

**THE 380TH BOMB GROUP ASSOCIATION
5th AF - RAAF**

AFFECTIONATELY KNOWN AS

The Flying Circus

NEWSLETTER #30

April 2007

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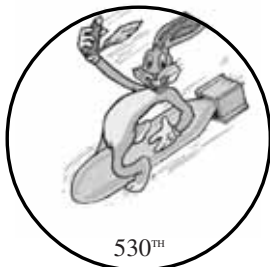
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HISTORIANS

Bob Alford
Glenn R. Horton, Jr.
Gary L. Horton

HISTORY PROJECT

Theodore J. Williams
Barbara J. Gotham

REUNION COORDINATOR

Martin Smith

NEWSLETTERS -

WEBPAGES - FINANCIAL

Barbara J. Gotham
Phone: 765/463-5390
(leave a message, please)
Email: barb@purdue.edu

130 Colony Road
W Lafayette IN 47906-1209

CORRECTION

Velma Grambley's last name was misspelled in a picture caption in Issue #30 (December 2006) in the Reunion photos. We apologize for this error. Velma is the widow of Timothy Grambley of the 531st.

380th MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

As a request from our members, and in order to save room for more articles, the membership form will not be included in each issue. BUT please continue to send in your yearly renewals! You can get the form from an old newsletter, or on-line from our website.

Or you can also send a letter with the following information:

Name
Squadron / 380th Duty
Renewal or New
Regular Member (original member of 380th Bomb Group or 380th Bomb Wing)
Associate Member (if associate, please include the name of the 380th veteran and your relationship to him)
Your address (street address, city, state, zip)
Your phone number
Your email address
Your spouse's name (if applicable)

Annual payment of \$20 payable to 380TH BOMB GROUP ASSOCIATION will help defray costs of mailings throughout the year. Mail to: Barbara Gotham, 130 Colony Road, W Lafayette IN 47906-1209 USA

Thanks to all who've sent in their dues!

BUDGET REPORT

<u>INCOME</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>	<u>NOTES</u>
Reunion funds	\$2,028.73	Carry-over from 2006 Reunion
Membership funds	\$4,448.87	Includes carry-over from Carnevale & Associates of \$523.87
Memorial funds	\$ 100.00	
TOTAL INCOME	<u>\$6,577.60</u>	
EXPENSES		
Postage	\$ 300.16	
2006 Reunion refund	\$ 24.00	
Bank fee	\$ 21.75	New checks fee
TOTAL EXPENSES	<u>\$ 345.91</u>	
BALANCE	<u>\$6,231.69</u>	

HISTORY PROJECT

WE WENT TO WAR: WHAT'S NEW?

Part XI: Our Opposition - Japanese Anti-aircraft Artillery and Fighter Units in the Southwest Pacific --

Just posted on the 380th website at: <http://fairway.ecn.purdue.edu/IIES/PLAIC/380/HISTORY/partXI.html>

If you would like a copy of this document mailed to you, please let me know.

Barb Gotham
130 Colony Road, W Lafayette IN 47906-1209
Email: barb@purdue.edu Phone: 765/463-5390

2007 REUNION

Dayton Marriott, September 6-9, 2007, Dayton Ohio

1414 S. Patterson Boulevard Dayton, Ohio 45409 USA

Phone: 1-937-223-1000 Fax: 1-937-223-7853

Toll-free: 1-800-450-8625

<http://marriott.com/hotels/travel/dayoh-dayton-marriott/>

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE OF EVENTS (none of this has been scheduled yet, so subject to change)

Thursday

Registration

Friday

Memorial Service, luncheon, visit the Wright-Patterson Museum

Saturday

Member meeting in morning, afternoon sightseeing, evening banquet

Sunday

Departure

We are trying to have more time for everyone to just sit and visit with their friends, although there will still be organized portions of the Reunion as usual.

Nearby Attractions:

Frank Lloyd Wright's Westcott House

- 1340 East High Street, Springfield, OH 45503 -- <http://www.westcotthouse.org/>

Dayton Art Institute

- 456 Belmonte Park N, Dayton, OH 45405

Dayton Aviation Heritage Nat. Historical Park

- 22 South Williams Street, Dayton, OH 45407-- <http://www.nps.gov/daav/index.htm>

Dayton Aviation Heritage National Historical Park, a four-unit park is located in and around Dayton, Ohio. The units include: The Wright Cycle Company Complex, consisting of The Wright-Dunbar Interpretive Center and Aviation Trail Visitor Center and Museum and The Wright Cycle Company; The Paul Laurence Dunbar House; Dayton History at Carillon Park; the Huffman Prairie Flying Field and Interpretive Center.

Carillon Historical Park (near the hotel)

- 1000 Carillon Blvd, Dayton, OH 45409 -- <http://www.daytonhistory.org/>

IMAX Theatre

- 1100 Spaatz St, Wright-Patterson AFB, OH 45433

Boonshoft Museum of Discovery

- 2600 De Weese Pkwy, Dayton, OH 45414 -- <http://www.boonshoftmuseum.org/>

Riverscape

- 125 E. First St, Dayton, OH 45403

Please let us know your suggestions for additional group tours.

Registration forms will be available in the June and August issues.

PAST 380TH REUNION LOCATIONS

Bill Bever recently asked for a listing of the 380th Bomb Group Association Reunions.

