



307th BOMBARDMENT GROUP (HV) ASSOCIATION

"THE LONG RANGERS"



NEWSLETTER - 86-2

April 1, 1986



QUOTES OF NOTE

"Years may wrinkle the skin, but to give up enthusiasm wrinkles the soul. Worry, doubt, self-distrust, fear and despair -- these bow the heart and turn the spirit back to dust."

Whether 60 or 16, there is in every human being's heart the love of wonder, the sweet amazement at the stars and the starlike things, the undaunted challenge of events, the unfailing child-like appetite for what next, and the job of the game of living.

You are as young as your faith, as old as your doubt; as young as your self-confidence, as old as your fears; as young as your hope. as old as your despair." -- Douglas MacArthur

"No one so thoroughly appreciates the value of constructive criticism as the person who gives it." -- V. R. Benner

"Hardening of the heart ages people more quickly than hardening of the arteries." - Ezra Jones

"Many a man's idea of charity is to give unto others the advice he won't use himself." -- E. K. Stone

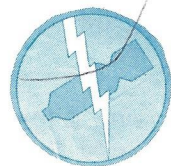
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REUNION UPDATE

Plans for the reunion are going ahead as scheduled. Reservations are pouring in daily. If you haven't made your reservation yet, the cutoff date is 16 April 1986.

Any changes in the "Schedule of Events" will be posted at the reception/registration desk at the Red Carpet Hotel.

See you in Milwaukee.



REUNION UPDATE - continued

RV PARKING SPACE

A recent phone call from Erwin Equitz tells of a VFW Park 5 minutes from the Red Carpet Hotel with space available for 40 RV's. Address: 5607 6th Street. This VFW Park has been offered, at NO CHARGE, to the 307th Bombardment Group. There is no dump site available at the park but to all of you with long electric cords in your RV's electricity will be made available. If you are interested please contact Erwin at (414) 255-9692 or call the VFW Park at (414) 481-9937.

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WORD FROM THE PRESIDENT

Nominating Committee Report: There have been four names submitted for the position of President and two names submitted for the position of Vice-President. If any of you members have a name to submit, please do so or should you be coming to the reunion, nominations will be taken from the floor.

Reunion Book: By now all of you should have received the 1984 Reunion Book. Many thanks to Jim Kendall, Harry Sterkel, and John Grayson for a job well done.

We might add that the reunion book is sent only to the members who have paid their 1984 or 1985 reunion dues. Should any new member want to purchase a copy of the book the cost is \$8.00. We plan on bringing extra copies of the book to the reunion for those new members interested. A new member should also know that once their dues are paid any book published after they have joined the association is included in their membership fee.

Change of Address: We have recently had a number of members write and wonder why they have not been getting their newsletters. Unfortunately, the Post Office will not forward bulk mail nor will they return it to the sender. We do not know a member has moved unless we receive a letter from them telling us so. Should any of you be moving, please let us know so we can update our mailing list.

Sick List: We have received word that George Jaffe recently suffered a severe heart attack. I have recently talked to Ethel and George is now at home recuperating. A short note of encouragement, get well card, etc. I am sure would be much appreciated.

TO "The Men of the 307th" -

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the membership for their support of the 307th Bombardment Group Association for the past 12 years. Originally a small group of 7 met in Reno in 1974, and from that meeting the first official reunion was held in Salt Lake City in July of 1976. We had 26 members in attendance at that reunion. Quite a stretch to the 300 we had attending the 1984 reunion in Orlando, Florida. Eight short years and look what we have accomplished.

During the last 14 years I have served as chairman and from 1980 at the Oklahoma City reunion as the President. This will be my last term as the President. Our little group of 7 has now grown to a list of over 700 names. So many have contributed to the success of the 307th Bombardment Group Association it would be impossible to name them all. So, to all of you my grateful thanks for your support and the prayer that whoever takes up the gavel as President will continue to have your great support.

