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19TH
NEWSLETTER

*ON WINGS WE
CONQUER*



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APRIL, MAY, JUNE 2006 ISSUE #23

**2006 REUNION – ALBUQUERQUE, NM
SEPTEMBER 26 (arrival) –SEPTEMBER 30 (departure)**

The 19th Bombardment Association’s 2006 reunion will be held in Albuquerque, NM on the above dates, Tuesday, September 26 through Saturday, September 30. The location will be at the Airport University Inn, 1901 University Boulevard SE, Albuquerque, New Mexico 87106. Phone: 1-505-247-0512/1-800-920-1901. Fax: 505-842-6040.

Email: reservations@airportuniversityinn.com.

The last two pages of the newsletter has all the details for the reunion. All members are encouraged to attend the reunion, noting that you can participate in any or none of the activities offered, and you can come for as little as a few hours or hopefully stay the full three days.

**BOOK – 19TH BOMBARDMENT ASSOCIATION
HISTORY – PART I – by Historian Darrell Landau**

19th Bombardment Association Historian, Darrell Landau, has completed the 19th History Book that he had previously committed to compile. Darrell has not only finished the book, but has had a number of copies printed and bound. He has also sent a number of these to members who had indicated wanting a copy when completed. The full CD history was sent along with the book. Darrell wishes all members understand this book covers the 19th Bombardment Group’s service history from it’s earliest beginning up through the end of World War II. He has done this calling it ‘Part I’, with the intent that a second book, ‘Part II’ can be completed at some point in time that will pick up and cover the period onward from the end of WWII to include Korea, Viet Nam, through to the recent 10th Air Refueling

Group/Wing. The Part II effort needs to begin, and discussions will be held at our Albuquerque reunion as to how best to proceed toward getting this in motion.

In addition to the enormous amount of labor put into this project, Darrell has assumed the burden of providing all the financial costs to date. The original estimate of being able to produce the history book at \$50 was low. Color printing costs alone exceeds this amount. Darrell's first and most important interest is getting this great book into the hands of interested 19th members, so the final decision of how printing, ordering, shipping, and associated costs, etc., will be decided at our Albuquerque meeting. Members who have not previously indicated they would like a copy of the book should contact either Darrell or myself.

APPROVAL TO PROCEED WITH ESTABLISHMENT OF 19TH HISTORY DISPLAY

The Association has been given initial approval to proceed with plans for a history plaque at the WPAF Museum Memorial Garden at Dayton, OH. Final approval is contingent upon a sketch or drawing of the design being submitted and approved. Dodds Memorial, a company in nearby Xenia, OH, who has designed, built and erected some 80% of all memorials at the WPAF Museum, would likely be our choice for doing the work for us. Previous contacts and discussions with Dodds have indicated they are interested in working with us and helping to accommodate some of the details desired such as squadron emblems, aircraft silhouettes, and other aspects of the design we have considered in our draft concepts

The Association is also required to replace the present small 19th memorial that exists since the Museum allows only one display per group/organization. This will be another subject to take up and discuss at the Board and Membership meetings at Albuquerque. Suggestions to date have been to consider replacing the small existing plaque with a Squadron plaque, one honoring all the Squadrons that were in the 19th (ok per discussions with the museum people), or perhaps seeing if the 19th Air Refueling Group at Robins AFB would have an interest of having their Group represented.

The possibility now exists that a dedication of the 19th history installation at WPAF in Dayton could occur at a 19th reunion in 2008. Should all things go well, this timing would fit our normal rotation for a reunion location in Dayton. We will see how the stars line up!!

Jim Pattillo, Secretary, let us know that as of January 6, 2006, the 20th Air Force Association no longer exists. Jim had worked hard and long for the Association to no avail. Jim has sent a follow-up note about a meeting of the 504th BG Association in St. Louis, 09/14-15/06 where the creation of an un-incorporated Texas association called the "20th AF Association" will be discussed. We can chase down additional information on this effort for anyone interested.

