



# 307th BOMBARDMENT GROUP (HV) ASSOCIATION

**"THE LONG RANGERS"**

## Newsletter .. 1997-1



APRIL 1, 1997

### QUOTES OF NOTE



*"Stick to your task 'till it sticks to you;  
Beginners are many, but enders are few.  
Honor, power, place and praise  
Will come, in time, to the one who stays.*

*Stick to your task 'till it sticks to you;  
Bend at it, sweat at it, smile at it too;  
For out of the bend and the sweat and  
the smile,  
Will come life's victories, after awhile."*

- Unknown



*"Nurture your mind with great thoughts,  
for you will never go any higher than  
you think."*

- Benjamin Disraeli



*"Don't let life discourage you. Everyone  
who got where he is had to begin where  
he was."*

- Robert L. Evans



*"I want it said of me by those who knew  
me best, that I always plucked a thistle  
and planted a flower where I thought  
a flower should grow."*

- Abraham Lincoln



*"The world is composed of takers and  
givers. The takers eat better, but the  
givers sleep better."*

- Anonymous

*"Many a time I have wanted to stop talk-  
ing and find out what I really believed."*

- Walter Lippman

### NOTES FROM THE PRESIDENT

By this time most of you who attended the San Diego Reunion in October have received and viewed your copy of Flor Lanning's very professional video of our reunion activities. This Association is deeply indebted to both Flor and Marge for the fantastic job they did on the entire reunion organization and the video is the icing on the cake. I'm told he has been getting kudos from many members on this and as of the first of March had fewer than a dozen copies left to fulfill orders from those who didn't attend the reunion. It is a beautiful reminder of a very successful reunion.

I need three volunteers to serve as the site review committee for the year 2000 reunion. This site committee will contact visitors and convention bureaus in the proposed sites to narrow the choices down for the membership to vote on by mail ballot prior to the 1998 Membership business meeting. I'd like to hear from the members who would care to have their favorite cities enter into consideration for Reunion 2000. I've had suggestions for Denver, Colorado; Washington DC. Asheville, North Carolina, Montgomery, Alabama.

Dave Owens - President

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## FROM YOUR HISTORIANS

### Pacific War MIA Memorial

Though it's a bit early for Memorial Day we'll cover information related to that holiday recently received from Ed Jurkens. Exerpts from his letter:

*"During the 31 years that I have lived in Honolulu I have visited the National Cemetery of the Pacific in Punchbowl Crater many times. On Memorial Day each grave is decorated with a U.S. flag and a lei placed there mostly by school children. It's an impressive sight. Last year I decided to walk up to Punchbowl and copy the names of 307th men engraved on the Court of the Missing. This turned out to be a bigger undertaking than I thought it would be, not only because of the walk uphill and most of the way down (6 3/4 miles) but also because there were many more names than I expected. After copying 38 names from WW II I thought I would check on 307th members missing in Korea and was surprised to find 78 names. Later I asked an official at Punchbowl why some names of men lost during WW II are not recorded, mentioning a friend, Ed Greene, who was lost over Buka, north of Bougainville. I was told that names of those lost*

*west of the Solomons are probably engraved on the Court of the Missing in Manila, P.I. However, those men missing during the Korean War are listed in Honolulu."*

This seems a strange situation to us, considering the strained political situation which has existed between the governments of this country and the Philippines. These bad feelings, combined with the eruption of Mt. Pinatubo on Luzon, forced evacuation of the U.S. military from the Philippines including the Thirteenth Air Force which moved from Clark Field to Guam. Perhaps consideration should be given to another monument at Punchbowl Crater engraved with the names now found only on the Court of the Missing in Manila. It is certain that most families and friends of those honored by such a memorial would be much more likely to visit it in Honolulu than Manila.

Be that as it may, we are indebted to Ed Jurkens for that long hike up to National Cemetery of the Pacific and for taking the time to copy the following list of 307th men whose names are engraved in the Court of the Missing. The list will without doubt bring back many memories of old friends and the real cost of the freedoms we all enjoy.

#### World War II 307th

Lester L. Amstutz	S/Sgt	307
Frank Andalora	S/Sgt	371
Ray W. Barnes	S/Sgt	307
Charles B. Bates, Jr.	S/Sgt	424
Anthony Benvenuto	Capt	307
Colonel A. Brooks	S/Sgt	371
Willard L. Brown	1/Lt	370
George F. Cleaver	S/Sgt	307
Gerald W. Conger	S/Sgt	307
Johnathan E. Coxwell	Maj	307
Robert J. Dunkle	S/Sgt	307
William Ebel	T/Sgt	307
Melvin Feigen	1/Lt	371
albert S. Feller	S/Sgt	370
Malcolm D. Frankel	2/Lt	372
Robert H. Guskey	1/Lt	370
Edgar G. Higginbotham	S/Sgt	370
Richard E. Hoffman	S/Sgt	307
John D. Hoyt	Capt	372
Richard L. Jacobs	2/Lt	371
Wallace R. Johnson	2/Lt	307
William W. Johnston	Sgt	372
Raymond W. Kreimeyer	S/Sgt	307
Richard M. Leather	2/Lt	372
James R. McCoy	S/Sgt	424
William D. Mulberry	2/Lt	307
Raymond T. Nolan	T/Sgt	307
John N. Roks	S/Sgt	307
Seymour H. Rosenblum	2/Lt	307
Anthony Salvaggio	S/Sgt	424
Robert F. Schmidt	1/Lt	307
Gene B. Snyder	1/Lt	372
Norman R. Spearman	2/Lt	307
Malvin J. Standridge	T/Sgt	307
Julius Reiss	S/Sgt	370
John V. Taffe	1/Lt	372
Lynn R. Walker	2/Lt	371
William A. Walker	2/Lt	424

