



The Crow Flight



Thirty-ninth Newsletter of the 47th, 48th, 396th & 820th Bombardment Squadrons, 41st Bombardment Group (M), 7th AF, WWII, Issued June 2007

IT'S ALBUQUERQUE!!!

Don't sweat the spelling - just put ABQ in your 2007 date book for September 27, 28, 29, 30 and October 1 (Thursday through Monday). Thursday will be check-in day and Monday



departure day. Next step: Call 1-800-522-1555, identify yourself as 41st Bomb Group,



and tell The Vagabond Hotel you're heading to ABQ, come hell or high water.

Make your reservation now...for good reasons: 1) Your Reunion Planners need to know YOUR plans ASAP. 2) Hotel reservations may be cancelled without penalty up to 24 hours prior to arrival day

Here is how the selection process progressed: Norm Geril, 820th read and took to heart *The Crow Flight* #38 article about grabbing and wrestling into action any dangling 2007 Reunion ideas. He contacted Charlie Orr, son of deceased William R., 396th Bomb. Sq., and offered Charlie the job of 41st Bombardment Group 2007 Reunion Coordinator. Charlie accepted. He immediately contacted the Chamber of Commerce and within a few days began receiving detailed hotel offers, thus providing choices from about a dozen bids. After narrowing the list to about four, Charlie made on-site appraisals and came up with the VAGABOND as our 2007 Reunion Hq. Here is Charlie's description and evaluation: Ladies & Gentlemen, I have visited the Vagabond, and am now ready to make my pitch that this be the place for the reunion. The property was built in 1986 as a Radisson. It has been refurbished and looks quite new. It is located very near the airport in a cluster with a Hawthorne Suites and a Quality Suites. Its locale is not the most beautiful in Albuquerque, but it has some pretty nice view s westward from the balconies. The atmosphere is pleasant, and the grounds are groomed and very nice. This summer all the beds, carpets and drapes are being replaced.



The rooms are a step below the Doubletree from last year, but are spacious. The bathrooms are small, but new and clean. All rooms have balconies facing the sizable courtyard which is quite pleasant. There is a nice pool in the courtyard. They offer free parking and complimentary shuttle to the airport. The room rate includes a complete, large, hot breakfast buffet with rotating meat entrée of bacon, sausage or ham, plus all kinds of other items.



The banquet facility is most adequate. The hospitality suite is very nice....a large open room with a long balcony, bathroom, and wet bar. Rates offered by the Vagabond are as follows.

Room rate per night, including all tax	\$ 66.60 x 4 nights	=	\$266.40	(Single or double)
Banquet meal including tax & gratuity (Will be part of the Reg. Fee)			<u>30.72</u>	(\$61.44 per couple)
THAT'S IT! The total hotel cost!			\$297.12	(\$327.84 per couple)

["THAT'S IT" is for the room and banquet meal only...must reveal there will be Registration Fees to cover Hospitality Room booze & snacks, Banquet Color Guard, etc., &, of course, The Tours.]

I met the general manager, sales manager and banquet manager. They were all very excited and honored to have WWII Vets come, and will do whatever they can to make the 41st BG welcome and comfortable. Whaddayathink? Charley



STEVE AND ROSE BONFILI, DAUGHTER ALIDA KING AND GRANDCHILDREN CHRIS & KAREN KING

Steve Bonfili and spouse Rose now reside at 3701 10th St. NE, St. Petersburg, FL 33704. Steve originally hailed from Bakerton, PA. They also had a son, Frank, deceased in 1997.

Steve was the Radioman/Gnr on the 47th Bomb Sq crew of P Joe Gardner, CP Mike Datco [Dec.], N Johnny Edenfield [Dec.], Eng/Gnr Don Elwood [Unk.] and Arm/Gnr Ed Stinson [Unk.]. They flew 17 combat missions with "Chief Tecumsah." Steve was separated as a Tech Sgt.

He and Rose owned Bakerton Inn until they moved to St. Petersburg in 1963 and purchased "El Cap" – the first Sports Bar in the area. They retired in 1980 and then did a lot of traveling...to Italy, several cruises and visits to various states.

Steve and Rose celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary this June.

Ed: Congratulations Steve & Rose on your Sixtieth! Your picture portrays an "All American" family. Sure wish you had been more generous in sharing your life adventures; nevertheless, do thank you for taking the time to return your "Bio" for *The Crow Flight* readers.

SQUADRON NOTES:

John Helmer, 48th reports from Cannon Beach, OR June 12, 2007: A beautiful day on the Oregon coast. I came down this morning, about a 1 hour and 15 minutes drive with little traffic. Beverly came down yesterday. I must leave in two days to over-see loggers working on my forest. This is going to be the last harvest for the next 50 years. I have taken every corner of my 42 acres. Now is the time to let the trees grow. The age of my trees range from one year old to 85. Now my spacing, from nine to 20 feet, is correct for maximum growth.

