



SUNSETTER'S GAZETTE

Newsletter of the
Seventh Fighter Command Association
USAAF-World War II



NEWSLETTER

Summer 2004

VOLUME XXIII NUMBER 2

7th Fighter Command Reunion

October 14-17, 2004 Dayton, OH



Seventh Fighter Command Veterans to share reunion and Memories with 330th Veterans. With three top drawer speakers on the program, two events for the ladies, the reunion of the 330th Bomb Group (VH) Association is ready for Dayton, Ohio. Per this editor's request, the 330th has graciously invited us to join them in their final reunion. 330th's President Bob Flischel is hoping for a turnout to rival that first reunion when more than 400 came to Dayton. This issue of the Newsletter contains the registration form and the complete program for reunion, from Early Arrivals Day, October 13th, to the full three-day reunion program for October 14th to 17th. Flischel points out that early registration guarantees rooms and table space for all meals, in the hotel ballroom or on the road. The ladies programs include a visit to Lebanon and the oldest hotel in Ohio, and the joint luncheon on Saturday at the Holiday Inn Dayton Mall. There may also be another ladies-only program added before registration closes.

Old friends we never met; Former B-29 crew and support members of the 330th BG, 20th AF, have allowed us to join them in their reunion in Dayton. Thus, we will meet some of the 330th crews who escorted the 7th to Japan and were also the recipients of our escort over Japan. It was a pleasure to have their company then, and it will be a pleasure to have their company in October to share memories. Some our Mustang pilots were probably with the 330th on the June 1st Osaka raid when 27 of our comrades were lost in an unparalleled WWII air disaster. Suddenly enveloped in a storm, P-51's collided with each other or, totally disoriented, lost contact with the escort B29s they were depending on to guide them to Japan. Lost, they plunged into the Pacific. It might be recalled that it was a 330th K37 B-29 who's crew bailed out over Iwo Jima and was subsequently shot down by a P-61 in view of the whole island.

MEMORIES

- Star of the Pacific -

2nd Part of the story of Todd Moore and his time with the 7th Fighter Command

Written by Tom Ivie and published with his permission

When the 45th Fighter Squadron arrived in Hawaii they were re-equipped with new P-47Ds, and began preparing for the upcoming Palau Islands campaign. However the combat assignment was given to the 318th FG instead of the 15th FG, and the frustrated 15th resumed flying training missions around the Hawaiian Islands. Shortly after his return to Hawaii, Todd Moore was reassigned to the 78th Fighter Squadron and promoted to the rank of Captain.

For the next several months the 15th FG languished in a training role, and morale dropped to a new low. According to Todd Moore the only saving grace for the unit was the opportunities that Hawaii offered. Referring to the low morale he countered, "on the other hand flying from a fighter strip near Honolulu was not the worst duty in the world. There were a few unattached females, plenty of booze, and Waikiki Beach for the more athletically inclined."

Finally, in November 1944, news of a new combat assignment sent morale soaring upward. Along with the alert the 15th FG received a new aircraft, the P-51D Mustang, and a hurried schedule of transition training began in earnest. The training came to an end in early 1945, and in February the Group found itself heading for a new base on the island of Iwo Jima.

The Marines were still engaged in heavy fighting when the Mustangs of the 15th FG landed on Iwo Jima's airfield No. 1. The date was 6 March 1945, and the ground fighting would go on for another three weeks before the island was considered secure.

The Group began operations immediately and, on 7 March, flew its first combat air patrol over the island. The next day they were called on by the Marines to provide close air support for them. For the first month on Iwo the Group continued the CAP over Iwo as well as the ground support role. In addition to the missions on Iwo they were also flying interdiction missions against the Japanese airfield and other installations on nearby Chichi Jima.

As the calendar was turned to April it was time to begin the mission which had brought them to Iwo Jima — attack the Japanese home islands. Heavy rains washed away any thought of missions during the first few days of April, but by 5 April the sun was shining again. With this break in the weather, preparations for the first VLR mission were begun.

The mission for 7 April 1945 was to escort B-29s of the 73rd Bomb Wing to Tokyo. Their target was the Nakajima aircraft plant.

