



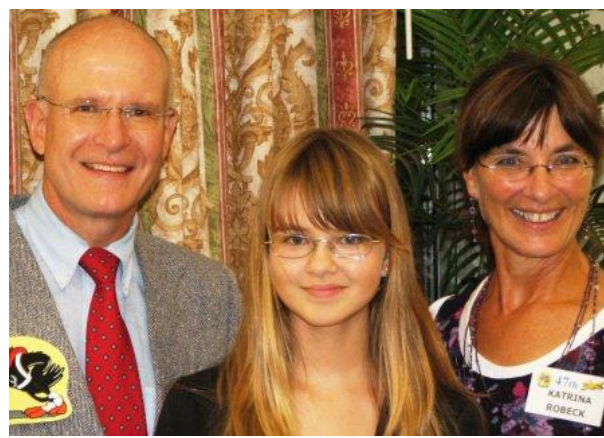
The Crow Flight



Forty-fourth Newsletter of the 47th, 48th, 396th & 820th Bombardment Squadrons, 41st Bombardment Group (M), 7th AF, WWII, Issued January 2009



FROM R TO L: ROLF GRANDSTAFF, HOST & COORDINATOR OF OUR 2008 CHS REUNION IN HONOR OF HIS DECEASED FATHER, JOHN, OF THE 47TH BOMB SQ. NEXT IS RICK RONDINELLI, GEORGE TOLBERT, EVERETT ROSS & URB GUTTING. NOTE WE ALL ARE WEARING THE 47TH "CROW FLIGHT" PATCH REPLICATED & DONATED BY JIM BELAIR IN HONOR OF HIS DECEASED FATHER, JEAN, 47TH BOMB SQ. FRANK LISAK, JR. ALSO ATTENDED, REPRESENTING HIS FATHER, FRANCIS, SR., 47TH SQ. HE & FRANK HANLEY, WWII HISTORIAN & COLLECTOR, WERE ALSO PRESENTED THE JEAN BELAIR MEMORIAL PATCH.



OUR CHS REUNION WAS A ROUSING SUCCESS FOR FOUR PRIMARY REASONS: THREE BEING ROLF GRANDSTAFF, HIS SPOUSE KATRINA ROBECK AND THEIR DAUGHTER, ERIKA. REMINISCENT OF "DOC" EYER'S "THREE LOVELY NIECES" IN TUCSON, ROLF, KATRINA AND ERIKA WERE IN SEEMINGLY PERPETUAL MOTION WHILE LOOKING AFTER OUR NEEDS AND COMFORTS. ROLF WAS THE MASTER PLANNER AND DID THE HEAVY LIFTING CHORES, WHILE KATRINA EXCELLED IN DETAIL PLANNING AND THEN BUZZED AROUND WITH ERIKA TO SEE THAT EVERYTHING WAS CARRIED OUT AS PLANNED. ERIKA WAS ALSO OUR RESIDENT ART DESIGNER FOR A VARIETY OF POSTERS AND SIGNS TO GUIDE OUR WAY. THE FOURTH PRIME REASON FOR THE CHS REUNION SUCCESS IS THE ATTENDEES, AS WELL AS THOSE WHO, IN WHATEVER MANNER, SUPPORT OUR 41ST BOMBARDMENT GROUP REUNION ASSOCIATION.

WE EXTEND OUR HEARTFELT THANKS TO ROLF, KATRINA AND ERIKA FOR GENEROUSLY OFFERING THEIR TALENT, ENERGY AND SPIRIT ON OUR BEHALF, ENABLING US TO ONCE AGAIN GATHER IN CAMARADERIE.



L TO R STANDING: MORGAN MOLLOY – PANCHO ROWE – JACK AUDISS – BILL CHILDS – SKIP THRUNE – TOM MCGUIRE – EMERY TUTTLE. SEATED: NORM GERIL – FELIX DREYFUS – ART LOVE. AWOL IS CRAIG NORTON. THESE HANDSOME GENTS BELONG TO THE 820TH BOMBARDMENT SQ., WHO CONTINUE TO PROVIDE THE ATTENDANCE MAJORITY.



**48TH BOMB SQ.: JESS RAMAKER – BILL CHILSON
JOHN HELMER**

A WOL FROM PIC IS FRED DEUTSCH



396TH BOMB SQ.: BILL MACMINN – DICK STERNBERG

(WE MISSED YOU DOC & TERRY, LOUIE & CORINNE)

ROLF GRANDSTAFF'S CHS REVIEW:

We had a nice turnout this time around for the Charleston Reunion with 60+ folks attending including many of us 'kids' of the 41st and our offspring. In fact, if these 'youngsters' constituted a squadron, we would have been a close second right behind the 820th which, as usual, had the best attendance. The weather turned out well as we had sunny days with temps in the 80s and Charleston lived up to her billing as the loveliest port city in the South.

Most attendees arrived on Wednesday, September 17, and settled into their rooms at our hotel, the Holiday Inn Riverside on the Ashley River right across from downtown Charleston. The aptly named Harborview Restaurant at the top of the hotel afforded us a beautiful panoramic view of the river, marshes, and marinas as well as plenty of good eats and drinks. But of course the best place to be, as at any of our reunions, was the 'Hospitality Room' where old friends meet to reaffirm bonds and recall the memory of training and combat in the Pacific from more than 60 years ago. It's also the place where spouses, children, and grandchildren can share in that experience and make new friends as well.



which is the home of the 437th Airlift Wing. The Air Force treated us royally with a tour that included stops at a static display of vintage airlift aircraft some of which had been crewed by 41st members, a canine training facility (ain't messin' with that dog!), an excellent lunch at the base club, and the C-17 maintenance training simulators. Throughout it all we were escorted

Thursday morning, we boarded the bus for a tour of the Air Force base at Charleston



by Air Force Staff Sergeant Hymas who went above and beyond the call to accommodate our various needs, questions, and interests for the entire 4 hours. He took great care of us and seemed to enjoy it all almost as much as we did.



