

STRAFER



498th SQUADRON

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345th Bomb Group Reunion Association

March 1996

The last "mission"

by V. William Pennanen

September, 1945. I was stationed on IE Shima, a small island in the Pacific near Okinawa. The Bomb had been dropped. Japan had surrendered. Peace was at hand. During the war I had flown 42 combat missions as a navigator on B-25 bombers, but now my job was done and I was waiting to go home. Then I was selected to go on one last mission. Our Group was ordered to furnish a B-25 and crew to fly with two specially equipped B-17's. The pilot for our B-25 was our group commander, Colonel C. A. Coltharp. I was the navigator and we had a copilot and two enlisted men furnished by the 498th Sqdn. Our mission was to transport a group of about 12 war correspondents through various South Pacific locations to report on the results of the war. The B-17's were equipped with special high power generators and HF radios that could communicate directly with stations in the U.S.

The group included correspondents from Life and Time Magazines, The San Francisco Inquirer, and the United Press. The Army Air Corps PR man in charge of the group was Tex McCrary, husband of Jinx Falkenburg the movie actress. Others I recall were writer Hal Boyle, Life correspondent Bill Howland and Bob McCarthy.

Our B-25 joined the two B-17's. We left Hong Kong on September 18 and continued our mission. I'll relate some of my experiences and impressions at our various stops.

HONG KONG— Did not appear to be ravaged by the war. There were lots of prewar goods available, for a price. I felt sorry for the old man pulling us around in a rickshaw.

RANGOON— I was impressed by a religious spire supposed to be taller than the Empire State Building. Traded a .45 pistol to a British soldier for a German Luger.

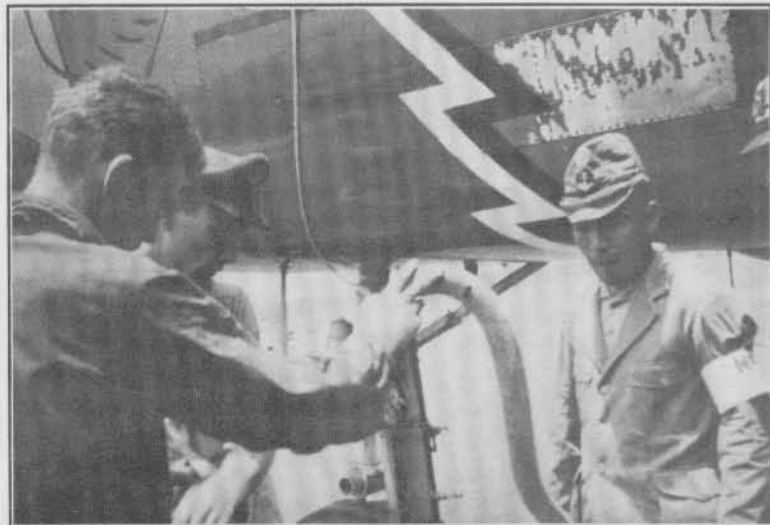
BANGKOK— Very friendly people. Had 50 kids following us around as we looked in shops. Thai Air Force officers had gone to college in the U.S. and treated us very well.

CALCUTTA— Landed at Dom Dom Air-

field. Went to town and stayed at the Great Eastern Hotel. I had my first hot bath in many months. Very crowded place. Had to step over people in the street. Very different inside the hotel— clean and proper.

SAIGON—The Japanese were still in charge, because no one had come to take over. We even had Japanese guards for our planes. There was fighting going on as Communist Vietnamese were trying to take over. The city was in bad condition. We stayed in a hotel but there was no water or electricity. The Japanese had ripped out all the fixtures. When we were leaving we draped a U.S. flag over our car and raced to the airport to avoid gunfire.

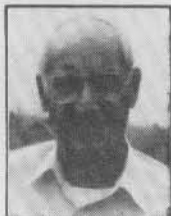
SINGAPORE— We met William H. McDougall, a UP correspondent who had



Bali, October 20, 1945. Transferring gas from drums to the plane. You can make out parts of the 498th Falcon behind the engineer and copilot. Japanese ground crew member is standing by.

been a Japanese POW for 4 years. Arrangements were made for us to fly him back to Palambang, Sumatra where he had been imprisoned. We went to the prison he had been in and there he dug up the notes he had made during his imprisonment. He had put his notes in bottles and buried them under a concrete slab. From these notes he wrote two books. A Japanese guard mentioned that he had spent some time in Detroit years ago. I advised him not to go

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President's Comments

Vic Tatelman
President

I wanted to continue my discussion of the lumber scarcity during our early days. Clint True reminded me of the build-

ing of the sawmill at Nadzab. He personally flew down to Melbourne to pick up a blade for the mill. I'd sure like to include a photo of that sawmill in our memoirs; Anybody have a picture of it? If I remember correctly, it was powered by a Jeep engine. And which squadron set it up? I don't remember it

being moved to Biak when we relocated.

