

# STRAFER



498th SQUADRON

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501st SQUADRON

345th Bomb Group Reunion Association

December 1992

## Colorado Springs ahead for 1994

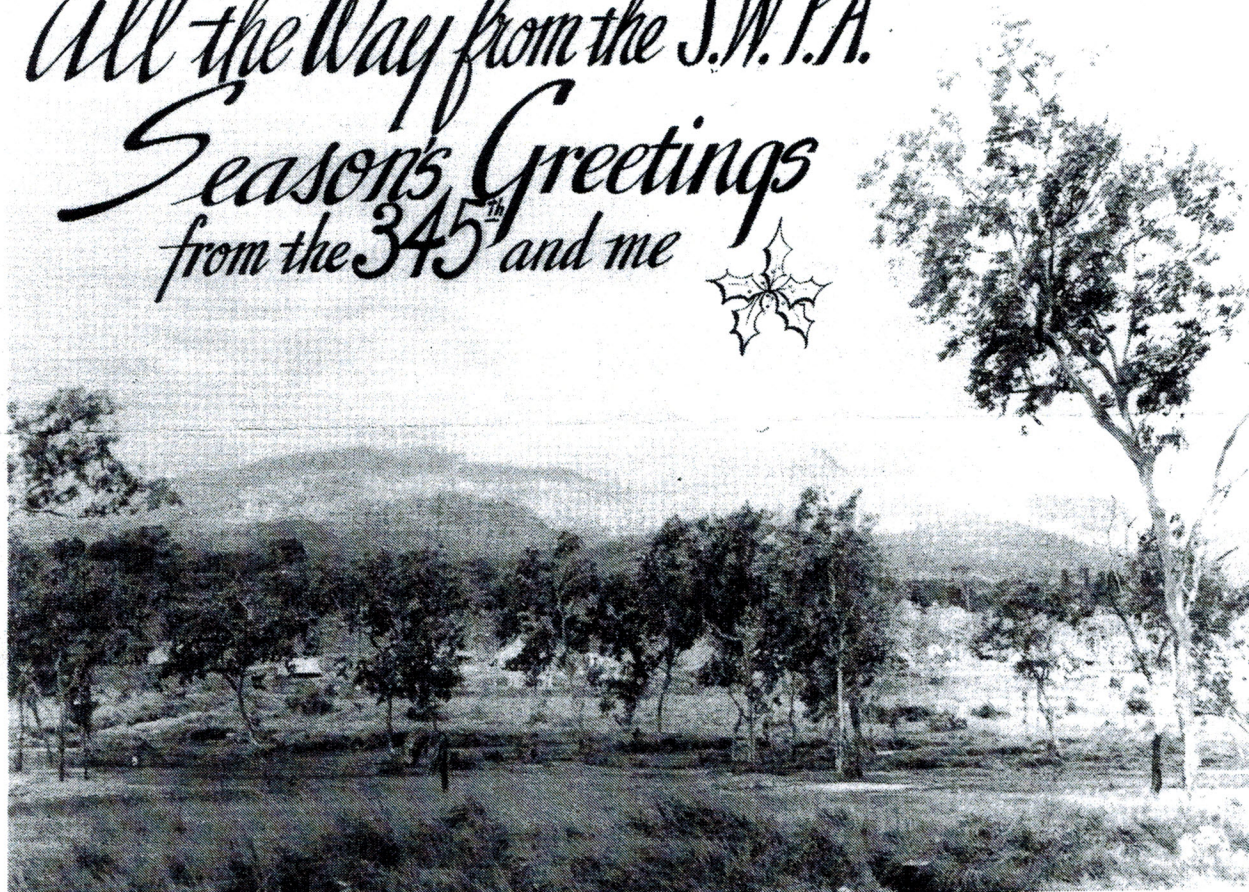
No, this is not another memory aid for changing from daylight savings time to standard time. It's the city chosen for the 1994 Reunion X. This will return the reunion to the city of the original 345th BG reunion. The Reunion X committee is in the organizational stages and they'll be reviewing accommodations for the big event.

Meanwhile, the Squadrons are getting to work on their minireunions too. So watch the *Strafer* and your mail from your Squadron vice president. You'll be getting more information on it soon.

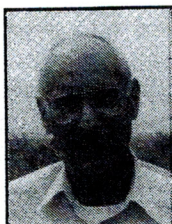
Bill Hilton (499) did not make it to reunion IX, although he did his best. He left home Saturday morning to drive down to Columbus, OH from Detroit. He stopped at a rest area to eat breakfast along the way and while he was finishing his coffee he noticed his car driving by outside. Police are still trying to recover it. Bill might appreciate receiving pictures and stories about the reunion.

