



# STRAFER



498th SQUADRON

499th SQUADRON

500th SQUADRON

501st SQUADRON

345th Bomb Group Reunion Association

September 1997

15 W OAK ST

CANAL WINCHESTER OH 43110-1129

*address service requested*

NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
COLUMBUS, OH 43200  
PERMIT NO. 2529



KENNETH C GASTGEB \*\*\*97  
2143 MELROSE CT APT 221  
NORMAN OK 73069-5269

## Reunion XII plans

*by Ken Gastgeb, reunion committee chairman*

The committee of Reunion XII has been hard at work making plans and arrangements. Working on the committee are our president, Lynn Lee, and the assistant group vice presidents: Gus Ouellette, HQ; Frank Dillard, 498th; Ben Miller, 499th; Ken Stufflebeam, 500th; and George Mordecai, 501st, along with Mary Elizabeth Gamble and Betty Hamner. Aleece Zucker of Uniglobe DiscoveryTravel, Inc. is assisting us in making arrangements with the Hotel and other items. The hotel is providing us with a large Hospitality Room, complimentary continental breakfast every morning, coffee and ice for the Hospitality Room, complimentary room for every 40 rooms we use, room rate of \$65 plus 9 percent tax and tow-hour social gathering of assorted drinks and buffet. Also, transportation to and from the airport. So far our preliminary schedule is: Wednesday evening drinks, chips, etc.; Thursday evening Casino Game playing using Apache Bucks, with prizes. Other activities the committee is talking about are: Dancing with Big Time Band music, tour of the Air Base, Golf, BridgeTourney, Bingo, Western Dress code Hawaiian Dress code for afternoon or evening social gathering, invite the Apache Indian Chief from Apache, Oklahoma to make him an honorary member of our Association, etc. We will have more information on these activities in the next issue. The regular Friday Night Squadron Ban-

quets, Saturday Night Group Banquet, Ladies' Breakfast and Men's Meeting will take place as in the past. One of our concerns is planning of tours. The committee is going to have a meeting at the hotel in October or November. So if you have any ideas or suggestions, please get them to your Squadron Vice President or me as soon as you can.

## New Association Members

Mr. William Orem, flight engineer (and a tentmate of mine at Port Moresby) and Mr. Wendell Houck, Col. Crabb's staff car driver in the states and later served in the motor pool, plan to join and attend the reunion. Also, I understand several others have joined our group lately. On behalf of the members of our association, WELCOME !!



### President's Comments

Lynn Lee  
President

Heard from Virgil and Frances Gross! They lost their daughter January 21 in a car wreck. Her car left the road and hit a tree. She was past court administrator of Chancery and other counties in Mississippi and was praised by the local judge and chief of police. Our sympathy goes out to their mother and father and other loved ones.

A thought of mine, for what it's worth.

We are all sometimes saddened by the news of the death of one of our friends, when we were not aware that anything was amiss. If we know that one is sick or needs help and we could extend a note of friendship or a phone call, I'm sure it would help and I know it would make us more aware of our own good fortune. So if you know of someone who is facing a crisis, let the rest of us know.

One more thing and I'll quit for this time. It's about your unpaid dues. Get 'em in. If you can't send \$15, then send something and a 32 cent stamp to let us know you still want to receive the Strafer.

# Squadron Reports

## 498th Squadron

Frank Dillard

Asst. Gp. V.P. - 498th Sqd.

First, I need to report a "happy accident." My phone number was listed in the Strafer for George Mordecai and for me. I received calls intended



for him, one from Jerry Stone (501). We had a nice visit on his nickel and I look forward to meeting him at Reunion XII.

Jesse Dean of Dayton, OH suggests that we invite the head of the Apache Nation to be a guest at the reunion and make him an honorary member. Great idea, I forwarded it to Ken Gastgeb, reunion chairman.

Roland Lamb visited recently. He chided me for not reporting his wedding anniversary (July 10) in the last Strafer. Sorry, sometimes I forget the day of the week.

There is an effort to raise a B-25C that went down and sank in Lake Murray, SC in the spring of 1943. It's in 100 feet of water and one of five said to be at the bottom of the lake. If funds can be raised it will be restored and displayed at Columbia Metropolitan Airport (formerly Columbia Army Air Base). Many of us will remember flying skip-bombing training missions out of Columbia to Lake Murray. Now I learn it could have been injurious to my health.

Ray LeTourneau and wife, Jo, are in Mass., where Ray will exhibit his skill at devouring lobster. He's so good he could almost charge admission. He celebrated his 83rd birthday August 2.

Ira Schaub of Raleigh, NC is feeling "about as good as could be expected" after surgeries. He talked me out of going to Branson, MO in October. Now we are trying to get reservations in a phone booth in Myrtle Beach, SC. If there's anyone out there, let me know.

