



6<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group  
Association

TINIAN ISLAND  
1944 - 45

JANUARY  
2012



## San Diego By The Bay!

It was 27 years ago when 40 veterans of the more than 3,000 men of the 6<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group assembled in Dayton, Ohio to form the 6<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group Association. A lot of "water over the dam" in the ensuing years with the loss of close friends and spouses, but the organization has held together and 22 veterans along with 70 family members met in San Diego to reconnect and visit once again. And what a weekend it was and well chaperoned by Glenda Richards, Jeanne Holmes, John Creek, Rene Myers, Marilyn Creek, Lori Forsman, Dave Farquhar and his wife Hannah, Steve and Larry Dananay, Dave Wilson and a

host of others, all contributing in so many ways to help make our short time in the city so meaningful.

Also all the members and their guests had the pleasure of a harbor boat ride. Skipped by Keith Angel, son of Art who passed away earlier in the year. Along with his wife, mother and two crewmates the 1 ½ hour trip gave one the feeling the Navy's in command of the harbor with submarines and carriers. Two of which were the Midway and the Carl Vinson, the latter noted for having the deck off of which Osama Bin Laden slid into his watery grave. The hotel guests returning from the trip at 5:30 on Thursday were notified the city was in a black out. No electricity from west Texas areas across New Mexico, Arizona all of southern California to Los Angeles. Seems an electrician threw the wrong switch on a power grid and with night approaching it was lights out with no electrical use for the 9<sup>th</sup> Floor Wine and Cheese Hospitality Party. That was moved to the lobby and all the guests were given glow lights to unpack by after they walked up to



their rooms. The party went well, guests dined on hors d'oeuvres (no restaurants open) and obviously early to bed for all.

Electricity was restored at 1:30 AM so everything was back to normal. Early Friday we headed out on a sight seeing tour of the area and in the afternoon we went to the massive Fort Rosecrans National Cemetery for a very moving service in memory of all our WW II 6<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group comrades, those killed in action and the more recently deceased members.

That evening a dinner cruise of the bay made for a long but very enjoyable day.

Saturday morning to the WW II carrier Midway which is now a museum in dry dock. With 4500 sailors on board when at sea it was very impressive. More touring with a stop for a picnic lunch, and from there back to the hotel for a members' meeting and the selection of Charlestown, SC for the 2012 Reunion. The banquet followed with 114 in attendance.

The dinner speaker was Gen John Handy with a very impressive talk on the Air Force National Guard on 911. Lots of dinner table talk with an auction and 6<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group Members and family then headed to the Hospitality Room. More "give and take" while younger people were all ears as the Tinian veterans shared their wartime stories. Sunday morning's service, Larry Dananay filled in for our Chaplain Jim Hays, who was unable to attend this year. Soon bags were packed and with hugs and farewells it was "See you in Charleston" echoed in the lobby as the attendees headed for the airport.





# MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

As I write this message I am concerned about how the 2012 reunion in Charleston will be handled and yet elated at how well the 2011 reunion in San Diego was handled.

San Diego got off to a rough start when the electricity went out leaving no elevator service to the already arranged top floor Hospitality Room with the afternoon arrivals stranded downstairs. A few of our more energetic members carried their luggage up the fire escape stairways to their darkened rooms. After that evening things took off very well with the midnight restoration of lights and elevator service. My congratulations to all who tackled the stairs and the dark hallways. I was very pleased none got lost and retained their enthusiasm in spite of this early challenge. From then on it was one of the best organized and most interesting reunions we have had. My congratulations to all who performed so superbly under the initial handicap, which was caused by a widespread loss of power in Southern California and Arizona.

One concern we face is our dwindling member numbers at the reunions. In San Diego we had only 19 original members of the Sixth. With the USA WWII population concentrated in the Eastern USA I would hope we might attract more attendees at the 2012 Charleston reunion. So get ready for another classic event with, hopefully a few more members able to attend this one. And don't forget to bring your Pirate Head name tags and caps.

