



The Crow Flight



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



Now we know why then what Lola wanted, Lola got!

But that was then and this is now, and so will Lola get what she wants now?

Only you can determine that, because what Lola wants now is for you to come to Hot Springs to be pampered, entertained, well fed, relax in commune with your WWII Comrades, Friends and Relatives, and be that vital part of what makes our reunions successful---You!

If you haven't done so as yet, it's not too late. Call the Austin Hotel at 1-877-623-6697 and tell them you are a 41st Bombardment Gp. VIP and want to make "Lola's Wish Come True." They may not know what the hell you're talking about, so just tell them to book you at our special rate for the nights of Sept. 25 through 28, 2005. Our "Room Block" Reservation expires 25 Aug. '05.

THE HOT SPRINGS GOLF OUTING: Joe has arranged it for 27 Sept (Tues). **GOLFERS & DUFFERS** will meet in the hotel lobby at 0800 and we'll proceed to the Belvedere Country Club. Transportation will be provided. Greens fee and cart will run \$30.00, payable at the course; club rental is available. Joe describes the layout as scenically beautiful and user-friendly.

All Squadron Registrants will be contacted and at that time you may indicate your desire to participate.

Joe said to tell all Reunion attendees that, "he has some surprises planned that we hope everyone will enjoy."

The **JOE F. ROOP**, 47 Bomb. Sq. "BIO:" After graduation from pilot training in Jan. 1943, Joe's first assignment was to Peterson Field, Colorado Springs, CO, flying F-5 photo reconnaissance aircraft.

Joe was transferred to the 47th Bomb. Sq. in April, 1943 where he flew anti-sub patrol out of Portland, OR Air Base. From there it was to the Gilbert/Marshals in Dec. 1943.

Joe remembers his MOS as 1052-0200. His "Old Crow" crew was: CP **JAMES KEENER** (Unk.), N **JACK BELL** (VMA -Very Much Alive - he and spouse Ann will be at Hot Springs), Crew Chief **PAUL A. BRANCH** (Unk), Eng/Gnr. **HOMER D. JOHNSON** (Dec.), Radio/Gnr **A.H. JOHNSON** (Dec.) and Armorer/Gnr **J. A. "PEE WEE" MORTON** (Unk.). They completed 50 missions in the Gilbert/Marshall Campaign, mostly low level cannon-strafting and some medium-level bomb runs. The low-level raids were in G Model #347 nicknamed "LOLA MAE." Medium altitude level missions were completed in "Mr. Lucky."

Joe's tenure as a Flight Commander of the 47th Bombardment Sq. was followed by assignment in Jan. 1945 to the 54th AACS Group. From there he was honorably discharged as a Captain in Oct. 1945.

Joe worked with Continental Ins. Co for 35 years and in 1981 retired to a life of leisure in Hot Springs Village, AR, where for the ensuing 24 years he has enjoyed golf, travel, reading--and 60 plus years of a wonderful marriage to Lola Mae. The love affair resulted in birth of daughters Jo Ann and Elizabeth and grandchildren Mike, David and John and a great grandchild, Anna.

It is our good fortune that the love affair still inspires Joe, and that he has acted at Lola's bequest, and in our behalf, to arrange our upcoming 2005 Reunion.

Joe said his only contact with other Sq. people had been his crew Bomb/Nav Jack Bell, and Ned Burris, 47th pilot living in Salem, OR.

Of course, that doesn't include all the folks Joe met--and some he re-met after 60 years--at his first Reunion attendance at Branson, MO in 2003. For sure, Joe was glad he attended. And, for sure, we are glad he did because it was there he volunteered to host and coordinate our upcoming 2005 Hot Springs Reunion. Y'all come. Meet up with Joe and Lola Mae.

PAUL A. KENWAY, 47TH Bomb. Sq. "Bio:" Paul resides with his spouse, Marion, in Richland, N.Y. They were blessed with three children, Paula, Sherry and Don, grandchildren George, Chris and Ferit and great grandchildren Karnity, Coloton and Hunter.

Paul's MOS was 555-747 and he was one of the "Hanger Crew" that provided the vital aircraft maintenance, starting with the A-29 and on through B-25 models C, D, G & H.

Paul was honorably discharged as a Sergeant and used his mechanical skills to complete a civilian career as a truck and bus maintenance technician.

"I joined the 47th early in 1943. With two MO's I was always a candidate for detached service: some good, some not so good.

I attended the first reunion at Orlando but was disappointed. I saw only one person that I had seen before in the outfit and I never knew him personally, after three years with the 47th.

Although I can fly practically free (one daughter worked for the airlines for over thirty years), being legally blind and nearing 90 years old, I have little incentive to travel.

You asked about the weather up here one time when you wrote. The prevailing westerly winds come across Lake Ontario and we get the most snow east of the Rockies. I live between the eastern end of Lake Ontario and the ticghill plateau. [? That's how I read it].

The hydro plants keep track of the snow each year. More snow, more electricity when the snow melts.

Last year was a real mild winter, only a hundred and ninety-two inches of snow. We have had as much as three-hundred-eighty-seven inches." Sincerely, Paul Kenway

[Ed.] Thank you for your "Bio" contribution, Paul. At age ninety your penmanship is still steady and superb. Also, Paul and Marion are among the elite who have contributed to "The Crow Flight" dues fund each year since its inception in 1996.

