



AIR APACHES

STRAFER

345th Bombardment Group Newsletter

VOLUME 17, ISSUE 4

DECEMBER 1999

1203 CLUBHOUSE ROAD
MARION, IL 62959
Address Service Requested

**MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW
YEAR TO ALL FROM THE 345th
BOMBARDMENT GROUP**

POSTNET
KENNETH C. GASTGEB 2000
700
2143 MELROSE CT APT 221
NORMAN OK 73069-5269



AIR APACHE ASSOCIATION OFFICERS

PRESIDENT-KEN GASTGEB

2143 Melrose Ct #221
Norman, OK 73069-5269
405/364-1350

VICE PRESIDENT-GEO. MORDECAI

14 Fredrick St.
North Branford, CT06471-07
203/488-8177

SECRETARY-ROLAND LAMB

3100 Black Walnut Dr.
Flower Mound, TX 75028
972/355-22373

TREASURER-DICK FEUCHT

12500 Tollgate Rd. Pickerington, OH
43147-9161, 614/837-7062

STRAFER EDITOR-FRANK DILLARD

1203 Clubhouse Rd.
Marion, IL 62959
618/995-2225

e-mail address: strafer@midamer.net

ASSISTANT GROUP VICE PRESIDENTS

HQ-AUGUST OUELLETTE

86 Central St.
Hudson, NH 03051-4600
603/598-6559

498th-FRANK DILLARD

1203 Clubhouse Rd.
Marion, IL 62959
618/995-2225

499th-BEN MILLER

9450 N 550 W
Decatur, IN 46733-9428
219/547-4460

500th-STAN MUNIZ

5378 Borneo Circle
San Jose, CA 95123
408/227-3240

501st-CHET BURNS

2693 Rock Port Ln.
Tom's River, NY 08755-2544
908/886-0529



PRESIDENT'S CORNER

**Ken Gastgeb, 345th Bomb Group
President**

Our thanks and appreciation to Frank Dillard for a great job in editing and publishing the **STRAFER**. To keep the cost down, Frank suggested that the Group buy a printer and do our publishing in-house. This is the first issue using the new printer.

The **500th Squadron** had their Reunion in Denver this year. Lynn Daker placed the 345th Bomb Group sign in front of their hotel. Reiny Salzman is caring for the sign, and will transport it to Charleston, SC, for Group Reunion XIII in October 2000.

The **501st Squadron** held their Reunion in San Diego, California. See Chet Burns' column for details.

The **345th Bomb Group Monument** at Wright Patterson Field in Dayton, Ohio, is showing signs of deterioration due to weather. Thanks to Jesse Dean (498th) who resides in Dayton, an attempt to have the bronze plaques cleaned is currently in progress. Jesse has contacted several local companies specializing in monument restoration to obtain competitive bids for the work. This service is best performed in mild weather, so it will be early spring before we can proceed.

George Mordecai is hard at work with plans and preparations for Reunion XIII. We thank the Event Committee Chairmen that have volunteered to help. This is a major undertaking, and we still need a couple of Event Chairmen, and lots of helpers. Anyone wishing to join in on the fun please contact George. We need your help.

Talked with Ernestine Pittman, and she said that Ranse Whitworth had suffered a heart attack but was getting along OK. Also talked with General Fridge, and he and Takako are getting along just fine.

If anyone recalls an incident that happened during the War, or would like to comment on current events, and thinks the subject would be of interest to the Group, please write it down and send it to Frank.

When you get your new calendar for the year 2000 be sure and highlight October 1st through the 5th for Reunion XIII.

**Hope you all have a very Merry
Christmas and a Happy New Year.**

VETERAN'S ALERT

By: Herman F. Reheis (500th)

If you have service connected hearing problems related to: (1) flying or servicing B-25s, (2) test-firing or combat exposure to cannon and machine gun fire, you should contact the nearest VA Hospital and enroll into the VA system. You will need to take your service records with you. If your problem can be corrected with hearing aids they will, in most cases, be provided free of charge. You may even qualify for a partial disability pension, which would be tax exempt.

