



6th Bomb Group Association

TINIAN ISLAND 1944 - 45

JANUARY
2014



Milwaukee 6th Bomb Group Reunion Recap

Well the holidays have come and gone for yet another year and it gives us a little extra time to sit back and to reflect on and enjoy the splendid memories we created with each other last October. It was the Charles Ritter Family's privilege and honor to host the annual reunion in our grand city of Milwaukee. We had a lot of fun putting on this event for the Boys of the 6th Bomb Group. After months of planning it was really special to see everyone start to arrive in town on Thursday afternoon. It's always very nice to see the regulars but do I daresay even neater to see the nubies whether they be veterans or grandchildren experiencing their first taste of a really great weekend. The exchange of stories and antidotes across multi-generations is always remarkable to observe.

The big event started off on a high note with a welcoming gala reception in the six floor atrium inside our remarkable hotel. Lifelong friendships were easily renewed and new ones started over the bountiful appetizers and a few cold ones. As fate would have it our reunion group had our very own "Cheers Bar" called The Swinging Door across the street from our hotel. This night, like the next two would find many late-night revelers finishing their day off with even more remembrances and much camaraderie at this fine establishment. I was told the 6th Bomb Group aviators were well represented here as well.

On Friday we were all treated to a wonderful long day of activities. After a great breakfast we took a short bus trip to the Harley-Davidson Museum and learned about their immense contribution to the war effort. The founder's daughter, Jeanie Davidson, gave us a great presentation about growing up in that era over a splendid luncheon spread. After lunch, Tim and Val Ritter gave an informative bus tour of the City for a large proportion of those in attendance. During Tim's interesting dissertation, the bus stopped at the War Memorial and in behalf of the 6th Bomb Group we laid a wreath here and had a respectful moment of silence. The night was capped off by a delightful nautical cruise up the Milwaukee River and out to Lake Michigan. A fantastic steak dinner was served with the skyline lit up for all to admire. Now it was definitely time to get some shuteye after this busy day!

Daybreak broke with the usual early risers sauntering down for breakfast. They could not have predicted what a special day this would be! The crew started off with a tour of The Miller Brewery one of our nation's largest. We loved the tour and the beer tasting with Miller Company veterans at the "Caves" was another highlight. Next, we took a short hop and landed at the historic and stately Wisconsin Club for what proved to be an incredible luncheon. Besides being serenaded by a patriotic music group we even had Ellenore Roosevelt show up to give a warm welcome and talk to the troops about her life with FDR. The Club was very proud to host us and it showed! Mother nature even saluted us with a ridiculous heavy downpour as we headed back to our remarkable hotel. No time for a nap today, for we were scheduled for a hour of the flyboys sharing their stories as we arrived back at our well appointed community room. Our resident historians, Phil Crowther and Dave Wilson, did their usual fine job with setting this room up to view our many archives. This venue turned magical at this point! Last summer, Dave Wilson, traveled to Tinian for historic research and a vacation. While on this trip the local officials presented our group with some awesome cloisonné

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medallions to thank us for our WW2 efforts. These in turn were passed out individually to our members by our president, John Creek, and Dave. There wasn't a dry eye in the house at this time as they were warmly and humbly accepted. We were still not done with the pageantry for the night! Warren Higgins next proudly stood up with his still formidable ram rod straight posture. He informed us that he was the last remaining crew member of his B 29 plane "Lucky Strike". Tradition has it that the last man remaining drink a bottle purchased when they still all together and toast his former brothers. Warren thought it would be appropriate to share his very significant bottle with his current 6th Bomb Group brothers which we did with great solemnity and thoughtfulness. These were two very incredible events that for me bring home what a fantastic group of individuals we are affiliated with. Next on the agenda was a Tailgate Party which included brats and hamburgers with all the trimmings. This was served in the community room too which everyone appreciated at this point. During and after dinner John Creek and Jeanne Holmes

ran our annual auction and raffle for our scholarship fund. Through their usual mixture of cajolery and humor they were able to raise a record amount from the unsuspecting audience. Dave Farquhar and Steve Nichols (alias Nick) together I'm sure put us over the top! With dinner and the auction over we settled down for the wonderful showing of the documentary "Honor Flight" produced in Milwaukee. This poignant film is still being shown in theaters across the nation with unbelievable acclaim. It details WW2 vets on a one day journey to see the Washington D.C. memorial dedicated to their unselfish service to our country. This documentary was well received by our group and we even got DVD copies to take home. By now it was time to take a flight upstairs for some well deserved sleep or in a lot of cases across the street for yet another night at The Swigging Door for more after hours mischievous shenanigans.

Sunday broke with a dazzling sun-popping out to help put an exclamation point on this epic reunion adventure. Steve Hays stepped up beautifully to take his Uncle Jim's role in performing our Sunday closing service. We prayed for those not with us and thanked the good Lord for the wonderful blessings those still here enjoy. Once again, Warren Higgins led us in joyous song. This gathering concluded with a solemn and bittersweet rendition of "Taps" coming from the back of the room. A traveling musician literally dropped out the blue to play this for our group. He was staying at the hotel on other business and was privileged to play his bugle for us and in honor of his father too, who served the Navy during WW2. What a way to close it out!!! The Ritter Family certainly enjoyed running this special event for The 6th Bomb Group. It would take another page to thank all the fine folks who helped us during this endeavor. However, I do want to call out some very special ladies! They are in no particular order; Lori Forsman, Glenda Richards, Jeanne Holmes, Elaine Angel, and Caroline Kegarice. These incredible gals are the oil that keeps us humming and the glue that holds us together. Thank you! Well till we see each other again may everyone stay healthy and wise. Hope to see everyone safely in Baltimore in 2014 to continue this quintessential lifelong journey together.

