



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

AFFECTIONATELY KNOWN AS

## The Flying Circus



NEWSLETTER #36

Fall 2008



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#### HISTORIANS

Bob Alford

Glenn R. Horton, Jr.

Gary L. Horton

#### HISTORY PROJECT

Theodore J. Williams

Barbara J. Gotham

#### 2008 REUNION COORDINATORS

Pat Carnevale & Larry Farnum

#### 2009 REUNION COORDINATOR

Barb Gotham

#### NEWSLETTERS -

#### WEBPAGES - FINANCIAL

Barbara J. Gotham

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(leave a message, please)

Email: [bjgotham@gmail.com](mailto:bjgotham@gmail.com)

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

Mail Call

Photo Gallery

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Next issue: Winter 2008 (to be mailed in January 2009)

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130 Colony Road

W Lafayette IN 47906-1209

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## 2008 REUNION INFORMATION

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

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The site for the 2008 Reunion will be the Hotel Arizona (formerly Holiday Inn downtown). Their rate is \$84 + tax and includes 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.

**If you plan on attending the reunion,** and you did not receive either the Summer issue of this newsletter or did not receive the event and hotel forms in the mail, please contact Barb Gotham (765-463-5390, [bjgotham@gmail.com](mailto:bjgotham@gmail.com)) or download them from our website at: <http://380th.org/REUNION/2008Reunion/Reunion.html>

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### 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. Dinner/Dance at the Hotel Arizona.

**Sunday, November 9:** Departure.

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*Registered as of 9/22/08:*

#### 528th:

Shek, Bill  
Shek, Diana  
Markowitz, Milt & Natalie  
Oakes, Loyd & Bill Randall  
Powers, Slim & Kathleen McCulloch, Tom Powers & Jakarta Eckhart  
Baker, Peggy Vance & Dean  
Peterson, Viola L. & Gladys Brandt  
Baker, Dexter & Tom Baker & Dexter Baker III & Dexter Baker Jr. & Greg Baker  
Banks, Jack  
Bever, Bill  
LaFlech, Bill & Sharon

#### 530th:

Stadler, Gene & Ruth  
Killingsworth, Cal & Joan  
Knafelc, Janice & Frank

If you take photos while attending the Reunion, and would like to share them with our members, please send them to Barb Gotham, 130 Colony Road, W Lafayette IN 47906-1209  
BY December 5, 2008  
Thanks!

#### 529th:

Borgstrom, Carl & Steve & Lynn Borgstrom & Terry & Terry Snyder & Conway Synder  
Jerry & Linda Weeden & Angela Garrow, Mattie Jo Horta & Jessica Eilenfeldt  
Fry, Lloyd  
Farnum, Larry & Jeanne  
Beilstein, Paul & Barbara  
Lanners, Irene & Juanita Cator  
Offerle, Bud & Kathleen

#### 531st:

Johnson, Marie & Doris Mitchell  
Sear, Lyle & Clara  
Hurley, Don & Phyllis  
Williams, Ted & Isabel  
Poy, George Lim & Jessie & George & Gloria Poy & Beverly & Robert Henes and Natalie & Xavier & Rosalyn & Steven Kin and Melissa, Erica, Steven & Joseph & Elizabeth Chan  
Walford, Edward & Barbara

#### Honorary:

Carnevale, Pat  
Gotham, Barb & Doug

## 380TH PATCHES, CAPS, JACKETS

Get ready for the Tucson Reunion! Order your patches, caps, and jackets now! I will be bringing a limited supply of patches, etc., to the Reunion - if I get your order prior to **October 27**, you can have your items before the Reunion.

PATCHES (Mark on line # requested)  
Squadron/Group patches: \$10.00 ea.

Group: \_\_\_\_\_  
528th: \_\_\_\_\_  
529th: \_\_\_\_\_  
530th: \_\_\_\_\_  
531st: \_\_\_\_\_

Wings patches: \$3.00 ea.

Pilot: \_\_\_\_\_  
Navigator: \_\_\_\_\_  
Bombardier: \_\_\_\_\_  
Gunner: \_\_\_\_\_  
Air Crew Member: \_\_\_\_\_  
RAAF: \_\_\_\_\_

(circle picture below to identify which one you want)

Shoulder patches: \$4.00 ea.

5th Air Force: \_\_\_\_\_  
USAAF: \_\_\_\_\_

### JACKETS

Blue nylon, \$25.00 ea.  
(Mark on line # requested)

Small \_\_\_\_\_  
Medium: \_\_\_\_\_  
Large: \_\_\_\_\_  
XL: \_\_\_\_\_  
2XL: \_\_\_\_\_

CAPS, \$8.00 ea.

