



Happy Holidays

307th Bombardment Group (hv) Association Newsletter 93-3

December 15, 1993

QUOTES OF NOTE

I found the following poem in our local newspaper. Such a simple reminder that we pass this way but once, and it is so easy to find meaning to our lives.

"Is anybody happier because
you passed this way?

"Does anyone remember that
you spoke to them today?

"The day is almost over, and its
toiling time is through;

"Is there anyone to utter now a
kindly word of you?

"Can you say tonight in parting
with the day that's slipping fast,

"That you helped a single person
of the many that you passed"

"Is a single heart rejoicing over
what you did or said?

"Does the one whose hopes were fading
now with courage look ahead?

"Did you waste the day or use it"
Was it well or sorely spent?

"Did you leave a trail of kindness,
or a scar of discontent?

"As you close your eyes in slumber,
do you think that God will say:

"'You have earned one more tomorrow
by what you did today'?"

NOTES FROM THE PRESIDENT

We are almost at the end of 1993. I'm sure all of you realize that as well as I do. '93 did not seem as long as '92, or '91, or '43, or '44. This is the time of year when we enjoy Christmas with Grandchildren, family and friends. Please take a moment for a prayer for the families of our comrades who have departed this life for a better one. May God bless them each and everyone.

By now all of you should have received the Great Reunion Book on the 9th Reunion which Jim Kendall and his crew has put out. I think they outdid themselves and everyone I have talked to thinks the same.

Our Reunion Committee of Bob & Sara Jones, and Bill & Ellie Gerhardt have everything in order for the 10th Reunion in St. Louis. All you have to do is to Register so they will know what you want to do and how many will be there. Please do not wait till the last minute. The Reunion Committee has put in many hours getting the best deal on events, trips, etc. Don't forget to bring all of your memorabilia. I know I have missed seeing some of the items that have been at reunions as I see pictures in reunion books

* * * * *

of things that were at the reunion but I did not see them. this reunion setup will be the best we have had to display items.

The Nominating Committee of Ike Ayala, Jim McCloskey, and Wes Gray are still looking for those who would like to serve the 307th Bomb Group Reunion Association. If you would like to help, please contact one of them. They are listed in the roster.

Velta and I would like to wish each & everyone of you a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year and hope that we will see you in St. Louis in May.

Ken Meyers
President

* * * * *

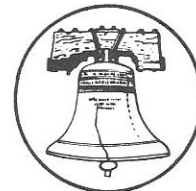
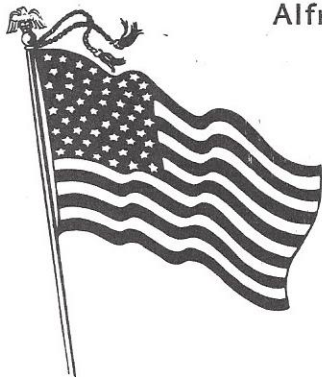
NOTES FROM THE MEMBERSHIP

Alfred Williams sent me the following letter several months ago telling of the first 307th Members to lose their lives in WWII. Alfred Williams is now listed among the 307th Members who have taken their "Last Flight".

"My name is Alfred H. Williams. I was a flight crew member of the 307th Bomb Group and the 424th Squadron. The enclosed clipping is of the deaths of the first two men of the 307th. Lt. Max B. Sanny was the pilot. This happened on a Sunday morning in August or September of 1942. At that time the 307th was based in Sioux City, Iowa. It happened on a routine flight of simulated bomb run and flight instrument check.

Would you please put this in the newsletter and dedicate it to the first known dead of our 307th Organization.

Alfred H. Williams"



"REVEAL NAMES OF CREW ON ILL-FATED BOMBER"

"All Seven of Survivors Injured as Plane Crashes" - Air Base officials late Tuesday afternoon disclosed the identity of crew members aboard the ill-fated bomber from the Sioux City Base which crashed Sunday morning four miles southwest of Wayne, Neb., killing two men.

The Dead:

2nd Lt. James B. Sleight, 23, Orange, Mass.
2nd Lt. Howard C. Austin, 26, Lincoln, Neb.

The Injured:

1st Lt. M.J. Sanny of University Heights, Ohio
2nd Lt. William H. Jones, Houston, Texas
Staff Sgt. Joe G. Herzog, Stanton, Conn.
Staff Sgt. J.S. Hansen, Pocatello, Idaho
Staff Sgt. Roy F. Baylor, Fish Haven, Idaho
Sgt. Alfred H. Williams, Linwood, N.C.
Sgt. Paul L. Berry, Stephensburg, Kentucky

All survivors, including Lieuts. Sanny and Jones, who were in the plane when it crashed suffered minor injuries, officers of base reported. The assignments of the crewmen were not revealed.

Five members of the nine-man crew parachuted to safety and two of the four men who "rode the plane down" survived the crash.

The pilot, whose only injury was a slight cut, said the plane developed motor trouble and a forced landing resulted, but that the landing gear failed to function.

An automobile wreck car from a Wayne garage was used to extricate the bodies of the two men from the wreckage.

The crash occurred in a nearly level stubble field on the farm of J.C. Bressler.

Dedicates Services

It came as Wayne residents prepared to attend early church services. Residents heard the motors of the ship falter, then saw four men jump from the plane as it roared closer to the ground.

Dr. Victor West, pastor of the Wayne Methodist Church, was directing observance of holy communion when word came of the crash. He immediately dedicated the service to the two men killed.

"Those men who died in that plane crash have brought this service up to date," he said. "We dedicate this holy communion to them. We who live and assume no dangers must give ourselves to the making of better schools, better homes and better churches. We dare not give less than our best."

Typical of the feeling of townspeople after the accident was the expression of Fred M. Blair, clothing store owner.

"Watch us get behind the scrap and bond drives now," he said. "I'm afraid we have been a little complacent about this war. I've talked to plenty of people since Sunday morning. That complacent feeling is a thing of the past."

* * * * *

DIARY OF LT. VERNON A. MRAK -

Continued from 93-2 Newsletter

10 July 1945 - T. IFF Lecture - VCR 695.
Bogy - Unidentified - Primary positions
1 - 2 - 6. Position 4 - Anti-radar (Referred
to IFF Channel positions)

1 - Regular Mission. 3 Sub Patrol. 6 Air
support. Hello Lily this is (our call name)
Bojangs - Turn on. Curtains - Turn off.
Sun Up - One position. Sundown - one
position down. Clay Pigeon - Unidentified.
Mournful - Am I identified? ? You are
identified.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURE - Fuel Systems.

