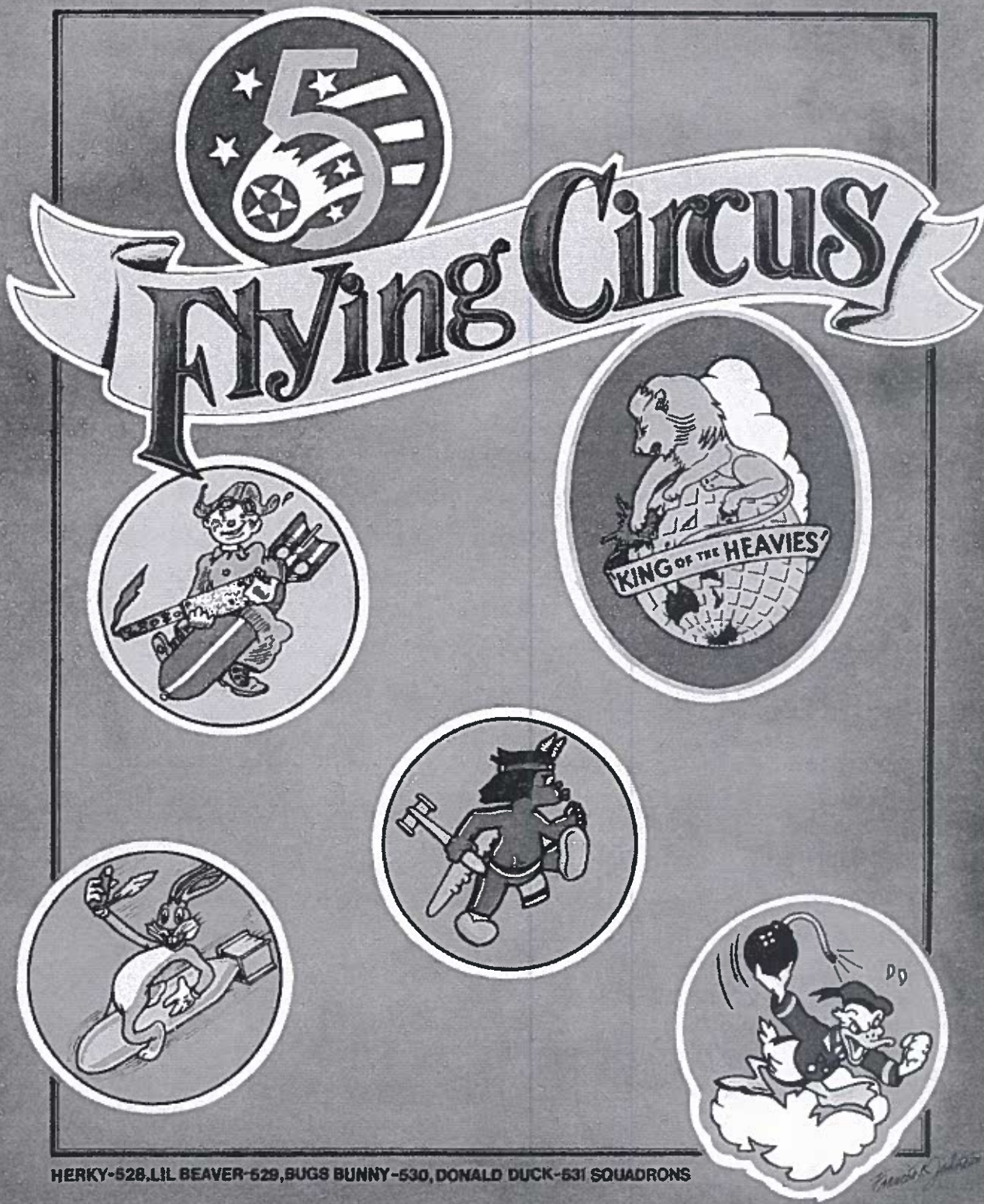


380TH BOMB GROUP



This Newsletter is Dedicated to:

*Forrest E. (Tommy) Thompson, Lt. Col. USAF (Ret.)
and
Helen H. Thompson*

*They had the foresight, perseverance, and love of the 380th
Bombardment Group (H) and its history, traditions, and person-
nel to organize, succor, and guide the*

380th Bombardment Group Association, Inc.

*our predecessor organization, for the past eighteen years
(1982-1999).*

Our everlasting thanks and love go out to them.



THE 380TH BOMB GROUP ASSOCIATION
5th AF - RAAF

AFFECTIONATELY KNOWN AS

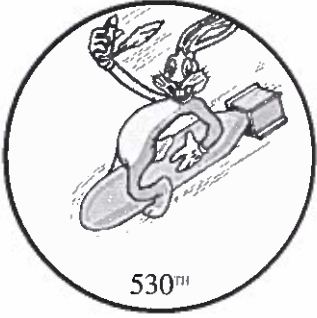
The Flying Circus

208 CHIPPEWA ST.
WEST LAFAYETTE IN 47906-2123



NEWSLETTER #26

March 2006



Compatriots and Friends:

We are looking forward eagerly to our Washington, D.C., Reunion on October 12-16th. Washington is a city of memorials and museums and a great place to visit. Our reunion is postponed one day from our usual schedule because of hotel bill consideration and the schedule for the USAF Memorial Dedication. The hotel has rooms at the higher special rate of \$169.00 for those who might want to come earlier for more sight-seeing.

There's a lot of our history in this issue, with Bill Shek's narrative of his and his sister's visit to the old airfields in Australia and my correspondence with Bernard Baeza of France on our Japanese opposition out of Australia.

See you in Washington.

To preserve the memory of the 380th.

HISTORIANS

Glenn R. Horton, Jr.
Gary L. Horton

HISTORIAN, AUSTRALIA

Bob Alford

EDITORS, HISTORY PROJECTS AND QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

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<http://www.ecn.purdue.edu/>

[IIES/PLAIC/380/380.html](http://www.ecn.purdue.edu/IIES/PLAIC/380/380.html)

Sincerely,

Theodore J. (Ted) Williams

2006 REUNION INFORMATION

Pat Carnevale has received a proposal from the Holiday Inn in Rosslyn, Virginia. They quoted her \$109 + tax but can only do it if we arrive on Thursday and depart on Monday. Otherwise the Wednesday night would be at \$169 and the other nights at \$109. They also offer free parking which is hard to find in the DC area. The Washington subway is only a block away for those who want to use it. Pat says she used it to get to the airport last year and it was great -- only took about 15 minutes and she was right at the terminal of the Washington National (Reagan) Airport.

