



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

**TINIAN ISLAND  
1944 - 45**

**JUNE  
2014**



**BALTIMORE – “STARS AND STRIPES FOREVER”  
SEPTEMBER 25-28, 2014**

Baltimore, Maryland...home to the Chesapeake Bay and Crabs, Fort McHenry and the Star Spangled Banner, Ravens and Orioles sports teams, Under Armour and McCormick Seasonings and boats, boats and more boats! On behalf of Nancy Webster Zander and Tom Ritter, we welcome you to the 6th Bomb Group Reunion that is taking place in Baltimore the last weekend in September.

The Brookshire Suites (<http://www.brookshiresuites.com>) is our host hotel located minutes from the Inner Harbor, which is home to many tasty restaurants, unique shopping, famous museums, live entertainment, local pubs and taverns. We have a Hospitality Suite for the evenings and Breakfast included for the mornings. The hotel is about 11 miles from the BWI airport so a Super Shuttle or Taxi ride should get you there in no time. If coming by car the hotel has valet parking or there are numerous parking garages within minutes.

The biggest problem we had was deciding what activities to plan for the weekend as there are so many wonderful things to do and see within blocks of each other! We have 4 historic ships: an 1854 sloop-of-war named USS Constellation, a cutter named USCGC Taney, WWII submarine named USS Torsk and a lightship named Chesapeake, the National Aquarium, MD Science Center, numerous Art Museums, B&O Railroad Museum, Babe Ruth Museum and the list goes on and on! But don't worry, we'll have brochures and lists of all these and more in your welcome packet at registration.

We'll start the weekend off on Thursday evening with our Wine/Beer and Appetizer Reception. And you're in for a taste

treat because what would eating in Baltimore be without the taste of crabs!

Friday morning we will be heading to Fort McHenry, where the Battle of Baltimore was fought September 13-14, 1814 and where the valiant defense of the Fort inspired Francis Scott Key to write "The Star-Spangled Banner". This being the 200th Anniversary of our National Anthem, our visit there is sure to be extra special! Since this is a National Park, the grounds around

the Fort are beautiful and a great place to have our picnic lunch. Friday night we will have Q & A time with our treasured Veterans in our Hospitality Suite.

Saturday promises to be a fun-filled day starting with a "National Anthem Tour by Sea" aboard a beautiful boat called "The Raven". It will conclude at lunchtime to meander along the Inner Harbor getting something to eat and enjoying the sights. We'll have a Mem-

bership meeting for those that want to attend in the afternoon, which will lead nicely into our Social Hour and the start of our Silent Auction. After dinner we'll have our guest speaker, Marine Colonel (Ret.) Michael Shupp, who is looking forward to meeting and talking to our Veterans as well. Our evening will conclude with the Fundraising Auction, which Jeanne, Glenda and support staff do with such flair!

Sunday morning we will have our Memorial service and say our good-byes until we meet again.

We're looking forward to seeing more of our East Coast veterans and hopefully all the familiar attendees as well as a new generation of faces!





## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

We are rapidly approaching our next opportunity to Honor our Veterans on a very personal level: Our own 6th Bomb Group Reunion. This year it is to be in Baltimore, MD, the home of fantastic seafood and many other attractions. Our Hosts this year are Nancy Webster Zander and Tom Ritter, children of 2 of our esteemed Veterans, Bill Webster and Charlie Ritter. Our multi-year plan of taking over all of the work for these wonderful Reunions seems to be working fine as 2nd generation family members' step up to the plate so well and take excellent care of seeing that our Vets have a great time without doing anything but "Show-UP". We thank you Tom and Nancy for your hard work and look forward to the fun things you have arranged for us all. I must add the Hotel sounds quite fascinating, very small and we may have it all to ourselves. What an Honor for our Vets.

