



The Crow Flight



Twenty-sixth Newsletter of the 47th & 48th & 396th Bombardment Squadrons, 41st Bomb. Group (M), 7th AF, WWII, Issued November 2003

THE REUNION

by Rachel Firth

Autumn leaves rustling, together to the appointed place, the old warriors come. / **Pilgrims**, drifting across the land they fought to preserve. Where they meet is not important. They meet and that's enough for now. / **Greetings** echo across the lobby. / **Hands** reach out and arms draw buddies close. / **Embraces**, that as young men were too uncomfortable to give, too shy to accept so lovingly. But deep within these Indian Summer days, they have reached a greater understanding of life and love. / **The** shells holding their souls are weaker now, but heads and minds grow vigorous, remembering...

On a table someone spreads old photographs, a test of recollection. / **And** friendly laughter echoes at shocks of hair gone gray or white, or merely gone. **The** rugged slender bodies lost forever. Yet they no longer need to prove their strength. / **Some** are now sustained by one of "medicine's miracles," and even in this fact, they manage to find humor. **The** women, all those that waited, all those that loved them, have watched the changes take place. Now, they observe and listen, and smile at each other; as glad to be together as the men. / **Talk** turns to war and planes and foreign lands. Stories are told and told again, reweaving the threadbare fabric of the past. Mending one more time the banner of their youth. / **They** hear the

vibrations, feel the shudder of metal as engines whine and whirl, and planes come to life. / **These** birds with fractured wings can be seen beyond the mist of the clouds, and they are in the air again chasing the wind, feeling the exhilaration of flight close to the heavens. / **Dead** comrades, hearing their names spoken, wanting to share in this time, if only in spirit, move silently among them. Their presence is felt and smiles appear beneath misty eyes. / **Each**, in his own way may wonder who will be absent in another year. / **The** room grows quiet for a time. / **Suddenly** an ember flames to life. Another memory burns. / **The** talk may turn to other wars and other men, and of futility. / **So** this is how it goes. The past is so much present. / **In** their ceremonies, the allegiances, the speeches and the prayers, one cannot help but hear the deep eternal love of country they will forever share. / **Finally** it is time to leave. Much too soon to set aside this little piece of yesterday, but the past cannot be held too long, for it is fragile. / **They** say "Farewell" ... "See you another year, God willing." / **Each** keep a little of the others with him forever.



This picture of TOM CARSON, 48th Bomb Sq., in his memorabilia regalia "Confederate AF" uniform, epitomizes the spirit and meaning of why we gather at reunions. Pride of service and unit sums it up. That's a hand-carved on whale ivory (scrimshaw) B-25 Mitchell on his WWII Issue Colt 45 custom grip.

THE BRANSON REUNION

The writing above by Rachel Firth beautifully describes the essence of feelings of those who are able to attend WWII reunions...and that statement will, I am sure, be seconded by the fort-seven folks that attended our 2003 Branson Reunion.



THE CROW FLIGHT is a publication of the 47TH, 48TH & 396TH 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 EXTRA WILL PURCHASE A RESPECTIVE SQ. ROSTER. MAIL CHECKS PAYABLE TO: JOHN HELMER FOR THE 48TH; DOC EYER FOR THE 396TH & URBAN A. GUTTING FOR THE 47TH ADDRESSES ABOVE.

***REQUEST A "BIO" FORM* - TO FILL OUT & RETURN FOR PUBLICATION OF HIGHLIGHTS OF YOUR SERVICE & LIFE SINCE DEACTIVATION. WE REALLY!! ARE INTERESTED. 47TH OR 48TH OR 397TH CONTACT URBAN A. GUTTING - ADDRESS ABOVE.**

\$\$ FINANCIAL REPORTS \$\$

47TH BOMB. SQ. - The Good Guys and Galls since last report are: **Herb & Lilian Kastin** - **Lola Wampler** (Memory of Austin) - **Robert & Betty McDermott** - **Ricardo & Marilyn Rondinelli** - **Francis & Evelyn Lisak** - **Frank Lisak, Jr.** - **Jeannette & Mike Phillips** (Lisak Daut.) - **Josephine Kinney** (Memory of Col. George Kinney) - **Gus & Enid Anderson**, 820th. Fifty-eight Good Guys & Gals (Counting couples as one---isn't that romantic...) have contributed \$1059 for 2003. Accounts balance as of 10-31-'03 was \$2315.78.

48TH BOMB. SQ. - John Helmer reports dues and gifts since the last newsletter from **Ana Smith**. The 48th share for NL #23 & 24 was \$292.59. Our bank balance on 10-31-03 was \$2489.25.

