307th Bombardment Group News Notes 2005-2

Merry Christmas, Happy Hanukkah, and Happy New Year!

Well, another year has come and almost gone. It has been an eventful year for our country with the continuing war in Iraq, the tsunami, and the hurricanes in the south. The overwhelming generosity of the American people never seems to waiver when there is a need either in our own country or somewhere else in the world. In a sense, we as a group are responsible for this generosity because at a time when this country needed our help to preserve the free will of our country and others, we were there to answer the call. Let us all give thanks for all the privileges we enjoy and remember that we still live in the greatest country in the world. My family and I wish you and yours the Happiest of Holidays and the hope of a very prosperous New Year!

Jim Walsh
President

News from Your Secretary

I have been very pleased with the response to the question "What's going On with You?" I have enjoyed reading your submissions and hope that you keep them coming.

Please remember that it is time for dues to be paid again. They are $30.00 and may be sent to me at: Cathy Daniel, 510 Riverview Road, Colonial Heights, VA 23834. I am enclosing an envelope for your convenience. If your spouse is also a member or is joining the group, please also include her/his dues and also their names. We welcome new members.

I am working on a new roster and I appreciate you all keeping me informed of members that have moved or taken their last flight. It is making it easier for me to make a roster that is as up to date as it can be.

Last Flight since last News Notes:

Ed Farley 8-26-05
C. Lynch Christian 9-26-05
Eileen Buskness 10-15-04
Gus Skidas 10-07-05

Soar High and Rest Well our Friends

What's Going on with You?

On August 6, 2005 my daughter, her husband, one son and I attended "Thunder Over Michigan" Air Show at Willow Run Airport. This was presented by the Yankee Air Museum to raise money to restore their museum hanger destroyed by fire last year. There were 8 B-17's, 2-B-24's, 14 AT-6's, 2TBM-3 Avengers, ME109, MIG 17, a Duck, 4 P47's, A-10, 3B-25's, C47, 2 Steramans PT 17, German Fighter Jet, 4P-51's.

It was a great show and a B-25, B-17, and B 24 (Witchcraft) were providing rides. I chose to fly in the Witchcraft. It had been 60 years since I flew in a B-24. I finished my missions the end of April, 1945. After take off I stood between the pilots as I had done on many missions. I told the pilot that I had been a navigator in the Pacific and he pointed to the instrument panel and said this is our navigator (GPS). The ride brought back many memories, but it was much harder getting around and through the Bomb Bay now compared to 60 years ago. Albert (Al) Gill 424th

I was the navigator on the Willard Pueppke Crew in the 424th Squadron. Upon return to civilian life, I resumed my farming business, married and helped rear five wonderful children. A grandson is to be married in the famous Francisco Grande Hotel, a few miles west of Casa Grande, AZ

Wayne Wuertz

No matter who you are
No matter who you know
When a special time arises
It's time you have to go

And when my special time arrives
I have a special wish
Don't put me in a wooden box
But in a fancy dish

And when we all are gathered
And while the pastor spoke
All eyes are raised toward Heaven
While I go up in Smoke.

Rock Daigle.

<u>Update on Maryann Qualia</u>

Biopsy 100% clear of cancer. Congratulations!!!!!!!!!

FROM YOUR HISTORIAN

As usual there are several requests by relatives seeking information on overseas deaths of 307th personnel or similar information on relatives who returned home but never spoke of their wartime experiences. If you can help any of these people, please write or call them. You may be the only person who can help!