As I am writing this the day after Memorial Day I am particularly reminded of the reasons for our Reunions and what the entire country tries to do on this weekend to never forget these men who gave so much to my generation and many more yet to come. As I think back on the many Reunions that I have attended, it is extremely rewarding to see it continue to grow with not only children of our Vets attending in larger numbers, but if you remember Milwaukee, we graduated to having Great Grand Children attend !! I will not forget that event as it has been our focus for many years to involve as many as possible in this now annual event. The growth of the Scholarship program and the now annual Silent (sometimes not so silent as it is just too much fun) Auction are yet other milestones in our growth and enhancement of this tremendous occasion to get together and TALK to the men who were there to do what had to be done. Speaking of talking, this year the General Meeting time will be absolutely dedicated to listening to our Vets personal stories first.....before we conduct any other business. So, may this serve as notice to our special men: Prepare your stories for our meeting as YOU are the focus of this event. We will also try to have this portion recorded for all to enjoy and preserve the things that need to be remembered forever. Each of our men made contributions to this tremendous effort and the seemingly minor events, as well as the major ones, are so important to hear about and record. As an example of minor events, my own Father spoke fondly of a Beach on Tinian where he learned to snorkel and refined his swimming skills. This was one of the few things he would tell me about his time on Tinian. In just a few weeks, I will have the privilege of traveling to Tinian to attend an Honorary Reception for some of our Veterans hosted by the current Mayor of Tinian. As I have wanted to visit this place of my Father's contribution to this horrible war for many years, this visit will find me snorkeling this same Beach and thinking about all the other things that he did and endured during his time on Tinian. I am sure I will be humbled by the event in every way, as it amazes me that the Mayor of Tinian is still grateful for our men doing their duty for all of us and the citizenry of Tinian today.

Enough of my musings. I am certainly looking forward to my trip to Tinian. I will share this trip with many of you at our Reunion and, of course, we are all anticipating another fantastic Honorary Reunion for our Vets in Baltimore.

☆ John R. Creek, Jr. ☆

## FROM THE EDITOR



On page 1 Tom and Nancy cordially invite any and all of you to the Baltimore Reunion and they outline the Events and Registration on page 7.

Let's make it a big turnout For the Good Life!

An interesting article in this issue takes us back to 1945 when I was assigned to the 22nd Photo Lab of the 6th Bomb Group on Tinian at the wars end when I was asked to take ground and aerial photographs of the Island for the "Pirates Log", The Historical Record of the 6th Bomb Group. The Very first photograph I took ended up as the front cover of the book as well as the masthead on our Newsletter. The Little Jeff B-29 parked in a hardstand on North Field. And little did I know at the time that in the 1990's I would get a phone call that started with, "Hi, I'm Little Jeff, the namesake of the B-29 piloted by my Father, William "Bill" Christie". The rest of the story by Jeff Christie, An Insightful Visit with Tom Neff, you'll find on pages 4 and 5. "The Marines Have Landed-AGAIN!" is on page 6 and the 2014 photo shows what the world's largest airfield with Saipan in the background looks like 70 years to the day it was constructed.

It's none too early to begin the celebration as some of our 6th Bomb Group members will be taking a trip to the Island of Tinian. In December of this year it will be 70 years ago that the support personnel of the Bomb Group disembarked just 4 months after the Island was secured to prepare for the flight crews that would begin arriving in 2 weeks. The Navy's Construction Battalion (Seabees) was already turning coral rocks into surfacing material for the Island's roads and building the world's largest airfield. North Field with its four mile and a half runways would serve the armada of B-29s that would soon be flying bombing missions over mainland Japan.

In last January's Newsletter, you may recall I wrote about "passing on the torch" as Editor to a younger member of the Association. Unfortunately, that wasn't as easy as I thought, hence I'm giving it one more "go around" and at Baltimore will be replaced for sure! Please think about volunteering and believe me it's not rocket science.

☆ William B. Webster ☆

*This newsletter is the official publication of the 6th Bomb Group Association Inc. and no articles or photographs may be used without prior approval from the editor.*

## Eunice's Corner



- ★ **Joseph J. Yankowski** formerly of Orange, CA, died in Olympia, WA, on February 25, 2014. Joseph was a Staff Sergeant with the 24th Squadron and worked as an airplane mechanic, servicing the Enola Gay.
- ★ **William "Bill" Young** of Elizabethtown, PA, passed away February 19, 2014. He enlisted in 1942 and served as 1st Lieutenant with the Army Air Corps in the Air Offensive against Japan, on Tinian Island as the navigator flying 22 combat missions on B-29 aircraft WUN WING LO.
- ★ **Jerome Fronczak**, Gaylord, MI, passed away on November 13, 2003. Jerome was a 1st Lieutenant and a P-51 Mustang Fighter, with years of active duty service from 1943 to 1946, followed with Reserve Duty to 1956.

For maintaining the "place of record" for deceased 6th Bomb Group Members.

