

307th BOMBARDMENT GROUP (HV) ASSOCIATION

"THE LONG RANGERS"

Holiday
Greetings



December 5, 1996

Newsletter 1996-3

THOUGHTS FOR THE HOLIDAYS

Once again it's that time of year when "nostalgia" takes over and we begin to reflect on times long past. The days of our youth come crowding back, old friends, happy times, special sleigh rides, the holiday dinner, family gatherings, children going door to door singing Christmas carols, and gifts wrapped with such loving care.

It is a different world today and as 1996 comes to a close what happy memories we share of our reunion in San Diego. With anticipation we look forward to the coming year and even better times for the "Men of the 307th".

To each of you, the Staff of the 307th wishes "THE BEST OF HOLIDAYS AND A PEACEFUL, HEALTHY, PROSPEROUS NEW YEAR!"

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May the trail rise up to meet you,
may the wind be always at your back,
may the sun shine warm upon your face,
the snow fall soft on the hills around you
and until we meet again . . .

may God hold you in the hollow of
His Hand.

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NOTES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Thanks to the tremendous organizational skills and prodigious efforts of Flor and Marjorie Lanning, our 1996 reunion in San Diego, California was a huge success. The smooth flow of registration was impressive, and I must commend the member volunteers who helped pass out the registration materials. It showed Flor's and Marjorie's abilities to delegate duties and responsibilities of routine tasks, leaving time for the site committee members to be able to tend to major functions other than registration.

My personal congratulations to all who so generously gave of their time and effort to make this meeting a big success.

Particularly impressive was the set-up arranged for the historians. For the first time in my memory they didn't have to use their sleeping rooms to handle historical data accumulation or to conduct interviews for the historical records. It's something we should strive to duplicate in future reunion hotels.

As usual Cena and Walt Marsh spent a major portion of their time manning the concession stand selling caps, T-shirts, pins, etc. and collecting 307th membership dues. I know Walt has been feeling bad for several months now and it was tough for him to sit at the dues table so long every day. For an Honorary Member, he

does yeoman duty, not just at our reunions, but for the two years between reunions he keeps track of our membership rolls and does many of the other duties helping Cena, our UNPAID Secretary/Treasurer.

This brings up the issue of memorabilia sales question Cena mentioned in the general meeting. The only way the caps, pins, jackets, etc., can continue to be sold between reunions is if we can get a volunteer with a fairly large storage room and lots of time on his hands to fill orders and deal with suppliers. Cena does not have the time nor the volution to continue to do that. Any volunteers?

Thanks to the entire membership for your attendance which makes our reunions so successful. It is wonderful to get together with our friends, tent-mates, crew members, fellow workers on the flight-line, mess halls, supply, motor-pool, or whatever part of the team that helped get our planes over the target and back. Every job was important to the entire overall accomplishments of the 307th Bomb Group and which contributed to getting us all home so we could get on with our lives in the USA.

As incoming president I wish to thank the retiring president and vice-president, Sam Britt and Ed Hicklin for their service as officers of the Association for jobs well done.

To our historian, Jim Kendall and his two associate historians, Harry Sterkel and John Reeves our thanks for their continuing efforts to furnish the 307th membership with the wonderful reunion books.

I wish to thank all the attendees for showing their confidence in electing me to another two-year term as President of the 307th Bomb Group Association. I'll do my best to justify your trust.

Have a Merry Christmas and two Happy New Years before we meet the next time in Hampton, VA.

Dave and Jime' Owens

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1997-1998 307th OFFICERS

The following 307th Members were elected at the 1996 Reunion in San Diego to serve on the 307th Bomb Group Association Board.

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

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NOTES FROM THE MEMBERSHIP

In April of 1996 I received the following letter from A.J. Evans. The letter is self-explanatory.

"Dear Cena and Walt,

Enclosed please find a copy of "A Miraculous Flash of Light" which you may find a refreshing hope worth publishing for us oldtimers. While Gen. Chuck Dixon, a retired P-51 pilot, didn't fly B-24s, they flew a lot of precious cover for us.

