did successfully return to base without further problems, but I believe surviving friendly fire on this mission was a miracle.

## More - Did You Know?

## A Service to Remember

From "Heroes of the 483", page 76

John G. Howell (d. 08-88) of the Hohn R. Garrett crew, 840<sup>th</sup> Squadron, recalled attending servcies in the chapel at Sterparone the first Sunday after VE Day: "It was jammed with combat and ground personnel. During the service we started to sing "America the Beautiful". All voices came out strong and full, but by the third verse, were weak and not clear. Before the end of the song, no one was singing, but everyone was crying. I'll never forget it as long as I live."

(Note: There was a special Thanksgiving service Tuesday evening, 8 May 1945. This may have been the event John remembered.)



# 2014 Reunion Tours - New Orleans

#### Pitot House

Located on historic Bayou St. John, the Pitot House is the only Creole colonial country house that is open to the public in New Orleans. It tells the



story of life along the bayou since the earliest days of settlement. The Pitot House has had a variety of owners from prominent lawyers to austere nuns. One of the most prominent was James Pitot, the first mayor of New Orleans after the city's incorporation who lived here from 1810-1819. In the 1960s, the Louisiana Landmarks Society painstakingly restored the Pitot House, with its stucco-covered, brick-between-post construction and double-pitched hipped roof, to the time period of James Pitot's habitation. The house has been furnished with Louisiana and American antiques that date from the early 1800s through mid-nineteenth century

#### Garden District

Laid out in 1806 by Barthelemy Lafon as an open, semi-urban system of interrelated parks with basins, fountains and canals, the Garden District was "one of the earliest expressions of the Greek Revival to appear in New Orleans," The area was originally developed between 1832 and 1900 and is considered one of the



best-preserved collections of historic southern mansions in the United States. The 19th-century origins of the Garden District illustrate wealthy newcomers building opulent structures based upon the prosperity of New Orleans in that era. The whole area was once a number of plantations. They were sold off in parcels to mainly wealthy Americans who did not want to live in the French Quarter with the Creoles. It became a part of the city of Lafayette in 1833, and was annexed by New Orleans in 1852.

St. Louis Cemetery No. 1 is the oldest and most famous cemetary in New Orleans. It was opened in 1789, replacing the city's older St. Peter Cemetery (no longer in existence) as the main burial ground when the city was redesigned after a fire in 1788. It has been in continuous use since its foundation. Famous New Orleanians buried in St. Louis No. 1 include Etienne de Bore, wealthy pioneer of the sugar industry and the first

mayor of New Orleans; Homer Plessy the plaintiff from the landmark 1896 Plessy v. Ferguson Supreme Court decision on civil rights; and Ernest "Dutch" Morial, the first African-American mayor of New Orleans. The renowned Voodoo priestess Marie Laveauis, believed to be interred in the Glapion family crypt. Other notable New Orleanians here include Bernard de Marigny, the French-Creole playboy who brought the game of craps to the United States; Barthelemy Lafon, the architect and surveyor who allegedly became one of Jean Lafitte's pirates; and Paul Morphy, one of the earliest world champions of chess. In 2010, actor Nicholas Cage purchased a pyramid shaped tomb to be his future final resting place.

Mardi Gras World In 1947, Blaine Kern, Sr. founded Blaine Kern Artists. Kern came from a family of float builders, but began creating floats after 1940, when a surgeon and krewecaptain who had seen a mural by Kern hired him to create floats for the Krewe of Alla. Kern's business expanded from there. Kern, who traveled to Europe to learn float building techniques, has gained an international reputation in float building, with floats beyond New Orleans for Las Vegas, NV; Mobile, AL; Galveston, TX; Montreal, Canada; and the Universal Studios Mardi Gras parade. Guests tour the working warehouse where floats are made for Mardis Gras parades in New Orleans.

## The Chalmette Battlefield and National Cemetery is

about 7 miles downriver from the New Orleans French Quarter. This historic site is a monument to two of the most significant wars in U.S. History, both having major implications regarding the survival of the nation. The Battle of New Orleans in 1814–1815, the last battle of the War of 1812, forever ended any attempt by England to regain control of the



American Colonies, lost during the American Revolution, the War of Independence. It was here that General Andrew Jackson, and local volunteers, including Jean Lafitte (the pirate) and his men, defended the city from the invading British. The British troops were under the command of General Pakenham, who died in the final battle, January 8, 1815. Today, one can walk the ramparts, the recreated defenses extending from the Rodriguez Canal at the Mississippi River to what was then the tree line of the cypress swamp, at the northern end of the battlefield.

