

# 307th BOMBARDMENT GROUP (HV) ASSOCIATION

## "THE LONG RANGERS"



### Newsletter - 1995-1

April 12, 1995

#### QUOTES OF NOTE

*"If a man does not make new acquaintances as he passes through life, he will soon find himself left alone. A man should keep his friendships in constant repair."*

- Johnson

*"Try to do to others as you would have them do to you, and do not be discouraged if they fail sometimes. It is much better that they should than that you should."*

- Charles Dickens

*"Choose your friends from among those who are faithful to themselves, for they will also be faithful toward others."*

- Author Unknown

*"Friendship is an open door. Compassion, kindness, grace and more. Friends, though few and far apart. Bring thoughts and kindness to the heart."*

- A. Scott Donnelly

*"The most valuable antiques are old friends."*

E.B. Birkenbeuel

*"Freedom is not only the right to use your own judgment but the obligation to live with the consequences."*

- Anonymous

*"There is no future in any job. The future lies in the person holding the job."*

- Dr. George W. Crane

*"Work is the grand cure for all the maladies that ever beset mankind -- honest work, which you intend getting done."*

- Thomas Carlyle

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#### NOTES FROM THE PRESIDENT

As many of you know, our Vice President, Mark Rifkin, died in December. He was in charge of making arrangements for the 1996 reunion in San Diego. Florian Lanning, who lives in San Diego, kindly consented to step in and make the reunion arrangements.

Jim Kendall and I met with Florian the first of March and after studying the information that he had collected picked a site for the 1996 reunion. The hotel is on the water, and there is plenty of room to roam. Among other attractions, there is a private beach, two paddle wheelers for tours of the bay, boats for rent and plenty of free parking. The hotel selected is the Bahia. Start making plans to attend now -- the dates are October 2-5, 1996. Additional information will appear in future newsletters.

Another item of business - In the last newsletter I wrote about the Turner Publishing Company's proposal for the publication of a history of the 307th. I requested that you let me know your wishes and set a cut off date of February 1st. As of March 1st I have received nine (9) replies six (6) for, and two (2) against and one maybe. I assumed that there was not enough interest and have cancelled.

Good health to one and all,

Sam Britt  
President

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## FROM YOUR HISTORIANS

### Best WW II Heavy Bomber

Dick Beard sent us the "flying Flashbacks" page from the January, 1994, issue of FLYING magazine. Of interest to all who flew in the Liberator will be the fact that in January of 1944 British Writer Peter G. Masefield, using his own "scientific rating system", identified the B-24 as the best heavy bomber to come out of WW II. Though this will come as no surprise we thought you would like to know. Incidentally, the Mustang came out on top of all single-seat fighters and the de Havilland Mosquito was named the top fighter-bomber.

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### Smithsonian/Enola Gay

Here's a follow-up, in case you haven't heard, to the "politically correct" version of history that was being promoted by the Smithsonian Institution. A few excerpts from the Feb. 3, 1995 essay by Cal Thomas, Los Angeles Times Syndicated columnist, tell the story and comment on it:

"The Smithsonian Institution, guardian of the nation's history, drastically scaled down a controversial exhibit about the atomic bombing of Japan after a barrage of charges from the American Legion and other veteran's groups that the exhibit depicted Japan as a victim and the United States as guilty of an

evil act.

"Some historians are uncomfortable with those who once recognized that evil exists and must be defeated, not accommodated, and with great leaders who do what is right without consulting polls or gurus to help them get in touch with their feelings.

"Truman and an advisory committee wrestled with the moral question and decided to use the bomb to save lives. As strange as that may sound now with hindsight, it was the right decision then - and it remains defensible 50 years later.

"For such (historians) to denigrate the real history, motivations and experience of those who fought the good fight is a smear on every man and woman who gave so much that we might enjoy peace and freedom in our time.

"It was right and good that the politically correct view of the end of World War II was aborted. It was illegitimately conceived. Next time, perhaps the Smithsonian ought to consult historians who tell the truth."

