



THE PYRAMIDIERS

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

November 2014

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Pieces of My Mind

Greetings to All,

There is an old rule that decrees you should never begin a written or spoken presentation with an apology; however, I owe a couple of mea culpa for items that appeared in the August issue of this newsletter.

Ed York quickly pointed out my error when I wrote that the 98th flew 37 bombing missions during the Korean War. He tells me that he personally flew 55 missions, many of them in "Snuggle Bunny," and that a replacement crew flew several

more in the same aircraft. The only semi-official source in my library, **Airpower, The Decisive Force in Korea**, fails to give a number of B-29 missions flown. This book, edited by Col. James T. Stewart, is largely based on the report of General O. P. Weyland, FEAF Commander, at the end of his tour, and was copyrighted in 1957. Therefore, it is highly probable that the data was still classified. Moreover, Herb Harper informs me that any data on the Korean War is highly suspect and should not be accepted at face value. So Ed, until someone finds a better number, I'm going to accept that the 98th flew at least 55 bombing missions during the Korean War. Thanks for pointing out my error.

The other mea culpa goes to our new associate member Ellen Wikstrom. She informed me that her father's last name was Baker, not Fraser. Ellen, we are sorry for the error, and thanks for the correction.

I am honored to have been elected to serve another year as president of our association, and am delighted that Dennis and Susie have been elected to serve with me. Lura agreed to continue as Susie's assistant and will keep track of our finances. Bonnie and Joan Hensel have



continued inside

Pieces of My Mind *continued from page 1*

graciously volunteered to handle the memorabilia for yet another year. Herb Harper continues to render superb service as our historian, and I assure you he is the most knowledgeable unit historian on the planet. Moreover, he is always willing to answer any and all questions he receives. I am indeed fortunate, as we all are, to have such a talented team to work with. My heartfelt thanks to all of them.

If I didn't see you at our reunion in Rapid City, you missed five days of fun. As I promised, those who were there had ample opportunity to spend as much time with our leadership and staff as they wished. This was possible in large part to the rather small number of attendees. We had some fifty people who were able to and chose to make the reunion. There were a number of members who rarely miss a reunion who were unable to attend. Notable among those absent were: Tony, Louise and Elisa DiPietro, and their friends Lou and Millie Moretto. The Donnelly "boys": Tim, Kevin and Michael. Guys, we also sorely miss your Dad. Also missing were the Siberski family; Stan, Regi, Laura, Linda, Doug and Cayley. We hope to see all of these folks, and many others who were missing, at our reunion next year.

A sad note for all of us was the absence of any former POWs. This was the first reunion I've attended, and I suspect the only reunion, without a former POW present. Joe Abbondonelo called to say he would be unable to attend due to personal issues. I understand that Herk Strietburger planned to attend with a couple of relatives, but had to cancel the trip on his doctor's advice. We would love to see all of our former POWs at our next reunion.

On a more pleasant note, the lovely widow of former POW Lou Staudenmeier was able to join us. Wynn, we all enjoyed seeing you again. Please join us every year.

During the past year we lost several of our cherished World War II Veterans, but were fortunate to have: Alex Tejada, Hubert Clemmons and Phil Tarpley with us at Rapid City. Their small number is a vivid reminder that we are rapidly losing the guys responsible for much of the legacy of the 98th. If you haven't taken advantage of the opportunity to get to know some of these heroes at our reunions, you are missing the experience of a lifetime.

For you fellow "number crunchers," according to the Department of Veterans Affairs, we are currently losing 555 WW II Veterans each day, and there are approximately one million of the 15.7 million who survived the war still with us. In 2008, there were about 1.5 million WW II survivors and the deaths per day was estimated to be 670. These statistics define the small number of WW II Veterans remaining and the increasing rate at which we are losing them. I've even seen estimates that we will lose the last one by 2020. All of us must remember that the mission of our association is to ensure these heroes are never forgotten.

It is difficult to believe that we are rapidly approaching the end of another year, but we are, and this will be the last newsletter for 2014. So let me wish you a Happy Thanksgiving, a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. May the New Year bring you good health and happiness.

With Warmest Regards to All,

Bill Seals

DECEASED

Last Name	First	M	Address	City	State	Zip	AC	SQD	DOD	
Cuddy	Deryle	C.	5816 Pratt Court	Alexandria	VA	22310	Member	B-24	415	03/07/2014
Ryan	Harold	G.		Pittsboro	NC		Member	B-29		08/23/2014
Shiver Jr.	John	J.	206 Medical Park Dr	Atmore	AL	36502	Member	B-24	344	08/10/2014
Mennell	Mrs. Robert (Alice)	C.	156 Plowden Rd	Putney	VT	5346	Honorary	B-24	345	04/19/2014

Message from the Secretary

I have to admit that 'The City of Presidents' is one place I had never, even in my wildest dreams, thought of visiting! (Finding out that our illustrious VP spent time there *and was allowed to come back* thoroughly amazes me!!) But I am sure glad I didn't miss this one. Rapid City was like going back to your old hometown in the fifties. It has that charming, clean, small town, USA "feel" to it. And the people everywhere couldn't have been friendlier. The surrounding area was breathtakingly beautiful! We spent a lot of 'bus time' on this tour, but in the end, it was more than worth it! I am always surprised how much there is to see and learn when on these trips.

