



The Crow Flight



Thirty-second Newsletter of the 47th, 48th, 396th & 820th Bombardment Squadrons, 41st Bombardment Group (M), 7th AF, WWII, Issued May 2005

HOT SPRINGS, ARKANSAS REUNION

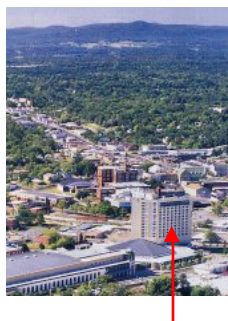
SEPTEMBER 25 – 26 – 27 – 28, 2005

(Sun. – Mon. – Tues. - Wed.)

"Whatever Lola Wants (Lola Gets)"

What Lola wants is a Reunion at which you will feel relaxed, pampered, entertained, well fed and, most importantly, one that you will have ample opportunity, in congenial surroundings, to once again meet in communion with your World War Two comrades, friends and relatives.

WITH MISSION ORDERS IN HAND, AND IN ACCORDANCE WITH SPOUSE LOLA'S WANTS, COORDINATOR JOE ROOP MADE THE FOLLOWING REUNION ARRANGEMENTS, OR, IN OTHER WORDS, "HERE'S THE POOP FROM ROOP TO THE GROUP:"



We will stay at the AUSTIN HOTEL next to the Convention Center. MAKE YOUR RESERVATIONS BY CALLING 1-877-623-6697. IDENTIFY YOURSELF AS "41ST BOMB GROUP" TO GET THE PREFERRED RATE OF \$79 + TAX (\$84.47). This special rate is good 3 days prior to and after the Reunion Dates. Our room-block reservation expires August 25 and then rooms are as available. Reservations may be cancelled without penalty up to 24 hours prior to check-in; so---DONT DELAY--- MAKE THAT RESERVATION CALL TODAY.

The Austin Hotel is in the heart of the Historic Downtown Business and Entertainment district. Some in-house features are: "The Magnolia Grill" Gourmet Dining, "Rumors Lounge" and "SPA IN THE PARK," where Baths and Massages range in price from \$20 to \$150, depending on the intensity needed for your hedonistic gratification. (Yes, that is a repeat from TCF #31, but can't say it better.) The "Spa Special," which may appeal to many with nominal hedonistic wants, offers a Private Mineral Bath with Whirlpool and 20 minute Swedish Massage for \$40. Facials, Paraffin, Mud Mask (Full Body!!) Thermal Packs, and Essential Oil---Sea Salt Bath (Only \$3 bucks) are all available. Make reservations with the hotel. OK, that seems to take care of the pampered part of Lola's Wants.

Our Hospitality Room will be a "designed-for-meetings" room large enough to comfortably accommodate 50+ people. Joe will keep it stocked with your favorite libations and tempting tidbits, and it will initially open at noon on Sunday, Sept. 25, the "communion" beginning. On Monday morning we'll have a get-together and Squadron Meetings in the Hospitality Room.

THE GARVIN WOODLAND GARDENS (Arkansas' Botanical Garden) is our destination Monday afternoon. Our chartered bus will pick us up at the Austin Hotel at 2:30 pm for a 1hr 45 min guided & narrated tour, with golf cart riding optional, of this 210 acre plot of nature's beauty featuring the Hamilton Woods Bird Sanctuary, a four-acre Asian Garden, two waterfalls, three unique bridges and a dazzling array of flowering blooms, depending on the season, of daffodils, azaleas, roses, mums, camellias, rhododendrons, iris, wildflowers and many more. [This bud's (especially) for you, Bev W & Bill T]



We'll depart the Gardens, probably regretfully, at 4:45 pm aboard our bus: destination "BELLE OF HOT SPRINGS" dinner/dance/cruise on Lake Hamilton, approximately 2 hrs duration; then, return via our bus to the Austin Hotel, arriving about 8:15 pm.

ROOP'S POOP CONTINUED:

Garvin Gardens, Belle of Hot Springs dinner /dance/cruise and bus transportation will be offered as a package at \$50. Golf cart riding at Garvin is optional at \$6 per rider. The Belle cruise takes in the sunset over Lake Hamilton, promising some beautiful vistas as well as fine dining as we cruise. Romantic dancing under the stars will be led-off by dedicated dancers Geo Tolbert and Bev, who will encourage all to join in. Make your dinner choice of Stuffed Pork Chops or Chicken Cordon Bleu on the Sq. Registration Form (The Insert Page). Of course, all trimmin's are included.



ON TUESDAY, SEPT. 27 you are on your own for a long, lazy day of hanging out at the Hospitality Room, shopping, visiting the Spa for a luxurious bath and massage, or whatever your heart desires.

AT 7:15 PM we will meet in the hotel lobby and walk a short distance (about 2 blocks) to the Bath House for a great two hour musical and comedy show, recently voted one of Hot Springs "top three attractions." The show features Big Band Era music of the 30s through hits of today, along with Entertainer of the Year Buford Presley, and the area's #1 entertainers, The Wilkins family. (Well, that's what the advertisement says.)

FOR THE GOLFERS: Joe is setting up an outing at his home Hot Springs Village course sometime Tuesday. Details are not as yet available but will be posted in the August issue of *The Crow Flight*.

ON WEDNESDAY, SEPT. 28 AT 10:00 AM we will be picked up at our hotel for a scenic and educational tour of Hot Springs and vicinity in a Motorized Trolley. (Mules, Joe learned are retired after Labor Day) Enroute back to the hotel we will lunch at Granny's Kitchen (Good Country Style Cooking). Cost of the lunch will be on your own and you may order from the menu. Wednesday afternoon is again free time for perhaps visiting in the Hospitality Room or that hot bath /massage if you haven't yet had one---or desire another. Or, you may want to just relax in prep for our Banquet in the beautiful DeSoto Room.

THE BANQUET WILL BE FORMALY PREPPED BY A "HAPPY HOUR" (and a half) that will begin at 5:30 PM with a cash bar. The banquet will start at 7:00 PM with presentation of the colors and recitation of The Pledge of Allegiance.

THE BANQUET ENTRÉE CHOICES are 1) Slow Roasted Prime Rib of Beef, Au Jus with Twice-Baked Potato, Chef's Blend of Fresh Vegetables and Homemade Dinner Rolls, or 2) Cornbread Crusted Catfish (Arkansas Farmed) with Spicy Tarter Sauce, Pecan Sweet Potato Mash, Turnip Greens and Homemade Cornbread. Also included, but Joe will have to make the choices, are Fresh Tossed Garden or Caesar Salad and desserts like Cheesecake with Pecan Praline Sauce, Key Lime Pie, Homemade Caramel Apple Pie, Fresh strawberry Shortcake, etc. This will probably be one of Joe's hardest decisions. Why not give Joe a call and cast your vote: 1-501-922-2332.

