



**90th Bomb Group (H) (WWII)**  
*The Best Damn Heavy Bomb Group in the World*

**"JOLLY ROGERS"**

**90TH BOMB GROUP ASSOCIATION**



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### THE BEST OF THE BEST

The 90<sup>th</sup> always contended that it was the best damn heavy bomb group. Even the plane they flew, the B24, flew farther and carried more bombs than the B17. The 90<sup>th</sup> did not cease to exist at wars end and the 90<sup>th</sup> eventually became the most powerful unit the world has ever seen or likely to see in the future. Through its history the 90<sup>th</sup> eventually transitioned to missiles and in the late 80s deployed the Peacekeeper missile. The 400<sup>th</sup> deployed 50 Peacekeeper missiles and was the only unit to do so. The Peacekeeper was a four stage rocket topped with ten individually targeted nuclear warheads. Combine these with the Minuteman III missiles of the 319<sup>th</sup>, 320<sup>th</sup>, and 321<sup>st</sup>, each with one to three warheads, and the 90<sup>th</sup> possessed a destructive ability that was unsurpassed. Due to cost and treaty restrictions the Peacekeeper was deactivated in 2002 and when the deactivation was completed in 2005 the 400<sup>th</sup> was also deactivated. The 319<sup>th</sup>, 320<sup>th</sup>, and 321<sup>st</sup> continue with 50 Minuteman IIIs each with the multiple warheads having been replaced by single warheads from the retired Peacekeeper system. *(Bob Tupa)*

**Air Force Historical Research Agency  
Maxwell Air Force Base  
From SECRET 400th Squadron records.**

May 1944

"In regard to rumors, Barney Ewick of Communications came up with a beauty this month. Barney says that Colonel Rogers, former 90<sup>th</sup> C.O. who returned to the States recently, will soon come back to the Jolly Rogers. According to Barney, Rogers has divorced his wife, married General "Hap" Arnold's daughter and now has permission to come and get his former outfit and take back home."

### NATIONAL REUNION REPORT

**The Dayton 2009 National Reunion was a HUGE success!** The reunion started with registration in our Hospitality Room and a reception. Crackers, cheese, fruit, vegetables and beverages were provided by the Holiday Inn Fairborn. For the rest of the week Deloyce

Van Elderen took care of our snacking needs and again treated us to her home-roasted nuts.

On Thursday sixty-five of us loaded the bus to visit the Wright Cycle Company Complex. We watched a wonderful film on the history of the Wright Brothers and were able to view many pictures and memorabilia of the era. We then enjoyed a beautiful country drive, complete with gorgeous fall colors, to the Golden Jersey Inn for lunch. When we arrived, our twenty three veterans got off the bus first and were greeted by the Wright Patterson University Color Guard and the cheers and applause of many local fans who came out to show support for our heroes. After a delicious lunch we visited the world's first airport, Huffman Prairie Field, the cow pasture where it all began!

On Friday we visited THE National Museum of the United States Air Force. Fifty-five of us were privileged to also take in the Memphis Belle Restoration Tour and the Presidential Gallery Tour. The museum was EXCELLENT and featured more than 400 aerospace vehicles along with thousands of historical items and powerful sensory exhibits! We got back to the hotel with time for a little nap and then eighty-nine of us enjoyed a marvelous banquet and dance at the Holiday Inn.

On Saturday our general membership meeting was held and then we had the rest of the day to relax and reminisce. The reunion was crowned by the elegant "Banquet under the Wings" in the National Museum of the United States Air Force and there were 100 in attendance. It was our treat to again see the film that was made for us in Cheyenne in 2006, and Colonel Smith again arranged for the Air Force Band to entertain us.

Colonel Jeff Smith, assisted by Captain Mark "Bull" Whitaker, Captain Chris Smyder, and Captain Adam Singleton made sure that EVERYTHING about this reunion was FIRST CLASS. We can't thank these young men enough for the interest and time they have devoted to our group!