1. September 1981, Organizational with 22nd Bomb Group, Denver, CO
2. 30 September - 3 October 1982, Dayton, OH
3. 28 September - 2 October 1983, Plattsburgh, NY
4. 11-14 October 1984, El Paso, TX
5. 11-15 September 1985, Omaha, NE
6. 24-28 September 1986, Plattsburgh, NY
7. 1-4 October 1987, San Antonio, TX
8. 14-18 September 1988, Seattle, WA
9. 13-17 September 1989, Norfolk, VA
10. 12-16 September 1990, Colorado Springs, CO
11. 25-29 September 1991, Orlando, FL
12. 4-8 November 1992, Tucson AZ
13. 29 September - 3 October 1993, Nashville, TN
14. 14-18 September 1994, Denver, CO
15. 17-23 July 1995, Oshkosh, WI
16. 16-20 October 1996, Savannah, GA
17. 8-12 October 1997, Panama City, FL
18. 13-20 September 1998, San Diego, CA
19. 19-26 September 1999, Tucson, AZ
20. 8-12 November 2000, San Antonio, TX
21. 3-7 October 2001, Dayton, OH
22. 18-22 September 2002, Salt Lake City, UT
23. 10-14 September 2003, Williamsburg, VA
24. 29 September - 3 October 2004, Boston, MA
25. 9-13 November 2005, San Diego, CA
26. 12-16 October 2006, Washington, DC

If anyone has any interesting stories or highlights from any of these reunions that you would like to share with our members, we'd love to hear them!

MAIL CALL

Letter from Forrest Brissey, March 22, 2007, to Barb Gotham:

Dear Barb,

Re: '07 Reunion at Dayton Marriott -- I can't make it - But I'll be there in memory and in spirit. Please convey my greetings to all, and my very best wishes for a grand reunion!

F.L. Brissey

Email from Mick Maguire, March 30, 2007, to Barb Gotham:

Hello Barbara,

My name is Mick Maguire, my grandfather was George Henry (Paddy) Maguire. He was a member of McPherson's crew, 530th, from early 1944 to the war's end and also flew numerous black cat sorties; his position was navigator. Fellow crew members were Vern Hiles, Hal Dixon, Delgrano, fairhead. He was also very good friends with Col McKinney, another RAAF buddy.

A school teacher by profession, he taught in Kavieng, Papua New Guinea for 2 years until 1940; during this time he developed the fine art of navigating while sailing around many of the Southern Pacific Islands. This ability saw him placed to teach American crews.

In my searches for info on my grandfather I've not been very successful in finding anything that's of note! As I believe from 2 members of his flight crew he was highly regarded as a wonderful teacher to the American crews he flew with in the fine arts of navigation in the Pacific region. I have numerous pics from his time in the islands and none really tell much of a tale as to where he was at the time but there are some wonderful shots among them and I'll do my best to get them to you so that you can place them on your wonderful site and hopefully some members may recognise the scenes.

If this info could be passed on to members of the site it would be greatly appreciated as it would be great to get some info on my grandfather as I was so unfortunate to be born 4 years prior to his passing in 1972 in Brisbane Australia after a 30-year struggle with post traumatic stress and heart complications.

If any of the stories my father relays about his exploits are true, I only wish that I could turn the clock back and watch from a distance the brave duty he and his fellow crew members carried out in such a time of great importance to all human beings.



Cheers, Mick Maguire A B-24 fan
mickjmaguire@yahoo.com.au

If anyone knew Paddy Maguire, please contact Mick,



MAIL CALL

Email from Eugene B. Warren,
October 12, 2006, to Ted Williams:

I recently discovered your web site about the 380th Bomb Group. My father was a crew member of the B-24 known as the Flak Fled Flapper. He was a waist gunner and as he was the oldest member of the crew at age 30, he was called "pappy." I have attached some info that you might find useful on your website. The photo was taken in California, this is the crew that took the aircraft to Australia, I don't have the names of the other crew members.



*S/Sgt James H. Warren, standing right end
Photo taken at March Field, California*

As you know, the 380th was part of the 5th Air Force and the patch on my father's flight jacket showing which squadron he was attached to had a cartoon figure riding a falling bomb and carrying a machine gun.

Thanks for renewing old memories...

Eugene B. Warren
ATC USN (ret)

Son of James H. Warren, Assistant Flight Engineer, Synar's Crew, 528th Squadron

If anyone knows the names of any of the crew in this photo, let us know.



Email from Jim Cernick, March 20, 2007, to Barb Gotham/Ted Williams:

Hello Ted, Hello Barb, ever see this sign before? I have not found it anywhere in the books. I think it's the PI, but not sure. The man that took it was an ATC with one of the service groups, and followed the 380th to Okinawa, most pics of his were in PI. The man in the photo is unknown too but looks familiar from other history photos. Please let me know what you think, take care and keep up the good work,

Jim

Jim is the son of Luke Cernick, Ground Staff, Communications, Radar Mechanic, Navigation, 531st Squadron

Let us know if you can identify this photo and/or the man in it!

MAIL CALL

From: William Stevenson [mailto:wsteven@neo.rr.com]

Sent: Saturday, January 27, 2007 2:59 PM

To: Gotham, Barbara J.

Subject: Leighton Loudon's Crew 530th

Dear Ms. Gotham,

My name is Bill Stevenson and I am the son of Walter Stevenson (L. Loudon's crew of "Dottie's Double"). Last year I joined the Flying Circus, 380th Bomb Group Association and have sincerely enjoyed reading of the many activities and historical resources of your fine organization.

I am hopeful you can assist me: What is the best way to learn if any of Dad's crew are still living?

Thank you Ms. Gotham. I am pleased to read you will be assuming the leadership of the association. I have many photographs and war memorabilia from Dad's service in the Air Force. Perhaps I can share these through your organization if you feel they would be of interest.

