



AIR APACHES

STRAFER

345th Bombardment Group Newsletter

VOLUME 21, ISSUE 3

SEPTEMBER, 2003

EAGLES REPORTED GATHERING OVER HAMPTON, VIRGINIA
AIR APACHES VOW TO REDUCE LOCAL SEAFOOD SURPLUS
MAYOR OFFERS AMNESTY FOLLOWING HOTEL BUZZ-JOB
STRAFER EDITOR CITED FOR INDECENT COMPOSURE

Office of the City Council

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GREETINGS FROM THE MAYOR OF THE CITY OF HAMPTON, VIRGINIA

It is indeed a great pleasure, on behalf of the City of Hampton, to welcome you to Hampton, the oldest continuous English-speaking settlement in the United States.

For over 390 years, Hampton has hosted visitors from all over the globe, as well as been the site of many important gatherings like yours. Hampton was the spot where the first English colonists befriended the Kecoughtan Indians, where three representatives met with President Abraham Lincoln to attempt to negotiate a peace settlement, where the crews of the *Monitor* and the *Merrimac* clashed during the "Battle of the Ironclads," and where the Mercury astronauts gathered for their original space training. We are honored to add the 345th Bomb Group Association, 2003 Reunion to our prestigious list.

Even though your reunion will be foremost in your thoughts and your time limited, we would still like to invite you to visit our many attractions, enjoy exquisite dining, unique shopping, strolls along the waterfronts and the spectacular sunsets over the bay. We view Hampton as a warm and friendly place and our citizens always enjoy the opportunity to share experiences with our visiting friends. We trust that our warm hospitality will encourage you to return in the future.

Best wishes for a successful reunion.

Sincerely,

Mamie E. Locke, Ph.D.
Mayor

*"Oldest Continuous English-Speaking Settlement in America — 161022 Lincoln Street,
Hampton, VA 23669-3591 (757) 727-6315*



PRESIDENT'S CORNER

GEORGE MORDECAI

345th BOMB GROUP PRESIDENT

I hope that as many as possible will be able to attend the great reunion that is planned in Hampton, VA. From my point of view I can see the diminishing returns as we the WW II generation are dwindling down to a precious few. Between the ravages of old age and the ability to travel effect our members we are slowly looking forward to the end of the line. This past year we made an effort to contact those individuals that have not responded to our efforts to find out if they are interested in the 345th or want us to continue to keep them on the rolls as a viable member of our organization. Doc Pearson the Secretary has written to each individual that has not contacted us since 1997 explaining that an answer would comply with their wishes to either remain a member or be dropped from our roster. In the process we had our roster go from just over 600 members to 511.

This shows that in order to continue as an active organization we will have to do some planning for the future. I hope to bring this up as a part of our agenda at the meeting in Hampton. We as a body must determine what has to be done to accomplish our plans for the future. There are many of us that have passed our 80th birthday and we are probably looking at an average close to 85 We need to look at a way to get our younger relatives involved. In some Squadrons they have already elected Associate Members to office.

This is true also of Group history. It has been suggested that members that are reluctant to pass on the events that they were part of in the

great war should get a tape recorder and leave something behind as to what they did between 1942 & 1945. It was a great era in our time and we should pass on the interesting facts of this conflict. This should be about our missions and living conditions not our visits to Sydney Australia.

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

The reunion committee regrets to inform the membership that it is has been necessary to change the entertainment program for the Group Banquet. The "Sawyer Sisters" were originally scheduled to perform, but due to an untimely death in the family of a member of the ensemble they have cancelled all performances until further notice. We are sorry they will be unable to appear at our banquet and wish to express our condolences to the remaining members of the troop.

The "Doorway Singers," a local Hampton singing group, have graciously agreed to perform for us on short notice. They are a quartet (two men, and two women), that appear in military costume and sing "OUR" kind of music. Their program reads as follows:

Liberty Call, Liberty Call

Tom Brokaw called them "The Greatest Generation." They faced a greater danger than the country perhaps ever had before and they rose up, united and focused, to triumph and very probably save the free world. And they did it to some of the most well know and best loved tunes we've ever heard. The "Doorway Singers" will be at our Group Banquet at Reunion XVI. They will present their tribute to the '40s and those who were willing to sacrifice so much.