On Friday morning, we again boarded a bus which took us to our boat for a tour of Charleston's scenic harbor. Slowly chugging along on the water, we ate a lunch



and sipped on various beverages (brewskis for yours truly) and leisurely enjoyed the historical charm of this great port city. Beginning with the establishment of 'Charles Towne' in 1670 - the city has defended itself against the Spanish, marauding pirates, the British, and, of course, The Union during the Civil War (or the War of Northern Aggression depending upon one's perspective, as our tour guide suggested). Drifting past The Battery, Fort Sumter, Patriots' Point where the aircraft carrier, USS Yorktown is anchored, and that incredible cable-stayed harbor bridge, we savored the views, a beautiful day, and each other's company.



With the harbor tour complete, next up was a brief bus tour of 'Historic Charleston' which took us through some of the city's oldest and most charming neighborhoods complete with block upon block of pristine 18th century residential architecture, winding cobblestone streets, and some of the prettiest garden courtyards you've ever seen. Also, included was a stop at The Citadel, which has prepared young men (and recently women) for leadership in the U.S. Military for more than a century. As we rode thru the campus, it was easy to spot the first year plebes because, among other things, they're required to walk in the street gutter, at a brisk pace (120 paces per minute), eyes straight ahead.



Upon graduation, those able to survive the trials of The Citadel are rewarded with the personal satisfaction of having persevered, as well as opportunities for leadership positions in the U.S. military, business, and government. Our tour guide had a special insight to The Citadel: her son had graduated from there, something she was obviously very proud of.

On Saturday, our last full day, morning and early afternoon were spent basically doing anything one felt in the mood for. Some folks went shopping, some went to Patriots' Point or any of the other sights that we just didn't have time to see as a group, and many of us just hung out at the Hospitality Room, snacking, drinking, and shooting the breeze. There were also written narratives, scrap books, memorabilia, artifacts (like a handheld 'flight computer'), slide shows, movies, people taking even more pictures, and of course a lot of smiles and laughter as well.

But as always, the highlight of our reunion is the banquet, held on the last evening we're together. For the guys, this generally means a jacket, maybe even a tie, and for the ladies, well, they look just gorgeous (including my own wife and daughter), let me tell you that. For this reunion, we reserved the Harborview Restaurant with its grand view of the harbor and sat down to a tasty dinner of prime rib, chicken cordon bleu, or red snapper, your choice but it was all good.

However, we don't just sit down and eat on an occasion like this...First; the Charleston County Sheriff's department presented the colors and did one helluva job considering they only had about 6 square feet to do it in. Next, John Helmer of the 48th Squadron gave an outstanding invocation and thanks that we could once again join together for this special occasion. Emery Tuttle



of the 820th then led us in song and we went thru a number of old tunes like 'I'll Be Seeing You' and 'Have I Told You Lately That I Love You', some of which I remember my dad singing when I was growing up. My favorite song at these occasions though is always, 'The Army Air Corps Song' and nobody can sing it better than the 41st Bomb Group accompanied by family and friends.



And no one was singing it with more enthusiasm than our speaker for the occasion, **Colonel Joe Mancy**, the 437th Operations Group CO at Charleston AFB. Colonel Mancy and wife, **Veronica**, honored us with their presence and an interesting,

informative presentation of the Airlift Command's mission as it is performed throughout the world today. Colonel Mancy also graciously made note of those who had 'Gone before him' including the 41st Bomb Group with its campaigns in the Pacific during WWII.

Staff Sergeant Hymas was there too, still taking care of us, and making sure everything was working smoothly.

After the banquet, we headed back to the Hospitality Room for one last round or two. We told a few more stories, listened to some, took lots of pictures of each other in our fancy duds, and made plans to do it all again next year. Some of us will be back next year and while some will not, those absent friends and family will be with us in spirit. It was a good time and a lot of fun. We're grateful that, for a few days this year, we were able to be together in reunion one more time.

BEVERLY HELMER CRITIQUES THE TOURS:

Ed.: Once again, Beverly graciously consented to paint her word picture of our Reunion for our TCF readers. Alas, since Rolf Grandstaff has already covered much of that, I'm hereby asking for Beverly's acquiesce to deleting what would be repetitive.

Beverly: John & I arrived one day early and took a tour of a 1700 acre plantation. Traveling on roads lined with huge trees, we were seated in a wagon pulled by a tractor.

In former days, rice was a major crop and the dams and water systems were built by hand. In one of the remaining ponds we saw a baby and two mature alligators. Other crops on the plantation included indigo and sugar cane.

The restored manor house had wrap-around porch to keep the sun from penetrating the walls of the house.



The plantation owners also had city homes, which we saw on another tour in Charleston as we

traveled over the cobblestone streets in a horse-drawn carriage. When the horses relieved themselves in these beautifully kept neighborhoods, the driver immediately telephoned a service which came instantly and hosed and cleaned that spot.

Charleston is a very well-groomed and prestigious city. We often took the 10 minutes shuttle to Old town. We walked the cobblestone streets and came upon the College of Charleston founded in 1770 and chartered in 1785. It is the oldest institution of higher education in S. Carolina, the 13th oldest in the U.S. and the first municipal college in the nation. The campus is a sanctuary of tall old trees that drip with moss. It seems far removed from the commercial city around it; an unbelievable sight and retreat to walk into by chance.

