

# 43RD BOMB GROUP ASSOCIATION, INC. "KEN'S MEN"



## NEWSLETTER 116<sup>th</sup> EDITION OCTOBER 2010

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### Headquarters Squadron

C. Fred McAllister (2011)

### 63<sup>rd</sup> Squadron

Charles Rauch (2011)  
James C. Dieffenderfer (2010)

### 64<sup>th</sup> Squadron

Robert W. Cooper (2011)  
Charles F. McClenny (2010)

### 65<sup>th</sup> Squadron

James W. Eide (2011)  
Lehman C. White (2010)

### 403<sup>rd</sup> Squadron

Robert P. Mangan (2011)  
Jack Strange (2010)

### Past Presidents

Robert Butler 1981-1984\*  
George L. White 1985-1987\*  
William H. Wilson, Jr. 1988-1991\*  
Dale F. Barr, Jr. 1992-1993\*  
Max Osborn 1994-1995\*  
James T. Murphy 1996-1997\*  
Samuel F. Commons 1998-1999  
Max M. Axelsen 2000-2001  
Roger T. Kettleson 2002-2003  
Charles Rauch 2004-2005  
Jim Cherkauer 2006-2007  
James Thompson Jr 2008

\*=Deceased

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Some of us have just returned from a hot time in the old Disney World town in Florida. It was the 30<sup>th</sup> annual reunion of the 43<sup>rd</sup> Bomb Group Association. It brings back my recall of the great work of the late **Bob Butler**, our founder, as I read of his message of the organization in the American Legion Magazine in Summer of 1981. The subsequent formation of this association allowed the members to renew the bonds of friendship they had established during the Greatest War of the World, ever.

Many writers now call them the "Greatest Generation." Those writers also often refer to the "Good War." I have often challenged that term, as I don't believe there is such, and I reject the naming of the "Greatest Generation," as I believe only history will know. However, as we have observed in all our reunions, there has been a great bond of friendship of those who've given much to preserve the principles of freedom for all nations of the world. Their contributions continued beyond 1945, as many made a military career beyond World War II, while others served their professions and communities with good citizenship. Some married before or during the war, and others returned to marry their sweethearts back home. Those wives, and mothers, had made important contributions in their own way. Now, these many years later, wives, mothers and daughters themselves, serve in the military. But through all the wars of our history, these stoic ladies had important roles in wartimes. We salute them!

In reference to these contributions by women, it is important for us to remember that three of our last four reunions have been the result of the leadership of three of our ladies. The 2007 great event in Philadelphia,

hosted by **Ann Fletcher**, daughter of **Jim Dieffenderfer**, then **Amy Nally**, daughter of **Sam Commons**, did a fine job as host of the 2008 affair in Atlanta. This 2010 Reunion with Mickey Mouse in Florida, featured the great work of **Nancy Solomon**, widow of **John**. She's been the "Songbird of the 43<sup>rd</sup>" for many years. As plans for this 30<sup>th</sup> reunion were forming, many of us wondered if it could be the last one. But the vote to accept the invitation of **Susan Lanson** to host the 31<sup>st</sup> Reunion was overwhelming in support. Susan's father, the late **Col. Leonard H. Clark** was a pilot in the 403<sup>rd</sup> Squadron, and became Commander of the 403<sup>rd</sup>. Susan has donated her father's large collection of memorabilia at George Mason University Archives, Fenwick Library, Fairfax, VA. Now I will, as many of you, look forward to a 2011 Reunion near our nation's Capital. My first tour of this great city was in 1929, and each visit I've made there since has provided new, awe inspiring experiences.

As my term as president ends this year, I must say that serving as your president is one of my greatest honors, and assembling the historical items for the Memorabilia display as Historian for this association has come from a life-long respect for those who've served in all our nation's wars. Have a great year and we'll all meet again next year

*Eldon E. "Bud" Lawson*

\*\*\*\*\***BOARD OF DIRECTORS**\*\*\*\*\*

Minutes of the board directors meeting on Wednesday September 8, 2010 at 7:00 PM, in the Memorabilia Room of the CORONADA SPRINGS RESORT, 1000 W. Buena Vista Drive, Lake Buena Vista, FL.

**ATTENDEES:** Eldon "Bud" Lawson, President; **Arvid Houghlum**, Vice President; **Roger Kettleson**, Treasurer; **Edward Gammill**, Secretary; **James Dieffenderfer**, 63<sup>rd</sup> Director; **Charles Rauch**, 63<sup>rd</sup> Director; **Robert Cooper** 64<sup>th</sup> Director; **Charles McClenney**, 64<sup>th</sup> Director; **James Eide**, 65<sup>th</sup> Director; **Robert Mangan** 403<sup>rd</sup> Director; Past Presidents: **Sam Commons**, **Roger Kettleson**, **Charles Rauch**, **Jim Cherkauer**; **Nancy Solomon**, 2010 Region Hostess/Sponsor. Members and Guest: **Alvin Hass and Loraine Ross**; **Audrey Kettleson**; **Anita Cherkauer**, **Ann Fletcher**, **Susan Lanson**, **Gerry Houghlum**, **Mildred McClenny**.

Motion, to approve the 2009 Board Meeting minutes as published in the October Newsletter, was made by **Jim Dieffenderfer**, second by **Sam Commons** and passed.

2. The following treasurer's report was presented by Treasurer **Roger Kettleson**:

43<sup>rd</sup> Bomb Group Association  
01-1-2010 to 08-31-2010

**INCOME**

Dues	\$	1,045.00
Life Member	\$	450.00
Donations	\$	-
Copyright Clearance Royalty	\$	-
Refund on 2009 Reunion	\$	-
Cash from CMA	\$	-
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>1495.00</b>

**EXPENSES**

Printing	\$	1787.21
Postage	\$	1254.22
Bulk Mailing Yearly Fee	\$	185.00
Web Site	\$	

Office Supplies	\$	-
Contract Labor	\$	324.00
Gifts for "09	\$	-
2011 Reunion Advance	\$	-
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>3550.43</b>

#### NET

Beginning Balance	\$	8941.16
Ending Balance	\$	6885.73
Money Mkt Acct # 1130676	\$	20,000.00
Money Mkt Interest	\$	792.58
<b>Net Worth</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>27,678.31</b>

3. Nancy Solomon presented the physical and financial status of the 2010 CORONADO SPRINGS RESORT Reunion. The report revealed a well organized program, which is under budget, Nancy expects approximately 58 will be in attendance.

4. The Membership Committeeman reported issuing 9 invitations and gained one new 403<sup>rd</sup> Member and three new Associate Members.

5. The Secretary reported the SURVEY results as follows:

#### TOTAL SURVEYS RECEIVED--35

1-Approval of recommendations?	YES-- <u>20</u>	NO-- <u>2</u>
2-Attend the 2010 Reunion?	YES-- <u>18</u>	NO-- <u>11</u>
3-Future Reunions?	YES-- <u>17</u>	NO-- <u>8</u>
4-Reunion Format?	YES-- <u>22</u>	NO-- <u>3</u>
5-Reunions Longer/Shorter?	LONGER-- <u>0</u>	SHORTER-- <u>7</u>
6-Location? EAST-- <u>12</u>	MID AMERICA-- <u>15</u>	WEST-- <u>8</u>
7-Facility--Cruise Ship?	YES-- <u>9</u>	NO-- <u>21</u>
8-Website--Maintain?	YES-- <u>21</u>	NO-- <u>5</u>
9-Newsletter? CONTINUE-- <u>17</u>	REDUCE #/YEAR-- <u>12</u>	DISCONTINUE-- <u>2</u>

After reviewing these results and upon the direction of the Board, President "Bud" Lawson directed the 31<sup>st</sup> Reunion of the 43<sup>rd</sup> Bomb Group Association be held in the city of Washington, D.C. This meeting shall be sponsored and planed by Associate Members Susan Lanson and **Michael LaVean**.

It was also directed that, the Association continue its present mode of operation until the next reunion, when an another review will be conducted.

#### NEW BUSINESS

1. Roger Kettleson requested to be relieved of his duties as Treasurer due to illness. Reluctantly the Board agreed. A nomination and election must be conducted in the General Group Meeting.
2. The Secretary reminded 63<sup>rd</sup>, 64<sup>th</sup>, 65<sup>th</sup>, and 403<sup>rd</sup> Squadrons of Board members whose term expires December 2010. They were informed to elect a person to fill that vacancy at their Squadron Meetings.
3. Susan Lanson, Associate Member and daughter of Leonard Clark, 403<sup>rd</sup> Squadron, Pilot, presented some of the items that are being planned for the Washington, DC 2011 Reunion. These include a meeting with Senator Levin during which he would make a presentation of any missing medals and accept application for medals not yet awarded. The Philippine Consulate has agreed to present the Philippine Liberation Medal to all those who qualify and not yet received the medal. Tours of Arlington National Cemetery with a memorial service and of the WWII Memorial.

Susan and Michael are considering a small quaint hotel with these features: one restaurant, one Watering Hole and a minimum of walking. Location and the availability of a meeting/memorabilia room suitable for our needs is an important consideration.

### VERY OLD BUSINESS

Jim Cherkauer reported a further delay in the publication of the 43<sup>rd</sup> History Book.

