



THE 380TH BOMB GROUP ASSOCIATION 5th AF - RAAF

AFFECTIONATELY KNOWN AS

The Flying Circus

NEWSLETTER #33

Winter 2007/2008

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Pat Carnevale & Larry Farnum

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Barbara J. Gotham

Phone: 765/463-5390

(leave a message, please)

Email: bjgotham@gmail.com

URL: <http://380th.org/>

Next issue: Spring 2008 (March/April)

130 Colony Road

W Lafayette IN 47906-1209

2009 REUNION SITE SELECTION

Results of the survey on the 2009 Reunion Site:

Savannah, Georgia
Charleston, South Carolina
Orlando, Florida
Shreveport, Louisiana
Nashville, Tennessee
St. Louis, Missouri
Rapid City, South Dakota

Get volunteer reunion coordinator(s) for 2009.

BUDGET REPORT

INCOME		EXPENSES	
Initial Deposit	\$ 10.00	2006 Reunion expenses	\$ 24.00
2006 Reunion funds	\$ 2,028.73	2007 Reunion expenses	\$ 7,920.93
2007 Reunion funds	\$ 6,284.00	2008 Reunion expenses	\$ 250.00
Jacket/patches/caps orders	\$ 876.75	Bank fees	\$ 95.28
Membership and research funds	\$ 8,118.87	Newsletter printing & mailing	\$ 5,540.44
Memorial funds	\$ 100.00	Office supplies	\$ 302.97
		Other printing expenses	\$ 255.09
TOTAL INCOME	\$17,418.35	Patches/jackets/caps/embroidery	\$ 901.06
		Postage	\$ 900.90
		Web hosting fees	\$ 115.00
		TOTAL EXPENSES	\$16,305.67
		ENDING BALANCE	\$ 1,112.68

REUNION FUND

At the time of the 2007 Reunion, one of our members suggested that a **Reunion Fund** be started to help with the costs associated with the reunion. These would be extra funds donated by our members (in addition to the event registration fees).

For those of you who would really like to participate in the reunions but cannot be there in person, this is one way to help others.

Your thoughts and comments are welcomed on this suggestion.

If you think this is a good idea and would like to contribute, please send a check payable to "380th Bomb Group Association" to Barbara Gotham, 130 Colony Road, W Lafayette IN 47906-1209. Please mark "Reunion Fund" on the memo line of your check, or send a note indicating how you'd like your donation to be used.

2008 REUNION - PRELIMINARY INFORMATION

The 2008 Reunion will be held in Tucson, Arizona, from November 5-9, 2008

Pat Carnevale and Larry Farnum are serving as our 2008 Reunion Coordinators. (See note below about the Reunion Coordinator function.)

The site for the 2008 Reunion will be the Hotel Arizona (formerly Holiday Inn downtown). Their rate is \$84 + tax and would include a full breakfast. They have offered us a meeting room off the lobby (quite large - definitely more than 700 sq ft) for our hospitality room.

The Hotel Arizona offers complimentary airport shuttle and free parking.

Adjacent to Hotel Arizona is La Placita - a group of shops and cafes. Also there are a number of other establishments within walking distance.

Pat has requested 50 rooms starting on Wednesday, November 5th, with check-out on Sunday, November 9th. The hotel is offering us the same rate is effective 3 days prior and 3 days after the event for those wishing to extend their stay.

The Hotel Reservation Form will be available in the Spring newsletters, and the Event Registration Form will be in the Summer and fall issues.

Tentative Agenda

Wednesday, November 5: Registration in afternoon. Buffet welcome dinner that evening at the Hotel Arizona.

Thursday, November 6: Optional group tours. Dinner on own.

Friday, November 7: Museum tours, Memorial Service, and Luncheon at the Pima Air and Space Museum - Memorial Service and luncheon will both be held in Hangar 3 of the Museum. Dinner on own.

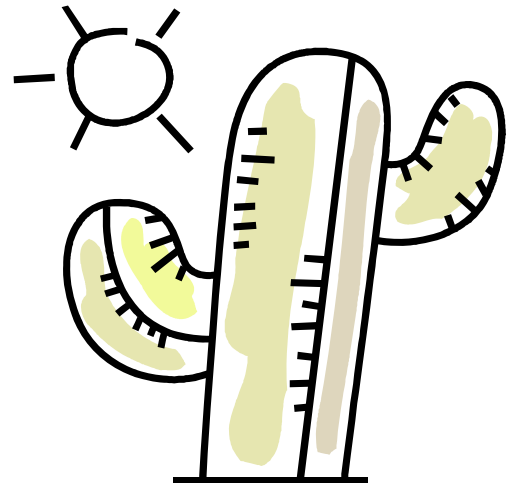
Saturday, November 8: Members' meeting in morning; optional group tours in afternoon. Dinner/Dance at the Hotel Arizona

Sunday, November 9: Departure

Here are a few suggestions for optional group tours:

- Biosphere 2
- Kitt Peak National Observatory
- Old Tucson Studios

Do you have a suggestion for a site for an optional tour? If so, please contact Barb Gotham <Email: bjgotham@gmail.com>



380th BOMB GROUP ASSOCIATION

2008 MEMBERSHIP REGISTRATION

New _____ Renewal _____ Date: _____

Your Name _____

Squadron _____ 380th Duty _____

Please check if you are a * Regular Member _____ or an **Associate Member _____

**Associates: 380th Veteran's Name: _____

Relationship: _____ Sqdn: _____

380th Duty _____

Your Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ E-mail _____

Spouse's Name _____

* *Regular member* means a member of the 380th Bomb Group who served in WWII or with the 380th Bomb Wing.

***Associate member* means a family member (or other affiliation) of a regular member. If you are an Associate, please give the name of the original member, your relationship to that person, and his squadron number.

