

STRAFER



498th SQUADRON

499th SQUADRON

500th SQUADRON

501st SQUADRON

345th Bomb Group Reunion Association

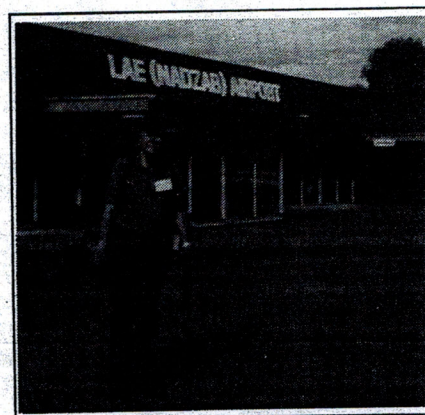
February 1989

"Return of the Eagles - Down Under" Tour

One hundred thirty-one former 5AF members and wives comprised the contingent for "The Return of The Eagles - Down Under" tour to Australia, New Guinea and New Zealand. Twenty-two were from the 345th, the most from any 5AF unit participating. Several left a few days early, visiting Melbourne and Canberra, and joined the main group arriving in Sydney on October 13, 1988. Several days were spent in Sydney visiting old scenes and explor-

ing new ones, including the magnificent Sydney Opera House. Kings Cross and Bondi beach brought back many memories. The Australian-American Association hosted a luncheon reception, followed by an elaborate reception/cocktail party given by the Premier at the State Office Block penthouse. One of the prime events of the entire tour was the RAAF Bicentennial Air Show at the Richmond RAAF Base outside Sydney. The "Eagles" were

provided a special bleacher section to watch the largest air show ever held in the Southern Hemisphere. Attendance was announced at over 200,000.



Lae (Nadzab) Airport - New Guinea 1988

President's Message

Another year has ended and the holiday season is over. We've put away the decorations and have had a chance to look back over the years and once again, we see how fortunate we are to have our friends and family. Some of us have not been so fortunate this past year and to those who have lost loved ones, please know you are in our thoughts and our prayers go out to you all.

In accordance with the notice in the last *Strafer*, dues are now due and payable. Every man who was a part of the 345th Bomb Group is and always will be a member of the 345th Bomb Group Reunion Association. We currently have a roster of over 1300 men who were with the 345th during the period the Group was active. Not all of these men send in dues or attend the Reunions, but nevertheless, they

are now and will continue to be a member of the 345th Bomb Group Reunion Association. We have also received inquiries about the Associate Membership for the wives and children of our members. Wives whose husbands are still living are

automatically included in their husband's membership. Children of fathers who are living or deceased may request associate membership and wives of deceased members may request associate membership also. People who desire to be associate members



Shuler S. Gamble

should send their dues of \$15.00 to Ken McClure.

Work and planning is continuing on plans for the 1990 Reunion in Las Vegas. More on that in a later *Strafer*.

Shuler Gamble

From Sydney, the group proceeded to Brisbane for several days, with passes to Expo '88, the world's fair, celebrating Australia's 200th anniversary. There was another reception dinner at the RSL Club of Brisbane. As in Sydney, the growth of the city was tremendous - vastly changed from the cities of 1943.

About half of the group headed home from Brisbane and the balance flew north to Townsville, where a large group of RSL members, their wives and many townsville people had gathered at the airport for an enthusiastic, vocal welcome. The RSL and The MacArthur Era Trust combined to entertain the group at a huge, friendly dinner and evening program, the most memorable of the Australian RSL Club functions. Over 300 were present for an evening of friendship and conviviality in a city where, 45 years earlier, the B25s of the 345th Bomb Group had been modified and converted to low level strafers.

(Continued on page three)

We want to thank **Charles Metzel** for his faithful service during the past several years as the HQ VP. I was elected to take over his duties. Some of you may remember me as a telephone linesman during our campaign from New Guinea to Ie Shima.

We thank **Maury Eppstein** for his leadership and hard

Headquarters Report

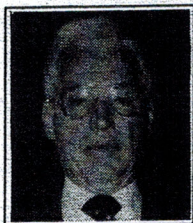
HQ had a fair representation at Norfolk. Of the 32 people attending, several were first timers. Reports I received:

498th Squadron Report

Hope the holidays were good to all. We enjoyed your cards and wishes. THANK YOU VERY MUCH.

