

SEASON'S GREETINGS

2003-3

NEWSLETTER

JANUARY 12, 2004

QUOTES OF NOTE

"Nostalgia is like a grammar lesson. You find the present tense and the past perfect."

- Anonymous

"The closest to perfection a person comes is when he fills out a job application form."

- Randall

"Opportunity is usually disguised as hard work, so most people don't recognize it."

- Ann Landers

"Man is the irrational creature who is always looking for home atmosphere in a hotel and hotel service around the house."

- Quote

"Whenever you are to do a thing, though it can never be known but by yourself, ask yourself how you would act were all the world looking at you, and act accordingly."

- Thomas Jefferson

"The only one who never makes mistakes is the one who never does anything."

- Theodore Roosevelt

"A polite person is one who listens with interest to things he knows all about, when they are told by a person who knows nothing about them."

- De Morny

TO THE MEN OF THE 307th

The year 2003 has now slipped into history. Was quite a year! With the exception of a trip to Australia, New Zealand, and Figi and, best of all my "60" Year Class Reunion, it is not a year I would like to repeat.

Two weeks after our return from Figi I fractured two vertebra and threw two blood clots. Spent 5 weeks in hospital/rehab, then 5 more weeks in home care. Was doing great when on Nov. 10 while visiting teaching was attacked by a dog that managed to take a hunk out of the calf of my left leg the size of a golf ball. Took 21 stitches to sew up the hole. As of now the scar doesn't really look too bad. Finally, wanting to end the year with a bang, on Dec. 7th while driving to Downey to attend the Madrigal Choir program my sister Jo sings in, I managed to hit a bull. Was about 6:50 pm, dark as pitch and raining. I was crossing the railroad overpass at Red Rock when the car ahead of me veered. He missed the bull, I didn't. No damage to me but sure did a job on my car. Enough of my exciting life.

Your Christmas/New Year Newsletter is arriving to you late due to inclement weather, snow and more snow. I spent Christmas with my family and returned home on Sunday with plans to return on Tuesday to Salt Lake with the newsletter for the printer. Haven't been back to Salt Lake since Dec. 28th.

The Sunday (Dec. 28) that I drove home from Salt Lake over Sardine Pass was a nightmare. Was a white out with winds gusting so hard we were down to 10 miles an hour. I can usually get home from Salt Lake in 2 hrs 15 min. Took me 3 hrs 40 min. just to get to Logan. From that day on we had snow for over 10 days running. Our little town roads are still a mess to drive on, the highways are now clear over Sardine and also around the Tremonton way so will have no trouble getting the newsletter to the printer now. The picture below is of my front yard with 3 feet of snow on the level and between 4 and 5 feet where the snow has come off the roof. Been a lot of years since I have been snowed in.

HAVE A GREAT YEAR IN 2004!

Cena



NOTES FROM THE MEMBERSHIP:

The last few months have brought a number of phone calls, E-mail and letters from either 307th members or individuals wanting to know about a 307th member, etc.

Excerpts from a letter dated Oct. 18, 2003 from Norman Amtower. Can you answer his questions?

"Two things in the recent letter caught my attention. The letter from William Wise brought to mind his statement of 'a long drag back to Morotai...'"

We did not move to Morotai until late Oct. of that year and our flights to Yap were from Los Negros. Am I right or was Morotai already an alternate base in June of that year?

His second statement about his 14-hour trip being the longest three engine flight in the 13th reminds me of our mission in October of that year.

The "infamous" raids on Balikpapan in October resulted, as everyone knows who was there, in heavy losses.

Our crew, Leon Steffy as pilot, flew the October 3 mission. I was bombardier on the crew. There is no need to describe the details of the strike from our view but I am curious if we set any kind of a record on that mission when we were in the air for 18 hours. Our individual flight record records 18 hours and is "CERTIFIED CORRECT".

I wonder!! Is that any kind of a record for a B-14 that year???

Norman E. Amtower
372nd Sqdn.

Letter from Jerry Stepanek, grandson of a 307th member. Jerry does volunteer work at a Veterans Museum in Harlingen, TX.