#### Korean War 307th

Robert H. Adams	Capt	372
Larry B. Akins	S/Sgt	307
Charles E. Allen, Jr	1/Lt	372
Charles T. Avery	M/Sgt	307
Donald E. Brine	S/Sgt	371
Richard G. Bristol	1/Lt	372
Nelson M. Brown	M/Sgt	371
John L. Buckner	Capt	307
David E. Degolyer	A/1Cl	307
Joseph S. Dougherty	S/Sgt	370
Emmett O. Evans	1/Lt	307
James W. Flemming, Jr	1/Lt	307
James A. Foulks, Jr	Capt	372
Alois A. Fueher	S/Sgt	372
James A. Gallant	A/1Cl	371
Fred H. Garrison	Capt	307
John S. Gonteski	A/1Cl	307
John L. Haas	Capt	370
Robert W. Hamblin	M/Sgt	370
Keith E. Hammion	T/Sgt	307
Nathan C. Haynes, Jr	Capt	371
Melvin B. Hays	A/1Cl	371
Robert R. Hebert	Capt	372
Arthur Heise	Capt	372
August Hinrichs, Jr	M/Sgt	371
Jimmie R. Hobday	A/1Cl	371
John J. Horner	1/Lt	371
Melvin J. Howard	Capt	307
Laurence H. Hudson	1/Lt	371
John H. Jackson	1/Lt	371
Wayne F. Jensen	S/Sgt	370
Gerold E. Johnson	A/2Cl	371
James Jones	A/2Cl	307
Clarence S. Kates	S/Sgt	371
Robert P. Kelleher	A/1Cl	307
Henry B. Kelly	1/Lt	371
James W. Kelly	A/1Cl	371
Jack E. Kennedy	M/Sgt	371

Charles F. Kirk	1/Lt	307
Robert M. Krumm	Capt	371
James R. Le Baron	A/1Cl	371
James A. Lowe	Capt	371
Israel Marshal, Jr	Pfc	371
Ernest R. McAdoo	S/Sgt	371
James W. McLain	A/1Cl	372
Irwin Moldafsky	1/Lt	372
Ara Mooradian	1/Lt	372
Jack L. Murray	1/Lt	372
Quenton L. Newswanger	T/Sgt	370
John M. Nutting	Capt	371
Julius E. O'Neal	L/Col	370
Jess A. Osborne, Jr	A/2Cl	371
Leonaard G. Owens	A/1Cl	372
Roger W. Penninger	Capt	370
Spiro J. Peters	1/Lt	371
Duane M. Phillips	1/Lt	307
William K. Phillips	1/Lt	371
Con F. Poynor	1/Lt	371
Paul R. Reiche	1/Lt	372
Ted G. Royer	1/Lt	371
James Ruska	M/Sgt	372
Warren W. Schmitt	A/2Cl	370
Norman W. Schneidt	Capt	307
Arthur H. Schuman	M/Sgt	370
Thomas L. Shields	Capt	370
Otha P. Stanley	S/Sgt	371
Clem L. Stinnett	A/2Cl	372
Leon C. Strieff	S/Sgt	371
Lewis A. Thomas, Jr	S/Sgt	307
William E. Threlkeld	Capt	372
James O. Trosclair	A/1Cl	371
James C. Vretis	1/Lt	370
Charles C. Wade	S/Sgt	371
Edward C. Wahlgrin	Capt	370
Edward A. Webb	A/1Cl	370
Carl E. Wist	A/2Cl	370
Claude V. White	1/Lt	371
Merlyn K. Williams	A/1Cl	372



## Notable Postwar Accomplishments of 307th Men

Our last Newsletter (96-3) carried a letter from John Vanderpoel suggesting that we consider more coverage of the post-war lives and accomplishments of 307th men. The article continued with a discussion of John's continuing work in the development and manufacture of racing wheel chairs for paraplegics. If you have ever seen these wheelchairs race you will know it is a very serious event for which John and his company provide an invaluable service.

This is our second installment of what we hope will become a regular series on notable postwar activities and achievements by 307th members.

Art Barker was tail gunner on the 424th crew of Willard Pueppke. He flew 51 missions, was credited with six Zeroes, and picked up a Purple Heart and a commendation on the same Truk mission, the commendation when pictures he took "for fun" proved to be the only ones taken of the day's bomb hits.

In the years following the war Art became a stand-up comedian and bit part player in B and C Hollywood movies. As the years passed he realized his life had gone into an ever increasing downward spiral and began to pick himself up "by his own bootstraps" with the same resolve demonstrated during his time with the 307th. After getting himself back on his feet he realized that his life's work must be helping others reclaim their lives as he had done. Since then more than thirty five years of Art's life has been devoted to working with and helping people with drug and alcohol problems.

In 1970 Art and his wife Shelly founded The Seed, a non-profit adult voluntary program of drug and alcohol rehabilitation. Located in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida, the program has grown to provide many additional services including: Individual Counseling, Group Sessions, Family and Marriage Counseling, Vocational Counseling, Prevention (Drug and Alcohol), After Care Services, Recreational Activities, Information and Referral as well as Community Outreach. A proven success rate of over 90% attests to the effectiveness of the programs developed by Art and Shelly. The impact of The Seed in the field of rehabilitation has brought Art many national and local awards, among them the Freedom's Foundation at Valley Forge Award, the American Bicentennial Commission "Patriot Award" for the State of Florida, and the Florida Education Association "Special Man of the Year" Award. He has also appeared as an expert witness before the U.S. House Select Committee on Crime, the U.S. House Sub-Committee on Education and the U.S. Senate Sub-Committee on Executive Reorganization.