396TH BOMB. SQ. - "Doc" Eyer reports dues received from: **Charles & Gwendolyn Willis** - **William & Dottie Miller** - **Nathan & Bernice Mitchell** - **Ralph & Peg Thomas** - **Charles & Carol Park** - **Joseph Coady**. Account balance as of 10-31-2003 was \$762.74

BRANSON REUNION REFUNDS: Once again we were able to bring early Christmas joy with a \$50 refund to each of 39 Squadron Registration Fee payers. Difficulty in determining what the cost of the buses would be, especially early on when the bus companies were going out of business or being bought out, was responsible for most of the surplus. Following an old Chinese proverb that says, "It is easier to give away money than to collect it," we erred on the high side.

*******VERY IMPORTANT NEWS*******

By unanimous vote of me, this newsletter will be printed entirely in black/white. That is the relatively bad news for esthetics like Kem Sitterley.

The good news is that this will save considerable printing cost vs. using color. Like about 3 cents a p. for b/w vs. 27 a p. for color.

More good news is that a full color version of *The Crow Flight* will be available for easy download on my rudimentary web site.

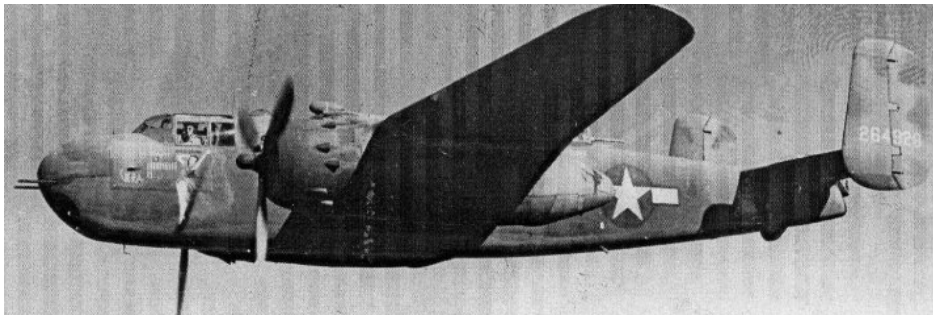
If you do not have computer web access from any source (son, grandson, friend, library, etc.), & you want a color version, let me (Gutting - Contact info left) know & I'll print & mail a color copy to you.

If this works, I anticipate that annual dues can be reduced to like \$5. Don't want to eliminate dues entirely because there will still be postage, etc. and we need to keep in contact for address changes and the wonderful notes that many of you send and are used in *The Crow Flight*.

PLEASE MAKE A COPY OF THIS: THE URL WEB SITE ADDRESS TO ACCESS *THE CROW FLIGHT* IS: www.thecrowflight.org

Feedback on how this works FOR YOU is essential.

EDWARD J. NAYLOR, 47TH Bomb. Sq., and crew, returning in 928 from a Marshall Island raid. Note 12 mission bomb counts on the nose. Picture below L. with CP Buck Miller sports the full 50 mission count. To the R. of Buck is the original crew: Starting top L-R:



Bob Gollnitz Radio Gnr. - Claud Jackson, Eng. Gnr. - Ed Dawson, Arm. Gnr. - Bill Doebele, Nav/Cannoneer - Ray Cramer, orig. Pilot (Wounded severely on second mission & replaced by Ed Naylor as Pilot) & Ed Naylor, CP.



The pulchritudinous nose art gal is none other than Ed's wife, *VERA*. A "Very pretty girl" added Ed. Hmmm. Looks like Ed's descriptive phrase needs some merited added "oomph." Ed & Vera are planning to be at the Portland, OR Reunion; so come, then you decide.

Ed & Vera raised two wonderful children, Gary E. and Barry R. who in turn rewarded them with three grandchildren, Matthew, Jeffrey and Mitchell.

After his WWII discharge as a Captain, Ed worked as a sales representative for A. Exton & Co. He held an M-Day assignment in the active reserve at Ft. Dix AAB, which later became McGuire AFB, and was recalled to active duty for the Korean War. He served in the Engineering and Test Flight section at McGuire until he was sent to Okinawa (well, he missed that opportunity the first time around) where he served from Feb. 1952 to July 1953 as Base Maintenance Officer and Test Pilot at Kadena Air Base. Once again Ed then elected discharge from active duty, this time at Portland, OR in 1953.

From there Ed migrated back to his eastern roots, and eventually established three hunting and fishing lodges in British Columbia, Canada. He sums this episode of his life as "Retired after 24 years." (Well, I can only report what is given; it must have been a real tranquil 24 years.)

