



The Crow Flight

Twenty-first newsletter of the 47th and 48th Bombardment Squadrons, 41st Bombardment Group (M) 7th AF, WWII issued July 2002

The *brief*, a 7th AF magazine, sold for 15 cents. Following is a reproduction of the 26 Dec.'44 issue, sent in by **Ned Burris, 47th Bomb Sq.** An Aug. 8, '44 edition (with pic of Yvone) of *brief* will be printed in a later *The Crow Flight* newsletter.



Veterans of a year in action, the groundcrews of this B-25 outfit know planes as no pilot does.

It's the Sergeant's Plane

By CPL ROGER ANGEL

IF YOU are a groundcrewman, you are not likely to get any decorations. You become a veteran by staying on the ground and you don't go home when your plane finishes a certain number of missions. You and your plane stay behind.

In the Hawaiian Islands today there is a veteran medium bomber group of the 7th AAF. This B-25 outfit, commanded by Col Murray A. Bywater, fought thru a year of frontline service in the aerial battlefields of the Marshalls, the Carolinas and the Marianas. Its Mitchells flew perilous low-level bombing and strafing missions. They flew medium-altitude sorties, some straight, some shuttle. They destroyed Zekes and Tonys from Mille to Ponape, faced ackack from Nauru to Guam. The

group has, with the exception of replacements and a few additions, the same planes that arrived at Tarawa and Apamama to go to war last December. They look like---and are---veterans. Most of them have from 30 to 80 bombs painted on their noses; many have small plates screwed onto their wings, cowlings, fuselage and tail surfaces--plates that cover what once were jagged flack and 7.7 millimeter holes.

Most of the men who ran up the strings of bombs on the noses of the 25's are no longer with the group. They finished their jobs and went home. To get the history of the planes today, you have to talk to other veterans in the group's four squadrons--the crew chiefs and their men. They are the sergeants who know the bombers as no pilot ever knew them. The planes belong to them.

Typical Crew

A typical crew chief is T.Sgt Robert H. Timson of Columbus, Ohio. Quiet and good looking, Timson is married and has three boys. He is chief of plane number 498. Like all the other planes in the group, his plane is known by the last three digits of its serial number.

Timson has been with 498 since it flew its first mission from Tarawa last Feb. 20. He and his four-man crew (engine specialist Cpl Clyde Christopher, Sevierville, Tenn., Armorer Cpl Richard Lovelace, Cedar Springs, Mich., and mechanics Pfc Iver M. Villa, Meeker, Colo., and Pvt Arnold B. Thomas, Neb.) have serviced 498 thru 63 missions. They have seen it take off on flights against Mille, Maloelap, Wotje, Ponape and Mauru. Over all these targets (Cont. p.2)

Crew chief
**M.Sgt Glen N.
Wheeler,**
Orlando,
Florida, cleans
the bore of the
75 mm cannon
in the nose of his
bomber.



the plane picked up only two small flak holes, one in the right wing between the engine cowling and the fuselage, the other in the right vertical stabilizer. Both of these holes appeared during raids over Nauru---a target known for its heavy and accurate anti-aircraft fire. But 498 missed only three scheduled flights.

The only man ever hurt on 498 was S. Sgt George Freeman, an engineer-gunner from Indiana who stepped on a pile of loose machine-gun brass during violent evasive action over Ponape and sprained his ankle.

Today 498 is in good condition. It is old and its fabric bears the marks of Down Under sun and salt-water, but it is ready for further action. Timpson's line chief said that 498, when it arrived in Hawaii at the end of nine months in combat, was in the best condition of any plane in his squadron.



In Hawaii, B25s which went down under to Tarawa last December, get much needed overhaul.

Before they got 498, Timpson and his men serviced another plane---294, the "Island Queen." This B-25, later shot down in combat, gave Timpson and engine specialist Christopher a hair-raising couple of hours on Feb. 1 when pilot 2nd Lt H. C. Taylor brought it back from Mille with an unexploded 20 mm shell lodged in the right wing, just above the fuel cells. The ground men had to get the shell out. Working with the care of a pair of safe-crackers, the two men gently laid open the wing and removed the gas tank. To their relief, they found that the pin on the shell had been bent out of line when the missile hit, making it harmless.