Join us as we take a nostalgic musical trip back to those tumultuous years--enjoy Kiss Me Goodnight, Rum and Coca-Cola, Sentimental Journey, Lillie Marlene, Apple Blossom Time, When the Lights Go On Again, White Cliffs of Dover, Chattanooga Choo Choo, Boogie Woogie Bugle Boy of Company B, and much much more.

It's a sure bet that one or more of those tunes will bring back a special memory of a time and place most dear to you. The "Dooway Singers" will have compact discs and tapes available for those that wish a souvenir of the latest Gathering of Eagles in Hampton, Virginia.



HEADQUARTERS

AUGUST OUELLETT, ASS'T. GROUP VP

It is almost time to begin our journey to Hampton, Virginia. We are planning to travel by car since one of my Boy Scouts has offered to be the chauffeur. How lucky can one get? I guess this is a benefit of all those years of scouting. My scouting friend has always been interested in the history of the 345th Bomb Group. We recently worked with his daughter on a school assignment pertaining to WWII, and I am proud to say she made an "A" on her paper.

The members keep saying we need to involve the younger generation in our activities and this is my contribution. I have noticed that there have been an increasing number of sons, daughters, and grandchildren at our recent reunions. I hope they enjoy being with us "old folks" as much as we enjoy having them around.

I talked to Ken Gastgeb recently, and he has had some health problems that will prevent him and Bobby from being with us this time. Our Headquarters roster has certainly been reduced in number over the years. Ken and I have been trying to hold the fort for sometime now, and I will miss his support. We usually worked together at the Registration Desk to help greet the members and sign them in.

Another one of our registration team that won't be attending this reunion is Mary Elizabeth Gamble. She has been to every reunion up until this one. Mary Elizabeth is presently undergoing treatment for cancer. I know you all join with me in wishing her a speedy recovery from such a dreaded disease.

I recently purchased a great model of the B-25. It was on sale, and I bought one for

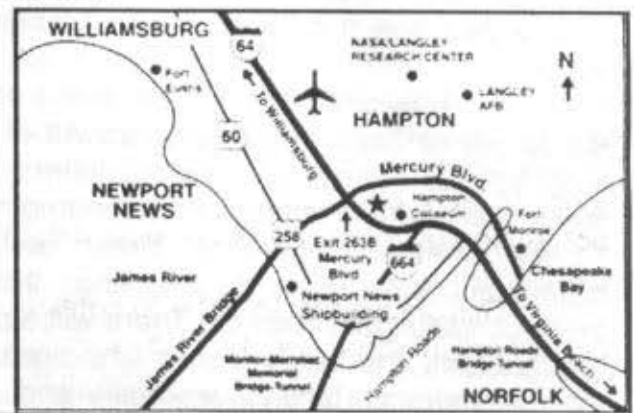
myself and one for Ray Derusha. The plane is made in England by Aurora Collections and is very well finished. Everyone that sees it thinks it is pretty special. If you are interested and have a computer you can order one on-line. Their e-mail address is < franklinmint.com >. They have models of other airplanes as well.

I am looking forward to seeing you at Hampton. I hope we will have a good number in attendance but old age is catching up with us.

There are so many places of interest in the area surrounding our hotel it will be difficult to decide what to see and what to omit. The reunion committee has attempted to help us choose by scheduling tours to several major points of interest. It sounds like we are in for a good time. Take care and stay well.

SPECIAL NOTICE

For those members planning to attend Reunion XVI that may need oxygen service, wheelchairs, or other surgical appliances it is recommended that you make arrangements in advance of arrival. Contact Tidewater Medical Supply between the hours of 8:30 AM and 5:00 PM, Monday through Friday, phone number (757) 591-2990. Visa and MasterCard accepted.



DRIVING DIRECTIONS TO HOTEL

The Holiday Inn Hampton Hotel & Conference Center is located at 1815 West Mercury Boulevard, Hampton, Virginia (See Star on above map).

If approaching from Route 17 North exit Route 258 North.

From Route 13 South, take I-64 to Exit 263B.

From I-95, take I-64 to exit 263B.

**Fasten your seatbelts
and please drive carefully.**



498th SQUADRON

MIKE HASSELBAUER, ASS'T GROUP VP

Wow! Here it is September and another year is slipping through the 'ol hourglass. It seems like just yesterday we were at Reunion XV in Dallas.