Your comments on whether this year's Friday, Saturday, Sunday schedule was better or worse than the previous years' Thursday, Friday, Saturday schedule will be appreciated. Write to Reunion IX Chairman (Treasurer) Ken McClure.

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



*This year Strafer brings back one of the Christmas greetings that are believed to have been made by Cliff Hanna (HQ). This one is from his collection. The location is Papua, New Guinea. Happy Holidays to all 345 members and family.*



### Captain Hurricane

**Vic Tatem  
President**

It's a pretty high honor to get elected to the Presidency without even being present. (Or perhaps

not being present to defend oneself is closer to the truth.)

We've already started the planning for the 1994 reunion in Colorado Springs.

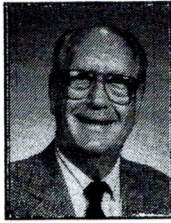
Henry Kortemeyer has graciously agreed to honcho a committee of our people in that area to select the hotel and the dates.

And Brenna Terrill will again be her indispensable self seeing to the myriad of details that she does so well. And Ken McClure (with Patti by his side) will  
*(Please See "President's message" on P. 5)*

# Squadron Reports

## 498th Squadron

Merl G. Wooden  
V.P. 498th Sqd.



Well, ..Our reunion in Columbus was a huge success. There were a few little hitches but that's expected. The worst was getting our rooms on time. The hotel was trying to get people from a previous convention out so they could clean the rooms for us and it wasn't working. But on the whole the hotel did a good job.

I think everyone enjoyed our 50th year reunion and especially the 498th banquet. At least I hope you did. Anyone having any remarks - pros and cons please let me know. Any changes you would like, please write. After all, it is your party and you are paying for it. We're already planning for our next party in Colorado Springs. One thing we are planning on is an afternoon of having a bull session, maybe after our meeting with no time limit to leave. I know everyone wants that.

Bob Judd sent regards from Mae Bowen (Lamar's widow). It was good to see C D Carrington after having all his surgery the past two years. Red Garland with his upbeat humor and wonderful feeling for others. We missed Harold and Edna Ponder, Elbert and Kathrine Wardle and Ed and Dorothy Stevens because of illness in their families. Since being home, I have received a nice note from Elbert. Everyone that can, call him once in awhile. I'm sure he is pretty lonely with Katherine in the nursing home and him having his ups and downs.

Bert Rosenbaum told how he and Elbert worked to get the reunions started. The 345th presented Bert and Elbert plaques for their efforts. Bert took Elbert's to him at home. Mike Coloff gave his account of Thirty Seconds Over Tokyo. He was a crew chief on one of the planes used in that mission. It was really interesting to hear Mike tell the story. Some of the other members had stories to tell. There will be more in Colorado Springs in '94. If you have one please let me know.

Bob Cornwell and John Polansky and their wives were present at the banquet. Bob was co-pilot and John was radio operator on the plane that contacted the two Betty Bombers that carried the Japanese envoys to IE Shima. They told of their experiences in picking them up. Red Garland (observer) and myself as crew chief were also on that plane. The Navigator, George Mesthos, wasn't present and Ma-

lor Jack McClure the pilot has never been heard from since. Any one knowing of his whereabouts, please let me know.

I have a few more copies of the roster printed as I ran out at the reunion. Make your check for \$4.50 payable to the 498th Bomb Squadron. Mail to 409 Lewellen Drive N W, Cedar Rapids, IA 52405. The money goes into our 498th Squadron Fund. I want to thank all who donated monies at the meeting in Columbus. You will be receiving a separate 498th bulletin in the near future, probably after the holidays.

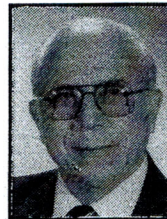
I was voted again to be your Vice President of the 498th and thank all of you who feel I'm doing all right. I felt real scared while in the hospital, wondering what would happen if something were to happen to me. I came to Columbus to suggest because of our ages, I needed a backup. You all voted unanimously for Frank Dillard. His address is: Frank Dillard Rural Route 5 Box 542 Marion, IL 62951-9805 Phone 618-995-2225

Frank will be very active in our squadron and we plan to use him a lot during our reunion and helping in other capacities. I'm awfully glad to have him on board.

Joyce and I wish all of you a very happy holiday season.

