



483RD BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H) ASSOCIATION

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

VOLUME 38

March 2015

NUMBER 1

President's Message



Here we are in March already. Wow! For us, the members of the 483rd Bombardment Group Association, March means we receive our first newsletter for the year which contains the "scoop" for our next reunion. And, let me tell you that Jana Coogler, our Reunion

Chair, has a fabulous array of places mapped out for us to see when we get to Albuquerque. I hope that you will be as excited as I am about what we will be doing and will want to be there. By the way, did you know that Albuquerque celebrated its tri-centennial in 2006 and that the Rio Grande Valley has been populated and cultivated as far back as 2000 BC? I didn't.

Now it is time for me to tell you that creating the 483rd website has turned out to be a much more difficult project for me than I first anticipated. I have maintained my business website for several years so I thought, "How difficult can it be?" Well, I have to confess to you that the learning curve has been huge for me. The accumulation of information and materials for it has also been a consuming task. So as far as my promise in the last newsletter to have the website up and running by January 15, 2015 or thereabouts, I have under delivered. Actually, more accurately put . . . I have not delivered at all because there is still no website up and running. I continue to devote as much time as possible to it and have set another deadline for delivery to be the end of April. I am working with the following sections so far: "Home", "History", "The Flying Fortress", "Missions", "Group Citations & Battle Stars", "483rd Roster", "KIA/POW", "Reunions", and "Officers &

Contacts". Please feel free to send me photos, information and materials that you would like to see included in any of these categories. I'm also open to other categories that should be included. You can send me things by "snail" mail to: 1050 E. 5th Avenue, Escondido, CA 92025 or by email to 483rdreunion@gmail.com.

As I bring this message to a close, I want to express to you all what an astounding privilege it is for me to once again serve you as President. You each hold a special place in my heart!

Sandee West Maeda

Make your reunion hotel reservations now!

Sheraton Albuquerque Uptown
2600 Louisiana Blvd NE
Albuquerque, MN 87110

Call (800) 325-3535
or via the Internet at:

www.starwoodmeeting.com/Book/483rdBombardment



The room rate is \$105 per night (single or double) and if you would like to extend your time in Albuquerque, the rate is valid for 2 days before the reunion and 2 days after. Complimentary breakfast will be available Thursday morning through Sunday morning but you must identify yourself as being with the 483rd Bombardment Group when making your reservation to get the free breakfast.

Room block registration ends September 22, 2015, but don't wait and take a chance of the block filling up – make your reservation today.

TAPS – Deceased Members Not Previously Reported in Newsletter			
Name	Squad	Date	Reported By
BARATH, ROBERT	NF	12-26-14	GUY VENIER (OBIT)
BRADLEY, WILLIAM N	817	08-29-14	COLLEEN BRADLEY
BROWN, J WARREN	817	05-27-12	GUY VENIER (OBIT)
CAIN, CLARENCE E	483	05-19-12	GUY VENIER (OBIT)
CAMPBELL, JOHN A	817	11-24-15	ELIZABETH WILMOT
CHORLEY, JOHN O	840	04-29-13	GUY VENIER (OBIT)
COLE, VERNE H	817	02-17-15	GUY VENIER (OBIT)
CRUZ, LUCIO D	840	08-07-14	ANDREA CRUZ
DANIELSON, ROBERT L	816	12-17-14	GUY VENIER (OBIT)
EDDISON, WILLIAM B JR	840	12-13-14	POST OFFICE
EMICH, ROBERT H	817	03-20-13	GUY VENIER (OBIT)
GALVIN, MARVIN	840	05-01-14	GUY VENIER (OBIT)
HARRELSON, MARION W	816	00-00-00	GUY VENIER (OBIT)
HODGSON, KENNETH W	840	01-11-14	GUY VENIER (OBIT)
MADEJ, WILLIAM S	815	11-04-14	GUY VENIER (OBIT)
METZ, JAMES R	817	11-26-14	GUY VENIER (OBIT)
MUNRO, JAMES A	817	09-06-14	GUY VENIER (OBIT)
OLMSTEAD, LEO B	817	02-28-06	GUY VENIER (OBIT)
ORTON, ROBERT L	840	08-28-14	TOM ORTON
PAULUS, WILLIAM T	815	10-28-14	GUY VENIER (OBIT)
ROBERTSON, KENNETH L	817	06-18-14	VERA ROBERTSON
VON STEPHENS, MERTON	NF	06-17-06	GUY VENIER (OBIT)
WATT, PAUL	FRD	00-00-00	POST OFFICE
WITHERSPOON, HOWELL R	816	01-19-14	GUY VENIER (OBIT)
WORCHESTER, WINTHROP	816	01-15-15	GUY VENIER (OBIT)
ZACHRITZ, OWEN R	816	08-30-14	GLORIA MILLER

