



The Crow Flight



Fourteenth newsletter of the 47th and 48th Bomb Squadrons, 41st Bomb Group (M), 7th AF, WWII, issued July 31, 2000

**NEXT REUNION, LAS VEGAS
SEPT 24TH – 27TH, 2000**

Come one, come all!!!!

Gamble away all your money!!!!

See Siegfried and Roy!!!!
(some shows are very expensive!)

Visit the Entertainment
Capitol of the World!!!! You
may just want to completely
arrange your own schedule.
That's okay, too!

You can have your choice of literally
hundreds of entertainment venues!

*Maybe you'd like to take a tour of
Hoover Dam and/or a Paddlewheel
Cruise on Lake Mead!*

One Choice would be a
Vegas Night-Lights Tour!!

None of the tours are firm at this time. The
plan is to arrange for them at check-in time.

How do you arrange to come to the reunion??

1) Complete the registration form, page 9 of
this newsletter, and send it to your respective
squadron treasuries.

2) Make your reservations at the Golden
Nugget, (800) 634-3454. Make sure that you
get the special reunion rate of \$59.00 per
night plus taxes, of course. Also make sure to
let them know that you are with the 41st
Bomb Group. This special rate is good only
for the three nights of the 24th, 25th, and 26th.
The deadline to get this special rate is August
9, 2000. If you can possibly make your
reservations earlier, it would be greatly
appreciated by the planning committee
because it helps them figure stuff out!

REUNION CALENDAR

47th, 48th, 396th, Las Vegas, NV Sept. 24-27, 2000
820th, Hot Springs, AR Spring, 2001
47th, 48th, 396th (?), Manchester, NH 27-30, 2001

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e-mail received 11/4/99

Railroad Gauge (4 feet, 8.5 inches)

Why is it that wide?! (Makes you stop and think...)

The US Standard railroad gauge (distance between the rails) is 4 feet, 8.5 inches. That’s an exceedingly odd number. Why was that gauge used? Because that’s the way they built them in England, and the US railroads were built by English expatriates. Why did the English people build them like that? Because the first rail lines were built by the same people who built the pre railroad tramways, and that’s the gauge they used.

Why did “they” use that gauge then? Because the people who built the tramways used the same jigs and tools that they used for building wagons, which used that wheel spacing.

Okay! Why did the wagons use that odd wheel spacing? Well, if they tried to use any other spacing the wagons would break on some of the old , long distance roads, because that’s the spacing of the old wheel ruts.

So who built these old rutted roads? The first long distance roads in Europe were built by Imperial Rome for the benefit of their legions. The roads have been used ever since

And the ruts? The initial ruts, which everyone else had to

match for fear of destroying their wagons, were first made by Roman war chariots. Since the chariot were made for or by Imperial Rome they were all alike in the matter of wheel spacing.

Thus we have the answer to the original question. The United States standard railroad gauge of 4 feet, 8.5 inches derived from the original specification for an Imperial Roman army war chariot. Specs and Bureaucracies live forever. So, the next time you are handed a specification and wonder what Horse’s Ass came up with it, you may be exactly right. Because the Imperial Roman chariots were made to be just wide enough to accommodate the back ends of two war horses.

Now the twist to the story....There’s an interesting extension of the story about railroad gauge and horses’ behinds. When we see a Space Shuttle sitting on the launch pad, there are two big booster rockets attached to the sides of the main fuel tank. These are the solid rocket boosters, or SRBs, the SRBs are made by Thikol at a factory in Utah.

The engineers who designed the SRBs might have preferred to make them a bit fatter, but the SRBs had to be shipped by train from the factory to the launch site. The railroad line to the factory runs through a tunnel in the mountains. The SRBs had to fit through that tunnel. The tunnel is slightly wider than a railroad track, and the railroad track in about as wide as two horses’ behinds. So a major design feature of what is arguably the world’ most advanced transportation system was determined by the width of a Horse’s Ass!



John Mahan sent this sketch to Gutts and Gutts asked, Wasn’t this guy called the “Schmoo?”

GREAT PREDICTIONS BY EXPERTS?

“This ‘telephone’ has too many shortcomings to be seriously considered as a means of communication...it is inherently of no value to us.” Western Union internal memo, 1876.

