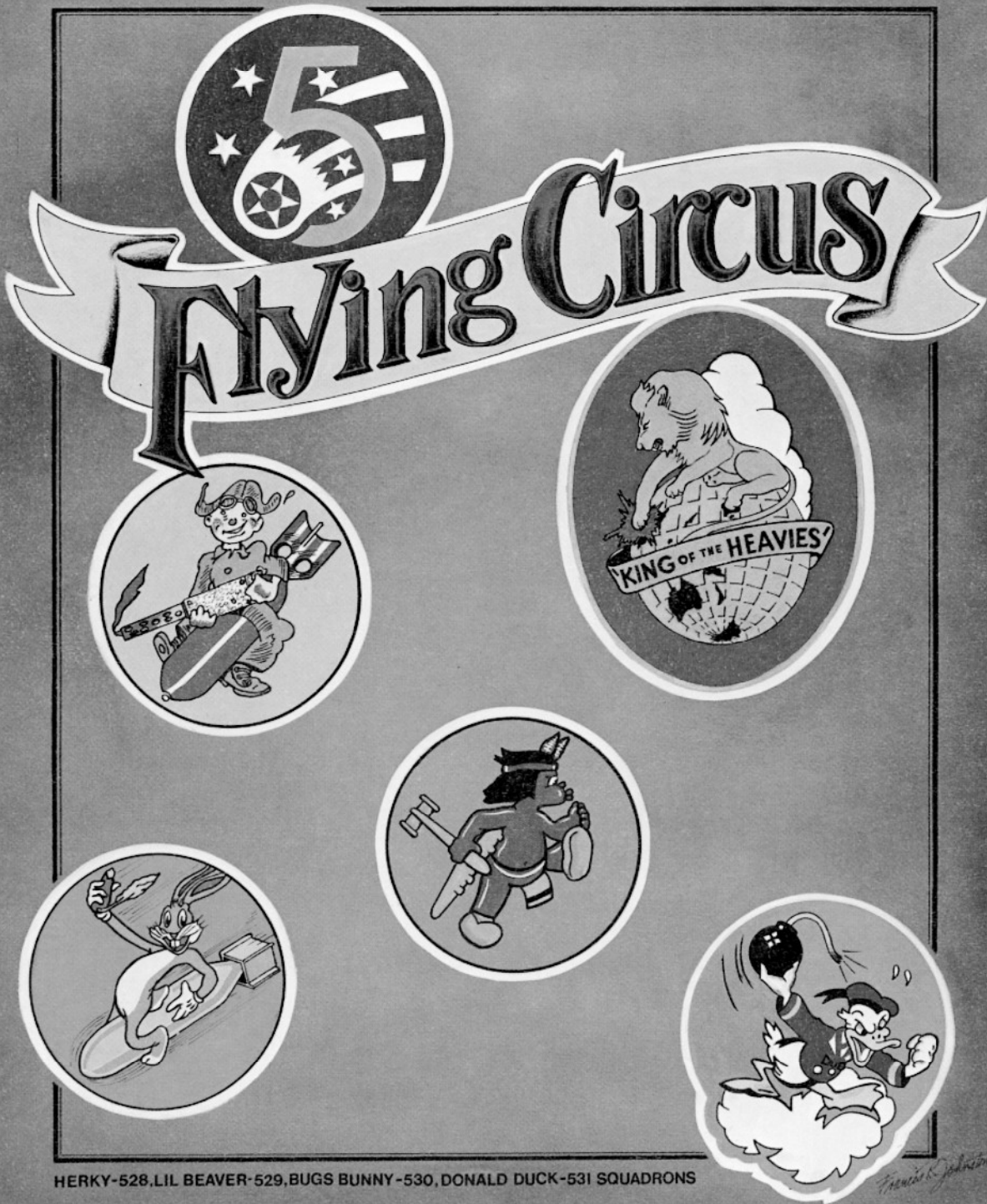


380TH BOMB GROUP



HERKY-528, LIL BEAVER-529, BUGS BUNNY-530, DONALD DUCK-531 SQUADRONS

Francis Johnson



The 380th Bomb Group Association 5th AF -- RAAF

Affectionately Known As

The Flying Circus

NEWSLETTER #84

APRIL 2026

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Membership form:

<http://380th.org/2026-27Member-form.pdf>

Gear order form:

<http://380th.org/Gear2025-Sept.pdf>

Comments/TAPS notification:

<http://380th.org/form.html>

FACEBOOK

Search for the group 380th Bombardment Group (WWII Veterans Group) or go to <https://www.facebook.com/groups/2302731583244398>

Facebook TAPS/Memorial page:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/421843586784696>

380th Bomb Group Association

130 Colony Road

West Lafayette, IN 47906-1209 USA

<http://380th.org/>

Email: 380th.ww2@gmail.com

Phone: 765-463-5390; Cell (texting preferred): 765-412-5370 (Eastern time zone). Please leave voicemail or text if no answer.

ROSIE, THE RIVETERS



George Poy - April 7 , 2026

We went to the Detroit Red Wings vs. Columbus Blue Jackets hockey game tonight hoping for a win, but settled for a tie while losing in the overtime shootout. The best thing for me was to meet and get a photo with tonight's guests at the game. These three ladies were all "Rosie, The Riveters" at the Willow Run Bomber Plant during WWII and helped produce the B-24 Liberator Bombers like the one my Dad was a navigator in during his tour of duty in the South Pacific. Their names are Fran (104 years old), Virginia (98 years old) and Delphine (101 years old). What an honor to meet these original Rosie the Riveters!

George is the son of George Lim Poy, 531st Squadron, Navigator, Benson's Crew (116)

RECENT FOLD3® BLOG ARTICLES

81 Days in the Alaskan Wilderness: The Miraculous Survival of Lt. Leon Crane - Jenny Ashcraft, April 13, 2026
<https://blog.fold3.com/81-days-in-the-alaskan-wilderness-the-miraculous-survival-of-lt-leon-crane/>

A Final Letter from the Front: The Story of Frances Y. Slanger - Jenny Ashcraft, March 2, 2026
<https://blog.fold3.com/a-final-letter-from-the-front-the-story-of-frances-y-slanger>

Dust Off the Memories: Help Us Preserve a Legacy of Service - Jenny Ashcraft, February 23, 2026
<https://blog.fold3.com/dust-off-the-memories-help-us-preserve-a-legacy-of-service>

Sacrifice in the South Pacific: The Legacy of Leonard Roy Harmon - Jenny Ashcraft, February 12, 2026
<https://blog.fold3.com/sacrifice-in-the-south-pacific-the-legacy-of-leonard-roy-harmon>

February 1945: The Battle of Manila - Jenny Ashcraft, February 2, 2026
<https://blog.fold3.com/february-1945-the-battle-of-manila>

Beyond the Gold Stars: Giving a Voice to the Fallen - Jenny Ashcraft, January 21, 2026
<https://blog.fold3.com/beyond-the-gold-stars-giving-a-voice-to-the-fallen>

The Lost Church Bells of World War II - Jenny Ashcraft, December 11, 2025
<https://blog.fold3.com/the-lost-church-bells-of-world-war-ii>

December 1941: A Month That Changed History - Jenny Ashcraft, December 8, 2025
<https://blog.fold3.com/december-1941-a-month-that-changed-history>

Victory Delivered: How V-Mail Boosted Morale and Helped Win the War - Jenny Ashcraft, November 12, 2025
<https://blog.fold3.com/victory-delivered-how-v-mail-boosted-morale-and-helped-win-the-war>

The United States Marine Corps turns 250! The Heroic Battle at Wake Island - Jenny Ashcraft, October 30, 2025
<https://blog.fold3.com/the-united-states-marine-corps-turns-250-the-heroic-battle-at-wake-island>

RICHARD D. WOOD SR. - 528TH SQUADRON

Richard D. Wood Sr., age 100, died peacefully on January 23, 2026. Dick was born in Columbus, Ohio, on December 17, 1925. He was preceded in death by his beloved wife of 63 years, Margaret. Dick is survived by his children Richard and Deborah Wood, David and Rebecca Wood, Susan and Robert Aumiller, as well as six grandchildren and eight great grandchildren. Dick graduated from North High School and The Ohio State University where he was a member of the Phi Delta Theta fraternity and the OSU President's Club. Dick was a decorated World War II Veteran with the United States Army Air Force and served in the South Pacific. He flew a record of 47 missions from bases in New Guinea to Okinawa, Japan.

Dick was the former owner of the McFadden Sales Co. and the founder and chairman of the Matryx Corporation. He was a mentor to hundreds and served the Central Ohio community as a friend and counselor for many years. Dick received many awards for community service and was named a Paul Harris Fellow by the Rotary Foundation of Rotary International. A graduate of the Shalem Institute in Washington D.C., Dick served on the board and as a counselor for the Maryhaven Hospital. He opened an office in the city where he provided free guidance as a spiritual director to all who came for over 20 years. Dick was an active member of the Spirituality Network which he helped organize as a non-profit. Dick was a trained leader with The Community Building Movement founded by M. Scott Peck, MD, and led workshops throughout the United States. He was a graduate of the Mind/Body Institute of the Harvard Medical School and led classes in Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction at the McConnell Heart Health Center.

Dick was an honored member and generous benefactor of Save A Warrior; a veteran's service organization credited with saving thousands of lives of returning veterans and first responders nationwide and abroad. S/SGT Dick Wood Warrior Village, home to the nation's first Center of Excellence for Complex Post-Traumatic Stress in Hillsboro, Ohio, is named in his honor. [See "Save a Warrior" article, this issue.]

In lieu of flowers, contributions can be made to Save A Warrior (S.A.W.) at Save A Warrior, P.O. Box 218117, Columbus, Ohio 43221 or saveawarrior.org. Contributions can also be made to the FSHD Society, fshdsociety.org.

A Memorial Service with Military Honors was held in Columbus, OH, on Saturday, February 7, 2026.

