



FOR THE MEN WHO FLY 'EM • FOR THE MEN WHO KEEP 'EM FLYING

Open Letter To Peter A. Massare
CO-FOUNDER
451st Bombardment Group, Ltd.

Peter A. Massare
441 Carlsam Drive
Rochester, NY 14609

Dear Pete,

Well...the First National Reunion of the 451st Bombardment Group is now a glorious and satisfying memory. The more than 260 members (462, including family) that attended, from August 1-3, 1980, found this REUNION to be more than gratifying. And that's with the consideration that some hadn't seen each other for more than 35 years. There was a lot of backslapping, embracing and just plain, "My God, it's good to see you...again," as comrade after comrade "locked sights" on each other.

The heartbreak of the event, and a real disappointment to everyone was the fact that you found yourself incapacitated due, in part, to a chronic and aggravating back problem relating to one of your wartime experiences. Thus forcing you to abort this important mission. No amount of explaining, on the part of myself or our superb "Chicago Committee" could soften the disappointment that our attending members felt. I understand there were a lot of "get well" wishes sent you since then, plus the SCROLL that bore the names of most everyone from the reunion, but the fact that you weren't in attendance left a dreadful void in our festivities. If your absence did serve any purpose, it showed our membership that this guy, "Bob Karstensen...DOES NOT WALK ON WATER." So that still leaves your mysticism in question. Our members will have to ponder that point til our next reunion.

Although, Pete, you found it impossible to join us, it was truly generous that you encouraged your wife, Clara, and three of your four sons (and wives) to attend in your absence. I was honored and proud to have Clara as my dinner partner for our Saturday evening BANQUET. Clara's presence, at the head table, along with Kay Hopcock and Mary Emma Knapp, lent that certain majesty that made the rest of us "old war birds" more compatible to the rest of our attending members.



Wartime Comrades Meet Again

(L to R) David & Audrey Eagles, Eldon & Mildred Morrill, Bob Karstensen, Leo & Patricia Cegla

R1 -- D1 Reunion 1 - Day 1

Our reunion really started long before our Friday afternoon Registration and Social Hour. We had members, such as the Art Gallaghers, Robert Horns and the Vincent Reises, come as early as Thursday, so as not to miss any part of the fun. But come Friday registration time...MAN!...we had "wall to wall" 451st people. That portion of our committee that worked the registration table, certainly had their hands full. The Registration Room, adjacent to the Penthouse of the Ramada O'Hare Inn, was a beehive of activity. As each member, or member and wife, left the elevator they were greeted by the Registration Committee and were given their name tags. These tags were to be their pass for our other events. The committee "signed in" each member by squadron. The committee already had most of the name tags. Once everyone was properly identified, it was "full throttle" into the "BRIEFING ROOM" (Penthouse) where the real action was going on.

Within the "Briefing room" area, members were seeking out the friends and comrades from yesteryear. This was made easy, through the foresight of our committee, by attaching a color ribbon to the name tag. The color ribbon corresponded to the squadron colors that were used during our wartime epoch. As you will recall the 724th used the color "white" on the cowling of its

engines; the 725th, "red"; the 726th, "green"; and the 727th, "yellow." In the case of Group Headquarters, which up to now had never been offered its own identifying color, we gave it a nice "sky blue." Now it became a little easier to "home-in" on an old friend by first identifying the parent squadron.

Pete, it would be impossible to convey the pleasure and joy I experienced as I met these men that made up the wartime 451st. These were the guys that, as airmen, put their courage to the test, and as groundmen, pushed their ability and endurance to the maximum. These were the guys that we (you, I and the "Chicago Committee") sought to bring together for this memorable weekend. When I saw the enthusiasm and pleasure that was expressed on the faces of member and wife, alike, I was concerned that the plans we had prepared would be worthy of such a respected group. Hopefully the year of planning and preparing would, with proper execution, be rewarded by the enjoyment of those attending. If you'll allow me, I'd like to take you step by step, through this "GRANDIOSE WEEKEND" and let you see it, as I saw it.

As already noted, the "signing in" on Friday afternoon was done under coordinated mayhem and established confusion. I was somewhat reluctant to venture into this area of jammed humanity, in the fear that one of the committee would point me out and say "HE'S THE ONE RESPONSIBLE!" causing any amount of problems. Rather I stayed near the BAR, appropriately designated "HICCUP TOWER." It seemed that the folks were a little more mellow and receptive as to my presence.

It wasn't long til the "BRIEFING ROOM" was filled with the buzzing of happy and excited members and wives. Table hopping was a "must," and for the first few hours it was pure joy in locating friends and discussing the whereabouts of others.

For those that wanted to retreat, from the excitement of the hour, they were offered a spectacular view of the "world's busiest airport" (O'Hare International Airport). All this, at no extra cost, from our vantage point, high atop the Ramada Inn. But really, there was little time for casual viewing. Things were happening within.