☆ REUNION COORDINATOR, ROB RITTER ☆

January 2014



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

We are sitting in beautiful Kauai, Hawaii sending greetings to all of you as Rene'e and I enjoy a wonderful vacation. Any vacation, of course, brings to mind other significant trips with special people such

as our last gathering in Milwaukee under the guidance of Rob and Gayle Ritter. Each Reunion with all of you seems to set a new standard of excellence. Rob and Gayle certainly raised the bar to a new level as we enjoyed so many wonderful trips and events. The Hotel choice alone was quite an adventure for me, as I have always loved the old architecture of stone work done so beautifully all over Milwaukee. The Harley Davidson tour was extremely informative concerning their War time contributions. The Miller Brewery tour was great fun for all. Even as all of our Veterans had to prove they were at least 21 years old at the door, we all just laughed. I took the opportunity to deliver a 15 second lecture to our hosts at the Brewery over Government required ID checks for World War II Veterans...?? The lunch at The Wisconsin Club was also quite outstanding as Rob invited Eleanor Roosevelt to remind us all, of the common sense of choosing your behaviors in the face of adversity of all kinds. The entire gathering was quite FANTASTIC. A tremendous THANK YOU to Rob and Gayle, and the entire Ritter Tribe, for their excellent planning and hard work.

OK, something to change for our next Reunion in Baltimore. My apologies to the Veterans and the group for us running out of time for their wonderful War Stories. I promise this year that will be first on our agenda and will not be compromised in any way. These Reunions are about honoring and learning from our Veterans everything possible while we still have the privilege of their company. The examples they have set for us to follow is so important to pass on to future generations and this part of the Reunion serves that purpose. I have been extremely proud to see so many 1st, 2nd, 3rd and yes, now even 4th generations attending our Reunion. It is quite gratifying to see this participation. Another change from our previous discussion at the Reunion: we had wished to have this one in August to facilitate more school age children attending. On the recommendations of our volunteers for the next Reunion, Tom Ritter and Nancy Webster Zander, it will be in late Sept. or early Oct. due to the heat and humidity of Summer on Chesapeake Bay. The predominate variable for Reunion decisions should remain what is best, easiest and the most fun for our Veterans and I think this decision revolves around that distinction. Thank you for your understanding of this change.

This letter also provides me the privilege of saying to all of our Veterans what an honor it has been to serve all of you in so many ways. My first attendance was with my Dad and Mom in Seattle, Wa. for the 50th anniversary of the first flight of a B-29 Superfortress. It has been an education, an honor and one of the most gratifying experiences of my life to associate regularly with men, and women, of such distinction. As we witness the changes in our Country and our society, it is helpful to think clearly about what we are and how we got here. The Veterans of World War II have given my life so much, it can not be repaid in any way other than educating our younger generation concerning the creation of our world as it exists today. Thank you all for providing such leadership and opportunities for all of us who were not there to fight with you.

In closing, I must say that the outdoors seems to be calling us to the beauty of Kauai, Hawaii. Rene'e and I look forward to our next vacation in Baltimore with all of you. I am confident that Tom and Nancy will have

FROM THE EDITOR



One of the advantages of editing is recognizing that talented writers within our organization are ready, willing and able to step up to the plate when called upon. In this issue it starts on page 1 with Rob Ritter's meaningful recap of our Milwaukee Reunion. Followed by a trio of very interesting articles; Don Kane's "The Canteen Story" on pages 4,5 and 6, Wat Smiley's "Recollection Of Time In Service" pg. 12 and Warren Higgins's "Last Man Club".

Other articles spaced within are "Eunice's Corner" (unfortunately the deceased listing continues to grow), the invitation to "Return to Tinian and Saipan for the 70th Anniversary" this summer and we have "Photos, Photos and Photos" of the reunion. And last but hardly least a request to one and all who receive the newsletters. January's is another big one and more expensive to layout, print and mail and unlike any of those in the past we've included a self-addressed return envelope to Larry Dananay, our newly elected Treasurer. Currently we print enough newsletters to cover all those at the reunion, plus all the Regular and Associate Members unable to attend, and we also mail to the wives of deceased Regular Members who we still carry on the mailing list. So with envelope in hand please refer to the back page of the Newsletter that references how current your membership is in order to keep the two newsletters a year coming to you. Your thoughtful attention to keeping up with your dues payments will be greatly appreciated.

On a personal note, as the longest running Editor of the 6th Bomb Group Newsletter, a job I inherited and thoroughly enjoyed all aspects of, it's time to pass on the torch. This issue will be my last, though I intend to work closely with my replacement on the June issue detailing the 6th Bomb Group's 2014 Baltimore Reunion.

I also want to personally thank our son Kip, who has so diligently worked as my "sidekick", for his graphic design efforts on all the newsletters and with the Historical Record of the 6th Bomb Group DVD.

☆ William B. Webster ☆

many wonderful surprises for us to enjoy at our next get together. Until then, our very best to all of you and your families. Thank You.

☆ John R. Creek, Jr. ☆

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LAST MAN CLUB

BY WARREN R. HIGGINS

**Lucky Strike B-29 Crew No. 3903
39th Bombardment Squadron'
6th Bombardment Group
313th Bombardment Wing
20th Air Force
Tinian Island, Mariannas,
Pacific Theatre, 1945**



The camaraderie that develops in a heavy bomber crew during combat missions approaches that of brotherhood. Team effort is of the essence. Lives depend upon each other's actions. Following the conclusion of World War II, our crew of "brothers-in-arms" separated to continue their lives and careers far distant from one another. The attraction to renew close, emotional continuing ties, resulting in a periodic reunion. At such reunions, memories are revived and embellished. Feats grow in gallantry and heroics with each passing year. Sad war time experiences are dimmed with the distance of time inevitably the group suffers

the loss of its brothers, one by one. It is appropriate that these brothers be remembered fondly, and happily. Eventually, all will meet again.

This Last Man Club is established to perpetuate the memory of the crew and its members. At each periodic reunion a moment of silence will be observed for each passing member, separately and individually. At the time of this commemorative silence, and following it, for each individual crew member no longer in the midst of the group, all remaining members will toast his memory and his last flight.

His bottle of wine will be removed from the rack and opened by the elected commentator. The commentator will pour equal amounts of wine for all remaining crew members. He will lead the group in an expression of camaraderie for the departed and toast him.

All will finish their wine and smash their glasses. Following the toast to his memory the empty bottle will be replaced in the rack. The last surviving crew member has the privilege of toasting his last fallen comrade by himself. He then has the option to open the last bottle and toast himself as the last surviving crew member of this organization.

