



CHRONOLOGICAL ACCOUNT

OF EVENTS

30 Sept. 40

23 May 45

After 40 plus years of not talking about events during my Service in the Air Force, it is surprising that I have come up with such vivid memories of so many events during that period of time. When I joined the 307th Association I became interested in trying to do this project. Items from the following publications have been included in this account.

(UTS) UP THE SLOT - by Samuel I Walker

(307th) HISTORY OF THE 307th BOMBARDMENT GROUP (Hv)

(7th AF) SEVENTH AIR FORCE STORY - by KENN C RUST

(13th AF) THIRTEENTH AIR FORCE STORY-
by Kenn C. Rust and Dana Bell

COMBAT SQUADRONS OF THE AIR FORCE WORLD WAR II

ENLISTED 30 Sept. 1940

OVERSEAS 27 Oct. 1942

RETURNED USA 29 Jan. 1944

DISCHARGED ~~23~~ May 1945

Sam Walker

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* * * * *

Ben Webster (424), one of the original 307th members, has enriched our Historical File with a copy of the CHRONOLOGICAL ACCOUNT OF EVENTS he has developed covering his AAF career in general and 307th service in particular. Ben has done an outstanding job of combining his own memories, comments, photographs and military orders with excerpts from various books and publications written about the part played by the 307th in the Pacific War. It is a great example of what each of us could do to record our view of the 307th wartime experience. Ben had drawn from the Group's HISTORY OF THE 307th BOMBARDMENT GROUP which covers our history through 1943, UP THE SLOT by Sam Walker, SEVENTH AIR FORCE STORY and THIRTEENTH AIR FORCE STORY by Ken Rust, and COMBAT SQUADRONS OF THE AIR FORCE - WORLD WAR II by Maurer Maurer, for paragraphs to complement his own material and memories. (Another good book for stories about the 7th AAF phase of 307th history; ONE DAMNED ISLAND AFTER ANOTHER by Clive Howard and Joe Whitley.)

Why don't you try it? All those old dusty orders, photos and memories will mean little in years to come without comments from you to set things in order. Dig out all you can find from those days. Put the yellowed orders, letters, shot slips and snapshots in chronological order, identify everyone and everything possible in the pictures including where they were taken. Pick out the best of what you have and tie the whole thing together with excerpts from books such as those mentioned above and your own memories, stories and comments. It will surprise you when you see what an interesting package you come up with! Present it to the family and they'll be so pleased they'll probably take you out to dinner. Be sure you send a Xerox copy of the whole bundle to your Historians. We can guarantee our undying gratitude!

* * * * *

FROM NEWSLETTER NO. 89-1
PAGES 5 & 6

Chapter I

Chanute Field - Rantoul, Ill.

On September 30, 1940, one month before the first draft registration, I quit my job at the Link-Belt Company in Indianapolis, and enlisted in the Air Force. I didn't want to be drafted because by enlisting you could pick your Branch, and I wanted to fly. Was sworn-in at Fort Benjamin Harrison then sent by train to Chanute. Part of the reporting instructions were, "don't bring any extra clothing, just the clothes you wear, and razor and tooth brush." Well, we were at Chanute for over a week before we were issued our first clothing. By that time my sox looked like base-ball sox (no heel or toes).

During boot camp we got a lot of shots, took a lot of tests, drills, ~~w~~apon training, etc. etc. I did fair pretty good in the mental tests area. My test grades were good enough that I could take any course in the Tech School that I wanted to. The two courses that required the highest test scores were, Weather and Link Trainer, and I could have taken either of those, but I wanted to fly and thought it would be to my advantage to take the Airplane Mechanics course. John Nutt, Gene Utterback and, I think, Brocks Wallis were a couple of the guys I remembered. I also remember that for the first three months Privates only got \$30.00 per month and out of that we had to pay for our laundry, PX checks and show tickets, and haircuts.

When we started to school we were moved to a large Tent City. Don't remember how many lived there but it was in the hundreds. Over Thanksgiving we were issued long weekend passes. During that weekend there was a severe thunderstorm with lots of wind that just about blew away Tent City. All of our belongings were gathered together and put in a big pile in one of the hangers. When we got back to camp we had to go to the hanger and dig our equipment out of the pile.

Airplane Mechanics course took 22 weeks to complete. I made good grades in about all phases of the course except one. Propellers. John Nutt had the same problem. Some of the phases were sorta basic and easy and some were pretty difficult. Engine test block was the most interesting one to me. Propellers came toward the end of the classes. Nutt and I both got called into the School Office and questioned why we thought we made poorer grades in Propellers than anything else. We both gave the same reason, even though we were talked to separately. We thought the Instructor no doubt knew what he was talking about, but he couldn't convey his thou-

ents to me in a manner that I could understand. About a week later we were both called into the office again. This time they talked to the two of us together. They asked if we would be interested in being transferred to permanent party at Chanute and being instructors in the Tech School. I turned down the offer because I really wanted to fly. Since John didn't live too far from Chanute he accepted the offer and became an Instructor.

On the second Saturday night in April Addie and I had our first date (a blind date). From then on, until I left Chanute, I hitch-hiked home every weekend.

At about this time I had my physical examination for The A. C. Cadets. One of the tests was a rule-type thing against the side of my nose with a card that had some printing on, they slid up and down this rule-type thing. When the card was on the left side of my nose I couldn't read it with my left eye, so I read it with my right eye. Well, that did it. They said I was near-sighted in my left eye and was washed out. I even told them what I had done but they wouldn't change their decision. That was the first eye exam I ever flunked.

When we were ready to graduate, they asked us to indicate three places we would like to be assigned. My first choice was the Philippines, second was Hawaii and third was anyplace in the U. S. Well I was assigned to the 39th Bomb Group at Salt Lake City. We were given about a two week delay-en-route and I think I was to report in Salt Lake City about July 4th. When I arrived at Salt Lake the 39th had moved to Spokane, Geiger Field.

Chapter II

Geiger Field - Spokane, WA

There were several from my class at Chanute who were assigned to the 39th B. G. We stayed at Salt Lake for two or three days and then went to Spokane via train. When we arrived at Spokane we were told that we would be bivouacked at Fort George Wright for a couple of weeks until Geiger field would have facilities to take care of us. I think one of the guys from my Chanute Class who came to the 39th BG was Brooks Wallis.

At this point the 39th only had several b-17s and they were landed at the Spokane municipal Airport. We pulled guard duty around the clock on the planes. The picture at right was taken after we had moved to Geiger, so it is easy to see we were not in plush quarters during our early assignment at Geiger.



GEIGER Field - July 1941

During this time the same people maintained and flew the planes. Usually we maintained them early in the day and flew them later in the day and night. Sometimes, if we had repairs to make, we worked pretty late into the night or the next morning. We were not only being trained as Mechanics, we were also training as Flight Engineers and as Gunners. We didn't go to gunnery schools. We shot skeet and trap and sometimes shot Air to Ground.

In the fall of 1941 I went back to Chanute for an eight week course Instrument Specialist. Also after I got back from Inst. Spec. school I helped out some as the Bombarriers practiced ~~or~~ a mock-up using a Norden sight. For sometime I had MR-2 assignments in S-2 area.

On December 6, 1941 I bought a new blue pin-striped suit, a tan topcoat and hat. I was going to come home on furlough starting the 10th of Dec. THEN THE NEXT DAY WAS PEARL HARBOR. About noon I got a telegram from Baldy, it said "money on the way - welcome home". Of course all furloughs were canceled.

During December, January and February we flew quite a few searches over the Pacific. Also about this time several crews were shipped out of Geiger. On three occas-

ions I was on the list to ship out, but for one reason or another I was scratched from the list. Someone or something must have been guiding my destiny.

On 3rd of February I was transferred to the 29th Reconnaissance Squadron of the 301st Bombardment Group, and was promoted to Sergeant.

 **BOYS
IN THE
SERVICE**

Sergeant Ben Webster is now stationed at Geiger Field, Spokane, Wash., according to word received by his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Homer Webster. He has been in the service 19 months, receiving his schooling at Chanute Field, Rantoul, Ill.

He recently was promoted to the rank of sergeant. He is an aircraft technician, acting as an instrumental specialist and engineer for one of the flying fortresses. He is stationed in the 29th Reconnaissance Squadron.

Huntington Herald-Press
@ March or April 1942



Brooks Wallis & Ben
Geiger Field Aug. or Sept
1941

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COMBAT SQUADRONS OF THE AIR FORCE—WORLD WAR II

419th BOMBARDMENT



LINEAGE. Constituted 29th Reconnaissance Squadron (Heavy) on 28 Jan 1942. Activated on 3 Feb 1942. Redesignated: 419th Bombardment Squadron (Heavy) on 22 Apr 1942; 419th Bombardment Squadron (Very Heavy) on 5 Aug 1945. Inactivated on 15 Oct 1945.

ASSIGNMENT 301st B.G.

STATIONS. Geiger Field, Wash, 3 Feb 1942; Alamogordo, NM, 28 May 1942

UD-11/22

When the 307th Bombardment Group (H) was activated on 15 April 1942 I was in the cadre that was assigned to the 35th Reconnaissance Squadron (Heavy). I remember M/S Gabriel Weisfeld, also in the 35th Recon. We were not in the 35th very long though (one week from 15th April to 22nd April) at which time the 35th was redesignated 424th Bombardment Squadron (heavy).

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COMBAT SQUAD

OF THE AIR FORCE—WORLD WAR II

424th BOMBARDMENT



AIRCRAFT. B-17, 1942; B-24, 1942-1945.

OPERATIONS. Sea search from Hawaii, Nov 1942-Jan 1943. Combat in Central Pacific, 22-23 Dec 1942 and 20 Jan-c. 4 Feb 1943; and in South and Southwest Pacific, 13 Feb 1943-11 Aug 1945.

CAMPAIGNS. Central Pacific; Guadalcanal; New Guinea; Northern Solomons;

LINEAGE. Constituted 35th Reconnaissance Squadron (Heavy) on 28 Jan 1942. Activated on 15 Apr 1942. Redesignated 424th Bombardment Squadron (Heavy) on 22 Apr 1942. Inactivated on 26 Dec 1945.

EMBLEM. A disc piped black, per fess debased engrailed, argent and azure, issuing from partition line a red sun rayed proper, surmounted by a black aerial bomb palewise, point to base. (Approved 25 Feb 1943.)

ASSIGNMENTS. 307th Bombardment Group, 15 Apr 1942-26 Dec 1945.

STATIONS. Geiger Field, Wash, 15 Apr 1942; Ephrata, Wash, 26 May 1942; Sioux City AAB, Iowa, 29 Sep-20 Oct 1942; Dillingham Field, TH, 2 Nov 1942 (operated from Midway, 22-24 Dec 1942; Funafuti, 20 Jan-c. 1 Feb 1943; Espiritu Santo, c. 6 Feb-c. 18 Mar 1943); Guadalcanal, 18 Mar 1943

Note: Six crews from the 424th landed at Cactus on 12th March, for 307th's first mission in the Solomons on 13th Feb. 1943.

(see pg. 29)

UD-1182

COPY

Ltr. Hq 307th Bomb Group (Hv), APO #719, 1 Jan 1945. Subj: "History of the
307th Bombardment Group (Hv)".

CHAPTER I - ACTIVATION

And so it came to be! The 307th Bombardment Group (Hv) was born on 15 April 1942, by authority of GO #24, Air Force Combat Command, Bolling Field, D. C., and GO #38, Hq Second Air Force, Spokane, Washington. The place was Geiger Field, Washington. Its parent was the 301st Bombardment Group (Hv). This made the 307th one of the first of the newly activated war time bombardment groups. We cannot lay claim to as illustrious and as long a history as the old time army bombardment groups, but we can lay claim to a longer and as illustrious history as any of the war time groups. I think that right at this point credit for much of our record must be given to Brigadier General William A. Matheny, commanding officer of the Group for most of its life.

From each of the 301st Group squadrons the following enlisted men were transferred to this group, the first to be assigned to the Group, and the first to start the ball rolling for the 5 squadrons of the 307th:

Hq & Hq Squadron - M/Sgt Wallace A. McKeller
370th Bomb Squadron - S/Sgt Robert W. Martin
371st Bomb Squadron - Sgt John B. Shaffer
372nd Bomb Squadron - Pvt Frank H. Spence
35th Reconnaissance Squadron - M/Sgt Gabriel Weisfeld

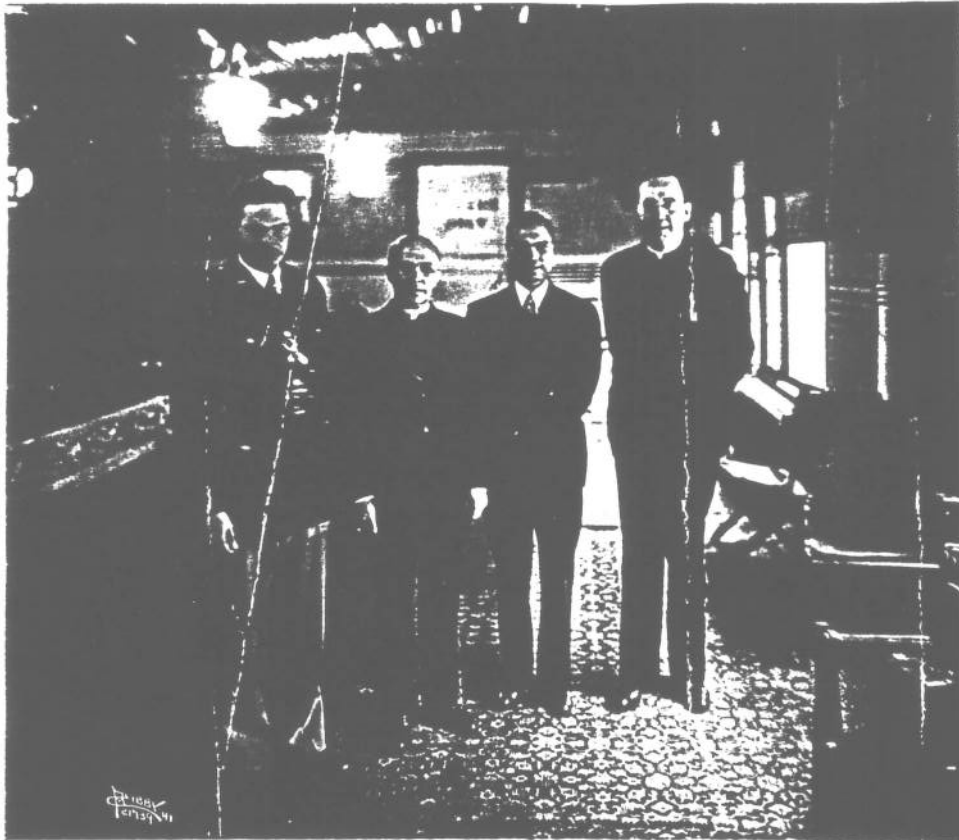
Of the five original enlisted men assigned to the 307th, two of them are still members of this organization.

Shortly after the activation of the Group, the Army Air Forces banned all reconnaissance squadrons in bombardment groups and the 35th Reconnaissance Squadron became the 424th Bombardment Squadron (Hv) by authority of GO #53, Hq Second Air Force, 27 April 1942.

CAPTAIN BILLY JARVIS was assigned to the Group on 1 May 1942, and, being the first and only Air Corps officer assigned to the Group, automatically assumed command, and during the next three weeks had his hands more than full in an attempt to set up Group and Squadron Headquarters. He has continued doing just that ever since, setting up camps and headquarters whenever the Group has moved. On this same date, the 307th was relieved from attachment to the 352nd Bomb Squadron, and really struck out for itself on its own still wobbly legs.

On 3 May 1942, the actual cadres furnished by the 301st Bomb Group, consisting of approximately 32 men per squadron, were transferred to the 307th and administrative and training functions commenced. The men furnished a basis for each section, orderly room, operations, mess, transportation, Tech and QM supply, communications, and engineering.

COPY



L. to R. Fr. (Lt.) George Gerner,
Most Rev. C. D. White (Bishop of Spokane)
C. F. Hamlin (Grand Knight), and
Fr. P. Reilly

While stationed at Geiger Field I took instructions from Fr. Gerner. I didn't say anything to Addie about it until after my First Communion. During my instructions, Fr. Gerner used the book "Fr. Smith instructs Jackson". Later when I went to work at OSV they still had thousands of those books. They were used for years during instructions for converts.

Also I joined the K of C at Spokane. Joe Manoski was in the class too. We were the only ones either of us knew. Joe was in the 301st B. G. and moved out from Geiger when I was transferred to the Cadre to form the 307th.

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Chapter 1

) The Birth of a Bomb Group

The 307th Bomb Group was among the first of the new groups organized after the Second World War began. It was born on paper January 28, 1942, and activated April 15, 1942, at Geiger Field, Spokane, Washington. The cadre came from the 301st Bomb Group. In the first few weeks of its existence the 307th grew slowly. For the most part, personnel to make up the air echelon—pilots, navigators, bombardiers, flight engineers, radio operators and gunners—were still in training in various schools throughout the states.

((UTS, p.5))

CHAPTER III

Ephrata, WA - Sioux City, Iowa

By 28 May 1942, 400 officers and enlisted men, with full equipment for a thirty day maneuver, must be moved to Ephrata, Washington, approximately 130 miles west of Geiger Field. Until that time 99% of the Group did not realize that such a place existed, but it took the 307th to really put the small community of 800 population on the map.

The purpose of this move was apparently two fold. First it was a training maneuver, and secondly, the powers that be were concentrating as much heavy bombardment as possible in the Northwest because of an expected attack on Alaska by Japan. It was necessary to have as many equipped bases as possible ready for the movement of planes and combat crews.

After two days of furiously drawing supplies and equipment and getting the trains loaded, bright and early on the morning of May 28th, the train pulled out on schedule for Ephrata. This was the first of many hurried movements this organization was to experience.

Upon arrival at Ephrata, it was found that in reality the Group had rushed out there to stand on alert against a possible air attack or land invasion of the west coast or Alaska. The Group, not having any planes or pilots, was furnished 16 combat crews and planes from various air bases of the Second Air Force, eight B-17s from Tucson Air Base, four from Wendover Air Base, and four from Salt Lake Air Base.

((307th, p.3))

On June 6th, the Commanding General of the Second Air Force called Colonel Matheny to a meeting at Fort George Wright. Everybody again knew something was in the air, but it took the Colonel's return to really bring the shock home. Yes, Ephrata was the permanent station and new home of the 307th Bomb Group. It is quite certain that there was not one individual overjoyed at the thought, but each and everyone pitched in to make it home and as habitable as possible.

((307th, p.4))

My Military Specialties record indicates four months with MOS 750, LINE CHIEF as S/Sgt. I am sure I was promoted to Tech. Sgt. as soon as we went to Ephrata. I was Line Chief as well as flying a lot to train and check-out Engineers.

While at Ephrata, I got a telegram from home advising that Roy Platt was in the hospital at Soap Lake (couple of miles from Ephrata). I went to see Roy and advised the folks that Roy was doing fine and would be back to duty soon. Roy's folks really appreciated this and Roy and I became

good friends. Roy was a truck driver in the 372nd Sqd. While we were at Ephrata and at Sioux City we saw each other quite a bit, but of course at Hawaii we were each at different fields. They after I left Hawaii it was quite a while till the 372nd got down to Guadalcanal.



The address of Technical Sergeant Ben Webster is 424 Bomb Squadron, Ephrata Air Base, Ephrata, Wash. Sergeant Webster has recently been promoted from the rank of staff sergeant to technical sergeant. He has been in the army for almost two years and took his training in the air corps at Chanute Field. He was stationed at Spokane, Wash., for almost a year and was transferred to the Ephrata air base four weeks ago.

Herald Press

During the four months that I was Line Chief at Ephrata I was a pretty busy guy. We had B-17s and later converted to B-24s so all the Maintenance Mechanics and the Flight Engineers had to learn and be retrained to the different planes. Also we were growing by leaps and bounds in numbers of personnel in the Group. Looking back it is amazing we did as well as we did. As Sam Walker wrote in his book "UP THE SLOT" Ephrata was a good training location for us because it really taught us to live and tolerate living under very adverse conditions.

I think it was about August that M/Sgt. Wheels joined our Squadron, and he became our Line Chief. This was about the time too that the maintenance and flying personnel were divided in that you were Ground Personnel if you did maintenance, and you were Flight Personnel if you flew. This was what I had been waiting for for a long time. Most of the Personnel in the 307th after that time never knew anything different than the division of the personnel between Ground and flight.

It was about this time too that Flight Comanders were assigned ((307th - p.8)) and Sanny was one of them. I was assigned to Sanny's crew from then on. From then on, until we left the States we were training other Flight Engineers, and other crew members. Joe Herzog was our first Asst. Engineer and he was a good one. In fact, it wasn't long

before Joe was checking out engineers too. With more flying personnel arriving and with such few planes available, the more experienced flying personnel did lots of flying day and night.

The scenery at Ephrata didn't provide any spectacular background as is evident in these following pictures.



Mess. Sgt.(?)
Ben, & Geo. Deppe



Bill Stearnes and Yours Truly
On 2-13-43 Stearnes went down
with Lt. Traeger's crew on our
first mission out of the Canal.



Of course its me !

17 August 1942 was also the day on which 12 officers (4 engine pilots) were assigned as flight commanders. They were: CAPTAINS KREBS, BENSON, ALEXANDER, LUDWING, BILLINGS, LIPPINCOTT, AND 1ST LTS SANNY, CARPENTER, NEWMAN, MILLEDGE, LUND, and BILGER. Many of these men were later to become squadron commanders and operations officers.

((307th, p.8))

5 October 1942 was a memorable and sad day for the Group, especially the 424th Bomb Squadron. Lt Sanny and his crew took off on a regular training flight. When about fifty miles from the base, motor trouble developed. Lt Sanny immediately gave orders for all to bail out. The four officers and one enlisted man who remained with the ship made a safe belly landing in a plowed field. The belly of the ship caved in and LT JAMES B. SLEIGH, navigator and LT HOWARD C. AUSTIN, bombardier, were killed by the impact. Lts Sleigh and Austin not only were popular with the other officers and enlisted men but were also two of the most promising young officers of the 424th Bomb Squadron and their loss was keenly felt and mourned by all. Lt Sanny and the remainder of his crew were shaken up somewhat, but after a few days rest and recuperation in the hospital they were again able to carry on. This was our first casualty. It made everyone realize for the first time the dangers of our assigned mission.

((307th, p.9))

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:

Second Lieut. James B. Sleigh, 23, of Orange, Mass.

Second Lieut. Howard C. Austin, 26, of Lincoln, Neb.

The injured:

First Lieut. M. J. Sanny of University Heights, O.

Second Lieut. William H. Jones of Houston, Tex.

Staff Sergeant Joe G. Herzog of Stanton, Conn.

Staff Sergeant J. S. Hansen of Pocatello, Idaho.

Staff Sergeant Roy F. Beyler of Fish Haven, Idaho.

Sergeant Alfred H. Williams of Linwood, N. C.

Sergeant Paul L. Berry, Stephensburg, Ky.

All survivors, including Lieuts. Sanny and Jones, who were in the

plane when it crashed, suffered minor injuries, officers of the base reported. The assignments of the crewmen were not revealed.

Five Use Chutes

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.

Perasso Bros. funeral home Monday night sent the body of Lieut. Sleigh to Athol, Mass., and the body of Lieut. Austin to Lincoln.

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

BOMBER

(Continued on Page 7.—Col. 6.)

May 1988: Alfred Williams brought an original news clipping of Sanny's crash-landing while we were stationed at Sioux City, (copy above).

I note a couple of discrepancies in this article:

1. This notices indicates five men bailed out and four rode it down. 307th History, and UTS indicate five rode it down and four bailed out.

2. This article indicates Joe Herzog was from Stanton Conn., but I am sure Joe was from Texas.

The article above indicates that the story was continued on page 7. Col 6., under heading Bomber, but Williams did not have the clipping from page 7, so I don't know what the rest of the story was.



Our first fatal crash. Flying out of Sioux City, Max Sanny lost all four engines but managed to walk away from the landing. However, James Sleigh and Howard Austin were crushed beneath the top turret.

(5th Reunion Book, pg.100)

8/89

10-B

In spite of the pleasant surroundings, soon after we reached Sioux City we got a shocking reminder that flying airplanes is no parlor game even under the best conditions. On October 5, Captain Max Sanny, a 424th Squadron flight leader, and his crew took off on a routine training mission. About fifty miles from the base they began having engine trouble. Sanny told the crew he was going to try to save the plane by making a wheels-up landing in a field but those who wanted to jump could do so. Four men parachuted safely and Sanny made the belly landing in a plowed field near Wayne, Nebraska. Sanny and his co-pilot William Jones and engineer Joe Herzog were shook up but not seriously injured. Tragically, the belly collapsed and navigator James B. Sleigh and bombardier Howard C. Austin were killed. They were the first fatalities in the 307th Bomb Group.

((UTS, p.22))

This is another example that someone above was controlling my destiny. I was flying with other crews, checking out flight engineers, I think. Alfred ^{Williams} was one of the men who bailed out, and I think Paul Wheeler (Killer Diller) bailed out also.

Then the news came. Late Saturday afternoon, 17 October 1942, Colonel Matheny received a long distance phone call. The Group was on its way overseas. This time there was no two weeks notice. By Tuesday morning, 20 October 1942, all ground and air echelon personnel had to be speeding to a West Coast port of embarkation. The rush and confusion of packing in the ensuing two days had never been equalled before and by Tuesday morning all baggage and equipment were loaded aboard the trains and planes. Combat planes, thirty-five (35) of them, were rounded up in a day's time and were waiting to be flown to their destination.