TREASURER'S MEMO

By Dick Feucht

Annual membership fees are due January 1, 2000. Check date on your mailing label to see if you are current. Still only \$15. Mail check to: Dick Feucht, 12500 Tollgate Rd., Pickerington, OH 43147-9161.

CHARLESTON TARGET FOR 2000 !

OCTOBER 1st to the 5th, 2000

By George Mordecai, Reunion Committee Chairman

Charleston...Land of the Southern Belle and Rhet Butler. Can't you smell the honeysuckle? See those magnolias in bloom? Hear the bluebirds singing in the apple tree? If not, you all be sure to mark your calendar for Reunion XIII.

Don't miss this opportunity to visit with your 345th family in surroundings found only in the nicest dreams.

Many of you may have "passed through," or rushed around Charleston on the way to your next station. Now, take the time to stop and smell the roses! This city has often been called one of the most picturesque in America, and rightly so. There is one spectacular scene after another. Many of the views have been used to typify the beauty of the south in some of the more famous movies of our time. If there is a problem with Charleston it is that there is never enough time to see all that you should see.

Some of you have indicated that you would like limited walking tours to the more prominent sites in the vicinity of the hotel.

With this in mind, Harold Timmerman has researched ways for us "to see it all" without getting too exhausted. Harold has come up with a list of trolley trips, boat excursions, and shopping adventures. He has done such a good job that your committee will have a tough job making the right choices!

Please remember, plans for Reunion XIII are still in the formative stage. There is still time to let us know what you think we should be doing for the year 2000. For that matter, it is not too early to be thinking about Reunion XIV and beyond! Please come to Charleston prepared to vote on the 2001 site.

As we prepare for the last reunion of this millennium let us strive to set a standard that all future reunions we be measured by.

"Home for the Holidays"



SQUADRON REPORTS



HEADQUARTERS

August Ouellett, Ass't. Group V.P.

First off, I would like to congratulate Frank and son, Cliff, for a pretty good job on their first venture with the STRAFER. It'll improve now that the "newness" is passed.

We cannot lose sight of the fact that news items from our members can add a lot to an undertaking like this. So, don't be bashful buddies, send them to one of the listed officers in the association.

I thought the sailor's account of the Kamikaze attack on the S.S. Nelson was very interesting. I've copied the article and given it to some of my close friends. It is good reading for the history buff.

I have made a contact that will try to get me a picture of the New Hampshire boxcar that was a gift from France for our participation in WWII. The car is in a difficult setting for an amateur to photograph. Too many shadows, reflections, and obstructions to get a good shot. As soon as I get the picture you'll see it in this "scandal sheet."

I finally finished the roll of film that my "Apache Clock" picture was on, and it came out

pretty good. That clock has gotten more WOW's than anything I've ever gotten before. To those of you that don't have one, I say you are missing out on a real eye-catcher.

I have an address for one of the "Lost Sheep" from Lynn Lee's report. It is: Robert McIntyre, P.O. Box 3905, Alamo, TX, 78516, phone number 756-787-7786. He was with Headquarters Sqd'n, in Communications. Ray DeRusha talked with him not long ago. Bob is suffering from a severe case of arthritis, but his memory is still good. No doubt he would appreciate a letter or phone call.

I recently visited the local high school to give one of the teachers a copy of the S.S. Nelson article. He asked if we were on the Internet, and I told him we were, but I didn't know the address. We played around on the computer for awhile and got "Air Apache Reunion Association." He made me a copy of the logo. Now, I have something else to add to my collection.

Received a post card from Andy Simco who was on a trip to Tokyo. He couldn't write much on a card, so maybe he'll give us a full report at our next reunion in Charleston.

I just spent a couple of days in the hospital due to my annual bout with pneumonia and lung disease. All this after eight decades! Glad to report that things are now back to normal.