Kind Regards,

Sincerely,

William Stevenson

wsteven@neo.rr.com

Mansfield, OH

From: Gotham, Barbara J. [mailto:barb@purdue.edu]

Sent: Monday, January 29, 2007 1:48 PM

To: William Stevenson

Subject: RE: Leighton Loudon's Crew 530th

Bill

Thanks for your email and your kind words about our organization. With regards to the memorabilia you have from your Dad's service, I am particularly interested in any aircraft or crew photos (especially if names are given to identify those pictured). In addition, I would be interested in printing in our newsletter any war stories your father might have told you, or journal entries made during the war, letters written home, etc. You can get some idea of what I'm interested in by looking over past newsletters for the stories we've been publishing. You can find past issues on our website:

<http://iies.www.ecn.purdue.edu/IIES/PLAIC/380/NEWS/News.html>

Loudon Crew info:

LOUDON (53)

Acft Cmdr: Loudon, Leighton L., Deceased, 04/17/2001

Pilot: Wilkerson, Ernest L., Deceased, 12/28/1995

Navigator: Wolf, Irving A., Deceased, 7/13/1995

Bombardier: Stevenson, Walter T., Your father - Date of death: 11/1981

Flt Eng: Lenac, Daniel V., Deceased, 1985

Radio Opr, Gunner: Sparks, Glen W., not listed in our TAPS, not a member of our association

Asst Flt Eng, Gunner: Erickson, Darel G., not listed in our TAPS, not a member of our association

Gunner: Gonzales, David D., not listed in our TAPS, not a member of our association

Gunner: Griffith, Kean J. (IO), Jr., Deceased, 7/02/1991

Gunner: Simon, Lloyd J., not listed in our TAPS, not a member of our association

Let me know if there's anything else I can help you with.

Best regards,

Barb Gotham for the 380th Bomb Group Association

(continued on next page)

MAIL CALL

From: William Stevenson [mailto:wsteven@neo.rr.com]
Sent: Tue 2/13/2007 8:32 PM
To: Gotham, Barbara J.
Subject: RE: Leighton Loudon's Crew 530th

Dear Barbara,

Thank you for your prompt reply. This email is to acknowledge your email and to let you know how much I appreciated your taking the time to prepare and research this info.

Attached are two photos, that I scanned a few years ago. Dad is in the front row on the far right in the first and in the front row on the far left in Photo II. The third scan is of the back of photo II showing the date of March 1, 1944 in Australia. The second photo you already have in your collections as I found a similar photo on the Best of the Southwest website. I am not sure which crew is in the first photo.

My father died November 9, 1981 in Rochester New York and is buried in Webster, New York.

Sincerely, Bill Stevenson

*If anyone can help with the names in Photo I,
let us know.*



Email from Paul Dumas, December 22, 2006, to Ted Williams:

Dear Sir:

I am Paul Dumas, Past Commander of the local DAV chapter 179 in Plattsburgh NY. The chapter has a project on the oval of the old air base. After research we have named it the Plattsburgh Barracks Veterans Park. There are flags for each branch of the services and a flag for each of the local veterans originations. There are two walls for bricks in memory of a veteran. We have a few older members from the 380th that have purchased bricks. We have a website www.davchapter179.com <<http://www.davchapter179.com>> that carries some of the pictures of the project. More information is available if interested. We would greatly appreciate any assistance you could provide in getting this information out to the members of the 380th.

Thank you in advance for your assistance.

Paul

UPDATE ON ARMOR PERSONNEL OF 530TH

In our December issue (#29) was a request from Patricia Hicks asking for names in a photo she had from her Dad's (Robert T. Hicks) collection. Bob Rhoden responded in January with his corrections to Pat's photos. The photos with Bob's response are below. Thanks, Bob!



1. Myers,
2. Olin, Warren
3. McDonald, Mac (he volunteered as a waist gunner on Connery's crew)
4. Daiber, Conrad
5. Orlando, Frank
6. Ruch, Harold (power turret maintenance)
7. Helms, (Cotton)
8. Shine, Frank
9. Muccia, Joseph
10. Dziak, Nick
11. Williams, Robert (Cheety) (bombsight maintenance, guess he just happened by at the time!)
12. ? (Bob couldn't identify him)

13. Phanauf, Lucien (Rudy)
 14. Hammond, (Hap)
 15. Peacock, George
 16. Norton, James
- The dog's name was Freddie.

17. Hicks, Robert
18. Snyder, Jimmy
19. ? (Bob couldn't identify him)
20. Federoff, John (Big Chief)

HONORARY MEMBERS OF THE 380TH BOMB GROUP ASSOCIATION

Alford, Robert (Historian)
Brissey, F. Lee
Carnevale, Pat
Chastain, Jr., James (Hill AFB)
Gotham, Barb
Horton, Gary (Historian)
Horton, Jr., Glenn (Historian)
Iverson, Dick
Krider, James

Martinez, Andrew
Moran, Bill
Rogers, Glenn (Honorary Chaplain)
Smith, Marty
Tedesco, Kirsten (PIMA Air Museum)
Thompson, Helen
Welsh, George (Bomber Legends)
Williams, Ted



DREAM TIME - A WAR STORY

by Roger W. Caputo
Installment #3

This is a story of one person's experience in World War II and the title grows out of the time served on the Continent of Australia (the term "Dream Time" is borrowed from the Australian Aborigine use of the term to describe the distant past of mankind.). The writing was done because of the urgings of one family member and was completed in 1995. No claim is made that the story is one of a kind or especially unique, no more than each of us is some different from the other. Reproduced here by permission of the author.

Because of the length of the manuscript, we will tell Roger's story in various installments, in succeeding issues of THE FLYING CIRCUS Quarterly, as page space permits.

Roger Caputo was an NCO who was assigned to Group Headquarters, Administrative Section, in Intelligence.

"Daddy, what did 'ya do in the War?" Answer, "In El Paso your Mother and I became engaged!" The El Paso campaign was all victory for me!