Sincerely,
Dan Cauffiel - President

HISTORIAN'S CORNER

1984 Reunion Book

Printing and binding are completed, mailing should be going on as this is written, and hopefully you will have received your copy of the long delayed Orlando Reunion Book by the time you read this Newsletter. All who were members of record during 1984 and/or 1985 will receive books. Remember, as you go through your copy, that we welcome all comments, criticisms and suggestions which might help us put out future books more to your liking. We will beat you to an obvious criticism -- the book is late! Our promise to you is that the 1986 Milwaukee edition will be in the mail by June 1, 1987.

Remember When....

The Christmas Newsletter included a letter of reminiscence from member Frank E. Hinkle. Included was a short description of the saga of Harry John's crew during a mission to Rabaul. As an example of how the historical files can sometimes be used to bring together memories and souvenirs of the same event, we are reproducing in this newsletter an article written by a New Zealand war correspondent which describes the same mission. The article, contributed by Jim "Tiny" Perry, was undated but appears to have been originally published sometime in 1944. Also printed is a photograph of the eight surviving crew members following the mission described by Hinkle and war correspondent Green. The photo, also contributed by Perry, had no identifications of the crew members. Any help that you members could give us with this or any other photo identifications would be appreciated. Generally, names of those in each photo will be printed if known. (If names are missing or incorrect, please send the correct information. As always, original articles and photos will be returned to the donor if requested.)

A recent letter from Frank Thompson included an interesting account of a test hop that he remembers vividly. Speaking of B-24 No. 235, "Hoot Owl Express", Frank continues: "I would like to know if the pilot is still alive who took me, as engineer, for a test hop after a supercharger had been replaced. After take-off, he wanted to know if it would fly on two engines, so poked the 2 and 3 feather buttons. After returning those to power, poked 1 and 4 buttons. Satisfied, continued to 18,000 feet. After a while started descending, and a P-38 streaked down by our nose. As the 38 swung and curved back up I found myself looking out the left window and into the ocean because we were in a tight left turn. The 38 rolled on its right side and tried to make a pass, but we were quickly in a tight right turn, outmaneuvered the 38, wig-wagged and zoomed on down. If this wasn't enough -- 'Pilot to Co-Pilot, do you see what I see? Should we?'

Flaps down, supercharger full on, throttles full forward (hang on to your stomach) the Navy is in and a perfect two rows of the fleet at anchor, and, about six feet off the water 'Old Hoot Owl' sped down the Avenue!!! As she climbed sharply at the end, the radio crackled and the fleet commander wanted to know if we wanted to try it again. Pilot -- 'I guess not'. Navy Comdr. -- 'If you do, every gun in the fleet will be trained on you'. Well, I can tell you, when you look out the top windows at sailors on every ship looking down at you, you have had a ride!!! Only one other thing, the day we got a new unpainted plane and 'Old Hoot Owl' was going to Australia, this pilot said 'If I could fly it back to the States I would fly the S.O.B. under the Golden Gate Bridge'".

(Historian's Note: As I remember it, "Hoot Owl Express" was the 372nd plane with the black Scottie Dog painted on its solid yellow tail. I last saw it parked in the storage yard on Biak in March of 1945. Several years after the war, a National Geographic article included an aerial photo of the B-24 graveyard on Biak filled with what seemed to be hundreds of bombers which were being cut up by the Dutch and melted down on the spot for their aluminum. Many were easily identified as 307th planes. Old "Hoot Owl" was not visible in the picture, but in all probability, she shared the same fate.)

1986 Reunion

Believe it or not, the Milwaukee Reunion is almost upon us and we have some requests and comments with regard to the next Reunion Book and the duties of the Historians.