ETERNAL FLIGHT

'ETERNAL REST GRANT THESE O' LORD, AND LET

PERPETUAL LIGHT SHINE UPON THEM.

BALDWIN, ALFRED F. – Son, Blair, wrote Joe Napieralski with sadness that his father had died March 25, 2006 at the age of 88. Tail gunner on “City of Lansford”, 28th Squadron, 1945.

COTTRELL, WILLIAM F. – Wife, Virginia, let us know that William had died April 8, 2006. 28th Squadron, 1945.

HERMES, FRANK J. – Sadly informed by Andy Kerzner that Frank passed away May 13, 2006. Member of Vern Chandler’s crew, 28th Squadron, 1945.

LANGANKI, RODEN L. – Regrettably informed by Rita, Roden’s daughter, that he died May 29, 2006. Guam, 1945, 574th Air Material Squadron.

MOSCICKI, ELIZABETH – Wife of member Chet Moscicki passed away April 26, 2006.

PEOPLE/INFORMATION SEARCH

Member George Wyatt has sent information regarding his continued research on two 19th B-17 airmen of the early part of WWII about whom people have inquired. Orrin Grover had requested information on Lt. Kenneth R. Kreps. Concerning Lt. Kreps, 0-21493, George reports that he has found Kreps mentioned 3 times in Walter Edmonds, “They Fought With What They Had”. All three mentions took place on 8 December 1941, and on that date Lt. Kreps was 30th Bomb Squadron Officer of the Day. Two of the items concern his memory of the time of the Japanese bombing of Clark Field, and one concerns the actions of the Group doctor and Group Chaplain in caring for the wounded. Apparently these observations were mentioned later when the book was being written because at that point he is referred to as Col. Kreps. Wyatt’s next finding of Kreps is in the 19th Bomb Group Operations Journal. On 20 January, Lt. Kreps was evacuated from Del Monte, P. I. to Java along with 22 other officers. No instance was found at anytime where Lt. Kreps was assigned duty as a flying officer. He is not listed on any crew lists prior to 8 December 1941, nor after that time. What duties he performed after evacuation from Del Monte is left to conjecture.

The second airman George has been researching is that of 2nd Lt. Leslie Duvall, the uncle of Cameron Odgers. Duvall was in the 28th Bomb Squadron and is listed as being on the Wall of the Missing at Manila American Cemetery. Wyatt says it shows him as being killed on 8 December 1941 and awarded the DFC and the Purple Heart. Two other Squadron members listed for that date are Cpl. Joseph Hriczko and Lt. Lonnie Wimberley. No information found so far neither has him listed as a B-17 crewman as of 12/08/41, nor as a crewman when the 19th moved to the Philippines. Duvall’s citation to the Distinguished Flying Cross he was awarded reads: “2nd Lt. Leslie Duvall, 0418431, Air Corps Army of the United States, distinguished himself by extraordinary achievement while participating in aerial flight as Pilot of a B-17 aircraft on 8 December 1941. During the Japanese attack on Clark Field, Lt Duvall succeeded in becoming airborne with his crew and managed to fight off and elude the enemy. After dark, with Clark Field unusable, his aircraft badly damaged, and himself wounded, Lt. Duvall ordered his

crew to parachute to safety, and then attempted to save his aircraft by landing at Fort Statsenberg without lights. The exemplary courage, fortitude, and selfless devotion to duty displayed by Lt. Duvall reflect the highest credit upon himself and the armed forces of the United States.” It is unfortunate that the 19th Bombardment Operations Journal notes all records covering the period from December 8 to December 16, 1941 were destroyed and were re-written from memory at a later date. It is very possible that Lt. Duvall’s service was omitted in this re-writing as well as perhaps others. George has said he will continue to search the records for any information on both Kreps and Duvall.

