



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

“JOLLY ROGERS”

90TH BOMB GROUP ASSOCIATION



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2010 National Reunion

The National Reunion will be held in Scottsdale, Arizona on Wednesday, October 6th through Saturday, October 9, 2010, and hosted by Dale and Mary Ann Bates. Registration information and schedule are on page 3 of the newsletter.

Final Western Mini Reunion R & R in Simi Valley

During the May Western Mini ample time was provided for Reminiscence and Relaxation in the beautiful setting of Simi Valley, California. On Thursday night we enjoyed a casual banquet at the hotel. Friday afternoon we toured the Reagan Museum after eating lunch under the wings of Reagan's Air Force One and were privileged to be able to walk through the historic Boeing 707. Another highlight was viewing the temporary display of the White House replica which is a faithful recreation of the White House in a one-foot-to-one-inch scale – an amazing replica that shows the viewer much more of the White House than most people will ever be able to see in any other manner. If you would like a taste of what we saw, go to

www.ford.utexas.edu/museum/exhibits/wh_miniature/main.html

On Saturday evening we enjoyed another banquet at the hotel with a special slide presentation by retired Colonel Clyde East, a highly decorated pilot who fought in the European theatre of WWII. The actual 90th Bomb Group veterans who were among the 25 who attended the reunion were Andrew Acompora, John Hileman, Dale Bates, Herbert Goodrich, Ervin Hartman and Robert Hanley. This was our final Western Mini Reunion. In the future efforts will be concentrated on our National Reunion. (*Grace Van Elderen*)

Excerpt from 319th Squadron records while stationed at Fenton.

OPERATIONS

Operations consisted of strikes and armed reconnaissance. Of the total of 75 missions flown only 27 were clear cut strikes while 48 were armed reconnaissance with the main purpose of observing enemy activity largely by photographs and a secondary purpose of bombing any chance shipping or targets of opportunity. Although many single plane armed reces were flown later practice was to send as many as 3 ships out together, largely for mutual protection. A maximum of 9 airplanes were assembled on two occasions for strikes on Ambon while the usual strike consisted of only 6 or, at times, 3 airplanes. The most consistently bombed target was Ambon where shipping and stores areas were destroyed and air strips, out of reach of the Aussie Beauforts and Dutch B-25s, in Dutch New Guinea, Celebes, Ceram and islands west of Timor. Aerial photography probably came in for greater use than in any other heavy bomb unit in the SWPA at that time. At least one camera was carried on every mission and photographic intelligence on the whole vast area was rapidly built up from nothing to complete and current coverage.

The 319th Squadron was under the operational control of the RAAF with Air Officer Commodore Bladin in command. Relations with the Australians were very cordial and no difficulties were ever experienced. All operations were cooperatively worked out and the squadron usually set up and flew their missions the way they wanted to, the RAAF having no experience with heavy bombardment.

The first mission was flown against Ambon on 5 February, 1943 and the last mission was flown against Makassar in the Celebese on 23 June, 1943.

During May airplanes and personnel of the 380th Bomb Group started coming in and their airplanes supplemented 319th airplanes in flying strikes. The 380th Group was introduced to the area by the 319th Squadron and was given benefit of the experience they had gained.

ENEMY INTERCEPTION

Enemy fighter interception, throughout the entire period, was heavy. Nearly 50% of the 75 missions were met with interception, often out numbering the B-24s 7 to 1. Another indication can be seen by comparing the total of 196 fighters encountered to a total of 238 sorties flown.

In these almost invariable aerial engagement the 319th established a remarkable record of superiority. While definitely destroying 44, probably destroying 11 and damaging 5 enemy fighters the 319th lost only 2 airplanes to enemy fighter action. Of even these two, one was rammed by an obsolete float plane that did not even attempt gunnery action and the other returned safely to base where the airplane was a complete wash-out after landing. Other than the 10 men lost on the rammed airplane only one gunner was killed by enemy fighters. Even under these extreme circumstances at least 21 to 1 ratio was established in aerial combat!

