

STRAFER



498th SQUADRON

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345th Bomb Group Reunion Association

June 1996

THE STRAFER

By Lt. Marvin Wachs

And it came to pass in those days that an edict came down from the seat of the brass that many men would be called out into the dawn to pour death and destruction upon their enemies from low altitude.

And the men went forth among themselves and bolstered up their courage by saying, "Am I listed among those who go?" And "Holy Smokel!" and diverse other phrases. For there were those among them who liketh it not to get below half a score of thousands of feet when over the story of the Setting Sun.

And as they went forth there cometh up to them he of the great intellect who was known as the Intelligence Officer. He was known by other names also. And one of the birdmen said unto him, "What has thou done unto us? Wherefore beguileth thou us?"

For they were not happy in the service that day, and the pouches of their eyes gaveth witness. And they went unto the holy of holies called the Briefing Room. And one cometh among them known as Fridge who sayeth, "Yea it is so. Best we calleth the roll." And there was quiet in the tomb of the prophets.

Then each of the birdmen went forth to his bird and counted each part with great care: But at the hour of the pushing of the throttles, one of the winged monsters thundereth not. And the birdmen there beateth it with their hands and kicketh it with their feet, but it availeth them naught. In vain the pilot calleth forth his lore of the bird, but it lacketh revs and putteth not out forty and four inches. Woe betide him who geth off without revs and inches for his children shall curse him and his children's children, and he shall curse himself.

And it came to pass that they went upon their journey and peelet off into formation above the treetops, and the area that was

called target was before them. Their enemies heaped upon them fire and brimstone, and there were some whose hands were damp, and some whose face was damp, and some whose pants were damp. There were many among them who bent the throttles. And there were some who

goeth off from the formation and were called on Channel A. The leader asketh them, "Whither goest thou?" And they replied, "I go to fly for myself for the heat in that path is passing great," And the leader curseth them and telleth them to come

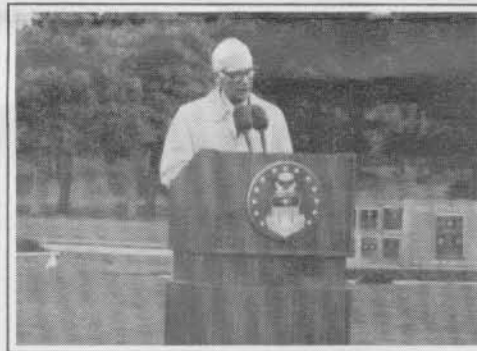
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Maury Eppstein: 1911- '96

Maury Eppstein, president of the 345th Bomb Group Reunion Association for two terms and adjutant of the 345th Bomb Group 1942- 1946, died in March. His health had been failing as a result of complications from jaundice developed during a bout of yellow fever during WWII. He made significant contributions to the group during the war. He played an important role in the publishing of the first book about the 345th, "Warpath," he was an important source of information for Larry Hickey in the writing of "Warpath

Across The Pacific," and he played a significant role in the development of the 5th Air Force memorial at the U.S. Air Force Academy and the 345th's part in it. He was instrumental in forming the 345th Reunion Association and in making it an active group.

He was a native of Oklahoma, but spent most of his life in California. Maury graduated from the University of California, Berkley, in 1935. He worked at the Emporium in San Francisco before and after the war. In 1951 he became a manufacturer's representative. His wife Margit expresses appreciation for the condolences she has been receiving since his death.



Maury Eppstein delivering keynote speech at dedication of 5 AF Memorial at USAF Academy in Colorado Springs, 8 Oct. 1993.



President's Comments

Vic Tatem
President

As the upcoming reunion draws nearer, several thoughts come to mind. I wonder, as we get older, if the reunions need be so involved with tours, schedules, meetings, etc. As our ranks become thinner, I think the squadron distinctions become blurred and the need for separation becomes unimportant.

Perhaps we can give some thought to merely meet for a couple of days, the first for registration and camaraderie (how much time do we need to recall the typhoons, the

grapefruit juice "whiskey", the poker games, the outdoor movies and the pinup girls) and the second for our business meeting and Group Banquet. Since most of the squadrons have an off-year mini-reunion, perhaps the necessity of the squadron dinners at the reunions becomes unnecessary.

