

CLOSE CALLS

Bob Connell

May 2010

Dedicated to the
B-24 Liberator
"ZOOMIES"
who served in the
southwest Pacific during
World War II

This is the true story of the crew of a B-24, Liberator Bomber, on their first two combat missions in the southwest Pacific during WWII.

After completing pilot training in flying a B-24 in Liberal, KS, I met my crew for the first time in Fresno, CA. The crew included: Bob Connell, Charles Russell, Harley Drollinger, Dan Burkleca, "Dutch" Van Gorder, John "Stew" Morrison, Warren Smith, Bob Wingert, Bob Blake, and Barney Rodrigues. The ages of these men ranged from 18 to 24. Our training as a crew was completed in Walla Walla, WA. As a crew we traveled to the Fairfield-Suisun Air Base in San Francisco, CA. From here we flew a new B-24 to Townsville, Australia via Hawaii, Canton and Fiji Islands. From Townsville, we joined the 13th Air Force at Noemfoor, New Guinea. In the southwest Pacific there were the 5th and 13th Air Force, the 13th being the smaller of the two. In the 13th there were two heavy Bomb Groups, the 307th and 5th. There were 4 squadrons in the 307th group and our crew was assigned to the 372nd squadron.

BALIKPAPAN MISSIONS

As a matter of record it must be noted here that the first mission to bomb the Japanese occupied Balikpapan, Borneo, oil refinery, was on "September 30, 1944. On this date B-24s of the 5th, 90th and 307th Bomb Groups departed their airfields around midnight for the 2600 mile plus round trip. As in each mission to follow, the bomb loads were light, the defensive ammo cut in half, and extra fuel crammed into the aircraft. Each aircraft flew independently to a staging area off the Celebes over Makassar Strait so as to save fuel. They formed up and then flew as a formation to Balikpapan. The Japanese were well aware of the B-24s arrival and met them with a continuous fighter attack that lasted before, during and after the bomb run for about 60 minutes. The refinery complex was hit hard, but many aircraft were damaged, many out of ammo and several were shot down". 1

The first mission for our crew was on "October 3, 1944 when both the 5th and 307th Bomb Groups returned to Balikpapan. They hit the refinery complex and did damage, but at tremendous cost. The Japanese had anticipated additional raids and had moved in 85 additional fighters from surrounding areas. Both groups took severe damage and the 307th would lose 7 B-24s and 63 men on this date. In all, both groups could only supply 12 airworthy aircraft, combined, for the following mission. It was this type of defense over Balikpapan that rated the refinery complex as one of the strongest and hardest defended bombing targets the Japanese had, rating equivalent with Rabaul in the Solomon's. The submarine USS Mingo was on lifeguard station and rescued 16 men. PBYS also provided lifeguard services and rescued additional crewmen." 2

On October 3, 1944 approximately 7 days after arriving at base on Noemfoor, New Guinea, our crew was sent on its first mission. It must be noted here the reason 4 new crews, including ours, was pressed into service so soon after arrival was due to the fact that while on night training (take offs and landings) in preparation for Balikpapan missions, a plane carrying 3 first (experienced) pilots crashed killing all aboard. On the evening of Oct. 2, 1944, during a briefing, the crews learned the target was Balikpapan.

It was standard procedure for an experienced, combat, pilot to fly the first mission as pilot to acclimate the new crew. Our pilot was Operations Officer- Lt. Clement Baldwin. Co- Pilot - Bob Connell; Bombardier- Harley Drollinger; Navigator- Dan Burkleca; Engineer & Top Turret Gunner- "Dutch" Van Gorder. Other Gunners were: Nose- John "Stew" Morrison; Ball- Warren Smith; Tail- Bob Wingert; 2 Waist- Bob Blake and Barney Rodrigues. Rodrigues was also the radio operator. Squadron photographer, Rodney Avenius, joined the crew for this mission. To prepare for departure we left our quarters around 2100 and headed for the flight line. It was to be a night take off with 3500 gallons of fuel (including 2 bomb bay tanks) and 10 – 250 lb bombs. With crew aboard we took off about 2330 each plane flying individually. Due to the distance and fuel limitations, fighter escort would be unable to accompany the mission. Prior to reaching the rendezvous point, Baldwin and I were informed by Engineer Van Gorder, that he was unable to transfer fuel from the two bomb bay tanks to the wing tanks. If unable to transfer the fuel we would not have sufficient fuel to return to Noemfoor. Baldwin made the decision to go ahead with the mission. The plan was to rendezvous forming into squadrons, on the west side, of the narrow neck of the Celebes, on the equator, but due to confusion at assembly and heavy head winds we were unable to connect with the 372nd squadron. However, we did join up at the rear of the 5th group formation and flew 180 miles across the Makassar Strait to Balikpapan. During this time we gained altitude to 18,000 feet.