Here's wishing you all a very Merry Christmas and Happy & Healthy New Year.

Editor's Note: Pat Feucht called December 6, 1999, to report that her husband, Dick, passed away during the night. Dick was a member of the 498th Squadron, and was the 345th Group Treasurer. He continued to serve in that office despite his severe struggle with Parkinson's disease. Our heartfelt sympathy goes out to Pat and family.



498th SQUADRON

Frank Dillard, Ass't. Group V.P.

When you open this issue Veteran's Day, Halloween, and Thanksgiving will be over, and you should be planning for the Christmas Holidays and a very special New Year! I hope this finds all of you well, and preparing for those moments with loved ones.

In thinking about the coming new millennium I leafed back through my mental scrapbook to review the current one. The thought occurred to me that the only thing that has remained constant in the last century has been constant CHANGE. We have been privileged to live during an era of unprecedented technical development. It is difficult for me to grasp the significance of the phenomenal advances in physics, chemistry and the general sciences.

If you had to choose the greatest accomplishment of the past 100 years what would get your vote? We have seen the invention of aviation, and it's progress, to include placing men on the moon and the launching of un-manned space probes to Mars and beyond. Then, we have seen the development of miracle drugs: I recall the dreaded polio epidemics of the 1930's, and thank God that our grandchildren are safe, due to the Salk vaccine. We were terrified at "Frankenstein" (the movie), but now accept vital organ transplants as a routine medical practice. Man has surrounded himself with innumerable mechanical and/or electrical marvels. Women use microwaves to prepare

dinner, while logged-on to the Internet via computer to shop, or e-mail a friend. Along the way we have caused some ecological problems. When we were flying our training missions stateside in the early '40's the sky was a beautiful blue dome overhead. Contrast that picture with the "virtual reality" of the perpetual smog and haze in today's sky. Are we prepared to move into the next millenium? I hope the legacy we leave was not accumulated at too great a cost.

Jesse Dean has been requested by Ken Gastgeb to locate a qualified contractor to restore our 345th Bomb Group Monument at Wright-Patterson Field in Dayton, Ohio. Apparently, the bronze plaques have been tarnished due to chemicals in the atmosphere. Jesse estimates that work will begin in the spring.

Harrison Beardsley was published in the November issue of **Aviation History Magazine**. He authored an interesting account of one of his missions that ended with a crash in New Guinea headhunter country! I had a discussion with Harrison about reprinting a condensed version of the article in the **STRAFER**, but ran into the copyright laws. It is a great story, and is commemorated in a painting by Jack Fellows that made the cover of the November issue. Great work, Harrison!

This will be my first attempt at being editor AND publisher. This issue is printed in-house (mine), on a new printer purchased with Group funds. We should be able to recover the cost of the printer in about two issues.

If we survive the forecasted epidemic attributable to the Y-2-K Bug, I will be writing to you again in March. If it's the end of the world... well it has been great! Thanks for your e-mail, cards, letters, and phone calls.

May you all have a healthy and happy Christmas and New Year.

Editor's Note: The "Sad Sack" cartoon on page 3 of the current issue was submitted by Ben Miller (499th). Ben had it reproduced from a copy of **YANK**, that was dated December 22, 1944. Back then, in December 1944, we were ALL "Sad Sacks" as we "Dreamed of a White Christmas" while the moon shone brightly on the coral.



499th SQUADRON

Ben F. Miller, Asst. Group V.P.

Everywhere there are signs asking people to contribute to the WWII Memorial in Washington before the end of the year. Some of the stores in our area have contribution containers with big pictures of the memorial. We have made quite a few appearances with the colors, followed by short speeches, and the drive is going well. In our state (Indiana), we have an appropriate memorial at the National Headquarters in Indianapolis. It is worth seeing if you are in the area.