Over the past four years that I've been your president, from time to time I think about our relationships, what we mean to each other and to the Group. I sincerely appreciate your selecting me and I hope I've lived up to your expectations - it's been an honor.

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Squadron Reports

499th Squadron

Harry Zarfaz

V.P. - 499th Sqd.

In a letter from Carol M. Lanning, personal assistant to Charlton Heston, to Earl Hitt, she states, "Unhappily, Mr. Heston will be unable to attend the reunion you have planned for the 345th Bomb Group as he will be working during the fall."

Speaking of Biak, a recent earthquake between seven and eight magnitude in the Pacific caused tidal waves between 13 and 21 feet to crash down on the island.

Jack Smith's wife called me from Spanaway, Washington, inquiring about the location of 345th memorials. Jack was an airplane mechanic with the 499th.

Jules Teck, secretary of the Fifth Air Force Memorial Foundation called about the recent death of Maury Eppstein. I assisted Maury in the 1990 reunion in Las Vegas. His contributions to the 345th were priceless.

I missed graduating with my class at Sheppard Field, Texas, due to being hospitalized with yellow jaundice, courtesy of the army giving me a defective yellow fever shot. The class that graduated, I believe, eventually wound up in Africa. Upon recovery and graduation I was sent to North American Aviation, Inc. in Engle, California.

Merl Wooden of the 498th and I completed a B-25C course on November 12, 1942 at North American. From there we were sent to the 345th at Columbia, South Carolina. My condolences to Merl's family and friends upon his passing.

500th Squadron

Ben T. Muller

V.P. - 500th Sqd.

Strange things happen! As a member of the Houston Chapter of "Us Too," prostrate cancer support group I volunteered for training by the American Cancer Society. It's for those who visit other men who have been diagnosed with prostrate cancer and want more information on this disease.

There were about 30 men at the initial training session. Sitting next to me was Horace Davis from Raleigh, North Carolina. He turned out to know Bear Britt, who is in the 500th. Small world.

I'll try to get my military record. I have heard that anyone can obtain his/her military record. Have you done this? Let



me know so I can let others know.

In the course of my work I met a young man from Australia. It's easy to identify Australians. They just have to start talking. Right? Back in the 60's and 70's he was doing mineral surveys in New Guinea for the Australian government. He was stationed at Angoam on the Sepik River in the north. They were using DC-3's for aerial seismic surveys, also Jet Ranger helicopters with American pilots who were Viet Nam veterans. There were lots of bomb craters and crashed Zeros in the Wewak area as they came into land there. Remember Wewak? I sure do! He also stayed for a time in Madang as well as Wewak. These towns now have some paved streets, he said. He gave me two copies of the in-flight magazine, "Paradise," of Air Niugini, the New Guinea Government Air Line.

One of the articles is entitled "The Recapture of Lae." It is about the paratrooper landing and taking of Nadzab and other battles at Wewak, Madang, Rabaul and Kavieng. Also mentioned is a 5 Sept. 1943 mission with 302 aircraft taking off from air fields in Port Moresby and Dobodura areas being led by six squadrons of B-25 Mitchells whose task was to strafe and bomb the Nadzab drop zone!

See you all in St. Louis and let me know if any of you have friends in Anchorage or Nome, Alaska. I'm going there in July.

501st Squadron

Lynn Lee

V.P. - 501st Sqd.

First, thanks to the many persons who phoned and sent cards and notes to me after the accident. I certainly appreciate it and it's wonderful to have to many people think of me. The accident broke my neck (two vertebra), but I'm doing all okay. No pain, just inconvenience and discomfort. Enough of that.

Had a letter from Frank Hanson, who visited Port Moresby and Australia. He was met by Fred Cook and shown around Lae. He brought back many memories: Big Rock, The Falls, wreck in the harbor and much more.

I had lots of letters from 501's on the notes and cards. I enjoyed doing it and hope the next VP continues.

Joe Zuber says a friend of his wrote about the natives rebelling in New Guinea. He said they removed a bomb from a downed plane (WWII) and blew up the main bridge to the sea coast. Don't you



know, those natives didn't realize the danger of moving a 50-year-old bomb and placing it under a bridge.