General Dixon, a friend in our retirement community, wrote this while severely handicaped by Parkinsons disease. He has just experienced a most remarkable recovery by a modern specialized brain operation. He is widely respected as a very courageous and determined gentleman. Sounds like many of our generation, doesn't it?

Hopefully you'll find space for this "anticipation" for all of us in the 307th. If you do so, I would appreciate an extra copy to give to General Dixon.

Sincerely and warmest regards,

A. J. Evans - 424th Sqdn."

*NOTE: See Page 3

A Miraculous Flash of Light

Chuck Dixon

Rogue Valley Manor

As you search for the war's great story, unexplained between heaven and hell,
you may pass some of honor and glory, but record each miracle well,
like the miracles that bind men together, in the story I'm about to tell.

I remember those magical evenings, especially in summer and fall,
when the sun dropped over the horizon, and I heard the nighthawk's call.
The colors of the earth had softened, neath a sky of turquoise blue,
and the tiny clouds of twilight, were bathed in a golden hue.

The departed sun shown brightly, some miles above the ground,
and the whispering wind blew softly, with an almost silent sound.
I would scan the sky, while praying, in that fading dusky light,
for the safe return of every plane, that was flying home that night.

We began these searches in England, during the summer of '43,
as our raids on Kiel and Schweinfurt, foreshadowed victory.
When, from the sky came a promise, with a miraculous flash of light,
that a missing plane, from an empty sky, would return to base that night.

In the fading northern twilight, when operations would post our score,
we would offer a toast to the missing, and to their safe return once more.
Though many would never return to base, for such are the costs of wars,
we who did will never forget, for we too bear the scars.

After the war was ended, we pledged to continue this rite,
of scanning the skies at eventide, and recording each magical flight.
Flights that were many times higher, than a plane could possibly be,
and flights invisible to all who watched, except my friends and me.

While others told of watching, when the evening star was bright,
for a hidden sun and a missing plane, to reflect a flash of light,
the sightings were always limited, to those answering the squadron's call,
leaving others to stare in disbelief, at the wonder of it all.

Last evening I concluded my final search, and proposed this explanation,
all missing planes will be flown in groups, as part of one great formation,
as "FLY IN REVIEW" is commanded, to the "Keeper Of The Score,"
this miracle will end with the simple words:

"ALL PRESENT AND ACCOUNTED FOR."

I've told this story to skeptics, who believe only in the powers of man
so now in passing it on to you, as part of my squadron's plan,
I ask you to vow what we know is true, and repeat it whenever you can.

by

Brig. Gen. Charles Dixon (retired)
9th Weather Recon. Sqdn., 9th AF

NOTES FROM THE MEMBERSHIP - Continued

The following letter reached us through Bill Rogister, via Joseph V. Longo. Bill had listed us as a possible source of information or photographs for Owen Carr.

I have written to Owen Carr and in doing so, said I would print his letter in our newsletter in case any of our members would like to contact him.

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"Joseph V. Longo - President
ICCA
7715 Sunset Blvd., Suite 300
Hollywood, CA 90046

Dear Joe,

I read your announcement on Page 11 of the Summer, 1995 Edition of BRIEFING.

I was a right-waist gunner on a B-24 Liberator heavy bomber combat crew with the 31st Bomb Squadron of the 5th Bomb Group of the 13th Air Force, flying out of Henderson Field on Guadalcanal.

On August 26, 1943, we were hit by a 20mm cannon burst from a Zero, just after salvoing our forty 100-pound demolition bombs on the bivouac area of Kahil Air-drome.

The spine of the left-waist gunner was severed and he later died. My left leg was badly shattered and I lost the entire leg. I also suffered other severe wounds.

I was wondering if there were any photographs available of the 31st Bomb Squadron or the 5th Bomb Group or the 307th Bomb Group (the only other heavy bomb group in the 13th Air Force).

If such photographs are available, perhaps you could tell me how to obtain them.

Sincerely,

Owen C. Carr
29/134 Moa 2 Thapkasatri Road
T. Koh Keaw Amphur Muang
Phukat 83200
Thailand

Phone/Fax 66(76)238-313"

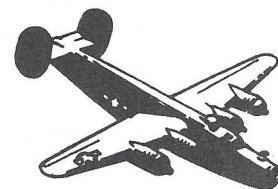
Another recent request has been received from Mrs. Marilyn Lampert. She would like to hear from any of you members who might have known her husband, Charles Miller. Charles Miller was Co-Pilot on James McClendan's crew. His plane blew up on December 16, 1942.

