

STRAFER



498th SQUADRON

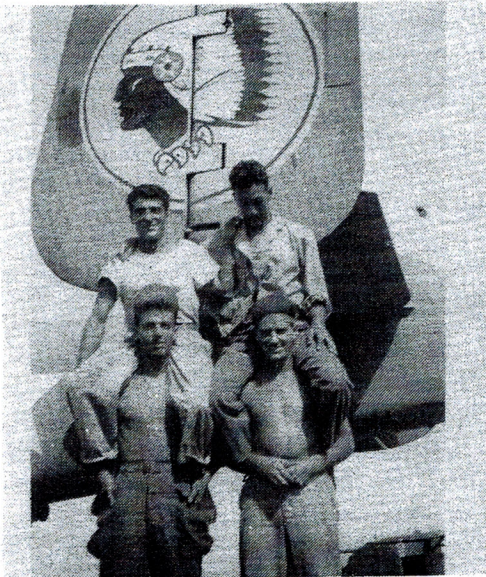
499th SQUADRON

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345th Bomb Group Reunion Association

March 1993



Still Crazy? The picture on the left was taken first, around October 1944 on Biak. The one on the right was taken September 12 1992 in Columbus, OH. "We had one helluva time trying to maintain the same pose of 48 years ago," says Quint Giuliani. Top left: s/sgt John Schillaci, armorer on "Little Stinky," top right: sgt George Lahood, armorer on "The Eager Beaver," bottom left: sgt Quinton Giuliani, armorer on "Potent Cock," bottom right: s/sgt Donald Yant, armorer on "The Wolf Pack." All are members of the 501st Squadron. None is an acrobat.

This was vacation

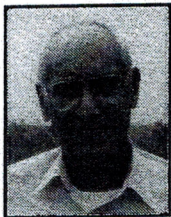
by Ben Miller, 499th

While fighting in Manila was still going on in some sectors, officers and men from the unit rented several large houses for 3-day rest leaves to group members. We went by truck over zig-zag pass and it was rough. We had to hit the ditch twice due to machine-gun fire, but no injuries. The fresh food at the houses was well worth the trip.

We saw newly liberated prisoners at Santa Thomas, smoke from the walled city where fighting was intense. We also came upon a merchant seaman on his knees bending over his buddy who was all covered with flies and dying from bad booze



Ben Miller, 499th, sitting on the wing of a suicide plane on the front yard of the house rented for a leave. They were told the planes that hit U.S. ships came from there, using the highway for a runway.



Comments from the President

Vic Tatelman, President

How many of you flight crew people remember the night missions? The take-off before dawn from

Nadzab to the Admiralties, through the pass around Lae into the straits between the mountains of New Guinea and the mountains of New Britain (we lost a crew to those mountains on one of those night take-offs).

Or the night missions from Clark in the Philippines out to Formosa, dodging Mt. Pinatubo that was out there somewhere waiting to grab you.

Or those missions to Japan's Inland Sea from Ie Shima with take-off at 4:00 a.m. and where you knew the mountain of Iki Shima guarded the southern approaches.

I bring these up to remind you that the perils of those days, the "above and beyond" perils, that bonded our crews into individual units, formed, through the years, into the friendships and love that bind our whole group together today. That closeness was vividly brought home to me during my bout with the after effects of the hurricane. My lifelong friends from long ago were ready to come to South Florida to help me put my life back together. It was only my pointing out the impracticality; no hotels, no roads meaning no transportation, meager communication, little food and water, that I dissuaded them from coming..

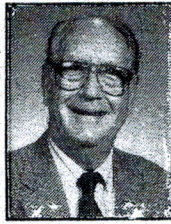
Friendship and love like that is only the result of shared experiences, the closeness through shared hardship and danger. It can't be explained or defined to those that didn't share that experience and it doesn't have to be defined to those that did.

they had consumed. The sidewalks were full of natives, but every time we three rounded a corner of this brick building, bullets came from across the park out of some burned out buildings, hitting bricks and sidewalks, showering us with fragments. After three attempts to round the corner, we took a more forgiving route back.

Squadron Reports

498th Squadron

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



Happy New Year members. According to the cards and letters I received during the holidays, we will have another big reunion at Colorado Springs. Most of the members said I'll see you in 1994. To me, that part of the country is really beautiful. Let's pull together to make it another great reunion.

