

Barbara Gotham
380th Bomb Group Association

2019 Hopi Code Talkers Event
April 23, 2019

- It is my pleasure and honor to speak to you today about the 380th's service in World War II and our current activities.
- A bit about me: I'm from West Lafayette, Indiana, home of Purdue University, where I was employed for over 30 years. I retired from the university in 2011.
- I've been working with the 380th Bomb Group Association since the 1990s.
- I worked with Professor Theodore Williams at the university and assisted him (in my off hours) with his research of and correspondence regarding the 380th Bombardment Group in WWII.
- He was a navigator in the 531st Squadron on the Magee crew.
- Together we published several volumes in the WE WENT TO WAR series, which includes rosters of all wartime members of the group, details of the individual aircraft of the 380th (B-24 bombers), bombing missions, and more.
- We developed the group's webpages, newsletters, and ran the group's annual reunions, from 2000-2007.
- In 2007 I took over coordinating the organization and running the reunions until our final one, which was last year in Tucson (2018).
- This cover slide shows the logos of the 5th Air Force, our nickname, THE FLYING CIRCUS, and the emblem of the group (King of the Heavies) and the four squadrons. The 528th Squadron represented by the mascot Herky the Clown on a bomb, the 529th with Little Beaver, the sidekick of Red Ryder in the 1930s cowboy movies, the 530th's mascot was Bugs Bunny, and the 531st's was a fierce Donald Duck.

ABOUT THE 380TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H) WORLD WAR II

The 380th Bombardment Group (Heavy) was part of the 5th Air Force and were known as the FLYING CIRCUS and also as the KING OF THE HEAVIES (note the lion in the insignia).

They flew B-24 Liberator bombers primarily in the Southwest Pacific Theatre in WWII.

In addition to flying combat missions, the group operated as a training unit for Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) crews in B-24 operations.

The group was awarded both the United States Distinguished Unit Citation and the Philippine Presidential Unit Citation for its combat service in Borneo, New Guinea and the Philippines.



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The 380th Bombardment Group (Heavy) was part of the U.S. 5th Air Force and were nicknamed THE FLYING CIRCUS and were also known as the KING OF THE HEAVIES.

The group's emblem reflected this last name by the lion on the world shown on the globe positioned at the Australian continent.

They flew B-24 Liberator bombers primarily in the Southwest Pacific Theatre in World War II.

Besides flying combat missions, the group also trained the Royal Australian Air Force crews on the B-24.

The group was awarded both the United States distinguished unit citation and the Philippine Presidential unit citation.

QUICK FACTS ABOUT THE BOMBER GROUP IN WORLD WAR II

- ❖ Constituted as 380th Bombardment Group (Heavy) on 28 October 1942
- ❖ Activated on 3 November 1942 at Davis-Monthan Field, Tucson, Arizona
- ❖ Inactivated on 20 February 1946 at Clark Field, Luzon (Philippines)

Squadrons

528th Bombardment Squadron: 1942–1946

Mascot: HERKY, the clown riding a bomb

529th Bombardment Squadron: 1942–1946

Mascot: LITTLE BEAVER, sidekick of Red Ryder in 1930s cowboy movies

530th Bombardment Squadron: 1942–1946

Mascot: BUGS BUNNY

531st Bombardment Squadron: 1942–1946

Mascot: a fierce DONALD DUCK

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The group was constituted as the 380th Bombardment Group (Heavy) on October 28, 1942

It was activated on November 3, 1942, at Davis-Monthan field in Tucson

It was inactivated on February 20, 1946, at Clark Field, Luzon, in the Philippines

There were four group squadrons:

528th, whose mascot was HERKY the clown on a bomb

529th, whose mascot was LITTLE BEAVER, the sidekick of Red Ryder in the 1930s cowboy movies

530th, mascot BUGS BUNNY

531st, mascot a fierce DONALD DUCK

Besides the 4 squadrons, there was group headquarters. More on this later.

