

STRAFER



498th SQUADRON

499th SQUADRON

500th SQUADRON

501st SQUADRON

345th Bomb Group Reunion Association

December 1990

Las Vegas A Success, Columbus in '92 Help Celebrate the 50th Anniversary of The Founding of the 345th

by Maury Eppstein

The 345th Bomb Group had 470 people attending the combined Reunion with the 5th Air Force in Las Vegas. That was one-third of the total 5th AF attendance. Members of the 345th arriving via air were met at the airport by the new 345th BG bus and chauffeured to the hotel by Lynn Lee.

In keeping with the "Las Vegas Spirit" all attendees were given decks of specially designed Air Apache playing cards and special 345th chips made excellent souvenirs. "Gatsby" hats set 345th men and women apart from other 5th AF.

Special thanks to: **Harry Zarfaz** (499) for hours and weeks spent on tour tickets and transportation, supplies for hospitality room, etc., **Bob and Anne Marie Larsen** (501) for day and night service in all phases of the hospitality room, **John and Del Baeta** (499) for months spent getting a registration procedure established. John and Del also want to thank all the people who helped them.

There was business to conduct too. Ed Bina was elected President of the 345th Bomb Group. His column, "Air Arena," will debut in the next *Strafer*, but look for a few words from him on page 3 of this issue. Please see the officers roster on page 3.

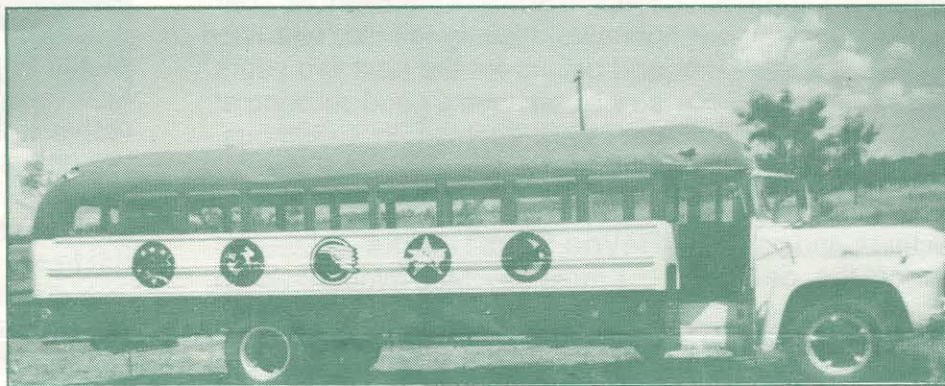
Business included selection of the site for the 1992 reunion and a return to Columbus was decided upon. That

will mark two anniversaries. It will be the 50th anniversary of the forma-

tion of the 345th in November 1942. We'll make an extra effort to get a

good turnout with an emphasis on attracting old COs, affiliated personnel, etc.

1992 will also mark 500 years since Christopher Columbus discovered America, making Columbus, Ohio a fitting site. SEE YOU IN COLUMBUS IN 1992 !!!



This bus now belongs to the 345th BG and it will carry members to activities at all future reunions. It was given to us by Lynn Lee, Abilene, Tx (501st sqd.).

*All the Way from the S.W.P.A.
Season's Greetings
from the 345th and me*

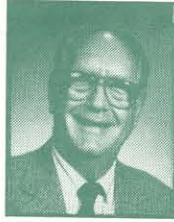


Some of these that were mailed may still be around. They were made by Cliff Hanna (HQ) and this was in his collection. This year it's from Strafer to all members of the 345th.

Squadron Reports

498th Squadron

Merl Wooden
V.P. 498th Sqd.



A warm hello to all of my fellow 498th squadron members.

It was good to see the group in Las Vegas and I missed all of my friends who weren't there.

The reunion in Vegas is over and, personally, I am again looking forward to being back in Columbus, Ohio in '92.

We learned a few lessons from this reunion - things to keep and things to change. I definitely hope our Columbus Reunion can be more of a group get-together - more time to visit. We are growing older and who knows which of us won't be at the next reunion. Of course, we hope all of you will be there and no more names appear on the deceased list.