In September, a few of the 499th had a mini-reunion at Bearcreek Farms, our usual meeting place. We had quite a surprise when Vic Tatleman cancelled out at the last moment. His reason for not attending is quite an honor to the 345th...Vic was summoned to North American Aviation in California to teach their test pilots how to fly the B-25!

Those attending the reunion were: Julian & Pearle Baird, Pax & Velma Baker, Edward & Connie Boghosian, Arthur & Gary Croft,

Patricia Cummings, Nick & Lee Dovica, Max & Helen Harner, Ben & Norma Miller, Jim & Evelyn Mortland, Elza & Iona Wagner, and John Wistrom. Since Vic couldn't be with us we all signed a card and sent it to him. He wrote us a letter and requested we publish the following paragraph in the STRAFER:

"To all those at Bearcreek mini-reunion; thanks from the bottom of my heart for the

wonderful surprise--the card signed by you all. I'm moved beyond words by your thoughtfulness. Our Camaraderie- our togetherness - becomes more meaningful as the years leap by. Again, thank you so much. Vic"

How well we remember Christmas while overseas. Some group in New York always sent me a large package of goodies, including dates, other dried fruit and baked goodies. This package usually arrived in our mailroom around June, disguised as a rubber mat! The tropical heat played heck with a lot of the packages before we ever received them, but intentions were good, so we said "thanks," but left out any mention of the condition at arrival time.

Norma and I wish all of you the best Christmas and New Year ever. We are looking forward to being with many of you in Charleston next year. Can you imagine, it will actually be in the next century? During the war, this seemed like an impossible dream, but with GOD's help, here we are at that threshold!



500th SQUADRON

Stan Muniz, Ass't. Group V.P.

Another Rough Raider reunion has come and gone, and what a reunion it was.

The Denver Marriott hotel was really great, and the buffet breakfast included everything you could think of-- all for the price of the room!

As for things to do, there was a trip to Bullwhacker's Casino where quite a few of us came away with more money than we went in with. Then, there was the trip to Heritage Square in Golden for shopping and to attend the Dinner and Melodrama Theater. That was great fun. Best of all was the wonderful turnout for the reunion. Over one hundred and thirty members and guests attended the banquet.

The guest speaker was Larry Hickey, the author of "Warpath Across The Pacific." He told how he came to write the book, and what was involved in gathering, compiling and editing all the information. It was quite a story.

Lynn and Bing Daker, along with their staff, did a bang-up job of picking a great hotel and lining up the events to keep everyone entertained and happy. You all deserve a great big "Thank You" from all of us.

As for the next squadron reunion, we are returning to our roots--Savanna, Georgia, where the group picked up it's own aircraft. So start saving your nickels and dimes, and make no other plans for the fall of 2001! 'Till then, take care.



501st SQUADRON

Chet Burns, Ass't. Group V.P.

Well, after many years of trying, we finally made it to San Diego. I would like to express

my thanks and appreciation to everyone who attended the reunion. Hopefully we all had a good time.

The hotel Downtown was terrific, Five Stars and courtesy everywhere. Good restaurants, excellent food, transportation and sightseeing were all very convenient. I think San Diego would be an ideal site for a Group reunion in the future!

One of the many highlights was the Valentine brother's meeting with their relatives. Some, they had not seen nor heard from in eighty years! They enjoyed their own mini-reunion, sharing old pictures, stories of family members, and many, many by-gones. *

Lynn Lee did his usual excellent job setting up the hospitality room supplies. The Banquet was also very enjoyable. After the banquet Bill Stone added to the evening's pleasure by performing his magic show.

There were a lot of AWOL 501st personnel, and they were missed. We all are going down that path where things get more difficult. The "Y2K" reunion in Charleston is less than one year from now. Start eating your "Wheaties" and let's all make it a super reunion.

Another "**Lost Sheep**" found me on the Internet somehow! Lennie Miller, 501st bombardier, made contact. He didn't know anything about what had happened to the 345th after the war

On the sad side, Jack Parker, top turret gunner, of Cicero, New York, passed away. We send our sympathy to his family.