ASSIGNMENTS AND STATIONS

Stations

- ★ Davis-Monthan AAF, Arizona, 3 November 1942
- ★ Biggs AAF, Texas, 2 December 1942
- ★ Lowry AAF, Colorado, 4 March – 17 April 1943
- ★ Fenton Airfield, Australia, May 1943
- ★ RAAF Base Darwin, Australia, 9 August 1944
- ★ McGuire Field, Mindoro, Philippines, 20 February 1945
- ★ Motobu Airfield, Okinawa, 9 August 1945
- ★ Fort William McKinley, Luzon, 28 November 1945 – 20 February 1946

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One month after being activated at Davis-Monthan Field, the group moved to Biggs Field, El Paso, where they underwent extensive combat training and where they learned to fly the B-24 bomber.

After completing training, the group moved to Lowry Field, Denver, to undergo final combat training.

The 380th Bomb Group went overseas in April 1943 to become the second B-24 unit in the Fifth Air Force -- the 90th Bomb Group was there first. The other heavy bomber unit was the 43rd and they flew B-17s. The two Hopi code talkers served in the 380th and 90th bomb groups.

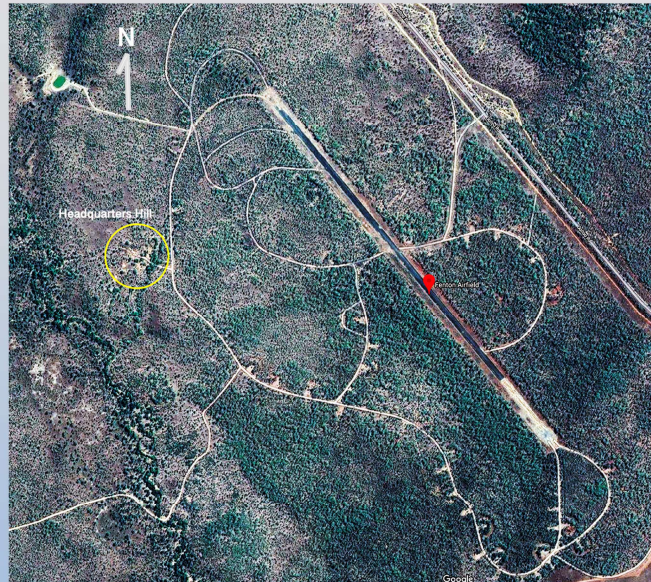
On arrival in Australia in May 1943, the group was stationed at Fenton and Long Fields.

In August 1944 the group was moved to Darwin (Australia) to train their Australian replacements on the B-24.

In February 1945 they moved to the Philippines.



Fenton and Long fields are marked at the top of the Australia section of this map.



Fenton Field – Headquarters Hill circled in yellow

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This is a photo of Fenton Field.

Headquarters Hill is circled in yellow (left of center) – this is where group's headquarters was housed – this included the intelligence section to which Rex Pooyouma [Poo-ya-ma] was assigned.

Rex came to the 380th in July 1944. In August 1944 the group was moved from Fenton and Long Fields to Darwin, so he wouldn't have been at this location very long. There's no information as to where he would have camped while in Darwin or the Philippines.

Group headquarters was mainly ground staff and included communications, medical, transportation, supply, administration and support personnel.



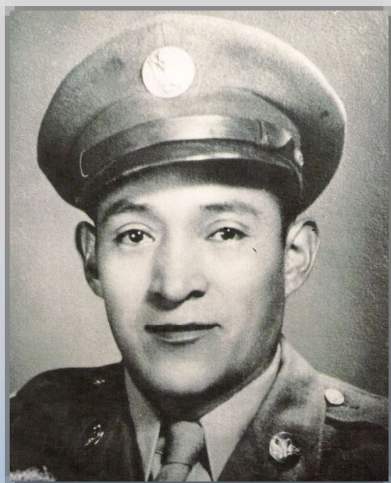
Current Map of Indonesia and Australia

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Here's a current map of the territory covered by the 380th Bomb Group in World War II (mainly the bottom half of this map).

The 380th was the only heavy bomber unit available to cover the whole western half of the South West Pacific area from July 1943 until late in 1944. This comprised the whole East Indies including Dutch New Guinea (1,000,000 square miles).

