

Season's Greetings

307th Bombardment Group (HV) Assn. "The Long Rangers"

Newsletter - 95-3

December 5, 1995

QUOTES OF NOTE

"The gift of love is about the only present that isn't exchanged after Christmas."

- Kenneth Parsons

"You give but little when you give of your possessions. It is when you give of yourself that you truly give."

- Jim Bishop

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

- Anonymous

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"THE MAKING OF FRIENDS:

If nobody smiled and nobody cheered
and nobody helped us along,
If each, every minute looked after him-
self and good things all went to the
strong.
If nobody cared just a little for you, and
nobody thought about me,
And we all stood alone in the battle of
life. What a dreary old world this
would be!

Life is sweet because of the friends we
have made and the thing which in
common we share;
We want to live on not because of our-
selves, but because of the people
who care;
It's giving and doing for somebody else -
On that all life's splendor depends,
And the joy of this world, when you've
summed it all up,
Is found in the making of friends."

- Edgar A. Guest

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NOTES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Season Greetings from our house to yours. We hope this will be the best Christmas ever, and that the New Year will bring nothing but joy and happiness to you and yours.

In October, I attended the 13th Air Force Association reunion. There were a number of 307th members in attendance.

I was impressed with the current commanding general, Major General Swope (52 years old). He is one dynamic individual. He informed us that the 13th is responsible for a large chunk of real estate in the South Pacific but does not have one single air plane. If planes are needed they are borrowed from the 5th and 7th Air Forces. The function of the 13th is to develop and acquire allies, to whom we sell warplanes, train pilots, teach tactics and provide support, including rebuilding and other services available on Diego Garcia. They also conduct combat training exercises with a number of area allies.

HAPPY HOLIDAYS TO ALL

Helen and Sam 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.

FROM YOUR HISTORIANS

Chaplain Ellett

Newsletter 95-2 announced the death of Lertis R. Ellett, original Chaplain of the 307th, who served the Group from its earliest days until early in 1944 when he moved on to become Chaplain of the 13th Bomber Command. Shortly after that story appeared, we received the following note from the Chaplain's wife, Kathryn Ellett:

"I received a copy of the last 307th Bomb Group paper sent to me by Carl Buskness. Here is a resume of chaplain Ellett's later days.

"From February 1, 1947 until September 1, 1970 he served the Lawndale Christian Church as pastor. He was a beloved pastor to them as he was a beloved chaplain to the Air Force.

"He was killed in a car crash on September 11, 1978. in Gardena, California.

"He also kept his Air Force Reserve up for over 20 years and I receive an Air Force allowance.

"We traveled a lot in his later years.

"Hope this helps you."

Respectfully,

Kathryn (Mrs. Lertis R.) Ellett
15404 S. Prairie Avenue
Ladale, CA 90260

Though saddened to learn of his passing, we are happy to know that he had such a happy and productive life following the war..

Perhaps some of the "old hands" who knew Chaplain Ellett during the early days would like to write to Kathryn. We think she would enjoy hearing from you.

Archie Dunn

A letter from Mrs. Verna Capito thanks our Association for our response to her request for facts on the loss of her brother, Archie Dunn, on our second mission to Balikpapan, October 3, 1944.

"I want to thank you so much for all the information you sent on my brother, Archie Dunn of the 307th Bomb Group. My mother tried for a long time to find out what happened but everything at that time was secret. She finally gave up trying but she never gave up hope that he might be alive somewhere. My parents were told only that his plane went down over Borneo and neither plane nor crew were ever found. I only wish they could have seen all this material that you sent.

"That war was so bad on my family. I lost another brother, Robert, just a few months after Archie was reported missing. Robert was stationed on Noemfoor from which the early Balikpapan missions were flown. His combat team had helped take the island from the enemy. He got a leave and was waiting to surprise Archie when he returned from that mission - a very sad day. Robert was killed about four months later.

"While visiting the Air Force Museum I mentioned to my brother-in-law that I wished I could find out what happened to Archie's plane and he is the one who got your name for me. He also put an article in the reunion paper for the 370th Bomb Squadron. As a result I have received several letters to date. My thanks to Wayne Cooper, Joseph Grooms and Earnest Kelley, Archie's pilot, who told me that on the day Archie flew that mission with the Gage crew his pet parrot flew away from the enlisted men's tent and never returned.

"Every one has been so nice and helpful and I really appreciate all of you. It's so good to know, after all these years, the facts of what happened that day "

Sincerely,
Verna Capito
115 Hilltop Drive
Fairfield Bay, AZ
72088
(501) 884-305 -6305

The thought of the families of missing men going for half a century with no definitive word is heartbreaking. Helping them learn the facts is the kindest thing we can do. Our thanks to all you who helped.

Does Anyone have information on Bill Becker, 371st?

We have a request from Ned Humphreys of Bombardiers, Inc. asking for any information we have on a William A. Becker of the 371st.

The above was the beginning of a request for information about bombardier Bill Becker. However we just received a post card from Bombardiers, Inc. telling us that they had already located him. It's too late to do anything else with this space but give you his address. Should any of you remember Bill and want to contact him, his address is: William A. Becker, 975 Windrowe Drive, Nashville, TN 37205 (615) 352-0487

End of the Line for the Old Consolidated Aircraft Plant

A note from Tom Flanigan says "The enclosed San Diego newspaper clipping is to let the gang know that Consolidated is no more and the home of the B-24 will disappear very soon".