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JAMES L. "JIM" McGRATH, 47TH Bomb. Sq. "Bio:" Jim graduated from pilot training at Brooks Field, San Antonio, TX in May 1943.

His first assignment was to fly officers from Chang Kai Chek's Chinese Army in O-52's, teaching them navigation and aerial reconnaissance.

"After checking out in the B-25 I was assigned to Eglin Field, FL, along with 17 other crews for special training in dropping conventional torpedoes from the B-25 and testing a flying torpedo that could be dropped from medium altitude.

Upon assignment overseas all 18 crews joined the 47th Sqdn. on Makin Island.

We stayed with the 47th Sq. in the Central Pacific until transfer to Okinawa. While in Okinawa, in addition to a

flew low-level and medium bombings of Kyushu, we also dropped flying torpedoes against 3 aircraft carriers in the Sasebo Naval Base and in Nagasaki Harbor prior to the dropping of the atomic bomb. We stayed on Okinawa after the war ended and left for the U.S. in early December 1945."

Jim was a Flight Leader and attained the rank of Captain.

His crew was: P Jim McGrath, CP George Siefert (Dec.), Bomb/Nav Joe McCrumb (Dec.), crew chief John Chickering (Dec.), Eng/Gnr LeGrand Frei (Dec.), Radio/Gnr Bob Luss (Unk.) and Armorer/Gnr Lou Brown.

His aircraft was B-25 #905 nicknamed "Lukibets" after his wife "Betty." Jim and Betty were married August 7, 1943 in the chapel on the airbase in Tullahoma, Tennessee. They have three children, Jim, Tom and Betsy, grandchildren Greg, Laura, Scott, Kelly and Elizabeth and great-grandchild Tyler and two more on the way, as of this writing.

"I returned to the company I had just joined prior to entering the service: held several sales and managerial positions and retired December, 1980.

We purchased a home in Lombard, IL where we raised our three children. After our children finished college and left the "nest" Betty and I purchased a condo in Venice, FL where we now spend 7 months of the year.

We enjoyed many trips to China, Japan and several countries in Europe as well as touring most of the U.S. Our traveling has been curtailed since I became legally blind.

As you know, I have been unable to attend recent reunions. At Xmas time I exchange cards with Joe Gardner, Rick Rondinelli, Arnold Sayer, Maury Smith and George Tolbert. I also have had recent conversations with my tail gunner, Lou Brown



CELEBRATING JIM'S 87TH 10-16-04

and Ramstack's radioman, Eldon Ford. Also exchanged cards and letters with Mrs. Donald Lighthall."

[Ed.] Must comment on how young and fit these "85 or so youngsters" appear in the above pic. Talked to Jim on the phone and planted the bug for them to consider making our Hot Springs Reunion, since it is a hop-skip-and jump from their summer home in Bloomingdale, IL. Jim promised to give it serious consideration. Rick, Arnold, George--you're all coming--give Jim a bug call.

RAYMOND P. "KUT" KUTTENKULER, 47TH Bomb Sq., now lives in Midlothian, VA (but house is up for sale). Ray's spouse, Mary, died on 1/26/05. They have one child, Joseph and three grandchildren, Branson, Evan and Ben.

"Kut" applied for pilot training in 1943 but was disqualified because of an alleged stammer; ironically, he was later sent to radio school.

After being drafted from Tipton, MO in March 1943, at Ft. Leavenworth, KS he received basic training at Amarillo, TX, radio training at Scott Field, IL and gunnery at Ft. Myers, FL.

His crew was formed in Columbia, SC and consisted of P Frank Hayward (Dec.) CP Urb Gutting (HIT), N/Bomb Kem Sitterley (HIT), Eng/Gnr Stanley Lomac (Dec), Radio/Gnr Ray Kuttenkuler and Armorer/Gnr Carl Ellis (Dec.).

"Our crew trained at Greenville, SC, Muroc, CA and Wheeler Field, HA, where we were assigned to the 47th Bomb. Sq. Our crew remained intact until the end of the war. We flew 10 (I think) missions, some glide bombing from 10M to 8M, low-level strafing and one aerial torpedo drop."

[An interjection: As part of that crew, I can attest that we were a professional grade, high performance team, of which Ray was an integral member as both an upstanding person and first-rate Radio Technician.]

After discharge as a Sergeant, Ray completed college at the University of Missouri, Columbia, MO and was commissioned as 2nd Lieutenant in June 1948. After a temporary appointment with the Census Bureau, he was called to active duty in Field Artillery, serving from 1953 to 1957.

Returning to civilian life, Ray worked as an analytic reporter for Dun and Bradstreet from '53 to '57. He then worked for the Small Business Administration, ending his career in Oct. '82 as District Director of the Richmond, VA Office: "28 years on the dole" is how Kut summed it up.

After retirement Ray kept prime steaks on the table by spending 15 years as a part time "Focused financial intelligence" consultant for Greenwich Associates, Greenwich, CT.

[That was a varied and high achievement career by anyone's standard and as your old crew member, I salute you, Kut. Gutts]

As to the "Bio" form question, What's Next? Ray said, "Old age - I have emphysema, hearing loss, replacement hips and low kidney function. Thank God I still have my driver's license." Just like most of us, Kut. Keep the motor running but fly carefully.