As a member of the "Lucky Strike" Crew, I was privileged to recite/perform at the reunion in Milwaukee. As a little background, the crew decided to have a reunion every five years some period of time following our return to the states. We alternated hosting the reunion between crew members. I recollect that we met in NYC, NY in July '65; Grand Island, NE in July '70 for our 25th celebration (Feted handsomely by city officials); Austin TX in July '75; Dayton, OH in July '80; Los Angeles in Nov. '83 hosted by radar man Warren Bush ne Lou Vollman, then a Hollywood producer who induced General Curtis E LeMay, Commanding Officer of the 20th Air Force and former 6th Bomb Group Commanding Officer Kenneth H. Gibson to be guests of honor. At that time he also had had a scene of the Lucky Strike in combat painted/rendered/presented later and currently displayed at the Smithsonian Institute. Then at Lake George, NY in July '86; and Independence, MO in August '89. About that time, after our 25th, I

had a business trip scheduled for a flight to Spain to visit one of our suppliers. It was there that I picked up a case of 1945 vintage Spanish wine. Before the next reunion, I composed the Last Man Club for a fitting use of the wine. We celebrated the LMC procedure at each following reunion....later at times as a separate addendum to the 6th BG Reunions. Because few of the LS crew were left or attended of late, I acknowledged and included remaining members of my second crew, the crew of the "Reamatroid". The last one or two uncorkings were eventful in that Max, my wife had to assist in my returning to our room even with only one or two drinking, I insisted on our finishing the bottle(s) to honor our departed crew members! I was really astonished and completely/pleasantly surprised when we popped the cork on the last bottle (68 year old wine) during the Milwaukee reunion and found that it was NOT VINEGAR but satisfyingly good and drinkable. So goes the story of the Last Man Club.

We Get Letters...



6th Bomb Group,

For your information who else you care to tell would like to come – but not able to travel-physical goings on to 89. I was attached to the 313 Photo Lab that did all three groups on the island. Installing cameras in plane and developing the film. Arrived on the island of Tinian right after we took it. All bombed out and flat. Most memorable item in my service. After the Enola Gay came back from dropping the Atomic Bomb, I was privileged to develop the first pictures of the bomb. I did not know it, top secret. I had two FBI Agents dressed in black suits and tie on each side of me in the dark room. They took all I developed, I never said anything but found out a few days later.

Mr. Louis Justin
205 Cottonwood Circle
Healdsburg, CA 95448

I arrived at Tinian on the Sea Marlin, we were greeted by Tokyo Rose who assured us we would be welcomed by Japanese bombers. Thankfully they were diverted to Saipan and we were able to shoot down those that got through.

I was with the 6th Bomb Group, 40th squadron. My plane was "Gravel Gertie". My training was as a mechanic and later I became a crew chief.

Two things happened while I was on Tinian that made history. Col. Tibbets and the Enola Gay dropped the A-bomb on Hiroshima and I was privileged to fly over the Missouri in Tokyo Bay during the peace signing.

When I got out of the service I went to college and got my BS, masters and 6-year degree, something that would not have been possible without the GI Bill. I spent a very rewarding 39 years in education first as a teacher and later as a tech school president.

Lewis Brinson
214 Walker Ave.
Fitzgerald, GA 31750

To Veterans and History Buffs:

Officials on Saipan and Tinian have asked Valor Tours to organize a tour package around the June 2014 70th Anniversary commemoration of the Liberation of the Marianas. Professor Anderson Giles, one of the foremost authorities on the Marianas, will escort this tour.

Those interested may obtain the descriptive brochure of this tour by calling 800-842-4504.

VALOR TOURS, LTD.

For brochures with further details on itinerary, prices, etc. call
Valor Tours, Ltd. at 1-800-842-4504
or E-mail: valortours@yahoo.com
10 Liberty Ship Way, Suite 110, Sausalito, CA 94965

THE CANTEN STORY

William Webster,

I saw the reunion notice in the July issue of Air Force Magazine and it sparked my interest. While I was not a member of the 6th BG (I was born in 1940 and slightly too young to fly), I do have an interest in the history of Tinian.

My connection with Tinian is via the Air Force. I am a retired O-6 Civil Engineering and Environmental officer. While stationed in the Philippines 1973-76, my environmental organization was tasked with studying the "environmental state of Tinian" as the Department of Defense was anticipating moving the Marines from Okinawa to Guam, and Tinian was slated to be the training facility for the Air Force, Marine and Navy forces stationed on Guam. This would include amphibious landings etc. Basically, we did the base-

line environmental impact study to support this action. Well, as things go, this relocation was postponed indefinitely but is now about to take place, some 40 years later.

There were 13 of us on Tinian for about 3 months. Because Tinian was free of snakes, we would explore the island thoroughly in the course of our study (water, air waste, hazardous chemicals, etc.). I took quite a few photos, especially of the Nuclear bomb pit, the hospital area on the B-20 ram area and, the old 2-story Japanese base operations building. However, the highlight and most significant event of my "exploration" was finding 2 canteens. One on the high water mark of the invasion beach was American. The other was Japanese that I found in a cave high on the cliff near Tinian town. I found both owners. The American was alive and the remains of the Japanese soldier owner were in the cave.

DONALD A. KANE, P.E.
U.S. AIR FORCE, BSC

19 August 1977
327 NW 29th Street
Corvallis, Oregon 97330

Senator Barry Goldwater
United States Senate
Washington, D.C.

Dear Senator Goldwater,

It was the Peggy G that caught my eye as I picked up a copy of the February, 1977 issue of Airman Magazine. The P-47 you flew across the Atlantic has a silhouette very much like the one etched on an old WWII canteen I found on Tinian Island in the Mariannas. You see, Senator, I know who owned that canteen because he etched his name on his canteen along with the sketch of what looks like a P-47 or P-40D. The man's name was Ralph R. Reber and I would like to return his canteen to him or his family.

I was TDY to Tinian Island in 1973 as a member of a team conducting an environmental study of Tinian. The study would help serve as the basis for an Environmental Impact Report should the Department of Defense choose to use Tinian for a military base. While conducting the study, I came across two canteens. One belonged to a Japanese soldier who died defending the island and his name remains unknown as his canteen was unmarked save for a shell hole. Ralph R. Reber's canteen was well marked (see attached sketch). The name is unusual and the P-47 or P-40D etched on the other side should yield a return of the canteen to its owner or to the story of Ralph R. Reber.

