

“AIR APACHES”

STRAFER

NADZAB

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The 345th flew many successful missions against enemy shipping, as shown in this strike photo taken off Swatow, China. We have received several requests for information from family members of one downed 498th aircrew that participated in that strike. The airplane was piloted by Cpt. Albin V. Johnson and was shot down on 6 April 1945. Thanks to Everett Hatcher for providing this strike photo taken during that mission. The original photo for the masthead was supplied by Duffy Soto.



PRESIDENT'S CORNER

By: Jim Bina

The new 345th web site was launched mid-April. It looks great with many thanks to Elizabeth Callahan, our web designer. Together with Paul Van Valkenburg she was able to pull this monstrous task together and give the group a great looking site. The link is www.345thbombgroup.org. We have been able to add much of the data that was on the previous web site but we have also added additional pages for new information. Don't be alarmed if you come upon an empty page, the web site is still under construction but operational. Just consider it a work in progress. Enjoy our new site!!

As I mentioned in the previous Strafer, if you are considering attending Reunion XXV, I highly encourage you to make your hotel reservations early! It's a football weekend in Columbia. The University of South Carolina Gamecocks are hosting the Arkansas Razorbacks in Columbia the very same weekend of our reunion. That means that hotel rooms will become scarce! The hotel number is on the registration form, call early!

I've recently become intrigued with the continued history of the 345th after it was deactivated in 1945. I had heard that the story of the Air Apaches continued well into the 1950's, but through internet searches only a scant bit of information was available. What I did find readily available was that the 345th was reactivated as the 345th Bomb Wing

(Tactical) in 1954 at Langley Field, Virginia. Initially, the 4400th Combat Crew Training Group was activated by Tactical Air Command on 22 June 1954 at Langley AFB, Virginia. The provisional unit's mission was to receive the new Martin B-57B Canberra tactical bomber and conduct proficiency training and maintenance crew checkouts on the new aircraft. The provisional unit was re-designated as the 345th Bombardment Group (Tactical) on 19 July and the four World War II squadrons were reactivated. The 345th was the first USAF unit to become fully operational with the B-57B.

The reactivated 345th trained to maintain combat proficiency in locating, attacking, and destroying targets from all



altitudes and under all conditions of weather and light. The service of the B-57 in tactical bomb groups was brief as the decision was made to phase out the B-57 in favor of supersonic tactical fighter-bombers. Group was activated to Wing status on 8 October 1957.

The 345th BW was about to deactivate at Langley AFB when one of its squadrons had to be hastily deployed in July 1958 to Incirlik Air Base in Turkey to make a show of force in response to a crisis in Lebanon. They stayed there three months. After the Lebanon crisis was defused, the B-57Bs were returned to Langley AFB.

The deactivation of the 345th BW was further delayed by a crisis in the Taiwan Straits. In August 1958, Mainland Chinese

forces began bombarding the Nationalist-held island of Quemoy. In late August, the 345th BG sent a detachment of B-57Bs to Okinawa to stay on alert just in case mainland forces tried to invade Taiwan. Fortunately, the crisis soon cooled and hostilities were averted, and the 345th BG returned to the USA to begin deactivation. This was completed in June 1959, and the unit was inactivated on 25 June.

The above history is what is “out there” about the reactivation of the 345th. But I figured that there had to be more to the story, it just can’t end there. So I contacted the historian at Langley Air Force Base and after an extensive search to include the Tactical Air Command library and the Air Force Museum, there is nothing. I queried the historian about that and he said that typically when a unit deactivates they have the option of creating a memorial book and archiving a few notable items. However it seems that this is not the case as the unit left virtually nothing but memories. The historian did find a 1954 Langley yearbook (back when they published those great books) and he did send me some copies of the 345th photos and the logo that you see here. I will get those posted on the web site shortly. I wonder what did happen to all the documentation that normally is generated by an active duty unit. As an optimist I hope that those documents are still in someone’s closet.



The search continues, perhaps I can enlist some of those great history searchers you see on TV. If anyone has more information

on the details of what the 345th did during the 1950’s please contact me as I am collecting this information to complete the history of the 345th.



HEADQUARTERS

By: Ken Gastgeb

A week or so ago I talked with our Apache Princess, Joan Leslie, and asked her to write an article for the *Strafer*. She responded with the following message to the members of the 345th Bomb Group:

“May 1, 2012

Warmest Greetings from your “Apache Princess” to the wonderful guys of the 345th Bomb Group! Congratulations on your 25th reunion to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the founding of the 345th! What great reminiscing there will be at the Columbia Air Force Base where many of you received your training!

I have been re-reading Lawrence Hickey’s superb account, Warpath Across the Pacific. It’s an amazing history of all that you men accomplished. So many of you signed my copy, which makes it a real treasure for me.

