



307th

Reunion News Letter

June 2009

WWW.307BG.ORG

Notes from the Groups President

To all:

I know that this has been long in coming and I sincerely apologize. There have been many setbacks for everyone in this group since our 2008 reunion in Savannah Georgia. Claude Jordon (Treasurer) has had many medical issues that required hospital stays, Cathy Daniel (Secretary) has come down with a severe case of diabetes that almost blinded her, and for myself, I have been in the hospital 6 (six) times with eye surgery and back surgery. The years tend to creep up upon us every so quickly as I am sure you all know. I know that I as the president have let you down by not communicating, but this is all the more reason for us to have current records of YOU and if possible EMAIL addresses. Communications today through the Internet is vital and cost effective to our group.

The group is in tack and as strong as ever. We are moving forward with our website that Pat Ranfranz (Historian) has put together single handedly and we owe Pat a debt of gratitude. If you have access to the internet and can visit the website I encourage you to do so. The website address is at the top of the newsletter. Pat has put thousands of pictures of crew members and memorabilia for all of us to enjoy and to carry on the spirit of our fallen heroes.

Pat Ranfranz is about to embark in October back to Yap where we hope he will be able to deliver some exciting new news of a lost crew. At our last reunion the group voted to donate money toward Pat's efforts and I am sure it will very well utilized as these trips cost Pat in excess of \$10,000.00 per month. Good Luck and Good Searching Pat.

Cathy, Milt Potee, and myself are all heading to our next reunion location of Branson Missouri and August 15th to start the planning for our next reunion. This reunion is going to prove be one of our best ever. Branson has just completed a new airport that will fly you in directly to the city and we are working on the transportation opportunities for you as well. I sincerely hope that you will all come to this reunion as we have many things to discuss about this group and fellowship with our members.

Please, once again accept my apologies for taking so long to communicate with you about the happenings of the 307th.

Jim Walsh

President (615)268-9110

From our Historian

**The 307th Bombardment Group (HV) Association, Inc.,
The Long Rangers**

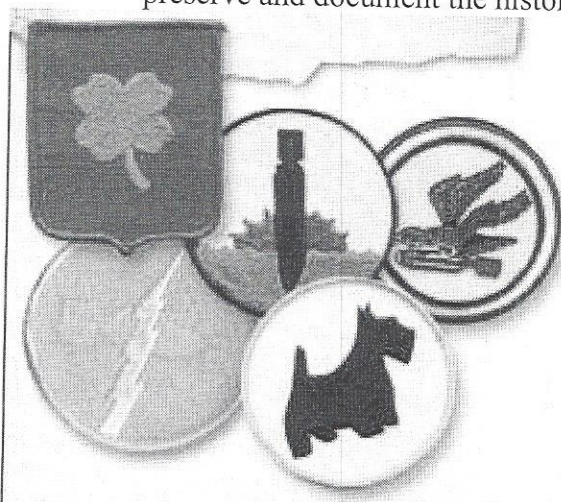


The web site has been setup to honor all the men of the 307th Bombardment Group (and 307th Bomb Wing from Korea) for their valiant service to their country during World War II from April 1942 to January 1946. The 307th Bomb Group (H) completed 625 Missions in the Pacific Theater, participated in 11 Campaigns and received 2 Distinguished Unit Citations.

The 307th Bomb Group was part of the 13th Air Force and consisted of the 370th, 371st, 372nd, and 424th Squadrons. The group was known as the "The Long Rangers" due to their long missions over long open stretches of the Pacific including missions to Turk, Yap, Palau, Philippines and Balikpapan, Borneo (the Ploesti raid of the Pacific war—the unescorted mission against vital oil refineries at Balikpapan, Borneo). Some of the



missions were over 17 hour unescorted round trips over open water with no landmarks. However, the 307th Bomb Group never received the press, fame and accolades that we piled on the bomb groups in Europe due to their remote theatre of operation and the fact that many of their missions were controlled by the Navy. This site has been created to preserve and document the history of the 307th Bomb Group.



