

ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

NUMBER 41

For all former members of the 307th Bomb Wing at Lincoln AFB, Nebraska

NOVEMBER 2003

Six Month's Warning! The Chairman's Column

Yes, hard as it is to believe, we're less than six months out from the Ninth Standup, our 2004 Reunion in Las Vegas! It seems like only yesterday that I was in Fort Worth, reeling from the stunning ambush that elevated me to the august position as your Chairman. Time marches on and your reunion committee, headed by **Vern Biaett**, with the help of **Betty Pelletier**, **Bill Carrier**, and the **Myatts**, is putting together what could be the best reunion yet! We hope you will join us in Glitter Gulch, er Las Vegas, for the time of our lives with excellent entertainment, delicious dining, garrulous gambling, and friendly fellowship.

Check out the reunion article in this newsletter for an update on what's planned and who says they're coming. We hope that list of prospective attendees continues to grow in the weeks and months ahead. Remember, our first reunion in Las Vegas set our attendance record with over 400 folks showing up, and we weren't even organized that time. Let's set a new record this time!

You'll recall that, in July, I solicited volunteers to serve on an ad hoc committee to look at options for a possible cruise reunion in 2006. Without prejudging a decision, which we'll make at the business meeting at Las Vegas in May, I'd like to have the issue thor-

oughly aired and thought through in advance, so our vote can be conducted without spending too much meeting time on "what's involved" discussions.

Dallas Crosby stepped smartly up to my challenge and has developed a great "cruise starter kit" for discussion. Dallas has had his questionnaire on our website for a while, (<http://www.307BWAssoc.org> and click on the Events tab), but it hasn't exactly produced a tidal wave of response. If that means people have lost interest, that's OK. But if there's still any enthusiasm for the idea, now's the time to weigh in. His article is reproduced in this newsletter and we'd all like to hear from you: your ideas, preferences, insights, pros and cons.

While I'm on the subject of the website, our intention in putting this site into operation was to make it the information nerve center of the association. At the moment, only a minority of our readers have web access, but these tend to be among the most committed and involved among our membership. I hope that more of our members will get web access in the future; it's pretty cheap (free in some cases) and opens up worlds of information for active minds. We need your ideas on how better to serve you. **Mike Gingrich** and **RT Boykin** and I can tinker at the margins, but we can only make the site reflect

your wishes if you share your ideas with us.

One thing that has bothered me ever since becoming involved with our association is the fact that our contributions are not tax deductible. Our members have been extraordinarily generous in contributing to our expenses, but it seems unfair to me and I haven't given up on getting this puzzling restriction lifted.

It's puzzling because I know of several nonprofit organizations (and am a member of one) that are almost identical to ours in purpose and membership, except that they enjoy the benefit of taking deductions for their donations. In pouring over the founding documents, I came across one that stated, "To make donations deductible for individuals, more than 90% of the Association members would have to be war veterans." I could find no reference to law or regulation that would substantiate this odd restriction and would like to reopen the matter with the IRS. If any of you is or is related to an attorney, or knows one who would be willing to do a little pro bono research for us, please get in contact with me. We may not win, but it's worth a little fight to regain this small benefit for the generosity of our members.

Wendy and I wish you and your families a great Thanksgiving and a most joyous holiday season.

Pete Todd

Back in Touch

Theodore S Channing, 3809 Lancelot, Temple, TX 76502.

Bob H Hagle, 840 Ruth Ave, Erie, PA 16509.

Edward J Schmidt, 2525 N 98th St, Lincoln, NE 68507.

Richard P St. Louis, 16 Madison Ave, Brewer, ME 04412.

307th Bomb Wing B-47/KC-97 Association

Chairman: Pete Todd, 1250 Big Valley Dr, Colorado Springs, CO 80919-1015. Phone 719-531-5874. Email: petetodd@aol.com.

Chairman's Committee

Secretary: Larry Boggess, 4304 Ridgecrest Dr, Colorado Springs, CO 80918. Phone 719-548-8024. Email: larryjan@att.net

Membership: Jan Boggess, 4304 Ridgecrest Dr, Colorado Springs, CO 80918. Phone 719-548-8024. Email: larryjan@att.net

Treasurer: Tony Minnick, 5920 Robin Court, Lincoln, NE 68516. Phone 402-423-6848. Email: tonym@inebraska.com

Newsletter: Mike Gingrich, 1525 Edenwood Drive, Beavercreek, OH 45434. Phone 937-426-5675. Email: mikegingri@cs.com

Co-Historian: Robert Loffredo, 6004 SW 2nd St, Des Moines, IA 50315. Phone 515-285-3445. Email: mustang51c@mchsi.com

Co-Historian: Ernie Pence, 2001 A St, Schuyler, NE 68661. Phone 402-352-3311. Email: Ernie_Pence@cargill.com

Co-Founder: Billy Williams, PO Box 29223, 5141 N 72nd St, Lincoln, NE 68529-0223. Phone 402-466-9301. Email: wjwbdw@juno.com

Co-Founder: Betty Pelletier, 205 W Palma Drive, Green Valley, AZ 85614. Phone 520-625-2936.

Las Vegas 2004 Reunion Chairman: Vern Biaett, 13618 N. 98th Ave, Unit F, Sun City, AZ 85351. Phone 623-972-7328. Email: vbiaett@azwest.net

The Association is a non-profit Veterans Organization. All contributions to the organization are gratefully received, but are not deductible under IRS Code. The Chairman is elected by majority vote of all members at each business meeting. The Chairman's Committee serves at the pleasure of the Chairman.

AREFS Reunion Recap

The September 2003 Branson Missouri Reunion was a great success with 79 people attending. With beautiful weather, one of the highlights was the boat cruise, which included dinner and a show. It was hard to believe that the wait staff served about 700 people at a sit down delicious dinner in less than half an hour. Before the cruise there was very meaningful Veterans' Memorial Service performed by a local military drill team at the boat-landing park. There were fourteen golfers for the traditional golf tournament, which was won by Reg Underwood. George Brannon did a great job organizing the golfing and also kept the Hospitality Room running smoothly. A list of the attendees is shown below. A short business meeting was held before we departed. The following was discussed:

- The next reunion will be held in Las Vegas sometime in May 2005. Reg & Joan Underwood, and Gerry and Shirley Berger will be hosting it. It was discussed on whether to hold it on the Strip or in an outlying area. A vote was taken and the Strip is where it will be. You will be provided more information at a later date. You may contact the Underwoods at 702-269-6794 or email at Regu33@aol.com. The Bergers telephone number is 702-228-3676 and email is sabgb@earthlink.net.
- Dave and Barb Boerigter have volunteered to host the September 2006 in Washington State, probably in Port Angeles. This is an area filled with natural beauty and is only an hour and half ferry ride to Victoria, British Columbia.
- There have been two couples that have attended all the reunions. Larry and Barb French and the Frakers.
- Dick and Joyce Amenell were thanked for their work for this reunion.

Dick Amenell has updated the AREFS

307th roster. Any one who wants a copy should contact him at 2230 Timberneck Lane, Newport News, VA 23602 or 757-877-0316 or rjamen@tni.net. If you wish you can get it on a floppy disk. There will be a charge of \$2.00 to offset the cost of copying and mailing.

Don and Pat Fraker

Reunion attendees were:

Dick and Joyce Amenell, Ed and Barbara Barry, Richard and Svea Berggren, Gerry and Shirley Berger, Dave and Barb Boerigter, George and Pat Brannon, Arnie Bruland, Bob and Janie Burns, Andy and Dot Cali, Don and Kay Campbell, Bill and Grace Clark, Dick and Mary Beth Coover.

