



THE 380TH BOMB GROUP ASSOCIATION 5th AF - RAAF

AFFECTIONATELY KNOWN AS

The Flying Circus

NEWSLETTER #35

Summer 2008

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Barbara J. Gotham

2008 REUNION COORDINATORS

Pat Carnevale & Larry Farnum

NEWSLETTERS -

WEBPAGES - FINANCIAL

Barbara J. Gotham
Phone: 765/463-5390
(leave a message, please)
Email: bjgotham@gmail.com
URL: <http://380th.org/>

Thanks go to Bill Shek and Doug Gotham for proofreading this issue!

Next issue: Fall 2008 (to be mailed in late September)

130 Colony Road
W Lafayette IN 47906-1209

2008 REUNION 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. 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.

The hotel reservation form is included in this issue. 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 effective 3 days prior and 3 days after the event for those wishing to extend their stay. The event registration form is also included in this issue, as well as on our website at: <http://380th.org/REUNION/2008Reunion/Reunion.html>

PLEASE NOTE the following change from the agenda posted in the last newsletter: On Friday, we will be having our memorial service and a luncheon at Davis Monthan AFB, instead of at the Pima Air and Space Museum. Thanks to Pat Carnevale for arranging this for us through her Air Force contacts.

Planned Agenda

Wednesday, November 5: Registration in afternoon. Dinner on own.

Thursday, November 6: Registration in afternoon. Optional group tour to the Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum (we need a minimum of 35 people to book). Buffet welcome dinner that evening at the Hotel Arizona.

Friday, November 7: Morning: Memorial Service and Luncheon at Davis Monthan AFB. Afternoon: Pima Air and Space Museum (includes tram tour and bus tour to the Boneyard). Dinner on own.

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

Sunday, November 9: Departure

Here are a few suggestions for sightseeing in the Tucson area:

Fox Theater (downtown Tucson); Mission San Xavier del Bac; Casino of the Sun; DeGrazia Gallery; U OF A Science Center and Planetarium; Sabino Canyon tours; Saguaro National Park; U OF A Biosphere 2; Tohono Chul Park desert preserve; Tucson Botanical Gardens; Tucson Museum of Art and Historic Block.

Farther away - Kartchner Caverns State Park (guided cave tours); Arizona Wineries in Sonoita and Elgin; Queen Mine Tours in Bisbee; Tombstone (since GrayLine Tours offers an 8 hour tour and a minimum of 35 booked, we won't be able to offer this as a group tour, but it is a good place to go on your own if you have time).

2008 REUNION ~ HOTEL REGISTRATION FORM

The Hotel Arizona
Tucson, Arizona

November 5-9, 2008

Name _____

Spouse or Guest _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ E-mail _____

Rate: \$84 (single or double) + 12% room tax + \$1 per night city surcharge (\$95.08 per night)
(Rate is good 3 days prior and 3 days after reunion subject to availability)

Rate includes full American Breakfast, transfers to/from Tucson Airport and complimentary parking at the hotel.

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

Credit card type (Visa, MasterCard, Discover) _____

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 The Hotel Arizona and include tax (\$95.08).

Cancel policy for this event: 24 hours prior to arrival to avoid penalty.

*Reservations made after **October 14th** 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

fax: 520-455-5866

phone: 800-659-8808

e-mail: carne@sunnacast.net

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

EVENT REGISTRATION FORM

Questions? Call Barb at 765/463-5390 – or send email to bjgotham@gmail.com

HELEN THOMPSON

Sad news -- our friend, Helen Thompson, passed away on June 22nd.

This obituary was published in the Jackson (Tennessee) Sun on June 24, 2008.

Mrs. Thompson died Sunday June 22, 2008.

She was born on January 11, 1924 in Henderson County, TN, the daughter of the late Robert L. and Lonia B. Scott Hart. Helen was a devoted wife, mother, sister, and a professional business woman. She worked for many years as a secretary for the architectural firm of Thomas, Ross & Stanfill in Jackson, TN, where she was relied upon for everything from bookkeeping and transcription to assisting with interior design. After retiring from Thomas, Ross & Stanfill, Helen and Tommy moved to Heber Springs, Arkansas. They became involved in organizing a reunion of Tommy's old Bomb squadron from WWII, the 380th and took on those duties for the next 10 or 12 years, until Tommy's health declined and they were no longer able to participate. Helen returned to Jackson in 1996 after Tommy's death and for the last few years, made her home at Dogwood Pointe in Milian, TN. She will always be known for enthusiasm for life, her wish to entertain, her love for gardening and cooking and her belief and support of her children.