We finally caught up with **A.N. Chiappe**, 2700 Henry Hudson Pkwy, Bronx NY 10463-4733. He was one of the original pilots starting in Columbia, SC. Spoke with him and he promises to be at the next reunion. His teaching schedule has kept him from attending previous reunions.

New Addresses: **William Tuel**: PO Box 141, Gilmer, TX 75644-0147; **Raymond Usnich**: 1019 S Bel Air Dr, Inverness, FL 32650; **Marian Vosevich**: 3401 Gandy Blvd #688, Pinellas Park, FL 34665.



Henry Reynolds

THINK LAS VEGAS IN 1990! Henry says, "An old timer is a guy who remembers to stop spending when he runs out of money."

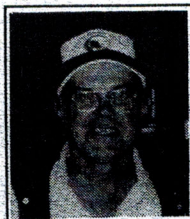
499th Squadron Report

The 499th was well represented on the "Eagle Down Under" trip. Those attending were: **Ken and Patti McClure**, **Bill and Doris Carter**, **Buck and Shirley Banz**, **Bert and Gloria Shaber** and **Glenn and Evelyn Taylor**.

The trip was thoroughly enjoyed by all, particularly finding the 499th area at 17th Mile, especially when we stood where our tents had been in the 1940s. We also enjoyed standing on the rusted out deck of a bombed Japanese ship in Lae Harbor.

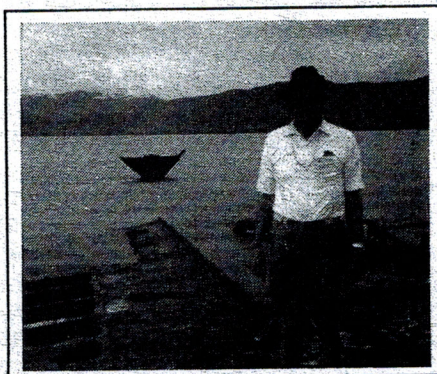
Note: For those interested in a mini-reunion, possibly in Durango, CO, please call **Pax Baker**, 303/856-6670. We've had several inquiries, but need more feedback from you Mid-westerners.

work during the past couple years as President of the 345th. He is to be commended for doing a fine job. Also a hearty thanks to all the other Officers.



Ken Gasteb

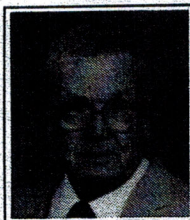
attended the celebration, The Return of the Eagles, in Australia during the month of October. Will have a report on their experiences later this year.



Ken McClure on the deck of the bombed Japanese ship in Lae Harbor.

500th Squadron Report

Although **Herman Werner**, chairman of the 1989 500th BS Reunion, could not attend the 345th Reunion in Norfolk, he made good use of his time. While visiting convalescent family members, he called upon former 500th



Fred Moore

members near his route of travel. He visited with **Francis Efta** in Montana, then journeyed to Ohio to visit with **Adolph Luhta**, who was unable to attend the Norfolk festivities. Upon leaving Ohio, he traveled to Colorado Springs to visit with **Spud Murphy**. After he left the **Moore**s in Las Vegas, where the reunion in Seattle was the order of business, he took a detour to visit with **Milton Tate** in Idaho Falls. Last year, he and Helen looked up **Erika Naigle**, Al's widow, who is very much a part of our squadron activities. Think he'd get our award for visiting

everyone had a good time visiting with each other and sightseeing, etc. I feel sure that number will be doubled at the next reunion at Las Vegas with the 5th Air Force Reunion.

Received word from **Wilton Pittman** that **Bruna Lambert**, HQ Wire Chief during the war, was killed in an automobile accident the first part of December. Our sincere sympathy to his family.

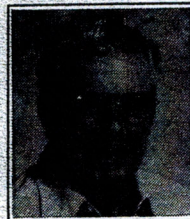
Maurice Eppstein and **Col. Clint True** attended the celebration, The Return of the Eagles, in Australia during the month of October. Will have a report on their experiences later this year.

ambassador this last year! If anyone has done better, let me know. In addition to those activities, he enlisted my wife's efforts in trying to locate anyone who knew of **Eddie Ison**. Many telephone calls were made, but no luck. However, a clue to the town of Isonville was given by a woman in Memphis. We will be following up on that in the near future. Maybe some of our other squadron members could help.