I was so proud to have been associated with you as your mascot, and am grateful to Ken Gastgeb, who came up with the idea and contacted me so long ago. He has faithfully kept me informed about your doings over all these years.

I would love to be with you, renewing old acquaintances and getting a look at those magnificent B-25’s, but unfortunately my health will not permit.

*I'll be with you in spirit at Owens Field and
at your wonderful banquet.*

*With all good wishes and love,
Joan Leslie, your Apache Princess"*

I also talked with Doc Pearson the other day. He and his wife are getting along just fine. Pauline Ouellette called me one day and we had a nice talk about the past and present.

You all take care and be careful.
God Bless.



FALCONS
498TH SQUADRON
By: Frazer
Dougherty

FIRST REPLACEMENT CREWS

I was in class 43-C graduating from Ellington Field, TX. I married soon after and reported to Columbia AAB, SC for B-25 training. Almost immediately we were assigned crews. My crew consisted of Lt. Foley as co-pilot, and Sergeants Moon, Strickland, Teal and Chittenden as crew. We flew together until we received orders to report to San Francisco for overseas assignment. There, we were loaded onto a packed B-24 and headed for New Guinea by way of Hawaii, Christmas Island, Brisbane, Australia, boarded a train to Townsville then flew by DC-3 to Port Moresby. We were assigned to the 345th BG, 498th Squadron and were among their first replacement crews.

My first mission was as co-pilot for Col. Coltharp but I then got my own plane and flew with my original crew.

Wewak was our least liked target because we faced fire from the mountains as we descended to the airstrip in line abreast formation. I have a vivid memory of the mission where Capt. Kizzire crash landed near the mouth of the Sepik River and all the crew were seen but then never rescued.

I remember missions to Rabaul and then our mission to New Ireland where we lost several planes and all of the crews were picked up by a PBY.

The most dramatic mission I remember was our last mission to Wewak. Wewak, we were told, was on its last legs; it was finished; it was to be a milk run; not to worry! We went up the valley all the way, flying in formations of three. Then, on signal, we formed into our squadron nine plane abreast formation and wheeled the formation clockwise so that by the time we were atop the hills just south of the strip we were in line ready to dive down the side of the hills to strafe and bomb the strip.

Apparently, the top Zero squadron had been sent to Wewak to bolster their morale. To this day I have never witnessed such flying. Jap fighters flying vertically both up and down, some crashing into the side of the mountain, some doing a 180 and going straight back up, planes everywhere, at one point a Zero flew upside down only inches away directly over us.

Then it was over. We had fired our eight guns, stayed in formation, dropped our bombs and were gone over the water racing to reform and head home.

After 63 missions, I was transferred to HQ, 5th AF in Brisbane where I mostly flew Gen. Sverdrup to Hollandia for engineering of the airstrips. I always say that we spent more time in the combat zone than while with the 498th.

Later, I was shipped back to the States and assigned as pilot and aide to Gen. Hunter, CG 1st AF at Mitchell Field, NY.

On my 63 missions, my engines always started, I never aborted a mission, and never had any mishap from ground or air fire, though we did find holes in the airplane after we had landed. My only accident was from a research trip by foot into the jungle near the airstrip where I contracted a bad poison ivy-type rash and two-week grounding by Capt. Blumenthal.



BATS OUTA HELL

499TH SQUADRON

By: Bob Sweet

PILOTS OVER THE PINES

(A review of a magazine article by Carlyle Holt in the September – October 1943 issue of Skyline Magazine: the house publication of North American Aviation. Reviewed by Bob Sweet, nephew of S/Sgt. Andrew Chesanek, 499th)

While going through some WW II magazines at a second-hand book store, this article and its date-line caught my eye.

The article begins by pointing out, “the famous B-25 medium bomber, put out by North American, was king at that broad

expanse of an air field.” The bombardment squadron at Columbia trained full crews as replacements, ready for combat after completing four-to-eight months training. On average every crew member would have 200 hours in the air before leaving Columbia in addition to a great deal of ground work.

Bombing was the stock-in-trade for these planes so they practiced high altitude, low altitude, skip bombing, and strafing. Navigators got practice in cross country flights, but most of the bombing training was situated on Lake Murray. This artificial lake was a short 30 mile hop from Columbia and shaped like a splash on the floor. Every range was littered with blue cases of practice bombs (exact duplicates of service bombs – but only a few pounds of powder to emit smoke as a marker).

An interesting sidelight in the article noted that on longer flights a number of returning planes reported that they were low on fuel near Daytona Beach, Fla. These crews radioed that they would land, spend a couple of hours, re-fuel, and continue on to Columbia. Senior officers became suspicious that the existence of a camp containing several thousand WACs at that locality had something to do with it.

