



VOLUME 29 ISSUE 2

JUNE 2011



The PBY "Catalina" or "Flying Boat", such as this one, was instrumental in rescuing some of our aircrews that crash landed in the ocean. In most cases, without the assistance of a Catalina, aircrews would be either lost at sea or captured by the Japanese. Jim Mahaffey's 499th Squadron page recounts several occasions when this ungainly but helpful aircraft came to the aid of the 345th (image from pby.com).



PRESIDENT'S CORNER

By: JIM BINA

Traveling always has its unexpected yet pleasant surprises. Today is one of those days. I arrived at Washington National airport heading out of town, and as I came into the gate area I noticed out on the ramp the “water cannons” were at full sail over an aircraft. This was an indicator of a special occasion, hmmm, must be an inbound flight from



Marie, S Dakota WWII Veteran

overseas carrying our brave military folks home for some R&R, similar to our experience at the DFW airport at our last reunion. Odd though, they don't regularly fly into the DC airport.

Close but no cigar - this time - the inbound flight was a WWII Veterans Honor Flight with 115 Vets onboard from South Dakota, coming into Washington, DC to visit the WWII Memorial and our great Capitol. Hey, now this is special! I jockeyed for position in front of the gate area to pay my respects to these Vets and to get a few photos. Now this Honor Flight business is a carefully planned operation with dozens of staff onboard assisting the vets as well as USO volunteers and uniformed military assisting on the ground. There was also a gentleman playing the different Service songs with his French horn giving a festive feel to the occasion. An announcement was made in the terminal that this was the

arrival of the Honor Flight area and everyone started to gather to see just what was going on. Then the Vets started to come off the airplane and everyone, EVERYONE, in the gate area started applauding these Vets as they came into the terminal. It was overwhelming, and the Vets were simply elated by this warm welcome by complete strangers and passersby. Travelers were lining up to shake the hand of a Vet and give them a warm welcome to Washington, DC or simply to say thank you for your service. Now most surprising to me was there were five, count 'em five, WWII women vets on the flight. We don't often recall women serving back then, but



Harold, 90th BG, Jolly Rogers

they did and they deserve equal credit for their service, too! The terminal was filled with uninterrupted applause as the Vets filed from the airplane, all with huge smiles on their faces. As I write this, they will be in Washington, DC for four days to see the sights and visit the WWII Memorial. The Honor Flight is a great program and I whole heartedly encourage our Vets and their families to take advantage of this opportunity to have the honor bestowed upon them for simply serving their country.

I visited Ken Gastgeb on a recent trip to Oklahoma City and what a pleasant occasion that was! I was very surprised by the vast amount of data and history that Ken had accumulated across the years, literally volumes and volumes of information and photos of his 345th days. I came across one of Ken's pictures that

shows a saw mill in operation. Who would have known – I had no idea. The picture was taken on Biak, I believe, and showed the troops cutting lumber presumably for living quarters and such. I never imagined... I wonder if our modern military could match such a feat. Does anyone know that Ken is also an accomplished artist? I was privileged to view some of his drawings and was completely amazed by the quality and detail. Ahh, the hidden talents amongst us! Thanks Ken for your hospitality and for taking the time to sit down with me and go through just a sampling of your 345th history files.

The reunion is closing in on us and everything is on track. We have another guest speaker lined up for us on Friday evening. Bruce Gamble, the author of *Fortress Rabaul* will be joining us. He just finished a tour across the southern US interviewing some of our 345th members for the next volume of his Rabaul epic. I just finished the book and it was a genuine page turner, I couldn't put down. *Fortress Rabaul* is a recommended read, you won't be disappointed.

By the time this edition of *The Strafer* comes out Memorial Day will have passed. In remembering *all* Veterans who have served and especially those that did not return, I salute you all! Have a pleasant summer and I hope to see you all at the reunion.

Historian Dr. Joshua B. Moore asked for scanned documents in the last Strafer. His new email is moorejbm@yahoo.com.