As we approached the target we saw numerous anti-aircraft bursts ahead, but we did not encounter Zeros during the bomb run. Over the target there was heavy anti-aircraft fire all around us, but we escaped being hit as did the 5th group of planes ahead of us. After dropping the bombs we were attacked by numerous Zeros. One approaching from 2 o'clock was firing 20mm guns at approximately 100 feet. Our #1 engine was disabled and aflame. The disabled engine was cut off from both power and gas. An attempt was made to 'feather' the engine (feather – stop propeller from continuing to windmill). Being unable to feather, both Baldwin and I were forced to press the right rudder with both feet to keep the plane flying straight. The loss of power caused us to drop back from the formation. At that time numerous Zeros came in for the kill. Fortunately a couple of other Liberators dropped back to give us protection until we were out of fighter range. (It is a matter of record that crews who were forced to bail out while still in fighter range were shot in their parachutes). Warren Smith, Ball-Turret Gunner, shot down a Zero during the air battle. Our Waist Gunner/Radio Operator, Rodrigues, was wounded in the leg and a great deal of damage had been done to the plane. Once out of fighter range we headed for the original rendezvous point on Celebes Island, approximately 180 miles. As we approached the peninsula and flew over it, we were at an altitude of 2500 feet and Baldwin ordered everyone to bail out on the first pass except the Co-pilot and Engineer. The plane made a 180 degree turn. As I left the cockpit I noticed the Navigator, Dan Burkleca talking with Engineer, "Dutch" Van Gorder. Burkleca had failed to bail out as ordered on the first pass and apparently was the last one to leave the plane. When he did leave the plane the tide was going out and he was quite far out from shore. Dan did not like water and was a poor swimmer. Sadly he did not make it to shore. I went back to the bomb bay and bailed out. After counting to "five" I pulled the ripcord and the handle tore loose from the ball and did not open the chute. I then pulled the ball and fortunately

it caused the chute to open. As I floated down under the parachute, I saw a couple of white chutes floating near the shore. The unmanned B-24 was turning slowly to the left and soon passed me to the south, crashed and burned.

I landed in the jungle and ended up swinging between trees about 80 feet above the ground. By swinging back and forth I managed to grab a tree, unhook the parachute and climb to the ground. I had taken a compass bearing to the peninsula where we were to meet. As I started walking, I ran into a large crocodile which slowly moved away from me into a dense swamp. After walking about an hour, I reached the north side of the peninsula and joined Baldwin, Smith, Morrison and Rodrigues. Baldwin and Smith had landed in the water; Connell, Morrison and Rodrigues landed in the jungle. Later we learned that Drollinger and Avenius landed in the jungle; Van Gorder, Wingert and Blake landed in the water and all ended up on the south side of the peninsula. (Burkleca also landed in the water, but did not make it to shore.) After Baldwin reached the shore a couple of B24s flew over, dropped a 5 man life raft with some supplies and a note telling us to remain on site and wait for a rescue vessel. The survivors spent the remainder of the day and night in separate locations. The men who gathered on the south side of the peninsula found shelter in an abandoned hut, while the rest of the crew, on the north side, stayed on a coral out cropping. For the first time I realized we were 800 mi. from the nearest Allied base.

A patrol log of the submarine USS Mingo SS261, indicated they had received a report of "Zoomies" (aviators) floating in Makassar Strait after being shot down on the September 30th mission. They had also received a report of aviators bailing out over Cape Manimbata, Celebes Island. On October 3, the USS Mingo picked up six aviators adrift in five small life rafts lashed together. They were members of a 5th group plane shot down on September 30. They were – Elder, Schmidtke, Comstock, Farley, Borup and Menzie.

On October 4th, the USS Mingo arrived off the beach of Cape Manimbata to search for our crew. They spotted a small fire with a lot of smoke and seeing figures on the beach, launched a rubber boat to investigate. They returned with four aviators in the boat and a fifth, Drollinger, who paddled out in a native canoe. (The canoe was taken on board the sub to be a present to the officers' club in Fremantle). The other four aviators were – Avenius, Van Gorder, Blake and Wingert. The search continued on the north side of the peninsula for the rest of the crew. The five crew members signaled with flares and mirrors. (The men had a scare. As the sub appeared they observed a red "meat ball" on the side of the vessel, which led them to believe the submarine was Japanese. The "meat ball" turned out to be a rust spot and needless to say the men were much relieved. It wasn't until after we were picked up by the Mingo that the survivors realized half of them spent the night on the south side of the equator and the other half on the north side of the equator.) As the Mingo entered the bay, five of us came out in our own life raft. Baldwin, Connell, Smith, Morrison and Rodrigues joyfully climbed aboard.

Just after picking up the last aviator, the Mingo was spotted by a high flying Liberator. The Mingo was unable to make radio contact with the plane and started to take evasive maneuvers. When the plane dropped a 100 lb bomb, which landed 100 yards off the

starboard beam, communication was finally established. Among other things the plane was told "Go home and take your*#%**+%* bombs with you."