Commenting as President and Founder of The Seed, Art says: *"More than thirty -five years of my life have been devoted to working with people with drug and alcohol problems. My experience in dealing with them has proven there are no short cuts to putting one's life together. Everyone needs to have a meaning and purpose to their life. We help people rediscover their sense of idealism and adventure and help them find peace of mind by peeling away the layers of fears, resentments and hangups they have lived with for years."*

*"Our first Seed reunion in 1990 was a great success. Seeing these young people (many were teen agers when I last saw them) as they are today - doctors, lawyers, businessmen, teachers, etc., with their husbands, wives and families proved a wonderful and emotional experience for me, Shelly and the Staff."*

*"I take a great deal of pride in the accomplishments and recognition of our program and the impact it has had in the field of rehabilitation. The Seed has been in existence only since 1970 but the innovative ideas and techniques I devised are today in use in many other programs, not only in Florida but throughout the country."*

Internet devotees will find more on The Seed at - <http://www.the-seed.org>

This is only one story of the positive contributions made to the world by former members of the 307th. There are many more. Please send us yours!

## Secret 424th Mission - Update

We have told of Walt Benedetti's search for the story behind an apparently secret 307th mission in Newsletters 93-1 and 94-1). Neither official channels nor these Newsletter articles have been of help in his search.

The mission was flown from Morotai, probably, Walt believes, between May 18th and May 28th of 1945. It began with the bulletin board posting of one 424th crew, plus Walt, for a special mission. Walt, a 424th photographer, flew with many crews but was not acquainted with this one and does not recall the name of the pilot. The aircraft was a B-24 brought in especially for the mission. Crew members received special equipment and were sworn to twenty-five years of secrecy. This so impressed Walt that, except for flying time, he kept no record of the mission.

His flying time was 9:00 hours, so the target could have been as much as 700 miles from Morotai. Walt thinks they had fighter cover which turned back before the bomber reached the target. During the flight a man, thought to have been a civilian, would not allow those in the waist of the plane to enter or even look into the bomb bay. Walt was unable to see the actual bombing but when the right waist gunner later tapped him on the shoulder and called his attention to smoke rising over the target he pulled the large camera out of the camera hatch and took several pictures from the waist window. These films were apparently confiscated when the plane returned to Morotai.

There is no mention of such a mission in microfilm records of either the 424th or the 307th. Walt's Form 5 shows no such mission credit. Years of correspondence and personal contact with military and civilian authorities have turned up nothing. Walt knows he did not dream or imagine his experience. We hope a fellow crewman on that mission, perhaps a new Association member who has not seen our previous articles, will read this one, remember the incident and write to help fill in some of the missing information.

Walt's address is:

Walt Benedetti,  
201 S. Lafayette St.,  
Denver, CO 80209



### Search for Another Bit of Missing Documentation

Considerable pre-planning went into the first series of 307th strikes on Balikpapan, Borneo which were flown during late September and early October of 1944. Perhaps the most important phase of this planning involved efforts to make it possible for the B-24 to wring enough flying time out of a maximum fuel load to make a 2600 mile round trip and still carry ammunition enough to defend itself and bombs enough to make the entire effort worthwhile. Test flights

were run on B-24s loaded as they would be for the actual mission to determine such things as optimum power settings for the engines and specific aircraft loading instructions which, it was hoped, would allow the aircraft to maintain its factory-determined center of gravity. This and much other vital information learned during the planning phase of the mission was mimeographed and given to each pilot. A six-plane test mission, duplicating the projected Balikpapan mission in all respects except that it was flown over friendly territory, convinced the planners that

the mission was at least "feasible". It now remained for the crews who were to fly the mission to learn if this was true. You know the rest of the story.

We have been searching for a copy of these additional instruction sheets given each pilot on the early Balikpapan missions which outlined the special steps necessary for the success of the mission such as power settings and continual redistribution of weight, both men and equipment, as the mission proceeded.

If you have a copy of these special instruction sheets we would appreciate a Xerox copy for the 307th Archives.

### Information on 307th Aircraft?

A letter from a Mr. Russell E. Fink appeared in the most recent issue of Briefing, Journal of the Liberator Club, asking for help in locating members of the WW II 307th Bomb Group. The very next day a letter from him arrived in our mail. The gist of his message:

*"I am looking for information about aircraft that were may have been assigned to the 307th Bomb Group. I have a number of photographs of B-24 bombers taken by U. S. Navy photographer Parlin Snow that I am trying to get published. I need information to include in an article that will accompany the photographs. Attached is a list of the aircraft I am interested in and the unit to which I believe they were attached. Any information your membership can provide will be helpful. I would like to*

*contact flight or ground crews or anyone else familiar with any of the planes who might be familiar with any of the aircraft. Thanks for your help."*

*Russell Fink  
12 Harvest Hill Drive  
Stockton, NJ 08559*

We don't know Mr. Fink's plans for publication of his photos but, in any event, do not provide member's addresses in answer to such requests. However, if you have knowledge of any of the following aircraft which you know to have been with the 307th and feel so inclined, you can write him at the above address. Should you write him, please send your Historians a copy of your information because we plan to request prints of his photos for our files.