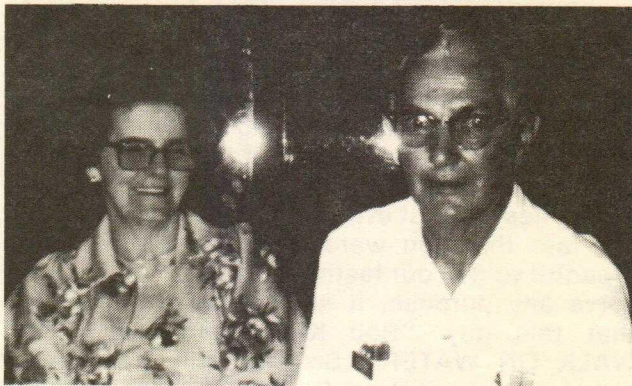
Our Audio/Visual Presentation was about to give us eight to ten minutes of fast-paced photographic projections, all of the 451st. These had been previously reproduced, under the direction of Committeeman Earl Numrich, and were now presented as part of our evening's entertainment. In all, the Audio/Visual was shown several times throughout the evening and with each showing, something different was noted by the viewer. It was, truly, a remarkable and unforgettable presentation.

Two of our members, Gordon Snyder and Archie Piirainen, had brought large oil paintings that were set up for membership viewing. Archie's painting, a large twenty by thirty inch canvas, portrayed his crews aircraft "BIG BOOBER GIRL," in flight. Archie served as Flight Engineer, under command of pilot Roger Sprowls (727th).

Gordon Snyder's painting (artist--Gordon Snyder), recreates the Markersdorf Airdrome Raid of August 23, 1944. (The Groups 3rd DUC) Gordon reproduced his impression, as he remembered it, from the Nose Turret of an aircraft piloted by Harold Thompson (727th). (Further information regarding Markersdorf Raid painting, on enclosed copy)

Just prior to 7 p.m., an invasion of AIR FORCE personnel assaulted our position. This was to be expected...they were the 566th Air Force Band, under the directorship of Captain Ether Smith. They joined us with the compliments of B/General Harold Holesinger, Commander of the Air National Guard, O'Hare International Airport. B/General Holesinger was extremely generous to our Group, as he made much of his command available throughout the weekend.

It was apparent, from the first notes sounded, that the Air Force Band was a major hit. It seemed that no matter what selections were played, and the selections were well chosen, our Group's response was overwhelming and enthusiastic. Captain Ether Smith later commented, "We were never so well received as we were, right from the start, with this audience." It was for sure our Group was "RIGHT WITH IT"... for when the Band struck up OUR old Air Force Song...as one, we all sang along to the top of our lungs. And for those priceless moments, taken to sing what was once our theme, you could sense the pride that had once knit us together, was at that moment, reborn again. And it seemed, from that moment on, what could have been "Just a reunion," had now become "THE REUNION OF OUR LIFETIME." The plans that the "Chicago Committee" had put in place were proving, at least to this point, doing the job. Granting the rest of the weekend be as successful as our KICKOFF session, we felt sure our members would be well rewarded.



Florence & Stan Leiter (725th) are enjoying the first evening's festivities.

Throughout the evening M/General Eaton "held court" with his many friends and occasional antagonist. Those few that took an adversary position, were in the most part, guys that had been "chewed out" for some infraction of military discipline. Although most now felt their reprimand to be an incident of the past, they aired these facts to see if General Eaton could recall said incident, thereby remembering the person(s) involved. It proved to be an evening where the memory was to be tested to the utmost.

To assist in the recall of friends and facts, many of those attending, brought along photo albums and memorabilia. One member, Christian "Larry" March, had the misfortune to have a valued newspaper clipping, "LOST, STRAYED OR STOLEN," perhaps "BORROWED." The article was entitled "The Larruping Libby." It was the accounting of the aircraft that Larry flew throughout his combat missions. If anyone is aware of what may have happened to the clipping, please contact Larry March. His address will be listed with the personnel of the 724th, in the enclosed Roster Supplement.

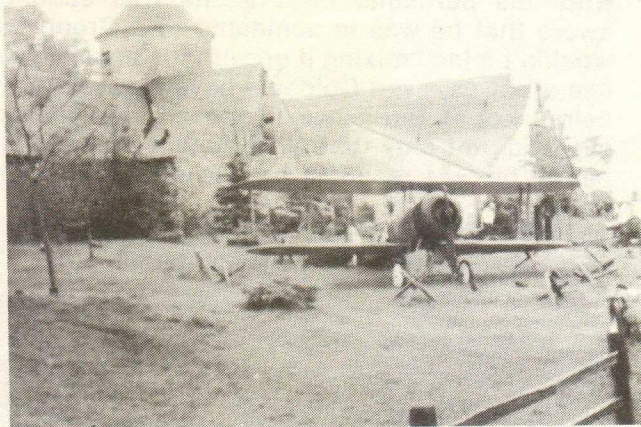
Tom Charles also experienced a bit of trouble. Tom had brought 8mm movie film, taken at Castelluccia Di Sauri Air Base. Seems that nowhere in the BRIEFING ROOM (Penthouse), could Tom find a dark enough corner to project his film. Tom finally resolved his problem by showing them in his own room, to small groups, throughout the weekend.

The evening wound down shortly before midnight, as us "old soldiers" set course for our "pad." Tomorrow was planned as a day for lots of activities.

R1 -- D2 (Reunion 1 - Day 2)

Pete, throughout the weekend we were plagued with the problem that our Reunion had exceeded our proposed projection of attendees. It was a beautiful problem to encounter, but it did cause some serious decisions to be made, on the part of our committee and our hosts; the Ramada Inn, the 94th Aero Squadron and the 126th Air Refueling Wing.

First off, our attendance had grown to the point that we were moved from the Ramada's Grand Ballroom to the Convention Center for our Saturday evening Banquet. GREAT!...No sweat!...Lots of room, now.