501st Squadron Report

I hope everyone had a joyous holiday season with friends and loved ones and is looking forward to the new year.

The 501st and the entire *Air Apache Group* was stunned by the loss of **Al Bosworth**, who died December 8, 1988. Al not only was a tremendous guy, but one of the main reasons the Air Apache Reunion Association is such a strong and viable organization today. Everyone knows the tremendous amount of work Al and his wonderful wife Virginia devoted to our squadron and the Air Apaches.



Jay Moore

Mrs. Tina Carter, Al's daughter, stated she wants everything donated in Al's name to be sent to the **501st Bomb Sq., c/o George Mordecai, Sec., 14 Frederick St, North Branford, CT 06471**. All funds will go into a separate account and then at the reunion in Las Vegas in 1990, we will determine how the funds will be utilized.

Do not have anything to report at this time on the 1990 reunion; however, by

(Continued on page three)

The Eagles Down Under

(From page one)

Next came Cairns. Adding one more jewel to the trip's crown was the 24 mile trip offshore to spend a day on The Great Barrier Reef, one of Nature's wonders.

Following Cairns, 63 "Eagles" headed for New Guinea with great anticipation. Of all places visited on the tour, the most memorable and dramatic action in WWII took place in New Guinea. All who had served there (every man in the group) were eager to revisit old scenes. Landing at the Lae/Nadzab Airport (the main strip at Nadzab in 1943), disbelief set in. There is a small, but modern, terminal at Nadzab and the old landing-mat strip is now long and hard topped, as is the road from Nadzab to Lae. The rolling green hills in the distance, where the 5th AF units had their areas, are still visible and look the same. Lae is now a city, teeming with activity and sprawling widely over the countryside. Difficult to believe are the city streets, blocks and buildings, taxis, busses, trucks and traffic lights, banks, shops and high rise hotels. There are few grass shacks with thatched roofs; they've given way to ramshackle structures of old plywood and rusty tin roofing, probably leftovers from the WWII units in the area. The natives all wear clothes now all ages!

Shocking as the changes at Lae, Port Moresby is even more so. It covers several miles surrounding the harbor and the main downtown area is Lae doubled or tripled. The main airport for all commercial air traffic is what once was 7-mile (Jackson Drome). There is a large and busy terminal. The hills overlooking the strip are only partially covered with homes and buildings, so one can still see where some of the HQs and Squadron areas once stood. It is almost impossible to locate where 14-mile and 17-mile strips once

were, though. The trees and Kunai grass have taken over once again.

We visited the War Cemeteries at both Lae and Port Moresby, with a stop at the large crocodile farm between Lae and Nadzab. The old wrecked ship

across Lake Wakatipu to a large sheep station, riding through picturesque hill country teeming with many breeds of sheep. (There are 70 million in New Zealand). The last big event was a boat trip on Milford Sound and out to the



499th Squadron Contingent Luncheon Reception - Sydney, Australia - Oct. 14, 1988

at Moresby is still there, but the one at Lae has broken up and sunk from sight. Remains of Jap landing barges still lie along the shore at Lae, however. The New Guinea of WWII has changed in the cities, but much of it 45 years can't change—or 45 centuries!!

From New Guinea, 42 hardy souls flew to New Zealand for the remainder of the trip. At Auckland, they were lavishly entertained and fed by the RSA (same as RSL in Australia) Club members and citizens at a long-lasting luncheon session. At Rotarua, the hotel stands by the geysers and boiling mud pits for which it is famous. A visit to an authentic-Maori village and attendance at a Maori "Hangi" dinner and dance program was thoroughly enjoyed. Rolling along through the Waitomo Valley with a stop at the exciting Glow-worm Grotto was another part of the North Island schedule. On to the South Island and Queenstown and a memorable trip

Tasman Sea, viewing glaciers and dozens of waterfalls emptying into the Sound on the return journey.

Time for the trip home. About 15 stopped off a few days in Honolulu and the remainder went on to San Francisco. From there, they scattered to all parts of the country for a night's sleep in their own bed once again after a trip of a lifetime none are likely to forget.