Hard Luck Plane

Not all planes get thru their missions with one or two holes in the wing or fuselage. Take the B-25 "O You Pretty Woman"---otherwise number 920. Crew-chief T.Sgt Augustus C. Hall, Littlefield, Texas, believes his is the original hard-luck plane of the squadron. On three of its first five missions from Apamama, it came back with several holes from accurate Japanese automatic weapons fire over Mille, Jaluit and Maloelap. These early missions at low level were among the toughest flown during the entire year by the group.

920's third mission was a headache, not only for Hall, but to a number of other chiefs. By a queer



M. Sgt Jack Daniel, S. Sgt Francis Major and M. Sgt. J.L. Sadler overhaul a B-25 engine

freak, 920 and two other plane--833 and 831---came back with their left tire shot up. One by one the three planes came in, touched ground and skidded off the runway.

Hall patched his plane after the mishaps on the first, third and fifth missions, and 920 began to run up a string of successful missions in one piece. But later in the year, when the group was flying sorties against shipping and harbor installations at Ponape, 920 returned from its mission with almost as many parts missing as there were flying. The pilot, Capt. Cole, brought the shattered plane into its base at Eniwetok with no brakes. It rolled the length of the landing field and stuck its nose wheel over the embankment at the end of the strip. If the other two wheels hadn't stopped against the embankment, 920 would have rolled into the water and Sgt Hall would have had to start with a new plane. As it was, all he had to do was to repair the damage done by 84 pieces of flak that pierced the fuselage, engines and wings.

(Continued P7)



CPL William Acunto repairs cowling. T.Sgt D. C. Krill and S.Sgt George E. Low install a new tire on their veteran bomber



THE CROW FLIGHT is a publication of the 47TH & 48TH Bombardment Squadrons, 41st Bomb Group, (M) 7th AF WWII

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DUES NEWS: CALENDAR YEAR DUES FOR THE 47TH IS \$12. THE 48TH SQ UADRON DUES IS \$15. MORE IS ACCEPTED. \$3 EXTRA WILL PURCHASE A RESPECTIVE SQ. ROSTER. MAIL CHECKS PAYABLE TO: URBAN A. GUTTING FOR THE 47TH OR JOHN HELMER FOR THE 48TH (ADDRESSES ↑)

***REQUEST A FORM* - TO FILL OUT & RETURN FOR PUBLICATION OF YOUR LIFE HIGHLIGHTS SINCE DEACTIVATION. WE REALLY!! ARE INTERESTED. 47TH OR 48TH CONTACT URBANA. GUTTING, ADDRESS ABOVE.**

\$\$\$ 47TH FINANCIAL REPORT \$\$\$

DUES PAYERS - The **GOOD GUYS and GALS** since last report are: **H. Charlie & Marian Treacle - Dick & Pat Sternberg, 396th - John & Madeline Waters - Charles & Carmen Reddig - Lynn & Betty Sweetland - Edless & Mary Manuel - Steve & Rose Bonfili - John & Toni Mahan - John & Lois Welfare - Herb & Fritzie Locke - Dale & Arlene Storms - Everett Ross - John & Mary Widener - Thom & Mary Zachok - Robert & Vivienne Schack - Wilmer & Betty Deitrick - Keith & Laverne Ingstad, 396th - Bob & Nancy Worsnop - Eldon Ford -**

This space intentionally left blank & reserved for more names.

To date, 36 members & friends have contributed \$471 for fiscal 2002. Again, thanks to all of you for making **THE CROW FLIGHT** possible.

The 47th Bomb Sq.'s USAA Balance as of 7-1-2002 is \$4022.09. Deducting \$975 of Reunion Registration and Tour monies and unbilled *The Crow Flight* #20 and roster printing and mailing costs (Approximately \$150 total) leaves an Operations balance of about \$2897. We are doing OK, but still have the expensive post reunion color edition of *The Crow flight* plus this one, to pay for.

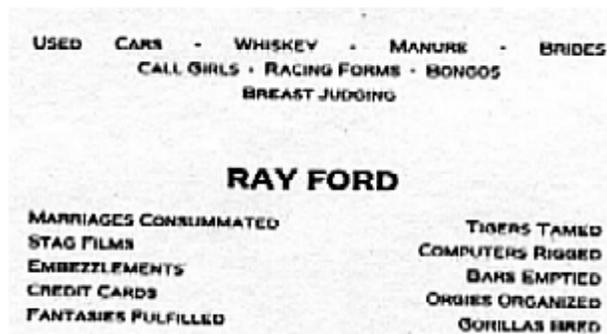
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YOUR ADVICENEEDED - Eldon Ray Ford, 47th

submitted the following business proposition in a recent letter. "Dear Gutts: 6-20-02

My business, as described on my enclosed card has been so successful that I would like to open another branch office or two.