Landings to re-fuel were the exception. These men took their job seriously and knew that in a few weeks they would be doing this in some far part of the world. These pilots, navigators, bombardiers, and gunners knew their ship and the task at hand. Turret gunners had a little fun shooting clay pigeons at a skeet range. However, they had to master handling the turret and the gun. Every crew member had to master the high

requirements demanded – or they did not fly in the B-25.



ROUGH RAIDERS

500TH SQUADRON

By: Kelly McNichols

Most in the 345th BG Association know of Lt. Nathan Gordon's exploits on February 15, 1944 which resulted in the awarding of the Medal of Honor for his actions. If you aren't familiar with the story, Lt. Gordon landed four times near Kavieng Harbor under enemy fire in his PBY Catalina named "Arkansas Traveler" and picked up 15 men from the water. His bravery and that of the crew can't be overestimated.

There are other individuals with ties to the 345th BG that many of us might not be as familiar with. On August 18, 1943, Maj. Ralph Cheli of the 38th BG, 405th BS led a group of B-25's to attack Dagua Airdrome near Wewak. Maj. Cheli's plane went down in the attack. The citation from the Medal of Honor website (www.cmoh.org) reads:

"For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity above and beyond the call of duty in action with the enemy. While Maj. Cheli was leading his squadron in a dive to attack the heavily defended Dagua Airdrome, intercepting enemy aircraft centered their fire on his plane, causing it to burst into flames while still 2 miles from the objective. His speed would have enabled him to gain necessary altitude to parachute to safety, but this action would have resulted in his formation becoming disorganized and exposed to the enemy.

Although a crash was inevitable, he courageously elected to continue leading the attack in his blazing plane. From minimum altitude, the squadron made a devastating bombing and strafing attack on the target. The mission completed, Maj. Cheli instructed his wingman to lead the formation and crashed into the sea."



Maj. Cheli was taken prisoner and executed on March 6, 1944. He was awarded the Medal of Honor October, 28 1943. His remains are interred at Jefferson Barracks, Missouri, Section 78 Grave 930-934 along with those of 345th BG 501st BS radio operator TSgt John M. Barron, gunner S/Sgt William C. Harris and engineer Sgt. Michael H Kicera. Also in the grave are the remains of 500th BS pilot Donald L. Stookey and co-pilot 2Lt. Herschel D. Evans. The remains of 21 individuals are at this site.

The 345th BG had an individual who was recommended for the MOH. Even though the award was reduced to the Distinguished Service Cross, the nation's second highest honor, many may not know of the account of the 501st BS Capt. John Manders. According to Hickey's book, Capt. Manders was flying a B-25 coincidentally named the same as Gordon's plane, *Arkansas Traveler*, on an air strike near Hansa Bay January 30, 1944.

Merchant ships were spotted and Manders' plane was hit by anti-aircraft fire and crashed into the water a mere 100 yards beyond the target. The recommendation for the MOH was written from a perspective which indicated that Manders had crashed into the ship. Further review with information from others witnessing the event reduced the award. Capt. Manders should be remembered for this action in any event.

I'd like to relate the story of another individual. 2Lt. Robert Hibbs was awarded the Medal of Honor posthumously on February 24, 1967. His citation from www.cmoh.org reads:

"For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of life above and beyond the call of duty. 2d Lt. Hibbs was in command of a 15-man ambush patrol of the 2d Battalion, when his unit observed a company of Viet Cong advancing along the road toward the 2d Battalion's position. Informing his command post by radio of the impending attack, he prepared his men for the oncoming Viet Cong, emplaced 2 mines in their path and, when the insurgents were within 20 feet of the patrol's position, he fired the 2 antipersonnel mines, wounding or killing half of the enemy company. Then, to cover the withdrawal of his patrol, he threw hand grenades, stepped onto the open road, and opened fire on the remainder of the Viet Cong force of approximately 50 men. Having rejoined his men, he was leading them toward the battalion perimeter when the patrol encountered the rear elements of another Viet Cong patrol company deployed to attack the battalion. With the advantage of surprise,

he directed a charge against the Viet Cong, which carried the patrol through the insurgent force, completely disrupting its attack. Learning that a wounded patrol member was wandering in the area between the 2 opposing forces and although moments from safety and wounded in the leg himself, he and a sergeant went back to the battlefield to recover the stricken man. After they maneuvered through the withering fire of 2 Viet Cong machine guns, the sergeant grabbed the dazed soldier and dragged him back toward the friendly lines while 2d Lt. Hibbs remained behind to provide covering fire. Armed with only an M-16 rifle and a pistol, but determined to destroy the enemy positions, he then charged the 2 machine gun emplacements and was struck down. Before succumbing to his mortal wounds, he destroyed the starlight telescopic sight attached to his rifle to prevent its capture and use by the Viet Cong. 2d Lt. Hibbs's profound concern for his fellow soldiers, and his intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty are in the highest traditions of the U.S. Army and reflect great credit upon himself and the Armed Forces of his country."

