



528TH



529TH



530TH



531ST

THE 380TH BOMB GROUP ASSOCIATION 5th AF - RAAF

AFFECTIONATELY KNOWN AS

The Flying Circus

NEWSLETTER #46

Spring 2011

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2012 Reunion

Membership Registration Form

Mail Call

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TAPS

Address Changes

New Members

Web Links (Colorado Springs)

HISTORIANS

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

HISTORY PROJECT

Theodore J. Williams

2011 REUNION COORDINATOR

Barb Gotham

**Colorado Springs, Colorado
August 3-7, 2011**

NEWSLETTERS –

WEBPAGES – FINANCIAL

- Barbara J. Gotham
- Phone: 765/463-5390
- Email: bjgotham@gmail.com



Next issue: Summer 2011 (to be mailed June 2011)

2011 REUNION

Location: Colorado Springs, Colorado

Dates: August 3-7, 2011

Hotel: Marriott

<http://www.marriott.com/hotels/travel/cosmc-colorado-springs-marriott/>

We hope you will be able to bring your family to the 2011 Reunion (especially since this year's reunion is before most schools start their fall semester/term).

The Pikes Peak region offers plenty of attractions that are sure to make memories to last a lifetime. There are so many things to do in Colorado Springs that you won't have any trouble keeping your family entertained. Enjoy all the great things to do in Colorado Springs and the unique Colorado Springs dining options such as The Airplane Restaurant and Squeak Soda Shop.

Discover more than 50 exciting and unique attractions such as Pikes Peak, the U.S. Olympic Team Training Center, Garden of the Gods Park, Pikes Peak Cog Railway, Cheyenne Mountain Zoo, Cave of the Winds, Manitou Cliff Dwellings, Royal Gorge Bridge, Seven Falls, Flying W Ranch, and the U.S. Air Force Academy.

With over 300 days of sunshine each year, outdoor recreation opportunities are everywhere you look. Colorado Springs has extensive parks and open spaces with trails that wind through magnificent rock formations and shady mountain forests – perfect for hiking, biking and horseback riding. Tackle the rapids of the Arkansas on a Colorado Springs white water rafting tour that winds through the Royal Gorge. Try something different such as a guided bike ride down Pikes Peak or a hot air balloon ride up into the Colorado sky. Fishing, camping, golfing and rock climbing are also favorite outdoor activities in Colorado Springs and the Pikes Peak region for family vacations.

Colorado Springs is also known for its rich and diverse cultural activities. Learn about how the city was founded and how the Pikes Peak or Bust gold rush shaped our region at the Colorado Springs Pioneers Museum and Cripple Creek Heritage Center. Descend 1,000 feet into a gold mine or take an historic train ride in Cripple Creek or the Royal Gorge. Visit historic homes such as Glen Eyrie Castle and Miramont Castle. View classic and modern art at the Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center and Smokebrush Gallery or explore your passion and interests at the Money Museum, Outlaws & Lawmen Museum, Western Museum of Mining & Industry, Rock Ledge Historic Ranch, Rocky Mountain Motorcycle Museum or the Dinosaur Resource Center.

FLYING TO COLORADO SPRINGS

Colorado Springs Airport (COS) - Serves the following airlines: Allegiant Air, American Airlines, Continental, Delta, Frontier Airlines, and United Phone: 1-719-550-1972

Because hotel has no shuttle service to/from the airport, they suggest the following for transport from COS to hotel: Meet & Greet Colorado Springs (from COS): fee \$50 one way, reservation required.
Estimated taxi fare: \$50 one way.

Denver International Airport (DEN) - All major airlines (approximately 83 miles northeast from Colorado Springs)
Phone: 1-800-247-2336

Because hotel has no shuttle service to/from the airport, they suggest the following for transport from DEN to hotel: Meet & Greet Colorado Springs (from DEN): fee \$180 one way, reservation required.
Estimated taxi fare: \$160 one way.

See further in the newsletter for specials offered our group from American Airlines and Avis.

GROUND TRANSPORTATION

The hotel has no shuttle service to/from the airport. **HOWEVER, they do offer local shuttle service within about a 7 mile radius of the hotel** - so if you are unable to make the Thursday Garden of the Gods tour, you could take the hotel shuttle there another time on your own (like Saturday afternoon).

You can rent a car at either airport (see discount offer below from AVIS), or there is shuttle, limo, and taxi service to Colorado Springs.