An annual donation of \$20 payable to **380th Bomb Group Association** will help defray costs of mailings throughout the year. Please mail your donation and registration form to:

Barbara Gotham

130 Colony Road

W Lafayette IN 47906-1209

Membership runs for one year from payment – so if you paid in August 2007 (for example), your membership would be up for renewal August 31, 2008.

FEATURED CREW PHOTO

BENSON CREW 531st Squadron

Back row, left to right:

Milton H. Abram, III (Radio Opr/Gunner), Walker L. Carroll (Flt Engr/Gunner), Jerome Mintzer (Aerial Gunner), Leslie R. Hare (Armorer/Gunner), Calvin C. Hall (Aerial Gunner), Albert Jansen (Aerial Gunner)

Front row, left to right: George G. Poy (Navigator), Gail F. Stephenson (Bombardier), Richard Benson (Pilot), Philip B. Hall (Co-pilot)

Photo courtesy of George Lim Poy.

See related story below.



TARGET: FORMOSA

by George Lim (G.) Poy
Navigator, Richard Benson Crew (B-11), 531st Squadron

In 1945, when we were flying combat missions in the S.W. Pacific and Philippines, I wrote letters back home to family and friends. Censorship was strict and at times our correspondence required censoring by S-2. Our squadron S-2 officer read one of my letters and said if I made a couple of changes that he could send it up to Group H.Q., and he could recommend that it could be used for P.R. material back home in some Air Corps magazine or paper. I was amazed that it was accepted. ... George

My personal antagonism for the Nipponese is an aggravated accumulation of clandestine "so sorry" incidents which were inflicted upon China and her people. I was forced by circumstantial reoccurrences to develop this deliberate hatred for the Japanese ever since I learned to write my Chinese name. By nature, I detest conflicts of all sorts, but I have seldom failed to witness the raging psychological reaction of a red-blooded people when they are humiliated and deprived of their integral rights for freedom.

I returned to the good U.S.A. in 1938 to continue my education. Then within the next three years the contagious turmoil of war plagued the world. I enlisted in 1943 and joined the Air Corps with ardent endeavor to offer my humble services to the great cause. Eventually, I was permanently assigned to the 5th Air Force, 380th Heavy Bombardment Group, famously known as the "Flying Circus."

Fragments of my first combat mission made a deep impression in my mind and no doubt, will linger for a long time to come. I wish to share these incongruent reminiscences with those who are interested.

I have never received anything with such whole-hearted enthusiasm in my brief military career. It was the inevitable news of my first combat mission over enemy territory.

TARGET FOR 17 MARCH 1945: OKAYAMA AIRDROME, FORMOSA

All my intensified training in the Air Corps has been laboriously leading up to this momentous task. Through seemingly endless months of waiting and suspense ... and now my heart palpitated to the joyous harbinger of the day. The night previous to the mission, I ventured into the squadron intelligence office to study charts and reconnaissance photos of the target area. A heated discussion of prominent target recognition points was in full progress among the S-2 officer and the lead bombardiers. One could almost hear their busy minds functioning as these veterans of aerial warfare thrashed out various points of importance.

I, for one who was yet to be initiated in actual combat experience, thought it extremely advisable to just listen and absorb their technical conversation. Later when the discussion came to an unanimous conclusion, Lt. French, squadron navigator, came over to the front of the room and laid his navigation instruments on the spread-out charts and maps.

continued on next page

TARGET: FORMOSA (continued)

"Hello, Frenchie!"

"Poy, you're going on tomorrow's mission, too, aren't you? It won't be too rough, mostly coastline pilotage and D.R. ... nothing to worry about!"

I wasn't absolutely without confidence in my Air Corps profession because I figured: 'If any navigator can successfully navigate a B-24N across the vast Pacific, he has an adequate knowledge of navigation.' Frenchie is a fine fellow, humorous at times, but in all seriousness, he is competent when confronted with any problem concerning navigation. I watched him plot his course, calculate E.T.A.s and headings enroute to the initial point and then to the target. He went over some of the major check points with me and then suggested that I had better hit the sack because it was going to be a long and tedious mission tomorrow.

It was pitch dark when I was awakened by a noncom. The early morning air seemed invigorating and for obvious reasons, I did not go through the drowsiness which usually succeeds reveille on ordinary days. My pulse must have been abnormal because I was ready ... come hell or high water! I crawled into my flying clothes, gathered my gear and headed for the mess hall for an early breakfast.

The briefing was short. A consecutive string of briefing officers harangued over the details which were emphasized the night before. I collected the charts, maps, and target folder from the S-2 officer and boarded the awaiting trucks.

"Pug," an elegant bird of 60 some odd missions, was our baby. A large portrait of the mischievous adolescent carrying a bomb decorated the left panel of the nose compartment.

Our pilot, copilot, and engineer made the routine pre-flight inspection with utmost scrutiny. Everyone checked their respective positions and battle stations for perfect performance, and then stood by for take-off orders. There wasn't much conversation among us and a tense atmosphere was much in evidence.

The signal came.

"Switch on!" bellowed Sammy, the crew chief who was standing fire guard.

"Switch on!" echoed the pilot.

"Clear!"

"Clear!"

Then the engines whined and sputtered and engaged into an anguish rotary motion. Out of the fading darkness, the whole field became vivid with life. The war cry of air rage surmounted in unison. We taxied into position and left Sammy standing back there proudly waving his hand to us as a gesture of good luck ... and probably silently praying to God to bring us back safely.

The bombers took off at precise intervals. It was our turn. The pilot gunned the engines and the plane lunged forward with a sudden surge of energy. We went racing down the long runway with the power of 4,400 horses. The steel matting beneath clattered under rolling pressure. As our air speed increased, the mighty plane ascended gracefully with her heavy load of bombs.