We were on the Mingo for nine days and were treated royally by the Skipper, Lt. Commander, J.R. Madison and the crew. There was severe overcrowding due to the 16 rescued aviators plus 9 Indonesian natives rescued after the Mingo sank some Japanese trawlers prior to rescuing the aviators. During the long trip back to Perth, I played poker with Lt. Commander, Bill Kitch winning \$40, which was never collected. We headed for the US base in Perth/Fremantle, Australia via the Lombok Strait and Exmouth Gulf where the sub refueled. In a US Navy publication 'LIFEGUARD ON THE LINE' describing the rescuing of downed air men, there appeared an article written by Rear Admiral R.W. Christie, quoted here: "I could always tell by the way Kitch said "Admiral!" whether it was good news, bad news, routine or action. This time the news was something special: the submarine Mingo was coming in with sixteen aviators rescued from the sea! Breakfast would be at the usual time, and time enough to meet the submarine Mingo at Fremantle as soon as she secured to the quay wall. The first four things to go over the gangway of a submarine on her return from combat patrol were (1) the mail, (2) fresh milk, (3) a crate of oranges, (4) the Admiral. The first three were enthusiastically received and eagerly devoured. The fourth was courteously received, but a little too old and possibly a bit too tough to digest easily. On this October morning I was greeted with a beaming smile by the captain of the Mingo, Commander J.R. Madison, U.S.N., who on return from his first patrol in command, had the "most wonderful news" – not forty thousand tons of enemy shipping destroyed, no Japanese battleships sunk, no carriers stopped; no, this was lives saved – sixteen American Army aviators, and lined up on deck to prove it. Sixteen beaming smiles to match the beautiful spring morning. Sixteen radiantly happy young Americans almost literally snatched from the jaws of death, or even worse, a Jap prison camp." Upon arrival in Perth/Fremantle our crew was invited to spend a 2 week rest leave with the Mingo crew. It was an exciting and relaxing 2 weeks. Because there was no U.S. Army personnel in Perth, we finally took commercial planes to Brisbane via Adelaide, Melbourne and Sydney. After a short stay at the military hospital in Brisbane we flew to join up with the 307th in Morotai on the 24th of November. Our first mission had lasted approximately six weeks. Our crew of the 307th, a.k.a., the Long Rangers, had finally returned to base. When the mission began on October 3, 1944, the 307th had 24 planes; 4 turned back, did not reach target; 7 shot down; 5 returned to Noemfoor; 3 landed at Morotai; 3 landed at Sansapor; 2 unknown return. During our six week absence our base had moved from Noemfoor to Morotai. We were welcomed by the Japanese with twin engine bombers bombing on a nightly basis. We soon learned where the foxhole was located. The bombing continued until early January 1945.

Upon returning to Morotai, Lt. Baldwin resumed his duties as the 372nd squadron Operations Officer. "Lt. Baldwin cannot be commended too highly for his handling of the airplane under fire, his ability to lead his men to safety and for his all around judgment and handling of the crew. A pilot less qualified would probably (have) lost part, if not the entire crew." 3

Morotai was a permanent base, in contrast to Noemfoor, which had been established specifically for missions to bomb Balikpapan. The primary targets from Morotai were to aid General McArthur in his promised 'return' to the Philippines.

At Morotai we lived in tents with wood floors built on oil drums. They were built up off the sand to discourage crabs and insects. Mosquito netting was also provided. These living quarters were located in a grove of coconut trees, near the ocean at the tip of the peninsula. The base also provided recreational facilities, including a movie theater, basketball courts and a PX for purchasing small items. The air base was approximately a mile inland from the living quarters. U.S. Army troops manned a security line between the base and Japanese troops, still located on three-fourths of the island.

My 'first' mission, (officially the second), after returning from the bombing of Balikpapan, was on November 27th as co-pilot to bomb the Puerto Princesa air base on Palawan Island, Philippines. On December 2nd, we flew our 'first' mission with the entire crew, myself as Pilot, Charles Russell, as Co-Pilot and without Dan Burkleca, our Navigator, who, tragically, was lost on the Balikpapan mission. The target was air bases on Negros Island in the Philippines. Both the primary and secondary targets were covered by bad weather. While flying through heavy weather to the tertiary, a HUGE explosion occurred above and slightly to the left of our plane. A B-24 from the 424th squadron had collided with one of our 372nd squadron, with bomb loads intact. Van Gorder jumped out of the Top Turret yelling, "Get the Hell out of here", as engines, wings and other debris were falling from the crash. I put the plane in a steep, downward dive to the right. After straightening out with no major damage we headed back to Morotai dropping our bombs in the ocean before landing. Upon landing, the ground crew inspected the plane and counted approximately 90 holes of various sizes on the plane. Following the second 'close call' several members of the crew opted for non-flying duty. After a few missions these crew members returned and finished the remainder of our missions. Granted we lost 2 B-24s, but even more important, 20 young men, 10 in each plane, lost their lives.

We soon fell into the pattern of flying a mission every three days with no two missions the same. During the last 4 months in combat we lost more planes to weather and accidents than to Japanese Zeros and anti air craft guns at the target site. By the end of December 1944 we had a total of eleven missions with another 10 in January 1945. By the middle of March 1945 we flew to Sydney, Australia for a two week rest leave. Upon returning to base, we continued to fly primarily to the Philippines with a few missions to Borneo. Eventually we attacked the major air bases in the Manila area plus several raids on Corregidor and the old sea plane base at Cavite.

Prior to completing my 40 missions, I was offered an opportunity to fly an additional 10 missions with the rank of Captain. I politely declined stating I felt my luck had run out and furthermore I did not plan to make the military a career. My 40th and final mission was on April 20, 1945 to the Seppinggan air base at Balikpapan. We saw no Japanese Zeros or anti aircraft fire. The purpose of the raid was to prepare for an Australian troops invasion. The average time for each of the 40 missions was slightly above 10 hours.

On May 23, 1945 I received orders to report to Leyte Island, Philippines and to return to the States. The trip to the U.S. was on a Liberty ship converted to a troop transport. Upon arriving in San Francisco, I received orders to report to Fort Sheridan, IL where I was authorized a thirty day rest leave in my home town of Elgin, IL. Following rest leave I reported to Santa Anna, CA, where I was classified as an "Evadee" on the basis of the one day we spent in enemy territory before being picked up by the Mingo. I was sent to Santa Monica, CA to "recuperate" on the beach. While at Santa Monica the war in the Pacific ended with the surrender of Japan. Since I had sufficient points, I returned to Fort Sheridan where I was discharged in early September 1945.