Membership News

Dear Comrades:

After every newsletter mailing, I always receive several letters back which contain the newsletter with a notation from the post office, "Not deliverable as addressed". If there is a phone number of the recipient, I will try and contact the member and if there isn't a phone number, I have no other choice than to drop him from the mailing list till I hear of him or her. I will still carry them in the roster with a notation, "no mail".

Also, in the past couple of years, I have been using the internet to see if I can find any of our member's obituaries. To date, I have 292 obituaries on file. I know it is a difficult time when a member has passed but the Association should be notified. Also please supply me with a phone number if there

is none listed in the roster next to your name. Hoping to hear from you with your phone numbers if you are still receiving the newsletter.

Take care and think summer,

Guy



2015 Reunion – Albuquerque, New Mexico

October 13 – 17, 2015

Mark your calendars now for our 2015 reunion! It will be held October 13 - 17, 2015 in Albuquerque.

There are many fun things to do in Albuquerque (including the Balloon Festival the week before our reunion), so you may want to spend some extra time before or after the reunion to see some of the attractions we are not able to see during the reunion.

2015 will mark the 70th anniversary of the end of World War II and this will be an important reunion for all 483rd members and friends to attend. As was discussed at the business meeting in New Orleans, future reunions will be voted on year-to-year during each reunion. As Ken Hoffman reiterated at the business meeting, we will have a tough decision to make at the Albuquerque reunion - whether to continue having reunions or to call this one our last. Please plan now to attend this reunion and let your voice be heard regarding the future of the 483rd Bombardment Group (H) Association and its future reunions.

Here's an overview of the tours we'll take:

Tour of Albuquerque

This fully narrated introduction to Albuquerque will showcase historic neighborhoods and stories of the growth and history of the town and a cruise down Historic Route 66. We'll have some time to take a look around the Old Town Plaza shops or you can choose to see the Albuquerque Museum.



International Balloon Museum

Albuquerque is the hot air ballooning capital of the world and the home of the Anderson-Abruzzo

Albuquerque International Balloon Museum. Hot air and gas balloons have been used for adventure, scientific experiments, the arts, warfare, espionage and the exploration of space. The museum houses a collection of wonderful documents and artifacts from the historic to the most recent ballooning feats.



Indian Pueblo Cultural Center

This Cultural Center is jointly owned and operated by the 19 Pueblo Tribes of New Mexico whose ancestors were the cliff-dwellers of the 4 corners states. We'll be welcomed by a tribal member and view the current exhibits and artwork on display. The IPCC also has a comprehensive gift shop and there will be time for lunch at the Pueblo Harvest Café.



National Museum of Nuclear Science & History

This is the nation's only congressionally chartered museum in its field and a Smithsonian affiliate. Originally known as the National Atomic Museum, it was established in 1969 as an intriguing place to learn the story of the Atomic Age, from early research of nuclear development through today's



peaceful uses of nuclear technology. Visitors can explore how nuclear science continues to influence our world. A docent will be available at the Museum for our group or you may choose to view the exhibits with your own interests in mind.

Turquoise Museum

On the way to the Turquoise Museum, we'll stop for lunch at El Camino, a restaurant on Historic Route 66. At the Turquoise Museum we'll have a fun and energetic tour where we will laugh during a seminar titled "The True

Colors of Turquoise". Bring your favorite piece of turquoise and discover its origin and value!