The renowned and respected "Flying Circus" was on the loose again.

Our squadron formation headed out toward the blue waters of the South China Sea to parallel the coast line of Mindoro, going north. The rippling sea below was calm and the air had a tinge of coolness. By this time the glowing sun had risen a rod's length from the eastern horizon.

I charted and plotted our course and calculated E.T.A.s for major check points and positions. This was my job. This was the opportunity I was looking forward to with eager anticipation.

Group rendezvous was an island in the archipelago off the Lingayen Gulf. Lingayen Gulf! Yes, this proper noun had been obscure to the common student of geography until it appeared twice in the history of world current events. I was aware of the name in 1942 ... and then a period of terror and madness reigned over the territory. Almost three years later, the name Lingayen was reiterated again, only this time joyously and triumphantly! I glanced below in solemn pride to watch the lapping waters of the gulf wash the wounds and blood shed from the beautiful shores.

By this time scores of B-24s were arriving and swarming about the area. When the predetermined second registered on our synchronized watches, the enormous formation took form and continued northward to Formosa.

I was busy recording instrument readings and converted the results in my log and charts.

continued on next page

TARGET: FORMOSA (continued)

Approximately two hours later, a silhouette of dark purple mountains loomed out of the clouds. All battle stations were manned. The gunners were manipulating their gun grips and incessantly scanning the sky for possible fighter interception. This was enemy territory.

By rights, this island of natural resources belonged to the Chinese, but was annexed to the Japanese Empire in 1896 as indemnity for the Sino-Japanese War ... Our enemy's first step toward a fantastic world conquest.

Okayama Airdrome lies on the western coast of Formosa, 67 nautical miles north of the southern tip. Our initial point was a fixed position out at sea. At the indicated time the entire formation swung eastward toward the target. Okayama City lay sprawled and lifeless before us. The airdrome, south by southeast from the city. Enemy ack-ack guns began to bark obtrusively. The formation zigzagged into evasive action as we headed steadily toward the target.

"Bomb bay doors open!" came the voice through the interphone.

Bombardiers were in their glory now, training their signs on aiming points with nth degree of precision.

During the bomb run, it was my duty to lean out into the bomb bay with one hand on the bomb bay door handle and score the hits of the bombs. Suddenly, the bomb release mechanism began to click. Bombs descended in trail, whistling and shrieking as they fell ... raining obliteration and devastation on the implements of a fanatical war machine.

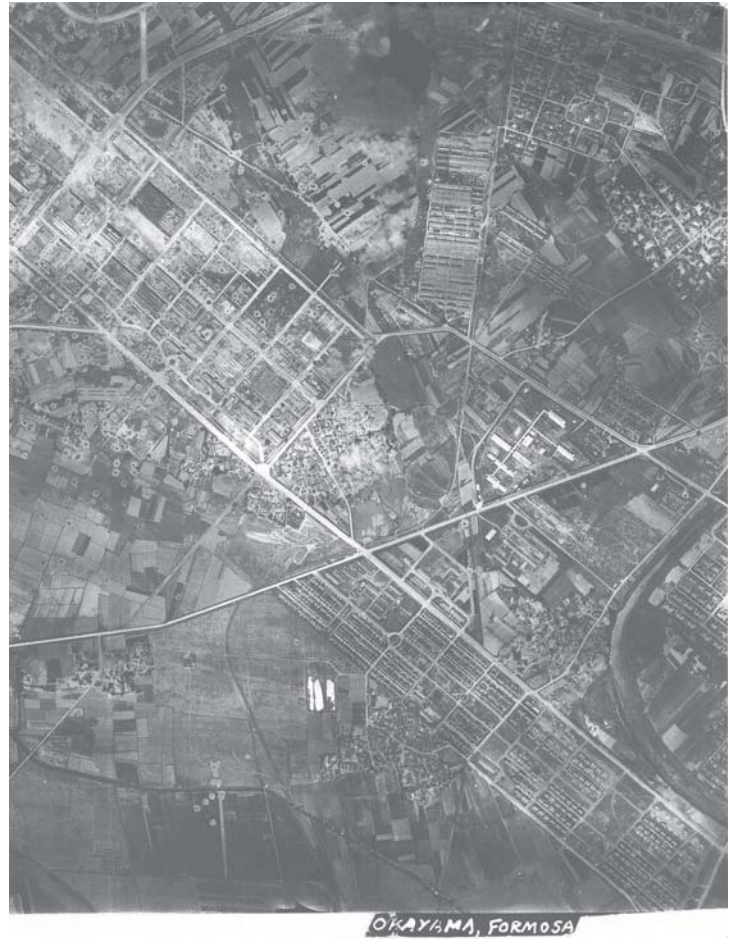
Bombs struck the target area, exploding with ferocity and destruction, spreading dust, smoke, and flames on the military installations below.

This was the moment of revenge I've been impatiently waiting for. A quick flashback went through my head ... It was on July 9, 1937, when the Japanese first sent bombers over Nanking, then Capitol of China. I was at school when it happened; bombs, incendiaries dropping everywhere; shrapnel flying. The earth trembled with terror. It amazed me how I got out of the ordeal alive ... Again, when I was on Canton, bombed out of school and nearly blasted out of home. Some of my school chums, neighbors were among the less fortunate ... These grim memories of lack-luster days gone by went racing before my eyes. Now the cards were turned in reverse. I was holding the trump suit! Giving the fanatic enemy a dose of their own medicine! It pleased me beyond literary expression to watch the bombs rip the target apart.

I clocked the time bombs were away; closed the bomb bay doors; and resumed my position.