OUR BANQUET GUEST SPEAKER WILL BE MAJOR GENERAL LEWIS LYLE, USAF (RET). As related in the last *The Crow Flight*, the Gen. flew 75 missions over Europe and Joe attests that his presentation is riveting. Perhaps you old timers could engage the Gen. in friendly discussion as to which was most hair-raising: low-level-hit-and-get-the-hell-out cannon/strafing missions subjected to brief but intense fighter and ground firepower---or high altitude deep enemy territory penetration bombing missions, subjected to hours of sporadic enemy fighter and anti-aircraft assault.

The ala Portland Greg Menton WWII memorabilia collector, mentioned in TCF #31 as being on the agenda, is now a "maybe" but Joe is still working on it.

FOR THOSE OF YOU FLYING INTO LITTLE ROCK, there is an Airport Shuttle Service available. Call **1-800-643-1505** and identify yourself as **"41st Bomb. Group"** for an **\$8 discount, making the round-trip fare \$52 per person.** 24 hour in advance reservations are recommended to guarantee seating. Little Rock departures as of this writing are: 11:15 AM & 1:15, 3:15 & 6:00 PM. Enroute time is one hour and you will be taken to the Austin Hotel.

AUSTIN HOTEL NOTES: Complimentary self-parking is provided in their parking deck located ½ blocks from the hotel or you may choose to valet park for \$5.00 per day, unlimited access. Check-in time is 3pm with room access prior to that based on availability; check-out is 11am.

COORDINAOR/SPOUSE TEAMS each present their unique reunion organization style and each great! You've noted that Joe/Lola lean toward the time-has-come-for-conservative-laid-back-yet-plenty-to-do-emphasis-camaraderie-style. Amen.

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS
HOT SPRINGS, ARKANSAS REUNION
47th, 48th, 396th & 820th Squadrons, 41st Bomb Gp (M)
September 25, 26, 27, 28, 2005

Questions or Special Assistance? Call Joe & Lola Roop at 1-501-922-2332

Sunday -25 September

Registration Afternoon and Evening. Hospitality Room Opens at Noon.
Meals are on Your Own

Monday 26 September

9:00 AM - Squadron Meetings in the Hospitality Room
2:30 PM – Bus Departs from Hotel for Garvin Gardens & Belle of Hot Springs Dinner/Dance Cruise. Bus Returns to the Hotel at About 8:15 PM.

Tuesday 27 September

Your Day of Leisure to Mingle in the Hospitality Room, Indulge Yourself with that Hot Bath/Massage, Shop or---Whatever.
07:15 PM – Meet in Hotel Lobby for Stroll to the Bath House Musical and Comedy Show
Meals are on our Own

Wednesday 29 September

10:00 AM – Pick-up at Hotel by Motorized Trolley for Hot Springs & Vicinity Tour – Enroute Back to Hotel We Stop at Granny's Kitchen for Lunch; Order from the Menu & Pay Individually.
Afternoon is Free Time
5:30 PM – Happy Hour in the DeSoto Room with Cash Bar
7:00 PM – Banquet in the DeSoto Room. Jacket & Tie for Gentlemen is Recommended.

Thursday 23 September

Farewells & Plans for Meeting Again at the 2006 Reunion and Departures

FOR YOUR RECORDS:

Hotel Reservations (1-877-623-6697 - Room-block Expires 25 Sept 04) made on (Date)_____
Hotel Deposit made on (Credit Card)_____(Amount)_____
Airline Reservations made on (Airline)_____(Date)_____(Confirmation No)._____
Squadron Registration Form Completed and Mailed (Date)_____ Ck. No._____Amt._____

(The Squadron Reunion Registration Form is an Insert Page of this Newsletter)

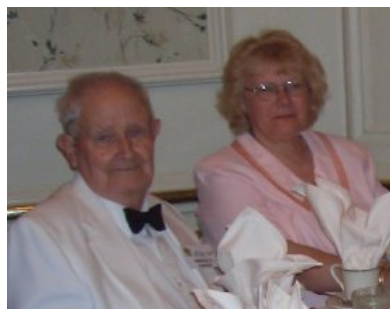
OBITUARIES:

It is with great sadness that I relay the information from his daughter, Elaine Stumbaugh, that **HAROLD R. KASTEN**, 47th Bomb. Sq. died on February 17, 2005. Harold was born December 14, 1917 in Monticello, Indiana. He was preceded in death by his wife Lillian L. and is survived by two daughters, three grandchildren and five great-grandchildren.

Reunion attendees in particular will remember Harold's exuberance regarding his large collection of WWII records and memorabilia. Readers might also recall that Harold was looking for a suitable home for his collection. Thanks to contact made with WWII memorabilia collector Greg Menton at the Portland Reunion, his wish has been fulfilled.

Readers will also recall Harold's "Tour of Duty" article that appeared on pages 6 & 7 of the last *The Crow Flight*, #31. Regretfully, the newsletter arrived at his home just a few days after his passing.

We will miss Harold, his cheerful attitude and his enthusiastic nostalgic input at our reunions.



Harold & Daughter Elaine at Portland; we should have had a Prize for Most Elegantly Dressed. Left, Harold & Bride Lillian at Visalia, CA, 1941.

GEORGE HARRISON, 47TH Bomb. Sq. wrote: Received the rosters, etc---everything looks good---I'm treasurer for two Legion groups, so I understand the drill. **HENRY "Pop" ARNDT**, listed as deceased, was one of my tent mates so I knew him very well. What happened to Harold Kasten??? That had to be sudden---he called me a couple of times from Tucson just before the Portland get together and we rapped about our organization days back in the spring of "41" at the Tucson Air Base as it was called then---so long ago. Looking at the article on the B-18s---the 47th had two of them when we were there---weren't worth much as I remember. Another of my old tent mates, whose name doesn't appear on any of your lists, is **GORDON "Mike" MALLALEY** who lived in Cincinnati, OH at the time of our separation. I tried many times to locate him but never had any luck. Maybe you could put his name out and see if anyone knows of his whereabouts---Mike ran our gas trucks." [George may be reached at 410-284-6087 or e-mail sqdn47@yahoo.com]

RAYMOND HENRY HUSCHLE, 48TH Bomb. Sq., age 85 of Watkins, MN passed away on March 5, 2005. A Mass of Christian Burial was held at Assumption Catholic Church in Eden, MN with interment in the MN state Veterans Cemetery in Little Fall, MN. He is survived by his wife, Arlene seven children and nine grandchildren.

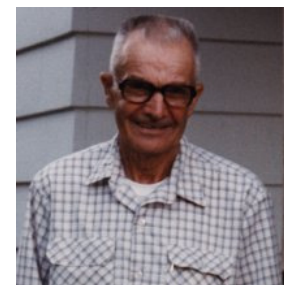
Raymond was born on November 17, 1919 in Sisseton, SD. Enlisting in the Army Air Forces in December 1941, Raymond served in the Pacific theater in World War II, then was stationed at Bolling AFB, Washington, DC, Japan, Andrews AFB in Maryland, Ft. Snelling in Bloomington, MN and Mountain Home AFB, ID. He retired from the United States Air force in 1964.



