

STRAFER



498th SQUADRON

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345th Bomb Group Reunion Association

May 1989

1990 Reunion Plans Set in Motion

We aren't on the final approach for Reunion VIII yet, but we are airborne and headed that way. The committee met at Las Vegas on April 10-11-12 and set things in motion for our next gathering.

As planned, the October 15-18, 1990 reunion will be held at the Riviera Hotel (with other options available for those wishing them) smack in the center of things on the famous Vegas strip. It will be a 345th event with our own side trips and meetings and parties (just as our past ones have been) but concurrent with the 5th AF function. We will join with other 5th AF units for *only* the big final evening's banquet.

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Enjoying the reunion planning session in Las Vegas are (l to r) Fred Moore, 500th; Vic Tatelman, 499th; Harry Zarfes, 499th; Maury Eppstein, Hdqrs.; Shuler Gamble, 499th; and Ken McClure, 499th.

President's Message

On April 9th, 1989, Maury Eppstein, Ken McClure, Vic Tatelman and I met in Las Vegas at the Riviera Hotel. Our visit was productive in that we were able to meet with the following men living in the Las Vegas area and were able to have a conducted tour of the facilities in the Riviera Hotel. Local men meeting with us were Fred Moore, 500th Sqd.; Harry Zarfes, 499th Sqd.; Ray Shaffer, 500th Sqd.; and Nate Etkins, 501st Sqd. All of these men



Shuler S. Gamble
President

are active in the 5th Air Force planning group and will also work with the 345th in the planning of our reunion.

In our meeting with the Riviera Hotel people, we found out that the total rooms booked for the reunion were assigned to the 5th Air Force Reunion Organiza-

tion and in order for the 345th to acquire rooms for its own reunion, we would have to obtain a release from the 5th Air Force Group. After much calling of various officers of the 5th Air Force Group, we finally reached Howard MacDonald, Secretary to the 5th Air Force Memorial Foundation, Inc., and after lengthy discussion, he assured us that he could see no problem in the release of sufficient rooms for our Group. Maury will have an additional report covering further aspects of the meetings.

We were very sorry that Ben Fridge was unable to meet with us due to an unanticipated medical reason. He and Maury are doing a good job for us.

Shuler S. Gamble

Squadron Reports

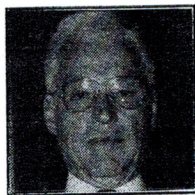
498th Squadron

We have received word that **Dave McCready** and his wife Hazel tripped out to the South Pacific with the thought in mind to find the downed B-25 in which Dave was a radio operator. We hope to have more on this for a future issue when they give us a full report.

Don Stout is poised and set for the Las Vegas Reunion in 1990. He will be handling affairs for the 498th in this regard. His address is 6356 Hack Hill Drive, Oroville, CA 95966, phone 916/589-1414.

Bert Rosenbaum reminisces over the day many years ago when he and his crew were leaving the U.S. mainland (with others, of course) for their South Pacific destination and their B-25 became balky. They were wondering if they would have to abort, but after some adjustments by engineer **C. D. Carrington**, things seemed to smooth out and they continued toward their goal. You all know the rest of the story since they did arrive in New Guinea.

Don't forget to keep in touch with us regarding address changes, finding some of our lost sheep, and any other particulars pertaining to the health and welfare of our members. The best of everything to all.



Henry Reynes
VP, 498th Squadron

499th Squadron

There is interest in a 499th Squadron reunion. So far, 15 people have expressed interest in a get-together this year, and they are very excited about it.

A June or September date is being considered. Please contact **Pax Baker** if you are interested. You will have to contact him in the evening, however. We would like to know which date is better for you.

Dick Marks is trying to find his copilot **Clement Walker** who was last known to be in Michigan. Does anyone have a clue where we can find him?

Pax Baker
VP, 499th Squadron

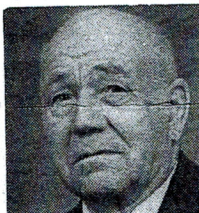
(A March 25th note from Dale Rapp)

Just a line to let you know **Julian Baird** had heart surgery March 20th. I was into the VA Hospital in Dallas to see him yesterday morning. He was sitting up and in good spirits and doing real well.

Have planted some garden. We had a fairly warm winter, then got ten inches of snow the first week of March, followed by another in the next week. Close to 80 degrees yesterday. Fruit trees are starting to bloom now.

Received a letter from **Joe Clevenger** in February. He is still in Okinawa. Was divorced in Feb. '87 and has now remarried to a Filipino girl. He plans on being back for his high school 50th reunion the summer of 1990, but did not say which month.

Guess that's about all for this time. Looking forward to Las Vegas. May the Good Lord Bless and Guide us in our endeavors.



Your friend,
Dale Rapp

500th Squadron

The February *Strafer* carried an item requesting news of **Eddie Ison**, who was a softball pitcher for the 500th and also served as a first sergeant. We were rewarded with a letter from **Fred Parks** of Colorado Springs. Fred wrote that he had visited him in Memphis several times, but on a phone call in 1973 found he was deceased.