94th Aero Squadron, Wheeling, IL. Site of the Group Luncheon.

When we informed the 94th Aero Squadron, some two weeks prior to our luncheon, that there would be approximately 250 to 300 in attendance...that really caused a dilemma. They had anticipated around 50, which they could merge with their regular daily flow of customers.

When we proposed the count we had projected, they went right into a directors meeting and, thanks to them, decided to close their restaurant to the general public and make available their facilities to the 451st Bomb Group, only. This was the first time the restaurant had ever closed down for a specific organization. Leave it to the 451st to be the first, again. Imagine after 35 years the Group is still powerful and has the ability to lead the way. So to those that may have experienced a little inconvenience at the 94th, being a PATHFINDER GROUP isn't always the easiest.

The 126th Air Refueling Wing of the Air National Guard, also found our numbers rather overwhelming. But, in the tradition of the Air Force, they overcame this difficulty and offered our Group a close look at today's super aircraft. I was sorry that I was not able to participate in the Luncheon, nor the Tour, but from the feedback I got, it seems that the transition from WW-I (94th Aero Squadron) to the present (126 Air Refueling Wing) was an experience everyone enjoyed.

At 5:30 p.m., Jack Hoppock (replacement Master of Ceremonies in your stead) and I, in our best "Class 'A' uniform" greeted General Robert E. Huyser at the main entrance of the Ramada. General Huyser Commander in Chief, Military Airlift Command (MAC), was to be our principle speaker, and it was to be our honor to host the General, and his Aide, Lt/Colonel Burnette, til the Banquet started.

General Huyser proved to be a man of the RANKS as he greeted our membership with a personal, easy going manner. The men that encountered him, as we passed through the lobby, were truly impressed and highly honored to greet the General and to shake his hand. We even "snookered" a six-pack of beer from Bob Holdeman, as we boarded the elevator, on our way to our suite. I don't know if Bob even missed the beer, as he was being "conned" by the General.

General Huyser expressed his interest in renewing his friendship with M/General James Knapp, as he had served under General Knapp, in the past. So as 6:30 p.m. approached, we set out in search of General Knapp, hoping to find him and his wife, Mary Emma, in the Grand Ballroom, enjoying our COCKTAIL HOUR, prior to the Banquet. Needless to say, the Ballroom was filled with humanity and it proved somewhat difficult to maneuver. The Air Force Band was again in concert, and another Audio/Visual showing was offered, just one more time.

The Committee had made all the detailed arrangements for the Banquet and when the doors were opened to the dining room, all the ladies received a single RED ROSE; all received a "THANK YOU CARD" expressing our gratitude for their attendance.(and thanks to you for having them printed) And at each place setting, except where we ran short, our members found a WINE GLASS, etched with our LOGO and an inscription, which read "1980 REUNION — 451st Bomb Group." These WINE GLASSES were our gift to each member. In addition, each place setting had

a beautiful and detailed SOUVENIR REUNION PROGRAM. (Note: I still have a limited number of extra wine glasses that I would package and sell to our membership for \$3.00 each, including shipping. I also have a limited number of blue and white caps, thanks to Bob Horn and Art Gallagher, that I would dispose of for the price of \$5.50 each, including shipping---one per family, please.)



Mary & Harry Beegle (725th) are enjoying the "Banquet Festivities."

Well, getting back to the Banquet. All four Squadrons were assigned a section unto themselves, plus a section for Headquarters and our V.I.P. guests. Each section was designated by the Squadron's number, elevated atop the mid-table in their respective areas. The speaker's platform was placed against one long wall and the performing "Medicare 7-8-9-Band" were to use the stage along the opposite wall. So, in between was packed numerous tables...eight people to a table...462 attending guests. MAN! what a Group...WHAT A FAMOUS WW-II GROUP....

Colonel Jack Hoppock (Ret.), as our Master of Ceremonies, started our program by putting everyone "at ease" and to welcome all, on behalf of our "Chicago Committee." He then introduced Chaplain McNeil to offer the Invocation.

Jack followed with the "Pledge of Allegiance" and then introduced me to offer the "Toast to Our Departed Comrades." Thereupon we proceeded with the dinner.

With dinner over, Jack reintroduced me to give, what I called, the KEYNOTE ADDRESS. I touched upon the fact that your duties, there upon the speaker's platform, were being capably handled, and on very short notice by Colonel Hoppock. I introduced our "Chicago Committee," your attending family and the fact that a certain Sally Sterns Brown (do-nut Sally) regretted that she was unable to attend, due to her involvement with a family run summer theater.

I wish I could say that my oratorical abilities had the crowd in awe, but the fact that I managed to do or say anything was due to three factors. One, Jack Hoppock could put a "caged lion" at ease with his easy going manner. Second, the committee had seen to the preparation of this evening, that there was little to concern myself with. Third, the mood of the audience was such that they were even receptive to my humble efforts. The last duties, of my address were to introduce and turn over the microphone to M/General Eaton, who without difficulty, held the audience engrossed.

General Eaton recalled the earliest history of the 451st and the challenges it overcame to arrive overseas. Once overseas, how it developed into the strong combat Group that was frequently commended by higher commanders. Even General Twining, Commander, 15th Air Force, noted to Colonel Eaton (upon the completion of his missions) that the 451st was the best Combat Group he had in his Command.