FIFTH AIR FORCE HOPI CODE TALKERS



Rex Pooyouma, 380th Bomb Group



Orville Wadsworth, 90th Bomb Group

PERSONNEL

- It takes many people, skilled in a wide variety of different tasks, to staff a heavy bombardment group of approximately 8,000 personnel.
- While the flight crews who man the planes on their battle missions receive the glory and take the risks of combat, many others behind the scenes at the home air base of the group must repair and service the planes, and carry out all the other operations that allow an organization the size of a small city to survive anywhere in the world.

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It takes many people to staff a heavy bombardment group of approximately 8,000 people.

While the flight crews who man the planes on battle missions received the glory and took the risks of combat, many others worked behind the scenes at home base to repair and service the airplanes and carry out the operations that allow an organization the size of a small city to function.

PERSONNEL

- Air crews were comprised of a pilot (also known as aircraft commander), co-pilot, navigator, bombardier, flight engineer, radio operator, and gunners. Sometimes aerial photographers and others joined the crew on their missions.
- Ground crews were divided into sections:
 - **Administration and Services**
Unit commanders, service officers (heads of departments), postal unit, laundry, mess hall, clerical, tailor, personnel services, chaplain services, bugler
 - **Armament**
Weapons mechanics, gunsmiths, armorers, power turret, bombsight and gunsight mechanics
 - **Communications**
Operators and mechanics for radar, electronics, radio, signal equipment, telephone, telegraph, dispatchers
 - **Engineering — Facilities Engineering and Maintenance**
Blacksmiths, bricklayers, carpenters, draftsmen, machinists, utility repairmen, surveyors, sanitary technicians, electrical, mechanical and civil engineers, firefighters
 - **Engineering — Aircraft and Other Equipment Maintenance**
Airplane mechanics, machinists, toolmakers

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Air crews were made up of a pilot, co-pilot, navigator, bombardier, flight engineer, radio operator and gunners.

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Ground crews were divided into various sections, including

Administration and services

Armament

Communications

Engineering – Facilities Engineering and Maintenance

Engineering – Aircraft and Other Equipment Maintenance

PERSONNEL

- **Intelligence**

Aerial photographers, cryptoanalytic (code) staff, translations, radio traffic analysis, geographers, cartographers, camouflage technicians

It is assumed that Rex Pooyouma, the 380th's Hopi Code Talker, was assigned to the Intelligence section (because of the secrecy of his assignment, very little is documented about his service with the 380th).

- **Medical**

Medical examiner, surgeons, dental, physical therapy, nurse (male), psychiatry, hospital technicians, pharmacy

- **Operations**

All aircraft crew (pilots, navigators, bombardiers, gunners, radio operators, flight engineers), aerial instructors, gunnery instructors, radar and weather observers, photography, meteorologist

- **Ordnance**

Ammunition and munitions workers

- **Supply**

- **Transportation**

Ground transportation motor vehicles (drivers, mechanics, repairmen)

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Intelligence

Rex Pooyouma would have been assigned to the intelligence section as a code talker – he was an enlisted man. (Because of the secrecy of his assignment, very little is documented about his service with the 380th).

Medical

Operations

Ordnance

Supply

Transportation

WWII OPERATIONS

- Upon its arrival in Australia, the 380th immediately began reconnaissance missions and combat missions that, besides attacking the Japanese oil supply, worked to cripple the Japanese shipping fleet to reduce their capability of supplying their far-flung forces.
- The group also heavily bombed numerous Japanese airfields in the East Indies to reduce the Japanese threat to Australia and New Guinea.
- The 380th made the longest bombing missions of WWII, to the oil refineries at Balikpapan, Borneo (200 miles further than the longest mission in Europe).
- The two Balikpapan missions were in August 1943. Each was a 17 hour, non-stop, 2,700 mile round trip for the planes and crews.

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The proudest accomplishment of the 380th was that it made the longest bombing missions of World War II, to the oil refineries at Balikpapan, Borneo (200 miles further than the longest European mission).