Please send information to: Glenda Richards, 7635 Dufferine Avenue, Riverside, CA 92504 (951)687-8676 or ggr41797@msn.com

**We feel fortunate** to have Michael Shupp, Col. U.S. Marine Corps (Ret), as our guest speaker at this year's reunion. During Colonel Shupp's 27 year Marine career he commanded troops in Kuwait, Bosnia and Iraq and commanded the main effort during the Battle of Fallujah. After the battle the Colonel was in charge of the reconstruction effort in the city and the first free Iraqi elections in 2005. The Colonel has hinted that during the reunion speech he will try to describe the air support and the air assault effort during the Fallujah battle. For those not familiar with how extensive the Battle of Fallujah was, there is some interesting information on-line at:

<http://militaryhistory.about.com/od/conflictiniraq/p/fallujah.htm>.



## HOME ALIVE IN '45!

A Letter Home from Staff Sergeant Walter M Zoller, Crew 2407, 24th Squadron, 6th Bomb Group. Part of Captain Charles Holton's Crew and flew on the B-29 airplane named "Holton's Hellions". He flew 35 combat missions and was awarded the "Distinguished Flying Cross" for being one of the first six planes that found Tokyo on the night of May 23, 1945 and dropped fire bombs. The rest of the planes flew to the flame and dropped their incendiary bombs on the target, which resulted in burning 22 square miles of the city.

"Well I'm still right where I was, and don't expect much change even if the war in Europe is over. Everyone here was as glad to know it's over as you are there, but very little celebrating. As a matter of fact there was little to do it with as some time ago we had a false alarm that Germany had surrendered. Everyone was shooting their guns and generally making a lot of noise only to learn it wasn't so. Since then all ammunition has been taken back to keep in the safe area and there's very little chance to use it on Japs here now. There always are a few drunks, but the stuffs too hard to get. The P.X. sells beer, two cans or bottles every other night. But it's too weak or scarce to do very much damage and hot too."

"Well I got in another one to the Empire earlier this week. I've forgotten which days, but I still remember it. Not too bad, but I can't seem to hit anything. I did get in some shooting though and they were shooting at us. Just some Flak and other stuff."

Night before last I had an airplane to guard again. I carried paper to write, but as usual I didn't get at it. Just killed time sleeping. This "tunnel" in the B-29 sleeps pretty good, just like crawling in an upholstered sewer pipe. It does give one a bit of a round-shouldered feeling but it gets over quickly. One night I slept in the plane loaded with timed mines and woke up some time during the night thinking I could hear one ticking. I know it was imagination but it sure ruined my sleep. There wasn't any use trying to get out and leave anyway because if it was anything I couldn't have gotten far enough away fast enough."

"Yesterday we had some more school lectures on first aid in the morning and dinghy drill in the afternoon. We went a mile or two off shore on a barge and played around with these little one-man rubber boats that we carry. The first time I ever went swimming with all my clothes and shoes on. Everyone seems to have had a good time though, lot of horse play and only one fellow nearly drowned. He thought he could swim, but couldn't as well as he thought."



Treasurer Larry Dananay indicated that on June 1st there was \$4,781 in the bank. Please note the number following your name/address on page 8 and if it does not indicate 14 or more you're not current on your dues. Thank you for your attention to this.

## AN INSIGHTFUL VISIT WITH TOM NEFF

BY JEFF CHRISTIE

In the early spring of 2011 I made contact with Tom Neff. He is the last surviving member of my father's B-29 crew 4009. Tom served as the central fire control (CFC) gunner on Little Jeff, aircraft number 65, 40th Bomb Squadron, 6th Bomb Group (Very Heavy), 313th Bomb Wing, 20th Air Force Tinian Island, Mariana Islands in 1945. Tom and every other member of the crew flew 35 missions against Japan's homeland.

Tom and I agreed to meet on July 1st in LaVerne, CA and he indicated two of his children wanted to join in the visit as well. Tom lives in a retirement community and I immediately recognized him as he is very close in appearance to the crew picture I have. It was delightful. The children were Dave Neff and Mary Masten. Dave, like Tom, is a retired forestry officer of the California Forest Service and Mary is an educator.

Tom brought with him some papers, books, and souvenirs of the Tinian experience. He had a gunner's recognition handbook, original and a copy of the Pirate's Log book, multiple pictures, and a music box (more of that later). I brought my USAF Museum copy of the A-2 jacket with the 6th patch.