"Joe Kight, from Harlingen, TX, Third Marine Division Veteran of WWII would like to know if any 307th Veterans remember Carney Field on Guadalcanal."

Even though the Third Division Camp was on the other side of a strip of jungle from the airfield, many of the Marines remember Carney Field, especially the night a Japanese bomber took a direct hit from anti-aircraft fire right over the airfield. He also remembers the many B-24s at Carney Airfield.

Any member of the 307th who would like to share their memories may send any correspondence to:

Jerry Stepanek
1701 South 1st St.
Harlingen, TX 78550

Thanks in advance to everyone.

Jerry

WALTER CLARK BEATY -

A recent E-Mail and also a telephone call from Australia from Michael Beaty for any information on his Father.

E-Mail reads: My Dad Michael said that he had talked to you and that you were kind enough to offer your help in finding anything about his Father. The spelling of my Grandfathers name may have been recorded wrong. The correct spelling is Walter Clark Beaty, serial #36071091 and in the 11th Bomber Group book it was listed as Walter O. Beatty.

We believe that Walter spent most of his military service with the 371st Bomb Squad, 307th Bomber Group but when he was killed he was listed as being with the 26th BS, 11th BG. We think he may have only just been assigned to them.

There is quite a story about Walter Beaty and the search by his son Michael for his father. We will print additional information as we receive it.

The grandson's E-Mail is:
colin123@iprimus.com.au

HARLEY C. GRIGGS

SN 39918965
395th Bomb Sqdn
5th Bomb Group
13th Air Force

Harley C. Griggs was lost over Moratai on April 30th, 1945. Two B-24's collided and both were lost. From the little information his brother has the B24 wings tipped and both planes went down.

Should any of you recall anything about the loss please contact me or else write to: Deal Griggs, 3540 Caroline St., Salt Lake City, Utah 84106 (801) 467-5931.

JUST FOR A LAUGH

During World War II, the 13th Air Force B-24 bombers island hopped from Guadalcanal to the Philippines. One afternoon, a mechanic in our group who

had finished servicing a B-24 was sitting on the ground with his back against the tire of the plane. A passing jeep stopped in front of the bomber, and a one-star general inside called out, "What's wrong with this plane? Its nose sticks up too high!"

"There's nothing wrong with this bomber, sir," the mechanic answered. "She's just proud of her war record."

The jeep and the general drove off.

- Contributed by Warren Thurber

BOOKS RECOMMENDED

The following books covering 13th Air Force, WWII material can be purchased at major bookstore. 1 and 2 are currently available at Walmart.

- 1) The Black Sheep (paperback)
by Bruce Gamble
- 2) Black Sheep One (paperback)
by Bruce Gamble
- 3) B-24 Liberator Units of the Pacific War (paperback) includes photos of 307th B-24's
- by Robert F. Dorr
- 4) Guadalcanal (paperback)
- by Richard B. Frank
- 5) Forked Tailed Devil; The P-38 13th Air Force, mostly fighter wing is mentioned in this book.
- by Martin Caidins
- 6) Wings of Glory, The Air Force Story 1914-1945, Maximum Effort 1943-1945.
- by Martin Caidins

I have quite a number of web sites that cover 13th Air Force info as well as information on the 307th. Let me know if you would like them listed in the newsletter.

Cena

TIMES REMEMBERED

2004 - Seems like yesterday that Carl Whitesell began to share letters and photos he had received from 307th men with me. Thirty-three years, where have they gone? So many good time shared by us with the "Men of the 307th". Sad times too as many of these friends took their "Last Flight".

The Holidays bring back memories of a time long past. Funny, how young one can feel on the inside, its just that the face is now lined and the hair turned white, if one is lucky to have any hair. I wouldn't have missed it for the world and I want to thank you of the "307th" for letting Walt and I be a part of your world.

HAPPY NEW YEAR Cena

* The following story was printed in one of our first newsletters.