Bill and Georgia Crane, Bill and Bette Davern, Jay and Lorainne Dees, Frank and Dina Eisenbraun, Don and Pat Fraker, Larry and Barb French, Jim and JoAnn Frise, Norb and Linda Hansen, Fred and Kaye Harwood, Henrylee Henriksen and Hildegard Monk (Guest), Dixon and Dianne Howard, Roger and Jayne McKenzie, Ivan and Mary McKinney, Gene and Helen Monk, Allen and Audrey Osborn, Clay and Ann Robson, Einar and Joan Samuelson, David and Jean Searing.

Ray and Pat Seip, Don and Loraine Setterberg, Earl and Mary Linn Sonnemaker, Jim and Mary Ellen Thornton, Paul and Thora Thurn, Reg and Joan Underwood, James and Catherine Van Herreweghe, Dewayne and Phyllis Whitsitt, Al and Joann Williams, Paul and Mari Etta Zook.

Donations

We wish to acknowledge the generosity of those who have recently made donations to the Association's General Fund.

Russell Heller
Leon McCrary
Robert Patterson
Donna M Reilly
Dallas Crosby
Donal B Horn
Robert Crooks
Leonard Earley

Around the Wing

Everyone by now is aware of the critical and successful role Special Forces have played in the Afghanistan and Iraq conflicts, but are you aware that “one of our own” has filled a pivotal role in these operations?

Colonel Frank J Kisner, son of the 307th Bomb Wing’s **Frank J Kisner**, assumed command of the Air Force’s 16th Special Operations Wing (SOW), Hurlburt Field, Florida, in June 2002, after having spent most of his career in special ops. Frank has been in the news previously in 1998 when he and his C-130 crew were awarded the prestigious McKay Trophy as a result of a daring rescue of civilians they performed in the midst of warfare in the Congo. Under Colonel Kisner’s command, the 16th SOW, whose fitting motto is “Any Time, Any Place”, operates 10 different types of aircraft including C-130s, the MH-54, UH-1, and the CASA-212. Most prominent in the news are the AC-130 gunships and the MC-130 Combat Talon aircraft used for infiltration/exfiltration operations and other “scary” missions in both Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom.

Frank graduated from the United States Air Force Academy in 1980 and completed Undergraduate Pilot Training in 1981. He has held a variety of operational assignments including pilot, instructor pilot, flight evaluator and commander as well as staff assignments at Headquarters US Air Force and the Joint Special Operations Command. Born in Lincoln, Nebraska, he is married to the former Helen Angelo Babineau of Midland, Texas, and has three daughters, Betsy, age 15, Kimberly, age 12, and Molly, age 8.

We are fortunate to have dedicated individuals such as Colonel Kisner protecting our freedom and are proud of the 307th heritage he bears in our interest. We, gray-haired Cold Warriors, send Colonel Kisner and his team a rousing well done and SIERRA HOTEL.

News on another “son of the 307th”. Lt Colonel **Dale Storr**, son of **Dick** (424th BS) and **Mary Storr**, both of whom have made their last flight, was frequently seen on TV during the recent war. Dale, now with the ANG, was a A-10 Warthog pilot during Gulf War I, and had the misfortune to be shot down and captured early in the conflict. Because he endured the full Iraqi torture treatment as a POW, he was called upon for interviews of his experience during the run-up to the recent conflict. The nearby photo of Dale reveals him to be the spittin’ image of his dad as we remember him.

Duty, Honor, Country

On the ABC evening news, it was reported that, because of the dangers from Hurricane Isabel approaching Washington, DC, the military members assigned the duty of guarding the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier were given permission to suspend the assignment...They refused...Soaked to the skin, marching in the pelting rain of



Colonel Frank J Kisner

a tropical storm, they said that guarding the Tomb was not just an assignment, it was the highest honor that can be afforded to a service person. The tomb has been patrolled continuously, 24/7, since 1930.

An unknown author wrote...

The Third Infantry Regiment at Fort Myer has the responsibility for providing ceremonial units and honor guards for state occasions, White House social functions, public

celebrations and interments at Arlington National Cemetery...and standing a very formal sentry watch at the Tombs of the Unknowns.

The public is familiar with the precision of what is called "walking post" at the Tombs. There are roped off galleries where visitors can form to observe the troopers and their measured step and almost mechanical silent rifle shoulder changes. They are relieved every hour in a very formal drill that has to be seen to believe. Some people think that when the Cemetery is closed to the public in the evening that this show stops. First, to the men who are dedicated to this work...it is no show...it is a "charge of honor". The formality and precision continues uninterrupted all night. During the nighttime, the drill of relief and the measured step of the on duty sentry remain unchanged from the daylight hours. To these men...these special men, the continuity of this post is the key to the honor and respect shown to these honored dead, symbolic of all American unaccounted for American combat dead. The steady rhythmic step in rain, sleet, snow, hail, hot, cold...bitter cold...uninterrupted...uninterrupted is the important part of the honor shown.

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Lt Col Richard Dale Storr prepares for a television interview March 23. Storr endured electrical shocks and repeated beatings as a prisoner of war after his plane was hit by Iraqi ground fire in February 1991. Assoc. Press

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Last night, while you were sleeping, the teeth of hurricane Isabel came through this area and tore hell out of everything... We have thousands of trees down...power outages...traffic signals out...roads filled with down limbs and "gear adrift" debris...We have flooding...and the place looks like it has been the impact area of an off shore bombardment. The Regimental Commander of the U.S. Third Infantry sent word to the nighttime Sentry Detail to secure the post and seek shelter from the high winds, to ensure their personal safety. THEY DISOBEYED THE ORDER...During winds that turned over vehicles and turned debris into projectiles...the measured step continued. One fellow said "I've got buddies getting shot at in Iraq who would kick my butt if word got to them that we let them down...I'm sure as hell have no intention of spending my Army career being known as the goddam idiot who couldn't stand a little light breeze and shirked his duty."

...Then he said something in response to a female reporter's question regarding silly purposeless personal risk...."I wouldn't expect you to understand. It's an enlisted man's thing." God Bless the rascal...In a time in our nation's history when spin and total bullshit seems to have become the accepted coin-of-the-realm, there beat hearts...the enlisted hearts we all knew and were so damn proud to be a part of...that fully understand that devotion to duty is not a part time occupation. While we slept, we were represented by some damn fine men who fully understood their post orders and proudly went about their assigned responsibilities unseen, unrecognized and in the finest tradition of the American Enlisted Man. Folks, there's hope.... The gene that George S. Patton...Arleigh Burke and Jimmy Doolittle left us...survives. **God Bless America**

More on the Shah of Iran from **Gerald Berger**...

In regard to my story about the Shah of Iran, it occurred in the fall of 1955. As to why he landed at Lincoln, I can only speculate that they could not land B-52s at Offutt and he landed at Lincoln and was transported to one of those high level briefings that were common place at the underground HQ during that period of our history.

John Herder wrote...

I was there in Lincoln from July '54 to Dec. '55... **Lt. Col. Thurlow** was the 307th ARS C.O. Names I remember -- **Capt Askey, Moon Mullins, Clay Robinson** (and his scooter), **Si Otto, Charles O'Brien** (our AC - - after a rather exciting take-off when we were TDY at Goose Bay, they sent our AC and pilot home, and Charles came on board), **Don Jordan, Pete Tuin, Joe Pavlas, Bob Purcel** ("Percy" and I lived in St Louis at the same time, and in Houston at the same time and talk to each other all the time on email). As was mentioned in a recent article, it was Pavlas' crew that went to BW-1. It seems that most of the guys mentioned in the newsletter got there after I left.

And from **Lou Roseling**...