The clippings tell the story. After 60 years of aircraft production in San Diego, the great plant at Lindbergh Field will be razed and the property will revert to the San Diego Unified Port District. The 95-acre plant was established in 1935 by Ruben H. Fleet when he moved his Consolidated Aircraft Co. to San Diego from Buffalo, New York. Originally producing Navy seaplanes the plant moved on into production of fighters and bombers at the onset of World War II, emerging as a major producer of PBY Catalina seaplanes and B-24 Liberator bombers. The prototype Liberator was born at the plant in 1939. By 1943 Fleet, no longer able to abide the rise of organized labor and the problems of doing business with the government, sold his share of Consolidated to Vultee Aircraft. Officially known as Consolidated Vultee Aircraft Co., the new company became known as Convair. Even after General Dynamics acquired the operation in 1953 the big assembly plant maintained a distinct identity as "Convair". The final job for the old factory has been production of fuselages for the McDonnell Douglas MD-11. On January 5, 1996, the final fuselage will be completed and delivered and the bulldozers will begin to raze the old building - surely the end of an era. Tom Flanigan adds: "I recall taking off at Lindbergh Field early in 1942 in a Ryan PT-22 alongside a row of Liberators in the process.....so long ago."

Authorization for the Philippine Independence Medal and Ribbon

Ten years ago Senator Levin of Michigan made inquiries for us which resulted in a letter from the Congressional Inquiry Div., Office of Legislative Liaison saying that recipients of either or both the Philippine Defense Medal and the Philippine Liberation Medal had been authorized the Philippine Independence Medal. On this authority many of you applied for and received the unexpected award. Not that it brought any "points" but it was nice to have.

Recently, however, member Jack Sloan (see the rest of his wartime diary elsewhere in this Newsletter) began to get conflicting stories as he attempted to obtain the medal to which he believed he was entitled.

His initial request, to the U.S. Air Force, brought a reply from a Lt. Col. informing him that he had not qualified for the Philippine Independence Medal and giving him a mild slap on the wrist for trying to collect a medal to which he was not entitled.

With his feathers somewhat ruffled Jack called the Philippine Embassy in Washington D.C. where he was told that a person must have been awarded BOTH the Philippine Defense (12-8-41 thru 6-14-42) AND the Philippine Liberation (10-17-44 thru 9-3-45) Medals to qualify for the third medal. This seems illogical but when you get it from the "horse's mouth" what can you say?

However, Jack contacted us again recently on the subject, enclosing an order form from The Glenwood Agency, a reputable source of military medals and awards, which stated that those holding either or both the Defense and Liberation Medals were authorized the Independence Medal as well.

So we are right back where we started. The whole thing is of little consequence at this point in our lives but you ought to know what is going on. We will try to get decision in writing from to settle the matter once and all. Will keep you posted

Two Views of the Loss of the Lucey Crew over Manila - 1-8-45

Frank Stagner spent the war as a young boy in the Santo Tomas POW camp in Manila from which he had a ringside seat for our bombing of targets in the Manila area. He wrote to us hoping to get an original copy of the Christmas Greetings dropped by our planes during the Christmas Season of 1944 which we printed in last year's Holiday Newsletter. We are sorry we did not have an extra copy to send to him for we know it would mean a lot to him personally. He is not a mercenary World War II collector. If anyone has an extra copy of that 1944 Christmas Greeting leaflet that you could give to Frank he would be forever grateful. His address: Frank H. Stagner, 3105 Kenland Drive, San Jose, CA 95111-3239.

To get back to our story...Frank writes of his memories of our bombing around Manila:

"In reference to AAF strikes in the vicinity of the Santo Tomas camp, there really weren't that many that I could relate or recall; as you are well aware, Manila itself was off limits to the AAF. The only close-by B-24 targets that I was aware of would have been Grace Park airstrip, less than two miles north of the camp, and Neilsen Field, a little more than four miles southeast of us.

Close as Grace Park was to the camp, I managed to miss all three of the B-24 strikes on this facility. It is possible I may have been deep within the Min Building at the time these events took place. The building would literally be rattling and rolling accompanied by the usual cheering and shouts of glee. Published reports have disclosed that both the 494th (twice) and the 307th were responsible for these attacks. Both these Lib groups may have actually bombed the Grace Park airstrip on the same day!

"Nichols Field, a former USAAF airfield and Air Depot, was over eight miles directly south of the camp and was out of my usual viewing due to the mass and height of the main building. I was barely able to discern the distant deep rolling thunder of exploding bombs. Other watchers on the upper floors were able to clearly observe these aircraft even at that distance. (These bombers may have been the 5th Bomb Group.

"We first observed and were able to identify the B-24 Liberator beginning on December 21, 1944. These bomb groups would pass almost directly overhead and on a northwesterly course to what we surmised was the other former USAAF facility, Clark Field. It was during these December flights by the 22nd and/or 494th Bomb Groups that escorting fighters were observed weaving above the bombers in a beautiful aerial display.

"It was on January 6, 1945, when one of the Lib groups really caught my attention. The group had approached us from a south-easterly direction and were flying at a lower altitude than the previous overflights to Clark Field. Just the majestic beauty of these machines and the accompanied thundering roar of the engines was something to behold! These Liberators may have been the Long Rangers as they could have just departed Neilson Field.

"The following day was a similar occasion except this may have been one of the strikes on Grace Park. This flight may have been either the 307th or the 494th. I was observing them until they passed overhead but had to dive for cover as the hot scrap iron from the AA began falling in the area.

"The mission of the eighth was the story I related to Sam Britt about the loss of what must have been Lt. Lucey's plane but there are a few other items I would like to add:

"First - A number of former Internees I have spoken with during reunions were very sure that at least seven crewmen were observed jumping from the burning aircraft with some claiming to have seen almost that many with open chutes. Of course, many of these people may never have observed the actual incident.