OBITUARIES:

- From Marian Treakle: "I am writing to inform you of the death of my beloved husband, CHARLES TREACLE, [47th Bomb. Sq.] on May 20, 2005, from pancreatic cancer.

He will be buried with full military honors on June 16th in Arlington National Cemetery.

The loss for me and my children is heavy on our hearts, but we will carry on as he would have wanted us to do."

With Marian are family survivors, daughter Pamela M. Iwanicki, Dr. Kevin B. Treakle and grandchildren Kevin, Jon, Jordon, Sophia, Tyler and Jasper.

Charlie and Marion attended the Biloxi, MS Reunion; as part of that Reunion report, Charlie's outstanding life and career achievements are briefly outlined in *The Crow Flight* # 22, P 7.

- Arnold Sayer, 47th sent the following obituary notice from his local newspaper. **Pembroke – CHAPLAIN HOWARD D. GOULD, 95 died May 22, 2005.**

Howard joined the US Army Chaplain Corps in 1943 and saw action in the South Pacific with the 41st Bombardment Group on Tarawa, Makin, Okinawa and the Hawaiian Islands.

Chaplain Gould served at many locations until his retirement from the military in 1967. He immediately joined the staff at the Veterans Administration Medical Center of Manchester, MA as the Protestant chaplain and ministered to the needs of veterans for 25 years.

His wife of 63 years, Jane Gould, died in 2004.

- Fran Bellamy, daughter of JAMES HEGG, 48TH Bomb. Sq., informed that her father died on January 15, 2005, one month short of his 92nd birthday.

Fran wrote, "As I have read from many of you, he had great stories of his days serving as crew chief. Notably with Gene Olsen!! I think a book could come of that!"

Dad retired as Senior Master Sergeant from the Air Force in 1969 and spent his last years working in his flower garden, playing duplicate bridge, walking the beach, fishing, and enjoying his five grandchildren. I will continue to enjoy getting *The Crow Flight* and keeping up with *The Greatest Generation*."

- The following memorial information was sent by Arlene Huschle.

Arlene, and now deceased husband, Ray, became good friends with Sylvester at an early '80s reunion. Arlene and Ray had reciprocal visits with Sylvester and his sister, Evelyn, at their homes on a number of occasions. "Sylvester and Ray would always talk about the war...Evelyn and I about church and family. We will miss our visits," said Arlene.

"He told us several times he was Murray Bywater's engineer, and that is why I sent the obituary from the newsletter; it was found among Sylvester's effect by his nephew who then sent this memorial notice."



Sylvester Joseph Johannek

Born: November 8, 1912 - Red Lake Falls, Minnesota

Died: June 3, 2005 - Red Lake Falls, Minnesota

Sylvester, the sixth of eleven children, was born in his family's home to the late John and Elizabeth (Zins) Johannek in Red Lake Falls, MN. He attended the Busy Bee country school north of Red Lake Falls in Red Lake Falls township. Sylvester worked at a number of jobs throughout his lifetime. In addition to helping his parents on their family farm, he also worked for area farmers. He later worked various construction jobs in the Red Lake Falls area including the building of Hwy 32. He lived and worked for a short time in Wisconsin when his family moved there during the depression years and later lived in California where he worked as a taxi cab driver in Long Beach.

In the spring of 1942, during World War II, he joined the military and served in the Pacific Theatre. As a flight engineer on a B-25 airplane, he flew 53 missions as part of a bomber squadron based on the Gilbert Islands. After Sylvester's return from the war early in 1946, he purchased a farm north of Red Lake Falls in Browns Creek township where he lived with his sister Evelyn. Together they farmed and cared for their parents until their parents eventual move to nursing homes. Sylvester raised dairy cows, chickens, hogs and small grains on his farm, together with a few nephews who helped with the summer farm work.

In 1976, Sylvester retired from farming and he and Evelyn moved to a new home in Gervais township. He lived there until May of 2004 when he moved to Sunview Center in Red Lake Falls and then to Hillcrest Nursing Home in May of 2005, where he resided until his death.

Sylvester was a member of St. Mary's and St. Joseph's Church in Red Lake Falls, and the National Farmers Organization. Sylvester will be remembered for his interest in the well being of the family farm and his pride in all he did during his years of service in the army airforce corp.

SQUADRON NOTES:

From **Mrs. Jo Ann Doan**: I am writing this letter for **WENDELL L. BYERS** of Great Bend, KS. We received the newsletter and information on the Hot Springs, Arkansas reunion. Wendell (my father) was with Wolf Pack. Wendell is in a nursing home and has several health problems. His wife (Betty J.) is deceased as of 1999. Needless to say, Dad will not be able to attend any more of your functions. I do want you to know how much both he and my mother enjoyed the ones they were able to attend.

If you would like to send any other newsletters to Wendell in care of my address, I will see that he receives them.

Thank you so much, (Signed) Jo Ann Doan

Ed.: Thank you for writing, Jo Ann, and, of course, *The Crow Flight* issues, currently on a quarterly schedule, will be sent.

JEANETTE R. GRANDSTAFF widow of **JOHN, 47th Bomb. Sq.**, and their eldest son, **Rolf**, have provided some recent and interesting correspondence with Kem Sitterley and yours truly.