Robert Crawford would like to find information on his uncle, Stephen Bednar, a radio operator on a B-29, who was lost when his aircraft was downed either over Japan or the Sea of Japan. Robert says his family received a brief letter from the Defense Department, but has very little information on his uncle. They know nothing as to the Bomb Group Bednar was assigned, where he was stationed, or anything about his crew. There is a slim chance he might have been in the 19th BG, and yet another chance that someone would perhaps remember him, but it is worth a paragraph of effort. Contact information: Robert Crawford, 94 Cottage Drive, Safety Harbor, FL 34695. Phone: 727-501-4724. Email: Drynorustdogs@aol.com.

The Association is in debt to member Arvon Staats for sending his information and research on 1st Lt. Gorman D. Blackerby AO 765-598. An inquiry had been placed in the Association’s last quarter’s newsletter. Blackerby was the lone radar officer in the 30th Squadron at North Field at the beginning of the Korean ‘Police Action’ in late June 1950. He had returned to the States for reassignment in 1951, and for years no further information could be found on where or what had become of him. Staats reports that Blackerby was assigned to the 301st Air Refueling Squadron, 301st Bomb Wing at Barksdale AFB, LA. On 25 August 1952, he was the radar observer aboard a KB-29A (44-86420A) during a refueling mission when the number one engine caught fire. The pilot quickly feathered the prop and extinguished the fire. Upon returning to Barksdale, he executed emergency landing procedures, but while approaching the field the aircraft drifted to the left. When the pilot had to attempt a go-around on three engines, he did not have enough power, the aircraft stalled and crashed. All aboard the aircraft were killed except Lt. Blackerly. While he was alive, unfortunately he was severely burned. He was transferred to the burn center in San Antonio for treatment, but sadly passed away on 7 September 1952, about two weeks after the accident. He is buried in Woodson Cemetery, Woodson, TX. He has a brother, Wayne Blackerby who lives in Breckenridge, TX, which was also the hometown of Gorman. While closing another instance/chapter of one of our own, we would have hoped for a better outcome.

MISCELLANEOUS

A number of members have expressed their sincere appreciation for Elton Brown’s report in the last newsletter on finding and visiting Conrad Marvel. Among those heard from was Arie Geurtz who sent a copy of a letter he had written to Conrad. Arie recalled to Conrad that they had first met years ago during a Convention in Louisville, KY of the American Defenders of Bataan and Corregidor (ADBC). Geurtz thanked Marvel for helping him become a life member of the ADBC, as he had served with the 17th P-40 Squadron on Java. Along with his best wishes,

Geurtz sent a photo of himself and his wife, Barbara that he hoped would help Conrad remember them.

THE FATE OF 'TALL IN THE SADDLE'