"Second - I related to Sam that I had heard parts of the Lib hitting the ground; one Internee has told me that he had seen an entire outer wing section fall onto the street just outside the camp wall.

"Third - As the burning sections of Lt. Lucey's aircraft began falling, I quickly shifted my gaze slightly left and observed all the rudders of the departing flight move as though on cue! The Libs all at once pivoted to the right which to me appeared to have been a change in course."

Our thanks to Frank Stagner for sharing his First-Person memories of a tragic 307th combat loss. Now if we could locate a 1944 Christmas Greeting leaflet for him....

Another first-hand view of the loss of the Lucey crew comes to us from member Leslie Martin whose B-24 was flying beside the ill-fated crew on the 1-8-45 mission to Neilson Field. Leslie writes:

"I was flying in the tail of the last ship over the target and happened to glance at the pland to our right just as it was hit near the bomb bay by a burst of AA. It must have hit the bomb bay tank for all hell

broke loose. The plane began burning instantly and the pilot had a hard time keeping it under control. We were at 12,000 feet and in an instant the plane was coming at us. I got on the inter-phone and said we were about to be rammed, but as the plane got within a hundred yards of hitting us the pilot took his fist, broke out his window and stuck his head out for just a moment. Then his plane turned to the right, missing us as it started to go down. I have lived with this scene for all these years and I know our crew owes our lives to Lt. Lucey. I must say that if anyone ever deserved the highest award for his actions it was Lt. Lucey."

Was the Early 307th Considered a Poorly Trained Bomb Group?

Joe Vacarro wrote some time ago to ask about a rumor he remembers from the mid 1942 days when the 307th was based in Sious City. That rumor said that the Group was scheduled to go to the European Theater but at the last minute, because of training deficiencies, was diverted instead to the Pacific Theater amidst rumors that our crews would get lost and never make it to Hawaii. Joe points out that it is a matter of record that only one 307th aircraft was lost on the move to Hawaii (hat one crashed into a Hawaiian mountain) and certainly the subsequent record of our group second to none despite claims of other groups in the South and Sowthwest Pacific and elsewhere in the AAF.

We checked with several Assoc. members who were original group members in positions to know if the 307th had been diverted from a planned move because of a perceived lack of readiness. Several replies combine to paint a picture of a wartime situation which could certainly spawn rumors, both the "latrine" variety as well as those with some basis in fact. In answer to our query

Larry Krebs stated in a phone call that he could remember no such rumor. He feels that the 307th followed orders and did whatever it was called on to do in a manner that the record will show was exemplary, and would have done the same wherever it might have been sent as was the case with all World War II bomb groups.

Ed Jurkens responded by letter:

"I don't remember that the 307th was scheduled to go to the ETO or any suggestion that we were not prepared to operate there. Before joining the 307th I was assigned to two other bomb groups, both of which flew the B-17. We were sure we were going to Europe - and both of them did.

"I believe the decision to use B-24s to replace B-17s in the Pacific was made early in our training. I was pretty sure we would go to the Pacific because Col. Matheny talked about how a B-24 was a good trade for a battleship. I wholeheartedly agreed...until I realized that I might be flying that B-24!

"It would appear that the long-range plan was carried out. The 90th Group with B-24s replaced the B-17s of the 19th Group in the SW Pacific. We replaced the B-17s of the 11th Group and the 5th Group converted from B-17s to B-24s on Guadalcanal. I was under the impression that B-24s replaced B-17s in the Pacific because of their greater range and more reliable Pratt & Whitney engines. Also, B-24s were being produced faster.

"Maybe I'm in denial about any accusations of lack of preparedness, but I sure don't remember and derogatory comments and, as a squadron commander, I'm sure I would have heard about them. I hope this helps. I also hope that if

others reply they will agree with my recollections".

Ed Jurkens

A final letter from Jim McCloskey sort of puts the whole discussion into perspective.

"Joe Vacarro is absolutely right! Those of us who were in Sioux City for the final phase of our training, which we never completed, were definitely insufficiently trained for the war in Europe...or anywhere else! We certainly were not properly trained to fight in the Pacific where the flying conditions were considerably more hazardous than in Europe.

The reason we were sent to the Pacific was quite simple; they needed us, properly trained or not. At that particular juncture in time the top brass decided to increase our offensive efforts in the Pacific. Unfortunately, although Army Air Corps Units were desperately needed in that effort, sufficiently trained, experienced units did not exist so they sent us and others

who were no better trained.

"Under trained, yes! Incapable, no! It's amazing that only four months after most of the pilots had graduated from flight school, many like myself from Luke Field, a single engine fighter training school, we were flying a four engine aircraft from California to Hawaii and two months later from Hawaii to Midway Island and on to Wake Island on the Group's first combat mission, one of the most important and completely successful missions in the early years of the war.

"Sure we were not properly trained. Hell, the country was not properly trained for the war. But like every other Air Corps,, Army, Navy and Marine Unit, we carried out our missions in a manner that astonished everyone, including our enemies.

"Every man who served in the 307th, from cooks to colonels, should be proud they served in a group that did its job as well, or better than, any other group that fought in WW II.

Jim McCloskey

RB-10 REUNION BOOK

Again I must apologize to all of our members for my delay in finishing the St. Louis Reunion Book . Forgive my delay and be assured that we have not forgotten to send your copy.

Jim Kendall

Since we can't send a personal greeting to all of you, please let this bring your Historian's best wishes for a very Merry Christmas and the Happiest New Year ever!