1. We were definitely handicapped when working on the last Reunion Book by a lack of snapshots covering the many reunion activities. As a result we were forced to go with the few we did have and ended with a poorer coverage than desired. To solve the problem, we need your help. As soon as possible, we would like to borrow prints of your best reunion snapshots for possible use in the book. Along with the snaps we need identifications for each person pictured. The snaps should be fairly well exposed and fairly sharp in order to reproduce well. The more sources of pictures that we have, the more people we can cover in the next book. Let us know if you want the pictures returned or if we may keep them. Either way is fine with us!
2. Notice the individual photos on pages 6 through 16 of the 1984 Reunion Book. A dozen or so of the current photos are accompanied by a wartime picture of that member. If possible, in the next Reunion Book, we would like to do this for everyone pictured on these pages. Again we need your help! Before you leave for the Reunion, look up a wartime photo of yourself (head and shoulders preferred) that could

MISSING MEMBERS - continued



Pictured below is the crew Homer Bryant would like information on.

Kneeling - left to right

Lt. Wm. Walker, Navigator
Lt. James Klein, Pilot (Home Owassa, WI)
Lt. Donald Beiringer, Bombardier
Lt. Bernard Watts

Standing - Left to right

Sgt. Gordon Hamilton (Montana or Wyo)
Sgt. Thomas Ramsay, Gunner
Sgt. Arnold Klein, Tail Gunner
Sgt. Theodore Roeschel, Michigan
Sgt. Michael Sullivan



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READING MATERIAL

"Army Air Force in WW II, Vol. 4, the Pacific Guadalcanal to Siapan" Per Harry Woolverton, this book covers period August 1942 to July 1944 and is official record of that period. It covers 13th Air Force and 5th Air Force. Other volumes are available from the U.S. Government Printing Office, Superintendent of Documents, Washington, D.C. 20402

FLASH! ONE MORE REUNION HIGHLIGHT

Surburban Car Wash, 160 W. Lincoln, courtesy of Julian Jay Moss has offered FREE car wash service to all members of the 307th

This about wraps up the 86-2 Newsletter. Get those reservations in to Sid and "WE'LL SEE YOU IN MILWAUKEE!"

Dan Cauffiel, President



MISSING MEMBERS

We have received quite a number of letters requesting information on missing "Men of the 307th". In many cases all we have is the State they were last located in. Where we do have a city listed would appreciate any help from the membership in trying to locate these men.

Austin L. Crager, TX (no city)
David V. Hemphill, San Francisco, CA
Thomas H. McAllister, Ashland, KY
Robert L. Verschoor, (no city/state)

Joe V. Mannino, Upper Darby, PA
John I. Wicks (no city)
Edgar T. York, Lafayette, IN
Weldon L. Wallace, TX (no city)

The above men were with Bob Bush. We do have Bernard A. Smith listed on the roster and he did join the 307th but either he has moved or changed phone numbers. Would anyone living near him please try and contact him? Bernard A. Smith, 7178 Lake St. RR 2, Pulaski, NY 13142. (315) 298-2168 last phone number. The above men make up Bob Bush's crew and he would very much like to contact them.

Harold Murphy, Red Bank, NJ
Walter Skakey, Rochester, NY
Francis Jones, Little Rock, Ark
Cliff Elledge, Kansas City, MO
Joe Williams, Heavener, OK

Nick Chomiak, Detroit, MI
Ken Ludwick, MO (no city)
William Decker, TX (no city)
Frenchy Rabalais, Corpus Christi, TX
Charlie Jessen (no city/state)

The above names were sent in by Ernest Nave. Some of them were part of his crew, another a photographer, others gunnery instructors. More help needed.

Do any of you remember Robert Altman? He is now well known as a film director with credits for MASH, Nashville, and etc. Pat McGilligan is writing a book on the life of Robert Altman and requests any information we can give him on this man. He has also asked to speak at the reunion in Milwaukee and maybe meet with any of you that might remember Altman. I noticed in the reunion book that he is listed on page 91 as part of Dennison's crew. Pat McGilligan's address: 2746 N. Frederick, Milwaukee, WI 53211 (414) 962-8988

The last letter comes from Homer Bryant, 6650 Old Moorinsport Rd., Shreveport, LA 71107.

"I would certainly be appreciative of any effort to locate the men in the pictured crew or to determine if they were lost in combat.