John Grandstaff was an armorer/tail-gunner and he is listed at "129 Highlands Ave., Bellevue Island, Lake Orion, Michigan," in the "Sq. Postwar Directory" of "Doc" Richard J. LaVigne's *The Crow Flight* post WWII book, but there is no match-up with a crew in the book.

Quoting Rolf: "Initially, I just wanted to write up a few things to say [in the WWII Memorial site] about Dad and his unit. I did a little research on the web and put together some of the stuff I found out there. Just the little I found though was fascinating. I'd like to continue researching it. Growing up, my Dad told me some about Tarawa to Okinawa. Later, I served with the 3rd Marine Air Wing in Japan, Okinawa, and Vietnam which made me more aware of what he'd done and where he'd been. *The Crow Flight* looks to be an excellent source of information. Anything else you could recommend or tell me would be greatly appreciated." In response, Kem provided Rolf TCF #1 through 17 and I provided #18 through 32.

Rolf would like to get more of the story out on a web site. His spouse and he are computer programmers.

If any of our readers can provide information or memories regarding John, I'm sure it would be immensely appreciated by Jeannette and son Rolf, as he is in the process of creating a memorial CD of his Dad's service and the unit in which he served. Contact Rolf at rolfgrand@aol.com or write to 228 Chris St., Garner, N.C. 27529. Phone 919-553-9852.

Baseball: Telega honored during pre-game ceremony. Guest of honor—In Camden County's pre-game, Telega not only threw out that first pitch; he was also a very special guest of honor. Telega and his family donated \$10,000 toward the renovation of Camden County's dugout. When finished, there will be locker rooms and showers for the players, a well as a new and improved dugout.

William Telega, who lives in St. Marys, [GA] got resounding baseball applause from the Camden County High fans.

"I still have a love of the game," said Telega, who was born in 1914 in Hadley, Mass. "I played baseball since I was a tiny toddler. And I thought Camden County needed something [like a modernized dugout]." He's right on the baseball cue.



Pic L: Catcher Clint Clark greets guest of honor **WILLIAM TELEGA** of St. Marys in the pre-game festivities before the Camden County-Groves region baseball game last weekend. The Telega family made a sizable donation to the ongoing renovation of the CCHS dugout in Kingsland. The Telegas offered up \$10,000 for the two-year project. William Telega threw out the first pitch in Saturday's game.

One amazing guy is Bill, and we're proud to claim him as the 47th Bomb. Sq.'s own. At 90 he still plants and tends his garden, oversees his neighborhood tavern, "Bill's Place" and makes every Reunion.

In pic below is spouse Ellie (far R.) serving up



'04 Christmas dinner for 17 family members; and, said Ellie, they will do it again for Independence Day. The attendees ranged in age from the youngest great-grandson, 2 to Bill, 90. (Great with hat removed it for blessing; hair was bright orange.)

"Had a call from Toni [widow of John Mahan, 47th] right after Christmas. She had been on a cruise.

Hoping to see you at the Reunion, Love & thanks, Ellie"



JOHN HELMER for the 48TH Bomb. Sq.:

Hot weather around the country, over 100 degrees in many states. In Portland today [7-27] at 4:00 pm it is 90. Any time it gets above 80, we think we are in a heat wave.

Beverly and I and a grand-daughter spent the month of May in Europe, two days at a family reunion in Stockholm with 60 family members attending.

We had a side trip to St. Petersburg, Russia, with a guided tour of the art treasures of the czars. The best part of traveling is arriving back at home base.

Have a great summer.

MILDRED CHILSEN, spouse of **BILL**, 48th Bomb. Sq., in a note relayed by John, says, "In two weeks we will be going to see our grandson who will be going back to Iraq for the third time with the Air Force. His name is Thomas Hansen. Please keep him in your prayers. You met his mother, Nancy, at the Biloxi reunion.

Keep well and we'll catch up to everyone some day. Sincerely, Mildred Chilsen."



THE 820TH BOMB. SQ. NEWSLETTER reported that all attendees thoroughly enjoyed the Mt. Rushmore Reunion, highlighted by tours of the Black Hills, Badlands National Park, Custer State Park, a visit to Ellsworth AFB where a group picture was taken under a B25 once used by General Eisenhower, and culminated by viewing Mt. Rushmore's presidential faces, including a lighting ceremony and dinning at the Buffalo Dining Room.

Included in the 28 attendees were representatives **Paul and Helen Hopson** from the 48th Bomb. Sq. and **George Tolbert, Bev Williams, Kem Sitterley and Kemary Crowder** from the 47th Bomb Sq. Carolyn and I definitely wanted and early-on planed to go, but a spinal operation for Carolyn on May16 sort of stymied that idea.

At the reunion business meeting on the 19th, it was decided that the 820th, if reunions are to continue, would join in combined gatherings with the 47th, 48th and 396th squadrons.

That sentiment has been expressed by a number of people from all squadrons. As Kem Sitterley aptly said: "It is so obvious to most of us that we must consolidate the four squadrons, at least for the purpose of having reunions. We simply do not have enough people anymore to have any negotiating clout with the hotels. Also, many of us have friends in the other squadrons that we would like to see."