What a story that canteen could tell. Was Reber a fighter pilot downed near Tinian? Was he a frustrated B-29 crew member based on Tinian in 1945, or, was he just a cook or clerk who identified with his unit? Who was Ralph R. Reber? I would like to find out and return the canteen to its owner. To date, all my efforts have failed. I do know that he was not buried in the American Cemetery in Manila and he is not listed as an MIA in the Pacific Theatre. The records repository in St. Louis has refused to help me because of the Privacy Act. All I get back is a form letter with my original letter (see attached copy). I feel that the key to RRR is in the St. Louis center if the records were not completely lost in the fire several years ago. But it will require someone taking the time to look for his file. If they are reluctant to give me his last known address, I would be delighted if they would forward my letters and my address to him or his relatives and let them contact me.

You, Senator Goldwater, are my last hope to unlocking the secret of that canteen. Any assistance you could offer would be sincerely appreciated by Ralph R. Reber and me.

Sincerely yours,

Donald A. Kane
Donald A. Kane Maj USAF BSC
Bioenvironmental Engineer

1 - Sketch
2 - Letter to St. Louis





BARRY GOLDWATER
ARIZONA

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20510

October 20, 1977

Major Donald A. Kane
327 NW 29th Street
Corvallis, Oregon 97330

Dear Major Kane:

Many thanks for your letter of some time ago concerning the old WWII canteen which you found on Tinian Island. That would be something if you could locate the owner.

I have just received a phone call from the Department of the Air Force advising that they have tracked down a man by the name of Ralph Reber and will be glad to forward your letter to him. Because of the Privacy Act, they cannot give you his last known address, as you already know. The address they have is quite old so it may be that he has since moved or could be dead. At any rate, please let me know if you hear from him. I certainly hope you will be able to reach him as it would, indeed, be an interesting story.

Thanks for writing.

Sincerely,

Barry Goldwater

Barry Goldwater

Invasion Beach White

-Tinian Island



Ralph R. Reber
17 Town Street
North East, Pa. 16428

October 31, 1977

Major Donald A. Kane
327 NW 29th Street
Corvallis, Oregon 97330

Major Kane,

I'm certain you can understand the astonishment I felt when I read copies of your letters. It's the kind of story you read in the newspapers, once in a while, about someone else. When it happens to you, it is just about unbelievable.

I know, that when I lost that canteen in August of 1945, I never expected to see it again, especially not 32 years later. I was a PFC in the U.S. Marine Corps and a DUKW (amphibian truck) driver in the 6th Amphibian Truck Co., 6th Marine Division. At the time, we were loading our equipment aboard ship. We were on our way to China for occupation duty. The interesting part about this is that we were loading in one of the harbors of Guam.

Unfortunately, I cannot recall the exact circumstances under which the canteen fell into the water, but I do remember it being missing when I stowed my gear aboard ship. I can only assume that it floated from Guam to Tinian and then washed up on the beach.

I had carried the same canteen for almost four years. It first went overseas with me in May of 1942. At that time I was with the First Marine Division. We first landed in Wellington, New Zealand where we only stayed long enough to reload ships in preparation for leaving. That was in the end of July, and our destination was Guadalcanal in the British Solomons. After four months of action, the Division was evacuated to Australia. I spent considerable time in the hospital as a result of malaria, and returned to the U.S. in September of 1943.

After a few different duty stations in the U.S., I again went overseas with a Replacement Draft and joined the 6th Marine Division which was then forming on Guadalcanal. On Easter Sunday, April 1, 1945, the Division landed on Ukinawa. After another four months of action, we left for Guam, where we were stationed until VJ day.

The above information will give you an idea of what that canteen went through while in my possession.





2013





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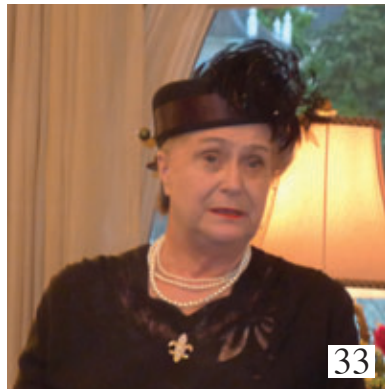
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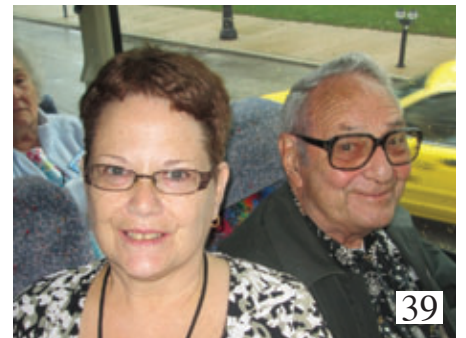
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| 4. All Smiles Those Websters | 21. Bob Frick with two Miller employees | 37. George, Marie and Gresco daughters |
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"Ace Photographers" throughout this issue can be attributed to the following: Lori Forsman, Gayle Ritter, and others.

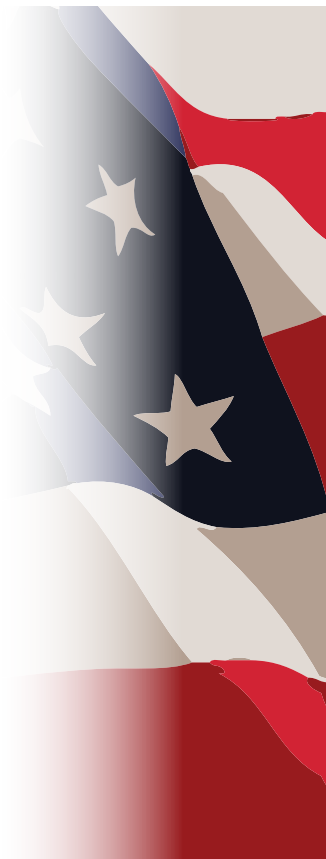
My mother taught me to share

One day an officer walked into the 24th Squadron Communication Quonset on Tinian with a small communication receiver from home. I don't know what happened. Maybe the load shifted on the boat or perhaps they threw the delivery box out as they flew over Tinian. Anyhow it looked like a tank had run over it. I was the only one with civilian experience so I always got those jobs. I had to take it all apart, straighten everything, and reassemble it. It then worked beautifully. A few days after the officer picked it up, I was delivered a package – a fifth of good quality whiskey, which only the officers could buy worth \$40.00 (in 1945) Tinian market. I decided to share with the other boys in the Shoppe. That was a mistake!! I thought they would collapse the bottle. When I got it back it was all but empty. My mother taught me to share, but she didn't say what the results could be.