She is survived by her children, Lt. Col. Ted E. Thompson and wife, Nancy of San Antonio, Texas, Suzanne Carpenter and husband, Paul of Medina, Tennessee and David R. Thompson and wife, Debra of Baker Florida. She is also survived by her grandchildren, Leigh Barnes and husband, Sid of Jackson, Tennessee, Ashley Thompson of San Antonio, Texas and Whitney Thompson of San Antonio, Texas; great-grandchildren, Maddox T. Thompson of San Antonio, Texas and Elizabeth A. Barnes of Jackson, Tennessee; sister, Clarice Smith of Hohenwald, Tennessee and brother, James Hart and wife, Judy of Cordova, Tennessee.

She was preceded in death by her husband, Lt. Col. Forrest E. Thompson and her son, Daniel F. Thompson.

The family would like to thank the staff of Dogwood Pointe for adopting Miss Helen as one of their own; the staff of Comfort Keepers and Asera Hospice for all of their assistance in the last week; to Dr. Timothy Hayden; and a special thank you to Dr. Priscilla Sioson for being there when we needed you the most.

In lieu of flowers memorials may be sent to the charity of the donors choice.



See next page for photos and tributes to Helen!

If you have any tributes and/or photos to share of Helen (or Helen and Tommy), please send to Barb Gotham to include in a future Newsletter issue.

MEMORIUM - HELEN THOMPSON

Pat and I were very sorry to hear of Helen's death and our best wishes go to the family. Helen and Tommy, and later Helen herself, were the force behind the resurrection and reunions of the 380th BG Association many years ago and it was my privilege to have worked with them both in perpetuating the history of the 'Flying Circus'.

Helen had a capacity for organising the annual reunions until it got to be a job rather than a pleasure. Pat and I thoroughly enjoyed her pleasant company at the reunions.

Please convey our condolences to not only the Thompson family but to her other family, the 'Flying Circus'.

Kind regards,

Bob and Pat Alford
Lampang Thailand

Thank you, Barbara, for sending the news about Helen Thompson - sad loss of a wonderful lady to whom we owe so much. Alice Craig

So sad to hear about Helen's passing. I met her for the first and only time at my first 380th reunion in 1999 in Tucson. She was a peach of a woman. You could tell she was well loved by all who knew her. Here is the only picture I took of her in Tucson.

Bill Bever



Panama City, 1997,
photo from George Gerards

San Diego, 1998,
photo from George Gerards



San Diego, 1998, photo from Marie Johnson

If you have any tributes and/or photos to share of Helen (or Helen and Tommy), please send to Barb Gotham to include in a future Newsletter issue.

FEATURED CREW PHOTOS



Kroes' Crew (56) 529th Squadron

Front row, L/R: Leonard Kroes (Acft Commander), George Stevenson (Co-Pilot), Paul Beilstein (Bombardier), Bill Gordon (Navigator)

Standing, L/R: George Rostad (Radio Opr), Syl Nemcek (Gunner), Carlton Stice (Radio Opr), Harold McAteer (Flight Engr/Gunner), Lou Lanners (Flight Engr), John Poplin (Gunner)

*380th Reunion, September 17, 1994,
Denver, Colorado*

L/R: Lou Lanners, Paul Beilstein, Bill Gordon, George Stevenson, Leonard Kroes, Syl Nemcek



*380th Reunion, October 5, 2001, Wright
Patterson AFB, Dayton, Ohio*

L/R: George Stevenson, Paul Beilstein, Lou Lanners, Bill Gordon, Syl Nemcek, Leonard Kroes



Photos courtesy of Paul and Barbara Beilstein
*In memory of Leonard Kroes, TAPS
April 30, 2008*

THEN AND NOW

CARL L. BORGSTROM
529th Squadron
Flight Engineer, Selman's Crew

The article below is reprinted with permission of Jefferson Middle School, Jefferson, Wisconsin. It was done for a class project. Carl's daughter, Terry Snyder, is a cook at Jefferson.