Because of the huge price difference (other hotels were offering \$209+/night!), we think it appropriate to change the dates of the Reunion *from* arrivals on Wednesday, October 11 (with departures on Sunday, October 15), *to* arrivals on Thursday, October 12, with departures on Monday, October 16.

Here's the schedule that we are currently working with:

Thursday	Registration in morning/afternoon; optional tours in afternoon; welcome dinner in evening
Friday	Memorial Service in morning; lunch; WWII Memorial and Air & Space Museum in afternoon
Saturday	Members meeting in morning; USAF Memorial activities in afternoon
Sunday	USAF Memorial activities in morning/afternoon; banquet in evening
Monday	Departure

If you would like to visit Washington earlier than Thursday for extra sight-seeing or other reasons, arrivals at this Holiday Inn prior to the scheduled Thursday hotel check-in can be booked but would be at the \$169 rate.

The hotel registration form is contained with this issue, and can also be printed from our website at:
<http://fairway.ecn.purdue.edu/IES/PLAIC/380/REUNION/2006Reunion/Reunion.html>

The highlight of this Reunion will be the dedication of the new USAF National Memorial on the ridge above Arlington, Virginia. It is now tentatively scheduled for Saturday and Sunday, October 14-15, 2006. The Memorial design is a three plane "bomb burst" with the remaining contrails of the planes becoming the Memorial object. A major fly-over is planned of USAAF and USAF planes will be included with the Collings B-24 and B-17 featured. It should be "some show."

2005 REUNION PHOTOS

Photos from the 2005 Reunion are now available on the 380th website at:
<http://fairway.ecn.purdue.edu/IES/PLAIC/380/REUNION/2005Reunion/2005Photos.htm>

2006 REUNION - WASHINGTON, D.C.
October 12-16, 2006

HOTEL REGISTRATION FORM

Holiday Inn Rosslyn at Key Bridge -- Arlington, VA

Name _____

Spouse or Guest _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ e-mail _____ Priority Club# _____

Rate: \$109 (single or double occupancy) + 10.25% room tax (Total \$120.17 per night)

Please note: Group rate is only available for the 4 nights of the reunion. Other nights will be at a higher rate.

Please call for quotes.

Arrival Date _____

Departure Date _____

Room type: _____ Single (one person, one bed)
_____ Double (two persons, one bed)
_____ Double/Double (two persons, two beds)

Special Needs: _____ Handicap facilities _____ Non-smoking _____ Smoking

Guarantee by credit card # _____ exp date: _____

Signature _____

Name on card _____

Please print

Credit card will be used for guarantee only. Your card will not be charged until arrival or unless you fail to cancel on time. If making hotel deposit by check, please make check payable to *Holiday Inn Rosslyn* and include tax (\$120.17).

Cancel policy for this event: 48 hours prior to arrival to avoid penalty

Reservations made after **September 21st** are subject to availability and possible rate change.

Please mail or fax reservation form to: Carnevale & Associates, Inc.

P. O. Box 1230

Sonoita, AZ 85637 Phone: 800-659-8808

Fax: 520-455-5866 E-mail: carne@dakotacom.net

As full service travel agents, we are also able to assist you with your travel arrangements. A modest service fee will be charged for airline tickets.

OUR AMAZING TRIP TO FENTON

by William E. Shek, Jr.

Fenton, Australia, 2005

My father, William Shek, assigned to the newly formed 380th BG, 528th BS, initially trained in the B-24 Liberator at Biggs Field, Texas. When the Group deployed overseas in early 1943, he piloted his B-24 "Dauntless Dottie" (named after my mother) to Northern Australia and Fenton. He would pilot "Dottie" throughout most of 1943, returning to the States in 1944. After the war ended he briefly left the military, rejoining when the U.S. Air Force was officially created. He remained in the Air Force as a career officer and pilot. He and my mother passed away in 2003.

Dad never spoke much about his war experience, but he never lost his fascination with Australia. He had saved a collection of b/w photographs from his time there, consisting of Fenton camp scenes, mission strike photos, and 380th BG B-24s with their nose art and crews. My mother also kept a scrapbook in which she had saved wartime newspaper clippings and official letters and telegrams about Dad. I grew up often looking through those photos. I organized the collection and scanned the photos and clippings onto disk. I also began to research the 380th BG and squadrons at Fenton and Long, wanting to know more about Dad's time there. For some years I had harbored a 'fantasy' that one day I would visit Fenton and the more I studied the photos the more I wanted to go. Finally, in early 2005, I decided that I had to do this. I phoned my sister, Diana, to ask if she wanted to go with me. She said yes before I had even finished the sentence! So, plans were made and in late August, 2005, we flew to Australia.

During my research, I had often emailed Ted Williams of the 380th BG Association. He was extremely helpful, answering my many questions. When I told him of my plans to visit Fenton he put me in touch with Bob Alford

528th BS "Herky's Hangout"



in Darwin. Indirectly, I came into contact with another Australian named Ray 'Doc' Doherty, who lives in Hayes Creek. Hayes Creek and The Hayes Creek Inn consist of an all-in-one motel/RV park/gas station/pub on the Stuart Highway (the main road between Darwin and Alice Springs), southeast of Darwin and a very short drive from both Long and Fenton Fields. Doc has lived there for many years and has extensively explored Fenton and Long, searching out and mapping previously unvisited, forgotten areas. He is licensed as a guide and conducts educational guided tours of the airfields for both foreign and Australian visitors—many of whom didn't know the bases existed—and many 380th veterans who have returned for a visit. He is actively and passionately involved in the continuing preservation of the areas as WW2 historical sites. Doc told me that he would be very happy to show us around Fenton and Long during our stay there.