### B-24 Aircraft photographed by Navy Photographer Parlin Snow

The Topper/B-24D/41-23910	307BG, 371BS	Willie's Wolves Den/B-24J/42-73146	307BG, 371BS
Pirate Lady/B-24J/42-72872	307BG	Frenisi/B-24D/42-40323	307BG, 371BS
Star Duster/B-24D/42-40679	307BG, 370BS	The Lady Margaret/42-40639	5BG, 868BS
Madame Libby/B-24D/42-40838	5BG, 868BS (Lost 6-14-44)	The Big Sleep/B-24J/42-73270	307BG, 370BS
The Jolly Roger		Snow Job/B-24D/42-41230	5BG, 31BS
Snuffy's Mischief Maker/4*-***82		Wishful Thinking	5BG, 11BS
Clumsy Baby/B-24J/42-73461	307BG & 5BG (?)	Passionate Witch/B-24D/42-41124	
Persuader/B-24J/42-73277	307BG, 372BS	Swanky Franky (Topless woman in shorts dropping a bomb)	
Rude Nude/B-24D/41-24151	307BG, 371BS	104 Seabees (W/Patzlaff, Eickenmeyer, Dennison, Iannaccone, Snyder)	
Hell from Heaven/B-24D/42-72829	307BG	No Name (Topless blonde wearing nightie - Pete Rowe, 23rd)	
Hoot Owl Express/B-24D/42-40235	307BG, 372BS	No Name (Nude blonde wearing boxing gloves)	
Chick's Chick	Navy VP-106 (?)	No Name (Nude in front of mirror - Smitty & Al, pilots?)	
Ramp Tramp/B-24D/42-40651	5BG, 868BS Lost 9-9-44	No Name (Face of women/ long blonde hair - Pilot, Fuller, Bomb, Wick.	
No Duds/B-24J/42-73256	5BG	NOTE: We have included the entire list, thinking that some of the planes not so listed might have been 307th aircraft.	

### Reunion Photos - Crews and Other

Several members have asked why they did not receive the crew or group photo taken by the photographer at the San Diego reunion. An order form for these photos was included in the envelope along with your reunion portrait proofs. Those who may have overlooked it and failed to order their crew or group photo will be happy to know that prints of all of the groups photographed are still available. They are:

1. Reeves Crew
2. Christian Crew
3. Fogelman Crew
4. Daniel Crew
5. Harris Crew
6. Douglass Crew
7. Hanson Crew
8. 424th Sqdn (?)
9. Barner & McCluskey Crew

10. Reamey Crew
11. Boeman Crew
12. Weisleder Crew
13. Patterson Crew
14. Hartzell Crew
15. Teichman Crew
16. Camp Crew
17. Ground Crew Personnel

Prints of these group photos may be ordered by number and crew or group name. Prices: are \$7.00 (5x7) or \$10.00 (8x10).

Monarch Systems recently changed its name after moving into new and expanded facilities. Print orders and payment should be sent to their new name and address:

Rainbow Publishers  
200 Distribution Drive  
Mansfield, Ohio 44905

### B-24 Site on the Internet

The Internet continues to grow by leaps and bounds, though it remains a total mystery to this writer. However, we have already included one Internet address in the Historian's contribution to this Newsletter and are about to give drop a second one. We are not familiar with Internet addresses printed and hope those printed here will be of value.

Assoc. member Robert J. Dunn, nephew of Robert J. Mansell who was lost over Palau Island in late August of 1944, wrote recently to tell us of a B-24 web site. This site is at present concerned mostly with the war in Europe but as time goes on this should change. For those of you who are active on the Internet, the address of this particular B-24 site was reported to us as: <http://www.mach3ww.com/b24/>

### A Navy Pat on the Back

Many of you remember seeing Bulletin Board postings on Wakde or Noemfoor of the following note from Gen. Sutherland, MacArthur's Chief of Staff, to Gen. Streett, CG of the 13th Air Force, regarding a letter he had received from Navy Admiral Carney. In

response to many requests from members we print a copy of the note below, an exact copy transcribed from a dim and unprintable copy of the original from our 307th microfilm. The Admiral's comments contrast with current WWII histories which seldom give the AAF, especially the 13th, credit for its important part in the Pacific victory.

GENERAL HEADQUARTERS  
SOUTHWEST PACIFIC AREA  
Office of the Chief-Of-Staff

21 September 1944

Major General St. Clair Streett  
Commanding General, Thirteenth Air Force.

I have just had a letter from Admiral Carney, Chief of Staff, Third Fleet, in which he said that the "Damned 13th Air Force has just about spoiled the war for our carriers, particularly at Yap; Davison's Command, Task Group 38.4, left Yap in disgust after the first day because our old Ex-SoPac 13th Air Force had left no decent targets.

We all feel good with you to see such a comment.

Cordially,

s/ R. K. Sutherland  
t/ R. K. SUTHERLAND  
Lieutenant General, United States Army



### 370th REUNION - OCTOBER 1997

Due to some health problems of Ira Anderson, Glenn Norwood and Joseph Grooms have taken over the responsibility of the 370th Reunion. Information is as follows:

Date: Oct. 23, 24, 25, 1997

Place: Ramada Inn Airport  
904 Spense Lane  
Nashville, TN 37217

Meeting and hospitality rooms will be available. Details will be mailed to all 370th members on our current roster.