I recently called my old buddy George Flynn in Fontana, CA. We met in gunnery school in Tyndall FL, transferred to Columbia, and he shipped out before me. It was a great surprise to meet again at Nadzab. I haven't seen George in person since the attack on the Thomas Nelson. It's hard to believe it's been 53 years, and harder to believe it ever happened.

## 499th Squadron

Ben F Miller

Asst. Gp. V.P. - 499th Sqd.

Thanks to all who responded to questions about the plane and crew on the bulletin board photo in the March issue. The pilot was a 19-year-old trans-



ferred in from the 38th Bomb Group at Nadzab. His name was Lt. James H. Mac Williams. And the copilot was Lt. Leo Flannigan, whose widow confirms this. They ditched their B-25 outside of Lae when Nadzab valley was closed in by weather. They were picked up later. Can you help name the crew?

The 499th Mini-Reunion in the last week of September should be a good one. Everything will be at a relaxed pace. If your Strafer arrives before September 25 do not hesitate to call Bearcreek Farms at 219/997-6822 or 800/288-7630. They say they will have space for last minute guests. If you have anything to contribute to the gathering, such as tapes, pictures, etc., bring them.

Max Ferguson wrote in the last issue about Biak. How many of you remember the day clean clothes were to be taken to the medics and boiled in a mixture of GI laundry soap and insect repellent? No one was bitten by ticks, but the ones who wore the safe clothes wound up walking like old cowboys and some went to the hospital with burned areas. So much for miracles.

## 500th Squadron

Ken Stufflebeam

Asst. Gp. V.P. - 500th Sqd.

Over 100 have been confirmed to attend the squadron reunion in San Antonio during the first few days of September. Nathan Gordon, the recipient of the Medal of Honor was the first naval aviator in WW II to receive the medal. He spoke at the 5th Air Force monument dedication in Dayton, OH. Some of us were at the dedication. That's how I made contact with the good old 500th.

Please forgive we 500th reunion members if we seem a little proud of our squadron, but we will be holding our ninth reunion this year, expecting about 125 attendees. By now most everyone is aware of the fact that the group reunion will be in San Antonio in 1998. The 500th will break a path for everyone and will volunteer to guide the newcomers in San Antonio in 1998.

We should have copyrighted the Air Apache logo. A company, "Pieces of History," has a five inch 345th Group patch for \$9.95 and full color jacket patch for \$28. Several B-25s use it. I guess we should be proud.

Keep walking as long as you are able and shuffle along to the new century if you can. I heard a guy say he was going to live to be 100 or die trying.



## 501st Squadron

George Mordecai

Asst. Gp. V.P. - 501st Sqd.

One way to get phone calls from members is to miss the Strafer deadline. I did not receive the March Strafer until May 10, informing me the deadline for the June issue was May 1.

Peppy Blount will not be able to attend our Branson reunion. He's recuperating from a four way bypass. He's spent much of his golden years hospitalized. Yes, even Peppy has golden years. Chester Lee Phillips has recuperated enough so that he will see us in Branson. He also had a quadruple bypass, but recovered enough to join us for the winning of another battle.

Our condolences to H. C. Blackwell on the death of his wife, Fay. They were always at our reunions and great companions. H. C. was a crew chief with the original cadre. We're looking forward to seeing his cigar again soon. We'll miss the pleasure of having Stony with us, but he's seeing the battle sites the group visited, compliments of our Uncle Sam, in the early forties. He promises to bring back many pictures and stories of his visit. Stony's wife said "Lets go upstairs and make love." He said "Which one do you want, I can't do both." Oh how the mighty have fallen.

Sandy Cortesio is having trouble with his knees so he will not be traveling to Branson. Drop him a line as he looks forward to hearing from his buddies. Don Hardeman is planning on being there after battling back from his stroke.

The 501st Mini-Reunion is in Branson, Mo. October 1-5. Arrangements have been made to see SHOJI TABUCHI & THE ANDY WILLIAMS SHOWS. A banquet will be catered with the assistance of Lynn Lee so you know that there will be a great time had by all.

## Headquarters Group

August Ouellette

Asst. Gp. V.P. - HQ Group

By all reports from Ken Gastgeb, it looks like the '98 reunion is progressing fairly well. Not quite in high gear, but hang in there. It'll come.

Like I've said many times, it behooves us all to keep this thing going. If we don't, who will?

One of my nieces went to the Air Force Museum and saw our monument there. She was tickled to think that her uncle was



a small part of it. She was an Air Force nurse after the war and that's why she had an interest there. She even sent me the 50th Air Force Spot Shirt and will I ever wear that proudly.

It would be very interesting to have the Apache Chief at the reunion. I have previously mentioned getting the Apache Princess for a return visit, but this new suggestion sounds better the more I think of it.

The Ouellettes are very much interested in the Hummel Museum, which is supposed to be near San Antonio. We went to Germany and my wife fell in love with Hummels.