Urb, Good to talk with you today. Hope 2007 continues to bring you good health and much happiness. Things are good in Ark – and looking forward to many more wonderful years. **Joe [Roop]** 47th

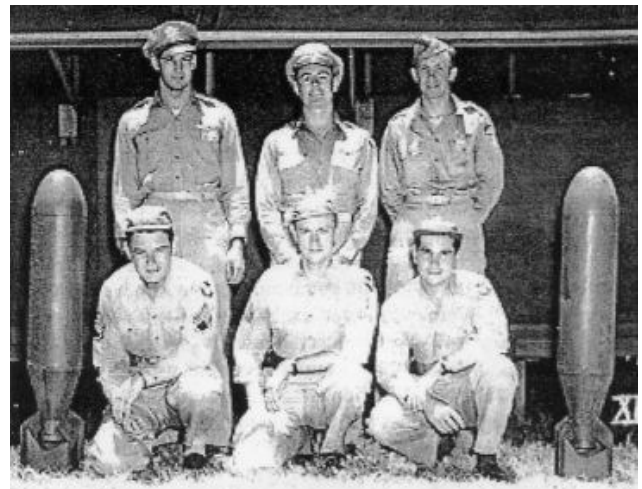
Nice job on the Tucson meeting report...sorry I missed it. **Rick Rondinelli**, 47th 4-25-07

From the desk of . . . **JOHN SACCO**, 47th 5/28/07

My contribution was small compared to you guys who carried the load (I came in at the end) but I am still honored just to be among the "Good Guys." Regards, **John Sacco**

Urb: I don't know how far I am behind on my dues or if I am behind. So I hope the amount of my check is enough to bring me up to date.

I enclosed a picture of our crew. The last info I received, only Keith Ingstad, Elwood and I are remaining. I talked to Quin Johnson some 10-15 years ago and his health was very bad then and he since died.



Keith Ingstad - Bob Thompson - Quin Johnson
George Rea - Elwood Konstant - Rowland Kerker

I retired in 1987 after practicing as an accountant for 40 years. In Jan 1999 we moved to Pensacola, FL to reside in a retirement village, "Azalea Trace." My wife, Dora and I love it. We have an RV & travel when we can. Our health is very good for our ages: "85."

Thanks to you and your Crow Flight friends for keeping me posted for the past years. **Roland Kerker**

Ed: Thanks, Roland for your interesting note. Roland Kerker is a member of the 396th Bomb Sq. He sent a very generous check that tested my fidelity, but I did credit Doc Eyer's 396th Treasury Account for the amount of the check.

Louis Cochran was kind enough to let us know he was "double blessed" by receiving two TCF newsletters. He was on the 396th & 48th mail rosters. Louis said he is 396th.

He too sent a generous dues check which also was credited to Doc's account. Bottom line for the 396th #38 TCF bill: it was reduced substantially.

MORE REUNION NEWS:

IT IS VERY IMPORTANT THAT YOU MAKE YOUR ABQ HOTEL RESERVATION ASAP SO THAT CONTRACTUAL ARRANGEMENTS CAN BE FINALLIZED WITH THE ABQ VAGABOND HOTEL & TOUR COMPANY. REMEMBER...YOUR COOPERATION BY REGISTERING NOW WILL MAKE LIFE MUCH EASIER FOR THE PLANNERS...AND...YOU RISK NOTHING BECAUSE HOTEL ROOM RESERVATIONS MAY BE CANCELLED WITHOUT PENALTY WITHIN 24 HOURS OF THE FIRST REGISTRATION DAY. SO PLEASE DO IT NOW!!! CALL 1-800-522-1555 AND PROUDLY ANNOUNCE YOU ARE WITH THE 41ST BOMBARDMENT GROUP.

For insight on ABQ attractions call the ABQ Visitor's Bureau at 1-800-284-2282 and request a Visitor's Guide booklet be mailed to you. For the adventurous, there will be a **limited number** of rooms available at our special rate for three days prior and post reunion dates. Book very early if interested.

You may remember reading in TCF #36 how the Tucson area was extolled as "...one of the most singularly unique areas found 'From Sea to Shinning Sea'." That was a good assessment, based on the fact that so many folks want a return reunion to Tucson.

Albuquerque and environs also ranks right up there as singularly unique in natural beauty and culture, only this time, it's "From the Mountains to the Valley." ABQ promises to be a pleasantly dry 80-85 degrees daytime temperature during our stay.

AN ACKNOWLEDGEMENT: FRED DEUTSCH, 48th, as reported in TCF #38, was doing research for a D.C. area 2007 Reunion.

When told of the rapidly developing ABQ plans, Fred graciously laid aside his work, even agreeing that he and BILL CHILDS, 820th, may be able to collaborate on reunion planning for 2008 at Williamsburg, VA. They both live nearby. Might Fred be able to persuade Queen Elizabeth to make a return visit and to be our guest speaker?

SOME PROFOUND THOUGHTS:

We have an unprecedented event taking place within the 41st Bomb. Group, in that never before has our Reunion been set up and coordinated by progeny of a member of our unit; and so, a salute to CHARLIE ORR. With certainty, his deceased father, WILLIAM R. ORR, 396th Bomb. Sq. is

pleased and smiling upon his son. Deepening the offspring connection, we can expect that William's grandson, JOHN ORR, will be assisting his father and thereby also earning the blessing of his grandfather.

As noted in one of the many emails generated in the Reunion planning process, this may presage a means of perpetuating our reunions until the last of the 41st Bombardment Group Mohicans is standing.

Another thought: could this be a national first for WWII units' reunions? If so, imagine the headline: (YOUR NAME HERE) took part in the first national WWII Reunion hosted by its unit's progeny. Come...be a part of history...once again.

