



The Crow Flight



Forty-third Newsletter of the 47th, 48th, 396th & 820th Bombardment Squadrons, 41st Bombardment Group (M), 7th AF, WWII, Issued August 2008



JOHN IN 1943

ROLF GRANDSTAFF, host of our '08 CHS Reunion coming up in September, introduces and relates memories of his father, JOHN GRANDSTAFF, 47TH Bombardment Squadron

My dad, John Grandstaff, served as an armorer with the 47th Squadron from November, 1943 until the end of the war. While he was proud of his service, he wasn't much given to reminiscing about it. He used to talk a little about Tarawa, Hawaii, and Okinawa - but it was especially Tarawa that had made an impression on him. I remember as a boy asking him what Tarawa was like and he told me that it was a "beautiful, terrible place." "A lot of men died there," he said, "too many."



JOHN IN HAWAII, 1945

Two things about the war he would talk about, though, were the B-25 Mitchell and the .50 cal. machine gun. "That plane," he'd tell me, was "the best damned plane ever made" because it carried "the best damned gun ever made," the .50 cal., and carried more of those .50s than any other airplane. He could extol the virtues of the .50 cal. at length: rate of fire, effective range, recoil, and how you'd break it down, clean it, reassemble it, load/charge it, etc. He could do it blindfolded, he said, and I believed him.

When Dad got out of the service, he returned home to Detroit and married his high school sweetheart, my mom, Jeanne Rolfe, in August, 1946. They lived in Ann Arbor and earned their degrees there, something Dad said he probably wouldn't have been able to do without the G.I. Bill. After graduation, they moved to Battle Creek, lived there for 40 years, and raised a daughter and three sons.

The best memories I have of my dad are from summertime. Dad was a teacher, so we had much of the summer off together as a family. Until I was about 10 years old, we rented a cottage on Lake Michigan near a town named Arcadia, in a remote northwestern part of the state where there weren't (and still aren't) a lot of people and everything seems to slow down a little. It was here that Dad taught me how to shoot (something Mom wasn't especially crazy about), to fish off of the big pier at Frankfort, to canoe down the Betsy and Little Platte rivers, and also where we would take long hikes along the beach or on old logging roads through the forest. One of our favorite things to do as a family was to watch the sun set into Lake Michigan; many of those sunsets were spectacular.

Both Mom and Dad loved to travel, and starting in the summer of 1962, we began the first of many camping trips that took us all over the western United States and much of Canada. The summer of 1965 we even drove up to Alaska on the ALCAN Highway, which at that time was little more than 1500 miles of gravel road. Sometimes it seemed as if my parents' goal was to simply get to the most out-of-the-way, scenic spot in the world to pitch our tent - and then explore it all by car or on foot. If we had a pit toilet and a water pump, we were good to go. At the time, it wasn't something that I always appreciated; I missed my friends from school and a hot shower was only something to dream about. But when I look back on those trips now, I have to marvel at the places we visited, the things we saw and did together. Years later, I'd (attempt to) reprise some of those trips with my kids.

Once I was in high school, we stopped taking the long summer trips. Over the years, the family would still get together, of course, for holidays, various occasions, and shorter vacation stays. One of my fondest memories was in the summer after I came back from Vietnam, when Dad, Mom, and I were in southwestern Colorado for a week near Ouray. I'd just bought a Harley Sportster and met them there on my way out west. Dad and I did some hiking, horseback riding, and just catching up in general. One evening he and I got on the bike and rode the "Million Dollar Highway" from Ouray down to Silverton. It was a clear night, the stars were out, and the

two of us rode through the switchbacks in the cool, dark night air. Soon after we started out, the moon rose over the canyon wall and reflected off of the snow fields for the remainder of the ride. We had a beer or two in Silverton and then headed back. It was a magical ride.

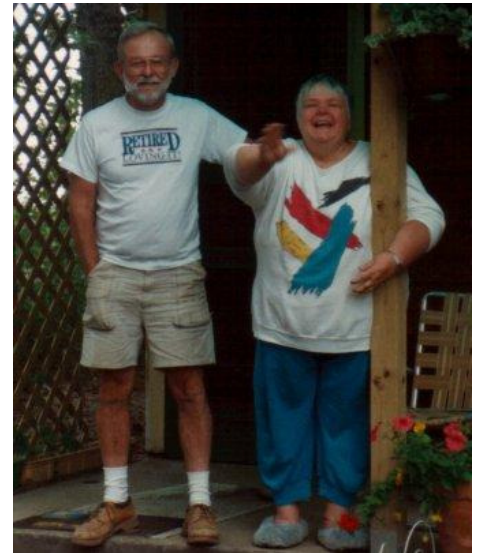
I think being a father was especially important to my dad partly because he didn't know his own father very well. In fact, he referred to his father only as 'Frank' and seldom spoke of him. None of us kids ever met Frank Grandstaff. While Dad was growing up, Frank was in trouble with the law much of the time and was finally sentenced to a life term at the Tennessee State Penitentiary in Nashville. I believe my dad was determined to give his kids the time and company that he never received from his own father.

I remember when I was very young; I had a vivid dream about dying. I think I'd had the dream because I'd just discovered, as we all do at some point, that one doesn't live forever, at least not in this life. Anyway, when I woke up, I told Dad about it and he just laughed and said not to worry because that was a long ways off. In



fact, he said, that time was even a long ways off for him.