Please share your memories! Donate 307th BG pictures, documents, and other items to our archives

Please share your 307th BG stories, documents, and pictures: Your legacy should not be lost in an attic, or stored in a garage, where it may later be disposed of as trash. Ask your children, your grand-children and even your great grand-children to participate in this effort to preserve your history. Submit 307th Bomb Group documents, pictures and related information to: Patrick Ranfranz, 307th Bomb Group Historian, 1473 21 1/2 Street, Cameron, WI 54822 or email: pat@307bg.org. Documents and photos will be returned on request.

Pat Ranfranz

From the desk of the Secretary – Cathy Daniel

Reunion 2008- Savannah, GA

Reunion 2008 is behind us now. I hope you all had a good time. It was so nice to see all of you again. The numbers are getting smaller but we still seem to have a good time anyway. I need to apologize for my state of mind during the reunion. I was under a great deal of stress and I did not handle myself very well. For all of you that had to see me cry, I apologize. I tried to hold it in but it was more than I could hold back. I wanted this reunion to be one of the best and I wanted to make sure all of you had everything you needed at all times, but I must admit that the staff at the Inn was not the best to work with. If any of you had problems with the Inn at Ellis Square, please let me know so that I can try to address those matters with the Inn. I am still having trouble getting in touch with them to settle up things. I also apologize for the Riverboat Cruise on Saturday night. We were supposed to have a private deck and the mix up was entirely the fault of the Riverboat Company and again I am still trying to come to some kind of settlement with them.

You people are very important to me and to think that I may have disappointed any of you in any way upsets me deeply. Again, I apologize for the glitches in the reunion, but I also hope that there were points of the reunion that you enjoyed. I do have many wonderful memories that I will keep close to my heart for all of the rest of my days. Thank you my friends.

Cathy Daniel

Reunion Host 2008

Act of Valor Brings on Pain

On Friday night, my parents, my nephew, my daughter, her boyfriend, her daughter, Tuck Gudger, Dottie Kendall, Ed Jurkens, David and myself went to the Pirate's House for dinner. After dinner we took the tour of the restaurant with Captain Jack. We went on the outside of the restaurant to see some of the old Ghost sightings and the hostess came out to give Captain Jack a message. She went up on the ledge that he was standing on and when she turned to come down she slipped and fell into the arms of C.E.. He had extended his arms to keep her from falling to the ground. We went on with the tour and the next day Dad kept saying his arm was sore. On Sunday when I put them on the train to return home I noticed that Dad hugged me good bye with only one arm, but really didn't pay that much attention to it.

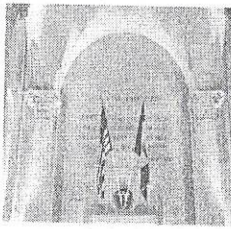
David and I didn't come home until late Monday and on Tuesday morning my sister called me and told me she thought I should come to see Dads' arm. When I got there his upper arm was badly bruised and his fingers and fingernails looked like he had soaked them in grape juice. I immediately thought blood clot and took him to the hospital. Sure enough that was what it was. He spent the next six (6) days in the hospital trying to not dissolve the clot, but to get it under control and keep it from breaking off and traveling through his body. He has to take 3oumadin for the next three (3) months. He is doing fine and is his usual grouchy self.

Oh by the way, my Mother has had two (2) nasty falls but no broken bones. The doctors stated that at least we know her Osteoporosis medication is working since she hasn't broken any bones yet. Our days are spent at the doctors' offices or the hospitals. Are these the good old days I've heard about?

The Milt Potee Corner

Milt Potee proudly represented the 307th Bomb Group at a very special occasion in Iowa. After our reunion in August of 2008, Milt was asked by the membership to attend a memorial service honoring Iowa State Servicemen from WWII. The event happened on November 11, 2008. Below you will find information that Milt obtained and shared back with the group. Milt our debt of gratitude goes out to you for all you did in honoring our fantastic organization.

ABOUT THE MEMORIAL UNION'S GOLD STAR HALL



Gold Star Hall is the "memorial" in the Memorial Union. In World War I, when a family had a son or daughter in the service, they displayed a card with a simple blue star in their window. When a life was lost, the card with the blue star was changed to one with a gold star - hence the name, Gold Star Hall. Gold Star Hall embodies the memorial that the entire Memorial Union building represents.