## 499th Squadron

Benjamin F. Miller  
V.P. - 499th Sqd.



Hello to one and all after another great reunion of the 345th Bomb Group.

First of all, the county fathers have taken it upon themselves to disrupt our mailing system by going to a new numbers system. Instead of R #8, Box 299, my address now is 9450N 550W. This will help locate rural homes easier. After the first of the year they will not forward mail sent to the old address unless it pleases them, so please note.

The reunion in Columbus was everything expected and more. My congratulations to all involved with all the planning and work. It was so good to see the regulars, along with so many first timers. Bodies changed a lot, but conversations were like time had stood still. We just smiled and spoke as though we had seen each other weeks ago instead of 50 years. Some incidents recalled were not for the ears of wives. We had some first time participants, such as Red Gross, Hap Maloney and several others, and we hope

they were favorably impressed. Eugene Colihan was coming, but didn't survive a surgery to repair his legs so he could discard his crutches. Mo Shawhan, who made our mini-reunion last year had problems that kept him from attending Columbus. Anyone who was ever on KP will remember him as the kind hearted cook with the green cap.

As most of you know by now, Vic Tatelman, who was in charge of the 499th banquet was nearly killed, and wiped out in the hurricane in Florida. All his tapes and records were lost, however the program came off quite well in 499th fashion. The crowning touch was at the conclusion, when Julian Baird led the standing crowd in a rousing rendition of GOD BLESS AMERICA. We missed Vic, and wish him a speedy recovery.

They made me VP of the 499th for another two years, so if you have any questions, or anything I can help with, be sure to contact me. I was instructed by those at our mini-reunion last year to do it again at the same place. Right now they are holding RV spots, and a group of rooms at BEARCREEK FARM. It is quiet, clean, the food is good, and it is within driving distance of many interesting attractions. The people also said to stay clear of travel agents and scheduled tours as they liked the peace and quiet of this place. The week we had last year is taken up by a reunion, but right now they are holding our spot of Sept. 16, 17, & 18. Mark it on your calendar, and write for information and brochures later.

## 501st Squadron

Virgil Gross  
V.P. - 501st Sqd.



Hi, I'm Virgil Gross whom you have elected as your representative for the next two years, THANKS! Hope I can do half as well as Jerry and his predecessors.

We had a real fine turnout at the Columbus reunion and as usual the 501st had the most in attendance. We had 83 members 60 spouses and/or friends and 20 from Group. We also had General Crabb's son and grandson as our guests. There were also two who were attending for the first time; Tom Heidorf and George Blair. So glad they were able to make it.

We want to thank Jay Moore for his engaging Tom Hennen as the guest speaker. I really enjoyed his presentation.

continued on page 4

# WARPATH ACROSS THE PACIFIC

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By Lawrence J. Hickey



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## 501st continued from page 2

It's amazing what a chore it is to accomplish such a normal thing as going to the bathroom.

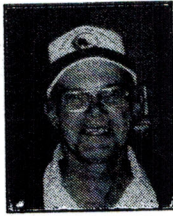
I have been to four reunions and it is very enlightening how the "War Stories" change from one reunion to the next.

Jack & Mary Gronewald, Fran & I and Willie B. had a micro-mini reunion with Bob & Sybil Anderson at their beach cottage at Holden Beach, NC. Speaking of mini-reunions the consensus seems to be for Myrtle Beach, SC. We will keep you posted but it will probably be in Oct, '93, so keep your calendar open.

Have a Happy, Healthy Holiday Season.

## Headquarters Group

Ken Gastgeb  
V.P. - HQ Group



It was good to see and talk with our WWII buddies again at Columbus.

From my point of view a good time was had by all. The HQ Group was 24 strong this year. We attended the Squadron Banquet with the 501st BS again and as in the past a very good meal and an enjoyable evening. There were approximately 165 in attendance.

Many of us visited the AmeriFlora '92, and the Central Ohio Center of Science and Industry. There were many thousands of beautiful flowers at the flower show and many interesting exhibits at COSI. Some members of the Group went to see the Ohio State football game. Those that arrived on Thursday visited the Museum at Wright Patterson Field.

