



THE PYRAMIDIERS

The Newsletter of the 98th Bomb Group/Wing Veterans Association

February 2013

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Pieces of My Mind

Greetings to all,

SKYBIRD! SKYBIRD! THIS IS SKYKING, THIS IS SKYKING, BREAK, BREAK.

OUR REUNION THIS YEAR WILL BE HELD IN CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA, FROM SEPTEMBER 15TH THROUGH THE 19TH. FULL INFORMATION ON THE REUNION AND A REGISTRATION FORM WILL BE IN THE MAY NEWSLETTER.

I recently received my copy of the “*Air Force Memorial Registry Book*”



in which all individual contributors to the construction fund for the memorial had been invited to place a listing, and/or a picture if they desired. When I received my invitation, I contacted Pete Lindquist, the executive director of the Air Force Memorial Foundation, and requested special recognition of our association in the registry for the large contribution we made. Pete informed me that none of the corporate or Air Force units were to be listed in the Registry, but that I could recognize our association under my listing. The

following may be found on page 195:

“Seals, Col. Bill (Ret); 98th Bomb Group Veterans Association; Why the Memorial is important to me: To me the Air Force Memorial is a link to not only those who served with me, but to those who served before, and all those who are serving, or have served after my service. A link not only to the history and heritage of the Air Force, but in a very real sense a link to each individual who served. For the last few years, I’ve had the honor to lead the 98th Bomb Group/Bomb Wing Veterans Association.; Personal: This has given me an opportunity to get to know Airmen and their families from the

continued on page 2

period extending from World War II to the present. An experience I would not trade for anything. One of the highlights of this association was the raising of \$25,000 for the construction and dedication of the memorial. The only unit sized organization to contribute an amount of that size. We also had a group of thirty plus from the association to attend the dedication as a group.”

During the “Great Depression” of the thirties, tens of millions of people received a much dreaded “overdue notice” from their creditors. Fortunately for our association, the number of members who are overdue on their membership dues is less than two hundred. Not so fortunately, the amount that they owe is nearly equal to the total dues we collected last year. Three years ago we stopped sending the annual membership cards to save on postage, and we haven’t sent reminder notices when dues are overdue for even longer. We have depended upon our members to keep their membership current, and most of you have. If you are uncertain of your membership status, you may look at the mailing label on the envelope this newsletter arrived in and following your name you will find a number. This number is the year your membership is

current through. So if you see the number 11, you owe a total of \$30 for the years 2012 and 2013. We would appreciate your prompt attention to this matter if you are in arrears.

The association has engaged the services of a professional web master, and we are working feverishly to get a revised web site on line. When the “new” site is available, you will need to sign into the site to be able to post items on it. Your username will be your e-mail address, and your password will be Veteran. Please note that the password is capitalized. We are hoping that the “new” site will encourage our members to make more use of the site. The staff has promised to try to keep the site updated, and hopefully interesting and informative.

I hope the New Year found you in good health and that you and your family will enjoy a great year. Despite the very real dangers that face our nation, I remain confident that we will endure and that our nation will continue to be “The Greatest Nation” on earth.

With Warmest Regards to All,

Bill Seals

Just for Laughs

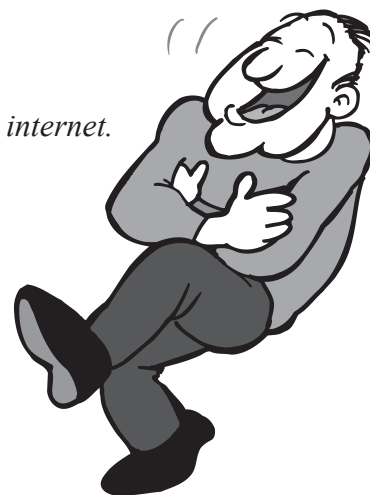
Editor’s Note:

We’ve included a few jokes in this issue which have “made the rounds” on the internet. Maybe you’ve seen them. Maybe not. Regardless, hope they bring a chuckle.

During training exercises, the lieutenant who was driving down a muddy back road encountered another car stuck in the mud with a red-faced colonel at the wheel.

“Your jeep stuck, sir?” asked the lieutenant as he pulled alongside.

“Nope,” replied the colonel, coming over and handing him the keys. “Yours is.”



A Message from the Vice President (former Reunion Coordinator)

Why am I writing this? I think it’s because I have been thinking about my life and how lucky I have been. Just about everything I have ever wanted has happened, except maybe three things: Flight School, African Safari and Australia (maybe the Great Wall of China).

Those are the things I have missed, they are nothing when it comes to the things I have seen and done. But, what I have really been thinking about is the people I have met, had the pleasure of getting to know, and being able to call them a “friend.” I suppose I am reflecting now because I am older and not in as big of a hurry to experience the next event in my life. Now, I just want to stop and enjoy life and remember all that has past.

I do believe now I am beginning to realize just how lucky I have been. All of my children are grown and well; I have grandchildren and even a redhead (dynamite) great granddaughter. What more could a fellow want? Not much! These days I enjoy a warm day in the sun and time to reminisce, which I do a lot. It is hard for me to believe where I started and where I am today. (Mom & Dad, if only you could hear me now.)

I had wonderful parents, a great home and then the adventure bug struck. When I was about 13 or 14, I stole \$3.00 dollars from my Dad to get a ride in an airplane (J3 Cub 1/2 open door) and the race was on. Then at 16 yrs and 20 days old I got on a train headed to Lackland AFB, and those next 13 weeks will never be forgotten in my lifetime. It was there I met the friends that would last a lifetime. Some are gone and some are still here today. Although I don’t see them or talk to them as much as I would like, they are still my friends. I remember once my mother was visiting our home at Christmas and was amazed we had 125/150 Christmas Cards. Some of those folks are not with us now, but are certainly not forgotten. I have been so blessed to have

traveled so much and met so many wonderful people. I just spent some time with my Air Force mentor, he is in his 90s and just a week before arriving he lost his wife (Gerri) of 71 years. But, what a great time was had with him and his family. We drove the dirt roads in the great Redwood Forest and shared so many wonderful memories.

It seems too good to be true that I have had so much in my lifetime. But, it has happened right before my eyes. God allowed this old boy from the Alabama cotton fields to live in Columbus, GA until he was just over 16, then grow up all over the world as he served in the Air Force. He has now blessed me with a deck, sunny days and the time to reminisce. Life has been good!

Thanks to each of you that have in some way touched my life and made these reflective moments so special. George; thanks for that short visit and hope you can go home soon. Ken; what can I say except I am glad your twisted arm got better and know you will again very soon. Jack O; you are truly one of the few men I ever loved “thanks.” Phil can you come and laugh with us some more, it’s a lot of fun. Bob; (there are several of you) Charleston Sept. 15th — I’ll see “ya’ll” there. Darlene; you can do it again. Pete; (please bring Dolores) can you believe Delta has a non-stop to Charleston. Bill; without Lura’s help you can drive it in 10hrs. Ken & Ken Jr.; overnight will be a must. Herb; it’s just a short 7hr trip. George, Bob, Phil; I’ll see you soon and we can lie a bit and laugh some more.