Source: <https://www.dignitymemorial.com/obituaries/columbus-oh/richard-wood-12720427>

Wood, Richard D., 528th Squadron, Gunner, Kunz's Crew (5), Duff's Crew (NL)



Meet S/Sgt Dick Wood (WWII Tail Gunner) RAW Footage Interview

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6KjMAR6mBe0>



2017 380th Reunion Memorial Service, Dayton OH - Bill Brew (left), Dick Wood (right), September 2017, at the National Air Force Museum

RICHARD D. WOOD SR. - 528TH SQUADRON (continued)

By David Wood (Son, Richard D. Wood Sr.)

My father wanted to be a pilot. He, like most men of his generation, enlisted as soon as he was eligible to do so. He chose the Army Air Corp because he wanted to fly. His father, my Grandfather, served in World War I. The war to end all wars. Grandpa served in every major battle of the war. He must have been devastated to see his only son go off to war. He knew first-hand how horrible war is. My Grandmother was heartsick. This was her only son.

Dad, on the other hand, looked at the entire experience as an adventure. He had grown up in Columbus and had never really been anywhere to speak of. His experience in the war would take him to places he had probably never heard of or thought much about.

In 1940 the US Army had around 270,000 men. By the end of the war it had over 8,000,000 men enlisted. One of the miracles of the war was how quickly America was able to develop both men and material for the war effort. The Army had a base in Columbus (Lockbourne), where Dad enlisted. From Ohio he was sent to Kentucky as a point of debarkation. He was given his uniforms and learned basic army doctrine. From Kentucky he headed to Keesler Air Base Mississippi where he camped out in a swamp and went through a 6-week basic training program. In Mississippi he tested for positions he would qualify for. He was approved for pilot, bombardier, and navigator. The best laid plans go out the window though. The Army needed gunners, so he was sent to Texas to learn the 50-caliber machine gun. He tested well, and why not? He grew up on a farm and was familiar with shooting. He handled the 50-caliber gun so well a career army crew from the Aleutian Islands grabbed him up to complete their crew so they could go overseas. The army pulled him out of training early due to the lack of gunners at that time. Dad joined them at Westover field in Massachusetts where they flew missions over the Atlantic Ocean to sync up with each other. Some of his friends never went overseas. He believes his early selection was the reason he ended up fighting the Japanese.

The crew received their orders while they were in Massachusetts. They were to fight the Japanese in New Guinea. The crew headed west but, on the way, Dad came down with tonsillitis. He was really sick. The crew went on without him. He stayed in a barracks in California by himself. On Christmas Eve a Master Sergeant came in and told him he had a cure. He handed Dad a whiskey with lemon, and Dad chugged it down. The next day his fever was gone, and it seemed like he was on this way. He flew to Hawaii to catch a plane to New Guinea. He ended up waiting 31 days for a ride. While there, he had the time of his life. He



would stop in the morning at the USO for juice and donuts, then take a bus around the island and swim all day. At night he would hang out at Trader Vic's and party. While in Honolulu he was able to see the USS Arizona. Even in 1944 the site made him sick.

Finally, on to New Guinea where he met up with his crew. The first words out of their mouth was, "Damn, it's Woody. We are going to have to fly missions now!" They could not fly missions without a tail gunner. The crew was enjoying their time off.

New Guinea was a jungle. The air crews slept in tents. Nothing glamorous. Dad used to laugh at movies like "South Pacific." In the movies, the natives were all beautiful women that every GI wanted to date. In reality, New Guinea was full of hostile tribes of headhunters.

On one occasion Dad and his friend disobeyed orders and followed a stream up the side of a mountain. They found a cool pool of water to sit in and relax. As time went by Dad noticed they were not there by themselves. There were painted faces peering out from the jungle. Dad and his friend jumped up at once and grabbed their 45-caliber pistols and ran naked down the hill back to camp. An officer laughed when he heard their story. He said the natives had probably never seen a white man before and were more afraid of them. Needless to say, that was Dad's last trip into the jungle.

DICK WOOD (continued)

Dad was proud of his service in the Pacific in World War II. His experience was always a thought away from surfacing.

Dad was in the Army Air Corps (pre-Air Force). He served as a tail gunner on a B-24. He was in the Fifth Air Force, 380th Bomb Group, 528th Squadron. He flew over 47 combat missions from bases in the Southwest Pacific. His plane was a heavy-duty bomber. A B-24 was designed to carry the maximum fuel and ordnance over the longest range possible. Before the B-29, the B-24 flew the longest distances of any American Bomber.

47 combat missions was a lot and rare. When a crew member was killed, other crews would ask for Dad. He replaced a lot of gunners on other planes. There were also times a soldier just couldn't get on the plane and needed a break. Dad would take their place. The squadron flew six days a week. They did not get much of a break.

The worst job he had as a tail gunner was to arm the bombs and shake loose bombs that were hung up. The catwalk in the bomb bay is 9" wide. He would have to walk out, and shake loose the bombs while flack was bursting below him. Imagine flying 10,000 feet over a target and looking through those open doors while you were being shot at. Scary. Only once did he freeze.

The Japanese would try to knock out the tail gunner so that they could shoot through the plane and take out the pilot and co-pilot. The top turret served as a lookout for Dad. As a Zero fighter was sliding into position the top turret would call it out. Some of Dad's vision was blocked by the tail of the plane so they worked as a team. Often-times Dad would play dead and slump over the gun. The Zero would come confidently in for the kill only to be met by a barrage of 50-caliber rounds. The Japanese did not do much to protect their pilots. Unlike American planes, they did not have self-sealing fuel tanks. 50-caliber rounds would destroy the plane in short order.

Dad completed his service as a Staff Sergeant. His commendations and theater of operations included:

- Air Offensive against Japan
- The China Defense
- Liberation of the Philippines at Luzon
- Battle of the western Pacific
- China offensive

Medals include:

- Good Conduct Medal

- Air Medal with 2 bronze clusters
- Victory Medal
- American theater ribbon
- Asiatic theater ribbon with one bronze battle star and one silver battle star.
- Philippine Liberation medal with 1 bronze battle star.

He had a lot of stories to tell about his service. I will try to relate a few of them here.

A Mission to Remember: As written by Dad

To attend morning briefing was routine, but this day I was told to attend to the gun check and bomb load. I was the "Armament Gunner" aboard our aircraft. This job was somewhat routine and usually fell to the tail gunner. Training for this job was done prior to graduation from gunnery school.

When I arrived on the line, I soon discovered why I was ordered to skip briefing. Our bomber was being loaded with huge fuel containers which made riding in the waist of the plane very difficult. The ball turret, waist and tail gunners ride there when not in their turrets or firing positions.

The ground crew in charge of installing the bombs informed me that we were going to carry a rack of "the big ones" along with the two racks of fragmentation bombs. This news, along with the huge fuel containers, had my attention.

When the crew finally arrived from the morning briefing, they were obviously upset. When the officers finally climbed aboard and were out of hearing range, I heard the news that we are going to a target in Borneo. We are going to bomb the strategic oil fields in Balikpapan, which was the source of oil being used by Japan for their war effort. I remembered from reading the news after the war started on December 7, that the emperor of Japan and President Roosevelt had failed to reach an agreement on oil and that was one of the key reasons Japan attacked us at Pearl Harbor. I also learned that both our pilot and navigator expressed concern over the distance we needed to fly with a full load of bombs. We lost crews due to fuel shortages in routine missions over familiar targets. With one exception, when you went down for any reason, you were never found.

DICK WOOD (continued)

The flight was somewhat routine until we crossed into enemy territory. We began taking some thin fire from the ground but without any damage as it was widely scattered and light by the standards we were familiar with. Every man on the plane and those in the entire formation were really on edge about their huge fuel reserves on board. We all knew a direct hit on any plane in the formation from anti-aircraft fire would turn the entire formation into an inferno.

When we entered the target area, the world erupted around us as the flak was heavy. Then it happened: as we opened the bomb bay and began releasing our bomb load, the pilot called me on the intercom (something that he had never done before), and said, "One of the big ones decided to stay on the plane. We are flying into heavy fire ahead, but can you go into the bomb bay and release it by hand?" I said, "yes sir," and started my journey. I had been on the catwalk before while in flight but never like this. When I arrived and started to walk the rail, 9" wide, I released a few frag bombs that hung up and finally reached the big boy. The fire was so heavy I was afraid to look, and we took some hits through the bay, which we discovered later.

I was able to release the bomb, and as I turned to retreat to the rear of the plane, we took a hit that froze me to the spot where I stood. It was a new experience for me, as I could not move. I was standing 20,000 feet in the air on a rail alongside the open bomb bay. Flak exploding all underneath me. The two gunners were yelling at me to get the heck out of there, but I was frozen. Finally, I took a deep breath and started to move around the side facing the tail and began to shuffle along the rail until I reached safety and could hold something more solid as the bay doors began to close. Again, the pilot called to see if I made it back unharmed.

We made it home to what for the crew and me was the most unusual experience of our 47 combat missions. When we landed and departed the plane, every man walked up to me and without a word, shook my hand. The chief engineer walked behind me, wrapped his arms around me and lifted me off the ground.

OTHER MEMORIES

- The soldiers could hear tribal wars echo through the jungle at night. The native people had probably never seen a white person before. It was that remote. Years later when he spent time at Gestemine

(a retreat in Kentucky), he met a priest who was a missionary to those native people at the same time that Dad was based there. The priest recalled watching the bombers take off on their missions. What are the odds of them meeting after so many years?

- A new crew had arrived on base. They slept in the tent next to Dad. The new crew was on his left as they approached the target. The plane was hit by flak and exploded into a million pieces. It was later determined that the Japanese shell had exploded inside the bomb bay. It took a long time before Dad got over seeing the plane explode. It was that crew's first mission and last.
- During the liberation of the Philippines, the B-24s flew at tree top level to strafe the Japanese pill boxes in preparation for the Army's landing. He was stunned at the damage the 50-caliber machine guns could do at close range.
- On one mission the target was obscured by fog. The captain of the plane was a career officer. The captain kept going back over the target until the bombardier could get a clear shot. Of course, every time they circled back the Japanese were able to adjust their artillery to their altitude. The poor ball turret guy, Bruce Champion, was totally losing it. He was cussing out the pilot who was a senior officer. Everyone on the plane's intercom could hear him. Of course, he had the best seat in the house being at the bottom of the airplane. He could see the flak zeroing in on their plane. After they got back to base, the pilot told my father that his intercom malfunctioned, and he couldn't hear a thing. He asked Dad if everyone was OK and this time they were. Of course, Bruce could have been court-martialed. Bruce started out the mission with coal black hair. It actually turned white after that mission. (Combat Stress)
- After a 15-hour mission, the crews would stand in line to check in their equipment. A young lieutenant ditched the line in front of my father who immediately decked him. Dad could have been court-martialed, but the senior officer ignored the incident.
- Toughest mission, Balikpapan. One of the most heavily fortified positions in the SW Pacific. It was critical to Japanese war effort due to its oil refining and port facilities.
- Only once did Dad get shot. A round came through the Plexiglas window in front of him and tore off part of his boot. His foot was sore but no other injury.

