



\*\*\* *We were the 1st, and still serving* \*\*\*

## SECOND BOMBARDMENT ASSOCIATION

NEWSLETTER

*"Second to None"*

[www.2ndbombgroup.org](http://www.2ndbombgroup.org)



Volume 25, No. 1

January 2009



### President's Corner

This is my last letter to you as your president. I want all of you to know that serving you in this capacity for the past two years has been one of the most singular honors of my life. When I look at you brave men of the Greatest Generation, I can't help but fantasize my father being among you. Somehow, even though I never even met him, I know that he would still be active with the 2nd bomb Group had he lived to return from the war.

I want to acknowledge the incredible board I got to work with. **Loy Dickinson** as immediate past president was always there to advise and guide me with his steadfast wisdom and sage perceptions of people and situations. **John Sisson** was the VP and he continues to contribute to the 2nd Bomb Group. **Law Waters** was the Secretary and has been invaluable in that role. He helped bring me into this group and he is always ready to be a sounding board for me when I got frustrated. He is assuming the job as your president in January and I am becoming the secretary so we are just swapping positions. **Matt Bryner** has been serving as the treasurer and has done yeoman's service in keeping us out of trouble with the IRS, and keeping our funds straight. **Todd Weiler** has become our historian and he is nothing short of inspirational in the way in which he can help inquirers find out information about family and loved ones. In addition he is our penultimate photographer for all the reunions. **Sid Underwood** is our fabulous webmaster and has us listed where folks can find out all about us. He has done a great job on adding information to the website and bulletin board. The other board members have also helped make my two year stint with you guys a joy. **Karen Nelson** hosted us in Washington, DC and I know how much work and coordination that took. My final nod goes to the devoted and talented Earl Martin for all the work he does with the newsletter. He constantly prods us gently to get our news into him

and then does magic with what he gets. I am so grateful for all these people and look forward to working with them in my new capacity.

I hope all you men will talk to your children about your wartime experiences so that your story will be told long after you are gone. I am more impressed with you each time I get the privilege of being with you. You all are my heroes. Bless you and I pray health and happy Holidays to each of you.

Lovingly, Bonnie

### President's Corner

(Incoming President)

Happy New Year to everyone! I hope that all of you had a pleasant and relaxing holiday.

It is with some trepidation that I take on the position of President of the Second Bombardment Association. To follow such stalwart individuals, from the past, as John Collens, Luke Bivins, and Kemp Martin is most challenging. And to succeed the more recent leaders as Dick Radtke, Loy Dickinson, and the ever popular Bonnie Hellums, is quite a responsibility. It is an honor to follow these individuals, and with the advice and assistance the latter three I will do my best to continue the high standards these leaders have set. I'm depending on them to help guide me through the maze. In addition, it would be difficult to continue the excellent results and research without the able assistance of Matt Bryner, Sid Underwood and Todd Weiler. And most assuredly the association would not have prospered nearly as well if it were not for our Newsletter Editor, Earl Martin.

It is interesting that we are returning to San Antonio, for the 2009 reunion, where the very first reunion was held in 1983. And perhaps even more of a coincidence is that our 2010 meeting is planned for Tucson, where the group met, for the fourth time, back in 1989.

*(continued on next page)*

For our reunion this coming year we have contracted with a professional reunion planner to handle hotel accommodations and matters related to tours as well as group dinners. Elsewhere in this issue is more information about the 2009 REUNION to be held in San Antonio, Texas -October 15 to 18, 2009. We know that all of you will do your best to join us there. Enlist the aid of your children and grandchildren to assist you in coming, as Ann and I have with our daughter, Jan Coyle.

There have been a number of subjects mentioned for presentations by our dinner speakers, so if you have any preferences please let us know. One idea was to again have a speaker on the Veterans History Project. This subject was first mentioned by Loy Dickinson with an article in the July, 2005 Newsletter, and at our recent reunion in Alexandria Mr. Robert Patrick, Director of the Veteran's Project at the Library of Congress, was one of our speakers. This subject is of particular interest to our children and grandchildren, as well as Tom Brokaw. I have recorded my service history through our local Historical Society, a copy of which went to the Library of Congress.

It is with regret that we have accepted the resignation of Paul Skalny as our Historian whose professional schedule does not permit him to continue. We wish to extend to Paul our sincere thanks for his stewardship of our historical legacy during an important time. It also is with great good fortune that Todd Weiler, the Asst Historian, is willing and able to step up and succeed Skalny. This is also a good time to introduce Todd's successor as Assistant Historian and she is Donna Conway, daughter of veteran Larry Ashley. On the subject of openings, it is time to ask for a candidate to fill a new position as — Assistant Newsletter Editor. Earl does not have a time table however it is prudent to have a backup person being groomed. Please think about it!