Speaking of Clint, he's holding his own, but I'm sure he'd like a few "well wishes" cards.

They say that necessity is the mother of invention; I think, in our case, Yankee ingenuity sure helped to win the war. Our efforts, ingenuity and innovation were countless. I remember the powered laundry machine. (Was that in the 501st?) Ed Egan and I tried to convert a gas powered refrigerator we "appropriated" when we were at Clark Field into an electric one.

The "captured" Jap three-wheel motorcycle on Biak inspired somebody (who?)

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Squadron Reports

498th Squadron

Lester Howard

I am writing this for Merl, who died February 10 after being in the hospital since January 8. Joyce's letter, below, explains it.

Merl's columns have been tremendous contributions to the Strafer. He was well liked and reliable in the reunion organization and in the 345th during WWII. Merl has a special place in history as a member of the crew of one of the planes to escort the Japanese surrender mission.

To all friends and members from Joyce Claude, Merl's best friend. Thanks for all cards and notes during the holidays. This is the second time Merl's been sick at this time of year. He had emergency bile duct and gall bladder surgery and was fighting the multiple problems that can go with it. He was heartbroken when he got news of his friend, George Womble's death. They knew each other even before the war. Merl will be buried in Oklahoma.

Got a note from Elbert Wardle, who is so happy to be remembered. Please, dear friends, keep in touch with each other. Joyce Claude, 216 Cynthia St., SW, Cedar Rapids, IA 52404. Phone: 319-390-3489.



name listed anywhere and I'm sure there are other similar cases.

I have been doing a little reading in my old age and found some data that may be of interest. "The Doolittle Raid," by Carroll V. Glines lists our line chiefs, Gordon B. Hansen and Curtis L. Cloud as personnel aboard the aircraft carrier Hornet but not on the raid. The original Hornet was destroyed at the battle of Santa Cruz on October 26, 1942. As of October, 1995, volunteers are fighting to save the current Hornet from the scrap heap.

In the "Battle of the Bismarck Sea," by Lex McAulay, "The Moresby Wreck," used for skip bombing training, was the 4700 ton P. & O. liner, the "S. S. Pruth," which had been driven aground on Nateara Reef on December 30, 1923. Also, #971, "Dirty Dora," before it was transferred to the 499th, was in the Bismarck Sea battle the morning of March 3rd, 1943.

500th Squadron

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

This is directed to POW survivors of Japanese capture and their next of kin. I know of two who did not survive. S/Sgt Charles (Chuck) L. Suey and Lt. Eugene L. Marviell. I do not know how to contact their next of kin. Chuck was from Detroit and/ or Windsor, Ontario, Canada and he was my engineer in 888. Marviell was Jim McGuire's navigator when shot down 3-3045 over Mainan Island.

Jim McGuire's next of kin, Lois and others should be able to make good use of this information. Also Gene Lawlis, if you haven't already. All you 345th members who know of POW survivors or next of kin, please make them aware of this information.

From the Center of Civilian Internee Rights Inc. Jan. 15, 1995, newsletter *Internee Affairs*. The following claim is and has been made against the Government of Japan. The claim is defined by these 4 actions:

1. The legal claim filed against Japan in Tokyo District Court for compensation of \$22,000 to each claimant and an official apology from the Japanese government.
2. The Joint (nonbinding) Congressional Resolution condemning Japan for its WWII brutality and demanding apology and compensation. This resolution is being introduced in mid-February by Rep. Robert K. Dornan (R. Calif.). All CFIR members and friends



should contact Mr. Al Santoli in Congressman Dornan's office at (202) 255-2965 to show support and find out how to help.

3. To block Japan's application for a permanent seat on the UN Security Council until Japan has settled the lawsuit in Tokyo or the similar claim files at the Commission of Human Rights at the UN in Geneva.
4. To support the passage to the "Civilian ex-POW Health and Disability Benefits Act," which is now before Congress. This bill updates the old War Claims Act of 1948 (P.L. 896) that is outdated and pretty meaningless.