Our thanks to Cal Thomas for saying it so well.

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### Palau Research Update

Updating the continuing story of Dr. Pat Scannon and the underwater research around Palau being conducted by the SCUBA team of which he is a member: Pat is currently in Palau with additional information

supplied by members of our Association which he hopes will help him to locate exact crash locations of at least two 307th aircraft. At least one former "Long Ranger" had planned to accompany Pat on this trip but had to cancel out at the last moment.

Pat reports that his plans for a book covering his underwater research into AAF losses over Palau and AAF involvement in the Palau campaign continue to move closer to realization. We'll keep you informed.

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### Spice Islands - Exotic Eastern Indonesia

During the final year of WW II the 307th was heavily involved in the Dutch East Indies, bombing many targets there on the islands of Ambon, Halmahera, Miti and Ceram as well as being based for almost a year on Morotai. Then known as the Moluccas, this group of islands is now called Maluku.

Most of us were unaware of the long history of that area while we were there 50 years ago. Many months ago Jim Kelly loaned us a book, SPICE ISLANDS - EXOTIC EASTERN INDONESIA. Published by Passport Books, this soft cover volume should be available in any good bookstore for about \$17.00.

We thought this very interesting book had been discussed in one of our Newsletters. A recent letter from John Boeman again called the book to our attention and



alerted us that it had not been mentioned. Any member who had anything to do with the Moluccas will be interested in the history told in this book and for its discussion of the area as it is today.

In Medieval Europe spices (cloves, nutmeg, mace, etc.) were literally worth their weight in gold. They were used to make badly preserved meat palatable, as medicines and as ingredients in magic potions. The entire world supply of cloves came from the Moluccas. The tiny Banda Islands produced the entire world's supply of nutmeg. Ternate and Tidore and a few nearby specks of land off western Halmahera were the only source of other spices used in the castles of Europe. Thus the Moluccas became known as the "Spice Islands" and the search for these spices fueled the 15th century's Age of Exploration. They also sparked the arrival of successive waves of foreigners, the Portuguese, Spanish, French and Dutch, all claiming the rich spice trade for themselves. It is interesting to note that, of Magellan's 5 ships and 230 men, only one ship and 18 survivors completed the trip around the world, returning to Spain in 1522 carrying only one ton of cloves. But this was enough to pay back the Spanish king's huge investment in the voyage and make the survivors rich for life. The history of centuries of domination of the Mollucas by foreign powers wanting to control the spice trade makes fascinating reading as does the present day status of areas familiar to us.

## Live and Learn

On the subject of the Spice Islands we have a story about Morotai which somehow became separated from the letter in which it arrived so we can't give anyone credit for it. The story: "The ad in the newspaper read 'All expense cruise to Morotai, \$50". It sounded too good to be true so Hank went to check on it. He was assured that it was true and that all that was needed was his check for \$50. No sooner than he had signed the check than he was knocked over the head.

It was some-long-time later

When he came to and found himself tied to a large log somewhere out in the ocean. He could also see that he was not alone. There was a second person also tied to a log. He paddled to get closer. "Is this the Morotai cruise?", he asked. The answer came back, "Yes".

A little while later he had another question: "Will they be serving lunch?" This time the answer was "No".

A little more time passed. "How do you know there will be no lunch?", Hank asked his companion. This time the answer was "I know because I took this cruise last year".