“Heavier-than-air flying machines are impossible.” Lord Kelvin, president, Royal Society, 1895.

“Airplanes are interesting toys but of no military valuye.” Marechal Ferdinand Foch, Prof. Ecole Superiure de Guerre.

Everything that can be invented has been invented.” Chas. H. Duell, Commissioner, U. S. Office of Patents, 1899.

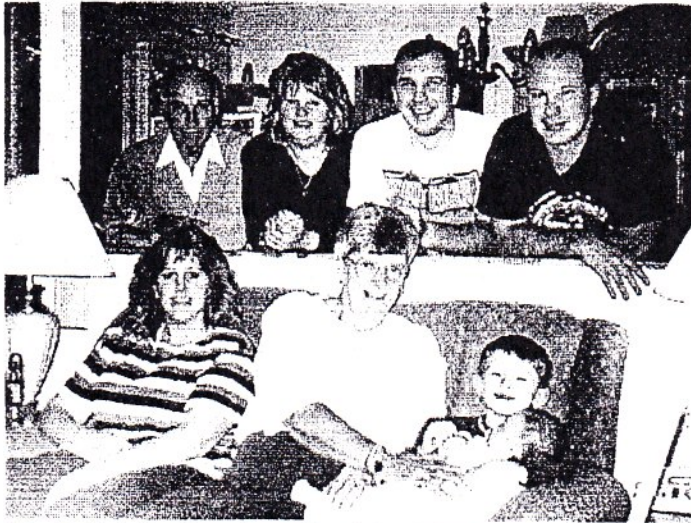
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 48th correspondents are **John Helmer**, 2122 S. W. Vista Av., PORTLAND, OR 97201. (503) 222-4614, and **Jess (Ray) Ramaker**, 17217 N. E. 7th Pl, BELLEVUE, WA 98008-4134 (425) 747-2306 e-mail ramajess@msn.com.



Thomas Zachok – Known as “Markie” back in the days of the 47th Bomb Squadron. Thom and his wife, Mary, live at 25 Monterrey Drive, WAYNE, NJ 07470, phone (973) 694-4672. They have two children, Timothy and Matthew and two grandchildren. Thom writes that he retired in 1985 and since has kept busy with his grandchildren and flower garden. He notes that the only contact with 47th personnel he has had has

been with M. Smith.



The Zachok family today – Top left – Thom, Daughter-in-law Lisa, Son Tim, Son Matthew. Bottom left Daughter-in-law Lois, Wife Mary, Grandsons Jonathan and Christopher.

ROBIN HITCHENS CRITIQUE – and I quote verbatim from her e-mail:

“This is Robin Hitchens. I am Bill Templeton’s daughter, have long been going to the 820th bomb squadron reunions and sent money to you to request your newsletter as well. I thought that being in contact with as many as Daddy’s comrades as possible was a wonderful idea. However, I have found that your newsletter often contains someone’s political opinions. You have every right to think my viewpoint on this matter does not count since I am only a family member hoping to keep your stories alive. But since whomever writes the Newsletter is so free with their opinions, I felt I should be with mine too. In my opinion (and you know what they say about

opinions) political views and/or copies of someone else’s speeches expressing their political views does not belong in the newsletter. I thought this newsletter was supposed to be about information from and to members related to activities and shared experiences. Guess I was wrong. Please remove me from your mailing list if politics is going to continue to take up a good portion of the newsletter. I’m not interested. I’ll just keep receiving the one I get from the 820th to enjoy the qualities I previously described. Thank-you for your time.

Robin Hitchens”

EDITOR’S RESPONSE TO ROBIN HITCHENS E-MAIL

Dear Robin,

Heavens! I surely don’t want to lose you as a reader! And I apologize for any transgression you feel I have made.

Let me explain a bit about the way I see my job. 1) To furnish the stories, I’m limited to whatever material I have.. 2) I try to furnish 10 sides (5 sheets) of 20# paper because that comes out to exactly one ounce so the squadrons can save money on postage. So you can see that sometimes, I must fill space. Other times I have more material and postpone their publication until the next letter. 3) I try to honor all things that I get in the mail. I do very little writing...almost entirely an “Editors Note,” here and there, where I feel it will help in clarifying and/or amplifying the material presented. 4) I do very little original writing and normally not much editing. I try to present to our readers as accurately as possible what has been submitted.