At the Banquet we had the privilege to sit across from Col. Joe Mancy and his wife, Veronica who is from a fifth generation Charleston family. The couple's only child, a daughter, attended The Citadel. Col. Mancy's speech was a highlight note for all of the families there who treasure the service given by our family members.

"Into the Air, Army Air Corps!! All of us treasure meeting old friends in new and special places.

We would like to thank the Grandstaff family, Rolf, Katrina and Erika for bringing us to this historic Charleston city trip that many of us would never have experienced without their efforts and planning, and thinking ahead for us. We had meaningful times with this part of Early America and with Old Time Air Force Friends. Thank you for helping us in any way that you could while we were with you. And thank you to the rest of you Air Force men and families for coming so that we could be together and share and have a joyous time reminiscing.

Sincerely, Beverly and John Helmer, Jr.



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

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: John & Margaret Sacco - Lynn Sweetland - Paul Kenway - Marian Treacle (Memory of Charlie - George Tolbert - Jack & Madeleine Waters - Reginald Gauthier (for '09) - The 47th bank balance as of 1-31-09 is \$2101.91

48TH BOMB. SQ. - John Helmer reports dues and gifts received SLR from Gene Olsen - Our bank balance is \$1965.28.

396TH BOMB. SQ. - Lou Beisser reports a bank balance of \$1243.06. The following were heard from SLR with dues: -

Al Hettig -

820TH BOMB. SQ. - Emery Tuttle reports: Since 9-30-08 we have received \$85.00 in dues and \$18.57 in interest. The 820th balance is \$2245.73. Those who contributed were **Pancho Rowe - Jack Audiss - Morgan Malloy - Enid Anderson.** Thanks guys and girls.

We will be paying Urb about \$300 for our part of The Crow Flight. If we really need some money I'll let you know. I have never been in this position before so can't project what

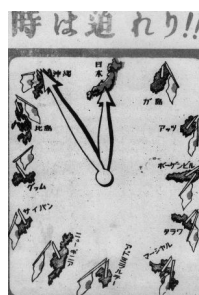
the future of the 820th will be. JoAnne tells me I have I have to live to 103 so if in the meantime I don't go Altzie, I'll keep up with the 820th bank account.

I have lost track of John Crane, someone tell me if he is still alive and I haven't heard anything from Laveme Terrell. John "Boomer" Snellgrove, Jonesboro, AK copilot for Stuart Abrams died about six months ago. I know Bill Childs, Wayne Steineder, Pancho Rowe, Jack Audiss, Morgan Molloy are still around and I visited Richie Giachino in FL after leaving Charleston last Sept. John "Skip" Thrune is in constant email contact with me from CA. Herman Bader called and sang "Some Enchanted Evening" to me from New York awhile back. Except for the most recent roster sheet, that's all the information I have, so how about anyone (or relatives of) who is still alive and was on Tarawa/Makin in 1943-44 write to me and we'll pass the recent news on to Urb for The Crow Flight. And all those who followed on and went to Okinawa and Japan after I went home, let me know and we'll try to pass the information along in the next TCF.

JESS RAMAKER, 48TH, sent these leaflets which were dropped on Japan in the closing days of WWII. One is clearly an attempt to reassure the Japanese that our service people were not monsters. Said Jess: I have given up trying to get them translated. The writing is Kongi and many natives are not familiar with it.



沖繩の幼い可愛い子供が
兵隊さんとすつかり仲良しに
なつてお菓子をあげて「遊ばま
せう」と大きなアメリカのお友
達を面会してゐます。
なんと無邪気なやうなやうでせう。
1945-3-1



Clearly the other lists the islands that had been retaken. The 12 o'clock position is the Japanese homeland and the message is along the lines of "you are next."

Kem, we missed you at CHS and hope the three of us can still make it to the next reunion.

JOHN HELMER reported that he and Beverly spent a very pleasant week in late Jan. '09 with old friends in the Palm Desert area and thus escaped the nasty weather brewed in the Portland, OR area at that time.

Recent telephone conversations: **DICK STERNBERG** has a possible resurgent prostate problem that requires our prayers. **GEORGE TOLBERT's** post knee replacement problems have abated enough that he has elected not to have corrective surgery. George & Bev graced us with a wonderful 3 day stay with us at our Branson timeshare. I think they had a good time...we certainly did. **KEM SITTERLEY** at age 87 is perking well & is determined to join us at our 2009 Reunion.

ALIDA KING, DAUGHTER OF STEVE BONFILI, 47th BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON, WROTE:

This is to let you know my Dad, Steve Bonfili, passed away May 20, 2008. He had the flu for a few days, it developed into pneumonia, and his lungs just couldn't fight it. He was a happy, healthy 91 year old until one week before he passed, and for that we are so grateful.

My parents so enjoyed the reunions they attended; seeing old friends, making new ones. I am enclosing my Dad's obituary: The St. Pete Times did a special article on him because of his business and its reputation in St. Pete. He was a wonderful man, a great Dad and grandfather. We all miss him. My Mom is doing fairly well. After 61 years of marriage being alone is a big adjustment.

Good luck and happy times for your September reunion. The Bonfili family will be there in spirit. God Bless All, Alida King

Note: Alida composed a heartfelt eulogy to celebrate her Dad's life. Friends may request a copy by writing to Alida King, 3701 10th St. NE, St. Petersburg, FL 33704.