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



REUNION UPDATE

REUNION NUMBER 11, SAN DIEGO
OCTOBER 2 - 5, 1996

Planning for San Diego is on schedule. Key components mentioned below are locked in firmly. A block of 250 reunion rate rooms is reserved along with ample spacious meeting rooms for 307th activities. A Grand Ballroom is ours for Saturday evening. Parking for autos and small vans on premise is available gratis. Over-size recreational accommodation is available in the vicinity.

Wednesday 10/2

Early bird activities.

Thursday 10/3

Early evening cruise for a "Reunion-Welcome Get-To-Gether"; we will cruise Mission Bay aboard the "William D. Evans", a stern wheeler. This event is complementary and the Evans, designed for 600 passengers, will provide an atmosphere of splendor representative of 1800's river boat era.

Following the cruise an outdoor Hawaiian Luau is offered.

Friday 10/4

Calls for a visit to the renowned San Diego Aerospace Museum; a must for Long Rangers! Tour type busses will shuttle between Bahia Hotel and the Museum in San Diego's Balboa Park.

Saturday 10/5

The Big Day! 307th Membership Meeting - Reunion Photos - Banquet and Dance.

Sunday 10/6

A morning of farewells and see you next time.

Remember, in conjunction with your Bahia Hotel Reunion stay, the Bahia will reserve accommodations at reunion rates for 1 to 2 days prior, or 1 to 2 days after, or both. You can "DO" San Diego "Your Way", choosing from the multitude of attractions available, for your leisure.

Newsletter 96-1 will provide a formal and factual briefing to assist you in completing the all important reservation form, and also your personal planning and itinerary for your San Diego stay.

P.S. AIR TRANSPORTATION - For those interested, check with major airlines, most have unbelievable low "Senior" rates, including coast to coast. SENIORS - Airlines very seldom offer - you have to ask.

CONTINUE THINKING AND PLANNING
307th REUNION
SAN DIEGO, OCTOBER 2-5, 1996

Reunion Committee
Florian and Marjorie Lanning

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REUNION NUMBER 12 - 1998

Please refer to Newsletter 95-2, Page 8. Reunion site ballots are coming slowly; approximately only 0.06% of around a 1000 membership. Thanks for acceptance of a new return "BY" date, now February 1, 1996.

Thanks for the responses received.

F.E. Lanning
1998 Site Chairman

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NOTES FROM THE SECRETARY

I recently read this story in one of our local publications. It is a bit of a reminder what Christmas is all about.

"I recall a young boy, who at the age of thirteen lead his friends in a successful search for the Christmas spirit. He and his companions lived in a neighborhood in which many elderly widows of limited means resided. All year long the boys had saved and planned for a glorious Christmas Party. They were thinking of themselves, until the Christmas spirit prompted them to think of others. Frank, as their leader, suggested to his companions that the funds they had saved so carefully be used not for

the planned party, but rather for the benefit of three elderly widows who resided together.

The boys made their plans. With the enthusiasm of a new adventure, the boys purchased a giant roasting chicken, the potatoes, the vegetables, the cranberries, and all that comprises the traditional Christmas feast. To the widows' home they went, carrying their gifts of treasure. Through the snow and up the path to the tumbledown porch they came. A knock at the door, the sound of slow footsteps, and then they met.

In the unmelodic voices characteristic of thirteen-year-olds, the boys sang; "Silent night! Holy night! All is calm, all is bright." They then presented their gifts. Angels on that glorious night of long ago sang no more beautifully, nor did Wise Men present gifts of greater meaning. I gazed at the faces of those wonderful women and thought to myself, "Somebody's Mother". I then looked on the countenances of those noble boys and reflected, "Somebody's Son." There then passed through my mind the words of the immortal poem by Mary Dow Brine:

"SOMEBODY'S MOTHER"

*The woman was old and ragged and gray
And bent with the chill of the Winter's day.
The street was wet with recent snow,
And the woman's feet were aged and slow.
She stood at the crossing and waited long,
Alone, uncared for, amid the throng
Of human beings who passed her by,
Nor heeded the glance of her anxious eye.
Down the street, with laughter and shout,
Glad in the freedom of "school let out."
Came the boys like a flock of sheep,
Hailing the snow piled white and deep...*

*(One) paused beside her and whispered low,
"I'll help you cross, if you wish to go."...
"She's somebody's mother, boys, you know,
For all she's aged and poor and slow.
And I hope some fellow will lend a hand
To help my mother, you understand.
If ever she's poor and old and gray,
When her own dear boy is far away."*



*And "somebody's mother" bowed low her head
In her home that night, and the prayer she said,
Was, "God be kind to the noble boy,
Who is somebody's son, and pride and joy!"*

MERRY CHRISTMAS AND HAPPY NEW YEAR

Walt and Cena Marsh

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NOTES FROM THE MEMBERSHIP

Continued - Excerpts from Jack Sloan's diary.

"BOOKER - FORTUNATO B-24 CREW"

On our 4/6 mission to Lolo, we dropped seven 1,000# bombs in the supply area with good results.

The 4/10 mission to Liang was uneventful. We dropped 250# general purpose bombs on the airdrome area.

The strike of 4/13 was to Davao, where we dropped five 1,000# bombs on the city. The important event on this mission was when we landed. The ground crew told us that F.D.R. was dead. It's difficult to convey how I felt, like there was a tremendous loss. I could only remember one other President in my life, Herbert Hoover. Would the war continue to be fought the way it had been, or would there be a lull until Truman set his policy?

We flew again on 4/17 to Kabacan, and we then knew that there was no interruption of our regular schedule with the passing of the President. We bombed the city with six 1,000# bombs.