During the fall term of 1941 and the spring term of 1942, at the small liberal-arts college in Alton, Illinois, Virginia and I started dating on weekends, the only time I had free. She was a year ahead of me in school even though I was 13 months senior to her. We had attended Woodrider High School at the same time, but I was a senior transfer student and our paths never crossed. I had lost time with my higher education schedule because I had taken time out to learn to fly after trashing the scholarship to an Illinois State Teachers College. I wanted to fly, not be a teacher. So much for the whims of youth! It was in the fall of 1941 when I observed Virginia, sitting alone between classes in the tiny Student Union working over her books, when I decided to approach her and introduce myself. I displayed no lack of confidence. I continue to puzzle over how people are sometimes drawn together and their lives are forever changed. So it was with Virginia and me. While dating we had some wonderful times together during the 1941/42 school year. Since I was working and had a car plus some extra cash, we could do things the normal college students couldn't. We went to a lot of dinner dance places just as a couple and danced and danced to the big band sounds. She was a dream to dance with; I was only average. Given that school year alone, my hindsight is we imprinted each other. It was a romance in the finest tradition. Wisdom, as a young man, was not my long suit and when the spring semester of 1942 ended and the summer came on, somehow we drifted apart and were not seeing each other ... neglect on my part was the cause.

War sometimes involves romance as well as battle and as I sat stupefied in El Paso, I resolved, after a lapse of 6 months, to phone Virginia and reestablish contact. It was much more than reestablishing contact. Brash as usual, I asked her over the phone if she would marry me if I ever returned home. She said, "Yes!" Whoopee, somebody will have me, and life for me took on real meaning! To solidify the engagement, for that was all it could be for the time being, I invited her to come to El Paso over her Christmas vacation from school and I sent her money to come by train first-class with a roomette all to herself. Nothing was too good for my betrothed!

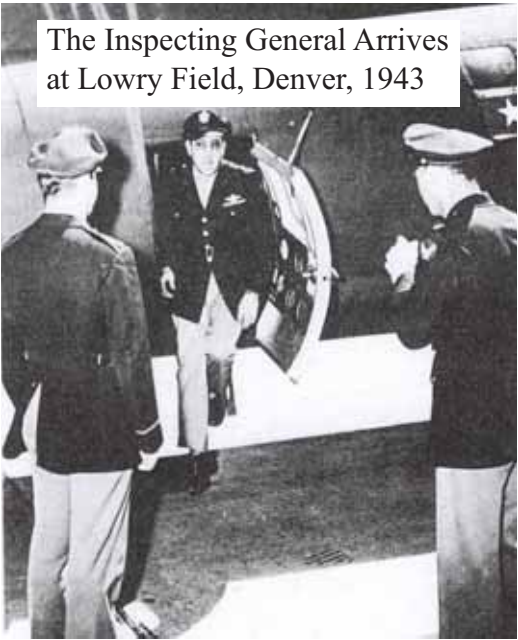
At the first opportunity, I hurried to town and shopped for a diamond engagement ring (it was the best I could pay for, but it was a visible symbol of the engagement). The next problem was arranging for a place for Virginia to stay while visiting in El Paso. At this point, I took my problem to my Captain who had considerable influence with the El Paso Hilton Hotel management. The Captain was quick to go to bat for me and said, "Sure, I'll get you a room." I replied, "Sir, you don't understand, I need two rooms." The Captain raised his eyebrow at my amended request, but he did get the rooms and everything was set.

On the appointed day, Virginia arrived, but in reviewing the details of the visit with her, neither can remember whether I met the train and a whole bunch of other details have been lost from our combined memories. One detail of the night is retained by us both: we had one big night out on the town! The Mexican city of Juarez lay just across the Rio Grande River from El Paso and a pedestrian footbridge made for an easy crossing. We strolled over to Juarez, did some sightseeing, and had dinner that evening in the best Mexican restaurant available. After dinner, we walked back to the hotel. I stayed in my room that night and Virginia in hers. Given the social behavior of today, the story may sound corny, but that's how it was done in those days by a couple of conservative Midwesterners and we are proud of it. The details of her departure are also lost to our memories, but she did get home in the same condition as she arrived with the exception she now wore an engagement ring that said to all predators, "stay away, she belongs to someone."

The Military in its great wisdom decreed that our Group should not complete its final phase of training in El Paso, but should be moved to Denver; no reason given, just do it. The aircrews flew their airplanes to Denver, an easy trip. The Ground Echelon went by train in early February of 1943. It was winter and cold in Denver and the heating system on the train was frozen, which didn't add anything to the comfort of the trip. If there was nothing to do in El Paso, there was less to do in Denver. I requested and was granted an extra long weekend pass for a visit home. There were two days at home and two days on the train. It was worth it. I got to spend some time with Virginia and my folks. As it turned out, the visit would be last time I'd get to see them until September 1945, or 2 ½ years later, a long, long time!