Ed caps up his WWII experiences: "Flew 50 missions in the central Pacific area which was very

exciting---between Jap fighters & anti-aircraft fire & the weather out there. It kept you busy. I lost a very good friend, Ray Cramer. I will never forget Ray. My home town is Trenton, N. J."

As to contact with other 47th Sq. people, Ed says he has talked with Bob Gollnoz, Ned Burris and Gen. Bywater. He has tried calling several others, "but they were not listed under those numbers," referring to the 47th rosters. Writer's Comment: There is only one way we can keep the Sq. Rosters current, and that is by you good folks keeping us informed of changes.

Sent Ed a few back issues of *The Crow Flight* after he surfaced about a year ago. Ed said, "I sure am glad to get all this information about our old outfit and hear about some of the boys. It sure brings back memories to me. I'm sending a few pictures that might bring back memories to others."

What's Next? "I go to my ranch every now and then in eastern OR."

I definitely get the feeling that Ed is a rather laid back sort of guy. And that's nice. Look forward to meeting him and *VERA* in Portland; would like to hear more about those Canada lodges too.



The 396th Bomb. Sq. – Lou & Corinne Beisser - Bill & Bobbie Mac Minn – Liz & Ed Feist



The 48th Wolf Pack

**John Helmer - John Beddall – George Knight – Dave Crane – Paul Hopson – Tom Carson – Ray Huschle
Beverly Helmer - Hazy Beddall - Jo Knight - Nettie Crane - Helen Hopson - Marian Calbreth – Arlene "**



The 47th Crow flight

**George Tolbert – Bill Telega – Francis Lisak – Rick Rondinelli – Arnold & Doris Sayer – Joe & Lola
Roop – Urb Gutting – Kem Sitterley
Bev Williams – Ellie Telega – Marilyn Rondinelli – Thom & Mary Zachok –Carolyn Colvin**

**Obviously, we 47th folks need to improve our photo op technique. Take off the glasses, like Joe?
Look away from camera, like Kem? Stay Focused? Fire Lou? (Just kidding, Lou! We need you.)**

BRANSON REUNION COMMENTS:

By Corinne Beisser, 396th: On the way to the Branson Belle dinner cruise, our bus driver told us that the 1000 passenger paddle wheeler was built on the hill overlooking the Table Rock Lake. It was then slid down to the lake on its side on bananas so they would not pollute the lake. Ozark Humor?

We stayed at the Lawrence Welk Resort. The food, everywhere, was delicious.

We all enjoyed the Lowe Family of Utah concert. Mrs. Lowe brought a tray of her homemade pumpkin muffins to our Hospitality Room and presented many men with Lowe Family caps and the women with candles and candy.

The Lawrence Welk show featured three Lennon sisters: Art Duncan, Joanne Castle and Jack Imel on his marimba. A great show!

On Wednesday, we started with comedy from Yakov Smirnoff and then a Violin production at Shoji Tabuchi's. The 41st Bomb Group was acknowledged at every show we attended. Each show included spiritual songs and ended with huge patriotic numbers. Someone remarked that if the ACLU ever came to Branson, they would shut it down.

Everyone enjoyed the final banquet. The food, as always, was delicious. Many prizes were given to lucky people. Conversation was heart warming and nostalgic.

We look forward to seeing everyone in Portland, Oregon next year.

By George Tolbert, 47th: As usual, I enjoyed seeing the "Old Crows" that are still mobile enough to travel. Also, visiting and sharing experiences with members from the other squadrons was a plus. It will be a sad day when I stand reveille alone. Hopefully, many more will recuperate and be able to attend next years 'reunion in Portland, OR. To those that couldn't or wouldn't attend the Branson Reunion, you missed a good time, good entertainment and good facilities. Many thanks to those that worked and spent time and money to make the Branson Reunion a success.

By Ray & Arlene Huschle 48th: Hi , Thanks for the refund, we appreciate that. We'll have to see how things go this coming year, before the Oregon reunion. We really enjoyed this one, the shows and meals, breakfasts were great, all but the banquet dinner; felt we could have had better service for it. Maybe the showboat service being so great, spoiled us. Other than that it was a great reunion and we enjoyed it. We didn't get a placemat, so if you still have some we'll take that. The Branson reunion was

well planed and it was nice to have bus service to the places we went to. You all do a good job, and we hope it works out so we can make the next one, too. Good luck on your knee replacement next month, will think of you and pray for a successful surgery

By Ricardo Rondinelli, 47th: Thanks for the \$100 check reimbursement. The reunion was A-1...no complaints of any kind.

