



Attached to
THIS ISSUE

Roster

Ever Honored

Life Members

New members

e-mail addresses

The 38th Bomb Group Assn, WW2

September 2003

TWO LETTERS FROM THE PRESIDENT FOR THE SEPT.

NEWSLETTER



Letter #1 It has been a year since our reunion at Colorado Springs. That means one more year and, God Willing, we will meet in St. Louis. There is much to be done at our meeting in St. Luis. I am receiving strong suggestions that this should be our last meeting. I, for one, agree and concede that this will be the last reunion for my wife and me. Orland Gage has said it so eloquently in his accompanying article to this news letter. We are all getting older. Each reunion becomes more expensive and the health of all of us is becoming a factor. In thankfulness to our predecessors we have a constitution which will give us guidelines to properly distribute our assets and bring to a close our biennial reunions. Our close

brotherhood as a fighting force and the comradery of combat flying, along with the many years of fellowship in the association must now end. The memories will linger on. WHO KNOWS HOW NEAR OUR END MAY BE, TIME FLEETS AWAY AND DEATH COMES ON, HOW QUICKLY, HOW SUDDENLY, MAY DEATH BE HERE AND LIFE BE GONE.!

Dick Fields, President
Letter #2 In deep gratitude to our Associate Member, Mark Col Iorn, the Personal Posterity the 38th Bomb Group Association can be preserved. At Mark's suggestion and hard work, we want to contact each member by mail. In the mailing will be a questionnaire to be filled out and returned. The plan is to then edit them and bind them and make them available to all. Again, time is short and only by full cooperation will this endeavor be successful. We need someone to volunteer to receive the returned questionnaires and edit them. If no one will do this it will not work and our money will be wasted. If this is some-thing you want to do please call me. This must be done in a professional manner, clear printing and an attractive binding.

Dick Fields, President

This is a request for information from the 405th Squadron.

Hello, My name is Bob Carson, I am doing some research on a project. I am on the Staff of Congressman Gene Taylor (D4 MS). I am looking for information on a Robert Edison Taylor, a radio operator with the 405th bomb squadron. Mr. Taylor was KIA about July 14, 1942. I am trying to help the family find some info. He was the only man that lost his life that day in the 38th bomb group as far as I can determine. can you help me find out the circumstances surrounding his death. Thanks. Bob

His email address is Bob,Carson@mail.house.gov

I understand there have been other presentations of events that occurred on the Mission on which the aircraft with Wing Commander, Col. Hawes, was lost. I believe I had a unique position to view that loss so here is my eye0-witness account of what happened, CMC, Editor

THE CARRIER MISSION

One morning we heard that the 38TH bomb Group had been given the job of finding an aircraft carrier that had been seen in the inland sea of Japan, between the islands of Kyushu and Shikoku. The first day that 12 planes went out after it (three from each squadron) the weather was so bad that they couldn't find the target. It was rescheduled for the next day and I was assigned to fly co-pilot for our Squadron Commander, Major Van Fleet, in the lead plane of our 3 from the 405th..

We flew in tight fingertip formation and stayed in that formation as flew northeast toward Japan. The target had been reported in Beppu Bay on the East side of Kyushu. The Bay was supposed to be about 30 miles across, shaped like a 'C', with the open side facing East into the Inland Sea between Kyushu and Shikoku. When possible, bomb runs were always made from land to sea since there are usually fewer guns at sea. With the very rugged mountainous terrain of Kyushu this wasn't easy -- and the weather was pretty bad. We reformed into a line of four flights of three in tandem (we wanted to make sure every plane went over important parts of the ship, if we found it), as we flew north over the Inland Sea between the islands. The 3-plane groups were supposed to space themselves so that each flight of 3 would be about 20 seconds behind the one in front. That would put about 1 - 1 ½ miles between each flight and this was about as close as we dared get as we were carrying 2 - 1000 lb. bombs with armor piercing noses and 8 - 11 second delay fuses. The plan was to skip the bombs into the side of the carrier so they would explode inside.