We need to continue our efforts to increase membership through the addition of the younger generations. We owe both Loy and Bonnie a debt of gratitude for their work in this regard. For Loy when we began the telephone survey in 2006, asking the veterans for the names of relatives who might be interested in becoming members, and for Bonnie for her enthusiasm in promoting the addition of family members. See you in San Antonio!

Let us hope and pray the economy recovers, and that the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan come to a satisfactory conclusion in the near future. I approve this message!

Sincerely,

Lewis H. Waters

## THE VIEW FROM THE FARM

What a great time the 2008 reunion was in the national capitol. With more than 300 vets and family-members in attendance and the arrangements made by our own Karen, the city with all its great scenes and functions was ours for a few days.

We saw the sights, enjoyed the functions and even were allowed a tour of the White House. The monuments helped everybody gain more appreciation for our mutual heritage, especially the WWII memorial. Former Senator Bob Dole joined us there on Sunday morning. He visited with everyone and made sure that photos were taken with every family group. The Washington, Jefferson, Lincoln monuments were astounding as was the brand new Air Force Memorial. The tour of the Udvar Hazy Museum brought back many memories for the vets.

The 2009 reunion will be a little farther west. The Board of directors selected San Antonio, TX as the place to enjoy the next meeting. That, too, is a great place for a gathering such as ours.

I am continually impressed, and I hear the same expressions from others of the veterans in the organization, by the younger generation taking over some of the responsibilities of the organization. Without this sort of help, I doubt the veterans would be able to continue the Association. Thank you young folks and keep up the good work.

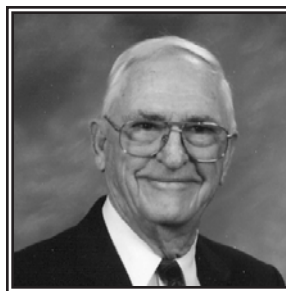
With the 2008 elections many changes are likely to come about in our beloved nation. My thoughts and prayers are that our great country may continue, as it has for so many years to be the bastion of liberty and freedom which the whole world admires and wishes for. Perhaps we did our part many years ago, but we must continue to support the things we know are true and right.

The men and women of our armed forces (all volunteers) who serve all across the world, should be remembered and appreciated by all Americans. Be sure to instruct the younger generations that these brave people are out there serving without complaint to keep us all safe and secure. And remember those families who wait for them, always anxious for THEIR safe returns as our families waited anxiously for us to return many years ago.

Thank you: Earl Martin

**President**

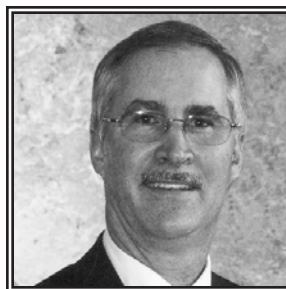
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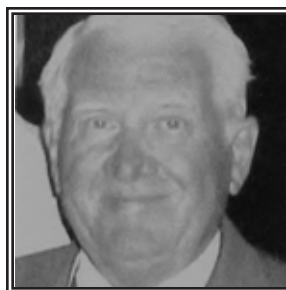
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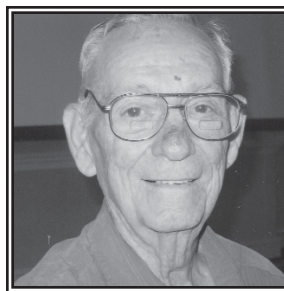
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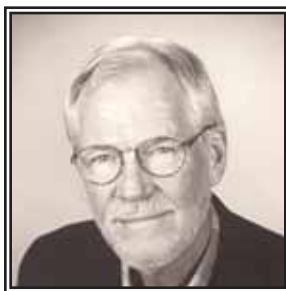




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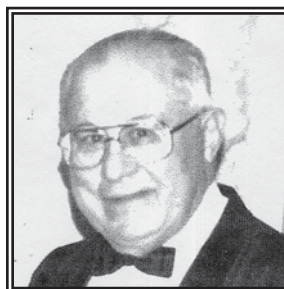
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## SECOND BOMBARDMENT WEBSITE

Our Web Master, Sid Underwood, has done a masterful job in structuring our site so that it contains great information and is quite user friendly. Even if you have been there go back to [www.2ndbombgroup.org](http://www.2ndbombgroup.org) and cruise the variety.

**DATABASE** - Click on this item on the left side of the Home Page and you will be able to search the mission record of every man who had as many as one sortie. And, the crew men he flew with on each mission. Ask one of us if you need help.

**VIDEOS** - Search out the stories that make up our history.

**BOOKS** - Defenders of Liberty is available but in short supply.

'The Second Was First' is out of print. Due to the generosity of Jean Richards it is available here for all to read and/or print out.

**REUNIONS** - down near the bottom - click on 2008 and find 93 photos representing the fine work of Historian Todd Weiler.

## THE 2008 REUNION

The 2008 reunion of the 2nd Bomb Association was a great success. During the last few days of August and the first of September, about 32 2nd Bomb Veterans and almost two hundred wives, children, grand children and friends gathered in the national capitol to celebrate and enjoy the place and each other.

