

Report on the 1987 Reunion in Colorado Springs

A Special Report by the President and Founder Bud Markel



President Bud Markel and Association Secretary Beatrice Markel at the Bar-B-Q and Western show at Flying W Ranch

The beautiful fall weather of Colorado Springs set the stage for a most enjoyable multi group reunion. The restful Indian Summer warmth made the outdoor events especially enjoyable. The spectacular happenings such as the Flying "W" Ranch dinner and show, Air Force Academy tour, the tailgate lunch, Air Force/Notre Dame football game, golf tournament, and the many other local tours, including Pike's Peak, gave a happy variety of events to choose from. There was something for everyone, with much of it provided by nature itself, and all of this organized by the 15th Air Force Association. A total of 1200 people came to Colorado Springs, mostly by air, but some drove so as not to miss the wonderful scenery of Colorado.

One of these sites was The Garden of the Gods with its sienna hued rock-like formations convoluted to add contrast and varying intensities of the reddish colors that predominate this awesome natural display. These towering natural monuments with both curved and sharp uneven peaks, stood silent and proud in the warm October sun, while the sound of cameras clicking was heard adding a note of human approval.

Of all of the many groups participating in the reunion, only the Flags of the 461st & 484th Bomb Groups were displayed proudly left stage, next to the speaker podium during the grand banquet held in the convention center of the Broadmoor Hotel. We had hoped to have the flags in the presentation of the colors procession, but because it would have been unfair to the other groups who did not have flags, we agreed to place them on the podium where they could be viewed during the entire program. The flags are featured prominently in one of the video productions made of the reunion. The last event of the 15th's part of the reunion was the Sunday morning memorial brunch at the Broadmoor. After the meal, a very moving memorial service was given by Ben Franklin, executive director of the 15th Air Force Association. The singing of traditional hymns during, and at the end of the service, added the right touch confirming the deep feeling of all of the attendees. Many members lingered long after the dying strains of music to stretch out the last goodbyes, made

to new friends and old. It was an emotional high point of the reunion.

With the exception of a few glitches that could not have been readily foreseen beforehand, the logistics of staging this multi group military reunion covering many sites and hundreds of square miles of territory, went quite smoothly.

More than 300 members, families, and guests of the 461st & 484th Bomb Groups Association gathered at the Clarion Hotel for our part of the grand reunion. The Association once again showed its historic collection of photographs, documents, and memorabilia in a large public room. We invited members of the other participating bomb groups to visit the displays. Many of the visitors who did, were quite impressed with what we had done, and some expressed that they might use a similar format at their own reunions.

Grant (Fang) Hansen, 824 Squadron, arranged with the Adolph Coors Brewery to provide tap beer for everyone during the last three days of the reunion. The kegs held the most premium of brews that Coors can produce, and was served at an absolutely ideal temperature. Some non beer drinkers reported that if suds of equal quality were available at their home base, they would become beer affectionados.

In the business meeting, preceding the Association dinner after the reading of the minutes of the last meeting, the financial report and the Scholarship Committee's report, the members voted to direct the board of directors to eliminate the California residence requirement for board members. They voted also to direct the Association to increase the number of directors to five from the present three, with the requirement that a minimum of two members from each bomb group should be represented. The present board members, all present at the meeting approved the members' actions. Two new directors, representing the 461st, were elected to the board: they being Tom Javaruski 764 squadron, 461st bomb Group, and Tom Moss 765, 461st Bomb Group. A motion was made expressing the wishes of the members that the two organizations which represent the members from the 461st Bomb Groups should be merged. It was agreed that the president of the 461st & 484th Bomb Groups Association should advise the president of the 461st Bomb Group, (H) of our members' wishes. With no other business, the meeting was adjourned.

At the Association dinner following the business meeting Chris Donaldson gave the toast to our departed comrades which was so moving, it is repeated here in full.