**Minutes of the General Meeting on Saturday, September 11, 2010 at 9:00-11:00AM** in the Memorabilia Room of the CORONADA SPRINGS RESORT, 1000 W. Buena Vista Drive, Lake Buena Vista, FL

### REPORTS

1. The Secretary's Report-A motion from the floor to accept the minutes as published in the October 2009 Newsletter was made and seconded. The motion was passed with thanks from a grateful Secretary.
2. Treasurer's Report: The Association financial status, as shown in the Directors Meeting above was presented by Treasurer Roger Kettleon.
3. President Lawson reported the Board of Directors offered the following candidates for 2011 Officers: President-Arvid Houghlum, Vice President-open. Treasurer-open and Secretary-Ed Gammill. When President Lawson asked for nominations from the floor, there was total silence for a Vice President. For treasurer, after another period of silence, Jim Dieffenderfer nominated Eldon "Bud" Lawson and Sam Commons Second. The candidates for 2011-2012 officers are: President Arvid J Houghlum, Vice President (vacant), Treasurer Eldon "Bud" Lawson and Secretary Edward L. Gammill. The President declared by executive order, that the membership approved the 2011-2012 officers as presented.
4. Nancy Solomon reported the status of the 2010 Reunion.
5. The Historian and Membership Committeeman gave their reports.
- 6--The group was informed that the 2011 Reunion will be hosted by Susan Lanson and Michael La Vean in Washington, DC. The date, facilities, preliminary schedule of activities for you planning will be in the January Newsletter.
6. **Fred Hagen** reported the successful return and future restoration of the B-17 SWAMP GHOST. The lead story in the September 2010 issue of AIR CLASSICS MAGAZINE reports Fred's activities in this project. A copy of the article is included as an attachment to this newsletter.
7. Fred's guest, **Bruce Gamble**, a freelance Arthur of four non-fiction narratives about WWII in the Pacific discussed his research and writing about the Southwest Pacific Theater.

### UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A response to my e-mail to Larry Hickey is an attachment to the newsletter

### NEW BUSINESS

1. 63<sup>rd</sup> Squadron reported the election of **Robert Richardson** as a Board Director to January 2012.
2. 64<sup>th</sup> Squadron reported the election of Charles McClenny as a Board Director to January 2012.
3. 65<sup>th</sup> Squadron reported the election of Sam Commons as a Board Director to January 2012.
4. 403<sup>rd</sup> Squadron reported the election of **Francis Drab** as a Board Director to January 2012.

### THE CORONADO SPRINGS RESORT REUNION

The Memorabilia Room was the focal point of our reunion. The resort staff rearranged and changed equipment as required for each day's activities. Our Historian Bud Lawson arranged the extensive memorabilia around the room. These photographs, data and articles became a hit, not only for our members, but the resort



staff and the many folks visiting the area. There were many compliments and well wishes from these people.

Once again the list of attendees is an attachment to the newsletter. The list has become so fragmented that the format does not fit into the body of newsletter very well.

After the Wednesday Executive Board Meeting, We gathered next door to see and hear an old fashion Barber Shop Quartet. They had many good songs and most unusual instruments. But our **Ray Crawford** became a star of the evening during his activities with the Quartet. Ray your talent surprised many of your friends!

Thursday, there was WWII movies and videos in the Memorabilia Room, until we boarded the bus for the HOOP Dee DOO REVUE.

Once we were seated, front stage, in the double deck dinner/theater, we were entertained by six (three men and three ladies) talented song and dance people. The show and setting was similar to old River Boat minstrel shows. During and excellent family style dinner. Much food on the table and you served yourself with any and all, Bar-B-Que pork ribs and chicken plus fixings. The beer and wine flowed freely as the server brought more of everything. There was much active with the performers visiting our tables and becoming quite friendly with some of our people. There was an introduction of the 43<sup>rd</sup> visitors and we received a standing ovation by the large crowd. It was fun!

Friday was a very busy day. In the morning we bussed to the FANTASY of FLIGHT museum, where for approximately 4 hours, we were able to see, watch, photograph and hear a collection of vintage airplanes. The final display was a special flight demonstration of a German "Storch" observation plane for the 43<sup>rd</sup> visitors.

That evening we traveled to the SPIRIT OF ALOHA-DINNER and THEME SHOW. Once again, we were a part of a large crowd and seated in a covered outdoor arena with a large stage. The Hawaiian music and dancing started as the food was served family style. The servers maintained ample food and drinks as we watched a show with many Hawaiian dancers and activities.

The ladies were treated to, bare chested-wash board abs, male dancers. I will not go into what our men were watching, but the female dancers sure could move all of it!

Saturday, the General Meeting was conducted in the Memorabilia Room. At the conclusion of the meeting Fred Hagen presented an update on the recovery of the SWAMP GHOST. Bruce Gamble, a guest of Fred's, discussed his research and books that he had written. Afterwards he sold and autographed copies of his book FORTRESS RABAU and BLACK SHEEP ONE. Bruce earned the Gold Medal in the History category from the Military Writers Society of America for FORTRESS REBAUL.

Remainder of the day was free time until the photo session at 6:00 PM. The photos session was well managed and avoided last year's problems.

After we settled in for the Banquet Dinner/Dance, a Color Guard of Boy Scouts of America, Troop #125, Oseceola District, Central Florida Council posted the colors and lead the group in the Pledge Allegiance. A very impressive group of young men and Scout Master.

President Bud Lawson read the opening prayer from **Chaplain Roland Fisher**.

"Dear Heavenly Father, once again we gather with friends and family to celebrate our love for you and for each other. Once again we reflect on the high moral purpose of our responsibility to mankind that you so wisely instilled in us when we formed as a unit so many years ago.

"Then we were many, young, strong and spirited, drawn from all parts of this great country that you so generously gave to us. Now we are few. We show marks of the years gone by. We are weary, some feeble. We see the shadows of our twilight drawing near.

"But we are grateful for those years you gave us. We are grateful for the many blessing you have bestowed upon us. We are grateful that you gave us, all of us in the past, each other as comrades. We are grateful that you gave us the ability to serve our country and the opportunity to help all people be free. We are grateful for your love and compassion. We know the spirits of our comrades lost in the war and those who have passed on since, are in your tender care. We ask for your blessing of the loved ones the left behind and you mercy to ease their grief.

"Our country, all mankind, is facing menace from the acts of those who are not guided by your principles

of compassion. Give us the wisdom to cope with these threats in a way that protect us, protects those who would hurt us from harm to any and all of us. Help us to select the best of our leaders and guide them on to acts that will benefit all mankind

"Dear Lord, we are humbly grateful for your benevolence. We thank thee. Amen"

Roland read this pray during the Philadelphia/Valley Forge 2007 Reunion

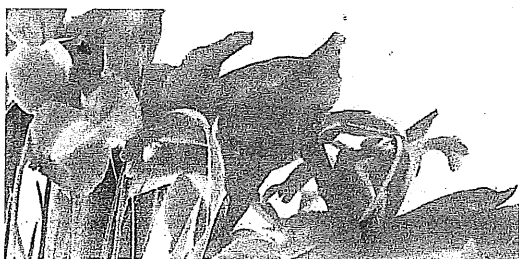
Bud Lawson asked Jim Dieffenderfer to come forward, whereupon, Jim asked me to come forward. I stood beside Jim, as he made a short-emotional presentation of a beautiful walking cane! Surprised and honored by being the recipient of this beautiful work of wooden art, I stumbled through a rambling acceptance speech. **Once again I thank all of you, especially Joe Snyder.** Joe you are a Master Wood Carver and an artist.

Our DJ, **Scott Messina**, had been playing our favorite 1940s music and had issue a challenge to name a song that he could not play for us. Many tried, **Jim Rodella** gave some of the wildest and weirdest titles I have ever heard. But the DJ always delivered.

A wonderful dinner was served, Filet Mignon steak with all the trimmings. The steak was so large that many could not finish eating it. It was an excellent meal and the cash bar provide some comfort to our members. Ray and Dorothy Crawford were the first to hit the dance floor, followed by Jimmee Dee and daughter, Ann Fletcher. There was much activity until around 10:30 when folks started to depart.

At the completion of these four busy days, we had suffered four casualties. On separate occasions, on a dark and humid night, Charles McClenny and Roger Kettleon had a losing skirmish with rough and dirty McAdam Asphalt.

Ed Gammill and Jim Dieffenderfer fell for and was rejected by Lady Slippery Bathtub. All of these old warriors, sore and embarrassed, returned to action.



43<sup>RD</sup> BOMB GROUP ASSOCIATION, INC. MEMORIAL SERVICE

SEPTEMBER 11, 2010

Introductory Remarks. . . . . Eldon E. "Bud" Lawson, President

"THE GREATEST" By Roland T. Fisher. . . . . read by Rick Lloyd

"How Great Thou Art" . . . . . Sung by Nancy Solomon

IN MEMORY OF THOSE WHO PASSED AWAY - 2009 - 2010

63<sup>RD</sup> SQUADRON

64<sup>TH</sup> SQUADRON

65<sup>TH</sup> SQUADRON

403<sup>RD</sup> SQUADRON

HQRS

"TAPS" . . . . . As played by the "Military Band"

GOD BLESS AMERICA . . . . . As sung by Nancy Solomon



We gather here this morning to celebrate the memory of all of our fallen comrades, and their families. This is the final event of this 30<sup>th</sup> annual Reunion of the 43<sup>rd</sup> Bomb Group Association. Sixty-five years ago we became a part of the history of that conflict called World War two. That war, once again, established freedom for our world. Yet, even then, as now, we all knew that freedom is forever under assault! Through the 390 years since the Pilgrims set foot on our shores, we call for the Grace of God to protect our free nation and our way of life has repeatedly been proclaimed by our leaders. Regarding this, I'd like to recall this time, with you, The actual words of some of these great leaders, as they were dedicated to the magnitude of God Almighty and beseeched Him to guide our lives in this land where every person has the right to Live, Work and Worship in freedom!