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BOMBING OF BALIKPAPAN HARBOR 14 August 1943



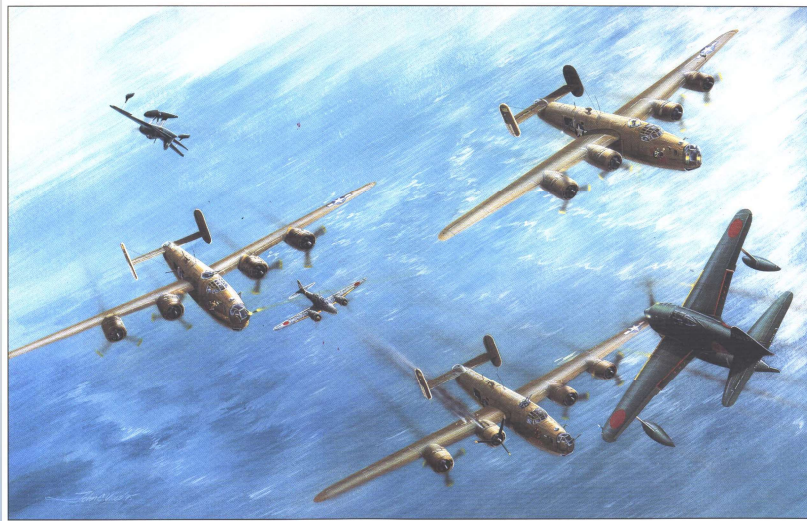
Balikpapan harbor, Borneo. 14 August 1943, 0026hrs. Capt. Zed Smith, 528th CG, barely misses the masts of the Katori Maru with #521 The Golden Goose. He bombed it and the oil tank farm located further inland before escaping into the inky skies.

Painting by John C. Valo

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Photo caption: Captain Zed Smith, 528th bomb group, barely misses the masts of the Katori Maru with his B-24, THE GOLDEN GOOSE. He bombed it and the oil tank farm located further inland before escaping into the inky skies.

AMBON HARBOR, 19 January 1944



High drama above Ambon harbor, 19 January 1944. With one engine feathered and smoking, Gorman Smith is protected by Carl Magee on the right and Bill Zagrobski on the left. Joe Wells, Magee's right waist gunner, is in the process of shooting down the Nick that is flying in the slot position.

Painting by John C. Valo

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Photo caption: With one engine feathered and smoking, Gorman Smith is protected by Carl Magee on the right and Bill Zagrobski on the left. Joe Wells, Magee's right waist gunner, is in the process of shooting down the Nick that is flying in the slot position. Carl Magee and Joe Wells were on the same crew as Professor Ted Williams.

WWII OPERATIONS

- The group also defended Corunna Downs Airfield, a top secret airfield in Western Australia where it was assigned to the Royal Australian Air Force's (RAAF) northwest area of operation. The Command's purpose was to engage in destroying Japanese strongholds in the Pacific.
- In August 1944 the group was placed under the operational control of the RAAF and were moved to their base at Darwin in the Northern Territory of Australia.
- At Darwin, they trained their Australian counterparts on the B-24 so the Australians could guarantee their own safety against Japanese invasion along its northern coast.
- The 380th trained 52 Australian crews and their ground staffs.
- In February 1945 the group moved to the Philippine Islands.
- In April 1945, Far East Air Force relieved the 380th of its ground support commitments in the Philippines.

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The 380th trained 52 Australian crews and their ground staffs.

From the end of May 1944 until the group moved to Murtha Field in the Philippines, they concentrated on neutralizing enemy bases, installations, and industrial compounds in the southern and central East Indies.

In February 1945 the group moved to the Philippine Islands.

In April 1945, Far East Air Force relieved the 380th of its ground support commitments in the Philippines.

END OF THE WAR

- In June 1945 the 380th was under the operational control of the 13th Air Force for pre-invasion attacks in Borneo. After the Borneo raids, the 380th flew its last combat missions to Taiwan.
- When the war ended (2 September 1945), the 380th moved to Okinawa to fly reconnaissance patrols and to ferry released prisoners of war to Manila.
- On 18 October 1945, the unit was transferred to the 7th Air Force in the Philippines, where it moved to Clark Field on Luzon, and participated in the Sunset Project – returning B-24s and their crews to the United States.
- Although some aircraft and crews were flown back to the United States, most of the aircraft from inactivating units were simply scrapped at Clark Field and personnel were returned via Navy ships from Manila.
- The 380th Bombardment Group (H) was inactivated at Clark Field on 20 February 1946.