A great deal of planning and work had gone into the efforts to make this one of the most memorable of our meetings. Karen Nelson, a resident of Washington D. C., spent seventeen months making Reunion arrangements. She contacted all the departments and people (browbeating some of them) to get all plans ready for the event. She had the support of president Bonnie Hellums and others. When we arrived at our hotel, Hilton Alexandria Mark Center, all was in place and ready to go.

Each days events were finished by a dinner and a guest speaker. The hospitality room was available at times when no other action was taking place

One of the very popular places visited was the White House. Though due to very strict security, not many are allowed to visit there these days, those of us who had received clearance had a very interesting tour of the lower rooms of that historic place.

The Spy Museum, Library of Congress and the Supreme Court were next on the agenda. Then Mount Vernon, the National Cathedral, and National Archives. The Monuments and Memorials of the city were most interesting. Perhaps the favorite was the new Air Force Memorial where members of the Association helped lay a wreath in dedication to all Air Force and Air Service personnel of the past. A bugler playing Taps terminated this memorial visit.

Of course, most of the gang was eager to visit the Udvar -Hazy National Air and Space museum located at the air port. Several hours were spent in that marvelous place viewing and reminiscing about the air-planes, old and new.

A tour of the Pentagon was scheduled from the beginning to be part of the events, but that one was canceled. The cancellation was not the fault of our scheduling, but of a mix up in the government planning. All were sorry we did not get to see that historic place.

Another exciting time for the attendees took place when we visited the World War II Memorial. Former Senator and presidential candidate Bob Dole (very much a veteran of that war) came to be with us. He was very informative and was most gracious to make

sure each family group was able to make pictures with him.

A great part of this issue of the newsletter is devoted to pictures of the reunion. Todd Weiler, Association Historian, has many more pictures.

A determination was made to hold the 2009 reunion in San Antonio, TX. Further information will be forthcoming about that.



20th Squadron Vets.

Standing: John Roberts, Richard Wood, Charles Beecham Earl Martin, Lloyd True, Meyer Spieler, Ron Dittrich, Kingman Loomis, Sandford Golding, Jack Norwine, Ben Carnes

Front: James Goodrich, Tex Binford, James Miller



The Air Force Memorail to the Sky





With Senator Dole at the World War II Memorial – August 31, 2008  
Emily Peterson, Janet Leikup, Karen Nelson, Art & Leona Winkler  
Tim Leikup, Anthony Leikup



Eva Loomis, Maxine Carnes, Kingman Loomis & Ben Carnes



Carol Barnard, Bruce Dickinson, Bob Dole, Loy, Karol Shupe,  
Yumiko & grandchildren, Tai & Misako Dickinson



The Missing Man Table



Bonnie and B Gen. Mike McClendon



The Vets at the Air Force Memorial



Lew Waters, daughter Jan Coyle and Todd Weiler



We gathered at the AF Memorial





Photographer/Historian Todd Weiler at work



Jack Norwine and Charles Beecham beginning a tour day



Bonnie and Carel



Terrific Triggs Tribe & Friend



Francyne, Senator Bob and Sid



Pat Kennelly, Senator Bob and Harley Kennelly

## **Thank you** *from Karen Nelson*

As your 2008, 2nd Bomb Group, DC reunion coordinator, I'm writing this to thank each and every one of you for being the outstanding, upstanding, caring, considerate people you are.

I can assure you that, if our group was filled with complainers, naysayers and "glass half empty" people, I would never have volunteered to coordinate the 2008 reunion in DC. I'm laughing as I write this.

But, I knew the caliber of our group. I knew that you are optimistic, funny, inventive, willing to take on long days and you love to absorb all kinds of information. I knew that you'd take care of each other and I knew that you wanted to create memories for your families and I'm delighted that so many of you were able to share the reunion with them.

However, as I mentioned in a pre-dinner remark -this reunion was not about the White House or museums or family dinners. It was a chance for all of us to honor our veterans. You veterans are the only reason we meet every year. Those who attended just to see the White House don't "get it".

I'm pleased that so many of our attendees were present

at our 2nd Bomb Group Wreath Laying Ceremony at the Air Force Memorial and also at the WWII Memorial. Wasn't Senator Dole wonderful?

I'm sorry that we didn't have more time to talk. Part of that is just scheduling anything in DC and knowing that everyone realized the importance of visiting the historically important sites and the sites we all see on TV. It's a lot of fun to say "I was there" or "Remember when we saw that?" For those of you who took photos, I hope that it's also going to be meaningful for you, in twenty years, to look at those photographs and remember your 2nd Bomb Group reunion and trip to DC.

And, as we all know, security runs everyone's life in DC. You certainly all got the "up close and personal" look at police escorts and "No, can't go there" with which those of us in or near DC live every day. Please enjoy your CIA, Homeland Security, Secret Service-free streets at home.