I am writing to see if you could show a copy of my business card in our monthly newsletter and ask if anyone would be interested in operating a branch office for me!! (Signed) Ray Ford 47th P.S. The hours are good. Noon to 5:AM and the pay is 3% of the net."



I am seriously considering investing 50% of Crow Flight funds in his enterprise. Your judicious evaluation and response is solicited.

Based on the attributes listed on my WWII calling card below, I feel I am at least somewhat qualified and could be trusted to successfully manage such an operation.

Urb Gutting

WORLD'S HOTTEST PILOT
INTERNATIONAL LOVER
LAST OF THE GREAT SPENDERS



JOHN HELMER REPORTS FOR THE 48TH BOMBARDMENT SQ.

IT'S ON TO BILOXI FOR OUR REUNION. GEORGE AND HELEN KELLY HAVE DONE A WONDERFUL JOB IN SETTING UP HOTEL AND TOUR ARRANGEMENTS.

I WILL TELL YOU ABOUT OUR PLANNING OF THE ITINERY FOR OUR TRIP. AT THIS MOMENT WE ARE PLANNING TO FLY TO JACKSON, MISSISSIPPI ON MONDAY, SEPT. 16TH. WE WILL RENT A CAR AND DRIVE TO VICKSBURG, MS. AND SPEND THE 17TH AND PART OF 18TH TO VIEW THE NATIONAL PARK CIVIL WAR BATTLEFIELD OF VICKSBURG. ON THE 18TH IN THE P.M., WE WILL DRIVE TO NATCHEZ TO VIEW THE HISTORIC HOMES. FROM NATCHEZ WE MIGHT GO TO LAFAYETTE, LA. TO SEE THE CAJUN SIGHTS OR TO NEW ORLEANS. WE PLAN TO BE IN BILOXI ON SAT. THE 21ST.

BEVERLEY AND I ARE GOING TO TAKE BOTH TOURS THAT GEORGE AND HELEN HAVE PLANNED. WE WILL HAVE A GOOD TIME. SHOULD BE A GREAT TIME FOR ALL OF US.

I HAVE HEARD FROM THE FOLLOWING PEOPLE THAT PLAN TO BE IN BILOXI FOR THE REUNION: BOB AND JANE AYERS - FRED DEUTSCH - JOE AND GRACE CHAMIDES - E.J. TRACY WILL NOT BE IN ATTENDANCE.

I RECEIVED A NOTE FROM THE DAUGHTER OF JAMES HEGG, 48TH. HE ENJOYS GETTING THE CROW FLIGHT. JAMES RECENTLY CELEBRATED HIS 89TH BIRTHDAY.

HIRAM EDWARD FITZPATRICK, 48TH, PASSED AWAY ON MAY 4, 2002. AFTER HONORABLE DISCHARGE FROM THE ARMY AIR CORP, HIRAM WORKED FOR OUR OREGON JOURNAL AND THE OREGONIAN NEWSPAPERS, RETIREING IN 1981 AFTER 45 YEARS OF SERVICE WITH THE LATTER.

WE HAVE RECEIVED DUES AND GIFTS FROM THE FOLLOWING PEOPLE. THANK YOU VERY MUCH.

JOE CHAMBERS
FRED DEUTSCH
E. J. TRACY

JAMES HEGG
FRANK SWIFT
BOB AYERS

D. E. BETTIS WORTH

A TOTAL OF \$250. OUR SAVINGS ACCOUNT BALANCE IS \$2252.45

LOOKING FORWARD TO SEEING YOU IN BILOXI JOHN AND BEV

GROUND TRANSPORTATION - NEW ORLEANS TO BILOXI - (Sorry, John, need some of your space.)

The only service I could find on the Internet is by Coastline/Mississippi Coast Service. Call 1-800-647-3957 for reservations and information. They depart New Orleans airport on nine trips daily from 8:00AM to 11:30 PM and provide drop-off & pick-up service to/from our Broadwater President Hotel. Reservations must be made.

Price is \$35 one-way \$62 round-trip for a single & \$60 one-way \$106 round-trip for a couple.

