38th BOMB GROUP

823rd SQUADRON

71st SQUADRON

405th SQUADRON

822nd SQUADRON

"The Sun Setters"

THE 38th BOMB GROUP ASSOCIATION (WWII) SEPTEMBER 1998

The President's Message . . .

HARLAN DENNING

Greetings!

It's September, and almost time for our reunion. This will be my last "SunSetters" message as your president and I want to take this opportunity to tell you all that it has been an honor and a privilege to serve as president of the 38th Bomb Group Association.

It will be the new president's responsibility to decide on the memorabilia to be offered for the next reunion, but I think this will probably be the last time for squadron logos. Our numbers are decreasing every year, which makes it difficult to come up with the minimum required by the supplier. The cost for the items almost doubles when the minimum isn't met. I have ordered a few extra of every item, which I will have on hand at Little Rock.

Keep the next reunion in mind, and come up with suggestions for the location of **REUNION 2000**! Also be thinking about names to submit for your new officers.

My heartfelt thanks to Chick Alford, our vice-president, and his wife Helen, for their dedicated efforts to make the Little Rock Reunion something to look forward to.

Many thanks also to Bill McKinstry, our secretary-treasurer, and his wife Cledie who have kept us up-to-date and operating in good order.

Our newsletter, *"The SunSetters,"* is in the capable hands of Jim Thoren with help from wife, Ruth. Thanks to them for putting out an outstanding publication.

To all the squadron representatives and alternates who will be manning the hospitality rooms at the reunion, I say a grateful thanks. And I know we can count on you.

Finally, to my wife Dorothy, I say thanks for all the behind-the-scenes work done to help me accomplish my mission.

I appreciate the many letters and phone calls I have been receiving these past two years. Many have been from family members of former 38th Bomb Group comrades. Some were interested in becoming associate members of the group so I passed their names on to Bill.

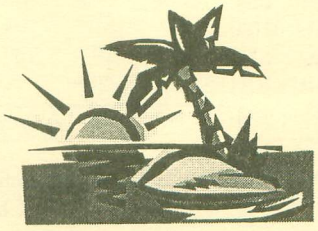
We'll see you in Little Rock!

Best Wishes and God bless,
Harlan Denning

PLAN TO ATTEND 38th BGp. REUNION OCTOBER 8-11, 1998 LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS!

LANDING IN THE PHILIPPINES – 1944

By Wally Byron



The B-24 was stumbling along as usual, looking for a place named "Layengayen Gulf" in the Philippines. The plane was weary, flying from one of the choicest spots of the South Sea Island, New Guinea. Landing in the Philippines would be just what the crew had imagined.

We fantasized about our arrival, visualized a large white tent housing the Air Force Band, tables decorated with food, wine and beer. Several hundred Army personnel would be milling around waiting to shake our hands. Our crew would exchange matching stories of dangerous combat missions. After we were assigned our quarters, we would all retire to the Air Force Club, piled high with food and drink champagne.

The reality occurred upon landing. We removed B-4 bags from the B-25 and a C-47 ran over them with the tail wheel as it was turning. When the copilot of the gooney bird exited, we asked if his head was up and locked. He has mild-mannered and mentioned that because we were second lieutenants and he was a flight officer, we should not pull rank on a fellow Airman. He waved, "So long," with one finger pointed to the sky. The pilot of the transport was a Captain. In lieu of disciplining him, we took our crushed bags with the smell of Seagram's 7, our pressed clothing, and departed.

There wasn't any white tent, only a row of bamboo, grass-shingled native huts. Air Force personnel were sitting on the porches. We decided they were getting their shoes shined by the natives, and we marked off looking for our BOQ. No BOQ, a do-it-yourself tent, unbelievable! It wasn't white, but you could see the white clouds from inside. This was quite different from what the Army had on their recruiting posters!

The native huts appeared more attractive each day. We decided to get an architect and draw up specifications for a new home. Some of the local contractors bid on the project. Our low bidder settled for a used cargo parachute, provided we supply the materials.