I am heading down to Florida, my winter residence for the next six months.

Here's wishing everyone a Happy and Healthy Holiday Season.

***Editor's Note:** . No mention of the Valentines brothers sharing cigars, and Eighty Years!???

The REDISCOVERY of WWII

By Arthur Schlesinger Jr.

World War II is being fought all over again these days, and it seems to grip the republic almost as intensely as it did when the world blew up 60 years ago. Tom Brokaw's "**The Greatest Generation**" and Stephen Ambrose's "**Citizen Soldiers**" have topped the best-seller list. Stephen Spielberg's "**Saving Private Ryan**" and Terrence Malick's (and James Jones) "**The Thin Red Line**" vie for audiences and for Oscars. Magazines celebrate incidents of war. We are suddenly involved in recapturing a heroic past.

This is a change. For a long time after victory, World War II seemed to slip away, almost as if there was a conspiracy of silence. Veterans rarely talked about the experience of war. Returning GIs instead picked up the broken threads of their lives, sought education under the GI Bill, married the girls they left behind, produced the baby boom and looked to the future, not to the past. Farley Mowat, the Canadian writer, spoke for most of us when he said about the war: "I kept the deeper agonies of it wrapped in the cotton wool of protective forgetfulness."

Silence went on for quite a while. Then, about a decade or so ago, veterans began to unwrap their memories. Almost for the first time the World War II generation started exchanging war stories. Parents told their baby-boom children what they had done in the war. Powerful television documentaries—"The World at War" and "**Victory at Sea**"--provoked the curiosity of the young. President Reagan's speech on the 50th anniversary of D-Day honored the bravery and the sacrifice of the men of the Normandy beaches.

Was it perhaps the very parade of anniversaries that set off the fascination with World War II? Yet the 50th anniversary of World War I had called forth no celebrations and released no flood of memories. There were reasons for that. The life expectancy of the

generation that fought World War I was around 48 years; so in the normal course of things, fewer World War I veterans would be around to tell their tales. And there weren't all that many veterans in the first place. Nearly four times as many Americans served in the armed forces in World War II as in World War I.

More important, World War I was followed by a decade of disillusion and disgust. Few thought of the "Great War" as a "Good War." "I had seen nothing sacred," wrote Hemmingway, "and the things that were glorious had no glory, and the sacrifices were like the stockyards of Chicago." And the 50th anniversary of the Armistice of 1918 arrived in another time of disillusion and disgust. By 1968 an angry country was trying to figure out what the devil we were doing in Vietnam and how the devil we were going to get out of it. No one thought of the Vietnam War as a "Good War" either.

Of course no war is any good. Yet occasionally, very occasionally, a few, like the American Revolution, the Civil War and the Second World War are necessary. War remains hell, but a few wars have been driven by decent purposes and produced beneficial results. Compared to the rest, they qualify as "Good Wars." And the last "Good War," the war of 1941-1945, evidently fills some psychic void in the American soul at the end of the 20th century.

In 1999 we bask in an interlude of contentment. Employment is high. Prices are stable. The stock market keeps rising. The crime rate keeps falling. Yet, for all the material satisfactions of the consumer society, there seems something missing in the lives of the baby-boomers, and in the lives of the Gen-X children. These lives lack a dimension of valor and of sacrifice, of fidelity to principal and honor, a dimension of risk and danger in a grand cause.

My generation, the generation that fought World War II, wasn't despite Tom Brokaw's generous phrase, the "greatest generation." If any American generation deserved the adjective, it would be the generation that won

the War for Independence and drew up the Constitution. The republic seems to have more gifted people in a population of nearly 4 million in 1790 than it has in a population of 272 million two centuries later.

The generation that fought World War II was like most other generations in American history. It consisted of plain people who, confronted by mortal threats to their country, accepted their duty and performed it laconically, modestly, self-effacingly, without show, without flourish.