Pssst - John Helmer and, I happen to know, Dick Sternberg, will have rental cars. Maybe could work a deal. Seriously, anyone with a vehicle willing to share a ride from/to NO, let me (Gutts) know. Anyone interested in signing up for such help, let me know. I'll try to match ya'll up.



"BB" Reports From Biloxi : For those of us who are older than dirt and tend to forget things, here again is the picture of "BB," the 47th Bomb Sq.'s representative at Biloxi. She is supposed to be watching over George Kelly, 48th Reunion Coordinator; however, the report I get from Helen is that George is watching over her even more closely.



First off, "BB" seemed a bit miffed at me for not telling you folks in the last newsletter about, "all the wonderful gambling casinos available for your pleasure in Biloxi---and the fortunes that are there for your taking." And be that true; but, be cautioned, some folks have been known to lose.

"BB" let out a *delightfully* sounding little squeal when I told her we have ten "early bird" (as of 7-1) Reunion Registrants, the first of whom was **Everett Ross, 47th**. The others are: **Ed (Patti) Krikorian - William (Mildred) Chilson + Nancy Hansen, 48th & Herb (Fritzie) Locke - Thom (Mary) Zachok, 47th**. This will be Thom & Mary's sixth in a row and 12 attended out of 13 available. What a record!

Then "BB" asked, with a discernable hint of sarcasm in her voice, why I had not yet called in my President Hotel reservations. After a bit of lame stammering, she cut me short with something like, "well, never mind, just DO IT NOW!" And I did.

So, to avoid "BB" getting on your case too, my advice to the rest of you guys is, if you haven't done so already, pick up the phone now and, with credit card handy for the first night's reservation, call The President Hotel at **1-800-843-7737**. Identify yourself as a **41st Bomb Group** member for the \$55 + tax rate (\$10 more for optional gulf view room). Reunion dates are 22 (Sun) thru 25 (Wed) September 2002. Our room rate is good 3 days before and after these dates. **QUESTIONS ? - CALL GEORGE KELLY AT 228-818-2809 or 228-432-0529.**

OTHER BILOXI NOTES: -The full name of our Biloxi hotel is "President Casino Broadwater Resort." There are actually two hotels, one across from the casino and the other, ours, an eight story hotel just east of the other. All rooms in our hotel have private balconies. Enclosed with this newsletter is the "Sq. Registration Form." This will be your last reminder before the Biloxi Reunion takes place, so please, fill it out and mail it now---and don't forget to make the hotel reservations!

MINI REUNION - This year, on our annual March Spring Training trip to FL to appraise my hometown St. Louis BB Cards, Carolyn and I got together with **HERB & FRITZIE LOCKE** for a delicious seafood lunch and some three hours of reminiscing--in the bar, of course. They are another 80s couple going on 60, and are already signed up for Biloxi. We look forward to seeing them again.

AND ANOTHER - Back in mid-May we had two one night visits with **George Tolbert** and the Love of His Life, **Bev** on our way to & from St. Louis, Mo. Bev is an ardent and very accomplished gardener, so when Courting George told Bev he has twenty acres of land on old Rt. 66 that she could "play in," Bev was hooked. Of course, George, the "Sly Ole Fox" was an added attraction. - Then, a reciprocal visit with us provided opportunity to show Bev, a first time visitor to San Antonio, some of the delights of our town. George said, "if she behaves herself," he will bring Bev to Biloxi. I expect Bev will "behave" to George's satisfaction, so ya'll come to Biloxi and meet this delightful lady.

LATE BILOXI BULLETINS

Schedule Of Events:

Daily - 0500 - Reveille. eeeeevvvverryybodyup!!!

- **0515** - Two-mile beach jog and 30 minute surf-swim. **"BB"** will be our proctor and she will be **topless**.

NOTE: Absence excuses accepted if deemed too strenuous for your heart or eyeballs.

Sun. - 1 to 7 PM - Registration in Hospitality Room.

(Helen promises a special homemade Cajun snack!)

Mon - 7 to 9 AM - Complimentary Group Bkft. in Hotel.

- **9 AM** - New Orleans Tour bus departs from hotel.

- Dinner on your own.

- **8 PM** - Squadron Meetings in Hospitality Room.

Tue. - Breakfast on your own.

- **9 AM** - Biloxi Tour Bus departs hotel.

- **6 PM** - Attitude Adjustment Hour.

