

*307<sup>TH</sup> BOMBARDMENT GROUP (HV), INC.*

*NEWS NOTES 2006-1*

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PHYSICS 105

PHYSICS 106

307<sup>TH</sup> BOMBARDMENT GROUP(HV), INC. NEWS NOTES  
2006-1

**From Your President:**

*I hope that 2006 has gotten off to a good start for all of you. We are steadily progressing with the reunion plans in Seattle. There are a couple of things we need your help with: we need three (3) members to form the site selection committee for our next reunion in 2008. At the very least we need some suggestions to present to the membership in Seattle. If you would like to be on the committee or have a suggestion for a site, please contact one of the board members. We also need three (3) members to serve on the nominating committee for elections of officers at the Seattle reunion for the next two years. If you would like to serve on this committee, please contact one of the Board Members and let them know. Again, I am asking for anyone interested in holding the position of Treasurer for the Group to please contact*

*one of the Board Members. If you have a problem or a concern that you feel I need to address, please contact me and I will try my best to resolve it for you.*

*Now on a more somber matter, our beloved Historian, Jim Kendall has notified the Board that due to his failing eyesight, he has to relinquish the responsibility of preparing the Reunion Books. If you have an interest in helping us with this or any suggestions as to how to handle this, please contact one of the Board Members. At the time of this printing, Jim has suffered a heart attack and has undergone quadruple by-pass surgery. Reports are that he is resting comfortably and doing well. We wish him a speedy recovery and have Dottie and him in our prayers. There will be no historian news in this issue. Take care and we will be seeing you all in Seattle.*

*Jim Walsh*



*From Your Secretary*

*Hey Guys*

*Thank you to all of you that have sent in your dues. For those of you who haven't, please get them in as soon as possible. I am working on the new Roster and I will only be mailing them out to the members that have paid their dues.*

*I have been contacted by Bob Chudzinski about a memorial monument in Dayton, Ohio honoring the 13<sup>th</sup> "Jungle" Air Force. He proposes that the 307<sup>th</sup> purchase a plaque to be installed on the face of the monument. The cost of the plaque is \$1,600.00. This is something for us to think about and we will discuss and vote on this matter at the reunion in Seattle. If you have thoughts on this, let one of the board members know.*

*I received a phone call from Gail MacKenzie. Her father, Warren MacKenzie was a member of our group. She has his flight log and has some questions that I know*

*some of you can help her with. I am including the note she sent and some pictures. If you can help her with these questions, please contact her at 614-793-8580. She writes: I'm not sure how long my father was a member of the 307<sup>th</sup>, but he was in the South Pacific from Sept. 1943 to Oct. 1944 according to this pilot's log book. I'm enclosing a couple of pages that describe his service and a couple of photo's of one of the B-24's he flew. He noted that this photo was of the first crew he flew with when he arrived in the Pacific and that he flew several missions as co-pilot in this aircraft. My dad is on the right. A page from one of your news letters, which I am enclosing, indicates that this plane 783 was lost on 4-27-44. Thankfully, my Father was not on board. He flew a 13 hour 10 minute mission on 4-23-44 from Green Island to Truk to Munda and did not fly again until May 1<sup>st</sup> according to his log. He also noted two other planes on that newsletter listing that he*

*piloted during his service. There is a question that we have about my Father's log book that I'm sure someone knows the answer to. In the remarks column he has indicated "strike#" and then sometimes and "0" or and "\*" or both. Sometimes the name of the island appears in the space also. Would anyone know what these markings mean? Please help me understand these markings if you can. (see page 5)*

*Dear Members,*

*Sam Sosa has contacted me about a 36"x24" picture of B-24's with the 307<sup>th</sup> Insignia. I have searched the internet and have come up with nothing. If anyone can help him find a picture, please contact him at 773-728-6250.*