Inasmuch as your letter comes right after the copy of Charlton Heston’s speech, I assume that this is the final straw that made you protest. That speech was contributed by one of our members. I didn’t see it as political at all... in fact it was apolitical inasmuch as Heston was saying, “Don’t take my word for it... or a politician’s or anyone else’s... THINK FOR YOURSELF!” This was talk given by a man from the so-called GREATEST GENERATION ... a more conservative thinker surely to a group of students from one of the more liberal universities. I compliment Georgetown University for inviting Heston and Heston for accepting.

You know I have this political thing here at home.. my wife of 56 years and daughters are all Democrats and I a Republican. Imagine the talks we have around here! Maybe it would be fun, Robin, for us to have an exchange of views. In any event, please don’t leave us!

With kindest personal regards, your editor, Kem Sitterley

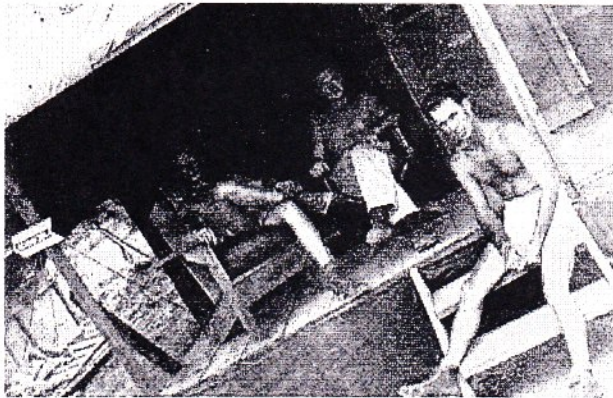


John's report on Joe Calbreath

I have received the news that Joe Calbreath has passed away. Joe was one of my tent mates at Machinato Air Base in Okinawa. The other tent mates were Bob Ayres and Oscar Carlson.

Joe stayed in the Air Forces after the war and had a tour of duty at Kadena Air Force Base. I remember that his family was with him and that one of his children was born there.

Joe attended most of the 48th Bomb Squadron reunions, at the last reunion in Ontario, California some of his children's families joined us for dinner. Our condolences go out to Marian and the family members on the loss of Joe's presence.



L to R, John Helmer, Oscar Carlson, and Joe Calbreath...Bob Ayres is taking the picture so you might figure it's a bit cockeyed! Our tent house at Machinato Airfield blew down in the typhoon of late summer, 1945.



L to R, John Helmer and Joe Calbreath at a recent 48th reunion.

48TH MONEY REPORT, FROM JOHN – Dues received from the following people since the last newsletter: Richard Monzingo, Robrert H. Murphy, Fred Emmert, Buford O. Hjill, Brosig A. Harmon, Tom J. Carson, Fred M. Deutsch, E. J. Tracey, John Geidel, Don Bettisworth, Bob Morse, Chauncey Kershaw, Bill McCoy, Hi Fitzpatrick, Hillard Shank, Wallace Johnson, and James Hegg. The money from the above people amounts to \$351.00. That brings our balance up to \$1,195.82. This amount does not include any registration dollars for the reunion.

47TH MONEY REPORT FROM GUTTS – Dues payers since last report include George Tolbert and Norm Simcoe. Our operational balance total is \$2,213.35.

WOMEN AND MEN (from the SEVENTMAN)

WOMEN

Women have strengths that amaze men. They carry children, they carry hardships, they carry burdens, but they hold happiness, love and joy. They smile when they want to scream. They sing when they want to cry. They cry when they are happy and laugh when they are nervous. Women wait by the phone for a "safe at home call" from a friend after a snowy drive home. They are child care workers, executives, attorneys, stay-at-home mums, biker babes and your neighbors. They wear suits, jeans and they wear uniforms. They fight for what they believe in. They stand up for injustice. They walk and talk the extra mile to get their children in the right school and for getting their family the right health care.

They go to the doctor with a frightened friend. Women are honest, loyal, and forgiving. They are smart, knowing that knowledge is power. But they still know how to use their softer side to make a point. Women want to be the best for their family, their friends, and themselves. Their hearts break when a friend dies.