11 July 1945 - Wednesday - #12 Flying
with Monica. 6/1000 SAP, 3100 Gas. Cape
Bajor Rendezvous. Take Off - We will
be on ground alert until 6000 ft.

No Flight on 11th -

12 July 1945 - took off as briefed previous
day. T.O. time 0702. Weather was fine
for about 30 min. out from field. 0800 -
Now we are in a squall line that apparently
is running parallel to course. The weather
today has been raining all the way over.
We were on instruments to Cape Karrang.
And now, at 6000 ft. we are about 300
ft. over complete undercast. ORBIT AT
PT. CHARLIE - Target area is clear --
Imagine that! 4464 LQVR - Standing One
- Ground control. 180° smoke center. 75'
Alt. 800=400. Max bomb Inter. Left target
at 1320 after making three dry runs on
Jap gun implacements and trenches. Unable
to drop bombs because of undercast that
closed completely just prior to our arrival.

We are going to bomb Secondary (Donggela
warehouse area) at Cape Karrang. As
we were leaving primary target, the Aussies
said "thank you very much for trying so
hard to get in on the target that we
assigned to you." 1110 Total Time - 600
A 1 300-300 235-235

14 July 1945 - Saturday 855 Limboeng 3100
gas. T.O. 0604 - 8500 15/250 GP. Ren-
dezvous 1000 - 1030. 3500 Rendezvous at
Field. For Group Box Landing. Southwest-
ern tip of Celebes. Primary: Limboeng
Airdrome. Secondary: Boezoedoang. Terti-
ary Malamboeng at Pare Pare. Saffono
Mopanget Airdrome. Our mission today

is to bomb Jap Airdromes at various tar-
gets. It is believed a few Jap fighters
are in these areas. Bob Harder and (the)
Col. from 5th Gp. were lost in this area
near Makassar Town. Rescue - Playmate
61 waiting off Cape Patiro. Our group
formation takeoff this morning was p.p.
Firstly, it was too dark to find the other
ships, and secondly, somebody screwed
up and it seemed that some of the ships
were where they shouldn't have been. I'm
flying in the left seat again today for the
fourth consecutive mission. I made T.O.
this morning also.

1020 - We had to detour around Jap flak
emplacements. Have been flying over Cele-
bes for past 2.00 hrs. Some parts are
very well cultivated by the natives. I
have seen three fairly well built roads.
1035 - We just passed over Jap Seaport
and airdrome of Towari in South Central
Celebes - Actual take off time - 0612

There were no Jap aircraft seen at Towari
although the runways appeared to be in
good condition and highway was excellent.

A very unfortunate thing happened as our
squadron was circling up into formation.
We were third ship in. As one of the other
ships tried to cut us out to get in forma-
tion with us, our nose gunner got excited
and mistook him for a single engine Jap
fighter and let him have about 150 rounds
of .50 caliber slugs. I do not know yet
how many times the ship was holed.

(He thought it was a Betty, a twin-engined
bomber, and fired two-twelve round bursts.
fortunately the B-24 was so much farther
away than he thought a Betty would be,
so he missed him. Shortly thereafter,
Steve called the crew and asked that we
be on the lookout for a downed aircraft.
That nearly scared the wits out of me,
because I thought that we had shot it
down.)

NOTE: Comments of W.O. Holston

Once again I am thankful to Vernon, this
time for omitting a very embarrassing time
to me! He may not be aware, but I also
would have screwed up on this mission
had it not been for a very careful and
exacting pilot and Aircraft Commander.
They say true confession is good for the
soul, so here goes!

As we were going down through the South-western leg of the Celebes, perhaps an hour away from rendezvous, Steve asked me for a position report, which he was accustomed to doing from time to time, and probably to see if I was on the ball! When I told him where we were, he told me I was wrong. After discussing it over the intercom, he came down to the nose of the plane and pointed out on my chart the exact location. It seems that I had been picking up checkpoints along the route that were in a line a few degrees off our course, and the location which I had marked off was some 25-30 miles off our exact position. Had he not been double checking on me we probably would have missed our rendezvous with the rest of the squadron! On this and one other time, I was extremely lucky as a navigator. The other time occurred over water between Okinawa and Clark Field while I was at 13th AF Hdqts. and I will cover that near the end of this document.

My other comment at this time is in regard to the mistaken identity of the B-24. When Jim called out that there was a bogey at one o'clock, I looked out the window and saw that it was a B-24. When I pressed my microphone to tell him, the cord to my throat piece mic had been disconnected and dropped to the floor of the plane. While I was frantically searching for the plug on the floor, he said in deliberate fashion, "There's a bogey at one o'clock! It's a Betty! It's coming in! I'm going to fire!" Then he let out with two bursts from the twin -50 cal. machine guns in the turret. By that time, I was able to get the plug back in my microphone, and I yelled, "That's a B-24!" Steve came on the intercom to ask what was going on, and I had to tell him. (Steve and Vernon had been talking to the other planes in the squadron on VHF radio and did not hear anything prior to the firing of the machine guns.)

There followed the longest period of silence on the intercom that I remember ever hearing before Steve told us to be on the lookout for a downed B-24. He was talking about Bob Harder, but I really thought that we had shot down another plane from our group.)

* * * * *

Practically as disgusting was that we made Five dry runs over our target which was perfectly clear, and besides, we were flying wing for the lousiest pilot that ever wore a pair of wings. Landing time 1745. Total flying time 1130.

2010 - Nobody has said anything to us about shooting up one of our own ships. It was perhaps from one of the other squadrons in our group.

We made group box form landing this eve. We were flying high squadron, #2, and on that lousy pilot's wing - We went into some very violent clouds just above the field and can't understand yet how we came out alive.

The son of a bitch went into a steep turn just when entering the clouds, and if I hadn't been throttled back, we perhaps would have collided at 5000 ft. above the field. Our airspeed dropped down to 122 Indicated. That alone should be enough. I know that (#13) is my lucky number. 2300, tonight the Japs must have broken through the perimeter again. I heard machine guns chattering and could hear the bullets ricocheting over our area.

