

STRAFER



498th SQUADRON

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501st SQUADRON

345th Bomb Group Reunion Association

Quarterly

Volume 16, Issue 3, September 1998

15 W OAK ST

CANAL WINCHESTER OH 43110-1129

address service requested



KEN GASTGEB
2143 MELROSE CT #221
NORMAN OK 73069-5269

Reunion XII report

by Ken Gastgeb

From all reports the Reunion was a great success. Many thanks to the Committee and Volunteers who did the work and most of all to the people who attended. It was really a pleasure to work with those who put forth great efforts with a pleasing attitude to accommodate everyone. We must admit that at times things do not always go according to plans. We apologize for a few inconveniences with the hotel. The problems were given immediate attention and taken care of.

About 235 people attended this year. Down in number from the last reunion. The 500th Squadron had their reunion there last year and their attendance was low. The Lackland AFB Parade was canceled because of rain. However, thanks to the fine planning by Kathy Rubin, the Group had an enjoyable morning visiting two Museums. After visiting the Museums, we had a great lunch at Mitchell Hall catered by the Gateway Club. We did get to see the B-25 from the Bus. We had planned on walking around the area where the planes were but had to cancel because of rain. The IMAX Theater and River Boat ride were great. Watching a movie on a super large screen, 60 X 80 feet, is quite a sight.

Joan Leslie, our Apache Princess, joined us at the Bar-B-Q, the Lackland AFB Tour, the Banquet and Ladies Breakfast. She did her best to meet everyone and signed many, many autographs and got every ones camera flashing. She and three of our boys led in the sing-a-long. We woke up those old songs and really made them sound great. Don Hardeman, confined to a wheel chair,

God Bless Him, stood up with a little help when we sang the "Army Air Corps" song. That demonstrated his allegiance to our Country and showed the spirit of the 345th Bomb Group.

All in all we had fun and I venture to say that every one made many new friends. The Committee, George Mordecai, Lynn Lee,

(continued on page 4)



President's Comments

*Lynn Lee
President*

First and foremost, may I say, being the president of the 345th B.G. was an enjoyable experience. And I'm

proud to have been elected.

Your new President, Ken Gastgeb, is a tireless worker and will be an outstanding leader for the next two years. It is your and my duty to work with him every way we can.

The strafer is a strong link in the bond of friendship and camaraderie, so when

we have an idea or news event that has pleased us or we hear of the good fortune of one of our friends, let the VP of your squadron or Ken Gastgeb know so they can get it into the Strafer. It would be nice if the Strafer were 10 or 12 pages instead of three and a half. So jot down an event that you think will be interesting to all. If you think it's good, so will we.

We were interviewed, some 20 or 30 of us, by Mark Foreman Film Productions for a TV documentary. So look for it in the future. Hope my interview does not end up on the cutting room floor, but if it does, I will give you a personal in Atlantic City in 2,000. See you there.

Squadron Reports

498th Squadron

Frank Dillard

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

Once again, time has slipped by and this is being written under duress. First, let me express my appreciation to Lynn Lee for the great job he has done as group president. Next I would like to congratulate Ken Gastgeb, Ben Miller, George Mordecai and all the others for producing a really great reunion. Ken will be an outstanding president. Also, a special thank you to the ladies for their handling of the registration and making the place prettier just by their presence.

I am almost recovered from the Valentine brothers' cigar smoke in the hospitality room! Ben Miller missed his calling - he makes a mean scotch and water. In addition he is married to a lovely "Normal" lady.

I either survived impeachment, or was "railroaded" into continuing in office as the asst. VP for the 498th squadron. The best part of this job is the contact with members and their heirs. I would appreciate more input in the form of short "war" stories, newsworthy events, photos or anything that might be of interest to the membership.

My best memory of the San Antonio reunion is that I met Morris Perkins (499th). While I was tending bar in the hospitality room, I overheard Morris talking to a group about being rescued by a submarine. I asked him if he remembered the date and place. He said, "It was my first mission and the rescue occurred on May 31, 1945, just off the coast of Hainan." My last mission (#42) was a search off the Hainan coast on May 31, 1945! I was engineer-gunner on one of the four B-25s from our group., We provided top cover for a submarine while he picked up three survivors from life rafts. We were under constant attack by four or more zeros that were trying to sink the sub with phosphorous bombs. I didn't know at the time that the sub was maneuvering through a minefield! As soon as the sub recovered the airmen and disappeared beneath the surface, we hit the deck and hauled ass. When I got back to San Marcelino, I was informed that I had completed my tour. I left for home, without knowing the names of any of the people who had been picked up that day. It only took 53 years to solve that mystery! Morris and I have vowed to maintain contact. He gave me an excerpt of a Navy report describing the rescue. If any of you were on this mission, please contact me. I would like to compile a complete report and need more details.