*Response from article in last newsletter:*

*TT. Mike McCabe  
(Navigator) and the 424<sup>th</sup>  
McCullough Crew*

*As a follow up to my article in the previous newsletter, I*

*wanted to thank the Association for printing my email pertaining to my Father, Michael J. McCabe, deceased 4-26-05. As a result I received several phone calls all of which were very helpful. It was particularly gratifying to hear from Bill Helms who was the BTO on the McCullough Crew and to in turn put him in touch with Major(Ret) John Mihalka their copilot. They had not spoken since the war. My brother Michael, Jr. recently located Maj. Mihalka in Idaho where he is flying his own bi-plane. I have learned much since my original email last fall. I now know that many different bombers were flown. In fact, my Father's crewmembers couldn't even remember the B-24 named "My Heart Belongs To Daddy". I have also learned that the training accident apparently happened while my Father was in Navigation School at Selman Field, LA not at Tonopah, Nevada. Most of all I have a better understanding of the enduring regard you men*



have for each other. It was a powerful experience to learn that Maj. Mihalka named his oldest son, Michael J., after my Father. It was equally intense when referring to my Dad, Bill Helms repeated several times, "He always got us home." It has been both heartbreaking and heartwarming to achieve some understanding as to why my Father most likely did not discuss the war, but did speak of his love and respect for his crewmembers, the 424<sup>th</sup> BS and the 307<sup>th</sup> BG. For as long as I can remember, a photograph of his crew was at his side in our family room. I can't put into words how fulfilling it is to have spoken to two of these men, (and surviving family members of most of the others) and to be afforded some insight as to the basis for such love and respect. Through this experience I now have a relatively clear understanding of the essence of it all. I've learned relatively little about my Dad when in the pursuit of specifics about his missions.

It's been in the specifics about their (his Crewmembers) relationships that I've come to better know the Dad I've always known, the one that instilled in me the values of loyalty, honor, family and friends and how they are timeless and cross generations. How else can one explain my young (14yo) son, Michael, quietly taking it upon himself to read all the books (Morotai, Up The Slot, We'll Say Goodbye) I've secured and both he and my 15 yr old daughter, Cara, wanting join me in August? SEE YOU IN SEATTLE!

Please note that my e-mail address was misprinted in the last issue. I can be reached at:

JIMMCC13@earthlink.net or 804-512-1180. Jim McCabe



From previous Newsletter that Gail MacKenzie refers to  
in her letter.

# NOTES FROM THE HISTORIANS

We've observed Memorial Day--oops, showing my age--Veteran's Day since our last newsletter. The following data will honor that occasion and help us to remember those who failed to return.

The information was included in a recent letter from Bob Beitling, well known Liberator historian and archivist. An excerpt from Bob's letter"

"I am including a copy of the official 307th Bomb Group losses taken from the MIA-Master List at the Air Force Research Center, Maxwell Air Force Base, Montgomery, Alabama. As I mentioned previously, I don't think this includes crashes, crash landings or accidents. I am not even sure that it includes all the losses! Unfortunately, the only theater that kept good accurate records was the 8th AAF. Their living conditions and battle conditions were much superior to those of the MOT, CBI, POA or any other theater..."

Following is the list that Bob sent. I covers only the period after the 307th became part of the Thirteenth Air Force. Included are the date of loss, serial number of the lost plane, and in most cases, the number of the Missing Air Crew Report (MACR) which was filed at the time of the loss. The list is certainly not complete. Several 307th losses known to be absent from the original list have been added. There are surely others. Most of our additions may be recognized because they include only the three digit I.D. of the aircraft involved rather than its complete serial number. We will be happy to receive any additions or clarifications that you can send us which will help complete the following list, whether combat losses, crashes or ditchings.

Copies of MACR reports may be obtained by request from the following address:

Modern Military Field Branch (NNMF)  
Military Archives Division  
National Archives  
Washington National Records Center Bldg.  
Washington, D.C. 20409