DICK WOOD (continued)

Dad witnessed friends killed, the terrible damage of war, experienced the stress of combat. 14 hours of boredom followed by 30 minutes of hell. This experience never left him. I remember one night at the 4th of July fireworks in Arlington. The ending is always a display of flash bangs. Kind of like flak. One night I was with him it really shook him up. The experience took him back to the war so many years before. Interesting how your senses trigger memories.

We took a trip to the Air Force Museum in Dayton, Ohio. I noticed a B-24 with ropes around it. I crawled under it and noticed an airman in the rear turret. I told him my father was on a B-24 in the Pacific and asked if we could pop our heads in. He welcomed us and Dad joined me in the bomb bay. The soldier was a retired Master Sergeant who was renovating the airplane. He was frustrated by something he couldn't fix in the rear turret and in an instant my father told him what the issue was. Dad turned to me in awe and said "I hadn't thought about that in 50 years and it came back to me like it was yesterday." War leaves a permanent imprint on your brain.

Dad's last station was on Okinawa. His squadron was taking pictures of the remnants of the Japanese Navy in anticipation of the upcoming invasion. None of the crew was excited about the mission. Navy flak is concentrated and horrible, the casualty rate was expected to be high. For some reason in August of 1945, all missions were scrapped. Soon they heard of the atomic bombs being dropped and the surrender of Japan. There was exhilaration among the troops. None of them believed they would have survived an attack on Japan.

In the fall of 1945, a typhoon hit Okinawa. Dad said the typhoon did more damage than the Japanese. The island was torn apart. He was lucky to be alive.

He took the first flight back to the States he could catch when he was released from service. On the way back, the bomber developed engine trouble. Of course, he was thinking, "You have to be kidding. 47 combat missions and I'm going to die flying home." Fortunately, they found an island to land on. It was a navy repair facility. The Navy Search aircraft used the same engine as the B-24s so they were able to repair and get going. Unfortunately, some sailor stole all of Dad's mementos from the service while the plane was being repaired.

Dad landed safely in California. There was no way he wanted to fly home. He took a train from California to Ohio. He had been in the jungle for almost a year. My

Grandfather said he could smell Dad from a mile away. Once Dad got home, my Grandfather burned all of his clothes. There was no way you could get the jungle smell out of them. He weighed only 150 lbs when he arrived in Columbus. It took years to get his health back. The stress of combat, poor living conditions, crummy diet took its toll on his body.

My father was proud of his service and that of his generation. On one of our Saturdays we stopped by North High School where he graduated from. There is still a plaque on the wall that lists all the battles kids from North participated in. Every major battle of the war was represented.

Dad made Staff Sergeant on March 8, 1945. His base pay was \$96. Flight pay \$48. Combat adder \$19.20. Total pay of \$163.20 a month.

He was the last of his crew to pass. It was a strange feeling for him. But then again, he was a boy among men. He was the youngest of his crew. The crew was as follows: "Becomin' Back"

- Acft Cmdr, Sqdn Operations officer, William Kunz; Pilot
- F/O Howard Stephen; Co-pilot
- Lt. James Vincent; Bombardier
- Lt. Richard Villard; Nose Gunner
- T/Sgt Sam Failla; Engineer
- Cpl James Wilkinson; Radio
- Cpl Bruce Champion; Ball Turret
- Cpl Donald Waters; Top Turret
- S/Sgt Richard Wood; Rear Turret
- F/O John Allan; Navigator



Aircraft photos from: Horton,
BEST IN THE SOUTHWEST



See additional story on this crew in Newsletter #73,
October 2021



Sources: <https://www.facebook.com/SaveAWarrior/photos>

<https://www.facebook.com/SaveAWarrior/>

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LEWIS E. SMITH (IVEY CREW) - 529th SQUADRON

As a follow-up to the Colorado Freedom Memorial/Ivey Crew article in the last newsletter (#83, Sept 2025), Gary Smith, son of Lewis E. Smith, sent the following photos of his father during the war as well as a crew picture. Gary believes it's from his father's training time at the Pueblo Airport in Pueblo, Colorado. He was there from 16 July 1943 to 25 Oct 1943. In-country pictures were likely taken from his base near Darwin, Australia.

The crew picture [below] does have some names on the back; unfortunately it's only the officers and not the enlisted crew members. The names from left to right are:

LT Edward W Ivey, Pilot, Los Angeles, CA
LT Reginald G Hansen, Co-Pilot, Greene, NY
LT Fred D Carlage, Navigator, Putnam, CT
LT Lewis E Smith, Bombardier, Lakeland, FL



If anyone recognizes and knows who the enlisted men were and can identify them from the crew picture, it would be great to have and for Gary's records too.

See Newsletter #83 for the list of crew members, and another photo of the Ivey crew, with names.

<http://380th.org/NEWS/News83.pdf>

JOSEPH P. BROOKS - 528th SQUADRON

Joseph Patrick Brooks, beloved father, grandfather, great-grandfather, and friend, passed peacefully on May 31st, 2025, at the age of 100. Born on September 1, 1924, in Beacon, New York, Joe lived a long and full life marked by service, love, and unwavering devotion to his family and country.

The son of the late Patrick and Helen Brooks, Joe was preceded in death by his beloved wife of 67 years, Irma Meixner Brooks, whom he met on a blind date on New Year's Eve—a luck encounter that led to a lifetime of love and laughs. He was also preceded in death by his siblings, Catherine Alyea and Marion Moore, and by his son, Brian Brooks.

A proud veteran of World War II, Joe served as a tail gunner on a B-24 bomber flying 40 missions out of Darwin Australia over Japan and returned home a hero. Back in the states he pursued his education and graduated from Ithaca College on the G.I. Bill—an accomplishment he was proud of. Joe and Irma settled in Aurora, Illinois, in 1960, where he began a long and successful career with Schering-Plough.



Joe was a natural athlete, mastering sports such as golf, tennis, bowling, and basketball—where his hook shot was legendary. He had an uncanny sense of direction, a passion for the market, and a voice reminiscent of Frank Sinatra, often serenading his passengers during long drives. He enjoyed big band music and never missed a chance to get out on the dance floor. Joe loved traveling, socializing, and cherished time with his family. He was a gentle, kind, and generous soul who was happiest when surrounded by those he loved.

He is survived by his daughters, Liesa (Jim) Oros, Sharon (Richard) Buchanan, and Michele (Ken) Margulis; seven adoring grandchildren; and two great-grandchildren. Joe's legacy lives on in the lives he touched with his humor, warmth, and steadfast devotion.

Published in:
Aurora Beacon News
from June 4, 2025



*Joe and Brian Brooks, 380th's
New Orleans Reunion, 2012;
see Newsletter #52*



*Richard & Sharon
Buchanan, Irma
& Joe Brooks,
Joe and Katie,
380th's Seattle
Reunion, 2013; see
Newsletter #54*



NEIL ROSS CLAYTON - 529th & 528th SQUADRONS

On the 58th anniversary of his passing on 21 April 1968, Ann Clayton Osborn, daughter of Neil Ross Clayton, sent the following photo and link to his gravesite on findagrave.com. (The other photo is from the 380th's "Blue Book," p. 139.)



Clayton was originally in the 529th Squadron as the pilot on the Steele Crew (39). Steele, who had previously been co-pilot on the Horton Crew (34), flew 7 missions after the group moved to the Philippines. Our records don't show Clayton on the Horton crew.

Clayton left the 529th Squadron for the 528th Squadron on 8 April 1945. No records are available showing which crew he was on with the 528th.

He received the Air Medal; he was cited for meritorious achievement while participating in serial flights in the Southwest Pacific Area from March 5, 1943 to May 14, 1943. In a letter dated July 16, 1945, to Clayton's father, from General George C. Kenney (Commander of the Southwest Pacific Area), Kenney wrote: *"Your son took part in sustained operational flight missions during which hostile contact was probable and expected. These flights included bombing missions against enemy installations,*



Officers party—Mindoro—Manila gin and fruit juice—April, 1945, Rear: Robert P. Banaugh, Harvey T. Harrison, Frederick J. Barrett, Henry J. Thyne, Robert L. Fitzhugh, James R. Brotherton, Neil R. Clayton, Victor S. Bryant, William J. Bennett, Richard G. Metiver, Cliff D. Mansfield, Albert J. Matkovich. Middle row, left to right: James Bejoian, Louis C. Davis, Ed E. Smith. Bottom row: Richard N. Gruendyke, Alfred S. Kopple, Francis K. Edminster, Edwin E. Lukmire, Robert J. Steil, Harry B. Trimble, William E. Hubbard.

shipping and supply bases, and aided considerably in the recent successes in this theatre."

Born in Houston, Texas, on 7 September 1924, he returned to Texas after the war. He married James Grace "Jimmie" Shettlesworth on 6 June 1947; they had three daughters, Nancy, Nell and Ann.

Clayton would serve his country again during the Korean War.

He was employed at the La Gloria Oil and Gas Company in Tyler, Texas. Clayton died on 21 April 1968 after an apparent heart attack. He is buried at the Rose Hill Cemetery in Tyler.



Ann also sent these photos (perhaps from his time in Korea since none of these names are on the 380th Rosters), saying:

Apparently this group of amazing young men called themselves the "Raunchy Six" and here are their nicknames:

*"Culby" Culbertson
Ed "Daddy" Clarae
Perry "P.A." Cole
Frank Cook
Les Curtis
"Pappy" Clayton*

The inscription on the one of the group in the jeep says, "The raunchiest cadets in the whole damn A.A.F."