General Eaton related further, that in his career, he had accepted the post of National Commander of the American Legion, to help further the need for national military preparedness, that he felt we must maintain at all costs.



Major General Robert E.L. Eaton USAF (Retired)

M/General James Knapp was next to take over the dais. General Knapp related an incident that involved the 451st Bomb Group, a battle weary B-24, a particularly difficult combat mission and himself. General Knapp explained that this mission wasn't, what he considered the NORM, and it certainly was inconsiderate of the enemy to have put so many holes in his aircraft and to have injured some of his crewmen. The General said, that with this particular mission, he was suddenly aware that he was in command of a Group that wouldn't mind "mixing it up with the enemy," but, like all of us, even Colonels have an aversion to being shot at. But as we all know, Colonel Knapp survived, not only that mission, but many others before he was replaced by our last Group Commander.



Major General James B. Knapp USAF (Retired)

Colonel Stafen, upon introduction, summed up what seemed to be the crux of our endeavor, both as an organization and our reunion...SELF RECOGNITION...Colonel Stafen did it all up in one paragraph, and if the Colonel will allow me to paraphrase his comments, I'd like to do so now:

(quote)

Here's one thing I'd like to get across to you, and that is, I don't think it's ever been said to you, what a fine job you did in WW-II. I wish General Twining had said it, but he didn't. I wish a lot of other important people had said it, but they didn't. Unfortunately, when the war was over, we all came back, got split up and dispersed and you never did receive your due credit. I realize, that as a Group, you did your job, but never knew how important the job was that you did to win the war. I know we give the presidents credit...I know we give Eisenhower credit...but, what about you? You know, it didn't matter whether you were a lead bombardier, leaving your bombs at the right place; or a toggler, in "tail end Charlie;" whether you were the guy that put the water in the powdered milk, so we could have milk on our cereal; whether you were the guy that moonlight requisitioned all the material necessary to build the fine mess hall in the 725th; whether you were a lead pilot, a truck driver, a Sgt/Major, a Chaplain, or whatever your job may have been...no one has given you the proper recognition, nor told you how your job shared in the winning and in the glory of winning WW-II...THANK YOU.

Like I said, in less time than it takes to field strip a 50 Caliber, the Colonel was finished with his address and sitting back down. The gist of his comments have stuck with me and I feel are worthy of adding to this letter.



Colonel LeRoy L. Stafen USAF (Retired)

I had the distinct honor of introducing our principle speaker, General Robert E. Huyser, Commander in Chief, Military Airlift Command (MAC), Scott Field, Illinois.

General Huyser first commented as to how he came to accept our invitation to address our Group. It seems that the major accomplishments I wrote about, regarding our Group's achievements; Regensburg, Ploesti, Vienna and our colorful letterhead caused General Huyser to cancel all previous commitments and accept our invitation.

General Huyser spoke of his career in the military, his involvement in this nation's connections in the Middle East, primarily Iran. He later discussed the type of duties that his command performed. And lastly he encouraged this au-

dience to take an involvement in the state of our National Defense. Between General Huyser and General Eaton, they championed the cause for a strong defense posture about as strongly as anyone could.



General Robert E. Huyser, Commander in Chief
Military Airlift Command

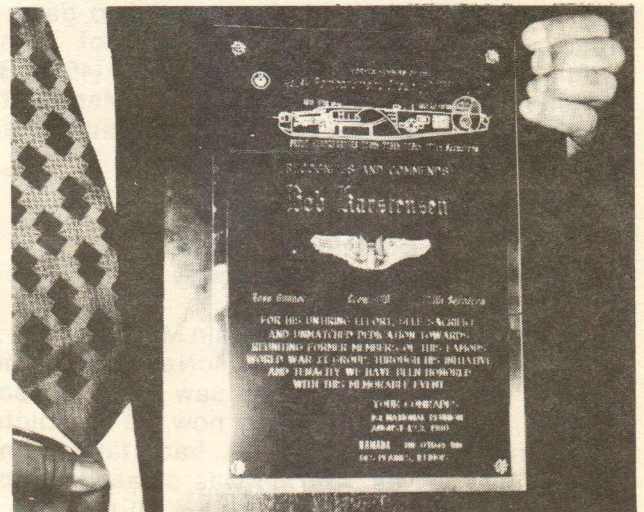
Upon completion of the four major addresses I prevailed upon our guests to accept commemorative plaques in honor of this auspicious occasion.

But unbeknownst to me there was an "updraft" lying in wait for me. From out of thin air, Jack Hopcock pulled one of the biggest engraved plaques, I'd ever seen. He called me "Front and Center" and read the inscription:

For his untiring effort, self-sacrifice and unmatched dedication towards reuniting former members of this famous World War II Group...Through his initiative and tenacity we have been honored with this memorable event.

Signed...Your Comrades

This, Pete, was a great honor, and it should have been shared by the two of us...rather than by me, alone.



Well, I accepted this gift and humbly attempted to express my thanks to those present. But no sooner had my nerves settled back and my blood pressure returned to normal than two of our com-

mittee, Tom Kelly and Jerry Bowker, came "on the double" to the dais. I watched them with care, lest they have a pot of tar and a bag of feathers. From all appearances I seemed to be safe from any mischief they may have intended. But rather than give me a "hard time" these two had it in their plans to present me with another momento...a large pewter tray inscribed with a "Thank you, Bob" from the "Chicago Committee." Upon my presentation, they made a similar presentation to Clara, in your behalf. Clara very well expressed my sentiments, in the remarks she made in accepting in your absence. Pete, could you imagine what may have been our reward had we really put an effort into this organization....