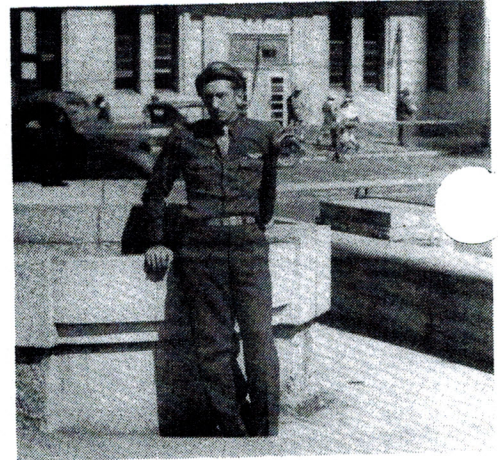
The Group Banquet Sunday evening was great as usual. We all enjoyed the presentation of the Flags; The sound of a B-25 starting up and taking off; The presentation of awards to the past Presidents of our reunion organization; And Astronaut Thomas Hennen's speech and slide presentation. His presentation covered pre-flight training, lift-off, events that took place in flight, and re-entry. Many of us received an autographed picture of Thomas Hennen. We sure thank Thomas for the fine presentation and wish him well in his endeavor.

We hope Vic Tatelman is as good as new again after his hassle with Andrew. Mrs. Bill Darwin fell and broke her arm shortly before the reunion. We certainly hope her arm is healing and will be good as new real soon. Bill Darwin couldn't attend the reunion but he sends his regards to everyone.

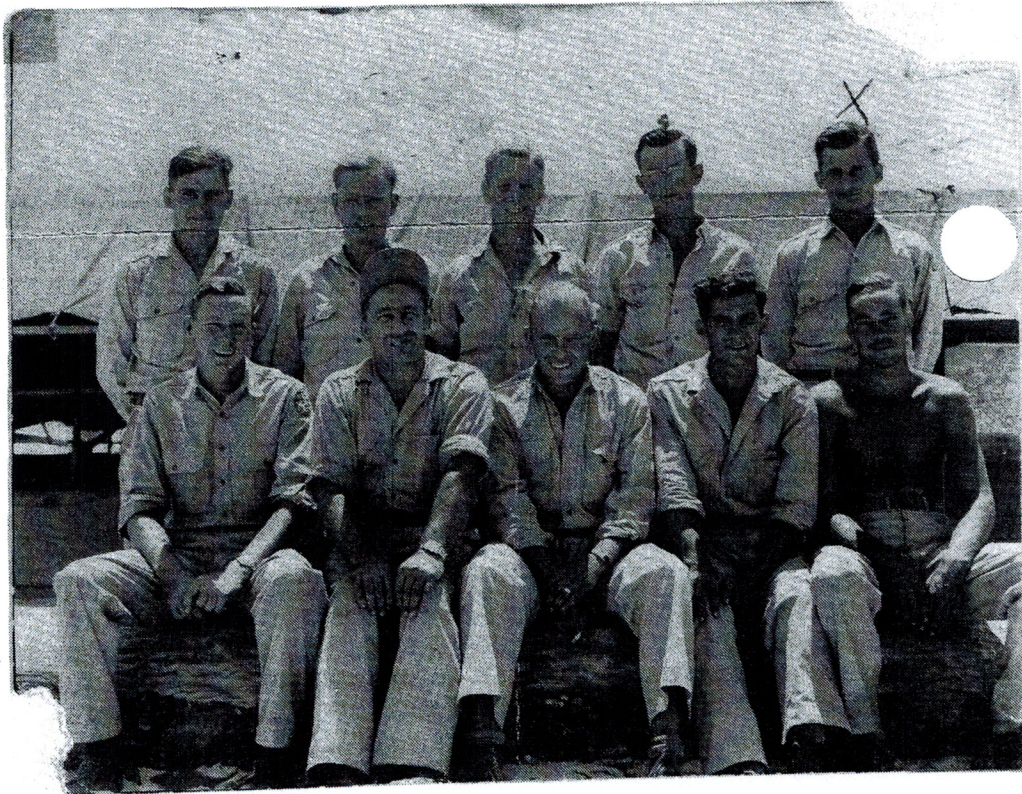
Merry Christmas to everyone and a Happy New Year.

## New Address

If you move, please let *Strafer* know. It will make our job of getting the publication to you go much quicker. Just send the post office change of address notice or drop a note along with something to include in the next issue. *Strafer*, 15 W. Oak St., Canal Winchester, OH 43110-1129.



Lt. Arthur A. Sowinski (501) pauses while in Brisbane in March 1945. He was originally from Flushing, NY, but the 345 has not been able to locate him. His friends would like to find him. They're looking for Tom T. Suddreth too. If you can help, please let an officer know (see page 5) or write to *Strafer*.