FOR A LIST OF TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS, PLEASE START WITH THIS WEBSITE:
<http://www.visitcos.com/meetings/colorado-springs-transportation>

2011 REUNION

DETAILED REUNION SCHEDULE (subject to change)

Wednesday, August 3

1:00 pm - Registration in Hospitality Room (open afternoon/evening)
Afternoon - sightseeing on your own
Dinner on own

Thursday, August 4

Morning optional Garden of the Gods Tour
9:00 AM - tour bus departs hotel
1:00 PM - tour bus returns to hotel

1:00 - 5:00 PM - Registration/Hospitality Room open
Afternoon - sightseeing on your own

Welcome Themed Dinner (on patio at Marriott)
5:30 - 8:00 PM - cash bar
6:00 - 8:00 PM - dinner

Friday, August 5

8:45 AM - buses depart for US Air Force Academy
10:00 AM - Memorial Service at Cadet Chapel, USAFA
10:30 - 11:30 AM - optional chapel tours
11:30 AM - 1:00 PM - luncheon at the Falcon Club (Sunrise Room), USAFA
Group photo after lunch

1:00 PM - to Visitor's Center
Those wishing to return to hotel will stay on bus at Visitor's Center
Remainder stay at Visitor's Center for shopping, film, and await return of bus for USAFA grounds tour
3:30 PM - bus returns to hotel

Afternoon/Evening - Hospitality Room open
Dinner on own

Saturday, August 6

10:00 - 11:00 AM - Members Meeting (Hospitality Room)
11:00 AM - 5:00 PM - Hospitality Room open
Afternoon - sightseeing on your own

5:30 - 10:00 PM - Banquet (at Marriott) (cash bar at 5:30, dinner served at 6:00, program and dancing following)

Sunday, August 7 - departures

MENUS

Breakfast, Wed-Sun

2 complimentary breakfasts/room provided each morning at the hotel restaurant (vouchers provided by hotel at check-in). FULL buffet includes: made-to-order omelets, waffles, eggs, bacon, sausage, hash browns, a specialty item such as green chili or biscuits and gravy, oatmeal, cereal, assorted pastries and muffins, yogurt, fruit, coffee, juice

Hours: M-F 6:30-10AM, S-S 6:30-Noon
Additional breakfasts are \$12+tax/pp

Thursday, August 4

Welcome Themed Banquet (on patio at Marriott)
Outdoor buffet:

Potato salad, cole slaw, watermelon
Boneless BBQ chicken breast
Hamburgers, hotdogs
Baked beans with molasses, corn on cob
Peach cobbler
Coffee/tea

Friday, August 5

Mediterranean Lunch Buffet, Falcoln Club, USAFA:

Tossed salad
Rice pilaf
Slow roasted chicken with garlic, lemon, rosemary and olive oil
Grilled Italian sausages with peppers and onions
Rotini pasta with pomodoro diable sauce
Chef's choice vegetables
Garlic bread
Chocolate cake/chocolate mousse
Coffee/tea

Saturday, August 6

Banquet - Plated entree buffet:

Salad, rolls
Roasted potato
Chef's choice vegetables
6 oz chicken breast with boursin, tomato and artichoke with lemon garlic butter
Broiled top sirloin with burgandy mushroom and demi glace
Chocolate cake
Coffee/tea

If you need a vegetarian choice for the banquet, please let Barb Gotham know (there's a vegetarian Wellington with gorgonzola cream)

DINING AT THE HOTEL

Zebulon's Grill and Tequileria
Open for breakfast, lunch and dinner
Dress code: Casual

Lobby Lounge
Open for lunch and dinner

2011 COLORADO SPRINGS REUNION - HOTEL RESERVATION FORM

380th BOMB GROUP ASSOCIATION – 2010 REUNION

August 3-7, 2011 – Colorado Springs, Colorado

Colorado Springs Marriott

5580 Tech Center Drive, Colorado Springs, Colorado 80919 USA

Phone: 1-719-260-1800 Fax: 1-719-260-1492

Reservations can be made by phone 24 hours a day by calling the **1-800-932-2151 Reservations** office. Please mention you are part of the **“380th Bomb Group Reunion”** (Group code: bgrbgra).

A **reservation web link** has been created to assist with the booking process. You will be directed to the property’s home page with the code already entered in the appropriate field. All you need to do is enter your arrival date to begin the reservation process. <http://www.marriott.com/hotels/travel/cosmc?groupCode=bgrbgra&app=resvlink&fromDate=8/3/11&toDate=8/7/11> **NOTE: The online reservation link is only set up for the contracted room block dates (August 3-7). Anyone needing other dates must call the hotel directly at 719-260-1800 as this request is based on availability.**

To avoid any availability issues, please have all reservations made prior to the **July 4th, 2011, cut-off date.**

If you prefer that I make your reservations for you, please fill out this form:

Name _____

Spouse or Guest Name _____

Address _____ City _____

State, Zip _____ Phone: _____ Email: _____

Arrival Date _____ Departure Date _____

Number of rooms required: _____

Number of adults per room: _____ Number of children per room: _____

Room Type: (All rooms are non-smoking) _____ 1 King Bed (\$99/night plus tax)

_____ 2 Double Beds (\$99/night plus tax)

Special Needs: _____ (For example, handicap accessible room; crib/rollaway bed)

Guarantee by credit card # _____ exp date (Mo/Yr) _____

Circle type of card: MasterCard, Visa, Discover

Name on card _____ (Please print)

Signature _____

-
- ALL ROOMS ARE NON-SMOKING AT THIS HOTEL
 - Hotel cancel policy for this event: 24 hours prior to arrival to avoid penalty
 - Complimentary on-site parking (self-park)
 - Check-in: 3:00 pm
 - Check-out: Noon
 - Pets not allowed (although service animals are allowed for persons with disabilities)
 - Services & amenities: coffee/tea in room; concierge desk; full-service business center; room service 6:30 am-11:00 pm; safe deposit boxes at front desk
 - High-speed internet free in meeting rooms; \$9.95 charge/night in guest rooms