It was the old army game over again. "Hurry up and wait". Because when the coast was reached, it was learned we had three days to prepare for the future. In those three days we had to get all personnel fully equipped, have physical examinations, prepare rosters, and take care of many more details involving time and men.

((307th, p.10))

During this waiting time we also were issued a 45 cal. pistol, a hunting knife. We all had the opportunity to see a chaplain too. He gave me a copy of the New Testament. I didn't think about it at the time, but before I would get back to the States I would have read it almost completely, twice.

My records indicate we left the U.S. on October 27th, 1942 and landed at Hawaii on the 28th. I do remember that it was about midnight when we left and that we flew under the Golden Gate Bridge, instead of over it.

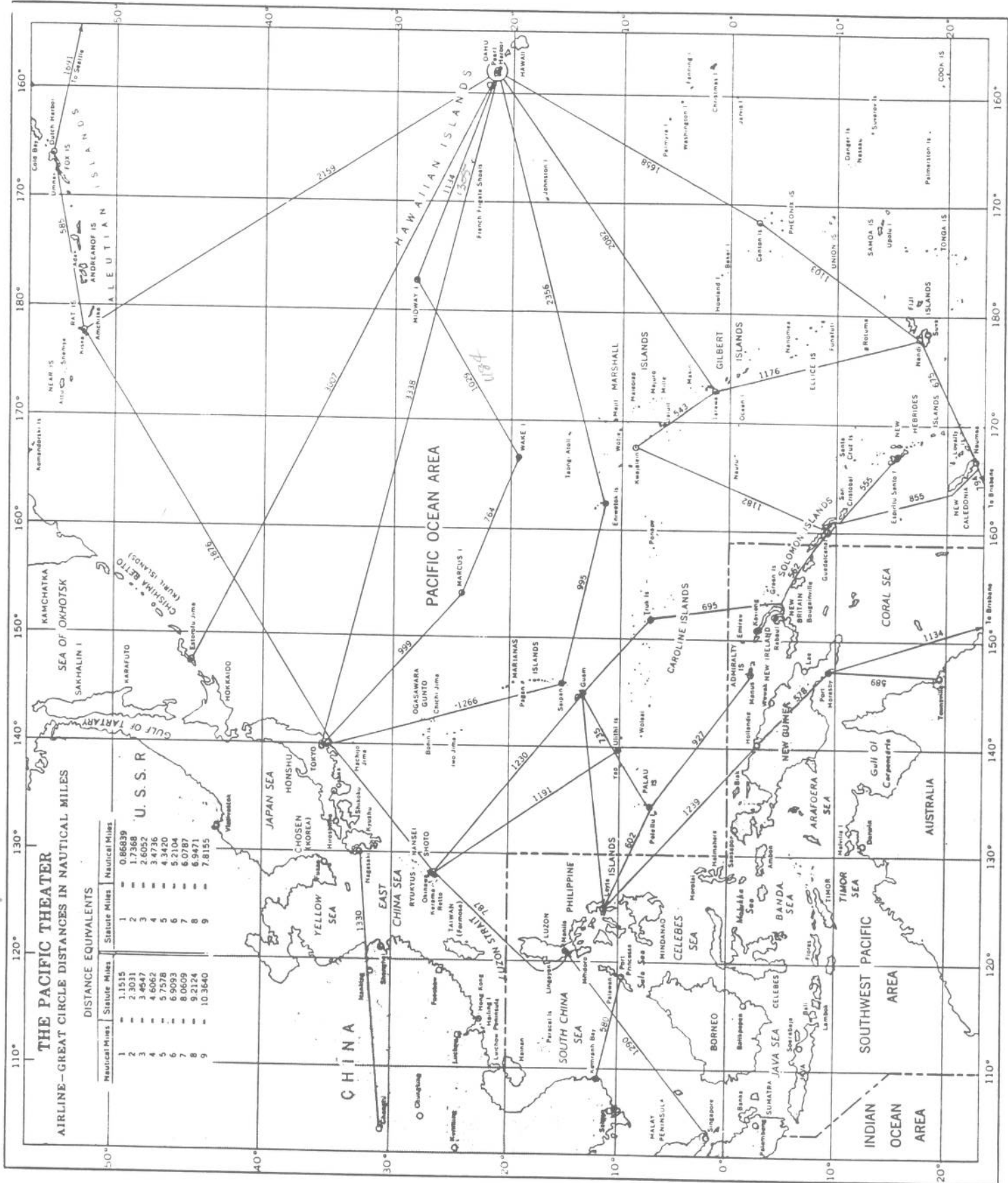
I talked to Addie by phone not too long before we took off, and told her I was going to go eat a piece of pineapple pie. Per the code we had worked out, if I was going to Hawaii, I would talk about pineapple. Later we had to work out a new code though because I had never heard of the place we ended up.



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THE PACIFIC THEATER
AIRLINE - GREAT CIRCLE DISTANCES IN NAUTICAL MILES

DISTANCE EQUIVALENTS

Nautical Miles	Statute Miles	Nautical Miles
1	1.1515	1
2	2.3031	2
3	3.4547	3
4	4.6062	4
5	5.7578	5
6	6.9094	6
7	8.0609	7
8	9.2125	8
9	10.3640	9

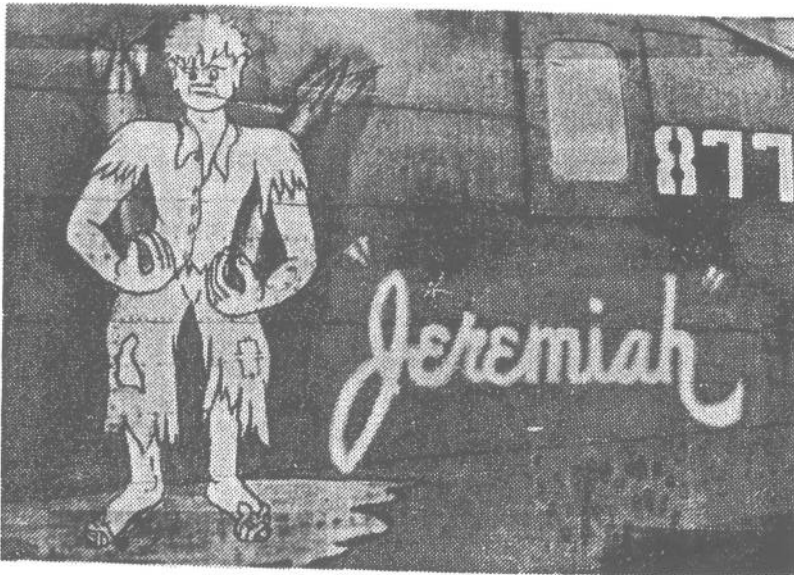
U. S. S. R.

Prepared by the Hydrographic Office, U.S. NAVY DEPT., Washington, D. C.

Chapter IV

Hawaii

Except for a big storm, soon after we left the States, the flight to Hawaii, for our crew, was pretty much uneventful and JEREMIAH purrrrrrrrd like a kitten all the way. All the planes landed at Hickam Field, except Lt. Guskey's plane which was never heard from. After a few days at Hickam each squadron went to a different field. The 424th went to Mokuleia, which was on the northwest coast of Oahu, and surrounded by sugar cane fields.



Actually we started another phase of training now for the next couple of months. We started to pull a lot of search missions, did some formation-flying and our crew checked out a lot of pilots and co-Pilots. By now our crew (Sanny's) was established as Squadron Crew and we led all the formation missions.

When we were checking out pilots and co-pilots we shot a lot of landings and take-offs. One day while doing this, Sanny told the pilot to get out of the co-pilots seat, and leave Sgt. Webster in there. The pilot sorta laughed and said "sure."

Sanny said, "I really mean it. Sgt. Webster is going to make some take-offs and landings." Then I almost laughed because this was not preplanned. So, I made three take-offs and landings, and did a pretty good job too. Of course on all the missions I had made up to this time, I was always standing between the pilot and co-pilot for all takeoffs and landings, and many times assisted one way or another.

Somewhere around the middle of December our crew was picked to fly a fuel-consumption flight to Midway. I am pretty sure Col. Matheny flew with us on this mission. Don't remember if we were the only crew on this mission or not, but I think we were. (There is no mention of this flight in UP The SLOT.)

Then came the Wake Island Raid ((307th, p. 13, 14)) and ((UTS. p. 53 55)), took off from Midway Dec. 23rd, bombed Wake Dec. 25th and landed back at Midway Dec. 24th (crossed the date line). Matheny was the first plane over the target, and his target was the runway. We were the third plane over the target and our target was the barracks. I think there were two rows of three barracks each. It was a moonlight night and we went in pretty low, maybe 1,000 to 1,500 feet. I watched out my open

waist window position and all our bombs landed right on target. Our bomb load consisted of 500 # bombs and fragmentation clusters. I could see Japs running out of the barracks.

Per ((UTS, p.56)) a photo crew took off Dec. 28 from Midway to take pictures of the damage that had been done to Wake Island. It is thought that the crew probably got the pictures but must have gotten lost in the storm on the way back to Midway, and never made it back. Bob Dunkle, one of the radio operators on that crew, was a good friend of mine, and is in the picture below. I think the picture was taken in November 1942.



Back Row: L to R: F. Robertson, _____, Weilbacker, _____,
Front Row: L to R: F. WARD , A. WILLIAMS , P. Wheeler, B. Webster, R. Dunkle

The newspaper clippings pretty well cover the Wake raid and the ceremony, and it is easy to see the US used the media well for a morale booster for everyone.

Along toward the middle of December it suddenly occurred to various personnel, who had no knowledge of the facts, that something was in the wind. Colonel Matheny, Major Green, and Major Birchard were continually holding conferences with the squadron commanders, operations officers, S-2 officers, and engineering officers. All meetings were held behind locked doors. Events finally reached a peak, and on 21 December 1942 twenty-seven (27) B-24s took off for Midway. On 24 December 1942, 26 out of the 27 again took off for a surprise raid on Wake Island. At this time the raid of the 307th was considered the longest mass formation raid of the war - 2,070 nautical miles for the round trip.

((307th, pl3))

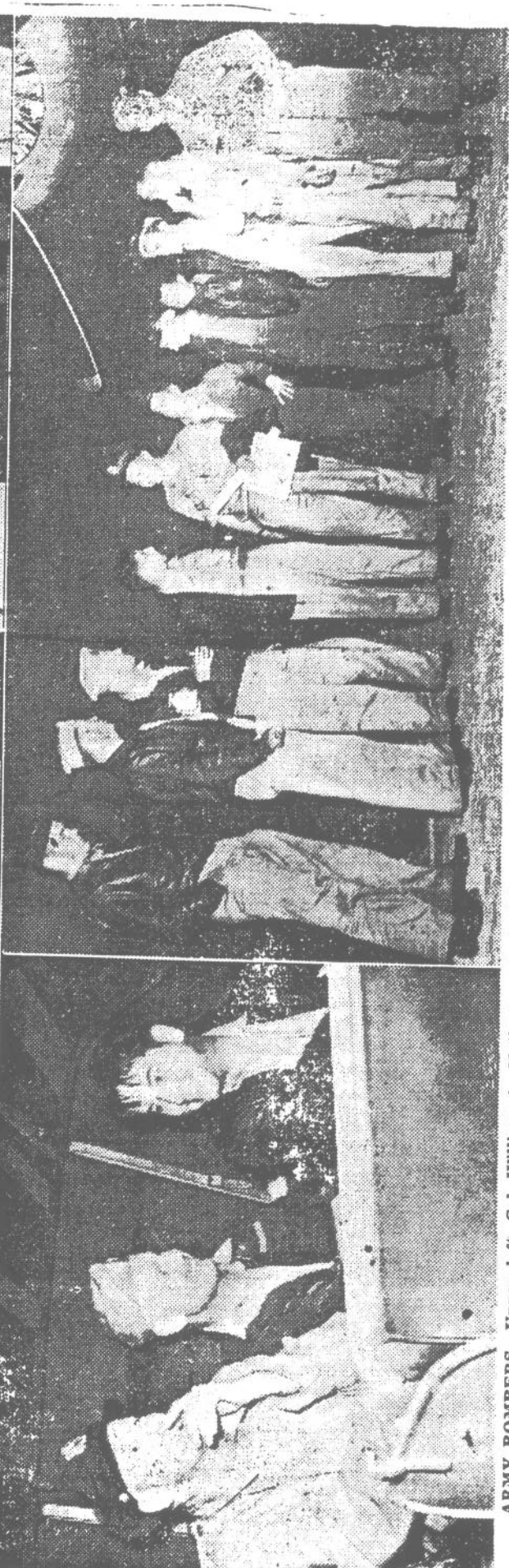
The runways on Wake were plastered with bombs. All 26 of the planes returned safely to Midway, landing in a pea soup fog without a mishap. It proved that the combat crews had learned their lessons well. On their first mass formation flight all planes landed without a scratch in the worst kind of flying weather. On Christmas Eve, Hawaiian time, the 27 planes returned to their home bases with all personnel aboard. The celebrations on that Christmas Eve were numerous and exceedingly vociferous.

And so ended the year of 1942. It had its ups and downs but the Group had come a long way, and had profited by its many and varied happenings. Our operational losses had been low - two full crews and parts of other ones. We had gained invaluable experience flying searches out of Hawaii. Our navigators had more than their share of over water flying. It is felt in the Group that our three months stay in Hawaii was literally a life saver. Our combat losses in the days to come were kept to a minimum by the experience gained there.

The new year started out with a bang. On New Year's Day, Admiral Nimitz, Commander in Chief of the Pacific area, awarded medals to all who took part in the Wake Island raid. A formal parade was held in front of the operations building at Hickam Field in honor of those receiving awards. Colonel Matheny, Major Jurkens, Captain Billings, Major Coxwell, Major Smith, and Captain Krieg were all awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for leading the flight. The remainder of the personnel received the Air Medal. The rest of the month weather held flying to a minimum.

((307th, p. 14))

These Are Some Of The Men Who Raided Wake Island

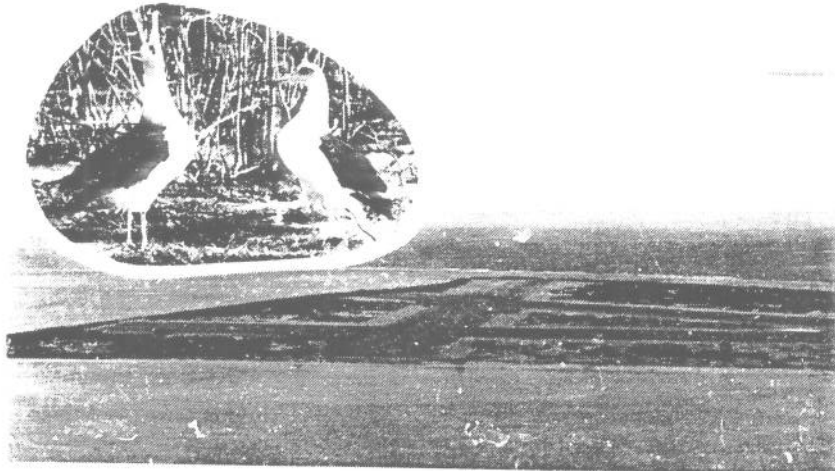
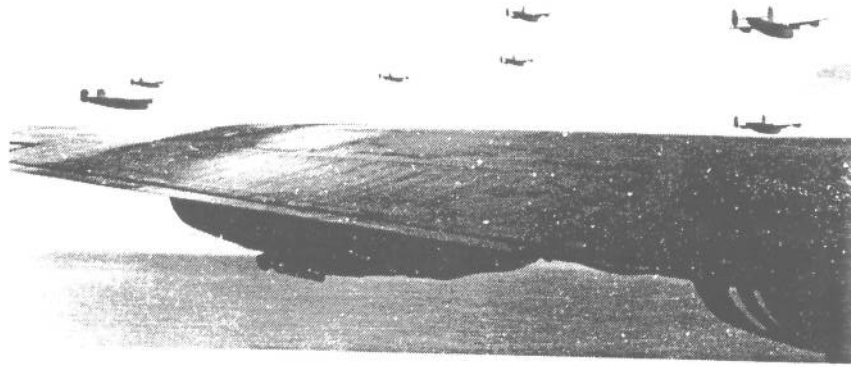


ARMY BOMBERS—Upper left, Col. William A. Matheny, who led the army fliers on the Wake raid, is shown "briefing" the crews before takeoff. Upper right, Brig. Gen. Howard K. Ramey, left, congratulates Col. Matheny on the successful foray. In the background are Col. Archie Hanna and Col. Jay Rutledge of the Army Air Force. Lower left, "all smiles" after the successful termination of the Wake raid are, left to right, Gen. Ramey, Col. Matheny, and Olen W. Clements, correspondent who went along on the flight. Lower right, Col. Matheny's crew after arriving home safely. (Official U. S. Navy Photos).

Watching Bombers Leave For Wake Raid



TENSE MOMENT—Col. Archie Hanna (left) of the Seventh Air Force and Brig. Gen. Howard K. Ramey, commanding all army bomber units in the Mid-Pacific area, watch their bombers take off in the evening mist for the raid on Wake Dec. 23-24. (Official U. S. Navy Photo).



One of our squadrons returns to Midway following the first Wake mission.



January 1, 1943. All four squadrons form up for the medal ceremony which closely followed the first Wake mission.

MIDWAY/WAKE

Sky is covered by 307th planes on the way to Midway and the historic first strike on Wake Island. Midway's gooney birds were model for the 371st Squadron insignia, Midway airstrip looms ahead of our planes.

JAPANESE SAY FLYING FORTS MADE ATTACK

No Confirmation From Other Sources; Buna Fingers Closing

BERLIN, Dec. 25 (Broadcast Recorded by United Press in New York).—A DNB news agency dispatch from Tokyo today quoted a Japanese headquarters communique as stating that American planes attacked Wake island Wednesday.

The DNB dispatch said the Japanese communique stated that a dozen United States planes approached the island from the direction of Midway.

Japanese troops were said to have shot down four of the planes and damaged six and "the remainder turned tail," according to DNB.

The dispatch said the American planes started fires at four points and killed one man and injured four.

Army sources here today had no comment on the foregoing dispatch.

Passenger on Bomber over Wake Tells of Dive on Target Area

Japs Caught Flat-Footed by Attack

(Correspondent Olen W. Clements represented all press associations on this special assignment. He rode in the lead plane.)

By OLEN W. CLEMENTS
ABOARD A BOMBER OVER WAKE ISLAND, Dec. 24 — In a few seconds 76,000 pounds of bombs will drop on Wake island. Standing behind Colonel William A. Matheny of Carrington, N. D., and Co-Pilot Lt. E. H. Carey of Gridley, Calif., I watch

that tiny island grow larger and larger over the nose of the big bomber.

It is the first second of the day before Christmas in the Eastern hemisphere. The colonel flips on his radio and says:

"This is it, boys. I'm going in and get those yellow bastards."

He noses the bomber over and down we come hell bent for leather. The wind shrieks outside the cabin. A piece of tape on the outside of the window tears loose and flaps and flaps and flaps. Down, down, down.

Our eyes are glued on the hallowed island where American marines made history last December in their heroic 16 day last stand,

38 Tons of Bombs Dropped on Island

Wonder when the Japs are going to open up with their ack-ack. Hope they won't. The lead plane is a good target and the Japs won't be jumpy from our bombs.

Down, down, down.

Still no ack-ack.

Hope they cut loose with everything they've got. Anything to break this suspense.

Island getting bigger and bigger with each tick of the clock.

Hope there are not any Amer- (Continued on Page 6, Col. 5)

Passenger on Bomber Tells of Raid on Wake

(Continued from Page 1)

ican prisoners down there. This plane and dozens behind it are going to rain death on that island.

Japs Dead to World

Still no ack-ack. It's 40 seconds past midnight. The island is dead to the world. May never wake up. What's the matter with them?

Just beyond the colonel's head the altimeter and speed indicator are really hopping. She's burning the air now. Funny feeling in my stomach. It's 45 seconds past midnight now. Still hurtling down.

The colonel shoves the wheel further forward, kicks the rudder and the bomber sways crazily.

Maybe we've been hit.

No. That's a new kind of dive the army has perfected.

It's 50 seconds now. Still no anti-aircraft fire or signs of life on Wake.

Where's my parachute! Forgot to put it on! I clutch feebly for my Mae West life jacket. Can't swim a lick. Too late to get my parachute now. Hope we don't get hit.

Glad no guns spouting upward now. The target looms bigger and bigger. It is a long barracks.

One minute after midnight. What a surprise package the Japs are going to get pretty soon now.

Speed Is Terrific

On and on we plunge. The speed is terrific, the wind mad.

Thinking about friends and relatives. Wish I was a little boy and I wouldn't be in this trap. Why did I ever get in this weird business? Wish I was a grocery clerk back in Texas, San Francisco, New York, Atlanta, anywhere but here.

Maybe we'll make it.

Suddenly the colonel levels her off.

Wham! Wham! Wham!

Our bombs go off below. The bomber shoots out over the water. My knees almost collapse. It's over and we are still alive. Every bomb hit the target fair and square.

The colonel sees it, too, and yells:

"Hot Dog!"

Elated. Start to pound the colonel on the back and suddenly remember his rank and fact just met him a few hours ago.

Fires Getting Bigger

Now for home. Boys behind are sure filling the atmosphere with steel. Fires get bigger and more numerous.

Japs must be having a helluva time.

Up comes some ack-ack. It's wild. Missed us by miles. Bum shooting.

Fires fading out now in distance.

Nobody says much of anything except top turret gunner Sgt. E. J. Bislew of Racine, Wis. He miffed. Didn't get a shot at a Zero and he won't have anything to tell his 61-year-old son after the war.

Reach for a cigarette. Suddenly realize can't smoke for the engineer is transferring the extra gas-o-line and there is too much danger of an explosion.

Munch a good roast beef sandwich instead. Drink pineapple juice, too. Everybody has a go at the food.

Stand around a while and watch the moon and the stars and the beautiful clouds below.

Yawn, getting sleepy. Stretch out on the floor of the flight deck and begin to pound my ear.

Good sleep. Awaken to find I am the only wounded man on the whole raid. Got my ear tangled up with a piece of metal on the deck floor. Tiny cut in front of the right ear lobe.

Enclosed in Fog

Getting close to the base now. Foggiest place I've ever seen. Can't see 10 feet. Hitting that base is going to be some job, hardest of the night. Hope Captain F. Krieg of Oak Harbor, Wash., does

his stuff. The navigator on such a trip has a terrific responsibility. Only the moon and the stars to guide him, too. These planes float on the water all of 20 seconds. Where's that exit, just in case?

Time we were letting down. Past time!

Still no place to land. Where's those lights? Can't see any.

The colonel, turns on the landing lights and vainly tries to see the water below. It's impossible. Getting lower and lower. Still can't find the horizon.

Nervous as hell. Sweating, too. The air is full of bombers and none of these kids even knew how to fly a plane a year ago. Suppose we collide in this fog.

Down, down, down. Still no place to land.

Finally at 200 feet we see the water. The colonel holds her there and the bomber hurtles on in the fog. Oh, where is that base.

Suddenly there is a light ahead. It gets bigger and bigger. There's that base.

Oh, boy, safe!

Wake Attack Only Sample, Nimitz Says

Admiral Decorates Six Fliers, Praises Unity Of Armed Forces In Operations Against Foe

The U. S. Army raid on Wake the night of Dec. 23-24 "is only a sample of things to come," Admiral Chester W. Nimitz, commander in chief of the Pacific Fleet, declared yesterday morning at Hickam Field, headquarters of the Seventh Air Force, where he presented awards to six participants in the raid. The admiral praised Brig. Gen. Howard Ramey of the Army Air Force for the planning of the foray, and Col. William A. Matheny, who led the raid, for its brilliant execution.

"I am glad to have this opportunity of starting the New Year by making recognition of a splendidly executed mission by our Army Air Forces," Admiral Nimitz said.

Surprise to Japs

"Without warning, on the morning before Christmas, the Japanese on Wake Island were suddenly presented with 75,000 pounds of aerial bombs, most of which struck and damaged military targets. All of our planes attacked from low altitudes and returned to base on schedule, with neither planes nor personnel harmed by the enemy artillery which was finally awakened by the visitors.

"To me this operation epitomizes the complete unity with which all fighting forces in the Pacific—the Army, the Navy, the Marine Corps and the Coast Guard—are coordinating their strength and skill against the enemy.

To 'Drive Jap Back'

"This raid, and others like it, will not alone eject the enemy from Wake. Such raids will, however, serve notice on the enemy, as well as give assurance to our own countrymen, that we have the men with the spirit, resolution and skill to handle the tools that are going to drive the Japs back to his own islands.

"To those of us in the theater of operations, there have been vexatious delays in getting ready. The building of bases, the transport of troops and material are but a few of the tasks that had to be done before we could undertake such an operation as this raid on Wake.

"Let the enemy take such consolation as he may from the thought that this raid is only a sample of things to come.

"For the preparation and planning of this operation Brigadier General Ramey deserves great credit.

(Continued on Page 6, Col. 4)

Raid 'Sample'

(Continued from Page 1)

credit. For its efficient execution we thank Colonel Matheny and his flight group. It is heartening to know that thousands of other young airmen of the armed services are eager and ready to carry out similar missions.