### THE CREW & STATESIDE TRAINING

We just started to talk and it was very easy to get the conversation off the ground. I wanted to let Tom do most of the talking and I ask questions and comment as the conversation developed. We started with the crew picture as Tom described who was who and what their backgrounds were. It was very interesting as most of the crew were east coast natives. For example-Tom was originally from Philadelphia and Nick Critelli was from New York City. Tom, as an enlisted crew member, gave me a far more in depth knowledge of the enlisted men members than my father ever did. It was really quite revealing as to the vast composite that comprised a single B-29 crew made up of the 'greatest generation' America ever produced.

We then moved to the officer crew members. He related that Tom Kinney, the co-pilot, was a professional singer who went on to sing on many TV shows, Red Skelton among others and at Vegas. I related my father's friendship with Kinney as they used to play cribbage on the long flight to and from the target while the plane was on autopilot. Also with Jim McGrail, the bombardier, they played Hearts when they got bored with cribbage. Tom moved on to describe the many different training missions they flew out of Puerto Rico, over Central and South America before they deployed with their new B-29 they picked up at the plant. They departed from San Francisco for the Hawaiian Islands and on the trip lost an engine. One of several throughout their wartime career as the early 3350 engines were very temperamental. They remained in Hawaii for a week and the remainder of the trip on to Tinian was uneventful.

### MEMORABLE MISSIONS

Tom had marked the 35 missions Little Jeff flew in the Pirate's Log and Dave made me a copy of that as well as a certificate for one of his kills of Japanese aircraft. The very early missions against the Home Islands were generally considered ineffective. These were primarily high altitude daylight precision bombardment attacks. They duplicated the 8th and 15th Air Forces' efforts against Germany. An interesting illustration of this is my Green Park story which I related to Tom and family. One of these high altitude raids was against Nakajima aircraft engine plant. Later the US Forces in Japan refurbished the building in the early 1950s and made it into military family housing naming it Green Park. Our family moved into Quarters B-103 in 1954 and on the tenth anniversary of the B-29 raid flown by my father, he sponsored a party at the Officers' Club in the center hallway of the building. It was "Bill Christie's Bombing Party- Everyone come and get bombed". The building had only suffered minor damage during the war and very little effect on engine production. It also made a great big play ground for several hundred American dependent children and we kids thought it was fantastic.

The biggest reason the high altitude mission (daylight precision bombardment) failed Tom said was the jet stream across Japan. The crews and the mission planners had very little understanding of or experience with the phenomena. The winds were so strong that the indices on the Norden Bombsight could not deal with its effects. One of the reasons Major General Curtis LeMay was brought in to the 20th Air Force from England was to overcome this problem. LeMay immediately went to much lower

altitudes rarely above 8000 feet and moved primarily to night incendiary raids using area bombing targeting cities and their populations.

Time didn't allow us to discuss all the missions but we focused on the most memorable. Tom said he was afraid on only a very few of them. Perhaps the scariest was the longest raid #62- a mining mission to Fusan, Korea. Nick Critelli, the Flight Engineer, transferred all the gas remaining in the wing tanks to the center tank in the forward bomb bay. This was normal as they did not want 'wet wings' over target as they would lose gas if hit or still worse ignite. Unbeknownst to the aircrew the filler cap was loose or had fallen off and the excess gas had flowed into the bomb bay. Tom had smelled gas and when investigating he found about 8 inches of gas was slopping around. He called the Old Man (OM) who came back to check it out and asked Tom how the mines were fused. Tom related they were acoustic mines and had been armed in preparation for dropping. He told the OM if he changed the pitch or speed of the props the noise change could set them all off. The OM went back forward and Tom said that was one of the quickest flights over a target they experienced and all the mines dropped normally.

Another time on the run up to the Home Islands the number 1 engine blew up and the whole top of the engine nacelle blew off. It struck the horizontal stabilizer on the left side of the tail and took off about 18 inches of it. The elevator on the left side was destroyed. Tom said the OM had a hell of a time on his hands but managed to turn the plane around, get her calmed down and stable. They dumped the bombs and headed back to Tinian. He managed to get her on the ground safely and without further damage.

