Group

823rd Squadron

71st Squadron

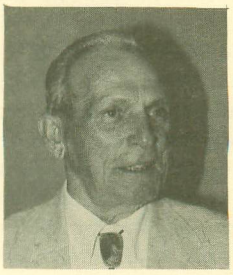
405th Squadron

822nd Squadron

"The Sun Setters"

THE 38th BOMB GROUP ASSOCIATION (WWII) JANUARY 1995

THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



DALE W. HOWIESON

The Number One priority of my tenure as President of the 38th Bomb Group Association (WWII) will be to maintain the high standard of quality leadership performed by my predecessors. It is my hope to be equal to the task.

My second priority will be to increase our membership. Each reunion, we lose more of our friends. I would like this organization to continue and be remembered in our time and into the future.

A note of thanks to Jim Thoren, Grant Nelson, Bill McKinstry and all the Squadron representatives for the excellent service given to the Association over the past two years.

We are always in need of material for *The SunSetter.* All members are asked to write their thoughts and experiences as related to the 38th Bomb Group. Please send your articles to me. I will try to have all items printed.

ATTENTION, PLEASE!

At the reunion, associate member Richard L. Wilisch, 128 Jefferson Pk. Dr., Huntington, WV 25605, offered some beautiful belt buckles with the 5th AF emblem . One 823rd member purchased 10 but did not pay for them at the time. Richard would sincerely appreciate payment for these buckles.

Anyone else desiring one of these fine buckles, at $10.00 each, can contact him at the address shown above.

38th BOMB GROUP ASSOC. (WWII)
REUNION 1996
SEATTLE, WASHINGTON
Plan Now To Be There!

PASSING THE PENCIL

Lew Pavel (405th Squadron), editor of *The SunSetters* for these past many years, has retired as editor. He is closing his home in Florida and moving to Texas to be nearer his family.

We all owe a great debt to Lew for his dedication and efforts. He has kept the Association informed and published many of your stories for all of us to enjoy.

However, at the moment, we do not have an editor . Our printers have agreed to do the editing, publishing and printing of *The SunSetters* for us on a limited basis until we can find a volunteer to take on the job.

If any of you, your family, or any associate member would like to take this on, please contact Dale Howieson, our president.

One would need a computer and a program to assist you in preparing the items for publication.

In the meantime, it is very important for each of us to continue feeding items to Dale concerning our stories and antecedents of the war years and other appropriate items related to the 38th BGp and its members occurring after the war.

Without your input, *The SunSetter* will die for lack of participation.

THE 38th LIVES AGAIN!

by Jim Thoren

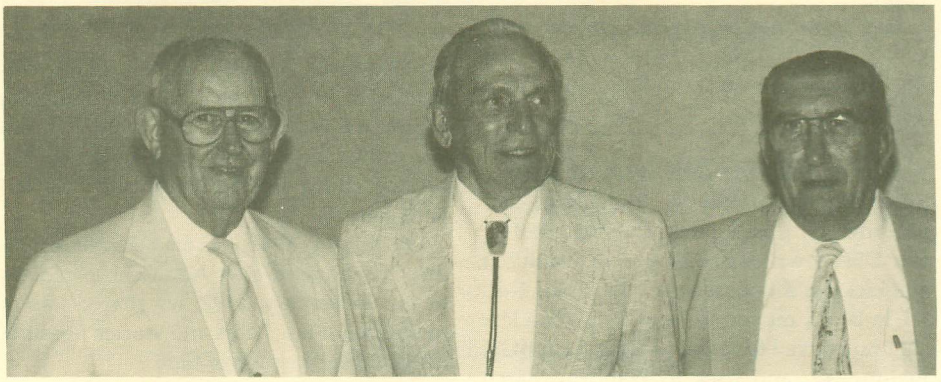
We were contacted in late October and informed that the 38th was being reconstituted as the 38th Engineering and Installation Wing at Tinker AFB, Oklahoma City, OK on November 8, 1994. It was to be converted from a flying organization to an engineering installation organization. They are the people that engineer and install communications systems throughout the Department of Defense. As a Wing, they have a wartime capability and mission.