The pilots of the 15th Fighter Group that were selected for this mission were veterans of 800-1,000 hours of flying time. Veterans of the Marshalls campaign like Todd Moore filled the positions of squadron and flight leaders.

The signal for takeoff was given at 0655 hours and in pairs the Mustangs of Iwo Jima headed out on this historic mission. Things looked promising right from the start. The weather was pretty good as they left Iwo and continued to improve as they neared the coastline of Japan. The rendezvous with the Superforts was made right on time over Kozu Shima at 18,000 feet, and the combined strike force headed for the target. As they made landfall the Japanese flak gunners welcomed them with a heavy barrage over Yokasuka and Yokahama. Then a huge force of Japanese fighters appeared on the horizon. They were waiting at the usual bomber altitude of 30,000 feet, and dove to attack the B-29s. The 47th FS of the 15th FG was the first of the escort fighters to swing into action, but the 78th FS soon had its turn.

Todd Moore was leading the forward flight of the 78th and for a moment he thought he had already passed the action. Most of the fight was taking place behind him, but as he approached Choshi Point another gaggle of enemy fighters was spotted. His flight was at 22,000 feet and from this vantage point Captain Moore looked down and saw several Japanese fighters heading for the bombers.

One of the B-29s was burning and a flight of four Hamps quickly closed in and finished off the disabled bomber. Too late to save the Super-fort, Captain Moore led his flight after the escaping enemy fighters. The faster Mustangs quickly closed in on the Hamps, and Captain Moore had them in his sights. He described the ensuing battle as follows: "The bomber exploded but I turned my flight into the Hamps anyway and joined their formation as number five man. I closed on number four, gave him a short burst from 600 feet and he exploded behind the cockpit. Then I gave my plane full throttle and closed on the number three man. I caught him at the bottom of their lazy eight, and gave him about a three-second burst that hit his engine and cowling. Then I looked up for the number two man and saw the leader of the formation turning into me. I told the flight to give it full throttle and dive away."

As the flight pulled away Moore's wingman reported that Captain Moore's second victim was falling toward earth completely out of control. The entire battle had lasted only about forty-five seconds and Todd Moore had scored two confirmed victories.

Shortly afterwards it was time to head back to Iwo Jima. The flights of the 78th arrived at the rally point and formed up immediately (this was amazing in itself since the flights had made no attempt to keep flight to flight contact, during the combat). The trip back to Iwo Jima was without incident, and by 1430 hours all of the 15th Fighter Group had landed safely. The mission had lasted 7 & 1/2 hours and had been an outstanding victory. The bombers had hit their targets, and their escorts had downed twenty-one Japanese fighters. Of equal importance, all of our fighters made it home safely. Seventeen of the day's victories were claimed by the 15th FG, seven of which

were downed by pilots of the 78th Fighter Squadron.

VLR mission number five was scheduled for 22 April and the 15th Fighter Group was to strike at Japanese airfields. The primary target was to be the Suzuka Naval Air Base and the secondary target was the airfield at Akenogahara. When the 15th FG arrived over Japan they encountered very hazy weather, and had difficulty locating the primary target. Pilots of the 45th and 47th FS's struck at various targets of opportunity on the ground and engaged a few enemy fighters in the air. Meanwhile Captain Moore directed the 78th FS to the secondary target, and began a strafing run across the field. As he was beginning his pass over the field Captain Moore saw an Oscar taking off. He immediately turned and went after the Ki-43 and with a well placed burst sent it crashing to earth. Victory number four. The Group as a whole claimed six aerial victories plus another eleven on the ground. Unfortunately the day's victory was paled somewhat by the loss of two planes and their pilots.

During the next four weeks six more VLR missions were flown, four of which had to be aborted due to the weather. However, on 25 May when the 15th FG was again scheduled for a fighter sweep against Japanese airfields the weather was a little more cooperative. On this date the 15th was to attack the airfield at Matsudo, and the strike was to be made by the squadrons attacking in line abreast formations. The 45th FS struck first, then came the 47th FS, and then Todd Moore led the 78th FS across the field. As they completed their strafing run Captain "Moore spotted a large formation of enemy fighters heading toward them. He tore right into the Japanese formation and damaged one Zeke before locking onto a five-plane formation. With a quick burst from Stinger's fifties Captain Moore blasted the "tail-end Charlie" from the formation. He then turned and headed for an eight-plane formation and sent its rear-most plane down in flames. With these two victories Captain Moore had run his total to six, and became the Group's second ace. On this mission the Group's totals were nine aerial victories and ten ground victories. Three pilots were lost to enemy gunfire.