Diana and I left Los Angeles on a Friday evening, arriving in Australia on Sunday morning—we had crossed the International Date Line and "lost" a day. Our flight ended in Brisbane, where we connected with a flight to Darwin. In flight I had my first look at northern Australia. The vast emptiness of the land was impressive—true wilderness. Our route skirted the north coast along the Gulf of Carpentaria. The colors of the water there are fantastic: blues, aquas, greens, and every shade in between. I tried to mentally put myself in a B-24 approaching that same coast in 1943, seeing the same beautiful scene.

The seasons in Australia are opposite from ours here in the U.S. and Summer was just beginning: Darwin was clear and hot. It seemed strange that, being in the northern part of Australia, we were actually in the tropics—again, opposite of the northern hemisphere. Another "opposite" is the driving—they drive on the "wrong" side of the road in Australia, which takes some getting used to. Darwin is an extremely interesting city, with much cultural and WW2 history, having suffered through several Japanese bombing raids. We spent 3 days seeing the sights then took a Greyhound Bus to Hayes Creek and into the bush. During the drive we caught sight of wild parrots, cockatoos and flocks of lorikeets, as well as a group of wallabies grazing in a field. This was Australia!

Doc was there to greet us as we stepped off of the bus. We checked in and had barely gotten our bags into our rooms when he asked if we were ready to go see some of Fenton. Not wanting to waste any time, we piled into his 4WD and headed out. Fenton and Long are designated as WW2 historical sites and the road in is well maintained. Once in, however, there are many dirt roads and tracks to the different areas and you have to do some walking to get into some of them. The realization that I was actually there hit me full-force when we came to a sign that said 'World War II Airfield—Fenton'. Then, continuing down a dirt road, we suddenly emerged onto the Fenton runway.

At that moment all of my research and Dad's black and white photographs became full-color reality! The feeling was somewhat overwhelming and I had to just stand there for several minutes trying to take it all in. Here I was, actually standing where, 63 years earlier, my father had taken off and landed his B-24 countless times.

(continued on next page)

OUR AMAZING TRIP TO FENTON (continued)



I was immediately struck by the great condition of the runway—it is clear of debris and vegetation and its original surface is still present and in good shape. The taxiways are still there—mostly dirt surfaced now—with the bush crowding their margins. The aircraft revetments



Fenton - Taxiway

and parking pads also still exist, but are somewhat overgrown. Standing on the runway in the heat and silence (it's very quiet there now) I imagined I could hear the roar of B-24s overhead.

Over the next days Doc took us into areas of both Fenton and Long that he does not normally include on his regular tours. In addition to "Headquarters Hill" and the 4 squadron camp areas (the 528th and 530th at Fenton and the 529th and 531st at Long), we visited B-24 crash sites, trash dumps containing artifacts and many old beer bottles (a LOT of beer was consumed there in '43-'45), anti-aircraft gun emplacements, and a munitions dump which still contains live ordnance. Seeing live .50 caliber ammunition and several still-live Japanese incendiary



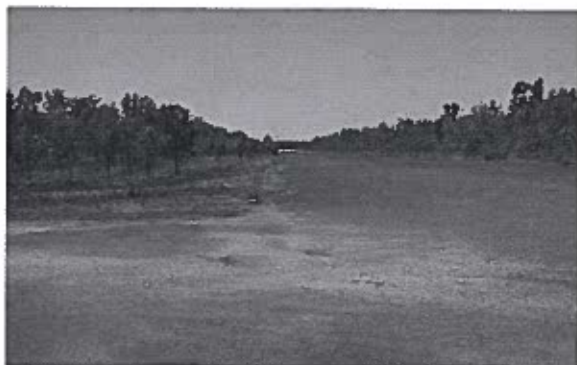
Fenton Runway - looking south



Fenton Runway - south end looking north



Fenton - Headquarters Hill-Ops/Pilots Briefing Room



Fenton Runway from Midpoint Taxiway looking South



Plaque on Headquarters Hill

(continued on next page)

OUR AMAZING TRIP TO FENTON (continued)

bomblets lying in the dirt really got our attention: we stepped VERY carefully and touched nothing! Doc pointed out pieces of Japanese bomb shrapnel from air raids on Fenton and some bomb craters at Long. He even took us into an RAAF site at Fenton where his father had served. History was really coming alive for us.

I was particularly interested in the 528th BS camp area, as Dad would have spent a lot of time there. Of course, all of the tents and wooden buildings are long gone from all areas, but the concrete pads that they were set up on are still there. Corrugated metal sheets used in construction are scattered around the camps and old rusted 55-gallon drums are everywhere.

The bush has taken over, but every year the Australian authorities set controlled brush fires throughout the Northern Territory to clear the grass and underbrush in order to prevent huge wildfires that can often occur in the dry season. The entire region is covered with Eucalyptus



Fenton - 528BS camp - structure pad

and Ironwood trees, which are unaffected by the fast burning fires. However, the swordgrass (which grows waist high and is impenetrable) and other brush comes back quickly. A burn had been done in the Fenton/Long region before we arrived, so it was fairly clear around the runways and in the camp areas.

I had hoped to try to identify certain camp scenes shown in Dad's photos, but found it was an impossible task. Back then, the camps were clear of undergrowth, with tents and shacks everywhere. Now there are just the concrete pads, trees and brush. However, we are 99% sure that we found one site: the 528th BS Bar 'Herky's Hangout', which Dad helped build. A galvanized pipe railing still stands on a large concrete pad area in the 528th camp. It is about the right height and length to be a support for the wooden bar structure and a tree still stands at one corner shown in a photo. I believe that I stood in the spot where my father is shown standing at that bar in one of the 1943 photographs.

Another area at Fenton, the 'Aircraft Graveyard' (marked by a sign) is where wrecked B-24s and their various parts were dumped. After the war ended and Fenton was abandoned, scrap metal scavengers (called "Scrappies" by the locals) moved in and many of the wrecked B-24s were picked apart and stripped for their aluminum. Even the Fenton runway tower was cut down. Over the years, visitors have also taken much as souvenirs. Although there are still large chunks of wreckage there, the 'whole'



Fenton - 530th BS Camp Area



Fenton - 528BS camp - fountain

aircraft themselves are gone. Even today, though it is discouraged, some people come who are in the 'business' of artifact hunting. They spend entire days literally raking through the camp and dump areas searching for and collecting artifacts which they later sell. Doc told us that some of them have gone so far as to destroy artifacts still remaining after they finish with a site (especially old beer and coca-cola bottles) thinking to increase the value of their finds. It's so sad to think of historical items being taken or destroyed for no other reason than greed.