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In June 1945 the 380th was under the operational control of the 13th Air force for pre-invasion attacks in Borneo. [For nearly two weeks, the group's B-24s kept these targets under siege.] After the Borneo raids, the 380th flew its last combat missions to Taiwan.

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The 380th bombardment Group (Heavy) was inactivated at Clark Field on February 20, 1946.

WORKING WITH THE AUSTRALIANS

- In its service with the Australians, the 380th served longer under the operational control of an Allied country than any other Air Force unit (from June 1943 until February 1945).
- They were the only U.S. B-24 Liberator unit attached to the RAAF. The RAAF had several of their own Liberator squadrons.
- Many of the Australians who trained with the 380th have become part of the 380th Bomb Group Association, the current veterans group – evidence of the strong ties of friendship which developed between the two countries in their long service together in World War II.

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POST WORLD WAR II

- The group was inactive from February 1946 to May 1947.
- They were an inactive reserve unit from May 1947 until May 1951, when they were called to active duty during the Korean War, but were only active for 15 days, at which time the group was again inactive.
- The 380th Bomb Wing was reactivated at Plattsburgh Air Force Base, New York, on 11 July 1955, flying the B-47 jet bomber, B-52 jet bomber, F-111, and later the KC 135 tanker. The 380th Bomb Wing was deactivated in 1994 and Plattsburgh AFB closed permanently in 1995.

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CURRENT OPERATIONS

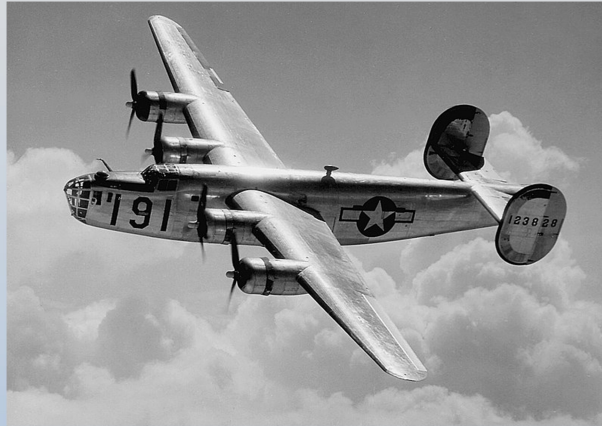
- Reactivated and redesignated as the 380th Expeditionary Operations Group in early 2002 to support the War in Afghanistan, the group participated in Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) and Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF).
- The 380th Expeditionary Operations Group (380 EOG) is the operational flying component of the United States Air Force 380th Air Expeditionary Wing and conducts combat operations as part of the Global War on Terrorism. It is a provisional unit stationed at Al Dhafra Air Base, United Arab Emirates, and is assigned to the United States Air Forces Central component of Air Combat Command (ACC).

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The 380th Expeditionary Wing and 380th Expeditionary Operations Group are the current iteration of the original 380th bombardment group.

They operate out of the United Arab Emirates and fly combat missions as part of the Global War on Terrorism.

B-24 LIBERATOR



Source: Wikipedia
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Consolidated_B-24_Liberator

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Now about the aircraft the 380th flew during WWII: the B-24 Liberator

You can see one in the Pima Air & Space Museum in Tucson.

The world's only flying B-24J is part of The Collings Foundation's annual Wings of Freedom Tour.

