

STRAFER



498th SQUADRON

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345th Bomb Group Reunion Association

July, 1985

345th BG VJ-Day Publicity Needed

Bill Cavoli is spearheading a drive to publicize the 345th BG's unique mission in Japan's final surrender. All members are asked to contact their local newspaper, TV and radio stations with this story. A sample letter follows, which you are welcome to use in contacting the media:

"This letter is being sent to you on the assumption that you may be in the process of preparing a documentary, or similar coverage, marking the 40th anniversary of VJ-Day. If this is true, we believe we have some valuable historical information to offer you in your effort to make your coverage more complete.

Just after the Japanese surrender announcement on August 15, 1945, my 345th Bomb Group — known as the "Air Apaches" — was given a rather unique honor because of our outstanding combat record in the Pacific. We were chosen to escort the Japanese aircraft carrying a delegation of 19 emissaries who, together with appropriate US representatives, were to make plans for the formal signing of the surrender on the USS Missouri. This escort mission took place on August 19, 1945, while our group was based at Ie Shima, a small island just west of Okinawa. You will recall that Ernie Pyle died and is buried at Ie Shima.

Aside from the "escort honor" given to our group, what we feel is especially unique is the fact that WE WERE THE VERY FIRST AMERICANS TO MAKE CONTACT WITH THE FORMER ENEMY UNDER OTHER-THAN-WAR-TIME CONDITIONS.

We believe we have significant historical information which would be helpful in making your coverage of the VJ-Day anniversary more complete, whether your coverage be in the form of a documentary or as a "story behind a story."

If you are in any way interested in the story we have to tell, please con-

tact me at the following number: (---) -----.

In turn, I will place you in touch with one of our members who can give you access to stories, photos, and a 10-minute silent color film "Call Word Bataan"; which covers the escort story in the air and on the ground at Ie Shima. The film is available in 1/2" VHS, 3/4" and 2" tapes.

We can get you names of local members of the 345th BG who participated in this event if you care to get live interviews.

Thanking you for your interest in this historical event, I remain,"

Your Name

Address

City/State/ZIP

Any response that you might receive should be forwarded to Bill Cavoli for further action. He can be reached as follows:

Bill Cavoli

4314 Planters Court

Annandale, VA 22003

(703) 827-9100 (office)

(702) 978-3830 (residence)

The President's Message



Ben Fridge
President

I assure all of you that the 1986 Reunion is progressing at a most satisfactory fashion under the guidance of **Bob Fain** and his committees. We are in continual contact with each other and are in agreement on all issues. I'm not trying to manage anything from this distance, the committee and Robert S. Fain are doing it.

All of you remember how unprepared for war we were in 1941, and we (and others not as lucky) paid the price for this lack of preparedness. The natural and understandable longing for peace has a tendency to undermine our ability to prepare for war. It is this lack of preparation that leads one's enemies to attempt this very war that we are trying to avoid. At the highest

levels of our government, some very difficult decisions are being made relative to "How much is enough" . . . and I mean *How much Defense?*

What we pay for defense, with a strategy of deterrence, is the price of peace for all of us, our children, and generations to come. If our strategy is wrong and we do not spend enough, we pay in a different fashion . . . with the blood of our citizens.

We have been through this once, twice or three times, depending upon our own personal experiences. I suggest that people can and will listen to our opinions, in the light of our experiences, and we may be instrumental in aiding in preparedness again. **Speak Up!**

(P.S.) I would like information on who the line chiefs were in the 345th BG, even those who served as a **LINE CHIEF** for only a short period of time. Anyone having information in this regard, please send me the names, as I would like to update my records. Hopefully, with your help, we will be able to identify ALL of these men.

Ben Fridge

13905 Rancho Verde Drive

Reno, NV 89511

(702) 851-3207

Reunion Committee Moving Rapidly

Committee Chairman **Bob Fain** hosted a committee meeting in San Antonio on April 13-15, and plans and procedures for the 1986 Reunion were put into "high gear."

In addition to Bob Fain, committee members in attendance included **Shuler Gamble**, Vice Chairman & Chairman Registration Committee, with committee members **Mary Elizabeth Gamble**, **Henry A. & Eloise Jepson**, and **B. W. and Louise Goodson**; **Tommy Gilstrap**, golf and special events committee chairman; **George Musket**, chairman, and **M. B. & Dorothy King**, of the site selection committee for the group and squadron banquets committee.

Airport reception committee chairman **John Hamner**, (committee members unable to attend this meeting were **Wandell Pliilier** and **Lyle J. (Joe) Clevenger**.)

Co-chairpersons **Betty Hamner** and **Dee Musket** of the entertainment and tour selection committee; **Ken McClure**, Treasurer, Bomb Group Association; **Vic Tatelman**, 499th Squadron representative; and John Epstein, director of sales, La Mansion Del Norte were also present.