We visited three B-24 crash sites at Fenton and Long at which the aircrews had been lost with the aircraft: the site of "Nothing Sacred", the site of an RAAF B-24, and one just off the Long runway. Standing at these sites, seeing the wreckage still present and knowing that men



Fenton - Aircraft Graveyard

(continued on next page)

OUR AMAZING TRIP TO FENTON (continued)

had died there in their aircraft affected Diana and me deeply. It hammered home the grim reality of the dangers all of the personnel there faced on a daily basis. I thought also of those crews who took off on missions and never returned. It was a profoundly emotional experience which I will never forget.

The Long runway is also still present, but is extensively overgrown with dense vegetation. The taxiways, revetments, and camp areas are also still there. I have since found out that a grant has been approved for the clearing of the Long runway. So, hopefully, it will soon be open and clear, although its surface is not in as good condition as Fenton's.



Long Runway - looking south

While at Hayes Creek, we were joined by two close friends of Doc's: John Haslett and Jason Efthymiades. John is another long time local whose knowledge of the area, its history and, especially, WW2 munitions, is absolutely encyclopedic. Jason is a young man from Darwin who has an enduring interest in the history of the area and has become very active in its preservation. Doc's knowledge is vast, but he often deferred to John on points of historical fact or identification of a site or a munition. John's stories of his past experiences often had us in stitches. He's quite a story teller! Without them, we would not have been able to see a fraction of either field. Their humor, knowledge and generosity is incredible.

The one thing that surprised me is the combined physical size of Fenton and Long—they encompass a vast area. The region is still remote and mostly uninhabited, much as it was in WW2. Unless you are very familiar with the airfields and their surrounding areas it is very easy to get lost, especially if you are on foot in the bush. The sun and summer heat are intense and you have to always be aware of where you step, especially at night and in the mornings, because of the presence of snakes, most of which are highly venomous. Luckily, we did not encounter any. There are actually pythons in the wild there! Unfortunately, the only one we saw was a road casualty—I would have loved to see one alive in the bush. In fact, the only wildlife we saw at Fenton was a wild pig in the 528th camp. A large cattle company (they are all called "cattle stations" in Australia) owns the land and is in the process of cutting cattle roads through and fencing parts of it. The company is aware of the historical significance of the area and is taking care not to impact any sites. They have granted Doc full, unrestricted

access to these new roads, some of which, Doc said, have already opened up some previously inaccessible areas for exploration.

We had only 4 days at Hayes Creek, which was entirely too short—a month would not have been enough time. After Fenton, we went on to visit Sydney, then back home. Interestingly, we departed Sydney on Thursday morning at 8:30 a.m. and, 17 hours later, arrived in Los Angeles on Thursday morning at 7:30 a.m.. Twilight Zone? No, just that pesky International Dateline again.

I embarked on this trip in search of my father's war experience and came away with much, much more. I originally wrote this as a brief description of our visit to Fenton and what things are like there now. However, the experience has become greater to me than just a tour of a WWII base where my father was stationed. Being of the next generation, I did not personally know any of those men and women, nor have I had to face any of the fear, danger, loss and sorrow they experienced in those years. But now, after having actually walked where they (you) lived, worked, flew, and many times died, I begin to have an understanding of what my father and all of the other veterans went through. Both airfields are now silent and deserted, but far from empty—they are still crowded with memory and history, which you can feel. Prior to the trip I was fortunate enough to get a ride in a B-24. That experience also greatly enriched my appreciation of the aircrews who flew in them and the ground crews who maintained them. I am grateful to Ted Williams, Bob Alford, Doc, John, Jason and all who are working to keep alive the memory of WWII sites such as Fenton and Long and the people who lived that history. It has been a rare privilege for me to share your experience, limited as that sharing has been. I only wish that Dad could have accompanied us on our journey.

On second thought, I think he did.

William E. Shek, Jr.



Fenton - Tower Remains

Editor's note: Larger versions of these photos can be found online at:

<http://fairway.ecn.purdue.edu/IIES/PLAIC/380/NEWS/News26/Shek.html>

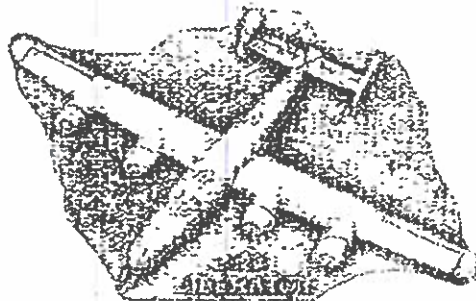
380TH PLAQUE - UTAH

Below is the design for our plaque to be placed in the Fifth Air Force Memorial Garden on the lawn of the Memorial Chapel at Hill Air Force Base Museum. Members who attended the Salt Lake City Reunion will remember that we visited that Museum and had our Memorial Service at that Chapel.

You will also recall that we discussed this memorial marker for the 380th Bomb Group at the Business Meeting during our San Diego Reunion.

The line on this figure is a defect in their copying machine, not a defect in the design.

1942 - 380TH BOMB GROUP (H) - 1945



SQUADRONS

528TH 529TH 530TH 531ST

"WE BURIED OUR DEAD AT SEA OR IN JUNGLE THICKETS...
THEY ARE A DEDICATION, NOT TO HISTORY, BUT TO THE FUTURE!"

THIS MEMORIAL IS IN HONOR OF THE MEN WHO SERVED IN THE 380TH BOMB GROUP IN DEFENSE OF NORTHERN AUSTRALIA AND WORLD FREEDOM. THESE AIRMEN AND GROUND SUPPORT PERSONS ENGAGED THE ENEMY IN THE ENTIRE SWPA, FLYING THE LONGEST UNESCORTED BOMBING MISSIONS UNTIL THE ADVENT OF THE B-29. THE 380TH BOMB GROUP PARTICIPATED FROM AUSTRALIA TO OKINAWA IN THE FOLLOWING CAMPAIGNS: AIR OFFENSIVE, JAPAN BISMARCK ARCHIPELAGO; NEW GUINEA; NORTHERN SOLOMONS; WESTERN PACIFIC; LEYTE; LUZON; CHINA DEFENSIVE; CHINA OFFENSIVE; SOUTHERN PHILIPPINES.