I could do this all day, but you get what I mean, friendship is just like a good marriage, it takes work and effort to keep it alive, but worth every second and time well spent.

I love you all and want to see and hear from you lot’s more!!!

Dennis Posey

A Message from the Secretary/Treasurer

Happy New Year to all!!! Can you just believe it is 2013? Another great year to look forward to, and I can't tell you how much I am looking forward to our Charleston Reunion in September. Charleston holds special memories for me, as it was my first 98th Reunion in 1994. My Dad and I flew from Detroit, Michigan and, unbeknownst to him, my Mother and sister flew from Columbus, Ohio — meeting us in Charleston. I still remember the surprise on my Dad's face when he first saw them at the airport! It was there that I first met many people who would come to mean so much to me — like Warren White, Walter Ryan, and Grover "Goadie" and Lu Helen Zink. At the banquet the ballroom was huge, as was the crowd, and I will never forget how proud I felt when my sweet, shy, unassuming Dad stood up to introduce us as his guests.

My good buddy, Ken Laninga has recently had some health problems and has moved, opening up a new location for the '98th Hospitality Suite' at 400 Parkside Drive / Room 117 / Zeeland, MI 49464. He is doing well and I know would very much appreciate hearing from you. I hear he is also looking forward to Charleston and seeing all his friends.



It is with great sadness that we learned of the loss of our dear Bud Lassiter who was a gentleman in the truest sense. He flew B-24s during the war, and continued to serve his country and community in civilian life. And who will ever forget that smile as he showed us 'his El Paso' when we were there for the 2007 Reunion? Also gone is Col. John 'Jack' Osgood, a B-24 Commander in the European Theater where he was awarded The Silver Star and The Distinguished Flying Cross for heroism in combat. We were privileged to meet him and his son at the 2007 Ploesti Raiders Reunion in Shreveport.

As a nonprofit organization, our memberships run July 1 thru June 30. We no longer send out membership cards. But, please find the number that follows your name on the mailing envelope in which this newsletter arrived. That number indicates the year your membership

is paid thru. Contact me if you have any questions regarding your status. We need new members to keep the 98th a viable, dynamic organization, so remember that membership is open to anyone with interest in the 98th with a yearly membership fee of \$15.

This year marks the eleventh year that the Association will be awarding a Scholarship! A special thank you to recent donors to the Scholarship Fund: Bill Seals, Anka Nassi, Herk Sreitberger, and Herb Harper.

Stay Warm and Think Spring!

Susie

98th Bomb Group / Wing Veterans Association Force for Freedom Scholarship *In Memory of Sgt William H. Simons*

The 98th Bomb Group / Wing Veterans Association will award a \$1000.00 Scholarship to a 2013 graduating high school senior who will be continuing their education at a university, community college, technical or trade school. Applicants should have at least a 2.5 grade point average, be a patriot who believes in the American ideals, and have a clear idea of what they want their continuing education to do for them and their chosen career.

Application packages are available from the Scholarship Chairman and should be requested by the sponsoring member of the 98th Bomb Group Association. They consist of forms to be filled out by the scholarship applicant and the sponsoring member who will mail the completed package, with the applicant's high school grade transcript to the Scholarship Chairman postmarked no later than May 1, 2012. The Scholarship Committee will review the applications and the President will announce their selection by June 10.

To request a package contact: Suzanne Mioduszewski (*see contact info on our newsletter masthead*).

The Definition of "Embarrassing"

Having just moved into his new office, a pompous, new colonel was sitting at his desk when an airman knocked on the door. Conscious of his new position, the colonel quickly picked up the phone, told the airman to enter, then said into the phone, "Yes, General, I'll be seeing him this afternoon and I'll pass along your message. In the meantime, thank you for your good wishes, sir." Feeling as though he had sufficiently impressed the young enlisted man, he asked, "What do you want?"

"Nothing important, sir," the airman replied. "I'm just here to hook up your telephone."

Officer: "Soldier, do you have change for a dollar?"

Soldier: "Sure, buddy."

Officer: "That's no way to address an officer! Now let's try it again!"

Officer: "Do you have change for a dollar?"

Soldier: "No, SIR!"

Control Tower Humor

On some air bases the Air Force is on one side of the field and civilian aircraft use the other side of the field, with the control tower in the middle. One day the tower received a call from an aircraft asking, "What time is it?"

The tower responded, "Who is calling?"

The aircraft replied, "What difference does it make?"

The tower replied, "It makes a lot of difference . . . If it is a commercial flight, it is 3 o'clock.

If it is an Army aircraft, it is 1500 hours.

If it is a Navy aircraft, it is 6 bells.

If it is an Air Force aircraft, the big hand is on the 12 and the little hand is on the 3.

If it is a Marine Corps aircraft, it's Friday afternoon and 120 minutes to 'Happy Hour'."



Hadley's Harem

Foreword

When my wife read an earlier draft of this story, she said she didn't like it. It was too sad! The story is largely about one crew, and one airplane, on one mission during World War II. It is a sad story, but it is just one of millions of sad stories that emerged from the war that was fought and won by America's "Greatest Generation." I regret that it is a sad story, but I think it is a story that should be re-told so we don't forget that it is part of the legacy of the 98th. After all, keeping alive the memory of men and events like the ones described here is the purpose of our association.

As dawn broke over the Libyan Desert on Sunday, the first of August, 1943, 178 B-24 bombers from five bomb groups took-off from airfields around the city of Benghazi. They were the second largest strike force ever launched, and they intended to fly the longest route ever attempted. (The Eighth Air Force in the UK had launched 186 B-17 bombers on July 30th, but only 134 aircraft reached the target.) The targets of the strike were the seven oil refineries surrounding the Romanian town of Ploesti. The facilities supplied about one-third of the fuel used by the German war machine and included the only source of high-grade aviation fuel available in Europe. The destruction of the refineries had been declared the highest priority by the Allied leaders President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill.

The plan was to attack from the direction that was thought to be the least heavily defended and to attack from low altitude. It was hoped that this tactic would surprise the enemy, aid in the precise identification of individual bomb aiming points, and lessen civilian casualties.

The strike force was led by the commander of the 376th Bomb Group, Colonel Keith Compton, in the lead ship. The Mission Commander, Brigadier General Uzal Ent, also flew in the lead bomber. The following groups, in order, were the 93rd, 98th, 44th, and 389th Bomb Groups.

As the bomber stream flew in a northerly direction at an altitude of 2,000 to 3,000 feet to their first turning

point just north of the island of Corfu, the stream became separated into two sections. The first section contained the 376th and the 93rd groups, and the second section consisted of the 98th led by Colonel John Kane, followed by the 44th, and the 389th Bomb Groups. This separation was the result of Compton and Kane flying different air speeds. Kane flew at a slower speed to conserve his sand-abused engines, while Compton flew at a higher speed. As the stream turned to the northeast and began a climb to clear the Pindus Range along the Albanian coast, the first section was ahead of the second by at least 10 minutes.