2Lt. Hibbs is the brother of Bill Hibbs, son-in-law of past 500th BS Association President Lynn Daker. Additional information can be viewed at: <http://www.virtualwall.org/dh/HibbsRJ01a.ht>

There has been a total of 3458 Medal of Honor recipients. Private Jacob Parrott was awarded the first on March 25, 1863 and Sergeant Dakota Meyer was

awarded the latest on September 15, 2011.
There are 81 living recipients.



BLACK PANTHERS

501st SQUADRON

**By: Paul Van
Valkenburg**

After all these years can you believe that we are still finding members of the 345th who were not aware that our organization existed? I received a call from Malcolm Savage out in California who told me that he located an old crew member of his, Charles Tomager. Charles is from the Albany, NY area and is the latest member to find their way back home to the 345th. Malcolm is hoping he can get Charles to attend this year's reunion with him.

Speaking of this year's reunion, can you believe it's been 70 years since this organization was founded? I hope all you members who have taken the past few reunions off are all rested up and ready to come back and celebrate this special occasion. I'm hoping that we can have a strong showing for the 501st. Bring along some photos from past reunions and we'll remember the good old days and raise a toast to those who gave us so many terrific memories but have since passed on. Let's honor their memory by having a big turnout! Oh, and don't forget to invite all the second, third, and even fourth generation family!

I've had several chats with Jerry Chealander recently. He sent me a story about a couple close calls he had while with the 501st. It is printed below. It

reminds me that all of you have stories to tell and I hope you make an effort to record some of them and pass them on to us.

Mike Buchkoski from the 500th has done an awesome job of designing a reunion T-shirt for the Group. Check out the design printed elsewhere in this edition of the Strafer. If you are interested in ordering one let me know so we can give him a count. T-shirts can be ordered with the front design specific to each squadron.

A CLOSE CALL

By: Jerry Chealander (501st)

During my tour of duty with the 345th, my B-25 was hit by flak and/or machine gun bullets on 9 separate missions. On one sortie, the navigator was killed and the flight engineer wounded by a 40MM anti-aircraft shell that burst over the top turret, shattering the Plexiglas and peppering the back of the pilot seats. Another burst in the right wing area tore a hole just outboard of the fuel tanks and ripped off the right aileron. Copilot Chuck Marsden and I were not injured and we managed to get the plane back to the emergency strip at the Laoag, Northern Luzon, from the target on Formosa. This was not the close call referred to. That took place in my tent on Ie Shima a month or so later.

My copilot, Art Kness from Taft, California, and I were sitting astraddle a cot playing Gin Rummy. Another copilot, Don Tripp, from Omaha, Nebraska, was sitting on his cot nearby preparing to clean his .45 automatic. Don apparently had his finger on the trigger as he pulled the slide back to clear the weapon. He released the slide, putting a shell into the firing

chamber, and the gun went off. The bullet passed so close to my head that it grazed the hair on my temple. That was close and it would have been an inglorious way to end a combat tour. I'm sure that my five children, ten grand-children and their offspring are as happy as I that it missed.

HOME COMING

By: Joseph Solomon (498th)

In August, 1945, the War was over and by the middle of September our orders arrived for return to the United States. I was now 27 years old, having entered the service at the age of 23. Three of the four years were spent overseas in the Southwest Pacific. It was time to go home.

We were flown in B-25s from Ie Shima to Okinawa and from there in C-47's to Manila, Philippines. We were told we would be in the Philippines for about a week until a troop ship arrived to take us back state-side. There were so many men returning home, troop ships were a scarce commodity. Nevertheless, in short time our ship arrived in Manila Harbor. We boarded and "set sail" for home. This proved to be another two week voyage, because of the danger of attack by the Japanese submarines. They refused to believe Japan had surrendered. Our ship was loaded to capacity with about 5000 servicemen aboard. Fortunately the men from our outfit stayed together.

When the weather was good, we spent the days on deck. All we could see was water all around us, but in the distance we saw two naval ships escorting us.

Our bunks were cots, three high down in the hold. The showers were saltwater which left us pretty sticky. Our

meals were in large mess halls below deck and because of the incessant rolling of the ship, we had to eat standing up to a long counter. This was standard procedure aboard ships.

While on deck our conversation was mostly about how life was going to be when we got home again. The ship couldn't move fast enough. Each day we gathered together on deck looking eastward, wondering who would be first to sight land. We had been issued life vests which we had to wear at all times and we would undergo life boat drills at odd hours during the day or night.

If truth could be told, no one knew what awaited us at home. Everyone had a story about how it was going to be for him, but you could sense the feeling that not one of us was confident of the future. I had misgivings, because I really didn't have a home when I left. I had been working in Montpelier, Vermont and for two years I lived in a three-dollar-per-week room.