(Holston comments: Thank goodness, I was unaware of the near-miss over the field, or I had forgotten about it. All the more reason I still hate to fly. I do remember the times the Japs broke through the perimeter, and the time we were dismounting 50 cal. and placing them on the beach.)

Today our squadron dropped 1000's of propaganda leaflets in and around Makassar Town.

16 July 1945 - Monday - Ship 855. Steve, Don Watts & I went out today for three hours of landing and formation practice. Steve made first take off and landing - I the second and Don the third. Don is now an instructor and was very pleased with my flying. Said he would see that I was checked out as soon as possible. (As first pilot.)



17 July 1945 - Ship 935 - PHOTO - 3100 Gas. Rendezvous at 8000 - Bira Point - Alternate, Tanakeke. Tanakeke, 370th, our squadron, will lead group at 8000 ft. Primary, Limboeng, Personnel area. Secondary, Watapone. Tertiary, Kendarie. Rescue: Playmate 61 - PBY. Jukebox - B-17 Flying Dutchman.

Tomorrow we are going to fly along as group photo ship. We are carrying six cameras plus specialized cameramen. The group is dropping a new type bomb and they are interested to know the effects of it. (It was clusters of napalm bombs.) Also the cameramen are taking moving pictures for newsreel. A Major is in charge of cameramen, 0800. Our targets today are Jap personnel areas. Nice juicy barracks and bivouac areas just full of smelly Japs. Bombed through heavy cumulus-stratus with tops at 8000. We're at 10,000. Have some stratus and heavy rain.

Down at Makassar Town on the 15th, the 5th group had an attack from six Jap fighters. Rumor is that three Libs were shot down.

This is the fifth consecutive mission that I have flown from the left seat. The group is using napalm fire bombs today. Load 9/500 napalm in clusters. We really had a ride out of this one. Made the first run abreast lead squadron. First time a dry run. Followed them around second time and took pictures of their bombs away and hits. We found out that the 424th did not release their bombs so we made a dry run with them. By this time the weather had socked in to a complete undercast. We let down to 2000 feet to get below the clouds and then made another run. Going over the bomb run, we were fired upon by machine guns but we received no hits, I don't believe --- I could see their flashes as they fired at us and helped our gunners locate them so they could strafe the Jap positions. After bomb run it was necessary to make a sharp turn and climb to avoid mountains that were directly on course and about 2500 feet above us. We pulled away from the 424th to miss the mountains. They pulled back and went down to approximately 500 feet to strafe.

(I do recall this incident, and seeing the flashes from their machine guns, but the thing I remember most is the mountains. There was a gradual slope from the sea and town on up to the mountain top which was rolling hills and very deceptive. By the time we finished the bomb run we must have been very close to the ground. We did have to look up to see the top of the mountain!)

(Addendum to pg 25, written by Vernon A. Mrak, 6 May 88)

This flight I remember very vividly. We were to fly photo ship for the 307th Bomb Group which required us to fly 200' below the lowest squadron so that the photographer could follow the bombs out of the bomb bays to the target.

The target was a large group of Japanese barracks where replacements troops were being housed (I think). It was located at Makassar Town, I believe on the Southwest coast of the Celebes. The people that we had on board besides the crew was a field officer (Major, I think), the civilians who developed the new napalm bomb and their photographers.

The bombs looked like two 10" pie plates placed together, then stacked in a package about three feet high. The straps holding the package together would detonate after leaving the bomb-bay, causing the individual bomblets to sail randomly to the target area causing a more or less shotgun coverage.

After three squadrons dropped their bombs from 8000' we followed the 424th around until we found a hole in the undercast, then had to get down to 2000' to see the target. This meant that we were flying at 1900' minus the terrain elevation -- probably 1200/1500' above the ground.

As we approached the target, the Japs began firing from two or three gun emplacements -- I believe twin 20mm machine guns. I could see the tracers curving gently up to us and what concerned me was that I knew that every sixth shell they fired was a tracer that I could see. It was the ones that I couldn't see that worried me. I knew

I was pretty well protected with my flak vest and steel seat but I was unprotected in the groin area. So, I pulled armoured skull cap off my head and put it where I thought it would do the most good.

There was one gun position located in some trees at a crossroad intersection a few hundred yards south of the target. It was from this position that the gunners had us pretty well zeroed in. I could see them very well -- below and to the left of the nose of the plane.

When our gunners -- either top turret or nose turret -- began firing, their bullets were falling short and kicking up spurts of dust. Then the dust spurts began walking up to the Jap gun emplacement, and as soon as their bullets found their mark, the Jap firing stopped.

I remember knowing what a good feeling that was because in a few seconds we would have been right over them, and they would have had us at point blank range.

Also, if we would have taken a bad hit, we were too low for all of us to bail out.

Somewhere packed away in one of my boxes I have before and after air photos showing the damage we did on this mission. Someday I'll find them!!

(Comments by W.O. Holston, 6-5-88)

"Most facts recorded above are exactly correct. The target was a barracks area E-NE of Makassar Town which is on the Southwest coast of the Celebes. I also remember the way the straps detonated and the bombs fell separately, scattering as they fell. There was a major aboard and some civilians. I take exception to the 12-1500' altitude, because I remember it to be 3-500', and remember that we had to sweat out getting away from the mountains in front of us. Jim Thompson, Nose Gunner, has related to me how he fired from the nose turret at the gun positions. I remember there was much smoke on the ground, and I was afraid that the photos would be no good, but I do remember seeing the photos later. They showed the napalm bombs to be very successful, and I would assume that almost immediately the B-29's in the Marianas started dropping them on Tokyo. The odd thing

is that I do not remember being afraid of the flak as much as the mountain or the long trip home.

* * * * *

I saw them shoot up a boat and the target area and everything else that would stop a slug. We went out over the ocean and climbed to 10,000 ft. while they went right down the coast continuing their little strafing spree.

We are now making a dash for home to get those letters that I know will be waiting for me--? Time: 1655. Just got a call that one of our ships is missing somewhere near the Halmaheras. They alerted us to be on the look out for it. Wonder who it is this time?

Our ETA to the field is 1810. We hit our ETA right on the second! (Thanks for the good word, Pal!) As soon as we landed the ground crew came running up and said they had heard that we were the ones that went down today. Haven't yet heard who it was.

Total flying time 1140. 120 PI, 100 CPI 450 P, 450 CP.

Vernon Mrak's Diary will be continued in next newsletter.