### THE IMPACT OF IWO JIMA

Early in our conversation the great value of Iwo Jima to the B-29 mission came to the forefront. Tom regularly attends and has served as the guest speaker for the annual United States Marine Corps' commemoration of the battle for Iwo Jima at Camp Pendleton in CA with the Second Marine Division Association. Little Jeff was the second B-29 to make a forced landing on Iwo. She had suffered damage and landed there for repairs while the battle was still raging. The Marines told them to get it fixed quickly and get the hell out of there as they were attracting too much enemy fire. The first aircraft in to Iwo was DINA MIGHT, a 73rd Wing B-29 out of Saipan. She survived her forced landing but was lost with her entire crew on a subsequent mission.

On another mission all the bombs on one of the upper racks had failed to release and were jammed in one of the bays. Tom tried to clear the jam and release the weapons but could not get to the switch. He called the OM who crawled back somehow over the top of the jammed bombs. He asked Tom for a screwdriver and told him to pull on one of the fins that was jammed against the release switch. Then the OM managed to work the screwdriver to where it would work the release switch and told Tom to be sure to let go of the jammed fin when/if the bombs released when he turned it to 'drop.' The bombs dropped and Tom made certain he let go. It is important to visualize what was going on here. Two guys were working over an open bomb bay somewhere around 8000 feet above the ground in an aircraft over enemy territory under fire. In addition on release one of the bombs damaged the bomb bay doors on the way out and they would not close. The increased drag occasioned yet another visit to Iwo for fuel and to fix the door. After they got on the ground at Iwo, they tried to fix the doors but the only way they could get the doors to remain closed was to jam a broom stick between the doors and tie it to one of the hoist cables in the bay. After they made it back to Tinian the ground crews were amazed that their fix had worked.

On one of the early visits to Iwo for fuel the Marines did not have hoses that would reach long enough to fuel the wing tanks. All the fuel remaining was in the fuselage tanks and it does not pump back to the wings. The OM had calculated they needed at least 500 gals (3000 pounds) of avgas. Iwo was very dusty so Tom and one of the other gunners used their flight suits to strain the gas in funnels. They had to use 5 gallon Jerry cans to get the gas up on the wings. They went to the mission debrief back on Tinian in their skivvy shorts as they couldn't wear the still avgas soaked flight suits. Some officer jumped all over them but the OM quickly put a stop to that BS. The OM told me a story many years ago of having to fly over the target in his shorts. Someone was cooking a can of soup on a hot plate in the aircraft and had forgotten to punch a



hole in it. It burst and sprayed hot soup all over him.

Tom also related another story that necessitated yet another visit back to Iwo. A B-29 flying ahead of them shot down an enemy aircraft. The plane exploded and a large piece damaged one of the propellers and the damaged prop required the engine to be shut down. Then there was a story on General LeMay, the Commanding General of 20th Air Force. Apparently he would not or did not like to fly the B-29. He preferred the B-24 which was lovely to fly "but had no legs" and didn't carry enough bomb load. Apparently after one particularly bad raid well over 30 B-29s made forced landings at Iwo. LeMay's B-24 was parked down towards the far end of the landing runway. A B-29 with severe damage came in on one engine (3 engines out) and the aircraft commander lost control of her after she landed. The damaged plane slid into LeMay's B-24 while he watched it. LeMay always had a cigar in his mouth and he bit that one in two.

Tom related that following one mission just after mine release Little Jeff overflew Vladivostok, Russia. The Russians sent up two aircraft to intercept them and as the two aircraft approached Tom said he called the OM on the intercom and asked what should the gunners do? Dad said I don't care if they are our friends now- give them a burst of gun fire and drive them away. They fired a burst or two at the Russians and as the planes dived away to escape the gunfire, the gunners could identify the planes as Bell P-63 King Cobras which the US had supplied the Russians as part of the Lend-Lease program.

On one of the raids weather forced them to drop the bombs using radar. They were in and out of clouds and following release they again entered clouds. Tom noticed a glowing ball shaped light following them low off the left wing and slightly behind. It stayed with them and maintained that position. The left blister gunner could see it as well as the tail gunner but my father and the cockpit crew were too far forward to be able to see it. The phenomenon followed them all the while they were in the clouds and eventually as the clouds dissipated it vanished. That occurred about 100 miles off the coast of Japan and Tom estimated it must have stayed with them about 30 minutes at an airspeed of 200 knots. When he got back to Tinian he was talking to a chaplain about what he observed. The chaplain made the comment that something was out there making sure they got home safely.