On October 3, 1789, George Washington proclaimed, "Whereas, it is the providence of Almighty God to obey His Will, to be grateful for His benefits, and humbly to implore His protection and favor." Then, seventy-four years later, October 3, 1863, as this nation was embroiled in a terrible Civil War, President Abraham Lincoln proclaimed, "No human counsel hath devised, nor hath any mortal hand worked out these great things. They are the gracious gifts of the Most High God, who, while dealing with us in anger for our sins, hath nevertheless remembered mercy,,,,," President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, in his famous December 8, 1941 address to Congress, requesting the Declaration of War, concluded his famous words, "With confidence in our armed forces----with the unbounding determinating of our people----we will gain the inevitable triumph----So Help Us God!!! Just days before, November 20,1941 before the attack on Pearl Harbor, the President had set aside the date for Thanksgiving with these words...."To be obseved in giving thanks to the heavenly source of our earthly blessing."

It is well for us to acknowledge the fact that our nation's greated leaders have always believe that America exists because of the Grace of God Almighty. All of us who served in the military and all who have served our government have taken a solemn oath to uphold the Constitution of the United States of America.

That timeless document was preseded by the July 4, 1776 Declaration of Independence which affirms America's recognition of God Almighty with these words, "We hold these truths to be self-evident that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalieable rights that among these are Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness,,,,,etc."

In view of all this, can there truly be such as a just separation of God (as Church) and this nation, and it's Government?

Following Bud's Introduction, Rick Lloyd read Chaplin Roland Fisher's "THE GREATEST" which is a free standing attachment to this newsletter. Many of you requested copies of this excellent presentation, by SMOKIE ONE, it will be easier to reproduce.

Nancy sang "How Great Thou Art." Bud called the names of those who answered "THE FINAL ROLE CALL" since our last reunion:

#### WE WILL ALWAYS REMEMBER

##### 63<sup>rd</sup> SQUADRON

Clair H. Black  
Nathan "Joe" Hirsh Jr  
Charles R. Woods  
Helen Epplon  
Wife of Fred Epplon  
Charles Lloyd Anderson  
Ann Rose Palmer  
Wife of Robert Ryan  
Isadore B. Miller

##### 64<sup>th</sup> SQUADRON

Albert Feldbin  
Joseph D. Howard  
Jack M. Rusmisel  
Nicholas Arabinko  
Orvis L. Cason, Jr.  
John G. Smith

##### 65<sup>th</sup> SQUADRON

Bernard P. Lynn  
Larry E. Main  
Milton Gusack  
Carrol (Kelly) W. Guy

##### 403<sup>rd</sup> SQUADRON

Carl O. Simpson  
William D. Galida  
Odis F. Cleere

#### HDQRS

**"TAPS----- by the Military Band"** there was not a dry eye in the room. Nancy had all present join in singing GOD BLESS AMERICA. Our service attracted much attention from folks passing-by.

The days activity finished with the traditional FAREWELL BREAKFAST BUFFET and finally good by as most headed home.

At the direction of Nancy Solomon, Commanding Officer of the 43<sup>rd</sup> Bomb Group Association's 2010 Reunion, the following is issued:

SPECIAL ORDER )

NUMBER OOOXXX)

1. All attendees of the 43<sup>rd</sup> Bomb Group's 2010 Reunion are authorised to wear the CORONADA SPRINGS RESORT Campaign Medal.

2. Charles McClenny and Roger Kettleon are authorised to attach the PURPLE WALKING CANE device to the Medal for action against Rough and Dirty MacAdam Asphalt.

3. Edward Gammill and Jim Dieffenderfer may attach the WHITE CROSS, indicating that they are now honorable Knights of The Order of Slippery Bathtub.

By the order of CO Nancy

Joe Doaks

Flunky

OFFICIAL:

12 Sept10

Big Shot

Final note from Nancy; "Thank you for the honor and the absolute joy of planning and hosting the 30<sup>th</sup> Reunion of the 43<sup>rd</sup> Bomb Group Association at Walt Disney World's Coronado Springs resort, Lake Buena Vista, Florida.

"We had excellent weather. I sincerely hope all of you thoroughly enjoyed all of the events planned. I had a Ball!!! The main idea was that we all got together one more year to re-live memories of WWII, and that's really what is all about. When I volunteered to do this reunion, uppermost in my thoughts was that you all fought successfully to make our country free and you all certainly deserve a memorable reunion not only this year; but every year we can all get together.

"God Bless all of you! See you in Washington, D.C. in 2011.

"By-the-way, I have 34 well designed hats left over and I am selling them at a discount of \$10.00 each. Maybe you know someone who would love to have one, possibly to add to their hat collection. Send me a check and I'll mail it to you. Nancy Solomon, 8971 Huntington Pointe Drive, Sarasota, FL 34238-3207.

"The preview pictures are now on the internet, they were taken by Dean, the Disney Photographer. You simply go to <<http://collages.net/disneyphotography>> Type in 43<sup>rd</sup> Bomb Group Association 2010 and enter password: 1971 ENJOY!!!! They're Great!!!!"

*Nancy Solomon*

43<sup>rd</sup> Bomb Group Association, Inc.

\*\*\*\*\*EDITOR'S AND MEMBER'S REPORTS\*\*\*\*\*

**"A house is made of walls and beams;  
a home is built with love and dreams."**

Unknown

**"Freedom is never more than one generation away from extinction. We didn't pass it to our children in the bloodstream. It must be fought for, perfected, and handed on for them to do the same."**

**"If you lose freedom here, there is no place to escape to. This is the last stand on Earth."**

*Ronald Reagan*

**Francis Langland, 63<sup>rd</sup> Squadron, Mechanic/Gunner** sent a Wichita KS Newspaper Article about the arrival of the B-17 "Swamp Ghost" in Long Beach, CA, which is an attachment to this newsletter.

On June 27, I received a follow-on letter from Francis, which gives additional information of his past and present activities. "I served in the U.S. Army Air Corp as a Tech-Sargent and Assistant Engineer on a B-24 Bomber. I landed on Owi Island, Sept. 12, 1944, under the command of George Welch and his crew. During this commission, I flew a total of 438 official combat hours. As a member of the 63<sup>rd</sup> Squadron. We flew only RADAR missions-only at night.

"Upon returning to the U.S., I have remained interested in and dedicated to the conservation of aircraft such as the one in the article about the "Swamp Ghost."

"I have spent at least 12 years volunteering at the Wichita Air Museum, where similar restoration work has been done and is still going on.

"I am glad to know that the article was of interest to you."

Sincerely

*Francis Langland*

P.S.—I have transcribed this letter for Francis, for he is recovering from recent eye surgery.

*V. Langland*

The "Swamp Ghost" and Fred Hagen became the lead article in the September issue of AIR CLASSICS magazine. This article is also included as an attachment.

Received the following edited e-mail from **John Kubiak**, son of **Edmond K. Kubiak, 403<sup>rd</sup> Squadron, RADAR Countermeasures Officer.** "I joined as an Associate Life Member and attended the Nashville Reunion in 2001. Had a wonderful time with everyone! You were all so welcoming!

"I enjoy the newsletter and want to stay on the mailing list and hopefully I will make another Reunion. Please change my address to John Kubiak, 1605 Cobblestone Creek Drive, Florissant, MO, 63031-4374. New Phone Number (314) 517-1548. Thanks to all of you for your help and for all you do for the Association."

GOD Bless the 43<sup>rd</sup>

*John H. Kubiak*

From **Max Axelsen**: "This is probably the best I have heard life explained!!"

**TWO WOLVES**

One evening an old Cherokee told his grandson about a battle that goes on inside people. He said, "My son, the battle is between two wolves inside us all.

"One is Evil— It is anger, envy, jealousy, sorrow, regret, greed, arrogance, self-pity, guilt, resentment, inferiority, lies, false pride, superiority, and ego.

"The other is Good— It is joy, peace, love, hope, serenity, humility, kindness, honesty, benevolence, empathy, generosity, truth, compassion and faith."

The grandson thought about it for a minute and then asked his grandfather, "Which wolf wins?"

The old Cherokee simply replied, "The one you feed!"

The latest from **Tracy, Sweet Heart of the 43<sup>rd</sup>**, via e-mail: "My Dad's doing okay-ish. By that I mean that physically all is the same—which is better than things being worse! – but there's also been no improvement. Psychologically all is fine. He's still at my sister's home, being taken care of by my sister and brother. I write him letters, talk to him on the phone, send him books and snacks, make sure he has a subscription to the newspaper, etc., and that's about all I can do from here.

"He has family around all the time and seems to be pretty happy most of the times I talk to him. I know he is frustrated, but given how things are physically for him, his situation is about as good as it can be. He is definitely well-loved, that's for sure! For Pops, as long as his family is OK and he has stuff to read, he can get by pretty well."

*Tracy Giliberto*

August 17, received a letter from **Emanuel A. LaPorte**, nephew of **Michael S. Laporte, 65<sup>th</sup> Squadron**. Manny reports: "In reply to your 7/22/10 letter, glad to give you data which can be used in our newsletter. I have plenty for sure. The poem I sent you last month was from my family's collection. I enclose two more, both are anonymous, I couldn't find the authors.

"I sent a thank card to Tracy Giliberto, for updating the information under my uncle's plane on the web site. I also sent a get well card to her father, which until I read our newsletter, I had no idea that he had a stroke. My prayers to all.

"God bless, take care and keep up the good work".

Sincerely

*Emanuel A. LaPorte*

From **Ray Snyder, 403<sup>rd</sup> Squadron, Gunner** by the way of **Elain Pierce**: "Mail piled up on me while I was gone. Just found the 43<sup>rd</sup> Newsletter! I see I have stupidly allowed my dues to elapse. I believe I owe for three years to stay ahead, so why don't I just add \$40 to make it \$100 for a Life Time membership! I will be 89 this year, time remaining-- unknown.

I had no crew as I was TDY from V Bomber Headquarters and flew with 10 different pilots. During one mission we were shot up over Biak. Crashed into the Marine invasion of Wakde. We were their guest for four days, I believe. They were very gracious, seeing we were unexpected. They took real good care of us".