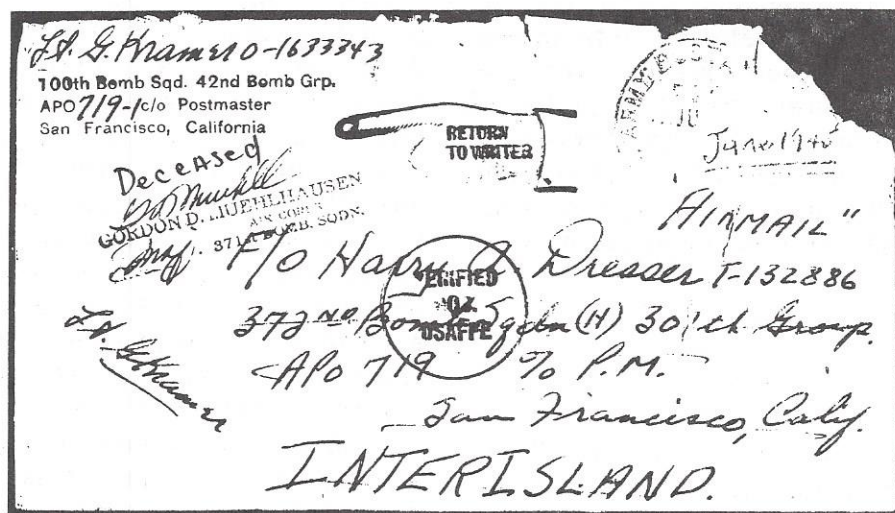
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## Premature Notice

The envelope pictured below quickly got the attention of Harry Dresser of the 372nd squadron who was pretty sure that he was in good health at the time. But, marked "deceased" and signed by an

officer of the 371st squadron, the letter had been returned to its sender, a premature notice of Dresser's death. Harry's story:

"The sender of the letter was Lt. B. Kramer of the 42nd Bomb Group. Guy Kramer and I were long time friends since about age 11 when we went to school





together. He even introduced me to the girl who was later to become my wife. We both wound up in the 13th AAF, he on Palawan and I on Morotai. We kept in touch by Inter Island mail very frequently. Once he even flew a B-25 to Morotai for a visit.

"In June of 1945, concerned that there had been no reply from Guy to my latest letter, I wrote again. His answer arrived in only a few days. His first words were 'Your last letter was like a voice from the grave, see the enclosed.' Enclosed was his last letter to me in its envelope announcing that Harry A. Dresser was deceased.

"This foul up should not have happened. The letter had been misdirected to the 371st where another navigator, Alton C. Dressler, had been one of several men killed in a crash on take-off from Morotai. While there was similarity in last names there was no similarity in the first names. Also, the letter was clearly addressed to the 372nd squadron. Nevertheless, I was officially deceased.

"I immediately wrote my wife, parents, relatives and friends to inform them that the notice of my death was, as Mark Twain once said, exaggerated. Fortunately, this seems to have been the only foul-up caused by the notice of my early demise."

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### Loose Bomb

In his book on the "Long Rangers", Sam Britt mentioned the occasion of a loose bomb

rolling around the waist section during a night mission to Kahili sometime in mid 1943. Russ Ratliff gives a bit more of the story: "Jack Ralph may hold the speed record for a B-24. Not official, not sanctioned and not a matter of record. On a single plane night mission to Kahili with twenty one-hundred pounders we were caught in the beams of about a dozen search lights just as Jeff Newman said 'Bombs Away'. Prior to leaving on the mission Jeff and I had taken a cluster of frag bombs apart and I gave two to Parker, our tail gunner, two to Wolf at left waist and kept two for myself at right waist. Upon Jeff's 'bombs away' the three of us tossed out our 20 pound frags, all except for one frag. At this time Jack Ralph, trying to lose the searchlights, put 'Old 266' into a hell of a dive, hence the unofficial speed record for B-24s. Then came the pull out. I have no idea what the 'G' factor might have been but can vividly recall that Henry Wolf had not gotten rid of his second frag bomb and could not lift it because centrifugal had it pinned securely to the floor. Wind was screaming through the open waist windows and out the open tail and somewhere was a loose and armed frag bomb, perhaps ready to break into 2000 pieces. I'm quite sure that Wolf was, despite his cool nature, somewhat concerned about the situation and as for me, it scared the hell out of me. We had done this several times before but that was the last time that we augmented the regular bomb load with our little

extra display of nastiness. Needless to say, we did get rid of that bomb."