It was a smaller group this year, but full of surprises and nice to be together again! We all were so excited to have our buddy, Ken Laninga back with us with his 'boys.' He was back to his old self, and it was fun to get caught up with him and see him looking so great! Ken and Randy Laninga were so much help when it came to dealing with wheel chairs, carts, helping people on and off the bus—we couldn't have done without them. Thanks much from all of us.

We also had two nice surprises: having our first Honorary members return in too long a time: Becky

Wysocki and Wynn Staudenmeier. Becky of the infamous "Cincinnati chicken dance," whose husband, George, will be remembered forever by all with his always stirring rendition of the *Missing Man* reading. Wynn's husband Louie, with a twinkle in his eye, was always fun to talk with and could often be found "palling around" his friend Herk Streitburger. Louie and Herk were former POWs from WWII. For the rest of us it was like having part of our family back together. We hope to see you ladies again next year!

To all our regulars who couldn't make it, we hope to see you next year! We missed you. And I would be remiss not to thank Bill and Dennis for all they did to make this another in a long line of fantastic reunions! Thanks to Joan and Bonnie for the great job they do with Memorabilia, and last but not least, thanks to Lura, who—unlike me—can add and subtract (a good thing to have in a treasurer!!).

Reminders: keep me posted on address or status changes, stay in touch with each other—call someone you haven't seen or heard from in awhile, invite others to join our organization, and send in your dues.

Susie

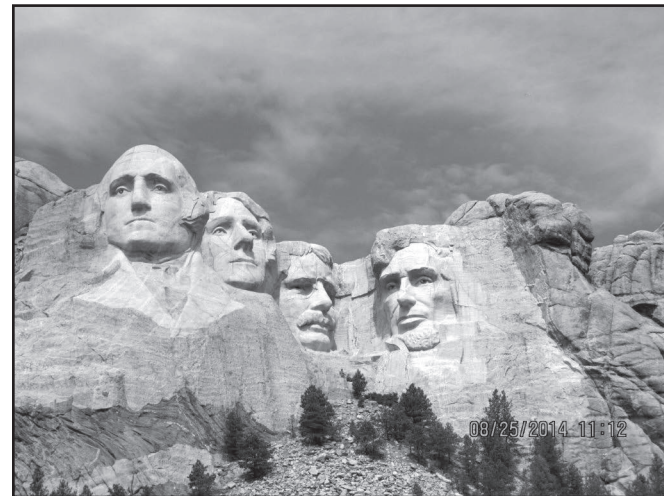
ADDRESS CHANGES

Last Name	First	M	Address	City	State	Zip	AC	SQD	
Clayton	Harold	E.	518 NW 6th St	Ontario	OR	97914	Member	B-24	343
Labranche	Joseph		612 George Washington Way Ofc	Lincoln	RI	02865	Member	B-24	344
Moore	Jack	W.	8450 Royal Palm Blvd, D641	Coral Springs	FL	33065	Member	B-24	345
Sternfels	Robert	W.	13964 E Geronimo Rd	Scottsdale	AZ	85259	Member	B-24	345
Watson	John	A.	3800 14th Ave SW, Apt B63	Lacey	WA	98503	Member	B-29	343
Braemer	Lucille	M.	3107 Diadem Dr	Lincoln	NE	68516	Honorary	B-47	344
Briggs	Mrs. Dorothy		2400 S Congress Ave	Boyton Beach	FL	33426	Honorary	B-24	415
Funicello	Mrs. Thelma		209 Nancy Dr	East Meadow	NY	11554	Honorary	B-47	A&E
Garcia	Mrs. Jane		10695 W 17th Ave, Apt 408	Lakewood	CO	80215	Honorary	B-47	A&E
Horney	Mrs. Lolita M.		3-3400 Kuhio Hwy, Apt C106	Lihue	HI	96766	Honorary	B-24	415
Just	Mrs. Carmella M.		8741 Pebble Creek Ln	Sarasota	FL	34238	Honorary	B-24	415
Morgan	Mrs. Helen M.		40 Tommy Marks Way	S Weymouth	MA	02190	Honorary	B-24	343
Opsata	Mr. Andrew W.		250 N Forest St	Bellingham	WA	98225	Honorary	B-24	389
Terry	Mrs. Fani		2590 Plantation Blvd, #204	N Charleston	SC	29406	Honorary	B-47	345
Turner	Mrs. Ann A.		6414 Old Lake Wilson Rd	Davenport	IA	33896	Honorary	B-24	415

Rapid City Wrap-up . . .

News from the 98th's August Reunion

Rapid City, SD, August 24-28, 2014. Mount Rushmore was certainly a highlight point of this trip—seeing the sculptures of the heads of four United States presidents by Danish-American Gutzon Borglum and his son, Lincoln Borglum. The presidents were selected on the basis of what each symbolized: George Washington (1732-1799) represents the struggle for independence, Thomas Jefferson (1743-1826) the idea of government by the people, Abraham Lincoln (1809-1865) for his ideas on equality and the permanent union of the states, and Theodore Roosevelt (1858-1919) for the 20th century role of the United States in world affairs. The entire memorial covers 1,278.45 acres and is 5,725 feet above sea level. Construction on the memorial began in 1927, and the presidents' faces were completed between 1934 and 1939. Since then Mount Rushmore has become an iconic symbol of presidential greatness that attracts over two million people annually.



The presidents.