** RSL is Return Service League; RSA is Return Service Association - much like our VFW organizations.

501st Squadron

(From page two)

the May edition of *Strafer*, we hope to have some information to report on squadron activities.

At this time, plans are underway for a 501st Mini Reunion sometime this fall. Again, by May *Strafer*, we hope to have all the info finalized and published so anyone interested can make reservations and plan to attend.

I hope by the time this arrives, all refunds from the reunion are in hand. I don't know what the problem has been and have been unable to find out with many inquiries, but I certainly hope by now everything has been resolved.

498th Patches Available

H.B. Garland has 498th patches for sale! Contact him at 9740 Flora Ave, Overland MO 63114-3519 to place your order.

- 4" — 498th Patch @ \$4.00 each
- 3.5" — Indian Head @ \$3.00 each
- 4.5" — Indian Head @ \$4.00 each

IN MEMORIAM

Dorothy Atkins (501) - Atlanta, GA (Ben's wife)
 Thomas F. Beisty (499) - Conneaut, OH (7/8/88)
 Steve Birchak (501) - Burlingame, CA (Send all
 memorials in lieu of 345th Bomb Group, c/o Ken
 McClure)

William A. Boehme (500) - Hannastown, PA
 Merle Cross (500) - Indianapolis, IN (10/87)
 Frank Disalvo (498) - Windsor, CT (7/17/88)
 William Jay (500) - Arvada, CO (9/86)
 Leanord Keller (501) - Spokane, WA (11/28/88)
 Bruna Lambert(HQ) - Lineville, AL (12/88)
 Donald McFarland (499) - Delhi, NY (9/29/88)
 Marvin Maxwell (500) - Birmingham, AL (2/19/88)
 Marjorie Reed (499) - Peterson, IA (Byron's wife)
 Fred Smith (498) - Orlando, FL (11/88)
 Vember Taylor (HQ) - Universal City, TX (9/5/88)
 Roland Thomas (500) - Salisbury, MA (12/87)
 James F. Woodcox (500) - Livonia, MI (9/18/88)

345th Loses Oldest Member

John Clifford Hanna (500), Cliff to all who knew him, died on November 25, 1988, following a lengthy illness. He was 90.

Cliff was probably the only Air Apache to serve in both WWI and WWII. As a young man, he drove ambulance for the French in WWI. He tried to qualify for the US Army Air Cadet program, but was unsuccessful because of a previous illness. However, he qualified for the Cadet program in Canada, part of the British RAF. Before his commission, though, the war ended and the program was discontinued.

Prior to WWII, Cliff ran the *Hanna Art Galleries*, begun by his father John. Following his return from WWII, he began the firm *Video Films*, doing TV commercials for leading US firms, as well as other video productions. These included films of the 345th in action in the Pacific, which have been a highlight of the 345th Group's reunions.

He was a skier (till age 86 and according to a friend, he used to sing *Hey, Big Spender* while skiing at Boyne Highlands). At one time, he served as president of the



Cliff and Helen Hanna

Detroit Ice Skating Club, one of the most notable in the country.

Cliff is survived by his wife, two sons, six grandchildren and five great-grandchildren.

The 345th has lost one of its giants. He will be greatly missed by all who knew him.

(Mrs. Helen Hanna, 20083 Doyle Ct, Grosse Pointe Woods, MI 48236; phone 313/882-6259.)

501st Loses One of Its Best

Elbert Bosworth, of San Bernardino, CA, died of a heart attack December 8, 1988. For over 10 years, he and his wife Virginia were instrumental in finding lost Apaches. Members may make contributions to the *Inland Empire Church of Religious Service*, 2404 N Golden Ave, San Bernardino, CA 92404, in lieu of flowers or to the *501st Bomb Squadron*, c/o George Mordecai, Sec., 14 Frederick St, North Branford, CT 06471. Thank you.



Al Bosworth

(Note: Al and Steve Birchak were tent mates the entire four years they spent in the South Pacific. Both died within one week of each other of heart failure.)

Recovering Members

Charles Chard (498) is recuperating from a stroke. Address: 9902 Tailspin Ln #E, Baltimore, MD 21220-2617.