Reservations due before **July 4, 2011. Reservations after this date will be provided on a space available basis.**

Please mail or fax reservation form to: Barbara Gotham, 130 Colony Road, West Lafayette IN 47906-1209

Fax: 765-494-6298

Email: bjgotham@gmail.com

2011 Reunion: <http://380th.org/REUNION/2011Reunion/Reunion.htm>

2011 REUNION

AMERICAN AIRLINES is offering special rates for our reunion attendees who book air travel with them to Colorado:



A discount agreement has been completed and is valid for travel July 31-August 10, 2011 to Colorado Springs or Denver, CO.

The Promotion Code for your meeting attendees is 1671BG; please use this website: www.aa.com.

Attendees reservations may also be booked via our Meeting Services desk at 1-800-433-1790. There is a \$20.00 ticketing service charge for reservations booked via the telephone. For Airport purchase the service charge is \$30.00 USD per ticket. These ticketing service charges are subject to change and not guaranteed until tickets are purchased.

Your International originating guests will need to call their local American Airlines reservations number and refer to your Promotion Code (STARfile 1671BG).

Please refer to www.aa.com/baggage for information on current checked baggage allowance and charges and bag and box embargoes that may apply for your destination.

At the time reservations are made, each passenger will need to provide the following passenger information. Under the Secure Flight program, the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) requires American Airlines to collect Secure Flight Passenger Data (SFPD). This includes a:

- 1) passenger's full name (as it appears on their government-issued ID they plan to travel with),
- 2) date of birth (DDMMYYYY),
- 3) gender, and
- 4) TSA issued Redress Number (if applicable).

AADVANTAGE members are strongly encouraged to save their SFPD to their account profile by going to www.aa.com/MyAccount. For more information about the Secure Flight program, visit www.aa.com/secureflight or www.tsa.gov/secureflight.

Should you have questions, please call us at 1-800-221-2255 or reply via E-mail and include your Promotion Code. We are open Monday - Friday between 8:30 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. Central time.

Thank you for choosing American Airlines!

Best Regards,

Andrea Parks
Andrea.Parks@aa.com
800-221-2255-Phone
817-931-4387-Fax

Group Name : THREE EIGHTY BOMB ASSOC REUNION

Valid Dates : 31 Jul 11-10 Aug 11

Auth. Number : A1671BG

Contract ID : HAP2001111559

Contract Issued: 20Jan11

Contract Type: Discount

Meeting Planners and members of the group, traveling together or individually to an event, should contact American Airlines Meeting Services Desk at 1-800-433-1790 for assistance with reservations and ticket purchase.

Avis is also offering discounts for our group's reunion to Colorado. (See next page for info)

2011 REUNION

Avis is also offering discounts for our group's reunion to Colorado

Avis Rent A Car Systems, Inc.
Avis Sales Department
P.O. Box 690360
Tulsa, Oklahoma 74169-0360



Thank you for choosing American Airlines Group and Meeting Travel to handle your meeting needs. American Airlines and Avis Rent A Car have joined together to offer a program designed to fulfill all of your transportation needs. AWD: G027999

The group discount number is designed to shop the best available rate, includes unlimited mileage and is available from seven days before to seven days after the event.

Reservations should be made by calling Avis directly at (888) 754-8878 or by using the link provided below.
https://www.avis.com/AvisWeb/reservation/ReservationsInitializer?&AWD_NUMBER=

Sincerely,
Candace Greer
Avis Meeting & Group Sales Specialist
candace.greer@avisbudget.com

LOCAL ATTRACTIONS:

Garden of the Gods
US Air Force Academy Visitors Center
Pro Rodeo Hall of Fame
Cheyenne Mountain Zoo
Pikes Peak Cog Railway
Seven Falls
Flying W Ranch
Cave of the Winds
Old Colorado City
Royal Gorge Bridge & Park
Miramont Castle Museum
US Olympic Team Training Center
Cripple Creek



Kissing Camels, Garden of the Gods
<http://www.gardenofgods.com/home/index.cfm>

If you are unable to attend, but would like to support the reunion, you can help by sending a donation to our Reunion Fund. Please make your checks to "380th Bomb Group Association," and mail to: Barb Gotham, 130 Colony Road, West Lafayette IN 47906-1209

2012 REUNION

Thanks to everyone who submitted their location choices for the 2012 Reunion.

NEW ORLEANS is the final answer!!

Barb Gotham will begin getting information and finalizing hotel bids for this reunion. She plans a site visit to New Orleans this fall.

2011 MEMBERSHIP REGISTRATION FORM

New____ Renewal____ Date: _____

Your Name_____

Squadron_____ 380th Duty_____

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

* *Regular member* means an original member of the 380th Bomb Group or the 380th Bomb Wing.