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### Ratti Crew

Mrs. Regina Ratti asks help in locating anyone from her late husband's WW II 307th crew. Since the death of Bud Schultz she has no contact with any of the crew members. She would appreciate help in locating Salvatore Fatigato, Frank Hill, Warren Nelson, Stanley Smith, Troy Dahmer, George Moore, Harlan Simmons and Galen Milsap. If any of these men have survived the years and you could help Mrs. Ratti contact them please write:

Mrs. Regina Ratti, 1621 Fourth St. West, Palmetto, FL 34221  
Phone - (813) 722-5483.

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### M.L. England of Larsen's crew

Sgt. M.L. England, nose gunner on the 371st crew of Howard W. Larsen was killed on September 21, 1943, during a mission to Kahili. Mission reports say he shot down the Zero that killed him.

England's two younger brothers have written us in hopes of learning all they can about their brother's military service and the 307th men who served with him overseas. Around 1980 they located Howard Larsen and learned the circumstances of their brother's death. Now they hope to locate



and correspond with other men with whom he served who still might remember him and would share those memories with them. The brothers, both younger than Sgt. England, are Charles S. England and Robby M. England. Robby, the younger of the two, was six years old at the time of his brother's death. He served as a naval aviator, though we do not know in what capacity. In a strange coincidence, ten years after his brother's death Charles flew 38 missions from Okinawa to Korea as a member of the 307th (372nd) during the Korean War, so he has a double interest in the Group. If you knew M.L. England during 1943 or if you know the present address of any members of the Larsen crew, the Englands would be very interested in corresponding with you.

Their addresses are:

**Robby M. England, 2107  
Ridgmar Blvd. 241, Fort Worth,  
TX 76116**

**Charles S. England, P.O. Box  
1773, Shreveport, LA 71166-  
1773**

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### **Yamato**

Your attention is called to the May, 1995, issue of WORLD WAR II magazine which carries a very interesting article about the Japanese super battleship Yamato. On October 26, 1944, in what came to be known as "The Yamato Mission" or "The Sulu Sea Mission", the 307th

bombed the Yamato and a second battleship, the Kongo, in the Sulu Sea. Close hits stove in many of Yamato's bow plates and killed many topside crew though the Japs later said there had been no direct hits. With this mission the 307th became part, though a largely ignored part, of the Yamato legend.

Some of our members have felt the Navy received credit for

destroying the Yamato that should have gone to the 307th. Not true. In the end, six months later, April 7, 1945, it was Navy planes that finally sank the Yamato as she left Japan on a suicide mission to Okinawa.

Though giving no credit to the 307th by name or branch of service, this WORLD WAR II magazine article will be of interest to all "Long Rangers".

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### **Thayne Crew**

John Ptak, navigator on the crew, is looking for six members of the 370th crew of Stanley J. Thayne, pictured here:

**Front** - Thayne (P), Waible (CP), Ptak (N), Carter (B).

**Rear** - Valdes, Walker (E), Stait, Ihde (RO), St. Peter, Hagadorn.

Three of the crew were lost on a mission to Truk. The others, listed along with their wartime home, are:

**Stanley J. Thayne, Ogden, UT.  
Geo. H. Waible, New Ulm, MN  
Howard Carter, Johnson City, TN  
Harry L. Walker, Albion, MI  
John S. Valdez, Atlanta, GA  
John Hagadorn, Norwood, OH**

Write John at this address:

**John Ptak,  
1967 Eden Evans Center Road,  
Eden, NY 14057**

**Until next time.....**

**Jim Kendall  
Harry Sterkel  
John Reeves**



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## NOTES FROM THE MEMBERSHIP

Bill Holston sent this excerpt from a book about B-24's that had been loaned to him by an 8th AF Veteran.