We have made our next to last move...our next will be to the

National Cemetery 2 miles down the road. We are in the retirement village for retired officers at Air Force Village west, in Riverside, Ca. near old March Air Force Base. My address is: Louis A. Roseling, 16888 Doolittle Circle, Riverside, CA. 92518-2801. Thanks for getting the newsletter to me. If health and everything else is favorable, we might try to see you in Las Vegas.

Jan Campbell has a complaint shared by many of us...

How come all the TV shows about anything aircraft, war, etc. skip almost directly from the B-24, and B-29 to the B-52? WHY don't we get no respect? Same with the KC-97s. I am a very irate fan of the B-47!

Do you think I am biased?

From **Lee McCrary** to Tony Minnick...

I must acknowledge that I haven't attended any of the 307th Bomb Wing reunions, but certainly do appreciate being kept on the mailing list and receiving the Association Newsletter. The idea of a reunion in Vegas has appeal and we will make an effort to attend the one planned for May of next year.

Don't think I qualify as a long time member of the 307th although I started with the wing in B-29's while we were stationed on Okinawa. You may remember **Roy Showalter**. He was the squadron commander of the 370th when I was selected to attend B-52 training and eventual assignment to Ellsworth AFB. **Rudy Webb** was our ops officer who to my knowledge lives in Fort Worth.

Thanks again for the many years that you served as chairman of the committee. It takes a lot of effort. I feel certain a lot of people appreciate those efforts.

Much thanks to **Robert Rose** who has sent in several photos of the engine shop folks taken during the wing's first TDY to Lakenheath. We'll be publishing these pix in the next several issues. Robert says that he and the engine shop guys still get together every couple of years.

Thanks also to **Royal G Shrubbe** who sent in a photo of the FMS Aero Repair folks at Kadena in 1954. He reports that he has suffered a stroke, and with failing vision is unable to travel, otherwise he'd be attending our reunions. He asks that if anyone knows anything of **TSgt Stewart** who was in supply in 1955 to please let him know. You can find Royal at 4165 Boy Scout Rd, Campbellsport, WI 53010, phone 920-533-8276.

Congratulations go to **Morgen Goodroe**, daughter of **Ken Goodroe** who was lost with the C-118 in 1956. Morgen has told of us several follow-up contacts with old friends of her dad that resulted from our newsletter story, but most recently she informed us of her pending marriage to Mr Richard Salas. Much happiness is wished for you, Morgen.

On the 307th website is a mini-book, "February Third, The Story of a Green Hornet" written as a memoir by **Don Hickman**. Don was the 371st nav aboard the B-47 that crashed on landing in a

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snowstorm at Greenham Common on 3 Feb 1963. He later went through pilot training, and nine years to the day after the Greenham accident, he was shot down over Cambodia while flying a chopper. His 80 odd page memoir recounts those experiences and the intervening period. It is worth pointing out that the Green hornets are a squadron of the 16th SOW, now commanded by Frank Kisner, as noted above. Don has told us that those without web access can write to him if they would like a copy, and he'll be glad to send one on. You can mail Don at 2525 N. Avenida Sorgo, Tucson, AZ 85749-8113. Don is contemplating making a book out of his story, and is currently recuperating from a recent heart attack. Here's wishing Don a good swift recovery.

Bob Merick tells us...

Butch Nollenberg and I were the first ones to report into the A&E squadron when the wing came back from Okie, -- talk about a mess we sure had one. I worked the AE part and had to keep track of the training weapons as to which aircraft could be loaded with what type. **Maraist** was in charge, **Col Vaughan** was the chief of maintenance. **Capt Goodroe** was in charge of base flight. I was reading the news letter article about the C- 118 that went down; it was ghostly as I was supposed to be on that flight and someone had goofed up the weapons loading, so Maraist asked me to take the next flight, so I was one of the last to get home. I am a newcomer to the association; maybe it has been mentioned before about **Col Thorup** landing up in Maine with 3 engines out on one wing, I always wondered about that, it seems like a heroic feat.

Jim Metzger inquires thru the web site...

I was stationed at Lincoln AFB from April 1963 until April 1965. I was in A&E as a Bomb/Nav technician. Are there any other B/N's out there who I might know. Contact Jim at JAM_MET@msn.com.

The B-47 Stratojet Association, formed to preserve and promote the legacy of the B-47, is looking for former support personnel, crewmembers, and others interested in the B-47, to join the roll of 825 members presently on board. The association publishes a quarterly newsletter, and holds reunions every other year. The next reunion will be held 23-25 September 2004 in Dayton, Ohio, at which a memorial monument to the B-47 will be dedicated at the Air Force Museum. You can visit the association's website at www.b-47.com or you can enroll by sending \$15 annual dues to Mark Natola, Secretary/B-47 Stratojet Assoc, 23 Oak Ridge Rd, W. Lebanon, NH 03784.

B-47 Aircraft Losses...

Sigmund (Alex) Alexander, past President of the B-47 Stratojet Association,

has just completed the update of the B-47 Aircraft Losses book. Alex says "It includes all the additional information I have been able to obtain since I compiled the original book. I have included pictures of a number of accidents and crewmen who were killed in these accidents that I have obtained from Association members and from "Combat Crew." The book is now 86 pages and includes additional excerpts from "Combat Crew, i.e." crew of the month, hazardous incidents, winter operations, and Hap Hazard cartoons. The last page of the book contains pictures of memorials to lost B-47 crewmen. The cost is \$20 that includes S/H. This is a self-published book and I will not re-publish it after the initial publication. It will not be available after November 30, 2003. If you are interested in obtaining a copy send \$20 to Sigmund Alexander 12110 Los Credos Dr., San Antonio, TX 78233-5953.

Farrell@robsomcom.net writes that his recently completed book NO SWEAT, about his Korean War B-29 Combat crew and the 19th Bomb Group at Kadena AFB on Okinawa is going to print now and should be available in October or November. He has several friends in the 307th, with many references to the 307th in the book, and thought that when appropriate they would like to know about the book.

We've often lamented the lack of pictures of the KC-97 in action. Now Air Reserve KC-135 Boom Operator and aviation artist Darby Perrin has done something about it with a beautiful print of a KC-97 refueling a B-47. You can view his work, and if you like, order a print through the website at www.planart.com/door/

An ever more interesting website is at www.strategic-air-command.com. Marv Broyhill, a former B-47 crewmember from Pease AFB is doing a bangup job bringing SAC alive again on the web. Don't miss it!

Since the last newsletter, some other folks have let us know they're still kickin'...we've heard from Flip Latham, Ernie Pence, Merrill Sinclair, TR Taylor, Bert Vorchheimer, Bob Ketchum, Harry Jones, Paul Thurn, Jim McKee, Dick Amenell, Bill Novetzke, Jim Flavin, Leonard Earley, and Wayne Matthiessen.

Treasurer's Report			
307th Bomb Wing B-47/KC-97 Association			
Ending Balance from last report June 20, 2003:		\$5,594.44	
	<u>Expenses</u>	<u>Deposits</u>	
General Fund Balance			\$5,594.44
Expenses:			
Postage	258.75		
Admin/Equip/Supplies	246.63		
Website	53.11		
Printing	<u>515.28</u>		
	1073.77		-1073.77
			4520.67
Income:			
Donations		440.00	
Interest on account		<u>4.19</u>	
		444.19	+ 444.19
Ending Balance October 31, 2003			4964.86
Tony Minnick, Treasurer			



The Ninth Standup Las Vegas Reunion May 3rd to 7th, 2004

Well folks, after receiving a number of responses to our reunion preference survey and after consulting with various experts, we've established our reunion schedule of events, as follows

Monday, May 3rd. Registration starts at 1:00 PM.

Tuesday, May 4th. Tour of Red Rock Canyon and Old Nevada, 9:30 AM to 3:30 PM.