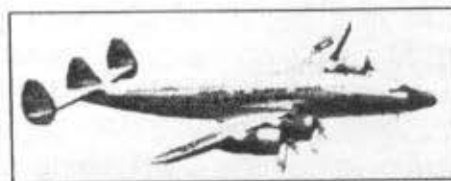
I continue to go through the squadron-mailing list to try and keep it current. It is not always the most pleasant job, but there are those rewarding moments in which I have gotten a chance to talk to some of you. It never ceases to amaze me at the heart of the members of this squadron. The conversation often ends with the question from the squadron member, "Is there is anything you need?" Boy, What a question, I am honored to be helping out here.

There is one little request that I would like to put to each of you though. All of you have special mementos, photos, letters, and memories that are important to document the history of this squadron. There will be historians and students fumbling through archives looking for records. There will also be descendants and family friends who are trying to reconstruct family records and this information is important to them. Please, make sure that you tell your stories, or better yet write them down. Make sure that your memories are all put together and pass them on to interested friends or family members. It might even be worthwhile to organize them and offer the material to a museum or archive, but be sure to let the squadron know if you do so. Then, when others are seeking such information it can be found.

Frank Dillard e-mailed me to advise that he had been in contact with Roland Lamb. It

seems that Roland struck his shin on a coffee table and the injury developed into a cancer. I am happy to report that after undergoing 20 radiological treatments Roland's cancer has been pronounced cured. He and wife Dorothy have sold their place in Sebring, Florida and will now reside fulltime in Texas. They are sorry they will be unable to join us at the reunion.

Our squadron dinner attendance is looking up. We had nineteen reservations by the middle of August. Ira Schaub's daughter, Kim Miller, has handled the details. Casual attire is the uniform of the day. We plan to have an evening of informal social conversation (provided we can keep Hal Cope and Frank Dillard from discussing politics) and great food served in a waterfront setting.



CONSTELLATION NO. 8612

Hal Cope wrote, "I just found this picture on the Connie link web site. It is a plane I flew many times back in the good 'ol days. On one trip I flew movie actress Constance Bennett (and her poodle), Charlie Ruggles, Jimmy Lydon, and a host of others over to Paris and Frankfurt, Germany, at about the time of the Berlin Airlift.

I also found a C-54 (DC-4) down at Harlingen, TX (Confederate air Force) that I had often flown in the pacific up until a month before the Communists took over Shanghai.

It really brings back memories when you see across an aircraft that you used to fly."

As the Christmas holidays approach I wanted to let you all know that there are some excellent die cast metal aircraft models available. I recently purchased a model of "Tondelayo," but "Chow Hound" and "Hell's Fire" were also available. If interested contact Aiken's Airplanes, 540 Dent Rd, Eads, TN 38028, phone (877)-224-5367.

Here's hoping I to see as many 498th members as possible at our reunion in Hampton. Until then, if there is anything **YOU** need please call, and I will help anyway I can.



499th SQUADRON
BEN F. MILLER, ASS'T. GROUP VP

While at our first location in New Guinea, we found out there were wild pigs in the jungle. The leaves were very thick, and there were none below about 2 1/2 feet, with the ground covered with vegetation, making walking like a soft rug. Harry Bridges and a man from the motorpool we called REBEL, decided they wanted a baby pig for a pet, so they took a Thompson sub/machinegun and ventured into the jungle. Soon they found two very small babies. Bridges was on his knees by them when his buddy saw the mother with her big curved tusks charging at full speed. He put the gun on full—auto and fired 8 shots. The sow slid to a stop with her nose touching the feet of the kneeling man, and all eight 45s were in the pig. They left for camp in a hurry.

At this same camp, Capt. Ferguson decided we should run a phone line through 3/4 mile of tall grass to a large tree by the river, and across. Stein, our lineman, and I put a reel of line in a jeep and headed for the tree, with me standing and directing him. We were behind our motorpool, and didn't go far when we were stuck. A metal object was under the very center of the jeep. It was a still operated by some people from the squadron. They managed to trade for some grain from the Australian pack horse artillery. As I explained our situation, there came an explosion of the most profanity I had ever heard.

The next morning communications people were by the river, with intention of putting the wire across. Stein was a big coal miner from southern Indiana, and a strong swimmer. He said he would take the line across, but was caught in a whirlpool and sucked under. All we could see was his forearm and hand sticking out. Scotty threw the wire, and GOD willed it to land in the hand. He wrapped the wire around

both hands, and we braced ourselves on a tree, and were able to pull him to safety. Not much later, he fell from a high tree while putting a wire high enough for planes to taxi. He received permanent injuries to his back and was sent back to the states. I was ordered to put it up the next morning, not a lot of fun, knowing what had happened to him.