Many thanks go to new Association member Lawrence Watts (see new member section) for sending us the following story, one about a 19th Bomb Group, 93rd Squadron B-29 and crew from North Field, Guam some 61 years ago. The story appeared in the Columbian newspaper, Vancouver, Washington, August 25, 2005. The 93rd aircraft set out from North Field on March 9, 1945 with 279 others to fire bomb Tokyo with 1,700 tons of incendiaries. Major Sam Bakshas, a Montana native, was the pilot of the 19th's B-29, 'Tall In The Saddle', nicknamed after its crewmen, all of whom were over 6 feet tall. Bakshas was not a regular member of the crew, as he had volunteered to be an observer on the flight, and his rank and experience – nine years senior to pilot Capt. Gordon Muster – made him the acting aircraft commander. Early morning of March 10, the wave of bombers approached Tokyo. Townsfolk at the village of Yatabe-machi watched from the high ground of a school site as search lights swept the night and a sea of fire engulfed the city. Some time later, the villagers stood in the street and watched as a single blazing aircraft, likely brought down by fighters or anti-aircraft fire, crashed into a rice field and pine forest 30 miles northeast of Tokyo, just outside Yatabe-machi. The 93rd's B-29 was just one of 14 that did not return from the raid. Bakshas and seven of the 12 crewmen died when the bomber hit the ground. The three sole survivors later died as prisoners of the Japanese, one of them when he was beheaded by his captor. On March 12, the local newspaper, the Ibraki Shimbun, published a story and two photographs of the crash, one of them showing the B-29's battered tail section and a partial ID number, 469686. Aldora, Sam Bakshas' wife, got word a few days later that her husband was dead. For nearly 50 years, she knew little more than that. In 1997, a retired North Carolina engineer, Lawrence Watts received a telephone call from Hidesaburo Kusama, a professor of international relations at a Japanese university. Watts and Kusama had known each other since the 1960s, when Kusama studied at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill for three years before returning home. Kusama was enlisting Watts' help in finding information on the crash of a B-29 bomber outside Tokyo in 1945. The bomber's ID number was 44-69686. Kusama had been an 8 year old that day in 1945 who had witnessed the crash, and for decades had wondered what became of the three prisoners of war that had been taken alive from the crash site near his village. Crash survivors Cpl. Glen H Hodak, 23, of Cambridge Springs, PA, and Cpl. Lavern Zehler, 30, of Batavia, NY were unhurt in the crash. They died, according to Kusama's report, in a Tokyo prison fire in May 1945. 2nd Lt. Leland P. Fishback, 22, of Thorntown, who had been badly burned and unconscious, was ordered beheaded by Japanese Lt. Col. Kimiya Ichinoe. On January 16, 1948, Ichinoe was sentenced by a war crimes court to death by hanging.

A narrow slab of marble embedded in a rock base shown on the next page now exists as a "peace monument" to the crew and its aircraft at the crash site. Kusama paid for the monument and bought the property it sits on. Hideo Hayashi is shown photographing the Japanese side, a repeat of what is on the English side. Hayashi, along with Kusama, as a young boy saw the crash. The complete article in the Columbian newspaper, and a booklet about the crash written by Kusama, sent by Watts contains much more information than has been possible to reproduce here. Anyone having further interest can request additional information.



B-29 Crash Peace Monument

This monument marks the spot where U.S. Air Force B-29 Number 44-69686 crashed on March 10, 1945, at 2:00AM, after having dropped fire bombs on Tokyo. B-29 crew members who lost their lives in this crash are as follows:

| | |
|------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Major Sam P. Bakshas | Capt. Gordon L. Muster |
| 2nd Lt. Eugene G. Cook | 1st Lt. Theodore R. Homling |
| 1st Lt. Earl J. Hake | 2nd Lt. John R. Hagadorn |
| Cpl. Willard A. Seitz | Cpl. Fred T. Hartley |
| Cpl. Donald J. Heaney | |

B-29 crew members who died later as Prisoners of War are as follows:

| | |
|----------------------------|------------------------|
| 2nd Lt. Leland P. Fishback | Cpl. Laverne J. Zehler |
| Cpl. Glen H. Hodak | |

Respectfully, crew member's names and data of "Tall In The Saddle" are as follows:
Maj. Sam P. Bakshas, SN 0403395, Acting Aircraft Cmdr., Ridgefield, WA. DOB: 10/08/11.
Capt. Gordon L. Muster, SN 0440990, Pilot, Green Bay, WI. DOB: 03/04/21.