This quotation by poet John Drinkwater is inscribed at the north door:

*For Thee they died
Master and Maker, God of Right
The Soldier dead are at Thy gate
Who kept the spears of honor bright
And Freedom's house inviolate.*

When the Memorial Union opened in 1928, the names of 117 Iowa Staters who died in World War I were carved into the walls. So thorough was the researcher's work, that no errors or omissions have ever been reported.

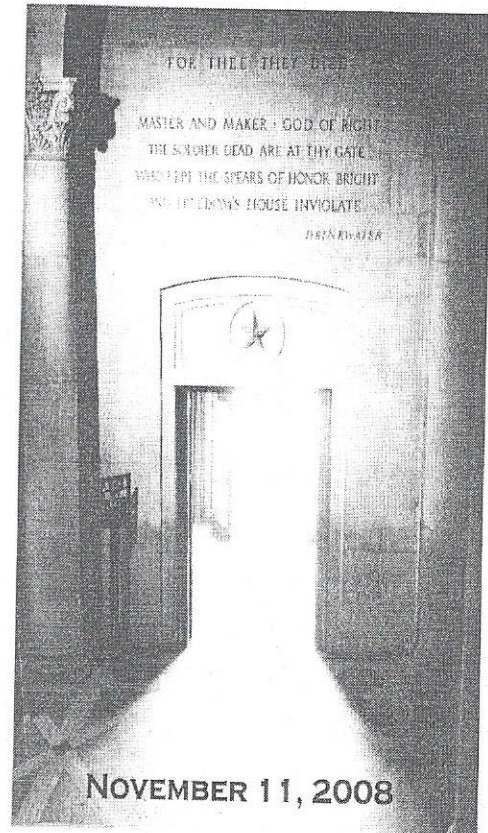
Early in 1969, ten bronze plaques bearing the names of 369 Iowa State men who died in military service during World War II were mounted on the two huge bronze doors that stood at the doorway between the vestibule and Gold Star Hall. The bronze doors were later removed * and in 1984, the names from World War II and Korea and Vietnam were engraved into the limestone. Additions were made in 2003, 2006, 2007 and now - 2008 for World War II, Korea, Vietnam, Somalia and Iraq. When the time is right, the names from the current conflict will be engraved permanently.

Each year, more than a million people pass through this memorial. Students understand its purpose and many pause on the benches during the course of their busy daily lives. Gold Star Hall remains an active memorial.

This quotation is inscribed in the vestibule:

*A memorial to the six thousand
Iowa State College men and women
who offered their lives
during the World War in the cause of
human liberty and free government.*

* In 2008, the bronze doors were installed in the new ISU Alumni Center.



**HONORING
IOWA STATE SERVICEMEN
FROM WORLD WAR II,
KOREA, VIETNAM AND SOMALIA**

**IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY
MEMORIAL UNION**

The below reading was the information about William Franklin Hedges of the 307th Bomb Gp

WILLIAM FRANKLIN HEDGES

William F. Hedges was born in Chicago, Illinois and grew up on the lower east side near the Indiana border.

He attended Iowa State College from Fall 1942 to Winter 1943, and majored in Animal Husbandry.

He pledged the 60-member Phi Kappa Psi fraternity, and enjoyed the camaraderie of house

mates as well as many social events. The 1943 Iowa State yearbook noted Bill's prowess as quarterback on the freshman football team. Bill was one of 28 players who earned their numerals and the possibility of moving on to Varsity play. In that time of war, the yearbook mentions that the "armed forces were making a dent in team ranks, even before the practice sessions had closed." Bill was also named to the undergraduate honor roll in his fraternity for his academics.

The exact course of Hedges' life after he left Iowa State in 1943 is sketchy. He likely enlisted later that year and started his training that continued to 1944. He probably shipped to the South Pacific mid-year in 1944.

Bill served with the 13th US Army Air Force. He attained the rank of Technical Sergeant and his crew was assigned to the 371st Bomber Squadron of the 30th Heavy Bomber Group known as the "Long Rangers".