REUNION TOURS:

"The Santa Fe Tour" & "The ABQ City Tour" have been selected.

We start with a drive to Santa Fe along the **"Turquoise Trail"**, stopping to shop in the historic mining village of **Madrid, New Mexico**, known for its quality arts and crafts. We will visit the beautiful Navajo **"Hogan"** inspired **Wheelwright Museum of the American Indian**.

An historic cultural tour follows, with a visit to the **Fenn Gallery**. Internationally acclaimed Sculptor **Glenna Goodacre** showcases the beautiful outdoor Fenn Garden

We will have a driving tour of historic Santa Fe, the oldest capital city in the United States. You will have free time to see the **San Miguel Mission**, the oldest church in America, (1610), and the French Romanesque styled **Chapel of Loretto** with the **"Miraculous Spiral Staircase"**. You will have time to shop and enjoy the plaza area, perhaps taking time to see the exquisite **Georgia O'Keeffe** or **Institute of American Indian Arts Museums**.

"ABQ City Tour" will start along the famed Route 66. "Old hacienda" style hotels and diners mark this early 20th century route. Downtown we'll see the "Railroad Era" of the Alvarado Hotel, an original "Harvey House." Other sights: National Hispano Cultural Center, University of New Mexico campus, the Bart Prince home, the arts and crafts area known as "Nob Hill," Old Town area, including an overview of the Albuquerque Museum, the Museum of Natural History, the Explora Science Center, and the Rio Grande Botanic Gardens and Aquarium.

Contract specs revolve around the **commitment date of Aug. 31, 2007**. So, once again, our reminder: **your cooperation is needed. We must know ASAP your intention...not your commitment...of attending the ABQ Reunion. You now have the ball in your hands...so slam dunk it...call in your reservation for the ABQ Vagabond Hotel...NOW! (1-800-522-1555)**



From Skip Thrune, 820th: We have lost a good friend. Maurice was my tent mate on Oki and roomie at Wheeler.

Maurice Edward Hamaker, age 84, Sun City West, passed away on May 19 in Surprise, Arizona.

Maurice was born in Highmore, South Dakota on April 20, 1923, to Margaret Johnson Hamaker and Maurice Carlton Hamaker. Maurice graduated from high school in DeSmet, South Dakota. He studied at the University of California in Los Angeles prior to entering the Army Air Corp. He received training as a pilot and flew a B-25 in the Pacific as a First Lieutenant with the U.S. Army Air Force during World War II. He continued his military service in the Air Force Reserve and attained the rank of Major.

He received his BA in Animal Husbandry from the University of California, Davis, CA. Maurice worked for the FHA in Plankington and Miller, South Dakota and then became an Insurance Examiner for the State of South Dakota and later for the State of Delaware. He maintained a 2,000 acre farm near Miller, South Dakota. In 1999 he and his wife moved to Sun City West, Arizona.

Maurice is survived by his wife, Katie Hamaker of the home. He is also survived by seven daughters, Linda Schwegman, Janice Matos, Kay Hamaker, Beverly Ackerman, Donna Hamaker, Laura Sowell and Mary Hamaker, and their mother, Elsie Hamaker, 13 grandchildren and one great grandchild. He is also survived by two step-children, Degan White and Susan Tarman, and two step-grandchildren.

Military services will be held at the National Cemetery in Arizona.

In lieu of flowers, contributions may be made to Hospice of the Valley, 9720 W. Peoria Ave., Ste. 128, Peoria, AZ 85345, or to the charity of choice.

Another notice sent by Skip:

- **Dorothy (Dottie) Pracko, wife of 820th B/N Bernie Pracko, passed away 6-8-07, after along fight with cancer.**



Dorothy hosted an 820th Reunion in Colorado Springs, including a tour of the Air Force Academy, a year after Bernie passed away. Her son, Gordon hosted a Luncheon, for a mini reunion, in Carefree, AZ. Dottie was a great friend of the 820th and the 41st Group.

- **Sent 5-14-'07 by Rolf Grandstaff, our 41st Bombardment Group Don Haskell Memorial Website manager and son of John, 47th Bombardment Squadron:**

I'm afraid I have some bad news about my mom, Jeanette. She passed away peacefully in her sleep last week. She was 82. We miss her. We will have a memorial service for her in Arcadia, Michigan early next month. My brothers and I will canoe out on Lake Michigan and spill mom's ashes there to join my dad's [John, 47th Bomb. Sq.]. It will be 13 years ago next month that we did that for dad. They wed in August, 1946, only about 6 months after he got back from Okinawa. They were married 47 years, had 4 kids, 7 grandkids, and a good life.

This writer: I've been privileged to have had a number of e-mail correspondences with Jeanette. She was outspoken, strong-willed and proud of her children. I especially remember how she reveled in the fact that, as a school teacher, she had the wonderful opportunity during the long summer vacations, to take the family on camping trips that, in aggregate, covered a good part of the United States. Now you know how Rolf acquired his rugged and confident countenance and demeanor.



THE CROW FLIGHT is a publication of the 47TH, 48TH, 396TH & 820TH B-25 Billy Mitchell Bombardment Squadrons, 41st Bomb. Group, (M) 7th AF, WWII

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

READERS MUST PROVIDE news material for publication. Send it & requests for your “Bio” form to your Sq. Rep. or to Urban Gutting, postal, tel. & e-mail addresses below.