If there are any other 307th members who would like to attend the 370th reunion please contact:

Joseph B. Grooms  
2320 Pamela St.  
Gastonia, N.C. 28054  
(704) 864-2477

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### LETTERS FROM THE MEMBERSHIP

Periodically we receive letters from members of the 307th with stories of their exploits so many years ago. We also receive stories from some members telling of the exploits of another member. Such is the case of the following furnished to me by Russ Ratliff.

"This is a follow-up letter which concerns Paul Svitak and the story about the "Stowaway to Wake Island." The responses from others from the 370th have not been forth coming, so I'll just send you a couple stories that I know.

#### WHO WAS PAUL SVITAK (REALLY)?

Those people who were in the other 3 sqdn's may wonder who he was, everyone in the 370th knew him. Paul was a flight chief that wanted to fly. I first met him at Geiger Field when the 307th was just taking shape. He was a Cpl. and I a Pvt. He was always one or two stripes ahead of me, that is until I was demoted to the rank of Flight Officer on

B-29's, the lowest form of Military Life. I went from T/Sgt. where I had some respect to F/O where I had none.

Paul was a hard worker, liked by everyone (mostly) unless there was some reason not to like him, and he knew airplanes. He made his 6th stripe when he was barely 20 years of age and probably would have made it when he was still 19 had he not crossed swords with our engineering officer on occasion. On the day that the promotion list was posted Paul acquired a new name. As I remember it, seems it was Meral Ashbaugh that tagged him with his new moniker, "The Boy Master Sergeant." Paul got things done. Everything worked out for him or he made them work out.

Vivid in my memory was a time when I was flying with a crew that was not my own. We had just landed back at Henderson Field from a night harassing mission to Kahili and Paul was giving the pilot hand signals on where to taxi, somehow the signals were misread and the plane taxied over a ditch driving the tail skid up into the airplane. Well, Paul, having worked all night in a cold rain, lost his cool and gave the pilot a tongue lashing that I've never forgotten. The pilot was speechless until he told (then Major Jurkens) what had happened. I'll not identify the pilot but, he should have taken his lumps and forgotten what he had just gone through because, Ed Jurkens finished up where Svitok had left off. So I heard.

My second story happened in New Zealand while on R&R. We were supposed to get 10 days there, however, depending on transportation, sometimes 2 or 3 days longer. Along with a free ride coming and going we were supposed to get a free bottle of booze. Booze was hard to come by in those days and sometimes it would be hospital brandy if the whiskey ran out. When Svitak went to draw his allotment, only brandy was left. Even so, it was better than nothing. We ended up in a place called the "Silver Slipper".



The Silver Slipper was sort of a taxi dance establishment that didn't sell booze, only setups if you had the whiskey. I don't remember what they had for music, but they had girls, lots of girls and Paul found two of them.

Close by sat 2 Navy flyers and before them, on the table was a bottle of good whiskey. Paul had his eye on it. Somehow, Paul struck up a conversation and was invited to have a drink with them. This led to dickering over their bottle and a deal was made to swap the bottles. It appears the Navy could get more whiskey. In order to complete the bargain, Paul had to throw in the two women. He had his whiskey, and he could get more women. As I remember it, probably better women than those he traded off.

Things just worked out for "The Boy Master Sergeant." I don't know about the laws in New Zealand concerning white slavery, Paul may have broken them, but everyone was happy. Things just worked out for Svitak, the flyers were happy with the women, the women were happy with the flyers, and Paul was happy with his bottle of good booze. He could make things work!"

Frank Misaage writes of an incident typical of Paul Svitak.

While the ground crew was busy making ready for a mission and Frank and his crew were loading bombs aboard, a 2nd Lt. approached the airplane. It is not known who he was or what his business was, only that he must have been quite new to the outfit because none of the crew looked up from their work to acknowledge his presence. After a few seconds the Lt. asked who the ranking non-com was and Svitak was pointed out. The Lt. then presented himself to Paul and said "Doesn't anyone here call attention or salute an officer when he approaches?" Paul's answer was, "We're busy and don't have time for any of that crap," to which the Lt. replied, "You can be court martialed for that." Paul's reply was, "And you could make a one way trip." That was the end of the story as far as anyone knows."

This is a follow-up letter I received from Russ on Svitak.

"It took place following the Las Vegas reunion. Paul invited me to visit him in Long Beach and he'd take me aboard the Queen Mary for breakfast and then we'd see the Spruce Goose. We arrived at Paul's in the afternoon, went out to dinner, and then whiled away the evening. We awoke early in the morning and soon headed for the Queen Mary. It was still quite early when we arrived and the ticket booth was unattended so we just walked on and had breakfast. Afterward Paul, acting as guide took me through the Queen, places that I'm sure the public never got to see. Svitak knew this boat like he knew B-24's.

From there we went next door to the hanger where the Spruce Goose was kept. It was still too early to buy a ticket, however, when you leave the Queen, you pass by the back of the hanger and Paul remembered seeing two men doing some painting near an open door. We walked back to them and Paul asked one of the men if he was the contractor, the reply was "No". Paul asked, "Have you seen him?" The reply was again, "No". At this Svitak said, "Well I've got to see him", and we walked through the door. Here we spent an hour and left.

On my way home, I thought to myself, "could all of this happened by accident, the early rising in order to beat the traffic and the ticket sales, or was this the same old Svitak". "Get the job done and let the devil take the hindmost." It strikes me that this is yet, the same Paul Svitak that I had known back in 1942 and '43.

Russ Ratliff

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As is in many cases, sometimes it takes a while before the writings of a 307th member finds its way into the newsletter. Such is the case of the following we received from Harry Coggins almost a year ago.