In February 1945, the 307th Heavy Bomber Group was based on Morotai Island, then a part of the Netherland East Indies

We are pleased to have Milton Potee with us today. In 1945, he was a young man who had grown up in Ames and who was also serving with the 307th Bomber Group in the South Pacific, but with the 370th squadron. Both his squadron, the 370th and Bill's squadron, the 371st, happened to be flying on the same mission on the fateful day of February 27, 1945. Milton described that mission:

"On February 27th Hedges' crew, flying a B-24 Liberator bomber, flew on a mission to Tarakan, an island off the coast of Borneo. Their target was a refinery and an air base for Japanese air craft. The mission was one of the "shorter" ones, taking between 8 and 9 hours. There was lots of weather on the way to and from the target but the run was successful with 1,000 lb bombs dropped down the middle of the air base runway."

It was on that date and after that mission that Hedges' plane was reported missing. Neither the plane nor the crew was ever recovered. With so much flight time over water, it was often impossible to locate downed aircraft. It is not known if the plane was downed by enemy fire, or by mechanical or weather problems.

William F. Hedges is named on the Tablet of the Missing at the Manila American Cemetery in the Philippines. He was awarded the Air Medal with the oak leaf cluster and the Purple Heart.

We are pleased that an Iowa State classmate, David Hamilton of Des Moines, thought to question why his friend was not included on our memorial and we are happy to make up for that omission today.

Supporters who need our support

Do you know what the Bent Star and Bent Prop Project ARE?

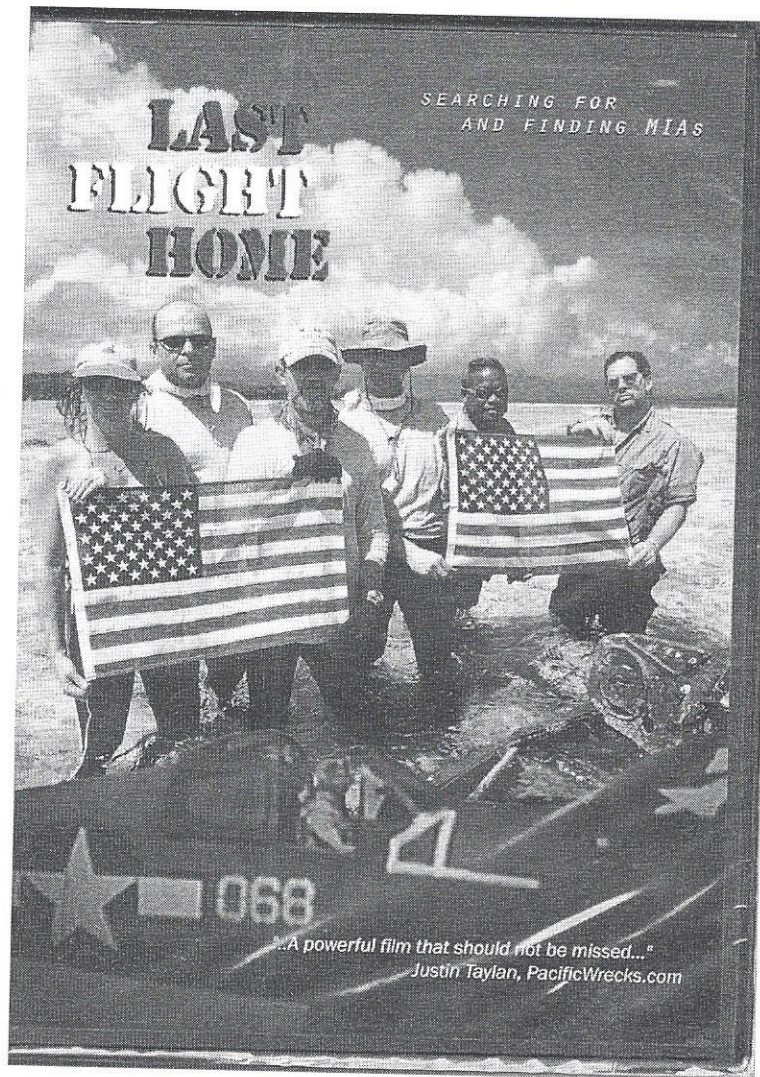
What started as a once in a lifetime opportunity to follow Dr. Pat Scannon on his quest to find Missing in Action personnel in the jungles and waters of Palau has become a quest of our own to bring these expeditions to you with the below video

"LAST FLIGHT HOME"

Order your copy today by going to www.lastflighthome.org

Or emailing to

info@bentstarproject.org





One would suppose that after 60 years, families and friends would move on, if not forget. But the sad fact is that the phrase Missing In Action (MIA) leaves the human spirit room for doubt and question. While it seems that Dr. Pat Scannon's work is in the waters and jungles of Palau, the real adventure and spirit of the project is to bring answers to the families and friends of those missing all these many years.