By Liz & Ed Feist, 396th: What a nice surprise we received in the mail yesterday. Just wanted to express our appreciation for all your hard work getting the reunion together, what a JOB!!! We thoroughly enjoyed every minute of it. Just wish we could have stayed longer and saw more shows, maybe I can get Ed to leave this ranch again and make another trip there. It won't be easy, he thinks things will fall apart if he's not here.

By Me (Urb Gutting), 47th: First, to set the record straight, the "...your hard work..." above refers to Lou & Corinne Beisser, the Coordinators. Lou set the whole thing up by phone & by snail & e-mail communication. So while it may seem Lou didn't break much of a sweat, it did take a lot of time and effort, not to mention very judicious planning and decision making..

So, in behalf of all the Branson Reunion attendees, our sincere thanks to Lou & Corinne Beisser for giving us what we all considered a GREAT reunion and the opportunity to once again be together. Or, as Rick would say, "Mucho parecido, mio amigos."

By Those Who Planned To Come But Met With Health Problems:

Terry Eyer, 396th continues to show steady improvement in her stroke rehabilitation. **Doc**, however, is still having difficulties with macular degeneration; wet right & dry left. A new type treatment has begun.

George Kelly, 48th broke his hip a while back but is recuperating nicely under the TLC of wife **Helen**.

Jack & Annie Bell, 47th: "Sorry we missed your call. Jack was playing poker with the "boys" and I was getting oiled, lubed and filtered at the local service station. (Surprising how flexible I have become.) We will not be making the reunion. Jack's cast was removed, but he must wear a very cumbersome boot and is still wheelchair dependent. I hurt my back (wheelchair transporting) and have been getting chiropractic assistance. Doing even the simplest things is such a hassle, so we are opting out. So disappointing, as we could both use a change of scenery, but maybe next year. Jack is trying to strengthen his legs with therapy in the pool but that takes time. So... Have a wonderful time with your buddies. Hello to Carolyn And keep in touch." Annie

BANQUET PRIZES & GIFTS: Those of you who have attended the past two reunions at New Hampshire & Biloxi will remember a vivacious, beautiful, talented and generous lady by the name of **Terry Eyer, 396th** who crafted exquisite ladies necklaces and donated them as prizes. Terry wasn't able to be with us at Branson. However, we seem to be blessed with an abundance of such ladies as described above. The singular one at Branson was **Corinne Beisser**, who created and donated a unique flower arrangement made entirely of varied colored, types and shapes of sea shells. The very appreciative winner of this ladies only prize (Pic P 7) was **Bev Williams**, Squeeze of our 47th's **George Tolbert**.

Ed.: Right here I must make a clarification and a confession. First, the confession: The shell arrangement as pictured on P7 is 4-5 times actual size; the picture is a composite of two, along with a bit of amateur computer enhancing, all to enhance shapness. The clarification: As prize emcee, I announced that, "next is the 'ladies only' prize drawing." Without looking at the ticket drawn by **Bill MacMinn**, I announced the the winner was **George Tolbert! That was meant to be a bit of levity. As Bev Williams will attest, I'm sure, George is no lady.** The "prize" I presented to George was an "Old Rt. 66 Placard" (Pic P7) that Carolyn & I had bought (no reunion funds) at the Veterans Memorial Museum as a "Thank you" gift to Geo. & Bev for housing us going to and coming from Branson from San antonio. George has a 2,000 acre ranch right on Old Romantic Rt.66, about 25 miles west of Tulsa, and he has a standing invitation to anyone with a sleeping bag to spend the night in the back 40. For other possible arrangements contact Geo. using the Masthead info. On P2. (Other good poop there too.)

THE U.S. FLAG "THROW" AND B-25 WOOD MODEL were, by unanimous vote of Coordinator Lou, once again chosen to be presented as prizes. The Flag Throw was an overall drawing captured by one of our Reunion "first timers," **John Beddall, 48th**. By luck of the draw, our other "first timer," **Joe Roop, 47th** was the men-only drawing winner of the B-25 model. (Pics P7) Both seemed extremely pleased with their good fortune. Also, in recognition of their coming out of hibernation, each had already been presented with a "blinking-light" U.S. lapel pin, and their wives, **Hazy Beddall and Lola Roop** was each presented a "non-blinking" flag pin. No nicer nor

more appreciative guy than Joe Roop could have captured the B-25 model prize. Someone whispered to me as we were all leaving the banquet room, that Joe was a bit misty eyed.