Please write or contact her at:

Mrs. Marilyn Lampert
6303 San Ruben Circle
Buena Park, CA 90620
(714) 828-2342

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Taps



*To everything there is an appointed season
And a time for everything under heaven
A time for sharing, a time for caring'
A time for loving, and a time for
remembering.*

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THE LAST FLIGHT

With the close of 1996, once more we have to report the loss of old friends. To the families of these men, we extend our sincere sympathy.

Bush, Robert H.	25 Mar. 1996
Castillo, Dionicio	2 May 1996
Clotfelter, Millard	10 Sept. 1996
Fromm, Adam	5 Aug. 1996
Hancock, John M.	13 April 1996
Hodge, Walter r.	11 July 1996
Johnson, Hedley A.	12 Mar. 1995
McKinney, John J.	26 Feb. 1996
Mulloney, Daniel C.	20 Mar. 1996
Schwartz, Ben	1 July 1993
Wickstrom, Thomas S.	Oct. 1994
White, Charles C.	6 Mar. 1990
Wilson, Robert J.	6 Nov. 1995

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REUNION #11 1996 SAN DIEGO

To all those that came, to those who wanted to come but factors beyond their control over-ruled their desire, to all who so willingly volunteered to fill the many job functions, to all who spontaneously enjoyed themselves, Marjorie and I owe many many thanks. You made it happen!

The bond among members, started so long ago, easily comes to full glow almost immediately upon being in each others company.

There appeared to be only two coordinators to begin with in February 1995, but not too many months later we had additional coordinators named Cena and Walt Marsh, Jim Kendall and Sam Britt, although many miles apart -- always available. To them also abundant thanks!

Our apologies for the weather man not responding fully to our requested same as always October weather. Then again the whole U.S.A. was experiencing unusual weather misbehavior.

We are looking forward to #12 and picking up where we left off in San Diego, but this coming time, more visiting time with friends, old and new.

Florian & Marjorie Lanning
SITE COORDINATORS

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REUNION #11 1996 SAN DIEGO VIDEO TAPE

A 43 minute VHS video tape titled the "LONG RANGERS", depicting the #11 Reunion at San Diego, has been professionally produced. All members that filled out and mailed the Official #11 Reunion Registration Form have been sent one tape per member family.