✪ Virgil Morgan, President ✪

## FROM THE EDITOR

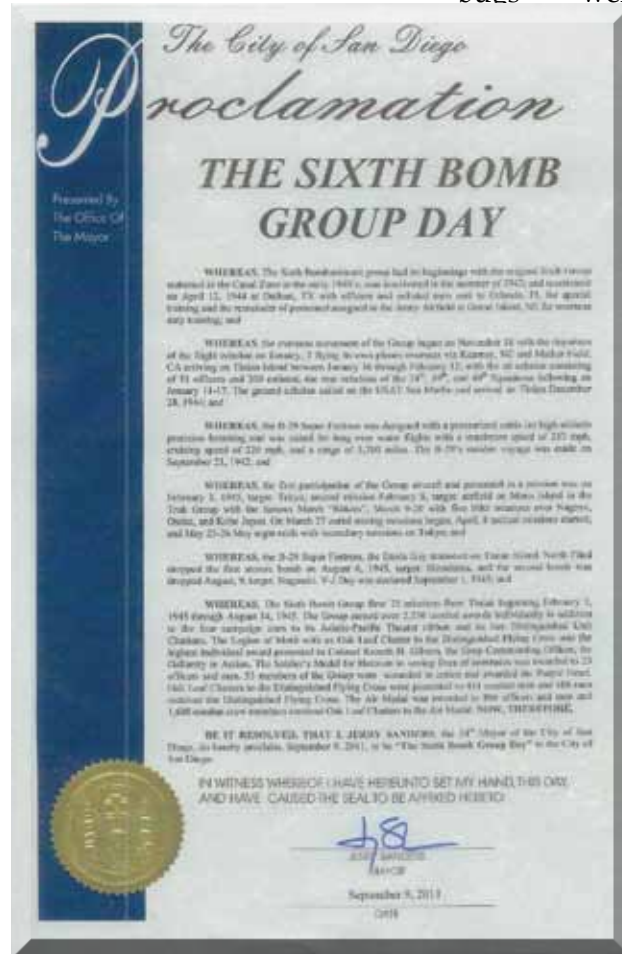
With the digital camera age upon us, photography has really changed from my days on Tinian when assigned the post war "cushy" task of photographing aerial and ground images of Tinian for the 6<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group's PIRATE'S LOG. And nowhere is it more obvious than on the pages of this newsletter where "shutter bugs" went wild.



To name a few we can thank for their photographs, I'll start with Lori Forsman, Jack Koser, Phil Conroy, General John Handy, and David Wilson.

As always two days of travel and three days of activities goes way too fast. Besides the photos within this issue, on page 10 is an article on General John Handy who spoke eloquently at the banquet on the terrorist attacks on 9/11 and the role the US Air Force Reserve played in it. Then on page 4 is Larry Dananay's article on *World War II Memorial Registration* and why documentation of WW II veterans war time experience is so important. Another article of interest to flight crew members is found on page 3 covering a prisoner of war mission.

✪ William B. Webster ✪



## SAN DIEGO REUNION ATTENDEES

Angel, Elaine, Keith, Rae Ann  
Brown, Norm, Bev  
Carlock Jr, Dan, Sr, Dan  
Conroy, Philip, Cathy  
Creek, John, Marilyn  
Myers, Rene  
Williamson, Loftis, Liam  
Cyhaniuk, Jill, Paul, Julie, John, Tom  
Dananay, Milan, Lawrence, Steve  
Farquhar Jr, David, Jackie, M, K,  
Dave III, Hannah  
Frick, Robert, Millicent  
Gililand, Kiki  
Gleacher, Donald, D  
Gresko, George, Maria, Mary

Handy, John  
Eichelman Sr, Martin, Jr, Martin  
Higgins, Warren, Max, Robert  
Voorhees, Susan  
Murphy, Scott  
Holmes, Jeanne  
Horst, Herb, Alice, Palmer  
Killen, Theodore  
Koser, Jack  
Kruger, Dick, Doris  
Kunz, Will, Margaret  
Linderwell, Leon, Vicki  
Litzenberg, William, Marc  
Forsman, Lori  
Moyer, June

Armstrong, L  
Dinius, Joyce  
Evans, Karla  
Graf, Tami  
Jones, Nancy  
Larsen, Chuck, Laurie  
Misner, Richard  
Moyer, Paul, Sarah, Steve  
Newman, Cindy  
Radlinger, J, R  
Randall, Richards, Kathy, Joyce  
Reagan, Bob, Jim, Ed  
Reed, Bob, Marjorie  
Richards, Glenda  
Ritter, Charles, Rob, Gayle, Will

Daniels, Clara  
Sharp, Dick  
Harris, Michelle  
Sidders, Dick  
Baudisch, Paula, Robert  
Smith, Claudia, Diane  
Trinkhaus, Jackie, John  
Bell, Jennifer  
Vincent, Ed, Kelly, Kent  
Sullivan, Carol  
Webster, Bill  
Zander, Nancy  
Wilson, Dave



# THE LAST MISSION

## of Crew 3918

BY ROBERT FRICK, NAVIGATOR

**A Prisoner of War Mission** to supply 9,000 pounds of food and medical supplies to the prisoners of war at Peiping Camp #4 near Weihsien, Manchuria, China.

This is the first POW mission flown by our crew and the second POW supply mission flown by the 39th squadron. Very little is known about this camp as well as the territory where it is located. The most difficult part of the flight will be to locate the camp. Also a possible shortage of gas could occur.

### FIRST LEG - Tinian to Iwo Jima - September 1, 1945.

We awoke at dawn - Breakfasted at 06:00 - Were briefed for the mission at 06:30 - loaded on trucks at 07:15 for travel to the flight line - engines start at 08:45 and takeoff for Iwo Jima at 09:02.

We leveled off at 8500 feet with an indicated air speed of 205 mph. At 12.07 we sighted Iwo Jima 40 miles ahead and landed there at 12:20. We left the plane in charge of the ground crew to be serviced. We stayed overnight.

#### IWO JIMA

Iwo hasn't changed much since we had landed here for gas on our 22 mission July 9. It will never rid itself of the drab look. Dull grey suspended clay dust greets the eye everywhere. The island only varies in monotony by the dust covered brown tents and the occasional dull grey of a few Quonset huts.