*William R. Snyder, Jr*

Welcome back Ray, now as a Life Time Member you will not have to worry about staying current.

\*\*\*\*\*MEMORIALS\*\*\*\*\*

June 28, received a phone call from **William McMurray, 63<sup>rd</sup> Squadron, A/C Maintenance** reporting the June 2010 death of **Isadore Miller, 63<sup>rd</sup> Squadron, Cryptanalyst**.

July 3, Sam Commons reported a phone message from **Nancy Gusack** informing of the death of her father, **Dr. Milton Gusack, 65<sup>th</sup> Squadron, Flight Surgeon**.

July 6, Nancy provided the following: "There's not a whole lot to say that Dad's squadron buddies don't already know. He was our father and our Mom's husband, so of course we have different histories with him. His recent history is straightforward, he moved from his apartment 8 months ago, into an assisted living facility. He was frail enough that he needed more attention than he could reasonably receive at his apartment. He has had a few falls, which had a real impact on him, even though he was not injured in any obvious physical way. It has to be depressing to become frail, especially when he spent his entire life caring for everyone else. Dad said that he was not depressed, but very sad. He missed our Mom more and more and found less and less to be of interest. In early June after another fall Dad began to "leave" us. He refused food and actually signed a note asking the personnel not to offer him food. The kind, but pushy, staff attempted to force him to eat when he was

no longer hungry. He also refused most liquids. My sister, who spent years visiting, supporting and listening, reminded him of the consequences of not eating and drinking. He was absolutely clear about where he was going.

"June 1, when he passed away at 92, he was spending most of his time sleeping or thinking or revisiting much about his past-way before our time. We know he was thinking about his parents and the War. When he was "awake" he knew us, and all three children were able to reaffirm and pledge our everlasting love for one another, which has made his passing a little bit easier. My brother and I spoke last to him on June 29 and my sister on June 30.

"You guys were lucky to know and love him, and so were we."

Sincerely,

*Nancy*

Joy, reported on "Message Board" of our Website the death of her father, **William D. Galida, 403<sup>rd</sup> Squadron, Armament**. The internment and services were in the Sarasota Veterans Cemetery.

The requested information on the "Message Board" was furnished to Joy via the Website.

An August 23 e-mail from **Denise Cleere Churchill** reported the following: "First, I wish to thank all of you for serving in the Army Air Corps, I consider you to be very patriotic and brave men. Thank you for all you accomplished at such a young age.

"Secondly, I want to inform you of the passing of my father, **Odis F. Cleere, 403<sup>rd</sup> Squadron, Crew Chief**. He was diagnosed with Alzheimer's back in 1996 and actually was still able to make his much enjoyed trips to the different sites of the reunions. It was not until 2006 that he began to slip into a different lifestyle. He very much enjoyed meeting with everyone at the reunions and would bring back so many stories and pictures to share. Our father passed on Saturday August 21, 2010 peacefully and with his loving family surrounding him.

"He, and the men and women of his generation will be truly missed, you are what we all should strive to be."

Thank You,

*Denise Churchill*

Sallie Guy reports: "I am saddened to inform you of the death of my husband, **Lt. Col. Carroll (Kelly) W. Guy**, at age 93, on Thursday, August 19. Fortunately, we had put him under hospice care after hospitalization for pneumonia and a mild heart attack, so he died at home.

"He was a Pilot on B-24s from 1943-1944 in the 65<sup>th</sup> Squadron. His dearest friend was Dr. Bud Gusack, they shared a tent on Owi. In recent years we visited Bud and kept in close touch with him. Since Bud died, July 1, Kelly was reunited with him in heaven just a few weeks later"

Sincerely

*Sallie Guy*

**Albert Feldbin, Bombardier, 64<sup>th</sup> Squadron**, my Dad died November 8, 2009 after a battle with cancer. I was going to attach a standard newspaper obituary, but I'm willing to bet all of you have read enough of them. Since most of you didn't know dad it would just be one more name in a long sad list. What I would like to do instead is share one of my best memories.

About 9 years ago, maybe longer, The Collings Foundation B-24 was making a stopover at one of our local airfields. I took a day off from work, Dad and I made the hour drive to take a look. We parked and walked over to the fence, about 20 yards from the plane. We were both transfixed by what we saw. It had recently been repainted as the Dragon and His Tail, a plane Dad had flown from Ie Shima on a couple of missions as bombardier on Ken Brown's crew. He said he didn't remember the aircraft being so big. I looked at him, dumbfounded. Having grown up in the era of B-52's and C-5A's, I had no idea that America's "other" heavy of WWII was so small!

This was a very small, private airfield and pre-9/11 so we wandered in through the gate. There were a



dozen other 70 and 80ish gentlemen walking around with men my age in tow. Obviously B-24 vets with their son who had the same idea as Dad and I. The aircraft wasn't "open" to the public, yet the Collings people were very accommodating and pretty much let us wonder at will. We formed a little spontaneous tour group with the other vets and pretty much heard stories from every position on that plane. As it came close to the public opening we were encouraged to finish. We took our last look around and as we walked around the nose on our way to the gate Dad ducked underneath and disappeared into the nosewheel opening. I figured he was just having a last look. When he didn't reappear for several minutes, I ducked under and stuck my head up through the nose wheel opening which is about all of me that would fit. There was Dad, hunched over the bomb sight. "Dad, we have to go" I told him. He turned to me, a small grin on his face and said "Give me another minute. I still remember how to do this!" In that brief, fleeting instant I saw Dad as a 20 year old flight officer on his greatest adventure. The image was just a flash but I still see it. That was the greatest gift I ever received from Dad and the best day I had with him as an adult.

Let that be his obituary. I'll think of all of you that way.

*Mark Feldbin*

Do not look at my grave and cry,  
I am not there; I'm up in the sky,  
I've passed my final check ride,  
and now I am free to fly.

To places I've only dreamed of,  
While flying mortals through the sky  
Do not grieve for me, for I'm free to fly,  
Do not grieve for me, for I did not die.

\*\*\*\*\*HUMOR\*\*\*\*\*

#### From Max Axelsen

One Sunday morning a pastor decided to do something a little different. He said "Today, in church, I am going to say a single word and you are going to help me preach. Whatever single word I say, I want you to sing whatever hymn that comes to your mind--then the pastor shouted 'CROSS.' Immediately the congregation started singing in unison, 'THE OLD RUGGED CROSS.'

The pastor hollered out 'GRACE.' The congregation began to sing 'AMAZING GRACE, how sweet the sound. Then he said 'POWER.' The congregation sang 'THERE IS POWER IN THE BLOOD.'

The pastor said 'SEX' the congregation fell into total silence. Everyone was in shock. They nervously began to look around at each other afraid to say anything. Then all of a sudden, from very back of the church, a little old 87 year old grandmother stood up and began to sing 'MEMORIES!'

#### Little Johnny Again

Did you hear about the Texas teacher who was helping one of her kindergarten students put on his cowboy boots?

He asked for her help and she could see why. Even with her pulling and him pushing, the little boots still didn't want to go on. By the time they had the second boot on, she had worked up a sweat. She almost cried when the little boy said, "Teacher, they're on the wrong feet." She looked, and sure enough, they were! It wasn't any easier pulling the boots off than it was putting them on. She managed to keep her cool, as they worked to put the boots back on, this time on the right feet. He then announced, "These aren't my boots." She bit her tongue rather than get right in his face and scream, "Why didn't you say so?" like she wanted.

Once again, she struggled to help him pull the ill-fitting off his little feet. No sooner had they removed the boots when he said, "They're my brother's boots. My mother made me wear 'em." Now she didn't know if she should laugh or cry. But, she mustered up what grace and courage she had left to wrestle the boots on his feet again. Helping him into his coat, she asked, "Now, where are you mittens?"

He said, "I stuffed 'em in the toes of my boots." She will be eligible for parole in three years!

As she prepared her young students to advance to a higher grade, Little Johnny's Teacher insisted on NO



baby talk in her class. She told the students that they must use "Big People" talk.

She asked Alex what he had done over the weekend? "I went to visit my Nana". "No, you went to visit your GRANDMOTHER. Use 'Big People' words".

She then asked Roger what he had done. "I took a ride on the choo-choo" She said, "No, you took a ride on a TRAIN. You must remember to use 'Big People' words".

She asked Little Johnnie what he had done? "I read a book" he replied. "That's WONDERFUL!" the teacher said. "What book did you read?"

Little Johnnie thought real hard about it, then puffed out his chest with great pride, and said "Winnie the SHIT."

\*\*\*\*\*INFORMATION\*\*\*\*\*

This newsletter is published four times a year - **January, April, July and October**. Please send **membership applications** and **dues payments** to **Elain Pierce, P.O. Box 84, Snyder, TX 79550**. Please keep in mind that annual dues are **\$20.00 per year** and life membership is **\$100.00**. Please make the check to the **43<sup>rd</sup> Bomb Group Association**.

Send items for the **Newsletter** to **Ed Gammill at 5337 E. Earll Drive, Phoenix, AZ 85018-8045** or via e-mail to **[Edgammill@aol.com](mailto:Edgammill@aol.com)**. Any material received after the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month prior to a publication month probably will not appear in that publication.

The Postal Service **will not forward** this newsletter. If you change your address **please notify Ed Gammill** at the address shown above. Send all changes of phone numbers, etc. also.