BATS OUTA HELL
499TH SQUADRON
By: JIM MAHAFFEY

The Catalinas were our best bet of getting picked up alive, as most of our flying was over Japanese jungle targets. Landing in the jungle was not suggested as you could only travel a mile a day on foot, if you were lucky, and were not picked up and beheaded by the Japs.

First was Lt. Alfred J. Naigle, coming back from the 24 October 1943 mission to Vunakanau in Lil' Deicer. He discovered oil and smoke coming from his left engine. He was able to feather the prop and continued on toward home but only slowly as he could barely maintain altitude and flying speed. Realizing he could not go over trees and mountains, he decided to ditch in Collingwood Bay on the north coast of New Guinea. The landing was perfect with only one crewman injured by a minor cut. The rest of the squadron circled them and then headed home. After an hour and a half in the water, they were rescued by a Catalina.

On 20 November 1943, Lt. Frank Gullette was on a mission with the 500th Squadron Rough Raiders when he took damage to his right engine and began to lose altitude, of which he only had about 10 feet to begin with. They finally set down about 2 miles off the coast of Mawok on the north coast of New Guinea. A Catalina was not available until about midnight. Then, after daylight, they searched the whole area with no results. It

was later learned that they reached shore and were captured by the Japanese, interrogated and then on a Sunday morning were shot and buried. They were recovered in 1948 and identified three years later. The Catalinas had tried, but the Japanese just did not like us.

Capt. Kizzire of the 498th Squadron led an attack on wooden shipping off Boram, New Guinea. He was so low that he had to pull up to clear the vessel and was hit by a 20mm shell from a freighter at Cape Moem. It hit the right engine of Impatient Virgin and knocked out his oil supply. This was a common problem on planes coming out of Wright Patterson AFB, with faulty engineering in the prop feathering system. This happened to one of our crews, too. Kizzie was a fine athlete, as were most of his crew, so no one doubted their surviving. He made it down the coast about 30 miles to the Murik Lakes at the Sepik River and set it down nicely. Col. Crabb tried to get the Navy to send a Catalina to get them but they could not or would not. Lt. Robinette took off the next morning laden with goodies and needs gathered by friends back at base and dropped the stuff near where the men were spotted. The next morning a Catalina without fighter escort attempted a search but broke off when a Jap bomber was sighted overhead. The search was continued the next morning but found nothing.

In March 1944, a shortwave transmission named three of the crew as being POW's at Wewak. These crewmen did not return and were presumed to have been executed as most crews were. You can find more about these missions in Hickey's "Warpath Across the Pacific".

We were hitting Manus Island regularly. On 25 January 1944 we saw a friend of McClure go down on our right, so Mac avenged them by going back around and hitting the Japanese headquarters building and we got hit by flak. It went right through the left oil cooler and out the top of the wing. It was an unreal feeling knowing you were hit and in trouble and almost helpless. It looked like someone had poked a post right thru the wing and burning oil was running everywhere. Mac headed for some clouds thinking he could put out the fire. The pilots had just discussed how to make a water landing and that was our next adventure. You didn't have time to be scared. Everyone had a job to do. Mine was to keep track of time and place and hold on to Flt. Officer Flaps, our poodle mascot, given to McClure by General Wilson of MacArthur's staff in Brisbane. He was a friend of Mac's mother, back in Ohio.

I was in the nav compartment and did not have a seat or a seat belt and was holding Flaps. Hitting the water at 120 mph is like hitting a brick wall at 80 mph. I slid forward and hit the bulkhead knocking Flaps out of my hand. Water was coming in so I decided I should get out.

I looked for Flaps but did not see him anywhere. About that time Mac said "Haffey, let's get out of here", but he was in the way as I was right beside him. He was in the escape hatch as I waited for him to clear it. He weighed about 230 pounds and Loverin about 250 pounds. I was a 6 ft skinny 180 lbs and we were known as "The Three Brutes" on "Doodle", our original plane. We were all soon out on the wings and Mac wanted to go back to look for the dog but we talked him out of it. The three

rear crewmen took the larger raft and Mac, Lt. Timpson and I took the smaller one. We tied them together to make them more stable. All the time we were thinking, "How are we going to get out of this"?