S/Sgt Ray at Wheeler Field, Hawaii, 1945

After retirement, Raymond and Arlene farmed near Eden Valley, MN until 1970, and then moved to Mountain Home, ID until 1980. They lived near Hill City, MN until April 2004 when they moved to a new home near Eden Valley. Ray liked to hunt, fish, hike and travel and continued to do so until he suffered a stroke on January 26, 2005. He also had taken up whittling to help pass winter months.

Ed: Ray and Arlene were frequent Reunion attendees, always adding their gentle and genuine warmth to our gatherings. Hopefully, Arlene will continue to join us when possible. We very much welcome and enjoy the company of our member's family and friends.



KEM SITTERLEY'S ADAPTATION OF TETRARCH'S SONNET #104 is presented IN COMMERATION OF MEMORIAL DAY AND OUR DEPARTED COMRADES:

Peace I find not, yet I am for war.
I tremble yet hope. I burn yet am ice.
I fly in my B-25 high above the clouds and dip my wings
to salute
My old comrades in arms who have gone on before...
I hold nothing yet I grasp it all.
Memories have me prisoner, and will not release me,
Neither will they hold me in toil.
They neither slay nor unchain me,
Allow me no joy or my sorrow to cease.
Without eyes I see, lacking words I mourn;
I scorn to die, yet cling to life.
I reject myself and yet I remember you guys,
Nurturing my grief, laughing with tears,
I despise equally death and life.
In this state, old buddies, am I yours.

**CHRONOLOGY OF JESS C. RAMAKER'S ARMY AIR CORPS SERVICE: 1942---1946**

December 7, 1941. Naval Air Corps was recruiting on campus at Michigan State University. The following day I applied to enlist in the Navy Air Corp. They gave me an eye examination and eliminated me from consideration because my vision was a little under 20/20. They suggested I try again later since many students experienced temporary reduction in vision acuity when studying.

June 19, 1942. Enlisted in the Army Air Corps that was recruiting on campus. Deferred till graduation, June 1943.

March 22, 1943. Called to active duty to report as an "Aviation Cadet" to Air Corps Classification Center in San Antonio, TX.

March 22 to June 23. I took some basic training and a series of aptitude tests for air crew training. The tests were scored from 1 to 9 for assignment to flying duties. Separate score were recorded for Pilot, Navigator or Bombardier. Since I scored a 9 on all three I was given a choice and selected Pilot Training.

June 28, 1943 I was assigned to Primary Pilot Training at Ballinger, TX. In addition to ground school we undertook Flight Training. After about 4 or 5 times at the controls I was "washed out" for depth perception (I was trying to land the plane either several feet below or above the ground).

Those who had scored 9s on all of the tests were given an opportunity to go on to Navigation or Bombardier Training and I selected Navigation. So did two others, (among many) Kemble Urban Sitterley from Kansas and Richard F. Sternberg of New York, New York. We were destined to spend the rest of our time together in the Air Corps and became the best of friends.

Dec. 20, 1943. We graduated from Navigation School at San Marcos, Texas and were appointed 2nd Lieutenants effective January 13, 1944. At that time the Air Force was looking to train some Navigators as Bombardiers to become "Duel Rated" so as to perform either, or both duties. This was in expectation of assigning crews to B-29s. In the event of incapacity of either of the dual-rated the other could fill in for both.

At this point, in retrospect, we were lucky – most of that graduating class of Navigators was assigned to the 8th Air Force. Many of them participated in raids on the Ploesti Oil Fields in Romania, Germany's most important oil source, which was heavily defended with fighter aircraft and heavy flack patterns. 1,000 plane raids were sent out and losses could run as high as 10-20%. Indeed, some of our friends who graduated from Navigation School with us were lost in those raids, including my former room-mate Jimmy Rabinowitz. On January 14 those of us selected for Dual Ratings were assigned to Roswell, New Mexico for Bombardier Training.

April 21, 1944. We graduated from Bombardier School and became "Duel Rated." We were then assigned to the Replacement Depot at Columbia, SC where we underwent a period of what I believe was called "Theatre Phase Training." Rather than B-29s we were assigned to twin engine B-25s. That airplane had a total crew of 6 and there was no room for both a Navigator and a Bombardier so our Duel Ratings were utilized.

September 26, 1944. We were assigned to crews so we could fly and train as a crew. I was initially assigned to Crew 5 which included John Helmer, Pilot; Bob Ayers Co-Pilot; I as Navigator/Bombardier; Cpl. Charles Colletti, Waist Gunner and Armament; Cpl. James McCoy, Waist Gunner and Radio Operator and Sgt. Wilfred Barclay, Tail Gunner and Aircraft Mechanic. Following that we were assigned to Muroc, CA and attached to the 41s Bomb Group, 7th Air Force. While there we undertook advanced training including "LORAN" or Long Range Navigation.

November 28, 1944. We went to Hamilton Field, California to await flights to Hickam Field, Hawaii to join the 41st Bombardment Group. Following a series of assignments combating the Japanese controlled islands through the south Pacific, the 41st Group was in Hawaii for re-staffing and awaiting reassignment. We spent the next couple of months at Hamilton Field awaiting airlift to Hawaii. That was another kind of lucky break inasmuch as we were able to spend many "Last Nights In The States" in nearby San Francisco, which was great for a group of eager [?] young Lieutenants.

January 9, 1945. It was determined that flights to Hawaii were not available, so we were sent by rail to Seattle, WA. From there we went by ship to Hawaii to join the 41st Bomb. Gp. (Kem has reminisced about where I found the chalk to write on my helmet as we were departing Seattle "Is This Trip Really Necessary?")

Upon our arrival at Hawaii I was assigned to the 48th Bomb. Sq., Kem Sitterley to the 47th and Dick Sternberg to the 396th.

When the squadrons were ready for deployment we were scheduled for assignment to Okinawa, the largest of the Ryuku Islands controlled by the Japanese. Our forces had invaded Okinawa and a fight was raging to secure the island. Pending our forces achieving control of the island, many of us took Navy transport to Okinawa. Arriving there, we went to the beach on LCVPs (Landing Craft Vehicular Personnel). Getting into the LCVPs required going down nets hung over the side of our transport while the LCVPs bobbed up and down. The craft was run aground on the beach, the ramp dropped, and we waded ashore from there.

We helped set up the camp while waiting for our aircraft to arrive. At that time the airfield area was cleared but several hundred Japanese soldiers were fighting a losing battle on

the south end of the island. At that point, rather than surrender to the Americans, many of the remaining Japanese jumped to their deaths off the high cliffs at the end of the island.