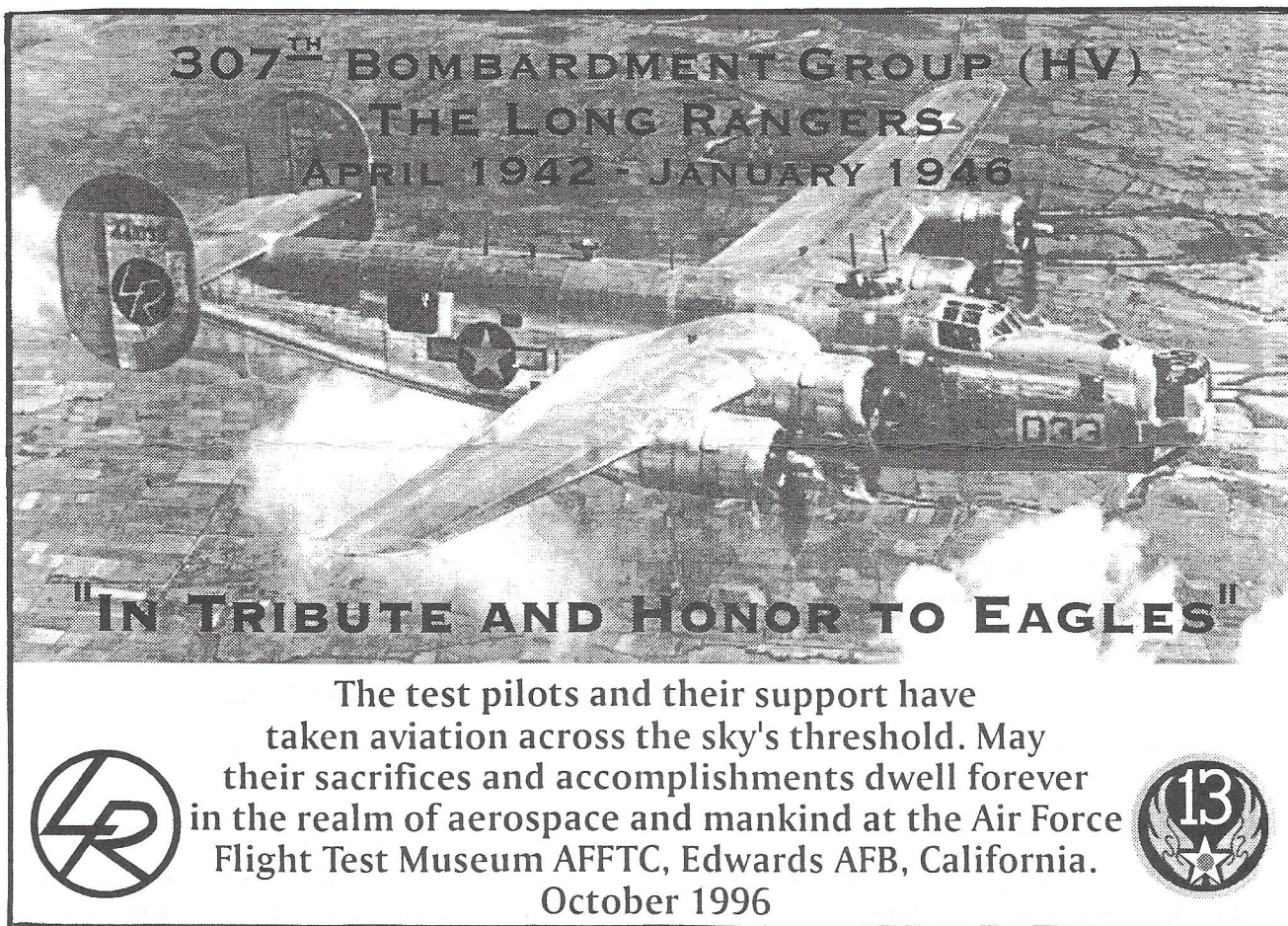
307th members interested in purchasing a first or additional copy of the "LONG RANGERS" tape may do so for \$7.00 per tape. Price includes S & H. The price is "actual cost - no profit", handled for the 307th membership by F. E. Lanning at San Diego. Delivery via Book Rate should be in 7-10 days after order is received.

If you are interested send a \$7.00 per tape check payable to:

F.E. Lanning
6617 Hillgrove Drive
San Diego, CA 92120

P.S. Please be sure to include your complete current address.

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The above photo represents the plaque presented to the 307th Bomb Group Association (HV) by Brigadier General Robert L. Cardenas USAF (Ret.), guest speaker at Reunion No. 11, October 5, 1996.

It acknowledges a 307th \$500.00 building fund contribution to the Air Force Flight Training Center, AFFTC Museum Foundation, at Edwards AFB, California.

Permanent display of the 307th tribute at the Historical Training Museum was the chosen way by which the Long Rangers would be long remembered.

The plaque is anodized aluminum, playing card thickness, laser processed with 8 X 14 inch dimensions.

F. E. Lanning
SITE COORDINATOR

REUNION #12 1998 SITE SELECTION

During the St. Louis #10 Reunion, President Sam Britt commissioned a committee of three to solicit, review and evaluate potential candidates for #12 Biennial Reunion site. The committee of three comprised F. E. Lanning Chairman, B. C. Waldo and H. G. Wilson.

Two official ballots were conducted via Newsletter mailings:

- #1 Ballot: Deadline Dec. 1, 1995 Member response 7%
Results: 66 Member Ballot return - 36 Potential Sites proposed
Note: Vote distribution insignificant for #1 determination
To close to call via mail ballot A/C potential lost ballots
- #2 Ballot: (Vote for 1 only) Deadline July 1, 1996
Member response 15%
Results: 132 Member Ballot return - 10 potential Sites
Note: Vote distribution significant - #1 choice Hampton, VA

NOTE: Both Official Ballots indicated Hampton #1 choice.
#2 Ballot defined a significant plurality (8%) for #1 choice
eliminating possibility of lost ballots (effect) in mail.

