

STRAFER



498th SQUADRON

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345th Bomb Group Reunion Association

Quarterly

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FELLOWSHIP AND FUN REUNION

by Ken Gastgeb

Our APACHE PRINCESS, JOAN LESLIE, is going to attend this reunion. She says she is anxiously waiting for the day to visit with us. I know everyone will be just as anxious to see and talk with her. She will sign autographs, so if you have a special document or paper for your collection, or perhaps for your grandchildren bring it with you.

Time is running out, so please get your reservations forms filled out and mailed. After checking with committee members it looks like the planning is about complete and we are ready to roll. A packet will be made for each person or couple with your tickets, name tag, and some goodies! You will receive your packet shortly after you arrive at the hotel. Please check your packet to be sure you received your correct name tag(s) and tickets. Your name and ID Number are on all of your tickets. This will help in the event they get lost or en.

Please wear your name tag is your ID for a 10 percent discount at the hotel restaurant. We thank those who have volunteered to help at the Reunion. Many more volunteers are needed. Your services are

greatly appreciated. We will need help with the tours and hospitality room. We could use anyone with or without experience in these areas.

Several places have been suggested for the reunion for the year 2000. That is unless our computers turn the clock back to 1900. They are Oklahoma City, Greenville, SC, San Diego, Palm Springs, CA, and Odessa, TX. If you have a favorite

place, please be prepared, at the meeting, to provide the Group with all the necessary information.

There has been a change in the speaker for the ladies breakfast. Betty Hamner, chairperson of the Ladies Breakfast, has informed me that Docia Williams will not be able to attend. Betty has contacted Ester

(continued on page 4)



President's Comments

Lynn Lee
President

I got this in e-mail. It impressed me and maybe it will you too.

Around the corner I have a friend, in this great country that has no end. Yet the days go by and weeks rush on, and before I know it, a year is gone. And I never see my old friend's face, for life is a swift and terrible race. He knows I like him just as well as in the days when I rang his bell, and he rang mine.

If, we were younger then, and now we

are busy, tired men. Tired of playing a foolish game, tired of trying to make a name. "Tomorrow," I say, "I will call on Jim, just to show that I', thinking of him." But tomorrow comes and tomorrow goes and distance between us grows and grows.

Around the corner! Yet miles away. "Here's a telegram sir..." "Jim died today." And that's what we get and deserve in the end. Around the corner, a vanished friend.

Our famed traveler Bill Stone (Stoney) will bring memos and pictures of his trip to New Guinea. He says Port Moresby and area have developed to a metropolis. It should be very interesting.

Squadron Reports

498th Squadron

Frank Dillard

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

I found a note from Bert Rosenbaum in my files, so I gave him a call. We refought the war briefly (we won). Bert had hip replacement surgery last year and is getting along without a hitch in his get-along. He said he's not quite up to the San Antonio raid. I'm sure he'd like to hear from everyone.

I called "Red" Garland about the middle of April. Dolly said Red had been critically sick with pneumonia, and was in a nursing facility in St. Louis. I'll try to get over to see him in the next few days. In the meantime, drop him and Dolly a card at 9740 Flora Ave., Overland, MO 63114-3519.

David Blazer wrote me a great letter after reading the last Strafer. It appears we have several common interests. He sent a sketch of a B-25, a poem and a short story involving some rancid military mutton that he accompanied on a tropical transport mission! Yes, David, we do have a mutual regard for B-25's, and a common distaste for Army goat meat.

Neal Wilson was kind enough to send me a rough draft of a biography he is working on for his uncle, Bill Strickland. He would appreciate any "Bill Strickland" stories, or anything else you might be able to contribute. He says Bill's a little ill. Write c/o Neal Wilson, 399 Main St. Apt 10, Manchester, CT 06040-4152.