Common Front

"The courage, determination and airmanship of Colonel Matheny and his officers and men indicate the response which we can expect from the personnel of all services maintaining a common front against the enemy in the Pacific.

"Made of exactly the same stuff are two destroyer skippers and two submariners who are to receive awards this morning. One, Commander Orville Gregor, took his destroyer, the Aaron Ward, under the very guns of an enemy battleship to deliver torpedo attack in the third Battle of Savo Island. His ship was hit by a salvo of 14-inch shells and raked by cruiser fire, but she lives to continue the fight. All of you know the story of the seaplane tender McFarland. The determination and resourceful tenacity of her captain, Lt. Comdr. John Alderman, is an inspiration to the rest of us.

"It is the American way of life that produces such men as these. It is their individual enterprise, initiative and common courage that are our principal weapons for victory.

"We are thankful for the valorous devotion of our brothers-in-arms who have stopped the enemy during the precarious months of the past year.

"The New Year brings heartening assurance. We are now getting the trained personnel and the equipment for our tremendous task. We have the unity, the power and the will to destroy the enemy."

Wake Island Raiders Rewarded by Admiral

Admiral C. W. Nimitz, commander in chief of the U. S. Pacific Fleet and Pacific Ocean Areas, presented medals yesterday morning at Hickam Field to six Army fliers who took part in the aerial attack on Wake Island, on the night of December 23-24, and to three officers and one chief petty officer of the Navy.

Admiral Nimitz presented Distinguished Flying Crosses to Colonel William A. Matheny, leader of the force of Army bombers which attacked Wake,

and to five subordinate leaders of the force of Army bombers which attacked Wake, and to four subordinate leaders under his command. Navy Crosses were awarded to the Navy officers and a Silver Star Medal to the chief petty officer.

Following are the awards presented:

Navy Cross

Commander Orville F. Gregory, USN, of LaJolla, California, commanding officer of the destroyer *Aaron Ward* which participated in the third Battle of Savo Island on the night of November 12-13. His daring determination and extraordinary seamanship aided materially in inflicting great havoc and damage on an enemy force, superior both in numbers and fire power.

Lieutenant Commander John C. Alderman, USN, of Portland, Ore., commanding officer of the USS *McFarland*, a converted destroyer, which acted as a cargo and troop carrier, escort vessel and seaplane tender in the Solomons campaign. He brought vitally needed supplies into Guadalcanal on October 16 and the stern of his ship was blown off in an attack by dive bombers. Through his excellent seamanship the *McFarland* will return to action.

Lieutenant Commander John B. Azer, USN, of West Chicago, Illinois, who commanded a submarine in an aggressive and successful war patrol in enemy-controlled waters. His submarine sank one freighter of 9,500 tons and damaged another 18,000 tons of enemy shipping.

Distinguished Flying Cross

The citations of the following officers read alike:

Colonel William A. Matheny, U. S. Army Air Corps, of Carrrington, N. D.; Major Jonathan E. Coxwell, U. S. Army Air Corps, of Billings, Mont.; Major Francis A. Smith, U. S. Army Air Corps, of North East, Md.; Major Edward A. Jurkens, U. S. Army Air Corps, of Sterling, Ill.; Captain Dana B. Billings, U. S. Army Air Corps, of Ripon, Wisconsin, and Capt. Philip Kreig, U. S. Army Air Corps, Oak Harbor, Wash.:

"He led his command on a bombardment attack against a strongly held enemy base, (Wake Island), inflicting great damage to personnel and material. By his superior airmanship, courage and determination he was chiefly instrumental in the success of a most difficult operation."

Silver Star Medal

Daniel J. Schultz, Chief Gunner's Mate, USN, of Albert Lea, Minn., who participated in an aggressive and successful war patrol in enemy controlled waters as a crew member of a submarine. His efforts aided his commanding officer to press home all opportunities for attack to successful

Sergeant Marks Bomb Dropped on Wake for Dad in Huntington

Ben Webster Decorated for Part Taken in Raid

A 500 pound bomb dropped on Wake island at midnight December 23 was marked "Baldy" for Homer Webster, manager of the Why store, and was dropped by his son, Technical Sergeant Ben Webster, who has been presented with a distinguished flying cross for his participation in the raid. "I know that this bomb hit home," he wrote.

The raid "was the longest bombing mission ever planned for the size of the load we carried and it was 100 percent successful. We didn't lose a plane. I am sending an arming wire of one of the bombs that our ship dropped on this mission," he said.

"I am sure that the Japs I promised Dad are accounted for a hundred-fold but I hope to be able to account for a lot more before I come back."

He enclosed several clippings from the Honolulu Advertiser of January 2 which told of the raid in which 76,000 pounds of bombs were dropped on Wake Island, where American marines made history December 1941 in their heroic 16-day last stand.

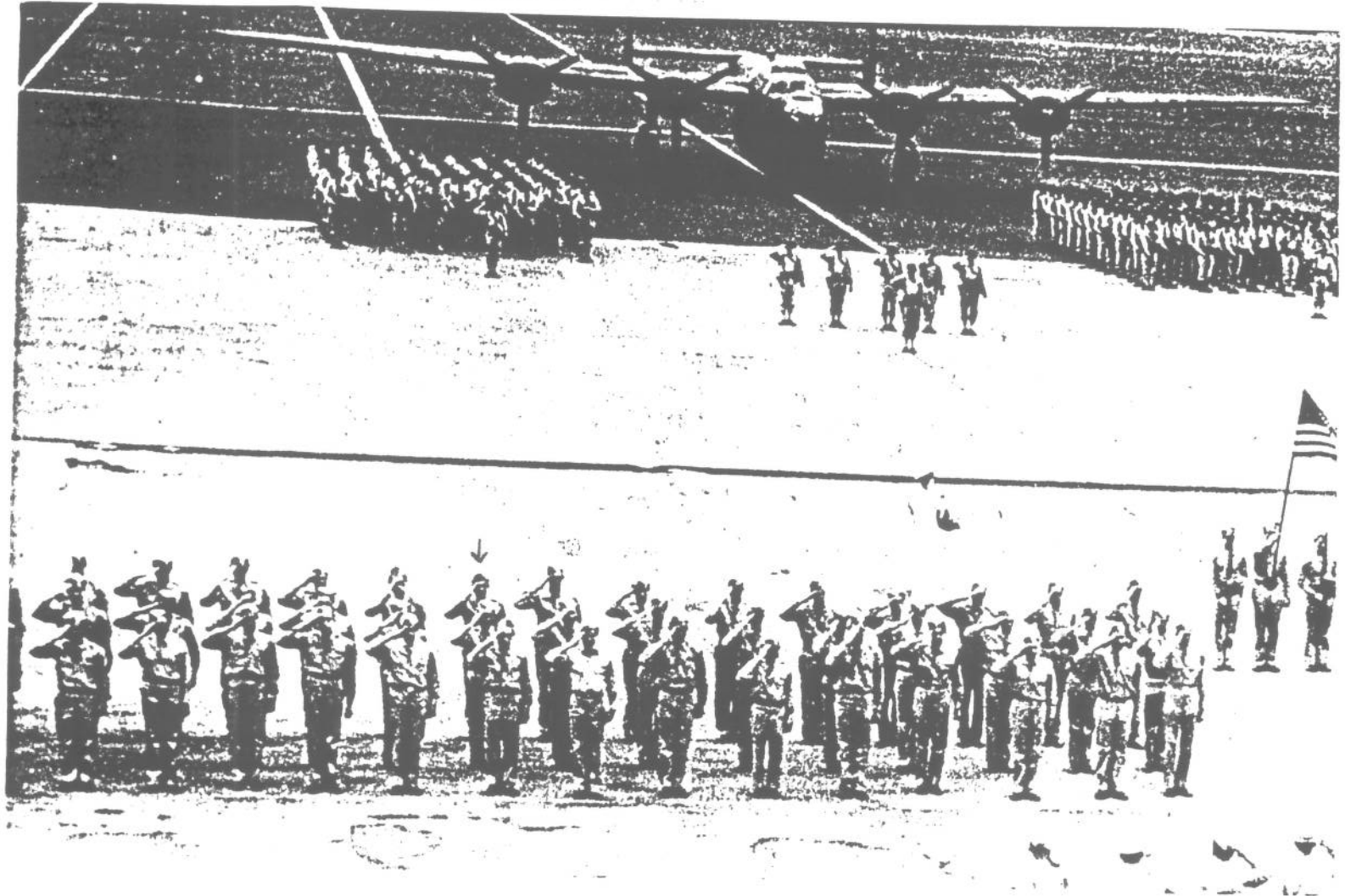
Ben wrote that it was a thrill to see the hallowed island beneath the plane and to have such a target. There was little anti-aircraft fire, but there was enough with the searchlights to give Sergeant Webster his baptism of fire. All of the planes attacked from low altitudes and returned to base on schedule with neither planes nor personnel harmed by the enemy artillery.

Webster is a gunner and senior mechanic. He entered service September, 1940, and received his training at Chanute Field, Rantoul, Ill., and at the army air base at Spokane, Wash. He was an instructor at the new base at Ephrata, Wash., and was stationed for a short period at Sioux City, Iowa. On October 25 he left the United States and has been flying on a number of missions, but the Wake Island raid was the first mass project in which he participated.

His present address is T. Sgt. B. Webster, 15059356, APO 953, Care Postmaster, San Francisco, Calif. An account of the presentation of the medal will be issued at a later date by the army.

Correction: Received the Air Medal, not the DFC.

((H-P, Jan. 1943))



The Headquarters Seventh Air Force, office of the air force commander's release of February 12 was received Friday telling that Technical Sergeant Ben Webster was awarded an air medal at Hickam Field, T. H., on New Year's day. The medals were presented by Admiral Chester W. Nimitz, commander-in-chief of the Pacific fleet units, and Lt. Gen. Delos C. Emmons, Maj. Gen. Willis H. Hale, Brig. Gen. Robert L. Douglass, and Brig. Gen. Howard K. Ramey. Sergeant Webster was a member of a bomber crew that raided Jap-held Wake Island, December 24, 1942.

((H-7, Feb. 12, 43))

HEADQUARTERS SEVENTH AIR FORCE

OFFICE OF THE AIR FORCE COMMANDER

A. P. O. #953

(B16)

12 February 1943

SUBJECT: News Release

TO : Huntington Herald Press, Huntington, Ind.

T/Sgt. B. Webster of 364 Monroe St. was awarded an Air Medal at this ceremony held at Hickam Field, T. H., on New Year's Day.

Medals were presented by Admiral Chester W. Nimitz, Commander-in-chief of Pacific Fleet Units; Lt. Gen. Delos C. Emmons, head of Hawaiian Army forces; Maj. Gen. Willis H. Hale, Air Force Commander in the mid-Pacific; and Brig. Gen. Robert L. Douglass and Brig. Gen. Howard K. Ramey of the Army Air Forces.

T/Sgt. Webster was a member of a bomber crew that raided Jap-held Wake Island Dec. 24, 1942. Because the American planes crossed the International Date Line in attacking Wake, they got back from the raid a day before they made it. They were over Wake on Dec. 24th (Wake Time) but landed back at their home base, Dec. 23rd, (Hawaiian Time.)

An undisclosed number of four-motored bombers made up the striking force, which dumped 76,000 pounds of high explosive and incendiary bombs on Wake. The raid was led by Col. Wm. A. Matheny.

* * * *

The Seventh Air Force is interested in seeing how the above release was used. If you have a clipping service will you please forward a copy of the story to this office, using the enclosed free-postage envelope for mailing. We regret that it was necessary to withhold the release of individual names for approximately six weeks.


C. E. SHELTON,
Capt., A. C.,
Public Relations Officer.

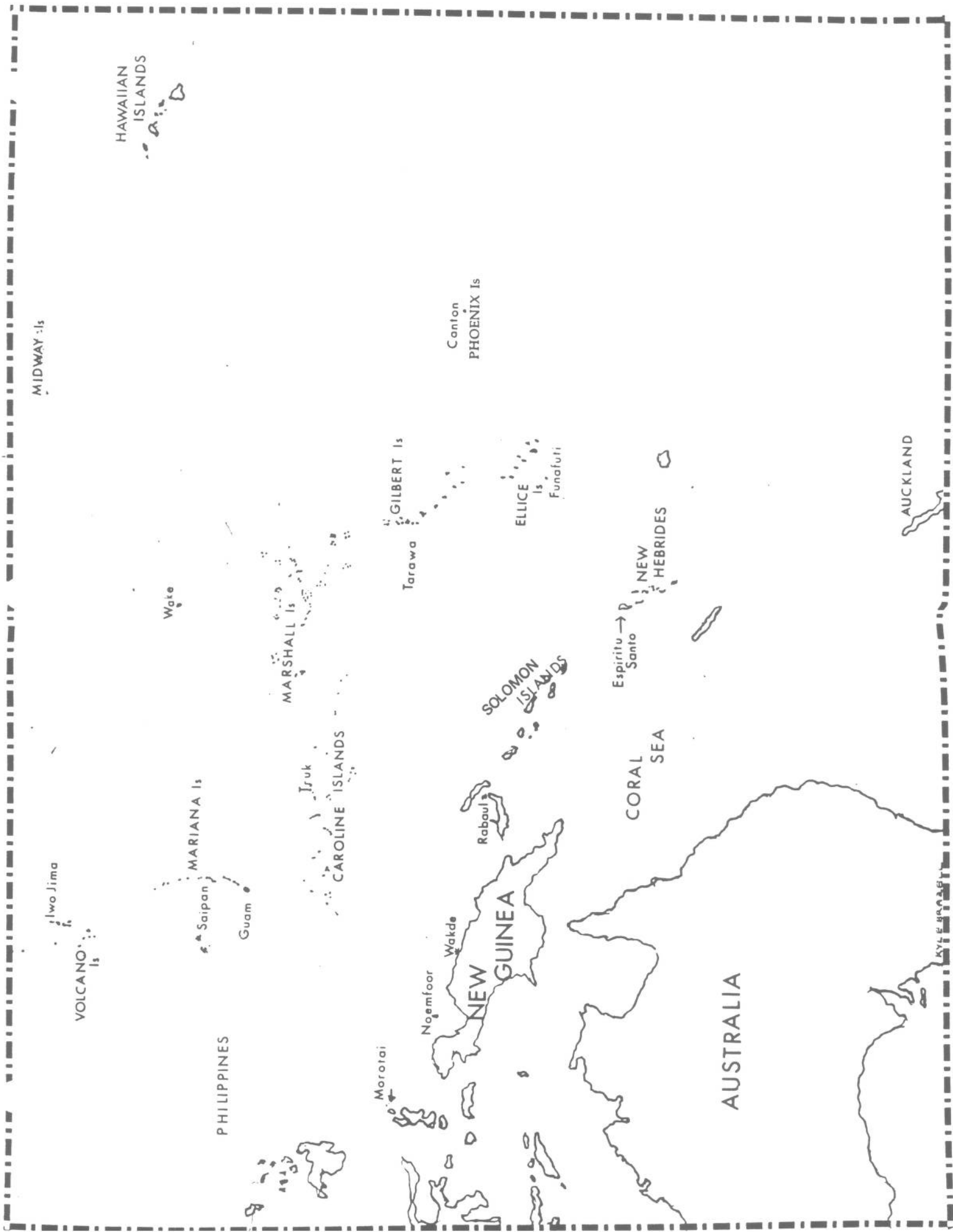
Then about the last of January strange things began to happen to our crew. We were told that we were going on a few day mission and other than our flying equipment, we would only have to take our toothbrush, razor and maybe a change of underwear. As I remember, Sanny didn't even know where we were headed until we were air-borne and he opened a manila envelope and the message instructed us to land at Canton Island, which we did. I don't know how many crews were sent to Canton at this time, but I think we were there two nights. Ray Bolger performed on one of those nights. He was the only USO performer I saw the whole time I was in the Pacific.

Then the next day we took off for Funafuti. This mission to Funafuti and Tarawa is covered in UP THE SLOT on pages 67 and 68, but since Walker was not in the area at this time the book is a little different than I remember it. I don't remember how many planes left Canton for Funafuti, but I do remember there being three planes in formation before we ran into the big storm which was referred to as the PERMANENT FRONT. I think that was the worst storm I ever flew through. I was standing on the flight-deck between Sanny and the Co-pilot and several times the updraft was so strong, and lifted the plane so much it felt like my legs were being driven through the flight deck. Also the rate of Climb indicator and the Altimeter were going crazy. After we got through the storm we did continue to Funafuti. UTS indicates that there was only one plane that got to Funafuti that day. I thought two of our three got through to Funafuti. I know the third plane didn't make it. Hitchcock's crew had to ditch, but they were all picked up and taken to Buttons (Espirtu Santo). The Book indicates that Hitchcock was the one who was nipped in the buttox by a shark, but I thought it was Hitchcock's Engineer, and he showed us his wound when he got to Buttons.

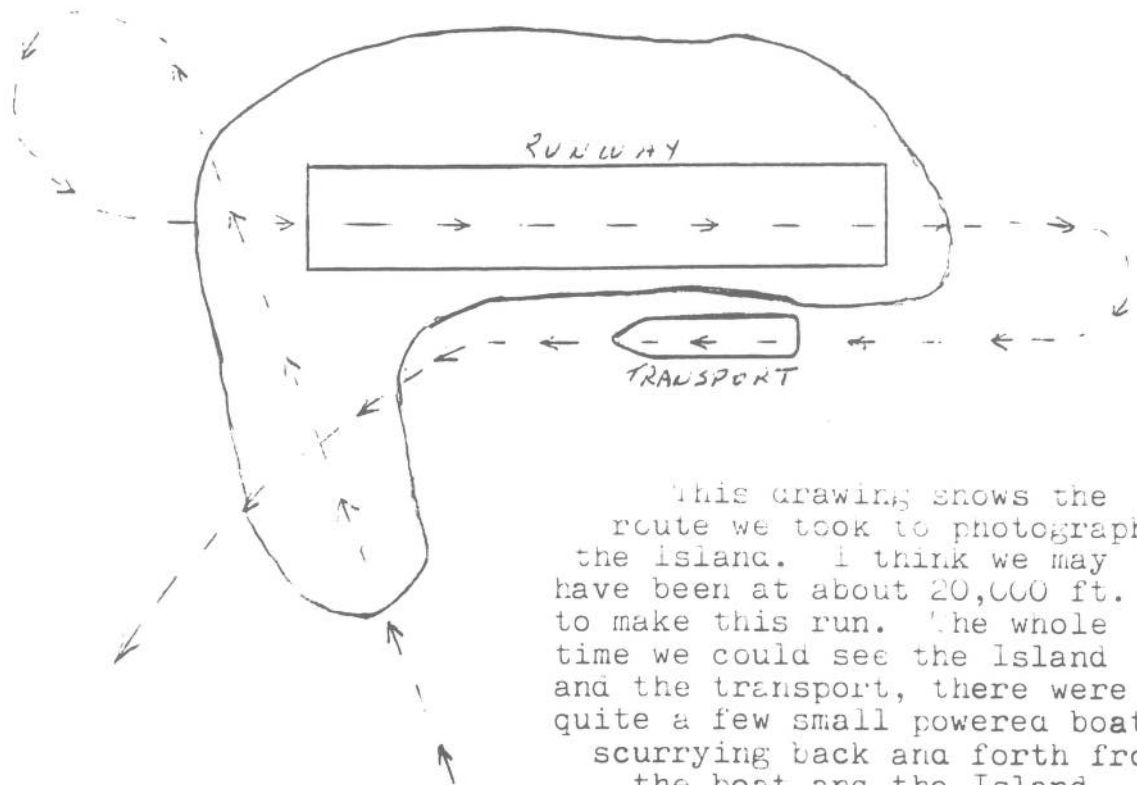
As I remember we were on Funafuti for several days. We waited for more crews to go with us to Tarawa. While we were at Funafuti the Navy housed and fed us. I remember I also got a pair of dungarees and a shirt (I was ready for a change). I don't remember how many planes went to Tarawa, but I am sure there were three and maybe 5. We were lead plane and we had a camera, and it was my assignment to turn the camera on at the start of the run over the Island. I would guess one or more of the other planes had cameras too since this was the primary purpose of our mission.

Major Glen Birchard led several 424th Squadron crews to Funafuti, a small coral atoll in the Ellice Islands. Staging from there they performed a photo-reconnaissance-bombing mission against the Gilbert Islands. They found a large cargo ship in the Tarawa Harbor and set it afire with 500-pound bombs. The pictures they took were used later in planning the Gilbert Islands invasion.

((UTS, p.67))



TARAWA



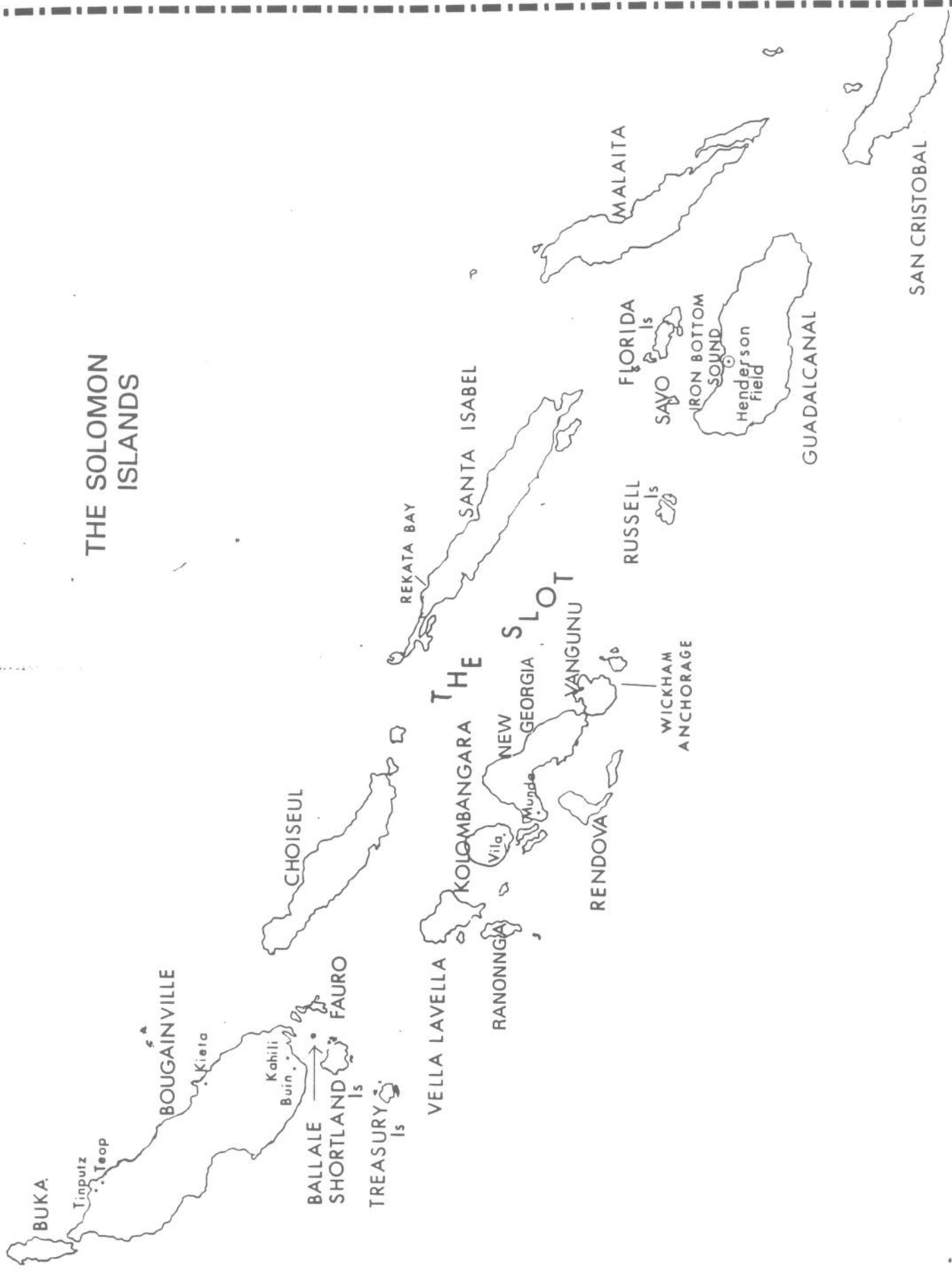
This drawing shows the route we took to photograph the island. I think we may have been at about 20,000 ft. to make this run. The whole time we could see the island and the transport, there were quite a few small powered boats scurrying back and forth from the boat and the island.

We didn't make any bomb drops on the island or the runway, just on the transport that pulled into the harbor that morning. They didn't fire any ack-ack either, until we started our run on the ship. The following day we received word from a Coastwatcher that the transport was on the bottom. I guess the harbor was not deep enough for the ship to be totally submerged.