Headquarters Group

August Ouellette

V.P. - HQ Group

In my March issue of the Strafer, Mark the editor, inserted the news of Maury Eppstein's passing. To me it was quite a blow. I liked Maury from day one in the Air Apaches. He made it possible for me to go from Le Shima to Clark Field and meet my oldest brother on a three day pass. We chased each other for 16 months, and our reunion was one of the big highlights of my Army career. The brother passed on 2 years ago. I'm sure he and Maury have already met and are having a good chat about Gus.

Maury was instrumental in forming our association. His dedication, even to the end, was unequalled. Without Maury I'm sure our unit wouldn't have the camaraderie we all enjoy so much. It's certain that we'll always remember him. (Maybe in some way at St. Louis.) I'm sure I already formed a reunion with our past buddies in heaven. We, who survive, must carry on and continue his work.

The Reunion committee made my wife their friend by planning the trip to Branson, MO. It's all she talked about since the last reunion.

I received a phone call from the replacement vice-president of 498th squadron. He invited the HDQ. SQDN. to the 498th SQDN. banquet on Friday night of the reunion. Previously we joined the 501st. and I see no objection to the change.

I let a Pearl Harbor survivor in town read the book "Code Name- Down Fall," mentioned in my last Strafer column. He enjoyed it very much.

I had a meeting with the high school teacher responsible for the WWII round table discussion at our local high school. All systems are go for May 22nd. I'll be there and only hope the kids don't tire of hearing about the Air Apaches. My granddaughter's 8th grade class is discussing WWII. I offered to attend their class and the teacher is working on it.

On a normal winter I'd have one new letter written. However, here it is April 10th and I'm shoveling 10 inches of snow. But I promise to wait for this issue of the Strafer (The No. 1 priority!) and will catch up with you guys.



Treasury turnover

Ken McClure is being succeeded in his role as treasurer by Dick Feucht. All dues checks should be sent to Dick. His address is in the box on page four.

Dick was elected assistant treasurer at Reunion X. He joined the 345th as a pilot at Biak, served as a member of the 498th Squadron until returning stateside from Clark Field. Dick takes over the treasury from Ken McClure. Ken's failing eyesight has made the job too difficult for him to continue. Ken has been the treasurer for 16 years, and he says he is sorry to give it up. His wife Patti has been helping with most of the work for the last few years. Ken joined the 345th as one of the original members, as a pilot in December 1942. He was stationed in the South Pacific and returned in early 1944.



President's Comments

(continued from page 1)

The two reunions in which I have been involved have been climatic each time for me and, I suppose, even more so for Kortemeyer and Hitt, but I wouldn't have missed the experience for the world.

We came to see each other, to verify our memories, and to relive our youthful experiences, and we succeeded. We learned that the young men's faces in our memories no longer exist. Their only substance is what peers from old photographs. But other features did not diminish-- camaraderie, respect for each other despite differences, and pride for having served our country together. Also we learned that our friendships are firm. And we renewed those friendships when most needed, late in life.

We gained the pleasures of sharing memories and generating new ones. But we gained more. Life in those days was uncomfortable and dangerous but spiced with thrills. We were privileged to share that with other young men. We were reminded that a young man can have no greater experience from which to generate rewarding memories and lasting friendships. Those memories and friendship we now have as part of our lives' treasures.

Group Bulletin Board

You're invited to attend the 475th Fighter Group Reunion, 26 Oct. 1996, on a cruise ship sailing from Ft. Lauderdale. Contact Bruce Travel: (800) 367-9980

Your next Strafer should arrive in August. Please submit items for it by July 1st.

According to the Post Office, the people listed here are deceased. Please write to Strafer if you can confirm or correct. Wm Clark, 499, Louis Higgins, 499, Frank Shukalo, 501, Wm. Teague, 498

Attn Strafer Readers: **BLACK SUNDAY**, just published by Michael J. Claringbould, is a detailed account of that infamous April 16, 1944 mission in which the 5th Air Force lost 37 aircraft. This is an outstanding account! More than 30,000 words, from more than 200 sources, including survival reports, previously unpublished photos, and post-war discoveries. \$29.95, contact Paul Gaudette Books, 2050 East 17 Street, Tucson, Arizona 85719, (800) 874-3097