In 1993, "that time" somehow suddenly arrived all too soon, and at the age of 69, Dad passed away of cancer. The last time I spoke with him was up in the bedroom of the house he and Mom had just built on the site of our old family vacation cottage. From there, we had a wonderful view of the sun setting on the lake.



JEANNE & JOHN 1946 He was a good man and a great dad. I miss him. **LAKE MICHIGAN COTTAGE, 1989**

ROLF, KATRINA AND ERIKA GRANDSTAFF WOULD LIKE TO REMIND YOU THAT OUR COMMITMENT TO THE REUNION CONTRACTS MUST BE MET BY 18 AUGUST, 2008.

IF YOU HAVE BEEN A FENCE SITTER, YOU NEED TO COMMIT NOW, OR FOREVER REGRET THAT YOU PASSED UP THIS OPPORTUNITY TO JOIN WITH YOUR WWII COMRADES IN WHAT MAY BE ONE OF, OR VERY CLOSE TO, OUR LAST GET TOGETHERS. WITH BUT FEW EXCEPTIONS LIKE SKIP & RENE & RICK & MARILYN, WE AREN'T GETTING YOUNGER; ERGO, IF YOU CAN STILL STRAP IN, NOW IS THE TIME TO DO IT.

Excerpts from "Travel + Leisure Golf," Oct, '06: ... "In the restored heart of the city, history has a knack for reminding us that it is present. It's here in the colonial cobblestones; in the antebellum mansions built with fortunes made from indigo rice and cotton; in the Ashley and the Cooper, the two tidal rivers that embrace the city. History bleeds though the vibrant hues of restored Rainbow Row, inspiration for the novel that became *Porgy and Bess*. ... I also know George Washington slept here. In fact, on his 1791 tour of the new nation, he ate and drank here, too..." "WHAT YOU MUST UNDERSTAND," Julian Buxton is explaining, "is that there's nothing like Charleston in all of America." A storyteller by nature, Buxton is a repository of Charleston lore, a native who returned in the mid-nineties and now owns the company, Tour Charleston. ...he's been regaling me with tales of pirates, ghosts and ship captains; hurricanes, fires and earth-quakes; honorable citizens and scalawags alike... We stroll through the gates of the Calhoun Mansion, then along Broad St., Charleston's colonial commercial hub... [Ed: These few excerpts provide a glimpse of what Charleston is about. In summary, I'd say, "Beauty and History." Come see for yourself and meet up with your old comrades.

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS
CHARLESTON S.C. REUNION
47th, 48th, 396th & 820th Squadrons, 41st Bomb Gp. (M)
September 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 2008

Questions or Special Assistance? Call Rolf at 919-553-9852

Wednesday 17 September

- 12:00 Noon - Hospitality Room Opens. Closes - ?
- Registration Afternoon and Evening In the Hospitality Room
- Meals Are on Your Own

Thursday 18 September

- 8:45 A.M. - Board Coach
- 9:00 A.M. – Coach Departs for Charleston AFB Tour (Lunch Included)
- 2:00 P.M. Return to Holiday Inn Hotel
- Dinner is on Your Own

Friday, 19 September

- 09:45 A.M. - Board Coach
- 10:00 A.M. – Coach Departs for CHS City & Harbor Tour With Box Lunch
- 03:00 P.M. – Return to Holiday Inn Hotel
- Dinner is on Your Own

Saturday, 20 September

- 1200 Noon –Group & Squadron Meetings in the Hospitality Room
- Swimming Pool Available – Mingle in Hospitality Room – Or?
- 05:30 P.M. – Happy Hour in the Hospitality Room With Open Bar and Hors d'oeuvres
- 06:30 P.M. – Banquet Commences With Color Guard Flag Presentation. Jacket & Tie for Gentlemen is Recommended.

Sunday 21 September

- Check-out time is 12:00 noon. Farewells & Plans for 2009: Saddle Up Old Paint and Clip Clop for Home. Do Come Back. There is Always Hay in the Barn, Sunny Days and a Drop of Dew in the Trough to Wet Your Como se Llama. Via con Dios Amigos! [Yeah, this is the second holdover from Doc's Tucson Farewell...but still can't improve on it.]

FOR YOUR RECORDS: Hotel Reservations (1-800-766-4451) Made on (Date)_____ (Room-block Expires 18 Sept. '08) Hotel Deposit Made on (Credit Card)_____ (Amount)_____.

Airline Reservations Made on (Airline)_____ (Date)_____ (Confirmation No.)_____.

Squadron Registration Form Completed and Mailed (Date)_____ Ck. No._____ Amt._____



Skip Thrune, 820th, emailed this cartoon. My reply: Knowing you, I'd say you waded right in there, thwacked the croc twixt the eyes with your nib lick and then proceeded to enjoy the rest of your round. By the way, who did win the match, you, René or the croc? PS. We'd like to keep you around for a few more years, so knock off about 50 of those pounds the picture shows you've gained.

Skip's reply: "Thank you Doctor Ben Dover" doesn't explain much, but we can verify the weight issue at CHS; **Skip & Rene** are signed up. Other early birds on board are: **Bill & Jean Childs, Art Love & son Keith, Craig & Betty Anne Norton, Emery & Joanne Tuttle & Morgan & Clare Molloy**, all 820th and **Rick & Marilyn Rondinelli, Everett Ross & Lola Wampler**, all 47th.