These were to be Todd Moore's last two victories as a member of the 78th Fighter Squadron. Shortly after the 25 May mission he was transferred to the 45th Fighter Squadron, and on 29 May 1945, Captain Moore flew the mission which turned out to be his most successful. The mission was a bomber escort to Yokahama, and he would lead the twenty Mustangs of the 45th Fighter Squadron.

Part 3 of 3 to be continued in the next Newsletter....

Shot Down

The following account is one in a number of stories of that I will be bringing you about pilots who were shot or forced down. Their fates were either to be captured or rescued.

FOURTH OF JULY, 1945 "A Fish Eyes View of Kasamigura Air Field, Honshu, Japan" By 1st Lt. Gordon H. Scott, United States Army Air Corps

It was the third of July, 1945, and as the third assistant operations officer of the 78th Fighter Squadron, I was in

the operations tent when we received the next day's FRAG from the 7th Fighter Command. The "FRAG" was an attack order which described the target, number of aircraft, route, ordnance, submarine rescue locations, frequencies, etc. in our orders to strike the Japanese fighter aircraft assembly plant located at Kasamigura Lake, about 50 miles northeast of Tokyo. This mission looked like a great chance to do some real damage to the Japanese war machine; and it was my turn to go get 'em! The ordnance for our 16 P-51Ds called for each plane to carry a load of six 5-inch high-velocity aerial rockets and two 165-gallon wing tanks. The 45th and 47th Fighter Squadrons were to provide us with high cover from attack by Japanese fighters during the attack. The 45th and 47th would have 16 planes per squadron, and each plane would have two 110-gallon drop-tanks. Captain Joe Fitzsimmons was the lead pilot, and I was flying his element in Code-X Red Flight. I posted the FRAG in the squadron area, and all of the assigned pilots from the three 15th Fighter Group Squadrons gathered together for an initial planning session before our "weenies and beenies" supper. As I was finishing my chow, I received a tap on the shoulder and was asked to report to the 7th Fighter Command briefing tent along with a few other selected mission pilots from the other two squadrons. At the briefing, we were introduced to a stranger in non-descript fatigues who identified himself as Mister Smith from the U.S. Army Military Intelligence Services Branch (MIS-X).

Mr. Smith taught us how to send and receive coded messages about our location and situation in the event that we were shot down and captured. After a three-hour session, we pilots went back to our squadron areas, appreciative that there were plans already in place in the possibility that we were shot down. We also wondered why we few pilots were picked out of the 50 pilots that were scheduled to fly the next day. Later we realized that most of the chosen ones were 1st and 2nd lieutenants—no captains or majors. Could it be that we were the ones most likely to need this information? And, were we perhaps expendable?



Gordon was flying "Sparkin Eye's" that July 4th

The next morning dawned and it was the Fourth of July, 1945. We went to the usual morning briefing; then pre-flight, start-up, taxiing, and take-off before joining up with the other squadrons; and all went well. As we passed over Kita Rock, some miles north of Iwo Jima, my number 4 man, Code-X Red Four, called in with a rough engine and reported he couldn't hold his position. He was told to return to Iwo Jima, and Code-X Spare was told to move in. My old buddy, 1st Lt. Tom McCullough, from our Class 44C flight

