



PANTANELLA NEWS

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781ST BOMB SQUADRON 2015 REUNION CONVERGES ON KANSAS CITY



**REGISTRATION
FORM
INSIDE**

PANTANELLA NEWS

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PANTANELLA NEWS

781st BOMB SQUADRON (H)
 Part of the 465th Bomb Gp. 15th AF
 Italy 1944-1945

Flew 191 Missions over Southern Europe
 dropping thousands of tons of death and
 destruction to the enemy. Shot down 25
 enemy aircraft. Received two Presidential
 Unit Citations in Seven Battle Campaigns.



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President's Letter



Memorial Day will be over by the time you get this but I remember a letter I received from a younger cousin last year. It was so nice to get. She was thinking how she could honor the day and she remembered that she had heard a story on the radio of a 90 year old gentlemen that had served. He would always answer when asked what he did in the war, "Saved the world". Family members thought this unlikely and strange but they

came to realize as they grew older that he was correct. She wrote that they each decided to send him a letter on Memorial Day and thank him. So my cousin wrote to me and thanked me. I want to send this letter of thanks to all the veterans in the 781st Bomb Squadron, Thank you for "Saving the world".

— Orren Lee

2015 Reunion Info

The registration form and reunion activities is included in this newsletter and is available on the website www.451reunion.org. Send your registration in early. If you have to cancel, we will refund your money.



Please note a TWO-SIDED registration form is enclosed in this Newsletter and also on the website.



**Hotel for
 2015 Reunion**
Hilton Kansas City Airport Hotel
 8801 NW 112th Street
 Kansas City, Missouri, 64153

Phone 1-816-891-8900

Ask for In-House Reservations — Group Booking Code is: BOM

If You Prefer, Reserve Online:

<http://www.hilton.com/en/hi/groups/personalized/M/MCIAPHF-BOM-20150922/index.jhtml>

THANK YOU

We received \$50.00 donation from Ron McGee.



CHARLES HENRY was born on November 17, 1924 to parents Oliver Henry and Emilianne Petit Braud in Thibodaux, Louisiana. His older brother Oliver Jackson (O.J) called him Brother. As a baby he became very sick and wasn't expected to pass the night. A friend of the family recommended a few drops of cherry bounce (home-made liquor). His health was restored. Having the help of his older brother O.J, he progressed through his earlier years as a shy but very friendly easy-going, good-natured child. His speech impediment prevented him from being fully understood until much later on in school. At Thibodaux College, the Catholic boy's school was where he was nick-named "Bubba" by a friend because there were two Brother Brauds and the teaching Brothers as well. Because of his husky build he participated in sports at an early age and football was his favorite in high school being named "All State" tackle in 1941. He graduated in 1942.

During those early years having his Dad being manager of the Chevrolet dealership in Thibodaux gave him the opportunity of driving cars at an early age. When he just turned 10 years old, he did a night-time drive of a new 1934 Chevrolet from the depot to the garage (a distance of about a mile). They didn't want the public to see the vehicle before the announcement date. At about 13 years old he was picking up cars from New Orleans and also driving his mother to visit family there with a round-trip of 130 miles.



Bubba's *Story*

Before getting into the service he held a few jobs and even worked at Higgins at Michaud in New Orleans where they had plans to build Liberty Ships. At that time he was working as a time keeper for 5-6 men making 60 cents an hour. That was big money for a 17 year old. One day a Union man approached him asking for his union card. He told the man he had left it at home. After a short time he lost that job and was put as a warehouse man in an empty warehouse and so with nothing to do, he was soon laid off.

He entered into active service on March 22, 1943 and took basic training in Miami Beach, Florida. He went to munitions school in Savannah, Georgia then Dalhart, Texas training with B17 outfit. He went to McCook, Nebraska. After leaving McCook they took a day coach train to Newport News for a few days. While there he met a former schoolmate from Thibodaux who had played football with him. Having been given an over-night pass a few of his group (about 5-6) went to Washington D.C. On February 22,

1944 they shipped out and on the 3 week liberty ship passage to North Africa he personally observed a German U-Boat periscope amongst the convoy. Depth charges were dropped and no ships were lost. After another shorter hop across the Mediterranean he arrived in Naples on March 25, 1944. He served in ordinance with the 781st Bomb Squadron at Pantanella Air Base in Italy making sure the B-24 Heavy