One size: \_\_\_\_\_

REUNION PATCHES, \$3.00 ea.

Tucson/2008: \_\_\_\_\_

Dayton/2007: \_\_\_\_\_

Washington/2006: \_\_\_\_\_

Older:

Year \_\_\_\_\_ Place: \_\_\_\_\_

Year \_\_\_\_\_ Place: \_\_\_\_\_



Checks payable to: 380th Bomb Group Association

Mail to:

Barbara Gotham  
130 Colony Road  
West Lafayette IN 47906-1209

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone and/or Email: \_\_\_\_\_



USAAF



5th AF



RAAF patches available



Pilot



Navigator



Bombardier



Gunner



Air Crew Member



Group



528th



529th



530th



531st



## FEATURED CREW PHOTO #1



### *Selman Crew* 529th

L to R, Top row: Eugene Beard (Co-Pilot), Milt Pius (Navigator), Don Thiel (Radio), Joe Gates (Bombardier), Tom Selman (Pilot)  
Bottom row: Larry Fishman (Armor), Carl Borgstrom (Flight Engineer), Jack Round (Tail Gunner), Willard Clark (Nose Gunner), Dick Prehn (Ball Gunner)

Photo and artwork courtesy of  
Carl Borgstrom



380th BOMBARDMENT GROUP

### 5th Air Force 5th Bomber Command *The Flying Circus* 'KING OF THE HEAVIES' SELMAN CREW



529th BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON



Top row L to R: LARRY FISHMAN—Armor/ Waist Gunner, JACK ROUND—Tail Gunner; CARL BORGSTROM—Engineer/ Top Gunner; DON THIEL—Radio Operator Waist Gunner; DICK PREHN—Ball Gunner; WILLARD CLARK—Nose Gunner  
Bottom row L to R: TOM SELMAN—Aircraft Commander; MILT PIUS—Navigator; JOE GATES—Bombardier; EUGENE BEARD—Co-Pilot



DREAM GAL  
44-40919  
(J-185-CO)

BASED—Murtha Field, Mindoro, Philippine Islands  
TARGET—8 July, 1945 - Shenchiku, Formosa  
BOMB LOAD—9,500 lb. demolition  
ALTITUDE—12,800 ft.  
RESULTS—Bombs on target  
FLAK—Two pieces in No. 2 Engine Nacelle - over 90 holes in fuselage  
PERSONNEL INJURIES—None  
AIRCRAFT SYSTEMS DAMAGED—None  
MISSION TIME—12 hours 50 minutes



SELMAN CREW flew 15 missions  
in the SOUTH PACIFIC THEATER  
from April 13, 1945 to the end of the war

PRESENTED TO  
THE PLATTSBURGH AIR FORCE BASE MUSEUM  
BY THE SELMAN CREW  
27 September, 1986



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## FEATURED CREW PHOTO #2

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### *Spencer Crew*

*528th*

Taken at March Field, Riverside, California  
Prior to flying overseas to Pacific  
June 5, 1944

L to R - E.R. Spencer (Pilot), Robert C. Hawkins  
(Asst Eng/Nose Gunner), Ray Witkowski (Bombardier), Hy Haves (Navigator), Tom Malpass (Tail Gunner), Roger Greve (Engineer/Turrent Gunner)  
Rear - W.L. Jackson (Co-Pilot), Arvid Olson  
(Radio Opr), James Mitchell (Waist Gunner), W.T.  
Martin (Waist Gunner)

Photo courtesy of Hy Haves



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## FORCED LANDING IN THE OUTBACK

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*By Arvid ("Olie") Olson*

For some reason unknown to me as an enlisted man, Hy Haves, the navigator on Spencer's crew in the 528<sup>th</sup>, and I, the radio operator, were assigned to fly from Mindoro Island in the Philippines to Brisbane, Australia. This was a pick-up crew from several different crews in the 380<sup>th</sup>. Apparently we were to be a courier carrying papers to 5<sup>th</sup> Air Corps HQ. We were using a B-25 instead of our usual B-24. Because of its shorter range, we had to island hop.

Our first stop was the island of Peleliu. Because of low cloud cover of almost 50%, we flew right over it without seeing it. Hy realized we were past the ETA for the island and asked me to get a radio fix (a triangulation radio report from three widely separated ground stations). We then simply made a 180-degree turn and soon landed. Peleliu was a good reason to be in the Army Air Corps and not in the Infantry or Marines. The shelling destruction was unbelievable. The Japanese had had time to build thick concrete fortifications and had fought from these and deep caves with artillery and small arms right off the beaches.