training days, moved into position on my wing. We fifty P-51Ds climbed up to and met our B-29 navigator plane who would guide us to the target. The single B-29 with its navigator flew a lot slower than we normally would, but we remained with him until we reached our turn point at Chosi Point over Honshu, Japan. He waited there along with our two spares to protect him while the other 48 of us headed for the target. We were to return to the navigator after the raid, and he would guide us back home. The B-29 navigator reported that the weather over Kasamigura Lake was scattered to broken clouds as we flew west toward the airfield. Once over Japan, the 45th and 47th Fighter Squadrons broke off and climbed up to their assigned escort-covering positions. When Joe, our leader, spotted our target airfield below the broken clouds, and the large, long aircraft assembly building, he fish-tailed us out to drop our 165-gallon drop-tanks. While in the descent, the shackle on my right tank hung up. With some fuel still in the nose of the tank, it rotated down and around and punched a hole in my right flap before rotating back up and damaging my right horizontal stabilizer. Looking back to my right in my rear-view mirror, I saw the tank finally break loose. I could also see that the stabilizer was badly dented. This wasn't good, but the aircraft was still performing adequately in the 20-degree dive; so I continued the attack. Joe put the squadron in a line-abreast formation as we dove toward the long assembly-line hangar with our gun-sight pippers on the building. Joe called for us to fire when within range. The sight was spectacular as almost simultaneously ninety-six 5" high-velocity aerial rockets roared through the sky and slammed into the side of the metal building and exploded inside as we passed over the hangar. On the airfield just beyond the hanger, I caught sight of a brand new radial-engine Japanese fighter in a bunker. Quickly switching to guns, I put my piper on the aircraft and fired a good burst into the fighter. It exploded. At the same time, some of my incendiary rounds were striking the building in back of the bunker. As I passed over the burning fighter on the pull-out, a tremendous explosion occurred in the building, and I was blown up into the low overcast clouds. To control the instant vertical pitch-up, I shoved the stick full forward and rolled the elevator trim full forward. The plane was starting to nose over in -2 Gs, but was still climbing. By reducing the full throttle, I started in a descent in the clouds and finally broke out at just below 1,000 feet and pointing directly at the Japanese naval seaplane

hangar on the lake. I put a short 50-caliber burst into the hangar, and then spied two amphibian observation bi-planes leaving the launch ramp. Dropping in behind the closest bi-plane, I exchanged shots with the tail gunner, and apparently I got the most hits as the Japanese plane splashed back into the water from about 50 feet up and exploded. The furthest bi-plane was at about 200 feet altitude when I put my piper on the tail-gunner who was firing at me, and I emptied the rest of my 50-calibers into his aircraft. He exploded right in front of me, and I pulled hard right and up as pieces of his plane flew by me. I was exerting full forward elevator trim and forward pressure on the stick to keep from pitching up. I had been pretty busy for the previous little while, and about that time the engine started running rough. White smoke was coming out of all twelve stacks and the coolant temperature gauge pegged full hot! Reducing power did not help, and within a few

seconds, the propeller froze into the "big X" position. I was in deep trouble! Looking at my altimeter, I was passing through 500 feet, but looking out the sides of my oil-covered windshield, I was just about to hit Lake Kasamigura in another 100 feet. I had a sudden realization that I was over Japan and not back home; and I didn't get an altimeter setting from the local Japanese airport after that 800-mile trip from Iwo Jima to Japan. It also flashed back to me that we had been taught that a P-51 was almost impossible to ditch safely; but with the prop frozen and the air-speed deteriorating rapidly, I realized I was going in the water without any alternate option. So, I bit the bullet, ducked my head, pulled the canopy jettison handle, and the canopy flew off, barely grazing my noggin.

By that time I was at 90 miles an hour and skimming the ripples and little waves at about ten feet off the water. I lowered full flaps, and just at stall, released my forward pressure on the stick and put both of my hands on the K-14 gun sight a few inches in front of my face. Thinking back, it seems weird that in that predicament—90 miles an hour, about to hit the water which would be like hitting a brick wall, in a country not known for kindness to prisoners, and thousands of miles from home—I took time to protect this pretty face! The Mustang by now was in a nose-high attitude as it skimmed over the water on the flaps. As it slowed down, and just before stopping, the aircooler scoop on the belly gulped in the water, and with the heavy engine up front, the nose of the aircraft pitched down toward the bottom of the lake. An instant before going under, I took a deep breath and unbuckled my seat and shoulder harness. Pushing out of the seat with my back-pack-parachute and seat raft was very very difficult. I finally broke free and started scrambling back up to the surface of the lake. Oh how I needed that gulp of air by now, but I was glad to be rid of the plane, which continued to head for the bottom of the lake. Then the weight of the parachute and raft pulled me under again; so I quickly unbuckled my chest and leg straps, and thank heavens the Mae West partially inflated when I yanked on the right lanyard. I then swam to the surface just before—I'm certain—my lungs collapsed. My life raft lanyard was hooked to my Mae West on the right clip and was starting to pull me under again. I then activated the left side of the Mae West to keep from sinking below the surface again. I was treading water with my legs like crazy; but a few seconds later, as I frantically treaded water, the life raft—and by now completely saturated parachute still clipped to the raft—began to pull me under again.