In 1993 Scannon first traveled to Palau as part of a team in search of the armed trawler sunk by Ensign George H. W. Bush, in July of 1944. While the team succeeded in its stated mission, Scannon was left searching for more... He discovered that during WWII many planes had gone missing over Palau and most of those MIA mysteries were left unsolved. After more than a decade of searching on and around the islands of Palau, Scannon and his BenProp team have been responsible for finding and identifying more than four dozen missing WWII aircraft, many with MIAs.

www.BentStarProject.org

You can assist in this altruistic quest!

The BentStar Project, Limited, a 501(c)3 non-profit corporation, was formed to support and document the efforts of Dr. Pat Scannon's BenProp Project. Our goal is to bring this altruistic quest to the public's eye, furthering education on the BenProp Project and MIAs, through the documentary film, "Last Flight Home", museum exhibits and the production of educational materials stemming from the film. The BentStar Project, Limited was formed by team members and supporters of BenProp and exists to ensure that Scannon's expeditions will be fully documented and will continue unencumbered.

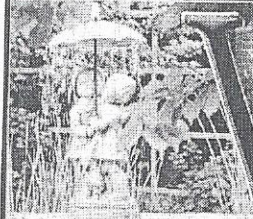
To make your donation or purchase the film, please go to:

www.BentStarProject.org

Or Mail to:
BentStar Project, Limited
443 First Street
Woodland, CA 95695-4023



MR. JACK SNEED



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**DEADLINE FOR THE
AUGUST ISSUE OF
THE VILLAGER:
JULY 15**

THE BOYS FROM SALE CREEK

by Bishop Holliman

Sale Creek is a little town near Chattanooga, not far from Coulterville and Bakewell. These small communities sent 380 young men off to fight in World War Two. Nineteen of the men were killed in action and over 40 were wounded. Jack Sneed, who is a resident in the Towers, along with his wife, Margie, was one of those men lucky enough to make it back home unscathed—bedecked with medals and memories—more medals than you can count on your two hands and bittersweet memories that have lasted a lifetime, almost as fresh as they were when he stepped off the train that brought him home in 1945.

Jack was nineteen years old and had been out of high school a year when he entered the Air Force in April 1943. After his training in Mississippi and Texas he found himself on a B-24, attached to the 13th Air Force, heading to the Southwest Pacific. His Bomber Group, the 307th was known as the "Long Rangers," and his plane was called "The Pistol Packing Mama." There were ten men in his crew. Jack soon attained the rank of Technical Sergeant and was third in command. Only four of his group still survives.

Jack and his crew flew 43 missions over Borneo, the Caroline Islands and the South Pacific Ocean, firing on enemy planes, strafing Japanese ships and bombing shore installations. They were very lucky, he says now, in that his plane was never damaged nor did any of his men get hurt.

But such luck did not hold for some other men and planes in his group. He remembers seeing as many as seven aircraft out of his squadron go down in one air battle—carrying men he'd trained with to their deaths. Another time he watched nine parachutes tumbling through the air, plummeting the men to certain death in the shark infested waters or into the jungles inhabited by cannibals.

When Jack wasn't firing 50-caliber machine guns or dropping bombs, his job was to monitor the flow of aviation fuel from bomb bay tanks to wing tanks to ensure all four engines had ample fuel. This task helped to relieve the boredom he felt on the long flights back to his base after a bombing raid. One bombing mission lasted over 17 hours, was 2610 miles round trip to Borneo in the Celebes Sea, and

burned 3600 gallons of gasoline.

The scariest experience he had was when they were caught in a hurricane and encountered winds so strong they lost one engine and had to "feather" another one on the wing to keep the B-24 aloft.