An Army 6x6 provided the transportation to the back woods for the bamboo. Our contractor assured us, as he walked across a stream up to his knees, that our 6x6 would have no problem negotiating the stream. We agreed and started across. But, as we sat in

(Continued on page 2)

The 38th Bomb Group Association (WWII)

1997/98 Officers & Directors

President:..... Harlan L. Denning, LM
2425 Mark Court, Richland, WA 99352
Vice-President..... Chick Alford, 405th Sq., LM
10 LaGranja Circle, Hot Springs Village, AR 91909
Sec./Treas.:.....William J. McKinstry, LM
473 Evergreen Dr., Tonawanda, NY 14150
HQ Rep. (Incl. 69, 70, 89th Sqdns. & Asc.)
Thomas D. Kirby, Sr., LM
P.O. Box 416, Simi Valley, CA 93062
71st Rep.:.....Richard D. Fields, LM
1421 W. Lexington Ave., Elkhart, IN 46514
71st Alt. Rep.:.....Albert G. Oliver, LM
301 Sunset Dr., PO Box 698, Abbeville, SC 19620
405th Rep.: ..... Rolf A. Laib, LM
416 East Bay Ave., Newport Beach, CA 92661
405th Alt. Rep.: ....Harry E. Terrell, Jr., LM
20475 Upper Bay Dr., Newport Beach, CA 92660
822nd Rep.:.....Ted V. Lorenzetti, LM
40 Main St., Apt. 406, Stoneham, MA 02180
822nd Alt. Rep.: ..... Andrew A. Rimar, LM
522 Chase Dr., Corpus Cristi, TX 78412-3035
823rd Rep.:..... Lorne H. Nelles (94)
76 Wendover Ave., Tonawanda, NY 14223
823rd Alt. Rep.: .....Orland F. Gage, LM
337 Reservoir Dr., Lewiston, ID 82501

Edited by Mary Jane Aurdal. Printed with pride in the USA by Paco's Press, PO Box 431, Lynnwood, WA 98046-0431. E-mail: aurdal@whidbey.com

"IN EVER-HONORED MEMORY'"

Since publication of the May 1998 newsletter and as of August 7, 1998, we have been informed of these veterans of the 38th Bomb Group that have gone to their final resting place.

"Rest In Peace, Brothers"

Andrukitis, Charles W. 70th
Babovsky, Michael 70th
Bracey, Chester J. 70th
Capan, Mac 70th
Cressy, Burton W. 70th
Dulac, Henry P. 70th
Ellis, John 70th
Freeman, William T. 70th
Gillis, Jack T. 70th
Glasser, Russell 70th
Honett, Eugene L. 70th
Jolly, Arthur 70th
King, Travis M. 70th
Lewis, Everrett R. 70th
Miller, Harold G. "Max" 70th
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Snodgrass, Okey W. 70th
Thorburn, Richard M. 70th
Yanashvski, Michael 70th
Musick, Charles R. 71st
Schroller, Edward A. 71st
Sousley, ? 71st
Zimmerman, Clayton 71st
Rice, Louis H. (LM) 405th
Wilson, Ted Q. (LM) 405th
Hershey, Harold A. 822nd

By squadron, these are the members and wartime comrades that have passed away:

HQ	16	71st	120	822nd	59
69th	1	89th	1	823rd	56
70th	42	405th	105	UNK	3

TOTAL = 404

ADDITIONAL LIFE MEMBERS

The Association has gained the following new Life Members since the listing in the May 1998 *Sunsetters* newsletter:
Teck, Jules G. 71st
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
8	57	104	50	49	7
2	10	18	10	7	Dec'd

Total = 276

S/T Request!!!

If anyone remembers a member of the 71st Squadron, Lt. Charles Landon Maggert, who was killed in action November of 1942, please contact his brother, Philip E. Maggart, at 516 Spencer Ave., Marion, IN 46592, (765) 664-8552.

PLEASE!

Read the message above your name on the address label! It tells you the status of your dues. If you are paid-up through December '98, you do not owe dues for "99/2000 until January 1999!

Every member received a copy of our Constitution and ByLaws with their January '97 SunSetters envelope packet. Article V sections spell out dues-paying member's obligations and, particularly, Section 4. Members whose dues have lapsed for 2 terms are removed from the Active roster and placed on the Inactive roster and will no longer receive any 38th BGp. mailings. As an Inactive member, you must pay your dues to attend reunions.

So many members go south for the winter, it has become necessary to create a Winter Database. If you are one of these members who have permanent addresses down south or know in advance where you will be and for how long, plus your phone number, and if you want the January newsletter, let me know if you haven't done so already. Our mail is sent out 3rd Class and is not forwarded!!!

Check your listing in the roster database carefully for wrong or missing information and send me any corrections PRINTED on a post card.