Sergeant Dean Ritzman, 24th Squadron, 6th Bomb Group
155 210th Street
Perry, IA

List of Milwaukee Reunion 2013 Attendees

- | | | | |
|--------------------------|------------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|
| Alice Horst | Clara Daniels | Gilbert Horst | John Horst |
| Andrew Webster | Clarence Pressgrove | Glenda LaBree | John Paul Randall |
| Baard Webster | Claudia Smith | Glenda Richards | John Ritter |
| Barb Higgins | COL Don Kane | Gloria McGowan | John Sabol |
| Belle Ritter | Corey Farquar | Gudrun Sandstedt | Joseph Sorge |
| Bertha Christie II | Dave Farquar III | Herb Horst | Judy Turner |
| Billy Sorge | Dave Farquar Jr. | Ian Higgins | Julie Kaufmann |
| Brian Zebart | David Wilson | Jake Berry | Julie Olmstead |
| Carole Spellman Sullivan | Diane Smith | James Reagan | Karen Higgins |
| Carolyn Kegarice | Doris Kruger | Jean Marie Thompson | Kathy Spellman |
| Cathy Sorge | Dr James M Randall | Jeanne Holmes | Katie Randall |
| Charles Higgins | Elaine Angel | Jerry Benesh | Katie Weber |
| Charles Ritter | Gayle Ritter | Jo Anne Litzenberg | Larry Dananay |
| Chris Dananay | George Gresko | John Creek | Laura Myers |
| Lee Kaufmann | Nancy Webster Zander | Robert Baudisch | Susan Randall |
| Lori Litzenberg Forsman | Nathan Warner | Robert Frick | Susan Sabol |
| Lynn Ritter | Norman Scott | Robert Reed | Ted Banagis |
| Marc Litzenberg | Paul Ritter | Robert Thompson | Tim Ritter |
| Margaret Kunz | Paul Webster | Robert Weber | Tom Ritter |
| Marie Gresko | Paula Baudisch | Roger Sandstedt | Tracy Litzenberg |
| Marj Reed | Paula Litzenberg Sorge | Samantha Berry | Ward Litzenberg |
| Mary Gresko | Paula Thomson | Sarah Webster Cox | Warren Higgins |
| Mary Kay Hoffman | Phil Crowthers | Sherry Ritter | Will Ritter |
| Matthew DeLima | Renee' Myers | Steve Dananay | William Jeff Christie II |
| Maxine Higgins | Richard Kruger | Steve Hays | William Litzenberg |
| Mike Higgins | Richard Randall | Steve Nichols | William Webster |
| Millicent Frick | Ris Higgins | Sue Litzenberg | William Webster, Jr. |
| | Rob Higgins | Susan Higgins | Willis Kunz |



RECOLLECTIONS OF TIME IN SERVICE

Those of us in the High School Class of 1941 were much aware of the probability of war coming soon, either with Germany or Japan. We all admired two of the older and earlier graduates of Mississippi. Greenwood Mississippi High School, Thomas Yates Gardner and Bob Upshur, who had gone to Canada and joined the Royal Canadian Air Force, became pilots and flew Spitfires in combat in the Battle of Britain. (Bob was killed early on but Thomas Yates later transferred to the American Air Corp and survived the war.) We also envied the local college graduates with ROTC commissions who were entering service as 2nd lieutenants. The local National Guard unit, whom we also admired for the parades they had put on over the years and for their World War I type uniforms who were preparing for call-up in late summer. All of us felt we would be going into service eventually and that was both scary and exciting. After graduating from high school in 1941, I went to work for the Staple Cotton Association in Greenwood as office boy. Don't laugh - this was a sought after job that could lead to a permanent position after a year of apprenticeship. I vaguely intended to enter Mississippi State College in January, 1942. In August two co-workers and I went to Jackson, took the physical exam and signed up for the Marines. I was seven-

teen and needed parental consent to join, so didn't become a Marine. My two co-workers were accepted and finished the war after participating in many of the battles in the Pacific. I was working at Staple Cotton at the time of Pearl Harbor and remember all of us gathering in the big office at the radio and listening to President Roosevelt describe the attack and asking Congress for a declaration of war against both Germany, its allies and Japan. I attended Mississippi State College in January, 1942 and transferred to Southeastern Louisiana College, in September. In November, three of us went to New Orleans and took the exams to enroll in the Army Air Force as aviation cadets. I was the only one of us to pass the physical and was sworn in November 28, 1942. I received orders to report to New Orleans on January 1, 1943 and from there was sent to Shepherd Field at Wichita Falls, TX for basic training. After six weeks of training we completed the course and were sent to Emporia State Teachers College in Kansas to take college courses prior to entering pre-flight school. It was there I got in an airplane for the very first time and given six to eight hours of flight training in Piper Cubs - enough to solo but were not allowed to do so. We were taught to take off and land, fly from point to point, do stalls, loops and spins which required rolling out on a certain compass heading. All of this a revelation to me as I discovered I had very little aptitude for flying. The possibility of airsickness was a constant problem and arriving at the proper compass heading was difficult. I did pass the course but my instructor's comments in my flight log indicated he doubted I was going to make Ace anytime soon. In the summer of 1943, we completed training at Emporia and were sent to Kelly Field, San Antonio, TX for preflight school. As I recall, the mornings were spent in physical training such as obstacle courses, races, pushups, etc. The afternoons were devoted to the academic training which included radio Morse code and aircraft identification. Both of these courses were important to me in that I

washed out of the school for failing aircraft identification but the high grades I received in Morse code allowed me to be selected for radio school.