Robert E Hull (498) is recuperating from a heart seizure. Address: Star/Route, Layton, NJ 07851.

John McArn (498) is recovering from a quadruple bypass. Address: PO Box 74, Rowland, NC 28383-0074. Please wish them a speedy recovery!

Int. Letter Mar 31, 1989

Air Force Locator Service

For those of you in search of crew members or "lost sheep", the Air Force has a service available to you or your surviving spouse. It maintains the home addresses of its retirees and Air Reserve Forces personnel and the military organization addresses of active members.

Send your letter to your friend in a self addressed, stamped envelope (return address and friend's name ONLY, please). Place this letter/envelope in another envelope with a letter

containing your full name, grade, SSN and address and on a separate sheet of paper, the known data of your friend's grade, SSN or serial/service number, date of birth, former duty station, dates known to be at the last base, etc. Mail to: HQ AFMPC/DPMD003, 9504 IH 35 North, San Antonio, TX 78233-6636. Include sufficient postage, if you think addressee does not reside in the continental US. The service is FREE to retirees.

For other locator information, contact: **Commanding Officer, US Army Personnel Services Support Center, Ft Benjamin Harrison, IN 46269; Chief of Naval Personnel, Navy Dept., Washington DC 20370; The Commandant, US Marine Corps, Washington DC 20380; Commandant (G-PE-3/TP45), US Coast Guard, R4616, 2100 2nd St SW, Washington DC 20593.**

PHOTO QUIZ!

Answers on page 6



Photo A: These guys do not look impressed with the accommodations. If you can name these five and their location, you've got one on me!

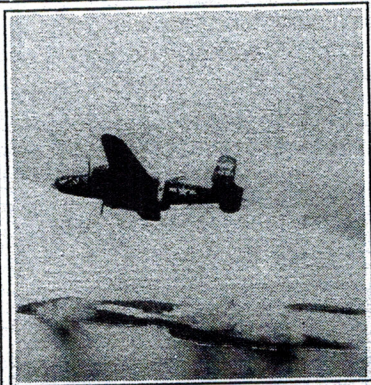


Photo B: Sandy Cortesio submitted a photo of the first bombing of the island shown. How many of you can identify the mission?



Photo C: Here's a real challenge. How many of you can identify these nine men, the year and their squadron? I'll give you a hint—the island is Biak.

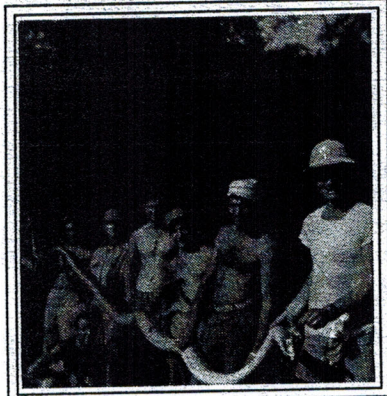


Photo D: June 1943, the first week in New Guinea. This is an 18 foot long python, the first and largest of some 200 killed in the immediate area during the six months stationed there. Can you name the area and the men? (Hint: the man in the pith helmet was a 1st Lieutenant at the time of this photo.)