"October 1944: Mission to Halmahera

The Bomber Barons would be brought into Morotai with the Long Rangers around October 20, 1944, and they would find their new base an interesting place. Just across a short stretch of water lay the big island of Halmahera, like most of Morotai still in Japanese hands. Morotai was raided eighty-two times between the unopposed invasion of September 15 and February 1945, and it may have been molested even more often had it not been for one of the shortest missions of the war ..... Visiting natives informed the Long Rangers that they had seen the Japanese on Halmahera building about half a dozen aircraft from parts of wrecks, and sure enough a few nights later engines could be heard running up in the distance.

So next day three Liberators took off, raised their landing gear, opened their bomb bay doors, dropped their bombs, turned, lowered their landing gear, landed, taxied to their revetments. Thirty minutes was all it took."

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The following excerpts are from Jack Sloan's diary:

"BOOKER - FORTUNATO B-24 Crew"

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By the time I graduated from high-school I had convinced my parents I would be a lot better off enlisting in Cadets, rather than being drafted and ending up in the Infantry. Took the mental part of the exam at Toledo and on my 18th birthday, Sept. 14th, I was notified to report to Cleveland for my physical. Made the height requirements by 1/2 inch. Two weeks later I was sworn in and active duty started October 17th at Jefferson Barracks, Missouri.

My career in Aviation Cadets didn't last long. A bunch of us washed out in one "Fell Swoop". We went through basic training, learned our left foot from our right, marched, ran, and then we had P.T. (Physical Torture.) We slept in tents until mid-November with coal stoves for heat. The fire was always out by morning and we learned to dress while still in bed under the covers. Finally, moved into a barracks and what a relief that was.

I had my folks send my trumpet on to me and one evening, at Jefferson Barracks while sitting on my cot playing, this big guy walks over and asks me, "Would you like to get out of P.T. tomorrow?" I said, I sure would and he tells me to take my horn over to the Day Room at 2:30.

The next afternoon saw me at the Day Room where the fellow that had the band was passing out orchestrations. In glancing through them, I realized that it was all Glen Miller stuff; "Moonlight Serenade, Little Brown Jug, String of Pearls, Kalamazoo, etc." We practiced a bit for the next two weeks and then the leader told us we had a job in St. Louis where we would earn \$2.00 per night, paid for by the U.S.O. We played for many dances through December, January, and most of February before moving to Truax Field, Wis. Our entire band moved intact, and we started playing at the University of Wisconsin three nights a week. Remember, we made \$2.00 per night and our Army pay was \$21.00 per month.

As all good things must, our time at Truax Field ended in March. We transferred to Scott Field to attend Radio School. The word was that we were to be in AACS (Army Airways Communication System).

Our stay at Scott Field ended in May when we were shipped to Harlingen, TX to become Aerial Gunners, or "Sharpshooters in the Sky." We never did find out what happened with AACS.



What an ungodly place Harlingen, Texas was! I had heat rash until I left the place. Anyway, we did our thing at Gunnery School, learned how to fire a 50 caliber machine gun, how to shoot skeet with a hand-held shot gun, and with one mounted in a turret. My experience in shooting was limited to my Red Ryder BB Gun, and the first time I fired that hand-held shot gun, I thought I had been in the ring with Billy Conn and caught a left to my jaw.

Finally, we saw some airplanes, after all, that's why I joined the Air Corps. We had 48 hours of air to air and air to ground firing. I had never flown before and I liked it. What a feeling, just like when I was a kid and would see airplanes go over our house, trying to imagine what it looked like from up there.

From Harlingen, we got a 15 day Delay Enroute before reporting to LeMoore Field, California. What a train ride from Texas to Chicago!! No seat, except on barracks bags in the vestibule. It was hot, sooty, and uncomfortable. Don't remember the days it took to get to Chicago but I do remember trying to wash, shave and change into clean khakis in the LaSalle Street Station so I would look a little more presentable to my folks.