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

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

Relationship:_____ Sqdn: _____

Your Address_____

City_____ State_____ Zip_____

Phone_____ E-mail_____

Spouse's Name_____

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**

MAIL CALL

Mar 25, 2011

First I want to thank you again for sending my dad the magazine and all that info. It took me awhile but here are some pictures of my dad and the Louden crew. The names of the crew members are written on the first picture. The picture of the guy in front of the tent has the painting of the girl, which I think might be the painting on my dad's aircraft, "LACKA NOOKY." I hope these pictures will help you and us find more info. Thanks again,
Vince Gonzalez

Son of David D Gonzales, 530th
Gunner, Louden Crew (53)
Aircraft: UNDECIDED
vincegonzalez57@gmail.com



11/11/10

So I was looking through some of my Dad's old WW2 Pictures and found this one. I looked it up on the internet and it brought it to you. He was a mechanic on this plane. Thought you might want to put the picture up on the page...<http://380th.org/HISTORY/PARTV/DuchessPaducah.htm>

My Dad:
Lewis D. Sicheri SSgt 6943449

Danny Secary
asecary@gmail.com



Feb 12, 2011

Hello Barbara,

My name is Zachary Rich. I am the grandson of James E. Garrett of the 380th 530 Squadron, Black's Crew. My cousin just worked on these photos of my grandpa and his crew and got them looking very good in my opinion. I was recently thinking of him as his birthday is coming up. My wife and I are expecting our first baby and it is due near his birthday. Anyway I miss him and feel these photos should fit well for "Dauntless Dottie" in good detail. He is the Big Guy back row 2nd on the left side.

I enjoy your website and the hard work that you have put into it.

Thanks,

Zachary Rich
zrich24@yahoo.com



11/13/10

My name is Steve Neshkoff and my Grandfather was Neshkoff, Daniel E. / 530 / 15374147 / Asst Flt Eng, Gunner, Roberts' Crew (61) / - / HELL'S ANGELS. He passed away a few years back when I was in the USAF still. I am now in college as a history major doing research on World War Two bombers crews. If there is any way to find out if my grandfather still has original crewmembers alive please let me know or any information at all on him at all. Please let me know so I can make sure to pass any information on to our family and future generations.

Thank you
Steven Neshkoff USAF 2002-2008
steven.neshkoff@yahoo.com

MAIL CALL

Mar 13, 2011

Thank you for the 380th BG newsletters, I wish I'd known about your group while my father was still alive.

In #45, I read about the paintings by Bob Mcrae, including the wreck of "Nothing Sacred."

My father, Bernard "Yorkie" Meyerson, 380 BG, 530th Sq., told me the story of that wreck and the one survivor, his best buddy in the "Outfit."

According to my father, and my sketchy memory, Nothing Sacred took off on a bombing mission, and lost an engine during climb out. As any vet of those missions would tell you, every lift off was pushing the envelope of what the performance and atmospheric limitations allowed. My dad said that every time the Engineers would push the jungle back another 500', the loadmasters would add another 1000 lbs. of bombs, or 100 gals of avgas, so the crews would still lift their feet to help clear the trees at the end of the Marsden Matting.

Nothing Sacred was only a few hundred feet in the air when the engine quit, and so heavily loaded that she couldn't maintain altitude. The captain turned back towards the base, but my dad's friend (who's name I don't remember) could see that they weren't going to make it. He strapped on his parachute, and climbed out the waist gunner's window. His crew mates told him not to jump, as they were already too low, but he pointed out the jungle below, and said he'd take his chances. He pulled the D-ring and let the chute pull him out.

The chutes back in WW2 were nowhere near as efficient as today, and he was still falling so fast when he hit the trees that both of his legs were badly broken. Today, he'd be walking with pins in his legs, but out in the field, doctors were forced to amputate both legs.

Sadly, the rest of the crew perished when Nothing Sacred crashed into the jungle. That crash site in the painting would be the site where 9 men lost their lives.

Again, this is third hand information from what I can remember, but it should be possible to confirm the death toll/survival rate of the crash from AAC records.

I have a photo from my dad's collection of Nothing Sacred in flight. She was an older model, with the "greenhouse" up front.

Also, I noticed in the photos of Aaron Bevers, the bomber "Sleepy Time Gal." My father flew as a substitute gunner in that plane, and I have photos of her, and her "sister" ship, "Battle Wary." BW had the exact same cheesecake nose art (an Esquire magazine cover, btw), but painted topless, in a black skirt. I also have a photo of him posing next to the nose art of "Carrot Top," another ship he crewed for.

Thanks again for all your hard work keeping the memories alive,
Jonathan Mercer
jonnymercer911@yahoo.com



This one is my old man with Carrot Top. I'm not sure, but I think this was the ship he was in when they were hit by ground fire and forced to crash land on an emergency strip.



While looking through issue #45, I thought I recognized the nose art of another ship in the photos of Aaron Bevers. There's no name visible, but the Bugs Bunny Squadron emblem, and location of the mission record looked familiar. Here's a photo of the same ship, but taken one or two missions earlier (count the bombs).



If this is the photo I was thinking of, this is my father, on the left, with his buddy, the sole survivor from the crash of Nothing Sacred. This was taken soon after the outfit arrived in Australia, as my father was still a welder with the ground crew. After the terrible losses, and no replacements, my father volunteered to fly as a gunner and was promoted to Sergeant.