A young naval lieutenant who saw action in the Solomon Islands expressed the attitude when asked how he became a war hero. "It was involuntary," Jack Kennedy said. "They sank my boat."

The two great war movies of 1999 are populated by frightened kids whom war turns into what Walt Whitman called "the numberless unknown heroes equal to the greatest heroes ever known." Their lives and deaths reassure new generations that they too, if put to the test, might have the right stuff. World War II reminds us that ordinary people, those you see every day, the sour fellow behind the counter at the hardware store, the cheerful guy at the filling station, could have, when put to the test, capacious reserves of courage and steadfastness.

Also there is a "last chance" effect at work. According to the Department of Veteran's Affairs, World War II veterans are dying at the rate of about 3,200 a month. Postwar Americans suddenly recognize that their parents and grandparents deserve a little honor while some of them are still around.

And some people seem finally prepared to comprehend, or at least make a stab at comprehending, the horror of war. "The real war," Walt Whitman had said of the Civil War, "will never get in the books." The real war certainly has not often got in the movies with their prettied-up pictures of battle: John Wayne (who himself sat out World War II in Hollywood making 19 films of derring-do) striding intrepidly through a hail of bullets. Spielberg's "**D-Day**," Malick's "**Guadalcanal**" comes close to projecting the ghastly reality.

Perhaps, too we think about World War II

these days because of an unconscious longing for great leaders--leaders who can summon us to take arms against the sea of troubles. When the World War II generation was young, larger-than-life men, for better or worse, bestrode the narrow world. Some, like Roosevelt and Churchill, were on the side of life; some like Hitler, Stalin, Mussolini, were on the side of death; but they all seemed towering figures. After the war there were other leaders who, if not of the same order, were still men of stature--de Gaulle, Nehru, Mao, Tito, Truman, Attlee, Adenauer, Eisenhower, Krushchev and Kennedy.

Today the world seems bereft of that demanding, inspiring, prophetic quality--leadership that commands the imagination of people and nations and moves them beyond short-term interest into larger visions of humanity's future. This, too, is part of the psychic void that seeks sustenance in the heroic past.

The great Supreme Court Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr., was thrice wounded in the Civil War. Two of his wounds nearly killed him. He had no romantic illusions about war, but he recognized that war has its role in the psychic economy.

"War when you are at it," Holmes wrote, "is horrible and dull. It is only when time has passed that you see its message is divine. I hope it may be long before we are called to sit at that master's feet. But some teacher of that kind we all need. In this snug, over-safe corner of the world we need it, that we may realize that our comfortable routine is no eternal necessity of things, but merely a little space of calm in the midst of the untamed streaming of the world."

"Life" Holmes said, "is a roar of bargain and battle, but in the very heart of it there rises a mystic spiritual tone that gives meaning to the whole.... It suggests that even while we think that we are egotists we are living to ends outside ourselves."

That search for deeper meanings may be why new generations are so eagerly engaged in the discovery of the Second World War.

RETURN to the PHILIPPINES

By: J.W. "Stoney" Stone (501st)

On October 20, 1944, General Mac Arthur fulfilled his promise of "I SHALL RETURN" by triumphantly wading ashore at Dulag, on the Philippine Island of Leyte.

I was there on the 55th Anniversary of this historical event this year. Unlike America, which celebrates Armistice Day, Memorial Day, and Veteran's Day in the form of 50 % off sales in major department stores, in the province of Leyte all stores were closed. The streets were lined with throngs of people enjoying the parade of Filipino veterans; the reenactment of Mac Arthur's landing, marching bands and patriotic speeches. What a contrast! The Filipinos really appreciate their freedom and what the Americans together with their allies did for them.

My visit was a spontaneous one. I noticed an article stating that Valor Tours was planning a trip to celebrate this auspicious event. I signed up and found myself in the company of 14 others. The group included 5 flyboys (counting me), and 4 ground pounders. Three of who had been infantry with the landing party. Also present were the daughter of one of those killed while wading ashore, and her daughter. Sadly, she had never met her father. Another member of our group was a widow, accompanied by her son who had never seen his dad.