DECORATIONS: TWO PRESIDENTIAL UNIT CITATIONS
THE PHILIPPINES PRESIDENTIAL UNIT CITATION
DEDICATED SEPTEMBER 1988 - 380TH BOMB GROUP ASSOCIATION

OUR OPPOSITION

In reviewing our history, *WE WENT TO WAR*, it has struck us that we have no information in it yet concerning the Japanese response to our intrusions over "their" territory. We have therefore resolved to include a Part XI in *WE WENT TO WAR* entitled *OUR OPPOSITION*. We acknowledge that Glenn Horton has some details of this in *BEST IN THE SOUTHWEST* obtained from Mr. Osamu Tagaya who worked with Laurence J. Hickey, another well-known WWII aviation writer, but we wish to be more complete in line with the other Parts of our study.

To whet your appetite, we are enclosing some correspondence we have had from Bernard Baeza of France who is studying this area.

From: Theodore J Williams [tjwil@ecn.purdue.edu]
Sent: Monday, October 03, 2005 5:25 PM
To: BAEZADomino@aol.com
Subject: Re: Night fighters over NEI ???

Dear Mr. Baeza,

In our missions from Fenton the 380th encountered night fighters only on our missions to Balikpapan, Borneo and the Ambon area off the coast of Ceram. Night fighters were definitely identified on the night of January 12/13, 1944 over Balikpapan and on the night of February 8/9, 1944 at Ceram. We lost one B-24 and one damaged at Balikpapan. We had one damaged at Ambon in February. We suspected that the Balikpapan attacker was an IRVING that at Ambon a NICK. No night fighters were claimed as destroyed by us.

We encountered Ki-45s in daylight many times as our search missions encountered their convoy duty between the Halmahera Is and Ambon. In most cases no attacks occurred. Our major combat with them was on January 16 and 19, 1944 in the Ambon area. We had one B-24 damaged on the 16th and lost two on the 19th. We claimed one NICK damaged on the 16th and three destroyed on the 19th.

Our first encounter was near the Tanimbar Is on September 5, 1943 when we had one of our aircraft damaged. The attacker was also claimed as damaged.

I hope this information is helpful to you. I would appreciate any information you have, particularly if it is different from this. Thank you. Best wishes.

Ted Williams

BAEZADomino@aol.com wrote:

> Hello,
>
> I am a french reader of your very nice and interesting History of 380th BG I am particularly interested in the missions flown from Fenton (Australia) and I'd like to get informations about two particular points (only for a period from arrival in Australia to the end of February 1944):
>
> 1) When operating from Fenton, how many times did the 380th BG encounter Army twin engine fighters (Ki.45-kai)?
> I'd like to know the date, the place and the result (claims or losses) of these encounters?
>
> 2) When operating from Fenton, how many times did the 380th BG encounter night fighters?
> The same way, I'd like to know the date, the place and the result of these encounters?
>
> Is it possible for you to assist me?
>
> Waiting for your answer, I send you sunny and friendly salutations from southern France and the Mediterranean Coast.
>
> Best regards!
>
> Bernard Baeza

(continued on next page)

OUR OPPOSITION (continued)

From: tjwil [tjwil@ecn.purdue.edu]
Sent: Tuesday, October 04, 2005 2:07 PM
To: BAEZADomino@aol.com
Subject: Re: Night fighters over NEI ???

Dear Bernard,

Our history of the 380th's combat experiences would be greatly expanded and improved with any information we could get describing and naming the opposition forces which we faced on our missions. If you have such information it would be most appreciated. Thank you for your offer.
Best wishes.

Ted Williams

BAEZADomino@aol.com wrote:

- > Dear Ted
- >
- > Thank you very much for your informations. They are very interesting for me and generally confirm what I knew.
- >
- > If you are interested in details from the other side, I do have the names of the Japanese units and pilots involved in the most important combats against the B-24s. Just tell me if you want to get these details. I'll will have to check my files.
- >
- > Thank you once again for your kind assistance and best regards.
- >
- > Bernard Baeza

Subject: Re: Night fighters over NEI ???
From: BAEZADomino@aol.com
Date: Sat, 8 Oct 2005 06:14:26 EDT
To: tjwil@ecn.purdue.edu

Dear Ted

I have checked my files and got some informations which may be interesting for you.

Here are informations dealing with the Japanese Side and some interrogations you will perhaps help me to answer :

1) On June 11, 1943, 16 B-24s raided Koepang (Timor). The opposition came from 6 Zeroes of Ku 202 (Ku means Kokutai. In English "Air Group") led by NAPI/C Mitsuomi Noda.
Japanese claims = 3 kills and 1 probable.
Japanese losses = nil.

2) On June 23, 1943, 17 B-24s raided Macassar (Celebes). The opposition came from floatplanes of Ku 932 (attached to the Netherlands East Indies Fleet HQ). A floatbiplane (Mitsubishi F1M2 "Pete") manned by Lt(jg) Yuji Kino and NAP2/C Tsuruô Manabe rammed B-24 No. 41-23688 of 319th BS (90th BG). The two Japanese aviators died as well as Cpt Roy L. Olsen and his crew.

As for this action, I have no precision about the exact number of floatplanes involved. Is there any information on this particular point in the 380th records???

3) On August 13, 1943, B-24s raided Balikpapan. What kind of opponent did they face: fighters or AA guns???

The next morning, while returning from Balikpapan, No. 42-40369 "Shady Lady" of 528th BS was attacked near Timor by 2 Zeroes. The 2 fighters of Ku 202 led by NAPI/C Tadaô Yamashita reported a bomber damaged. (Ku 202 was attached to the 23rd Air Flotilla).

4) On August 16, 1943, 2 B-24s flew over Balikpapan. Opposition came from 7 Zeroes of Ku 202 led by the Commanding Officer himself: Lt-Comdr Minoru Suzuki.
Japanese claims = 2 kills.
Japanese losses = 1 (NAPI/C Takeshi Takahashi was shot down by gunners of No. 42-40369 "Miss Giving" of 528th BS)

5) In the night of August 17 to 18, 1943, B-24s raided Balikpapan again. What kind of opponent did they face: fighters or AA guns???