My first thought was my mom. I thought it would be hard on her if something happened to me. I felt badly because I had joined the Air Force and didn't have to. She had raised six kids by herself since our dad died when I was five. It turned out that she didn't have to worry because someone had called Dumbo to rescue us. As I have said, they are a beautiful sight when you are sitting in a small rubber raft in the middle of a large ocean.

Our fate did not seem good when all the other planes had gone back to base and we had hours to wonder. After about six hours of drifting and worrying we heard a sound to the north, and we saw airplane activity toward the island. They appeared to be "Zekes", but as they came closer we saw they were P-47's. We fired a Very pistol flare to make sure they saw us.

Someone had told them we were nearer to Manus Island so the Catalina had given up and was headed south for home when the P-47's found us. The Catalina pilot, Lt. Herb McPike from Massachusetts had flown for eighteen months and had not rescued anyone. After the war, I had wanted to locate him to thank him but never did until 2003 when I located his son near Boston. Herb had died a few years before so do not put off those thank-you's you want to make. When his son found out we were coming to see him, he got all of his dad's log books. Herb had never discussed with his son what he had done

during the war. When we looked in his log books all of our names were there as he had written everyone's name that he had ever picked up.

McPike was a very humble man that never shared what a hero he was to us and many others.

McClure and I finished our fifty missions and returned to the states. Sadly, the co-pilot, Lt. Timpson, and the rest of the crew were all lost on subsequent missions. They were Sgt's Robotcek, Harvey and Mitchell. I am the only one left of the crew.

I flew with great men, some of whom gave their life for our country.



ROUGH RAIDERS
500TH SQUADRON
By: KELLY MCNICHOLS

I once watched a television program on the Boeing B-52. One expert stated that though the plane was designed and built in the mid 1950's, an aircraft built to fit the role of a B-52 today would be a B-52. Nothing could be constructed that fit the mission any better.

I've heard numerous comments from the 345th members that no plane could fly the mission required in the SWPA better than the North American B-25. The role of low level bomber and strafing was no better matched for a plane except the Mitchell. I began to wonder why the plane which was designed in the late 1930's was such an asset in WWII. Even Jimmy

Doolittle recognized this when he selected the B-25 for the first bombing mission to the Japanese mainland April 18, 1942. I know that other planes were tried in the role that eventually was filled by the Mitchell. B-24s, B-17s, A-20s, B-26s and even A-24s were tried at various for the many different missions that were fulfilled by the B-25.

I suppose one needs to go back to the start to understand how this remarkable plane was developed. According to various internet websites dedicated to the plane, the precursor of the B-25 was the NA-40. The NA-40 was designed as a medium bomber in response to US Army Air Corps Proposal Circular #38-385 in March 1938. The NA-40B built for this competition crashed during tests because of pilot error and not design problems. The Douglas entry also crashed causing the Air Corps to rule no contest on the competition.

In March 1939 Proposal #39-640 was issued for a medium bomber. North American revamped its design of the NA-40 into the NA-62. While the NA-40 had placed the pilot and co-pilot in tandem under a canopy that many described as an "upside down bathtub", the NA-62's cockpit was streamlined into the top of the fuselage with the pilots seated side by side. The wing was repositioned from a high position to the mid fuselage that we know today. Even though the submission would lose to the Glenn L. Martin Model 179 design which would eventually become the B-26, Martin did not have the manufacturing capability to produce the 385 planes required. Martin was contracted to build 201 B-26s and North

American received the remainder of the contract for 184 B-25s.