Framing the entrance to Mount Rushmore is the beautiful *Avenue of Flags* where the flags of the 56 states and territories fly below the memorial. Here, the avenue provides direct and easy access to the Grandview Terrace and Presidential Trail, a half-mile walking trail that offers spectacular views of the mountain sculpture.

One of the most memorable moments of our days in Rapid City was our trip back to Mount Rushmore to see the evening lighting ceremony held in the new amphitheater, where the highlight of the evening is the slow exposure of light to the monument until it is fully illuminated during the singing of the national anthem. Also moving was the 100 or so military personnel from the crowd (including many from our group) who were invited onto the stage to give their name and branch of service. Then the flag is lowered. It was truly an incredible experience with hardly a dry eye in the crowd.

Interestingly, the next evening in the hotel we met a young man who had participated in that same ceremony who was just starting his Air Force career.

2nd Lt Steve Nardone (Wilmington, Delaware and a graduate of the University of Delaware with a degree in Criminal Justice) and his Dad were driving the next day to Minot AFB where he is currently stationed as a deputy missile combat crew commander in the 740th Missile Squadron. Two nicer people you could never meet! Steve had seen the 98th Banner in the hotel lobby and wanted to buy the 98th guys a drink to show his appreciation for their service. We gave him some old newsletters we had with us, one of our coins, and told him we would add him to our honorary membership, and to stay in touch. I recently heard from him and he said: he's honored to be part of our group and carries the 98th Bomber Wing challenge coin with him.

The Crazy Horse Memorial is a mountain monument complex that is under construction on privately held land in the Black Hills, in Custer County, South Dakota. It depicts Crazy Horse, an Oglala Lakota warrior, riding a horse and pointing into the distance. The memorial was commissioned by Henry Standing Bear, a Lakota elder, to be sculpted by Korczak Ziolkowski, who also worked on Mount Rushmore. Work began with the first blast on the mountain on June 3, 1948 with five survivors of the Battle of the Little Bighorn attending. When completed the Crazy Horse Mountain Carving

REUNION ATTENDEES

Last Name	First	City of Residence	State	Last Name	First	City of Residence	State
Bartlett	Les	Chandler	AZ	Newton	Millie	Yuba City	CA
Bartlett	Pat	Chandler	AZ	Kopp	Terry	Yuba City	CA
Carver	Norman	Victoria	TX	Posey	Dennis	Marietta	GA
Carver	Carol	Victoria	TX	Griggs	Peggy	Marietta	GA
Clemmons	Hubert	Lebanon	TN	Potter	Ron	Loveland	CO
Clemmons	Tom	Lebanon	TN	VanHofwegen	Carol	Loveland	CO
Gerfen	John	Port St Lucie	FL	Remley	Joe	White Bear Lake	MN
Conley	Patricia	Port St Lucie	FL	Robinson	Hondo	Holland	MI
Gladding	Herbert	Pocomoke City	MD	Robinson	Ellen	Holland	MI
Catlin	Joyce	Pocomoke City	MD	Schinsing	Bob	Newark	NY
Hagen	Ronald	Bellevue	NE	Schinsing	Gary	Oceano	CA
Hagen	Mary Ann	Bellevue	NE	Schinsing	Sue	Oceano	CA
Hayes	Lura	Marysville	OH	Schinsing	Lily	Point Richmond	CA
Hayes	Bill	Marysville	OH	Whalen	Jack	Point Richmond	CA
Henderson	Dick	Portland	OR	Schinsing	Simone	Ridgecrest	CA
Henderson	Elinora	Portland	OR	Seals	Bill	Katy	TX
Hensel	Joan	York	PA	Seals	Connie	Katy	TX
Hensel	Bonnie	York	PA	Williams	Stephanie	Houston	TX
Keeney	Roger	Sandy Valley	NV	Sells	Roy	Little Elm	TX
Keeney	Barbara	Sandy Valley	NV	Sells	Rosie	Little Elm	TX
Ladislaw	Bob	Enon	OH	Staudenmeier	Wynn	Ashland	PA
Ladislaw	Marian	Enon	OH	Tarpley	Phil	Rio	WI
Laniga	Ken	Zeeland	MI	West	William	Fairborn	OH
Laniga	Ken Jr	Mackinaw City	MI	West	Linda	Fairborn	OH
Laniga	Randy	Peoria	IL	Tejeda	Alex	San Diego	CA
Mioduszewski	Suzanne	Ann Arbor	MI	Tejeda	Barbara	San Diego	CA
Newton	Glen	Yuba City	CA	Wysocki	Becky	Clearwater	FL

will be 641 feet long by 563 feet high. Crazy Horse's completed head is 87 feet 6 inches high. The horse's head, currently the focus of work on the Mountain, is 219 feet or 22 stories high.

Today there is a beautiful Welcome Center and the Indian Museum of North America filled with all kinds of artifacts and art one could spend hours viewing. There is an outdoor theatre where Native American dancers perform daily. All this and the actual memorial are maintained and funded completely by donations to the Crazy Horse Memorial Foundation, a private non-profit organization. This same Foundation funds a \$1

Special Thanks to Bob Schinsing who donated two unique bird feeders (see photo) which earned more than \$400 for the 98th's Scholarship Fund at the Rapid City Reunion.



million scholarship program that goes mostly to Indian students attending South Dakota schools.