I joined this crew as radio operator at Tonapah, Nevada where we flew R.T.V. for about 3 months. When we were flying one of our last routine missions I developed pneumonia and was hospitalized at Tonapah for 3 months. After return to duty I joined Lt. Charles Christian's crew and flew R.T.V. for 3 months.

When we arrived in Nadzah, New Guinea, I made inquiries regarding the first crew and no one seemed to know what happened to them. Later I heard they were missing in S.W.P.A.

Cena, I have reason to believe they were assigned to the Pacific sometime in April of 1944. I will appreciate receiving any information you may obtain on these men.

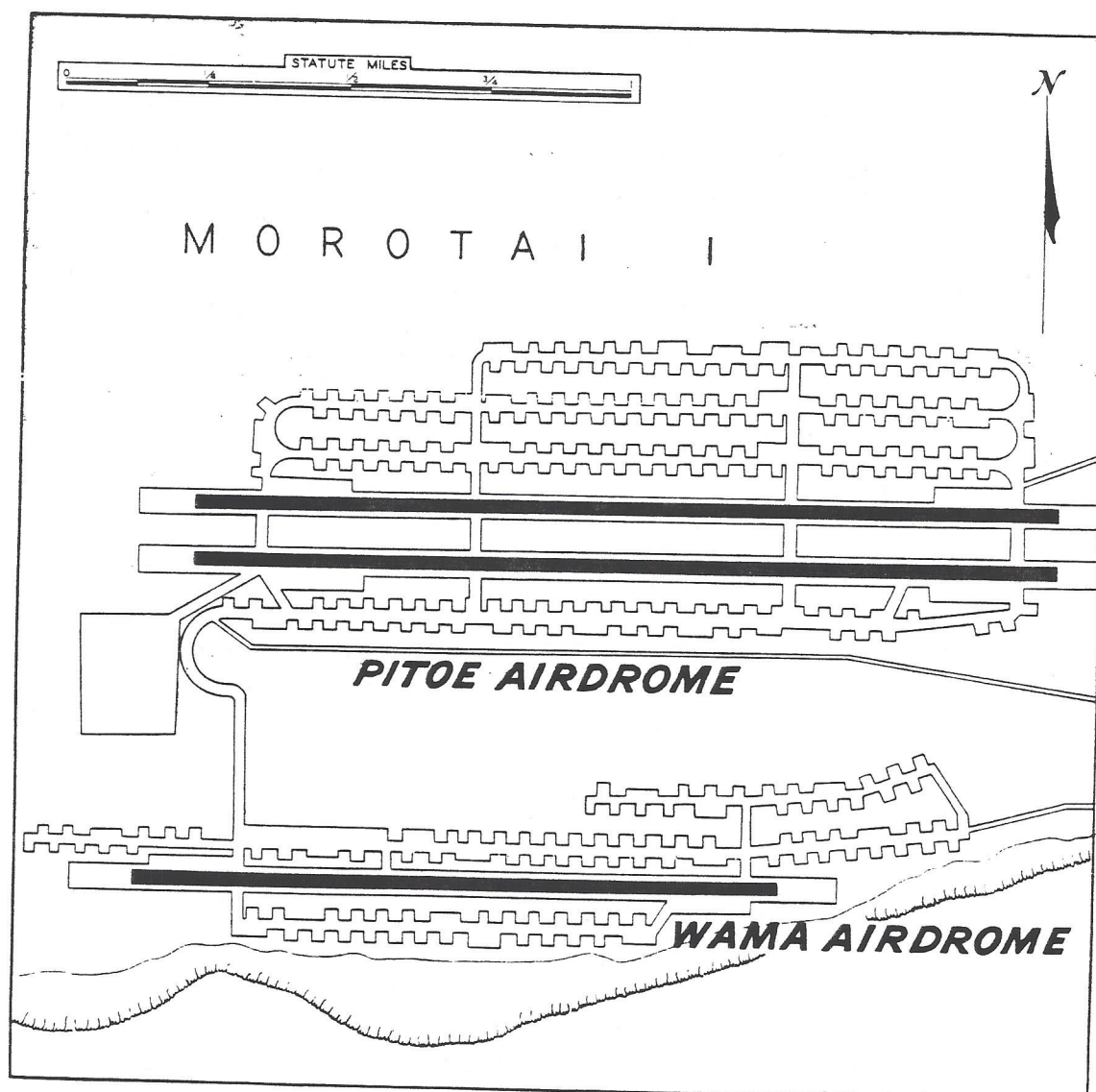
Keep up the good work.