Carl Borgstrom was born on December 10, 1922 in Duluth, Minnesota. His family moved to Wisconsin because they lost everything in the Depression. Carl's father found a job in Waukesha and the rest of the family came the next day by train. In November of 1942, he joined the Army Air Corps at the age of nineteen.

Carl had an unusual basic training. The Army Air Corps had no facilities. He was sent to St. Petersburg where he and the other enlistees lived in a hotel. Basic training was held across the street at the Yankee baseball team's training ground. He was paid \$165 a month but they had to pay the hotel cook, hotel laundry, and hotel bellhop before they could see any of that money. They had \$21 left. Carl attended a civilian school called the California Flyers in Santa Monica where he learned aircraft mechanics and engine maintenance. From there he moved to Missouri to the Curtiss Wright factory to observe A-25 dive bombers being built from start to finish. The bomber, nicknamed the Helldiver, was big enough to hold two people. After the bombers were built, they were sent to a military base where the armament was attached. From here, Carl headed to gunnery school in Fort Meyers, Florida.

While in Missouri, Carl met a local girl named Helen on the 4th of July at a swimming pool. They corresponded. In Arizona, he became part of the 380th Bomb Group that flew B-24s. The Liberator was the most produced plane during the war. It was an easy plane to fly but it was terrible if it had to ditch into the water. It would usually break into two and the crew usually had only 30 seconds to get out before the plane sank. Ten men made up the crew of a B-24 Liberator. Four of them were officers - the pilot, co-pilot, bombardier, and navigator. The rest of the crew was enlisted - nose, tail, Sperry ball turret, top turret and two waist gunners. One of the waist gunners also served as the radioman. Carl was the top turret gunner as well as the flight engineer. The crew wore gloves to protect their hands and had both a summer and a winter helmet. They also wore coats and boots. They wore no ear protection or flak jackets. Another important item that Carl did not wear was a parachute. There just wasn't enough room in the top turret. He did have it handy in the event that it was necessary and could snap it right on. Carl was not only a gunner but also the flight engineer. On the flight deck was an entire panel of fuel transfer valves. His job was to watch the engine RPMs and to transfer fuel back and forth to keep the ship in balance. He also kept the propellers in sync.

They made their way to the South Pacific in a roundabout way because of the Japanese occupied territory. The Japanese had conquered a big chunk of the South Pacific. They had few oil supplies on Japan so had their sights on oil fields of Borneo. This was one of the main reasons the Dutch East Indies were taken. Before they left Walla Walla, Washington via California, they flew the B-24 on three or four missions to test it out before the long flight. It took nearly 16 hours to fly the Liberator from California to Hawaii. Their maximum air speed was 220 mph. From Hawaii, they flew to Christmas Island, then to Canton, Tarawa, Guadalcanal, Biak, and finally to Nadzab, New Guinea. From there they began flying their bombing missions. When asked if they were ever worried about finding these tiny airstrips on these small islands in the vast Pacific Ocean, Mr. Borgstrom stated that they had extreme confidence in their navigator. On the long initial flight to Hawaii, his estimated time of arrival was only off by ten minutes. They gave the navigator the nickname of Pope Pius and called him Pope for short.

Carl Borgstrom missed some of his first missions. When asked why, he said, "Stupidity." They were in Nadzab, New Guinea for a week of jungle training. His training lasted a day because when using a machete to get rid of a vine, he sliced off the edge of his shoe and a toe. A decade after the war, he had to have the entire toe amputated because of complications.

The total bomb load for a B-24 was 3000 pounds. Sometimes they would carry three 1000-pounders. Saturation bombing was done with 100-pounders. Fragmentation bombing used 500-pounders. This was most used when they were going after ships. They were flying 10,000-11,000 feet above the target and were lucky if the bombs even hit the ship. Targets would be shipping, sea ports, or shore batteries. There would always be a lead bomber. When it would open its bomb bay doors, they all would do likewise. When the lead bomber would drop its load, the others followed suit. This was not always successful especially if the lead bomber missed the target. Mr. Borgstrom recalled, "We killed a lot of fish that day." The bombs all fell short of the target directly into the bay.