The next morning we took off for Lae, New Guinea. We reached it in the afternoon. The pilot and the co-pilot switched responsibilities because the co-pilot wanted to land a B-25 which he had never done before. The pilot, of course, then handled the radio for the control tower instructions. The landing was fine but the airfield seemed deserted. The pilot called in for transportation. Much later a truck finally appeared and we climbed aboard. The driver asked the pilot why we landed where we did. He said it was a taxi strip on an abandoned airfield about 10 miles from the one we were supposed to use!

In the morning we flew over the Owen Stanley mountains heading for Darwin. After hours of flying over nothing but water, Hy asked me to get a radio fix to check against his dead reckoning position. The fix showed us to be very far off course, almost impossibly far off course. From then on things went from bad to worse. (Later on we learned that the Darwin station had us confused with another plane. This must have been the case because I was never called in to explain my transmissions or in any way questioned or reprimanded for my role in the mix-up.) At one point I asked the ground station to give us a compass heading to their station. The reply was "you are right above the field, circle and land." When we looked down, there was nothing below us but water!

*(continued on next page)*

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## *FORCED LANDING IN THE OUTBACK (continued)*

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The pilot decided to fly a compass course which would put us over land and to search for Darwin from there. By this time, our gas supply was dangerously low. The pilot saw a long meadow ahead covered with long grass. He decided to make a wheels-down landing in the grass. He set the B-25 down gently and perfectly. When we rolled to a stop, we sank in the grass and soft mud up to the axles, and there we were stuck! I sent signals for a radio fix and relatively soon a single engine plane was circling overhead. They dropped a note telling us that a landing party would come out for us the next day.

We spent the rest of the day collecting water, as we were all very thirsty and had just a little water left in our canteens. The only water we could find in the immediate vicinity of the plane had to be spooned out of the hoof prints of cattle. I believe we used an empty oxygen bottle to store the water which we rationed carefully. The pilot had some halazon tablets in his parachute pack which he used to purify the water. Unknown to the rest of us, the co-pilot found some iodine in his pack which he poured into the container. Needless to say, the water was well purified. We slept in the plane rather uncomfortably and thirsty.

Just before dark the next day the rescue party arrived from Burrundie Cattle Station on whose land we were. Ted Cox, Fred Knowles, and Willie, a full-blooded aborigine, came on horseback with five extra horses but only three extra saddles. Willie never came into the circle of men or near the fire we had built when darkness fell. We offered to make tea by boiling the water in the container. I don't know who had the packet of tea in his kit. It was accepted gratefully by the rescuers who had been riding all day to reach us. Accepted and spat out when the halazon/iodine tasting tea reached their mouths! So without refreshment, we started out for Burrundie Station which was near the rail line to Darwin. I don't know if Ted or Fred owned or just managed the station, but it was immense. It extended from their house and buildings 35 miles to the sea and for 100 miles along the coast. Before we left the plane, I insisted that I had to blow up the IFF (Identification, Friend, or Foe). At radio school and elsewhere it had been drummed into us that radio operators would commit a very serious court martial offense if we abandoned a plane with the IFF intact. That was the only fun part of the whole trip!

We mounted the horses for the almost 35-mile horseback ride in the dark. Hy, the navigator, was from New York City, and I was from San Francisco. At least two of us were not experienced horsemen. The officers used the saddle horses, and the flight engineer and I rode bareback. Willie led; we followed in single file. Occasionally Fred or Ted would call out, "Where are you, Willie?" Willie never answered. He just took an extra draw on his cigarette and held it up over his head. We hadn't ridden more than 5 or 10 minutes when we forded a river flowing up to the horses' bellies. So much for our hoarding of water! I recall that Hy got so saddle sore that he got off the horse and tried to walk, but the mud was so soft and sticky he had to get back on. We were really out of our element in the Outback!

Sometime in the daylight we arrived at the home buildings of Burrundie Station and were fed a large and very welcome meal. The next day we took the train to an installation near Darwin and waited for transportation back to Mindoro Island. I learned many years that that we were listed as MIA for a day or so.