The Wing Commander was leading the group and we were second in line and directly behind his B-25. After flying northward between the islands of Kyushu and Shikoku for a while he turned west and began flying over Kyushu, staying as close to the ground as was safe. A few minutes later he turned southward toward the Bay, remaining as close to the surface as the land sloped down to the water. They did find the target -- the carrier, Kaiyo. It was heavily camouflaged and was anchored near the shore while it was being loaded with cargo. Colonel Hawes airplane was headed to about the mid point of the ship length but as he neared the ship the Commanders airplane must have taken a direct hit in the right engine. Since our bomb runs were always made with throttles to the firewall to go as fast as you could) his plane did 1 1/2 snap rolls to the right, ending upside down and into the water at about 20 to 30 degrees from the horizontal, from an altitude of about 75 feet as we only pulled up enough to clear the trees and the camouflage. There was no loss of a wing or tail before his airplane impacted a couple hundred yards out in the water and there was no chance for any survivors in that one! Our flight was as close to them as Major Van Fleet thought was safe. I opened our bomb bay doors, armed and dropped the bombs. We were very near to the center of the ship as we flew over and I closed the bomb bay doors and Maj. Van Fleet got us out of there as fast as he could. We climbed up, looking for the others as our plane would be the lead in going home. Major Van Fleet was second in command and the lead plane as we led the surviving five aircraft home. As we climbed up and started home we found out that the last two flights lost track of us in the bad weather over Kyushu and never did find the ship. We were told they dropped their bombs on the alternate target.

The Wing Commander, Col Hawes, was given a posthumous Distinguished Flying Cross (DFC) and the rest of us in the 5 surviving aircraft received Air Medals.

I have an opinion that I would like to publish in the News letter. At one time I felt we needed to form an organization that could carry on our Association after we all have passed on or become so old we can no longer attend our biannual meetings. The idea was to have the associates carry on after we are gone to our final resting place. I have changed my mind after much thought and my reasons I will put on paper.

We (The 38th Bomb Group Association) are composed of individuals who shared a unique experience facing dangers and experiences that have banded us into a group of individuals who are bound together by these shared events that occurred over three and a half years of very brutal war where no quarter was shown by either side.

The people who would carry on could not possibly view the purpose of our association from the same viewpoint that our members do and for that reason I propose that at the 2004 meeting we make plans to disband our Association and at the Reunion 2006 meeting we formally dispose of our assets and cease operations as "The 38th Bomb Group Association WW2".

I write this letter in an effort stimulate a dialog concerning a final disposal of the association in a manner consistent with our Constitution and By Laws. The 2006 reunion is an arbitrary date, but I feel that we need to set a time for closure. Each year our health deteriorates and as our medical costs increase over time many of us have a difficult time coming up with the airfare and hotel costs. Driving a car to the reunion city becomes almost a hazard to others on the highway.

I will send a copy of this to Dick Fields and Bill McKinstry and a couple more. I hope your summer will be a pleasant one and hope to hear what you think of this.

Best Wishes,
Orland Gage

71st Bombardment Squadron (M)
38th Bombardment Group (M)
APO 713 Unit 1

Subject: Narrative of Mission No. 168-E -7

16 June 1944

To: Commanding General, Fifth Air Force, APO 925, (Through Channels)

Attention Assistant Chief of Staff.

1. At 0844/K on the 16 of June 1944, 6 B-25S-I's of the 71st Bombardment Squadron led two groups of B-25D's on a minimum altitude strafing and bombing attack on Samate and Jefman dromes. This was to be the first mission for the B-25's with the half bomb-bay tanks for extra gas, in this theater. These dromes lie at the most western tip of New Guinea and was the longest mission flown by B-25's in the Southwest Pacific Area as of this date.

2. Taking off from Hollandia drome and rendezvousing with the other three Squadrons from the 38th Bomb Group and four Squadrons of the 345 Bomb Group over Wakde Island at 3,000 feet at 0923/K. Circling the Island and joining formation they were on a course of 265 degrees at 0958/K. The wing was to rendezvous with four Squadrons of P-38's at Mios Waar Island at 1130/K at 1,000 feet. Rendezvousing with the fighters they proceeded to the target.

3. The bombing and strafing run was made on a course of 30 degrees in a eleven ship abreast formation across Samate and Jefman dromes respectively. Five ships of the 822nd Squadron were in this formation 4 x 100 pound parademo bombs were dropped on target 8x. 4 x 100 pound parademo bombs were dropped on target 3V on Samate drome. This target was heavily strafed with results generally unobserved.