\*\*\*\*\*REUNION INFORMATION\*\*\*\*\*

The 31<sup>st</sup> Reunion will be in Washington, D.C. The date and preliminary plans will be [n the January Newsletter. Hostess and Host will be Susan Lanson and Michael La Vean

\*\*\*\*\*ATTACHMENTS\*\*\*\*\*

- 1-2010 Reunion Attendees
- 2-Larry Hickey's Response
- 3-Return of the SWAMP GHOST, AIR CLASSICS MAGAZINE
- 4-B-17 "Swamp Ghost" back in California!
- 5-Chaplain Roland Fisher's Memorial Service Message

## 2010 REUNION ATTENDEES

### **63<sup>rd</sup> SQUADRON**

Chuck Rauch  
Edward Gammill  
Jim Dieffenderfer  
Ray Crawford  
Dorthy Crawford  
Ann Fletcher  
Bob Richardson  
Shirley Richardson  
Roger Little  
Kathryn Celletta  
Fred Hagen  
Alfred Hagen, Sr.  
Patricia Hagen  
Bruce Gamble

### **HEADQUARTERS SQUADRON**

Gordon F. Bavor  
Betty Bavor

### **64<sup>th</sup> SQUADRON**

Lyle Heineke  
Betty Heineke  
Arvid Hougum  
Gerry Hougum  
Bob Cooper  
Joyce Rodella  
Jim Rodella  
Boots Rodella  
Roger Kettleson  
Audrey Kettleson  
Al Haas  
Lorine Ross  
Ralph Grubb  
Dan Grubb  
Wendall Jones  
Charles McClenny  
Mildred  
McClenny  
Garrett Minnick  
Marla Gornall  
Sally J. Mitchell  
Pamela Mulligan  
Arthur Mulligan  
Beverlee Mulligan  
Gary Mulligan  
Sally Mulligan  
Mark Ten Eyck  
Gil Foch  
Barbara Foch

### **65<sup>th</sup> SQUADRON**

Eldon E. Lawson  
Jim Eide  
Steve Eide  
Sam Commons  
Jim Cherkauer  
Anita Cherkauer  
James L. Harcrow  
Bob "Hark"  
Harcrow  
Terry Hammond  
Deb (Cherkauer)  
Hammond  
Fred Cooke

### **403<sup>rd</sup> SQUADRON**

Nancy Solomon  
Frank Drab  
Peg Drab  
Joe Snyder  
Sally Snyder  
Bob Mangan  
Nancy Solomon  
Susan Lanson  
Rick Lloyd  
Bob Mangan  
George Anderson  
Gwenn Anderson  
Gayle Anderson

Subj: **Re: INFORMATION; reply**  
Date: 9/17/2010 10:32:10 AM US Mountain Standard Time  
From: [larry@irandpcorp.com](mailto:larry@irandpcorp.com)  
To: [Edgammill@aol.com](mailto:Edgammill@aol.com)  
CC: [scottcmiller@irandpcorp.com](mailto:scottcmiller@irandpcorp.com)  
*Sent from the Internet (Details)*

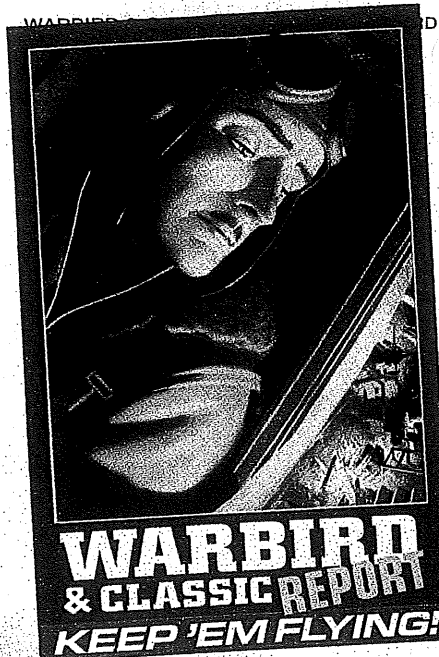
Ed,

I am acutely aware of my obligation to publish. The book is in its final layout, fact checking and editing. There are more than a half dozen people involved in that process right now, with the goal of uploading the book to the printer-server for printing before the end of the year, maybe well before then. We've just finalized within the past two weeks three major items from our final check list on the project, all of which have been outstanding for many years. The end is very near.

I greatly appreciate your steadfast support of the project for so many years. My health is now the best it's been in 30-years, after a very serious bout with a recurring cancer last year, with all the attendant radiation treatments to my head and chemo therapy. Since I lost all my taste buds to the radiation treatments for several months, I went on an intense diet and exercise program that has resulted in a weight loss of 120 pounds, which has greatly impacted my health in a positive way. I still have 20 pounds to lose but am approaching a normal weight for my size. Eighteen months ago, my cardiologist said I wouldn't live to 70 (I'm now 66) without a major change in my health, and I've now accomplished that, while still bringing two major books to near-conclusion, including yours.

Regards,

Larry



**WARBIRD  
& CLASSIC REPORT**  
**KEEP 'EM FLYING!**

# RETURN OF THE GHOST SWAMP

**AN AMAZING ARTIFACT  
OF AMERICAN AVIATION  
HISTORY HAS BEEN  
RECOVERED  
BY MICHAEL O'LEARY**



The recovery of the Swamp Ghost  
was dirty, dangerous, and costly.  
(Aero Archaeology)

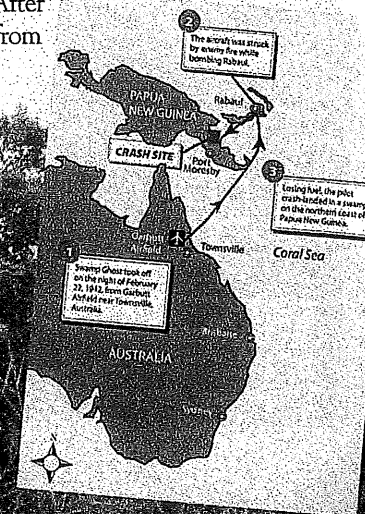


Captain Fred Eaton and his crew knew they were in trouble. Bombardier Sgt. Richard Liver had just alerted Eaton, at the controls of the Flying Fortress, that the bomb bay doors had not opened during their run over the target. Beneath the broad wings of the Olive Drab and Neutral Gray B-17E lay the Japanese fortress of Rabaul, New Britain. The date was 23 February 1942 and America was reeling from defeat after defeat following the Japanese sneak attack on Pearl Harbor. The men of B-17E 41-2466 knew what they had to do — Capt. Eaton did a 180 and headed the bomber back over the important target (by the way, Rabaul was the longest battle of WWII — some 44-months).

The Japanese

were now alerted to the audacious American air raid — the flak had thickened and enemy fighters were rising like angry wasps.

This time, the bomb bay worked and bombs tumbled down into the enemy emplacements. However, the Fort had been hit hard and was losing fuel at a fast rate. Eaton knew they would not make it back to distant Townsville, Australia, and he quickly began to consider options. After flying a considerable distance from





Forward fuselage of *Swamp Ghost* arriving at the Reef Restaurant in Long Beach, California.

Rabaul (the Japanese were executing Allied aircrewmembers downed over Rabaul), Eaton spotted a large flat stretch of land and knew that this was the place where he had to put the Fort down. With crew in their crash positions, Eaton began to pull back on power and slowly bled the flaps down. The propellers began to chop into the thick razor grass as the Fortress settled into an amazingly smooth belly landing.

Now we have to fast forward to 10 June 2010. The location is the Reef Restaurant at Long Beach, California, and a large truck slowly pulled into the parking lot carrying the forward fuselage of the B-17E that had become known as *Swamp Ghost*. With the *Queen Mary* forming an almost surrealistic backdrop, Capt.

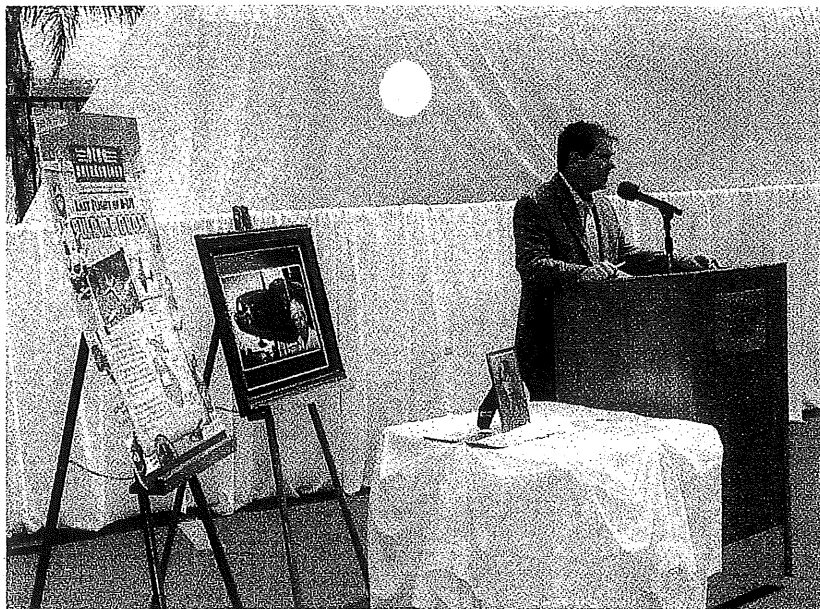


The late David Tallichet with his B-17G. David financed the recovery of *Swamp Ghost*, realizing the aircraft's importance to the American public.

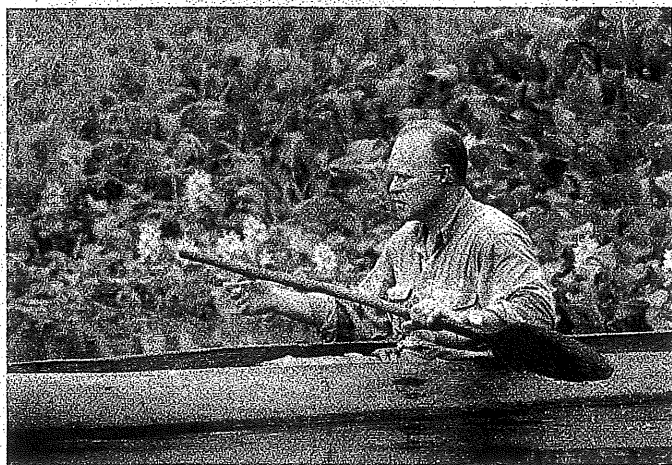
Eaton's Flying Fortress had finally returned to America after decades in the swamps of Papua New Guinea.