When the airplanes arrived most of us were re-assigned to existing crews since we were going there to fill crew vacancies in the 41st. I was assigned to a crew consisting of Captain J.A.S. Hoffman, Pilot; 1st Lt. Bob Hodson, Co-Pilot, myself as Navigator/Bombardier; Charles Coletti, Waist Gunner and Armament; James McCoy, Waist Gunner and Radio Operator and Wilfred Barclay, Tail Gunner and Mechanic. This was the same crew as before except we ended up with a different Pilot and Co-Pilot. This crew stayed together for all our missions and until the war was over. Since Captain Hoffman was Squadron Pilot our crew flew Squadron lead on many missions.

One of my clear recollections about our stay on Okinawa was a typhoon which hit the island (the exact date I can't recall). We were living in tents (as we did through our stay). It came abruptly and blew down our tent and most everything else in view. Because of the debris sailing around we sought shelter in an inhospitable crypt which was nearby. The picture shows the four of us, (L-R) Tom Wetherbee, another close friend, Dick Sternberg, I and



Kem Sitterley sitting on top of that crypt with little idea of what was inside. It was dark in the crypt and we had no kind of a light to use. We spent the night in there while the typhoon continued to blow. It was uncomfortable to try to sleep, although preferable to trying to stay outside.

We had no blankets or padding and spent the night sleeping on what we thought were rocks. The next morning after leaving we discovered we had been sleeping on bones. God knows how long they had been there and we were not interested in trying to find out.

We were also regularly visited by "Bed check Charlie" a lone, single engine plane which showed up at about 9:00 each night and dropped a single bomb to the accompaniment



of our search lights and anti-aircraft fire. We never learned whether Charlie got lucky with a bomb but July 4th something exploded in our ammunition dump. We were

"entertained" by a very colorful fireworks display as several ship loads of various kinds of ordinance exploded. We were able to avoid the explosions when taking our airplanes off the next morning, but on our return the smoke was so great that we had to land at another air field on Okinawa.

During this period we began our missions against Japan. Most of them were against Kyushu, the southern-most of the Japanese Home Islands. Our targets included air fields at Chiran, Omura, Tokina, Ronchi, Kanoya Tsuki, Kumamoto, and an urban mission with strafing and low level bombing Miyakanaga. One version of the B-25 had 14 forward firing 50 caliber machine guns: 8 in the nose, 2 in each of two side packets and 2 in the top turret; that in addition to 2 in each waist window and 2 tail 50 calibers. Another version replaced the 8 nose 50s with a 75 mm cannon. These two versions were particularly effective for strafing missions. With the 75 mm it was the Navigator's mission in a run to load the cannon; that was quite an experience with spent cannon shells littering the floor around our feet.

On most occasions we flew in B-25 versions with a "glass nose," from where the Nav. operated the Norden bombsight. We also had a pair of 50 caliber machine guns which we fired on strafing runs or at enemy aircraft.



Jess "Glass Nose" Ramaker

When flying missions over Japan we often had fighter cover with P-51s, P38s and P-47s [also Marine F4Us] and occasionally were accompanied by other bombers including B-24s. Other than Jimmy Doolittle's raid on Tokyo (with B-25s which had taken off from an aircraft carrier and landed in Free China) our missions were the earliest land based attacks against the Japanese Home Islands. By that time Japan was running low on aircraft, ammunition and fuel – consequently we encountered somewhat less fighter aircraft and anti-aircraft fire than had earlier mission.

During this period we also flew 2 missions against Shanghai, China. One of the attacks (July 17) on Shanghai had a primary target of an airfield which was socked in by weather. This was just as well since we later learned that there were American Prisoners of War at that location. The secondary target was, as usual, "targets of opportunity." Captain Hoffman and I decided to lead the Squadron to bomb a large industrial complex on the Whang Po Canal. We left it wreathed in smoke with hits from our 24 planes.



The officer who de-briefed us back in Okinawa examined the maps and photos and told us we destroyed the Standard Oil Refinery. We never did get specific confirmation that that was what we left burning but it has always been a favorite recollection. If true, that refinery also helped make much of Japan's source of oil and gasoline.

The two Atomic Bombs dropped on Japan were on August 6th at Hiroshima and August 9th at Nagasaki. We had missions on each of the days following those flights, at Tsuiki on August 7 and August 10 against Kumamoto Air Field, about 40 miles east of Nagasaki. We did fly near the



site of the devastation at Nagasaki and we have photos showing the destruction of both flights. We also saw smoke on the 7th from the Hiroshima site.

We flew additional raids on August 11, 12, 13, 14 and

15 until the cease fire. With no missions to fly we were assigned to fly to the Philippines and from there to Morotai, to "store" the planes. I kept part of a map on the day we flew there with our location clearly marked with my notation, "Hooray, the xxx-xxx War is Over." After landing there we taxied our planes to a spot overlooking steep cliffs at the end of the island. After disembarking we watched while bull dozers pushed the planes off the cliff to the rocks below. We assumed the aircraft were judged to be obsolete and of little value. From there we flew to Manila in the Philippines for further assignment.

With the end of the war the members of the Squadron began to be sent back to the States and to be discharged. Discharge was on the basis of "Points," so many for each month of service and twice that for each month overseas. The ground personnel of the 41st had not been rotated back to the states as had flying personnel based on missions. The result was, quite appropriately, that they were the first to return and be discharged with the rest of us waiting.

From Clark Field, Manila, Kem Sitterley and I were temporarily assigned to the Army of Occupation in Japan. Dick Sternberg was assigned to the Philippines, which separated the three of us for the first time. Kem and I were assigned to the 5th Air Force in Japan but not any specific duties. We were told to look around the base to find any vacancies and to volunteer for any that interested us.

We decided to take temporary assignments as Military Police Officers. We were assigned to investigate allegations of Japanese civilians of abuse by American troops. We were able to interview American personnel but had no way of communicating with the Japanese. For that purpose we were assigned Japanese-American soldiers. (I believe that some of them had been members of the famous 442nd Infantry Battalion in Italy, but I'm not sure of that.) With their assistance we were able to do the job. When we visited Japanese civilians in the course of our investigations they came to their doors where they were greeted by two American Officers and two soldiers who were clearly Japanese but in tailored American uniforms,

obviously well fed and about half a head taller than the average native Japanese. The looks on the faces of those being interviewed was something to behold and remember. We had some interesting experiences in more remote parts of Japan and with a variety of local officials.

I haven't retained much of the details of our experiences there. Kem Sitterley (Pic R.) remembers a good deal more than I.



Ultimately, with a couple more points than Sitterley I was shipped back to the States. He followed shortly thereafter. At Fort Sheridan, IL I was processed to go home. I was placed on leave and released from active duty on March 26, 1946. We all remained officers in the Inactive Reserve.