To celebrate the occasion, elaborate functions were held all over the province. We were treated as dignitaries at every event. We were honored guests of the Governor of Leyte, the Ambassador of the United States, ranking diplomats from Great Britain, New Zealand, Australia, and the representative of the President of the Philippines. We were celebrated in words at every function, and were then fortunate enough to mingle with the approximately 300 Filipino veterans of World War II guerrilla fame.

It is sad to realize that America seems to have forgotten the price of freedom.

LOST SHEEP

The following is a listing of persons considered to be "**Lost Sheep**," since their copies of the September issue of the **STRAFER** were returned by the post office:

- (1) William F. Davis (501)
- (2) S. Mawrence (500)
- (3) D. L. Miles (501)
- (4) Norman E. Moore (?)
- (5) Mrs. Ernestine Pittman
- (6) Frank C. Pohlman (500)
- (7) Dale A. Rapp (499)
- (8) Carl A. Strauss (700)
- (9) Dewitt C. Vanderzee (501)
- (10) Clifford Vick (499)

If anyone knows the current address for any of the above, please let us know.

NOTE: If you plan to move, please notify the Treasurer, or your Editor, of your change of address to insure continued delivery of the **STRAFER**. We cannot maintain an up-to-date mailing list without your help.

The post office will forward First-Class Mail for twelve months. Circulars, books, catalogs and advertising mail under 16 ounces **will not** be forwarded unless requested by the mailer.

IN MEMORY OF

**Richard R. Feucht (498), 345th Bomb Group
Treasurer, 12-06-99, Pickerington, OH .**

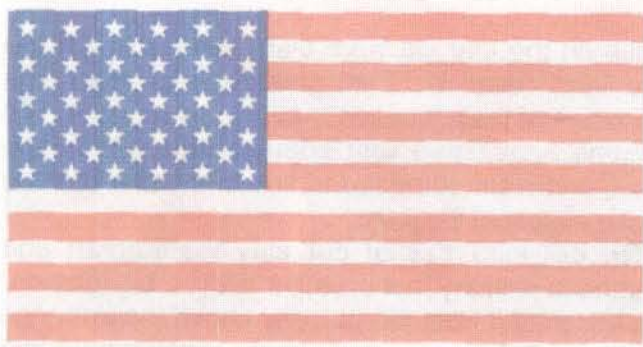
**Don Harderman Sr. (501), 02-17-99,
Orlando, FL.**

**Walter C. Kurowski (499), 04-07-97,
Sacramento, CA.**

**Charles E. Mardis (501), 08-01-97, Woolrich,
PA.**

**Patricia McClure, wife of Ken McClure (499),
10-17-99, Columbus, OH.**

**Martin D. Wood (499), 06-14-99, Weems,
VA.**



"THAT RAGGED OLD FLAG"

Contributed by Earl Hitt, 498th

I walked through a county courthouse square
On a park bench, an old man was sittin' there.
I said, "Your courthouse is kinda run down".
He said, "No, it will do for our little town".
I said, "your old flag pole kinda leans a bit,
And that's a ragged old flag you

got hanging on it".
He said, "Have a seat". So I sat down.
He said, "Is this your first visit to our little town"?
I said, "I think it is".

He said, "I don't like too brag,
But we're kinda proud of "That Ragged Old Flag".
"You see, we got a little hole in that flag there,
When Washington took it across the Delaware.
It got powder burned the night Francis Scott Key
Sat watching it, writing "Oh! Say can you see"?
It got a rip in New Orleans,
With Packingham and Jackson tugging at it's
seams.

It almost fell at the Alamo beside the Texas flag,
But she waved on though.
It got cut with a sword in Chancellorsville,
Got cut again at Shiloh Hill.
There was Robert E. Lee, Beauregard and
Bragg,
And the south wind blew hard on "That Ragged
Old Flag".