2nd. Lt. Eugene G. Cook, SN 0777127, Co-Pilot, Sacramento, CA
 1st Lt. Theodore R. Homling, SN 0795860, Radar Op., Kearney, NE. DOB: 09/08/19.
 1st Lt. Earl J. Hake, SN 0669401, Bombardier, Platteville, WI. DOB: 04/19/16.
 2nd Lt. John R. Hagadorn, SN 0873800, Navigator, Schenectady, NY
 2nd Lt. Leland P. Fishback, SN 0868639, Flight Engineer, Thorntown, IN. DOB: 08/02/22.
 Cpl. Laverne J. Zehler, SN 12139226, (Radio Operator?) Batavia, NY. DOB: 07/06/14.
 Cpl. Willard A. Seitz, Gunner, SN 21821922, Lima, OH. DOB: 03/24/18.
 Cpl. Fred T. Harley, Gunner, SN 35778501, Cooksville, OH. DOB: 01/16/24.
 Cpl. Donald J. Heaney, Gunner, SN 36785322, Chicago, IL. DOB: 11/15/15.
 Cpl. Glen H. Hodak, Tail Gunner, SN 22188053, Cambridge Springs, PA. DOB: 03/17/22.
 One needs to realize looking at these airmen's birth dates, at the time of the crash in 1945, Bakshas was the oldest at 34, and Harley the youngest at 21(two with birth dates unknown).

MORLEY CHRISTENSEN – WORLD WAR II B-17 PILOT TO CHAPLAIN

Photos, a newspaper clipping and a nice letter sent to the Association from Beth Christensen, Morley Christensen's widow, is sincerely appreciated. She recounts some of her husband's earlier 19th Bomb Group activities that include passing through Hawaii in early December 1941 heading for the Philippines. With the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, Morley ended up in Brisbane and Mareeba where he flew 16 hour days bombing Japanese held islands. Christensen returned to Pyote, TX where he was a combat instructor, and later at Dalhart Air Base where he had orders to lead a flight of 60 planes to London. Pyote veterans will appreciate Beth's characterization of "Rattle Snake Air Base" when Morley had returned from Australia..."They (Morley et al) returned to 7,200 acres of University of Texas sand which had an Air Base and a filling station. As a bride from the wooded east part of Texas, it was really different!!"



Lt. Morley Christensen, Co-pilot, 4th from the left, standing. On to his left is Lt. Fester Norwood, Bombardier; next is Capt. Dick Ezzard, Pilot. Sgt. Chopping is said to be on the lower right. Beth believes the 10th crewman was missing. More of the unique story of Pilot to Chaplain in the next newsletter.

--- SUBJECTS COMING UP IN FUTURE NEWSLETTERS ---

- Excerpts from the 19th Bombardment Group Operations Journal- December 8, 1941 to February 1942 (Courtesy of George Wyatt & Jody Smith)
- “City of Milwaukee” Trilogy – Chuck Marotske
- More on “Kingbirds” – McNeilly & Brenegar – Missions and accounts
- Pictures and comments from Bob & Lorraine Grenz

** THE 10 BEST BOMBERS EVER - History/Military Channel **
 (judged using a number of criteria; range, pay-load, dependability, fire power, etc.)

| | | |
|------|---------------------|---------|
| # 10 | B-17G | US |
| # 9 | HANDLEY PAGE 0/400 | BRITISH |
| # 8 | JUNKERS JU-88A-4 | GERMAN |
| # 7 | TUPOLEV TU-95M | RUSSIAN |
| #6 | B-47 | US |
| #5 | LANCASTER MARK III | BRITISH |
| #4 | DEHAVILAND MOSQUITO | BRITISH |
| #3 | B-29 | US |
| #2 | B-2 SPIRIT | US |
| #1 | B-52 | US |

FINAL

“THE VERY IDEA OF FREEDOM PRESUPPOSES SOME OBJECTIVE MORAL LAW WHICH OVERARCHES RULERS AND RULED ALIKE. SUBJECTIVISM ABOUT VALUES IS ETERNALLY INCOMPATIBLE WITH DEMOCRACY. WE AND OUR RULERS ARE OF ONE KIND ONLY SO LONG AS WE ARE SUBJECT TO ONE LAW. BUT IF THERE IS NO LAW OF NATURE, THE ETHOS OF ANY SOCIETY IS THE CREATION OF ITS RULERS, EDUCATORS AND CONDITIONERS; AND EVERY CREATOR STANDS ABOVE AND OUTSIDE HIS OWN CREATION.”

---- C. S. LEWIS ---