Joyce and I spent a couple of days in St. Louis this fall. We spent a day with Red & Dolly Garland and went to the Air Museum in St. Charles. They had just brought the B-25 into the hanger. I crawled into the cockpit first time in 51 years. I can't get over how much that cockpit has shrunk. Joyce couldn't get over the instrument panel. We always enjoy being with the Garlands.

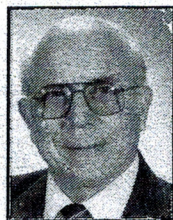
I had bypass surgery Dec 14 on my right leg to improve circulation. It is improving and ready to get back to the dance floor. While I was in the hospital, I misplaced the person's name that sent me \$5.00 cash for a roster. It had a picture of 3 fellas at a mini reunion. I misplaced the whole letter. I apologize and would really like to hear from that person as soon as possible to get the roster to you.

Harold Ponder said Edna is back to walking three miles a day and really enjoys dancing to the music of our era. He enjoys his volunteer work at the medical center.

Had a note from Elbert Wardle. He and Katherine are both at home and making wonderful progress.

499th Squadron

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



The holidays are over, grandchildren back in school and college, and no more need for snow as Christmas is behind us. It is time to start thinking about the mini-reunion of the 499th Sqdn. in September, on the 16, 17, and 18.

Reunions are always a time for reflecting on the past. Some things that happened defy explanation, but we know they did take place. While we were at Port Moresby, some of the flight crews were issued Aussie flying boots. Some were black, and some were brown. Before long we no longer saw either. They said black would be shot

down, and brown were good luck. The reason they dropped out of sight really was that they popped off the feet in the event of bailing out.

It was my duty to take care of the codes and issue the books to the radio operators before all flights, and lock them up after missions were completed. The last five missions were always brutal on nerves. One of our original operators came to me before one of his last flights, shaken up, and handed me his billfold and his mother's address with instructions to send the billfold and a letter in the event he did not return. He did, however, finish his missions and is a treasured friend today. He told other radio men about this, and I had as many as 13 billfolds on one mission, and not once did I send one home, or write a mother. A few of the men took a big bath, but always survived.

500th Squadron

Benjamin T. Muller
V.P. - 500th Sqd.



Those of you who missed the Columbus 345th reunion lost out on a time of great camaraderie. At our squadron banquet we were a total of 70. I think the highlight of the reunion was the group banquet. There were over 600 there. The dinner was capped by a wonderful speech and slide presentation by Astronaut Payload Specialist Thomas J. Hennen. It lasted almost two hours! Our audience was captivated by his 20 minute, vivid, complete description of the astronauts' elimination technique in the atmosphere of zero gravity (weightlessness). It was a revelation to us all.

This may be of interest to some or all of you. I know it is to me. In the NY Times Book Review of November 22, 1992 there is an excellent review of "Japan at War: An Oral History" by Haruko Taya Cook and Theodore F. Cook. As the reviewer writes, "it is a powerful, eloquent, hideous and remarkably candid recollection of Japanese veterans of World War II and confirms the worst allegations of American propaganda during the conflict." This is true, I have been reading it. As I said, the book is of interest to me, because at that time I was learning the Japanese language (at least a few necessary words) involuntarily as a POW in China.

Also mentioned in the review is a book by Matsatsugu Ogawa, "Human Beings in Extremis: The Island of Death, New

Guinea." The author was the only one in his company of 261 to return home. There're two good books for you Jack Landon (in Clovis, NM)!

Plans for our 500th Atlanta gathering are coming right along. J.W. Albright, Bob Bynum and Herman Reheis have met in Atlanta, laying out the groundwork for the reunion of the 500th to be held in the first week of September. Many sights will be there to behold, so mark your calendars.

At the Columbus meeting there were five members of the 500th who attended for the first time: Ron Armitage, Raymond Hejl, Gene Lowry, Larry Hanna (son of Cliff Hanna), and Bud Stratton. It was Bud's first contact with 500th people in 47 years! Talk about one gloriously happy fella.

On a sad note, Jerry Burke has suffered for many months after a stroke. It has left him in a state of near unconsciousness. He is in St. Albans VA Hospital nursing home in Queens, NY. Our prayers go out to him and Margaret. Sid and Hilda Strassheim and Pete and Ann Luciano are in close contact with Margaret Burke.