In the fall of 1943, I entered radio operator's school at Scott Air Force Base, Bellville, IL. that lasted several months. Among the highlights, were the flights in an old two-engine pre-war bomber to practice radio operation. Upon completion of the course and based on high grades, I was selected to stay on to enter a new school established to train radio operators for B-29 Bombers.

In the late spring of 1944, having completed the radio operator courses, I was sent to Grand Island Air Force Base, NE where they were forming the 6th Bomb Group and became a flight crew member in the 40th Squadron. We began our training in B-17 Bombers that consisted of formation flying, practice bombing missions, fighting enemy fighters (P-51's with everyone using gun cameras). As the B-29's were built, they were sent to us and assigned to a crew. At that time, they were considered fairly secret and were guarded and were required to present your pass before you could go onboard. Shortly our crew #4011 "Rattle N' Roll" had the new bomber and training continued. Crews consisted

of eleven members; pilot, co-pilot, flight engineer, navigator, bombardier, radio operator, radar operator, left and right gunners, central fire control gunner and tail gunner.

In the winter of 1944, we flew to and spent about two weeks each at Batista Field, Cuba and at Barriguan Field, Puerto Rico for overseas navigational training. In late December, 1944 right after Christmas at Grand Island, we picked up our new plane, flew to Mather Field, California and issued new flight clothing, weapons, ammo, etc. In early January, 1945 we flew to John Rogers Field, Oahu, Hawaii where we were able to visit the officer's club overlooking Pearl Harbor. Those of us who were not officers borrowed insignia from those that were. From there we flew to Kwajaleen Atoll for a refueling stop and then on to Tinian in the Mariana Islands.

Although the air crews had flown over to Tinian, the ground crews and other non-flying personnel had come by ship and had to set up camp, etc. and prepare for our arrival. Shortly after we arrived, our Group commander decided to have a party for all of the Group celebrating our getting back together and the beginning of our participation in combat. The location was about a half mile from our tent area at the edge of the ocean and on a coral cliff with a drop-off of about twenty five or thirty feet to the water. Most of us were standing around the edge of the cliff talking, eating and generally watching the force of the waves smashing into a room size pocket right below us. Suddenly, one of the men fell off right into the middle of the pocket. There was nothing for him to hold on to so that he could climb out (or that anyone could reach him) and every time that he tried to swim out of the pocket the waves would smash him back in and into the rocks. Since all of us were dressed in shorts and shoes there was nothing to tie together to make a rope to throw to him. Although I didn't see any volunteers offering to jump in to help him, the officers in charge were yelling for everyone to stand back from the edge and not try to go in. I think someone ran to the



Top Row (L to R) Ralph Hanson, Eugene Jack, John Joyce, Carmine DiPalma, James Smylie. Front Row (L to R) Henry Peelle, Edgar Vincent, Herbert Bunting, Harry Fink, Clarence Presswood.

Bunting Crew in front of "The Tulsa Barb"

6th Bomb Group Crew 4011 "RATTLE N' ROLL" 9.22.44

camp to signal for the Navy to get a boat there but they were based on the other side of the island. Well, we all stood around helplessly for about ten or fifteen minutes (it seemed longer) until he exhausted himself and drowned. Ironically, although the area was placed off-limits from then on, within a month or two someone discovered a way to climb back out after diving in and a few of us swam there (using our air mattresses) regularly until the war ended.

We spent a good bit of time at first flying practice missions and we bombed Truk several times as it had been a major Japanese base bypassed by our invasion forces and bombed so many times that you could see no sign of any activity. We also bombed Iwo Jima prior to the invasion.

One of the impressive sights at the time was seeing our Navy lying right off shore from our camp and we got to see them practicing their invasion tactics. We didn't know it at the time, but they were headed for the Iwo Jima landing.

We flew our first combat mission on March 4, 1945. This was a daylight bombing mission to Tokyo. Up to this time, Tokyo had sustained very little damage as a result of the war. General Curtis LeMay, the 20th Air Corp Officer our commanding officer, instituted a series of low level night missions using incendiary bombs to burn out the major cities of Japan. Of a total of five missions of this type, we flew four with the targets being Tokyo, Nagoya, Osaka and Kobe. In all, we flew thirty one combat missions.

The daylight missions were flown in formation for maximum impact on the target and in order to defend against fighter attacks. These attacks usually consisted of Japanese fighters lining up above and out from our formations. Just out of gun range and flying at full speed ahead to get well in front of us. At that point, they would turn and dive into our formations with everybody blazing away. Due to the speed of the B-29, they didn't get many repeat times for this maneuver. In addition to the fighters, we usually encountered anti-aircraft fire.

The night missions were not flown in formation but as I recall, we went in single file attempting to maintain thirty second intervals to keep out of each other's way. I remember vividly what looked like a wall of fire just over the target area caused by the exploding antiaircraft shells, machine guns and search lights. Ofcourse, it just looked like a wall of fire because you don't have any depth perception at night. I don't remember this knowledge giving me a great deal of comfort at the time. I do remember my feelings when seeing other crews going down, the smell of a city burning when we were caught in the updraft from the fires and just the terror of getting caught in the searchlights and the flashes of antiaircraft fire.

On one of our daylight missions we had mechanical problems and were forced to land on Iwo Jima. This was during the time that the fighting was still going on and the island had not been secured. After we landed and cut-off the engines we could hear our artillery going overhead and into the enemy positions. We all pulled guard duty at the plane that night and were relieved to leave the next day.

Our mission to Marifu on August 14, 1945 turned out to be the last combat mission of World War II. We knew the Japanese were engaged in peace talks with us and were instructed to monitor the radio for the code word Ohio, which means "gooff morning" in Japanese. That would mean to turn back and not bomb the target. We did bomb and on the way back, I switched to Armed Forces radio and heard the Japanese had surrendered and the war was over.

In early October, 1945, I was selected on points to fly back to the States with the 58th. Bomb Group. We stopped over at Oahu, Hawaii and landed at Sacramento Air Force Base, CA. From there and byway of San Francisco, I was sent by train to Amarillo Air Force Base, TX and was discharged.