Lt. Michael J. McCabe
and the
424th McCullough Crew

Jim McCabe, son of the late Mike McCabe , writes in search of any living crew members of the 424th McCullough flight crew. He writes: "I just learned of the 307th BG Association. I saw that you are familiar with personnel who served in Morotai. My father, Lt. Mike "Rip" McCabe, was a navigator with the 424th from Dec '44-Sept '45. I believe the name of his bomber was "My Heart Belongs to Daddy". Dad passed away this past April. He was among the many who did not discuss the war. I gave up inquiring years ago when I learned how it truly upset him to do so. I know a major issue for him was his being late back to base in Tonopah, Nevada and missing one of his last training flights. The bomber took off without him and exploded. All his fellow crew members were killed. Dad was shipped overseas a week or two later through Hickam Field. It is only now that we, his six children, are beginning to learn of his war record. Despite having little to no respect for our parents privacy growing up we never stumbled upon his service records which we recently found complete. He had them stashed real good. He was awarded an Air Medal with two oak leaf clusters with other ribbons. We have also learned he was the lead navigator on 25 of the 37 missions that he flew. Until the day he died, my father spoke with reverence of their pilot, Gene "Mac" McCulllough (I believe this was his name, I may have the spelling wrong) who landed their bomber safely with no landing gear after one of the missions. Does anyone know if any of my father's crew mates are still alive? What info would you need to help me? I have Dad's ASN. We have found many photos/ records. It would be a great honor to attend the reunion and share this info. Thanks, Jim McCabe

Phone: ***804-512-1180***
Email: immcc13@earthlink.net

Sgt. Billy Joe Hutton

This request comes from Mrs. Laura Hutton, wife of Billy Joe Hutton. The Hutton's have been married for over fifty years but Billy Joe never spoke of his military service. He has now been diagnosed with Alzheimer's and is unable to tell Laura anything about his service with the 307th. Laura knows only that he was a flight engineer with 42 missions, and his name in the Association roster shows he was a member of the 424th squadron. If you remember Billy Joe please call or write to Mrs. Hutton with your information. Their address is

806 W, Washington
Kennett, MO 63857
Phone: 573-888-4878

Alfred Skaggs

Gerald Russell, former B-47 pilot, writes: "My friend, Alfred Skaggs, was stationed in the Pacific in WWII with the 307th Bomb Group. He was a cook in the 372nd Squadron. He joined the 372nd in Sioux City, then moved to Hawaii and New Caledonia, then island-hopped the Pacific from 1942 until 1945. He is now 83 years old and would like to contact any of his old comrades." If you remember Mr. Skaggs you may contact Gerald Russell,
via Email at

htmfarms@arkansas.net

and he will forward your message to Alfred Skaggs. Or write Alfred Skaggs directly at:

14252 Highway 94
Rogers, AR 72758
Ph: 479-631-1878

Sgt. Richard R. Roberts

Lt. Charles R. Shaffer with his entire 372nd flight crew was killed when their B-24 crashed into the sea while taking off on a mission to Biak on 5/27/44. This request for information comes from the family of Sgt. Richard Roberts who was the Assistant Radio Operator on the crew. The family is making every effort to locate any bit of information from anyone who knew and may remember Sgt. Roberts and the Shaffer crew. The request came from Butch Fox, a family member and recently retired Army Aviator who flew the AH64 Apaches. Mr. Fox has located about all that is available on the loss of the Shaffer crew including mission reports and missing aircrew reports on the crash. He has done a great job of research. Now he writes "I would be very interested in hearing from any member of the 307th BG or the 372 Sq. regarding Sgt. Richard R. Roberts or anything about him or the crew at the time, or from family members who might have information on anyone from the Shaffer crew. "

You may write Mr. William B. Fox at

626 Nanceen Court
Ballwin MO 63021
Ph: 636-230-5890.

Shipwrecked in Manila Harbor

Jack McLoraine (371st) sends this story of his release to home from the SWPA which was almost as exciting as his combat missions.

There were many significant events of worldwide importance that occurred during the Wilcox' crew overseas tour of duty. Holed up on our little island of Morotai in the Pacific with no radio or newspaper, it was almost as if we existed in a different world. Either we never learned of world happenings or we found out long afterwards, or their importance didn't have the impact they would have had if we had been living normal lives.

We flew our 6th mission on April 13,1945. On our return, we learned of President Franklin D. Roosevelt's death. On May 7, 1945 we flew our 10th tenth mission, eleven hours searching for enemy shipping. That day, Germany surrendered unconditionally to the Allies. To the best of my recollection, no special announcement was made of this event which ended the European phase of WWII.

On June 22, 1945, we flew our 21st mission to the oil fields of Balikpapan, our hottest target. The day before, the Japanese forces on Okinawa surrendered after 2 1/2 months of deadly struggle where over 100,000 Japanese and 13,000 Americans lost their lives. Word of this surrender never reached us.