499th Squadron

Ben F Miller

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

We have just completed a most enjoyable reunion of the 345th Group. We owe a great big thank you to the committed and to all the people who came forward to help, some of them from the area. Doing away with the squadron banquets was a plus. It had us mixing with the entire group and we learned to know each other better. The entire thing was well planned and came off without a hitch. Since Frank Dillard and I were behind the bar whenever not on tour, we are now on first name basis with members of the entire group. It was a blast, but the heavy smoke nearly drove us out.

At the western party, Norma and I were honored to be at the table with Joan Leslie, our Apache Princess. We couldn't have chosen better. She is a very understanding person, who made all feel at ease, and went out of her way to give autographs and posed for endless pictures. Thank you Ken Gastgeb for writing to her in 1944, and also for inviting her to our party.

The 499th was honored to have two of our past commanders at their squadrons. Julian Baird, who was attired as a fearless sheriff for the western party, and sang with Joan Leslie at the group party. Wendell Decker came from Miss. and made his presence known. It was a pleasure to have them.

The ladies said they figured out why it was so loud in the hospitality room, and wherever we gathered. Almost all of the men are hard of hearing, with many hearing aids being visible. Our companions are understanding because they live with us.

We were pleased to have two first time members in attendance. Thomas Ginnelly of Calif., and Perry Scott of Texas. They had pictures of their furlough in Sidney, and did they have fun. Please do your best to find more of our members, they are out there. Our numbers are declining, but we can keep having these reunions if we encourage more people to come. We want to see more of you in Atlantic City in 2000.

500th Squadron

Stan Muniz

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

Now that you did a double-take at the picture and said, "What happened to Stuff? He looks awful." I can tell you it isn't Stuff, it's your new reporter from the 500th Sqdn.

Some of you know me, but for those who



don't I will fill you in. I was a radio gunner with the 500th from March of 1945 until the end of the war. I am now retired. Aren't all? I keep busy putting in tow-to-four a week at the Wings of History Museum a few miles south of my home in San Jose, Cal. I am the chief librarian and am in the process of getting over 3,500 hard and soft bound aviation-related books cataloged, inventoried and on the computer. We have books on pre-WWI, the Gulf War and everything in between. We also have pilot manuals from private aircraft to military and commercial aircraft. Technical books cover maintenance, props, weather, flight instruction, etc., etc. Want to know how to rig a Curtiss "Jenny"? I have the manual. We also have over 2,000 aviation magazines and counting. And everything we have has been donated!

The museum has two hangers and a restoration shop. Some of the aircraft we have include a Neuport XI from 1916, an American Eagle from 1928, a PT 17, and a Waco 10 from 1929, just to name a few. As you can see between my work at the museum, my oil painting and my model plane building, all I can say is I do keep busy, and I love it.

Now that I have covered my life and I do, what do I write about in the next newsletter? A few tidbits from some of you in the 500th would help. Till then, eat low fat and exercise.

501st Squadron

George Mordecai

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

The 1998 reunion has come and gone. It was a great time, the only drawback was the members that were unable to make the trip to San Antonio.

For the first time that I can remember stalwarts as Julius Fisher, Virgil Gross, Jack Grunwald Roman Ohnemus and Bob Anderson did not make the trip. After checking with them they promised that they will see us all next year. George Musket although not attending the reunion for medical reasons did drop in to see some of his old buddies. He is sorry that he was not able to say hello to all but he was on his way to a doctor appointment. He said that he would be sure to catch you all next year. The squadron elected Chet Burns to lead you for the two years. We will be trying to go to San Diego in 1999 and Atlantic City in the year 2000. Chet has already started to check on Atlantic City to insure that it fits into the high standards that the 345th is accustomed to. Chet will be taking over this column next



Group Bulletin Board

Reunion XIII

September , 2000

Atlantic City, New Jersey

1998 Dues Payable

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

Member sought:
Robert
Van Ausdell
1209 Fern Oaks Dr.
Santa Paula, CA

WANTED - any information on Daryl D. Williams, 499th Sqd. Send to Ken Gastgeb.

I am trying to locate my pilot, Robert Draper, somewhere around Louisiana or California. I was group bombardier/navigator when we were at Clark Field. James Hutcherson, 11 Sunflower Ave., Indianola, MS 38751

Your next Strafer should arrive before the end of December. It's being put together now. Please send items for it right away.

Seeking information

(see article, "A letter," on this page)
Brian J. Close
PO Box 1000
Milan, MI 48160

Next issue: 49 boxcars were delivered to the United States as a gift from France in 1949, one for each state and one shared by Washington D.C. and Hawaii. Read the story in the December *Strafer*.