On a bombing mission, once they reached the initial point (IP), the bombardier took over. Their biggest fear during this time was the flak. The Sperry ball turret was especially susceptible to flak. Many times Japanese fighters were up in the air with them radioing down the altitude, compass heading, and air speed of the B-24's so the ground artillery could adjust the height of the flak. It could some times take 8 hours, most of it over ocean, before they were even near the target. For Carl, the worst time was the anticipation just before getting to the IP.



(continued on next page)

THEN AND NOW (continued)

Carl went on a total of 17 combat missions. An average of around 27 planes flew on a mission. There were always some aborts because of fuel leaks, engine failure, anything where the pilot felt would endanger the crew.

The longest mission was to Balikpapan, Borneo. It lasted over thirteen hours. Borneo was known for its oil resources. Bombing the refineries, the 380th's Bomb Group assisted in the Allied invasion of Borneo from above. The oil explosions caused flame and smoke to reach nearly 13,000 feet. "The landing boats look like water beetles from that altitude."

Their worst mission was to Formosa (today known as Taiwan) where the B-24 had at least 90 holes in its fuselage from flak. They also lost an engine on this mission. When they got back to base, the crew chief said, "What did you do to my aircraft?" The ground crew was responsible for a particular aircraft while the flying crew used more than one airplane. Holes were mended using aluminum patches.

Carl did lose a good friend, also a flight engineer, whose B-24 was struck in the bomb bay by flak causing the plane to explode over Indochina.

His last bombing mission was to Okinawa. On the way back to base, they heard by radio of the big one dropped on Hiroshima. After the war they helped ferry very thin American, British, and Dutch prisoners of war from Japan and Okinawa to Clark Field in the Philippines. He also went on some search and rescue missions flying in a criss cross pattern for nearly 16 hours.

He was at a base on Okinawa soon after V-J day when a bad typhoon hit. He was in charge of the two generators on the airbase at that time. They were about 5 feet apart inside a tin building. He emptied a large tool chest, turned it upside down and crawled beneath it between the two generators. The next morning he crawled out. The typhoon had brought nearly 140 mph winds and the tin building was long gone. The flag pole was bent over. Airplanes were flipped over and even ships had come ashore. There are no hurricanes in the Pacific. Tropical cyclones in this area are called typhoons.

Carl is the oldest of three brothers. His youngest brother was also in the Pacific after the war with the Occupation Forces. In 1944, his second brother, Stan, was severely wounded ten days after the invasion of Normandy when his foxhole was hit by a German 88 tank shell. He was in a cast from neck to toe and spent a year and a half in the military hospitals. One of the hospitals where he was sent was in Springfield, Missouri. Carl was still corresponding with Helen, the Missouri girl he had met in 1943. Helen made a hospital visit to see Carl's injured brother. The hospital would not allow her access since she was not a relative. Helen went to a local dime store and purchased a cheap toy ring. She went back to the hospital claiming to be Stan's sister-in-law. They let her see Carl's brother.

Carl proposed to Helen by letter. He did not have enough money to buy her a ring so his fellow crewmates each chipped in \$10; he sent the ring to his brother, Stan, still in the military hospital in Springfield. When Helen went to visit him, Stan presented her with the engagement ring from Carl. After becoming engaged, Helen did not hear from Carl for a while. As a joke, she sent Carl a telegram telling him that her address was still 1406 Penrose.

While overseas, malaria was a big health concern. All soldiers and airmen took an atabrin pill right in the mess hall line. Carl never had malaria overseas but he had two bouts of the disease after returning to the states. The second bout was on his wedding honeymoon. Helen and Carl were staying in Santa Monica, California, where he had been stationed during the war. The doctor gave him enough quinine to get home.