I look forward to seeing Hal Cope in San Antonio. He's trying to get a minireunion into our San Antonio bash. It seems many of the aviation cadets during WWII were trained at one of the four Parks Air College facilities. I learned the Cape Girardeau, MO training center I attended as a member of class 44-A was a Parks Air College satellite. Since I am jointly responsible for the hospitality room with Ben Miller, I think we can arrange a meeting for all Parks alumni there during our stay. Look for an announcement on the bulletin board.

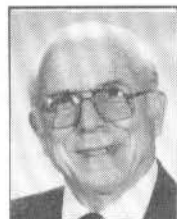
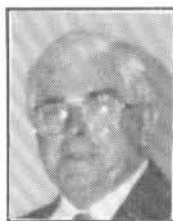
499th Squadron

Ben F. Miller

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

The reunion committee still needs volunteers. If you can spare just an hour or two, many thanks. This should be the best reunion ever.

It's been quite a chore, but my squadron roster is as up to date as possible with our



reporting system. I've made a list of deceased members listed in past Strafers, plus reports and letters from others, but some are never reported, or only many years later. I will post my list at the reunion. Please make corrections or additions.

If anyone has pictures or knew Sgt. Grady L. Young, an engineer-gunner of the 499th, who flew with and went down with 2nd Lt. Morgan A. Smith on Jan. 8, 1945, let's hear from you. His nephew sent a picture of Sgt. Young in uniform, and he had three stripes on his arm and bombardier wings on the jacket. About that time we received a group of gunners who had been noncom navigators and bombardiers. By the way bring pictures to the reunion.

The reunion program sounds great, but I'll not be allowed to show my hobby, as a gun enthusiast. It's been fun building a few, but many years of shooting skeet and trap are my hobby. Can you imagine a refresher course with scatter guns for all the gunners and pilots?

Frank Arthur Croft, one of our oldest crewmen overseas, sent me a book called "The Forgotten Fifth." It's a tribute to all the units over there. It makes you realize how rough things were. Do you remember when General Crabb made this statement? "You will not BE history, you ARE history."

As a Legion member, I am quite busy working with schools. We have prayer back and classes start with recitation of the pledge. We do flag education projects with grade schools, oratorical with middle and high schools and Americanism and government with middle and high schools. Being in the color guard, we did 45 military rites for veterans last year and already 11 for '98.

500th Squadron

Ken Stufflebeam

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

TEMPE FUGIT, time flies, they say, but it never did in the old Army Air Corps. All we ever did was "hurry up and wait." But - where does time go? Hoping this finds all of you well and happy, but not feeling too old, as I pose a question to all, HOW OLD IS OLD? Having received only one letter of correspondence from a former member of the 500th, I do not have much to write for the column. As some of you may know, I did not return to San Antonio last fall and help with the planning of the 345th Group reunion. I had just been there attending the 500th reunion.



Our very able 500th secretary was in on the planning of the group reunion, as he lives in the fair city of San Antonio. Thank you, Bill. There seems to be some concern about what to do with the funds of the Group reunion association. I say, don't worry about it. Inflation will erode some of it and I suggested to spend some of it on reunions and let it benefit those who have been faithful in paying dues and attending reunions.

It appears that there was some confusion about the life memberships. They're still honored, but life members are asked to pay dues and no new ones are being sold. Robert's Rules of Order probably says that cannot be done, but it's appropriate. If a person has paid dues for life membership in an organization, that means for the life of the member, unless the organization ceases to be. And surely someday that will be the case.

Don't keep your eyes on the road, keep your eyes on the driver in front of you and in back of you and on all sides of you. Two men met in their cars on a narrow bridge one day. One man said he never backed up for a fool. The other man said, "I do," and he put his car in reverse and backed off the bridge.