It is more than ever a beehive of activity. Most of the island is a commotion, bustling within a pall of brown dust mixed in with the black dust of the volcanic ash. Fighters are constantly roaring overhead coming and going since the 5<sup>th</sup> Air Force moved in.

### SECOND LEG-Iwo Jima to China and return - September 2, 1945

Take off at 03:17 - leveled off at 8,000 feet - 6,800 gallons of gas. Planned reserve 297 gallons. Went to sleep on a blanket on the nose wheel hatch. Awoke at 06:05. Weather at present ok.

07:04 - Sighted the island of Tanega Shima just south of Kyushu. 07:10 - Weather is getting bad ahead and severe to the right of course. Have turned on the radar to find a path through the storm. 07:30 - Turbulence is becoming severe, weather is closing in. Thunderheads ahead. 07:45 - Turned around and are skirting the storm to the left. Weather is souper but better. 08:15 Back on course. 08:40 Have been flying in heavy rain for some time. Turbulence is letting up. 08:55 - Breaking through the weather. Cold front behind us. We are on top of an under cast. (Note: We are not sufficiently supplied with food for this mission. The thought of ten more hours without food is not pleasant. Back to sleep.)

09:40 - Am awake. Weather has cleared up entirely. Expecting land in about 60 minutes. 10:16 Sighted land, (China.) Landmark is about 8 degrees right. Were right on course. Sighted several junks off the coast. 10:35 - Coming up on Ch'ing-Tao and its bay. Ch'ing Tao looks like a nice city of about 70,000. The buildings have rust colored tile roofs and grey walls. The streets are laid out similar to an American city. 10:42 We are crossing the bay. The far side of the bay has no line of demarcation. The water continues in to the flooded rice fields. The fields beyond resemble logs floating down a river. They are long and narrow.

10:52 - Sighted the railroad which will parallel our course to Weihsien. It is supposed to be at the junction of the railroad and the third river. The landscape and towns all look the same; most of them have walls around them. From the air the country looks beautiful - We have crossed the first river. 10:59 - We are coming to the third river. We have let down to 2,000 feet. This does not look right. We were told at the briefing that if we were south of the course we would mis-count the river junctions. Our navigator said that our ETA made this the second river. We continued on.

11:03 - Approaching another river the town on the railway does not seem large enough. We can't mess around here too long, gas is a problem. 11:08 - This must be it. Now we have to locate the POW Camp. We were given two possible places to find it. Then we spotted another plane dropping supplies just ahead of us.

11:14 - We are now on our dropping run behind the other plane. Now they have dropped their supplies from the rear bomb bay. What a beautiful sight. The mission

compound is a small compact enclosure. The foliage is tall trees and shrubbery. All of it is dark green. The red tile roofs and white walls provide a pleasant contrast. Two story buildings predominate, but a few are three story and two or three towers stand about 4 stories high. Just behind all this at the moment, parachutes of many different colors, red, blue, green, orange yellow and scarlet. Coming up on the missionary we see hundreds of people running around on the grounds.

11:17 Cargo away. Had to salvo all of it. Usually on POW supply missions some kind of damage can be done to the aircraft because the cargo is set on a large one piece rack. Sometimes when released the slip stream sends it toward the tail, where it may hit part of the plane. However all went well. 11:20 - Going around to have a better look and take pictures. We passed at tree top level. The people on the ground were running all over. They seem to think we are going to make another drop. 11:28 - As we circled we passed over the city of Weihsien, a city of 70,000 enclosed within a mammoth wall. The city square was jammed with people watching the spectacle. I don't think they had ever seen a B-29. 12:02 - Our job was done. We climbed to 15,000 feet and headed for Iwo Jima. On the way we were accompanied by two F6F's Navy fighters one on each wing. We didn't like them being there. Our Fire Control swiveled the guns. The fighters got the message and left. The rest of our flight to Iwo was uneventful. We hoped we had enough gas. 17:15 - We landed at Iwo. All the crew is tired. We parked in the gas line. We were 4<sup>th</sup> in line. I filed a clearance for Tinian and waited while they gassed up the plane.

### CREW

William Lemme  
Tari Miller  
George Hauer  
Robert Frick  
Paul Eastman  
Harry Buergin  
Ivan Strommen  
Bill Laughlin  
Emory Worth  
Charles Herring  
Gene Hines

AC  
Pilot  
Bombardier  
Navigator  
Radar Operator  
Flight Engineer  
Radio Operator  
Fire Control  
Waist Gunner  
Waist Gunner  
Tail Gunner

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### THIRD LEG - Iwo Jima to Tinian

18:20 - We left Iwo for Tinian and leveled off at 8,000 feet - The weather was good. Our ETA was 21:23  
21:25 - We landed On Tinian.

**Time:** 3hrs 25 min to Iwo,  
14hrs 10 min Iwo to China/back to Iwo,  
3hrs 10 min Iwo to Tinian.  
**Total Flying Time:** 20 hrs. 45 min.  
We had flown a total of 4,650 miles.