Wednesday, May 5th. Tour of Las Vegas City and Liberace Museum, 8:30 AM to 12:30 PM.

Thursday, May 6th. Hoover Dam Tour, 8:00 AM to 11:45 AM.

Thursday, May 6th. Thunderbird Museum Tour at Nellis AFB (tentative), 1:00 PM to 4:30 PM.

Friday, May 6th. 10:00 AM, Business Meeting.

Friday, May 6th. 6:00 PM, Reunion Banquet.

So far, no plans have been made for a golf outing because of insufficient interest. If you want to have a golf tournament, let Vern Biaett know ASAP by mail at 13618 N. 98th Ave, Unit F, Sun City, AZ 85351, or by phone at 623-972-7328, or email at vbiaett@azwest.net.

It may have slipped your mind what's involved with the tours scheduled above, since they were first described in the July issue, so here tis again...

Red Rock Canyon and Old Nevada Tour. A scenic drive through the Red Rocks where you can view the Canyon. Time may be allowed for taking pictures of the beautiful scenery along the way. Enjoy the drive through the 13-mile scenic Red Rock Loop. See an area once inhabited by Indians and still home to herds of wild horses, burros, and big horn sheep. Enjoy a short stop at the Visitors Center, where you can take a nature walk on the grounds surrounding the Center. At Old Nevada, see a vivid replica of an old western town. Watch the old-fashioned melodrama in the saloon, followed by the hanging outside. You will also have access to all of the exhibits, a Wax Museum where you will hear Abe Lincoln speak, a Historical Museum, and an Opera House. Enjoy lunch consisting of BBQ Chicken, baked beans, cole slaw, biscuits, and a

drink. Time permitting, visit some of the shops.

Las Vegas City and Liberace Museum Tour. First stop in Henderson to visit the Ethel M. Chocolate Factory and Cactus Gardens. Once you've seen how these candies are handcrafted, sample your favorites and bring some home from the gift shop. Then take a quick stroll through the Cactus Garden, blossoming with rare and exotic cacti. Drive by the homes of Wayne Newton and Liberace before you arrive at the Liberace Museum. Tour the museum and see his personal jewel collection, exquisite wardrobe, classic automobiles, custom-made pianos, and other Liberace memorabilia. Take a ride down the Las Vegas Strip into Glitter Gulch, downtown Las Vegas, and hear how Las Vegas came to be what it is today.

Hoover Dam Tour. One of the seven modern wonders of the world. On the way, your guide will entertain you with the history of Hoover Dam. Arrive at the Dam, the Western Hemisphere's highest concrete dam, rising 726 feet above bedrock and 660 feet wide at its base. Enjoy an orientation film on the history of Hoover Dam. The Dam was built to control the sometimes violent flooding of the Colorado River and aided parts of Nevada by offering an inexpensive source of electricity. *(We must add that we have been told that current security restrictions preclude tours from going inside the structure).*

Nellis AFB Thunderbird Museum Tour. This is tentatively scheduled for Thursday afternoon from 1:00 to 4:30 PM. As most everyone knows, Nellis AFB is the home of the world's premier aerial demonstration team, the USAF Thunderbirds. The TBirds airshow schedule for 2004 has not yet been finalized, but it is unlikely they will be at home, so we probably won't be able to see them fly. However, the Thunderbird Museum offers daily one-hour tours to the public, and contains exhibits of interest to followers of the team. Although the tour is not yet a certainty for us, we are discussing it with the folks at Nellis. Stay tuned...

Our Reunion Hotel, The Imperial Palace Hotel & Casino is conveniently located at 3535 Las Vegas Boulevard South, Las Vegas, Nevada 89109. The hotel is right in the heart of the Strip, within walking distance of the Caesar's Palace Forum Shops, The Mirage, Treasure Island, Hilton Flamingo, and The Venetian. The Imperial Palace has 2,600 guestrooms. Each room comes equipped with a remote controlled color TV, iron/ironing boards, and a hairdryer. The hotel features an outdoor Olympic-sized swimming pool, a heated spa, a men and women's health and fitness center (fee charged), The Legends in Concert located in the Imperial Theatre, a beauty/barber shop, a gift shop, pool-side lounge, and a mini shopping mall. The hotel boasts one of the world's largest auto collections, with antique, classic, and special interest vehicles dating back to 1897. Handicapped accessible and non-smoking rooms are subject to availability. Please request these special accommodations when making your hotel reservation. Parking is complimentary for overnight guests of the hotel. Check-in is 3:00pm and check-out is 12:00 noon. **Embers**, is open for dinner Wednesday through Sunday. *Sea-*

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house, is open for dinner Friday through Tuesday. **Pizza Palace**, is open daily for lunch, dinner, and late night meals. **Rib House**, is open for dinner Tuesday through Sunday, and **Ming Terrace**, is open daily for dinner and late night meals. Reservations are suggested for both. Room service is also available.

Bell Trans provides shuttle service from the McCarran International Airport to the major Strip hotels every fifteen minutes. You may call Bell Trans for advance pick-up reservations at (702) 739-7990. Otherwise, the shuttle is readily available outside door eleven in the baggage claim area of the airport. Currently, rates are \$4.25 per person one-way and \$8.00 round trip.

There is no parking at the hotel for RVs; however, Circus Circus Hotel & Casino offers a full hookup RV Park on the Strip. Please call (800) 634-3450 for information, directions, and reservations as soon as possible.

Should you need to rent a wheelchair for the reunion, ScootAround rents both manual and power wheel chairs by the day and week. Please call their toll free number at (888) 441-7575 for details. All prices quoted include delivery fees.

Our reunion planners, AFRI have informed us that individuals are responsible for making their own reservations. Attendees should call the Imperial Palace convention desk at toll free 1-800-800-2981 and identify themselves as part of the 307th Bomb Wing to get the special reunion rates of \$69 per night for the reunion nights and \$79 for weekend nights preceding or following the reunion.

We are quite pleased with these rates obtained for us by AFRI ...for comparison, a recent Las Vegas travel article in the Dayton Daily News speaks of a bargain rate of \$100 per day at the Imperial Palace.

Other links to the Imperial Palace are 1-702-792-3286, FAX: 1-702-794-3368, or www.imperialpalace.com on the web.

Some of you may be sitting on the fence undecided about attending the reunion. Take a gander at the folks who have indicated interest thus far, and you just might find a good reason to come and join us...

Dick & Eloise Arens, Vern Biaett, RT. & Dru Boykin, Bob & Pat Byrom, Bill & Grace Carrier, Johnny & Joan Clark, Ray Coley (2), James & Barbara Cone, William & Georgia Crane, Don Daley (3), George & Rita Davis, Ronald & Ruth Davis, Bill & Theodora DeAngelis, Mike & Judy DeCarlo, Bob & Shirley Delany, Virgil & Millie Domino, Frank & Dina Eisenbraun, H.O. & Mary Evans, Franklin & Helen Fish, Darrell & Lois Gallenberger, Mike & Jan Gingrich, Merle Hahn, Leo & Marly Halpin, Robert Hansen (3).

Russ & Betty Jean Heller, Joseph & Beverly Herman, Glen &

Lucy Hesler, Harry & Carol Jones, Ross & Mary Jones, Don & Martha Kellum, Richard & Beverly Kies, Bob & Peggy Jorgensen, Al & Mary Kulikowski, Jerry & Penny Lanning, Flip & Sandy Latham, Butch & Carol Leppi, Marvin Lundgren (2), Billy & LaRee Lyons, Butch Manning (2), Janie Marvel, William & Margaret McCarthy, Frank & Dede Medrick, Robert Merick, Tom & Andrea Mills, Tony & Bev Minnick, Wally & Pat Mitchell, Adam Mizinski, Michael & Denise Myatt (5), Jim & Dottie Myers, George & Wauneta Nigh.