On May 21, 1952 we received copies of the Award of a "Presidential Unit Citation" for the 41st Bombardment Group. The Citation read, in part "...the Group... is cited for extraordinary heroism in action... Bearing the burden of land-based aircraft missions. It established its facilities and operated its aircraft under most hazardous conditions... A gallant fighting unit, complemented by skilled officers and men, the 41st Bombardment Group... played a major role in achieving the air superiority essential to our success in the Okinawa campaign. In 1948, 1951 and 1952 many of were offered opportunities to join the Active Reserve. They were interested in a certain particular skills, including Navigation, with an opportunity to be trained in Radar Navigation. Like most of us, I opted not to take advantage of these opportunities.

Sitterley, Sternberg and I kept in touch. As a matter of fact, Kem and I spent some months attempting to make a success of a candy store in Kansas City. We ultimately, independently made our ways to California where we were again friends.

The only time in the ensuing 60 years since 1945 that the three of us were together was at the 41st Bomb. Group Reunion in San Antonio, Texas in 1998. We have a favorite picture showing the three of us at San Antonio in front of a sign copied from a background sign saying "396th Officer's Club" copied from a picture which had been taken on Okinawa.

There have been yearly reunions since 1998 but so far the three of us have not been able to attend one together.

NOTES: I researched this paper in preparation for a taped interview as part of a Library of Congress effort to preserve oral memories of WWII.

Many of the dates and places we were stationed I reconstructed from orders of the assignments which I retained. I am sure that others have even better recollection than I of some of these assignments.

In addition, I invite any readers of this paper to send me corrections and additions. [Ray's contact information can be found in the Masthead of this newsletter.]

ARMY AIR FORCES NAVIGATION SCHOOL
SAN MARCOS ARMY AIR FIELD
San Marcos, Texas

SPECIAL ORDERS)

13 Jan 44

NO. 10)

E X T R A C T

1. FN Avn/C or AVN/S as indicated, having satisfactorily completed the prescribed course for A&ft Obsr (Aerial Nav) are eff 14 Jan 44 hon disch fr the mil sv for the convenience of the Govt & eff 15 Jan 44 by DP are aptd 2ND LTS AC - RES, 2ND LTS AC-AUS, or F/O -AUS as indicated, are asgd to dy in the AC, are ~~ordded~~ to AD at this sta pending further dy asgmt orders & are atchd un-asgd to orgns indicated. Avn/S marked thus (*). ASN indicated prior to disch & Off serial number indicated upon acceptance of commission. Each Off will rank fr 15 Jan 44.

* * *

ATCHD UNASGD TO 1151ST NAV TNG SQ;

APTD 2ND LT -AUS (Contd)

RAMAKER, JESS C	16060094	07061662	Grand Rapids, Mich.
SITTERLEY, KEMBLE U	17099727	0707120	Kansas City, Kansas

ATCHD UNASGD TO 1151ST NAV TNG SQ;

APTD 2ND LT AC -AUS (Cont'd)

STERNBERG, RICHARD F	14102907	0706983	Brooklyn, New York
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* * *

By order of COLONEL HUTCHISON:

/s/ P. C. Musgrave
P. C. MUSGRAVE
MAJOR, AC
Adjutant.

OFFICIAL:

P. C. MUSGRAVE
MAJOR, AC
Adjutant

The above order officially established the "Inevitable Triumvirate," a brotherhood of Ramaker, Sitterley, Sternberg, lasting throughout the WWII days and well beyond--like into the present time.

FOLLOWING ARE KEM SITTERLEY'S EMBELLISHMENTS TO JESS RAMAKER'S ACCOUNTS:

9-15-'04 Letter: Ray, I awakened at 4:30 this morning thinking about you and the fact that I have wanted to answer your wonderful note of May 1. Normally, I am so tired and/or sleepy that all I can do is get back in bed or watch TV. When the Tennis or Golf major tournaments are underway, I'm with them 5 or 10 hour a day. This morning however was different, and I thought, "I'm just going to spend a few hours with Ray and Dick and Guts!" So here goes!!

Ray, thanks so much for your nice letter of May 1, 2004, along with your notes about your service time; it was the major subject of our Mother's Day dinner. Some way or another, one of the girl found it (there is no privacy around here--one's person's mail is everyone's mail), and your letter was sort of passed around for about an hour as we celebrated Mother's Day over turkey, etc. "Dad is this

really true?" "Yes, substitute Kansas State U for Michigan State, and it would be the same for me...or with Sternberg it would be North Carolina U." "Dad, why haven't you told us any of this?" (From daughter's Kemary and Kallie, and granddaughter Karissa {18 going on 38}...) And we chatted and laughed and had a most marvelous timethanks mostly to your letter and notes.

I washed out of pilot training because another instructor saw me make an improper spin recovery (I left the stick forward for a split second too long). My instructor was most apologetic...and also confided in me that they had orders to wash out 60% of the pilot class because they needed more gunners. You had to have a three-nine rating to get back for navigation or bombardier school, and that was probably not over 3 or 4 percent. If you remember, I cheated on the hearing test...when they said stick your finger in you ear, I did while I was holding the ear open. I had flunked the Navy Air Corps test, and thought that one up all by myself.

As I remember it, they wanted to "dual rate" officers on both the B-25 and the B-29: on the B-25 because they didn't have room for another body and on the B-29 because they wanted a spare because of the long missions.



Farmer Kem at About Age 15

Ploesti brings back painful memories. Verne Graham, one of my best friends in high school went down over Ploesti. Visiting his Mom in Kansas City, Kansas, was one of the hardest things I've done.

Transferring from the ship to the LSVP is one of the scariest times in my life. The ship was bobbing about 5 to 10 feet up and down and below it about 20 feet was the LSVP bobbing about 10 to 15 feet. We all had with us full gear of duffel bags, B-4 bag, gas mask, 45 pistol...how in the hell can you get all of that into that little boat down there? There was a LSVP commander sergeant in the little LSVP and he motioned to us o throw the duffel bags and the B-4 bags onto a huge pile of same and jump onto the top of the pile...now this was scary on one hand, but on the other it seemed to be the safest way to go. So far as we knew everyone made it. Now we had no transportation, but we were issued pup tents which we constructed and slept in a night or two until our transportation arrived.

You say, "Tom was lost on a mission over Japan." I don't remember this. His wife, Charlotte, came down to our Manchester reunion, and we had a lovely 3 to 4 hours with her. She brought a daughter with her, and I had Kemary

with me, so we just had a wonderful time. Tom Wetherbee got home and died about 5 or ten years ago, I think. (You never know about my brain.)

I have not been able to establish the date of that typhoon...but looking through some of my stuff, it should be about the last half of August or the first half of September, 1995.

...So much for being responsive to your letter.

...AND SO MUCH FOR THE STORIES OF THE JAPANESE MEN AND THEIR STOICISM AND BEING UNDEMONSTRATIVE...