Though the NA-40 bore little resemblance to the B-25, the NA-62 was a close facsimile. One of the main differences was the constant dihedral of 3 degrees from the wing root upward to the tip of the wing. Unfortunately this caused some instability problems and after the tenth plane was built, the inboard portion of the wing was changed to 0 degrees with the portion from the engine nacelle to the tip remaining at 3 degree dihedral. This is the wing conformation that we all recognize today. This explains a lot to me. I know that the Corsair had the inverse gull wings to add propeller clearance while reducing the height of the landing gear. This wasn't the case with the Mitchell. I could never understand the wing shape on the B-25 until now.

According to my research, the shape of the twin vertical tails also went through several transformations. If one views a modern A-10 Warthog, the shape of the tail is reminiscent of the Mitchell. Coincidentally, many of the size specifications are also quite similar.

The original #39-640 specification called for a twin engine aircraft with a bomb load of 3000 pounds, a range of over 2000 miles and capable of a top speed of over 300 mph. Pratt and Whitney 2800, Wright 2600 or 3350 engines were to be used. Undoubtedly, the choice of the Wright 2600 engine was instrumental in the making of the plane the Mitchell would become.

Amazing to me is the fact that the B-25 could be used as a medium bomber, a strafer, an airborne artillery platform and a low level bomber. I know that the A-20

was used by Pappy Gunn early as a straffer. The limited load carrying capability of the Havoc forced Gunn to consider another plane.

According to the book *Pappy Gunn* by Nathaniel Gunn, in a letter to the colonel, North American stated that the B-25 would never be able to fly with the number of 50 caliber Browning machine guns Gunn proposed be fitted into the nose. Gunn responded that he didn't know whether it would work or not but that he had been doing it for months.

I find various numbers for the total number of forward firing Brownings that could be brought to bear against a target. I have heard from pilots and have read that it could be as high as fourteen-eight in the nose, two each in the side blisters and two in the upper turret. This is a tremendous amount of firepower.

Pilots remark that when the G's and H's fired the 75mm cannon, it seemed that the plane stood still for a moment. I understand that firing the cannon was very hard on the airframe. It took many hours of repair after each mission. I have seen photos of what appear to be the cannon barrel hole covered with four 50's line abreast. Did any of the G's and H's have the cannons removed and replaced with machine guns? If so how did this conversion affect the flying characteristics? Undoubtedly, the B-25 was an extremely rugged and reliable plane. The fact that it was able to fly damaged and return to base time and time again speaks volumes. North American produced a tremendous plane but we should never forget contributions from men such as Gunn and other nameless crews in the field. Many of

the modifications were made in response to battle conditions.

I witnessed the love and respect from the pilots and crew for the B-25. Once at the Mid America Air Museum in Liberal, KS Lynn Daker was allowed to sit in the cockpit of the plane painted 498th colors. I saw him caress the plane like an old friend which I believe it was.



Tail rudder of the B-25J "Show Me" painted in 345th colors (Kelly McNichols).

DO YOU REMEMBER JACK HOOPES?

Bill Hoopes, nephew of 1Lt Jack Hoopes of the 499th Squadron Intelligence Section, is looking for information regarding the death of his uncle aboard the B-25 "Slapsy" during a nighttime searchlight training accident that occurred at Nadzab on 9 May 44. If you recall the incident or have any information regarding the accident, Bill can be reached at billyhoopes@yahoo.com.



DO YOU REMEMBER AMOS BRINE?

Charles Brine, son of 500th Squadron turret gunner Amos Brine, is looking for information about the missions and aircraft on which his father flew. S/Sgt Brine was with the 345th from 1943 to 1945. Charles sent the following picture hoping that someone might recognize his father or the location. Charles can be reached at:

Charles Brine
17427 SE 82nd Pecan Terrace
The Villages, FL 32162



Amos Brine on the right with two unidentified individuals, possibly taken in the Philippines.



HEADQUARTERS

By: KEN GASTGEB

PROPAGANDA LEAFLETS

Sometimes, our airplanes would carry along bundles of propaganda leaflets that would be dropped along with the bomb loads. Some leaflets were aimed at getting the local natives to work against the Japanese or instructing them how to assist our downed aircrews. Other leaflets were intended to demoralize the Japanese soldiers.