They have sorrow at the loss of a family member, yet they are strong when others think there is no strength left. A woman can make a romantic evening unforgettable. Women come in all sizes, in all colors and shapes. They live in houses, apartments, castles and cabins. They drive, fly, walk, run or e-mail you to show how much they care about you. The heart of a woman is what makes the world spin. Women do more than just give birth. They bring joy and hope. They give compassion and ideals. They give moral support to their family and friends. And all they want back is a hug, a smile and for you to do the same to people you come in contact with

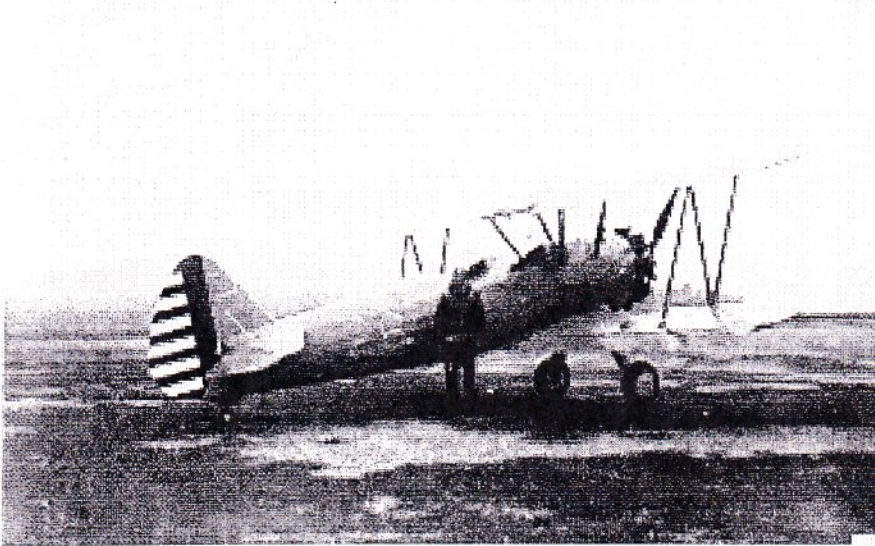
MEN

Men are good at lifting heavy stuff.

P. S. Thank God for women.



MY PRIDE & JOY



“47th ...B .O .Q. Visalia, Calif. Airport, June 1942

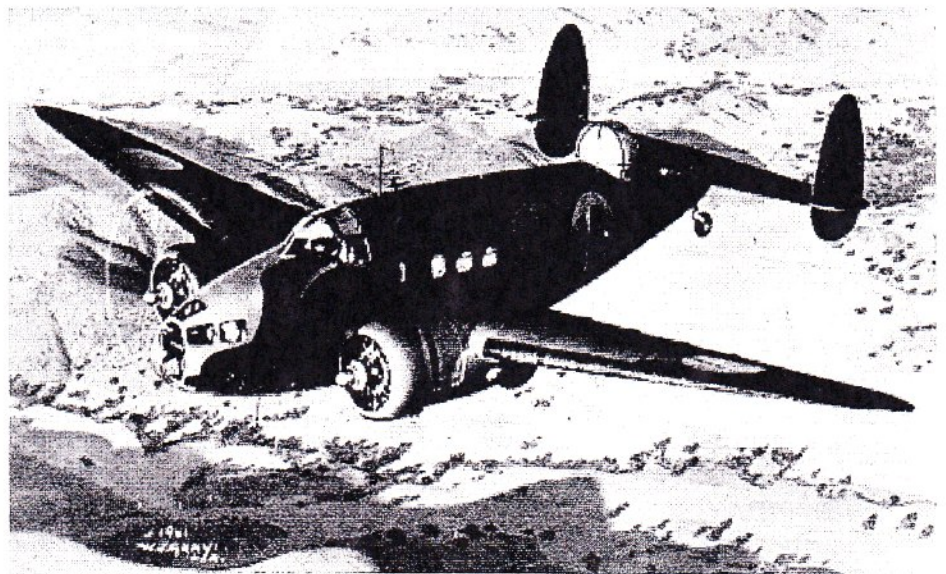
Norm and his Stearman, primary training at Cal-Aero, King City, California



