

NEW TYPE OF BOMBING

In the recent issues of the newsletter, several stories have surfaced about the consequences of bombs being released in mid-air while the bomb bay doors were closed. Permit me to describe another version of this "unhappy foul-up".

While at Morotai, probably in the early months of 1945, I received a call to rush to the flight line early one morning. Our six airplanes of the 370th were loaded, bomb bay doors closed, planes in each of their revetments, engines idling, awaiting the signal to move out to their take-off point for the mission of the day.

Somehow, intentionally, or unintentionally, inadvertent or pre-planned, the bomb salvo lever (button or whatever) was tripped and all the bombs came crashing down to the hard surface below and through the closed bomb doors of one of the airplanes.

As ordnance officer of the 370th (from Munda in early 1944 to Clark Field, Oct. 1945), it was my function to go in and determine the damage and the danger. Clearing the area of all personnel, I found my first version of the game called "pick-up-sticks" except that this time the game was being played with 500 pound bombs and some damaged, live fuses.

After 52 years, I don't remember the explicit details. Some bombs had rolled clear. A few were stacked up. The tail fuses, protected by the tail fins on the bombs, were generally intact. A few of the nose fuses had their protective heads knocked loose and the pellets that prevented the firing pins from striking the explosive in the body of the fuse had dropped out. In perspective, today, the situation probably wasn't too serious. After all, one individual, armed only with a wrench, wasn't going to move any 500 pound bombs. After unscrewing and removing the damaged fuses, everything quickly returned to normal.

I never did hear the official version of what happened that early morning. Remember, the crews underwent great stress and tension. How many of you remember the noon lunch hour at Admiralty Islands when a gunner from a flying crew, while standing in the chow line, suddenly went berserk. Or the honorary firing squad that we assembled for the funeral of a flying officer who took his own life. Or the pilot whose

planes would develop malfunctions directly in proportion to the closeness of the target. So let us be compassionate, not critical.

At the Dayton Reunion of the 307th, a gentleman from San Diego said he was in one of the adjacent 370th airplanes and he remembered the incident very clearly. However, he was in

a cockpit and wasn't able to get too close.

I'm certain that some^{OK} you readers may remember that morning³
and can supply better^ details. Please do so! ³

WHO WON THE WAR?

Lets reopen the question of who won the war. All of you participants deserve to know the "true" story.

At the start of WW II, the ordnance department had all of these powerful bombs and intricate fuses. Located at Aberdeen Proving Grounds, near Baltimore, they realized they had to devise a way to deliver. So they decided to expand the Air Force, and the Navy, so that delivery systems could be set up.

Training bases, aircraft production lines, recruitment and training of personnel, all on an enormous basis, was initiated so that the ordnance bombs could be "delivered" to the target. Oh, for the sake of appearances, we let the promotions and the medals go to the "glamour boys". Some of our flying crews racked up more flying hours going to and returning from Auckland and Sydney than they did on missions. (okay, back off, I'm just kidding)

Serious thought was given to naming the whole operation as "The U.S. Transportation and Delivery Company".

Serious thought was given to naming the whole operation as "The U.S. Transportation and Delivery Company".

To illustrate the careful pre-planning of the ordnance people, it was arranged that missions were flown mostly in daylight. That way our ordnance crews had to leave at 1:00am and 2:00am to load the bombs and fuses on the trailers, haul them to the airplanes, and then assemble the complete bomb for winching up to the racks in the bomb bays. Remember the arming wires and fahnstock clips. Yep, that was part of our work. When the air crews arrived, everything was ready to go.

The point is, all the time we were either several degrees north or south of the equator. Thus, we "arranged" to do ~~our~~ work in the cool time of the day and did our "sack-time" while most everybody else were sweating it out in the heat of the day.

What is my situation? Today, Tuesday, April 1, 1997, tongue-in-cheek, I am sitting by my telephone, waiting for the Pentagon to call. Surely they have finished their search for the 2nd Lt. who had the longest time in grade as a 2nd Lt.

Just think of the honor, the distinction, of being the one person who served in that celebrated status, in the entire armed forces.

Alvin L. Kuehn
370th Bomb Squadron
Carmel, IN 46033