Help needed. The post office says Wilbur Van Hise has a hold on his mail. *Strafers* are returned. Last address is 6 Mayfair Rd., Vincentown, NJ. If you can help, please write to *Strafer*.

345th Internet home page is at <http://snycorva.cortland.edu/~vanvalkp/index.htm>

edition and he is counting on all of us to help by submitting any items that are worth printing so he can keep us all up to date on what is happening to all our buddies. The 501st was privileged to have two of our leaders attend in the person of Bob Fain and Ken Fridge. Their attendance showed why they were called upon to serve as our leaders in the past. Not only were they great overseas but they also were instrumental in making the reunion group what it is today. Let's hope that we are able to call on them for the guidance that is needed from such successful men in the community that we call the United States. With their background for leadership we can be nothing but successful in any future endeavors. It has come to my attention that one of our departed members, RICO PALLOTTA, has been honored by having a building in Cleveland named after him. The Positive Education Program, a program nationally known for educating students with severe behavioral problems, was renamed for Rico Pallotta, the program's founder. These are the things that are nice to know about our buddies. Let's not wait until we read about it in the obituaries. If you know of any commendable action about one of our members be sure that you bring it to the attention of your VP so it can be put in the next issue. Attending the reunion was the son of Joe Forman, Mark. Mark has started a 501st web page

and is in the process of making a documentary about the 345th. He hopes that it will be available for next year's squadron reunion. Also attending was Paul Van Valkenburg. He also has a web page and he had some copies that show what a great job he is doing getting the 345th noticed. Check the web site for the AIR APACHES and keep up with what is happening to the group. Paul can be reached on e-mail Vanvalkp@cortland.edu. It was determined that the Squadron will attempt to go to San Diego in 1999 and the group has chosen Atlantic City for 2000. Work has already started on both sites. If you have any input please make your information available to the committee NOW. I can be reached on e-mail gimordecai@juno.com. Drop a line.

Headquarters Group

August Ouellette

Asst. Gp. V.P. - HQ Group

My comments for this issue of the *Strafer* will be a report on the reunion in San Antonio. The



highlight of the reunion was the presence of our Apache Princess Joan Leslie. She was with us for three days and seemed to enjoy herself as much as we enjoyed having her. I don't know how many units can match ours to be able to boast such a fine person as our

Apache Princess. There also aren't many actresses who can boast such a fine string of movies or list of co-stars: Randolph Scott, George Murphy, Fred Astaire, James Cagney, Gary Cooper and Humphrey Bogart are some. I don't know if she ever had her picture taken so much as she did during the reunion, though. She was photographed with just about every guy there and never complained. Add us all to her list of co-stars. She attended the ladies' breakfast, then after the business meeting organized the whole group into a single picture with her.

The business meeting included a big discussion on finances. Membership is decreasing. Attendance was lower at this reunion than it's been before and it's going to get worse before it gets better. More work will be done on dealing with finances. The reunion committee will have a freer rein on spending for future reunions.

An Atlantic City, NJ hotel has offered to take charge of the whole program for the reunion in 2000. There is no casino in the hotel, but there are casinos all around it nearby. We must begin on a Tuesday and end on a Thursday or Friday to receive their special rates. We've also received a proposal from Oklahoma City, OK. Atlantic City seems to be the city for the next reunion, but Oklahoma City will be looked over some more too.

Now it is very important for all of us to try to take part in doing something to enhance future reunions. The reason is that our numbers are declining and our ages are increasing, so it means more people are needed to pitch in to spread the work around.

A letter

I read your December issue about the invasion of Japan. These men who knew the invasion would cost the lives of 250,000 GIs have to be the bravest and most honorable generation this country will ever see. I can't pay enough respect to the brave people of your generation for all their sacrifices. The families who lost loved ones, the women who sacrificed their husbands and the brave men who fought and too often died for our freedom. If every American learned about the sacrifices made, they would appreciate their freedom and their very existence. When your generation of warriors is gone, you will be sorely missed.

Brian J. Close

P.S. My Dad was in the 498th and was stationed on Okinawa when Typhoon Louise struck. He and his tent mates secured their tent and ended up with 17 or 18 men (and one bottle of whiskey) in it during the storm. All the other tents were leveled. I'd like to hear from anyone who recalls this.

Reunion XII **report**

(continued from page 1)

Frank Dillard, Ben Miller, Gus Ouellette, Bill Cavoli, Kathy Rubin, Dee Musket, Betty Hamner, Mary Elizabeth, Bobba Harper, and our Apache Princess Joan Leslie, deserve many, many thanks for all their hard work.