[Ed.: Rolf Grandstaff, our sterling CHS Reunion Coordinator, served in the Marines. This is a tribute in his honor.] The link will take you about 15 minutes to

watch. It is being shown at the new National Museum of the Marine Corps in Quantico. If you have previously served or are currently on active duty, it will reinforce what you already know and make you proud. If you have never served, this film will show you what sacrifices have been made, are being made today and will be made in the future on behalf of you and the freedoms you enjoy by those who wear the Eagle, Globe and Anchor. Appreciate your freedom... it isn't free. Semper Paratus http://www.dailymotion.com/video/x3f3i1_nmmc-orientation-theater-film

John Helmer, 48TH Bomb Sq., sent word that **Jacob DeShazer**, a member of the WWII B-25 Doolittle Tokyo Raiders and a bombardier on plane 16, the last one to take off from the carrier Hornet, died at age 95 on March 15, 2008. John wrote, "A few years ago when our reunion was in Portland, Beverly and I had an hour talk with Jake. We invited him to be our guest speaker at the reunion and he happily agreed to do so. Unfortunately, a few months later his daughter called and told me his health had taken a down turn and he would not be able to speak to us."

Held in a cramped Chinese prison cell, Jacob DeShazer withstood 40 months of solitary confinement, interrogation, torture and threats of execution. He was fortified by a born-again religious experience that came while reading the Bible---the only book his captors allowed him.

Freed by paratroopers in August 1945, he returned to the U.S and trained to be a missionary. He and his young bride, Florence, moved to Japan in 1948. During three decades as missionaries, the couple helped start 16 churches in cities throughout Japan.

One of those converted to Christianity by DeShazer's testimony was Mitsuo Fuchida, the former Japanese pilot who led the attack on Pearl Harbor. He became a Christian and spent the rest of his life as a missionary.

John concluded his message by saying, "See you in Charleston."

NOTE from Mary, widow of Thom Zachok, 47th. 6/23/08.

I can't remember when I sent in Thom's dues. Does this make it up to speed? If not please let me know.

It's not been easy. I still am encountering some problems with health insurance. But most, I miss him. Even though I was doing 24/7, it is a big void in my life. Some days I still think I'm going to see him sitting in his chair watching TV. Thank God for my sons and daughter-in-laws and my grandsons; they have been my support.

It saddens me to think we will not be able to go to the reunion; he loved going to them and seeing all of you guys. It sounds like a good one. Say hello to all.

Hope all is well with you and Carolyn.
Take care, Mary

FROM the desk of Dale Storms, 47th 6/13/08

Certainly appreciate your faithfulness and skill in "keeping" this organization percolating.

Hope this finds all your family in good health and happy.

Interesting things "going on" in our National Politics just now.

We pray that we will remember our "founding fathers" understanding and selflessness in their endeavors---and, do likewise.

This is a great country. Dale

We extend a hearty welcome to ELMER W. KOONCE, 47th Bomb Sq. Elmer was recently promoted from the 47th's "Unknown" to the "Known" roster. Here is the story:

--Original Message-- From: Nick Koonce To: Rolf Grandstaff - Subject: 47th Bomb Squadron's Unknown. I am happy to report the location and status of one of the missing members of the 47th Bomb Squadron listed on the missing page you maintain. Elmer W. Koonce (known to his crew as The Falcon) is alive, and remarkably well for a man of his age. He is my father and about to celebrate his 92nd birthday on 23 July. Address: E. W. Koonce 802 E. Calle Laureles Santa Barbara, CA 93105. Phone (805) 682-5660

Rolf's reply: Well, that is just outstanding, Nick! Thanks for letting us know. I'll copy our newsletter editor, Urb Gutting, so he can share it with the rest of the 41st Group. Both Urb and my dad served in the 47th Squadron. Maybe you two can make it to our 41st Bomb Group Reunion in Charleston this September. We'd love to have y'all. Please give our best regards to your father. Nice hearing from you! Rolf

Nick's reply: Thanks for the quick response. Dad was thrilled to learn about your page. I plan to go over it with him this weekend. Unfortunately, diabetes has robbed him of just about all but his wit and sense of humor. He isn't able to walk and has dialysis three times a week so it's very unlikely that he'd be up for the trip but I'm sure he'd be thrilled to get your newsletter. When I told him about your site he asked if there was contact info for a couple of his crew but the names he came up with are all on the missing page along with him. When the bomb group went on the offensive and moved to the S. Pacific, he was among the first to arrive in Hawaii and helped set up the first base camp for the group at Kipapa Gulch. He piloted a B-25 in the Marshal and Gilbert Islands and was involved in what he believes to be the longest air to air battle in recorded history. I'm sure he'd be thrilled to be interviewed for the newsletter too. I've been on the lookout for the bomb group patch for the better part of the last 20 years. It was, along with all of his decorations, misplaced by one of his grandsons thirty odd years ago. I search the web for it every six months or so. As well as your site, today I found this page with the best picture I've seen to date. <http://toonsatwar.blogspot.com/2006/09/47th-bombardment-squadron-patch.html>

I'd like to get the word out that I'm looking to buy this patch for him if any are still in existence. He has a shadow box of his memorabilia and this is the only piece he hasn't been able to replace. There is a local war museum here in Santa Barbara, the Pierre Claeysens' Veterans Museum and Library, that is getting started and seeking a permanent location. They have an exhibit featuring my dad. Currently their exhibits are displayed periodically at other museums. When my father passes, I plan to loan the shadow box to them, including the patch if I can find one. Nick

[Ed.: Thanks to Jim Belair (Refer to P10 of TCF # 42), Nick's quest for a 47th Bomb Sq. patch was resolved.] Nick's email to Jim: You don't know me but I want to thank you for your kindness and

generosity and to tell you the story that has lead to this email.