Homer Bryant"



PITOE—Military Airdrome (Lat. 02° 02' 30" N., Long. 128° 19' 00" E.)
TOWER: "BLOOMER."

Location On the southwestern coast of Morotai Island immediately N of Wama Airdrome.
Size Two parallel runways 8000 ft. x 100 ft. plus 500 ft. graded over-
runs and 50-ft. shoulders.
Surface Bearings ENE/WSW. 86°/266° Magnetic.
Surface Coral asphalt.
Elevation 50 ft. above sea level.
Traffic Pattern . Left-hand; traffic keeps to N of runway.
Pattern Altitude . 1000 ft.
Obstructions No obstructions.
Navigation Aids . See current Radio Facility Charts.
RON Facilities .. Accommodations for transient and emergency landed crews.
Serv. Facilities .. Fuel and oil—Tank truck delivery. Major repairs available.
Weather Facilities Forecasting service available.
Remarks Suitable for all types of airplanes.



DO YOU REMEMBER?

The following two reproductions were sent to me by John A. Leggett. They were taken from the July 1945 edition of Airdromes Guide Southwest Pacific and should remind our members of our last combat base at Morotai.

MOROTAI ISLAND AREA

(Lat. 02° 02' 30" N., Long. 128° 19' 00" E.)

LOCATION:

Morotai is approximately 15 miles NE of the northern tip of Halmahera Island.

TERRAIN:

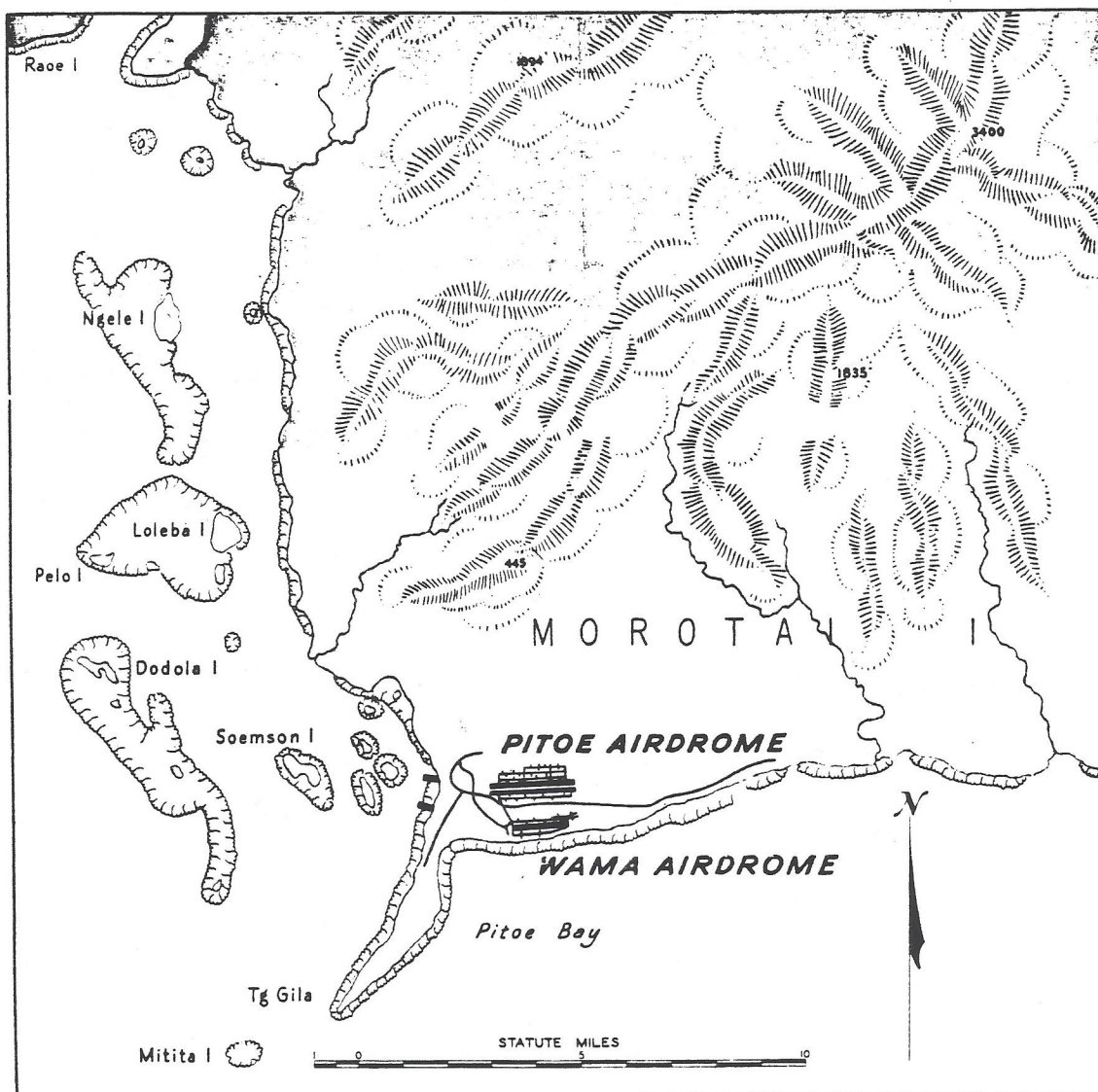
The island is 45 miles from N to S and 32 miles from E to W. It is mountainous except for the coastal area; the highest mountains rise to elevations of 3400 ft. Forest covers most of the island which is interspersed with streams.

LANDMARKS:

A narrow peninsula four miles long projects from the southwest corner of the island.

AIRDROMES:

Two airdromes, Wama and Pitoe, are located in the southwest corner of the island. An abandoned runway lying northwest of Wama and Pitoe is used as a crash strip.



My Favorite War Story

How "Blessed Event" came back with her wounded and dead

By E. K. GREEN

"Blessed Event" was a Liberator, and the climax to its career came last year when Rabaul was still too strong.

Eight of its crew of 10 men were still alive when I talked with them—but the "Blessed Event" was a shattered wreck.

It began almost over Rabaul. No. 3 engine coughed out. The other planes seemed to shoot ahead and, within seconds, Zeros attacked the straggler. For 40 minutes afterward the Liberator fought a losing running battle—but she fought. Again and again, 20-mm. and 7.7-mm. cannon shells exploded within, or hit, her. Half the tail was shot away, a gaping hole was blown in the waist. The navigator was killed with the first shell. Controls were shot away.

Below was the unfriendly Pacific; above, below and on all sides were Zeros spitting fire and death.

"No man ever had a better crew," said Lt. Harry P. John, of Crowley, La., the pilot. "Each had a job to do and each was doing it."

As he fought to hold the plane in control after a 20-mm. had ripped his control board, John felt rather than heard the gasp of his co-pilot, Ray Green, of Sayre, Okla., who had been hit in his shoulder and neck.

"Hurt bad, Ray?" John asked. And Ray's cool voice answered, "I'm O.K."

"He's plenty tough, that Ray Green," John said to me. "Guess it's the Indian in him. He's mighty proud that he has a streak of redskin."

From nose, turrets, waist and tail, John felt the chatter of his guns. At first there was no time to tally scores, but twice, at least, it seemed that Zeros took mortal wounds.