#### World War II Museum

The National WWII
Museum in New Orleans
opened on June 6, 2000,
as The National D-Day
Museum. Founded by
historian and author,
Stephen Ambrose, the
Museum tells the story of



the American Experience in the war that changed the world - why it was fought, how it was won, and what it means today - so that all generations will understand the price of freedom and be inspired by what they learn. Designated by Congress in 2003 as the America's National WWII Museum, the campus includes the Louisiana Memorial Pavilion, showcasing the large artifacts of the war and exhibits on D-Day at Normandy, the Home Front and the Pacific; the Solomon Victory Theater, a 4-D theater showing the exclusive Tom Hanks production, Beyond All Boundaries; the Stage Door Canteen, where the music and entertainment of the "Greatest Generation" comes to life; the John E. Kushner Restoration Pavilion, where staff and volunteers restore artifacts in public view; the American Sector restaurant and Soda Shop - delicious onsite dining options by Chef John Besh; and the new US Freedom Pavilion: The Boeing Center, where exhibits and interactive experiences paint the picture of a nation mobilized for war.

## Houmas House

The first owners of the plantation were the indigenous Houmas Indians, who were given a land grant to occupy the fertile plain between the Mississippi and



Lake Maurepas to the north. The Houmas sold the land to Maurice Conway and Alexander Latil in the mid 1700's. The original French Provincial house that Latil erected on the property is situated directly behind the Mansion, adjoined by a carriageway to the grand home described during its antebellum heyday as "The Sugar Palace". By the time of the Louisiana Purchase in 1803, the plantation was established and producing sugar. In 1810, Revolutionary War hero Gen. Wade Hampton of Virginia purchased the property and shortly thereafter began construction on the Mansion. However, it was not until 1825 when Hampton's daughter, Caroline, and her husband, Col. John Preston, took over the property that the grand house truly began to take shape. Irishman John Burnside bought the plantation in 1857 for \$1

million. A businessman and a character, Burnside increased production of sugar until Houmas House was the largest producer in the country, actively working the crop on 98,000 acres. During the Civil War, Burnside saved the Mansion from destruction at the hands of advancing Union forces by declaring immunity as a subject of the British Crown. Houmas House flourished under Burnside's ownership, but it was under a successor, Col. William Porcher Miles that the plantation grew to its apex in the late 1800's when it was producing a monumental 20 million pounds of sugar each year.

## New Orleans Museum Of Art

The New Orleans Museum of Art (NOMA), New Orleans' oldest fine arts institution, opened on December 16, 1911 with only 9 works of art. Today, the



museum hosts an impressive permanent collection of almost 40,000 objects. The collection, noted for its extraordinary strengths in French and American Art, photography, glass, and African and Japanese works, continues to expand and grow, making NOMA one of the top art museums in the south. The five-acre Sydney and Walda Besthoff Sculpture Garden at NOMA is one of the most important sculpture installations in the United States, with over 60 sculptures situated on a beautifully landscaped site amongst meandering footpaths, reflecting lagoons, Spanish moss-laden 200-year-old live oaks, mature pines, magnolias, camellias, and pedestrian bridges.

## Jackson Square

Historic Jackson Square, originally known in the 18th century as "Place d'Armes," and later renamed in honor of the Battle of New Orleans hero Andrew



Jackson, is a timeless attraction in the heart of the French Quarter of New Orleans. This famous landmark facing the Mississippi River is surrounded by historic buildings, including the St. Louis Cathedral, the Presbytere and Cabildo (Louisiana State Museums), not to mention the Lower and Upper Pontalba Apartments, the oldest apartment buildings in the United State. The Pontalba Apartments offer retail shops, museums, galleries and restaurants on the ground level; their second and third floors still house a selection of prestigious apartments.

## French Quarter

The French Quarter, also known as Vieux Carré - or the "Quarter" to locals, sits on a crescent in the Mississippi River on some of the highest ground in New



Orleans. Intimate and unique, New Orleans' oldest neighborhood has exerted a spell over writers and artists since the time of Mark Twain, Lafcadio Hern and John James Audubon. French Quarter architecture is a mix of Spanish, French, Creole and American styles. Plastered walls and single chimneys reflect laws enacted after fire virtually destroyed the city in 1788 and 1794. Walled courtyards, perfect for French Quarter parties, are a gift of the Spanish influence. Cast iron balconies were added to many masonry buildings after 1850, when Baroness Pontalba included them on her fashionable row houses near Jackson Square. These lacy galleries, along with plentiful stoops and porches on younger buildings, make the Quarter a great place for people-watching-and every kind of person imaginable can be spotted on the sidewalks of the Quarter.

# Confederate Memorial Hall

This is a museum containing historical artifacts related to the Confederate States of America and the American Civil War. It is historically also known as "Memorial Hall". It houses the second largest collection of Confederate Civil War items in the world, behind the museum Confederacy of the in Richmond. Virginia. The



museum is also known as Louisiana's Civil War Museum at Confederate Memorial Hall. The museum's building is known as the "Battle Abbey of the South" due to its elaborate stained glass windows and distinctive church-like architecture. It is the oldest continually active museum in Louisiana. The Confederate Memorial Hall contains over 5,000 historical P.G.T. Beauregard, and Franklin Gardner as well as 125 historical battle flags from the Civil War. Jefferson Davis' wife Varina Davis donated several of her late husband's belongings to the museum including several items of clothing, his suitease, his saddle, and a

rare letter to Davis containing an enclosed crown of thorns from Pius IX. (This museum is across the street from the World War II Museum. To keep tour costs down this was not included in the paid portion of the tours but can be seen for an additional \$7.00).