Hy Haves

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## WHEN ADELAIDE WAS BOMBED BY ORANGES

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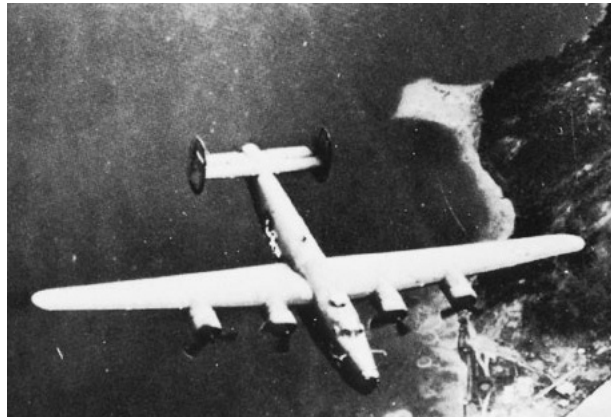
*Excerpts taken from an issue of W.W.II magazine*

*Submitted by Bill Bever*

During the 380<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group's stay in Australia, the various bomb squadrons had to make supply runs to feed their airman and ground crews. Thus came about "the bombing of Adelaide," an episode attributed to a Liberator bomber carrying various items in its bomb bays .... oranges, booze, Coca Cola and so on. As luck would have it, the bomb bay doors "peeled off shortly after takeoff .... And gravity took care of the rest. Quite a sight it was to see case after case tumbling down, plus crates of oranges flying apart," recalled American Charles Edwards of the 380<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Group.

Below, a crate of beer landed in Mrs. I.F. MacDonald's backyard and a Coke carton "demolished" the roof of her washhouse. Oranges "showered down over the entire neighborhood." Amazingly, no one was hurt.

The 380<sup>th</sup> did not win a Presidential Unit Citation for this feat, but did win one for its lengthy missions over the Dutch East Indies, including the war's longest bombing raid before the advent of the B-29 "Super Fort." Operating the B-24 Liberator, the 380<sup>th</sup> lost 49 of its bombers in one year, and more than 260 men overall, before decamping from the Northern Territory .... No longer the vulnerable Northern Territory exactly because of such sacrifices by American, Australians and their various allies in the down under part of the world.



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## MAIL CALL

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9/14/08

Hi Barb,

Some FYI for your newsletter. The Collings Foundation tours the country with the "Wings of Freedom" tour. Their planes include a B-24, B-17, B-25 and this year they have added a P-51. Their schedule including dates and locations can be found on the internet at [collingsfoundation.org](http://collingsfoundation.org). Since this is the only flying B-24, I am sure many of our members will be interested.

Sincerely,

Bob Peachey



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## MAIL CALL / PHOTO GALLERY

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Fri, Aug 8, 2008 at 12:50 PM

I just received a couple of pictures showing crew members and a handpainted sign outside the enlisted men's tent of crew number 10, 528th Squadron. I was wondering if any of the former members would like a copy of these photos. My uncle, W.R. Miller, S/Sgt, was KIA on April 28, 1944, as a member of Crew Number 10. Also, I have a news article describing the air battle in which my uncle was killed.

Major Billy J. Smith, USAF (Ret).  
lexidog999@tx.rr.com



### *Dunseth Crew (10) 528th*

L to R, Back row: Charles W. Frayne (Navigator), W.R. Miller (Gunner), unknown, Don Young (Flt Engr), Dick Gross (Radio Opr)  
Front row: Don Crombie (Gunner), unknown, Ed Edwardsen (bombardier), Robert Dunseth (Acft Cmdr), Joe Mizzell (Gunner)



This photo and text below was sent by Dexter Baker, 528th Squadron, Baker Crew (4)

*Left to right: Sgts. Hanner, Hill, Shoat, and Gray. These are the mechanics who kept the GOLDEN GOOSE flying from the time I arrived in April 1943 to its departure for scrap to Amberly Field, Australia, in February 1944. It completed 40 missions, most of them under my command. ... Dexter*



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## MAIL CALL

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Sat, Sep 13, 2008 at 10:11 PM

Dear Barbara,

I have enjoyed reading the interesting articles in Mail Call and the exchange of information between members. Could you please include my letter regarding information I am seeking about my father Sgt. Edward Grady McDonald.

He served with the 380th Bomb Group, 528th Squadron, Engineering Maintenance Section, and was stationed at Fenton Airfield in Darwin, Australia in 1944/45.

He may be remembered by the name of "Buddy" as he was called by his family.

I have included 2 photos of my father and 1 of his friend (holding a snake) that he mentioned in his letters, Sgt. William (Bill) Wren.

I would appreciate hearing from anybody who remembers my Father or Bill Wren during or after the war.

I would like to thank you for all your work and the contributors to the newsletters for their memories and stories as this has given me an insight into my father's life and experiences during this period of his life.