DREAM TIME (continued)

The Inspecting General Arrives
at Lowry Field, Denver, 1943



The aircrews continued with their flight training with emphasis on long-range navigation and some of the stories generated out of this were unbelievable. Navigators' ability to navigate apparently had gone undeveloped as they had relied, up to this point, on the civilian low frequency radio beacons in use by the airlines. Those guys weren't ready for those 2,000 mile, over-water legs they'd have to fly to get to Australia; of course, they didn't know that's what they would ultimately have to do. So our stay at Denver was continued for an extra month to 6 weeks to whip the navigators into shape. While we were at Denver's Lowry Field, we were inspected by lots of top brass checking on the Group's fitness. The heat was on. Later, we found out that Roosevelt had promised Churchill to send a group of heavy bombers to Northern Australia because the Japanese had taken over all of the Dutch East Indies, placing them only 500 miles from Darwin, Australia's northernmost town. Darwin hardly merited being rated as a town. It was but a minor seaport for shipment of beef to the Empire. The story is told, that during one or more of those inspections, in addition to all the unfitness detected, an honor guard really blew it with their inability to do drills (remember, they hadn't had

any infantry training). So the Inspecting General lost his cool and remarked, "This is a Circus," and the name stuck and we adopted the official name of "The Flying Circus, King of the Heavies," and our Group logo became a lion sitting atop the globe. There were four squadrons which made up the Group and each adopted a logo of its choice. Each Squadron had the same organization as the Group Headquarters where I was posted, i.e., the S-1, S-2, S-3, and the S-4. There was a lot of needless duplication, but then that's the Military. The idea was that each Squadron was able to go off and operate on its own if need be, really not a bad idea, but they were never called upon to do so.



The Brass Inspecting the Records
Lowry Field, Denver, 1943

The third week of April we packed our gear and fell out in formation to board a troop train for the port of embarkation (POE). It was a bitter cold day with snow on the ground and it seemed we stood there for hours shivering in the cold while the people counters did their thing and assigned us to our sleeper cars. It was to be an overnight train ride to San Francisco, although we weren't told just where we were going ... security, you know, "the enemy is listening" was the by-word. The cars were standard Pullman rail coaches with upper and lower bunks which were designed for one person in each bunk, but we were lodged two to the bunk. There was barely enough room for two in the bunk and then only if each party lay flat on his back with his arms folded across the chest. Ralph Finch and I were upper bunk buddies as we had become friends and shared some of the same cultural values.

Sometime during the night I woke up feeling sick and determined that I had a fever. The on-duty doctor, a Captain Glass, told me I had a fever of 105, and gave Finch orders to get out of the bunk; I don't know where he spent the balance of the night, but I had the bunk to myself the rest of the trip (which I don't remember, since I slept all the way to San Francisco).

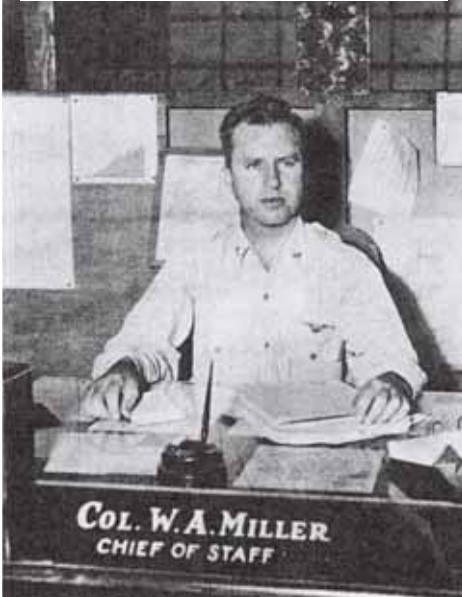
When the train pulled into Camp Stoneman, the medics took me off the train on a stretcher, and an ambulance took me to the Base hospital, where I was put into quarantine. In due time a hospital staff doctor checked me over and the diagnosis was scarlet fever! In August of 1942 I was afraid I wouldn't pass the physical, now I had a new worry: would all my buddies get on the boat and leave me behind to heaven knows what? "How soon can I get out of here?" I asked the doctor. He just shook his head! Next day the medics brought in Ralph Finch, my bunk buddy on the train. He had come down with the scarlet fever also. Ralph was also very upset about the prospects of missing the boat, but there was nothing we could do about the situation.

Somewhere after El Paso our S-2 officer, Captain Miller, disappeared and a new officer was assigned to run S-2. His name was Captain Joe Burkes. He too was a lawyer in civilian life and was from Seattle. The Captain was a regular fellow; he used rough language and didn't believe in red tape; as a matter of fact, he was an expert at cutting it! In about a week he came around to see us, staying at a safe distance. We appealed to him to get us out of there, we didn't want to be left behind when the boat sailed. He said he would do it, not to worry.

At midmorning on May 5, 1943, Captain Joe showed up and said, "Get your gear together, I'm taking you guys out of here now." We had been in the hospital about 10 days and were feeling better, but still pretty weak. We wondered about the propriety of breaking out of quarantine, but if Captain Joe said it was OK, who were we to argue; we were going to catch the boat and that was the main thing! Captain Joe carried our gear since we were too weak to carry it ourselves. It must have been some sight, two

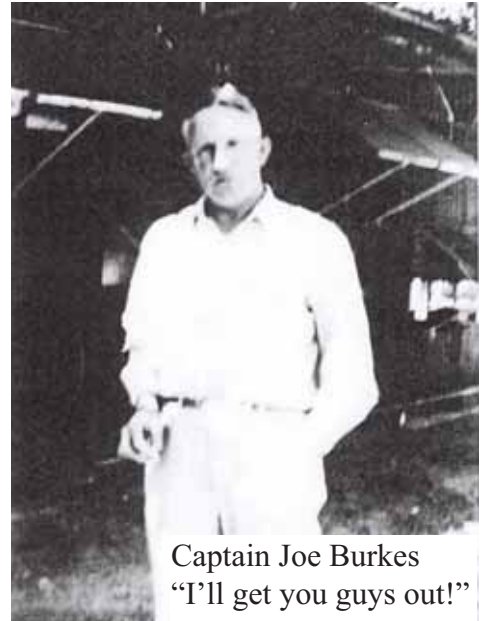
DREAM TIME (continued)

Moved up to Bomber Command



pale, too weak to hardly walk, enlisted men struggling up the steep gang plank with a Captain dragging their gear and bringing up the rear! It was a very democratic Army that day! We had no more than stepped on deck when the gang plank was removed and the ship was under way.