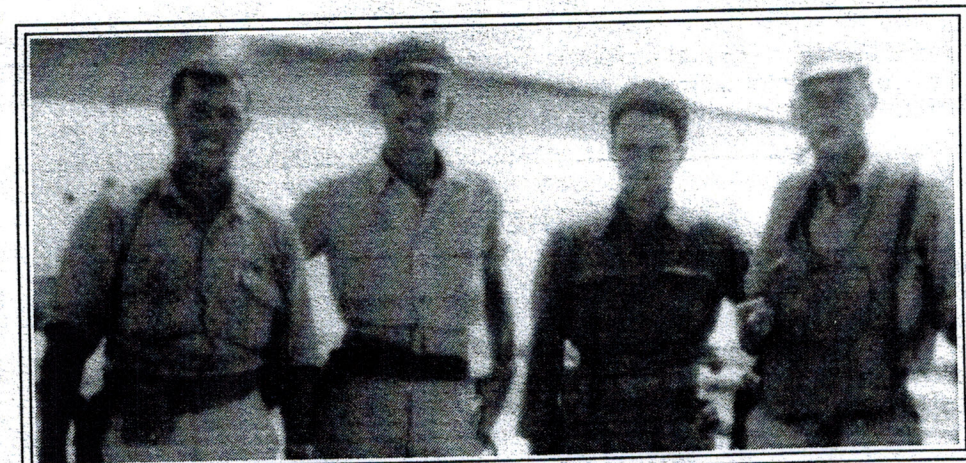


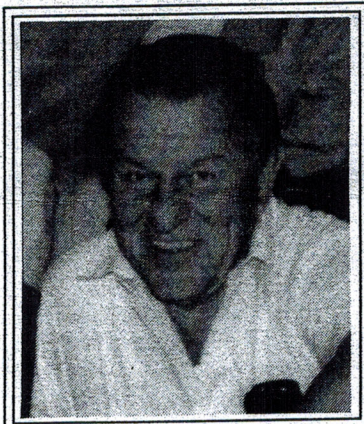
Photo E: This photo was taken on Ie Shima, 08/15/45, after being recalled from a strike in Southern Japan. Can you name these four men?

Let's Talk

Every two years, new officers of the 345th Bomb Group Reunion Committee are elected. Some are strangers and remain that way during most of the two years. This year, I'd like to introduce your new officers.

Shuler Gamble, President, joined the 499th Squadron in early January 1945 as a copilot Flight Officer at Tacloban on Leyte. He became a First Pilot and was promoted to 2nd Lieutenant at San Marcelano on Luzon. While on Ie Shima, he was promoted to 1st Lieutenant. He was on the last mission of the war on August 14, 1945. Born in Stigler, OK, he married a childhood sweetheart he'd known since age three. Mary Elizabeth and he attended Oklahoma State and have one son, David, who lives in Houston and is an attorney. David and his wife, Janine, have two girls and one boy. Shuler became a CPA after the war and eventually became involved in the oil and gas business, both as an accountant and an economist. He retired in 1985.

Ed Bina was born Sept. 17, 1923, in Antigo, WI. He enlisted as an aviation cadet at the start of the war, but



Ed Bina

had to wait until January 1942 to be called (because of his age). He was assigned to the 345th/501st Squadron and started flying missions at Biak. He flew 36 total missions, ditching twice on consecutive flights 10 days apart.

Ed and his wife of 30 years, Julia, traveled extensively after his return to the States: Milwaukee, WI, (Wisconsin Air National Guard); Truax Field, WI (Arma-

ment Systems Officer); Johnson Air Force Base, Japan (Avionics Officer/40th Fighter Interceptor Squadron); Lowery Air Force Base, Colorado (studied electronics); Chanute Air Force Base, IL (Mobile Training Wing) and back to Lowery for schooling as an Armament Systems Officer and Weapons Orientation. In 1956, he attended

school at Hughes Aircraft Co. (SET Indoctrination Course/Maintenance Mgmt. Course); Philippines, Clark Air Force Base (Armament Staff Officer/Maintenance Supervisor, 405th Consolidated Aircraft Squadron); Malmstrom Air Force Base, MT (Armament Systems Officer).

Ed served 13 months in Vietnam as Armament/Munitions Advisor to the Vietnam Air Force, receiving a personal letter of Commendation from TRAN VAN MINH, Acting Commander in Chief of Republic of Vietnam Air Force.

This list goes on and on, from Europe to Iceland to the States. His last duty post was in Columbus, OH, where he retired from active duty April 1, 1978, as a Colonel with 30 years of active service and a command pilot with 7400 flying hours. After two years as Vice President with a home builder in Columbus, he retired again to enjoy other interests with his wife Julia. They now reside in Antigo, WI, where they built a new home and are enjoying the serenity of Wisconsin.

Julius Fisher was elected Secretary this year, a position long held by **Al Bosworth**. He joined the 345th/501st

at Nadzab, New Guinea, and left it at Clark Field, P.I. to return to the States. He stayed in the Air Force Reserve for over 30 years and retired with the rank of Colonel.

Fisher earned his degree in Engineering and spent 27 years with Chrysler Corp. in the design and development areas of all passenger cars and trucks as an Engineer Manager.