Oct. 3, 1944 – Balikpapan Mission

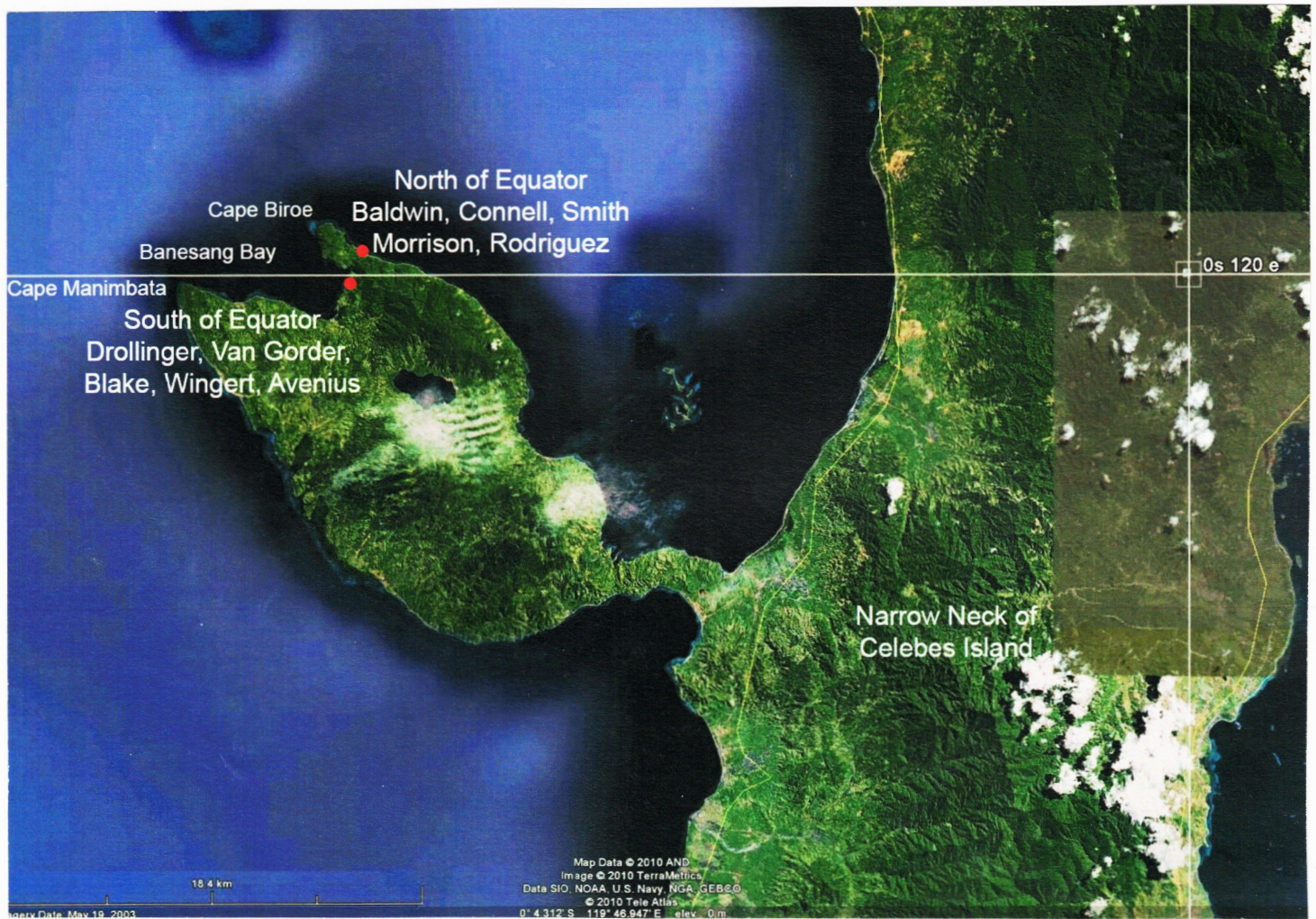
Crew Survivors

Back Row (l-r):

Cpl. Bob Wingert - Tail Turret, 2nd Lt. Bob Connell – Co-Pilot,
1st Lt. Clement Baldwin – Pilot, 2nd Lt. Harley Drollinger -
Bombardier, Cpl. “Dutch” Van Gorder – Engineer/Top Turret,
Cpl. Barney Rodrigues – Radio Operator/Waist Gunner.

Front Row (l-r):

Sgt. Rodney Avenius – Photographer, Cpl. Warren Smith – Ball
Turret, Cpl. “Stew” Morrison – Nose Turret, Cpl. Robert Blake –
Waist Gunner.