In WWII my father, Elmer Koonce, flew a B-25 in the south pacific. He was a member of the 47th Bombardment Squadron. Sometime long after the war, much of his memorabilia was misplaced by one of his grandsons. Over the years he has been able to replace his medals and such but the one thing he has never been able to replace was his squadron patch and he has long since given up on ever finding one. I on the other hand have continued to look for a replacement. Over the past twenty years, I searched the web looking for the patch every six months or so. My most recent search lead me to the 41st Group website where I found that my fathers name was listed among a roster of members of unknown address or status. I emailed the web site contact to let them know of my father's location and status. This first email, lead to an exchange of emails with Urban Gutting, with whom I shared my interest in acquiring a bomb group patch. I recently found such a patch in my mail box, courtesy of Mr. Gutting along with a note explaining how he came to have an extra one.

So, I want to thank you for what will undoubtedly be the perfect Fathers Day gift! Many happy returns! Nick

NICK RELATES A STORY ABOUT HIS DAD: Yeah, my dad sure was among the first [To serve in the South Pacific]. He has shared many stories over the years but unfortunately I almost always retell them wrong to some extent.

He falsified his age to get in to basic training. The Army wouldn't let him in to pilot training because he had flat feet and the Navy wouldn't take him because he didn't have enough teeth. Determined, he managed to get in to the Canadian Air Force. He'd been promised his choice of aircraft after pilot training and had looked forward to being a fighter pilot. He was sure there'd been a mistake when he was assigned with the 47th as a B-25 pilot. He was assured that the Army didn't make mistakes.

He told me about his flight out to Hawaii; He and a navigator took off with sealed orders and filled to capacity with 5 gal. Jerry cans. Once they reached the designated altitude they opened their orders and learned that they were to take a heading that would put them somewhere in the middle of the South Pacific. He was sure someone had made a mistake and quite suspected it was the Army! It was the longest night of his life, as he tells it. Complete radio silence all the way. Once they had used and tossed their last Jerry cans the navigator instructed my pop to adjust his heading 2 degrees and begin the decent. My fathers had to fight back laughter as he replied "if you think it will help!" He thought he'd have to be further off course than 2 degrees. It was well before dawn in the black of early morning and the last light they'd seen was the sun setting the night before. They were sure they were in for a water landing and began exchanging instructions and responsibilities should one survive and not the other. They were almost completely out of fuel and discussing the merit of bringing the landing gear back up when runway lights blinked on in front of them...and much to his surprise he was aligned very well for the approach. They ran out of gas before they reached the end of the runway.

Shortly thereafter he was ordered to a recently built airstrip (I believe it was somewhere in the Gilbert Islands but it may have been in the Hawaiian isles). He arrived to find a runway that he was clearly the first to land on. He found a small shack at the end of it, wherein a Sergeant and Corporal were playing cards and awaiting his arrival. The Sgt. informed my father (not even Second Lieutenant yet) that in a near by valley he would find everything needed to outfit the 47th when they arrived in a couple of days. In the mean time, he and the Corporal were to prepare the camp. My father began to protest saying that "there must be some sort of mistake"...he "didn't know the first thing about setting up a camp"! The Sgt. reminded him that the "Army doesn't make mistakes" and proceeded to explain to him the many ways in which he could get himself Court Marshaled if he didn't sign for all of this equipment, if he didn't set it up properly and if it wasn't all accounted for later. Soon he was certain he wasn't going to be able to avoid being Court Marshaled but he did avoid it and was relieved of his responsibility within a few days of the camp being set!

Later while doing shuttle runs through the Marshals, he and a group of (about 12 as I recall) B-25s were set upon by Japanese fighter planes near Malaolap. The first thing he knew, two of ours were falling out of the sky and he had taken a couple of insignificant hits. They got down on the water and defended against 3 consecutive waves of what he remembers as more than 20 fighters. 45 minutes later, 6 of ours remained and dozens of theirs had fallen. He believes this to be the longest air to air battle in history and he received a Distinguished Flying Cross for surviving.

He earned another Distinguished Flying Cross (I don't know which came first) after having one engine shot out on a low altitude bombing run over a Japanese airstrip. He thought for sure he was going in and wasn't planning to do so with the full bomb load. He jettisoned the load and somehow managed to get back into formation. Upon debriefing he was shown bomb door photos of his direct hit upon a fuel depot that was not a known target.