The story that most sticks in my mind regarding our stint as military policemen is the one about our investigating the murder of a young Japanese girl...maybe 16 years old. The body was found in a field about a quarter mile from the road about five miles from our home base of Irumagawa. We went to see the body and it had about 20 stab wounds. There were maybe a dozen or so Japanese folks around and they all agreed that the murderer was John O. Doeyou and that he worked in a mine in a small city about forty miles up in the mountains nearby. After clearing it with our boss we decided to go to Littlecity early the next morning. It was a very cold ride. I do not remember that our jeep had a heater, and the flap had lots of openings that the cold air could blow in as we tried to cruise at 35 to 50 miles per hour. We got there and went immediately to make a courtesy call of the Chief of Police of Littlecity. And what a delightful surprise, Chief Nicemanu could speak very good English. He insisted on sending two of his men up to bring the alleged perpetrator back to town (if he would have brought him, I don't know what in the hell we would have done with him. For me, I would have been scared to death). Thank goodness the men came back with the good news that the alleged perp had skipped town and had not reported to work for several days. During the two hours that we had to spend with Chief Nicemanu, he wanted to talk about the wings on our tunic and what airplanes we flew and anything that had anything to do with the Army Air Corps. He then told us that his son had died flying a suicide bomber...and he just absolutely lost it...he cried, he sobbed for several minutes. Thank goodness the men came back from the mine and he had pretty much gotten back to normal. We exchanged pleasantries and were on our way and quite happy about getting out of a very awkward situation.

As I remember it, they wanted to get some officers on road patrol because they were having such a difficult time with officers speeding and giving enlisted men MP's a hard time when they tried to give them a ticket.

And then we had this crazy incident where two officers were in an ambulance with a flat tire in beautiful downtown Irumagawa. They had four cases of cigarettes with them. The lug nuts of the wheel could not be turned. They told us that they surely were not trying to sell these cigarettes on the black market; they were just getting them for their Officers Club. We explained that that was sort of a long story.. they could buy those cartons for 50 cents at

the PX, and they could be sold for about \$10 on the black market, which would net about \$4000. They insisted that they were just out scrounging these things on the black market and they were going directly to the Officers Club. They were such nice guys. We just helped them get their damned lug nut unscrewed and directed them on their way...as they seemed to be a bit turned around in our beautiful downtown Irumagawa.

Another chore that I remember hating was the all night patrol. It was so cold. The base was having quite a problem with stuff getting stolen, and this was the reason that it had to be done. We had the jeeps, and we had to patrol for about 20 to 30 minutes each hour on an eight-hour shift; we didn't have it too often because we were getting quite a few day shifts on detective assignments.

It's almost 10:30 Ray, and I have been with you for six hours reminiscing and trying to remember particular items from our tour as military policemen. Can you imagine? Ramaker and Sitterley? As military policemen?

My favorite story of all...Doesn't really have that much to do with being military policemen, but it did happen on that watch. I was down in Yokohama on one of my scrounging trips with the navy. That day I was unable to get a jeep and I was forced to go by rail. I was in a train station and no one was in sight. I was standing about four feet from the edge of the platform. The train roars in and the sliding door opened about 4 feet from me. Crowds came from nowhere. I wasn't going forward to get into the train car. I was being jostled backward. I was awestruck. I just barely got on the train. The seats were all full. The standing room was unbelievably jammed. I found a strap and was holding onto it with one hand and was reading an Esquire magazine which I held in the other hand. I did not see any other Caucasians at all. I was feeling sort of lonely when out of this sea of Oriental faces a voice in perfect English said, "It's a shame you have to ride in such crowded cars." I couldn't believe it at all. We visited and visited, and he insisted I come to his house to visit. He gave me his address and a little map, and we made a date...This beautiful Mr. Murami and I.

Mr. Murami had spent many years going to American Schools. He had graduated from the University of Michigan in Mechanical Engineering. He got a Masters Degree in Electrical Engineering from Ohio State. He had held very high positions in both RCA and GM in this country and this surely would account for his excellent English.

We took gifts, many gifts, things that we could buy at the PX for very little, but which were priceless to them. Jewelry for Mrs. Murami, tobacco and alcohol for Mr. Murami, candy for the kids (a daughter about 10 and a son about 8) amongst many other things. These items might have cost us \$40 but would have cost them 20 times that much if they could even find them to buy. Mrs. Murami and the children came in to meet us, which they did by kneeling in front of us and bowing their foreheads to the floor mat. No shoes are

worn in this beautiful home. The house was very good size and had a huge garden with a little stream running through it. When the war broke out, Mr. Murami was the manager of the Japanese branch of RCA.

We stayed at Mr. Murami's house for 2 or 3 hours, visiting only with him. The wife and children stayed no more than 2 or 3 minutes. As discussions amongst men usually do, sex raises its beautiful head (no pun intended). He explained the structure of the geisha. The top tier are mostly young and beautiful, highly educated, and talented...some in music, some in dancing and all in conversation...they do not go to bed with their clients. The second tier is much like the first except that they may go to bed with clients at their option. The third tier is many times ex-workers from higher tiers and will go to bed with their clients at the client's option but the geisha girl's price.

Mr. Murami took us to a geisha of the very highest tier. It was a big building, looking like a house with a front which reminds one of Mt. Vernon. It had a big center atrium, 3 or 4 stories high. We were taken to a big room with a big low table. Food and drink were just constantly being served by beautiful young ladies. Other young ladies came and sat with us. Some would sing and some would dance. There was never any incident of their offering sex. Mr. Murami wanted us to take a hot tub with him. We did. These huge tubs could have comfortably served 6 to 8 people. The water was so hot, it's hard to believe. I couldn't take over 5 to 6 minutes. Ray lasted a minute or two longer than I, and then Mr. Murami probably could have lasted forever, but being the good host got out shortly after Ray.

Our wonderful day with Mr. Murami was over. It was about 8 in the evening and we had a two hour ride to get back to our base. We took Mr. Murami back to his beautiful home; we profusely told him how much we had enjoyed our 5 or 6 hours with him and we drove back to the base....it was the coldest night we had had but with that great hot bath and maybe a bit of the bubbly, we didn't even notice it...I think I asked Ray to drive...maybe I had more bubbly?

I'm so sad you're not going to make Portland.
God Bless y'll and I send my love...Kem



Red...No top but with Rumble Seat. Much cooler & fun than Dick's 1944 Plymouth Convertible...but not as effective as a girl catcher.

[My (Gutts) addendum]: My mother visited for a day or two

on her way back from a visit with my Navy brother Al & wife in Florida. The Model A owner guys were off somewhere, so Jess generously offered me use of it. The brakes, as Jess providentially warned me, were tender. While touring with Mom, we were coming down a steep hill toward a stop sign and, with a "hot" young pilot at the wheel, perhaps going a tad too fast. It became increasingly obvious that we were not going to stop within the confines of the law. Fortunately, there was no traffic except for a lone young driver stopped to our right at the intersection. Still vivid is the image: he, recognizing our plight, watching with an amused grin as we slid through the stop sign...and Mom, mustering a rigid, straight-ahead matriarch demeanor look that never wavered...as the "traffic guy" and I waved pleasantries, and we continued on our way.