On Flanders Field in World War I,
She took a hit from a Big Bertha Gun,
She turned blood red in World War II.
She hung limp and low by the time that one was
through.

She was in Korea, and then Vietnam,
She went where she was sent by her Unc
Sam.

The Native Americans, The Blacks, Yellows ar
Whites

All shed red blood for the Stars and Stripes.

And here in her own good land,
She's been abused, burned, dishonored, denie
and refused,

And the very government for which she stands
Has been scandalized throughout the land.
She's getting threadbare, and she's wearin
kinda thin,

But she's in pretty good shape, for the shap
she's in.

'Cause she's been through the fire before
And she can take a whole lot more.

So we raise her up each morning
And we bring her down slow every night,
We don't let her touch the ground.
And we fold her up just right.
On second thought... I do like to brag,
'Cause I'm mighty proud of
"That Ragged Old Flag".

HIGH FLIGHT

By John Gillespie Magee Jr.

Oh, I have slipped the surly bonds of earth
And danced the skies on laughter-silvered wing
Sunward I've climbed, and joined the tumbling
mirth
Of sun-split clouds - and done a hundred things
You have not dreamed of - wheeled and soared
and swung
High in the sunlit silence. Hov'ring there,
I've chased the shouting wind along, and flung
My eager craft through footless halls of air
Up, up the long, delirious, burning blue
I've topped the windswept heights with easy grace
Where never lark, or even eagle flew
And, while with silent, lifting mind I've trod
The high untrespassed sanctity of space
Put out my hand, and touched the face of God.

MISSION TO KOREA

By John Palansky (498)

On September 5, 1945, six 345th Bomb Group B-25's were readied for a special mission from Ie Shima to Kiejo (Seoul), Korea. The purpose of the mission was to transport General Harris and his staff to Kiejo, where they would take over the governing of Korea from the Japanese.

When we landed at Kimpo Field we were greeted by a contingent of Japanese VIP's. In the course of our conversation with the base commander we asked if he recognized our planes. He replied, "Yes. We called you the yellow-nosed bastards!" He was referring to the nose art on the 498th aircraft.

We were then taken to a hotel in Kiejo. Our history book states that we were billeted at the Chosen Hotel but the oriental vase and hand towel I "liberated" bore the name of the Hanto Hotel. We were so amused with running water (after so many months) we kept flushing the toilet and taking showers at every opportunity.

We were technically under Japanese armed guard until our army landed on the fourth day, and officially assumed command of Korea.

One day the Japanese put us in a command car and we were taken on a tour of Kiejo. We visited a Shinto Temple, which was quite a sight, being done in brightly colored laquers and pure gold.



Photo #1



Photo#2



Photo #3

While on the tour we were also taken through the "red-light" district. The girls waved from the balconies of their "houses" as we passed along. We became acquainted with some of the girls at the hotel, and were surprised to find that some of them spoke excellent English.

On the third day of our stay the Korean and Japanese military honored us with a big parade. We watched it from the balcony above the entrance to the hotel. There were many marching bands and as each one came up to us they would stop and play the National Anthem, and we would have to salute.

I flew as radio/gunner on Colonel Coltharp's crew for this mission. We was told that he was promoted to Brigadier General, and was to be assigned to Fifth Bomber Command at this time. I can't remember the names of the other crewmembers after all these years. If you were one of the crew, or know anyone that was I would appreciate hearing from you. My mailing address is: John Palansky, 731 South Fourth Ave., Libertyville, IL 60048, Phone 847-367-1564.

I have enclosed some photos taken during my stay in Korea. Can anyone identify any of the men shown?

Key to Photos:

Photo #1: John Palansky in front of Shinto Temple (Seoul),

Photo#2: Jap interpreter and unknown 345th members.

Photo #3 : 345th Officers & Japs in front of "Zero"fighter.