We hit Sepinggan on back to back missions on 4/20 and 4/23. Talk about identical missions - ten hours and ten minutes and ten hours and twenty minutes; six 1,000# bombs; three 2,000# bombs. We had very heavy Ack-Ack on both, however, on the second mission of 4/23, we were holed in the tail. Fred showed all of us the holes in the tail section when we got back. He was mighty upset that they had singled him out.

The 4/23 mission was our twenty-fifth, and we considered ourselves very fortunate to have flown this many missions with so few problems. We probably had another ten or twelve to go before we were to be replaced.

On 4/27 we had quite an experience. We had a very early morning take off, and it was still dark when we became airborne. As soon as the gear came up, we started smelling gas. I stuck my left arm out of the left Waist window and was immediately soaked with gasoline. I got on the intercom and told Andy, our Engineer, that we had a tremendous gas leak. He told Steve, our Pilot, who came on the intercom and told us no smoking, to get our Mae Wests and parachutes on, to open the Camera Hatch, and to wait for his word to "Bail Out"! This was for real! Andy came back to the Waist with a flashlight and looked at the left wing gas cap. It wasn't there. It had blown off, because someone hadn't safety-wired it on. The air turned blue, as Andy was more than a little upset. Andy transferred gas from the left wing tank to the bombay tank, and the level was low enough in the left wing tank that it had quit siphoning out. Our immediate problem was over, but we now knew that we didn't have enough fuel aboard to hit either the primary or secondary target. This left us to hit the Mandao Town bridge. No one, I mean, no one had been able to get this sucker in months and months. Well, they hadn't had a Bombardier like our "Butterball" Yelland. We hit the bridge from 8,400'. Al dropped three 1,000# bombs on the first run and the middle bomb got a direct hit on the north span. We made a reciprocal run, and again, Al dropped three more 1,000# bombs. Once again, the middle bomb scored a direct hit on the southern span. Albert was a Hero, the scourge of Manado Town! When we got back to base and the word got out that Fortunato's Crew got the Manado Town Bridge, friends and neighbors brought us each a quart of cold Australian beer.

On the next day, 4/28, we were off to Masamba, because the Manado Town bridge raid was only four hours and they

didn't think we had flown long enough to earn our pay. Ah, so, fame is so fleeting. Everyone is a hero for 15 minutes of their life. Albert was again over the bombsight.

Somewhere along the way, Fred L. and I borrowed a Jeep, dug out our bottle of Four Roses that had become full, the one we had stashed from Andy for those many months, and we took a ride down to the other end of the island. We'd found there was an Infantry outfit located there. We talked it over and thought we might be able to raise their spirits a little with some of our spirits. We just "happened" to get there at chow time, and we just "happened" to pull up by the mess hall, where there just "happened" to be quite a line. (Do you get the picture?) Well, Fred L. sorta flashed the bottle, a few fellows walked over and asked if we were selling. Fred L., with the best "Snake-Oil" charm I'd ever seen, asked, "What's it worth?" (This was just like Wheel of Fortune, waiting for the big bucks to come up). The bid was \$35.00, \$50.00, \$60.00, and we sold it at \$70.00. Needless to say, we didn't stay around to help them taste it. We probably would still be hanging from the tallest Palm tree on Morotai Island once they found out it wasn't Four Roses, but combat booze. Oh, well! Caveat Emptor!!

The next two missions were convoy cover on 5/4 and 5/8. They were uneventful, but different. We went out and flew over our ships from 12:00 to 8:00, looking for submarines. They still counted on missions, and two more closer to going home.

May 13 was the longest mission we flew, 13:30 to Tabanio, Borneo. We led the Squadron for the first time.

On 5/16 we again led the Squadron...two in a row. This time we went to Manggar, one of the fighter strips covering Balikpapan oil refinery. We had some flak, but it wasn't very accurate, with no fighter interception.

5/20 was the date of our thirty-second mission. It was a memorable day for two reasons. First, we always knew we would have heavy flak over Balikpapan. That day was no exception. We were flying B-1 (lead plane in the Second Element.) Our target was a large ship tied up at a pier in Balikpapan Harbor. On the way in, we started to get very heavy accurate flak. Just before "Bombs Away", the plane sort of shuddered and bounced like a wounded elephant. Since we were flying B-1, which is just a little below the three planes in the First Element, I thought some idiot in the First Element had thrown out a whole box of "Window" (lead foil with a weight in the middle, like a roll of tape. This unwound and screwed up the Japanese radar.), and it had hit our plane. Just then, Al shouted "Bombs Away", and we made a sharp turn for home. After we came out of our turn, Al said into the intercom, "I think I got the Purple Heart." I started to unhook to get out of the turret to check Al out, when Steve told me to hurry and attend to him. When I crawled out, Al had a hanky over his face. I pulled it down, Al looked like he had crawled through a briar patch. His face was all scratched. I asked him what happened, and he pointed to a hole in the plexiglass just about a foot left of the bombsight, and a foot below where my fanny had been when I was in the turret. He had just straightened up, moved his head from the bombsight, when a piece of flak entered through the nose window directly over the bombsight, and went out the Navigator's window. After we landed, we got on Al as to whether he was going to accept the Purple Heart for his war wounds, and he said, "You bet your sweet 'bippy'" or words to that effect. "After all" he said, "That's five more points than you guys have toward going home and getting out of service."

We learned later that we had gotten an 8,000 ton freighter-transport ship in the harbor.

5/24 we hit the barracks area at Tawao. This was uneventful, just a long mission of eleven hours and forty minutes.

We had another mission to Balikpapan on 5/28. Anti-aircraft guns were the target and per usual, we encountered heavy flak.