We were breaking away from the target now. Flak bursts mushroomed on all sides, leaving black puffs of smoke to harass and reluctantly disappear from our anxiety. As we turned out toward sea again, I took one last glimpse at the job we had just performed. Large fires burning, oil smoke rising into the heights! What a sight! I found myself silently reveling upon the satisfaction that my participation, though infinitely small, was accredited to the success of this mission.

Following is an excerpt from a letter to George Poy from Captain Donald R. McGoldrick, Bureau of Public Relations, War Department, 29 June 1946, containing a quote from the letter of acceptance from the editor, U.S. AIR SERVICES: "This story by Lieutenant Poy is worthy of more than the usual pleased to meetcha note of acknowledgment. If I spent one million years, and studied at night and on holidays, including Sundays, trying to tell a story in the Chinese language, I could never compete with what young Poy has done with the English language, he being born a Chinaman. Not only is the story interesting just as a story, but this young chap has the gift of being able to enlist the active interest of readers on one of the year's hottest days. I should like to meet him sometime, and I hope you will encourage him to continue to write. He is a writer by instinct. He also has the burning zeal to inject into his piece the emotions felt by him when living through the experiences he describes so well."



MAIL CALL

From: Pete Minix
To: Barbara Gotham
Date: Oct 12, 2007 7:07 PM
Subject: Documenting the history of our World War II Veterans

I have been collecting and documenting the history of our World War II Veterans since 1998. I currently have over 200 veterans from all branches and ranks, in my "private library". I have always been interested in World War II and what better way to learn this is to talk to the men and women who lived it. It is my way of keeping their memories and stories alive. For every World War II Veteran we lose, a piece of history is gone forever. I believe that it should be told to someone who is willing to take the time to document their story. For the men and women, who served during World War II, they all have a great story to tell, whether they were in combat or sitting behind a desk. They answered the call to duty in a time when more the half the world was at war.

When it is my time to pass on, all this information will be placed in the General Patton Museum in Chiriaco Summit, CA, so that future generations will know what these men and women went through. One day, all of our Veterans from World War II, will have passed on and so will their stories.

If you are a veteran or a family member of and would like to share your / their personal experiences of World War 2 with me, please e-mail me at pdmmm@msn.com.

Peter Minix
Former Marine Sgt.
Indio, CA

From: Billie Sutter
To: Barbara Gotham
Date: Oct 24, 2007 10:40 PM
Subject: 380th information

Barbara,
I am John and Mary Ellen (Harris) Porter's eldest daughter. My brother Mike and sister Donna and I have been working to put together information on our parents' service in Australia for the Aviation Military Museum of Louisiana.

The Museum is located in Monroe, Louisiana, at Selman Field - now a regional commercial airport - in WWII, the location for the Army Air Corps largest navigator school, and later the founding home of Delta Airlines. Monroe is also the adopted hometown of Claire Chennault of Flying Tigers fame and an astronaut - Jim Halsell. All this to say there's lots of air history here.

Our family lived in Monroe for many years; our parents died there and Mike still lives there. We donated some of our parents uniforms, pictures, and memorabilia and told the curator the story of how and where they met and eventually married. Now they have become something of a special exhibit in the Museum, which is being expanded and rededicated on November 10 this year.

Our parents met at Fenton Field (Momma was an Army nurse) and married in Adelaide in 1944 in a double ceremony with Jenny Krause (another nurse) and 'Ned' Brenholtz, Daddy's Co-Pilot. Daddy was part of the 528th, and he and Momma attended many of the 380th reunions - including the return to Australia.

Thanks for all your work in keeping the memory of the 380th alive.—

Billie Sutter
Director of Christian Education
United Christian Parish

MAIL CALL

From: Donald I. Jack
To: Bill Shek (copy to Barb Gotham)
Date: Dec 1, 2007
Subject: Your Dad's A-2 Jacket

Hi Bill, I really enjoyed your article in the October 2007 Flying Circus Newsletter! As an introduction, I am a former WW2 member of the 531st Bomb Squadron - Tom Cook's crew. You mentioned the "blood chit" (Nationalist Chinese Government Flag) on the jacket. Also, that the 380th BG squadrons at Fenton never used these patches. True, but when the 380th moved to Mindoro, P.I., the coastal Chinese areas occupied by the Japanese, came on the target menu and these escape FLAGS were issued to crew members. I STILL HAVE MY SILK FLAG!

As a living relic, I participated in the first 5th Air Force raid on Hong Kong Harbor (April 2, 1945, mentioned on page 330 of Glenn Horton, Jr.'s book, "The Best in the Southwest"). As the article mentions, due to a navigation SNAFU, the 531st Squadron became lost and wasted one hour of precious fuel! We finally went in alone over Hong Kong Harbor and we were greeted by "heavy and accurate flak." I'm old, but I remember it all as if it was yesterday! Being very low on fuel for our return trip to Mindoro, we stripped all possible weight from the plane! This included throwing the gun barrels overboard! There were several times when we were not sure if we had enough fuel to make it "home" and resorted to tossing everything we could out of the plane! Especially if the plane had been flak damaged or had mechanical problems!

Tom Cook's crew is shown on page 360 of Horton's book [*re-printed here*]. I'm the blonde kid standing 3rd from the right in the picture. I was age 18 when the picture was taken - maybe that's why I'm still alive - I was very young back then!



My Best Regards,
Donald I. Jack



From: James Chastain
Sent: Sunday, November 11, 2007
To: Gotham, Barbara J.
Subject: A soggy Veterans day at Hill Aerospace 5AFMC

Dear Barbara

The 5th Air Force Memorial Circle big plaque was dedicated last 13 October and looks and reads pretty nice. The flags and flowers got a bit drenched. We had quite a nice dedication last month and things are coming along slow but fine. I have two new plaques in the works, one from the 38th BG "The Sun Setters" and the other concerns the 19th BG who were operational in the Phillippines at the beginning of WWII.