B-24 AIRCRAFT

- The basic unit of the United States Army Air Forces during World War II was the Group. Groups were built around the operational use of a specific type of airplane. In the case of the 380th, this was the B-24 Liberator Bomber.
- These planes were used in a particular class of mission suited to their capabilities. This was heavy bombardment associated with a large fraction of reconnaissance missions, particularly in the Australian phase of the 380th's service in the 5th Air Force.
- US Air Force bombers were designated as H for heavy, M for medium, or L for light. This designation was based on total weight of bomb loads they could carry, their flying range, and number of engines. So the heavy bombers were the B-24s, B-17s, and B-29s.
- The 380th was assigned to the South West Pacific War Area because of the long-range capabilities of the Liberator and the need for its services there at that point in the war (Spring 1943).
- A total of 137 planes served in the 380th in Australia and New Guinea. Of these, 53 served further in The Philippines.

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During World War II the basic unit of the U.S. Army Air Forces was the Group. (The Air Force wasn't founded until September 1947.)

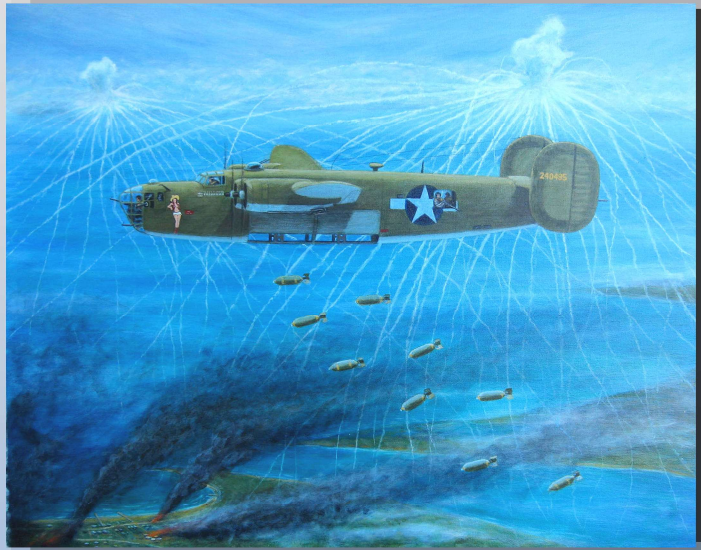
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[Medium bombers were B-25 Mitchell, B-26 Marauder, A-20 Havoc. And light bombers were the Navy torpedo bombers, A-26 Invader and single engine fighters that could carry bombs]



B-24D "Dauntless Dottie"

Painting by William Shek

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Many of the aircraft were painted with what is called nose art and given names. This particular one was named for the pilot's wife, Dottie. The artist is the son of the pilot, William Shek, who's a member of our current veterans association and who also helped me with this presentation.

ABOUT THE B-24 LIBERATOR

- The Consolidated B-24 Liberator is a 4-engine, twin-tail American heavy bomber designed by an American heavy bomber designed by Consolidated Aircraft of San Diego, California. Its first flight was on 29 December 1939, and it began service in 1941.
 - The B-24 provided excellent service in a variety of roles due to its ability to carry a heavy bomb load and its long-range capabilities.
 - At approximately 18,500 units – including over 4,600 manufactured by Ford Motor Company – it holds records as the world's most produced bomber, heavy bomber, multi-engine aircraft, and American military aircraft in history.
 - The B-24 was used extensively in World War II. It served in every branch of the American armed forces, as well as several Allied air forces and navies, and saw use in every theater of operations. Along with the B-17, the B-24 was the mainstay of the U.S. strategic bombing campaign in the Western European theater. Due to its range, it proved useful in bombing operations in the Pacific, including the bombing of Japan.
- Source: Wikipedia https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Consolidated_B-24_Liberator

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The Consolidated B-24 Liberator is a 4-engine, twin-tail heavy bomber designed by Consolidated Aircraft of San Diego. Its first flight was on December 29, 1939, and it began service in 1941.

[The B-24's spacious, slab-sided fuselage was built around a central bomb bay with two compartments that could accommodate up to 8,000 pounds of ordnance each.]

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380TH BOMB GROUP ASSOCIATION

- The 380th Bomb Group Association was formed to preserve the history of the 380th Bombardment Group (H), 5th Air Force, World War II.
- The first association operated from 1983-1999. Their activities included newsletters and annual reunions.
- The current veterans' association was started in 1999 and continues today. Annual reunions were held from 2000-2018; they were discontinued after the 2018 event due to the health and age of our WWII veterans. Future reunions are possible, just not on an annual basis.
- Activities of the current association include the history project (WE WENT TO WAR series), newsletters, website, and Facebook pages.