The Center sent letters to President Clinton, Cabinet members and members of Congress asking the U.S. Government to hold off supporting Japan's application for a permanent seat on the UN Security Council until the compensation had been settled.

The Center's Fax number is 305/861-8550, phone is 305/864-2558.

501st Squadron

Lynn Lee
V.P. - 501st Sqd.

Lynn Lee has been hospitalized since suffering a broken neck in a car accident on Super Bowl Sunday. He's said to be doing better, but still having difficulty.



499th Squadron

Harry Zarfas
V.P. - 499th Sqd.

Charleton Heston phoned me on January 12th, 1996 in response to a letter I sent him. We had a very interesting conversation. He was a radio/gunner in the 11th Air Force with the rank of Staff Sergeant; stationed in the Aleutian Islands from 1943 to 1945. I invited him to attend our reunion in St. Louis. He said he'd consider it.

Ida and I hope you're having a healthy and happy New Year. We suggest that you make early reservations for the reunion. As the last *Strafer* said, there's no penalty if you cancel before the check-in date.

It is unfortunate that all the members of the 499th were not listed or mentioned in the original "Warpath" or "Warpath Across the Pacific." A case in point is Dave Bartzokas, cousin of Christopher Bartzokas. Dave, an armament gunner, flew his first and last mission in our plane, "Doodle," on September 15, 1943. It was a barge sweep over Alexishafen. He received a bullet in his upper leg and I understand it was later amputated. I have never seen his



Headquarters Group

August Ouellette
V.P. - HQ Group

I had planned on doing this letter immediately, but mother nature had different ideas. Between four feet of snow, tropical rains, and worse. I've been pushed to the limit. I should have been born rich, instead of handsome, then I could have paid someone for shoveling. Unfortunately such is not the case.

I've heard from quite a few buddies over the holidays. Too many to enumerate in this note so I will catch you in the SQDN. newsletter. I will say that one of the letters came from the Colonel and despite health problems he is planning on being in St. Louis with us. He has made all other Reunions and I hope his luck holds out.

I've made my room reservation in St. Louis and I'd advise you not wait too long. My wife, like most ladies, is shy of heights,



Make your Reunion XI plans now

Earl J. Hitt Committee Chairman

Reunion XI planning and scheduling has now been completed and we re in the countdown for the reunion in September. This issue of the *Strafer* includes the Registration Form for Reunion XI with three pages of information relative to the reunion and registration for the reunion. We urge you to review all of the information before you fill out the Registration Form. Even though the planning and scheduling are complete, much work remains to be done before opening day. Much of this work depends on those planning to attend Reunion XI. Therefore, we urge the membership to send in your registration as-soon-as-possible as this will assist us in the work remaining. The following are brief descriptions of the regular and post-reunion tours planned and scheduled for Reunion XI:

Gateway to St. Louis Highlight Tour

Thursday, September 5, 1996, 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. This tour includes: Views of Laclede's Landing, Mississippi Riverfront, a stop at the Gateway Arch, the Old Cathedral, and a stop at the Old Courthouse. Your guide will trace the history of St. Louis beginning with the city's original settlement, Laclede's Landing; a nine block historic district filled with renovated turn-of-the-century buildings housing shops, eateries and offices. Next, you will visit the Nation's tallest monument and engineering wonder, the Gateway Arch. Standing 630 feet tall, the Arch commemorates the gateway to the west for thousands of pioneers. Located beneath the Arch is the Museum of Westward Expansion which focuses on the early settlers in Missouri, and the Oregon and Santa Fe Trails where you will find a variety of objects of historical nature. A tram ride to the top of the Arch and the film Monument to the Dream, which focuses on the construction of the Arch are optional on the tour. East of the Arch you will pass the excursion riverboats and the permanently moored restaurants boats on the riverfront. You will pass by the Old Cathedral and briefly stop at the Old Courthouse, the setting for many cases involving slavery, the fur trade and equal rights (the Dred Scott case is the most notable).