The most interesting aspect of my meeting and discussions with Tom was capturing the flavor of the war from the guys in the back. What I knew was primarily from the flight deck in the aircraft commander's eyes. One of the mementos Tom brought along was a music box similar to a child's hurdy-gurdy player. Tom said the radio operator Robert Garrett would dial in the Jap anti aircraft gunners' frequency as they approached the target. Then wind up the music box and place it against the microphone on Little Jeff. The plane's radio would transmit this horrible sound and destroy the enemy's communications among the flak guns.

Tom also related that the B-29 gunners were initially mystified by the Baka Bomb Kamikaze aircraft. The Baka Bomb was essentially a torpedo with short, stubby wings, a cockpit for a pilot, and a rocket motor on the aft end. At night when most were employed by the Japanese it was very hard to see unless the engine was on leaving a long fireball behind it. The gunners would naturally focus on the exhaust plume and miss the target. Little Jeff killed one of the Baka Bombs. Tom said the Americans got their first close up look at a Baka when one of them hit a B-29 and failed to explode. The Jap pilot was killed but the weapon stayed together stuck in the B-29 and they brought it back to Iwo.

Tom also indicated that by the end of June 1945 the B-29s had run out of incendiary bombs and essentially run out of cities that the strategists and targetiers believed needed to be burned down. War critical city areas of Japan were essentially ashes by July. At that time the 6th Bomb Group turned to mining operations almost exclusively.

I do remember the OM talking briefly about mining missions. He hated them as most were flown at night, and he believed they were just about the most dangerous of the entire mission envelope. You had to fly precise routes, low and slow and "dirty". High drag with bomb bay doors open for extended periods of time and close to anti aircraft and within range of small arms fire. However, it has been clearly proven that the small number of B-29 groups devoted to the mining mission actually sunk more Japanese tonnage than the entire US Navy submarine fleet did in the Pacific. Japan had effectively been denied all access to shipping.

#### THE ATOMIC BOMB AND THE END OF THE WAR

We discussed the impact of the atomic bomb at some length. Tom said

on the last mission they had been briefed that the war was about to end. However they had not received the "codeword" when they arrived at the target. They proceeded with the drop and just after bombs away the word "Oklahoma" came over the radio telling them the war was over. As Hiroshima was fairly nearby the OM asked the crew if they wanted to fly over it and see what it looked like. They flew over what was left of the city at 4000 feet and then home to Tinian. When they got there they had to go to the medical facility and get checked out for radiation. Someone checked out Little Jeff as well. Tom also mentioned one of the ground crew guys said something looked funny on the Enola Gay, the plane that dropped the Atomic Bomb. When he went to look at it he found that the whole tail portion had been slightly bent or pushed to one side by the blast.

We discussed the whole controversy about the A-bomb. As the 50th anniversary approached of the dropping of the Atomic Bomb, on August 6th and the Smithsonian was preparing to display the Enola Gay in the Air and Space Museum. They attempted to portray the dropping of the atomic-bomb on Japan as a racial act (we, i.e. the US, would never have dropped it on Germans (Caucasians)). I showed Tom and his kids my pushback against their attempts to re-write history. They really liked the hand painted patches on my flight jacket and we all agreed there was no other choice available to the United States than drop it.

And because all good things must come to an end, a little after 4:00 p.m. we called it quits although I could have listened for hours. It was a marvelous visit and we all enjoyed it. The kids were going to see Tom again on Monday, the 4th of July for his 90th birthday. As for my visit to California in meeting Tom, it certainly was all I had hoped for. And makes me even more proud of the contributions my father, his entire crew, and his aircraft Little Jeff made to the victory in the Pacific.



Tom and Jeff at Marine Ceremony

#### Addendum to Visit with Tom Neff -1 July 2011

During my visit with Tom, Dave and Mary we discussed his annual participation in a ceremony at Camp Pendleton in honor of the Marines who assaulted Iwo Jima. Tom suggested joining him for the next reunion as he feared it might be his last. I said I would try.

In December I decided to take him up on the offer. I flew out to San Diego on February 17th and we made arrangements to meet at Camp Pendleton on Saturday afternoon at the site of the ceremony on the 18th. The outdoor sunset ceremony was most impressive and fitting for what the Marines did at Iwo starting 19 February 1945. Tom participated in the wreath laying ceremony as the representative of the aircrews of the 20th Air Force. He wore his Distinguished Flying Cross and 20 AF lapel pins.