Much later I finally learned how Captain Joe was able to get us out of the Base hospital at Camp Stoneman. He was touched by our appeal and so he went to work with the surgeons in our Group and they lobbied the base hospital doctors to release us to our Group on the promise that we would be put in sick bay as soon as we boarded the ship as insurance against our infecting the entire ship's company. The base doctors were being super cautious, as they should be, while our Group surgeons were being more practical and working from experience. Immediately upon boarding, we were conducted to the ship's sick bay and locked up in quarantine. Once the ship sailed outside the 3-mile limit, it was no longer under the jurisdiction of the Continental Command and new authority took over. The next morning Captain Joe had us released from quarantine and we were free to join the rest of the troops.



Captain Joe Burkes
"I'll get you guys out!"

The ship was the US Mt. Vernon, a 27,000 ton cruise ship converted to carry troops. The lower decks had been stripped of all the civilian trimmings and fitted out with bunks. The arrangement consisted of tubular framing from deck to overhead (that's nautical language for ceiling) with the canvas laced between the horizontal members. The vertical spacing between bunks was about 24 inches, packing the sleeping troops in as tight as packages on a shelf. When Ralph and I went below decks to claim a bunk, there were none left. The ship's crew then issued us folding cots and we were shown where to set up on deck, out in the open except for a canopy that extended from the deck house to the railing. We were not the only ones, there were several others. There we slept for the next 16 plus days at sea, just one big step from going over the edge and into the sea. If my Mother would have had the slightest notion that her sick, but recovering, son was sleeping out doors after a bout of the scarlet fever, she would have been beside herself. Actually, I believe the fresh salt air was excellent therapy. We arrived in Australia in good health!

Sleeping on deck was a bit chilly for the first few and last few days of the voyage, but a couple of those heavy Army O.D. blankets did the trick. The only problem with sleeping on deck was we had to tear down our cots each morning and re-erect them each night. The ship's crew began their morning routine at daybreak each morning and it was violent. They came down the deck with fire hoses, flushing down the surface with sea water. We had to be up, gear stacked, and out of the way, or be drowned!

The middle third of the voyage, from 15 degrees North Latitude to 20 degrees South Latitude, we encountered warm to hot ambient temperatures and the below deck parts of the ship became insufferably hot. The troops could not tolerate the conditions, so they spent all but their sleeping time on deck with nothing to do. Our cots, located on the deck, were very comfortable sleeping. With all the troops on deck, it did not take long for the card and dice games to break out. The congestion on the deck sometimes interfered with the ship's crew performing their duties. The ship's captain became frustrated and he had a few salty remarks to make about the troops' priorities to the effect he believed the gambling would continue even if the ship was sinking! I simply watched. War seemed very, very far away. Meals were served three times a day with certain groups scheduled for certain times. Eating was accomplished standing up to narrow tables, about chest high, bolted to one of the lower decks. The tables had rims around the edge to restrain any sliding mess kits from falling on the deck. I'll never forget the first meal I took. We were only a short distance out of San Francisco and still in what is known as ground swells, so the ship pitched and rolled and we didn't have our sea legs yet. The meat dish was greasy pork chops. It was too much for me and I didn't eat.

I never had an exact count of how many troops were on the Mt. Vernon, but we were not the only ones. There were about 2,000 of us in the ground echelon and we were just a very small part of the total troops on board. I'd heard rumors there were 10,000 of us, but I think someone stretched the facts a bit. There were thousands, but just how many I never knew.

At dawn on May 21, 1943, the Mt. Vernon slowly nosed its way into the harbor of Sydney, Australia.

More to come....

CREATING MEMORIES

Dave Peck, Chief, Fairfield Police Department, Fairfield, Connecticut, sent us an article about his dad which was printed in the Connecticut Post on November 11, 2006 (story by Andrew Brophy <abrophy@ctpost.com>) Parts of that article are given here.

A VISION FROM THE PAST: Veteran, artist connects father and son

John T. Johnson, a ball turret gunner who flew 50 missions aboard a bomber in WWII, painted emblems on the nose cones of two bombers and the leather jackets worn by 10 members of his crew. Johnson was assigned to the 449th Bomb Group and 719th Squadron. He served on the B-24 bomber named "Lonesome," which flew missions over Romanian oil fields. Johnson's days of painting bomber nose cones ended with WWII, but he recently put his artistic skill to work again as a gift to the son of a WWII bomber who died 38 years ago.

Johnson gave Police Chief David Peck a leather jacket featuring an insignia he painted of the bomber group in which Peck's father had served during WWII. The insignia, painted on the back of Peck's jacket, features a lion swatting down an airplane above Japan, with the words "Flyin' Circus" and "King of the Heavies." Peck's father, Franklin L. Peck, died of a heart attack in 1968 when Peck was 12 years old. Peck said he never got a chance to talk with his father about what he did in World War II.

Several years ago, Peck decided to research his father's service and learned that he was a radio operator and machine gunner in the 380th Bomb Group and 531st Squadron. Peck said his father had a leather jacket from his service in WWII, and he decided to recreate that jacket as a tribute to his father. "I don't have a lot of memories of him. We did things as a family when we were younger, but I don't really have anything to tie onto, to hold onto," Peck said. "I thought this was a good way to keep his memory alive, and it's something I'll always have and pass on to my son." Peck couldn't find his father's leather jacket, but he did find two original Army Air Corps patches of his father's, which he put on the front of his leather jacket.



Peck knew Johnson's son, Thomas "TJ" Johnson, who also works for the Town of Fairfield, and his daughter, Betty S. Wolak, a classmate of Peck's in high school in the 1970s. When TJ heard Peck was recreating his father's leather jacket, TJ told Peck his father, John Johnson, not only served on a bomber in WWII, but painted leather jackets and nose cones in the war as well.