Kem proposed a name for this coalition: "**The Big Bad Buncha Boys from the Bomber Group, 41.**"

Kem had other suggestions: 1) First President will be **Dick Sternberg** because he will do a great job. He also will do a great job of being the coordinator of the reunion [proposed] to be held in the fall of 2006 at the time and place in Florida of his choosing. 2) First Vice-president will be **Skip Trune**, simply because he still skips around more than anyone. 3) First Secretary will be **Urban "Gutts" Gutting**, because he's already doing such a fabulous job with the newsletter [now you know why all this is included] which goes only to the 47th, 48th and 396th. He may as well add a few more and send them out to the 820th also. 4) First Treasurer will be **Paul Hopson** because he was the only one from the 48th at Rapid City. Does that really sound like a reason? Anyhow, I wanted someone from each squadron. There is nothing in my thoughts about changing the treasury set-up. Each squadron has a functioning treasurer.

"In summing up, there are only two reasons for the new organization: 1) they will have their reunions together, and 2) the newsletter will be expanded to include the 820th.

I'm sure there will be many other ideas for the new organization. Let 'em roll! Kemble "Kem" Sitterley...maybe one of the last pterodactyls????



Ed: I've learned that sometimes Kem presents a free-wheeling thought style. I've also learned to pay attention, because Kem is an innovator.

What he has proposed, I'm sure is in part "tongue-in-cheek," but which part(s) I'm not sure: suspiciously, though, that coalition name is one. Hopefully, someone of you can improve on that.

At any rate, Kem's proposals should earn and stimulate your interest, and hopefully your response. Communicate your thoughts re the consolidation of squadrons and where & when you would like the 2006 Reunion to be held, to your representative, listed in the "Masthead." Please do that NOW so that your ideas and input can be a part of the discussion at Hot Springs. BETTER YET, BRING YOUR THOUGHTS TO HOT SPRINGS

NOTE FROM RICK RONDINELY, 47th Bomb. Sq: Keep up the good work...you and Sitterley do one hell of a job with "The Crow Flight" newsletter and related matters. See you in Hot springs. Best regards, [r.r.]

GENE OLSEN, 48TH Bomb. Sq. sent this interesting account of his memories and personal harrowing experiences with "The Typhoon" that hit us on Okinawa.

"It arrived on Okinawa the evening after our two squadrons of B-25s arrived back from Morotai---and it was a "doozee." It blew all but two tents down, the mess hall was blown apart, and the 10-hole crapper was blown off its place on the small "hill" above the road below it.

Our planes were all tied down with 500 lb bombs with cables. Even so the tail sections were snapped on some. The props spun from the severe 150 mph plus wind. The control tower blew away (12' X 12' legs)!

All the Navy amphibians were sunk. A couple of destroyers rolled completely over even though they were in a supposedly protective bay---estuary?

Our tent was one of the two that stayed up. Actually, our tent was two tents, one right on top of the other. During the first typhoon, our tent was one of the first to go. We learned!

The rest of the tent inmates slept somewhere else?? I was alone and pooped out when I felt something crawl up from my foot and snuggle right under my chin! I froze! It was a Norwegian Rat – the size of a cat! They are not afraid of humans. When cornered, they attack humans! So---when my little pal moved back down towards my feet I brought both hands up to under the blanket and my chin---just in case! Yep! Back came this man-eating monster and he settled right on top of my waiting hands. I let fly with all my might and the last I saw of that monster was when he flew out the open entry way on his way across the China Sea!

I went back to sleep---typhoon or no typhoon! G.O. "

[As an old KB-50 typhoon chaser with the 54th Weather Recon. Sq. on Guam from 1958-60, I chased typhoons all over the Pacific; like to brag that I had 33 penetrations. SOP was that if you were caught on the ground path of one, the best procedure was to sit mid-room on the floor with a quart of your favorite booze---and guzzle. Wonder if Gene was an instigator of this procedure?]

JESS RAMAKER stated in the closing remarks of his Military Chronology in TCF #32 that he invited readers to send corrections: here are some submitted anonymously "in the interest of keeping the record accurate."

As to "Bed Check Charlie," no bombs were dropped by him and he was finally knocked down from his high "safe altitude" by a Marine F4U from Kadena, stripped of all guns, ammo, etc. so it could get up to the Jap's altitude. The F4U pilot simply got behind the Jap and chewed his tail off! The Marine then glided to a safe landing back on Kadena---with runway flares. [Sounds wild, but who knows / Marines] P.S. Charlie never returned.

The nose mounted 75mm cannon H model was never used from Okinawa; only from planes based on Makin and making raids on the Gilbert /Marshall Islands.

Only Marine F4-U's escorted our missions over Kyushu.

Probably the most controversial recollection is the description of B-25s being bulldozed over the cliffs on Morati. Our anonymous writer, as do I, recollect differently. There were two squadrons (48th & 47th I believe) involved in vacating Okinawa to make room for the occupational troops staging through Okinawa to Japan, and we were sent to Moroti, an island in the East Indies owned by the Aussies. I vividly recall the scene of all our aircraft approaching Morati, banking toward the most beautiful ever sunset I can remember witnessing. Both squadrons and their aircraft returned to Machinato, after what I remember as about a month stay.