Well, Jack finally got the program rolling again by asking Father John Flanery to give the Benediction. And with that, Jack introduced the musical portion of our evening's program...The Medicare 7-8-9.

AH!...the musical part of our evening's program...Pete, I can't, but reflect on it as one of our greatest achievements. John O'Connor and his lovely wife, Erma Jean, spent the better part of a half year on this project. The selection of music and the arrangements of that music, the rewriting of lyrics, all to tell the story of the 451st from its inception, til it returned home. All the technical aspect that would arise, with such a production, were confronted and overcome. The special lyrics that were drafted to the music of the OLD STANDARDS, was a delight.

The insertion of appropriate poetry (from the book, PUPTENT POETS, Stars and Stripes, 1945) and read by members of the audience, was truly imaginative.

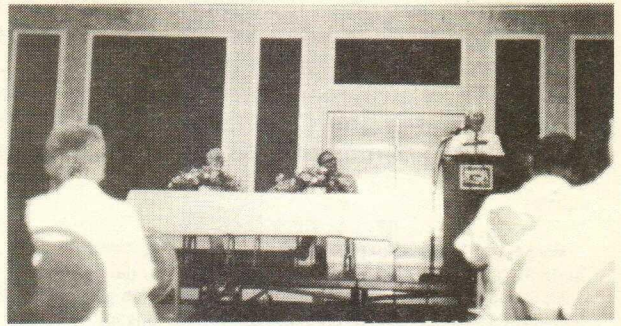
Yes, Pete, the planning, preparation and practice that John and his fellow musicians, the MEDICARE 7-8-9 (7 musicians, 3 vocalist ensemble from the University of Illinois) put into this production was tremendous. It was a production worthy of the Broadway stage. I...KID...YOU...NOT.

But again, like many of the good things we had experienced throughout these past two days, it too, came to an end. As the music of John's original composition "Hail Liberators!" (451st BG Reunion Anthem) and the Air Force March, still ringing in our ears, we all happily retreated to our respective rooms and "hit the sack."

**R1 -- D3
(Reunion 1 - Day 3)
Church Services**

August 3rd was to be Chaplain McNeil's day. At 10:00 a.m. Chaplain William McNeil was to once again "see his boys," as he saw them 35 years before...from his pulpit. Only now, as he pointed out, most of "his boys" had taken unto themselves, wives. And he was pleased to note how well each had selected.

Our Chaplain had, to assist him, Reverend Paul Johnshoy (former Command Pilot of the Minnesota Mauler, 724th) and Reverend John Pafford (former operations clerk, 727th).



Interdenominational Memorial Service
Seated, Reverends John Pafford & Paul Johnshoy.
Standing (at rostrum), Chaplain William McNeil.

Former Group Commander, Colonel LeRoy Stafen, accompanied us on the piano as we sang the hymns: Amazing Grace, Sweet Hour of Prayer and A Charge to Keep I Have.

William Bihn sang a lovely and touching solo "You'll Never Walk Alone." It was a pleasant surprise to find we had such a rich baritone voice within our ranks.

But of all the memorable moments, that were shared during this religious service, none could have been more beautiful than Chaplain McNeil leading us in silent prayer and John O'Connor offering us TAPS on a trumpet that blew as clear as Gabriel's horn.

The Church Services, as conducted by Chaplain McNeil, Reverends Johnshoy and Pafford, were a fitting and ideal conclusion to a very nostalgic weekend.

As I watched our members depart this final event, I was struck by the fact that most all had a deep commitment to the past and the friends that were from that past. And now having renewed, both the past and the friendships, were off on their own LIFE'S PATHS, much the same as we had done when we were separated from the service, back in 1945.

POST REUNION FACTS

For me, that fabulous weekend in August didn't end at noon on Sunday. OH, NO! The mail that followed the reunion was really gratifying. I'd like to offer you some excerpts from some of that mail.

M/General Eaton;

"Just a note to express my congratulations and appreciation for the great exercise this past weekend. I was greatly surprised at the turnout, at the enthusiasm, and I know that you will agree with me that the effort was worthwhile. Again, congratulations on the great effort you put forth."

Colonel Stafen;

"That was a reunion. That "WAS" a reunion. It was superbly planned in every detail. Much, much credit to you and all the Chicago Committee for a great, great job."

Charles Haltom;

"First of all I want to tell you that you and your committee did an outstanding job planning for our first reunion...My wife and I thoroughly enjoyed ourselves...We have got to do it again!"

Tom Casey, Jr.;

"The first expression should always be one that says or tells all of the writer's feelings dealing with the subject to be discoursed: Super, wonderful, exciting, mind-boggling and all of these expressions are not even a touch of what I felt while reliving the thirty-five years last. Friends, comrades, acquaintances - new and old - were renewed...Thanks again for a wonderful weekend."

Tom Plude;

"Congratulations Bob, to you and your crew for the outstanding reunion of the 451st Bomb Group. It was a great weekend!...Looking forward to another reunion."

C. "Larry" March;

"This is to add mine to the fabulous number of accolades that I am certain you have received as a result of the outstanding work you did in assembling 460 troops for the 1980 Reunion! Congratulations from both Eddie and me...she enjoyed the events fully as much as did I."