When the National Guard was reorganized in 1946, I was persuaded to join. Later on, having been a staff sergeant in service, I qualified to take the examination for a commission. I went to Mississippi State and met with a review board and was commissioned a second lieutenant in the Mississippi National Guard. During this period I attended summer camps at both Camp Shelby, MS and Fort Benning, GA.

In December, 1950, President Truman made a speech in regard to the Korean War and immediately after his speech, it was announced that the Mississippi and Wisconsin National Guard Divisions were to be called up. In January 1951, I was sent to Carlisle Barracks, PA: to a

Joint Force (Air Force, Army and Navy) Information and Education School. In March after completing the school, I joined the 31st. Division at Fort Jackson, SC.

In the spring of 1951, I entered the artillery school at Fort Sill, OK and upon completion was sent to Yokahama, Japan and from there to Hokkaido and joined the 45th Infantry Division as an Artillery forward observer. The day I arrived, they received orders to go into Korea to replace the 1st Calvary Division.

December 25, 1951 I spent on a ship on the way to Korea. We landed at Inchon and immediately moved up to the front by way of an old Japanese train. That night on the train

Was the coldest I ever spent - deep snow, 20 below and all the windows had been shot out. The next afternoon, we went to the Air Section and met and relieved the 1st Calvary Division Air Section. We flew an orientation mission over the front lines that afternoon and also got surprised and greeted by Chinese 20 millimeter anti-aircraft fire.

Our Air Section consisted of eight air observers and twelve pilots (all of us lieutenants or captains) with a major in command. In addition, we had aircraft mechanics, mess, supply and clerical personnel so we were pretty well self-supportive.

We tried to keep two planes (L-19 Birddogs) over our frontline sector during daylight hours, weather

permitting. We, observers, rotated averaging two missions a day lasting about two and a half hours each. Since our air strip was located about five miles behind the front lines, it didn't take long to get there. Our job was to fly out over the enemy lines looking for targets that we could reach with our Artillery. These targets often consisted of Chinese or North Korean troops, truck convoys, dug in gun positions or buildings suspected of containing enemy supplies. In addition to calling for and adjusting artillery fire onto these targets, we could request air strikes on the more difficult ones. So on the days when some sort of action was taking place, we pretty much had a ringside seat to the war. Some months after I returned home, I received a copy of a letter to the Army Times magazine in which the writer challenged someone's claim of having flown the most missions of this kind. He stated that then Lieutenant Smylie had flown 248 missions which ranked second on the most flown. So, I guess that puts the original claimant in third place. While in Korea, I was sent back to Japan twice for five day rest leaves.

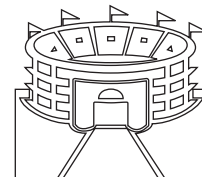
Among the awards I received were the Distinguished Flying Cross and the Air Medal with ten oak leaf clusters and October, 1952, I was sent back to the States by way of Sasebo, Japan. We came back by ship and landed at San Francisco. From there, I came home and after leave, was separated at Fort Jackson, SC.

So, this is why I want my VA marker to read,

James W. Smylie, Jr.
1st. Lt. Artillery
U. S. Army
World War II & Korea



Play Ball!



David Wilson was going through some 6BG microfilm came across Special Order #17, dated 17 January 1945 listing movement orders for 6BG men. Interesting, the name Salvatore Conigliaro jumped off the page since it is such a unique name. He did a quick search for former Major League Baseball player Tony Conigliaro who played for the Red Sox among other teams. Tony's parents were Sal and Theresa Conigliaro and Tony was born on 7 January 1945. Can any of our veterans confirm if former 6BG member Salvatore Conigliaro was on a crew or served in some capacity with the group? If responding please use the return address in the Newsletter.

Army Air Corp on the Eve of WW II

And The Role The B-29 Played in Ending It.

Unprepared for any conflict with Germany and Japan, who were building massive troop strengths and war machines in the months and days leading up to what would become WW II, the United States was thrust into the thick of it on December 7th, 1941.

However, some interesting figures on aircraft numbers and production show what occurred when in 1941 the “sleeping giant was awakened”. In the years leading up to the attack on Pearl Harbor the following number of planes were produced; Japan – 4,467; German – 8,259; England – 7,940 and the US – 2,141. In the following six years through 1945, Japan produced a total of 71,853; Germany – 103,492; England – 123,609 and the US – 301,572. The latter figure is more than the three other countries combined and accomplished with sacrifice and a work force the likes of which the world had never seen before.

Virtually all of the major types of airplanes with which the Army Air force would fight World War II with were in production or soon would be by December 1941. Prior to that the AAF had 198 B-17s, with more coming off the line that month. The B-24 was in initial production. The P-40 was replacing the P-36 as the standard fighter. The P-38, P-39 and P-47 fighters were in limited production, and the P-51



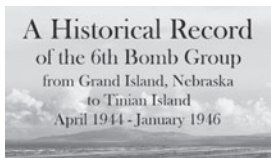
Mustang had just made its first flight. The B-29 was in development and would fly within the year. On the drawing board in 1941, and with XB-29s in the experimental stage shortly thereafter, was a complex fighting machine that when involved in the Pacific by 1944 literally reversed the direction of the war. The bombing and mining missions by B-29's from Saipan, Tinian and Guam, and the Hiroshima and Nagasaki Atom bomb droppings played a significant role leading to the unconditional surrender by the Japanese rulers. In turn ending WW II, the deadliest conflict in recorded history.

An added note of interest, as this applies to those of us in the 6th Bomb Group; the number of military personnel serving in the Army Air Corp in 1939 was 22,387 and 52,125 by 1941. However, it vastly expanded and by 1945, it reached 2,282,259. This figure was 28% of the full US Army's strength. To accomplish this the civilian aircraft production included every able-bodied person not destined to serve in the military. Plus the aircrews had to be trained, bases built, infrastructure and logistics established. All of this managed under the able direction of General Henry “Hap” Arnold in building the greatest air armada in the world.