## 307th BOMB GROUP AIRCRAFT REPORTED AS "MIA" (2-13-43 through 9-18-45)

<u>DATE</u>	<u>AIRCRAFT NO.</u>	<u>MACR</u>
6-13-43	41-23957 41-23975 41-23980	
6-30-43	42-40254	
7-01-43	881	
7-06-43	42-40230 41-24093	45A
7-08-43	42-40384	1487
7-13-43	42-40239	12212
7-20-43	42-40178	200
7-21-43	42-40221	1291
7-25-43	42-40856	220
7-28-43	42-40659	364
8-25-43	42-40638	492
8-30-43	42-40217	489
10-25-43	42-40864	1014
11-14-43	42-73141	
1-01-44	42-72823	1495
2-12-44	42-72818	2282
3-29-44	42-73466	3738
4-06-44	42-40266	3795
4-27-44	42-72783	12418
5-10-44	42-110080	4621
5-27-44	42-110106	5196
6-25-44	44-40598	10023
7-05-44	44-40611	6526
7-13-44	44-40609	10653
7-15-44	44-40555	6923
	42-73119	6924
	42-40857	7180
8-10-44	44-40571	8638
8-25-44	44-40542	9325
	44-40549	9326
8-28-44	44-40603	
9-01-44	42-73453	
10-3-44	44-40565	10485
	44-40933	10487
	44-40614	10488
	44-40568	10489
	44-40955	14084
	44-40599	
	101	
10-18-44	44-40540	10288
10-22-44	44-41422	10486
10-26-44	44-40547	10845
	44-40605	
	022	
11-06-44	44-40951	12187
11-08-44	44-41421	10456
	44-41264	10587
	44-41381	

photos  
this was  
the 1st  
crew my  
father  
flew  
with

My father also  
flew these two  
planes





Warren  
MacKenzie  
Back Row  
Right





# Chudzinski awarded Flying Cross

## World War II vet honored

After years of waiting, Robert Chudzinski finally has his medal.

While he's known around town for serving prime cuts of meat from his Prairie Market store on Napoleon Road, many visitors to the establishment probably don't know that Chudzinski is also a World War II veteran.

And now he's got one of the military's most distinguished medals to add to his collection.

Chudzinski was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross at an annual meeting of Sandusky County Veterans Service Committee Tuesday night.

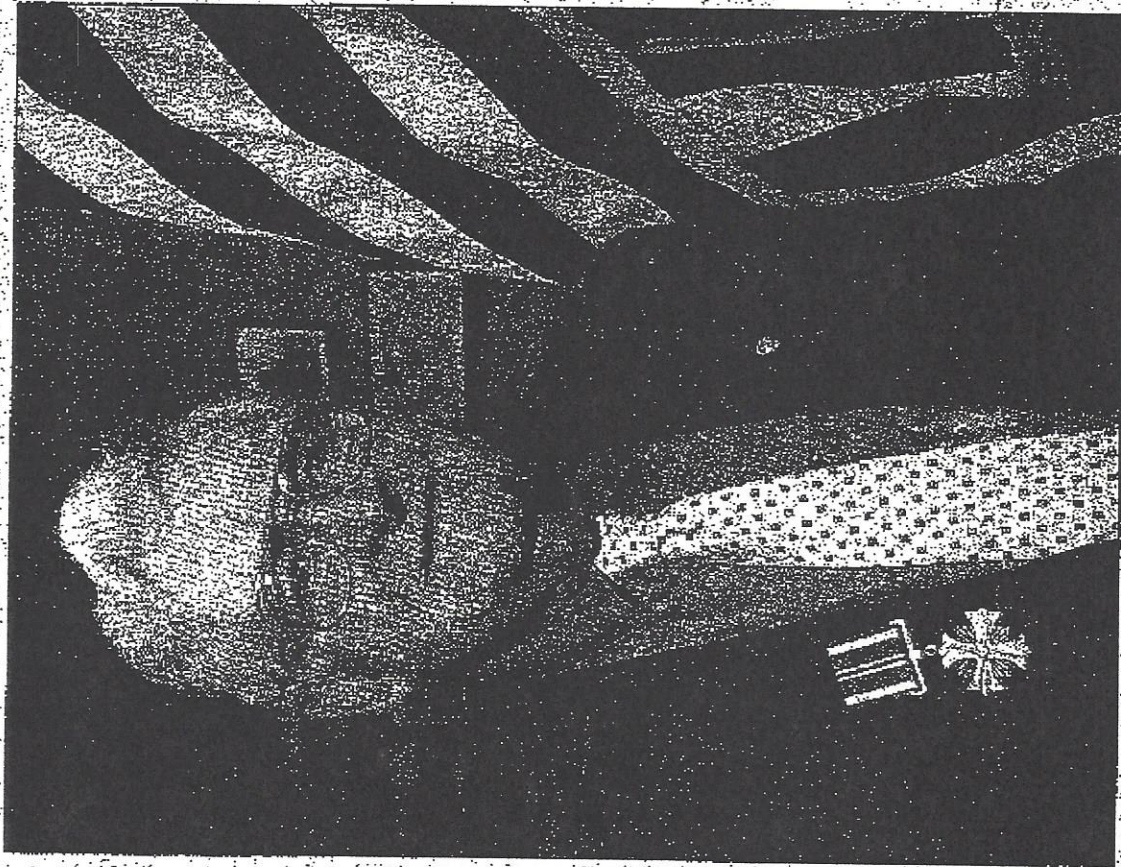
Friends, family and even a few war buddies attended the event and looked on as U.S. Rep. Paul Gillmor, R-Old Fort, presented the medal.