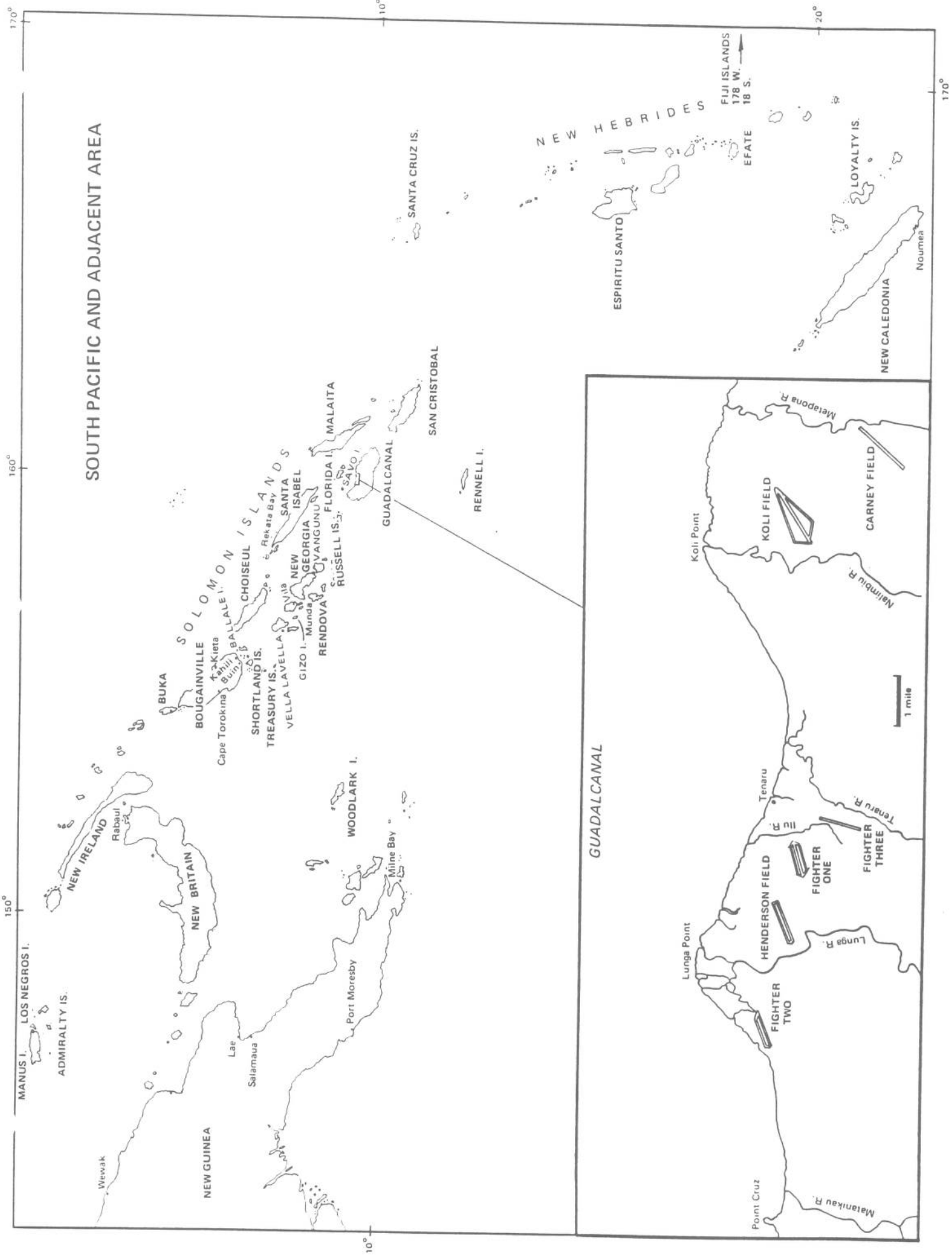
note: Hard to believe but it is true. In the summer of 1987, Pat and Paul Okuly were here and Paul mentioned that he had been stationed at Tarawa, with the Navy, for awhile in 1944 or 45, and he said when he was there a transport was still sitting on the bottom at the same location. Probably the same one we sank.

I am not sure if we went back to Canton after this mission (per page 66 UTS) or if we went to Buttons (Espiritu Santo) via Fiji, but we did stay on Buttons several days. Here we were initiated to "Washing Machine Charley's" night bombing raids. (Called Washing Machine Charley because they were two-engine bombers and they were not able to synchronize the props, which caused a unique vibrant sound we learned to detect.) The first night we were bombed we didn't have any foxholes to jump into, but the next morning we were all busy with shovels.

THE SOLOMON ISLANDS



KYLE L. BANGS



13th AIR FORCE TACTICAL UNIT HISTORY

GROUPS	SQUADRONS	1943												1944												1945																							
		J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A																
11th BG	26th BS	-B-17- To 7th Air Force																																															
	42nd BS	-B-17- To 7th Air Force																																															
	98th BS	-B-17- To 7th Air Force																																															
	431st BS	-B-17- To 7th Air Force																																															
5th BG	23rd BS													B-17												B-24																							
	31st BS													B-17												B-24																							
	72nd BS													B-17												B-24																							
	394th BS													B-17												off ops. B-24																							
307th BG	370th BS																									B-24																							
	371st BS																									B-24																							
	372nd BS																									B-24																							
	424th BS																									B-24																							
42nd BG	69th BS	B-26																								B-25																							
	70th BS	B-26																								B-25																							
	75th BS																									B-25																							
	100th BS																									B-25																							
	390th BS																									B-25																							
	868th BS																									B-24																							
347th FG	67th FS	P-39																								P-38																							
	68th FS	P-39/40												P-39												P-38																							
	70th FS	P-39																																															
	339th FS	P-38																																															
18th FG	12th FS	P-39												P-38												P-39												P-38											
	44th FS	P-40																																				P-38											
	70th FS													P-39																								P-38											
	Det. 'B' 6th NFS	P-70/P-38												To 7th Air Force																																			
	419th NFS													P-38												P-61																							
	550th NFS																									P-61																							
4th PG	17th PRS	F-5																																															
	18th PMS/CMS	B-25												Deactivated																																			
	38th PRS																									F-5																							
403rd TCG	13th TCS	C-47																								C-46																							
	63rd TCS													C-47												C-46																							
	64th TCS													C-47												C-46																							
	25th LS																									L-5																							
	2nd ERS																									OA-10																							

*

5/40

28-A

Chapter V
GUADALCANAL

Shortly after the first warning orders were issued, new orders came through directing the Group to Guadalcanal. Lt Colonel Green brought the combat crews that were with him at Espiritu Santo up to Henderson Field, Guadalcanal. Then began our part in the battle of the Solomons. It also marked the roughest period of our existence then or since. Organization and liaison between the various units of the armed forces were apparently non-existent. There was practically no channel of supply either for the airplanes or personnel. It's a wonder that we kept the planes flying at all. The camp areas were a sea of mud, and maintenance was non-existent. The men lived and worked in mud. It is said that Guadalcanal at this period was the only place in the world where one could stand knee deep in mud and still have dust blowing in your face. "It was really rough".

((307th, p.15))

It was either the 11th or 12th of February that our crew moved from Buttons to Cactus (Guadalcanal). Since it was only a day or two after we arrived at the Canal, that we pulled our first mission, and since "History of the 307th B. G. (Hv) covered our 2-13-43 mission, I will just add my comments about this mission following the account of the mission in the History.

COPY

Ltr. Hq 307th Bomb Group (Hv), APO #719, 1 Jan 1945. Subj: "History of the 307th Bombardment Group (Hv)". Contd. -----

13 February 1943 deserves special mention because it marked our first combat in the Solomons and one in which we gained a Pyrrhic victory. It was under leadership other than our own. We sustained our greatest loss in the history of the Group up to that time. Detailed reports of all combat missions are a part of the permanent S-2 and A-2 records, but there were some special features about this one that should be mentioned here. The commanding officer of the 11th Bombardment Group, which had been operating from Espiritu Santo using Guadalcanal as a staging base, took command of 6 of our B-24s for a daylight bombing attack on the shipping in the harbor of Buin, between the islands of Bougainville, Shortland, and Fauro. As Command Pilot he flew in the lead ship with Captain Sanny. LTS JONES and McNEESE were on his right and left wing. CAPTAIN MILLEDGE led the second element with LTS ROWE and TRAGER on his wings. The planned fighter escort of 12 planes shrunk to 6 before the target was reached, due to operational difficulties.

((307th, p. 16))

Nine (9) Navy PB4Ys escorted by 15 fighters had alerted the target area only 45 minutes before our planes came over. It was assumed that anti-aircraft fire would be light. Never underestimate your enemy is one of the axioms of war. AA opened up immediately when our planes reached the target area. The leader had selected a large cargo ship as the specific target. Our planes were led over this fortified area straight and level at 13,500 feet for over 5 minutes. There were Zeroes to the right and to the left of them, flying out of range of our gunners and giving the ground batteries our speed and altitude. The inevitable happened. Lt Trager's plane received a direct hit and burst into flames, with pieces scattering to the four winds. Lt Rowe's plane was hit just after he reached the target, burst into flames on a long glide toward the water and crashed from about 500 feet. Crippled, with one engine feathered, Lt McNeese's plane was beset by 10 to 12 Zeroes. He dived down to just over the water, but before clearing the harbor 4 members of his crew bailed out and were followed down and strafed by some of the Zeroes. He flew on over Choiseul Island, shook the Zeroes, turned back and made a water landing a couple of miles off shore. The story of the twenty day trip in a rubber boat of LTS McNEESE, VANDERSLICE, DECLERQUE, and CARROLL, and S/Sgt Adams through enemy patrolled territory with no food save what they could find in the jungle, is one that speaks well of the courage, hardiness, and resourcefulness of the men of the 42th Squadron. The following officers and men were listed as missing in action in this engagement:

1ST LT RUSSELL W. ROWE	1ST LT GEORGE K. TRAGER
2ND LT DANIEL D. DEUCHARE	2ND LT PAUL C. CRANE
2ND LT CHARLES R. WADE	2ND LT THEODORE BARTON
2ND LT GEORGE G. RADFORD	2ND LT HIRAM E. BATTERSBY
T/Sgt Hiram Meigs	S/Sgt William Sterns
S/Sgt Elmer J. Beaupre	S/Sgt Robert Smith
S/Sgt John Stimadorakis	Sgt James F. Magri
Sgt Elbert Boyer	Sgt Lawrence Averitt
S/Sgt Leo Elts	S/Sgt Roy Lund
S/Sgt Kenneth McCarthy	S/Sgt Jack Collins
Sgt Herman Selvig	Sgt Elton Hartt

One of the two P-38's in escort made a heroic attempt to protect Lt McNeese's plane by diving into a dozen Zeroes that were following him down. He was shot down. Two of the four P-40s were also shot down in the running fight of one hour and a half in which our planes were engaged. It was estimated that 30 to 40 Zeroes carried on this attack. Some of them were the new square wing type and about 12 were float type. The attack did not let up until the formation had reached the southern end of New Georgia and it constituted one of the longest running fights of the war in the Pacific. Eight (8) Zeroes were shot down. Three of them fell to our guns, the rest to the fighters. One direct hit with a 1,000 lb bomb was made on the cargo ship attacked. It was left sinking. We lost 2-1/2 crews and three airplanes with their equipment. This mission was reported in some detail because it happened to be our first definite contact with a strong enemy and unfortunately our first and largest combat loss.

((307th, p. 16, 17))

Since Jeremiah led the formation on this mission, and since I was on the right waist-gun position I could see as much as any others, that day.

As we approached the target area, I could see fighters taking off from Kahili, Ballale, Buin, and a couple other runways, as well as sea-plane fighters taking off too. Then when the Ack-ack started it looked like they were firing from about all of the small islands. I saw both of Rowe and Trager's planes hit with ack-ack but didn't see McNeese's plane hit. I did see it going down and I did see, Lund, Smith, Averitt and Hart in parachutes.... and saw them strafed.

We sometimes heard about acts of chivalry between the Allies and Germans when one or the other was no longer an immediate threat. If anyone in the 307th ever entertained notions of that sort they were completely dispelled on February 13 when Jap fighter pilots strafed Roy Lund, Robert Smith, Lawrence Averitt and Elton Hartt as they swung helplessly under their parachute canopies over Shortland Harbor.

((UTS, p. 167))

Note - After that mission, most of us gunners felt that we would retaliate for this action. My turn came on 11-11-43, on a mission over Rabaul.

Later we learned that we were outnumbered by about eight to one in the running battle over the target, and that the running battle lasted for over an hour and twenty minutes total.

At one time I noticed a row of about five or six holes in a line down our right rudder. I thought it might have led to Knipp in the tail turret. A little ^{LATER} I called Knipp on the inter-phone and he said no holes near him but he thought it may have gotten me. Later, when we weren't so busy, I followed the row of holes to a spot about six inches from my right foot, on the deck. We had 52 or 58 holes in Jeremiah, from this mission when we landed.

After our running battle with the Jap fighters was over, the two remaining P-40s flew close to us, for protection, the rest of the way back to base. The one pilot huddled real close under our left wing. I am sure we were able to relay a message to each other that we were thankful to each other for our survival of what we had both just been through.

When we landed at Henderson we were greeted with a handshake by the Chaplain with our right hand, while reaching to the Flight Surgeon for a slug of whiskey with our left hand. On that particular day I think they let us go through the Flight Surgeon's line several times. It must have been hard to keep track of who went through the line, how many times because they changed the procedure. After each mission the crew got a fifth of Booze. One mission the officers would take the booze and the next mission the enlisted men would take it.

After this mission, "Killer Diller", our radio operator who had given himself this name in the States, said "from now on just call me "Diller".

307th Bomb Group's First
 Combat Mission In Solomon
 Islands with 424th Crews

February 13, 1943

X = survivors of this mission in attendance of '89 307th Reunion in Nashville, Tenn.

JEREMIAH

Col. Everst
 Command Pilot

- | | |
|------------------|------------------------------|
| M. Sanny (P) | X B. Webster (E) |
| W. Harpster (CP) | *J. Herzog (AE) |
| W. Knox (N) | P. Wheeler (R) |
| K. Weilbaker (B) | X A. Williams (AR) <i>al</i> |
| | A. Knipp (TG) |

BOMBS AWAY

- | | |
|-------------------------|------------------|
| <i>X</i> H. McNeese (P) | *W. Adams (E) |
| *H. Vanderslice (CP) | **R. Lund |
| W. Carroll (N) | **R. Smith |
| *D. DeClerque (B) | **L. Averitt |
| | (**E. HARTT (P)) |

THE RATTLER

- | | |
|------------------------------|----------------|
| W. Jones (P) | J. Wycoff (E) |
| E. Belcher (CP) | *M. Smith (AE) |
| <i>Tom</i> X T. Flanigan (N) | R. Issitt (R) |
| E. LeMarqund (B) | C. Eckman (AR) |
| | N. Ward (TG) |

Unknown Navy Photographer

HOUSE OF BURBON

- | | |
|-------------------|---------------------|
| X H. Milledge (P) | X N. K. Bullard (E) |
| C. Johnson (CP) | L. McKee (AE) |
| C. O'Neil (B) | F. Woods |
| J. Woody (N) | Sargeant (G) |
| | J. Shaughnessy (G) |

?

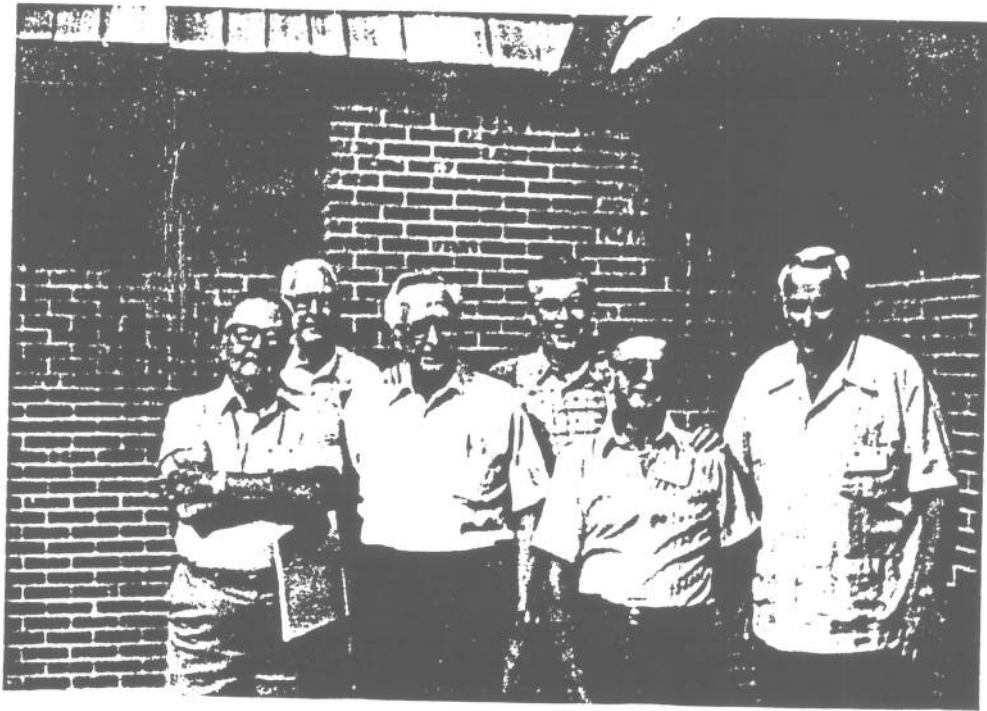
- | | |
|------------------|-------------|
| **G. Traeger (P) | **W. Sterns |
| **T. Barton | **H. Meigs |
| **G. Radford | **L. Eilts |
| **H. Battersby | **H. Selvig |
| | **E. Boyer |

?

- | | |
|---------------|------------------|
| **R. Rowe (P) | **K. McCarthy |
| **D. Deuchare | **E. Beaupre |
| **C. Wade | **J. Stimadorkis |
| **P. Crane | **J. Collins |
| | **J. Magri |

**Unknown Navy Photographer

** Lost on this mission.
 * Lost on later missions.



Front Row: L. to R., Harold McNeese,
Ben Webster, Alfred Williams, Hank
Milledge.

Back Row: L. to R., Kelly Bullard,
Tom Flanigan.

This photo was taken at 307th Reunion in Nashville,
Tenn, May 1986. Six survivors of the 307th's first mission
in the Solomon Islands on 2-13-45.

Milledge and Flanigan had attended several other 307th
Bomb Group reunions, but this was the first time for McNeese,
Webster, Williams, and Bullard to attend a reunion. First time
in 45 years I had seen any of the other five men.

REC'D
FROM M...
89

HEADQUARTERS 307TH BOMBARDIER SQUADRON
APO 708

February 1943

SPECIAL ORDERS)

NUMBER.....20)

1. 1st Lt WILLIAM D. BELL 0854090 424th Bomb Sq is aptd Summary Courts Officer to inventory and dispose of the effects of the following named personnel of the 424th Bomb Sq who were reported missing in action Feb 13 1943:

1st Lt RUSSELL W. ROWE 0726482
2nd Lt CHARLES R. WADE 0728436
S/Sgt Kenneth G. McCarthy 12029541
S/Sgt John Stinadorakis 13029222
Sgt James F. Nagri 15101628

2nd Lt DANIEL D. DEUCHARE 0662757
2nd Lt PAUL C. CRANE 0728256
S/Sgt Jack L. Collins 19054993
Sgt Herman E. Selvig 16022598

The court will be governed by the instructions contained in the 112th Article of War, MCM 1928 and AR 600-550. AUTH: AW 112, MCM 1928.

2. 1st Lt JOSEPH J. GUGENHEIM 0433227 424th Bomb Sq is aptd Summary Courts Officer to inventory and dispose of the effects of the following named personnel of the 424th Bomb Sq who were reported missing in action Feb 13 1943:

1st Lt GEORGE K. TRAGER 0442557
2nd Lt GEORGE G. RADFORD 0387242
T/Sgt Hiram W. Meigs 20467632
S/Sgt Leo J. Mills 29870285
Sgt Elbert H. Byer 36176998

2nd Lt THEODORE BARTON 0662722
2nd Lt HIRAM E. BATTERSBY 0728250
S/Sgt William A. Stearns 19049588
S/Sgt Elbert H. Byer 36176998

The court will be governed by the instructions contained in the 112th Article of War, MCM 1928 and AR 600-550. AUTH: AW 112, MCM 1928.

3. 1st Lt SAUL C. WEISLOW 0909138 424th Bomb Sq is aptd Summary Courts Officer to inventory and dispose of the effects of the following named personnel of the 424th Bomb Sq who were reported missing in action Feb 13 1943:

~~1st Lt SAUL C. WEISLOW 0909138~~
2nd Lt WESLEY M. CARROLL 0728533
S/Sgt Roy H. Lund 37110132
S/Sgt William E. Adams 14071345
Sgt Elton M. Hallett 20146651

2nd Lt HARVEY R. VANDERS... E JR 078888
2nd Lt DONALD A. DECLERQUE 0728259
S/Sgt Robert O. Smith 16035680
Sgt Lawrence C. Averitt 14068152

The court will be governed by the instructions contained in the 112th Article of War, MCM 1928 and AR 600-550. AUTH: AW 112th, MCM 1928.

4. The following named officers are rel. fr. asgd to their pres org and asgd to orgn as indicated:

CAPT NOEL S. BEESON 0364473 371st Bomb Sq to 370th Bomb Sq
1ST LT RICHARD A. BISBEE 0662728 371st Bomb Sq to 370th Bomb Sq.
CAPT CHARLES G. BEHES 0426038 371st Bomb Sq to 370th Bomb Sq.
1st Lt ROBERT L. STRATTON 371st to 370th Bomb Sq.
1st Lt GEORGE E. HOELLER 0726400 371st Bomb Sq to 370th Bomb Sq.
2nd Lt MATTHEW C. GUIBESON 371st Bomb Sq to 370th Bomb Sq.
2nd Lt GEORGE T. WHITE 0728440 371st Bomb Sq. to 370th Bomb Sq.
2nd Lt ORLANDO W. SEVERSON 0663329 371st Bomb Sq to 370th Bomb Sq.
1st Lt JAMES R. McCLOSKEY 0726438 371st Bomb Sq to 424th Bomb Sq.

32-AA

10/89

HEADQUARTERS 307TH BOMB GROUP SO #20 par 4 cont'd.

2nd Lt WILLIAM P. MOELLER 0442577 371st Bomb Sq to 424th Bomb Sq.
2nd Lt HAROLD R. THORN 0728433 371st Bomb Sq to 424th Bomb Sq.
2nd Lt HORACE G. SMITHSON 0663323 371st Bomb Sq to 424th Bomb Sq.
Capt RALPH F. ANDREWS 0406502 372nd Bomb Sq to 424th Bomb Sq.
2nd Lt RUSSELL R. DOUGHERTY 0662760 372nd Bomb Sq to 424th Bomb Sq.
2nd Lt LLOYD K. MAHOGUE 0728406 372nd Bomb Sq to 424th Bomb Sq.
2nd Lt ROBERT W. WADLIN 0663333 372nd Bomb Sq to 424th Bomb Sq.
2nd Lt NORRIS E. NELSON 0663302 372nd Bomb Sq to 424th Bomb Sq.
2nd Lt FRANCIS S. CRAVEN JR 0662751 372nd Bomb Sq to 424th Bomb Sq.
2nd Lt JOHN H. STORER 0726502 372nd Bomb Sq to 424th Bomb Sq.
2nd Lt LEO E. BLEFF 0728419 372nd Bomb Sq to 424th Bomb Sq.
~~2nd Lt STEVE R. FOSTER 0728410 372nd Bomb Sq to 424th Bomb Sq.~~
2nd Lt EDGAR R. BORDEN 0662759 372nd Bomb Sq to 424th Bomb Sq.
2nd Lt CLINTON W. ROEMER 0728421 372nd Bomb Sq to 424th Bomb Sq.
2nd Lt JAMES W. NICHOLSON 0663305 372nd Bomb Sq to 424th Bomb Sq.

By order of Colonel MATHEW:

L. G. SQUIRES,
Major, Air Corps,
Adjutant.

OFFICIAL: *Carl O. Buskness*
CARL O. BUSKNESS,
WO/JG, Air Corps,
Assistant Adjutant.



McNEESE'S CREW - 424th; The 307th lost three of the six planes that took part in the Group's first mission from Guadalcanal. Two went down over the target, Shortland Harbor. The third, flown by Harold McNeese, fought its way to Choiseul Island and ditched offshore. This was on February 13, 1943. On March 4, 1943, the five survivors of this crew walked into camp at Guadalcanal after a harrowing trip back via life raft, war canoe and PBV. They were, clockwise from lower left: Harold McNeese, Bill Adams, Wesley Carroll, Harvey Vanderslice, Don DeClerque, pictured above after their return. 307-19-32 (Ralph Collection) ((307th Reunion Book Five, p.67))

In a letter, dated 9-19-86, from McNeese, he advised that after returning to the States, he joined the B-29 program and flew a second tour from Guam, ending the war as Squadron Comanding Officer. He remained in the AF and retired in 1970 (I think as a Colonel). He said Wesley Carroll was invalided home after the rescue. Also that Vanderslice, DeClerque and Bill Adams were later k.i.a.

Per picture on page 64, of the 307th Reunion Number Five book, and a letter dated 6-5-86, from Tom Flanigan, Bill Adams went down with Gerald Darr's crew over Kahili on 11-14-43. Tom had been flying on Darr's crew too and had made his last mission with them on 11-11-43 to Rabaul, after which he received orders to return to the States. Later in this report, there is a picture of Darr's crew that was taken after they returned from Rabaul on 11-11-43.

RECD. FROM
MCNEESE
2-1490

Message from Australian J.A. Corrigan, Coastwatcher on San Isabel Island (Solomon Islands) to me on the day of our return to base on Guadalcanal (by PBY).

Have received message
that Capt. will pick
you up Friday 1500 hrs
He is sending my NO. 1.
by & I shall follow.
I don't think I can
make it in time but
he knows what to
do.