We were invited to participate and some of our local members did. Jack Wallace, 822nd, did a great job for us setting everything up although, at the last moment, he was unable to attend. Dale Howieson and Terry Terrell sent our squadron and group banners, and the combat pictures for them. The Air Force had a B-25 brought in for display.

It turned out to be a grand affair. This new 38th desires to keep an open dialogue with the 38th B Gp. Assn. (WWII) and to keep past recognition and accomplishments alive in this organization so as not to forget the efforts and sacrifices of those that built the original 38th into an effective combat force.

So ... the 38th lives again!

YOUR NEW OFFICERS FOR 1995-1996



J. Lee Ranney
Vice-President

Dale W. Howieson
President

William McKinstry
Secretary/Treasurer

The 38th Bomb Group Association (WWII)

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ADDITIONAL LIFE MEMBERS

The Association has gained six new Life Members since the listing in the September 1994 *The SunSetters* newsletter:

Arthur W. Camire ..... (405th)
James C. Campbell ..... (405th)
John F. Collins ..... (405th)
William W. John..... (405th)
Donald E. Bartz ..... (823rd)
Michael C. Siciliano ..... (823rd)

Here is the breakdown, by squadron, of the *total* number of members who have contributed $100 to the Life Membership Fund:

HQ	71st	405th	822nd	823rd	ASC
7	48	88	41	44	4
1	4	6	4	1	Dec'd

TOTAL: 232

A Note From Bill McFarland

Bill McFarland (69th Sq. 38th BGp., 268 Hillside Dr., Castle Rock, CO 80104-2041, Ret. USAF) writes that he is in ill health but still kicking. Bill joined the 69th B Sq., Dec. '41 in B26's, moved to New Caledonia Jan. '42, transferred to the 42nd B Sq. 11th BGp. in June '42, and back to Waho in March '43.

!! CAUTION !!

A word of caution to those who were unable to attend the reunion at Hampton last year. At the business meeting, it was suggested to lower the biennial dues back to $20.00.

Since our last reunion at San Antonio, we have made the following changes which were effective in decreasing our expenses. With one or two exceptions, we no longer send out newsletters in an envelope. Labels are stuck directly on the newsletters which are then sent by third class mail, saving on postage and envelopes.

Members who have not paid dues since 1990 have been deleted from the mailing list along with widows of former delinquent members. This brings our mostly active membership to just under 700.

Accordingly, members voted unanimously to lower the dues from $30 to $20 for the 1995-96 term. However, this can create a dilemma for the treasurer. Since the Group's checking account is not set up for making out small refund checks, *anyone who forgets that dues are $20 and sends $30 will be credited for a 3-year period: 1995-6 and 1997!* **There will be no refunds.**

It has been a pleasure being your Secretary/Treasurer for the last 4 years and I am flattered that you have voted to keep me for another term. Those who know me are not surprised when I say my wife is actually the Treasurer of the 38th Bomb Group Association, so you have been getting a "two-fer" bargain. We look forward to serving you again and seeing you at Seattle.

— Bill McKinstry, S/T

— 405th CONDO MATES —

Gerry Carpenter & Everett Brady, 405th Sq. 38th BGp 5AF

In 1945 we shared a canvas condo on Okinawa. In January, 1992, we shared a condo in Siesta Key, FL. This picture shows two things: a big difference in quality of the condos and a slight difference in participant ages!

On July 31, 1945, we also shared a misdirected mission over Nagasaki. Needless to say, in January, 1992, we shared lots of memories, a few beers and stories possibly distorted by passage of time.

We strongly recommend this type of mini-reunion to anyone!

SOME RAMBLING THOUGHTS

Dale Howieson

The many oysters in Brisbane - pub hours, two in afternoon and evening - warm beer.

A long hot trip to Townsville on a narrow-gauge railroad with a woodburner locomotive.

Charters Towers, desert country, resembled our West at the turn of the century. False-front buildings, horses and hitching posts.