Now nose gunner S/Sgt. Bill Barlow, of Redlands, Cal., felt a thrill



E. K. Green is war correspondent for The Auckland (New Zealand) Star and the Overseas Press.

of triumph wipe out the pain of a severe skull wound as he caught a Zero and saw it burst into flames. Ball-turret gunner S/Sgt. John Lemon, of Kent, Ohio, hit one and saw it fall.

Every man but three was fighting. In the dead navigator's seat slumped bombardier Lt. Lester Kornblow, of New York, his face ashen, bleeding from wounds in his right arm, shoulder and leg. In

the waist, radioman S/Sgt. Tom Craven, of Kalispell, Mont., lay unconscious beside his gun, mortally wounded. By the other waist gun lay S/Sgt. Dennis Ryan, of Palisade, Minn., both collar bones broken and a splinter of shrapnel in his back. He was aiming and firing with one arm.

At the tail gun, S/Sgt. Joe Dispenza, of Buffalo, N. Y., had wounds

in his face and hands. S/Sgt. Charles Derrick, of Westminster, S. C., came down from the turret seeking aid for a serious abdominal wound; he took one look and went back to his guns. Lemon, wounded in the foot, came up from the ball and took over the waist guns. He got another Zero from there. Dispenza got still another.

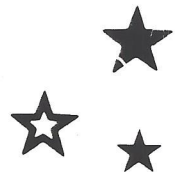
John himself had wounds in the right arm and face but he scarcely realized it. By the time the last Zero turned back, a second engine was out of action. There was no chance to make his home airfield. It was an emergency field landing—or else.

He made it, on a too-short runway, and with only one wheel down. Green cut the ignition as their belly touched, and the ship slithered to a stop.

They had lost two men—Craven died that night—but the "Blessed Event" had accounted for four Zeros and six probables out of a hundred that had taken the sky that day.



Harry John's crew following the mission described above



be used along with the current photo. However, any good sharp photo could be used. So look up such a picture, give it to us when the individual shots are taken and they will be printed together in the next book. Please put your name on the back of the picture (using an address sticker or a felt-tip pen ... no ball points, please) along with a note "Keep photo" or "Please return photo". Thanks for your help.

3. The Historians plan to set up specific times and places to talk to you about material which you might be willing to lend, or donate, for the files. Harry and I would like to operate in this manner in order that **WE** may have some time for various reunion activities. You will receive word at the reunion as to times and places where every effort will be made to carry on the Historian's work. See you in Milwaukee.

Harry Sterkel
Jim Kendall

POST SCRIPT

They say that if you are going to make a mistake you might as well make a big one. Marty Sporn just received his copy of the Orlando Reunion Book and writes to point out a granddaddy of a mistake on page 50. The framed 307th insignia collection given away at the reunion dinner was not painted, framed and donated to the Association by noted aviation artist Charles Osborne as reported. In addition to printing a totally erroneous story, I even managed to use the incorrect name for the well-known artist to whom I meant to refer. Not only did I call Robert Osborn, Charles Osborne, I find that neither of the names are correct. Have you got that one figured out? At any rate the part of the story concerning the source of the insignia collection is totally incorrect. Here is the straight story as supplied by Marty.

"Don't know where you got your information, but it is not at all correct. The fact of the matter is that they (the logos) were painted by CLYDE W. OSBORN, an Air Force vet who is a well known collector and artist of logos, nose art, etc. Clyde made three sets of logos for me, which I then had framed. One I donated to the 307th as a fund raiser. This was the item that was turned back by the original winner and re-raffled at Orlando. The second one was to be given to the city of Ephrata, but this was cancelled by the 307th and it too was raffled off."

It is painfully evident that I had the story completely wrong and for this there is really no excuse. Our thanks to Marty for setting the story straight and for donating the framed collections to the Association. Thanks also to Clyde Osborn for his excellent work on the insignias. And my apologies to all concerned. Now I have another problem. I know that Mac and Norma Willard have the one framed insignia collection. However, my Orlando reunion notes do not indicate who won the second collection given away the same evening. HELP.

Jim Kendall