Robert V. Smith;

"Thanks - Thanks - Thanks - for a Reunion well done. We enjoyed it so much that little else can be said. I shall remember the event for another 35 years."

Robert Viau;

"Thank you, that was a tremendous job you and the others accomplished. The time and effort can never be repaid, but a loud--Thank You--at least helps...Planning, facilities, food and camaraderie were of the highest order."

Wesley Rink;

"Your committee and you did a great job with the reunion, but the significant accomplishment was the way Pete and you brought the organization together...I'm sure I can speak for all who attended the reunion. Thanks for a job well done."

George Tudor;

"I had a wonderful time--every minute was enjoyable...that's putting it mildly. I shall be forever grateful to you and to all of the people who made this reunion possible. I can't think of anything in my life that can match the happiness you people brought to me...And now my thanks to you - it's a simple thing to say - and many times we use the words for meaningless things...but this time it comes from the bottom of my heart."

Hubert Anderson;

"Thank you many times for the excellent reunion. I know you spent a lot of hours and hard work for this...Thanks again."

Bill Bihn;

"Had such a good time at our reunion I just had to write and say thanks...Am looking forward to '82 and hope we can get many of the guys who didn't make the first one!"

Robert Carringer;

"I want to extend my thanks to you and all the people who made the Reunion last weekend possible. Everything about it was first class and that was the opinion of all the people I talked with."

Ray Hughey;

"Thank you so much for the great job done for the reunion in Chicago. This family really appreciated your endless hours, time, money and effort in doing this job...Let's meet in Italy, next time."

Wayne Wessman;

"I can't imagine how much time and effort it must have taken to put together everything that was done. It was wonderful...Again, thanks so much for a really great weekend."

Bill Glynn;

"What can I tell you about the reunion? Friday evening and Saturday were particularly happy and enjoyable days for me. The camaraderie and the opportunity to meet old friends and make new ones was most rewarding...If there is a second reunion, I certainly plan to attend."

Pete, these were only a portion of the comments that have crossed my desk. I wish I could have included all, but to those that I may have omitted, it was only for lack of space that their words are spared.

A point of interest, regarding our attendance, was that the committee had a pretty good "handle" on all the members that came through the door. But somehow two 451st men, entered...paid...attended and left the reunion, without as much as a fare-thee-well, leaving only their names and no addresses. I'm sure that some of our members will come up with addresses, once I divulge the names and squadrons. Jerry Tabor (726th) and George Hecker (724th) were the infiltrators. Since they were not as yet bona fide members of our group, we would like to recruit them.

Before I let you go, there are two things that need to be covered. First, regarding our next reunion...YES, there will be another...and another...and another. The committee that did such a super job on the Chicago Reunion, is still active and eager to fulfill the requests of our membership. Certain conclusions were drawn from this last reunion that lead us to believe, we should have another one in two years time...1982....The committee will be evaluating the locale in which the next one would be most appreciated and have the suitable features necessary for a group our size.

Also, our "free spirited and dedicated" Chicago Committee was wondering what the response would be as to an "Italian Tour" reunion in 1983. If there is any kind of an economy, by that time, perhaps there would be enough interested that arrangements could be made for a tour that would visit those bases that the 451st flew from. If the interest is there, then the committee will evaluate the probability of such a happening and find the cost. In the meanwhile we'll be going with a Stateside Reunion every two years, hoping we can achieve, or even surpass, our Chicago endeavor.

Second item on the agenda are the direction and goals that we wish to achieve, as an organization. Our very first project, when our membership had exceeded the 500 mark, was to Charter our association in the State of Illinois, as a non-profit corporation. Secondly, we sought from the Postal Service, a special bulk mailing rate. This was denied, til I requested, and received the support of the Honorable Robert McClory House of Representatives, 13th District of Illinois. Thereafter our request was granted. Thirdly, and our most recent acquisition, is that NOW all funds, grants, contributions and donations, to our "Former Members of the 451st Bombardment Group (H) WW-II Ltd." are now deductible on their Federal Income Tax. We had petitioned the Internal Revenue Service and were granted this exclu-

sion, for their benefit and for the continued life and growth of what has been started. It has been with their contributions that we have been able to continue, since the initial outlay by the two of us, and by their generosity we shall continue to grow and to plan.

Dreams, plans and projections, are what I think an organization grows from. What was just a "back yard barbecue," three years ago, with five former 451st men in attendance, has grown into an organization of more than 700. I guess this would attest to the fact that there is an interest, a strong and growing interest, in our "Famous Group" and in the way we are promoting this interest. There would be no greater epilog to the 451st Bomb Group, than to have it ranked as one of the best Bomber Groups to have participated in WW-II. And as you and I have discussed before, the pride in the achievements of the 451st, and of the men that served within its ranks, has been the driving force that propels us on.

I have been pleased to hear that there are two books in the works, both by noted authors, that will deal, in some part with the 451st Bomb Group. William C. Anderson (from within the ranks of our membership, Pilot 725th) is planning a novel based on his experiences with the 451st. "Andy" has a string of fourteen books, with three being of a military nature: HURRICANE HUNTERS, THE GOONEY BIRD & PANDEMONIUM ON THE POTOMAC.