* * * * *

The following letter was received from Harry Coggins.

FIND PEOPLE FAST UPDATE

"In your 93-2 307th newsletter you had a note from Jack Sloan in Swanton, Ohio, regarding a computer service that could be helpful in finding old friends, particularly crew members not heard from in years.

I want to give support to Jack's suggestion. For six years I have been trying to find three members of you 307th crew. We simply had lost all contact with each other.

"Find People Fast" provided me with a computer search of all three names and within a week I had found all three men. The address for this outfit has changed

slightly, although the telephone number remains the same: It is Find People Fast, 4600 Chippewa, Suite 244, St. Louis, MO, 63116; telephone 1-800-829-1807. Their charge is \$19.50 per name on the search list. Of course, it is up to the buyer to write or make phone calls to determine the individual they actually are seeking. As an example, one of the names on my list had about 30 individual addresses and phone numbers. I was lucky to pick the correct one on the first call.

I want to join Jack Sloan in recommending this firm, and also to thank Jack for letting 307th members know of the firm.

Sincerely,
Harry E. Coggins"

An excerpt from another "Find People Fast" letter.

"I can verify that the "Find People Fast" organization lives up to their name. I called them and gave them the name of the person I had been trying to find for the past 40+ years. The first name they punched out of the computer was the one I was searching for. Unfortunately the person had died about 2 years before. I did have a long talk with his wife. What saddens me most is that I didn't try harder and didn't know about "Find People Fast".

J.R. Gibbs"

BOMBARDIERS INCORPORATED

"Know a Bombardier". How about your crew Bombardier?

We need to know of them and their location and fate! If you have any information please contact:

BOMBARDIERS, Inc.
500 Jackson St. #1407
Dapne, AL 36526-7035
(205) 626-3920
Attn: Ned Humphreys "

AIR FORCE GUNNERS ASSOCIATION

Jay E. Ingle, Air Force Gunners Assn. has requested that we pass this information on to the 307th membership.

"The Air Force Gunners Association held its 4th Biennial Reunion in Bethesda, MD July 15 - July 19, 1993. The reunion was attended by approximately 325 members and guests.

The members in attendance voted to have the next reunion in San Antonio, Texas. This meeting will be scheduled during the spring of that year.

If you are not familiar with the AFGA, the group is made of of Enlisted Aerial Gunners that flew on Light, Medium and Heavy Bombers from the World War II Era up through and including 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"



ADDRESS CHANGES

The past year has shown quite a number of letters to the membership and the reunion book as well, being returned because of an incorrect address. This has proven to be rather costly as we have to pay twice for the letters and the book to be returned to us. There are also costs incurred when we try to locate the member by telephone. We have finally given up trying to locate a number of them.

Please notify us of any change in your address or telephone number. Even if the change is only a zip code or area code.

Thanks for your help.

Cena

FROM YOUR HISTORIANS

Reunion Book Update

By now all 723 paid-up members should have received RB-9, the Dayton Reunion Book. Let Cena know if your copy has not arrived.

Request for Information on Lauren Dixon Flight Crew

One on the most satisfying functions of the Historian is that of providing answers to letters such as that recently received from Mrs. Lori Dixon Whitman:

"My father, Lauren W. Dixon, was stationed in the Philippines during World War II. He died in 1970 at the age of 48 from heart failure. I was 13 years old. My mother has said that Dad never spoke of the war, and of course, as a 13 year old, I didn't know enough to ask questions. I have often wondered about his experiences during those years and would like to find someone who served with him or find more information on the missions flown by those stationed there.

"Here's what I know: Dad entered the AAF in February of 1943 and served until the end of the war and continued in the Reserves for many years thereafter where he reached the rank of Lieutenant Colonel. He served as a B-24 pilot with the 371st Squadron of the 307th Bomb Group (The Long Rangers) of the 13th Air Force. I have a newspaper article which names him as one of the pilots of the Jungle Air Force who supported Australian Troops in their landings at Balikpapan.

"I have a picture of his crew which lists names, ranks and crew positions. The other crewmen were: S/Sgt. Williams, top turret; S/Sgt. Mericle, radio; Sgt. Lylerly, tail; Sgt. Curran, ball turret; Sgt. Welch, nose turret; S/Sgt. Gerhardt, engineer; 2nd Lt. Jefferies, co-pilot; 2nd Lt. Bolland, navigator; and F/O Morrison, bombardier.

"That's all I have. I don't know if that's enough to track down crew members or others who may have served with him, but any assistance you can give me would be greatly appreciated."

Lori (Dixon) Whitman
905 Loves Park Drive
Loves Park, IL 61111

Only one of the names listed above appears on our latest 307th Bomb Group Assoc. roster, that of Bill Gerhardt, who, with his wife Ellie and others, is

working hard making arrangements for our 1994 St. Louis reunion. As Dixon's engineer, Bill is perhaps the closest contact we could have found and by now he and Mrs. Whitman have probably written each other. Unfortunately, as happened with so many of us, Bill has lost track of the other members of his crew so we can give Mrs. Whitman no other contacts who could provide other facets of Dixon's military history.

If you remember Lauren Dixon or his crew, Mrs. Whitman would like to hear from you in her and to enlist your help in reconstructing her Dad's experiences in WWII. Whatever you can tell her may add to the information she gets from Bill Gerhardt and will be greatly appreciated. Write her at the address above. Remember that we would appreciate it greatly if you would send a copy of your reply to Historian Jim Kendall, 2350 Derby, Birmingham, MI 48009.

Big, Ugly, Inferior, Second Fiddle!!!!!

Somehow the following material became separated from its cover letter so we don't know who sent it to us. A note handwritten on the back of the sheet states "From Bob Carnes of 'Warbird Buckles'". We suspect these comments accompanied a Liberator belt buckle created by Mr. Carnes and purchased by one of our members. Acknowledging the valiant service of the Liberator while painting a very negative picture of the plane's appearance and durability, the article will probably find favor with some and infuriate many. It is an interesting view of the mindset that has kept the B-24 in the shadow of the B-17 for five decades. We feel the Liberator is deserving of all the author's reluctant praise and much more, and that it has far less to apologize for than his words would indicate.

"Big, ugly and ungainly, the Consolidated B-24 thundered through the war-torn European and Pacific skies with an ease that belied its bulk, bringing the war home to the Germans and Japanese alongside its smaller and tougher forbear, the B-17.