(continued on next page)

OUR OPPOSITION (continued)

6) On September 5, 1943, 3 B-24s encountered twin-engine fighters Kawasaki Ki.45 Kai "Nick" of 5th Sentai (Army Air Force). In this action, the 5th Sentai lost 1 plane. With this plane died 1/Lt Yasuhiko Kiyosuki and M/Sgt Yoshitake Nakano. 1/Lt Kiyosuki was the 3rd Flight CO (in Japanese Chûtaishô).

I'd like to know if records of the 380th BG say exactly how many Ki.45 Kai were involved in this action???

7) In the night of September 11 to 12, 1943, B-24s raided Macassar. What kind of opponent did they face: fighters or AA guns???

8) On September 15, 1943, while returning from Kendari some B-24s encountered Ki.45 Kai of 5th Sentai over Timor. During this action, 1 "Nick" was lost with its crew: 1/Lt Noriuchi Ogata and Sgt Kenichi Kondo.

I'd like to know if US records say exactly how many Ki.45 Kai were involved in this action???

9) On September 21, 1943, 8 B-24s raided Langgoer (Kai Islands). They encountered 2 "Nick" led by Cpt Yoshiaki Yamashita, leader of the 5th Sentai's 2nd Flight (Chûtai).

Japanese claims = 2 kills

Japanese losses = nil

They shot down No. 42-40532 "Little Joe" and No. 42-40509 "Nothing Sacred".

10) On October 26, 1943, 12 B-24s raided Pomelaa and 2 planes were lost. What kind of opponent did they face: fighters or AA guns???

11) On November 21, 1943, 7 B-24s encountered 4 "Rufe" over Tabernane. These floatfighters Nakajima A6M2-N belonged to Ku 934 (attached to 23rd Air Flotilla). They were manned by 2 confirmed pilots (WO Takeshi Kawaguchi and WO Sadayoshi Yokota) and 2 rookies (Seamen 1/C Yukiô Setô and Yonetada Sawada).

Japanese claims = nil

Japanese losses = 1 (WO Takeshi Kawaguchi).

12) The same day (Nov. 11, 1943), 7 B-24s flew over Manokwari (New-Guinea) and encountered 2 "Rufe". They too belonged to Ku 934 and were manned by Ens Susumu Kawasaki and NAP2/C Yukiô Okada.

Japanese claims = 1 kill and 2 damaged.

Japanese losses = nil.

This action caused the loss of No. 42-40967 "Black Widow" and the crash landing of No. 42-40683.

"Black Widow" was also claimed destroyed by the AA gunners of Manokwari.

13) On December 12, 1943, 3 B-24s flew over Manokwari and encountered 2 "Rufe" of Ku 934. The floatfighters led by NAP2/C Hideô Kawaguchi didn't manage to make contact. Strangely, they reported seeing 7 bombers.

To be continued....

Bernard Baeza

Subject: Re: Night fighters over NEI ???

From: BAEZADomino@aol.com

Date: Sat, 8 Oct 2005 09:10:58 EDT

To: tjwil@ecn.purdue.edu

Dear Ted,

Here is the second part of my searches on the Japanese side. There still are some interrogations for me. If you could have some informations about them, I'd appreciate very much.

1) In the night of January 8 to 9, 1944, 18 B-24s raided Kendari and No. 42-40369 of 530th BS was lost during this mission. What kind of opponent did they face: fighters or AA guns???

2) In the night of January 12 to 13, 1944, 17 B-24s raided Balikpapan. They were intercepted by 2 Zeroes of the new model 52 (Mitsubishi A6M5) which belonged to Ku 381. This unit was a reinforcement for the 23rd Air Flotilla. The 2 Zeroes were members of an advance party of 5 aircraft led by Lt Kuniô Kanzaki which had arrived 5 days sooner.

Kanzaki himself led the 2 fighters which faced the B-24s that night and managed to shoot down No. 42-40369 "B.T.O" of 530th BS.

Ku 381 claims = 1 kill

Ku 381 losses = nil

(continued on next page)

OUR OPPOSITION (continued)

I have not managed to find documents about another Japanese unit involved in this action. Some of my friends in Japan think that "Irving" night fighters (attached to the 23rd Air Flotilla HQ) may have been involved. What do reports of the 380th BG say about this combat??? Do they mention the presence of twin engine fighters???

3) On January 16, 1944, 6 B-24s flew over Ambon and encountered 7 "Rex" float fighters (Kawanishi N1K1-J "Kyôfu"). They were new planes of the Ku 934 and were led by Lt(jg) Masamichi Minokota.

Japanese claims = 1 kill (by NAP2/C Kiyomi Katsumi)

Japanese losses = nil

It seems that NAP2/C Katsumi shot down No. 42-40369 of 528th BS.

4) On January 17, 1944, 4 B-24s flew over Manokwari and had to face 6 "Rufe" of Ku 934 led by the CO himself: Lt Toshiharu Ikeda.

Japanese claims = 3 bombers damaged

Japanese losses = nil

5) On January 19, 1944, 22 B-24s raided Ambon and were met by 7 "Rex" and 5 "Nick".

The floatfighters of the Navy were still led by Lt(jg) Minokota

Japanese claims = 2 kills and one probable

Japanese losses = 1 (WO Sadayoshi Yokota)

The Ki.45 Kai of the Army belonged to the 5th Sentai's 1st Flight and were led by 1/Lt Yasuhide Baba.

Japanese claims = 5 kills and 2 probables

Japanese losses = 1 shot down and crew killed (1/Lt Kensaku Tsurumi and S/Sgt Kiyoshi Kanaya)

1 crashlanded on a beach (2/Lt Fujitarô Itô and ?)

During this action, the 380th BG lost No. 42-40369 "Paper Doll" of 529th BS and No. 42-40369 "Doodlebug" of 531st BS.

6) On January 31, 1944, 13 B-24s flew over Ceram. What kind of opponent did they face: fighters or AA guns???

7) On February 7, 1944, 12 B-24s flew over Ambon. What kind of opponent did they face: fighters or AA guns???

8) On February 9, 1944, 13 B-24s flew over Ambon. What kind of opponent did they face: fighters or AA guns???