Starlight Cruise on the Mighty Mississippi

Thursday, September 5, 1996, 6:30 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. On this cruise you will experience the Mighty Mississippi first hand during a Gateway Riverboat dinner cruise. The two and one-half hour cruise will be aboard

an authentic paddle wheeler (either the Mark Twain, Huck Finn, or Becky Thatcher) from which you will see the dramatic St. Louis skyline, enjoy a delicious seated dinner and be entertained by one of St. Louis best Dixieland bands. The dinner cruise menu will include a choice of one of

the following: Prime Rib, Stuffed Flounder, or Cheese Pasta.

Casino St. Charles

Thursday, September 5, 1996, 5:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. You will visit the most casino action that the Greater St. Louis area has to

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Pannell Job of the 500th is on a pass over Wadke Island off New Guinea in May, 1944. The airstrip and supply dumps were hit.

President's Comments

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to try to make it work. And work it did! (And I'm sorry he did. What a noisy contraption it was.)

We made many improvements on our airplanes. Field modifications, they were called, which were incorporated in later models by North American. From the simple act of moving the inverter switch in the D models from the navigator's compartment

to the pilot's panel, the major armament innovations thought up by Pappy Gunn at Townsville, all later made standard by North American.

And combat tactics: The development of skip bombing procedures. The realization that attaching a parachute to a fragmentation bomb would slow its forward motion so that it would not explode under the low-flying plane that dropped it. All these developments originated in the "field" by people who could imagine something better.

Headquarters

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so by making an early reservation we got a bottom floor room.

My son, the Colonel at Carlisle, Pa., sent me a personally autographed book "Code Name- Downfall," by Tom Allen and Norman Palmer's "The Secret Plan to Invade Japan and Why President Truman Dropped the Bomb." Very interesting, to us who were there and I recommend you read it.

Things around here on the anniversary of WWII have quieted down a lot and this is where we vets have to keep it alive. A high school teacher here is planning another

session with students this May. I will be there to follow up on last year's session. My display at Lowell, Mass. National Park Museum runs till August. Another way of keeping it alive is through information and displays of WWII in grandchildren's and great-grandchildren's classes. Remember, history books give it only a very few pages. These class sessions help.

I remember the Season's Greetings cards like the one in the December '95 *Strafer*. They were made by our photo section for us to send home for the holidays. We were overseas for two Christmases and I've got both of them among my souvenirs.

Reunion XI

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offer. You will have the chance to test your luck at more than 1800 machines, blackjack, video poker, craps, roulette and more. For those wishing a good meal, dinner will be available (optional) at the Feast restaurant.

Forest Park & St. Louis Union Station

Friday, September 6, 1996, 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Meet Me In St. Louis, Meet Me At The Fair! Forest Park was the site of the 1904 World's Fair and is one of the largest city parks in the country. Today, Forest Park houses the world renowned St. Louis Zoo, the St. Louis Art Museum, the Science Center, the History Museum and the Muny (the largest outdoor theater in the country), and other attractions. Bordering the park you will see the grand mansions on Lindell Boulevard which are fine examples of the Golden Age of St. Louis at the turn of the century. At the New Cathedral you will see the largest collection of mosaics in the world. The tiny pieces of stone and glass portray scenes from the Old and New Testaments, the life of Saint Louis IX, King of France, and many men and women prominent in the history of St. Louis. Continuing on west on Lindell Boulevard en route to Union Station, you will see the Masonic and Moolah Temples, Grand Centre and St. Louis University, the oldest west of the Mississippi. You will stop at Union Station, once the busiest rail terminal in world. You will visit the Grand Hall and Train Shed that have been renovated to house specialty stores, festive markets, restaurants and a luxury hotel. Here you will have time for lunch and shopping at your own pace and your guide will offer an optional historic walking tour of the Station.

Historic St. Charles, Missouri

Friday, September 6, 1996, 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 a.m. This tour includes overviews of Main Street and Frenchtown and time for lunch and shopping. St. Charles is the site of many historic firsts: Missouri's first State Capitol, the Lewis and Clark Rendezvous, the Zebulon Pike Expedition, as well as the site of the drafting of the Santa Fe Trail. Thousands of pioneers replenished supplies here on their journey west. You will enjoy the driving tour of historic Main Street (a nine block district filled with restored buildings dating from 1790). The cobblestone and gas lit street is known for its gift, antique and craft shops. You will also visit Frenchtown, a neighborhood located in the northern ward of St. Charles which have buildings dating back to 1818. You will have