REMEMBER WHEN - RAID ON WAKE ISLAND December 25, 1942

by Woody Carpenter

As you will recall, the 307th Bomb Group gave the Japanese on Wake Island a surprise Christmas present on December the 25th of 1942. Bombs started dropping a few minutes after midnight on the 25th of December with approximately twenty aircraft hitting selected targets all over this tiny island. The raid was highly successful and caught the sleepy Japanese by complete surprise.

Leading up to this attack there was a lot of planning and preparation which took place on Oahu, Hawaii, several weeks before the actual strike. The first hint that something was underway was when the 307th Bomb Group Headquarters scheduled a large training formation flight just west of Oahu. We took off on this training mission and, after a lot of circling around, assembled our planes into a large group formation. The mission lasted about two or three hours. It didn't go off too well, as you may remember, as we flew into one of those Pacific squall clouds and the formation really came unglued. This resulted in quite a few of us returning to Oahu individually. I was upset about trying to fly formation in the clouds when I could not maintain visual contact with my lead aircraft. Needless to say, with all those

planes milling around over the Pacific without being able to see each other was quite a tense experience. I made a wide gentle turn to the left to get out of the way of all of the other aircraft somewhere in the clouds. Following the mission we were briefed more thoroughly about formation flying under heavy weather conditions.

Following the big training flight, nothing was said or done that would alert us to what was coming up. Then, a few days before Christmas, we were scheduled for a similar formation flight and told that we would be issued a sealed envelope which were to open after a certain time after take-off. The envelope would contain further orders. Well, upon opening the sealed envelope, we were directed to proceed to Midway Island. We were on our way for a surprise Christmas present for the Japanese on Wake Island.

After arriving at Midway Island, the Group started a round of briefings on the mission over Wake Island. It was to be the longest mass bomb raid ever undertaken. When you looked at the map you could understand what they were talking about.

On the day for us to take off on the mission the weather was bad with about one-half mile visibility. As each aircraft made the run down the runway, it disappeared from sight about half way down. With weather like this - and we were to assemble all of these planes into a large group formation? From the ground this looked like an impossible task. However, as you remember, after we took off making a wide sweeping, climbing turn to the left, we starting popping out of the clouds at about 3,5000 - 4,000 feet. The normal procedure of circling and assembling a formation was ruled out for this mission to conserve fuel. We were to assemble as we were heading out on course for Wake Island. A crewmember was to signal who he was by the use of a signal light gun. Man, with dusk setting in, with all of these aircraft breaking out of the clouds at about 4,000 feet and with everybody climbing right on course, it was a real challenge to find your formation leader. After a while we got the planes all together in some form of a fashion. Perhaps not with the one we had been briefed on, but what the heck, we were on our way. As to the light codes, I've never seen so many fireflies in the sky in all of my life!! Now we settled down to a long, long trip to Wake Island,

and set our throttles for the long range cruise control setting. The weather was beautiful after we got away from Midway, so no problem there.

A few minutes before midnight on the 24th of December, we could see Wake Island very clearly in the distance. We approached our descent spot and Colonel Matheny broke radio silence and said, "Let's give 'em hell." We started our power descent from 6,000 feet (I believe it was 6,000 to avoid detection) to 4,000 at which we established our bomb run on our target. Dan Cauffiel had opened the bomb bay doors and started giving directions into the target. Then bombs away! We felt the blast as the explosions gave us a bump. The crew reported that we hit the target and we saw others hitting their targets, making the island look as if it were on fire. We could see a lot of action on the ground including the firing of AA guns. I got so fascinated with all the sights on the ground that I kept the plane on its bomb course until Kissel said, "Skipper, let's get out of here." Right! I made a wide descending left turn away from the island and after determining all was well, started my climb back to the return home altitude. Funny, at no time did I ever think about getting hit with flak, about all that water down there and how far away we were from Midway. Nuts!

On the return flight I didn't know who was who up there in the sky with us. We just all got together and started for home. As we proceeded home we became more spread out, as each navigator was doing his own thing, I guess. In any event, we began to see fewer and fewer airplanes, hearing a radio transmission occasionally.