Despite an attempt to close the gap, the distance between the two sections continued to increase as the formations cleared the mountains and descended into the Danube valley. As the lead section flew towards their first initial point (IP), an event began to unfold that totally altered the outcome of the entire mission.

When the first section approached their second IP, Colonel Compton mistakenly took it to be the final IP and turned to the bomb run heading of 127 degrees. Cries on the radio from ships in his group and the 93rd group that he had turned early went unheard by the leader who had his command radio turned off. The 93rd had no option but to turn with the lead group, and they dutifully followed. At this point, these two groups were approximately 20 minutes ahead of the second section.

After a few minutes on the wrong course, Colonel Addison Baker, the leader of the 93rd, glimpsed

refineries off his left wing and immediately turned towards them. In a masterly display of airmanship, the group turned with their leader. In spite of extremely intense ground fire, the 93rd inflicted great damage to both the White IV and White V targets, which were the targets assigned to the 98th and 44th groups. The eight aircraft that crashed in the target area added to the huge amount of fire and heavy black smoke arising behind their attack.

The 376th continued on a southeasterly heading until they spotted the towers of the city of Bucharest and realized their mistake. Compton ordered a turn to the north and the group flew towards Ploesti. By this time, the defenses were fully aroused, and the group encountered very heavy ground fire. Realizing they would not be able to strike their assigned target, the mission commander gave the order for the group to bomb targets of opportunity and the group scattered. An element of three planes led by Major Norm Appold found and bombed a refinery which turned out to be White II, Concordia Vega. The crew of **Bomb Boogie** also struck the same refinery. These four aircraft appear to be the only planes from the 376th that were able to hit targets with significant military value.

Meanwhile, events were unfolding as planned for the trailing groups, and as they flew over the first IP, the last group in the formation—the 389th—turned towards their target, while the other two groups continued to their second IP. In the nose of **Hail Columbia**, the lead navigator, Norm Whalen, gave a sigh of relief that he had done his job with his usual accuracy. However, his relief was quickly replaced by a feeling of foreboding as he and the crew saw the huge billows of smoke and flames rising from the stricken refineries that were their target. At the final IP, Colonel Kane, who had correctly surmised that their target had been attacked by the groups ahead of them, resolutely

turned his group to the bomb run heading. The 44th group followed.

As Colonel Kane made the turn into the target, he glanced out his side window at the plane stuck tightly to his left wing. The bomber he saw had been named **Hadley's Harem** by its crew and was flown by Captain Gilbert "Gib" Hadley. The Colonel liked Gib Hadley, the hotshot young pilot of the **Harem**. Perhaps Hadley reminded Kane of himself at that age. Gib Hadley was handsome, daring, and fancied himself as quite the ladies' man. Hence, the name on the airplane. When he flew, he always wore cowboy boots and carried twin pearl-handled revolvers. His crew liked him and had great confidence in his flying abilities. As the **Harem** completed the turn to the target, the plane flew a bit too low and clipped the tops of some trees which prompted waist gunner Leroy Newton to call over the intercom, "Quit trimming the hedges." Gib and the rest of the crew were much too busy to answer as they and the rest of the formation battled the flak train that was paralleling their course.

Hadley kept the **Harem** in its position in the element as they approached the target. The bomb bay doors were open. They were not more than 60 seconds from their release point flying 200 feet above the explosions from delayed action bombs dropped by the 93rd Group earlier. Flak burst all around them as the gunners dueled with the guns firing at them from the ground; flames and thick black smoke filled the air. "It was like a movie," said radio operator Bill Leonard.

An instant before bomb release, an 88-mm shell tore into the **Harem's** Plexiglas nose. The fierce explosion jolted the plane from nose to tail. It killed Leon Storms, the bombardier, instantly and wounded the navigator, Harold Tabacoff, in the arm. The navigator yelled, "They got me too, can you send someone down with first aid?" Before Hadley could answer, Sgt. Russell

Hadley's Harem — continued

Page, the flight engineer, reported that the number two engine was on fire. Bright red flames leaped across the wing, trailing off behind them in the slipstream. **Hadley's Harem** was in serious trouble!

The pilot told Page to go forward and help the wounded navigator. Before Page did so, he remembered their bombs had not been released before the bombardier had been hit. Page pulled the emergency release handle and the bomb fell away. The plane started to buck like a wild horse out of control and it took all the strength and skill of Hadley and his co-pilot to keep control of the bomber. Finally, Page reached the nose and saw the bombardier. "I never want to see a mess like that again," he said. The navigator was dizzy from shock and loss of blood. Page bandaged his wounds and dragged him to the flight deck to get him out of the wind roaring through the shattered nose.

Hadley feathered the number two engine. The plane lurched and dove so close to the ground that Sgt. Leonard began to pray out loud. Hadley and his co-pilot, James Lindsay, leveled the ship just as another shell buckled the floor of the fuselage, twisting the metal in the shape of a V. The force of the explosion knocked Roy Newton, the right waist gunner, off his feet. He pulled himself up but was so dazed that he grabbed his gun and open fire on a flock of birds he mistook for enemy fighters.

The crew kept the Harem skimming over the tree tops as they cleared the target area. They passed through a cloud of smoke so dense that it blocked out the sun. They emerged to see two Liberators, both on fire, crash-land. They were unable to see if anyone made it out alive. Then they spotted another B-24 that was starting a slow climb. The entire plane, from wing tip to wing tip, was engulfed in flames. The pilot was attempting to gain enough altitude for the crew to safely bail out. Suddenly, the ship disappeared in a huge burst of flame and smoke, leaving a trail of debris raining to the ground. Everyone in the **Harem** knew it could just as easily have been them.

By this time, the **Harem** was struggling along at 25 feet above the ground just beyond the target area. Her hydraulic system was shot out, and there was

nothing the flight engineer could do about it. Gasoline was leaking badly from the number one engine into the bomb bay, so Page transferred fuel from the dead number two engine to number one.

Gib Hadley had turned the plane to a southerly heading towards Bulgaria when he saw another bomber limping along ahead of him and joined up with it. The ship was Kane's **Hail Columbia**, and they were soon joined by others. William Banks in **Sad Sack**, Robert LeBrecht in **The Squaw**, and Robert Sternfels in **The Sandman** took up positions in the group.

As the planes flew south, the pilots were all trying desperately to gain altitude in order to clear the 6,000-foot mountain range ahead. Kane and Hadley were the lowest in the group, and as they approached the mountains it was doubtful that they wouldn't crash into the side of a mountain. At the last minute, Lady Luck threw a helping hand to the crippled pair when up-drafts from the valleys provided just enough lift to get the planes over the peaks. Both pilots breathed a little easier as they scraped over the final range and limped on across Turkey.