Vic Tatelman's B-25

Vic Tatelman flew his B-25, Barbie III, to the 1996 Reunion in St. Louis. It was really nice of Vic to have the plane there. Those who went to see the plane certainly appreciated being able to see and touch the WWII Warbird. Vic served in the 499th Bomb Squadron. He contributed many pictures for the book "Warpath Across the Pacific" and his name appears throughout the book telling of his experiences. Vic has been active in the Reunion Association for many years and served two terms as President. His services to our Country and this Organization are greatly appreciated. Vic headed up the loading of the Buses at this reunion to assure that no one was left behind. Thanks to Vic and his crew for doing a fine job.



Vic and Ann flew the B-25 to central Illinois in July to see Max and Berneice Ferguson. Max was the 499th Communications Officer.

Help Wanted

I am looking for help in finding information about my late father, Donald W. Bailey. My father was a T/Sgt. assigned for a while to the 345th Bomb Group. I received a copy of a report from Vic Tatelman regarding my father. It was dated May 27, 1945 regarding a May 20 mission in the "Dirty Dora."

"Ground Controller contacted Tatelman by radio and requested an attack on a Jap tank that was holding up an infantry advance. Tank was blown up by strafing. Tatelman circled the tank while his waist gunner's extremely accurate machine gun fire destroyed the tank. The ground controller thanked Tatelman and his crew. Landing was made at 1730.

Crew: Pilot: Capt. V.W. Tatelman

Copilot: Lt. B.J. Reed

Navigator: Lt. A.W. Whittington

Radar Observer: Lt. A.M. Schaffer

Waist Gunner: T/Sgt. D.W. Bailey"

I would like to gather any information I can regarding my father's service and unfortunately, he passed away before I was able to get it first hand. Thank you for any assistance.

Tom Bailey
3625 Earnscliff Pl #1
San Diego CA 42111

345th cow?

by Quint Giuliani

Who hasn't heard about or seen the cow on top of the American Hereford Association



These 499th pilots renewed their B-25 talents when Vic Tatelman brought the airplane to St. Louis during our 1996 reunion. From left: John Baeta, Carl Cessna, Vic, George Cooper and Wendell Decker (the man on the extreme right did not participate). All reported the urge to "get down to strafing altitude."

headquarters in Kansas City? Well, it just happens one of our own, Donald O. Yant (501st) of Independence, Missouri had a major role in the creation and installation of that wonderful landmark. Any time that cow is mentioned I do butt in and stoically proclaim, "Hell, I know the guy who put it there."

Bulletin blunders

These announcements are said to have actually appeared in church bulletins around

the country:

At the service tonight, the sermon topic will be, "What is Hell?" Come early and listen to our choir practice.

A bean supper will be held on Tuesday evening in the church hall. Music will fo"

The ladies of the church have cas. clothing of every kind. They can be seen in the church basement Saturday.

This afternoon there will be a meeting in the south and north ends of the church. Children will be baptized at both ends.

Group Meeting Minutes, 9/12/98

Meeting called to order by Pres. Lynn Lee. The minutes of the last reunion held in St. Louis were read by the secretary and approved as ad. The financial report as submitted by Treas. Dick Feucht was: Balance on hand \$26,301.08; Certificates of deposit \$17,233.39. Treasurer's report was approved.

Nominating committee presented the following slate of officers for acceptance by the group: President Ken Gastgeb, VP George Mordecai, Sec. Roland Lamb, treas. Dick Feucht, Asst. Treas. Jerry Murphy

President Lee asked for nominations from the floor and Jerry Seelander moved that the nominations be closed. Nominees elected by acclamation.

Honoring various individuals on memorials was discussed. Ben Miller moved that the group as a whole not honor individuals. Frank Dillard seconded. Motion carried.

The 500th sqdn made a pitch to put some 345th paintings in all VA hospitals in the US. They had formed a committee to study same, finances, etc. and hoped to get the group interested.

Improving the Strafer was much discussed. Many suggestions were made. Frank Dillard moved that the new officers serve as a commit-

tee to work with all organizations they could that have a newsletter and present recommendations to the group on how to improve the Strafer. Vic Tatelman seconded. Motion carried.

President Lynn Lee announced that the 135 registered members had not paid their '98 dues. He emphasized the fact that if someone could not pay dues because of financial hardship they would be taken care of. A spirited discussion followed on what to do with the money presently held in the treasury. Frank Dillard moved the reunion committees be authorized to spend whatever funds they deemed necessary to put on a good reunion. Seconded by Ken Gastgeb. Motion carried.

Vic Tatelman moved that the secretary's minutes and treasurer's report be included in the Strafer. Seconded by Jerry Murphy. Motion carried.

The meeting recessed for 15 minutes while new VPs met to choose a site for the next reunion. They chose Atlantic City for year 2000. The group voted to accept Atlantic City. Meeting Adjourned at 10:30 a.m.