I realized that if I wanted to inflate the raft and get into it, I had to release the two buckles from my soggy parachute, which was still attached to the raft. So, I took a really deep breath, ducked under the surface again, and started pulling on the parachute lanyard hand over hand while thrashing my legs; but I was still sinking. The lanyard or rope attached to the parachute is supposed to be 15-feet long, and by now I had surely pulled more than 15 feet, and still no parachute. I needed air real bad, and had to let go and zoom to the surface with my lungs again about to collapse. I ducked under the water one more time and had the same negative results as I pulled and pulled on the parachute-raft lanyard; but I never reached the parachute or the raft. When I popped to the surface that time, I was completely spent, and with some water in my lungs. I was totally exhausted and was again being slowly pulled under the

surface of the water. In desperation to live, I unclipped the life raft lanyard and popped back up to the surface. This time I had good buoyancy with the two chambers of the Mae West life vest keeping my chin out of the water. When I returned to the States in October of 1945, I ran into my other '44-class buddy, 1st Lt. Charles Butler, whose plane I was flying that day. He told me that he had replaced the standard 15-foot life raft lanyard with a 25-foot one. He explained that he did this so he wouldn't get tangled in the shorter one if he ever had to bail out. Now he tells me! By now I was bobbing around, coughing up water, and trying to get my breathing back to normal. I was also so very surprised and glad that I was still alive. I looked around and discovered that I was in the middle of a very large lake and several miles from the nearest shore. To the west I saw a column of black smoke rising up over a thousand feet in the air from the airfield we had attacked just a few minutes earlier, and there were also two smaller fires and black smoke nearer my current position from where I had downed those two float planes. That direction looked awfully unfriendly too. I made a quick 180-degree wheelie and started swimming toward the eastern shore and the Pacific Ocean. I remembered our pre-flight briefing by Mr. Smith (MIS-X) that suggested that a U.S. Navy submarine would likely be stationed off the eastern shore, northeast of Chosi Point, to possibly rescue us unfortunate souls. For the next hour of breast-stroke swimming with the aid of my Mae West, I continued to see the towering plumes of black smoke rising in the west. Next, some Japanese fighter aircraft began arriving from the north to land at what was left of their airfield. A couple of them started circling over the lake at slow speed. I had to unscrew my air valves which let the Mae West deflate so I could take off my international orange vest and tuck it under my chest. That way I wouldn't be spotted by the circling fighters. After about a half hour of treading water and submerging as the planes circled directly overhead—they were apparently getting low on fuel—they left toward their burning airfield, and I was able to again put on and inflate only the right side of my Mae West. That way, I was able to stay low in the water and swim toward the eastern shore. The sun was setting low in the west, and several small fishing boats started sailing my way. I had to partially submerge again by deflating my Mae West until the boats passed. One of them came so close that I could hear the crew chatting in Japanese! The last hour of swimming was out of the shipping lanes, and I was able to swim on my back toward the shore. Eventually I began getting into some reeds growing about 50 yards

from the shore, and I finally felt that wonderful terra firma beneath me. The sun was down by this time, and dusk was slowly moving in. I spied a small village up a slope to my left about 200 yards away. I had finally made it to shore after more than four hours in that cold water. Fortunately it was July, and the water wasn't ice cold; but believe me, it was cold! My plan was to lay low until after dark, then skirt the village to the right, and head into the woods to the east and try to arrive at the designated pick-up point northeast of Chosi Point the next morning. Just before dark, as I lay in the reeds up to my chin in water, an old papa-san with five kids was poling through the shallow water in a flat-hulled boat, and was returning to the village dock. He poled to within about 30 yards of me as I slipped under the water. I stayed under as long as I could; but when I eased up for