As your new vice president voted into office in Vegas, (guess no one heard me say, "no, no, no."), I am asking for your help. Please send all information, ideas and just general correspondence to me. I want to hear from all of you, including illness and deaths.

I went to Kalamazoo, MI on Veteran's Day weekend to enjoy the festivities of the unveiling of the B-25 that was mentioned in the Sept. *Strafer*. The date had to be changed. How appropriate, being Veterans Day. I enjoyed seeing the crew of the 498th flight in #115. Taking the Japanese Emissaries to the peace table was a mission none of us will ever forget.

We really missed seeing Herb (Red) and Dolly Garland in Vegas. Red had recent eye surgery. We also missed

Katherine Wardle due to illness. It was the first reunion all of them had missed.

We had a new squadron member at the reunion. Robert E. Jones, 1718 South Park Dr., Santa Ana, CA 92707. I didn't get to meet Robert. I hope some of you did and welcomed him into our squadron at the Reunion.

We were short of people at the Las Vegas reunion. If my count was correct, there were only 44 of us there. That is about 15 to 20 below our average attendance at the reunions.

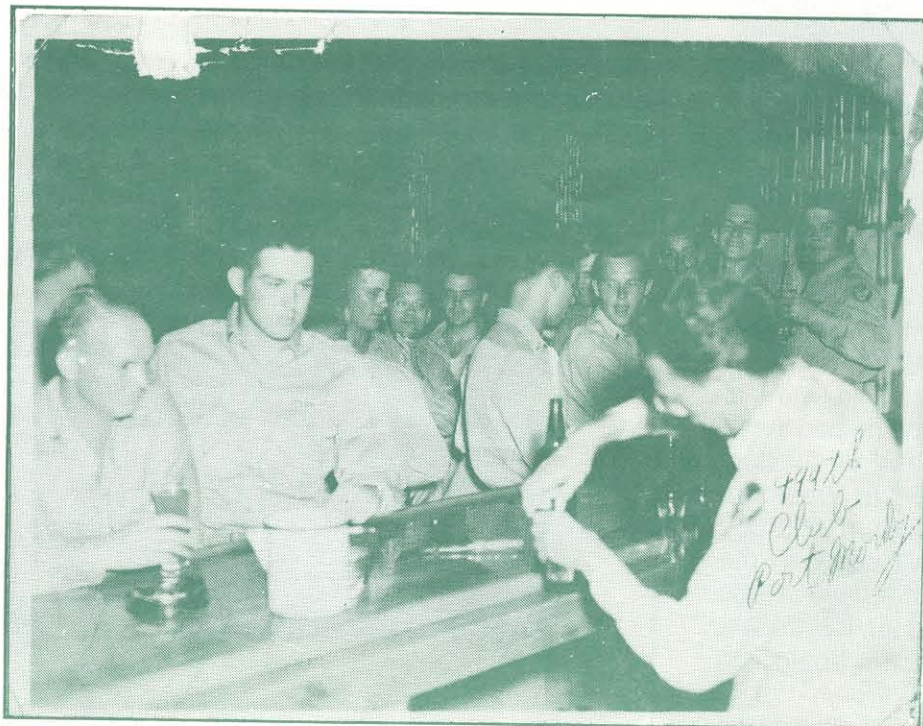
NOW HEAR THIS, 498TH TROOPS!!! START SAVING your pennies, nickels, dimes, quarters and dollars for the next two years so we can have a good showing at our 1992 reunion in Columbus, Ohio.

Reyns Says Thanks

I must say Merl Wooden is an excellent choice for Squadron Vice President. He will do just great!

My thanks to all of you for your support through the past six years. See you in Columbus in 1992.

Henry J. Reyns



This photo comes from the collection of the dark-haired fellow second from left. If you can't identify any of these people, see the names on the next page.

Headquarters Group

Ken Gastgeb
V.P. - HQ Group



The 345th BG was well represented at the 5th Air Force Reunion. About 30 members of HQ Group were there. The two banquets were great. HQ Group joined the 501st Squadron on Wednesday for an evening of fellowship, fun and good food. We thank the 501st, especially George Mordacai and Jay Moore, for inviting us to join them. At the Thursday evening banquet General Davis 5th Air Force, presented a history of the 5th Air Force.