J.A. Corrigan

Date of this message would be March 4, 1943.
(Per 307th Reunion book #5 pg. 67)

2/90

33-A

The return of men who were forced down was a great morale booster to everyone, but even before they got back things had started looking better. On the night of February 17-18 six Liberators took off to harass southern Bougainville. William H. Jones' crew dropped four 1000-pounders on the Japanese torpedo storage at Nusave Island. Dan Macdonald's crew dropped twelve 500-pound bombs across the southern end of Kahili's revetment area. The Japs even seemed to cooperate with Max Sanny's crew. As they approached Ballale a Jap medium bomber was buzzing the field. The Japs turned the runway lights on, no doubt for *their* plane to land. Karl Weilbacher took full advantage of the lights and laid his bombs right down the runway.

The other three Liberators had mechanical trouble and turned back before reaching the target but for the first time all 307th Liberators returned safely from a Solomons mission. This seemed to break the streak of misfortune and the remainder of February was operated without a loss. Munda and Vila in the Central Solomons were bombed twice each and Kahili and Ballale were both hit with an additional harassing mission.

((UTS, p.111))

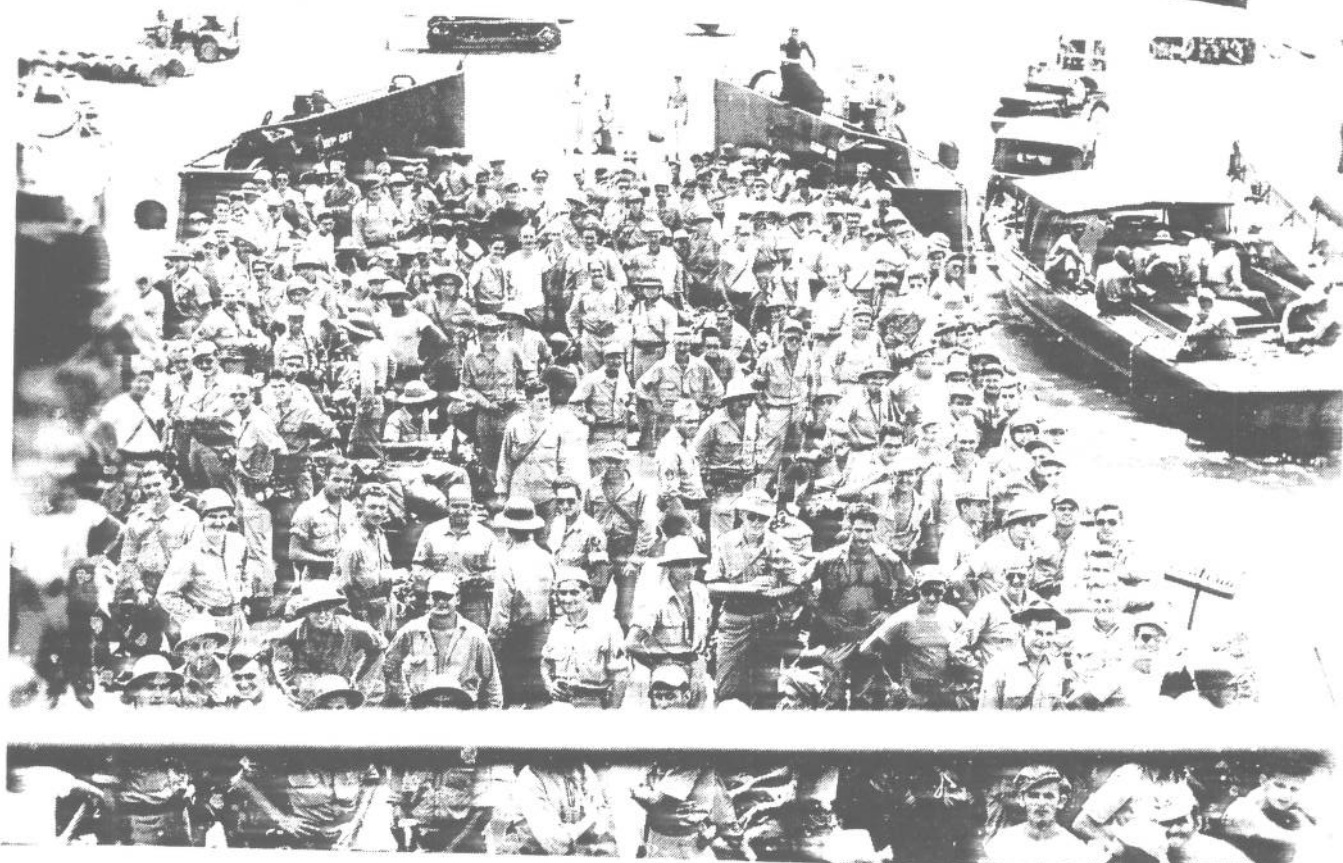
In addition to what Walker wrote, in the book, about Sanny's crew over ~~BALLALE~~ on February 17-18, I can add a few first-hand comments. When we started our run on the island there were two Jap Bombers (Bettys) going in for landings. It was a real bright moon-light night and we think the second bomber saw us pass between the moon and them because they did a sharp 90 degree bank to the right and probably went to another landing strip. When Sanny saw what was happening we went to a much lower altitude than planned and completed our run. As I remember we decided to strafe the area too. I was on the right waist gun on that mission and I remember the control tower was on my side of the runway. So, I strafed the tower too. They didn't fire a shot at us on this one. It helped us to know that all the missions wouldn't be as bad as the Feb. 13th one was. But we never had another one that was as easy as this one either.

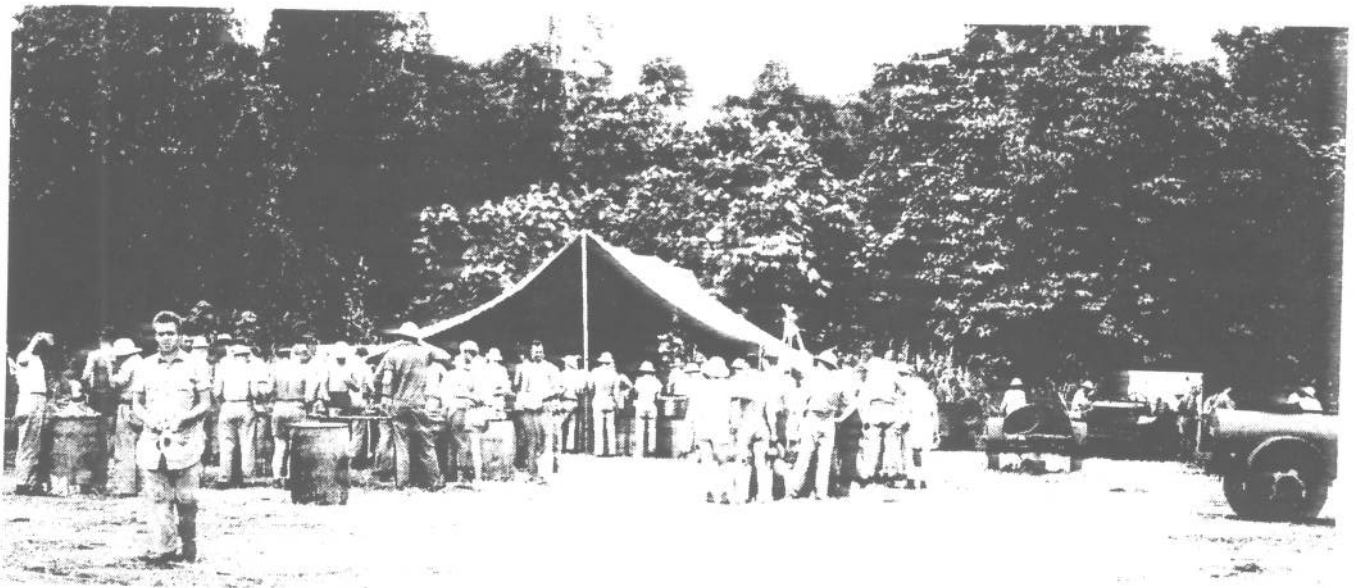


Dillingham Field, home of the 424th while in Hawaii. Inset is Bill Agnor, 424th First Sergeant during those days.



424th loads onto landing barge for transport to the President Tyler which will carry them to the South Pacific from Hawaii. This is a particularly clear photo--how many of you can find yourselves here?

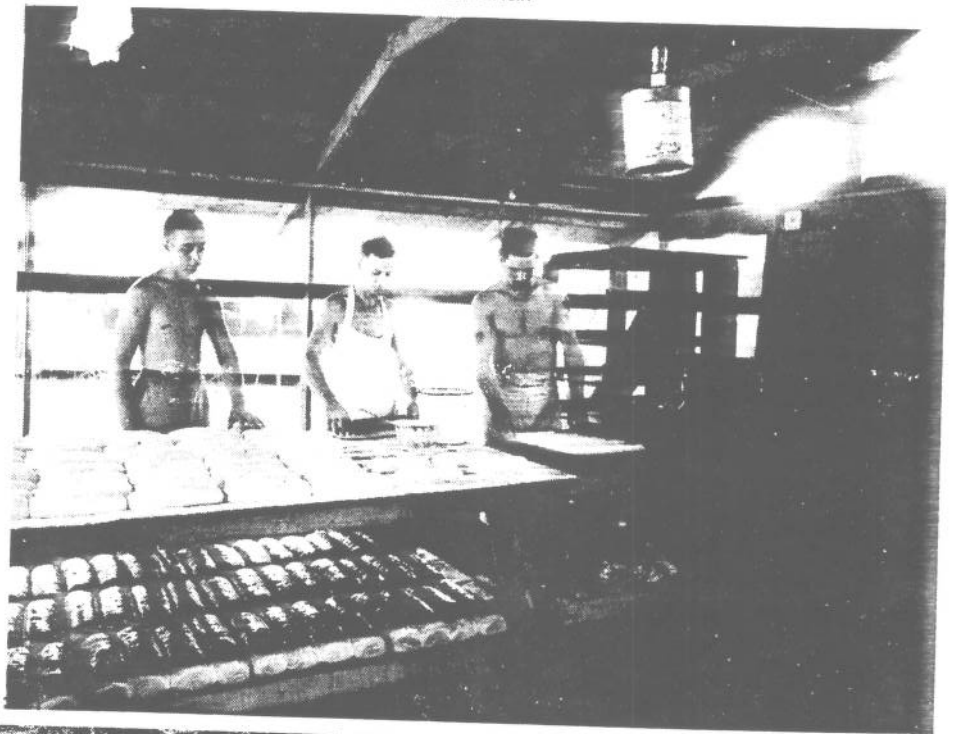




Mess hall during the early days at Guadalcanal.

GUADALCANAL

Yarbough, McDowell and Redwine in the bakery at Guadalcanal. Note the oven to the right--designed and built by welder Redwine.



Officer's area was the same as that of the EM--plain and broiling.

(5th Reunion book, pg. 104)

8/89

34-B

In the meantime, back on Guadalcanal, it didn't take the "planners of missions" long to decide that new tactics were in order. We didn't have the strength, neither bomber nor fighter, to sustain daylight missions against the Japanese stronghold on Bougainville. Night harassing missions seemed more in order with bombers taking off at hourly or half-hourly intervals. The first bomber's take off could be set to allow the plane to arrive over southern Bougainville just after dark. Each crew could make at least two runs over the target, dropping half their bombs each time, and then clearing the area for the next plane. This would keep the Japs awake as well as damage their bases. ((UTS, p.83))

The original plans for Night Harassing missions, as stated above were changed, and modified a lot, via good old U. S. A. ingenuity. Sometimes we would stay over the target for a lot more than a half-hour. We found that we could stretch our bomb load out over a longer period of time than for two passes. We may make a run over the target and not drop anything. Or we may drop a few beer bottles on a run. Those bottles made a weird sound and could be mistaken for a type of bombs. It harassed the Japs more, but also we got shot at more too.

The crews that beat us to the Canal had been busy. Throughout the latter part of February and early March they constantly pounded the Japanese bases up the Slot—Munda, Vila, Ballale, Kahili and Rekata Bay—with night missions. Crews piloted by Captains Henry Jones, Laurence Krebs, Max Sanny, Ulmer Newman and Henry Milledge and Lieutenants Jerry Bourgeois, Danny Macdonald, William H. Jones, Sam Gregory, Harold McNeese, Robert Miller, William Flood, Robert LaMontagne and Buford Flahaven were veterans.

((UTS, p.118))

When we started pulling night bombing missions we instilled more ingenuity.

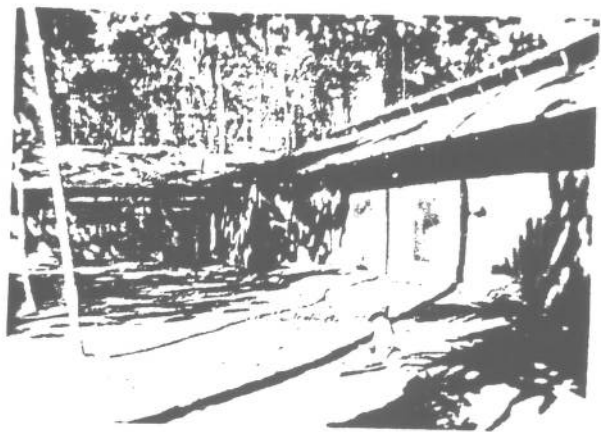
One of the crews noticed that when Jap night fighters were in the air, and if the night fighter saw our bomber, or bombers, the night fighter would fire a green flare from his plane. Then the search lights would continue to look for us, but they didn't shoot any ack-ack at us. They were afraid they may shoot their own night fighter down. So, when our bombers would get close to the target, one of the gunners would shoot a green flare and the Japs wouldn't shoot at us and we would drop our bombs and head for home. This trick didn't last too long.

Many times weather was an enemy to while flying. On one occasion atmospheric conditions played havoc with our crew. Just a few minutes before we were ready to drop our load on Kahili, our entire plane lit up like we had neon tubing completely around the entire plane, the wings, tail fuselage and all. The light it made was very bright and must have lasted for a minute, but at the time it seemed like an hour. Never did know what caused this, nor did we ever hear that it happened to anyone else.

About this time the caps began bombing us more with night missions too. On March 23rd the first "Condition Red" sounded about 8:30 p.m. I think this is the night that we were just ready to take off when the alarm sounded. We taxied off the runway and looked for cover. A couple of us found a mound that we laid up against (not as much help as a foxhole would have been). After the all clear sounded we looked on the other side of the mound and found that we were at an amunition dump, and bombs were stored there. We went out again to take off and another warning sounded and we cut the engines and looked for cover again. This happened again 2 or 3 times before we finally got in the air and completed our mission.

Then the next night Washing Machine Charlie came back again. This time one bomb hit a palm tree about 35 feet from the ground and demolished our mess hall.

note: Not sure if the mess hall below was the one demolished or not.



424th Mess Hall

McDowell - 424th Baker

He was a real good baker too. He made an oven by welding the beams of two Jap pick-up trucks together.

The success of the Jap bombing missions the later part of March speeded up the move of our permanent camp. Henderson Field was far too crowded with aircraft and the camp areas too clustered. (see UTS, p. 129). By April first the Seabees had Carney Field in usable condition so we moved the planes to Carney and moved our camp to Koli Point.



April 1, 1943, we pitched our tents in this grass field near Koli Point. We moved under the trees in the background as soon as the underbrush was cleared. (Picture furnished by Ed Jurkens.)

While living in this tent city I remember several things. My mattress was a wool army blanket folded in thirds, and my pillow was my Sheepskin flight jacket, turned wrong side out. And of course a mosquito-net over our cot. Sometimes we would get our elbow up against the net and the mosquitos would bite us through the net. About this time we would get "C Rations" once in awhile too. There would always be cigaretts, which we used. The fruit bars and cheese was pretty good, so we ate it, but the bisquits included were terrible. We would throw them out in the field. And if it was raining, the rats would bring them inside our tents to eat them. And these were large rats too.

April was a busy month. Jap fleet feints from Truk necessitated widespread sea search from Guadalcanal. Our crew flew two sea search missions and most 307th crews flew at least that much and some flew more. Over a period of eleven days our group flew fifty-four search missions. Each plane covered an eight or nine degree sector between 310 degrees and 40 degrees magnetic, going out 600 to 800 miles. Some sectors were dangerously close to Buka, Rabaul, Truk and Nauru.

((UTS, p. 129))

We flew several of these missions and usually we flew very low, maybe only a couple of hundred feet above the water, which made us less likely to be spotted. I remember one of these missions well. After we had gone out our far distance, and then made our turn, we were out past a Jap held island and one of our engines lost power and was wind-milling so we feathered the prop. Not long after that one of the engines on the other side lost oil pressure and we feathered ^{the} ^{first} ^{one}. Pretty soon the engine on the same side of the first engine we feathered started missing. We knew we could not fly too far on one engine so we decided to try to unfeather it. We did and it purred like a kitten all the way home. We did have to feather the other one on that side so came home on two engines.

Also sometimes we flew search missions right up the slot, when we would be looking for crew members that may have had to ditch their plane. Sometimes these searches brought us pretty close to the enemy too.



Knipp and me, in our work clothes.

Knipp and I were real good friends. He was about 33 years old in 1943. He was divorced and had a son, in his teens, I think. He was our tail-gunner and a good one. Knipp got home before I did and when he got to the States he called Dad and told him that I was okay and would be home when I completed my missions. In 1986 I checked with the library system in the Pittsburgh area and they sent me a copy of a funeral notice which indicated Knipp died in November 1968.

By far the largest Jap raid of the month was a daylight attack on April 7. We got word about noon that the Japs were coming down the Slot with the biggest aerial force they'd assembled since their attack on Oahu. Unlike December 7, 1941, this attack came as no surprise. Word of Jap planes taking off from Buka, Ballale and Kahili was flashed to Guadalcanal by alert Coastwatchers long before they appeared on radar screens. Fighters were in the air with an altitude advantage and ack-ack gunners poised and ready long before the Japs arrived.

Our crews were ordered to man the planes and get them off the ground and out of the way while the attack was on. All except a few "down" for maintenance got off the ground. Unfortunately *Man-O-War* was one of the few unable to be buttoned-up in time to get off so we watched the attack from our camp.

Jap planes arrived in swarms about 3:00 p.m. and hordes of our fighters met them. The Japs didn't seem interested in land targets but concentrated on ships at Tulagi and off Koli Point. We could see the Jap dive bombers push over in near vertical dives and swirling dogfights erupted. At any given instant several burning planes were spinning to the ground. We were far enough from the battle that aircraft identification was impossible and we could only hope that the burning planes were Japanese.

The air battle lasted thirty minutes and then we got glowing reports about the results. Although we lost three ships—a destroyer, a tanker and a corvette—fighter pilot and ack-ack gunner claims totaled more than a hundred Jap aircraft shot down. Our aircraft losses were fifteen fighters with seven pilots rescued. Air intelligence, after sifting the reports and eliminating what appeared to be duplicate claims, scaled the estimated Jap losses down considerably but it was still pretty one-sided in our favor.

((UTS, p. 131-133))

I remember the above attack, and us getting as many of our planes off the ground as possible. I think we just flew around in the air, probably between Cactus and Buttons, untill it was all over, then we went back to the Canal.

The above mentions the Coastwatchers. They were a great bunch of people who were a tremendous help to us in many ways. Some of the coastwatchers were Islanders, some from New Zealand and Australia, and I now believe that some were American Indians whose language could not be deciphered, or decoded. It was through the Coastwatchers that we were able to rescue many flyers. Like above they gave us advanced notice of attacks. They are the ones who advised us that the ship we bombed at Tarawa went to the bottom. They were just invaluable.

On May 7th, 8th and 9th (Mother's Day) will be remembered by all who were there, for the thunderstorms and torrential downpour which caused the Metapone River to overflow and flood our camp. It was a mess. (UTS 143 - 149) covers the flood.) In a couple of days the water receded, but not before it damaged Carney Field, to the extent we moved the planes back to Henderson Field and operated from there until Carney was repaired. Ironically I have a newspaper clipping from the Journal - Gazette, dated May 29, 1986 with a picture of some of the damage done to the Solomon Islands from a cyclone that hit the islands on May 19th. 96 people died, the food supply for 90,000 people was wiped out and homes were destroyed for one-fourth of 240,000 islanders.

For sometime it was felt that the B-24 was not heavily enough armed. The nose guns did not cover wide enough area and the belly was very inadequately protected. In fact after our first couple of missions, when we went on a day mission we used to stick a broom handle out the the photographic hatch and tie a rope to the broomstick and to a leg of each of the waist gunners. Then every now and then a gunner would move his leg which in turn moved the broomstick which made it look like another gun was sticking out the hatch.

It was decided to install a two gun turret in the nose and a ball turret in the belly. We would send a few planes back to Hawaii to get modified trying to have them all modified by the middle of June. (The next page shows Jeremiah before and Mammy Yokum after.)

About this time Col. Matheny thought it was time to be getting the other two squadrons, 371st and 372nd to the area to give some relief to the 370th and 424th combat crews. He went to Hawaii to make the arrangements but the two squadrons didn't arrive to Buttons till June 12th.

Starting the night of May 19-20 for five consecutive nights our crews were over the southern Bougainville area bombing Kahili, Ballale, the Bougainville shoreline and harbor islands as a diversion for TBFs mining the harbor and attacking shipping from low altitude. The Japs continued to increase their defenses. More ack-ack guns and searchlights were installed, particularly around Kahili. Japanese aircraft were frequently encountered over the target. ((UTS, p. 155))

Capt. Sanny was very good at slipping us out of the searchlights, but on several occasions so many lights were on us we couldn't get out of them for several minutes.

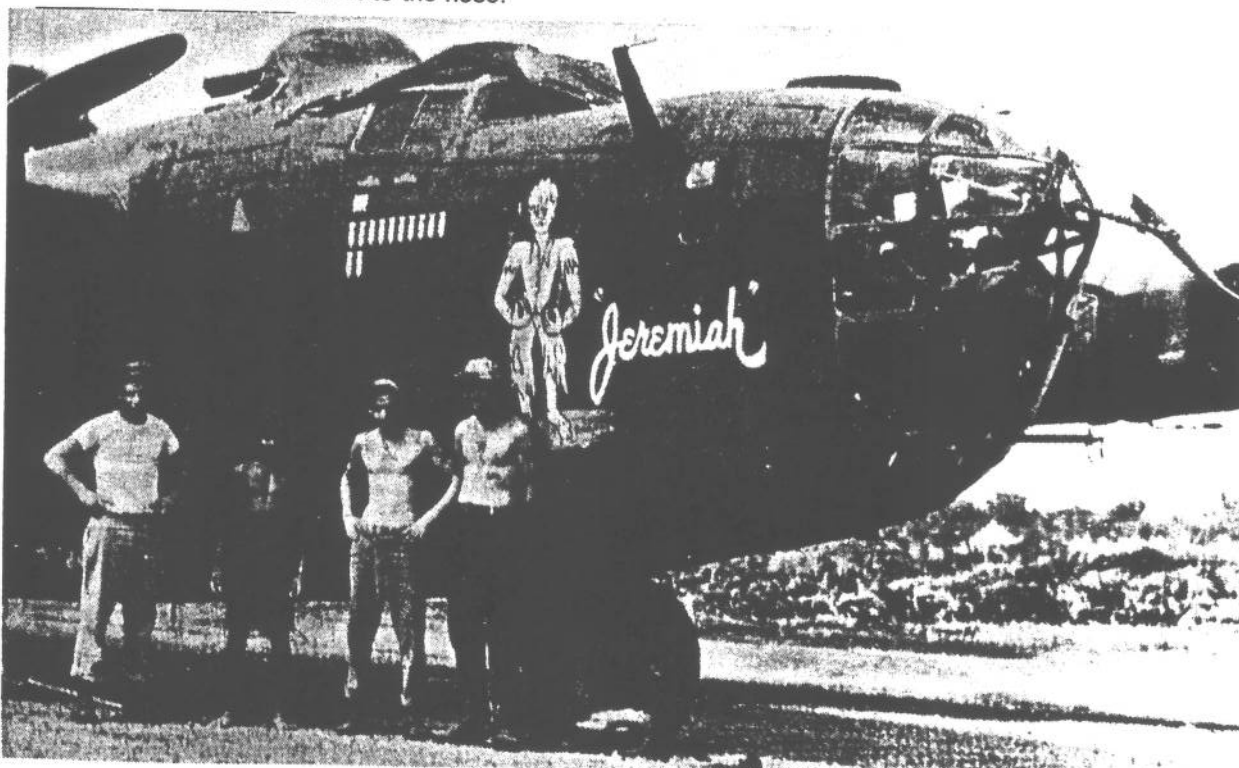
Huntington Flyer Gets Second War Department Award

WASHINGTON, May 18—(AP)—Tech. Sergt. Bensing Webster of Huntington, Ind., has been awarded the Oak Leaf Cluster to add to the Air Medal he had earned earlier, the war department announced tonight.

Second Lieut. William R. Harpster of R. R. No. 2, Star City, Ind., has been awarded an Air Medal, the army also announced.

The two Hoosiers were among 32 army air force officers and enlisted men of the Hawaiian department awarded decorations for extraordinary achievement while participating in an aerial flight over enemy territory last January. Seven awards were posthumous.

This is an interesting pair of pictures for comparison of the original "D" model B-24s assigned to the Group, before and after modifications which relocated the original Consolidated tail turret from the tail to the nose. "Jeremiah" still has her "greenhouse" while "Mammy Yokum" clearly shows the areas changed to add the turret to the nose.