His best buddy is his wife of over 45 years, Margaret. They have two children: Julie and Tom. Both are married and have four children between them, a "true joy to have around."



Julius Fisher

Photo Quiz Answers

(A) Place - Nadzab; Men - (L-R) Saforitz, Spencer, Adams, Bebrealt (unsure of correct spelling!), Welch

(B) Wadki Island, which was made unserviceable before the 18 May 1944 invasion.

(C) This is a real quiz, because your editor can't answer this one! Please send answer to Sheila Regan, 1906 Fontenay Court, Columbus, OH 43235-7371.

(D) The jungle is right behind the

501st Squadron area at 17-Mile Drome Region, Port Moresby. R to L: Maury Eppstein, Sgt. Fezio and the others remain unidentified. Can anyone name these men?

(E) L to R: 1st Lt. Shuler Gamble, Pilot; Joe Wyatt, Radioman, who received the message to return to base; Charles Reavis, Engineer; Copilot Louis Damour. (Gamble "found" his copilot at the 1988 Norfolk Reunion!).

Editorial Error

It was erroneously reported in Hap Maloney's profile he and his wife lived in El Paso for the past 22 years. They have lived in Deer Park, TX, for the last 22 years; it's a suburb of Houston. Sorry!

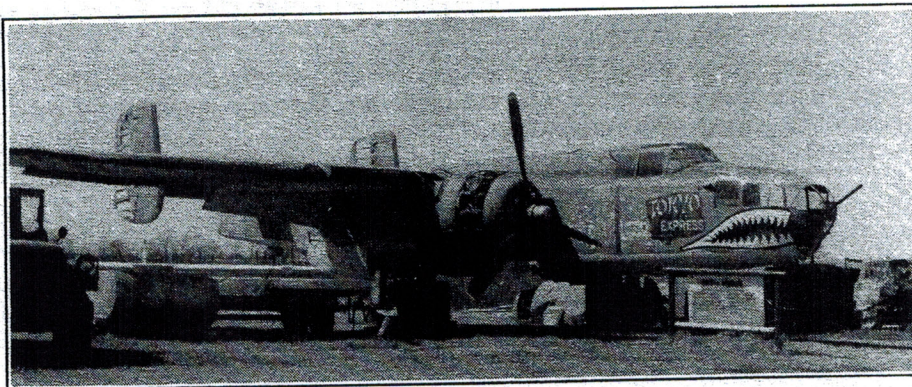


The Past Enters The Future

The *Tokyo Express* was in a private museum north of Chicago. Its interior had been badly vandalized. Of the few B-25s remaining (over 9,000 were built), three were auctioned in October 1983 by an estate in Texas. Each was in various stages of neglect. Two went to a restoration/parts outfit in California, the other to a private individual with hopes of restoration.

Mickey Pavkovich (500) located this fella near Pittsburgh. Formerly a Hollywood plane, it was flown to the area and transported by "skycrane" to a cemetery. Placed wheels down, it overlooks the veterans' section with a plaque headed "On Final Forever."

The cemetery proprietor offered the plane to NASM during its search for a candidate in its new display. Although the plane was in good shape, NASM declined. **John Dinges** inspected the cockpit and revealed a good bit of activity by birds. The plane was later acquired by a Florida B-25 enthusiast.



Above, The Tokyo Express. At right, "On Final Forever" at rest.



Help Erect A WWII Memorial/Museum

Martin Goldensohn wants a memorial museum built for WWII veterans, especially to those who died. Here's what he has to say:

"My dear Airmen of World War II:

My name is Martin Goldensohn. I was with the 553rd Bomb Squadron, 386th Bomb Group during WWII. I would like you to join me in the building of a War Memorial dedicated to all the Airmen who died on missions during World War II.

For the past 30 years, I have felt our government should have provided for a War Memorial Museum. That has been my dream. I believe it's up to people like us - who have seen service and who remember - to take action and to do it now. Before time runs out.

I've communicated with the Department of the Air Force on this matter. (He received a letter from Brig. Gen. Joseph Stapleton). I was so mad after reading that letter. Here's why:

The General says he called Wright-Patterson Air Force Museum for information. First of all, I don't believe any of their airplanes were in action overseas. Besides, there are no pictures there of our great pilots and crews. The only place I know with such a plane is the Smithsonian Institute's air museum in Washington D.C. They have no pictures of the crews from that plane—a B26 with over 200 missions.