As ever,
Jim Chastain

PHOTO GALLERY

From: Rick Cordell
To: Barbara Gotham
Date: Oct 4, 2007 11:13 PM
Re: Pictures of my dad, 529th, 380th bomb group

Dear Barb.

I would like to get in touch with anyone still around that might remember my dad:
Cordell, Robert E. / 529 / 39110222 (from your website). I also have his book on the history of the 380th group and his insignias, silk maps, and a couple of pieces of flak, including a timer propeller from a Japanese bomb. Anything that you might want to look at, I could scan and send to you.

I have started to go over my dad's letters and pictures, etc. Here is his picture (and a couple others). Feel free to use in your Newsletter. Even though my dad was an operations officer, he did fly a number of missions. He flew several with Capt. Woodward and Capt. Harrison.

Kind regards,
Richard Cordell
cordellr07@msn.com



These photos of two members of the Bevers Crew (530th Squadron) were submitted by Mick Bradley - top is of Earl Zody, Flight Engineer - bottom is Aaron Paul Bevers, Aircraft Commander



12/4/07

This photo was taken in the Philippines next to our assigned B-24 Liberator.

We are Fred Low's crew. The photo shows (L-R) - co-pilot Steve Rankin, bombardier Dan Bruin, and navigator John Otto.

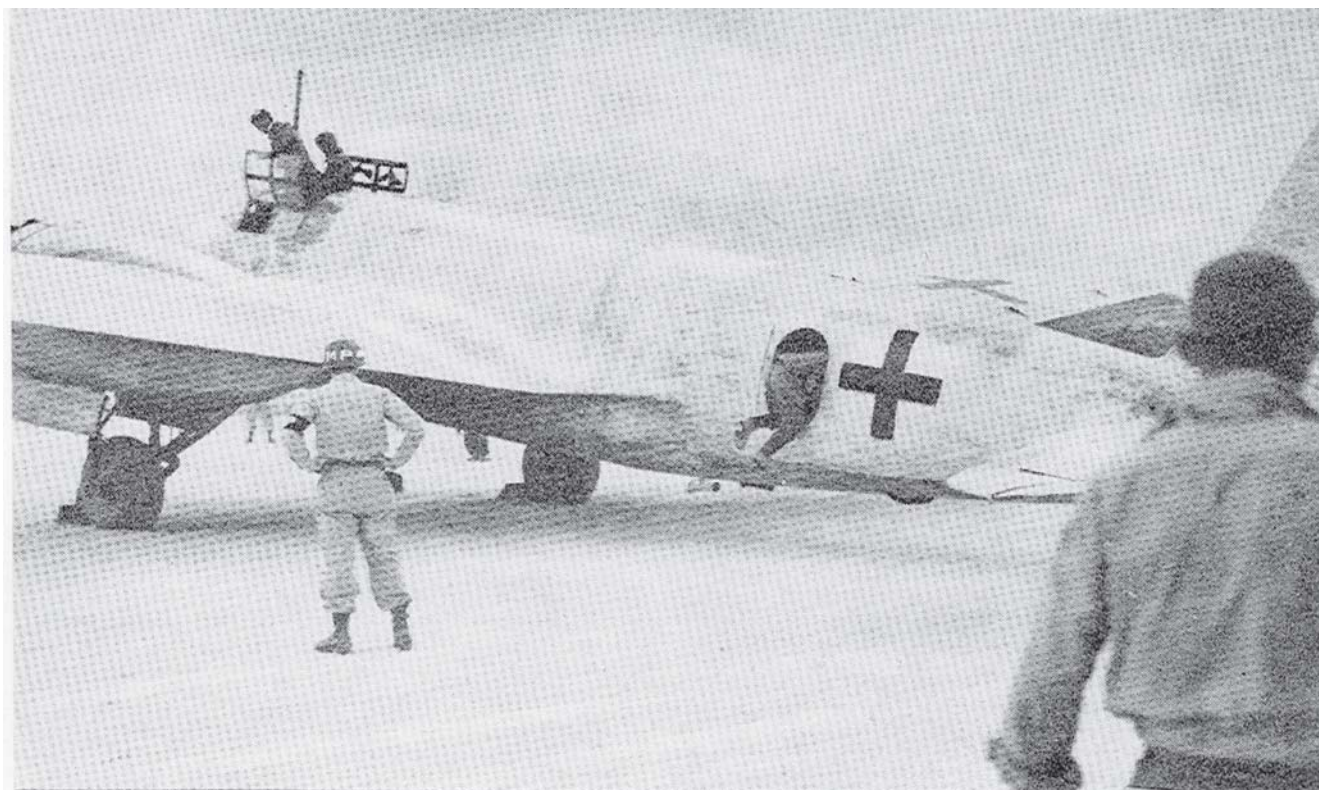
Regards,

Steve Rankin, 531st Squadron



PHOTO GALLERY

These photos were provided by Donald Jack, 531st Squadron, Gunner, Cook's Crew



AUGUST-1945 INITIAL JAPANESE SURRENDER PARTY ARRIVES ON OKINAWA. THEY FLEW IN 2 "BETTY" BOMBERS THAT HAD SPECIAL GREEN MARKINGS. PHOTO PROPERTY OF DONALD JACK , FORMER MEMBER OF THE 380TH B.G.

DREAM TIME - A WAR STORY

by Roger W. Caputo
Installment #5

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.