By the time Jack's military service ended he had seen action in New Guinea, the Mandated Islands, Bismarck Archipelago, the Philippine Islands and East Indies. For his exploits he was awarded the Distinguished Air Medal with four Oak Leaf Clusters, the Asiatic-Pacific Theater Ribbon with five bronze stars, the Philippine Liberation Ribbon with one bronze star and nine other citations for outstanding service.

When Jack returned to civilian life in 1945 he attended a technical school in Connecticut where he learned bookkeeping and developed further his bent for machinery, subjects that would stand him in good stead later in his career. But first things first—in 1946 he married Margie Jones, a girl who'd been his classmate at Sale Creek High. He then embarked on a career with the Chattanooga Gas Company in the sales department and worked his way up the ladder to position of Vice President. It was a job that would keep him hopping for the next 43 years!

One of Jack's interests has been the writing of poetry, both humorous and serious, much like you see on greeting cards. He jokes that if he has to, he can always go to work for Hallmark Cards.

Next Friday marks the 232nd anniversary of America's Independence, a birthday we can celebrate because of the likes of the Boys from Sale Creek, Coulterville, and Bakewell, and all the other little towns across the land—Boys who were there when their country called.

WE SALUTE YOU!



Reunion Planning:**WELCOME TO BRANSON, MO.**

As was stated previously, on August 15th 2009, Cathy Daniel, Milt Potee and myself are heading to Branson, Mo. to start the final preparation for our fun filled event that will go off in August 2010. The exact date has not yet been procured but I can assure you that we will do this and have it out to you in the very near future. Once again we would like to see all of you along with as many family members you can muster up, join us in Branson. This will be the best reunion we will have ever had.

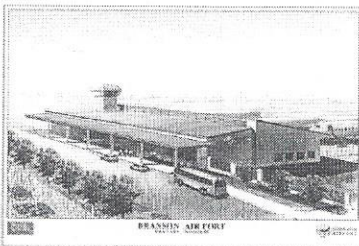
The Branson Chamber of Commerce is sponsoring the three of us for a grand total of \$50.00 per person for a 4 night stay. The Chamber is going to be providing tours and other events where the many different vendors will be bidding for our business. I am sure that your reunion planning staff will not do you wrong and you can expect a full week of excitement in this beautiful destination. Below I have included information about the new airport that has recently been opened. We hope you will join us. Remember that our 2009 Dues are due and payable now. Please send those to

Cathy Daniel 510 RiverView Road, Colonial Heights, Va. 23834

Mission Logs worth a read**The NEW Branson Airport**

Executive Director, Jeff Bourk - 417-334-7813 www.Bransonair.net

It is expected that the new Airport will foster a significant increase in new visitors from around the United States, who will finally be able to enjoy the wonderful Branson experience. Airport officials have been working closely with officials from Taney County, the Cities of Hollister and Branson, and the Branson Lakes Area Chamber of Commerce to attract low-cost air service directly to the Branson area.



The new commercial airport is now under construction within the Branson Creek development, and will be approximately 8 miles south of the center of Branson. Access to the Airport will be by Branson Creek Boulevard. This site will be owned by, and is entirely located within, Taney County, Missouri.

The Airport will accommodate all types of commercial aircraft (except wide-bodies like 747's), enabling non-stop and direct air service from anywhere in the continental United States. When completed, the Airport will have complete auto rental and ground transportation capabilities. The airfield will consist of a single 7,140 foot long, 150 foot wide runway.

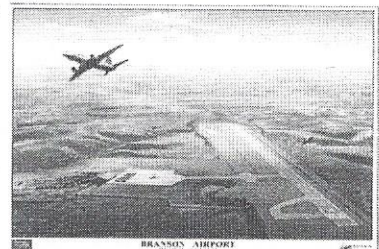
The Airport will be the first privately financed and operated commercial airport in the United States.

There has not been a brand new, NON-replacement airport built in the United States in more than 30 years. CitiBank handled the Bond sales. The name of the construction company is McAninch Corporation.

Ground breaking was Tuesday, July 17, 2007. Construction is scheduled to take approximately 22 months, with the Airport scheduled to open in May, 2009 in time for the spring/summer tourism season.