"There is little doubt that the Liberator was ugly. Blunt, slab-sided, short for its almost obscenely slim wings, its sixty-seven-foot fuselage was capped, in front by a multi-paneled glazed nose (or in later H and J models, a bulky nose turret), and in back by a bulging tail-gunner's position, flanked by huge, sail-like rudders and rife with wartish turrett protruberances, bristling with guns. Its four Pratt engines, in their tear-drop-shaped nacelles, looked like poorly-planned add-ons. It resembled a grasshopper on the ground, hunched over its spindly tricycle gear. No, it was not a good-looking bomber, as bombers go. Its very appearance relegated it to the role of playing second fiddle to the Flying Fortress in movies and in the newsreels.

"But, in other ways, it was a superior aircraft. It could carry more bombs higher, farther and faster than could the Fortress, and did so in greater numbers. It was developed

to make up for the Fortress' deficiencies, and this it did, but it paid for its superiority in range, speed and payload by sacrificing one all-important quality--durability.

"This was the Liberator's greatest--and most deadly--lacking. The endurance of the B-17 is, by now, legendary, made so by accounts of the bombers staggering home missing large parts of major components, such as wings and noses. Not so with the B-24. They were not known for sustaining direct flak hits and staying in the air; few returned to their bases, more holes than metal; not very many completed their missions and came home on one or two engines. None survived being chopped nearly in two by mid-air collisions with enemy fighters or lived through knocking down barns with their wingtips. They were practically impossible to belly-land and deadly to ditch, a fact that their combat crews, faced daily with the prospect of someday needing to crash-land a badly-damaged Liberator, did not enjoy. This weakness eradicated all other advantages the Liberator held over the Fortress, and marked to forever as an inferior plane.

"Inferior though it may have been, eighteen thousand Liberators flew more than two hundred million battle-scarred miles over Europe and the Pacific, dropping well over a half-million tons of bombs while suffering five thousand losses. It fought in all extremes of climate and conditions against two ruthless and determined foes, in the service of the British and Australians as well as the Americans. Its crews were just as valiant as those of the Flying Fortress, and died with an equal, if not greater, amount of courage. It was the B-24, not the B-17, that pounded the Japanese island bastions into submission, and devastated the German war machine in the Mediterranean. History has forgotten this, striving only to point out its one gross fault. But the men who flew them, the men who fought below them as they delivered their lethal loads, the enemy that suffered under their sledgehammer blows, cannot and will never forget."

Original Cadre of the 307th

From time to time we have commented on Ben Webster's search for those men who made up the original cadre which formed the 307th Bomb Group. The 307th came into being on 15 April 1942 by authority of GO #24, Air Force Combat Command, and GO #38, HQ Second Air Force. The first five men assigned to the 307th, transferred from the 301st Bomb Group, became the nucleus of the five 307th squadrons. These men were: Hq. and Hq. Sq., M/Sgt.

Wallace A. McKeller; 370th Bomb Sq., S/Sgt. Robert W. Martin; 371st Bomb Sq., Sgt. John B. Shaffer; 372nd Bomb Sq., Pvt. Frank H. Spence; 35th Recon. Sq., M/Sgt. Gabriel Weisfeld. The 35th was soon redesignated the 424th Bomb Sq. On 1 May 1942 Capt. Billy Jarvis was assigned to the 307th and, as the only officer, assumed command of the new Group. On 3 May each of the five 301st squadrons transferred an additional 32 men to the 307th, providing the basis for the various sections of each new squadron. By 28 May 1942 things had progressed to the point that 400 officers and men were moved from Geiger Field near Spokane to Ephrata, Washington. Many of those in the 301st cadre had previously been part of a cadre from 39th Bomb Group which formed the 301st Bomb Group. Following are a few comments from 307th Association members who joined the Group during those early days.

* * *

Ben Webster

"After graduation from Airplane Mechanics Technical School I was assigned to the 39th Bomb Group at Salt Lake, reporting about July 4th, 1942, only to find the 39th had moved to Geiger Field, Spokane, Washington. At this point the 39th had several B-17s based at the Spokane Municipal Airport. The same people maintained and flew the planes. We were being trained as mechanics, flight engineers and gunners. On December 6, 1941, I bought a new blue pin-striped suit, tan overcoat and hat in preparation for a furlough home which was scheduled to begin on the 10th of December. Obviously, that furlough was cancelled. On February 3, 1942, I was transferred to the 301st Bomb Group and promoted to Sgt. On April 15th, 1942, I was part of the cadre assigned to the 307th Bomb Group, joining the 35th Recon. Sq. which soon became the 424th Bomb Squadron. My MOS record indicates four months as 750, LINE CHIEF during which time I also flew a lot to train and check-out engineers. A Staff or Tech/Sgt at the time, I was a pretty busy guy. We had a few B-17s and later converted to B-24s so all the mechanics and engineers had to be retrained on the new plane. Looking back, it is amazing we did as well as we did. About August M/Sgt. Wheelles joined our squadron and took over as Line Chief. About this time maintenance and flying personnel were divided, in that you were Ground Personnel if you did maintenance and Flight Personnel if you flew. After that time most 307th personnel never knew anything different than that division between Ground and Flight. Also about this time Flight Commanders were assigned and Sanny was one of them. I was assigned to Sanny's crew from then on. Until we left the States we were training other flight engineers and other crew members. With more flying personnel arriving and with so few planes available, the more experienced flying personnel

did lots of flying night and day. Ephrata was a good training location for us because it really taught us to live and work under very adverse conditions."

* * *

Orville Iverson

"I was one of the men sent to the 301st Bomb Group at Geiger Field in April of 1942. After finishing mechanic's school at Wichita Falls, Texas, I worked on the flight line on B-17s for only a week or two, then was sent to Ephrata, Washington, to be part of the 307th. There were only a few buildings there and not many tents. I was assigned to be a flight engineer, sent to gunnery school at Las Vegas, Nevada, and returned to Ephrata for more training. There were so few B-24s on hand that it was difficult to get in the required hours of flight time. I was on Hoeffler's crew and flew most of my flights with them as engineer and top turret gunner. My first combat mission was to Wake Island from Midway, Christmas, 1942."