# WORLD WAR II MEMORIAL REGISTRATION

As we continue to make video recordings of our honored veterans at the reunions, I want to remind everyone of the importance of registering these men and women on the World War II Memorial Site as an everlasting record of their service to our country.

In 1993 the Congress directed the American Battle Monuments Commission to build the World War II Memorial in honor of the men and women who helped win this Great War, whether they served in battle or on the home front.

The completed Memorial now stands as a permanent reminder of the sacrifices made by a remarkable generation to preserve the freedom and rights we have today. To compliment the physical site in Washington, DC, there is an electronic database listing those who have registered.



Our 6th Bomb Group veterans, their children or grand children need to find the time to register these men and women on the WWII Memorial site as a permanent record of their service. The process is not difficult and full details are available at [www.wwiimemorial.com](http://www.wwiimemorial.com) under the tab WWII Registry. Once at the Registry page, click "Register an Honoree" and follow the directions. Everyone knows the story of WWII, but not many hear the seemingly insignificant tales told by individuals at the reunions. These are the memories that need to be preserved for future generations. Feel free to search the database for other members of the 6th Bomb Group for ideas on what to write.

Larry Dananay

## FORT ROSECRANS NATIONAL CEMETERY



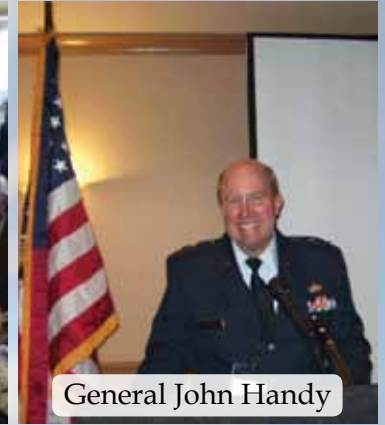
**Sitting Left to right:** Richard Randall, Bob Frick, Marty Eichelman, Dave Farquhar, Emil Dananay, Bob Reed  
**Row Behind Chairs:** George Gresko, Dick Kruger, Bill Webster, Herb Horst, Bob Reagan, Ted Killen, Willis Kunz  
**Back Row:** Don Gleacher, Ed Vincent, Virgil Morgan, Warren Higgins, Richard Sidders, Charles Ritter  
**Attended but Missing from Photo:** Jack Koser, William Litzenberg, Richard Sharp



# San Diego Reunion 2011!



Rob Ritter, Jim and Bob Reagan



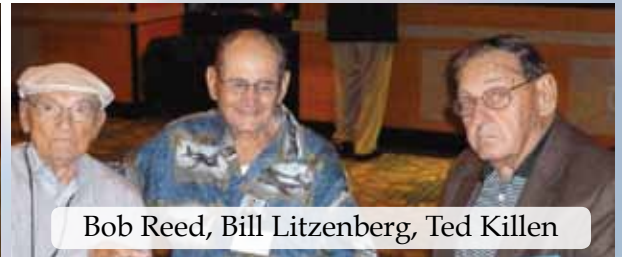
General John Handy



Aaron, Marc and Bill Litzenberg



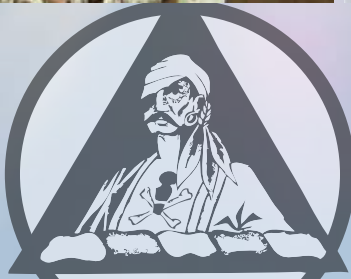
Jackie and David Farquhar



Bob Reed, Bill Litzenberg, Ted Killen



Ed Reagan and George Gresko



Ed Vincent and Herb Horst



Phil and Kathy Conroy



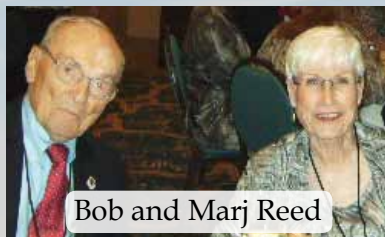
Bob and Jim Reagan



Bill Webster & Nancy Zander



Warren Higgins



Bob and Marj Reed



Mary Gresko & Richard Sidders



Alice and JP Horst



# San Diego Reunion 2011!



Bob Frick



Millicent Frick and Pres. Virgil Morgan



Rea Ann and Elaine Angel



Charles Ritter



"And that's the way it was!"