4. Continuing on course to Jefman drome which is approximately four miles northeast of Samate. Colonel Hall, pilot and leader of the wing flying in this formation, destroyed one Zero and got a probable Zeke with his nose guns. This fighter was taking off Jefman strip into our formation and was shot down before it had a chance to get its wheels up. Captain Kelly, flying in plane number 219 and Lt Crockwell in plane number 938, each shot down a single engine fighter, also attempting to take off into our formation. 46 x 100 pound parademo bombs were dropped on Jefman with the majority of them falling among twenty SSF, parked on the northeast end and on the southeast side of the strip. As a result of this bombing and strafing run, five large fires giving off black smoke were observed in the drome and revetment areas. 3 small fires were observed toward the north end of Jefman Island. Another Zeke in the revetment area was set afire by strafing. Colonel Hall lead this formation so low over the drome that plane number 233, piloted by Lt Breneman, was forced to pull up to strafe the operations tower

5. More than 15 enemy SSF were airborne over Jefman drome but the majority of these were engaged by the P-38's with disastrous results for the Nips. 3 or 4 probable Zekes came in very high to drop phosphorus aerial bombs. All of these exploded ahead and above the formation. One Zeke with an aerial bomb under each wing tip passed directly over our formation at 1000 feet. The turret gunner in number 233 fired on this Zeke getting many hits causing it to fall off and crash in the water. Enroute back, northwest of Cape Waios, a Betty bomber was met flying a reciprocal course at our altitude. The Squadrons were flying 3-ship elements at this time. Colonel Hall in the lead plane turned his flight to bring the nose guns to bear on the Betty, causing it to dive toward the water. Turning the formation and following the Betty many hits were seen to enter the plane, setting the left engine on fire. The Betty eventually crashed as a result of the combined efforts of this Squadron, the 405th and the 823rd, all of which took part in the pursuit and scored hits

6. Only one burst of heavy anti-aircraft fire was seen over the target and this was from the southwest end of Jefman strip. Moderate but inaccurate machine gun fire from the beach at the northeast end of the strip was encountered. There guns were silenced by strafing 2 luggers offshore at target 2Y on Jefman island were strafed with unobserved results.

7. Two unidentified SSF and one Betty was seen near the center of the Samate strip. Also two unidentified light bombers at the west end and an unidentified twin engine airplane in the revetment area south of the west end of the Samate strip. One motor truck was sighted at the west end of the strip. At least 20 SSF was seen along the Jefman strip. The majority of these were parked on the northeast end and on the southeast side of the strip. Probably 25 more SSF and 3 to 4 Bettys were seen in the dispersal area. 3 or 4 trucks were seen in target 4X on Jefman island. One 2000 ton A/K with 2 or 3 Sugar Charlies was seen off the north tip of Wokir island. One 1500 to 2000 ton A/K was sighted two miles northeast of Jefman. One cruiser was sighted close into shore southeast of Doom island with 2 or 3 DD screening it, in line, south of Doom island. There was a barrage of heavy anti-aircraft fire over these vessels – apparently their own fire. Several phosphorus bursts were reported over the vessels although no fighters were seen over the area.

8. Weather over the target was 8/10 cumulus at 500 feet with tops at 3000 feet and visibility 10 miles.

9. 54x100 pound parademo bombs were dropped on the target with 18 returned to base due to rack "failure". 10,450 x50 caliber and 500x30 caliber ammo were expended in strafing and combat.

10. Leaving the target the formation headed out over the water and around the north coast of New Guinea, changing course so as to pass between Biak and Noemfoor islands. Then taking a course of 110 degrees they landed at Hollandia at 1647/K with their mission 100 percent completed. John L. Wright

A Soldier's Christmas

The embers glowed softly and in their dim light,
I gazed round the room and I cherished the sight.

My wife was asleep her head on my chest,
my daughter beside me, angelic in rest.

Outside the snow fell, a blanket of white,
transforming the yard to a winter delight.

The sparkling lights in the tree, I believe,
completed the magic that was Christmas Eve.
My eyelids were heavy, my breathing quite deep,
secure and surrounded by love I would sleep
in perfect contentment, or so it would seem,
So I slumbered, perhaps I started to dream.

The sound wasn't loud and it wasn't too near,
but I opened my eyes when it tickled my ear.

Perhaps just a cough, I just didn't know,
then the sure sound of footsteps outside on the snow.