* * *

Frances Steckel

"Upon graduation from Airplane Mechanics school at Chanute Field I was part of a half dozen or so men who were assigned to the 301st Bomb Group at Geiger Field near Spokane, Washington. When we arrived there we found the 301st packed and heading the next morning for the European Theater. We were assigned a barracks and given food accommodations with another squadron and told we were to remain at Geiger to form a new Bomb Group. In another few days another small group came in from Sheppard Field and we all became the first men in the 424th Squadron. I believe Ben Webster and Bill Stearns were carryovers from the 301st but the rest of us were fresh out of school."

* * *

Rodney M. Wheeler

"I was part of the original group of mechanics finishing school at the Douglas Aircraft Plant in California. Part of the class was shipped out and one-hundred of us were left in the Edgewater Hotel in Santa Monica. It seems they lost the last page of the orders, the page containing the last part of the alphabet. It took several weeks before we would get our orders to Geiger Field, not a bad deal if we had had a payday. When we finally arrived at Geiger we were put into a transient barracks for they still didn't know where we were to go. Then some of the guys happened to see our names on the 371st bulletin board as AWOL! We were then able to get to our assigned squadrons. I stayed with the 371st until late winter of 1945 when one hundred Master Sergeants were sent back as B-29 cadre. I finished my service on B-29s at Pyote Air Base in Texas."

* * *

Carl Buskness

"I was a member of the 301st Bomb Group assigned to the 307th Bomb Group in April of 1942. At the time I was a T/Sgt. and Pers. Sgt. Major of the 301st and reassigned to the 307th in the same position. I was promoted to M/Sgt. in May, 1942, and assigned as Sgt. Major of the 307th, which assignment I held at Ephrata until Sept. 1, 1942 when I became a WOJG and assigned as Asst. Adj. under Capt. Squires, Adj., and Col. Matheny, Group CO.

"Incidentally, many of the men who cadred the 307th Bomb Group had their beginnings with the 7th Bomb Group in 1939 at Hamilton Field, CA. We were transferred to Salt Lake City in October, 1940, and cadred the 39th Bomb Group in April, 1941. The 39th moved to Felts Field and then to Geiger Field, both in Spokane. We then cadred the 301st Bomb Group at Geiger in January, 1942, and the 307th Bomb Group in April, 1942."

* * *

Sam Key

"After basic training at Wichita Falls I was shipped along with ten other men to Phelps Field, Washington, to join a reconnaissance Group. When we arrived a Phelps we found the Group aboard a train sitting on a siding ready to pull out. Seven of our number were selected to leave with the train and four of us were transferred to Geiger Field. My memory gets hazy but I remember there were very few men in our squadron at the time, probably no more than twenty. Our squadron was later redesignated the 424th. Probably because of my accounting experience in college I was assigned to Personnel Supply and never did get assigned to the Photo Section despite civilian photographic experience. However, I did get to take a few pictures in addition to those I took on my own. We went from Geiger Field to Ephrata where the crews began getting their flight training. From Ephrata we went to Sioux City, Iowa, and from there to Hawaii. From the time of my enlistment to my embarkation date was fifty-one days which I thought was quite a record for a recruit. However, had I gone with the Recon Squadron I would have left the U.S. about three weeks following my enlistment. That would have been a record."

* * *

Marvin V. Imbler

Marv gives us very little of his experiences in the early 307th, but his comments make it obvious that he was one of those assigned to the 307th before the move to Ephrata. His letter does not indicate whether or not he was one of the original cadre sent over from the 301st Bomb Group. He writes: "I was assigned to the 307th Bomb Group, 370th Bomb Squadron, in Spokane after finishing AYE School at Chanute Field. I served 33 months overseas as a mechanic."

Genesis of "Long Ranger" Name

Marvin Imbler's letter, quoted above, also included the following comments: *"I would like to add my recollections to the article carried in Newsletter 93-2 regarding the source of the "Long Ranger" nickname. It was on Guadalcanal, or perhaps on an island or two later (Munda? Los Negros?: Ed.) that all of us were asked to submit our suggestions for a name for the Group. The winning entry, "The Long Rangers", was submitted by a waist gunner who, I believe, had a Zero to his credit. He got an R&R leave to Australia for submitting the winning name. He was shortly taken off flying status by the squadron doctor because of a nervous condition and was assigned to work as a ground crew helper until the end of the war. I don't remember his name but know what he looked like and would recognize him today."*

"Cat on the Bomb" Insignia Update

More than ten years ago the late Pat Rickard set down his memories of the "Cat on the Bomb" insignia in a letter to Marty Sporn. In that letter, sent to us by Marty, Pat comments: *"Marty, about the emblem you enclosed in your letter (The "Cat on the Bomb" insignia: Ed.)--to the best of my knowledge this is what I remember of it. It was an "unofficial" emblem. After all the squadrons had submitted their emblems and had them approved the Group felt that they should have an emblem displayed on all Group aircraft. A contest was held and many drawings were submitted for the prize, a war bond as I recall. The two finalists were the one showing the cat and another with the letters LR intertwined and placed within a circle."*

"The judges at Group and Bomber Command selected the LR emblem and it was forwarded and approved. However, most of the personnel had by that time formed a great attachment for the "bomb riding cowpoke" and adopted it as their emblem and used it on the masthead of the Group daily bulletin and on any signs where all the squadron emblems plus that of the Group were displayed. "The reason given for not adopting the "cow-poke" emblem was that the judges felt that it was not an appropriate one for a Group but rather would be a great Squadron emblem."

"The feeling among most of the personnel was, I

think, that the "cow-poke" with his "hell for leather" or "give 'em hell" attitude more closely represented that of the truly great, heroic, dedicated aircrew and support personnel who fought and worked so hard and who truly deserved the title "LONG RANGER".

"That's the story as I remember it."

We believe Pat Rickard served as Executive Officer in at least two 307th squadrons and, as such, had a better vantage point from which to view the development of the emblem discussed above than the writer. We did not remember that the "Cat" and the "LR" emblems were ever in direct competition. We have pictures which indicate that the "LR" logo was carried on 307th aircraft as early as the September/October, 1944, Balikpapan missions but seem to recall that the "Cat" insignia was not voted on by all Group personnel until January or February of 1945. However, we have no documentation for this vote other than our own hazy memory which does not improve much as the years pass. If you can throw any additional light on this or any other 307th subject please write Jim Kendall, 2350 Derby, Birmingham, MI 48009.