Kem knows this pic was taken in TX, but not sure where... Perhaps he & Ray visiting Austin when they were at Nav. School at San Marcus. Yes, it does (but rarely) snow in S. Texas ...had 12"

here in San Antonio in 1985. The gal was Kem's then babe, but why is she snuggling up to Ray?

Honestly, not sure what to make of this pic (R). Kem endeavoring to identify himself? Naw, never knew a guy more rightfully sure of himself and who he is.



(L) General Patton? Again, naw...wrong theatre. Ah so, it's General Chongomoto, alias Gen. Chong, who you will remember appeared at the Portland Reunion Chinese Gardens with Aides Ching and Chang.

The Okinawa "Chalet" Kem and I built after The Typhoon. Kem (with me tagging along) posed as "Mess Hall Officers" to scrounge the materials. Interior décor included a sofa, easy chair, record player, records and stand, a two seater

writing desk, refrigerator, Bunsen stove and stocked larder.

Below L: Frank Hayward, crew Pilot at the writing desk.
R- Furniture builder Gutts.





"DOC" EYER REPORTS FOR THE 396TH BOMB. SQ:

It's been great hearing from the most recent dues payers. I'm happy to report that most are fairly healthy---the rest like me are "hanging in there" wondering when those highly touted "golden years" will arrive. Spouse Therese "Terry" continues to experience migrating pain of unknown cause. An exploratory brain scan MRI was negative and a spinal scan is scheduled.

[Ed. I've recently read articles disclosing that researchers have found that people who have been prayed for by others have experienced more positive curative effects than those not prayed for. So please add Terry to your prayer list.]

Good to hear from historians Frank and Nancy Handley. His nephew, Capt. Bullock was KIA off Maloelop 2/10/44, in flames---and earlier off Maloelap 1/25/44 Ralph Thomas gave morphine and blood transfusions to Malcolm Knickerbocker whose leg was blown off at the crotch. Malcolm performed his duties as co-pilot, dying as his plane turned on final approach.



Dues for 2005 are \$15---another \$5 will bring the new roster---finally (Thanks to Gwen Moody). Those of you who have already paid will receive the roster shortly. We do need updates on your phone and e-mail addresses.

I would like to thank Bill Zingary again for the truly amazing job he did for the 396th and my apologies for not being able to reply to all the notes received.

And a big Thank You to Urban Gutting for the amazing job he's doing---for the whole group.

JOHN HELMER REPORTS FOR THE 48TH BOMB. SQ:



Beverly and I and our grand daughter Isabelle, age 14 are (as you read this) in Sweden for a family reunion that is held every 5 years. The reunion is in Stockholm, my father's birthplace.

We will also spend 10 days in southern Sweden in the home of my mother was raised in.

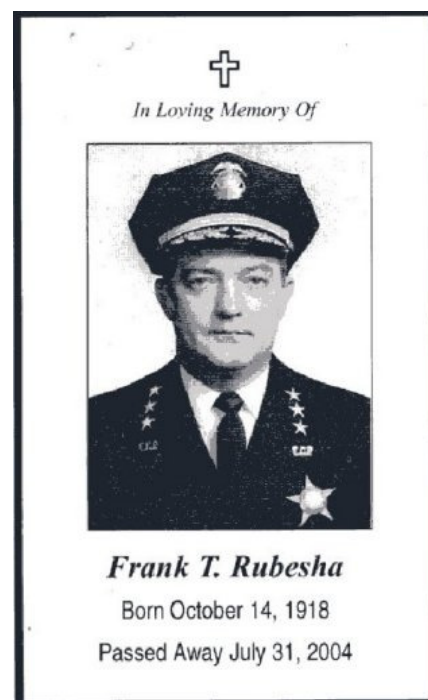
After the reunion we will visit St. Petersburg on a 5 day group tour.

June 1 to 3 we will visit Elmia, Sweden for the largest forest show in the world. It is held every 4 years.

We leave Seattle May 3 and return June 4. We will travel on British Airways with a lay over in London and plane change to Stockholm.

GLENN PENNER, 41st Bomb. Gp. Hq. relayed information from Rae E. Rubesha Puntillo that her father, FRANK T. RUBESHA, 41st Gp. Hq. passed away on July 31, 2004 at age 86. An article in *The Crow Flight* # 23 P6, related Frank's story of how the movie *Going My Way* saved his life while stationed at Makin Island.

Frank retired as Chief of Police of East Chicago, IN. He was a graduate of the FBI National Academy.



Glenn added: With the passing of Gen. Bywater and Frank, he knows of only three other Gp. Hq. survivors from his April '43 to Dec. '45 tenure. Colonel Charles B. Doughey was the Gp. CO before overseas orders.

March 5, 2005. Dear Urban, You can't even imagine how thrilled and pleased I was when I opened your envelope with The Crow Flight newsletter and saw the presentation of Murray. I have always loved and admired him so much and to realize that the 41st members were proud of him also, gave me much consolation in what I am bearing these months. Thank you So Sincerely, **Frankie** [Frankie also requested a few extra copies of TCF for her family and we were happy to oblige.]

February 28, 2005. Dear Gutts: Received the 31st Crow flight and reminded me I hadn't sent my 2005 dues. Great tribute to General Bywater---we are losing too fast.

I really did appreciate that Barry, Ed Naylor's son, was thoughtful enough to call me when Ed passed away. Ed was the only member of our crew with whom I had contact. Barry's letter and the verse from McMillian, once again brought back many memories. Ed wasn't the only one scared to death when we hit that terrible storm on the August 15th mission. At the time, though, didn't have time to be scared, jumping from one gun to the other, with Zeros diving at us from all directions. Most scared, I guess, was when we were scheduled for our 50th and last mission---until the wheels touched down safely. Keep up the good work. Wishing you the best, **Bob Gollnitz [47th Bomb. Sq.]**

April 20, 2005. Hi all, Spring has finally sprung here in New England. We closed the ski area on the 10th after a reasonably good season. The ice went out of the lake this morning. I can now walk around without a jacket. The crocuses are blooming in the front garden and the birds are creating a traffic jam at the bird feeders. Doris and I will be at Ft. Sill for a few days in May to attend the retirement ceremony for my son Steve. It will be 22 ½ years since I commissioned him from ROTC. We have a busy schedule laid out for the summer. Beside the trip to Ft. Sill, we are going to China for 14 days in June, then a couple of weeks at the family cottage in Maine in July. Last but not least we will hopefully see all of you at the reunion in September. Doris is almost fully recovered from her heart surgery and we both are doing well. CUL, **Arnold Sayer, 47th**

April 27, 2005. Hi Doc & Terri, I hope you folks are doing well and without problems. I and Joyce too, are doing OK for the shape we are in, and are looking forward to Hot Springs. Enclosed is a check

for 2005. Thanks for keeping things going for the 396th. Sincerely, **Walt Winner [396th Bomb. Sq.]**

March 16, 2005. Dear "Doc" Quite some time ago, I was a young fellow, flying B-25s in Central Pacific area. Although I have seen a lot and done a lot since then, I still remember the days on Makin, the Marshall Islands, etc.