If any of you have ideas for the reunion, make sure to notify the committee. They're always open to constructive ideas. Also, make sure to plan on helping during the reunion. There are many needs that one can fill. We all know the value of volunteering, not only for the event, but also for the individual. Even if you can't help, try very hard to be at the reunion.

# South Pacific Cizzle

by Dick Fazatte, 498th gunner

Many of you will recall having steak exactly once, at Nadzab. Fresh, honest to goodness steak from a hind quarter of beef. Very good steak. If not so properly cut, then no one noticed or cared.

I had become acquainted with the mess Sergeant and was making trips to the quarter master's depot over by Finchhaven. On this day "Grandma" said there's a quarter of beef for us, but we don't have anyone to cut it. I instantly stated my meat cutting qualifications. I had cut lots of meat. Of course, I had taken a bite each time. It was determined we would get the hind quarter and I would do the cutting. This probably 400-pound quarter was laid on the meat block and I was handed the knife.

You push a 12-inch blade into the center and make a square cut block maybe eight inches by eight inches and four inches thick. You then cut the four-inch-side into slices one inch thick. As you become acquainted with the interior of this meat, you go into more squares and some oblongs. Just keep them one inch thick.

To my knowledge, this beef was consumed in one meal. No one ever said I could not cut beef. Then again, I really never told "Grandma" I was a meat cutter.

## Group Bulletin Board

**Reunion XII**  
September 9-13, 1998  
San Antonio, Texas

### 1998 Dues Payable

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

Your next Strafer should arrive in December. Please submit all items for it by November 1

To receive medals you should have gotten or get replacements for ones you lost, mail a request with a copy of your discharge to: National Personnel Records Center (NCPRC), 9700 Page Ave St. Louis, MO 63132

Strafer circulation has dropped from 1330 to 640 since the requirement that only dues-paying members receive it. Thanks to all who have paid dues and continue to receive Strafer.

**CORRECTION**  
The letter in the March Strafer reported a group checking account of \$12,382.33 and a \$12,774.51 group savings account. There is no group savings account, only a group checking account. The amount reported as savings account balance does not exist.

Some of the deaths reported in this issue are based on information from the U.S. Postal service. If you know a report to be untrue, please contact Strafer immediately.

New postal service regulations affecting nonprofit postage have affected Strafer. This issue's new appearance is an attempt to ensure that Strafer is delivered as quickly as possible and at the lowest possible rate. Please report any delivery problems to the return address shown on page 1.

The original *Warpath* book has been reprinted by Schiffer Publishing, Ltd. I was able to order one through a Barnes & Noble bookstore. Frank Dillard

If you're interested in the *Warpath* reprint, please contact your squadron vice president or me if you're interested in ordering. Ken Gastgeb

### IN MEMORY OF

Robert E Barnett	498	6/1/97	Butler, PA
Fay Blackwell (wife of HC)	501		Adamsville, AL
George Blackwell	501	1995	Medford, OR
Bryant Edwards	498	1997 (Post Ofc report)	Clarendon Hills, IL
Robert Lindberg	498	7/95	Canton, OH
James E Keown	498	1/8/97	Philpot, KY
William O Lingerfelt	501	1997 (Post Ofc report)	Fyffe, AL
William M Mathews	501	1997 (Post Ofc report)	Indianola, IA
Walter Schoenfeld	501	5/3/97	Whittier, CA
Harley M Shaffer	500	1997 (Post Ofc report)	Columbus, OH

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

### Association Officers

President -- Lynn Lee  
1717 N 6th, Abilene TX 79603  
915/677-5319  
Vice President -- Ken Gastgeb  
2143 Melrose Ct #221, Norman OK 73069-5269  
405/364-1350  
Secretary -- Jay Moore  
329 Cotten Rd Sanford NC 27330  
919/774-3535  
Treasurer -- Dick Feucht  
12500 Tollgate Rd Pickerington OH 43147-9161  
614/837-7062  
Strafer Publisher -- Ken McClure  
5581 Chowning Way, Columbus OH 43213  
614/864-5772

### Assistant Group VPs

HQ - August Ouellette  
86 Central St, Hudson NH 03051-4600  
603/598-6559  
498 - Frank Dillard  
1203 Clubhouse Rd, Marion IL 62959  
618/995-2225  
499 - Ben F. Miller  
9450 N 550 W Decatur IN 46733-9428  
219/547-4460  
500 - Ken Stufflebeam  
12986 N St Hwy 78, Lewistown, IL 61542  
309/547-3175  
501 - George Mordecai  
14 Fredrick St North Branford CT 06471-1807  
203/488-8177

# Walters' bomb

by Douglas C. Busath

*Editor's note: Douglas C. Busath writes, he was a navigator in the 499th and flew with Parke and Cabel, then with Snyder in 1943, while the 345th was stationed at 18-mile strip out of Port Moresby. He was transferred to the 13th Air Force in the Solomons and flew in the 370th Squadron their 345th group.*

Since you people in the 345th were stationed at Biak for a while, I thought it might interest you to hear the story of Walters' bomb.