This picture taken on New Guinea shows a bat outta an earlier hell

time after the tour for lunch and shopping. Also available in the Historic District are the First State Capitol building which offers guided tours, the Lewis & Clark Center, a winery tour and more. Missouri Wine Country, Hermann, MO, Sunday, September 8, 1996, 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. En route to Hermann, MO, this Post Reunion tour will familiarize you with the rich history of Missouri wine making which dates to the Mid-1800s. By the turn of the century, Missouri was the second largest wine producing state. Hermann was settled by German immigrants in 1826. The rolling hills along the Missouri River were not only perfect for wine making, but reminded the immigrants of the Rhineland in Germany. Today, Hermann has many craft shops and antique stores. You will tour the Stone Hill Winery, founded in 1847, Missouri's largest. Stone Hill was the third largest winery in the country by 1900. Prohibition forced the winery to survive by growing mushrooms in its giant cellars. The winery has been awarded medals for its wines in national and international competitions. Wine tasting is included in the tour. Lunch will be at the Vintage 1847 restaurant also located at Stone Hill Winery. Branson, Missouri, Country Music Capitol of the World, Sunday, September 8 - Tuesday, September 10, 1996, departing 8:30 a.m. This Post Reunion tour will be by luxury motor coach and will include lunch En route to Branson. You will arrive in Branson at approximately 3:00 p.m. and check into your hotel. Sunday evening, 6:00 p.m., you will enjoy a seated dinner at the Outback Steak & Oyster Bar, and at 8:00 p.m. you will attend the Mel Tillis Show. On Monday a continental breakfast is included at your hotel. After breakfast, 9:45 a.m., you will see Branson via Ride-the-Ducks and be taken on a unique land and

water excursion, which includes a cruise on Table Rock Lake and a drive through a Military Museum. At 11:30 a.m. you will tour the College of the Ozarks, where you'll see the grist mill, weaving studios, the orchid greenhouses, and more. Time will be allow for lunch on your own. At 1:30 p.m. you will be offered Shopping at the Factory Merchants Mall or an afternoon on your own. At 5:30 p.m. you will enjoy a buffet dinner at Sadie's Sideboard and afterward at 7:00 p.m. you will attend either the Shop Tabuchi or Andy Williams Show. On Tuesday, after a continental breakfast at your hotel, you will check out and depart for the return trip to St. Louis. Lunch En route is on your own. You should arrive back in St. Louis at approximately 3:00 p.m. and passengers will be dropped at the Holiday Inn, Westport, or the Airport.

More Reunion XI

It's more than tours. A hospitality room will be open in the Board Room on the lobby level of the Holiday Inn where you can just sit and visit, and where snacks and drinks will be available. On Wednesday, at 6:00 PM the Holiday Inn is sponsoring a free wine, beer and cheese party. On Friday, the Squadrons of the 345th will hold their squadron banquets, with entertainment following the banquets. On Saturday, we hope the ladies will plan to attend the Ladies Breakfast at 9:00 AM and that the men will plan to attend the Group Meeting, also at 9:00 a.m. The hotel will furnish doughnuts at the group meeting and complimentary coffee will be also be available. Finally, the Group Banquet on Saturday night will feature a prime rib dinner and entertainment. Prior to the Group Banquet, pictures of the individual members and their wives will be taken for the Reunion Photo Album. This

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Reunion XI

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memory book will include pictures of everyone in attendance whether or not an album is purchased. However, we will need a minimum of 100 albums purchased in order for the album to be produced. The room rate for the reunion is \$67 per night, flat rate for single through quadruple occupancy. This rate will be available prior to and after the reunion dates. For nonscheduled activities, the hotel has four 10-passenger vans and will transport attendees anywhere within a 5 mile radius of the hotel (This radius includes the Airport, several shopping plazas, many restaurants, and at least one gambling casino. Each morning until 9:00 AM, the hotel will provide complimentary

newspapers, coffee, tea and decaf in the lobby. The hotel includes Copperfield's Restaurant featuring breakfast and lunch (all you can eat) buffets. The hotel also includes Micki's Lounge which features nightly drink specials and complimentary Hors d'oeuvres Monday - Friday from 5:00 to 7:00 PM. There is an indoor pool, hot tub and exercise room which is open from 6:00 AM to 11:00 PM daily. Complimentary access to Vic Tanny Health Club is offered for all in-house guests.