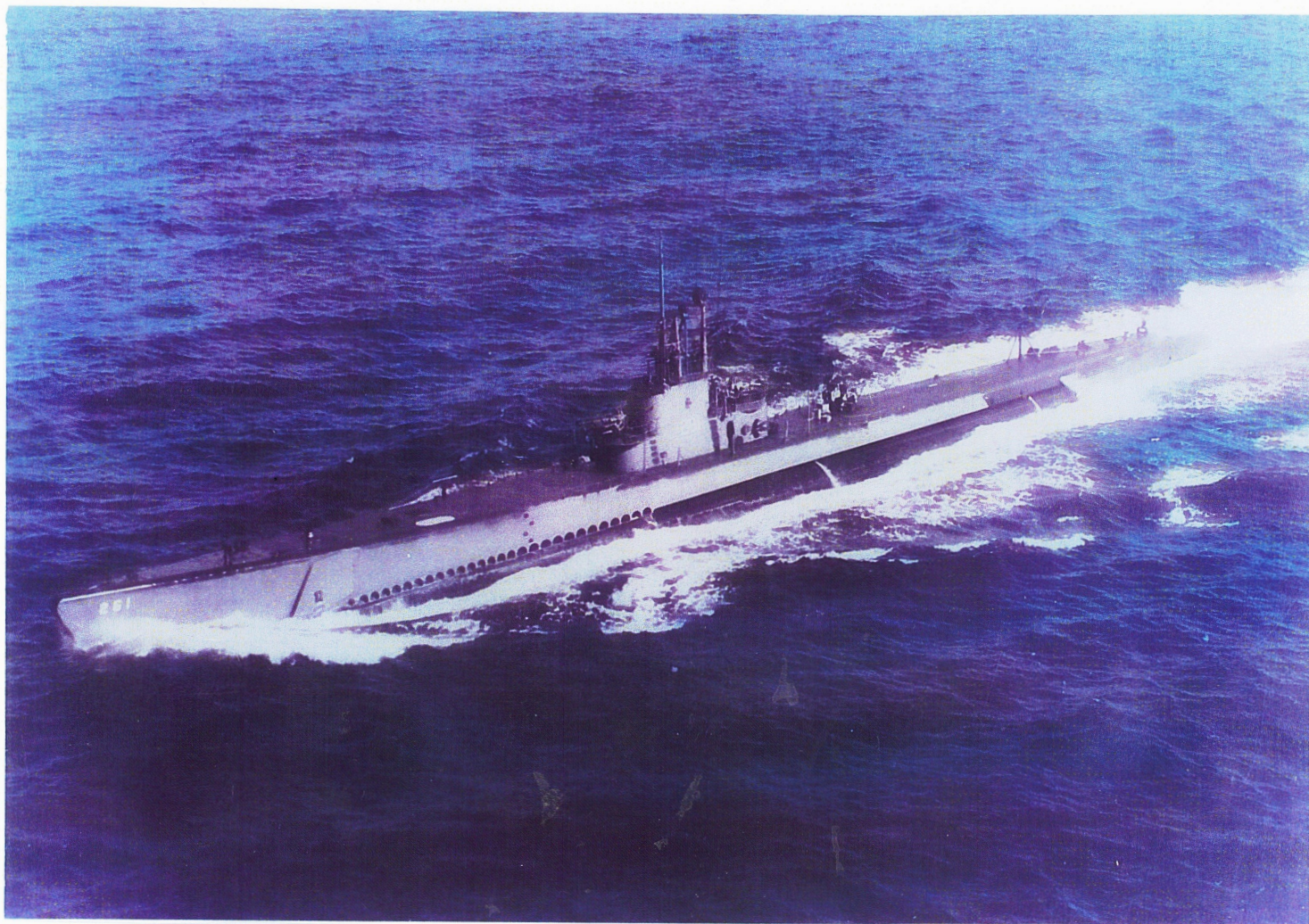




B-24J Liberator Bomber

Pictured above is the only flyable B-24J Liberator Bomber left in the world. During WWII 18,500 of these planes were built in several factories, one being Willow Run, Ypsilanti, MI. The assembly plant was over a mile long and a B-24J was completed every 55 minutes. According to a spokesperson from the Collings Foundation this bomber flew more missions, dropped more bombs, than any other aircraft, helping to shorten the duration of the war.