In closing, I can't imagine offering to organize a reunion of this complexity for any group other than the 2nd Bomb Group. I hope the children and grandchildren of our veterans don't mind my saying that you, our veterans, are; and

*(continued on next page)*

have been, our inspiration for our entire lives. We owe you for our love of country, our love of each other, our community involvement and the positive, can-do attitude you've shown us every day.

Thank you, again, for allowing me to be your DC Coordinator. I wish you all only the best and look forward to seeing you next year.

With respect and appreciation,  
Karen

*Editor's Note:*

KAREN,  
The Association is very fortunate to have in it member-

ship a young lady named Karen Nelson.

Karen is the daughter of Vet. Member Arthur, and Leona Winkler of Sheboygan, Wisconsin. But Karen lives and works in Washington, D. C., the location of our 2008 reunion.

Without the untiring work of Karen, the reunion would not have been near the success everyone who attended acclaimed. She contacted all the departments and people that needed to be contacted and made arrangements for all the events.

This is another example of the younger generation taking over some of the management of the Association, and we older ones are very grateful.

Thank you Karen. We all appreciate what you have done and what you continue to do.

THESE VETS ATTENDED 2008 REUNION IN D.C.			
Veterans	DOB	Position	Missions-dates
Burt Thorman (1)	9/11/16	navigator	4/28/43 - 11/24/43
George Vrablik (2)	5/28/17	bombardier	11/19/44 - 5/1/45
Jim Goodrich	4/14/18	waist	9/5/44 - 1/21/45
Meyer Spieler	9/10/19	crew chief (20 <sup>th</sup> )	3/1/43 to 5/8/45
Charles Childs	7/17/20	pilot	11/1/44 - 1/21/45
Earl Martin	10/13/20	pilot	3/30/44 - 4/13/44 (pow)
Henry Heim	4/23/21	pilot	8/25/43 - 10/11/44
Art Schiffer	5/20/21	waist	5/28/43 - 8/17/43
Larry Ashley (2)	5/31/21	ball	3/16/45 - 5/1/45
John Sisson (2)	6/17/21	bombardier	9/15/44 - 5/1/45
Ray Tuwalski	7/27/21	bombardier	9/5/44 - 2/23/45
Charles Beecham	1/7/22	pilot	4/5/44 - 8/24/44
John Nigborowicz	5/16/22	engineer	7/25/44 - 8/29/44 (pow)
Art Winkler	7/1/22	engineer	7/15/44 - 11/11/44
Lloyd True	1/3/23	radio	3/22/44 - 7/7/44
John Roberts	1/5/23	engineer	4/17/44 - 7/18/44
Ron Dittrich	2/23/23	ball	3/16/44 - 8/2/44
Howard Johnson	7/6/23	US Navy (WWII) --	then 2 <sup>nd</sup> B Wing
'JC' Speight	1/5/23	radio	6/16/44 - 9/17/44
Jack Norwine	12/3/23	waist	6/27/44 - 4/1/45
Sanford Golding	8/17/24	bombardier	3/23/45 - 4/21/45
Frank Bulkin	8/29/24	waist	12/3/44 - 4/24/45
Ed Smith	10/ /24	navigator	6/16/44 - 8/29/44 (pow)
Art Sauer	12/2/24	waist	3/2/45 - 4/19/45
Loy Dickinson	12/12/24	navigator	7/18/44 - 8/29/44 (pow)
Wm Dale Schultz	1/25/25	tail	11/18/44 - 4/11/45
Lew Waters	3/12/25	tail	11/22/44 - 4/20/45
Jim Pfeiffer	5/17/25	radio	3/16/45 - 4/20/45
Kingman Loomis (2)	7/10/25	tail	12/9/44 - 5/1/45
Joe Milardo	10/29/25	waist	4/18/45 - 4/26/45
Ben Carnes (3)	1/3/26	waist	10/7/44 - 3/20/45

Footnotes (1) Thorman flew on #1, the very first sortie the 2<sup>nd</sup> BG flew. Burt was with the Group when it re-formed in Euphrata, WA. He went through Montana, Kearney, NE and the flight to No Africa. Thorman was assigned as an A-3 at Hqtrs 15<sup>th</sup> AF after completing 50 missions the day before Thanksgiving 1943. We wish to thank him for his contributions on our Board these past several years..

(2) Vrablik, Ashley, Sisson & Loomis flew on its very last #412.

(3) Carnes the youngest in the crowd put in 37 sorties.



Dear Senator Dole:

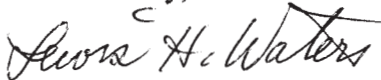
Thank you so much for meeting with our veterans and their families on Sunday, August 31. To take time out of your busy schedule, particularly on a weekend, was really appreciated by our members.