There was a nearby Japanese occupied island that our forces had by-passed and isolated, a common tactic on the march to Japan. The Japanese Commander was persuaded to be flown to Morati for surrender negotiations, where the American Commander drove him slowly past the long rows of our B-25s and declared that if the surrender was not accepted, these aircraft would bomb and strafe you to oblivion. We didn't have a single bomb or round of ammunition, but the Japanese Commander did not know that. He signed the surrender document.

Later, said anon, our B-25s were flown from Machinato to Clark Field, PI and were abandoned. The Filipinos ravaged and stole, stripped and destroyed them. No cliff – no bulldozers.

After-the-war stories of our B-25s being bulldozed was common rumor and it's easy to conjure a graphic mind's picture that over time blurs with reality. At Morati, we were told stories about the "crazy" Aussie P-38 pilots there who made take-offs on one engine. That created a picture still vivid in my mind, but today I couldn't swear as to whether or not I actually witnessed such a take-off.

The following article was sent by JESS RAMAKER, 48TH Bomb. Squadron. It is an appropriate follow-up to Jess's Service Chronology published in the last issue.

NEW YORK TIMES INTERNATIONAL MONDAY, JUNE 20, 2005

Okinawa Suicides and Japan's Army: Burying the Truth?

By JAMES BROOKE

ITOMAN, Okinawa, June 17 — Clutching a hand grenade issued by the Japanese Imperial Army and driven by tales of what American soldiers would do with a pretty young woman, Sumie Oshiro recalled on Friday, she fled into the forests of Okinawa during the World War II battle known here as the "typhoon of steel."

"At one place, we sat together and hit the grenade on the ground, but it did not explode," she recalled of her flight with friends after Japanese soldiers told them to kill themselves rather than be taken captive. "We tried to kill ourselves many times, trying to explode the grenade we were given from the Japanese Army."

The three-month battle for Okinawa took more than 200,000 lives — 12,520 Americans, 94,136 Japanese soldiers, and 94,000 Okinawan civilians, about one-quarter of the prewar population. Lt. Gen. Robert Blackman, commander of the United States Marine forces in Japan, led a low-profile memorial ceremony on Friday, attended largely by Americans war veterans and relatives.

This Thursday, the 60th anniversary of the battle here, the last major one of World War II, Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi is to attend Japan's tribute here. [On Sunday he led a memorial service in Iwo Jima, a Japanese island where fighting ended in late March 1945, just as the invasion here began.]

Okinawa's trauma over what happened here after 545,000 American troops attacked this small archipelago is still deep. People here on Japan's southernmost islands want more recognition from Japanese society for their sufferings. But that wish collides with a growing nationalist effort to airbrush the past. After

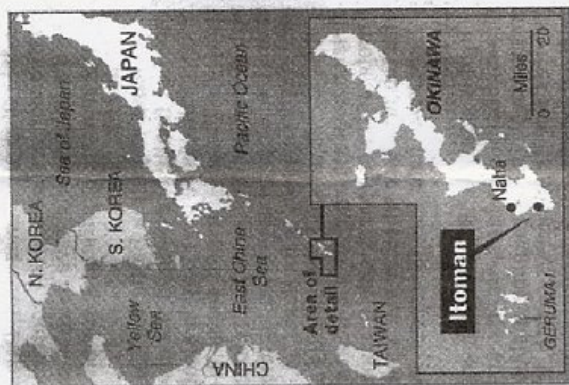
winning battles to play down Japan's war-era history of forcing Asian women to work in military-run brothels and Asian men to work in Japanese factories and mines, Nobukatsu Fujioka, a nationalist educator, started campaigning two weeks ago to delete from Japanese schoolbooks the accounts of orders from Japanese soldiers to civilians here to choose suicide over surrender.

Okinawa's anguish over the widespread civilian suicides has been sharpened by the deep belief here that soldiers from Japan's main islands encouraged Okinawan civilians to choose suicide over surrender to the Americans. In a display at the Okinawa Prefectural Peace Memorial Museum, a spotlight highlights a glinting bayonet held by a fierce-looking Japanese soldier who stands over an Okinawan family huddled in a cave, the mother trying to smother her baby's cries.

"At the hands of Japanese soldiers, civilians were massacred, forced to kill themselves and each other," reads the caption. Nearby, a life-size wall photo shows the grisly aftermath of a family killed by a hand grenade.

Soldiers seeking refuge from the naval shelling forced civilians out of limestone caves and, during the fighting, out of the island's turtle-back shaped tombs, according to wall captions. About two weeks into the battle, the Japanese military commander sought to suppress spying by banning the speaking of Okinawan dialect, a version of Japanese often unintelligible to nonresidents. Armed with this order, Japanese soldiers killed about 1,000 Okinawans, according to local historians.

Two mainstream Japanese history textbooks from the 1990's that talk of Japanese soldiers "coercing" civilians to kill themselves are on dis-



Itoman is a place where Okinawans committed suicide in 1945.

play. Now, Okinawans fear that this history will be dropped from the national consciousness.

"In many cases, hand grenades, which were in extreme shortage, were distributed to residents," Masahide Ota, an Okinawan who fought here with the Japanese Army in a unit called the Blood and Iron Student Corps, said in an interview on Friday. "I heard people say they were told by the military to commit suicide using the grenades rather than becoming captives."