Carl and Helen were married in 1946 on the 4th of July. Three children were born to this union - Steve, Linda, and Terry. When Carl was 30 years old, before Terry was born, he came down with polio. His first symptoms were that he could not close his eyes. They would tape his eyes closed at night so he could sleep. After coming down with the disease, a physical therapist had to stretch out his legs. It was very painful. Once his legs were straightened he had to learn to walk all over again. He was in the hospital for six months.

During the war, Carl was in the military for three years. Altogether he was in for over 20 years retiring permanently in 1969. Much of his time in service was spent with the Wisconsin National Guard. He was activated during the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962. He and Helen were married for 58 years. They had three children, seven grandchildren and 10 great-grandchildren. Helen passed away in 2004.

Carl and Helen



Used with permission of Janna Dykstra Smith, Library Media Specialist, Jefferson Middle School, Jefferson, Wisconsin
<http://www.jefferson.k12.wi.us/jms/LibraryHomePage/WartimeRemembrances/Veterans/allnew.htm>
Mr. Borgstrom's daughter, Terry Snyder, is one of the school cooks at Jefferson.

Carl and Terry

MAIL CALL

Wed, Jun 4, 2008 at 8:52 PM

On certain space missions NASA, in partnership with The Planetary Society, has a program where the public can submit their names online, which are then put on a CD and attached to the vehicles being launched on those missions. They have done this for the Opportunity and Spirit Mars Rovers landing craft, a probe that went to a comet and others. Late this year NASA plans to launch a Lunar Reconnaissance Orbiter, which will orbit the moon and take HD photos of its surface. I took the liberty of submitting the 380th BG and all 4 squadron numbers to be included. After you submit a name, you get a certificate of participation. This is that certificate.



Certificate of Participation

This certificate recognizes that
380th BG 528 529 530 531 BS
has joined the Lunar Reconnaissance Orbiter
"Send Your Name to the Moon" Project

Date: **June 04, 2008** | Certificate No: **1191275**



The Lunar Reconnaissance Orbiter is built and managed by NASA's Goddard Spaceflight Center for NASA. "Send Your Name to the Moon" is a partnership with NASA, the LRO Project, The Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Laboratory and the Planetary Society.

Bill Shek

From: info@aerophoto.it

Date: Thu, Jul 17, 2008 at 11:05 AM

Subject: photo book

Dear Sir

I'm an Italian photographer and I'm working on a photo book about the most important warbirds still flying in the world. For this project I visited and flew with several warbirds museum and association. As I want to put on the first page of the each aircraft chapter a WWII B/A photo of the plane, I ask if you can help me to get a good photo of a B 24 of 380 BG in order to be used on the book. Of course I will give right credit to the author's or owner of the photos, that allow me to use it and to publish on the book. I can get the photo by email but what I need that dimension of it will be ok to publish at 10x15 centimeters size. If you want to have a look to my photoworks please visit my website www.aerophoto.it

I look forward to read from you soon. Thanks in advance.

Luigino Caliaro - ITALY
www.aerophoto.it

Feel free to contact Mr. Caliano if you are interested in helping him with his book.

Mick Maguire in Waterford West, Queensland, is looking for someone who can sew patches onto his flying jacket. If any of our Aussie members has any information for Mick, please contact him:

Phone=07 322996641

Email=mickjmaguire@yahoo.com.au

Mick's grandfather, George Henry Maguire, was a navigator in the 530th Squadron.
Any help in this would be greatly appreciated.

BLIND PILOTS CLUB

Photos and news article submitted by Steve Conway, Associate, 529th Squadron, son of F. Richard Conway, Pilot, Toepperwein's Crew (17)

Here's the text from a scan of a newsclip from what is most likely the St. Paul (Minnesota) paper about the Blind Pilots' Club ...

September 3, 1944: There's a club out in the southwest Pacific that none of the men want to belong to ... but once they're in, they have a lot of fun. Name of said club is "The Blind Pilots." Only officers who commit prize boners while flying a mission are eligible for membership.

One of them is Lt. Francis R. Conway. Although he's made at least one boner, he's done a lot of sharp flying as co-pilot of a heavy bomber ... he holds the Air Medal and the Distinguished Flying Cross.