As the dawn began to break, we were just drumming along and seemingly quite alone. At this point we began hearing aircraft calling Midway for steers but we didn't see any of them. After a while this radio traffic began to taper off and here we were still drumming along with no one in sight. I kept on the course that Murphy kept giving me and felt that he would get us home. However,

as the radio traffic began to cease, I began to get a little fidgety. As the sun rose higher and higher in the sky and here we were still drumming along, I began questioning Murphy about our course and ETA. We kept checking our gas and from all indications it was getting awfully low. When we started getting close to our ETA I started calling Midway for a fix. Since others were ahead of us we had to wait. As luck would have it, just as Murphy's ETA came up, we got a call from Midway telling us to take up a certain heading. Normal procedure was that they would give us an outbound heading and after determining it was us, they would give us the reciprocal heading for the base. Well, with so little gas I told Murphy that we were going to follow the radio direction needle and head for Midway. I don't remember how long it was before we saw Midway, but it seemed like an awfully long time. I kept expecting the engines to stop at any time as I was sure we were flying on gas fumes. But there it was! - Midway - and I've never been so glad to get back on the ground in all my life.

Later we learned that our fuel was just about all gone. I believe we were the last plane to get back. Before making the final descent to the island, I had those engines cut back so far that you could nearly count the prop blades as they turned over.

The mission was a success and we didn't lose one aircraft. Unfortunately, when Captain Brown of the 370th Squadron and Major Benvenuto of 307th Group Headquarters made their photo reconnaissance flight over Wake Island, they were lost at sea. They got back within 200 miles of Midway and then went down. No one knew what happened. The air searchers found an oil slick after an extended search for them. Today their names, along with their crew, are on the memorial stone wall at the National Cemetery. God rest their souls.

As remembered by Woody Carpenter,
crewmember in the 370th Bomb Squadron.



FROM YOUR HISTORIAN

CORRECTION

Many of you have already caught an error in the Historian's pages of the September 2003 issue of the Newsletter. Look on page 9 of that issue for the article sent in by Bill Wise about the mission to Yap of June 28, 1944. Bill's memories of problems encountered on that mission differ from the official mission report. That subject has already been covered, but your Historian allowed a disconcerting error to slip through.

The article mentioned the Dufur crew as having run into more than enough trouble and that "it was a long drag back to Morotai", an obvious error since the first mission from Morotai was flown on November 15, 1944. So that comment should have read "it was a long way back to Los Negros". The Dufur crew was credited with the longest 3-engine flight in the 13th Air Force. My apologies for the mistake.

Another Mission Report Questioned

Association member, Phil Watson, (424th) sends the mission report for June 14, 1945, which he feels is incorrect. This is similar to the Bill Wise story in the last issue of the Newsletter.

The Mission Report which Phil feels is in error states, speaking of the 6/14/45 mission, that "Weather thoroughly washed out this mission over all targets. Only one (1) aircraft (No. 546 - Lt. Ansley, pilot) was able to drop below the undercast at Balikpapan to hit his target after three (3) runs had been made at the briefed altitude. Secondary and tertiary targets were also 'socked in' tightly. Lt. Ansley lost #1 engine due to loss of oil pressure just fifteen minutes after bombs away but returned safely to

base without jettisoning any equipment." Elsewhere the mission report states that bombing results at Balikpapan were 'excellent'. An estimated 75% of bombs hit within precise target limits."

Phil Watson writes: "The above quoted portions of the mission report are incorrect. The engine we lost blew an oil seal and was on fire while our formation was still above the overcast. By the time the fire was put out and the engine stopped, our plane had dropped alone below the undercast and the AA target at Balikpapan could be seen. With bombardier Shilling leading the discussion it was quickly decided to make a bomb run on the assigned target. An estimated seventy-five percent of our single plane load of bombs hit the target, putting that AA position out of action. As indicated by the mission report, other than a mission credit, our crew got no mention for successful action."

S/Sgt. Thomas F. Kearney

A recent phone call put us in touch with Mrs. Cathy Benberg who is seeking information on her father's WWII military service. Kearney never discussed his service days or travels with his family. We have given her the address of the National Personnel Records Center in St. Louis on the chance his records survived 1973 Records Center fire

Meanwhile, Mrs. Benfield would like to contact anyone who knew or remembers her father who might be able to help fill in the story. The only thing she has to go on at this time is a wallet size copy of Kearney's discharge which is scarcely readable. However, from what we can read, it looks as though he might have been a clerk in a group or squadron office, or perhaps in the Far East Air Force office. If you knew S. Sgt.