501st Squadron

George Mordecai

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

It seems as if I just got through sending a letter to the Strafer for the March edition. Time flies when you get into the upper age bracket. I keep hoping there are some of you who great things are happening to and you'll let me know so I can make you famous. Another one of our members, William Flynn, has passed away and now in his obituary we read what he has done since he left the service. He received the Distinguished Flying Cross for shooting down two Zeros on a single mission. He carried on this type of service to his country as a coach in the South Jersey area establishing little league and midget football in the Gloucester area. Nick Dovica of the Bats Outa Hell Sqd. read his obituary with the mention of the 501st.

The reunion in San Antonio is shaping up pretty well in spite of last-minute changes. I hope all will realize that our time sharing our past is getting shorter. Get your reservations in and come down and have a great time. It's great to relive the past with friends who shared it.

Well, William J. Stone, AKA Stoney, is prepared to enlighten us on how things



have changed since we returned from freeing up the South Pacific and all the great things we made possible in that part of the world. I am looking forward to his great story telling. Heard from Sara Nowles. Ralph was in the hospital in February, the Doctor is giving her hope for better things to come. They are in Florida. Heard from Jack & Mary Gronewald. They are in San Diego and seem to be enjoying themselves. Heard from Fran and Virg Gross. Fran is having some trouble getting around but, if I know her she will make this trip and still get in some shopping. I think we should have a seminar on how to keep in touch with each other.

Headquarters Group

August Ouellette

Asst. Gp. V.P. - HQ Group

First on the list for this letter is the coming reunion. The plans took a setback from the Holiday Inn, but the handpicked members of the committee came up with a plan B without skipping a beat. We'll never notice that anything was ever changed.

On March 27 I was interviewed for a sixth grade class studying WWII. A girl recorded a one-hour conversation with me and I just say she was very knowledgeable. The teachers gave the students a series of routine questions. I'm sure the girl was very impressed with the Air Apaches. I took the "Warpath Across The Pacific" and the pictures were worth a thousand words.

I also participated in the school's Memorial Day program. I've participated in many of these occasions and not one has been rejected by the kids. Some don't pay attention to all of it, but enough do to make it worth it. One kid asked, "Where's... New Guinea?" He knows now and may forever remember it.

In fact, if anyone mentions an interest in Air Corps (or Force) they get a copy of our "Air Apache" tile of the plaque at the Air Force Academy Cemetery. That black and white tile copies beautifully and many are amazed at the record listed on it. I could not come close to guessing how many I've given out. In fact, I gave the sixth grade teacher 40 copies.

Another thing that got a lot of attention among my friends was the article about plans to invade Japan. That was one of the best *Strafer* articles ever. Many friends have made copies.

Col. Darwin sent me a copy of some items from our reunion at Gulf Shore, AL. Very much appreciated. I missed that one.

Just one reminder, sign up for the reunion and volunteer wherever possible. Take care and C U later.



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 by October. Please submit all items for it by September 21. This is a delayed deadline to allow for news on the reunion.

Information wanted

WWII veterans and civilians who worked at the Miami Air Depot or Miami 36th St. Airport 1042-47 or in the '40s, '50s or '60s, your memories and experiences are needed for historical research. Raven International 800/719-1626

Author offers to buy own book

Wife has decided that all eight grandchildren must have copy of granddad's book, "We Band of Brothers." Need books, will pay. Call Peppy Blount collect: 903/758-4424, write PO Box 1227, Longview, TX 75606, or bring to reunion.

Register with the VA

The Veterans hospital system is under review. All veterans should register with the VA hospitals in their areas on or before October 1 this year. You need to register even though you may not need hospital care. Congress will use the registration list to evaluate the need to continue the VA hospital program. Suggest to your congressional representative that any assistance he or she might render would be appreciated at election time.

Frank Dillard

Officer elections are held at the reunion and your squadron vice president is a member of the nominating committee. He would appreciate your input.