"It wasn't the type of heroics that sent the Army Air Forces rushing to announce presentation of a medal. In fact, it was down right embarrassing to some of those involved. But dropping 8,000 pounds of bombs through the bomb bay doors of a B-24 over Sandakan, Borneo, was the catalyst for the type of quiet heroism and dedication that marked so many 307th Bomb Group crew members during the South Pacific war years.

The day started innocently enough. --- Before it was completed the young Coggins crew had learned some important lessons on its fourth mission out of Morotai, as well as being involved in an outstanding piece of crew work. It also was a day when the crew gained first hand information that "Murphy's Law" is not all fiction. March 10, 1945, truly was one of those days when "if anything can go wrong, it will".

It all started when Flt. Of. Alexander Gabriels reported on sick call, necessitating a replacement navigator. (This replacement's name is questionable but appears to be "Lt. Aynor" on the 370th intelligence report).

The crew's truck slipped and slid through typical Morotai mud but finally reached the flight line where the crew found it had been assigned one of those old, black B-24's, possibly a castoff from a night-flying squadron. The black exterior gave the impression the plane was a true war weary, something the crew thought it had left behind in Tonapah months earlier. (The pilot recalls the plane was very sluggish in the air). Still, the ground crewmen assured the crew it was a fine plane, in good shape, and, after all, a relatively new crew shouldn't expect the newest plane in the 370th arsenal.

And O.K. it was for about five hours. Over the target, however, "Murphy's Law" began operating in earnest. Flying in the B-1 position the crew had A/C 463 in the correct bomb run position, bomb bay doors open. Then the squadron leader called for a dry run on the first bombing attempt. The message was relayed via the intercom and, true to his training, the replacement navigator followed procedures and pushed the handle to close the doors.

Unfortunately, the bombardier's intercom did not operate and Lt. Lyman Matheson did not hear the dry run command. When the cross hairs crossed in the bomb sight the bombs dropped. Everything was "according to Hoyle" except for one problem...the bomb bay doors were almost closed. Right after the bombs fell, so did one of the doors. It flew past Armorer Gunner Cpl. Bob Cost, barely missing the ball turret. The other three doors were knocked from their tracks and began flapping violently in the slip stream.

While the other squadron planes went back for a second bomb run, the old black No. 463 was turned for Morotai. Bombardier Matheson and others began efforts to somehow get the doors flapping in the breeze at 9,000 feet in a position that would prevent landing problems. It was obvious it wouldn't be an easy task.

With Co-pilot Lt. Ben Weeks at the controls, the plane was slowed in an effort to perhaps calm the flapping doors so they could be reached from the bomb bay cat-walk. That didn't work and it became evident the crew had to devise a plan to somehow grab each swinging door and pull it inward where it could be tethered. It would be necessary to work without parachutes. One slip on the cat-walk and a crewman would be gone.

Radioman Cpl. Jerry Kirby was the tallest of the crewmen. With Lt. Matheson, Cpl. Cost and others holding him as best they could, Kirby started attempting to get a foot under a door and pull it toward the bomb bay where Matheson or one of the crewmen could grab it.



Standing one legged on the cat-walk, with the other leg swinging over empty space, Kirby managed to get each door in a position where it could be grabbed by another of the crew and then secured using bomb arming vane wires. After successfully completing his task, Kirby returned to his beloved radio position and left the final tie up to Cpl. Anthony Ragni, engineer; Cpls. Dave Goodson and Bill Gillette, gunners. It had been a cat-walk full of personnel, but each one managed to hold tightly despite the rush of wind from the slip stream. The plane landed safely some five hours after the incident. The 370th post-strike briefing report matter of factly reported the loss of one bomb bay door and damage to three others. (Sam Britt also noted this incident in his 307th diary). The ground crew chief wasn't the happiest person on the flight line when the plane landed, either.

The day after the mission was a bit different, however. A few of the squadrons higher ranking officers had some choice words for what happened ...until they learned the intercom did not operate properly. They also backed off when members of the crew raised the question of a micro-switch that was installed on the B-24 to prevent such things from occurring. The switch cost two or three bucks in those days and had it operated properly, it should have prevented the entire episode. Why didn't it operate? The crewmen were told "it got wet". You might say the micro-switch worked for the crew that time. It prevented a "dressing down" for a relatively young crew that went on to compile an outstanding record in the 370th.

(Note: Sam Britt's "Diary of the 307th" notes a second incident at Moratai when bombs were released through bomb bay doors. A July mission by the 372nd crew involved a drop through their plane's bomb bay doors, reportedly wiping out a 24-holer of the 93rd Infantry Division. Like the Coggins plane, it too, was painted black.

Harry Coggins

\* \* \* \* \*

## SORTING THROUGH A CLUTTERED MIND OF MORATAI MEMORIES AND QUESTIONS:

Whose B-17 was it that flew directly under the 370th planes just before bombs dropped? It happened on one of the Philippine invasions. Target, IP and flight direction were assigned by the Navy; bomb bay doors were open and suddenly a B-17 crossed beneath the flight. Back on Moratai at debriefing it was suggested the plane may have been MacArthur's. At that stage of WWII there were very few B-17's in the Pacific area. Looking back now, it appears safe to wonder if the 370th became infamous assuming the general was aboard. Or could he have been sloshing through the surf on one of his "I shall return" photo missions?