One early morning, towards the end of the second week, the coastline was sighted and did it ever look good! There was a lot of excitement on board, with music coming out all the speakers and everyone in a joyful mood.

Our ship finally reached the shoreline and entered Puget Sound for the trip to Tacoma, Washington. By late afternoon we docked and 5000 men rushed to the shore side to get a closer look. We thought the boat would tip over! At any rate, we finally disembarked and lined up on shore waiting for the trucks to transport us to Fort Lewis where we would remain until a troop train was available for the ride to the East coast. To our great surprise, after we were in the trucks, the

drivers proceeded to Ft. Lewis via a short detour down the main street of Tacoma for a ticker tape parade. This was a first for us and it was exciting.



Waiting for truck transportation in Tacoma. Joseph Solomon is pictured fourth from the left.

Three days later we were on troop trains heading east. Our first stop was in Lincoln, Nebraska, where some cars were shifted to another track to take the southbound men home. It was difficult to say goodbye to my three closest friends who were making the change to go to their respective homes in Texas, South Carolina, and Arkansas. It was hard to believe, after three years overseas, we were heading home. It took us about five days to make the trip and finally we arrived at Camp Devens, in Ayer, Mass. from whence it all started.

It was eight pm when we arrived at Devens, only to find that there was no room available at the Fort for the servicemen from this train. The overcrowded condition at the Camp was due to the sudden ending of hostilities and the return of thousands of servicemen within a few weeks of the war's end.

The men from our train were advised to go directly home and return in two weeks for our official discharge and

back pay. The Base arranged to have limos, taxis, even private cars available to take us home. Since it was late at night, five of us going to Vermont hired a cab and went home in style. The first stop the cab made was in Bennington, then Rutland and arrived in Burlington at about one A.M. The driver had one more stop on his way back. The fare was \$15.00 per man which was very reasonable. I had to wake my father to borrow the \$15.00 to pay the driver. They were on their way and my father and I stayed up a couple of hours. There was so much I wanted to know about what happened during the years I was away.

It was great to be home! In the service we talked about what we were going to do when we returned. We made so many imaginary plans. We all seemed to have the same hopes for a new life. About a week after my return, I started to get restless. The euphoria had lasted about a week. It seemed like something was missing and I realized I missed the service, missed all the buddies I spent the last three years with, even missed the tents, the outdoor living and the army chow. Where were those dreams that we'd had back in New Guinea and the Philippines?

I was at loose ends. Burlington had gone through many changes since I left and was still in the throes of shortages. Ration stamps were used for just about everything. Some of the fellows I knew never made it back and the ones that did became recluses and restless like myself. This is when I learned that it was harder to adjust to our return than it was to adjust to the Service. I recalled that the largest problem I had was I just didn't know what I wanted to do. After four years of having

your life planned by others, this sudden independence was frightening.

But I knew I was fortunate. I had a family to rejoin and an opportunity for a new beginning. As time passed, I adjusted as most of us did. I found that a part of that adjustment was to make my memories of the war and my time in the Southwest Pacific a part of my new life.

WITH THE 345TH

By: Frank Blauvelt, Jr. (500th)

When the 345th Bomb group was activated November 11, 1942, I was just 30 days away from my 18th birthday. I knew I would be called to duty so I had already made arrangements for the Air Force to take me when I turned 18. Thus, in Feb 1943 I was sworn in and was to become a meteorologist. I reported to Fort MacArthur in Long Beach for the usual round of shots, physicals, and an IQ test. The latter was to plague me throughout my service. For some reason I scored very high and consequently was sent to school after school after school for the next two years. Finally, in December of 1944, I graduated from an advanced electronics school in Boca Raton, Florida after learning all there was to learn about anti-radar detection systems in airplanes.

I was immediately sent to Hamilton Air Force Base in Marin County, California for transfer overseas. Here I waited and waited and waited. One morning a jeep pulled up to my barracks, a sergeant hopped out and called for Frank Blauvelt. I said that I was that person whereupon the sergeant said, "fill this small knapsack with the bare essentials, dump the rest in the jeep and make it quick." I did as I was told and we headed for the airstrip. I said,

"What happens to all the rest of my stuff". "I will turn it in for you", was the reply. I was then ushered to a B-24 where I was astonished to find a bomber completely redone inside to resemble a plush transport with huge leather seats, tables, cup holders, etc. I was also surprised to find that my fellow passengers were captains, majors and colonels. I was the only corporal in the bunch. Off we went landing 10 hours later at Hickam Field in Hawaii. There we got a new crew, refilled the tanks, had a quick warm meal, and again we were airborne. I've lost my notes, but as I remember we also stopped at Howland Island and Tarawa for fuel, finally landing at Biak. From there, I was eventually sent to Tacloban where the 345th took such a beating while waiting on ships in the bay. I was accused of being AWOL because I had no papers. They didn't get on the plane with me at some point. I argued that if I was AWOL, I would have hopped a plane to the States and not to the Philippines. This seemed to make sense to the CO as he marked something on several pieces of paper saying, 'draw one.' I did and it said 500th squadron, 345th Bomb Group. I was promptly put on another plane and dumped off at another base, which was not entirely devoid of Japanese at that time. I was put on another C-46 and off we went, 20 or 30 feet off the ground until we reached the hills guarding San Marcelino which is where I finally became an Air Apache.