- **7 PM** - Reunion Banquet in Hotel.

Wed. - Meals and Activities on your own. Many

"Excursions" to choose from.

NOTE 1: Dining room services are available **only** in the **Casino**. (**Two for one or 1/2 price for single**.) Our Gp. Continental Breakfast (Mon.) and the Reunion Banquet (Tues.) will be catered in our hotel.

NOTE 2: Banquet will feature: Presentation of U.S. Flag by Color Guards; an accomplished singer to lead singing our National Anthem; a tried and truly funny Cajun Comedian; and, great door prizes. Oh yes, and good food!



GEORGE TOLBERT'S CORNER - Since I am at wits end to write something intelligent, informative, or interesting, the following article applicable to most of us, is submitted in lieu of.

LIFE BEGINS AT 80

I have good news for you. The first 80 years are the hardest. The second 80 are a succession of birthday parties and perks. Once you reach 80, everyone wants to carry your baggage and help you up steps. If you forget your name or anybody else's name, or an appointment, or your own telephone number, or promise to be three places at the same time, or can't remember how many grandchildren you have, you need only explain that you are 80.

If you survive until you are 80, everyone is surprised that you are still alive. They treat you with respect just for having lived so long. They seem surprised that you can walk and talk sensibly.

Being 80 is a lot better than being 70. At 70, people are mad at you for everything. However, at 80, you have a perfect excuse no matter what you do. If you act foolishly, it is your second childhood. Everyone is looking for symptoms of softening of the brain. Being 70 is no fun at all. At that age, you are expected to retire to a house in Florida and complain about your arthritis (once called lumbago). You ask everyone to stop mumbling because you can't understand them (actually your hearing is about 50 percent gone). So please, folks, try to make it to 80. It is the best time of life. People forgive you for anything and everything. If you ask me, life begins at 80.

(Ed.'s Note: George turned 80 on 17 June 2002, so I'm forced to forgive him for this crappy article. I'm only 78 so still legally irascible---according to George. What did you say? Speak up---and stop mumbling!)

LET'S TRY THIS ONE - Sent by **Robert Brandt, 48th.** "Old Geezers"--- (slang for an old guy)---are easy to spot: - At sporting events, during playing of the National Anthem, Old Geezers hold their caps over their heart and sing without embarrassment. They know the words and believe in them. - Old geezers remember WWI, the Depression, WWII, Pearl Harbor, Guadalcanal, Normandy and Hitler. They remember the Atomic Age, the Korean War, The Cold War, the Jet Age and the Moon Landing, not to mention Vietnam. - If you bump into an Old Geezer on the sidewalk, he will apologize. - If you pass an Old Geezer on the street, he will nod or tip his cap to a lady. - Old Geezers trust strangers and are courtly to women. - Old Geezers hold the door for the next person and always, when walking, make certain the lady is on the inside for protection. - Old Geezers get embarrassed if someone curses in front of women and children and they don't like violence and filth on TV or in movies. - Old Geezers have moral courage. They seldom brag unless it's about their grandchildren.

It's the Old Geezers who know our great country is protected not by politicians or police, but by the young men and women in the military serving their country.

This country needs Old Geezers with their decent values. We need them now more than ever.

Thank God for Old Geezers!

NOTES FROM SOME GOOD OLD GEEZERS -

JOHN MAHAN, 47TH wrote: Just a few lines to let you know I will not be going to the reunion in Biloxi. The doctor says NO WAY. Can't make a trip like that.

We will miss seeing the guys of the 47th, and seeing Biloxi again. It's a nice town. Toni and I have been there many times in the past. Will also miss going to New Orleans. Toni comes from there and we use to visit her nephews and nieces just about every year.

The doctor says no traveling. I have too many things wrong with me. At present I'm under the care of Hospice. (It's a home health care in place of being in the hospital)

Give my very best to all the gang from the 47th. We will miss all of them.

Find enclosed dues money for the coming year.

(Signed) John Mahan

Ed.: Your mission right now, John, is to get yourself well again. Prayers are with you.

FROM - KIETH INGSTAD, 396TH: Enclosed is dues 2002. Kem has been sending me copies of The Crow Flight so decided I should send my share. Hope to see you at the Reunion. Sincerely, Keith

Ed.: Keith, you remember, coordinated the great 396th hosted Las Vegas Reunion in 2000. Carolyn and I had a very pleasant time touring a number of Strip casinos with Keith and Laveme and Joyce Haddock and Walt Winner. It will be great seeing them all again in Biloxi. Joyce and Walt, you are coming too, aren't you?