I enjoy the Crow Flight and other things all of you send. Therefore, am sending a small check to help with admin. expenses, etc. The article on Murray Bywater was well done! Our best wishes to all, **Dana W. Stewart [396th Bomb. Sq.]**

Dec. 23, 2004. Dear Mr. Eyer: May I call you "Doc?" Comrade "Zing" was kind enough to take me into the 396th a few years ago. I had lost all contact with my Kahuku Air Base Buddies by outliving the ones that I knew and kept in contact with. Except the Red Cross Field Director, Walt Liddiard from New York and our Assistant Base Adjutant who lives in St. Louis but will not talk about the war. Walt and I visit and keep in touch via phone. Kahuku was a B-24 bomber base and when we started retaking the islands from the Japanese, I was part of a B-24 Sq. which was sent to Funafuti, one of the Ellice Island group; also spent some time on some of the other islands.

I really enjoy "The Crow Flight," as it brings back so many memories and many pictures are so alike ones I took on Funafuti and others.

I sent a few of the native pics to Zing, mostly grass skirted Island Belles. One of a Jap Bomber we downed who made a landing in very shallow water. I never found out what happened to the crew.

Last Jan. 3rd at age 88, our 911 rushed me to the local hospital for an emergency operation...I had a ruptured colon, and a few other things with a one in four chance of survival. After four weeks in ICU, of which I remember nothing, I started to recover and came home March 15th. With a lot of rehabilitation, I'm now walking and driving.

If I'm delinquent in any dues, please advise, and I'll pay up. Fraternally, **CB [Cecil B "CB" Williams, Lt. Col. USAF (Ret.)]**

LOOKING FORWARD: THE NEXT THE CROW FLIGHT #33 WILL PRESENT THE "BIOS" OF JOE ROOP 47TH AND JAMES L. MC GRATH "JIM" 47TH AND HOPEFULLY OTHER INPUT FROM ALL OF YOU. WOULD LIKE TO SEE MORE "BIOS" FROM THE 48TH, 396TH AND 820TH.

REMEMBER THEM ON MEMORIAL DAY

THE YOUNG DEAD SOLDIERS

By Archibald MacLeish

**The young dead soldiers do not speak.
Nevertheless they are heard in the still houses.**

(Who has not heard them?)

**They have a silence that speaks for them at night.
And when the clock counts, they say,
We were young, We have died. Remember us.**

They say,

**We have done what we could
But until it is finished it is not done.**

They say,

**We have given our lives
But until it is finished no one can know what our lives gave.**

They say,

Our deaths are not ours

They are yours.

They will mean what you make them.

They say,

Whether our lives and our deaths were for peace and a new hope

Or for nothing

We cannot say.

It is you who must say this.

They say,

We leave you our deaths,

Give them their meaning,

Give them an end to the war and a true peace,

Give them a victory that ends the war and a peace afterwards.

Give them their meaning.

We were young, they say.

We have died.

Remember us.



THE CROW FLIGHT is a publication of the 47TH, 48TH, 396TH & 820TH 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 & 396TH SQUADRON DUES ARE \$15. MORE IS ACCEPTED. \$3 (\$5 FOR 396TH) EXTRA WILL PURCHASE A RESPECTIVE SQ. ROSTER. MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO: WARREN EYER FOR THE 396TH, JOHN HELMER FOR THE 48TH AND URBAN A. GUTTING FOR THE 47TH. ADDRESSES ABOVE.

\$\$ FINANCIAL REPORTS \$\$

47TH BOMB. SQ. Good Guys and Gals dues and gifts contributors since last report are: **Bob & Ople Gollnitz** – **Rick & Marilyn Rondinelli** – **George Harrison** – **Eleanor Walker** (Memory of William [Bud]) – **Elaine Stumbaugh** (Memory of her father, **Harold Kasten**) – **Lynn & Betty Sweetland** – **John & Margaret Sacco** – **Frankie Bywater** (Memory of **Murray**) – **Bob & Nancy Worsnop** – **Jim & Kay Land** – **Mary Ellen Ramstack** (Memory of **Richard**) – **Ray Kuttenkuler**. The 47th bank balance as of 04-30-05 was \$2433.72.

48TH BOMB. SQ. – **John Helmer** reports dues and gifts since the last report from the following people: **Gene Olsen** – **Ruth Sleasman** (Memory of **Homer**) – **Paul Hopson**, for a total of \$70. Thank you very much. Our Savings Balance stands at \$2659.34 as of 4-25-05

396TH BOMB. SQ. – "Doc" Eyer reports: Thanks in part to the following paid up members of the 396th our

bank balance is \$1,075.82: **John "Baggy" Baglietto** – **Louis Cockran** – **G. Loeb** (Memorial) – **Leo Cavender** – **Frank Hanley** – **D. Stewart** – **Robert Baird** – **Ralph Thomas** – **Chas. Burns** – **M. Allee** – **W. Eyer** – **Walt Winner** – **Bruce Hanson**.

ATTENTION:

The 47th & 48th Sqdns. each have approximately \$2500 in their bank accounts. Equitable disposal of these assets must eventually be addressed, so it is proposed that these assets be dissipated by using them to pay for future issues of *The Crow Flight*, thereby eliminating the need for future Squadron Dues payments for the 47th & 48th. The 396th Account Balance is about ½ that of the 47th or 48th & therefore continued 396th dues collection would be required for an indefinite time.

Annual newsletter expenditure for four issues is about \$1000 per Sq.; therefore, two years of publications would expend all but a cushion of about \$500 for each of the 47th & 48th Sqdns. Should extenuating providence be kind to us after two years we can then reassess the need for resuming Sq. dues payments.

Two realistic but unpredictable limitations must be considered: 1) How many more years will Reunions attendance-wise be viable, and 2) How many more issues of *The Crow Flight* can be published.

Joining forces with the 820th Bomb. Sq. should extend the viable limit of the (No 1) Reunion limitation. (No. 2) limitation is mostly dependent upon the will of God re my health and stamina, definitely unpredictable.

Bases for this proposal have been touched with your honchos, **Geo Tolbert**, **John Helmer**, "Doc" Eyer and **Kem Sitterley**, and all are in support. Please, your individual opinion is solicited and is essential. Contact your Sq. Reps; addresses in Masthead.

Eliminating Dues Payment poses a potential serious drawback: that is, absence of your communication in the form of notes and other input for publication in *The Crow Flight* that you've sent along with your Dues Payments. Without your continued input for publication there would be scant material to report in this newsletter.

This is now only a proposal. Please continue all Sq. Dues Support until a decision, based upon your input and discussion at Hot Springs, is announced.