Orientation and boredom, very little flying. Bus ride to Townsville enroute to Port Moresby on Christmas Day. Brown bag lunch consisted of a totally dry orange and a very smelly sandwich. Settled for some water from a canvas bag hanging outside the window.

Arrived at 17 Mile, New Guinea as replacements to the 823rd. It was sweltering! New Year's celebration, everyone firing guns - scary! We lost a plane and crew on our first mission — the left wing man on our formation. Plane went down coming from Townsville and then lost another plane searching for it. Three planes and crews lost in quick order.

The hill at the end of 17 Mile Strip - had to go left or right to get around it. That beautiful B-25 just kept on plugging.

Climbing over the Owen Stanley Mountains — sometimes at 21,000 feet, going and coming on strikes, a little dizzy at times.

Moving to Nadzab, a step up from 17 Miles, planes remodeled, minus cannon, more 50 cal's — a great improvement in my book!

REUNION 1994

Those of you who could not attend the reunion in Hampton truly missed a good time. We had over 200 original members from the 38th (WWII) and a good number of associate members. The wives even appeared to have enjoyed this one! There were 371 members and ladies attending the Saturday night banquet.

Olan Mills is publishing a memorial booklet for the reunion. Those of you who were there but did not order one, and those of you that did not attend, can order directly from Olan Mills, Attn.: Customer Services, 4325 Amicola Hwy., P. O. Box 23456, Chattanooga, TN 37422-9989. Check with them for a price.

There are still some 38th BGp. patches ($3 each) left and 8 or 9 caps ($8 each) with the same patches on them. Contact Jim Thoren, 1-360-579-1080 for these items.

Also, we came out a little ahead on the funding, so the surplus will be set aside for the next reunion. Thank you all.

BRIEFING TIME!

John Roman of Latham Seabrook, MD recalls the crews at the AFB near Sacramento, CA preparing to fly their B-25s to Biak in the Shouten Islands:

"We had picked up a new B-25J at Salinas, CA, equipped with extra fuel tanks in the bomb bays and radio operator's compartment. After a period of flight testing and instrument calibration, we were outfitted with combat gear and the plane flew to Mather Field, our point of departure where we joined the crews of several other types of aircraft: B-17s, B-24s, C-46s, which were to be flown to the Pacific Theater of Operations.

"The evening of our departure for the first leg of the trip was to John Rogers NAS in Honolulu. All crews scheduled to leave that evening assembled for a flight briefing.

"The weather briefing was kindly, indicating fair weather and following winds. Then the cruise control officer came on and gave the engine settings for the various aircraft to maximize their flight range. He then proceeded to project the amount of reserve fuel each type of aircraft would have for the trip. 'The B-17s will have four hours of reserve fuel. The B-24s will have six hours; the C-46s can come back if they miss the island,' and so on through the list.

"A young, fuzzy-cheeked flight officer in the rear of the room raised his hand and asked, 'But, sir, what about the B-25's?'

"Back came the laconic reply, 'If the tail wind holds up, you'll make it!' "

The winds must have held since Roman joined the 38th in Lingayen, Philippenes in July, 1945, went on to Okinawa and the Fukuka, Kyushu, Japan, and was discharged at Ft. Dix, NJ in June 1946.

Helmet Does Double Duty!

by Denny Fordyce

I finally got around to marking up and identifying people in some of my old pictures. I'm not positive if the spelling of all names is correct - perhaps your memories are better than mine.

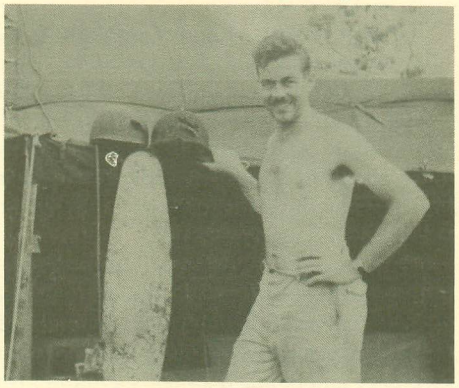
The first picture is of me standing in front of the tent of Arthur "Swede" Hamilton, a navigation school classmate of mine who was in the 822nd squadron. If you look closely, you will see a helmet and liner next to my right hand. The story is as follows:

On a mission out of 17 miles strip, probably going to Wewak, the 38th Group was jumped by a flight of Zeros while we were joining up with our fighter cover at Gusap. In the melee that followed, a Zero made a frontal pass at the plane that Swede was in and hit it with a 20 mm shell.