The following e-mail was forwarded from Ed Sharpe to Frank Dillard. The author writes in response to comments I made in a previous newsletter:

Dear Sir:

I read in The STRAFER, Vol 21 Issue 1, in the column by Ben Miller, that you were trying to locate a pilot from the 499th Squadron named Lt. Jenkins. I am sorry to inform you that my father, Lt. Col Walter P. Jenkins USAF Ret., died July 31, 2003 of fibrosis of the lungs. My mother, Margaret Jenkins, was his wife of 59 years and was a pilot in the CAP. He is survived by his wife Margaret, a daughter Christine, sons, Walter Jr., Michael, and Theodore.

My father was very deeply affected by the loss of his crew in WWII. His plane was named "Margaret Hayne," after my mother. I heard that one crewmember may have survived. One member of his crew was named, or nicknamed, "Smitty."

If any of my father's crew is living, or if any of you remember my father I would like to correspond with you. Letters may be sent to Margaret Jenkins, P0 Box 857, Anna Maria, FL 34216.

Best regards,

Walter P Jenkins Jr.

We are still shaking off the effects of the worst flood in the Decatur area for 100 years, but we were lucky. Our residence didn't sustain much damage at all.

If at all possible, try to make it to Hampton. Hope to see you there.

Editors Note: I talked to Wendell Decker on August 21, 2003. He is feeling somewhat better following lung surgery. He had previously undergone open-heart surgery, and was starting to recover from that operation, when he developed the problem with his lungs. Wendell sends his regards to all those that plan to be in Hampton for Reunion XVI, and expresses his regret that he won't be able to join with us for some good seafood and friendship. Since he won't be there to close the hospitality room each night we need a volunteer. Those without an endless repertoire of entertaining and interesting "war stories" need not apply.



500th SQUADRON

STAN MUNIZ, ASS'T. GROUP VP

Dear Frank: Late once again. This time I do have a bit of an excuse. I have spent some time in the hospital. I went in with chest pains and after all kinds of tests they determined that I had a slight blockage, which we will have to determine the best way to take care of it. The main reason I was kept for a few days was because my blood pressure when I was admitted was 103/52 and a few hours later it was 128/56. Then it went down again to 105/55. They still haven't figured out what is causing it, but I am set up for more tests this coming week. Needless to say, I haven't had time to think much about an item for the newsletter but here is a short item that may be of interest.

On December 17th, 1903 the first heavier-than-air aircraft took to the air with Orville Wright at the controls. Now that it is 2003 there are all kinds of events planned for the 100th anniversary of that historic flight. For the last few years various organizations have had under construction replicas of that famous stick and cloth flying machine. In fact one was tested in the big wind tunnel at NASA Ames at Moffet Field in Sunnyvale California. It proved that the aircraft was aerodynamically stable. Another replica built by the Utah State University has made fifty flights. But it differs from the other replicas in that it was built with space age materials such as foam, fiberglass, Kevlar, Dacron, and graphite. It is powered by a Harley Davidson twin-cam 88 B engine. But there is another replica, one that is exact in every way except for the engine. It is a non-flying replica and it is in a little museum in San

Martin California just 18 miles south of San Jose where I live. I also work in the library at the museum. This museum, called "Wings of History," has had this replica for almost twenty years and has been on display at many local functions. It was on display in San Francisco last year and even in a car commercial seen on TV last year. So, if you are out this way stop by and visit our little museum and get a close-up view of this replica of the Wright Flyer.

Editor's Note: Actually, Stan was early with his report, but if we tell him he might think he has some "carry-over" time and try to use it for the December STRAFER. Let's just put the 'ol guilt trip on him and let him suffer. We are sorry he has had health problems and wish him a speedy recovery.



501st SQUADRON

QUINTON GIULIANI, Ass't Group VP

At our last reunion, in the great state of Texas, there was an episode that occurred between a fine looking gentleman and I. I can't remember his name, but if I could, I wouldn't tell you anyway. He had such a scowl on his face; not a real mean one, but a scowl, is a scowl, is a scowl. Even today, when I think back, I can still smile about it, and I hope he can too.