I heard numerous comments to the effect that our members were extremely gratified that the National Fund-Raising Chairman of the W.W. II Memorial would meet with us on our visit to this sacred site. Everyone appreciated the opportunity to thank you for your tireless efforts to bring the memorial to a successful conclusion.

And I was pleasantly surprised to have you mention "Honor Flight" during the time many of us were taking pictures. It was somewhat hectic with everyone vying for your attention, so I'm sure it didn't register when I mentioned "Honor Flight" originated in my hometown. I'm privileged to be acquainted with Earl Morse, the founder of this wonderful organization, and I'm sending him a copy of this letter.

An interesting coincidence of our visiting with you is that we also served in Italy, our being one of five B-17 Groups based near Foggia. Again, we appreciate the opportunity share some cherished moments with you.

Most sincerely,



Lewis H. Waters, Secretary  
Second Bombardment Association

Cc: Mr. Earl Morse

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Dear Lewis,

Thank you for your kind letter.

I enjoyed meeting you and the other members of the Second Bombardment Association at the World War II Memorial on Labor Day weekend.

As I am sure you will agree, the Memorial is a special place. I am please you all had an opportunity to visit.

Thanks for your service to our great nation. Have a good day.

God Bless America,



BOB DOLE

# Where do they find men like these?

Pilots Bill Garland (91) and Bill Tune (88) passed away in 2008, Garland in May and Tune in October. It was my great good fortune to have flown with both these men almost two thirds of a century ago. Garland was our pilot in training at McDill AFB, Tampa and then with the 2nd Bombardment Group in Italy during July-August 1944. I flew with Bill Tune on mission #263 when nine of our aircraft were shot down over Czechoslovakia on 8/29/44. Tune ended up in a German hospital for three months before joining Garland and many of his fellow flyers interned at Stalag Luft I near Barth, Germany.

Bill Garland was successful business man and civic leader in Phoenix for many years. He sold his steel business in 1972 and moved to Sedona, AZ where he started many enterprises. He was non-stop entrepreneur with a new idea every day. Bill's wife, Georgianne passed away in 2006.

Bill Tune had a 50 year career as an architect in Florence, Alabama. He designed and built hospitals, schools, churches and other public buildings as well as private residences all over the state of Alabama. He served on the Alabama Board for Registration of Architects and was an active member of the First Methodist Church of Florence. Fran Tune, Bill's wife of 62 years survives him.

In 1994 Tune and Garland and two other pilots, Leo Zupan and Francis Flynn and their wives joined Karol and me for a visit to the Czech Republic. This was to join in the Commemoration of the 50th anniversary of "The Air Battle over the White Carpathian Mountains". It took place in Slavcin and at several sites where the B-17's crashed 50 years earlier. This was one of those unbelievable and unforgettable experiences. Our Czech and Slovak hosts gracious and

extravagantly outspoken in their expressions of gratitude for what the American flyers had done for them during the war. These people have experienced oppressive regimes and know the true meaning of Freedom.'

Loy Dickinson

13 July 2008  
In Memory Of  
Kemp Martin  
Lieutenant Colonel  
United States Air Force (Ret)  
1919 -2008



Today we lost a good friend, a giant of a man wrapped up inside a 100 pound body, a driving force behind the force and our Vice President for Membership. Kemp went to the arms of his creator at 0700 this morning. — **Bob Kjar, AFA President**

Little need be added to the memorial by the AFA official.

Kemp Martin was president of the 2nd Bomb Association for two terms. He stepped forth in 1990 when the Association was about to be terminated. No one else would take over the reins as president. Kemp took over as president and kept the outfit together.

He was always active in the association, doing whatever was asked of him. For several years, Kemp took over the responsibility for arranging the reunions.

He was actively in business in Houston, and took time to write several novels as well as part of the story of his military service.

Kemp's wife, Mary was always by his side after their marriage during the war until his death at age 89 years. Kemp will be missed by all.

## Carol Emory "CE" Underwood

My father was a cadet at Tarleton college in Stephenville, Texas. After that, I believe (I am not absolutely certain) that he served as a flight instructor for a time before he actually got to Amendola, Italy for combat service. He flew only 10 missions in the 429th Squadron at the very tail end of the war. One of the missions he flew was the 2nd Bomb Group's longest mission, #385 to Berlin, Germany on March 24, 1945 (exactly five years before I was born in 1950). At the 2nd Bomb reunion in St. Louis three years ago, I was looking and found my father's signa-

ture on the "Berlin Mission" poster that was signed by all those who went on the mission. It gave me a huge thrill to find his signature. Even though my father is gone, each 2nd Bomb Group Reunion that I've attended has helped me fill in some missing information that has allowed me to reconnect with my father.