So young, handsome and full of life.



STANLEY J. WARZECHA - 529th SQUADRON

The airman on the left is my grandfather, Stanley Warzecha, who was part of the 529th Squadron. Unfortunately, I don't know when this picture was taken or the identities of the other two airmen.

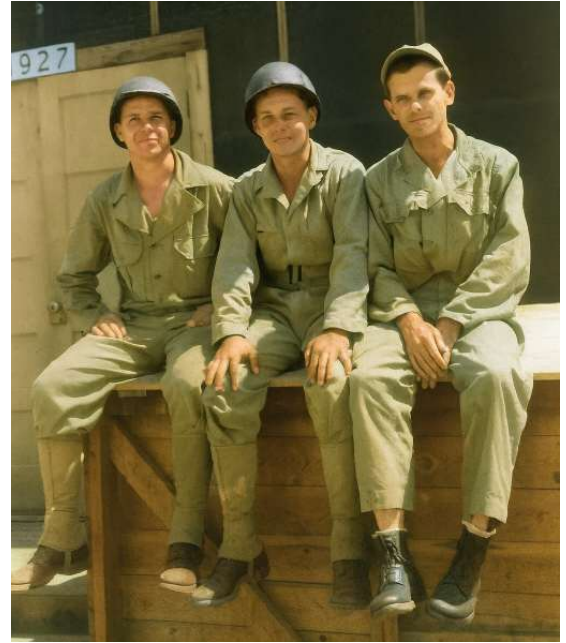
This is a colorized version of the original photo.

Respectfully,

Nathaniel L. D. Banks

Warzecha, Stanley J., Gunner, Trimble's Crew (26), arrived at 380th on 27 Sep 1944, probable departure in July 1945 (records missing).

If anyone recognizes and knows who these men are, please let us know!



TRIMBLE CREW - 529th SQUADRON

TRIMBLE CREW (26)

Pilot, Acft Cmdr: Trimble, Harry B.
Pilot, Acft Cmdr: Steil, Robert J.
Navigator: Lowell, Joseph F.
Bombardier: Melton, Thomas I.
Bombardier: Walsh, Ralph J., *KFA, 22 May 45*
Flt Eng: Richards, George W., III
Flt Eng: Rinoldo, Anthony C.
Flt Eng: Schaefer, Marvin (NMI), *KFA, 22 May 45*
Gunner, Photographer: Fox, George W.
Gunner: Smrt, George J.
Gunner: Warzecha, Stanley J.



#487, the plane Harry Trimble's crew abandoned 22 May 1945.
Robert Chandler Collection

On 22 May 1945, 35 miles off the coast of Mindoro, flak damage to the #1 engine on B-24L-5-FO, #44-42487, caused the propeller to runaway and overheat the motor to the point it caught fire. All efforts to extinguish the blaze failed so the crew jumped before the wing burned through. Everyone got out, but these two men drowned before rescue. *Source: Horton, BEST IN THE SOUTHWEST, pp, 362, 433.*

To read about this incident, please see Newsletter #68 (November 2019).

Another story on Marvin Schaefer appeared in Newsletter #77 (April 2023).

HERBERT B. ROSENBAUM - 531st SQUADRON

My father, Herbert B. Rosenbaum MD, was an aircraft commander in the 531st Squadron. Here is a photo of him.

Here also is a picture of the Rosenbaum crew under a B-24 wing. I understand this photo was taken in California just before they loaded a new B-24 with spare parts and sent it across the Pacific with the newly assembled crew. I remember my father saying that there were ships to guide them the entire way from California to Hawaii. He also said that they were ordered to fly at a certain altitude, but his navigator concluded that to do so would use up so much fuel that they could not reach Hawaii. So, he would fly up to the altitude and allow his plane to slowly sink and then fly up again. He said that planes that did not do so did not make it.

Another tidbit about my father: he would not eat rabbit after the war, claiming that he had enough that was provided by the Australians!

My father is in the Garrison cap. I do not know the names of the other men, but assume they are listed in your roster under his crew. There are no markings on the picture identifying who is who.

Also, pictures of his nylon hand-painted flight jacket with a 380th logo. The jacket used to say King of the Heavies as well. They were out of the leather ones by the time my father entered the war.

Jonathan Rosenbaum



ROSENBAUM CREW (NL)

This crew joined the 380th in Jun 1945.

Acft Cmdr: Rosenbaum, Herbert B.
Pilot: Medalinski, Sebastian L.
Navigator: Batovsky, John (NMI)
Bombardier: Tichy, Edward F.
Flt Eng: Keith, Edward W.
Radio Opr: Lonsbery, Leland R.,
Gunner: Chernes, Frederick T. |
Gunner: Desrochers, Clement A. |
Gunner: Misonholter, Thomas E.



CELEBRATING AL JANSEN, ONE OF FEW REMAINING WW2 VETERANS

531st Squadron: Albert Jansen, Gunner, Benson's Crew (116)

By George Baron

100 year old Al Jansen being greeted at his 100th birthday party, September 27, 2025, Edgewater Hotel, Seattle. Pictured with Al is Lynne Baron; her Mom and Al's Mom were first cousins.



Al is an amazing person with a ready smile, an unending repertoire of jokes (many off-color), and optimism and persistence that carried him through not only the war but a great many years of ups and downs in the construction business.

Al was a top turret gunner in a B-24 flying in the Pacific Theater. He also served as the flight engineer, particularly on one harrowing flight, as the flight engineer on board wasn't really up to the job. Enlisting at the age of 17 while a junior in high school, Al survived 30 missions over the flak-filled skies of the Pacific.

About four years ago Al approached me about writing his story. I'd known Al for many years because his daughter, Patti, and her husband Frank, have been among our very best friends for many years. I was very excited about writing his story, particularly his war experience and began with collecting materials and interviewing Al, then 96. It became clear the book he wanted was not something I was able to commit to given work involvement at the time, so I did not get much further than his time in the war.

What I wrote has never been published before but I thought the occasion of his 100th birthday provided as good a reason as any. It is written in the first person, from Al's point of view and Al reviewed it all and declared it true and worthy.



A 17 or 18 year old Al Jansen in flying gear ready to load into a B-24 Liberator.

Al Jansen's War Story

Today, it might seem reasonable to ask why a high school junior, just 17 years old, would want to quit school and join the war. In those

days, it was more a question of how soon can I get in?

In 1942 the world was a very busy place. While we kept busy helping dad with the nursery business, having good times with brothers and friends, and doing all the typical high school things, the bigger world was in agony. The

Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in late 1941 took us all by surprise and suddenly our country was in a fight not only for its life but for the future of freedom itself.

It's hard for those who were not there to understand just how clear cut things were in those days. Since then, with wars in Vietnam, Afghanistan and Iraq, we always fought with two hands tied behind our back. We didn't use all we had to defeat the enemy but held back. I'm not saying that's right or wrong, just saying it was a different time, a different war. In 1942 with the Japanese taking island after island, even in Alaska, and jumping ever closer to us living on the West Coast, it seemed entirely possible that we would lose the war. Same thing in Europe with the Nazis pounding England with bombs that never seemed to stop coming and taking over more and more of the world in the Mediterranean and northern Africa. Even as young kids, we weren't at all sure that things would end well.

I knew I wanted to fly. Flying for some reason is in our Jansen blood. Brother Hank always flew his own airplane, and his very successful business called Lynden Inc., now run by Hank's son and my nephew Jim, has a big fleet of airplanes including large four engine Hercules C-130 airplanes used to deliver cargo to remote areas around the world. Jim's brothers also still fly their own planes. My younger brother Skip flew at a young age, but we'll save that sad story for later. *[Note: Skip died flying his private plane over rough terrain in Oregon. Al spent weeks and months searching for him. It was a tragedy that Al felt all his life. Skip's son Steve worked for Al before heading a construction company in Alaska and Al was a great mentor to Steve.]*

In the early part of 1942 the war picture was pretty grim. Nazi Germany had advanced and seemed unstoppable and Japan kept going from island to island establishing bases for its powerful navy and air forces. In June, the US Navy fought and won the big battle of Midway, finally halting the Japanese approach to US soil and Germany invaded Russia which for the time being put an end to the threat of overrunning England. American flyers were fighting the battle on both fronts and losing men and boys in droves. Recruitment efforts were strong. Replacement crews were desperately needed as at that time the average crew only lasted 11 missions. If you found yourself on a B-17 or B-24 bomber crew, you had less than a 50% chance of surviving the war.

But, like most 17 year olds, I didn't think of it that way. High school just wasn't that exciting, I had an itch to see the world, an itch that has never really left me to this day. And, my country needed me. To become a pilot or join the US Army Air Corp, this was before it became the Air Force, you had to have two years of college or pass an equivalency test. I took the test and passed.

I know Moeder [Al is the son of Dutch immigrants and Moeder was mother in Dutch] wasn't entirely happy with my decision, but dad never questioned it. I think he knew if he was 17 and eager for adventure again, he'd do the same thing. Dad never offered much in the way of praise, but I think he was proud of me for joining up. Moeder was more the worrier of the family, a realist, really, who understood that things don't always

AL JANSEN (continued)

work out exactly as you would like them to. Dad never seemed to worry much. Problems could almost always be laughed away, you just keep on going and doing what you have to do. I got more of that spirit from my dad than my mom.

Basic training was at Buckley Field in Aurora, Colorado, just east of Denver. All Air Corp recruits, pilots and crew went through the same basic training. I suppose it is a sign of the times but now this field, named after a local Colorado boy who was shot down as a pilot in World War I, is now a Space Force base. That's right. Now we have an Air Force and a Space Force, and Buckley is the headquarters. Things sure do change. We couldn't have envisioned that as 18 year olds being transformed from the farm kids and city boys into cogs in the rapidly growing military machine.

I wanted to be a pilot, of course. But by the time I got into the game, the game was changing. Where earlier pilots were in short supply due to the heavy losses being taken in the early part of the war, by the time I was in training, there wasn't the same urgent need for pilots. So, I asked to be transferred to the paratroopers. Why? That spirit of adventure, I guess. If I couldn't fly an airplane and be in control of my own destiny that way, I figured it would be fun to jump out of airplanes. Sure, there might be people shooting at you on the way down and when you land, but what the heck, it sounded like fun.