This action caused the loss of No. 42-40369 "Quack Wac" of 530th BS which crashlanded at Fenton due to battle damages.

9) On February 15, 1944, 18 B-24s raided Ambon and Halmahera. What kind of opposition did they face: fighters or AA guns???

10) Same question for the mission to Laha flown by 19 B-24s on February 20, 1944???

11) Same question for the mission to Ceram flown by 13 B-24s on February 25, 1944???

I hope that this will be useful for your work.

As you can see, I lack informations from the 380th BG's side. If it possible for you to search and find them for me, It would marvelous. Mainly this would give me a base of work to carry on searches in Japan!

Hoping to read you soon.

Bernard Baeza

(continued on next page)

OUR OPPOSITION (continued)

From: tjwil [tjwil@ecn.purdue.edu]
Sent: Sunday, October 09, 2005 6:39 PM
To: BAEZADomino@aol.com
Subject: Re: Night fighters over NEI ???

Dear Bernard,

Thank you for your two messages. Our information on the other side, beyond our personal observation, including my own, comes from Glenn Horton's book, BEST IN THE SOUTHWEST, published 1995. He had contact with a Mr. Osamu Tagaya who worked with Lawrence J. Hickey, a well known WWII aviation writer. They had some translated Japanese records. I have not seen these, only what information Glenn put in the book. I will comment on your statements using your numbering :

First Message (All in 1943) :

(Item 1) On our June 11, 1943 raid on Koepang (Timor) we lost one plane (CARELESS, 42-40500) No other damage was reported. Our gunners claimed three Zeros. We state 15 of our aircraft participated. Horton had the same information as you have.

(ITEM 2) On June 23, 1943, 17 planes of the 380th and the 90th attacked Macassar (Celebes). According to our information Lt Kino's plane was an obsolete B5M1 Carrier Attack Bomber. The rest of your information matches ours. We saw only one Japanese plane, it had fixed landing gear not floats. It would be hard to mix these up since PETE is also a biplane. No other Japanese planes were reported in our narrative.

(ITEM 3) On our August 13/14 raid only Searchlights and Anti-aircraft, mostly from shipping. SHADY LADY, 42-40369 encountered two Zeros over Koepang but they did not press their attacks and no damage was done to our plane. It later crash landed at Drysdale Mission in Australia but this was due to running out of fuel because of too much time over the target. The attack on Balikpapan was at midnight.

(ITEM 4) On our August 15 mission to Balikpapan in daylight for reconnaissance both plane were separately attacked. Four planes attacked SHE ASTA, 42-40512. According to our data they were led by Flight P/O Takahashi. They made fourteen passes. SHE ASTA had only one hole in an aileron and claimed one Zero downed. Takahashi then left SHE ASTA and joined Suzuki in attacking MISS GIVING. They made only single attacks (fifteen in all). Only major damage was loss of No 4 engine.

They claimed four Zeros. We have learned that Takahashi was killed. Over Timor on the return they saw nine fighters but avoided them in the clouds.

(ITEM 5) On the August 16/17 raid was met only by severe Anti-Aircraft fire from shipping damaging several of our aircraft but all got back safely.

(ITEM 6) On September 5 several of our aircraft flying east of the Tanimbar Islands were attacked by a single Ki 45. They claimed the fighter and we learned their names. Our aircraft all returned safely to base. No other Japanese planes were involved.

(ITEM 7) On the September 11/12 raid on Macassar the target was shipping and the only opposition was severe Anti-Aircraft fire from the ships. We lost on B-24 and another lost an engine. Four crewmen from the lost plane were captured and executed by the Japanese.

(ITEM 8) On our September 14 raid on Kendari there is no description of fighter engagements in our reports. The tracks of a Kendari mission do not generally go over Timor but stay north.

(ITEM 9) On our September 21 raid on Langgoer our aircraft lacked the formation discipline that we would have later and were easy targets for the 6, A6Ms under Superior FP/O Katsuyoshi Yoshida and 2 Nicks of Captain Yoshiaki Yamashita. The Zeros shot out engines on three planes, 42-40509, NOTHING SACRED ;42-40512 SHE ASTA and 42-40935, QUEER DEER. Captain Yamashita downed 42-40532. LITTLE JOE with cannon fire. She crashed on a reef in the west of the Kai Islands. That crew was taken prisoner and were liberated only at the end of the war. The rest of our planes returned safely to Australia where most of them landed at the first airfield (Darwin). The pilot of NOTHING SACRED, a rookie on their first mission, elected to continue on for another 80 miles to their home base at Fenton. In the failing light of dusk and with a disabled engine he crashed short of the runway killing his whole crew. Hardly a kill for the Japanese since a sensible pilot decision would have saved that plane and crew. Our claims totaled 12 Zekes and 3 Nicks, many more than were flying.

(ITEM 10) On our October 26 mission to Pomelaa again lacked formation discipline. This and mechanical problems doomed two of our aircraft. Only four aircraft reached the target and bombed when our minimum force for this mission was six. On top of this they broke formation at the target and lost sight of each other for a time. Flak was inaccurate so the opposition was mainly fighters. Six Zekes from Kendari under F/PO2 Goro Tsuda attacked them concentrating on FYRTLE MYRTLE 42-40485 which was shot down into the sea. Most of the crew parachuted and were rescued as prisoners and kept for the rest of the war. GOLDEN GATOR, 42-40518, immediately broke formation to go to the aid of the stricken plane and was immediately attacked by all six Zekes who quickly disabled two of the engines but our plane was able to escape into a cloud. Strangely our other two did not attempt to find and escort this disabled aircraft. GOLDEN GATOR struggled 300 miles to Moa Island east of Timor and was readying for a Ditching there when they were attacked again by two transient Ki 45s. They ditched while under attack. Four of the crew were able to get into life rafts and were rescued next day by Australian Catalinas. We did not learn the names for the Nicks.