Mr. Ota, who surrendered four months after the fighting ended here, went on to become a leading local historian, then Okinawa's governor, from 1990 to 1998. Now, at age 80, he represents the prefecture in Japan's upper house of Parliament.

Okinawans fear that the lack of a written suicide order by Japanese

military commanders will prompt editors of Japanese history textbooks to drop all mention of the military indoctrination that, as a wartime slogan put it, "soldiers and civilians had to live and die together."

On Geruma Island, Takejiro Nakamura was one such civilian, a 15-year-old student when the Americans invaded started.

"For a long time, the Japanese Imperial Army announced that, on other islands, the women had been raped and killed, and the men were tied at the wrists and tanks were driven over them," said Mr. Nakamura, now a guide at a museum housed in a traditional dwelling that bears bullet holes from the American attack. As Japanese defenses crumbled on the island in late March 1945, 58 of the 130 residents committed suicide, he said. Fleeing with family and neighbors, he said, he passed one cave where 10 villagers had killed themselves.

"I heard my sister calling out, 'Kill me now, hurry,'" Mr. Nakamura said, recalling how his 20-year-old sister panicked at the approach of American soldiers. His mother took a rope and strangled his sister.

"I tried to also strangle myself with a rope," he recalled, lifting his now weather-beaten hands to his neck. "But I kept breathing. It is really tough to kill yourself."

Minutes later, the Americans took them captive.

"The U.S. soldier touched me to check if I had any weapons," he recalled. "Then he gave us candy and cigarettes. That was my first experience on coming out of the cave."

His mother lived into her 80's. "We talked about the war," said Mr. Nakamura, who became a village leader. "But to the end, she never once talked about killing her daughter."



WARREN "DOC" EYER REPORTS FOR THE 396TH Bomb. Sq:

"We will have the new roster in the mail before you report to Hot Springs.

Harold Newlander is trying to find out if there are any other survivors from his and **Paul Jamison's** crews. I sent Harold the last address we had for Paul.

Had a nice note from **Paul Bull** of Sacramento, CA. Every time I hear "Sacramento" a flood of happy and crazy memories comes to mind: Sqn. H.Q. in one corner of the old Sac. Muni. Hangar – drove your car out to your aircraft's revetment – on return from flight you'd find your car serviced with a full tank of 100 octane gas – only one A-29 left, so loaded as many flight crew aboard as possible to get in required flight time – buzzing the capitol concourse at night – 'til someone knocked down the flag pole atop the capitol dome – taking aboard a civilian uncle of Goree (an original 396th pilot) - landing on a crop-duster's strip outside of Calaxico – by car-light – never shut down the engines – the old gent climbed out and we were off for home – "Buddy Bears Bar & Grill" was the watering hole – yes indeed.

Terry just wrapped up "Walk and Balance" therapy and fights the battle.

I sincerely hope to pass along this duty---don't think it's fair to hog all the fun. Parkinson and a few other 'trophies' for the lucky aged are slowly taking their toll. Maybe the Hot Springs would help? Hope to find out. Best Regards to all."

From ALBERT HETTIG, 396TH Bomb. Sq.:

I appreciate your sending me the newsletter about our commanding officer with the story of his life and funeral.

In Gen. Bywater's book there is a description of his wedding to his lady, Frankie, the same as he admired on the side of his plane.

This is all part of the history of the 41st Bomb. Group, which is fading away, with still no history book.

If all these stories would be put together in a book it would be a best seller. We need someone of the 41st to gather articles, like the Dec. '04 DAV magazine article about the B-25 named "Panchito," now flown by Larry Kelly and seen by people from all over, at air shows like Muskegon MI. It was flown in combat by the crew of Don Seiler (one of the crew was Bill Miller), deceased, but not forgotten.

My health has not been good. Been to the hospital but when home hate to sit and do nothing, so I read histories of other vets, pilot's crews, others who did the island hopping, General White of the 7th AF, the typhoon and history of all the other groups and squadrons.

Came home on the S.S. Sea Flier and settled in St. Joseph, MI where we built our home and raised two

sons, now married---but they didn't give up their fishing. My wife died of cancer in 1986.

[Ed: Al said he is not responsible for spelling, punctuation, etc. Presume he's claiming that over age 80 exemption. Your effort is appreciated, Al, and hope my paraphrasing correctly captured the essence of your message.]

Some time ago, "**Doc**" Eyer sent a 32 page typewritten account of **THOMAS D. "TOMMY" THOMPSON's**, 396TH Bomb Sq., diary from January 1st to September 15th 1944.

Tommy died Aug. 7, 2000 and his newspaper obituary was published in Bill Zingery's 396th Newsletter #32. Doc described Tommy "...as my closest friend...an excellent pilot, a wonderful hunting & fishing companion..."

When first received, and admittedly with only a cursory review, the sheer volume gave pause as to how to present the diary in "The Crow Flight."

Doc, politely but adamantly, did not accept my procrastination. Doc's urging and a more careful reading of Tommy's diary provided convincing evidence that it needed to be published. It is a fascinating glimpse into the day-to-day life of the 41st's first waves warriors.

We'll begin here with the initial installment; continue on P10 of this issue, and then in future issues as space permits.