On April 11, 1945, my father was shot down by flak on mission #398 to bomb the north railroad bridge at Padua, Italy. According to mission reports, his plane

*Continued on page 11*



was hit several times, caught fire, lost three engines, and went into a steep dive. My father was able to regain some control at about 2,000 feet and limped on into friendly territory just north of Florence where all the crew bailed out except himself. The last one to bail out was William "Dale" Schultz. (I was extremely thrilled to meet Dale and his wife, Jane, at the Washington, D. C. reunion). By the time Dale jumped, the plane was so low that his parachute barely opened before he hit the ground and he broke his ankle. Dale was the only one who suffered an injury of any kind. My father stayed on board and crash-landed the plane. He flew two more missions before the war ended.

After my father died in 1986, my sister found some of his military documents and papers. One was an "Extract" document, dated June 19, 1945 written by "command of Major General Bevans and Brigadier General Thomas M. Lowe that awarded my father the Distinguished Service Cross (the Cross, not the medal) "for extraordinary heroism" and "an outstanding display of airmanship", that saved the lives of his crew and for staying on board and guiding his burning B-17 away from an inhabited area. Of note, The Distinguished Service Cross (DSC) is the second highest military decoration that can be awarded for extreme gallantry and risk of life with an enemy force. The DSC is second only to The Medal Of Honor.

I guess that my own personal story about my father's service in WW-2 is that my father never told anyone, including my mother or my grandparents that he had been awarded the DSC for "extraordinary heroism" during WW-2. We did not find out about it until 40 years after the war ended and after Dad had died. I am certain my father never considered himself any more of a hero than anyone else he served beside. He obviously didn't want recognition for doing some-

#### DID YOU KNOW:?

1. That during WW- II, actor Sterling Hayden served in the OSS in Italy. His wife, Madeleine Carroll worked with the Red Cross in hospitals in the Naples and Foggia area.
2. That U. S. Navy Officer, Jake Fyfe, as commander of the submarine U.S.S. Batfish, sank three Japanese submarines in four days.
3. That General George C. Marshall was an aide to General Pershing during WW-I.
4. That General Henry H. Arnold (during peacetime) wrote several books for young people. They were known as "The Bill Bruce series".
5. That the Combined Chiefs of Staff was the title of the amalgamation of the American Chiefs of Staff and the British Chiefs of Staff during WW-II.
6. That Alexander de Seversky emigrated from Russia in 1918 and founded the Seversky Aircraft Corporation which later became Republic Aviation Corporation. (Manufactured that great P-47 which helped keep those Me-109s off of us: Sometimes)

thing he must have believed was his duty and expected of him as a pilot. As for myself, I am in absolute total awe of all those that have served in WW-2. It's unimaginable to me that so many ordinary men from ordinary places, with ordinary backgrounds did do so many extraordinary things at such a truly young age, yet never wanted to talk about their experiences and accomplishments when they came home. After the war they simply wanted to return home to a normal life. That's what my father wanted to do.

My father returned to civilian life in the Texas Hill Country after WW-2, met my mom and they head me and my sister. Normal civilian life soon came to an end and he was recalled during the Korean War. My very earliest memories as a kid are of Mather AFB and McClellan AFB near Sacramento, California and Yokota AFB, Japan where my father was a B-50 pilot in the 6091st Squadron and flew spy missions to Russia. He once told me that he was chased by MIG jets on the way back from one of his spy missions. In his true fashion, he would not elaborate on that either.

I truly wish that there was more to write, but that is really all I know about my father's service.

EDITORS NOTE: I asked Sid Underwood, our Association Web Master, to recall some of his remembrance of his fathers service in the 2nd Bomb during the war. His reply follows.

My father, (Carol Emory "CE" Underwood) never talked about the war and I now woefully regret that I did not ask him questions while he was around. My interest in his service during WW-2 didn't begin until after his death March 3, 1986. Most of what I learned about my father's service are things that I have found on the 2nd Bomb Data Base. That's why I am so extremely grateful that the 2nd Bomb Group has the data base available on its website.



# The Great Explosion

**Editor's note:** This story is taken from the book, "G.I. Journey" by Walt Clausen.

It is about a dangerous event that impacted our ground personnel away from the scene of combat.

I have found this story in no other place. Do any of you remember this event?

In the short period of twenty four hours, tragedy - unexpected and quick - cast it's somber mantle over a mixed native and Air Force group working industriously in the marshaling yards of the supply clogged Chateau-Dun. A train load of fragmentation bombs had arrived during the night at the busy division point.

A work party of ammunition handlers was engaged in moving the missiles from the string of bomb filled flat cars to an outlying area. The exceedingly complex structure of such a type of explosive required an unusual amount of care in handling.

Throughout the morning hours, the men toiled steadily in hope of finishing the job before the sun should reach its nearly unendurable zenith. Never feeling quite at ease dealing with the "ticklish: weapons, I felt more than relieved to clamber aboard a loaded truck and lumber quickly out of town.

Valdez, driving warily, drew deeply on a cigarette before announcing that after the vehicle was unloaded, we should all be just in time to "compete" for the midday meal.