June started out with a 6/2 mission to Tarakan Island in Northeast Borneo. This was to take out targets prior to the invasion. Again, we lead the squadron.

On 6/6, we hit the personnel area at Labuan in Northwest Borneo. This was our thirty-sixth mission -- not many more to go!!

After the 6/6 mission, I was grounded for nearly three weeks due to a severe shortage of ground personnel being rotated to the States. All Assistant Radio Operators (I was Assistant Radio Operator), and Assistant Engineers were taken off their crews and assigned to work elsewhere. It would not effect their going home when it was their crew's time to rotate to the States. I worked in Squadron Operations. Someone asked me if I could type, and I said I had taken typing in High-School. I was elected, not selected. I didn't fly again until June 27th. The target was Balikpapan beach defenses, and once again, we had heavy, accurate flak. Our missions the past couple of weeks have been Balikpapan and the immediate area around it, getting ready for the July first invasion.

Fred and I hadn't flown together since 6/6. He flew on 6/9, 6/13, and 6/16 while I was in Operations, "typing".

My next mission, the thirty-eighth, was on July 10th to Donggala. Walker, Ward, Sheldon and I flew with Captain McDonald's crew and Al flew with Lt. Boyd's crew.

We didn't know until we got back to the area, when Fred told us, our crew had been replaced. To know we'd flown our last mission was unbelievable. It's impossible to convey what I was thinking at that precise time. Total and complete relief that we'd made it -- no more hazardous take offs, no more fighters to contend with. The war was over for us! I walked around in a daze and just grinned for a week.

We made orders on 7/14, cleared on 7/21, and left for Manila on 7/24. Before leaving, we got rid of our accumulated stuff. (Junk) I sold my customized cot for \$50.00 (made \$15.00 on the deal). We sold the radio and parachute and split the money. I bought a new A-2 jacket and a B-4 bag. No need for barracks bags now. Sure wish I had that leather jacket now, probably wouldn't fit.

Six of us flew to Manila in a C-47. There were four of our crew, Sheldon, Ward, Goff and I. We didn't know when Walker, Pressey, or Steve, Al and Willie left Morotai. After we got settled in Manila we went to a restaurant for dinner. I had a very small pork chop, a boiled potato and a tossed salad. The salad was a little piece of lettuce and a very thin slice of pink tomato. The price was \$2.30, a lot of money at that time. We didn't eat out again. I believe we were in Manila until August 3rd when we boarded a very large banana boat for home. I don't know the name of the ship, but as we were boarding, Navy personnel checked us in from their list. Once again, I was asked if I could type. I said "yes", and this guy told me to go with a Navy-type guy and to take my bag. I didn't have to go below where everyone else did. Instead, I was shown to a room on deck with four beds, told I was assigned to the ship's newspaper and would have access to any place on the ship. My God, how lucky could I get? Wow!! We put out a mimeographed paper every other day and passed it out all over the ship. I even got to go up to the bridge and interview the Captain. The only bad thing about this whole deal, if you can call it bad, was the continuous zig-zagging of the ship to avoid submarines. We did this until we got close to the West coast of the United States.

We were three days out of Seattle when the war was over, and we put out a special edition of the paper, which was called "The Pacific Express." This was August 14, 1945.

On August 17th we landed in Seattle. What a beautiful, glorious sight to be back in the States. After disembarking and getting settled, I called Mother and Dad and told them I would be home soon. I would be on a train to Camp Atterbury,

Indiana and would call from there. As it turned out, I left Camp Atterbury for home on August 23rd. Called my folks that I would arrive at the bus station at 9:30 p.m. the same day in Toledo. They checked the bus schedule and found out it stopped in Maumee before continuing in to Toledo. (Maumee is only 15 minutes from Swanton). My Dad, two brothers and two sisters-in-law were waiting for me when I got off the bus. Got a great big hug from Dad, but Mother wanted to wait at home for me. Got my bag and we were gone ... 15 more minutes to home. When we arrived, I was the first one into the house. There was my Mom, standing there crying, and so was I. My Lord, the neighbors and friends came and there was so much food, I couldn't believe it. My Dad went out to the kitchen and came in with two beers. That was the first time my Dad and I ever had a beer together -- it wasn't the last time.

My brother, Junior, home from France and I compared the merits of his 9th Air Force and my 13th Air Force. Got to sleep in, Mother cooked breakfast for me, and we just sat and talked and talked. Thirty days seemed like an eternity. I went to some high school football games, dated, went out to dinner, saw friends and relatives and ate and ate good home cooking. Gained 20 pounds in short order. I grew 3½ inches while in the service. My Mother couldn't believe this. The first thing she said to me when I walked in was, "You've grown!"

Pressey stopped in to spend the night. He was enroute from Muskegon, Michigan to some place in Maryland for his discharge. Pressey was the last crew member I saw until 46 years later. He died within 4 or 5 years after the war.

Got a 15 day extension to my furlough and when that time was up headed for San Antonio. When I boarded the train, the conductor took my ticket and showed me to a compartment. Told him he had made a mistake but he assured me he hadn't and the compartment was mine. What luxury! I could have traveled all over the U.S. My meals were in the dining car, a beer in the club car, and I wasn't even 21 yet.

Came back to reality when I arrived in San Antonio. Was assigned to a barracks and told to watch the bulletin board for assignments. Sure enough, before long I was on K.P. at an Officers' mess. The instructions for the evening meal were, clean khakis, wear your ribbons and wings. I was on the serving line and got a lot of looks and some questions; like, "Were you overseas?", "You look too young to be a Staff Sergeant", etc. I was called over to one table where several Officers were eating. They invited me to sit down and have a cup of coffee. Then I really got quizzed. "What kind of plane were you on?", "Where were you?", "How many missions did you have?", "How long were the missions?", "What are the ribbons:", etc., etc.