But, the Army Air Corps still needed gunners for the bomber crews, so my request was denied. Probably just as well. What happened to a lot of those brave paratroopers on D-Day and then in Operation Market Garden in the Netherlands was pretty darn tough. So, I was sent to Harlingen, Texas for two months to learn how to shoot a 50 caliber machine gun at enemy fighter planes barreling in on you at four to five hundred miles an hour, dodging and weaving to avoid the bullets.

As George Poy, our crew's navigator, wrote to me after the war: "It takes extraordinary skills and coordination to track and lead an enemy fighter plane as it maneuvers in the attack on your bomber." That's very true, and in the earlier days of the war the aerial gunners on the B-24 Liberators were very successful in shooting down Japanese fighters. The four-engined bombers had ten 50 caliber machine guns to protect the plane and crews and in the hands of skilled gunners, could make life very unpleasant for attacking fighters. Just couldn't do a damn thing against the anti-aircraft fire.

Al maintained contact with his friend Navigator George Poy. George's son spoke at Al's 100th birthday party, recalling the relationship and what Al meant to his family.

As it turned out, I never got a chance to show just how good I was at shooting down the attacking planes. By the time I got into the war, in spring of 1945, the main threat to our survival was the dreaded flack plus the inevitable accidents. It's tragic to look back now and see how many of our planes blew up on the runway or crashed



on landing or take-off, or disappeared into the vast Pacific without a known reason or a trace.

After Harlingen, we were sent to March Field, near Riverside, California. Here is where we became friends with the big bomber that was to be our focus for the next year plus our crew. The Consolidated B-24 Liberator bomber was the most produced bomber ever with more than 18,500 built. The Boeing B-17 Flying Fortress had more fame and attention, but the commanders of the air war liked the Liberator because it carried more fuel and therefore could go on longer missions. In fact, my bomb group, the 380th Flying Circus, holds the record for the longest bombing missions of the war.

Before I arrived, when the group was stationed at Fenton Field near Darwin on the northern tip of Australia, our squadrons were sent to bomb the huge oil refining complex at Balikpapan, New Guinea. It was a seventeen hour mission! Think about that. Riding in a car for 17 hours without a break sounds grueling, doesn't it? Now, imagine riding in a bucking bronco of an airplane, at an altitude where it is freezing cold and you have to wear an oxygen mask to breathe, and having 20 millimeter cannon shells and machine gun bullets coming at you from fighters or 20 to 88 millimeter shells from anti-aircraft artillery exploding all around. Seventeen hours in those conditions was exhausting, to say the least. Most of our missions were of about 10 hours as our airfield had moved closer to Japan thanks to the island hopping campaigns of General MacArthur and Admiral Nimitz.

I suppose most of us had a love-hate relationship with the B-24. It was faster than the B-17, carried more fuel for those long missions, and could take a lot of punishment. But, crews generally wanted to fly the B-17. Pilots found the B-24 notoriously hard to fly and other crew members preferred the Boeing because of the defenses of the plane and its extreme ruggedness. It wasn't called the Flying Fortress for nothing.

The Liberator looked a bit fat and ungainly on the ground, leading some to call it the Flying Boxcar. Because of its handling difficulties and the number of accidental crashes, and the shape, it was even more often called the Flying Coffin. I still have fond memories of the planes we flew all of which were given names. While in the combat area we were assigned a specific plane to each crew although more often than not we flew planes assigned to others. Our plane was named "Embarassed" for reasons I really don't know, but I preferred flying "Miss Lace" and "Male Call."

If meeting our plane was exciting, meeting and getting to know our fellow crew members was life changing. We trained together for about six months before being sent off to war. During that time, and especially during our combat experiences, we became closer than brothers. I don't say that lightly as I was close to my brothers all

AL JANSEN (continued)

through my life and especially growing up together. Hank, seven years older and Skip, seven years younger, were my best buddies and we stuck together through good times and bad. I couldn't imagine better brothers. But, as only war veterans can probably know, there is something pretty special about sharing the trials and rigors of training and then the experience of living daily with the prospect of death all around.

There's a photo of our B-24 "Embarrassed" with the names of all our crew on it. It has our squadron emblem, a very pissed off Donald Duck, and 108 missions painted boldly near our names. There are five neat rows of bombs, 108 altogether for the missions this plane flew. The names on the side of that ship are:

1st Lieutenant Richard. Benson, our 22 year old pilot and commander

2nd Lieutenant Phillip Hall, our 21 year old co-pilot from Crawford, Indiana

1st Lieutenant George Poy, our navigator from Detroit, Michigan

1st Lieutenant Gail Stephenson, our bombardier from Burlington, Iowa

T/Sgt W.A. Carroll, our flight engineer from Wellesley, Massachusetts

T/Sgt Milton Abrams, II, our radioman from Milwaukee, Wisconsin

S/Sgt Calvin Hall, nose gunner from Danville, Virginia

S/Sgt Al Jansen, top turret gunner, from Lynden, Washington

S/Sgt J. N. Mintzer, waist gunner from Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania

S/Sgt Leslie Hare, tail gunner from Battlecreek, Iowa

This was my family. Like a family, there are personalities, quirks, differences and even sometimes some conflict. But we were a band of brothers. As many historians have pointed out, one of the reasons why the Americans proved to be such a powerful fighting force against the extremely well-trained and disciplined German army was because of this bond. The German commanders didn't understand that a major reason for fighting hard even to the death is to support and protect your brothers fighting with you. Germans exchanged soldiers in and out of units, where American commanders tried hard to keep units intact. When replacements came, they were often a bit out of it and vulnerable because of that.

We were together from our training in our bomber all through the thirty some missions of combat. When we joined up again at reunions many years later, it was as if the years melted away and we were right there again, close as our own blood. It really was an amazing feeling and the many reunions I attended were some of the highlights of my life. Now, at 96 as I write this, I am the last one standing, all others have gone into the "blue yonder" before me.

Written by Gerald R. Baron, September 28, 2025, family friend of the Jansens. Permission to reproduce here from Paulette Jansen, Al's wife, April 2026



Al is top row, third from left, with his flight crew in front of their B-24 "Embarrassed."

See Newsletter #33 (Winter 2007/2008) for a story (TARGET: FORMOSA) by George Lim (G.) Poy, Navigator, Richard Benson Crew, 531st Squadron - photo below of the Benson Crew is from that issue



*Back row, left to right: Milton H. Abram, III (Radio Opr/Gunner), Walker L. Carroll (Flt Engr/Gunner), Jerome Mintzer (Aerial Gunner), Leslie R. Hare (Armorer/Gunner), Calvin C. Hall (Aerial Gunner), Albert Jansen (Aerial Gunner)
Front row, left to right: George G. Poy (Navigator), Gail F. Stephenson (Bomb)*

Newsletter #82 (March 2025) featured a story and photos of Al Jansen (and his crew) being honored during half-time of the Seattle Seahawks NFL (football) game on Sunday, September 8, 2024.

HAROLD E. STEWART - 529th SQUADRON

I came across the attached photos while doing some research at the Meriden Historical Society Museum in Meriden, Connecticut. The back [of the photo to the right] says, "Pvt H. E. Stewart 11029205 home sweet home in Apo 921 after fire." I thought you might like to see them.

Christine Hendricks



Harold E. Stewart, 11029205, Ground Staff, Engineering, Aircraft Maintenance Technician (750) - he came to the 380th in the Original Cadre in November 1942, as a Sgt, and left as M/Sgt. No other information is known of him or how/why these three photos were part of the collection of 69 photos the Meriden Historical Society received. The other photos were tourist photos of landscapes (Charles River, farms, etc.), mostly from Massachusetts.

If anyone has any information about Mr. Stewart, we'd be happy to hear about him!



FRANCIS H. KOHLMEIER - COMMUNICATIONS SECTION - 529th SQUADRON

Recent correspondence with David Kohlmeier included this photo of his father in the 529th's Communications Group.

Born in 1920, Francis H. Kohlmeier was a radio repair specialist in the 529th Squadron. His son, Dave, said that during his time with the 380th, his father set up a darkroom and developed pictures of the aircraft and then sold these pictures back to the crews. He brought back copies of many of these photos with him after the war, as well as morale posters, performance boards, and squadron-produced artwork.

At the time of his passing in September 1992, Francis was a retired design engineer with Eastman Kodak Co.



Communications Section—Darwin; Rear: Roy Carpenter, Durell W. Knight, Leo M. Mannix, R. J. Mitchell, CWO Chester E. Harmon, Thomas M. Hart, Dale L. Masten, Robert E. Crews, Jr.; Middle row: Arthur A. O'Hara, Jerome Lucas, Oscar W. Johnson, Andrew J. Beke, Ronald F. Corkum, Francis H. Kohlmeier, Norman Shetler Jr.; Bottom row: James Ranum, Herbert J. Leitz, Jr., Morris N. Alexander, Harold I. Bryars, Jacob Feldstein, James D. MacLean, James A. Reynolds.

SHERMAN W. TRAFTON - 531st SQUADRON

Julie Zimmerman is sharing photos of her grandfather, Sherman W. Trafton and his crew, and also his honorstates.org (Montana) profile. That profile can be found at: <https://www.honorstates.org/profiles/492991/>

Name: Sherman W Trafton
 From: Miles City, Custer County, Montana
 Casualty Date: 18 May 1945
 Rank: Second Lieutenant
 Burial: Fort Snelling National Cemetery, Minneapolis, Minnesota
 Commendations/Awards: American Campaign Medal, World War II Victory Medal, Purple Heart, United States Aviator Badge, Army Presidential Unit Citation, Army Good Conduct Medal



His B-24 (#44-42352) was shot down over the Island of Formosa during a raid on the Airdrome at Taichu on 18 May 1945. It took a direct hit from a large caliber flak shell, flipped over and dove straight into the ground. Trafton and his crew were killed.