After the belly landing, the crewmen exited their stricken bomber and were greeted by absolute silence. They were literally in the middle of nowhere in the god-forsaken Agaimbo swamp

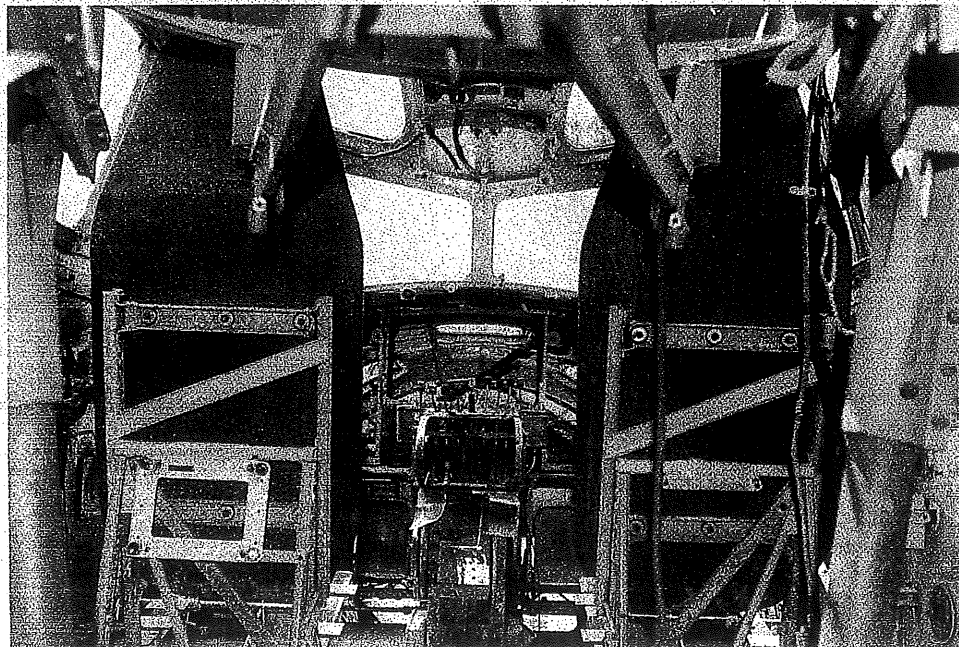




John Tallichet recalls his father's efforts in recovering the remarkably intact bomber.



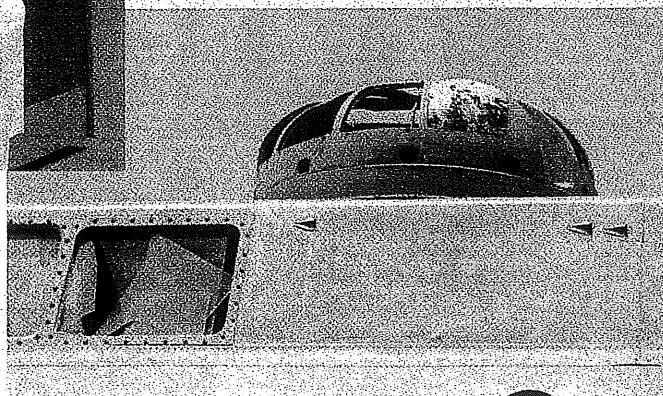
Alfred Hagen utilizing a native canoe during the recovery. (Aero Archaeology)



The pilots' compartment in *Swamp Ghost*.

## SWAMP GHOST CREW

<b>Pilot</b>	Capt. Fred Eaton
<b>Copilot</b>	Capt. Henry "Hotfoot" Harlow
<b>Navigator</b>	1st Lt. George Munroe
<b>Bombardier</b>	Sgt. Richard Oliver
<b>Flight Engineer</b>	T/Sgt. Clarence Lemieux
<b>Radio/Gunner</b>	Sgt. Howard Sorenson
<b>Waist Gunner</b>	Sgt. William Schwartz
<b>Rear Gunner</b>	S/Sgt. John Hall
<b>Waist Gunner</b>	T/Sgt. Russell Crawford

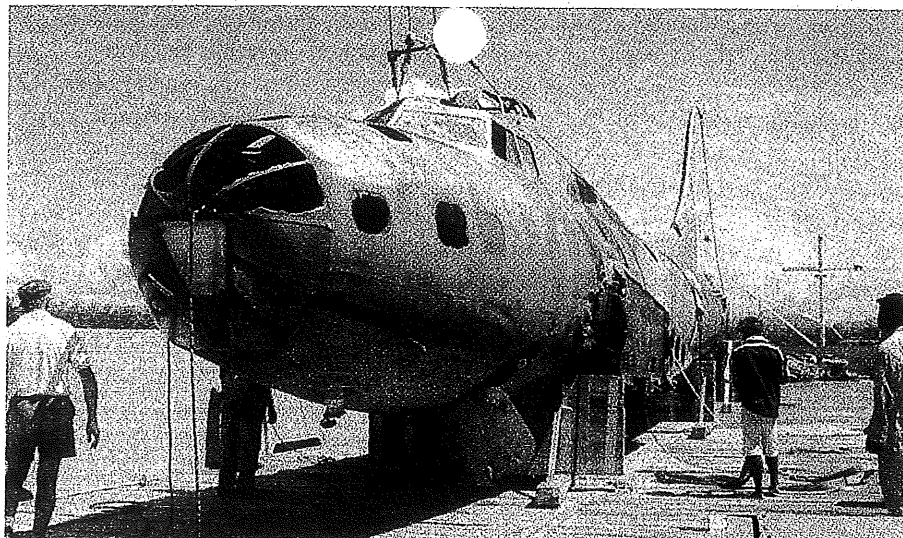


Even the top turret was intact.

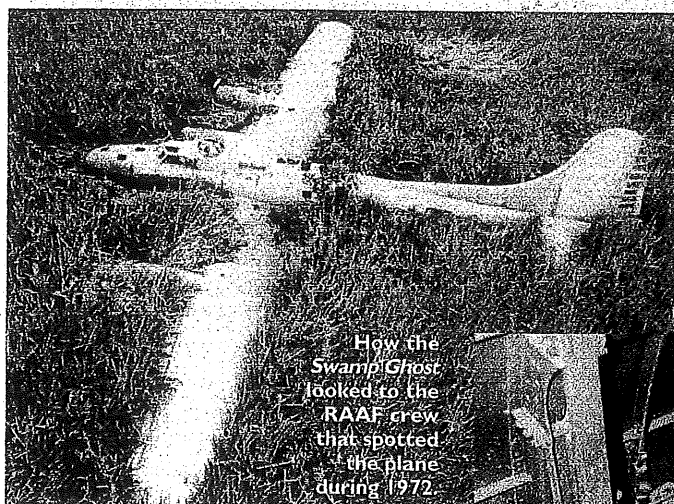
with water up to their chests. Utilizing their maps and compass, the men began a six-week trek of survival that would eventually result in their return to Australia. All were sick with malaria and other maladies, but after minimal treatment they were given another Fortress and went back into action. There was a war going on.

*Swamp Ghost* was part of what became known as the Kangaroo Squadron — a small number of B-17s that made it to Pearl Harbor immediately after the attack and then began leapfrogging in an attempt to find a secure base from which to strike back at the enemy. That base was Townsville in Australia. The mission on which *Swamp Ghost* went down was the first American heavy bomber offensive raid of WWII.

With the tempo of the war increasing, the downed bomber was quickly forgotten and it wasn't until 1972 that the crew of a Royal Australian Air Force aircraft spotted the unmistakable shape of a B-17 outlined by the swamp's razor grass. One must remember that this was just at the very beginning of the Warbird movement and interest in our historic aircraft was just starting to build. However, it quickly became obvious that *Swamp Ghost* was the best-preserved example of a combat B-17 in existence and from that point numerous groups began efforts to recover the bomber.



Even though being exposed to the elements for decades, most of the camouflage scheme still remained as well as the majority of airframe stenciling. The fuselage is seen at the dock in Papua New Guinea where it was damaged as shipping of the aircraft was delayed. (Aero Archaeology)

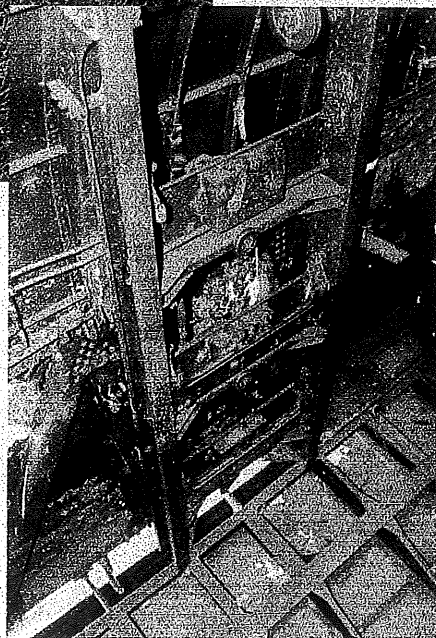


How the *Swamp Ghost* looked to the RAAF crew that spotted the plane during 1972.

*Swamp Ghost* had gone down far from civilization and in many ways that was a good thing since local natives could not get to the aircraft. Closer aircraft had been salvaged for aluminum. Once the location of *Swamp Ghost* became known, rich tourists began to visit the site by helicopter and some vandalism and souveniring was done.