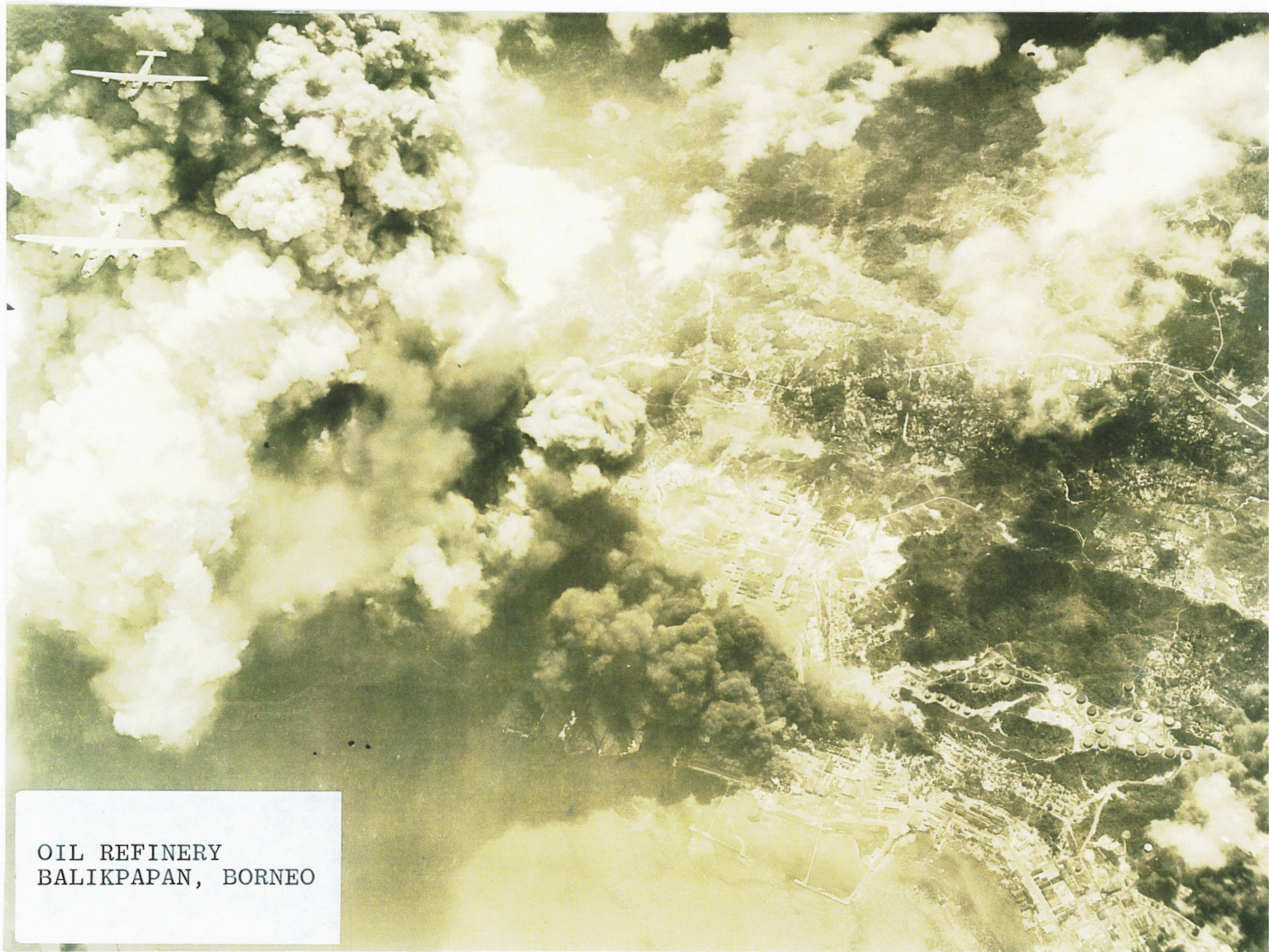
The Collings Foundation restored it in 1989 and in honor of the 15th Air Force in Italy, it was named the ALL AMERICAN. The second name change was the DRAGON & HIS TAIL, to honor and represent the WWII veterans who served in the Pacific. Currently this bomber has been named "WITCHCRAFT", is an olive drab color, it honors the 8th Air Force and all who served in England and in the ETO. As a living history museum the B-24 and a sister ship, B-17 continue to fly visiting American cities as a part of the annual Wings of Freedom Tour.



USS MINGO SS 261

The Mingo began her fifth war patrol in August 1944. In October 1944 she took up station off Balikpapan to stand lifeguard for Thirteenth Air Force Liberator strikes. When a B-24J Liberator had to ditch, the Mingo was available for rescue duty. The Mingo received 5 battle stars for WWII service.

Mingo history: Commissioned February 1943, Decommissioned January 1947. Transferred, on loan, to Japan, August 1957, renamed KUROSHIO (SS 501), Decommissioned by Japanese Navy March 1966. Final disposition – sunk as a target in 1973.