At that time my evil mind went into high gear. Why not have some fun, Looking directly at him, at a safe distance with an exaggerated smile. Just keep smiling while he goes slack—jawed, and looks back at you with a perplexed stare, while nonchalantly glancing down at his fly. Hoping he can read lips, I mouthed a reassuring message. They're zipped! Aha, now we both smile; I won!

A recent letter from Bill Cather mentions that Ed Bailey broke his hip from a fall but is

now on the way to a full recovery .

Bill also mentioned that Dick Barth and his wife had been ill, but said both are now doing better.

Joe "Seeegar" 'Valentine recently celebrated a happy and well deserved 86th birthday. It is rumored that Joe and brother Anthony will try to attend our reunion in Hampton.

Is it just me that struggles, almost fruitlessly, to extricate those tasty little morsels of Lance cheese or peanut butter crackers from their cocoonish protection? There must be a reason that they jump-start my salivary glands, and I'm drooling from both sides of my mouth before I get the first one out of the package. There is one other product that makes me drool even more profusely, a legendary Phipadelphia candy, Goldenberg's Peanut Chews. If you ever get a chance to savor one, you will know what I'm talking about. It's beyond me, in this day and age, why someone can't invent an easy off package. Look what a good job GOD did with a tangerine and banana. It's a real pleasure to get to the meat. I'm not too thrilled with HIS artichokes; they can be a real hassle, especially for me with my overbite. Hey! It's O.K. with me if I never eat another artichoke--for that matter, nor another Brussels sprout, or how about Tofu? What the hell is it anyway? Never mind; I don't want to know. Well it's come to this, at no surprise. It's just a matter of conditioning, and my condition "ain't" so hot. So at the venerable age of 81 with hit and miss teeth, I'm just happy as hell to be able to gum my macaroni. Thank you Marco Polo!

Even though it may take a little longer than a moment to think back. Let's do it anyway, back to 1927. When Charles A. Lindbergh made his momentous flight. Why did we all think, that every airplane that flew overhead was "Lucky Lindy up in the sky?" I know I did. And I still look up at the sound of every airplane flying by. Oh! That wonderful sound of an "Air Apache" B-25. Oh! How I miss you. Always hopeful-- always listening. There are no ifs, ands, or buts...I'll know you when I hear you...and I'll salute you when I see you!

PHILOSOPHY 101

A professor stood before his Philosophy 101 class with several items on the desk in front of him. When the class began he silently picked up a very large and empty mayonnaise

jar, and proceeded to fill it with golf balls. He then asked the students if the jar was full? They agreed that it was.

The professor then picked up a box of small pebbles and poured them into the jar. He shook the jar lightly. The pebbles, of course, rolled into the open areas between the golf balls. He again asked the students if the jar was full, and they agreed it was.

Next he picked up a box of sand and poured it into the jar. Of course, the sand filled up all the other space. Once more asked the students if the jar was full. The students responded with a unanimous - - "YES!"

Then the professor produced two cans of beer from under the table and proceeded to pour the entire contents of both cans into the jar, effectively filling the empty space between the grains of sand. The students laughed.

"Now," said the professor, as the laughter subsided, "I want you to imagine that this jar represents your life. The golf balls are the important things - - your family, your partner, your health, your children, your friends, your favorite passions - - things that if everything else was lost and only they remained, your life would still be relatively full."

"The pebbles are the other things that matter like your job, your house, your car. The sand is everything else - - the small stuff."

"Now, if you put the sand into the jar first," he continued, "there is no room for the golf balls or the pebbles. The same goes for your life. If you spend all your time and energy on the small stuff, you will never have room for the things that are really important to you. Pay attention to the things that are critical to your happiness. Play with your children. Take time to get medical checkups. Take your partner out dancing. Play another 18 holes of golf. There will always be time for you to go to work, clean the house, give a dinner party or fix the disposal."

"Always remember to take care of the golf balls first - - the things that really matter. Set your priorities. The rest is just sand."

One of the students raised her hand and inquired just what the beer represented. The professor smiled. "I'm glad you asked. It just goes to show you that no matter how full your life may seem, there's always room for a couple of beers!"

SOUND-OFF!