Belated Honors

Vic Tatelman just came across a list, released by the Japanese, of our people executed in Rabaul by the Japanese 6th Field Kempei Tai (like an air base squadron) on March 3, 1944.

Barron, John M (501)

Cassera, Michael H (unit unknown)

Clements (first name unknown) According to Major Saiji Matsuda of the above unit, Clements was transported to Japan and arrived safely; final fate unknown.

Evans, Herschel Daniel (501)

Harris, William C (501)

Kicera, Michael H (501)

Marr, Romulus F (unit unknown)

McCauley, Paul F (unit unknown)

Newman (first name unknown) (498 or 499)

O'Hagan (first name unknown) Last seen alive Nov. '43 in Japanese Navy custody, fate unknown.

Stookey, Donald L (500)

Treasurer's Report

9/7/96 through 9/5/98

Funds on Deposit in:

*Checking Account:

Receipts

Balance 9/7/96 3,213.37

Receipts to date 35,356.84

Total receipts to date 38,570.21

Expenditures

Total expenditures to date . 12,269.13

Balance on hand \$26,301.08

**Certificates of Deposit:

#1 2,481.07

#2 3,034.15

#3 7,478.40

#4 2,121.90

#5 2,117.87

Total in CDs \$17,233.39

* National City Bank

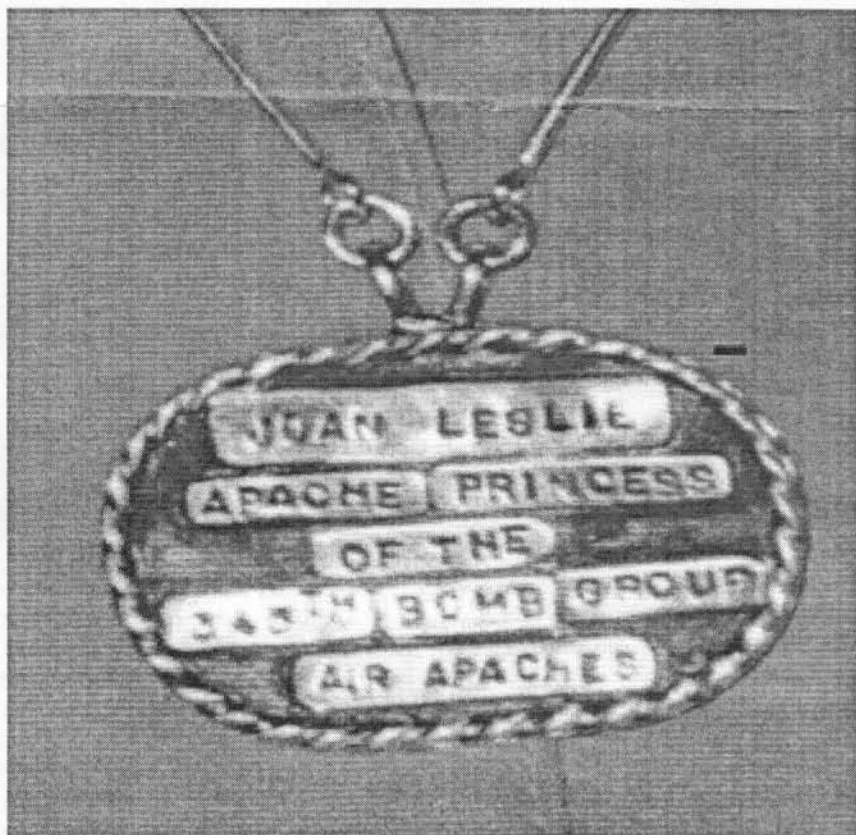
Hill Road

Pickerington, OH

** Fifth Third Bank of Columbus

PO Box 182026

Columbus, OH 43218



Pendant Given to Joan Leslie

by Ken Gastgeb

Joan Leslie received a beautiful engraved Silver Pendant, attached to a silver chain. Silversmith Paul McIntyre (499th) made the Pendant and presented it to her at the Banquet. The picture depicts a close-up of the Pendant.