We next headed down the road for an enjoyable lunch at the Dakota Cowboy Inn in the town of Custer, where we were greeted by none other than the most incredible look alike for George Armstrong Custer, who posed for pictures with several of the ladies! Some of us dined on delicious buffalo, but no one had a dessert that could match Connie Seal's ice cream Sunday that looked like a 'mountain!' While we were waiting to round up our group and get back on the bus, the Simons and Hensel sisters, Wynn Staudenmeier and Gary Laninga had a few minutes to run down the street to the Naked Winery to buy a souvenir for Randy's Dad, Ken, to take back to Michigan with him!!



The Custer Look-Alike

Ellsworth AFB is home to the 28th Bomb Wing. An operations group, a maintenance directorate, a mission support group, and a medical group occupy the base. It spans approximately 25,000 acres. About 15,000 military and civilian personnel serve our country there. The base supports bombing missions across the world. It was established in 1941 as Rapid City Army Air Base (AAB), the base was later named after Brig Gen Richard E. Ellsworth, commander of the 28th Strategic Reconnaissance Wing, who lost his life in March 1953 when an RB-36 and its entire crew of 23 crashed in Newfoundland while returning from a routine exercise in Europe. President Dwight D. Eisenhower made a personal visit to dedicate the base in memory of Brig General Ellsworth.

During World War II Rapid City Army Air Base was a training location for B-17 Flying Fortress heavy bomber units, and later began training of replacement personnel for deployed heavy bombardment units in the overseas combat theaters. The field's instructors taught thousands of pilots, navigators, radio operators and gunners from nine heavy bombardment groups and numerous smaller units.

Rapid City AAB was reactivated on 11 October 1945 and was assigned to Continental Air Force. It was designated a permanent facility by the Army Air Force. The base briefly trained weather reconnaissance and combat squadrons using P-61 Black Widow, P-38 Lightning, P-51 Mustang and B-25 Mitchell aircraft. The airfield was again temporarily shut down from September 1946—March 1947 and underwent a major construction program to upgrade the temporary wartime facilities to that of a permanent base. When operations resumed in 1947 the base was a new United States Air Force asset and home to the new 28th Bombardment Wing (28 BMW) flying the B-29 Superfortress.

Since that time the installation changed names a few more times (Weaver AFB, Rapid City AFB) and the 28 BMW has been reassigned a few times (8th to 15th Air Force, 821st Strategic Aerospace Division, etc.). It has seen many aircraft changes as well: B-29s to the B-36 Peacemaker, to the B-52 Stratofortress, and—in the early sixties—Nike, Titan and Minuteman Missiles.

In the eighties, the base and the 28 BMW phased out the B-52 fleet and became the second home for the B-1B Lancer bombers. Later when the 12th Air Division moved to Ellsworth it became responsible for training B-1B, B-52, and KC-135 Stratotanker crews both at Ellsworth and other SAC bases in the region.

With the demise of the Cold War in the early nineties, there were many changes as the Air Force had to reshuffle its organizations and resources to meet the shifting, although diminishing, threat. It was also during this period that, in acknowledgment of the elimination of the Warsaw Pact, that the President ordered all strategic nuclear alert operations to stand-down. Less than a year under the new command, the 28th's mission changed from that of strategic bombardment to one of worldwide conventional munitions delivery.

In December 1991, the wing permanently pulled the first Minuteman II missile from its silo and in April 1992, the first Minuteman II launch control center

shut down. By April 1994 inactivation of the entire missile complex was completed. Under conditions of the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty, all of the 44th Missile Wing's Minuteman silos and launch control centers were slated for demolition with the exception of Sites Delta-01 and Delta-09. These latter two sites were subsequently turned over to the National Park Service for preservation as part of the Minuteman Missile National Historic Site.



Barbara and Alex learn about the duties performed by current personnel at Ellsworth AFB.

In 1999 the Air Force announced a reorganization plan that makes Ellsworth AFB and the 28 BW partners in the new Expeditionary Air Force (EAF) concept, now known as the Air & Space Expeditionary Force (AEF). The 28 BW was named a lead wing in the EAF, which enabled them to gain additional B-1Bs and military personnel. Currently, this expeditionary force construct enables the Air Force to respond quickly to any worldwide crisis while making life more predictable for military members.

We had lunch at the Officers Club and while there we were given equipment demonstrations, had a chance to see the inside of a missile silo, and the pinnacle for most being taken out on the runway where we all had the opportunity to climb on board a B-1 Bomber and talk with some of the crew. Just outside the gate we stopped at The South Dakota Air and Space Museum that showcases 25 military aircraft ranging from World War II bombers to the modern-day B-1, and

four different military missiles on display, including a Minuteman II Intercontinental Ballistic Missile.

Custer State Park was another interesting destination for our reunion attendees. The Park is one of the few truly wild places that remain in this country. One of the largest state parks in America, it includes a wildlife reserve that is located in South Dakota's Black Hills. Named after Lt. Colonel George Armstrong Custer, it is South Dakota's largest and first state park. It is home to a variety of wildlife (bison, elk, mule deer, white-tailed deer, mountain goats, big horn sheep, pronghorn, mountain lions, and feral burros).