## BUSINESS MEETING

### Trustees elected

President: Dale Bates  
Vice-President: James Verrocchio  
Treasurer: Robert J. Tupa  
Secretary: Dale Bates  
3 year Trustee, 3 years to serve: Col. Jeff Smith  
3 year Trustee, 2 years to serve: Audrey Fralick  
3 year Trustee, 1 year to serve: Ervin Hartman  
One Year Trustee: Robert Hanley  
One year Trustee: Brent Harraman  
One year Trustee: Capt. Mark Whitacker

(An additional trustee was added due to the election of Dale Bates as president. Dale elected to continue on as secretary and a ninth voting trustee was needed.)

### **2010 National Reunion**

The 2010 reunion, as recommended by the Trustees and approved by the members, will be held from October 6 through October 9, 2010 at the Holiday Inn EXPRESS Hotel and Suites located at 3131 North Scottsdale Road in Old Town Scottsdale, Arizona. It will be hosted by Dale and Mary Ann Bates (Home phone 623-546-2215 and email address dbates2369@msn.com.) The schedule is at the present time in the early planning stage. It is expected to be more laid back with fewer major tours but with the possibility of a number of optional smaller tours for groups of ten to twelve people. If you have suggestions for one of these smaller tours please contact Dale or Mary Ann.

### **Western Mini-Reunion**

Funds and the desire still exist for holding a western mini-reunion in a scaled down form although finding someone to ramrod the event has yet to occur. Several are considering undertaking this task but at this time there are no firm plans. If you have any ideas or would like to lend your assistance please contact the Association.

### **The Future of the Association**

Due to the success of this year's reunion and plans for one next year, plans for the future dissolution of the Association were not high on anyone's agenda. The Trustees voted to form a committee to come up with at least three different proposals concerning dissolution of the 90th Bomb Group Association. These options would be discussed and voted on at the Annual Meeting of Members, which will be held on Saturday morning October 9, 2010 in Scottsdale, Arizona. Information regarding the committee will be in the newsletter in the future.

### **Australian Memorial**

Michael Musumeci, Sergeant of Police in Queensland Australia, who was instrumental in the 90<sup>th</sup> being recognized at the Iron Range War Memorial and author of the book IRON RANGE AIRBASE, submitted a

proposal to implement a Memorial Plaque within the confines of the Rocky Creek Memorial Park, Atherton Tablelands, Far North Queensland Australia, honoring the service of the members of the 90<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group. The proposal was approved by the Trustees and the general membership. Work on the plaque has begun and Michael is going to invite the U.S. Embassy to attend the unveiling when it occurs.

### **FROM PRIVATE TO CHIEF**

Leaford Bearskin was a captain in the 321<sup>st</sup> Squadron and he and his crew completed 46 combat missions. Leaford was not always a captain, nor did he end up one. In a just published book titled KWA-HOO-SHA-HA-KE American Indian Warrior Hero, Fredrea Gregath Cook chronicles the life of Leaford Bearskin from his childhood growing up during the Depression following the accidental death of his father to his becoming Chief of the Wyandotte Nation. In 1939 after turning 18 Leaford ENLISTED in the Army Air Corp. When the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor he was a sergeant and crew chief stationed in Alaska mapping the terrain from the air. After Pearl Harbor he immediately applied for flight school and was the first of his group to solo receiving his wings along with his twin brother. His career took many twists and turns starting as a flying sergeant becoming a Flight Officer upon graduation. He turned down a position as an instructor because he "wanted to go on the warpath and help win the war." He was unable to get into fighters and was given a crew and a B24 and after training went off to join the 90<sup>th</sup>. After the war he transferred to the Army where he served as Company Commander and Transportation Officer in the 24<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division which was occupying the island of Kyushu. After two years in the infantry he was recalled to the Air Force and transferred to a heavy transport group at Tachikawa, Japan. The group was alerted to transfer to Europe where Leaford and his crew flew 29 missions in the Berlin Airlift. This was followed by a jet fighter unit, transition to the B29, and the Strategic Air Command where one of his duties was the Commander of the SAC Headquarters Squadron. Upon retirement from the Air Force he began a career in Civil Service Vandenberg AFB. He retired from Federal Civil Service in 1979 to Wyandotte, Oklahoma. It was after three years in retirement that he began his third career, which continues today, when he was chosen Chief of the Wyandotte Tribe of Oklahoma. This interesting book is available from Gregath Publishing Co., PO Box 505, Wyandotte, OK 74370, or online at <http://gregathcompany.com/catalog/isbn/9780944619964.htm> The cost of the book is \$20 plus \$5 shipping and handling.