Bombers were ready and loaded with bombs for the next mission. Bomb fuses and occasionally booby-trapped fuses (to prevent the disarming of unexploded ordinance) were installed and armed prior to take off. The work was done mostly through the night and there were times when it would take 15 or more hours to load for a mission after which he was

dead tired but had to walk a mile or more back to his bunk. Bubba tells of the first mission after arriving at Pantanella when they loaded the bombs for a mission only to have the mission cancelled. They then defused and unloaded all the bombs and



returned them to the depot just in time for them to be told that the next day's mission was on. By the time they finished they had been working for 56 hours straight. They were given 6 hours off before they had to begin loading for the following day's mission. For the most part, during a mission bombs were dropped prior to returning

to base, but occasionally bombs that had not released properly would dislodge at landing and end up skidding across the runway. The ordinance crew was responsible for collecting and disarming these live bombs prior to destroying them. Bubba left Italy on June 6, 1945 for Trinidad. After several weeks in Trinidad, he left on September 15, 1945 and arrived in the United States on September 20, 1945. He was officially discharged September 28, 1945 at Camp Shelby, Mississippi.

After the war Bubba had a few years of being single. His close friends were getting married. In October 1948 he and his friends decided to have a fish fry party but he had no date to go with. He asked one of his female friends to find someone for him. Knowing that her friend, Mamie, was dating another guy she called her anyway and she agreed to go. After the party he was so persistent in calling her and dating her that she finally ended her other relationship that summer of 1949. So began the union of Charles "Bubba" Braud and Mamie Blanchard. They became engaged and married April 29, 1950.

— Submitted by Bubba's Family

KANSAS CITY

2015 Reunion

**Joint Reunion of the 451st and 455th Bombardment Groups (H) WWII
With other 15th Air Force Units
September 24th-27th, 2015**

- The reunion includes the 451st, 455th, 461st, 465th, 484th and 485th Bomb Groups in order to keep our group a strong, viable size.
- Individual group dinners are planned for Friday evening. The 451st, 455th and 465th will meet together as one group and the 461st, 484th and 485th will each have their own group dinner.
- Saturday evening is the Gala Banquet including all Bomb Groups.
- Saturday guest speaker is Roger Locher, an F-4D Weapons Officer and Pilot who was shot down over North Vietnam in 1972. Locher spent a record 23 hair-raising days evading capture before being rescued and returned to friendly territory. Locher says he will consider it an honor to relate his story to our group. He is the nephew of 484th member, Dick Yunghans.

TOUR DESCRIPTIONS

- Tours are first class venues that you will really enjoy
- For some tours, there may be substantial walking – wheelchairs are on hand at the venues
- All tours are optional. Tour cost is not included in base registration fee.

World War I Museum at Liberty Memorial (\$39 per person) – 9/25

This is the only Memorial of its type in the country and has been designated by Congress as the nation's official WWI museum and monument. The museum is extremely well done and nationally renowned. It offers a great insight into the war that many of our Bomb Group veteran's fathers fought in and illustrates that "some things just never change"! Atop the museum is the WWI Monument that was dedicated by President Coolidge and the Allied Commanders in 1921 in front of 150,000 people. The area surrounding the tower offers panoramic views of downtown Kansas City and the surrounding area. You can take an elevator to near the top of the 230 foot tall tower, although there are 45 stairs to get all the way up to the observation deck for breathtaking 360 degree views. We will have lunch in the Over There Café before returning to the hotel.

Harry S. Truman Presidential Library & Museum (\$39 per person) – 9/26

You will see first-hand how this humble and simple man from Independence, Missouri led our country and made some really difficult decisions after the death of FDR during the height of WWII. You will be amazed at the simplicity and unpretentiousness of the "most powerful man in the world". This is a great museum that our Veterans and wives will especially relate to. We will have lunch in the indoor atrium that overlooks the outdoor courtyard where HST's grave along with his beloved wife, Bess is located. We will then go the mile or so to view the Truman home from the outside, the home where he and Bess lived from the time they married until his death in 1972. A National Park Service Ranger will board each bus to give an overview of the home. Their home, although quite large by yesteryear's standards is remarkable in its simplicity and that of the surrounding residential neighborhood where the President took daily walks with no Secret Service protection (until the 1960s).