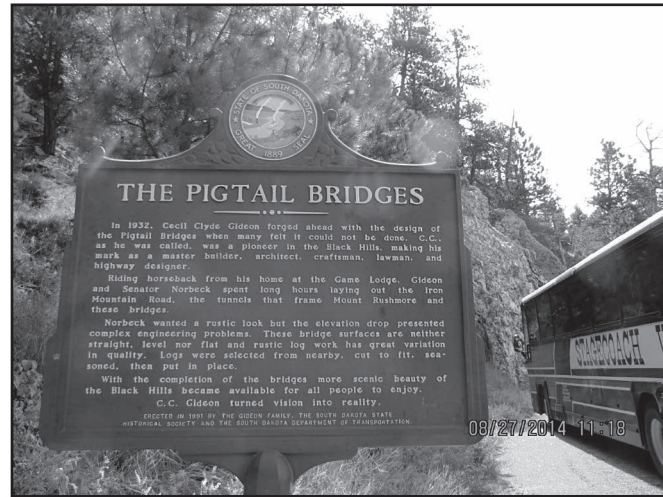
The park is famous for its scenic drives. It spans 71,000 acres. The area originally started out as sixteen sections, but was later changed into one block of land because of the challenges of the terrain. The park began to grow rapidly in the 1920s and gained new land. During the 1930s the Civilian Conservation Corps built miles of roads, laid out parks and campgrounds, and built three dams that set up a future of water recreation at the park. In 1964 an additional 22,900 acres were added.

Although we only saw one, nearly 1,300 buffalo roam the prairies and hills of Custer State Park and are often seen along the 18 mile Wildlife Loop road that winds around the southern edge of the park. The park has an annual buffalo roundup and auction in September, in which the bison in the park are rounded up, with several hundred sold at auction so that the remaining number of animals will be compatible with the rangeland forage. These annual roundups began in 1965, and now more than 10,000 people attend each year!

Slender granite formations called "Needles" dominate the skyline and these unique rock outcroppings can be seen while driving along the winding roads and through small granite tunnels along the 14-mile Needles Highway that crosses the park. Another scenic drive is the Iron Mountain Road that connects the park to Mount Rushmore. This route includes some of the most breathtaking scenery in the area as well as three more tunnels and three "pigtail" bridges.

So many interesting sites and the company of great people made for a most memorable reunion!

Rapid City Reunion 2014 in Pictures



Stopped to gawk at the corkscrew formed by the bridges and the road.



One of the log bridges winds its way into our view.



OK Ladies, where are Mickey Mouse's ears?



Ice Cream Break!



"Wild" Boros begging for a handout.



A lonesome old bull.



Alex shows Barbara his photos.



The B-47 gang, the Hagen's, the Bartlett's and the Keeney's.



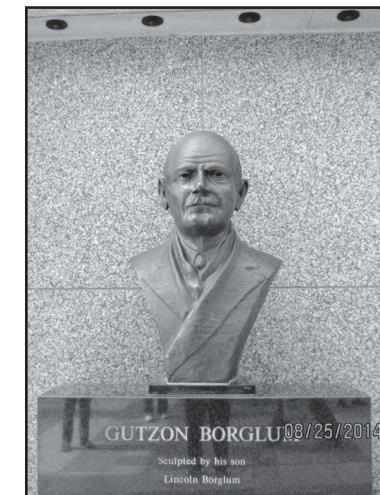
The entrance to the Mt. Rushmore Memorial.



Some 98th folks walking up the Avenue of Flags.



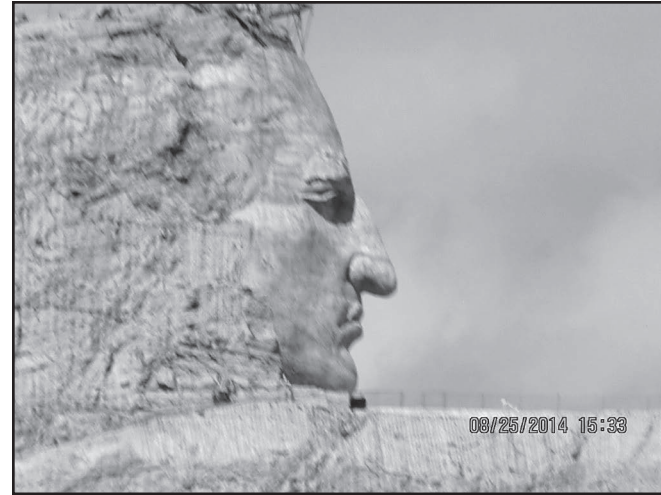
Ok Dennis, what have you done wrong now?



This bust of Gutzon Borglum, the designer of Mt. Rushmore, was created by his son, Lincoln, who completed the monument.



Model of the Chief Crazy Horse Monument.



The profile of Crazy Horse.



One of the memorial parks in Rapid City.



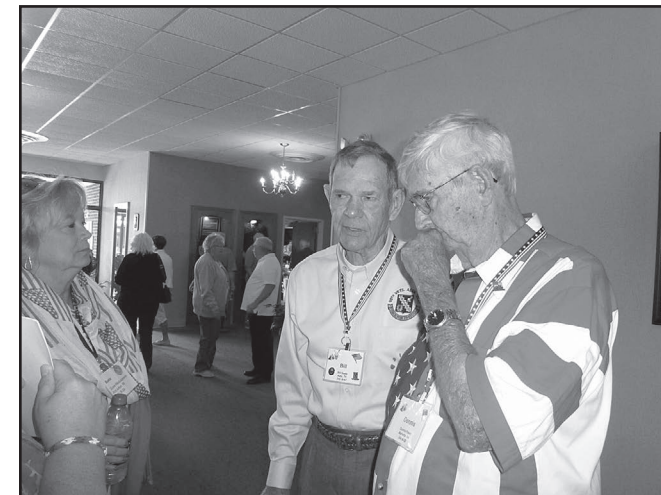
Lura taking a metal working lesson.