OUTSTANDING MISSIONS

Although consistently damaging results were obtained in bombing enemy installations the two most outstanding operations were reconnaissance missions.

On March 13, 1943 a lone B-24 with a 13 man crew, including a photographer and intelligence officer, made an extremely long flight to Soerabaya Java, 1300 miles away. Enemy air strips dotted the intervening islands of Timor, Soemba and Bali but no interception was encountered to, from or over the target. The city was completely open and a full photographic run of the target was made. This brilliant photo coverage gave a full picture of the city and port and was given wide distribution in Intelligence Channels. It probably served as the target photos for the navy carrier attack on that city in early May of 1944.

The other mission was an ambitious plan of reconnoitering the entire Northwestern Area simultaneously on 28 May, 1943. All the outer most targets were covered – Soerabaya, Makassar, Kendari, Ambon, Manokwari as well as targets between these points and the Australian Coast. Weather hampered part of the mission and a few

areas were covered on the next day. Photographs were taken of all the targets and where the gasoline load permitted some bombs were carried. The result was the simultaneous coverage of one of the largest areas ever reconnoitered a total area of over 1,000,000 square miles.

COMMANDERS AND COMMENDATIONS

The initial operations of the 319th Squadron were under command of Capt. Charles E. Jones until he was killed when his airplane unaccountably exploded in mid-air in March. Capt Roy W. Olsen succeeded him and demonstrated outstanding leadership in the conduct of the new and unfamiliar operations. In recognition of his services he was awarded the Legion of Merit by the USAFFE and the Distinguished Flying Cross by the RAAF, possibly the only American airman to receive an Australian decoration. In recognition of the Squadron's service both General Kenney and AOC Bladin awarded a personal letter of commendation.

WILBERN H. KEEFE

Captain, Air Corps
Statistical Control Officer

Jess Taylor

Jess Taylor recently sent me a copy of his memoirs titled WORLD WAR-2 SCRAP BOOK which he prepared for his grandchildren. It is a collection of short essays on his four years of military service that left an indelible impression on his mind. Jess included permission for me to use it in the newsletter. I sent Jess a reply telling him thanks and that the permission was nice but I was going to use it anyway. Thanks again Jess.

ANOTHER WAR STORY

By Jess Taylor

I served Uncle Sam during World War-2 as a bombardier on a B24J in the Southwest Pacific. The nose of this airplane was crowded with a nose turret, complete with a nose gunner, a Norden bombsight, two side mounted .30 caliber machine guns, and a cramped bombardier.

On this particular mission we were to bomb the Wewak airstrip at 18,000 feet. Our crew had the squadron lead, which meant that I aimed my bombs a little short and the other five planes in the formation toggled their bombs when they saw our bombs start to fall.

As we turned into the bomb run I looked over to the
(continued after reunion information)



REGISTRATION

90th Bomb Group National Reunion October 6 - October 9, 2010



(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Last _____ First _____

Spouse, guests: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____ Squadron: _____

Wednesday, October 6

12:00-10:00 p.m. Registration - Hospitality Suite open
4:30 - 6:30 p.m. Reception (fruit, cheese, crackers, punch, coffee)

Thursday, October 7

Free Day
Take the free shuttle, from the front door of the Hotel through "Old Town Scottsdale" with its many shops and restaurants.
(Please see questionnaire at bottom of form – we plan to offer several mini tours based on your responses).

Friday, October 8

9:30 a.m. **Tour of the Heard Museum of Native Arts and Culture** # _____ @ \$30.00= _____
12:30 p.m. Bus to the museum
1:30 p.m. Bus to the Arizona Art Museum for lunch (six blocks)
Bus return to Holiday Inn

5:30 p.m. **Annual Banquet – Mesa County Club** # _____ @ \$45.00= _____
Bus to the Country Club
_____ Prime Rib, # _____ Chicken Wellington
_____ Salmon, # _____ Portabella Mushroom (Vegetarian)
9:00 p.m. Bus returns to Holiday Inn