MAIL CALL

Jan 30, 2011

Hello Barbara,

I have been conducting research into the Corunna Downs air force base here in Western Australia when I came across your web site. My area of interest lies in documenting Western Australian WW1 Air Force bases.

I am wondering if you have access to any photographs from the 380th B.G. during their time in Corunna Downs, or first hand accounts (1943-45). Of particular interest is the Operations building and the H.F. transmitting station. I have been able to plot the locations for all the buildings on the site and confirm them with photographs with the exception of these two buildings.

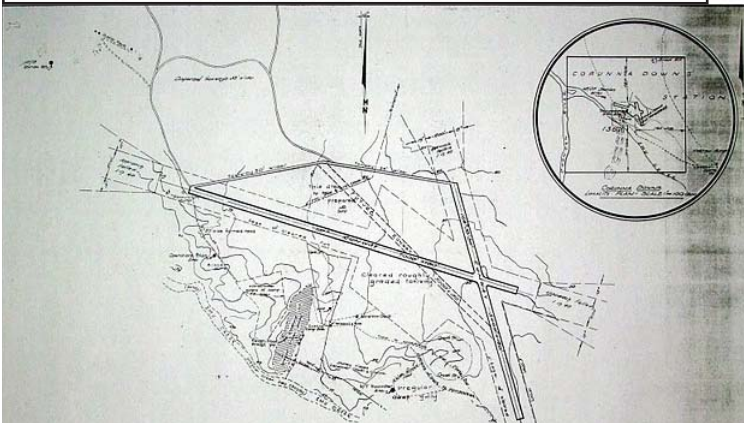
At the heart of the problem is trying to identify the type of construction. There are two conflicting recommendations from the air administrations board in 1944, one endorsing the construction of wood above ground, and the other concrete below ground. I am unable to determine from the evidence left at the site which method was adopted, and have no photographic evidence.

I am inclined to believe that the structures were timber aboveground in keeping with all the other buildings on the site, However, local legend persists with the story that at least one building was constructed underground (probably the operations building).

Can you, or any of your members who may recall, confirm if there were any buildings at Corunna Downs A.F.B. which were constructed underground?

Thank you and best Wishes
Brigg Ranford
briggscafe@hotmail.com

Only including here one of the four attachments Mr. Ranford sent: there were two documents and two drawings - I can forward to whoever is interested....
Barb Gotham



March 31, 2011

My father, Maurice F Langston, was in the 529th. I grew up knowing my brother was named after his best friend in the war...Mark A Mitchell...but knew very little about any details. My father never talked much about the war...nothing sad, just a few funny stories. I always wondered about Mark and how he died. I found a few clues here and there and finally came to your website and was amazed to find so much. As I learn about the Golden Gator that was shot down in Oct 1943 I am hoping to find someone who knew my father and his friend and maybe someone who has pictures. I realize that most are gone now but maybe there are family members who have keep these precious memories.

My father, Maurice (Morrie) F Langston, passed away Jan 1994 in North Plains, Oregon.

Mark died with 6 other crew members when the fighter plane was under attack....4 survived. It would be my utter joy to find someone still alive that knew my father and Mark. Mark was on the Golden Gator...his plane went down Oct 26, 1943. Eleven were on the aircraft and four survived when the pilot ditched in the ocean. The mission was to Pomelaa on Oct 26, 1943. I looked up who had passed already and 2 men did not appear on the taps listing.

Green, Edgar A 0-804816
Statland, David 33189644

Those lost were.....
Bottiglio, Aldo A
Collate, Howard G
Herres, Frances E
Hinze, Frederick S Jr
Mitchell, Mark A
Wine, John F
Wolf, Robert F

I would love to find someone with pictures. I have only one picture of my father in the war. He is on Luzon with some buddies and holding a Japanese flag. I fear I've waited too long but if you can offer any suggestions.....I would be extremely grateful. My father lost his only son at 18 in Vietnam.....he never was the same and died in 1994.

Sincere and Warm Regards,

Darla Langston Stewart
kennydalecathy.stewart5@gmail.com

MAIL CALL

Jan 26, 2011

I started out to make a jacket for my Dad, 380th 531st 5th AAF radio/op/mech, RCM op, Ground staff, and various flight crews. It turned more into a group jacket though. Started painting on a 8th AF faded decal version of Lucky strike on an old Avirex A-2, cut and hammered out some patches, painted, hand sewed, ended up with this so far, not perfect, not Dick Ebbeson, a little busy for me. Have yet to add "The Flying Circus" which will be at the top. My first attempt at painting with my new Chinese glasses I now require, maybe that's my problem:) I used an original photo to compare, but she was naked after I painted it and I couldn't have that and wear it around. Those Japanese flags were the worst to get right and have the squadrons listed. The 48 stars were a pain. The observers wings bent up a pair of real wings hammering them in, they came out OK though. The bombs are some of my Dad's missions. I ran out of room for all the tail insignia, maybe I'll work it in. I don't like how the "Lucky Strike" came out, but had to do it for the color, black, like the original, you just couldn't see on the jacket. Same with the red circle around it, and the blue dress matches the 8th P51 mustang version but I went with it to cover her up better. The eagle was going to be a "Raven" for those RCM Operators, but the color once again wasn't coming out, the seagull finally turned out eagle-ish, or vice-versa.