I was reminded of the aging of our group when I recently visited the Post Office. When I noted that I was there on the business of the 345th Bomb Group, a WWII group, the man on the service desk looked up at me and said: "You mean you guys are

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still alive?" The man was of the babyboomer age group and was mildly surprised when I noted that our group had some 1,400 members still alive. Unfortunately, we are still aging. It is estimated that the average age of our living members is 76. I know that, as a group, we are approaching our last formal reunion; whether it will be in 1998, 2000 or beyond remains to be seen. Although Reunion XI won't be our last, I'll be at Reunion XI in September 1996, how about you. Plan to MEET ME IN ST. LOUIS. . . In closing, I would like to thank the president of the 345th, Vic Tatelman, for his assistance to the Reunion Committee. Vic's tireless efforts have been instrumental in putting together a Reunion I believe all will enjoy.

Last Mission

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back there as he might get his throat slit.

BATAVIA (NOW JAKARTA)— The war with the Japanese was over, but a new war for independence from the Dutch was underway. There was fighting in the streets. We ignored it until we got caught in some cross fire. The windshield of my vehicle was smashed and my face was badly cut. We found an English doctor after some time and he sewed me up. My upper lip had been almost severed and required many stitches. The next day we filled our bomb bay with drums of gasoline. We didn't know what the fuel situation would be like at our next stop.

BALI— The Japanese were still in charge here. They met us at the airport, transferred the fuel from the drums into the plane and gave us a victors' ride into town. They also gave us a big banquet, put us in a nice hotel and gave us all the money we wanted to spend. We bought many carvings and paintings. We met a Belgian painter who was married to a Balinese dancer named Pollak. They entertained us with tea and fruits and Pollak danced. Our correspondents wrote stories and took pictures.

AUSTRALIA— We flew through Broome, and Alice Springs to Sydney where we spent a few days servicing the plane and relaxing. I looked up a friend from a previous visit and had a good time.

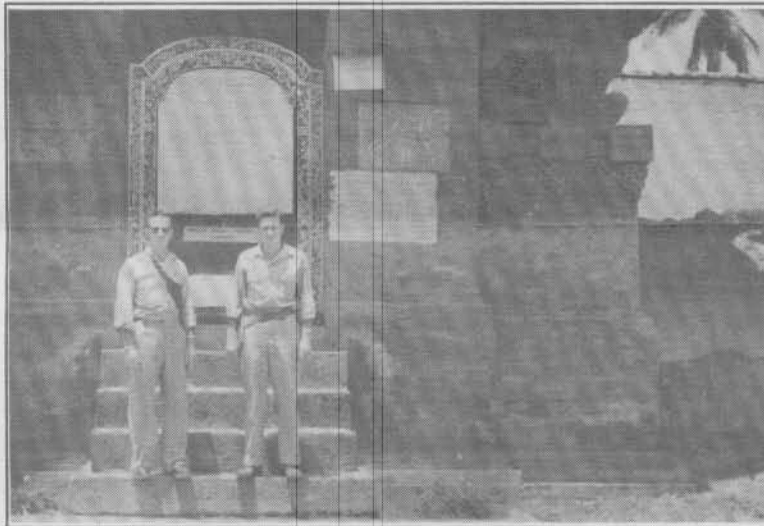
BACK TO IE SHIMA— From Sydney we island hopped to Tokyo. There we saw the most war damage on the trip. I was a curiosity to the Japanese. I guess a tall

blond American looked very different. I got a haircut, and about 100 people watched. From Tokyo it was back to IE Shima and the

wait for transportation home.

The entire trip took 30 days and covered about 15,000 miles. We made 20 stops, so we were on the move most of the time. All the people we met were very friendly, even our former enemies. I was pleased that this mission allowed me to end my tour in WWII on a positive note.

As a result of this mission, I am mentioned and my pictures appear in William H. McDougall's book, "By Eastern Windows," and my picture appears in Life magazine, Nov. 19, 1945, pg. 40, and "Life, The First Fifty Years, 1936- 1986, pg. 57.



Two crew members from the 498th. Can anyone help to identify them?



Bill Pennanen covers stitches on a cut on his face while being served tea by a Balinese dancer in this 1945 Life magazine photo. Who's the copilot, also from the 498th, on the left?