WWII VETERAN U.S. FLAG PINS PRESENTED: A few of these were left over from Biloxi. One was given to the oldest guy there, none other than **Bill Telega**. 89 years young. Then the Gilbert/Marshall "Old Timers," **George Knight, Paul Hopson, Dave Crane & Thom Zacok** were each presented one. Confess that I'm not sure I have these names right. Memory fading.

THE BANQUET: Lou introduced the local American Legion Color Guard for the Flag presentation ceremony, followed by an invocation by **John Helmer, 48th** that included prayers for victims of the then raging Hurricane Isabelle on the east coast. The meal, especially considering it was about half the cost (another source of the refund) of most previous banquet meals, was declared by all (Except Kem, who thought his steak was a bit tough) that I heard from, to be excellent. **John Helmer** gave a very enticing preview of the 2004 Reunion to be held in Portland, OR. More details are reported on John's 48th Bomb Sq. page. **Joe Roop, 47th** gave a very nice synopsis presentation of his WWII experiences in the "Old Crow" era.

MENTOS: Following **Eldon Ford's, 47th** suggestion, we resurrected the 1998 Reunion Placemat, although in an improved version with heavier laminate. Each person for whom a Sq. Registration or Banquet Fee was paid, was to receive one. We know, however, that a number of folks that should have, did not receive theirs; but we do not know all such names. If you fit that category, please let me (Gutting - see Masthead P2)) know & they will be mailed.

Kem Sitterley had some extra placemats made. They are available at cost, including packaging & postage, at \$6 for one; or \$10 for two & \$5 for each additional in the same order. These placemats, as Eldon Ford said, make a wonderful picture story of the 41st Bomb. Group's Pacific adventures. A set of 4 or 8 for your dinner guests make the perfect artistic and conversational table setting; or two (front & back) make a unique wall hanging. Send your request, indicating number desired, to Kem Sitterley or Urban Gutting, using contact information in the Masthead, P2.



Above: Far R. Winner John Beddall, From L. Roop, Gutting, MacMinn



Joe Roop Accepts His B-25

Geo. Tolbert & "Route 66"



Doc & Terry Eyer Send Best Wishes From Tucson

Bev & Bouquet



Ray/Arlene Huschle & Nettie / Dave Crane on Branson Belle



Francis Lisak Jr. & Sr. Enjoy Banquet

Kem & "Crow Jacket"
Carolyn Colvin
On Branson Belle



"The Patriots"
At the Banquet



I pledge allegiance to my veracity; I am not pouring anything down Bobbie's boobies. Have no idea why the startled reaction & can't remember what was presented. Can hubby Bill help out?

Below: Marian Calbreth, 48th & Friend Georgiana Colburn



John & Beverly Helmer – Bobbie & Bill Mac Minn on Branson Belle



The 48th Bombardment Squadron John Helmer Reports



2004 PORTLAND, OR REUNION PREVIEW:

We had a wonderful time in Branson. We saw six shows in four days; that kept us busy.

Now is the time to plan for our reunion in Portland. As the Reunion Coordinators & hosts, Beverly and I are going to do our best in seeing that you have an enjoyable time. The Reunion activity dates will be Sept. 20, 21 & 22, 2004 (Mon., Tue., Wed.).

On Mon. we will visit our traditional Chinese garden, which is two years old and was designed and installed by people from China. Beverly and I will lead this visit. We also have an authentic Japanese formal garden in Portland.

On Tue. we visit Mt. St. Helens, notorious for its April, 1980 eruption. Portland's streets were covered with two to three inches deep mineral ash; very heavy, not powdery. The fire department had to wash down the streets with fire hoses and scoop-mobiles would load up the ash into trucks. St Helens is now a National Monument and is an attraction not to be missed.

On Wed. we will visit Howard Hughes's Spruce Goose at the Evergreen Aviation Museum. The "Goose" was built toward the end of WWII of spruce plywood, has a wing span of 319 feet & the tail is as tall as an 8 story building. After our museum visit we will go to a winery for a tour and lunch. Our Banquet will be at the hotel Wed. evening.

Here are suggestions for your planning process: Plan, if you can, to arrive in Portland on Sept. 19. A travel day is a tiring day so you can't get much else done.

If you arrive earlier, say Sept 17 or 18, here are some things to do with your extra days in Portland:

1. Rent a car and drive to the ocean beaches, about 80 miles distant and 1 1/2 hours travel time. Oregon has beautiful beaches.