My soul gave a tremble I struggled to hear.
and I crept to the door just to see who was near.

Standing out in the cold and the dark of the night,
a lone figure stood, his face weary and tight.

A soldier, I puzzled, some twenty years old,
perhaps a Marine huddled here in the cold.

Alone in the dark he looked up and smiled,
standing watch over me, my wife and my child.

"What are you doing?", I asked without fear.

"Come in this moment, it's freezing out here!

Put down your pack, brush the snow from your sleeve,
you should be at home on Christmas Eve!"

For barely a moment I saw his eyes shift
away from the cold and the snow blown in drifts.
to the window that danced with a warm fire's light.

Then he sighed and he said, "It's really alright
I'm out here by choice, I'm here every night!

It's my duty to stand at the front of the line
that separates you from the darkest of time.

No one had to ask or beg me or implore me,
I'm proud to stand here like my fathers before me."

"My Gramps died at Pearl on a day in December."
Then he sighed and he said, "That's a Christmas
Gram always remembers!

My Dad stood his watch in the jungles of Nam
And now it's my turn and so here I am

I've not seen my own son on more than a while,
But my wife sends me pictures, he's sure got her smile."

Then he bent and he carefully pulled from his bag
The red, white and blue...an American flag.

"I can live through the cold and the being alone,
away from my family, my house and my home.

I can stand at my post through the rain and the sleet
I can sleep in a foxhole with little to eat

I can carry the weight of killing another
or lay down my life with my sisters and brothers

who stand at the front against any and all
to ensure for all times that this flag will not fall

O go back inside," he said, "Harbor no fright
Your family is waiting and I'll be alright."

But isn't there something I can do at the least?
Give you money?" I asked, "Or prepare you a feast!

It all seems too little for all that you've done,
For being away from your wife and your son!"

Then his eyes welled with a tear that held no regret

"Just tell us you love us and never forget
to fight for our rights back home while we're gone

to stand your own watch no matter how long

For when we come home, either standing or dead
To know you remember we fought and we bled

Is payment enough and with that we will trust
That we mattered to you as you mattered to us."

Michael Marks December 7, 2000

In loving appreciation of the countless Americans who
Have and continue

S/T REMARKS "BE ADVISED"

The Active Roster is only furnished in each January newsletter and is only as accurate and up to date as the information I receive in time for this publication .

Everyone should check his name and address in the roster to make sure that all of the information there is correct. There have been many changes in telephone area codes all across the country. Members with winter addresses may have forgotten to provide their telephone number. Members that sent an address change notice forget that the card does not provide a space for a new phone number and I have a question mark after yours, indicating that it may be wrong and now your friends are unable to contact you.

Members are reminded that their label on every newsletter has their dues status on it. January 31st has come and gone. Those that haven't paid their dues are informed of this in the line above their name on the label and by the number in the parantheses (02). That indicates 2002. We are now into a new term of 2003/2004. Since you are requested in our Constitution to pay \$20 for the entire term in the month of January, the number in the parantheses should be (04).

Widows of our Ever-honored members that no longer want the Complimentary newsletter should send the S/T a note requesting the newsletter be discontinued.

Bill McKinstry, S/T

I've just received the June 2003 Sunsetters newsletter and found the Sydney R & R experience great reading. I would love to read more detail in future issues about the incidents you noted in the cover story. They sound like high adventure.

It brought back memories of my January 1945 ten day R & R in Sydney. My first free morning there I went to a fine hotel dining room and had a delicious "Stike and eggs" breakfast topped off with a quart of real milk. As I recall up North food was pretty basic - Spam, powdered eggs, phony potatoes, powdered milk. It kept us going but nobody gained any weight for sure. Next stop in Sydney for me was a genuine professional shave and haircut. Up North, we usually sat on a box in the middle of a field as a displaced (Manilla), wandering Filipino barber eked out a humble living around our camps. After a bad housing start, I wound up in Sydney's Red Cross' Kensington Golf Club with wonderful buffets, quarters, evening entertainment, guided tours of the Sydney environs, etc. The most "difficult problem" was finding out that all the transport planes had been commandeered for action around the Philippine combat areas. As a result, I was "forced" to stay an extra 20 days in Sydney. It was a great contrast to our humble living at Mindoro but I missed out on a lot of missions by my 3rd Attack Group in that month, delaying the end of my mission tour to July. Today I can say the fates were kind to me as I escaped harm in those 52 missions and got to see America again.