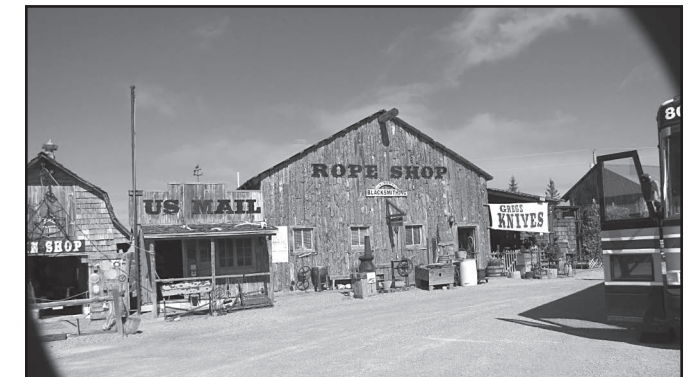
Those Mid-Westerners do have a way with names!



Sampling the wine!



A meeting of the "Big Three."



One of the sets from the movie, "Dances with Wolves."



Bill Seals flew this FB-111 in the 1970 SAC Aircraft Combat Competition. First Comp. for the FB.



Connie Seals and Stephanie Williams watch the show.



Dennis is plum-tuckered out!



One size fits all.



Just hanging out in the hospitality suite.



Ken with his cups—again.



Hondo and Ellen wait for lunch.



A sample of the local stone work.



Bob trying to weasel a free drink.



Ladies' luncheon.



All dressed up for the banquet.



The "head" table.



Free breakfast was a big hit.



A big "Bull Session."



The Missing Man table.



Happy 84th birthday "Little" John.



The long and short of it.

My Memories of Flying with the 98th Bomb Group

During the Korean War.

By John L. Baker

While reading Kenneth E. Ackerman's recollections of his service during World War II in *The Pyramidiers* (the August 2014 issue), memories of some of my experiences during the Korean War came to life in my mind and I was inspired to write some of them down. I don't have a diary like Kenneth did, so if my remembrances don't jive with yours, or with history, I apologize.

I joined the Army Air Force on November 4th, 1943 which was about three weeks after turning 18. I volunteered in order to select the branch of service I preferred. I only knew of two men in our community who did serve in the military during World War II. One man had polio and was crippled. The other man had psychological problems. Following training, I graduated from Aviation Cadet Navigator School at Selman Field, Monroe, Louisiana in March 1945, and received my navigator wings and gold bars.

I expected to be assigned to crew duties on a B-24 as I waited for assignment. The B-29 had just come out (figuratively), so I was surprised and happy to find I was going to the 29. They were new and hot, fast and pressurized. I thought only the elites got assigned to them.

I didn't go overseas during WWII. The first crew I was with did go, but I had suffered a fractured right wrist during a practice drill and was replaced on that crew. That crew made seven or eight missions over Japan before the war ended, and made many reconnaissance flights over Korea and Manchuria before coming home. I think those flights enabled us to have reliable maps of Korea during the later war. Thank you fellows.

The B-29 was quite a change from the B-24. I hesitate to say "step up," but it was more comfortable to fly in. The three pressurized compartments; front, mid, and tail meant we didn't have to wear sheepskin or heated clothing, nor oxygen masks—except over the target.

All our combat missions were eight to ten hours in duration flying out of Yokota AFB located in the NW suburbs of Tokyo, Japan. It was a longer mission out of Okinawa where the other two B-29 groups were based. (*Editor: The other two groups were the 19th and the 307th*). The 98th had three squadrons, the 343rd, 344th, and 345th. All of our missions "counted double" just as the more dangerous B-24 missions had during WWII.

If I remember correctly, our bomb loads were typically thirty-eight 500-pound bombs. (*Editor: Per other sources, the normal load was forty 500 pounders which were filled with 250 lbs. of RDX composition D explosive which is more powerful than TNT.*) Quite some difference from the ten 500-pounders the B-24 carried on long missions.

All of our bombing missions were flown at night. A B-29 would have been a sitting duck against a MIG in daylight. As it was, only one B-29 from the 98th was lost to a MIG during our tour. The bomber was caught in a searchlight. I can still recall the excitement and anguish in Ed Loskot's voice over the intercom describing the sequence of events. (Ed was in the top aft bubble.) The navigator of that plane, Bob Bird, his wife and two small daughters lived in a trailer across from ours in San Antonio while we were at Randolph Field, did not survive. He was a retread also, having



B-29s from the 98th Bomb Group bombing a target in N. Korea.

flown "The Hump" in WWII. I understand only three crewmen survived the loss of their plane.

The B-29 carried an ECM (Electronic Counter Measures) operator. These men flew three times as often as the other crewmen. I think men with their skill were in short supply. Their electronic equipment could be turned on to confuse the enemy radars, and the proximity fuses on the anti-aircraft shells so they would explode at lower altitudes. I can remember Don Dressler's (the bombardier in the nose) voice of alarm as he observed the rising altitude of the bursting AAA shells when the ECM Operator had to replace a fuse in one of the systems. His panic would change to one of relief as the system resumed operation. It was said that an ECM Operator's most critical skill was how fast he could find and replace a blown fuse. They always carried a bag of spares. Our plane, 61872, didn't have a skin puncture from AAA fire in the six months of

our tour from June 1952 to January 1953. Thank you ECM!