We were stationed at Los Negros in the Admiralties and flying B-24s in the 307th Bomb Group. We had a mission to Biak in June of 1944. The mission was to bomb the air strip and support facilities with 500-pound bombs.

The I.P. was due east of the strip and we went over and dropped. We then started a shallow turn to the left to start home when the engineer in one of the ships called up

the bombardier, whose name was Walters, and told him he had a bomb still in the bays. Walters responded by hitting the salvo handle right away and out went the bomb. A good number of us saw that bomb arch into the jungle about three miles from the strip. It started a humungous oil fire, probably the biggest one I ever saw in my whole tour.

You can imagine the frustration of some Japanese supply officer. He has his oil tank stuck out in the jungle, well camouflaged, and some guy hits it with one bomb.

Two days later we went up there with 24 B-24s carrying 41 100-pound incendiaries and plastered that jungle, but didn't start a single fire. The tank Walters hit must have been the only one there.

One of the wire services got ahold of the story and interviewed Walters and then put the story out. Walters' mother clipped it out of the paper and sent it to him. The last sentence of the article went something like this, "It was only an accident, said Walters with a rueful grin." Walters spent a couple of weeks trying to ignore the demand, "Hey Walters, show us your rueful grin."

# The Valentines' day, South Pacific, 1944

*Editor's note: A member read this in the May 26, 1996 Middletown, NY Sunday Record. Joe Valentine is a member of the 501st.*

In the Philippines on October 21, 1944, the 27th Division landed on Leyte Island to rout Japanese forces. Sergeant Emil Valentine, then 24, his strong shoulders deeply tanned by three years of combat under the Pacific sun, worked with his company for days to set up a barrier on the beach.

Emil watched the skies from that barrier three weeks later as a kamikaze pilot with a bomb strapped to this plane fixed his sights on the S.S. Morrison Waite. The transport ship was awaiting its own bomber planes in Leyte Bay.

From above, his target locked, the kamikaze pilot gunned the throttle and began his death dive into the sitting-duck ship.

Staff Sgt. Joseph Valentine heard the alarm and rushed off the upper deck of the Morrison Waite, where he was making a cup of soup. "I ran down into the hole and threw myself under the bunk," Joe, now 79, says as his hands grip the arms of his chair. "I landed on a life preserver and I held onto it."

The kamikaze hit his mark, destroying the side of the ship. Not all aboard were as lucky as Joe Valentine. One hundred and seven men were killed.

From Leyte beach, Emil Valentine stared as the kamikaze plane hit. I had no idea Joe was on that ship, Emil says today. "And he didn't know I was on the beach." That night the survivors of the attack were brought to shore. Emil Valentine would hear the next day from an Army postman that there was a "valentine: on the beach.

"I have five brothers and we were all in the service," Emil, 77, says leaning forward in his chair in Joe and Connie Valentine's cozy Newburgh home. "I had to go and check it out."

Emil took his rifle, headed down to the beach and asked the ship's sergeant if there was a Valentine in this company.

The sergeant walked with Emil past three companies, then shouted to Staff Sgt. Joe Valentine, who was facing away from the

two men.

"When he turned around," Emil Valentine says, as his hand moves over his heart and his voice begins to crack. "We j stared at each other. We couldn't move. The brothers found their legs after a moment, then fell into each other's arms, tears flowing.

Emil and Joe looked upon each other for the first time in three years of war.

# Somewhere in New Guinea

*anonymous*

We're somewhere in New Guinea where the sun is like a curse,  
Where each long day is followed by another slightly worse,  
And the red brick dust blows thicker than the drifting desert sand,  
And all men dream and wish for a fair and cooler land.

We're somewhere in New Guinea where a woman's never seen,  
Where the day is never cloudy and the weeds are always green,  
Where the Dingo's nightly howling robs men of blessed sleep,  
Where there isn't any whiskey and beer is never cheap.

Somewhere in New Guinea where the nights were made for love,  
Where the moon is like a searchlight and the southern cross above,  
Sparkles like a diamond cluster in the balmy tropic night,  
It's a shameful waste of beauty, 'cause there's not a girl in sight.

Somewhere in New Guinea where the mail is always late,  
And a Christmas card in April is considered up to date,  
Where we never have a payday and we never get a cent,  
But we never miss the money as we'd never get it spent.

Somewhere in New Guinea, where the ants and lizards play,  
And a hundred fresh mosquitoes replace each one you slay,  
So take me back to America, let me hear the city's yell,  
For this God-forsaken outpost is just a substitute for hell.