### **BEAUTIFUL DOWNTOWN BIAK**

(From declassified SECRET 400<sup>th</sup> records.)

On approximately the third of August, 1944, the

advance echelon of the 400<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Squadron, under the command of the squadron executive officer, Captain H.C. Holliday, arrived on Biak Island to lay out and clear the area for the construction of the camp area.

The island is a little over forty miles in length and twenty miles at its widest point. Biak Island, a component of the Schouten Group, is hardly more than a large body of coral, on which may be found the average plant life, peoples, and general conditions which are peculiar to the many similar islands of the Southwest Pacific area.

Numerous obstacles had to be surmounted before any of the actual work of building or mapping out the area could be accomplished. Clearing the area consisted of removing everything from wrecked Japanese equipment and unexploded munitions (bombs, shells, hand grenades and cartridges) to the actual remains of deceased members of Hirohito's diminishing hordes.

Water had to be hauled in from the small stream several miles from where the camp site was located. Later, however, a pipe line brought the water directly to the camp. Latrines had to be literally blasted from the coral to provide suitable means of waste disposal. Seepage pits were constructed in a like manner.

In spite of the numerous difficulties which had to overcome, the accomplishments of the advanced detail, and the men who followed shortly thereafter, enabled the entire organization to be present in the latter part of August, 1944.

The aerial photographs shown here depict the general layout of the squadron area from the front, rear, and directly overhead: This overhead view shows, in the right background area, the long building which houses the Orderly Room, Communications, Intelligence, Post Office, and the offices of the Commanding Officer, Executive Officer, and the Squadron Adjutant. To the left of the administrative building is the Supply, Barber Shop, Carpenter Shop, and the Chemical Warfare Service.



Officer's quarter atop the ridge and below, the enlisted men's tents. Situated in the extreme upper middle, the Jolly Roger Playhouse, in which movies, fight cards, and other entertainments are presented.



This front view shows the mess hall, to the left of the administration building, and behind the mess building order are the dispensary, squadron laundry and the showers. In the upper right of the picture lies the motor pool.

### TAPS

*These buddies, wives, friends and comrades-in-arms  
forever remain heroes*

George Norton reported the passing of **Flavio H. 'Frankie' Landavazo** on June 3, 2009, in Fremont California. Frankie was a member of the 400<sup>th</sup> Squadron.

Felix Fuller notified us that, the widow of his crewmate Jim McAteer, **Kay McAteer** passed away in December of 2008. Felix and Jim were in the 320<sup>th</sup> Squadron and part of the Campbell crew.

Jim Long, a pilot in the 400<sup>th</sup> Squadron, called to tell us that his navigator, **Scott Watkins**, passed away during the summer of 2008. Scott was a transfer from the

infantry having served with Major Eisenhower before transferring to the Air Corps.

Lorene Rodgers notified us that her husband, **Herbert Rodgers**, passed away on December 14, 2008. Herbert was a nose gunner on the Cooley crew in the 319<sup>th</sup> Squadron.

Velma Bjorstrom notified us that her husband, **Raymond A. Bjorstrom**, passed away on December 12, 2008. Ray was a flight engineer and gunner in the 321<sup>st</sup> Squadron.

Bob Ford notified us that **John J. Bily** passed away on June 11, 2009. John was a member of the Whitlock crew and Communications Officer of the 320<sup>th</sup> Squadron.\*

**Jack H. Thacker** passed away on May 27, 2009. Jack was a gunnery officer with the 400<sup>th</sup> Squadron.

Cloyce 'Red' Snouffer sadly notified us that his wife, **Mildred Snouffer**, passed away in April 2009.