Hospitality Room Chairman **Melvin Best** was unable to attend, but already has procedures underway.

It was decided to distribute a survey questionnaire in the October issue of *The Strafer*. Registration forms will be included in the April issue of *The Strafer*.

Shuler Gamble's Registration Committee has met with the San Antonio Convention Bureau and with La Mansion Del Norte's John Epstein, and plans and procedures are moving along ahead of schedule. Tommy Gilstrap's committee has arrangements under way for golf activities at two fine courses, and are negotiating for a B-25 fly-over or static display.

George Musket's site selection committee reported that Lackland AFB can accommodate a 100 and a 500 group and Kelley AFB has accommodations for a group of 150 and a group of 200. Present cost per person is \$9.75, not allowing for inflation at Reunion time. The 499th decided to have their banquet at the La Mansion Del Norte Hotel with Vic Tatelman in charge of that squadron's dinner and program. If the other squadrons desire to use the military base facilities, please contact George Musket, 1018 Baden St., San Antonio, TX 78245 (512) 673-0413 for their reservations as soon as possible.



Reunion committee members at San Antonio meeting included (back row - l to r) Vic Tatelman, B. W. Goodson, H. A. Jepson, Tommy Gilstrap, George Musket (middle row l - r) Shuler Gamble, M. B. King, Jack Hamner, Bob Fain, and (kneeling in front row) Ken McClure.

Possible sites for the Group banquet facility include the La Mansion Del Norte, Fort Sam Houston, or the Shrine Temple. An estimate of seating accommodations and cost is needed to make the final decision.

George also made arrangements for a Military Review Ceremony at Lackland AFB for Friday morning, Nov. 14th, 1986. Any memorial service and awards program would take place at this time.

John Hamner's airport reception committee will make arrangements for airport arrivals assistance such as signs in terminals and location for awaiting transportation to the hotel.

Betty Hamner & Dee Musket have reserved Thursday, Nov. 13, for our own private Fiesta known as *A Night*

In Old San Antonio. All reports indicate this is a gala event with all the various kinds of food you can eat for \$25 per person, and all the margaritas, beer or wine you can handle for \$5 per person. They are also looking into an optional tour in the morning which would include the Alamo, The Missions, LaVillita, Spanish Governors Palace, El Mercado (Mexican Market-fun place), King Williams District, and The Lone Star Brewery to taste the National Beer of Texas.

Don't forget to make your plans to attend the 1986 Reunion!

Bob Fain, Chairman
P O Box 388
Mexia, TX 76667
(817) 562-3334

Operating Funds Almost Depleted

Annual Membership Dues Needed Immediately

The operating funds for the 345th BG Reunion Association are getting dangerously low. This is due to the lack of payment of the \$15.00 annual membership dues for the 1985 current year. These funds are used for postage, *The Strafer* newsletter, stationery, etc. If all members would send in their dues, the problem would be resolved.

As noted elsewhere in *The Strafer*, there has been a fair response for Life Memberships. However, these funds cannot be used for current expenses of the Association. Earned interest and dividends can be used for current ex-

penses, but the fund does not generate enough income to cover the expenses of the Association.

Payment of your dues is needed immediately. If you have not mailed your \$15.00 "tax-deductible" contribution for 1985, please do so as soon as possible.

Send your \$15 membership today to 345th BG Association, c/o Ken McClure, Treasurer, 2770 E. Main Street, Columbus, Ohio 43209.

Ken McClure, Treasurer
(614) 864-5772

HEADQUARTER'S REPORT

Time passeth as a wisp in the eternal cosmos!

It is hard to believe it slips by so quickly. Almost three-quarters of a year since our last reunion. Most of what had to be said about that one has been said, and it enters the ranks of history. And now on to the future — San Antonio — '86.

I was just thinking of getting off another letter to Headquarters men ... and here I am writing for *The Strafer* again. I'm going to have to coordinate dates so they're not conflicting. As I said — Time — Time Time —.

Have been working on keeping an updated roster of Headquarters men to notify them and Group of current changes. I'm sure you Vice Presidents of Squadrons know this is a never ending chore.

At this time, and I am sure all Headquarters men join me, in welcoming our new editor and publishing staff, and wish them the very best. We hope to be able to contribute to their future success in keeping the 345th BG Reunion Association unified.

I am working on a thought I have for a successful '86 reunion. I will be passing this on to Headquarters men in my next letter to them for their consideration. Since a good portion of our Board of Directors and Pres. **Ben Fridge** receive this letter, I will let them digest it to get their input on putting it to the Group for acceptance. We will be looking forward to some really serious

thinking and planning by fall on our '86 reunion. As I sat down to write this, I had thoughts about what to write. And now, I have already passed a couple of hundred words.