All my training was of no use to the 500th as none of the planes had radar blocking electronics so I worked repairing radios and training gunners to be radiomen as well. Again, because of my training, I was sent to New Guinea to study

the LORAN navigation system - another waste of time. While away the group moved to Ie Shima, which spawned my most vivid memories. One evening the First Sergeant came into our tent and said, "Blauvelt, we have a huge storm coming and I have to go out to the line so you are to stay at headquarters and watch things." Such a storm I never saw before or since. Sheets of corrugated metal were flying everywhere along with any growing thing and most of our tents. For some reason headquarters stayed intact. Hour after hour I sat there not daring to shut my eyes. I started taking pills to keep me awake but they didn't do much until about 36 hours later when the winds and rain moved on and I was able to hit the sack. Then I was wide awake. Our tent was leaning about 45 degrees and there was not an ounce of color left in the fabric.

My other greatest memory had to be standing on the line watching those three Betty bombers coming in to offload the officers who were chosen to go on to Manila and work out the details of signing of a peace Treaty with General MacArthur.

I must say, I have great respect for the men who started in South Carolina and fought their way through the entire Pacific operation. Those who were never there cannot imagine what those men endured and they deserve our heartfelt thanks.

I am proud to have served the 500th, if just for a short time.

REMEMBER MICHAEL TALBOT?

"I'm looking for any info you might have about my dad, Michael P. Talbot, who was in the 498th (Falcon) Squadron on a plane with tail # 1055. He was the chief radio operator for the escort for Japanese

Peace Mission to Ie Shima on a different plane. I have extensive pictures from his entire service and an original Commemorative booklet of that mission. What I don't have is a lot of info on the plane. Walter Treadwell was the pilot of # 1055, Bob Mayerson was co-pilot and Warren Lipman was navigator. John Cochran and John Cohen that were on the plane as gunners, I think, at different times. My dad was the radio operator/tail gunner. Anything you have or know about would be greatly appreciated.

*Thanks much,
Jeff Talbot"*

REMEMBER JAMES RICHARDSON?

"I am writing for more information on my husband's uncle, S/Sgt. James R. Richardson. He was KIA on March 28, 1945. He was a tail gunner on a 501st B-25. I found the accident report on pages 85-86 in the mission narratives from early 1945. He was the only crewmember lost after the airplane ditched off the coast near My Thanh, Indochina.

Our contact information is Jim and Rachel Richardson, 21 Hodil Road, Grove City, PA 16127. Our email address is jimnrachel_richardson@embarqmail.com. Our telephone number is 724-748-3858. Thank you for any information you can provide.

*Sincerely,
Rachel Richardson"*

REMEMBER MARION G. COLLIER?

This request was received from Terry Carpenter, nephew of the late S/Sgt Collier of the 498th Squadron.

"I am researching my maternal uncle's service in WW2 and hope your members might be able to help me fill in a few blanks.

He flew 38 missions with the 498th and perished on 6 April 1945 while flying as a member of Cpt. Albin V. Johnson's crew.

He first came to the 498th as the tailgunner on Lt Roland Lamb's crew and flew most of his missions with him. He was wounded during the Japanese attack on the USS Nelson in the Philippines.

I'd be grateful for any information from people who know of him or might have flown with him.

Thank you."



S/Sgt Marion Gale Collier (498th)

COLUMBIA PLANS ARE COMING TOGETHER

Almost every day, the mail brings another registration for the upcoming 70th Anniversary celebration and we are excited to see the interest! The reunion of the 345th Bomb Group that was founded at the Columbia Army Air Base on November 11, 1942, will be held on November 9-12, 2012. This will also be Reunion XXV of the group. Veterans from the Falcons, Bats Outa Hell, Rough Raiders, and Black Panthers, their families and descendants, WWII historians, and guests will gather in Columbia for the reunion.



Swimming at Sesquicentennial State Park

We are hoping that the veterans who attend will remember their time in Columbia, flying across the South Carolina landscape, perhaps watching an athletic event at the University of South Carolina, or attending local dances and going to movies. Many veterans also spent time at Greenville Army Air Base. Do you remember skip-bombing practice at Lake Issaqueena, the base radio shows hosted by Norvin Duncan, or the hospitality of area churches and residents? At this year's reunion we hope to bring back memories

of South Carolina during the years 345th veterans were stationed there.