Cont'd next column

"Helmets" *continued:*

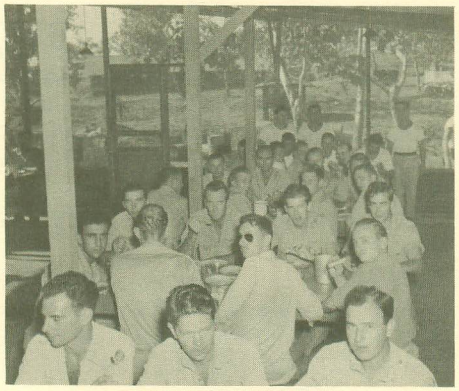
While all the action was happening, the Swede was sitting on the helmet and liner shown in the picture, checking the shells for the 75 mm cannon. Pieces of the Zero's shell came into the navigator's compartment and hit the helmet leaving the damage shown in the picture. Pieces of shapnel hit the Swede on the inside of his arms and legs.



One of the crew said that when they asked him how he was, and when he answered in a *deep* voice, the Swede broke out in a smile from ear to ear!

As a final sidelight to the story, Swede reported that the Officer presenting his Purple Heart in the hospital concluded with, "and I hope you get many more!"

L-R: Denny Fordyce, Mike Conforto, "Burr-Head" Morris, (?) Dyer, and (?).



OFFICER'S MESS HALL

L-R, front row: Raymond Cohen, Andy Beveridge, Bill Bean-?; 2nd: Willie Johns, D.J. "Big Red" Davis, (?), George Cobb; 3rd: Robert Apai-?, (?), "Scorchy" Steele, Lew Pavel, Wickes? or Ricks?, Denny Fordyce.

50 YEARS LATER

by Bruce K. McConnell

In October of 1944, the US forces had just landed on Leyte in the eastern-central Philippine Islands. Our squadron, the 823rd (38th Bomb Group, 5th AF), was flying almost low-level strafing and skip bombing missions to prevent Japanese aircraft from using airstrips in the southern part of the islands.

On the 30th of October, we hit the strip at Zamboanga, Mindanao, P.I. While over the target, we were hit by ground fire. The plane was engulfed in flame and hardly maneuverable. Nevertheless, our pilot S.A. "Sid" Sampson and co-pilot K.G. "Fritz" Schweiger, with extreme effort, managed to ditch in the bay. It was a hard landing and the fuselage broke just behind the bomb bay.

John Storhaugen, the armorer at the tail guns, had been killed over the target. As radio operator, I had been at the waist guns and checked on John. Because of intense fire coming from the wing through the bomb bay, I couldn't get near the bulkhead to brace for ditching. On impact, I apparently rolled out through the gap between the aft fuselage and bomb bay.

The water was warm. On surfacing, I though that I was the only survivor and contemplated swimming to the shore some distance from the city. The Japs were shooting at us so a squadron of our fighters which had hit the target before us, strafed them to prevent them from putting a boat out to capture us.

No need to swim. In a short time, I saw a Navy PBY coming in. A sailor put out a raft and jumped in after me. The plane began taxiing with us in tow hanging on to the ropes of the raft. I thought I'd drown. Little did I know that in front of the wing where I couldn't see them was the rest of the crew. Sid, Fritz, Hank Newell (the bombardier/navigator) and I were rescued. W.R. "Bill" Kyle, the engineer, was in the top turret and although he got out he was too badly burned and drowned. We were all hurt to some degree and spent weeks in hospitals after the PBY flew us back to Morotai.

This story has a sequel. 50 years later, my wife and I flew to Manila, and on to Zamboanga. On the evening of the 29th of October, 1994 we were having a cool one on the terrace of the Lantaka-by-the-Sea hotel trying to decipher the Tagalog dishes on the menu. A nice young lady at the table next to us came over to help. In the course of conversation we told her why we were there. Her response gave us goose bumps.