Yours Sincerely,

Graeme Thomas  
gjet@bigpond.net.au



Sgt Edward (Buddy) McDonald



Sgt William (Bill) Wren



Sgt Edward (Buddy) McDonald

## PHOTO GALLERY



Charlie Howe &  
Assistant (Little  
Lulu)

Lt John Thompson & Toughy



A T Ferrante, T M Jones, Jack  
Garlock, Tom Farrell, Jan 1944



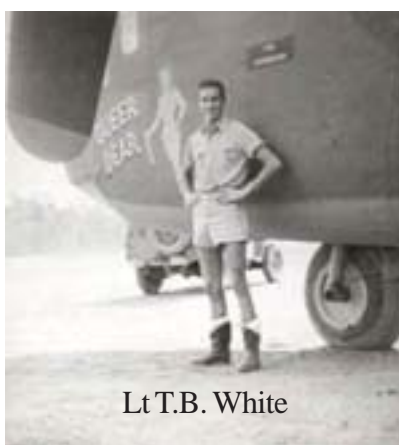
Capt Jack Kelly



Hit by Flak

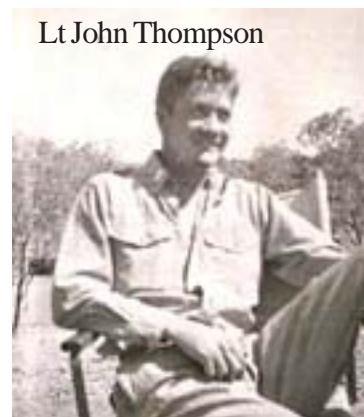


Capt A.T. Ferrante, Jan 1944



Lt T.B. White

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



Lt John Thompson

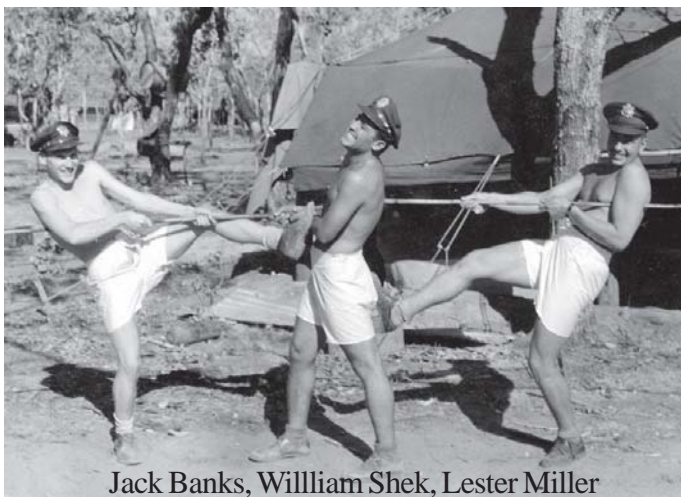


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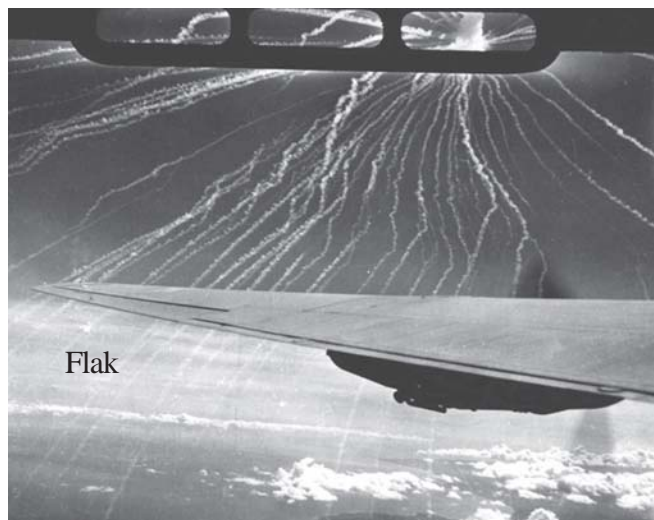
## PHOTO GALLERY

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Photos provided by Bill Shek



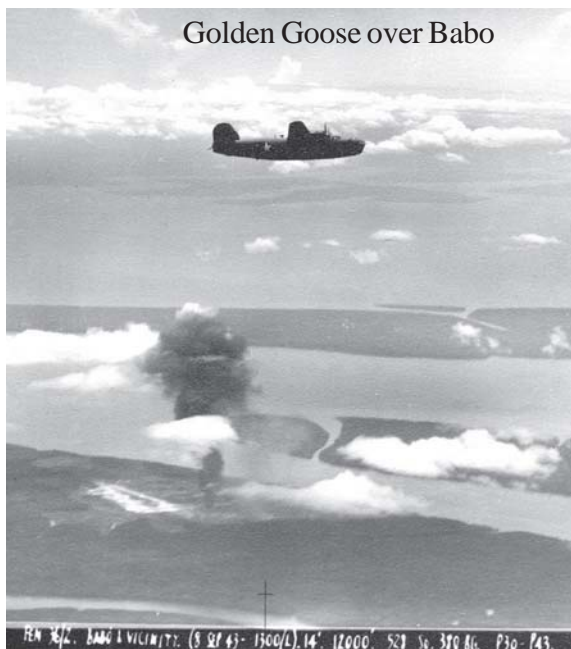
Jack Banks, William Shek, Lester Miller



P38 - Charter Towers



Fenton Field 1943



Golden Goose over Babo



Didgeridoo - Shady Lady Crash - August 1943  
Photo provided by Bill Shek/Slim Powers