JEREMIAH'S GROUND CREW--No identification for either the crew or the native boy helper.



GROUND CREW OF THE "MAMMY YOKUM" - 424th; Webb, Forrester, Tidestrand, Kimes, Jessky. 307-9-10 (Smith/Gisler Collection)

On June 4 a Coastwatcher reported a Jap merchant ship with destroyer escort near Kolombangara Island. The Navy sent a Black Cat (PBY painted black and with special radar) to establish contact, and at 7:00 p.m. Captain Ulmer Newman headed up the Slot carrying twenty parachute flares. Twenty-five minutes later Captain Max Sanny's crew roared in pursuit with four 1000-pound bombs.

When Newman approached the target area the Black Cat pilot told him by radio that he had a ship on his radar scope. The Black Cat dropped a flare and illuminated a Jap destroyer near Vella Lavella. Newman's crew took over the flare job and kept the destroyer illuminated by dropping flares from 5000 feet. Sanny approached a few minutes later, flying at 1500 feet. When he sighted the destroyer he made a 360 degree turn and spiraled to 300 feet. Sanny's crew made a level run from that altitude, broadside from the stern port quarter.

The destroyer captain was no novice. He was making at least thirty knots and took violent evasive action. Sanny dropped two bombs but due to the destroyer's violent turn they overshot and hit about 100 feet beyond the ship. As the B-24 passed over the destroyer the Japs opened up with small caliber ack-ack and put two holes in the left inboard gasoline tank. From their grandstand seat at 5000 feet Newman's crew reported that the destroyer heeled way over on its side when the bombs exploded but this may have been from the violent turn rather than the bombs. Then the wily Jap captain ran under a small cloud and disappeared.

((UTS, p. 155-156))

This was the first time a B-24 was used to Skip-bomb a ship and it wasn't too effective. Also we got more than the two holes mentioned above. When the Japs saw us so low, and knew we were going directly over their ship, they just pointed all of their guns straight up, knowing we would have to fly straight through. The B-24 is just too big for this kind of action.

Taken from UTS, p. 162 - "Ulmer Newman and Max Sanny were back up the Bougainville coast on June 2. Again they discovered a small ship at Tiniputs; again the bombardiers failed to get direct hits and again the gunners raked the ship from bow to stern with concentrated machine gun bullets. But this time they didn't set it on fire."

By now you may realize that going on missions or sitting through bombing raids didn't occupy all of our time. Being away from home and our families & friends caused us some stress and anguish. Then too the living conditions on the Canal were not exactly like home either. When we were not flying missions, about the only duty I had was cleaning my machine guns, loading my ammunition for the machine guns and maintain my pistol. At first I manned the right waist-gun so I only had one to maintain, then

later I switched to the top turret and had two guns to maintain them. When I loaded ammunition for the right gun of the turret I loaded; one tracer, one incendiary and one armor piercing. The left gun was loaded; one tracer, two incendiary and three armor piercing. I always used the right gun alone until I was zeroed in on the target, then I would pull the trigger on the left gun and pour them in.

Now might be a good time to list:

NON-COMBAT ACTIVITIES

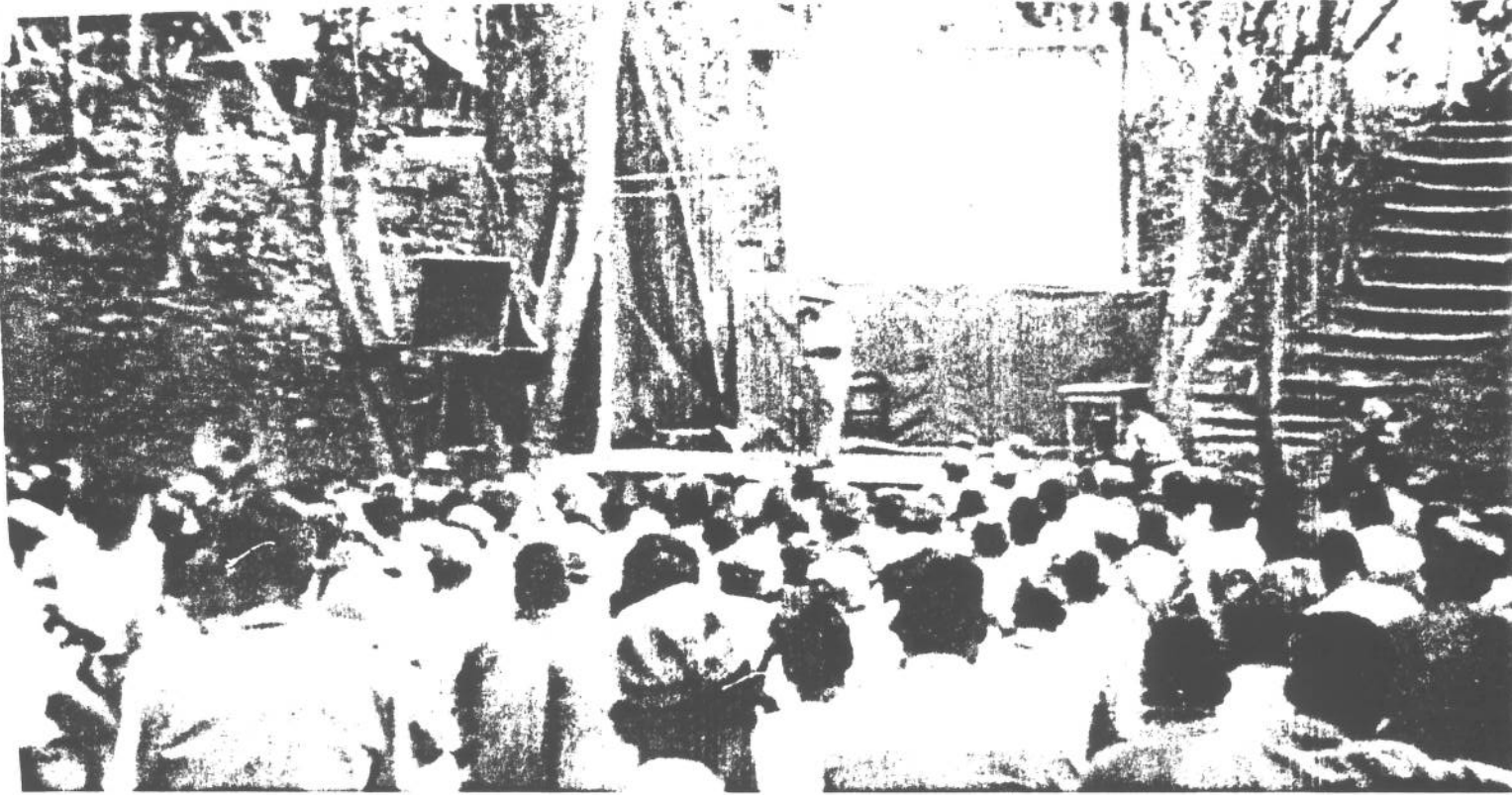
CARDS/CRAP: After payday is when most of the time was used to play cards and shoot crap. This procedure was hard on the paper money because it changed hands many many times before the money got settled in just a few hands, at which time the games had fewer participants at any given time. One time we were playing cards, outside, during the day, and we heard an explosion, not too far from us in the jungle. We all looked at each other and there was another explosion. We all jumped up, grabbed our pistols and went looking for the source. We thought there might be a sniper or something there. Soon we heard another explosion, then heard something falling down through the trees. When we located the spot we saw some broken glass jugs. The cook had bottled up some peach juice and hid it in the jungle to work itself into some kind of drink. Guess he left it work too long.

MONOPOLY/VOLLEYBALL: There were a few who never did play cards or shoot crap, so they played a lot of Monopoly, volleyball and a few other games instead. But toward the end of the month a lot of guys played other games. When it was raining was a good time for Monopoly cause a game could last all day sometimes.

WATCH BANDS: I remembered when I was at Camp Dick Runyan one time we made rope belts. We started with the buckle and tied several strands to the buckle and with a series of knots we ended up with a rope belt. I got the idea that since we sweat so much down there, our leather watchbands got pretty stinky sometimes, and if I made a watchband, like the belts I could wash it. I checked around for a source of fishline and made a watch band. Other guys thought that was a pretty good idea so I was soon in the watch-band business. That used up some of my spare time cause it took a long time to make one. I think I got \$2.50 to \$3.00 each, but "my overhead was low".

PISTOL HANDLES: I spent a lot of time making a pair of handles for my pistol out of a piece of plexiglass from a Zero that had been shot down. It took a lot of filing

and polishing to get them shaped right. Then I put a picture of Liz on one side. If I remember the picture of Liz was in the grass skirt I had sent her from Hawaii. I thought I would try to get my Pistol home, but had to turn it in when I got back to the States.



Col. Wm. A. Matheny briefs the air echelon for a bombing mission in the open air theater in our camp near Koli Point. The surroundings look primitive but the movies we saw here were modern. *H. M. Pullham, Esquire; Random Harvest* and others hadn't yet been released for showing in the States. Rain never stopped the show but sometimes "Washing Machine Charley" delayed it. (Picture furnished by Bill Mayhew.)

((UTS, p. 130))

MOVIES : Yes we had a Theatre. And they did send some of the latest movies over to us. Sometimes the movie was cut short by an Air Raid Warning, but we were used to being interrupted. The Natives used to like to come watch the movies too. It didn't take us long to realize that sometimes these Natives would get up and leave, before the show was over, and just about every time they did that we would get an air raid warning in 15 or 20 minutes. Don't know how they knew what was going to happen, but they were just about always right.

POEM: Once I even wrote a poem. I remember it very well. It was when we were living in tents. It was about 2:30 or 3:00a.m. and just couldn't sleep. I guess I wrote it by flashlight. The masterpiece is on the next page.

THE WEBSTER FAMILY

Now Modock is the Mother
Who is getting big and fat.
She has one son in the Air Corps
Ans she wonders where he's at.

The son I'm speaking of is Ben,
Who's the oldest of the stock,
And if he could write and tell her
She would probably get a shock.

There is no need to worry though
Cause he's really feeling fine,
And when he gets back home again
ole Modock sure will shine.

Now Ben's father, they call Baldy.
He's not so big as the other half,
But with no hair and his big nose,
You really have to laugh.

Now Baldy is a clothier
And a Councilman as well,
And if he left the good old town
It sure would go to hell.

The Webster's have another son
Who's in the service too,
He used to be a high-school star
That made the girls Woo-Woo.

Now Bob sent a picture home one day
In his Marine Corps Monkey Suit.
It had a medal on his chest
Because he learned to shoot.

Ben sent Liz a real grass-skirt.
She's the baby and quite a girl.
She practiced dancing day and night,
And how the grass does whirl.

I guess I've said it all by now,
Except about the dog.
Since Lady's reached a ripe old age,
She's lazy as a log.

I've been sitting here and writing this
Because I couldn't sleep.
If it isn't the roar of an airplane
It's a darned old noisy Jeep.

Now Ben would sure be thankful
If the Censor would pass this through,
And he knows that the Webster's
Would get a big laugh too.

READING: We were supplied pretty well with magazines. Not the risque kind that are on the market today, but Sports magazines and current event types of magazines. Also I read in the New Testament every day, and by the time I got back to the States I was just about through it twice. I also prayed a lot on just about all of our missions.

BBB STOCK: This by far consumed more of my non-combat time than any one other thing. BBB stood for Baldy - Bob - Ben Store. Bob and I were going to use our GI loans to open a men's store for the three of us. I spent hours figuring, how much loan we would be eligible for and how much of what kind of stock we could buy. By the time I got back to the States I had a lot of figures on paper. How many pairs of pants (and what sizes) to sell for 4.98, 6.95 etc. How many kinds and sizes of shirts to sell for 1.98, 2.98, 3.49 etc. Did the same for jackets, hats and caps, underwear, sox, sweaters, sportcoats, suits, etc. etc. Well when I got back to the States (don't remember if it was while I was in Galveston or home) I checked into the possibilities of the loan. I was told that I couldn't buy merchandise to be sold with any of the money in a GI loan, but that I could use it for fixtures, office equipment etc. I told them I could make most of the fixtures we would need, and that I wouldn't need office equipment, we could keep our money in a shoe box, we didn't need an expensive cash register. Well, that ended our prosperous business venture, before it got started. Guess it did accomplish one thing though, it occupied a lot of my time on the Canal.



((copy of McNeese photo))

There is another version of this picture on page 134 of Up The Slot and the caption indicates that Sanny was sitting in for Squadron Commander Noel Benson when the picture was taken.

Sanny was one good pilot and I had a lot of faith in him, and I think he had faith in my abilities too. One of my early letters from Tom Flanigan indicated that he had heard Sanny had died several years ago. I wrote to the Library system of Cleveland and they were unable to come up with anything on him.

CHAPTER VIII - LARGE SCALE OPERATIONS

The title of this chapter is rather misleading. On a comparative basis with other theaters our operations are pretty small. However, July was the beginning of much larger scale operations for the heavy bombers of the Thirteenth Air Force. In the past our missions consisted of four to eleven plane attacks - most of them closer to four planes than seven. In July we really started to operate as a complete combat team. Two squadrons were usually scheduled for each mission.

A system of rotation of squadrons was evolved. Each squadron served a six week tour at Guadalcanal then retired to Espiritu Santo for a six week rest and a training period. This kept two full squadrons of fresh crews at Guadalcanal all the time. The crews at Santo were sent to Auckland on rest leaves in relays during their six week period there. The remaining crews were put through an intensive training period. Since many of the new crews in the 371st and 372nd Squadrons needed additional training, the rotation policy was not put into effect until 8 August 1943. The 370th and 424th Squadrons continued operations at Guadalcanal for the month of July.

To illustrate our large scale operations - there were 16 missions with 220 planes scheduled for the month of July. In addition there was 1 rescue mission and 7 searches for missing planes and crews. 8 of the 16 missions were against Kahili, 2 against Ballale, 2 against a Jap task force, 1 against Buka, 1 against shipping at Buin, 1 against Munda, and 1 against Tarawa. We dropped 2,400 bombs for a total weight of 408.8 tons during these 16 missions. Our losses were terrific for the month. We lost 8 planes and 68 men. This was the highest monthly loss we've ever had, before or since. In exchange we shot down two (2) enemy aircraft and damaged three (3) more - not a very good rate of exchange. However, results must be measured in damage done by bombs.

((307th, p. 27))

The next mission came July 25 in support of ground troops on New Georgia. The tenacious, well-dug-in Japs had been hard to rout and American progress had been much slower than anticipated. Our two squadrons, making separate runs, saturated a strip 800 feet wide and a mile long between Ilangana Point and Munda Field with 500-pound demolition bombs. Ground troops moving into the area afterward report-

((UTS, p. 195))

ed, "Trees were shattered stumps, pill boxes were caved in and dead Japs abundant. There was hardly an area of twenty-five square yards that was free of water filled craters."

There was sad news along with the good about this mission. The B-24s took off in early morning darkness, assembled just after daybreak, then continued on the mission. Lieutenant Orlin F. Wyse took off along with the other crews but never joined the formation. The most logical assumption seemed to be that the crew crashed immediately after take off and went into Iron Bottom Sound. Two friends who had flown several missions with us, Joe Herzog and Royce Colclasure, were with Lieutenant Wyse. Others missing were: Harold Cunningham, Howard Dugan, Quentine Wagner, James Mickler, Julio Caparella, Joseph Duke, Jr., and Dexter Reddick.

((UTS, p.197))

Joe Hersog was our original Asst. Engineer, from way back to Ephrata. He was a good friend, a good Engineer and a typical good ole Texan. He flew on all of our early missions but I don't remember when he left our crew to become Engineer on another crew. I don't remember who replaced him on our crew as Asst. Engineer.

I learned in the summer of 1987 that Hersel Dumbauld, from Huntington, was an officer with the Sea Bees waiting to get ashore to build a fighter strip on Munda. He told me what a welcome sight it was for them to see our B-24s dump our loads on Munda that day.

The war was hot in the Solomons on the night of July 19-20. We had eighteen crews over Kahili that night. Some of the first crews up the Slot discovered a task force north of Kolombangara and could have bombed it but weren't certain of its identity. They tried to report the task force by radio but couldn't get through because of what appeared to be a long, urgent radio transmission by someone else on our frequency.

Our planes hitting Kahili started six fires and knocked out one searchlight. But the Japs were still bolstering their Kahili defenses. Eleven of our planes were caught and held by searchlights—some as long as four minutes. Jap ack-ack broke the plexiglass on two nose turrets and injured one gunner.

((UTS, p. 193))

I remember this mission well too. It was one of the few times Sanny could not get out of the searchlights. Usually about two good sideslips and he was out, but not this time. Also they had us in their lights before we dropped our bombs so we had to drop them first. It was the last bomb of our load that got the searchlight that night. I could see where all of our bombs hit the target, from the waist window.

Harold
Huntington Ind

HEADQUARTERS USAFISPA
APO #502

28 July 1944.

GENERAL ORDERS)
NUMBER 1143)

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Section

Awards of the Oak-Leaf Cluster (Distinguished-Flying Cross) . . . I.
Awards of the Oak-Leaf Cluster (Air Medal) II.

I. AWARDS OF THE OAK-LEAF CLUSTER (DISTINGUISHED-FLYING CROSS):

1. By direction of the President, under the provisions of the act of Congress approved 2 July 1926 (Dull 8, WD, 1926), a bronze Oak-Leaf Cluster, in lieu of an additional Distinguished-Flying Cross, is awarded by the Commanding General, United States Army Forces in the South Pacific Area, to the following-named officer:

HOMER A. BAKER, JR., (0-660613), Captain, Air Corps, United States Army, Squadron Commander, for extraordinary achievement while participating, during the period of 25 June to 21 September 1943, in ten aerial photographic flights over enemy territory. Flights were of a highly hazardous nature due, at times, to extremely adverse weather conditions. Frequently of long duration, and during which extreme altitudes were often attained, these flights were performed alone in unarmed aircraft with attack by enemy airplanes at any time probable and expected. These flights make sixty of like nature in which he has participated. Previous recognition that Captain Baker has received makes his record one for emulation; his accomplishments being a credit to himself and the Army Air Forces. Home Address: 1430 East Kellogg Street, Wichita, Kansas.

2. By direction of the President, under the provisions of the act of Congress approved 2 July 1926 (Dull 8, WD, 1926), a bronze Oak-Leaf Cluster, in lieu of an additional Distinguished-Flying Cross, is awarded by the Commanding General, United States Army Forces in the South Pacific Area, to the following-named officer and enlisted men for extraordinary achievement while participating in aerial flights on combat operational missions. All of these flights were of a hazardous nature during which enemy opposition was met, or during which an area was traversed where enemy antiaircraft fire was effective or where enemy fighter patrols were habitually encountered. Previous recognition that each has received makes his record one for emulation; his accomplishments being a credit to himself and the Army Air Forces.

EDWARD P. LeMARQUAND, (0-2042973), Second Lieutenant, Air Corps, United States Army, Bombardier, for five heavy bomber strike sorties during the period of 6 August to 24 August 1943, making forty of like nature in which he has participated. Home Address: 140-70 Ashland Avenue, Flushing, New York.

HENSING WEBSTER, (15059356), Technical Sergeant, Air Corps, United States Army, Aerial Engineer - Gunner, for five heavy bomber strike sorties during the period of 29 October to 7 November 1943, making thirty of like nature in which he has participated. Home Address: 364 Monroe Street, Huntington, Indiana.

JAMES V. SHAUGHNESSY, (36398676), Staff Sergeant, Air Corps, United States Army, Aerial Gunner, for five heavy bomber strike sorties during the period of 1 August to 9 August 1943, making thirty-five of like nature in which he has participated. Home Address: 5647 Peoria Street, Chicago, Illinois.

FRANCIS A. WOODS, (17038398), Staff Sergeant, Air Corps, United States Army, Aerial Radio Operator - Gunner, for five heavy bomber strike sorties during the period of 2 August to 16 August 1943, making thirty-five of like nature in which he has participated. Home Address: Bladen, Nebraska.

GO, #1143, Hq USAFISFA, 20 July 1944.

II. AWARDS OF THE OAK-LEAF CLUSTER (AIR MEDAL):

By direction of the President, under the provisions of Executive Order, No. 9158, 11 May 1942 (Bull 25, WD, 1942), as amended by Executive Order, No. 9242-A, 11 September 1942 (Bull 49, WD, 1942), a bronze Oak-Leaf Cluster, in lieu of an additional Air Medal, is awarded by the Commanding General, United States Army Forces in the South Pacific Area, to the following-named officers and enlisted men for meritorious achievement while participating in sustained combat operational missions. Flights were of a hazardous nature during which enemy opposition was met, or during which an area was traversed where enemy antiaircraft fire was effective or where enemy fighter patrols were habitually encountered. Each individual exhibited great courage and untiring energy; his services reflecting highest credit on the military forces of the United States.

HAROLD F. AMSTER, (O-676332), First Lieutenant, Air Corps, United States Army, as bombardier from 13 May to 24 May 1944. Home Address: 1658 Hillcrest Road, Cleveland Heights, Ohio.

EDGAR D. FRAKER, (O-687025), First Lieutenant, Air Corps, United States Army, as flight leader from 21 May to 2 June 1944. Home Address: Grover, Colorado.

KENNETH D. SMITH, (O-691003), First Lieutenant, Air Corps, United States Army, as copilot from 16 May to 27 May 1944. Home Address: 923 West Fruit Street, Albuquerque, New Mexico.

CHARLES L. DAVIS, (O-761051), Second Lieutenant, Air Corps, United States Army, as copilot from 17 May to 8 June 1944. Home Address: 11301 East Seventeenth Avenue, Denver, Colorado.

ELLIS G. GOODMAN, (31012369), Technical Sergeant, Air Corps, United States Army, as aerial engineer gunner from 15 May to 9 June 1944. Home Address: Garber, Oklahoma.

EDWARD A. ROCKEOLT, (34367816), Technical Sergeant, Air Corps, United States Army, as aerial radio operator gunner from 18 April to 11 May 1944. Home Address: 2052 Fleix Avenue, Memphis, Tennessee.

JEROME L. ZALINSKY, (32413898), Technical Sergeant, Air Corps, United States Army, as aerial radio operator gunner from 7 May to 15 May 1944. Home Address: 899 Montgomery Street, Brooklyn, New York.

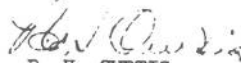
JAMES W. HOUSTON, (20803306), Sergeant, Air Corps, United States Army, as armorer gunner from 18 May to 30 May 1944. Home Address: Gonzales, Texas.

EDWARD H. MARTIN, (12190717), Sergeant, Air Corps, United States Army, as aerial gunner from 27 April to 14 May 1944. Home Address: 31-67 Thirty-seventh Street, Long Island City, New York.

By Command of Major General MURRAY:

A. J. BARNETT,
Major General, GSC,
Chief of Staff.

OFFICIAL:


R. H. CURTIS,
Lt Col, AGD,
Asst Adj Gen.

DISTRIBUTION: All Island Commands.
All AAF Units, Thirteenth Air Force.

In August and September I did very little flying as the orders on the *PREVIOUS* page will confirm. I had noticed on several July missions that I had some kind of visual problem because I noticed some difficulty identifying Zeros compared to some of our planes. They checked my vision and grounded me for about six weeks until they had a pair of glasses made for me in New Zealand. The frames would be small enough that I could wear them under goggles so I would be able to continue flying combat missions.

note* As will be pointed out later, it was okay for me to fly on combat missions, with glasses, but after I returned to the States I was taken off flying status because I needed glasses. So no flight pay after I got back to the States.