Negotiations to return the *Swamp Ghost* to America ran into one huge stumbling block: The government of Papua New Guinea. Once the government realized there was interest in recovering the plane, all sorts of obstacles were put into place — obstacles that usually could only be overcome with generous amounts of green backs.

The late David Tallichet knew the importance of the *Ghost* and he began working behind the scenes to recover the bomber. David helped finance Aero

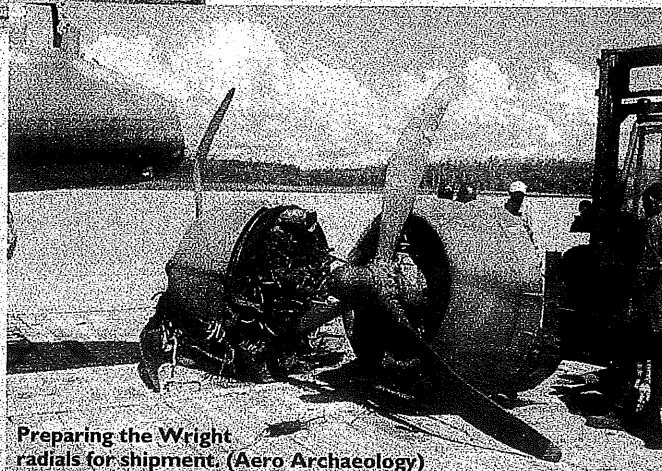


Detail of the left side of the bomb bay showing bomb racks and door.

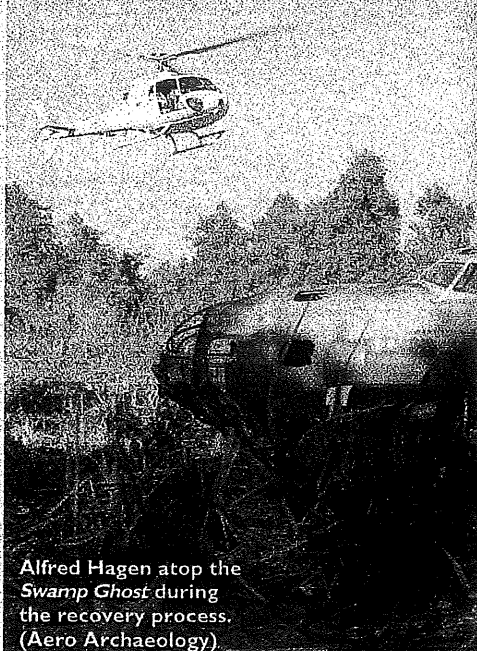
Archaeology, run by Alfred Hagen. Hagen had been to the area numerous times and had located more than a dozen MIA American airmen and returned them to the USA and to their families for military burials. The men realized that

negotiations would be slow and arduous, but they were prepared to endure — and endure they did.

Finally, with permits in place, a twelve-man recovery team ventured into the swamp in 2006. Battling the same conditions as did the crew of *Swamp Ghost*, the impossible was achieved — *Swamp Ghost* was carefully disassembled and components were lifted out by helicopters and transported to a dock for shipping back to the USA. Once the aircraft was at the dock, the government once again interfered and the plane was blocked from shipping. During this time, the airframe



Preparing the Wright radials for shipment. (Aero Archaeology)



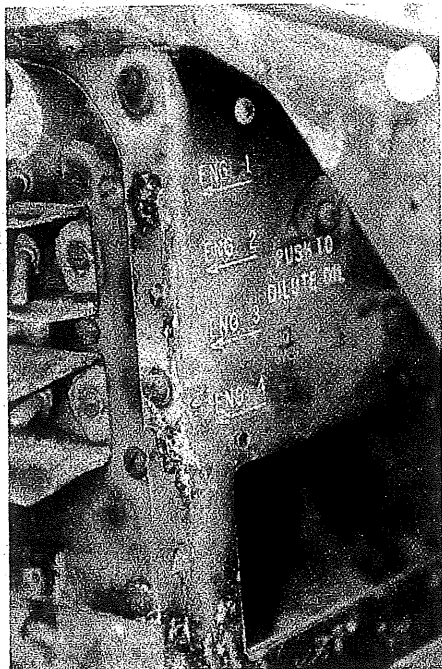
Alfred Hagen atop the *Swamp Ghost* during the recovery process. (Aero Archaeology)

## SUGGESTED FURTHER READING

*Fortress Rabaul* by Bruce Gamble (Zenith Press, ISBN 978-0-7603-2350-2) is an excellent overview of the amazing battle to destroy the Japanese fortress.







Detail of interior equipment.

incurred more damage than in the belly landing due to rough handling at the dock. Also, and sadly, the last four surviving *Swamp Ghost* crewmen died while red tape held up the return of "their" B-17.

Finally, everything was cleared and *Swamp Ghost* arrived in port at Long Beach, California. John Tallichet, David's son and president of Specialty Restaurants, put together a moving ceremony on 11 June to honor the crew of *Swamp Ghost*, his father, and the men and women that helped recover the bomber. With the remarkably intact fuselage as a background, John told of how his father had labored at great expense to return the bomber for the American people. A P-40 and P-51 from Planes of Fame Air Museum flew overhead as John introduced Carol Tallichet, Alfred Hagen, and surviving family members from the crew. John said, "It is almost as if God decided

to put away this historic aircraft that took part in the defeat of Axis evil and left the B-17E intact so it could be returned as a time capsule of that tumultuous conflict."

The *Swamp Ghost* has now been moved into storage as the plane awaits a decision on its final fate. Although it would be very, very expensive, the *Swamp Ghost* could fly again. Several restorers have examined the airframe. Much of the structure would have to be replaced, but just imagine the sight of this airborne B-17E — the aircraft that participated in America's first offensive mission of WWII that led to the defeat of the greatest evil the world has known **AC**

## LET US KNOW!

Even though it will be extremely expensive, do you think *Swamp Ghost* should fly again? Please send a Yes or No to [moleary@challengeweb.com](mailto:moleary@challengeweb.com).



# B-17 'Swamp Ghost' back in Calif.

BY JOHN ANTCAK  
Associated Press

LONG BEACH, Calif. — A B-17 bomber that lay in a New Guinea swamp for decades after being forced down during a World War II combat mission has been returned to the United States after years of salvage efforts.

The forward fuselage of the "Swamp Ghost" was displayed Friday at the Port of Long Beach in an emotional, patriotic ceremony attended by kin of some of the now-deceased aircrew.

"I know this is a happy day for Dick," said Linda Oliver, the 89-year-old widow of bombardier Richard Oliver, who was the last surviving crewman when he died in August. She regretted he did not see the warbird's return.

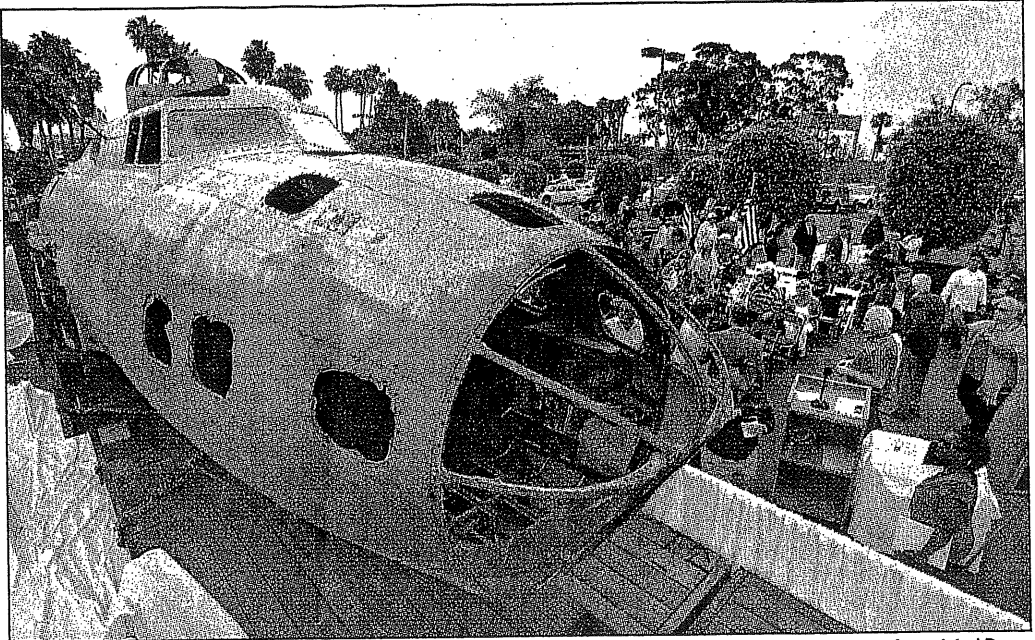
"He longed for this to happen, but this wasn't to be," said Oliver, of Tiburon, Calif.

The frail widow watched a flag presentation by an Air Force honor guard and a fly-over by vintage World War II fighters before her three children helped her climb steps to peer inside the fuselage sitting atop a truck trailer in the parking lot of a harborside restaurant.

The four-engine B-17E Flying Fortress was built by Boeing in November 1941, flew from California to Hawaii days after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor and then island-hopped to Australia.

It went down on Feb. 23, 1942, on its only combat mission, after being damaged by enemy fire during a raid on Japanese forces at Rabaul in New Britain and losing fuel.

Army Air Corps Capt. Fred Eaton piloted the aircraft to a belly landing in what turned out to be a swamp and the



Associated Press

The Swamp Ghost, a B-17E Flying Fortress that crashed in a Papua, New Guinea, swamp during World War II, was returned to the U.S. and unveiled in Long Beach, Calif., on Friday.

nine crewmen survived a six-week ordeal escaping the swamp and making their way to safety.