Headquarters Fifth Air Force Office of The A.C. of S., A-2 APO 710 15 August 1945, Past, Present and Future

I. PAST.

The PAST is over and done; it is finished; the Recording Angel has written it "in the corner of his eye, with a golden stylus" and there is can rest, unless somebody does something about it. However, Fifth Air Force PAST is glorious and must not be allowed to rest in the corner of any Angel's eye. It must live in the memories of Fifth Air Force

men and must be kept alive in their telling of it. It is a PAST filled with honor- a PAST to be spoken of with pride. In telling of, Fifth Air Force men will be accurate and truthful. Only small doers of small deeds talk 'big,' hoping thereby to make their deed appear big. However "small" Fifth Air Force men may talk about their organization's deeds, those deeds will always be big- almost

incredible- so much have we done with so little.

Always, in the PAST, Fifth Air Force had driven ahead. Never has it gone backward or receded from an advance it has made. Never has it merely marked time. If only a modicum of the DRIVE of the Fifth Air Force is carried into the everyday national life by

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501st Prize Winners

by Harold L. Timmerman

Pictured from top left are Rhodes, Caldwell, Albright, Becker, Phillips, Holmes, Hull, Singerman, Berger, Blackwell, Halverson. Second row: Anderson, Hainer, Greenquist, Salazar, Buchanan, McCormick, Brocker. Front row: Cloyd, Janashak, Shoemaker, Barbato. Not in the picture 501st Engineering Officer Harold Timmerman. This is a photo of the team from the 501st Bomb Squadron that set the world record for changing both engines on a B-25 at Dobodura, New Guinea. It began when another unit reported performing a single engine change in one day. Some of the line crews of the 501st thought they could beat that so the attempt was set up with the approval of C.O. Bob Fain and Harold Timmerman, Engineering Officer. The team members were selected and briefed on specific tasks and the effort was officially timed by the Squadron Navigator. The change of two engines on a B-25 was completed in world record time of 3 hours and 45 minutes from cold start to ready-for-take off. C.O. Fain asked the two engines be checked over again for safety. No problems were found and the test flight was made the same day.

A Memorable SW Pacific New Year

by Harold H Ponder

From whence came the motivation and brilliant originality for our first new Year's celebration in the Pacific?

My records reflect that most of us made the move across the Owen Stanley range to Doba Dura on December 23, 1943 after about six months at Port Moresby. THE FALCON, the 498th history, declares, "By the time that New Year sneaked up on us we had a good stock of amber fluid on hand again and we floated the old year out." BINGO! BRILLIANCE IN A BOTTLE, or probably a canteen cup.

A mission was scheduled for January 1, 1944 and we, the mechanics and support personnel, finished our day well after dark. While we were gathered in small groups back in the squadron area, doing whatever led up to the event, someone thought we should make a little noise to let the world know we were still here on this, our first New Year in the Pacific. But how? Rattling canteen cups and mess kits was certainly too mundane. Besides, we heard that racket every day. Gunfire was dismissed as being a little risky at that time of night. Someone might just decide to make a game of it. What is more noisy, though, that a B-25? NOTHING!! A sizable contingent of mechanics and other support personnel piled into trucks and reported to the flight line.

Shortly before midnight, all operational engines were started and all parties checked in by radio. When the designated "clock watcher" gave the word that the time was 00:00 all engines were advanced to full power and kept there for what seemed to be a minute or two. It seemed that the whole jungle shook and the leaves of the trees fluttered. Of course, we didn't want to abuse the engines nor use enough fuel to make it necessary to "top off." So we shut down just as someone remembered the flair pistols! Such a brilliant display of pyrotechnics has probably not been seen in that particular area since! To shoot straight up, it was found most comfortable to lie on one's back and point upward. I'll always remember hearing, "Hey Merl. Aim just a little to the right. That last one missed my wingtip about six inches!"

"Okay, George. How's this?"

Would you believe that not a single airplane was scorched, not a blade of grass was singed, nor a single GI damaged beyond recovery?! Don't tell me there is not someone looking after us!!



Major Rosenbaum (the 499th's first CO), Lt Forsythe, S. Sgt. Stevens, S. Sgt. Middlind, Tech Sgt. Wooden

Your Next Strafer should arrive in June. Stories, pictures and other notices for publication are invited. Please submit by May 1, 1996 to the return address shown on page 8. Please include return address.