Trafton Crew (108)

Sherman W Trafton - Pilot
 Guenther F Kuehnel - Co-Pilot
 John J Garland - Navigator
 John W Branney - Bombardier
 John E Matthews IV - Flight Engineer
 John H Ronk Jr - Radio Operator
 Robert L Barone - Gunner
 Robert J Benson - Gunner
 Edward J Bogan - Gunner
 William E Kral - Gunner



Additional source regarding crash: Horton, BEST IN THE SOUTHWEST, p. 433

Bottom row (L-R):

- Branney
- Garland
- Kuehnel
- Trafton

Back row (L-R):

- Bogan
- Benson
- Barone
- Kral
- Ronk
- Matthews

Another version of the photo above was sent in by Bill Gould (see Newsletter #40, Fall 2009) - his uncle was Sgt. Robert J. Benson of this crew. That photo included the names shown above.



<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/35579346/sherman-willard-trafton>



ELMER E. SCARIGLIA - 530th SQUADRON

The following photos were sent by Donna Delmar. Her dad was Elmer Scariglia and he was a flight engineer serving on the Lt. Forrest E. Thompson Crew (55) (530th Squadron). His plane was called *Sleepy Time Gal*. The photos are of the crew, the plane, and their camp in New Guinea. Donna said: *Many of the photos have his writing on the back indicating what was in the pictures and who some of the men were in the photos. One of the things about the photos is how much of a piece of history they are, especially in documenting everyday life in the military camp they were stationed in.*

If anyone knew any of these men and would like to share stories with Donna and her family (and also us, the readers!), please let us know.

ELMER SCARIGLIA



In front of our tent with "Alex"

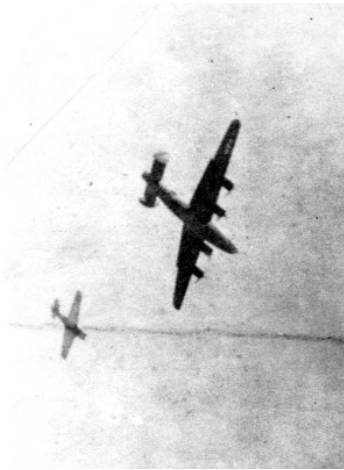
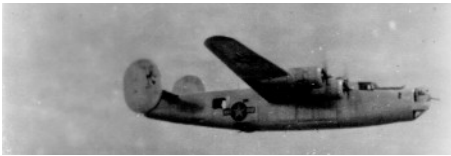


With "Annabell"



Painting an outline of a gal on the Duchess

ELMER SCARIGLIA (continued)



A Zeke intercepting one of our formations

AIRCRAFT & CREW MEMBERS



Skipper (Forrest E Thompson) at the controls ready for take-off; Back: Murray Forman (Navigator)



R.O. Joseph H. Owens fully equipped for a mission



Lt. Peter S Panos, our bombardier



Crew taken after a mission



Lt. Thompson (Skipper)



Whitey (Harry White) - Brisbane



Skipper at the controls

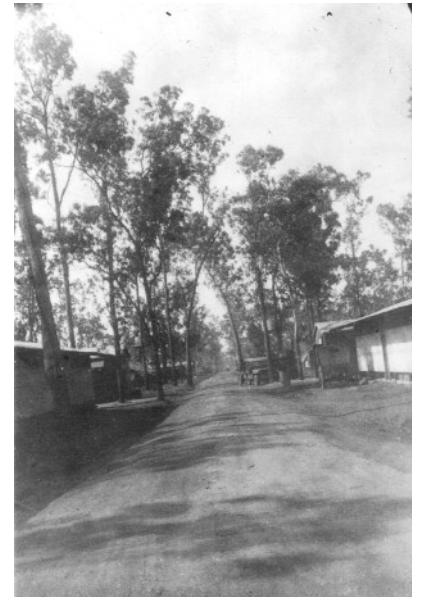
Jay F. Rocco (Asst Flt Eng/Gunner), Warren A. McGinn ("Micky") (Gunner), Harry M. White (Asst Flt Eng/Gunner), Joseph V. Young Jr (Asst Flt Eng/Gunner), Joseph H. Owens (Radio Opr)

ELMER SCARIGLIA (continued)

CAMP LIFE



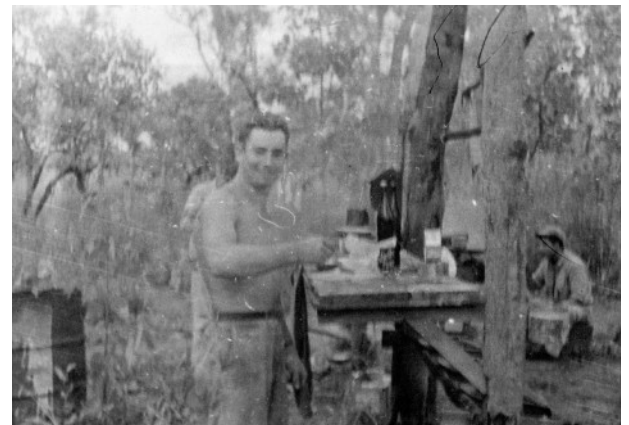
Left building is the Red Cross and the right building is the Chapel



Our Broadway



Interior of our Red Cross Building



Taking time out for tea



Enlisted Men's Club



Boys arriving for a dip

TEN MEN GO BOMBING - WRIGHT CREW (RAAF) - 529th SQUADRON

TEN MEN GO BOMBING

B/cast 9.15 a.m. 27/8/44. (Sunday).

By

John Elliott

This is a story concerning ten young Australians (captained by a flight-lieutenant from Edgecliffe Road, Woollahra, Sydney, named Johnny Wright), crew of a Liberator, one of five such RAAF crews attached to the Fifth American Air Force based "Up North." One day last week these Liberators bombed Japanese airfields in the Ambon-Ceram group of islands, bases which provide vital air support for the Japanese armies trapped in Dutch New Guinea.

The mission flew out over the sea early in the afternoon, returning just before midnight. John Elliott, ABC War Correspondent in the S-W Pacific Area, who travelled aboard Johnny Wright's Liberator, wrote the following story after the Liberators had returned.

We bombed at 15,000 feet. The bombs went away, and since we'd arrived over the target as the sun was dying, in the nature of a surprise, the interior of the Liberator was not only cold, bitterly cold, but already almost dark.

Everyone was using oxygen. I was in the cabin immediately behind the controls, and I could see Johnny Wright, banking away from the target heading for home, his co-pilot, Merv Bell, a flying-officer from Redcliffe, Q'land, winner of the U.S. Silver Star, just as busily engaged, scanning the skies for enemy fighters.

Below, the lacework of white clouds which had practically hidden the targets throughout, were knitting together into a vast flock bed, hiding whatever flak was coming up, which wasn't much. All around, on higher and lower levels, hovering light giant bats in the darkening sky, were the other bombers.

Looking over my shoulder I saw Dusty Miller, Flying-Officer W.M. Miller DFM of Montrose Avenue, Netherby, S.A. heavy in his parachute harness, Mae West, oxygen mask hanging loose rising from the bombardier's chamber – having just planted our nine 500 pounders square across Laha airfield, or so Intelligence was to tell us next day.

As he came closer, I dropped my oxygen mask and Dusty began growling, at the cold and other things.

"Over here they never seem to think it gets cold on these night bases," he said, rancorously. "Wouldn't I just love a cup of hot tea or coffee right now. One thing about bombing Berlin, Essen, Milan, Genoa, or any of those places over the other side, once you got your bombs away you

always had a hot drink on hand. A thermos of hot tea or coffee was on issue to each man. And, the trips were no longer, if as long."

Dusty won his DFM after completing a tour of operations in Europe as a bombardier on a Lancaster. He bombed Germany 22 times, Italy eight times, and took part in that brilliant daylight raid on the French armament works at La Creusot, in October 1942 when 94 Lancasters, flying treetop high, razed the French "Krupps" to the ground.

He grunted again, and picked his way along the monkey bridge between the bomb racks to relieve Dave Cotterill, of Chipping, Norton, N.S.W., our flight-engineer, who with flight-armourer Jeff Schraeder of Randwick, was at the open bay amidships, the coldest spot on the bomber, clad in sheepskins and wool-lined boots, swinging the waist guns on the alert for enemy fighters. Indeed, if any enemy fighters came up for an argument, no chances were being taken regarding surprises.

Cliff Edsell, Sergeant-gunner, and substitute radio-operator, from Wallington, Via Geelong, who handled guns in Beauforts in the New Guinea fighting, was manning the aft-turret, keeping his eyes skinned in case anything tried to jump on us from behind; the waist-guns were manned by Dave and Jeff; and Flying-Officer Peter Oakey, of Vaucluse, our radio-operator, was in the reach of the belly-guns, ready should an attack be launched from below. Above me, was Peter Julien, a Flying-Officer from Hawthorne, Vic, gunnery leader, alert in the top turret, waiting to direct our defence should the Japs start anything.

Sgt. Ted Morris, of Footscray, Vic, was behind the guns, looking ahead; Flying Officer Angus Henry of Sandy Bay, Hobart, was navigating.

Let 'em all come – although Ted Morris, Jeff Schraeder and Dave Cotterill were in action for the first time. And, as a matter of fact, although the skipper, Johnny Wright, had over 15,00 flying hours since leaving Cranbrook School and an office job with Qantas, mostly with Coastal Command in Gt. Britain, he'd been away from operations since December 30, 1941, sickness grounding him for some time afterwards.

Also, Merv Bell, who flew out of Singapore just ahead of the Japs – he collected his "Gong" from

TEN MEN (continued)

the Americans for doing something too secret for a citation to be published at the time, August 1942, but it concerned bringing home, if somewhat damaged, a Flying Fortress of which he was co-pilot, carrying back a vital reconnaissance of Japanese Naval dispositions during the second and final naval battle of the Solomons, after 16 Zeros had jumped on his 'plane, four being shot down in the process, but not until they had inflicted casualties. Merv hadn't been involved in operations since November of that year. However, on the night before setting out, all this had been ironed out in Johnny Wright's tent. Did it matter? Hadn't everyone barrels of training under their belts?

In the sky round about were the other four Australian crews captained by Squadron Leader Russell Bell and Squadron Leader Bill Ross, both of Rose Bay, Sydney, Squadron Leader Archie Dunne, also of Sydney, late of Gellong, and Flight-Lieutenant Ken Bowman, of Crabbon Wargundy, N.S.W.