(continued on next page)

OUR OPPOSITION (continued)

(ITEMS 11 and 12) On November 21 we had a dual anti shipping mission to Taberfane (14 aircraft) and Maokwari (7 aircraft). Both encountered Float Plane Fighters and Anti-Aircraft fire. The Taberfane mission had a damaged engine on each of two aircraft. Our reports say 6 Rufes were involved. They claimed one Rufe. We learned his name, the same as you report. At Manokwari our information states the Rufes were from Jefman at Sorong on the West Coast. According to all reports BLACK WIDOW's nose was shot off by anti aircraft fire. She was 42-40677. There were no phosphorous bombs near it when this happened. Our other loss was 42-63683 which crashed at base out of fuel, not from enemy action. We had no battle claims.

(ITEM 13) Our mission to the Vogelkopf on December 13 was to Boela on Ceram, Kokas in New Guinea and Larat off Jamdena Is, well south of Manokwari. We had three aircraft involved. It is most unlikely that they would have been seen at Manokwari. especially expanded in number to seven. We claimed 11 of the Attackers.

Second message (All in 1944)

(ITEM 1) Our mission of January 8 was a daylight mission to Kendari. On the run-in to the target 13 Zekes attacked our formation concentrating on the 530th Flight Leader whose plane quickly lost two engines on one side making it virtually unflyable. This plane, 42-73115, crashed on Wowoni Is with the loss of all its crew. One other plane lost an engine but made it back to base.

(ITEM 2) Our mission to Balikpapan on the night of 12/13 January was met by heavy anti-aircraft fire, many searchlights and both Zeke and Irving night fighters. Our crews had been warned of possible night fighters of this class with their "Schrage Musik" type of armament (i.e., 20mm cannon shooting vertically upward from an aircraft directly underneath the victim). Several of our planes experienced or observed this action and reported that 42-41214, B.T.O., was probably shot down this way. They also reported that the Zekes and Irvings were not coordinated and got in each others way. One other of our aircraft was damaged by the Irving but successfully reached Base. This was QUACK WAC, 42-72775.

(ITEM 3) The mission of January 16 had one casualty - 42-73125, which had no name - had its hydraulic system shot out and crash landed on return to base because of poor runway surface due to monsoon rains. This plus no brakes meant disaster but should not necessarily be considered a Japanese victory

(ITEM 4) Our mission of January 17 was intercepted north west of Manokwari by 6 Rufes. No damage was caused by either side as the enemy attacks were not aggressive.

(ITEM 5) The mission to Halong on January 19 resulted in the loss of two 380th aircraft. They were 42-73187, PAPER DOLL, of the 529th Squadron, shot down into the sea South of Amboina Is. Most of the crew escaped to life rafts and sailed to the Kai Islands where they were betrayed by natives and made prisoners until the end of the war. The crew attributed their shoot down to a NICK. The second aircraft was DOODLEBUG, 42-73117 of the 531st Squadron. It was part of a 4 plane element that made two runs on Halong and was the only aircraft to bomb Halong that day. According to our reports, DOODLEBUG was first damaged in the #3 engine by a Nick in their first pass. It was later further damaged by the 6 Rufes that continually attacked us on the bomb run to Halong. The NICK of Lt Tsurumi was shot down at this later time by this element and seen to crash. DOODLEBUG was able to fly to Seroe Is (halfway home) before having to ditch there. Half of the crew were saved and rescued the next day by Australian Catalinas. We claimed in total, 3 NICKS, 2 RUFES, 1 ZEKE and 1 OSCAR. We had no previous knowledge of the REXs. When seeing the silhouettes of the Rufes and REXs together, we who were there would unanimously say all the float planes we saw were Rufes.

(ITEM 6) The mission of January 31 was to pursue a convoy from Ceram to the Kai Is. A cruiser in the convoy provided sufficient gunfire to keep the formation high and as a result inaccurate in their bombing.

The formation was also harassed by repeated flights of 9 Zekes and 7 Rufes and later 5 more Zekes. Three of our aircraft received light damage. We made no claims.

(ITEMS 7 and 8) These missions were similar with 14 aircraft going to Ambon on the 7th and to Halong on the 9th. Anti-aircraft was always heavy in this area. By this time it was considered to be radar directed. We were also warned of night fighters but they were not considered to have radars. On the 9th a Nick made three passes at our 42-72775, QUACK WAC, damaging the left wing and flattening the left tire. It returned safely to base but was badly damaged on landing because of the tire.

(ITEM 9) On February 14/15, 14 planes were sent to Halong. A successful raid was reported with numerous fires and related explosions. No aerial opposition was reported. The Halmahera mission on the 15th was a photo mission to determine enemy harbor defenses. No opposition was reported for this mission

(ITEMS 10 and 11) By now these large night missions to the Ambon area were becoming routine to try to keep the airfields cratered and the docks and stores decimated. As noted above they always featured severe anti-aircraft fire but little or no aerial opposition.

I hope these remarks are helpful to you in your study of the Japanese side of WWII. I hope you will be able to help us on the March - June 1944 period when we faced our stiffest opposition on our missions to the Vogelkopf, Geelvink Bay and the Halmaheras.

Best wishes,

Ted Williams

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528th Rowe, Irving C. ("Pappy"), Bombardier, Sheehan's Crew (5), Elgin, Illinois, DOD May 27, 2005, reported by his stepson, Steve Berry

529th Chandler, Robert L. ("Sandy"), Aircraft Commander/Squadron Commander, Chandler's Crew (35), Petaluma, California, DOD October 31, 2005, reported by his wife, Carol Rathmann

529th Johnston, James H., Navigator, Carmichael's Crew (40), Bellevue, Washington, DOD September 22, 2005, reported by his son, Craig Johnston

530th Hess, Arthur D., Jr., Aerial Photographer, Mess Cook, Asheville, North Carolina, DOD January 21, 1988, reported by his son, Terry D. Hess

530th Hicks, Robert T., Airplane Armorer, Baden, Pennsylvania, DOD March 22, 2005, reported by his daughter, Patricia Hicks

530th Rivera, Rodolfo A. ("Rudy"), Flight Crew Photographer (Various Crews), Plano, Texas, DOD December 31, 2005, reported by his wife, Mary Rivera, and Bill Bever

531st Bernstein, Elwood E. ("Woody"), Bombardier, Sears' Crew (85), Vancouver, Washington, DOD February 14, 2006, reported by his son, James Bernstein

531st Cumming, Alexander B., Radar Mechanic, Saco, Maine, DOD November 22, 2005, reported by his daughter, Janet Cumming Tucker