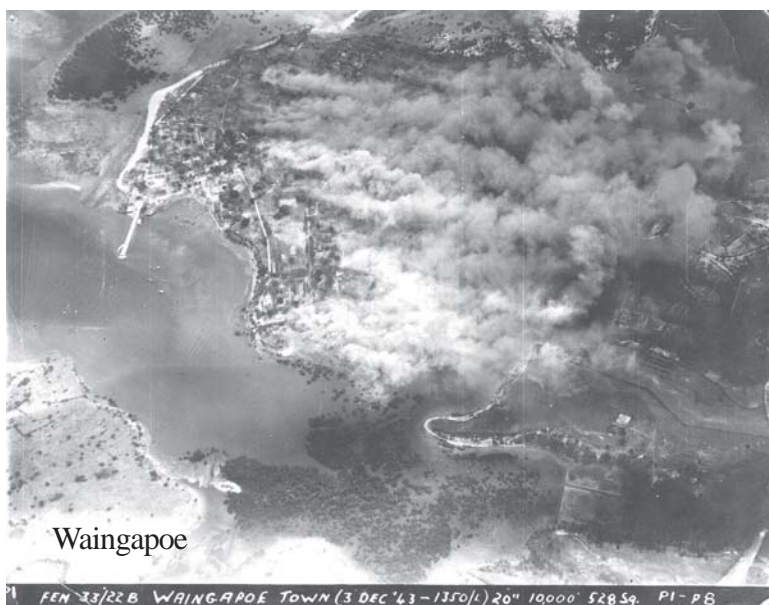
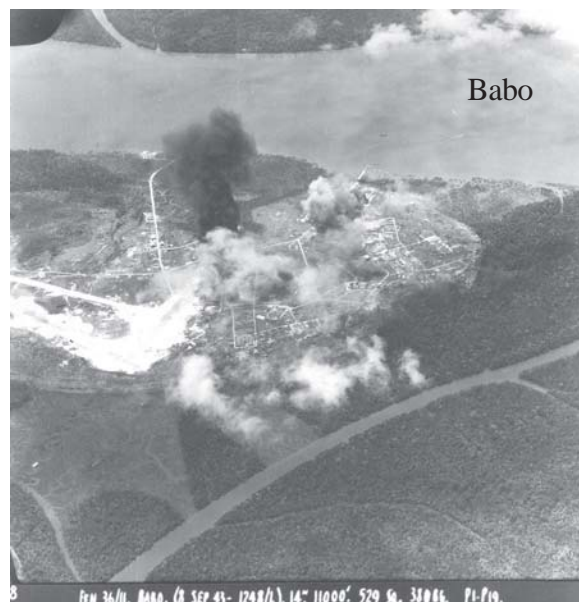


## PHOTO GALLERY

Photos provided by Bill Shek

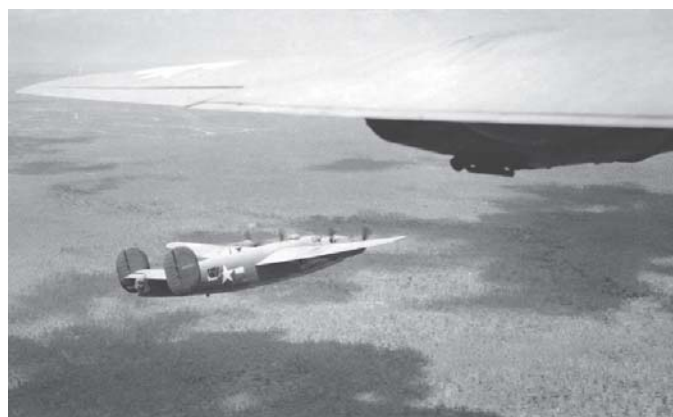


Quack Wac, Queer Dear, Beautiful Betsy, Jezebel (labeled)



Waingapoe Harbor Ships

Dauntless Dottie over Roti-  
Koepang Timor Mission



Golden Goose - Approaching Fenton

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## *YANK DOWN UNDER, JUNE 23, 1944*

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Thu, Mar 6, 2008 at 1:20 PM

I ran across an issue of *Yank Down Under* in my father's papers. I thought the Flying Circus readers might enjoy this commentary.