We flew three types of missions: strategic bombing of specific targets, front line support of ground troops, and propaganda leaflet drops. The ground support drops were controlled by ground observers and ground radar who directed us by radio to a specific location and heading and then gave us the command to drop a specified number of bombs. Usually, three to five. We would then circle back around and repeat the maneuver until our bomb load was gone.

Shortly after arriving at Yokota while we were still in temporary quarters, and before our crew flew a mission, there was an apparent max effort underway when a B-29 crashed on takeoff. Straight down the line of the runway. It shook us "newbies" up quite a bit. It was the only crash while we were there.

The propaganda drops were entirely different. The "bombs" were hinged clamshell type containers with tail fins. They were filled with printed materials on toilet paper sized leaflets, but the paper was too slick to be of practical usage. These missions had as many as 17 plus or minus drop points all over North Korea. Don Snyder our Aircraft Commander (A/C) asked me if I minded these missions because of so many targets and heading changes. I didn't. I didn't think the Commies had so many defense assets that they would chase a solo B-29 while the rest of the group was hitting a single target. In later years, I've wondered if all those containers only had propaganda leaflets, or did they contain other items too? We sure scattered a lot of paper all over North Korea from 20,000 feet.



ACE in the HOLE, of the 343rd BS / 98th BG

Twenty five missions (fifty “counters”) were required to complete our tour. On three occasions we had to divert to an alternate airfield because of low fuel or engine oil. On one mission we were forced to land at Kunsan, a base for F-84 fighter/bomber jets, on the west coast of South Korea. A regular preflight for a B-29 takes four hours. While we were preparing our plane for return to Yokota, an F-84 across the parking ramp taxied out and returned four times. Someone inquired of a local maintenance man if “they were practicing touch and goes.” The man replied that they had completed four missions! But, they needed 100 missions to complete a tour.

In navigation school they always emphasized that the navigator’s job is not complete until the wheels touch the runway. I endorse that edict whole-heartedly. We were returning to Yokota with one engine feathered in weather. We asked for a GCA (ground controlled approach) with a mayday priority heading. They gave us one—but it wasn’t correct (may have been they were looking at another plane). If we had followed their heading, we would have let down on a mountain top. Thank goodness for that APN-13 radar. With good maps it’s almost like pilotage at low altitude in daylight. We landed successfully (to the approach end of the runway) after a course correction.

As a lead crew, whatever that’s worth, we often had senior officers aboard. The lead navigator announces the time of arrival at the initial point (IP) for the bomb

run based upon the coast in time of the other planes in the bomber stream and then radio silence is maintained till “bombs away.” The object was to close up to a point with about one minute spacing although we took off with wider spacing. The Radar Navigator passenger suggested a dog leg course to let the following planes catch up. I declined the course change and the Commanding Officer who was a passenger suggested to the A/C, Don Snyder, to follow my course. At bombs away Ed Loskot, who was looking through the aft bomb bay window to observe our bomb impacts, saw some impacts that were ahead of the usual reference points. It turned out that one plane had dropped ahead of us. We were the lower altitude plane. The entire bomb group dropped in about three minutes. Near catastrophe? Maybe, but I doubt that a dog leg route would have offered any safer outcome.

Our plane #61872 had some nose art when we were assigned the aircraft. At our crews request a local Japanese artist everyone called “Rembrant” changed the nose art. Two versions of the art are shown on page 75 of the book *Superfortress, the Boeing B-29*, by Steve Birdsall. The book is a Squadron/Signal publication. ISBN 0-89747-104-0. I found the book at the Air Force Museum during a crew reunion, and all of us bought a copy. We signed each other’s copies as a memento of our crew. Years later, B/G Paul Tibbets and some WWII groups were at an air show at Lunken Field in Cincinnati, OH, and the general signed my

book over the photo of the “Enola Gay.” The book is an important keepsake to me.

The following paragraph was taken from the book *B-29 Superfortress Units of the Korean War*, by Robert F. Dorr. This entry was made to identify a profile of the aircraft created by artist Mark Styling shown on page 40 of the book. According to Dorr, the profiles were produced following exhaustive research of group records, studies of original photos, and correspondence with Veterans and their families. The profile of 44-61872 shown in the book has the name “ACE in the HOLE” and has a black underside (as shown at the top of the opposite page). Apparently, it was done after the crash landing and the recovery of the aircraft. Dorr notes that changes in the aircraft’s name and other factors created some “confusion relating to the identity” of the aircraft. *(Editor: In my research of the history of the 98th, I have found that details are often confused. Therefore, reader beware of possible differences that may arise while reading the paragraph below.)*

B-29A-BN 44-61872, ACE in the HOLE of the 343rd BS/98th BG, Yokota, Japan, 1952.

B-29, 44-61872 was originally named ACE in the HOLE, but following the application of black paint to the undersides it wore two versions of the name, Sac’s Appeal. The bomber was damaged by flak on 22 April 1952 and crash-landed at Kimpo, in South Korea, without sustaining casualties. Like many 98th BG aircraft, ACE in the HOLE was previously assigned to the 92nd BG. Indeed, its nose art was applied by the same artist that had painted the group’s B-29 44-69805 “DEAL ME IN.” In fact, he used the same five playing cards for both bombers, with the ace reversed in an attempt at subtlety. The words “Deal Me In” also appeared in small letters below the artwork, which has caused confusion relating to the identity of this B-29.

