



REPORT OF THE 1988 SAN FRANCISCO REUNION

The San Francisco Airport Marriott Hotel, the site of the 1988 reunion, has to be the best of all of the hotels this Association has ever used over the years. While the Marriott hospitality is world famous, the management of this establishment went that extra mile to insure the comfort of our guests, way beyond what was guaranteed in the contract we had negotiated. As anticipated for this particular weekend, the weather was absolutely beautiful and the reunion functions and tours went off smoothly. Departure of one of the bus tours was delayed to afford everyone the opportunity to board. There was not enough time to announce the new departure time. This was the first reunion where more than one tour was operated, in fact there was a wide range of choices, from the city of San Francisco, Muir Woods, Napa Valley, Carmel/Monterey, Yosemite, United Air Lines Maintenance Base tour, Ames/Nasa Research Center, and included a post reunion tour to Hawaii, and members and their guests took advantage of the opportunities provided to see this part of our country.

Our guests were able to enjoy the luxury of a word class hotel at a substantial savings over the regular rate. The Indian Summer weather and the resort like accommodations made for a very pleasant stay. "This 1988 reunion was the best ever", was the report we heard most from our guests as they departed for home.

On Friday evening, the squadrons met for dinner in separate break-out rooms, as has been the practice at past reunions. This year many of the squadrons initiated a new format. After dinner, each guest stood to introduce himself, gave a brief history of himself, and told of his most interesting or frightening war experience. He would then introduce his wife or guest and she would talk about their life and family. As the stories began to unfold a feeling of family unity began to emerge and the common experiences brought on by the war was bringing the members and guests closer together. Everyone wanted the emotional high to last longer because it is the true essence of what a reunion is all about. It was a most successful evening. Some members suggested that in the future as this part of the reunion agenda, any member of a squadron with a VCR camera might wish to record these meetings for use as an oral/video history. The Saturday night banquet began with the presentation of the colors brought in by a color guard company from Travis Air

Force Base under the command of S/Sgt Harold L Ballance. In the presentation were the flags of the United States, the State of California and the United States Air Force, as well as the flags of the 461st and 484th Bomb Groups. After the pledge of allegiance led by Tom Javaruski (764th Sq.), Chaplain Terrell E Hamilton, Travis Air Force Base, gave the invocation. Following the roll call of the squadrons by Leonard R Cole, 461st Hqtrs, and Peter Drill 484th Hqtrs, Chris Donaldson 765 Sq gave a most appropriate and moving toast to our departed comrades. The complete text follows:

SO HERE WE ARE IN SAN FRANCISCO, THE CITY BY THE BAY-OAKLAND BAY, I THINK. I LIVE IN ST PAUL, WHICH BEARS SOMEWHAT THE SAME RELATIONSHIP TO ITS FAST TRACK NEIGHBOR, MINNEAPOLIS, AS DOES OAKLAND TO SAN FRANCISCO. GERTRUDE STEIN, A STRANGE LADY, WHOSE WRITING I NEVER REALLY UNDERSTOOD, ONCE SAID ABOUT OAKLAND "THERE IS NO THERE THERE".

WHICH BRINGS ME TO "THERE". SOME HAVE BEEN BACK THERE -THERE BEING EUROPE, ITALY, CERIGNOLA, TORRETTA. THE FIRST TIME I WAS BACK THERE A FEW YEARS AGO DRIVING THROUGH PLACES LIKE MUNICH, INNSBRUCK, THE BRENNER PASS, BOLZANO, ROVERETTO, MY WIFE OBSERVED, WHAT A PITY WE DROPPED BOMBS ON SUCH ATTRACTIVE PLACES. I COULD ONLY REPLY THAT IT SEEMED LIKE A GOOD IDEA AT THE TIME.

WELL, IT WAS A GOOD IDEA AT THE TIME. WE WERE CALLED AND WE SERVED - IN THE AIR AND ON THE GROUND, ON THE SEA AND BENEATH IT AND LATER WE BASKED IN THE LUXURY OF A NATION'S GRATITUDE, A REWARD NOT ENJOYED BY SERVICE PEOPLE IN LATER CONFLICTS.

BUT BACK TO "THERE", WHERE AT TORRETTA ANCIENT STONE BUILDINGS STILL EXIST WITH FAINT MARKINGS OF OUR TRANSITORY OCCUPANCY- AN OCCASIONAL FENCE INCLUDES METAL RUNWAY PLANKING, A LONG FLAT STRETCH OF FARMLAND SUGGESTS A ONCE BUSY RUNWAY SYSTEM.

WHAT WAS THERE IS STILL THERE ALBEIT FADING WITH