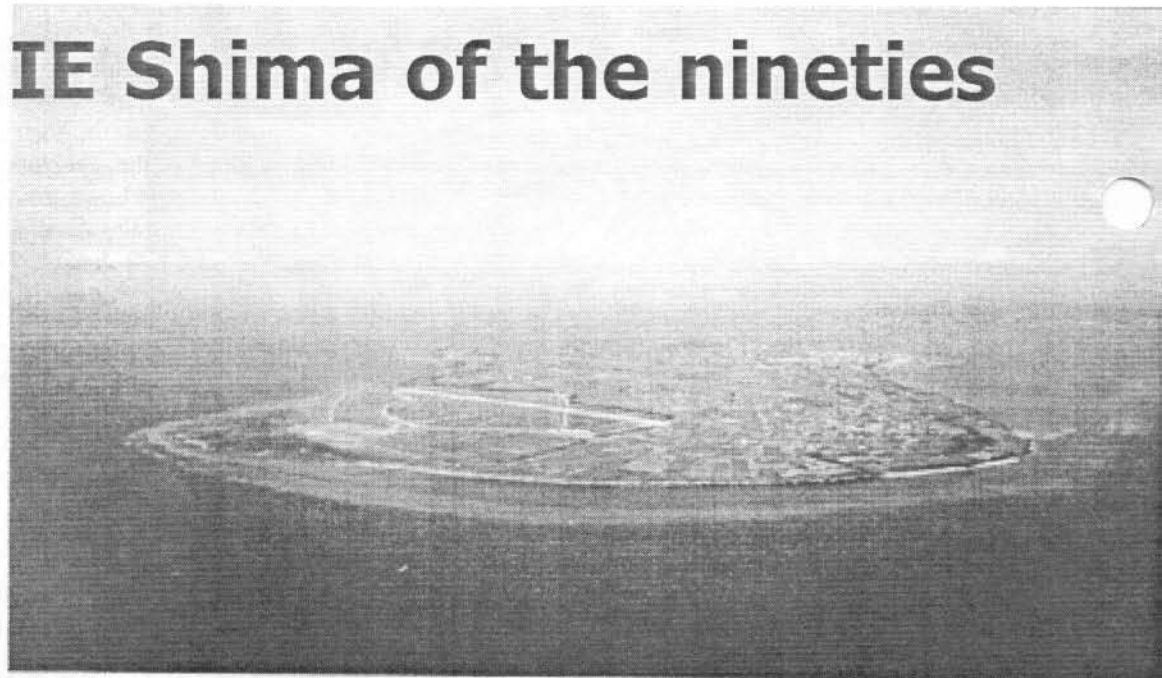
The new IE Shima of the nineties

by George Davison

My son-in-law was attached to the 36th Airlift Squadron and did a tour of Japan. In 1995 or 1996, while in that capacity, he visited I E Shima and he has sent these pictures, showing what it looked at that time. I thought the members of the 345th would like to see it.

I was sent to Nadzab to join the 345th as part of the 498th, during WWII. Gratitude and very fond memories is what I have for all the brave members of the 498th squadron. Since I was attached to the armament section my prayers are in honoring my friends who didn't come back: Ed Niemeyer, Eddie Dibbern, Lloyd Cleary, Thomas Golden and Thomas Henson.

We the living can only humbly ask God to have mercy on us when we are called away.



IE Shima of the nineties as seen from the air. A major feature is the air field on this end of the island.

Near death raft

A life raft almost brought death to a 3435th crew in early July of 1943. The crew of "Snatch" of the 499th was dropping supplies to Australian infantry on New Guinea. The static line for some of the supplies had accidentally been hooked to the cable for releasing the life raft that runs up to the cockpit from where the raft is stored at the rear of the plane. When the supplies were dropped, the life raft was released through its door on the top of the plane. The raft inflated, caught on the tail and nearly brought the plane down. The plane's turret guns wouldn't shoot at its own tail and the crew couldn't find a way to deflate the raft. After several failed tries, they fired a pistol at the raft through the plexiglass turret cover. The raft deflated and the plane managed to land safely.



The pictures show the aftermath of the story. Top, after making a safe landing, the crew of "Snatch" stands by the now-deflated life raft, still hanging where it caught on the plane. Left to right, 2Lt Carl Danlinger, 2Lt James Wallace, Jr., 1 Lt Jack Snyder, S/Sgt. Hyman Prosten, S/Sgt. John Huddleston, T/Sgt Milton Wickhorst. Bottom, a crewman points to the hole made by the bullet fired to deflate the raft. These pictures are from the collection of the late Andrew Fisher (499).

13 MARCH, 1945

SUBJECT: Commendation of Chemical Detachment.

TO: Commanding Officer, 892nd Chemical Company, Air Operations.
Thru Channels

1. It is the desire of this Headquarters to convey to you the pride and appreciation we have for the 2nd Platoon of your organization. Their loyalty, persistence and initiative, so evident in their work in connection with Napalm-gasoline Flame Bombs since their arrival at this station has been of the highest calibre, worthy of praise for all concerned.

2. Your excellent work made possible the servicing of planes in a minimum of time. This allowed missions to be flown on "short call" from the ground force commander.

3. To date the ground forces have credited our units for killing more than 3,00 Japs, the majority of which were killed by burning.