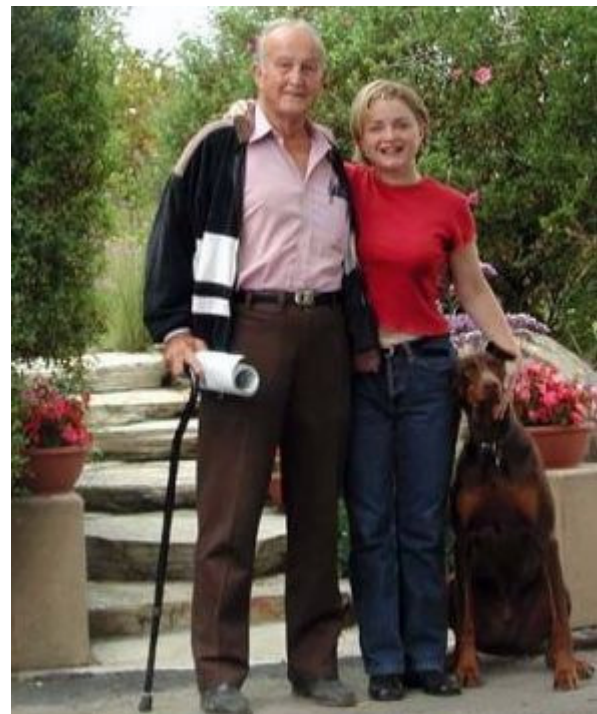
When he came back to the states he was a flight instructor. He remembers training Chiang Kai-shek's pilots and having to be very careful with what he said to them. They were too obedient and took every instruction quite literally. Many years later on a tour of China he found that everywhere he went young men, recognizing him to be of the appropriate age, all wanted to know what he did during the war. He was surprised that they were not impressed and even cold when he told them that he trained Chinese pilots. So he took a different approach after that and told them that he had bombed and strafed the Japanese. This got him a hero's welcome.

Looking forward to receiving the newsletter. Speaking of which, what funds that effort? Is there a subscription fee and or do you take donations? Thanks again! Nick

E.W. Koonce on R & R with K.L. Farmer and E.G. Kelley (current status/location unknown) and some lady friends. Earl Carroll Theater and Restaurant, Hollywood, CA 10/03/1944



This picture was taken within the last 9 years or so. He is posing with his grand daughter Cymene and his dog Cedar.



Ed.: Somewhere up there Don Haskell is smiling. He has to be pleased, not only with the continued service his 41st Bomb Gp. Website is providing for connection of our generation with that of our children and grandchildren, but also with the fact that his children, Mike & Donna, saw fit to perpetuate the 41st Bomb Group website in Don's memory. And, of course, we cannot fail to acknowledge the vital services of Rolf Grandstaff who maintains Don Haskell's Memorial 41st Bomb Group Website.

• **HAROLD P. "HAL" MOODY, LTCOL USAF (RET) - 1916-2008**



Harold (Hal) Palmer Moody, 92, died Wednesday, May 21, 2008. Hal was born in Marion, VA on May 13, 1916, the son of Matthew Thomas and Minerva Elen (Pafford) Mooney. He spent his early childhood in Fredericksburg, VA and was graduated from Central High School in Washington, D.C. He entered the U.S. Army on May 20, 1941; went to Dutch Harbor, Aleutians, August 30, 1941, with the 206th CA (AA) AR-NG. Moody completed aviation cadet flight training in California and Arizona and received his pilot's wings on August 30, 1943. Assigned to the 820th Bomb Squadron, 7th AF, he flew the B-25 he named "Tiki" over Nauru, Kyushu, Japan and China during WWII. After being recalled to service during the Korean conflict, Moody remained in the US Air Force where he piloted some 13 different aircraft prior to his retirement from the service in 1966. His awards included the Air Medal with three clusters and the Air Force Commendation Medal. After working for Riviana Rice Company in Houston, TX, Moody moved to Pensacola, FL. Hal was a member of the Civilian Conservation Corps Alumni Association, the Boy Scouts Alumni Association, the Air Rescue Association, the American Helicopter Association, and the Order of the Daedalians, among other organizations. Hal is survived by his loving wife, Jeanette Luker Moody, daughter Kathleen Moody and her husband Marty Walsh of Vienna, VA, son Thomas Moody of Albuquerque, NM and son Matthew Moody and his wife Denise of Springville, Utah, and three grandchildren. Also surviving are stepsons Mickey and Sammy Luker and Sammy's wife Sandra and children.

Hal's sisters Camilla Moody Payne, Thelma Moody Weirich Hall and Evelyn Moody Dill preceded him in death.

Hal was a member of Richards Memorial United Methodist Church in Pensacola where services were held. Burial with full military honors followed at Barrancas National Cemetery.

Comment provided by Pancho Rowe: "Moose" was in the class of 43 H. He had been an enlisted man for a while before Aviation Cadets. I believe one of the units he belonged to was an Arkansas National Guard Unit that had been nationalized in 1941. Moose was one of the older pilots, probably 26 or 27 years of age. He had a big booming voice and would do a moose call that had people putting plugs in their ears. A fun loving man he never turned down an opportunity to have a party.

• **MARVIN JAMES LUZIER – Born September 13, 1922 - Died May 9, 2008**

Marvin was laid to rest with military honors at the Maryland Veteran's Cemetery, where he rejoined his predeceased wife, Minnie. Marvin left behind his two sons, Mike and Ron, their wives, five grandchildren, and one great-grandchild. Marvin was employed by the United States State Dept. as a systems analyst serving the US Navy.

Marvin served in WWII in the 820th Bomb Sq. as a CPL and engineer/gunner on LT George A. Mason's crew.

Bill Childs, 820th provided the information above; we regret we could not obtain Marvin's obituary.

AN EMAIL FROM: Janet Peele [mailto:janetpeelee@gmail.com]

Sent: Sunday, September 23, 2007 6:32 PM
To: ngeril@earthlink.net

Subject: 820th Bombardment Sq. Hello, I am daughter of a veteran of the 820th. I know very little about his war years except that he was in the Pacific, Midway, Okinawa, Tarawa, Gilbert Islands. His name was Richard Emerson Oldham, Vass, NC, and some called him "Dick" He trained as a teletype operator and ran a PX. He was a corporal.