Suddenly, to the rear, a series of tumultuous explosions rocked the sun baked land and violently ripped away the cloak of tranquility. Almost immediately, concussion - traveling unbelievably fast - slapped at and tore the canvas concealing the ever dangerous cargo stacked high in the ammunition carrier. A boiling column of smoke, back and forbidding, wafted menacingly skyward, its turbulent upper level mushrooming into a enormous fan shaped cloud.

My companion instinctively jammed home the hand brake, and squirming from behind the wheel, dived headlong for the ground. Simultaneously, I too "hit the dirt" from the opposite side of the cab. Scrambling fearfully to our feet, the Mexican and I turned rearward and looked dumbounded at the billowing, cataclysmic horror that had, quite obviously enshrouded the full length of the train yard.

"Madre-de-Dios" the Corporal murmured incredulously as the meaning of the calamitous outbreak impacted on our sense.

Shocked beyond the power of speech, I could only stare, tremendously shaken by the evidence of the horrific disaster rising swiftly in the morning sky. Eventually, I found my tongue. "How many were there left to finish the job at the time we decided to leave?" I numbly queried the Corporal.

"Cully is the only one I remember?" The driver answered dully. "He offered to stay with the others while we took off for chow."

In silent stuporous wonder, we watched the great mass break into segments and vanish into the blueness above. The urge to reverse direction and hurry back to the scene of the blast was strong within us, but, having been directed to unload with all possible speed, we proceeded unwillingly to the base ammunition area.

My vague misgivings concerning the unstable nature of the fragmentation bombs had been tragically substantiated. Placing together bits of information gathered from those nearest the accident, we learned just how foolhardy it could be to handle indiscretely a lethal weapon assembled from such possibly questionable design.

Of those who laid down their lives that direful, black, desert morning, each must be considered to have carried out his duties in the selfless tradition that true valor demands of us all. Such happenings are not unexpected in time of war, but when they do occur, are startling and hard to believe.

That evening, with grieving hearts, Sergeant Wahlstrom and I walked out under the star studded sky, sitting on the still warm sands, quietly smoked and thought long of down-to-earth Corporal Cully whose pungent words and grinning countenance, it was as certain as the coming of the dawn, would be missed by his troubled-in-heart buddies.

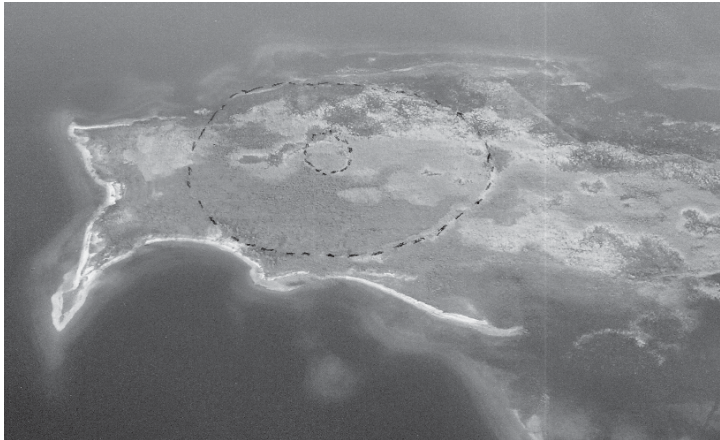


# Island Target

THIS WAS SUBMITTED BY KEN ROLLER

I thought your members might find this piece of history interesting.

My father, Ernest Roller was a flight engineer and top turret gunner in the 49th Squadron. I grew up with a fascination for aircraft of all kinds. It was not uncommon for us to go out to Chicago Midway Airport to simply watch airplanes on Saturday and Sunday. Fast forward many years and I found myself living out-side Boston Massachusetts. Being single and having time on my hands. I decided to follow a dream I'd always had of learning to fly. I followed that dream, got my pilot's license, and bought a Cessna 172. Over the years I have flown it



allover the Eastern half of the country, but many of my evening flights have been and continue to be out to the western part of MA and over the Quabbin Reservoir.

One year, when we were experiencing a very bad drought, I noticed something on one of the islands in the reservoir. It appeared as though a road grader or bull dozer had made a berm around the outside of the island. There was also something in the center of the island that I could not make out. I asked around if anyone knew what this was but got no leads on it for a long time. Eventually, I contacted the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority, the agency that manages the reservoir, and asked them the purpose of the circle.

*Continued on page 15*

## Hurricane Ike

A note from Sid Underwood:

Those of us who attended the 2007 Reunion in Houston will fondly remember our visit to the Lone Star Flight Museum and Texas Hall of Fame on Galveston Island. During all the news of Hurricane Ike, I kept thinking about the Museum at Galveston and wondered about their fate too.

The B-17, "Thunder Bird" and all the other flyable vintage aircraft were evacuated, but everything else was either destroyed or severely damaged by the hurricane winds that blew the siding off and the more than 8 feet of sea water in the museum and hanger and 4 feet of water in the gift shop.