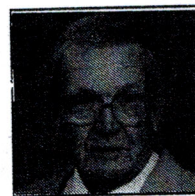
Now Fred has some requests for people info. He wondered about **Crago, Kennedy** and **H. E. Bert**. Any news from any of you out there?

It also seems that Parks made a trip from Clark Field to Milne Bay with reps from the 498th, 499th and 501st to bring back a portable saw mill. He'd appreciate hearing who those people were, and if they are members of the 345th B. B. Reunion Association, he'd like to hear from you.

Nat Etkins of the 501st, **Harry Zarfes** of the 499th and **Fred Moore** of the 500th are working on the committee for the 5th AF Reunion in Las Vegas in

1990. Nat has just recently moved there. If you wish to call any of us, telephone numbers are: Harry 1-702-731-1852; Nat 1-702-876-0401; and Fred 1-800-871-4405.

Plans for our 500th odd-numbered Reunion are rather firm. If information is desired contact **Herman Werner**, 500th Bomb Squadron Association, Post Office Box 25823, Seattle WA 98125-1323, telephone number 1-206-363-1246.



Fred Moore
VP, 500th Squadron

501st Squadron

Plans are pretty well complete and everything is ready for a 501st Squadron reunion. By the time you receive this issue of *The Strafer*, all you Black Panthers should have received, or if not you will soon, a letter from our Secretary, **George Mordecai**, outlining all you need to know to attend the 1989 501st Squadron reunion.

The place is Banson, Missouri, about thirty miles south of Springfield, Missouri. The times are 15, 16 & 17 September, or whatever time you want to come. Come early and stay late. Headquarters will be the Shepherd of the Hills Motel and R.V. Park. All of this is repeating what George has outlined in his letter, so I will not belabor you with any more details. I just make your reservations and we will see you all in September.

Received a letter recently from Jeff Blackmon in which he listed three men he was trying to locate: **George C. Westfall**, M/Sgt 16035479, Communication Chief (Original cadre); **Adolph K. Singerhan**, T/Sgt 32252025, changed his name to A. K. Stevens (Original cadre); **Ostelle E. Rhodes**, T/Sgt Crew Chief.

Any information anyone has, let us know, or better yet, bring it to the squadron reunion.

See you in September in Missouri.



Jay Moore
VP, 501st Squadron

700th Squadron

Mistaken Identity
By Ken Gastgeb

One night, when we were stationed on the sandy beach of Leyte, shortly after the Nelson and Waite hit, the Japs dropped paratroopers around our area. **Palmer Laughridge**, Group Communications Officer, and several other officers noticed a small native boat a little ways off of the shore. They noted that the Jap planes flew over the boat when making their approach directly over our area. They thought that Jap and native collaborators were on the boat and giving some sort of signal for the Jap planes to home in on.

They commanded an Army Duck. They all boarded and went to investigate. The boat seemed bigger the closer they got to it. As they arrived along side, they learned that it was a native fishing boat. They told the natives to put out all lights, even the fire in the hole.

With that taken care of, they headed back to shore. As they were returning to shore, the 345th BG guards spotted them and thought the Japs were invading us from the sea.

The US opened fire on the Japs with our one and only 50 cal. machine gun and small arms. Palmer and the other officers forgot to tell anyone that they were going out to investigate the fishing boat. However, after ducking a lot of bullets, they made it back to shore okay and felt awful stupid about not telling anyone.

Autobiography of Ken Gastgeb

Before WWII, I worked in a steel mill in Bridgeville, Pennsylvania, about ten miles away from Pittsburgh, as a laborer in the plow shop. I joined the 345th on November 11, 1942 in Columbia, South Carolina. I served as a clerk in the 498th Squadron and as a telephone and telegraph linesman in HQ.

Returning home after the war, I went back to the steel mill. After several months, I was transferred to the metallurgical lab as a metallurgical technician. In 1948, I went to work for the US Railway Mail Service. With the mail service, I served as a clerk on the trains

between Pittsburgh and New York in the Pittsburgh Terminal, and at the Pittsburgh Airport Mail Facility.

In 1960, I was transferred to the Pittsburgh Post Office as a Maintenance Mechanic on the conveyor system and mail processing equipment. I also served as a part time instructor on the Mark II



IN MEMORIAM

Deceased: **Leonard "Curly" Curtis**, 498th; March 18, 1989

He was a proud member who never missed a reunion. Curly was very popular overseas during his day. He will be missed by all.

Eddie Ison (Location requested in Feb. Issue). **Fred Parks** visited Eddie several times in Memphis years ago.

Through a phone call in 1973, he learned that Ison was deceased.