BOB HOPE

1903 - 2003

By Frank Dillard, Editor

Even though it has been 59 years since the 345th Bomb Group assembled at the "Apache Playhouse" on Biak Atoll to be entertained by a USO troop featuring Bob Hope, I vividly remember the event. Bob was accompanied by the beautiful Frances Langford, Jerry Colonna, Patty Thomas, Tony Romano, and Barney Dean. For a moment we all laughed and forgot the war, even though it was quite possible that some of the Japanese troops might have been also watching from the jungle.

Later, when the show was over and I returned to my tent it hit me...the loneliest feeling that I had ever experienced. I was 20 years old, but I felt like a tired old man. That feeling was short-lived however, as my mind drifted back to the evening's entertainment. I lay on my bunk and shook with silent laughter

remembering Bob Hope's magical comic delivery and his personal magnetism that reached out and engulfed the crowd.

On May 29th, 2003, we celebrated the 100th birthday of one of the worlds most recognized and beloved entertainers.

On July 27th, Bob Hope passed away and the world seems somewhat severely diminished while heaven must be a bit brighter.

Bob Hope was best known as a comedian, and as the guy who, in spite of feeling uncomfortable in an airplane, was always ready to fly off to the front to entertain the troops.

His longevity as a TV performer was remarkable. He is legendary among golfers, as well, but Bob also had a career as a comic movie actor extending from 1934 to 1994. He appeared in over 80 films and TV series (including cameos), and while he has joked about never winning an Oscar while emceeing eighteen Academy Awards shows, he actually won four honorary Oscars, plus the Jean Hersholt Humanitarian Award. In addition he won more than 2,000 medals, awards, citations, and honorary doctorates (a Guinness world record)! He was even Knighted by Queen Elizabeth! Although he has become an American icon, Hope was actually born to an English father and a Welsh mother in Eltham, England on May 29, 1903, as Leslie Townes Hope. He and his parents came to the US in 1907. After achieving success in vaudeville and on Broadway as a singer, dancer, and comedian, and appearing in several films beginning in 1934 (the same year he married Dolores Reade), he finally landed his first big movie role in "The Big Broadcast of 1938," in which he sang what later became his signature tune, "Thanks For the Memories."

The highlight of his movie career was the series of "Road" films (to Singapore, Zanzibar, Morocco, Utopia, Rio, Bali, and Hong Kong) he made with Bing Crosby and Dorothy Lamour from 1940 to 1962. He was the top box office draw in 1950.

Bob was a true American icon. I believe we can place him at the top of the list of great leaders of the "Greatest Generation" without fear of too much opposition.

On behalf of all of us ex-service men and women who treasure personal memories of brief encounters with Bob Hope, in exotic places, I wish to express my condolences to his wife and family and to say to Bob...as long as we can say

"THANKS FOR THE MEMORIES."

you may rest assured we will never lose Hope.

BARROOM BALLADS AND OTHER STORIES

Contributed by: Douglas Busath (499)

Before I joined the 499th at Eighteen-Mile Strip, in June of 1943, they had been building an Officers' Club, which we finished after the crews got back from converting the planes to strafers at Townsville. We had a big party planned with nurses coming from the Field Hospital. One of the last jobs was to smooth the floor for dancing which was necessary because the lumber we got for the club was pretty rough. The trouble was that we were getting direct current from the Aussies and the sander ran on alternating current. This required a converter, which wasn't heavy enough for the sander, we had and it meant we could only operate the sander for short periods of time before the converter overheated. We finished the job pretty late in the afternoon, and we stank! To make matters totally bad, the water supply failed. No showers. Someone got the bright idea of checking out some vehicles and bathing in the river nearby. (You had to be careful not to get any water in your ears or you would get a fungus, which could be serious.)

I had checked out a weapons carrier, which I knew could not get stuck in the mud, what with those big mud-grip tires and four-wheel drive. I drove it out into the river to avoid walking in the mud. It took two six-by-sixes chained together to get me out. Anyway we got some of the stink off of us and had the party.

As I recall, the punch for that party consisted of three parts. The first third consisted of hard liquor, the next third of lighter stuff, such as wines and liqueurs, and the last third of fruit juices. It was potent, and we had a lot of it. I was dancing with this nurse, when a Bombardier came up to us with a glass full of this stuff and said to the nurse, "I saw you do it before and I don't believe it---do it again." The nurse said it was a waste of good booze and she didn't want to. The Bombardier insisted and she finally drank it down like it was water and said to me, "Alcohol doesn't affect me." Later on, I saw the Bombardier repeat the process while she was dancing with another man. This meant that she had drunk three full glasses of that stuff at least, and for all I could tell, it had no effect on her whatsoever!