IN MEMORY OF

Robert B. Bailey	499	2/13/98	Phoenix, AZ
Ray A. Comstock	500	1/28/98	Ft. Myers, FL
William J. Flynn	500	3/12/98	Boynton Beach, FL
Leslie Isaacson	501	1/9/98	St. Paul, MN
James J. Minnick	501	6/97	Abbingdon, VA
Robert Louis Sims	500	10/8/97	Cleveland, TX

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

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Simple stuff

by Dick Feazatte, 498th

Special orders #60 state that seven crews left Columbia, SC dated 17 Aug., 1943. Crews are to report to Hamilton Field for assignment for PCS.

This all sounds easy and simple. There is so much left out. Just a 12-hour flight to Hickam in Hawaii. About six hours to Christmas Island, then to Samoa, then Fiji, next to New Caledonia and into Brisbane, Australia.

It gets more complicated as the journey starts again. We get onto a narrow-gauge rail line with dinky, miniature cars headed for Charles Towers. This trip scales out to about 750 miles on my world atlas. It took four full days and three nights. It was a very beautiful trip through bogs of eucalyptus trees. There were birds of all sizes, shapes and colors galore.

Sometimes we may have hit 15 m.p.h.. That would be at zero slope, or five degrees if anything. The food was mutton hot dogs in an intestine case. They were not refrigerated and they were greasy, green-looking creations. I did not eat the first or second days. The third day my will power collapsed and I ran the rest of the way. Take this any way you wish, as I sure ran. I eat hot dogs yet today, but I check to see if they are green.

The total sleeping time on the trip was 46 1/2 hours. That included the flight into Moresby out of Ipswich. The total distance was probably 11,000 miles, as you circled the central Pacific.

Time has erased lots of memories of many good men who have left us. We did a job every one of us can be most proud of. I sure am. The 345th will always be covered with glory.



"Ordeal of Tondelayo" a painting by Jack Fellows.

Veterans' Art Project

Ben T. Muller, 501st, recently managed to have a VA hospital in the Houston area hang a photographic copy of this painting. He did it with a slide of the painting, donated by the artist and free photographic and typesetting work from folks in Houston. He says he'll organize 345th members in the Houston area for a dedication ceremony. Now Ben hopes to expand the idea. He says 345th paintings could hang in VA hospitals around the country. He believes the donations have probably been exhausted and is looking for ideas on how to finance the project. To help him with this significant work, call him at 713/774-3905, write to him at 7215 Sandpiper, Houston TX 77074, or see him at Reunion XII.



January 9, 1945 American forces landing on 15 miles of beach in Lingayen Gulf were unopposed. This picture, supplied by Tom Ginnelly, 499th, shows a P-51 Mustang on the beach, said to be the first landing on Luzon. According to the story told Ginnelly, the plane was running out of fuel and needed a place to land quickly. So trucks smoothed and packed the sand on the beach and the pilot landed. Those are tire tracks running from the bottom right corner of the picture toward the upper left. Ginnelly says the markings just ahead of the cockpit show eight kills.

B-25s & the 345th

My son discovered a B-25 with the Air Apache insignia in Missouri. It belonged to the Confederate Air Force Missouri Wing. My son and the CAF wing leader ended up calling me to talk. Later I visited a couple of times. They have a small 345th museum and have run feature stories on us in their newsletters. I called our local paper and they did a story on the CAF. *Bill James (499)*.

A recent letter from my grandson included pictures of a B-25 on display at Hickam Air Force Base on the Hawaiian island of Oahu. He was there on business. The tail carried the Air Apache insignia and the number 1504. It made him think of me. *Quint Giuliani (501)*.

Reunion XII

(continued from page one)

McCrew Hardin, who will speak about "The Yellow Rose of Texas." We thank you very much, Betty, for chairing this committee and keeping us informed.

The picture of the committee in the last issue was provide by Mary Elizabeth Gamble. I messed up a bit in the names of the people on the picture. The young lady in the upper right corner is Betty Hamner and not Dee Musket. My humble apologies to you two lovely ladies.

See you at the Reunion.