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41st Gp. <http://www.softcom.net/users/dhaskell/bombgroup41/>

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CHANGE OF ADDRESS: Contact Your Sq. Representative or “The Crow Flight” Editor & Publisher, Urban A. Gutting, addresses above.

DUES NEWS: 2007 CALENDAR YEAR DUES FOR THE 47TH & 48TH IS \$5, INCLUDING A ROSTER; 396TH DUES IS \$15 + \$3 FOR A ROSTER AND THE 820TH DUES IS \$10.

MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE & SEND TO: EMERY TUTTLE 820TH, WARREN EYER 396TH, JOHN HELMER 48TH & URBAN A. GUTTING 47TH. ADDRESSES ABOVE.

\$\$ FINANCIAL REPORTS \$\$

47TH BOMB. SQ. Good Guys and Gals dues and gift Contributors SLR (since last report) are: **Joe & Lola Roop – Robert Gollnitz – Lynn & Betty Sweetland – Steve & Rose Bonfili – John & Margaret Sacco – Rick & Marilyn Rondinelli – James & Kay Land – Urban Gutting – Steve Gutting – Suzanne (Gutting) Powers.** The 47th bank balance as of 6-14-2007 was \$2757.54.

48TH BOMB. SQ. – John Helmer reports dues and gifts received SLR from **Robert Morse – Joe & Vera Carrion**, for a total of \$85. Cost of *The Crow Flight* #38 for the 48th was \$114.93 and our bank balance is \$2121.12.

396TH BOMB. SQ. - “Doc” Eyer reports a bank accounts balance of \$1217.16 as of 06-01-'07. The following were heard from SLR with dues: **Roland & Dora Kerker –**

Louis & Marjorie Cochran – Robert Baird – Baggy Baglietto – Walt Winner. Said Doc: And received good feeling notes from Zing – Bob Baird – Ginny MacDavid – Peggy Thompson.

820th BOMB. SQ. - 2007 dues payers are: **Jerome & Marian Cassell – Marjorie Bleicher – Richard Giachino – Leroy & Merrill Myers.** Interest earned \$29.20. Balance as of June 1, 2007 is \$2029.00.

PLEASE NOTE: Each Squadron maintains its own treasury. Please send your dues checks to your respective Squadron Treasurer, as indicated under “DUES NEWS” in the masthead at left.

CORRECTION: NL #38 P12 captioned the handsome couple displaying Doc's Intarsia US. Flag prize as **Clare & Morgan Molloy**; change that to **Craig & Betty Anne Norton.** The handsome Molloy couple is pictured center on P11 (between patriotic Kemary and “Doc Urb” examining Dick). They are also on the far right in the group picture below that.

INPUT: Skip Thru provided a lot of it for this TCF issue. Fleeting thought to name it “The Skip Thru Issue,” but then decided he hasn't...quite...earned that honor. If, however, Skip were to host a forthcoming Reunion and submit a comprehensive “Bio” therewith, he would definitely be in the running.

SQUADRON ROSTERS: Would like to propose that each of *The Crow Flight* readers access our 41st Bomb Group website and check the accuracy of your personal information on the Squadron Rosters. If corrections are needed, you can post them to “Sign Our Guestbook” at the bottom of the home page, ~~or contact our website Manager, Rolf Grandstaff~~ at the addresses given on this page under “Don Haskell's Memorial Website” in the masthead. Keeping up with accuracy of the rosters is a huge job. Rolf has done a lot of work on them but he can only enter what information he is given.

Stuff happens. Received below message just before the presses rolled. ~~Hopefully, someone of you will step up for Rolf.~~ Meantime, for now cancel notification of roster changes or corrections to Rolf. **Sean Casey will do it!!!**

Urb, I'm afraid I need to give you a heads up that we're implementing new student systems at NC State Univ this fall and throughout the year. It's getting pretty crazy and will be for the next year or so. I'm already working OT to get stuff done in time. I'm afraid I'm not going to have much time to do anything but ----, shower, and shave besides work. If some one would like to take the over the website, at least for a while, to keep things moving, I certainly would have no problem with that. Otherwise, please bear with me if I don't get stuff done in a timely manner. I've certainly enjoyed doing the website and promise to resume my work with it once we're caught up around here. Hope all is well with you. Talk to you later...-Rolf

Our intrepid scuba diver-researcher, **Matt Holly**, sent a 13 page email recounting his downed-aircraft research in the Marshall Islands. Our 41st Website manager, Rolf Grandstaff, plans to post it to our website. It is fascinating reading and relays Matt's request for more information from us in the form of era photos of specific people as well as crews and aircraft.

Matt has a 24 chapter book in the final stages of preparation. It contains six separate 41st BG stories, three based on his findings of three 41st BG aircraft underwater, and unique research on three other downed planes. TCF will keep readers posted on news as received re availability of Matt's book.

From **Doris Sayer**: "Poking around the attic a few days ago, I found the enclosed photos. Note that they are "official" AAF photos. I am trying to be ruthless, but 35 years of accumulation (this house alone) is difficult to dispose of. If I have good luck, I will have sold the property before next winter. I just cannot take care of such a large house and 17+ acres."