Members of the Blind Pilots Club:

Front row: Lee, Conway, Toepperwein

Back row: Robertson, Carmichael, Morabito, Craig



Members of the Blind Pilots Club (unmasked!):

Front row: Lee, Morabito, Toepperwein

Back row: Robertson, Carmichael, Craig, Conway - Craig is our C.O.

Please send address changes and other membership info updates to:

Barbara Gotham
130 Colony Road, West Lafayette IN
47906-1209
Email: bjgotham@gmail.com

PHOTO GALLERY

This photo was sent by Chuck Mitchell, 531st Squadron. It shows the 380th Group Headquarters location on Okinawa as it appeared after the typhoon of September 16, 1945. Reprinted here are Chuck's remembrances of that day, from a letter sent to Barb Gotham on May 5, 2008:

Yes, that is our flag pole! The photograph was taken by Ollie Reeves, who, with me, was a member of Technical Supply in the 531st.

I do not know the typhoon severity rating. I recall, however, that we had the core of the system go through our camp grounds. The wind was from one direction for a number of hours -- we had dead calm for about 45 minutes -- then, for another period of time the wind was from the direct opposite direction. I do not recall exactly how long this thing lasted but it was severe and how we all survived is something else. We did our best to secure whatever we could and subsequently hang on to it.

Not much of anything in the way of structures was left standing after the storm. What withstood the initial winds did not make it through the reverse direction. I can personally recall seeing fully packed barracks bags and other items of huge size rolling through our camp toward the ocean like they were tumble-weeds.



Heritage to Horizons

Commemorates the 380th Air Expeditionary Wings History and the Air Force's 60th Anniversary - submitted by Chris McWilliams



This photo of TODDY was sent to us by Dave Sieber, 531 / (RAAF) / Gunner, Finlayson's Crew (82)

PHOTO GALLERY

Photos provided by Slim Powers/Bill Shek



Slim with Little Joe at Herky's Hangout



Jack Banks (right)



Herky's Show



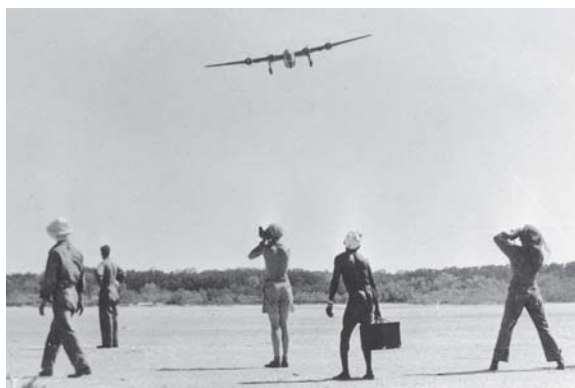
Slim Powers - 528 BS Waist Gunner - 1943



Boxing



Shady Lady - Aussie Jumpers (1943)



Shady Lady (Aug 1943)

DREAM TIME - A WAR STORY

by Roger W. Caputo
Installment #6

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.

The aircrews seemed to consistently have target recognition problems while often dropping bombs wide of the target. Getting into position for a bomb run was not easy. The preferred route was always from sea to land to avoid anti-aircraft fire which was always land-based. To identify some unmarked point on the surface of the sea, at which point the aircraft was to align itself for the run, was difficult, to say the least. Colonel Miller, the Group Commander, appealed to the Aussies for suggested solutions to the problem. They claimed to have the answer: it was to build large scale, three-dimensional relief models, around which the navigators could huddle and imprint the island targets in their minds. The idea was to minimize the recognition problem. Some targets would be struck once and then never thereafter, so they had no opportunity to practice where to make the proper turn in for the bomb runs. Further, the Aussies were operating a how-to-do-it school in Brisbane for would-be target model builders. Two other enlisted men from the Squadron's S-2 and I were sent to Brisbane, on two weeks TD, to play in the sand boxes.

The duty in Brisbane was interesting, but at the same time dull, because the town was wall-to-wall soldiers. We rented space in a small second or third class hotel and we were comfortable. The local motor pool furnished us a jeep for travel from the hotel to a big warehouse containing the so-called school. A one-page, type-written report could have contained all we learned in the two weeks. The Military's strong pint was not efficiency!