I joined the 499th Squadron in June of 1943 out at Eighteen-Mile Strip near Port Moresby. All the flying personnel were down at Townsville getting the B-25 's converted into strafers, (and enjoying a visit to Sydney.). It seems that none of the engineering geniuses at Townsville gave any thought to what all that iron added to the nose and sides of the planes would do to the magnetic compasses, and when the guys flew the planes back to Moresby, the compasses were off by multi-degrees which caused some frantic searches for the air strip. One crew never found it and when their gas got low they landed on a beach about a hundred and fifty miles east of their destination. They had to ship a load of metal strip down there, make a short runway, empty the B-25 of guns etc. and then fly it back to Port Moresby.

Oddly enough, if everyone had known of a peculiarity of the water there the trouble could have been avoided. It seems that right at Moresby, the water changed color. The water off the coast, east of Moresby, was green and that west of Moresby was blue. All you had to do when you hit the coastline was turn east if the water was green or west if it was blue, and you would end up at Port Moresby.

My first job after the crews returned with the modified planes was to swing compasses.

As if flying low-level strafing missions wasn't enough fun, one of the things some of the pilots did was what I called, "Navigating the River." This consisted of flying up the Sepoy River, (I think that is the correct name) the mouth of which was a few miles west of Moresby, as far as you dared, staying below the tops of the trees that lined the banks. What happened as you went inland, the river became narrower and narrower and the turns became tighter and you had to bank steeper and steeper until you chickened out and pulled up above the trees. I understand that a few guys did it in pairs in a game of "Chicken." The only time we did it was once after we had practiced strafing runs at that old German ship which had been sunk during the First World War and which lay off the coast near Moresby. We did it alone in what, I guess, would be called a game of, "Solo Chicken." The game could get pretty hairy, but was a sure cure for boredom.

CANDID CAMERA

Contributed by Harry Patten (499)

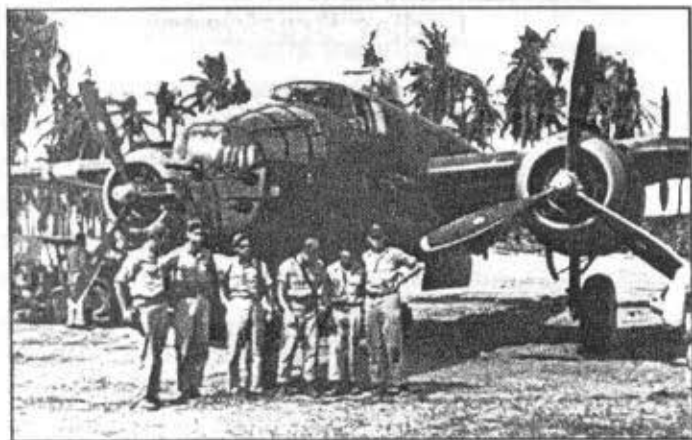
I was an aerial photographer in the 499th Bomb Squadron. We had so many people in the Group it was hard to get to know everybody.

I started out with Group Photo at Columbia, SC, but didn't start flying until we arrived at Port Moresby when someone else quit. I wasn't brave, but the pay was better and I had always liked flying. When I worked at Sikorsky, prior to my enlistment, I hung around the airport across the street. I have logged a total of one-half hour dual time in a Piper Cub. I also hung out with a fellow that was flying unlicensed planes. He did all the flying. As far as flying combat goes I was always excess baggage and never assigned to a specific crew.

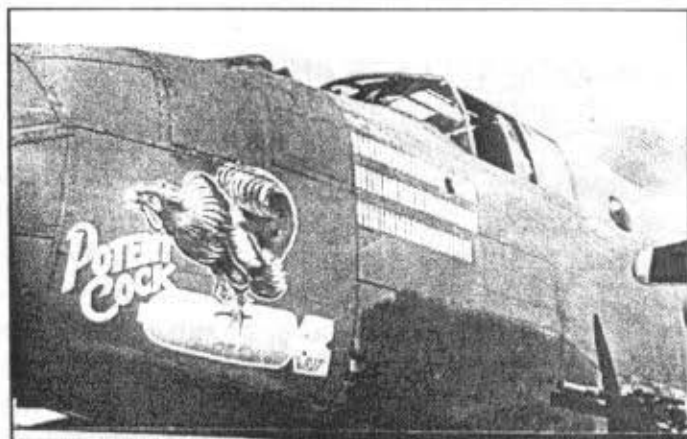
I have enclosed some pictures from my files. The pictures of plane number 016 were taken at Lingayen Gulf with a K-20 camera while on a courier mission. I Believe Doug McClure was the pilot. This was the first landing of a B-25 at Lingayen Gulf following the invasion.