Steamboat Arabia (\$43 per person) – Sunday, 9/27

The Steamboat Arabia was a cargo and passenger steamboat that ferried supplies and people up and down the Missouri River, aka Big Muddy. This boat sank in 1856 and settled to a depth of about 45 feet of mud after the river channel changed over the course of time. It was discovered and a real treasure chest of ship parts and artifacts were retrieved. This is truly a fascinating museum and offers a great insight into the clothing, tools, kitchenware and many, many other items of life in the mid-1800s. We will have lunch in the museum's Atrium Café.

KANSAS CITY



2015 REUNION ACTIVITIES



Thursday, September 24th, 2015

- 1:00 PM - 5:00 PM** Early Registration - Hospitality Room will be open.
7:00 PM - 8:00 PM Reunion informational meeting in the Kansa room.

Friday, September 25th, 2015

- 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM** Registration
9:30 AM - 1:00 PM Optional Tour* National WWI Museum with Lunch
2:00 PM - 4:00 PM Veteran led presentations and discussions in the Kansa A & B room.
5:00 PM - 8:30 PM Evening Sit Down Dinner including 451st, 455th & 465th members with informal speeches.
5:00 PM - Cash Bar* • 6:00 PM - Sit Down Dinner in the Wyandot room.

Saturday, September 26th, 2015

- 9:00 AM - 1:00 PM** Optional* tour - Harry S. Truman Presidential Library with Lunch.
2:00 PM - 4:00 PM Veteran led presentations and discussions in Kansa A & B room.
5:00 PM - 9:30 PM Gala Banquet - All Bomb Groups. Guest Speaker: Roger Locher
5:00 PM - Cash Bar* • 6:00 PM - Sit Down Dinner in the Shawnee Ballroom.

Sunday, September 27th, 2015

- 9:00 AM - 10:00 AM** Memorial Service
12:00 PM - 4:00 PM Optional* tour - Steamboat Arabia Museum with Lunch
6:00 PM - 8:00 PM Optional* Casual Farewell Dinner in the Wyandot room.

Registration Fee: \$115 per person

* Registration fee does not include the cash bars, the optional bus tours on Friday, Saturday & Sunday or dinner on Sunday

Attire: Casual dress for all events with the exception of the Saturday Night Gala Banquet for which sport coat with or without tie is requested.

Travel: Hotel provides a free airport shuttle service as well as free parking for guests traveling by automobile and a free breakfast buffet for up to 2 people per room. The Hotel also provides 2 drink coupons per room per day.

VICTORY IN EUROPE

VE Day 7 May 1945 by Pierre J.J. Kennedy

To answer Jim Althoff's question of where I was on the day that World War II ended in Europe, I read over some pages I wrote in the summer of 1945 while at home on a 60 day recuperation furlough, and am sending the following:

On 7 May 1945 I was in Brussels, Belgium, quartered at the Queen Anne Hotel by the British Army which had liberated my group of USAAF and RAF prisoners of war. The Royal Canadian Air Force had flown us out of western Germany to Brussels in C-47s which had flapping wings, bucket seats, and no parachutes. These planes had first taken British Marines in full combat gear to an airfield in Germany, and after they departed from the C-47, we climbed in.

On our arrival in Brussels we removed the filthy clothes which we had worn for months. They were burned. We were

deloused with DDT, given a hot shower and issued brown tankers uniforms with large square pockets. We were given an orientation talk by the British Major in charge of our transportation. He ended by saying, "Well, Chaps, you will be leaving soon to join your own forces. Remember your shipping number, but if you want to stay and view the city for a few days, forget the damn number and go out with the next group." I made out an identity card, was given a few dollars by a British paymaster, and sent a letter to my parents in Haverhill, Mass. To let them know that I was O.K.

At the hotel, the Red Cross and Order of Saint John War Organization of London gave us chocolate, tea, coffee, cookies and toilet articles. I soon got sick from eating a chocolate éclair. My stomach which had taken a beating from lack of food as a POW, could not digest an éclair.

That evening I took a short walk near the hotel, and heard that the war was over. Everyone was celebrating in the streets. Actually, for us former POW's the war ended on May 2nd when we were freed from the Germans by British tanks. The men in my group were in bad shape, and I felt that I could survive only two or three more weeks. Thankfully, the war ended when it did.

It was in Brussels that we left our good friends, the Tommies, (Donald Toomey, Lovey Navigator, and Albert Toomey) and I was somewhat reluctant to part with them. I wrote in my large red notebook, "The Empire Forces treated us like Kings all the way."

A few days later, I returned to duty with American forces at Namur, Belgium.