Marilyn Mckay



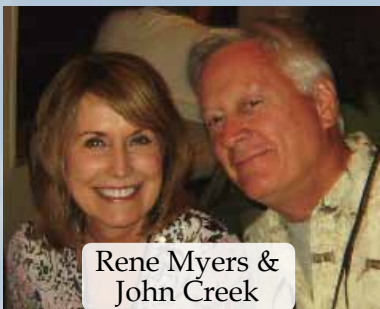
Warren & Max Higgins



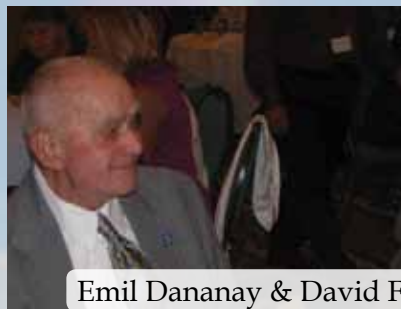
Martin Eichelman



Jeanne Holmes



Rene Myers & John Creek



Emil Dananay & David Farquhar



Jack Koser



Keith and Rea Ann Angel



Willis Kunz



Dave Farquhar & Warren Higgins



Martin and Marty Eichelman



# San Diego Reunion 2011 - All Aboard!



Dave & Hannah Farquhar



Hal & Carol Whiteside



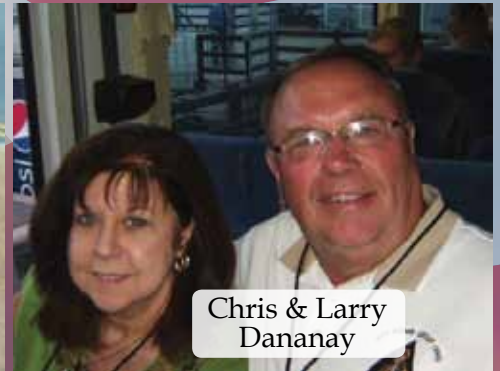
Dick & Doris Kruger



Don & Dodie Gleacher



Bob & Millie Frick



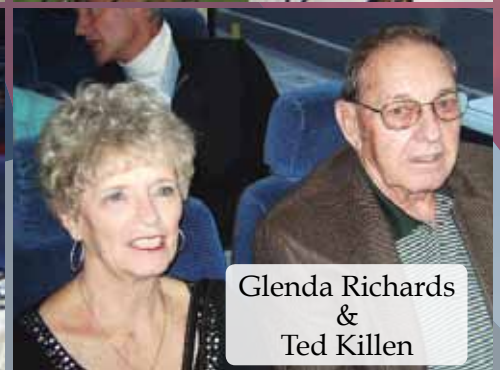
Chris & Larry Dananay



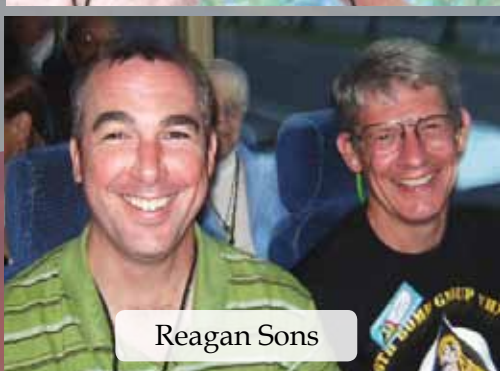
Claudia & Diane Smith



Ed Vincent & Son



Glenda Richards & Ted Killen



Reagan Sons



Jacquie & David Farquhar



Keith Angel & Jeanne Holmes







Dick & Doris Kruger



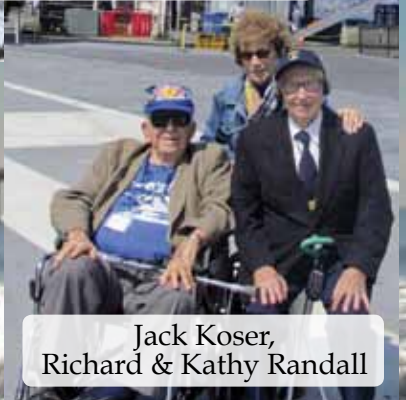
Herb & Alice Horst,  
Lori Forsman



David Farquhar & Emil Dananay



Herb & Alice  
Horst



Jack Koser,  
Richard & Kathy Randall



- ✦ **George Lewis** – November 20, 1984 Staff Sergeant, CFC Gunner on the B-29 “Connecticut Yankee II”, 40th Bomb Squadron.
- ✦ **Bernard E. Snyder** of Conestoga, PA passed away on June 4, 2011. Staff Sergeant, Tail Gunner on the B-29 “Grider Gal”, 39th Bomb Squadron.
- ✦ **Elizabeth R. Webster** – Wife of Bill Webster of the 22nd Photo Lab. Mother of Bill IV, Paul, Nancy, Beard, Andrew, Sarah and Christopher passed away suddenly on June 29, 2011. She led a very active life devoted to her children while thoroughly enjoying her ten grand children and hobbies of gardening, rug hooking, quilting, a lifetime lap swimmer and the 6th Bomb Group Reunions with the many friends she met over the years.
- ✦ **David S. Laning, Jr.** of Trenton, NJ passed away on December 21, 2010. Staff Sergeant, on the B-29 “Speagle Eagle”, 39th Bomb Squadron.
- ✦ **William W. Hague, Jr.** of San Antonio, TX passed away on October 9, 2010. Staff Sergeant, Radarman on the B-29 “Earthquake McGoon”, 40th Bomb Squadron.
- ✦ **Joseph F. Dahm** of Finleyville, PA passed away on May 29, 2010. Staff Sergeant, Ground Crew, 24th Bomb Squadron.
- ✦ **Henry A. Rowen** of Meridian, MS passed away on October 22, 2009. Tech Sergeant, Ground Crew Chief, 39th Bomb Squadron.
- ✦ **Barney R. Olive** of Richardson, TX passed away on September 10, 2011. Captain, A/C on the B-29 “Speagle Eagle”, 39th Bomb Squadron.
- ✦ **Floyd Deterding** - b. Dec. 7, 1915 - d. Jan. 12, 2012 - (Lt. Col. Retired) Prior to joining the 6th Bomb Group on Tinian serving as Chief Maintenance Officer, he served in the Pacific in the Philippines and Australia under General MacArthur. (Additional biographical information to follow in the next newsletter).