It was bitterly cold, although it was warm enough in the control cabin and the navigating chamber below – but there was little chance yet awhile of the flight leader, a very pleasant lieutenant from Winter Garden, Florida, named Clarence Deaton, dropping to the warm of a lower level.

At the "briefing" that morning, the "I.O.," an affable lieutenant from Philadelphia named Ed Smith, had voiced a warning:

"The other bunch that went over and bombed the same area yesterday," Ed Smith had said, "arrived over the target, scattered all over the sky – so don't do that! Yesterday, interceptors came up; but fortunately they didn't close in, otherwise! So today keep together and keep high. Bomb at 15,000. Keep high, an hour before, and hour after bombing. First sign of trouble, let the flight-commander know – he'll take steps to protect whoever gets it. If in trouble, keep sending out your positions – but don't hang around waiting for a reply."

Now it was almost 8:00 p.m. We'd been in the sky over five hours. It seemed only minutes before, that Angus had ceased walking the skip, keeping a watchful eye on everything and had, at a signal, opened the bomb bay doors, through which I saw a Japanese freighter near Amboina Island, and which we learned later, via Intelligence, was hit by one of the bombers behind us – and we began our first run across Laha airfield, which is just across the bay from Ambon town.

Then "Bombs Away!"

"All gone!" echoed Angus, shrugging his shoulders, anxious to close the doors of the bomb bays and lessen the intense cold.

A few minutes later, at the waist, Dave Cotterill and Jeff Schraeder were handing our cold fried egg sandwiches, opening water bottles. We felt the plane dipping. Up behind the control cabin, the atmosphere grew less baleful; warmth had returned to life again – then the interplace starting buzzing. Peter Oakey took it, then shouted, "E.T.A. twenty-three one." That meant Expected Time of Arrival was 11:10 p.m. – back at our airfield. At the waist, somebody was opening emergency rations – chocolate, raisins, figs.

Everybody, except the pilots, peeled off heavy clothes. I made myself comfortable and gazed forward, watching the red hot exhaust pipe of the starboard supercharger, fascinated – until Angus told me that Johnny Knight had ordered all aboard to get back into their parachute harness, which meant we were nearing land.

In due time, he dropped that big bomber on the illuminated strip between the two rows of lights as easily as a taxi-driver puts away his cab for the night. We were the second plane to touch down. It was 11:35 p.m. so we were late. Later, in the "Ops. Room" where Ed Smith was busily interrogating the crew first in, Dusty started off again:

"There's better be something hot for a man after a bash on a night like this!"

Ed Smith heard him.

"There is," he called over. "Coffee and creullers out the back – hot fried egg sandwiches and more hot coffee if you want it in the kitchen."

Walking out the back where a dark-eyed girl in American Red Cross Uniform was in charge of refreshment, Johnny Knight took my arm, said sympathetically with a little wry smile on his face:

"Not very exciting for you, I'm afraid," he said. "We didn't give you much to write about." Dusty happened to overhear.

"What about me? I couldn't see, once I got the bombs away – but I know I was on the target. I've got to wait for Intelligence to tell me if I hit anything."

TEN MEN (continued)

WRIGHT CREW (46) (RAAF) 529th Squadron

Acft Cmdr: Wright, John N., F/L
Pilot: Bell, Mervin C., F/O
Navigator: Henry, Angus M., F/O
Bombardier: Miller, W. ("Dusty") M., F/O
Flt Eng: Cotterill, David W., Sgt
Radio Opr: Oakey, Peter C., F/O
Asst Radio Opr, Gunner: Edsell, G. ("Cliff") J., F/Sgt
Gunnery Ldr: Julien, I. ("Peter") H., F/O
Gunner: Morris, J. ("Ted") E., Sgt
Armorer/Gunner: Schader, F. ("Jeff") G., Sgt (flew with various crews)

Other Men Mentioned in TEN MEN GO BOMBING:

Bell, Russell E., 528th RAAF, Acft Cmdr, Bell's Crew (19)
Ross, William L., 528th RAAF, Acft Cmdr, Ross' Crew (22)
Dunne, R.A. ("Archie"), 528th RAAF, Acft Cmdr, Dunne's Crew (21)
Bowman, Kenneth G., 531st RAAF, Acft Cmdr, Bowman's Crew (96)
Deaton, Clarence J., 531st US, Acft Cmdr, Sqdn Ops Officer, Deaton's Crew (78)
Smith, Edgar E., 529th US, Intelligence Officer

JOHN ELLIOTT - BROADCASTER & WAR CORRESPONDENT

John Elliott was an Englishman who led what could only be described as an adventurous life before coming to Australia to serve in the AIF and, ultimately, to work as a war correspondent for the ABC. His death in Borneo just before the end of the Second World War was doubly tragic as he and a colleague were mistakenly killed by an Australian machine-gunner.

John Elliott was born into a very poor family in London on October 14, 1901. He began a sporadic service career as a ship's boy in Britain's Merchant Navy but was discharged in 1919 after an injury which cost him a thumb. He first took up journalism when he came to Australia in 1927. He married a promising New Zealand actress in 1932 but she died of cancer three years later.

With war looming in 1938 he returned to England and joined a British volunteer force fighting for Finland in the Winter War against the Soviet Union. He trained there as a pilot but when Finland aligned with the Nazis against the USSR, Elliott was trapped with the other British volunteers and had to make an epic escape to Vladivostok, Shanghai, Tokyo, Manila and, finally, Sydney.

Elliott joined the AIF as a volunteer in 1941 and was posted to the Middle East as an assistant to the Official War Correspondent, Kenneth Slessor. He was granted a discharge in 1943 to pursue his own career as a correspondent and was eventually engaged by the ABC, filing graphic reports from the Pacific theatre including New Guinea, the Philippines and Borneo.

On July 3, 1945, John Elliott and Bill Smith, a colleague from the Department of Information, were working in the front lines at Balikpapan in Borneo when they inexplicably wandered into enemy territory. They sat down to eat and exchange notes near an enemy shelter where three Japanese had been killed just minutes earlier. When Smith removed his hat the two Australians were mistaken for enemy fighters and were targeted, shot and killed by an Australian machine-gunner 700 yards away.

John Elliott was 43. He was listed officially as having been killed on duty and was buried in Borneo.

(Information courtesy Peter Cave)

Losing a thumb in the merchant navy didn't prevent John Elliott winning a boxing silver medal for England in the middleweight division at the Paris Olympics in 1924.

He went to the United States as an amateur boxer but turned professional there. He first came to Australia to box in 1927 and had a mixed career before turning to journalism as a boxing reporter.

Source: <https://www.abc.net.au/corp/memorial/johnelliott.htm>

TAPS

LEST WE FORGET



528th - Joseph P. Brooks, Assistant Flight Engineer/Gunner, Rice's Crew (8), DOD May 31, 2025, Aurora, Illinois, internet search

528th - Richard D. Wood, Sr., Gunner, Kunz/Duff Crews (5), DOD January 23, 2026, Columbus, Ohio, reported by his daughter, Susan Aumiller

529th/528th - Neil Ross Clayton, Pilot, Steele Crew (39) (529th), DOD April 21, 1968, Tyler, Texas, reported by his daughter, Ann Osborn

529th - Donna J. Gioia, widow of Anthony ("Tony") Gioia, DOD September 12, 2025, Lockport, New York; Tony was Flight Engineer on Deaner's Crew (51) - he died September 17, 2008

529th - Francis H. Kohlmeier, Ground Staff, Radio Repair Specialist, DOD September 22, 1992, Wildwood, Florida, buried at the Florida National Cemetery, Bushnell, Florida, reported by his son, David Kohlmeier

529th - Lewis E. Smith, Bombardier, Ivey Crew (40), DOD September 9, 1969, Lakeland, Florida, reported by his son, Gary Smith


529th - Stanley J. Warzecha, Gunner, Trimble Crew (26), DOD February 17, 1995 (after a battle with prostate cancer) in Highland, Michigan, buried in the Oakland Hills Memorial Gardens, Novi, Michigan, reported by his grandson, Nathaniel Banks; his spouse, Bernice, died in 2002

530th - Elmer E. Scariglia, Flight Engineer, Thompson Crew (55), DOD March 2, 1962, Camden, New Jersey, reported by his daughter, Donna Delmar

531st - Herbert B. Rosenbaum, Aircraft Commander, Rosenbaum Crew, DOD January 23, 2016, Boca Raton, Florida, reported by his son, Jonathan Rosenbaum



In Memory Of
Reporter
JOHN ELLIOTT
Service Number: 1537
Australian Broadcasting Commission, Australian War Correspondent who died on 03 July 1945
Age 45
Son of William George and Margaret Sophia Elliot, of Westminster, London, England.
SO GLAD TO HAVE KNOWN & LOVED YOU, TILL WE MEET, LOUISE & CLAUD
Remembered with Honour
LABUAN WAR CEMETERY
18, C, 7.



COMMONWEALTH
WAR GRAVES
COMMEMORATED IN PERPETUITY BY THE COMMONWEALTH
WAR GRAVES COMMISSION



NOTICES

If you have any inquiries, requests, or other information you would like to relay to other 380th Bomb Group Association members, please write to: Barbara Gotham (see contact info below in "How to Report Address Changes").

Also, if you have any information pertaining to any of the mail calls in any issue of THE FLYING CIRCUS, you can respond directly to the person inquiring (if contact info is provided) or to Barb Gotham to pass along to that person.

AS OF SEPTEMBER 2025, PRINT COPIES ARE NO LONGER BEING SENT OUT BY USPS MAIL; ALL FURTHER ISSUES WILL BE SENT BY EMAIL ONLY (PDF); THEY ARE ALSO AVAILABLE ON OUR WEBSITE

To sign up for the e-list, please send an email to: 380th.ww2@gmail.com

or go to our Newsletter webpage (<http://380th.org/NEWS/News.html#Newsletters>) and click on the sign-up link.

NOTE: IF YOU CHANGE YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS, PLEASE BE SURE TO SEND NOTICE OF YOUR NEW EMAIL ADDRESS.