Just as they crossed the south coastline, **Hadley's Harem** lost another engine. They were now down to two and maintaining a speed of no more than 125 miles per hour. The other ships pulled ahead of them.

When the Harem was about 20 miles south of the Turkish coast, the super charger on the number four engine caught fire and the number two engine began leaking oil. Within minutes, the level on the oil gauge fell to empty. Both engines were in danger of freezing up at any moment. The crew's only hope was to get back to land and make a crash-landing on the beach. Hadley knew it was suicide to try to ditch a B-24 in darkness. The pilot radioed, "Turning back for Turkey, we can't make it!" The radio operator began broadcasting their position on an emergency frequency to alert any rescue units who might receive the message.

If they could just stay in the air for another 5 or 10 minutes, they might make it back to the beach. The altimeter needle kept slowly unwinding as the crew prepared for a crash-landing. Russ Page opened the top

hatch above the flight deck as the men in the waist took off their shoes and huddled against a bulkhead.

Without warning both engines stopped at the same instant. With less than a mile to go, the Harem was gliding like a rock towards the water. Hadley and Lindsay tried to hold the plane in the air to reach the beach. It might have worked in another airplane, but not in a wounded Liberator. The Harem hit the water like a ton of bricks and began to sink quickly. The plane broke in two, just behind the wing, and water rushed into the shattered nose filling the flight deck and slamming the top hatch closed. The men in the front section of the plane were trapped inside.

Flight engineer Page tried to open the top hatch but it wouldn't budge. He saw Hadley and Lindsay struggling in the rushing water trying to find a way out of the flooded ship. They also tried to open the hatch, but couldn't open it against the pressure of the water. Page forced his way back into the top turret and found a pocket of air, inhaling as deeply as he could, he dove under water and made his way to the rear of the plane to where the tail had broken off. He swam free just as the Harem sank, taking both pilots and the body of the bombardier, Leon Storm, to the bottom of the Mediterranean Sea.

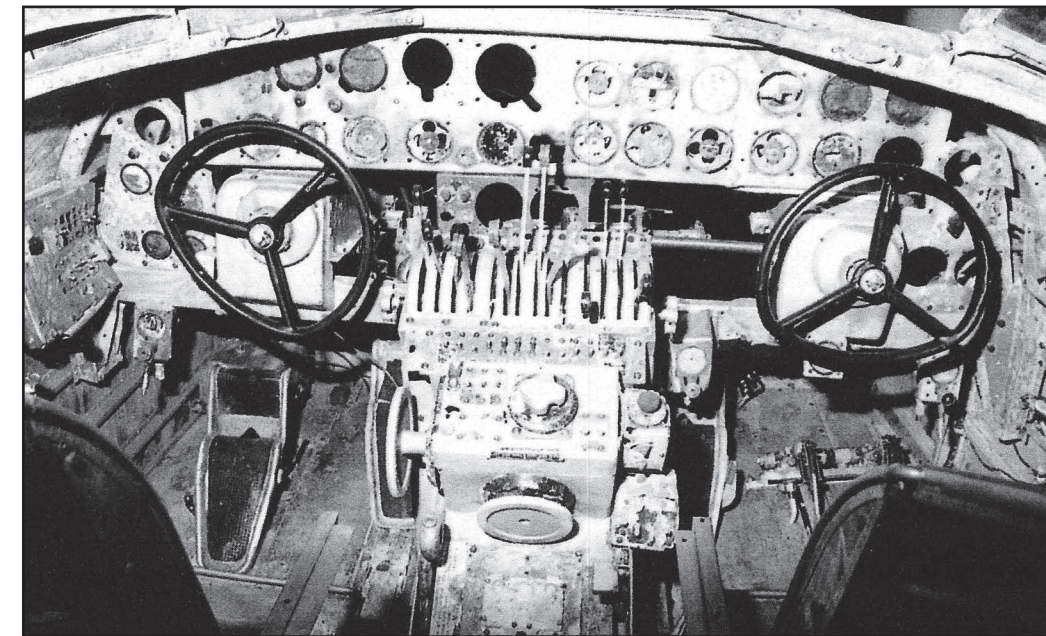
Back in the waist section, Leonard Holweger, Roy Newton, and Pershing Waples managed to escape

through the break in the fuselage. The four crewmen found Harold Tabacoff, the navigator, thrashing in the water without a life vest. Page shared his Mae West with Waples, who had given his to the navigator, while Newton clung to an oxygen bottle. Together with the ball turret gunner, William Leonard, and Frank Nemoth, the tail gunner, the survivors made their way to the beach and collapsed. They were broken, bleeding, and shaken, but they were alive.

Page and Leonard were in the best condition of the group, and they did what they could for the others. Newton had a compound fracture of an ankle. Tabacoff had hurt a leg in the crash in addition to his flak wounds. Waples suffered a broken leg and a sprained ankle while Nemoth had a deep gash on his leg. Holweger had cuts, bumps, bruises, and a black eye.

Shortly after reaching the beach, the survivors were surrounded by about fifteen local Turks pointing ancient rifles at them. After searching the group, and taking a few items from them, the Turks proved to be friendlier than they first appeared. Although the Turks had no food or medical help to offer, they did build a large fire from driftwood. As the bedraggled flyers huddled around the fire for warmth, the Turks disappeared into the night.

British Air-Sea Rescue units on Cyprus had heard the **Harem** give its last position on the radio just before



The fuselage of Hadley's Harem on display at the Rahni M. Koc Museum in Istanbul.

Hadley's Harem — continued

the crash. The next morning a Wellington spotted the survivors on the beach and dropped a note. The airmen confirmed they were American flyers by spelling out an answer on the beach with stones, and it wasn't long before a high-speed rescue launch from Cyprus arrived offshore. A dingy loaded with first aid, morphine, and a translator came ashore to treat the wounded airmen. There wasn't much the medics could do for the more seriously wounded, and the entire entourage moved to a village some 4 miles inland. The villagers were kind and gave the flyers the first meal they had had since before taking off from Libya, and a Turkish doctor treated their wounds as best as he could.

The British sailors tried to convince the Turkish officials that since the plane had crashed at sea, the airmen were subject to maritime law which gave the rescuers the authority to return them to Cyprus. The Turks didn't fall for the ruse and the survivors were interned and moved to the American hospital, Admiral Bristol, in Istanbul.

Hadley's Harem was not the only bomber to finish the Ploesti mission in Turkey. Seven aircraft either landed at airfields or crash-landed in Turkey. Altogether, 75 (some authors say 78) flyers were interned in Turkey where they were treated well during their internment.

Billeted at the Yeni Hotel in Ankara, they were paid their regular pay plus a generous clothing allowance. Free to go almost anywhere, they liked to dine at Ankara's fine restaurants where they drank and ate to the point where it began to take a toll on the men. Even the near endless parties and beer busts began to lose their appeal as the men thought of their loved ones and home. There was just no way to escape the fact that they were being held in a foreign land, and they had no idea how long they were going to be there.