Don & Angie Nigro, John & Virginia Ogren, Frank & Kay Ott, Gerald Otten (2), Arthur Pearson (2), Pat Patterson (2), Betty Pelletier, Donna Reilly, Clayton Robson (2), Dean & Bonnie Jean Roelle, Bill & Mary Rogers, Jesse Sears (2), Robert Schultz, Jo Anne Kroll, James & Judy Shelton, Ray Stefl (2), Pete & Wendy Todd, Noble & Gladys Timmons, Doug & Pat Valen, James Villa (2), Les Walrath, Bob & Carolyn Weidner, Billy & Jean Williams, Wally & Peggy Whitehurst, John & Jeri Yaryan, Merle Young (2)

It's really getting down to the short strokes now. The next newsletter will hit the postal circuit hopefully in mid-February, and it will contain registration blanks for you to send in as well as any new or additional information about **The Ninth Standup**.

See you in the Casino... Vern Biaett



The Chief's Corner

It's Almost War By Ernie Pence

Summer of 1958, nice weather, balmy days on the flight line, Sputnik is orbiting overhead going beep-beep. Then, the inconsiderate Chinese decide the upstarts on Formosa must be brought back to the fold. They begin by dousing the islands of Quemoy, and Matsu, with neighborly artillery fire. Troops are massed, invasion boats are in place in the mainland harbors. For inexplicable reasons the U.S. takes umbrage to these events. The

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Newsletter Schedule

The 307th Bomb Wing B-47/KC-97 Association Newsletter is published for the benefit of all former members of the 307th Bomb Wing of Lincoln AFB, Nebraska. It is expected to be published three times a year in March, July, and November.

Contributions for publication in the newsletter are encouraged, and are essential for the success of this newsletter.

(Continued from page 7)

only people with a large global shield are called upon to save the day, while the Navy nervously puts a carrier task group in straits so narrow between the factions they are considered the sacrificial lamb.

Before anyone can blink an eye, we are behind-deep in aircraft returning from training missions, water alcohol trucks, combat chaff, H.E.I., 20 mike-mike and nuclear weapons. We maintenance types do our standard thing, nobody goes home until all aircraft are ready to load, that means no sleep, damn little to eat, nothing but behinds and elbows. Cadillac Crook was a God Send. We are all out there getting after it for who knows how long, who shows up in the 370th section of the ramp but Jack. The trunk pops open, and presto, what to our blood shot eyes should appear, a cornucopia of sandwiches and coffee from the O club! At times like that it comes over as good as a sit down dinner in an excellent restaurant. People in outfits that wear panty hose, Mats, ADC, etc. never learned the true meaning of teamwork and esprit de corps. This was the 307th at her finest.

All birds are loaded and cocked, the crews are using the BOQ for alert quarters, and the crew chiefs are living in the bomb squadron buildings. No practice alerts, if the horn blows it is a real launch. This low-pressure cauldron boiled for about 2 weeks, you could physically feel the tension, but no one let on it was tight, we were professionals. Time was passed with endless card games, sleep, preflight, Russian Roulette, stories, and freshening the crew's water bottles in the planes. Something seems out of place to you, it seemed perfectly plausible at the time.

One night some of the chiefs had tired of the stories and cards, it was time for a boredom breaker. One of the guys whips out a snubby 38, removes the cartridges for everyone's inspection, places a rolled up piece of paper in one of the chambers and snaps her shut. I don't recall if bets were placed or not, but I do remember Col. Thompson walking in the building that night,

glancing into the briefing room and going dead pale! He literally flew across the room, snatched the pistol from the possible victim's head, flips open the cylinder, closes it, hands the weapon back to the player, mutter's "Carry on men," and leaves the room. Who knows, he may have gone to the O Club shortly after that.

About a week into this thing it seems an eternity. The Air Police do not have sufficient manning to guard each aircraft, chestless WAF's are drafted from personnel and given a short course on standing in front of a B-47 with a carbine or M-1. Howard Barry's crew decided to have fresh water put in the bottles that day at preflight, they brought them down and told Barry to put in fresh water and leave them in between the front main tires, they would put them up in the morning. Bored, absent-minded, stupid, or a combination of all three, about 1400 hours the make believe air policeman decided the bottles had been transformed into a deadly weapon. He calls in a bomb, we all hear a klaxon. A lot of money was lost that day, cards, money, chairs, everything went straight up in the air. For those of you who have not had the privilege of thinking you are about to incinerate the world, you can not imagine the plethora of thoughts that go through your mind in 1 millisecond. In that short span of time the world stands still, no audible sound is uttered, then the whole area erupts as all accelerate to the max instantaneously.

The crew chiefs of the 370th went through the base ops building as one would think a tornado would. The door flew against the wall and we rounded the second corner jockeying for position, no words, just the noise of a normal stampede, labored breathing and a hell of a lot of fast moving feet. I can still see the guard at the door, eyes big as saucers, reaching for the leading airman's flight line badge. Fifteen of us ran the poor man down without hesitation. We literally ran over the man. A witness told me the fellow had just managed to get to his feet when Col. Thompson rounded the corner and hit him like a line backer. I doubt if he

reenlisted. The weather staff in ops were said to have wet their pants, we have no proof.

Fire trucks, bayonet nozzles at the ready, were poised in front of the endangered bomber. A NCO from the air police was standing in front of the nose of his pickup, red lights flashing, mobile strike team at the ready. When Barry's crew arrived, he walked over, picked up the two bombs, and sheepishly handed them to his crew, who than mounted the ladder and stored the offending units. We never saw the neophyte guard again. Thank God! To bring a short story to fruition, suffice to say that Command Post saw fit to inform all crews the alert was over a week later, by initiating another alert. Everyone scrambled to the birds as before, only to have the copilots informed by radio the alert was terminated. When the hell did telephones become redundant?



The Last Flight

The verse on the SAC Chapel Memorial Window says it best...

Charles A Williams, ARS, Plainfield NJ.

Donald J Meade, 29 August 2002, Chippewa Falls WI.

Helen Meade, 1993

Pearl Utech, Auburn CA, 17 July 2003.

Don Desselle, 372nd BS, Longboat Key, FL, 24 October 2003.

And God said who shall we send. I answered I am here, send me." Isaiah 6:8

Ali Duke and His Forty Thieves



th Photo Tech. Sq.

“Ali Duke,” Captain Walter Duch (right), and his buddy, Lieutenant John J. Pacura, whose squadrons of green boys broke the siege of Imphal

Editor's Note. This article is chapter 5 from a book entitled "Wings for the Dragon", by Alice Rogers Hager, published in 1945 by Dodd, Mead & Company. The book describes the little known World War 2 air campaigns in the China-Burma-India theater of operations. The author, a Fellow of the American Geographical Society, was a noted aviation writer of the time.

Ali Duke is the person we of the 307th knew later as Col Walter F "Buddy" Duch, of the 307th Bomb Wing. During his assignments with the wing, Duch was the first commander of the reactivated 424th Bomb Squadron, commander of the Field Maintenance Squadron, and was also wing Deputy Commander for Maintenance (DCM). He was known by his troops to be a true leader.

I first encountered this book in the summer of 1960, when I briefly worked for Duch at Field Maintenance. During recent correspondence with Peggy Duch, his surviving widow, she happened to mention the book's title, and I later located it under out of print books at Barnes & Noble.

During the intervening years since 1960, I have carried

around memories of a Duch anecdote, which I once ascribed to the Ali Duke chapter. Since I can not now find the anecdote anywhere in the book, I must reascribe its origin to 307th oral tradition. It goes something like this...