Saturday October 9

9:30 a.m. General Meeting with vote on "Dissolution Options"
Free time – With mini tours?
5:30 p.m. Bus to Pinnacle Peak Patio Steakhouse – a Western themed restaurant – Dress will be "Western **Casual**". # _____ @ \$35.00= _____
_____ 10 oz Top Sirloin Steak, # _____ ½ chicken

ANNUAL DUES # _____ @ \$10.00= _____

TOTAL \$ _____

Please send registration and check (payable to the 90th Bomb Group Association) by September 15 to:
Dale Bates, 17200 W. Bell Road, Lot 2369, Surprise, AZ 85374

**Registration continued
Questionnaire about Mini Tours**

Suggestions

1. Desert Botanical Garden ___AM Thursday, ___PM Thursday, ___11 AM Saturday
 2. Casino ___AM Thursday, ___PM Thursday, ___11AM Saturday
 3. Fashion Mall ___AM Thursday, ___PM Thursday, ___11 AM Saturday
 4. Golf ___AM Thursday, ___PM Thursday, ___11AM Saturday
 5. Lunch ___11:15 AM Thursday, ___11:15 AM Saturday
 6. Sedona (All day) ___9:00AM Thursday, ___8:30 AM Saturday
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HOTEL REGISTRATION/INFORMATION

The reunion will be held at the Holiday Inn Express Hotel and Suites (an all suite hotel), 3131 N. Scottsdale Road, Scottsdale, AZ 85251 (which is on the south edge of the area known as "Old Town" Scottsdale.

Room reservations should be made by calling The Holiday Inn/Scottsdale at (480) 675-7665. Please request the group rate for the 90th Bomb Group and make your reservation before September 15, 2010. The nightly rate is \$99 (plus tax) for a spacious 2 room suite with a king or double beds, microwave, refrigerator, work desk, hair dryer, coffee maker, and iron with full size board. Rate also includes: Pull out sleeper sofas with separate sleeping space, free high speed internet, complimentary deluxe continental breakfast available daily, complimentary evening managers reception, complimentary airport shuttle every thirty minutes on the hour and half hour as well as an area shuttle (within three miles of the hotel) between 7am and 10 pm.

The rate quoted is good three days before our reunion and three days after.

Sky Harbor Airport is served by many airlines and is only a fifteen minute ride from the Hotel. Scottsdale Road is accessible from the south and west from the 202 Loop and from north by the 101 Loop.

If you have any questions please call (623-546-2215), write or email me at: Dale Bates, 17200 W. Bell Rd., Lot 2369, Surprise, AZ 85374, dbates2369@msn.com.

(Jess Taylor continued from page 2)
side of the bombsight and saw a coiled up vari-colored snake that, stretched out, would measure three feet long. It had apparently climbed up in the plane while the plane was parked overnight close by the jungle. This discovery just about scared the living XXXX out of me. Besides having to worry about the ack-ack coming up from below, and the Jap fighters coming from above, I now had to worry about snakebite. We were committed to the bomb run and I had to do my thing with the bombsight and hope that the snake would not strike at me. My hands were only 24 inches from its coiled body. I manipulated the bombsight during the five minute bomb run and after "bombs away" I carefully withdrew my jungle knife and whacked away at the

intruder. At that high altitude the cold had immobilized the snake, but I did not think of that fact when I was busy doing my thing on the bomb run.

When we landed back at Nadzab I showed the now dead snake to the ground crew. A wuzzy-wuzzy native came up and asked for it to take back to his hut to cook. I was happy to oblige.

TAPS

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

Hugh O'Brien reported to us that his wife **Emma** passed away. They were married for 60 years and one day. Hugh says that Emma was the best thing that ever happened to him. Over the years they

attended at least 20 reunions and the friends he made in the 90th were the best friends of all. Hugh says that he was so lucky to marry a wonderful girl and be a Jolly Roger.

Herman Shanker reported to us that his wife of 69 years, **Ester Shanker**, passed away on April 8, 2010. Ester was a reunion favorite.