In October 1988 at a reunion in San Diego, I saw my war-

time buddies for the first time in 45 years. We were so happy to see one another, we all cried. I said to myself, Thank you, God, that I have lived to see them.

Reunions are great, but that is not enough for me. I demand we get a place of our own, a *real* War Memorial Museum to honor Air Force, Navy, Marines, Coast Guard of World War II, including our beautiful and courageous Women Ferry Pilots. If we all pull together, this dream can become reality.

Here is how I plan to begin:

—Send a copy of this letter to all your buddies in your group. Talk with as many as you can about our idea.

—If you do that, I will set up a reunion of all groups, so we can get the ball rolling. I would want two people from each group to attend. We'll all pay our own expenses, so no one has to 'take up a collection' for anybody.

Remember, dear buddies, death is for the living and the living will live on. They who died for us to live, and for our children to live, will live on. So let's give them a place of honor."

For more information on how you can help, write **Martin Goldensohn, 700 SW 128th Ave, Buckingham C210, Pembroke Pines, FL 33027** or phone **305/432-8245**. It's time to pull together once again.

Memorabilia Request

Mike Matthews is a huge fan of the 345th. He paints the noses of B25s - in tribute to the 345th/5th Air Force. When he attends air shows with his B25, **Larry Hickey**, author of *Warpath Across The Pacific*, sometimes sets up shop beneath the "Bat Nose" and has great success selling his book.

Cliff Hanna started Matthews's 345th collection with his own Air Apache bomb group patch. Matthews is seeking a patch from each squadron in order to complete his display. As proud owner of "Tondelayo", the cover for *Warpath*, he'd like the patches framed along the lower edge of the painting. The patches he is seeking must be ORIGINAL, however, and not reunion patches.

Matthews will purchase any patches



John Baeta and his former crew member, Mr. Foster, in front of a "Mike Mathews" B-25.

and build aircraft models of the B25 with any markings requested. (He's a professional model builder). He's also interested in flight jackets, boots, hats, etc. from the 345th/5th Air Force era. He has a large collection of flight gear from most theaters, but his 5th Air Force collection is "weak". He stresses, however, he is a collector and does not sell any pieces he acquires. If donors have a change of heart, he will return it willingly.

Over the last three years, Matthews has been restoring B25s and has over 150 flying hours as crew chief. He loves the plane and flies it as much as possible, mainly because he wants to

preserve the history we somehow take for granted.

"The greatest thrill (to me)," he says, "is to meet a B25 veteran at an air show, especially if they flew with the Apaches. Believe it or not, I have met three other crew members from the 498th, 499th and 501st."

For those of you willing to expand his collection, please write **15014 Kalan Ct, Chino Hills, CA 91709**.

Another 345th Fan!

Thought some of you may enjoy this letter I received from **Stephen Quesinberry**.

"I just wanted to write and thank you for including me in your last letter of *Strafer* (August 1988). I did attend the reunion and enjoyed myself very much. If you could possibly include in your upcoming *Strafer* that I appreciated everyone who helped me and talked with me last weekend (9/88), and that I am still looking for information on my uncle, **F/O Kenneth Bridges**. I am also looking for copies of the old unit history, *Warpath* and the 498th Squadron history, *The Falcons*. anyone has or knows of extra copies they would be interested in selling, please let me know.

Again, let me thank you for the help you have given me in this quest of mine. The 345th has a proud and distinguished history, and I am proud my uncle could have been a part of it for a short time."

Computer Reunion Notices

If you have a home computer, a modem and a telephone line, you can have FREE access to a privately operated computer information center listing and screening armed forces reunion announcements.

The data base is available 24 hours a day by calling **(704) 667- 8021**; the baud rate can be any rate between 300 and 1200 with *modem settings of no parity, eight data bits, one stop bit and full duplex*.

Reunion representatives without access to a computer may mail information to **USS Merrill Reunion Association, PO Box 681, Enka, NC 28728-0681**. Questions: send a stamped, self addressed envelope to ATTN: **HERBERT W. REITH**.

DUES ARE DUE!

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

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