Ed.: Tech Sgt. Steve Bonfini was the Radio Gunner on the crew of Joe Gardner (Dec.), Mike Datko (Dec.), John Edenfield (Dec.) Don Elwood (Unk.) and Ed Stinson (Unk.).

Epilogue by Stephanie Hayes, *Times staff Writer* **His life was like one of his burgers: unfussy. The former owner and operator of El Cap, the famed St. Petersburg restaurant, died May 20.**

ST. PETERSBURG — Steve Bonfili liked his El Cap burger with onions, mustard and Pabst Blue Ribbon — the beer only when off the clock.

He kept the outside of El Cap nice and clean. He'd come early to sweep away trash, even when customers teased him. He swept, even years after he'd handed the place down to his son, Frank.

He didn't like dramatics. As he ailed with pneumonia, he made his wife promise that there would be no elaborate celebrations of life or cloying elegies.

His family had a quick viewing and a simple Catholic Mass. His funeral notice didn't even mention El Cap, the St. Petersburg institution he operated for 17 years. It was like his burger. Unfussy.

He was born in Pennsylvania, where he played football and baseball and rooted for the Pittsburgh Pirates. He thought he'd never leave. He ran a bar and restaurant with his wife, Rose. They sold little sandwiches, beer, wine, liquor. Then, the economy took a dive. Business got bad.

Mr. Bonfili's half brother, Angie Donatelli, was a well known major league baseball umpire working spring training games in St. Petersburg. He wrote Mr. Bonfili a letter about a business opportunity in town: *a nice place where a lot of baseball people go*. They moved down in 1963 and bought El Cap. They didn't renovate or invent fancy new foods. They liked El Caps simplicity, its small charm.

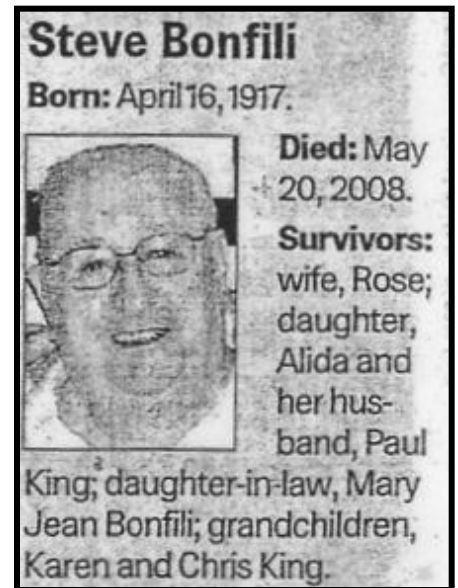
They served big league ball players, umpires and Little Leaguers. Mr. Bonfili chatted up customers with baseball trivia while his wife piled ham high on rye bread in the kitchen. "People were nice and friendly," said Rose Bonfili, 86. "People liked us which was very lucky. We made a lot of friends, and the business just kept booming." They started work at 9 a.m. and quit at 11 p.m. or later. They closed on Sunday. They had only one waitress.

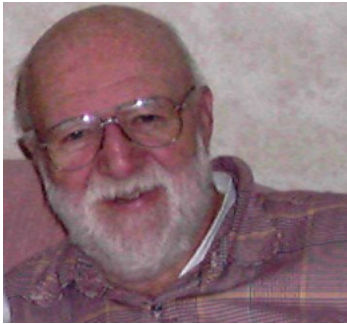
Mr. Bonfini got a daily two-hour break from ground beef and buns. He'd go home to eat the dinner his wife had prepared for him. His favorite was her spaghetti.

The couple had two children, Alida and Frank, who died of a heart attack more than 10 years ago at age 46. Frank's wife, Mary Jean, still operates El Cap.

Mr. Bonfini told his children that bartending was back-breaking work. He didn't put them through college to serve beer. But in 1980, Mr. Bonfini was ready to retire. His son asked to take over El Cap. Despite his well-meant advice otherwise, Mr. Bonfini was happy to hear it.

From Norm Geril: His spouse, Beverly, reported that Joseph Strelez, 820th, died on 1-30-09. His obituary will be included in the next issue.





ON NOV. 27, 2008, FRANK LISAK, JR WROTE:

I just received the bad news that my father, FRANCIS J. LISAK, SR. passed away this morning. He was 83 years old. He had been suffering from cancer of the liver for the past two years. Survivors include his wife, Evelyn, to whom he had been married for 56 years, seven children and numerous grandchildren.

Dad was in the Army Air Corps with the 47th Bomb Sq., 41st Bomb Gp. (M) and was posted throughout the southwestern Pacific. He rose to the rank of corporal. Dad talked little about his WWII experiences, but he did mention the Gilbert Islands and Apamama and may have seen action at Okinawa and Iwo Jima. One of his duties was as a parachute rigger and repairman.

Financial difficulties prevented Dad from attending any 41st Bomb Group reunions in the '60s, '70s and '80s but he and Evelyn were able to attend a few in the '90s and he enjoyed them. After the war Dad settled into working for U.S. Steel Corp., Gary, Indiana Works in its steam production division. He worked approximately 1952 – 1986. Because Dad worked nights (i.e., 3 -11 pm shift) I and my siblings hardly saw him except in the weekends during the school year. Dad made up for this absence by spending quality time (before that was even a popular term!) with his children when he could. Every Sunday he would pile all seven of us into the car and drive us to his parent's home near Lake Michigan for lunch and a subsequent hike along the shores and dunes of Lake Michigan. This we did every Sunday, winter, spring, summer, fall; thru freezing, windy gray, snowy skies and thru humid, bright, sunny days. He also found time to work part time as a bartender at his cousin, Gabby Groch's tavern, where folks came from all around town to enjoy Dad's cheerful nature and the safe atmosphere.