As was the case most days on the flight line Army personnel were there asking to be taken on local engineering flights. Usually they were accommodated and were told to remain in the waist area of the plane as it was tested following major overhauls, including engine repairs. On this day the young soldiers were told to get aboard for a flight over Moratai and environs. They were given parachutes...just in case. The flight included feathering props, cutting off engines and restarting, etc. It was during one of those feathering tests that the engineer screamed a man was attempting to jump out the waist window. He grabbed the soldier closest to the window and pushed him away from the opening. Only then did he realize no one on the three-man crew had remembered to warn the soldier about the things that would be done. And only after it was explained to the soldier that feathering props was all part of the day's work, not an emergency, did the young man begin to calm down.

Harry Coggins

\* \* \* \* \*



## REQUEST FOR INFORMATION, ETC.

Periodically we receive requests for information, help, and sometimes just a request for letters from the members. Following are two such requests.

Many of you will remember Eugene P. Geyer, 370th Sqdn. deceased 1992. His wife, Virginia, has made the following request.

I would appreciate hearing from any of Gene's Buddies. Particularly ones who trained at Davis-Monthan. That is where Gene and I met. My father was Sub-Depot Commander - Col. W.V. Newhall (now deceased) retired as General.

Virginia Geyer

### Address:

Virginai H. Geyer  
4288 South County Rd #210  
Knox, Indiana 46534  
(219) 772-3119

\*\*\*\*\*

The following letter was sent to Dave Owens requesting information.

"Dear Mr. Owens,

My brother Lt. Gerald D. Coleman was a pilot flying a B-24 from the Admiralty Islands in June 1944 with the 372nd Squadron of the 307th Bomb Group, and on June 25, over Yap Island, he was killed, and I suppose that his entire crew was killed with him. I was with the 1st Marine Division and we were getting ready to make an assault on the Island of Peleliu in the Palau Islands.

The last letter that I received from him, he stated that he had just got a new airplane for he and his crew, a New B-24 without any paint on it, and that he could get 8 to 10 knots more speed out of it. I had just gotten to Guadalcanal to visit him, and found that he had left some days earlier for the Admiralty Islands, and I only had a three day pass and the Air Corps Officer there said I wouldn't have time to get up there and back before my leave expired. We were stationed at a small Island called Pavuvu just off the west end of Guadalcanal.

I am the last living person of Gerald and my immediate family. Even Gerald's wife and daughter have passed on. Gerald was five years older than I, and I am now 76 and I would like to correspond with anyone who knew my brother. I am enclosing some pictures and newspaper clippings concerning him. any help you can give me will be deeply appreciated.

I wish you and your friends the best at your reunion. I have attended one reunion of my old outfit, but there are very few of us left after Peleliu. Thank you so very much.

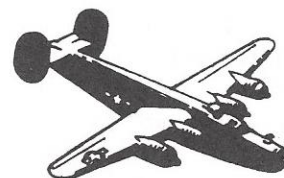
Sincerely,

Jack L. Coleman

Brother of Lt. Gerald D. Coleman 08006220  
307th Bomb Group, 372nd Squadron,  
13th USAAC KIA 6-25-1944 "

\*\*\*\*\*

*Taps*



The following is a list of names of 307th Members who have taken their "Last Flight"..

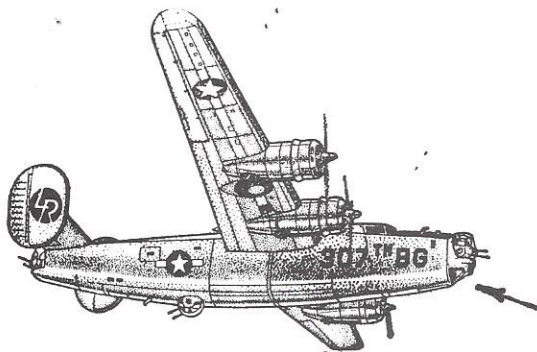
Breslin, Edwin R.	01-13-97
Campbell, Glen L.	11-27-96
Doblekar, Frank J.	09-01-96
Harrison, Max C.	01-31-97
Kahn, Sidney	01-17-97
Phillips, Paul R.	10-01-96
Schlueter, Robert	10-27-96
Tremblay, Harry A.	10-10-96
Weeks, Benjamin E.	01-07-97
Woolverton, Harry C.	08-05-96

Our sincere sympathy goes out to all the families of these 307th members.

\*\*\*\*\*

Dave Owens - President  
John Reaves - Vice-President  
Jim Kendall - Historian  
Harry Sterkel - Asst. Historian  
Anita Sporn - Parliamentarian  
Cena Marsh - Secretary/Treasurer



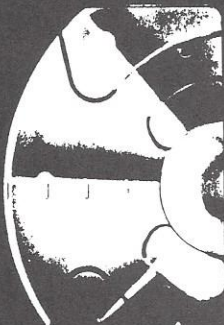


307th B.G. B-24J STAMP

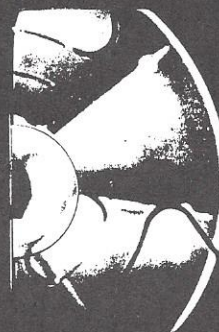
"LONG RANGERS" VIDEO - SAN DIEGO 1996 REUNION

THE 43 MINUTE VHS TAPE PROFESSIONALLY PRODUCED AND OFFERED IN NEWSLETTER 96-3 IS STILL AVAILABLE BY SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT, WITH THIS LAST OPPORTUNITY TO PURCHASE. ORDER FORM BELOW.

THIS CUSTOM 307th B.G. B-24J STAMP OFFERED IN NEWSLETTER 96-2. (16 "ONLY" AVAILABLE). IF YOUR ORDER IS LATE - YOUR MONEY "IMMEDIATELY" REFUNDED WITH MY APOLOGY. ORDER FORM BELOW.