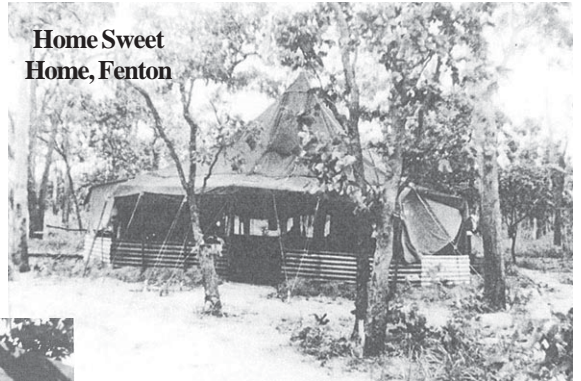
Roger Caputo was an NCO who was assigned to Group Headquarters, Administrative Section, in Intelligence.

It was a 100 miles ride over rough gravel roads from Darwin to Fenton Field where Headquarters and two squadrons were to be based. The other two squadrons had to travel still another 100 miles further south to another airstrip called Manbulloo.

These bases plus decoy bases had been hacked out of the "Outback" by Aussie Army Engineers and they stayed on to maintain them and build our camp facilities. The mess halls and office buildings were wooden framed with the wood being cut on the job with portable saw mills. The covering was corrugated sheet iron. There were no glazed windows, only fold-out louvers to let in the air and keep out the rain which came continuously during the rainy season (the winter months of May through September). Leather shoes would become covered with green mold and clothing seemed to never dry. The dry season was just the opposite: it seldom rained and when it did, it always fell out of a thunderstorm. During the dry season the "Outback" would become dry as tinder and brush fires were common. The insects were never too bad, but we always slept under a mosquito net and we took our daily dose of medicine to ward off the yellow fever. The medication gave all of us a yellow-tinged complexion.

Home was a five-man tent with no floors and the sides were kept raised most of the time for ventilation. Other trimmings, such as a 2-foot high sheet of corrugated iron around the outside of the tent, served as a barrier against creepy crawling things such as lizards or snakes. One never went to bed at night until the bed was shaken down to flush out the scorpions or centipedes. Shoes were never put on in the morning until they had been shaken out. There was running water from an elevated water tank which in turn was kept filled from bored wells by pump. The showers and wash stands were community affairs with no privacy or screening.

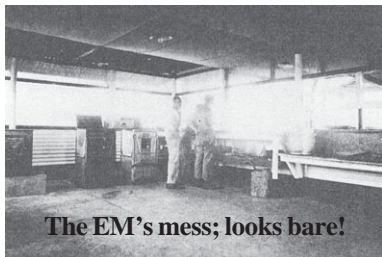
Home Sweet Home, Fenton



Doin' the laundry



The EM's mess; looks bare!



The bedroom!



The private bathroom



The Red Cross girls had to look out for themselves and never wandered into our area. There is always a pecking order to human relations. The Headquarters section was located on a small hill. At the top of the hill was the quarters of the Red Cross girls enclosed by a stockade made from whatever was available. Next down the hill was the officer living quarters followed by the HQ building. Last at the foot of the hill were the mess hall and the enlisted men's living area. Enlisted men were strictly prohibited

from approaching the Red Cross stockade as they were not "gentlemen" and therefore not trustworthy! After one look at some of the Red Cross girls, it was obvious the enlisted men were not being penalized! The Red Cross's principle function was to serve the aircrews coffee or pastry when they returned from their missions. They were also supposed to be available to help with family problems back home. From time to time, the officers and Red Cross girls threw parties for each other and the sounds of reveling would drift down the hill on the evening breezes. In the eyes of the excluded enlisted men, it was the rankest kind of discrimination. We all had a lasting impression of how some ethnic groups, such as blacks, have been treated.

"What's for chow?"



continued on next page

DREAM TIME (continued)

There was no way to distinguish the days of the week. They were all alike. We went to our jobs every day at 0700 and knocked off at 1700. On occasion there was work at all hours of the night and it was the combat mission's schedule that determined the need for the night work. Usually the missions were flown in the daylight hours and the airplane mechanics and other service people worked on the aircraft all night to be ready for the next day's mission. Those people had a hard life! ... and I at one time thought being an aircraft mechanic might have been great! During the hot dry season an airplane sitting out in the hot sun would be too hot to touch so the work was often done at night as the only practical time.

Reporting to work did not always mean there was something to do for the office types. We often worked hard at trying to find something to do; to look busy. These circumstances were bad for morale ... a feeling of being useless and excess baggage is not a happy circumstance. After awhile, we all started to come to the office wearing white T-shirts. On one occasion, an officer, new to the Group, walked in and he did not know whom to address, as our principal officer was not in and he left in a rage. Soon thereafter, orders came down from the Group Commander, Col. Miller, that if we didn't think enough of our rank to display it on a proper uniform, he'd be happy to relieve us of our rank. Next day, we wore regulation uniforms, long sleeves and all, buttoned up no matter how hot it was. The Aussies had a little better approach to the uniform and heat problem. Their standard tropical issue was a short-sleeved shirt and shorts. The American Military never got the message!

Part of the problem of finding something to do was not of our making. In consideration of the Aussies' feelings, the 5th AF Command placed us under the operational command of the Australians. It was they who called the shots on what to bomb and when in the Dutch East Indies. It was their backyard and they knew it well. 5th AF had its hands full trying to keep up with General MacArthur who in turn was competing against the Central Pacific Command for priorities and recognition.

The Aussies had a good intelligence service. They had installed a network of spies called "coast watchers" hidden in the hills of the territory occupied by the Japanese and they would feed timely information on Japanese movements by short-wave radio. Some of them lost their lives. The Aussies received this information, processed it, and selected targets to be bombed accordingly. It was a good arrangement and the logical chain of command was from the Aussies to our Group. This arrangement largely made the S-2 section, in which I served, unnecessary as all we did was to do a paper shuffle. The Squadron S-2 officers would debrief the aircrews after they returned from the missions; write the reports and forward them to our Group HQ S-2 Section who in turn would send them on to the Aussies. On one occasion, I was sent to Aussie HQ for an overnight stay to get acquainted with the procedures and the personnel. It was a relatively short trip on the North-South Road and I was furnished a motorcycle for transportation. I had owned a motorcycle right after high school, so I knew how to ride one. It was a great change of pace from the dull routine of office work.