Sunset Dinner at Sandia Mountain

This promises to be a relaxing way to end the week's tours. Sandia Mountain dominates the east-side of Albuquerque and is 10,378' above sea level. Before dinner you may want to take the Sandia Peak Tram ride which lasts 15-minutes and travels 3,800 vertical feet through biological life zones that equal a trip from Mexico to Alaska, revealing deep canyons and an awe-inspiring view not soon to be forgotten (*Tram is on your own and will cost about \$20 - approximate round trip time allowing for viewing from the peak is one hour*). If you'd rather not take the Tram, then just enjoy the scenery and sunset at the base of the mountain while enjoying your favorite beverage. We'll all have dinner at the base of the Tram (6,560') at Sandiango's Mexican Grill. The dinner menu includes your choice (one entree per person) of Blue Corn Enchiladas, Burrito Sandiango (beef or chicken with beans rice and cheese), Sandiango's Cobb Salad, Portabella Stack, or Carne Adovada Plate (pork marinated in red chile and then baked). Includes soft drinks and dessert but alcohol is available COD. Sunset is at 6:30.



Did You Know?

Operation Into Czechoslovakia

*Re-typed by Clare Ascani September 24, 2014
from original report by Fred J. Ascani*

On the morning of October 6, 1944, orders were received at 483rd Bomb Group (H) Headquarters, 5th Bomb Wing, to alert six skeleton crews and planes for a top secret mission. By careful screening, six skeleton crews were selected on the basis of two crews from each of three squadrons. Their orders were to report at 15th Air Force Headquarters, Bari, Italy, by not later than 1700 of the same date, October 6. Special emphasis was placed on insuring that the six B-17s selected would be in perfect mechanical condition. At 1600 hours, the six B-17s departed individually from their home base for Bari.

At Bari, the crews were met by Lt. Col. Pritchard who had been selected to lead the mission, with Lt. Col. F. J. Ascani designated as deputy leader. All crews were instructed to stand by their aircraft, immediately after landing, to assist in the loading of assorted equipment and supplies. All supplies were brought onto the Bari Airfield by Navy personnel from a Navy depot. Each type of equipment, wherever possible, was divided into six parts so that all aircraft might have as similar a load as possible. Among other things, items of equipment, loaded into the aircraft, included: Bazooka guns, Marlin guns, Bren guns, automatic pistols, large amounts of ammunition for all weapons, portable radios, collapsible bicycles, 30 parachutes, five-gallon tins of gasoline and oil, and food. In addition, a two man team from O.S.S. was carried on each airplane. The load placed in each aircraft was so bulky that, in order to carry it all, it was necessary to fill the entire bomb bay, including the catwalk, and most of the available space remaining throughout the airplane.

With the loading of all six aircraft completed, the crews were transported to 15th Air Force Headquarters for briefing. As yet, no members of the crews possessed any knowledge of the nature of the mission. At Headquarters, the crews were directed to the briefing room and welcomed by Col. Rogers who conducted the briefing.

Col. Roger's opening remarks conveyed the impression that the slightest hitch in the plans for successful completion of this mission could create an extremely hazardous situation. The nature of the mission, as contained in the Filed Order, was to "evacuate aircrew personnel from Czechoslovakia, ferry in supplies and O.S.S. personnel, and make contacts, through agents, concerning disposition of politically important Czechs." The airstrip selected as our landing point was Triduby Airfield, situated at Bancktia-Bystrica, Czechoslovakia. This sod airfield was approximately 4000 feet long and 1000 feet wide and was of semi-permanent nature. One moderately damaged hangar was located on the field, with a very small hard surface apron in front of it.

As additional data, information on the enemy situation was furnished the crews. Triduby Airfield had been captured approximately October 3, 1944, from the Germans, by Czech Partisans. The Germans had been driven into the surrounding hills and were awaiting reinforcement before attempting to recapture the airstrip. The airfield, itself, served neither strategic nor tactical purpose but was ideally suitable for the use of our mission.