During the first week of August, 1945, all flight crews were instructed to tear down and burn all living quarters and debris in the camp area in preparation for a move to Okinawa by amphibious LST's. The final assault on Japan was about to begin and we'd be in on the final curtain. But other forces were at work that would drastically change the course of the war. On August 6th, Hiroshima was destroyed by the first atomic bomb; On August 9th, Nagasaki was similarly destroyed. On August 14, 1945, President Truman announced Japan's unconditional surrender and the end of the Pacific phase of WWII. The formal document was signed aboard the USS Missouri in Tokyo Bay on September 2, 1945.

On August 18, 1945 our bombardier, Walt Baltowski, and I received relocation orders terminating our stay on that beautiful, tropical paradise Morotai and returning us to the good old USA. For some strange reason, no other members of our crew received similar orders. Our pilot, Wilcox, RO Emge, and a skeleton crew flew us to Manila, where we were to await the availability of a Liberty ship to return us to the USA. After six days in a huge, open-field tent city, we received orders to proceed to Manila Harbor were we waited in a blistering sun for the tenders that would take us into the harbor to board a 16,000 ton transport, the SS Sea Marlin. While sitting in a patch of grass along the harbor wall, I removed my wristwatch and placed it under a small bush. In the stifling heat, we were perspiring heavily and the wristband was irritating my wrist. Several months earlier, I had sent money home and asked Mom and Dad to buy a gold watch and ship to me, which they did. It was a beautiful gold instrument with a large sweep second-hand.

With the arrival of the tenders, we were hastily assembled and marched to the pier for boarding. Once aboard the Marlin, I lanced toward shore and immediately realized what I had left under a small bush. I could see the bush but there was absolutely no way I could retrieve my watch.

August 25, 1945 the Marlin began its slow withdrawal from Manila Harbor which was overcrowded with ships of every size and description. But as we made out way through the maze of ships, elated at the thought of going home, several of us spotted a large oil tanker that appeared to be moving slowly toward our starboard bow. We could not be sure because of the angle of her course. The anchor ball hanging from the mast indicated she was still at anchor and not moving toward us. As the distance between ships diminished, it was soon evident that we were about to be rammed, and rammed we were! The tanker crew had failed to lower the "anchor ball" as they also got underway.

The collision ripped a hole in our starboard side that appeared to be 15-20 feet wide. Ex-bombardier Baltowski was below deck when the collision occurred but escaped injury.

The Marlin was now taking on water and listing to starboard. The list worsened until we were leaning at a ridiculous angle but remained afloat. In fact, we spent the night on the deck of the Marlin but it was difficult to keep from rolling downhill to the railing. Since the Marlin was no longer seaworthy, on the morning of August 26th, the tenders arrived to return us to the pier from which we had originally come. To say we were depressed was putting it mildly, but a sudden thought brightened my spirit. It is possible that my watch might still be under the bush? On reaching shore, I made a dash for the bush but no watch awaited my arrival!

We reported back to ugly tent-city to await the availability of another Liberty ship, a sad looking bunch of depressed ex-airmen.

Five days later we received orders to proceed to Manila Harbor where we boarded the SS Cape Victory which, at 10,000 tons, was considerably smaller than the Marlin. Without incident we left the harbor arriving at Leyte, Philippines on September 2nd, Ulithi, Caroline Islands on September 5th and Eniwetik, Marshall Islands on September 10th. The destroyer escort that had accompanied us from Manila now returned to base and we were left to continue our journey across the Pacific Ocean unescorted. My sketchy log runs out at this point; our part in the war was over and there was little incentive to continue keeping records. But as this project develops, I regret the decision to discontinue maintaining a journal. From here on, it's my memory.