air, one of the little kids was looking back and spied me. The boy started screaming to the old man, who turned the boat around to see what the kid was yelling about, and he saw me. He immediately whipped the boat around again, and headed for shore. All five of the kids jumped out of the boat before it hit the shore and went screaming up the slope to the village. Not more than a minute passed before most of the people of the village came running down the slope with their rice knives, bamboo poles, pitchforks, and several old-type guns and rifles. It was probably lucky that my 45-caliber pistol fell out of its holster and sank as I struggled for my life out in the lake; so I was unarmed, but out-numbered at least a hundred to one. As I lay in the water and saw my imminent capture about to take place, I suddenly realized I had just avoided death in a 1000 to 1 chance with the crash and near-drowning episode, and here I was about

to become a prisoner of war, or worse! I had been so busy for the past hour or so, I hadn't had much time to think about home; however, I now thought that perhaps I had a chance to again, someday, to see Pat and little Colleen, and the rest of my family back home. I was soon captured by the villagers, and my chances of survival grew dimmer and dimmer. My capture and survival as a prisoner-of-war for the rest of the war is another story.

Do you have a story to share? Please contact me and I will add it to a coming newsletter and the Web Site.

REUNIONS

7th Fighter Command 2004 Reunion

We have been invited to join the 330th Bomb Group in their Last Reunion, which will be held in Dayton, Ohio on October 13-17, 2004. It will be similar to our reunion in Seattle as the activities will center around the Air Force Museum at Wright Patterson AFB. The following is a outline of events:

Wednesday October 13 - Early Arrival

10:30am to 3:30pm Ladies' bus trip to Lebanon, Ohio
Men visit USAF Museum by bus
2:30pm to 5:00pm Hospitality suite open
6:00pm Dinner, Holiday Inn banquet room
(Music: Wright-Patterson AFB "Band of Flight")
8:30pm Hospitality Suite open until 11:00 pm

Thursday. October 14

10:00am to 12:00 Registration in hotel lobby
2:00pm to 4:00pm Registration continued
2:30pm to 5:00pm Hospitality Suite open.
7:00 pm Welcome Dinner, hotel ballroom
(Speaker: Ken Werrell, author: "Blankets of Fire")
9:00pm to 11:00pm Hospitality suite open

Friday. October 15

9:00am Board buses for memorial service at Wright-Pat AFB
10:00am Memorial service, WP AFB chapel
11:30am Luncheon, AFB Officers Club
1:00pm Buses return to hotel
2:30pm to 4:30pm Hospitality suite open

5:00pm Board buses for Air Force Museum
6:00pm to 10:00pm Dinner and tour; Air Force Museum
(some buses will return to hotel for those who do not wish to remain until 10:00 p.m.)

Saturday. October 16

9:00am Association's business session
Ladies special event (TBA)
12:30pm Luncheon at hotel -(speaker: Dr. Gaile McCoy, survivor of USS Indianapolis sinking)
2:30pm to 4:30pm Hospitality suite open
5:30pm Cash bar reception
6:30pm Reunion banquet; ballroom
(speaker: Dave Braden, president, 20th AF Ass'n)
8:30pm to midnight Hospitality suite open

Sunday. October 17

7:00am to 9:00am Buffet breakfast - ballroom

The Reunion Speakers

Three men will address the 330th's final reunion in Dayton. Thursday night, Ken Werrell, an Air Force Academy graduate who flew B50s during his career, will highlight the opening day dinner at the Holiday Inn. Dr. Werrell is the author of Blankets of Fire, a fascinating history of the B29 fire raids on Japan and their evolution from the early concept of strategic bombing that began with the first world war.

At the Saturday luncheon, members and wives will hear former marine Dr. Gaile McCoy, who survived the savage fighting for Iwo Jima. He was on Iwo and watched when the crew of K37 bailed out over the island after the Osaka raid June 1st, 1945. He was reassigned to the Marine cadre aboard the USS Indianapolis when it carried the key components of the first atomic bomb to Tinian for delivery by "Enola Gay." McCoy was aboard the cruiser when it was torpedoed and sunk on the return trip, July 30th, a week before the bomb hit Hiroshima... He was one of the 321 survivors of the ship's almost 1200-man crew.