Was a wonderful furlough - saw a lot of relatives, ate a lot of good home cooking, went out with some of the girls I had graduated with, and some I hadn't. Time passed all too quickly - I hated to get on that train to Lemoore Field, because I knew where we were going --- ETO or the Pacific. I certainly didn't want to tell my folks that.

The train ride to California was much better than the one from Texas to Chicago. After our arrival at LeMoore Field it was a week or two before I was assigned to a crew. I vaguely remember it was sort of a piecemeal effort. We did not get our navigator until we were at March Field for a while. We left LeMoore in early September for March Field. The nicest base yet.

Our pilot was George W. Booker "Book", 1st Lt., a big soft-spoken guy from Jonesboro, Arkansas. He reminded me of a big brother, someone you had confidence in. I found out later that he had been assigned to fighters (P-38's), but he got too big for them and was sent to Multi Engine School. Our Co-Pilot was Steven Fortunato, "Luigi", 2nd Lt., from Wilmington, Delaware. A quiet, cool-headed competent individual that you knew you would fly with anywhere he wanted to go. Our Bombardier was Albert Yelland, 2nd Lt. from Hancock, Michigan, a little on the heavy side, hence the nickname "Butterball". He had a great sense of humor. Andy Walker, our Engineer, was from Hamstramch, Michigan. I always thought he looked like Clark Gable. He was a rough, tough guy you wanted on your side. Being around Andy when we were flying, you knew he was a damned good Engineer, really knew his job inside out. Edwin Sheldon, from Oklahoma City was our Radio Operator. He also knew his job. He and Andy were drinking buddies. Manfield Pressey, T/Sgt., from Muskegon, Michigan was the old-timer on the crew, at the age of 34. He was Armour-Gunner and flew Ball-Turret. William Ward, from Montclair, New Jersey was Top Turret Gunner. Bill was a very quiet person. Fred L. goff from Nitro, West Virginia, was our Tail Gunner. Fred and I, at age 19, were the youngest on the crew. Fred's favorite singer was Jimmy Durante. Does that tell you something. I was the Nose Gunner on this motley crew. A few weeks later, our Navigator arrived. We were in the locker room getting into our flight suits and this 2nd Lt. walked over and asked if this was Booker's Crew. Someone said yes, it was, but no one was really paying any attention to him. His face was getting redder by the second, when he reached into his pocket and pulled out name cards and handed one to each of us. It read, "Lt. William S. Springer, Navigator, U.S. Army Air Corps." We all looked at the card and as if on cue, we all said, "Hello, Lt. William S. Springer, Navigator, U.S. Army Air Corps".



When we settled down, after the laughter, (including his), we shook hands and welcomed him aboard.

We did a lot of flying, including night flights. I remember flying over Ontario, Pomona, and Riverside on Friday nights when the high schools were playing football. One could see the teams on the field.

As our training continued, you could feel and see how we were becoming a team. Everything began to fit together, like a well oiled machine. We did our share of formation flying, and sometimes that got a little hairy in the turbulence. It wasn't so bad when your wingman was moving up or down with you, but if you were going up and he was going down, that was bad news! This was when we found out that Al, our Bombardier, didn't like formation flying.

One morning, when we weren't flying, we were in the upper bay of our barracks, when we heard an airplane obviously having trouble. As we looked out the window we could see this B-25 coming in quite low. We all ran outside and watched as the plane was going by. We heard a couple of small explosions and the tail blew right off the fuselage. The plane came down between two barracks about two or three blocks down the street and exploded, the tail section came down next to the theatre. All aboard were killed. What a sobering experience! That was the first time we had experienced anything of this nature, but it was not to be the last.

On one of our last Gun Camera Missions to the desert, we were told there would be fighters making passes at the formation. All the gunners were in the turrets, cameras working, and Booker informed us to be alert, as fighters were in the area. I picked up a speck at 12:00 and closing fast. Before I knew what happened, it was long gone. Booker came on the intercom and said, "Fellows, you just saw your first jet fighter." After we landed, the consensus was that we wanted no part of that new fangled airplane.