Following the ceremony we adjourned to the adjacent Staff NCO Club for social hour, further ceremonies and eventually dinner. I sat with Tom, his son John and wife Jill, Mary and her son Will, and good friends, Jack and Sharri Hunter.

Tom and Little Jeff were mentioned in the various parts of the ceremonies as being the second B-29 to make a forced landing at Iwo. I learned that Little Jeff made a total of 6 landings into Iwo following raids. Due to the winds and the layout of the island and airfield they always landed to the north after circling Mt Suribachi to the left.

As a guest I was honored and flattered to be a part of the 3rd, 4th and 5th Marine Division ceremonies.

# THE MARINES HAVE LANDED - AGAIN!

70 years ago on July 24th, 1944 the Marines, after securing Saipan 3 miles away, landed on the Island of Tinian in what was described as the most successful invasion force in WW II. And since January of this year they have been working fervently on bringing back to life North Field, the world's largest airfield ever constructed. The following excerpts outline the work undertaken to date.

"Exercise Forager Fury II will allow Marine Aircraft Group 12 to improve aviation combat readiness and will simulate operations in a deployed, expeditionary environment.", said Brig. Gen. Steven Rudder, commanding general of 1st Marine Air Wing, III Marine Expeditionary Force.

"Tinian allows us to put a lot of Marines in the field and build those expeditionary runways, make clearings and set up radar in an environment where there is no infrastructure

to start from, so we're truly in the field. Out here is exactly what our mission set calls for, take the critical assets and rapidly deploy them, put them in the field, and start operations."

The Marines really enjoyed the opportunity to get tactical operating training and the experience they've employed to accomplish this task. The North Field exercise operations focused on clearing, stripping and repairing deteriorated runways. Removing vegetation from previous-



ly disturbed surfaces and restoring portions of North Field presented a significant opportunity to develop a tactical expeditionary airfield, allowing Marines to hone their skills. The opportunity provided operations to face a challenge in exercising specific unit capabilities while restoring and preserving some of our treasured national landmarks. In four weeks they took a jungle and restored it into four runways.

## ATTENTION AIRCREW MEMBERS AND THOSE WHO WORKED AT NORTH FIELD

If you are having hearing problems and have not applied for a Disability Rating, by all means do so. Contact the folks at your closest U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs office. Look the number up in the phone book. When you state your hearing problem tell them you were an aircrew member on B-29s flying long missions or ground support working around the planes in the Pacific during WW II. They will tell you to come in for an interview and hearing check. You will be given the forms to fill out and help you if necessary. You can submit the forms through them or they will tell you where to send them. In a month or so your Rating will come through (ask them to expedite) and you will be told where to be fitted for hearing

aids. If eligible, you will receive a monthly disability payment from the VA.

Jack Koser, Col. Ret. A member of our 6th Association and I have received Hearing Disability Ratings based on the missions we flew with the 6th from Tinian. Payments can run several hundred dollars a month, so don't let it get away from you. To help you with the Forms I have a one paragraph statement I used referring to my time on Tinian. I will be glad to send you a copy upon request. (Harry George 1170 Gulf Blvd. #703, Clearwater, FL 33767)

This Article by Harry George, 6th Bomb Group Association Historian Emeritus

## ATTENTION VETERANS

To those attending the Baltimore Reunion please think of some incident; be it serious, humorous or ridiculous that you recall from your time on Tinian to be shared with the attendees at the "Veterans Q and A" session. Those unable to attend do the same with pen and paper and send to Larry Dananay at the address on the back page to be read at the reunion.



# hotel

## 6th Bomb Group Hotel Registration

September 25-28, 2014  
Brookshire Suites-Baltimore's Inner Harbor  
120 East Lombard Street, Baltimore, MD 21202  
Phone: (410) 625-1300  
Website: [www.brookshiresuites.com](http://www.brookshiresuites.com)