"What are the chances of that, someone who painted them in the war?" Peck said of the coincidence of finding Johnson. "The fact I was able to find a B-24 crew member who did this in World War II, it's quite an honor, and right in our town."

Franklin L. Peck, 531st, was the Radio Operator on Purinton's Crew - if any 380th members have any information on this crew and the aircraft that they flew, please contact Dave Peck <FDPCOP103@aol.com>

TRAINING CAN BE DANGEROUS

By William D. Bever

In the Southwest Pacific during 1944, training of bomber combat crews in the 380th Bomb Group, 5th Army Air Forces was scheduled between their operational missions to keep crews prepared for what they might encounter over the vast miles to and from bombing targets.



John DiDomenico

Gunnery training (mock interceptions) of crews was setup with Australian and United States military personnel to academically prepare both countries' airmen with added experience to accompany them as they continued to rout the Japanese from New Guinea and the Dutch East Indies.

On September 18th, 1944, Crew #4, Pilot, 1st Lt John S. DiDomenico, Co-pilot, 2nd Lt Paul W. Norris, Navigator, 1st Lt John H. Reid, Bombardier, 2nd Lt Everett D. Bever, Radio Operator, TSgt John H. Miller, Engineer, TSgt Robert G. Gjerstad, Gunner, SSgt James L Edwards, Gunner, SSgt Ellie V. Hester, Gunner, SSgt Albert S. McKinney and Gunner, SSgt Thomas E. Murray of the 528th Bomb Squadron stationed at Darwin, Australia, went up to Melville Island on a gunnery training mission. The bomber's gunnery crew was to encounter several Australian Spitfire fighter planes to increase their accuracy potential of finding enemy fighter planes and engaging them.

The first few Spitfires were tracked by the gunners and mock interceptions went according to their training procedures. The last Spitfire to engage them most likely misjudged its closing speed and position of its location with 1st Lt DiDomenico's crew #4 B-24 Liberator. The right door gunner, SSgt Ellie V. Hester, saw the Aussie Spitfire closing in and knew it was going to hit them, but could not warn the pilot in time as the Spitfire flew into the B-24's number one engine. The impact sheared the number one engine propeller off of the bomber and left wing of the Spitfire. The Spitfire's Flight Officer, A.K. Kelly of the 452nd squadron, cartwheeled into the Gulf of Van Diemen, never having a chance to bail out.

Upon impact, the right wing of crew #4, flying at 10,000 feet, went perpendicular to the ground. The pilot and co-pilot frantically worked the rudders to level the bomber back to an upright position. The bomber's intercom was chaotic as the pilot ordered everyone to bail out. Radio Operator TSgt John H. Miller was sitting at his radio work station, working a crossword puzzle when the Aussie Spitfire hit their #1 engine, slamming his head into the radar screen. Up above, the upper turret gunner, Robert G. Gjerstad, fell from his upper position, hitting the radio operator with his body.

The entire crew decided to stay with the plane as it finally leveled out at 3,000 feet. The pilot told the radio operator to get on the radio to let Darwin know what their location was and what had happened. When land was seen, the bomber flying with three engines was in close proximity to Darwin. The pilot once again told the crew they could bail out over land as he was not sure how well the bomber would land after what it had just been through. The crew decided as a group not to bail out, having the utmost respect for their pilot's flying ability. Crew #4 had a safe landing. Pilot DiDomenico added this safe landing to his total of eight emergency landings on three engines.

Greeting the crew upon landing was the 528th squadron flight surgeon, Captain Butts, who passed out a bottle of whiskey with sleeping tablets to the relieved crew. Crew #4 deserved a break from one of their greatest scares and narrowest escape from death.

Bill is the son of Everett D. Bever, Navigator, DiDomenico's Crew

Photos from Glenn R. Horton, Jr., BEST IN THE SOUTHWEST



Everett Bever

TAPS

*Day is done, gone the sun, from the lake, from the hill,
from the sky. All is well, safely rest, God is nigh.*

*Thanks and praise for our days 'neath the sun, 'neath
the stars, 'neath the sky. As we go, this we know
God is nigh.*



LEST WE FORGET

528th/531st/GP, **Loy, Edward C.**, Ground Staff, Administration, Adjutant; Squadron Executive Officer; Supply, Quartermaster Supply Officer; Altoona, Florida, DOD 01/10/2007, reported by his widow Nane, and his niece Susan Emetti

529th, **Angney, Robert L., Jr.**, Ground Staff, Airplane and Engine Mechanic, DOD May 2005, reported by Bertha Quigg-Strouse

529th, **Granzow, Donald**, Flight Engineer/Gunner, Reed Crew (38), Hobart, Indiana, DOD 06/27/2005 reported by his widow Kathleen

529th, **Horton, Glenn R.**, Aircraft Commander, Horton Crew (34), Roseville, Minnesota, DOD 03/18/2007, reported by his son, Glenn Jr.