Mostly everyone dropped a few coins in the slots. One person won \$2,000. Whether you won or lost, the slots were fun. Sometimes you could stretch out a roll of coins to last over an hour on the one arm bandits. Usually the bandit got all of the coins in the end, though.

The strip is a beautiful sight to see at night with the millions of colorful flashing lights that form many images at the hotels: The Mirage

Hotel with its lights, water falls and exploding volcano were something to see. Also, the rain forest and white tigers. The Excalibur, one of the new hotels, has a carnival atmosphere with games of chance or skill or both. You can: toss rings at bottles, throw baseballs at bottles, have your weight or age guessed, etc. We went on the bobsled ride, a great adventure. For the big bucks players - Ceaser's Palace has slots up to \$500 a pull.

Israeli Air Apache

by Fred Moore

John Dinges, who worked on the 500th Sqd. portion of the original "Warpath," learned about **Captain Stanley Andrews**, who also assisted and contributed the artwork of a debriefing session. Over the years, Stan's name had come up occasionally and he had been believed to have been killed while flying for Israel.

According to the Israeli government, "In October 1948, he participated in several bombing runs on the Egyptian Forces in the south of the country. On October 20, 1948, he piloted a 'Beaufighter' aircraft along with two other volunteers, Leonard Fitchett of Canada and Dov Sugarman of England. Their mission was to bomb the Egyptian antiaircraft at the police station of Iraq-Suweidan, which blocked the way to Negev. They released the bomb, flying at a low altitude. Despite the antiaircraft guns and contrary to the flight plan for the mission, the crew executed an additional pass and their aircraft was hit. They crashed in Egyptian territory.

"Stanley Andrews was posthumously granted the rank of Flight Lieutenant."

501st Squadron

Jerry Murphy
V.P. - 501st Sqd.



I think we will all agree that the reunion in Las Vegas was a success. We had in attendance fifty-four members from the 501st plus wives and guests - the largest turnout of the entire 5th AF. We can be proud.

Las Vegas was the first reunion for Chester Lee Phillips, John Iacovelli, John L. Davis and Walter Kilroy. Chet Phillips flew on our crew as copilot. It was the first time in over 45 years that I have seen Chet. John Iacovelli was also reunited after 45 years with his crew mate, Don Hardeman.

Thank you for electing me your vice president for the next two years. I will do my best to represent you.

Congratulations are in order to Jay Moore for a bang-up job during the previous term. Also, cheers to George Mordecai for chairing a great banquet Wednesday night. Everything was terrific!

Please send me any information you have concerning members or events of our squadron.

Late report: Those of you who knew that Ralph Knowles became quite ill at the reunion will be glad to know he's much better. He had a touch of food poisoning. His wife, Sarah, says the care and concern of the people of the 501st is very much appreciated. "It really was a big morale builder," she says.

Just A Note. How can you describe something that continues to improve? Of course I am speaking of the tremendous effort put forth by everyone who made our Las Vegas reunion a huge success. I want to thank each and every person who participated and spent countless hours working out details. Now that you have chosen me to be your president, I will do my best to lead the group for the next two years.

Happy Holidays,

The men in the picture on page 2, from L to R are: James R. Salter, Ken McClure, Clyde F. Muse, E.W.K. Andrau, George Wallace, Chandler Whipple, Joe Stevens, William W. Cabell, Edgar Kauffman (bartender), Russell Erum, William Graham, Royce E. Tuttle

IN MEMORY OF

Robert R. Blodgett	500th	Aug. '90	Teller, AK
George M. Bolte	499th	Apr. '90	Jersey City, NJ
William R. Crosland	499th	Sep. '87	Fort Smith, AR
Donald J. Hatfield	499th		Ordway, CO
Tom R. Kelley	499th	May '90	Winthrop, MA
Robert Mayerson	498th	Jun. '90	Pompano Beach, FL
Harry R. Sharp	501st	Jun. '90	Flagstaff, AZ
Thomas J. Vincent	501st	Nov. '89	N. Canton, OH