There were only two features of the Brisbane experience that are of story value. ADC-3 flown by a Dutch Army pilot, a refugee from the Dutch East Indies, picked us up early in the morning along with others and we started for Brisbane. About noontime, or shortly thereafter, as we crossed from the Northern Territory into the province of Queensland, a

huge dust storm lay across our flight path. The pilot decided it was a no-go situation and he turned around, located an emergency dirt airstrip, and landed in the middle of what appeared to be nowhere. Very shortly one of those Aussie lorries came bumping along and picked us up and transported us to a rail point. There stood a huge old two-story Victorian frame house with a windmill beside a narrow gauge railroad. We waited a couple of hours and in late afternoon, a small wood-burning engine, towing two small wooden-rail coaches, made a stop for water and rest. We threw our gear aboard the coaches and climbed in. The coach seats were made of wood and resembled those normally found in parks. The coach windows were the double-hung type and they had to be opened for ventilation and the black smoke from the engine rolled back over the coaches and in through the windows. We tried various window adjustments as a compromise between keeping cool and being blackened by smoke. We were enroute about 15 to 16 hours, arriving in Brisbane around 0800 hours the next morning; no sleep and soot-blackened from the smoke. At frequent intervals, during the night journey, the train would make rest stops, always beside a small building where the interior illumination was a kerosene lamp sitting on a table. Also to be found on the table was a tray of biscuits (cookies) and hot strong tea. It was a serve-yourself arrangement with a frontier-type woman usually in

continued on next page



"Can't Ya' See I'm Busy?"

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

DREAM TIME - A WAR STORY (continued)

Group HQ Intelligence, Fenton

attendance. Also on the table was a tray with a few coins in it, indicating that a donation of a couple of shillings would be appreciated. We were generous with our contributions!

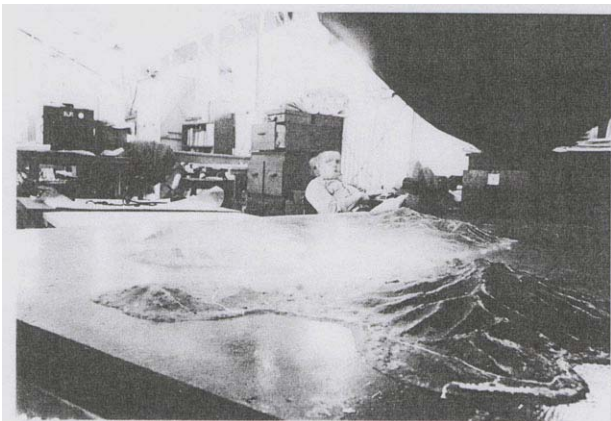
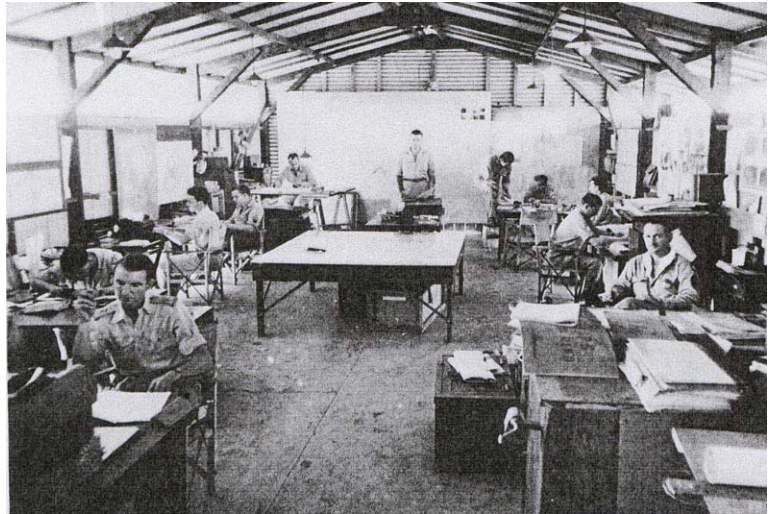
Upon arriving at the hotel in Brisbane, we stripped off our blackened clothes, took a bath, and crashed into bed. We were dead tired; the War could wait until the next day! Recognizing how the interest in tourism has grown worldwide, I can now fancy how some folks, making the same trip today, would be charmed by the experience, of course without the black smoke!