50TH WEDDING CELEBRATION - Those who attended the NH Reunion will remember Frank Lisak Jr, who presented those graphic Pentagon damage slides. He wrote that his parents, Francis Sr. and Evelyn were feted for 50 years of marriage by some 70+ family and friends on May 15, 2002. We extend congratulations to Francis and Evelyn for their Golden Day. They are planning on attending Biloxi, said Frank Jr. in a footnote.

HOSPITALIZED - Called Kem Sitterley this eve (7-15) re printing this NL. Grand-daughter informed me that Kem has been in the hospital about a week with heart problems. Your prayers are earnestly solicited for his recovery. I've demurred about the p. 9 article joshing Navigators, & Kem in particular, but I know Kem enjoys humor and I believe he would want it left in. And so it is. Get well, Old Gezzer Buddy.

Hangar Queen

Occasionally a plane comes home so badly shot up that it cannot be repaired. When that happens, the plane is not junked, but becomes a "hangar queen," to be used for spare parts. Such parts are scarce at forward bases and become increasingly valuable. When one of the group's four squadrons went into action at the beginning of the year, it had enough spare parts for 30 days combat. Beyond that, every single worn out or shot up unit had to be replaced with parts salvaged from other planes.

One B-25 that was retired to become a supply depot was number 831, which crash landed at Apamama. It was too wrecked to take to the air again, so for several weeks chiefs used it for spare engine parts and pieces of metal. Crew chief S.Sgt John R. Raymond, Abilene, Texas, finally pirated the biggest piece of 831, when his own ship, "Stinky," came back from Jaluit one day in bad shape.

"Stinky's" entire tail surfaces and vertical stabilizers had been riddled by bursts of flack that almost but not quite succeeded in bringing down the plane. The tail was too weakened to be repaired, so Raymond took the whole tail from 831 and transferred it to "Stinky." Today his plane is one of several in the theatre whose nose and tail have flown different numbers of missions.

This technique of plane-merging is a fairly common one. A spectacular example occurred early this year. Capt James Scott Brown led a special mission to Wotje to wipe out a Jap destroyer. The enemy warship was not found, but the flight made a run on three Jap freighters. Capt Brown, in hitting a 200-foot wooden freighter with three 500 pounders, got so close that his wing tip took a mast and most of the rigging off the ship. The entire left side of the plane, from nacelle to the tail, was damaged and pieces of the enemy ship trailed from the B-25 all the way home.

When Capt Brown landed his plane, ground men found a Japanese flag imbedded in the left engine cowling. A length of steel cable wrapped around one prop; another piece was trailing from the wing and the bomb bay door carried a piece of iron pipe. The bomber became a hangar queen.

Then T.Sgt Charles Reese's 895, "Luscious Lucy," came in a few days later for a landing on her nose. When 895 came to a stop, she was nothing but scrap metal from the pilot's compartment forward. Reese and his flight chief, M.Sgt Arvine A. Green, Boonsboro, Md., cleared away the debris and then calmly removed the entire nose section, including the wheel and cannon, from Capt. Brown's plane.

In a couple of days "Luscious Lucy" was back in one piece. It looked good as new, but because the crash had strained the fuselage, the plane was sent back to Hawaii. However, the crew that flew it back called it "the best flying ship in the squadron."



Sgts John Majauskas, Fred Higgengottam, H. I Wilson and Henry Sirave take ten under wing.

Line Chief

Today Sgt Green is line chief of one of the group's squadrons. An old Air Corps man, he was once in the cadre of the famous 19th Bombardment Squadron. He has been with his present group since January, 1941. Many of the planes in Sgt Green's squadron are flying today because of the ingenuity and sweat of himself and his men. And many of the planes are better planes today--after 60, 70 and 80 missions--than they were when they started.

Line Chief Green Cleans a famous B-25



When the B-25s first went into action over the Marshalls they flew almost entirely at low level.