### Each 6th Bomb Group Member who attends the reunion:

- ★ Must make their own reservation by calling the above telephone number – not the website.
- ★ Must say they are from the WWII Bomb Group to qualify for the special room rate.
- ★ All rooms must be guaranteed by a credit card.
- ★ Reservations must be made by 8/22/14 but due to availability of rooms would suggest making them as soon as possible
- ★ If planning to stay up to 2 days prior or 2 days after, call Nancy directly at 410-562-5605.
- ★ Room Rate: Studio/Queen w/ Sofa or Double/Double \$129.00 plus tax  
Rate includes Breakfast Fri., Sat., and Sun. for each guest along with free Internet.  
Check-in Time is 4:00 PM, Checkout is 11:00 AM.  
The hotel is a non-smoking hotel.  
The Hotel charges a \$9.95 Destination Fee, but is waiving it for the 6th Bomb Group.
- ★ Cancellation of Room Reservations  
4:00 PM the day prior to your arrival.
- ★ Airport is 11 miles from hotel ~ 15 minutes,  
No free shuttle service from airport.  
Taxi Rate: \$30.00 one way  
Super Shuttle: \$15 one way
- ★ Valet parking at hotel: \$36/day  
Self-parking available at downtown and Inner Harbor garages: \$19/day
- ★ Our Hospitality Suite (Sky Room) will be open Thursday thru Sunday noon for us to gather.
- ★ Wheelchair Rental: Scooter Plus Rentals 1-866-474-4356;  
Standard Wheelchair - \$32/day  
*Ask about Military Discounts*

Member Name (for name tag) PLEASE PRINT

Spouse/Guest Names

# events

## Event Registration Form

### Thursday – September 25, 2014

3:00 PM Registration Open - Sky Room  
5:00 PM Wine/Beer & Appetizers Reception  
\_\_\_\_\_ x \$10.00 pp \$\_\_\_\_\_  
Dinner on your own

### Friday – September 26, 2014

6:30 – 9:30 AM Breakfast served – Level C  
8:30 AM Meet in Lobby for Fort McHenry with picnic after \_\_\_\_\_ x \$25.00 pp \$\_\_\_\_\_  
1:00 PM Back to hotel on buses  
Free time to take advantage of the sights  
More info will be in your Welcome packets  
4:00 PM Social Hour in Sky Room  
Dinner on your own  
7:30 PM Open mike, Q&A with Vets in Sky Room

### Saturday – September 27, 2014

7:00 – 10:00 AM Breakfast served – Level C  
8:00 AM Board of Directors meeting – Sky Room  
10:30 AM Meet in Lobby for Harbor Cruise  
11:15 – 12:15 PM Harbor Cruise  
\_\_\_\_\_ x \$25.00 pp \$\_\_\_\_\_  
More free time to explore the Inner Harbor  
3:00 – 4:00 PM Members meeting – Sky Room  
5:00 PM Social Hour in Sky Room with start of Silent Auction for Scholarship Fund  
6:00 PM Dinner – Sky Room and Level C  
\_\_\_\_\_ x \$60.00 pp \$\_\_\_\_\_  
Speaker and continuation of Auction

### Sunday – September 28, 2014

7:00 – 10:00 AM Breakfast served – Level C  
9:00 AM Sunday Morning Service – Sky Room  
Registration Fee  
\_\_\_\_\_ x \$15.00 pp \$\_\_\_\_\_

## TOTAL CHECK

\$ \_\_\_\_\_

**PLEASE MAKE ALL CHECKS PAYABLE TO:**  
6TH Bomb Group 2014 Reunion

## MAIL THIS COMPLETED FORM TO:

Glenda Richards  
7635 Dufferin Avenue  
Riverside, CA 92504

Please give us your email address

Larry Dananay  
224 Indian Hill Road  
Leechburg, PA 15656  
ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

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

### Board of Directors

John R. Creek, Jr., President  
Virgil Morgan, Sr., Vice President  
Edgar L. "Ed" Vincent, Secretary  
Larry Dananay, Treasurer  
Robert W. Frick  
Steve Hays  
Herbert C. Horst  
Jack Koser  
Newell W. Penniman, Jr.  
Charles Ritter  
William B. Webster

## ☆☆☆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.**

Member \_\_\_\_\_

Spouse/Other \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Dues are \$20 per year.

Paid for Year(s): \_\_\_\_ 2014 \_\_\_\_ 2015 \_\_\_\_ 2016

Regular Member \_\_\_\_\_ Associate Member \_\_\_\_\_

Total Enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Make check payable to: 6th Bomb Group  
(check or money order please, no cash)

**Mail to:** Larry Dananay, 224 Indian Hill Road  
Leechburg, PA 15656



**6<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group Area  
Off West Shoreline**