F.E. Lanning
For 1998 SITE SELECTION COMM.

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REUNION #12 1998 HAMPTON, VA

The 1998 Site Selection Committee on October 5, 1998 advised President Britt and the Board of Directors, that Hampton, VA has qualified as the #12 307th B.G. Association (HV) Reunion Site based on:

- A. The July 1, 1996 Official Site Selection Ballot determined on 8% of total ballot plurality for Hampton over the #2 potential site.
- B. Qualification of ability to provide the necessary accommodation and services necessary required by the 307th, at an affordable level have been verified and will be substantiated by contract.
- C. Member C. E. Jordan, 370th Sqdn., has offered to head the Site Coordination Committee and is accepted.

F.E. Lanning
For 1998 SITE SELECTION COMM.

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FROM YOUR HISTORIANS

The San Diego reunion was another great one and we must add our thanks to Flor and Marjorie Lanning for their efforts in planning and overseeing the meeting. San Diego was great, the reunion site was great and the award at the banquet of John Reeves long delayed DFC really put the icing on the cake. Thanks, Flor and Marjorie, for a wonderful reunion meeting.

Reeves DFC

Previous Newsletters have told the story of John Reeves' (424th) part in the rescue of most of the 370th crew of Urban Dohogne after their bail out over the sea near Tarakan, Borneo, in June of 1945. Reeves neither expected nor, as was so often the case in the 13th Air Force, received any recognition for his efforts in the rescue. The "rest of the

story" is that since learning several years ago the identity of the pilot who had been instrumental in his crew's rescue, Dohogne has been petitioning the Air Force for official recognition of John's deed. The facts in the case seem to have been very convincing for despite the fact that it had been fifty years since the event the Air Force awarded John Reeves the DFC. It was a satisfying award for Reeves, Dohogne and all the others from the 307th who during the war seldom saw what appeared to be well justified decorations approved by higher headquarters.

Too Many War Stories?

John Vanderpoel writes to suggest that our Newsletter is made up of too many "war stories". Excerpts from John's letter:

Response by John Reeves (424th) after receiving the Distinguished Flying Cross from Maj. Tom Lambert, USAF October 5, 1996

This award really moves me and makes me step back and consider. I am really holding this medal in trust for all involved in the rescue and for many more who are here tonight.

It's for Dohogne's crew who experienced the ordeal and trauma of the downing. It is held in trust especially for Sgt. Courtemanche and Lt. Jones, photographer and navigator, who were missing and presumed lost.

Credit must be given to the crew of our plane No. 550 (RADAR equipped) and very much to the Gibson crew who stayed with the stricken plane throughout the bailout and until their own gas shortage forced them to leave.

Credit must go to the Aussies at the Sanga-Sanga fighter strip who put 500 gallons of gas aboard our B-24 in 20 minutes from five gallon cans.

And what about the personnel aboard the USS Pocomo who responded without question and made a PBM available at our request.

A piece of the medal belongs to that PBM crew which risked all in the landing, pickups and takeoff in heavy swells and with an overload.

Further credit must be paid to the RADAR crew on Tarakan Island for their instant response and triangulation on Gibson's plane and ours which made it possible to locate the men in the water within the next half hour after Gibson's departure.

Last but not least, another bit of the medal goes to the crews of the crash and PT boats that made the 80 mile trip from Tarakan to the crash site and continued the futile search for Courtemanche and Jones on into the night.

To borrow a contemporary popular phrase, 'It took a whole village'.

What's the moral of the story? Preparedness and willingness by all to go out on a limb, if necessary, to take immediate action minus protocol and even radio security to save those men. To do less was not an alternative.

Let's hope, if it does nothing else, that this ceremony helps us all to remember that this nation must stay alert and prepared to defend our principles, and to remember those who gave their all for the rest of us.

I would like to add that this medal really belongs to many more in this room who also had extremely harrowing experiences of their own.

Thank you.