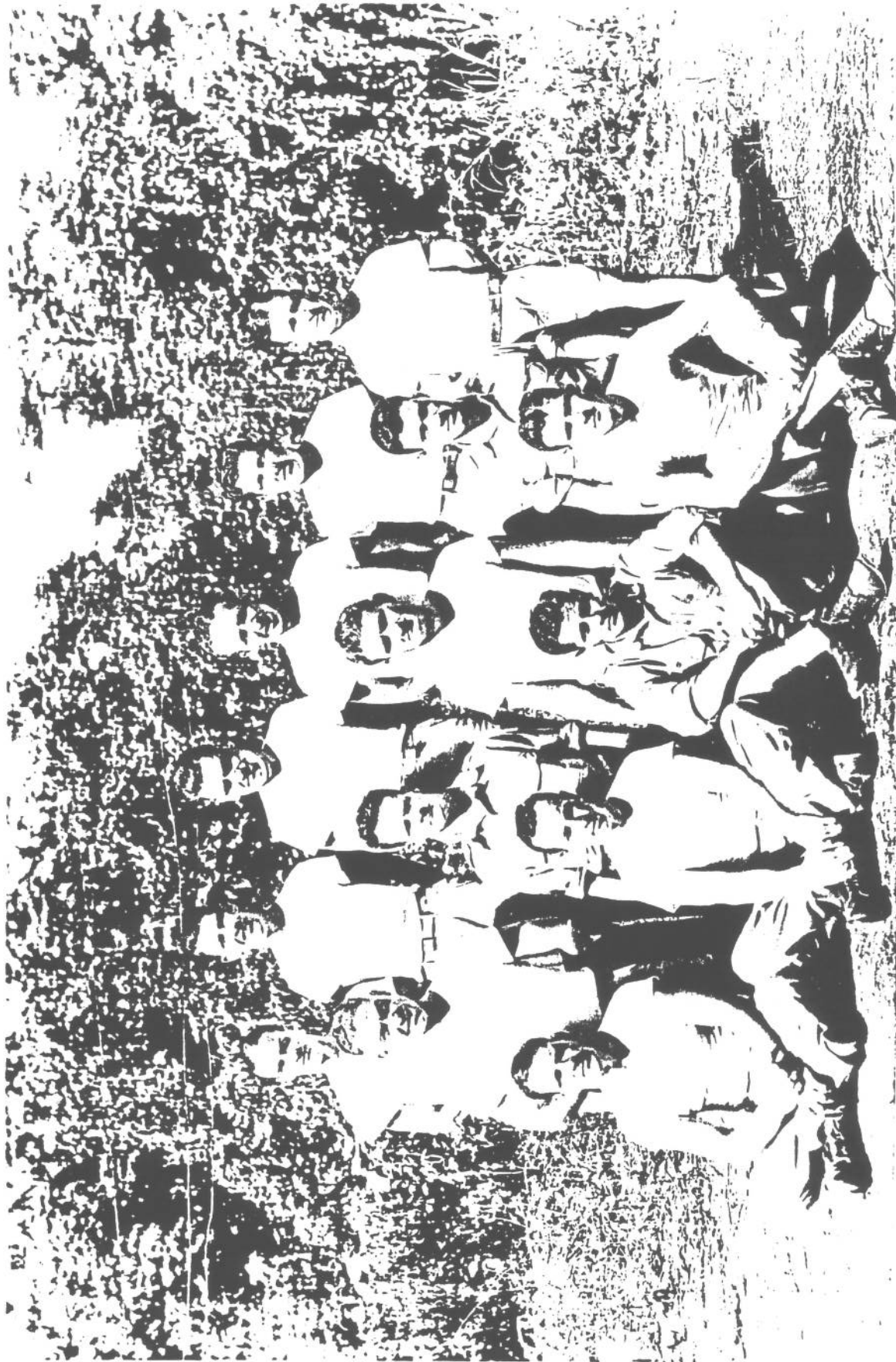
The following picture of Milledge and Sanny crew members was taken just before August 20th, because Milledge left the Canal on August 20th with the first cadre of Officers to return to the States. According to the information available, Sanny must have left the Canal about September 10th with another cadre coming back to the States.

August 25 we (the 371st Squadron) took off from Espiritu Santo and headed for Guadalcanal to relieve the 424th Squadron. It was the first time the 424th Squadron had had a breather from combat since their February 13 mission against Shortland Harbor. Things had changed a lot in the Solomons since February. In addition to the air field in the Russell Islands we now had usable fields for small planes at Segi Point and Munda on New Georgia. The Seabees were working on still another strip on Vella Lavella. No longer would the single engine fighters be pinched for gasoline when they escorted us to Kahili.

((UTS, p. 215))

As indicated above the 424th must have left the Canal around August 25th and gone to Buttons, for about six weeks during which time we were to have gone to New Zealand for about a ten day rest. I don't know for sure just when Knipp and I made it to New Zealand, but it was good to just get away from the Canal too.

I can remember a couple of things that happened to us on Buttons while we were waiting to go to New Zealand. We had quite a few ships in the harbor at Buttons and one of them was a Battleship. We found out that if we could get aboard ship by noon, we would probably get invited to eat lunch on the ship. Several of us went to the dock and hitched a ride out to the Battleship. We told the people running the shuttle boats, that we had never seen a battleship so they took us out for a tour of it. True we did



Sitting:- L. to R. - Capt. K. Weilbacker, Capt.
H. Milledge, Capt. M. J. Sanny, 2nd Lt. J. Woody.
Kneeling:- 1st Lt. C. T. O'Neill, 1st Lt. W. A.
Knox, 2nd Lt. C. L. Johnson, 1st Lt. W. R. Harpster
Standing:- S/Sgt. A. S. Knipp, T/Sgt. K. Bullard,
S/Sgt. F. Woods, T/Sgt. B. Webster, S/Sgt. L. W.
McKee, S/Sgt. J. V. Shaughnessy

get invited for lunch. We couldn't believe our eyes. T-bone steaks, and they were really tender too. The last time I remember having a T-bone was back at Oahu when Lt. Roberts and I flew a small single engine plane to Hilo and brought some steaks back and shared with several of the cooks and a couple of officers.

Another thing I remember on Buttons was one day we heard that the Navy was going to dispense some soft ice-cream cones. Knipp and I hitch-hiked to wherever it was and we waited in a line about three blocks long to get one cone.

When we did leave Buttons for New Zealand, we landed in Noumea, New Caledonia to change planes and stayed all night.

Finally we got to New Zealand. They did speak English but they had some funny slang expressions. For example you better not call some one a "bloody joker" cause that was pretty bad and considered fighting words. They drove on the wrong side of the street, walked on the wrong side of the sidewalk. And what bothered me most was they went up and down the wrong side of the stairsteps. Twice a day they stopped whatever they were doing to have tea. One time we were riding on a tram (streetcar) and it stopped in the middle of a block, and the driver went into a tea shop to have his tea break.

Most of us wanted to get out of our GI shoes and get some dress shoes. The shoe store was very busy, and I think it only had one clerk. I told the guy that I used to sell shoes, and asked if it would be alright if I tried to find shoes for the five or six guys who wanted them. The clerk said go ahead and finally we all had the right size so paid for them and walked out. We didn't know their pounds and shillings money system and sometimes held some money out in our hands and let the clerks take what was supposed to be the right amount. We probably got taken sometimes but we didn't know it.

After the food we had been eating, their fresh meat, vegetables and dairy products really tasted good. The combinations of their meals were different than ours. Steak and eggs was very common, for example. Then to top off my first steak meal, I ordered a piece of pie, anykind. Well they brought a meat-pie. They didn't make fruit pies. They didn't know how to make American coffee though. They made coffee like they made tea, I guess. I think they boiled the tea with milk right in it. The Red Cross served good ole American coffee though.

Not too long after we got to New Zealand I started aching and feeling like I had the flu. They put me in the hospital and later diagnosed that Dengue Fever had caught up with me. Quite a few of the guys had come down with it on the Canal, but it hadn't bothered me till now. Maybe the change in climate brought it on.

While in New Zealand I bought a few things that I can remember, besides the shoes mentioned earlier, I bought some tomato seeds and planted them when I got back to the Canal. They grew real well, but before the fruit came on I moved or came back home, and I never got to taste them. I also bought a hunting knife, handmade. I still have it but never used it too much. Then there was that wooden flute I bought. It was similiar to the plastic ones the little kids use in school now. I remember when I got home, Dad called Louie Diffenbaugh and had me play "Darktown Strutters Ball" on the phone (over the phone).

They had some strange customs in New Zealand. On the King's birthday all stores are closed. Everybody goes to the horse races. The whole family goes, and everybody bets on the horses. They don't ice the beer they sell. It is sold at room temperature. They just store it on shelves instead of in coolers. It is a heavy dark beer too.

Knipp and I did a lot of things together before he left for the Canal. We played golf and we could only buy used balls, which didn't make much difference to us because we weren't golfers anyway. We went skating at a big rink. I think I may have skated in a rink once before, but Knipp was a pretty good one on skates. We went horse-back riding and of course I am no horseman either. The New Zealanders thought just because we were from the States, we were all cowboys. Ha! We also saw "Yankee Doodle Dandy", in Black and White.

Don't remember how long I was in the hospital before I left for the Canal, but it wasn't long. I do remember that the staff at the hospital asked if I would take several of the patients to the beach to fish for a day, and I agreed. They sent us on a bus, and packed a picnic lunch for us. We didn't catch many fish (odd fishing tackle) but we did have a good time.

While we were in New Zealand, Sanny must have made a few missions with pick-up crews. The picture on the following page shows, Sanny, Knox and Weilbacker, from our original crew, but doesn't show who the Co-pilot was. The only enlisted man I know is Gianoli. He was in the 424th for sometime, but I don't remember him flying on our crew.

The best news of the month was the announcement on 2 September 1943 of the rotation policy for returning combat crews to the United States. This policy was a point system based on months in the area, months in foreign service, total combat hours, combat hours in this area, total combat missions, and combat missions in this area. Six points made a man eligible to go home, but the old crews had so many missions and hours that it was close to ten points before a man was put on a list to go home. ((307th, p. 31))



SANNY'S CREW - 424th; Front - Apply, Gianoli, Bush. Back - Walker, Hinkle, Wolberton, Sanny, Knox, Weilbacher, Northcraft. 307-9-0. (Smith/Gisler Collection)

After I got back to the Canal from New Zeland flying missions was different. I don't remember being on any particular crew. We flew with different crews to fill in for someone who was sick etc. Many of the crews flying missions now were replacements and I guess we older guys just didn't have the confidence in the new crews. Also When we were flying with our old crew each man knew what each of the other men on the crew could and would do in different situations.

At last the 307th Group had an ideal set up. On 2 October 1943 we moved the planes from Carney Field to Koli Point. This made the third airdrome we had used on Guadalcanal. The beauty of Koli was that it was right in our own backyard. The runway was only 500 yards from the camp and the nearest taxiway only 100 yards away. This gave us a much better maintenance set up. Engineering buildings were halfway between the taxiway and the camp area. It made this area convenient to both airplanes and living quarters. It eliminated the long tiring ride from the camp to the line. The men had only to walk from their tents to the line which was a matter of only a few minutes. However, everyone was just a little worried with an operational runway so close to our camp. Surely Tojo would try to do something about it. The result was a general strengthening of foxholes throughout the area and when the siren went off we never dallied in getting into them. It remained to be seen how much we would have to take.

((307th, p. 33))

We didn't have long to wait for Tojo to discover our new field. He paid us a visit on both the 11th and 12th. In the first raid he apparently sneaked in under the radar, because the siren did not awaken us until he had gotten his bombs away. Fortunately his bombs landed miles away from the strip. The next night he came closer but did no damage.

((307th, p. 33))

About this time our crews began carrying 1000-pound bombs. The objective was to make the Japanese runways unusable in preparation for the pending Bougainville invasion. On October 18 two 307th Squadrons and one 5th Group Squadron dropped their 1000-pounders on Ballale air strip from 17,000 feet. The field order for the day read: ". . . will plow Ballale strip." The crews were admonished at briefing that if they didn't do a good job from 17,000 they'd have to return at a lower altitude. Only seven bombs missed the tiny island airdrome.

The next day, October 19, the same three Liberator Squadrons found their primary target, Kara, closed and dropped their bombs on Kahili. Ack-ack was intense and accurate but only one plane was slightly damaged. Fifteen to twenty Zekes intercepted after leaving the target but showed a decided reluctance to press home their attacks. One Zeke was shot down, two probably shot down and five damaged.

((UTS, p. 255))

Shifting our attacks to Buka and Bonis in November we soon had them nonoperational. We continued to bomb and harass Jap airdromes throughout the Bougainville area. On 1 November 1943 American forces made a beachhead at Torokina, Empress Augusta Bay, Bougainville, and we again shifted our attacks to hit supply depots, bivouac areas, troop concentrations, and ground installations.

((307th, p. 34))

After the Japanese abandoned their southern Bougainville air bases, the 307th began ranging further afield. They flew their first mission against Rabaul November 11, by staging through Munda. They continued hitting Rabaul occasionally through December. Staging through Munda was cumbersome. It was time to move up. The 371st and 372nd Squadrons' ground echelons packed up in the New Hebrides and leapfrogged to Munda in January 1944 and Guadalcanal became the rear echelon base.

((UTS, p. 266))

The November 11, 1943 mission to Rabaul was a memorable one for many of us.

We flew to *MUNDA* November 10th and then took off for Rabaul the next morning. I remember that I hadn't flown much with the crew that I was flying with on that mission. There was quite a bit of overcast that day and I was in the top turret, I knew we were flying formation but I couldn't see any of the other planes. After I sweat this out for sometime I finally asked the pilot if we were still in formation and he assured me we were and the other planes in the formation were with us. I raised myself out of my seat for a couple of inches and saw the rest of the formation. Due to atmospheric conditions there was a two to three inch of ice around the turret bubble, and I was trying to look through it. I felt much more at ease after I learned that.

I think we were flying around 20,000 ft. and I am pretty sure we didn't have any fighter cover because of the distance. I don't remember if it was just before we got to the target or if it was soon after we made our bomb run, but there was a zero making a head-on run at us, flying at our same altitude and flying right at us. I know I was pouring shots into him and I couldn't tell if our nose gunner was shooting at him or not, but he did start smoking while he was out three or four hundred yards. He nosed his plane up over us and ejected in his parachute. When I saw him in a chute above us I thought about the four guys from McNeese's crew who were strafed on 2-13-43, and I started to straffe the Jap pilot. All the other gunners in the formation did the same thing. I think this mission was the first I saw phosphorus bombs dropped on our formations by the Japs.

Soon after our bomb drop I felt kinda blaaaaahhhh and I guess I must have slumped in my seat. The navigator noticed that I was having trouble and checked what might be wrong and he noticed that the oxygen supply on my turret was empty and he filled my supply from the plane's supply. As soon as I got oxygen I came out of it okay. Sure glad the navigator noticed me.

I didn't learn until I started to write to Tom Flanagan in 1986 that the November 11 mission to Rabaul was Tom's last mission out of the Canal. And that he was grounded for combat missions, waiting to go home. Tom was flying with Darr's crew at the time. I guess when Bill Jones left the Canal, Darr took over the crew which still had some of the people on it that had flown with most of the missions Jones flew. There is a picture on the next page of Darr's crew that was taken on their return from the Rabaul mission. The next mission Darr's crew flew they were lost. The picture was in the 307th Reunion book number five. Tom said he did fly several search missions looking for any of the crew. Don't think any were ever recovered. I guess Tom and Malcolm Smith were good friends and Tom took care of sending Smity's personal things home.



Darr's Crew - 424th, taken 11-11-43

Front - James Hoffman, Malcom Smith, James Buchanan, Bill Adams, Morris Nelson.

Back - Tom Flanigan, Gerald Darr, Eugene Hyden, Bill Bush, Clyde Friend.

All lost on 11-15-43 except for Flanigan who had completed his missions and was grounded to return to the States.

The old rumor factory was going strong at this point. The main one of course was that we were going to move to Munda on New Georgia. The rumor had a good basis in that the distance from our base to our targets was getting longer and longer. In fact the raid on Rabaul on 11 November 1943 was staged from Munda. It was obvious that most of our missions in the future would be against Rabaul and northern targets.

On 24 November 1943 the 371st Squadron again relieved the 424th Squadron. With this change a new policy of rotating key ground personnel along with their air echelon was inaugurated. Aircraft mechanics, specialist, S-2 and S-3 personnel, and armorers were given a much needed rest at Espiritu Santo.

((307 th, p. 35))

After the November 11th raid on Rabaul, most of my missions were bombing or search missions in the Northern Solomons, flying with different crews. None of the bombing missions after Rabaul were especially memorable to me so they must have been routine. Also I must have been on one or two search missions for Darr's crew.

By November 24th, when the 371st relieved us again, I had completed 39 bombing missions and 27 sea searches and had racked up about 2,000 hours military flying time. I didn't realize it at the time, but my Military flying time was completed, because I was taken off flying status back in the States because of my vision.

Sgt. Webster Receives Oak Leaf Cluster

The award of an additional oak leaf cluster to the air medal won by Technical Sergeant Bensing Webster, 25, last December for his participation of an air attack on Wake Island, was recently made by General Harmon, commander of the United States army forces in the South Pacific area, for meritorious achievement while participating in aerial flights on combat operational missions.

"All of these flights were of a hazardous nature, during which enemy opposition was met, or during which the airplane traversed an area where enemy anti-aircraft fire was effective or where enemy

AWARD GOES TO SGT. WEBSTER

(Continued from Page One)

fighter patrols were habitually encountered" the report read.

"His most exciting moments on combat missions came when his plane attacked and sank a Japanese transport in the Solomons. There were many Jap warships in the vicinity, throwing up considerable anti-aircraft artillery fire, Sgt. Webster said, "and a swarm of over 50 Zeros attacked our formation of three bombers and five escorting fighter planes. The running battle which followed, lasted for an hour and 20 minutes, during which time we escaped losses while knocking down twelve Zeros."

He is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Homer Webster, 364 Monroe street. He is a member of SS. Peter and Paul's church, and is a member of the Spokane, Wash., Knights of Columbus lodge. He played for four years in the Huntington high school band and attended Indiana university and Ball State Teachers college. He is a member of Delta Chi fraternity and played freshman basketball while at Indiana university.

An engineer and gunner on one of the United States bombers in the Solomon Island area, Sgt. Webster received training at Chanute Field, Ill., and Geiger Field, Spokane, Wash., before serving overseas. He has a brother, Robert Webster, now serving with the Marine air corps at Mojave, Calif.

Huntington
Herald Press

Huntington Flyer Awarded Additional Medals For Missions

(Special to The Journal-Gazette)

HUNTINGTON, Nov. 22.—Tech. Sgt. Bensing Webster, 25, who was awarded a Distinguished Flying Cross last December for participation in a bombing mission on Wake Island, has been awarded an Air Medal and Oak Leaf Cluster for meritorious achievement while participating in aerial flights on combat operational missions.

"All of these flights were of a hazardous nature, during which enemy opposition was met, or during which the airplane traversed an area where enemy anti-aircraft fire was effective or where fighter patrols were habitually encountered," the citation read.

He is a son of Mr. and Mrs. Homer Webster of this city. He attended Ball State Teachers college and Indiana university, where he was a member of the Delta Chi fraternity and played with the freshman basketball squad. A brother, Robert Webster, is serving with the marine corps at Mojave, Calif.

FTW Journal-Gazette

I have some question about these articles. They appear to have both come from the same source. I got the Herald Press article from the Library, and had marked it 11-22-43. I doubt that some of that data would have been released in 1943. I couldn't have sent that information in mail home. In 1944 that information would have been available to H-P from other releases. Also I did get an Air Medal for Wake, not a Distinguished Flying Cross as indicated in the J-G Article. I did get an Oak Leaf Cluster to the DFC, during 1944, while in Galveston.

Both articles indicate I played freshman basketball at IU, but I really played Baseball.

When we got back to buttons at the end of November there really much we had to do except wait for our trip to New Zealand. The facilities and food were better at buttons, and it was good just getting away from the Canal. The only problem in moving, while in the Service, is there is a lull in receiving your mail for awhile. We played a lot of volleyball, basketball, etc., had movies, read etc.

I think it was a few days before Christmas when I got to NZ. I remember being in the hospital for Christmas and New Years. Of course it was summer then in NZ.

We boarded a ship for home on Jan. 15, 1944. It was a Kaiser (quick built) transport, which was not very plush. We were allowed each a carton of cigarettes or a box of cigars. I got a box of La Pallena cigars, and one of my friends, who didn't smoke, got a box of cigars for me too. Also on board were a bunch of New Zealanders coming to the US for flight training.

I didn't get sea-sick but did have a couple of problems. It was hard to find soft enough water to take a bath (sometimes we sneaked into crew's quarters). Then the food wasn't the greatest. We were served two meals a day. Every morning we had eggs, usually hard-boiled and coffee. Every afternoon it seemed like we had beans, and always tea instead of coffee. When we boarded ship we were allowed to volunteer for K-P duty in the Officer's mess, but I was too dumb to do so. They ate better than we did. I did have a friend who worked in Officer's mess and he did get me a couple of good sandwiches during the trip.

It was hard to pass the time on ship, especially so because we were headed home. There was one big poker game that went on for 24 hours a day. I didn't play in that one, but there were a lot of two and four man card games going on. There was also a lottery with the winner being the one who guessed closest to the official docking time when we landed in the US.

We landed at Frisco on Jan. 29, 1944, and most of us were run through Letterman General Hospital, for check-ups.

While I was at Letterman, Bob did get a pass and came to see me, but I couldn't get a pass to leave the hospital. He was stationed at Mojave Calif. at that time. Sure was good seeing him.

It wasn't long then till I was transferred to McCloskey General Hospital at Temple Texas.

SGT. BENSING WEBSTER ARRIVES ON WEST COAST

Technical Sergeant Bensing Webster, son of Mr. and Mrs. Homer Webster, this city, arrived in San Francisco Saturday night after 15 months service in the South Pacific with the United States army air force. The sergeant, holder of air medal and other decorations for service in the American air forces that have been assaulting Japanese positions in the South Pacific, will be sent to a rest camp for two weeks to make the transition from tropical to temperate climate, and then expects to come home for a furlough.

Sgt. Webster called his parents by telephone from San Francisco Sunday evening.

H-P Jan. 31, 1944

I was at the Letterman General Hospital in San Francisco for a week or ten days then sent to McCloskey General Hospital in Temple, Texas.

WEBSTER GIVEN AIR AWARDS FOR PACIFIC SERVICE

Presentation Ceremony Held
in Texas Witnessed by
Fellow Townsman

Technical Sergeant Bensing H. Webster, United States air force, son of Mr. and Mrs. Homer Webster, this city, received two bronze oak leaf clusters in lieu of two additional air medals at a presentation ceremony last Friday at McCloskey general hospital, Temple, Tex., with Staff Sergeant Edward W. (Doc) Payne, this city, an interested spectator.

Sgt. Payne, who is attached to the public relations office of the hospital, wrote letters over the week-end to Mr. Webster and The Herald-Press, telling of his meeting with Sergeant Webster at the hospital and a copy of the story issued by the hospital.

Sees Name on List

Sgt. Payne, formerly a chiropractist in this city, was surprised when he found Webster's name on a list of patients receiving decorations in the Red Cross building at the hospital. Payne had read in The Herald-Press about Webster being in the Letterman general hospital in California, but was absent on a bond tour when the train bringing Webster to McCloskey arrived.

Sgt. Webster will be home in a few days, according to Sgt. Payne, who said he was taking the airman with him on a short bond tour, beginning Sunday, February 13.

Major Charley H. Freeman, post administrative officer, representing Brig. Gen. James A. Bethea, commanding general, made the awards.

Sustained Operations

The story released by the hospital says:

"Sergeant Webster, an engineer-gunner on a B-24, won the decorations for meritorious achievement while participating in sustained combat operational missions, all of a hazardous nature during which enemy opposition was met, or during which there was traversed an area where enemy anti-aircraft fire was effective or where enemy fighter patrols were habitually encountered.

General Bethea paid especial tribute to young Webster, for his great courage and untiring energy, and added, Your services reflect the highest credit on the military forces of the United States.

Sgt. Webster completed 39 combat missions, and has over 2,000 combat hours in the Southwest Pacific theater to his credit. He made many flights over the Solomons, Gilberts, Samoas, and Marshall Islands. His group received the presidential citation for exceptional service in the successful assault on Wake Island. On one occasion, while photographing Japanese positions on Tarawa, a Jap transport was sighted just off the coast...They interrupted the

(Turn to Page Seven, Please)

WEBSTER GIVEN AIR AWARDS FOR PACIFIC SERVICE

(Continued from Page One)

mission long enough to sink it with a couple of well-placed bombs.

After 15 exciting months overseas, Sgt. Webster returned to the United States for rest and treatment of a tropical fever contracted at Guadalcanal. He is recuperating splendidly and after a well-deserved sick leave with the folks back in Huntington, expects to return to full duty.

"A glance at Ben's blouse tells the entire story...He wears the American defense ribbon, good conduct, Asiatic-Pacific ribbon with four bronze stars, presidential unit citation, and the air medal with four oak leaf clusters. He has also been recommended, and will receive, the distinguished flying cross."

HP 15 Feb. 1944

Chapter VI
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Galveston, Texas - Colorado Springs, Colorado

While at Letterman General and McCloskey General hospitals Addie and Ben made quite a few phone calls. It was hard to guess a date when I would be released from the hospital, so we couldn't set a wedding date too far ahead.

I traveled by train from Temple Texas to Indianapolis, then the Bus to Huntington, arriving Monday evening on 21st of February. The bus trip from Indianapolis took for everrrrrrrrr.

Tuesday and Wednesday were very busy days. We had to get the marriage license. We had to get two dispensations from Church. One because we didn't announce the wedding three times in Church and one dispensation because we were getting married during Lent.

Since I was to report in Atlantic City, N. J. for reassignment, we decided to report a week early in Atlantic City for Honeymoon.

Ufheil-Webster Rites Solemized Here Thursday

Miss Adeline Ufheil, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Ufheil, became the bride of Technical Sergeant James Hensing Webster, son of Mr. and Mrs. Homer Webster, in a nuptial mass at 9 a. m. Thursday in St. Peter and Paul's church with the Rev. Simeon Schmitt officiating. Miss Filene Ufheil and Elmo Ufheil, sister and brother of the bride, attended the couple.

Sergeant Webster returned to Huntington this week for a 20 day delay enroute to Atlantic City, N. J., after serving 15 months as an engineer and gunner on a B-24 in the southwest Pacific. He has received the air medal and four bronze oak leaf clusters and has been recommended for the distinguished flying cross.

Both young people are graduates of Huntington high school. The bride, who has been employed in the office of the Kelley furniture store, is a member of the Kappa Sigma Tau sorority.

HP 24th Feb. 1944



Feb. 24th was a beautiful day.... Look, no snow, no heavy coats. Just lots of Sunshine.

Being reassigned at Atlantic City was very tough duty, (having just come from the Southwest Pacific).

We stayed in one of the PLUSH Boardwalk Hotels that the Government had taken over. It cost us \$2.25 per week (maid service) for our room. My meals were free and Addie's meals cost 25¢ each. Regardless of which meal or what they were serving. Always could go back for seconds, even when T-bone steaks were served. Sometimes they even had a string ensemble playing during meals.