No guarantee could be given by the Czechs that they could hold the strip later than October 7, 1944, and, therefore, the success of our mission hinged largely on completing it with the first attempt. With Bazooka teams, the Czechs had secured all road intersections leading to the airstrip and would not withdraw until our entire unit was again airborne. Upon arrival over the target, a white green ground flare was to indicate that the airfield was secured.

Best available information on the condition of the airstrip indicated that the sod would be slightly soft because of recent rains. All pilots were cautioned not to slow down or stop their aircraft during any part of the landing roll, with the heavy load being carried. At takeoff, each B-17 had a gross weight of approximately 76,000 pounds. Explicit instructions were also issued to the effect that, should it become necessary to abandon any aircraft on the field, the airplane would be destroyed by burning and the crew would be given first priority on withdrawal from the scene of operations.

Weather data furnished at the briefing, by the Air Force Weather Officer, Lt. Colonel R. W. Nelson, indicated that conditions enroute would be excellent. It was predicted that early morning conditions would result in possible low stratus formations at Bari and Stratocumulus formations over the target.

Fighter escort and withdrawal cover was to be furnished by the 15th Fighter Command, which would employ approximately 30 P-51s. It was requested, by the fighter leader, that no attempts be made to fly through clouds conditions for any appreciable length of time. Further, it was requested that not more than twenty minutes be utilized in unloading the supplies at the airfield, since the fuel carried by the fighters were not sufficient to furnish further coverage.

During the early morning of October 7, 1944, last minute supplies were loaded on the aircraft as the crews prepared themselves for the mission. Take off of all six aircraft was completed without mishap, although the initial rate of climb of each B-17 was somewhat low. Low hanging clouds presented no serious difficulties and all six aircraft quickly fell into their places in the formation.

At the rendezvous point, the fighter escort was sighted and our climb to 15,000 feet, on course, was begun. Approximately twenty miles to the north could be seen the long strings of various Wings on their way to bomb

Vienna. The course of one B-24 Wing took them directly above us for part of the route, so that excellent screening of our small unit was afforded as anticipated.

From Bari to a point approximately 30 miles south of our destination, navigation was excellent and the flight was routine. At a point 30 miles south of ~~Banckia-~~
~~Bystrica~~, the terrain changed from relatively flat ground to a series of rolling hills and high peaks. The hills occupied an area of approximately 100 square miles, and, situated in the exact center, in a valley, was the airfield where we were to land.

Our first glance at this particular area disclosed that the whole region was covered by morning ground fog and low hanging cloud formations. Occasionally, a hold afforded us a view of the hilly terrain underneath; but, for all practical purposes, the clouds gave the same effect as ~~an overcast~~.

This was perhaps the most critical point to occur during the whole mission. Unfavorable weather conditions not only prevented pin point navigation, but the clouds could also create an extremely hazardous condition, should an attempt be made to take a formation into the airstrip, under an overcast. However, the leader was also faced with the knowledge that the Czechs could not hold the airfield for an attempt another day. In addition, an abortive mission would remove the element of surprise, should a subsequent attempt be considered.

The decision to carry on with the mission was made almost instantly by Lt. Colonel Pritchard, and, as he circled near the edge of the cloud formation, we descended to an altitude of 4000 feet. This altitude placed the formation slightly below the level of the clouds and we noticed, to the north, the tops of the hills sticking up into the overcast. Colonel Pritchard then pointed the formation north through the most convenient valley. As deputy leader, I dropped back some 200 feet with the second element to obtain greater flexibility. The fighter escort, seemingly unhappy, spread itself out in order to remain under the clouds and to secure more room for action.

As we proceeded up a small valley, small arms and minor anti-aircraft weapons threw up desultory fire. No aircraft received any major damage. We had proceeded approximately 10 miles when we approached a dead end, in the valley, and it was necessary to retrace our flight slightly. Colonel Pritchard spotted another pass and we bored through it, with hills jutting up on both sides, and the clouds directly above us.