Doris said she was to have double cataract surgery done this month (June) and is not enthusiastic about a possible redo of her heart valve surgery scheduled for early Oct. Keep Doris in your prayers for successful outcomes.

The photos Doris referred to above are from the south Pacific action and all involve B25s attacking Japanese shipping. I'm going to forward them on to Matt Holly in the hope they will be of use in his research.

Thomas D. "Tommy" Thompson Diary (Contd. From TCF #37 P 11)

January 25 TARAWA 3rd MALEOLAP RAID

Doc, Al, Jameson, and I stayed home today but nine of our airplanes hit Maleolap about 5.00pm. Fiest thinks he hit a freighter docked at the pier with two 500# bombs. Casey flew my ship with Major McDavid as his co-pilot & brought it home without a scratch about 25 Zeros attacked them, some dropping phosphorous bombs which came pretty close. MacDonald's ship was hit by two 20mm from a Zero. One hit his co-pilot Knickerbocker in the groin & exploded blowing flesh all over Mac & the inside of cockpit. Knick lived until they hit Makin, but he died in the final approach. They had given him three blood plasma transfusions & morphine so he was in no pain. He was as game as they come. It was a bloody mess & the Sqdn is taking it pretty hard.

January 26 TARAWA

Flew a 2½hr search mission for an 820th plane which everyone thought had landed at Makin but apparently was lost. We flew over Betio (where the battle of Tarawa took place) and what a mess! Not a tree left & the ground is black from shell fire. Jameson, Doc, Al, and I went. We found a B26 wing & a box of emergency rations. On returning we found out that a body of one of the crew had washed ashore at Betio & was identified by the dog tags. Frank Stevens went down on the last 820th raid two days ago. He made a water landing 5 minutes after the Zeros left them. They were hitting Maleolap. His plane caught on fire & two men in the rear tried to bail out. It broke in half but three got out. Dumbo (Navy rescue plane) picked three men up yesterday but I don't know if Frank was with them or not. Replacements are here.

January 27 TARAWA 1ST NAURU RAID

Cpt Bailey led Trucker, Doc, Al, Jameson, and myself on a six plane raid on Nauru a Japanese Island 396 miles from here. We straddled the coastline going in over a new air strip under construction and hit another older strip on the other side of the Island. We had complete surprise and very little opposition. My forward guns jammed again and I am plenty sore at Armament for not taking better care of them. Saw a log block house which I fired into. Cleared the trees about 10 feet going over the Island which is 3 miles long and 180' high. We were doing 240 miles an hour over the target. Saw some poor native in his boat just as we dropped our bombs on the far strip and came over the end of the Island. He was sure surprised and his head was turning in circles. Didn't sweat this raid out much - hope they all come like this. Sighted huge U.S. Task-Force on way home. Tappan may get a crew.

January 28 TARAWA

Frank Stevens was picked up. He pulled his co-pilot & navigator out of the sinking ship and somehow got them into a life raft. He was badly burned but the other two were more hurt than he. The three enlisted men were not saved. We saw two separate U.S. task force on the way to the Marshalls when we were coming home from Nauru. Looks like a big battle brewing up there. Three enlisted men in our Sqdn have cracked & refused to go on any more missions. They were broken to privates and put to work on the ground. Can't understand it - in my opinion that is desertion in the face of the enemy & they should be treated accordingly. Heard Brig Gen Landon when he talked to the Sqdn. According to the higher ups, 30 missions is all heavy crews must participate in before being permanently replace - they have not decided on Medium yet. I believe it should be less ! Looks like a long war for us on this side of the ocean.

January 29 TARAWA 1st WOTJE RAID

Nine ships left at 1.30 pm to raid Wotje in the Marshalls. As usual Doc, Al, Jameson and I stay here. We seem to catch the same raids. Trucker went; however, and this will bring the total up to four as the rest of us have. Sure enough things are popping. The Navy task force is bombarding Wotje before the 25s go across. I don't think they'll run in to much opposition. Finished "So Little Time" and enjoyed it very much. These days of rest drag very slowly and we are all ready to go again. Shirley has been in the hospital with Dengue fever - so has Gillette and 4 or 5 other officers. I've been feeling very good although I've lost 10 pounds so far. Wilbur Shaw has gotten a crew and Tappan is next (so the Major told him) Personally I think he is safer flying with me. Really sweating the boys out - I hope that they all get through safely. Two years of war, when will this bloody mess be over ?

January 30 TARAWA

The mission yesterday was successful over the target. No ships were hit and a great deal of damage was done to Wotje. The Navy was supposed to have been bombarding the Island with a task force. No sign of any hits at all from them. On the way home - 50 miles from the target the nine ships were skirting the Task Force when suddenly our own Navy opened fire. Navy fighters hit them from above, shooting my good friends Taylor & Cherrington (pilot & co-pilot) down in flames. Most of our airplanes were hit by the barrage & fighters. Casey's ship was badly hit & Doyle his navigator was wounded - undetermined how badly. Trucker's engine blew up on the peel-off and he crashed in the Lagoon. All were hurt but not badly. They are returning to Oahu. My God what a disaster ! We are ready to fight the Navy first & then the Japs. How could they be so stupid ! Their fighters closed in to 150 yds & our boys just sat there & got killed !!!!