The trip to Owens Field is a must. A B-25C that crashed into Lake Greenwood, and is the only known intact aircraft used to train airmen in low-level strafing, sits in the historic Curtiss Wright Hangar there. The SC Historic Aviation Foundation, which is seeking funding for the plane's restoration, has an interesting video and story about this plane on their internet site: <http://www.schistoricaviation.org/>



Basketball at the University of South Carolina

Our planning committee is working to recruit interesting speakers for the educational sessions and Rachel Haynie, author of "Cornfield to Airfield: A History of Columbia Army Air Base," has agreed to serve on a panel about "Columbia During the War." We're still waiting for information from the Columbia Mayor's office about the Veteran's Day Parade—and how our veteran members can be recognized.

Fritz Hamer, from the Caroliniana Library at the University of South Carolina where our opening reception will be held, has already begun the research for the exhibit we will view there. Plans are

underway for an historical marker recognizing the achievements and sacrifices of the 345th Veterans.



Local dances were well attended by servicemen.

Be sure to make your hotel reservation early and plan to join us in Columbia. We look forward to seeing you in November.



Ray Link with a CAAB trainer

Thanks to Rachel Haynie for the vintage CAAB activity photos and to John Turner (great-nephew of Ray Link) for the B-25 trainer photo.

Mary and Clint Roby

345th Bomb Group Association Reunion—2012

Columbia, SC

Thursday, November 8	Friday, November 9	Saturday, November 10	Sunday, November 11	Monday, November 12
Attendees Arrive	Breakfast: Hotel Restaurant	Breakfast: Hotel Restaurant	Breakfast: Hotel Restaurant	Breakfast: Hotel Restaurant
Plan is for the B-25's to arrive today and for some Vets to be able to go on flights this afternoon.	Morning: Educational Sessions I and II ~35 in each session <i>These sessions will be held at the hotel</i>	Morning: Veterans Day Parade in Downtown Columbia 11 a.m. (Members of the 345 th may participate)	Morning: Marker Dedication at Columbia Airport or other location B-25 flyover (B-25's depart)	Attendees Depart
All meals this day are on your own.	Lunch: Box lunches on the bus to Owens Field or at Owens Field	Lunch: Lunch with a Speaker at the Educational Session Site	Lunch: At a Local Restaurant or American Legion Post, possibly Bar-b-cue	
May need transportation to Owens Field.	Afternoon: Tour B-25's at Owens Field Airport with opportunity for Vets to fly	Afternoon: Educational Sessions III and IV ~35 in each session; will be held at the Educational Session Site (to be determined) <i>(Educational Sessions & Dinner on your own could be switched, depending on the time of the football game, which is not yet set)</i>	Afternoon: Squadron Business Meetings (498, 499, 500,501) 345 th Bomb Group Annual Business Meeting (~50-60 people) <i>At the Hotel</i>	
Evening: 345 th Executive Committee Meeting (need room for ~8-10) Hospitality Suite Open (light food available?)	Evening: Opening Reception at the Caroliniana Library 5-6:30 p.m. "Columbia in the War" exhibit (definite) Hospitality Suite Open after the Reception/Dinner Hour	Evening: Dinner on Your Own <u>or</u> Educational Sessions Hospitality Suite Open after the Dinner Hour	Evening: Banquet with Speaker (~125-135 people) At the Hotel Hospitality Suite Open after the Banquet	

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:

John Herbert Gale (498) 18 July 2011, Colorado Springs, CO

John R. Atwood (500) 29 Feb 2012, Sandy, UT

Robert S. Fain (501) 29 Feb 2012, Mexia, TX

Eugene Cole (500) 28 Mar 2012, Beaverton, OR

TO TOKYO ROSE

By: Ken Gastgeb

Tokyo Rose was your name,
Your Radio broadcasts got you fame.
You sweet talked to all us Yanks,
And played good music for GI Joes and Hanks.
You reported the news several times a day,
And always reported it the same old way.
That your side was winning by leaps and bounds,
Yet we Apaches were steadily gaining ground.
Yellow Nose butchers you called our planes,
And often called our Group by its Indian name.
Many times you knew our orders bit by bit,
A long time before they were even writ.
You greeted us Apaches on our way to Leyte,
Telling us the Jap Navy was coming our way.
You always did your best to make us feel sad,
However, Rose, your broadcasts weren't really bad.
We enjoyed your sweet talk, news and music you played,
And Rose, we always knew the war was going our way.



The face of "Tokyo Rose" was revealed to her audience after the end of hostilities. She is seen here in a prison photo.