Duration of this type of flying lasted roughly 15 minutes, at the end of which the lead navigator spotted our airstrip. As the formation went into a landing circle, the proper identification was received from the ground. A tight pattern was flown by all aircraft, wince it was known that the Germans were still entrenched in the hills on the perimeter of the field. Power approach glides were executed by all pilots, so that the aircraft could be stalled on the immediate end of the runway.

As deputy leader, I was number four to land and not until my wheels had touched did I observe that the number 3 airplane had become mired at the end of the sod strip. All pilots refrained from coming to a stop as much as possible, but this particular pilot had the misfortune of encountering a treacherous spot. More than likely this saved the following aircraft since they gave that particular area a wide berth.

Five of the B-17s rolled up to the safety of the harder ground near the destroyed hangar, and a crew of 100 Czechs immediately began unloading each aircraft. Meanwhile, a crew of 150 Czechs proceeded to the mired aircraft and unloaded it with dispatch. Concurrently with the unloading, the extra Czechs began the process of digging out around the wheels of the aircraft.

All engines were left running and all crew men remained at their stations with the exception of Colonel Pritchard and myself. While Colonel Pritchard supervised the unloading and conferred with the dignitaries present, I proceeded to assist the operation of freeing the mired airplane.

When I arrived on the scene, the pilot, Major J. Gorman, was directly assisting the Czech Partisans. After ten minutes of fruitless efforts, I ordered Major Gorman and his crew to proceed to my aircraft, after setting fire to their own. To the accompaniment of our P-51s, buzzing the field, Major Gorman refused to destroy what he considered an urgently needed piece of equipment. No amount of persuasion could convince him or his crew that they should return in my airplane and burn their own.

At this point, it was observed that the twenty minutes for our P-51 coverage had expired and after one last exhortation, I returned to my own airplane.

The unloading was complete and the Czech newsreel cameras were grinding out their last few feet of film, when Colonel Pritchard gave the signal for takeoff. On each B-17 were loaded 30 American air crew evacuees and politically important Czechs, who were being sought by the Nazis. The process of taxiing out was accomplished to the tune of mortar fire in the hills, where the Germans and the Partisans were having it out, hot and heavy.

Using normal rated power, each of the five B-17s made a normal takeoff, passing almost directly over the marooned B-17 and its crew. None of the crew members were optimistic about seeing either the airplane or its crew again, since, to return safely, it had to navigate 400 miles of enemy territory unescorted and without the mutual fire support of its sister B-17s.

Fortunately, our return trip was not as hazardous as our flight in; since we flew up through one of the several holes the sun had created in the overcast. Our penetration P-51 cover had already departed, but a few minutes later, we were joined by our withdrawal escort.

The return flight was entirely uneventful, with the exception of further harassment by the weather at Bari. Heavy rains and low clouds had set in over the lower

portion of the Italian Peninsula. At a signal from the leader, all five B-17s proceeded individually to the traffic pattern and effected a safe landing.

Subsequent to landing, each crew answered the questions posed by the Intelligence Interrogator and then the mission was considered completed.

Several pilots expressed concern for Major Gorman and his crew, so it was decided that we "seat it out" for a while. Approximately three hours after the main formation had landed, a lone B-17 nosed its way into the traffic pattern at Bari and made a successful landing, in practically pitch black darkness.

Major Gorman's interrogation bore out the fact that, with an encountered number of Czech Partisans, he managed to pry loose his airplane from its mired position. A normal takeoff was followed by an unmolested flight back to Bari. It is the opinion of the undersigned that Major Gorman not only displayed loyalty in refusing to burn his airplane, but also courage in returning over enemy occupied territory, alone, where he presented as juicy a target as could ever be found.

The following morning all crews returned to their home station to resume their routine duties of bombing the Reich into submission.