January 31 TARAWA

Five of Taylor's crew were picked up by a destroyer, but we haven't heard as yet who it was. Trucker's whole crew have gone back to Oahu. His engine blew up and tore his tail assembly off. All six of them were plenty damn lucky to get out alive. They have just about used up all their luck & I'm glad they sent them back. Trucker's face was a mess and the radio operator's leg was broken. All of them were battered & cut up. Johnny Moore Truck's co-pilot gave me two quarts of liquor when he left. Doc, Al, Bill & I drank them up last night. Only Jameson & myself left in "D" flight out of 4 original crews - not too good. Shirley, Curtis & Kemp received Purple Heart medals in a short ceremony today. Half of my crew! Watson is out of the hospital & back in the Sqdn, He says he won't fly any more. Yellow, I say. Today the Navy is supposed to invade the Marshalls -Good Luck !!

(To be continued)

Dear Rolf, My name is Peter Trusevitch. I am the son of Edward J. Trusevitch.

I am trying to inform the appropriate personal responsible for maintaining the living/deceased roster list. Can you direct me to an email address or forward to the appropriate personal that can ensure that my father's military family is aware of his passing?

Regards, Peter Trusevitch, Strategic Alliance Mgr. - Cisco Channel, Dimension Data North America, Work: 508 808-6337, Cell: 508 954-5106, FAX: 508 983-6298, EMAIL www.dimensiondata.com

[Ed: Notice of Edward J. Trusevitch's death was carried in TCF #38. Edward was a member of the 820th Bomb. Sq.]

Sent: Wed, 28 Mar 2007 2:13 AM. Subject: 48th Squadron 1944

Hi. I am hoping that you may be able to help me. I have a distant relative who was a member of the 48th Squadron that was downed on March 26, 1944, 15 miles north of Ponape. I am hoping that you might have a Roster photo or know how I could get a picture. My distant relative was Lionel D. Colley - MIA/KIA. I appreciate your time. Thank you so much. Amy.

Amy thanks for your note. My dad was with the 47th Squadron of the 41st Bomb Group and I'm the webmaster for the 41st's website. I'm afraid I don't currently have any photos of Lionel Colley but I do have microfilm that I can research to see if any are there. I do have some information for you however. Diane Lassitter, whose father Merritt Miller was also on that aircraft on March 26 would no doubt like to talk with you and she may have additional information on the crew including Lionel. There are also several members of the 48th that you could contact. These gentlemen include Bob 'Pappy' Brandt, Jess Ramaker, Ed Danko, and John Helmer. Pappy actually saw the aircraft go down and watched the crew board a rubber raft. An account of this can be found in our newsletter, 'The Crow Flight', issue #23 as well as a 'reunion' of sorts by phone between Diane and Pappy in issue #24. All of this information including their email, phone numbers, and the articles are available on the website but please feel free to contact me if you have any questions. I'll copy Diane and Pappy on this as well as Urb Gutting who is the newsletter's editor chief. They are wonderful folks and I'm sure you would enjoy corresponding. I'll let you know if I find out anything else. Nice to hear from you. -Rolf Grandstaff

Hi Rolf & Sean, I'm Bob Dorrough, son of James Dorrough, pilot of the Paper Doll's second crew. Last year I visited the National Archives in Maryland and got the only known film of the 41st Bomb Group, 48th Bomb Squadron. I've converted it to a Windows Media file and would love to

include it on the 41st website. It's currently at 640x480 screen size; 21:50 run time and 213mb. I could crunch it down more, but would hate to lose what little detail is there. I'd be happy to FTP it or park it somewhere for you. Please let me know.

[Ed: Bypassing the rest of the tech jargon, suffice it to say Rolf now has it on the 41st website with download instructions. This is the same film on VCR that Diane Lassitter purchased from the Archives and sent copies to Pappy Brandt and me. It has been shown several times at past Reunions.]

My name is Charles D. Tolliver and my uncle, Kenneth Tolliver, was a member of the 820th Bomb Squadron. He died in 1967 when I was 6 of cardiac failure and his widow died in 1999 in Sacramento, California. My aunt said he never talked about the war and my father, who died in 1991, never talked about it or his brother except in general terms.

Until 1995 when I found General Bywater's book, the only information I had on Uncle Kenneth's experiences during the war were a picture of him and the crew of the Lil Lynn labeled "Kenneth and his war buddies." After a brief correspondence with Gen. Bywater and George Knoy, I moved and lost contact.

Yesterday while doing research on the Internet, I decided to see if there was any new information on the group and found the new website. I read in one of The Crow Flights that you had been able to get the group records for the 41st. My uncle's service records were destroyed in a fire at the archives, so I would appreciate any information you could provide from the unit records regarding him, the men on Mason's crew and their missions.

Kenneth Tolliver was a Staff Sergeant and crew chief and later a gunner on George R. Mason's plane, the Lil' Lynn (possibly, B-25G 42-64897). When Cpl. Marvin Luzier was grounded, he volunteered to serve as engineer-gunner on Mason's crew and after gunnery training was assigned to that position. Sometime later he was wounded (both knees injured) and shipped home. Thank you very much for your assistance. Very truly yours, Charles D. Tolliver

Note from **George Davidson**, 820th. Love getting The Crow Flight. Not enough 820 news. Sorry to read about Bob Bleicher, but nice story. Thanx, George
New Address: 217 Brian Lane, Windsor, CT 06095.
Phone (680) 683-4441.