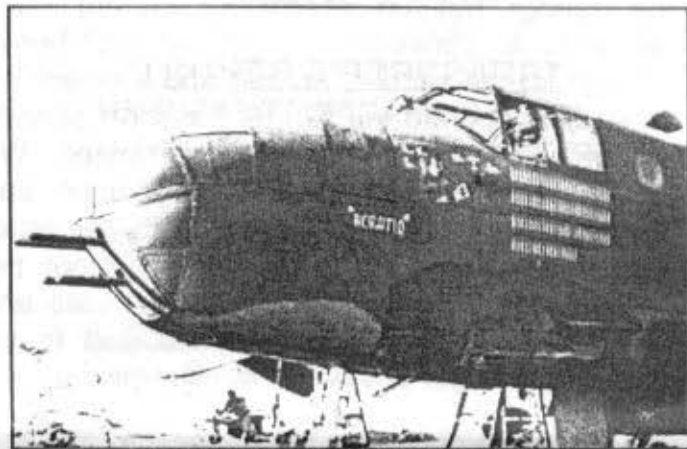
AIRCRAFT NUMBER 016



AIRCRAFT 016 AND CREW



A WELL-USED "POTENT COCK"
(NO EXPLANATION REQUIRED)



A WAR-WEARY "HORATIO"



ONE OF THE BATS 'OUTA HELL ON POINT

The pictures of "Horatio" and "Potent Cock" were in my just in my files . Hope you enjoy them.

While overseas I made my first HO model train. It was constructed out of pieces of tin soldered together. It sure was ugly! I can no longer do such small work so I gave all my HO stuff to my nephew. He is active in a club and apparently enjoying the hobby. I guess getting old beats the alternative.

BULLETIN BOARD



TREASURER'S REPORT EDWIN F. SHARPE, TREASURER 345TH BOMB GROUP ASSOCIATION

GROUP ASSETS as of 07/31/03

Cash Deposit

Wachovia Bank
Burlington, NC4,925.62

Certificate of Deposit

Alamance National Bank
Graham, NC10,377.01

Money Market

Vanguard Prime
Money Market16,233.96

TOTAL\$31,536.59

TREASURER'S NOTE: Association dues for the year 2003 are past due. This may be your last issue of the STRAFER! Check the date on your mailing label to see if you are current (2003). Still only \$15.00. To avoid being dropped from the mailing list make your check payable to the 345TH BOMB GROUP ASSOCIATION and mail to:

Edwin F. Sharpe, Treasurer
345th Bomb Group Association
2438 Edgewood Ave.
Burlington, NC 27215-4794

EDITOR'S NOTE: The next issue of the STRAFER will be mailed in early December. Please submit your contribution of photos, notes and articles **no later than November 5, 2003.**

IN MEMORY OF...

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

Walter P. Jenkins (499), 07-31-03,
Anna Maria, FL.

Robert W. Judd (498), 03-22-03,
Urbana, IL.

Carlton W. Kenyon (498), 07-11-03,
Salem, OR.

Merlin Miller (498), 11-11-02,
Dugger, IN.

Raymond F. Proffitt (500), 05-14-00,
Vancouver, WA.

Orville A. Simonson (498), 11-02-02,
Modesto, CA.

George H. Sprowles (500), 07-18-03,
Warminster, PA.

George H. Wonn (499), 09
Denver, CO.

LOST SHEEP...

If you have information about the present address of anyone previously listed as a "Lost Sheep" please let your Squadron VP, the Treasurer, or your STRAFER editor know.

345th Bomb Group Association Ladies Breakfast

Attendance at the ladies breakfast during the Reunion XVI promises to "turn back the clock," in both history and humor. Join with us as we reminisce about past experiences in years gone by. The presentation will no doubt bring about laughter and fond memories of the way things were before, during, and after our brave men were overseas in the South Pacific. Please join us!

Kim Miller (498)



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