The navigator’s position in the 29 is adjacent to the forward gun turrets. There are four 50 cal. machine guns in the upper turret and two more in the lower. All are remotely operated. Luckily, we didn’t have to fire them at any enemy aircraft: however, there were thousands of cases of 50 cal. ammunition remaining from WWII which we were directed to use to test fire the guns. On the return flight from Korea the navigator would announce over the Sea of Japan that the gunners were cleared to fire the weapons in a northerly direction. On a couple of flights the gunners emptied their guns, and even though I knew the guns were going to fire, I couldn’t help but jump when they did.

For crew safety, we had to make sure all of our bombs were gone before landing, and on one flight we had a 500 lb. bomb hang up. Don Dressler the bombardier asked our radio operator to go out onto the walkway in the bomb bay and trip the shackle holding the bomb. As it happened, I needed a time hack from Joe Kuchinsky, the radio man, which meant that Don would have to release the bomb. So Don had to squeeze by the gun turret and crawl into the bomb bay himself. When he was able to release the bomb over the sea, we all breathed a sigh of relief.

Our crew was given an R&R (rest and recuperation) break in December. I spent some time in Tokyo Christmas shopping, and then went to a military hotel on Lake Chuzengi which was a very scenic location. Upon returning to the base on a Saturday evening I was told that there was a telegram for me at the telegraph office. Unfortunately, the office wouldn’t open until Monday morning, and I knew what the telegram had to be about. My dear wife, Doris, had delivered our second child, a son, on December 5, 1952, in Cincinnati.

Yokota had some pluses like a good mess hall with tasty food, but towards the first of December, I began

to feel the stress. It seemed even the mashed potatoes were getting hard to swallow. Eventually, we finished our tour and flew back to Travis AFB on the same DC-4 that had taken us to Japan the past June. Upon arrival, I declined to remain in the Air Force Reserves and separated from the service. I took a train (3 days) to Cincinnati. Home at last!

Editor's comments: First, I want to thank John for sharing his memories. As many of you know I have encouraged our Veterans to share their experiences with us through the newsletter without a lot of success. John, like many of us, would be in trouble if we had to make our living as an author, but that didn't stop him from sharing his memories. He sat down, thought

a while and began to type, and when he was finished he mailed me a copy. I don't have any right to call myself a writer, but in the process of earning three degrees, and an Air Force job where I read 100s of research reports, I think I've learned how to express a rational thought—usually. In this article I've rewritten much of what John wrote, hopefully without changing the meaning of his thoughts. If I have, the fault is mine. The point of this diatribe is simply this, Veterans send me your stories in whatever form you can. The only requirement is that I'm able to understand your thoughts and comments. I promise you will get to review any article I produce for the newsletter before it is printed.

98th Bomb Group/Wing Veterans Association Balance Sheet as of: June 30, 2014

Assets:		
Checking	\$35,310.81	
Total Assets:		\$35,310.81
Liabilities:		
Scholarship Fund	\$10,672.55	
Memorial Fund	\$1,077.52	
Total Liabilities:		\$8,943.55
Retained Surplus Funds:		\$23,566.74
Total Liabilities and Retained Funds:		\$35,310.81

Financial Records for Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2014

see Balance Sheet above and Income Statement on facing page



Most Americans wonder if their lives made a difference. Veterans don't have that problem.

98th Bomb Group/Wing Veterans Association Income Statement for Year Ending: June 30, 2014

Income:		
Membership Dues	\$1,785.00	
Scholarship Fund	\$3,561.50	
Memorial Fund	\$593.00	
Memorabilia Sales	\$1,132.95	
Reunion Fees 2013	\$8,763.50	
Reunion Fees 2014	\$5,784.00	
Change for 2013 Reunion	\$600.00	
Total Income:		\$22,219.95
Expenses:		
Reunion Expenses 2013	\$11,882.03	
Reunion Expenses 2014	\$943.13	
Postage	\$1,109.74	
Office Expenses	\$77.99	
Scholarship	\$1,000.00	
Memorials	\$291.98	
Memorabilia	\$1,691.20	
Change for 2013 Reunion	\$600.00	
Total Expenses:		\$17,596.07
Surplus/Deficit for the Year:		\$4,623.88

Join Us in Dayton in 2015



An aerial view of the National Museum of the United States Air Force, located at Wright Patterson Air Force Base, Dayton, OH

Message from the VP/Reunion Coordinator

It seems every year I hear people say, “This was the best reunion ever.” Well, I think that if you are like Peggy and me, every reunion may be the best because we just love being with some of the very best folks in the world.

The places we go and the things we do are certainly fun, but it has always been the people who attend that make our reunions great! It is all of you who have made these reunions so enjoyable and worthwhile.

2015 may well be our last **98th Reunion**, like so many other things in life, time takes its toll. It seems that is

the case now. So, please make every effort to attend and enjoy those friendships that have long made our reunions wonderful. *See you in Dayton!!!*

Dennis

Dayton OH — August 24th - 28th, 2014
Dayton Crowne Plaza Hotel

We will be dedicating a memorial plaque and bench at the National Museum of the United States Air Force in honor of the 98th. More details and the event schedule will be part of forthcoming newsletters!