She said she knew of some local divers who had found an American WWII plane on

Continued Page 4, column 1

50 Years Later *from page 3*

the bottom, the only one they knew of. She pointed to the location and it all fit. There is very little tidal action in the area and no typhoons.

The next day, exactly 50 years later, we rented an outrigger and boatman and headed out there. I'm sure we were over the approximate location but we didn't have a diver with us. *Thought of John and Bill and the fifty years they missed.*

We then continued on to the small island of Santa Cruz where we enjoyed the beach, snorkeling and gathering coral and shells as mementos of the occasion. On the way back, the boat operator asked my wife if I had been a general. Some promotion from S/Sgt! He knew how to get a tip.

Zamboanga is not exactly on the tourist circuit and it was quite an experience. On the flight down we noticed we were the only Americans on the plane. This was also true in town and at the hotel. It was a beautiful place and if they ever settle the uprisings, kidnappings and trouble between the Muslims and Christians, it could very well be a popular resort.

REFLECTIONS

by Lew Pavel

Near Townsville we were able to get a Jeep occasionally and drive to the Australian Officers' Club. To avoid "borrowing" of the car we were using (usually by our own officers who would eventually return the vehicle to the motor pool), we had to chain it to a tree or strong fence.

On one of our visits, the club only had gin and creme de menthe so we ordered drinks half-and-half, which were called "power houses." Upon leaving the club, we found they had been most appropriately named!

— — —

Our regular gunner refused to fly on one mission because the top turret guns were not functioning properly. He didn't think we should go up. He was grounded and replaced by a new gunner who repaired the guns, en route.

— — —

On another night flight timed to finding enemy shipping at dawn, we not only were in a heavy storm with lots of lightning over the Owen Stanley Range, but we were fired upon by one of our own planes who apparently thought we were one of the new Japanese night fighters. We were hit a few times, but no damage.

Our top turret gunner returned fire and the other plane, which our gunner thought was another B-25, flew away. We never did find out whose crew it was.

A Brief History Of The 38th Bombardment Group

Source Unknown

CONSTITUTED as the 38th Bombardment Group (Medium) on 20 Nov. 1940.
ACTIVATED on 15 Jan. 1941.

Trained with B-18, B-25, and B-26 aircraft. The ground echelon moved to Australia, Jan-Feb. 1942, while the air echelon remained in the US for further training. Air echelons of two squadrons arrived in Hawaii in May 1942 and took part in the Battle of Midway; they did not rejoin the group and eventually were reassigned. Air echelons of the other squadrons arrived in Australia in Aug. 1942.

Assigned to Fifth AF and equipped with B-25's, the group operated from bases in Australia, New Guinea, and Biak, Sep. 1942-Oct. 1944, attacking Japanese airfields, shipping and supporting ground forces in New Guinea and the Bismarck Archipelago.

Major Ralph Cheli was awarded the Medal of Honor for action on 18 Aug. 1943. While leading the 405th Sq. to attack a heavily defended airdrome on New Guinea, his plane was severely hit by enemy fire. Rather than disrupt the formation, Major Cheli remained in position and led the attack on the target before his bomber crashed into the sea. (He was taken prisoner and killed in the Rabaul area later.)

The group was awarded a Distinguished Unit Citation (DUC) for bombing and strafing Japanese troops and fortification on Cape Gloucester, New Britain, Dec. 1943, preparatory to the Allied invasion. Received another DUC for two missions over New Guinea, 16 & 17 June, 1944, against Japanese airfields, merchant ships and naval vessels. Moved to the Moluccas in Oct. 1944 and bombed airfields, ground installations, harbors, and shipping in the southern Philippines in support of the US invasion of Leyte. Struck a large enemy convoy in Ormoc Bay in Nov. 1944 to prevent the landing of reinforcements, being awarded a DUC for the mission.