The staff and volunteers are now hard at work trying to recover and restore what was damaged.

### 36 Hours After IKE Photo Gallery

This picture shows some of the damage in parts of the museum



These pages are not ordinarily open to appeals but here is an exception to that rule. If you are inclined, contributions to the museum's recovery and restoration may be sent to: Lone Star Flight Museum – P O Box 3099 – Galveston, TX 77552

## 2<sup>nd</sup> BOMBARDMENT ASSOCIATION General Meeting

August 31, 2008 - Alexandria, Virginia

The meeting was opened at 5:05PM by President Hellums. A survey form was circulated which asked for opinions on various aspects of the reunion in order to guide planners of future reunions. The order of business was the report of the Nominating Committee. Board member and past president Loy Dickinson presented the results as follows:

President – Lewis Waters	<u>Directors at Large</u>
Vice President – John Sisson	John Bryner
Secretary – Bonnie Hellums	Fred Fitzpatrick
Treasurer – Matt Bryner	Karen Nelson
Newsletter Editor – Earl Martin	Jack Norwine
Historian – Todd Weiler	Paul Skalny
Co-Historian – Donna Conway	Burton Thorman
Webmaster – Sid Underwood	George True
Agent to Calif/Secy State – Patrick Kennelly	
Past Presidents – Bonnie Hellums, Loy Dickinson & Dick Radtke	

President Hellums requested that members give consideration to the need for a person to serve as Assistant Historian to assist and back up to Earl Martin. Karen Nelson reported that total attendance at the reunion is approximately 185, including 31 veterans. Lew Waters gave the Secretary's report and also read the minutes of the Board of Directors meeting.

At this point President Hellums directed the discussion to consideration of future reunions. The consensus was to continue meeting every year rather than every other year. During the discussion several places were suggested as sites. A closely monitored tally of six possible sites resulted in making San Antonio, Texas as the venue for the 2009 Reunion. Tied for second were Tucson, AZ and Colorado Springs, CO. A later coin flip determined Tucson will be our host in 2110 and Colorado Springs in 2111.

In addition to when and where to hold future meetings, Loy Dickinson suggested that the time has come for us to contract with a professional tour/reunion organization to manage future reunions. This concept will be considered in preparing for San Antonio. President Hellums thanked everyone for actively contributing to the discussions on Association matters and for their interest in continuing the growth and success of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Bombardment Association.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:01PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Lewis H Waters, Secretary



# **2009 REUNION**

## **SECOND BOMBARDMENT ASSOCIATION**

### **CROWN PLAZA HOTEL SAN ANTONIO AIRPORT**

#### **SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS - October 15 to 18, 2009**

Here we go, Deep into the Heart of Texas!! San Antonio is the most visited city in Texas for good reasons. It has many great historic sites, great weather much of the year, the renown River Walk, important military installations and good hotels and restaurants AND, friendly Texans.

**DETAILS WILL BE INCLUDED IN THE REGISTRATION PACKET  
TO BE MAILED EARLY IN MARCH.  
SAVE THE DATES – OCTOBER 15 to 18, 2009!!**

REMEMBER THE ALAMO!! Texans attacked and overcame Santa Anna's forces in the battle of San Jacinto on April 21, 1836

FORT SAM HOUSTON, San Antonio was constructed in the mid 1870's and was named for the first president of the 'Republic of Texas'. During Dwight Eisenhower's post, here 1915-1917, he met and married Mamie Dowd. After WWII the Army made Fort Sam its principal medical training facility. In time Brooke Army Medical Center came to provide inpatient care as well as all trauma and emergency medical care. Bonnie's son, Captain (Dr) Josh Hellums, worked at Brooke in recent years. Fort Sam was made a National Historic Landmark in 1975.



Crowne Plaza Hotel

PASEO del RIO, the famous River Walk waits to delight our members next October.

## **“SEE YOU ALL IN SAN ANTONE”**

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*Continued from page 12*

A few days later came a reply that described how, during the war years when the reservoir was still filling, the Army created the circle and an inner circle on the island to provide a target for bomber crews to practice on. They also pointed out that no real bombs were used, only those made out of flour. The Army also built a number of towers that were used by spotters to grade the bomber crews. Some of them still exist today.

When I next spoke to my dad, I asked him about the time he spent at Manchester, NH before flying

over to the ETO. He said that he had spent 30 days at Manchester before flying on to Greenland and Europe. I asked him if during that time they did any practice bombing and he stated that, in fact, they had used a range about 60 miles from Manchester. He wasn't sure where it was because he was monitoring the engines, but thought it was an island somewhere. He also made a point to note they were using flour sacks instead of real bombs. I told him I had a pretty good idea where they had been dropping that flour.

The picture shows the "Island Target" (enhanced) is still there!



# 2nd Bomb Group

Second Bombardment Association  
A Veterans Organization of the  
2nd Bomb Group & Bomb Wing

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