### When advised of Barney Olive's death, Harry George his very close friend wrote the following.

*“Barney came to us from Hallsville Texas, a bundle of bluster, but all heart. To hear him tell it, there was no other town on earth as friendly as Hallsville. He had worked oil well rigs and teams and his stories could keep your jaw dropping to the wood planking of the Quonset hut porch for hours. In 1943, Barney was one of the pilots stationed in Panama with the 6th Group when it was in the Caribbean, prior to being designated the Sixth Bombardment Group (VH) in Grand Island, NE. He joined the Sixth again in March of 1945 on Tinian with a crew he trained stateside. By policy, his crew was to fly five missions with guidance by a combat experienced aircraft commander while Barney gained the combat experience with other 6th Group pilots. As fate would have it, his crew was lost during the great Tokyo fire-raid of 25 - 26 May, 1945. Barney was grief stricken. You can imagine how hard that was to overcome. Barney will be sorely missed at our future reunions. Nell was always so proud of him. Barney Olive was legendary.”*

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Eunice Plax maintains the “place of record” for deceased 6<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group Members. Please send information to: [Eunice Plax](mailto:euniceplax@cox.net), 10312 West Talisman Road, Sun City, AZ 85351 (623) 875-0501 or [euniceplax@cox.net](mailto:euniceplax@cox.net)

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## THE ARMY HOUR



Just prior to General Handy's talk, Harry George, History Emeritus who was unable to attend had prepared a short script on the 6th Bomb Group from inception and training in the United States to arriving on Tinian in late 1944 and subsequent bombing missions over Japan. This was followed by a four minute tape of a live interview played all across America at 9 A M May 26, 1945 with the crew of a crippled B-29 forced to bail out over Iwo Jima returning from the 6th's roughest incendiary mission over Tokyo. All crew members survived and this bombing mission earned the group its first Distinguished Unit Citation.





MAJOR GENERAL JOHN B. HANDY



# National Guard Bureau

General Officer Management Office, Arlington, VA

As our guest speaker at the banquet, we were fortunate to have Major General John B. Handy, son in law of Martin Eichelman, member of the 6th Bomb Group. General Handy retired from the Air National Guard in 2005, having served as

the mobilization assistant to the Director of the Defense Contract Management Agency. Prior to this, he served as the Commander of the District of Columbia National Guard.

It was in that capacity that he spoke to us, recounting the story of the DC Air National Guard's role on September 11th, 2001. His units, especially the 113th Wing, which

flew F-16 Falcon fighters, found themselves suddenly playing a critical role in protecting our nation's capital on that eventful day.

With a distinguished educational background, General Handy was commissioned as a Lt. in 1973. As a civil engineering officer, he served in Air Force Civil Engineering positions in Arizona, Greece, and the National Capital Region eventually rising to the rank of Major General. Much of the content of his speech can be found in the following article in Aviation Week and Space Technology. In addition, a fascinating hour-long interview with one of the pilots who flew that day can be found at the CSPAN website at this address:

<http://www.c-span.org/Events/AHTV-Remembers-911/10737423828-1/>



## AVIATION WEEK & SPACE TECHNOLOGY



By William B. Scott

ANDREWS AFB, MD. -- With Pentagon in flames and hijacked aircraft threatening Washington, White House scrambled fighters with little or no armament. Within minutes of American Airlines Flight 77 hitting the Pentagon on Sept. 11, Air National Guard F-16s took off from here in response to a plea from the White House to "Get in the air now!" Those fighters were flown by three pilots who had decided, on their own, to ram a hijacked airliner and force it to crash, if necessary. Such action almost certainly would have been fatal for them, but could have prevented another terrorism catastrophe in Washington.

One of those F-16s launched with no armament--no missiles and no usable ammunition in its 20-mm. gun. The 121st squadron's day had started normally. Three F-16s were flying an air-to-ground training mission on a range in North Carolina, 180 naut. mi. away. At Andrews, several officers were in a scheduling meeting when they received word that the World Trade Center had been hit by an aircraft. Minutes later, after United Airlines Flight 175 slammed into the second WTC tower, a squadron pilot called a friend in the Secret Service "to see what was going on. He was told some bad things were happening.

"After the Pentagon was hit, we were told there were more [airliners] coming. Not 'might be'; they were coming," Mozley recalled.

Sasseville grabbed three F-16 pilots and gave them a curt briefing. Another call from the Secret Service commanded, "Get in the air now!" Almost simultaneously, a call from someone else in the White House declared the Washington area "a free-fire zone. That meant we were given authority to use force, if the situation required it, in defense of the nation's capital, its property and people," Sasseville said.