I've painted over some of it so many times that it started working out pretty good and I actually thought I could paint LOL, wish I started 30 years ago. Still have some sewing left to do and maybe a lion or group patch for the front, Maybe one of all the squadrons and of course a radio/radar tower patch, but I don't want it to look like PJ Patches if you ever saw him. I may put 416 on there somewhere for the number captured or killed minus the 29 that were freed as POWs and didn't get eaten or be-headed, lest we forget. Looks better in person; last a 100 years maybe, hopefully! I'll wear it to a reunion someday; too hot for TX that's for sure! A lot of work went in there anyway:)

Go 380th Bomb Group and Association.
GOD bless and take care all,

Jim Cernick
Son of Louis (Luke) Cernick, 531st



DREAM TIME

Installment #13

by Roger W. Caputo

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.

This is the final installment of Roger's story.

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

Along about May 1945 I began to feel sick; I was losing body weight at a rapid rate. One of the Group's flight surgeons looked me over and put me in the local military hospital where they diagnosed me to have a bad case of amebic dysentery. The tropical bugs had finally won out! I was put on some medication which kept the symptoms under control, but I never regained my normal body weight. In May 1945 the War in Europe was over and the military had more manpower than it knew what to do with, so they devised a point system, such that those soldiers who had been in the military and also overseas a long time could apply for a 45-day leave to go home for some of Mom's good cookin'. If there were other circumstances, such as failing health, or battle wound complications, then these factors were added into the point system. The magic number was 80: 80 points and you go to go home for leave. 'Ya had to promise to come back to the overseas theatre that issued the leave. Also, a soldier had to write a letter of appeal as well as have 80 or more points. I wrote the letter and I had just a few over the magic number. The fact that I had not been and was still not contributing anything of substance to the War effort could not be considered a legitimate factor. However, the officers reviewing my application had the option of approving the application if they felt so moved. My application was approved!

I had to say goodbye to some of my buddies with whom I had been closely associated for 31 months: December 1942 through June 1945. The "clerk typist" did his thing and cut my orders. I packed my personal things and turned in that belonged to the military. An airplane carried me to the Island of Leyte, Port of Tacloban, only 275 miles as the crow flies. This occurred in early July and I joined others in a staging area awaiting "the first available transport" to the United States. Translated, that means, just be patient and sooner or later something will come along that floats and we'll put you on it. It finally came along and it was a Liberty ship very much like the Steinmetz. Well, since it was free and there was an implied promise we'd be fed, we accepted the generous offer! Thirty days after boarding at Tacloban that wonderful old Liberty ship sailed under the Golden Gate Bridge in the broad daylight. As the ship was nudged into its berth, there was a crowd present to greet us along with brass bands the likes of which cannot be imagined. The War was over! Japan had surrendered unconditionally and we were all heroes!

The significant part of the story lies in that the poor old Liberty ship was so slow and made so many stops enroute that the departure date plus 30 provided the time needed to drop two A-bombs and for the Japanese to accept that it was all over for them.

The Liberty ship stopped first in the Marshall Islands, that was a 2900 mile leg; then it stopped at Pearl Harbor, another 2500 mile leg; and then the final leg to San Francisco, for a total distanced of about 8000 miles. Upon arriving at Frisco I had accumulated about 62 days at sea and that's more than some guys in the Navy accumulated the entire war! Today, Virginia can't understand why I am averse to taking a vacation on a cruise ship!

We had no duties enroute those 30 days and that caused the time to pass very slowly, but we could wait because we knew the United States was the destination and a known quantity awaited us. We whiled away the time sunning ourselves on the deck and visiting with each other. Strange as it may seem, no significant events occurred aboard ship and I cannot recall a single face or name of any of those on the voyage. I think the sleeping accommodations were standard troop transport (the bunks below deck in layers), but the messing facilities and procedures are a total blank.

While the ship was at berth in Pearl Harbor, the damage from the December 7, 1941, bombing raid was plainly visible; sunken ship hulks here and there. One afternoon, while still in the harbor, the ship's PA system came on announcing the dropping of the first A-bomb (August 6, 1945). We all just stared at each other wondering what it was and what it all meant. Even with one year's college engineering to my credit, I was unable to analyze the announcement. The news was framed in language that seemed dramatic and somehow we grasped, in a crude way, that this was no ordinary event!

The character of the reception at Frisco was unexpected, but even more we did not expect a troop train of Pullman cars to be switched right on the dock waiting for us. We walked, dragging our gear directly from the ship to the train. In a few hours, the train departed for all points east. No shivering in the cold or standing in the rain. My, how things had changed! As the train wended its way eastward and while passing through Utah, I began to feel sick. My throat was too sore to swallow and I could tell I had a fever. The Officer in Command of the troop train was a very young Lieutenant and I made my concerns known to him. After deliberating together over the options available, we jointly decided that I need the attention of a medical person and there were none on the train. At a stop in Ogden, Utah, I got off the train and transport was waiting to take me to the nearby Base hospital. Diagnosis ... streptococ-

DREAM TIME (continued)

cus infection! That was the second time during my military service that a train ride over the mountains found me too ill to proceed. Physically I was a basket case; my body weight had declined from a normal 155 lbs to 125 lbs, probably due to the bout with the amebic dysentery.