Bill McKinstry, Secretary/Treasurer

NEW MEMBERS

71st: Teck, Jules G. (LM); 1601 Cabana Dr., Lk Havasu City, AZ 86404-1033; 520 855-1776

405th: Milam, Wayman C.; 2220 Ellington Dr., Belleville, IL 66221; 618-227-3358

405th: Kancius, Stanley; 6115 W. Dennison St., Chicago, IL 60630; 773-545-7443

823rd: Dixon, E.L. "Les"; 322 Ruth St., Benton, AR 72015; 501-778-8312

823rd: Mrozek, Frank J. O.S.; 652 Euclid Ave., Villa Park, IL 60181; 630-832-1960

ASC: Drake, Donald D. "Don"; 7127 Echo Bluff Dr., Dallas, TX 75248-3003; 972-931-5742

ASC: Maggart, Philip, E. ; 516 Spencer Ave., Marion, IN 46952; 765-664-8552

ASC: O'Neill, Tom J.; 1000 U.S. Hwy 1, #756, Jupiter, FL; 561-744-7126

ASC: Sousley, Barry R.; 2545 Reservoir Rd., Clarkston, WA 99403; 509-758-6112

Landing In The Philippines 1944 – *from page 1*

water up to our belts in the middle of the stream, we concluded that a 6x6 sank even further into the creek bed than a 100 lb. contractor!

Our dream of having a house in the Philippines became a "stuck-in-the-mud" misadventure. Just then, out of the woods came an American tank and pulled us out. They waved "good-bye" with a single fingered gesture that we had seen before and then sang the "Air Force Song" with something about "down the drain."

The contractor completed our home after a few more bars of soap and our promise that his wife would be our exclusive house boy and laundress. It was a great home with unglazed windows, a see-through roof and floor, built over a swamp with hot and cold running mosquitoes!

Oh, well, think positive! The ocean was near and the Australian food was no longer our single source of nourishment. MacArthur had returned and took back his kingdom from the Japanese. As subjects under King MacArthur, we would dwell in this island paradise until the Navy won the war . . . maybe! *There's that finger again!*☺

Ad: Seeking Movie Footage (8 mm, etc.) of B-25 Mitchell Bombers/Strafers in action, on the ground, etc., in Papua, New Guinea, 1942-43. Especially any showing the "Green Dragon" insignia on the nose (405th Bombardment). Also looking for the 405th Bombardment emblem. Also seeking a copy of 405th Bombardment SQDN (M) Green Dragons; statistical data for 43 months overseas from January 1942 to September 1945. It was printed in 1945. Contact W. Deas, 11 Platypus Ave., Sorrento, Queensland, 4217, Australia: phone/fax +61 755 388 231, e-mail *waldeas@3dnet.com.au.*

54 Years Later

Harry A. Rosengard, 405th

Two weeks before Easter, I was using my daughter's computer checking out names and places from the past. During one effort, I plugged in the name, Royce Harrod who was the co-pilot of our original crew that left Columbia, SC and flew combat in New Guinea. Bill Wilson, who died a while back, was the pilot (one of the best); I was the navigator/bombardier. Our radioman/gunner and gunner was also top notch, but I couldn't locate them on the computer.

The name, Royce Harrod, showed up on the screen with a Texas address. I sent a note to that location, asking if he was an ex-member of the old 405th Bomb Squadron. On Easter Sunday, I received a phone call from Royce and we spent a couple of minutes ascertaining that we were the New Guinea buddies!

The first surprise was that the letter reached his son in Texas and he contacted Royce who now lives in Arizona – 90 miles from me! Three days after he called, he and his wife came down from the Phoenix area to visit me in Tucson. We had a great day discussing events from the New Guinea days to the present. We even had a drink to toast the past and future. The last time we were together was 54 years ago in New Guinea.

The second surprise was the fact that Ellie, Royce's wife, has a sinter in Bricktown, New Jersey where we lived before moving to Tucson. They are planning to visit there in a month or two, and will be only a couple of blocks from my sister. They will stop in to say hello. My sister visited me in Columbia and met the crew. It was a long time between drinks, but we vowed to keep in close contact until the last mission.

March 2 Strike – Lingayen, Luzon

G. Mathe, 823rd

The mission to northwest Formosa was to be 72 ships, 36 from the 38th and 36 from the 345th.