Salt & Pepper Info

DOB: 20 Dec. 1924 **DOD:** 27 Nov 2008. **Raised & Lived in** Michigan City, Ind. **MARRIED:** Evelyn Adams on 15 May 1952, who survives; **CHILDREN:** Kathleen (Philip) Pridemore, Jeanette (Michael) Phillip, Leigh (Hal Taliaferro) Lisak, Francis J. Jr., Mark (Kay), John (Jennifer), & Matthew; five grandchildren & four great-grandchildren. **WWII EXPERIENCE:** U.S. Army Air Corps, 47th Bomb. Sq., 41st Bombardment Group, SW Pacific. **OCCUPATION:** Steam Production worker, U.S. Steel Corp.,

Gary, Ind. Works for 30 + years. **HOBBIES & INTERESTS:** His family, although he showed some interest in the St. Louis Cardinals, Notre Dame U. and was a history buff of WWII SW Pacific action.

Ed.: The picture of Francis was taken at the Biloxi, MS Reunion in 2002. Francis and family members attended every reunion from '98 thru '03, at times unannounced, but always most welcome.

A NOTE FROM RICK RONDINELLI, 47th: The Charleston meeting was excellent!!

Hotel accommodations were tops (Quality & price)

Meeting Room and Drinks – Excellent

City & Harbor Boat trips were very good, as was the visit to Charleston AFB

Banquet was good (I didn't get dessert) as was the presentation by the AFB personnel

Best of all was the opportunity of swapping stories with the gang – not only 47th people but of others of the 41st – Everett Ross, George Tolbert, you, Frank Lisak and Rolf!! Congratulations to Rolf Grandstaff and his wife and daughter on a great job...we need more of the offspring of 41st members!!!

As to the 2009 group meeting my first choice would be Tucson (Illness caused us to miss the '06 meeting there).

Ed.: Rick also sent his Bio but I've run out of room in this issue so will have to hold it for the next.

“DOC” EYER, 396TH, WROTE: Hope you can decipher this. Thanks for the H Bday wishes. Sorry I missed your call.

Came across the enclosed material from Davy Jones (re the Doolittle Raiders Reunion) – I'm sure they had a good get-together – just hope ours is coming together as well! I'll miss everyone, especially you. I'll be there in spirit.

My nieces threw a hell of an 87th party for me – all five were there including a grand niece from [Couldn't make it out], a niece from Hawaii and another grand niece from San Francisco.

And I had 2 martinis – and walked out of the place on my own – how about that.

Love & kisses to you and Caroline.

Also have an interesting story from “Doc” Eyer titled **“The Night I Bombed the Oakland Bay Bridge”** for the next issue.

ANTHONY (BOB) & MARILYN ROSS, 47th, has a new address: 500 E. Spring St. Apt 4, Olean, NY 14760. Bob was co-pilot on Maurice Smith's crew. He wrote: Enjoy your newsletter “The Crow Flight.” It is terrific. Unable to attend recent reunions, but still have hopes of getting to one soon.

JOHN “BAGGIE” BAGLIETO AND MARJEAN report a new address: 200 Deer Valley Rd., Suite 3A, San Rafael, CA 94903. bagsnbaggage@comcast.net Tel 415-524-8355. The grapevine told me their new digs are scrumptious and that Baggie and Marjean are thoroughly enjoying the yard & housework and cooking exemptions.

AN E-MAIL SENT TO "DOC" EYER & HIS 41ST BOMB GP. FRIENDS: Hey Doc, Good hunting!

A true story: Back in 1944 Doc bagged a 300 lb, 20' wingspread manta ray in the South Pacific Makin Island lagoon by stunning it with a near-by round from his B-25G 75 mm nose-mounted cannon. Doc's marksmanship was right-on and the hunt was as legit as things got in those days. The Makin Island chief had requested the kill and it provided a month-plus food supply for the island natives. Doc said the natives claimed it got better as it aged, but Doc can't claim it tasted like chicken because he chickened out of tasting it.



Looking like giant leaves floating in the sea thousands of Golden Rays are seen here gathering off the coast of Mexico.

BAGLIETTO'S OPENING DAY TAKE FOR THE 2008 DEER SEASON



Dear Mr. Tolbert,
My name is Dan Googins, I am a retired USAF Combat Cameraman, now the photographer and Crew Chief for the Plane-Girls, a group of young female pilots and aviation enthusiasts home based in Georgetown, Texas. We are trying to locate any history of or remaining crew members of the B-25 named "Rhode Island Red". USAF resources indicate that this aircraft was assigned to the 41st Group, squadron unknown. The photograph attached was taken on Guam in possibly in 1944 but likely 1945.

The Plane-Girls, a new generation of women who fly, are preparing a photo tribute to the men and women of the greatest generation, a gift from one generation to another. It will be titled "The Lost Girls" and its focus is on the artwork of the aircraft that never came home, or were scrapped immediately after the war. We think that

"Rhode Island Red" is one of the "Lost Girls". **Any information on her crew or history or operational record would be greatly appreciated.** Thank you in advance for any information that you may be able to provide, we look forward to hearing from you with great anticipation. Best Regards, Dan "Doc" Googins, Georgetown Municipal Airport, 301 Toledo Trail, Georgetown, TX 78628. doc@plane-girls.com 512-284-5300



Reply to my email: Dear Mr. Gutting,

Thank you so much for your kindness. We have indeed studied the 41st Gp's website, where we found Mr. Tolbert's e-mail address. In our short existence, we have had wonderful opportunities to meet so many veterans at air shows and events. We spent a week with the Doolittle Raiders in San Antonio, and were astonished by their quiet dignity and humility. We have seen those same qualities in all of the veterans and their families. There is a reason why they are called "The Greatest Generation". There will always be heroes and great men of valor, but never again so many, I think.