Prescription for a Laugh (author unknown)

Just a line to say I'm living,
That I'm not among the dead.
Though I'm getting more forgetful,
And more mixed up in the head.
For, sometimes I can't remember,
When I stand at foot of stair,
If I must go up for something, or
I've just come down from there.
And before the fridge, so often
My poor mind is filled with doubt,
Have I just put food away, or
Have I come to take some out.
And there are times when it is dark out,
With my night cap on my head,
I don't know if I'm retiring,
Or just getting out of bed.
So if it's my turn to write you,
There's no need in getting sore,
I may think that I have written,
And don't want to be a bore.
So, remember, I do love you,
And wish that you were here,
But now it's nearly mail time,
So, I must say "Goodbye," dear.
There I stood beside the mailbox,
With my face so very red,
Instead of mailing you my letter,
I opened it instead.

Apache Strike

Over the coco-palms they're thrashing
Those Air Apaches are out today.
Wild-wind-riders, their bomb load crashing
On far Nip targets along the way.
Up from the home strip swift at the dawning,
Up and Over the ink-blue sea,
Lead ship heading across the morning,
Squadrons follow in Victory V.

Out of the cloud-mists, swiftly hitting,
Out of the valleys and down they sweep,
Bomb bays open and fifties spitting,
Straight as a sun-ray course they keep.
Down from the sky-high crossroads swinging,
Routing the silence with shattering roar,
Blasting the target, eardrums ringing,
Away from the bomb-run and up they soar.

Hundred-and-eighty, headed for home now,
Zeros brushed from the sky way path,
Making good the Apache war vow,
Cracking down on the squirming Jap.
Brightly the sun shines, calmed is the sea might,
Homeward the star-winged warbirds go,
Pilot to tower - give us the green light -
Tomorrow, we're visiting Tokyo!

(Written by **Maury Eppstein** at Biak Island, Shouten Island Group, Netherlands East Indies, September 8, 1944)

Facer Canceled Machine. In 1968, I was promoted to foreman of maintenance. In 1969, I accepted a full time instructing position at the Postal Service Technical Training Center in Norman, Oklahoma.

I retired from Government Service, after 35 years, in January 1981. My hobbies include golf, bowling, fishing, computing, and entering sweepstakes.

Ken Gastgeb

Reunion Plans, continued from Page 1

Las Vegas is probably America's greatest reunion/convention city and has so many outstanding attractions from which to choose that it will be difficult to select the most interesting for our program. In future issues of *The Strafer*, we will have a variety of events, side trips, etc. for you to look over and indicate which you would most like to participate in when at our reunion.

The committee met with members of the 5th AF reunion committee and went over details on all facets of the hotel possibilities, side trips, restaurants and various revues for which Las Vegas is famous. Comprehensive descriptions, prices and other pertinent facts on these will be covered in the upcoming *Strafer* articles, as well as information on air and other travel matters. We can't help having a great time there in 1990.

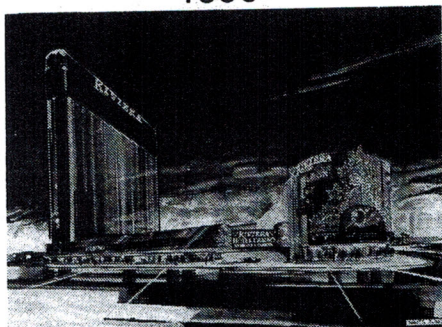
Reunion VIII Will Be A Weekday Only Event!

In thinking ahead, remember that this reunion will be held on **MON-TUES-WED-THURS** rather than later in the week as our previous reunions have been. This scheduling was decided upon in order to take advantage of the best price breaks and to avoid the heavy travel and traffic pressure, and will coincide with all 5th AF units participating.

Watch for details in future *Strafers* and give us your feedback after seeing what selections we have lined up for your decisions.

And, hey -- money will come in handy at Vegas, so start plunking it in that piggy bank now! 18 months and counting

REUNION
OCTOBER 15 - 18
1990



LAS VEGAS, NEVADA

Notice

Orlando and Jacksonville, FL residents, along with San Diego, CA residents are asked to send their new, correct addresses to **Ken McClure, 2770 E. Main Street, Columbus, Ohio 43209.**

Due to the growth in these areas, new ZIP codes have been instituted by the Postal Service. Only correct addresses will ensure the receiving of future issues of *the Strafer*.

Association Officers

President -- Shuler Gamble: 2011 Stebbins Drive, Houston, TX 77043
713/468-0737
Vice President -- Ed Bina: 628 Deresch, Antigo, WI 54409
715/627-2272
Secretary -- Julius Fisher: 3131 W. Drahner Rd, Oxford, MI 48051
313/628-1287
Treasurer -- Ken McClure: 2770 E. Main St, Columbus, OH 43209
614/237-4251

Reunion Committee Vice Presidents

HDQ -- Ken Gastgeb: 1730D W Robinson, Norman, OK 73069
405/364-1350
498 -- Henry Reyns: Box 281 Beattie Rd, Rock Tavern, NY 12575
914/496-5375
499 -- Pax Baker: 2425 S. 25th Rd, Cedaredge, CO 81413
303/856-6670
500 -- Fred Moore: 4952 Vivaldi Dr, Las Vegas, NV 89102
702/871-4405
501 -- Jay Moore: 8145 Braun Rd, Groveport, OH 43125
614/836-5215

DUES ARE DUE!

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

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