"Often in my life the courage and the perseverance that Dad and his fellow crew members demonstrated gave me courage to face some of the challenges we've all met in life," said the bombardier's son, Mike Oliver of Richmond, Va., who was born while his father was missing in action.

An Australian air force crew came upon the B-17 in 1972. Having sustained little damage in the landing and virtually undisturbed for years, the intact craft became coveted by salvagers of historic warplanes.

John Tallichet, president and CEO of Specialty Restaurants Corp., recounted how his father, company founder and World War II B-17 pilot David Tallichet, start-

ed efforts to recover the plane in the 1980s but didn't live to see its return. "One of his purposes in life was to bring this plane to the United States," he said.

The B-17's remote location and difficulties in gaining governmental permission to remove it from New Guinea would leave it in its watery resting place for many more years, gaining the nickname "Swamp Ghost" along the way. Westerners trekking to the site removed many items as souvenirs during that time.

The effort to bring home the plane was carried on by Pennsylvania businessman Fred Hagen, a friend of David Tallichet who has located a series of aircraft lost during World War II, leading to repatriation of missing airmen's remains.

In 2006 Hagen organized a salvage operation in which the

B-17 was cut into sections that were flown by helicopter to a port. However, a dispute over authority to remove the plane held it up in New Guinea, and then its status as a warplane delayed its shipment through New Zealand, Hagen said.

The B-17 finally arrived in Long Beach last month.

Hagen said the cost of recovering the bomber was approximately \$1.5 million.

It may be restored to flying condition and housed in a museum, or perhaps reassembled at less expense for display in a setting re-creating the jungle swamp where it landed 68 years ago, Hagen said.

In a poignant scene, Linda Oliver, stood in front of the plane with a photo of her late husband in uniform, assisted by daughters Kathy Oliver Cataldo of Richmond, Va., and Karen Braughton of Sebastopol, Calif.

Dear Rick;

This is the speech that I would like you to read at the Memorial Service. It was written by Chaplain Roland Fisher, who gave it at the Tucson, Arizona Reunion in 1999. It is very moving and I feel it would be appropriate for the 2010 reunion. At the reunion, I will give you a program for the Memorial Service.

## THE GREATEST

It's been a while since Tom Brokaw wrote about a generation of American men and women who, born in the echoes of the first World War, reached adolescence during the bleak, desperate years of the Great Depression and came of age during the excitement and danger of World War Two. This generation was shaped at a time of economic despair, in days when two hundred men would line up at a factory gate at dawn to respond to an advertisement of three jobs; a time when they watched their parents lose their jobs, their homes, their hopes; when they saw agony in their fathers' and mothers' eyes because they could not give them decent clothing, sometimes even food; a time when the future was so uncertain, it seemed to play out just one day at a time.

Then as they approached adulthood, the world exploded in war; and they abruptly were summoned to protect personal freedoms that were being destroyed everywhere outside of America.

Their response was magnificent. They came from all parts of the nation: from the far north and the deep south; from logging camps, cattle ranches, small farms; from crowded cities, little towns; from mines, factories, offices, schools; from the lands of the Indian nations; from Hollywood, Wall Street and great universities. Regardless of their origin, they united with a common purpose and with common values of duty, honor, courage, love of family and country and responsibility for oneself.

They were uniquely qualified: toughened physically by hard work, strengthened mentally by intense competition for the few jobs available and quietly proud, in spite of their lack of material things. They were buoyed with a near spiritual belief that no matter what else they were denied, they had each other. They were profound and creative thinkers because their recreation, their escape from the economically dull world, lay in reading books, walking the land, viewing the sky. They could not afford to buy entertainment, except for an occasional nickel movie or listening to "Amos and Andy" on radio, so they dreamed dreams that grew into the greatest creativity of any society in history.

At a time when their lives should have involved gentle romance, innocent adventure, they had thrust upon them the responsibility of saving the world from tyranny - and they did!

Brokaw calls them the greatest generation any society has ever produced. It WAS the greatest generation ever. It was OUR generation.

Another author was Studs Terkel who wrote of "The Good War", a history of World War Two. "Good" and "War" are incongruent. They seem contradictory. But World War Two WAS a good war. It was a different kind of war. You and I who lived through it understand what that means. It was not expansion of our territory. We sought not to build an empire or impose our culture on another. Our enemies did. In fact, they had overrun vast areas and began mercilessly eliminating entire populations when we entered the war. They made it clear they were intent on destroying the personal freedoms that we held were precious rights, worth dying to preserve. If any war can be called just, it was the Second World War.

And - it was OUR war. I was our generation that answered the call to save the world from the two most powerful and ruthless military machines ever assembled, instruments of destruction and conquest in the hands of cold-blooded maniacs.

The men of our generation, who fought World War Two, came from a vast reservoir of American decency that compelled us to resist the terrible indecency of the enemy. We had a late start and faced huge odds, but we succeeded on every front.

We won OUR war.

We won because we loved our country and its precious freedoms, we loved each other and, as much as we were willing to risk losing it, and many of our comrades did, we loved life.

For four years the young men of the 43rd fought the vicious enemy, in strange skies where danger filled every corner, living in despicable conditions in primitive places with names the world had never heard of. More than seven hundred of us died, some in unknown places, lost forever in deep waters or dense forests. Some died from wounds or strange diseases lying in steaming humidity on a canvas cot under the canvas top of a field hospital. Some were sent with broken bodies to die at home. Some were shot down captured and murdered by a bestial foe. A few came back to us after years of torture by brutal prison guards. But most of us survived, even thrived in that awful part of the world.

And we prevailed. We beat back the fanatic enemy. We liberated the homelands of the people they had conquered. We sank their huge warships. We knocked their planes from the sky. We smashed their weapons factories. We crushed their mighty military machines. We made them unconditionally surrender.

We won OUR war, and went home.

Then in history's greatest display of mercy, although we were in a hurry to catch up with the years we had lost, instead of subjugating our former foes, we helped them rebuild their completely devastated lands. We gave them food and medicine. We clothed them and provided fuel for an oncoming winter. We gave them money, our technology, our business expertise. We taught them of our democratic political institutions. We helped them rebuild themselves into two of the most stable, economically strongest, most peaceful countries in the world today.

Back home we began rebuilding our own lives. We were still young, but we had matured far beyond our years. We had been tempered by the rigors of war and disciplined by our military environment. We were very proud of our legacy of sacrifice we had created, but humbled by our memories of those we had left behind. We hurried to build the world we wanted, but we stayed true to our belief in values of personal responsibility, duty, honor and faith in each other.

A grateful nation gave us a generous tribute, the GI Bill. It was the greatest investment in higher education any society has ever made. Brokaw calls it a brilliant commitment to our nation's future....and it was. We jammed the campuses, lived in old barracks or hastily erected Quonset huts, some of us with new wives and babies. We ignored the customary frivolities of college life, focusing on learning quickly. We left school, armed with new knowledge and a determination to make up for lost time. We moved into all the fields of American life with the same passions that served us so well during the war.

We were a major force in building the most powerful, longest lasting, peacetime economy in the history of the world. We invented entirely new technologies, landed on the moon, reached for the stars, gave new meanings to medicine and science, created new art and literature. We got our country to better understand the meaning of the words of its founders, that all men have equal rights, and made overdue improvements in civil rights. For decades until it collapsed from within, we stood fast against Communist Totalitarianism's threat to banish personal freedoms throughout the world, with the same determination that we fought OUR war.

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That war ended nearly ~~seventy~~ <sup>65</sup> years ago. Time is working against us. We were young men when we came back from the war in the Pacific. Now we are in our twilight. Our numbers have fallen, scores of us gone. Just in the past year, we have lost many more.

Sadly, among too many of those who came after us, there is a disturbing disregard of World War Two and a near complete forgetting of the Great Depression, although both were events that forever changed the psyche and the face of the United States---- of the entire world.

Not so here. Sometimes I pull forth from a corner <sup>of</sup> my closet, a battered single shot .410 shotgun. I think back to the bitter winter of 1933 when my father--my very young father--worked at menial labor for one of the few well-off landowners just for that gun. At age 12, I yearned for my own gun to hunt on the fringes of Denver. Dad had seen the .410 in the garage of the landowner. The price was one dollar. Dad did not have it. He made a deal to work all day for it. The owner paid him with it and gave him an extra dollar. To me, that gun has immeasurable sentimental value. Its intrinsic value? In this day of \$3000 Brownings, it is, maybe fifty dollars. I don't scoff at that. I hold it in my hand and I see the light in my father's face when he gave it to me on my 13th birthday... I remember.

As I look at my hand, I see another's. It is October 1944, ten years later. I am amidst the noise and chaos of the battle for the airstrip at Leyte, our single foothold in our return to the Philippines. We were under constant air attack. We had just pulled the 63rd's engineering officer, Hugh Noonan, from the flaming wreckage of a B-24. We lay him on a stretcher on the sand, on the beach, by the airstrip. He saw me bending over him, reached out with his charred hand and took mine and said, "Don't worry Fish--I don't hurt." Two hours later he died under a canvas roof. I look at my hand that he grasped-- and I remember.

Someday in the not so distant future, the greatest generation all will be gone. Probably most of what we did will be forgotten, perhaps for someone who was not there, no amount of words can ever describe the experiences and feelings that we shared, But right now, those of us of that generation, who are still left, remember. And in those final years, we can take enormous pride in knowing that each of us was a part of it; in knowing that because of it, we leave the entire world with more personal freedom than ever before in its history.

To those we left behind when we all came home, to those who have left us since, to those who still remain----a salute!! Know that you fought a good war--OUR war. And know that you ARE the GREATEST GENERATION ever!!!

Roland Fisher 63rd Bomb Squadron 43rd Bomb Group Fifth Air Force