I was finally discharged on 10/31/45 and headed for home immediately. My Army Air Corps career was exactly two years and 13 days, many miles, many States, and a whole lot of the South Pacific.

I'll always remember our crew. Being a part of that team was an honor and a privilege I'll never forget. My only regret is not making more of an effort to stay in touch with them all. For a few years I sent Christmas cards to everyone with a little note. Didn't hear from Springer or Ward. A couple of years later heard from Andy's wife that he had died of leukemia. The following year I heard from Pressey's wife that he had passed away. In 1990 I wrote to Steve to tell him about the 307th Assn. and received a letter from his wife that he had died in January, 1990.

In April of 1990, Fred L. sent my name to the 307th Bomb Group Assn. Fred heard about the existence of the Group from one of his patients. Received a large manila envelope with newsletters and a covering letter from the Secretary advising me what Fred had done. Called Fred and thanked him for his fine gesture. He was the first person on our crew I had talked to in 45 years. Now we talk on a regular basis. In October of 1990 Fred came for a visit and we ended up calling Al Yelland from Ontario, CA. Had a wonderful three-way conversation. In August, 1991 contacted

Booker and advised him of the 307th Bomb Group Assn. Has been wonderful visiting with these crew members after all the years. They sound the same as they did in 1945!

- Jack Sloan

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50th ANNIVERSARY B-24 LIBERATOR

In the publication "50th Anniversary of the B-24 Liberator", a commemorative book of the reunion held in Fort Worth, Texas '89, the following article appeared.

The following words are taken from a letter written by Jack Sloan, after he had read the article from the book given to him by his son-in-law.

"While reading this, I came across an article entitled, "The People". After reading it, I pushed the book to my wife, hardly able to get the words "Read this" out. After a few minutes, I looked over to her and tears were running down her cheeks.

There is no author listed for this article. I wish there were, as I would like to compliment this person for one of the finest tributes I have ever read. This article had to be included in the newsletter, and I hope you enjoy and appreciate reading it as much as I did.

Jack"

"The People"

"An Anniversary 'salute', to each of you, the dedicated men, women and supportive families back home, who gave life, blood and sinew to the remarkable Liberator Units of World War II, and their ever-formidable B-24 airplane. The golden autumn-eve of a Fiftieth Anniversary of memories, then and since...comes softly and quietly now in a warming glow of remembrances of those trying times of World War II. The bonds and sharing, a comraderie of men, women and machines both ground and air melded together in times then -- the kinships of which

"The People" - continued

are never quite expressable and the deeply etched memories which will never be forgotten.

The unselfish mark of valor was tradition in each of you, never forced or contrived in whatever difficult tasks you had to do then. A proud country, quietly, will always salute and hold close all of you. Those who still touch and rekindle each other's lives in the treasured, fleeting moments of a reunion and those of friends and family dearly remembered but now gone, who will never pass our earthly way again. This Anniversary tribute, so sincerely meant but inadequately spoken is for each of you, and what you gave... when the chips were down for all of America and its Allies throughout the world. Now, in the sunset of many wistful memories, that tradition on your behalfs will never perish. It will always flourish in many ways as this memorable Reunion 1989, hallmarks.

In the dimming twilight of a memory.. may it be asked that after these many years... from where did you come...who were you then? As an answer begins to focus on that long ago and far away it may be said most assuredly that you came from the solid, humble roots of honest and simple families throughout every Allied country...and an America, just arising from the dust of a great depression...from every cross-roads, big and small, rural or citified....and the middle-core roots of your country. You came with great uncertainties in a time of urgent need...you came with determined willingness along with those who fell in along the side of you to do what you were asked to do for the 'Duration Plus', for however long that might be, God only knew. You came and entered into a threatening, unforgiving and deadly personal world of sudden change where supreme demands would be asked of you both on the ground and in the air. The willingness to lay your lives on the line, each day, you did not know when that might be. By your unselfish givings you grew up quickly to proven adulthood before your time, doing all the essential

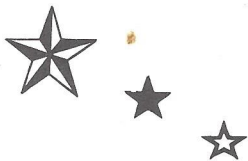
daily mission tasks demanded on the ground and in the criss-crossed, contrail streaks across a hostile sky the world over. Your well-deserved heritage recognition with the B-24 Liberator airplane is written indelibly in history for all time.

As we reflect now there were many things you accomplished then in the grueling daily struggles of a mission-oriented group at war, things which you may never had done before, or perhaps, thought you could ever do. Maybe it was never being able to replace a light bulb at home, but now, you and all the maintenance, supply and specialist co-workers could make that growling quartet of R-1830 P&W engines of your Liberators purr in harmony and perfection to insure their aircrews and systems were combat ready and always reliable. Or, maybe a game hunter you never were, or you never owned or fired a gun, but, now suddenly the twin-fifties of the B-24 you nourished daily and knew blind-folded and intimately 'by the book', extolled you as the best aerial gunners and ground armament experts anywhere in the world. And perhaps, you could never bear the sight of the family ritual in wringing a pet chicken's neck for the Sunday pot now, as medical team professionals...doctors, nurses and corpsmen...you came quickly and capably to administer to the sick air-battle wounded, and the dying, whenever and wherever your duty demanded. Or, the table you set in the tiny, smoke-filled mess halls and scrubby tents, especially at holiday times, with bountiful good and goodies, never belied the fact that you maybe could never boil water well, or even make a cup of coffee before. And, the mission ending Red Cross greetings and blessings of hot food and beverage given to the tired, scared and battle weary, were thanksgiving so often unsung, but always appreciated. And, yes, just maybe you may never had two pennies before to rub together or even a pen to write with or a stamp to use, but you were always the kings and queens as competent paymasters and mighty morale boosters of the V-mail caretakership in everyone's life then...so far away from home.