The return trip to the Northern Territory was uneventful. The Colonel was anxious for us to get to work on making target models and two targets were assigned as being most important. I only remember one, it was Ambon on the Island of Ambon, which lay just west of Dutch New Guinea and east of the Celebes Group, and we were ready to roll up our sleeves and to go work. There was one small problem; none of the materials available in Brisbane for model building were present in the Northern Territory! The Colonel expected the models and we had to improvise and we did. In the 1930s and 40s, a particleboard known as Celotex was used in home building for exterior siding (it was a failure as siding) and something very similar to it was available from the Aussie Army engineers in unlimited quantities, but it came as sheets about ½ inch thick and 4x8 feet. Using only our hands, it had to be shredded into very small pieces, so that it could be molded into various shapes needed. Pressing it together required large amounts of adhesive to bind it and there were no glue factories in the Northern Territory! There was a mess hall, and it had lots of wheat flour. Calling upon our boyhood experiences with building kites from newsprint and flour paste (they never flew well, too heavy); we made gallons and gallons of flour paste and formed the models. In the high humidity, some models took forever to dry, but they eventually did. Various colors of paints were also available from the Aussies, so we painted the entire model a dark green which simulated the jungle which covered all the islands. Contrasting colors were then used to indicate towns, roads, airfields, and the like. Ralph Finch was a commercial artist by trade (he did matchbook cover artwork) and he could do wonders with a fine-pointed brush.

At last the first model was finished and we displayed it to the Colonel. "Excellent! Excellent!" he remarked, and rushed out to bring some of his staff to see it. They mostly just stood and stared at it and made hardly any comment, good or bad. We built a second model and it received the same level of review! As I remember, the models were used once or twice by HQ operational planners, but I have no memory of any aircrews ever seeing them. War is crazy: there were

the airmen, 10 to the bomber, going out on 1,000 mile missions, running the gauntlet of tropical storms, Japanese anti-aircraft fire, attacks by determined Japanese interceptors, running the risk of having to ditch a disabled bomber at sea in shark-infested waters, or worse, captured by the enemy and tortured; while we office types were safe at base playing in our sand box!

The models were finally stored away and never used thereafter. Months and months later, I came upon them and touched them with the tip of my finger and then the surprise: beetles had bored their way into the models and had a feast on the flour paste, leaving the models a fragile shell made up of the outside coating of paint! So much for the permanence of things made by mankind!



Target Model, Ambon Harbor

More to come next issue!

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, Castro, Ramon, Ground Staff, Mess, DOD December 28, 1965, Alice, Texas, reported by his daughter-in-law, Irma Castro

528th, Gaddis, Eugene J., Nose Gunner, Boeshaar's Crew, DOD July 28, 2008, Mt. Pleasant, Texas, reported by his son, Terry Gaddis

529th, Cassin, Robert C., Gunner, Morabito's Crew (41), DOD July 25, 2008, Rockville, Maryland, reported by his friend, Gregory J. Maier

529th, Kroes, Leonard G., Aircraft Commander, Kroes' Crew (56), DOD April 30, 2008, Delton, Michigan, reported by his son Larry, and Paul Beilstein

529th, Seckar, John C., Bombardier, Levandoski's Crew (43), DOD June 10, 2008, Charles City, Iowa, reported by his daughter, Marilyn



530th, Pozorski, Norbert L., Pilot, Clarence Lewis' Crew (85), DOD July 5, 2008, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, reported by his daughter, Barbara Pozorski, and Gene Stadler

530th, Thompson, Helen, widow of Forrest E. ("Tommy") Thompson, DOD June 22, 2008, Milan, Tennessee, reported by Tom Hunt (from a call he received from her daughter, Suzanne)

Other, Yeoman, Genelyn Marie, mother of Barbara Gotham, DOD June 14, 2008, West Lafayette, Indiana

Please send TAPS information to:
Barbara Gotham, 130 Colony Rd
West Lafayette IN 47906-1209
Phone: 765/463-5390
bjgotham@gmail.com