307TH BOMB GROUP (H)  
**"Long Rangers"**  
 # 11 Biennial Reunion  
 San Diego, CA  
 October 2-5 '96



P.S. THIS IS A "NON-PROFIT", 307th B.G. ASSOC. OFFER  
 SEND ORDER FORM (BELOW) TO: F.E. LANNING  
 6617 HILLGROVE DR.  
 SAN DIEGO, CA 92120-4819  
 (619) 698-4070

CLIP AND RETURN THIS ORDER FORM:

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ SQDN \_\_\_\_\_  
 ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_ APT/SP \_\_\_\_\_  
 CITY \_\_\_\_\_  
 STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_  
 TEL # (     )     -     \_\_\_\_\_

(QUAN)

\_\_\_\_\_ "LONG RANGER" VIDEO @ \$7.00 TOT \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_ B-24J RUBBER STAMP @ \$9.90 TOT \_\_\_\_\_  
 CHECK OR M.O. ONLY TOT \_\_\_\_\_  
PRICE INCLUDES ITEM AND S&H





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CONSPICUOUS SERVICE CROSS APPLICANT

PLEASE READ INSTRUCTIONS CAREFULLY!

AND

COMPLETE ALL REQUIRED BLOCKS

WHILE ATTACHING

ALL REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION

FAILURE TO DO SO WILL RESULT IN  
UNNECESSARY PROCESSING DELAYS

DO NOT SEND ORIGINAL DOCUMENTS







APPLICATION FOR THE NEW YORK STATE CONSPICUOUS SERVICE CROSS

(For use of this form, see DMNA Reg 672-1. Proponent is MNHR-AD)

SECTION I  
PERSONAL DATA

\_\_\_\_\_  
(date)

FROM:

\_\_\_\_\_  
(first name)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(middle initial)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(last name)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(current/former rank, SSN, and unit, if applicable)

Home Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Request I be issued the New York State Conspicuous Service Cross:  
This is to certify that I have reviewed the eligibility criteria in  
Section II below. I am forwarding herewith substantive documenta-  
tion (e.g. DD FORM 214, WD AGO FORM 53-55). Documentation includes  
Honorable Discharge, list of awards/certificates/permanent orders  
for awards and indicates current New York State citizenship or New  
York State citizenship while serving on federal active duty.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature)

REPLY TO: The Adjutant General  
Division of Military and Naval Affairs  
Attn: MNHR-AD  
330 Old Niskayuna Road  
Latham, New York 12110-2224

SECTION II  
ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

To whom awarded:

1. Current New York State Citizen.
2. New York State citizen while serving on federal active duty.
3. Full-time military personnel; active Guard/Reserve-AGR/Title 10 USC only) in the armed forces of the U.S. for purposes other than training since 6 April 1917.

Active Guard/Reserve-AGR (Title 32 USC) personnel are not eligible.







CRITERIA. The Conspicuous Service Cross may be awarded to any current New York State citizen or person who was a New York State citizen while serving on federal active duty; whose entire service was honorable subsequent to the time of receipt of the citation while serving in the U.S. Army, Air Force, Navy, Marine Corps, Coast Guard or in the Army Female Nurse Corps, and who has received a personal decoration issued by a brigade or equivalent higher headquarters. The Conspicuous Service Cross may also be awarded to any citizen of New York State, who while serving with the allied forces, received a personal decoration published in order issued by a brigade or equivalent higher headquarters. The award of the Conspicuous Service Cross is based on prior award of at least one of the following military decorations:

- (1) Medal of Honor
- (2) Distinguished Service Cross
- (3) Navy Cross
- (4) Air Force Cross
- (5) Defense Distinguished Service Medal
- (6) Distinguished Service Medal (Army)
- (7) Distinguished Service Medal (Navy-Marine Corps)
- (8) Distinguished Service Medal (Air Force)
- (9) Distinguished Service Medal (Coast Guard)
- (10) Silver Star
- (11) Defense Superior Service Medal
- (12) Legion of Merit
- (13) Distinguished Flying Cross
- (14) Soldier's Medal
- (15) Navy and Marine Corps Medal
- (16) Airman's Medal
- (17) Aerial Achievement Medal
- (18) Coast Guard Medal
- (19) Bronze Star Medal
- (20) Purple Heart
- (21) Defense Meritorious Service Medal
- (22) Meritorious Service Medal
- (23) Air Medal
- (24) Joint Service Commendation Medal
- (25) Army Commendation Medal
- (26) Navy Commendation Medal
- (27) Air Force Commendation Medal
- (28) Coast Guard Commendation Medal
- (29) Joint Service Achievement Medal
- (30) Army Achievement Medal
- (31) Navy Achievement Medal
- (32) Air Force Achievement Medal
- (33) Coast Guard Achievement Medal
- (34) Gold Lifesaving Medal
- (35) Silver Lifesaving Medal
- (36) Prisoner of War Medal
- (37) Combat Infantryman Badge (CIB)
- (38) Combat Medical Badge (CMB)
- (39) Combat Action Ribbon (CAR)
- (40) Mariner's Medal (Merchant Marine)
- (41) Merchant Marine Combat Bar
- (42) Pearl Harbor Commemorative Medal
- (43) Navy Submarine Combat Patrol Insignia

NOTE: Acceptable documentation for veterans who served at Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, is a certified copy of the application form for the Pearl Harbor Commemorative Medal or the Pearl Harbor Survivors Association, Inc. membership card.