"The People" - continued

Lastly, but not forgotten and maybe for many, the prize early...may have been the treasured thoughts of having the privilege of driving the family's one and only automobile which came so seldom, or maybe not at all, to take that special lady friend out in those early, fanciful springtime days of youth, now, long ago and far away. But suddenly one day later, an Uncle Sam believed in you, asked and entrusted you with the lives of nine others to pilot, navigate, defend and destroy an enemy from a one half-million dollar bomber called the "Liberator" in a battle order unison your unit had been trained so rigorously to do. You...these many airmen...who came quickly and suddenly, left your combat groups in stays that so often were cut so short, successful mission tour completions -- or, grim circumstances over which you had little control in the gut-wrenching, stressful times of combat. The humble thanks goes silently but truly to you all, each and everyone, from the training personnel who prepared all crewmembers for combat; to those who then, went to war.

These humble tribute remembrances given to each of you in the golden glow of an autumn's memories of everyone now and times of then will remain always, even after the days of reunion are no longer. The magnificent men and women, and one legendary, long ago airplane, will be remembered unfailingly into the distant future of history. The gratitude of a grateful nation and its people could never be said in words or deed for your having passed this way, one very special, trying and youthful time of your lives a very long time ago. You truly are a legendary 'Gathering Of The Liberators' and may God bless you all...and hold you in his Hands always.



CAN YOU HELP US FIND?

Do any of you know where GEORGE BOYD moved to? All the correspondence we have sent him has been returned marked "No Forwarding Address."

Our last known address for George was:

12801 Roydon Dr., Apt. 2003
Houston, Tx 77034-4879
(713) 484-2062

RETURNED MAIL

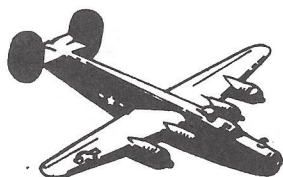
This past year has seen many of the newsletters returned marked "TEMPORARILY AWAY." These are not the newsletters sent to members who spend part of the year in the South and the other in the North. These are members who are probably on vacation. This has become costly as each returned newsletter costs \$.55 for the return and \$.55 for the re-mail. We know mail can be held at the Post Office for a period of time, therefore, in the future any mail returned to us, since we have no idea how long the member will be "Temporarily Away" will not be re-mailed to the member. You will have to notify us if you do not receive the newsletter, then we will forward a copy off to you.

We are not having as much of a problem with those members who have written to let us know just where they spend their winters and summers. We have had the same problem with members who move and do not send a change of address to the Association. We have added a note on the newsletter mailing envelope requesting "Forwarding and Address Correction Requested." We are hoping the Post Office will forward the newsletter to the member as well as notify us of the change of address. In the meantime, please notify us of any change of address.

Thanks,

Cena

Taps



"It broke our hearts to lose you,
 But you didn't go alone.
 A part of us went with you,
 The day God took you home.
 A million times we missed you,
 A million times we cried.
 If love could have saved you,
 You never would have died.
 Now to the grave we travel,
 The flowers are placed with care.
 No one knows the heartache,
 As we turn to leave you there.
 If tears could build the stairway,
 And heartache make a lane.
 We'd walk a path to heaven,
 And bring you back again.

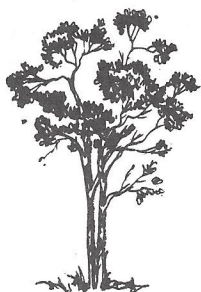
- Unknown

THE LAST FLIGHT

With the close of 1995, once more we have to report the loss of old friends. With the passing of years, our lists seems to be growing. At our age, this is to be expected, but still, saying our last farewell to an old friend is always hard. To the families of these men, we extend our sincere sympathy.

Bullard, Nolan K.	5 Oct. 1995
Clark, Raymond L.	25 Aug. 1995
Roth, Richard	30 July 1995
Smith, Warren W.	28 Nov. 1995
Wood, John R.	22 Oct. 1995

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307th MEMORABILIA

It has come to our attention that a number of 307th members have received correspondence from Jeff Spielberg wanting to purchase their WWII momentos. We do not know if this man is a legitimate collector or if he is wanting to purchase 307th memorabilia for resale. Also, we do not know if he has a copy of our roster, or if he has, how he came by it. Mr. Spielberg is not a member of the 307th Association.

The 307th Association has been trying to locate a complete set of authentic WWII Squadron patches for our library. Jim Kendall has a couple of patches but not a complete set and would be very interested in locating the entire set to add to our 307th Library. Also, in talking with Sam Britt, the 13th Air Force Museum is building another museum in the Philippines to replace the one destroyed by the eruption of Mt. Pinalubo. The museum is in need of WWII momentos to replace what had been lost when the volcano erupted. More information about this museum will be forth coming in future newsletters.

As a precautionary measure, so the 307th does not lose their collection of WWII memorabilia, please contact Jim or Sam about any items of interest you think ought to be in a museum. Please do not sell your memories.

* * * * *

The 307th Board of Directors want to wish each and everyone of you a very "Merry Christmas and a Happy and Healthy New Year."

Sam and Helen Britt
 Ed and Carolyn Hicklin
 Jim and Dottie Kendall
 Harry and June Sterkel
 John and Tudy Reeves
 Cena and Walt Marsh
 Anita and Marty Sporn