Joyce MacDonald  
Daughter of James Parker Benton  
530th, Asst Flt Eng, Gunner, Harkins' Crew (38)

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### **Ho Hum Milk Run**

Dear Yank:

In the May 12 issue of YANK we of the heavy bomb group, formerly known as Colonel Miller's Flying Circus, noticed the article entitled "Two Bomber Outfits Start Feuding." After operating with both the Jolly Rogers and Ken's Men we are inclined to agree with Ken's Men that the Jolly Rogers are not the "Best damn heavy bombers in the world."

As you know, Colonel Miller's boys are from the Never-Never Land and probably it is because of that fact that no publicity comes our way. But what's the difference; we are no supermen nor can we vie for honors with comic-strip heroes. We fly without fighter cover, our short missions are longer than those flown in Guinea, and we take off (with maximum loads) and land on strips shorter and inferior to those utilized by the Jollys or the Kenny's. Ho Hum, we never had it so good.

Once in a while we have some fun. We go down on an enemy airdrome and strafe. It may be an operative strip, makes no difference. Perhaps our bombs didn't hit (we are not infallible) and we may knock a few fighters out of commission before they come up to meet us. You see, we have no top cover.

There's a rumor circulating in camp that sometime ago part of the Jolly Rogers were here. We hear tell they received some kind of award for going over a particular target. That target is a good deal hotter

now and we're required to go over it with fewer planes. Milk Run!

We are proud of one thing, however. We are proud of the formation we fly. It's very nice to see and we think the Nips appreciate it, too. Many times we see numbers of the little fellas way off in the distance debating whether or not they should come in closer for a better look at the formation.

We have a lot to learn about combat flying, we admit. We'd like to have some of the Guinea heroes targets. We're eager to learn-send'em over.

Lt. E. H. Radius

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**Radius, Egbert H. / 529 / O-746176 / Pilot, Blake's Crew (19) / BAIL-OUT BELLE**

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### **Ho Hum Milk Run II**

We chuckle heartily up our sleeves every time we read one of your stories about the Jolly Rogers or Ken's Men.

This is the only heavy bomb group in Australia and has the distinction of completing the longest combat mission on record.

What would seem to this, The Lost Battalion, or more affectionately known as the B-24 Group, a milk run would be a hot mission to the Guinea Play Boys.

There is one big question we would like to have answered—what would they do if they had to fly missions all the time without fighter cover?

T/Sgt. H. M. Gramblet

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**Gramblet, Howard M. / 529 / 39094659 / Radio Opr, Harrison's Crew (39)**

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## *DREAM TIME - A WAR STORY*

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*by Roger W. Caputo*  
*Installment #7*

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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.

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The 380<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group (Heavy), operating from the Northern Territory, set record after record for missions of long distance, none of which were turning points in the war, and received little or no recognition in the press at home. We were simply operating in a little known area of the world (ask anyone to name more than one of the Dutch East Indies Islands) and as a result was a sideshow at best.

The Dutch East Indies' area is large, covering an area of the globe's surface about equal to the United States in an East-West and North-South direction. The area extends from about 95 degrees east longitude to 135 degrees east longitude and the area sits astride the equator extending 10 degrees of latitude to each side.

Beginning in the late 1600s, and from then on, the Dutch and Portuguese sea explorers staked out their claims around the globe. In the Dutch East Indies, as the name suggests, the Dutch had it very much their own way, with the Portuguese only gaining one-half of the Island of Timor, the one nearest Australia; all the rest were held by the Dutch. The islands were full of riches: spices, lumber, petroleum, vegetable oils, minerals, sea food, hand-crafted cloth and artwork, and many more things. The Dutch let the natives govern themselves and did not attempt to impose Western culture upon them. The religion was Muslim, a God-fearing creed, and in general there was a large measure of civil order. The Dutch only wanted to make and manage the money! The area had, at the outset of the war, only token military defenses and were almost powerless to stop the Japanese invaders. The Japanese overran British territories also. The Japanese could not sustain a war effort for very long without being resupplied with raw materials from Southeast Asia and the Dutch East Indies. It was the job of the 380<sup>th</sup> to make business as usual as near as impossible as we could for the Japanese. Looking at the record, I think what we did was evident in many ways.