FRED J. ASCANI
Lt. Colonel, Air Corps
Chief, Bomber Operations Section
Flight Test Division



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PAST PRESIDENTS

Phillip A. ~~Lupton~~ (Deceased) 1980
William A. Haskins (Deceased) 1981
James V. Reardon (Deceased) 1982-83
Lynn M. Borders (Deceased) 1984
Joseph W. ~~Gauthron~~ (Deceased) 1984
M.L. "Bob" ~~Hottel~~ 1985 (Deceased)
Harry K. Keller (Deceased) 1986
Donald R. ~~Speagle~~ (Deceased) 1987
James "Russ" Hefflin (Deceased) 1988
Evan M. "Jack" Edwards (Deceased) 1989
Ralph H. Simpson (Deceased) 1990
Harry P. Millnamow 1991
William P. Dunn (Deceased) 1992
Edward T. Cotton (Deceased) 1993
Harry D. ~~Wage~~ (Deceased) 1994
Ray H. Whitaker 1995
Harold D. ~~Leventide~~ 1996
William I. Jeffis (Deceased) 1997
George F. Stovall 1998
John A. Campbell 1999
Verne H. Cole 2000
Benjamin H. Adams Jr. (Deceased) 2001
Robert W. Mitchell (Deceased) 2002
John P. Nobel 2003
Curtis B. Clark 2004
Fredric A. Hicks 2005
Wilfrid Hebert 2006
Stanton "Mike" Rickey 2007
Ellis Maxey (Deceased) 2008
Jim Ashley 2009
Dennis West 2010, 2011, 2012
Sandee West Maeda 2013, 2014

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) Association", write "Albuquerque Reunion" in the memo area, then mail the form and check to Jana Coogler, 6026 Spring Creek Lane, Spring, TX 77379. If you have questions about the form or registration, please call Jana at (713) 898-8765 or send her an email at reunion483rd2015@yahoo.com.

First Name _____ Last Name _____ Nick Name _____
 Squadron (or friend) _____ Spouse name (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 September 14, 2014**

Date	Event	No. of People	Price per person	Total
Tuesday Oct 13 1 pm – 5 pm	Early Bird Tour: Depart hotel by motor coach for narrated tour of Albuquerque and a stop to tour Old Town Albuquerque		\$45.00	
Wednesday Oct 14 9 am – 4 pm	Tours: International Balloon Museum & Indian Pueblo Cultural Center <i>Lunch on your own at the Cultural Center restaurant</i>		\$56.00	
Wednesday Oct 14 6 pm	483rd Welcome and Memories Night & Dinner Buffet dinner		\$30.00	
Thursday Oct 15 9 am – 2 pm	Tours: National Museum of Nuclear Science and History & Turquoise Museum via motor coach with tour guide <i>Lunch on your own at El Camino Restaurant</i>		\$45.00	
Thursday Oct 15, 6 pm	YounGuns Reception (hors d'oeuvres)		\$15.00	
Friday Oct 16, 9 am	Ladies Brunch with entertainment by a Navajo Flute Player & Story Teller		\$20.00	
Friday Oct 16 4 pm – 9 pm	Sunset Dinner at Sandia Mountain: Depart hotel by motor coach with tour guide for dinner at Sandiego's Mexican Grill at the base of the mountain. Enjoy the sunset while you sip on a drink of your choice or ride the Sandia Peak Tram to the top of the mountain for a spectacular view <i>(dinner is included in price but alcoholic drinks and Tram are on your own)</i>		\$65.00	
Saturday Oct 17 6 pm	483rd Banquet Meal Choices: ___ Sliced Roast Beef in Mushroom Demi-Glace _____ ___ Grilled Salmon _____ ___ Uptown Chicken _____ Meal for (write name here): _____		\$40.00	
	Registration Fee Per Person		\$25.00	
	LATE Registration Fee Per Person after September 14th (See note below*)		\$25.00	
			TOTAL	

Mail Registration Form and check payable to "483rd Bombardment Group (H) Association" (write "Albuquerque Reunion" in the memo area of check) to Jana Coogler, 6026 Spring Creek Lane, Spring, TX 77379

* A \$25 late fee will be imposed for registering after the 30-day prior registration deadline of September 14th, with special exceptions for health issues. This was initiated at the 2013 483rd General Business Meeting to help plan tours and schedule busses. Reunion registration cancellations will be accepted until September 28, 2014 without fee or penalty, so please help by registering early.