Our founder, Miss Chasity Ballard, is 29 years old with two children, 7 and 5. She recently remarked that "When my kids grow up, there will be so very few of these men remaining. My generation may be the last to know these men when they were alive." Thus was born the "Lost Girls Project", a gift, a tribute and homage from "A New Generation of Women Who Fly" to the "Greatest Generation". The old nose art depicted the women that these men loved, their hopes and dreams of life and a future beyond the war. The hearts of young men and women today are not so different from their grandparents and great grandparents. It may be that we will find a crew, a record, a family. It may be that all we ever find is an old faded photograph, all else known but to God. But someone loved them and cared about them once, and we will do the same for their memories, not just for the twelve, but for all of the men and the women who loved them.

"Rhode Island Red"

is one of 12 aircraft that we have selected for the project. Twelve lost girls, who carried their crews through the most perilous of times. Twelve lost girls, fallen, abandoned, and forgotten, will return home for a little while. Because when all else fades away, only love remains.

Miss Ballard is Rhode Island Red for 2009. We shot the finals today in the studio, and although her image and pose are different from the 1945 photo, the spirit of the woman is the same. I have attached a stock photo of the Plane-Girls Team that was taken during the Jasper Air Show in April this year. Chasity is on the far right. We



intend to unveil all of the Lost Girls in December of this year. We will keep you posted on our progress.

Thank you again from all of the Plane-Girls, our very best to all of you. Doc & Chasity

I can speak for all 41st Bomb Group members in saying that we would be most delighted to meet Chasity & "The Plane-Girls"... and you too, Doc.

We'll keep Doc posted re our next Reunion site selection and hopefully the Plane-Girls & crew will be able to join with us.

TCF EDITOR'S NICKEL'S WORTH: The Hospitality Room was by far the most accommodating and spacious we have ever had. A large flat screen TV provided the venue for Katrina's presentation of a collage of 100s of pictures garnered from past reunions and The Crow Flight newsletters.

Then came **BOB AYRES', 48th Bomb Sq.**, presentation of his WWII pictures that he compiled into a beautiful presentation with print narrative and background music of the era. Very professional. Bob has converted it to DVD and a copy is yours for the asking, plus a small charge to cover reproduction costs and postage, probably about \$5 to \$8. If you are interested, let me know (See Masthead for contact info for the **WORKING** nerd editor). At Bob's request, I'll then compile the orders and pass them on to him.



Bob included a few tidbits of bio info along with a copy of the DVD he sent to me. He took Cadet Preflight Training at Ft. Worth, TX, Basic at Enid, OK and Advanced at Altus, OK, graduating in class 44A. After four months as an instructor pilot he teamed up with John Helmer's crew at Greenville, SC. After the war he met his wife, Jane, while attending school in CO and later was recruited by her father to take over operation of his newspaper in Kearney, NE where Bob and Jane still reside. They have 3 children, 4 grand and 3 great-grandchildren. Bob has owned 4 Grumman American Topeka aircraft and he still flies, albeit with an instructor pilot now because some doc stuck a pacemaker in him a while back.

"Doc" Eyer again graced us with a gift of two of his intricate handmade Intarsia U.S. flags; one was presented by the winning draw to the most deserving Bill Childs, a long toiling worker for the 820th Bomb. Sq. Congrats to Bill but sorry we did not get a picture; perhaps Bill will send one for the next TCF issue. Doc's other Intarsia Flag is being held by Rolf for presentation at the next Reunion.

Emery Tuttle provided a copy of his book, "And The Angels Sing" as a prize and it was garnered by Greg MacMinn, son of Bill, 396th. **Ed.: Let me put in a short plug for Emery's tome: It is a book you should read. Call Emery at 903-451-3029 and mention "Urban" for a discount, the amount undetermined because it was my idea and this is the first Emery has heard of it.**

A unique hand-crafted animal-like fabric covered bedside lamp was donated by JoAnne Tuttle as a prize. I'm told it went to a name undetermined male banquet only attendee. We hope the lamp enhances the recipient's nocturnal animal instincts.

Glen Penner, Hq. Sq., recently sent five pins that commemorated the B-25 & P-51 fiftieth anniversary in 1990. They will be presented as prizes at the next reunion.

All of our Reunion attendees are special, but added tribute is due to Polly Littrell and Enid Anderson for attending this reunion. As you know, their respective spouses, Elmer and Gus, recently passed away. Both Polly & Enid are north

Texans so Polly arranged their driving trip to CHS. True grit has no gender boundaries.

It was wonderful first-time reunion experiences to have a member's great-grandson attend. See pic P 12. God bless our progeny for enhancing and sustaining our reunions.

Several near-miss notables were **Kem Sitterley and daughter Kemary, Louie and Corrine Beisser and Doc and Terry Eyer. All had planed to attend but the "getting older syndrome" trumped their good intentions.**

Attendance, however, did exceed expectations, numbering 62 for the banquet and a resounding 40/46 respectively for the AFB & CHS tours. Thanks to all the hearty folks whose attendance made this such a successful reunion. Y'all come back now, y'hear?

COME BACK TO WHERE, YOU ASK? Good question, but at this time there is no definitive answer, although we have options in the works.