Headquarters men — myself included, wish all of you a Happy, Healthy, Safe summer season.

Time again passeth — and now it is time to closeth. As they say in San Antonio Spanish — "Adios Mi Amigo."

Charles Metzler

1019 - 8 Mile Road
Cincinnati, OH 45230
(513) 474-4565

498th Squadron

The project of completing and updating the Roster is progressing. To date we have accumulated nearly 300 names and addresses. This is all due to the terrific response from those of you who have sent a stream of letters and checks which in turn are helping to make this a very complete piece of information. Soon we will try to put all of this material into a form which can be mailed to each member.

We do need the addresses for the following: **George E. Millett, Gy H. Quinn** and **Ralph R. Robinette**. If any of you have this information, please send it to me as soon as possible. Thank you very much.

As the Commander of the Fifth Air Force once said, "If you want the job done right, get the 498th to do it". (Or something like that).

Henry J. Reynolds

Beattie Rd., Box 281
Rock Tavern, NY 12575
(914) 496-5375

Princess Of The Air Apache Group

The movie *Rhapsody In Blue*, featuring Joan Leslie, prompted the men of the 345th BG to vote the beautiful young actress as their official pin-up girl ... the "Princess of the Air Apache Group."

Miss Leslie, now Mrs. Caldwell, is on our mailing list as an honorary member. She was unable to attend the last reunion due to her busy work schedule on TV, commercials and family commitments, and it is hoped that her future plans will allow her to attend our 1986 Reunion in San Antonio.

AIR PRINCESS OF THE 345TH BG JOAN LESLIE, decked out in Indian regalia, sent pin-up photos to the Group during WW II.

Memorial Bench Fund Drive

Contributions to the Memorial Bench Fund have been very disappointing. Since March, only \$405 has been received. The total on hand now is \$3573, leaving a short fall of \$4427.

I was pleased to see a few new names appear among the last contributions, and would like to see many more. Vacation travel plans and various other spring and summer chores make it easy to forget many things. Mark on your calendar today **A NO LATER THAN** date to forward your contribution. Work must be completed by Early October, or delayed to 1986 because of frost.

There is not much more to say except that I would like to see a special effort from all to support this Memorial addition. Send your "tax-free" contribution so that the benches can be added to our fine Memorial.

Send checks to: **Ed Bina**, Memorial Chairman, 912 W. Main St., Westerville, Ohio 43081

Ed Bina, Memorial Chairman
(614) 890-0981

A Note From The Editor

Many thanks for the phone calls, letters and contributions for *The Strafer*. Unfortunately, space is limited and we were not able to put all of the material in this issue. Specific thanks to **Ed Bina, Al/Virginia Bosworth, Bill Cavoli, Arthur Croft, Maury Eppstein, Bob Fain, Ben Fridge, Larry Hickey, Robert J. LeMay, Ken McClure, Charles Metzler, Fred Moore, Henry Reynolds**, and **Vic Tatelman** for their photos, comments, stories, and phone calls.

As we use your material, we will return the photos to you. They will be kept safely, and I would like to use all of the photos and material in future issues. Thanks for your support, and I'll be looking forward to additional contributions from 345th BG members in the future.

P.S.: Please notify us of your address changes. At 25¢ per postal notice, and 22¢ to remail your Strafer to you, not counting the original postage cost, the last issue cost a small fortune and put a dent in the budget. Our non-profit permit does not allow the post office to forward The Strafer to you.

Phil Rack, Editor

1906 Fontenay Court
Columbus, OH 43220
(614) 451-6373 or 457-3187



501st Squadron

At the 1984 Reunion in Columbus, the 501st elected **Jeff Blackmon**, President; **W. D. Helvey**, Vice President; and **Al Bosworth's** wife **Virginia**, Secretary/Treasurer.

Bob Fain, who was our first CO, has put together an outstanding committee for the 1986 Reunion, and their planning and working appears to guaranty the next Reunion to be the very best one ever. **George Musket** has made arrangements for the Squadron banquet.

The 501st Squadron has had the most people at the last two get-togethers, and we're asking all the Squadron members who were there to go out of their way to locate missing people. The members attending reunions for the first time are a joy to watch, because they're having such a good time!

Help is needed in locating additional

500th Squadron

We are saddened from recent reports of the deaths of **Herman Ryerson**, **Joseph Di Nino**, **Joe Marrett** and **Cecil L. Long**.

Our 500th Reunion, under the chairmanship of **Grant Ross**, will be held October 20-23, 1985 in San Francisco. More information on this event is in our Squadron newsletter.