John Blackford notified us that his wife **Ruth M. Hopp Blackford** passed away on October 18, 2009. Ruth was the widow of John Hopp who passed away in 1986.

Janet Schumacher notified us that her mother **Wanda Martin** passed away in November of 2009, in Topeka, Kansas. Wanda was the wife of William Martin who passed away on September 25, 2007. Bill was in the 321st Squadron.

Col. Jeff Smith notified us that **Louis L. McPhail** passed away on May 25, 2010, in Platteville, Wisconsin. Louis was a member of the WT Olson crew in the 321st Squadron.

Bob Ford notified us that **John McLeod Sr.** passed away on June 2, 2010, in Dallas, Texas. John was a member of the Coleman crew in the 319th Squadron.

Margot Liba notified Bob Ford that her beloved husband **Joseph Liba** passed away on June 3, 2010, in Rochester, Missouri. Joe was a member of the 400th Squadron.

Bonnie Basham notified Bob Ford that **Giles Henry "Hank" Basham Jr.** passed away on May 24, 2010, in Panama City, Florida. Hank was a member of the 320th Squadron.

Charlene Lomneth Tritt notified us that her father **C. Robert "Bob" Lomneth** passed away on May 19, 2010. Bob was an Engineering Officer with the 321 Squadron and 5th Bomber Command and was responsible for the maintenance of approximately 300 B-24s.

Regina Failla Sisco notified us that her father **Dominick A. Failla** passed away on April 18, 2010. 'Nicky' was in the 319th Squadron and a tailgunner on Jack Fay's crew.

Harold L. Gelman passed away on May 23, 2010. Harold was a member of the 320th Squadron and he was not listed with the Association.*

Frank Scott reports that the pilot of his crew, **Frederick E. Hellenga**, passed away on March 28, 2010. Frank says that Fred took the crew on 43 combat missions with the 321st Squadron.

Horace T. "Pete" Masterson passed away on April 23, 2010. Pete was a member of the 319th

Squadron.*

William Paul Truitt passed away on April 6, 2010 in Los Angeles, California. William was a pilot in the 319th Squadron with the Jagdman crew.*

Boyd Blair Meixell, Jr. passed away on January 13, 2010. Boyd was a pilot in the 400th Squadron and he was not listed with the Association.*

Terry Zinslen notifies us that his father **Raymond E. Zinslen** passed away on April 3, 2010. Ray was a member of the Hoot Bassett crew in the 320th Squadron.*

Ervin and Anna Hartman notifies us that **Betty Burns** passed away on November 20, 2009. Betty was the widow of Bob Burns who was a pilot in the 319th Squadron.

George Ben Laury passed away on June 17, 2009. George was a member of the 321st Squadron.*

Frank A. Lamphier, Jr. passed away on March 12, 2010. He was a ball turret gunner in the 320th Squadron and he was not listed with the Association.*

Junior Colvin reports that his crewmate **Michael J. Reach** passed away on February 23, 2010 in Mt. Pocono, PA. Mike was the radioman in the Briggs crew in the 400th Squadron.

Del Lobb reports that his last surviving crewmate, **Alvin J. Langham**, passed away on January 8, 2010, in Keyesport, IL. A.J. was the copilot of the William McGimsey crew flying as pilot on his last few missions in the 321st Squadron.

Robert M. Barton, Sr. passed away on February 24, 2010. Robert was a pilot with the 319th Squadron and he was not listed with the Association.*

Phillip Manger notified us that his parents, **Thomas and Mary Manger**, passed away in February 2010. Mary passed away on the 12th and Tom on the 24th. Tom was on the Charlton crew in the 320th Squadron.

Carl R. Hilton passed away on August 24, 2009. Carl was a member of the Mann crew in the 320th Squadron.*

Peggy Westover notified us that her husband, **John H. Westover**, passed away on March 16, 2010, at his home in Santa Maria, California. John was a B-24 mechanic with the 320th Squadron who flew on missions as a combat photographer capturing images still with us today.



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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