4. The undersigned takes great pleasure in commending all personnel of the 2nd platoon, 892nd Chemical Company, Air Operations, for the fine spirit they demonstrated, and for the important part they played in indirect support of our Ground Forces.

N. D. SILLIN
Colonel, A.C.
Commanding

A CERTIFIED TRUE COPY:

RUBIN N. SUMMERGRAD
2ND Lt., C.W.S.

IN MEMORY OF

Arthur O. Anderson	501	6/11/98	Mound, MN
James R. Arruda	498	4/22/98	Fall River, MA
Daniel B. Chadrow	498	2/2/97	Philadelphia, PA
Ray A. Comstock	500	1/28/98	Fort Myers, FL
Robert E. Devinney	498	6/30/98	
Russell B. Diemer	501	12/27/97	Spring City, PA
Lloyd Erickson	498	7/28/98	
Neil F. Fiorello	501	8/24/98	Philadelphia, PA
Andrew J. Fisher	499	6/27/98	Scranton, PA
Wood T. Harrel	500	6/4/98	Virginia Beach, VA
Lesley Isaacson	501	1/9/98	St. Paul, MN
Col. Albert Jacobs	500	2/28/97	Cocoa Beach, FL
Thomas C. "Chili" Lipscomb	498	11/19/96	
Wolfgang Mueller	500	4/14/98	Farmington Hills, MI
James B. Murphy	500	1/21/98	Colorado Springs, CO
John A. Murphy	500	10/2/98	Columbus, NE
Stephen Nettles	498th	1/5/98	Columbia, SC
Dr. John M. O'Brien	500	8/30/97	Michigan City, IN
William D. Rogers	500	1/3/98	Canon City, CO
Hugh P. Rone	498	4/26/98	Henryetta, OK
Willaim Rousseau, Sr.		1/18/98	Branford, CN
Robert S. Smith	498	8/20/96	
Len Timms	500	6/11/98	
honorary/life member of 500th. Was 500th's Australian military liason on New Guinea.			
William O. Tuel	498	9/94	Gilmer, TX
Joseph Ulaszewski	500	11/29/95	

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



Tony Godich from Little falls, NY on the left and Corp. Urban E. Levee from Amsterdam, NY on the right. Both were in the 892nd Chemical Company, Air Operations; attached to the 345th. The letter and picture above are from Urban's son, Noel, who says his father was aboard the SS Waite when it was hit. Noel is proud and would like to hear from members of the 345th who knew his father. His address is 1 E. Green St., Johnstown, NY 12095.

Deaths note

The larger-than-usual number of deaths reported in this issue is largely the result of efforts like Lynn Lee's to attract members to the reunion. Lynn sent post cards to every member and received many responses giving notice of deaths.

Association Officers

President -- Ken Gastgeb
2143 Melrose Ct #221, Norman OK 73069-5269
405/364-1350
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14 Fredrick St North Branford CT 06471-1807
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618/995-2225
499 - Ben F. Miller
9450 N 550 W Decatur IN 46733-9428
219/547-4460
500 - Stan Muniz
5378 Borneo Circle, San Jose, CA 95123
408/227-3240
501 - Chet Burns
2693 Rock Port Ln, Tom's River, NY 08755-2544
908/886-0529

Black Sunday

by Ken Gastgeb

Copy of article that appeared in the Norman Transcript on April 16, 1998

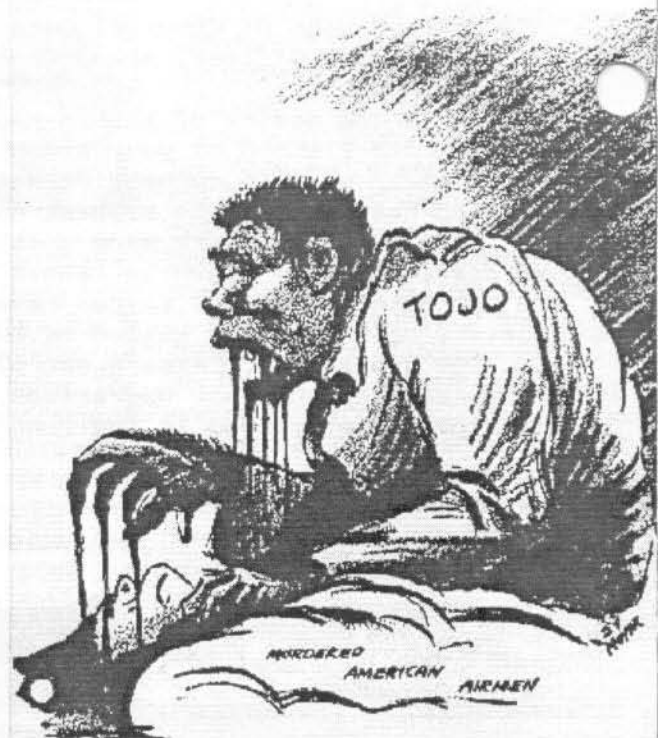
It was April 16, 1944, the Fifth Air Force had suffered its greatest loss of the War. On a mission along the Northwest coast of New Guinea there were 68 Liberator B-24 Bombers, 51 Mitchell B-25 Strafers, 97 Douglas A-20 Attack Bombers, and the fighter escort of 76 Lightning P-38s. Hitting the target successfully the planes headed home to Gusap, Nadzab and Saidor. The weather conditions were marginal until they approached a heavy storm front that stretched from the mountains far out at sea.