The Aussies in turn lodged one of their sergeants with us. His name was Art Simpson and we enjoyed his company. He was a fine person. The idea of the exchange was to get to know each other better. In peace time, Art had served with the Australian Colonial Service in New Guinea and he had many tall tales to tell about dealing with the natives. The true natives, or aborigines, in New Guinea and to some extent in the Australian Outback, were stone age people run over by the white man's civilization. In some cases these natives would work with the Japanese who occupied their lands, but the Japanese more often than not treated them badly as compared to the more enlightened treatment they had received from the Australians and Dutch before the war. The result was a latent good feeling toward the white man which in some cases worked in our favor when it came to sheltering downed aircrews awaiting rescue by submarine or Catalina Flying Boat.

Colonel Miller, our Group Commander, recognized that maintaining a high level of morale among the aircrews was important. He decided that the aircrews should be given some R&R at regular intervals in Sydney. The straight line distance from Darwin to Sydney was 2,000 miles one way and the aircrews, in turn, would fly themselves on the trip using a bomber that was no longer fit for combat. They would be gone for a week which gave them a full five days in the city, and the other two days were used for travel. The aircrews usually returned fairly used up after 5 days of riotous living and there was always a question of how fit they were to fly. There was one disastrous incident. The Deputy Group Commander, a Major and a West Pointer, was en-route back to Darwin from Sydney with his crew; they were all tired and fell asleep and the plane was on autopilot. The airplane flew on and on until it ran out of fuel and they crashed somewhere in the Outback. No one knew where they were and some search and rescue missions were organized with several bombers trying to locate them. Most of the route from Sydney to Darwin lies over uninhabited land and the downed bomber could be anywhere. After several days they were located and the crew of the crashed bomber lit a signal fire to show their position. The fire got out of control and the bomber caught fire and burned to ashes. The crew was eventually rescued, without injury, and returned to base by a trek overland. The entire matter was sort of kept under wraps and the poor Major was quietly transferred. That incident ended the R&R trips to Sydney. [See note at end of article from Glenn Horton regarding this incident.] Later on a new R&R city was chosen – Adelaide in South Australia, and it was only 1,600 miles away. It was also known as a City of Churches!

In time the Command decided that ground echelon people should also be given an R&R opportunity, and we would be sent to Adelaide for a week. We were sent in small groups, sometimes with a buddy. The first trip to Adelaide, Ralph Finch was my buddy. Adelaide was a quiet town that rolled up its sidewalks early in the evening and there wasn't much to do but sit around in the hotel and get lonesome. Ralph had received a "Dear John" letter from his wife back in Massachusetts and he was heartbroken and was free to vent his sorrows with the Aussie girls. I was determined to keep the faith with my Virginia, so socially

continued on next page

DREAM TIME (continued)

I was a fifth wheel. Prior to departing for Adelaide, I sought out the counsel of the Group Chaplain, a Captain Roark, who was a conservative Baptist Minister. I presented by social problem to him and he came up with a solution. Somehow the Chaplain had done some earlier reconnoitering in Adelaide and its church community and made contacts with people of conservative leanings, including young women who were waiting for their betrothed to return from the war. He gave me a name to look up when I got to Adelaide. Those who have never experienced the trauma of living for long periods in a single gender society are not able to understand the negative effects on an individual. You finally forget how to talk to the opposite gender and suddenly are not comfortable around them!

As best as I can remember, the young lady's name was something like Thelma Sandow. She worked in an office of some kind as that is where I had to go to introduce myself and invite her out to dinner to get acquainted. She was a typical heavy built English-type girl and wore glasses. It was obvious that her blood lines were all British. Her home was a sheep ranch about 100 miles by train north of Adelaide and she stayed with a relative near the edge of the city. To escort her home required a ride on the tram, and then a few blocks walk beyond. The trams quit running early, about 10:00 PM and to miss it was unthinkable as the walk would have been miles back to the downtown hotel. We R&R types had been warned to avoid walking alone in some parts of Adelaide after dark. The experience was that some Yanks had been assaulted and robbed when alone. The attackers were never really identified by type, but the suspicion was that they may have been some renegade Aussie soldiers bent on revenge against the flashy Yanks and their fat wallets.

There wasn't much to do in Adelaide. The beach was too far away and besides it was always too cold. A stroll in the park and the small zoo with some photo taking was about par for a visit there. But the good bed in the hotel and the excellent food were a welcome relief from camp life.

As I remember, I had two widely spaced R&R trips to Adelaide during the 20 months I was in Australia. On one of these visits, the Sandow family invited me to their home on the sheep ranch. The train ride was pleasant through the rolling hills. The Sandows resided in an old stone house, suggesting it had been passed down for several generations. Thelma's younger brother, an RAAF pilot, was home on leave after training and before he departed for duty in England. The Australians love their horses and the Sandows had several riding horses in their stable. They insisted we all take a ride together in spite of the fact that I admitted to having never been on a horse. I was assured they had picked out the gentlest horse for me. Getting on was no problem; it was staying on that presented the problem! That horse knew he had a greenhorn in the saddle and he set out to show the two of us who was in control! As we were riding alongside a fence row, my mount took the bit in its teeth, lowered its head, and burst into a high speed sprint. I knew I'd lost all control and concentrated on just staying on as the horse tried to scrape me off by brushing past the fence posts such that I was certain one of my legs would be torn off. The brother was good on a horse and came to my rescue, much to my relief. I was one grateful and humble Yank and fully acknowledged the facts. The entire affair was a great embarrassment for me and when the weekend was over I was just happy to slink back to the Northern Territory. Thelma was engaged to an RAAF pilot already on duty in England. I hope he and the brother returned home safely as after the last visit all contact was lost with the Sandow family. The Adelaide visits were great, but they did have a negative effect in that they increased the heartache for home!