The day before a particularly important mission, the Japs strafed Duch's airfield and three Gooneybirds (C-47s) were destroyed. Duch commiserated with his top sergeant, whose pre-war employer was said to be certain Mafia elements in New York City. The sergeant, known to be a very persuasive problem solver, told Duch that he would see what he could do about the situation... The next morning, three replacement Goonies were on the line, and ready to go. It was noted that the aircraft's US insignia and tail numbers seemed rather tacky to the touch. The mission was successfully accomplished and all was well. Several days later, the RAF at a base about 25 miles distant were complaining about the disappearance of three of their Dakotas!

Despite not knowing of the origin of this tale, it does seem to lend credence to the title "Ali Duke and His Forty Thieves".

Mike G, November 2003, one of many admirers of the Duke...

During the time that General Stilwell was beginning his drive in north Burma, the Japanese themselves were far from inactive. They were beginning to lose air supremacy, thanks to the daring and skill of the fighter and bomber units of the Eastern Air Command. But on the ground they were still powerful and arrogant and, as a counter measure against Stilwell, they staged the invasion of India which had been threatened for so long.

They counted on two factors for their success—the disaffection of the Indian people and our known weakness in troops and equipment to throw against them. As usual, they underestimated the British and American stubbornness in resistance and they did not know that a group of green boys, fresh from flying schools in the States, would take to the skies and make possible their final defeat.

Again quoting General Arnold: "In February, 1944, a Japanese offensive enveloped the Indian Seventh Division in the Arakan. A year earlier, a similar maneuver had turned an Allied offensive into a retreat to re-establish ground communications. This time the decision was made to stand and fight. Tenth Air Force Troop Carrier squadrons, led by Brigadier General William D. Old, and strengthened by planes of the Air Transport Command, established an air line of supply for the Seventh Division of Lieutenant General Slim's Army. Wounded were brought out by air. The Seventh fought its way clear, and the campaign, which had threatened India itself ended with the lines stabilized.

"The second Japanese offensive of 1944 came in the spring when they crossed the Chindwin in force, took Tiddim and surrounded elements of the Fourteenth Army at Imphal and Kohima. As in the Arakan, traditional staff tactics again called for a retreat, but again it was decided to fight it out. The Eastern Air Command kept

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approximately 200,000 troops supplied with food, ammunition and equipment. In 758 sorties, transports flew an entire division, complete with pack animals, from the Arakan into Imphal. During the 80 days that Imphal was cut off, 28,120 tons of supplies and 61,000 men were flown in. The Japanese offensive was turned by the ground-air combination into a retreat, with three of their divisions virtually annihilated."

If the invasion had succeeded, it would have cut the Bengal-Assam railroad, over which the bulk of supplies moved up from the Indian ports to the air supply bases in Assam. It would have stopped Stilwell cold, if it did nothing more. It would have put a period to supply for China. The overworked Air Forces could not have handled the additional job of transporting materiel from the port cities without very large reinforcements-and at that time, with the invasion of Europe already prepared, there were simply no reinforcements to be had. It was a shrewd move on the part of the Japanese and it came perilously close to being a successful one.

Once again, air supply proved its value. The ability to hurdle obstacles, to maintain mobility in a crisis, to carry -the load and, to deliver without delay to the point where supplies were most urgently needed were, the known qualities which had-influenced the SEAC in its decision to "stand and fight."

The work of the 2nd Troop Carrier Squadron was one of the most vital parts of that aerial supply in the theater, but it was not, of course, the only one. In many cases, more than one squadron was supplying the same battlefield. In others, a single unit held full responsibility. In the case of the invasion by the Japanese into the State of Manipur and the siege of Imphal, there is another story that must be told because of its special quality.

The four Japanese columns had begun their offensive from across the Chindwin river in Burma in mid-March. They struck powerfully through to the Indian border and beyond, taking Tiddim and advancing up the Tiddim Road. Kohima and Imphal were surrounded and the airstrip at Imphal, while still used by RAF fighter planes, was under attack on the ground. All surface supply routes were cut off and the defenders were in a hopeless position unless immediate help was provided. Between the urgent needs of Stilwell and Merrill in north Burma, and of the 7th Army of Lieutenant General Slim in the Arakan, the Troop Carrier Squadrons were heavily engaged and terribly shorthanded. But the situation at Imphal, with its threat against the nearby Bengal-Assam Railway was of paramount importance. General Stratemeyer was in the unenviable position of the magician who has no rabbit to pull out of the hat at the crucial moment of the show.

There was a rabbit, however-a baby which must somehow be made to do for a full-grown buck. On the 3rd of June, when the situation was blackest, the first units of the newly activated Combat Cargo Command had arrived at Karachi. They were young pilots, very young indeed, who had been sent to India to

receive training for tactical supply work. Some had had their shiny new wings pinned on at their training bases in the States on one day and been on their way to CBI the next. They all knew how to fly C-47s, but that was all they did know. They were scarcely dry behind the ears. They had almost no training in navigation; their only flying had been done under practically ideal weather conditions at home. Of the delicate and dangerous technique of air dropping, they had no knowledge at all. It was planned that they should have months of careful advanced instruction in the theater, under supervision of highly experienced pilots, before they would even bear the zing of a bullet.

The Headquarters Cadre had been chosen from among some of the best fliers of the 443rd Troop Carrier Group by its former CO, Lieutenant Colonel Charles D. Farr, who had been assigned to take over command of the 3rd Combat Cargo Group. Colonel Farr had gotten his own wings in the Navy school at Pensacola, Florida, in 1929; had served with 4 torpedo and bombing squadron on the U.S.S. Saratoga for two and a half years and then done commercial flying until 1939. Early in 1940, he was commissioned by the Army Air Forces, took four-engine training, became General Stratemeyer's aide and personal pilot and in 1943 went overseas with the 82nd Airborne Division to participate first in the North African invasion and then in that of Sicily. In October, he was sent to India, and by March, 1944, had taken over command of the 443rd. He was, in all respects, a highly experienced and seasoned combat leader and an exceptionally wise and understanding officer.

The cadre for the 3rd Combat Cargo Group included four squadron commanders: Captain Clyde T. Alexander, Captain Donald H. King, Captain Raymond D. Potter and First Lieutenant Walter F. Duch (pronounced "Duke"). Potter had been in on the early days at Myitkyina. Struck in the face by shrapnel and with one of his engines shot out, he managed to bring his plane down on the strip and get his crew out safely before it exploded. If he had landed in the rice paddy alongside the strip, they would have been in the hands of the Japs.

Captain Alexander had been in China and had had long service over the Hump. King had been top tonnage man in his previous squadron and Duch, with his pal and new squadron operations' officer, Lieutenant John J. Pacura, had served through the worst of the Arakan campaign. Major Talmadge E. Walker was Group Operations Officer and he had served in Java and Australia as a B-17 pilot and then at Port Moresby and Markham Valley with the Troop Carriers.

It was to Farr that Stratemeyer turned in the emergency. He would have to throw these green pilots into the breach - there was no one else to send. Both men knew that it was a suicidal mission-that nothing but a miracle could save these boys from almost certain death. There was no choice; no other, experienced men could be spared. Farr took it quietly and sent his squadron commanders to Karachi to get their air echelons together and fly them back to the base in Assam. There had not even been time to prepare quarters for them.

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Alexander, King, Potter and Duch assembled their outfits at the Karachi base, dividing them equally. All the planes were as new and as untried as the pilots. The Four Musketeers shepherded them across India, following the ATC routes and carrying the extra pilots and crew chiefs as passengers.