John T. Reeves

"Maybe I am a wet blanket, but I get more and more annoyed with the stuff that is in the 307th Newsletter. My beef is that the Newsletter contains 'war stories' and I don't want ANY MORE war stories. I got shot at in two wars and I want to forget them. I don't want to forget the great guys I knew who are now gone or the great guys who are still here. I just don't want stories about 'There I was flat on my back at 30,000 feet'. I am a member of flying class 41-G and its Newsletters are packed with the personal stuff that members of like interests like to read about, short squibs about what the troops are doing and how they are feeling. Such items are usually very easy to come by for when members send in their dues they generally include a line about how they are and interesting things that they are doing right now".

Vanderpoel has also provided us with the following interesting information about what he is doing at present. We hope that it will move others of you to share your stories with us.

John continues: "Right after I retired from the Pentagon in 1967 I went to work as a civil servant at Hanscom AFB in Bedford, Mass. This was not a good thing for me and in a year I resigned. I had to do something so I took up the restoration of antique bicycles - more particularly the old high-wheeled variety. This I found very worthwhile for about nine years. At this point as I was assaying the machine shop of a man who had been stricken with an incurable and debilitating disease, a young fellow, a polio victim, arrived to teach the patient how to drive his car with hand controls. When this man heard that I had an extensive machine shop he told me that he raced wheelchairs but that they were not really suitable. He asked if I could help him modify a hospital corridor chair for racing. We did and he became the very first man to do a marathon in a wheel chair. The trimming of his chair was so successful that we formed a company to make racing chairs. That was nineteen years ago and our company has created more than 3000 racing wheelchairs and 600

basketball chairs. They are all made to order. None hang on a peg waiting for a customer. We were the first to go to tricycles from quads and had a hard time selling the idea, for coaches, racers and judges believed the tricycle to be unstable. We convinced them that the tricycle's center of gravity is so close to the rear axle that it is virtually as stable as a quad. You never see a four-wheeled racing chair anymore. We were also the first to use radial spoking to reduce the complexity of building wheels. We were first to center the front wheel with heavy springs that permit the racer to spend more time stroking than steering. Steering can best be accomplished with a series of very small 'wheelies' and the steering handles used only in very fast coasting when the arms can't keep up with the wheels anyway. More recently we made a cross-country skiing chair for a man in Michigan. He won three silver medals at the 1990 Winter Olympics in Norway. He was 36 at the time and just couldn't beat the 26 year-old racer from France. With this success in mind we designed a single ski on a motorcycle shock strut for handicapped downhill skiing, and have sold a lot of them. Next will be a hand powered tricycle using chains to operate the wheels. Such a chair cannot be used in a sanctioned running race but we feel there will be a call for it if we produce one. We have no brochure at present and no photo of our chair for we recently switched from steel and titanium to aluminum and the 'look' is quite different. Our company is New Hall's Wheels in Somerville, Mass. Bob Hall is my partner and he is known the world over for it was he who was first to run a marathon in a wheelchair. It took him over three hours to complete the 26 mile 185 yard course. Today the wheelchair record for the Boston Marathon is 1 hour 21 minutes. No runner at Boston has ever done the course in less than 2 hours 8 minutes. Think about that!"

John's suggestion that we try to cover more "now" news from members is a good one. Such coverage would be appreciated by other members and would provide interesting variety to our Newsletters. We will be dependent on you members for this news. We can't print it if we don't have it. And rest

assured that such news will of course be accompanied by the stories that brought our organization together in the first place - our mutual background in and experiences with the 307th Bomb Group. Stories such as the one that follows.

Stowaway to Wake Island

Paul Svitak joined the Army Air Corps in 1940, hoping to get into pilot training. But the Army learned he had been an ace mechanic at home and, in a rare show of logic, made him an aircraft mechanic. In December of 1942 he was crew chief on the B-24 the Sam Gregory crew flew to Midway to take part in the first 307th combat mission, the Christmas strike on Wake Island. Paul tells his story:

"I had become close friends with the enlisted men on the Gregory crew and the night before the mission we were having a good bull session and I outlined the story that I had wanted to be an air crewman and it was not working out and that I wished I could go on the Wake mission with them. One of them, Hardin I believe, said 'Well, why the hell don't you?' so I said 'O.K., I will'. So, when I did the fire bottle guard during the engine start and No. Four got started I went around the right side of the aircraft, parked the fire bottle directly back of the tail and casually got into the plane through the camera hatch which was then our belly gun port. Then I just sat quietly in the back of the aircraft. All the enlisted crew knew I was going and I'm sure the officers, except for Sam Gregory, also knew. (Ed. Note: Harry Sterkel, bombardier, does not remember that any of the officers were aware of the stowaway plan.) I waited until we were about twenty minutes out so he certainly wouldn't turn around and put me back on the ground. I walked forward and stood between the pilot and co-pilot. Sam

casually turned around, looked at me, and went right back to his flying. In a couple of minutes he turned again and said 'I didn't know you were supposed to be on this mission, Sgt'. I said 'Well that was the idea. You weren't supposed to know'. To make a long story short, I managed to fly the first combat mission with the group. The flight is vivid in my memory - the searchlights, the inaccurate ack-ack and everything else and it was really an experience. It was the most beautifully planned and executed mission you could imagine. On the way back I was uncertain as to what the outcome of my actions would be. I didn't see how they would classify me as AWOL because I was on my assigned airplane. I got on the ground and nobody said a word. The only guy who mentioned anything about it was my engineering officer and I won't go into what he had to say. I had been listed as a stowaway and shortly after that an order appeared on the bulletin board saying there would be no more of that. About two weeks later I was told to report to the orderly room and thought the stripes were gone for sure. Instead, a pleasant surprise. I was sent by car to CBS Radio to be interviewed about the Wake mission by Webley Edwards on a coast-to-coast hookup. A telegram was sent to my parents and everyone I knew was alerted to be near their radio that Sunday morning. Later on I did manage to fly many other missions. On one of them we made a three-engine bomb run on my recommendation and nothing ever came of that. Another time I asked Sqdn. C.O. Jurkens why he had scratched me from a mission. He said I was too valuable. I said that he was going and asked if he wasn't valuable? His reply: 'Pilots I can get, you I can't. Now get the hell out of my office' - a comment that would surely have bruised the ego of a good many pilots and air crewmen.

As much as we would like to, there are too many of you Long Rangers out there for us to send personal Christmas greetings to everyone.

So let this be our personal wish for you.

That your Christmas Season and New Year be the Merriest and Happiest ever.

Jim and Dottie Kendall

John and Tudy Reeves

Harry and June Sterkel

MESSAGE FROM RETIRING PRESIDENT

I would like to add a few words to thank the membership for their support these past two years. It's been quite an experience.

Unless a person has handled the logistics of a reunion they can never know the time and effort it takes to handle the task. Florian and Marjorie Lanning should be commended for their performance in putting on a first class reunion. What a tremendous job they did. All those attending had a wonderful time. What an entry in our book of memories.

Happy Holidays to you all.

Sam and Helen Britt

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DUES TIME AGAIN

It is dues time again for you 307th members. Dues are \$20.00 per year. Please use the attached form when sending in your payment.

HAPPY HOLIDAYS

Members of the 307th Board of Directors wish to extend their wishes for the best of "Holidays and a Happy and Healthy New Year".

Dave and Jime' Owens
John and Tudy Reeves
Jim and Dottie Kendall
Harry and June Sterkel
Cena and Walt Marsh
Anita and Marty Sporn

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307th BOMB GROUP PX

Currently the following items are available to the membership through the mail. After July 1, 1997, these items will be sold at the reunions only.

Cap - Fits All Sizes (Specify Squadron)	\$ 8.50
Jackets - White (Med Only)	25.00
T. Shirt - White (M, L, XL) Orig. L/R Logo	12.00
License Plate Holders (Specify Squadron)	5.50
Lapel or Hat Pins (Specify Squadron L/R, Group)	2.50
Patches (Specify Squadron L/R, Group)	3.50
Memorial Plaque	11.00
We'll Say Goodbye (Reprinted 1945 307th Book)	20.00

Prices listed above include shipping and handling.

Make checks payable to the 307th Bomb Group Assn.

Mail to: 307th Bomb Group, 262 East Valley View Drive, Preston, ID 83263

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