OIL REFINERY
BALIKPAPAN, BORNEO

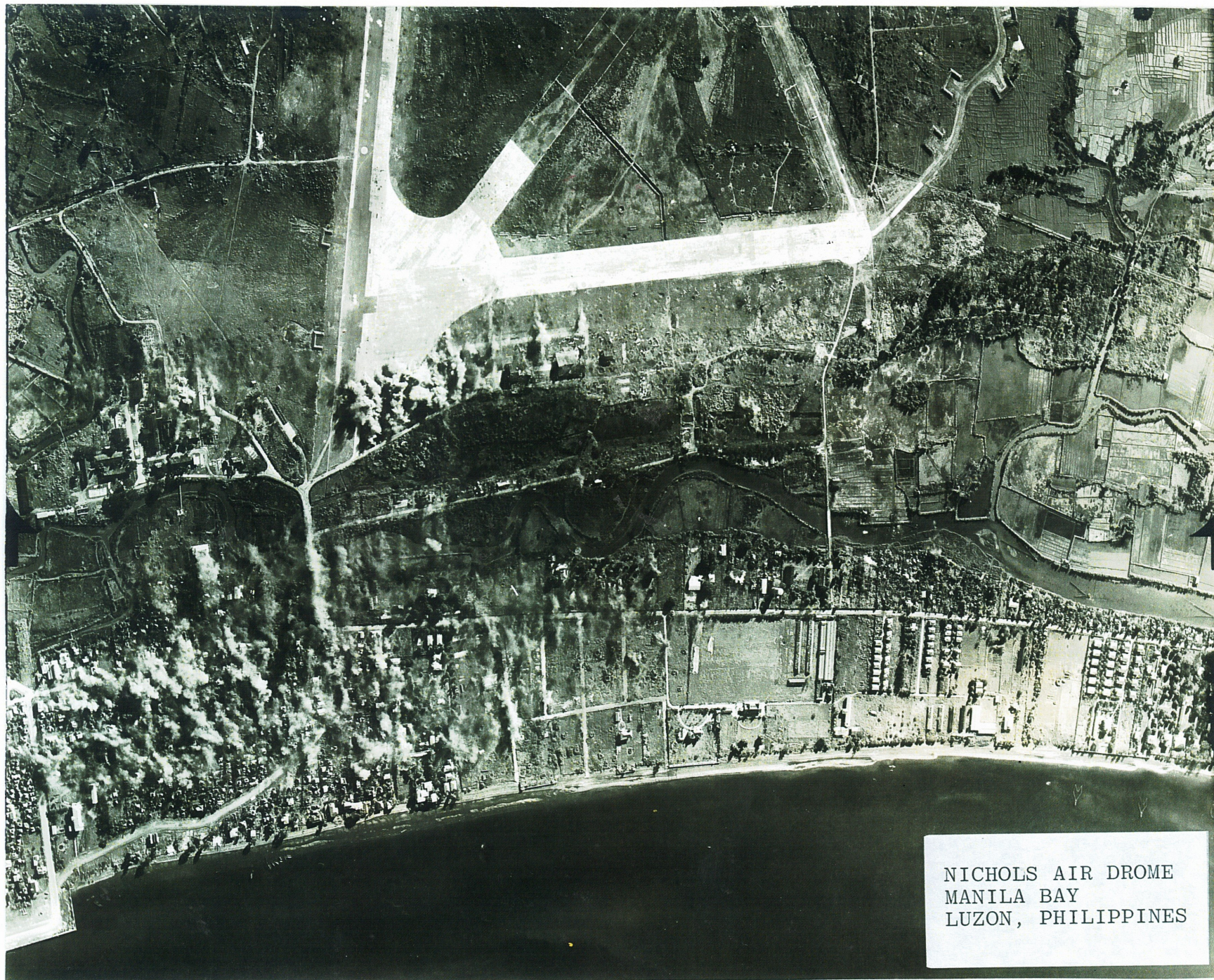
The picture above and on the following pages are actual combat photos. Photographers were special crew members assigned to one or more planes for each mission. Upon returning to base the film was processed, printed and used to assess target damage and to identify future targets. Some photos were retained for further study. Fortunately, I was able to obtain these photos from the Operations Office.



CORREGIDOR ISLAND
MANILA BAY
LUZON, PHILIPPINES



CAVITE NAVAL BASE
MANILA BAY
LUZON, PHILIPPINES




NICHOLS AIR DROME
MANILA BAY
LUZON, PHILIPPINES



AIR DROME
JESSELTON, BORNEO



SHIP YARDS
KUTCHING, BORNEO

An aerial photograph of an air drome in Manggar, Borneo. The image shows a large, dark, rectangular area with numerous circular pits or craters scattered throughout. Some of these pits are surrounded by lighter-colored material, possibly sand or concrete. There are also some rectangular structures or buildings visible within the drome. The overall scene is somewhat obscured by shadows and a dark, grainy texture. A white label is present in the bottom right corner of the image.

AIR DROME
MANGGAR, BORNEO

File No.

U. S. S. MINGO (SS261)

ENJOY THE MAKASSAR SEA BREEZES

AT

MADISON'S ZOOMIE REST HAVEN

LOCATED NEAR THE WATER CLOSE TO THE EXOTIC

ISLAND OF BORNEO

OPEN TO GUESTS DURING SUMMER MONTHS ONLY

LARGE AIRY ROOMS

We offer plenty of fresh canned food, unlimited drinking water, coffee, and congenial companionship. Try our GAME ROOM: Bridge, poker, blackjack, acey ducey, cribbage, chess and checkers. Climaxing each season's sojourn is a pleasant and exciting tropical cruise on our yacht, the MINGO!!!

Season guests are entitled to one tooth brush, soap, tooth powder, one razor blade (use of a razor), one towel, and one bath. Rates - one bottle of whiskey.

Additional baths - not to exceed one a month - at a round of drinks (whiskey).

Special instruction on how to flush the head - one round of beers per.

Change of skivies - one per guest - one round of beers.

One set of dry clothes - one per guest - one round of beers.

As an added attraction - THE ZOOMIE REST HAVEN offers a special course on submarines - their handling and care. No man should be without this instruction. (This includes one look through a genuine American submarine periscope.) This latter given only to those successfully completing the course.

2/22/92

*200, Gen. Kendall is our 307th S.G. He is
doing a great job. He is
from BIRMINGHAM, MI*

307th crews and planes participating in the Balikpapan Strike of 10-3-44

370th

- 075 Wydallis--damaged--crash landed at Morotai.
- 090 Wolfe--damaged--crash landed at Sansapor.
- **568 Kendall--shot down over target--crew lost.

- **933 Gage--damaged--failed to return--crew lost.
- 553 Kelly--DNRT--flaps stuck partly down--returned to Noemfoor.
- **565 Wright--shot down over target--crew lost.

371st

- **A1 955 Kates (Group Leader)--shot down over target--one known survivor.
- A2 570 Adair--damaged--crash landed at Morotai.
- A3 587 Covington--damaged--returned to Noemfoor.

- B1 601 Howard Johnson--damaged--returned to Noemfoor.
- B2 545 Owings--damaged--7 of 11 wounded--landed at Sansapor.
- B3 544 Gottleber--damaged--returned to Noemfoor.

372nd

- **A1 614# Rouzie--damaged over target--crew lost--bailed out SE of target.
- A2 954& Dryer--damaged--returned to Noemfoor.
- A3 620# Kimble--damaged--crash landed at Sansapor.