Thomas F. Kearney and could tell Mrs. Benfield of his service, please contact her at the address which follows:

Mrs. Cathy Benfield
1323 Bradbury
Troy, MI 48098

Email: ckbenfield@aol.com

John (Jack) Raymond McCullough

Newsletter 2002-3 carried a request from Pat Ranfranz for information on his uncle, the above named "Long Ranger" who was KIA when the 372nd Coleman crew was shot down south of Yap on June 25, 1944. McCullough was radio operator on the Coleman crew. Apparently the original request for information brought little response because Pat Ranfranz writes: "I'm finally getting back to my search for information on my uncle. Recently I was stunned to find a picture in Reunion Book No. 11 (page 55) of his crew. This is the first picture we have ever located of him in the service. My family would love to find a copy of the original picture. Does anyone have other snapshots and information on the history of this crew and the men in it?"

Also, please visit my www.charleslindbergh.com web site. It is one of my hobbies. The site received almost 500,000 visitors last year. People are still fascinated by Lindbergh related topics."

Pat Ranfranz
3165 Victoria Street, North
Shoreview, MN 55126
1-651-490-9720 (H), or
1-800-328-2460, ex 7610 (O)

Email: Webmaster@CharlesLindbergh.com

Norris Andrew Nelson Mason Prescott

In a strange coincidence the families of the two men listed above have, almost at the same time, requested information about the loss of their family members. Our meager records show that both Nelson (bombardier) and Prescott (navigator) were assigned to the 372nd Bomb Squadron but flying with the 424th Friend crew when shot down. This is not too unusual at this point in the war when planes and crews were in short supply and switching back and forth was not uncommon.

Norris Andrew Nelson

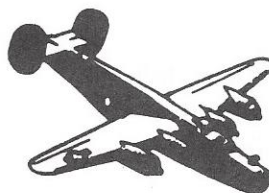
The request by Norris Robins for information on Norris Nelson was covered in Newsletter 2003-2. That request brought responses from Mel Brown and Francis Craven who might also be able to help with the following request for information on Mason Prescott.

Mason Prescott

Rick Prescott requests information about his uncle Mason Prescott, also a 372nd crew member lost while flying on the same doomed Friend 424th crew. Rick writes "I'm trying to find any available information on my uncle, 1st Lt. Mason Prescott. He was a navigator, assigned to the 372nd Squadron and was killed during a mission on 15 November 1943 flown against Kahili Airfield, Bougainvillea. Due to a shortage of navigators, Mason was flying that mission with a 424th BS crew. I have a copy of the MACR so know the names of the crew members and tail number of the plane on that mission. I have been trying to discover the names of the 372nd crew and of the plane Mason was normally assigned to. I would appreciate any information that may be available. Thanks.

Rick Prescott

Email: RICKPRESCO@aol.com



THE LAST FLIGHT

NATIVE AMERICAN PRAYER

I give you this one thought to keep --
 I am with you still - I do not sleep.
 I am a thousand winds that blow,
 I am the diamond glints on snow,
 I am the sunlight on ripened grain,
 I am the gentle autumn rain.
 When you awaken in the morning's hush,
 I am the swift, uplifting rush
 of quiet birds in circled flight.
 I am the soft stars that shine at night.
 Do not think of me as gone --
 I am with you still -- in each new dawn.

Each passing day we seem to be losing more of our members. Quite a number of newsletters have been returned to me with "deceased" written across the name. Some I have been able to get the date of death but others there has been no response.

In this newsletter I will list only the names of our members who have died. If anyone of you know the date of death I would appreciate hearing from you.

Many of you will remember Mike and Juanita Michlo. Mike and Juanita attended all of the reunions until Mikes death in 2001. They were the two that introduced us the Bill Adams. Word received some time ago brought news of Juanita's passing.