IN MEMORY OF

Merl Wooden	498	Feb 10, 1996	Cedar Rapids, IA
Ray E. Geer	500	Nov. 17, 1995	
Joe Ulanzewsky	500	Nov. 29, 1995	
Forest Seiverson	500	Dec. 14, 1995	
Norman Chatigny	500	Jan. 3, 1996	
William F. Clark	499	June 2, 1995	Sebring, FL
Jack L. Broadhurst	499	May 10, 1995	
Irving M. Mosser	499	Dec. 1995	
Thomas H. Heidorf II	501	Dec. 17, 1995	Newark, N.J.
Louis Higgins	499	Dec. 1995	
Charles Phillips	499		Pittsboro, NC
Henry Treece	498		Marietta, GA

Please mail notices of deaths to Strafer. Next issue deadline is May 6.

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Past, Present & Future

(Continued from page 6)

Fifth Air Force men, we, as a Nation, will "go places and do things." Let us carry on the rich tradition of positive action, which our Great Commander had created and taught us to live. Let us- each in his big or little sphere- carry on that ever-forward DRIVE, which recognizes no odds, knows no fatigue and overcomes all obstacles. Fifth Air Force has never know anything but Victory; Victory over self, which is the most difficult to win, as well as lesser victories over obstacles from without.

These are the big thing our PAST has given us:- the ever-froward DRIVE; the taste and habit of Victory; the memories of the DRIVE and the victories, to inspire us and keep us "in the groove." Our Great Commander remarked, on 15 August, "We need a few more Victories." Fifth Air Force men can give him those "few more Victories" in their everyday, normal lives, if they will. We think they will.

II. PRESENT

Fifth Air Force- in its accustomed fashion- is making its final forward move. And here begins the real PRESENT. This PRESENT of ours is full of things. It may appear, offhand, to be rich in privileges. Actually, it is loaded with obligations and responsibilities. We, the conquerors, have the obligation to impress our superiority upon the conquered enemy. The enemy is an Oriental. He will not be impressed by a noisy declaration of superiority. He will be impressed by a quiet demonstration of superiority.

Such a demonstration of superiority requires that the shirtless legions which have driven forward from MORESBY to

OKINAWA, must now find their shirts and war them. The Soldier is the traditionally superior individual in the Japanese social hierarchy. A shirtless G.I. is not in uniform, therefore not a Soldier and therefore not a Superior person.

The only headgear the shirtless legions have worn since MORESBY days, are the green and purple straw abortions which blossomed forth at STOTSENBERG. These must go by the board and the uncovered G.I. must acquire regulation headgear and the habit of wearing it. An uncovered G.I. is not in uniform, therefore not a Soldier and therefore not a superior person.

The salute- military mark of mutual respect- has been forgotten. The forward DRIVE has been so persistent that certain amenities (which happen to be regulation) have been overlooked- sometimes have had to be overlooked under the pressure of the DRIVE. Now that the DRIVE is over and the goal is won, the amenities can- must be picked up again and scrupulously observed. The regulation mark of mutual respect must be given and returned- scrupulously. Otherwise, we shall not be conforming to regulations, therefore not Soldiers and therefore not superior persons- as conquerors must be. If we do show that we respect each other, the enemy must respect us.

The mission of Fifth Air Force, as the occupying Air Force, is difficult, perhaps dangerous, certainly arduous. We are accustomed to overcoming difficulties, we have never faltered in the face of danger, we "make no bones" about a 24-hour combat alert. We have no fear that our mission will fail- Fifth Air Force missions never fail. But

the individual responsibility, imposed upon each of us- of being a good Soldier, and therefore a superior person- is going require a 24-hour personal alert on the part of each of us. "We need a few more Victories"- Victories over personal carelessness. Let's win them!

III. FUTURE

For the FUTURE, we must hold what we have won at such cost of blood, treasure and sustained effort. The PACIFIC OCEAN must remain, what it now is, an American Lake, just as American and just a purely and singly American as- for example- Cayuga Lake in New York, Cass Lake in Minnesota, Great Salt Lake in Utah. A Pacific Ocean dotted with American-held Air and Naval bases, will be just such a lake and will justify- for the first time in History- it's PEACE-implying name.

We have won- at a cost of much blood, treasure and sustained effort- this American lake. For the long, long FUTURE, let us hold it. If we will be hard, selfish and realistic in this respect, that will be actually the most generous gesture we can make toward "Peace in our time" and that of our sons.

HARRY F. CUNNINGHAM,
Colonel, G.S.C.,
A. C. of S., A-2.

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