But to pick up where we left off, we encountered a violent storm halfway across the Pacific which lasted three days. The height of the waves and pitching motion of the ship were such that when the bow was down, the stern was totally out of the water, exposing the powerful screws that propelled us and sending violent shuddering vibrations throughout the vessel. Almost all aboard were deathly sick, a fate I was spared. I recall one lunchtime during this period when two of us showed up in the galley. Only soup and apples were available. Even the cooks were sick. We stood at the long, narrow waist-high eating benches that were anchored in the ship floor and extended across the entire galley. As the ship pitched and rolled, the apples would roll from one side of the room to the other. We were OK as long as we didn't look at the soup rolling around in the bowl. 28 days after leaving Manila, the USS Cape Victory sailed through the Straits of Juan de Fuca off the coast of Washington. We were welcomed by a bevy of beautiful girls and a military band, a very emotional moment.

Our overseas duty was a relatively brief 8 months but so much had happened during that short span of time, that as the US coastline appeared we suddenly realized what we had been through and coupled with the expectation of seeing loved ones and pride in our country with its heritage, it brought a lump in the throat and tears to the eyes. If Hitler's Germany and Hirohito's Japan had succeeded in carrying out their insidious plan of world domination, God knows where we would be today. To have taken arms against these aggressors and won the victory justifies a feeling of pride in our country and its heritage.

Within 24 hours of arriving in the US we were processed and sent to discharge centers near our homes. I was discharged from Fort Sheridan, Illinois on 12/21/1945 and given a ride to downtown Chicago where I boarded the elevated for Oak Park and home. It was an eerie feeling riding with civilians in business attire while I was still in disheveled flight togs, carrying a beat-up flight bag, with everyone staring at me and facing an uncertain future. It was an uncomfortable ride. My parents must have been shocked when I walked in unexpectedly...we sat up into the wee hours and talked and talked and talked.

Brief Explanations for Concerns of Our Members

This has been a very tough year for the entire group. As you know we had been faced with several problems in order to keep the group active and running as a Not For Profit organization. With this being said, I will cut right to the chase. We are still hitting many roadblocks with Cena. We have asked several times and made offers to allow us to send a trucking company to her home to pick up the materials that belong to the 307th,, but she strictly refuses to let go of them. This has and still is hampering the ability for this organization to move forward with new members as well as sell items to existing members. We also know that she is still conducting business with the merchandise and neglecting to send the money to the acting treasure for deposit into our account.

I know that several months ago Cena sent out letters to many of you stating her position and that in the By-Laws we had no right to remove her from the board. You have all been sent a copy of the By-Laws and I trust have been through them with a fine toothcomb. If you have, then you will know and understand how this organization needs to run in order to maintain us. I have purposely not addressed this in any of the newsletters because I felt that we needed to do this at the reunion in Seattle. I have received mailings from some of our members requesting that we give full explanations of the issues and all I can say to this is that it would be very costly for us to do this in a newsletter. This is my justification for saving it until the reunion.

We are still in need of a person to handle the organizations Treasurers position, so I would like to hear from anyone whom may be interested in this position.

Jim Walsh
President

REUNION NEWS

NEWS FROM THE 307TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (HV) ASSOCIATION

2006 REUNION IN SEATTLE, WASHINGTON

November 2005 Issue 1

2006 REUNION PLANNING UPDATE

Veterans Day – Nov 11, 2005

Welcome to the 307th Bombardment Group Association ***Reunion News.***

Things are progressing well for the 2006 Reunion of the 307th Bombardment Group. I am excited and honored that the membership decided last year in Nashville to hold its 2006 Reunion here in Seattle, Washington.

The reunion will be held at the beautiful Hyatt Regency Hotel in Bellevue Washington. The Bellevue Hyatt is making rooms available for the 307th Bomb Group at the very special rate of $99 per night. For more information on the Bellevue Hyatt and how to make your reservations now, see page 2.

The dates for the reunion are Wednesday, August 23 through Sunday, August 27, 2006.

Bellevue is a perfect location for the reunion. Hotel rooms will be more affordable than downtown Seattle, but we're still just 15 minutes to most of the key attractions that Seattle has to offer.

And the hotel location in downtown Bellevue is ideal. Bellevue is a pedestrian friendly community. The Hyatt is just across the street from Washington's premier shopping mall, as well as two theater complexes, the Bellevue Art Museum, quiet city parks, a range of dining opportunities, and easy public transit.