Vintage 307th Newspaper

Bringing up the rear of our report for this issue of the Newsletter is this copy of the unnamed 307th Bomb Group Newspaper for February 6, 1944--an interesting glimpse of things considered newsworthy and humorous forty-eight years ago.

Christmas Greeting from your Historians

Since we can't send a personal Christmas Card to each and every one of you, let your Historians take this opportunity to send our wish that you and your loved ones have a Very Merry Christmas and a Happy and Prosperous New Year.

Jim and Dottie Kendall
John and Tudy Reeves
Harry and June Sterkel

? 307 BG ?

VOL. 1 NO. 2

APO # 717

FEB. 6, 1944

SOUTH PACIFIC FIGHT SONG

(To the tune of "Back Home Again In Indiana")

We'll say goodbye to Malaita
And the fields of Guadalcanal
We'll bid goodbye to Shortland Harbor
And the whole of Bougainville
We'll say goodbye to aerial combat
And to Zeros by the score
And we'll take the rest of Hiro Hito's
Air Force
To that far and distant shore.

We'll say goodbye to Naval orders
And to take offs way before dawn;
We'll say goodbye to stormy weather
And to flying on and on
We'll wave goodbye to all the search
lights
And to Ack-Ack bursting near;
And we'll leave the Isle of Espiritu
Santo
For our home and friends so dear.

We'll say goodbye to Buka Passago,
And to far away Nauru;
We'll say goodbye to Simpson Harbor,
And the strong hold of Rabaul,
We'll say goodbye to Comair Sopac,
And the boys in Bomber Command;
And we'll sail right thru that Golden
Gate at Frisco
For the worlds best one night stand.
Lt. Fred Curlo (372)

NAME CONTEST!

Hear ye! all beer drinking men (you do drink don't you) the contest is rapidly drawing to a close--midnight Feb. 10, 1944. Have you selected and sent in your choice of name for the group news paper. Get your contest name into the Special Service office and win 6 cans of delicious beer. (Not bad, eh)

WORLD NEWS SUMMARY

Washington--President Roosevelt signed legislation providing mustering outpay of \$100 to \$300 for the armed forces!!

MARSHALLS ACTION--Kwajalein atoll is in allied hands. Roi, Namur and adjacent islets captured. Seabees transforming, three strip Roi airfield for our use.

ITALIAN FRONT ACTION--Mile by mile, mountain by mountain. Cassino tottering.

RUSSIAN ACTION--Ten German divisions, (between 120 and 150 thousand men) have been trapped in the Ukraine. Axis withdraw 50 miles deep inside old Poland withdrawing from Rovno and Lutsk. Red army five day 100 mile breakthrough to join forces along the Zvonigorodka-Shpola line forty five miles below middle Dniapor river.

SOLDIERS VOTE--Sacramento-Hurrah! The government today signed a bill giving service men and women abroad the right to vote by absentee ballot.

INCOME TAX RETURNS FOR 1943:----'Income tax Regulations permit military personnel on duty outside the Continental US to delay filing of their income tax returns for 1943 until return to the U.S.

JET PLANE FLIES WITHOUT PROPELLER

Washington (CNS)--The War Department has announced the development of a sensational new type of propellerless fighter plane, powered by jet-propulsion engines, which will soon be in production at airplane plants in the U.S. This marks a revolutionary advance in aeronautics, the WD revealed. It has been flown by test pilots.

MALE CALL



by Milton Caniff, creator of "Terry and the Pirates"



QUARANTINE



STAFF OF 307 B.S.

SGT. Tony Mongelluzzo

Cpl. Ray Harok

Cpl. Ronald Stewart

Cpl. Francis Quigley-Art Ed.

Cpl. Ralph Carter

This paper needs more men on its staff come in and let us know what you can do.

"This paper receives CNS material. Republication prohibited without permission of CNS.

Officer-in-charge Lt. Maxwell Gurman

SOLDIER VOTE AID

Acting on the request of the Council of State Governments, the War and Navy Departments have prepared a statement on "Practical Aspects of Cooperation by Army and Navy in Voting by Absentee Servicemen during War Time" according to Camp Newspaper Service's Washington Bureau.

The statement issued by War Secretary Henry Stimson and Navy Secretary Frank Knox, was made public in answer to a letter from Frank Bane, executive director of the Council, which asked for suggestions regarding Federal legislation on the soldier vote.

In their reply to Mr. Bane's request Secretary Stimson and Secretary Knox made it clear that the War and Navy Departments had no intention of interfering with states' rights in the soldier vote issue. It is understood that whatever bill Congress adopts, the action of state legislatures will remain vital.

The secretaries also stressed the point that their departments do not advocate or oppose any particular voting legislation. "They will endeavor to administer, subject to their primary obligation, whatever law may be in effect" according to the statement.

The policy of the Army and Navy is to assist and encourage servicemen to vote so far as is practicable and compatible with military operations. Nothing must interfere with the services primary obligation to wage victorious war" it said.

The statement outlined the limitations placed by war conditions on the Army and Navy in carrying out requirements of the law among men and women abroad. It recommended that ballots be mailed servicemen overseas at least 45 days before the election and to service men within the U.S. at least 30 days before that date. (CNS)

BOYINGTON MISSING

Okahogan, Wash.--Marine Maj. Gregory Boyington, who downed 26 Japanese planes in the Pacific to tie the current war ace record of Maj. Joe Foss, and the World War I record of Capt. Ed Rickenbacker is missing in the Southwest Pacific, his mother has been told.



BODY ARMOR SAVES LIVES

Washington (CNS)--Body armor--not unlike that worn by the knights of King Arthur's Court--is saving lives today just as it did when Launcelot rode.

American fliers are wearing a sleeveless canvas jacket with slits in which 20 pounds of steel plates are slipped to sheath the wearer from neck to thighs. It is suspended from the shoulders, laced together along the sides and may be removed in a minute by pulling a release cord.

The device was designed by Col. Malcolm Grow of the Eighth Air Force in England, and on more than one occasion has saved the life of a flier.

SOLDIER DOWNS 12 NAZI PLANES

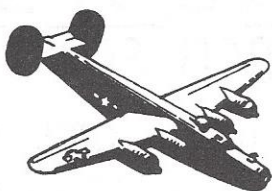
England-S/Sgt Donald W. Crossley of Wellsburg, W. Va., Eighth AAF gunner in the European theater with 12 German planes to his credit. He holds the DFC and an Oak Leaf Cluster.