One beach idea is to drive to Tillamook, OR on the Pacific coast and see the blimp hangers from WWII. They are the largest wood buildings in the world, now housing a museum of aircraft. Then travel north to the town of Cannon Beach, OR, known for its beaches and the famous "Hay Stack Rock," a monolith. There is glass blowing and many artists' galleries. This is a beautiful village with a locally owned grocery store and many good restaurants.

2. Drive one hour to Timberline Lodge on Mt. Hood at the 6,000 foot elevation. Mt. Hood is 11,000 feet tall. The lodge was built by the W.P.A. during the depression and was dedicated in 1937 by president Franklin D. Roosevelt. Schools were let out early for the event and Beverly & I did get to see the President as he drove by in his open-air limousine. Beverly and I attended different grade schools so didn't know each other then. We did go to the same high school, where we met, and Beverly fell in love with

John, but it took John a while to catch up. Now this is 55 years later into our marriage. (Beverly's note.)

On your way back you could visit Bonneville Dam and watch the salmon go through the fish ladders. The dam is located in the gorge of the Columbia River, a sight to see.

In the next newsletter I will talk about local attractions in Portland.

Ed.: I have to second John & Beverly's suggestion---and their example, for they have done it every reunion, I believe---to arrive early (or stay late), if possible, rent a car, and take in the sights unique to each area we have our reunions. Oregon is one of those states I've passed through but never had the opportunity to visit. If the crick doesn't rise that is what we will do come reunion time.

**From Ruth Slessman, Widow of Homer, 48th:
Thank you & Beverly for coming to Homer's memorial services. It was nice to have someone from the 48th there. The son of Homer's navigator, Bill O'Toole, was there also. He was 3 years old when Bill passed away, so he looked up Homer, who told him about his dad.**

You asked about how I met Homer...I was stationed at Tripoli Gen. Hosp. in Honolulu. Two other nurses & I signed up for "down under" service where the action was. We were sent to a camp at Koko Head, from where we got orders to report to the Navy Hospital Ship, USS Mercy to replace 3 sea-sick girls, never asking us if we get sea-sick. All three of us did. In one week we were ordered back to Koko Head, one of the happiest days of my life!

The next day, while at the Moana Hotel waiting to use a phone, all of which were being used by AAF guys who were back from missions on R & R, is when I met Homer. We talked and I thought he was 'OK'. We dated until I left for the Philippines and we kept in touch by letters.

At Fort Dix, NJ, awaiting discharge, I received a phone call on Nov. 28, 1945 from Homer who asked if I still wanted to marry him. I met him at Grand Central, NY and we took a train together to Conn., where we married on Dec 14, 1945. Our last anniversary celebrated 57 years together. We had a happy marriage and had three boys and 7 grandchildren. Homer died July 13, 2003.

Squadron Notes:

9-20-'03. "My father, **Virgil Wilkening, (396th)** asked me to send this message and request that you forward it on to others. His condition is deteriorating and he is just too weak to sit at his computer any more. He asked me to let you know that he is "at the end of the runway and running out of territory." In the meantime, please let his friends know that he is basically comfortable, has very little and infrequent pain and his family has gathered around him to help he and Mama through these last weeks. We ask for your prayers for a "quick and happy death" for him, as Mama says. Please know how much pleasure he has received these last several years from attending the reunions and contact through emails with so many of you." 10-12-'03. "Just a note to let you know that Virgil passed away very peacefully and quietly on Sat. at noon. He was at home with Mary, his 3 daughters, and his granddaughter beside him. His visitation and funeral will be held at his church right across the street from his home here in State Center, IA. Military rites complete with echoing taps will be held at the cemetery. We know how much he enjoyed his ties with his veteran friends and thank you and all the guys for the great reunions, newsletters, and emails; but most of all, the friendship, thoughts and prayers these last couple of years. Sincerely, Patty Wilkening Tresemer." We extend our sincere condolences to Mary and all Virgil's family.

Bob "Pappy" Brandt, 48th informs that spouse **Jo** is now well on the road to restored health after a series of bouts with physical ailments that had her in and out of the hospital. Bob said, "Sure is great to have her back home where I can hug & kiss her whenever I want." Bob & Jo sent thanks for all our prayers in their behalf.

More Branson Notes: The hospitality rooms were, in my opinion, a bit below par, consisting of two regular rooms with the furniture removed and the adjoining door opened. Certainly adequate, however, with enough room and furnished with refrigerator and microwave. As **Diane Lassitter** said, the important thing is that we had space to meet and mingle.