With a mission this large, a full-blown Hollywood-type briefing was conducted by the wing commander, squadron CO, and the operation section. Then the intelligence officer, a captain twice our age, well-liked and respected, described the target fire we would run into. Sometimes, he would get emotionally carried away and this time he was very much so. Most of us checked out our flight equipment plus two bulletproof vests. One was to wear and the other to sit on to protect our manhood.

This mission, I had a five member crew, four regular and one replacement, the tail gunner. He was a Texan named St. Charles F. Dillinger. The following is from my strike diary:

As our 36 B-25s turned towards the target, our squadron leader feathered his left engine and pulled away. This happened as we began the run, causing some confusion. Number Two took the lead and all continued as briefed.

The Japs welcomed us with rifles, machine guns, and ack-ack. The red golf balls and puffy black explosions caused all to tighten up. As we made the run to the Formosa Strait over the water, disaster began. One ship hit the water, nose down with a huge splash, leaving only a tire and small parts on the surface. Another ditched two miles out and was floating nose down. Some crew members were climbing out. A Navy Catalina was already heading for them.

Over the water, a crew check was made but the tail gunner did not respond. The waist gunners refused to check his status, so I crawled back and found Dillinger slumped over his tail guns. Lifting him up revealed a small caliber hole in his left temple.

We got permission to make smoke back to Lingayen strip where upon arriving, we shot a red flare, a casualty signal.

The medics were waiting at the pad. The crew was in shock as Dillinger's body was placed in the ambulance. Later, walking around the plane, we found a few holes in the fuselage.

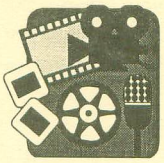
During a "Jim Beam" debriefing, the medics reported that Dillinger died instantly. The "Cat" rescued two from the ditched bird, but none from the crash. Major Adams did not get out of the ditched B-25.

Movie Film Footage Available

Robert Gross, 71st SQDN.

In the May issue of "The SunSetter," Herb Grote asked the whereabouts of some members of the 38th. I was able to find Erickson of the photo-lab. He is B. R. Erickson, M.D., and is the director of the Lake Powell Medical Center in Page, Arizona. He is still practicing and in good health. I was unable to find Salome or Lovejoy.

Early in October 1996, the 5th Air Force Memorial Foundation met in Dayton, OH. Went there and met Mat Gac, formerly of the 38th photo lab. After being overseas for three years, he returned to the States in the spring of 1945.



Mat and I had some time together. I gave him some photos and a video tape of 16 mm film salvaged from the 38th. The first three of four minutes are in color and show the 38th Group in formation off some coast with purple mountains and white clouds as background. I don't know where the film was taken or by whom but the planes have the top turret aft the bomb bay, not forward as in later B-25 models. Maybe someone will remember the place and time. The rest of the film is mostly GSAP black and white film taken over Formosa. There are also some hand held shots made with the GSAP with batters rigged to equal airplane voltage. These were taken at the base in Japan after the war. The tape runs 27 minutes. I gave copies to the 38th Assn. And the 71st Sq. Ass. As far as I know, they were never shown to the membership at large. I have two extra copies and if anyone wants to gamble $15.00 to cover cost and mailing, I'd been glad to oblige.

Mr. Grote mentioned they lost 4 out of 6 planes on a trip to Balikpapen, Borneo. I was on two trips there but can't recall who went into the water. I remember the Navy sitting off-shore lobbing shells into the refinery.

There was a story around when we return to our camp on Palawan that a pilot informed his leader he had to ditch. When the pilot reported in, a voice over the radio said, "Go in by one of the big bastards; he'll have ice cream." I didn't hear the transmission so I can't say it is true. Does anyone have any knowledge of such an incident? Fact or fiction?

Reply to Robert G. Gross, 71st SQDN., 5080 S. Ridge Drive, Cincinnati, OH 45224-5101; 513-853-2794.☺

Larry Hickey Interview With Sam Mazzara:
"Mission to Jefman-Samate – June 16, 1944"

SM: I think I may have a fair recall of what happened. As we hit the strip, like Pappy stated, the Japanese Zeros were in various stages of takeoff. Some were with landing gear down. Some with gear up. Pappy got his Zero before I got the two. I didn't see his get hit. As we were making our run on the strip, at about 50 ft., two Jap Zeros appeared off our right wing. They were in a takeoff mode. They were slightly above our right wing tip, approximately 45 ft. away. We were still down at 50 feet. One Jap pilot looked at me and I could see his expression — he was surprised and I was, too! He appeared to be about 20 years old, my age. I whipped my guns over and gave a short burst. You could have hit him with a shotgun. There was another one right behind him. They were taking off together. He was a little lower in pattern than the other. He just flipped over and, as he flipped over, I let him have it and they both went down. I saw the explosion when I hit him, and then he wiped the other one out. I was raking them both with my 50's.