I'm wondering if anyone remembers him, or could tell me more about those times. I found you on the internet in the reunion news. I know he had a good friend nicknamed "Bags" who is no longer living. My dad died in 1995. His old footlocker is here with his dress uniform and his pins & ribbons. He never wanted to talk about those days. My mother said it was just too horrible for him. I found a letter thanking him for sending pictures to a reunion in Chicago. There was not enough identification on the letter for me to write that person. He was disabled from 1986 and could not attend the reunion. I found a blue mug with 820th on it and searched from there. From 1947 until retirement in 1984, he owned and operated a farm supply store and was a respected member of the community.

He and my mother had 52 good years together, she died in 2003.

If there are any documents on line, or if you know anyone who knew him closely, please let me know.

Thanks in advance.

Respectfully,

Janet Oldham Peele

P O Box 366

Aberdeen, NC 28315

CAVENDER Leo L. of Cincinnati, OH, formerly of St. Albans, WV, loving husband of 62 years to Katy Cavender. Loving father of Doug Cavender and beloved grandfather of Emily and Adrienne Cavender. Leo Cavender passed away on Wednesday April 17, 2008 at age 84. Mr. Cavender was a WWII veteran and was a B25 bomber pilot in the South Pacific during WWII. Decorated with the Air Medal in recognition of his courageous service to the 396th Bomb Squadron - 41st bomb group. He retired as resident plant manager for FMC Corporation in Nitro, WV. An active and dedicated community member of St. Albans, WV he served as President of the Kanawha Valley United Way. As a final gift, he donated his remains to the University of Cincinnati Medical Center.

Prayer for Our Soldiers

"Lord, hold our troops in your loving hands.
Protect them as they protect us.
Bless them and their families for the selfless
acts they perform for us in our time of need.
Hear our prayer O God. Amen."

Top Row: Bill Weiss – Leo Cavender – Ed Soderstrom



Bottom Row: James Pearce – Casper Scafidi – Homer Prichard

NOTE from Barry, son of Edward Naylor, 47th:
June 20, '08.

My mother, Vera, passed away on March 5th of this year. I was with her when she quietly went to sleep (just as I was with dad when he passed away). Mom and Dad are interred at Willamette National Cemetery together under the same marker; it is what they wished.

This note is to tell you that I have been enjoying every issue of "The Crow Flight." To this end I am enclosing a check to cover past dues, and some extra in the memory of both my parents.

As a result of contact with a long-lost cousin and exchange of family photos and history, Barry said he has re-started plans to leave a history legacy for his nephews concerning their grandfather.

"The Crow Flight" provided a lot of the details, missing in the official records – incidents which would not be included in records of that nature. When I get back into the swing of research again I will pass anything of interest on to you and the Crow Flight gang. Keep up the good work. Sincerely, Barry Naylor

NOTE from Viviane, widow of Seymour Skloot, 820th. June 16, 2008

How very nice of you to send me "The Crow Flight" and to invite me to your next reunion. It would be very difficult for me to go without Seymour because I know virtually no one and neither of my children can take time off from their jobs. Nevertheless, I enjoyed reading your newsletter and found the various articles very interesting and entertaining. Of course, the passing of so many men, though to be expected, was very sad.

I have often thought that Seymour and I should have written a book recounting some of his war time experiences. Seymour had a wonderful sense of humor and we would both be convulsed with laughter at some of the stories he would tell. I hope to be able to compile a few of the events so that when the next newsletter arrives I may be able to submit a few stories of interest.

Thank you again for sending me "The Crow Flight." I hope you will all have a great time in Charleston. Sincerely, Viviane Skloot

February 5 TARAUA

Same old waiting around. Played poker (what a dummy) lost about \$50.00 on credit. That evens my debt up with Bill so I broke even after all. The Navy is going great guns in the Marshalls. They've taken 3 Islands on the Kawajalien Atoll and I have a hunch will be moving up there before long. It's a cinch we're not doing any good sitting around here.

February 6 TARAUA

We were briefed after the movie on The Wotje raid for tomorrow. Fiest is leading with Doc & Shaw as wingmen. Bullock is flying the 3rd element with MacDonald and Millard on his wings & of course "██████" Jameson will be leading the 2nd element with Turner in the #2 position and me in #3 for the run over the lagoon.

February 7 TARAUA 2nd WOTJE RAID

Left Tarawa at 8.45pm with 8 ships Al was taken off at the last minute. The weather was very rough and the air unstable. Had my new co-pilot Pfyl along and was not too confident of his flying consequently I did 90% of 8hrs of formation. We reached the Target bout 12.45 and I made my run over the lagoon strapping a tip of the Island on the way in. Over the lagoon there were no targets. Saw 3 sunken ships and watched the other planes dropping their bombs on the airfield and building area. Going over a small island which was putting out heavy 20mm ground fire on the end of the main part of Wotje, I poured 250 rds out of seven forward guns into the trees and emplacements fishtailing back and forth to spread my fire Pfyl dropped 4-500lbombs on the Island all of them hitting it. I banked around to look back and saw the whole of Wotje covered with smoke & exploding bombs. Our Island was practically obscured by bomb blasts. On the way home I was running short of gas so I landed at Makin. The others continued home. We came home and buzzed the field good before landing. Should have some good pictures of the mission from our camera. Air Medal!