[Ed: Not enough 820 news? Print what you guys send. "Don't make news...just report it" is TCF Ed policy.]

"A Day of Loss" by Bob Bleicher, as told to Skip Thrune, 820th Sqdn.

29 July 1945, we left Okinawa, target Myazaki, on Kyushu. We were a mixed Crew, in B-25J 327879, in the number 3 position on Dan Hill's wing. Pilot was Nate Mangeno, Nav Jim Van Epps, E/G Joe Kinkley, R/G Fred Forge Jr., A/G Tom Billings, with me as Copilot. During our low level attack on a rail bridge, one of our 8 nose guns kept firing. This affected our rejoining formation, until it stopped. We were hit and the tail gunner was wounded. The left gear dropped down, as we tried to climb.

Fire was burning in the left wing. Ditching was the only option, because of the wounded tail gunner. We prepared to ditch and as we neared the water, the waves looked like mountains. The initial touch was smooth, then a severe bump and the right prop flew off. The controls were not functioning and the cockpit hit nose down. From viewing the photos later, I saw there was an explosion, separating the rear fuselage from the wing assembly.

I remember going through the windshield, passing through pieces of plexiglass, then darkness. Then, I became aware of deep blue water, and total disorientation. Finally, I saw a lighter blue, and swam to the surface. All that floated was the wing section, heavily engulfed in fire and dense smoke. The only sound was the crackling of the flames. Believing I was all alone, I felt a mild panic.

Then I heard voices. I saw two people about a hundred feet away, yelling for me to get away from the aircraft. After swallowing salt water and swimming away, I activated my Mae West. Nate Mangeno and Jim Van Epps were struggling to inflate two one-man rafts. We got Mangeno into one, and Van Epps, who was the more injured, into the other. The large raft from the fuselage had blown clear, but was not inflatable due to a damaged pump.

We called and searched for others, but got no response or visuals. We unloaded what supplies were of use from the large raft to the small ones. Dan Hill had been circling us, after his photographer had recorded the ditching, and had been radioing for "Dumbo." A Navy PBM seaplane responded and Dan departed for Okinawa.

The PBM made three landing attempts, aborting each due to the very high seas. Much later, a B-17 appeared, and dropped a boat by parachute. It landed out of our sight, and beyond our ability to paddle toward it. A second B-17 made a better drop and we were able to reach it. But there was much strain in our efforts to finally disconnect the three chutes, which were dragging the boat underwater.

The Flying Dutchman was well equipped for survival. We were able to exchange our torn and oil-soaked gear for dry clothes. All this was done by 1700 hrs. With the med kit, we tried to care for Mangeno's broken leg and hands. He was ejected still in his seat, and had difficulty detaching it under water. I had a wide bruise where my seat belt broke on impact.

Van Epps was crouched behind Mangeno, and was ejected with the pilot's seat. His leg was torn open severely, on both sides, almost to a point of amputation. We did our best to hold it together.

The PBM stayed with us until dark. We dared not use a light, or start an engine, which might help the enemy locate our position. We noticed a flare around midnight, but no sounds. At dawn, after much effort, I got one engine started, giving us enough power to keep from drifting toward a hostile shore.

At about 1000 hours, a PBM flew over and signaled "S-T-O-P" with a sight gun. We shut off the engine, but the plane didn't land. After some time and concern, we were startled by the conning tower of a submarine surfacing behind us. When we spied the uniforms emerging from the hatch, we knew (or thought) we were safe. Little did we know what was to come.

The sub crew got us aboard in spite of the high seas, and destroyed our boat with gun fire. The 16mm film they took has been incorporated into our Group History VHS tape. The USS Batfish then returned to its assigned location for continued "Life Guard duty" until relieved. We were treated by their corpsman for our wounds, in very confined space, but well enough to stabilize Van Epps' leg.

The third day, while reclining in a bunk, I was jolted, my injured back vertically striking the wall, amid noises; a loud horn and a repeated "DIVE, DIVE!" We were under attack, and I heard the bomb sounds as we submerged. I remembered seeing this in movies, but this was real!

When all clear, the Captain asked me about our Planes. He described the one that attacked us perfectly. It was one of our 820th B-25s. We had assumed, too early, that we were safe, after our rescue.

After this event, our sub got permission to depart its post and head to Iwo Jima. There, we were put onto amphibious "Ducks" (while being filmed again), and taken to the hospital. It was here, from Skip Thrune, Bill Norling and Art Love, flying to Iwo to check on us, that we learned who bombed our sub.

Mangeno and Van Epps, because of their greater injuries, were flown to hospitals for full recovery. I was returned by C46 to Okinawa. Even that flight was aborted due to engine problems, before I made it back. We three, along with Skip, finally got together in 1990 for a reunion in Phoenix.



Jim Van Epps, Nate Mangeno, Skip Thrune and Bob Bleicher,
together for the first time, since Iwo Jima, in 1945.
February 21, 1990

We reflected on our experiences, but mostly on the heart-break of not finding and being able to have our three crewmen rescued with us. The PBM, circling for hours, was unable to sight anyone else. My wife, Marjorie, made it her mission to visit their families and share their grief.