The final reunion banquet on Saturday, October 16th will be addressed by Dave Braden, President of the 20th Air Force Association and a sought-after speaker in his own right. Dave was a navigator with the 73rd Wing's 497th Bomb Group. He survived a ditching on his third mission and went on to fly a total of 32 more by war's end. He is an architect by profession and has served as Chairman of the Dallas-Fort Worth International Airport. Noted as a humorist, writer and speaker, he was an obvious choice to bring down the curtain on the 330th's long series of reunions.

Hotel Reservations

Please make hotel reservations yourself. The hotel is the "The Holiday Inn Dayton Mall" and the rates are \$75 per night. Please mention the 330th Bomb Group to get that rate. The phone number for the hotel is: 937-434-8030.

Ground Transport Costs from Airport to the Holiday Inn

None of Dayton's hotels offers free transportation to and from the airport. The Holiday Inn Dayton Mall suggests that on arrival, 330th Association members contact Charter

Vans at their booth near baggage carousel No. 1 Dayton Airport. The one-way single person rate to the hotel is \$40, two can ride for \$20 each and three or more for \$15 each. Ditto on the return trips to the Dayton Airport. Charter Vans will accept telephone reservations a few days in advance, so getting a group of three or more together before leaving home may not be a bad idea. The phone number: (937) 898-4043.

If You Are Coming

Please be sure to drop me a note at 14629 SE 198th St., Renton WA 98058 or call at 253-630-3199. Whether or not I get our own meeting room will depend on how many are attending.

NEWS

On-Line Roster Available

If you have access to the Internet then you may have access to the 7th Roster. Here you will be able to look up olds friends and make new ones. Visit the web site at: <http://www.7thfighter.com> and click on the "Roster" button. You will be asked for a username and password. The username is **bushmaster** and the password is **snakes**

7th Web Page

The 7th's Web page <http://www.7thfighter.com> continues to expand this year with hundreds of photos as well as the stories that you have sent the association. In addition, Group and Squadron records as well as other wartime documents will be available to read. While it is recognized that many of you may not have access to the internet, the prime purpose of the Web page is to educate and inform your extended family as well as the general public as to what role the 7th Fighter Command played in WWII.

HELP NEEDED

History and Memories

How can you help? From 1941 to 1945, thousands of men and women of the 7th Fighter Command left the security of their homes for the uncertainty of war in unfamiliar lands to do their duty, very often at the sacrifice of life and limb. It is now our duty to compile for present and future generations an accurate account of the sacrifices they made and the parts they played in the Second World War. Please help us preserve your legacy. Please assist us in the challenge of collecting and preserving the historical contributions of the 7th. We cannot protect that heritage without your cooperation. All too frequently these items are undervalued not only by the families to which they are left, but even by you the veterans. Between your modesty relating to your personal achievements and a hesitancy in asserting the worth of your memorabilia, these irreplaceable historical materials are being misplaced or discarded. Through the preservation of written words, film, and war mementos, your experiences will not be lost.

You can send me your original documents and photos and I will scan them and return them to you promptly. If you

are not in a hurry, please let me know as I get quite a backlog of material at times. Please consider a donation of the materials or consider leaving the materials to the 7th in your Estate.

All material will be archived in the 7th's records and then a search will be made for a permanent home for the materials such as a worthy Museum. The Associations archives will be indexed on the Internet on our web page and made equally accessible to family, the scholar, the historian, and the average citizen. In short, anyone interested in understanding the virtually unknown, and untold history of the Seventh Fighter Command. Each small piece of history the Association receives is another square on the patchwork quilt of our understanding to help us **Preserve Your Legacy**.

ASSOCIATION DONATIONS

Thank You to all of you who have been able to donate to the association. Many of you have donated, and thanks to your generosity the Newsletter will continue to be published on a twice a year basis. Since there are no required dues in the association, and all activities including this newsletter are dependent on your generous donations. If you have enjoyed this newsletter and would like to see more like this, we need your continued support. It is understood that many of you are on fixed incomes and may not be able to donate funds, but If you are able to help, any donation would be appreciated.

Please send any donations to: Jim Van Nada, 4095 Berrywood Drive, Eugene, OR 97404-4061 Make all checks payable to the 7th Fighter Command Association. All donations are tax deductible.