B-25A "MITCHELL" MEDIUM BOMBER AT HAMMER FIELD, CALIFORNIA

This post card was also included in Norm's stuff

Norman Simcoe – shares some notes and pics and history. Norm and his wife, Gretchen, live at 946 Vaughn, AURORA, CO 80001, and their telephone number is (303) 366-6213. They had two boys, Ronald and Mark and one grandchild. Norm stayed with the USAF and after retirement there, worked for the state of Colorado. He served with the 98th Bomb Wing in Korea and had some “hairy” experiences flying B-29’s. Norm was a good friend of Novel (Steve) (Curly) Wood (Commanding officer of the 47th), who passed away a few years ago in Denver... and I quote some excerpts from his note... “To comment on the aircraft inventory of the 47th – in summer of 1942 we had 1 Douglas B-23, 1 B-18 (it was either a modified Douglas or a modified Boeing), 6 or 7 (?) A-29 Lockheed Hudsons, and we might have had a Piper Cub?..Here’s some pics someone might want to glance at?”



LOCKHEED H-14. Known in the British service as the Lockheed Hudson, is a very rugged and powerful 2 engine all metal reconnaissance bomber. Lockheed Aircraft Corp., Burbank, Cal.

Norm's note on the back reads, “one of the 47th's early planes but we had open rear gun turret.



WILLIAM A. MEEKS, JR... and I quote an e-mail exactly as it was received from Dan Brettell, Bill Meeks son-in-law...

“Dear Kem,

“With great sadness, I’m writing to you on behalf of myself my wife Patti, and our children to inform you of the death of Patti’s beloved dad William A. Meeks, Jr. Dad died on January 26, 2000 after a fairly long and very difficult illness. His last six months were spent living with us while on Hospice Care. He passed quietly in the early morning hours of the 26th with his family around him holding him and telling him that he as loved.

“On a personal note, I will always treasure the days I spent in San Antonio with Dad during the reunion. Meeting all those whom I had heard so much about for so many years was an experience that I count as one of the greatest of my life. You are all, without a doubt, The Greatest American Generation, and all Americans owe you their undying thanks. Patti and I continue to impress upon our children the sacrifices your generation made in their behalf. They had wonderful examples to follow in their grandfathers, both Patti’s and mine (my dad was in the First Wave at Normandy – Combat Core of Engineers) Unfortunately both are now gone so now Patti and I tell their stories for them.

“And I guess the examples were well taken Our oldest son was in Kosovo with the 82nd Airbourne and is now at Penn State with ROTC. He’ll receive his Degree ;and his Commission in 2003. Our youngest son has applied for ROTC in hopes of entering in the fall of 2001.

“Please continue to send us The Crow Flight. It’s our tie with Dad. He was a great patriot and a great man. He loved this county, his wife and his family. And we miss him terribly.

Thank you all.

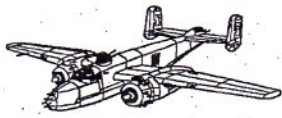
Sincerely,

Dan and Patti Brettell
2000 Hillcrest Drive
Easton, PA 18045
(610) 253-7331"

(Editor’s note -- Dan also gave the eulogy at Bill’s funeral. He e-mailed us a copy and I quote excerpts...)

“... But he was and is just the type of man I want my children to look up to as an American Hero. Because he was a family man...Family meant everything to him... for 50 years, he and Mom – his beloved Rosie, shared a love that transcended illness, injuries, money problems, etc. In his last letter to Patti and Ed he told them how great his loss was when Mom died – how he would wake up every morning expecting to see her in bed beside him. And when she wasn’t.... Well, it just hurt so much.... He was so proud of his children, and he loves them so much. Sometimes he couldn’t say those things, but he was and he does. And the fact that he raised two such wonderful children is testimonial in and of itself. Each, in their own way has taken the lessons he and Mom taught and found lives of service to others and to God – Ed in his Priesthood and ministry and Patti in her work with Hospice patients. What a legacy for a parent!