At that stage of the mission the pilots were looking closely at the fuel gauges. Most planes had enough fuel to get to home base in good weather. However, when they approached the front, visibility became so poor that the pilots could barely see the other planes in the formation. As conditions got worse the planes were separated and in most cases they were alone and on their own. They searched high, low and around for a way to get through. They learned quickly the size of the front and that they were in trouble. Some were lucky and got through somehow and others weren't. Saidor was the closest strip and some planes found their way there. The visibility being so poor that the planes, that found the field, were almost running into each other as they were getting into the landing pattern. One incident that happened there, out of the many, ended in a head-on collision at the middle of the landing strip. Two planes had tried to land from opposite ends of the strip simultaneously. This blocked the runway, halted the operation for some time and added to the difficulty for the planes. They were already low on gas and their options for another place to land were severely restricted. Each crew that found a safe place to land or walked away from a crash landing had its own story to tell of that dreadful experience. A book (Black Sunday) has been written about what happened to individual planes and the chaos in attempting to find their way back or a safe place to land. Some of the planes that make it back ran out of fuel as they landed and couldn't taxi to the hard stand.

Pilots reported that some planes just disappeared. Others crashed into the mountains or into the sea.

A quote from the book "Black Sunday" about Ed Hambleton, of Norman, an A-20 pilot, who was on this mission. "When the bulk of the 'ROARING 20s' finally arrived in Gusap's circuit area, those with least fuel were allowed to land first. The 389th Squadron had some close shaves. After landing, Ed Hambleton's crew chief checked the tanks of JE REVIENS, and told him, 'Lieutenant, the only gas you've got is in the carburetors.'" LITTLE JOE rolled to a stop at the runway's end after both engines quit. Pilot Leonard Happ and gunner got out and said a thanksgiving prayer. Not all were so low on fuel. LAK-A-NUKI'S crew chief measured sixty gallons in its tanks and CRASH GORDON Gerould's A-20 still had eighty."

This mission cost the Fifth Air Force 37 planes, lost or destroyed. Eleven planes were missing. Fifty four men were killed or missing. Some of those missing planes and crews are probably still down deep in the jungles of New Guinea. A couple WWII planes have been found in those jungles during the last 20 years. A Black Sunday indeed, for the men of the 5th Air Force. Yes, a true story of what these courageous and brave men did to protect our country from an enemy that attacked us on December 7, 1941.



It was a gruesome time. This World War II poster shows Japanese General Hideki Tojo's hands dripping with the blood of American Airmen. Imagine the reception this poster would receive in the peaceful society we live in today. Of course, we still learn facts today that explain these sentiments. See "Belated Honors" on page 5. died in 1948.

The naming of WW II, September 11, 1945

[U.S. Department of State, Bulletin (GPO, Washington, 1945), XIII, 427-428.]

10 September 1945

The President

The White House

Dear Mr. President:

President Wilson, under date of July 31, 1919, addressed a letter to Secretary of War Baker which read, in part, as follows: "It is hard to find a satisfactory 'official' name for the war but the best, I think, that has been suggested is 'The World War,' and I hope that your judgment will concur."

Subsequently, under date of October 7, 1919, War Department General Orders No. 115 directed: "The war against the Central Powers of Europe, in which the United States has taken part, will hereafter be designated in all official communications and publications as 'The World War.'"

As a matter of simplicity and to insure uniform terminology, it is recommended that "World War II" be the officially designated name for the present war covering all theaters and the entire period of hostilities.

The term "World War II" has been used in at least seven public laws to designate this period of hostilities. Analysis of publications and radio programs indicates that this term has been accepted by common usage.

If this recommendation is approved it is further recommended that the title "World War II" be published in the Federal Register as the official name of the present war. [See 10 Federal Register 1188.]

Respectfully yours,

HENRY L. STIMSON,

Secretary of War

JAMES FORRESTAL,

Secretary of the Navy.

Approved: September 11, 1945

HARRY S. TRUMAN