Choking up just a little as he spoke, Chudzinski joked, "A man's not supposed to cry, and I didn't really cry, but I sure teared up a little when I found out I was getting this."

Only 17 when he enlisted, Chudzinski served as a tail-gunner on a B24 long-range bomber. His outfit flew some of the longest missions of any group at the time, some as long as 15 hours.

On a mission over New Guinea, a 2,000-pound bomb became stuck, hanging from its tail end and dangling out the plane's bay door.

The bomb actually banged against the door a few times, just a little off the fuse.



ROBERT CHUDZINSKI wears the Distinguished Flying Cross presented to him by U.S. Rep. Paul Gillmor for his service in World War II.

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# World War II veteran presented with Flying Cross

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"If that had been a 500-pounder, that would have been it," he said.

Chudzinski and a crewmate were left with two options. They could evacuate the plane, which at the time was flying 8,000 feet over the Pacific Ocean, or they could try to pry the bomb loose.

Walking along an aluminum plank only eight to 10 inches across, Chudzinski eased out with a metal crank similar to a Model T crank, but about seven feet long.

"The walkway couldn't have been wider than that," he said, "because my heel and my toes were both leaning off the edge."

Eventually, Chudzinski and his crewmate managed to pry the end of the bomb free by reaching behind their heads and rotating the crank. The bomb splashed harmlessly into the Pacific Ocean below.

When retelling the story, Chudzinski retained some humor and managed to joke about the situation.

"You do things like that in the service," he said. "You don't even think about it. I was only 19. I didn't know what I was doing."

However, it was years before Chudzinski ever considered the possibility that he may have earned a medal for his efforts.

He read a similar account in the Tampa Tribune of a crew from another plane who were awarded the Cross, and he made a call to John Kelly, senior vice officer for the Sanusky County Veterans of Foreign Wars.

Kelly suggested he contact his old crew and get a written account of what happened that day. By the time he was back from Florida, Chudzinski said, the letters were already in his mailbox.

There was only one problem.

No one could remember the exact date of the incident.

"We were young," Chudzinski said. "No one knew what day it was. The only day we knew was the first of the month because that's when we got paid."

Without the date, however, the Department of Defense would not award the medal.

That's where Gillmor came in. A World War II veteran himself, Gillmor took up the case. His office called the Department of Defense repeatedly, helping cut through the red tape so that Chudzinski could finally get his medal.

"Sometimes it's the squeaky wheel theory," Gillmor said. "If we bug them enough, some-

times we get stuff done. That's one of the good parts of the job when you can do something like this."

Chudzinski received notice that he would receive the award on Sept. 23.

"I feel proud," he said. "I feel humble. I am happy for my family and for my grandkids that they'll be able to talk about what their grandfather did long after I'm gone."

When he was discharged, Chudzinski returned home to work at the family business, where he still helps out when he can.

"When I got out, I had to go home and go to work," he said. "The Army was easier."