- ✧ **Robert William Allardyce** of Pittsfield, MA passed away on June 25, 2013. Robert was Master Sergeant and a flight engineer on B-17-B29 with the 39th Squadron of the 6th Bomb Group.
- ✧ **Harold D Breech** of Santa Barbara, CA died August 25, 2012. Harold was a Sergeant in the 6th Bomb Group on Tinian.
- ✧ **Charles M. Chupa** of Warren, MI died on February 12, 2006. Charles was a Corporal with the 24th Squadron.
- ✧ **Kenneth E. Creech** of West Palm Beach, FL passed away December 4, 2011. Kenneth was a Staff Sergeant/radar with the 24th Squadron. He was with Crew #2404. Kenneth was a P.O.W.
- ✧ **1st Lt. Robert H. Crowther** (the father of Phil, our 6th Bomb Group Association Webmaster and Co-Historian) passed away on February 19, 2012 in Lenexa, KS. He was a radar man with the 39th Squadron, serving primarily on "Myas' Dragon" under the command of Capt. Catts. After the war he married Nan McKeever (whom he met during training) and she also passed away in 2012. Phil's father provided the initial insights and reference materials for the 6th Bomb Group website, which served as the catalyst for many interesting discussions.
- ✧ **Paul F. Dietzel** of Baton Rouge, LA died September 24, 2013. Paul was a Second Lieutenant and a bomber pilot. He flew 12 missions over Japan including one of the longest mission of the war, the Rashin Fushan in Korea. Post WW II Paul had a very successful coaching career at LSU and in 1958 led his team to a National Championship.
- ✧ **Joseph Kubicek** passed away in Sycamore, IL. Joe was a 1st Lieutenant with the 40th Squadron. He was with Crew #4018.
- ✧ **James Monette Diley Jr.** of Delaware, OH passed away November 28, 2011. He was assigned to the 6th Bomb Group and became a B-29 crew member.
- ✧ **Robert A Grant** of Middleton WI passed away January 22, 2013. Robert was a Sergeant in the in the 6th Bomb Group as a left gunner of a B-29. He was a POW and received the Distinguished Flying Cross, Air Medal with 4 oak Leaf Clusters and the Purple Heart.
- ✧ **James R Loyd** of Wichita, KS died on July 6th, 2010. James was a Private First Class with the 40th Squadron.
- ✧ **Raymond (Ray) S. Raetz** of Hackensack, MN died November 22, 2013. Ray was a Sergeant in the 24th Squadron. He was with Crew #2404 as CFC.
- ✧ **W. Manion Rice** of Carbondale, IL passed away on November 1st, 2013. He was a Lieutenant in the U.S. Army Air Corp on Tinian Island and solely responsible for the design, editing and publishing of the Pirate's Log, a historical record of the 6th Bomb Group.
- ✧ **Lawrence W. Stewart** of New Mexico passed away June 3, 2013. He was a Flight Engineer with the 24th Squadron.
- ✧ **Wallace L. Peebles** of Marion, IL passed away on May 14, 2013. Wallace was a Waist Gunner on the "Trigger Mortis". He was awarded the Air Medal with three Oak Leaf Clusters, the Distinguished Flying Cross and the Purple Heart.
- ✧ **Keneth D. Moor** of Ovoca, AK died January, 2010.
- ✧ **Glenn Broadhurst** died in 2009. Glenn was a Radio Operator on a B29.
- ✧ **Joseph Kubrick** of McFarland, WI died November 9, 2013. He was part of the crew on "Dearly Beloved".
- ✧ **John D. Daverie** of Sharon, PA died December 15, 2007.

Glenda Richards now maintains the "place of record" for deceased 6th Bomb Group Members. Please send information to: [Glenda Richards, 7635 Dufferin Avenue, Riverside, CA 92504 \(951\) 687-8676 or ggr41797@msn.com](mailto:Glenda.Richards.7635@msn.com)



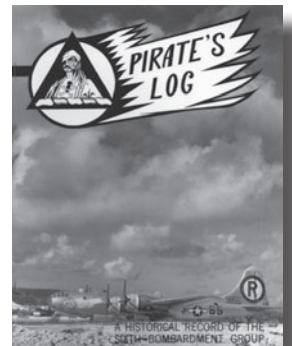
The DVD with 450 photographs and running 58 minutes, tells the story of a war time bomb group, and all the support personnel from reactivation stateside in April 1944. Followed by training in Nebraska and arriving on the Island of Tinian in December. Crews commenced flying off North Field on bombing and mining missions over the Empire of Japan in early 1945. Culminating with the dropping of the Atomic bombs and the signing of the unconditional surrender of Japan on September 2, 1945. In turn ending the greatest conflict in the history of humanity without the planned invasion of the Japanese homeland.

The PIRATE'S LOG was first published in 1946 and recently reprinted. A 74-page book chronicling the 6th Bomb Group from reactivation in 1944, transitional training in B-29s at Grand Island, Nebraska, over water flights to the Caribbean and departure for the Island of Tinian in the Pacific. Followed by bombing and mining missions over the Japanese Empire and the conclusion of history's greatest conflict in September 1945. With second and now third generation young people continuing to show more interest in WW II, and the role their father or grandfather played in securing victory, this is a must for family members.

The cost for the DVD and the book is \$25.00 each with a \$4.00 shipping charge and can be ordered through WBW, Inc., 29277 Garrard Avenue, Frontenac, MN 55026. Make your checks payable to the 6th Bomb Group Association.

★ 6TH BOMB GROUP SCHOLARSHIP MEMORIAL PROGRAM ★

For information on donations or inquiries on the scholarship program in which any members' blood relatives are eligible for scholarship awards, write or E-mail: Liz McClure, Truman Heartland Community Foundation, 300 N. Osage St., Independence, MO 64050, (816) 836-8189, mcclure@thcf.org



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☆☆☆ IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT ☆☆☆

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Record of Combat



David Wilson would like to offer his services in helping you obtain your Dad's Record of Combat (ROC) while on Tinian. If you will send a copy to him at 3540 Gallagher Drive, Tallahassee, FL 32309 he will attempt to find as many of the Mission Summaries as possible. Some may be missing from the microfilm and others difficult to read but he'll send what's available.



Back row: Dick Kruger, David Farquhar, Bill Litzenberg, Bob Reed, Charles Ritter, Warren Higgens.

Front row: Bob Frick, Robert Thompson, Willis Kunz, Jerry Benesh, Richard Randall, Herb Horst, Bill Webster, Clarence Pressgrove.

Missing but attended: George Gresko