"By this time, [commercial] airplanes were landing, but there were still several unidentified ones flying. One was in the northwest [area], basically coming down the [Potomac] River," Thompson said. Later, they would learn that the FAA and Norad's Northeast Air Defense Sector (NEADS)

were tracking the hijacked United Flight 93, and feared it was coming toward Washington. Thanks to intervention by passengers, the aircraft ultimately crashed in Pennsylvania.

Another call from the Secret Service commanded, "Get in the air now!" Almost simultaneously, a call from someone else in the White House declared the Washington area "a free-fire zone. That meant we were given authority to use force, if the situation required it, in defense of the nation's capital, its property and people," Sasseville said. "By this time, [commercial] airplanes were landing, but there were still several unidentified ones flying. One was in the northwest [area], basically coming down the [Potomac] River," Thompson said. Later, they would learn that the FAA and Norad's Northeast Air Defense Sector (NEADS) were tracking the hijacked United Flight 93, and feared it was coming toward Washington. Thanks to intervention by passengers, the aircraft ultimately crashed in Pennsylvania.

MINUTES LATER, Sasseville and Lucky were in the air, roughly 6 min. after they had reached their F-16s. "We all realized we were looking for an airliner--a big airplane. That was [United] Flight 93; the track looked like it was headed toward D.C. at that time."

Obviously, there was no precedent to draw upon. All the pilots were relying on their training and ability to think under pressure.

It's clear that Hutchison, Sasseville and Lucky knew their options were limited for bringing down a hijacked airliner headed for an undetermined target in the capital city. Although reluctant to talk about it, all three acknowledge they were prepared to ram a terrorist-flown aircraft, if necessary.

Sasseville and Lucky each had 511 rounds of ammo, but that only provided roughly a 5-sec. burst of the 20-mm. gun. And where should they shoot to ensure a hijacked aircraft would be stopped? Sasseville planned to fire from behind and "try to saw off one wing. I needed to disable it as soon as possible--immediately interrupt its aerodynamics and bring it down." His alternative was "to hit it--cut the wing off with my wing.



If I played it right, I'd be able to bail out. One hand on the stick and one hand on the ejection handle, trying to ram my airplane into the aft side of the [airliner's] wing," he said. Possibly the highest ranking pilot in the area, Sasseville "essentially declared myself the CAP [combat air patrol] commander and set up deconfliction altitudes so we didn't run into each other. There really wasn't time for niceties." For the rest of the day, a dozen or so fighters rotated in and out of the region, running intercepts on myriad helicopters and light aircraft.

A miracle of the post-attack hours on Sept. 11 was that no aircraft was shot down accidentally, a credit to the training and discipline of U.S. fighter crews.

On that first day, many of the pilots flying CAP over Washington, New York and other U.S. cities were faced with the very real possibility of having to shoot down or ram their fighter into an air transport filled with innocent passengers.

In the afternoon, Sasseville and Lucky were flying their second

mission of the day--armed with AIM-9 missiles now--when they were told to contact an AWACS aircraft in the area and "expect special tasking." Unable to communicate by secure or encrypted means, the AWACS controller lowered his voice and told Sasseville via radio they were going to "escort Air Force One," President Bush's aircraft. Sasseville and the two F-15s later joined on Air Force One, while Lucky positioned her F-16 about 10 naut. mi. in front of the 747. Surrounded by fighters, Air Force One descended rapidly toward its home base. All of the fighters remained with the 747 until the latter landed, then climbed and established a CAP over Andrews.

Despite being short of aircrews the next few days, the 121st flew continuously for about 63 hr., maintaining protective CAPs over Washington. They were aided by fighters from other ANG, Reserve and active-duty units, as well. "We were generating airplanes faster than they could put 'em up," remarked Belknap. "And we still are."



## The Real *Pirates* Formerly of the Carribbean

*The title is from our new found friend's article in the "Air Force Print News Today" - Air Force News from Around the World! Bill Polson,*

*Historian of the 6th Air Mobility Wing at MacDill Air Field, Florida joined us at the reunion and wrote about the earlier 6th, we of the WW II era.*

SAN DIEGO, Calif. -- For a few short days recently, the pirate with skull and crossbones - the distinctive emblem of the 6th from long ago when it had been stationed in the Caribbean - rose from the past to relive a time when huge silver-gleaming bomber planes roared from a tiny island in the Pacific to help end World War II. From Sept. 8-11, this old emblem and the men that flew under it came together for a reunion in San Diego sponsored by the Sixth Bombardment Group Association. The approximately 110 people who attended this year's event included 25 veterans with their family members and friends. They gathered to share their past with family, hook up with old buddies, catch up with each other's lives, and add a few embellishments to old war stories from long ago. "It's just amazing how they light up when they get around each other during these reunions," said Jeanne Holmes, a co-organizer of the reunion. "Sometimes they'll start talking about stories that even their own families have never heard before." During the latter years of World War II, from 1944-45, these men served in flight crews or ground crews of the 6th Bombardment Group. The assignment of this band of brothers revolved around a then-new super plane; the B-29 "Superfortress." According to the association's historical record, the Pirate's Log, "These were the days of fanciful speculations and exaggerated rumors. Some typical stories were: a B-29 could fly non-stop around the world; it carried armament equal to a light cruiser (a Navy ship); it carried a bombload of a B-17 squadron." "You have to remember that none of us had ever seen a B-29 before," said Don Gleacher, a native of Fairfield, Conn., who served as a tail gunner on the Superfortress nicknamed 'Reamatroid'. "At the time, they only had these new planes over in the China-Burma-India Theater. We had only heard stories about the Superfortress. Most of us had trained to be a B-17 crewmember, but all of a sudden after we came out of training we had to know how to handle this new one." Once fact had been separated from fiction during training at Grand Island Army Airfield in Nebraska in the spring of 1944, these new members of the 6th Bomb Group learned they were headed to the Pacific. There, they would be stationed on the small island of Tinian in the Northern Mariana chain. Their missions involved flying hundreds of miles across the Pacific, avoiding enemy