After a few months, with the help of the British Embassy, arrangements were made for the Americans to be quietly evacuated, a few at a time. Led by guides, and using clandestine routes through neighboring countries, all of the men were eventually returned to active duty.

Prologue:

Staff Sergeant Leroy Newton was one of the lucky men on the crew of **Hadley's Harem**. He survived the crash and the war. Returning to his home in California, he became a product designer, married, and raised a family. Newton tried not to think much about the **Harem** and Gib, and the horrors of that terrible day in 1943. He had largely put them out of his mind for 50 years when he learned there would be a reunion of the men who flew on the famous "Tidal Wave" mission to strike the Ploesti oil refineries.

Leroy Newton went to the 50th reunion, in Salt Lake City, the first gathering of Ploesti veterans he attended. He was amazed to see a photograph of himself and the other six survivors of **Hadley's Harem** on a beach in Turkey surrounded by more than a dozen armed Turks. The picture brought back a flood of memories. He decided to go back, to stand on that beach again, and try to find whatever was left of the plane. "The seven of us really owed our lives to him," Newton said of Gib Hadley. "It's miraculous he could fly the thing that far. (He and Lindsay) gave me a good 50 years of my life, and I felt this was a good pay back."

Newton went to Turkey in 1994 and walked the beaches for miles, looking for anything familiar to identify the spot where they came ashore. He knew there was no chance of finding the plane until he found the right beach, but he did not recognize anything. On the last day of his trip, a local newspaper reporter interviewed him and published a story about the airplane that had crashed off the coast five decades before and the wounded Americans who had straggled ashore. By the time the article appeared, Newton had returned home, disappointed that his search had been unsuccessful.

A short time later, he received a letter from a Turkish diver who had read about his search. The diver wrote that he had discovered the aircraft back in 1972 while filming an underwater documentary about turtles. Newton was skeptical but decided to go to Turkey again.

Newton hired a boat and a diver, and with the Turkish photographer motored to the location of the crash. In an interview with a reporter from the *Los Angeles Times* in December of 2006, Newton said, "When we got over the site I nearly had a heart attack I was so excited." Unfortunately, foul weather had muddied the usually clear seas and they were unable to locate the plane. A disappointed Newton returned home to continue his efforts to recover the aircraft and the bodies trapped inside.

Eventually, the wreckage was found 750 feet offshore in 110 feet of water with its nose partly buried. Several items were recovered from the wreckage, and when the parts were verified as coming from a B-24, it was a hopeful sign. But for Newton the hardest part was still ahead.

Negotiations

with the Turkish government for a permit to claim the plane were difficult, and the expenses, which Newton was absorbing, were mounting. He also had to develop a plan to recover the nose section.

On his third trip to Turkey, Newton invited Peter Frizzell, a Florida history buff who was making a film on the Ploesti low level mission, to join in the recovery effort. Frizzell became the leader of the recovery operation and came up with a plan to raise the nose section with large inflatable balloons.

Although it took more than three and a half months, they succeeded. Not only was the nose section in much the same condition as when it sank, the bodies of Hadley and Lindsay were recovered. In addition, Hadley's wristwatch, sunglasses, and one of his pearl-handled pistols were found. (Some accounts say both pistols and a pair of cowboy boots were found.)

Newton didn't immediately contact the families. He and Frizzell handed over the bodies to personnel of the U.S. Embassy in Turkey. The bodies were returned to United States and positively identified through DNA analyses. Following their identification, the bodies were transferred to the families of the deceased pilots.

On January 5, 1997, First Lieutenant James R. Lindsay was laid to rest in Texas with full military honors. His

remaining relatives could finally close a sad chapter in their lives.

Captain Gilbert B. Hadley was buried in his home town of Arkansas City, Kansas, on January 9, 1997, with full military honors. His surviving relatives now had his remains resting in the burial plot over which they had erected a headstone upon learning of Gib's death in 1943. Their hero had finally come home

Gib's brother Bill Hadley was glad that Leroy Newton had intervened in the course of history. Bill said, "After all these years, it was difficult to believe it was all possible." (Note: This writer has been in recent contact with Bill Hadley who is in his late eighties and doing well.)

Over a period of time, the B-24 christened **Hadley's Harem** was raised from the floor of the Mediterranean, cleaned, and put on display in the Rahni M. Koc Museum in Istanbul, where it remains as the only survivor of the 178 planes that took off from Benghazi in Libya early on Sunday morning, August 1, 1943. A posting on flickr.com gives a short description of how the plane was placed in the museum:

Sutluce-Istanbul, Turkey 2011

Posted by Goksel Beydilli

Much of the airframe was salvaged in 1995 and the cockpit section, partly restored, was put on display with the help of Mr. Roy Newton, one of the survivors of the crash. The remains of the aircraft were preserved with the help of the Turkish Air Force, and now the entire remains have been placed under a tent structure in one of the outdoor display areas. The missing sections have been replaced by new aluminum framework, and it is now possible to image the aircraft as it might have been more than 60 years ago.

Hadley's Harem had reached its final base.

Sources: *Ploesti: The Great Ground-Air Battle of 1 August 1943* by James Dugan & Carroll Stewart; *Into the Fire: Ploesti, The Most Fateful Mission of World War II* by Duane Schultz; *Fortress Ploesti: The Campaign to Destroy Hitler's Oil Supply* by Jay A. Stout; *Black Sunday: Ploesti* by Michael Hill.

Composed and submitted by Bill Seals.

My Introduction to the

At the time of the following incident, I was a Corporal in the Air Force with a MOS of #911 (Airplane Armorer); Later AFSC 462xx (Aircraft Weapons Maintenance Technician). I was not a regular combat aircrew member, but was assigned to a B-29 aircrew for maintenance support and mobility on TDYs, deployments, and long cross-country flights. I had failed the Gunner's physical exam for defective eyesight but pretty much knew the B-29's gunnery and radar systems, and often flew on training flights in a scanner's (gunner's) place. I was also on a B-29 Ferry and Acceptance Team that ferried the bombers to other organizations and inspected and accepted newly acquired B-29s to the 98th Bomb Group.

Looking back and remembering over sixty years after the outbreak of the Korean Police Action, I am reminded of the events that happened to me on 25 June 1950.

I had gone swimming on that Sunday morning at Medical Lake, near Spokane AFB, Washington. A short time later, the Washington State Police located me on the lake shore and directed me to accompany them. They would not tell me anything except they were ordered to return me to Spokane AFB.

When we arrived back at the base, they took me directly to the 345th squadron's operations with instructions to report to the operations officer. When I reported to him, I was still in my bathing trunks. He informed me that an armed conflict had broken out and that the 98th Bomb Group was sending six B-29s and I had two hours to get packed and return to operations.

When I returned about one hour and fifteen minutes later, he told me the orders had been changed and that

the entire 92nd Bomb Wing, which was also at Spokane, would deploy to the Far East. I was ordered to report to the "Captain of the Guard" in the big hanger. There I was issued an M-1 Carbine and ammunition and posted on a B-29 as a guard. My instructions were to allow NO ONE on the aircraft without proper authority. Not asking OR being told what "proper authority" was, I took my post. This began a most boring night with one exception.