— By Pierre J.J. Kennedy



Footnote: Editor, Jim Althoff, added the following note:

Pierre used the date 7 May 1945 as VE day. I believe most of you will remember it was 7 May as I do. The signing was on 8 May, but the shooting stopped on the 7th.

Pierre was tail gunner and Leonard Goldstein was radio operator on my crew. They were with the Lovey crew when they went down on Friday October 13, 1944. They were taken POW and spent the rest of the war in Stalag Luft IV. As the Russians advance they were force-marched from their camp by the Germans to the west. After 80 grueling days they were freed by the advancing British Army.

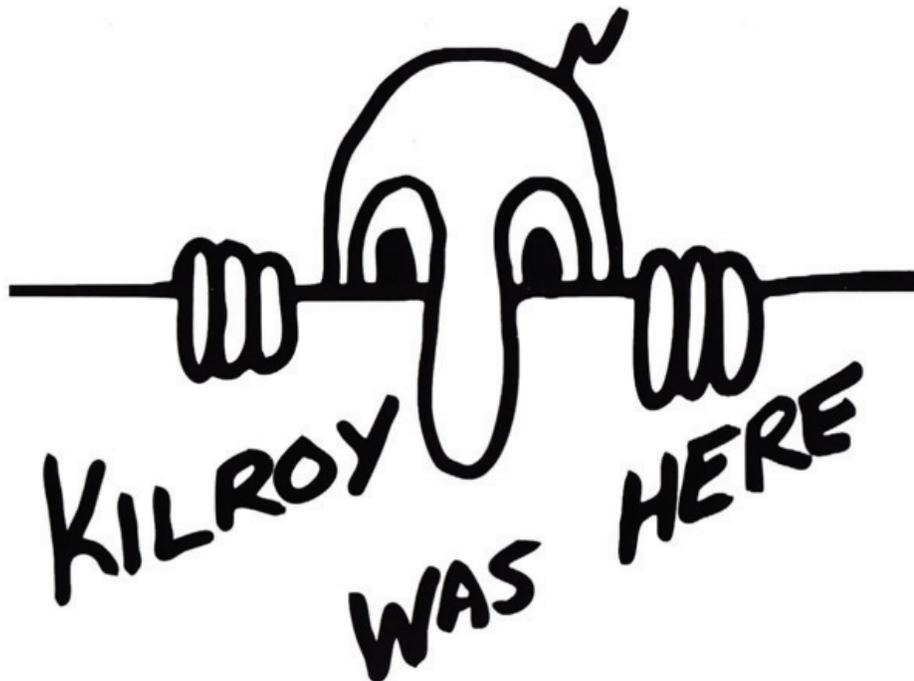


NEW PATCH AVAILABLE AT REUNION

Here is the patch Greg Soucy presented a picture of at the Business Meeting of the Association in Dover, DE. Ron had done a lot of research to see if he could get one made. They had a picture of it at the reunion in Dover. It was the general consensus of the group to go ahead and order them which Ron Soucy proceeded to do. Ron went through a lot to get these made. A lot of phone calls, visits, and as he put it 'knit-picking' to get the exact coloring, detail and design we desired. As it was produced 'off-site' there was no end product for him to see, only a computer print and verbal assurances. They turned

out great. They are a Penn weave 3" x 3" patch. When you see them, you will want one. We are indebted to Ron for all his work ordering the patches and donating them to the Association to sell. We will have them available in Kansas City at the 2015 WWII Joint Bomb Group Reunion. They will be \$15.00 per patch. If you are unable to attend the reunion and want a patch, you will be able to order one if we have any left by contacting Orren or myself.

— Submitted by Carole Lee,
Executive Secretary



FOLDED WINGS



CARL DAHL

It is with sadness that the family of Carl V. Dahl must inform you of his passing. He died in his sleep on June 12, 2015. His health had been very bad for the previous 6 months. However, he still spoke often of the war and his experiences with the friends he made.

There will be a military color guard at his service. He has asked for immediate family only.

Carl, Jr. and I thank all of his friends who joined him many times at reunions for their continued friendship and support.

— Submitted by Judy and Carl Dahl, Jr. and remaining family.



Our thoughts and prayers are with all our fallen comrades who have found everlasting peace. You have served your country well. We will remember you forever.

781st "PANTANELLA NEWS"

Orren Lee, President
4700 S. Cliff Ave, #308
Sioux Falls, SD 57103



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