I picked up this leaflet somewhere along the line and my daughter had it translated. It is dated 14 April 1945 and was produced by the US Forces in Manila.

This issue of the "Parachute News" was intended for the enemy and tells them about the sinking of their battleship Yamato and the death of their Admiral Koga in the Philippines. It goes on to tell them about the huge numbers of new Allied aircraft that were being ferried overseas using a new route between Alaska and Siberia and contrasts this to the loss of 20,000 Japanese airplanes in the past six months.

The leaflet also played upon the enemy soldier's loneliness by telling them that in their homeland, Japanese children were being evacuated from cities to the countryside where the children were suffering greatly due to the lack of heating.

PT BOAT RESTORATION VIDEO

Paul Van Valkenburg sent in this link to a story about a group of WWII vets who restored a PT boat. This is a real piece of history, restored through incredible efforts by a team of fairly senior guys. This is an interesting video to watch. Ctrl-click on the link or type it into your browser to view the five minute video.

<http://videos2view.net/PT658.htm>

TO THE MEN OF THE 345TH

Reprinted from the first issue of the *Apache Pow Wow*, Special Victory Edition, August 1945.

Submitted by: Ken Gastgeb

"With the signing of unconditional surrender by the Japanese, complete victory is now ours in the Pacific. The miracle of the atomic bomb combined with the overwhelming striking power of the American air and naval bombardment proved the final destructive blows in the defeat of the enemy.

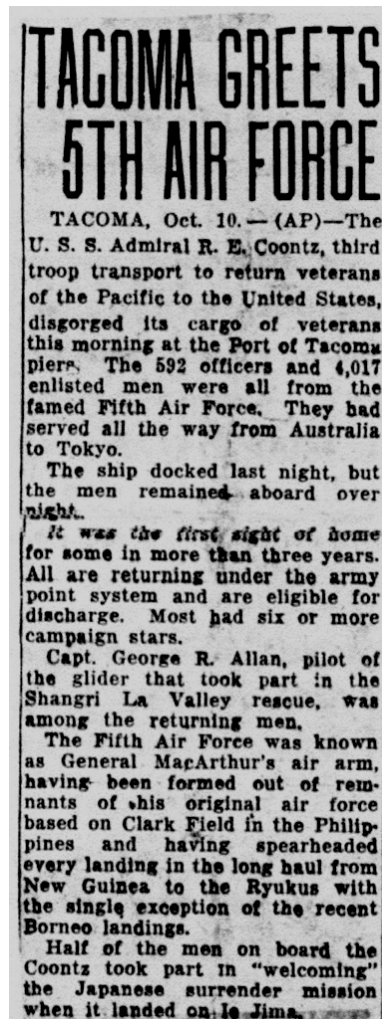
Japan had already been severely crippled by the calculated, systematic cutting of her supply lines and transportation facilities. These actions finally resulted in the isolation of the homeland from the colonial empire and prevented the Japs from obtaining much-needed raw materials for their war production.

Fighting as a team, the 345th Bombardment Group may rightly take much of the credit for doing this specific job. During our months of operations, we

have knocked-out thousands of tons of Jap shipping and thereby contributed greatly to the blockade of Japan.

To all the men of the Group, no matter where they may have fit in to the pattern of our operations goes my sincere appreciation for your active cooperation at all times. Without the individual contribution of each man, the Air Apaches could never have established their enviable reputation as the outstanding bombardment group in the Pacific. We have won the war. Now we may look forward to the peace for which we have sacrificed so much. Good luck to you in the days to come."

Glenn A. Doolittle
Lt. Col., Air Corps
Commanding



This clipping from a Tacoma, WA newspaper announces the homecoming of the 5th Air Force personnel who returned home aboard the USS Coontz in October 1945 (Ken Gastgeb).

345th Bomb Group Reunion Details



Welcome to all our extended family young and old.....