The Sq. meetings were held Tues. afternoon. **Joe Roop, 47th** suggested we hold the 2005 Reunion at his home base, The Village at Hot Springs, Arkansas, and motion was seconded by the 47th. Joe thought we could stay at individual homes for rent on the property, but when I recently spoke with him on the phone he was having some doubts re the logistics of

moving folks to the meeting & dinning rooms, etc. But Joe will continue to work on it, possibly using the Village 20 passenger buses or using a nearby motel. Joe reports that **Buford Hill 47th** is seriously ill. Prayers are requested.

John & Hazy Beddall took a cruise last year that visited many of the WWII Pacific battle islands, including Majuro, Okinawa, Iwo Jima and others. The veterans aboard, including our **48th's John Beddall**, were interviewed and recounted stories about their combat experiences at each island visited. Actually, I thought John was the star interviewee. I spoke by phone with John some time ago about him providing ordering information for the VCR tape, but so far no information has been forthcoming & my calls get a recording saying call back later, so maybe they are off on another Odyssey. I know many of you would find the tape very interesting. If you are interested, give John & Hazy a call at 480-239-1027.

Bill & Ellie Telega, 47th won the hearts of all 47th attendees by gifting each 47th couple with a bottle of their home state Georgia Peach Cider. A really delicious nectar for which we thank you, Bill & Ellie.

George Tolbert & Bev stocked the Hospitality Room with succulent home-grown cantaloupe for everyone, for which we thank you for your thoughtfulness. George & Bev are dedicated horticulturists; from which we also reaped benefits of their okra & peppers (hot stuff!) crops, for take home.

Frank Lisak, Jr. took a video camera tour of their entry into & drive around Branson, as well as shots of our people in some of the theatres and at the Banquet. Frank has generously offered to mail you a copy for \$7, which covers only his expenses. Mail your request & check to Frank at 1201 S. Court House Rd #37, Arlington, VA 22204.

.Family & Friends: Sorry we did not get a group picture of you. **Tessie Telega, Kemary Sitterley Crowder, Newton (Kem's nephew) & Lola Urban, Frank Lisak, Jr., Georgina Colburn – friend of Marin Calbreth, Leo & Pauline Schank – kin of Ed & Liz Feist and Tom Carson's friends, Jim & Tудie Adair.** Be assured, you lent an element of warmth by your presence and, in some cases, important support and travel assistance. We appreciate and thank you very much for being with us, and ask that you come back.

Vet Hist. Proj.: Medal of Honor Conv. took priority.

World War II Pilot Takes Trip Down Memory Lane

By Airman 1st Class Susan Stout, "Thunderbolt" Editor, 56th Fighter Wing Public Affairs



LUKE AIR FORCE BASE, Ariz. (AETCNS) -- For an 82-year-old World War II bomber pilot, a visit to Luke AFB was a trip down memory lane and a chance to test his flying abilities again.

Warren "Doc" Eyer, who primarily flew the B-25 while overseas during World War II, spent the morning of Aug. 27 flying an F-16 simulator in what he called a "fantastic" experience.

Although he had been warned of the F-16's speed by a friend who flew in one, Mr. Eyer was impressed by the jet's capabilities.

"I couldn't believe the speed," Mr. Eyer said, grinning ear to ear. "The main difference, I think, is the control stick or wheel (I'm accustomed to it being) in the center, and in the F-16, the control is on the right side. The F-16 has a fantastic rate of response, and for me, it's easy to over control." Mr. Eyer, who now lives in Tucson, spent 25 years in the military in active duty, as a Guardsman and a Reservist.

"I stopped flying private aircraft 10 years ago," he said. "(The time away) takes its toll on you -- you lose your touch. But, I could get into a B-25 and still fly it today."

According to Maj. Karl Gashler, 21st Fighter Squadron chief of safety, Mr. Eyer's instincts as a pilot were right on target.

"Doc's flying ability is obvious," he said. "After about 10 minutes in the simulator, he was handling the F-16 like a pro. It's great to see how time hasn't faded his stick and rudder know-how. But even beyond pilot skill, Doc's love of flying really shines through. I'm proud to know a true aviator and patriot like him."

After flying overseas during World War II, Mr. Eyer returned to the states and became a member of the Arizona Air National Guard in 1946. At that time, the Arizona Air National Guard was at Luke. "I was in Barry Goldwater's squadron," Mr. Eyer said. "I developed a friendship with him. He was a good man and a darn good pilot."

While at Luke, Mr. Eyer flew the A-26, AT-6 and the P-51. "For a bomber pilot, flying the P-51 was a heck of a thrill," he said.