Another author that has displayed an interest in our Group is Steve Birdsall, noted military

historian. Steve would like to include some of the 451st NOSE ART and AIRCRAFT HISTORY in his next publication. (note questionnaire in packet) Steve's list of works include: LOG OF THE LIBERATORS, THE B-24 LIBERATOR, THE B-17 FLYING FORTRESS, HELLS ANGELS & THE A-1 SKYRAIDER.

Also, champion of our cause is the noted artist, illustrator and military researcher, Robert E. Carlin. Bob served with the 456th Bomb Group, as a Pilot, stationed near Cerignola. In my last communique with Bob, I was informed that he will be presenting our Group markings in one of his paintings. Perhaps not in a premiere role, but at least visable to the naked eye. Carlin has a way with words, and has led me to believe that he is having our Group en route to bomb Spain. I countered with the fact that much of our bombing was in that westerly direction, and it could well have been any part of France that we were heading for. I shall do my best to inform Senor Carlin just how efficiently our Group functioned, no matter in what direction they may be heading.

Well, Peter, I think I have touched most of the subjects that I had in mind. I hope that by the time this letter reaches you, you are much improved and that we can count on your involvement and labors for our 1982 Reunion.

Take care, Peter...The best to Clara...and family.

Your comrade and friend,

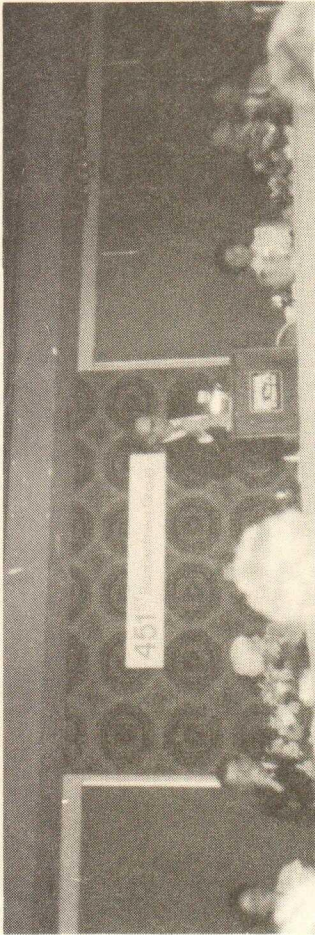
Bob Karstensen

The cost of this mailing has been, in part, underwritten by attending REUNION members.

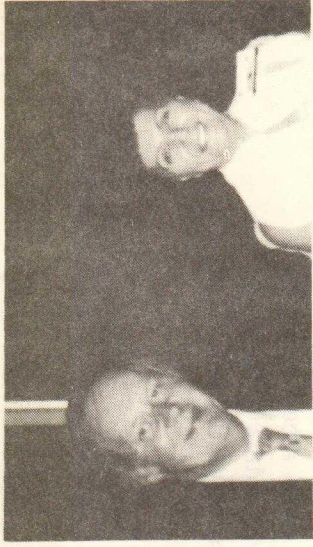
All contributions are tax deductible.

451st BANQUET

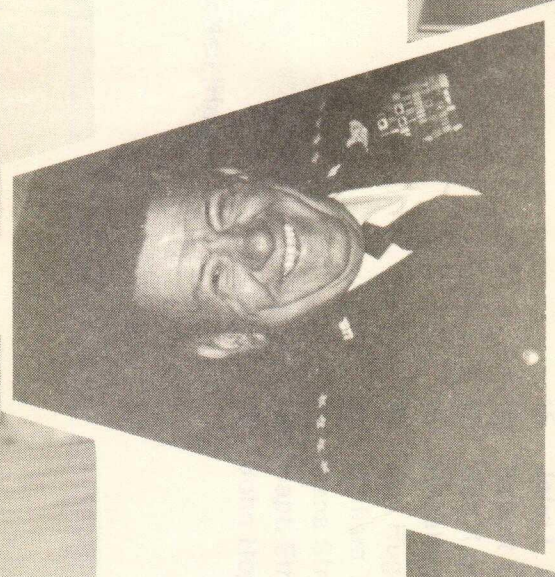
August 2, 1980



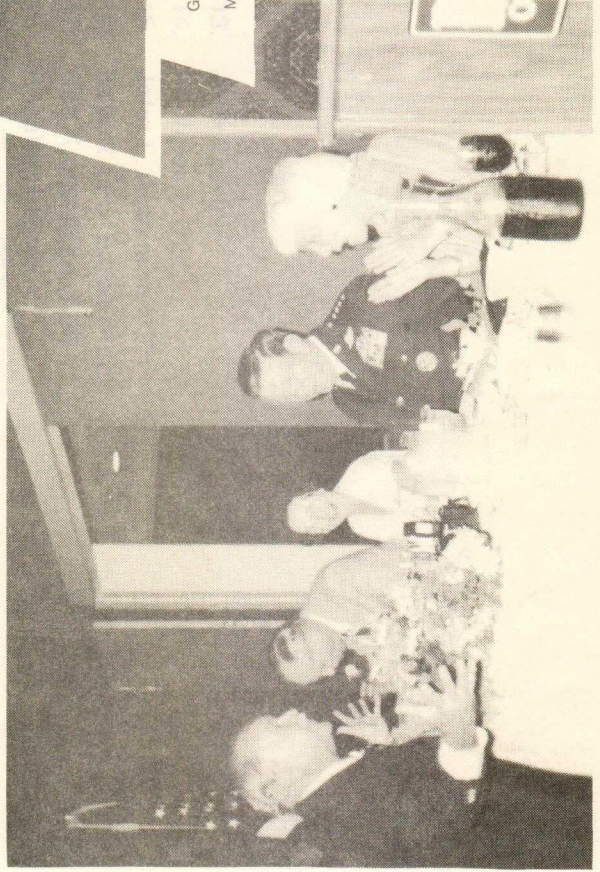
MASTER OF CEREMONIES
COLONEL JOHN S. HOPPOCK (RET.)