Jan and I have some exciting updates to our plans for our Labor Day Reunion. *Please see below and get your registrations in early!!!!!!*

Headquarters: Renaissance St. Louis Hotel. Convenient access to nearby Edward Jones Dome (Rams football), the Gateway Arch, and Busch Stadium, and yes, the Cardinals are in town. There are many restaurants to choose from plus the City Museum, all located within walking distance. Forest Park is the home of the St Louis Zoo, (free entry), the 4th largest Science museum/planetarium, plus the Missouri Historical Museum. Nearby are the Anheuser Busch Brewery and the Soldier's Memorial. All this information, and more, will be in your welcome packet. Details at: www.marriott.com/hotels/travel/stldt-renaissance-st-louis-grand-hotel/

Scott Air Force Base Home of Air Mobility Command, the 18th Air Force and the 618th Tanker Airlift Control Center. Our tour will include:

- A personalized tour by pilot Major Tom Jackson, of 'his' plane, the KC-135R. The KC-135R has been a mainstay of the Air Force for many years; it can refuel two planes at once while in flight. Lynn Daker had this personal tour & loved every second of interaction with Major Jackson.
- A visit to the Air Mobility Center, the command center where ALL global military flights are monitored. This is reality that appears like a movie set to the non-military observer.
- A demonstration of the use of military dogs in detecting drugs hidden aboard planes.
- Lunch at a local restaurant which supplies the St. Louis area with their peach/apple orchards.

Jefferson Barracks National Cemetery: This is one of our oldest National Cemeteries. Weather permitting, we will be having two fly over's with the B-25J Mitchell from the CAF museum during our visit to the Cemetery. We will have a prayer service during our visit also.

Commemorative Air Force: We've been in contact with the Missouri Wing of the CAF and they are planning something special for us, even we don't know. This is the home of the B-25 "Show Me" which is in 345th colors. Check out their newly updated web site at www.cafmo.org. **Again weather permitting; they are going to give rides to any of our vets that are able to get in and out of the B-25. There is one whole area of their museum dedicated to WW2 information. Besides the B-25J, the Missouri CAF also has a TBM Avenger and an L-3B Defender that they plan to have parked outside their hanger. You will be able to get in and move around in the planes at your leisure.** They have wonderful tours of their hangars, aircraft and museum. The CAF is thrilled to have us in their fair City.

We have a local reporter, from one of the top stations in St Louis, coming to our reunion to interview some of our guys to get their perspective of what happened during those times. Two authors will be attending the reunion; both have interviewed some of you folks.

There are many local sites that you can visit, plenty of great food and something for everyone. We are so excited with all that we are offering and hope that you will enjoy yourselves over the entire weekend.

345th Bomb Group XXIV Reunion, 2011 Registration Form

September 1 – 5, 2011

Renaissance Grand Hotel, St Louis, MO.

Name _____

Name(s) of Spouse/Guest(s) _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Home Phone _____ Cell Phone _____

E-mail _____

Arrival Date _____ Departure Date _____ Squadron No. _____

Make sure you check out our description page of each exciting trip and what each has to offer, we have some great and exciting things lined up.

Registration Fee:	No. Persons _____ X \$35.00 = _____
Friday PM: Welcome to St Louis in Hospitality:	No. Persons _____ X \$10.00 = _____
Saturday AM: Scott Air Force Base & Lunch after Must be 14 years of age to enter SAFB	No. Persons _____ X \$30.00 = _____
Tour Saturday afternoon: Jefferson Barracks and Cemetery. (An "extra")	No. Persons _____ X \$00.00 = _____
Tour: Sunday early Afternoon: CAF (An "extra") www.cafmo.org	No. Persons _____ X \$10.00 = _____
Sunday Evening: Closing Banquet: _____ Pork _____ Chicken _____ Fish	No. Persons _____ X \$40.00 = _____
	Grand Total = \$ _____

DEADLINE for registration forms: 8-1-2011

PLEASE COMPLETE THIS REGISTRATION FORM AND MAIL IT ALONG WITH YOUR CHECK TO:

345th Bomb Group

Diane Brauer

2795 15th Ave

Marion, IA 52302

Cell: 319-360-6463 debrauer@yellowbook.com

MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO: 345th BOMB GROUP

Remember to make your own hotel reservations at:

1-800-Hotels-1 (or 314-621-9700) Group Name: HPN WWII Veterans

BULLETIN BOARD

IN MEMORY OF:

The members of the 345th Bomb Group Association extend our sincere condolences to the families of our departed members and friends:

Max B. Ferguson (499th) 3 January 2011 Charleston, IL

Charles K. Dusenberry (500th) 23 January 2011 Whitewood, SD

Victor A. Grasso (500th) 11 February 2011 Freehold, NJ

Stanley R. Muniz (500th) 9 March 2011 San Jose, CA

Robert K. Scudder (500th) 11 March 2011 Riverside, CA

William A. Baker (500th) 16 March 2011 Miami, FL

Jay W. Moore (501st) 4 April 2011 Sanford, NC

Stanley R. DeRight (499th) 7 April 2011 Portage, MI

Albert W. Holm (500th) 19 April 2011 Cook, MN

Ralph W. Kunkle (501st) 21 April 2011 Lehighton, PA

Rex Reheis (500th) 29 April 2011 Atlanta, GA

2011 AIR APACHE REUNION STUFF



commemorate the St. Louis reunion?

Wish you had a new t-shirt or ball cap with the 2011 reunion graphic printed on it? Maybe you'd like a coffee mug to

Reunion wear and souvenirs can be ordered online from the 345th Bomb Group store at www.zazzle.com/345thbombgrp*

The reunion artwork features a B-25 flying in front of the St. Louis Arch and is the result of the efforts of reunion co-host Diane Brauer. 100% of the proceeds from sales will go to help fund our association.

T-shirts start at \$16.95 for XL or smaller in white. The color and size can be customized to match your wishes. Mugs start at \$13.95. The website frequently offers discounts or free shipping.

THE PRESIDENTIAL UNIT CITATION

Submitted by: Vic Tatelman

*For Action over the Admiralty Islands,
February 29, 1944*

This Squadron was designated on that date to help provide air support for the strategically important landing at Los Negros, Admiralty Islands. During the night preceding the mission all sections of the Squadron worked to perfect every detail of the operation and to ready the aircraft for flight. After take-off the next morning, the formation encountered such turbulent weather approximately half way to the target that the crews would have been justified in turning back to the base; however, that the success of the landing operations might well depend on their aerial support, they pushed on, relying entirely upon their instruments. By dint of expert piloting and flawless navigation of Lt. James Mahaffey, they made their way to the target, the only squadron to get through to prepare for the ground assault.

As barges laden with troops and supplies began moving forward, the bombers, under the leadership of Lt. Victor Tatelman, made their initial strike at the landing area and carried out three bombing and strafing runs with telling effect. These attacks were especially hazardous because poor visibility made it necessary that the operations be

conducted under a bare 200-foot ceiling. They did not cease until the barges were on the shore and the weather had closed in to such an extent that the target area was completely obscured.

Of the seventeen 500-pound bombs dropped, every one hit in the target area. When the ground troops landed, the battered and demoralized enemy hastily withdrew from their prepared positions.

This operation was a reconnaissance in force and was carried out by American troops far inferior in numbers to the Jap forces defending the island. The successful establishment of a beach-head and the consequent occupation of the island were made possible by the energetic air attacks which drove the enemy into the jungle away from the beach-head area. The success of this strike reflects great credit on the gallantry and airmanship of the bomber crews in carrying out their attacks in the face of almost impenetrable tropical weather conditions. The devotion to duty displayed by all personnel of the 499th Bombardment Squadron reflects great credit on themselves and the military service.