Association Officers

President -- Ed Bina
628 N. Deresch St.
Antigo, WI 54409
715/627-2272

Vice President -- Vic Tatelman
18900 SW 232nd St.
Miami, FL 33170-5204

Secretary -- Julius Fisher
1640 Battlecreek Rd.
Charlotte, MI 48813
517/543-4816

Treasurer -- Ken McClure
2770 E. Main St.
Columbus, OH 43209
614/237-4251

Reunion Chairman -- Ken McClure
614/237-4251

Co-chairman -- Jay Moore
614/836-5215

Reunion Committee Vice Presidents

HQ - Ken Gastgeb
1730D W. Robinson
Norman, OK 73069
405/364-1350

498 - Merl Wooden
409 Lewellen Dr. NW
Cedar Rapids, IA 52405-3303
319/396-6667

499 - Ben Miller
Rural Route 08, Box 299
Decatur, IN 46733-9428
219/547-4460

500 - Fred Moore
4952 Vivaldi Dr.
Las Vegas, NV 89102
702/871-4405

501 - Jerry Murphy
5208 Lynd Ave.
Lyndhurst, OH 44124-1031
216/442-7273

Did You Know What Came Before Zero?

by Col. Joe Elia

Almost everyone knows about the career of Howard Hughes. He was an eccentrically brilliant aviation innovator, medical philanthropist, movie maker, etc. However, there are not many who know of a very important fact involving Hughes, the "tunnel vision experts" we had in the Pentagon and General Claire Chennault. It is now known that they precluded America from having the fastest fighter plane in the air at a time when it would have been extremely valuable, World War II.

In 1937 Mr. Hughes presented his H-1 plans for a fighter plane to the Pentagon. This plane had an amazing range and could remain aloft for 10 to 12 hours and was more maneuverable than any plane in the world at that time. Our "whiz kids" in the Pentagon nixed it.

The Japanese got wind of it and copied all the data and specifications and then actually constructed it. Then they put it to use in China, where General Claire Chennault

and his Flying Tigers saw it perform in air combat. Chennault sent pictures and all the data he could accumulate concerning the plane's maneuverability to Washington. They replied, but didn't share his concern. What the Pentagon really told Chennault, in masked language, was that he was a liar. "No plane could do all that Chennault had indicated and reported," they said.

The Zero (copied from the H-1 plans) received its name from the Japanese, because it was designed (from the stolen American data) and manufactured in the Japanese calendar year of 2600. That was 1940 by our Roman calendar.

The Pentagon was to realize its gross stupidity later when others also reported the feats and facts of this amazing airplane, which could outfly anything the Allies had. Hughes had designed the right plane, Chennault had reported the right data, but we had the wrong people in the Pentagon.

"Wilbur Wright has made the statement that in his opinion, the use of the aeroplane for dropping bombs or explosives into a hostile army is impracticable as the machine must rise 1,000 or 1,500 feet above the ground to escape shell fire. At that height accuracy would be impossible in dropping explosives when moving at 40 or 50 miles an hour." *Popular Mechanics, July 1909*

Air Apache Museum

by Maury Eppstein

Bob Lumbard, Pomona, CA, was a foot soldier in Korea, but now he's a "B-25 freak." He is working to establish a 345th Air Apache Museum at Eagle Field in Dos Palos, CA. He owns a B-25, "In The Mood," and it carries the Air Apache insignia just like ours did in WWII. Bob and his associates would like to hear from you and would welcome any 345th memorabilia, photos, etc. Dollar donations will not be rejected. Bob Lumbard, 498 Roosevelt Ave., Pomona, CA 91767, 714/865-5072.

345th Decks

A limited number of 345th playing card decks is still available from Reunion VIII. They are white with red insignia and printing. Great gifts at \$4.50. Make check to 345th Reunion Assoc. and mail to: Maury Eppstein, 800 Mountain Home Rd, Woodside, CA 94062.

1991 DUES PAYABLE

Please send \$15 annual payment to
345th BG Assn.

c/o

Ken McClure, treasurer
2770 E. Main St.
Columbus, OH 43209

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

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

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

*****ALL FOR STATE
1:1019 STA S1 18

Frank Dillard
Rural Route 05 Box 542
Marion IL 62959-9805