My crew and I joined the 38th - 71st squadron in September, 1944 in Biak. I was there exactly 3 days but it got interesting quickly. I slept armed in my cot, which was the closest to the jungle where Japanese holdouts were said to be hiding in caves and foraging for food at night. Nocturnal visits to the somewhat distant latrine were a bit spooky. The first afternoon there a veteran squadron top sergeant strolled into the jungle area, not a 100 feet away, and stepped on a land mine. It was a violent explosion and he was badly mangled. A great start. Next day we were assigned to a mission to Morotai to soften up the beaches for an American landing. Within an hour we ran into a massive (unpredicted) front and had to abort the mission. The third day a request came through for a 1036 Navigator-Bombardier to go on temporary duty with the 3rd Attack Group (A-20), flying lead in a (Norden) B-25, for a series of medium altitude missions to Babo and Utarom, W. New Guinea enemy air bases. I then continued to accumulate low-level missions and was eventually assigned permanently to the 3rd. So, my 38th assignment was short but eventful in a way. Unfortunately my original crew pilot, engineer and gunner were lost in 38th combat actions. Fate was at work!

Sincerely yours,
Robert J. Bucholz

If you like Paul's address labels you can have them from:

	\$11.00 setup fee
Holiday Co.,	250 - \$15.95
1330 Norfolk Ave.,	500 - \$17.95
P O Box 341	
Bedford, VA 24523	800-765-8565



Mr. Paul Popma
12700 Newport Ave., Apt. 23
Tustin, CA 92780

*It's been fifty years plus seven more
Since World War Two was ended
Where victory's price was paid in full
By young men's blood expended
Those young men now are somewhat older
And many are here no more
But comrades meet now once again
Their friendship forged by war*

*Who are these men here in this place
Who savor memories great?
Well it's plain to see I think you'll agree
They're the Sunsetting 38th
From 5th Air Force they fought and they flew
In foreign pacific skies
These Mitchell strafers who flew on the deck
Om their beautiful B-25's*

*The 822nd and 823rd, 405th and Seventy-one
From every state in the whole Forty-eight
These squadrons fought and won
Where did they batter, where did they bomb?*

*Places with names so weird
You've all been there but again I'll share
Where the 38th Bomb Group appeared
From Aussie-Land to Moresby's Port*

*To Noemfoor and Lae
From the hell of Rabaul we bombed them all
And went back day after day
Alexishafen, Hollandia-Wewak and Kavieng*

*Finchhafen, Biak and Morotai to strips at Madang
These places are hard to pronounce for sure
Harder still to dodge their flak
We parafraged airfields and slip-bombed ships*

*Just hoping we'd make it back
Up the Philippines we continued to fight
The ack=ack making us sweat
But advance we did and we began tl think*

*We just might live through this yet
Some went back in '44, others in '45
And when they dropped the bombs it was over
We were so glad to grt out alive*

*We left the Spam and powdered eggs
The jungles and Atabrin
We went back to family, to jobs, to home
Freedom was safe again*

*Though war had died the brothers in arms
Could not forget their bond
So they organized, decided to meet
For their friendships would never be gone*

*And for all these years they have come together
To reunion and tell a few stories
To see their buddies of the old 38th
A true face of World War Two glories*

*So enjoy your friends – remember their courage
Laugh and cry and then
Look forward to good times un the years to come
When we get to do this – again!*

William J. Smith – 71st
Submitted by his son
Steven D. Smith

Dear Mr. McKinstry:

I found your name and email on a website for the 38th Bomb Group Association. My husband's father, Lt. George Roland Mims, Jr., a member of the 38th BG 405th BS (0-685686). He was killed in action over Borneo on December 30, 1944.

His wife, Sarah (my husband's mother) passed away recently, and we have discovered wonderful letters from him—one written the night before he died.

My husband was only a month old when his father died, so he never knew him. Finding these letters has really encouraged our interest in knowing more about him. I would especially like to find his tentmate and friend who wrote several beautiful letters to my mother-in-law.

I would very much appreciate your advice as to how I might proceed to locate anyone who may have known George. There is SO much on the Internet, and I am not sure what is legitimate.

Thank you very much for any suggestions.

Cecilia Mims

The Sun Setters

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