June 15 had been set as the deadline for the squadrons to go into action. That gave them about ten days from their arrival in India. When they reached the base in Assam, nothing was ready but the plans and the information. The boys slept under the wings of their planes the first few nights, without protection from either the rain or the mosquitoes. Their commanders worked them relentlessly. They had no understanding of the terrible weather they would face, no check flights over the terrain they must fly, almost no instrument training, no experience in short field landings or in dropping. The General had set the date for them to meet their first combat, but not even he thought they would make it.

But the situation at Imphal was growing worse, and the worn and weary neophytes began to sense dimly just how desperate it was. Their brains by this time were fuzzy with fatigue from all the information that was being crammed into them, practically by shotgun methods. They flew around the base until they were practically asleep at the controls. It was the only protection their commanders could provide.

Then Headquarters at Calcutta was thrown into a storm of excitement by the announcement on the 11th that Lieutenant Duch had begun operating with his 10th Squadron. He had beaten the deadline by four days. The other squadrons followed almost immediately. Every one of them was in action before the 15th. HQ held its breath and waited tensely for the heavy casualties to start coming in.

That historic day of the 11th of June, the 10th Squadron delivered just short of 100 tons of supplies to Imphal, completing 40 sorties with 23 planes.

On top of everything else, the 3rd's ground echelon had not yet caught up with them. One of the base ground squadrons helped when it could, but it had its own troubles and the 3rd's air crews were having to fly all day and then do most of the maintenance on their planes at night. It was a killing pace.

The monsoon, of course, was going full blast. Nothing was spared them. Yet, day by day the tonnage totals crept upward. In less than three weeks, each squadron was flying 60 sorties a day and on June 25 the 10th achieved the record delivery of 422,631 pounds. And somehow the miracle had happened; there was not a single fatal accident in the 10th in those three weeks. This was not true of all the squadrons, but, even so, the rate stayed very low.

So magnificently did they do their job that those three weeks turned the tide. By the first week in July, the siege of Imphal

was broken and the enemy was in full retreat. India was saved. The supply line to China was safe. Stilwell's campaign took on new life. The 3rd Combat Cargo's part was a small one, in comparison to the major operations elsewhere, but it was uniquely heroic because of the circumstances under which it was carried out.

Of their four squadron commanders, it was Lieutenant Duch and his buddy, Lieutenant Pacura, who were the most notable figures. Pacura had taken over the 11th Squadron and once again the two men were in hot competition with each other. I had heard of the "Duke" before I went to their base, and his sardonic, swashbuckling humor. He and Pacura had flown together during the Arakan campaign and they were a great pair. Inseparable buddies, each was always trying to get the jump on the other, and their progress left sparks flying in the night skies over Burma.

But there was another side to the Duke. He had taken the job of breaking in his squadron with a passionate seriousness. There was no humor in his speech when he talked about his boys, only a deep compassion and a bitter hatred of the war, which had caught them before they were prepared to meet it. That he himself had worked like an inspired demon to teach them all he knew, to give them a rough and driving tongue-lashing when they did something wrong, so that they would do it right the next time and in so doing save their own lives, he never admitted. He drove them to glory the hard way, but he made them win and he made them as safe as possible while he kept their tonnages climbing.

Out at the squadron mess, when one day's work was over, the Duke told me the story in his own words. They are significant words and worth remembering.

"When Pacura and I first started flying in the Arakan," he said, "we began with the night drops. Our squadrons worked with the initial Air Commando group, doing the whole, transport and supply job. The weather was so bad it -was against everything we had been taught in training. In spite of that, we would fly all night and get back to base about four A.M. At seven the Japs would come over and we'd have to hit the foxholes. We'd sleep in the daytime when they would let us, but that wasn't often. There was one month when they came over twenty-five days out of thirty. They didn't actually raid us, just kept us jumpy and not getting any rest.

"We would take off at night at various hours to contact the ground troops at selected bivouacs where there might be some safety for our planes. We had to climb over the mountains and then turn off our lights as soon as we reached Burma. There was no horizon to judge by on dark nights and there were mountains everywhere. Usually, we'd get about ten days of moonlight a month; we'd pray for that. The maps were all bad; they didn't help very, much. In coming over the targets, we'd have to let down to around three hundred feet and, believe me, we sweated those letdowns. We'd call the target and say: 'Am I high? Back would come a cheerful British voice, saying: 'Yeah, Johnny, you're high.' Then they would set the flare paths for us. "When we were dropping ammo,

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we could get rid of a load in twenty minutes. Each type of cargo was different. Barbed wire was the worst to get out-that took about an hour. Once the ship was clear, we'd hightail it out of there and climb faster than any homesick angel ever did. I'd tell the co-pilot, 'It's all yours, Bud.' Then I'd drink everything on the ship, my throat would be so dry".

"All of us hated going in to Aberdeen. It was in a V-shaped valley; uncomfortably narrow on a dark night. We had to spiral down in a three-thousand-foot weave over the field and then chop power because the runway was only twenty-eight hundred feet long. There was always the pleasant possibility that you might bit a water buffalo that had wandered onto the strip. You just came in weaving, wondering who was going to crack up first. The co-pilot didn't mind. He was just fat, dumb and happy enough to think you were a good pilot. Once you were down, however, you had to get him to light your cigarette. You were just too nervous to manage the match.

The first night landing we made at Blackpool, someone lighted a cigarette that way and one of the native troops threw a hand grenade into the ship. That was nerves, too. Everybody had 'em. But it got to be a terrifically personal factor to support those poor devils who were doing that bloody fighting. They were mostly Chindit troops, with some British, Ghurkas and West Africans. We were proud to feed them. They were part of us and we were part of them. The greatest pains we took was to get the mailbag down safely. We collected magazines for them when we could.

"There was no such thing as canceling a mission. John Pacura was our weatherman. He'd check, and then, if there was an inch of visibility, he'd say, 'Let the streetcars roll,' and out we'd go. But fatigue started really telling on the boys when the weather got that bad. You could see them cracking-getting old. Once you got into it, after you'd taken off, it was just as easy to go on as to turn back, and you kept thinking all the time of those guys waiting out there in the dark for you to come.

"You could always tell Blackpool by the stink of the dead the British had been butchered there. The smell came up and hit you in the stomach hundreds of feet in the air.

"That was our background when we took over the raw kids, fresh from their little flying courses in the States. They had never been allowed to fly unless the weather was just right. They could take a C-47 off the ground, push it around over nice safe country, with no mountains to worry about, no night flying, no enemy bullets on the ground or in the air. Then they were stuck with going into this kind of a show-straight into the middle of hell. John and I were old men-we were twenty-four and twenty-five. We'd started out eager. We were going to be heroes. Yeah, we were hot. These kids were the way I was when I was going to high school, dreaming of a convertible car, zoot suits and jukebox dances.

"Well we had ten days to beat some sense into them, and we did what we could. I did everything but beat their brains in. I yelled at them. I told them they were no good. I practically told them which side of the bed to get out of. They hated me. They were so mad they were going to show me they could fly the stuff if it killed them. They got the understanding right away that they had a job to do; and, by God, they did it. I got them up at four in the morning and made them fly all day. First they slept under their planes in the mud. Then we got bashas and the roofs leaked. Our clothes were always wet. But they worked. They had to train for war the hard way.

"Then we went in. Those boys did something never before dreamed of in aerial warfare. In twenty days they broke the siege of Imphal, and that was a man-sized job in anybody's language.

"At night we had to maintain our planes. We didn't have any ground crews then. We had enlisted men telling the officers what to do. Everybody worked like a team. We didn't have spare parts and the enlisted men flew all over India, cannibalizing other planes to keep ours going. Whenever anyone missed anything, they blamed it on me. They called us 'Ali Duke and his forty thieves' but we kept going. There was no such thing as 'unbecoming an officer and a gentleman.' We all got just as dirty and we never had any trouble with discipline.