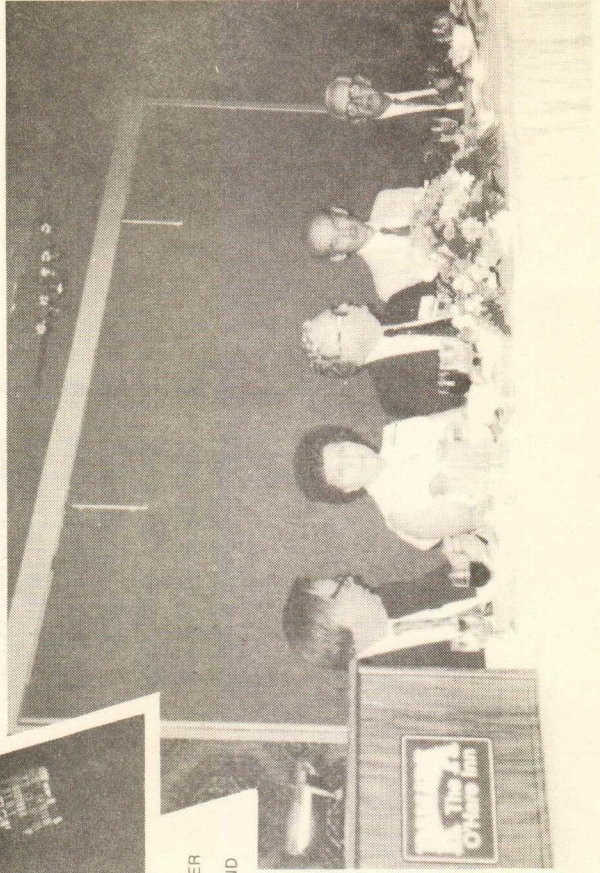
BOB KARSTENSEN (PRES.) CLARA (MRS. PETE) MASSARE



GUEST SPEAKER
GENERAL ROBERT E. HUYSER
COMMANDER
MILITARY AIRLIFT COMMAND



C.L. MARCH (AUDIENCE MEMBER) MRS. JAMES (MARY EMMA) KNAPP GEN. ROBERT E. HUYSER MRS. JOHN (KAY) HOPPOCK



BOB KARSTENSEN CLARA MASSARE M/GEN. ROBERT E.L. EATON COLONEL LEROY STEFEN

CHAPLAIN WM. McNEIL

(Note B-24 in Landing Pattern)



451st BOMB GROUP REUNION

[Names on Reverse Side]

1. Harry Waite (727)
2. Don Schaftner (727)
3. Kendall Young (727)
4. John Biggs (727)
5. Willard Gill (727)
6. Myra Caldwell
7. Bob Caldwell (727)
8. Grace Fazio
9. Armand Fazio (727)
10. Leo Cegla (724)
11. LeRoy Stefen (Hdq)
12. Chaplain William McNeil (Hdq)

13. Jean Voisich
14. Ed Voisich (727)
15. John L. Anderson (727)
16. Robert E. L. Eaton (Hdq)
17. Bob Karstensen (724)
18. Rosalie Hughey
19. Ray Hughey (727)
20. William Tunev (725)
21. Dana Street (Hqs)
22. Capt. Ether Smith (Air Force Band Director)
23. John Hoppock (M.C.)



SOCIAL HOURS

[Names on Reverse Side]

Center Photo: 566th Air Force Band in Concert — August 1, 1980

1. Margaret Kacena
2. Dana Street (Hdq)
3. John Buckley (726)
4. Robert Kacena (Hdq)
5. Bobbi Kelly
6. Tom Kelly (727)
7. LeRoy Stefen (Hdq)
8. Robert V. Smith (Hdq)
9. Verne Johnson (724)
10. Ray Hughey (727)
11. Leland Younkin (Hdq)
12. Fran Rogers
13. Richard "Slim" Rogers (Hdq)
14. Nan Bennett
15. John O'Connor (724)
16. Harvey Carpenter (724)
17. Clara Massare
18. Charles McCutchen (724)
19. (unknown)
20. Bob Karstensen (724)
21. William McNeil (Grp. Chaplain)
22. Bill Potts (725)
23. Bill Bennett (Hdq)
24. Art Gallagher (726)
25. Charles Thomas (727)
26. Jack Hoppock (727)
27. Kendall Young (727)
28. Leland Younkin (Hdq)
29. Quincey Tucker (727)



LUNCHEON: 94th AERO SQUADRON

TOUR: 126 AIR REFUELING WING (A.N.G.)

[Names on Reverse Side]

1. Al Nerroth (Hdq)
2. Ted Rill (Hdq)
3. Leland Younkin (Hdq)
4. Robert V. Smith (Hdq)
5. (unknown)--(724)

6. Ed Voisich (727)
7. Larry Stauth (727)
8. Robert E. L. Eaton (Hdq)
9. Earl Numrich (725)
10. Ed Rasmussen (Hdq)