They were dangerous missions. Opposition was intense and a good many planes came back after sustaining heavy damage. And to add to the chief's troubles, it was found that propeller control brackets on the B-25s had a bad habit of breaking. To fix this, the mechanics added stronger metal plates, and fastened the broken parts to them. Many of these makeshift parts held for the rest of their combat missions and were not replaced until the planes arrived in Oahu. In the meantime, the manufacturers modified the part in later B-25 models. (Cont'd. P8)

But on the whole, the B-25 are amazingly sturdy and do their best to make things easy for their chiefs. Take T.Sgt John K. Lapp, Clorieta, N.M., and his plane "Beachcomber." "Beachcomber" was pretty badly shot up once over Ponape. Then, on a later mission, it came home with a hunk of Jap metal in the accessory section of the gearbox. Lapp extracted the slug, noticed that the damage wasn't too extreme, and tested the engine. It worked O.K., so he screwed a plate over the hole and left it alone. Since then "Beachcomber" has flown 40 missions without a cough, but with a hole in its gearbox that the designer didn't plan on.

But the classic example of tough B-25s in the group is the plane known as 891, "Lefty's Wolf Pack," or "Hello, Moe." With 84 missions, it is the veteran of the group. Originally this plane belonged to Maj William K. Pflingst, a squadron CO, who flew the first missions in the "Wolf Pack." Then the late Lt Col Solomon T. (Ted) Willis took over the squadron and renamed 891 "Hello, Moe." In it he flew some of the most extraordinary missions a B-25 was ever put thru. Histactics over Jap harbors and airstrips made him the most talked-about pilot in the CPA. After one busy afternoon over Ponape, Col Willis flew 891 home to learn that Tokyo Rose was frantically calling him "a suicidal maniac."

After Col Willis' tragic death in a ground accident, Maj (now Lt Col) Pflingst took the plane again. He flew the final missions in it. Today 891 is "in" and ready for more missions. Despite its rugged combat history, its chief, T.Sgt John G. Anderson has found it necessary to make only one complete engine change on the plane.



One More Mission added by Chief Timpson

Time Savers

Time is almost as precious to chiefs as spare parts. Keeping planes in the air every day is a job that requires long hours of day and night work. Sgt Green and his men have devised many time-and-labor-saving mechanisms, which are now standard in the entire group. For example, they built a unit that cut the time spent in installing new wings. A portable unit containing air compressors and instrument testers was mounted in a jeep trailer so that it could be brought to the planes. Sgts A.F. Bertram and T.A. Cody made an electrical testing apparatus so that the delicate balancer of instruments and voltage between the two engines on each plane could be made in a matter of minutes.

Sgt Green himself worked on a new mount for the tail machine guns in his planes. Gunners had complained that their guns--placed down by their knees--- were too difficult to control and that their green-houses limited visibility. Their guns lacked mobility necessary on low-level raids.

Green removed the old mount and installed a piece of tilted armor plate. On top of that he placed single machine guns. Only the hood over the gunner was left in. Ammunition belts were raised so that they didn't interfere with the gunner's movements. The results were immediately noticeable. One plane shot down two Zeros, which the gunner said he never would have seen from the old position. "If we hadn't had the new setup, our tail gunner would have had the hell shot out of him," Green said.

From the ground man's point of view, Sgt Green said, Apamama was, despite a number of bombings by Jap Betties, heaven. The surroundings were ideal and there was always shade to work in. On the other hand, Saipan, where Green's was the only B-25 squadron, was hell. Until one of the planes skidded off a rain-covered runway and crashed, there were practically no spare parts. Worst of all was the fact that when Green's squadron arrived, the runways were still strewn with razor-sharp pieces of shrapnel, which ripped up tires. Thirty-three tires blew out in the first month. Rubber grew so scarce that Green had to borrow some extra tires from P-47 squadron on the islands. And finally, Saipan was tough because there was so much to be done. During their bombing of Guam, the planes were flying an average of two missions a day and the ground crews worked all day and most of every night to keep their plane flyable and to accomplish Basic maintenance.

Long Hours

But if most of the ground crewmen bitch mildly about long hours of work they admit that they feel rather lost when they have nothing to do. One chief, TSgt Carl B. Young, Healdsburg, Calif., explained this feeling. "I don't know why it is, he said, "but I always worry a lot more when I don't have a plane than when my plane is on a mission. We all do a lot of sweating when our planes are in the air, but it seems I don't sweat so much when my plane is out." (Cont'd p 9)



Sgt Young should know what he is talking about. He was chief of "Devil's Spouse," which failed to come back from a mission over Wotje. Now he has "Rose's Beau," which under him has an almost perfect record. Two crews have flown the plane for a total of 73 missions, 61 of them without missing a scheduled flight. It has never been touched by flak or bullets.