"In those three weeks, the kids turned into old men. When they aren't flying now, they sit around dreaming of home, of ice and showers and green salads. You get damned hungry for some real Stateside food. And there's nothing to do. Except sit around and argue. One day you're an atheist. Next day you're a Catholic. When the kids get leave now, they go to Calcutta. They're tough and they act tough, but they're gentlemen in spite of that. I wonder if the girls back home are going to be ready for the old men they've grown to be. You can't live through an experience such as they did and not have it change you from the inside out."

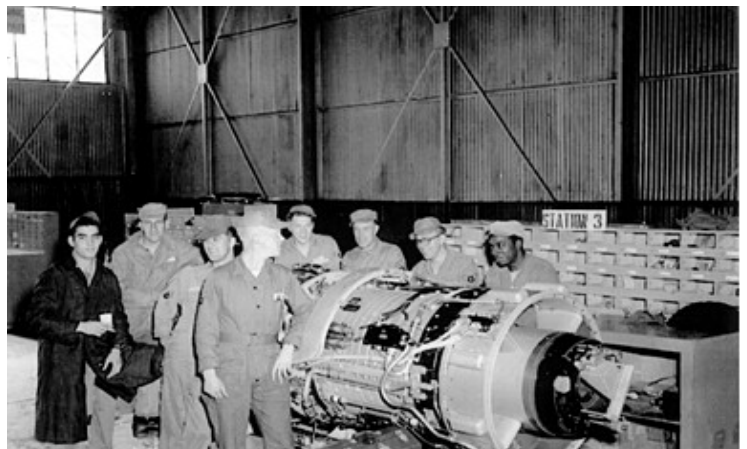


Photo by Robert Rose

Engine Shop at Lakenheath during first 307th deployment
Left to Right: Murray, Zanetti, Lehr, Persons, Raynor, Rinehardt, Nystrom, Askew

Reunion Cruise for 2006?? Future Cruise Reunion – Info Starter Kit

By Dallas Crosby

To follow up on Pete Todd's suggestion with regard to a cruise as a possible option for a future reunion, we thought providing an opportunity for all to express their interest and opinions would be appropriate. Since the vote on the 2004 reunion plan at the 2002 Ft Worth business meeting was so close, it was agreed that the association should look further at the possibility of a future cruise reunion.

There are a lot of available cruises going to a variety of places out there. For those who might not have cruised before, the length of the trips go from 3-4 days to most any length you'd want. Taking less than a 7-day leaves you with limited time and limited ports-of-call. The 3-4 day trips normally only go to the Bahamas or down the West Coast of Mexico because further distance is too great to make in the short time period. Three to 4 day trips seem to be ending so soon after starting that they may not be desirable. The 7- day cruise offers a much better itinerary. The Caribbean is a good area for 7-day trips. Alaska of course, is summer only.

If you haven't cruised before, the prices may look high but you must remember you are paying for most of your vacation in one price. If you add up the cost of a vacation trip (hotel, transportation, gourmet dining, high quality entertainment, luxurious surroundings and all activities), cruise prices are very competitive. Cheaper cabins are relatively small, but with so many things to do, most people don't spend much time in the cabin anyway. Getting an exact price far in advance is impossible, but prices have been coming down recently and some have been available at around \$60 a day per person, but prices can vary widely, so you should watch for sales. Any airline travel you might need in conjunction with a cruise is extra, of course.

We will bring information on as many cruise options as possible to Las Vegas but in the mean time those interested should stop by their local travel office for free brochures and answers to questions. Don't go by the prices quoted in the cruise pamphlets, you can get much better prices when you shop around. Travel bureaus that will answer your questions are easily accessible, for instance there are the Military Officers Association (MOAA) at www.moaavacations.com or 800-211-5107, Cruise.com, Travelocity.com, and Expedia.com, to name a few. It may be possible to have a travel agent at our Las Vegas reunion to give information and answer questions as needed. Also, anyone who has gathered any cruise info along the way, please bring it to Las Vegas. It will all help!

Of course, none of us know for sure if we can go this far in advance, but please give us your desires so we will know what to work on. The mini-survey below is designed for you to copy and paste into an email to me, Dallas Crosby at JulieDall@aol.com, or it can be clipped and mailed to me at 9148 Linda Rio Drive, Sacramento, CA 95826. I look forward to hearing from you, it will really help us.

Dallas

Clip or Snip right here, then mail by snail

CRUISE SURVEY

Your name _____ Email address _____

What is your choice of preferred cruise duration?

3 to 4 days _____ 7 days _____

For a 3-4 day cruise, where would you like to go?

Bahamas _____ Mexico _____ Other _____ It doesn't matter _____

For a 7 day cruise, where would you like to go?

Western Caribbean _____ Eastern Caribbean _____ Northern Caribbean _____
Southern Caribbean _____ Alaska (summer only) _____

When would you like to go? Cruise ships tend to be less crowded before schools are out and after schools resume classes.

Spring _____ Summer _____ Autumn _____ Winter _____

Other Comments, suggestions, questions _____

The Reunion

By Rachel Firth

Summer leaves, rustling together to the appointed place, the
old warriors come,

Pilgrims drifting across the land they fought to preserve.
Where they meet is not important anymore... They meet and
that's enough for now.

Greetings echo across a lobby.

Hands reach out and arms draw buddies close. Embraces, that
as young me they were too uncomfortable to give, too shy to
accept so lovingly.

But deep within these summer days they have reached a
greater understanding of life and love.

The shells holding their souls are weaker now,
but hearts and minds grow vigorous remembering.

On a table someone spreads old photographs; a test of recol-
lection,

And friendly laughter echoes at shocks of hair gone gray or
white, or merely gone.

The rugged slender bodies lost forever.

Yet they no longer need to prove their strength.

Some are now sustained by one of "medicines miracles."

And even in this fact they manage to find humor.

The women, all those who waited, all those who love them,
have watched the changes

take place. Now they observe and listen, and

smile at each other, as glad to be together as the men.

Talk turns to war and planes and foreign lands. Stories are
told and told again,

reweaving the threadbare fabric of the past.

Mending one more time the banner of their youth,

They hear the vibrations, feel the shudder of metal as turbines
whine and whirl,

and planes come to life. These birds with fractured wings
can see beyond the mist of clouds, and they are in the air again,
chasing the wind,

feeling the exhilaration of flight close to the heavens:

the wild blue yonder of their anthem.

Dead comrades, hearing their names spoken, wanting them to
share in this time,

if only in spirit move silently among them. Their presence is felt
and smiles appear

beneath misty eyes. Each in his own way may wonder who will
be absent another year.

The room grows quiet for a time.

Suddenly an ember flames to life. Another memory burns.

The talk may turn to other wars and other men, and of futility.

So this is how it goes.

The past is so much the present.

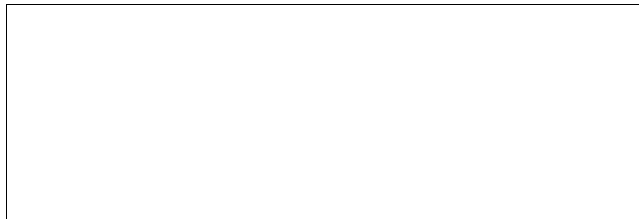
In their ceremonies, the allegiances, the speeches, and the
prayers, one cannot help but hear

the deep eternal love of country they will forever share.

Finally it is time to leave. Much too soon to set aside this little
place of yesterday,

but the past cannot be held too long for it is fragile. They say,
"Farewell... see you next time, God willing," breathing silent
prayers for one another.

Each keeping a little of the others with him forever.



**Dated Material
Return Service Requested**

**307th Bomb Wing B-47/KC-97 Association
5920 Robin Court
Lincoln, NE 68516**