Sometime later, a STAFF CAR emblazoned with stars and flags approached my post. I challenged the driver to "Halt and be recognized."

He presented an ID. I then asked, "What is your authority to approach my post?"

He pointed to the back seat. Slowly the rear window was lowered and an ID card was thrust at me. I almost lost it when I read the card: "Curtis LeMay, General, USAF."

I asked if his intention was to enter my post or the B-29, if so "what is your authority?" My mind was running wild by this time, with "what do I do now," and I began to think back to basic training and when we practiced guard duty. I was about to call out, "Captain of the Guard," when the general said he did not intend to enter my post or the aircraft; he was only checking base security. All during this time, my carbine was loaded and cocked with the safety on. I never heard another word about this.

The next day, all the 98th maintenance personnel along with the 92nd moved the 98th B-29s out of the hangers and the 92nd bombers in. Then we and the 92nd worked together doing preventive maintenance on the 92nd

Korean Police Action

aircraft until they departed about a week later. Then the 98th's B-29s were serviced and departed about 1 August 1950. I got to Yokota Air Base, Japan on the 6th of August 1950, and worked all night with the air crews loading bombs, who then had to fly their first mission to North Korea on 7 August 1950.

In early February 1951, a rotation system was set up and the original air crew began to rotate out as replacement crew arrived. Ground support personnel also began to rotate out as their replacements arrived. Being single and without a close family back home, I volunteered to extend and remained at Yokota until August 1952. I was probably the last or among the last of the original 98th members to rotate back to the U.S. By this time, some of the originals were returning for a second tour.

During my time at Yokota, I witnessed many things, such as loading and flying 4,000-pound Block Buster

bombs. On many occasions, during Maximum Efforts, armorers were asked to fly as gunners were in short supply. I declined as I DID have an eyesight problem and did not want to compromise the efficiency/effectiveness of the crew. However, I did fly one mission into the combat zone to recover the bomb sight and guns from a downed B-29. During my time at Yokota, I went from Corporal to Staff Sergeant in rank. My rotation orders were to the 310th Bomb Wing at Smokey Hill AFB, Kansas. An interesting fact, while I was at Smokey Hill, B-29 Serial Number 44-62070 was assigned to the 310th. This B-29 is NOW known as "FIFI," the only flyable B-29 in the world.

Submitted by: MSgt. Herbert Harper, USAF-Ret.



The "rendering" of the B-29, FIFI, shown above is based on a photo by Buck Wyndham on the web site: warbirdalley.com

Memorial to B-47 crew lost near Comfrey, Minnesota

Foreword: *The following letter was received from an association member. I think you will find it both informative and heartbreaking. Our association is making a contribution to the memorial fund, and I encourage you to consider making a personal contribution.*

Dear Fellow Veterans and Friends,

I have been a proud member of the 98th Bomb Group/ Bomb Wing Veterans Association for many years. Over the years our newsletter has paid tribute to many of our fallen comrades and this letter is a request for your help to honor additional ones.

As most of you know, there are many memorials in the United States and in other countries to honor our lost American aircrew members. This is true for many of our B-47 aircrews as well. But in a recent email from the daughter of one of my navigator training classmates, I learned that this was not the case with her father's crew who was lost in the crash of a B-47 near Comfrey on February 20, 1963.

On her own, Tammy J. Maher, the daughter of Lt. Thomas Hallgrath, and her family visited the site of the crash this past summer. They made contact with members of the local community who lived in the area at the time of the crash and they have offered to help Tammy and the children of the other lost crewmembers to build a memorial to their fathers. The memorial will be located in Comfrey's memorial park where it will be part of the annual Memorial Day services for years to come. The American Legion and the Veterans Association of Brown County, Minnesota along with the Legion's Ladies Auxiliary have begun fundraising for the memorial.

As a member of Harlingen AFB Aviation Cadet Navigator Class 60-19N, and as a classmate of Tom Hallgrath, I have made an initial contribution to get the ball rolling. Since I feel confident that there will be an overwhelming response to the memorial, I have recommended that any surplus funds be used to set up an annual college scholarship in the names of the crew for a graduating Comfrey High School student. I am requesting your wholehearted support for this memorial project. A modest memorial and a lasting scholarship for the youth of Comfrey will honor these

Air Force Officers who lost their lives in the service of our country.

The following is a brief synopsis of the crash. The crew was assigned to the 98th Bomb Wing at Lincoln AFB, Lincoln, Nebraska and consisted of Captain Donald Livingston, Aircraft Commander (A/C), 1Lt. Michael Rebmann, co-pilot (CP), 1Lt. Thomas Hallgrath, Bombardier/Navigator (B/N), and Instructor Navigator (IN) Lt/Col. Lamar Ledbetter. They were flying a six jet engine B-47E bomber, tail number 52-0563 that was assigned to the Strategic Air Command (SAC). As most of you know, the B-47 was USAF's first operational all jet bomber, and its crews were among the best qualified crewmembers in SAC. (Ed. Note: USAF's first all jet bomber was the B-45, a four engine aircraft, but it never served as a bomber. It was mostly used for reconnaissance, and many of the missions were flown by British crews gathering information on the USSR.) SAC B-47 crews consisted of an aircraft commander (pilot), co-pilot, and a bombardier navigator. They all wore parachutes and sat in ejection seats while in normal flight. On occasion a fourth man flew with the crew. He was often an instructor pilot (IP), or an IN, or a crew chief, His position was in the narrow aisle just below the deck where the pilot and co-pilot sat and did not have an ejection seat. His means of egress was either through the crew entryway after the entry door and ladder had been jettisoned, or through the opening left after the B/N had ejected.

The crew had just finished flying a high speed low level navigation route and bomb run on the "Iron Horse" training route at altitudes of 500-1,000 feet above ground level. As they began a climb to high altitude to start the high level navigation portion of the mission the engine mount on the number six engine failed. The outboard engine caused an uncontrollable nose low spiraling attitude which the crew was unable to recover from. Both pilots ejected successfully, but did not survive due to high winds and below freezing

temperatures. According to fellow crewmembers at Lincoln, the last radio transmission from the aircraft said that the B/N was out of his seat replacing some amplifiers on the navigation computer. Due to the resulting extreme "G" forces, the B/N, and the IN were unable to escape the aircraft. As a result, the entire crew was lost.

Please send your donations to the American Legion, Albin Johnson Post 244, B-47 Memorial, P.O. Box 98, Comfrey, MN 56019.

Thanking you in advance for supporting this worthwhile project.

Most Sincerely,

LtCol. Karol E. Franzyszen, USAF Retired

Former B-47 Bomb/Nav, 70th and 384th Bomb Wings, Little Rock AFB, Ark (1961-64), and 98th and 307th Bomb Wings, Lincoln AFB, Neb (1964-66).