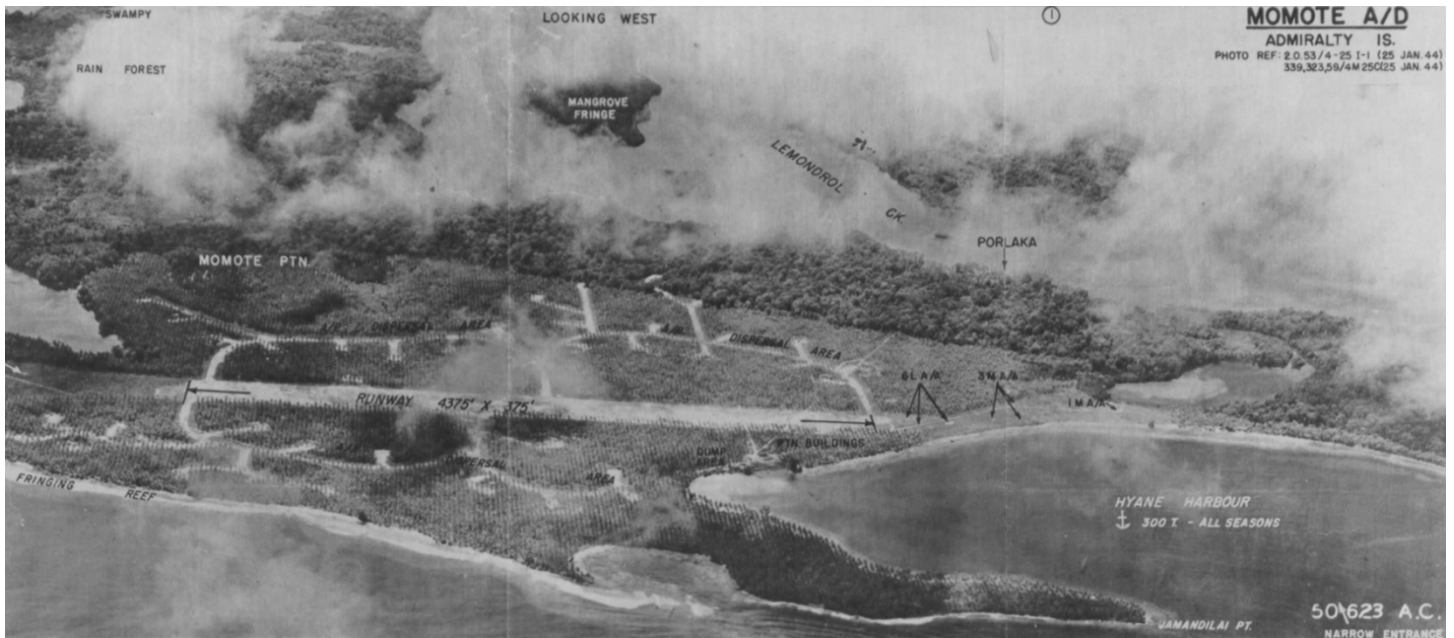


The invasion of Los Negros, Admiralty Islands was launched against the beaches in the harbor near the north end of Momote airdrome, pictured here (image from footnote.com).

A CORRECTION

The memoir reprinted as the 498th Squadron page in the March 2011 *Strafer* should have been attributed to Joseph A. Solomon. My apologies go out to Joseph and his son, Robert, for the oversight.

I encourage anyone with memoirs of their time with the 345th to submit excerpts to the *Strafer* for publication. I also encourage everyone to take the time to record their memories of their WW2 service in either written or audio format.



Another view of Momote airdrome on Los Negros, Admiralty Islands looking west. The invasion forces landed on the beaches inside Hyane Harbor in the bottom right of the photo. The 345th supported the ground troops throughout the entire invasion by bombing and strafing targets of opportunity and targets identified by our liaison teams (images from footnote.com).

A nurse stationed in the Admiralty Islands during the successful invasion. She was one of the thousands of women who served during WW2 mentioned in Jim Bina's article.



A bomb skips over a camouflaged Japanese airplane on Los Negros, Admiralty Islands during the campaign to drive the enemy from the airdrome and off the island chain.



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