345th Bomb Group Reunion XXV & 70th Anniversary at CAAB—Registration Form

Name		Spouse/Additional Guest Name(s)	
Address			
City, State, Zip			
Home Phone		Cell Phone	
E-Mail			
Arrival Date	Departure Date	Squadron	

<i>Events and Fees</i>	<i>Cost</i>	<i># Attending</i>	<i>Totals</i>
Registration Fee (<i>non-refundable</i>)	\$50		
Friday, November 9, 2012 Educational Sessions; Trip to Owens Field; possible B-25 rides; Opening Reception			
Educational Session I (No charge for veterans) *	\$40/\$0		
Field Trip to Owens Field and B-25 Fly-In; box lunch	\$25		
Opening Reception at the Caroliniana Library; CAAB Exhibit	\$25		
Saturday, November 10, 2012 Veterans Day Parade; Educational Sessions			
Veterans Day Parade in Downtown Columbia	\$15		
Lunch with a Speaker (in conjunction with Educational Session)	\$25		
Educational Session II (No charge for Veterans) *	\$40/\$0		
Dinner on Your Own	No Charge		
Sunday, November 11, 2012 Marker Dedication and B-25 flyover; Business Meetings and Banquet			
Historical Marker Dedication and B-25 Fly-over	\$15		
Barbeque Lunch	\$20		
Squadron Meetings	No Charge		
345 th Bomb Group Business Meeting	No Charge		
Banquet with Speaker	\$50		
* Discounted Registration for both Educational Sessions = \$75	\$75		
Please send completed registration form and check for the total amount made payable to the 345th Bomb Group Association to Mary Sloan Roby, Treasurer, 1916 E Pratt Street, Baltimore, MD 21231			Total Due

Please indicate your Banquet Meal Choices:

# _____ Beef	# _____ Chicken	# _____ Fish	# _____ Vegetarian
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Please indicate any special services you will need in order to attend the reunion:

_____ Wheelchair	_____ Other, please describe
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**Make hotel reservations as soon as possible by calling the Doubletree at 803.744.0142, using Group Name "345th Bomb Group." Group Rates are only available until October 19, 2012.
Follow us on Facebook for a website address for online reservations.**

REUNION T-SHIRTS

Mike Buchkoski of the 500th has come up with some excellent artwork for use on t-shirts for the 2012 Reunion and has made arrangements to have them produced for us.

The back of the shirts feature artwork for the 70th Anniversary of the 345th Bomb Group. The front of the shirts will display Squadron-specific details including an airplane representing the squadron. The shirts will be a medium blue color

Shirts can be ordered directly from Mike. His phone number is 505-275-3930, his email is mikebuch25@aol.com and his address is 831 Tony Sanchez Dr. SE, Albuquerque, NM 87123.

Cost will be about \$15 each if we can order 144 shirts. Let him know your name, address, phone, email, squadron and quantity when you order. Have your order in to him by July 31.



PICTORIAL HISTORY FOR THE 345TH WEB SITE

At last year's reunion we attempted to capture (scan) original photographs and documents from your personal collections for inclusion on the 345th web site and virtual museum project. Well, that effort fell extremely short of our anticipated goals. We are going to attempt the same, again in Columbia and we need *your* help in doing so!

A portion of the 345th website is dedicated to a pictorial history of the 345th Bomb Group by creating a display of your photos with your memories of the Southwest Pacific Theater. Your photos with a description are a vital link in presenting, and preserving this pictorial history. In fact some, if not most, of your photos may have never been seen outside of your home or by the general public. Your photos are a vital link in the history and accomplishments of the 345th.

There are a couple of ways to get your photos to us:

You can scan any pictures that you have from the war along with a description and any memories about each picture, that is if you have the scanning equipment. Email or send a CD of your photos to myself or Josh Moore. Include names of persons in the picture, location and anything you wish to add, such as: Biak Island, flight line, changing an engine, SSgt Moore, June, 1944, and any memories you have about the picture to create the setting. If you don't have the scanning equipment you can send the pictures to either of us for scanning. We will take very special care to ensure the safe handling and return of the photos.

If you are coming to the reunion in Columbia, you can bring your photos with you. We are arranging to have all the necessary equipment on site to do the scanning. We encourage you to bring them to the reunion with your written or oral memories and we will scan them for you and record what you recall of that photo.

Lastly, you can scan directly to the 345th website – but not quite yet! This is one of the new functions we are designing into our new and improved website. At the present time this function is not available but we will be sure to let you know when it does come available, complete with instructions.

I was told that at the Colorado Springs reunion in 1994 that someone had a table-full of original strike photos and others that were being sold. Does anyone have any information on who this gentleman was that was selling the photos? These would be of great value to this project. Please let us know.

The pictures you have stored in those photo albums, shoeboxes in the back of the closet, trunks, or in a drawer are a valuable link to the historical importance of the 345th. Please share these with us so our future generations will come to appreciate what the 345th accomplished during WWII.

James Bina

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