

Minutes of the 2010 345th General Business Meeting

Margene Miller Brown (499th), daughter of Ben Miller, explained she was assisting her father in chairing the meeting.

President Ben F. Miller (499th) called the meeting to order in the Appaloosa Room 1 at the Gaylord Texan Resort and Convention Center, Grapevine, Texas at 9:27 AM on Sunday, September 5, 2010. He thanked all for coming and led us in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Kelly McNichols (500th) gave the invocation.

Jim Bina (500th) thanked Geico Auto Insurance for their generous sponsorship of the Coffee/Tea Service at this morning's meeting.

Judy Best Zurlis (498th) and Carol Best Hillman (498th) thanked all for attending the XXIII Reunion and explained that the Military Reunion Planners made it possible for us to meet at this fantastic venue. Judy explained that the banquet meals are extremely expensive and the MRP had negotiated greatly reduced prices for each meal. However, they were still pricey, but we really wanted this reunion to be exceptional and have it at the Gaylord so we asked if the association could supplement the expense of the meals. Member's \$15.00 dues made this possible. Bottom line: Pay your dues so the association can continue to give you outstanding Strafers and reunions.

Mary Roby (500th) gave the Treasurer's Report. She thanked Charles Wilson for the ease in transferring the books. She has big shoes to fill.

Mary combined both accounts as of August 11, 2010 totaling \$16,910.41. Income was \$8,299.76 with Expenses of \$9,770.24 leaving a final balance as of August 30, 2010 of \$12,158.74. Don Rary (499th) moved to accept the Treasurer's Report as given. Bob Pearson (500th) seconded it. The motion carried.

Committee Reports:

Paul Van Valkenburg (501st) reported that the website has been updated with Mission Reports and new and old The Strafers since last year. He needs someone to redesign the website. Suggestions are needed.

Paul also reported we have additional DVDs available for \$10.00 each. Included on the DVD is: Warpath of the Air Apaches, Mission to Rabaul, The Emperor's Envoy, and the 2004 Reno Fly-by. Each person who registered with the reunion received a copy. He suggested that we post the on the website that the DVDs are available for purchase. He gave the website address – www.345thbombgroup.org.

Jim Bina explained our 501 C 19 tax status is for Military Veteran Associations that have a minimum of 75% veterans. We are not in compliance with this rule; therefore, we must change to a new tax status. Mary Roby and he will be researching the best tax status for our association. *The Strafer* will keep you abreast of the results.

Jim also discussed the status of the 345th and what it will be in the future. One suggestion is that we become a Historical Society instead of an Association. Jim wants to share with the world the legacy of the 345th. In order to do so we will need to increase the website. He wants to preserve the veteran's personal history – what they did prior to the war, when they volunteered, why, what they did during and after the war ended. Not veterans alone, but to include what the wives and children did to keep the home front

going. How the family supported each other both monetarily and personally, etc. Jim challenged the second generation to get the information on tape, video, etc. He would like to continue with a new direction to get a good start towards a Historical Society.

Kelly McNichols suggested we might donate papers to a museum rather than lose family and personal documents.

Nancy Ingram volunteered to record and write videos of the veterans.

Dennis O'Neill reported the audit of the Treasurer's books was perfect. He was very happy with what he found.

Margene Brown recognized the current officers. They are:

President – Ben F. Miller (499th)

1st Vice President – Jim Bina (501st)

2nd Vice President – Dennis O'Neill (500th)

Secretary – Silas Pearson (498th)

Assistant Secretary – Judy Best Zurlis (498th)

Treasurer – Mary Sloan Roby (500th)

Assistant Treasurer – Charles Wilson (498th)

Mary Sloan Roby (500th) presented the Treasurer's report. Copies of the report were distributed. A copy is attached.

Silas Pearson announced that he will continue to send condolence letters to families of deceased veterans. He will continue to absorb all expenses as the feedback has been tremendous and he is honored to do this small service.

Silas Pearson complimented Melvin Best (498th) on his devotion to the 345th Bomb Group. He and Gladys have attended every reunion of the association and hosted two of the reunions.

He then reminded everyone of Kenneth Gastgeb's diligence in compiling a complete list of all deceased veterans.

The slate of proposed officers was presented:

President – Jim Bina

1st Vice President – Dennis O'Neill

Secretary – Andy Decker

Treasurer – Mary Sloan Roby

Don Wagner (500th) moved that the nominations be accepted as presented. Don Rary (499th) seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Margene Brown (499th) read the duties of the remaining officer positions to be filled – 2nd Vice President, Assistant Secretary, and Assistant Treasurer.

Jim Bina (501st) thanked all for the honor and is humbled to be elected President. His father, Ed Bina, was elected president in 1990. He realizes he is the first second generation president and first son to be elected to the office.

Kelly McNichols (500th) suggested Don Rary (499th) as the group Chaplain. Diane Brauer (500th) seconded the suggestion. Don accepted the position. This is not an elected officer position.

Andy Decker (501st) agreed to continue as editor of *The Strafer*.

Ruth Damour (499th) volunteered to be the Assistant Secretary.

Nancy Ingram (499th) volunteered to be the Assistant Treasurer.

Judy Best Zurlis (498th) moved the positions be approved. Norma Miller (499th) seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Diane Brauer (500th) nominated Kelly McNichols (500th) to be the 2nd Vice President. Bob Jensen Pearson (500th) seconded the nomination. The motion passed.

Dennis O'Neill announced that the government will pay for a headstone for all veterans. Harlan Hatfield said that if the veteran had already passed on the government would pay for a plaque added to the marker.

Don Rary announced that the government will fly veterans free of charge to Washington, D.C. to see the WWII monument. Contact Don for more information.

Kelly McNichols announced that he will help any veteran apply for any Service Awards or medals.

Don Wagner explained that traditionally we rotate the three different sections of the US for our reunions. It would be nice if we could secure a central US location for Reunion XXIV.

Diane Brauer (500th) announced her sister, Janice Daker (500th), lives in St. Louis and if she does not kill her for volunteering herself they will be happy to host the 345th Bomb Group Reunion XXIV next fall, 2011 in St. Louis. Judy Zurlis moved to accept Diane's offer to host the XXIV reunion next fall. Don Rary seconded the motion. The motion passed.

The newly elected officers are:

President – Jim Bina (501st)

1st Vice President – Dennis O'Neill (500th)

2nd Vice President – Kelly McNichols (500th)

Secretary – Andy Decker (501st)

Assistant Secretary – Ruth Damour (499th)

Treasurer – Mary Sloan Roby (500th)

Assistant Treasurer – Nancy Ingram (499th)

Squadron Vice Presidents:

498th Vice President – Carol Best Hillman (498th)

499th Vice President – James Mahaffey (499th)

500th Vice President – Donald Wagner (500th)

501st Vice President – Paul Van Valkenburg (501st)

Volunteer Positions:

Webmaster – Paul Van Valkenburg (501st)

The Strafer Editor – Andy Decker (501st)

Mailing of *The Strafer* – Judy Best Zurlis (498th)

Group Chaplain – Don Rary (499th)

Silas W. Pearson (498th) will continue to send condolence letters to the families of deceased veterans.

Kenneth Gastgeb (HQ) will continue to keep a list of all deceased veterans.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:00 AM.

Respectfully,

Judy Best Zurlis, Assistant Secretary