Any of you who come across news of interest to the squadron or group, please pass it on to me. Don't forget to have your doctor check your blood PSA regularly !!

501st Squadron

Virgil Gross
V.P. - 501st Sqd.



I hope you all had a nice Holiday Season.

Had a note from Bill Cook saying the reason he was in Columbus only one night was sickness in the family. Also had a report from Yvonne Baker that Cecil Johnson has had serious surgery since the reunion, Jack Gronewald is making preparations - giving blood etc. - for replacement of his other knee on Feb 4. Our thoughts and prayers are with you all.

We have had inquiries regarding the formation of an Auxiliary for the children and grandchildren of the members. It seems to be taken care of in the present By-Laws under Article IV, Membership & Voting Rights. "Associate membership is automatically granted to wives of deceased members and to children of living or deceased members who request it, Associate members are not allowed to vote." Article V, Dues: "The annual dues for each member and associate member for each calendar year shall be \$15.00." Requests for membership, regular or associate, should be sent, with dues, to Ken McClure.

Received a letter from Bill Cather and he

is in touch with one of the Flight Engineers, Len Shubeck. I am, as I think most of you are, interested in what is happening to our friends. As I told you at the time of my election, I'm not a psychic therefore your input is needed so we can share.

We are planning a trip to Myrtle Beach in March "to get the ball rolling" for our Mini-reunion in Oct. Hope to see the Andersons, Moores, and possibly the Mordecas and Willie B. Will keep you informed.

Headquarters Group

Ken Gastgeb
V.P. - HQ Group



Christmas has come and gone. Most of us have celebrated Christ's birthday for more than 70 years. Kinda makes one feel a little old. One of those years we were in Port Moresby, New Guinea and another one we were on Leyte, in the Philippines. We all remember the hardship we went through on Leyte. The Kamikaze attack on the two Liberty ships we were on, the USS Nelson and USS Waite.

Danny O'Brien, radio operator Headquarters, asked me if that was the first time the Japanese used Kamikazes. We were among the first to get hit. The following are excerpts from an article that appeared in the June 1977 American Legion Magazine. Col. Darwin sent it to me. "The Kamikazes were a group of Japanese airplane pilots whose mission was to crash dive their planes into Allied naval vessels. Kamikaze, which means divine wind, was the popular name given these fliers. They were, however, officially named the Special Attack Force of the Japanese Naval Air Force. Because the Japanese believed it to be an honor to die serving the emperor, the suicidal nature of the mission seemed unimportant to the men. - Kamikaze units were used on a large scale, with varying degrees of success, in the invasion of Okinawa (note: I think that should be Leyte, or the date is incorrect) in October 1944. 6,000 planes were used. While only a few hundred ships, they caused considerable damage and many deaths. - The first attacks by Kamikazes against American warships during the Battle of Leyte Gulf were relatively unsuccessful, but they did shake the confidence of American servicemen who could not comprehend why the Japanese would attempt to smash their aircraft into American warships with apparent disregard for their own lives. - Between Oct. 25, 1944 and Jan. 11, 1945, 16 US ships of more than 1,000 tons in size were sunk in the Philippines campaign. "

It is a four-page article. I'll be glad to copy it for anyone.

Group Bulletin Board

Col. Clint U. True is recovering from surgery; send greetings to: Clinton U. True
726 Elgin Pkwy NE #9-A
Ft Walton Beach FL 32547-2580

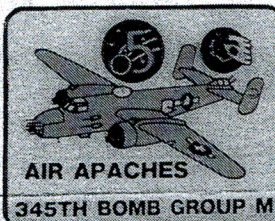
Col. Jack McClure died in London, England in 1964, his academy classmate, Bert Rosenbaum (HQ), reports. Jack was the pilot who picked up the Japs and escorted them back to Ie Shima to surrender.
(Merl Wooden)

Demand exceeded supply for the Indian Head Lapel Pins available at Reunion IX. Minimum reorder resulted in small number remaining. Send \$5 check (\$9 for two) to:



Ken McClure
5661 Chowning Way
Columbus, OH 43213

A few 498th Rosters are left. Make \$4.50 check to 498th Squadron. Mail to Merl Wooden.