The CHS Group meeting ended with no proposals for a '09 Reunion site; however, after the meeting, two proposals emerged: 1) Frank & Nancy Hanley, WWII memorabilia collectors and historians, who have attended a number of our reunions, will check out possibilities of holding our 2009 reunion in the area south of Orlando, FL, near Kissimmee. Frank has a friend there who owns an airfield and a number of vintage '30-'40's aircraft, all in flyable condition.

Proximity to the Cape Kennedy Space Center offers another outstanding tour option. We are also considering that, should Orlando be selected, we move the date to spring, probably May, in order to avoid conflict with the hurricane season. 2) Then, it was learned that Bill and Jean Childs are receptive to hosting '09 at Williamsburg, VA. However, after recently conferring with Bill, he agreed to limit the choice to Orlando or Tucson...read below. Bill likes Tucson and would drive as he has friends along the way to visit.

To top off our '09 choices: "Doc" Eyer called and announced the blockbuster news that his "Three Lovely Nieces" and Doc's friend, Lyndon Johnson, have volunteered to once again host our Reunion at Tucson, AZ. Those of you who attended our 2006 Reunion there need no sales pitch; others may consult TCF newsletter # 38 for how it went. Reminder: *The Crow Flight* newsletters can be accessed on the 41st Bomb Group website.

Responses received from a letter to the CHS attendees were, as to be expected since most live on or near the east coast, most favorable to having the 2009 Reunion at Orlando; **but most also added that they would attend wherever it was held.**

We need a broader consensus, so the attack plan is to ask our squadron activists to conduct a telephone poll and we'll let the results of that, to be published in the next TCF, determine where we will celebrate in 2009. In the meantime, you may voice your opinion by contacting your squadron reps or The Crow Flight editor at the addresses provided in the Masthead.

It is suggested that dedicated and potential 2009 Reunion attendees reserve their calendar schedule for the first week of October for the possible selection of Tucson.

THE FOLLOWING TEXT APPLIES TO THE PHOTO ON THE FACING PAGE OF THE HANDSOME YOUNG GENT IN THE FAB JACKET SPORTING THE 47TH CROW FLIGHT PATCH:

"To put a face with a name, my wife took a picture of me this morning after what was probably our last m'cycle ride of the year (it was spitting snow). That's me in my 'flight' jacket. Have a happy Thanksgiving.--**Jim Belair**." Jim sent this by e-mail on 11-18-'02. He & family live in Laconia, NH, and that's just the start of snow time up there. (Right, Doris?) Jim's dedication to his father's memory also benefited the 47th Bomb Sq. members by his gift of the "Crow Flight" patches he recreated.

Note: There is still a limited number of those patches available so if any of the 47th Bomb Sq. members or their prodigy are genuinely interested in having one, please contact me (The "Working Editor") at the addresses provided in the masthead.

SQUADRON NOTES: Apparently, **Gene Olsen, 48th**, doesn't believe in doing things half-way; e.g., his "note" (accompanied by a very generous check) was a 7 page tome. I'll have to condense the letter, but his year-long sweet-heart must be given full exposure. Lovely gal! Unfortunately, he doesn't reveal her identity or phone number, but certainly can't fault him for protecting such a voluptuous property.



Gene continues to be hampered by crushed vertebrae and broken ribs incurred in an accident involving heavy cartons while preparing for his move from Las Vegas. His current Address is: 3318 Brookside Rd #112, Stockton, CA 95219. It's an "Old folk's home" that he hates, said Gene, and he plans to find a nice apartment.

He also had a severe nasal infection that the doctors declared potentially fatal, since they were unable to cure the infection and his weight dropped from 164 to 130 lbs. They told him he was dying, but then, astonishingly even to the doctors, overnight use of a prescribed nasal spray cleared out gobs of congestion and cleared up the infection. So now Gene is back to exercising and his weight is up to 155.

Fortunately, Gene also has had the help and comfort of his daughter who also lives in the Stockton area.

As an aside, Gene said he has a pile of WWII stuff: Jap rifles, bayonet, sword, Jap bomb nose piece, 2 flags, etc that is currently on loan to the Palm Springs Museum.

He also threw in a page of data re military aircraft: Altitude Record – Russian MIG-25 from the ground reached 123,525.58 / 23.39 miles. [Wonder how they measured that .58 feet?] Altitude Record launched from another aircraft – USA X-15 to 314,750 feet / 59.61 miles. Speed Straight Course / Horizontal – SR71A – 2,173 mph. Altitude / Horizontal Flight – SR71A – 85,067.99 feet – 16.11 miles.

B-2 Bomber: 20 purchased – 1 totaled 3/08 on landing. Can carry 16 ea 2,000 lb bombs anywhere in world non-stop. Each of 4 engines of 17,300 lbs thrust – 69,200 at 50,000' altitude – or can carry 16 nukes unrefueled 5,000 miles. Can carry 40,000 pounds of bombs / 80 – 500lb bombs each independently precision targeted to within 10' square. Can stay airborne 44 hours. Has 2 man crew and lands at 140 mph. Carries no guns. Just a mite + potent than our B-25.

August 7, 2008

Dear Ust,
Please find enclosed a check for
Charlie Seadle - dues in memory from
mes. Marian.

Hope all of you have a great
time at the Charleston reunion.
We always enjoyed them so much.

Sincerely,
Marian Seadle

We are enclosing the thoughtful refund check and hope that you can put it toward the publication of The Crow flight. We had a wonderful time in Charleston and we wish to send accolades and thanks to the Grandstaff for the great success of the reunion. The hard work and planning takes place behind the scenes and since we planned one reunion, we do know all about that!