## Holiday Inn New Orleans Downtown - Superdome

330 Loyola Ave New Orleans, LA 70112 1-800-972 2791 Group Nightly Rate \$109



Our host hotel for the New Orleans reunion will be the Holiday Inn Downtown. It is 12 miles from the airport and listed at \$27 taxi fare one way. Once at the hotel, it is very convenient

to most of the venues that we will be visiting.

You may have noticed the \$109 nightly room rate. It is higher than what we have paid in the recent past. New Orleans room rates are considerably higher than other cities we have visited, and since New Orleans is a much desired city to visit, the rates are either high or higher!!! Without the group rate, the going rate for similar hotels in the vicinity are \$139 and up. October is when the room rates increase for the season. Checking current internet prices on the Holiday website rooms are \$169.99 for our dates. The hotel costs are the reason for having the reunion dates earlier than usual.

The hotel is located less than a mile from the WWII Museum, eight tenths of a mile from Jackson Square, and less than six tenths of a mile from famed Bourbon St. and Canal St. All of these locations will be easily accessed by the Loyola - UPT Streetcar (Not Trolley, as it has been pointed out) which goes right in front of the hotel. At Canal Street passengers can transfer to other streetcars in the city's network, including those for St. Charles Avenue (Garden District, Loyola University, Tulane University, Audubon Zoological Gardens and on to Carrollton), and the Mississippi Riverfront line (French Quarter, Jackson Square, Cafe du Monde and the French Market. Streetcars in New Orleans have reasonable fares (\$1.25 each way) and can be paid with exact change when you board. 1 and 3 day unlimited ride Jazzy Passes are also available for \$3 and

(See norta.com for more information.)

# 483rd Bomb Group Reunion Registration Form

Listed below are all registration, tours and meal costs for the reunion. Please enter how many people will be participating in each event and total amount. Make check payable to "483rd Bombardment Group (H) Reunion New Orleans" and send to Dennis West, 2447 Hooker St., Denver, CO 80211. If you have questions about the form or registration, please call Dennis at (303) 332-1625.

First Name	Last Name		Nick Name
Squadron (or friend)	Spouse na	me (if attending)	
Guest Names			
Street Address			
City	State	Zip	Phone ()
Disability/Diet Restrictions			
Arrival Date / Departure Date		E-Mail	

## REGISTRATION FEE PER PERSON IS \$25.00

LATE REGISTRATION FEE PER PERSON IS \$25.00 IF NOT REGISTERED BY AUGUST 7, 2014\*

Date	Event		Price	Total
Tuesday am, Sept 9	Early Bird Tour – 11:00 am Depart hotel by street car to Pitot House and New Orleans Museum of Art		\$22.00	
Wednesday am, Sept 10	Tours: Houmas Plantation House, Cemetery Tour and Garden District  Lunch on your own at Houmas.		\$49.00	
	483rd Welcome and Memories Night & Dinner			
Wednesday pm, Sept 10	Meal Choices: Meal for (write name here):  Broiled Tilapia Grilled Chicken Blackened Pork Loin		\$31.00 \$27.00 \$30.00	
Thursday am, Sept 11	Tours: World War II Museum, Jackson Square, Saint Louis Cathedral, Cafe Du Monde (Optional Confederate Museum)  Lunch on your own.		\$62.00	
Thursday pm, Sept 11	YounGuns Reception (Munchies - Suggested Donation)		\$12.00	
Friday am, Sept 12	Ladies Brunch with entertainment TBD		\$20.00	
Friday pm, Sept 12	Tours: Battle of New Orleans: Chalmette Battlefield, 9th Ward (Katrina Hurricane) viewing and Mardi Gras World		\$45.00	
Friday pm, Sept 12	Dinner on your own in French Quarter			
Saturday pm, Sept 13	483rd Banquet  Meal Choices: Meal for (write name here): Chicken Palmira Seared Filet of Salmon 10oz Rib Eye		\$29.00 \$33.00 \$35.00	
	Registration Fee Per Person		\$25.00	
LATE Registration Fee Per Person after August 7th (See note below*)			\$25.00	
Please enter number of people selecting meal choice for Each Meal Purchased. Write the first name of each person selecting this meal choice after the meal type.			TOTAL	

Mail Registration Form and check payable to "483" Bombardment Group (H) Reunion New Orleans" to Dennis West, 2447 Hooker St., Denver, Colorado 80211

<sup>\*</sup> This year a \$25 late fee will be imposed for registering after the 30-day prior registration deadline of August 7th, with special exceptions for health issues. This was initiated at the last 483rd General Business Meeting to help plan tours and schedule busses. Reunion registration cancellations will be accepted until September 2, 2014 without fee or penalty, so please help by registering early.

#### YOUR 2014 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

#### PRESIDENT

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#### PAST PRESIDENTS

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483rd Bombardment Group (H) Association

# Membership Secretary

Guido "Guy" Venier 13185 Picadilly Drive Sterling Heights, MI 48312

# ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

FIRST CLASS MAIL