Each day of the reunion there will be a variety of events at the reunion hotel, as well as organized tours to the top tourist attractions that Seattle has to offer. We will also have some unique events tailored for our veterans and their families.

Already we have tours to McChord Air Force Base, the Boeing Factory, and the Museum of Flight planned. There will be many opportunities to visit downtown Seattle attractions, including Pike Place Market (and its famous flying fish), Pioneer Square, and the Waterfront.

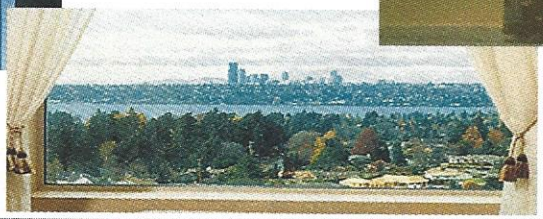
We'll be having a special presentation one evening by a member who visited Yap this past summer – he'll be sharing his discoveries of special interest to all 307th members.

But won't it be raining in Seattle you ask? Well, August is Seattle's little weather secret. Days are mostly sunny (yes sunny – bring your sunscreen and sun glasses!), with pleasant temperatures usually between the low 80's and high 60's, with low humidity.

Look through this first issue of the ***Reunion News.*** In this and future issues I'll keep you updated on more details as they are finalized. I'll also try to paint a picture for you of what to expect when you visit the Seattle area for the reunion next year.

The 307th Bombardment Group had its World War II origins here in Washington State, at a little town called Ephrata out in the desert on the east side of the Cascade Mountains. As you and your family plan to attend the 2006 reunion, remember that the 307th will be coming home to its origins here in Washington. I guarantee that Seattle and Washington State will make you feel at home in 2006!

Greg Babinski



Reserve Your Rooms Now for the 2006 Reunion

While it is still many months until the reunion in August 2006, I've had several people call to tell me that they are ready to reserve their rooms for next year now. Here are the details.

Hyatt Regency Bellevue
900 Bellevue Way NE
Bellevue, Washington, USA 98004

Local reservation number: 425-698-4140
Toll free reservation number: 800-233-1234

When you make your reservation tell the reservation clerk that you will be attending the 2006 reunion of the:

307TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP ASSOCIATION

It is very important to refer to the 307th when you call. This will both ensure that you get our special room rate and that the association gets credit for your reservation to help us meet the minimum room commitment we need for free use of the meeting space.

Our special nightly guest room rates are:

Single occupancy:	$ 99
Double occupancy:	$ 99
Triple occupancy:	$124
Quadruple occupancy:	$149

Scheduled reunion events will begin on Wednesday August 23 and conclude on Sunday August 27, 2006.

The Hyatt will also make these special rates available to those attending the reunion beginning on Saturday August 19 and extending as late as Sunday night, August 27. This may be of interest to those who want to arrive early or depart late to do a little sight seeing on your own.

Guestroom Amenities:

Views of downtown Bellevue, Lake Washington, and Mount Rainier welcome you to newly renovated interiors featuring one king or two double Grand beds with ultra-plush pillows, the softest sheeting and thick down blankets piled upon pillow-top mattresses. Hotel

Preliminary 2006 Reunion Program

The program for the reunion is well under development. Listed below is a day by outline of the activities and events that are currently planned:

Wednesday, August 23
- Reunion Registration Opens
- Memorabilia Room Open
- Possible Daytime Tours:
  - Seattle Sightseeing
- Opening Day Evening Social and Presentation on Recent Visit to Yap

Thursday, August 24
- Memorabilia Room Open
- Interview Room Open
- Possible Daytime Tours:
  - Museum of Flight
  - Seattle Sightseeing
- Seattle Mariners vs. NY Yankees

Friday, August 25
- Memorabilia Room Open
- Interview Room Open
- Possible Daytime Tours:
  - McChord Air Force Base
  - Seattle Sightseeing
- Evening Membership Meeting

Saturday, August 26
- Memorabilia Room Open
- Interview Room Open
- Possible Daytime Tours:
  - Boeing Factory Tour
  - Seattle Sightseeing
- Pre-Banquette Photo Session
- Banquette with Entertainment

Sunday, August 27
- Reunion ends
- "We'll Say Goodbye"