My husband, Harry Holly was in the 498 squadron of the 345, that's him in the rear right. We were first married 43 years ago. Harry has been in a nursing home for the last two years with Alzheimer's disease. He knows no one and is in his own world. It's very, very sad. He will be 73 years old this year. When I was going through some pictures I found this one; thought someone in the 345 might know who everyone is. In Friendship, Barbara Holly.



# President's Message

continued from Page 1

continue to provide the guidance that comes with his experience. His advice and expertise make life easier for all of us.

Efforts are continuing to find our people; one of us should make every effort to locate a friend, a tent-mate, a fellow crew

member - anyone who is not yet on our roster. Time is not on our side. As our numbers become fewer, we will come closer to each other. That bond, so indefinable to others, will become stronger, especially within the squadrons, for that's where the ties were first formed.

On a personal note: Thanks to everyone who called and wrote, expressing their

concern after Hurricane Andrew devastated this area. I'm healing nicely and the house will be rebuilt. Ann says I'm getting to be as grumpy as I was before, so, I guess I'm returning to normal.

Let me hear from you; how can we make our biennial gatherings more entertaining or our organization more interesting - let me know.

# Lost paper trail tale

by James N. Harrah (501)

I had a rather tenuous association with the 5th Air Force and the 345th. My crew and I left Greenville, SC in August of 1944, picked up a new B-25J in Savannah and flew to McClellan Field in Sacramento. The three-day modification turned into 10 days. It was another 10 days before we arrived in Port Moresby where we sat for a couple of weeks. When other crews arriving after us were sent on to Nadzab, I asked, "Why?" "Who are you," was the reply. It turned out that our papers were sent off to Nadzab the day we arrived and we were "lost." We flew several courier missions for Port Moresby, and despite their requesting we stay to fly for them, we insisted we were a combat crew, so we were finally sent along. After two weeks at

Nadzab I again inquired why we were not getting pre-combat training. "Who are you?" It turned out our papers were lost again. We finally finished our two "practice missions" on Wewak and were sent off again, only to arrive at Biak and be assigned to the 345th on the day of shipping out for the Philippines. I was permitted to stay at Biak while the rest of the crew boarded ship. Two of my crew members, Howard and Bisesi were killed when the ship was kamikazied in Leyte Harbor. Strangely enough, I never flew another mission with any member of my crew! I missed a number of vital missions during February and March of 1944 as I took a pickup crew on the very last leave to Sydney! Because there was no transportation back, we were gone for six weeks and the 345th finally sent a C-47 to pick up the crews on leave. My crew was fortunate enough to be asked to fly a B-25H back for 5th Bomber Command so we had several extra days in

Australia and returned to the 345th, which by then was at San Marcelino.

I participated in the raid on Saigon, and barely was able to make it back in 016 - with almost maximum right rudder trim and maximum right aileron with my foot resting on a flak helmet and my knee cushioned at the wheel by a 1st-aid pack. There was not enough gas left to start the engines. When one considers the two months it took to get assigned to the 345th, the two-month wait at Biak until we could move to the Philippines, my leave in Sydney (and also to Manila) I probably got my 37 missions in faster than any other pilot in the Group. Consequently, I made few acquaintances with any members of the 501st other than Ted Hart and his crew (for whom I had the responsibility of sending their effects to their families). Keep the *Strafer* coming - I look forward to each issue.

## The Next *Strafer*

comes out in March. Please submit pictures and articles by February 5.

# Financial Status

## 345 BG Fifth-Third Bank CDs as of October 1, 1992

#008-0091008517 .....	\$1,730.28
#008-0091008605 .....	\$1,724.71
#006-0091121456 .....	\$2,382.88
#008-0094202868 .....	\$5,612.74
#008-0094202876 .....	\$1,829.70
Total .....	\$13,280.31
Checking Account Balance (Whitehall Credit Union)	
All bills paid 11/10/92 .....	\$5,096.72
Grand Total Assets .....	\$18,377.03
Ken McClure Treasurer	

## IN MEMORY OF

Edward C. Zorn .....	501	Jan 13, '92	Durham, NC
James J. Reed .....	501		Norwalk, CT
Carl B. Oxford .....	501		Orrville, AL
Ethyl Menefee (widow of Jack) .....	499		St. Louis, MO
Steve Marty (Marticorena) .....	501		Laguna Beach, CA
David McCready .....	498		Vacaville, CA
Betty Barnum Fridge (wife of Ben) .....	501	Feb 3, '92	Reno, NV