February 8 TARAUA

Part of Taylor's crew has returned here on their way back to Oahu. Kritz the navigator was lost. Their ship was hit by a shell from a destroyer and .50 cal's from an F6F. Taylor's leg was broken in two places and all of them were hit by shrapnel except Cherrington who is O.K. The Navy was very nice to them (and why shouldn't they be!!) They were in on the Kawajelein operation aboard the carrier Enterprise. Two new battleships ran into each other up in the Marshalls. They had to return for repairs. That gave us all a big laugh. Its amazing that the crew got out alive because the water was ablaze with oil and gasoline. The life raft was burned in half. Just as we suspected it was the Navy fighter pilots first action and they didn't even attempt to identify the B25s.

February 9 TARAUA

Played poker with Bill, Doc,, Thomas, Shirley, Watson, Enman, and MacMillan (the navigator) Neither won nor lost in a game that's been going on for two days. After the show there was a briefing for the Maleolap raid tomorrow. They left Jameson and me off the list and MacDonald is flying old 825 which aggravates me no little. This makes the 3rd raid I have been missed, but of course everything is run on a mathematical schedule and just worked out this way. Our pictures on the Wotje raid turned out good, but did not show the part of the Island we bombed - just the tip we first went over. There are some houses and a bridge with a railroad track across it which none of us even saw on the run in. Sure wish we were going on that raid today damn!

February 10 TARAUA 4th MOLEOLAP RAID

Bullock and Millard were both shot down by anti-aircraft over Moleolap. Bob hit the water doing about 250 and the plane was on fire. It broke into little pieces when he hit. Millard flew about 15 miles from the target and suddenly slipped off on a wing and crashed. The bomb bay doors were open and the ship busted in three parts. Casey circled the plane but no one got out. John Selsted was Bob's co-pilot and Patcheck was his navigator. Millard, Kummel, and Miller were in the second plane. That is the worst loss yet and everyone is deeply hurt. There was a lot of drinking last night and Doc tried to go swimming and we had to carry him out of the water. Doc Eddy finally got him to sleep with a shot of morphine & he spent the night in the hospital. He really gave me a time.

February 11 TARAWA

Two new crews came in yesterday & one pilot named Totterdell moved in with us . He's right out of school with only 50 hrs in a B25. I was sick all morning from the drinking last night. In fact everybody was suffering from hangovers. God but they are rough in this climate ! General Landon presented all of us who had been on five missions with Air Medals today. We had a big review out on the field. He said the 7th Air Force has lost over 200 men killed in the recent action in the Marshalls. More than the Marines & Army lost in taking Roi. Old TNT is leaving along with eight other D's to be sent to other Sqdns in the group and we are getting nine G's with the 75mm cannon. So we hate to see her go, like losing a good friend. We have lost more than half of the original combat crews !

February 12 TARAWA

The 820th lost a ship today over Wotje and the 48th had one crash land at Majuro which we have occupied in the Marshalls. After the unfortunate luck the 41st Group has had somebody has finally gotten wise to the fact that this minimum altitude attack will not work. From now on we will be bombing from 8000' to 10,000' which according to the B24 outfits around here is a fairly safe altitude. They have only had light losses from anti-aircraft. We have so many new crews around here that I hardly recognize anybody anymore. We all resent them because the old 396th just doesn't seem to be the same squadron. After three years of no fatal accidents to lose half the Sqdn in a month is a hard break for any of us to take. The boys who went back to Oahu probably will not be assigned to this Sqdn if they come back.

February 13 TARAWA TO MAKIN

Took one of the new D's which the replacements have flown down here over to Makin. Taxied up to the sub-depot and there sat MacDonald's "Old Sagebrush" which Holty crash landed and also "The Bodacious Idjut" Trucker's first airplane all stripped of parts and badly beaten. That graveyard really gave me a miserable feeling. Holty's eye is nearly gone. Provost is in for the Silver Star for flying that ship home with no rudders and his own wounds. From the looks of the airplane it's a wonder they ever got in. My G number 910 is sure in lousy shape and Smitty, my crew chief, sure is sad. He had old TNT in beautiful shape. This G has only been on 2 raids but it looks as though it had been through the whole war.

February 14 TARAWA

The weather has turned very bad and it has been raining pretty steadily. No missions in sight as yet. Tappan, Mona,McMillan, Trumble and Shaw all have crews now. They were co-pilots when they came down here. Casey is the new flight commander taking Bob Bullock's place. Not a very wise choice in my estimation. The heavies (B24's 11th Group) raided Ponaife (near Truk) from here yesterday but haven't heard yet how they came out. Watson is going back to Oahu to have some more shrapnel removed from his leg. His nerve was all shot anyway and he was of no use to any crew. I'm glad this Sqdn are supposed to go back to Oahu for a 14 day rest starting the 1st of March. Don't know what for - we're getting nothing but sleep around here. Wish to hell we'd get some more action !

February 15 TARAWA

The rain continues as does the monotony. It's getting so bad we're beginning to play

childish games such as "battleships" and "monopoly" which really help to pass away the time. Frank Pfyl my co-pilot is a Stanford graduate and know quite a few friends of mine from Piedmont. After looking over the other arrivals I feel very fortunate in having him assigned to me. General Hales "50-50" speech has made the "Newsweek". Thirty missions is quite a laugh to us when we've already lost our fifty per cent in only eight raids. Our chances have already been cut to about 25-75. Shirley has won \$500.00 since we've been down here. Thank the Lord he hasn't gotten any of my money because I certainly want to send it all home.. He sleeps till 11.00 every day. What a life - then they're going to send us back to Oahu for a rest - what we need is some raids to kill the restless feeling.