For more information, email me at mike51bmte@comcast.net or call (609) 499-4194.

Do you know what the acronym ABMC stands for?

In government lingo, ABMC stands for the American Battle Monuments Commission. The Commission was established by Congress in 1923 as an executive agency of the Executive branch of the federal government. It is the guardian of America's overseas commemorative cemeteries and memorials honoring the service, achievements, and sacrifices of United States Armed Forces.

The ABMC's commemorative mission includes:

- Designing, constructing, operating, and maintaining permanent cemeteries in foreign countries.
- Establishing and maintaining U.S. military memorials, monuments, and markers where American forces served overseas since April 6, 1917, and within the United States when directed by law.
- Controlling the design and construction of permanent military monuments and markers by either U.S. citizens or organizations, both public and private, and encouraging their maintenance.

"In fulfilling its mission, the Commission administers, operates, and maintains 24 permanent American military cemeteries; 25 federal memorials, monuments,

and markers; and seven non federal memorials. Three memorials are located in the United States; the remaining memorials and all of the cemeteries are located in 14 foreign countries, the U.S. Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and the British dependency of Gibraltar. These cemeteries and memorials are among the most beautiful and meticulously maintained shrines in the world. The World War I and World War II, and the Mexico City cemeteries are closed to future burial except for the remains of U.S. war dead discovered in World War I and II battle areas."

The Commission also commemorates individuals by name on stone tablets. These Tablets of the Missing are located at the cemeteries and at three memorials on American soil. Altogether, some 94,000 U.S. service members who are missing in action or lost or buried at sea during World Wars I and II, and the Korean and Vietnam Wars are honored by name.

In addition, The Commission administers trust funds to (1) build memorials authorized by Congress, but financed primarily from private contributions, the sale of commemorative coins, and investment earnings; (2) decorate grave sites with flowers from private contributions; and (3) maintain and repair non federal war memorials with private contributions.

American Battle Monuments — continued

For fiscal year 2011, the Commission's cost of operations was \$73.5 million. Operations and maintenance costs were \$58.6 million; property and equipment costs were \$2.2 million; and provisions for foreign currency losses were \$12.7 million. Approximately \$32.3 million of the Commission's expenditures were for salaries and benefits, a large portion of which was paid to foreign workers.

At first, \$73.5 million may seem excessive for the cost of operations, but when one considers the facilities being maintained, they may appear more reasonable. The care provided includes the upkeep of 131,000 graves and headstones and 73 memorial structures (within and external to the cemeteries) on approximately 1,650 acres of land. Additionally, the Commission maintains 65 visitor centers and quarters for assigned personnel; 65 miles of roads and paths; 911 acres of flowering plants, fine lawns, and meadows; 3 million square feet of shrubs and hedges; and 11,000 ornamental trees.

In addition to operating and maintaining cemeteries, memorials, and markers, the Commission is continually striving to improve the facilities placed in their care. On Veterans Day, November 11, 2012, the Commission dedicated two new pavilions at the Honolulu Memorial, one of which contains Vietnam War battle maps. This is the first major addition to the memorial since 1980, when the Vietnam Courts of the Missing were finished. It was appropriate that the battle maps dedication took place during the period of

our nation's commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the Vietnam War. The battle maps will complete the story told at the memorial of America's major wars in the Pacific. Maps depicting World War II operations in the Pacific and Korean War operations were dedicated with the memorial in 1966.

In Europe, several important interpretive projects are under way. In August 2012, construction began on a new visitor center at the Cambridge American Cemetery, a World War II cemetery in England. The center will tell the stories of the battle of the Atlantic, the strategic air campaign against Germany, and the buildup to the D-Day invasion. At Pointe du Hoc, across the English Channel in France, an expansion of the existing visitor center and the addition of new outdoor exhibits will describe some of the actions on D-Day. One of these will be the story of the U.S. Army Rangers who were given the very difficult assignment to climb the 100-foot cliffs along the coast and destroy the Nazi guns that could have devastated the American invasion forces landing at Omaha and Utah beaches. And in Italy, a new visitor center at Sicily-Rome American Cemetery will provide an overview of U.S. and Allied operations during the long and very difficult Italian campaign. Construction at Pointe du Hoc and Sicily-Rome began in September 2012, and all three projects are scheduled for completion in 2013.

Lastly, the Commission is in the initial design phase for renovations of the visitor centers at two World War I cemeteries, Flanders Field Cemetery in Belgium and Muse-Argonne Cemetery in France. All of these projects are a portion of the Commission's ongoing efforts to maintain a standard of excellence befitting our commemorative sites' status as national heritage assets and to improve its ability to preserve the stories of those we honor.

Editor's note: This article was adapted from information available on the Commission's official web site. Composed and submitted by Bill Seals.



The American Cemetery in Brookwood England

Boeing Builds Rugged Aircraft

This is the story of two Strategic Air Command (SAC) crew on what had been a routine training mission for both on a clear early fall day in the skies over Arizona.

The B-47 aircraft and crew were from the 40th Bomb Wing at Davis Monthan AFB south of Tucson, Arizona. In place of a normal crew of aircraft commander (AC), copilot (CP), and bombardier/navigator (B/N), on this mission the crew consisted of AC (and student pilot) Major R.A. Bosworth in the pilot's seat, and his assigned CP, Captain Ludovic S. Filgas, who was riding in the fourth man's position. Lieutenant Colonel Herbert W. Rineharclt, an instructor pilot (IP), was flying in the copilot's position, and a second student pilot, Captain Charles F. Stump, occupied the B/N's seat.

The KC-97 aerial refueling crew was from Smokey Hill AFB near Salina, Kansas, and it also had a non-standard crew aboard for this mission. Flying in the left pilot's seat was Captain W. Scaggs, a student pilot, and Captain F. Jenkinson, an IP, was in the right seat. The remainder of the crew consisted of First Lieutenant J. Mead; Technical Sergeants P. Presnidle and J. Pennington; Staff Sergeant J. Cook; and Airmen F. Adams, C. Cameron, J. Kozel, and J. Carroll.

The KC-97 and the B-47 had been conducting practice hookups at 15,000 feet for approximately two hours over an area northwest of Gila Bend, Arizona. After 22 hookups, mostly dry, the bomber disconnected from the tanker and assumed a position 300 to 500 feet below and about 1,000 feet to the right of the KC-97. The IP in the B-47, Lt. Col. Rineharclt, then called the tanker pilot to inform him of his plan to drop back and change students in the front cockpit before resuming training. The bomber dropped down and slightly left of the tanker's centerline, then moved to the right. After positioning himself, the IP glanced at his instruments momentarily to make certain he was in level flight before instructing Maj. Bosworth, the pilot in the front cockpit, to change seats with Capt. Stump, the other student pilot in the B/N's seat. The IP later stated that he had reduced power to about 70 percent when he had

taken control of the aircraft, which he believed would prevent his overtaking the KC-97 while he glanced at his instruments.