I had to report to a large convention hall for all of my tests, conferences, and check-ups, etc. It was the same building that they held the Miss America Pageants in for years.

Dwight Frost visited us one day while we were there. He was stationed in Newark I think.

We were being transferred to Galveston, Texas. After we learned which train we would be traveling on, we called the folks and Mom, Dad and Treasa met the train in Ft. Wayne for a five minute stop.

After we arrived in Chicago, we were advised we would have to wait till the next day to get a train to Galveston. Well Addie and I hopped on an Erie and came back to Huntington for the night and went back to Chicago the next Day.

We stayed in a Hotel for about a week until Addie found us an apartment. One of three apartments on the lower level and one apartment above.

While at Galveston I was an Inspector out of the Base Inspection Office. My vision wasn't good enough to fly for monthly flight pay. They were alright to finish my combat missions, but not good enough for Stateside flying. That cut in pay didn't help newlyweds budget much.

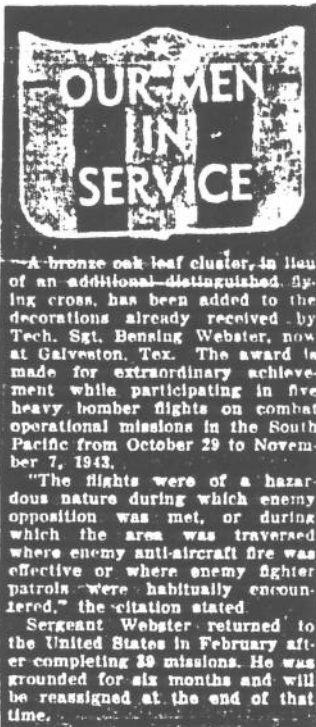


On the board Walk

I had applied for some business courses through a College program we could take. When the manager of the PX learned that I had had some retail experience he offered me a job redecorating the PX. He said he didn't care what way I would decorate it, but he wanted me to cover up as much of the blue and Yellow paint that the inside of the PX was painted in. I received half-base pay (same as flight pay) for working parttime at the PX.

We have a lot of personal memories from our stay in Galveston, some good and some not, but service wise not much to remember.

I did finally receive my Distinguished Flying cross at a formal Review in August 1944. There were three officers who received medals at the same review, but because the DFC was a higher ranking medal than the others, I out-ranked the Officers in the formation.



HP 14 Aug. 1944

ITEMS OF YESTERYEAR

TWENTY YEARS AGO
Monday, August 14, 1944

OUR MEN IN SERVICE— A bronze oak leaf cluster in lieu of an additional distinguished flying cross, has been added to the decorations already received by Tech. Sgt. Bensing Webster, now at Galveston, Texas. The award is made for extraordinary achievement while participating in five heavy bomber flights on combat operational missions in the South Pacific from October 29 to November 7, 1943. Sergeant Webster returned to the United States in February after completing 39 missions.

Herald - Press

Sometimes word came about men far away. The Air Force sent word that Tech Sgt. Ben Webster, who had already been awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross and the Air Medal with two oak clusters, had been awarded four more clusters for the Air Medal, after 39 combat missions and 2,000 combat hours.

HP 28th Dec. 1983

Dale Francis article OUR TOWN, which was titled Heros and heart-breaks in 1944.

From Galveston we were transferred to Peterson Field in Colorado Springs, Colorado.

We bought a 1936 Chevy Coupe so we could drive back and forth to the field and so Addie could get to work in Colorado Springs. We had rented a small house in Manitou, which was located up on Red Mountain. It was pretty up there, but there were some inconveniences too. The only heat was a coal burning cook-stove.

Addie got a job at an Ice Plant Office in Colorado Springs. I think it was on Saturday of that week that we had to attend a meeting in the theatre explaining the demobilization process of our troupes.

By graph they showed that a pretty good size percent of the Ground Forces would be relieved, a smaller portion of the Service Forces would get out and only a tiny amount of the Air Forces would be relieved.

On Monday my name was on the bulletin board to report to headquarters. They told me that I was 12th or 13th highest on the field with points. Did I want out of the Service or did I want to stay in. I said "I'll get out". They said okay, that's all.

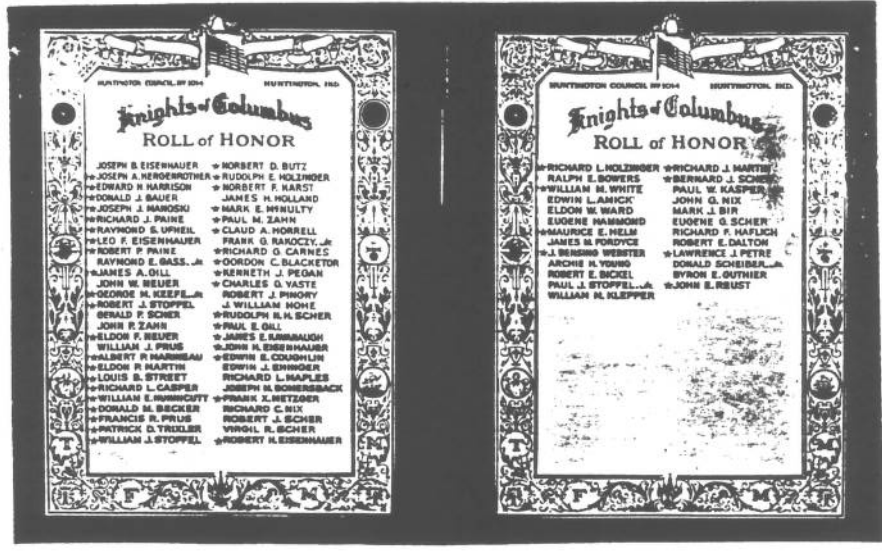
On Tuesday my name was on the board to report to Headquarters. I thought they just didn't take down the notice from the day before, but I reported anyway. They asked, "when I leave will I be traveling GI or private conveyance"? I told them private conveyance. They said okay that's all.

Wednesday my name was on the board to report again. When I got to Headquarters they told me to go home and get my gear and come back and run clearance, that I would leave Thursday morning to come home and to report to Camp Atterbury for processing, out of the service.

Addie quit her job, collected her pay (for one week's work) which was about all the money we had at the time. We left Colorado Springs on Thursday at noon and arrived in Huntington about 8:00 am on Saturday. Drove straight through on US 24, driving day and night. We did stop at a hotel in Missouri on Friday afternoon to take a nap and a bath.

I went to Camp Atterbury the next week for a couple of days and was very surprised when Bernard Freund was the person who processed all of my papers.

Addie was surprised that after I learned that the 307th had an Association, I started looking in the old boxes etc. for the few items I still had in my possession that are found in this book, because for over forty years I didn't talk about my service. But After I got a roster of the 307th members, and read UP THE SLOT, History of the 307th, We'll Say Goodbye, etc. it brought a lot of memories. Now I am looking forward to the 88 R union in Nashville and talking with the guys I have been writing to lately.



Headquarters Sq "D" 202 AAFBU
 Name Webster, Bensing
 Rank T/Sgt Mos. 750
 Aviation Badge Authorized Aerial Gunner Bdg
 Service Ribbons Authorized Amer Defense Medal
 A. R. P. TO w/4 bronze stars; Good Conduct
 Decoration Ribbons Authorized Air Medal 1 silver
 O. I. C.; DEC (1 bronze OLC)
 19 Feb 1945 Date
 A. R. PALPILLI, Capt. Commanding





370



GROUP



371



372



424



TAIL ID LOGO

西島

370th BOMBARDMENT



LINEAGE. Constituted 370th Bombardment Squadron (Heavy) on 28 Jan 1942. Activated on 15 Apr 1942. Inactivated on 18 Jan 1946. Redesignated 370th Bombardment Squadron (Very Heavy) on 15 Jul 1946. Activated on 4 Aug 1946. Redesignated 370th Bombardment Squadron (Medium) on 28 May 1948.

ASSIGNMENTS. 307th Bombardment Group, 15 Apr 1942-18 Jan 1946. 307th Bombardment Group, 4 Aug 1946; 307th Bombardment Wing, 16 Jun 1952-.

STATIONS. Geiger Field, Wash, 15 Apr 1942; Ephrata, Wash, 27 May 1942; Sioux City AAB, Iowa, 29 Sep-21 Oct 1942; Kipapa Field, TH, 2 Nov 1942 (operated from Midway, 22-24 Dec 1942, and from Espiritu Santo, c. 6 Feb-c. 18 Mar 1943); Guadalcanal, 18 Mar 1943; Munda, New Georgia, 22 Feb 1944; Los Negros, 13 May 1944; Wakde, 22 Aug 1944 (operated from Noemfoor, c. 20 Sep-12 Nov 1944); Morotai, 14 Nov 1944; Clark Field, Luzon, 10 Sep-27 Dec 1945; Camp Stoneman, Calif, 16-18 Jan 1946. MacDill Field, Fla, 4 Aug 1946 (operated from Kadena, Okinawa, beginning c. 4 Aug 1950); Kadena, Okinawa, 15 Aug 1953; Lincoln AFB, Neb, 19 Nov 1954-.

AIRCRAFT. B-17, 1942; B-24, 1942-1945. B-29, 1946-1954; B-47, 1955-.

OPERATIONS. Sea search missions from Hawaii, Nov 1942-Jan 1943. Combat in Central Pacific, 22-23 Dec 1942; South and Southwest Pacific, 16 Feb 1943-11 Aug 1945. Training unit for antisubmarine warfare, Sep 1947-c. May 1948. Combat in Korea, 8 Aug. 1950-27 Jul 1953.

SERVICE STREAMERS. None.

CAMPAIGNS. World War II: Central Pacific; Guadalcanal; New Guinea; Northern Solomons; Eastern Mandates; Bismarck Archipelago; Western Pacific; Leyte; Luzon; Southern Philippines; China Offensive; Air Combat, Asiatic-Pacific Theater. Korean War: UN Defensive; UN Offensive; CCF Intervention; First UN Counteroffensive; CCF Spring Offensive; UN Summer-Fall Offensive; Second Korean Winter; Korean Summer-Fall, 1952; Third Korean Winter; Korea Summer-Fall, 1953.

DECORATIONS. Distinguished Unit Citations: Truk, 29 Mar 1944; Borneo, 3 Oct 1944; Korea, 11-27 Jul 1953. Philippine Presidential Unit Citation. Republic of Korea Presidential Unit Citation: [Aug] 1950-27 Jul 1953.

EMBLEM. On a blue disc, border gold, a gold aerial bomb dropping to dexter base behind a white lightning flash, point to sinister base. (Approved 27 Mar 1943.)

371st BOMBARDMENT



LINEAGE. Constituted 371st Bombardment Squadron (Heavy) on 28 Jan 1942. Activated on 15 Apr 1942. Inactivated on 18 Jan 1946. Redesignated 371st Bombardment Squadron (Very Heavy) on 15 Jul 1946. Activated on 4 Aug 1946. Redesignated 371st Bombardment Squadron (Medium) on 28 May 1948.

ASSIGNMENTS. 307th Bombardment Group, 15 Apr 1942–18 Jan 1946. 307th Bombardment Group, 4 Aug 1946; 307th Bombardment Wing, 16 Jun 1952–.

STATIONS. Geiger Field, Wash, 15 Apr 1942; Ephrata, Wash, 28 May 1942; Sioux City AAB, Iowa, 30 Sep–20 Oct 1942; Wheeler Field, TII, 2 Nov 1942 (operated from Midway, 21–24 Dec 1942 and 20–25 Jan 1943; Canton, 6–12 Feb 1943; Funafuti, 18–23 Apr 1943 and 27 Jul–1 Aug 1943); Espiritu Santo, 13 Jun 1943 (operated from Guadalcanal, 25 Aug–14 Oct 1943; 24 Nov–31 Dec 1943); Munda, New Georgia, 9 Jan 1944; Los Negros, 13 May 1944; Wakde, 22 Aug 1944 (operated from Noemfoor, c. 18 Sep–c. 20 Nov 1944); Morotai, 10 Nov 1944; Clark Field, Luzon, 1 Sep–27 Dec 1945; Camp Stoneman, Calif, 16–18 Jan 1946. MacDill Field, Fla, 4 Aug 1946 (operated from Kadena, Okinawa, beginning c. 5 Aug 1950); Kadena, Okinawa, 15 Aug 1953; Lincoln AFB, Neb, 19 Nov 1954–.

AIRCRAFT. B-17, 1942; B-24, 1942–1945. B-29, 1946–1954; B-47, 1955–.

OPERATIONS. Sea search from Hawaii, Nov 1942–Jan 1943. Combat in Central Pacific, 22–23 Dec 1942; 20–25 Jan 1943; 6–12 Feb 1943, 18–23 Apr 1943, 27 Jul–1 Aug 1943; South and Southwest Pacific, 26 Aug 1943–11 Aug 1945. Training unit for antisubmarine warfare, Sep 1947–c. May 1948. Combat in Korea, 9 Aug 1950–27 Jul 1953.

SERVICE STREAMERS. None.

CAMPAIGNS. World War II: Central Pacific; New Guinea; Northern Solomons; Eastern Mandates; Bismarck Archipelago; Western Pacific; Leyte; Luzon; Southern Philippines; Air Combat, Asiatic-Pacific Theater. Korean War: UN Defensive; UN Offensive; CCF Intervention; First UN Counteroffensive; CCF Spring Offensive; UN Summer-Fall Offensive; Second Korean Winter; Korea Summer-Fall, 1952; Third Korean Winter; Korea Summer-Fall, 1953.

DECORATIONS. Distinguished Unit Citations: Borneo, 3 Oct 1944; Korea, 11–27 Jul 1953. Philippine Presidential Unit Citation. Republic of Korea Presidential Unit Citation: [Aug] 1950–27 Jul 1953.

EMBLEM. On a disc sable bordered or, a shield vert, with a chief sable, chief

? ? ? ?

372d BOMBARDMENT



LINEAGE. Constituted 372d Bombardment Squadron (Heavy) on 28 Jan 1942. Activated on 15 Apr 1942. Inactivated on 26 Dec 1945. Redesignated 372d Bombardment Squadron (Very Heavy) on 15 Jul 1946. Activated on 4 Aug 1946. Redesignated 372d Bombardment Squadron (Medium) on 28 May 1948.

—ASSIGNMENTS. 307th Bombardment Group, 15 Apr 1942–26 Dec 1945. 307th Bombardment Group, 4 Aug 1946; 307th Bombardment Wing, 16 Jun 1952–.

STATIONS. Geiger Field, Wash, 15 Apr 1942; Ephrata, Wash, 28 May 1942; Sioux City AAB, Iowa, 1–20 Oct 1942; Kahuku, TII, 2 Nov 1942 (operated from Midway, 22–24 Dec 1942; Funafuti, 18–23 Apr 1943); Espiritu Santo, 13 Jun 1943 (operated from Guadalcanal, 5 Aug–15 Sep 1943 and 25 Oct–3 Dec 1943); Munda, New Georgia, 9 Jan 1944; Los Negros, 13 May 1944; Wakde, c. 22 Aug 1944 (operated from Noemfoor, c. 20 Sep–c. 9 Nov 1944); Morotai, c. 10 Nov 1944; Clark Field, Luzon, c. 1 Sep–7 Dec 1945; Camp Stoneman, Calif, 26 Dec 1945. MacDill Field, Fla, 4 Aug 1946 (operated from Kadena, Okinawa, beginning c. 7 Aug 1950); Kadena, Okinawa, 15 Aug 1953; Lincoln AFB, Neb, 19 Nov 1954–.

AIRCRAFT. B-17, 1942; B-24, 1942–1945. B-29, 1946–1954; B-47, 1955–.

OPERATIONS. Sea search from Hawaii, Nov 1942–May 1945. Combat in Central Pacific, 22–23 Dec 1942 and 18–23 Apr 1943; South and Southwest Pacific, 7 Aug 1943–11 Aug 1945. Training unit for antisubmarine warfare, Sep 1947–May 1948. Combat in Korea, 9 Aug 1950–27 Jul 1953.

SERVICE STREAMERS. None.

CAMPAIGNS. World War II: Central Pacific; New Guinea; Northern Solomons; Eastern Mandates; Bismarck Archipelago; Western Pacific; Leyte; Luzon; Southern Philippines; China Offensive; Air Combat, Asiatic-Pacific Theater. Korean War: UN Defensive; UN Offensive; CCF Intervention; First UN Counteroffensive; CCF Spring Offensive; UN Summer-Fall Offensive; Second Korean Winter; Korea Summer-Fall 1952; Third Korean Winter; Korea Summer-Fall, 1953.

DECORATIONS. Distinguished Unit Citations: Borneo, 3 Oct 1944; Korea, 11–27 Jul 1953. Philippine Presidential Unit Citation. Republic of Korea Presidential Unit Citation: [Aug] 1950–27 Jul 1953.

EMBLEM. On a medium blue disc within a wide Air Force blue border, a white disc charged with an Air Force blue globe turning on a perpendicular axis, land areas and grid lines white; over all, two Air Force golden yellow aircraft, shaded golden brown, one in dexter chief flying to sinister chief, one in sinister base flying to dexter base. *Motto:* On a white scroll, edged Air Force blue and inscribed Air Force golden yellow, ARMED AND ALERT. (Approved 6 May 1959.)

424th BOMBARDMENT



LINEAGE. Constituted 35th Reconnaissance Squadron (Heavy) on 28 Jan 1942. Activated on 15 Apr 1942. Redesignated 424th Bombardment Squadron (Heavy) on 22 Apr 1942. Inactivated on 26 Dec 1945. Redesignated 424th Bombardment Squadron (Light) on 15 Nov 1952. Activated on 1 Jan 1953. Inactivated on 19 Jul 1954. Redesignated 424th Bombardment Squadron (Medium) on 11 Aug 1958. Activated on 1 Sep 1958. Discontinued, and inactivated, on 1 Jan 1962.

ASSIGNMENTS. 307th Bombardment Group, 15 Apr 1942–26 Dec 1945. 4430th Air Base Wing (attached to 4400th Combat Crew Training Group), 1 Jan 1953; 4400th Combat Crew Training (later Tactical Bombardment) Group, 1 May 1953–19 Jul 1954. 307th Bombardment Wing, 1 Sep 1958–1 Jan 1962.

STATIONS. Geiger Field, Wash, 15 Apr 1942; Ephrata, Wash, 26 May 1942; Sioux City AAB, Iowa, 29 Sep–20 Oct 1942; Dillingham Field, TH, 2 Nov 1942 (operated from Midway, 22–24 Dec 1942; Funafuti, 20 Jan–c. 1 Feb 1943; Espiritu Santo, c. 6 Feb–c. 18 Mar 1943); Guadalcanal, 18 Mar 1943 (operated from Munda, New Georgia, 28 Jan–15 Feb 1944); Los Negros, 13 May 1944; Wakde, 22 Aug 1944 (operated from Noemfoor, 26 Sep–c. 8 Nov 1944); Morotai, 10 Nov 1944; Clark Field, Luzon, 5 Sep–7 Dec 1945; Camp Stoneman, Calif, 26 Dec 1945. Langley AFB, Va, 1 Jan 1953–19 Jul 1954. Lincoln AFB, Neb, 1 Sep 1958–1 Jan 1962.

AIRCRAFT. B-17, 1942; B-24, 1942–1945. B-26, 1953–1954. B-47, 1958–1961.

OPERATIONS. Sea search from Hawaii, Nov 1942–Jan 1943. Combat in Central Pacific, 22–23 Dec 1942 and 20 Jan–c. 4

Feb 1943; and in South and Southwest Pacific, 13 Feb 1943–11 Aug 1945.

SERVICE STREAMERS. None.

CAMPAIGNS. Central Pacific; Guadalcanal; New Guinea; Northern Solomons; Eastern Mandates; Bismarck Archipelago, Western Pacific; Leyte; Luzon; Southern Philippines; Air Combat, Asiatic-Pacific Theater.

DECORATIONS. Distinguished Unit Citations: Truk, 29 Mar 1944; Borneo, 3 Oct 1944. Philippine Presidential Unit Citation.

EMBLEM. A disc piped black, per fess debased engrailed, argent and azure, issuing from partition line a red sun rayed proper, surmounted by a black aerial bomb palewise, point to base. (Approved 25 Feb 1943.)

402d BOMBARDMENT

LINEAGE. Constituted 12th Reconnaissance Squadron (Heavy) on 20 Nov 1940. Activated on 15 Jan 1941. Redesignated: 402d Bombardment Squadron (Heavy) on 22 Apr 1942; 402d Bombardment Squadron (Very Heavy) on 28 Mar 1944. Inactivated on



1 Apr 1944. Activated on 1 Apr 1944. Inactivated on 10 May 1944. Activated on 1 Jun 1944. Inactivated on 15 Apr 1946.

ASSIGNMENTS. 39th Bombardment Group, attached on 15 Jan 1941, and assigned 25 Feb 1942–1 Apr 1944. 39th Bombardment Group, 1 Apr–10 May 1944. 502d Bombardment Group, 1 Jun 1944–15 Apr 1946.

STATIONS. Ft Douglas, Utah, 15 Jan 1941; Geiger Field, Wash, 2 Jul 1941; Davis-Monthan Field, Ariz, 5 Feb 1942–1 Apr 1944. Smoky Hill AAFld, Kan, 1 Apr–10 May 1944. Davis-Monthan Field, Ariz, 1 Jun 1944; Dalhart AAFld, Tex, 5 Jun 1944; Grand Island AAFld, Neb, 26 Sep 1944–7 Apr 1945; Northwest Field, Guam, 12 May 1945–15 Apr 1946.

AIRCRAFT. B-25, 1941; B-17, 1941–1942; B-24, 1942–1944. B-29, 1944–1946.

OPERATIONS. Antisubmarine patrols, Dec 1941–Jan 1942. Operational and later replacement training unit, 1942–1944. Combat in Western Pacific, 30 Jun–15 Aug 1945.

SERVICE STREAMERS. None.

CAMPAIGNS. Antisubmarine, American Theater; Air Offensive, Japan; Eastern Mandates; Western Pacific.

DECORATIONS. Distinguished Unit Citation: Japan, 5–15 Aug 1945.

EMBLEM. On a disc divided per fess wavy debased blue and white three gold airplanes, radiating from the middle base. (Approved 23 Oct 1941.)

note:— other squadrons of the 39th Bomb Group were,

60th,
61st,
62nd.

419th BOMBARDMENT



See page 4
"Boys In The
Service".
promoted to
sergeant.

LINEAGE. Constituted 29th Reconnaissance Squadron (Heavy) on 28 Jan 1942. Activated on 3 Feb 1942. Redesignated: 419th Bombardment Squadron (Heavy) on 22 Apr 1942; 419th Bombardment Squadron (Very Heavy) on 5 Aug 1945. Inactivated on 15 Oct 1945. Redesignated 419th Bombardment Squadron (Medium) on 20 Aug 1958. Activated on 1 Dec 1958. Discontinued, and inactivated, on 1 Jan 1962.

ASSIGNMENTS. 301st Bombardment Group, 3 Feb 1942–15 Oct 1945. 301st Bombardment Wing, 1 Dec 1958–1 Jan 1962.

STATIONS. Geiger Field, Wash, 3 Feb 1942; Alamogordo, NM, 28 May 1942 (operated from Muroc, Calif, c. 28 May–14 Jun 1942); Richard E Byrd Field, Va, 21 Jun–19 Jul 1942; Chelveston, England, 19 Aug 1942; Tafaraoui, Algeria, 24 Nov 1942; Biskra, Algeria, 21 Dec 1942; Ain M'lila, Algeria, 16 Jan 1943; St-Donat, Algeria, 8 Mar 1943; Oudna, Tunisia, 6 Aug 1943; Cerignola, Italy, 10 Dec 1943; Lucera, Italy, 2 Feb 1944–Jul 1945; Sioux Falls AAFld, SD, 28 Jul 1945; Mountain Home AAFld, Idaho, 17 Aug 1945; Pyote AAFld, Tex, 23 Aug–15 Oct 1945. Lockbourne AFB, Ohio, 1 Dec 1958–1 Jan 1962.

AIRCRAFT. B-17, 1942–1945. B-47, 1958–1961; E-47, 1961.

OPERATIONS. Antisubmarine patrols off California coast, late May–early Jun 1942. Combat in ETO and MTO, 5 Sep 1942–c. 26 Apr 1945. Electronic countermeasures, 1958–1961.

SERVICE STREAMERS. None.

CAMPAIGNS. Antisubmarine, American Theater; Air Offensive, Europe; Egypt–Libya; Tunisia; Sicily; Naples–Foggia; Anzio; Rome–Arno; Normandy; Northern France; Southern France; North Apennines; Rhineland; Central Europe; Po Valley; Air Combat, EAME Theater.

DECORATIONS. Distinguished Unit Citations: Tunisia, 6 Apr 1943; Germany, 25 Feb 1944. Air Force Outstanding Unit Award: 1 Jan 1961–1 Jan 1962.

EMBLEM. On an Air Force blue disc bordered Air Force golden yellow, four white lightning flashes fretted, two issuing radiant from dexter chief and two issuing radiant from sinister chief; all surmounted by an Air Force golden yellow shield, details and shading golden brown; in chief a large Air Force golden yellow star; encircling the lower half of the emblem, nine small white stars. (Approved 11 Aug 1961.)

note:— other squadrons of the 301st Bomb Group were,

32nd,
352nd,
353rd,
354th.