LH: So the first one you saw your bullets hitting him where?

SM: Right across the whole fuselage.

LH: Did you actually see the bullet holes appearing in the side of the fuselage?

SM: It was like instant hit, instant explosion.

LH: Did you see tracers or anything?

SM: I didn't see anything going in. I Was firing right at him, point blank. I didn't even use my gun sights. He winged over and there was another one, right there next to him.

LH: So he disappeared from your view?

SM: Yes. After they both collided, they went down. Pappy got the one in the lead,. There were quite a few planes taking off. Swede got one with his nose guns. He was our wingman.

LH. So you got one and then you got the other. Tell me what you saw happen after that.

SM: There was a fire and explosion by the cockpit and he winged over and as I was raking his plane, I was raking the other above him, too. It happened so fast. Whether my 50's got him or whether he wiped him out . . . They both went down together into the water.

LH: Did you actually see anything hit the water?

SM: No. You're moving so fast over the target, you hit them, you see fire and an explosion. They were both confirmed by Fred Logan, the gunner in Swede's plane.

The weirdest part about the experience was the face-to-face confrontation with the Jap pilot, just 45 ft. out there. I could see the surprised expression on his face.

Another scary mission was an early morning mission, one of the first that Pappy and I flew together. He was the oldest man on the crew. That's why we all called him "Pappy."

It was a night mission out of Dodobura and we were assigned a celestial navigator. His name was Johnny Johnson and it was our first time together. We were heavily loaded with fuel and 500 lb. Bombs. I don't recall the target.

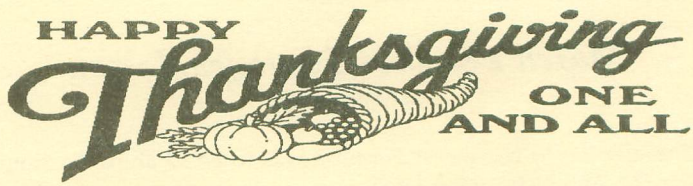
About midway down the runway, we lost power. I was standing in the turret and you know the type metal runways you had in New Guinea, the props came down, and the sparks were flying! Pappy picked it up and it dropped down again. We slammed in and slid right to the end of the metal runway onto the dirt. There was no fire. Swede, our copilot at that time was fast enough to hit all the switches. They bailed out of the front and the radio operator and I bailed out from the waist windows.

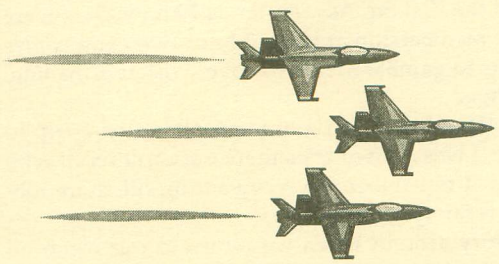
We all gathered in front of the nose, off to the side, with the rest of the B25's barely clearing us! No one was aware that we crashed on takeoff. Major Foley, our CO, was at the other end of the runway in a jeep and didn't see us crash. No one was aware of the crash until Jimmy Kannette (radio operator) notified the control tower.

We counted heads and Johnny Johnson wasn't there. Swede and I ran back, climbed over the nose and into the cockpit. We found him right behind the pilot and copilots' seats. A piece of prop caught him on the right side of his head. He was still breathing and Swede gave him a short of morphine. If you're standing behind the pilot and copilot, those props are right even with you. When we hit that metal runway with the props, a fragment sliced right through the fuselage and caught Johnny Johnson in the head. He was later pronounced dead at the hospital.

I had been talking to Johnny just before we took off and he told me he received a letter from his mother telling him that his brother who was flying P40s over China was missing in action. Johnny was concerned for his mother because she had a bad heart condition. She lost one son and then this happened. For quite some time after Johnny's death, my thoughts were with his mother and I wondered if she survived the tragedy of losing two sons in the war.

Sam A. Mazzara, 520-505-4914
3121 Pintail Drive,
Lake Havasu, AZ 86406-5543





PLAN TO ATTEND 38th BGp. REUNION
OCTOBER 8-11, 1998
LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS!

"The SunSetters"
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