1944 THOMAS DONALD THOMPSON 1ST LT. AC (DIARY)

January 1 BELLOWS FIELD HAWAIIAN ISLANDS
Welcomed in the New Year last nite with Major McAfee over at the 19th Fighter Sq. Liquor flowed freely & we laughed & talked about the old P.H.S. days. Also, the summer job at Saratoga Springs. All the pea-shooter pilots were swell to me & I guess I held them spellbound with my wild tales of flying "trucks." Harry flew me back to Bellows in an S.B.D. and slow rolled on the way, quite a thrill; I'd forgotten flying could be fun. Promised him I'd come up & buzz the place good in old "T.N.T." Two nights of unfamiliar boozing left me rather shaken. Cleaned guns all day & loaded 2100 rds for firing tomorrow. The boys had a falling down party here while I was gone. Doc managed to sleep in hall, up to his old "Sacto Hotel" tricks. Got paid so I bought clothes at the Q.M. & also this damn diary.

January 2 BELLOWS FIELD HAWAIIAN ISLANDS
The time we've all been waiting for is drawing near. Bomb bay tanks are being installed for the long flight to the Gilberts. Understand that the 820th Bomb Sqdn has already pulled two raids & have had their sleep disturbed every night by Jap nuisance raids. They have lost one plane by this bombing. Bill Gillette & I played
(Continued on P 10.)



THE CROW FLIGHT is a publication of the 47TH, 48TH, 396TH & 820TH Bombardment Squadrons, 41st Bomb. Group, (M) 7th AF, WWII

Currently, the targeted publication schedule is Feb. – May – Aug. –Nov.

Materials for publication & requests for the “Bio” form should be sent to Urban A. Gutting, postal, tel. & e-mail addresses below.

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DUES NEWS: CALENDAR YEAR DUES FOR THE 47TH IS \$12. THE 48TH & 396TH SQ UADRON DUES ARE \$15. 820th is \$10. MORE IS ACCEPTED. \$3 (\$5 FOR 396TH) EXTRA WILL PURCHASE 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 SLR (since last report) are: **Paul & Marion Kenway – Bill & Ellie Telega – Dale & Arlene Storms – Nedry & Ginny Burris – Jeanette Grandstaff (Memory of John) -The 47th bank balance as of 8-1-05 was \$2773.76.**

48TH BOMB. SQ. – John Helmer reports dues and gifts SLR from the following people: **Bill & Mildred Chilson – Robert Morse**. The cost of sending out TCF #32 to the 48th Sq. people was \$98.61. Our Savings Balance stands at \$2587.39.

396TH BOMB. SQ. – “Doc” Eyer reports dues and gifts SLR from **Dick Sternberg – Bill Zingery – A. Miros – Rick Heckel – Harold Newlander – Art Ferriera – Paul Bull – Gwen Moody – Lou Beisser**. Anyone else? The water’s fine! Bank balance is \$

CORRECTIONS TO TCF #32: I read (apparently not very carefully) through the whole newsletter about 4 times, yet managed to miss misspelling of **Jess (Ray) Ramaker’s** name several times. Mea Culpa, Ray Raymaker.

On “Schedule of Events” P3, make it Wednesday 28 and then Thursday 29 for Farewells. On the same form, “Room-block Expires” date should be **25 August ’05**.

On P6, it says, “2 [50 calibers – of course, it’s 1] in each waist window. That was my typo and I’m sure there were more.

Our Head Guy, George Tolbert, some time ago declared anyone over age 80 to be exempt from such glitches; I claim that exemption, now and henceforth.

+++++

(Thompson Diary Continued from P 9.)

our usual handball this afternoon & then went to the early show with Doc & Bob. Played poker for the first time in 3 weeks and won about \$50.00. Worked on the ship & have it all ready for firing tomorrow. Will try to get up to the 19th Fighter Sqdn and see Harry on the way home from his mission. Might even buzz the field in the old “truck” who knows?

January 3 BELLOWS FIELD

Flew out over water and fired all the guns except the tail gun. Blew off one blast tube and a shell tore a hole in the side of the fuselage. Guns fired fairly well, but I’m not satisfied with the forward firing guns by a long shot. Have a bomb release for Bob now & it worked O.K. Those seven guns sure kick up a lot of water when they hit. On the way home I buzzed Kualoa good. Very good! About 310 per 10 ft off the 6000’ steel runway. Pushed straight up to 2000’ and came in. All the buzz boys were quite impressed but damn it, Harry wasn’t there. Came back to the field and cleaned guns the rest of the day. Started to help my crew chief, t/sgt B.D. Smith put in the bomb bay tank but we had to give it up in order to eat. Doc just came in so I guess we’ll go the show. Four letters from my darling wife today!!

January 4 BELLOWS FIELD

Spent all day cleaning old “TNT”. Put in new plugs and installed the second life raft in the roof of the radio operator’s compartment. Had orders to pull the bomb-bay tank – so out it came. Except for the fact that the ground echelon has already left I’d believe we were due to spend the next six months on patrol. The 820th has lost two planes on the ground and one in the air (over Jaluit) in four raids. Doesn’t sound too good to me.

Played poker last night and won about \$60.00 of which \$50.00 I loaned Bill. Joined the locker fund at the club and purchased 5 qts of wine instead of one qt of liquor. Doc & Bill will help me dispose of this valuable property in short order. I’ve sent \$130.00 home this month, but it was just to pay back borrowed money – too bad. (To be continued)