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About our veterans association: The 380th Bomb Group Association, our current veterans group, was formed to preserve the history of the Group's service in World War II.

Activities of the veterans group include

Newsletters

History projects

Website

Facebook pages

From 1982-2018 the group held annual reunions all over the United States to reunite war buddies, to introduce their families to the group, and to honor fallen heroes at an annual memorial service.

These annual reunions were discontinued with last year's meeting in Tucson. Future reunions are possible, although not on an annual basis.

380TH HISTORIES

- ***THE FLYING CIRCUS - 380TH BOMB GROUP***, by James E. Fain, Jr., Howard L. Bergman, Grant C. Cannon and Julian A. Riser, Intelligence Officers of the 380th Bomb Group, Commanday-Roth Co., New York, NY, 1946, 190 pp. Reprinted 1988.
- ***KING OF THE HEAVIES - 380TH BOMB GROUP, 1942-1945***, by Glenn R. Horton, Jr., and Gary L. Horton. Library of Congress Card Number 83-90348. Privately published, 1983, 184 pp.
- ***THE BEST IN THE SOUTHWEST - THE 380TH BOMB GROUP IN WORLD WAR II***, by Glenn R. Horton, Jr., Library of Congress Card Number 95-079703, ISBN 0-9645959-0-7. Mosie Publications, Savage, MN, 1995, 513 pp.

Please note that all three of these books are out of print.
Check military bookstores/libraries, eBay, and other resources for available copies.

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Here's a listing of the history books written about the 380th's service.

**The first book was written by the Intelligence Officers after the war.
The other two were written by the sons of one of the 380th pilots,
Glenn Horton.**

HISTORY PROJECT: WE WENT TO WAR

A Detailed History of the 380th Bombardment Group (H) in World War II
<http://380th.org/HISTORY/History.html>

PART I Roster of the 380th Bomb Group

PART II Roster of the Flight Crews

PART III Our Brothers-at-Arms (RAAF Rosters and Crews)

PART IV A Listing of MOS/SSNs

PART V The Planes We Flew: Australia/New Guinea Campaign

PART VI The Planes We Flew: Philippines Campaign

PART VII The Ground Staff of the 380th Bomb Group (H)

PART VIII The Missions We Flew: Australia/New Guinea Campaign - (PDF list of missions) *

PART IX The Missions We Flew: Philippines Campaign - (PDF list of missions) *

PART X The Background of Our Service, Why We Were in the Southwest Pacific Area: A Review

PART XI Our Opposition: The Japanese Flying Units in the Southwest Pacific

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* Expanded content underway

The current ongoing history project, the WE WENT TO WAR series, was conceived and researched by Professor Theodore (Ted) Williams, who served in the 531st bomb squadron as a navigator on the Magee Crew.

The book series was printed and copyrighted in 1999. Hard copies produced in 1999 were quickly outdated with corrections and more information provided by members.

Therefore the history project series was moved to the 380th's webpage and content continues to be updated.

Current work underway is on the Missions of the Australia/New Guinea and Philippines campaigns.

CONTACT INFORMATION

For info on membership, newsletters, correspondence, history project, website, TAPS information, and more, contact:

❖ ***380th Bomb Group Association***

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West Lafayette IN 47906-1209 USA
Email: 380th.ww2@gmail.com*

❖ ***Our Facebook group page can be found at:
380th Bombardment Group (5th AF, WWII)***

❖ ***Website: <http://380th.org/380.html>***

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Contact information

THANK YOU!!

Thanks so much for this opportunity to talk about the 380th Bomb Group at this special event honoring the Hopi Code Talkers.

Our veterans' association didn't learn about the code talker in the 380th (Rex Pooyouma) until 2011. We are honored to have had him serve with the 380th in WWII!

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Thank you for this opportunity to talk about the 380th Bomb Group. We are proud and honored to have had Rex serve with the 380th in World War II.