As a first order of business, we had to keep the enemy out of Northern Australia as all the evidence was they intended to take Australia. The Japanese Airforce was based in strength in Timor and they pounded the Port of Darwin into rubble. There wasn't much to pound, but they did a good job of it. So when the 380<sup>th</sup> entered the Northern Territory, we had to be hidden as it were back from the coast in the "Outback." As the 380<sup>th</sup> Group's mission began to get the attention of the Japanese, they came after us twice with daylight bombing raids. The first was a total surprise. Friendly observers on the coast alerted us to the oncoming enemy bomber formation. They were very high, maybe 20,000 feet, and while the Aussies had some anti-aircraft guns in place, they were more token than anything else. There were also some Aussie Spitfires based in Darwin, 100 miles north of Fenton; maybe two or three. We were really betting the Japanese couldn't hit the broad side of a barn. The bet was largely a winner. No one was killed; no craters in the airstrip; no aircraft damaged; no hits in the living area, but the fuel dump caught a couple of direct hits, followed by some fireworks!

*(continued on next page)*



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## *DREAM TIME - A WAR STORY (continued)*

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The all-alert siren sounded; we grabbed our helmets and raced for the shallow foxholes we had previously dug. There crouched down, so as to make as small a ball of our bodies as possible, we waited. The enemy was so high the engines could hardly be heard. Then the Aussie ack ack began to fire; blam!, blam!, blam! The sound of the ack ack was reassuring, but as we peeked up we didn't see any bombers coming down in flames. Then we could hear the scream of the falling bombs and scream they did, just like in the movies. Every screaming bomb had a person's name on it, or so we felt. The bombs then would strike: ba-room!, ba-room!, ba-room! And the earth would shake. A 500-pound bomb strike one-fourth a mile away leaves the impression it exploded next door. In less than 10 minutes, the raid was all over and the all clear was sounded. Now we were greeted by an emergency call for all hands at the fuel dump which had been hit. The aviation fuel was stored in 55-gallon steel drums, stacked up like cord wood, 20 or more feet high. I never understood how anyone stacked them so high or had planned to get them down. The fire started by the bomb hit had set some of the barrels afire and one would ignite another, and another, and another until the entire dump threatened to explode in one gigantic ball of fire. Exploding drums would be hurled 100 feet into the air and the ends would be blown off; the 20-inch diameter steel ends flying across the area like a Frisbee, ready to decapitate any head in its path.

"All right you guys, let's get at it, start rolling those drums away from the fire!" The fire was so large and intense, just to approach it was a searing experience, but approach it we did and rolled those unburned drums away, some so hot they almost burned our hands. I wondered if we'd be awarded the Purple Heart if one of those hot flying Frisbees took our head off! In a few hours, the fire was under control, make that more like burned out, because we had rolled the barrels to a safe distance. Mark the end of one bombing raid!

The second time the Japanese came over, a couple of Spitfires got after them and the bombs dropped wide of the target, us!

The falling bombs still made a terrifying noise and the ground still shook. One of the Spitfires hit a bomber and it began to trail smoke, dropping out of the formation to finally crash somewhere in the Outback.



Aussie Pilot Officer and his Spitfire

The initial mission planning strategy for the 380th Group was to neutralize the Japanese threat on Timor. We plastered their air bases and left them in ruins and kept them unusable with an occasional raid to keep the runway full of craters. At first, the Japanese put up fighters in resistance and they were very capable, but then so were ten 50-caliber machine guns on every bomber. Timor never ceased to be a threat to our boys as they returned from those long missions. To give Timor a wide berth required some dog legs in the flight path, and that burned extra fuel that wasn't available, so they always came as close to Timor as they dared.

We had some super heroes in the 380th, but then it is supposed that every outfit can make the same claim. Uncommonly brave behavior on those long bombing raids deep into Japanese territory became common after awhile. They were recorded in the story of the Group as written by a group of the Intelligence Officers at the close of the war. I often re-read it, if for nothing else than to remind me there were some great men who made great sacrifices so that I could return home! They shall never be forgotten!

*More to come in future newsletters!*

## ***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***

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**528th, Watson, John C.**, Flight Engineer/Top Turret Gunner, Dally's Crew(9), Salisbury Mills, New York, reported by Joe Dally

**529th, Bejoian, James**, Bombardier, Hawkey's Crew (57), DOD 08/21/2008, Watertown/Chatham, Massachusetts, reported by his widow, Sara

**529th, Shipman, Paul R.**, Gunner, Hughes' Crew (32), DOD 12/03/1985, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, reported by his son, David R. (Rick) Shipman

**529th, Shipman, Shirley G.**, Wife of Paul R. Shipman, DOD 12/12/2005, Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania, reported by her son, David R. (Rick) Shipman



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