Mercedes Terry called Bob Ford and told him that her husband, **George V. 'Pickle' Terry**, passed away on July 7, 2009. George was the radio operator on the Manion crew in the 319<sup>th</sup> Squadron.

Terry Bell notified us that his father, **Charles Artie Bell**, passed away on June 28, 2009. Charles was a crew chief in the 400<sup>th</sup> Squadron.

**Herman Leo Rubeck** passed away on May 18, 2009.\*

**Paul E. Gemberling** passed away on March 4, 2009. Paul was a member of the 321<sup>st</sup> Squadron.

Mary Stein notified us that her brother **Edward Koffel** passed away on August 10, 2009. Ed was a radio technician in the 319<sup>th</sup> Squadron.

**Donald J. Ralston** passed away on July 10, 2009. Donald was part of the Jurs crew in the 321<sup>st</sup> Squadron.\*

Deloris Nelson reported to us that her father **Charles R. Miller** passed away on August 11, 2009. Charles was a member of the H. Adams crew in the 320<sup>th</sup> Squadron.

**Irving J. Kellerman** passed away on March 29, 2009. Irv was a member of the Herman crew in the 400<sup>th</sup> Squadron.\*

**Cartier J. Olson** passed away on May 14, 2009. Cartier was a member of the Rahm crew in the 321<sup>st</sup> Squadron.\*

**Henry W. Bulmer** passed away on July 11, 2009. Henry was a member of the Wm Dean crew in the 320<sup>th</sup> Squadron.\*

**Romain Herbert Rismiller** passed away on August 12, 2009. Romain was in the 400<sup>th</sup> Squadron.\*

**Thomas Louis Talkie** passed away on September 17, 2009. Tom was a radio technician and bomb loader in the 321<sup>st</sup> Squadron.\*

**Victor H. Hirsh** passed away on May 2, 2009.\*

**John A. Franco** passed away on January 1, 2009. John was a member of the 320<sup>th</sup> Squadron.\*

**James Hudson Davis** passed away on March 26, 2009. Hut was a flight engineer with the JL Wright crew in the 320<sup>th</sup> Squadron.\*

**Otto Claud Carter, Jr.** passed away on February 25,

2009.\*

**Frank Raymond Harder** passed away on July 17, 2008. Frank was a member of the 320<sup>th</sup> Squadron.\*

**Donald M. Detry** passed away on October 25, 2008. Donald was a member of the Swanson crew in the 320<sup>th</sup> Squadron.\*

**John V. Cahill** passed away on August 30, 2008. John was a member of the Almond crew in the 319<sup>th</sup> Squadron.\*

**Howard W. Farragh** passed away on March 19, 2008. Howard was a member of the 321<sup>st</sup> Squadron.\*

**Kenneth Conrad Laughrun** passed away on September 24, 2008.\*

**Raymond H. "Bud" Livermore** passed away on February 22, 2008. Bud was a member of the 319<sup>th</sup> Squadron.\*

**Kenneth Leroy Nafus** passed away on January 11, 2008. Kenneth was a member of the Kubiskie crew in the 400<sup>th</sup> Squadron.\*

**Walter Elmer Spindler** passed away on January 17, 2008. Walter was attached to Headquarters.\*

**Adam E. Tyra** passed away on October 25, 2009. Adam was a navigator on the M. Terry crew in the 320<sup>th</sup> Squadron.\*

**James E. Polzin** passed away on October 28, 2009. Jim was a bombardier on the H. Smith crew in the 321<sup>st</sup> Squadron.\*

\*Contributed by Kenneth Sheats.