The 1,600 mile trip to Adelaide was an experience in itself. There was a midpoint stop at a place called Alice Springs; it is almost dead center of the continent of Australia where it is all desert. Today, Alice Springs is a tourist resort, complete with modern motels and swimming pools. In 1943/44, it consisted of one gravel airstrip and half dozen Quonset huts, those half round things made of corrugated iron sheeting. We sometimes flew to Adelaide in a DC-3, other times a bomber was used. The food at the Fenton Base lacked variety and there was no beer in Northern Territory unless it was brought in by air or sea. A railroad existed from the South Coast to Alice Springs, but then north of Alice Springs to Darwin there existed only 800 miles of gravel road; dusty in the dry season and muddy in the wet. After the war was begun the road was maintained such that trucks could use it, but it was no interstate highway. The stop at Alice Springs was always welcome as the 1,600 mile trip required about 10 hours by air. On some occasions a bomber's bomb bay would be rigged out with a wooden bottom and at Adelaide the entire bomb bay would be loaded with beer in quart glass bottles and other good stuff. The Adelaide airport had no paved runways; it was an all-grass field which was typical of an undeveloped area. Those bombers with their specially fitted bomb bays were called "Fat Cats." One particular "Fat Cat" mission was loaded at Adelaide and took off then returned to give the town a buzz job. Some aircrew member undoubtedly trying to impress his girl. For that time a 30 ton 4-engine bomber roaring across the roof of a house doing 200 mph at 200 feet was an attention getter. At the end of the low level run, the bomber pulled up sharply (always impressive) and then the laws of centrifugal force took over; the temporary wooden floor gave way and the cargo of goodies went flying completely through the bomb bay doors and was scattered all over Adelaide! The local Adelaide paper, which we were later to see, carried headlines of being bombed by friendly forces using bottles of beer!

Stay tuned ... more to come!

[Note from Glenn Horton, Jr., regarding the incident described above on the R&R trips to Sydney: The incident happened 31 Aug 1943, the pilots were Everett Ware, Deputy Group CO, and Reynold Craddock. The story appears on pages 61-63 of his book, BEST IN THE SOUTHWEST.]



DOTTIE AND HER FRIENDS

Posed in front of their Liberator bomber "Dauntless Dottie" at their Northern Australian base are the members of the crew of this B-24, all of whom seem very happy. Recently on a mission over a Jap-held island 2,300 miles away, the Liberator was forced to fly on instruments 12 out of 15 hours because of bad weather. Left to right, front row, are Capt.

William Shek, pilot, Stratford, Conn.; 2nd Lt. Lester Luehring, co-pilot, Mayville, Wis.; Lt. Lester Miller, navigator, Gasport, N. Y.; Lt. William Barrington, bombardier, Salem, Ore., and Tech. Sgt. Berdine Rustad, engineer, Sunburg, Minn. Back row: T. Sgt. Glenn Sargent, radioman, South Lebanon, O.; S. Sgt. Arthur Firmbach, assistant engineer, Ozone Park, N. Y.; S. Sgt. William Klenn, Chicago, Ill.; S. Sgt. Norman Quimby, Dover, N. H., and S. Sgt. James Morgan, Indianapolis, Ind.

International News photo.

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/Group Porter, John W., Aircraft Commander/Pilot, Beller Crew (6), Group Tech Inspector, Group Claims Officer, Group Surveying Officer, Monroe, Louisiana, DOD 03/14/2003, reported by his daughter, Billie Sutter

528th/Group Porter, Mary Ellen (Harris), Wife of John W. Porter, Monroe, Louisiana, DOD 03/07/1998, reported by her daughter, Billie Sutter

528th Allison, Eleanor June, wife of Lute P. Allison, Front Royal, Virginia, DOD 11/28/2007, reported by her son, D. Michael Allison

528th Grover, Ione, wife of George Grover, Canal Fulton, Ohio, DOD 10/18/2007, reported by Loyd Oakes

528th Schmitz, Robert C., Navigator, Sheehan Crew, Richmond Hill, Georgia, DOD 11/06/2007, reported by his daughter, Marlaine Kirton

529th Cordell, Robert E., RCM Operator, Various Crews/Ground Staff, Admin Clerk, Big Bear Lake, California, DOD 12/09/1979, reported by his son, Rick Cordell

529th Cordell, Marguerite, Widow of Robert E. Cordell, Yuciapa, California, DOD 10/27/2000, reported by her son, Rick Cordell

530th Plassman, William H., Ground Staff, Administration, Orderly Room Clerk, Leipsic, Ohio, DOD 12/18/2007, reported by his widow, Connie

530th Pozorski, Alyce, Wife of Norbert L. Pozorski, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, DOD 10/09/07, reported by Gene Stadler

531st Boatwright, Carroll W., Supply Sergeant, Birmingham, Alabama, DOD 01/25/1991, reported by his son, Carroll W. Boatwright, Jr.

531st Garn, Robert A., Aircraft Commander (Staff Crew), Deputy Group Commander, Fremont, Ohio, DOD 12/10/07, reported by Joe Burdick

531st Shultz, John, Gunner, Boyd Crew (76), Lebanon, Pennsylvania, DOD 11/22/07, reported by Anna Debevec



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