Time seems to be slipping away and with each passing year we say goodbye to more old friends. To the families of these men we extend our sincere sympathy.

Adams, Ralph N.	03-01-03
Alexander, Nicholas R.	
Brautlacht, Richard C.	
Glass, Gordon F.	11-17-02

Bird, Charles A.	05-30-02
Hoskins, Richard	08-18-03
Hollinger, Marvin	
Jenkensen, Charles	04-30-02
Kuspan, Joseph G.	
Lindley, William S.	07-27-02
Larson, Howard W.	06-26-02
MacDonald, James A.	
Pruett, Ray	
Ratliff, Russell R.	08-19-02
Reider, Jack P.	02-23-03
Young, John M.	
Wilkerson, Donald E.	02-06-02

REUNION UPDATE

Word from Jim Walsh that the plans for the 2004 reunion in Nashville are about to a final stage. If you review his letter in the 2-2003 Newsletter you will see he has some interesting activities planned for us.

"Registration Forms, Hotel Reservation Forms, Agenda, Tours, Shows, Etc." with all the necessary instructions will be in your hands by the first week in April. As posted in the 2003-2 newsletter the dates for the 2004 Reunion are listed for the week of August 17-24.

Seems all plans are going well with the reunion.

Jim Walsh

MEMBERSHIP DUES

It is that time of year again. As you can see, the "DUES ENVELOPE" is included with this newsletter. Like a birthday, it comes around every year.

Many of you have already sent in your dues for 2004 - just tear up the envelope I have sent.

Thanks,

Cena

NEWS FROM THE PRESIDENT

Well friends, another year has come and gone. There have been many low points for some of us this year and also for our country. We must strive to keep our faith and remember the high points in life that we are blessed with.

Plans for the reunion in Nashville are promising to be a very enjoyable time for all of us. Please try to make every effort to attend. I know that each year it gets harder for us to make these plans, but the times we share are so memorable that it is a shame to miss even one.

Cathy and I have been unable to get any members to serve on the site committee for presentation of possible sites for the 2006 reunion, so we have sent for information from Spokane, WA, San Francisco, CA, Milwaukee, WI, and Kansas City, MO. We will try to set up some presentations and have them in Nashville. If you have any suggestions for reunion sites or you would like to help to plan the 2006 reunion, please contact Cathy at 804-526-7249 or 804-399-5563. You may reach me at 804-590-2494. We would appreciate any help or input from anyone.

I would like to take this time to wish you and your families a very Happy and Safe Holiday Season from my family and me.

C. E. Jordan

A VETERAN DIED TODAY

He was getting old and paunchy and his hair was getting gray,
He sat around telling stories, of a long ago day.
Of a war that he had fought in, and the deeds that he had done,
His exploits with his buddies, they were heroes, everyone. And
'tho sometimes to his neighbors, his tales became a joke, all his
buddies listened, for they knew of where he spoke.
But, we'll hear his tales no longer, for he has passed away, and
the world's a little poorer for a Veteran died today.
No, he won't be mourned by many
Just his children and his wife.
He lived an ordinary, quiet sort of life
He held a job, raised a family, quietly going his way.
And 'tho the world won't note the passing,
a Veteran died today.
When politicians leave this earth, their bodies lie in state,
while thousands note their passing,
and proclaim that they were great.
Papers tell of their life stories, from the time they were young,
but the passing of a Veteran goes unnoticed and unsung.
He was proud to be a Veteran, and his ranks are growing thin.
His presence should remind us, we may need his likes again
For when countries are in conflict, we find the military's part,
is to clean up all the troubles, the others seem to start.
If we cannot do him honor, while he's here to hear the praise,
then at least let's give him homage at the ending of his days.
Perhaps just a single headline, in the paper it might say,
"Our country is in mourning, for a Veteran died today".

Author unknown

As you may know, I was sued this year by a City Councilman for some ads I paid to have printed in the paper during the election. I have set up a website for the information that was the object of the suit and I would like you all to check it out and give me your thoughts .

*www.your1stamendmentatrisk.com
WWW.your1stamendmentatrisk.com*

C. E. Jordan