Inasmuch as no further information was received from Group regarding the *Return to New Guinea* tour, we planned our own 19 day trip for October 23-November 10, 1986, following the 500th Reunion. The estimated cost is \$3500 per person, double occupancy. Inquiries may be made at Nellis Travel Service, 3665 N. Nellis Blvd., Las Vegas, NV 89115 if anyone is interested in joining us.

Fred Moore (702) 871-4405
4952 Vivaldi Drive
Las Vegas, NV 89102

members. **Bill Cather** is trying to locate **Nolan S. Coons** (Los Angeles, CA?) and **Nathan Genuth** (Santa Monica, CA?). **Gerry Murphy** located about 40 people in 1985, and the latest one for the 501st was **Richard Lathrop**, Palmdale, CA.

We were saddened in Columbus to learn of the passing of **John McCormick** on September 1st.

Ed Bina is Chairman of the 345th BG Memorial Bench Fund, and since he's from the 501st Squadron, let's show him our support by letting him hear from the highest percentage of the members. That doesn't necessarily mean the most money — just everyone from the 501st send SOMETHING! By the way, Jeff Blackmon says the stone used in the Memorial dedication during the 1984 Reunion was quarried about 40 miles north of Columbia, South Carolina.

Harold Kimsey has passed along a list of the names of the 226 enlisted

men from the 501st who left the United States in May, 1943. Of that number, 40 were transferred, 3 went to OCS and 20 were killed in action.

The Bosworths

839 W. 21st Street
San Bernardino, CA 92405
(714) 886-2169

499th Squadron

Our roster has been brought up to date as far as names and addresses, but we are still trying to complete the telephone and spouse name portion of our list.

We are also looking for newly found members to add to the list. Thanks for the recent help in sending new information to me. I hope that we can continue to find new members, which will make our reunion even more of a success.

Vic Tatelman

18900 S W 232 St.
Miami, FL 33170
(305) 247-8439

Life Membership Report

As of June 14, 1985, the following members have paid \$100.00 and are now Lifetime Members of the 345th B.G. This special fund is deposited in a separate trust fund, and only the earned interest or dividends, etc. may be used to defray current expenses of the Association. Upon termination of the fund by action of the Board of Directors, the entire amount of the fund will be donated to Purdue University in the form of a scholarship fund in the name of **Major General Jarred V. Crabb, USAF (Ret)**.

Life Membership Cards are sent to members who contribute to this tax-deductible fund. If you are interested in participating in this program, please send \$100.00 to the 345th BG, c/o Ken McClure, Treasurer, 2770 E. Main Street, Columbus, Ohio 43209.

HEADQUARTERS

Calvin, Crim O.
Crabb, Eleanor
Darwin, William
DeRusha, Ray
True, Clint U.

498th SQUADRON

Council, William D.
Lane, Perry
Meadors, Irby
Stevens, Ed J.

499th SQUADRON

Beata, John R.
Boyd, John R.
Croop, Aaron B.
Gamble, Shuler S.
Luhta, Adolph J.
Matthiesen, George L.
Mattson, Matt A.
McClure, Ken
McKinnon, Laurence E.
McShane, Isaiah E.
Post, Robert C.
Tatelman, Vic W.
Wonn, George H.
Wyatt, Jr., Joe L.

500th SQUADRON

Baker, Jr., William A.
Gerhardt, Robert G.
Goodson, B. W.
Hourigan, William E.
Keenan, John
Naigle, Alfred J.
Newman, Jr., Joer S.
Reheis, Herman
Wright, Jesse

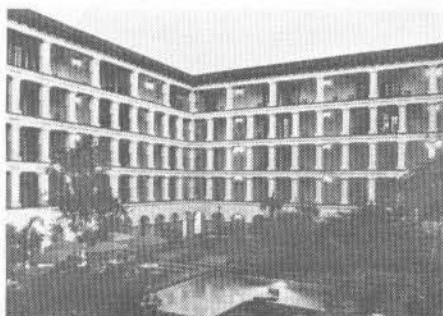
501st SQUADRON

Bagwell, Harold D.
Barbato, Ralph H.
Cather, William
Cook, William O.
Cortasio, Sandy
Fain, Bob
Fridge, Ben W.
Gallagher, Jim J.
Hansen, Frank P.
Krause, Charles A.
Plock, Lowell B.
Rider, Harry E.
Shubeck, Len
Valentine, Joseph N.
Yant, Don

Ken McClure, Treasurer

REUNION

Nov. 12-16, 1986



La Mansion Del Norte
San Antonio, Texas

345th B. G. Reunion Committee
2770 E. Main St.
Columbus, Ohio 43209

NON-PROFIT ORG.
U. S. POSTAGE
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COLUMBUS, OH 43200
PERMIT NO. 2529

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

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1730 W. Robinson
Norman, OK 73069

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