CONGRATULATIONS!

AIR MEDAL:

S/Sgt William F. Humphrey (424)
S/Sgt Clarence S. Philpot (424)
S/Sgt Helmuth W. Schultz (424)
S/Sgt Wade M. Seals (424)
Sgt Stanley Smith (424)
S/Sgt John R. Vickers (424)
1st Lt. Arch Bishop Jr. (370)
2nd Lt. Stephen A. Novak (372)
2nd Lt. John D. Porter Jr. (372)
S/Sgt Leo W. Fredericks (372)
Sgt John N. Roks (372)
Major Marshall T. Vose (370)
Capt. Martin F. Hanson (371)
1st Lt. Clifton H. Volstorff (424)
2nd Lt. Donald Anderson (371)
T/Sgt Jack R. Morrison (424)
T/Sgt Mike G. Vetreoin (370)
S/Sgt Peter J. Michel (370)
S/Sgt Henry J. Septoski (424)

BUY BONDS . BUY BONDS BUY BONDS



THE LAST FLIGHT

"Shadows fall,
and life becomes
so difficult to bear...
Yet sunshine comes
through memories
and the love
of those who care."

It seems with each passing year more and more of our old friends and members take their "Last Flight". Since the 93-2 Newsletter we have received notice of the loss of 18 men. On some of the notices we have the date of death, others the year and some no date at all. We do feel we should publish the name of each 307th Member regardless of the date of death.

Adams, Raymond	Jan. 10, 92
Anderson, John	Nov. 23, 93
Ayers, Burl	May 9, 93
Bradford, W.E.	Nov. 18, 92
Carusi, Sandy	Feb. 3, 93
Cote, Joe	Feb. 28, 91
Culkins, Leo	Unknown
Duarte, Harry	June 28, 93
Faris, William	Aug. 18, 93
Horine, Don	June 12, 93
Lakin, Francis	Oct. 17, 93
Lutseck, John	Feb. 93
Rumble, Dudley	Aug. 24, 54
Telrin, John	Jan. 2, 91
Vaughn, Chet	Sept. 13, 93
Ward, DeRowland	Mar. 28, 93
Williams, Alfred	May 5, 93
Wyscarver, John	Unknown

Our sincere sympathy to the families of these men.

REUNION UPDATE

The 10th biennial 307th Bombardment Group Reunion is being held at St. Louis, Missouri from May 25 through May 29, 1994 at the Frontenac Hilton.

Frontenac Hilton - Free parking, free local telephone calls, shuttle to and from the airport and within a 7 mile radius of the hotel. (Points of interest within the seven mile radius are: Art Museum, Science Museum, Zoo, Jewell Box, and two of the best St. Louis shopping malls. Restaurants - 1) hotel restaurants, 2) La Chateau for lunch (just behind hotel), 3) Plaza Frontenac has several including a Pasta House, (Clayton Road), 4) Coco's at 721 S. Lindberg, and 5) Schniedhorsts, at corner of Clayton & Lindberg).

Grants Farm - Former home of General U.S. Grant and now owned by August Busch (of Anheuser Busch). Upon arrival at farm you will board a free trackless train to take you to the farm area where they breed the Clydesdales, goats, deer, buffalo, zebra, antelope, etc. and all types of birds. You will see a unique bird show and then visit the Baurnhof, where we will have lunch in the courtyard and where you can drink all the "free" beer you want. (Soft drinks have to be purchased.) You'll tour the World's Greatest Carriage Collection and trophy room. Back on the train you will travel through the estate grounds to U.S. Grant's home and also get a glimpse of Busch Castle. You'll pass the famous fence made of 2463 Civil War rifle barrels. (The Gerhardtts are in a movie and commercial passing through this famous gate.) You'll then be off to the parking lot barn to see a few of the Clydesdales. This is an interesting tour with very little walking.

St. Louis Baseball - The St. Louis Baseball Cardinals will be in town Wednesday night, May 25 to play the Phillies.

Gateway Arch - The Gateway Arch is one of the most interesting sites in the world. 650' high it begins 15 feet below ground where you will find a gift shop, museum of westward expansion, and a movie theatre. For those who want to go UP in the Arch the price is \$2.50. You'll board

one of two unique capsule transporters. Each tram has eight barrel shaped capsules joined to form a train like vehicle that runs on a special track inside the hollow. Each capsule has five seats that keep you in a level normal sitting position to the top of the Arch. The ride takes four minutes. You'll see a breath taking 30 mile view (on a clear day) to the west. Downtown St. Louis and out to the county. The view to the east, Historic Riverfront. The room at the top is 65 feet long, 7 feet wide and can accommodate 90 to 100 people. The capsule is the only one of a kind in the world. It's a relaxing, non-physical site that you all should enjoy and will want to see and experience. It's a sight to behold!!!!

PLEASE NOTE:

HOTEL RESERVATIONS - MAKE DIRECTLY TO: Frontenac Hilton

Hotel Rate - Including Hotel Tax

Single/Double	\$69.81
Triple	\$80.41
Quad	\$91.16

TO SAVE PAYING THE MISSOURI TAX, PAY BY CHECK TO THE FRONTENAC HILTON. MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO:

307th Bomb Group

If you elect to pay your hotel by credit card the rate will be different than the rates indicated above.

1. R.V. Parking available at Hotel but there are no hookups.
2. Historians Suite, 1500 is opposite Memorabilia room.
3. Memorabilia Room is in the Clayton Ballroom. Open Wednesday afternoon, Thursday and Friday only. (Hours will be posted.) Don't forget to bring your memorabilia for display. Room will be secured.

Reunion Committee

Bill and Ellie Gerhardt
Bob and Sara Jones



"Your squadron reunion isn't until next week. Aren't you ready a little early?"

START THE NEW YEAR RIGHT!!!!

Just a reminder that the 307th Bombardment group Association ANNUAL DUES of \$20.00 are due the first of January 1994.

Please use the enclosed Membership form to send in your dues.

Our many thanks to the "Early Bird" 307th Members who have already sent in their dues.

HAPPY HOLIDAYS!

Ken and Velta Meyers
Jim and Dottie Kendall
Harry and June Sterkel
Sam and Helen Britt
John and Tudy Reeves
Cena and Walt Marsh