COMMUNICATION

Be sure to let us know if you move or your loved one has passed away. We get many newsletters returned due to bad addresses.

TAPS



The following list indicates those comrades who we have gotten notification of passing on since the last issue of *Sunsetter*. If you know of any members who have passed on recently, please be so kind as to inform the *Gazette*.

Name	Unit	DOD
Bird, Wilma	WARDSO	10/01/01
Bleick, William D.	456th	3/24/04
Bregar, Col. A. J.	72nd	11/28/03
Craig, Bill Raymond	531st	07/09/94
Foland, Douglas H.	78th	12/14/02
Guthrie, John	7th HQ	04/22/04
Hann, Paul Douglas	549th NFS	7/6/2003
McCormick, Donald L	73rd	05/01/77
Reineke, Lawrence	7th	09/18/03

**330th Bomb Group (VH) Association /
7th Fighter Command Association**

Reunion Registration Form

Dayton, OH • OCTOBER 14th-17th, 2004

(This is *not* a hotel reservation)

REGISTRATION MUST BE RECEIVED BY SEPTEMBER 15, 2004

Date	Function	Optional \$50/\$38	Included in \$175.00
Oct. 13	Early Arrivals -		
	Ladies -- Lunch & Tour Lebanon, OH	XX	
	Men -- Tour Air Museum -- Lunch on your own	XX	
	Dinner is also on your won that evening		
Oct. 14	Dinner & Entertainment, Holiday Inn		XX
Oct. 15	Memorial Service--Wright-Patterson AFB Chapel		XX
	Luncheon--WPAFB Officers Club		XX
	Dinner & Tour AF Museum		XX
Oct. 16	Men--Business Meeting--Holiday Inn		XX
	Ladies--T.B.D.		XX
	Men & Ladies Luncheon -- Holiday Inn		XX
Oct. 16	Banquet -- Holiday Inn		XX
Oct. 17	Breakfast Buffet--Holiday Inn		XX

**Mail to: Robert Billings
6928 Voltaire
Orlando, FL 32809 407-859-4402**

Registration	_____	X \$175.00	=	_____
	number	price each	total	
Early Arrivals	Ladies _____	X \$50.00	=	_____
	Men _____	X \$38.00	=	_____

TOTAL AMOUNT PAYABLE TO 330TH BG ASSOCIATION

\$ _____

PLEASE PRINT NAME: _____

SPOUSE & GUEST NAME: _____

STREET ADDRESS: _____

CITY _____ STATE ____ ZIP _____

PHONE NO. _____

EMERGENCY CONTACT _____

PHONE NO _____

E-MAIL ADDRESS, IF ANY _____

ARRIVAL DATE: _____ DEPARTURE DATE: _____

ARE YOU FLYING? ___ DRIVING? _____ RV? _____

Please send in reservations ASAP. This makes it easier for the planning of meals and buses.

Full refunds will be authorized if notified by 10-01-04 _____. Please make requests for refunds in writing to Treasurer (above Robert Billings) to allow for his records to be complete.

(If Flying) Airline _____ **Arrival Time?** _____ **Depart. Time & Date** _____

YOUR REGISTRATION MUST BE RECEIVED BY SEPTEMBER 15th, 2004

SUNSETTER'S GAZETTE
14629 SE 198th St.
Renton, WA 98058-9405

Address Correction Requested

Web Page <http://www.7thfighter.com>

Newsletter of the Seventh Fighter Command
World War II

Mark Stevens – Editor
mark@7thfighter.com

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V.P. 15th Fighter Group: Jim Tapp
V.P. 21st Fighter Group: Bill Bradbury
V.P. 318th Fighter Group: Frank Rodgers (acting)
V.P. 414th Fighter Group: *Pending*
V.P. 506th Fighter Group: John Benbow
V.P. Night Fighters Group: Bill Sill
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Treasurer: Jim Van Nada
Adjutant General: Harve Phipps

Please remit your contributions to "7th Fighter Command Association" if you would like to see more newsletters like this one. Contributions are on a voluntary basis and not a requirement for membership.

Name _____ Squadron _____

Amount Enclosed _____

Mail to : Jim Van Nada, 4095 Berrywood Drive, Eugene, OR 97404-4061