## NOTICES

**DUES** Year 2010 annual dues of \$10 per year are due if the date on your newsletter address label indicates 09 or before. This is the last newsletter for those that we have not heard from since 2006. If you have the letter W, H, or L instead of a date you do not need to pay dues, just update your address when needed. Make dues checks payable to: 90<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group Association and mail them to 273 Wellington Cutoff, Wellington, NV 89444. The newsletter is available online on John Barrett's website at <http://www.jollyrogersweb.com/> Feb 15<sup>th</sup> is the deadline for the next newsletter.

## VA Benefits

My sister is a patient care coordinator at a VA hospital. The 'Colonel' as she is affectionately referred to by her siblings is constantly telling me how there are veterans who have yet to apply for benefits to which they are entitled. You do not have to be retired from the military or have been in combat to receive benefits. If you were a POW you get the gold card of benefits, however, if you simply fought the Battle of California like my father did between the wars, you are still eligible for benefits with various levels in between. If you are not aware of your VA benefits, call this toll free number. 1-800-827-1000. (*Bob Tupa*)

## From SECRET 319<sup>th</sup> Squadron Records in 1944

### “Life of an Armorer”

“In the dead of night, he, the armorer, keeps his lonely vigil. Early in the morning he staggers from his bed, not staggering from the juices of the forbidden fruit, ...no, from fatigue. Why should this man be tired, you say? Yes, but remember he had eight Demolitions on his plane when all they really wanted in the first place was four. After unloading the required number and loading up with practice bombs he can then take himself to bed or maybe one of his buddies will help him to get to his tent. All the time he is muttering to himself—“Bombs, Bombs.”

He will rise up in bed at night and holler out in his troubled sleep...Bombs, Bombs, who stole my pulleys? Where in the hell is the hoist? Get that damn bomb off my rack...all through the night. Can anyone sleep with all this on his mind? Yes but does he really rest. No.

There are many complications arising while loading bombs such as fastening the top bomb to the racks and darn thing slips and mashes your finger...not clear off, but it will surprise you, you will jerk your arm back thinking to recover what is left of your hand, all the time forgetting that you have an elbow, or what is left of an elbow, for by this time you have jerked your elbow back into the bomb racks, cutting off a good pound of meat. You will then start to cuss and get mad. Then you straighten up and fracture your skull in doing so. In hitting your head it dulls the pain in your hand so you put another bomb in before the pain starts again.

When you have all your bombs loaded you mumble a prayer of thanks and in feeling your way out of the bomb bay you will automatically stumble and peel all the skin that is left on your shins and other parts of your body, you don't care tho because you have the bombs loaded, now all there is left to do is to try and get out to there before the section chief sees you and tells you to unload them. You hurry away and just as you enter your tent you remember that you didn't sign the form so back you go. You get the form signed and sure enough there he is. He says, 'take four of your bombs off and put them on someone else's ship.' This is the life of an armorer.”



Armament Section  
More From SECRET 319<sup>th</sup> Records

### FAMOUS AIRCRAFT

“According to Air Force magazine an airplane that completes 100 combat missions is a really famous airplane. “Yankee Doodle Dandy” is one of them.

In spite of her flashy name she was a wheel horse airplane. The ‘Dandy’ flew almost a year to the day in the Southwest Pacific combat areas and dropped her bombs on targets ranging from Nakassar in the Celebes and Ambon to Rabaul, Wewak and Hollandia. She flew on many brilliant missions but never got very dramatic about it, just quietly shot down seven Zekes and flew her dogged way through heavy ack ack barrages to the target-----and back again.

When the “Yankee Doodle Dandy” arrived M/Sgt. Barnhart of Sugar Run, Penn. got his eye on her, took over and maintained her through out the one hundred missions.

On the 101<sup>st</sup> mission over Hollandia, she was shot down by three Zekes.”



### Honor Flight

Honor Flight was part of the wonderful reception for the 90<sup>th</sup> veterans at a luncheon during the recent reunion. Honor Flight Network recognizes American veterans for your sacrifices and achievements by flying you to Washington, D.C. to see YOUR memorial at no cost. For further information call 937-521-2400 or go online at <http://www.honorflight.org/index.cfm>.





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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