## Association Officers

President -- Vic Tatelman  
18900 SW 232nd St  
Miami, FL 33170  
305/247-8439

Vice President -- Jerry Murphy  
5208 Lynd Ave.  
Lyndhurst, OH 44124  
216/442-7273

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

Treasurer -- Ken McClure  
5581 Chowning Way  
Columbus, OH 43213  
614/864-5772

Reunion Chairman -- Henry Kortemeyer  
3133 San Luis Dr., Colorado Springs, CO 80909 303/471-0039

## Reunion Committee V. P.

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

498 - Merl Wooden  
409 Lewelln Dr NW, Cdr Rpds, IA 52405  
319/396-6667

499 - Ben Miller  
9450N 550W, Decatur, IN 46733  
219/547-4460

500 - Ben T. Muller  
7215 Sandpiper Dr., Houston, TX 77074  
713/774-3905

501 - Virgil Gross  
84 Ridgeland Dr., Columbus, MS 39701  
601/328-9369

## 1993 Dues Payable

Please send \$15 annual payment to  
345th BG Assn.  
c/o Ken McClure, treasurer  
5581 Chowning Way  
Columbus, OH 43213



The White Cloud, MI library receives a copy of "Warpath Across The Pacific" from an Air Apache. (L to R) Librarian Linda Foondle, James Mortland (499), Evelyn Mortland

## Just So They'll Know

by James Mortland (499)

Back in the early days of '91 we received an order form for an additional copy of the "Warpath Across The Pacific," which is the story of the 345th Bomb Group in WWII. We and many of our friends have enjoyed it for some years. With this document on hand my wife, Evelyn, grabbed her check book and ordered an additional copy. Very fortunately the book arrived just before Pearl Harbor Day. So on the 50th anniversary of this NASTY day I accompanied Evelyn to our city library where she presented the new book to Mrs. Linda Foondle, our neighbor as well as the librarian. So now White Cloud, MI can be aware of our participation in WWII and the loyal service rendered by all of those men of the Air Apaches from Nov. 11, '42 until the whole mess was settled in 1945.

## Strafer lives at new address

The office of Strafer has been moved to a suburb of Columbus, Ohio. Correspondence should be to:

**Strafer 345 BG Reunion Association**  
15 W. Oak St.

Canal Winchester, OH 43110-1129.

614/833-0499 Mark Nordstrom

All Strafer business will be handled

through that address and phone number. Mark Nordstrom, who has edited many past *Strafers*, is the editor. You are invited to contribute stories and pictures from your time spent in the 345th, about post-war events that relate to the 345th. You can use Fax or modem to send items. Please share and enjoy the *Strafer*.

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**Reunion X**  
Colorado Springs, CO  
1994 1994 1994 1994

### Special Late Note:

Col. True has been diagnosed as having a spot on his lung and it may be serious enough that he would die. This late note was added to yours and 10 other Strafers, to ask that you contact as many people as you can to ask them to send encouraging cards to:

Clinton U. True  
726 Eglin Pkwy NE #9-A  
Ft Walton Beach, FL 32547-2580

Phone is 904/862-2742

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FORWARDING AND RETURN P

CORRECTION REQUESTED

# One cold night in '42

by William A Miller (501)

Have you ever been in Columbia, SC on a cold early winter night? Well it does not get any colder. I had just joined the new cadre of the 345th Bomb Group. As a qualified radio operator I was placed on an air crew with a Lt. Mayer\* as pilot. Our new B25 D's started to arrive and were placed on hard pans on the field. We, as crew, were placed on guard duty at night. My first duty was a nightmare. It rained and was cold, I have never been so cold in all my life. I tried to burn hydraulic fluid, but no go. It just got colder. In the distance I heard this jeep, stopping at the various hard pans. It was the new second in command Lt. Col. True. We were well briefed on him, Point graduate and all. A real hard nose. He wheeled into the pan and got out and started to walk toward me. My knees shook, what should I do? "Halt!" I shouted. He kept coming. I put a round in the chamber and shouted halt again. This time he stopped. "For Gods sake soldier its the OD," he said. I told him to advance four steps and place his I D on the ground. "Now take four steps back," I said. My wallet got soaking wet. This was my first meeting with our new chief, I figured my last. He did acknowledge that my actions were correct and that some of my buddies would be in for some big trouble. I can't believe this was nearly fifty years ago.

\*Lt Mayer later changed to another squadron. He was reported killed over the Owen Stanley Mts. a year later. He was the son of LB Mayer of MGM.