After moving to the Philippines in Jan. 1945, supported US ground forces on Luzon, bombed industries on Formosa, and attacked shipping along the China coast. Stationed temporarily on Palawan in June 1945 for participation in the pre-invasion bombing of Japanese installations on Borneo. Moved to Okinawa in July 1945 and conducted several attacks on industries, railways and shipping in southern Japan.

Moved to Japan in Nov. 1945 as part of Far East Air Forces. Re-designated the 38th Bombardment Group (Light) in May 1945. Equipped with B-26 aircraft.
INACTIVATED in the Far East on 1 Jan. 1949.
ACTIVATED in France on 1 Jan. 1953. Assigned to United States Forces in Europe. Equpped with B-26 and later with B-57 aircraft.
RE-DESIGNATED the 38th Bombardment Group (Tactical) in Oct. 1955.
SQUADRONS: 60th: 1941-1943. 70th: 1941-1943. 71st: 1941-1949, 1951-. 89th: 1946-1949. 405th: 1942-1949, 1953-. 822nd: 1943-1946, 1953-. 823rd: 1943-1946.
STATIONS: Langley Field, VA, 15 Jan. 1941; Jackson AAB, MS, June 1941-18 Jan. 1942; Doomben Field, Australia, 25 Feb. 1942; Ballarat, Australia, 8 Mar. 1942; Amberley Field, Australia, 30 Apr. 1942; Eagle Farms, Australia, 7 Aug. 1942; Breddan Field, Australia, 7 Aug. 1942; Townsville, Australia, 30 Sep. 1942; Port Moresby, New Guinea, Oct. 1942; Nadzab, New Guinea, 4 Mar. 1944; Biak, 1 Oct. 1944; Morotai, 15 Oct. 1944; Lingayen, Luzon, Philippines, 29 Jan. 1945; Okinawa, 25 July 1945; Itazuke, Japan, 22 Nov. 1945; Itami, Japan, 26 Oct. 1945-Inactivated Apr. 1949. Laon AB, France 1 Jan. 1943-.
COMMANDERS: Lt. Col. Robert D. Knapp, 15 Jan. 1941; Col. Fay R. Upthegrove, 18 Jan. 1942-unk.; Lt. Col. Brian O'Neill, 19 Oct. 1942; Lt. Col. Lawrence Tanberg, 1 Oct. 1943; Lt. Col. Carl C. Lausman, July 1944; Maj. Howard M. Paquin, 18 Aug. 1944; Lt. Col. Edward M. Gavin, 9 Nov. 1944; Lt. Col. Edwin H. Hawes, 16 Mar. 1945; Lt. Col. Vernon D. Torgerson, 9 Aug. 1945; Lt. Col. Bruce T. Marston, 12 Sep. 1945; Lt. Col. Joseph P. Gentile, 17 Mar. 1946; Lt. Col. John P. Crocker, 16 May 1946; Col. C.J. Bondley Jr., 2 July 1946; Col. Dale D. Brannon, 12 Nov. 1946; Col. John H. Hitchison, 25 Jan. 1947; Col. Donald D. Fitgerald, 26 Feb. 1948; Col Preston P. Pender, 7 May 1948; Lt. Col. Charles R. Johnson, 18 July 1948-inactivated Apr. 1949; Lt. Col. Max H. Mortensen, 1 Jan. 1953; Col. Glen W. Clark, 16 Mar. 1953; Col. Broadus B. Taylor, 6 June 1955-.
CAMPAIGNS: Air Offensive, Japan; China Defensive; Papua; New Guinea; Bismarck Archipelago; Western Pacific; Leyte; Southern Philippines; China Offensive.
DECORATIONS: Distinguished Unit Citations: Papua, New Guinea, Sep. 1942, 23 Jan. 1943; New Britain, 24-26 Dec. 1943; New Guinea, 16-17 June 1944; Leyte, 10 Nov. 1944; Philippine Presidential Unit Citation.
INSIGNE: Shield: Azure, a winged sword point downward argent, the hilt and pommel charged with a torteau, a pomeis, and beant, a fleur-de-lis fretting the blade, or between two cloud formations of the second issuing from dexter and sinister base. (Appr. 16 Apr. 1954)