After one afternoon flight Book called a crew meeting at the B.O.Q. at 7:30 that night. We couldn't figure out what it was all about. Book said we were going to have a discussion as to where we would be going overseas. (I never thought we had a choice). We talked about the pros and cons of ETO, and the same about the South Pacific. We discussed long over water flights, and the German Air Force with their heavily defended targets. We voted on the two theaters. South Pacific won.

On November 24th, with bags packed, we boarded a plane for Hamilton Field. We got our shots, brought our records up to date, and went to an operetta in San Francisco. Book thought we needed a little "culture", so we took a couple of cabs, went out for dinner, and saw "The Mikado". Really! Just sitting next to Andy Walker through this was more entertaining than the operetta. All Andy wanted was, out, a beer, and a cigarette. Booker told us all to keep an eye on Andy and that he had better not come up missing.

One night Andy and Sheldon decided to go into San Francisco for one last state-side blast. Now, you know you are going to see plenty of sailors in the bars in San Francisco. That's exactly what they saw, except Andy had to take exception to all the sailors and said so in so many "Expletives" to a tablefull of sailors. Needless to say, the Navy Shore Patrol was called and a night stick brushed across Andy's ankle, causing a slight break. Corporal Walker ended up in the hospital and 1st Lt. Booker had to go to the hospital and practically kidnap Private Walker our Engineer, to take him overseas. You see, Walker got busted in two places, Sheldon, only one.

As we boarded a C-54 at Hamilton Field for Hawaii, it's a wonder that the Post Band and the Commanding General of the 4th Air Force didn't come out to wish us Bon Voyage. What a motley crew going up the steps; 2 privates, one of them on crutches barely able to make the steps; 1 T/Sgt. (Pressey); 3 Corporals that tried to look nonchalant; and the



After we were airborne for two hours, Book informed us that we could open our orders. I opened my envelope, and here was a green ticket, A 320029, "Good for one-way passage to Biak." Fred L. opened his, looked at it for a while, and asked me where "Buyak" was? I told him, since Geography was not my strong suit in school that I had no idea.

After 12 hours in the air, we landed at Hickam Field, Hawaii where we stayed in a transient camp for four days. Our trip into Honolulu was not very impressive.

On December 12th we boarded a C-46 for a six-hour flight to Christmas Island. The trip was uneventful with only a few hours spent there. Was glad we didn't have to spend the rest of the war there.

The next morning we boarded the C-46 again for the next leg of our journey to Canton Island. What a God forsaken place this was! There was one tree on the entire island, and everything about the island was depressing. One thing, I met a fellow at the mess hall that evening who was at Scott Field (Radio School) when I was there. He had completed the course and was assigned to Canton Island AACS for two years. How lucky could I be!!

On the morning of the 14th we boarded our C-46 for a six-hour flight to Tarawa. I was excited about going to Tarawa as I remembered seeing Newsreels and Life Magazine articles about the landing at Tarawa, and the bloody battles that ensued. Looking out the windows of the plane as we approached the landing strip, you could see the beached LST's and other remains of the battle. After we landed and were assigned to a tent, we made a tour of the beach. The tops of the Palm trees were blown off. All that remained were the trunks standing nakedly embarrassed by the vicious battle that had taken place months before.

On December 15th, after a seven hour flight, we landed at Guadalcanal, another historic site remembered from the newsreels and Life Magazine. There was more destruction here, LST's rusting in the water, palm trees blown away and the cement blockhouse that the Japs occupied. The Marines had burned them out with their flame throwers, and you could see the burned areas by the door and the openings where the Japs stuck their guns out. There was a brass plaque on the front of the blockhouse telling about some U.S. battleship that was so many miles off shore, firing big shells into this blockhouse, and very little damage was noted. At one end of the island, Army Engineers used bulldozers to push all of the Japanese remains, guns, tanks, etc. into big piles. What a sight that was.