As we were driving through Muskogee, OK one day, Marjorie saw a sign, "War Memorial Park." We drove in and found the USS Batfish on display, complete with a Docent and original Log Book. Imagine the surprise of the docent when he related the rescue incident, and we supplied the names

Postscript by Skip Thrune: Because our 41st Gp. Mission from Okinawa was first, breaking

the Japanese infrastructure, and then supporting the beach landings on Kyushu, we had a minimum of two crews per plane. This would entail two-a-day strikes, which we actually tested. Not extreme for the air crews, flying only one, but rough on the planes and hard working ground crews, doing double duty.

After the crash, we needed to know who survived. I boarded the Communications Ship in Buckner Bay and from the radio logs, badly garbled, I got names, rescuing vessel and destination. Permission to fly to Iwo was given by the Sqdn. CO. Due to the numbers of new men, I didn't meet Bob or Jim until that day on Iwo. Mangeno and I were Cadets and friends, even before he was copilot on my second crew. I'm happy we had many reunions before Bob and Nate left us. Bob and Marjorie hosted one 820th reunion in Dayton.

When Bob, Nate and Jim finished telling their stories, they suddenly, as one, asked, "Who, in the 820th bombed us?" I told them he was flying number 2, on my right wing, when he broke radio silence and then broke formation. He met us in our revetment, proudly announcing he had "sunk a Jap Sub"!

Before I could say his name, they had guessed correctly.

Bob had written a more complete account of his "Day of Loss" as a chapter in a book Marjorie just finished writing for their family. She gave me a copy, and permission to use material in The Crow Flight and in Rolf's 41st Group Web Site. I feel honored to have been a small part of their lives.



Sequence of Ditching Photos Taken from Pilot Dan Hill's Plane

SQUADRON NOTES:

Dick Sternberg has been communicating weekly and he reports the good news that Pat has steadily progressed in recovery from her stroke on April 3rd. Dick said that Pat's attitude is good and that she smiles a lot. Among those who know Pat, there was never a doubt that she would show a champion's determination in her rehab efforts. And so it has been.

Daughter Annie and husband Larry, living nearby, lend tremendous comfort and help to both Pat and Dick. Their other two children, David and Ruth, live and work in NY City, but have made frequent visits to lend their family support.

Dick said your prayers and communiqués of encouragement for Pat have made a positive impact and are most appreciated.

From **Gene Olsen, 48th**: Hi! Just a note – because I'm pooped from moving, what with all the hanging of pictures, furniture moving – and then I pull my back muscles moving a large 24 x 36 x 36 box with over 10,000+ glass sculptures. The box was on top of a duplicate one which weighed a lot more than 100 lbs - so I screwed up and tried to lower it – yeah, sure! Dummy! So I'll survive. At my age 87 I assume this to be my last move?? New address: 5353 W. Desert Inn Rd, Apt 1089, Las Vegas, NV 89145-7943

The cake cutting ceremony was performed by Army Veteran William Telega, who at age 92, still possessed the youthful playfulness of a teenager. Event Organizer Patricia Jared, manager of Kingsland Downtown Development Authority, had a difficult time taking the cutting knife from Telega, who proceeded to cut the whole cake following his prescribed ceremonial cut.



Bill Telega, our young-at-heart elder statesman keeps making the news. Picture left was taken at the Armed Forces Day Celebration held in downtown Kingsland, GA

A quote from TCF #38 P5: "Look for a picture of Ellie, bride and Bill in

the next TCF...Told Ellie that beauty obviously runs

in the family. Note the dapper, now 92 youngster's sartorial selections which, hopefully, he will wear at our next reunion."



Dear Urb, Thanks for The Crow Flight. When I saw your name on the envelope all I could think of was "Good God, I forgot to send my dues for 2007."

We are both hanging in there, hitting our 86th and 87th in February, and celebrated the fact that Ople put up with me for 65 years.

All three of our boys are doing well, with Wade, owner of a gas station for 41 years, thinking of retiring. Mark, our youngest at 53, took us down [From Westfield, NY] to North Carolina to visit with Dean who is 54. Coming home Monday of this week we hit terrible weather and all kinds of accidents. Was sure thankful that Mark did practically all the driving. Hope you are doing better. Sincerely, **Bob & Ople Gollnitz, 47th**

Forwarded by John Helmer: Dear John, Sorry I'm late with some money. I sure enjoy The Crow Flight & appreciate keeping me on the mail list. I have Parkinson disease so please excuse the penmanship. Kindest regards, Bob, 48th [**Robert J. Morse**, 3 Court of Harborside, Northbrook, IL 60062]

Dear John Helmer, I am **R. Harry (Grem-lin) Girten**. I was Crew Chief on 778 (77 missions). It was named "Lady Godiva." My first flight crew was Lilly & Sline, both Flight Officers. We went back to



Hawaii for reorganizing with new "J" type B-25s. I can't remember who I had in Okinawa. I came home and was discharged on Nov. 27, 1945. I will soon be "86" years old. Paul Hopson will remember me.

Mr. Helmer, can you give me any information on how to get the medals for the 48th from start to finish of WWII?

Thank you, God bless, **Robert Harry Girten**
895 4th Lane
Vero Beach, FL 32962