The terminal facility will be approximately 45,000 square feet of floor space and 6,000 square feet of canopy covered area. The terminal will be designed to comfortably handle / process 500,000 deplaning passengers per year. To put that into perspective, the Springfield / Branson National Airport had 440,000 passengers deplane in 2006. The new terminal is designed so that it can be added on to as needed and will eventually be able to handle up to 750,000 deplaning passengers per year, should the need grow as expected.

They are in discussions with all relevant airline partners and will make announcements as these partnerships are finalized.



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Letter from Jimmy Fielding

Dear Vera

About two years ago, at our last reunion of the 307th in Virginia, you asked if I would put down my "remembrances" of the day Paul was shot down. Well, better late than never, I'm going to give it a try, not only because I promised to do it, but also to get Nancy off my back. She is the reason I have pen in hand.

Let me go back a bit from that fateful day of November 6, 1944. I got my pilot's wings at the Douglas Army Air Base in Douglas, Arizona, in January, 1944. From there I went to Hammer Field in Sacramento, California, where crews were being put together and where I met and signed-on as copilot on Warren McMillan's crew. I believe McMillan and Don Balovich had trained on B-24's at the same air base and now were both at Sacramento (with a lot of other guys) putting crews together. I mention this because from the start of training it seems to me we were "running" parallel and the crews knew each other. The relationship between the crews grew when we joined the 424th and began active combat flying. As losses took their toll, those remaining became closer and with their experience became squadron and group leaders on missions. Balovich's crew, together with Hunter's crew and our own (McMillan's) were the nucleus until we lost Balovich's crew and, then within a matter of days Hunter's crew. We had all been flying a great deal as we filled in for the replacements which were not arriving. I mention all of this because under "normal" conditions (if there is such a thing) Balovich probably would not have been flying on our wing that fateful day. But, that's just how I remember it--maybe there was another reason. Who will ever know!

As I noted above, I joined McMillan's crew as a copilot and flew all my missions with him in that position. As with most other copilots I wanted to move out and get my own crew, but with the way things were going it looked like a long road! November 5, 1944, however, my wishes were heard and I took my "checkout" ride with our C. O. Major Vanderpool. My copilot on that ride was Bob Houghton (Balovich's copilot) who was going to be shifted over as copilot on my crew. Another interesting thing, the plane we flew on the check ride was the plane Balovich was flying when he was shot down the next day. Don was a great guy and a good friend and I can still see him sitting on the revetment yelling "don't hurt my aeroplane" as we taxied out. Little did we know what fate had in store!

Fighters attacked from the outside far right and then peeled off from the other guns in the formation. The first of these attacks occurred as we were on our bomb run and it was at this time that our tail gunner, Marshall Friedman, called on the inter-com to say Balovich had been hit and his number 3 engine was on fire. Fate being what it is, it was at this time that the Group leader broke radio silence to call for a turn to the left

off the bomb run due to a layer of cloud coverage that had come in and obscured the target. The turn to the left not only put Balovich on the outside of the turn (where more power is needed to stay in formation) but he also had the problem of his number 3 engine on that side on fire. I remember looking out the window by my seat and seeing Don as he gave me an "okay" sign from his window. From that I assumed they were doing okay. Just moments later, Friedman called from the tail position to say that Balovich had peeled off and gone down into the cloud layer below. He also said the fighters had gone down after him. That was the last time we saw their plane.

When we came off the target we broke formation and went down to see if we could find them. It was not only a futile effort but one that almost got Mac and I court martialed. It was, however, a sort of understanding that we had to watch out for each other.

Once Balovich's ship disappeared in the cloud cover we lost contact until a night months later (I forget exactly how long) when a fatcat pby rescue plane came into our base in Morotai. McMillan and I went down to the strip to meet it and, among others, were Paul and Al Primesberger.

Vera, the 307th historian, Jim Kendall, has Paul's full story on tape. In fact, I was with Paul when he made the tape in San Diego. Why not check with him and get a copy. It tells the story from the time they disappeared in the clouds to that night on Morotai when we met again.

Regards, Jim Fielding

Final Flight

Missing but not Forgotten

Our condolences go out to the families of:

Mr Charles Hunnigan of Bristol Tennessee

And

Mr. Phil Watson of Columbia South Carolina