345th BG Pin sold at Las Vegas and Columbus reunions. A few remain. Send check for \$4.00 (which does cover postage) to:
Jerry Murphy
5208 Lynd Ave
Lyndhurst, OH 44124



A small number of Air Apache 50th Anniv. Paperweights are available. Send \$45 to:
Bill Croop
800 Highland Dr
Toledo, OH 43160

IN MEMORY OF

| | | |
|---|-----------------------|--------------------|
| Edwin F. Bentz | 500th ... Aug 1, '92 | Nekoosa, WI |
| G.I. Davis (George) | 500th ... Dec 20, '92 | Ft Worth, TX |
| David W. Haines | 499th ... Oct 10, '92 | Casper, WY |
| Charles A. Krauss | 501st ... Jan 4, '93 | Neptune, NJ |
| Dorothy F. Knappik (wife 43 yrs to Floyd) | 499th ... May 18, '92 | San Antonio, TX |
| Donald "Doc" Marcus | 501st ... Nov '92 | Jamesburg, NJ |
| Ralph May | 499th ... Dec 18, '92 | Jeffersonville, IA |
| Jack McClure | HQ ... 1964 | London, England |
| James "Mac" McGuire | 500th ... June '92 | Surfside Beach, SC |
| Harold W. Rayfield | 498th ... Nov 5, '92 | Valdosta, GA |
| Jack R. Walsh | 501st | |

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303/471-0039

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

5th AF Memorial at academy set to go for October '93

All clearances with the USAF and USAF Academy have been made and work on the 5th AF Memorial will begin at the Academy as soon as the weather permits, probably in April. Completion is scheduled for June.

On Friday, October 8, 1993, an official dedication will take place, at which time all former 5th AF personnel, their families and friends, and anyone else interested in attending are invited.

The plaques of twenty-seven 5th AF units, including that of our 345th Bomb Group, will have been mounted on the wall and the entire Memorial will be officially dedicated. Of the 60-some Memorial Foundation Trustees, Maury Eppstein, Trustee for the 345th, has been selected as keynote speaker for this occasion.

Then, in 1994, as part of our Air Apaches Reunion X program, we will hold a special ceremony to dedicate our particular plaque. The AF Academy will cooperate with us on this occasion. Please keep the facts straight:

October 8, 1993 - entire 5AF dedication of Memorial, (Date of 1994 345th Reunion X to be announced soon) Special dedication of 345th plaque during reunion.

You are invited to attend both, but our 1994 Air Apache dedication will, of course, be of particular interest.

The 5AF Memorial Foundation wishes to thank all 345th members who made donations for the AF Academy Memorial. Your contribution is greatly appreciated.

Thank you for address info

Many thanks to all who mailed-in changes of address. It helps get *Strafer* to you quickly. Anyone who has different summer and winter addresses or if you will be temporarily away and having mail held, please, let us know. It will save time in getting the June issue to you.

Reunion X

Colorado Springs, CO
1994 1994 1994 1994
(exact date to be announced)

345 B.G. Reunion Association
15 W OAK ST
CANAL WINCHESTER OH 43110-1129
*forwarding and return postage guaranteed,
address correction requested*

EDWARD L. BINA
628 N DERESCH ST
ANTIGO WI 54409-1172



Past Presidents Honored at Reunion IX Dedicated service of the Presidents who have served the 345th Reunion Association in the past was recognized at the Group Banquet in the Reunion in Columbus, Ohio. Maury Eppstein, Mary Elizabeth Gamble (widow of Shuler), Clinton True and Ed Bina accepted plaques in an award ceremony. Ben Fridge was unable to attend the reunion due to his wife's illness. **Ken McClure Honored for service** Ten years as treasurer, twice reunion co-chairman, Ken McClure was recognized for his dedication to the 345th BG Assn. **Elbert Wardle and Bert Rosenbaum** were honored for organizing the first reunion.

Your Next Strafer

should arrive in June. Please submit pictures and articles by Friday, May 7. Send to:
Strafer
15 W Oak St
Canal Winchester OH 43110

1993 Dues Payable

Please send \$15 annual payment to:
345th BG Reunion Assn.
KEN McCLURE
5581 CHOWNING WAY
COLUMBUS OH 43213

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