February 16 TARAWA

Went out to my new G and Smitty really has it in beautiful shape. Staten has all the guns cleaned up and she's ready to go. I'm going to fly her tomorrow if I can to see how she handles. We tried to get some beer from the Sea Bees but they haven't any. So we spent the afternoon at our usual pastimes. Kasey wrote that Johnny Cain was on his way home after completing his missions to marry Skip. Glad to hear that episode had a happy ending.

February 17 TARAWA

MacDonald had gone to the Navy hospital a few miles down the island. He has been losing weight steadily and has had styes in his eyes one after another. Doc Eddy came down with an advanced case of hives and has been shipped off to Canton for treatment. He's a great man and I sure hope we don't lose him as our flight surgeon.

February 18 TARAWA - Married 11 months

Wrote an anniversary letter home to my wonderful wife. There are all kinds of rumors floating around that we are to be sent home for 30 days & then to China, which is quite a rumor. Wouldn't mind that at all. The task force got up to Truk and attacked shipping & airfields. They destroyed 201 enemy planes and lost 17 according to the Navy. The second day of the attack they had Marines landed on Eniwetok and have secured half of that atoll. We now have Majuro & Arno also. Capt Knight made a landing up there after losing an engine over Moleolap. The 48th Sqdn (B25s) pulled a raid up there & so when Knight went into Majuro the Navy lost the honor of having the 1st plane to land on that field.

February 19 TARAWA 3rd WOTJE RAID

Took off at 9.30 am to bomb Wotje on our first medium altitude raid. I was flying 3-2 in our V of V's in my new G. We left Tarawa but finally found a break and climbed up to 9600' where we flew to the target. It was the first time I had seen a Jap atoll from that altitude but the target was easily discernable. On our bombing run we received no anti-aircraft fire and we got 100% hits in the target area. Three of our four 500lb bombs hit the runway - the principal target. On the way home we had to turn back to Makin and land due to the very bad weather between here and there. Tappan & Mona took their new crew on their first raid. Mona flew very far back in our formation and used the radio during radio silence. However, considering their inexperience they did very well.

February 20 MAKIN

Spent a miserable night on Makin. Hard cots and a blanket plus lousy food made us quite unhappy. They had ice cold beer waiting for us at Tarawa so we were gripped. We did get a few cans of warm beer which tasted pretty good. The 27th & 38th Sqdn came in there at night after bombing Ponape and I saw Pimentel who was with me in New School.

(To be Continued.)



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

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DUES NEWS: 2008 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, LOU BEISSER 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: Dale & Arlene Storms - Everett Ross - Barry Naylor (Memory of Father Edward & Mother Vera) - Mary Zachok (Memory of Thom) - Jean Truex (Memory of Marshall) - The 47th bank balance is \$2470.82.

48TH BOMB. SQ. - John Helmer reports dues and gifts received SLR from Felix Galyean. Our bank balance is \$1971.19.

396TH BOMB. SQ. - Lou Beisser reports a bank balance of \$1243.06. The following were heard from SLR with dues: - Albert Hettig - Gilda B. Loeb (Memory of Bob) - Paul & Constance Bull - Bruce Hanson.

820TH BOMB. SQ. - Emery Tuttle reports: Starting bank balance 9-1-07 was \$2150.58. Income: \$346.91 from Dues & Donations & Interest Earned. Expense Paid; \$377.49 for TCF Newsletters #38, 39, 40 & 41. Balance as of 6-30-08 is \$2120.00. Dues & donations since 8-28-07 received from: Frank Snellgrove - Bill Childs - Felix Dryfuss - Norm Geril - Jos. Strelez - Morgan Molloy -

Craig Norton - Jim VanEpps - Arthur Love - Richard Rarey - James Meehan - R.E. Karns - Gus Anderson - John "Skip" Thrune - Thelma Wood - Larry Skelton (Red's (Earl) son) - Jos. Strelez (again).

WO UNDED WARRIORS:

Bruce Hanson, 396th sent word to Louie Beisser that he is due to have a hip replacement and won't be able to make it to CHS.

Mary Widener emailed that Johnny, 47th, is doing very well after Dr. Kumar, at Stillwater hospital was able to open up the 3rd bypass from 1999 that had gotten blocked; about 2 weeks before his other heart doc wasn't able to do it. He came home the morning after 2 ballooning & the stent was put in. He already has more energy and the blood is going where it was supposed to go.

Jap Beheaders Doomed to Hang

KWAJALEIN, Dec. 11. (AP)—A United States military commission today condemned six Japanese officers to death for the decapitation of five American flyers on Mille atoll in February, 1944.

Four other Japanese officers who were tried with the six were sentenced to prison terms—two for life and two for 20 years each—for their part in the slayings.

The six condemned Japanese will be hanged. No date was set and no place was designated for the executions.

Among those condemned to death is 54-year-old Col. Chisato Oishi, senior army officer on Mille, who admitted ordering the execution of three flyers. The others are Maj. Otokiti Nakao, Maj. Chojiro Takarada, Navy Lt. Kyoshi Fueta, Army Lt. Yashuo Moori and Navy Warrant Officer Tatanichi Manako.

The four Japanese sentenced to prison are Army Capt. Masaki Ahe, Ensign Yataka Tanaka, Lt. Yasuyoshi Kadota, Ensign Harushi Motomura.

DOC EYER, 396th sent this information regarding the Kwajalein trial of the Japanese responsible for the death by beheading of five 396th Bomb Sq. crew members on Mille atoll in February, 1944.