fighter planes and anti-aircraft fire, bombing military targets on the Japanese mainland, and then hopefully returning back to Tinian before they ran out of fuel. Some of them didn't make it. Glenda Richards, the other co-organizer of this year's reunion and the wife of pilot Jeffrey Richards, noted that the bonds they forged during those difficult times have strengthened over the years. "For example, some of these guys were taken prisoner and kept in the same prison camp," she said. "We have two of our veterans that really connect when they get together because of everything they went through." She particularly pointed out the crew of the B-29 nicknamed "Blind Date/Lady's Delight," which had been shot down during a night bombing raid on Tokyo on May 23, 1945. They were eventually captured and taken to the main prison of the Kempei Tai (the notorious Japanese secret police often equated to Hitler's Gestapo) in Tokyo, adjacent to the Imperial Palace grounds. Two of the current surviving members of that crew, tail gunner Milan "Emil" Dananay, from New Kensington, Penn, and David Farquhar, Jr., from Redlands, Calif., attended this year's reunion. "I was scared," said Dananay. "I tried to hide the parachute, and then went into a cave. Eventually I got hungry and had to come out. A little boy spotted me in the fields as I was walking past a tomato patch. He ran back to the village and I ran into the woods nearby. Soon afterwards the soldiers started searching. I was caught in the woods." To honor their service, the City of San Diego sponsored a ceremony on Sept. 9 at the Fort Rosecrans National Cemetery, located on a scenic bluff overlooking the city. Guest speaker Air Force Col. (Retired) Clark Kholos recounted the many successes of these men as they flew some of the most dangerous missions of the war. "They earned over 2,250 combat awards individually in addition to the four campaign stars to their Asiatic-Pacific Theater ribbon and two Distinguished Unit Citations." As part of the service, the City of San Diego issued a proclamation marking Sept. 9, 2011 as "The Sixth Bomb Group Day." The following day, the entire group of veterans, family and friends took a self-guided tour aboard the museum ship USS Midway at the San Diego Aircraft Carrier Museum to take in a little military aviation nostalgia. Coincidentally, the Navy commissioned USS Midway on Sept. 10, 1945 - a little more than a week after the Japanese surrender onboard the battleship USS Missouri. Some of the veterans in the group had flown their B-29s in a huge formation over USS Missouri as part of that same ceremony in Tokyo Bay eight days earlier. This year's event marked the 23rd time that the Sixth Bombardment Group Association veterans have gathered together over the past 27 years. Their first reunion in 1984 drew only 40 members, although attendance at subsequent events jumped to as high as 330. However, for those who came this year, and for those who will attend next year's reunion in Charleston, S.C., and wherever else after that, these reunions mean more than just a number count. "For us, this is about the things we've done, the places we've been, and the airplanes we've flown," said William Webster, a native of Frontenac, Minn., who had served as a ground and aerial photographer for the Group. "This is a chance to see the other Group members and share a very special bond. This is camaraderie."



*The numbers next to your name indicate your current membership status.*

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☆☆☆ **IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT** ☆☆☆

**Dues payment applies to the current year and years going forward as all past dues are forgiven. Membership dues are paid through the last year of the numbers following your name on the newsletter label above.**

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# Reunion Committee Report

The process has begun for setting-up the location and activities for the next reunion in Charleston, SC. We have gathered information from several hotels and also got some ideas on things to do while in the Charleston area. The Board gave us the OK to look at some dates in the summer months when the grandchildren are out of school so they might be able to attend and learn what grandpa did in the war. Rates for the summer months are comparable to the September dates we've been used to the past couple years. We're hoping to get down to Charleston early in the year to lock up a hotel and get a first hand look at the attractions. Very close by is the new Boeing Plant, Charleston AFB, the



very beautiful Aquarium, various plantations, the CSS Hunley, a Confederate Warship and the first submarine to sink an enemy warship along with the USS Yorktown (CV-10) which is now berthed at Patriot's Point in Charleston, SC. Our intention this year is to provide outside activities for those interested, as well as in-house speakers and activities for those who prefer a more relaxed and casual setting. If summer dates are secured, we will be sending out a supplement to the newsletter with the reunion details. We're looking forward to seeing everyone this year in Charleston.

*The Reunion Committee*