The business of sweating out their planes is never easy for the men on the ground.



When a plane doesn't come back, its chief is lost. He waits about forlornly, thinking first about the men in the plane, and then about his plane. T.Sgt Billie Earnhardt, Kannapolis, N.C., was crew chief of "Vicious Virgin II." One day the plane failed to make it back to Tarawa after a mission to Nauru. Earnhardt stood on the flight line helplessly until some body told him that the crew had been picked up in the water 60 miles from Tarawa. "I never sweated so much in my life" he said. "I didn't know what to do. And it turned out that I was about the last man to find out that they'd all been picked up. Nobody thought of telling me."

Two days later Earnheart took over another plane. But it wasn't quite the same for the ground men. They were

happy that the crew had been picked up, but they had lost a plane. Their plane. Earnhardt's assistant crew chief, Cpl T.D. Manross, Erie, Pa. put the feeling into words. "After you've had a plane for a while you know what's good about it and what's wrong with it. It sort of belongs to you. When you lose it, you have to get acquainted with another plane, but it takes a little while before it seems like yours. I don't know what it is about these planes, but you get attached to them." (End of Article.)

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Welcome Aboard - Looks like Don Haskell is still successfully busy searching the web for identity of our "unknowns." Latest "find" to add to your 47th Roster is: **CHARLES SALTS**, 1365 Zebra wood Ct., Florence OR 97439, (541) 902-1447, e-mail: chucks@oregonfast.net. We've been in e-mail contact with Chuck and will send him a set of 47th Rosters and add him to the newsletter mail list.

ED DANKO, 48TH found us. He contacted Robert Brandt, 48th, by e-mail. Ed and his wife, **JO** met with Bob & Jo Brandt for a congenial dinner and a lot of conversation. Ed's address is 4323 Dresden Ln., Sarasota, FL 34233, e-mail is edjoe@comcast.net.

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Death Notice - Eldon Ray Ford received a letter from Joey Frei in which she advised that her late husband, LeGrand, died of a heart attack in April, 1992. LeGrand Frei, 47th Bomb Sq., was an Engineer-Gunner on Pilot Jim McGrath's crew. He had been listed on the 47th Bomb Sq. "Unknown" roster.

FOR THE NAVIGATORS - The instructor of a WWII navigator training class was explaining about latitude, degrees and minutes. The instructor said, "Suppose I asked you to meet me for lunch at 23 degrees, 4 minutes north latitude and 45 degrees, 15 minutes east longitude?" After a confused silence, a voice volunteered, "I guess you'd be eating alone."



Is This Moon Over Miami Or Moon River?

Anyone recognize this Navigator? I'd say it looks like **Kem Sitterley** except that, as I remember, **Kem** has a fatter ass. (How do I know, you ask? We had community showers, smart ass.) Maybe **Dick Sternberg**?

MORE ON REAR ENDS - **Art Ferriera, 396th Reunion Money Guy** sent the following: "The scheduled events (see p.5) sound terrific. I'll definitely make reveille at 0500, just to collect the autographs of anybody who shows up! These days my rear end is as leaden at 5:00 AM as it was on the morning of a Milli raid from Tarawa." At the time he wrote that, Art was not aware that "BB" will lead the exercises and will be topless. Wonder what his reaction will be when he learns that? Bet he'll want to add 30 or so "side-straddle-hops" to the exercise program. That should conjure up some awesome imagery! It might even get the lead out of his rear end. Help Kem's rear end? Naw, way too far out.

WINDY, AIN'T IT? - Three WWII vets, (all Navigators) each with a hearing loss, were taking a walk one fine March day. One Nav. remarked to the other, "Windy, ain't it?" "No," the second Nav. replied, "It's Thursday." And the third Nav. chimed in, "So am I. Let's have a beer."

FIRST GLITCH? - Every Reunion has its share of glitches. This may be '02's first. When I tried to make a reservation to include Sat 21 Sep., I was told all rooms are booked up for that night. This is not a problem for those folks arriving Sun. 22nd, as George and Helen have a firm commitment for 50 rooms reserved until Sept. 1 for the "41st Bomb Group," for the 22nd through 25th Sept. period. However, it appears the hotel did not reserve rooms for the "3 days before and after at the same rate" provision. George and Helen are working on it.