During his time in the Arizona Air National Guard, Mr. Eyer did not live in the local area. "I used to fly my PT-19 or PT-22 and land at Luke to do my air guard stuff," he said. "Luke looks a lot different now. The buildings are much nicer than they were when I was here."

After two years, Mr. Eyer was transferred to the Air Force Reserve at Williams Field in Mesa just before the Korean War. He wasn't recalled to active duty.

Prior to becoming a pilot, Mr. Eyer was a ROTC cadet at the University of Arizona and in the Horse Cavalry. When the attacks on Pearl Harbor occurred, he signed up in the Air Corps under the Cadet Act.

"Pilot training is probably much different today than when I went through it," he said. "First we went to Santa Ana, Calif., to receive training in code (and) theory of flight and we marched and marched and marched. That's all we did."

"Then I went to primary flight school in Visalia, Calif.," he said. "That was fun. I was flying the PT-22 and it was the greatest time of my life. Then I went to

basic pilot training at Merced, Calif., flying BT-13s. It was a lumbering plane and underpowered, but fun." Mr. Eyer attended advanced pilot training in Roswell, N.M. "We flew the AT-17, a twin engine Cessna," he said. "We were the experimental class for the B-25. By the time I finished training, I had 80 to 90 flying hours."

Mr. Eyer relayed one memorable experience: the night he caused the lights of San Francisco to black out. On a trip to Hickam Field, Hawaii, his fuel tank began to leak. Within minutes, his B-25 had five inches of fuel covering the floor. "I turned every thing off and turned (the plane) around," he said. "I was afraid that one spark would take the plane. Radar picked me up and (the controllers) didn't know if I was a friend or foe (so they turned the city lights off). It was very dark out. It was about 1 a.m. Two fighters flew next to me and we used our lights to communicate. I was afraid to even use a flashlight.

"The fighters accompanied me to Hamilton Field in California. The whole town was black because of me. I got the green light to land and I put down the wheels with no problem. I put on the brakes and bailed. The plane was leaking fuel everywhere, but I made it."

Once he got a new fuel tank, Mr. Eyer was off again to Hawaii. His flight, which lasted 10 hours and 58 minutes, held a record for two years for the fastest flying time from Hamilton Field to Hickam Field. "My B-25 was full of armament. I just had fantastic winds," he said. "I slept some of the way and my navigator followed the stars. When the sun came up, we came up on the island of Hawaii. It was a good feeling."

Mr. Eyer held a second record for one and a half years for the most number of holes from enemy fire when he returned from a combat mission. None of his crew members were injured. In all of his flying during World War II, none of his crew were ever injured. He credits his crew chief, Nick Karukas, for his successful flights.

"We heard pop, pop, pop and an (anti-aircraft artillery) shell went through my navigator's seat," he said. "It never went off. Luckily, the navigator had climbed between the pilot and co-pilot's seat just

seconds before. The poor guy about fainted. "Piloting the aircraft, Mr. Eyer put the B-25 into a steep dive to escape enemy fire. "They told us the top speed of the B-25 was 350 and I was past 500," he said. "Although it was hard, I enjoyed my flight time while overseas in support of World War II. It was exciting, to say the least."

Note: "Doc" Eyer, 396th said to be sure to clarify which is he in the pic P 10. Doc is on the right. The good-looking one is Major Karl Gashler, 21st Fighter Sq. F-16 Desert Storm pilot and Sq. chief of safety. The major is the son-in-law of **John "Baggy" Baglietto, 396th** who arranged the flight for "Doc" and is responsible for putting expensive USAF equipment in peril. Am I jealous? Yes!



Lou Beisser's Art Work. Lou has my vote to be next Newsletter Editor.

Happy Holidays To

Urban (Gutts) Gutting
7047 Autumn Chase
San Antonio, TX 78238
The Crow Caws For The

47th, 48th, & 396th Bomb. Sqds.

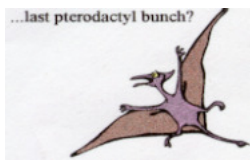


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It would save me a lot
of trouble, if you'd put
this on your frig and
leave it up all year...



REUNION CALENDAR

47TH, 48, 396TH Bomb. Sqns.
At Portland, OR Sept. 20, 21, 22, 2004.
John & Beverly Helmer, Reunion
Planners. 2122 SW Vista Ave., Portland,
OR; Tel 503-222-4614 (No email)

820th Bomb Sq. At Wash D.C. May
28 thru 31, 2004. Contact Norm Geril 1-
203-262-1860; Ngeril@earthlin1.net
Norm says this is a definite "go" now, so
contact him if you are interested.