529th, **Kiggins, Leslie C.**, Radio Operator, Horton Crew (34), Estacada, Oregon, DOD 9/5/1997, correction of DOD provided by his son Robert

529th, **Twomey, Llewelyn R.**, Gunner, Jeffery Crew (54), Old Center, Panola County, Texas, DOD 03/21/2007, reported by his stepson Ken Weese

530th, **Cruze, Verne E.**, Pilot, Huet Crew (51), Aircraft Commander, Cruze Crew (51), Morris, Minnesota, DOD July 1987, DOD corrected by his grandson Shaun G. Cruze

530th, **Gronkowski, Jean**, wife of Leonard Gronkowski, Nanticoke, Pennsylvania, DOD 11/06/2006, reported by her husband

530th, **Kendra, Joseph P.**, Ground Staff, Engineering, Maintenance, DOD 03/15/2007, reported by his son Mike

530th, **McHale, James W.**, Pilot, Cullen Crew (54) and Aircraft Commander, McHale Crew (54), Bloomington, Minnesota, DOD 03/01/2007, reported by his son Bill

530th, **McHale, Jacqueline Ann**, wife of James W. McHale, Bloomington, Minnesota, DOD 02/16/2007, reported by her son Bill

530th, **Nelson, Theodore Frank**, Bombardier, Harkin Crew (38), DOD 11/06/2004, Salt Lake City, Utah, reported by his grandson Glenn Cowan

530th, **Peachey, Mary**, wife of Robert Peachey, Winfield, Illinois, DOD 12/14/2006, reported by her husband

531st, **McCrea, William Russell ("Russ")**, Transportation, Motor Pool, Auto Equipment Operator, Georgetown, Delaware, DOD 10/22/2006, reported by his widow Verna, and Jim Cernick

531st, **Reinheimer, Albert R. ("Rex")**, Bombardier, Waterbury's Crew, Warsaw, New York, DOD 02/25/2007, reported by his grandson, Shawn Gardner

531st, **Rhem, James A.**, Ground Staff, Engineering, Maintenance, Airplane Mechanic, Marion, Kentucky, DOD 07/10/1987, reported by his son-in-law Ronald Howton

531st, **Rhem, Margaret**, wife of James A. Rhem, Marion, Kentucky, DOD 03/2001, reported by her son-in-law Ronald Howton

531st, **Cernick, Louis ("Luke")**, Communications, Radar Operator; Mechanic; Navigator (Various Crews), Butte Falls, Oregon, DOD 12/06/1969, reported by his son Jim Cernick

531st, **Cruthers, Zura B.**, Pilot, Blum Crew (91), Los Angeles, California, DOD April 2003, reported by his wife Norma

531st, **Hahn, Howard**, Aircraft Commander, Hahn Crew (31), Saint Charles, Michigan, DOD 12/19/2006, reported by Joe Edinger

continued on next page

TAPS (continued)



531st, **Mayer, Robert P.**, Flight Engineer, Low Crew (109), Johnstown, Pennsylvania, DOD 12/10/2005, reported by John Otto, Jr., and Jim Cernick

531st, **White, Robert L.**, Gunner, Goode Crew (90), Vandalia, Ohio, DOD 12/30/2006, reported by son-in-law Rick McCoy and Joe Megliola

531st, **Winters, Dorothy**, Wife of Harold R. (Bob) Winters, Zanesville, Ohio, DOD 11/08/2004, reported by her son-in-law Don Mullinnex

380th Wing, **Widdows, William D.**, Veteran USAF, USAFR, ROA, MOAA, Springfield, Ohio, DOD 12/16/2006, reported by Joe Wells

Jim Cernick has been doing some research on the 380th, and has found the following obituaries of our members. Thanks, Jim, for all the hard work on our behalf!

528th, **Greuel, Ervin L. ("Bud")**, Aircraft Commander, Greuel Crew (14), Eau Claire, Wisconsin, DOD 05/18/1998

528th, **McLeod, William M.**, Flight Engineer, Osage County, Kansas, DOD 12/10/1966

528th, **Phillips, Abraham (NMI) ("Abe")**, Airplane & Engine Mechanic, Hogsburg, New York, DOD 08/05/1970

529th, **Davis, Donald E.**, Gunner, Craddock Crew (11), Port Arthur, Texas, DOD 01/28/2007

529th/530th, **Hutcheson, Charles E. (alternatively, Charles H.)**, Ground Staff, Adjutant; Mess Officer, Chattanooga, Tennessee, DOD 07/20/1968

529th, **Kilgore, Howard D.**, Ground Staff, Alden, Kansas, DOD 08/06/2003

529th/GP, **Linder, Chester E. ("Earl")**, Medical Aidman, Spokane, Washington, DOD 05/15/1996

529th, **Matthews, Miles M.**, Gunner, Watkins Crew, Vista, California, DOD 04/28/2004

529th/GP, **Woodward, Herbert L. ("Woody")**, Sqdn CO, Aircraft Commander, Woodward Crew (41), Santa Ana, California, DOD 10/05/1960 (date correction)

529th/GP, **Zuccarelli, Carl J.**, Ground Staff, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, DOD 07/30/1961

530th, **Dougherty, James F.**, Aircraft Commander, Dougherty Crew (79), Topeka, Kansas, DOD 01/19/2000

530th/GP, **Holtz, Donald J. ("Hoff")**, Flight Engineer/Photographer, Various Crews, Hastings Borough, Pennsylvania, DOD 10/18/1999

531st, **Calkins, John E.**, Instrument Specialist, Custer, Michigan, DOD 01/28/1991 (date correction)

531st, **Donnelly, Henry (NMI), Jr.**, Ground Staff, Loran System Tech, West Palm Beach, Florida, DOD 05/30/1966

531st, **Rinaldi, Frank R.**, Ground Staff, Aircraft Sheet Metal Worker, Shoshone County, Idaho, DOD 11/19/1964

531st, **Rominger, Raleigh W.**, Ground Staff, buried in Willamette National Cemetery, Portland, Oregon, DOD 11/07/1968

531st/GP, **Warren, John K.**, Ground Staff, Administration, Commander's Secretary, Huntington Beach, California, DOD 04/16/2000

GP, **Brents, Rafel T.**, Ground Staff, Supply Clerk-Typist, Cleveland, Arkansas, DOD 03/06/2007

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