In the tanker there had been no call from the scanner or the boom operator to warn the pilots that the B-47 was either approaching the tanker or was no longer in sight. This may be explained by the fact that the scanner had just left the window on the right side and was moving to left side of the tanker when the collision occurred. The KC-97E and F had only one intercom position in the vicinity of the aft scanners windows, and this was on the right side of the aircraft. Captain Jenkinson preferred and usually carried two scanners if possible. However, logging hookups and monitoring the hydraulic panel had taken priority on this mission over carrying the second scanner. (Note: The author did not find any information pertaining to what was happening in the boom operator's position just prior to the collision. But at least one of the airmen was a student boom operator, and it is possible that a change of boomers was taking place.)

The proximity of the two aircraft was not noticed by any of the KC-97 crew members until a fraction of a second before contact, when Capt. Scaggs, in the tanker's left pilot's seat, looked across his cockpit into the cockpit of the B-47 on his right. He attempted evasive action but it was too late.

Captain Jenkinson now takes up the story: "At this time, I was in the right seat, and the student pilot was in the left flying the aircraft. We were on a north heading, well stabilized with refueling airspeed indicated. I had just glanced at the tanker flight instruments when I felt a severe impact. I looked out the right window and saw the B-47 up close under the right wing. His canopy appeared to be forward of the leading edge of the tanker's wing and out of sight under the right wing as I noticed severe damage to Number 4 prop accompanied by severe vibration. I informed the engineer to stand by to feather Number 4 (engine) as I retarded the throttle and depressed the button. The flight engineer closed

Boeing Builds . . . — continued

down Number 4 at the time I feathered. Vibration persisted after Number 4 was feathered. I assumed Number 3 had also been damaged and carried out normal feathering of that engine.

“The tanker shuddered and fell off on the right wing at approximately 190 MPH indicated. The student pilot was on the controls at the time, and we both righted the aircraft after dropping the nose slightly. The aircraft shuddered again, and the wing dropped. I notified the crew by interphone to prepare for bailout and then rang the alarm bell long and steady for bailout. The student pilot and I did additional stalls, and we agreed that the aircraft was uncontrollable. The pilot left his seat, and I intended to follow. The pilot proceeded to the rear of the aircraft while I remained in the right seat to attempt to hold a level platform for their bailout.”

In the aft section, Captain Skaggs found the hatches still in place. It appears that the one long ring of the alarm bell was the first alarm heard, but had caused some hesitation on the part of the crew members in the rear section of the plane. Captain Skaggs ordered the jumpmaster to jump first, and then expedited the bailout of the rest of the crew prior to bailing out himself. “About the time that he (Skaggs) left,” Captain Jenkinson continued, “I noticed that the aircraft could be controlled partially between 190 and 200 MPH. During this time the right wing had to be held up and a gradual turn was initiated to the left into the good engines.

“I headed toward Gila Bend, flying between a partial stall and buffeting, in a slow rate of descent with number 4 wind-milling slowly in reverse. During this time the right wing dropped several times, and I prepared to leave. But each time I regained control, and I decided to stay. I called Gila Bend tower and advised them of the aircraft’s condition and the fact that the crew had jumped. Gila Bend advised me that they would furnish a chase aircraft, and while the T-6 was climbing out I entered a slow turn to the left. After rolling out, I decided to experiment with various flap settings.

“As the flaps were extended in 5 degree increments, control became better. I finally had about 35 degrees of flaps and could now control the aircraft at 160 MPH indicated. The chase aircraft advised me of the tanker’s damage, and I asked him to stand by while I extended the gear. Once the gear was extended, control could still be maintained at 160 MPH indicated. He suggested Luke AFB for the emergency landing because of the runway length and facilities.

“I set the auto pilot and watched for several seconds to see whether it would hold the aircraft well enough for me to quickly change seats so that nose-wheel steering would be available on landing. I crossed over the aisle stand. A wide, descending approach for left-handed traffic was made, holding 160 MPH indicated and that allowed the aircraft to slow down considerably before using the brakes. Approximately 40 minutes had elapsed between collision and the end of the landing roll.”

Damage to the KC-97 included damage to the Numbers 3 and 4 propellers; an engine change of the Number 4 engine; a damaged outer wing panel on the right wing; and numerous small holes in the side of the fuselage, engine cowling, and wheel well doors.

All of the tanker crewmembers who jumped from the plane landed safely in the desert, and after an extensive search by some 35 aircraft, were spotted just as darkness descended. Because the crew had not fired any flares to indicate a serious injury, it was decided to wait until the following day to pick up the crewmembers. Food, water, and desert supplies were dropped to them as they prepared to spend the night on the ground. Early the next morning, helicopters transported the crewmen to Luke AFB where they were examined, and two men were treated for minor injuries. The crew was eventually returned to Smokey Hill AFB.

Captain Jenkinson was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for his extraordinary heroism in saving the KC-97.

While Captain Jenkinson was saving the tanker, the bomber was still flying, although it was heavily damaged. The collision had resulted in damage to the vertical stabilizer, the top of the fuselage, and the Number 6 engine. The top of the stabilizer was bent into a “J” shape to port with a sharp short hook. The top of the fuselage had a deep gash just aft of the trailing edge of the wing, and the Number 6 engine was hanging from the front engine mount only.

The January issue of “*Combat Crew*” magazine describes its recovery. “After the collision, the pilot (Lt. Col. Rineharclt) of the B-47 determined that his airplane was still airworthy. With Number 6 engine out, the Number 1 engine was shut off to provide symmetrical power. The elevator trim tab control and the rudder control systems were inoperative. Aileron and primary elevator control was normal except that the airplane had a tendency to nose up because of the elevator action of the bent fin and rudder.”

The Stratojet’s crew declared an emergency, and an uneventful landing was made at Davis-Monthan AFB.

Thanks to the highly skilled actions of Captain Jenkinson and the crew of the B-47, following the collision, both aircraft were recovered and lived to fly another day.

Flight crews from many years past have long since known that the Boeing Aircraft Company builds **RUGGED** airplanes. As many of the readers of his newsletter will attest, the B-17s, B-29s, B-50s, B-47s, KC-97s, KC-135s, and B-52s built by Boeing have brought them home when there were long odds that they would not return. I must hasten to add, that the B-24 Liberator was a mighty tough old bird also.

Editor’s Note: In addition to the magazine cited, this article was adapted from information on the 40th Bomb Wing’s website. Composed and submitted by Bill Seals.



A Boeing KC-97 . . . in mint condition.



CHARLESTON

98th Bomb Group Reunion

September 15-19, 2013 • *(check out on the 20th)*

If you wish to get a head start on your plans for our reunion, you may make your hotel reservations by contacting the Sheraton Airport Hotel (for reservations call: 1-888-747-1900). Our "98th" room rate is \$101.00 inc. Our rate is guaranteed until August 1, 2013.

The Pyramiders is the newsletter of the
98th Bomb Group/Wing Veterans Association.