Page 7 of the last Strafer, picture caption identified Maj. Burt Rosenbaun as the first C.O. of the 499th SQD. The caption should have read "the 498th." Thanks to Lt. Col. Gordon Hanson, USAF, (Ret'd)

IN MEMORY OF

Norma Bynum (wife of Bob)	500th	18 Aug. 1996	Oneonta, AL
Alfred Elton Cade	501st	31 Oct. 1993	Port Charlotte, FL.
Dr. Richard Chapman	501st	3 Mar. 1993	
Owen B. Cordor	501st	4 Dec. 1993	
Lester E. Darnell	498th	7 May 1995	Couinna, MI
Maury Eppstein	HQ Sqdn	7 Mar. 1996	Woodside, CA
Nathan Goldman	498th	25 Feb. 1996	El Paso, TX
Marion Golt	501st	1 Mar. 1996	Easton, MD
Russell Hall	498th	6 Jun. 1995	N. Vernon, IN
Paul E. Haller	501st	20 Mar. 1996	Kirkland, CA
S. Robert Houtchens	501st	10 Feb. 1996	Greely, CO
John McArn	498th	17 Feb. 1996	Rowland, NC
Joseph Merenda	501st	Nov 1994	Melrose, MA
James Moore	501st	21 Jan 1995	Harrisville, OH
Irving Mosser	499th	27 Nov. 1995	Victorville, CA
Edward M. Phillips	501st	16 Feb. 1994	Oshkosh, WI
Donald E. Thomas	499th	19 Feb. 1996	Olathe, KS
F.A. Williams	499th	5 Nov. 1995	Galveston, TX

Please mail notices of deaths to Strafer. See next issue deadline on Bulletin board.

Association Officers

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501 - Lynn Lee
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345TH BOMB GROUP ASSOCIATION REUNION XI SCHEDULE

Hospitality Room
Information Center

Group Activities

Tours

Day	Hospitality Room Information Center	Group Activities	Tours
Wednesday 4 September	1:00 PM Open 6:00 PM Close 7:00 PM Open 11:00 PM Close	6:00 PM Hotel Reception - Wine & Cheese Party.	
Thursday 5 September	9:00 AM Open (Information) 11:00 AM Open (Hospitality) 11:00 PM Close		9:00 AM Gateway Arch tour 5:30 PM Casino St. Charles 6:30 PM Starlight Cruise
Friday 6 September	9:00 AM Open (Information) 11:00 AM Open (Hospitality) 4:00 PM Close	2:00 PM Exec. Comm. Meet. 6:30 PM Cash Bar 7:00 PM Squadron Banquets	9:00 AM Union Station Tour 9:00 AM Historic St. Charles
Saturday 7 September	11:00 AM Open 4:00 PM Close 10:00 PM Open (After Banquet) 12:00 PM Close	9:00 AM Group Business 9:00 AM Ladies Breakfast 5:30 PM Photographs 6:00 PM Cash Bar 7:00 PM Group Banquet	
Sunday 8 September	10:00 AM Open (Info Only) 12:00 AM Close Liquor will not be served		Post Reunion Tours: 9:00 AM Missouri Wine Country (1 Day) 8:30 AM Branson, MO Tour (3 Days)

Registration

Registration forms for Reunion XI were published in the last issue of Strafer. They should be mailed to Earl Hitt, 15718 Callendar Court, Chesterfield, MO 63017-7306. His phone number is 314/227-2692.

Planning is complete for the reunion, but much of the work remaining depends on those planning to attend sending in their reservations as soon as possible.

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back to the formation. But they have tuned to Channel B, and hear him not.

And all goeth home by diverse routes, each to his roost and his ounce and half of the drip of the corn. And the leader calleth out upon the wanderers and cheweth mightily upon their posteriors and telleth them of a bad show. Too high and too fast. We go back anon, low and slow over the target! And he giveth them hell in general. But they heed him not and make haste to enter into their sacks until the call of chow.

Selah

(Marvin Wachs was a member of the 70th Bomb Squadron, 42nd BG, flying B-25's from Stirling Island just Bougainville.)



1996 Dues Payable

Please send \$15 annual payment to
345th BG Reunion Assn.
DICK FEUCHT
12500 TOLLGATE RD
PICKERINGTON OH 43147-9161

Reunion XI



Holiday Inn Westport
St. Louis, MO
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