“Anyone who sat with Dad for more that five minutes knows that Dad had strong political opinions. Harry Truman and Ronald Reagan were his heroes. ...But many may not realize is that Dad’s political convictions were deeply rooted in strong moral and religious convictions. Right was right and wrong was wrong and there were no shades of gray. He would listen to your opinion....and then he would tell you why you were wrong. And Dad was a patriot – a knowledgeable patriot. He read constantly – mostly history – and he could speak about the causes and effects of events of the twentieth century world. There was never any doubt in his mind – nor should there have been – that what he and millions of others did between 1941 and 1945 saved this world from a horrible fate. On that note, I just want to say that Dad gave me a wonderful gift these past years when he – like my own Dad did – shared his stories with me. I will treasure them always. When two years ago, he asked me accompany him to the reunion of hisBomb Group from World War II, The Crow Flight – I was honored to go. What I encountered during those five days was beyond my wildest expectations. I met men I had heard about in stories, and I saw not aging warriors living in the past, but in their eyes I saw again the young men they had been – full of passion and devotion to their country. They truly were and are The Greatest Generation. I’d like you to consider one last thing. Dad was a man you could count on as a friend above all else. He never wavered or faltered in his devotion to friend, to family member, to his God, to his country. He was a true and very real American Hero we can all look up to. But most of all he was Bill. He was Dad. He was Grandpop. And for the last twenty-five years or so, he as my Best Friend. Thank you Dad.”



**Registration for 41st Bomb Group Reunion
Las Vegas, Nevada, September 24-27, 2000
(Sunday thru Wednesday)**



Name (s) for name tag (s) _____

Address _____

City _____

State and zip _____

Phone number _____

How many in your party? _____

How many for golf? _____

How many steak? ___ Chicken? ___ Salmon? _____

Item per person	Price Each	How Many	Amount
Registration	\$72		
Banquet only	\$40		
Total			

The registration fee also includes the Tuesday Continental Breakfast from 8 to 9 AM.

The tours at this time have not been definitely determined. There will probably be tours, but they may be handled, scheduled and paid for at the time of arrival, or perhaps another questionnaire will be sent to those who have indicated they are definitely attending.

GOLFERS: All of the golf was so expensive that it was decided not to schedule it at this time. We tried to get into Nellis Air Force Base, but they wouldn't let us in, ostensibly because we weren't retired military. We're hoping that one of our career retired officers can take care of this.

If you're with the 47th, 48th or 396th, please mail to your individual squadron as shown at the right. If you're with the 41st Group Headquarters or the 820th, please mail to Gutts with the 47th.

Please make your hotel reservations at our special rate of \$59.00, ASAP. Call the Golden Nugget at 1-800-634-3454, and don't forget to tell them that you are with the 41st Bomb Group. The special rate is good for the nights of the 24th, 25th, and 26th, only.

Please send this form and your check to your respective squadrons as follows: Make checks payable to the respective individuals –NOT to the squadrons, because of the legal hassel, fictitious names etc.



**47th/ 820th/
Group Hdqtrs**

make checks payable to
and mail to:

Urban A. Gutting
7047 Autumn Chase Drive
SAN ANTONIO, TX 78238-2118
(210) 647-1651
E-MAIL: urban@stic.net



48th make checks
payable to and mail to:

John Helmer
2122 S.W. Vista Avenue
PORTLAND, OR 97201
Home phone (503) 222-4614
Business phone (503) 223-4976



396th make checks
payable to and mail to:

Bill Zingery
P. O. Box 5930
COLLEGE STATION, TEXAS 77844
(409) 694-9584
E-MAIL b25mitch@myriad.net

Send us your information below for use in "The Crow Flight"

47th and 48th Alumni – 50-some years later

NAME: _____ CALLING NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____ SPOUSE: _____

CHILDREN: _____

GRANDCHILDREN:(number) _____

OCCUPATION: _____

LIFE SINCE 47TH AND 48TH _____

CONTACT WITH 47TH AND 48TH PEOPLE: _____

ANYTHING ELSE OF INTEREST "THE CROW FLIGHT" READERS? _____

WHAT'S NEXT? _____

USE A SEPARATED PIECE OF PAPER IF NECESSARY!

Send to: The Crow Flight, % Kem Sitterley, 20449 Blue Mountain Drive, Walnut, CA 91789

OLD PHOTO

PERHAPS IN THE UNIFORM YOU WORE
IN THE SERVICE...

PERHAPS WITH A HOT ISLAND BABE!!!

NEW PHOTO

PERHAPS WITH WIFE, KIDS AND
GRANDKIDS....

PERHAPS WITH YOUR GIRL FRIEND??