Hurrah for those who offered to carry on for 2009! Florida sounds great to us nor' easterners, but we would be more than happy with the other choices if that is what most want. Best wishes, **Morgan & Clare Molloy, 820th Bomb Sq.**

Make me a good guy. I'm trying – Regards and thanks for Crow Flight. **John (Sacco, 47th Bomb Sq.)**

The story of Rolf Grandstaff (TCF # 43) brought back memories of our camping trips to Michigan. I quit in 1968 when my wife died of cancer. I really enjoyed this letter. Keep up the good work. Many good wishes, my friend, **Al Hettig, 396th Bomb Sq.**

Glad we all got home safely. Thanks for your diligence in making this one memorable. Our guests were very impressed (their first event with a bunch of old guys and gals) at how all managed to survive this long. Their turn is coming! **Skip and Rene, 820th Bomb Sq.**

Had a pleasant surprise last Nov. My crewmate, Chuck Massey called (we've been "checking in" with each other every 3-4 weeks). His son had offered to bring him up from AZ to New England to spend a day with his friend Reggie. Except for wearing glasses, Chuck has not changed at all. I enjoyed the day (so did my four daughters). I'm very grateful to Chuck's son, Eddie. **Reggie Gauthier, 47th.**

9-'08: This is to let you know – no Reunion for me this year. Suffered a stroke in January past and the recovery is slow. Have a good one! **Harold Newlander**

From the MacMinns: Thanks for the latest TCF and the enclosed check. Our preference for the next reunion is as follows: 2009 Williamsburg; 2010 Florida; 2011 Tucson. However, we will attend the next reunion no matter where it may be held. **B & B**

We wish to thank you for all your CHS work that you put into the meeting. Betty Anne and I have attended four reunions and enjoyed every one of them. We wish to make our next reunion in Orlando. We are enchanted with the location. We will be most happy to go with the majority. Warmest regards, **Craig Norton.**



The Essential Elements of Feminine Charm & Beauty Was Provided By Top Row: Nancy Hanley – Bev Williams – Jean Childs – Clare Molloy – Polly Littrell – Marilyn Rondinelli. Bottom Row: Bobbie MacMinn – Jo Anne Tuttle – Delia Dreyfus – Beverly Helmer – Rene Thrune.

AWOL Were: Enid Anderson – Mildred Chilson – Lee Deutsch - Betty Ann Norton - Wayma Rowe – Carolyn Colvin.

WE ARE PROUD OF AND GRATEFUL FOR THE PROGRESSIVE REUNION ATTENDANCE NUMBERS OF OUR 41ST BOMB GROUP MEMBER'S PRODIGY. WE CHERISH THEIR PRESENCE AND APPLAUD THEIR FILIAL LOYALTY.

Top Row: Greg MacMinn – Michael & Monica (Morgan Molloy's Niece) Batchelor – Frank Lisak, Jr. – Erika & Rolf Grandstaff – Diane Dreyfus Puttre. Front Row: Jerry Audiss – Bill MacMinn – Keith Love – Jack Audiss – Anne Sternberg Meador. AWOL: Linda Anderson Jones – Nancy Childress Hansen – Cheryl MacMinn



L & R are some of the 48th Bomb Sq. folks AWOL from the group pics.

L is Mildred Chilson with Marilyn Rondinelli. Mildred is a lady of true grit; when offered wheel chair assistance on the Harbor Tour, Mildred politely declined, saying, "You're not getting me into one of those." We missed Bill and family at the last 3-4 Reunions, but they were able to take advantage of the CHS Reunion's proximity to their Edgewater, FL home and we were glad to see them again.

R is Fred and Lee Deutsch, 48th Bomb Sq. They were not able to attend the ABQ Reunion because of business obligations (Fred owns & oversees 4 or so furniture stores). They were unannounced but most welcome arrivals at CHS. Center background in that pic is **Gary Bowser**. Quote Skip: "He was a baby when we first saw him. We taught him, his brother and sister to water ski. Their parents were dear friends, who, while younger than us, passed away some years ago. The 'kids', now grandparents themselves, have always regarded Rene and me as their second parents. His wife, **Cathy**, and his sister **Pam Brock** joined us at Charleston."

R is Jim Belair. See related text on preceding page.



Above is **Lee Deutsch, Jess Ramaker, Col. Joseph W. Mancy** and spouse **Veronica** and **Nancy Chilson Hansen**.

Close R is **Art Love, 820th** & son, **Keith**. Art (on the R, lest confusion) is the youngest 92 year-old that I have ever met: fit of body, sharp of mind and, just to top it off, a really nice guy. Hope we see them at our next reunion. Far R is **Jack Roger Audiss, Polly Littrell, Tom McGuire** and **Jack R. Audiss, 820th**; all core members of our Reunion Family.





L - JoAnne & Emery Spice Things Up With A Little Hanky-Panky...To the Obvious Delight of John & Beverly. Pic Below Shows JoAnne Can Make Boys of Any Age Feel Happy. The lad is Charles Aponte, great-grandson of Bill & Mildred Chilson.

R - Polly Littrell in Joyous Hat(s), Along With Linda and Enid Anderson and Jean & Bill Childs.



R is one of the C121 Constellation flown by Bill MacMinn, 396th, while stationed at CHSAFB in the '50s. Bill is proudly pointing to the empenage; his claim: he was one of the few USAF pilots able and qualified to handle three pieces of tail at the same time.

Obviously Bill did prevail, so we offer our congratulations for both Bill's prowess, as well as his extended service (no pun intended). Bill retired as a Lt. Colonel after 26 years of service.