The next leg of our journey was to Finchafen, a five hour flight on the 16th of December. On the 18th we had a one hour trip to Nadzab, New Guinea, which would be home for about a month. This is where we went to Survival School and learned how to cope with "Jungle Life".

On January 2nd, we flew a mission to Rabaul, New Guinea. In the early part of the war, Rabaul was a major Japanese port and air base, very heavily defended by anti-aircraft and fighters. Our mission was 7 hours and 20 minutes long. Someone asked what our target was, some smart alec on the crew said, "Japanese Victory Gardens." Again, on January 15th we flew a 5:25 mission to Wide Bay (Putt-Putt Plantation). A thought aside from all this ...Is this where Arnold Palmer got his idea for the miniature golf courses?

On January 19th, we flew in a B-24 for six hours to our destination. (On our green ticket, when we opened our Orders two hours out over the Pacific on December 8th, it said, "One Way to Biak.") We had finally arrived at Biak, New Guinea. It took us one month and eleven days.





January 20th we flew five hours to our base in Morotai that would be our home for the next 5 1/2 months. No one on the crew could envision what it would be like for the next several months. We had no idea where the targets would be, what the routine was, how many missions we would fly in a month, or how many missions before our tour was over. We had heard it was 25 in E.T.O. What were the living conditions like, and how was the food. We were now assigned to the 307th Bomb Group, 372nd Squadron and we had exactly two weeks to get acclimated.

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Jack Sloan's diary will be continued in the September 1995 Newsletter.

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### MEMBERSHIP DUES

To the many 307th Members who have sent in their 1995 Membership Dues, our thanks. To those who are a bit slow, this is just a gentle reminder that your Membership dues should be paid the first of each year.

Thanks

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### AIR FORCE GUNNERS ASSOCIATION

The Air Force Gunners Association is trying to locate former Aerial Gunners. The following information is for any of you former 307th Aerial Gunners who may be interested in their association.

"Dear Sir,

As Membership Chairman of the Air Force Gunners Association, I would appreciate your help in an effort to locate Ex-Aerial Gunners.

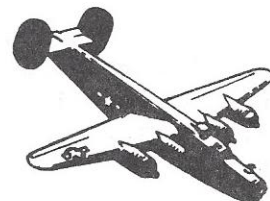
If you are not familiar with AFGA, the group is made up of Enlisted Aerial Gunners that flew on light, medium or heavy bombers from the WWII era through those who flew on the B-52's in the Persian Gulf.

For more information contact:

Jay E. Ingle  
Membership Chairman  
35469 Colossians Way  
Shingletown, CA 96088  
(916) 474-1632"

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*Taps*



### THE LAST FLIGHT

In each newsletter sent out I must report the loss of "Old Friends". Many you have known for over 50 years while others are the friends of your later life. We will always remember the happy laugh of Mark Rifkin and the quiet dignity of Aubrey Tomlin. Faithful Harold McNeese and a more recent member Manuel Martinez. Some of you will remember a young man who came from Alaska to attend the 50th Anniversary of the 307th at Dayton with his Father, Dave Owens. John Patrick Owens, Lt. Col. USAF, lost his valiant battle with cancer the 29th of November. To the families of these men we extend our sincere sympathy.

Kein, Edward	Sept. 1994
Martinez, Manuel	18 March 1995
McNeese, Harold	21 Feb. 1995
Myrann, Robert	April 1994
Rifkin, Mark	9 Dec. 1994
Sears, Warren F.	8 Dec. 1992
Stickney, Douglas	19 July 1994
Smith, Eugene F.	1992
Suchma, Joe	1983
Tomlin, Aubrey	21 June 1994
Tschan, Edmond	date unknown

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Sam Britt	President
Jim Kendall	Historian
Harry Sterkel	Asst. Historian
John Reeves	Asst. Historian
Cena Marsh	Sec/Treasurer
Anita Sporn	Parliamentarian