The nurses put me to bed and loaded me with medication and I went to sleep ... after about 24 hours of sleep, I awoke and felt like a new person. The fever was gone and my throat felt better. To this day, when I get the flu or an infection, I go to bed and sleep and when I wake up I'm well on the way toward recovery.

I stayed in the hospital, perhaps a week to 10 days, and was finally pronounced fit to travel again. Before I left the hospital, I decided to do something daring for that time: phone Virginia long distance and tell her what had happened to me and we talked a long time and all the staff were getting very nervous about the cost of the call. I assured them I could cover it and the final bill was \$25, a tremendous sum for that time (equal to \$300 today). Given the fact I had not talked to Virginia since February 1943 (it was now September 1945), hang the cost! I didn't call my folks as it would only upset them: me in the hospital again. Virginia gave them assurances that I was alright.

I cannot remember a single detail of the trip from Ogden to Chicago. It was a train ride, but I have no recollection of the trip until the occasion I am standing, at attention, before a Lieutenant at Fort Sheridan (in Chicago) as he is reviewing my file and my orders for the 45-day leave. Normally, enlisted men are not entrusted to carry their files from point to point, but in this instance an exception was made due to the move from a foreign theatre to the United States. As I stood there awaiting his pleasure, he looks up and says, "Sergeant, you have a choice; you may have the leave as you applied for and has been approved; or you may have a DISCHARGE!" Suddenly I'm hearing heavenly harps and the flutter of angel wings! DISCHARGE? I mustered all the self control I could and replied, "Sir, if it is all the same to you, I'll take the discharge, Sir!" The Lieutenant said, "So be it, but remember you still belong to Uncle Sam until you reach home and take off the uniform!" Within hours I'm clutching my discharge papers to my breast and boarding a train for St. Louis, but not before I've called home and told my folks the train arrival time in St. Louis. Why the military put me on the Illinois Central, which stops only in St. Louis in place of the Chicago and Alton, which stops in Alton, only 10 miles from my home, I'll never know. I'm free at last and who is going to quibble about details?

My father simply hated to drive in the big city, but somehow he found the courage and the way to drive to Union Station in downtown St. Louis. Mom and Dad were, with many others, crowded up to the arrival gate at the station anxiously craning their necks to catch sight of me as a mix of civilians and soldiers tried to squeeze through the gate. I saw them and tried to motion them back to ease the jam, but they were having none of that back-up stuff! They came to see their boy after he'd been overseas for 28 months. Police lines could not have held them back! Mom was just beside herself, almost jumping up and down. We gave each other a big hug and then I

could tell by the expression on her face that she had given me the once over and concern was written all over her expression as I undoubtedly looked like walking death at 125 lbs. We sat down on a bench trying to gather ourselves together and I asked where Virginia was and they explained she could not make the meeting. I was crushed! Later, Virginia, thoughtful that she has always been of others, told me that she had decided to let my arrival be all for my Mom and Dad. Virginia was now in her second year of teaching as a high school band director in a small town about 80 miles away. The date was September 9, 1945, and school had started and she had no car nor did she know how to drive. I had not thought of these problems; all I could imagine was she didn't care to see me. Welcome home!

Dad got us back to the house without trouble. He carried my bag for which I was grateful. I crashed into bed and slept.

For six weeks I did practically nothing while waiting for Mom's good cookin' to nurse me back to health; and it did, but it was a very slow process.

What was it like to be home after 37 months in the wartime military and 28 of them overseas? In August 1942 I left a boy 21 years old and returned an adult 24 years old; I'd been the equivalent of around the world twice; seen all of the Pacific Ocean; had been in many strange lands; seen many strange people; had done nothing of substance during my absence; had seen men just like myself die and they would never get to go home; why did they die and not me? I had lived in a tent for the 28 months; experienced climate conditions and environment totally hostile; lived with uncertainty; and had little or nothing to say about what I did. After all of that, how was I supposed to react to civilian life, given the fact that 3 years of growing into it was simply wiped out ... I had entered civilian life as a freshman, skipped the sophomore, junior, and senior years and came back a graduate! How were any of us to go about picking up where we left off? The answer was, "this is a new problem," maybe requiring some new approaches!

I can clearly remember riding home from Fort Sheridan on the train trying to develop a response to the new status of being a civilian. I was trying to figure out why I wasn't reacting with more enthusiasm; for example, jumping up and down; or laughing; or getting drunk to celebrate; or shaking everyone's hand. Nope! None of these reactions at all; I just sat there and stared out the train window at the good old United States as represented by the Illinois prairie, drinking it all in! I'm nearly home; no more sea voyages; or no more tropics; or no more death and destruction; or no more military; just soak up all the features of the nearly forgotten civilian life. When people have a long illness and a near death experience in a hospital, there is a certain level of mental trauma that is present until they get back to normal and the wheels are rolling again. My wheels were not yet rolling!