- B1 354# Steffy--damaged--place of return not documented in report.
- **B2 599& Baldwin (Opr. Off.)/Connell--damaged--bailed out near Celebes--
"10 rescued by sub U.S.S. Mingo-1" lost.
- B3 535@ McMillan--damaged--place of return not documented in report.

NOTE: @ 1 ship (McMillan) bombed with 370th Sqdn. at 0900.
3 ships (Rouzie, Kimble, Steffy) bombed as 372nd Sqdn. at 0941.
& 2 ships (Dryer, Baldwin) bombed with 5th Bomb Gp. at 0951.

424th

- **101 Rider--rammed by Zero on bomb run--crew lost.
- 273 McGinnis--DNRT--bombed bridge on Celebes--returned to Noemfoor.
- 547 Coorsen--DNRT--pilot sick--AFCE inoperative--returned to Noemfoor.
- 585 Wheeler--damaged--landed at Morotai.
- 605 Lewis--DNRT--could not catch squadron at rendezvous--returned to Noemfoor.
- 951 Rodwick--damaged--returned to Noemfoor.

** Indicates planes lost on 10-3-44 mission.

DNRT=Did not reach target.

372ND BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON (Hv)
 307TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (Hv)
 A.P.O. # 719

COMBAT FLYING TIME

NAME		RANK		ASN	DUTY
CONNELL, Robert E.		1st Lt		0-705906	Pilot
DATE	SEARCH	STRIKE	OTHER	TOTAL	TARGET & OTHER REMARKS
10-3-44		11:00			Balikpapan Refinery
11-29-44		11:00			Puerto Princesa
12-2-44		10:15			Dumaguette
12-8-44		9:45			La Carlota
12-13-44		10:00			Carolina R/W
12-15-44		10:45			Puerto Princesa
12-17-44		11:00			Jesselton
12-21-44		9:30			Dumaguette A/D
12-23-44		9:45			Fabrica
12-25-44		9:20			Sandakan A/D
12-31-44		2:55			Hatetabako
1-2-45		2:50			Halmahera
1-4-45		10:30			Puerto Princesa
1-7-45		13:25			Batangas A/D
1-9-45		12:45			Nielson
1-12-45		12:45			Muzon Town
1-15-45		11:00			Jesselton
1-20-45		12:45			Fabrica R/W
1-23-45		12:15			Corregidor
1-26-45		12:30			Binalbagan Sugar Control
1-29-45		12:55			Canacao Pt
2-2-45		12:15			Corregidor
2-5-45		9:45			Seppinggan
2-8-45		11:05			Seppinggan
2-11-45		12:00			Corregidor
2-15-45		13:00			Corregidor
3-5-45		5:25			Licanan
3-8-45		8:10			Zamboanga
3-12-45		6:30			Lagao Town
3-16-45		8:50			Lahud Datu
3-19-45		9:30			Cebu City
3-24-45		8:45			Cebu City
3-26-45		9:35			Cebu City
3-28-45		11:10			Jesselton
3-31-45		13:20			Oelin
4-3-45		5:45			Morotai - Palawan
4-4-45		10:30			Kutching
4-5-45		7:20			Tarakan
4-9-45		8:40			Jolo
4-16-45		7:20			Cotabato
4-20-45		10:00			Seppinggan

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

BOB WINGERT deserves credit for obtaining much of the information in this document. Bob was responsible for locating and contacting crew members and in setting the stage for the 1992 Submariners Reunion in Indianapolis, Indiana. Five crew members and their wives attended this reunion: Bob and "Dot" Wingert, "Stew" and Janet Morrison, Warren and Vivien Smith, Harley and Pat Drollinger and Bob and Elaine Connell. All 16 aviators rescued by the Mingo in Oct. 1944 were given the designation of "Honorary Submariners". Following this reunion many of the crew remained in contact and even attended other 307th Bomb Group and Submariners Reunions.

In addition Bob spent many hours in providing copies of important records. He requested from The Albert F. Simpson Historical Research Center, the "Historical Record of the 372nd Bomb Squadron (H) for the period October 1944-April 1945". Bob provided other important documents and several were used in writing this story.

Four crew members – Drollinger, Morrison, Wingert and Connell, are still living, as is Vivien Smith, widow of Warren, and all continue to keep in contact.

ELAINE CONNELL, my wife of 64 years, is largely responsible for working with me in writing and preparing this record. For many years she urged me to tell "my story" as I remembered the two missions documented here. It was her assistance, perseverance and interest in having the information recorded as my own personal piece of World War II history for our children, grand children and great grandchildren. I can't compliment her enough for the hard work and hours spent in seeing this document through to completion.

NOTES

Page	Note	
1	1 & 2	BALIKPAPAN BORNEO WWII Chronology 1941-1945 Clifford G. Neve'
4	3	Historical Record of 372nd Bomb Squadron (H) From October 1944 – April 1945

CREDITS

The Long Rangers- A diary of the 307th Bombardment Group (H)
Author – SAM S. BRITT, JR.
Published 1990

13th Air Force News Release to Courier News, Elgin, IL
Regarding October 3, 1944 Balikpapan Mission

USS Mingo (SS 261) Report of Fifth War Patrol
“Lifeguard on the Line”
Rear Admiral R.W. Christie, USN
Perth/Fremantle Navy Base, WWII