The membership/donation form is provided in this issue, but you can also use one from an earlier issue, or download a copy from the 380th website at:

<http://380th.org/2026-27Member-form.pdf>

PAST ISSUES OF THE NEWSLETTERS CAN BE FOUND ON OUR WEBSITE AT:

<http://380th.org/NEWS/News.html#Newsletters>

HOW TO REPORT TAPS

Please write to:

Barbara Gotham
380th Bomb Group Association
130 Colony Road
West Lafayette IN 47906-1209 USA

Or send Email to: 380th.ww2@gmail.com

Or go to this web link and submit the form:
<http://380th.org/form.html>

Got an idea for a story? Send Email to 380th.ww2@gmail.com or mail to Barb Gotham at the USPS address shown below.

Looking for a gift for that special someone? Please consider 380th gear! Check out the order form in this issue as well as on our website at: <http://380th.org/Gear2025-Sept.pdf>

HOW TO REPORT ADDRESS CHANGES:

Please write to:

Barbara Gotham
380th Bomb Group Association
130 Colony Road
West Lafayette IN 47906-1209 USA

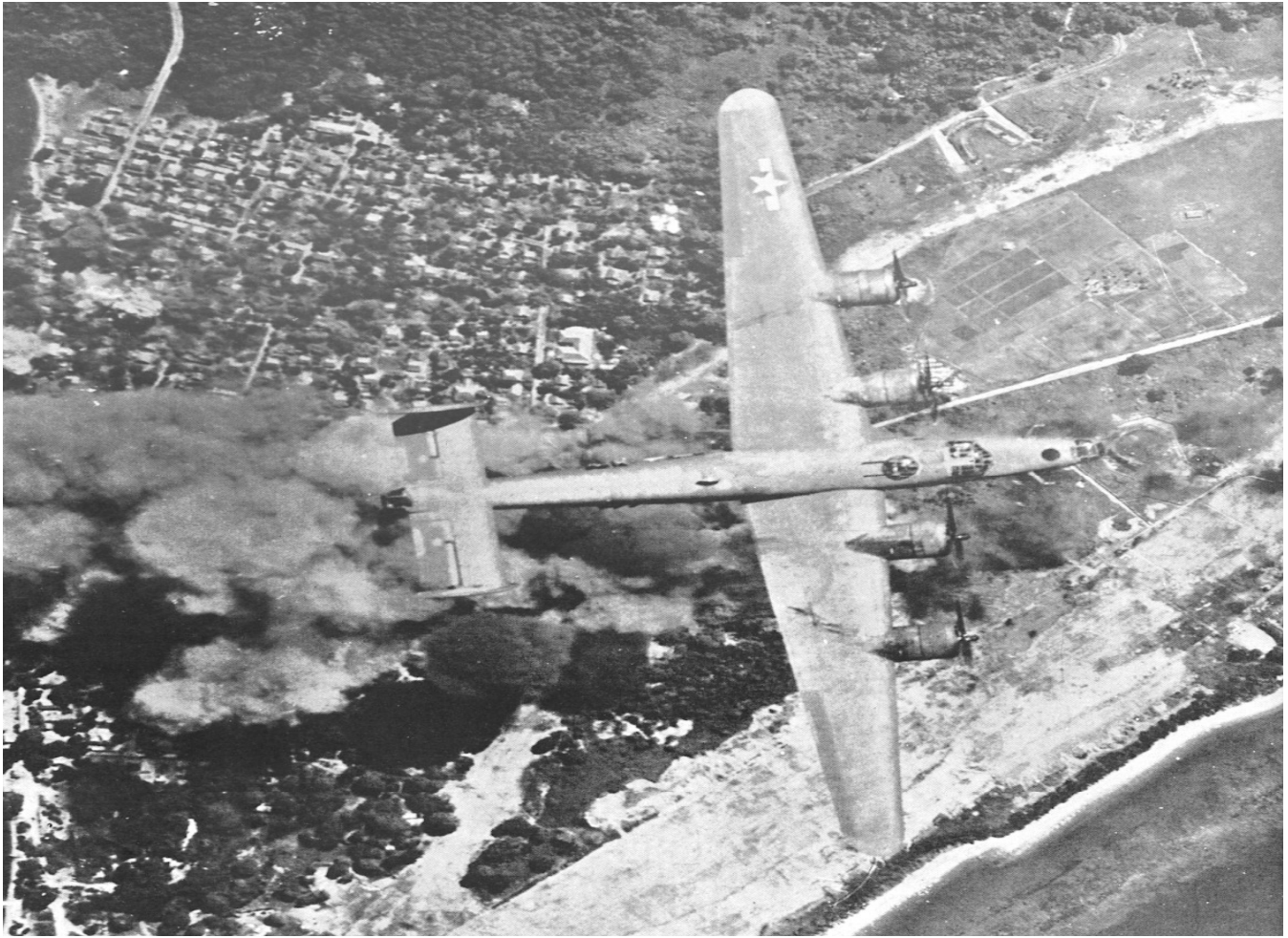
Or send email to: 380th.ww2@gmail.com

FACEBOOK PAGES

Search for the group 380th Bombardment Group (WWII Veterans Group) or go to
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/2302731583244398>

TAPS/Memorial page:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/421843586784696>



*This Newsletter is Dedicated to All the Men of the
380th Bombardment Group (H) in World War II*

with special thanks to

*Forrest E. (Tommy) Thompson, Lt. Col. USAF (Ret.) (DOD 6/15/91) and Helen H. Thompson
(DOD 6/22/08) who had the foresight, perseverance, and love of the 380th Bombardment Group (H)
and its history, traditions, and personnel to organize, succor, and guide the
380th Bombardment Group Association, Inc. (our predecessor organization, from 1982-1999)*

*and to Theodore (Ted) J. Williams (DOD 4/27/13) for his dedication to preserving the 380th's
history and for continuing the work of the
Thompsons in guiding our current organization from 1999-2006*

*and to Thomas (Tom) M. Hunt (DOD 11/11/08)
for his support, guidance and commitment to the 380th Bomb Group Association during his lifetime.*

Our everlasting thanks and love go out to them all.

380th BOMB GROUP ASSOCIATION

2026-2027 MEMBERSHIP REGISTRATION INFORMATION

New ____ Renewal ____ Date: _____

WWII Squadron (528th, 529th, 530th, 531st, Group, or RAAF) _____

Your Name _____ Spouse's Name: _____

Your Address: _____

City/State/Zip/Country _____

Home Phone _____ Cell Phone _____

E-mail _____

380th Duty (if known, e.g., Gunner, Crew Chief, Mechanic, etc.) _____

Please check the appropriate box(es):

NEWSLETTERS WILL BE SENT BY EMAIL ONLY (AS OF 30 SEPTEMBER 2025)

380th Veteran **Please send my FLYING CIRCUS newsletter by email**

380th Wing Member

Family Member of 380th Veteran Name of Veteran _____

Your relationship to veteran _____

Other If other, please explain here why you wish to join the group _____

An annual donation of \$25 (or whatever amount your budget allows) payable to **380th Bomb Group Association** will help defray costs of 380th's website (annual domain and server fees). (Cash or checks only, no credit cards.)

Please mail your donation and registration form to:

**Barbara Gotham
130 Colony Road
West Lafayette, IN 47906-1209 USA**

Cash or checks only, made payable to: 380th Bomb Group Association (no credit cards)

Note: If you have a PayPal account (especially recommended for our Australian and other overseas members), you can transfer your donation using the Send & Request Tab – use Barbara Gotham's PayPal email account (in order to avoid any fees, please mark that it is "to a friend"):

bjgotham@gmail.com

If you send a donation by PayPal, you need to either send the completed form by mail (to address above) or email the information to 380th.ww2@gmail.com to get on the newsletter mailing list.

380th Bomb Group Association
GEAR ORDER – as of 8 September 2025

<p>PATCHES (Mark on line # requested) Squadron/Group patches: \$10.00 ea. (used patches \$5.00 ea.) Group: _____ 528th: _____ 529th: _____</p>	 <p>Group-6"x4-1/2" 528th-5"x5" 529th-5"x5"</p>	<p>Tucson 1942-1999 patches: FREE _____  Size: 4-1/2" x 5"</p>
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<p>Wings patches: \$3.00 ea. Pilot: _____ Navigator: _____ Bombardier: _____ Gunner: _____ Air Crew Member: _____ Size: 3-1/8" x 1-1/4"</p>		<p>REUNION PATCHES FREE Size: 4-1/8" x 3/4" Tucson/2018: _____ Older: Year _____ Place: _____ </p>
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<p>Shoulder patches: \$4.00 ea. 5th Air Force: _____ USAAF: _____ Size: 3" round</p>	 <p>5th Air Force USAAF</p>	<p>1981-2018 Commemorative Reunion Patch \$10.00 ea. _____ Size. 3-1/2"x5-1/2"</p>	
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<p>JACKETS (long sleeves) Blue nylon, \$5.00 ea. These are the only sizes left: Unlined: Small: _____ (only 2 left)</p>	 <p>Back Front</p>	<p>T-shirts (short sleeves) Blue cotton/polyester, \$2.00 ea. (Logo on shirt front only) Front  Closeup of logo on front</p>	 <p>Small: _____</p>
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PLEASE send email to 380th.ww2@gmail.com **before submitting order to check on current availability of items.** Limited quantities of items are in stock. PATCHES WILL BE RESTOCKED AS NEEDED. HOWEVER, JACKETS, CAPS, TEES WILL NOT BE RESTOCKED. Please allow 6-10 weeks for re-stocking of patches. Allow 2 weeks for delivery. -- **ADDITIONAL FUNDS FOR POSTAGE CHARGES ARE WELCOMED – HOWEVER, ADDITIONAL FUNDS REQUIRED FOR EXPRESS DELIVERY OR OVERSEAS ORDERS.**

Name: _____ Email: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Date: _____

Mail to: Barbara Gotham, 130 Colony Road, West Lafayette, IN 47906-1209 USA

Cash or checks only, made payable to: 380th Bomb Group Association (no credit cards)
PayPal payments will also be accepted: Use Barbara Gotham's personal PayPal email account: bjgotham@gmail.com
(in order to avoid any fees, please mark that it is "to a friend")
(Note: You still need to mail or email the completed form in order to get the gear you want!)