It takes energy to make the wheels roll and my level of energy was at a very very low value. Would it eventually restore itself? How long would it take? What should I do to help it along? Would I be able to identify all the handles of the civilian way of life and would I have the strength to grasp them?

DREAM TIME (continued)

When? Where? How? Should I return to my old employer and reclaim my job as provided for by the newly adopted Federal law, or should I do something else? Maybe I should make an entirely new start; if so, then what? Those individuals who had begun a professional life prior to the war had only to return, dust off the tools, and move on ahead. For them, the decisions to be made were less traumatic. For the guy like me, the choices could be more complicated. I had done a pretty good job of screwing up my chance to get an education by dropping the scholarship opportunity in favor of chasing the flying dream; and then had to get back into the education loop the hard way by working full time and attending school at the same time. I certainly needed to straighten out this mess if I was ever to make a better life for myself.

The timing of my return to civilian life was bad from the standpoint of returning to school promptly. The fall semester had already begun and even if it had not, my energy reserves were zero and I would have never been able to keep pace. So the general plan began to take form in my mind on the train ride to St. Louis: get rested and regain some strength; then get my old job back or an alternate; then at the beginning of the spring semester of 1946, reenter an engineering school of my choice. The money problem no longer existed; the Federal GI Bill would pay for all the school costs plus \$120 per month living allowance. In addition, I had a military pay withholding program in force for all of the time I was overseas and my bank balance showed \$4000 cash. I was rich! Listen up fellow! ... Your Creator is giving you one more shot at the brass ring and you had better not fumble it! I didn't!

After the 6 weeks of R&R at home, I reported to my old employer and the old job was available, but I didn't want it. We were able to negotiate a compromise; I wanted a job in their engineering department as a draftsman. I had some artistic talent, one year of pre-war college engineering, and a senior person in the engineering department took me under his wing, taking considerable pleasure in helping a veteran. The employer made it clear that if I did not claim my pre-war job, the employer had no obligation to provide any other. I signed a waiver, releasing the employer from his legal obligation, and then started work on a drawing board. It was a great experience. The employer was aware that I planned to work only to the end of 1945, then quit and go back to school.

In January 1946 I entered the University of Illinois at the Champaign-Urbana campus. There were 20,000 other veterans also enrolled and the town and campus was very crowded, just like the military bases had been. As a matter of fact, the faces on the campus were the same ones I had been looking at for the previous three years. They not only looked the same, they acted the same, but just in a different setting!

I rented a room in the home of an aging couple as being preferable to a dormitory which would have been just another barracks. I had to take all my meals out in public restaurants where the food was very similar to that served in the military. I had no car. Before the war I had owned a nice little used Chevrolet. During the war, my Dad had put it up on blocks to save the tires, and he was holding it pending my return. For reasons I cannot recall, I instructed my Dad to sell it. Very

possibly someone was pestering him to buy it as there were no new cars being made during the war. That was a terrible mistake to sell the car, because when I returned I needed wheels and there were no cars as the auto industry was only getting started producing them. Every returning veteran needed a car and the supply was non-existent. My private room was about a mile from the campus and I was forced to use public transportation which was adequate. Getting home on occasional weekends to see my folks and Virginia involved sharing a ride with others, who lived in my home area, or taking a train. Dad let me use his car when I was home on weekends so Virginia and I could get our romance up to speed again.

In order to make up for lost time, I went to school the year around: spring, summer, fall, and winter. By the end of the spring session of 1946 I could foresee life was going to be one long lousy experience until graduation. I'd had enough of that loner stuff to last me a lifetime ... and 2-1/2 years more did not look attractive! So during the middle of the 1946 summer session, Virginia and I were married in a lovely small formal wedding. Our honeymoon consisted of a weekend at a St. Louis hotel and then we caught the train back to school and set up a home in a small apartment.

For the first time in my memory, I felt whole, having a mate just as the Creator intended life should be!

So what goes around comes around, and civilian life had been rejoined!

THE END



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 Anderson, Robert Lee (Bob), Gunner, Boeshaar Crew (4), DOD January 15, 2011, Malakoff, Texas, reported by David Lehigh and Jim Meredith

528th Hurson, Patrick J., Jr., Radio Operator, Laurent Crew, DOD November 23, 2002, Yakima, Washington, reported by his son, David F. Hurson

529th Brake, Elizabeth Combs, Widow of Edwin "Boots" Brake, DOD November 24, 2007, San Antonio, Texas, reported by her son, Gene Brake

530th Goecke, Gordon Paul, Pilot, Lutsey Crew (87), DOD April 20, 2010, reported by his son Paul Goecke

531st Rafeld, Paul L., Airplane Mechanic, Assistant Crew Chief, DOD March 5, 2011, Ashland, Ohio, reported by his son, Daniel Rafeld

Other Sicheri, Lewis D., SSgt 6943449, Mechanic, "Dutchess of Paducah", DOD March 24, 2008, Fort Myers, Florida, reported by his son, Daniel Secary



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